

## Matt the Miller visits Bear's Mill - Part 1

Greenville, Ohio, USA - August 2015

### Matt Painter - Miller at Eling Tide Mill

On a hot and sunny Saturday morning, I set out from Loveland, heading north towards Greenville Ohio and Bear's Mill. This mill was chosen for two reasons:

1. It was the closest working mill. 2. My favourite animal is the bear.

It took just under an hour and a half to drive the 80 miles, which obviously in country the size of America is nothing to shout about but when my commute to the mill is only 10 minutes on a pushbike I appreciated the distance. Arriving at Bear's Mill I was immediately struck by its size and the sense of space that is around. The car park could probably only fit about 10 cars in but they had a field that could easily have fit about 100 extra if needed, even American cars which are a darn sight larger than English cars.

Bear's Mill is an attractive 4 storey building clad in American Black Walnut which I was informed had last been replaced in 2001 and looked as though it was weathering very well. As you walk up to the front door, you can't fail to admire the beautiful 1929 Ford. (*see picture below*)

As I stepped into the Mill, I was greeted with a well ordered shop that sold not only flour, but exotic brands of tea and coffee as well as jams, relishes and cooking sauces.

As a man who loves mills I was in heaven, but looking back on this visit, what sticks with me most vividly is the delicious smell of a baking building as the sunshine hit the wood outside.



We were met at the door by Sally who was very welcoming and had been asked to keep a look out for two Brits and to take us over to Terry Clark the miller. He still had a few more checks to do before he could mill so we met up briefly with Marti Goetz who has recently started as the mills Executive Director. She was very interested in hearing all about Eling and in particular the Lottery project that we are undertaking.

Terry then ushered us back and we were whisked upstairs as he began his tour which was filled with juicy gossip about corrupt millers, drunk millers and security conscious ones as well, while taking down some of the internal cladding Terry found a rifle! When Terry informed us that his mill building dated back to 1848 he stopped to ask when Eling's first mention was. They were taken aback when they heard me say 1086.

The mill had a very productive life, after being converted to a flour mill from a sawmill in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century it continued to use turbines to rotate French burr stones until 1882 when the mill was converted to work with rollers. Luckily for us all of the original machinery and the stones were left in place and can now be used again

During his tour Terry gave me a brief milling demonstration, everything was much as I was expecting but all of his controls were up on the stones floor. He spun a wheel which opened hatches and allowed the turbines to begin spinning about 10 feet below the water in the mill race getting things turning. He made his tentering adjustments from here and was also able to check the quality of the flour by lifting a flap next to the tun cover meaning that he only needed to go back to the ground floor to replace his flour sack when it was full.

We wound our way around the building with Terry pointing out items of interest including photo albums that covered some of the mills history along with many colourful tales about the old millers, including one whose wife used to coat the floors with flour so she could follow his footsteps to find his alcohol stashed all throughout the building.