

Passing through the mill.....

By the time you read this I will have visited Graham Burgess who was introduced to me at Bere Mill. Graham is a landscape designer and artist who has built his own ecological home at The Weir alongside the Fulling Mill in Whitchurch. He designed the new “dry garden” plantings at Bere Mill (keep an eye out for more NGS Open Days garden lovers!) and, having a keen interest in Whitchurch past and present has been involved with the Friends of Whitchurch Silk Mill, having carried out the duties of chairman for several years. He designs with nature, ecology and conservation in mind combining those with his empathy for the area’s history and he has posed some questions, which you may be able to answer, regarding the storage and transportation of paper in Henri de Portal’s day viz: *how was it stored to prevent rats eating it? and, as paper is very heavy (and edible by rats) and the lanes were very narrow, were especially designed wagons used?* I have had a quick go at researching this on the internet to no avail so far. If you can suggest answers to these teasers please let me know and I’ll pass the info on. (The Museum of Rural English Life may well be able to help on the matter of wagons, I guess.)

Under the banner of “Get Cromford’s Wheels Turning”, Cromford Mills of Richard Arkwright fame is inviting donations to add to the grants given to restore Building 17, the Arkwright Society has raised over £3 million, with a further £1 million earmarked, but work cannot commence until the entire funding gap has been closed. The Society must raise a further £250,000 in order to be able to proceed with the project. For more information about the Fundraising Campaign and to donate on-line, please visit the [Arkwright Society website](#). Whilst many mills, and other worthwhile causes, are clamouring for financial help, Cromford stands prominently at the forefront of innovative mill workings as it led progress in the textile industry and is thus very deserving of your pennies.

A popular windmill near the lavender fields of north Norfolk is Bircham Mill. Yummy cream teas are now supplemented with their own hand-made, feta style *Miller’s Fancy* cheese and a hard cheese similar to Wensleydale, named *Norfolk Charm*. I wonder if they will try making a lavender flavoured one next.

The April issue of the Friends of Norfolk Mills Newsletter carries an advert for the Hardley Mill Trust which has a number of foundry patterns which can be hired complete with core boxes, subject to suitability, to other restoration groups. All enquiries to: Hardley Windmill Trust Ltd. For a full list or email: P.grix@btinternet.com.