

## Presidential Notes by John Silman



1870s photo of St Catherine's Lock showing the Saw Mill with Half Way House in the middle distance.

Photo courtesy of Winchester College Library

### OCTOBER 2009

**Tuesday, 27<sup>th</sup>** Met Mike Clark of Hampshire Buildings Preservation Trust with our Chairman, Mick Edgeworth, to take a preliminary look at the water power site of the recorded wood sawmill at St. Catherine's Lock on the Itchen Navigation. We also met Polly Whyte who is overseeing the improvements to the towpath etc. on the Navigation. We found a shaped "cut-out" in the wing wall which would appear to have accommodated a wheel driving a saw. It's positioning also fits in with the anecdotal information that the wheel would only run when the lock was empty!

### NOVEMBER 2009

**Thursday, 5<sup>th</sup>** Alan Stoyal joined HMG in visiting Broughton Manor Barn Mill and Sir Philip Trousdell's House at East Mills near Fordingbridge. Some answers found on both buildings. On Sir Philip's House, Alan felt that the underground channels and voids which have been found were connected with the East Mills production to cut and prepare "Best Arbroath" Double "O" Sails for commercial sailing ships, probably in the dyeing process. Alan thought that Broughton Manor Barn Mill is a very important mill of its type, being water driven, particularly the well preserved "compass arm" waterwheel. We hope soon to be able to commence the cleaning process which must be carried out before a full survey is started.

**Monday, 16<sup>th</sup>** With Mick Edgeworth and John Christmas to St. Catherine's Lock to help the volunteers of Hampshire and IOW Wildlife Trust with the inspection of St. Catherine's Lock and the water power site. Luckily, JC had brought along his "Tirfor Winch" which when hitched to a nearby oak tree could be used to pull the stone ends of the mill axle out of the watercourse; this not helped by us not being allowed to go into the water (about 4" deep) because we had not been on an appropriate course!! However, other volunteers had been on the course so we could get a wire around the large stones to get them to where they could be inspected.

**Tuesday, 17th** *Tony Yoward and I spoke to the members of the Rogate Society on “So you think you know about Industrial Archaeology”, which they enjoyed.*

**Saturday, 21st** *Another successful day’s milling at Longbridge Mill.*

**Tuesday, 1st** *Work commenced by JC and Tony the engineer on the badly cracked pit wheel at Hockley. We are looking forward to possibly running the wheel on our open day on January 1<sup>st</sup> 2010.*

**Monday, 2nd** *I spoke to Eastleigh Railway Engineering Society on the “History of the Postcard”.*

## **DECEMBER 2009**

**Tuesday, 8th** *I was contacted by our member, Michael Carden, who has been kind enough to present our HMG Library with the book “Flour Milling” from the library of his next-door neighbour who was Frederick John G. Keevil. From a milling family in Winchester, his father bought Abbey Mill in 1928. More details on **the** family appeared in the last newsletter in a very full article by Michael who also gave me, from Mr. Keevil’s collection, a bill and thrift which he had found in the river by Abbey Mill and which he felt was quite old - being smaller than the usual Victorian tools. I have passed both items to our Chairman for safe-keeping. Thank you very much Michael!*

**Thursday, 10th** *A party consisting of most of the regular milling crew at Longbridge Mill met at the mill for our annual Christmas dinner.*

**Friday, 11th** *I talked to a very interested party of Porchester Wives Club on the “History of Milling.*

**Saturday, 12th** *HMG Quarterly meeting this time held at the Abbey Hotel in Romsey. The use of the room arranged by JC. Thanks John.*

**Saturday, 19th** *A very busy milling day at Longbridge Mill; usual crew took part.*

## **JANUARY 2010**

**Friday, 1st New Year’s Day** *I was delighted to attend the open day at Hockley Mill on FOKABs annual running day. This brought in visitors on almost all the buses that called at the top of the road. I was scheduled for the afternoon shift and arrived at 1pm. Others I saw and spoke to were Nigel and Angela Smith, Gavin Bowie and the chief organiser, Eleanor Yates. We estimate approximately 100 people came to the mill. A very good day but very cold. As my hands warmed up in the car going home, the pain brought tears to my eyes!*

**Thursday, 7th** *Meeting arranged ref. the turbines at Bishopstoke cancelled due to the bad weather.*

**Friday, 8th** *Conversation with Basil Hunt giving consideration to various works at Longbridge Mill which will need doing this coming spring. Thursday 13th Re-convened meeting at River Inn regarding the restoration of Armfield Turbines with representatives from HMG, Eastleigh Borough Council Engineers & “Sustainability” Departments, Bishopstoke Parish Council and the contractor to give estimates. Many subjects covered and offers of help both practically and financial appear to be*

**Monday, 18th** *With Mick Edgeworth to inspect plans for alterations to City Mill, Winchester and Chilland Mill near Itchen Abbas. Much new information on Chilland Mill in far reaching research into its history, very impressive.*

**Friday, 22nd** *Crux Easton Wind Engine Committee Meeting.*

**Saturday, 23rd** *Milling day at Longbridge, the first milling of the new decade. Another cold but reasonable day with quite a lot of visitors and with plenty of milling to do! The River Loddon was pretty high and we were able to mill without having to put in the extra height boards which we have normally to place along the top of the weir. The wheel is running very smoothly and the stones are working very well since Basil and Fred lifted and cleaned them. 4 x 25kg of conditioned wheat was milled with the stones producing a super grade of flour. The working crew of Basil, Fred, Mick, Gavin, Sheila and the President are now a pretty seasoned lot with each knowing what needs doing at any particular time. And all have their specialty - mine is putting up the SPAB red flag to indicate milling is taking place!!! Thanks to all the gang for help.*