

From the Chattering Damsel at the Editor's Desk

Molinology. A word devised in recent years to encompass all things mill related. A good word for doing just that, and the need to spread the word about molinological matters is never more important than right now. Two Molinological Masters have been lost to us in these last few months in Ken Major and Paul de Groote. Characters certainly, but how very different in their characteristics they were and how each individual coloured and shaped our knowledge and appreciation of mills and industrial archaeology generally. The HMG Committee, along with other mills groups, is right to be concerned with attracting more members, whatever their ages, so that the knowledge, interest and expertise can continue and all the mills which are used to demonstrate this working heritage, whether working or static, as a whole or in part, which people such as Ken Major, Rex Wailes, Frank Gregory, Wilfred Foreman, and many others who took up the challenge to repair, restore and educate us in the importance of these items of everyday life, remain as such and are not allowed to fall into disuse and decay, simply because many of the public don't know that they can help to keep them going. So, please, tell everyone you meet about the mills groups and the opportunities existing. Why don't you take the opportunity to learn to operate a mill when you come to the Winchester City Mill on September 18th? And why not bring someone with you who may appreciate the chance to find out about how grindstones, sluices, and all the knobs and levers work. Remember all the milling staff are volunteers and they wouldn't be there if they didn't enjoy it! For the more desk-oriented, Tony Yoward our Archivist is always busy with research and scanning - I'll bet he would welcome some assistance too.

Another way I help to keep the knowledge going is in my work as a volunteer at the Mills Archive Trust. Luckily, I live "just down the road" from Watlington House in Reading but there are others who work from home and HMG member, Ken Kirsopp who lives in Basingstoke, is one. My job is to sort into different categories for archiving, the collected material handed over to us; this can take the form of newspaper articles, pictures, postcards, books, magazine articles, photographs and sketches. Most recently I've been dealing with the collections of Christopher Wallis, a millwright, and Mr. Johnstone of Lymington, a keen mills observer. Ken Kirsopp does an ace job at scanning the newspaper articles onto disks, at a pace which suits him. Those of us who give our support as Friends of the Mills Archive Trust are being treated to the first of two Frank Gregory On-Line days at the Weald and Downland Open Air Museum, Singleton on 17th September. Sussex Mills Group members will also be sharing the day's events to remember this saviour of so many mills in that county, and to see the work on his collection achieved so far at the Mills Archive. If you'd like to come too, just join the Friends of the Mills Archive for the small cost of £5 per month; admission to the event is free but by invitation to Friends only.

The splendid building of Whitchurch Silk Mill plays host to some inspiring handycraft events for adults during October 27th, 28th and 29th with Half Term fun for children ranging from 8 to 16 years on October 30th. An exhibition which opens on 6th October and continues until 3rd January 2010 is by the Senior Curator for the Embroiderers' Guild; displays of unusual jewellery and sculptures. For full details go to www.whitchurchsilkmill.org.uk