

Hampshire Mills Group Newsletter



No. 60 Spring 2006

www.hampshitemills.org

registered charity number 1116607

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Twyford Waterworks

HMG Dates for your Diary - 2008

Saturday 15th March - 2.00pm - Spring Meeting - Twyford Waterworks, Hazeley Road, Twyford. SU 493248 (*see page 2*)

Saturday 10th & Sunday 11th May - National Mills Weekend

Sunday 25th May - Open Day at Lords Farm, Petersfield - hosted by John Lovell

Friday 13th June - 7.30 pm - Summer Meeting - Durley Mill. Our thanks to John & Janet Hammond

19 September - Autumn Meeting and AGM - Eling Tide Mill. Venue tbc

13 December - Winter Meeting - Longbridge Mill. Venue tbc

If you have (or know of) a venue that you would like to share with the members of HMG for any future meetings, please let our Chairman know.

HMG Committee Meetings 2008

8th May, 7th August & 6th November. If there are specific items that you wish the committee to consider, prior to the next members meeting, please advise the Chairman or Secretary in advance.

Deadline for contributions to the Summer 2008 Newsletter

FRIDAY 23rd May

The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Hampshire Mills Group.

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Editor's Comments

I wish all our members a Happy 2008. My thanks (once again) to all those who have contributed to this edition of the Newsletter. The range of articles is so varied that I hope you have as much pleasure reading them as I had putting them together. For the first time in a long while, I haven't been able to fit all the contributions into this edition, so I already have a healthy start to the next issue. You will note that there is a fascinating history of Curdrige Paper Mill, which was kindly put together by John Hammond (surely a labour of love). There is so much detail, all of which is extremely interesting, that I felt I just could not edit out a single word. I have therefore decided to publish the entire article (as written) in two parts. Part two will be in the Summer Newsletter (Issue 81).

HMG is proposing a 4 day trip to Herefordshire on a B&B basis. The likely dates would be in late September or early October 2008. There will be a maximum group number of 30. If you are interested in joining this trip, please contact our Secretary, Alison Stott (telephone number on front page) by the end of April.

Ros

Membership Renewal

Lyn is still waiting for more money - have you paid yet???

Twyford Waterworks

The Spring meeting will be on Saturday 15th March at 2.00 in Twyford Waterworks, Hazeley Road, Twyford. After a short business meeting we will have a guided tour round the works and light refreshments. The tour will try to emphasise the problems that have been encountered in repairing & restoring the site, boilers, limeworks etc. and how they have dealt with them. I thought this would be most interesting for our members.

Eleanor Yates

Twyford Waterworks Trust - Grid Reference SU 493248

The kilns at Twyford Waterworks were employed to produce quicklime for the water softening process employed here. Two were erected in 1903 and are largely roofed over. A further three to the same design followed in 1930. These are of the intermittent 'flare kiln' design and burned chalk from the adjacent quarry. This had to be in pieces of at least 3 inches across to allow free flow of air through the kiln whilst burning. They were fired from the stokehole for the whole burn of the kiln.

A temperature of at least 1650 degrees fahrenheit (900 degrees centigrade) was required to be maintained for two days to achieve complete conversion of the chalk to quicklime. The emptying was undertaken through both the high level charging door and the stokeholes. A complete cycle of loading, firing, cooling and emptying a kiln took about one week.



The Twyford kilns were taken out of use in 1939 at the start of World War II as it was thought that the glare of burning could have aided enemy aircraft to navigate. Trial screens over the kilns proved unsuccessful. After the war they were not restarted.

The Twyford Waterworks Trust now manages the preserved works and holds a number of open days throughout the year. For more information, see: www.hants.gov.uk/twt or www.twyfordlimekilns.50megs.com

Presidential Notes

Tuesday 13th November - I spoke to Fair Oak Widows on the History of Milling.

Thursday 15th November - HMG Committee Meeting

Tuesday 20th November - Tony & I spoke to Bursledon History Group on the subject of Industrial Archaeology.

Wednesday 21st November - I attended a meeting with "interested parties" at Borough of Bournemouth Conservation Department, followed by a site visit at Throop Mill. Throop is a very interesting site.

The mill originally contained both stone ground and roller milling equipment and I attended in my capacity as a member of the SPAB (Mills) committee. The stones (two pairs) were removed some time ago by the owners, Heygates of Bugbrooke, to their mill in Tring where they are still working.

All the rest of the machinery is still in situ at the mill. Unfortunately, due to alterations to the physical geography of the river, the mill has lost most of its water, however, the SPAB and I think it is a very important mill showing the transition from stone ground to roller milling.

I will report again on the next developments.

Wednesday 21st November (evening) - Tony and I spoke to the Mid Thorngate Society on Industrial Archaeology.

Friday 23rd November - I spoke to the Dynamo Club on the subject of Postcards.

Saturday 24th November - Milling Weekend at Longbridge Mill. Very successful milling with plenty of customers visiting the mill. The usual gang was in attendance.

Monday 26th November - HIAS Committee Meeting.

Thursday 29th November - Work party at Longbridge Mill to continue clearance of the willows growing in mid stream in the headrace. Seven members present. Fred did the really difficult climbing and sawing but everybody worked hard (and got very muddy). Thanks to all.

Wednesday 12th December - I spoke to the Southampton Society of Model Engineers at Riverside. Very well received.

Thursday 13th December - The regular milling crew at Longbridge had their Christmas Dinner, kindly arranged for us by Brian, and a good time was had by all.

Afterwards, Basil showed slides of "Steam in Action) from his archive. Thanks very much to Brian and Basil and all who attended what is becoming an annual fixture!

Saturday 15th December - The Christmas Meeting of HMG took place at Beaulieu by the kind invitation of Hon. Ralph Montagu who also addressed us on the possible future of Beaulieu Tide Mill following the recent fire in the mill.

HMG member, Michael Carden, who is closely involved as Consultant Architect, also talked about the practicalities of the mill's restoration. Altogether, a very interesting meeting.

On the administrative side, I formally resigned as Chairman of HMG. Mick was duly elected Chairman and the meeting was kind enough to vote me in as President. Hence the change in the title of these musings.

Thursday 20th December - In order to give a hand with the Christmas orders for flour received at Eling Tide Mill and to assist with a general service of the milling equipment, a small party went to help David Plunkett and John at the mill.

The removal and return of the (to me) "modern" Armfield, all metal shoe and hopper etc., went very well and we were soon producing some very fine flour to fulfil those Christmas orders.

It made a very interesting contrast to the much older type of equipment at Longbridge

On a personal note, we spent a very happy Christmas with all the family present at our elder daughters home in Dartmouth.

2008

Firstly, "Happy New Year"

Tuesday 8th January - Not me this time but Tony speaking to Wickham Local History Society on the subject of "Mills in the Meon Valley".

I understand that he had a completely "Full House". I think that he should be persuaded to give this lecture to HMG. Don't you?

Saturday 12th January - Tony and I spoke at the AGM of the Wessex Mills Group (we are both members). We spoke on the subject of restoration and Tony has gathered up a good collection of "Heavy Gang" pictures.

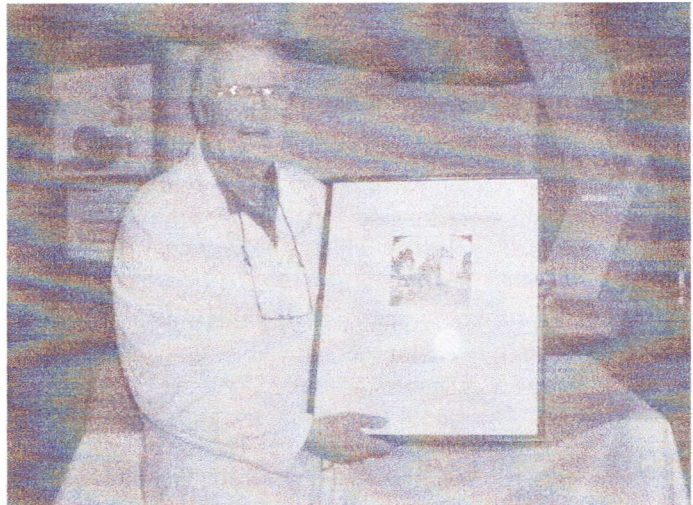
Tuesday 15th January - I spoke to the Titchfield Local History Society resulting in another donation to Group funds.

John Silman

Thirty Years On - A change at t'Mills Group

Mills, those wonderful ancient relics of our industrial past always conjure imagery of timelessness, whether it be a sails-topped windmill towering above a village or a water driven wheel steadily churning the river in some green valley; and so it happens with chairmanships too, this idealistic vision of everything just happening and carrying on seamlessly for years.

"I'll do it for six months, just until you find someone else." was the famous phrase uttered in a generous but firm manner. Now, more than **thirty** years later, John Silman has at last found a trusty replacement Chairman for the Hampshire Mills Group. His worthy successor is Vice-Chairman, Mick Edgeworth, who took over his new role during the December meeting at the National Motor Museum, Beaulieu.



A founder member of HMG, John Silman has spearheaded a small band of enthusiasts through more than three decades of rescue and repair of many of Hampshire's wind and water mills. Mill owners and work parties of other mills groups throughout the country have sought his advice. He has also delivered countless illuminating and highly informative talks to an enormous cross section of groups and societies across the south of England, and not just about mills, but about old postcards too. These will be continued as will labour with the "Heavy Gang" team, working to repair and restore Hampshire's industrial past.

In recognition of John's enormous contribution, the Mills Section of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) presented him with an illuminated citation in November 2006. Justly proud of this rarely bestowed honour, John is photographed with it at Longbridge Mill..

Both Mick and John are millers at Longbridge Mill, Sherfield-on-Loddon and can be seen in action there on the last Saturday of every month (29th March, 26th April etc..) Milling starts at 12noon and guided walks over the mill are free. Mick Edgeworth will be delighted to hear from anyone interested in the work the Hampshire Mills Group carries out and welcomes everybody to come, look, learn and enjoy this ancient watermill.

Sheila Viner

Whitchurch Silk Mill

Job Available - Mechanical Engineer

Whitchurch Silk Mill is in need of a mechanical engineer who would be able to work with historic machinery. Much of the machinery is 19th century and produces silk for interiors, textile conservation projects and costume dramas.

The key functions would be:

Maintain regularly all production machinery ensuring its effective and safe operation.

Undertake programmed restorations of machinery

Maintain the waterwheel and water power systems and restore when required.

Undertake any other mechanical work as required

You will be expected to use the machinery in the production of silk fabric.

The position would be for two days a week.

Please apply to: Whitchurch Silk Mill, 28 Winchester Street, Whitchurch, Hants RG28 7AL
telephone number 01256 892065 for an application pack.

Registered charity number 900621

The original deadline for applications was 25th February, but if you are interested in this position, a swift response to this article will be acceptable

Destruction of Testwood Mill by Fire

In the past century or more, hundreds of mills have fallen into disuse and have either been demolished or turned into riverside homes. Some, however, ended their active lives in a more dramatic fashion as this report shows.

Hampshire Advertiser, June 28th 1890

"Testwood Mill, a spot so well known on the Test was destroyed by fire early yesterday (Friday) morning. The fire originated owing to the upsetting of a benzoline lamp and the building, being of a very inflammable nature, the flames spread with great rapidity soon obtaining a complete hold of the mill for, although there was water all around, nothing effectual could be done in time.

A telegram was sent from Totton railway station to the Southampton fire station for assistance and Superintendent Johnson received it at forty minutes past six o'clock. He at once summoned members of the fire brigade and started with the manual engine horsed by Mr Petty and they were on the spot - some five miles from Southampton - in about fifty minutes after receiving the message to attend, while in seven minutes from their arrival they were in full work.

Nothing however could then be done to save the mill but efforts were directed to the house (from which the furniture had already been removed by the inmates) and in this, they fortunately succeeded. The mill was in the occupation of Mr Kendall who recently spent a large sum on new machinery and fittings which, together with the mill, were destroyed.

The fire was witnessed by a large number who lent their aid and one of the earliest to render assistance was the Mayor of Southampton (Mr James Bishop JP) who happened to be passing near the mill on his tricycle when the fire broke out."

The consequence of the delay in tackling the fire because of the necessity of summoning assistance from Southampton subsequently led to the founding of a volunteer Fire Brigade in Totton.

The mill at Testwood, part of the Great Testwood estate lying to the north of Totton since medieval times, was never rebuilt. No information has so far been found about Mr Kendall, the unfortunate occupier of the mill, since his name seems to be absent from local directories or census returns.

Today, there are few visible indications that a mill once existed on the site, although the former millers house mentioned in the newspaper report is now occupied by a river keeper.

Michael Southgate - Eling Tide Mill Trust

Bursledon Windmill

Bursledon Windmill reopened to the public on 15th July 2007.

The last seven months have been a period of consolidation and rebuilding of the visitor and customer base for the mill and its products. In that time we have also had the new position of Visitor Services Manager filled, dealt with the restrictions placed upon us by the recent changes in the Fire Regulations and put in place a more structured system of opening times for the mill.

The fire regulations have restricted the access to the upper floors of the windmill. So rather than allow visitors to wander over the mill, as they were previously, they are now given guided tours in groups of 5 from the ground floor onto the reefing stage and back down.

A height restriction of over 1.2metres to go up the mill has meant that we have brought the saddle stone and rotary quern into use as a hands-on activity for the younger/smaller visitor. Previously this activity had only been used during school visits. Co-incidentally this activity is also very popular with adults of all ages as well as the children.

Jo Lawler - Visitor Services Manager - Bursledon Windmill

Curdrige Paper Mill c1633 - 1841

In 1620, Arthur Bromfeild, junior, gentleman, son of Arthur Bromfeild, senior, esquire, was admitted as copyhold tenant (by the Manor of Bishops Waltham) of land in the tithing of Curdrige, including "one and a half acres called Kingsmead and one other parcel of meadow lying in two parts in Durley called Southmead and Froylemead containing three acres of the Lord's demesne". As Arthur, junior, was only about four years old, his father was looking ahead! He also at that time became copyhold tenant of Durley Mill and adjoining land. He was granted a licence to lease all his lands and tenements to any "honest and suitable sub-tenant", on payment of two cows to the value of £6 13s 4d. Arthur Bromfeild, senior, owned Chawcroft House in the tithing of Allington, South Stoneham. As one of the Earl of Southampton's gentlemen, he lived at St. Margarets, Titchfield until the death of his wife in 1618 when he probably moved back to Chawcroft, from where he became Mayor of Southampton in 1637/8.

In 1630, Arthur Bromfeild, senior, esquire, was granted custody of his son, Arthur, for all his lands (he was only 14 years old) until he reached the age of twenty-one, and was likewise granted a licence to lease all this property. There is no mention of the paper mill in the manorial rentals that year.

The Paper Mill was probably built about 1633 by Arthur Bromfeild at the same time as he was rebuilding the present Durley Mill. It was not the first paper mill in Hampshire, that being at Warnford which started in 1616.

There has survived an inventory dated 1636 of the goods and chattels of Michael Casier/Keysyer of Curdrige, late of Bishops Waltham, papermaker. His widow, Anne, and Francis (surely his son) were the beneficiaries. The appraisal was carried out by at least two Curdrige residents, William Kelsey and Silvester Wyatt. The inventory included a stock of paper worth £10, "stuff to make paper" worth 18 shillings and 15 pairs of paper moulds. So he must have been well established by 1636, and we could assume that he could have started paper making at least two years before. This would then give us a commencement date of between 1633 and 1634 for the mill.

In 1588 in Scotland, there was a growing realisation that Scotland would be a profitable country in which to make paper. Germans were seeking opportunities abroad where they could exploit their knowledge, and the favourable attitude of James VI towards industrial development offered an incentive for people to settle in Scotland. A privilege granted by King James to Peter Graet Haere, a German, in February 1589-90, *'to set up this art of making paper of all sorts within this realm for a period of nine years'*, was followed in December 1590 by the concession of a monopoly to Pietter Gryther [a varied spelling of Graet Haere?] and Michael Kysar, almanis paper materis, appointing them paper makers to the king for nineteen years.

The site of their manufacture – the earliest Scots paper mill – was the West Mill at Dalry, on the South bank of the Water of Leith near Edinburgh. What happened to Peter Gryther is unclear, but at this mill Keasar had a contract with two Scotsmen – Mungo Russell and his son Gideon, and by a later contract, in 1594, Gideon Russell had two German partners in paper making – Michael Keysar and John Seiller.

It is recorded that on the 3rd May 1594, the Russells agreed to provide further accommodation for a drying loft by raising the mill walls by 8 feet. It is probable that paper fit for printing was produced, and possibly watermarked writing paper was also made. No records exist after 1605 but it is likely that this mill went out of business shortly afterwards.

In 1603, King James VI of Scotland became King James I of England and moved his Court to London. Perhaps Michael Kaysar followed the King, his patron, following the demise of his paper mill at Dalry. In London, the Earl of Southampton and one of his gentlemen, Arthur Bromfeild, would have met the King in Court circles, and it seems reasonable to assume that Michael Kaysar could have met Arthur Bromfeild. I will go into the significance of this later.

In 1639, Henry Bromfeild, gentleman, the elder son of Arthur Bromfeild, was admitted as copyhold tenant (by the Manor of Bishops Waltham) of one and a half acres called Kingsmead and three acres of meadow in two parts called Southmead and Froylemead in the tithing of Curdrige, on the surrender of his brother, Arthur, junior. Still no mention is made of a paper mill in the transaction. The transfer of ownership was on the condition that Henry paid to his brother the sum of £40 each year during Arthur's lifetime and to be paid to his residence at Frogmill House, which would have been the present Durley.

Francis Keyser and Izabell Leach, both of Bishops Waltham, married at Durley in 1640. They baptised 5 children at Bishops Waltham.

.... continued

Curdridge Paper Mill ...continued

On the 13th of April 1648, **Francis Keysier** was admitted as copyhold tenant of "one parcel of land lying triangular containing by estimate half an acre and one small lane leading from the said parcel of land to Hatlane and one coppice lying in length between the said small lane and Southmead and one meadow called Southmead lying between the said coppice and a river there and one mill called a **Papermill** in respect thereof and also the west end of another parcel of meadow called Southmead containing by estimation half an acre as it is now divided lying on the north side of the said river in the tithing of Curdridge...on the surrender of Henry Bromfeild". The property is stated as being part of Kingsmead, Froylemead and Southmead, held by Henry Bromfeild since 1639.

From 1650 to 1662. Francis Keyser paid the poor rate for the paper mill of 2s per annum.

On the 24th of March 1656, **Richard Cornelius**, merchant of Southampton, was admitted as copyhold tenant of the Paper Mill and adjoining land, on the surrender of Francis Keysier who remained at the paper mill as a sub-tenant and presumably as the paper maker, until at least 1662, as he continued to pay the poor rate (i.e. the rate levied for the relief of the poor of Bishops Waltham). Richard Cornelius was a member of a well-established and prominent family of merchants in Southampton, possibly descended from a John Cornelys (a Dutchman?) who was resident in Southampton High Street in 1544. His father, also Richard, was a merchant trading mainly in wines, and he owned a brewery in Southampton. He features on the Muster List of 1585 for Holy Rood ward with one able-bodied servant. Made a Burgess in 1585, he was Sheriff of the town in 1599- 1600 and Mayor in 1601-2, living close to Holy Rood Church and owning property elsewhere in the town. He married Averen Knight, after whom his grand-daughter was named.



Curdridge Paper Mill (a scanned photocopy of a 1920s photo)

The son, Richard, grocer and tobacconist, was Sheriff in 1639, but never served the office of Mayor as he was excused this obligation on payment of a fine of £100 in 1643. Nevertheless he still kept his place in the Corporation. His father died in 1619 or 1620 when his heirs were shown in the town records as free-suitors or property owners in the town. As one of the Sergeants at Mace of Southampton he was called upon by the Court to dispose of "unwholesome herrings" in 1626. He is referred to as a grocer and merchant when being admitted free as a Burgess of the town on the 24th October 1628, being already a Free Commoner. He was certified as a fit person to sell tobacco by retail in 1632. His brother, Francis, was shipping tobacco from the Caribbean at that time.

Richard took apprentices in 1635, 1640, 1649 and, in 1657, he registered his new son-in-law, Henry Norborne, who had had experience with another master in trade in France or Spain. He was living in St Lawrence parish in English Street (now the High Street) on the 22nd February 1641/2 when his name is entered on the Southampton Protestation Return "to maintain the true Reformed Protestant Religion in accordance with a letter of instructions from the Speaker of the House of Commons at a time when Southampton, in general, supported the Parliamentary cause in the Civil War. It is interesting to note that a cousin, Jasper Cornelius, does not appear on the list though he was the town solicitor, and in the following year he collected silver for melting down for the King. He was a juror from 1648 to 1662 and the Weigher of Wool in 1656.

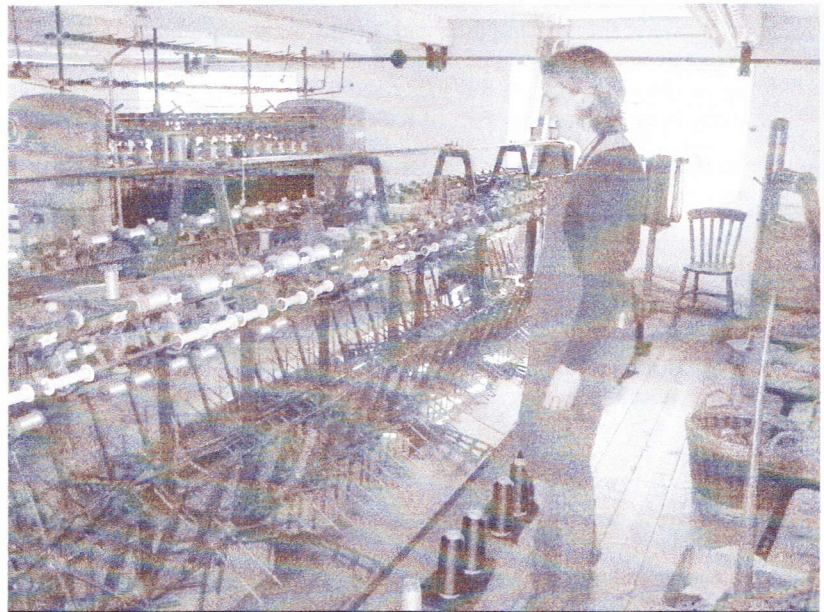
His first wife, Margaret, after whom his grand-daughter was named (to become Margaret Port, see later), was buried on the 5th August 1654 at Holy Rood Church, (no burials took place at St. Lawrence's Church). Soon afterwards, he married a widow, Margery Bachilor, both being of St. Lawrence's parish, the banns having been published on the 15th October 1654.

.... To be continued

Whitchurch Silk Mill is not a run of the mill operation

Many of you will be familiar with Whitchurch Silk Mill and yet it isn't the case with the general populace. It is a challenge for a small organisation to spread the word and keep the customers coming through the door. Many people stumble across the Mill by chance and when they do, they are utterly delighted. Its position and picturesque appearance contributes to the wow factor but I think that people can't really believe that there is a mill still weaving silk commercially in Britain and doing so on Victorian looms.

Of course we try to hold our visitor's attention and ensure they enjoy their visit. Which is why we have introduced a digital microscope for a close up view of yarns and fabrics and a model of the waterwheel which can be erected and dismantled by visitors. Soon we will be rolling-out our new audio visual presentations across the Mill which should add a great deal to visitors' understanding of the processes. Additionally, as a result of historical research over the last few years, our history is re-written and this is being shared in a booklet which will be published soon.



Warper, Clare Andrews using the winding machine that needs repair to wind silk

Happily our prime function is weaving silk and we work hard to remind customers of the unique service we offer of weaving what they want. Currently we are weaving: an ottoman for upholstery; a coffee and cream stripe silk/wool mix for curtains; we are preparing to weave a taffeta and organza for an apartment in Paris and are having yarn dyed for a property in the USA. To meet the demands of the orders we need to care for our machinery. Our 1850 design Smiths looms are not in use anywhere else in Britain, as far as we have been able to establish, textile engineers do not generally recognise the manufacturer. However, the company was a substantial Lancashire manufacturer. Over recent years we have carried-out an extensive amount of work to the looms but there are too many jobs that remain:

We need to:

- master the operation of a drop box mechanism which would allow us to weave weft stripes for checks and tartans and if possible install another mechanism of the same type on another loom;
- finish the restoration of a loom which isn't a large job;
- dismantle a Smiths loom and re-erect it in the weaving shed, making way for a simple timber framed 1830 loom to be erected outside the weaving shed (this will give visitors a direct comparison between hand weaving and power loom weaving);
- remove a ring doubler which is too heavy for our top floor and replace it with a 1920's machine, it is superior to the more modern machine in every way;
- extend our creel or acquire a larger one to make larger pattern repeats easier;
- complete the installation of drop wires to our looms which will mean we can operate two at a time.

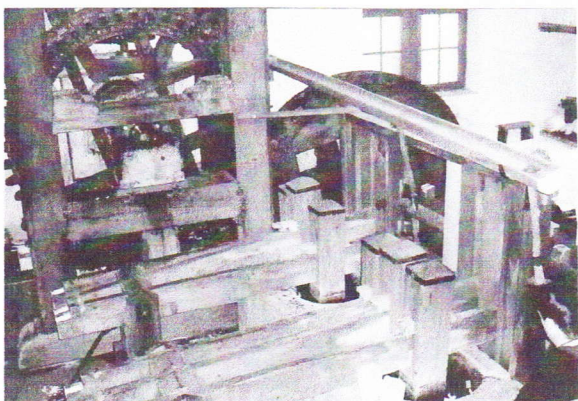
Our winding machine has mandrals which revolve in wooden bearings, these are badly worn. At the moment we are sourcing box wood so that a kindly volunteer can drill and shape all one hundred of them. This will dramatically improve how the yarn feeds onto the bobbins.

There are as you can see many tasks ahead. It is most rewarding to be involved in getting the machinery to do its job well. If there are any HMG members who would like to help we will welcome you with open arms. Please contact Stephen Bryer on 01256 892065.

Stephen Bryer

Swiss Museum of Paper, Writing and Printing - Basle Paper Mill

If you find yourself in Basle, Switzerland, as well as riding on the wonderful tram network, you might make a visit to the Swiss Museum of Paper, Writing and Printing. Housed in the old part of the city, adjacent to the walls, the museum main building is the medieval former Gallician Mill, initially for production, then becoming a hammer mill and eventually, in 1453, turned to processing rag pulp for paper. The whole complex includes several former mills, and another mill site, now housing a building for museum workshops.



Stamping Mill at the Swiss Paper Museum

binding. It is possible to try one's hand at printing and other skills – again there is ample material in English, and an excellent guidebook available. At the end of the tour, products made from the mill's paper can be purchased.

I would highly recommend this museum – its website, www.basel.ch/en/culture/museums/paper_museum

Pam Moore



Waterwheel at the Swiss Paper Museum

This is a very much a working museum, and visitors can both watch paper being made, and try their hand at the processes themselves. The water power comes from a large external breast shot wheel. The ground floor of the museum takes the visitor through the paper making process, with historic machinery, and good interpretation, with English translation. Here you see the rag chopping machine, the moulding and couching vats, the stamping press and the racks drying the sheets of paper in the traditional manner.

On the upper floors of the building are exhibitions devoted to the history of writing, printing and book-

Chesapeake Mill Heritage Centre Trust

Chesapeake Mill Heritage Centre Trust at Wickham, has been awarded a Lottery grant of approximately £4,000 to create a Heritage Centre. This is intended to provide visitors to the mill with the complete story of the US frigate Chesapeake and the famous battle in 1813 during which she was captured by HMS Shannon. The mill had been built by John Prior in 1820 using timbers from the Chesapeake. The Centre, at the heart of the mill, will now be equipped with a 'Protouch' screen display unit, graphic boards, models and slide shows to display:

- ◇ History of the building of the frigate Chesapeake.
- ◇ Naval battle of 1813 with HMS Shannon.
- ◇ History of this mill and the previous ones.
- ◇ Early history of the medieval village of Wickham.
- ◇ Natural history of the Meon Valley

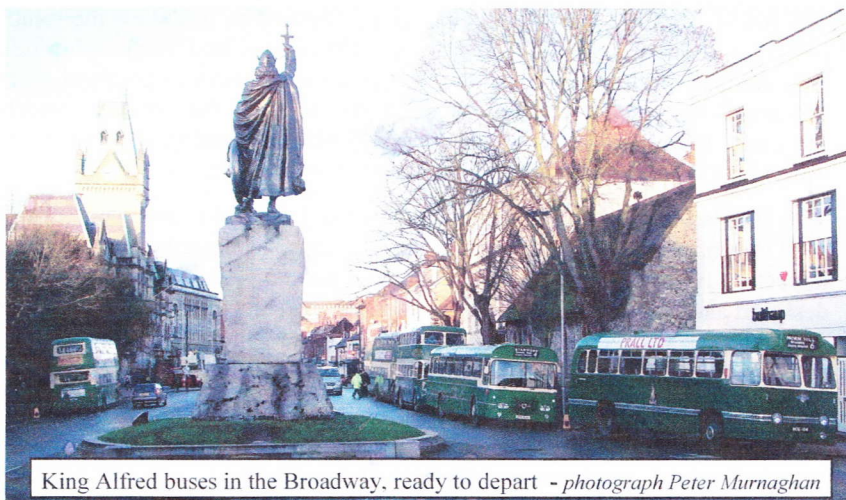
The mill is open to the public: Tuesday to Saturday 10am to 5pm and Sundays & Bank Holidays 11am to 4pm - at present it is a antique furniture store and tea room but the timbers of the US frigate may be seen all through the mill. Originally it was purchased by the C.C. with the intention that the mill would be a centre for the Meon Valley. But all councils felt the 'pinch' at that time and the money did not appear. So it is great that at last it will be able to realise some of the original intentions.

Tony Yoward

Buses and Mills on New Year's Day

On New Year's Day for the past 20 years or more, FoKAB — Friends of King Alfred Buses, a registered charity which preserves King Alfred Buses and the memory of King Alfred Motor Services, the company that ran Winchester's buses from 1920 to 1973 — have staged a major bus running day in Winchester, when some of the 12 remaining ex-King Alfred buses are joined by up to 40 visiting vehicles to re-run the old routes and re-create the road scenes of the 1960s and 1970s.

Some years ago it occurred to Bob Goodwin of City Mill that bus enthusiasts often have diverse other interests, and so it was agreed, as an experiment, to open the National Trust-owned City Mill to take advantage of the thousands of visitors that the bus event attracts to Winchester. The result of this cooperation was fantastic and the mill received substantial numbers of visitors, as it has each year since: over 300 this year!



King Alfred buses in the Broadway, ready to depart - photograph Peter Murnaghan



Hockley Mill - photograph Ruth Andrews

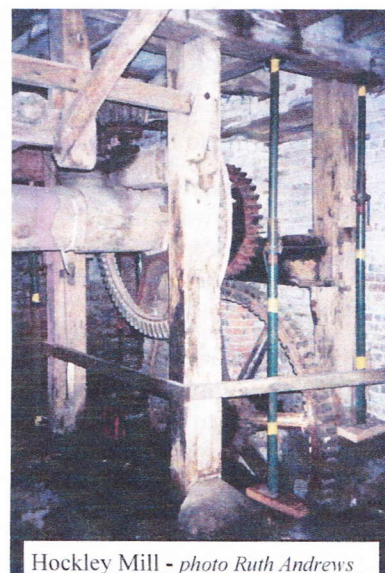
FoKAB then got more ambitious and supported Twyford Waterworks' decision to try opening for the day by providing a frequent bus service — route 193, changed later to 93 — to the waterworks, and advertising it in their programme. Once again, this was very successful; the change from donations to charging for entrance this year had no effect on numbers, with well over 100 visitors.

For the last two years, HMG's own volunteers have opened Hockley Mill, which is conveniently situated on the 93 route. This is something quite different, a building which is only accessible two or three times a year and is not widely known or publicised to the general public. Once again, over 100 of the bus enthusiasts proved themselves willing to get off a bus and explore something different.

Everyone involved agrees that these types of cooperation are beneficial to all the organisations concerned.

FoKAB would like to thank Mick Edgeworth, Eleanor Yates, and John Silman for avoiding the party excesses of New Year's Eve in order to get up early and brave the cold at Hockley. I suspect I got up rather earlier than they did (6am!), but at least I spent most of the day indoors, on the FoKAB Sales Stand in the Bus Station Waiting Room.

HMG members will have an opportunity to visit Hockley Mill, when it will be opened immediately after the group meeting at Twyford Waterworks on 15 March 2008. They will also, of course, be able to explore the waterworks and talk to some of the volunteers there. It is likely that FoKAB will be providing a bus service to a couple of Twyford Waterworks' open days this year. For more information about FoKAB, visit www.fokab.org.uk.



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