

# Milling NEWS



**With World Flour Day this month, it is only right that this column begins by talking about it. First of all I would like to take this opportunity to register how refreshing it is to see the many men and women of our industry who keep things moving finally receiving the recognition that they deserve.**



Who's looking after the history of milling in your country? In the UK we are fortunate to have two dedicated individuals - miller Mildred Cookson and her husband Ron Cookson - a group of Trustees and a support team of staff and volunteers at the Mills Archive Trust. The Trust, which is an accredited archive, was set up in 2002 to gather and catalogue documents and memorabilia on milling from its earliest times. The focus has mostly been on mills powered by wind and water followed by steam and electricity. The Archive is growing in international acclaim especially following the addition of the Rex Wailes Collection last year.

With the advent of steel rollers some 150 years ago and their rapid replacement of millstones in the UK, the Trust recognises that future generations will want to explore with interest the technological change that brought this about and is now taking place in our industry. As roller milling developments are finding their rightful place in the Archive alongside wind and water mills, we are pleased to report on this year's World Flour Day (March 20) the Trust has agreed to record the history of the Milling Hall of Fame on behalf of the industry globally. The Milling Hall of Fame was set up last year by Milling and Grain magazine.

Ron and Mildred Cookson have invited the MHoF to lodge its paperwork and images with the Archive for posterity and to keep a record of each individual who is inducted into the MHoF, which has its physical location in the FlourWorld Museum in Wittenburg, Germany.

Our sincere thanks on behalf of our industry go to Mildred and Ron Cookson and the Mills Archive Trust.

An example of their heroics over the past year can be found here in the UK during the early days of the pandemic. A huge spike in supermarket sales saw a 92 percent increase in the sale of flour, compared to the same period in the previous years.

The shortage arose because prior to the pandemic, only around four percent of UK flour was sold through shops and supermarkets, with the majority produced in bulk and delivered in tankers or bags of more than 16kg to bakeries or other food manufacturers.

Speaking to the BBC at the time, Alex Waugh, director general of UK Flour Millers, stated that the issue wasn't related to the ability to mill enough flour - but the lack of capacity to pack it into small bags for retailers.

In response to this, the flour industry was then working round the clock, milling flour 24 hours a day, seven days a week to double production, according to Mr Waugh. Although the huge increase in demand still saw shortages, the industry still pulled together and went above and beyond what was expected of them in difficult circumstances.

With so much currently going on in the world and with much of modern life focusing on numbers and hitting targets, the people without whom this industry would grind to a sudden and catastrophic halt are all too often overlooked.

So thank you to the millers, the bakers, flour bringers and flour takers for keeping us all in bread, cakes and all of the other daily staples upon which a plentiful supply of flour is heavily reliant.

With Statista also forecasting the value of the world flour market to swell to US\$261.72 billion this year, this recognition could not come at a better time.

As we seek to reward our industry's Covid-19 heroes, another ongoing issue continues to burn very brightly in our industry's consciousness.

Now the keen followers of this column will have noticed that we focused heavily on the importance of the fortification of flour last month. This is a topic that once again receives a great deal of attention in this issue too, and quite rightly so.

The absence of any legislation that makes fortification mandatory has the feel of an unfolding scandal - although we can only hope that a peaceful and common sensical solution is reached, which will not come a moment too soon.