



# *Mill Memories*

*The Newsletter of the Friends of The Mills Archive*



**Join the party!** Those who know Watlington House will recall the Grade II\* listed walled garden that we are privileged to overlook. Our landlords are investing £20,000 in transforming the garden, adopting a plan from the early eighteenth century. We plan to use the garden when it is finished for our annual Exhibition and Garden Party.

Following feedback from Friends disappointed that they had to miss the event previously, we are offering a choice of two dates next year. Please put one (or both!) in your diary now:

Saturday June 14

Saturday August 2

The events will run from 11.30 until 3pm and the programme as ever will be very informal. Friends and their guests are welcome. Book early to avoid disappointment!

Issue 13

Autumn 2013

## Archive visitors

Elizabeth Trout

As Information Manager I receive many enquiries about mills and milling from people all over the world. Those based in the UK are able to visit us but developing links with people from abroad is restricted to email. So it is rare but a pleasure to welcome overseas visitors.

In September, we welcomed Kerr Canning from Nova Scotia along with his wife and two friends from Sussex. Kerr contacted the Archive about 18 months ago with some information and images of a 17th century tidal saw mill that has been gradually emerging from the mud of the Apple River Delta in Nova Scotia over the

past few years. Since then he has sent regular updates of information and images of the mill and the logging industry that was in the area.



*The History of Reading Society visiting the Archive last year*

The Archive has collaborated with a number of local museums and historical groups, and often receives group visits. A local group, the Wesleyan Guild, came as a result of a talk given to them by Mildred Cookson earlier in the year. Ron and I had an entertaining session with the

ladies discussing the history of the Archive and listening to memories about local mills.

All our visitors sign the visitor's book. We value the messages, which show how much the Archive is appreciated:

*Absolutely fascinating* – a Wesleyan Guild member

*Great work done by the Trust ... very welcoming and knowledgeable staff* – Canadian film company (see page 6)

*Excellent service and a brilliant Archive* – architecture student

If you or someone you know would like to make an appointment to visit, please get in touch – see page 17 for details

*Mill Memories is edited by Nathanael Hodge. Cover photograph by Liz Bartram.*

## Detective work at the archive

Nathanael Hodge

To work in an archive you sometimes need to be a detective. This is especially true for the tangled web of the mill world, where everybody knew everybody and things were constantly passing from one person to another. A little digging can reveal unexpected connections between material that came to the Archive by completely different routes – as we discovered recently.

H E S Simmons was a Sussex photographer who toured the country by bike in the 1930s taking pictures of mills, which he sold as postcards. Our collection of Simmons cards, gathered together from various sources, was catalogued by volunteer Talbot Green, who discovered that Simmons had his own numbering system for the cards.



*Wood's sketch of the same mill, which he visited on 24 December 1932.*



*The tower mill in Harby, Leicestershire, which Simmons photographed on 1 July 1933.*

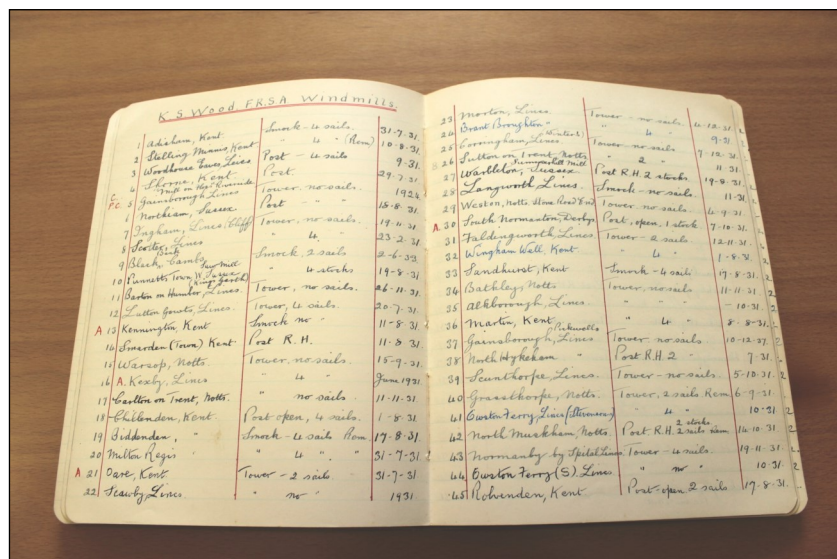
By chance we came across a handwritten notebook in another collection listing all the cards in number order – this was a great help to Talbot in cataloguing, but who wrote it? It wasn't in Simmons' handwriting, nor that of Michael Short, in whose collection it was found, nor Martin Mason, creator of much of the material now in the Short collection. It was a mystery – but the clue turned up unexpectedly.

Karl S Wood was another cyclist who toured the country seeking to record the disappearing mills of Britain, in his case in watercolour. His planned book *The Twilight of the Mills* with black and white versions of all his mill

## Detective work at the archive (continued)

pictures was never written, and his watercolours were acquired by the Lincolnshire Museum Service in 1977. The Karl Wood Collection at The Mills Archive consists of around 1400 pen and ink sketches, perhaps intended for the book, which came to us in the collection of Frank Gregory, the Sussex millwright.

It was only when we looked at some of the small scraps of paper found with the Wood sketches that we discovered a link with Simmons. The handwriting was the same as the Simmons notebook. Till then we hadn't paid much attention to the rest of the notebook, but now we saw that it also contained a list of Karl Wood drawings – a list that corresponded exactly to the contents of our Karl Wood collection.

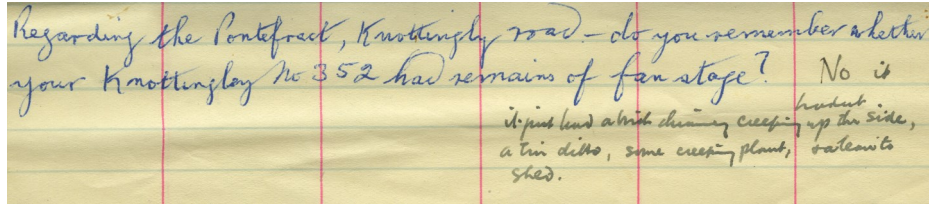


*The notebook*

So the writer of the notebook owned not only a large number of Simmons cards, but also the Wood sketches that had somehow ended up in Frank Gregory's collection. I went back to the Michael Short collection in which we found the notebook to look for more items in the same handwriting, and at last came upon a name on a letter – T J Mason. Much of Short's collection came originally from Martin Mason – so who was T J Mason? A relative? With only the name and the address on the letter to go on another volunteer, Guy Boocock, put his family history research skills into action and drew up the complete Mason family tree in a morning. As well as confirming that the handwriting was T J Mason's (by means



### Detective work at the archive (continued)



*One of the scraps of paper found with the drawings—this one has a question in T J Mason's hand with a reply by Karl Wood.*

of his signature on a census return), he identified him as Thomas James Mason, 1881-1961, son of a Surrey wheelwright and uncle of Martin.

Meanwhile I had contacted Michael Short who told me that he bought the Mason collection from a shop in Cecil Court, London in the 70s. In fact this seems to have caused a bit of a stir at the time - I then found several letters in the archive referring to the sale, which included many Simmons cards. One of these letters is from Simmons himself, and describes how he gave his cards to T J Mason. There is also correspondence between Frank Gregory and Stephen Buckland regarding the postcards - and it is from their collections that the majority of the Simmons cards in the archive originate.



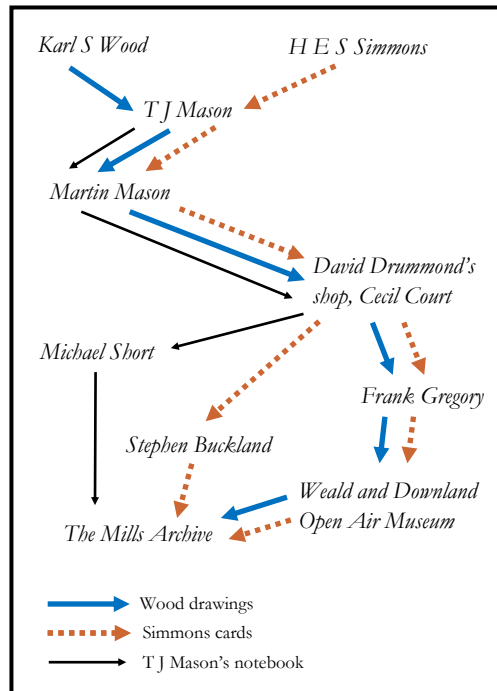
*Talbot Green (left) and Guy Boocock (right)*

Am surprised to hear that the late Martin Mason's postcard collection is on sale in London - I would have thought this would have been passed on to his mill collaborator Mr. Farries who is at present preparing a book on the Essex mills - particularly as it appears to contain the Essex portion of my collection which he acquired on the death of his uncle, T.J. Mason, to whom I gave the cards originally.

*Extract from a letter from H E S Simmons to Stephen Buckland, 12 January 1971.*

### Detective work at the archive (continued)

So this is our reconstruction of events: T J Mason seems to have been friendly with both Wood and Simmons, and acquired collections from each of them. On his death these passed to his nephew, Martin Mason, and together with his own collection were sold at the shop in Cecil Court. Michael Short bought some items, including the notebook, while the postcards passed to various people including Buckland and Gregory. Although none of the sources found so far refer to the Wood drawings being on sale also, it seems fair to assume they were there as well and were also bought by Gregory. Finally all these collections found their way to The Mills Archive.



*The tangled web: Diagram of how the drawings, postcards and sketches came to the archive*

All of this underlines the importance of the Archive as a place where related collections from diverse sources can be brought together, each gaining from the context provided by the others. In the ideal world all archives would be fully digitised and available online, allowing this sort of detective work to be carried out regardless of the physical location of the collections; until such a world emerges, however, a specialist repository like The Mills Archive will continue to be valuable.

#### Karl Wood on screen

A documentary on the life of Karl Wood and his 30 year long quest to paint windmills is currently in production - a film crew visited The Mills Archive in October to view the sketches and interview staff about Wood. Keep an eye on our website and Facebook page where we will update you on further developments.

## Making New Friends: developing our Friends' scheme

Liz Bartram



We have applied to the Lottery to see if we can get a grant from their Catalyst scheme to improve long-term viability of charities such as ours. This will enable us to extend and improve our Friends' organisation.

As well as enhancing the benefits of individual Friends' membership, we will be able to create several new types of membership to cater for a wider range of interests and needs, including commercial interests. New membership categories could include mills, academic institutions, and heritage and other businesses of varying sizes and this will involve us in offering them a number of distinctive benefits.

If you have any suggestions as to what categories we should consider then please get in touch by writing to us or emailing us at [friends@millsarchive.com](mailto:friends@millsarchive.com). At this

stage we would welcome any comments – including types of business or specific organisations, as well as the benefits that we could offer.

As an existing Friend, you will automatically be enrolled into the new scheme with the appropriate benefits in recognition of the help you have given us in getting this far. Your continuing support has meant we have been able to develop our services and keep them free to the general public; now we can grow to the next stage of ensuring the sustainability of The Mills Archive for future generations.

If you have any questions, please email us at [friends@millsarchive.com](mailto:friends@millsarchive.com).

### Adieu and thank you



2013 has been an exciting year for us in many ways, but we have had to say good-bye to two of our longest-established volunteers, Colin Mitchell (below) and John Ward-Smith (left). We owe a special debt of

gratitude to both. They have each been with us for some eight years and in that time worked on a variety of projects from the mills of Kent, French's Mill in Chesterton and Rex Wailes' glass plates of windmills in the USA to turbines and mill profiles for local counties. Both managed to combine significant additions to our catalogue with busy lives away from The Mills Archive. We wish them both well, we are pleased they remain Friends of The Mills Archive and we will miss their expertise and friendship.



## Sugar Mills – from the Niall Roberts and Mildred Cookson Collections

In the last Mill Memories we featured an article ‘milling by muscle power’ which captured in photographs and engravings water raising and grinding of cereals. In this issue we focus on the digitised images of sugar production from two of our collections.

Sugar production takes us to many parts of the world, Cuba, Mexico, Tennessee, and more commonly, the Caribbean Islands. The crushing of the cane was done by wind, water and animal power. Animal powered mills were very often built adjacent to the windmill in the Caribbean as a secondary mill to take over crushing if the wind dropped.

Niall Roberts visited the Caribbean Islands and met the people from the sugar production areas, talking with former workers. This gave him the opportunity to take a lot of photographs, some of which are shown here.

*Right: A former worker standing by the derelict waterwheel at Franklyn Mill on Tobago. The waterwheel is now preserved.*



*Left: Derelict gearing from the Bezard sugar mill in the commune on the island of Marie Galante in the French overseas region south of Guadeloupe. Since Niall's visit the machinery shown here has been reinstated in the restoration of the mill, returning it to its original working condition.*

*Right: Blizzard sugar mill on Antigua. This photograph was taken in 1979 and shows the iron machinery which was installed by Mirrlees & Tait of Glasgow in 1864.*





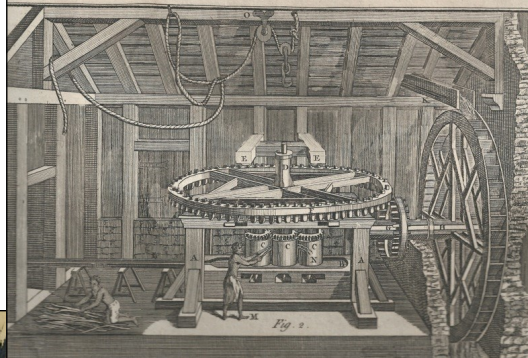
## Sugar Mills (continued)

From the Mildred Cookson collection we have early engravings and several postcards dating from the early 1900s, showing both man and animal power working the sugar mill rollers. Feeding the cane into the rollers was a very dangerous operation, having to make sure your hands did not get too close to the rolls. Originally the rolls would have been made of wood, as shown in the engravings, although the early sugar mills in China had rollers made of stone. Much later iron rollers began to appear.

*Right: Old engraving showing cane being crushed between vertical rollers*

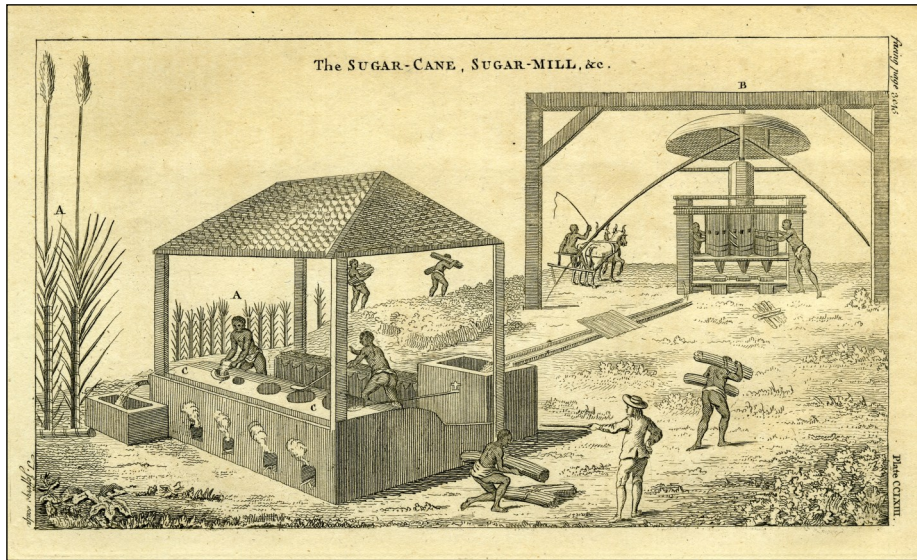
*Fig 1 shows horses being used to turn the rollers*

*Fig 2 shows an overshot waterwheel as the power source*



*Three Filipinos working a sugar cane mill located in Manila. One is feeding the cane by hand in between the two vertical wooden rollers while the other two are walking round in a circle pushing the pole to turn the rollers.*

## Sugar Mills (continued)



*Above: Wind powered sugar cane mill in Barbados showing both male and female workers. Note the extremely long tail pole for turning the cap and sails into the wind.*

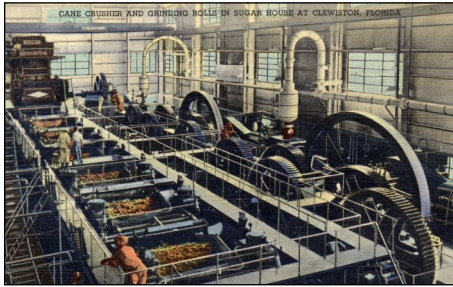
*Above: This old engraving dated 1667 is from the History of Guadeloupe. The sugar cane (A) is cut down and carried to the horse-driven mill (B) where it is crushed between vertical rollers. The extracted juice from the crushed canes flows down the chute to the boilers (C).*

*Below: Niall's picture of a restored sugar mill at the Whim Museum on St Croix.*



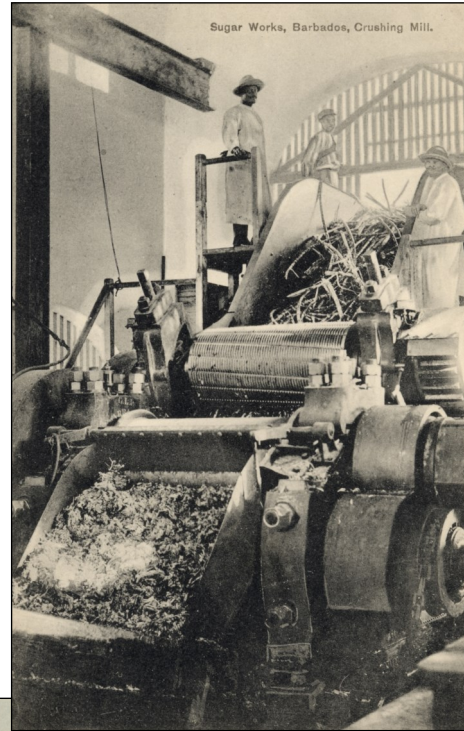


## Sugar Mills (continued)



*Above: Cane crusher and grinding rolls in sugar house at Clewiston, Florida. The grinding process consists of 2 sets of shredding knives, a crusher, and 21 rolls. Here the juice is separated from the fibre and pumped into juice heaters while the fibre (bagasse) is carried on a conveyor belt to the power house for use as fuel.*

*Right: Inside a cane mill factory in Cuba driven by engine power. Shows the canes being crushed by iron horizontal rollers.*

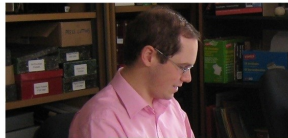


*Left: Plantation windmill still in operation showing the boiler house adjacent to the mill*

## Can you help us continue to make a difference?

Vodafone's *World of Difference* Programme, which offered **Liz Bartram** volunteers paid placements at a charity of their choice, has come to an end. The Mills Archive has had 3 years of successful applications to the Programme, which has made it possible for several young people to improve their skills while making a meaningful contribution. While this decision by Vodafone is a shame, our previous participants have enjoyed the opportunity and the Archive has seen several important projects completed as a result.

### Vodafone Winners



2011 CHRIS WHEELER



2012 NATHANAEL HODGE  
GUY BOOCOCK



2013 LIZ BARTRAM  
GUY BOOCOCK

I am particularly appreciative that I was one of this year's World of Difference winners and joined the Archive as a full-time employee at the end of my placement. I am now the Development Officer and a regular fixture here! The Programme gave me the opportunity to learn more about the Archive - its activities and the importance of preserving our milling heritage - and to start exploring the potential for development projects. I have certainly benefitted from this knowledge in my new job, which is devoted to improving our long-term sustainability.

Now that the Vodafone Programme has ended, it would be great to find a similar initiative. If you know of such a scheme, we would love to hear from you. Please get in touch by emailing me at [Liz.Bartram@millsarchive.com](mailto:Liz.Bartram@millsarchive.com) or you can write to us.

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## Why I'm a volunteer



### Regular volunteer Tom Hine tells the story of how his interest in mills began:

I developed an interest in family history when I reached my mid 50s. I remember quizzing my father as to why I, my cousin, my uncle and my grandfather all had the Christian names of Thomas Mann? My father didn't really have any idea where the name came from, except the rejoinder that it was - 'a family name'! I joined the Berkshire Family History Society in 1989 and very soon found a

distant cousin in Australia, and it came as a total surprise to find we were both descendants of Richard John Hine, a miller in Brimpton, Berkshire. Somehow he met and married the daughter of a Rev. Thomas Mann from West Cowes; when their son was born he was christened Thomas, after her father, and was given his mother's maiden name as a middle name - so Granddad was the first to bear the name which I have. My grandson is now Lennard Thomas Mann Hine, and is the sixth in the family to still have the name. Apologies for the genealogical ramblings!

Anyway after a few short years of tracing the family - which was fairly easy as, being millers, they didn't move around too much - I was able to get back to Kingsclere, Hants, c 1590. My interests very soon became totally that of watermills. I then found Hines at both Brimpton Mills (Hyde End Mill on the river Enborne and Brimpton Mill on the River Kennet), Woolhampton Mill, Donnington Mill, West Mills in Newbury, Hampstead Marshall Mill near Kintbury and finally West Mill, Stalbridge, Dorset. The strong connections with the county of Berkshire and its history appealed to me so much and tied in with my local mill knowledge. I'm pleased to admit I have a wonderful hobby to keep me occupied in retirement. I have been a volunteer at The Mills Archive for the last four years and must thank the team there for putting up with me on Thursdays - and besides, I enjoy the coffee breaks!



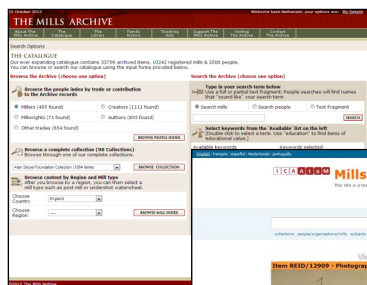
*West Mill, Stalbridge, Dorset. Photo: Alan Stoyel*

## A New Online Catalogue

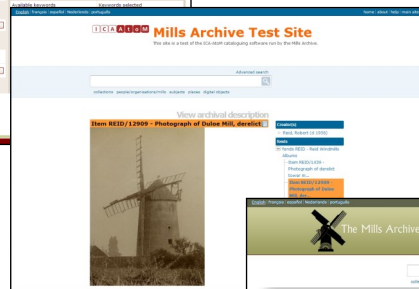
Nathanael Hodge

When our online catalogue was launched in 2003 it was a state-of-the art facility, making digitised material available online in a way few other archives did at the time. But the site is now over 10 years old and has had 10,000 registered users. Times change, and The Mills Archive is changing with the times. In May next year we will be launching our new online catalogue.

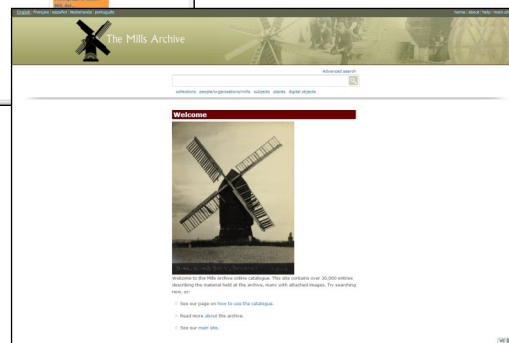
Unlike our existing, bespoke system, the new site will use standards-based archival software, storing our data in a form that is easy to share with other archives or upload to networks like the Archives Hub. The catalogue will also be easier to use, integrate better with our main website and include a host of new features. We're looking forward to introducing it.



*Our existing catalogue...*



*...current test site using the new software...*



*...and what the final result might look like.*

We want our catalogue to reflect your needs as closely as possible, so we'd love any feedback which might help in developing the new system. What do you like about the current catalogue? What would you like to see change? Please send any comments to me at [archivist@millsarchive.com](mailto:archivist@millsarchive.com).

## Bookshelf



This section is devoted to books in The Mills Archive. It looks at recent additions and interesting mill books in our collection of more than 2,000 volumes. The library catalogue is on our website at <http://www.millsarchivetrust.org/index.php/library>.

We also feature examples of the books we have for sale. These are either new or surplus to our library collections, and can be ordered online at <http://shop.millsarchivetrust.org/>.

## Days of Glory

Sheila Viner, one of our volunteers, originally introduced Alan Mead, author of *Days of Glory, The story of Glory Mill, Buckinghamshire* to The Mills Archive. Alan from Twyford recently handed over 50 new copies of his book to be sold through our online bookshop. The local press reported:

*"Alan, 87, has also assigned the sole sales, marketing and printing rights to the acclaimed Mills Archive Trust, home of international milling memorabilia, ensuring his book Days of Glory will be advertised and available throughout the world for years to come."*

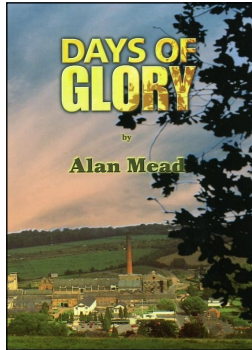


*Alan dedicates a copy of Days of Glory at The Mills Archive. Photo: S Viner*

Welcoming Alan and his family members, Ron Cookson gratefully accepted the books on behalf of the Trust, indicating that the well-recorded history has a much deserved place not only in the Archive bookshop but also in our reference library at Watlington House.

*Days of Glory* is the story of the paper mill at Wooburn where for 30 years Alan worked. When it closed in 1999, he decided to record how Glory Mill was used to develop a range of photosensitive papers, the processes and the people who operated them. Complete with a chronology of important dates from Domesday onwards, there is an appendix of workers from 1888 to 1943 and a chart of all the other mills along the River Wye.

### Days of Glory (continued)



The book, now in its third reprint, has two special dedications. The first is to Alan's wife Ivy who sadly died last year; the second dedication declares that all proceeds from sales will go to The Mills Archive Trust based in Reading, an organisation which Alan is enthusiastic about for its wealth of written and photographic material and current research being undertaken.

Local sales have been very good, and the book is still available (£13.50 including p&p) from our bookshop.

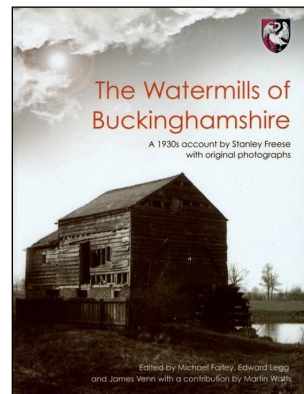
### Amazon

Friends may have noticed that some of our books are also available on the Amazon site at <http://tinyurl.com/qg6uh3m>. All the books are available in our online bookshop and at better prices. Although Amazon reaches a wider audience, they have very restrictive rules about postal charges, with the end result that we have to charge more for heavy books. For example Bill Bignell's book *Mapping the Windmill* reviewed in the last Mill Memories weighs well over 1kg, so with Amazon commission the cost including p&p rises to £28.20, very different to the Mills Archive price of £26.50.

### Freese revisited

We have new stock of the excellent book based on Stanley Freese's work on Buckinghamshire Watermills. This 2007 publication of Freese's work in the 1930's is a beautifully produced testimony to the man and the mills. Brought together by James Venn, Michael Farley and Edward Legg with a contribution from Martin Watts, it is amazing value at £15 plus £4.75 p&p.

Freese passed his mill collection to James Venn, a Friend of The Mills Archive, who has donated the original negatives of the photos reproduced in the book to the Archive.





## Visiting The Mills Archive

Friends and members of the general public are welcome to visit us in Reading. The address is on the back page and our website includes an interactive map.

Our **Library and Research Centre** are on the ground floor of Watlington House, and we are convenient for the town centre with free car parking.

As we are open only when volunteers are working, it is important that you make an appointment before travelling. We can arrange to be open **most working days** between 10 and 4. **Saturday mornings** are sometimes possible as well.

We strongly encourage you to let us know beforehand of any specific research you are undertaking, so that we can retrieve the files from our store **before you arrive**.

Email [enquiries@millsarchive.com](mailto:enquiries@millsarchive.com) 1–2 weeks before your planned trip and offer us alternative dates if possible. We will do our best to be there when you need us.



*The Mills Archive Library  
and Research Centre  
Ground floor access  
Free car park  
Appointment necessary*

## Please join the Friends of The Mills Archive

*“Our Friends  
are our future!”*



Our Friends are the lifeblood of the Archive. Their support helps to preserve vulnerable collections that would otherwise be at risk of being lost forever. We safeguard the memories for generations to come and provide all these services free to the general public. Without regular public support, we could not do this. Such support is a major influence on grant-giving bodies such as The Heritage Lottery Fund which likes its grants to echo public interest. Regular donations by many people are the best way of signalling that interest and guaranteeing the long-term success of The Mills Archive.

As an individual, the best way to support us as a Friend is to set up a standing order for £5 per month or more, and we would ask you to complete and return the standing order form opposite. You may donate annually if you prefer, and single donations are always very welcome. You can also donate by cheque or join online at <http://tinyurl.com/nea2uub>

### Key Benefits for Individual Friend

Mill Memories every six months

Invitations to exclusive Friends' events.

Discounts on purchases from our online bookshop

Free high-resolution images

Waiving of copyright fees

Much-reduced research fees

*Read more on these benefits in the “Friends’ Services” section of our website. New and additional benefits will be announced in Mill Memories, so watch this space!*

*“Help us to save  
the memories”*



### Visit our Website

[www.millsarchive.com](http://www.millsarchive.com)

Internet shop

Family History Searches

Library Catalogue

Featured Mills

Mill Writing blog

Archive Catalogue

I wish to join the Friends of The Mills Archive and I have completed the standing order form for at least £5 per month

**Or** I wish to be put on the *Mill Memories* mailing list (small donation appreciated)

**And** I am a UK taxpayer so you may reclaim Gift Aid on my contribution (*please delete if not appropriate*)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_ Tel \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

*Note we will not divulge your information to any other organisation or individual.*

<b>Standing Order Form</b>	To	Bank	Branch
Address		Postcode	
Please Pay SANTANDER plc, BOOTLE Sort code 09-01-53 Account No 21695488			
Credit THE MILLS ARCHIVE TRUST			
The Sum of £_____ (amount in words: _____)			
Commencing _____ and then every _____ (due date & frequency)			
Until further notice or until _____ and debit my/our account accordingly			
Name of account _____		Account No _____	
This replaces my/our previous standing order for the transfer of £_____ to the same account			
Name _____		Signature _____	
Name _____		Signature _____ (if second required)	
Address _____			
_____		Postcode _____	



## The Friends of The Mills Archive

Part of The Mills Archive Trust

Registered Charity no 1091534

**Watlington House  
44 Watlington Street  
Reading, RG1 4RJ  
United Kingdom**

The Friends of The Mills Archive are dedicated to aiding the work of The Mills Archive Trust and we value new members. We extend a warm welcome to family, local and national historians as well as to those who simply want to find out more about our milling heritage.

As a Friend you are supporting the care and public access to one of the world's great mill collections. It is an Aladdin's cave filled with memories, free to users and run by volunteers. The collections show the rich and diverse crafts, people, buildings, machinery and equipment involved with mills in the UK and around the world.

Friends enjoy a number of benefits (see page 18) as well as knowing they are helping to protect an unrivalled world-class resource.

**Please help us to save the memories!**

*For more information write to the address above or email us  
[friends@millsarchive.com](mailto:friends@millsarchive.com)*

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## In the Next Issue of Mill Memories

### Roller Flour Mills

We are considering creating a roller flour mill archive as part of The Mills Archive.

In the next edition of *Mill Memories*, we will be exploring roller flour mills. An often underexplored subject, we will be discussing this stage in the story of milling.



If a roller flour mill archive is something that particularly interests you, do get in touch. Similarly, if you or a family member has worked at a roller flour mill, or if you have any documents or photographs relating to roller flour milling, we would love to hear from you.

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