

Issue 2

February 2008

# Mill Memories



Mills Archive Trust

*The Newsletter of the Friends of the Mills Archive*

## A new opportunity; a new challenge

The Heritage Lottery Fund told us in January that they have awarded us £49,800 for our new “Frank Gregory Online” project!

### Special features:

- Postcards as historical records
- Chiltern mill drawings
- Frank Gregory and Kenneth G Farries
- Derek Ogden’s millwrighting files

Issue 1 of *Mill Memories* featured our successful Kent Millers’ Tales venture, also supported by the HLF and launched at Cranbrook windmill last September. That 2-year undertaking allowed us to catalogue more than 8000 images and documents on Kent mills and put them on the Internet for all to see.

This new commission is much more ambitious and underlines how the Mills Archive works with other bodies to protect our milling heritage. Frank’s enormous, largely disorganised collection is stored at the Weald and Downland Open Air Museum at Singleton, West Sussex, but ever since it was left to them almost 10 years ago, it has not been available to the public.

We intend over the next three years to remedy that, sorting the material, labelling, indexing and scanning as needed, before carefully storing the mill items in archival enclosures. We will display all the best documents and images on our website along with detailed finding aids for the other objects. In time the originals will be returned to Singleton, but we will keep copies of the most interesting matter in Reading.

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*Although this is our fourth successful Lottery bid, they do not pay our rent, storage and other costs, which is why the support of the Friends is so highly valued. Your continuing support persuades grant-givers that we will put their cataloguing grants to good use.*



## Collections in Practice

There are many ways to collect and store your records, but at the request of members, we will use this page to make some practical suggestions for you to consider. If you have a topic you would like us to include please let us know.

### Postcards as historical records

The Royal Philatelic Society website gives a brief history of postcards at [http://www.rpsl.org.uk/pictures\\_in\\_the\\_post/index.html](http://www.rpsl.org.uk/pictures_in_the_post/index.html). Picture postcards were popular from the Victorian era until after the First World War, a period coinciding with the decline of the windmill and to a lesser extent the watermill. Some cards offer unique pictures of how mills looked when last working, others chart their subsequent decay. Two examples from the Mildred Cookson Collection (below left) show how Laxton post mill in Nottinghamshire suffered and why “vintage” postcards are valued as donations to the Mills Archive.

Topographical, real photographic cards often of rural scenes were largely developed in England and are sought after by collectors competing with local and family history researchers. Good quality cards, often produced locally in small numbers can be expensive, particularly now eBay offers a market place for anyone with a computer.



Postcard collections should be kept in albums with suitable pockets and not stuck in scrapbooks or photo albums. Cards kept in shoe boxes or small filing drawers should be protected by plastic pockets. Great care must be taken on inserting cards, as they are often very fragile. **Arrowfile**, PO Box 7, Wetherby, LS23 7EP ([www.arrowfile.com](http://www.arrowfile.com)) provide our postcard storage albums etc.



Two archival and historical elements are vital: the image and its date. The latter can be estimated from the postmark if the card has been posted. If further examples of the card are encountered, it is helpful to note if any of them have earlier postmarks, so we can better estimate the date of the photograph. Some photographers made prints on postcard paper and it may be possible to identify who they were, another valuable piece of information.

## News from the Archive

### Millwrighting files in the Derek Ogden Collection

The Mills Archive recently accepted the donation of an additional set of material from the well-known millwright Derek Ogden. Now living in the USA, Derek began his professional millwrighting career in England during the 1960s and he carried out a considerable amount of practical restoration work, in addition to surveys, inspections and reports on behalf of the SPAB Mills Section.

Internet users who are familiar with the Archive's website catalogue can inspect the first batch of Derek's material, which he donated to the Archive at the time of its establishment in 2002. The latest files Derek has donated relate to the period 1967 to 1975.

### Mills in the recent past

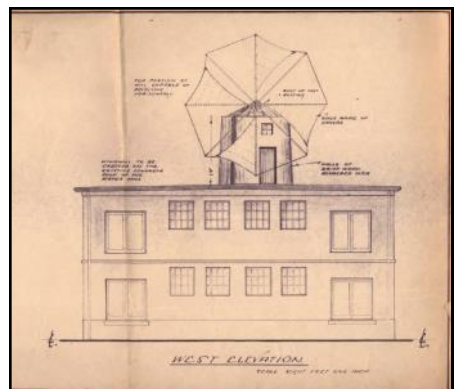
In the late 1960s and early 70s several fine mills, which are now restored and open to the public, remained derelict. Funds for restoration were scarce during this period, being limited to what the owners of mills could afford or the small sums which could be generated by local councils or public subscription. Fortunately, the enthusiasm and skill was available to plan and carry out restoration schemes which left several mills in a 'static' state, and more recently some of these schemes have been taken further to bring mills back into working order.

### International mill restoration

Derek's millwrighting work files will be catalogued progressively over time. Website users can read a chronological summary of the work he has undertaken both in the UK and abroad. His files add to the wealth of information now held by the Archive; information which spans many decades and allows us to understand more about mills from the perspectives of different 'mill people'.

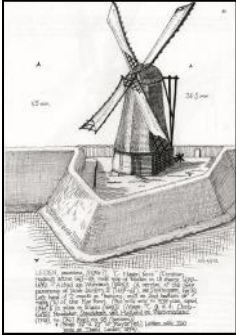
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*"I did some pretty big jobs before the days of the British Millwright Companies—in fact I still pride myself in having tackled the biggest jobs around"*



## Letters to Stephen Buckland

**Mills Archive Trustee, Michael Harverson writes:**



*Dutch smock mill at  
Leiden*

The Stephen Buckland Collection in the Mills Archive includes over 400 letters that he received from fellow mill enthusiasts. The first one is dated 1952, when Stephen was a 16-year old member of the SPAB Mills Section, thanking him for his photos and his interest in mill recording, from the secretary, Mrs Dance.

Stephen seldom threw anything away. We can be thankful that he kept this correspondence, whilst regretting that his general policy seems to have been not to retain copies of his own letters [50 are filed with the 450 received], which had stimulated his correspondents to reach for pen and paper. In 2007 I have been listing this correspondence, which is now available to visitors to Reading, with the main contents listed in the catalogue on the Mills Archive website. The correspondents include Rex Wailes, Paul Wilson, Stanley Freese, Ken Farries, Denis Sanders, Miss Gardner, Syd Simmons, Jesse Wightman, the Suffolk millwright, and C.J.Hoad (7 pages of reminiscences of an old Bexhill miller and baker), Frank Gregory (for 40 years) and Peter Davies (from 1959 until 1987), who were perhaps Stephen's chief mill friends, and regularly exchanged news and views with him.

*A Kentish miller, Albert  
Dean, and dog*



### **“Hope you don’t mind dogs”**

In 1968 Anders Jespersen, referred to by Stephen as “The Great Dane”, tells him home truths about his impenetrable handwriting. A young Vincent Pargeter swops photos and discusses mills visited in Suffolk and Kent (Stephen's mother lived at Staplehurst in Kent). Chris Wilson writes about his millwrighting and milling at Over and Willingham and their common enthusiasm for the windmills of Suffolk and Cambridgeshire. Their correspondence begins in 1960 with “Dear sir” and “yours faithfully”; in 1974 Wilson's wife Georgina warns Stephen that she now breeds Yorkshire Terriers as a hobby and has 16 at present - “Hope you don't mind dogs.” [In fact, Stephen hated dogs, along with Shakespeare and cricket!] Paul [Lord] Wilson asks Stephen to “eat or flush” one outspoken letter after reading it!

## Firsthand information

The editing of “Millnotes” in the early 1970s stimulated correspondence with possible contributors. For instance, Stephen put his university French to good use in writing to Jean Bruggeman and Claude Rivals. The whole project clearly meant a lot to him.



*Rex Wailes and Chris Wilson on the fan stage of Chris's mill at Over, Cambridgeshire. Photographed by Stephen Buckland on 30th March 1974*

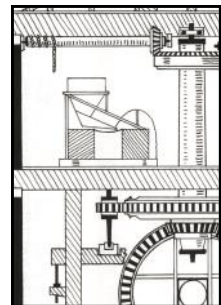
## A unique record of the era

These letters, dating predominantly from the 1960s and 70s, remind us that Stephen was an accomplished photographer; that mill recording trips by bike were a feature of summer holidays for men like Stanley Freese (though not Stephen); that letter writing was an essential part of expanding one's knowledge of mills and that the survival of this correspondence gives us firsthand information about the state of windmills in the third quarter of the 20th century. Above all, the volume and intrinsic interest of the letters, not only for mill enthusiasts, emphasise the value of this documentation and its significance in the life of Stephen Buckland.



*Windmill at Deal, Kent*

*Stephen's drawings, which accompany this article, have been compiled to form a book. (see page 12)*



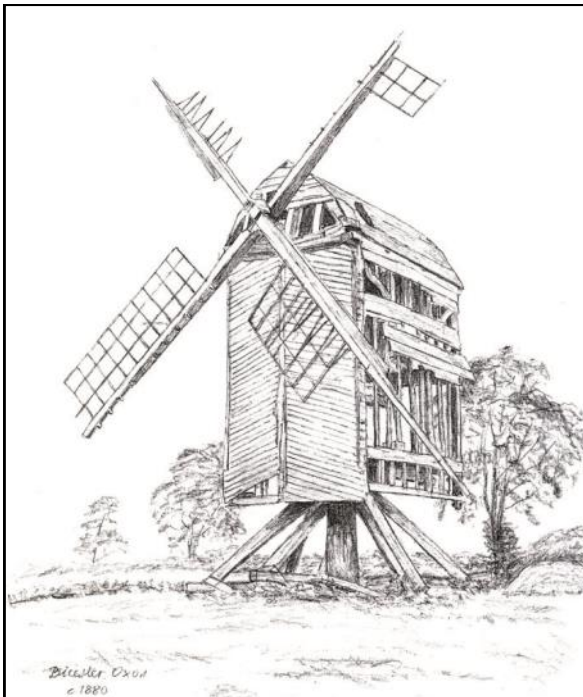
*Detail of a watermill design, reproduced by Stephen*

## Chiltern Mill drawings by James Venn

*The windmills of the Chilterns were unique and intriguing—although many have been lost there are some valuable survivals*

Mill enthusiast and researcher James Venn has donated copies of several of his own drawings showing windmills in Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire that have disappeared.

In his letter to the Archive, James writes “These individual ones, although not of any artistic merit, are technically accurate and correct”. We would disagree that the drawings are not artistically valuable, because James has a good eye for aesthetics – as well as for the individual characteristics of each mill. A selection of his drawings are reproduced here and all of them can be accessed via the website catalogue at [www.millsarchive.com](http://www.millsarchive.com).



### Shattered sails

#22884 – Post mill at Bicester, Oxon. Circa 1880.

This open-trestle post mill must have become disused at a relatively early date, as this drawing shows it in a derelict state. The frames of its four common sails are shattered, and the tail ladder and several weatherboards are missing from the mill body. The photograph from which this drawing has been made is indistinct, but suggests that the mill's trestle had three cross trees and six quarter bars. This unusual feature survives only at Chinnor Mill, which is presently being rebuilt.

A number of post mills in the Chilterns have been restored and are open to the public. These include the ancient mills at Brill and Pitstone which are among the oldest examples in the country.



## Unusual features

#22883 – *Smock mill at South Weston, Oxfordshire.*

A quaint, squat, tailpole-winded mill with common sails and an oddly-shaped cap that looked rather like the top of a post mill. James's watercolour shows that the smock tower was clad with metal sheeting, probably a weatherproofing measure. The miller's house is in the left background. The windmill was demolished circa 1920.



#22891 – *Tower mill at Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire.*

This pencil drawing shows the windmill and its surrounding group of farm buildings. Instead of being circular in plan, the tapering tower was octagonal, and perhaps began its life as the base of a smock mill. A series of small holes, visible near the bottom of the mill, served as supports for a platform or staging around the tower, from which the sails could be controlled. The most peculiar feature of this mill is the tile-hung section just below the cap, which appears to have been added to increase the height of the mill and, consequently, its power.

If you can contribute to our records of mills in the Chilterns, please get in touch with us!

## Friends' Forum

These pages are set aside to discuss matters of particular interest to Friends. If you wish to send a letter or comments, they will be very welcome. We will announce new Friends' projects and events and explain how you can get more out of the benefits of membership.

### The Friends' Shop

The most immediate way that Friends can benefit from membership, and at the same time help the Mills Archive, is to buy mill books, pictures, postcards, etc at <http://shop.millsarchivetrust.org/>.

**Registration:** Recently all Friends for whom we have an email address have been registered on the site as a Friend, automatically qualifying them for discounts and special offers. If you are not registered yet, you can ask us to do it by sending us an email. Alternatively you can register on the shop yourself and wait for us to confirm that we have told the server to recognise you as a Friend.

*"The list of benefits is attractive, and I'm sure will appeal to many people"*

**The discount:** If you make a purchase of more than £30, you get an automatic 10% discount on the purchase price. Postage is calculated separately, based on the weight of the items and is not discounted. You can avoid postage by arranging to pick up your items in Reading or at the next Mills Section Spring or Autumn meeting.

**Payment:** We offer payment by Paypal as the quickest and most secure method. This method is essential for payments from overseas. For UK residents with a British bank account we will cheerfully accept cheques.

**Friends Offers:** From time to time we will make special additional offers. These can only be seen when you log on to the shop as Friend and click on the Friends' Offers link. At the moment (see picture) we are offering the Stephen Buckland book of drawings for £9 post-free, a saving of £4 on the public price with postage added.

The screenshot shows the Mills Archive Trust website interface. At the top, there is a search bar and navigation links for 'Home', 'Join the Friends', and 'Shopping Cart'. Below the search bar, the page is titled 'The Mills Archive Trust > Friends' Offers'. A sidebar on the left lists various categories: 'CATEGORIES', 'FRIENDS' OFFERS', 'BOOKS', 'SUITABLE PRESENTS', 'POSTCARDS', 'JOURNALS AND REPRINTS', 'SPECIAL', 'HELP', 'CONTACT US', 'PRIVACY STATEMENT', 'TERMS & CONDITIONS', and 'JOIN THE FRIENDS'. The main content area is titled 'FRIENDS' OFFERS' and features a book listing for 'MILL DRAWINGS BY STEPHEN BUCKLAND POST FREE' by Michael Harverson. The book is priced at £9.00 (13.51), a 10% discount from the market price of £10.00. The page also includes a 'Buy Now' button and an 'Add to wish list' button.



## The Friends' Garden Party & Exhibition

As a Friend of the Mills Archive, we invite you to our first Exhibition and Garden Party, to be held at Watlington House on Saturday 19 July. If you return the enclosed questionnaire in the envelope provided by Friday 28 March, we will send you two free tickets (or one if you so specify).

We now have more than 100 Friends and we hope as many as possible will be able to visit us on that day to:

- See how we work and meet the volunteers and trustees
- Inspect parts of our collections not yet available to the general public
- Discuss our plans for the future and exchange ideas on priorities
- Let us know what you are particularly interested in
- Meet other Friends of the Mills Archive and enjoy yourself
- Tour our exhibition and possibly learn something new

The questionnaire will not only help us to plan catering, it will also help us to decide the subjects covered in the exhibition. So please complete the form as best you can and let us know your views!

If you have any ideas for further publicity please email us at [friends@millsarchivetrust.org](mailto:friends@millsarchivetrust.org).

## Auction News

Our eBay postcard sales have raised many hundreds of pounds to support our work. Final prices have ranged from 99p - £89 with the average about £6 per auction. All cards are donated for us to sell and most are not related to mills. Nevertheless we are now finding more and more mill postcards which might be of interest to Friends.

**Friends only:** As promised in the last *Mill Memories*, we have now created a special section in our shop postcard listings, visible only to Friends. This section "Postcards available to Friends only" offers most of the mill cards intended for eBay at the fixed price of £5.50 each, post free. Cards are only displayed for a couple of weeks before we sell them on eBay, usually starting at 99p + £1 postage. If you would prefer to risk eBay, then list `mills_archive_trust` as a favourite seller so you can get eBay alerts when we list them.

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*"You're giving  
a treat (penny  
ice and cold  
meat) to a  
party of  
friends..."*

WS Gilbert.  
*Iolanthe*



## People Pages

Most of the visitors to the Mills Archive website are interested in tracing ancestors who may have had some connection with traditional mills and milling. As the Mills Archive holds more than 1 million records, we have much to interest the family historian.

Millers, millwrights and mill owners played an important part in our history and we aim to make information about them more accessible.

These pages keep you up to date with progress and highlight some interesting discoveries.



*Frank Gregory at the re-opening  
of Lowfield Heath windmill in  
Surrey, 10th April 1990*



***STOP PRESS!***

***HLF awards the Mills  
Archive £49,800 for  
Frank Gregory Online***

*See page 1*

### Frank Gregory 1917–1998 with thanks to Peter J Hill

Frank Gregory died in June 1998; he was the Sussex authority on traditional mills, happily giving information and help. He painstakingly sketched, photographed and took notes at each mill he visited and befriended the millers.

Over 65 years he built up an invaluable record of wind and watermills, many of which have long since disappeared. He left detailed records of his involvement in the construction, modification and, in some cases, restoration of mills. These give a unique insight into the technical and particularly the craft aspects of mills and milling.

Trained as a woodwork teacher before the war, he was interested in wooden machinery and buildings. Nutley, Polegate and Shipley windmills all owe their preservation to his unstinting dedication and drive for restoration. Later, his involvement in West Blatchington windmill was invaluable and his love for Oldland windmill resulted in its restoration.

Frank left his work to the Weald and Downland Open Air Museum (WDOAM), but since 1998 the public has not had access to this important collection.

### The Frank Gregory Collection

Following a feasibility study by Trustees Derek Stidder and Michael Harverson and discussions with the Sussex Mills Group and WDOAM, we have asked the HLF for a grant to organise, scan and catalogue Frank's mill collection. We will use the opportunity to make available many of our Sussex items; if you have relevant material or would like to help please contact us. We need all the help we can get!

## Kenneth George Farries 1916 –1986

A Geography master at Reigate Grammar School, Kenneth was well known as an author of in-depth and authoritative regional studies of windmills. His first major work, published in 1966, was a historical and technical review of the windmills of Surrey and Inner London, written in collaboration with Martin T. Mason. The book is a weighty tome of 276 pages. Containing measured drawings, several maps and detailed technical descriptions, it set standards in terms of the recording and interpretation of mill structures and machinery.

With one critical success under his belt, Farries embarked on an even more ambitious project, namely a parish-by-parish study of the windmills of Essex. The fieldwork for this monumental publication, which runs to five volumes, was undertaken over several decades with the assistance of other dedicated mill researchers, including Denis Sanders, Ronald Hawksley and Ed Goatcher. In addition to an historical review, one of the five volumes describes selected mills in detail and explains the differences in their design, aided by some fantastic drawings by Roland W. Smith. The resulting study exceeds the high standards that Farries previously set himself.



A great deal of Kenneth Farries' correspondence, together with many photographs and other research documents, has been donated to the Mills Archive by his widow, Penelope. Kenneth's exchanges with other enthusiasts make particularly interesting reading. Our volunteers and trustees have completed the indexing and cataloguing of much of this material, all of which is available either via our website or at our Library and Research Room in Reading. Why not browse the collection online?

**The accompanying photograph was taken in April 1967 at Reigate Heath post mill, and records the occasion of the Surrey and London book's launch. Shown are (from right to left) interviewer Mike Sullivan; authors Farries and Mason and publisher Charles Skilton.**

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## 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 1700 volumes. The library catalogue is on the Friends' website at [www.millsarchivetrust.org](http://www.millsarchivetrust.org).

We also feature examples of the books we have for sale. These are all surplus to our needs; as we keep at least 2 copies for the library. The bookshop is also on the Friends' website.

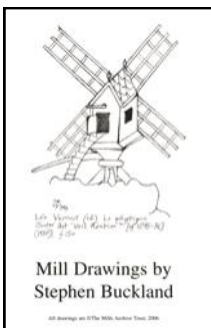
### Books on Mills, Millers and Milling

One of the most interesting new books recently added to the Library is Michael Harverson's book on Stephen Buckland's Mill Drawings. A sensitive and fascinating tribute to a meticulous researcher and well worth the £9 it costs Friends (see p 8). Although some publishers occasionally send us copies of new mill publications, we mainly rely on the author donating a copy. We are always pleased to receive such gifts as most of our stock is much older. One very attractive book recently added to the collection is Kenjiro Kawakami's "*Japanese Watermills*" (2005), an elegantly produced, soft cover volume with English and Japanese text. Another new book which deserves a lot more attention is Alan Stoyel's "*The Windmills of Thomas Hennell*" (2006). Alan and Landmark Publishing have performed a great service making these detailed drawings more widely available.

### Secondhand Corner

Michael Harverson has kindly donated several new copies of "*Mill Drawings by Stephen Buckland*" (2007), which we are featuring in the bookshop at <http://shop.millsarchivetrust.org/>.

This 84 page, A4 volume is an arresting collection of drawings, chosen as examples of Stephen's art and minute attention to detail. It is one of the best collections of unusual mill drawings (all now deposited with the Mills Archive) and an ideal present for a mill person. To make sure you get a copy while stocks last, either order online or use the envelope provided to send us a cheque, made payable to the Mills Archive Trust, for £9.



## 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 office and research centre are on the ground floor of Watlington House, and we are convenient for the town centre with a large free car park.

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.

It will save you time if you can 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 [info@millsarchive.com](mailto:info@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 Room  
Ground floor access  
Appointment necessary*



*Watlington House*

*Free car park*

*10 minutes' walk from*

*Reading station*

## Please join the Friends of the Mills Archive



Opening the Library 2006

As the Archive plans for the long term, monthly standing orders are vital to ensure that regular costs are covered by regular income. So to qualify for full membership, we ask you to complete and return the standing order form opposite. Single donations are also very welcome, and in return for a donation of £25 we will send you three free copies of *Mill Memories*.

Regular public support is a major influence on grant-giving bodies. The Heritage Lottery Fund, a generous supporter of our cataloguing, likes to feel its grants 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.

### Key Benefits of Membership

*“We all  
need  
Friends!”*

*Mill Memories*, every 6 months.

Two free invitations to exclusive Friends' events.

Internet privileges, all free of charge including:

- Discounts on purchases from our Internet shop
- Early warnings of additions to our bookshop
- Posting notices on the Friends' Notice Board
- Offering items for sale on the Friends' Trading Post

10 high resolution images each year from the Mills Archive, emailed on request.

Additional benefits will be announced in *Mill Memories*.



The Friends' Website

### Check the Friends' Website [www.millsarchivetrust.org](http://www.millsarchivetrust.org)

Internet shop

Mills Archive Library Catalogue

News of Mills

Mystery Mills and Oddities

Friends' Notice Board

Friends' Trading Post

Family History Searches

Useful Links

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 only to receive *Mill Memories* and enclose a cheque for £25 payable to The Mills Archive Trust

**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 organization or individual.*

<b>Standing Order Form</b>	To	Bank	Branch
Address		Postcode	
Please Pay GIROBANK plc, BOOTLE Sort code 72-00-03 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 supporting 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.

The Mills Archive is 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 14) 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@millsarchivetrust.org](mailto:friends@millsarchivetrust.org)*

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## In the Next Issue of Mill Memories

### **Peter Dolman Collection**

Research into the charismatic mills of Suffolk and Lincolnshire

### **Progress with Frank Gregory Online**

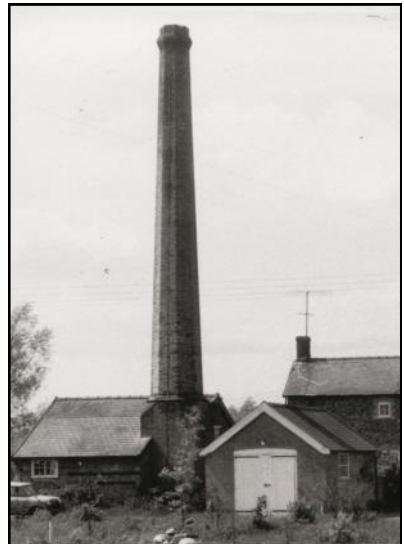
Digitising a wealth of Sussex milling information

### **Records of the SPAB Mills Section**

Evidence of the Section's 75 years of work to preserve mills

### **Large mill drawings in the Archive**

A picture is worth a thousand words—but a drawing is worth a thousand pictures



*Chimney at Culford Watermill, Suffolk—P. Dolman*

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