



# Mill Memories

*The Newsletter of the Friends of the Mills Archive*

**Issue 22**

**Spring 2018**

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# Organisational Change

## Ron Cookson

Our rapid development as the nationally accredited centre of excellence for the history of mills and milling has increased our focus on the management and development of our services and programmes. At the same time we are addressing strategic issues relating to charity governance, the need to encourage more mill research and the requirement to ensure our long-term sustainability.

Liz's announcement of her successful Resilient Heritage application (opposite) has profound consequences for the future of the Mills Archive Trust as it enables us to put in place our succession plan. This will ensure we are set up properly for the coming years.

## Director of Programmes and Development

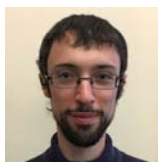


As a first step, we are pleased to announce that Liz Bartram has been appointed to a new role as Director of Programmes and Development, in charge of all aspects of the management of the Archive.

Liz reports to Ron, who continues as Chairman, concentrating on strategy development with the aid of our Board of Trustees. Mildred will continue to provide Liz and the archive team with advice and technical help on a daily basis.

Liz will implement our Strategic Plan and is responsible for all staff, programmes, services and development. In addition to controlling expenditure and ensuring we operate to the

highest charity standards, she and her team will maintain and improve our professional standing as a nationally accredited centre of excellence.



Liz's team of professionals comprises Nathanael, our Archivist, Elizabeth, our Information Manager and Nataliya our Database Executive. Nathanael is full-time, Elizabeth and Nataliya are part-time. With Lottery support, Liz is now recruiting a full-time Development Assistant to help her achieve the key objective of ensuring we generate sufficient resources and funding to run our services and programmes and to ensure sustainability.

As you can see, we are getting ready for the 2020s and beyond!

# Resilient Heritage, Resilient Archive

## Liz Bartram

Since its founding in 2002, the Archive has gone from strength to strength. Recent achievements include raising and spending our first £1 million in October 2015, and becoming an accredited archive service in 2016. The latter was made possible by the employment of a professionally qualified archivist, when Nathanael completed his Masters in Archives and Records Management with Distinction.

However, like many small charities, our resources are limited. This makes it harder to grow significantly further, and grow we must if we are to continue to look after the world's milling records for many years to come.

When we heard about the Heritage Lottery Fund's Resilient Heritage funding stream, designed to strengthen organisations so that they better manage heritage in the long term, we knew it was just the opportunity we needed.

To our delight, we were awarded £95,300, our largest grant to date. The project, "Succession Breeds Success", will strengthen the charity in 3 areas: management, governance and fundraising. These are all areas for which it is usually difficult to get funding.

The first stage is to create a new full-time role. The Development Assistant will raise funds for our activities, so that I can explore new income opportunities such as the modern milling industry. I will also take on management responsibilities as part of our management and governance restructure. We have a budget to train trustees, management and staff in areas such as digital communications and audience analysis. This is so we can make sure we meet the needs of our users and reach those who would benefit from discovering the Archive.

We are very grateful to the HLF for this opportunity, which has been made possible by National Lottery players.

We are also very grateful to you – we couldn't have survived this long without your support. With the combination of your continuing support and this grant, we will ensure that the Archive will not only survive, but thrive for generations to come.

**Funding raised by  
The National Lottery**

and awarded by the Heritage Lottery Fund



**LOTTERY FUNDED**



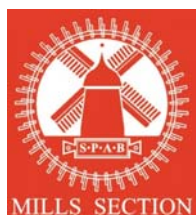
# Report: From Quern to Computer

**Liz Bartram**

This 2-year HLF-supported project has now come to an end. In past newsletters, you might have seen different elements highlighted. Hopefully you will have participated in some of the activities too. Below are some facts and figures showing the work that went into the project. If you have taken part in some way – thank you!

**29** volunteers contributed to the project,  
whose work amounted to more than **1000** days

Facebook likes  
for the Mills Archive page increased by more than **325%**



Our joint **Symposium** with the SPAB Mills Section  
took place in October 2017 and attracted over **70** people

Our first **interactive timeline** was created on the Mills Archive  
website, with more than **100** entries


**10** representatives from mills attended a **training workshop**  
on caring for their own archives and promoting them to the public

Volunteering requires fuel. During the project  
**3600** cups of coffee and **7000**  
biscuits were consumed  
(we like mill themed biscuits best!)



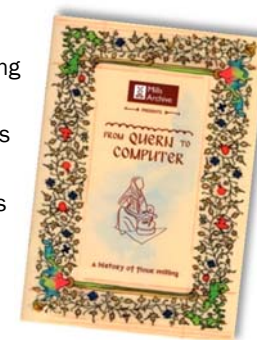
**6<sup>th</sup>** December 2017 - the date on which the **20,000<sup>th</sup>**  
item was added to the online catalogue by the project's cataloguing volunteers

The Mills Archive made its debut on

 **Instagram** with more than **125** posts

**15** chapters on the history of flour milling  
were written by **Sue and Martin Watts** and now feature on the website

An **educational booklet** on the history of flour milling  
was produced, and more than **100** copies  
were bought by mills to sell or train their volunteers



The Mills Archive held its first **exhibition**  
at **Reading Museum**



More than **400** mills were added to the  
Mills Database thanks to public participation in the  
**Great British Mill Race**

The youngest contributor was under **10** years old





# Mystic Mills

Nathanael Hodge

Over the millennia, mills have often featured in myth, fable and religious symbolism. This article examines the 'mystic mills' of the Middle Ages

Bread is an important symbol in Christianity. According to the Bible, Jesus called himself the 'bread of life', and spoke of death and resurrection using the image of a grain of wheat which must die in the ground for new life to appear. His followers saw his crucifixion in this light, as a death which brought life, and this is remembered in the Communion or Eucharist in which bread represents Christ's body, broken to become a source of food for the hungry.

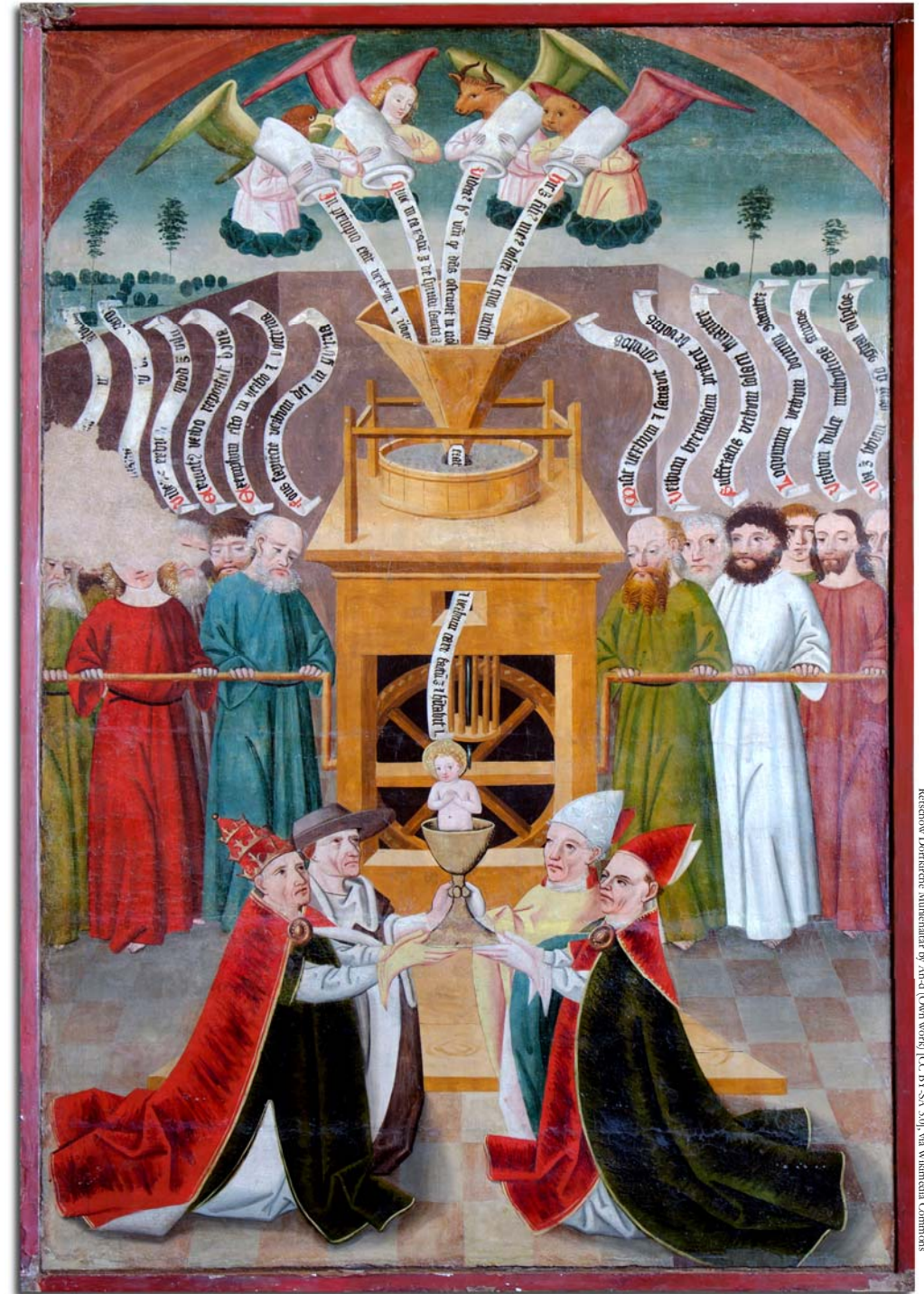


It's not surprising, then, that this metaphor was later extended to include milling. The mill as a religious metaphor is found in varying forms through the Middle Ages, some of which are shown here.

An early example is this twelfth-century sculpture, on the capital of a column in the Basilique Sainte-Marie-Madeleine de Vézelay, France. At first sight merely an image of one man pouring grain into a hopper while another collects the flour, the symbolism becomes apparent when you notice that the gearwheel is positioned so that its spokes form a cross. The first man is thought to be Moses, pouring the grain of the Old Testament through the cross of Christ, to be collected in a transformed state by the New Testament writer Paul.

A much more elaborate version of this idea seems to have become popular in fifteenth-century Germany, where it was known as the *Hostienmühle* - 'host' (communion bread) mill and featured in paintings, carvings and stained glass windows. The many versions of this all share the same basic design. Two are shown here.

In this image four creatures, a man, a lion, an ox and an eagle pour grain into a hopper. These are the traditional symbols of the writers of the four gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, and the grain is the gospels themselves - often shown as scrolls with the opening text of each gospel written on them. The twelve apostles turn the handles which work the mill (or in one case open sluice gates). Communion bread and/or another scroll emerges to be caught, in the form of the infant Jesus, by the four 'fathers' of the western







Catholic church, Ambrose, Augustine, Gregory and Jerome.

At first sight this is a strange and complex image which is hard to interpret, but it seems to be showing the processing of the original gospel truth through the various stages of church history, passed on by the apostles and later figures to arrive in form of life-giving food for the viewer, who would be looking at this image above the altar as they took communion.

Of course the question of who was dispensing the authentic and life-giving gospel truth became a controversial one during the Reformation, when Martin Luther and others broke away from the Catholic Church. The recent invention of the printing press allowed them to spread their message swiftly in the form of printed pamphlets, often illustrated by woodcuts. One such image, from a pamphlet entitled *Die göttliche Mühle* (the Divine Mill) is clearly a Protestant response to the *Hostienmühle* image.



The man, lion, ox and eagle are just visible entering the hopper of the mill, here a watermill. On the right of the picture are figures in the same costume as the church fathers in the earlier images, but they are no longer receiving the output of the mill. Their place has been taken by key Reformation figures: Erasmus, collecting scrolls coming from the mill reading 'Faith', 'Hope', 'Love' and 'Strength'; Luther, kneading dough in a trough; and Zwingli, offering the finished product in the form of books (rather than mass wafers) to the Catholics, who refuse to receive it. The message is clear: the reformers are the source of truth - if you want to be fed, you must take what they have to offer. Above this 'Karsthans' ('Hans the hoer'), a standard symbol of the German peasantry, protects the mill from a demonic creature. The peasants - presumably the target audience - are portrayed as heroic defenders of the new-found faith.

Finally, here's another Reformation woodcut with a more grotesque version of the milling theme. In this image, *Die Mühle des römischen Papsttums* (the Mill of the Roman Papacy) by Swiss illustrator Tobias Stimmer, a skeleton and several bird-faced men are the Catholic clergy, grinding sackfuls of people in their mill. The unfortunate victims emerge as a variety of deformed creatures such as an egg with legs and what looks like a human set of bagpipes!



NEXT ISSUE: The mill which ground old people young



# The Silence of a Caribbean Mill

Retired millwright David Nicholls has sent us this evocative description of life in the Caribbean in the days of wind-powered sugar mills. David worked on some of these mills, and his collection of photos and records is now at the Mills Archive.

*I am awoken by the interminable whistling of the little tree frogs and the soft rustling in the leaves of the palm trees as they are disturbed by the rising strength of a veering wind. No other sound. It is black, no moon in the calm balminess of a tropical night. Almost silent, except for the tree frogs and their incessant calling.*

*I think about the day to come which will arrive quickly with the swift rising of the sun. But listen - one can hear the occasional dog barking in the distance and the first early blackbirds who are beginning to rise and call their neighbours. Their calls are sharp but sweet and will replace the frogs with their chatter, all day long, until nightfall.*

*Somewhere - way in the distance - I hear more barking of village dogs excited at the bustle of workers preparing for the long day and now there is the occasional shout in the rapidly approaching beautiful dawn. Men, woman and children will be responding to calls to get ready for another day's toil - in the fields or at the mill where they must ceaselessly feed the enormous, silent machine. Shortly I hear a knock, knock, knocking from all around the plantations where the carpenters are driving home the hardwood wedges to secure the huge points or sails to the massive arms or back supporting timbers of all the mills - tight, tight because no risk can be taken here where a loose point could be disastrous for the whole day's crushing of precious cane juice.*

*Many hands are now gathering, either silently carrying the bundles of cane into the mill yard from the fields or laying out the waste or crushed cane - the bagasse - to dry before feeding this to the boiling house furnaces. There is no other fuel except precious cordwood which must be kept for final boiling.*

*As the day progresses, other sounds fill the air - but quietly. The slow melodic refrains of hands joining in to ease the toil with timeless rhythmic song in beautiful harmony, the occasional lowing of cattle as they haul the great lumbering waggons, the creaking of axles desperate for greasing, the rumble of iron shod wheels on the rough coral stone tracks, the steady swish, swish of the points in the wind and sometimes the commanding shout of an overseer, on horseback.*

*Rarely - and praise be to God it is rarely - there is the terrifying scream of a cane feeder who has been careless and who has pushed the cane too far into the slow moving great iron rollers of the mill. His finger is caught - his arm will follow and quick action with an axe is the only way his life will be saved. The rolls cannot be stopped - they are controlled by the enormous power of the sails which keep turning, turning relentlessly.*

*Eventually the day's work will end as darkness descends rapidly. The tree frogs whistle.*



*Feeding the sugar mill, c 1900. Postcard in the Mildred Cookson collection*

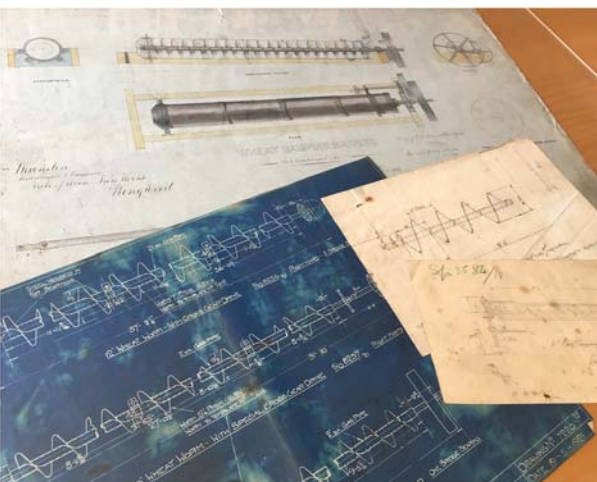


# Millwrights and their Collections

Mildred Cookson

## Part 1 Drawings

Millwrights are an important part of the Mills Archive. We have been given or in some cases helped in the rescue of a number of important collections which record the work of individual millwrights. As well as many informative drawings, we hold detailed measurements, photographs and published material providing an invaluable and growing reference source for those interested in the construction and repair of traditional mills.



*Drawings from the Armfield collection.*

Nicholls, who scanned them for us before cataloguing and depositing the originals in the Devon Record Office.

The Archive's collections cover not only UK work but also work on mills abroad, including the repair of the Morgan Lewis sugar mill in Barbados by local millwright David Nicholls (see p. 10), the repair of Montefiore Windmill in Jerusalem by the late Vincent Pargeter and the work done on mills in the USA by Derek Ogden and Jon Sass.

The Millwright's drawings we hold are invaluable to modern millwrights, as their detail can save time and money, avoiding the need for new ones. Older records are also invaluable to the researcher.

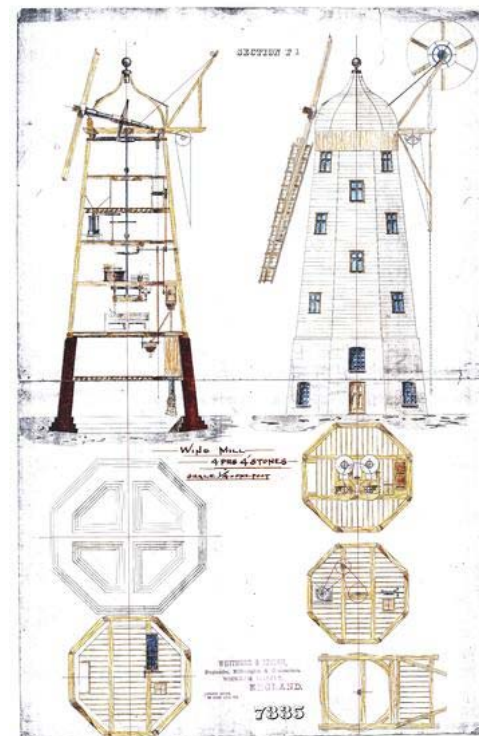
We have drawings by Christopher Wallis, the Oxfordshire based millwright, and exceptional drawings by Peter Dolman of Suffolk, as well as his collection from the

Nearly 1000 outstanding drawings from Armfield Ltd of Ringwood, Hampshire, dated 1870 – 1920, were rescued by millwright Simon Janes and curated for us by David Plunkett. Found in dustbin bags, they could easily have been lost for ever. Armfield manufactured turbines, waterwheels and accessory machinery to a high standard, with an attention to detail, creating bespoke products for each installation. A second collection of the same age was rescued by Reading industrial archaeologist Cyril McCombe from the demolished premises of the Bodley iron foundry in Exeter. They were passed to us with the help of David

millwrights Whitmore & Binyon of Wicken Market, Suffolk (see a detailed history of the firm with many images here: <https://tinyurl.com/ybbzftq9>).

The Holman Bros. collection was donated by the family, together with some financial help, enabling us to rebind two beautiful ledgers and put together the whole history of the company. This Archive project, involving several volunteers and many hours' work, gave great satisfaction to us and the family. More recently we have the entire collection of drawings and notes from the late Vincent Pargeter. This collection will take months of work to go through, scan and catalogue before it can be available for research purposes. Before starting on this collection we will need a substantial sum of money to be in place just for archival packaging.

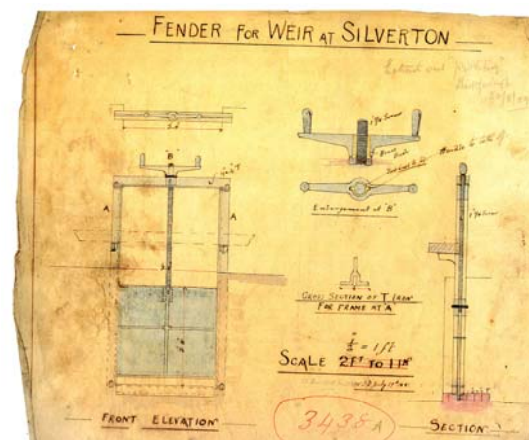
The Archive has lists of millwrights in various counties throughout the UK, and many unique photographs of them. These include those from the distant past such as Mr T Hunt and Amos Clarke, along with millwrights less well known. Individual collections donated to the Archive contain information on millwrights and their work over the last 40 or 50 years. In addition our Research Publication series has recently published two detailed accounts of past millwrights: a history of the Saunderson firm of Louth in



Lincolnshire by Jon Sass, and Jim Moher's *The London Millwrights: Masters and Journeymen in the late 18th and early 19th centuries* (see p. 24).

Finally, scanning, cataloguing and archiving all these drawings, documents and images takes time and money. Time is dependent on volunteers, money is dependent on individual donations, and we need more of both if we are to do justice to the collections in our care.

*Design for fender for a weir at Silvertown from the Bodley Foundry collection.*

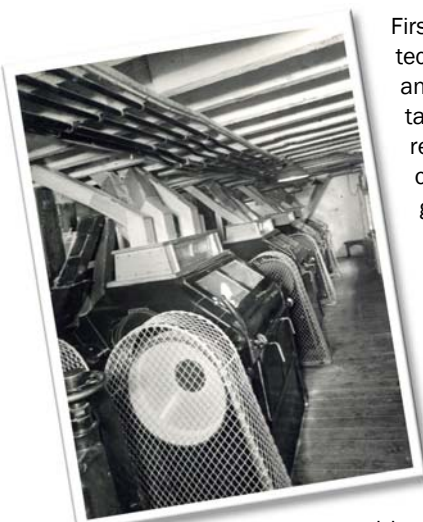



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[Stories from the Archive](#)

# New Modern Milling Webpages

## Hannah Pomeroy

On 4 May, 1908, on the completion of his brief three-part retrospect on 'Twenty-Five Years of Roller Milling', in *The Miller*, Mr W T Bates wrote that he believed 'a full and complete history of the period, compiled from authoritative sources, is now due'. Well 110 years later the Mills Archive have published a series of webpages which would hopefully meet with Mr Bates' approval. These new Modern Milling pages cover the 'period' of history Mr. Bates was referring to, the end to the 19th century, and brings the story up to today. The advancements and changes that took place were so great that to attempt to write a 'full and complete history', many different aspects have had to be considered.



Firstly, there are the technical developments. It was the technical advancements made to machinery in Europe and America that caused the roller mill revolution to take place. The invention of the break roller, the reduction roller, the plansifter, the purifier and many other machines owe their origins to this period. A general history about these early beginnings can be found in the new 'Roller Milling Development' Section, whilst details about the development of the machinery, including those who invented and manufactured them, are included in the 'Machinery' Section. Information can also be found about how the machinery was used within the actual milling process in the 'From Field to Shelf' Section.

Despite saying that the roller mill revolution was caused by the advancements made to the machinery, it could be argued that the technological changes only took place due to social pressure

and the demand for white bread. These demands meant a technological solution had to be found to provide white flour for bakers. This social side of the history is not ignored in the 'Roller Milling Development' Section, nor in the 'Stories from the Archive' Section, where stories about mills and individuals that lived through the period can be found.



Section contains information about many such firms.

Along with those few individuals featured in the 'Stories from the Archive' Section, there were many other individuals who helped shape the period. As such, the 'Key Individuals' Section contains profiles on many influential men who, in their roles as Architects; Authors and Publishers; Engineers; and Millers and Mill Owners, helped cause the roller mill revolution. Many of these individuals were also responsible for founding important businesses and the 'Key Companies' Section contains information about many such firms.

To write these histories and profiles 'authoritative sources' were required. The majority of these sources came from items held within the archive and library. Publications such as journals, catalogues, milling manuals and other works from the period provided much of the information for the articles. A selection of these works are featured in the 'Publications' Section, along with links to the new Literature Index where extracts from old milling journals can be found.

These new pages cover many aspects of the 'Modern Milling' period, and the wide array of articles means there should be something for everyone to enjoy.







## Why I am a Volunteer

### Anne Harrison

Over the years I have developed an interest in history and archaeology, and on retirement took an MA in Medieval Archaeology at Reading University. As a possible project I began looking at medieval bridges along the Kennet in Berkshire and this led naturally to looking at the mills since they were often sited near crossing points, although the building of the canal has seriously interfered with the waterways along the Kennet. I have often walked along the canal tow path and seen how the few mills still extant are now converted to smart residential accommodation.



*The U3A team examining the Brian Eighteen collection.*

When my local U3A (University of the Third Age) group was invited to take part in a project to catalogue the collection of local ex-millhand and historian, Brian Eighteen, I and some others came to a meeting in Dec 2016 at the Mills Archive where we were introduced to the Archive and the project. Brian's collections comprised photographs, postcards, cuttings, and assemblages of invoices, receipts, price lists, and all sorts of other mementoes of mills which he had acquired over his long career. Cataloguing these items was a good introduction to the workings of the Mills Archive database.

By November 2017 the Brian Eighteen project was complete but I decided to stay on since I was enjoying the varied work. Since then I have catalogued a collection of documents from family run mills near Cambridge, which is an area I know fairly well. In fact, my own family name cropped up in a sales brochure for one of the mills as the land agent. Now I am working with a huge collection of slides taken by Richard Hills over the years, including many East Anglian mills, and a boxful of slides taken on his holidays abroad in the Netherlands, Sweden and Germany. These are often challenging to locate but show how far and how often he travelled to photograph mills wherever he happened to be. These two collectors are typical of the enthusiastic people around the country who have donated their life's work to the Archive for the benefit of others.

## Tony Yoward

### Ron Cookson

The 15<sup>th</sup> of December 2017 was a big day for us! On that day we welcomed Tony as Guest of Honour to a celebration recognising his contribution to the Mills Archive over the years. Tony was one of our original trustees, helping to guide our first tentative steps as well as donating his research notes on Dorset as part of our Mills Archive Online initiative.



Many will know that Tony was for a time archivist for the SPAB Mills Section and has looked after the archives of the Hampshire Mills Group while building his own collection, including his family history data compiled with his late wife, Mary.

The event was organised by Ashok Vaidya, our Vice-chairman, who has worked with other members of the Hampshire Group in arranging the transfer and arrangement of Tony's collection following its donation to our care. The Group very kindly donated more than £2,000 to help us with packaging this big and important collection and were represented at the "thank you" by Ashok, Andy Fish and Dave Plunkett.

### The Arthur Lowe Collection

We took the opportunity of thanking Ashok for the digitising and cataloguing of the Arthur Lowe Collection, an impressive set of 1580 photographs of windmills and watermills from the 1930s onwards that had been donated to the HMG some years ago.



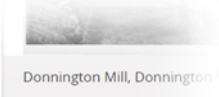
Shaker Tower Mill, Shaker, four common, goos cap with flats



Whitecombe Farm Mill, Corton Denham, wheel



Whitecombe Farm Mill, Corton Denham, wheel



Donnington Mill, Donnington





# Adopt the James Venn Collection!

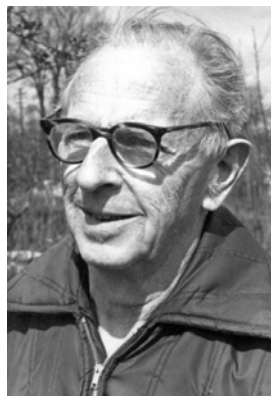
## Liz Bartram & Nathanael Hodge

Launched in 2017, our 'Adopt a Collection' appeal has had a strong start, thanks to those of you who have adopted a collection (or more than one, in some cases!). Adopted collections include those created by E M Gardner, Gelder & Kitchen and Vincent Pargeter. We are very grateful for the support we have received so far.

We are now adding another collection to this appeal - will you be the first to adopt the James Venn Collection?

## The James Venn Collection

The James Venn Collection is in fact two collections, one built on top of the other. The story starts with Stanley Freese, who in the 1920s and 1930s cycled across the country with his brother Cyril, sketching, photographing and gathering information on rural England, particularly the mills of Buckinghamshire. He planned to write a work which would 'cover every windmill and watermill ever known to have existed in the county, giving an outline of its ownership from earliest times', illustrated by photographs and enlivened with details of mill history gleaned from interviews with 'old-time wind and watermillers'. Unfortunately with the outbreak of World War II Freese's hopes for his book had to be put on hold.



*Stanley Freese, 1971.*



*James Venn, 2011. Photo F S Mackay.*

James Venn met Stanley Freese while still a teenager in the 1930s, and remained friends with him, inheriting his papers and photos on his death in 1972. It was his intention to publish the windmill section of Freese's manuscript with such corrections and additional information as he could find; however this planned new version never got beyond the stage of gathering information in note form. The watermill section of the manuscript was published in 2007 by the Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society.

Freese's writing may not meet today's standards for research - he failed to provide references for much of the information he presented, and was also clearly an opinionated individual whose feelings of resentment towards the 'conservative old men' he blamed for the loss of wind

### A TOPOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL SURVEY OF THE WINDMILLS AND WATERMILLS OF BUCKS.

For a considerable time past the writer has been engaged upon the above survey.

It covers every windmill and watermill ever known to have existed in the county, giving an outline of its ownership from earliest times, (from Domesday in many cases); exact location of each mill or site is noted, with particulars as to when the mill existed, what alterations, fires, riots, disasters, etc. have happened to them; when and how the non-existent mills met their end.

Full descriptions of the wind and water-driven machinery have been obtained wherever possible, including that of many now defunct mills; and photographs of most existing mills, and of their old-fashioned machinery, have been secured.

Old-time wind and watermillers have been interviewed, and their many interesting experiences noted; these will never again be obtainable, since windmilling has ceased in Bucks; and men who have not only built windmills but moved them from one place to another have explained to the writer how it was done.

Now the survey is nearing completion; all the voluminous notes and information collected, together with vast quantities of new facts obtained both from local Libraries and the British Museum are to be included in a handsome and exhaustive volume at the earliest opportunity.

The Windmill section will deal more thoroughly with the subject than any previous windmill book; whilst the Watermill section containing the first comprehensive watermill survey ever produced will cover nearly every known type of watermill, corn-milling, paper and millboard making, fulling, gunpowder, wire, and copper mills, sawing, tanning, printing, pumping, silk, linoleum and flock mills. This is a wider variety probably than could be found in any other country of this size; and Bucks incidentally possesses three out of the six oldest windmills in England.

and water power and the advent of a 'Dark Age of Fuel-burning' make their way into his manuscript in several places. But the value of his work lies in the information he gathered from the final generation of Buckinghamshire millers, which without him would have been lost forever.

For more information on the collection see <https://millsarchive.org/explore/features-and-articles/entry/194481>. Along with the various drafts of the Buckinghamshire manuscript, the collection contains many photographs and sketches from both Venn and Freese, much of which is yet to be catalogued. By adopting this collection you can help provide archival packaging and support our archivist and volunteers in cataloguing and digitising all our collections.

Why not make 2018 the year that you adopt a collection? By doing so, you will help us care for all of the fragile, irreplaceable archival material that the Archive serves to protect. To find out how the appeal works, what recognition we would like to give you, and to adopt a collection of your choice, click the 'Adopt a Collection' link on the website homepage at [millsarchive.org](https://millsarchive.org), or visit the relevant section here: <https://bit.ly/2ol2XK3>



# Joseph Rank

Mildred Cookson

## Part 2

As we mentioned in the last issue of *Mill Memories*, mill pioneer Joseph Rank was not one to get downhearted with a crisis or even fire. Two stories stand out reflecting Joseph Rank's unflappable approach to potential disaster.

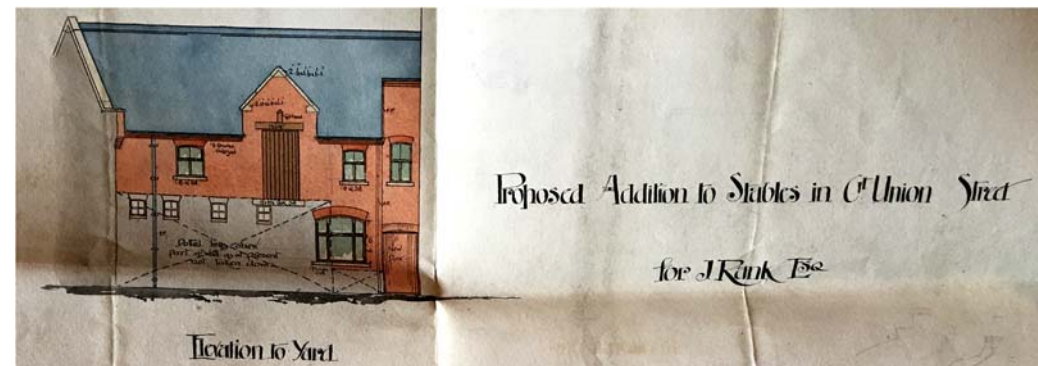
His lifelong close friend and architect, Alfred Gelder, once got news during the night of a fire at premises close to West's Mill. He rushed round to the Ranks' house and banged upon the front door, But Joseph was a sound sleeper, so to wake him up Gelder threw stones at the bedroom window. The window was flung up, and Joseph angrily demanded to know what all the row was about. "There's a fire in Southcoates Lane", shouted Gelder, "and your mill's in danger; you'd better come

down at once." Joseph paused reflectively for a moment, and then asked: "Which way is the wind blowing?" "Well, at present it's blowing away from the mill," answered Gelder. Whereupon Joseph exclaimed: "That's all right then. Don't worry, I'm going back to bed"; and back to bed he went - and the wind didn't change.

Although Alfred Gelder was a close friend from his early milling career, living on the same street at opposite ends of a four-block terrace, he did not mince words. Once in front of a group of notable people at a mill he said to Gelder "Don't have those twiddly bits put on the top next time - they're no use to the mill; they're only put there to help the reputation of the architect."



*Design for the 80 foot long 'Sky sign' at Clarence Mills, from the Gelder and Kitchen collection.*



*Design for addition to stables at Clarence Mills, from the Gelder and Kitchen collection.*

His greatest blow came, one that all millers dread, early in October 1941 when Clarence Mills were set on fire. All the mills were destroyed along with some of the warehouses and silos. Yet of the little group about him in the yard he asked only one question, in his blunt, Yorkshire way: "Did you get the horses out?" Yes - they had got the horses out, every one of them. That satisfied him. He had always loved horses, and could not bear to think of any of them suffering. As for the mills, turning back to the car, he exclaimed: "What's done can't be undone. It's no good thinking of the past. It's the future that matters. A few bombs can't destroy our work. After the war we shall build new and better mills." And he drove away without a backward glance.

Joseph Rank died on 13th November 1943. Many tributes were paid throughout the press, but to the people of Hull he was a man of influence, where he was regarded a leading citizen.

The Archive now holds many original documents and drawings of Joseph Rank's roller mills, in particular ones of his famous Clarence Mills in Hull.

*Right: plans for silo extension at Clarence Mills, 1950s.*





# The Life of an Information Manager

Elizabeth Trout



*The garden at Watlington House.*

I am a qualified Librarian and work at the Archive part-time, three days a week, usually Tuesday to Thursday. My day begins at 10am and ends at 4 or 5pm. I love working in this historic house built in 1688. My desk is by the library window looking out onto the back garden.

On Tuesday morning, we begin with an Archive staff briefing to discuss issues that have arisen over the past week. The rest of the day is spent catching up on enquiries and follow-up emails that have come in over the weekend from all sorts of people: mill owners; mill enthusiasts; family historians; architects and archaeologists; authors and artists; academics and students. Many

enquiries need some research in the library to answer which I enjoy the most, as I always find out something new about mills or the social history of milling. I refer very technical enquiries to Mildred Cookson, our mill expert. If we can't answer an enquiry, I give advice on sources or local archives that might have relevant material. I also encourage people to send us a copy of their research when it is complete.

On Wednesday the current library volunteers come in. Susan has volunteered for over two years and undertaken big tasks such as repackaging the Northwestern Miller prior to it being professionally bound. She has written summary translations for our French and Spanish books, and is currently listing our trade literature and turbine catalogues. Laura is a university student helping with general library cataloguing and identifying books for repair or important books for preservation.



*Susan working on the Northwestern Miller.*



*A visiting researcher in the Mills Archive library.*

work of the Archive. Visitors are often happily surprised at the resources available.



*Above left: Elizabeth repairing a book. Above right: With Nathanael on a disaster training day.*



Occasionally we have disaster rehearsal sessions and learn about book conservation at workshops at the Berkshire Record Office.

I also help out at MAT events, particularly the Garden Parties. I also try to drum up student volunteers at the University careers fairs and occasionally give talks about milling family history.

*Right: At a careers fair.*

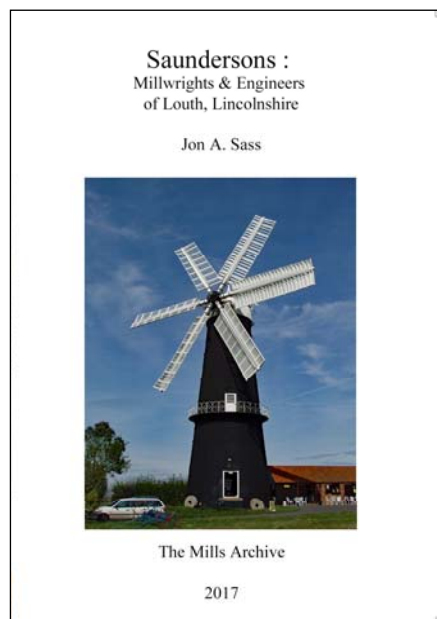




# Bookshelf

Ron Cookson

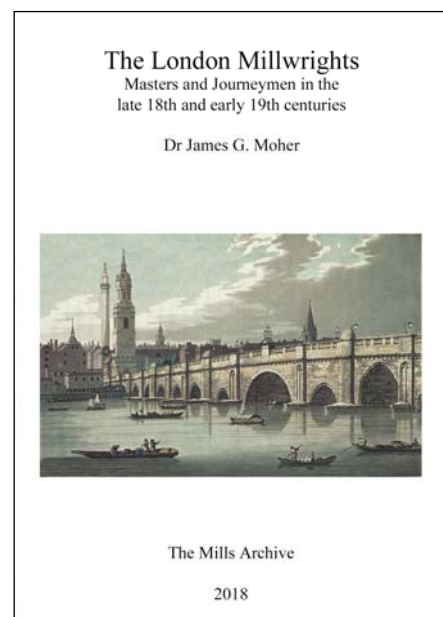
## Mills Archive Research Publications



This last year has seen two excellent publications on millwrights and their work in contrasting parts of the country.

Jon Sass's account of the Saundersons, three generations of traditional millwrights in Lincolnshire, founded in 1812 and active for 100 years, has proved so popular we have had to reprint it.

Order both books for the special price of £15 at [tinyurl.com/yam4msr6](http://tinyurl.com/yam4msr6)



Jim Moher's account of London Millwrights, published last month, is a fascinating examination of the struggles millwrights faced during the Industrial Revolution in a growing and spreading city.

London had many huge mill or engine structures in large establishments (waterworks, breweries, distilleries and a myriad of manufactured products), and hundreds of small or medium-sized watermills on the many tributaries of the Thames. There were also the countless 'small footy windmills' said to grind nine-tenths of the corn trade, erected on the higher ground of the capital and its surrounding urban area and countryside.

Last October we published the seventh in the series, *The Brown Family: Ten flour mills in a hundred years*. Peter Sinclair charts the history of the family's involvement in flour milling between 1848 and 1954. During that time they owned, leased or operated 10 mills:

Waltham Abbey

Ware (Amwell End Mill)

Croydon

Wades Mill

Exeter

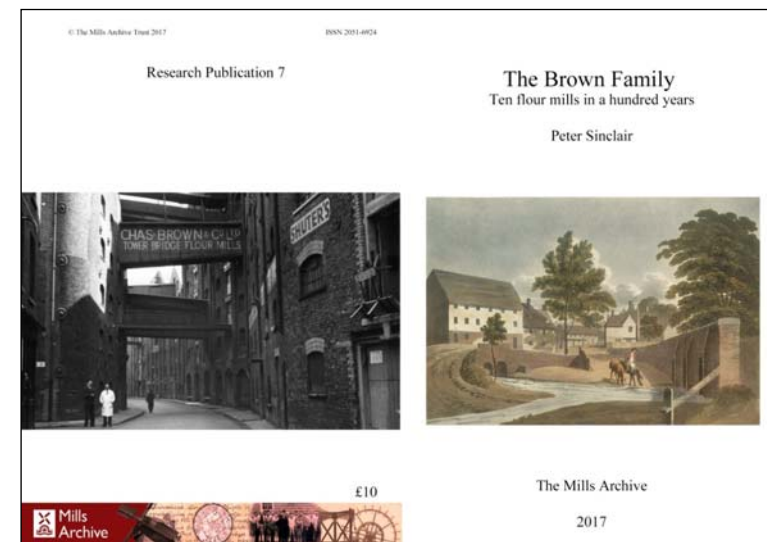
Bermondsey (Tower Bridge)

Horley

St Albans

Cork

Vauxhall



The illustrations on the cover of the book of Wades Mill near Hertford and Tower Bridge Mills, sold to Spillers in 1954, are good examples of the 58 images in this enthralling 48 page A4 book.

All nine Mills Archive Research Publications are still available individually; If you would like to purchase the full set at half-price and subscribe to all future issues, please email us.

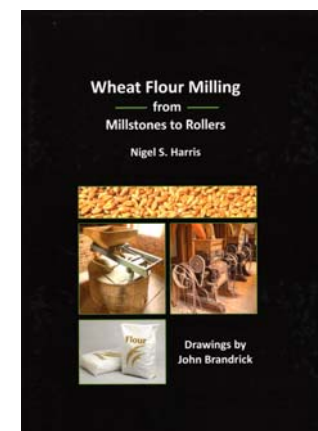
## Our best seller!

Nigel Harris' book *Wheat Flour Milling from Millstones to Rollers* continues to impress. It has now attracted attention in the USA, following a very positive review in *World Grain*:

*Harris does a magnificent job of meticulously describing the advances that have taken place in milling equipment over the years.*

(Arvin Donley, March 2018)

We still have copies available at [tinyurl.com/y8c8gpe4](http://tinyurl.com/y8c8gpe4)





# 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 directions and a map are available on our website.

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.



We welcome visitors but please make an appointment first. We are open from 10am until 3pm on Mondays to Fridays.

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.org](mailto:enquiries@millsarchive.org) 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*



# Key Privileges For Our Friends

As a Friend, are you making the most of the privileges available to you?

- 80% discount on high resolution digital images
- 10% discount on all other purchases from our online shop
- Research service: 1st hour free every year, discounted thereafter
- Copyright waivers
- Mill Memories every 6 months
- Invitations to exclusive Friends' events



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## The Friends of the Mills Archive

Part of the Mills Archive Trust

Registered Charity no 1155828

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 as well as knowing they are helping to protect an unrivalled world-class resource.

*For more information write to the address above or email us*

*[friends@millsarchive.org](mailto:friends@millsarchive.org)*



### Next Time:

In the next issue of Mill Memories, we'll be highlighting some of the Gems from the Archive, which we think will surprise you!

*Right: 1870s tintype photograph from the Geoff Holman Collection, showing T R Holman and his employees.*

