



Mill Memories

The Newsletter of the Friends of the Mills Archive

Issue 32

Spring 2023

11

Culture in the
Northwestern
Miller

18

Heritage Lottery
Grant

20

A Few of my
Favourite Things

26

Milling History
and the Modern
Industry

29

Recent
Acquisitions

34

Indentures

*Our 21st
birthday
issue*



In Defence of Cake ~ p. 15

Welcome to our 21st anniversary issue!

It's the Mills Archive's 21st birthday! In celebration, we have put together an extra large helping of *Mill Memories*. This issue celebrates our achievements over 21 years as well as keeping you up to date on some of our most recent developments. Read on to find out about current projects, exciting announcements and cake!

In 21 years we have:



Accessioned 281 archival collections, equating to over 45 cubic metres of material

Catalogued over 92,000 items



Made almost 76,000 digital images freely available online



Benefited from the work of over 100 volunteers

Built up a library of over 6000 volumes



Acquired 1.5 TB of digital files

Received up to 111,000 visits to our website per year



Staff Profiles

For this special issue we asked all our staff members to write a short profile introducing themselves and giving their insights into the story of the Mills Archive so far.

Liz Bartram



Like most of my colleagues, my time at the Trust began as a volunteer, about 10 years ago. I particularly enjoy planning new projects, supporting our work experience participants, and seeing the enjoyment people get from engaging with our collections. I'm currently building up my knowledge of the history of electricity generation using renewable sources, and I'm always keen to shine a light on the

experiences of a wide range of people involved in the history of milling. To reach our 21st birthday is a huge achievement, and I couldn't be more proud of the team or our supporters.

Nathan Trill

The strands of my experience converged in my role at the Mills Archive Trust. After graduating with a history degree, I tutored an A-Level student in the topic and volunteered for Reading Museum. On the other hand, I worked for the family business, which renovated old and listed buildings. I delved into the history found in books, archives and behind glass; so too did I discover the history bound in bricks and mortar. The Trust appreciates the equal importance of both. I am looking forward to helping my team to make more of this history accessible for everyone.



Nathanael Hodge



I can hardly believe it is both 21 years since the Mills Archive was founded, and almost 12 years since I first walked in through the door as a new volunteer! Then I was a recent graduate, hoping to move into a career in archives work; the Mills Archive was still largely volunteer run and just beginning to investigate the issues of archival standards in cataloguing and preservation. The last decade has seen significant developments both for myself,

including getting my diploma in Archives Administration and becoming a registered member of the Archives and Records Association, as well as for the Archive, such as achieving Accreditation and the Queen's Award. In that time I have enjoyed learning all about mills, although I don't yet feel I'm an expert! I'm excited to see what the next decade has to offer.

Nataliya Vine



I was born and grew up in Ukraine, Ivano-Frankivsk region and lived in Prague for 12 years before I came to the United Kingdom in 2007. I started as a volunteer at the Mills Archive in 2013 and I am now a Database Executive. My main responsibility is designing and sending out weekly newsletters and automated emails on Mailchimp, an email marketing service that is fully integrated with our internal database,

Macramé. I also process reports, edit social media posts, and look after the list of contacts – we have 4,941 subscribers! I enjoy working on Mailchimp and it is rewarding to receive so many beautiful comments from our readers. My other responsibilities include processing book orders, working on Word Press, data entry and updates on Macramé.

Why I Became a Trustee of the Mills Archive

Margaret Simons



If my records are correct, it was back in April 2014 that I first set foot in Watlington House, home of the Mills Archive Trust. Myself and others who provided and/or used archive collections were invited by Ron Cookson to a group discussion about the merits and otherwise of archives and the availability of collections to the public. Something I said at this meeting must have struck a chord, because not long after this I received an email asking me if I would

consider becoming a trustee.

I accepted the offer to become a trustee, as I was so impressed by the initiative and enthusiasm of like-minded individuals and their belief that I may have something to contribute. There was a palpable passion about milling heritage and all exposed to this were left in no doubt about the need to ensure its retention for future generations. It was inspiring to see just how much had been done in the 12 years since its inception by this entirely self-funded organisation. The pioneering approach of the founders had by this time not only created an archive of renown, but an ethos had developed that had both mill enthusiasts and the wider public as its focus.

A good example of this is the volunteer programme, which has engaged both young and old in various aspects of milling heritage and offered opportunities to experience the archive and its management in a unique environment. It is this inclusive approach that immediately appealed and is a strength, which acknowledges the fact that a healthy archive is one that reaches out to and encourages interest in its collections by its users. The search room with the large table at its heart is the perfect environment for visitors to explore the library and consult the various materials it holds.

Since my first introduction the Mills Archive Trust has continued to grow. It has weathered the Covid storm and as it reaches its 21st birthday, its achievements as a self-funded organisation are to be applauded as it goes from strength to strength. Its vision has been to see beyond the traditional wind and watermill to embrace the importance of new technologies in mills and milling and has established some beneficial partnerships along the way. The archive's inclusive approach to access is an asset to its substantial collection, which will undoubtedly continue to grow apace supported as it is by a robust business-like management approach and due to its unique position as the only major depository for milling history.



Margaret with other trustees and volunteers at our disaster training session.

Reciprocal Heritage Partnerships

Nathan Trill

Mills cannot be separated from their history. Our Heritage Partners do not only operate, research, repair and promote mills and milling - they also help each other to do the same.



Recovering the Owlsworth IJP Collection with the help of its Millwright Manager, Paul Sellwood.

Marsh Mill, which itself had supported us as a Heritage Partner. Owlsworth now supports our mission to care for historical records, which can be used to preserve other mills and teach the broader public about milling heritage.

We want to give back more to our Heritage Partners. We promote their history and host their

We saw this first-hand on our trip to Owlsworth IJP late last year to retrieve their millwrighting collection (see p. 29). Owlsworth are specialist contractors within the building conservation sector. Within their collection we found plans for the tower mill, Marsh Mill in Lancashire - copies of plans from our archive which we had provided.

Our partnership with Owlsworth began when their millwrights needed these plans to repair



Copies of plans for Marsh Mill's sails from our archive.

collections on our website for our 100,000 annual users, and we are always willing to promote our Heritage Partners in our newsletter, social media and *Mill Memories*.

We are keen to provide discounted images and waiver copyright fees entirely for educational purposes. This year, we will restart our workshops, sharing best practices for caring for collections.

Thank you to our Heritage Partners for helping us to weather the last few years. As we recover, we hope to expand this mutual support to more institutions. So please tell mills, museums and local history groups about getting involved with the Mills Archive.

For more information, email me at: nathan.trill@millsarchive.org.



Marsh Mill, Thornton, Lancashire from the Peter Jennings Collection.

The Little Things Friends are For

Nathan Trill

Since we launched the Friends of The Mills Archive in 2007, you have kept our charity punching above its weight. From an attic with four collections to an accredited archive caring for over 3 million records, your monthly donations have allowed us to expand our abilities and reach.

Your donation this month could allow us to rent the space to care for a delicate manuscript, photograph or architectural drawing for another year. Your help will ensure that the knowledge and information contained in these records is kept safe and made accessible for research.

The following month, your support could give us the time to upload these priceless records onto our digital catalogue for a year. It only takes one item to rekindle a memory or spark an interest in a new topic.



Our treasures arrive in all sorts of packaging. Your support allows us to share them.

the history of milling accessible for everyone to enjoy. So, do not hesitate to share our newsletters and tell others about becoming a Friend at millsarchive.org.

For the third month? Your help could contribute to a research project into these new topics or give us the time to engage the public with our newsletters.

These tools allow us to promote new fields of research within milling history to attract specialist, major grant-giving organisations or make a new Friend. As we continue to uncover the importance of the collections we care for, you help us every step of the way.

We cannot thank you enough. We are also very grateful to everyone who donated to our latest appeals. Your support keeps us independent and makes



US trade journal The Northwestern Miller, being digitised by Starlina, our PhD placement (see p. 11).



Book by millwright and Friend of the Archive Dr Dave Pearce.

Hot out of the Oven

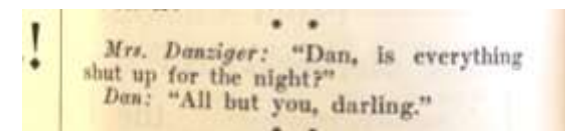
Culture in the *Northwestern Miller* magazines from 1930-1939

Starlina Rose



From the 1870s to the 1970s, the *Northwestern Miller* magazine documented the trends of the North American and global milling industry with painstaking detail, offering weekly news, commentary, advertisements, data, and (terrible) jokes to their vast readership. While the magazine's run spans the modernisation of milling in America throughout most of the 20th century, my current focus is on the decade of the 1930s, and the almost biblical struggles which defined the era in American industry, infrastructure, politics, and policy.

Right: Joke from the Northwestern Miller's 'Grist of Grins', 03/02/1932, p. 332.





Starlina and Liz showing the number of journals digitised over the course of two weeks.

My name is Starlina Rose. I am a White Rose College of Arts and Humanities (WRoCAH)-funded PhD student from the University of Sheffield. While my PhD research focuses on historical linguistics in the long 18th-century, digital heritage has become a key part of my research function, and a passion of mine. I came to the Mills Archive to do a work placement, with the aid of WRoCAH, and I am currently working with Liz Bartram and Nathanael Hodge to digitise and write about the decade of the 1930s

as depicted in the *Northwestern Miller* magazines. It was Liz who quite enthusiastically introduced me to the *Northwestern Miller* magazines and the incredible trove of perspective on American milling subculture, worldviews, biases, and vibrant personalities contained within their pages. As of writing this, I've digitised 469 *Northwestern Millers*, and am almost to the end of the decade.

Why the 1930s? The decade was bookended by the Wall Street crash of 1929 and the start of WWII in September 1939. In the intervening years, the vast Midwest, or "breadbasket" of America, experienced extensive droughts that punctuated the decade. In the March 27th, 1935 issue, C C Isely writes, "*The cows nibble at the dust-laden fodder with black mouths; the clothes snatched from the line from an impending gust have to be washed over again; daintily slippered girls, unabashed, trip down the street with dirty faces; the merchant mourns at the damage to his contaminated textiles; the sticky rolls of the printing press are gummed with pollution from the skies; electric lights are a faint blur; the sun is turned to darkness and the moon into blood.*" The realities behind this

incredibly vivid scene and others like it across America are reflected in the minutiae of regional seed purchase statistics, the crop outlooks, the write-ups about weather forecasts, and the relentless attention to flour, feed, and bread sales and demand in the *Northwestern Miller's* pages. The conditions of the milling industry were reflected less intentionally by the magazine as well. For example, between December 1930 and December 1933, the two-page spread of the "Index of Advertisers" had been halved to one page by the simple fact – mills and adjacent businesses could no longer afford to advertise or had shut down.

The in-depth look at the droughts and Great Depression is but one facet of the contents in the *Northwestern Miller*. Amongst the numbers, educated projections and beautiful hand-drawn statistical graphs that give shape to the Depression Era, there are also mill histories, profiles on milling industry luminaries such as E Cora Hind, a "Manual for Bakery Sales Girls" from 1932 that debates the merits of hiring single women versus married women, a speculative commentary in 1934 about whether a mill in New York had ceased to use the swastika as its logo because of Hitler's ascension to power in Germany, advertisements featuring female personifications of flour brands, and an industry-wide campaign to convince women that bread was a diet food. These examples are just a few I have found so far that paint the sociocultural picture of the millers, bakers, and their industry through the editorial and imaginative lens of the *Northwestern Miller*.



Above right: E. Cora Hind, from the 12/10/1932 issue, p. 107. The article reads "True, she wears mannish clothes in her field work because they are comfortable, but she is as fond of pretty clothes as any other normal woman and takes a particular delight in a woman's hobby of getting a 'bargain' in clothes."

In Defence of Cake

Liz Bartram



As some of you may know, we here at the Mills Archive are rather partial to a slice of cake (or two, or three, depending on whose birthday it is in a given week).

So imagine my delight when I chanced upon a reassuring article in a 1942 issue of the *Northwestern Miller*, giving weight to my hopes (hopefully not my body) that cake is in fact a nutritious, health-giving staple that should form part of any balanced diet.

The article was published almost one year after the USA declared war on Germany during the Second World War. Wartime presented the milling and baking industries with several challenges, including a workforce shortage and food rationing. The shortage of workers in this case meant that the Washington officials did not want to encourage over investment of human resource in the production of anything considered a 'luxury'. And if a product was



deemed a luxury, then the use of ingredients that were being rationed (sugar, for example) was difficult to justify. On the same page of the article is a small notice about the reduction of the sugar allowance for bakers, a loss of 30% on the previous year's allotment.

Is cake a luxury during wartime? Or can it be enjoyed as part of a balanced diet with the added benefit of improving morale? The millers and bakers of the time had to try to demonstrate the latter, if they wished to make a living from selling a diverse range of products.

When considering whether cakes are a luxury or a deserving wartime food, we are advised to consider three things:

1. Their food value;
2. Their economic position;
3. Their morale value.

The article reports that cake contains a variety of ingredients that offer a 'considerable number of nourishing and vital ingredients'. Most of these are easily digested, offer some vitamin and mineral content (such as calcium and iron), and are therefore 'highly recommended by nutritionists' (in 1942).



There are also different types of protein, and animal-derived protein sources are considered the most nutritious out of these. At a time when meat rationing was being considered, this made the protein from milk and eggs in cake all the more valuable.

We are advised to consider cake 'an excellent source of food energy', rather than purely as fattening. According to Dr James A. Tobey of the American Institute of Baking, "cake is one of the attractive, pleasing desserts that satisfy the appetite and promote better digestion. By giving an agreeable feeling of fullness and by stimulating the digestive juices, cake helps to condition the digestive tract for its normal function". Apparently these points were echoed by the Council on Foods and Nutrition of the American Medical Association, in its concurrent report on desserts and diets of adults and young children (Jamie Oliver would be unimpressed).

At the time of publication, there had been an increased food consumption in the United States since 1937. Reasons given for this include, in part, the increased employment rate, which in turn increased the total physical effort expended by the nation. During wartime it is also reasonable to expect that people are working longer hours in more strenuous occupations. Therefore there is an increased need for 'energy-building foods' – which is where cake comes to the rescue!

'As morale builders, desserts have a value somewhat beyond their purely nutritional function. At a time when methods and customs of living are being upended on every hand, homes broken up and numerous inconveniences imposed on the civilian population, as well as the armed forces, there is no point in extending these inconveniences and curtailments beyond what is necessary'.



The author of the article is critical of some of the officials who believed that by making life harder for people, they would come to see the importance of winning the war and so would work harder to help the war effort. The author felt that such a policy could go too far. There were growing casualties and workers were already struggling in war plants experiencing high levels of absenteeism. Therefore, adding 'cake restrictions on top of all this will only make life harder for people, not improve war production facilities or materials'.

At the end of this article, I remain to be convinced that the unhealthier aspects of cake are outweighed by any nutritional benefits (unfortunately!) but I am left with an increased awareness of the role of cake in raising people's spirits, in a way that I have never consciously thought about before. And so we will continue to celebrate birthdays and other special occasions at work with a slice of some excellent cake - purely for the benefit of workers' morale, of course.

All illustrations from the Northwestern Miller.



21 in the 21st Century

Liz Bartram

The Mills Archive Trust is awarded a £198,751 grant by The National Lottery Heritage Fund to transform local learning about the history of wind and water power and their potential to address present and future needs

Did you know that the world's first wind turbine for generating electricity was patented by a British inventor 136 years ago, in 1887?

That water power was generating electricity five years earlier?



This is a photograph of an early wind turbine, using windmill designs to generate electricity. This particular example was installed on the outskirts of Reading, in Thatcham, in the 1920s (Burne Mill, Edward Lancaster Burne Collection).

The Mills Archive Trust has just received a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant of £198,751 for an innovative heritage project, *Reading emPOWERed*, in Reading. Made possible by money raised by National Lottery players, the project focuses on preserving and sharing the history of two renewable energy sources – wind and water – by drawing on the Archive's existing records of milling heritage and encouraging the creation of new archival material and contributions.

Involving local people from a range of groups and drawing on interest and expertise nationwide, the project will explore the significance of wind and water power in the local area and the roles of local people in developing the potential of renewables to address the needs of existing and future generations.

This project has come at the right time. We are all feeling the pinch with fuel costs rising and more of us are aware of the reality of climate change and its implications. We are committed to showing how the past connects

with the present and future, through highlighting the role of wind and water power, its advocates over the years, and the efforts of generations past to deal with issues that we all continue to face today. The town of Reading and its surrounding area has its own important part in this story, which we will share with local people and raise Reading's profile on the national and international stage.

The project will also benefit from being shaped by the public, who will have a say in which parts of the archive should be explored and uncovered in more detail, and what related activities are currently taking place that should be recorded for the future.

Collaborating with other groups, including arts groups, schools, entrepreneurs, cultural groups and academics, people local to Reading will have the opportunity to participate in a lively range of activities over the next two years.

The Trust's own history is deeply connected to Reading; it was founded in 2002 by local people and has operated from central Reading ever since, with a global reach. This is the largest grant ever received by the Trust to date and will transform how we make information available and engage with wider audiences to show how the history of milling touches all our lives.

Reading Hydro, a community hydro plant, is established on the former site of Caversham Mill. In that area, there are recordings of mills since Domesday and where for hundreds of years the power of the water has been used to produce flour, textile and cork. This site now sees the generation of electricity to serve a local business and runs some of its own educational activities.



These are a Few of my Favourite Things...

Guy Boocock

Over the past 12 years, I have worked on several of the collections held at The Mills Archive, be they small, medium or large, but all important in their own way. By doing so I have garnered a real understanding of the importance of saving these collections and preserving the stories of milling, the people involved, and the roles which mills played in social history.

Celebrating 21 years of the Archive prompted me to have a look back at the collections I have worked on, and to choose some of my favourite items from within them.

Way back in November 2010 – gosh that feels like another lifetime – I was given some Dutch and Russian mill postcards to catalogue from the Mildred Cookson Foundation Collection. This was my first insight into the type of records held at the Archive, and also a good way of learning about the different types of mills there are. What I enjoyed most about these mills was their unique names and vibrant colours they were painted in. The Russian mill postcards were a challenge, as I had to translate the wording from Cyrillic to English. Google Translate wasn't always my friend as in some cases the postcards were dated before 1918 when the Russian alphabet was reduced from 37 letters to 33. Below are two of the postcards that caught my eye.



In 2012 came my chance to work on one of our biggest collections, the Stephen Buckland Collection, thanks to the Vodafone World of Difference



programme. The aim was to catalogue the most important aspects of his collection within the time restraints of the programme. His extensive notebooks were catalogued first, including his tiny first notebook from 1949 when he was 14 (JSPB-1125422) in which he has made some sketches and notes on Kentish mills. This image of Cross-in-Hand post mill with thistles in the foreground was taken at the time he made his notes in 1949.

I moved on to Syd Simmons' collection of windmill and watermill postcards, an extensive collection of images from his cycling tours of England. This image of Demas Dallaway, miller of Cherry Clack Mill, Punnett's Town (right) is a favourite for two reasons, his name, and his hat. He also looks particularly overjoyed to be having his photograph taken!



In 2013 I won the Vodafone World of Difference for a second time – this time working on the Niall Roberts Collection. Among the files and photographs was found this intricately carved Chinese miller's stamp, made of soapstone with a dragon carved on top. It belonged to a miller called Luo Shi Mo. Sadly nothing else is known about the miller or where in China he was based.





Among the Michael Harverson Collection were two travelogues. One for watermills in Iran, and the other a red album with beautifully compiled photographic and written records of his travels through the Atlas Mountains, Morocco in 1985 (left).

The Michael French Collection is a record of the French family of millers from Cambridgeshire. Included is this image of two fully-harnessed horses pulling a W French and Sons cart laden with

flour sacks outside French's Mill, Chesterton (below). Aside from the posed nature of the photograph which harks back to more traditional means of transport, the dog kennel on the right-hand side adds an element of home comfort for the miller's dog in the foreground.



Before Lockdown 1.0 I was indexing the Rex Wailes Collection from the Science Museum. A set of three pencil drawings by Anton van Anrooy were found, including this of the De Gooyer windmill, Amsterdam. Anrooy captures the imposing grandeur of this mill, which still stands (below left).



My family owned a mill in St Neots, Huntingdonshire, and while going through a scrapbook of cuttings in the Duffield Family Collection, I came face to face with my ancestors John and Wellwood McNish in a cutting from "The Miller" in 1910 (above right). It reported on the rebuilding and reopening of the mill after a disastrous fire in 1909.

After Ron and Mildred had published "Mills at War", I was asked to catalogue the postcards and photographs used in the book. Many of the postcards dated from the First World War showing images of mills destroyed by fighting. More interesting from my perspective were the messages from soldiers to loved ones on the back. One caught my eye – one Corporal Jesse Nusbaum writing to Dr Charles Lummis at Southwest Museum, Los Angeles. A little research into these individuals told me that



Jesse Nusbaum was an archaeologist, later an important figure in the American southwest's Native American and Spanish colonial cultural heritage as well as the National Park Service's first archaeologist. Dr Charles Fletcher Lummis, Nusbaum's colleague, was the founder of the Southwest Museum of the American Indian.



As part of my Masters degree in Archive Administration I had to catalogue a full collection. The Jon Sass Collection was assigned to me, and an interesting one it turned out to be. In a file relating to Flowerdew Hundred Post Mill in Virginia, USA, a mill that Jon built in the 1970s, was this proof of a series of photographs of Jon outside the mill. He looks dapper in his jaunty flatcap.



And finally, I have just completed cataloguing the Hallam Ashley Photographic Collection, and to my surprise a series of portraits, taken by Hallam, of staff at George Wailes and Co were discovered. Sadly the names of the individuals aren't known, but this young woman still sporting a victory roll hairstyle jumped out at me.

The Mills Archive Retains its Accreditation

Nathanael Hodge



It was that time again – the time when, every six years, we are inspected by a team of assessors who will decide whether we can retain our status as an Accredited Archive Service. We had already submitted the lengthy application form and copies of all of our policies and plans when we reapplied last autumn. Now we had to prove that we didn't just look good on paper but also in person.

Accreditation is a coveted mark of recognition given by the National Archives to archive services which can demonstrate that they keep to the recommended standards and guidelines. Reapplying had been a long process, involving review of all our policies as well as ensuring we had carried out the improvements recommended when we were last accredited. The assessors' visit was the final step.

There was a certain amount of nervous tension in the office in the week leading up to the visit, as well as lots of last minute frantic tidying, rereading the documentation and stocking up on tea and biscuits for our guests! However as it turned out we needn't have worried. The assessing team, lead by the National Archives' Melinda Haunton, were both friendly and professional, asking insightful questions and taking an interest in every aspect of our work. When the visit was over, we were hopeful, but still had to wait a couple of weeks for the outcome.

At long last we found out we had been successful! A lengthy report from the assessors gave detailed feedback, mostly very positive, along with some suggested actions for improvement. They concluded that we are "an effective and ambitious specialist service which is developing its strategy effectively as its operating context changes." Now that we have heard the result, all that remains is to arrange a date for the presentation of the certificate, when I'm sure there will be plenty of photos taken which we will share in a future *Mill Memories*.

Bridging the Gap: Milling History and the Modern Industry

Liz Bartram

One challenge – or rather opportunity – has been to build a relationship between the Trust and the modern milling industry. For us there is a clear connection: history has shaped the present and provides a valuable perspective on today's issues. Knowledge and visibility of the past and present provide context for the whole story, which continues to be played out. We are also keen to encourage the preservation of contemporary records, which in the future could become important archives for our descendants.

After some years of effort, we have now established some meaningful and mutually supportive relationships in the modern milling industry, in particular with the UK Flour Millers, the Millers' Mutual Association, and most recently with the George Family Foundation.



Visiting the UK Flour Millers HQ in Arlington Street, London, in August 2022 to view their records.

milling throughout history and up to the present. It includes a timeline and articles exploring historical trends, the lives of key individuals, and interviews with some of the women working in the industry today. This showcase is available on the UK Flour Millers' website: <https://www.ukflourmillers.org/women-in-milling>

The UK Flour Millers is a trade association that sits at the heart of the industry. Their role as a representative body for the industry includes collating and sharing the collective view and position of their members. For International Women's Day in March 2022, we jointly launched an online resource with the UK Flour Millers, called 'Women in Milling'. This online resource showcases the contributions of women to

Connected to the UK Flour Millers is an organisation called the Millers' Mutual Association, an organisation with its own long history in the evolution of milling as an industry, and they have supported us with generous grants over the past six years. Most recently, we have just embarked on a new three-year project funded by the Association, called 'Millers, Memories and Megabytes':

Millers: We are committed to shining a light on their contributions for the public to see and appreciate the value of the work that all those associated with milling have contributed historically and today, often in difficult circumstances.

Memories: Their stories need to be captured now, before they are lost. The stories also need to be provided in a variety of engaging and accessible ways both for those in the industry now and the future, as well as milling heritage enthusiasts, young people and the general public. One way we will do this is by creating oral histories, a first for the Mills Archive.

Megabytes: We all depend on digital nowadays, to access and share information, connect with places and people, discovering things about ourselves and wider society. The same is true for the gathering, preservation, organisation and dissemination of archival and educational information. Like the milling industry today, the Trust is dependent on its digital infrastructure and rapidly changing technology, which requires a constant investment.



The UK Flour Millers/Millers' Mutual archives were transferred to us in March 2023 (see p. 29). They will be an important priority in the next few years.

We have also just received their archive, which is an historically significant and fascinating time capsule of the past 100+ years of the UK industry's landscape. Over the next couple of years we will be working to catalogue this collection and will share some of its highlights with you.

The George Family Foundation is a recently-established grant giving organisation, with a strong connection to the milling industry, and which has pledged to make a generous annual donation. The George family has been involved in milling for more than 100 years, and has been responsible for building the considerable success of the Whitworths company, which is now the UK's largest milling outfit. The head of both Whitworths and the Foundation is Martin George. Martin's grandfather, Frank, started working for Whitworth Bros in 1905 as a milling apprentice. Before long, he was running the mill for the family and bought the business when the original owners retired in the late 1920s. The business has gone from strength to strength, and in the last 15 years, their share of the market has grown from 1% to nearly a third.

Having invested time in building relationships, it is a rewarding feeling to gain recognition within the modern milling industry, and we are keen to encourage the preservation of the sector's records for future generations.



Whitworth Brothers' Victoria Mills, Wellingborough, c 1900.

Recent Acquisitions Illustrate our Range

Nathanael Hodge

Three newly acquired collections demonstrate the range of material held by the Mills Archive and the themes we hope to develop

Over the course of its history the Mills Archive has acquired a wide variety of collections from various different sources. From its beginnings in the world of traditional wind and watermills, the Archive has branched out into other related areas. Our three most recently acquired collections illustrate this development – they are very different from one another, but each is a significant addition to the archives we hold in a different area.

Caring for an icon: The Owlsworth IJP Collection

The roots of the Mills Archive lie in the movement to preserve traditional mills, beginning with the efforts of Rex Wailes and the SPAB in the 1920s,



Millwright Paul Sellwood shows us some of the millwrighting work at Owlsworth IJP – in this case a metal waterwheel being rebuilt.

and continuing today with the work of millwrights, mill researchers and many volunteer groups. This remains a core area of interest for us and one in which we hope to do more work to engage the public. Our current engagement strategy expresses this theme under the heading 'Caring for an Icon'.

Our collections in this area are diverse, but some of the most significant are millwrights' collections. Where these include architectural drawings



Mildred and Nathanael looking at the records.

Originally named 'Millwrights International' and owned by millwrights David Nicholls and Chris Wallis, the firm has repaired mills throughout the UK and even in Barbados, as well as having broadened its work to include many other types of historic building repair. The plans and files we have been given are a valuable record of their work. The firm also supports us as one of our Heritage Partners (see Nathan's article, p. 6).

with details about the structure of wind and watermills, they can be essential for people working on repairing and preserving the buildings.

In December 2022 we accessioned the millwrighting records of Owlsworth IJP. Mildred, Nathan and I made a trip to their workshop and warehouse, not too far away in Reading, where we were given a tour and shown some of the mill parts they are working on, before taking a look at the records. With the help of a forklift truck and millwright Paul Sellwood's van, we were able to bring 19 boxes of material back to our stores.



The collection ready for transfer to the Archive, courtesy of Paul and his van!!

Better technology, better planet: The Peter Musgrove Collection

Another key theme for public engagement from our strategic plan is 'Better Technology, Better Planet' – our label for the work we hope to do in expanding our focus to make more of renewable energy and the use of wind and waterpower to generate electricity. While most of our archive reflects the centuries old use of wind and waterpower to create mechanical energy, some items in our collections illustrate the beginnings of electricity generation. This is an area in which we hope to grow.

Our first acquisition of 2023 was the collection of Peter Musgrove. An engineering professor at Reading University, Peter was an early advocate for off-shore wind farms in the 1970s and designed vertical axis wind turbines. He helped found the British Wind Energy Association and wrote the book *Wind Power* (2010), which tells a connected story of how humans have made use of the wind, from historic mills to modern turbines. He has also been instrumental in encouraging the Archive to develop in this area.

Peter's collection is the first major collection we have accessioned devoted solely to modern wind power. His photographs, papers and collections of press cuttings are an indispensable record of the career of a key individual in the story of the development of this power source, which now provides sometimes up to half the nation's energy on a given day. Along with archives he has also made a significant contribution to our library collection by donating his books, journals and conference proceedings.

Below: Conference proceedings from the British Wind Energy Association.



Feeding the world: The Millers' Mutual Association Collection

The final theme in our engagement strategy is 'Feeding the World'. While a very broad theme with many facets, one key aspect of this theme is the story of the development of the modern milling industry. The decline of historic mills, which motivated the efforts of figures like Rex Wailes to campaign for their preservation, was driven by the significant shift in the industry which took place with the development of roller flour milling in the late 19th century. Suddenly small local mills were going out of business, while large firms like Ranks, Hovis and Spillers, with their enormous port roller mills, began to dominate the scene.



Portrait of NABIM president James V Rank, son of Joseph Rank and brother of J Arthur Rank.

Two key institutions originating around this time which played important roles in shaping the modern milling industry in the UK were the National Association of British and Irish Millers, now UK Flour Millers, and the Millers' Mutual Association. Both organisations still exist and have been generous in their support for the Mills Archive (see Liz's article, p. 20). We were delighted when they also chose to trust us with the care of their archives.

The collection, which arrived in March, is a unique in-depth record of the history of the milling industry and related industries in the UK, from the end

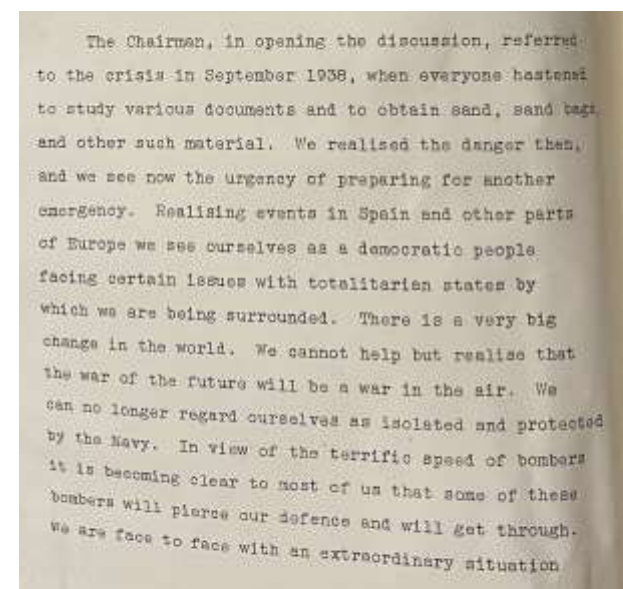
of the 19th century until the 1980s (more modern records have been retained by UK Flour Millers for the time being). Annual reports and minutes of AGMs and NABIM committee meetings chart the history of the industry over the course of the 20th century, and will include extensive details about the challenges faced during the two world wars, as well as later events such as decimalisation, the introduction of VAT and the UK's entry in the European Economic Community. Some of the early minutes



were pasted into enormous minute books like those shown here, which are fascinating to look at, although their bindings may require conservation. Along with these records the collection includes deeds of purchase for mills bought by the Association from 1929 onwards, patents, policy documents and financial documents. There are also books which will make a significant addition to our library, as well as some impressive images such as the painting opposite.

While the three collections discussed here need significant work before they will be easily accessible to researchers, we welcome any expressions of interest from potential users and can keep you up to date with our work.

Right: extract from the minutes in early 1939, discussing the possibility of war.



Indentures from the Mildred Cookson Collection

Amanda Knight

Those who receive the Mills Archive's weekly e-newsletter will have enjoyed reading Nathanael Hodge's recent piece about the oldest document in the archive, a 1552 indenture from the Mildred Cookson Collection which relates to Hockeredge Mill, Kent.



Indenture relating to land near Hockeredge Mill, 1552. MCFC-IND-057.

As Nathanael explains,

*'Indenture' is a term used to describe a variety of different types of legal deed. The name comes from the French **enderter**, from **dent** 'tooth', and describes the teeth-like indentations at the top of the document. Originally, these resulted from the fact that two copies of the text would be written at opposite ends of a large vellum sheet. It would then be cut in two with one copy given to each party to the deed. The authenticity of each copy could then be demonstrated by matching up the two halves again.*

The indentures which Mildred has collected are largely concerned with documenting dispositions of land, all of which relating in some way to mills, millers or millwrights. This article takes a look at some interesting features uncovered whilst cataloguing her collection which is available via our website at <https://catalogue.millsarchive.org/indentures-and-legal-documents>.

The majority of the indentures catalogued date from the 19th century, although there are plenty from the 17th and 18th centuries too. Some of the mills are known to us and still exist today and others await identification and indexing. In terms of geographic spread, most of the mills identified are English with just two mills from Wales and one rather surprising addition from Pennsylvania, USA. Post, smock and tower windmills feature as well as watermills and the type of produce milled at them is varied: corn mills, fulling mills, silk mills, woollen mills and bone mills all featuring.

Mildred tells us that the collection was accumulated over 30 years, principally from online auctions of legal papers from now defunct law firms. One could perhaps argue that these documents have outlived their usefulness, having served their primary transactional purpose: conveyances of land, now documented electronically at the Land Registry; grants of probate for wills long-since proved. But this ignores the secondary value which these documents hold in providing unique insights to social and historical conventions from our collective pasts as well as practical applications today.

The physical quality of the documents themselves is fascinating: the durable property of the vellum (writing material made from animal skin) on which the majority of the indentures are written is evident. All hand-made, their longevity certainly brings into focus the fragile nature of some of our more recent innovations, for example, thermally printed facsimile paper. It is also interesting to see the development in handwriting styles over the centuries. Nathanael's e-newsletter explains about the 'Secretary hand' used to write earlier documents such as the 1552 indenture. After the mid-17th century, a more familiar 'Copperplate' hand is apparent, as is the increased use of paper for appended maps, plans and legal correspondence, much of which is beautifully watermarked. However, vellum continues to be the preferred medium for recording dispositions

of property well into the 20th century, the latest example in Mildred's collection being a conveyance of Ditchingham Mill, Norfolk in June 1919 (MCFC-IND-070).

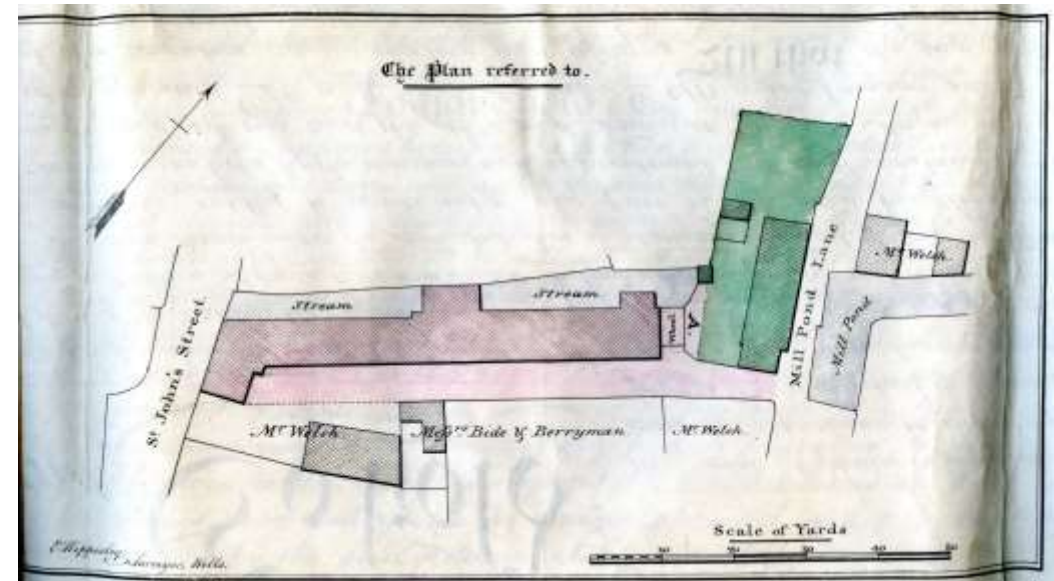


Conveyance of a windmill, house and land at Ditchingham, 4 June 1919. MCFC-IND-070-030.

Examining the execution provisions of these indentures has revealed a profusion of seals, signatures and official stamps - enough to support an entire academic paper on the topic, one suspects. However, what stands out to me are the instances where these documents are executed by a person's 'mark'. One can speculate as to the extent to which these 'marks' represent an imbalance of knowledge and power in the transactions recorded in them.

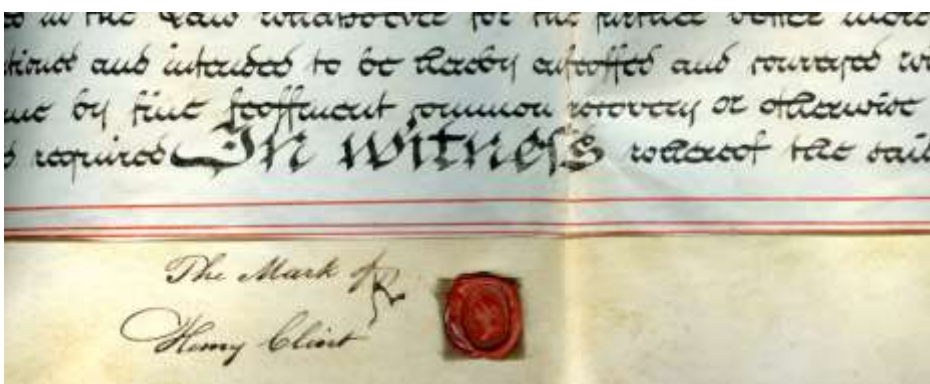
MCFC-IND-044 records a mortgage granted in 1828 over a post mill at Messingham, Lincolnshire as security for a loan of £200. The document is

signed by the miller and his wife, the latter by her mark and seal. The woman is the daughter of the previous miller and she is a party to the document by virtue of her inheritance of the mill. Up until the Married Women's Property Act 1882, a woman's property became her husband's on marriage and whilst she was still required to be a party to any disposition of that property, it was generally accepted that the decision whether and how to dispose of it was for the husband alone. The fact that our miller's wife signs by her mark suggests she is illiterate however, and one hopes that she was fully aware of what she was signing. Coincidentally, it was not long after this transaction that the Fines and Recoveries Act 1833 was passed. This introduced a provision to require any woman selling property jointly with her husband to be assessed separately by a public commissioner, to certify that she understood the nature of the transaction and to ensure that she was not being forced into it against her will. An example of one of these certificates can be seen at MCFC-IND-003 concerning an 1845 sale of a watermill at St John Street, Wells.



Plan from indenture relating to the sale of water grist mills and land adjoining St John Street, Wells, 1845. MCFC-IND-003.

Nevertheless, one cannot be too sweeping in making assumptions about a person's capacity and knowledge simply from the fact that they sign by their mark. MCFC-IND-027 (below) shows the 'mark of Henry Clint' on an 1808 disposition in which he receives the sum of £1,425 as consideration for a watermill in Bewerley, Yorkshire. This equates to £66,300 today (which according to the National Archives currency converter would have been enough to buy 135 horses or pay for 9,500 days' wages for a skilled tradesman). Regardless of whether he could read or write, Mr Clint seems to have negotiated a good deal, comparing favourably with the sums exchanged on comparable watermills in the catalogue.



It is hard not to become invested in the stories of the families whose histories are captured in these indentures. The series of documents relating to Ditchingham Mill, Norfolk has had me cheering from the sidelines as time and again, a 19th century working family has mortgaged their plot of land allocated to them by the Enclosure Commissioners in return for a loan from an obliging gentleman (plus interest, of course). The jeopardy to these families will have been real and the sense of relief is almost palpable when the documents record that the loan has been repaid in full.

With so much of our heritage to be gleaned from these indentures, it is clear that their value extends well beyond their original evidential purpose. Moreover, the collection also records information which could have practical application today. MCFC-IND-022 (facing page) gives an account of trees planted at either Thoresby Park or Holme Pierrepont Hall in 1762 which could be relevant to their estates management teams

today. The file of papers about Beckery Mill, Glastonbury (MCFC-IND-069) could be helpful to the trust that has been set up to regenerate this area. The long lists of milling equipment conveyed with each transaction could assist modern millwrights in their work to preserve and maintain heritage mills. But in any event, these documents are beautiful and interesting in their own right, providing a vivid testimony about our past and we must thank Mildred [and Ron] for allowing us to make them available for all to enjoy.

An Account of all the Trees taken out of the Nurseries, and Planted in the Park, to 31. of Decem. 1762.

	No.	No.
Scotch Firs	114400	
Spruce	4508	
Larch	4580	
Lineaster	3500	
American Lines	1758	
English Oaks	46868	
Spanish Chestnuts	1550	
		177164
Scotch Firs	158898	
Spruce	8170	
Larch	10960	
Lineaster	5310	
American Line	8420	
Silver Birch by G. S.	1600	
English Oaks	2300	
Spanish Chestnuts	2006	
Elms	6409	
Cluster Cherrie	780	
		204853
Scotch	20500	
Spruce	1000	
		21500

Planted by Mr. Richardson 1761.

Planted by George Saxe 1762.

Sent to Linnepont Hall 1762.

How we Help Those who Wish to Publish Good Research

Ron Cookson

The history of milling, the mills and the people involved is a rich and constantly stimulating subject. People ask questions and often want to find the answers themselves. Having spent months or even many years checking facts, recording impressions and getting their thoughts in order, they may feel in a position to tell more people about their work and that can be difficult.

Mill groups and societies such as TIMS, the Welsh Mills Society and the Midland Mills Group publish excellent journals, attractive resources for those who wish to publish their research. In contrast book publishers are less welcoming and self-publishing can be a cost too high. This is where we can help.

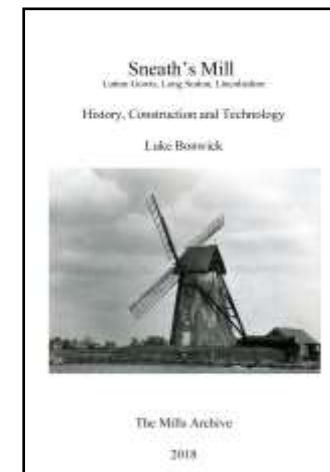
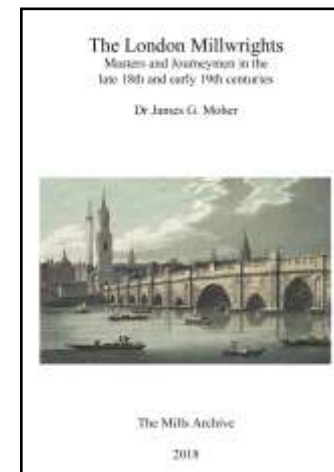
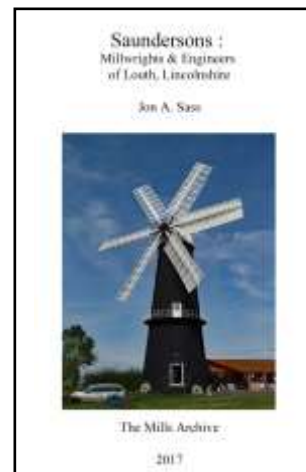
In 2006 when we received the Stephen Buckland Collection, Michael Harverson authored a book on Stephen's drawings, followed by Volume 2 in 2014. Both were published by the Mills Archive Trust as part of our remit to stimulate research and encourage greater awareness of our collections.

Before we complete our 21st year, we will have published a total of 20 books on a variety of mills and milling topics and all at affordable prices. We have only been able to do this with freely given help initially from Ian Scotter and since 2016 from Ashok Vaidya. With help from the authors, they have created a series which now attracts favourable attention. A recent independent review of "Corn and Flour Milling in Newry" (2022) concluded:

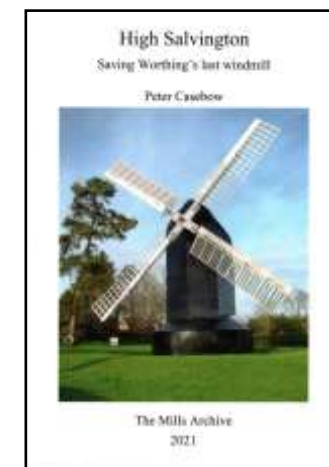
"This is a comprehensively, even lovingly, researched and amply illustrated work, as evidenced by the near-1,000 footnotes... The Mills Archive Trust and the author deserve acknowledgement in creating what could well be a template for other local historians to adopt for their own sectors."

This gratifying comment illustrates our thinking behind the publications: not to make a profit from the books, but to stimulate more research and future publications. As long as the topic is interesting and well-researched, it does not have to be about our holdings!

We already have a number of books on mills in particular regions as well as topics as varied as sugar, cement and warfare. We are keen to develop stories about milling families or people associated with a particular mill. If there is sufficient interest, we can provide more details. For now, the illustrations show our books on millwrighting, providing a snapshot of what we have done so far to help authors to publish their work.

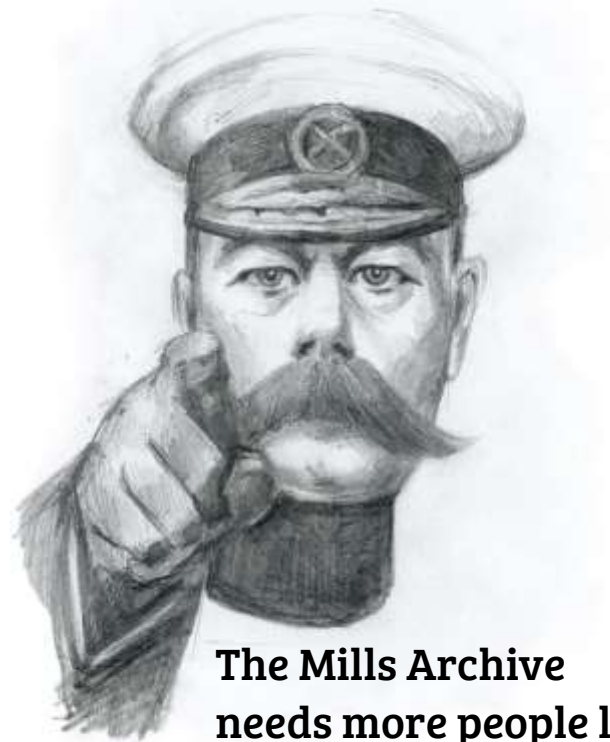


And two books that underline the role of volunteers in saving a windmill:



All these books and downloadable PDFs are available from the Mills Archive's bookshop: <https://millsarchive.org/MARP/>.

RECRUIT A NEW FRIEND FOR THE MILLS ARCHIVE TRUST



The Mills Archive
needs more people like

YOU

"I am very proud to be a Friend of the Trust ... it works tirelessly to liberate important historic material and has grown exponentially... The Mills Archive will always be an institution which is very close to my heart."

- James, Friend of the Mills Archive Trust

The support of the Friends of the Mills Archive Trust motivates us to not only preserve but also promote the history of mills and milling. You share our belief that everyone should understand and value the essential role played by milling, not only in our history but in our lives today.

We need to find more people like you, people who are passionate about our shared heritage. All of you, present and future Friends, ensure that our amazing collections will remain freely available for all.

Do you know anyone who would want to help us achieve our goal? They might be members of your local history society, academics, friends who live in or near a mill, or people you know whose family members were (and maybe still are!) involved in milling. We would love to hear from them and welcome them to the Friends of the Mills Archive Trust.



Please encourage your friends, family and acquaintances to support us by becoming a Friend of the Mills Archive Trust. Share our newsletters, Mills Memories (we can send you another copy!) and direct them to our website at millsarchive.org. Alternatively, they can contact us at friends@millsarchive.org.

We are very grateful to all our Friends for your ongoing support and sharing our e-newsletters. The Trust relies on our community of like-minded individuals who value our milling heritage. Thank you!

We enjoy what we do so much more when we are reminded that our efforts are not just useful, they are valued.

- Dr Ron Cookson, Chairman of The Mills Archive Trust



Charity No: 1155828



Cover: Illustrations from covers of The Northwestern Miller and American Baker, May 1, 1935 (front) and November 3, 1937 (rear).



Mill Memories is
edited by
M Cookson and
N Hodge

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