



Open day and art workshop ~ p. 18

Introduction

Liz Bartram

What you hold in your hands is the concluding anniversary edition of Mill Memories, celebrating our 21st birthday. We asked several people to contribute articles giving their memories of the trust over the last two decades, and this issue features contributions from our former colleague Elizabeth Trout (p. 7), long time supporter Alan Gifford (p. 16) and collection donor Lynn Holman (p. 22), as well as an article from Mildred about one of our proudest moments, receiving the Queen's Award (p. 33).

This year has seen a growth in our engagement and outreach activity, made possible for the most part by the National Lottery Heritage Fund (which you can read about on p. 10). We've been able to trial a new workshop in collaboration with a local arts charity, which we enjoyed just as much as the participants (p. 18), and we have plenty more activities in store! Our team has also been joined by Rachel Riddell, our new Information & Engagement Manager. Working on the Lottery project, Rachel will help us to develop our offering to existing users over the next two years, including researchers and supporters like yourself, and to attract new audiences in the future.



The team at the recent workshop.

The Lottery project's theme – renewable energy – is particularly apt as it echoes the need facing the Trust as we approach our 22nd year and the coming decades. How can we ensure that the Mills Archive Trust is sustainable, so that we can continue to provide a safe home for the records of milling heritage for many years to come? Our colleague Nathan Trill writes about some of the ways you can add your strength to our own (see p. 12 and p. 30).

We invite you to join us in our journey into the future. We have already done so much thanks to your support, and I hope that many of you will decide to remain our travelling companions.

Introducing Rachel

Rachel Riddell



I'm Rachel, the new Information and Engagement Manager. I've been hired to look after our project, Reading EmPOWERed, which is funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and made possible by lottery players.



I have a somewhat eclectic background. I'm Australian, but spent most of my childhood in London. When I was 15, my parents decided to move back home. After finishing school, I started my adult life out as a model on reality TV, and then changed paths completely to study theology at undergraduate level. During this time, I worked in academia as a researcher and copy editor for some prolific scholars, which turned out to be something that would take me through my twenties – allowing me to also personally write and publish academically. I have published (or have forthcoming) 11 academic pieces so far – mainly on the history of Islam and/or Christianity. I eventually moved back to England, undertaking an MA in History at the University of Birmingham. In my dissertation, I specialised in Medieval Latin, translating and interpreting manuscripts to discern differences in English clothing pre- and post-Norman conquest.

After finishing my studies, I applied for jobs, knowing I wanted to work full-time in the archiving industry. I very happily came across the Information and Engagement Manager role at the Mills Archive Trust, which I work in today. The Mills Archive Trust is a brilliant employer: its employees and volunteers are kind, interesting and intelligent people, and our jobs are filled with variety, colour and challenge. I am very excited about the Reading EmPOWERed project – it highlights our important milling heritage, while bringing together the community through the exploration of both local and global renewable energy initiatives.

I look forward to much learning and growing from our workers and our archives, reminiscent of how the winds change and the waters flow.

Volunteer Callout

Rachel Riddell

As detailed on pages 10 and 11, our new project, Reading EmPOWERed, has been set up to reach new audiences, with a particular focus on exploring the development of renewable energy. We need two types of volunteers to help us do this:



1) **Archive Dynamos** will interpret and discover.

You will help us go through our existing records and find new links and connections – you'll be a fresh pair of eyes. You'll become familiar with our holdings, influencing how we grow and change them. We'd love you to be able to advise on cultural sensitivity, decolonisation of old writings and on how we should interpret our information in a modern world.

2) **Current Contributors** will collaborate and create.

You will take the interpretations of our Archive Dynamos and transform them into engaging, user-friendly material. We want to expand our education outreach – you will have the opportunity to create teaching packs, write articles, contribute to digital exhibitions and help with local organisational collaboration.

Do either of these roles interest you? If so, email our Information and Engagement Manager at rachel.riddell@millsarchive.org



Workshops

Nathan Trill

In the coming months, the Mills Archive will hold workshops on caring for archival collections online. In a series of two-hour Zoom sessions, covering different topics, we aim to help heritage organisations and individuals meet the task of preserving records and meeting modern archival standards.



Our 2017 Caring for Your Collection workshop.

While originally for mills and other heritage institutions, we aim to preserve records where they exist and collections as they are created. Vulnerable records can be found in mills, museums and homes across the world. Digital workshops will enable us to reach more of them and expand our shared network to protect records.

But what is a record? They are old manuscripts, photographs and architectural plans but also emails, recent documents and digital files. History is not stopping, nor should our efforts to preserve it.

The breadth of available records requires a plethora of topics to be covered: from deciding what material to keep and preventing decay to cataloguing and preserving digital records.

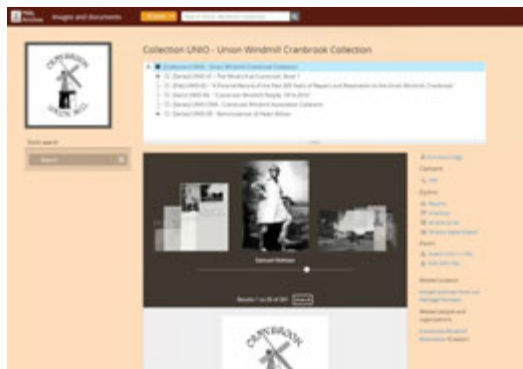
To tailor sessions to you, please tell us what archival challenges you face in preserving your collection.



Preserving mill photos in our 2014 workshop.

Let us know and express your interest at nathan.trill@millsarchive.org. Heritage Partners attend regular workshops for free. Otherwise, the price of each workshop is £25.

The Archive hosts the digital collections of traditional mills on our catalogue to make them accessible to the public. We would be happy to discuss this and other topics in bespoke workshops. These could include study days into the history of a particular mill or ways to better advertise events to your local communities.



The digital collection Union Windmill, Cranbrook on our catalogue.

Our workshops have already helped volunteer-led mills care for their collections:

An interesting and profitable day... You had all put a lot of thought and hard work in the preparation... The sessions were nicely structured and yet left time and opportunity to flower in the open discussions that followed and covered a lot of ground.

— High Salvington Windmill

Thank you so much for such a stimulating, inspiring and extremely informative workshop... the workshop has really given me the confidence as I felt a little nervous to be taking on such a massive project alone. I now feel focused and confident with how I will set about this project.

— Brixton Windmill

If you have a collection or know of volunteers in a heritage institution that would benefit, sign up for our Caring for Your Collection workshop. Send me topics you would like to see covered. Also, let us know whether the morning (10–12am) or afternoon (2–4pm) would suit you best and I will be in touch.

We hope to see you there.

Memories of the Archive

Elizabeth Trout



Elizabeth sorting books with volunteer Alex.

Looking back over the 12 years that I was at the Mills Archive (2008–2020), I am in awe at the achievements over that time. I joined as a volunteer from a career in libraries. Ron impressed me with his grand plans to create a specialist archive for the milling industry and to change public perception of archives and how they operate. The Mills Archive was to become the centre of

excellence for milling research; a lofty ambition when funding was scarce and it was staffed by a few volunteers and mill enthusiasts. It was necessary to “think outside the box”.

The Work Experience Programme that I set up in 2010 brought rapid changes to the way the Archive worked and raised the standards of archive cataloguing. A constant stream of enthusiastic, intelligent and technologically capable volunteers undertook big archive cataloguing projects; others were involved in development and fundraising projects. Being part of the period of phenomenal growth was exciting, dynamic and highly creative. Having young people around was fun. Older volunteers gained renewed vigour and excitement to embrace new ideas and technology with enthusiasm, initiative, problem solving, a ‘can do’ attitude. Volunteers given responsibility



Elizabeth lighting candles on the cake she made for our 10th anniversary party in 2012.

for their projects often developed a bigger project that was launched online. They also suggested new approaches and practical solutions to operational problems.

Many of the work experience volunteers were from Reading University and the Careers Department invited the Mills Archive to host students on the Internship Programme. However long work experience volunteers stayed, their projects were significant in growing the online archive collections. In turn, the skills and experience they gained helped launch their professional careers in archives, museums and libraries. Some of the volunteers stayed and made a significant impact on the way the Mills Archive is managed and operates. Much has already been said about the work and contributions of Nathanael, Liz, Guy and Nataliya.

The Mills Archive has established itself as a nationally recognised centre of excellence. It is listed on the register of Archives at the National Archives and the Archives Hub for academic researchers as well as an entry in the Directory of Rare Books and Special Collections. Ron was awarded the MBE in 2012.



Another cake, this time for the Accreditation award in 2015

In 2015, the Mills Archive became an Accredited Archive under the new National Archives standards which was an immensely proud moment for staff and volunteers. Nathanael became a qualified Archivist and the archive continues to thrive under his care. As Information Manager, I answered enquiries from mill researchers and family historians and helped visitors and academics from all over the world. Visitors were thrilled at the amount of archival material that they could view without limit. They were pleased to be able to do further research in the library and grateful that Mildred was available to answer milling and technical questions.

The presentation of the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service in 2019 was an amazing accolade and testament to the work of the trustees, staff and volunteers, past and present. It has become a remarkable and nationally significant archive in 20 years, creating a huge legacy for the milling world. Important milling collections have been saved and are kept in secure archival standard storage facilities. The Mills Archive continues to meet the standards set for all archives and demonstrates all that can be achieved with well trained volunteers who benefit from good quality archival work experience. The Mills Archive has not rested on its laurels

but continues to "think outside the box" with the "Archiving @ Home Hub", launched in 2020, enabling remote volunteers to transcribe documents, adding significant information to the archive records. I am glad to have been a part of the phenomenal success of the Mills Archive.



Left: Book repair training at Berkshire Record Office (now the Royal Berkshire Archives).

Right: Helping to unload part of the Rex Wailes collection when this was transferred from the Science Museum in 2019.



Reading emPOWERed

Rachel Riddell

Earlier this year, the Mills Archive Trust received our largest grant to date, the sum of £198,751. This was donated by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, made possible by National Lottery players, and is funding our new two-year project: Reading EmPOWERed.

Reading EmPOWERed focuses on raising awareness among the local community by writing a new history on the development of wind and water power and providing access to our extensive records of over four million items. Reading is a wonderfully diverse community, and at the Mills Archive, we love the fact that diversity brings different voices to the fore. We want to capture these voices, as the history of milling is global: it is relevant to many more aspects of today's society than one might think.



This is evidenced in our research work and records. After traversing the Middle East for information on mills, our former trustee Michael Harverson wrote, "around 5000 years ago, when the Sumerian civilisation became established in what the Greeks called Mesopotamia, water management

assumed a crucial role in the survival and prosperity of the population". Historical water management in the Ancient Middle East was carried out by the use of *norias* (giant water wheels that gather water in attached compartments as they turn); and by Archimedean screws, which are used in modern mills and other structures today (evidenced by our local renewable-energy-practicing champion, Reading Hydro).



So how can we use the milling history of our ancestors to have a global perspective on the development of renewable energy? This is what Reading EmPOWERed has been created to do; we need local voices of all ages and backgrounds to tell us their stories and interpret our records, identifying new links and patterns within them.

We're in conversations with the Reading Ukrainian Community Centre, Jelly (a local collaboration of artists), Reading University, and we're exploring collaborative opportunities with organisations that promote perspectives different to our own. We've held two Heritage Open Days: an exhibition and an art workshop, which attracted a multitude of people, of all ages, ethnicities and stages (see pp. 18-21).

In terms of benefitting our existing audience (ie. those who are already mill enthusiasts, just like us) we want to capture our discoveries in multiple formats: digitally, educationally and visually. We're going to be producing material that will then be made visible; investing in research that will be of interest to everyone.

If you would like to know more about how you can get involved, contact our Information and Engagement Manager at rachel.riddell@millsarchive.org. Also see page 4 for more information on volunteering roles.



People Appeal

Nathan Trill

Thank you to all of you who supported our previous appeals. You have enabled us to preserve and safely store the archival collections of millers, millwrights, researchers and more. In our latest appeal, launched in October, we are focusing on the best assurance for their legacies—developing the skills of the next generation.



Just some of the new collections we received in the last year.

It will fall to our volunteers and interns to preserve our shared heritage. We need your help to give them the space and training to prepare for this challenge.

Costs are rising quickly: an extra 50% on our offsite storage here, an extra 40% on archival packaging there. Meanwhile, volunteers must preserve a record number of new collections.

History is being rediscovered and created all the time. With your generous support, our volunteers and interns will rise with the tide, keeping our educational charity independent and accessible to all.

An ex-volunteer himself, our Archivist understands the need to invest in the next generation. With the help of experienced volunteer Amanda, he guided our first under-18 volunteer, Tzipi.



I even had a go at appraising old archival material, sorting through the useful and beautiful collections of architectural plans, building contracts and letters, which was really fun and made me feel like Indiana Jones.

—Tzipi.

Tzipi "enjoyed this placement enormously", going behind the scenes at the Archive.

Tzipi helped give a new lease of life to the Gelder and Kitchen Collection, a Hull architectural firm, that was destined for the skip before

we saved it in 2017. At the same time, she gained vital experience for university applications and her future career.

Due to their size and number, we measure the care of collections in years. Volunteers race to prevent further decay. Then, they order the boxes, check for relevance, repack, sort, list and add their details to our catalogue. Finally, they must scan, describe and upload records online.

This process costs £7,370 for 2926 records—the amount our volunteer Guy digitised from the mill researcher and photographer, Stephen Buckland's collection. This is only a portion of the 70 boxes of records. "The level of detail in his descriptions of each mill he visited is, quite frankly, astonishing" wrote Guy. With five boxes left, you can help Guy make this meticulous research available to millwrights, researchers and the public.

Your generous donations have made these archival feats possible. But there is much work left to do. With your support over the coming months, our volunteers will be trained and ready to care for millions of records.

To find out more about the work of our volunteers and how to donate, visit our website: millsarchive.org/people-appeal.

Alternatively, you can donate via cheque or bank transfer. More information can be found below.

£500 allows us to rent the work areas our volunteers use to preserve collections for one month.

£250 could pay for 12 hours of training and managing the work of volunteers to give them the archival skills they need.

£50 is required for a volunteer to sort ten photographs and for the archival packaging to prevent their decay.

£25 is equivalent to the staff time to manage volunteers to catalogue and digitise 55 sketches and photographs.

Help our volunteers to tell you about the discoveries they make in our catalogue and newsletters. Help them safeguard our milling history and acquire the experience they need to find success in the Mills Archive and beyond.

Please make Sterling cheques payable to "The Mills Archive Trust".

Please send cheques to the address below, or get in touch if you would prefer to make a direct bank transfer.

Watlington House
44 Watlington Street
Reading
RG1 4RJ



Guy has been instrumental in preserving the collection of the Millers' Mutual Association, pictured here.

Red Rot Consolidation

Nathanael Hodge

Recently at the Archive we have been hard at work conserving these enormous minute books from the Millers' Mutual Association. New tanning processes in the late 19th-20th centuries mean that leather bindings from that time decay easily, crumbling into a fine red powder known as 'red rot'. These minute books included some particularly bad cases. Thanks to some training from Sue from the Royal Berkshire Archives, we were able to prevent further decay by the application of a gel which consolidates the leather. These records are now in a suitable state to be used and consulted by researchers.



Some of my Mill Memories

Alan Gifford

In 1972 the Gifford family were given, as a present from my mother-in-law, a family pass to Dept of Environment properties. During a holiday in Suffolk that year it took the family to Saxtead Green post mill - my first mill! Yes, I could see how it worked but there still seemed a lot to learn to satisfy my engineering background. I then obtained from the library a copy of John Reynold's *Wind and Watermills*, and quickly looked for a guide to windmills round my county of Derbyshire - there wasn't one! In the meantime, I found Midland Mills Group (MMG) and soon became an active member on the committee, eventually becoming chairman for many years. There I made many lifelong friends and decided to write the book *Derbyshire Windmills*, using the knowledge I was gaining. Holidays became mill centred and quickly focussed on tours round Holland and

mills in the Anjou region in France. I well remember the first talk I gave was on our first Dutch holiday and I showed a slide where I said the sails were "Dekkerised" - a wild looking man who I did not know leapt up and shouted "That's not Dekkerised!" - and then rambled on the subject - I had met Mr Hawksley for the first time!



Alan Gifford with other volunteers at Heage Tower Mill.

My interest quickly included watermills, because I soon ran out of easily accessible windmills in Derbyshire and again found no guidebook existed - so I wrote *Derbyshire Watermills*. With a caravan in tow we toured the country on mill seeking holidays - Lincolnshire, Suffolk and south to Kent and north to Cumbria and Northumberland etc. I joined the SPAB Mills Section and soon was a committee member. Through SPAB my circle of mill contacts extended and I met up with so many likeminded people.

A holiday nominally based on Natural History in Crete in 1992 quickly changed when I spotted lots of wind and watermills. It changed even more when the English guide, domiciled in Crete, was found to be very mill oriented. Suffice to say this expanded into my organising two mill tours in Crete and one in the Greek mainland. These were very revealing both for the mills we found but also for the culture we enjoyed.

Over the years I gave many talks to local organisations on wind and water mills and I was contacted in the 1980's by Derbyshire County Council, who owned Heage windmill but knew little about it - 'Could MMG Group provide guides if it opened it to the public?'. They could and we saw how neglected the Grade 2* mill was and it was clear that something needed doing. So Heage entered into my life. We formed a Charitable trust and eventually got her restored to working order - now seen as a major, flour milling, tourist attraction for the County. In my mid 90's, after 25 years, I am fortunately still able to be an active Trustee. And my best mill memory - it has to be the moment when I first saw the six sails at Heage Windmill turn in the wind - after 80 years of idleness and so much effort to make it happen!



Alan Gifford carrying out rust removal on the wallower at Heage

When I first heard news on the 'Mills Telegraph', back in about 2000, that a repository for old mill records, photographs etc. was being proposed it seemed too good to be true. Prior to this records were scattered all over the place - I remember my trying to get a copy of H E Simmon's records of Derbyshire Mills and going to London to copy them myself in the Science Museum; and seeing dusty piles of paper in the basement of SPAB which were not controlled or recorded in any way. The Mills Archive had to be better and from its onset I have regularly supported it all the way. It's hard to believe that that was 21 years ago and it has matured into perhaps the primary internationally recognised home of milling data. The milling world has a lot to thank the pioneers who brought 'Mills Archive' to life for.

Open Day and Workshop

Rachel Riddell

On Friday 15th September 2023, as part of our Heritage Open Days offering, the Mills Archive set up an exhibition on The Development of Renewable Energy. The exhibition displayed artefacts and records spanning history, including items from the Iron Age to today. We also had a special section about our Reading EmPOWERed project, pointing visitors to the future. This included information on our project goals, highlighted organisations we are collaborating with; and displayed some of the key renewable energy initiatives that are happening in the UK.



Finally, we had a separate section on the history of Reading, which, as a town, has a rich history of promoting sustainability. The University of Reading alone is a world leader in learning and innovation in renewable energy. Examples include their development of a Renewable Energy MSc; as well as the creation of the viral Climate Stripes picture, developed by Professor Ed Hawkins from the University, and featured on the cover of Greta Thunberg's The Climate Book. We were also very privileged to have our founder, Mildred Cookson, as a guide during the exhibition. She

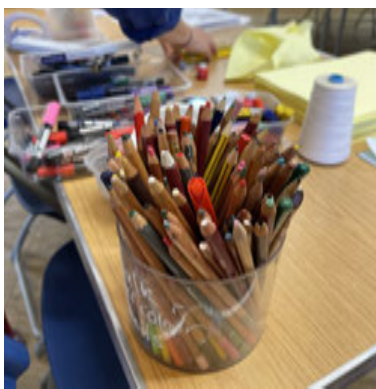
has a wealth of knowledge from her own records, including her experiences as a local miller for 30 years.

The exhibition was a great success. Because we catered for different audiences (eg. Traditional mill enthusiasts up to renewable energy buffs), a diverse range of people visited us, including mill house owners, renewable energy lecturers, and artists. We received feedback commenting on how brilliant it is that we are "preserving our glorious heritage", as well as another saying the Trust is a "treasure trove" of information. We're aiming to host a bigger exhibition in the future to follow up on the success of this one.



The next day, on Saturday 16th September, we collaborated with Jelly Artists to host an art workshop, which focused on mills, milling and our Reading EmPOWERed project. The workshop lasted for a few hours and was drop-in, giving people the flexibility to come and go as they pleased. Our staff and volunteers put together a display of mill-related items, including wooden sculptures, an Iron Age quern and grain measures filled with rice. Emma, our Jelly Artist, was excellent in engaging with the participants and giving them different things to create – most people created paper wind sculptures with their art, which can be seen in the pictures shown overleaf.

Nathanael, our archivist, ran a station on calligraphy, which almost every participant took part in. We were again very pleased with the turnout – we had people of all ages and stages turn up, from single adults to families with young children. We're already following up on the success of this event by planning future events with Jelly, so watch this space!



Finally, we'd like to acknowledge the National Lottery Heritage Fund for funding these events, made possible by Lottery players. As a charity, we rely on external funding to run events and our day-to-day activities, so we are very grateful for their support.



The Holman Archive

Lynn Holman

On a snowy January afternoon in 2012, together with his two children, we scattered the ashes of Geoff Holman (1937-2011) around his favourite Holman windmill at Stelling Minnis. Soon after we decided to give the remainder of the Holman Bros archive to the Mills Archive and to make a donation to cover its cataloguing and conservation. We included Geoff's many photographs of mills – he had been a professional photographer – and his collection of old postcards, a few milling books and his brief memoir based on facts and anecdotes about the family millwrighting firm in Canterbury which was closed in 1969 after about 120 years when his father, Tom Holman (1908-2000) by then an agricultural engineer, retired.



Left: a badly damaged 1937 photograph of Stelling Minnis Windmill from the Holman Collection.

In some respects, an easy decision since Geoff had long known and admired Ron and Mildred Cookson for their work and their passion but in others more complicated because Tom, a charming but mercurial and parsimonious man had a decade or two earlier gifted much of the collection, including some of the all-important drawings to the University of Kent at Canterbury and some to Canterbury Cathedral Archives, with a few



Other items in the collection.

artefacts going to Canterbury Museum, changing location as he lost patience with, as he saw it, the lack of results. Having refused to be interviewed by the authors, he was particularly vituperative about a printed booklet on the firm which ascribed noble origins to a firmly



Conservation work being carried out on the ledgers.

'ordinary' Kent family of bakers, millers and millwrights with related coopers, shipwrights, ship owners and even a marine painter. Hardly the authors' fault since this spuriously documented legend had been built on the marine painter's desire to obtain better commissions.

As a former librarian I well understood the technical difficulties, the financial requirements and the time it takes to undertake the

necessary work. I am very pleased that all these collections now have online catalogues of the Holman donations but eternally grateful that the Mills Archive, specifically Nathaniel Hodge, Guy Boocock, Elizabeth Trout, Judith Wiesner, Vincent Pargeter, Rob Cumming and Mildred Cookson, worked so hard on some unpromising material including some of the firm's large daybooks covered in red rot. Dull entries relating to visits and payments to the uninitiated but set in context revealing much about the firm, its employees and its work over time on Kentish and surrounding mills. Geoff would have been delighted, as his family is.



The family visited in 2014 to view results of work on the collection.

Revolutionary Turbines

Nathan Trill

In 1829, the French *Société d'encouragement pour l'industrie nationale* announced a prize of 6,000 francs 'for the application [...] of hydraulic turbines'. A relic of the Napoleonic era, the society continued to promote new inventions after years of war and economic stagnation.

France was ideal for developing the turbine. Its waterways and uneven topography made waterpower abundant; the prohibitive cost of transporting coal overland made steam less so. Even by the 1840s, the country's textile and metal industries overwhelmingly relied on hydropower. From its geography to politics, this context would shape the inventor who turned wheels into turbines—Benoît Fourneyron.



A French watermill in Saône-et-Loire from the Niall Roberts Collection.

Born in Saint-Étienne in 1802, the son of a surveyor, Fourneyron quickly gained an aptitude for engineering. He graduated from *l'école des mines de Saint-Étienne* at 17 where he studied under the engineer Claude Burdin. Burdin coined the term '*turbine hydraulique*' in 1822 for his wheels, which allowed water to act on their entire surface simultaneously. Despite their later stormy relationship, Fourneyron admitted that, without Burdin, France would have been long 'deprived [...] of these admirable machines.'

By 1821, Fourneyron was employed in the forges owned by the Pourtales family. Providing a feeble output due to regular flooding, their waterwheel at Pont-sur-l'Ognon required a more efficient mechanism even when submerged. Four years of work yielded a solution in 1827—the modern turbine. With an efficiency of 83%, Fourneyron's invention produced six horsepower, but its most significant contribution was its surrounding casing. This maintained the required pressure in varying conditions, ensuring Fourneyron's 6,000 francs prize from the *Société d'encouragement* in 1833.

Between 1827–1835, Fourneyron's turbines reached 60 horsepower, earning another award at the Exposition of Paris in 1839. Newfound fame propelled him to the *Legion d'Honneur*, bestowed by King Louis-Phillipe.

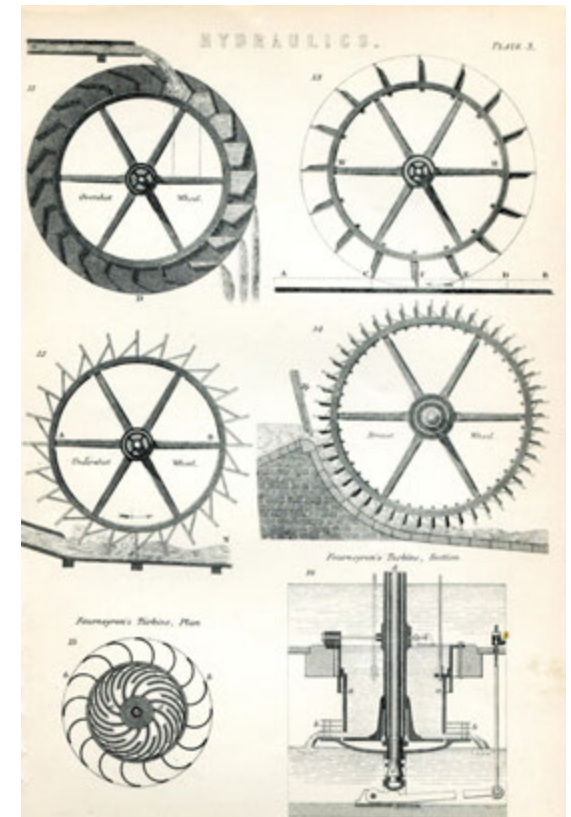
However, both Fourneyron and his royal patron found themselves swept up in the revolutionary year of 1848. The ardently liberal Fourneyron was elected to the Constituent Assembly for his native Loire and to repay Louis-Philippe, he voted to oust the monarchy and establish the Second French Republic.

While never enjoying the same electoral success, Fourneyron served successive governments, including in a committee of public hygiene. Here he plied his engineering skills to discover the source of subterranean flooding in Paris in 1856.

Further opportunities to promote science arose on the admissions juries of the 1862 and 1867 International Exhibitions. Overwork prior to the latter Exhibition in Paris was blamed for his fatal stomach illness.

He willed large sums of money to the poor, students and the sciences. Still, his most enduring legacy was his turbine. A hundred were used in France between 1832--62. In this time, his machines spread globally. A Fourneyron-style turbine was even used to generate electricity from Niagara Falls in 1895.

Today hydropower makes up about 10% of total electricity production in France. From the traditional water wheel, Fourneyron paved the way for the future of hydropower.



Engineers of Achievement: Your support is making a difference to people's lives

Liz Bartram

In the past couple of years, in spite of Covid, we've been fortunate to fund three internships, providing work experience to young people like Hayden. Hayden was a fairly recent graduate who had done some volunteering for us in the past, and was looking to build up experience in the heritage sector. He was a pleasure to work with and as a result of his work, he was able to apply for a job in London in a records management capacity at a record office, and got the job! We keep in touch and he still helps support our social media activities.



In collaboration with a school work experience officer, we are looking to provide a work experience programme for some Year 11 students. Providing opportunities like this for young people is something I feel passionate about, as I can see the value and wish I had had the same opportunities. We also provide taster sessions for people considering a new career or move into

archives but are unsure about exactly what is involved. With our own experiences in what sort of training and exposure is useful to get onto courses and for careers in archives and heritage, we enjoy sharing our insights.

This is one of the most personally satisfying parts of working for the Trust: supporting people trying to get work experience and find a place for themselves in the world. This journey is one I can relate to, my role here began as a volunteer some 10 years ago, and I never left! I'm a mentor for Reading University as well and find that much of my time talking to our

work experience volunteers and paid interns is about confidence building and providing support. It's really rewarding when you see a person start to open up and flourish. During mentoring sessions it became clear that pathways into work were especially hindered during Covid. Our resulting remote volunteering facility enabling people to transcribe some of our handwritten documents from their own homes, has proved mutually beneficial, helping to open up our collections and make them more discoverable. We've even identified a potential publication opportunity, thanks to the contributions of a number of transcribing volunteers. Watch this space for more information on that!

A final message to our friends and supporters: it is only because of your support that we are able to provide these opportunities. You are playing a vital role in helping to shape people's lives for the better – perhaps an unexpected by-product of preserving and sharing milling history – and I know they would join me in thanking you for your support.



Why I'm an Archive Trustee Martin Savage



My interest in mills started at an early age. As a child, I lived near to Watford in Hertfordshire. At that time Moor Mill at Bricket Wood was still functioning (contrary to many texts) and was operated on a very small scale by a family of smallholders. We made frequent visits to buy eggs, flour and vegetables; I was intrigued by the workings of this watermill. Later when I lived in north-west Essex, I was a 'friend' of Ashdon Mill

at the time when it was being renovated by volunteers, with Vincent Pargeter as the millwright.

Unbeknown to me at the time, there was another link to the MAT. My French teacher at Watford Boys Grammar School was Michael Harverson.



Moor Mill, Bricket Wood, postcard from 1907.

Although we did not know it, Michael was deeply interested in mills and was travelling Europe and north Africa in school holidays. Later he went on to be a founding member of the Trust.

After three years at the University of Leeds, the first twenty years of my working life was as a crop protection consultant with the state agricultural advisory service (ADAS). I specialised in cereals and grassland, moving around England and Wales with each promotion. I even spent a year working in New Zealand. After ADAS I worked as a marketing consultant for a couple of years before joining the Crop Protection Association in a government affairs role. For the last twelve years of my working life, I was the trade policy manager at nabim (latterly UK Flour Mills) where I formed strong links throughout the modern milling industry and the farming sector which supports it.

My plans for retirement were to spend more time sitting as a magistrate in Berkshire, fishing for trout on the chalk-streams, gardening and doing craft work. Just before I retired Ron approached me with suggestion that I should become a Trustee. So why did I accept!

I was impressed by the dedication of everyone involved in the Trust and the way that a very impressive archive had been built. Ron's enthusiasm was catching so I decided that I could use my marketing experience to assist with building a sustainable income for the Trust. Recently, I have been involved with the review of the web-site. The challenge is to integrate the historical aspects of milling with the modern milling industries. The opportunities posed by wind generation of electricity is another exciting prospect. The Trust is fortunate to have archive material from around the world and we could do more to promote our activities and to form links in Europe and North America.



Michael Harverson on a trip to Morocco to look for watermills, 1985.

Legacies

Nathan Trill

Since 2007, generous gifts in wills have provided £400,000 to the Mills Archive Trust. Totalling 20% of our income over 21 years, we could not have realised our mission without these legacies.

While it would be easier to hoard our records, this would deprive us of our purpose and long-term future. Volunteers make milling records available, connecting people across the world to their past. The interest we inspire in the public and the archival skills we give to volunteers are the surest means of preserving heritage long into the future.



Heritage Open days hosted in the Founder's Room in 2018 and 2023, made possible by Helen.

Helen Major saw that people were our greatest asset. Well known in the mill world and a dedicated volunteer, she enlivened the Mills Archive with her dry wit and many abilities—her enchanting singing and poetry to name but a few. She also used her years as a Civil Service proofreader to get the best out of the work of our staff and volunteers. With this meticulous attention to detail, she added 20,000 names to our family history database.

She was proud of the Archive she helped to shape, especially our work experience programme for young people. But she saw that it could do more, and so left us a legacy in her will.

Her gift opened doors. Literally in the case of the Archive's Founder's Room. The space she opened is now used by volunteers to preserve collections and host Mills Archive events, which Helen had always helped to run. She also expanded our computer network, accommodating up to 10 volunteers at a time.

With a fund in her memory, Nathanael, our Archivist, was able to obtain an archiving qualification. Having a professional Archivist propelled us to National Archives accreditation in 2016, attracting even more collections to the Archive. Since then, Nathanael has trained young volunteers who can be found preserving heritage in institutions across the country.



From volunteer to training volunteers, Helen helped Nathanael to continue benefiting aspiring archivists.

Beginning in an attic with four collections, gifts from Helen and many others have made us into an award-winning accredited archive and source of young talent. In the coming months, we plan to tell you more about the wonderful contributions made by generous givers.

By remembering us in your will, you will bring our free educational resource to more people and start the careers of our young volunteers.

You can find out more about leaving a gift in your will on our website: millsarchive.org/gifts-in-wills/.

Alternatively, we would be happy to give you more information by email: nathan.trill@millsarchive.org.

The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service

One of the highlights of our 21 Years

Mildred Cookson

Equivalent to an MBE, the QAVS are the highest awards given to local voluntary groups in the UK, and they are awarded for life. This prestigious award commemorated the Late Queen's Platinum Jubilee. The Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee volunteering Award recognises national charities working with young people.

The Archive was only one of 281 charities to receive the award in 2019, and out of all the charities in Berkshire we were one of 6 and the only heritage organisation to receive the award. Back in 2019 The Mills Archive Trust was put forward to be nominated for this Award. We ourselves could not fill in the nomination form, but the late Dennis Coombs, Chairman of the Friends of Upminster Windmill, was one of those who nominated us.

The next thing to happen was an appointment made for a visit from the judges who asked us many questions about the work of the Trust and particularly of the work of our volunteers. Three of our volunteers were there on the day as well as two Trustees; they were all asked how they found working at the Mills Archive, about the people they worked with and the projects they worked on. They then spoke to the staff asking many questions and then they were taken on a tour of Watlington House showing them the rooms we occupied for our office, library, and where accessions go on arrival till a volunteer takes charge of a collection to list and catalogue it.

We then had to wait a while before hearing if we were to be chosen as one of the recipients. A few nerves on that day in April, then came what we were all waiting to hear - the result. Yes, we had been granted the award! But we were not allowed to publicise this till June, which was very difficult for us all.

Before the official presentations began, a invitation was sent to all the

QAVS Nominees' for a Reception in April, hosted by the Lord Lieutenant of Berkshire: this was to publically recognise all of the nominated organisations. Liz Bartram, Elizabeth Trout and Guy Boocock, one of our long-standing volunteers, were invited to attend, along with Dennis Coombs.

Meanwhile preparations were put in place for us to receive the award itself along with other local charities. This took place in Reading Town Hall on Tuesday 10th September 2019. All those who had been present during the judging attended. The High Sheriff of Oxfordshire, Mr James Puxley, presented three of us, Mildred, Nathanael and Tom Hine, one of our long-

standing volunteers with the award and this along with a framed certificate signed by Her Majesty the Queen, now take pride of place in our Founders Room at the Watlington House. We held a party for the volunteers to thank them all, who without their commitment and work at the Mills Archive we could not have achieved this.

Since then new volunteers have joined the team along with interns. Many more of the 279 collections and items have been scanned, catalogued etc which brings the total number of scans to over 71,000. And the really good news is that 5 of those volunteering here have gone on to become Archivists themselves!



Help the Archive stay free and independent for our third decade

21 years. We are coming to the end of the first year of a new decade at the Mills Archive. With your support, it has been a year of exciting firsts: our first PhD placement, under-18 volunteer and arts workshop for our local community. We have received extensive new collections, outlining the transition from traditional mills to the modern milling industry and renewable energy.



An arts workshop for the local community? Your support has allowed us to introduce more people to their milling history.

But these past months have not been without challenges.

The costs of preserving our collections are rising fast. We are unbelievably privileged to have received so much support. You have seen us through equally difficult periods.

To remain an independent, freely available educational resource; to benefit more volunteers and safeguard the achievements of the past, we rely on your support.

So please spread the word. Share some *Mill Memories* (we will send you a new one) with local heritage institutions, libraries or people interested in their history. We are grateful for everyone who has shared our social media posts and newsletters.

If you have not already, join the Friends to prevent our shared milling history and those that made it from fading. Find out more here:

millsarchive.org/friends/

We would also like to thank all of you who have supported our appeals and donated to save our collections. To know that our work is valued drives us to do more.

This year, we plan to help even more volunteers to set out on their career paths. If you would like to see the next generation trained to preserve our heritage, have a look at the Mills Archive's people appeal on our website: millsarchive/people-appeal.org.

We pride ourselves in the abilities instilled in our volunteers and placements:

My internship at the Mills Archive Trust set me up for my professional career as it allowed me to gain fundamental communication, engagement and project management skills.

—Hayden.



This project allowed me to gain the skills of working with an archival team, creating and completing a digitisation project of rare and old materials.

—Starlina.

Experience at the Mills Archive can change a life. We rely on you and a community of likeminded individuals to give young people the tools to succeed.



Cover: Artwork
from our recent
workshop.

Mill Memories is
edited by
M Cookson and
N Hodge

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