

Issue 4

February 2009

Mill Memories

The Newsletter of the Friends of the Mills Archive



Mills Archive Trust

Special features:

- Glass plates and lantern slides
- Rex Wailes and his collection
- Cann Mills, Shaftesbury, Dorset
- Sussex Watermills and Millers

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Mutual support is key

We are keen to support other charities and groups with aims similar to ours.

Not only do we look after our collections and run an archive, we aim to stimulate wider appreciation of the importance of mills and milling. With the help of Friends and volunteers, we are increasingly able to do this.

For example, the recently-announced collaborations with the SPAB Mills Section and with TIMS involve us in helping them to sell their stock of books and publications. More details are given on p12. As well as covering our costs, we hope this will encourage more people to join the Friends, as members of both groups see us supporting their society. Current Friends will also benefit, as the 10% discount applies to all the new books we sell.

Guy Blythman will shortly be announcing a new Mills Research Group initiative, supported by the Mills Archive, to bring together a lot of technical information about existing mills and those that have vanished. This will be a long-term project and will be described in more detail in future issues of *Mill Memories*.

Finally, we are spreading the word on Flickr and Facebook, both widely used by the general public (see p8).



Can you help us spread the word even further?

If every Friend could provide one good introduction, we would have enough to cover the rent for the extra room we have had to take on to store the Frank Gregory Collection (see issue 3).

If you would like literature for an event or would like us to send a form and a sample copy to someone, please let us know.

Collections in Practice

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

Glass plates & lantern slides



Caring for glass negatives and lantern slides can be an expensive challenge. They are fragile, easily damaged and difficult to scan. The Mills Archive has about 3000 of them and is currently scanning and cataloguing them. As part of this project, if you have any mill-related glass media, you could consider giving them to us to care for and digitise. We would provide you with a high-resolution scan and store the slide as a donation from you in archival enclosures,

suitably packed to prevent damage and deterioration. Do contact us first to discuss the gift and how it will be transported.

We receive glass plates in all sorts of unsuitable packing (see above) and we transfer them either to acid-free 4-fold archival enclosures (see below) or archival plastic sleeves and then store them in acid-free, lignin-free reinforced boxes, which are not too heavy to lift. Handling glass plate negatives is a skilled business and they should always be stored upright. Such care costs about 60p per slide if you buy the materials in bulk. Few collectors will want to buy packs of 1000 enclosures, so you may want to talk to us about obtaining a small supply.



Our volunteers have scanned a number of lantern slides and glass plates. Some flatbed scanners such as the Epson Perfection Photo series come with a selection of the necessary masks to use when the scanner is used in transmission mode. You almost always end up having to make your own masks and you must also be careful not to scratch the scanner itself. We have found a number of plates are difficult to scan, so as the process is slow and tricky, we now use a specialist scanning agency, which brings the total cost per slide to £3.

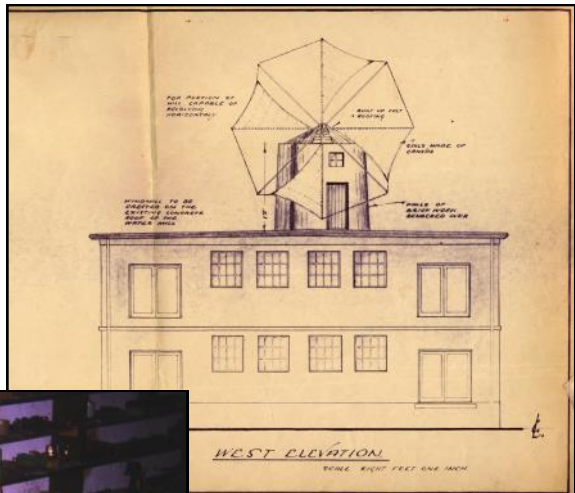
A future issue of Mill Memories will give some examples of why all this is worth the effort.

News from the Archive

Cann Windmill 1971-2008 RIP

The curious Portuguese-style tower mill that was built on top of Cann Watermill at Shaftesbury, Dorset, is no more. More space was needed inside this commercially-working watermill which was rebuilt in 1954 following a serious fire, so an extra storey has been added on top. Standing on the building's flat roof, the windmill, which had not turned for some years, had to be sacrificed.

The Mills Archive holds records of the design and construction of this unusual windmill which was built to an authentic Portuguese design by millwright Derek Ogden for the miller at Cann, Mr Stoate. Although it had the appearance of a folly, the windmill could be made to lend a hand, driving its own pair of millstones. The watermill's new look is a necessary



Above: The new brake wheel of the windmill takes shape in Derek Ogden's workshop at Great Alna, Warwickshire.

Above right: The mill as it appeared when complete.

although aesthetically less pleasing one, and the windmill will no doubt be mourned by local residents and occasional visitors alike. We have yet to find out whether the bones of the mill will be exported to the Iberian Peninsula for possible transplant...

Rex Wailes: His work and his collection

Luke Bonwick



*Rex Wailes photographed
in Holland in 1973
(SPAB Collection)*

*Coleby Heath Mill in
Lincolnshire (below) fired
Rex's interest in windmills
in 1923*



Rex Wailes (1901-1986) must have been a remarkable man. Unfortunately, I never got the chance to meet him, though I have several friends who knew him well. At a relatively young age Rex, brought up into the family engineering firm, became a widely-known and respected figurehead of the movement to preserve the windmills, and later the watermills, of the UK.

According to David Attenborough, Charles Darwin's body of research was underpinned by a prolific correspondence with other experts in the field, through whom he floated, discussed and refined several of his ideas. Many well-known mill researchers fit this mould, and Rex was no exception. Of particular interest to me has been his correspondence with millwrights and millers such as John Russell of Kent, Jack Thompson of Lincolnshire and Jesse Wightman of Suffolk. As well as their own considerable experience, these men could tap into the working practice of their immediate predecessors, reaching back into the early decades of the nineteenth century. Much of this correspondence has been indexed and is available for visitors to the Archive to examine.

The standard work on windmills

Rex's publishing achievements are perhaps his most remarkable. He produced the standard work on the subject of *The English Windmill* and more than one other robust reference work on the same theme. The former is a very 'human' mill book, as much a record of the people behind the mills as the structures themselves. At a recent meeting of the SPAB Mills Section, Rex's daughter, Anthea, presented to the Mills Archive Rex's own copy of *The English Windmill*, signed by the author and complete with pencilled embellishments.

Comparatively late in my molinological studenthood I came across the series of papers Rex presented to the Newcomen Society between the 1940s and the 1960s. These are technical surveys of mills (describing what I would term the 'interesting bits') and their content goes into surprising depth as well as

The Rex Wailes Collection (continued)

breadth; the result of hundreds of hours of fieldwork involving motorcycle, sidecar, camera and tape measure. Some papers comprise regional surveys in which the differences and similarities between local mills are compared. Other papers contain the results of a countrywide investigation into a particular theme: brake wheels and wallowers; tide mills; the drive to the millstones; bell alarms and sack hoists.

Derek Ogden, millwright and Honorary Friend, comments:

You ask "Was Rex Wailes always right?". Well, no he was not, but he set us a wonderful example to follow. None of us is always right but if we can follow the example set by Rex then we shall indeed provide a wealth of material for those following to ponder over. One thing Rex taught me was to make a statement which he knew was perhaps not quite correct but expecting a response with the answer. It has not worked for me when saying there are no examples of porcelain rolls left in the USA today. Perhaps people don't know or care but there must be one out there!! Rex was indeed a good loyal friend to me.

Derek used our new online discussion forum, "Mill Writing", to share his views. Friends can do the same—see p9



International influence

Rex's knowledge was not confined to the mills of the UK. Subjects of further Newcomen Society papers included the windmills of Oland, Sweden; Finnish windmills and the sugar cane-crushing mills of Barbados. Set against a backdrop of the growing discipline of industrial archaeology, in which he played a leading role, Rex's achievements and his contribution to the study of mills is, from any viewpoint, outstanding.

Finding items in the Rex Wailes Collection at the Mills Archive

Our Library and Research Centre holds a copy of all Rex's published works that relate to mills. In particular, we have a complete set of his Newcomen Society papers. His correspondence with other 'mill people' is available for inspection at Watlington House and detailed indexes appear on our web catalogue at www.millsarchive.com. Our catalogue also contains several hundred Rex Wailes photographs and high-resolution copies of these are available to Friends of the Mills Archive.



An early photo of Rex at Stansted Mill, Essex, in 1940

Memories of Sussex watermills

Derek Stidder



Robertsbridge Flour Mill.

Archival images like the one above often contain a wealth of detail, as the enlargement below demonstrates

Traditionally Sussex is regarded as a 'windmill' county but in 1850 it had 225 watermills operating. The majority were flour mills although there were other processes carried out by water power, mainly in those areas of Sussex adjacent to the county boundaries with Kent and Hampshire. Of course many of the former windmills and watermills have disappeared from the landscape but fortunately we have detailed records of many that have been lost.

Archival records of a lost age

Transport has always been difficult throughout the Sussex Weald and the larger mills were quick to see advantages in using the navigable rivers, all of which, apart from one, run southwards to the coast. The River Ouse Navigation was certainly used by the flour and oil mills at Barcombe, for example, but the railway quickly put an end to this and both mills consequently had their own rail head and sidings at Barcombe Station. Robertsbridge was another extensive milling concern; it even had its own 0-6-0 railway engine to collect the 20-ton bulk grain wagons delivered to Robertsbridge Station direct from Avonmouth Docks. Eventually, the business became financially unviable and the mill closed in the mid 1960s,



Memories of Sussex watermills (continued)

thus becoming another statistic in the long list of mill closures. Barcombe flour mill was destroyed by fire in March 1939 but had closed a few years before this despite possessing a five-sack roller mill, 60hp compound engine and a 'Little Giant' turbine.

Today there are no true working commercial watermills in Sussex, apart from the re-sited Lurgashall Mill operating by water power at the Weald and Downland Open Air Museum.



*(left)
Remnants of a once
thriving industry—the
edge runner stones from
the oil seed crushing mill
at Barcombe. Flour
milling was just one of a
number of processes that
were formerly carried out
by water power*

Throughout his very active life, **Frank W. Gregory (1917-1998)** amassed an enormous collection of material relating to the mills of Sussex. Images, documents and ephemeral items from his collection are continually being added to our website catalogue. We are making excellent progress with our collaborative project to catalogue the many thousands of items in Frank's collection. One of the first tasks has been to digitise and index more than 12,000 of his 35mm slides. In tackling this Herculean task we are grateful for the assistance of expert members of the Sussex Mills Group. At Watlington House, our volunteer teams have been working through Frank's collections of postcards, handwritten notes, drawings and other material. A more extensive report on the project will appear in the next issue of *Mill Memories*, which will also feature examples of glass plate negatives and lantern slides from Frank's collection.

Friends' Forum

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

Flickr gallery see <http://www.flickr.com/photos/millsarchive/sets/>

In an attempt to draw a new audience to mills, we have placed some sample high-resolution images on Flickr, the world's biggest photo-sharing site with several million subscribers. A new feature advertises the postcards intended for eBay, which are available at fixed prices exclusively to Friends beforehand at our shop (see p 12).

The Archive on Facebook

Along with many other charities, we now have our own page on Facebook, the social networking site. The public can become fans of the page at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Mills-Archive/40323207238> We will hope to use this to attract a new, younger audience to our work. The more fans we

get the more the page will be noticed. Please consider becoming a fan yourself – it is free and fun!

The screenshot shows the Facebook interface for 'The Mills Archive'. At the top, the navigation bar includes 'facebook', 'Home', 'Profile', 'Friends', 'Inbox', and 'Ron Cookson'. The main content area features a large photo of a brick house with a chimney, captioned 'The Mills Archive' and '4 Browse more non-profits'. Below the photo, it says 'Founded: 2002'. To the right of the photo is a sidebar with options: 'Edit Page', 'Edit Admins', 'Send an Update to Fans', 'Promote Page with an Ad', 'View Updates', 'Remove me from Fans', 'Remove from my Page's Favourites', and 'View Insights'. Below this is a 'Share' button and a 'Fans' section showing '6 of 21 fans' with 'See All'. The fans listed are Simon Hudson, Guy Blythman, Gareth Hughes, Adam Marriott, Fred Atkins, and Nedra Anvil. Below the fans is a 'My Flickr' section with a link to 'Flickr pictures by The Mills Archive | Showing 27 photos sorted by most interesting'. On the left side, there is a 'YouTube Video Box' with a video titled 'Classic TV - Windmill Interlude Film' and a 'Mini-Feed' section displaying 5 stories.

The page has many features and, depending on feedback from fans, we can add others that will make people more aware of the value of our milling heritage. Fans can add pictures and videos as well as leave comments. We can also use the page to organise or just publicise events. It is even possible to launch appeals. Facebook will raise our profile among its 120 million members. Plans are being considered for a joint Facebook group with the Mills Section.

Mill Writing see <http://www.millsarchivetrust.org/index.php/blogs>

The next time you look at the Friends' website at www.millsarchivetrust.org you will notice that we have added some new features. One of these can be found by clicking the tab marked "Mill Writing".

The page that opens contains a lot of short articles (sometimes called "posts") on a variety of subjects relating to mills. This is a public forum for anyone to express their views, ask questions, make announcements or seek help on any mill topic. A wide variety of topics has already been aired and it is well worth browsing. Four or five new topics are published each week, but there is no limit – and they do not have to mention the Mills Archive! The topics can be examined by category (eg windmills or research or electricity generation) or just browsed sequentially.

Importantly the site allows you to comment or add information to any article. One on "What has happened to Mill Research?" Has already had 20 comments added to it. Why not give it a try and see what happens?

The articles are well-indexed and attract many readers. In fact the main purpose on placing the pages on the Friends' site is to attract more mill people towards the Friends. Please publicise the site whenever you get the chance.

"This is really interesting. I've just had a look at the photo I took back in 1986, and the inscription is carved onto a piece of wood nailed onto the main beam supporting the spur wheel"
Rob Cumming

Friends of the Mills Archive Trust > Mill Writing

Edit your profile | View the Memberlist | Editorial | Log Out

Mills Archive Trust

Our Bookshop | The Archive & Library | Friends' Notice Board | Interesting Articles | Mill Writing Blog | Other Important Sites | Family History Searches

Become a Friend

Please help us to continue to look after and make freely available these important and vulnerable objects that tell us so much about our vanishing heritage.

[Find out about becoming a friend](#)

Contact us by email:
✉ friends@millsarchivetrust.org

Please make a donation:
every pound counts!

Friends Online

Ron Cookson

There are 3 unregistered guests browsing the site.

Mill Writing

Chislet Mill anyone?
November 25 2008 by Virginia Silvester (242 views)
[Kent Millers' Tales & Mill People & Family History & Windmills](#) | 2 Comments

I have done a lot of research on the early millers at Chislet and this is detailed below. A follow-up item has also been posted see http://www.millsarchivetrust.org/index.php/blogs/more/chislet_mill_historical_research_an_update/

[Continued below...](#)

Categories

- [Kent Millers' Tales](#)
- [Archive](#)
- [Electricity Generation](#)
- [Frank Gregory Online](#)
- [Mill People & Family History](#)
- [News of Mills](#)
- [Research](#)
- [Mills outside the UK](#)
- [TIMS - The International Molinological Society](#)
- [Watermills](#)
- [Windmills](#)

Being Discussed Now

- [Chislet Mill historical research: an update](#) (1)
- [Chislet Mill anyone?](#) (2)
- [Sale from telegraph poles](#) (1)
- [Old Glory](#) (1)
- [What has happened to Mill Research?](#) (13)

People Pages

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

Millers, millwrights and mill owners played an important part in our history and we aim to make information about them more accessible. These pages keep you up to date with progress and highlight some interesting discoveries.

Sussex millers: a who's who

Michael Harverson

*George Parris, the last miller at
Blackboys Post Mill,
photographed by Donald W.
Muggeridge in 1934*



Amongst the many hundreds of items in the Frank Gregory collection was a cardboard box marked "CUCUMBERS" [!], containing a pile of large sheets of poor quality, yellowing paper, on which somebody had recorded the names and a few details of over a thousand Sussex millers active between c.1770 and c.1920.

The writing is not Frank's; perhaps it is Syd Simmons' - in which case, did his widow pass over the notes to Frank? The entries were all dashed down in pencil and deciphering them often presented problems. Derek Stidder and Peter Hill gave me the benefit of their local knowledge when scrawled locations eluded me. However, in most cases, Hemming, Brunnarius and Pevsner have come to my aid.

The names of mills have changed over the years. Colourful nicknames deserve to be remembered; Jerusalem Mill [Angmering], Honeypoles Mill [Shipley], Luggers Crouch Mill [Mayfield], Cuckoo Hill Mill [Hastings], Honeylane Mill [Rowhook]. "Three-legged Cross Mill" held me up for a while [it is near Ticehurst]. Mills often took the name of their current miller.

In the past millers (as opposed to mill owners) seldom served one mill for long and soon moved on. This list only records documented references to millers, normally not their longevity, though Henry Henley merits a mention for holding Udimore Mill from 1868 to 1921.

Sussex Millers: A Who's Who (continued)

William Bradford junior “held a mill at Brighton on the Steyne, then forsook milling and became a noted stagecoach and waggon proprietor, dying in 1829”. William Jenner, miller at Spital Mill Lewes was struck dead by lightning in the mill on 12 August 1783. A sad note is struck by the fate of Mr Wickham, in 1882 the last to work Witherenden Mill, Burwash, who was later found drowned in the pond of the nearby watermill. Among the dynasties of Sussex millers feature Dallaways, Ashbys, Woodhams, Kenwards and Kennards. The unusual surnames Lashmar, Ingeldew and Pescodd also occur.

Having created a spreadsheet from the lists of 1161 millers, I moved on to transcribing the copies of entries for “Millers” in the 24 Kelly's Sussex Directories between 1792 and 1934 that were held in Brighton Reference Library when someone (Syd Simmons?) typed them out and then annotated them. This has yielded another 709 millers. The two lists totalling 1870 millers will be viewable in the Mills Archive catalogue as part of Frank Gregory Online.

Hopefully the availability of these lists at the Archive and online will assist those researching the history of Sussex mills and millers.



Percy Trorer (left) and Fred Sayers of Cobb's Mill, Hurstpierpoint. A photo from the Frank Gregory Collection

Towards a new database

Most of the visitors to Mills Archive Online are only interested in family history. A few express an interest in the mills and the role of millers, but most just search for their family names and then move on.

When Mary and Tony Yoward gave us their database of 30,000 millers and millwrights, they urged us to charge for searches. We are at last in a position where we can introduce this and we will announce the full details in the next issue.

All Friends will have free, unrestricted access to our extended database, but casual family historians will need to pay a small sum to search for their ancestors.

We are grateful to all our volunteers, especially Helen Major and Peter Whittington, for their help in building the numbers up to 50,000 names and there will be a lot more to add. We are also pleased to have help from Elizabeth Trout and Peter King in deciding how the data will be presented.

Bookshelf



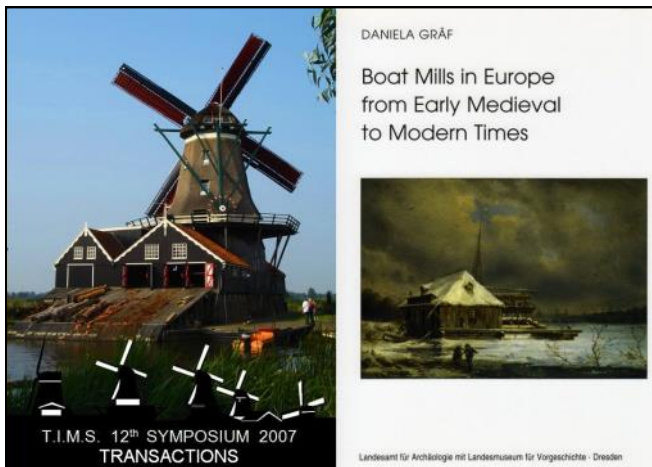
This section is devoted to books in the Mills Archive. It looks at recent additions and interesting mill books in our collection of more than 1700 volumes. The library catalogue is on the Friends' website at www.millsarchivetrust.org.

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

Changes to our bookshop

As mentioned on the front page, Friends can now benefit from the 10% discount* on books previously sold by TIMS and the SPAB. These are all new books and include the two most recent TIMS publications, the Dutch 2007 Symposium proceedings and Daniela Graf's excellent monograph on Boat Mills (see below).

Our bookshop at <http://shop.millsarchivetrust.org/> is the place to buy them as well as many second-hand mill books, Friends can avoid postage by arranging to pick books up before Mills Section meetings in March or November or by calling at the Mills Archive in person. New books must be paid for in advance if you wish us to bring them to a meeting for you.



Why not buy your books from us and support our efforts at the same time?

Please email us or phone Ron (01189 478 2784) if you wish to pay by cheque or you want to collect books at a meeting.

*The Friends' 10% discount applies to all orders for more than £30, but does not include post & packing charges.

Visiting the Mills Archive

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

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

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

It will save you time if you can let us know beforehand of any specific research you are undertaking, so that we can retrieve the files from our store before you arrive.

Email info@millsarchive.com 1–2 weeks before your planned trip and offer us alternative dates if possible. We will do our best to be there when you need us.

*The Mills Archive Library
and Research Room
Ground floor access
Appointment necessary*



Watlington House

Free car park

10 minutes' walk from

Reading Station

Please join the Friends of the Mills Archive



Opening the Library 2006

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

Regular public support is a major influence on grant-giving bodies. The Heritage Lottery Fund, a generous supporter of our cataloguing, likes to feel its grants echo public interest. Regular donations by many people are the best way of signalling that interest and guaranteeing the long-term success of the Mills Archive.

Key Benefits of Membership

*“We all
need
Friends!”*

Mill Memories, every 6 months.

Two free invitations to exclusive Friends' events.

Internet privileges, all free of charge including:

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

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

Additional benefits will be announced in *Mill Memories*.



The Friends' Website

Check the Friends' Website www.millsarchivetrust.org

Internet shop

Mills Archive Library Catalogue

News of Mills

Mystery Mills and Oddities

Friends' Notice Board

Friends' Trading Post

Family History Searches

Useful Links

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

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

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

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____ Tel _____

Email _____

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

Standing Order Form	To	Bank	Branch
Address		Postcode	
Please Pay GIROBANK plc, BOOTLE Sort code 72-00-03 Account No 21695488			
Credit THE MILLS ARCHIVE TRUST			
The Sum of £_____ (amount in words: _____)			
Commencing _____ and then every _____ (due date & frequency)			
Until further notice or until _____ and debit my/our account accordingly			
Name of account _____		Account No _____	
This replaces my/our previous standing order for the transfer of £_____ to the same account			
Name _____		Signature _____	
Name _____		Signature _____ (if second required)	
Address _____			
_____ Postcode _____			



The Friends of the Mills Archive

part of The Mills Archive Trust

Registered Charity no 1091534

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United Kingdom

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

The Mills Archive is one of the world's great mill collections. It is an Aladdin's cave filled with memories, free to users and run by volunteers. The collections show the rich and diverse crafts, people, buildings, machinery and equipment involved with mills in the UK and around the world.

Friends enjoy a number of benefits (see page 14) as well as knowing they are helping to protect an unrivalled world-class resource.

Please help us to save the memories!

For more information write to the address above or email us
friends@millsarchivetrust.org

In the Next Issue of Mill Memories

A new home for family history information

Many Archive users are interested in the people as much as the mills

Troublesome media (held over from this issue)

Types of archival item and how we slow down their deterioration

Lantern slides and glass negatives

Some evocative examples from our collections



Larger archival items such as measured drawings present a significant storage problem for us to solve!
