

Mill Memories

The Newsletter of the Friends of the Mills Archive



Mills Archive Trust

Special features:

This issue focuses on the Mills Archive's collections of large mill drawings. Over 600 drawings have recently been digitised and will progressively be made available to researchers via the web catalogue. The original drawings can also be inspected by appointment.

Funding shortage for heritage projects

The costs of the Olympics and the previous Government's reduction in spending on Heritage and the Arts are now beginning to affect the Mills Archive.

Our last grant application to the HLF for our "Local Mills" project was approved by the secretariat as it "ticked all the boxes", but was then turned down because of shortage of funds.

Although we can re-submit, presumably when more funding is available, we need to look for other sources of funds as well. The continuing support of the Friends is essential to our growth and encourages us to keep on fundraising.

We are also getting help from individual Friends. Two Friends have already nominated us on their Self-Assessment form to receive any tax refunds they are due from HMRC. If you wish to do the same our charity code is PAT69WG.

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Above: In the Archive's store our recently-recruited volunteer cataloguers receive training from Ron Cookson.

L to R: Ron, Chris Wheeler, Rachel Gill and Lisa Studdert-Kennedy

Quality from Quantity

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.

What should I do with all my old 35mm slides?

The digital age and the convenience of using PowerPoint for presentations have firmly rendered the traditional slide projector obsolete. Conference facilities are less and less likely to have both types of projector available, though for many mill collectors a large number of their photographs were taken on transparency. So what is the solution?

Our answer would be to digitise your slides as quickly as possible, and bequeath your originals to us. Colour slides can be vulnerable to change over time, even if they are securely stored in dark conditions. Due to the differing amounts of chemicals used in different brands, degradation can occur at different speeds, resulting in changes of colour depth and hue. A photographer from the Suffolk Mills Group once said that he wished he had standardised on one brand of colour slide film in the 1950s, rather than buying different brands, as some of the slides he projected recently had faded while others had not.

Slides can be easily scratched and tend to attract dust and tiny hairs which are clearly visible when the slide is projected. Fingerprints are also magnified during this process, so take care not to touch the image when handling. Also, try to avoid the temptation to wipe any debris off the image as this can cause scratching and damage. If your slides are particularly dusty it is best to ask a professional digitiser to clean them all to the same standard.

Digitising slides has become cheaper and easier, even over the last five years, as technology has steadily improved. The Mills Archive's collections were digitised by a professional agency, TownsWeb Archiving, and supplied to us as high-resolution digital 'tiff' images. They are stored in numbered slots in transparent plastic pages which are contained in acid-free ring binders. This approach allows easy and quick 'browsing' of the slides without the need to handle them directly.

The latest home digitising devices, eg. The ION Film 2 SD, are reasonably priced (£120 from PC World) and enable the user to view and scan each slide simultaneously. The device automatically adjusts the exposure and scans the image as soon as you insert the slide. By pressing one button you can store the image on an SD card and it is instantly ready to print or manipulate using image-processing software on a PC. Digitising your old slides has never been easier!

News from the Archive

Since the Archive's inception in 2002, the efforts of its personnel have mainly been concentrated on the completion of HLF-funded cataloguing work, focusing on the collections held by other archives – our HLF project partners. Work on the Kent Millers' Tales and Frank Gregory Projects has meant placing the cataloguing of our own collections on the back burner.

The present absence of project deadlines gives us the opportunity to commence work on elements of the Mills Archive's collections that have been in the planning stages for many months. These exciting initiatives will make available on our web catalogue a great deal of previously unseen material.

Cataloguing work begins on the Stephen Buckland Collection



Walsokne Brass
Windmill, 1349.

J.S.P. Buckland.

Stephen's collection was left to the Mills Archive on his death in 2006. Its large size has meant that the precise contents of the collection are so far unknown.

Stephen was a prolific researcher and the collection reflects his incredibly wide range of interests, from genealogy to cartography via industrial archaeology. The results should be revealing: watch this space!

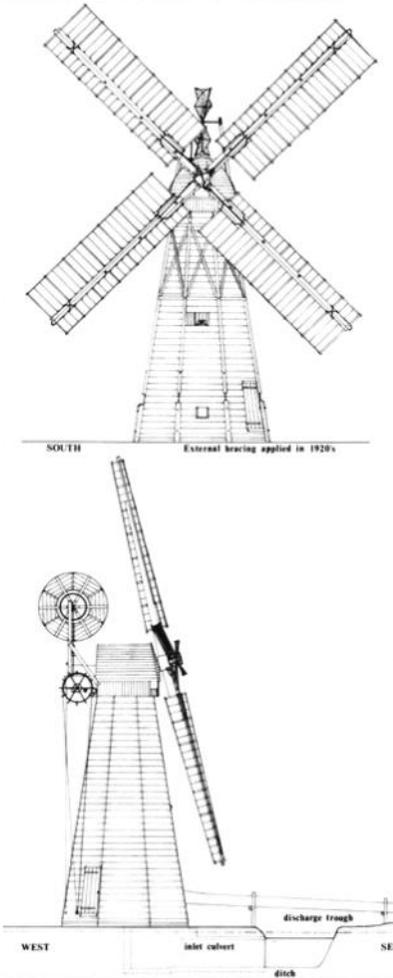
ION Film 2 SD Slide / Negative digitiser

Devices such as this one make scanning your 35mm slides and negatives an enjoyable and surprisingly fast process.

The most time-consuming part is loading your slides or film strip into the holder. A 5-megapixel image is created instantly and can be saved straight to any type of SD card.



The Mills Archive Large Drawings Project



Above: Two exemplary views of East Bridge smock pumping mill, Suffolk, drawn by Peter Dolman in 1977 as part of a scheme to reconstruct the mill

The Archive holds several hundred large measured drawings illustrating different aspects of mills and milling.

These come from a number of collections, principally those of Peter Dolman, J Kenneth Major, Derek Ogden and Wilfred Foreman. A few years ago we acquired two large plan chests to house the drawings temporarily while a suitable strategy for cataloguing them could be devised. By 2010 our collections had outgrown these two chests and the time to act had clearly arrived.

Large drawings are easily damaged and can suffer most through repeated handling. If they are stored in boxes or tubes they must be rolled up and the edges of the drawings can be crushed if the boxes or tubes are too small or if too many drawings are stored together. Fortunately, we have been given very few folded drawings. These days, most drawings are generated using CAD and the folding of printed outputs is permissible, but it is unthinkable to fold an original hand-generated drawing, even if it is much too large to store flat.

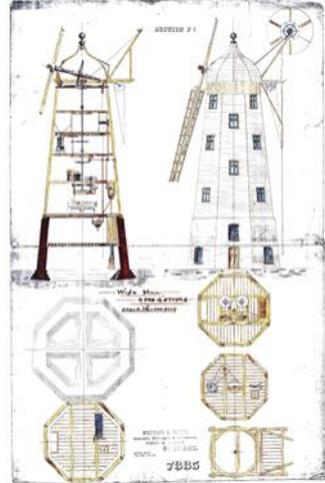
Below: Large posters that incorporate detailed drawings of mills can have a strong educational value and are given the same treatment as our collections of original drawings.



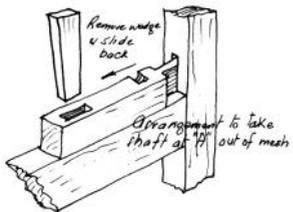
The Mills Archive Large Drawings Project (continued)

At the time when the Frank Gregory Online project was drawing to a close we were visited by a new recruit to the Mills Research Group, John Brandrick. A semi-retired draughtsman, John operates a computerised drawing service (www.AQtech.co.uk) and became interested in the subject after acquiring the site of a watermill at Whitland, Carmarthenshire, where he and his wife have built their home. John offered to help us with the cataloguing and digitisation of our entire collection of large drawings, involving the company he uses to print his own drawings.

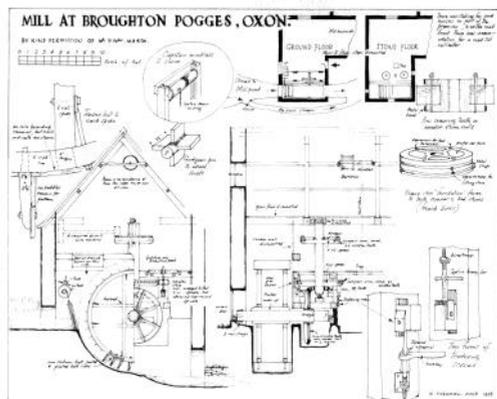
Having experimented with different storage materials, we acquired a set of new acid-free archival-standard boxes in which to transport, and later to store permanently, the rolled drawings in our collections. John transported the drawings to the digitiser, free of charge, in batches and negotiated a remarkably low fee to create high resolution digital 'tiff' images of each one. He has recorded key information about each drawing on the Archive's database, such as the drawing's precise dimensions, its date, author and scale, as well as the type of paper, film or fabric on which it is based.



Above: A 19th-century coloured drawing in the Peter Dolman Collection from the millwrighting workshop of Whitmore and Binyon, Wickleham Market, Suffolk.



One of the distinctive drawings by Wilfred Foreman illustrating the Oxfordshire watermill at Broughton Pogges. Above is a small annotated construction detail, a typical feature of Foreman's mill studies.

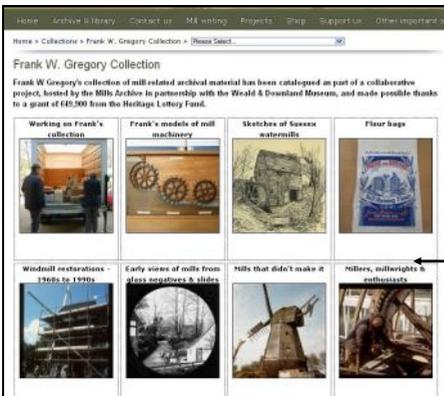


Frank Gregory Online project completed Luke Bonwick

The Frank Gregory Online project is now complete, with the launch of our new web pages describing the project and the addition of over 32,000 new items to the Mills Archive catalogue.

The new pages include:

A **Project Page**, containing background information about the Frank Gregory Online project, its project partners and funders: millsarchivetrust.org/index.php/frank_gregory_online/

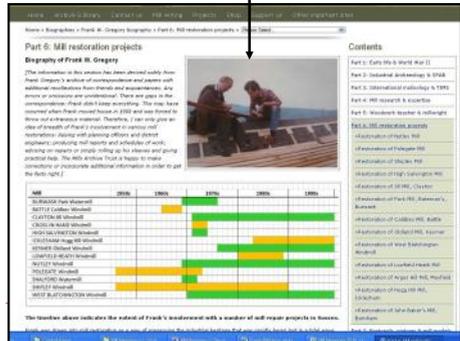


A **Collection Page** with links to different thematic elements of the collection:
www.millsarchivetrust.org/index.php/collections/frank_gregory_collection/

A **Biography page**, containing a new 20,000-word biography of Frank Gregory prepared by Mills Archive volunteer Elizabeth Trout.

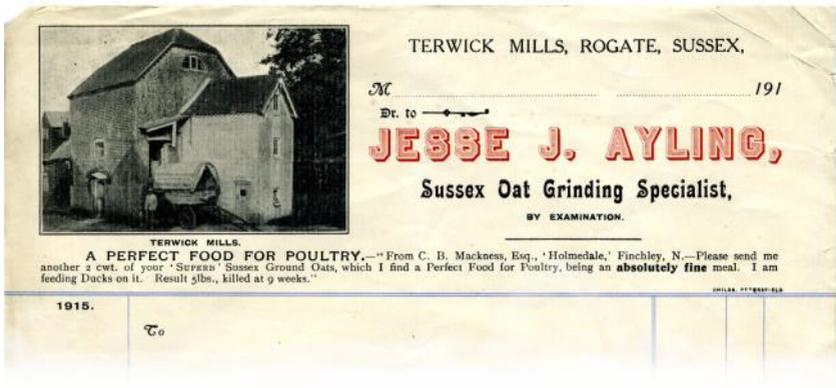
The biography chronicles Frank's life and work and includes 13 pages dedicated to the mill restoration projects he was involved with. See millsarchivetrust.org/index.php/biographies/frank_gregory/

Frank's collection is an expansive, colourful view of the changing state of our milling heritage over a lifetime, viewed from the perspective of a pioneering enthusiast with a keen interest in mills of all types and a taste for exploring the landscape. By browsing our online catalogue, Frank's passion for his subject can be shared by everyone with an interest in mill conservation and recording.



Frank Gregory Online project completed (continued)

Diverse aspects of Frank Gregory's collection, available to view online free of charge, include sets of flour bags, mill matchboxes and chromatropes; some of the models he made as teaching aids for use at talks and mill museums, and an attractive and fascinating collection of millers' bills and letterheads. Many of these are signed by the proprietors of the mills and have strong historical significance. One, sent to Frank by Ayling brothers of Terwick Mills, Rogate, in August 1966, records the termination of a long-running family milling business that continued over four generations, using water power to the last. The letter states that "it is no longer practical to carry on with our now almost unique type of corn and provender milling".



To mark the completion of the FGOL project, the Autumn Meeting of the SPAB Mills Section was devoted to 'the people behind the restoration projects'. The meeting's programme was organised by the Mills Archive and featured presentations on mill repair projects that were close to Frank's heart, together with some new ones he would undoubtedly have approved of.

Above: Billhead from Ayling Bros, Terwick Mills

Peter Hill, Chairman of the Sussex Mills Group whose expert panel were closely involved with the FGOL project, recalled working closely with Frank on the repair of West Blatchington windmill and his encyclopaedic knowledge of the milling history of the county. Luke Bonwick's presentation showcased many 'gems' from Frank's collection, including his evocative pen-and-ink drawings and the train timetable Frank had used as notepaper on an unplanned visit to a mill. The meeting was attended by Frank's daughter, Joy, and her family, who spoke about Frank's passion for collecting mill information and the mammoth task of saving the collection following his death in 1998.

People Pages: The J Kenneth Major Collection

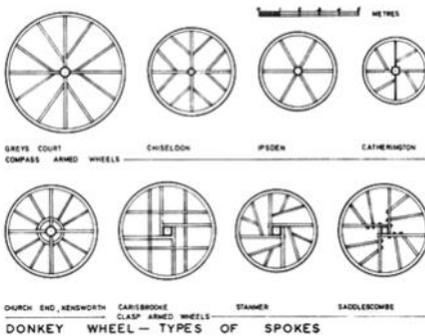
Ken Major was an architect with a passion for old buildings and machinery and a keen interest in the development of the traditional mill.

Born in 1928, Ken qualified as an architect in 1953, and by this time his enthusiasm for heritage architecture had been fired. The previous year he had been awarded the SPAB's Lethaby Scholarship which gave him an appreciation of building repair and conservation methods and approaches.

In the 1960s the industrial archaeology movement was gaining momentum and the need to preserve our rapidly diminishing stock of historic buildings became officially recognised. Ken was at the forefront of a national audit of our surviving

industrial heritage and was asked to carry out comprehensive surveys of mill sites in several regions, starting in his home county of Berkshire and progressing to the Isle of Wight, Bedfordshire, Northumberland and Wiltshire.

A measured drawing showing the different sizes and methods of construction of donkey-powered wheels for water raising and other uses



After setting up in private practice in 1984, Ken was involved in planning the repair and restoration of several significant mills across Britain. A particular success was the re-commissioning of an elegant water-powered pump at Painshill Park near Cobham in Surrey, which features a huge low breast-shot waterwheel entirely of metal, 36ft (11m) in diameter. Photographs held by the Mills Archive show Ken at the official re-starting of the wheel in 1988 by HRH the Duchess of York.

In the 1970s, when an international society for mill studies (christened TIMS) was being set up, Ken was one of its founding members. The newsletters and related documents that he compiled during his time as editor contain a wealth of information and a complete set of these is held at our Library and Research Centre in Reading.

Like other molinologists, Ken was an avid collector of secondary material relating to his specialist research interests which included wind engines, water turbines and human and animal-powered mills. He surveyed and photographed countless examples of mills powered by the muscles of animals in the UK and throughout the world for his two books on the subject. When the Mills Archive was established in 2002, Ken was one of the Foundation Trustees.

The J Kenneth Major Collection (continued)

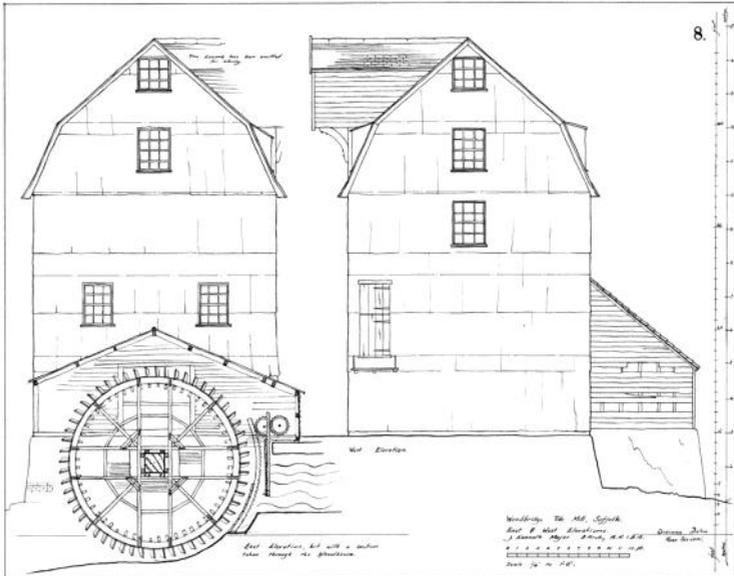
On his death in 2009, the remainder of Ken’s mill material, which forms one of the three Foundation Collections, was transferred to the Mills Archive. The collection reflects his specific interests, featuring all of his original mill reports, survey drawings and repair designs spanning four decades.

Ken’s presence at the Mills Archive is missed but we are fortunate that his wife, Helen, still lives nearby and continues to be involved in our activities; her copy editing skills alone make her an essential member of the team! Helen accompanied and assisted Ken during many of his mill survey visits and her memory for detail allows us to fill any gaps in our records of Ken’s collection.

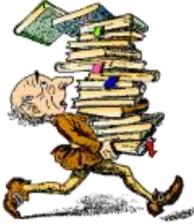


*Above: Ken delivers a presentation at the Dutch Symposium of TIMS in 2008
(Photograph by Mildred Cookson)*

Gable end elevations of Woodbridge Tide Mill, Suffolk, prepared by Kenneth Major for the mill’s initial restoration in the 1970s



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 2,000 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 at <http://shop.millsarchivetrust.org/>.

Millwrighting and Mill Writing Michael Harverson

The Mills Archive trustees and volunteers are delighted to pay tribute to their fellow worker and friend, Luke Bonwick, on the occasion of the publication of his book on Brill Windmill.

His close involvement with the Mills Archive has given him an extensive knowledge of the material, especially visual, available here for researchers to use. He has turned that awareness into print, making a name for himself as an author of both popular and scholarly mill studies: *Norfolk's Windmills* (2008) and, this year, *Brill Windmill, Buckinghamshire: The History, Technology, Conservation and Repair of a 17th-Century Post Mill*. Both titles are available from the Mills Archive bookshop at <http://shop.millsarchivetrust.org/>.

Bonwick concludes his survey of the recent restoration of Brill, which he oversaw as millwrighting consultant, with a lengthy quotation from Stanley Freese's *Windmills and Millwrighting* (1957).

Freese describes his experiences in 1948 when he initiated and carried out the work that enabled Brill Mill to survive for another 60 years. Material in the Frank Gregory, Stephen Buckland, Peter Dolman and James Venn Collections at the Mills Archive relevant to Freese, plus photos taken by enthusiasts like Harry Meyer during the second quarter of the last century, puts Freese's pioneering practical work on mills in context.

In his book published a decade after the event, Freese gives a revealing, blow-by-blow account of how, with his gang of untrained volunteers, he dismantled the sails and took elements of the mill apart, before renewing and reconstructing them. There is valuable detail in the description, but little in the way of figures. Freese tackled the task as a craftsman, not as a scientist. His approach was largely empirical, seldom theoretical.

Millwrighting and Mill Writing (continued)

By contrast, the project recorded by Bonwick made full use of modern methodology and machinery, put into practice by a team of professional millwrights. Carefully-drafted plans, dendrochronological (tree-ring) investigation, archaeological excavations and minutely-recorded measurements illuminate the action for future generations. Where Freese's account may prompt and inspire, Bonwick's will lead along a waymarked path.

The preservation of written records and illustrations from each chapter of the mill's life is important in order for researchers to understand how approaches to mill restoration have changed over time. Much of this raw material is accessible at the Mills Archive.



Above: Brill windmill is described and illustrated in both of Freese's books, dating from 1931 and 1957 (1971 reprint shown) and the new publication from Bucks County Council (2010)

A style of writing that has died out

A last thought and a third way: in our library at Watlington House we possess not only examples of the approaches typified by Freese and Bonwick, that have spawned the informed involvement in recording and preserving mills of the last 50 years, but also a number of older books of a different kind: a style of writing on country and craft matters, popular between the two world wars, that has died out.

These titles contain barely-researched, subjective description, by the likes of William Coles Finch in his *Life in Rural England* (1928) which is strong on sentiment and thin on fact. (Admittedly he was a journalist rather than a millwright.) Such titles are best left to gather dust [not much!] on the shelves of Watlington House; our purpose at the Mills Archive is better served by bringing to general notice the wealth of genuine, hard-won knowledge that can underpin the future study and preservation of mills.

Friends' Forum

This page is 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.

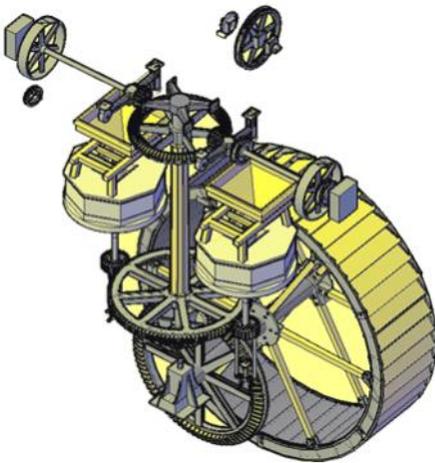
Surveying and drawing mills

John Brandrick writes:

On seeing the Mills Archive's collections, my initial reaction was "Wow!". Working with the original drawings of molinology 'gurus' like Wilfred Foreman and Ken Major, I can appreciate not only their skill with pen and pencil, but the hundreds of hours they must have spent researching, surveying and recording every component within mills. The in-depth knowledge these people held, that is captured in their work and sketches, I find amazing. It also frightens me to see what information could have been lost without their unstinting efforts. Shortly the Archive will make this information and the work of many others available to all of us via the website catalogue.

Below: One of John's superb 3-D survey drawings showing the working parts of a watermill

Over the last few months I have seen many mills but I've only been able to survey and draw a handful of them. I am saddened by the terrible state many of them are in through lack of even the most minor repairs. The weather is destroying them daily. Any information that can be gathered when mills are inspected should be collected and sent on to the relevant Mills Group or directly to the Mills Archive.



Although I am a relative newcomer to molinology I have been drawing for more than 45 years, 22 of them on computer in both 2-D and 3-D. Recently I have been working from survey notes and sketches made by David H Jones during his survey of the Watermills of South Wales in 1982. I have been able to reconstruct two Welsh mills in both 2-D and 3-D. Shortly I hope to start 3-D drawings of Newark Mill, Ripley, Surrey, working with David who surveyed the equipment there in 1966. If anyone has any information on this mill please contact me.

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 including:

- Discounts on purchases from our Internet shop
- Early warnings of additions to our shop
- Waiving of copyright fees
- Much-reduced research fees

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

Friends' Notice Board

Mills Archive Library Catalogue

Mill Writing blog

News of Mills

Family History Searches

Mystery Mills and Oddities

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 organisation 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

**Watlington House
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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

Cataloguing the Stephen Buckland Collection

At present this is one of our largest single collections, occupying an estimated 100 cubic feet of store space.

Photographic postcards by H E S Simmons

Sid Simmons was a superb photographer and his carefully-framed interior and exterior photographs of mills, mostly dating from the 1930s, form one of the most important mill collections in existence.

