

Issue 9

November 2011

# Mill Memories

*The Newsletter of the Friends of the Mills Archive*



Mills Archive Trust

## Special features:

This issue includes reviews of new additions to our bookshop and library; updates on our progress with several collections, and a recent article from our blog, *Mill Writing*.

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## Only days left!

Many Friends will be aware of our first ever research competition. The deadline to choose and submit your title for the first Mills Archive Research Competition is 1 December this year – so if you are going to enter, email your title to [millsarchivetrust@gmail.com](mailto:millsarchivetrust@gmail.com) in the next few days!

The full rules of the competition are available on the Internet at <http://www.millsarchivetrust.org/> (follow the link on the home page) and by request to: The Research Management Board, The Mills Archive Trust, Watlington House, 44 Watlington Street, Reading, RG1 4RJ, UK.

There are two competitions with cash prizes of £500 and £10 with guarantees of publication. The research must be on a topic connected with traditional milling, by wind, water or muscle power. It must be original, previously unpublished and written in English.

**The Mills Archive Research Prize of £500** is for a major piece of research of about 25,000 words and the winning entry will be presented as a stand-alone individual edition, published by the Mills Archive Trust.

**The Mills Archive Research Award of £50** is for shorter research communications of about 5,000 words. The winning entry will be published in a special edition of *Mill Memories*.

Ron Cookson  
(Chairman)



## From our website blog - *Mill Writing*



A recent headline from our popular weblog is reproduced below. *Mill Writing* is a public forum for you to express your views on mills and milling, located on the Friends' website (address above). We welcome your contributions to the debate. Why not start by reading what other people have to say, and adding a comment?

### Women in milling



**Claire Wooldridge writes:** After spending the summer volunteering at The Mills Archive, I have now completed my project regarding the role of women in the milling industry. The pages are now available as part of the new [Themes](#) section on this site. I have produced a series of web pages from my research, which I hope will be a useful and interesting addition to The Mills Archive website. Researching the role of women in the milling industry has been an interesting and rewarding pursuit, which I have greatly enjoyed. I hope you enjoy looking at the web pages, and I would welcome any further comments.

My research has been in part based upon the 1881 census returns regarding millers, milling and millwrights held on the Mills Archive database. I have also used books, articles and other online resources in order to research the roles and experiences of women in the milling industry. I have largely focused on women in the milling industry since the nineteenth century.

There is a wealth of material relating to the lives of male millers, which is both interesting and revealing, including *Life in Rural England* by William Coles Finch, *The Life of Joseph Rank* by R.G. Burnett, and *Recollections of a Lincolnshire Miller – Robert Willson of Huttoft* by Gordon Willson. These accounts are especially enlightening regarding the harsh, unpredictable and unforgiving lives of millers, particularly covering the 19th century. Women, however, are typically absent from these accounts. If women are mentioned, it is usually in relation to a male miller, either as their wife or their daughter.

This study has attempted to investigate the role of women in the milling industry as thoroughly as the sources available will allow, and in this way highlight the often significant and vital role of women in the milling industry.

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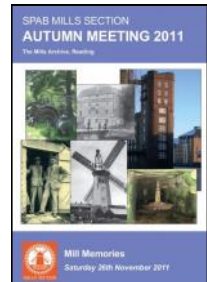
## News from the Archive

### Treasurer and Secretary

Following our advertisement in the last issue of Mill Memories, two Friends volunteered to help as Honorary Treasurer and Honorary Secretary to the Trust. We are delighted and grateful that **David Neaves** accepted the treasurer role and **Colin Mitchell** agreed to become our secretary. Both have extensive experience of these functions elsewhere and we are very lucky to have them helping us.

### Have you booked your place?

The very successful visit by the **Sussex Mills Group** in July has encouraged us to offer the Archive as a venue for the **SPAB Mills Section** for their autumn meeting. In return for their support over the years, we are not making a charge for the facilities, which means that the entry fee is much lower than usual. We are looking forward to welcoming about 60 delegates. There are a few places left, so any Friend should contact us quickly if they have not already registered.



### Fundraising continues apace

Would you like to join our fundraising team? We are looking for Friends who would like a new challenge and could help us in our various publicity programmes and our activities directed at persuading organisations etc to give us financial support for specific projects. Please email Ron ([millsarchivetrust@gmail.com](mailto:millsarchivetrust@gmail.com)) if you would like to know more.

### Home page given a makeover

Our Vice-Chairman and Webmaster Peter King has given the home page of our website a much-needed new look. This is part of an ongoing programme of work to upgrade our old website and merge it with the dedicated Friends site at [www.millsarchivetrust.org](http://www.millsarchivetrust.org). The new home page is much more user-friendly and features a rolling slide show of items from the Archive. Log on and see what you think!



## Work on the Stephen Buckland Collection

Luke Bonwick

**Stage 1 of the project to index and catalogue the Stephen Buckland Collection has been completed. This massive collection, bequeathed to the Archive in 2006, occupies approximately 100 feet of shelf space. The project will require a huge team effort and is undoubtedly our most ambitious undertaking to date.**

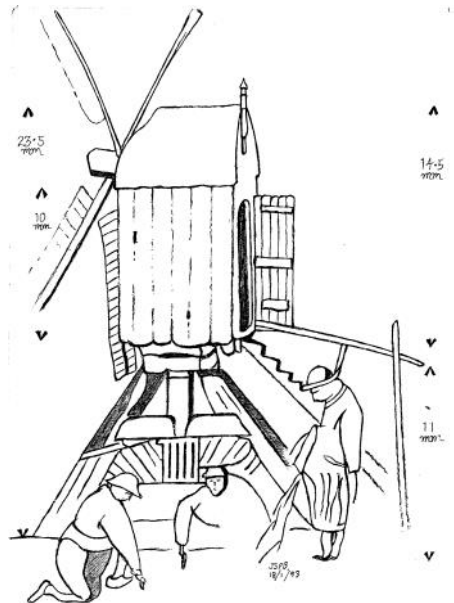
When the collection arrived in Reading it was in a very poor state. The boxes and the files they contained were full of the dust of several decades, and all were unsuitable for long-term storage. Work to re-house the collection in several hundred archival boxes was undertaken by some of our recently-recruited volunteers, principally Guy Boocock, Chris Wheeler and Lisa Studdert-Kennedy, under the supervision of Elizabeth Trout.

Trustee Michael Harverson undertook a pilot study once we had taken delivery of Stephen's material. He produced a preliminary index listing of several of the boxes, so we now have a much better idea of the contents of the collection.

Michael focused on two specific aspects of the collection: Stephen's personal copies of well-known mill books that he annotated as part of his research, and his numerous analytical drawings of mill subjects. Selected drawings were compiled into a fascinating and unusual book, copies of which are available via our online bookshop (see pages 12-13). An illuminating assessment of Stephen's unique contribution to molinology is included as a foreword.

Sketches that are typical of Stephen's work but are not featured in the book are reproduced here and on page 12. Of particular appeal are his understated representations of the human form, which add an extra dimension to many of the drawings.

Stephen was a generous researcher, and his response to requests to reproduce his work would often be "Treat my notes and drawings as if they were your own".



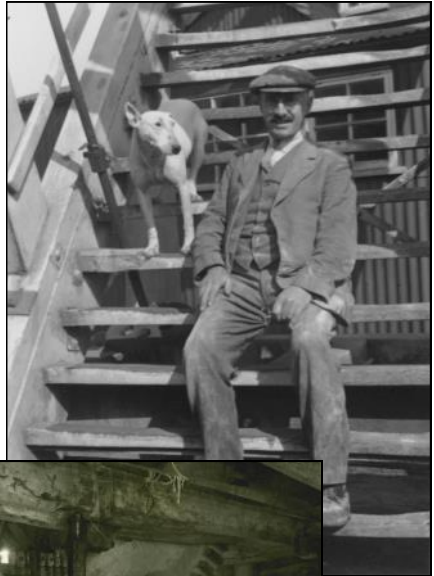
## Memories of Suffolk Millers Talbot K Green

Over the last few months I have been working to improve the indexes of mills held by the Mills Archive, starting with those of Suffolk. Part of the legacy of the late Peter Dolman is a set of detailed research notes describing the mills, millers and millwrights of this county. These contain some fascinating (and often hair-raising) stories of milling life, a selection of which are reproduced below.

### No work on the Sabbath?

Robert Lee, a miller in the 1820-40s, was very proud of his occupation and used to smear flour on his face before going to church on Sunday mornings. His three daughters were very annoyed by this and also by the way he forbade them to show off their parasols when they went out as he didn't want them appearing 'above themselves' (From *A History of Lavenham Windmills* by Lionel Baker).

Mr Charles Pearce of Palgrave Mill was evidently a discerning employer. In the *Bury St. Edmunds & Norwich Post* of 1st October 1806 he advertised for an apprentice who must be "a sober lad of some education". An Ipswich miller of the 1890s was slightly more relaxed. Horace Cattermole, who worked Bramford Road tower mill, used to run adverts for staff in the Ipswich Journal: "No one who was born tired need apply. Sunday work should not be objected to."



*Top: Caleb Reynolds Wright of Friston Mill, Suffolk, 1930  
(Donald W Muggeridge Collection)*

*Bottom: Stanley Jupp, miller at Outwood post mill, Surrey,  
c1950 (Frank W Gregory Collection)*

## Memories of Suffolk Millers (continued)

The successful applicant may have been fortunate to land a job for life. The tenant miller at King's Road Mill, Bury St Edmunds, is said to have started there as a boy when the mill was nearly new. By the time the mill ceased work around the turn of the 20th century, he had been there for 80 years!

### Honest mistakes

C M Masden of Southwold found a bag of gold in some grain he was milling and, for his honesty in handing it back to the owner, received a reward (From the *Suffolk Chronicle*, 14 November 1857).



*Above: King's Road windmill, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk - a fine smock mill with a separate steam-powered plant, it survived until c1913.*

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*Below: Miller R. Mortimer unloads one of the last batches of grain to be ground at Eye post mill from his horse-drawn cart - 1938 (D W Mugeridge Collection)*



Mr Bumstead [sic] Moore, miller of Ousden, had left a horse at an inn in Bury, which the innkeeper was threatening to sell unless the animal was collected and the costs of its keep settled (From *Bury St. Edmunds & Norwich Post* 24<sup>th</sup> December 1806).

### Braking new ground

In about 1895, a local man was bet he wouldn't climb to the top of the sails of a post mill at Hitcham but - being drunk - he did so. As the man reached the top of the uppermost sail, they started turning backwards due to the brake only working in one direction. He jumped off at the bottom and ran through a hedge, only to hurt his leg on the fence on the far side.

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## Memories of Suffolk Millers (continued)



*Left: A photograph taken in the early 1980s by Frank W Gregory captures one of the UK's last commercial watermillers at work - Mr Frank Mettam of Olerton Mill, Nottinghamshire..*

### Moving lock, stock and barrel

Stanley Freese reported that the open-trestle post mill at Hundon, known as Plough Mill, once 'ran away' (ie. could not be stopped) in a high wind. The miller, not having a supply of brick-dust or sand to hand,

threw a 6-inch pane of glass into the brake to bring the sails to a rapid halt. One wonders how long it took him to clean the bits out of his machinery.

"We regret to record that Mr Walter John Pollard, aged 82, died somewhat suddenly at Nayland on Sunday last. The deceased, who was a miller by trade, was very much esteemed and in his native village of Assington he was part and parcel of the public life of the village ...

Many years ago the deceased bought a windmill at Sudbury and removed it intact to Assington. This caused great excitement in the district at the time, and many people were curious to know the time of the proposed removal. So great was the excitement displayed that it was deemed advisable to carry out the work at midnight, this being done in order to avoid accidents by the horses being startled, as no less than 21 were used for the work. The incumbent of St. Peter's Church, Sudbury, asked to be allowed to witness the interesting work, and he was the only person in attendance excepting the workmen. It was a huge structure to move along the highway ..." (From the *Halstead Gazette*, 22.8.1912).

## Cataloguing our most vulnerable collections David Neaves

Amongst the various collections of mill memorabilia, the Mills Archive holds a number of glass plates, lantern slides, glass negatives and other negatives illustrating mills and many aspects of mill activity. Some 17 collections comprising 3,267 images have been digitised and positive images made from negatives. A total of 3,103 (95%) of images have now been catalogued and many have already been added to online web pages for easy access.

The original slides or plates were received by the Archive in a variety of cardboard boxes or containers, many of which had seen better days. Some arrived in custom-made wooden boxes or just wrapped in paper; some were separated by pieces of old newsprint turning brown, or were simply placed in a box touching



*Above: Glass plate negative from c1930 showing the post mill and the remains of an ancient tower mill at Burton Dassett, Warks.*



*Above: A rare lantern slide from the collection of Ronald Clarke, a well-known author of books on traction engines. It shows the interior of an unidentified East Anglian post mill, with two pairs of millstones located side by side and driven by the tail wheel - an arrangement that can no longer be seen in the UK.*

one another. Every plate and negative has now been re-packed in its own envelope and kept for posterity in acid-free boxes. They are stored in small numbers per box to protect the glass images from damage. Although they are available for access by researchers, the high-resolution scans of each image will minimise the need for future handling of the originals.



## Cataloguing our most vulnerable collections (continued)

During the process of adding the collection to the Archive's catalogue, the database of mill sites has been updated to include images of early mills. Some of the plates and negatives had the site, and in some cases dates, noted on the border. In many instances it was necessary to refer to published mill literature as a starting point, such as K G Farries & M T Mason's *The Windmills of Surrey & Inner London*. Several images could be identified by cross-checking with other images in the catalogue, and by consulting websites such as [www.norfolk Mills.co.uk](http://www.norfolk Mills.co.uk).

Where additional mills and/or sites were identified it was necessary to create a new mill reference for the index by adding the mill name; county; country, parish/village/town; purpose of the mill (i.e. drainage, cereal milling, etc); source of power (i.e. wind; water) and six-figure NGR, wherever possible. Again, data were cross checked with published material and/or web sources. Additional small sets of glass negatives and slides are donated from time to time. Having identified this material as a high priority, these collections will be progressively digitised and uploaded.

From a personal viewpoint, it has been fascinating to visit first hand these examples produced by earlier photographic techniques and equipment, with certain images dating back to the late 1800s. Some of the larger glass plates have images of very high quality, comparable to the products of our 21st century technology.



*Top: Glass negative of Wormingford watermill, Essex, 1924 (W H Palmer Collection)*

*Bottom: Colour slide of unidentified watermill*

## 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 new library catalogue is on the Friends' site at <http://www.millsarchivetrust.org/index.php/library>.*

*We also feature examples of the books we have for sale. These are all surplus to our needs.. The bookshop is also on the Friends' website at <http://shop.millsarchivetrust.org/>.*

## Getting the most out of the Mills Archive Library Luke Bonwick

Our new library catalogue software allows you to find the published resources you are looking for quickly and easily - all from the comfort of your own home! Once you have found details of the book you are interested in, you can make an appointment to visit our Library and Research Centre in Reading.

First, log on to the Mills Archive home page at [www.millsarchivetrust.org/](http://www.millsarchivetrust.org/).

Click on the **Archive & Library** tab. Follow the blue hyperlinks to search the library by your preferred method:

- [Browse an alphabetical list of author names](#)
- [Browse an alphabetical list of titles](#)
- [Browse an alphabetical list of subject categories](#)

You can also:

- [Search by title word or other key word](#)

This will take you to a standard search page. Type in your search term and press the **submit your search** button to produce your results.

You can click on the **title** of the publication to find out more about it. Elsewhere on this page you can click to **locate the publication** on our shelves, and **search our online** bookshop to check whether we have a copy of the publication for sale.

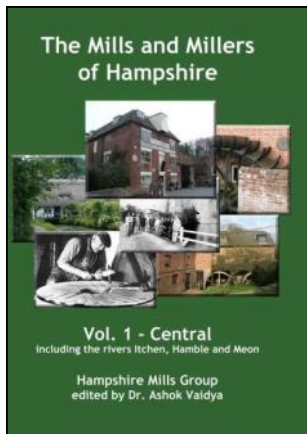
Our Library also features a searchable **glossary** of key milling terminology, and a large number of **journal offprints** and newsletters. Currently, these remain part of the main Archive catalogue, but will be added to the Library in due course.

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## New to the Mills Archive Bookshop

**The Mills and Millers of Hampshire - Volume 1: Central** Soft cover **£13 + P&P**  
 Edited by Dr. Ashok Vaidya and published by the Hampshire Mills Group

This informative book focuses on a geographical area that has not previously been covered by mill literature. We are selling copies of the book on behalf of the Hampshire Mills Group, who are promising two more books in the series.



This first volume covers the central area, including mills on the Rivers Itchen, Hamble and Meon, as well as tide- and spring-fed mills.

The concept for this book is to make available in a convenient and easily-accessed way some of the mass of historical data held by the Group.

The Archivist of the Hampshire Mills Group (HMG) Tony Yoward, and his late wife Mary, researched and collected information about the mills and the millers for many years. Their work has been supplemented by contributions from other members of the HMG, and in earlier times from the Southampton University Industrial Archaeology Group.

The book contains a great deal of information about the mills, the millers and mill owners, presented chronologically. In all, 72 mills are covered; over 500 millers are identified and 300 research references are listed in its 160 full colour pages. The current status of each mill is included. Historical sources consulted include insurance company policies, church and civic records, local newspaper archives and personal knowledge, and the reference to the source is given.

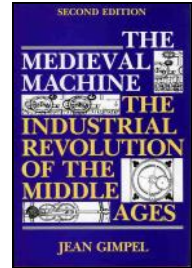
The book concentrates on the watermills of Hampshire and includes an introduction to a 'typical' corn mill, details of the work of the Hampshire Mills Group and colourful maps of the rivers of the county. The Hon Ralph Montagu has contributed a foreword. His estate at Beaulieu has a tide mill, which will be described in a later volume.

Naturally, the book has a historical rather than a technical focus, and a little more information about the buildings and machinery would have balanced out the historical references. The book is well illustrated, and hopefully the subsequent volumes will include larger and sharper photographs. Overall, this is a very worthwhile and long-awaited book, and further volumes are eagerly anticipated.

## New to the Mills Archive Bookshop (continued)

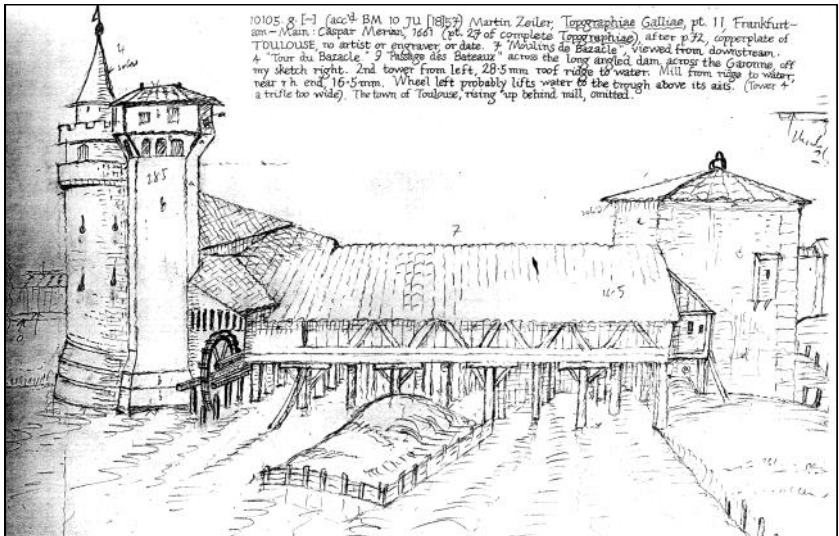
**The Medieval Machine** (2nd edition, Hardback, 1988)  
by Jean Gimpel, published by Wildwood House **£18 + P&P**

In this fascinating book, Jean Gimpel argues that the Middle Ages experienced an Industrial Revolution that, in many ways, was more significant than the generally-accepted turning point of the 19th century. Unlike most books that relate to mills, the technological boom is described from a human perspective, so the reader gains a greater understanding of 'how' and 'why', as well as precisely 'what' was done.



One vivid example involved the watermills of the Garonne, where it passed through Toulouse, France. Here, three separate groups of entrepreneurs built watermills on dams across the channel, and each was accused of raising the height of their dams above agreed levels in order to improve the productivity of their mills. Protracted legal wrangling ensued.

The sketch below, by Stephen Buckland, shows the mills of the Bazacle dam, positioned furthest upstream of the three.



## 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 Library 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](mailto: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 Centre  
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](http://www.millsarchivetrust.org)

Internet shop

Mills Archive Library Catalogue

News of Mills

Mystery Mills and Oddities

Friends' Notice Board

Mill Writing blog

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 organisation or individual.*

<b>Standing Order Form</b>	To	Bank	Branch
Address		Postcode	
Please Pay SANTANDER plc, BOOTLE Sort code 09-01-53 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  
44 Watlington Street  
Reading, RG1 4RJ  
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](mailto:friends@millsarchivetrust.org)*

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## In the Next Issue of Mill Memories

### **Progress with the Kenneth G Farries Collection**

The collection of this important molinologist is the focus of a lecture in the upcoming November meeting, and a summary of our cataloguing progress will appear in the next issue.

### **Details of our 10th Anniversary celebrations**

The Mills Archive is in its tenth year! The tenth edition of *Mill Memories* will focus on our past achievements and plans for the future.

*Kenneth G Farries holding a sack passer at  
Frost's Mill, Halstead, Essex, c1980*

