

Successful Country Mills no 2

Newington Mill Ramsgate

(From 'The Miller' June 1st 1903)



Milling Journals of the past at the Mills Archive

by Mildred Cookson, The Mills Archive, UK



As I have always had a soft spot for windmills, the second in my series of “Successful Country Mills” is Newington Mill. The mill stood ½ mile north of St Lawrence Church Ramsgate in Kent.

Mr Peter Mack of Newington Mill was said to be a go-ahead young miller “who deserves to succeed”. He transformed his windmill to run on an Armfield system. It was well known that Messrs J. J. Armfield of Ringwood, Hampshire seemed to have had the special knack of fitting their machines into impossible corners, and whole systems into inconceivably small spaces, as in the case of Newington Mills. It was not very often that a windmill was converted this way, and was referred to as ‘a veritable waistcoat pocket installation.’

They introduced a one-sack system, which turned out clean flour and well finished offal’s on three octagonal floors, one measuring just 18ft.6ins across. The flour and offal’s were taken off in the basement of the mill and hoisted straight into wagons or carts.

The first floor (see diagram) contained three double sets of Armfield’s 12in. x 6in. rolls. They stood in a line, which took up 11ft 6ins of the floor, leaving space between

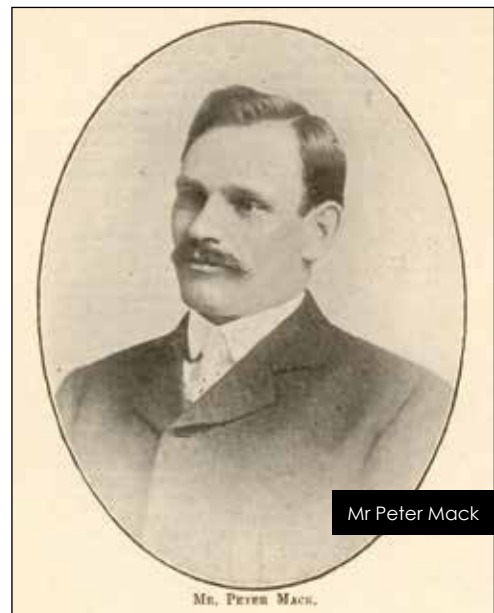
each double set to allow replacement, when the need arose, with 18in rolls. It was felt once the surrounding neighbourhood heard and tried his flour; the new rolls would soon be installed.

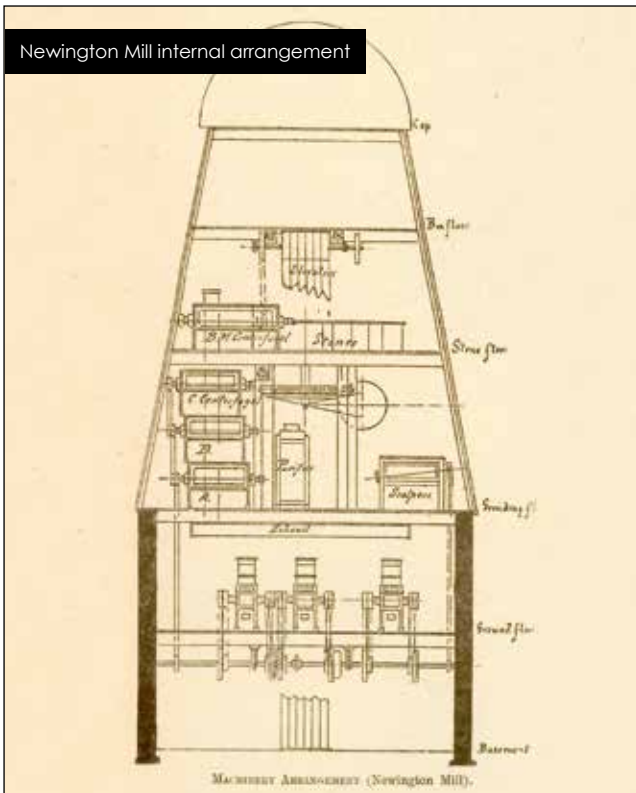
There were three breaks and three reductions. The usual wheat cleaning machinery, including magnets placed in front of the first break to intercept any small pieces of wire or nails. On the floor above the rolls was a double scalper operating upon the chop from the first two breaks, an Armfield purifier of suitable size and capacity and three centrifugals.

The next floor had a break meal centrifugal and a bran duster. It was said that ‘the middlings were divided into two sizes and were being delivered to the rolls in a regular manner, and in good shape, they were bright in appearance, and free from light tissue and branny matter, a fact that any practical miller loves to look upon.’

Everything was said to run quietly and efficiently. The motive power was from a 12 horse power engine, but interestingly by a very simple arrangement the huge 70ft sweeps could be coupled up so that either steam or wind could be used.

Even though the roller plant system was in place the two pairs of 4ft 6in millstones were still retained on the stone floor along with a corn crusher and wheat cleaner. The bin floor contained two bins, one for dirty wheat arriving and the other for the wheat to be stored once cleaned.





The mill is about 100 years old. The sweeps, which are in fairly good condition, were last used twenty seven years ago (1904). I think considerable repair would have to be done for them to be used again. The shutters, of course, have been dismantled. We used up to quite recently two pairs of stones, one set of Derbyshire Peak and the other French Burr. We now only use one pair (for grinding barley and farmers' corn). The other pair have been removed for an oat crushing, maize kibbler and grinder combined. We make our own gas (from anthracite coal) to drive the gas engine, which drives a small flour plant, the stones and crusher all together. We also have a bakery adjoining the mill in which we bake bread. So you see we make our own gas, make our own flour and produce bread from same. Our trade is a mixed one, of course, as is the case with similar businesses, consisting of corn, fodder, flour, bread, which is retailed at our two shops.

Mr Mack added that he had heard that the mill originally stood on the old SE & CR Station site in the town and was moved by the railway company to make room for the line. This is a misunderstanding I think, for the Canterbury millwrights tell me that the mill was erected on its present site by John Holman. Prior to Mr Mack's ownership, the mill was in the Mascall family, for whom it was probably built. Mr Mack's assertion that considerable repair would be needed to the mill is underlined by the sketch made only six year later by windmill artist Karl Wood, whose portfolio of 1500 windmill drawings is now cared for by the Mills Archive.

If you would like to know more please email me at mills@millsarchive.org

The wheat was hoisted up directly from the wagons which could pull up directly under the chain hoist.

The standard mill reference book for the area in our library (Coles Finch,1933) quotes from a letter received in 1931 from the miller Mr Peter Mack:



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