

Rice Milling around the World: The advent of industrial processes



Joseph Heap & Sons Rice Mill, Liverpool

Milling journals of the past at The Mills Archive

by Mildred Cookson, The Mills Archive, UK



In previous issues of Milling and Grain, I mentioned that the Mills Archive library holds a number of books, catalogues and images on rice production from all corners of the world. This article moves on from the early primitive methods and the subsequent description of

the use of waterpower illustrated in earlier articles, to examine some of our holdings covering the early stages of industrialisation of rice milling.

As well as extensive runs of journals stretching back to the 19th century, we hold a wealth of trade literature and a number catalogues from the manufacturers of mill machinery. These provide much of the background to this article and its illustrations. The journals, including *The Miller*, *Milling* (the forerunner of this publication) and the *American Weekly North-Western Miller*, are a valuable and fascinating source of early advertisements as well as detailed articles of interest to the modern miller. Regular readers of this column will recall that we are still looking for early and contemporary material to enhance our roller mill collection.

Although treated less prominently than flour milling, these sources provide ample coverage of rice milling. The literature contains a great deal of technical information and many designs such as that of Walker's Patent Rice Decorticator. Advertisements, for example the one I have selected from the Whitmore and Binyon catalogue, underline the wealth of parallel uses for mills in late Victorian times. In this one advert these milling engineers are offering not only rice milling machinery and flour

milling machinery, but also mills to produce Portland cement and even to wash earth away from diamonds! An illustrated catalogue at the Mills Archive from the Rangoon agents of the Hamburg firm Nagel and Kaemp, which was established in 1865, displays details of the "Filipina" machine for rice production. This was designed so that it could be fitted into a small building and proved very popular at the time as its size was such that it could be readily transported by horse-drawn carts.

A more elegant 1920 catalogue from another Hamburg engineering firm, FH Schule, shows, along with many illustrations of rice production machinery, several pages of photographs of mills around the world which had installed their equipment. A publicity image of their headquarters indicates that their factory had increased twenty-fold in the last thirty years and that additional works extensions were also being constructed. The mills employing Schule equipment ranged from the small mills in Bangkok to larger ones such as the Messina Brothers plant in Brazil, which had a capacity of almost 30,000kg/day.

In 1866, 364,000 tons of rice left Rangoon and other ports in Burma aboard sailing ships bound for the mills in Bremen, Hamburg and England. Articles in *The Miller* show that Liverpool was the chief rice milling centre in Britain along with London. Heap's Mill, a dock mill built in Liverpool in about 1780 survived into this century when it was listed in 2005 by English Heritage as Grade II, "a building of special interest warranting every effort to preserve it". They highlighted its combination of a mill/warehouse type of building, specifically designed for a particular use and which had been altered to accommodate changes as technology improved. It is now intend to develop the site in a £130 million project which will

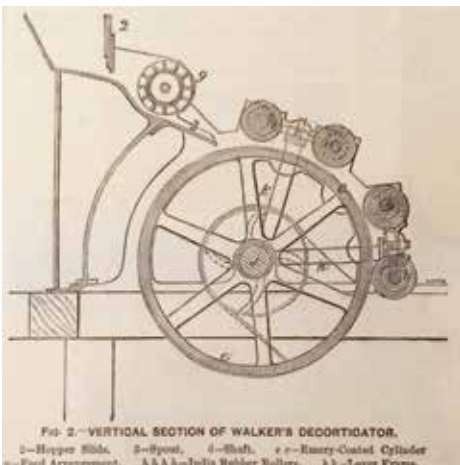


FIG. 2.—VERTICAL SECTION OF WALKER'S DECORTICATOR.
1—Hopper 2—Spout 3—Shaft 4—Emery-Coated Cylinder
5—Feed Arrangement 6 & 7—India Rubber Rollers 8—Lower Frame.

Walker's Patent Rice Decorticator

WHITMORE & BINYON

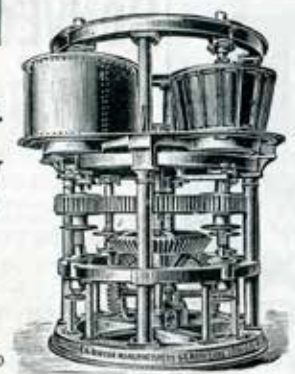
64, Mark Lane, London, E.C.
WORKS - - WICKHAM MARKET, SUFFOLK.

RICE MILLING MACHINERY

AND FLOUR MILLING MACHINERY

ON THE NEWEST SYSTEMS.

Machinery for Portland Cement Making.
for Diamondiferous Earth Washing.

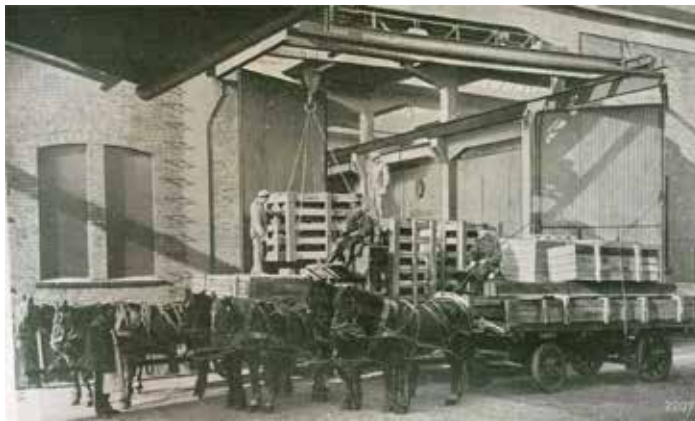


WHITE RICE—GONE HURST.

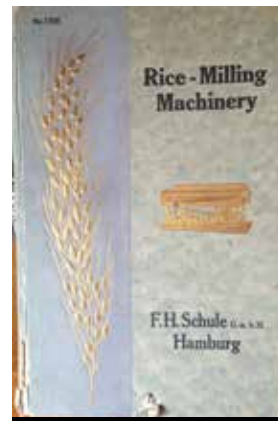
A cutting from a Whitmore and Binyon catalogue advertising rice milling machinery



Nagel and Kaemp Catalogue for Filipina Rice Mills



Shipping of a Filipina



Schule Catalogue no 1328 for Rice-milling machinery



Headquarters of FH Schule GmbH in 1920



Guan Heng Seng Rice Mill, Bangkok



Nai Thom Yah Rice Mill, Bangkok



Fratelli Messina Rice Mill, Ribeirao Peto, Brazil



Rice Mills and Warehouses Edmund St. Liverpool, 1886

preserve the facade of the building, but not its interior. Joseph Heap and Sons Ltd will feature in a future article in this series.

The large mills were typically built on docksides to facilitate transfer from sailing ships and steamers. The 1886 architect's engraving of the new design for Rice Mills and Warehouses in Edmund St. Liverpool shows the layout of a rice mill and warehouse complex adjacent to the Liverpool Exchange Station on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, not far from the docks. Both the mill and the railway have now gone, although the Victorian station facade remains as frontage for offices.

These articles only give a brief glimpse of the several million records held by the Mills Archive Trust. Next month the focus will move to rice milling in Japan. If you would like to know more please email me at mills@millsarchive.org.