

Issue 1

August 2007

Mill Memories



The Newsletter of the Friends of the Mills Archive

Firing on all cylinders!

Since the Archive was launched, early in 2002, our activities have gained momentum. Five years later, we are close to completing our third successful digitization project.

The “Pilot Project” was completed in October 2003. It confirmed the Archive’s Internet presence with the launch of the website and online catalogue, containing 3000 items relating to mills in Dorset and Nottinghamshire.

In the intervening period, we have received several large collections of material as people became increasingly aware of our aims and activities. These spurred us on to add material to the catalogue and to provide facilities for visitors to inspect and discover the original material.

The Library and Research Centre, at Watlington House in Reading, opened in 2005, provided these much-needed facilities. The second digitization project, which was running at this time, focused on the mills of North East England.

Special points of interest:

- The story behind our logo
- Hints and tips on backing up your photos
- People and the Mills Archive

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2 Mills Research Group Secretary, Guy Blythman commented,

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3 *“It is incredible how quickly things have happened. From a standing start they have got a lot to show people, as well as somewhere special to show it to them”.*

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The latest project, which focuses on Kent mills is to be launched in September (see page 4). None of this would have been possible without support from the mill world and the Heritage Lottery Fund, to whom we should all be grateful.

To save money, Mill Memories is printed in black & white. However, a full colour version can be downloaded from the Friends’ website at

http://www.millsarchivetrust.org/intro_friends.htm

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.

Backing up digital photographs

Photographic images eventually decay, losing colour and definition. Although modern technology has slowed the process, it is still inevitable. Unfortunately digital images can also suffer over time and they are also more vulnerable to catastrophic loss. On the basis that the simplest solutions are the best, it seems sensible to print the images you want to keep on to acid-free photo paper.

As a short-term measure storing digital images on a computer is wise, but a second copy should be made on a CD, DVD or other removable medium that will retain your images if your computer crashes. The Mills Archive backs up its images on to external hard drives such as the Maxtor OneTouch III USB 2.0. This costs about £100 and provides 500GB of storage – enough for several hundred thousand images. We also copy our back up on to a second external hard drive, which we keep in a separate building.

Having avoided the potential for catastrophic loss, any electronic storage medium will still present you with the problem of rapid obsolescence. Magnetic, optical and electronic storage devices all have limited life expectancies, both physically and in terms of the equipment being available to read them after 50 or even 20 years. Floppy disks have all but disappeared and the future is not necessarily assured for the current generations of CD and DVD. Unless you can ensure that your

images are routinely copied to the popular media of the day they will either deteriorate or become unreadable in just a few decades.

This whole area demands careful thought for long-term security and is described in detail in the guidelines issued by AHDS and TASI. If you need a more detailed discussion, start with this web page http://vads.ahds.ac.uk/guides/creating_guide/sect71.html .



News from the Archive

The Mills Archive holds more than 50 collections amounting to about 1.5 million records.

As we catalogue the material, we scan much of it so that you can see it on the Internet at www.millsarchive.com. However, our cataloguing priorities are largely determined by whether we can get grants, eg from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

As a Friend, you are invited to comment on what we catalogue and we welcome suggestions on what we should do next.

To help you appreciate the wealth of our holdings, we use the following pages to highlight new acquisitions, interesting items and important collections.

Our new logo

We are quite proud of our logo design, and hope you like it too. It is based on a model of Herringfleet drainage mill in Suffolk, constructed by Jacquy Cayn (see photo below right). The logo was designed by Lorraine Humm, a friend of the archive who has been responsible for a lot of the design work on our website catalogue and the new Friends of the Mills Archive website.

Our aim was to generate an image which combined the main elements from different types of mill. We thought initially of a gear wheel with meshing teeth—a feature common to mills of all types. This had the disadvantage of having no immediate visual mill connection.

The Herringfleet logo is readily identifiable as a mill, but on closer inspection it emerges as a wind-powered drainage pump with a scoop wheel, combining the elements of wind and water with an alternative industrial use to corn milling.



The logo is based on a model of Herringfleet drainage mill





Millers' Tales—The Changing Face of Kent's Mills

September 2007 will see the launch of this exciting collaborative project to digitize material on the mills—and mill people—of Kent. We have already reached our target of making available more than 8,000 new archive items.

The project has been supported by grants from the Heritage Lottery Fund and Kent County Council, and has generated an unrivalled and constantly expanding collection of material relating to Kent's milling heritage.

*Kent's
numerous
smock mills
have a style all
of their own*

One of the project's aims has been to make available core information on as many known mill sites in the county as possible. In addition, there is a wealth of material available on certain prominent mills—such as the watermills of Canterbury and the windmills owned by Kent County Council—so these have been treated in more depth.

Project administrator, Luke Bonwick explained, *"The volunteers have worked incredibly hard over the last two years. They have organized, indexed, scanned and catalogued hundreds of photographs, letters and other documents. We are now beginning to see the fruits of their labours - and they are very impressive"*.



Launch of the project website

A unique facet of the project is the way in which it combines Kent-related material from a number of collections. These include the Archive's three Foundation Collections; the extensive archive of Kent County Council; the SPAB Mills Section's collection, and a large number of fantastic "windfall" collections which were donated to the Mills Archive soon after the project began. The collections contain many previously unseen images and papers.

The elements of all these collections will be drawn together by the project's new website, the location of which will be announced imminently. The site features several innovative ways of exploring the material, and we hope users will find it extremely easy to use, as well as interesting to browse or search through.

What are the Kent Millers' Tales?

Each of seven *Millers' Tales* is represented by a dedicated web page, designed to inform and entertain the user by introducing them to a different mill-related theme.

THE CANTERBURY MILLER'S TALE provides a gateway to each of the mills that stood in and around Canterbury. Abbott's Mill is seen through the eyes of one of its former millers, Neville Price, who recounts his experiences of working at the mill.

THE RIVER'S TALE describes the mill sites of the River Loose, which rises at Langley and once powered the wheels of over fifteen watermills.

A MILLWRIGHT'S TALE is dedicated to the people who built and maintained Kent's mills in the past, and who repair and restore them today. It includes recordings from a recent interview with an active millwright, as well as historical material.

CRANBROOK'S TALE features links to material on the windmills and watermills of Cranbrook and its surrounding area, including the well-known and spectacular Union Mill which has recently been restored to working order and is open to the public.

THE MILL RESEARCHER'S TALE celebrates the many dedicated and enthusiastic individuals who have studied Kent mills and created records of them for posterity.

THE COUNCILLOR'S TALE tells the story behind the mill restoration movement in Kent from the perspective of the County Council's Heritage Conservation Team. Their campaign to preserve the county's windmills began in the 1950s and continues today.

THE MILL SMASHER'S TALE describes the activities of George Jarvis, a carpenter and wheelwright, who was responsible for demolishing so many mills that he gained the unenviable nickname of "The Mill Smasher".

A project with wide appeal

We hope that the project will prove a valuable educational resource, as well as encouraging more people to explore the material in their local archives and to stimulate their interest in the milling heritage of Kent.



People naturally think of oasthouses and windmills—but Kent had hundreds of watermills too



The last days of milling at Chesterton Mills, Cambridge

Michael French, the last descendant of a Cambridge milling family, has donated his collection of photographs and recollections to the Archive

We had a phone call recently from Michael French, the last descendant of a long line of millers who lived and worked at a large mill complex, dubbed “French’s Mill”, near the centre of Cambridge. He had assembled a lot of documents and photographs relating to his father, grandfather and close relations, and details of the part they had played in the family business.

Although the site now houses a set of smart offices inside the original mill buildings, Michael was adamant that the information he had compiled should not be lost. He was keen to donate the collection to the Mills Archive so that interested visitors could find out about the site’s former activities.

A step back in time

Michael’s family lived in one of the two grand houses on the site, which had evidently been built for the successful master miller at some time in the 19th century. The complex contained warehouses, a steam-powered roller mill and, taking pride of place in the centre of the site, a tall octagonal smock mill.

The accompanying photograph shows the windmill in its working days, and two members of the family posed outside. The value of such photographs, as records of the design and layout of mill sites, is well demonstrated by this one. A new building blocks off the former entrance to the site where the Victorian photographer stood, so the same photograph cannot be taken today.



The Stephen Buckland Collection

John Stephen Percy Buckland (1935-2006) was an enigmatic and productive mill researcher with a love of old maps and an eye for detail. We suspect that he was seldom without a pen or pencil in his hand, as he seemed to have committed an incredible number of his thoughts to paper.

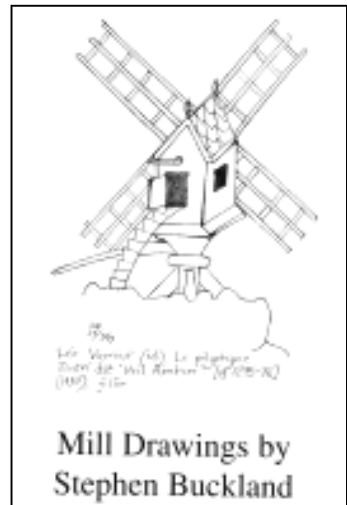
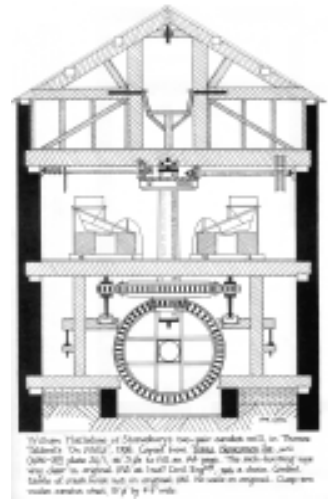
Stephen was interested in many different aspects of mills and milling, as well as countless other related subjects. Mills Archive Trustee, Michael Harverson commented, *“He was also one of those unnerving people who you discover know more than you do about most things, including your own speciality, once a conversation has started”*.

Stephen’s published works include illuminating papers on Edmund Lee’s windmill patent of 1745; the windmill featured in the Walsoken Brass in a King’s Lynn church, and the way in which mills were featured on ancient maps.

During the last months of his life, Stephen carefully prepared much of his mill collection for transfer to the Archive, and took care to label up nearly every box, book or folder to ease our workload. To give some idea of the collection’s size, a regular transit van was filled almost to the point of overloading on its journey from Lambeth to Reading.

Stephen’s collection is a treasure trove of handwritten notes and compiled information from a variety of sources, providing researchers with a remarkable and valuable resource. His attention to detail means that each comment and sketch has been the result of a great deal of careful consideration.

Stephen’s drawings of mills demonstrate his lively and recognizable style. A number of drawings, illustrating a variety of topics, have been selected by Michael Harverson and published in an A4-size paperback by the Archive. This is available through our online bookshop on the Friends’ website www.millsarchivetrust.org .



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.

The Friends' Website

The site at www.millsarchivetrust.org will be of value to Friends and raise money from the general public. It is easy to use and contains a number of pages worth exploring as well as information on how and why to become a Friend. Already available we have:

Bookshop: Over 200 mill books for sale! To use, you need to register. If you email us to say you are already a Friend, we will update the server so that you can claim the Friends' 10% discount.

Archive and Library: The Archive continues to run on a separate site, but we have moved the library catalogue to a new and simpler system. We have more than 1200 mill books listed and about 500 more to catalogue.

Friends' Notice Board: A free service where you can post announcements and messages so that the public can see what is going on. We will also use it to announce Friends' events.

Friends' Trading Post: Another free service for Friends; here you can offer items for sale to the general public and mill enthusiasts.

Mystery Mills & Oddities: A fun page with a purpose. Help us to identify and unravel some of the more unusual things we get. Send your own in and see whether you can start a correspondence.

News of Mills: We will add to submissions by Friends with feeds from the BBC. Please send in items and bookmark this page to keep up to date.

Other Important Sites: A discriminating and informative links page with connections to sites we think you will find interesting. If you disagree or feel we should add others, please tell us.

We will continue to add features, but the site will only flourish if you make use of it and send in contributions or comments.

*“A great
move in the
right direction.
I'm surprised
you delayed
until 2007”*



Launching the Friends

Mills Archive Chairman, Ron Cookson, explained “The formation of the Friends gives us the opportunity to demonstrate our appreciation of the help we get from many individuals”.

Before the formal launch, marked by the first issue of *Mill Memories*, those who are currently supporting the Archive were asked for their views. We received a lot of support and encouragement and many suggestions were taken up.

The Friends start with almost 100 members and we wish in time to increase this to about 200 people who are able to support the Archive’s work. We hope that Friends will also help to spread our message within and beyond the mill world.

We are launching the Friends in several stages this year:

- The Friends’ website is available at www.millsarchivetrust.org
- The new Internet bookshop is open offering a 10% discount to Friends
- All Founder Friends get the first *Mill Memories*, together with a set of 5 postcards
- The Friends’ leaflet is being sent to all SPAB Mills Section members. They will be offered the 5 postcards if they join before the end of September.
- We will email 6000 people round the world who are registered to use the Mills Archive catalogue.

If you have any ideas for further publicity please email us at friends@millsarchivetrust.org.

Auction News

We sell donated old postcards on eBay to raise money. As a registered charity we do not have to pay commission. This provides an important source of income for us.

Most of the cards are not of milling interest, but any mill cards will be offered at a fixed price to Friends only before they are put on eBay.

The service is only available on the Internet. If you would like to register, please email us.

“The list of benefits is attractive, and I’m sure will appeal to many people”



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.



Alfred Hone at City Mills, Ely 1895

Alfred Hone of Ely

The image on this page was donated by Lyn Cottrell. She believes the photograph was taken in the 1890s at City mills, Ely, Cambridgeshire, where Alfred Hone is listed as miller in 1892 & 1900.

The Mills Archive family history database has another mention of him as miller at Downham Road, Ely in 1883. Alfred's first wife died in 1892. The photograph shows Alfred's second wife Emily, his daughters from his first marriage, Maude and Nellie, and his stepson William.

Millers and Millwrights

The 1851 census of Great Britain recorded about 10,000 millwrights at work in the country. The Domesday Book listed many thousands of mills in England in 1086.

Not surprisingly therefore the milling and the later millwrighting professions provide a fascinating and rich source of information for family historians as well as those piecing together the history of specific mills and regions.

Some of our most interesting contributions have come from people researching their own ancestors. These are carefully catalogued and provide the human cement in the story we build.

*“People will never
look forward to
posterity who do
not look
backward to their
ancestors”*

Edmund Burke 1797



Biographies and Portraits

The Mills Archive site does not only contain searchable databases and family history communications, it is also building a comprehensive section of biographies and portraits of mill personalities—both past and present. For example, we think this is a picture of Albert Dean and family at Biddenden smock mill in 1938; do you know better?

Whenever the Mills Archive is given material, the first question we ask is “What do you know of the person who did the research or took the photographs?”. Our first donated collection was a large set of photographs taken in the middle of the last century by Dr Michael Dunn. His daughter was able to persuade her mother to write our first biography, adding a personal and easily lost story to his records of mills.

Often the biographies provide links to other families of mill people and give a glimpse of how much we have to catalogue to get the best out of the information. There are of course some gems, such as James Waterfield’s account of his first encounter with a mill.

We welcome more people information, both contemporary and from previous generations. The more we are given, the more we can complete the story of our milling heritage.



“I can remember the warm, sweet smell and the very frightening (to a small child) rumble of the machinery”

James Waterfield, miller at Maud Foster, Boston

Can You Help?

Do you have a computer and an Internet connection? We are looking for volunteers to help to improve our information on family history. You could help us by working a few hours at home each week or (if you live close enough) you could work at the Archive.

Most visitors to the Archive website want to search the databases of millers and millwrights created by Mary Yoward and Ken Kirsopp. We want to extend these by including, for example, names that appear in the indexes of mill books.



Please email us at friends@millsarchivetrust.org if you can help!

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 2 copies for the library. The bookshop is also on the Friends' website.

Books on Mills, Millers and Milling

One of our best-kept secrets is our amazing library of mill books. Starting with the collections of the late Peter Dolman and Don Paterson, it has grown to fill a number of large bookcases (a few of which can be seen opposite). An early lesson we learned was not to use the Archive catalogue for our books, so we have now developed a much simpler and more informative system.

The new catalogue is at <http://library.millsarchivetrust.org/>. It is very easy to search and browse, so why not give it a try, or better still visit us and see for yourself? Although we have many hundreds of books, we are particularly pleased with the older ones we have been given. One of our oldest to date is an early edition of Oliver Evans, donated by Derek Ogden.

Secondhand Corner

Our bookshop at <http://shop.millsarchivetrust.org/> has the widest choice of books on traditional mills and milling on the Internet. It is easy to use and once you have registered and been confirmed as a Friend you qualify for discounts and get priority treatment if you are looking for a particular book.

All books are priced at their secondhand market value and every penny goes to support the work of the Archive. We have a no-quibble returns policy and you can save postage by contacting us as you place your order and agreeing to collect paid-for orders either from Reading or from the SPAB Mills Section Spring or Autumn Meetings.

Send us your wants list and let us find the books you need!

*“For a jolly
good book
whereon to look,
Is better to me
than gold”*

Pleasures of Life, 1887

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**

Open by prior arrangement



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

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*.

*"We all
need
Friends!"*



The Friends' Website

Check the Friends' Website www.millsarchivetrust.org

Internet shop

Friends' Notice Board

Mills Archive Library Catalogue

Friends' Trading Post

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 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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The Friends of the Mills Archive is 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

Derek Ogden Collection

Aspects of Derek's millwrighting work in the UK and the USA

Kenneth G Farries Collection

Unpublished elements of the collection of this well-known mill author

James Venn Collection

Drawings of bygone mills in the Chilterns

Postcards as historical records

Often the detail is what is important

