# *Pann Mill Times*

**MARCH 1998** **No. 2**

THE NEW MILLENNIUM
A DREAM?

My vision for the future of Pann Mill is to see this prominent site developed sensitively, as an economically viable conservation unit.

It would be satisfying to see a large brick-built mill with the capacity to convert grain to flour on a significant scale. Why shouldn't the mill include a bakery and provide for home deliveries?

How exciting if it could support a full-time miller (and family?) who combined the traditional methods of milling with the advances of modem technology!

A well equipped administration centre might be responsible for a 'teaching wing' with accommodation for food science students and the planning of school visits.

PROJECT LEADER'S JOTTINGS

Looking back through my diary over the past six months, I am surprised at the amount of work we have accomplished on our fortnightly morning working parties. John has constructed a plinth on which the 'tun' will sit. A tun is a glorified wooden box which covers the stones and traps the flour as it flies out from the centre of the rotating millstone. Christopher Wallis is making our tun, also a stone crane - which will be used to move and turn over the stones when needed.

Cathy Kraft recently visited the mill; her father who died recently was a longstanding member of the High Wycombe Society. His free legal services were invaluable in supporting vital issues taken up by the Society including those connected with the Rye and Pann Mill. Cathy has offered to fund the stone crane in memory of her father. Already she has done some maintenance work at the mill and we look forward to her joining the working party whenever she feels the need of a break from London city life. (Continued on page 4)

## WATER AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL?

**NOVEMBER 1997**

Four members of the restoration team attended a one day conference arranged by the Mills Section of the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) - of which we are members.

The theme was **'Water Source Storage** and **Use'.** A number of fascinating descriptions were given of the now defunct water powered industrial sites in Wales, the Lake District and Cornwall.

The day was not only interesting but served to emphasise the need for highlighting Water Management at Pann Mill where the normal current river flow is not adequate for milling. Various preliminary calculations have been made in order to deduce the quantity of water required. Consideration has been given to creating a mill pond, but the initial conclusion is that it is doubtful if one of adequate size could be constructed.

There is therefore the need to involve specialists and the agencies responsible for the river and local water supply.

**FEBRUARY 1998**

How heartening to receive the Environment Agency's Newsletter Issue 2 dated February 1998 which reports on their River **Wye** Alleviation of Low Flows **Study** that has just been completed.

The best solutions are considered to be:

- importing water from outside the catchment to allow a reduction in the pumping rate at Mill End. This could be combined with feeding water to the Wye, when needed, using existing water supply facilities; and

- pumping groundwater from downstream of High Wycombe through a new pipeline to augment the upper reaches, provided that the water quality at the source can be demonstrated to be satisfactory.

A potential water source outside the catchment has been identified to the south of High Wycombe at West Marlow. Further consideration is now being given to the development and use of this source. It is hoped to reach agreement in principle on an alleviation scheme by the middle of this year.

**MARCH 1998**

Representatives of The Chiltern Society and The High Wycombe Society have met to consider the report and to put forward their combined views on this very important issue. They are gratified that the authorities are taking very seriously the environmental implications of recent low river flows. Details of the alleviation scheme may be obtained from **Tim Webb, Scheme Manager, Environment Agency, King's Meadow House, King's Meadow Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 8DQ,** who will be glad to receive comments.

FOUR MILLSTONES NOW ALOFT

We decided our French burrstones, aloft on the stone floor needed company, for Pann Mill would not look authentic with only one pair of stones on the Hurst Frame. So, on two Sundays mornings in January our augmented team of seven hoisted the Derbyshires millstones aloft. The French stones, powered by the 1860 waterwheel, will make flour; the Derbyshires will be just exhibited.
Our French burrstones started life in a quarry 66km east of Paris, at La Ferte-sous-Jouarre. Burrstone pieces were quarried and transported to Dell's wharf on the Thames in London, where they were made up into millstones. Dell & Son was in business from just before 1850 to 1938, when the firm was acquired by Doug. Garner and then by Dorothea Restorations in the early 1990's.

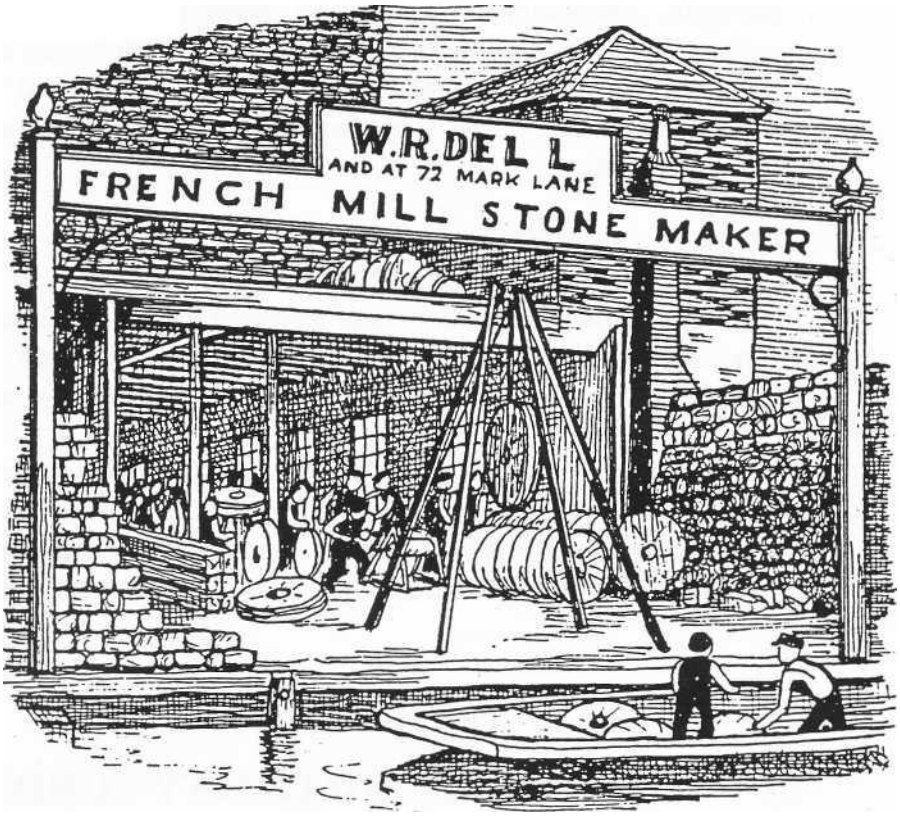


Illustration from Oxfordshire Mills
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CHICHESTER
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Dell's Wharf, 1850

Owen Ward has traced the fascinating history of French Millstones in his 75 page, well illustrated essay on the millstone industry at La Ferte-sous-Jouarre. The quarrying of millstones there was mentioned in local deeds of the early fifteenth century, and it is known that French burrstones were bought by the City of Oxford in 1599. Our stones, now in good working order, are probably less than 100 years old.

Monolith stones, that is, millstones made from a single piece of stone, were also made in this quarry. The chief impetus to the evolution of the art of burrstone making - from small pieces - was a renewed interest in refinements to the milling process in America, England and France early in the nineteenth century. Two other factors popularising made-up millstones stones were the increasing difficulty in extracting large enough pieces of stone for monoliths, and the easier transportation of small pieces of burrstone.

PROJECT LEADER'S JOTTINGS (Continued from page 1)
Visitors will see the riverbank garden in the south west comer, transformed. Nuttalls, the Pumping Station contractors, needed access for a JCB to help prepare that part of the river to accept a newly positioned water outflow. After their work was completed Margaret took the opportunity to make the comer more attractive with money paid to compensate for the upheaval.
The 14 year old workshed withstood an attempted break-in, but the resulting damage has had to be repaired.

Only twenty metres from Pann Mill's five-barred gate which opens onto the Rye is a seat recently installed by Wycombe District Council. It affords magnificent views of the Rye and Dyke, and the wooded hill that forms the Chiltem Hills spur between the Thames and Wye valleys. The seat is in memory of Jack Scruton, Secretary of The High Wycombe Society from 1968 to 1988, and the prime figure in saving the historic Rye from being scarred by road building. On one misty autumn morning Jack's friends gathered to remember him as the seat was dedicated. Olive Scruton, his widow, came from Hythe in Kent to attend the ceremony.

Clearing the garden and river of branches, twigs and other debris is a constant occupation. On a drizzly bonfire night Peter and I, sustained by roast jacket potatoes and wine, burnt the rubbish in the dry leat. As the fire crackled and roared, rain averted the possibility of the huge sycamores being set alight. Needless to say that Margaret quickly rescued the ash for her plants.

On a more constructive note, in hoisting the second pair of millstones to the stone floor, all four millstones have at last reached their journeys end. Thanks to Christopher Wallis, all members of the team are becoming experienced with Acrow props and "A" frames.

## NATIONAL MILLS DAY SUNDAY 10TH MAY
## from 11 to 5pm
## COME AND SEE THE MILL AND OUR EXHIBITION ABOUT THE PANN MILL PUMPING STATION AND LOCAL WATER SUPPLY

**Project Team**
Myra King - **Leader** (S Home 01494 523968)
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**With engineering assistance from**
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