

Pann Mill Times



MARCH 2001

No. 8

Pann Mill Times gives news of the restoration of cornmilling on this site, a project of the High Wycombe Society. It is situated only three minutes walk from the High Street and is owned by Wycombe District Council.

FLOUR MILLING DEMONSTRATIONS

OPEN DAYS 2001

SUNDAYS

13 MAY

15 JULY

2 SEPTEMBER

Visitors are also welcome 1st & 3rd Sundays in each month,
when the working party meets

PROJECT LEADER IS FÊTED

Project Leader Myra King moved in February to Somerset, after working on this project for well over 20 years. Her achievements were acclaimed at a gathering in the mill garden of some 40 friends from the Society on the cold but sunny afternoon of Sunday 18th February.

She was thanked for her work and was presented on behalf of the Society with a spoon exquisitely carved in wood by local craftsman and member Stuart King; it depicted the Pann Mill building. From the Restoration Team she received a fine Folio Society copy of George Eliot's renowned novel *The Mill on the Floss* - an appropriate gift because it was first published in 1860, the year Pann Mill's present waterwheel was installed.

GLOSSARY MUSINGS

A few years ago at my first SPAB Mills Section conference, I bought a copy of Tony Yoward's "Consolidated Glossary of British Mill Terms". Every page reveals a fascinating list of colourful and strange words associated with watermills and windmills. The definition of one word often leads to another and the fascination deepens.

One stage in the work of assembling the cast-iron machinery at Pann Mill, was to number the cog slots on the gear wheel that would be meshed with the **STONE NUT**. This was because each wooden cog, made in-house, was to be sponsored by visitors to the mill. It had been assumed there would be an even number of slots, say 48, to mesh with the 24 **TEETH** on the iron **STONE NUT**. The slots however, numbered 49 - not so easily divisible into a 360 circle. That seemed to imply some very clever design and manufacturing all those years ago. Recently, by chance, I found in the Yoward glossary the term **HUNTING COG**. This is represented in Pann Mill by the odd 49th cog, an arrangement which provides a very effective device to counter **uneven wear** on the wooden cogs when meshing with the 24 **TEETH** on the iron **STONE NUT**.

The difference between **COGS** which are of wood and iron **TEETH**, has already been explained in Issue No. 5 of Pann Mill Times.

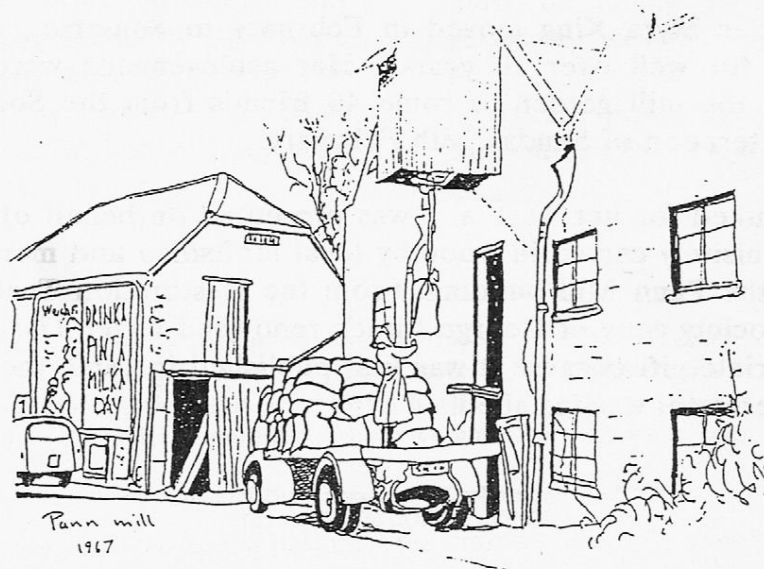
The glossary defines **STONE NUT** as the gear wheel mounted on the **STONE SPINDLE**. This latter is the vertical shaft passing through the stationary **BEDSTONE** and engaging the **RHYND** (which may be spelt **RYND** or **RIND**), which carries the **RUNNERSTONE**.

In Pann Mill there is, according to the glossary, a **BALANCE RHYND** - the iron bar support, secured across the **EYE** of the **RUNNERSTONE**. An insert on the underside of this bar has a dimple which fits over the **COCK HEAD** at the top of the **STONE SPINDLE**. This dimple serves to centre the stone on the spindle. A **MACE** is fitted on the spindle to engage the **RHYND**, enabling the stone to be rotated. Unfortunately, as with other mills, when the wooden **TUN** is in position for milling, very little of all that can be seen!

The word trail does not end there; but for the time being, ponder over **HACKLE PLATE**, **MILLER'S WAND**, **SPUDGEL**, **SCUPPIT**, .

..... (yes yes yes, that's enough for this issue! Ed.)

J Themuser



A rare view of
Pann Mill in action
1967

FLOUR MILLING RETURNS TO PANN MILL

A written tribute was paid to Myra in Pann Mill Times No. 7, last September, to celebrate her "dream come true" of milling flour on the site, the first major objective she set on becoming Project Leader in 1988.

Now that flour milling has returned to Pann Mill, which is a major objective achieved, it would seem appropriate to highlight significant events in the site's history - for those unaware of them. It is known from the Domesday Book of 1086 that our Saxon forebears milled flour on this site some 1000 years ago.

There have been, however, times when flour was not milled here. In modern times, for instance, it is likely that only animal feed has

been milled since early in the twentieth century. The introduction of large industrial roller mills towards the end of the 1800s had made small watermills uneconomical units for making flour.

For a period in the middle ages when cloth was made in Wycombe, the mill may have been converted to a fulling mill for beating cloth, as suggested by finds from archaeological excavations made in 1993 and 1995. These digs also revealed 14th century wooden posts which would have been the remains of a mill building, just five metres from the present waterwheel. That mill in those days would have supplied flour to the adjacent St. John's Hospital whose Norman ruins are seen today.

RECENT KEY EVENTS

Four significant recent events, and those responsible for them, have led to flour milling on the site once again.

The site is saved from office development

In the early 1960s the local council approved a plan to build a dual carriageway road across the corner of the Rye in front of Pann Mill. Municipal offices would have been built on the mill site. The Rye Protection Society was formed to fight the plan and in 1965 it was allowed to Petition Parliament, objecting to the Order to appropriate land needed to build the road. The Petition succeeded, the site was saved and the Rye was left intact. **Jack Scruton MBE**, later Secretary of the High Wycombe Society, led the fight and is remembered by having a public garden named in his honour, nearby at Queen Victoria Bridge.

The present mill is built

Unsuccessful in its attempt to prevent demolition of Pann Mill and its Georgian mill house, the Society raised funds for the present building, designed by Architect and Society member **Colin Kennedy**. Townsfolk hold great affection for this tiny, attractive mill building, which incorporates the sparse remains of the

earlier mill. Though never designed to become a working cornmill, nevertheless its interior has been ingeniously adapted for this purpose.

Milling machinery acquired

The "sharp end" milling machinery - supported by its Hurst Frame - seen today, was provided by Engineer and Society member **Christopher Wallis**. He discovered and transported to Pann Mill a redundant motor-powered farm mill from Drayton Parslow, a village in the north of the county. Without this remarkable acquisition, Pann Mill would have stood no chance of carrying on the tradition of water-powered flour milling. *Some from here like, James Rishworth?*

Restoration Working Party

The formation of a Working Party, still operating after more than 20 years, must be a key event. Without dedicated volunteers, working as a team, no restoration would have been achieved at such low cost to the community. The team has varied in number and in skills over the years, but always there has been the common spirit of conservation amongst its members, inspired and managed by team leader **Myra King**.

SACK FEED RENOVATION

In 1977 J Kenneth Major produced an important and interesting report on Pann Mill as it then existed. Quoting from one particular paragraph:

"The only corn milling equipment still left is one pair of composite millstones mounted on a floor above the gears and pulleys. This pair of millstones discharged meal into an archimedian screw sack feed which is still in place."

That pair of millstones - which had been driven by a motor - remain in place today. However when the old mill was demolished, this sack feed was removed and stored in the workshed, from which it has recently been unearthed. This equipment enabled three sacks of animal feed to be filled in turn, saving the

millers valuable time in changing sacks. Miss Valerie Jarvis, writing in the Society's booklet *The Rye - A Priceless Possession*, mentions her father's drive to increase productivity, of which this is a good example.

The original sack feed casing - a 9 x 9 inch wooden trough - which was encrusted with meal and riddled with woodworm, has been cleaned and treated. Its three sack feed apertures have been fitted with new wooden shutters and sack hooks. A 5ft steel shaft fitted with 27 blades along its length forms the Archimedes Screw. The shaft, bearing plates and bevel gear have been sand blasted to pristine condition by Sprayblast Fabrication Ltd of West Wycombe Road, and we are grateful for their contribution to the Pann Mill Project. The restored sack feed will be on view on National Mills Day, 13th May.

John

PANN MILL'S FUTURE

There can be no return to the days when the sentiments in Wordsworth's Peter Bell poem prevailed:

"A primrose by a river's brim,
A yellow primrose was to him,
And it was nothing more"

The Pann Mill site is not just a piece of ground almost surrounded by water. This was the prevailing sentiment in the 1960s and 70s that destroyed many historical sites and buildings. The site represents nearly 1000 years of Wycombe's history. To preserve it, now that the site has been truly saved, the High Wycombe Society has a duty of working and

maintaining the flour milling equipment, and keeping the buildings and gardens looking attractive for visitors.

If the Society is to continue to carry out this obligation of caring for the site, one urgent requirement is the replacement of the old and now inadequate workshed, by a visually acceptable building.

To achieve this aim, the work of volunteers must be amply supported by donations of goods, services and above all, money.

So please encourage friends to support Pann Mill on its Open Days in 2001.

Team members

Nick Dewey	Ricky Hogan	Don Murray	Harry Turner
Nick Gillott	Gary Howard	Karen Roberts	Nick Turner
Annabelle Giorgetti	Cathy Kraft	Owen Rush	Robert Turner
Peter Hazzard	John Mumford	Margaret Simmons	Eric van Voorden

Pann Mill Times appears in March and September
THE HIGH WYCOMBE SOCIETY

Honorary Secretary: Frances Presland, 61 Hicks Farm Rise, HIGH WYCOMBE, HP13 7SX Tel: (01494) 523263