

One-Piece French Burr Millstones (2014) Mill News #139 (April), 22

More Letters to the Editor

Dear Mildred

ONE-PIECE FRENCH BURR MILLSTONES

Background

Monolith millstones were the principle product of La Ferté-sous-Jouarre, France until the early 1800's. Around 1835¹ there was a pronounced change in production to millstone constructed from a number of stone blocks (French burr stones) rather than them being of one piece.

Whilst reading a booklet by Owen Ward,² I noted that La Ferté monoliths are rare outside of France. However, there was mention of one being on show in Heckington Windmill, Lincolnshire. I emailed Heckington Windmill Trust to inquire if the stone was still on view. My intention being to drop in to the mill at some time in the future to view this rarity.



In response, Jim Bailey kindly confirmed that it was still there and very helpfully sent me some pictures. Jim has agreed to sharing these with *Mill News* readers. The stone is exactly 4ft (1220mm) in diameter and averages 10.5in (267mm) in thickness +/- 0.25in (6.35mm). It is banded and has a rhynd in the eye.

Owen suggested that the Heckington example probably came from the long-converted watermill of Ashby-by-Partney.

Do readers know of another whole or part monolithic example in the UK?

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Ref 1. Ward, O.H. 1982. Millstones from La Ferté-sous-Jouarre, France. *Industrial Archaeological Review*. Vol 6, No. 3, p206

Ref 2. Ward, O. 1993. French Millstones, Notes on the Millstone Industry at La Ferté-sous-Jouarre. The International Molinological Society. ISBN 9291340189, 27.