

# Milling About

News from the Friends of Peirce Mill

Spring/Summer 2006



## Designing a system to supply water to the wheel

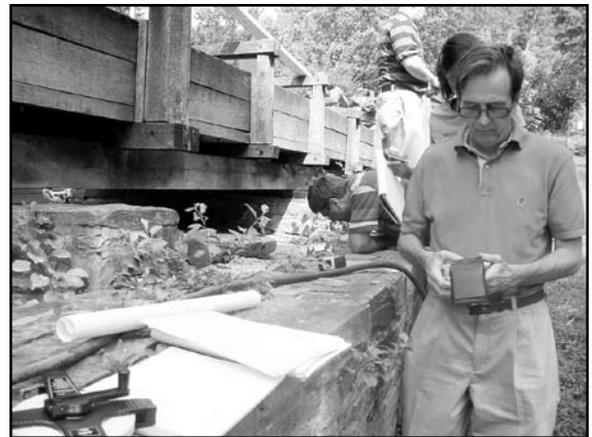
The third phase of our restoration project—providing a flow of water to the water wheel—is now underway. The Friends have contracted for a design study and cost estimate by a team of architects and engineers under the direction of Ward Bucher of the Bucher/Borges Group, Washington DC. Also on the team is Mike Myers, an engineer with the Walter L. Phillips Co., Falls Church VA, and Robert Cohen, electrical/mechanical engineer specializing in pumps. The accompanying pictures, taken at the mill on July 19, show the team inspecting the existing pump pit that once supplied water to the mill.



Steve Ortado checks the depth in the tailrace



Exploring the old pump pit beneath the flume



Architect Ward Bucher checks his calculations. Engineer Mike Myers in background.



Millwright Derek Ogden in discussion with John O'Rourke

The design team is now studying an approach that would utilize at least a portion of the old system, which if successful would save us some money compared to the earlier cost estimate. Also being consulted in the design process are Millwright Derek Ogden and our milling machinery contractor O'Rourke and Kiorpes. Derek and John O'Rourke are shown in discussion at the mill in another photograph. The design study should be completed by the end of August.

## High Water on Rock Creek

The torrential rains of June 23 to 27 raised water levels at Rock Creek to heights not seen in many years. Creek water entered the mill through the basement door and rose until it was only about three feet below the main floor. The pressure of the water actually pushed in the basement door and door frame. The accompanying pictures were taken after the water had receded roughly six feet.



*The rear of the mill after the water had receded about six feet*

Our long-term plan to protect the mill against high water includes construction of a barrier along the bicycle path, one that would include a gate in the tailrace. However, there is no barrier of reasonable size that will protect the mill against the really big floods like this one. An additional protection we are considering for those events is the installation of a sump pump in the basement so that flood waters could be rapidly evacuated, minimizing the damage caused by standing water.



*The flooded basement after the water level had dropped about eight feet. High water on Rock Creek*

## Steve Ortado works on the mill floors

Work currently going on inside the mill involves Steve Ortado and his crew preparing to repair and/or replace selected floor joists supporting the main floor. Floor boards will be removed in section to gain access to the joists. In order to do that, the weight of the upper floors of the mill has to be lifted and twenty-foot-long columns installed to support the load. This joist repair phase of the project—the last part of the process of stabilizing the mill structure—should be completed by year end.



## MILLING ON THE WEB



There is a great deal of information available on the web for milling enthusiasts. Check out our own web site at [www.peircemill-friends.org](http://www.peircemill-friends.org), then go to the “Links” page and you will find a list of milling and historic preservation organizations, including SPOOM, as well as links to other national and international milling organizations, and links to other local mills. If you want to learn more about the history and technology of milling, check out the web site operated by Ted Hazen, the former miller at Peirce Mill, at <http://www.angelfire.com/folk/molinologist/map.html>. This extensive site is the most complete source of information on milling available anywhere.

## Our financial status

Our business manager and board member David Lyman has just prepared a summary of all funds raised by the Friends since our incorporation in 1997 through June 2006. It breaks down as follows:

Grants from foundations and associations:	\$437,850
Grants from the National Park Service:	41,000
Individual donations over \$100:	25,155
Individual donations under \$100:	1,993
Total cash grants and donations:	505,998
In-kind donations (services, materials)	<u>15,776</u>
Grand total	\$521,774

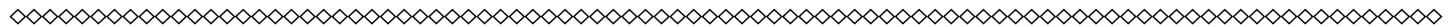
The above figures include the two \$50,000 grants received earlier this year, but the total is lower than previously reported because an announced \$30,000 grant from the DC Department of Transportation was withdrawn. The funds will, however, go through another channel and benefit Peirce Mill by being used to correct a drainage problem at the west front of the mill that has caused rot to damage floor joists. Membership dues, not included in the above figures, roughly balance out our operating costs. Of the total amount raised, we still have on hand \$161,500, which is sufficient to cover all restoration costs foreseen for 2006.

Currently we have two outstanding foundation grant requests totaling \$70,000, and an outstanding application to Save America's Treasures for a matching grant of \$275,000. In addition, we have sought the assistance of Representative Eleanor Holmes Norton in earmarking funds for the project in the FY 2007 District of Columbia appropriations bill, though at present we have no information on the likelihood of that happening.



### Meet your board: Tom Blackburn

Tom Blackburn is a geochemist by training. After a long career in college teaching, he joined the American Chemical Society Petroleum Research Fund in 1991, retiring as Senior Program Officer in 2002. A long-time fan of antique machinery, he joined the Friends in 1998, working primarily in the areas of fund-raising, donor relations, and proposal writing. An avid amateur cellist, he is a member of the Dumbarton Chamber Ensemble and the Hunt String Quartet. He lives in Mount Pleasant, a short walk from the Mill.



## Upcoming Events

### August 16

#### **Visit to the George Washington Grist Mill, Mt. Vernon**

This operating water mill, located three miles west of the Mt. Vernon estate, was totally rebuilt by the same people who will build and install the wooden milling machinery at Peirce Mill – John O'Rourke and Gus Kiorpes. We are planning a special visit to the mill on Wednesday, August 16. Dennis Pogue, who is in charge of the mill, will host our group. We

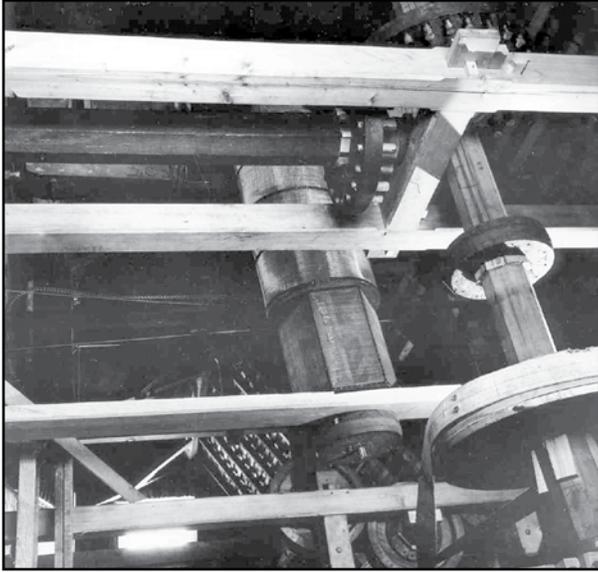
plan to meet at the mill around 10, explore the mill and see it operate, then adjourn to picnic tables nearby for a picnic lunch (bring your own!). Please join us and get a feel for how our own mill will look and feel when restoration is complete. For additional information, please contact Richard Abbott at [abbott1229@verizon.net](mailto:abbott1229@verizon.net), or plan your own trip by going to [www.mountvernon.org/visit/plan/index.cfm/ss/32/](http://www.mountvernon.org/visit/plan/index.cfm/ss/32/)

### September 30

#### **Rock Creek Park Day**

This annual event is celebrated at the Nature Center in the Park. Lots of activities for folks of all ages. Along with other organizations involved with Rock Creek Park, we will have a table there, so please come by and say hello.

# *d o w n s t r e a m*



**T**his photo shows the mill machinery soon after installation in the 1930s, including the main vertical shaft, another vertical shaft, and a horizontal shaft. These components, considerably aged, were recently removed and saved, to make way for new machinery.



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