

HISTORY

Improvements followed quickly on George Reynolds Wright's arrival in 1867, and the introduction of new technology gathered pace as his sons, George William, Walter and Leonard became active in the business, by now titled G.R.Wright & Sons.

The mill was one of the first in the country to install the continental roller-mill system - although millstones were retained to grind the firm's speciality product, Imperial Wholemeal. Wright's pioneered the introduction of electricity, to replace water wheels, when it became one of the first companies in the region to switch to the new power source in 1909. The firm also enthusiastically employed the latest ideas in commercial transport,, such as steam-powered horseless carriages, purchasing a steam Foden in 1906 for £496.00.

However, in 1920, the industry was de-regulated and a period of cut-throat competition began, which was exacerbated by the Great Depression. Millers throughout the country suffered for almost a decade, and many had to sell up.

G.R. Wright & Sons response to the depression was to invest, in order to be ready for better times. For example in 1925, the firm commissioned a 600 tonne grain silo, which employed the latest building technology and was one of the tallest structures in the district.

During World War II, production at Wright's continued seven days a week to help make up for the loss of mills bombed in the Blitz. Post - war, the plant was remodelled - under the supervision of G.R. Wright's grandson, George William (Bill) Wright - and capacity was increased by 50%.

The transformation of Ponders End Mills into a modern food factory began in 1963 when Bill's son, Kenneth Wright, became Managing Director. Over three decades, he and his team introduced numerous improvements and innovations which have continued under Ken's son, David, who joined the company in 1982.

All of our most recent achievements would mean little to our founder. However, there is one measure of the firm's progress which he would readily understand. The production of 1,000 tonnes of flour represented almost a whole year's output in 1867. Today, we can manufacture this amount of finest-quality flour in less than a week.

