

HØM MØLLE

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Offprint of the Christmas Edition of Folketidende, 1951

Dedicated to Rosa and Troels Findsen

HAN MØLLE

THE HISTORY OF THE DANISH PEOPLE

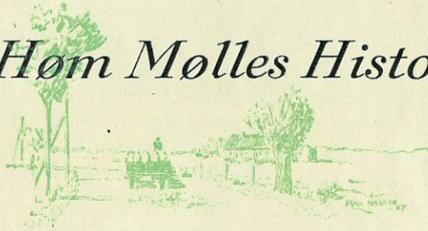
Approximately 2 kilometres south of Ringsted, in a valley west of the highway to Næstved, away from the road and close to the curves of the stream of Ringsted Å, you'll find the old, historic mill, "Høm mølle".

Following a byroad from the highway, you suddenly come to this idyllic place that still remains an unspoiled cultural monument from the old days. The annexes to the mill are in a continuous state of decay and several of them are now pulled down, but most of them stand as they did in the old days, however, most of them are not used.

The road goes through the mill farm. It curves sharply round the corners of the old farm, past the large two-storeyed main building, which has still kept its grand character and stands as a stately monument of a golden age in the history of the old mill.

...Leafs of history of Høm Mølle

... Blade af Høm Møllens Historie



It is a lovely stroll when you pass the Høm mill on a summer's day, crossing the narrow bridge with the outflow from the millpond on one side and the steep ravine on the other where the water wheel used to spin. It was driven by the pressure of the water from the dammed millpond allowing the water to tumble down as a waterfall into the gulf over which the remains of the old stamping mill are still hanging. This was once also an important part of the operation of the water mill.

If you then follow the rushy millpond along the meadows, over the next bridge called "Gold-broen" (the barren bridge), taking you over the stream and where a narrow parish road leads you over the hills to the village of Skellerød, through this distinctive and beautiful spot which is hidden from the rest of the world, you will feel that you are carried back several hundred years.

The old water mills in their original shape have had their days. Turbines or other modern driving engines have in most cases ruined the idyll that pervaded the locality of the water mills. You can no longer hear the spinning of the water wheel under the rush of the water. Moreover, many of the idyllic millponds, where the wild ducks used to frisk along, are now gone, all this that contributed to accentuating the beauty and idyll of the old water mills.

As regards the town of Ringsted, it is the three historic water mills, Have Mølle, Høm Mølle and Englerup Mølle, which have been most significant to the town and its inhabitants in the old days. All three of them have gotten the water power from the stream Ringsted Å and have thus been dependent on each other in some way. Especially the first two mills, as they were closest to the town. Have Mølle is the oldest one as it was established by a royal charter in 1150.

These two mills are now both shut down, in 1906 and 1947, respectively. At Englerup Mølle, however, milling is still carried on. (See the book by Laur. Hansen "Fra det gamle Ringsted og Egnen deromkring" (From the old Ringsted and the surrounding area) on Englerup Mølle).

Originally, Høm Mølle as well as Have Mølle belonged to the monastery Ringsted Kloster as copyhold mills. The latter is named after the long gone wood, Munkehaveskov, which to a wide extent encircled the monastery and parts of the town, and here where the stream Ringsted Å curved through the woods, Have Mølle was established. MA Arthur G. Hassø writes about the wood Munkehaveskoven in his book "Ringsted Købstads Historie indtil Aar 1600" (The history of the town of Ringsted until the year 1600). Here he gives a description of a journey made by the German student Michael Franck to Denmark in 1590 where he gives a very interesting and detailed description of the wood, monastery, and its surroundings, the

mills Have Mølle and Høm Mølle, the stream, ponds, fishponds and groves. In the wood, which was completely fenced in, and which consisted of oak and beech trees, aspen and an undergrowth of hazel bushes, there was a rich animal life with deer, wild boars as well as squirrels.

In the year 1664, King Frederik III handed over Ringsted Kloster and its farm buildings and other property including Høm Mølle and Have Mølle to the Court butcher, Niels Olufsen, in Copenhagen, but the mills were transferred back to the Crown only a few years later.

In 1674, Olufsen was granted the deeds of both mills including all buildings and free fishing in the mill stream and Aalekistefang. However, the Crown reserved the right of repurchase as the sale of the mills depended on a sum of money which the Court butcher was to pay as compensation to Captain Peder Morsing who had a grant of a life estate of the mills together with his wife. But as the payment was not settled, Morsing kept the mills and the deed was set aside in accordance with the Royal decree of 4 April 1682.

Høm Mølle is said to have been built around the year 1530 and it was situated in the outskirts of the fields belonging to the town of Ringsted surrounded by the parishes of Høm and Sigersted which were separated by Lilleå and Ringsted Å, respectively.

It is said about the mill that in the years

1682-1690 it had two fall grinders, that the water came from Have Mølle, from Ringsted Å which has its head in the lake Haraldsted Sø, that a small, enclosed garden with three old trees belonged to the mill, but no cabbage garden, and that it had an area of 11590 square yards right to the East of the mill. It is also said that since Høm Mølle is situated right below Hauge Mølle (Have Mølle), there is no passage in the stream and that the mill is considered to be able to mill and earn as much as Hauge Mølle. It has visitors from 23 farms in Balstrup, Skellerød, Høm, Veterslev, Haugebyrd, Tolstrup and Mulstrup.

After this time, Høm Mølle enters a new era as it during the 18th century was subject to the manor of Sørup.

In 1682, titular Privy Councillor Adam Levin Knuth of Assendrup (and later also of Gissfeld) became the owner of Høm Mølle following Counsellor Bolle Luxdorph of Sørup.

Around this time, the registered miller in Høm Mølle is a man called Friderich Andersen. He must have been an important man as he is buried in the church of St. Bendt. Apart from the nobility, such a favour was only meant for people from other social classes who held a prominent position – however, not from the peasant class.

In the south side aisle, near the pulpit, you will find the tombstone of the miller, Friderich Andersen, a rather large stone with an ornamental frame and the symbols of the four evangelists in the corners of the stone. At the head of the stone, you will see an angel with an hourglass in one hand and a burning candle in the other. The inscription says:

“Here lies the honest and esteemed now late man, Friderich Andersen, who lived and died in the mill of Høm at the age of 50 with his now late daughter, Anna Maria Friderichsdatter, who died at the age of 3. This stone is paid for and laid in the year 1720.”

In the year 1719, Count Adam Christopher Knuth of Knuthenborg (a son-in-law of the above-mentioned Bolle Luxdorph) received the deed of Høm Mølle along with another estate. After the death of Count Knuth in 1736, Høm Mølle became subject to Sørup. Count Knuth's second wife, Ida Margrethe Reventlow, inherited Sørup in 1743 together with Rosengaard and Sandbygaard and 7 churches (Veterslev, Høm, Sigersted, Vigersted, Kvækerby, Sandby and Bringstrup) and more than 1000 acres of hartkorn tenant farms belonging to a manor (a Danish unit of land valuation based on estimated productivity), a total of 1600 acres of hartkorn, and then let Sørup be

established as a barony, Conradsborg, for her son Conrad Ditlev baron Knuth. In 1796, the barony was substituted by an entailed estate after which time the manor was given its former name.

At that time, a new windmill was built on Farendløse Mark and this made Countess Knuth complain that this mill would be very harmful to her immemorial landed mills: the mills in Have, Høm and Englerup. After a while, the mills were also complaining about this, but the owner of the newly built mill, dowager countess Schack of Giesegaard, dismissed the complaint with the comment that the above-mentioned millers in the period from March to October, seeing that they were only water mills, were hardly able to mill as much as they needed themselves, and less so for others, and that they could not be said to manage the milling successfully.

The following year, the same millers complained directly to the King, but since none of the above-mentioned mills belonged to the King, the chancellery dismissed the complaint and referred the complaints to their masters or the prefect.

Later on, the millers of Høm Mølle and Have Mølle submitted a complaint against the owner of the monastery Ringsted Kloster, Peter Johansen Neergaard, as he around the year 1750 had built a horse mill at the town square in Ringsted (where the savings bank is now situated), which the two millers thought would inflict a great loss on them. This case led to an action, which the millers lost.

There have been many millers living and working in Høm Mølle as tenant millers, when it was subject to Ringsted Kloster as well as the Sørup estate, until the mill became a freehold mill at the beginning of the 19th century.

In the late 18th century, one name in particular in the history of the mill seems to have special relation to the old Ringsted: the name Roed, as the farmer and carter, Jørgen Roed, Sct. Hansgade in Ringsted, was allegedly in possession of Høm Mølle in 1784. His son was a well-esteemed citizen of Ringsted, distiller and carter Peter Roed, whose son was the painter, Jørgen Roed (the latter was given the name of his grandfather, as you may see).

From the earlier days, as mentioned earlier, a stamping mill (frieze stamper) was attached to Høm Mølle. When the fabric was processed in the stamping mill, it was laid out for bleaching on the meadow in an open space especially made for the purpose, enclosed by trees and called Bleghaven (the bleaching garden). The old people could tell stories about the

stamping mill and the large water wheel that were shaking the foundation of the old mill buildings and making a deafening noise when they were working.

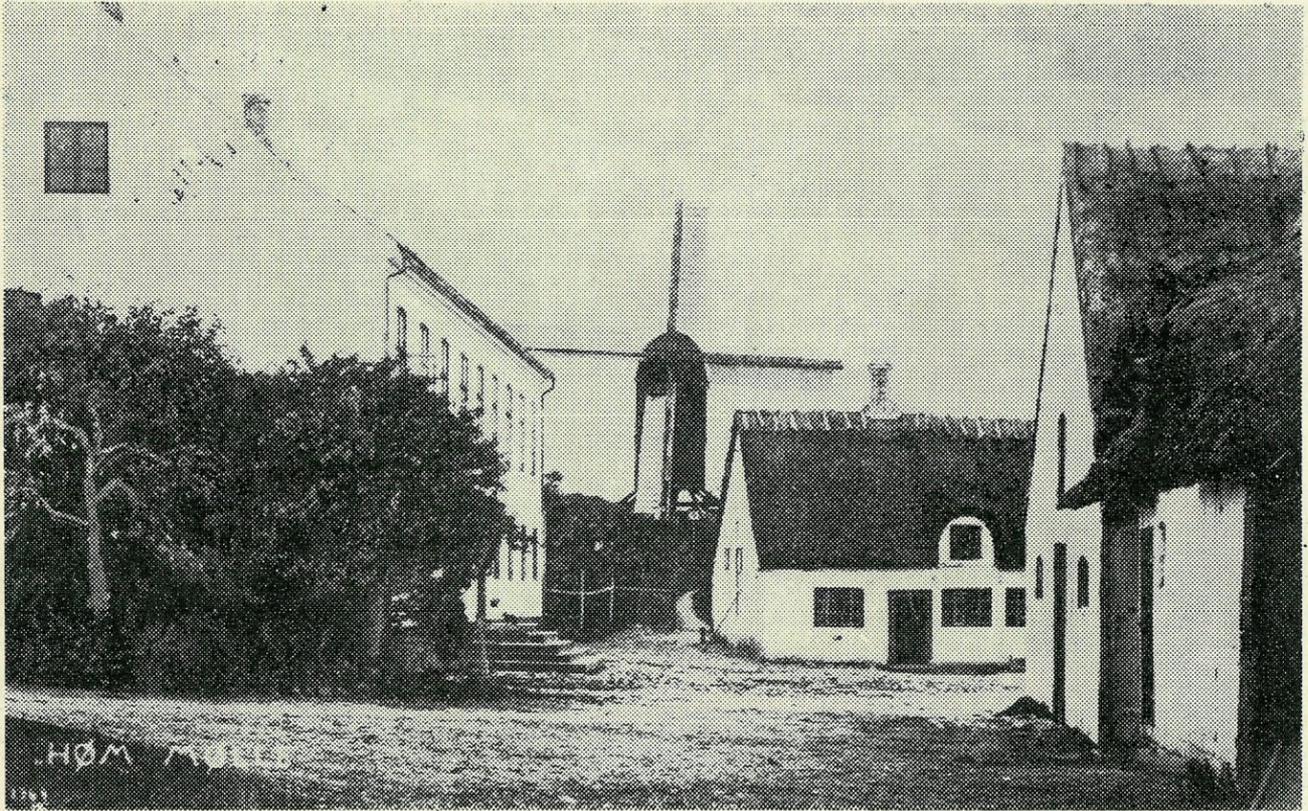
There was a large rush of people to the mill. The carriages were often lined up all the way from the mill up to the highway to Næstved.

Later on, a post mill was built next to Høm Mølle as an auxiliary mill when the water level in certain periods during the year was not high enough to fully power the mill. The 87-year-old man of independent means, Hans Knudsen, Sct. Knudsgade 24, Ringsted explained about the time when the post mill was built that the mill had been situated near Køge and that it had been transported from there to Høm Mølle in 1805 and was rebuilt there. He had been told this by lord Muus, Sørup, who died many years before. As such, it must have been built by the then owner of Høm Mølle, Gudmand Conradsen. He is registered in the oldest census forms in the Danish National Archives for the years 1787 and 1801 as copyhold miller, however, he is registered somewhere else, in the year 1802, as the owner of the mill. In 1821 his son, Niels Gudmandsen, took over Høm Mølle and at this time, the post mill existed, which appears from the fact that Gudmandsen's sister, Conradine Gudmandsen, had a mortgage on it of 2000 rix-dollars.

The “Gudmandsen” family appears to have been a well-known miller family at that time. Another son of Gudmand Conradsen was the miller, Conrad Gudmandsen, who was registered as owner of the mill Suserup Mølle, which he disposed of in 1835, and he was said to be a highly respected man in the parish.

Until the end of the 19th century, Høm Mølle was one of the most esteemed mills in the Ringsted area and far from being a small business. The census forms from 1834 reveal that Niels Gudmandsen had three officers at the mill (as millers) as well as other servants, farm hands and maids.

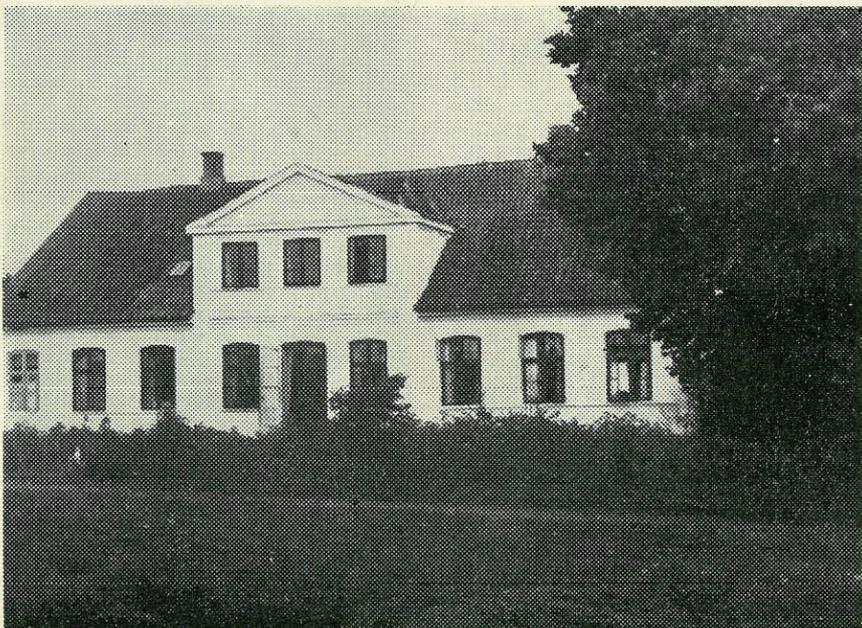
It seemed that the development of the mill was in great progress when Niels Gudmandsen was the owner. He died on November 9, 1839, just 40 years old. The census forms from 1840 reveal that he had three children between 11 and 16 who were still staying at the mill and that this was run by an older manager named Johan Schwartz. However, Høm Mølle certainly had its golden age during the time of the next owner, Ludvig Wilhelm Sønderup, who was a lawyer and owned the mill from 1840-1887. In 1856 he built the large, luxurious main building and the following



Høm Mølle in time of L. W. Sønderup and Carl C. Findsen. "Stub" mill torn down 19??



Miller Carl C. Findsen.



Høm Mølle main building, seen from the garden



year he built a new stable wing, which is now pulled down as the business that was once very large is now completely changed and therefore does not need that many buildings. The old millers had many livestock, which was necessary in order for them to turn over those large amounts of grain that they received from the farmers as payment for grinding the grain, the so-called mill toll.

In particular, it was the name Sønnderup that came to influence the life of Høm Mølle in the 19th century. The large, luxurious main building, which was built by Sønnderup in 1856, was built in two storeys towards the yard, but only in one storey towards the garden as the building was built into a slope. The style of the building is very beautiful and it has a pediment which further gives the building a dignified character. The top storey, which was very elegantly furnished by the standards of that time, was occupied by the Sønnderup family, whereas the ground floor was reserved for the servants. Here was the mill room, the common room, the kitchen and different small rooms.

At the time of the Sønnderup family, a large and luxurious establishment was kept at Høm Mølle. The couple had two daughters for whom the family kept a private teacher. There was a housekeeper, cook, maid as well as many other servants related to the mill: millers, mill driver, miller apprentice, farm hands and a farm boy. The two daughters were later married. The eldest daughter, Dorthea Jacobine Sophie, became mistress of Sørup as she married captain, later lord, William H. Muus, son of lord Thor Muus of Sørup, who left the estate to him. The other daughter of Sønnderup, Ludvika Petrea Ulrika Frasiska, married Judge Albert Ludvig Henrik Thrane. (Incidentally, there was a dual kinship between Sønnderup and the Muus family of Sørup as a sister of Sønnderup was married to lord Thor Muus. Thus, the youngest daughter of Sønnderup and Will. Muus were first cousins).

When the Sønnderup family went for a drive, it was also in an elegant manner: landau with a coachman dressed in livery and the customary outfit. Miller Sønnderup was known for his beautiful carriage horses, 2 were as white as snow and 2 were proudly brown. The few people, who are alive to remember the Sønnderup family today, explain that it was a pretty sight when the elegant carriage drove past the neighbourhood.

Sønnderup, who was the son of land agent, Joachim Brockdorff Sønnderup of Rosendal, near Fakse, was the owner of Høm Mølle from 1840 to 1887. He died on

January 24, 1887 at the age of 75 in Sørup where he spent his last years as a widower with his daughter and son-in-law. He is buried at the cemetery of Veterslev together with his wife, Petrea Jørgine Sønnderup, née Stevenius, who passed away three years earlier in Copenhagen at the age of 76, from where her funeral was conducted in a very formal and stately manner. 84-year-old Mrs. Anna Findsen, Birkerød, the widow of the late miller at Høm Mølle, Carl C. Findsen, can talk about the funeral of Mrs. Sønnderup that the bier was transported via the high way, through Ringsted to Veterslev lead by four beautiful horses from Høm Mølle.

Mrs. Sønnderup left behind a very beautiful memory which can also be seen from a letter written by the then rural dean, F. V. Andersen, Ringsted, in 1894 to Sønnderup's youngest daughter, Mrs. Thrane, as an answer to a letter sent by Mrs. Thrane to the rural dean on the occasion of his retirement from the post as rector at the church of St. Bendt. A fragment of the letter was given to me by district revenue officer, Alb. Thrane, Hillerød, who is a grandchild of miller Sønnderup and it reads like this:

".....Now, let me tell you that your home at Høm Mølle – and if I should mention just one, your beloved mother – is one of my fondest memories from my time in Ringsted. Forgive my fast pen, I had no intention of disregarding anyone, least of all you, whom I have always held dear and whom I will never forget. But the image of your mother, the still deep, who almost filled me with awe because you felt that nothing of impure character could get near her, became so clear to me every time I came by Høm Mølle."

After the death of Sønnderup, Høm Mølle went to doctor N. Christophersen, Ringsted, who owned the mill from 1887 to 1901. He let the mill and all its belongings on lease to his brother-in-law, miller Husum, who was leasing it during this period, after which time he became miller of Have Mølle until this was shut down.

In 1901, Høm Mølle was passed on to Christophersen's son-in-law, Carl C. Findsen and his wife, Anna Findsen. Carl Findsen used to be a draper in Ringsted, where A/S Knud Teilmann is now located. Findsen died in 1941, and two years after his death his widow sold the mill to her son, miller Troels Findsen, who is still the owner, which means that it has been owned by the same family for approx. 65 years. Around the year 1918, the then owner, Carl Findsen, let the mill on lease for a period of 5 years to a limited company called A/S Høm Mølle. During

this period, the mill got a revival and was working day and night. It was run as a flour mill, but when the war with all its restrictions was over and the American flour was available on the world market again, the business of the mill declined and it was decided to dissolve the company. At this time, a 30 HP turbine had been installed. Later, in 1929, the mill got a 24 HP crude oil engine. As mentioned earlier, there have been no milling activities at Høm Mølle since 1947.

Originally, as mentioned earlier, the mill only had a small piece of land. Later on, it was mentioned that approx. 10 acres of land belonged to the mill and, additionally, another 11 acres have been purchased granting the mill 21 acres of land. Furthermore, the mill had approx. 41 acres of land as lease from the fields belonging to the town of Ringsted until approx. 1919.

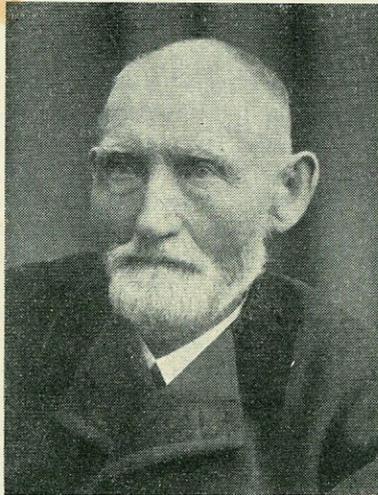
The farmer who paid for his own drinks at the miller's

The mills used to be a popular rendezvous for the farmers. The parlour of the miller could be compared to that of an inn. Here the visitors to the mill let themselves be treated with beer, spirits and coffee punch which were all free of charge to the visitors to the mill. The beer mug and the stone bottle with the spirits were never empty. If you happened to have plenty of time on a winter's day, the parlour of the mill could attract many farmers and it was often midnight before the last visitors left the mill – usually a bit unsteady on their feet. Sometimes, when a smallholder, who did not have a carriage of his own and thus had to transport his grain to the mill some other way, either on a wheelbarrow or by carrying his sack, it happened that he made himself so comfortable in the parlour while waiting for the grinding to be finished that he was not able to carry back home his sack, having to leave it for the next day. Sometimes, the next day would have the same result.

In the old days, the payment to the miller for the grinding of the farmers' grains would take place by the miller providing himself with the share of the farmer's grains, which he was entitled to, using his "toldekar" (an authorised measure). Sometimes the farmer felt that the miller took rather too much. Later on, the mill toll was abolished and after that



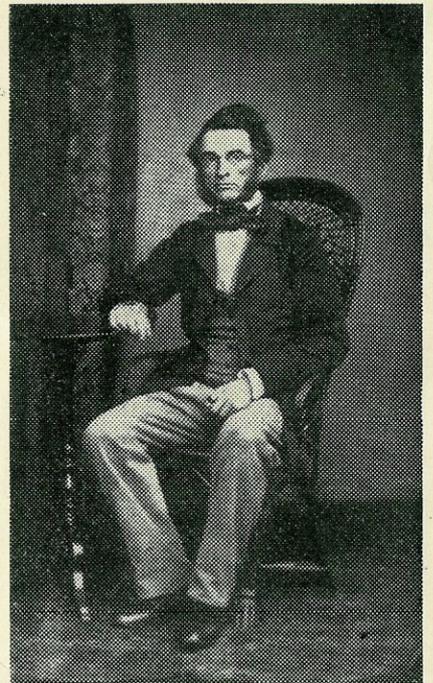
West entrance driveway to Høm Mølle.



Doctor N. Christophersen.



*Petrea Jørgine Sønderup,
Stevenius.*



Miller L. W. Sønderup

time, the miller was to receive his payment in cash. However, it was somewhat difficult for many of the old millers not to use the "toldekar". (At Høm Mølle they have kept the mill's old "toldekar" as a curiosity). In this connection, there is story of the mill in Høm that goes way back. When you came from the manor of Sørup with a cartload of grain sacks for grinding, the miller took one of the sacks aside for himself as payment for the grinding. The lord thought that this was passable, but the fact that the miller also kept the empty sack was too much for the lord, who felt that he at least was entitled to get back the sack.

A story of similar character from another mill in central Zealand may be mentioned here, told by the millwright, Hans Blom, Alsted, who passed away many years ago: A leaseholder of one of the large farms complained several times to the miller that he thought that the content of his sacks was shrinking too much after the grinding and that he had noted that a sack was missing when the carriage returned. The miller claimed that this could not be right and suggested that the farmer supervised the grinding himself in order to prove that there was no foul play. The cunning miller solved it like this: During the grinding, he opened a shutter to a bolter underneath the grinder and let a sack of grinded grain run down the bolter while he was talking to the man. When the miller found that the bolter was full, he closed the shutter again without the man noticing and as his load was full, he was then convinced that nothing had been taken.

There is also a funny story about a miller, whose cleverness would in no way fall short of the miller's mentioned above. He had placed a bell wire in his private living room so he was able to communicate with the people at the mill. Should the situation arise, which it often did, that the miller thought that a farmer stayed a bit too long in the mill room while waiting for the grinding and that he had too many drinks, he pulled the bell wire, which meant that the miller carrying out the grinding should take an extra share using the "toldekar" from the farmer's grain sacks. And if the farmer still stayed too long, according to the miller, he would pull

the bell wire again to signal that they should take yet another share. In this way, the farmer came to pay for the drinks himself even though he thought they were free.

The locality and area around Høm Mølle holds many secrets. In this extraordinary undulating country southeast of the mill, until recently, several interesting finds from the prehistoric Denmark have been made in the shape of stone tools and weapons of beautiful workmanship while digging for gravel. Similarly, in the stretch of meadow land below the hills in a deep bog hole (the remains of a former peat bog) treasure troves belonging to the Danish state have been found. In the old days, the bog was let out to the poor-law authorities in Ringsted with the purpose of helping the poor people, who were able to work, by letting them cut their own peat. Troels Findsen explains that during the last world war, he cut a lot of peat in the old bog hole and that it was of very high quality, but that the peat layer was at a depth of 6 metres. The peat layer that used to be on the surface had been dug up long ago. While cutting the peat, several bronze buckles and a beautiful ring were found – the latter was also made of bronze. These were sent to the Danish Museum – who in return sent their thanks for the rare finds which they regarded as highly remarkable.

Then there is "Galgebakken" (the place of execution) which is situated directly next to the land of the mill, east of this. There is a somewhat uneasy feeling related to this name. In the old days, the hill was used by the town of Ringsted as the place of execution of criminals sentenced to death. More recently, the people of the town have been digging for gravel around the hill. During this work they made a horrifying find, Troels Findsen remembers from his childhood years. Suddenly, a pile of human bones and skulls fell out of a hole on the side of the hill. The workers, who were struck by horror by this sight, quickly covered up the hole and then avoided going near this scary place. But the boys, Findsen further explains, were more courageous. The place attracted us too much and we could not stay away. When the workers left the place after work, we got down to it. And by searching the

covered up ground, we managed to get hold of some skulls, which we playfully tried to place on railings and other places where they terrified people. My father, who found these boyish pranks to be of very bad taste, intervened in a very harsh way. He gathered it all in a sack and buried it.

If the Earth could speak, what would it not be able to tell us humans. This is also the case in this small peaceful spot near Høm Mølle where the history goes so far back in time that human striving towards an in-depth knowledge of how our ancestors lived will have to be abandoned. However, if the content of this article, which is gathered like a piece of mosaic of several small occurrences that may seem to be of minor importance to the people of today, may contribute to upholding the memories of the old water mill in the stretches of meadow land near the stream of Ringsted Å, I would be very pleased.

Laur. Hansen.



In order to gather these memories as a whole, I have had to seek assistance from several interested parties. I owe these people my warmest thanks, in particular the Findsen family and not least the present owner of Høm Mølle, Troels Findsen, who has been very informative and is in possession of a great love for his old home where he works in his spare time very diligently and thriftily in order to make the mill stand out as a dignified memory of one of the old water mills in central Zealand.

My thanks are also due to the rural dean, Johs. V. Beck and rector Edv. Nielsen, Veterslev, for the valuable information about the church registers, as they are due to rector Nielsen for the prompt help on getting the two lovely old pictures of miller Sønnerup and his wife, through the Muus family. I thank the district revenue officer, Alb. Thrane for the information on the Sønnerup family (Alb. Thrane is the grandson of the late miller Sønnerup) as well as H. Knudsen. Furthermore, I have had to seek assistance in the archives and writings that have discussed the subject of water mills, e.g. in the book of Niels Meyn "Danske Møller" (Danish mills) as well as in the year book of the historical society of the county of Sorø for the years 1950-52 on the water mills in the county of Sorø by senior teacher Fritz Jacobsen, Slagelse. A historical description of no minor importance.

