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Bradford Winder Hank/Skein 'Gillian'

The Skein Winder is our oldest machine in the Mill and dates from the late 19th Century. We don't have an exact date or maker of the machine as the name plate is non-existent. I believe the machine to be made by Prince & Smith as they produced these winders in huge quantities. The machines, due to their popularity in Bradford Mills, were known as Bradford Winders.



Gillian in situ at Joseph Horsfalls Mill

The job of the winder is to wind folded yarn from a bobbin or cone into a measured skein of yarn of a particular weight - we wind in metres to grams and generally in 100g skeins.



Knit by Numbers Skeins

The machine can be loaded with 40 bobbins or cones and each end threaded and tied to the start point. The counter is set for the required revolutions and the motor engaged, and the winder rotates delivering the yarn on to the frame. Once complete the machine stops and the yarn is tied off. The clever bit is getting the yarn off the frame - the wooden slats collapse and the skeins are slid to the end and fed through the rotating slotted wheel, the wheel is cranked round and the yarn can

come free of the frame. Once off the frame we manually twiddle the yarn into finished skeins ready for hand knitting.

Gillian is named after Juliet's dear friend who loved to knit.