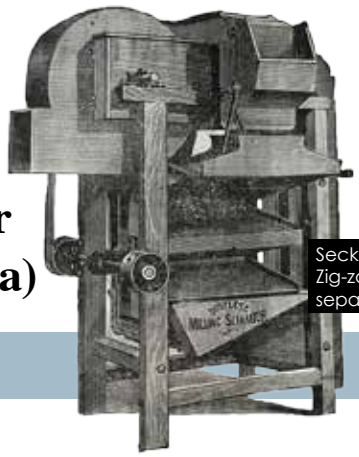
A German Roller Flour Mill: The New Roller Flour Mills of Mr C Scholtz at Loewen (Silesia)



Seck Eureka Zig-zag separator

Milling journals of the past at The Mills Archive

by Mildred Cookson, The Mills Archive, UK

In reading through old copies of the important Victorian journals at the Mills Archive my attention was drawn to an article in The Miller that appeared on page 362 of the issue dated November 5th 1888. The article describes in detail the new mills of Mr Scholz recently built in Loewen in Silesia (now part of Poland and known as Lewin Brzeski), some 60km south west of Wroclaw (formerly Breslau). Mr Scholtz had a Seck system installed and next month I shall write more about Messrs Seck Brothers with illustrations from their works in Darmstadt. The Loewen mill was situated on the banks of the Neisse, a tributary of the Oder, from which the mill got its source of power. Two turbines were used, one of 75hp and the other 45hp. The installations were so arranged that when water was low only one of the turbines would be in operation and so made use of its full capacity. The main building, containing the mill itself and the screen room, separated by a wall, had a length of 140 feet and a width of 50 foot. There was one other building on the site, which was used as a warehouse.

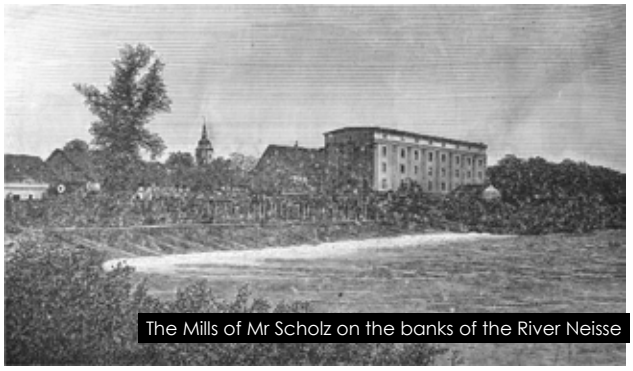
Seck's engineers, in planning the working diagram of the plant had to take into consideration that the machinery would be required to work on wheat and on rye alternatively. This problem was solved in an ingenious manner, and the equipment was arranged to enable the miller to pass over from one operation to the other by simply turning a few valves and changing the direction of a few spouts.

How the mill was run

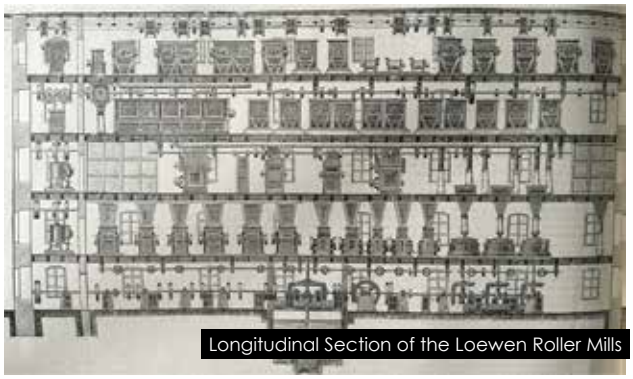
The run of the system was as follows: leaving the warehouse, the grain was conveyed automatically to the mill where it passed through a dressing reel into a large silo. From here it went through an automatic weighing machine, and afterwards was conveyed by an elevator to the fourth floor, where it entered the screen room proper. The screening machines were arranged in the following succession: one Eureka "zig-zag" separator; one aspirator; two large cockle cylinders; one aspirator with magnetic apparatus; one Seck's patent wheat polisher and one Seck's brush machine. After having passed through these machines the grain would go on to a pair of cracking rolls, and from there it fell into a large hopper above the first break roller mill, entirely cleaned and ready for being ground.

On the ground floor of the mill, the main shaft was fitted on solid stone foundations and driven by the two turbines. This shaft traversed the whole of the building and drove the roller mills and millstones on the floor above. At the centre of this floor were the elevator bottoms arranged in one row, to receive the produce from the rolls and stones above by means of worms fixed to the ceiling.

The first floor was entirely filled by the roller mills and millstones. There were twelve pairs of Seck's fluted rolls and ten pairs of smooth rolls as well as three pairs of millstones, all of which were fitted in a single row. All the roller mills were of solid construction and evidenced first class workmanship; the woodwork was of polished walnut, giving this floor a very pleasing effect to the visitor. The second floor contained the large bin for cleaned wheat, and a flour chamber for the finished flour. There was also three Seck's improved middlings and semolina purifiers as well as two dust collectors, one



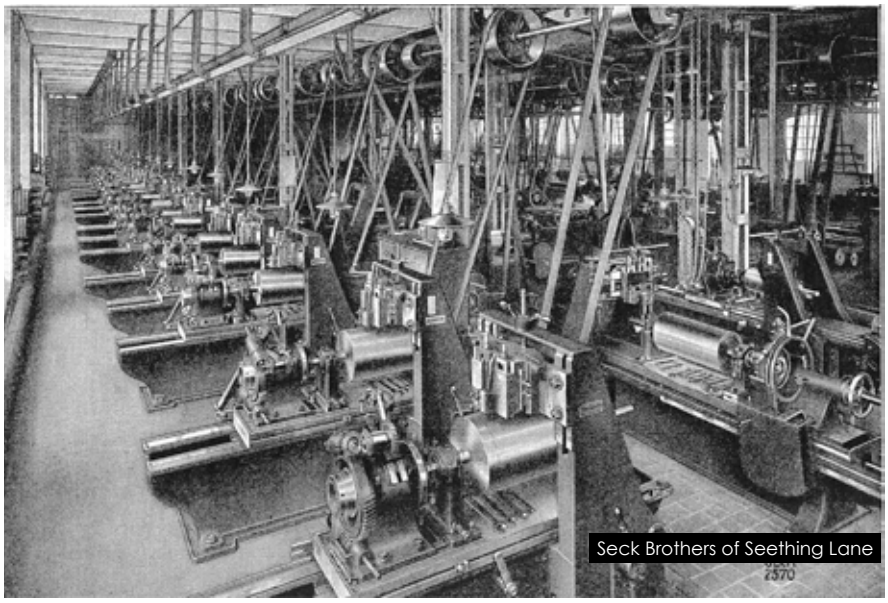
The Mills of Mr Scholz on the banks of the River Neisse



Longitudinal Section of the Loewen Roller Mills

Cross Sections of the Loewen Roller Mills and the Wheat Cleaning Department

of which took the dust from the purifiers and the other one from the rolls. Two centrifugal dressing machines were on the third floor for dressing the flour; these were each driven by a half twisted belt from a long shaft below. Also on this floor were the semolina and middlings sizing reels. On the top floor there were the ordinary scalping reels, intermediate centrifugals, detachers and elevator tops.


Seck Brothers of Seething Lane

The mill was working at the "highest satisfaction"

The reporters gathered that the mill had been working to the highest satisfaction from the time it was set to work and that all concerned had said that the same system turned out equally good results on rye as it did on wheat. At that time Mr Scholtz had given Messrs Seck Brothers an additional order for enlarging the mill and fitting up a complete silo arrangement.

At this time, The Miller was giving prominence in their advertising for "Seck Brothers, Milling Engineers of Seething Lane, London" to the factory at Darmstadt in Germany and the foundry and works at Oberursel, later more famous for producing engines for World War 1 fighter aircraft and later part of Rolls Royce Deutschland.

All four Seck Brothers were millwrights. Wilhelm Seck founded his business in 1865 in Bockenheim near Frankfurt. In 1870 he went into partnership with two of his brothers Charles (Karl) and Christian. Seck Brothers moved to Dresden in 1873 on the death of Christian. It appears that later, the youngest brother, Heinrich was responsible for the success of the Dresden business, making it one of the leading roller mill manufacturers in Germany and Europe.

These articles only give a brief glimpse of the several million records held by the Mills Archive Trust. If you would like to know more please email me at mills@millsarchive.org.

Similarly, if you would like to receive my regular newsletter on our progress in building the world's first public roller flour mill archive and library, please email me.

Seck's roller mill manufacturing floor in 1923