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Mill Lane  
Gayle  
Hawes  
North Yorkshire  
DL8 3RZ

01969 667320  
[samantha.belcher@gaylemill.org.uk](mailto:samantha.belcher@gaylemill.org.uk)

## **Unique Dolls House returns home to Gayle Mill**

A wooden Dolls House handmade at Gayle Mill in the 1960s has come back to the Mill over 40 years after it was made by the Reverend James Alderson. The Dolls House was a present for the Reverend James's two grand-daughters. It came complete with furniture (including the kitchen sink!), and was much loved and played with.

It's the first of the Reverend James's daughters in law, now Mrs Sacker, who recently brought the Dolls House back to Gayle Mill. Mrs Sacker now lives in the Cotswolds and because her daughters have grown-up she wanted to bring the Dolls House back to the Mill to be seen and enjoyed by visiting children. *"On behalf of Gayle Mill Trust I'd like to thank Mrs Sacker for her kind donation, it's a unique contribution to the history of Gayle Mill"*, said William Lambert, Chairman of the Trust.





Alderson family ties to Wensleydale and Gayle Mill are well known. The Reverend James was the brother of Tommy Alderson and uncle to Brian both owners of Gayle Mill. Brian was the last private owner of the Mill. In his spare time the Reverend James was a skilled model maker. He made many models of the products made at Gayle Mill, about a third of these are on show at the Mill with the rest at the Museum in Hawes. These models bring to life the wooden products made at the Mill, including the famous six-rail Gayle Mill gate, carts and farm equipment.

Mrs Sacker has generously donated the Dolls House to Gayle Mill Trust for them to display in the Mill. *“Gayle Mill is the right place for it to be, he (Rev. Alderson) would be happy it is here. It has come home”* commented Mrs Sacker. The house, including its match box furniture, is on display at the Mill and Samantha Belcher, Gayle Mill’s Education Co-ordinator, will use it to inspire children during school visits as part of the Mill’s Heritage Education and Skills Training project.

*“The Dolls House is a lovely addition to the story of the Mill and the people associated with it. Children love toys and games. The tradition of making toys and creating your own fun has been somewhat lost in recent generations”,* said Samantha. *“We’ll use the Dolls House to stimulate creativity in children. I can’t wait to see their faces as they make their own toys.”*

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### **Additional Information**

1. Gayle Mill is a restored 19th century state-of-the-art sawmill, complete with Victorian machinery driven by water-powered turbines. It is run by the voluntary organisation Gayle Mill Trust and supported by the Friends of Gayle Mill. Gayle Mill Trust has four main areas of responsibility; running the Mill as a historic visitor attraction, providing commercial wood services, electricity generation and heritage education and training.
2. Visitors can experience Gayle Mill on one-hour guided tours, given by volunteer tour guides, from 22 April to 2nd July on Tuesday to Saturday at 11.00am and 14.00. Then from 5th July to 1st October guided tours are at 11.00am, 12.30pm, 14.00 and 15.30 on Tuesday to Friday but stay at 11.00am and 14.00 on Saturday. Gayle Mill also runs two-hour demonstration tours on the 1st Sunday of each month, throughout the year, and selected bank holidays (24th April, 29th May and 28th August) at 11.00am and 14.30. On a special demonstration tour visitors’ experience, see and hear, the original 1879 water-powered Victorian machinery being used to make wooden products. Booking is strongly advised.



3. Gayle Mill Trust (GMT) Gayle Mill Trust is a Limited Company by Guarantee and a Charity registered in England & Wales Company no. 05190918 – Charity registration 1123047- VAT registration: 898 4281 62. It was created on 27 July 2004 to provide formal support, alongside the Friends of Gayle Mill (FOGM), to the campaign to restore Gayle Mill and open it to members of the public. It is governed by a board of directors who are also trustees, as GMT was registered as a charity on 3 March 2008.
4. The Heritage Education and Skills Training Project (which employs Samantha Belcher as Co-ordinator) is currently a 3 year project (2011-2014) funded by an £80,000 grant from the Yorkshire Dales LEADER programme. The Project will bring together key elements of the Mills long-term and more recent history in order to educate visitors, preserving its story for the benefit of future generations. The Project can be broken down into two main elements; Education and Skills Training. Educational activities will be targeted at school children in the Yorkshire Dales Area and Skills Training will be aimed at young people over 16 and adults.
5. 'LEADER' is an initiative for assisting rural communities to improve the quality of life and economic prosperity in their local area. The funding is being made available through the Rural Development Programme for England, which is jointly funded by Defra and the European Union, and is managed by Yorkshire Forward in the Yorkshire & Humber region. LEADER is an acronym for "Liaison Entre Actions pour le Développement de l'Economie Rural3 (Linkages between rural economic actions and activities).
6. 80% of the funding for this project comes through the Rural Development Programme for England, which is jointly funded by Defra and the European Union, and is managed by Yorkshire Forward in the Yorkshire and Humber region. The other 20% of the funding comes from Gayle Mill Trust and the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE).
7. For more information about schools visit and education at Gayle Mill please contact Samantha Belcher on [samantha.belcher@gaylemill.org.uk](mailto:samantha.belcher@gaylemill.org.uk) or call 01969 667320.