



MILL BITS

The Newsletter of the CRANBROOK WINDMILL ASSOCIATION

Spring 2018

Chairman: Denis Hempstead., Secretary: Andrew White, Treasurer: Peter Bourne

SUMMER OPENING

The mill was open to the public for "Kent's Big Weekend" on March 24th but our official **regular opening days start Easter Weekend**, on Saturday 31st March.

Association's AGM, 2017

The 2017 AGM, held in the Russell Building on 26th November, was well attended. The main business was dealt with quickly and was followed by reports from the Visitor Group (Joy Temple), Volunteer Group (Chris Lear), and the Maintenance Group (Nick Vinall). The latter took the form of videos of Mill restorations, firstly the video of the return of the sweeps (mentioned in the last edition of Mill Bits and on YouTube) on which Nick did most of the editing. He then played another video composed of footage taken in 2003 by David Hall, when CWA members visited IJP's workshops near Reading to see the cap and sweeps being repaired. In the course of the evening, we were informed that there was no likelihood of the outside of the mill being painted because KCC's money for "heritage buildings" has run out.



The most popular part of the AGM

Competition Results



In the run-up to our AGM, members were invited to think up alternative meanings for the initials A.G.M. Over 70 entries were submitted, and the winning entry was "Agile Grease Monkey(s)". This was a tribute to the maintenance men at the mill who regularly climb up into the cap to lubricate the machinery.

The many entries included:

Ain't Going Monarch

Another Grinding Muddle

Activate Google Mail

All Great Minds

Appetiser: Garlic Mushrooms

Andy Goes Mental

Maintenance and Displays

Improvements in the Russell Building: Downstairs, work over the last few weeks has centred on boxing in all the unsightly pipework and electrics in the toilets, enclosing the kitchen area, and installing new doors (photos below). As a result, the china cabinet has moved upstairs. Disabled access to the toilet has been provided which has necessitated the rebuilding of the dais (with the electric mill on it) and a scaled down diorama. The mill model is still working but the background has yet to be painted.



Work in progress (above)



Job done >>

Pre-Season Meeting for Volunteers

There was a light fall of snow on the morning of Saturday, 17th March, and the day was bitterly cold, but a good crowd assembled in the surprisingly warm upstairs room of the Russell Building, including half a dozen new volunteers. Before the start, the Association was presented with a cheque for £300 by David Beeken, Chair of The Cranbrook Fun Day committee. Fun Day supports local charities and selected the CWA on this occasion.

After a short talk on Health & Safety, and a brief report on improvements in the Russell Buildings, CWA members and new volunteers were given a short tour of the extremely cold mill and were very appreciative of the tea and biscuits provided afterwards.



At this meeting we were told about a new scheme, launched this year, called "Wheels of Time", which is aimed at encouraging 5-11 year olds to visit Museums and Historic Sites across Kent. We will be one of 33 venues where children will be able to collect badges (shown left) and other awards based upon the number of venues visited.

Millers' Training Days

In readiness for the new season, there were two training sessions in early 2018, each lasting about 90 minutes. On Wednesday, February 14th five members attended the mill (their one true love?) and although the day started with a thick mist and no sign of wind, by 10am the sun was shining and a breeze was gathering in strength so that the sweeps could be turned, first free-wheeling, then with the stones engaged, the first time since 2015. Grinding was attempted but, as the tun case was previously empty, it took a while for the flour to fill the outer void and only a little of the "first runnings" were collected on the meal floor. At the next session, enough flour was produced to fill forty 1 Kilo bags, ready for sale to the public at the Kent Big Weekend.

Someone, of course, has to fill the bags ready for sale. Our versatile maintenance men, aka grease monkeys, swapped their blue overalls for white ones for this job. Does that make them flour monkeys?



More from Wynn's Archive

Work continues digitising books, which Wynn Tremenheere had compiled, and making them available online on the "Mills Archive" website. The latest volume is "A Pictorial Record of the Past 200 Years of the Repairs and Restoration to the Union Mill, Cranbrook". It includes a collection of photographs of the Dutch millwrights' work in 1958-60, a most valuable record.



Some Summer Reading?



Wynn also accumulated quite a library of books and pamphlets which he left to the Association. Some were sent to the Mills Archives while others were kept to form a small library now housed in the Russell Building for use by CWA members. The collection includes books for the general reader as well as some with more technical details of mill machinery. Do borrow a book (or two) but please enter your name and some contact details in the file provided and sign the book back in when you have finished with it.

Union Mill in Northumberland !

A former windmill steward, Ken Baker, who moved to Northumberland in January 2017, contacted us to say that on a guided tour of Heatherslaw Water Mill (on the River Till, a tributary of the Tweed), he was surprised to see a model of the Union Mill. The editor contacted the Mill and received the following reply: "We do have a semi-working model of the Union Mill but it is awaiting a few repairs at the moment. From what we understand it was created for the great exhibition of the North in the 1920's and made its way to Craggside which is a National Trust property, where incidentally there are large numbers of models of various ships and other inventions associated with the Armstrong Family. We wonder if the creator of some of these may have created the mill model. The model was then given to Heatherslaw Mill by the National Trust ... in 1999."

Upper part of mill model showing wide staging >>>





Images from Heartherslaw Mill website

If you fancy a holiday or short break in this part of Northumberland there's a lot to see in addition to the water mill, including a light railway and Castle Etal. Just Google "Ford & Etal" for more information.

What the Papers Said

Gravesend Reporter, North Kent and South Essex Advertiser, 3rd December 1859

"Accident" - Rather more than 12 months ago, Mr. Ashby, miller and baker, of Harmer-St, who also works the old windmill close by the "Ship and Lobster", was knocked from the stage of the mill by one of the sails, and had one of his legs broken by the fall. On Thursday morning last Mr. Ashby was on the stage, which being very old and decayed, gave way. He was precipitated to the ground, and again broke the same leg. The unfortunate man, remembering the skill and attention he had before experienced at the Infirmary, expressed a wish to be conveyed there again, and he was accordingly taken to that useful institution."

It's very reassuring to know that any wooden slats in poor condition (about one third) on the Union Mill staging were replaced in Spring 2017.

Sussex Agricultural Express 11th May 1895

Important Notice to Gamekeepers, Poultry rearers, and others Russell & Son, Millers, Cranbrook

Beg to draw the attention, of those interested in Rearing Pheasants and Poultry, to their celebrated **PHEASANT and POULTRY MEALS**, acknowledged to be the Best in the Market by those who have given them a fair trial. Prepared from the receipt of Mr. W. Mason, the well-known head gamekeeper to Major J.R. Atkin-Roberts of Glassenbury Park, and manufactured from the best materials only.

Celebrity Sighting?

Amongst those at the Pre-Season Meeting, I thought I spotted Sean Connery but it was Shome mishtake, shurely! >>>



Final Bits

Data Protection – most important.

Under new regulations coming into force in May, 2018, we are required to obtain your consent to hold your contact details. If you haven't already done this, please let our secretary, Andy White, know asap that you are happy for the Association to do this. Either fill in the form you were sent in February (copy with this Newsletter) and post it or email Andy on unionmiller1@yahoo.co.uk to that effect. If you have any questions you can contact Andy by email or by phoning 01580 713681

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