



# MILL BITS

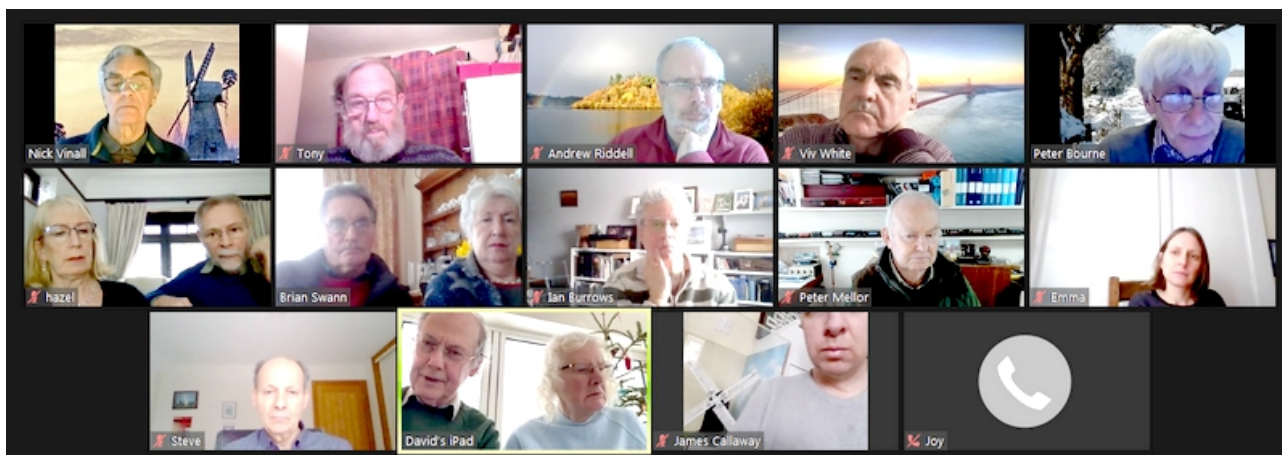
The Newsletter of the CRANBROOK WINDMILL ASSOCIATION

**March 2021**

Chairman: Nick Vinall, Secretary: Hazel Jobson, Treasurer: Peter Bourne

## AGM and Christmas Party

Due to current Corona virus restrictions our usual AGM, scheduled for 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2020, was postponed and had to be held Virtually using Zoom video-conferencing software on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2021.



The screenshot above was taken as members were joining the meeting. A few IT savvy members had worked out how to display picturesque backdrops. They weren't on holiday in far off places!

Sorry you missed the party >>



## Windmill Renovations



Tim Whiting and his team of millwrights from Saxmundham in Suffolk have been awarded the contract for carrying out **Stage 1** of the renovations. This got under way in mid-November and removal of the sweeps and fantail is now complete and they have been taken to the millwrights' workshop for repairs. Their normal cherry-picker crane couldn't reach the height needed for our mill so they managed to secure a brand new one to do the task. For the more technically minded, it was a JLG

800AJ with a working platform height of 24.46m (80.2ft), which enabled them to reach our fantail. After being released from Lockdown in Manchester, it was delivered directly to Cranbrook, and parked up for about three weeks before work could start.

Photos and video footage were taken during the work and there is now a page on our website with images and a link to a video on YouTube which was put together by our chairman, Nick Vinall: [Union Mill Renovations 2020/21](#)

**Stage 2 - Weatherproofing** - Value wise, this is the main contract and awarded to Redec Limited, a Chartered Building Company based in Ashford, whose portfolio includes the restoration of the [South Foreland Lighthouse](#).

Here is a detailed summary of work completed so far and what remains to be done:

### **Stage 1 - Tim Whiting Millwrights**

- 1 - They removed the shutters individually, gaining access to them by the traditional method of climbing on the sail frames.
- 2 - The various bits of metal of the striking mechanism were then removed using their own cherry-picker.
- 3 - This was also used to slacken the bolts and straps that hold the sail frames to the stocks.
- 4 - The big crane was then brought in to lower the sail-frames onto the low loader and these were taken back to the millwrights' workshop in Suffolk.
- 5 - The fantail was then unbolted and lowered to the ground.
- 6 - They were unable to pull the stocks from the central canister so had to saw them off and lower them down individually.
- 7 - The stumps still in the canister were removed using a chainsaw and crowbar.

### **Stage 2 – Redec of Ashford** - projected start date 6<sup>th</sup> April

- 1 - Scaffolding will be erected and plastic wrapped.
- 2 - All external wood will be sanded. The wooden slats on the staging will be replaced and various repairs made to fantail staging, door frames, windows, etc.
- 3 - All external woodwork will be painted with heavy duty 'Kreidezeit', described as a "luxurious form of linseed oil paint with biocidal properties".
- 4 - Scaffolding will be taken down; scheduled for completion 26<sup>th</sup> June.

**Stage 3: Millwrights** will install the renovated fantail, stocks, sweeps, and striking mechanism.

**Stage 4:** Mill re-opens to visitors, **hopefully** sometime in July. Hurrah !!

During Stage 2, we won't have general access to the Mill while the work is going on so, when completed, it will take a bit of time to get the inside sorted out, quite possibly without the sweeps. This might well include having some anti-covid measures such as the provision of hand sanitizer stations and signage; these need to be decided on nearer the time and according to Government restrictions.

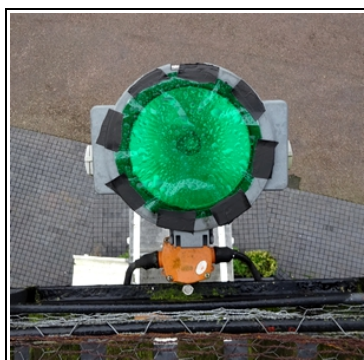
### **Pop-up Shop**



Usually in August, the editor is busy making jam, much of which is sold in the mill shop to help Association funds. With the approval of our chairman and treasurer, he opened a temporary shop on three consecutive Saturdays during August 2020, selling jam, along with some flour (ground in our electric mill) and some stationery items from the shop. Members and a few passing visitors helped to raise £65 through sales and donations; many thanks to those who dropped in, had a chat, and supported the venture.

<< The Masked Trader

## Christmas at the Mill



Our chairman thought it a good idea to cover our spotlights on the staging with green filters\*\* and this has been well-received by the local community and added some much needed colour at this trying time.

<< Spotlight viewed from above with green plastic filter taped on.

\*\* Filters were supplied by Kester Hulland Rumley, the Manager of the Queen's Hall Theatre at Cranbrook School.

Thanks also to Linda Swann who made a wreath for the front door of the mill, to add some Christmas cheer.

Our present tungsten filament spotlights (8 in number) were purchased by CWA in about 2004 and have served us well but we are planning to replace them with energy efficient LED lighting once the Weatherproofing (re-painting) is complete.

This project obviously appealed to the Cranbrook Co-op because we have been selected as a "Good Cause" by their Local Community Fund. In their honour (?), our chairman has found some blue filters for the spotlights and it is now a "blue (and white) mill".



### EXCELLENT NEWS – CO-OP Local Community Fund; message from our trasurer

Thank you everyone who has brilliantly supported the Windmill Association by shopping at the Co-op in Cranbrook and nominating us as one of the three Charities to benefit from their Local Community Fund for 2020/21. I am delighted to report that we have now received an **INTERIM GRANT of £2,121.93**. We are not yet half way through our year and there remains significant additional monies available to us if we can encourage more of our friends and neighbours to shop at the Co-op locally and choose us.



The newly refurbished Cranbrook Co-op opened on Thursday, 11th March and Nick and Peter set up a display to attract public interest. Details on how to become a member and support this cause can be found on the [home page of our website](#)

<< Nick and Linda Page, Hon. Mayor of Cranbrook (photo: Peter Bourne)

## **“Wheels of Time” - Online Badge Collection Scheme**



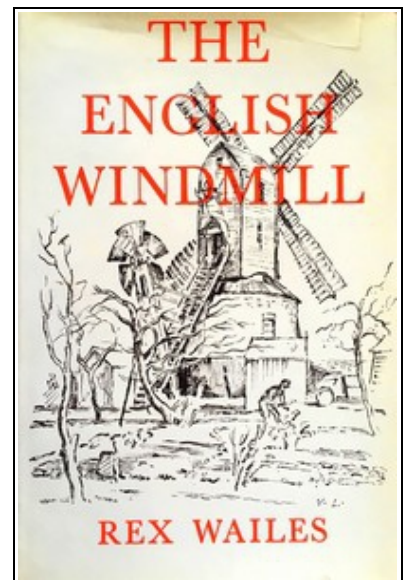
It is hoped that most of the Museums and Heritage Sites across Kent will be able to re-open during 2021, and that children (aged 5-11) will be able to resume their badge collections. However, this year will see the launch of a second badge scheme, which will encourage them to explore the websites of the County's 48 places that “Wheels of Time” now promotes. Each one is being encouraged to include on their website an activity, for which an E-Badge can be awarded; further rewards can be gained for the numbers of E-Badges collected.

Three images were considered for use but to start the scheme, a picture of Windy Miller from the children's TV programme, Camberwick Green, was thought to be most suitable. The new scheme is scheduled to start on 2<sup>nd</sup> April and we have a new [Wheels of Time webpage](#) created ready for it.



## **Vincent Lines' Drawings**

Another image under consideration was suggested by Peter Bourne and based on an ink drawing by Vincent Lines. It's one of several which appear in Rex Wailes' classic book, "The English Windmill", first published in 1954. Another of the drawings was used for the cover design (see right). There are two copies in our mill library. We have 19 original Lines' drawings which we acquired from the Lines' family in 1994. These were on display in the Russell Building but the CWA committee were concerned about their slow deterioration in the unheated building, so it was decided that they should be donated to the [Mills Archive](#) in Reading for preservation. In return, eight smaller ones have been scanned and printed already and are now back in the RB and look very good. The 11 larger ones need an A2 scanner, so when covid allows, the Mills Archive will make high resolution scans of those as well. Then we will receive good quality copies which can also be displayed in their original frames.



## **Denis Hemsted**

We are very sad to tell you of the passing of Denis, a member of our association for nearly 20 years. We understand that he had been in hospital with pneumonia. Denis made a very valuable contribution to CWA. As well as having an engineering background and being one of our qualified Millers, he was our chairman for several years and more recently vice-chairman. He was also a regular contributor to the training programme we have each year for stewards, particularly new ones. This was based on a similar programme he ran at Sissinghurst Castle. Denis's home was Sissinghurst, where he ran the Villages Stores for many years and he was one of their Parish Councillors until very recently.

## An Unusual View of our Mill

The accompanying photo of our mill, now in the Mills Archives, was taken by Rex Wailes between the two world wars.

Maps from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century show that there were open fields behind the mill (as now) but the building in the foreground is an open sided cart shed not the Russell Building, which was built in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The Russell Building is actually there and if you look closely, you can just make out the left hand end of its roof – almost like a shadow of the cart shed (no longer there).



## What the Papers Said

*Maidstone Journal & Kentish Advertiser*, Tuesday 2 January 1816

**Extraordinary robbery** - Last Friday night, at half past 11 o'clock, Broadford Mill (water), near Horsmonden, the property of Mr.J.Parton, was entered through the means of a skeleton key, exactly in the same manner as his father's mill at Tenterden had been on that night 12 months, which was attended with so dreadful a conflict.\*\* Mr.J.Parton having of late discovered a great deficit in the weight of flour there deposited, resolved to lay wait for the depraudators, accordingly fixed on that night for the purpose, at the foregoing hour a person entered and struck a light, then filling a bag with flour, proceeded to fill another with hog corn, in doing which, Mr.J.Parton, darted from concealment upon the robber, and pinioned him down. His name being Charles Harding, a native of Brenchley who was afterwards taken before W.Alexander Morland, esq, (local JP) by whom, after examination, he was committed to Maidstone gaol, in order to take his trial at the next assizes. On his person were found a tinder box, 2 skeleton keys of curious workmanship, and a dark lanthorn (=lantern). Subsequently, Harding went to trial at Kent Quarter Sessions and was sentenced to be transported for seven years.

\*\* The incident referred to at Mr.Parton's watermill near Tenterden can be found in Mill Bits in June 2018. You can find a copy on the [Mill Bits webpage](#).

## Beware, Spiders!

The spider mechanism is the clever arrangement of rods and leavers which enables the miller to remotely adjust the shutters as the wind-speed changes.

Heckington mill, Lincs, has 8 sweeps >>  
(from Wikipedia)



## Final Bits

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