



MILL BITS

The Newsletter of the CRANBROOK WINDMILL ASSOCIATION

October 2022

Chairman: Nick Vinall, Secretary: Andrew Riddell, Treasurer: Peter Bourne

NOTICE of AGM

This will take place as usual, in the Russell Building, on Sunday 27th Nov, at 3pm.

Chairman's Update on the Millwright's Work

The Millwrights arrived towards the end of August, rather later than originally expected but still very welcome. They are well practised in getting both their cherry-picker and the hired large crane fitted into the limited space in front of the Mill. We are very grateful to nearby residents for their tolerance of the disruption caused and the inconvenience of having to park their cars outside for two days.

The collage (see over) shows the general sequence of the work. A heavy-lifter was used to transfer the sweeps and stocks, etc, from the delivery low-loader to the ground space around the Mill. From here they could be hoisted into position by the large crane. First up for safety reasons was the fantail. The heavy duty stocks were then lifted, slid and wedged into their steel canisters. The hefty wooden clamps were added around the canisters to give the extra strength needed to support the sweep bolted to each stock. When all four sweeps were safely in place the large crane could depart. Even if the wind then shifted the fantail would 'wind' the Mill as necessary.

Lastly the cherry-picker was used for the skilful but time-consuming job of fitting the striking gear, from the spider and shutter rods at the front to the striking wheel at the back of the Mill. It is vital that the shutters can be opened and closed in synchronism.

The missing shutters will be added when the metal pivot arms are received from the firm casting them. And finally the sweeps will be balanced so that they rotate freely.

Classic Cars at the Mill

In June this year the mill was visited by some members of the [Stag Owner's Club](#). The Stag was a model made by Triumph from 1969 – 1977 in both hard and soft top (right).



<< In September, it was the turn of some enthusiasts who favour the [Lancia Gamma](#)

(Photos: David Hall)



Tight fit for the crane and cherry-picker



Unloading the sweeps, stocks, etc



Fantail arrives ready for hoisting into position



Stocks fixed into canisters



Sweep being hoisted



And bolted to stock



All done crane departs



Missing shutters still to be fitted

**Re-installation of sweeps
and fantail, August 2022**

Photos by Alan Ford, with thanks

Official Opening after Restoration - Wednesday 7th September

Some short informal speeches were made by Lesley Game, Chair of KCC, Susan Carey, Cabinet Member for the Environment and Windmills, and Sean Holden the KCC Member for Cranbrook. Sean has pledged £2000 to the CWA from his member's discretionary fund towards the cost of our new floodlights. Our Chairman gave a brief talk about the mill's history, which was to have been followed by the sweeps turning. Although the rain held off, there was unfortunately no wind, so plan B involved Peter being secreted at the rear of the staging and operating the striking gear chain to give us a "shutter flutter". The red ribbon was then cut, and with stewards already stationed on each floor, an orderly tour of the mill followed



with refreshments in the reception area.



The stone floor became rather crowded at one point so some decided to head back downwards, led by Luke Bonwick, KCC's man in charge of the county's windmills. However, he forgot the correct procedure and one of his work colleagues cried out, "Go down backwards, Luke!", which was followed by some wag adding, "First time in a mill, is it Luke?"

The two local mayors (Godfrey Bland of Tunbridge Wells and Linda Page of Cranbrook) enthusiastically climbed to the Bin Floor, undeterred by the awkward ladder. By chance, the cap and sweeps were facing in the ideal direction (towards the Co-op) so that they had the best possible view the machinery above their heads.

Wheels of Time GOLD Badges

The GOLD Badge is awarded for visiting 30 (or more) of the present 53 sites participating in the scheme and on Saturday, 1st October (Cranbrook's "Apple Day"), two young



brothers received their badges from our treasurer, Peter, on the steps of the mill. First, however, they donned miller's coats and hats and then smiled for the cameras. As if that was not enough, Peter then presented them each with a small bag of our stone-ground flour.



Michael Waghorn (1931-2022)

After a short stay in a Staplehurst nursing home, Michael died recently at the age of 91 and some CWA members attended his funeral on Friday 23rd September. He had been a volunteer at the mill since 2011 and was always cheerful and enjoyed stewarding. He worked as a porter at Benenden hospital until the age of 75 and afterwards helped out selling fruit for a local farm shop. In addition to the mill, he enjoyed fishing and bowling and was a member of the choir at St Dunstan's.



Rolvenden Postmill - Update

In late September 2022, the editor was pleasantly surprised to see that this postmill sported a new (rebuilt) stock and sail-frame and all the sweeps had been freshly painted.



Another Major Restoration

Sibsey Trader Mill, in Lincolnshire, is owned by English Heritage and is one of a very few surviving mills with six sails – yes, they're called sails in that part of the world.

It suffered damage during high winds in 2018 and the work to completely rebuild the cap and construct the new sails was started in 2020. It has been carried out by Tim Whiting's team of millwrights from Suffolk, who have also been working on the Union Mill.

The [BBC News website](#) has an article on the restoration work with some interesting photos or you can search for "Sibsey Trader Mill".

Forthcoming Events

- a) **Autumn Clean Up:** Saturday 5th November 2022 at 10am – and checking our displays and exhibits so that necessary repairs/maintenance can be undertaken over the Winter Months.
- b) **Miller Training** - fortnightly during the Winter Months on a weekday - will cover Winnowing of Grain, Cleaning the Millstones, Turning the "Sweeps", and using the Brake, Milling when conditions are favourable, and maintenance and greasing of the Mill.

Contact Peter Bourne cpbourne@btinternet.com for information.

Final Bits

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One of Susan Hooper's excellent shortbread biscuits prepared for the reception at the Official Opening.

