

Arthur 'Mr. Windmills' Smith - An Appreciation of His Life

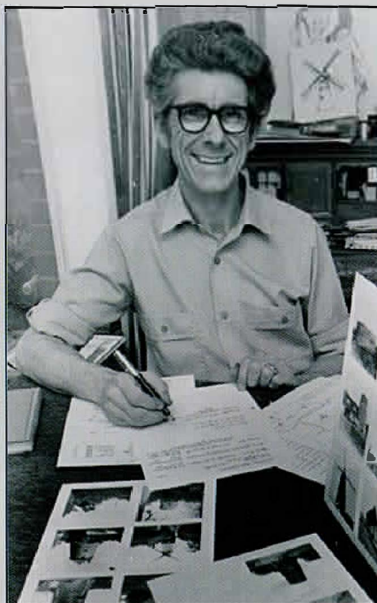
Arthur C. Smith, 1924 - 2013

Arthur Smith, who died on Tuesday 18th June 2013 at a residential home in Newton Abbot, Devon, was best known to people in the mill world as a first class researcher and meticulous recorder of windmills, in photographs as well as text. Completed surveys of the surviving windmills of a dozen English counties include about 750 Mills and old sites, all visited and recorded personally.

Well into his 80s when he died, Arthur travelled over 20,000 miles, seldom by any form of transport other than by bicycle, during the 1970s and 1980s after coming across John Vince's book *Discovering Windmills*. Dissatisfied with the little information that he could find written about windmills or where they were, he decided to find out and this became an absorbing interest, culminating in books recording the windmills by County, all published by himself at his own cost.

A man with many interests (besides windmills) which encompassed music, natural history, aeroplanes, cycling everywhere and camping out in his own styled bivouac when on long-distance trips, plus competing in half marathons, marathons and cross-country races. In fact in 1999 he took part in his fifth London Marathon at the age of 75!

During WWII he flew in Halifax bombers and stayed in contact with two of the remaining crew. He became a design draughtsman after the war and worked for British Aerospace on projects ranging from the Comet to the BAe 146.



*Portrait of Arthur C Smith, ACSC/6519,
© The Mills Archive*

After retirement from work in 1987, he was a frequent visitor at Cromer Post mill. During the 1990s he recorded all the stages of the restoration work on this last remaining post mill in Hertfordshire, chronicling it for posterity.

I never met him, but I met people who did at the Henley Traditional Boat Show a couple of years ago. I was attending the Mills Archive stand and some cyclists from Bedfordshire came through, following the Oxfordshire Trail, who said "Oh, a member of our cycling club is mad about windmills and cycles around all of them. His name is Arthur Smith." Arthur Smith was a remarkable man who will be missed by many, but thank you Arthur, for all that you have done for generations to come researching windmills.

(Arthur donated his extensive collection of research notes, slides and mill material to the Mills Archive in July 2002 when (in his own words at the age of 78) "he could no longer ride his bike".)

Sheila M. Viner