



Friends of Lowfield Heath Windmill

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Dear Friends,

THE STORY SO FAR - Part 3.

With the coming of spring much progress can be seen at the windmill, but I will start from where the last newsletter left off. As most of you know the TRESTLE was erected last autumn, November 2nd to be precise, a sunny autumn afternoon. All went very smoothly and well, those present were delighted, it was completed in 2 hours, and sitting perfectly. Quite a unique sight to behold, the huge centre post standing waiting to receive its mill. Let me remind you that the trestle consists of 2 big horizontal cross trees that sit on brick pillars, the centre post is above their crossing, supported by 4 diagonal quarter bars running from the cross trees to the centre post.

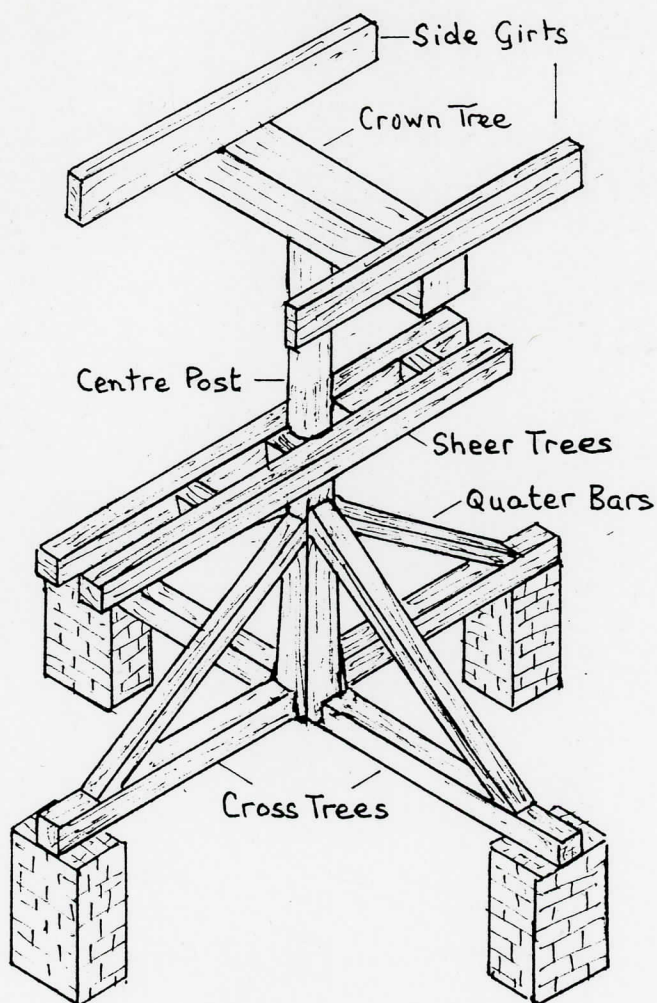
During the winter the trestle was covered by a huge green tarpaulin and that was no easy task to do, I witnessed it, and admired the cool determination of Peter Darby, the millwright, as he stood on top of a long ladder heaving the tarpaulin a few inches at a time up over himself and the top of the post. It withstood the winter, and conveniently the March and April winds tore it down.

Throughout the winter work continued on the timbers. It has been a very big job and fascinating to see the meticulous and complicated joints. The tools used were those most suitable for the job, so although the sawing was done with a power saw, the holes were drilled with a hand auger. It was a joy to see the shavings rising from the hard oak, apparently a power drill wouldn't cope at all well in that situation. Several other special hand tools are used.

With the coming of spring the roundhouse was completed to its final height, that could only be done when the cross trees were in position. Then a hardcore track had to be made to take the big crane over the wet field, hopefully one day it will look like a cart track, it doesn't at the moment!

May 23rd was a day of great activity. Scaffolding had previously erected. The crane and the SHEER TREES arrived. These are 2 long large parallel timbers held 1ft 9ins apart by 4 timbers each with long double tenons. The centre gap is rounded out to form a circle which will freely rotate round the centre post. The crane lifted the sheer trees over the top of the centre post and let them down into their rightful position halfway down the post, supported temporarily by timber blocks on the scaffolding.

Next the huge CROWN TREE, weighing several tons, was lifted up and into its place on the top of the centre post. This pivot is the link on which the whole mill will turn. Metal rods link the crown tree and sheer trees. Later the SIDE GIRTS were put in their position on the top of the ends of the crown tree. These horizontal members are the main timbers of the side panels. That completes the state of play at the time of writing.



. An exciting summer lies ahead. Do watch it happen on site, and take photographs, but please don't interrupt the millwrights.

A large amount of new weatherboarding for covering the mill has arrived at the barn workshop and painting has commenced by volunteers - the mill will be white as on old photographs. More volunteers are needed for this job, male or female, please contact Jean Shelley 862646, or Peter James 540705. There are other jobs too, for the skilled or unskilled. We need your HELP.

By the end of the summer we expect to erect one pair of sails. One very big snag remains, we need £15,000 to finish the job! We are hopeful it will be completed by Autumn 1990.

On Thursday, July 6th, there will be an OPEN EVENING for Friends at the new windmill site, 6pm - 8pm, starting with a brief A.G.M. The millwrights will be present during the evening, and we look forward to seeing you. If anyone wishes to come who is not a friend they can join up on site. (Follow signs to Gatwick Zoo).

A few friends have not renewed their subs, a red cross will appear on their newsletter, and if they forget this will be their last newsletter.

The subscription is £5 for 2 years, and present life membership is only £10, or £20 for the family. We NEED your money.

THE MILL TIMBERS

The repairs can only be done with well seasoned timbers. New timbers cannot be mixed with old. To find really big oak to meet these requirements was not easy. The result is quite interesting.

Both CROSS TREES needed renewing, they are 27 feet long. The lower one had a slight curve, a replacement was found at Midhurst which had been felled about 10 years ago. The upper cross tree replacement was from York Minster where it had been bought with many others to repair the Minster, but it was never used. (They didn't know they were going to have a second fire!)

The original CENTRE POST is in suprizingly good condition. It has supported the mill for 250 years and now that some replacement timber has been dovetailed in near the base it is at work again. An oak is mature when it is 150 to 180 years old, so it was a sapling in Tudor times.

Bletchingly Church tower had a new bellframe in 1947, but this was replaced by a metal frame when the bells were rehung in 1988. The timbers were sold to a boat builder on the Sussex coast, but five of them made their way to Charlwood. The first was used to replace a QUARTER BAR, The other 3 quarter bars are all original, but two have inset repairs.

The 2 SHEER TREES which revolve round the centre post and form the lower floor have been replaced with timbers from Bletchingly, the timbers which join them are recycled from the disused quarter bar.

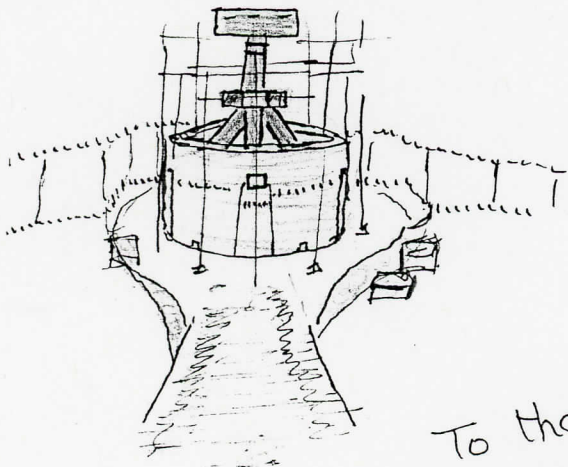
The upper surface of the CROWN TREE was in poor condition, so the top few inches were sliced off and replaced. The crown tree is 11ft by 2ft 3ins by 2ft.

Two CORNER POSTS have been replaced by Bletchingly timbers, one post will be recycled to replace a member of the rear stone frame.

Lowfield Windmill was originally built with some reused timbers, this was normal practice, the evidence being the presence of unused mortices. The meal beam, a vertical in the middle of the breast (front panel), stone floor joists, and possibly the sheer trees were all reused.

Lastly, I might sound knowledgable but I'm not, this is what Peter Derby, the millwright, told me, and I thought it was worth writing down.

Jean Shelley.



To those not really interested in timbers,
I apologise! It should be different
next time.
Jean Shelley.

Post Mills of England

Lowfield Heath windmill represents over 2% of the surviving post mills in England, thus it is important nationally as well as locally. The following is a complete listing of all those surviving mills. Details of individual mills will be included in future newsletters.

<u>PLACE</u>	<u>MILL NAME</u>	<u>COUNTY</u>	<u>NAT GRID</u>	<u>CONDITION</u>	
Brill	.	.Bucks	.SP652I42.	Complete	*
Ivinghoe	.Pitstone Green	.Bucks	.SP945I57.	Restored	*
Borough Green	.Six Mile Bottom	.Cambridge	.TL588582.	Restored	*
Bourn	.	.Cambridge	.TL3I2580.	Restored	*
Great Chishill	.	.Cambridge	.TL4I4389.	Restored	*
Great Gransden	.	.Cambridge	.TL277555.	Restored	*
Madingley	.	.Cambridge	.TL407596.	Complete	
Stevington	.	.Bedfords	.SP992527.	Restored	*
Dale Abbey	.Cat & Fiddle	.Derbyshire	.SK438398.	Complete	
Cross-In-Hand	.New Mill	.E.Sussex	.TQ5582I8.	Under Restoration	
Herstmonceux	.Windmill Hill	.E.Sussex	.TQ647I22.	Derelict	
Icklesham	.Hog Hill	.E.Sussex	.TQ887I60.	Under Restoration	
Mayfield	.Argos Hill	.E.Sussex	.TQ570283.	Restored	
Nutley	.	.E.Sussex	.TQ45I29I.	Working Order	*
Ashdon	.Stevington End	.Essex	.TL595426.	Preserved	
Aythorpe Roding	.	.Essex	.TL590I52.	Working Order	*
Bocking	.Church Street	.Essex	.TL763260.	Restored	*
Finchingfield	.Duck End	.Essex	.TL687330.	Under Restoration	
Fryerning	.Ingatestone.MillGn.	.Essex	.TL640008.	Preserved	
Mountnessing	.	.Essex	.TQ63I980.	Working Order	*
Ramsey	.	.Essex	.TM209305.	Restored	
Wimbledon Common	.	.G London	.TQ230725.	Preserved	*
Stoke Heath	.Danzey Green	.Here&Worc	.SO952682.	Working Order	*
Cromer	.	.Hertford	.TL304286.	Restored	*
Wrawby	.	.Humberside	.TA026088.	Working Order	*
Chillenden	.	.Kent	.TR268543.	Preserved	*
Keston	.	.Kent	.TQ4I564I.	Preserved	
Rolvenden	.	.Kent	.TQ8373I6.	Preserved	*
Wittersham	.Stocks	.Kent	.TQ9I3273.	Complete	*
Kibworth Harcourt	.	.Leicester	.SP689944.	Preserved	
Garboldisham	.	.Norfolk	.TM002805.	Under Restoration	
Thrigby	.	.Norfolk	.TG468I2I.	Complete Rebuild	
Bloxham	.Bloxham Grove	.Oxon	.SP456366.	Complete	
AldringhamCumThorpe.	.Thorpness (pump)	.Suffolk	.TM468598.	Restored	*
Drinkstone	.	.Suffolk	.TL964622.	Complete	
Framsden	.	.Suffolk	.TMI92598.	Working Order	*
Friston	.	.Suffolk	.TM4II60I.	Preserved	
Holton	.	.Suffolk	.TM403774.	Restored	*
Saxstead Green	.	.Suffolk	.TM253644.	Restored	*
Stanton	.Upthorpe	.Suffolk	.TL97I733.	Under Restoration	
Charlwood	.Lowfield Heath	.Surrey	.TQ235408.	Under Restoration	
Outwood	.	.Surrey	.TQ328456.	Working Order	*
Reigate Heath	.	.Surrey	.TQ234502.	Preserved	*
Tadworth	.	.Surrey	.TQ236554.	Preserved	
Clayton	.Jill	.W.Sussex	.TQ303I34.	Working Order	*
High Salvington	.Durrington	.W.Sussex	.TQI23067.	Under Restoration	*
Keymer	.Oldland	.W.Sussex	.TQ32II62.	Under Restoration	

* = Mill open to view.