



Friends of Lowfield Heath Windmill

Mrs. J. M. SHELLEY
4 NORWOOD HILL ROAD
CHARLWOOD, HORLEY
SURREY, RH6 0ED
Tel 0293 862646

NEWSLETTER No 8.

March 1993

Dear Friends,

We've had another very satisfactory year, thanks to Peter, Jack, Barry and Gordon, who work so regularly on Sundays, 9.30am - 1.30pm, we are very grateful to them. Financially too we've done well, with no money at all spent on labour in the year ending February 28th, but some money coming in, the largest amount being over £1,800 from the winding up of the Lowfield Heath Village Trust. We hope that this plus a smaller grant, plus small regular amounts of fund raising that come in, and two other promised grants may be enough to finance the required brakewheel. Visitors donations take care of the expensive insurance.

Peter is writing the main part of the newsletter this year, so all that is left for me to do is three notices.

Firstly, our ANNUAL OPEN MEETING is at the Mill on SUNDAY, APRIL 18th at 12 MIDDAY. Do come and see for yourself and ask questions.

Secondly, Sunday, MAY 9th is NATIONAL MILL DAY. Mills all over the country will be open that afternoon. It is a great opportunity to visit some other mills.

Thirdly, Lowfield Heath Mill will be open on Sundays, 2 - 6pm from Easter to the end of September. And that means we need volunteer stewards to man the mill. The time is divided into two shifts, 2 - 4pm & 4 - 6pm. We need someone to go up into the mill and someone to stay at the bottom (sitting much of the time). If the weather is bad we don't open. No experience is necessary, we give you simple written instructions & information. DO HELP US. Phone me, Jean Shelley, on (0293) 862646, or Jane Hoyle on 862347, or Peter James on 540705.

Now over to Peter.

RESTORATION PROGRESS, by Peter James.

Although restoration work throughout the year has been done by a small band of dedicated volunteers on Sunday mornings only, a steady progress has been achieved.

The roundhouse door frames (in Charlwood oak) were finished first, followed by the six pane window frames above, again from local oak and glazed with old glass. New doors were made out of larch and hung using old wrought iron hinges, which came together with some lovely brass locks, from one of our Friends. Finally the whole assembly was painted inside and out.

In April the Reigate Area Conservation Volunteers (BTCV) made a Dutch drain around the mill. This consisted of digging a trench around the wall of the roundhouse and filling it with shingle. From this another trench was dug to the corner of the plot, into which was laid a land drain pipe and again the trench was filled with shingle and then turfed over. It all proved very effective in keeping the rain away from the roundhouse floor.

Also in April the roundhouse roof boards were trimmed off to length and nailed in place, prior to which any shrinkage was taken up by hammering the alternate tapered boards further home. This vastly improved the appearance of the roundhouse roof.

The remainder of last year was taken up with making and fitting the oak 'soldiers'. These are downward protruding members along both sides and front of the mill body and are designed to support the downward continuation of the weatherboarding, known as the skirt. There are about twenty 'soldiers' and they were quite difficult to fit as the mortices into which they fitted could only be reached by using ladders. Most of the wood came from the Village Chandlers being old fence post stock.

In October we started to level the mill plat with the kind help of Ron & John Capstick. They brought along a JCB and two dumper trucks. Having levelled about half the mill plat, we were unfortunately caught by the winter rains and had to abandon any more work until the spring.

This year we have painted the inside of the roundhouse walls white. This gives an altogether lighter interior as well as showing off the oak timbers, which support the centre post, in better contrast.

On January 3rd we greased the post using tallow (a traditional method) and turned the mill using the tailpole. It took two people to move it at first, but after four revolutions and plenty of tallow, one person could move it with ease. This operation highlighted the fact that the mill post was not upright as the 'soldiers' touched the roundhouse roof at one point, and also the mill was easier to move in one quadrant than another. To confirm this we set up a plumbline within the mill. We then turned the mill one revolution, stopping at various points to mark the position of the plumb bob. At the end of this, the plumb bob had described a circle from which the amount of incline of the post could be calculated, it proved to be 1½ inches out of vertical.

To correct this, the wedges around the base of the post would have to be moved (see fig 1). It was felt best to put this in the hands of our millwrights, West Sussex Rural Engineering Company. On March 1st I assisted them in this task. The post was moved upright successfully by moving wedges and adding a new one. Incidentally this operation also involved moving over one of the cross trees to give more clearance to move the post, no mean feat using only a sledgehammer and wedges; the weight of one end of the cross tree being in the region of 5 tons.

Most recently we have started to weatherboard the skirt. Initially this has entailed refitting the triangular weatherboarding pieces at the rear of the mill, near the start of the tail pole. These will retain their mid 19th century weatherboarding - a rare survival!

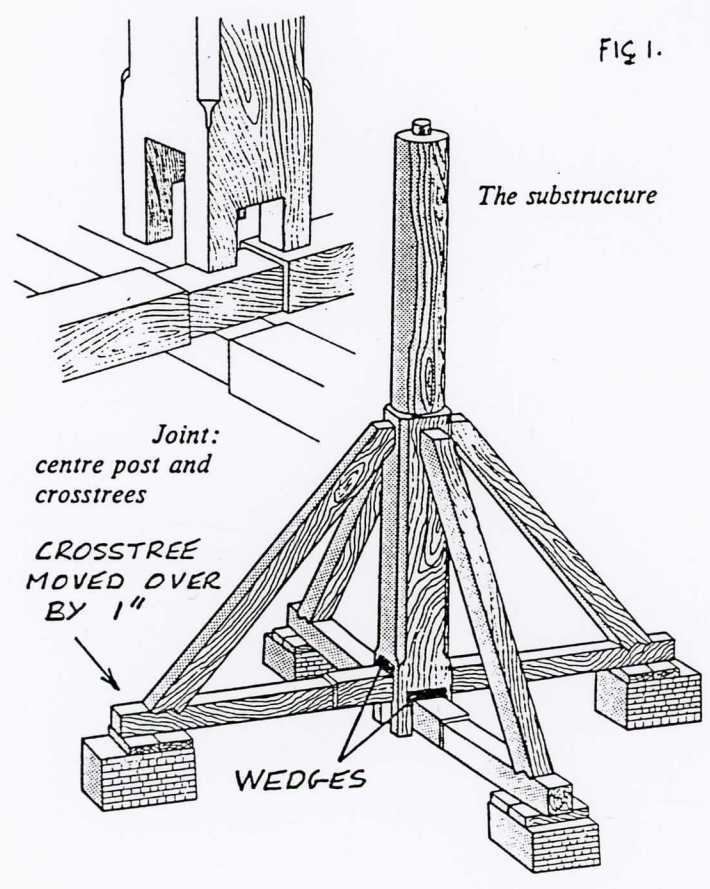
PLANNED WORK FOR 1993.

1. Completion of the skirt including painting both this and the roundhouse roof.
2. Re-tarring the roundhouse, probably by the BTCV in April.
3. Complete the landscaping.
4. Making and fitting the brakewheel; as far as our funds permit this will be done by our millwrights as it is a very time consuming job and needs workshop facilities.
5. If time permits we may make a start on new steps.

WINDMILL PAINTING EXHIBITION

There is at present a superb exhibition of Windmill Paintings at Hove Museum and Art Gallery, 19 New Church Road, Hove. 0273-779410. It is entitled 'The Romantic Windmill - The Windmill in British Art from Gainsborough to David Cox, 1750-1850'. It is a must for any windmill enthusiast and runs until 25 April 93.

A FURTHER LOOK AT THE TIMBERS SUPPORTING THE CENTRE POST.



An interesting point to make when referring to fig 1 is that there is no weight taken at the intersection of the crosstrees. The entire weight of the mill is transmitted via the four diagonal quarterbars down to the brick piers.

Of further interest fig 2 below shows the joints between the post and quarterbar and between the quarter bar and crosstree.

Note: none of these joints are dowelled together, the weight of the mill being sufficient to hold the joints in place.

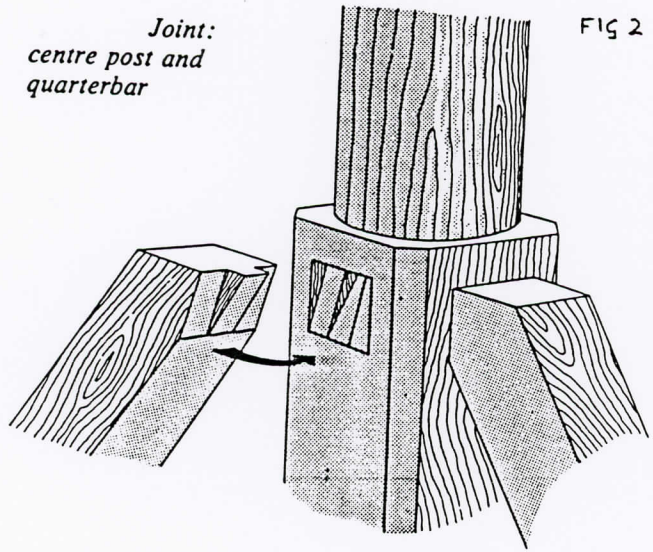
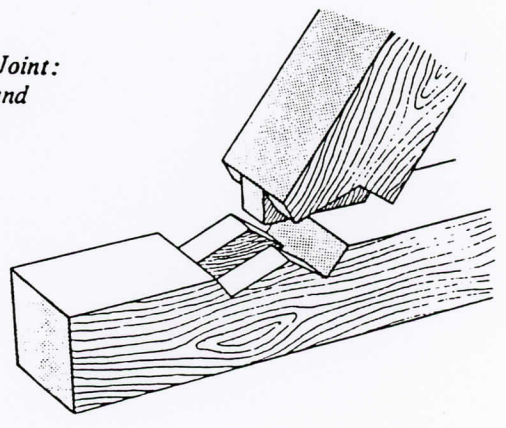


FIG 2

Joint: crosstree and quarterbar

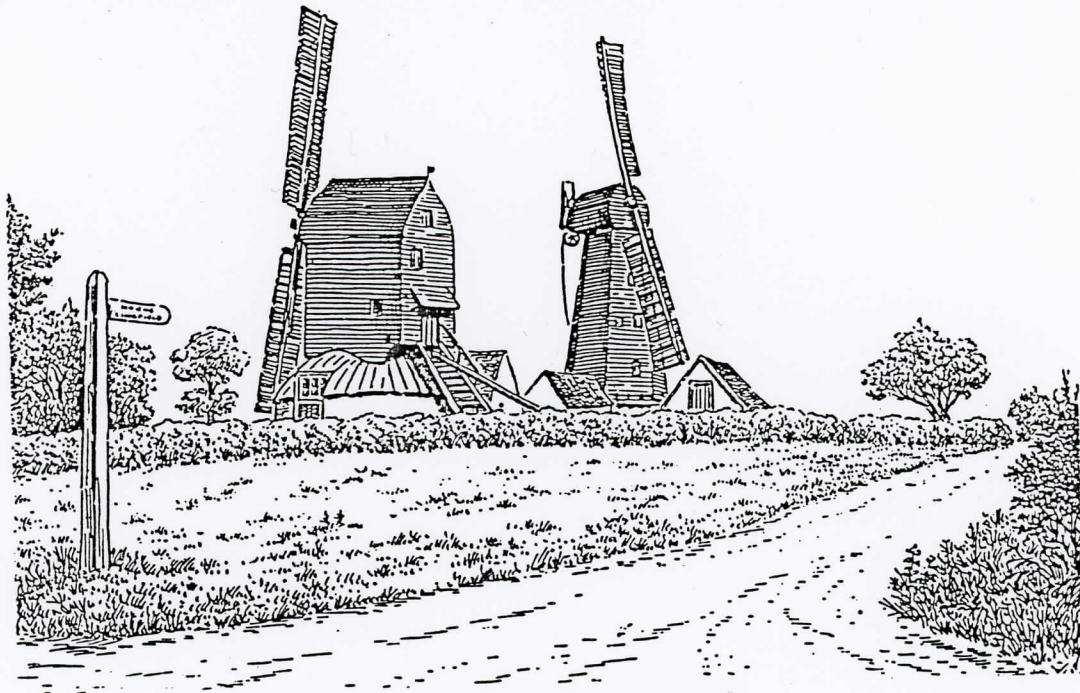


OUTWOOD WINDMILLS !

I am sure everyone is familiar with Outwood postmill near Redhill, but it is not so widely known that Outwood Common once boasted two mills, the other being a tall smock mill.

The post mill was built in 1665, but the smock mill did not appear until 1796 being borne out of a family quarrel. The smock mill finished work in 1914 and started to decay which eventually resulted in it collapsing during the early hours of Sunday, 25th November 1960.

All the wreckage was soon cleared away to leave the postmill dominating the scene, as of old. It is a superb old mill, and its great to think it still grinds corn. Well worth a visit. (It is open on Sunday afternoons in the summer).



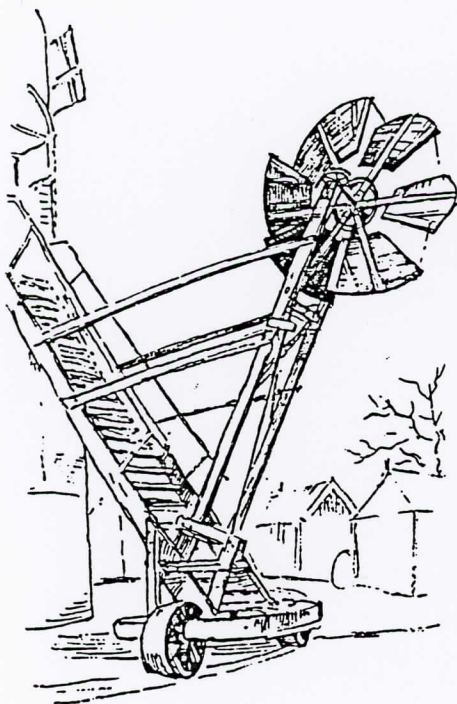
Outwood Mills, circa 1931.

FANTAILS

Several people have asked if there will be a fantail on our mill.

Firstly to explain what a fantail is: This was invented in 1745 by Edmund Lee and is what may be considered as a small windmill set at right angles to and some way behind the sails of the mill. If the wind blows square to the sails, the fantail presents no surface and remains still. When the wind changes direction it strikes the fantail causing it to revolve. This movement is transmitted through gearing & wheels onto a track around the mill. Hence the fantail drives the mill around until the sails are once more square to the wind.

The only recorded fantail in Surrey was at Hookwood. Here it was mounted on the tailpole, as it is at 'Jill' windmill on the South Downs, above Clayton. It is thought that the early decline of windmills in Surrey discouraged such innovations, hence Lowfield Heath retained the more labour intensive tailpole until the end of its working life.



LADDER MOUNTED FANTAIL