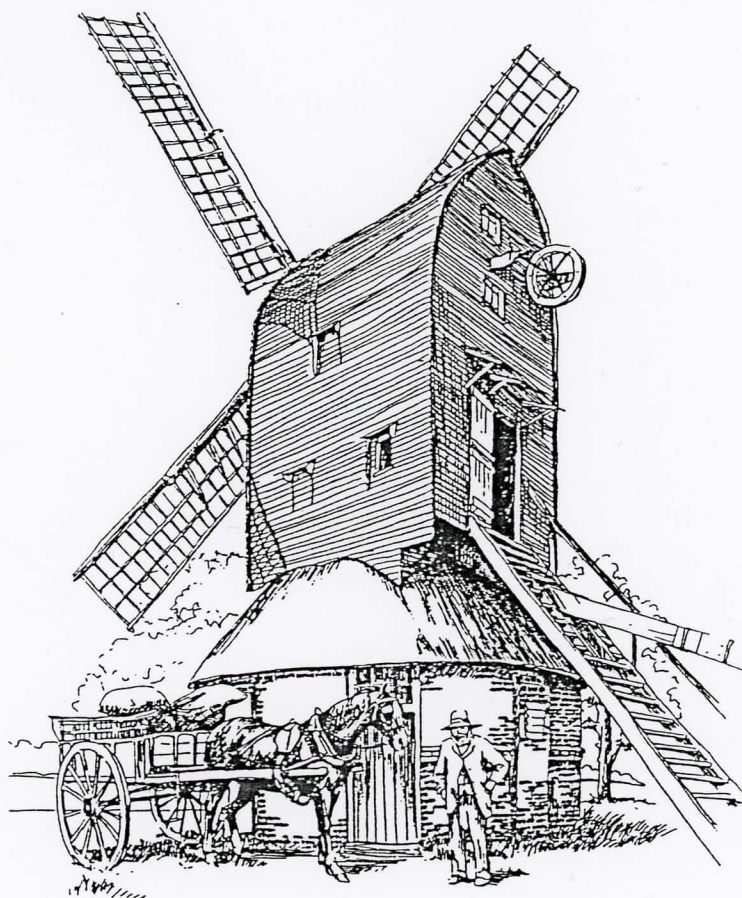




Friends of Lowfield Heath Windmill

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NEWSLETTER No 10. Spring 1995.

Dear Friends,

You will be thinking, we've seen this picture, (by Sarah Worthington), before. That's right, but I have a special reason for reproducing it again, the lower part was drawn from a photo of John Ansell the last miller, the top part from the mill today, (plus an extra pair of sails). The photo was given to us by Mrs Margaret Connell, nee Chandler, who was born and spent her childhood at Lowfield Heath. Margaret was the great granddaughter of John Ansell. Sadly, Margaret died recently. She got a lot of pleasure from the fact that the mill was being saved, and we got a lot of pleasure from her photos we recieved, they made it all more real. Do you remember the 'tea party', very posed, of John Ansell, his wife and two daughters outside the mill house? A highlight for Margaret was meeting Princess Alexandria in 1990, her special task that day was presenting the Princess with a bag of stone ground flour, (from Jill mill, obtained by Brendon). We are very grateful to Margaret for making contact with us. Our sympathy goes to her husband and son. And a 'thank-you' to some members of her family who sent a donation to the windmill in her memory.

The mill should be open on Sundays, during the summer, from 3pm to 5pm. On May 14th, National Mills Day, the time will be extended to 2pm to 6pm; mills everywhere will be open that day. In late July and in August we will also open 2pm to 6pm on Sundays.

Tele: Jean Shelley 01293 862646, Peter James 01293 409845.

Jean Shelley

I had a letter from a Ron Harris who now lives in New Zealand, but as a child, in the War, he lived in Lowfield Heath at the Lodge of Lovell House, right opposite the Windmill.

"... in 1942 I was eight years old. We would climb the (to us,) huge wooden staircase and swing on the tail pole, up to the stable door - often found hanging open and banging in the wind - the chain, which we mistakenly took to be the sack hoist, was still swinging and clanking around on the side of the mill too.

Inside it was facinating and quite 'spooky'. Much of the machinery seemed to still be in place - there were chutes, bins, sieves and even (it seemed) a liberal sprinkling of flour among the dust, although this must have been only a product of the imagination, I think.

The stairs to the upper floor were narrow and rickety - here we could see the sky through holes already appearing in the weather boards - people were far too pre-occupied with the war to bother about old buildings.

Up there were the two bed stones and of course the brakewheel with its wooden cogs. Here we could look out onto the mill house below and over the flat countryside towards Charlwood. The flyball governors and tentering gear were particularly wonderful peices of strange machinery.

We never went into the roundhouse because the door was kept locked, but I remember the ivy which covered most of the wall and the roof. ... The whole structure created an impression of awe and wonder which has never left me. As a teenager I was led on to develop an interest in the other windmills of Kent and Sussex. Perhaps one of my favourites being the post mill at Argos Hill, Sussex, - such a perfect landmark."

J.S.

Lowfield Mill , Crawley !

For most of its life Lowfield Heath mill has been within the county boundary of Surrey , but in 1974 was involved in a boundary change which effectively moved it into West Sussex . We were therefore very pleased when the new site at Charlwood returned it to Surrey in 1988 . It is therefore very ironic that the receipt on the right gives the address as Crawley !

This receipt was traced after a bit of detective work starting with the H.E.S. Simmonds collection of mill papers held in the Science museum . In this Mr Simmonds makes reference to a certain Gurney Wilson visiting the mill on January 16th 1915 at which time "the miller's account books from 1873 , brought home , onwards , were still in the mill" . The part of the sentence "brought home" did not really fit in grammatically . To check out the real meaning of this , I caught up with the original Gurney Wilson papers now held in Brighton reference library . this proved that the words "brought home" were in fact a note written above the original sentence . I now believed that this meant that Mr Wilson had brought some of these old accounts home with him . To my delight the library held a further book of Mr Wilson's papers , within which were preserved six original receipts , all dating from around 1890 . The above has proved to be an object lesson in researching back to original material .

LOWFIELD MILL, CRAWLEY.

11 Month 20 1890

Mr. *J. Napley* *J. Wilson*

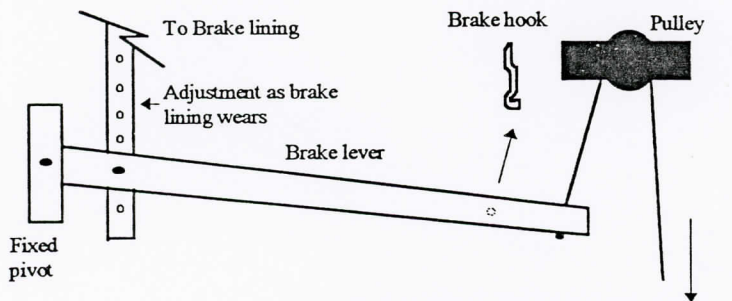
Qrs.	Sks.	Tons.	Cwts.	£	s.	d.
<i>1/2</i>	<i>1/2</i>				13	6
					6	9

Carman

Progress since last newsletter

The last major task of weatherboarding was completed in spring 1994, this was the boarding of the skirt. The skirt being the continuance of the boarding down from the mill body (buck) to within two inches of the roundhouse roof. This was especially difficult to do because the boarding had to be profiled to match the contours of the roof. The boarding was marked using a gauge and cut using an 'all-purpose' reciprocating electric saw. I think you will agree that the finished result is worthy of the rest of the mill.

The tailpole was repaired next, a certain amount of rot had developed in the original section dating from the repairs in the 1960's. This was consolidated using resin based fillers. The original tailpole tie (found in a hedge at the original site) was repaired using a new section made by our blacksmith (John Barwell of Copthorne). This tie partly supports the weight of the tailpole by suspending it from above the window at the rear of the buck. The talthur was made next, this is the lever which is suspended from the tailpole and is used to lift the ladder clear of the ground, prior to turning the mill. Unfortunately the mounting of the talthur will have to await the new steps, hopefully later this year.



Pull down to disengage brake i.e lever is latched onto hook.
To engage brake, release lever from hook, weight of lever applies braking force. It can also be locked in the on position.

The next task tackled was the repair of the brake, manufacture of a new brake hook (part of the old one survived, but the new one is essentially a copy from Reigate Heath mill) and assembly. The details of which are shown in the sketch. This is now ready for attachment to the brake, when it and the brakewheel arrive this spring.

In September the complete mill was repainted in white. The paint used was Atzo Permaglaze acrylic system as recommended by Wrawby postmill in Lincolnshire (supposedly Humberside). This is a water based i.e. an environmentally friendly product and comes in an anti-mould grade, which hopefully will prevent the 'green' look of recent years. The company awarded the contract was R. Durnell & Sons of Westerham in Kent. This was particularly pleasing as they have been established since 1590 and have undoubtedly worked on mills over their long history. I am sure that research into their extensive records would confirm this. All the metalwork was also painted in black smooth hammerite. I am sure you will agree that they have done a splendid job. Incidentally this work was carried out, not by encasing the mill in expensive scaffolding, but instead by the use of a boom platform, the job being completed within three weeks. Maybe this is a something that other mills could do to reduce the cost of repainting.

In early October the roundhouse floor was covered with butyl rubber and a layer of cement screed was laid. The rubber extended up the side of the brickwork and met the existing damp proof course. This has since proved its worth by eliminating the flooding problems of past winters, when as much as three inches of water filled the roundhouse. This is also now a much smoother base on which to build the sleeper walls to support the re-instated wooden floor.

During this time the tenting frames which support the flyball governors were extensively repaired and re-erected. New ends were traditionally joined onto the original timbers which had suffered badly at their joints and other parts were consolidated using resin, thus continuing the philosophy of repair rather than replacement which is such a good feature of the spout floor of our mill.

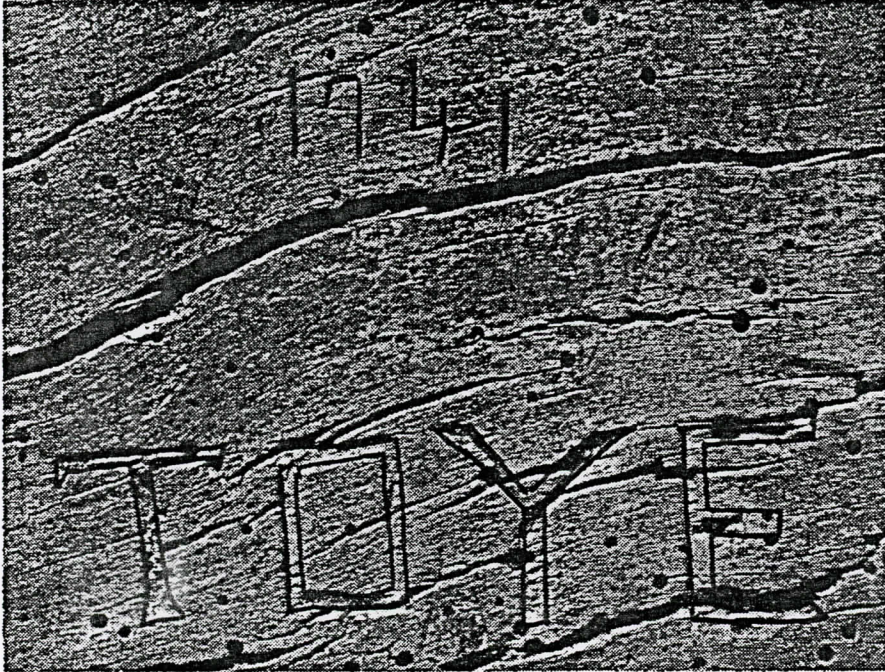
1741 ?

Recently I was in the roundhouse and happened to glance at the remains of the wooden sack hoist drive pulley , which has been removed from the cast iron tailwheel some time previously in readiness for rebuild . As I looked the light caught some marks and on inspection I found the word 'Toye' with the date 1741 symmetrically above it . The carving has been done very carefully with

extensive use of serifs .

The date unfortunately has a small split in the wood , which at first look gives it the appearance of 1941 .

I am hoping to prove the existence of a millwright or similar of this name as the date fits very well with an often quoted reference (of unknown origin) stating the mill was moved from Horsham in 1738 . Incidentally there are several Toye's in the telephone directory around the Horsham area .



Peter James

LOWFIELD HEATH
in 1762
from Rocque's Map

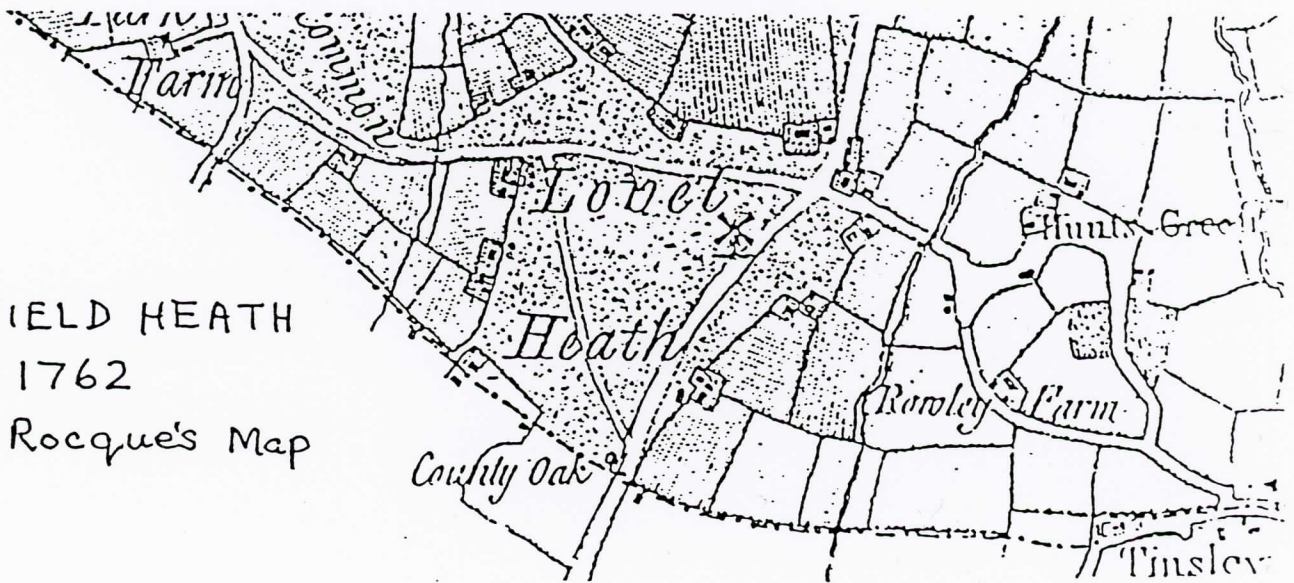
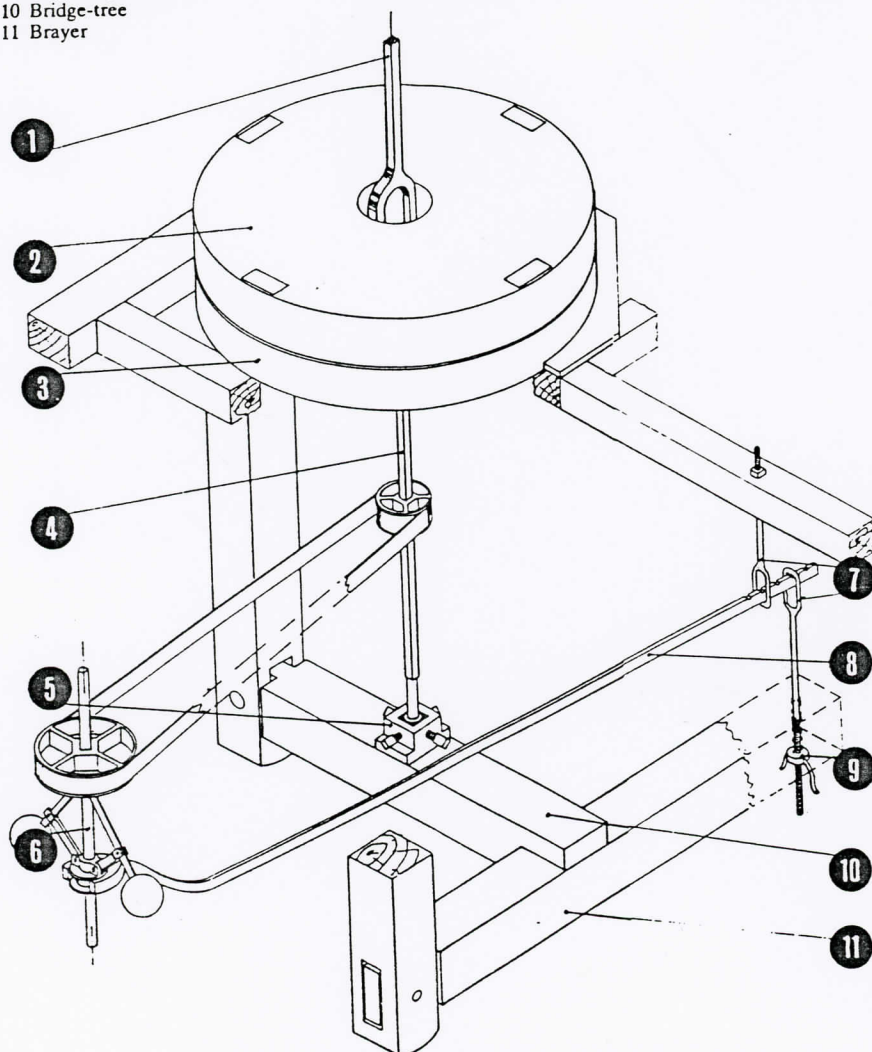


Diagram of a Typical Tentering Gear showing:

- 1 Quant
- 2 Runner Stone
- 3 Bedstone
- 4 Stone Spindle
- 5 Bridging Box
- 6 Governor
- 7 Steelyard Loops
- 8 Steelyard
- 9 Adjusting Screw
- 10 Bridge-tree
- 11 Brayer

In operation if the speed of the runner stone increases, the weights of the centrifugal governor move outwards and the links attached to the arms draw the sliding collar up the governor spindle taking the forked end of the steelyard up with it. The outer end of the steelyard will therefore be pivoted downwards thus lowering the brayer and in turn the bridge-tree and runner stone.



The drawing on the left shows a typical tentering arrangement, which is very similar to that at Lowfield Heath. The intention of the arrangement is to control the speed of stones i.e. the grinding speed - this is done by controlling the grinding gap and hence the friction between the stones and the grain. The flyball governor can be seen on the left, there are two in the mill, one for each set of stones. The front one was in situ when we started the restoration and was complete apart from the lead weights which need to be cast onto the shafts. The rear governor was completely missing however researches revealed a photograph of it taken in 1933. This has enabled new parts to be made by our blacksmith and a new wooden pulley made. All these parts were made several years ago and so it is very gratifying to start to assemble them.

So far we have re-erected both governor shafts and made a new oak top bearing for the rear one and a new lower bearing for the front one, out of apple wood, the original bearing I think was made from lignum vitae, but apple is similar in hardness. Incidentally the top bearings are 'hinged' so that the governors can be removed for maintenance.

The current task that we are undertaking is the reflooring of the buck. For this a saw bench (with many accessories which have evolved as work has progressed) has been made. This has enabled us to convert our oak planking into floorboards. All the boarding for the spout floor has been converted and currently is being grooved to take the loose tongues which will be used during laying. A start has also been made on laying the boarding in the mill, this is taking quite a time due to the mill not being entirely square.

I hope the above has given you a flavour of the work carried out during the year and I would like to take this opportunity to mention that we are always after more volunteers whom have experience in woodwork and / or metalwork.

Peter James