



Friends of Lowfield Heath Windmill

NEWSLETTER No 15. SPRING 2000.

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Dear All,

You will be pleased to know that the mill will be open this year on the last Sunday of each month, from April to August also on Sunday, May 14th, National Mills Weekend, and Sunday, September 17th, National Heritage Weekend. All at 2pm to 5.30pm.

We had hoped to be grinding by now but the governor is not properly ready yet. A couple of weeks ago we did try, we closed the shutters on the two sails and fitted the canvas on the other two, but the wind would not oblige! Some of our volunteers are visiting other mills to gain experience in milling. Incidentally, we will not be able to grind on open days, it would be far too dangerous.

The mill now has a lightning conductor. Are you saying how is that possible on a mill that turns, and also has sails that turn? There is a conducting wire running down each of the four sails, these meet at a metal ring where the sails cross, from there it runs via a brush along the side of the mill down the steps and by a cable to an earth station. There are four of these stations so the mill can be turned to any position.

The mill is looking very smart, inside and out, the millwrights completed their work before Christmas, and the volunteers have been fitting out the roundhouse with display boards, cupboards, an artifacts cabinet and video display equipment. Also in the roundhouse we have a hand mill, (a quern), - a real one, it grinds corn well, we did a mini grind, and trust the big mill will take the hint! We imported the quern from India, it is a modern reproduction. We have gained a new volunteer, Mike Harrison, recently retired and local. He is already being a great help to the mill in many aspects.

In the days before we even moved the mill we were much helped by the great knowledge and encouragement of Frank Gregory from Hove. Frank was a retired woodwork teacher and mills were his great hobby, right from his school boy days until his death a few months ago. He was then 80 but still in quite good health. He was a quiet unassuming man but always interested and helpful. He had visited, made notes, photographed and sometimes sketched every mill he saw or visited - and that was a large number. His talks with slides were much in demand. His collection has been deposited in Brighton Museum. One day he gave me a small solid model of a postmill that he had made, the sails turn and the body rotates. I treasure it, it lives on my sideboard.

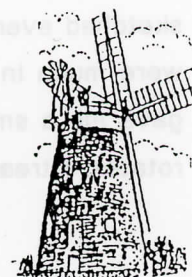
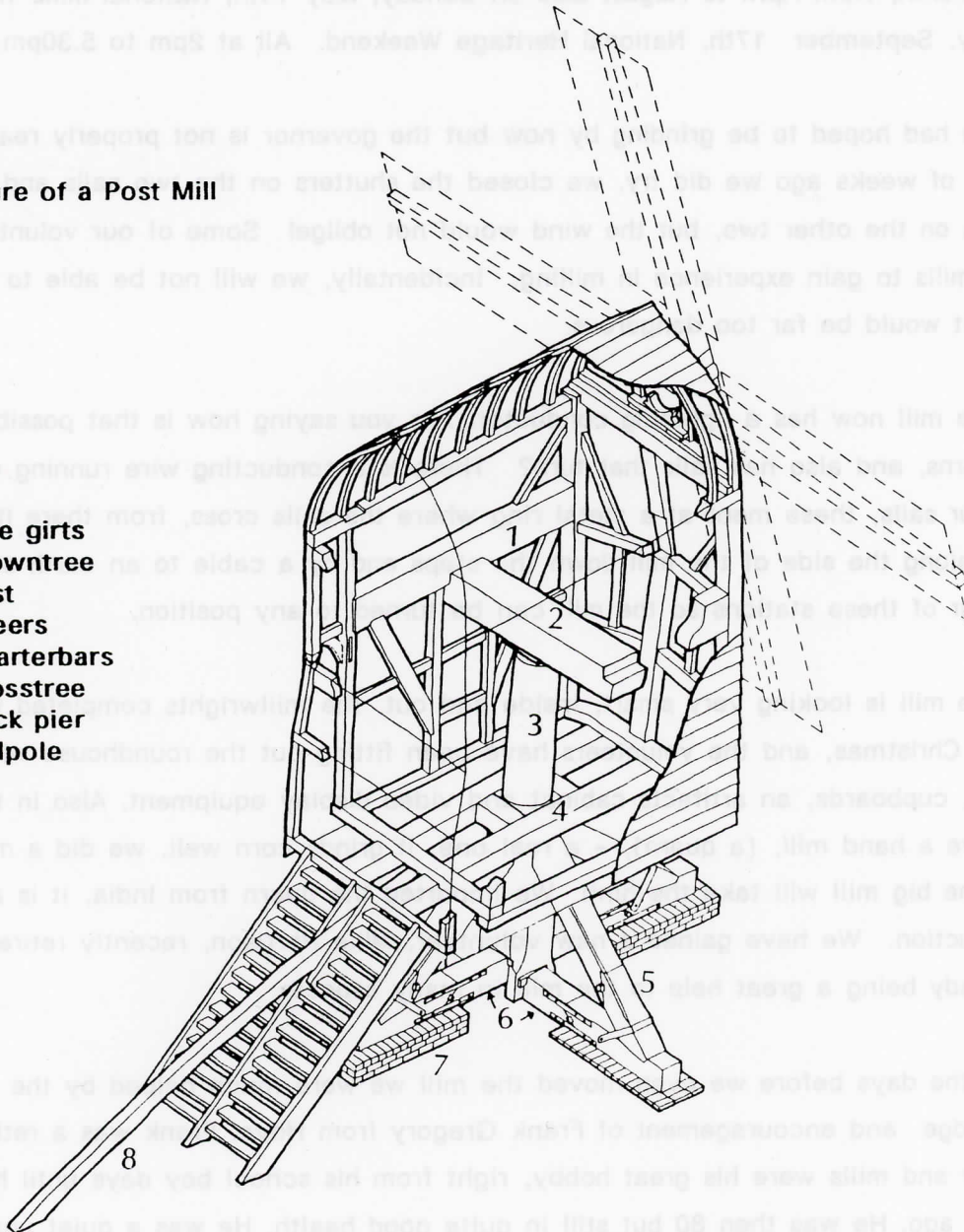
I had a Christmas card from Margaret Connor, a direct descendant of John Ansell, miller at Lowfield Heath. She said how fascinating she found the extracts of the Robinson letters, and added "The millers all seem to be Quakers, my grandfather Chantler, who married Mary Ansell from the mill, was son of the miller at Rudgwick and they were all Quakers". (This is partly because Quakers were not allowed to take up a profession),

When I wrote the first newsletter I decided that if I continued I would make it a diary of the happenings from then until it was back in working order. I think there is just one more to write, but as we are so near I have listed the contents now!

Jean S.

Structure of a Post Mill

- 1 Side girts
- 2 Crowntree
- 3 Post
- 4 Sheers
- 5 Quarterbars
- 6 Crosstree
- 7 Brick pier
- 8 Tailpole



CONTENT & DIARY of WINDMILL NEWSLETTERS.

(In note form to make it quicker to read).

Number.Year.

1. 1987. How it all began. The trustees. Technical drawing of mill from side, naming parts.
2. 1988. The foundations, the roundhouse. Names of millers. Technical drawing across the mill, naming parts.
3. 1988. The trestle, timbers, diagram of main timbers. List of postmills in England.
4. 1989. Diagram of windshaft assembly naming parts. Scaffolding up. Much assembly work done. Frank Gregory writes on Windmill Restoration.
5. 1990. Very busy time, working all day on Sundays throughout the winter, assembling, weather boarding, painting. Scaffolding removed on March 26, followed by erection of steps. Erection of one stock and sweeps on April 5, then erection of tailpole and removal of underpinning achieved by sunset on April 9. Visit by Princess Alexandra on April 10 to our Ceremony of Restoration. Diagram of striking gear, spider, etc:
6. 1991. Volunteers make circular wall (eaves) plate made for roundhouse using local oak, also circular purlin to support centre of roofing boards. Diagram of steps, tail pole and talthur. Money is short!
7. 1992. Mill drawing, with miller - from old photo. Rocque's map of 1762 shows windmill. Volunteers finish roof of roundhouse, also make and fit door frames and doors. List of future plan of works. Mill open on Sunday afternoons.
8. 1993. Roundhouse roof trimmed. Mill plot levelled. Inside of roundhouse painted white. Turned the mill, with ease, using tallow. Testing the post to vertical showed some slight wedging required. Diagram of timbers and their joints which support the centre post. Drawings of Outwood Mill, also of a fantail.
9. 1994. Skirt completed. Millwright making a new brakewheel. Diagram of wheel and stone assembly. Mill painted professionally. Oak from Beggar's Gill planked & stacked for drying ready for floors. The sack hoist pulley has '1741' cut into it, also the initials TOYE. Diagram of brakewheel. Artist's drawing of mill by Barry Smith.
10. 1995. Description of mill in 1942. Diagram of brake lever and pulley, with explanations. A number of small jobs and repairs done. Photo of timber with '1741'. Diagram of tentering gear with explanation.
11. 1996 Received the Surrey Industrial History Group's Award AND news of a grant from the National Heritage Lottery Fund to enable us to finish the mill! Boarded the stone floor with local oak. Diagram on how a mill could be erected without a crane. The death of the Outwood millers.
12. 1997. Boarded the roundhouse floor. Peter drawing up plans for millwrights under the Heritage Lottery Award. Diagram showing stone furniture.

13. 1998. Millwrights, Hole and Son are now working on the mill under Dorothea Restorations. Brakewheel fitted. Electricity coming. Excellent extracts of letters of the Robinson family, framers and millers, 1844-1847.

14. 1999. Millwrights still working here at times, bins, etc. in place. Volunteers working on tentering. Latter explained.

15. 2000. Still not quite complete. Put on sail cloths, but not enough wind! Have a hand quern - that grinds! Work on furnishing roundhouse including video equipment.

- 9 Brakewheel
- 10 Windshaft
- 11 Tailwheel
- 12 Stone nut
- 13 Stone spindle or quant
- 14 Millstones
- 15 Stone floor
- 16 Meal floor or Spout floor

Structure of a Post Mill

