



Friends of Lowfield Heath Windmill

NEWSLETTER No 18. SPRING 2003.

Dear All,

Sorry this is rather late. Thank you all for your responses to membership last year, there will be no need to renew any this year .

With luck you may know that National Mills Day is the second Sunday in May, so we will be open on May 11th. We will also be open on the last Sundays of the months of June, July and August, then on Sunday, September 14th, (National Heritage Weekend). In each occasion the time will be from 2.30 to 4.30pm.

The volunteers are normally at the mill every Sunday morning and you are welcome to call in. Other visits can be arranged by appointment.

We had a sad occasion last winter, Barry Smith, a volunteer died. Barry was a much respected and valued person and as Peter James said, 'The mill has lost its best carpenter'.

The mill news is overleaf.

And now for a some history from Liz Butler, a descendant of the Robinsons who ran the mill at that time, -

A letter from Martin Robinson at Horleyland Farm to Henry Robinson in America, dated 26 January 1848:

I cant tell thee much as to the affairs of the old Mill at Lofield Heath, I think if Joe could do the work he would do a nice little business. They have just put in a new Peak stone as the bed stone tho' not worn out turned out faulty and flaked off at the skirt so that they could not do anything with it. The new runner that thee helped to finish is now the bed stone and the new stone is the runner. They have made them narrower as in the common plan & Joe says it decidedly answers both as to quantity of work done.

Committee contacts:

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NEWS FROM THE COMMITTEE.

As you know, Gatwick Zoo closed its doors in September 2002 and the site has now been sold for housing development (seventeen houses now under construction). This sale has meant that a new lease for Lowfield Heath Windmill had to be drawn up and this has now been agreed and signed to by all interested parties. The plot of land associated with the mill has been extended slightly and the work on the fencing and the kissing gate for the mill site has been carried out. The Committee discussed the need for a Portaloo on the site now the Zoo has closed and has also considered the purchase of Mill Open Day signs for local publicity now that the brown Gatwick Zoo signs have gone. Press and TV coverage was discussed as without the attraction of the Zoo, visitor numbers are likely to drop unless some advertising is undertaken.

Restoration and repair has continued over the winter months and, in addition to the fencing and hedging, work on the re-aligning of the brake wheel has been undertaken and it is hoped that this will allow the shortened sails (following the October 2002 gale damage) to be turned safely. Keston Post Mill has been visited several times in order to measure and draw the existing boulder there and work has now started to construct one for Lowfield Heath Windmill. A contract for the external repainting of the mill was agreed and work started in April and should be completed before the first Open Day.

In addition to the funds that result from Friends' contributions, from donations made through the collecting boxes at the mill and from other sources, the Windmill Trust has gained a significant cash injection from the sale of Gatwick Zoo and it is intended to put this money aside and to use the interest from it to cover yearly maintenance costs. Just over £6000 has been received from the Landfill Trust (SITA) and this is earmarked for the replacement of the tailpole, the construction of the boulder and the provision of the Mill Open Day signs. An application to the Gatwick Airport Community Trust for a grant to half the cost of the repairs to the sails is being prepared.

The summer months will be an interesting period in the life of Lowfield Heath Windmill as a result of all the recent changes to the area around the mill and it is hoped that visitor numbers will not be too adversely affected by the Zoo closure.