

Finkley Down Farm and Crux Easton

Russell Jones

On National Mills Weekend this year I decided to visit the model windmill that now stands at Finkley Down Farm near Andover, followed by the wind engine at Crux Easton.

The windmill at Finkley Down Farm was built at nearby Enham in 2008-12 as a working scale model of Pitstone post mill, and moved to the farm in 2016. The farm is a children's farm/zoo with animals of all shapes and sizes plus an outdoor play area. Prior to my trip I did some research to find out where it was. Their website didn't mention the windmill, and the entrance fee was £12.95, rather more than the usual mill entrance fee!

When I arrived at the entrance kiosk I thought it best to check that the windmill was still on site. I was told it was, and they kindly stated that I could go in free of charge as it was just a visit to look at the mill. Once inside it didn't take long to spot one of the sails of the mill visible in the far corner of the site, so I made my way over.



It looks pretty impressive and is about 18ft high, but could have been better sited as it is very close to the fence. There is no information about it on display and it looked rather uncared for with a broken sail. The trestle is strapped down to wooden blocks rather than brick piers. As a precision model it needs regular maintenance from someone who understands mills. I can only hope that the farm might ask the model's builder to carry out some maintenance.



After leaving there it was a short drive up some very narrow lanes to Crux Easton. The mill was advertised as open but unfortunately that proved to be incorrect. However you can walk right up to it for close inspection. The shutters have been removed from the sails and the fantail is currently tied. Perhaps someone can give an update on this mill.

Editor: *The sudden and unexpected death of John Christmas has thrown the Crux Easton plans into disarray. I asked **Tony Kirkby** for an update and he writes:*

The sails at Crux Easton were removed as some were rotten, and some ripped.

The rotten ones John Christmas sent off for repairs; I still hope to find out who carried out the work as there is more to be done. I know Justin O'Shaughnessy is wanting to know which company did the sails.

All the bearing blocks were removed as they were very slack. We were going to machine out and fit bronze bushes to avoid rusty stains on the sails. The rocking ring/bracket holes are also slack and the bolts knackered; we need to drill out and fit bronze bushes and shouldered bolts.

The tail fan is falling apart at its joints and needs removing and repairing but it couldn't be removed as the cherry picker wasn't high enough to reach it last time.

The bottom main shaft support bearing is badly worn and was due to be investigated.

Following Russell's comments and Tony's report, I have put in a request to get the information about opening times corrected.