

## Derelict Windmills of South Lincolnshire

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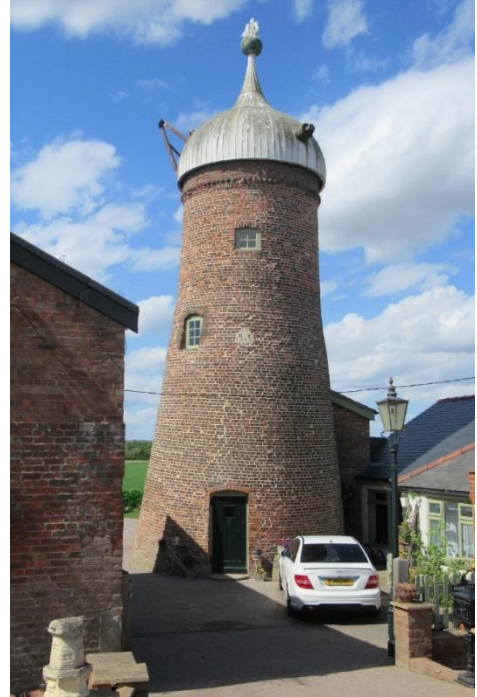
Photos by Keith and Ruth Andrews

Lincolnshire is well known for its multi-sailed windmills: Alford with 5 sails, Burgh-le-Marsh with 6 (running clockwise unlike most other mills), Heckington with 8, Maud Foster at Boston with 5, and Sibsey Trader with 6. And there are 'ordinary' 4-sailed ones like Moulton.

There are also several hundred disused and derelict windmills across the county, so here are a selection from South Lincolnshire that we saw on our recent visit. Background information is from *Lincolnshire Windmills, a contemporary survey* by Peter Dolman (1986).

### **Pinchbeck, Glen Mill:**

This attractive mill, on the bank of the River Glen outside Pinchbeck, is dated "R.T. 1812". At some stage another storey was added. There were 4 spring sails mounted on stocks in a poll end, driving 2 pairs of stones. After the sails were damaged in 1932-3, it continued to mill using an engine until the late 1970s.



### **Sutterton, Swineshead, Sibsey:**

These 3 similar mills are very typical. They date from the 1820s to 1840s. Sutterton worked until 1921, and the cap survived until after the war. Swineshead worked until 1931 when the sails were blown off, but the cap survived until the 1950s. There was a plan to restore it, but it doesn't look like it happened. Sibsey (not to be confused with Sibsey Trader) also worked until 1921, the sails being removed in 1924, and the cap by 1934. At one time it was driven by "Bywater's roller reefing sails" which used longitudinal rollers clothing the whole length of the sail in one go.



**Sutterton**



**Swineshead**



**Sibsey**





### **Amber Hill:**

This was one of several pumping mills in Holland Fen. Probably dating from the late 18th century, it was converted to steam power in the late 19th century, driven by a traction engine and finally by a tractor until about 1960. It is now a roofed stump with the rebuilt scoop wheel alongside. Unfortunately, there is now a very thick hedge guarding it from prying eyes!



### **Gedney Dyke:**

It was built for a Mr Rubbins in 1836 and worked until 1942, subsequently losing its sails and cap. It was very tall at 68ft to the curb, with 8 floors and a stage at second-floor level. The fearsome fencing and notices suggest that visitors are not very welcome.

Here's what the notices say. The last 2 had a picture of a fierce dog!



KEEP OUT STRICTLY ENTRY BY APPOINTMENT ONLY PHONE 01406 nnnnnn AND LEAVE MESSAGE

WARNING DANGEROUS ANIMAL KEEP AWAY

IS THERE LIFE AFTER DEATH? JUMP THIS FENCE AND FIND OUT!

### **Long Sutton, Brunswick and Harrison's Mills:**



These 2 ostensibly similar mills were built in 1817 and 1843 respectively. Heightened from 5 to 6 floors in the mid-19th century (and hard to tell where the join is!), Brunswick's original 4 sails were refitted with 6 patent sails driving 3 pairs of stones. It worked until the 1930s and the cap was blown off around 1963. Harrison's Mill worked by wind until the 1920s and then by engine for a time. It had 6 patent sails driving 3 pairs of stones on the first floor; there is a suggestion that latterly it had 2 more pairs of stones on the ground floor.



**Brunswick**



**Harrison's**

### **Holbeach, Penny Hill:**

Dating from 1826 it had 4 patent sails driving 3 pairs of stones. In the late 19th century it was heightened and then re-equipped with 6 patent sails and 4 pairs of stones. It worked until the early 1940s and was dismantled by 1953. It is surrounded by a very interesting range of farm and mill buildings, with the inevitable millstones propped up against the walls.







As we were photographing these buildings from the road the owner appeared and we had an interesting chat. She said she and her husband had bought the mill complex after they fell in love with it when driving past one day, but they had made no attempt to restore the mill, preferring it as a picturesque ruin (which it is!). She said a lot of people stopped to admire it; they often wanted to buy the millstones.

### **Lutton:**

Said to be the oldest complete tower mill in the county and is dated "T.D. Ayckley 1779" on a stone above the door. Unlike any other mill it resembles a brick-built smock mill and is octagonal in plan. It worked until the early 1930s. The simple cap had triangular gables and a straight ridge, turned to the wind by a braced tailpole and winch. As with Swineshead, there was a plan to restore it, but it doesn't look like it happened.



### **Bourne Dyke:**

The only remaining smock mill in Lincolnshire was originally a pumping mill in Deeping Fen, being moved here in about 1845 and changed to corn milling, working until the mid-1920s. The original cap was boat-shaped and turned to the wind by a braced tailpole, inherited from its earlier use. It is now in use as a fine art shop.



Finally, a comment about **Sibsey Trader**. It is not currently in operation (but not derelict!) as it is having a brand new cap constructed as well as replacing the damaged sails and curb. In the pictures you can see the new cap, the six armed iron cross to which the stocks are bolted, and the fantail staging. English Heritage are carrying out the work, and in mid-July the cap was completed and lifted back into place.

