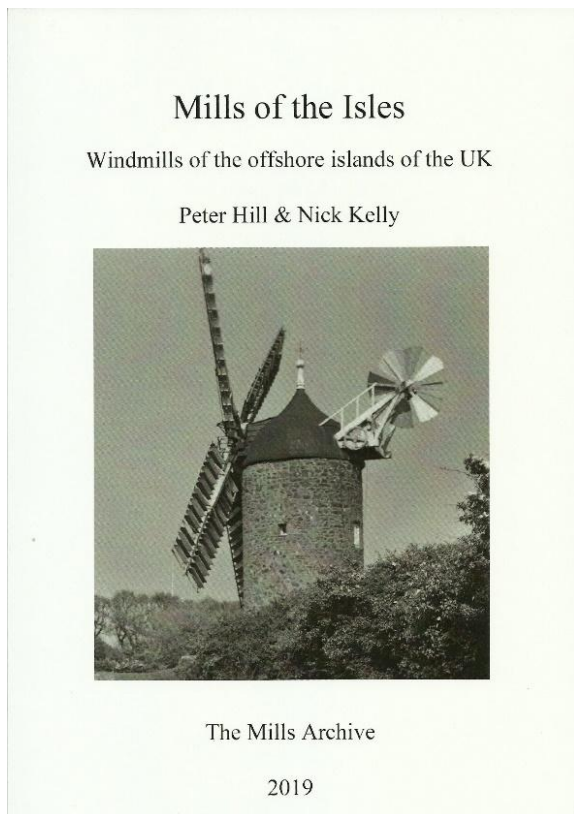


Mills of the Isles

Book Review by Russell Jones



Mills of the Isles
Windmills of the offshore islands of the UK
by Peter Hill & Nick Kelly
The Mills Archive, 2019
45 pages, A4
Price: £10 + postage
from The Mills Archive

Many members will have heard Peter Hill talk about his joint research for this book, and at last this has come to fruition.

The book covers the Channel Islands, Isle of Wight, Isle of Man, and Isles of Scilly, areas which for the most part have had little or nothing published about their windmills.

Each chapter starts with an overview, then lists in gazetteer form all of the remaining mills on that island, with a recent photograph and detailed historical and current information about each one. There are also photos showing when some of these mills were more complete. At the end of each chapter there is information and some historic photos on some mills that have been demolished.

What makes the book interesting is the variety of designs and uses to which the mills were put. A number of the Channel Island mills look as though they were designed by British millwrights with their tall towers, domed/ogee caps, patent sails, and fantails. Others are more squat and appear more primitive. Guernsey also had its own design of wooden skeleton mills which were used to irrigate market gardens. The Isle of Man has the remains of 2 small farm mills used for threshing and had a sawmill that once had five sails. The mill at Buzza Hill on the Isles of Scilly had Spanish style jib sails.

Unfortunately, Bembridge windmill is the only restored mill on all of the islands, though a millwright is currently building a cap and sails for a mill on Guernsey. Most of the mills on the Channel Islands suffered during the German occupation when many were considerably altered. Only Sark mill remains reasonably complete and cared for, and deserves complete repair to working order.