

Heage Windmill Break-in

from Derby Telegraph, 10 August 2017

Thieves broke into a Grade 2 listed windmill in Derbyshire and stole a 'potentially deadly weapon' – and scrawled in the visitors' book before they left. Members of the Heage Windmill Society were left horrified on Thursday morning when they discovered the 220-year-old monument had been ransacked overnight.

Crooks had forced their way through a trap door in the floor of the mill before causing mindless damage to various displays, artefacts, and a weather station. They made off with a 150-year-old mill bill, which is used to dress millstones. Alan Gifford, founder and trustee of the society, described the theft of the mill bill as "most distressing" because it "represents a potentially deadly weapon" which had been chained down to avoid such an incident.

He said: "The heavy west door of the mill had been forced open and damaged and there were various pieces of evidence of mindless damage, both in the mill itself and in the undercroft where there are various mill displays used to explain the story of the mill. Access to this area had been gained through a trap door in the floor of the mill used to provide additional ventilation. An earlier attempt to force the east door had obviously failed – so they really wanted to gain access."

He added: "Our important weather station – used to determine if conditions are suitable for milling – was also broken."