

## MRG 2015 Conference and Mills Tour

### David Plunkett

This year's Conference was based on the Norfolk town of Wymondham (south west of Norwich).

The venue was the Fairland Church Centre, on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> September, which suited our requirements for the day. After an initial assembly with hot drinks and setting up of audio visual equipment, the programme for the day started with a brief address and thanks by chairman, David Plunkett before handing the programme over to Secretary Philip Graves.

First away was Philip Graves with his research and recording of the Hydraulic Mills on the Island of Mallorca.

Second was David Plunkett with a presentation on understanding Intermediate and Tidal Mills in the light of modern historical research in both the UK and Netherlands. This was followed by lunch in the Cross Keys local pub.

After a good lunch we reassembled for our third and new member, James Wheeler from Somerset explaining his mapping of mill sites by computer with related mill topics. This was followed by Guy Blythman talking about the ongoing Technical Information Project and finally after a tea break. An update on the Illustrated Mills Glossary Project, which is being managed with the Mills Archive Trust but primarily with the drawings of John Brandrick and with other MRG members. This computer based project has a long way to go yet but grant funding is being sourced and planning continues into 2016. So ended an enjoyable day's conference with most members staying locally for the night and joining up again the next morning for a day of mill visiting.



We met on the Sunday morning at Wicklewood Mill [OS #144: 976026]. Just a few miles to the west of Wymondham. This is a five storey, tarred brickwork, tower mill of 1845 with boat shape cap and a gallery. A six bladed left handed fantail complete with striking chain wheel and tailpole. The four double shuttered sails driving 2 pair of stones. By 1904 an auxiliary steam engine had been installed. Now maintained by the Norfolk Mills Trust. After fully exploring, inside and out, it was soon time to leave for the next mill.



This was to Old Buckenham Mill to the northwest, [OS 062909]. This tower mill was built of red brick in 1818 and has the date cast into a wall washer on the tie bar above the north door. The 42 foot high tower had a very slim batter, being 26 feet 6 inches diameter at ground level with 2 foot thick walls, all of which made it the windmill with the largest diameter in the country.

It is believed that the mill was originally built with 8 common sails that were replaced by 4 patent sails after serious storm damage in 1879. The overall height of the mill to the top of the cap was 54 ft. 6 in. This mill also has a huge great spur wheel to over driven, four pair of stones.

We were rather late in leaving this mill, and our preferred lunch stop in Old Buckenham village could not cope with our group. So

we pressed on, buying picnic food en-route which we had on reaching our third mill.



Little Cressingham, a tower & dual watermill, [OS 870003]. A tower windmill with a rather complex early development and history, due to its original good water supply (the Walton Brook) to a watermill. The brick tower mill was added in 1821, aided by the rebuilt single storey linked watermill. This watermill with a 12 foot, breast shot, cast iron wheel survives today. It was designed to drive two pair of stones, inside the tower ground floor. The tower mill also had two pair of stones on upper floor but ceased sooner.