

10th Annual USA, Tide Mills Institute Conference of 2014.

Held at York, Maine on 14 & 15th November 2014.

“Harnessing the Tides – 1403 – 2014.”

David Plunkett

The Thursday before the Conference was due to start, Ros and I were travelling down the eastern seaboard of Maine from Brunswick and the former great tide mill complex at Winnigance. Briefly stopping to view sites of interest and towns like Kennebunkport which literally shut up for the winter. So onwards to a picturesque York Harbour and the old village area of York where the Conference was due to commence the next day. Our accommodation for the next four nights was arranged by Bud Warren with Richard & Roberta Cunningham at their rural home, a few miles north of York. Having never met these charming people previously, other than a few email exchanges and the odd phone call, we were made unbelievably welcome.

The following day, after a leisurely morning and light lunch we were whisked off to the Parsons Gallery Barn Museum, the former ‘Remmic Barn of the early colonial settlement. Here the Conference visitors and delegates registered and mingled with York Historical Society members, taking in some of their early history and architecture. The afternoon consisted of:

“Tide Mill Sharing” – Informal Presentations:

Seven short presentations, including one from myself

- Exploring the Seacoast Regions Tide Mills: with Jennifer Felice, of Seabrook NH.
- Discovering a Tide Mill in Salisbury MA, by Ronald Thompson.
- Kittery’s, Thompson Tide Mill and Mill and Land Trust by John Viele.
- Chasing Maine’s Tide Mills by Bud Warren.
- My 20 minute slot titled: Counting the UK’s Tide Mills. This was an account with the aid of PowerPoint, of updating earlier named researchers, tide mill sites and the amendments and corrections required as modern progress evolved over the past 20 years. There now being about 230 sites in the UK with new historical sites by archaeology, coming to light in recent years.
- Visualising Four Maine Tide Mills, by Samuel F. Manning of Camden.
- Ernest Haskell’s, Phippsburg Tide Mill Etchings, by John Goff, concluded the afternoon proceedings. All very worthy contributions to the Tide Mills theme.

Later that evening we attended an informal reception with cider, snacks and nibbles, allowing people to inter-relate on their own personal hobbies and passions around tide mills. And so home to a comfortable warm home and good company in the wooded landscape.

Saturday 15th dawned bright and early for Ros and I, leading to transportation by the Cunningham’s to our venue for the day in the modern York Church Hall, able to hold I would say up to a hundred people.

There were a range of speakers and delegates from Portugal to Florida and up to Canada.

- Firstly, with 'Realities of Tidal Power Today'. Using in-stream devices in Maine, with Roger Bason.
- 'Public Policy and Tidal Energy' with Rep. Deane Rykerson , of Maine State Legislature.
- York River Tide Mill's: Two presentations with – ' Maine's First Tide Mill of 1634; by Emerson Baker and 'York's Biggest Millpond, The Barrell Mill', by Robert Gordon.

A field trip followed, being bussed the short distance to the York River and the former Barrell Tide Mill site with its surviving footpath topped, mill dam and small iron suspension bridge. While being very historic it was rather windy and bitterly cold, for those poorly dressed for the wintry conditions. And so back to the hall and hot drinks and plentiful buffet food.



Delegates at the evening Reception

This was followed by:

- 'Analysing the True Cost of Tidal Energy', by Todd Griset, of Portland ME.
- 'The future of Mill Organisations', a discussion and debate involving SPOOM, TIMS & TMI members.
- Xavier Pita (an illustrator) from Lisbon, Portugal, explaining his work at the 15th Century Corroios Tide Mill, at Seixal.
- David Plunkett, lastly spoke on 'Operating the UK's 400 year old Eling Tide Mill'.

And so the Conference finished at 4.00 pm which allowed some delegates from distance States, a chance to travel home the same day.

Then, Richard and Roberta took Ros and I for a drive around the local landmarks and vistas of York's coast before darkness fell. Then, back for our penultimate night with the Cunninghams.

And so soon, it was time to say our goodbyes and head south in our rental car with Ros driving to Boston and our flight back to England.

For more information about the TMI go to:

www.tidemillinstitute.org.

Next year's conference is already being planned by Bud Warren and John Goff, with a venue closer to Boston, MA.



David & Xavier and a yellow school bus



Barrel Tide Mill Site

