

Obituaries of two fine men

Arthur 'Mr. Windmills' Smith - An Appreciation of His Life



Arthur C. Smith 1924 - 2013

Arthur Smith who died on Tuesday 18th June 2013 at a residential home in Newton Abbot, Devon, was best known to people in the mill world as a first class researcher and meticulous recorder of windmills, in photographs as well as text. Completed surveys of the surviving windmills of a dozen English counties include about 750 Mills and old sites, all visited and recorded personally.

Well into his 80s when he died, Arthur travelled over 20,000 miles, seldom by any form of transport other than by bicycle, during the 1970s and 1980s after coming across John Vince's book *Discovering Windmills*. Dissatisfied with the little information that he could find written about windmills or where they were, he decided to find out and this became an absorbing interest culminating in books recording the windmills by County, all published by himself at his own cost.

A man with many interests (besides windmills) which encompassed music, natural history, aeroplanes, cycling everywhere and camping out in his own styled bivouac when on long-distance trips, plus competing in half marathons, marathons and cross-country races. In fact in 1999 he took part in his fifth London Marathon at the age of 75!

During WWII he flew in Halifax bombers and stayed in contact with two of the remaining crew. He became a design draughtsman after the war and worked for British Aerospace on projects ranging from the Comet to the BAe 146.

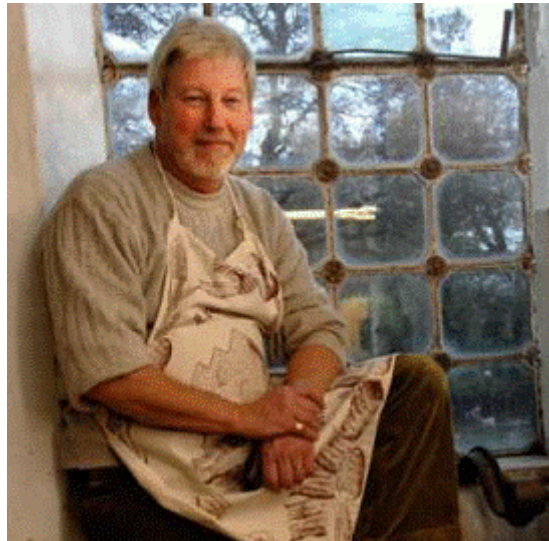
After retirement from work in 1987, he was a frequent visitor at Cromer Post mill. During the 1990s he recorded all the stages of the restoration work on this last remaining post mill in Hertfordshire, chronicling it for posterity.

I never met him but I met people who did at the Henley Traditional Boat Show a couple of years ago. I was attending the Mills Archive stand and some cyclists from Bedfordshire came through, following the Oxfordshire Trail, who said "Oh, a member of our cycling club is mad about windmills and cycles around all of them. His name is Arthur Smith." Arthur Smith was a

remarkable man who will be missed by many, but thank you Arthur, for all that you have done for generations to come researching windmills. *Sheila M. Viner.*

Acknowledgement to the Mills Archive for the use of the photograph.

Mike Thurlow – Norfolk's Only Watermill



Mike Thurlow 1946 – 2013

The news that Mike Thurlow had died, in his sleep on 22 June, came as a tremendous shock. A lively, gregarious ex-mariner, he put his heart and soul into making a going concern of Norfolk's only working water mill and succeeded in creating a thriving business with high accreditations and held in esteem by all who dealt with him and used his products.

Mike Thurlow was originally from Rushden, Northamptonshire, and his route to Letheringsett Mill was via the Royal Navy, travelling the world seven times as a radar operator. Following an accident in 1976, he met Marion, a naval nurse, and they married in 1978. He left the Navy in 1981 as he had a second accident at sea. The couple moved to Winterton near Great Yarmouth after he was discharged and Mike became a lorry driver for an animal feeds company; it was during one of his trips that he saw Letheringsett Mill being renovated. Owners, the Letheringsett Estate, were on the lookout for someone to run the mill and Mike bought it in 1987. Fortunately Marion had also fallen in love with the place and they both set to in establishing it as a successful flour mill producing a variety of products selling not only through their own mill shop but through several farm shops, Harrods, various exulted chefs and even the British Embassy in Moscow!

Members of the Hampshire Mills Group were greeted with a gruff rebuff by Mike for turning up later than the appointed time when visiting Letheringsett Mill during the 2006 Norfolk Mills tour. However, he gave us an excellent guided tour of the mill and regaled us with his achievements, which were considerable. Mike was quite excited for he had recently been awarded the prestigious title "Local Food Hero" by the TV chef Gary Rhodes for producing a baked loaf which was made from grain harvested that morning and milled for baking later that day but, he was

also in excited anticipation of the arrival of a new set of stones which were en route from Holland. We enjoyed his commentary, jokes and anecdotes regarding current stringent rules and regulations which 1000 years of Millers had been able to do without.

Marion, and their daughter Michelle, will continue to run the mill and I'm sure all HMG members will join me in sending our sincerest condolences to them and wish them continued success. *Sheila.*