

Passing through the mill.....

Beaulieu Tide Mill: Latest news in is that Planning Permission for both alterations to the mill and outbuildings to complete the restoration scheme in full has been given the go ahead.

Our President, John Silman, sent me an article from the Southern Echo featuring **Botley Mills** *From Flour to Craftwork* and, he says, it is a mostly correct, factual report of it's history. It reads:

"From the description and historical knowledge of milling it has been deduced that there were probably two waterwheels each driving one pair of stones. Hence the site has always been referred to as Botley Mills and not Mill.

The Mills were once owned by the Duke of Portland who released the business to various tenant Millers. Britain's involvement in the wars of Europe in the second half of the 18th century caused significant increase in the population along the south coast of England. The demand for flour in the area rose and in 1757 plans were drawn up for the expansion of his Grace the Duke of Portland's Mills at Botley. In 1838 the site was bought by W and J Clarke and the Mills traded under that name until 1921. The company also traded in coal, importing it in by barges which came up the River Hamble at high tide. Grain was also imported this way until 1914. For a short time between 1830 and 1848 paper was also manufactured on this site. The last two waterwheels were installed in about 1870 and were pitch back suspension wheels. The inclined gates controlling these wheels are still in place. Sometime between 1900-1910 these wheels were replaced by a turbine built by Armfield of Ringwood. This drove two pairs of French burr stones which remained in full commercial operation until 1985. Turbine and stones are still all in place. In 1921 the Botley Flour Milling Co. Ltd., Was formed and by 1928 control of it was sold to the Appleby family and remains in their ownership today. As a family the Appleby's have been involved in milling about 300 years, owning Mills in the North of England before moving south at the time of the purchase of Botley Mills. In the latter half of this century, the business of manufacture and supply of animal feeds has grown and following a serious fire in 1980 a new feed mill was built on another site close to the M27 motorway. Commercial white flour production continued at Botley until 1990 and stoneground flour until 1993 when for economic reasons production ceased. Normally when a mill closes in the United Kingdom the owners are able to sell the milling capacity and machinery is destroyed. In the case of Botley the decision was made not to do this but to preserve the machinery. The Mills are now home to a number of independent businesses."

Abel and willing: If you pass through Kings Lynn, Norfolk, call in at **Denver Windmill's** new shop at Hanse House, South Quay. The Abel family continue to achieve success in rising sales for the flour they mill from local crops and the variety of loaves they bake from it; all this despite the Windmill and its site being sold for development by the Norfolk Historic Buildings Trust. John and I called in on them on a busy day at the mill last year, had a superb cafe meal and watched the scores of visitors buying up the produce and enjoy learning about the mill and the healthy value of the Abel family's produce from Mark Abel; we were disheartened to learn of the latest threat to their continued commercial life at Denver Windmill as they had been given notice to quit (in February 2013); we joined hundreds of others in signing a petition. Sadly, the enthusiastic support was not enough to satisfy the owners. We are pleased that suitable alternative premises have been found to house their enterprise. What will happen to the sail-

less Windmill now? Will it become a whimsical feature to a theme park playground or be allowed to fall further into decay, or, will a lottery winner restore it? Only time will tell. See lots of info on: <http://www.denvermills.co.uk/>.

Windsor Castle Hydro Turbines are fitted at last and due to start operating as we go to press. Watch it happen on <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t2xVy2ilaAQ> *Time lapse record of turbines placement at Romney Weir.*