

Tail Race

Two Suffolk Mills, well known to most Hampshire members, made the news this spring:

Bardwell Windmill: the Wheeler family were joined by many local villagers and supporters, in April, to celebrate the fixing of its second set of sails, thus completing the restoration work begun when all the sails were destroyed in the great storm in October 1987, just after purchasing the Windmill from James Waterfield. Sadly, Geoffrey Wheeler was taken ill in 1989 and did not live to see the work completed. Hampshire Mills Group are proud to have been among many who sponsored shutters for the new sails which cost £1000 in paint alone. English Heritage and St Edmundsbury Borough Council gave over £73,000 towards the estimated cost of £92,000 to restore the mill to working order. The balance was raised by the Friends of Bardwell Windmill by means of various events which several H M G members attended. The mill is a four-storey tower mill with a beehive winded by a fantail. The four double patented sails have a span of 63 feet (19.20m) and are carried on a cast-iron wind shaft which was cast in 1989 in one piece to replace the original which was cast in two pieces. Bardwell Windmill can be viewed on U-tube and Facebook and there are several websites which give the history and records of the completion of the restoration works. For news of the annual threshing event in August and later art exhibition tel: Mrs Enid Wheeler on 01359 251331 or write to her at the windmill.

Woodbridge Tide Mill: a second Suffolk landmark has been celebrating completion of restoration works in April. The £1.25 million Heritage Lottery Fund grant included replacing the waterwheel. The HLF grant was supplemented by a £955,800 grant from a consortium including Woodbridge Town Council Suffolk Coastal District Council, Waste Recycling Group Limited charitable trusts and Rotary clubs plus individual donors and businesses. The new oak wheel (made by the International Boatbuilding College in Lowestoft) weighs four tonnes and the Friends of Woodbridge Tide Mill look forward to producing grain there for the first time in 50 years. Other improvements include works to the foundations to prevent the mill slipping into the River Deben; a walkway around the tide mill and video cameras on the upper floors to allow disabled people to see what is happening; there will also be demonstrations and workshops in flour milling for all ages to attend.



Woodbridge Tide Mill from across the harbour



Section of 1850s oak shaft The new wheel on 1971-2 shaft



Seeing through the wheel into the mill



Ian Hunt explains, while the working model demonstrates, how released water from the penstock operates the wheel. *Photographs by Sheila Viner*