

UPMINSTER WINDMILL NEWS APRIL 2015

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Friends of Upminster Windmill

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From the Chairman

Plans for the restoration are continuing. The architect was appointed earlier this year and has now produced the detailed design plans for the new Education and Training Centre. These are being costed and formal consent is being sought from Heritage Lottery Fund to issue the tender documents in order to select a building contractor. There has been some slippage to the timetable though it is still hoped that the work will start later this year.

A millwrighting consultant (Luke Bonwick) has been appointed to finalise the requirements for the mill restoration, prepare the tender documents and oversee the work. Luke is well known to many of our members and has a very good understanding of Upminster Mill.

If you have visited our website recently you will have seen the fruits of our partnership with the National Mills Archive. We were the first to join the MA as a partner in their archiving project. Around 100 of our photographs, documents and images are now available either through our website or the MA's. Simply visit our site, www.upminsterwindmill.co.uk, select "gallery and archive" and click on the link to the MA. You will find a wonderful selection, including professionally restored historic photos and some outstanding computer graphics produced by Cliff Featherstone and Jonathan Green.

Neil Morley has been working on establishing a partnership with Thames Chase Forest Centre, through which the websites of many heritage organisations are linked and their activities promoted across the heritage community. The results can be seen by visiting the website; www.thameschase.org.uk/discover/heritage-sites/upminster-windmill.

Neil has also been working with Gemma Smith, Heritage Officer at the Old Chapel. Partnership arrangements have been established with a group of local heritage organisations to set up Discover Metropolitan Essex. DiscoverME is a group of 10 heritage sites from across Barking and Dagenham, Havering and Thurrock. The group has been working together to promote awareness of the fantastic local heritage on our doorsteps. The product is a new

website showcasing the member sites. It can be viewed at <http://discoverme.london>

Since the HLF award in summer 2014 our volunteers have contributed 4200 hours to the delivery of our project, which counts as a contribution of £80,750. This is in addition to a further 3963 hours on our usual activities, such as opening the mill to the public. During 2014/2015, 61 individuals contributed to this effort (38 men and 23 women). The scope included guiding and other open day support, repairs and restoration, archaeology, research, archiving and restoration of photos and documents, and production of images and models – as well as a range of management and administrative activities. If you are not already helping and would like to participate in this exciting and important project, please get in touch. You will be joining a very friendly team. - DC

Upminster Windmill Archaeology

The archaeology continues on the site of the steam mill. We have now been able to remove the tarpaulin to expose the whole of the steam mill site. We have uncovered the majority of the building foundations on the site. We are now in the process of clarifying



what we have uncovered, tidying up the areas around the foundations and checking we have all the information the archaeology has provided. We continue to dig out the well that was

discovered a couple of weeks ago. So far we have managed to go down about five feet, but there is at least four to five foot of clay to remove.

Whilst excavating the coal place, we have noticed it has two floor levels, the original brick floor, and at some time later this was screed over with a bed of lime mortar and sandstone slabs laid on top. We think this may have been due to boiler size, the new boiler being higher required the floor to be raised so as to efficiently stoke the boiler.

We still have a couple more buildings to excavate, before we can finally recreate the site plan as it was in the early 1900s.

Whilst working on the coal place we discovered some intact bottles.

There was a glass baby feeder, a bottle for Congreves Balsamic Elixir, a bottle for Sequahs Prairie Flower, a storage jar, possibly for ink and a graduated medicine bottle, all with dates ranging from mid to late 18C to early 1900s.



Sack Loader by Jonathan Green

The Sack Loader (often misnamed as a sack slide) was attached to the gallery until the restoration of the mill in the 1960's. It can still be seen on display *inside* the mill, but in order that the windmill Sketchup model could be completed, I decided to look into how it was attached and operated.

The loader was attached into a cut out section of the gallery timberwork by two hinged bolts, and could be raised up when out of use, or lowered when needed. The loader was required because of the height of the gallery, where the sacks were too heavy to just drop down onto the cart or wagon below. When lowered, a sack could simply be slid down to rest on the shelf at the bottom of the loader, where someone standing on the back of the wagon could take it at chest height and lower it down.

The old black and white photographs in the archive show that there were three chains attached: two support chains (one for each side), and one raising chain.



The raising chain was attached to a flat iron bar on the back of the loader, and passed through a number of pulleys to bring it down under the gallery to the side of the door. When loading was finished, pulling the chain would pull the loader up out of the way, and the chain secured to keep it up.



The exact number and position of the pulleys is not discernible from the photos, and neither is the exact make-up of the timberwork, but these images are at least a possibility and illustrate how it would likely have been.



Open Days 2015

Please note these will be the final open days of the Mill until the refurbishment is completed.

May 2, 3 & 9, 10 & 30

June 6, 7 & 20, 21

July 4, 5 & 18, 19

Aug 1, 2 & 15, 16

Sept 5, 6 & 19, 20

Special Events - Mill open from 12 noon

June 7 Craft Fair

June 21 Art Exhibition in Old Chapel. We are planning to show restored photographs, computer graphics etc of the Mill.

July 5 Classic Cars Display

Backroom Work

Since Christmas a great deal of effort has been made across a range of topics, amounting to several hundreds of hours of work.

The Archive continues to expand at an ever increasing pace, so regular revisions of the cataloguing structure are required to keep it abreast of changing needs and to prepare it for its long term role as the central information resource once the Visitor Centre has been built. Apart from a local resource, the aim is to make the entire archive accessible via the internet, with its cataloguing complying with international museum standards. A first step in this direction has been through our partnership with the Mills Archive, placing a small collection of our records on their AtoM (Access to Memory) web system. You can now access our AtoM contribution via a link on the FUW web site.

Site Evolution. Knowledge of the mill site in its earliest days is very sketchy. Snippets in various histories relating to Upminster, the Nokes family, Old Chapel, and local windmills, give us some insight, but references are frequently contradictory. Using the 3D model of the site a sequence of images has been created that shows the most likely development through the decades as we currently understand it to have been. Below are three of the images.



In 1803 most probably there was just the mill with a meal house and granary, no houses or other structures. James Nokes lived at Hall Farm, and William at Bridge House Farm.

With the building of the steam mill in 1811 a good water supply would have been necessary, and it is speculated that it was then that the channel connecting the site to the nearby pond was dug. Water from the channel was allowed to recharge the water table, then extracted from a short well wherever required. The ground distributed the water, filtered it, and kept it cool.



Sometime either before the steam mill was built, or shortly afterwards, histories suggest that a cottage existed for workers. The historian T.L.Wilson quotes an insurance policy of 1818 that lists a cottage associated with the site, 'not adjoining; traditional slate and timbered; in the occupation of workmen'. Whether or not this was actually on the site or nearby is not known, but it seems reasonable that some form of accommodation for employees would have been required.

Research now shows that in all probability the mill house and more substantial brick built cottage were not constructed until sometime after 1827, and possibly as late as 1838 as suggested

in the 1849 auction catalogue. The need for a mill house in the early days did not seem to be a necessity: there was Bridge House Farm and Hall Farm for the Nokes', and in 1813 William Nokes (son of James) leased Hill House opposite to the mill site, buying the house in 1820. The clerical business of the milling business was conducted from there, and it was only after 1827 when William sold Hill House that there was likely to have been a need for a bespoke mill house.

The building of the mill house along with other improvements was the primary cause of Thomas Nokes becoming bankrupt and selling the estate in 1849.



The mill site as it probably looked in 1838

Steam Mill. As mentioned in the January Newsletter, a new animation of the 3D model was being prepared. This is now complete and has been uploaded to YouTube. No Hollywood production, but I trust better than the previous version that it replaces. You can view the film clip by a web search for Upminster Steam Mill, or by using this address below. There is also a link on the FUW web site.

<https://youtu.be/AbV48rkXk2w>

Cliff Featherston

STOP PRESS

A recent development in our graphics capabilities means we have a new and exciting way of showing the mill. On our web site, in the Galleries and Archive section, you will find a small image of the Stone Floor. Click on the image and it will open a panoramic view of the Stone Floor. If you click and drag in the image you can move the scene as you like, and scroll in and out to zoom the view.

The panorama is a full spherical image, so you can pan it in a complete circle. Give it a try. The panorama is based on Jonathan Green's lovely 3D model of the mill.

Your feedback on this way of showing the mill will be welcome. The proposal is to make a series of these interactive panoramas, both from the 3D models and from real photographs.'

Our Newsletter

Back numbers of the Newsletter are available on the Mill Website.

This Newsletter is available electronically, saving printing and postage costs. If you would like to receive the Newsletter electronically, please let Ian Ross know by emailing him at membership@upminsterwindmill.co.uk.

The next Newsletter will be published in July. Contributions are welcome and should be sent to the Editor by early July.