



MILL BITS

The Newsletter of the CRANBROOK WINDMILL ASSOCIATION

Summer 2017

Chairman: Denis Hempstead., Secretary: Andrew White, Treasurer: Peter Bourne

MEMBERS ANNUAL SUMMER PARTY AND OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE NEW ELECTRIC MILL FRIDAY, 7TH JULY, 7.30PM IN THE RUSSELL BUILDING

Come and enjoy our Summer Party, where we will commission our brand new Electric Flour Mill, which has now been installed in the Russell Building. Michael Payne, the County Councillor, who has responsibility for the KCC owned mills, has kindly agreed to "press the button". Light refreshments will be provided.

Please telephone Peter Bourne 01580 713770 or email cpbourne@btinternet.com to confirm your attendance.

Maintenance and Displays

Much work was done during March before the windmill opened to the public. The brick walls in several places had become very mouldy and discoloured due to damp which had seeped in. All the affected areas were treated with "Castles" paint which covered the stains and, as it also included fungicide, it should prevent a recurrence in the foreseeable future. The ground floor has had a complete refurbishment of the notice boards with new hessian to replace the old "tired" stuff which was sagging. The stewards' roster is now positioned in the N corner, freeing up space in the area where the public first arrive for a splendid array of photos of the mill. These have been taken at significant moments such as the major restorations and improvements. Nick and Ian have been very industrious in creating these impressive display boards.



As mentioned in the last Mill Bits, a good number of the slats on the staging have been replaced.

Electric Mill - update from Nick Vinall

The long awaited electric mill arrived from the makers in Austria in mid-May and is now installed in the Russell Building. It was purchased by CWA from the money raised by the Cranbrook Co-op Community Support scheme for which we are very grateful. It will be used for educational purposes, to help children understand the whole bread making process, and also to supplement our supply of stoneground wholemeal flour when needed.

At the unpacking everybody agreed how beautifully made it is, with real craftsmanship evident. A bonus is that there is a very clear match between how it feeds grain into the stones and how the runner stone is adjusted with how it all happens in the windmill. It is easy to use. Our group of trainee millers (by wind) had a session with it and were impressed. After some experimentation with the stones' gap and the grain feed-rate we can now produce 25-30kg per hour of decent quality wholemeal flour which makes excellent bread when mixed 50:50 with strong bread flour, either white or wholemeal.



For the first time in well over a year we now have stone-ground flour and this was put on sale in the shop over the late May Bank Holiday weekend when we were open for three consecutive days (Sat-Mon), two of them supporting the "Cranbrook Goes Nuts in May" event.

If you want to find out more about the mill and its manufacturers just Google "East Tyrolean grain mills". It's easier than trying to type in the complete German web address(!) Don't worry, the website is in English.

Some interesting attendance figures - Cranbrook Goes Nuts in May

Sunday 28th: **90**

Monday 29th: **183**

Many thanks to all of those who volunteered over the weekend, and especially to Chris Lear for managing to juggle the rota to enable us to open for the entire period.

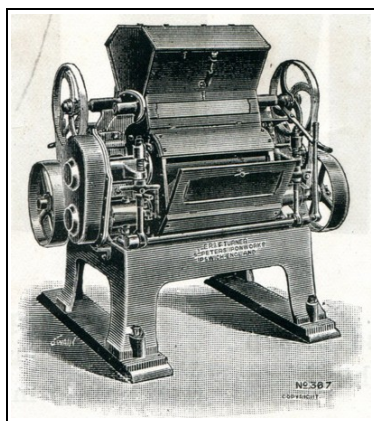
By comparison, on Saturday, 27th (normal opening hours), we had 21 visitors

What the Papers Said

Is history repeating itself? We are now producing flour for sale using an alternative energy source with our new Electric Mill. Hugh Russell also installed an alternative method of milling over a century ago – read on:

Maidstone Journal, 1st June 1895

Messrs. Russell & Sons Mill. - Some extensive alterations have been made in the machinery used at this well-known mill, which was built for Henry Dobell in 1814 by Mr. Humphrey. What is known as the full roller system has been adopted and the whole of the machinery is driven by a 14 horse power compound engine by Messrs. Fowler & Co., Leeds. The capacity of the machinery is equal to two sacks per hour, and the work has been carried out by the old-established firm of Messrs. W. R. Dell and Son, of 26, Mark Lane, London. The Mill was started on Wednesday morning with the new machinery, and it ran till the evening without stopping, making very satisfactory flour. All the flour made on the first day has been sent out, which very few mills can boast of doing on their first day of working. On Tuesday evening Mr. H. Russell gave a supper to celebrate the re-opening of the mill, which is one of the largest in the county, and he was supported by Mr. H. Dell, Mrs Russell, Miss Dungey and others. After a capital spread had been disposed of, a few toasts were proposed. - The Chairman gave the "Health of Mr. Dell", and said he was satisfied with the way the work had been carried out, and had never had a better lot of men to work for him. - In responding, Mr. Dell expressed the hope that they might meet again when Mr. Russell decided to enlarge the mill. - Songs were given by Messrs. F. Geal, W. Brill, S. Curl, O. Sinden, S. Steel, J. Baldwin and others. Mr. J. Hawk gave recitations, and a most enjoyable evening was spent.



The manufacturer of the milling machinery is not mentioned above but perhaps it was Turner's of Ipswich and London. This image is taken from an advertisement in the May issue of "The Miller" in 1894, where the makers described it as "The best Four-Roller Mill in the World".

Perhaps some CWA members might be persuaded to perform a song or a recitation to celebrate the inauguration of our new mill and to entertain the assembled throng at our Summer Party?

Wynn's Archive

As mentioned in the last Newsletter, the considerable archive of old photos, drawings, letters, and other Union Mill memorabilia, which Wynn Tremeneere collected, is being digitised and put online by the Mills Archive. They have now completed "Book 1" and this includes 255 separate documents or images, which are accessed from 13 web-pages. You can find it easily by Googling "Mills Archive Cranbrook" and follow the link near the bottom of the Mills Archive page. You might be interested in "Memories of Union Mill from Childhood" by Helen Wilson (nee West), who was John Russell's niece. Go to the last page (13) then click on the image of the yellow typed notes to get a larger version which you can download and print off if required.

Helen as a child outside the mill >>>



Tudor Hall Windmill, Hawkhurst

In 1846, John & George Russell of the Union Mill negotiated a seven year lease of the windmill at Tudor Hall in Hawkhurst, along with their lease of Furnace Mill (water). The windmill rent was £20pa and they had to pay all the rates and taxes appropriate at the time. The post mill stood to the west of the Oak and Ivy PH beside the main Hawkhurst to Sandhurst road, now the A268. On the west of the mill stood Tudor Hall, then a school, later a hotel, now apartments.

Thomas Reeves had owned these mills but had died in 1839 and it was his executors who were leasing them to the Russell brothers. Interestingly, one of the executors was Richard Reeves, farmer and miller of Beacon Farm, Benenden (mentioned in the last Mill Bits).

One condition of the lease was that the Russells “shall in the summer of the 2nd and 6th years of the term paint all the outside wood and iron work of the mill and premises with two good coats of oil colour” - take note KCC. The “sweeps, gear work, running tackle, and machinery” had been impartially valued at £174 1s and would be revalued at the end of the lease (1853) with any difference being payable or reimbursed. The original lease (in



the Kent Archives) includes a very detailed schedule, listing all the fixtures and fittings of the mill, even low value items such as two troughs and two spouts for meal and, last of all, a 12ft ladder. This document tells us that the mill had one pair of Wheat stones (presumably French Burr) and one pair of Peak stones. All the gear work was wooden with brass bearings.

William Coles-Finch includes in his book, *Windmills and Watermills of Kent*, a reproduction of a painting, dated 1874, of the mill and its surroundings (only the mill is shown left). The rest of the painting includes several buildings (not marked on late 19C OS maps) and a stream running nearby (doesn't exist!), so some artistic licence was clearly used. However, the mill may be reasonably well depicted.

The start of the lease of this windmill coincided with John and George Russell leasing Furnace Mill (water) and when the seven years were up George continued to run the watermill, while John supplemented his milling by wind by leasing Hartridge Mill in Cranbrook for a short period.

Tudor Hall mill was advertised for sale in 1867 in good working order but it is not known when it finally ceased operation. There is a circular building marked on the 1907 large scale OS map which suggests that it may still have been standing then, although this may have been just the roundhouse.

Final Bits

The next Issue will hopefully be a SPECIAL ISSUE to cover the return of the Sweeps – or perhaps an article on flying pigs!

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