

**Friends of
Windmill Hill
Windmill
NEWSLETTER**

**Number 42
Spring 2016**



A Miller's Tale...

(the Windmill Hill version, not Chaucer's)

by Alan Alder

Well the day had finally arrived. For months volunteers had been working on the restoration of the windmill getting ready for the opportunity to mill some flour – which is of course what it is all about. The sweeps (sails) had been put back, the shutters and accompanying controls had been connected and the stones were back in position and ready to roll. Now was the start of the commissioning stage when the sweeps would at last turn in anger. Prior to this the sweeps had been allowed to turn with reduced load, by driving everything bar the stones to see how everything behaved. We had also operated the sack hoist lifting sacks of grain from the trestle to the stone floor.

The day in question was Wednesday 2nd March 2016, a normal day for the volunteers who turn up and carry out various tasks as required. It had been suggested that we needed additional wind speed for the initial running and in fact 22mph would be required to enable us to turn the stone. As the forecast for that day indicated the required speed, with Michael in charge, designated 'Head Miller' since he had – it was rumoured – had 'some' previous

experience, we headed up the windmill.

While in days gone by, the miller would have operated things on his own, this time he had a few able helpers. We all went to our posts after some encouraging words from the master! The brake was taken off, the shutters were closed to catch the wind and the sweeps and stone began to turn. The



Bill McKelvie singlehandedly painted the roundhouse and outer roundhouse over a number of days in the summer of 2009. He became a regular volunteer painting and applying preservative to the mill. He passed away on the 4th November and his warmth and generosity of spirit is much missed. The sweeps were placed in the 'mourning' position by the volunteers as a mark of respect.

'shutter man' ensured that once the sweeps had picked up speed, he would open them slightly to 'spill' some wind so that they did not over-speed. Those on the stone floor had to ensure that there was sufficient and continuous supply of grain such that the stones did not touch. The automatic grain feeder gave us a problem resulting in this having to be done manually.

The 'Head Miller', on the floor below controlled the separation of the stones to ensure that by 'Rule of Thumb' he was achieving the finest flour. The windmill ran for 45 minutes before shutting down, with congratulations all round that we had milled flour for the first time in over a 100 years.

The flour was 'slightly' coarse and gave us something to think about for the next time. Some of us took away a bag of flour, which we sieved to get finer flour, and at the AGM an olive loaf and a cottage loaf were produced as evidence. Some scones were also made but apparently went into the bin after first bite!



The tentering gear.

So progress has been made, a lot learnt, some problems to be resolved but it was a successful and historic day overall.



Above: Trustee Paul Frost made a presentation to Douglas Andrews for the outstanding work he has done in the restoration of the machinery and also gave him life membership of the Windmill. After the AGM Douglas gave an illustrated talk when the members were able to see the craftsmanship, care and thoughtfulness in the restoration that caused the Trustees to make this award.

Right: Volunteer Emily Wood at the Windmill stand for Lime Cross Christmas Fair on Sunday 29th November 2015.



Volunteers Party

There were 30 volunteers at the Christmas party hosted by Bee and Paul and with refreshments kindly donated by Bella and Crispin. Philip prepared a quiz but was unfortunately unable to attend. However, Irene stepped into the breach, delivered the quiz and presented a cake to the winners Sara and Lester who promptly cut it up and distributed it to all – very much appreciated. Thank you Bella and Crispin for bringing and serving the drinks.



100 club prize draw

The recent prizewinners:

November

- 1st Roger Wintle
- 2nd Bill McKelvie
(Son donated)
- 3rd Robert Girling

December

- 1st John Bishop
- 2nd Neil Beck
- 3rd Shirley Wigfield

February

- 1st Crispin Freeman
- 2nd Pauline Thomas
- 3rd Neil Beck

Front cover photos: Flour produced by wind power for the first time in over 120 years at Windmill Hill Windmill! On Wednesday 2nd March 2016 our volunteers ground grain into flour – what an achievement by all our volunteers, supporters and Friends who have supported the Trust over the last 20 years. At the AGM we were able to see the flour and taste two loaves of bread made by Alan Alder and Mary Kemp. Wonderful!

Diary Dates

Saturday 14th May 2016

Official Opening of the Windmill – invitation event.

Sunday 15th May 2016 – 10.30am to 4.30pm. National Mills Day

Windmill Hill Windmill Trust

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The newsletter is available electronically. If you would be happy to receive the newsletter this way, please send an email to bee@windmillhillwindmill.org advising your name and postcode.