



**Friends of
Windmill Hill
Windmill
NEWSLETTER**

Number 35 Summer 2013

Windmill Hill Windmill – Historical Queries

by Michael Chapman

For some years now it has been recognised that some aspects of the mill history remain distinctly uncertain or unproven. One of our members Mrs Ann Vollor, has spent many hours researching for definitive answers but the following points still lack proven evidence so it was decided to put the questions out to a wider local audience to see if we could unearth evidence that has been hidden for so long. If we are able to uncover certain facts they will not only allow us to complete local history but enable the national organisation, the Mills Archive to complete more of the Windmill Hill history.

Building date: Most publications quote circa 1814 but what proof is there that that is true? What was known as Cook's Mill from the name of William Cook was originally located in Mill Field but in 1784 was purchased by Henry Marten and was then moved to the present site of Windmill Hill windmill but went out of existence from the 1813 OS map.

Which millwright built the present mill? The name of Samuel Medhurst has been mentioned but this is incorrect as in 1814 he was too young! He was first registered as a millwright in 1824 with a business in Lewes. He held the licence in this area for Cubitt's patent sails, a design now usually referred to simply as patent sails and with which Windmill Hill was fitted. His son Boaz took over the business around 1870. There is some evidence to suggest it operated three sets of millstones.

Reason for raising the mill: There are two stories associated with this activity. One concerns the building of a large house to the east of the site and secondly the planting of trees to the south west. Both stories relate to the taking of wind from the mill and the owner, Edward Beeney, fought the situation in the courts but lost. Has anybody seen the court papers which would provide the truthful evidence?



Windmill Hill pole dancing club prepare for their first al fresco event.

Original sweep design: Whereas latterly it certainly had patent sails nevertheless were they the design used on the original mill construction? A Bridge Iron casting now in the mill displays the Boaz Medhurst nameplate so we can conclude that he was running the company at that time and was his involvement maintaining/refitting the patent sails for which they held the licence? This would have been in the 1870's.

Hammond sweep governor: Hammond patented his design 1873 so was Boaz Medhurst (above) involved in fitting out the mill to accommodate this mechanism? How successful was it in the 19 years before steam power arrived? We can find no information on the experience gained from operating this unique feature.

Conversion to steam: The Neve brothers, millwrights of Walberton were employed to convert the mill to steam power in 1892. What steam engine type was used? Where did it go after the mill ceased working about 1910? Who bought the sweeps which were removed at this time?

Evidence: Has anybody seen any indisputable evidence that will enable Windmill Hill Windmill Trust to fill in some of the gaps in our Industrial Heritage history as outlined above? We look forward to your feedback.

Ref: HES Simmons and M Brunnarius

100 club prize draw

The recent prizewinners:

June

First	No. 5	Bill McKelvie
Second	No. 1	Robert Girling
Third	No. 25	Tom and Jean Bewick

Can you help?

- We need a large wardrobe for the trestle floor – one that would be in keeping with the mill. Any suggestions?
- We are looking for someone to manage our database of names, addresses, emails and phone numbers for our concert mailing.
Contact Bee Frost on 01323 833033.



At the end of May, Bee was asked to bid for a flour bin for a TV programme with presenter James Braxton. Look out for the programme in the Autumn!



Armenian violinist Ani Karapetyan, accompanied by Aleks Szram, thrilled the audience with her virtuoso playing in the ballroom of Herstmonceux Castle, our annual fund raising

Report on Mills Day 12th May 2013

We decided to open on Sunday this year from 10.30 to 5pm. For the first time we had stationary engines on display from the Sussex and Weald Stationary Engine Group. This was a most interesting display and they received many favourable comments.

The BBQ with local sausages and homemade burgers was popular over lunchtime and as usual the tea and cakes were in demand all day. There were also stalls for plants, DVDs and books, windmill souvenirs, a raffle, and face painting and fencing provided by PGL Activity Centre. Members of the Southdown Amateur Radio Society were 'talking to mills around the world', Classic cars were on display on the Green at the Horseshoe Inn and the Long Man Morris Men gave a brilliant display for visitors.

There were many raffle prizes including those donated by local businesses – The Woolpack, Bank on Beauty, Lime Cross Nursery, the Truggery, Rusko's Pet Shop, Davenport's, Rocks Farm Shop, Styles Hair Design, and Conquerors. We are very grateful for their support. The rain held off until the end of the day and we were delighted to have welcomed nearly 200 visitors.

Cover: Members of the 750 MC, a motor club catering for pre-war Austin Sevens visit the mill.



Some of the stationary Engines on display on Mills Day.

Dates for
your Diary

Sunday 15th September 2013

Heritage Day open from 12 noon to 5pm. Display of heritage artefacts.
Entry by donation.

Friday 15th November 2013 – 7 for 7.30pm

Talk on the Palace of Westminster (Houses of Parliament) by Kevin Gordon

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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.