

Oldland Mill Trust

Autumn Newsletter 2022

Patron: Richard Burrows

Registered charity: 1072911



The oldest regularly working windmill in Sussex! Now 319 years old!

Welcome to the Autumn Newsletter

For many, this year has been mixed. Early in the year we joined the celebrations for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth's Platinum Jubilee, dressing the Mill as had been done in 1878 to celebrate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee. The sweeps were set in the position of St George's Cross, the lower sweep offset to the left, bunting stretched between the sweeps and topped with a Union Jack. When not working the sweeps of a mill are set as the St Andrew's Cross. A mill with sweeps set as St George's Cross stands out in the landscape, signalling a birth in the family or a celebration when the lower sweep is offset to the left, and a loss and mourning when the lower sweep is offset to the right. In September, we sadly found ourselves setting Oldland Mill's sweeps in the mourning position to mark the loss of her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.



At the AGM we welcomed three new trustees. Annette Brown was elected as our Honorary Treasurer and Judy Pointing as Secretary. David Bunting became the representative for Hassocks Parish Council. We said goodbye to David Cumberland, a long-time member of the trustees and sadly to Geoff Miller, our previous Treasurer and Secretary, who died in April.

With the lifting of Government Covid restrictions we resumed our normal schedule of events and work. Tuesday and Thursday mornings are our normal work days. You are welcome to visit the Mill then but please let us know beforehand by contacting Fred (F.J.Maillardet@brighton.ac.uk).

As the year comes to a close and we move towards Christmas, it is good to see the sudden and rapid progress being made in building the new workshop, which hopefully will serve the Mill and the Trust for many years to come.

Promotion and Fund-Raising

We have had a very successful year of Open Afternoons and Event Days at the Mill, attracting a large number of visitors, many of them for the first time. This is thanks to increased social media advertising as well as the many posters which are displayed locally. We are very grateful to the musicians and other acts and businesses who give of their time free of charge to help with our funds. Several new and enthusiastic members have joined the fund-raising team and we are starting to refresh our memorabilia

items. Come and see us at the stall at 'Light Up Hassocks' late-night shopping on Friday 2 December and see what we have to tempt you.

MILL CHRISTMAS CARDS: Available again after record sales in 2020. Three designs. Pack of 10 for £5; two or more packs £4 per pack.

OLDLAND MILL GUIDE: This new 40 page guide (with many coloured photographs) describes the restoration of the Mill over the last 40 years. Price £4 including postage. AN IDEAL CHRISTMAS PRESENT. We will deliver Cards and Guides to local addresses.

For cards and guides please contact Judy (judy.pointing@hotmail.co.uk).

Milling

Along with the return of Open Afternoons and Events we continued our focus on producing and selling more flour to generate income for the Trust. Regular milling sessions took place during the early summer with some sessions producing as much as 200kg of flour. However, this became less fruitful as the months wore on, mainly due to insufficient wind and more recently because painting the body of the Mill has taken priority during the last of the warm, dry summer weather. Despite this, since March we have produced 560kg of flour, of which 320kg was sold to local bakers.

We continue to purchase our grain from local farms. In April we collected approximately 1 tonne of 2021 harvest "Zyatt", grown at Gibraltar Farm, Beddingham. This was carefully inspected and subsequently processed through our winnower, to remove unwanted chaff, and is now stored on the bin floor ready for use once we have used our remaining stock of 2021 harvest "Crusoe". We now have plenty to last until the end of the year, but we are already checking the availability of the local

2022 harvest after receiving reports of possible shortages.



Our recently restored 19th century winnower, belt driven from a small standing engine

We have sold 1,200kg of flour so far this calendar year, which represents a 30% increase on last year, mainly due to more sales to commercial outlets such as Coburn & Baker. Retail outlet sales are down slightly, possibly as a result of the very hot weather in the summer discouraging baking! But direct sales from the Mill are increasing steadily and have already exceeded 170 kg this year!

Mill Maintenance

The dry weather presented ideal conditions for painting. We have focused on the right-hand side (viewed from the rear) of the Mill body.



Upper right-hand side of the Mill

With the prevailing south-west wind this side is usually out of the sun and subject to more rain than the east side or rear. The overlapping weather boards that make up the side were last painted in 2014 and many areas had damaged paint. The photo above shows the extent of the problem, the grey being areas where primer had been applied to damaged areas after paint had been removed. The roof section was painted last year using a hired 20m cherry-picker. The painting process takes time, as it requires cleaning, scraping and sanding, followed by primer, two undercoats and two top coats. Professional oil-based white paint is used and had to be applied in two separate operations using initially a scaffold tower and platform and then the cherry-picker.

Repair and painting has also continued on the oak rear steps and the tail pole used to turn the Mill into the wind. The oak side members ("stringers") are painted white to match the historic appearance of the Mill.

The storm hatch, located at the front of the Mill above the shaft, allowing access onto the sweeps and to the top of the Mill, was removed and refurbished. Fortunately, while a temporary hatch was in place there were no storms.



View of the repaired and refurbished Storm Hatch

The round-house roof has been washed and sprayed with Algon, an organic product which helps prevent algae and fungal growth. We plan to wash and apply it to the sweeps, and if time allows, to the Mill body. This will depend on the repair of our rather elderly cherry-picker, which has a hydraulic pump failure. The cherry-picker is key to much of the repair and maintenance of the Mill. We use it to check the condition of the sweeps, including the tightness of the bolts holding the shutter cranks to the sweeps, and to paint-in the threads as necessary. The windboards have been removed for refurbishing. Once returned to the sweeps they will allow milling under lighter winds. Their refurbishment will provide an opportunity to test different painting systems so we can compare how well they weather. We will paint some with our current oil-based paint and others with water and solvent-based breathable paints.

New Building

The slow progress in building the new workshop continued during the summer as we struggled to find a steel fabricator available to construct the internal frame. However, eventually a local fabricator was found. We made wooden templates to aid the steel work cutting plans in August, and the frame was fabricated and erected in September.



Work has now accelerated as the Joiner is constructing the integral wooden framework.

At long last the overall shape and size of the Workshop may be appreciated.



Membership and 200 Club

We have 358 members, divided into 224 Life Members, 102 Annual Members and 32 Volunteers. This is a decrease of 29 since last year. Some Annual Members have upgraded to Life Members, which means they no longer have to pay an annual subscription. Please contact me if you wish to upgrade.

The 200 Club year commences on 1 July. We currently have 171 Draw Tickets sold to 92 members. Please let me know if you wish to buy any more tickets. Indeed, some of you may wish to make a gift of Draw Tickets to a friend or relative. If so, please complete an Annual Membership Application Form, which includes a section to purchase Draw Tickets and also includes a Gift Aid certificate.

Winners since 1 July 2022 are as follows: July - 1st Prize 37; 2nd Prize 117; 3rd Prize 55.

August - 1st Prize 35; 2nd Prize 62; 3rd Prize 158.
September - 1st Prize, 132; 2nd Prize 6; 3rd Prize 64.

Most members pay for their Draw Tickets by bank transfer and in turn they receive their prizes by bank transfer. That makes life much easier for me and the Hon Treasurer and reduces our bank charges. It would be helpful if those members who pay by cheque could kindly allow us to pay them their prizes by bank transfer and let us have details of their bank account. This would also save work and bank charges.

John Tarling (Membership Secretary)
john.tarling@btinternet.com

Jenny Goodacre

Jenny Goodacre died in July following a short illness. Jenny not only assisted her husband Paul with their Children's Toys stall at Mill Open Days, but also helped maintain our stock of memorabilia and carried out regular stock takes. A group of Mill volunteers attended Jenny's funeral wearing the Mill's red shirts, a gesture much appreciated by Paul. Our condolences go out to Paul. The sweeps were set to the mourning position as we do whenever we have 'a death in the family'.

Stephen Waite

Chair, Oldland Mill Trust

Tel: 01273 843700

Website: www.oldlandwindmill.org.uk