

Hardley Windmill Newsletter Autumn 2019



www.hardleywindmilluk.org

The year is almost gone, we have had some very successful weekends and some that we battled against the elements to continue to provide a service

We are still waiting for the bronze bearing at the bottom of the shaft, to be regenerated by John Bone at his foundry, to connect to the turbine. The brickwork on the tower still needs repointing with some of the bricks to be replaced.

The adverts we placed some in the Contact magazine and the Chet News asking for volunteers to come and help revealed a couple who are prepared to help, so thank you Ruth and Paul, who also happens to have an engineering background.

As we move towards the end of the season we look back on those colder days in April after late February and early March had promised a bright and warm start to the year. The first week was slow to get going with not many people on the river and a few more walking, most of whom were local and had visited the mill before. Still the volunteers kept at it and soon our first organised event was upon us.

Sunday 14 April, Loddon and Chedgrave District Society had a walk from Hardley church to Hardley Cross then on to Hardley Mill for Lunch.

Saturday 11th May the Arthur Ransome Society visited the Mill, the following week the U3A cycle group stopped by for teas and coffees.

On Thursday 13th June, Hardley Mill entertained 10 children from Chernobyl, followed the following Saturday by the Midsummer Frolic, one of our money raisers of the year, this year we made a profit of £600.

On 6th July, Hardley Mill hosted Coldham Hall sailing club and ensured they were all fed and watered before their return journey. On Thursday 11th July it was our Annual General Meeting, which was well attended. Will Fitch the warden from Wheatfen gave a talk on the ever-changing landscape, flora and fauna of the fen.

Saturday 17th August was Music at the Mill and again was well attended, this is our second money raiser and we made a profit of £700.

Our last event was on Sunday 25th August and the Mill hosted the Norfolk Wayfarers walking group and provided a barbeque and pudding which they could walk off on their way home. We had a beautiful day, possibly too hot to walk but they managed. The whole group of around 40 enjoyed the experience and we made around £550 profit.



Some of the guests take to the shade

Thanks to all those who attended both the Music at the Mill and Midsummer Frolic as this is where the vast majority of the money comes from to enable the "sails to keep turning".

Throughout the rest of the season the volunteers perform miracles showing people around the mill and enticing them into the Visitor Centre for hot/cold beverages and homemade cake/biscuits. The donations received here again go towards maintenance of the Mill.

There are two more reports to make. Firstly I was at the Mill on Sunday 11th August and had just sat down in the Visitor Centre, following a few energetic tours of the Mill when a gentleman asked if I would like to receive some photographs, I think filmed by his Grandfather, Peter Ritchie of Church Farm, Hardley; donated by his mother Wendy Roper of Westgate Farm Hardley Street. These photographs are of Hardley Windmill being used to pump water from the land back into the river in February 1953, during the flood.



I thanked the gentleman and hoped that the message got back to Wendy Roper. I know we always said that the Mill was used to help pump water during the flood, even though the top was missing after the storm in 1951, and that it was powered by tractors using belts to drive the shaft. Now we have photographic evidence of this.



First tractor connected through the door

As so



The second tractor through the back window

What makes it even more astonishing is that a couple of weeks before that, I spoke to a family that were viewing the Mill when one of the men said his father had driven one of the tractors that had been used to drain the marshes during the flood; spooky or what!



Part of the gear used to drain the water back to the river

I believe some of the pipework was at least 60cm (2 feet) in diameter and a young girl whose name may have been Wendy nearly disappeared down one of these channels; using her arms outspread and calling out for help, she was saved!



All neatly tidied away

Secondly, we have been contacted by a film company (Camouflage) who would like to use the Mill as a temporary base to film part of a production showing the Mill, the river and some leisure activities, I think paddle boarding, as part of a Norwich City promotion. They are prepared to give us some of the photographs, of the mill, including those taken by drone, for our own use.

Earlier this year, in July I believe, we had someone who asked if he could take some pictures with his drone (see below).



That's all I have for the moment. I will try to put another Newsletter out later this year to try to wrap everything up.

Anyone who feels they may be able to offer help, a few days a month, mostly at the weekends, please contact Frances Kirkpatrick on 01508 – 520331.