

Restoration of Bursledon Windmill

Progress Report

On 12 November 2015 the mill wright, Malcolm Cooper, who replaced the windshaft and sails for the bi-centenary in 2014, returned to investigate the operation of the mill which was running noisily and causing concern. This was an anticipated requirement following the replacement of major components and allowing time for the new timber to bed in. It was necessary to wait for the right wind conditions coinciding with the availability of the mill wright. The noisy operation was caused by the imperfect meshing of the teeth on the brake wheel, the primary driving gear on the wind shaft, and the wallower attached to the top of the main vertical shaft which drives the mill machinery. Neither of these two parts had been replaced and it was confirmed that both have natural irregularities to be expected with heavy timber components. The four new pairs of steel brackets which hold the brake wheel in place on the drive shaft include built-in bolt clamps enabling very fine adjustment to be made to the angle of the wheel relative to the shaft and after some trial and error the optimum position was found giving significantly quieter running.

There have been on-going consultations with the County Council Safety Advisor about the best arrangement of the proposed barrier rails and ladder access arrangement for access into the working cap of the Mill which will enable trained volunteers to participate safely in its operation. A satisfactory solution sympathetic to the historic character of the Mill was agreed in November 2015 and has been included in the current Outbuilding and Mill works contract. The new posts and rails are being made with free issue salvaged oak from the County's historic materials salvage store which is an appropriate use for this material and is contributing to keeping the works within budget.

The updated lightning protection scheme for the Mill is also included in the current contract. It will provide continuity of protection both when the cap is being turned and when the sails are turning through the use of brush connections on circular conducting rails and bands.

The construction of the new Outbuilding, which will provide an accessible toilet for the use of visitors and a volunteers' room, is currently under construction. The contract for this and the work on the Mill was won by T. Colborn & Sons Ltd in a competitive tender in December 2015. So far the ground slab and drainage connections have been laid and the framing of the timber building is underway. The new building is on programme to be completed by the 14 March. Additions to the brick paving and repairs to the gravel access track are also included in the contract works.

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