

<b>Committee:</b>	BURSLEDON WINDMILL JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	5 July 2016
<b>Title of Report:</b>	CURATOR'S REPORT
<b>Author:</b>	Christine Taylor

**Purpose:**

Report on activities at or relating to Bursledon Windmill Covering period March 2016 – June 2016
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**1 Providing a Welcoming and Well Maintained Site**

**1.1 Windmill Service Delivery**

The Curator, Erica Munro, left the Hampshire Cultural Trust for a new position at the end of March. The role has been covered in the interim by Christine Taylor, Curator of Natural Sciences. Interviews have taken place and Cerian Trevan has been appointed. She started her new role with the Hampshire Cultural Trust on 20 June 2016 and joins us from Stonehenge.

The absence of a VSA, who left in January, has meant that the site had not been cleaned as regularly or as thoroughly usual. The mill has been covered by casual staff who have acted as Duty Manager.

The interim area Curator has worked with a volunteer and the miller to clean the interior of the mill, clear some of the pond, clear the paths of weeds leading up to the windmill and trim the edges beside the windmill.

Interviews for a part time VSA for the windmill have taken place and Jeff Witchett started at the windmill on 20 May.

The number of volunteers had dwindled to one regular person and a garden volunteer in recent months. The interim area curator has contacted all of the volunteers on the list to see if they were still keen to help and all have replied to say that there are. They were also asked if they would be willing to help with occasional 'cleaning blitz's' and most have said that they would help if they are available. A new volunteer is in the process of being added to the team.

The new outbuilding comprising the visitors' toilets and volunteer's room have now been completed providing much improved facilities. The improvements to the inside of the windmill cap (hand rails so that the cap can be accessed more easily and safely); the installation of a lightning conductor on the exterior of the mill and signage for disabled car parking were completed at the end of April. The Operations Manual has been received and signed off.



Installation of the lightning conductor (left) and the governor belt (above)

The automaton donations box which had been repaired by its designer broke down again. This has been repaired by members of the Conservation Team. The Conservation team have also recently (22 June) fitted a new Governor's belt.

Funding (£10,000) has recently been secured via the TESCO Bags of Help scheme. It is anticipated that the entrance fence will be replaced, perimeter fences to be repaired re-using good pieces of the entrance fence, two large sleepers with a kick board will define the edges of the pond and allow wheelchair access and two external lights on the Chineham Barn for evening events.



After Storm Katie violently hit the South of England at the end of March it was discovered that the brake which stops the sails from going round, had failed and that a bolt needed urgent replacement. The emergency call out procedure was actioned and Gary (the miller) and a member of the Conservation team were able to repair the damage.

April and May were busy with various yearly checks – Fire alarms and Legionella testing. Regular bait traps checks are also being carried out.

One of the aims for this year was to set the sails to grind wheat and make flour. For several weeks the staff at the mill had been watching the weather forecast and had a couple of abortive attempts when the forecast wind didn't arrive. The sails on the mill have finally been turned to make flour – the first time in 5 years! Gary Freeman, the Miller, has sourced a supplier for grain and we are just getting costings.

## 1.2 Visitor Figures

Year	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Totals
2011 – 2012	581	645	389	435	408	244	261	258	86	159	227	173	3866
2012 – 2013	385	285	227	251	332	316	433	253	188	62	228	364	3314
2013 – 2014	252	299	278	388	489	784	275	215	95	85	227	332	3719
2014 – 2015	252	422	318	362	0	121	90	290	72	390	332	503	3152
2015-2016	298	383	315	282	563	274	431	129	24	109	142	263	3213
2016-2017	170												

It is hoped that visitor figures will start to pick up now the mill has started to grind grain. Special events and out of hours visits have been planned which will help to increase numbers. The appointment of a new VSA means that there is a member of staff to assist with out of hour's events and planning with events.

From July – September the Windmill will be opening on Saturdays as well as Sundays and it is hoped that the additional day will draw visitors, especially if the sails of the mill are rotating. The plan is then to close the mill in the quiet months of November, December and January, when it is hard to attract visitors, except for specific events. There may be scope for a special Christmas event to be run. The miller and VSA will come in during the winter to keep a check on the site.

A number of events have been planned for the summer months:

### Special Sundays

- 15 May 'Flour Power' as part of National Mills Weekend
- 12 June 'Strawberry Sunday'
- 10 July 'Get Busy'

### Minibeasts at the Mill – 1 June

Half term Windmill Wednesday for families is with Natural Selection Learning. Activities include making a pooter, ready for a minibeast safari.

## **Ways with Wood – 30 & 31 July**

A two day festival celebrating woodcrafts, featuring all day workshops and family drop in activities.

## **The Great Bursledon Bake Off – 17 August**

Summer holiday Windmill Wednesday for families. Making pizzas in the bread oven.

## **2 Caring for Collections, Promoting Access, and Providing Specialist Knowledge and Advice**

### **2.1 Caring for collections**

The Hampshire Cultural Trust's Emergency Conservation Unit came to the rescue on the Bank Holiday Monday to carry out repairs to the windmill following the storm on Easter Sunday. A bolt within the braking mechanism bent allowing some turning of the brake mechanism. The bolt was replaced and minor repairs made to the woodwork. This may have been the result of an inherent weakness that has developed over time in the bolt or the change in wind direction during the storm. There was no evidence of lasting damage to the mill.

The conservators returned to the mill to repair the automaton model of the mill and measure up in preparation for renewing the windmill governor belt, which was installed in June.

### **2.2 Promoting access to collections and providing specialist knowledge and advice**

Our Curator of Natural Sciences, who normally makes a significant contribution to events held at the mill, started covering the role of South East Area Curator in April. For four days a week she has been managing the four sites in the area, including Bursledon Windmill, until the new area manager starts work. As well as this temporary role, she has found time to assist with the 'Minibeasts at the Mill' event.

## **3 Inspiring Learning and Community Engagement**

### **3.1 Formal Education Provision**

There have been quite a few enquiries from schools, but no bookings for February to April. Schools seem to want to be able to buy flour and make bread as the follow-up to the visit so until the mill is producing flour again, schools are favouring other mill visits such as Winchester City Mill. However, there are bookings in place for the summer term and no doubt the usual harvest season bookings will come in for Sept and Oct. The CELO attended the Hampshire Primary History Teachers' Conference and promoted the service to 68 teachers. The CELO has also been working on a bid to the Arts Council for a Writers in Residence project with schools which includes use of the windmill site to stimulate creative writing for key stages 2 to 4.

School bookings are starting to be taken for the Autumn term.

### 3.2 Better Life Chances

**Families:** For February half term, the CELO organised Mill, Myth & Magic story telling workshops inside the windmill itself with storyteller Mike O’Leary. These attracted 33 participants and were very atmospheric and enjoyable.



For the Easter Holiday, the CELO, assisted by our wonderful volunteer Andrea Badkin, ran a drop-in family workshop outside normal opening hours called Spring Into Action on 6 April. 31 people came along and enjoyed finding out about migration, hibernation, life cycles, animal babies etc, using real specimens from the natural science collections. They also undertook 2 trails – one spotting signs of spring and one a trail of clues around the grounds to find the lost baby bunny! They made woven caterpillars and ‘daffo-mills’ which were really popular. The activity benefitted from Hampshire Futures funding for family learning. Participants’ feedback was really positive and included:

“Very ingenious. Great ideas and brilliant for kids to see and touch the animals.”

“Well thought out family activities.”

“The children now know about life cycles, eggs etc and have very much enjoyed themselves.”

“Kids enjoyed the rabbit hunt and crafts.”



The other Easter Holiday event was Miller’s Ark Easter Animals coming along for Easter Sunday. 137 people turned up to pet the baby animals despite Storm Katy! There was also another Special Sunday in March – all about Cogs and Gears for British Science Week.

**Adults:** There was just one out-of-hours group visit in this period, which was a talk and tour for the Solent MG Owners’ Club on 23 March. 29 adults (and their sports cars) attended.

## Other out of hour's bookings

Two Beaver Scout groups are booked in for evening sessions at the mill in June and July.

The CELO, Janet Wildman retired from the Hampshire Cultural Trust at the end of April. Elements of her post have been taken on by Rebecca Parrant, Cultural Engagement Manager for Schools.

## 4 Marketing and Communications

### 4.1 Print material

A new edition of What's On covering the period May to August and featuring Bursledon Windmill was delivered at the beginning of April. 12,500 copies were printed and it is now in circulation via our distributors, Brochure Connect, to TICs, libraries, museums, accommodation providers, educational establishments, attractions, arts centres, theatres etc.

### 4.2 Online marketing

The e-newsletter Museums Monthly, featuring exhibitions and events from Bursledon, has been to sign ups on a new database. Subscribers now number over 2,500. We have promoted features such as Special Sundays, Might Mill Event and the Easter Activities on Social Media and the website.

### 4.3 Research

Postcodes are now routinely collected from visitors at on an ongoing basis. These are profiled annually using Mosaic software and provide ongoing information on which groups of people are using and not using our services and how individual visitor profiles compare to the local area. This feeds into the service and marketing planning processes.

### 4.4 Social Media

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2 March	Bursledon Windmill	Bags for Life grant awarded
13 March	Bursledon Windmill	Science Week
23 & 24 March	Bursledon Windmill	Millers Ark
5 April	Bursledon Windmill	Spring Activities
11 May	Bursledon Windmill	Special Sundays (June to July)
16 May	Bursledon Windmill	Minibeasts at the Mill
5 April	Bursledon Windmill	Spring Activities

Miller's Ark featured in the news section of the Hampshire Cultural Trust's website.

“Baby bunnies, lambs, ducklings and chicks from Miller’s Ark will be making their way to Bursledon Windmill for a fun packed family day this Easter Sunday.

There couldn’t be a more enjoyable and seasonal Easter Sunday outing than going to the beautiful windmill site to meet the Easter animals and taking a tour around the windmill itself.....”

### **Big Theme: Royal Blood 2016**

The Royal Blood website including sign up area and What’s Ons for all upcoming events is now live. Although Bursledon Windmill doesn’t have an exhibition as such, we hope it will feature complementary activities and or events which we can promote and share.

75,000 DL RB leaflets have been produced promoting all key exhibitions. 48,000 of these are being professionally distributed by Brochure Connect across Hampshire and the bordering counties (Berkshire, West Sussex, East Dorset, Wiltshire and Surrey) including date specific “blitzing” in key areas prior to regional events.

A PR campaign has been embarked upon with our agency Carswell Gould. This includes Releases at the launch of major exhibitions (and also a co-ordinated Press event at the Stephen & Matilda re-enactment on 9 July alongside our partners Winchester Cathedral and The Great Hall.

We have taken out Press adverts, including a feature wrap and strip, (we should also receive some editorial support alongside this paid advertising space) in Schools Out (May half term), Primary Times (back page summer half term), Defence of the Realm magazine and The View.

For the first time this year our big theme has a media partnership with Wave FM. This includes On Air mentions of our events during round ups of what’s on locally (at least 3 mentions per week for each of our 4 featured events), 2 features in e-shots to their customer database, a webpage on wave105.com (over 330,000 visitors per week), and specific targeted messaging via their Social Media channels throughout the partnership

Christine Taylor  
June 2016