

Windmill is once again able to produce flour after restoration

By Rhianne Pope

WHEN Wheatley Windmill last produced flour, television was yet to be invented and Europe was on the brink of the First World War.

But now — 98 years later — the windmill is once again being used to produce flour.

After standing derelict for more than decades, the windmill was reopened in 2009.

And now volunteers are celebrating after milling flour at the site once again.

Mavis Ramsden, whose grandfather was the last miller in Wheatley in 1914, said: "It is a great achievement to say we have done this after 98 years.

"It is a place with a lot of family history for me."

Mrs Ramsden's great-grandfather, George Cripps, bought the mill in 1857 and passed it on to his sons.

Her grandfather, Ezra Cripps, was the last miller at the outbreak of war in 1914.

For decades afterwards the windmill was neglected.

About 30 years ago local volunteers started a campaign to get the mill up and running again.

The 150-strong committee raised £150,000, including a £38,000 grant from South Oxfordshire District Council, to restore it.

Mrs Ramsden, 71, who lives next to the windmill,



said: "Firstly the mill had to be restored to working order because it was in a very poor state.

"Then we had a visit from a miller and several lads who showed some of our volunteers how to get it going and showed them the methods of making flour. It was a great success."

She added: "It is very rewarding to see it milling flour again."

Wheatley is one of a handful of working

■ IT'S WORKING AGAIN:
Owner Mavis Ramsden
and the restored
Wheatley Windmill

Picture: **OX53049**
by Jon Lewis

windmills left in the county, including Venn Mill in Garford, near Marcham, and a smaller mill in Bloxham.

Another campaign to restore a windmill is under way in Chinnor.

To mill flour, specific

wind conditions are needed.

It takes a breeze of 10 knots on a dry day to generate sufficient power to turn the millstones.

It is now hoped flour will be produced again in the coming months and will be sold at the mill's open days.

The next open day is Sunday, August 12.

The committee is also looking for volunteers to help produce flour.

For more information visit wheatleymill.co.uk