

Acc 2681

Wheatley Windmill – statement by the owner in March 2022

Of some 5000 windmills built in England only about 40 remain that can grind grain. Wheatley is one of about 100 windmills built in Oxfordshire and just two remain that fully work. (Wheatley and Great Haseley.)

Wheatley Windmill is a unique gem.

Of 2000 tower windmills built in England just five had an octagonal tower instead of the normal round tower. This combined with the unusual clockwise rotating sails, 2 hearths, an almost complete set of all wooden machinery, not to mention an apple orchard for replacement cogs makes for a historically unique combination.

Wheatley Windmill is a survivor.

Blessed not only with a tower of stone but also with original machinery saved by safety concerns from ‘war effort’ scrap recovery campaigns, Wheatley windmill was championed for restoration by the expert on Oxfordshire mills, a cause actively embraced by the owner and finally rebuilt over 45 long years by the Wheatley Windmill Preservation Society (WWPS).

Wheatley Windmill is the history of Wheatley.

Located at an altitude of 400ft on old Littleworth Common, built of limestone and ironstone from old Wheatley quarries, patched with brick from Cooper’s brick works, grinding local wheat for flour and also locally dug ochre for brilliant yellow paint, it is a monument to Wheatley’s past.

What’s been done so far?

A new barn has been built in the paddock to hold a collection of old agricultural machinery and to store all the WWPS mill maintenance materials. This will enable the Mill Open Days to not only be run more efficiently and allow car parking safely in the paddock but also show the machinery collection, centred on a mobile mill, as a fully working display, hopefully creating wider interest and attracting more visitors.

And next?

The current 25 year agreement to allow public access to the Mill expires in 2025. This will be renewed for 10 years.

A registered Trust will be created to ensure the mill’s future in perpetuity. Working with WWPS and the local community its remit will be to maintain a fully working windmill with public access.

Future goals are to get the sails repaired and gearing fully working, grind local wheat, hopefully produce flour on a regular basis and maybe even recreate the ochre grinder.