



*Friends of*  
**Upminster  
Windmill**

**Newsletter September 2016**

# Friends of Upminster Windmill

is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) managing the windmill on behalf of the London Borough of Havering.

**Chairman:** Dennis Coombs

**Vice-Chairman:** Martin Withers

**Secretary:** Paul Sainsbury

**Membership Secretary:** Ian Ross

**Treasurer:** Jean Webb

**Web Master:** Neil Morley    **Community Engmt. Officer:** Gemma Smith

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**Website:** <http://www.upminsterwindmill.org>



**Visiting.** The mill remains closed during its restoration, which will last until 2018.

The new Visitor Centre will be open to the public in April 2017.



**Diary.**



This fun event has been especially arranged in aid of FUW funds.

Please book your tickets from:

**Peter Scott**

**tel: 01708 227259**

Ad Hoc Players present

# Murder Mystery

7.30pm

evening

**Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> October**

**North Street Hall**

North Street, Hornchurch RM11 1QX

**Tickets**

**£10**, includes Ploughman's

Bring your own drinks

from Peter Scott tel: 01708 227259



*Guess who done it???*



# Dennis Reports

## Progress on the new building

The building of the new Education and Training Centre is nearing completion and, thanks to Andrew Conway, we have a series of wonderful images to add to the overhead photos we have accumulated over recent months.



As I write, the builders are installing the external security shutters and completing a few residual tasks. We are still awaiting connection of the utility services. The building has been connected to the mains electricity, gas and water but the meters are still to be installed and the systems then need commissioning and testing. The phone line is still to be installed though BT have made a start by identifying an underground connection point in St Mary's Lane.

Installation of the parquet flooring in the Education Room and sealing the concrete floor in the Training Centre cannot be done until the underfloor

heating has been turned on for several days to ensure no moisture has been retained. This, of course, awaits the provision of the gas and electricity supplies.

We hold the keys to the building and have access for planning purposes, though making practical use of the building must await completion of the outstanding tasks. For the immediate future, the heras fencing will be retained both to provide security until the building is in use and to prevent the public accessing the uneven ground.

## **Education Room**

Andrew has captured some wonderful images of the Education Room, including this one.



The Education Room is where we will receive visitors to the Mill and explain its story before they embark on a traditional tour of the Mill itself. During 2017, the Mill will still be closed for refurbishment but we will have much to offer, telling our story through the wonderful graphics that Cliff Featherston and Jonathan Green have enchanted us with. The Education Room will double as a meeting room where we, and other organisations, can give talks. It will also be available for hire.

We plan to install high quality IT equipment for our presentations. We will have two large screens (probably 65"). These will be mobile with flexible viewing angles. We envisage using one in "table-top" mode, where visitors can gather round and listen to one of our guides while watching the visual display. The display will be interactive and we will, over time, build a library of presentations from which the guides can choose for the particular audience. The menu will comprise photos, graphical images, 3D models, interactive displays, prepared presentations and videos. A second large screen will be used in an upright position for formal presentations.

There will be two additional, but smaller IT screens along the wall. These will enable visitors to scroll through some of the material themselves, for example through a selection of photographs.

Finally we hope to include an information screen such as those seen in many public waiting areas. This would display administrative material, such as opening times, welcome notices, forthcoming events etc.

A retail sales outlet will also be incorporated.

## **Training Centre**

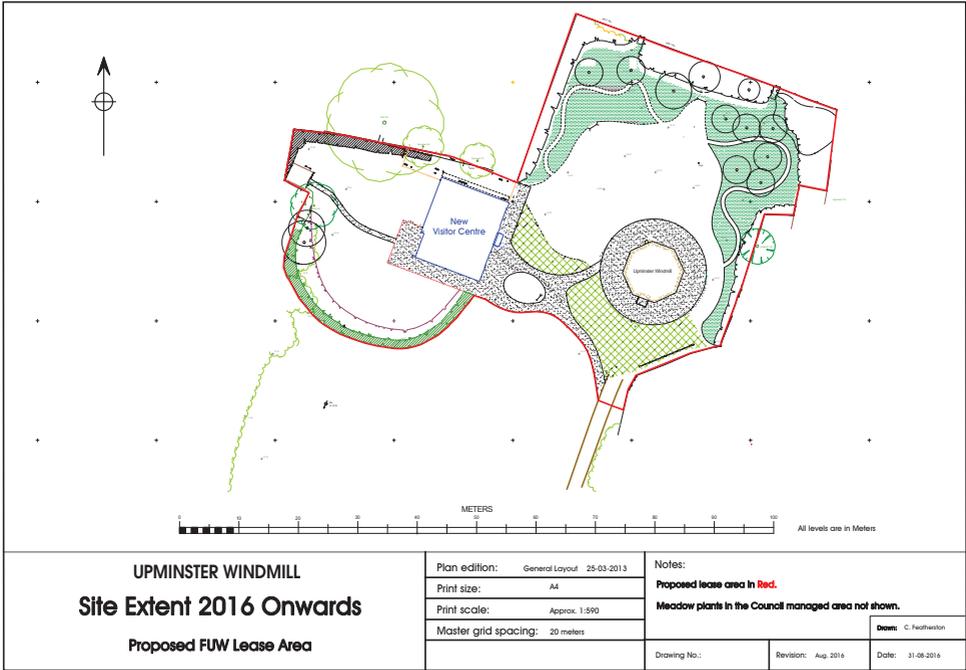
The Training Centre is a very large workshop area which will provide the facilities for volunteers to help with the restoration of the Mill and keep it in good repair in the future. The space is impressive. John Reed, Mike Turner and Martin Withers have devoted an enormous amount of time planning what is required. We are ready to make the purchases as soon as the work on the floor has been completed. I am confident that our volunteers will enjoy the workshop, especially so after struggling in all weathers either in the container or outside.

## **Administration area**

The building also has some office space, storage areas, kitchenette and toilets. It is fully accessible for disabled people.

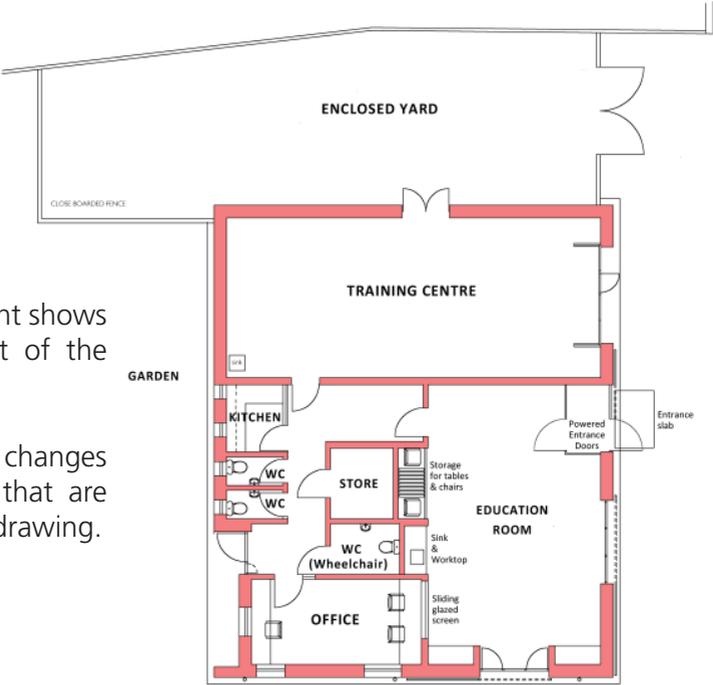
## **Grounds**

On the following page the plan shows the area that we will lease from the Council. This has been modified recently to take account of the landscaping proposals.



The plan to the right shows the general layout of the Visitor Centre.

Some small design changes have been made that are not shown in this drawing.



The area behind the new building, which has long been derelict, provides a wonderful (and very large) area to develop and maintain as a delightful garden. We will need additional volunteers but I am sure they will be easily found. More details will be provided as soon as we are permitted to start work on the grounds.

## **Steam plant foundations**

Historic England are funding some work by professional archaeologists to record the remains of the steam plant foundations. This work has just commenced and will have five strands.

- Review of our archive material, including the archaeological finds (Paul Sainsbury is making the relevant material available to them).
- Producing a project design statement setting out their methodology.
- Undertaking the site work, where our volunteers and other members, as well as members of the public, will be invited to participate. Details will be forwarded by email as soon as they are available.
- Produce a report.
- Organise some public engagement, possibly an open day for people to visit and learn about the site.

We are also working with Historic England to consider how best to preserve the site.

## **Not forgetting the Mill**

Our millwright, Willem Dijkstra, continues work in his Dutch workshop to restore the cap and the sails of the Mill. He is expected to return to the UK around mid-October when we will see the gallery removed and scaffolding erected to enable repairs to the smock tower. Our next newsletter will report his progress. Paul Kemp, a long standing member of the Friends and one of the UK's few accredited millwrights, will be working with Willem, as will some of our volunteers. If you would like to help with some hands-on work on the Mill, please email Gemma, our Community Engagement Officer:

[gsmith@mary.havering.sch.uk](mailto:gsmith@mary.havering.sch.uk)

**Dennis Coombs**



## Activity Update by Gemma Smith

The banners which were developed back in April have continued to tour the local area. They were on display in Elm Park Library until recently where I also gave a community update about the project. The Old Chapel took part in Open House on Sunday 21 August and the banners were displayed there too. I was also able to give a talk at the Upminster Probus group in August.

I was lucky enough to be able to see the inside of the Visitor Centre recently. It was interesting to learn that old materials from the miller's house, such as bricks and the front door step, have been integrated into the new building.

On Sunday 21 August an open day at the Old Chapel was held to showcase the work currently going on at the Windmill, both on site and behind the scenes. Photographs of the restoration of the Windmill by Andrew Conway were displayed alongside the digital models of the site and windmill. Tours over to the mill field also took place to talk to visitors about the development of the Visitor Centre. Following on from this event The Friends also had a stall at the Havering Show over the bank holiday weekend and it was a great opportunity to tell the community about what was going on. It was a chance to explain where the sails were and how the new Visitor Centre will be used.

During the school holidays a workshop for children was held at the Old Chapel inspired by the windmill. 25 children came along and learnt about how the Mill works, as well as getting creative. One activity involved them making imaginative designs for new sails to replace our missing ones!



Trips for volunteers have been taking place throughout the summer months with the most recent one to Brixton Windmill in August. Existing volunteers are also invited to a Volunteer Open Day on 24 September. The day will be a chance to learn about new volunteer projects and hear more about the plans for 2017.

# Visit to Brixton Windmill

13th August 2016

Alison Taffs reports

On a sunny day in August eleven Upminster volunteers visited Brixton Windmill.

## THE MILL

Brixton is a small tower mill built in 1816; known locally as Ashby's Mill it ran until 1864 when building in the area prevented the essential wind from reaching its sweeps.

A period of use for storage was followed in 1902 by the installation of new stones powered by oil and gas.

Like Upminster, Brixton finally stopped production in 1934. Following the mill being placed on English Heritage "at risk" register the Friends of Brixton Windmill Gardens were formed in 2002 and won HLF funding for restoration, opening in 2011.



## THE TRIP

Brixton on a Saturday morning is one of London's most vibrant, bustling and downright loud spots. The group took a bus from the tube station and alighted near the famous Brixton Prison (which can be seen from the top floor of the windmill).

The mill is hidden in a small oasis of grass in the middle of a housing estate, and you really can't see her until you are very close, inside the Windmill Gardens themselves. It's very easy to see why the wind can't easily make it to the mill, being in such a flat and built-up area.

There is a children's playground sporting a bright windmill mural wall and a garden, created by the volunteers, planted with herbs and heritage wheat and barley.

The Friends had a suitably bright and vibrant sales table set up under an awning in the sun. We were warmly welcomed by Jean Kerrigan, the Chair

of the Brixton Friends, and we were then split into groups of three. The mill is compact, so more than three with the guide on each floor would be overcrowded.



Next to the mill a children's nursery group were holding a fund raising fete which was teeming with people. The music and smell of the barbecue made for a lively atmosphere for us whilst we waited our turn to tour the mill.

The sails are common style, the canvas for which was on display nearby. We were taken all the way through the mill to see the restored mechanisms. The highlight is a provender mill, now converted from gas and oil to run on electricity, which the Friends use to demonstrate milling flour, and selling this to the public.



The mill is small but very attractive, neatly finished in black pitch, it looks very striking, almost the negative of our white clad windmill. The tour was fascinating with the Upminster volunteers receiving a warm welcome and informative guiding from Jean and the volunteer team.

# Archaeology Report

During the summer construction work on site has prevented any further archaeological excavation taking place, despite there still remaining some areas not fully explored, principally to the east of the steam mill. The team have, however, been kept very busy cleaning up the existing excavations and generally assisting with the other works taking place.

The many artefacts found during our past excavations have amassed into quite a collection, and these are now being researched and catalogued. Some items are large and were found in situ, but the majority are small and were scattered around the site as a whole, largely as a result of the site being bulldozed after demolition in the 1960's.

A selection of the artefacts have been on display at the Havering Museum, and in due course items of particular interest will be photo scanned for display as 3D objects on our website. Below are just three of the objects found.



These tiles, c1889-1905, were in sets of five for the sides of fireplaces. Sets were sold in pairs for around 8s 6d a pair.



The Honfleur pattern for this plate was registered in 1887. The plate was manufactured by Bishop & Stonier from their Pottery in Hanley, Staffs.

Button made by  
Firmin & Son, 153  
The Strand, London  
between 1852 and  
1875



**Paul Sainsbury**

## Graphics Work

Now that the Visitor Centre is nearing completion, and with a target date for opening in April next year, a drive is under way to ensure our information resources are as up-to-date and as comprehensive as possible.

Much new material has been added to our resources this year, some by necessity in support of the project's management - diagrams, maps, bespoke illustrations - and some for public displays and talks. Also new research has meant that existing material has required revision and expansion. Not least has been the recording of the building work and start of the mill's restoration.

Jonathan Green has continued to specialise in methods to bring realism to our 3D models, and through new and advanced rendering techniques is achieving outstanding results.



In this image and the one below, the scenes from the 3D models have been rendered using natural lighting effects, such that tones have more subtle gradations that enhance the appearance of surfaces and surroundings. Of course, to see these images at their best they need to be viewed at a much larger scale than these pages permit.



Jonathan has used these improved rendering techniques on the full mill model displayed on Sketchfab, which is well worth viewing by visiting :

<https://sketchfab.com/upminsterwindmill>

On the Sketchfab website there, too, is a model of the Mill House basement that was generated from photographs taken by Richard Saville in 2013.



The technology that permits 3D models to be generated from sequences of photographs has been used by industry for some time, but it is only recently that advances in computer software have made it practical for use by the general public. FUW now have this capability and it is planned that once Historic England have completed their study of the steam mill site, that the site will be photo modelled as a major addition to our graphics displays.

Below are two examples of recent additions to our library of graphics and archive material.

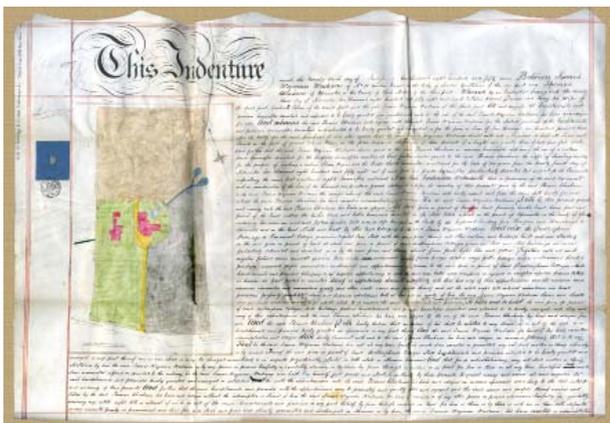


Here the windmill is seen in 1811 with its original Common canvas sails. Two sails are set full and two reefed in sword point configuration.

Speculation is that the cap did not have a fantail when first built, this being added later.

Note the timbered and tiled cottage. This was replaced c1880s.

Romford Library hold a number of important documents associated with the windmill which have now been scanned. This is the conveyance indenture on the sail of the mill and site by James Weyman Wadson to Thomas Abraham, dated 23rd July 1859.



When the restoration project is complete there will be a plinth set outside the Visitor Centre upon which will be a display board, much like the sloping tabletop of a lectern. The old millstone that FUW has in its collection will be set on edge in the ground, supported by brick or stonework to form the plinth.

The display board will show a large graphic identifying all the original buildings and where they once stood. This will be available for visitors to the Mill Field to view regardless of whether or not the Mill and Centre are open.

The image below is a draft proposal for the plinth graphic that meets the requirements stipulated for the display. This is a collaborative work between Jonathan Green and myself, based upon a specially prepared version of Jonathan's site model. All buildings are labelled, and the key that identifies them has been set out in time-line order giving their dates of construction. At full size the graphic would be approaching a metre square, making details and text very legible.

**Cliff Featherston**





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