**MEOPHAM WINDMILL**
**www.meophamwindmill.org.uk**

To Support Our
Continued Renovation
and Maintenance
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# Newsletter

## SUMMER - AUTUMN  September 2025

This is our 1st Quarterly Newsletter and we are beginning with a celebration of the hard work and great effort that has gone into the Restoration of Meopham Windmill.

We look forward to sharing our story and our progress as we focus on preserving our national and local heritage. We also aim to give insight into the lives of earlier generations of millers, farmers and traders who served this village and provided healthy nutrition to both people and livestock over many years.

Windmills are disappearing in Kent and we hope you will enter into the spirt of conservation and support our projects.

Fortunately, Meopham Windmill has special status as a Grade II* listed building and has drawn the attention of various media platforms in the short time that we have been open. This includes Press coverage in Kent Messenger and Kent On Line, a variety of radio stations and just after we closed our doors for the autumn, Meridian TV featured us on early evening news.

This overall  media interest has been following our success with the restoration and because the current interest in conservation and the support of ancient buildings is of vital importance as councils manage their short term and long term budget plans.

Meanwhile, enjoy our Quarterly Newsletters and please share our events and visit us whenever you can.
https://meophamwindmill.org.uk

## Conservation and Restoration

The story began over 200 years ago when Meopham Windmill was built by the Killick family who were reputable millers in this part of Kent.  The windmill fed the village and farms in the area  until after a few generations, the mill was bought by the Nortons who also had a strong milling history. However, technology and industrialisation of milling meant that couple of generations later, when  it was put up for sale, it was purchased in 1959 by Kent County Council (KCC) to preserve its cultural and historical heritage. Since that time, it has been overseen by the Meopham Windmill Trust and they have managed the council's restoration projects over the years.
Meopham Windmill is a valued historic property and was awarded the protection of being a Grade II* listed building.

# Welcoming Visitors Again

The recent restoration of the windmill began with a severely broken and battered by the elements. The huge project began slowly but eventually, a new cap and fantail were fitted, then 4 sweeps were added and mechanisms were checked.

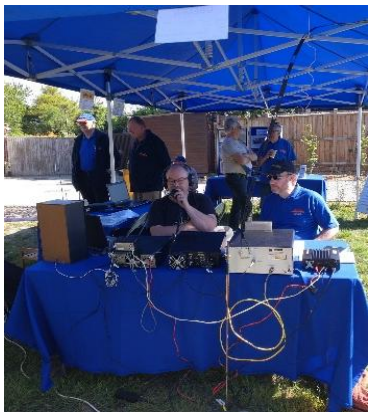
It was very exciting to see them turn in the wind so we watched the weather and the trees for the slightest movement. Soon, the trees were swaying in the gusts and rushes of wind and the sweeps moved on their own. A call went out for us to grab our cameras and phones to capture the moment. For the first time in 50 years, the sweeps turned and all was well at the mill.

Then at 1pm on 22nd June 2025, we opened the door of the windmill to the public and the amount of visitors surprised us. It was all very welcome encouragement after all the hard work and commitment made.
Hundreds have come since then, to go up into the mill and walk around the reefing balcony where they have enjoyed stunning views across the fields and cricket green.

As windmills in Kent are rare, we are reminded how precious Meopham Windmill is and how she reflects village life, our history and our legacy to future generations.

# Community Involvement and Fun

We began the season with the return of Hartley Morris Men and they brought along another three Morris Teams to share their exuberant dancing and jolly folk music as they flashed their colours and caused a wonderful stir with much toe-tapping.
Crayford Radio Club also returned to hold a live meeting at the mill just as they used to for many years previously, and it was great success as they connected with radio clubs around the UK and across Europe.



# Clubs and Groups

We had the pleasure of some visits by several local children's groups and several scouts and cubs are coming along in October to build a bug hotel. We will keep you updated on this in the next newsletter.

We also invited the two painting and drawing groups from Meopham u3a to spend a morning creating pictures of the windmill.  During one of the hottest days of the summer, they braved the sweltering heat wave to sit in the grounds and produce some great views of the windmill and its sweeps.
These were then displayed on the wall of the base room and we received some enthusiastic comments from visitors. Some children also added their colourful

pictures to the display and everyone’s work was greatly appreciated.

## For Children

Visiting children love our *Rat Trail* with certificates and reward badges for finding all the cuddly rats hidden inside the Mill and they can also buy one as a keepsake. There are colouring pictures of the windmill and other features around the grounds, puzzle pages and miniature windmills can be constructed from a few shiny nuts and bolts.

## Education

Scout groups, primary and secondary schools have visited and enjoyed learning the history and the important role the windmill has played in village life.
Children from St George's Primary School came along to learning about aspects of making flour from corn and other cereals and how the mill also produced animal feed from the left overs. The children were excited but very well behaved and followed every safety precautions including hand cleaning afterward. There was a lot for them to see and do and as usual, the Rat Trail was most popular.
Boys from Northfleet Technical College, Northfleet enjoyed an inspiring trip and were very engaging, asking lots of questions especially about the mechanical workings of the mill. It was a pleasure to see them learn the terminology and take an interest in the effects of weather and climate on the mechanisms.

## Volunteers

The restoration of Meopham Windmill has needed a team of volunteers to see it through to completion. From managing the building, the machinery maintaining the sweeps, to running the tours, handling the souvenir stall and planting out the garden, volunteers have stepped up to help and been positive, friendly and supportive all the way through.

## Media Interest

Media interest has grown since the Meopham Windmill opened to the public again, media interest has steadily grown. We have enjoyed features and mentions from radio, local magazines, specialist publications, newspapers and more recently, TV. This has helped raise the profile of the mill and also Meopham Village with its relevance to the community and our national heritage.

The windmill has also forged an attractive social media presences and visitor numbers have been high as we have reached out to a wide area. We are looking forward to building stronger relationships with media platforms as we go forward.

# Celebration of the Restoration

To celebrate the success of the renovation, a formal Celebration was attended by both the Lord-Lieutenant of Kent, Lady Colgrain;  Mayor of Gravesham Borough Council, Councillor Jennifer Wallace;  Kent County Council Head of Environment, Helen Shulver;  and Kent County Council Cabinet Minister of Environment David Wimble who each shared their reflections on the importance of conservation and raising awareness in all age groups, schools, local businesses and other invested groups and organisations.
It was also an opportunity to share this tremendous success with members of the Parish Council and local businesses who have supported all the efforts to make the Grade II* listed Meopham Windmill a landmark heritage site in Meopham Village and for the extended communities.

It was heartwarming to meet several members of the local community who had direct associations with the mill over the years was heartwarming. Village residents such Helen Corwell who was raised on a local farm and delivered and collected corn and animal feed from the mill. Also, David Stableford, whose father was a popular tour guide at the windmill in the 1990's and we are grateful for photographs David donated for historical record.

In particular, we also wanted to show our thanks to Kent County Council and the Meopham Parish Council for financing the project and to share our success with their representatives.
Of course none of this could have happened without the involvement of all the Meopham Windmill Trustees who have been there from the beginning;  in the positioning of the new cap and fantail and in pushing and pulling to test the sweeps were working.
We give a special thanks also to the local company Consilio for their support and particular care for the grounds and regular grass cutting. And thanks also, to Silverhand Estate because we celebrated a refreshing sparkling wine.

The entire restoration project has all been challenging but also extremely rewarding and now we look to the future as there is still much to do.

## Looking Ahead

We will be working on the garden and planting bulbs and we will also have the beginnings of a *bug hotel* to attract more wildlife and we're counting the birds, bugs and butterflies, amongst others of course.

The restoration of our lovely Windmill is continuing and there is still much to do to the interior so there is more to look forward to next Spring.

We trust you are as excited as we are about our brilliant start.
Meanwhile, enjoy the Autumn and we will be in touch again with the Winter-Spring newsletter.

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