

WINDMILL NEWS

Friends of West Blatchington Windmill - Newsletter - February 2021

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History repeated!

During a storm in December 1934 the fan broke loose but thanks to his quick thinking, a farmhand climbed out onto the fanstage and stopped it with an iron bar preventing any damage being done. Now, 86 years on, thanks to storm Christoph, history has been repeated!

I received a phone call, early on Thursday morning, from Dave & Sue Bernard, to say they and their neighbours had been awoken during the night by strange 'metallic' whining noises but it was not until dawn broke that they realised it was the fan turning intermittently in the gale force wind! So with Charles and Dave to back me up, it was my turn to climb out on the fanstage and by lashing the fan spokes to the staging supports, once again prevent any damage occurring.

As the weather improves, and conditions allow, we can soon permanently remedy the situation but for the time being there should be no more broken nights for the residents of Windmill Close!!

Peter Hill, President



Sue Bernard

NOTICE OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the
40th Annual General Meeting
 of the

Friends of West Blatchington Windmill

will be held on

Thursday 18th MARCH 2021 at 8pm.

Due to the current Covid-19 restrictions, the meeting will be held virtually using Zoom. More details can be found elsewhere in the paperwork accompanying this Newsletter.



2021 is a Census Year!

As no-one has ever actually lived in the Windmill it has never been mentioned in the National Censuses. These began in 1841 and have occurred every ten years since. (except 1941)

Edward Ledgerton 35 Miller f. y.

It is in this 1841 Census that we find the first mention of a 'miller'. His name is Edward Ledgerton who is 35 and born in Sussex. Sadly, that's as much as this Census tells us about him. It does show him living in 'Blatchington House' where a William Hodson, 63, is listed as a Farmer. There are 7 other households in the village, with 2 shepherds, a wheelwright, and a multitude of agricultural labourers. A total of 64 residents of West Blatchington.

By 1851 the village had shrunk to 53 residents, and John Hodson had succeeded his father, William, as the Farmer of 700 acres, but there is no mention of Edward Ledgerton. However, we do have mention of William Strudwick who is thought to have carried out the role of Miller.

William Strudwick Head 44 y.

In 1861 there are 59 residents and the Farm has grown to 800 acres. William now appears to be called Richard(!) and he is living in Toads Hole.

Toads Hole 1 Richard Strudwick Head 54 y.

The 1871 Census reveals John's brother, George Hodson, as Head of the 'Farm House' that now has an extra 50 acres. Richard Strudwick is still one of the 70 residents of the 'village', though his address has become 'Frogs Hole'!

Frogs Hole 1 Richard Strudwick Head 66 y.

Then in 1881 we see the first appearance of George Whittington. He is thought to have worked with Richard, who is still in the village, aged 78. It is in this year Richard cleared a heavy fall of snow from the fantail to ensure the sweeps would still turn to the wind! George Hodson remains head of the farm.

George Whittington Head 36 y.

The 1891 Census was the last before the Windmill ceased being a working mill. John Brown is now head of the Farm and there are no Strudwicks in the village. We can still find George Whittington, at a more specific address.

2 Hill Cottage 1 George Whittington Head 46 y.

There were 95 residents of 'the Ecclesiastical District of West Blatchington'. I wonder what the count will be in 2021!

One thing is certain, there is no 'miller'.



Winter Windmill in Lockdown



We were only able to spend a couple of evenings painting the newly made Snowman and checking that the Christmas tree was ready with fully functioning lights etc. Then the new lockdown came in. Fortunately we got them both up and down again, with help from Jack, his brothers and Dad!

Since then it has been a case of popping in regularly to check all is well and liaising with the new Estates team about the smoke alarm checks etc.

We are all hoping that we will be able to open at some stage during the year. We have started to plan rotas and are considering implications for volunteers and visitors alike. We clearly cannot make any set plans yet but rest assured our potential programme of events has multiple opportunities for us to enjoy our Mill again.

www.westblatchingtonwindmill.org

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EDITOR'S NOTE:

This edition has been printed in order to accompany the AGM documentation. Digital copies are also available to read or download from our [website](https://www.westblatchingtonwindmill.org) and will also be shared on our Facebook [page](https://www.facebook.com/WestBlatchingtonWindmill).

Please send any ideas and/or contributions for the next edition via [email](mailto:news@westblatchingtonwindmill.org) with **Newsletter** in the subject line. **Sue Burgess**

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