

## Replacing The Fantail Sails



Last year the Mill Maintenance team went to paint the fantail sails, but found that they had rotted.



The team measured the sails and calculated the requirements for replacements. Seasoned oak was purchased from Whippletree in Hertfordshire at a cost of £1,800. Museum Development East Midlands contributed £800.



During the autumn a pair of sails were removed (it had to be one from each side to keep the fantail balanced). One sail was



used as a pattern for the new sails. It was tough, dusty work cutting the seasoned oak to size and shape.



"Biscuit holes" were made along the joining edges so that "biscuits" (small wooden discs) could be used to seamlessly join each piece to its neighbours. Gradually each sail took shape.



As the work on the new sails took place during winter, the mill provided the space to spread out the cut timbers for painting.



Many mill visitors have noticed how windy the mill area is at ground level. To withstand the elements at the top of the mill, each piece of sail was given three coats of paint.



The team will tell you that it might be a warm, sunny day at ground level, but it was much colder on the fantail. Cold hands on cold spanners made replacing the sails a tough job.

Scaffolding poles were used to create a safe working platform with rails. Volunteers wore secured harnesses and hard hats when working.

