

## Hough Mill - The Last 100 Years

**T**here are a number of known sources that help provide an insight into the history of Hough Mill, Swannington during the last century.



### Watercolour by Elsie Palmer

This watercolour is by Miss Elsie Palmer, of Hough Hill. In 1926 she became Headmistress of Thringstone Infants School.

It is perhaps an idealised picture of the pond and the mill. It includes a fence between the Gorse Field and the mill, instead of the hawthorn hedge of today.



### Karl Salsbury Wood

Karl Salsbury Wood was born at Kings Newton, Melbourne in 1888, the son of gardener John Radford Wood and Harriet Salsbury. During WWI he was injured in France while in the army.

He later became an art and music teacher in Gainsborough Lincolnshire.

In 1951 he was imprisoned for four years for homosexual activities.

On leaving prison he moved 400 miles and stayed with the monks at Pluscarden Priory near Elgin in Moray. He died of tuberculosis in 1958.

Between 1926 and 1956 Wood drew 1,394

windmills during his cycling tours. The collection is at the Usher Art Gallery in Lincoln and digitally on the millsarchive.org website.



This drawing of Hough Mill is different to the version in the Trust collection. However, it is usual for artists to make a rough drawing on site, then draw the final version in their studio.

Karl Wood seems to have been on a tour as he sketched Stathern, Harby and Long Clawson, on the 24th December 1932. Perhaps he stayed with his Melbourne family for Christmas.

On the 26th he drew Wymeswold and Blackbrook before reaching Hough Mill (which he named Coleorton). If he was staying at Melbourne that would have been a 40 mile round trip. Heage and Carsington were drawn on the 27th.

Wood's sketch shows the cart house, earth mound surrounded the mill, and the dilapidated cap and sails.

Much of the iron mill equipment in Hough Mill came from Chippenham Smock Mill near Soham. It no longer exists. Karl Wood depicted it without sails on the 2nd September 1933. This is mill 631, so he drew about 200 windmills in nine months!



### HES Simmons Report 1945

Herbert Edward Sydney Simmons 1901-1973 was a member of the Cyclists Touring Club. During the 1930's he started photographing windmills and selling postcards of them. He also recorded details of the mills, intending to publish a book.

He worked for the Ministry of Defence and during WWII was in the RAF in Warwickshire and East Anglia.

He visited Hough Mill on the 6th May 1945 and recorded its condition. While there are some differences, the mill restoration is very similar to the original described in his report.

- There was a five foot mound of earth around the mill. This was removed by the Trust in 1999.
- Originally the mill had four sails but only the remnants of the outer two remained, just the stocks and two whips. Four sails have been installed.
- Fan tackle was used and some iron gearing remains, but the fan-stage and supports are gone. A new fantail was added in 2009.
- An inwards facing geared ring, cast in segments, was used for turning the cap,



which is timber-framed. The restoration replicated this. Only three pieces of the original geared ring at the top of the mill survive. They were made into seats in 2015.

- Wooden, octagonal windshaft, about 18in across near the neck bearing. The 2009 windshaft is about the same dimensions but cylindrical.
- The brakewheel had iron teeth cast in segments and bolted on. This was replicated on the 2012 brakewheel.
- The original wallower was about 4ft 6in, whereas the 2014 wallower is about a foot wider.
- The sackhoist was driven by friction from bottom of wallower. This was replicated in 2017.
- Two pairs of stones were underdriven and mounted on the first floor. All gear removed except one bridge tree and remnants of one 4ft 6in diameter stone on floor of mill. The 1999 restoration installed two sets of underdriven stones on the first floor.



The HES Simmonds papers and this 1960's photo are held by the Science Museum.

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- There was a set of 5ft diameter peak stones mounted on a 3ft high hurst frame and the wooden bridge tree was just above ground level. These stones were removed prior to the 1986 repairs notice issued by North West Leicestershire District Council.

### The Ground Floor Stones



The ground floor mill stones are now in the possession of a supporter of the Trust, who is prepared to loan them to the Trust on a long term basis.

### Historic England - Listed Building

In the early 1980's local heritage enthusiasts were concerned about the condition of the mill. They asked NWLDC to have it listed.

The mill was given a grade II listing by English Heritage (now Historic England) on the 1st September 1983, listing number 1361234.

The mill was described as: Smock Mill - Tower mill, C18. Brick, 3 storeys, with doorway and some plain rectangular openings. Slight remains of cap survive.

### NWLDC Mill Repairs Notice 1986

In May 1985 a district councillor raised the deterioration of the mill with the NWLDC planning department. Leicestershire County Council's Historic Buildings Advisor carried out a physical inspection of the mill on the 2nd July 1985.

Several letters were exchanged between NWLDC and the Hough family. On the 17th June 1986 NWLDC served a notice on the Hough family, giving them a year to carry out a range of repairs.

- Make good brickwork at top of mill.
- Repair arches and lintels over doorways and windows.
- Vertical cracks above windows to be pointed.
- Window sills to be repaired to shed water.
- Loose bricks to be set in cement mortar.
- Recesses for internal timbers to be repaired.
- Holes in internal bricks to be filled with cement mortar.
- Treat timber beams with fungicide and wood preservative.

### Compulsory Purchase Order

As the repairs were not carried out, on the 15th October 1987 NWLDC decided to purchase the mill and 1,830 square metres of land.

The CPO process required confirmation by the Department for the Environment. There were some objectors to the CPO (including some councillors). A public inquiry took place.

The purchase was completed on the 28th March 1990. Four years later NWLDC sold the mill to the Trust.



The brickwork was in a very poor state in 1992 and 1994 when the Trust bought the mill.