

Warwick Bridge Corn Mill Project

Quarterly Update June 2019

Works on Site:



Since March, the main external works have been to identify suitable locations for the drainage trenches and incoming power and water supplies for mill – this has meant several test trenches being opened up to ensure sufficient depth to allow the services to be safely located. A few places were tested – uncovering glimpses of earlier cobbled yards and foundations of structures but eventually suitable locations were found.

The water, electricity and telephone cables were all expected to be complete by the end of June, but slight technical difficulties were discovered with the main water supply – which would have required the main A69 road to be closed and all traffic diverted while a new larger capacity pipe was installed under the road – so an alternative connection has been made that avoids the need for this.

HPR have completed the rebuilding of the parapet wall for the eastern loading dock and made a start on relaying the cobble setts in the top yard.





Internally, work has continued on the Drying Kiln – with conservation experts removing and repairing the metalwork that supports the kiln tiles, new padstones inserted to support the floor, new stairs to the east of the kiln and rebuilding of the stone wall at the top of the kiln.



In other areas of the mill wiring and lighting and plumbing are being installed, as well as new access ramps to the milling floor, and two new staircases so that it will be possible to go from top to bottom of the mill without having to walk around the outside. Work on creating toilet provision within the mill has also been undertaken, with public loos being created by partitioning off part of the store on the ground floor near to the mill wheel and staff loos in the barn, and we hope that this will be completed in early July.





More of the windows have been repaired and re-installed – particular care had to be taken with one very oddly shaped louvre that fits against the roof structure





The millwrights have continued their work both on and off site and in mid April we were able to test the waterwheel – it was exciting to see and hear it running for the first time in many years – there is a clip on our project facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/wbcornmill/videos/1924102857700861/>) and towards the end of June they brought back the repaired sluice gate and framework which will go into place in the headrace at the top of the cascade so that water can be diverted around the mill in the beck when maintenance work is being carried out. This will also have an automated gate that will open when water levels rise too high to prevent flooding.





People Update

Alongside the building works the volunteers have been busy, taking part in training sessions and getting very muddy assisting the millwrights in the clearing of the head race.

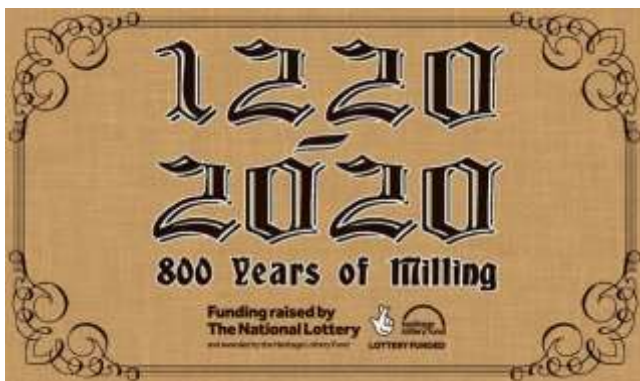


We had the offer of assistance from an expert in the field of ironwork conservation and had two training days learning all about the development of iron and its smelting processes over the years, along with understanding the differences between wrought and cast iron and the best methods of caring for and restoring these. This will all help enable us to better conserve the historic tiles that were used for grain

drying in the top of the kiln as well as other iron tools, handles, brackets etc. that form part of the machinery in the mill collection.



Additional training in lime pointing and stone dressing and carving have also taken place – open to both volunteers and members of the public. Karen is starting to introduce regular drop in sessions for volunteers so that anyone with an hour or so to spare can call at the mill and do whatever tasks are required – training can be given if needed.



Karen and some of the volunteers have also been taking part in a project being run by Heron Corn Mill –The ‘1220 -2020 Flax Project’ aiming to bring small scale flax growing and fibre production back to the Beetham and Milnthorpe area – and across the UK with the help of visitors to the Mill –

for the duration of the project and beyond. The Flax Project is part of the Heritage Lottery Funded '800 Years of Milling', which is a program celebrating the milling history at Heron Corn Mill in Beetham. We are growing flax in different parts of the mill garden, so that we can see what conditions suit it best. The flax will be harvested and processed – it is an incredibly versatile plant and will be used to make linen cloth, strong twine and rope. The flowers are a vibrant blue and as from medieval times onwards flax was grown on both a domestic and small agricultural scale would have been a familiar site in the summer landscape.



In addition to these activities on site, we held a Public Meeting in the Downagate Community Centre in early April, where we had a display showing the work that has been done to date, talked through what we hope to achieve with the project and introduced the concept of greater community involvement through the setting up of a community benefit society who would be responsible for the day to day running of the mill.

We were pleased at the turnout and the enthusiasm shown by everyone for our vision – helped by the tasty samples that our future baker brought with them – and we have held several smaller meetings with those who'd expressed an interest in being part of a steering group to set up the group and working towards a community share offer later this summer. There will be more public meetings in due course, but if anyone is interested in hearing more about what this is all about, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Harry, our archaeologist has been keeping an eye on works on site, and has been keeping detailed records – which ultimately will be turned into a report that will be deposited with the archives in Carlisle – as another chapter in the history and life of the Corn Mill. His regular updates are posted on our website on the Warwick Bridge Corn Mill page and can be downloaded from there – as well as available in various local outlets – including the Doctors' surgery waiting room, the primary school and other venues – thanks to the efforts of our volunteers.

As always, our thanks go to all our supporters and funders, both large and small, without which this restoration would not be possible: National Lottery Heritage Fund, Architectural Heritage Fund, Historic England, Garfield Weston Foundation, The Wolfson Foundation, Arts Council England, The Pilgrim Trust, The Headley Trust, Cumbria Waste Management Environment Trust, Cumbria County Council, RDPE Leader Programme and others.