

The Eling Experience PROJECT news

Summer 2015

elingexperience.co.uk

The tide mill has stood at the centre of life in Eling for centuries. For 900 years millers have been harnessing the power of the tides in Eling Creek to grind wheat into flour. Today the Grade II* listed tide mill and adjacent heritage centre form the Eling Experience visitor attraction. Now the partnership of New Forest District Council (NFDC) and Totton and Eling Town Council are working to secure its future.

A design and project management team led by NFDC, along with the Eling Experience staff and specialist consultants, has painstakingly researched and developed a Conservation Management Plan and applied to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a £1.3 million grant to safeguard this unique piece of local heritage.

The Eling Experience Project will include essential conservation of the mill, extending and developing the heritage centre and cafe and improving access to Goatee Beach and Bartley Water.

During the project this newsletter will keep you up to date with work on-site, as well as news of any exciting discoveries and ways to get involved.

We will be closed until Summer 2016 while the work is carried out.



Eling Tide Mill

Community events and activities

While we're closed we will be out and about in the local area working with schools and running events in the community. In May half term we ran a free doughcraft workshop at Totton and Eling Community Centre, when families created some lovely pieces of artwork. **During the summer holidays there will be more free family fun at Totton Library.** Find out more on our Facebook page or email ruth.kerr@elingexperience.co.uk to be added to our family activities email list.



Reuniting local people with their history

Over the years the community has generously contributed to our collection of artefacts. As part of the improvement project the heritage centre will include an exciting interactive exhibition telling the story of the mill, the local area and the power of the tide.

While some of the objects will form part of the new displays, we've been working with Totton and Eling Historical Society to reunite other items with their original owners. Some pieces have been returned to families, bringing back memories of the people who donated them, while others have found new homes with other heritage organisations.



LOTTERY FUNDED



New Forest
DISTRICT COUNCIL



Totton and Eling
Town Council



elingexperience



Discovering the mill's past at Winchester College

The new exhibition will tell the story of the mill and the people who worked it over the centuries. To help piece the story together, Eling Experience staff - Ruth Kerr (community engagement officer) and miller Matt Painter - recently visited the archives of Winchester College, which owned the mill for more than 600 years.

Ruth said: "We confirmed that the mill was owned by the Crown until about 1200, as part of the Royal Manor of Eling. In the mid-1300s it was bought by the Bishop of Winchester and given to the new college he had founded". The tide mill went on to become an important source of income for the college. "We also saw a beautiful map of Eling from 1692, which gave us a great idea of how the area would have looked and how it's changed."

Matt also gained some fascinating insights into past millers amongst the ancient documents: "We saw the earliest surviving lease for the mill. It dates from 1418, when Thomas Mydlington of Southampton agreed to rebuild a new mill and repair the causeway". It was not until 1975 that the tide mill changed ownership once more, when New Forest District Council bought it to save it from falling into disrepair.

On site:

Dressing the stones



Our miller Matt has been carrying out some essential maintenance before the main conservation works begin in the mill. 'Dressing' the mill stones involves redefining the furrows in the two heavy stones that grind together to mill the wheat into flour. Armed with the tools for the job, including a proving staff, some thrifts and some tungsten tipped mill bills, and with expert Geoff Wallis on hand, Matt embarked on a process which hasn't changed in hundreds of years. First the heavy top, or 'runner', stone was lifted off using the stone crane, allowing the miller to check for high spots on the grinding face of the lower 'bedstone'. The high spots were then chipped away using the mill bills. After three long days of painstaking work, the sluice gate was opened to allow the water to slowly turn the machinery and check that the stones were equally balanced. If one side was heavier than the other the stones would rub together, undoing all their hard work. "Fortunately" said Matt "they were perfectly balanced. We reassembled the machinery and it was a relief when good quality flour began coming down the chute once more".

Read Matt's full account of dressing the stones at elingexperience.co.uk



Protecting the timber

During the summer we will begin the conservation of the mill building by treating the timbers to protect them against damage from pests such as woodworm.

Finding out more



elingexperience.co.uk



[Facebook.com/elingexperience](https://www.facebook.com/elingexperience)



info@elingtidemill.org.uk



Project newsletters