

LLYNON MILL, LLANDDEUSANT, ANGLESEY

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Background

Llynon Mill is one of the last remaining examples of a working windmill on Anglesey. It is best described as being a stone tower mill and is typical of all the Windmills built on Anglesey and also of those in the North West of England.

This mill has been well documented in the Anglesey Inventory of Ancient Monuments and as well as including a detailed description of the mill, a comprehensive account of the actual workings of its machinery are contained with fascinating references to the production of groats etc., and the workings of a Groat Machine is described. This account was produced by Mr. Rex Wailes.

However, at the time of this record in the late thirties Llynon Mill was falling into disrepair. It had been severely damaged in 1918 in a storm and only worked intermittently until about 1924 and then only when the wind was in the South West. In 1954 the mill was subjected to further storm damage, when most of the sails and the cap was lost and only four whips, the cast iron cross and windshaft holding them in place remained.

Interest in restoring this mill has existed since before 1953 and at one time consideration was given to moving the buildings, which is grade 2 listed to the Folk Museum at St. Fagans. The former Anglesey County Council prepared several schemes for its restoration but for a variety of reasons, usually the shortage of money, the schemes failed.

Purchase of the Mill

In 1978 the Mill was advertised for sale. This caused a strong reaction from the public, who urged the new Council i.e. The Ynys Mon—Isle of Anglesey Borough Council to purchase the property, so that it could be restored, endorsing their request with a bulky petition.

Encouragement for this action was received from the Council for the Protection of Rural Wales as well as the Historic Buildings Council for Wales, this Council eventually making a generous grant to the Borough Council.

The Borough Council purchased the mill, outbuildings and about 4½ acres of land in the November of 1978 for £10,000.

Restoration and Technical Description

Needless to say, when the Council did buy the mill it was in a most neglected and derelict state. The remaining sail was

hanging precariously from the top, all the floors and beams had collapsed into a heap of machinery, stones and rotting timbers in the base. It was in such a dangerous condition that sign warning intruders to keep out had to be erected.

In 1979, a 45 ton crane was hired to clear out all the contents of the mill and salvage all reusable material i.e. the millstones and all metal parts including the windshaft, spurwheel, wallower and brakewheel parts and so on, were recovered.

The crane was also necessary, when work on the tower began during 1980 and put to good use in lifting new beams and inserting them through holes which had to be cut in the structure. Several cracks which had been exposed had to be made good, rotten lintols and broken slate sills were replaced and the external wall was replastered.

All metal parts were sandblasted clean, painted and repaired as necessary. Fresh castiron windows were made by utilising the best frame as a pattern and the new windows replaced those broken.

The millwrights then commenced the first major works inside the mill i.e. the fitting of the oak upright shaft and fixing the oak curb or rack at the top of the tower adding the geared rack and the centering frame as soon as the dust floor had been formed. The spurwheel and the wallower were fitted on to the lower and upper ends of the oak shaft respectively. The oak H. frame was lifted into place then the metal windshaft and brakewheel positioned in relation to the wallower and the centering frame. The fixing of the turning gear including the cartwheel or chain wheel culminated the mechanical input of the Millwrights at the top of the mill.

The sack hoist gear on the dust floor was fixed and the boat shaped cap erected at the top of the mill so that carpenters and joiners could now be sheltered whilst they fitted the remaining floors and steps including the traps for the sack hoist.

New external doors were made and hung.

The Millwrights continued fitting the stone frames and laid the bed and runner stones in place together with bearings, tentering gear, spindles and stone nuts. Two sets of stones only will be in working order and the third set, which has a single bed stone will be open for public view.

The carpenter made and fitted the stone casings, grain spouts, hoppers and shoes and flour chutes and fixed pitch pine stanchions under the millstones. Fortunately, detailed drawings of most of these items were obtained from the National

Monuments Record for Wales, Aberystwyth and the drawings proved invaluable in ensuring that the new parts were authentic and accurately replaced. The millwrights then erected the pitch pine sails.

The interior walls were plastered and the ground floor relaid and old millstones re-set in the floor, the cap was given a final coat of creosote and both internal and external walls painted white.

This then is the background to the detailed restoration of the mill. The Borough Council paid for the project with money allocated from the Shell Fund and was assisted with a generous grant and advice from the Historic Buildings Council for Wales. The cost of the operation has been about £120,000.

The supervision of the project was undertaken by the Planning Department under the wing of the former Director, Mr. Reg Powell.

The success of the scheme has depended to a great degree on the Millwrights R. Thompson and Son (Mr. J.C. Davies) Alford, Lincs, for their ready assistance and advice and also on Messrs. Jones & Williams, Building Contractors, Llangefni (Mr. William Jones) who were responsible for the carpentry.

Their craftsmanship and skills has ensured that the historic and technical integrity of this mill has been faithfully maintained.

Official Opening

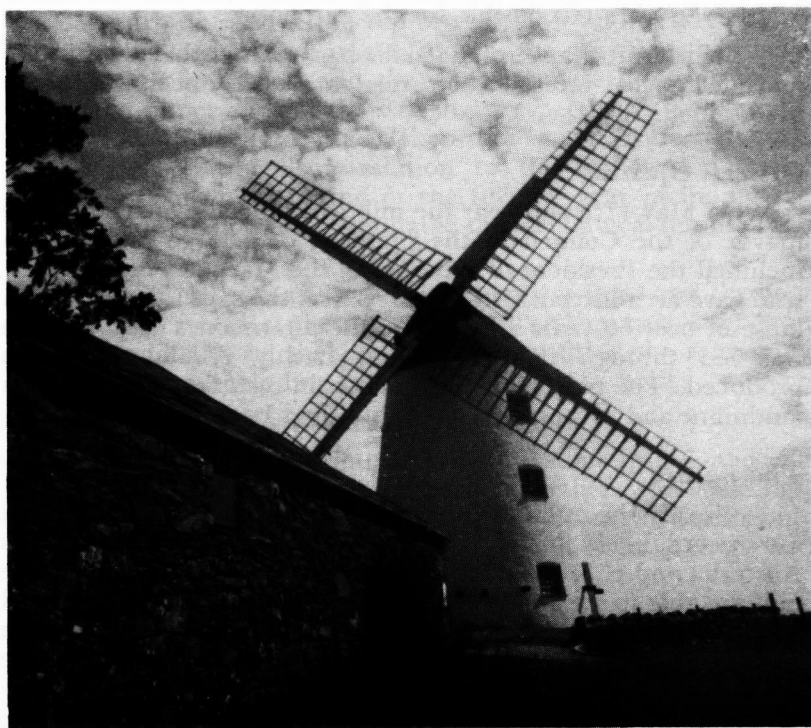
On May 11th this year the mill was officially opened by the mayor of the Council in the presence of a large party which included the President of this Society the Marquess of Anglesey, who gave an address. A steady breeze set the sails turning after a lapse of over 60 years and during the afternoon a sack of grain was fed through the stones and freshly ground meal was produced. The objects of the Council in restoring this mill as a landmark and as a working windmill had been achieved.

The Future

Already the mill is attracting a large number of visitors and our record book shows addresses from places as far apart as Australia and U.S.A. Local school children, who have visited the mill are able to see and get some idea on how flour was produced in their grandparents' time. Degree course students from the Liverpool Polytechnic have also measured and photographed the building and its machinery as a part of their studies.



Llynon Mill in 1978 (*above*) and in 1984 after restoration (*below*).



Plans have been approved to restore the outbuildings for interpretative displays, as toilet accommodation and for the provision of light refreshments. A car park will be formed and some landscaping will be carried out.

A temporary caretaker has recently been appointed and the public can now visit the mill each afternoon as well as during the evening by arrangement with the caretaker, for the time being. It is the intention, however, of the Borough Council to appoint a miller on a full time basis as a priority so that the mill will once again operate and the sails turn freely once more.

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Mr. Rex Wailes wrote an important article on the Llynon Mill, and made the accompanying drawings, for the *Anglesey Inventory of the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments in Wales and Monmouthshire*, published in 1937, Appendix X, pp.clxv-clxviii. As noted by Mr. Stead, this article was helpful in the restoration of the mill. We rejoice that Mr. Wailes at the age of 83 has been able to see the mill put into good working order again, and we are glad to supplement Mr. Stead's account with the following note from his pen. The Ancient Monuments Society took a great interest in the mill when its future was uncertain and seconded the efforts of the old Anglesey County Council led by Mr. N. Squire Johnson to acquire and restore it.

Additional Note by Rex Wailes

When I prepared to record the windmills of Anglesey for the Industrial Monuments Survey, I consulted the late Wilfrid Hemp, who had known me all my life, and through him was given all the necessary local help.

Most of the mills were in a very poor state and after a thorough examination of every one of them, it was decided that the Llanddeusant mill had the strongest claim.

As there was, and still is, a shortage of experienced millwrights in that part of the country, I suggested that Messrs. Thompson, of Alford, Lincolnshire should be employed.

The only mill in Anglesey which was complete and working was the well-known tidemill at Menai Bridge and a large gathering was held, at which the project was agreed upon.

Sufficient money was promised for the work to be undertaken at once. The work was very well executed but before it could be started I took Messrs. Thompson to a mill in The Fylde

of Lancashire where they recorded many details and gave an estimate.

The work was extremely well executed and, provided that an annual inspection by a trained millwright is made and the necessary work is done at once, the mill should last as long as the firm of millwrights is in existence.

I have inspected much of their millwork and have never had to make any complaints, and only to report extremely satisfactory work.

I very much regret that I was unable to accept the kind invitation from the Anglesey Borough Council to attend the opening ceremony on May 11th.

Rex Wailes