

Dereham Windmill

The last of Dereham's windmills

Over the years there were at least four windmills and three watermills in and near to Dereham but this is the last one remaining. It was built in 1836 as a flour mill by local baker Michael Hardy and James Hardy, a millwright of Toftwood. It was in use for exactly 100 years and ceased working in 1937.

The windmill consisted of a brick tower with a wooden boat-shaped cap, four double shuttered sails and a six-bladed fantail. Although the mill was built with two pairs of stones a third pair was later added to the stone floor and a fourth pair to the first floor, driven by a paraffin engine.



The cap carried the fantail and contained the windshaft onto which were mounted the sails and the brakewheel. The cap revolved around a circular iron track to face the wind and turn the sails.

During World War I, it was used for grist milling, grinding oats and barley for animal feed and even acorns for pigs.

The sails were finally removed in 1922, their wind power replaced by a paraffin engine that also replaced the older auxiliary steam engine.

It became a Grade II Listed Building in 1972, by which time it had lost its cap and had become very dilapidated. The listing saved the building as the owners wanted to demolish it.

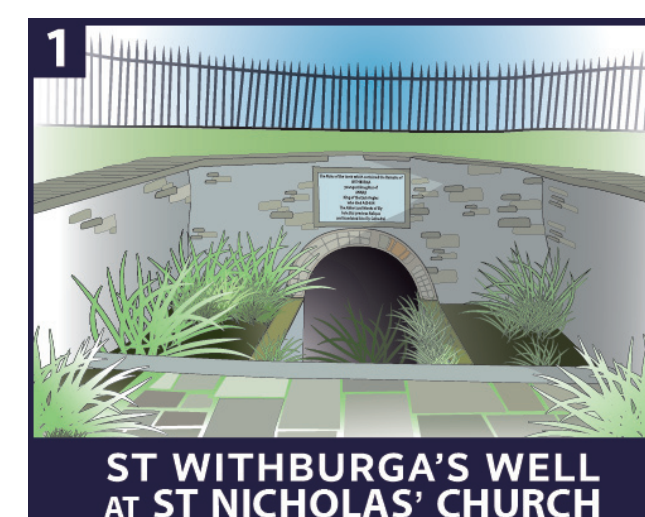
In 1979 Breckland District Council purchased the building for £1. Much of the machinery had already been removed and it was decided to restore the mill as a landscape feature and not to full working order.



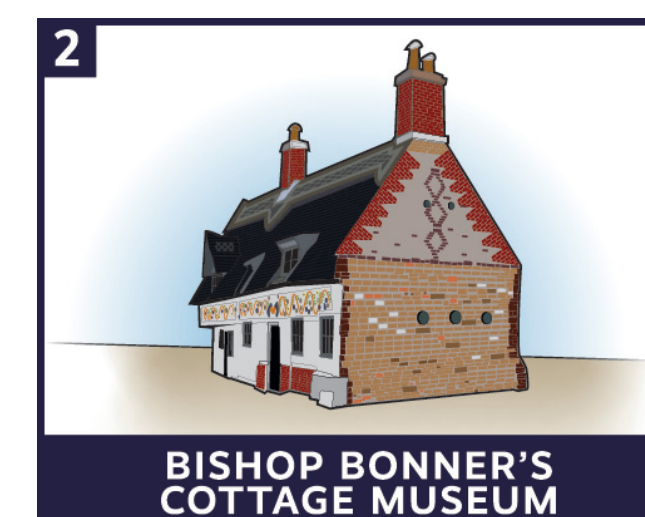
The restored mill was opened in 1987 and was subsequently taken into the care of Dereham Town Council in 2002.

A video portrays Miller William Fendick who bought the mill in 1844. He talks to visitors about what life was like as a miller in the 19th century.

In 2011 the Friends of Dereham Windmill secured funding to complete the restoration and re-open the windmill as a visitor and exhibition centre. Learn more at derehamwindmill.co.uk



Find out why Withburga became a saint and see her holy well at the west side of the town



These beautiful cottages house Dereham's museum and are in the ancient heart of the town



Opened by the Queen Mother in 1983, an oasis of tranquility off Church Street near the Guildhall



A great venue for live performance, workshops and meetings with a 300 seat auditorium



Dereham Station and railway has been restored by volunteers and is now fully operational



The last windmill in Dereham, now restored as a visitor centre with parking and tea rooms

From the windmill to Dereham town centre is only one mile, (1.6km) about a 20 minute walk or a few minutes by car. There is ample parking in the town centre and a very good shopping offer with a mix of national brands and independent shops and cafes.

There are several interesting sites to see in the town and leisure activities such as the leisure centre, the recreation ground and skate park and play areas. Neatherd Moor offers a chance to play and walk away from the roads and take in some of the diverse flora and fauna at any time of year.