

= Stembridge Mill , High Ham =

Stembridge Tower Mill in High Ham , Somerset , England , is the last remaining thatched windmill in England . The mill is a grade II * listed building .

The stone tower mill was built in 1822 with four floors and a thatched " cap " . A steam engine was installed in 1894 , and became the mill 's sole source of power after a storm damaged it in 1897 or 1898 . Commercial use ended in 1908 . The mill is now owned by The National Trust . In 2009 , it underwent a £ 100 @, @ 000 restoration by local craftsmen funded by the Grantscape Community Heritage Fund , and was re @-@ opened later that year .

= = History = =

Stembridge Mill was constructed for Robert Tatchell in 1822 . It incorporated parts from the earlier Ham Mill , a few hundred yards to the north east . The mill has a 26 feet (7 @. @ 9 m) tower situated on an old mill mound , surrounded by a low wall intended to keep people and livestock away from the sails .

Tatchell leased the mill to his son @-@ in @-@ law John Sherrin , who inherited the mill in 1824 following Tatchell 's death . When Sherrin died , the mill passed to his three sons , although only one , Robert , worked the mill . Simon Spearing became the miller in 1869 . He was later assisted by his son William , who lost an arm when he was thirteen due to an accident at a watermill in Low Ham . The mill was acquired by Adam Sherrin in 1881 and owned by his family until 1902 . By the late 1880s , the mill was being rented by George Parker . He added a portable steam engine as auxiliary power . It drove one pair of stones . The mill was damaged by storms in 1897 or 1898 and after that was only powered by the steam engine , which had been installed in 1894 , rather than the wind . The bakehouse ceased to be used around this time .

Robert Hook then acquired the mill . Unable to compete against grain imports and the building of dockside mills at Avonmouth , Stembridge Mill was last used commercially in 1908 . Hook sold the mill and 5 acres (2 @. @ 0 ha) of land to Dr. Hugh Hale Leigh Bellot for £ 500 . Upon his death in 1928 , it was inherited by his son , Professor Hugh Hale Bellot . In 1969 Professor Bellot left the windmill , miller 's cottage and garden to the National Trust in his will . New sails were added in 1971 , along with other repairs . Further repairs were carried out in 1974 , including the removal of floors . It was designated as a grade II * listed building in 1986 .

It is the last survivor of five windmills that once existed in the area .

In 2009 the sails were replaced and the mill re @-@ thatched and restored by local craftsmen at a cost of a £ 100 @, @ 000 ; the mill was re @-@ opened later that year . The work was funded by the Grantscape Community Heritage Fund . Although the sails do not rotate with the wind , they are moved 90 degrees four times per year for maintenance . Before the restoration work was undertaken surveys revealed that the mill was used as a roost for long @-@ eared and lesser horseshoe bats . It was ensured that the bats would still have access after the restoration .

= = Description = =

Note : Italicized terms are defined in the mill machinery article .

Stembridge Mill is a tower mill , a type of windmill which consists of a brick or stone tower , on top of which sits a roof or cap which can be turned to bring the sails into the wind . The advantage of the tower mill over the earlier post mill is that it is not necessary to turn the whole mill (" body " , " buck ") with all its machinery into the wind ; this allows more space for the machinery and storage . In the earliest tower mills the cap was turned into the wind with a long tail @-@ pole which stretched to the ground at the back of the mill . Later , a looping chain was used which turned the cap with gears , as is used at Stembridge . It is winded by a wheel and chain . The windshaft is of wood , with a cast iron cross , which carries four common sails . The brake wheel is of clasp arm construction . No other machinery remains , since the wallower , upright shaft and great spur wheel were removed after the mill ceased to operate by wind

The mill has four floors , a thatched cap and is constructed of local limestone known in the area as Blue Lias . It has two pairs of 4 @-@ foot (1 @.@ 22 m) diameter millstones . One pair is French Burr stones , which date from 1859 . The other pair has a French Burr runner stone on a conglomerate bedstone . Both pairs of millstones were originally driven overdrift by the windmill , with the mixed pair later being driven underdrift by the steam engine , which also drove a wire machine . The remains of the old bakehouse can be seen at the rear of the mill .

= = Millers = =

The following millers worked Stenbridge Mill :

John Sherrin (1822 ? ?)

Robert Sherrin (1861 ? 69)

Simon Spearing (1869 ? ?)

Joseph Loader (1879 ? 81)

George Parker (1889 ? 97)

Frank Parker (1897 ? 98)

Robert Mead (1898 ? ?)

F. G. Harding (post 1898)

Mr. Hill (post 1898)