

## = Watermill at Opwetten =

The Watermill at Opwetten ( Dutch : Opwettense watermolen ) is a watermill along the river Kleine Dommel , located on the Opwettenseweg 203 in Opwetten , Nuenen , Gerwen en Nederwetten , in the province of North Brabant , Netherlands . First mentioned in the 11th century , the watermill burned down and was rebuilt in 1764 .

There have been several buildings in the watermill complex . One building was a gristmill and sawmill , while another functioned as oil mill and fulling mill . The mill operated two undershot water wheels , including the largest water wheel in the Netherlands . The gristmill is still in functioning order and is used on a small scale , the building of the former oil and fulling mill now houses a restaurant . A tannery was located in a building in the back and up to 1910 an inn was located in the miller 's house . Vincent van Gogh lived nearby and made several paintings while in the area , including a painting of the mill in 1884 . The watermill was listed as a national monument in 1972 .

## = History =

The gristmill was built in the early 11th century along the river Kleine Dommel , by monks of a Benedictine monastery in Sint @-@ Truiden , Belgium . In the 14th century the mill was owned by the lords and ladies of the heerlijkheid Cuijk and Mierlo , and was a banmolen ( nl ) , meaning peasants in the locality were obligated to use this mill to grind their wheat .

In 1664 the mill partially burned down . It was rebuilt and , in order to recover from the losses , the miller did not have to pay taxes for the next 15 years . In 1764 another fire destroyed the entire mill , according to an ordinance from the States General after the miller requested assistance . The mill was rebuilt with the addition of a second water wheel . The larger building was a gristmill and the smaller building an oil mill . In 1909 a sawmill was added to the larger building , and for a period the smaller building also acted as a fulling mill .

A plaque placed on the miller 's house in 1973 to celebrate the 100th birthday of miller Gerardus van Hoorn commemorates both fires . Van Hoorn had known the Dutch painter Vincent van Gogh , who lived in nearby Nuenen from 1883 until 1885 . Van Gogh painted several paintings around the mill , including an 1884 painting of the mill itself , Water Mill at Opwetten ( F48 ) . In a video interview in 1973 , Van Hoorn said that he had seen Van Gogh paint and had supplied him with bird nests for his paintings .

The mill has had several names and during the first centuries it was known as the Saint Anthony Mill ( Dutch : St. Antoniusmolen ) , named after a nearby chapel dedicated to saint Anthony the Great . From 1726 until it came into the possession of Gerardus van Hoorn in 1916 , the mill was known as Jan 's Mill ( Dutch : Jansmolen ) .

## = Description =

The Watermill at Opwetten is situated along the river Kleine Dommel . Diverted river water flows along a channel with force to drive two wooden undershot water wheels , connected to two buildings on either side of the channel .

The buildings are made of painted wood on a brick foundation , with tiled roofs , and an extruding hatch covering the main entrance of the higher building . The gristmill , originally used to grind spelt , later ground bread wheat , and then a sawmill was added . It has a water wheel of 9 @.@ 30 metres ( 30 ft 6 in ) in diameter , consisting of 44 paddles of 80 centimetres ( 2 ft 7 in ) width , which makes it the largest water wheel in the Netherlands . The gristmill is still in functioning order , and uses a pair of Cullen millstones from Mayen ( " Cullen " for " Cologne " , where such millstones were marketed from ) , and a pair of cast millstones , both 17 hands in diameter or 1 @.@ 50 metres ( 4 ft 11 in ) . Only some remainders are left of the sawmill , including one of only two watermill circular saws in the Netherlands . Inside the larger mill is a room for the assistants of the miller , where the names of millers and their assistants have been carved in the wood .

The oil mill and fulling mill used a water wheel of 7 @.@ 50 metres ( 24 ft 7 in ) in diameter and

used 30 paddles with a width of 30 centimetres ( 1 ft 0 in ) . The oil mill was used to crush and press oil @-@ bearing seeds to extract vegetable oils , and the fullingmill kneaded wool for hours or days in order to make it thicker . Both structures are completely gone , and only two edge stones posted outside remind of its former function as oil mill . It currently houses a restaurant .

= = Modern day = =

The mill was listed as a national monument ( nr 30830 ) on 14 June 1972 . The grounds are freely accessible . The gristmill is operated and open to the public on Sunday afternoon , and the restaurant is open every day of the week except on Mondays . The mill is located on the Opwettenseweg 203 in Nuenen , Gerwen en Nederwetten , in the province of North Brabant , Netherlands . The next mill upstream is the Collse Watermolen on the Kleine Dommel . The next mill downstream is the Hooidonkse Watermolen on the Dommel .

In 2011 , a full @-@ size replica of the mill was built at the Binjiang Park in Nanjing , China . Together with replicas of three other Dutch monuments , it is part of the ' Van Gogh Friendship Park ' , in honour of the relationships between the sister cities of Eindhoven and Nanjing , and the sister provinces of North @-@ Brabant and Jiangsu . The mayor of Nanjing , Ji Jianye , visited the Watermill at Opwetten in 2012 , during his visit to Eindhoven .