



**Renewable Heritage Trust**

Old Buildings – New Energy

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# friends Newsletter

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0005



## Unanimous verdict!



Val Hood and Andrew Yeats - gallant speakers on behalf of the Howsham Mill Project

On January 17 2006, two years of work were put to the test when the application for planning permission and listed building consent were put before Ryedale District Council's planning committee.

We were advised beforehand that the application could not be recommended for approval owing to concerns over restoring a "ruin" and car parking arrangements - the best we could possibly hope for would be to have the decision deferred until the next session, allowing the Councillors to have a site visit, and the planners to undergo further consultation.

Imagine our surprise, therefore, when Councillor after Councillor stepped up to support the project. Cllr Knaggs stated that the planning department was running the risk of "doing the right thing eventually but being niggardly in their approach". Between them the Councillors described the Howsham Mill Project as "brilliant", "exactly the sort of project that we should be supporting", "inspirational" - Cllr Raper concluded: "Anyone objecting to this scheme should be hung drawn and quartered, and I will be happy to do it". Tempting, but perhaps a little extreme!

At the vote, the planning officers' recommendation to defer a decision was overturned, and approval was given unanimously (subject to the usual terms and conditions of course!)

Three people are to be particularly thanked for their part in this miraculous verdict: volunteer Val Hood who overcame her nerves to give a tremendous speech in support of the project; Andrew Yeats, (architect), who has been our unfailing source of encouragement from the beginning, and who delivered such a rousing speech on our behalf, we thought the Councillors were all going to break out into spontaneous applause, and Sir Frederic Strickland-Constable, our patron and champion in every sense. At the eleventh hour, he stepped into the breach and offered us a piece of land to use as a car park in order to appease the planners. There is no doubt that this magnanimous gesture tipped the balance in our favour.

Thanks of course also to everyone who has had energy and imagination enough to share our enthusiasm for the Howsham Mill project - we had a truly impressive list of volunteers and supporters to back up our application.

After such a stressful couple of weeks when the future of the whole project seemed to be hanging in the balance, it's tempting to sit back and breathe a sigh of relief - however, now we have overcome the planning obstacle, the real work is only just beginning!

## We have containment!

This newsletter is printed on recycled paper using environmentally friendly inks which are virtually VOC (Volatile Organic Compound) free

**Don't forget to renew your Friends' Membership - your continued support is invaluable to us!**

Single £5.00 Couple/family £10.00  
Life membership £100

You can pay by cheque made out to **Renewable Heritage Trust** or by credit card online at [www.rht.greenisp.org](http://www.rht.greenisp.org)



Any of you who have flogged across the muddy field to the mill laden down with tools and equipment will be delighted to



learn that we now have secure storage on site.

Last weekend, Geoff Hutchinson and his team together with some other hardy souls, braved the weather (and the mud) to manually transport the flat-pack container on to site.

Thankfully, with only the bare minimum of discord (inevitable with any flat-pack construction), our lock-up was completed in fine style!



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# 250 year celebration!

On 4 December we held a bit of a party on site to mark the 250th anniversary of the building of Howsham Mill. As usual we were blessed with the weather, which though cold, remained dry and allowed the creation of rustic reindeer to proceed unimpeded! In all, about 60 people turned out to celebrate with us, some familiar faces, and gratifyingly, quite a few new ones.



Between us we managed to consume 15 kilos of jacket potatoes, 10 litres of pumpkin soup and a large cake, not to mention several gallons of mulled wine! It was a fantastic day and a fitting tribute to our beautiful building - thank you to everyone for coming.



## Woodland Craft Courses 2006

- 5 March:** Parent & Younger Children Activity Day - Free
- 2 April:** Willow Garden Structures - £5.00 (payable in advance)
- 7 May:** Willow Garden & Home Decorations - free
- 10 & 11 June:** Green Woodworking Weekend - £5.00 (payable in advance)

### Booking is essential

Please call Angela Cole on: 01653 618892

## New Trustees

This year's AGM was pretty well dominated by planning considerations, but we did manage to vote some new faces onto the board of Trustees:



**Pete Anderson:** MSc in Environmental Technology; Head of Science at Bootham School, York and organises school Natural History expeditions worldwide. Interested in all aspects of conservation and green issues.



**Phil Kershaw:** daytime Company Secretary with miscellaneous jobs at other times - parish councillor, weekend shovel operative, parish newsletter writer and trainee horse rider.



**Paul Lister:** postman and outdoor pursuits instructor. Has myriad useful contacts, and seems to be able to lay his hands on whatever equipment we need. Arrived in a canoe and never left!



**Martin Phillips:** Adviser to farmers on conservation and environmental matters. Believes that the mill is part of the agricultural heritage and restoring it will show farmers just what can be done with apparently redundant buildings.

## Another step forward

Back in the July 2005 newsletter you may recall that we showed the plan for a hand-crafted footbridge, made in the traditional way using traditional methods.

Geoff Norton of Yorkshire Hurdles braved the elements (and the mud!), and completed his masterpiece in November last year. It is a magnificent piece of craftsmanship and well worth a trip down to the mill to see it, even if you do nothing else!



## New for old

Rather excitingly, work has now begun on the restoration of the waterwheel. Pete McKew, of local company Dock End (pictured below with his business partner), is no stranger to building waterwheels having already completed one such project at his own mill home in Ramsdale.

One of our original concerns was how we were going to remove the old axle given its size and our lack of a crane. Pete came up with the perfect solution - leave it in place and just add new bearings.

Thanks to his efforts, the axle of the waterwheel can now turn again for the first time in 50 years!

## Come and learn more about Howsham!



On **Saturday 13 May**, the Helmsley Archaeological Society are organising a trip to Howsham. This will include the mill, Howsham Hall and Howsham church.

Guest speakers will include Sam Taylor, Jim Halliday and John Harrison, author of 800 Years of Milling in North Yorkshire, all of whom have kindly agreed to come and share their expert knowledge of the various sites.

The trip is free and open to anyone who would like to come. Meeting place: Howsham Bridge at **2.00pm**. Refreshments will be served at the mill in the usual rough and ready way from the bonfire. Hope you can make it!

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