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The Old Mill Seaton Ross

The old mill was built in the early 18th century and the earliest known resident was Mr. John Sykes. The mill was occupied for many years during the early 19th century by Matthew Cook. In earlier days, a 'post' mill stood on the site. A 'post' mill operated on the basis that the whole mill from its foundations upwards, turned round to meet the wind on a central post.

In the tower of the old mill was a great vertical wheel, yards in diameter, fashioned out of huge beams and cross pieces of roughly trimmed oak. The wheel was turned by the sails and itself turned through a bevel the centre post, which ran down through the mill, connecting cogged wheels with time grinding stones on different floors.

Up above, the grain was put into hoppers and on the ground floor came out as meal. Millers would clasp the eight and ten stone bags and run up the stairs with them until the mill power itself would hoist the bags aloft.

The 5 sails on the mill were six feet wide each weighing a ton and were 33 feet long. The total weight of the top portion, which reared and turned automatically with ever changing breeze, weighed 30 tons. The five cloth sails each had 18 roller blinds that was an ingenious arrangement whereby each sail could be opened or closed according to the amount of wind.

Old French stones were kept in use at the mill for making real English wheaten wholemeal flour.

In the 1870's working men's wives and children would glean during the harvest period and it was known to gather enough wheat by "gleaning" and taking to the mill to produce a 10 stone bag of flour.

Sadly the old mill stopped turning in 1935 and the sails were dismantled in 1951. The tower still stands - a reminder to us of farming history.

Thank you to Malcolm Young for this article. Next issue The New Mill