

I have in my possession what I believe to be an original watercolour painting entitled "old mill at Dale Abbey" by KS Wood dated 1932. I also have a newspaper article on the artist and his travels dated December 1932 from the Derby Evening Telegraph which I suspect was written by my father as he as a journalist with that paper at that time.

Alan Flux



# A PAINTER OF MILLS

## CYCLIST-ARTIST IN DERBYSHIRE

### TWO RECORDS

*Although you might have turned for a second glance if you had seen a smiling, heavily-laden cyclist on a Derbyshire road the other day, you would never have guessed his story.*

The cyclist was Mr. Karl Salsbury Wood, a native of King's Newton, near Derby, who has set himself the spare-time task of painting in water colours England's 1,650 windmills. Driven by an urge which he calls "windmillitis," he has painted 435 mills since June, 1931, and has just revisited Derbyshire to paint the last two of the county's 15 mills.

Mr. Wood, who now lives at Gainsborough, told me that Derbyshire holds two windmill records, writes a correspondent. The two mills at Leabrooks stand closer together than any others in England, and the one at Carsington, near Wirksworth, which stands about 1,000 feet above the sea, he believes to be the highest in the country.

"Local people say that the Leabrooks mills became derelict because the owner was trying to get two lots of power out of one gust of wind," said Mr. Wood.

"Derbyshire has four stone wind-mills—Heage, Carsington, Bolsover, and Whitwell. There are 'post' mills at Dale Abbey and South Normanton, and the Mapperley mill used to be a 'post' mill. The others—Findern, Fritchley, Leabrooks, Melbourne, Micklegate, Ockbrook, Swarkestone, and West Hallam—are 'tower' mills.

#### BEAUTIFUL MILLS.

"Some of the Derbyshire mills are beautiful erections," added Mr. Wood, "while, judging from the sounds I heard inside it, the one at Fritchley must be haunted.

"There are fewer remains at West Hallam than I have come across anywhere else. All that is left is a small piece of wall, with a grindstone, and the place is inhabited by fowls. At Swarkestone, where there were formerly two mills, the building has been struck by lightning, while the Findern mill has been turned into a house.

"The only windmills now in use in Derbyshire," Mr. Wood went on, "are those at Dale Abbey, which is about 200 years old, and the oldest in the county, and Whitwell, where oil instead of wind is used for power. Heage is the only six sweep mill left in the county, and very soon the sweeps will have to be taken off."

#### THE WORST ROADS.

Ninety-nine people out of a hundred, if asked "Which country has the most windmills?" would answer "Holland," but they would be wrong. England has about 450 more windmills than Holland, and Mr. Wood claims to be the first to state this fact.

Lincolnshire, with nearly 200, is England's champion windmill county, and about 30 per cent. of them are still working, compared with two per cent. for the rest of the country. While Lincolnshire is adding to its total of working mills, Mr. Wood knows of no mill in Derbyshire which has been brought back into use recently.

DERBY EVENING TELEGRAPH

DECEMBER 29<sup>th</sup> 1932

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A distinctive figure when mounted on his cycle, with his stool and other baggage strapped on the back, Mr. Wood assured me that his task was making him "the happiest man in the country." Give him a free day, his cycle and a parcel of food, and he can be depended upon to find one more mill towards the 400 he hopes to paint before next Christmas.

He has cycled many thousands of miles in all but two of the English counties, so that his opinion of roads should be respected. His brief comment was: "Leicestershire roads are the worst in England."