

The designer was John Smeaton and the mill had six working floors and could grind up to 500 quarters of corn weekly, yielding a yearly revenue of £40,000.

After his second term of office as Mayor and appointment as Alderman of the ward of Northgate, he embarked on his great project, the improvement of the Dane John Field, obtaining a lease at a peppercorn rent for 2½ years on the understanding that the ground would be levelled (with the exception of the existing mound) and gardens laid out. As a result a pleasant and greatly frequented promenade was created for the inhabitants, with trees and flowering shrubs.

By 1802 King's Mill had been pulled down and Simmons had a house built on the Kings Bridge site, next to All Saints Church. (see illustration).

A project which occupied much of Simmons' attention in the last twenty years of his life was the plan to cut a canal from Canterbury to the North Kent Coast near Reculver but, before this

came to fruition, it was frustrated by the Napoleonic Wars and, although various ideas were put forward, even after his death in 1807, nothing developed, perhaps because the building of the Canterbury and Whitstable Railway found favour instead.

His life as an M.P. for Canterbury was short, as he was elected in October 1806 and died on the 22nd January 1807. He is buried in a vault in the churchyard of St. Mildred's, Canterbury.

Photographs from Frank Parton's book on James Simmons.



Kingsbridge House, built by Simmons in 1801-2 on the site of the King's Mill. The Regency All Saints Church is alongside.

A visit to **THE LONDON EYE**

Report by Elizabeth Senyard

Wednesday, 23rd May promised to be beautiful right from the start, and it never faltered for a moment; the weather was absolutely perfect from beginning to end.

The bus was fully loaded to its 52 passenger capacity, and we set off on our journey, full of anticipation for this great experience. Despite our worries about the London traffic, we arrived on time and were parked just a short walk away from the wheel. Suddenly, it came into view - this famous London Eye, slowly winding its

endless journey round and round, far up into the sky.

The wheel doesn't actually stop at all, but travels very slowly, so that passengers have plenty of time to board and dismount without difficulty. However, there are many attendants available to help if necessary. The propelling mechanism consists of several huge wheels. These are set on the main wheel, and as their massive tyres are turned round by an enormous motor, this causes the Eye to rotate. It makes the foreground-style big wheel seem very small



indeed. The pods which carry the passengers are oval-shaped, and are made of very strong clear steel-framed plastic, giving a clear view in all directions.

Our group were excited, if a little awed, by this project, but fears were soon forgotten as we became part of the carnival before us. The sky was a beautiful blue, decorated faintly with traces of white pebbly clouds, and the sun never stopped shining. There were people everywhere - some watching the passengers mounting and dismounting, some waiting their turn, and plenty milling around just enjoying the general hubbub. Everywhere were sellers of ice cream, hot dogs, memorabilia, etc. all of which contributed to the fun of the occasion.

The view from the wheel was really spectacular. The Thames moved slowly along, supporting its constant burden of small boats plying their trade up and down. Across Westminster Bridge the Houses of Parliament and Big Ben looked fantastic, with their golden spires glittering in the sun. And all the time the wheel kept on turning, giving a constantly changing scene. It's not difficult to see why so many foreigners love to visit London.

The whole operation took about half-an-hour, after which most of us stopped for a coffee or early lunch, before commencing our chosen afternoon activity. There is so much to do and see from this part of the

South Bank, starting with the Royal Festival Hall. The Tate Modern is a few minutes walk away, as is Somerset House, and many of the group chose to visit them. Boat trips on the river were very popular, with about thirty of the party taking their choice of trips to the Tower, Greenwich and the Thames Barrier. For museum lovers there were many within easy reach, The Garden Museum, Florence Nightingale Museum and the Imperial War Museum. A few members visited the Globe Theatre. Some went

shopping; some visited friends.

Altogether it was a most successful day. The trip on the Eye was just a fun thing to do - pure enjoyment - and, when aided by warm sunshine and happy companionship, it was perfection.

Photographs by Elizabeth Senyard.

