

5th February 2010

An open letter regarding a typical small scale hydro installation, microhydro

I refer to a recent email, 1st February 2010, that I received from a local mill owner. This asks "to commission an engineer's report with regards to a number of items and I wonder if you would be willing to carry this out for me?"

My response is as follows, over a period of perhaps 35 years I have steadfastly tried to promote the use of hydropower 'best practice' at the 20,000 or more millsites and weirs in the British Isles. In the case of this particular mill – a centre for environmental education – I have discussed with the owner and his colleagues over the years the following issues :

- Why he should have installed a quality modern turbine installation, as opposed to a vintage 2nd hand water wheel – he ignored my advice.
- At his request I produced a report for which I was paid, as to where and how to install an Ossberger installation, downstream of the mill
– he ignored my advice.
- I tried to influence the design of a water wheel at a second site on this property.
– he ignored my advice.
Instead he had an aluminium water wheel built by a violin maker, with no previous experience of hydropower; it has proven unsatisfactory and unhelpful to the promotion of hydropower.
- He commissioned another report by an energy consultant with no experience of hydropower.
- He subsequently commissioned a further report from yet another company; eventually ordering an Ossberger

turbine from this supplier, excluding me from any input.
(I have represented Ossberger in UK for 35 years).

- He is now experiencing difficulties, which I believe are largely of his own making. He apparently would like the installation moved downstream of the mill, where I had recommended it be sited in my original report.

Appended herewith a copy of an article written prior to 20th August 2008 "Small & Micro Hydropower – How we arrived at present situation", which I believe summarises many of the issues that are being complained about. I have highlighted the points in this article, which I believe apply to the above situation.

Please excuse me therefore if I am disinterested in expending further time and effort on this particular mill, even as a paid consultant. I feel sure that this particular mill owner, like many others, will continue to do as he pleases, as is his prerogative.

For my part I will continue to actively promote good examples of small scale hydropower. There are good examples of turbine installations that have been well commissioned, without the adverse disadvantages of customer inexperience and interference.

I am adding this information to the attached article as a further illustration of hydropower follies.

Osman Goring
Water Power Engineering (est. 1962)