

## DECORATING

In the Zaan region (just north of Amsterdam) the custom is to deck the mill out for weddings and wedding celebrations of the miller or his family, although there is no strict uniformity in decorating. These photos show examples; the decorated sails are set to face the festive house. The summer and winter sailcloths are rolled up lengthwise and plaited into the sails. Stretched between the wing tips is a rope entwined with fir twigs. In the middle are the initials of the bridal couple, and perhaps, as on the picture the number of years the couple has been married. Trumpet angels (the Fame) perched on the wing tips announce the celebrated event.

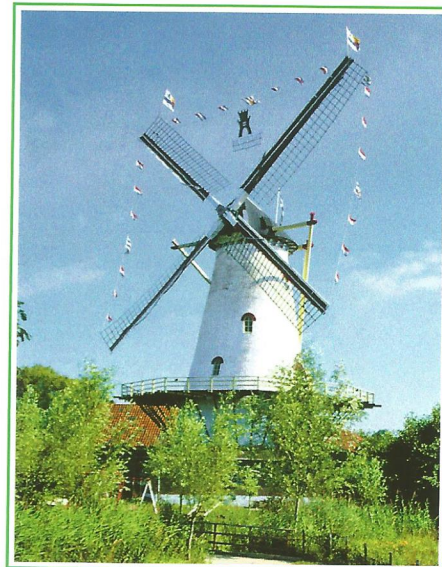
From the sail tips, hanging down on the ropes are a hoop on which Cupid's two love arrows are crossed, and protectively held in love's open heart, two tiny tin 'mills' that gently sway to the music of the wind, as they reflect the sun's glittering rays. Small houses of open lattice-work represent marriage cages. The couple stand with outstretched arms as if they are going to meet each other, the bridegroom on the left and the bride on the right. Their cages symbolise the end of their 'freedom'. A multi-pointed-star or sun represents happiness.

Underneath is a bridal crown. On the top left and right wings are hearts (love) and on the bottom left and right a ring (the universal symbol of the conjugal band). And of course, the windmill proudly displays the Dutch flag!



*Oukopmolen (1839)*

*"De Graanhalm", Haamstede*



*Next page main picture: Mill "De Kat"*  
*Next page insert picture: Mill "De Zoeker"*