

MILL LANGUAGE

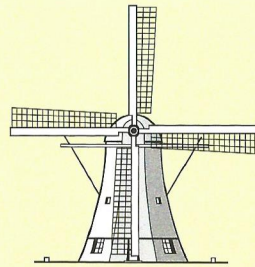
Sometimes one notices that mills at rest do not always have their sails in the same position. The reason for this being that the miller wishes to communicate with the neighbourhood. The mill was always the centre of the community and the miller was informed by his customers of the local news. If there was a reason for celebration then the miller would signify this by stopping the sail just before it reached its highest position, this is called "*coming*". The mill sails always turn counter-clockwise. This coming position occurs when there is a birth, marriage or some similar joyful event. If, however, the vertical sail has just passed its highest point, "*going*", then it means someone has died and that the miller is in mourning. If the sails are in a pure horizontal and vertical position, this indicates that the miller is resting for a brief period and intends to resume work shortly. If, however, the sails form an "X" cross, so at 45 degrees to the vertical and horizontal position, the miller indicates that he is resting for a longer period. The mill then rests in a '*cross over*' position.

This position will not be seen very often nowadays. Because mills are now fitted with lightning conductors there is no longer the need to set the sails in the cross over position which makes the mill lower in order to lessen the risk of it being struck by lightning.

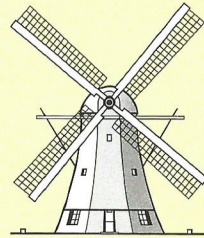
The miller also used certain resting positions to signal messages to confidants. For instance, to let the millwright know that his services were required. During wartime too, messages were relayed by prearranged signals and in World War II they were frequently used to warn people in hiding about raids.

6 & 7. A mill "*adorned in celebration*" for special occasions (for example a wedding), including flags and decorations. The "*rejoicing position*" is also used on these occasions. It is also called the "*Whitsun position*".

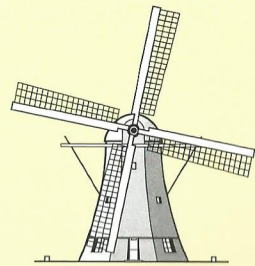
1. The "*upright position*" (with one sail-arm in front of the mill) or "*working position*" indicates a short period of rest. When they are not in operation, the mills are almost always in this position. The sail-arms are in a horizontal and vertical position, making it easy to conduct any necessary (maintenance) work to the sail-arms. Nowadays, one can observe that the mills are usually in this position, as it is then easier to fit the mill with a lightning conductor.



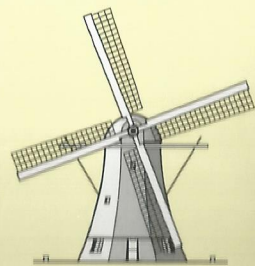
2. The "*diagonal*" or "*cross over*" position is the position that indicates a longer period of rest. The cross that is formed by the sails is at a 45 degree angle with the horizon. The sail-arms are in the lowest possible position and are therefore least likely to be struck by lightning.



3. The "*rejoicing position*" indicates that the miller's family has something to celebrate, for example a wedding or a birth. In this position, the approaching (descending) sail-arm is stopped just before it reaches its lowest point. The fact that the sail-arm is "*approaching*" symbolises the joy and expectation. (In the Province of Noord-Brabant however, this position is used to indicate a time of mourning.)



4. The "*mourning position*" indicates sadness and mourning. In this case, the "*departing*" sail-arm is stopped just after it leaves its lowest point. The fact that the sail-arm is "*departing*" expresses mortality, and sadness. (Once again, this position expresses exactly the opposite, namely joy, in Noord-Brabant.)



5. The sail-arms of the mills in the Netherlands always rotate to the left, counter-clockwise.

