

SUFFOLK MILLS GROUP

Newsletter Number 14

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As you will already have noticed, this edition of the Newsletter is somewhat slimmer than usual. This is because of pressing personal commitments in the form of a planning thesis which has to be submitted by the beginning of May. Normal service will be resumed as soon as possible after that date (allowing time for recovery!). Meanwhile, please remember our A.G.M. which will be held in mid May, probably either the 18th. or 25th.. The next Newsletter will appear just before then, but notice of the exact date and venue will be necessarily short.

Mark Barnard

News

DALHAM REPAIRS COMPLETED

The first stages of the full restoration of Dalham smock mill have now been finished, and the mill now stands with its new cap and wooden curb, but without fantail or sails. Repairs to the brick base are now in progress. It is hoped that the remainder of the restoration will be put in hand soon.

S.M.G. PUBLIC MEETING

About 110 people attended S.M.G.'s meeting at Ipswich Town Hall on February 23rd., entitled 'Old Suffolk Windmills'. Chairman Chris Hullcoop introduced the meeting, and showed slides of last year's work at Stanton and Bardwell mills. Brian Flint and Peter Dolman were the main speakers, and were followed by Mark Barnard who informed the meeting of other Suffolk 'mill news'. The evening finished with a series of windmill slides set to music. Thanks are due to everyone who helped make the evening such a success, especially Richard and Joan Smith for lending and operating their 'cross-fade' projector, and Dick Powling for making the delicious 'stone ground' biscuits.

For three weeks prior to the meeting, S.M.G. mounted a small publicity display in the window of William and Glynn's bank in Buttermarket, Ipswich. We crammed the space with specially printed old photographs, posters, mill books and guides and even a mill bill and thrift, plus three splendid models of Suffolk mills. The display was very well received and we extend our thanks to the bank for helping us in this way.

PRIZE CROSSWORD RESULT

No less than 23 entries were received to our crossword competition which appeared in the last Newsletter. Of these, 20 were correct, and were from: Andrew Abbott, Len Ball, Rosemary Dennis, Fred Hamond, Viv Harvey, Peter Hill, M.Hunt, Peter Jennings, Cliff Lovett, Vincent Pargeter, Don Paterson, Karl Paterson, J.Pelling, Chris Seago, Aidan Skeoch, John Snowdon, Bob Stevens, Alan Stoyel, Alan Wallis and Graham Wilson.

These names went into the hat, and the Chairman had the task of selecting the winner. This was Aidan Skeoch, from Ingatestone, Essex. He was presented with his signed copy of 'Suffolk Windmills' at the S.P.A.B. Windmill Meeting on March 22nd..

The solution was as follows:

ACROSS: 1 Thrifts; 4 Tjasker; 7 Land; 8 Quant; 9 Grid; 10 Heel; 11 Steel; 12 Kerb;
14 Dress; 17 Steam; 18 Prick; 19 Greys; 21 Sail; 22 Mead; 24 Undershot Wheels;
25 Sky; 26 Trestle; 27 Oil.

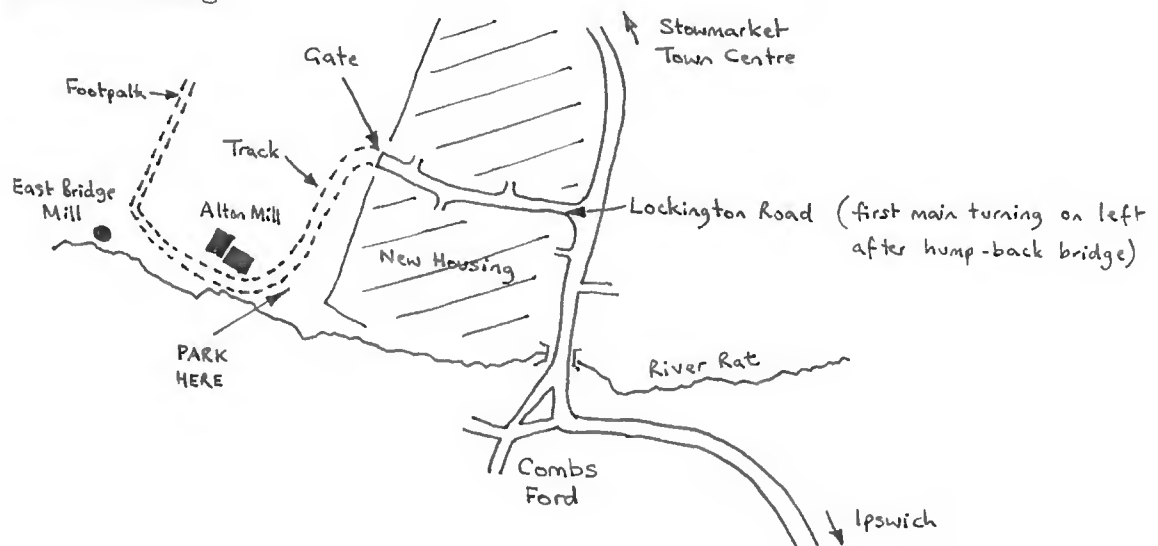
DOWN: 1 Talthurs; 2 Runner; 3 Smutter; 4 Tenters; 5 Kernel; 6 Rode Balk; 13 Wallower;
15 Elevators; 16 Framsdén; 19 Girts; 20 Screw; 21 Spouts; 23 Damsel.

Many thanks to all those who entered the crossword and made it such an exciting draw!

Events

MINSMERE WINDPUMP OPEN DAY: ABBOT'S HALL MUSEUM, STOWMARKET; SATURDAY 5th. APRIL 1980, from 2.00 p.m..

Members and friends of S.M.G. are invited to view the newly-finished East Bridge wind-pump at the Museum of East Anglian Life at Stowmarket. The mill is now in working order and is a fine sight with its set of fully shuttered sails. It is being declared open in the morning by local naturalist Ted Ellis and will be open to general view from about two o'clock. Members may enter the museum by the Lockington Road gate, and leave their cars near the Alton watermill. Say you're from S.M.G. at the gate and you can get in free of charge.



SUFFOLK MILLS GROUP ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: MAY, 1980.

Unfortunately it has not been possible to fix a firm date and venue for the A.G.M. in time for this Newsletter. It is hoped to hold the meeting on a Sunday in mid to late May, probably at a mill. Further details will be given in Newsletter 15.

THELNETHAM WINDMILL 'WORK-IN' : JULY 26th. to AUGUST 10th. 1980.

As in previous years we are organising a two-week 'work in' to allow Members, especially those living further afield, the chance to make a positive contribution to the preservation of Suffolk mills. In the past the work carried out in this way was of a 'holding' nature, and we had specific tasks to achieve in a limited time. This year will be different, however, as the work will be the first stage of a continuous restoration to bring Thelnetham mill back to full working order.

The mill, built in 1819 and disused since 1924, has a good brick tower, so there

is no need to strengthen the structure before tackling the various jobs necessary. Much of the work this year will be of a negative nature, such as taking defective and rotten timbers out. The main tasks this year will be:

Strengthening of the cap frame to allow its safe removal by crane;

Dismantling the fanstage and fan gearing;

Removal of the remains of the sails and the stock;

Removal of the cap frame and windshaft by crane (we hope to arrange for 'lift off' during the second week of the work in);

Removal of the curb and repairs to the top courses of brickwork;

Replacement of the dust floor;

Repair of the bin floor and stone floor;

Repairs to doors and windows.

In addition, there are smaller jobs such as removing tin sheeting and hundreds of nails from items like the stone floor beams and joists, the spare stock, and some of the machinery. George Vincent, who used to live at the mill, spent most of his spare time (or so it seems) nailing old oil cans to every bit of bare wood he could see, which might have seemed a good idea at the time but is a real nuisance to us now!

Some of the work listed above has already been started as Members are visiting the mill at week-ends. However, there will be plenty for people to do from carpentry and joinery down to pulling old parts to pieces, and there is room for a range of skills so don't worry if you're not particularly 'handy'.

Thelnetham is some 30 miles from Ipswich and about the same from Norwich. Diss is seven miles away and Thetford 10 miles. There are several pubs and small shops in the immediate locality, including a supermarket at Hopton.

Accommodation at the mill is limited to a three-berth caravan, although hardy types can sleep in the mill or pitch a tent in the mill field. At present facilities are limited - there is no sanitation other than a primitive chemical closet and drinking water has to be brought in from outside. The caravan has a gas stove for brewing tea and cooking.

For those who wish to stay in the area, please let us know and we will try to arrange 'digs' locally. For those staying in the Ipswich / Stowmarket area it might be possible to organise car-sharing as several Members will be commuting daily to the mill.

Any Member thinking of lending a hand at the work in is invited to contact S.M.G. Secretary Peter Dolman (Ipswich 76966, evenings only) as soon as possible. Let's hope for a good turnout to get the restoration well under way!

N.B. A short brochure has been produced on the Thelnetham project by S.M.G., setting out the history of the mill and our plans for its future. Price 40p. including postage, from either the Secretary or Editor.