

# SUFFOLK MILLS GROUP

## Newsletter Number 17

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In the weeks since the last Newsletter Members have been working at Thelnetham, Pakenham (watermill) and at Syleham, and there has been a Committee meeting to decide on the programme of events for autumn and winter. Arising from this are two dates to make a special note of in your diary: a rare chance to visit a mill at work producing stone-ground flour - Pakenham watermill - on November 16th., and a S.M.G. social evening in Ipswich on December 5th. (a Friday evening), when Members can meet in surroundings somewhat more comfortable than the average mill interior! Both these events promise to be particularly enjoyable - I can certainly recommend a visit to Pakenham having seen it at work very recently.

As well as Pakenham, repair work is about to start at Syleham (see inside), and we would welcome help at this mill in particular.

Mark Barnard

### THELNETHAM 'WORK - IN' PETER DOLMAN

Our two-week 'work in' at Thelnetham has now taken place and the mill field has again fallen silent with only the sounds of nature disturbing the landscape (those who camped at the mill will know what I mean!).

As you will know from previous Newsletters, Thelnetham mill was built in 1819. After ceasing work in the mid 1920's it became more and more derelict until it was acquired by its present owners, Thelnetham Windmill Preservation Trust in 1979. Although complete a closer inspection showed the mill to be in very poor condition, and some urgent weatherproofing was immediately done to keep out the worst of the winter weather. Meanwhile plans were being formulated for this year's 'work in'. Graphic evidence of the mill's condition came earlier this year when the dust floor partly collapsed. We decided to clear away the old floor and begin the installation of new beams in advance of the work in. Here we were fortunate to receive assistance from members of Suffolk Conservation Corps who had been working on the nearby nature reserve. Using their chain saw and ample muscle power they helped us remove the sad remains of the old dust floor.

Of the old dust floor, the only parts good enough to re-use were one joist and the perimeter curb. Subsequently two new pitchpine beams were hoisted into place, resting on oak wall plates. Other preliminary work included building a scaffold platform to allow the fanstage to be safely dismantled and removing the centering wheels so that they would not prevent the cap from being lifted off.

The first day of the work in, which was uncomfortably warm and humid, saw people arriving from various corners of the country, some of them camping in the mill field.

By midday we were sorted out well enough to make a start. The old sail whip was lowered and the brake dismantled to enable us to turn the sails. Halfway round there came a horrible splintering sound followed by a crash. This turned out to be the brakewheel which had begun to disintegrate after trying to mesh with the wallower. The cap frame was reinforced in preparation for its removal while our excellent team of carpenters began to reconstruct the dust floor. The following day the other sail was removed and the stock turned horizontal in readiness for lifting off. Meanwhile another gang of volunteers had started to remove the dreaded tin and nails which the late Mr. Vincent had for some reason put all over the ceiling of the ground floor and the hurst frame.

The first week saw very rapid progress made, with about 15 people at the mill each day. The dust floor was re-framed and a temporary layer of boarding put down as a working platform. One beam on the bin floor was replaced with pitchpine and the other had its ends corbelled with oak plates. A patch of rot and beetle attack was also cut out and made good. The carpenters then began to erect the joists, the ends of which were supported by a new curved wall plate of elm. Meanwhile a new window and door had been fitted to the ground floor, the fanstage was dismantled and the plaster stripped from the walls. By Thursday evening all was ready for the great 'lift off'.

Friday morning (August 1st.) dawned bright and sunny and those of us staying at the mill were just eating breakfast when a lorry was heard approaching. It was the crane, an hour earlier than expected. Having manoeuvred it into the yard we decided to delay matters as long as possible as at 8.30 in the morning no-one else had turned up. A start was made therefore by using the crane to arrange our pile of second-hand pitchpine baulks into a neater stack. Soon we had quite a large audience as mill fanciers and villagers turned up to view the spectacle.

The windshaft was lifted out first, using a three-point sling arrangement with the stock in position. No problems were encountered and the shaft was put down on blocks, with the brakewheel in a shallow pit. Next came the cap frame, which we watched with bated breath as we half expected it to disintegrate in mid air! Luckily however it stayed intact. As the cap frame was lifted off it dislodged a cast iron curb section which crashed to the ground, miraculously escaping damage. We also used the crane to lower the remaining curb sections as these weigh over one hundredweight each and are rather bulky, and also to lift the tarpaulin to the top of the tower. After all the excitement had subsided it was back to the more mundane tasks such as rebuilding floors and spreading and securing the tarpaulin. Subsequently the cap frame was dismantled and the brakewheel taken off the windshaft and rolled inside the mill. Other tasks accomplished included repairing brickwork and replacing some of the timber lintols. The old ground floor, which had been bodged up in concrete by Mr. Vincent, was broken up and excavated, revealing a huge number of empty bottles under the hardcore, mostly sherry, gin and lime cordial! They were of no great age so we presume them to have been Mr. Vincent's empties.



THELNETHAM WORK-IN

Above: Removing the remains of the last sail

Above, right: Colin Budgey hoisting the new bin floor beam into position

Right: Colin Budgey again, this time working on the dust floor joists

Below, right: looking up inside the tower during the first week, showing the new dust floor joists. The old bin floor had been mostly removed by this time



Photographs on this page & on page 5 are by Mark Barnard and Peter Dolman

By the middle of the second week a start was made on boarding the bin floor. A problem was soon apparent. The new elm boarding had been supplied seasoned but on delivery was found to have been stacked badly, allowing serious distortion to occur. Before the boards could be laid it was necessary to trim both edges to a straight line, a process which lost us up to 10% of some boards. This was rather worrying, as I had only allowed for 10% wastage when ordering! In the event though, we just had enough. The boards were nailed with cut steel nails (as were the joists), which are traditional and look much better in a mill than the ubiquitous round wire nail. To prevent dust and dirt falling through the board joints we used a metal cross tongue inserted into slots cut with a saw along the length of the board. This method works remarkably well and means that the full width of the board can be used, unlike tongue and groove or rebated joints, where some wastage occurs. Boarding a tower mill is an interesting job, as each board has to be scribed to a circle at each end, and fitting the last board has its problems too!

The new dust floor was fitted with oak joists throughout & is extremely strong, and about 75% of the bin floor joists were oak. For the remainder we used a varied collection of second-hand pitchpine, including some pieces of old sails salvaged from the original East Bridge windpump. One of the original joists had been a piece of common sail and it was possible to re-use it by cutting the rotten ends off and using it in a shorter span. In one of the old sail bar mortices I found a crumpled up envelope which had contained a grain sample from a farmer. From the name, H. Lock, I searched old directories and found him listed at Walsham le Willows in the 1870's. Inside the envelope was a single grain of wheat. I wonder if it would germinate? Although it would have been far cheaper to have used softwood instead of oak for the new joists we felt that as we were taking out oak we ought to put the same back, even at 55p. a foot. I only wish other mill restorers would follow this practice and not use poor quality softwood.

At the end of the work-in various jobs were left unfinished but as time is not too critical this did not matter, and work is continuing at the mill most week-ends.

Having described the work undertaken, I must now pass on to the personalities involved. Firstly, the actual volunteers. Three people stayed the whole two weeks on site to keep the continuity going. Dave Pearce and Chris Seago did sterling work living on site and are continuing to help at odd week-ends. Peter Adshead from Stockport, who helped us last year at Bardwell, again proved his versatility by tackling varied jobs such as brickwork and carpentry. Chris Bell and his wife Di from Bristol were a very welcome addition to our group, Chris being an expert wood-worker and Di showing skill as a bricklayer! Colin Budgey, another fine carpenter, staggered us by making up all the joists and trimmers around the sack trap on the ground, complete with 'tusk tenon' joints, taking it up to the floor and dropping it into place for a perfect first-time fit! Chris Hullcoop was his usual industrious self, dashing around organising people and working furiously at various jobs. John Holdway, Cliff Lovett, Michelle Skinner and her father Roger, Andrew Haylett,



Above: lifting off the windshaft and cap frame on August 1st.

Right: Dave Pearce fitting a joist on the bin floor

Below, right: Peter Adshead and Dave Pearce boarding the bin floor

Below: Cliff Lovett glazing the new ground floor window



Andrew Abbott and Alan Wallis all gave a week or so of their time and were all very helpful indeed. Other people gave several days to help: Mark Barnard, Richard Seago, Don Porter and his friend Peter Moran, Don Paterson and Bob Sharp, Charles Dolman, Kate Davidson, Brian Flint, Steven Binks, Karl Paterson, Alan Noble, John Snowdon, Bob Tyrell, Mike Organ and Des Codd. Phillip Lennard and Chris Wilson both called to see how we were doing and immediately got roped in to help! On the 'recording' side, several of us were busy with cameras to ensure an excellent record of the work in both colour and black and white, while on the day of the lift off Viv Codd came along with his movie camera to make a ten minute film of the occasion. In addition we were visited for several days by Wilf Foreman and his wife who were on a touring holiday in East Anglia. Wilf did a survey of the mill in preparation for one of his lovely drawings. We were also assisted on the first and last week-ends by ten members of Colchester Endeavour Group led by David Atkins. They have tentatively offered to come along next year to help with the new ground floor.

During the work-in we were visited by several representatives of the Press, including a camera crew and attractive girl reporter from B.B.C. 'Look East' who was bold enough to climb the vertical ladder to the cap in high heels! They spent all of one afternoon recording interviews and filming and gave us a very good report in the local news the next day. The only trouble was, due to a transmitter fault, half of East Anglia missed it! The best newspaper write-ups were in the Eastern Daily Press and the East Anglian Daily Times, the latter being spoilt by a rather silly headline 'Dreamers watch a mill take shape' over a picture of the mill after the cap had been removed! This was not quite so ridiculous as the Bury Free Press, whose photographer wanted Chris Hullcoop and I to sit astride the stock about five feet out from the canister, drinking tea! We refused, of course.

As well as the volunteer helpers, we would like to thank a number of other individuals and firms who provided valuable assistance in one way or another: Eastern Plant Service Ltd. for kindly allowing us a discount on the crane hire; Messrs. Protim Ltd. for discount on their preservative; S.L. Contractors of Market Weston for supplying good local oak virtually on demand; T. & A.J. Mann Ltd. of Earls Colne for elm at a discount; the landlord and lady of the Thelnetham 'White Horse' for putting on special menu's for us; Stanton Middle School for the loan of a toilet and its tent; Brian Davey, our neighbour, for use of water and electricity and for loaning tools; John Holdway for loan of scaffolding; Adrian Colman for the loan of a ladder and a ratchet winch; Mike Organ and Andrew Abbott for donating tarpaulins; Chris Armour for shotblasting and repairing ironwork; Fred Davis for loan of a guillotine; Suffolk College for loan of tools; Chris Hullcoop for loan of tools, tackle and scaffolding.

The work carried out and materials purchased so far amounts to about £1,500, and a rough estimate of the remaining costs comes to £5,000. We have been



fortunate to be promised a number of small grants, including one from St. Edmundsbury Borough Council, while Suffolk Mills Group put £200 into the repair fund to help get things going. We have applied to the Historic Buildings Council for a grant and are optimistic about receiving one. We also hope to attract further 'private enterprise' sponsorship.

The success of this year's work-in has encouraged us to plan another for next year. It has been suggested that this might be split into two equal parts, one at each end of the summer. Has anyone got any views about this idea? If so, please let me know. Work planned for next year is the rebuilding of the stone floor, hurst framing and ground floor and repairing the top of the tower ready for the new curb (which will be started late 1981 or early 1982). It may also be possible to start on the cap frame if the timber can be delivered in time. There is still plenty of varied and interesting work to do, and I hope that we get the same sort of very gratifying response next year as we had this year.

## CORRESPONDENCE

Following on from Don Paterson's letter in the last Newsletter, 'Thoughts on the Removal of Machinery from Mills', Rex Wailes writes:

"I am very interested in Mr. Paterson's points. The practice of using parts of a derelict or demolished mill is of long standing and it would be tedious to cite such cases encountered over the years. But it was far from unusual, as millwrights now deceased told me from time to time. Not only machines, gears and stones from the mill interior, but also sails, fantails and their gear from the exterior. But for this practice some mills might have ceased useful work and have disappeared altogether.

To call a mill a hermaphrodite just because parts from a derelict or destroyed mill were used to keep it in useful work seems misguided to say the least. But as one who has recorded the interiors of windmills using flash and a wide-angle lens since 1936, I could not agree more as to record photographs which, in such cases, are of even greater value than measured drawings especially if essential measurements are taken at the same time. And they are much quicker."

John McCann has asked us to publish the following request for information on horse mills. His address is 'Greenhill', Hatfield Broad Oak, Bishops Stortford, Herts.

"I would be interested to hear of evidence of early horse-mills in England, particularly the earliest. An inventory of Mountnessing, Essex, of 1386 mentions 'two stones for the horse mill and one iron for the horse mill' (ERO transcript 114). There was one at Kirkham, Lancashire in 1337. There are detailed illustrations of late horse mills, used in connection with several industries, in Diderot's 'Encyclopaedie', published serially from 1762 - of which the originals are probably English. Any information?

## NEW PUBLICATIONS

Reviewed by PETER DOLMAN

'WIND AND WATERMILLS' Published by the Midlands Wind & Watermills Group; 1980. Price 75p. (50p. if at least 10 copies are bought); 44 pages.

This enterprising booklet is the first issue of a series of occasional journals of the Midlands Group. The Group already produce a comprehensive newsletter but have

recognised the potential market for a journal containing lengthy and detailed articles which could be made available to the public, a niche once occupied by the late lamented 'Millnotes'.

There are six articles in the Journal; two on the tower mill at Rowington in Warwickshire are of value in presenting almost a complete picture of the mill, which has now been savagely house-converted. Wilfred Seaby details its history and construction and John Bedington details the old cap which was surveyed before its destruction. Gordon Tucker describes millstone making in Anglesey, one of the lesser known areas of millstone manufacturing, and Tim Booth contributes a history of the Turton family of millwrights who were in a big way of business in Kidderminster until quite recently. Finally there is a survey of watermills on the Belne Brook in Worcestershire which was prepared by H.E.S. Simmons in 1945 but never published. This has been edited and preceded by an introduction by Jonathan Briggs and Gordon Tucker which brings the article up to date. In all the Journal contains much to interest the molinologist and is well written and presented. Not all the illustrations are of the highest standard but they do not detract from what is essentially a professional standard publication. The format, incidentally, is of an A5 size booklet with a card cover, the whole printed by offset litho, with the text in reduced type. The editors were Gordon Tucker and Tim Booth, and the booklet is available from the Midlands Wind and Watermills Group at 188, Merrivale Road, Smethwick, West Midlands B66 4EA. Allow extra for postage.

Also available from the Midlands Group is Tim Booth's 'Warwickshire Watermills' at £1.20 per copy (or 80p. if ten or more are purchased).

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## **SOME MALTESE WINDMILLS** MARK BARNARD

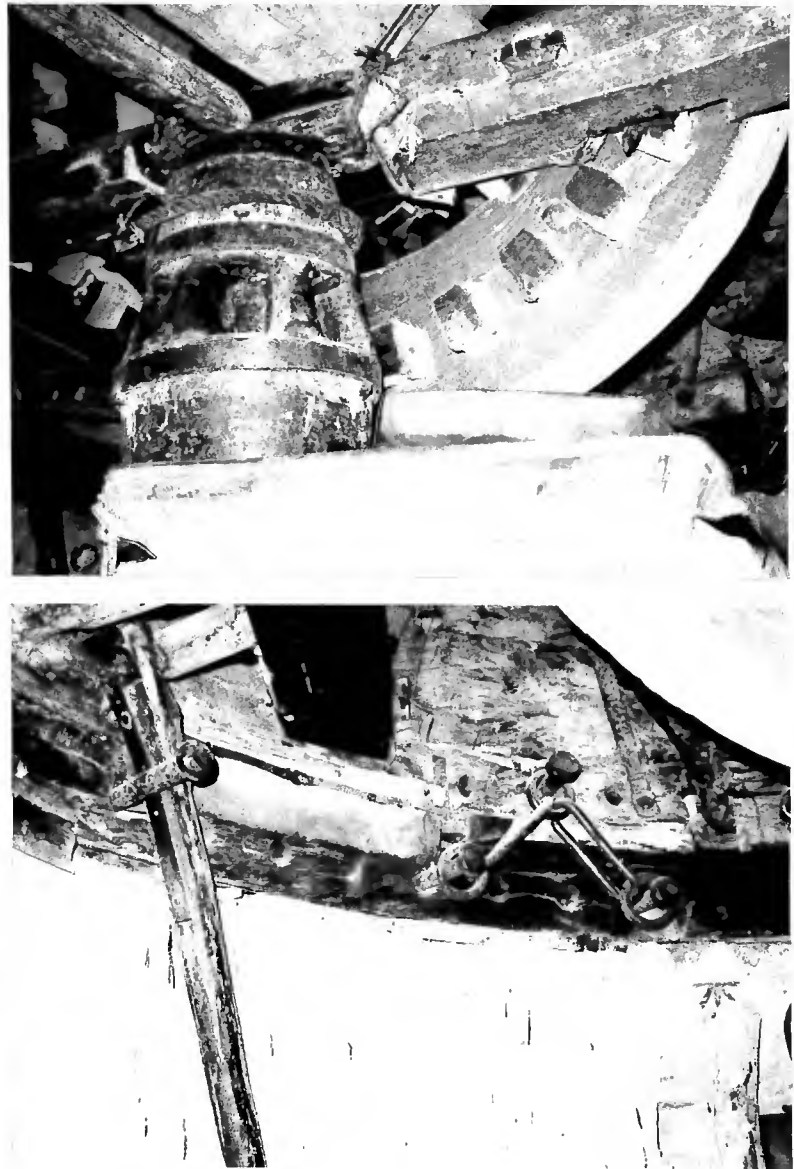
While on holiday in Malta last year I could not help noticing a number of circular stone towers dotted around the countryside, mainly in elevated positions, obviously the remains of windmills. This year I was lucky enough to return and decided that whenever I saw a mill during my travels I would attempt to locate it exactly (that is, plot it on my tourist map) and take a photograph. However, this sometimes proved difficult or even impossible for reasons I will relate below.

Malta comprises three inhabited islands - Malta itself, Gozo and Comino - and is quite small, the main island being only about 18 miles long by 9 miles wide. The population is about 320,000. The undulating limestone landscape appears barren and parched in the heat of summer, but in fact the islands are cultivated intensively, the small fields usually enclosed by stone walls to prevent erosion of the thin soil. In several areas modern iron windpumps are used to raise water for irrigation, as are waterwheels (or noria) worked by oxen, although I didn't see any of the latter. There are no permanent rivers.

From 1530 until 1798, when Napoleon invaded, Malta was ruled by the Knights of St. John, an ancient and wealthy religious Order who were dedicated to waging war







Preserved mill at Xaghra, Gozo

Above: exterior view

Above, right: the brakewheel and stone nut

Right: the internal lever for turning the cap. The chain links on the right help to secure the cap.

shaft. The cap is in the form of a shallow wooden cone, felt covered, sometimes surmounted by an elegant wind vane. The cap is turned into the wind internally by a wooden lever, an iron peg being inserted into one of a regular series of holes on the inside face of the curb to provide a fulcrum. Inside, against the walls of the tower a stone staircase winds up to an intermediate floor giving access onto the roof of the surrounding house from which the sails can be reached, and continues on to the single pair of stones at the top of the tower. These are driven directly off the brakewheel, which in both mills was of heavy, wooden compass-arm construction, about 5 ft. in diameter. The wooden stone nut was very crude, like a massive tapering cartwheel hub with mortices cut away to mesh with the cogs of the brakewheel (see photograph above). The drive ratio was low - about 4.5 : 1. There was no brake: the old miller at Xaghra told me (in very broken English!) that the mill was stopped by a lever with a weight attached which lowered the bridge tree, setting the two stones together. However, I should think this method was mainly used to prevent the mill moving off again once it was stopped, and the sails were probably quartered (set at 90° to the wind) to

stop the mill. When at rest the upper sails were held by wires which passed over the cap frame at the tail and down to the roof of the building below.

Both the preserved mills at Qala and Xaghra are in good condition although no longer used. That at Xaghra has been made the closing feature of a couple of rows of new housing, and has a small amenity area adjacent. A short distance from the Qala mill is another, this time a capless derelict with the windshaft still in place. On Malta itself there are three mills with gear. The best is at Safi, right beside the main road, which is complete apart from the sails which I am told were blown down in the winter of 1978-79. An excellent photograph of this mill appears on page 95 of 'Windmills and Watermills' by John Reynolds. At Mosta (famous for its church which has one of the world's largest domes) there are two mills close together, one of which retains its gear but is open to the elements. I discovered this almost by accident: having caught a distant glimpse of its less interesting neighbour, I went to take a quick photograph. Imagine my surprise when the fine derelict came into view a short distance down the road!

The third mill with machinery on the island of Malta is at Naxxar (pronounced nashar). This mill, which retains its cap, has a superb site on the crest of a ridge to the south-east of the town, and is visible over a wide area to the south. In fact nearly all the mills are

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Right: derelict tower at Lija with circular surrounding building

Below, right: the derelict mill at Naxxar. The house is still occupied

Below: the pair of mills at Mosta



very conspicuous at a distance, protruding above the dense cluster of flat-roofed houses which make up the towns and villages (some of the latter are surprisingly large). Mistakes were easy to make though and often what I thought at a distance to be a mill turned out to be a square tower (of which there are a very large number), and once I even photographed a water tower before I eventually found the mill I was seeking! The greatest difficulty however was actually locating the mills within the maze of narrow winding streets which restrict one's view to a few yards in any direction, and in a few cases there was no time to actually reach the mill which I had already seen from afar. Usually it was a matter of trusting my sense of direction and the fact that the mills were usually on higher ground, but the fierce summer heat could soon make a prolonged search a tiring exercise.

Mill-hunting always takes you to the out-of-the-way places you would otherwise never visit, and Malta is no exception. It was fascinating to wander through the streets in the late afternoon and see all the locals sitting outside, engaged in casual conversation or just watching the world go by in typical Mediterranean fashion. The mills were in a variety of locations. Lija (pronounced leeya) was one of my favourites, a very attractive tower with a circular building surrounding it, down a quiet country lane. In contrast, at Balzan (pronounced boltsan) the derelict mill stands by the busy main road leading to Mosta, so close in fact that the road has to bend extra sharp to miss it! At one of the Siggiewi (pronounced si-jew-wee) mills was one of the very few English-registered cars on the island. I was not surprised to find the mill was a house-conversion!

I would certainly recommend Malta for an interesting holiday which, apart from many other things, is great fun for the molinologist to explore.

## **NEWS**

### SAPISTON WATERMILL

Last June St. Edmundsbury Borough Council served a Building Preservation Notice on Sapiston watermill and the adjoining mill cottages as it was suspected the property might come onto the market and be the subject of a planning application for conversion. This B.P.N. had the effect of up-grading the mill from Grade III to Grade II, thus giving it statutory protection under the listed buildings legislation. However, a B.P.N. needs to be confirmed by the Department of the Environment, and in the case of Sapiston the Department refused to do this, thus in effect saying that the mill was not worthy of listing. The reason put forward was the 'altered condition' of the buildings.

S.M.G. are very concerned about this decision, not just because it denies the mill listed building status, but because it illustrates the very arbitrary way in which the process of listing mills seems to be carried out, without any firm criteria being established. Although Sapiston mill was altered, probably in Victorian times, the basic structure is much older while the machinery is complete and in exceptionally fine order, with several interesting later machines,

including an elevator-fed 8-yard (yes, 25 ft. long!) flour dresser. We find it hard to accept that if the mill was worthy of Grade III status in the early 1950's when the area was surveyed, it is no more important today when far fewer mills remain intact.

Unfortunately there is no longer a water supply to the wheel and re-instatement would be expensive, but milling could easily continue by engine power. It would also be possible, we believe, to find an acceptable new use for the mill, such as a craft workshop or store, which would enable all the machinery to be retained in situ. There is ample living accommodation available in the cottages (which could be converted to one dwelling) without

any need to convert the mill for this purpose. We are endeavouring to advise the Grafton Estate, who own the mill, about the future of the property but for the moment both mill and house are empty, slowly deteriorating.

The photographs above show the mill and cottages from the front (above) and the stone floor of the mill (below).

#### PAKENHAM'S PROGRESS

Suffolk Preservation Society held a very successful open afternoon at Pakenham water-mill on the last Sunday in September. About 300 people came to inspect progress at the mill which was working for most of the afternoon.

Restoration of the large timber-framed mill building is now complete but has cost far more than expected. It was in a sorry state, worse than the Woodbridge tide mill. Once the covering was removed timbers which looked sound on the inside were found to be hollow or just crumbled away. One of the more pleasant discoveries was an earlier wheel position at the mill house end and foundations of Tudor bricks here. It was originally planned to fill this space beneath the ground floor with rubble and concrete it over, but an opportunity to see early foundations is rare so S.P.S. decided on the far more costly course of a concrete floor, but hollow underneath with a trapdoor to allow inspection of the foundations below. It's not surprising that the



work cost more than expected and it could only be completed with the aid of a large loan. This still leaves the machinery though. Not surprisingly S.P.S. are reluctant to go further into debt and this, combined with the high prices and uncertainty of millwrighting in recent times, led us to do what we could over the last few weeks. This has consisted of reinforcement and adjustment rather than replacement and by the open afternoon we were able to have the central pair of French stones in reasonable working order. Despite precious little dressing they produced some good wheatmeal but at a rate of about a third that of well dressed stones. Much of it was sold to visitors who could buy it 'warm from the stones'.

S.P.S. are very fortunate in securing the services of Richard Byers, a recently retired teacher living in Bury St. Edmunds who will be the custodian when the mill is open to the public next year. There is plenty for the visitor to see in the mill while outside in the adjoining engine shed is the fine Blackstone auxiliary oil engine. A path leads over the by-pass sluice and along the river bank. Although nettles and scrub need clearing the old willows are still there, part of a beautiful English watermill landscape. This one is very special though as half a mile away on higher ground is Pakenham tower mill. There are several places where a windmill can be seen from a watermill but nowhere else where they are both in working order. To be inside the watermill as the wheel drives the stones and to look out across the mill pond and see the tower mill with sails turning is an experience unique to Pakenham.

A great deal of work to the machinery remains if the mill is ever to grind regularly and sell wholemeal flour to visitors. The stones have to be levelled and dressed and the floor around them made tight. Tentering must work well including the governors and the feed lines set up properly with twist pegs. To satisfy the food production regulations everything that is in contact with the wheat must be steel or steel-lined and be totally rodent proof. The sack hoist must work, the falling shut repaired for more effective use of the available water, the spur wheel badly needs reinforcement, a weed grid needs to be made and fitted and lots more beside. How much of this work can be completed at low cost depends on our experience and mill knowledge and the effective co-operation between the custodian and local schools and industry. S.M.G. will do its best to help keep the stones turning at Pakenham.

#### KERSEY WATERMILL

Members may be a little confused by recent reports in the local papers on the progress of Mellordata, the firm that bought Kersey mill in 1978. What the press loosely calls Kersey mill is a large group of buildings consisting of the watermill, the mill house, a great barn, a malting and numerous farm buildings and stables. The directors of the firm, Geoff and Christina Mellor now live with their family in the splendid and spacious mill house. They hope to use the very large brick-built malting building to house the electronics business with converted farm buildings as offices. At present the watermill is in 'cold storage',



the deterioration having been effectively halted. Priority must go to the establishment of the business at Kersey which will take some time, giving Geoff and Christina a chance to look at other mill restorations and learn from the successes and mistakes of others before starting work on their own mill. We wish them success with their venture and hope one day to visit a working watermill beside a modern electronics business, a fascinating juxtaposition of technologies, both with the common aim of greater efficiency.

#### THE MILL ON THE FLOSS

The T.V. serial of George Elliot's famous story has been repeated recently and Members may have wondered where the mill shown in the opening sequence is to be found. It is Charlecote, near Stratford upon Avon, under repair by our good friend John Bedington, Secretary of the Midlands Group. There seemed to be something wrong with the wheel, not only the lack of sound but it had an airy look. The B.B.C. wanted the wheel turning in rather a hurry and were prepared to contribute towards the cost of repair. So initially every other paddle was fitted and that is how it was filmed.

#### WINDMILL STAMPS

Those of you who collect stamps may be interested to know that the U.S.A. has issued a set of five 15c. stamps featuring American windmills. The mills shown are the Robertson Windmill, Williamsburg, Virginia c.1720; replica of the Old Windmill, Portsmouth, Rhode Island c.1790; Cape Cod Windmill, Eastham, Mass. c.1793; the Dutch Mill, Fabyan Park Forest Preserve, Illinois c.1860; a 'modern' iron windpump, Texas c.1890. The stamps were issued as a \$3 booklet, each booklet containing a total of four sets. The booklets are available from Lake & Brooks Ltd., 106, Bedford Chambers, Covent Garden, London WC2E 8HH, price £2.50 plus 30p. handling charge, or from your local stamp dealer.

## **EVENTS**

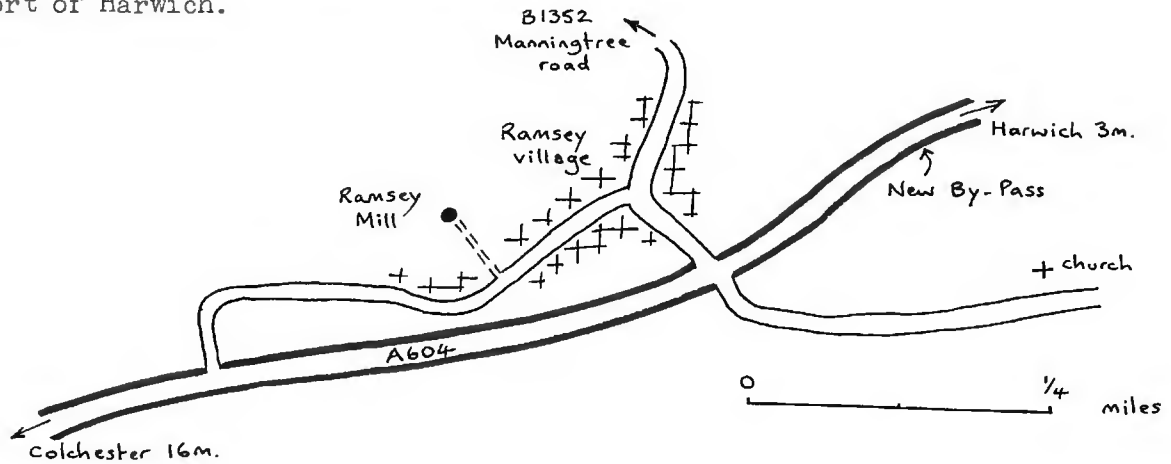
#### REPAIRS TO SYLEHAM POST MILL

The first-aid work to the roof of Syleham mill described in the last Newsletter has had to be delayed owing to non-delivery of the weatherboards. However, these have now arrived and the repairs will commence in earnest on SUNDAY OCTOBER 19th. If you can lend a hand please contact Chris Hullcoop during office hours on Ipswich 76911, or turn up at the mill on the day.

#### VISIT TO RAMSEY POST MILL: SUNDAY OCTOBER 26th., from 2 p.m. - 5 p.m.

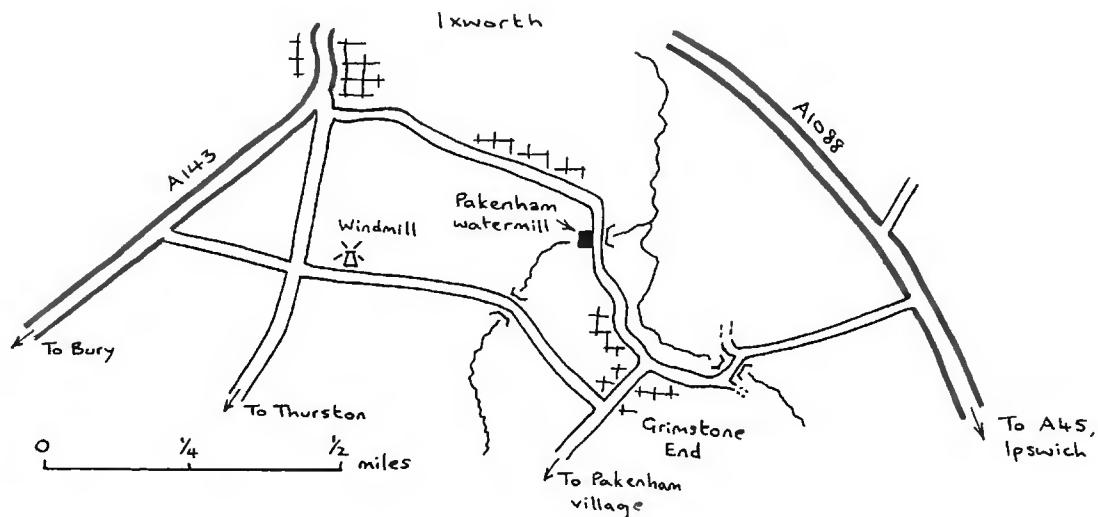
There are now only five tall post mills left. For the record their heights to the buck roof ridge are: Friston (Suffolk) 51ft.; Hurstmonceux (Sussex) 50ft.; Ramsey (Essex) 49ft.; Framsden (Suffolk) 48ft.; Saxtead (Suffolk) 47ft. The best proportioned of these mills is surely Ramsey, really a Suffolk mill in Essex, being moved from Woodbridge by Collins of Melton in 1842. Michael Organ who owns the mill has done very considerable research into its history and has copies of many old photographs and documents. The mill was extensively repaired by volunteers (many of whom are now S.M.G. Members) between 1974 and 1978, led by the indefatigable Chris Hullcoop, and is now

an outstanding landmark seen by thousands of motorists on their way to and from the port of Harwich.



S.M.G. 'GRIND-IN' AT PAKENHAM WATERMILL: SUNDAY NOVEMBER 16th. from 2 p.m. - 5 p.m.

Only very rarely can we invite Members to a working mill and this is one such occasion. All being well the wheel should drive the stones and we will experience the sights, sounds and smells of a mill at work. There will be plenty of freshly-ground wholemeal flour available at competitive prices! Don't miss this one!



S.M.G. MEMBERS' SOCIAL EVENING: FRIDAY DECEMBER 5th. from 7.30 p.m. at the SUFFOLK C.C. STAFF CLUB, ROPE WALK, IPSWICH

This will be an informal evening for Members, their families and friends, in the very comfortable lounge of the Suffolk County Council staff club. If you would like to show some mill slides (any subject), bring them along. We will be giving a brief account of S.M.G. work and visits this year, including a film of the 'lift off' at Thelnetham (if it's ready in time). If sufficient people are present perhaps we'll also discuss ideas for future S.M.G. activities, or have a light-hearted discussion about mills in general.

To complement the evening there will be liquid refreshment to suit all our Members (beer, wine, sherry and weak tea), together with some 'eats'. A small charge will be made for this to cover our costs.

