

SUFFOLK MILLS GROUP

Newsletter Number 33

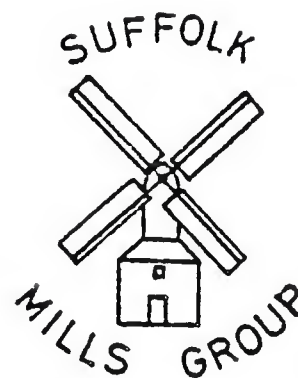
MAY 1985

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In common with most voluntary groups, S.M.G. is run by a very small number of people, most of whom were instrumental in getting the group started in the first place. As people leave the area or 'serve their time' and move on, new blood must be attracted if the activities of the group are not to be curtailed. S.M.G. has now reached the stage where one or two more people (that's all) are urgently needed to help run the show and keep it on the road. A particular need is for a person to publicise S.M.G. and to help recruit new members. In the past we've tended to neglect this aspect simply because there has been no time to even do basic things like design and distribute posters. If any member would like to help in this direction John Snowdon would be pleased to hear.

As an aid to recruitment a new membership leaflet is being produced which it is hoped to enclose with this Newsletter. If you know anyone who shares your mill interest, please show the leaflet to them and ask them to support us.

This edition of the Newsletter gives details of our programme of events for the summer, including the A.G.M. at Buttrum's Mill, Woodbridge on June 2nd and the two work-ins at Thelnetham. If all goes well at these work-ins Thelnetham mill should once again boast four sails by the time the next Newsletter appears. This would be a great achievement and one in which S.M.G., as organisers of the work-ins, can feel justifiably proud.

Mark Barnard

RELEGATED TO REPLICAS CHRIS HULLCOOP

A few years ago a dissatisfied customer took the suppliers of a certain notorious replica to court. An expert witness said that the replica might just about be acceptable provided it was dark and one was drunk. Mills have not yet reached this desperate state but the warnings are there and anyone responsible for restoration must ask a few questions on why and how the work is to be done.

On S.P.A.B. tours a derelict mill is particularly attractive to members. Dangerous and with decay everywhere, the locals wonder what it is that brings this busload of visitors when not too far away is the mill everyone knows, fully restored at great expense. The members know that here is a mill that has not been altered and compromised by modern restoration. Patched up and modified over the years certainly but at a time when its existence was vital to the local community. There is not the same intrepid enthusiasm for the mill totally restored or reconstructed. Constructional detail is so often lost and there

is little point in noting details of a 1970's butt joint held together with threaded rod. What was the original joint like?

There are many debates on the desirability of retaining weak original components in a working mill. Some will argue that today's repairs are just as valid a part of the mill's history as any previous ones. It is the easy way out to conclude that preservation of original components is just not possible in an old mill working today. Many responsible for restoration projects never understand or quickly lose sight of what they are trying to do. It was this attitude that so annoyed William Morris and led him to establish the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings in 1877. The manifesto he wrote then is just as valid today. How familiar his words sound when looking at a reconstructed mill and the 'before and after' photographs: 'There is no laying to rest in the spectator the suspicion of what may have been lost'. Walking across new boards, on new joists set on new beams we suspect that 'Of all the restorations yet undertaken the worst have meant the reckless stripping of a building of some of its most interesting material features'.

What is it in the derelict mill that the S.P.A.B. members risk Leicas and limbs to see? They are there because what they are looking at is the original or modified in the mill's working days. A half-rotten clasp-arm wheel is seen to have evidence of compass-arms which once fitted it to a wooden shaft. Here is evidence of the change from wooden to iron technology, the first effects of the industrial revolution. As Morris said: '... even change, whatever history it destroyed left history in the gap'. It is like looking through an old explorer's diary and seeing the day he noted the discovery of a continent. It is the closest we ever get to time travel and is not just academic but romantic as well. That precious fragment of the Mary Rose bears little resemblance to the ship in her prime on the sea. Why go to the vast expense of salvage and preservation? Why not measure and record and then build a large-scale model or even a reconstruction which would give a far better idea of how the ship looked before she sank. Who could not be moved though when the ship's old bones finally surfaced and were safely won from the sea bed. Replicas, however good, can never rival the romance of the original. The preservers of the Mary Rose have problems but they are spared the most difficult of all. There is no intention of returning the ship to full sailing condition. She will exist as found, a substantial part of a ship rather like a piece of broken pottery, and never again required to function in a harsh environment as originally intended. If anyone had sufficient money to study how such a ship handled on a voyage then a replica would be built and sailed in a similar way to Thor Heyerdahl's voyages in Kon-Tiki and Ra.

A full mill restoration on the other hand has to consider the stresses imposed by working. Compromise is inevitable but has to be reached through

knowledge and it is here so many mill restorations fail and a project like the Mary Rose succeeds. Long before the ship was raised methods of preservation were being studied. Representatives went to Sweden to see similar old ships that had been preserved and talk things over with people who had developed and successfully used complicated drying and resin impregnation techniques. The project demonstrates the professionalism of the archaeologists and museum conservationists, people who have extensive training and a lot of experience. They accept that learning is something they will do all their lives and feel no shame in not knowing the details of a particular technique.

The millwrights of old were not concerned with the conservation of history. They were replacing or repairing vital plant which would one day be out-dated and scrapped. Today the remaining mills survive like old steam engines for their contribution to the quality of life and not out of necessity for survival. The aim of repair is therefore different and the millwright has to be a conservationist as well. This is far more difficult as there has to be compromise between replacement and repair and good judgement born of experience is vital. The post mill at Bois de Feugère in France is being rebuilt after collapse in a gale. The post was weak at the neck and rather than replace it a repair was made. The post was cut in half lengthways, a special steel girder inserted and the halves fitted together again. At Thrigby in Norfolk, when the long-demolished post mill is being reconstructed, the post had been sawn off at the neck and since the lower half had rotted considerably, in this instance a new post had to be made. The original crowntree at Nutley post mill in Sussex has a RSJ let into its top surface and the side girts at Cromer post mill in Hertfordshire have steel plates on their outer faces. Both are discreet reinforcements enabling retention of important original components. There are methods of reinforcing load-bearing timbers using resins and carbon fibre as well as traditional repairs using scarf joints. So many original components have been lost because restorers do not bother to find out how they can be repaired. Contrast this with those soggy lumps salvaged from the Mary Rose which are now seen as splendid wooden implements, accomplished not by miracles, but by knowing how to do it.

As well as main frames and large components, much of the detail in mill restorations is poor. Old bolts often give way to thin-walled hexagon nuts and wire nails which spoils otherwise good work. Modern materials are often used without finding out their effectiveness from others who have already used them. Morris in his Manifesto said 'Restoration of ancient buildings, a strange and most fatal idea, which by its very name implies that it is possible to strip from a building this, that and the other part of its history - of its life that is - and then to stay the hand at some arbitrary point, and leave it still historical, living and even as it once was'.

What we need is more professionalism, and this is not just the distinction

between paid and voluntary work. It is a way of doing things which needs humility and confidence but never arrogance. Those contemplating restoration need the confidence to say that they know little but are prepared to learn, or that they know what they are doing but accept that they are learning more all the time. It needs humility to look around, ask questions and learn from the successes and mistakes of others. Without this approach the same old mistakes, bodes and misuse of materials will continue. As Vincent Pargeter says in his Code of Practice: 'The mills are gradually changing and if this trend is not halted then they will no longer be interesting, beautiful or examples of early mechanical engineering'.

BYGONE MILLS PETER DOLMAN

BLYTHBURGH

In the Middle Ages Blythburgh was quite a large town, with a sea port and magnificent church. By the eighteenth century however it had shrunk, like many other formerly large towns and villages in this part of Suffolk, to merely a small village, with its port long silted up and abandoned in favour of nearby Southwold. Only the beautiful church survives to show what once had been a thriving town.

There was a priory here in the Middle Ages, and what was known as the Prior's Mill stood to the south, in Mill Field, one of the open fields, by the old main road to Leiston. Kirby's map of 1736 marks a mill in this area and Kirby's 'Suffolk Traveller' of 1764 indicates the mill more precisely at Grid Ref. 453742, a site now marked by a water tower. Hodskinson (published 1783) shows no mill at Blythburgh at all; however the Ipswich Journal for August 11th 1787 announced the auction on September 3rd of 'A Post Windmill, new rebuilt in 1782, with one pair of French Stones and a flour mill; with a dwelling house, and two acres of land ...'. The sale arose because the owner (un-named) was declining business. It would appear that the old mill, presumably also a post mill, had disappeared at about the time Hodskinson did his survey and thus escaped his otherwise fairly reliable notice.

An estate map dated 1792 shows a mill, drawn as being of tower type, at a new site, some half a mile closer to the village (Grid Ref. 453749). I believe the 1782 rebuild brought the post mill to this new site closer to the village, as the original site did not have a dwelling remotely near it. At some time between 1782 and 1792 then, another new mill was built, the smock mill which was at the end of its life such an enigmatic survivor. Why a 'new rebuilt' post mill should be replaced after 10 years or less is unfortunately a mystery at the moment - perhaps it succumbed to fire, or a gale.

The Bury and Norwich Post of September 10th 1800 gives us the new mill's details: 'A Capital Smock TOWER-MILL, with two pair of French Stones, 4 F. 10 I., and 4 F. 6 I. and every other convenience for the Flour-Trade, almost new.'

The owner, Mr. Smith, was selling up as he had taken another business elsewhere. It may have been bought by Samuel Wilkinson, as an investment. He is recorded as owner and John Woods as occupier by the Tithe Map and apportionment of 1841. The Suffolk Chronicle of 8th July 1843 announced the auction of his estate, Lot 1 being '... an Excellent and Substantial TOWER WINDMILL, working 3 pair of stones ... occupied by Mr. John Woods'. (Lot 2 was Holton post mill incidentally.) By 1853 W. Woods was listed as miller but by 1868 George Piper was miller, the mill remaining in his family until it ceased work. He also had the post mill at nearby Walberswick from 1885. In 1892, wind and steam are noted as motive power, but in 1896 steam alone was noted, indicating the demise of wind-powered milling at the site. Herbert Piper was listed as miller and farmer in 1908 (also at Walberswick).



Blythburgh mill, 1936 (H.E.S.Simmons)

The last note of milling at Blythburgh is contained in an extraordinary account of a case in Woodbridge County Court noted in Milling on May 31st 1913. It appears that Herbert Piper, miller, of Blythburgh, brought an action after a collision between his motorcycle and a car driven by Mr. Henry Solomons, dentist, of Woodbridge who was being taught how to drive. He received damages of £55 plus costs, on account of his severe head and neck injuries. As no further millers are listed either at Blythburgh or 'Walberswick', it may be assumed that this unfortunate accident put an end to Herbert Piper's career.

The mill stood until February 1937, latterly with gaping holes in the sides, and was then pulled over by a traction engine. A photograph by Stanley Freese taken shortly afterwards shows the brick base, only about 12 inches high, with one solitary stone nut. The machinery was reportedly thrown down a well and nothing remains at the site today.

Blythburgh mill was unique in Suffolk in being 12-sided. It was not very tall, with four floors and a height of about 32 feet to the curb. It stood on a high bank behind the mill house, very close to it, with a shed on one side, no doubt to contain the engine of later years. The framing was fairly simple, as can be seen in the photograph, consisting of diagonal bracing to each storey-height panel and appears to have been all pine. It was clad with tarred vertical boarding, with butt joints and cross-tongues, another unique feature. The interior may have been plastered.

The shape of the cap is unknown, but it was probably domed. It never had a fantail and although the method of winding is not known, I would hazard the guess that a braced tailpole was used. The cap was removed c.1900 and replaced by a simple conical roof. This was surmounted by a weathercock on a long pole, perhaps a remnant from the old cap. Much of the original machinery (all of wooden construction) including the upright shaft and spur wheel was probably disposed of at this time, the steam drive being applied directly to one pair of stones, with a new sack hoist set up to operate from it. In 1936 only the three stone nuts (planked solid) remained, with 22, 20 and 26 teeth (reflecting the different sizes of the stones). The last stones were about 4 ft. diameter, the older and bigger ones having gone by 1936.

When built it had four common sails, then two spring and two common, and finally four patent sails. The shutters were taken out some time before the cap was removed. No photograph of the mill in working order has come to light although one is reputed to exist.

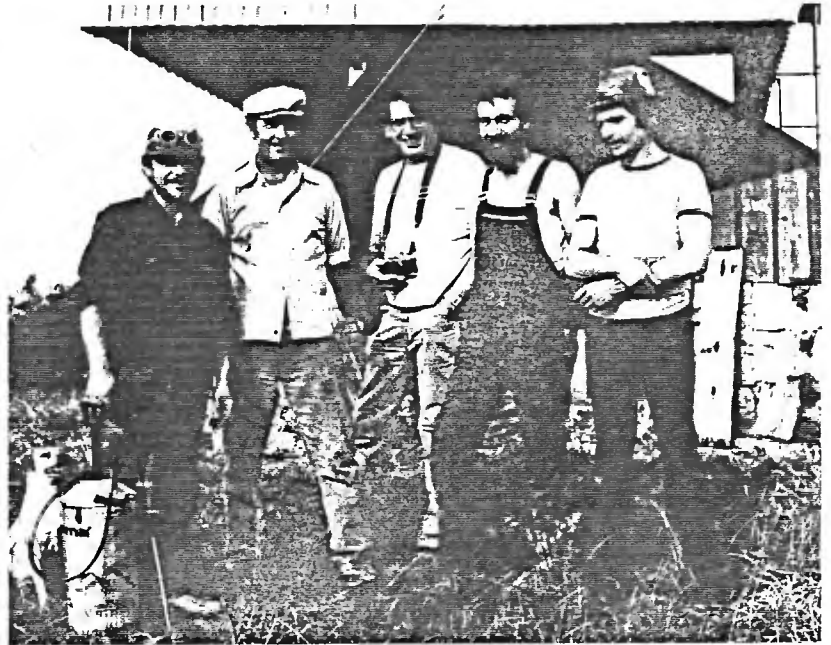
As a postscript, one possible candidate for its builder would have been the millwright William Bicker, of Blythburgh, who died in September 1836, aged 68. Whoever built the mill, nothing else like it was ever constructed in Suffolk. It was also one of the earliest smock mills in the county.

THE FRENCH CONNECTION PENNY PATERSON

As the summer approaches our thoughts go back to last year's visit which Roy Berry and I made (our third so far) to see the progress our friends Christian Porcher and Jean-François Amary are making on the mill at Bois de Feugères and the other mills that they, as prime movers of ARAM Beauce, are caring for and organising restoration work on.

After the two massive post mills of Hondschoot and Wormhout that we had visited in the Nord region of France at the beginning of our holiday (both well worth a visit, particularly as their respective custodians are proud to show you round), the post mill of Bois de Feugères seemed smaller and daintier. Although it lacks the side panniers characteristic of the northern mills, our friends have used the attractive method practised in the Nord region of cladding the breast of the mill with decorative wooden shingles and carved bargeboards at the eaves.

Those members who attended the S.M.G. public meeting at Ipswich in February 1984 may remember Roy's talk on French mills and the slides, some of which showed the daunting task that Christian and Jean-François faced after their mill had been virtually flattened by a freak storm. We were on our arrival last summer, as on the previous visit, amazed by the progress they had made. This time our friends were in the throes of preparation for a disco at the nearby village hall to be held that evening as a fund-raiser to buy wood for the sails. Gluttons for punishment, they had also planned a fête with stalls and side-shows round the mill for the following day. Visitors to the mill, which was now fully clad except for the front gable of the roof still awaiting wind-shaft and sails, could admire the new tun for the enormous pair of stones sitting resplendent up on the stone floor, and below the new governor, waiting to be finally linked. Thoughtful touches such as the cat-flap for



Top The post mill at Bois de Feugères

Above The 'French Connection' at Moutiers. From left to right: Jean-François, Edgar Barbier, Roy Berry, Christian & 'Gipsy'

Raymonde, who will keep the mill free of vermin, the de-mountable sides of the mill body to facilitate removal of the stones, and the sunken floor area for the scales so that sacks of flour can be slid over easily onto them showed how much Christian and Jean-François had thought out and planned the running of the mill, and how they have gleaned ideas from other mills visited. Examples of their ingenuity also abound in their workshop and its adjoining caravans (they have sprouted a second one since our previous visit!) which miraculously provide office, projection and

slide viewing area, drawing office and darkroom facilities, plus living accommodation and a shower!

The weekend fund-raising festivities over, we had time to visit the stone tower mill at Frouville Pensier where Christian and Jean-François had recently organised a work-in with visiting mill volunteers from Holland, achieving a new framework for the upper floor of the mill beneath the very effective temporary



cap of tough clear polythene sheeting over a wooden frame which our friends had made 18 months previously, prefabricating it at Bois de Feugères and erecting it on site. Next came the post mill at Moutiers where Edgar Barbier, son of its previous owner, the late Marcel, was working with our friends and their new-found mill enthusiast 'Gipsy' (could it be that he smokes Gitanes?!). One half of the roof cladding was off, providing a marvellous opportunity for well-lit interior photographs of the stone floor. Jean-François was disguised as a Martian, busily scaling ladders outside the mill and spraying its new wooden cladding (not to mention our van!) with preservative. Edgar Barbier showed us the mechanism which operated the Berton sails as they lay on the ground beside the mill, and we were delighted with the model sail they showed us inside the mill (see photograph above).

Our latest letter from Christian and Jean-François recounts their winter activities (and we gather that their winter was as cold as ours!). Jean-François spent much time at the nearby steel factory, fabricating a new sheet iron (13 mm. thick) canister which will be fixed to the massive wooden windshaft which waits to be raised to its new home. Meanwhile Christian was making the new brakewheel (2.70 m. diameter), which took a long time because the work could only be done when the temperature was over 2°C.!

However, their work doesn't stop at the practical level, and winter work also includes preparation of new information booklets for mill enthusiasts, tourists and schools (1985 in France is National Heritage Year), translation of texts on milling techniques, regular visits to Paris for archival research, and the mounting of exhibitions to inform the public of its responsibilities to its milling heritage.

Their letter sends best wishes to all friends in S.M.G., and expresses their

hope that the proposed S.M.G. exchange will take place this summer. There is also a request for a pen friend. Albert, the 13 year old cousin of the aforementioned Gipsy, is also very interested in mills (he's at present making a model of a cave mill). He is learning English at school and would like to have the name and address of a mill enthusiast to correspond with. Any S.M.G. members with teenage relatives or friends who would be interested, please? They wouldn't necessarily have to write in French, just clear English so that Albert could understand and get to know 'real' rather than 'text book' English. If readers have anyone in mind who might like to do this, please send details to Roy Berry / Penny Paterson, Frating Hall, Frating, Colchester, Essex; we'll put you in touch.

And finally, if you do decide to visit the Beauce region and its mills this summer, Bon Voyage, and we're sure you'll enjoy the experience!

NEW BOOKS Reviewed by PETER DOLMAN

'ESSEX WINDMILLS, MILLERS & MILLWRIGHTS' Volume 4 by Kenneth G. Farries. Published by Charles Skilton; 1985. Price £12.

The latest volume in the epic survey of Essex windmills covers the parishes beginning with the letters F-R. The remainder and various appendices will appear in Volume 5 in due course. There is little that can be said that hasn't been said before: it is extremely well researched, written and illustrated. Those who have been collecting the volumes as they appear will buy this one automatically. They will not be disappointed.

An interesting diversion has been introduced by the author who offers readers the chance to 'write it yourself'. A particularly strange succession of mills at Febmarsh has not been sorted out, all the relevant data being presented 'in the raw'. Readers are invited to send their submissions for possible mention in the final volume. I shall be interested to see if anyone rises to the challenge!

'NORFOLK CORN WINDMILLS' Volume 1 by Harry Apling. Published by the Norfolk Windmills Trust; 1985. Price £9.95.

Those of us who know Harry Apling have been awaiting the publication of his book for some years now. It is indeed fortunate that the Norfolk Windmills Trust have decided to publish this work which plugs a large gap in the available knowledge of mills in the county, which probably had more windmills than any other (with the possible exception of Lincolnshire). The book is to appear in three volumes, at intervals. Volume 1 covers all mills of which something remains, however small; Volume 2 will cover vanished mills of which a picture has survived; Volume 3 will cover those mills of which only the barest documentary evidence remains.

The first volume follows a similar format to that adopted by Martin Brunnarius in his book on Sussex windmills. Personally I find this illogical. To give a mill a thorough biography just because a few bricks remain in place yet to totally ignore possibly more interesting mills which have vanished seems a poor basis for an historical work. In the case of 'Norfolk Corn Windmills' this criticism is

not valid, as Volumes 2 and 3 will fill the gap. Unfortunately though, this method of production causes some difficulty in looking up a particular mill, especially as mills are grouped into various categories in Volume 1 (such as 'Conversions - Residential', 'Conversions - Other social use', 'Preserved - Non-residential', 'Other remains - Towers truncated by one or more storeys', etc.). I'd much rather have all the mills lumped together in alphabetical order. I also felt that some of the transcriptions of old newspaper adverts could have benefited from a sharper pair of scissors, interesting though most of them are. The author has managed to ferret out some very interesting facts about the mills and presents his information in a concise and logical manner. Technical details are kept brief and in tabular form; this works well and avoids the repetition which might otherwise occur with so many mills of similar type. Another excellent feature of the book is the wealth of old photographs used to illustrate the mills. These have reproduced well and where possible the oldest picture of each mill has been used, to attempt to show them in their prime. It's a pity the provenance of most of them is not known, credit being given mostly to the Unwin Collection as source.

The early chapters contain fascinating data including explanations of well-known but perhaps misunderstood terms like 'grist milling' and 'smock' mills - these are not named from a man wearing a smock, but from the Old English 'smok', a woman's shift or undergarment. As the author says, 'windmills were regarded as being of FEMININE gender, so why try to dress them up in MASCULINE attire?'.

To find factual errors in the text one must know more about Norfolk mills than the author himself, which is impossible! Further information is appearing all the time, and several additions to the first volume will appear in the subsequent parts. I did spot one unfortunate error - a photograph labelled as being of East Wretham mill before conversion is in fact of Thelnetham mill, taken about 1932. Also Worstead mill, said to have ceased work c.1922 was in perfect order and clearly still used in 1924 when Sid Simmons photographed it.

In conclusion then, despite misgivings about the layout, I have no hesitation in recommending the book to all mill lovers, especially in view of its reasonable price.

'THE VERSATILE MILLSTONE - WORKHORSE OF MANY INDUSTRIES' by Jon A. Sass. Available from the author at 36, Brigg Road, Hibaldstow, Brigg, South Humberside; price approx. £5 - £6 (varies with exchange rate).

This book (published in America in 1984) is the result of the author's five-year stint as miller at Flowerdew Hundred windmill in the U.S.A.. It relies heavily for its source material on the stupendous U.S. collection of several hundred millstones made by Paul Flory. If you thought that millstones came in two types, grinding and crushing (edge runners) and were limited in use to milling corn and a few industrial processes, think again! 27 different types

or sub-types are listed, used for purposes as varied as threshing, making split peas, cider mills, cocoa mills and tanbark mills. A very interesting little book, well illustrated and packed with obscure facts. Essential reading for the serious molinologist.

BOOKS FOR SALE

Due to recent acquisitions I have a number of windmill books to spare which I offer to S.M.G. members. All prices are exclusive of postage.

'The English Windmill' by Rex Wailes. First edition with dust jacket, in mint condition. £10

'Windmills in England' by Rex Wailes. Published in 1948. This is an original, not the facsimile, but is a bit scruffy. £5

'English Windmills' Volume 1 by M.I. Batten. Well-known 1930 survey of mills in Kent, Surrey and Sussex. Good condition. £8

'In Search of English Windmills' by R. Thurston Hopkins & Stanley Freese. Published in 1931, this is one of the best of the inter-war travelogue mill books. Good condition. £10

'England of the Windmills' by S.P.B. Mais. This is the EP reprint of the 1931 edition. As new. Cost £5.95, now offered at £3.

I also offer members the opportunity to add to their collections of pictures of bygone mills. I can supply good quality copies of a large selection of mills, mostly windmills, in Suffolk, Cambridgeshire and a few other areas of south-east England. The cost (post extra) is 40p for enprint (5"x3½"), 70p for 7"x5"; larger sizes on request. Write for details to Peter Dolman, 3, Lawling Avenue, Heybridge, Maldon, Essex (tel. Maldon 58440).

NEWS

PROGRESS AT THELNETHAM

During the course of the winter there has been steady progress both on-site and away from the mill. The brake is now finished and operational (insofar as is possible without sails!), there have been further repairs to the brickwork inside the tower and work on the sackhoist is continuing. Off-site, over half the sail shutters are well on the way to completion and the striking gear is being made.

The main point to stress is this year's work-in dates: Saturday July 20th to Sunday July 28th and Saturday August 17th to Monday August 26th inclusive.

The main aim is to get all four sails up and turning, albeit with only a half-set of shutters. This will allow us to get the striking gear working so that additional shutters can be put in place as they become available. Other work to be carried out this summer is to get the 4ft 7in. stones set up to run, with tun, spouts, etc.; to modify the existing shed so the sails will clear it; and perhaps to put some tar on the mill.

As usual we need as many volunteers as possible for both weeks as there is still much work to be done to the sails before they can be hoisted. As things have reached an exciting stage we hope to see a few new faces joining the ranks of regulars:

There is ample camping space at the mill, with (new for '85) a flush toilet, plus running hot and cold water, electricity, refrigerators and cooking facilities. Alternatively, several nearby houses do bed and breakfast. For further details please contact Peter Dolman (address on p.11).

Can you help?

After a break of over two years work is now advancing on the storage and interpretation building at Theltham. This is constructed of brick and will be tarred. We would like if possible to give it a traditional tiled roof, and reckon about 1200 pantiles or, alternatively, 2000 plaintiles will be needed. If any S.M.G. member has access to tiles or knows where some might be available Mark Barnard (Ipswich 77853) or Chris Seago (Norwich 34351) would be delighted to hear.

HAWKS MILL, NEEDHAM MARKET

A few years ago this mill was sold by Quintons with planning permission for conversion into flats. Now, several owners later, detailed plans have been finalised and work will start soon. The mill was gutted many years ago and all machinery relating to its several former uses as corn mill, mustard mill and seed dressing plant for Quintons has been removed. All that remains is a fine 100-year old Armfield turbine and an auxiliary drive. The waterways are complete and with a good supply from the Gipping. A beautiful tree-lined head pond and a tail race with fine brick arches together with the formal nineteenth century brick mill building and a much older mill house make a classic prosperous watermill scene.

S.M.G. had hoped that both turbine and auxiliary drive could be saved but it soon became clear that the auxiliary drive would have to be sacrificed. We agreed to dismantle and remove this rather than see it cut up for scrap. It is always sad to remove machinery from a mill but we must remember that in some parts of the country permission is blithely granted for gutting of complete mills and enthusiasts have had to dismantle and remove gear rather than see it destroyed. Developers Curry and Pennock are keen to preserve the turbine and its waterways. We have dismantled the fine turbine controls on the first floor and hopefully one day they will be re-assembled on the ground floor close to the turbine. This area will not be converted and access will be from a separate side door. Nothing will be done to prevent the turbine turning again and if there is sufficient interest in Needham it could be run regularly and perhaps even drive a generator. (C.H.)

STANTON POST MILL

This fine post mill and the adjacent mill house were mentioned in the last Newsletter as being for sale. We are delighted to announce that the property has been purchased by S.M.G. member Richard Duke, who intends to return the mill to working order. Unlike the few other derelict post mills (and some

'preserved' ones) a major rebuild of the buck is not needed as extensive repairs were carried out just before the last war by Amos Clarke at the request of the S.P.A.B.. A recent inspection of the mill has revealed the dates 1763 and 1761 on the post, which ties in with the clearly eighteenth century framing of the buck. However, as there was no mill standing on this site until about 1800, the present mill has clearly come from elsewhere. Perhaps more of its early history will come to light in future years.

RETURN TO DRINKSTONE

We hope to complete more work at Drinkstone mills this year. The first task must be repair of the leaking roundhouse roof with its motley collection of plaintiles of all ages. The roof as well as being conical has to have ladders placed on it to reach the buck above, all adding up to a tiler's nightmare! About a fifth has been rebuilt with the tiles laid in lime mortar on boarded rafters. This area faces south so that when any part of the buck needs painting it can be cranked round until it is over this area of tiles. Ladders can then be placed on specially designed roundhouse roof saddles which will hold them firmly and safely and not damage the roof below. It would be nice if this year we could replace the missing two blades from the six-blade fly, although the mill keeps to wind very well on the four remaining blades. The granary and engine shed need painting and more sleepers must soon be added to the winding track so please let us know if you can spare the odd Saturday or Sunday this summer to help with this important work. (C.H.)

NEWS IN BRIEF

The draw for the S.M.G. prize crossword featured in the last Newsletter had to be postponed and will now be held at our A.G.M. on June 2nd.

Moves are being made to establish an Essex Mills Group. Following a pilot meeting in April there is to be a public meeting at Coggeshall Grange Barn on Sunday May 19th.. S.M.G. wishes the new group every success.

Bardwell windmill received a pair of fully-shuttered patent sails in March, the work being done by Thompsons of Alford. We understand that the mill is now able to grind by wind power.

Wiston Mill, Nayland is for sale. This large watermill, listed Grade II*, still has the main drive gear and a ruinous waterwheel, but the stones and the final drive to them have gone. Offers are invited for mill, mill house, cottage and about 4 acres by the agents, Strutt and Parker.

EVENTS

S.M.G. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: SUNDAY JUNE 2nd 1985 at BUTTRUM'S MILL, WOODBRIDGE, starting 11 am.

Our 1985 A.G.M. will be held at Buttrum's Mill, Woodbridge, by kind permission of Martin Whitworth, the owner. This visit comes at an opportune time as the exterior of the mill (which is maintained by the County Council) is now fully restored and she regularly turns. The mill stands to the west of the town centre just off the A12 Woodbridge bypass. Bring a pic-nic lunch (plenty of grassy space around the mill) or visit a local pub. In the afternoon we hope to arrange a visit to another mill in the locality.

VISIT TO HOLBROOK WATERMILL: SUNDAY JUNE 30th 1985, 2.30 pm - 4 pm.

When we last visited this mill in April 1982, owners Ken and Jenny Read were about to start renovation work, converting the empty upper floors to living accommodation but retaining the turbine and its drive to two pairs of stones in the basement of the mill. Since then the conversion work has been largely completed and a start is now being made on repairs to the machinery. It is hoped that the 'Little Giant' turbine will be lifted out by the time of our visit.

The mill is just south of Holbrook village on the B1080 road. Parking is in the grounds of the adjacent Mill House, subject to availability.

Ken and Jenny Read have produced an attractive cut-away perspective drawing of the mill which is being sold for 50p to help raise funds for the restoration of the turbine. These will be available on the day.

THELNETHAM MILL WORK-IN: SATURDAY JULY 20th - SUNDAY JULY 28th 1985 (Week 1)

See page 11 of this Newsletter for details.

VISIT TO EUSTON WATERMILL: SUNDAY AUGUST 4th 1985 at 2.30 pm.

Euston watermill is most interesting, as the wheel drove both a single pair of stones and also a water pump, raising water to a tank which was contained in a tower designed to look like a church tower. The tank supplied water to Euston Hall, on whose estate the mill stands. Following the visit to the mill we hope to arrange a guided tour of the fine seventeenth century parish church in Euston Park.

The mill stands close to the A1088 Ixworth to Thetford road just south of the bridge over the river.

THELNETHAM MILL WORK-IN: SATURDAY AUGUST 17th - MONDAY AUGUST 26th 1985 (Week 2)

See page 11 of this Newsletter for details.

Other Events

Members may like to know that Easterford Mill at Kelvedon, Essex will be open to the public from 10am - 6pm on the following Sundays: June 16th, July 21st, August 18th and September 15th. Other visits can be arranged by contacting Marjorie Thompson the owner on 0376 71778 or 0376 71360. Renovation work is continuing and it is hoped to have the waterwheel and crown wheel in operation by the summer.
