

SUFFOLK MILLS GROUP

Newsletter Number 35

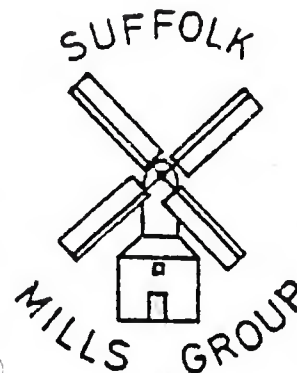
JANUARY 1986

SECRETARY:

John Snowdon Lark Rise Hemley WOODBRIDGE

EDITOR:

Mark Barnard 41, Melbourne Road IPSWICH



Just as the last Newsletter was being distributed came the sad news of the death of Mike Organ. As owner of Ramsey post mill, Mike helped to organise five work-ins there between 1974 and 1978 which saw his mill restored to fine order. During this time his interest in mills widened and he joined S.M.G. when we were formed in 1977, later serving on our Committee. His humorous and generous nature endeared him to many and he will be sadly missed.

More recently we have learnt of the death of Rex Wailes. Rex was the pioneer of the serious study of mills in this country and played an important part in the founding of the S.P.A.B. Wind and Watermill Section. For this alone we owe him a great debt. He was particularly fond of Suffolk mills, especially the post mills, and in 1979 we invited him to speak at our public meeting in Ipswich which was one of the most successful events we have organised. Rex Wailes' death is a reminder that our links with the old milling days are slowly disappearing.

Inside this issue is a report of the last full-scale work-in at Thelnetham, held last summer. Also, please don't forget the date of our public meeting - Saturday February 22nd - which, as you will read inside, will be well worth attending.

I would still welcome further material for future Newsletters; the next will appear in May.

Mark Barnard

MILL MEMORIES (2) CLAUDE ALDRIDGE

In my young time there were nine mills working on the River Waveney and I've been in every one of them when they've been at work bar two. At Hoxne they had a big 10 h.p. portable engine as auxiliary to the water and a 10-stone Tattersall Midget roller plant. Homersfield mill and the cottage attached to it was pulled down in 1927 I think. The bank of the side channel caved in and they lost all the water. They went there one morning to start her up and the river was dry. The mill had a lineshaft drive to the stones off the pitwheel. It belonged to the Flixton Hall estate; they wouldn't pay the money so it stood empty for about three or four years and then they pulled it down.

There was a queer house at Bramfield Waterloo Mill. The mill wasn't too high and when they built the house they didn't want to put too high a house up to hold the wind, so they built it in two parts, one each side of the gate - living quarters on one side, the bedrooms the other. So if that was snowing or a foot of snow outside they had to go across the gateway to the bedroom! Never heard

of it anywhere else. When my father left school at 14 he worked for old Stephen Haddenham who owned Waterloo Mill as well as about four other windmills in Halesworth. He used to be sent to run that mill, perhaps in the summer time, and I've heard him say you could stand on top of the cap and see the ships sailing along on the sea off Southwold.

Talk about getting money and living the hard way! Hori Barker had Hinderclay tower mill (see Newsletter 23) for years and I've heard him say he'd put a horse in the cart in the morning, get a dollop of corn up the top of the mill and leave his wife to look after the windmill all day long. He took the horse and cart to Diss station and bagged a ton of coal up out of the truck and hawked it on the way back to Hinderclay, about seven miles. He earned five bob - threepence a hundredweight. Then he went in and worked the windmill to midnight. That's what you call getting money the hard way! The mill was standing in my courting days because my wife kept house for her two brothers when they started farming at Thelnetham in 1929, and I used to go within 100 yards of that old mill every Sunday when I went over to see her.

Gislingham was a nice mill. That's where I should have started business. I and my brother-in-law went there ever so many times. There was also a three-floor steam mill with steam engine and two pairs of stones and a house. We could have bought the whole lot for £300 but we couldn't raise 300 shillings, not in those days. Old Nat Finch and his brother worked that mill. When he put the other two patent sails on he said 'That mill will last me a lifetime'. The old boy was 75 then! A couple of years later he was dead and the mill was sold.

I remember one Sunday night when I was out courting my wife at Botesdale, before we were married. It was 25 miles from St. Michael's mill, where I lived, and I knew my aunt and uncle were out for the day. I came home round about eleven o'clock and got up to the top of Billingford hill which is roughly half way. I could see a big thunderstorm coming up. I knew where the mill stood - she stood east - and of course nine thunderstorms out of ten come tail to wind. I opened that old bike out and came home hard as that bike could go. I just got into the yard as the storm broke; the mill was almost dead tail-winded. I



Bramfield mill in the 1920's

had to claw up the steps and go along the fly rails to pull the old fly round until she got into the wind. Mind you I got fairly wet because it started to rain but once she'd got the wind she went round in a hurry.

Editor's Note Some correction is needed to the first part of this article, which was derived from tape recordings. Claude Aldridge has kindly clarified things as follows.

The episode of the waterwheel and stones I renovated reads as if it was at Wye mill, Kent, but I never worked at Wye mill (my father did, as stated). It happened at Newbury mill, Berkshire.

I left my uncle at St. Michael's mill in September 1930. Times were very bad then and I was getting married the following year and there was not a living for two families. I went to Hovis Ltd. at their West Mills, Newbury. This was a provender mill with a combined roller and stone plant for grinding maize, barley, wheat, etc., and corn cutters, oat-crushers, mixers, clippers and polishers, etc. for a general provender trade. This was driven by a big iron waterwheel and a 25 h.p. Clayton diesel engine together. The waterwheel was completely worn out and was always breaking down. At the other end of the mill was a smaller wooden waterwheel which they had not used for a long time because they said it nearly shook the mill down when last used and this is the wheel and stones I described. Further to that episode the pair of stones I mentioned as Peak bedstone and emery compo runner only worked for three days and cut the furrows clean out despite being $\frac{5}{8}$ " deep. We put a 2" face of emery composition grit on the Peak bedstone and then we had a good pair of emery stones that would grind for weeks.

I faced several stones like this during my years with Hovis Ltd.. I went to their Sible Hedingham watermill and faced a pair of 4ft. French burr stones there about 1933-4. The system was this. We drove one or two hoops off the stone to be faced and put on a new band 4" or 5" deep, leaving 2" or whatever we wanted above the stone to be filled up with the mixture. The stone had to be absolutely dead level and centered; I had an old pulley I put in for the centre. You'd tell Barrons the millwrights exactly what depth of facing you wanted and the size of the stone, and they would send the exact quantities of materials for the job - so much emery grit, special cement which looked like Plaster of Paris (but wasn't) and a drum of liquid to mix it with, an oily sort of stuff. You'd mix all this up to their instructions and when it was set it would be very hard wearing. We used a sickle dress, furrows only of course.

I worked for $17\frac{1}{2}$ years for Hovis Ltd. from 1930 until I came to the mill at Barningham in 1948. In 1936 I was appointed mill foreman at the Town Flour Mills which was about 600 yards from the provender mill and I remained in charge of the two mills. In 1935 the two waterwheels were taken out of the provender mill and replaced with a 35 h.p. Armfield turbine which drove the mill without the engine. We just had an electric motor to use when the water was low. The Town

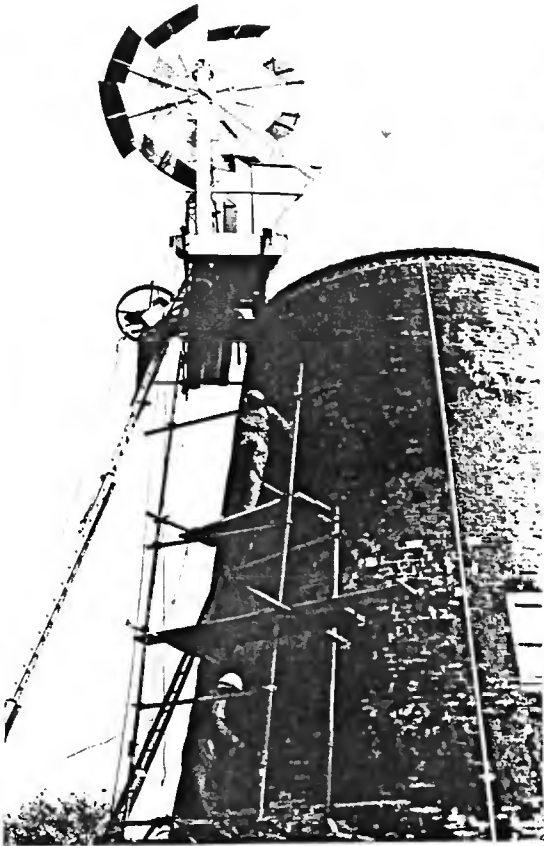
Flour Mill in 1936 was a four-sack Turner roller plant which we enlarged during the war to produce 7-8 sacks per hour. This mill was driven by a 80 h.p. Armfield turbine and a 75 h.p. electric motor linked by clutches on the main mill shaft. Sadly both mills are now demolished.

The other item not quite right in Part One of the article was the last sentence, about the millstones I sold from Barningham mill to be made into composition stones. This should read French burr composition not emery which is an entirely different material. As a matter of interest there are the last two pairs of millstones I used at Barningham up to the mid 1950's still standing in the mill - one pair of 4ft French burr composition and one pair of emery composition. We keep them for old times' sake.

THELNETHAM WORK-INS PETER DOLMAN

The July work-in got off to a damp start with volunteers having to pitch their tents on a soggy site in rain, an ill omen for the remainder of the week, which actually turned out to be quite fine apart from the odd shower. Undaunted however, we launched into the work with a will, starting on projects under cover where possible. The heaviest work, on the sails, had to take place outside of course and we began by finishing off the clamps to the first stock and fitting them to it with the four bolts and two shackles. Meanwhile Chris Hullcoop continued with the trimming of the second stock, which had been left unfinished from 1984.

Installation of the first batch of shutters in the first sail began on Monday and was to continue for the rest of the week, with the same shutters being put in different sails in turn as we only had a few! On Tuesday the weather improved so the first pair of sails was assembled and bolted together. Due to the wide 'Norfolk type' clamps, several notches had to be cut to allow the trailing sail bars to clear. Once the sail frames were in position several gangs could begin to make and fix the backstays, and to fix the striking gear in position. The first pair was completed on Friday and was quickly dismantled to allow the ironwork and shutters to be re-used on the second stock, which by this time was also ready to receive its sail frames. At this stage we suffered a setback. The fourth sail frame (weighing about a quarter of a ton) was being moved to the stock by many willing hands when someone stumbled on the uneven ground, causing a slight jolt which resulted in a loud crack as a sail bar broke off near the whip. This was found to have been caused by a notch cut in the wrong place, weakening the bar. The extra shock caused it to break, damaging the inner lath at the same time. This delayed us for a few hours while the bar was cut off and drilled out of the whip, into which it was immovably fixed. The sail was then mounted on the stock and work proceeded as before while a new bar was made and fitted. The second pair of sails was



Above: Colin Budgey at work installing the sail shutters

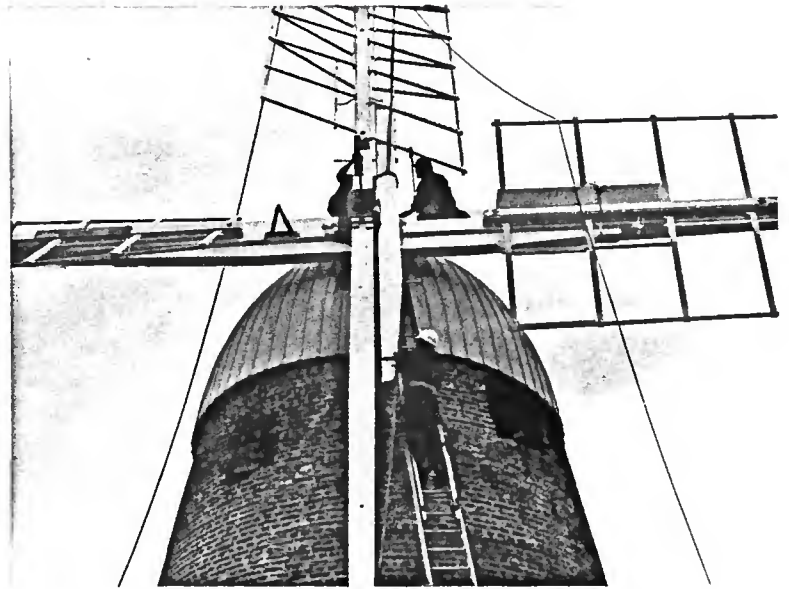
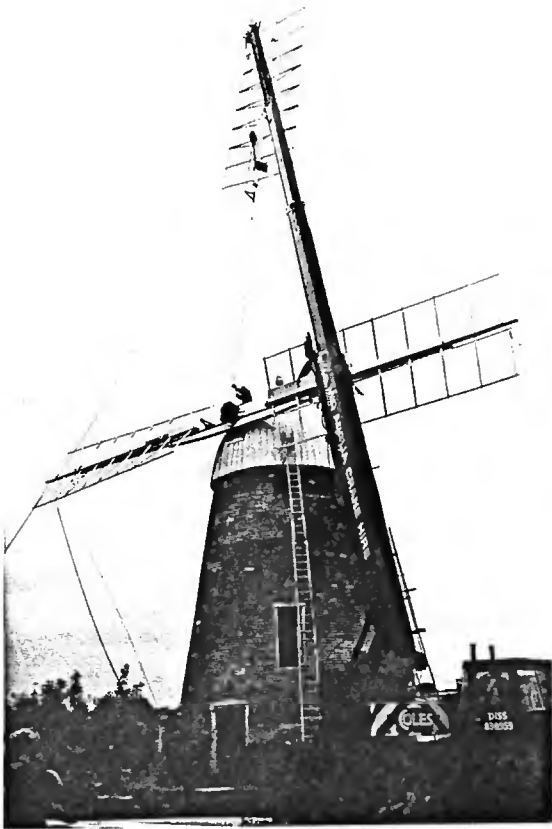
Left: A view of the tail of the mill showing work in progress on the striking gear and re-pointing the last section of the tower

finished during the last week-end and dismantled to allow the clamps and stock to be painted.

Between the work-ins, further shutter fitting took place and Dave Pearce was frantically organising the remaining ironwork for the second pair of sails while further shutters were being covered and painted.

The second work-in started well, with all the remaining ironwork appearing and many workers being employed in fettling and painting it ready for installation. The new striking wheel also arrived, cleverly contrived from channel section and other bits of steel to be a replica of the cast one at Garboldisham mill by our excellent local engineer, George Garrod. This was fitted into place with the striking rack and pinion by Chris Wilson who spent many hours standing on a ladder against the tail of the cap.

The weather conspired against us by raining with monotonous regularity but we were able to get on with painting everything ready for erection of the sails. This was to take place on Tuesday and sure enough we had a fresh to strong wind and rain to contend with. This tended to drive away many of the spectators who perhaps expected it would be over by coffee time! No such luck. The crane arrived before nine and was set to work immediately. Because the mill is so short, only 35 feet to the poll-end, we could drop the stocks in from above with one sail already fixed, complete with backstays. The inner stock was lifted first, with several ropes and many willing hands to steady it in the ever-increasing wind. The poll wedges were knocked in once it was in position, the fine control on the crane



Above: Fixing the first clamp to the second pair of sails

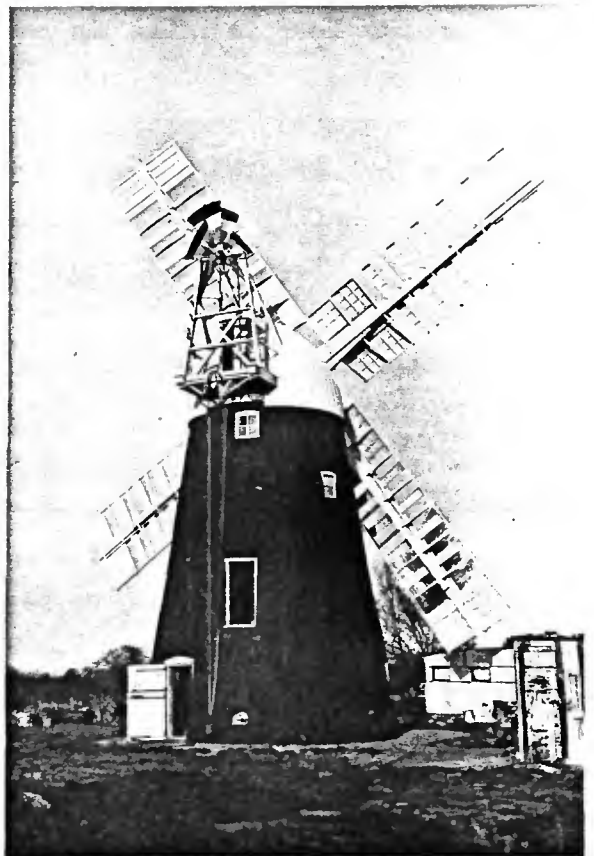
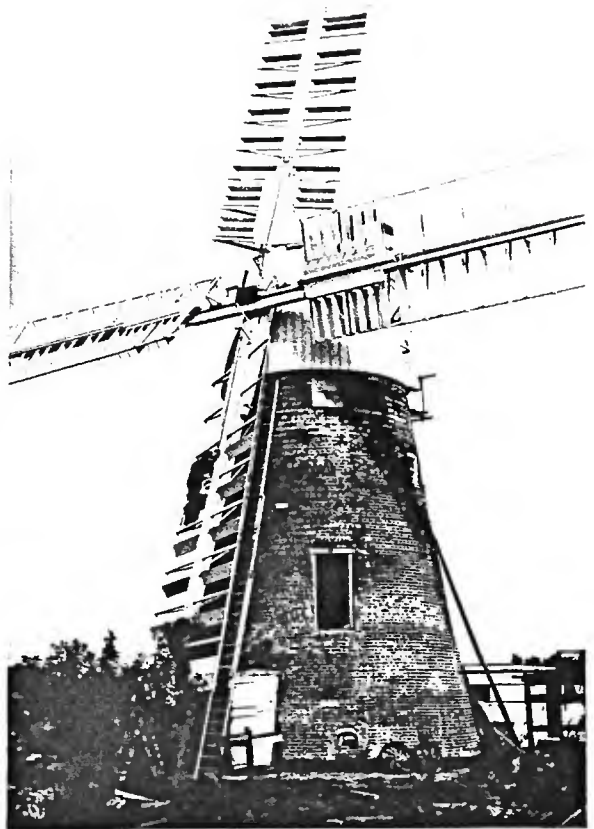
Left: Lowering the second stock into position

proving a great advantage in getting the stock accurately placed. Once the wedges were as tight as possible the crane hook was released and, as we held our breath, the stock stayed in place. The two clamps followed next, the first hanging on the bolts while the other was placed in position, allowing the nuts to be fitted and tightened. The clamps were set away from the stock by about $\frac{3}{4}$ " to allow them to be drawn up tight against the outside of the poll-end, thus holding the stock firm should the poll wedges accidentally come loose. All attempts to fit the shackles around the end of the clamp failed unfortunately; I wished that we had a trained octopus on site at the time! We settled for temporarily fastening part of the shackle to the lower sail as it was lifted. This was easy compared to fitting the stock and was soon accomplished without trouble. However, when we came to check the position of the stock in the poll-end we found it had slipped down about an inch, trapping the striking rod. This had happened because the paint on the stock and canister, being new, was still soft underneath and allowed the $1\frac{1}{2}$ tons of sails to move imperceptibly down. The simple, although rather barbaric remedy, was to turn the sails through 180 degrees and then to wiggle the stock vigorously, allowing it to slip back to its rightful place, whereupon the poll wedges and clamp bolts were fixed as tightly as possible. This scheme worked very well, although observers inside the cap reported the tail beam and windshaft as being somewhat animated during the process! By this time it was midday but no break could be allowed as the crane was booked for six hours only and anything over this would cost us more. The second stock was erected in exactly the same way,

this time without incident, apart from a little wood butchery being required to the stops on the inner poll wedges before the outer clamps would line up properly. Who would think that $\frac{1}{4}$ " of wood could be such a nuisance!

By about four o'clock it was all over and the stalwart sail-fixers and crane crew could enjoy a well-earned pint of Adnams (supplied free by the brewery) in celebration. The mill looked really impressive and we were able to walk down the road to study the new view, not seen since the Great War. As we were chatting by the gate, a car screeched to a halt and a lady shouted to us 'Well done, it looks fantastic!'. Never have such words been so well received or justified. Well done, all those who helped to make it possible.

The remainder of the week was a bit of an anti-climax, with shutters, striking gear, boards, backstays and lightning conductor strips being fixed to each sail in turn. All was finished by early on Saturday evening so the ropes were cast off one by one from the sail tips. A moderate breeze was blowing and to our great pleasure the moment the shutters were closed the mill sprang to life and set off at a steady 8-10 r.p.m.. Much to my relief, the brake worked perfectly. The expected problems of clearance between the inner sails and the tower manifested themselves in a worse manner than predicted, probably due to the poll-end not being accurately aligned with the shaft. One sail heel scraped particularly badly and about four shutters were affected when open. This was sorted out after the work-in by springing the sail forward on the backstays and moving the pivots on the offending shutters.



Top: Completing the installation of the shutters

Above: The mill as it now stands

Various other jobs were tackled during the two work-ins. A lightning conductor was fitted to the mill. Each sail has a strip along it, fixed to the windshaft. Connections are taken from both the neck and the tail bearings down to the curb by way of the cap rollers. The curb is linked together electrically and a conductor strip goes down the outside of the tower to an earth electrode. Whether this scheme will work remains to be seen; I hope we never need to find out! The bedstone curbing was fitted in place and a start was made on the first spout. Some of the fan gearing and the poll-end were given their final coat of paint and a start was made on tarring the tower (from a cradle made to an old miller's design by Chris Wilson), using bitumen emulsion. This has been successfully used at Soham and Over mills, where it has set and remains dry, though soft, even on the hottest days. We had heard bad reports of painting tar, melting in sunshine and running down to the bottom of the tower. As a prelude to the tarring, the remaining portion of repointing had been carried out, and we were very glad to see the end of this laborious job.

The other main progress was the single-handed erection of the roof over the new workshop by Fred Davis. By the end of the work-in this was nearly finished, only the ridge tiles being required to be bedded in place. The old shed was cut down to allow the sails to pass, which they now do with about two feet clearance.

For the record, the helpers this year were: Peter Dolman, Chris Seago, Mark Barnard, Charles Dolman, Dave Pearce, Nigel Bacon, Colin Budgey, John Spencer, John Infield, Alan Wallis, Shirley McCauley, Chris Hullcoop, Chris Wilson, Roger and Michelle Skinner, Dick Hesketh, Duncan Breckels, Fred Davis, Kim West, Cliff Lovett, Alan Loasby, Jo Roberts, John Holdway, Sheila Brynner, Vicky Stopford and children, Jocelyne and Trevor Nurse, Andy Abbott, Michael and Karl Wolf and friend Geoff, Wilf and Sylvia Foreman, Des and Gavin Codd. Help came from many other sources, too numerous to list here.

A few statistics may be of interest. The total weight of the sails is about $3\frac{1}{4}$ tons; the crane hook was 70 feet above the ground in order to get the stock into the poll-end, and was lifting $\frac{3}{4}$ ton. The sails took (or will take) 20 gallons of paint, one gallon of linseed oil and 10 gallons of white spirit. With 120 shutters (out of 192) the mill will idle in about a 5 m.p.h. breeze and starts to produce useful power at about 15 m.p.h.. When all the shutters are in place this should come down to about 12 m.p.h..

Since the summer work has continued to the interior, with one stone tun and spout finished (to the 4ft 7ins. stones). A new governor belt has been fitted and the sack hoist is now working. No serious problems have been encountered; the joint in the upright shaft needed packing to stop it moving;

(cont'd on p.10)

CROSSWORD

Compiled by MARK BARNARD

There are two prizes to be won in this year's crossword competition. The first prize is a book token for £12; the second prize is a book token for £5.

As in previous crosswords, all the clues are connected in some way with mills or milling. You'll be relieved to hear that this year there is only one anagram! To enter, simply fill in the copy of the crossword at the end of the Newsletter and send it to the Editor (address on p.1). It is hoped to make the draw at our public meeting at Ipswich Town Hall on Saturday February 22nd., so entries must arrive by the post on that day. So don't delay - fill it in today!

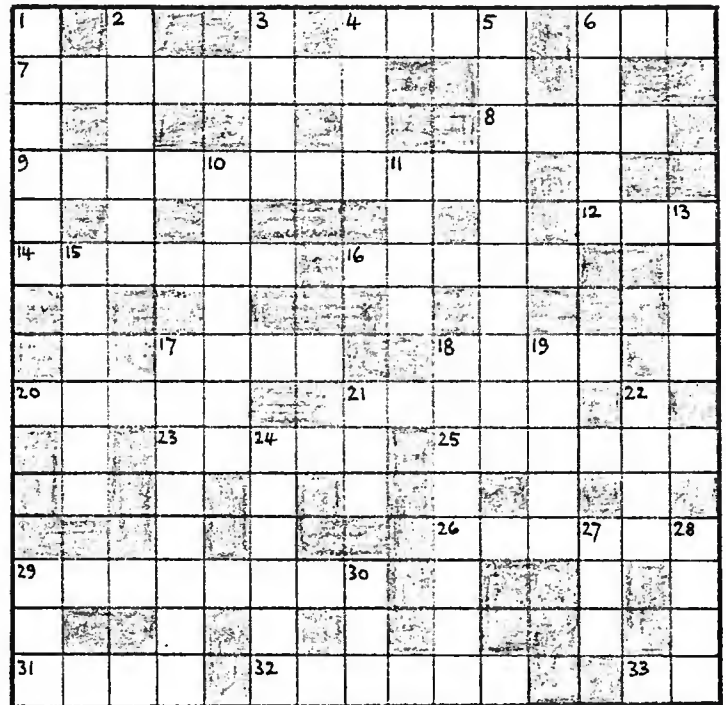
Remember, with only a relatively small number of entries you stand a very good chance indeed of winning, so why not give it a try?

CLUES ACROSS

4. Turns the sails (4)
6. Turns the cap (3)
7. (& 32. Across) Restored Essex post mill (8,6)
8. 'The mill she is built of wood, -- and stone' (from 'A Couris Thing') (4)
9. Midlands post mill, now moved (6,5)
12. Struck by the damsel (3)
14. Kentish smock mill (6)
16. (& 26. Across) The last Sussex windmill to stop work (5,2,4)
17. (& 24. Down) I, Ralf, spent it on this machine (4,6)
18. Found round a millstone (4)
20. Small watermill on the Suffolk Stour (5)
21. Pioneering American millwright (5)
23. Watermill author (5)
25. Small Suffolk tower mill (6)
26. See 16. Across
29. Found one end of the windshaft (8)
31. (& 21. Down) Another name for 29. Across (4,4)
32. See 7. Across
33. (& 19. Down) One of the last Essex tide mills (2,5)

CLUES DOWN

1. (& 2. Down) Early grain crushers (6,6)
2. See 1. Down
3. The colour of Peak stones? (4)
4. May provide a watermill site (4)
5. The oldest Suffolk windmill (10)
6. See 28. Down
10. Sussex smock mill (7)



11. Clusters of grain on the plant (4)
13. See 27. Down
15. Norfolk windmill author (6)
17. 9. Across and 5. Down, for example (4,4)
18. Author of 'The Story of Sprowston Mill' (8)
19. See 33. Across
21. See 31. Across
22. Windmill author (and restorer!) (4)
24. See 17. Across
27. (& 13. Down) Found on roller-reefing sails (3,4)
28. (& 6. Down) Almost at the top! (4,4)
29. Boat-shaped or ogee, perhaps (3)
30. Longest part of striking gear? (3)

the tailbeam keeps creeping back under the wind load, as the wood compresses in the sheers and wedges. The sprattle beam bearing is not seating down properly and will need to be re-fixed.

The mill is now working regularly and about $\frac{3}{4}$ ton has been milled, although flour sales are not yet being seriously pursued. The flour is capable of comparison with other locally milled flours. Due to the lack of shutters, it takes a fresh to strong breeze to get the mill going really well and in these circumstances the best performance to date has been $4\frac{1}{2}$ cwt. in an hour, with six stone on the striking chain, at 8 r.p.m. of the sails (100 r.p.m. of the stones).

As stated above, the mill is not quite finished yet. Further work planned for this year is to plaster the interior walls, make a new 'rear' door, set up the other two pairs of stones (one for engine drive), to bird-proof the cap and to rebuild the bins and grain spouts on the bin floor. Ancillary work will also take place to the workshop and engine shed. To allow us to do at least some of this we will be holding yet another work-in at the mill on 16th-25th AUGUST, when several of the mill partners will be working all week. We welcome any assistance which members may care to give and anyone interested in helping can contact me for further details (3, Lawling Avenue, Heybridge, Maldon; tel. Maldon 58440).

WHEELS REG CLOVER A GUESS AT THEIR ORIGIN IN REMOTE TIMES

Our way of living depends almost entirely upon millions of spinning wheels. Not only in the movement of ships, planes, cars, etc., but also in the smaller, but most important things in life. The bread and bacon on our breakfast table, buttons, shoes, to name a few items at random, the spectacles on your nose and yes - even the bloom on the ladies' cheeks, has somewhere in the background the turning of a wheel. Not only does our way of living depend on wheels, but it is also deeply affected by the rate at which they turn. Now¹ the wheels of war move faster and faster, but the wheels of civilian life have slowed down considerably, and we have delays, and shortages, and rationing.

It is difficult to realise that ages ago empires rose and fell without knowing the use of the wheel. A wheel is such a simple affair in its simplest form - nothing but a disc with a rod pushed through it. A child might think of it. We are, however, looking at it from the wrong end, and looking back from 1943 instead of forward from thousands of years B.C.. When our skin-clad ancestor looked out of his mud hut or cave as dawn came up over the woods or heaths, he saw nothing but pebbles and bits of wood, and his only tools were some sharp flints and a jagged bone or two. He had to make something circular in form before the remote possibility of a wheel could occur to him. Under

these circumstances, progress was incredibly slow, and I would venture a guess that the wheel was never invented at all, but adapted from something else.

One of the first pre-occupations of man was how to crush his grain to prepare it for cooking. He could only use what was at hand and so he would select a flat stone on which to spread the grain, then he would naturally select another heavy, flattish stone and pound the grain to break it up. It would be tiring work, lifting the heavy stone and dropping it, and since the brains of a good many of us are brightest when we are trying to dodge work, it would soon strike him that by holding the stone with a hand on each side and rubbing it backwards and forwards and in a half circle this way and that, he could halve his labour. In course of years, a hollow would be worn into the lower stone and in this the upper stone would fit comfortably. The upper stone he was using might happen to be a piece of lava stone, full of indentations where bubble bursts had solidified, and an obvious thing to do would be to put a bit of stick in one of these holes near the edge and to use it as a handle to turn the stone in complete circles. He was an observant chap, this ancestor of ours, and he noticed that the crushed grain was always swept by some force of which he knew nothing, to the edges, and so one day when he had some time to spare, he painfully chipped a hole through the middle of the stone, so that he no longer had to lift the stone every time he needed to put fresh grain under it, but could put it through the eye.

In course of time, the upper stone became so worn and thin that its weight was insufficient to crush the grain, and so he, or more probably his grandson, had to replace it, and he gave the old stone to his small son as a plaything. The child played with it for a time, and presently thrust a stick through the hole in the middle of it and ran it about by leaning over it with a hand on each side of the stick, and no doubt called out to his father and mother, as children will, so that they might express astonishment at his little tricks; they, as they watched him, had not the slightest inkling that through a combination of thinking processes and accident they had seen set in motion the first wheel, not an invention, but an adaptation, that would, as the centuries passed, increasingly dominate the lives of every living creature upon the surface of the earth.

Note 1 This article was first published in 'Milling'; 19.6.43.

NEW BOOKS Reviewed by PETER DOLMAN

'EAST YORKSHIRE WINDMILLS' by Roy Gregory. Published by Charles Skilton; 1985. Price £7.95

This book fills one of the gaps in the mill bibliography, which regrettably has tended to ignore windmills north of Watford (or the Wash, at any rate) in the past. It contains very interesting chapters on the historical background, and on the various types of mills to be found in the area. 'The Windmill in Local Politics' is a subject which doesn't usually get considered and makes fascinating reading, being concerned with some rather dubious practices at Beverley. The

remainder of the book deals with the surviving mills, nine in detail and the rest (mostly minor remains) in a brief list. The book has a postscript dealing with the restored Elvington windpump, finished only a matter of weeks before the book was printed.

It is very well written and copiously illustrated, using old pictures when possible, including many of mills which no longer survive. There are also several detailed line drawings.

'CAMBRIDGESHIRE WINDMILLS AND WATERMILLS' by Robert Stevens. Published by The Cambridgeshire Wind and Watermill Society; 1985. Price £3.95

Another worthwhile gap-filler, this little book is very impressive for a mills group publication. All the surviving wind and watermills are covered, including minor remains, with a paragraph on each. The 'new' county is followed, so Huntingdonshire is included. The photographs are too few in number for my liking and have not reproduced well; I also feel that a more eye-catching cover picture could have been used, being a view of Wicken Fen mill seen against the willow trees into which it merges too well.

There are factual errors in the text, but these do not detract too seriously from its value although I was annoyed to see the same old chestnuts in the section on Bourn post mill. This was blown down and destroyed in 1741, there being good documentary evidence in support of this. The by now well-known date of 1636 is still quoted, although the author later admits that the earliest date in the mill is 1742, coinciding nicely with the destruction of the previous year. I was also very surprised that no mention was made of the date 1575 on the post of Great Gransden mill, which the author himself has seen, and which has been independently identified by at least three other people since it was first noticed in 1976.

NEWS

MICHAEL ORGAN

Michael Organ of Ramsey mill died in hospital on 24th November 1985, aged 58, after a long but bravely borne illness. His funeral in Harwich parish church was attended by over 200 people, including friends from Trinity House, local mill groups and S.P.A.B.. Afterwards we stood outside the church chatting and remembering our old friend.

Mike was a master mariner and had seen service all over the world before joining Trinity House over 20 years ago to become a North Sea pilot. He took vast tankers from Rotterdam to Thameshaven as well as bringing passenger ships into Harwich and Felixstowe. A few years ago he was elected a Younger Brother of Trinity House, a great honour in the merchant navy.

I first met him at Ramsey mill not long after he bought it in 1965. We started repair work in 1974, holding working holidays there every year for

five years. He knew little of mills then but was keen to learn and the old post mill so close to collapse soon became the fine landmark it is today. His mill interest widened and he became an active member of S.P.A.B., The International Molinological Society (TIMS) and of course S.M.G.. He undertook considerable research into the history of Ramsey and other local mills and for TIMS on wider subjects such as military mills.

Mike was a man of good cheer. At the Ramsey work-ins when things were not going well he would be ready to cheer everyone up with a joke. He knew a lot about folk and once said 'You can't be a sailor all your life without getting to know the best and worst of human nature'. When people became a little too serious about anything he would remind them with a gentle humour of the frailty of all human endeavour. He enjoyed showing people his mill and was good company on the mill tours which he really enjoyed. We have lost a good friend but when we remember and talk of him, it will be with a smile. That would be his wish. (Chris Hullcoop)

REX WAILES O.B.E., F.I.Mech.E., F.S.A. (1901-1986)

'One of the loveliest sights I know is that of a windmill at work, the sails turning steadily against a blue sky, with cumulus clouds passing across it in ordered procession'. Rex Wailes, who wrote those words in the opening chapter of his classic book 'The English Windmill', died on January 7th 1986 aged 85. He was the pioneer and father figure of our movement to preserve what is left of our old wind and watermills. His life spanned most of the twentieth century and as a young man he saw the last years when mills were at work everywhere. Wholesale destruction quickly followed but Rex did not just stand by and accept it. He fought hard to preserve the best mills and I recall him telling me the words of a senior ministry man when told of the need to protect just a handful of windmills: 'Are there any windmills in England? I thought that all windmills were in Holland!'.

Rex spoke and wrote from the heart. In his efforts to preserve some of the Norfolk drainage mills he again encountered ignorance and apathy from authorities. In his Newcomen Society paper on the drainage mills delivered in 1956 he wrote: 'The millwrights were all fine, ingenious and resourceful men and it is to the eternal disgrace of the Norfolk County Council and the Catchment Board that they have not thought fit to preserve some of their work, much of which has been wantonly destroyed since the war'. They have since made amends.

In his later years Rex was able to see a new interest, with mills restored to working order completely by volunteers. He gave help and encouragement whenever he could and was full of useful information on traditional practice and materials. Despite all our efforts the mills can never again be as they were before the last war. On a drive around Suffolk with Rex about 15 years ago I failed to understand why he was not particularly interested in what I regarded as an important stump.

'I remember when there were 50 mills still at work in this county', he said.

Fortunately his books are still in print and generations who never met him can find something of his spirit in their pages. His descriptions of the mills are an inspiration to all who strive to keep them working today. Rex Wailes was unique and irreplaceable, but we will do our best to continue the work he started so many years ago. (Chris Hullcoop)

GREAT HOLLAND MILL DESTROYED

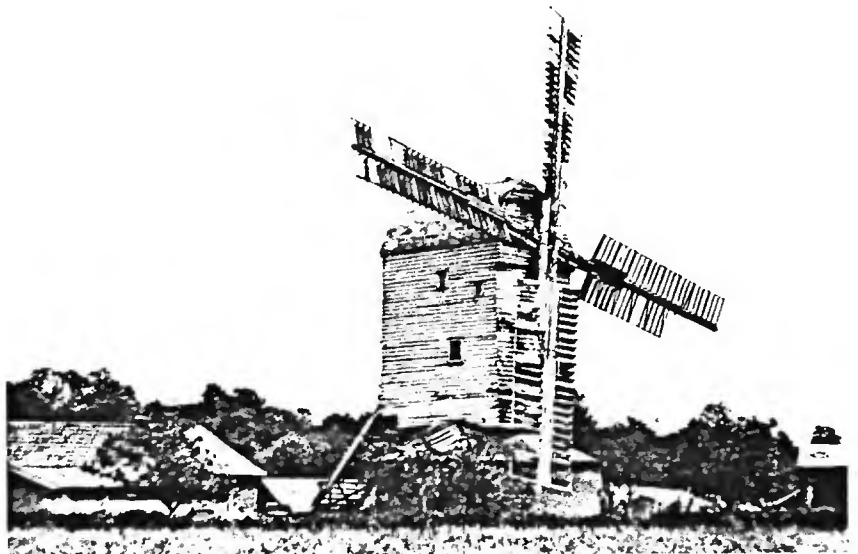
The remains of the smock mill at Great Holland near Clacton were destroyed by a fire on Christmas Eve. The mill was of greater interest than the average minor remain because as well as the brick base, two floors of the smock also survived, showing a sophisticated arrangement for supporting the weight of the four pairs of millstones formerly in place. The premises were used for milling animal feeds and the fire is estimated to have caused between £100,000 and £150,000 worth of damage.

WORK AT STANTON POST MILL (Chris Hullcoop)

S.M.G. will be organising two 'work-ins' this year. From July 19th-27th we will be working at Stanton mill and from August 16th-25th there will be a combined work-in at Stanton and Thelnetham.

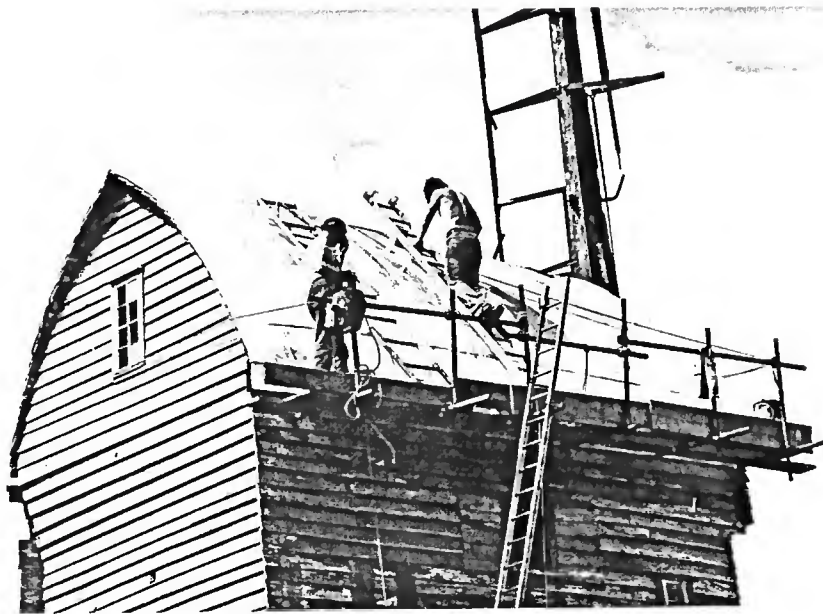
Suffolk is famous for post mills but sadly today there is not one working, even occasionally. The importance of the Stanton post mill was recognised by the S.P.A.B. before the last war, and some £600 was raised for a considerable repair programme. It is amazing what could be done then for such a sum. New steps and winding gear, a pair of new sails fitted and another pair provided, a new roundhouse roof, considerable structural work to the buck including a new side girt and reboarding of most of it. The work was generally well done and despite nearly 50 years of total neglect the mill is still in good condition.

I remember the mill turning to wind in the late 1950's and early 1960's and calling there in 1968 to find one step string disconnected from the fan carriage and dragging along the ground and the whole winding gear threatening to fall backwards. William Bryant was worried for his farm buildings so Phillip Barrett-Lennard and I removed the 8 fly blades,



Stanton mill in the 1920's

carefully storing them in the buck. I recall supporting the broken step string with a piece of old gatepost nailed to the ground - still there to this day! Very shortly after this William Bryant was tragically killed in a car accident. The mill was scheduled to prevent any untimely demolition and eventually William Bryant's widow sold it to Frank Adams senior. His son and family lived



Work in progress at Stanton in 1979

there for the next ten years and during this time S.M.G. held a work-in to re-sheet the right hand side of the buck roof (see Newsletter 12). After the death of Frank Adams senior in 1984 his estate of which the mill was a major part had to be divided between his children. Thus the mill and its lovely little farmhouse were put on the market early last year. Unlike most estate agents and to their great credit, Rutters advertised the property not with the mill as having 'potential for conversion' or other trivial or gimmicky uses, but as a fine windmill worthy of restoration to working order. It was bought by S.M.G. members Richard and Annie Duke. Richard was the last man to work Great Chishill windmill in Cambridgeshire and had kept his interest in mills through his long career as a master mariner and farmer. Always at the back of his mind he had the idea of restoring and working a windmill in retirement and when Stanton was for sale he recognised an ideal opportunity.

With wooden windshaft and wooden upright shaft, Stanton's machinery is extremely interesting and complete. The buck shows no distortion and a complete absence of that sag fore and aft of the crowntree usually associated with post mills.

At the work-ins priority will be rebuilding and reboarding the head, including the installation of a new prick post and mid transverse beam, and continuing the work started on the roof in 1979 with the re-sheeting of the left hand side. We also hope to repair the existing stock, carry out work to the steps and winding gear and numerous other jobs if weather and manpower permit. Richard has installed a washroom with hot water and a flush toilet. There is plenty of room to pitch tents. Stanton is a large village with several pubs and shops, including a good 'chippie'. It will be a very interesting and pleasant place to work, with the prospect of seeing once again a Suffolk post mill making stone-ground flour. If you are thinking of helping or want further details, please contact me at 42, High Road West, Felixstowe (office 'phone Ipswich 715161).

EVENTS

★ S.M.G. ANNUAL PUBLIC MEETING: 'DUTCH WINDMILLS'; IPSWICH TOWN HALL, SATURDAY FEBRUARY 22nd 1986 at 7.30 pm.

We are privileged to offer an exciting programme of 16mm film and slides of Dutch windmills for our 1986 public meeting. The films have been specially loaned to us by the Dutch government and sent via their embassy in London.

The first is a general review of the working of Dutch mills, the second details the seventeenth century drainage of the large polders such as the Schermer and Beemster; the third follows the removal and rebuilding of the superb oil mill 'De Zoeker' beside the River Zaan in 1968. Before the films there will be a general introduction to Dutch windmills with slides.

We hope there will be a good turnout of members for this unique chance to see these fine Dutch films.

A poster has been produced to publicise the meeting and if you find one with this Newsletter please try to display it where it will be noticed. Once again S.M.G. has put a small display in the window of the Cheltenham and Gloucester building society in the Buttermarket, Ipswich, to draw attention to the meeting.

★ VISIT TO GREAT THURLOW SMOCK MILL: SUNDAY APRIL 20th 1986, 2-4 pm.

This mill, which stands on the Vesty estate, is one of the lesser-known Suffolk mills even though it is preserved in good order following a restoration in the early 1960's. The machinery includes a windshaft by Aikman of King's Lynn, a spurwheel which is planked in solid and a pair of governors uniquely mounted above the stones on an extension of the damsel. All worth seeing!

NATIONAL MILLS DAY: SUNDAY MAY 4th 1986

S.M.G. will be giving publicity to the mills which will be open, including Thelnetham. Look out for further details.

Advance Notice

★ S.M.G. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Our 1986 A.G.M. will be held in the Education Centre at the Museum of East Anglian Life, Stowmarket, on Sunday June 8th commencing at 11 am. Further details in the next Newsletter.

S.M.G. WORK-IN: STANTON POST MILL: Saturday July 19th - Sunday July 27th

S.M.G. WORK-IN: STANTON POST MILL / THELNETHAM MILL: Saturday August 16th - Monday August 25th

PRIZE CROSSWORD ENTRY FORM

To enter the crossword competition on page 9, simply fill in the copy below together with your name and address and send it to the Editor, Mark Barnard, 41, Melbourne Road, Ipswich IP4 5PP. Entries must arrive by Saturday February 22nd. 1986.

Name

Address

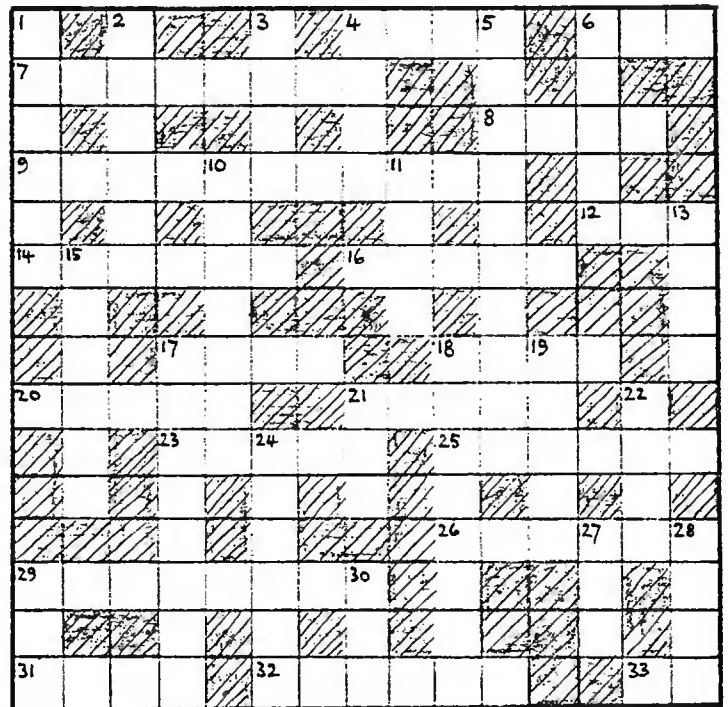
.....

CLUES ACROSS

- 4. Turns the sails (4)
- 6. Turns the cap (3)
- 7. (& 32. Across) Restored Essex post mill (8,6)
- 8. 'The mill she is built of wood, -- and stone' (from 'A Couris Thing') (4)
- 9. Midlands post mill, now moved (6,5)
- 12. Struck by the damsel (3)
- 14. Kentish smock mill (6)
- 16. (& 26. Across) The last Sussex windmill to stop work (5,2,4)
- 17. (& 24. Down) I, Kalf, spent it on this machine (4,6)
- 18. Found round a millstone (4)
- 20. Small watermill on the Suffolk Stour (5)
- 21. Pioneering American millwright (5)
- 23. Watermill author (5)
- 25. Small Suffolk tower mill (6)
- 26. See 16. Across
- 29. Found one end of the windshaft (8)
- 31. (& 21. Down) Another name for 29. Across (4,4)
- 32. See 7. Across
- 33. (& 19. Down) One of the last Essex tide mills (2,5)

CLUES DOWN

- 1. (& 2. Down) Early grain crushers (6,6)
- 2. See 1. Down
- 3. The colour of Peak stones? (4)
- 4. May provide a watermill site (4)
- 5. The oldest Suffolk windmill (10)
- 6. See 28. Down
- 10. Sussex smock mill (7)



- 11. Clusters of grain on the plant (4)
- 13. See 27. Down
- 15. Norfolk windmill author (6)
- 17. 9. Across and 5. Down, for example (4,4)
- 18. Author of 'The Story of Sprowston Mill' (8)
- 19. See 33. Across
- 21. See 31. Across
- 22. Windmill author (and restorer!) (4)
- 24. See 17. Across
- 27. (& 13. Down) Found on roller-reefing sails (3,4)
- 28. (& 6. Down) Almost at the top! (4,4)
- 29. Boat-shaped or ogee, perhaps (3)
- 30. Longest part of striking gear? (3)

