

# SUFFOLK MILLS GROUP

## Newsletter



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May I start by wishing all S.M.G. members a happy and successful New Year. 1987 is, of course, our tenth anniversary year (the actual date is May 28th), a time perhaps to reflect on what has been achieved by the Group as well as to consider what the next decade may bring. Some of the early projects seem a long while ago now, like the completion of the work on Ramsey post mill and the rescue of the fallen East Bridge mill from the Minsmere marshes. I hope to include a review of our first ten years in the next Newsletter, and during the summer we hope to organise a special meeting to mark the anniversary.

It was good to see such a large turnout for the social evening just before Christmas. Many thanks to all who helped with the food and especially to Richard and Annie Duke for hosting the occasion. The next event is the public meeting at Ipswich Town Hall on February 21st, of which full details appear inside.

As I write this, the winter snow is here with a vengeance - a good time to sit down and write something for the Newsletter! Thanks are due to those who have already responded to my repeated pleas.

Mark Barnard

### **STORM DAMAGE TO MILLS (2)** PETER DOLMAN

In the 1830's there were several severe storms. The Suffolk Chronicle of 24th December 1830 records one: 'Hurricane - During the night of Friday last, a windmill at Hasketon, commonly known as the Red Mill, was blown off its piers and totally destroyed. Mr. Forsdike, the occupier, and a lad, were at work in the mill, but miraculously escaped with only a few slight bruises.' The mill was rebuilt as a tower mill, incidentally the first known to have been erected by the famous millwright John Whitmore.

On 16th July 1831: 'Windmill destroyed: Little Totham windmill, Essex, held by Mr. Green, was destroyed by a hurricane on the 30th ult., about six o'clock in the evening. The miller was above in the mill, when the hurricane commenced. He was induced to leave it on account of its extraordinary motion, but had scarcely got clear of it when he observed one of the sails taken off and carried into an adjoining field. Shortly after another limb followed, and at last the shaft snapped, and the body fell with a tremendous crash. The damage is estimated at £500.'

A storm in 1832 caused very widespread destruction. The Suffolk Chronicle reported thus (21st July): 'The late tempest. On Thursday week, about 8 o'clock, the sails were blown off the mills of Mr. Cockerill and Mr. Limmer, on the West

side of Bury... A mill at Ixworth (actually Pakenham tower mill) was deprived of the sails... at Stoke (near Eye) the sails of a mill were carried away. At Beccles, the sails were carried off Mr. Bullock's mill... The cap of a mill at Loddon, was blown off, and killed a man on the spot, a boy was so much injured that he died the next morning... The Poringland mill, belonging to Mr. Lock, was struck by the electric fluid, the cap completely torn off, and the mill very much shattered...' The Bury and Norwich Post (18th July) gives more details:

'...The mill of Mr. Button, of Sudbury, and one at Ixworth were deprived of their sails.' Later in the year yet another post mill fell victim. Suffolk Chronicle 10th November 1832: 'On Saturday morning, about 6 o'clock, the windmill of Mr. Bauley, of Stowupland, was blown down; himself and son were in the mill at the time, but providentially received only a few slight bruises.' (This was replaced by a tower mill.)

The end of 1836 was perhaps the worst time for windmillers in the early nineteenth century. The Suffolk Chronicle of 26th November reports on damage from a gale on Wednesday 23rd. 'The heavy gale of Wednesday, has done much damage to the mills & c., round this town (Diss). Mr. Jay's small mill on the common, used for the purpose of dressing flour, & c, was blown off the brick foundation; it is very materially damaged, and is now lying on the ground in a shattered state. Two sails were blown off Mr. Robinson's mill, on Wortham Ling. Mr. Pilgrim's mill, at Kenninghall, is dismantled of its cap. Mr. Burlingham's mill, at Old Buckenham, lost two of her sails, and is otherwise damaged. Danbrig Mill, at New Buckenham, is also very much injured. The top of Mr. Harrison's mill, at Eye, was taken off by the wind. Supposed damage, £50.' (Note the mention of a small mill at Diss solely for flour dressing.)

Those mill owners who thought they had escaped were in for a shock for less than a week later came an even more destructive storm. The Suffolk Chronicle again (3rd December): 'On Tuesday last... Two windmills, on the Albion Hill (Ipswich), the property of Mr. J. Bedwell, were much damaged, by the loss of sails, vanes, & c., and the roundhouses and other buildings being stripped of the tiling & c.... At Somersham a mill has also suffered...a windmill at Beyton, in the occupation of Mr. Barber, was blown down, fortunately no person was in the mill or received any injury from the fall... two windmills at the entrance to the town (Sudbury), on the Bury Road, are complete wrecks... At Beccles... much damage was done to the mills; ... the mill lately built for the purpose of draining the common marshes was blown down... On Diss common, Mr. Jay's large tower mill was damaged; Mr. Jarret's tower mill at Burston lost a great part of its cap, and is otherwise damaged; but Mr. Johnson's tower mill, at Bressingham, suffered more severely than either, having lost its 4 sails and cap; from the rapidity of the motion of the sails, the friction was so great as to cause the wood to ignite, but the workmen speedily extinguished the fire. Messrs. Pike

and Chaplyn's mill, at Palgrave, was blown off its foundations, and is now lying on the ground in a very shattered state... The mills at Bradwell and Borough (Burgh Castle) were both blown down, the roundhouse under the latter being swept away by the storm, and a neighbouring field of turnips covered with flour, in such a manner as gave it the appearance of drifted snow.'

The Bury and Norwich Post (7th December) added to this catalogue of carnage: 'The mill belonging to Mr. Gooch, of Hargrave, was much damaged, the cap, sails and wind tackle being carried off the top of the mill and completely demolished. At Ashley the cap, with sails and break-wheel, were blown from off the mill of Mr. William Moore, and broken to pieces, and the body so much shattered that it must be entirely

rebuilt. Fortunately no lives were lost; but the cap and sails fell within one foot of the house in which the family were. At Dalham the mill of Mr. Ruffles was stripped of the vanes of two of her patent sails, and more damage would have been done but for her having the patent sails and winding herself. At Higham, Gazeley, the sails and break-wheel were torn out of the mill of Mr. Ray, but owing to the cogs catching hold of the curb of the mill, and the sails clasping the body, they did not come to the ground; two of the sails, however, are completely destroyed... At Sudbury, two windmills,... were very much damaged; the cap of one in the occupation of Thomas Ginn, jun., was blown completely off, breaking the sails and machinery to splinters; and the other, belonging to Mr. John Crisp Gooday, had the sails broken, and so intense was the friction, that the neck of the mill caught fire, and had it not been for the prompt assistance, the flames would have soon completed the work of destruction. The amount of damage to these two mills is estimated at £500... At Beccles, a new marsh mill, built last year by the corporation, was blown down, as also a mill at Saxted, near Framlingham.'

The local millwrights no doubt rubbed their hands with glee at the prospect of all this trade, and in the same day's paper, Jacob, the Gazeley millwright, rather tactlessly advertised for six workmen!

Further gales are reported as damaging isolated mills in 1838, 1839 and 1840. The Suffolk Chronicle of 8th May 1841 gives another interesting account. 'On



Hadleigh smock mill after gale damage, 1910. Note sail in roof!

Sunday last, about noon, during a strong wind, which arose suddenly, Messrs. Lockwood's cement mill, not having shifted herself to the wind, and the pressure of which was so great upon the wrong side of the sails, that three of them were snapped off in an instant, displacing the head wheel, a part of the cap, and other considerable injury. The immediate cause of the accident may be attributed to the neglect of attaching a weight to prevent the sails from clothing themselves.'

This last example shows how negligence can lead to damage. Another foolish example of this was reported by the Bury and Norwich Post on 28th September 1842: 'Falling of a windmill. On Monday last the windmill, in the occupation of Mr. John Kindred, at Framlingham, fell down. Workmen were building under the mill a round house, the brickwork being upwards of seven feet in height, upon a portion of which the mill was raised, and supported by screws. It appears that one of the cross-trees gave way in the centre, while the mill was working at a slow pace, and it fell into the yard with a fearful crash, barely clearing the dwelling house and out-buildings. At the time of its falling there were in the mill Mr. Kindred and two other persons, all of whom providentially escaped without more injury than some severe bruises. When Mr. Kindred was extricated, he had nearly five coombs of corn upon him, and was nearly suffocated. A bricklayer, who was at work under the mill, had only time to escape by throwing himself over the new brick-work.' What a stupid thing, working a post mill while it was jacked up! The machinery was later auctioned and a new tower mill built by John Whitmore.

More isolated instances of storm damage follow until another 'big one' in July 1852. The Suffolk Chronicle again reports: 'On Friday last this county was visited by a severe thunder storm, accompanied by a gale of wind of terrific violence... The windmills of Messrs. Fison, Stowmarket; Whitehead, Finborough; Clover, Buxhall; Brooks, Combs; and Hayward, Needham, were much injured... the water mill belonging to Mr. Baker, at Great Cornard, was struck by the electric fluid, which entered at the roof, displacing the tiles and tearing the ceiling, it descended by the sack-tackling chain to the shaft of the water-wheel, from which it shivered a piece of the solid oak about three feet long. A windmill at Waldingfield was also injured.' Many mills in the Colchester and Chelmsford districts were also damaged.

And so it goes on and on; mills continued to suffer from storm and tempest, right up to the present day. Of course as the number of active mills diminished, so did the frequency of reported damage. Syleham mill was tailwinded during a thunderstorm in 1947 and almost wrecked. More recently, in 1971, Pakenham windmill was struck by lightning and one sail severely damaged. One thing stands out from the reports of damage listed above: don't underestimate the power of the elements! Anyone involved with a windmill today must guard against tailwinding by locking shutters open and 'spragging' brakewheels (if possible), and

against lightning strikes with lightning protection systems, or at the very least by leaving the sack-hoist chain down as this has saved many mills in the past.

## **WINDMILLS OF SOUTH EAST ENGLAND** GUY BLYTHMAN

This is intended to be the first in a series of articles on the windmills of what must be the third-ranking windmill area in the country, after East Anglia and Lincolnshire - indeed probably the second-ranking in terms of the number of mills surviving in a recognisable state, despite the fact that it accounts for a very small part of the country. After describing the surviving mills I will go on to the more notable vanished mills and minor remains, and finally analyse some regional trends. Anyone who spots mistakes or can up-date the information in the articles, where necessary, is invited to write in to correct them.

I propose to go down through Surrey, then west - east through Sussex and into Kent, which will be covered in a roughly circular route.

### Part One: Surrey and the Chichester area of West Sussex

#### Surrey

##### TADWORTH (TQ236553, O.S. Sheet 187)

A tall-bodied post mill with a two-storey roundhouse (unusual for this part of the region), the lower storey of brick and the upper of wood. Built in the mid C18 and last worked in 1902. The sails and stones have gone, but some of the gearing remains. The square aperture above the neck of the windshaft is an unusual feature. The mill has been maintained in reasonable condition over the years but when I last saw it it presented a shabby and derelict appearance and an up-date on its present condition would be most welcome. It was damaged by a flying bomb in 1944.

##### REIGATE, WRAY COMMON (TQ269511, O.S. Sheet 187)

A tower mill, built in 1824 and last worked in 1895, with an unusual conical cap encircled by a gallery and topped by a finial. The sails were recently removed as they had become unsafe, and no machinery remains below the brakewheel, but the mill is in fair condition. The ornamental windows are of interest.

##### REIGATE, REIGATE HEATH (TQ234501, O.S. Sheet 187)

A post mill said to date from 1765 and possibly older. It ceased work in 1868. In 1880 the roundhouse was converted into a chapel and is still used as such; this is believed to be the only windmill in the country used for ecclesiastical purposes. The mill is maintained in good repair and most of the machinery is present. The sails are dummies as is the fantail, mounted on the tail of the mill about half way down, of which only the hub now remains. An example of over-zealous and poorly-planned restoration, it could not have worked properly in this position.

##### OUTWOOD (TQ328455, O.S. Sheet 187)

This old post mill probably needs no introduction but I can't resist giving an account of it. Built in 1665-6 and worked regularly until the 1960's, it still grinds occasionally for demonstration purposes and may be considered the oldest working windmill in the country. Legend has it that when the mill was nearing completion the workmen watched the Great Fire of London from the roof. Not all the components are original but in many ways it seems the structure has changed little over the years. It is a beautifully constructed and attractive mill, with decorative features such as the gabled roof with its ornamental flagstaff indicating its great age. To me it is reminiscent of certain post mills of similar age in northern France and the Low Countries, and I seem to recall being

told somewhere that Flemish craftsmen had a hand in its erection. Can any reader confirm this?

The most noticeable changes over the years have been the addition of the roundhouse and the replacement of common sails by spring sails.

EWHURST (TQ077426, O.S. Sheet 187)

A tower mill, built in 1845 to replace a post mill which had been blown down, and said to have been a meeting-place for smugglers at some time. It ceased work in 1885 and was later house-converted. Unlike many other windmills which have received this treatment, however, it still has some of its former character as the domed cap has been retained and a set of reasonably authentic mock sails fitted. No machinery remains below the brakewheel. Its pleasant, deeply-wooded setting makes it worth a visit.

West Sussex

EARNLEY (or SOMERLEY) (SZ817984, O.S. Sheet 197)

A small smock mill on a one-storey base, dating from the beginning of the last century. It was one of the last windmills to work commercially south of the Thames, stopping in 1946. Since 1975 the owner, Mr. C. Darby, has been gradually restoring it. At present the ogee cap, sails and fantail are missing, but most of the machinery remains and the brakewheel may be seen lying on the ground nearby.

SELSEY (SZ844934, O.S. Sheet 197)

This small tower mill is an important feature of this well-known seaside spot. Probably built during the early C19, it ceased work in 1890 but was refitted and brought back into commission in 1908. The stones were not replaced and it was used mainly for cracking beans and rolling oats until again forced to close in the early 1920's. In 1960 the mill was acquired by a local caravan firm who restored something of its external appearance, fitting authentic dummy sail frames. Unfortunately its appearance has been somewhat spoilt by the addition of a large observation window at the rear of the domed cap, in place of the fantail. No machinery remains below the brakewheel. The ground floor is now a souvenir shop. Traditionally the mill has been locally referred to as 'Medmerry Mill'; how it came by this engaging name is not known.

EAST WITTERING (SZ796972, O.S. Sheet 197)

Only the shell of this small tower mill, which is unusual in that the lower half of the tower is octagonal and the upper half rounded, now remains, with the windshaft lying on the ground floor. Built early in the C19 and last worked in 1895, it had a domed cap and two common and two spring sails serviced by a travelling stage. A fair amount of machinery remained within the tower until May 1975 when the ivy-clad ruin was unfortunately gutted by fire.

NYETIMBER (SZ892988, O.S. Sheet 197)

This once fine tower mill was built in the early 1840's and last worked in 1915. It had a copper-covered ogee cap, patent sails and fantail and drove two pairs of stones and a dresser. The rate of feed to the latter was controlled by a governor driven from the upright shaft. The mill remained fairly complete, apart from the sails and fantail, until badly damaged by fire in 1962. The windshaft and much of the machinery remained until 1981 when the tower was gutted and incorporated in a new housing estate. They were then taken to the Weald and Downland Open Air Museum at Singleton for storage and advertised for sale through S.P.A.B.. Does anyone know what eventually became of them? The mill has now gained a cap similar in shape to the original, and it looks as if the pulley on the outside of the tower via which a steam engine drove the machinery on calm days has been retained, although this may be a replica.

HALNAKER (SU920097, O.S. Sheet 197)

This is a small red brick tower mill with part of its cladding of burnt Sussex tiles still evident, situated near the top of Halnaker Hill within the ramparts

of an Iron Age fort. It is a well-known landmark, the setting of which alone makes it worth a visit, for fine views of the surrounding countryside can be obtained from the spot.

The exact age of the mill is uncertain but it is an old one, and a date of c.1750 has been suggested. The site has been occupied by successive windmills since at least 1540. A feudal mill, it is still owned by the Dukes of Richmond and Gordon; it has been suggested that the name 'Halnaker' is derived from the half-naked condition of many of the Duke's tenants in medieval and Tudor times. The mill stopped in 1905 after lightning split the old wooden windshaft and damaged the cap; a previous lightning strike some years before blasted a hole in the wall of the tower and welded the links of the winding chain into a solid mass. Two tablets above the doorway, now sadly covered in graffiti, record the mill's restoration in 1934 as a memorial to the wife of Sir William Bird of Eartham. It was restored again in 1955 by West Sussex County Council, who are responsible for its upkeep. The tower is now a shell, floors and machinery having been removed many years ago. A new 16-sided 'beehive' cap was fitted during the 1934 restoration along with the iron windshaft from the demolished sawmill at Punnett's Town, which carries a set of dummy common sails. The fantail has gone but by a twist the chain-wheel it superseded remains, enclosed in a box-like structure.

The mill is depicted in a painting by William Turner which now hangs in the National Gallery of Scotland, and also features in a poem by Hilaire Belloc:

#### HANNAKER MILL

Sally is gone that was so kindly,  
Sally is gone from Hannaker Hill  
And the briar grows ever since then so blindly,  
And ever since then the clapper is still...  
And the sweeps have fallen from Hannaker Mill.  
Hannaker Hill is in desolation,  
Ruin a-top and a field unploughed  
And spirits that call on a falling nation,  
Spirits that loved her calling aloud,  
Spirits abroad in a windy cloud.  
Spirits that call and no-one answers -  
Hannaker's down and England's done.  
Wind and thistle for pipe and dancers,  
And never a ploughman under the sun,  
Never a ploughman, never a one.

SINGLETON, Weald and Downland Open Air Museum (SU874128, O.S. Sheet 197)

Among the exhibits in this interesting collection of old buildings, which also includes a watermill and a horse mill, is a tiny wooden hollow post mill with an open trestle, which dates from the mid C19 and formerly drained the marshes at Westham, near Pevensey. It was reconstructed at the museum in 1975 and works for demonstration purposes, pumping water to a large pond. It has four short common sails and is winded by a circular vane. There are two lift pumps worked by eccentric cams from the upright shaft.

At Glynde (TQ457087, O.S. Sheet 198) timbers and machinery of a similar mill, which supplied water to steam engines which drove an aerial ropeway at a nearby quarry, remain engulfed in a bush.

The next article in the series will cover mills in the Brighton and Worthing area.

## MILLS AND ME PETER STEGGALL

This is the first of a series of short articles in which S.M.G. member Peter Steggall tells of the part mills have played in his life.

### EARLY DAYS

My grandfather was in the milling trade, not as a miller but, I believe, as a



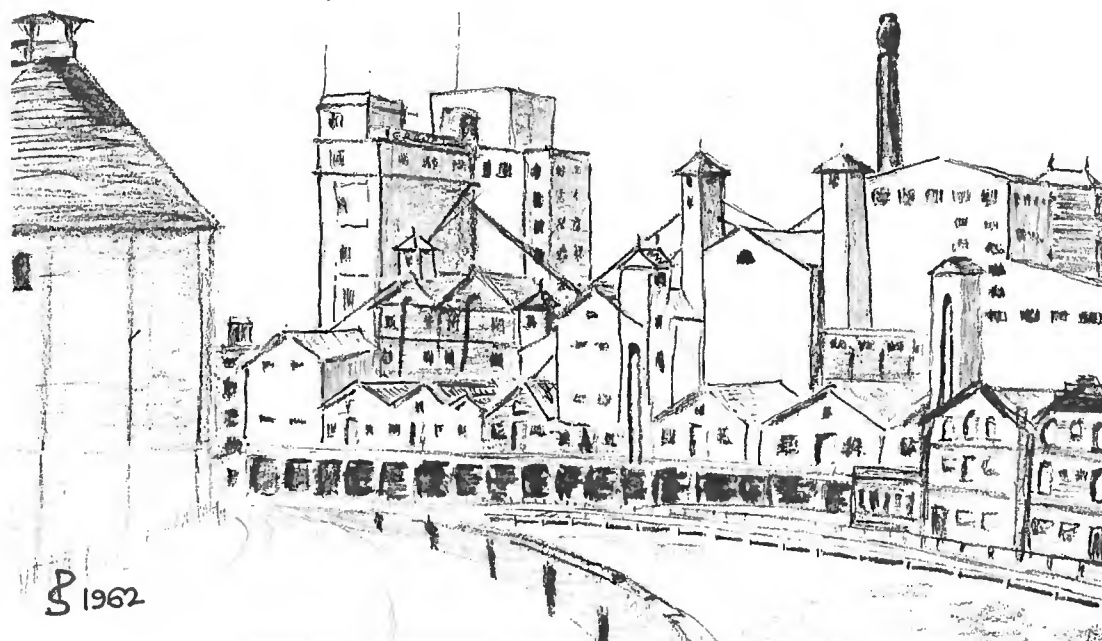
miller's clerk or tallyman, during the last years of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth. I have been told that he worked at Sudbury watermill (now the Mill Hotel), Brantham mill and Bosmere Mill, Needham Market (now a restaurant). I cannot remember him talking about mills and milling, but I saw him only very occasionally after I left Ipswich at the age of nine; he and my grandmother died in 1943 while I was abroad in the army.

Before the 1939-45 war, I was vaguely aware of wind and water mills as fairly common features of the countryside, but I have vivid memories of living near Ipswich dock in the late 1920's and of wandering (in defiance of parental orders) by the dockside to watch grain being sucked out of ships into Cranfield's huge flour mills, and to see sacks of flour sliding down the polished wooden chutes onto lorries below. It was to be over 50 years later, during a visit with the Suffolk Mills Group, that I learned how Cranfield's converted the grain into flour!

At Harlow, in Essex, in 1931-2, my school friends and I were taught 'forcibly' to swim in the cold waters of the mill pool at Latton where the mill buildings had already disappeared. In our own time, we swam voluntarily in the mill pool at Harlow mill which even then was a restaurant beside the main road where it crossed the River Stort.

During the war, both in England and abroad, I must have seen a lot of mills, but, to my shame, I remember only one. It was a tall windmill - I think it was a smock mill - beside the road about ten miles south of Ghent in Belgium. I passed it daily on my way to and from the Army Post Office in Ghent, for a few weeks in March 1945 before we moved into Germany. There always seemed to be a good breeze and the sails turned merrily, almost over the road, so close was the mill to it.

(Continued on page 10)



Cranfield's Mill, Ipswich



# CROSSWORD

Compiled by MARK BARNARD

Welcome to the 1987 crossword! As usual there are two prizes to be won, the first prize being a book token for £12 and the second prize a book token for £6.

As in previous S.M.G. crosswords, all the clues are connected in some way with mills and milling, and there are some anagrams. To enter, simply fill in the copy of the crossword at the end of this Newsletter and send it to the Editor (address on p.1). The draw for the winners will be made at our public meeting on February 21st. so entries must arrive by the post on that day. So if you wish to enter, don't delay - fill it in today!

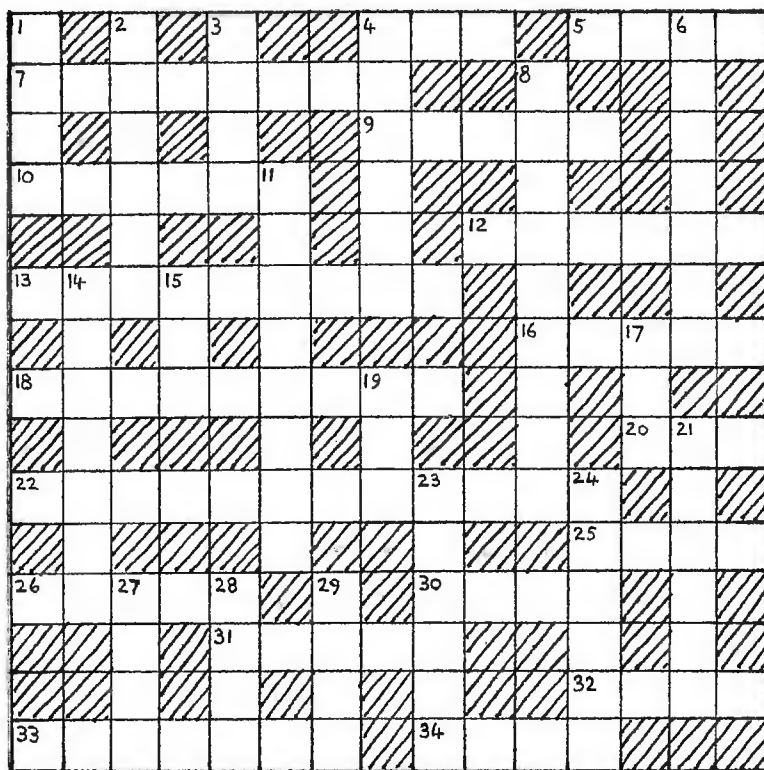
As we usually only receive some 20 or so entries your chances of winning something are several thousand times greater than in most competitions, and it's a lot more fun to enter. So why not give it a try?

## CLUES ACROSS

4. Grain store (3)
5. See 9. Across
7. To reveal how the grain reaches 4. Across would be giving you the answer! (8)
9. (& 5. Across) Sussex post mill (5,4)
10. Dutch sail innovator (6)
12. Stop us carrying the meal! (6)
13. Rises with the governor! (9)
16. One of many on a waterwheel (5)
18. Turned mills before the fan (9)
20. Weatherproofing layer (3)
22. A regular mill visitor, perhaps! (5,7)
25. Suffolk river, alas without mills (4)
26. Used by millwrights, perhaps (5)
30. Set into a runner stone (4)
31. Preserved multi-sailer (5)
32. Cambridgeshire watermill (4)
33. djusts gap between the stones (7)
34. Feudal custom eg. milling (4)

## CLUES DOWN

1. Curb without rollers (4)
2. Another sail innovator (6)
3. Another name for a shutter (4)
4. Links with 13. Across (6)
6. (& 23. Down) These can raise the runner! (7,6)
8. Neither post, smock nor tower! (9)
11. Architect-author of a fine mill book (8)
14. Essex windmill (7)
15. Part-rent for a medieval watermill? (3)



17. 'The windmill is a Couris thing Completely built by --- of man' (3)
19. Suffolk post mill which collapsed in 1955 (3)
21. Suffolk milling family - at Saxtead, for example (6)
23. See 6. Down
24. Used by 22. Across for sure! (6)
27. Dutch river famous for industrial windmills (4)
28. Part of the stone furniture (4)
29. A sail often has eight of these (4)

For a few years after demobilization in 1946, I led a townsman's life, living in the northern suburbs and commuting to the city of London. The only mills I can remember in those years were the huge flour mills beside the Royal Docks, and old watermills at Marlborough and Winchester which had been converted into youth hostels where a cousin and I stayed on cycling tours. At Marlborough the mill stood, and I suppose still stands, beside the main road at the east end of the town; it was a very old, weatherboarded mill and conditions for the hostellers, some of whom were far from youthful, were very spartan. We also had to rough it at Winchester City Mill, a fine red brick building, owned by the National Trust, astride the River Itchen not far from the cathedral. A pre-1953 postcard shows hostellers 'washing in the mill race' by dipping a bucket into the cold, fast-flowing water, and washing in enamel bowls placed round the walls of the lowest part of the mill.

At the time of our visits to Marlborough and Winchester, I was still woefully ignorant about mills even though I was of an age by which, in the 1970's, certain young founder-members of the Suffolk Mills Group had acquired a great deal of knowledge of mills and practical experience of restoration work. It was not until I joined Essex County Council in 1949 that, in the course of my work, I began to learn a little about the problems of disused mills and the procedures for helping to rescue them; but that is something that must await the next instalment of these rambling reminiscences.

## **VANISHED MILLS**     PETER DOLMAN

### ST. JAMES SOUTH ELMHAM POST MILL

This mill had the distinction of being the last post mill to be moved and set up as a corn mill in Suffolk (Thorpeness was converted into a pumping mill) and was also one of the last windmills to be erected on a new site in the county (at Grid Ref. 320,813). In appearance it was a 'typical' East Suffolk tall post mill but in fact it was originally a Norfolk mill, standing at Starston, near Harleston (Grid Ref. 227,834). As Norfolk is 'foreign' to me I don't know much of its early history. However, I can say that Faden's map of Norfolk (1797) omits the mill (although showing one only a mile away at Needham - perhaps it was moved twice?). It was standing by the 1837 Ordnance Survey map.

The date of the removal was 1864 and Stanley Freese gives a good account of it, obtained from one of the workmen involved, in his book 'Windmills and Millwrighting'. It was moved to St. James for its first miller, Lawrence Clarkson, who seems to have seized on the fact that there was no mill serving the village. The removal was organised by Messrs. Adams and Balls, according to Freese, both from Huntingfield (where Robert Balls was a miller). I wonder if in fact the millwright was George Balls, of Bardolfe Street, Bungay, perhaps assisted by Adams & Son, 'Engineers, Millwrights and Coprolite Mill

Manufacturers' of Stowupland (White's Directory, 1874)? At any rate the mill was moved in the traditional way, on a large wagon or drag, the post having been removed, together with all the machinery. In order to pass under a railway bridge the roof had to be removed en route (about eight miles)



but this was only a minor inconvenience. It was jacked up and given a new trestle, the old post being re-used. The gear was then installed and a new roundhouse (with the crosstrees at ceiling level on the first floor) built under it.

By 1883 it had been joined by another post mill buck, this time set up at ground level as a steam mill. This buck was believed to have come from Bungay, in which case it was almost certainly the buck of Flixton Road mill, demolished in 1879 (Grid Ref. 337,892). By 1892 the miller was Robert Kemp and by 1896 John Aldridge was in charge. He eventually retired and the mill passed to Richard Mayston who worked it until 1923 when it was demolished by the Clarke family (Sam, George and Amos) during June and July. At the time of its demolition it was in perfect working order and various bits found their way elsewhere such as a stock which went to Barley Green, Stradbroke. Claude Aldridge tells of a 4ft 6in stone from here being taken to the nearby St. Michaels mill, which he then cut down by hand to make a 3ft 6in bedstone. Claude described it as having been one of the 'headstones', from which it seems possible that the mill was arranged with two pairs of stones in the head and tail (this is mainly supposition on my part).

As can be seen in the photograph above, it was a handsome mill with a small porch over the door. It was winded by a six-blade fantail and was powered by four anti-clockwise double shuttered sails, which were not particularly large, with only seven bays of three shutters. The rear striking gear followed the local practice of using a wooden roller and chains to move the striking rod instead of a rack and pinion.

The other buck survived until 1972 - unfortunately I missed it by a matter of months! When I was there the roundhouse was being used as a pigsty so I was unable to ascertain whether or not the trestle survives.

# NEWS

## STEADY AHEAD AT STANTON

Restoration work at Stanton post mill continues apace, with owner Richard Duke, assisted by Fred Davis and Quentin Garlic, starting to rebuild the winding gear. A new carriage has been made and the two great track wheels set into it, their axles radial to the centre of the mill. Vincent Pargeter has given the patient a thorough examination to diagnose the cause of the mysterious tail-sickness. As well as the tail woodwears being hard against the post, the post itself is leaning due to an old subsidence under one pier. The cure will involve raising a crosstree at one end and lowering it at the other. Richard Duke hopes to do this in the Spring.

Meanwhile, I have been busy with new cogs for the 82-tooth spurwheel. The beech wood purchased for this was rather fresh and wet and apprehension set in on reading that it has to be seasoned for nine years if the cogs are not to shrink and fall out. A start in 1996 seemed too long a delay! At work we have a crop drying oven which, rather like a farmer's combine harvester, is used intensively for only a small part of the year. The boss agreed to its use for drying the beech which by now had been cut into blocks 5" long with the end grain sealed with paint to prevent too rapid drying and consequent splitting. After a period of air drying in a warm room the blocks were placed in the oven and the temperature gradually increased from 25 to 70 degrees Centigrade over some three weeks. The blocks warped but there was no splitting, so the nine years was cut down to nine weeks! As they are well oversize it is easy to plane out the warpage and prepare the blanks. The next step will be the long slow task of fitting each one individually to the wheel. To make this easier the spurwheel together with upright shaft and wallower has been lowered about three feet with the footstep bearing re-set on a 40-gallon oil drum. A bench and vice is set up on the meal floor so we should be able to work in comfort. Let's hope the rest of the winter is not too harsh! (Chris Hullcoop)

## PROGRESS AT THELNETHAM

Nothing dramatic has happened since the autumn, with the mill having been opened every Sunday until the end of October and a steady flow of visitors. The need to keep a stock of flour maintained has meant that the mill has been worked on almost every occasion possible, giving visitors a rare chance to see a windmill grinding corn. A notable event in early November was when for a few minutes we ran both pairs of stones together. The mill coped easily and if anything ran smoother than normal with the extra load. As the 4ft 4in stones have yet to be properly sorted out we did not run for long to avoid producing too much unsaleable flour.

The main area of progress has been with the plastering. So far we have reached the bin floor and should the present cold weather end soon we hope to complete

the job by March. We cannot claim to have mastered the art of plastering but nevertheless the mill looks much better inside than it did!

#### WICKEN SMOCK MILL, CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Wicken mill, a derelict 12-sided smock mill dating from 1813, has been on the market for some time now and mill enthusiasts have been concerned for its future, fearing possible house-conversion. As a result of discussions last summer during the S.M.G. work-ins, a group of mill enthusiasts has decided to buy and restore the mill. The members of the group, led by David Pearce, are Alan Wallis, Nigel Bacon, Michelle Skinner, Peter Dolman, Cliff Lovett and Liz Botterill.

A week-long 'work-in' is planned from Saturday July 25th to Sunday August 2nd, when it is hoped to start repair work. The mill's structure is reasonably sound, but needs new floor-boarding and weatherboarding, plus much sorting out of machinery and cap, and of course new sails and fantail.

The group is starting literally from scratch and would welcome individual grants or donations, plus tools, equipment and good second-hand material such as floorboarding and pitch pine baulks. If anyone thinks they can help please contact David Pearce at 30, Rushams Road, Horsham, West Sussex (Tel. Horsham 53909) or Peter Dolman at 3, Lawling Avenue, Heybridge, Maldon, Essex (Maldon 58440).



#### BARDWELL TOWER MILL FOR SALE

Bardwell mill, restored to working order during the last three years and worked commercially by James Waterfield, has been put on the market. This comes only a matter of weeks after the second pair of sails was fitted. The property also includes a four-bedroom mill house and a small range of outbuildings including the former engine shed, in all about  $\frac{1}{3}$  acre. Offers are invited around £110,000 and the agents for the sale are Rutters, 86, Guildhall Street, Bury St. Edmunds.

#### A TURBINE TURNS AGAIN

The Armfield turbine at Hawks Mill, Needham Market is turning again. In the autumn the head pond was dammed very effectively with a load of earth, enabling work to proceed in comfort and safety on the turbine and its by-pass sluice. A ton of mud had to be dug away and as expected the teeth on the racks which open and close the

sluice gates were badly worn. Local contractor David Few managed to free the rotor and Frank Silver, whose company bought the mill in late 1985, tells me it turns very well indeed. The controls which Richard Seago, Geoffrey Burton and I dismantled early in 1985, originally on the first floor, will have to be set up in the turbine room. This room has been kept separate from the flats in the main building and is reached by its own outside door. (C.H.)

#### CAN YOU HELP?

Lowfield Heath post mill, near Gatwick airport, is soon to be moved and restored. Mr. Peter James, Secretary of the Lowfield Heath Windmill Trust, is appealing for any photographs or other useful information on the mill which will assist the project and contribute to a historical scrapbook. Any such items would of course be returned. His address : 15, Sandringham Road, Broadfield, CRAWLEY, RH11 9NF.

## **EVENTS**

S.M.G. PUBLIC MEETING: 'POWER FROM THE WIND'; IPSWICH TOWN HALL, SATURDAY  
21st FEBRUARY at 7.30 pm.

This year's public meeting focusses on wind as a source of useful energy, covering both 'traditional' windmills and modern wind turbines for electricity generation. The speaker is Dr. David Pearce, a research engineer with the CEGB at Leatherhead (as well as a mill enthusiast and member of S.M.G.!). This promises to be a most interesting evening and one that will be popular with the general public. Members are advised to arrive in good time to be sure of a seat.

There will be a small display on the theme of the meeting in the foyer of the Ipswich central library in Northgate Street from February 2nd - 21st. Those members living close to Ipswich will find an A4 poster with this Newsletter. Please try to display it in a prominent place!

VISIT TO THORINGTON STREET WATERMILL, STOKE BY NAYLAND: SUNDAY 12th APRIL, 2-4pm.

We are delighted to offer members another chance to look round this fine watermill on the River Box, first visited by S.M.G in June 1979. Last worked in the winter of 1962-3 by the late Joe Munson, it has remained virtually untouched since, providing a wonderful opportunity to see the set-up of a small rural mill in its last working days.

NATIONAL MILLS DAY: SUNDAY 3rd MAY

S.M.G. will be opening Herringfleet and Thelnetham mills, both of which will be working (wind permitting). For further details look for posters nearer the date.

WORK-INS 1987

The dates for the 1987 work-ins are as follows:

Wicken mill, Cambs. 25th July - 2nd August

Stanton post mill 22nd August - 31st August (further details in next Newsletter)

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Easterford Watermill, Swan Street, Kelvedon, Essex will be open to the public from 2 - 6pm on the following Sundays: 3rd May; 19th July; 13th September. For visits at other times contact Marjorie Thompson on 0376-71778 or 71360.

# 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 21st.

Name .....

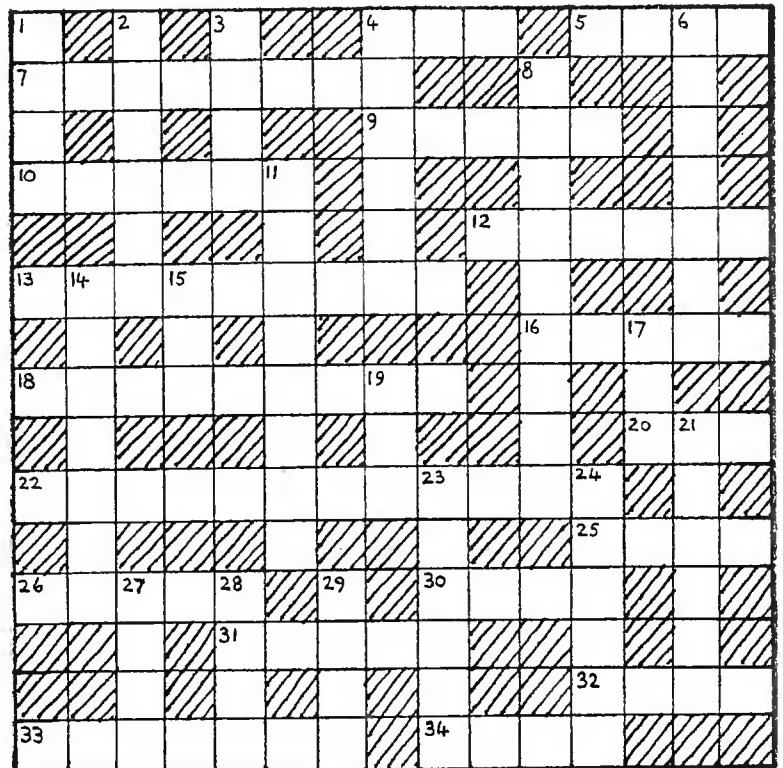
Address .....

.....

.....

## CLUES ACROSS

- 4. Grain store (3)
- 5. See 9. Across
- 7. To reveal how the grain reaches 4. Across would be giving you the answer! (8)
- 9. (& 5. Across) Sussex post mill (5,4)
- 10. Dutch sail innovator (6)
- 12. Stop us carrying the meal! (6)
- 13. Rises with the governor! (9)
- 16. One of many on a waterwheel (5)
- 18. Turned mills before the fan (9)
- 20. Weatherproofing layer (3)
- 22. A regular mill visitor, perhaps! (5,7)
- 25. Suffolk river, alas without mills (4)
- 26. Used by millwrights, perhaps (5)
- 30. Set into a runner stone (4)
- 31. Preserved multi-sailer (5)
- 32. Cambridgeshire watermill (4)
- 33. Adjusts gap between the stones (7)
- 34. Feudal custom eg. milling (4)



## CLUES DOWN

- 1. Curb without rollers (4)
- 2. Another sail innovator (6)
- 3. Another name for a shutter (4)
- 4. Links with 13. across (6)
- 6. (& 23. Down) These can raise the runner! (7,6)
- 8. Neither post, smock nor tower! (9)
- 11. Architect-author of a fine mill book (8)
- 14. Essex windmill (7)
- 15. Part-rent for a medieval watermill? (3)
- 17. 'The windmill is a Couris thing Completely built by --- of man' (3)
- 19. Suffolk post mill which collapsed in 1955 (3)
- 21. Suffolk milling family - at Saxtead, for example (6)
- 23. See 6. Down
- 24. Used by 22. Across for sure! (6)
- 27. Dutch river famous for industrial windmills (4)
- 28. Part of the stone furniture (4)
- 29. A sail often has eight of these (4)