

# SUFFOLK MILLS GROUP

## Newsletter

No. 42

JULY 1988

Secretary: PETER DOLMAN  
The Mill, Thorington Street,  
Stoke by Nayland, Colchester CO6 4SS  
Editor: MARK BARNARD  
41, Melbourne Road, Ipswich IP4 5PP



Several months have passed since the last Newsletter but they have been fairly active ones as far as S.M.G. is concerned. The public meeting in February, commemorating ten years of our work, was followed, during a hectic few weeks in April and May, by our Lowestoft public meeting and library display, a Herringfleet open day, a display in Ipswich library and then another open day at Herringfleet to coincide with a big Scout jamboree nearby. Attendance at the Lowestoft meeting was disappointing although we did enrol a few new members. We also met a very keen husband and wife team to help at Herringfleet. More recently we have had a successful A.G.M. day and visit to France, both of which are fully reported in the following pages.

Please note that Peter Dolman is once again our secretary and subscriptions should be sent to him. John Snowdon will continue to maintain membership records and he should be notified of changes of address, etc..

With the main summer holiday season now starting (it must be summer, it's pouring with rain as I write this!), wherever you venture I hope you all have an enjoyable time - and good mill hunting!

Mark Barnard

## FRENCH LEAVE

CHRIS HULLCOOP

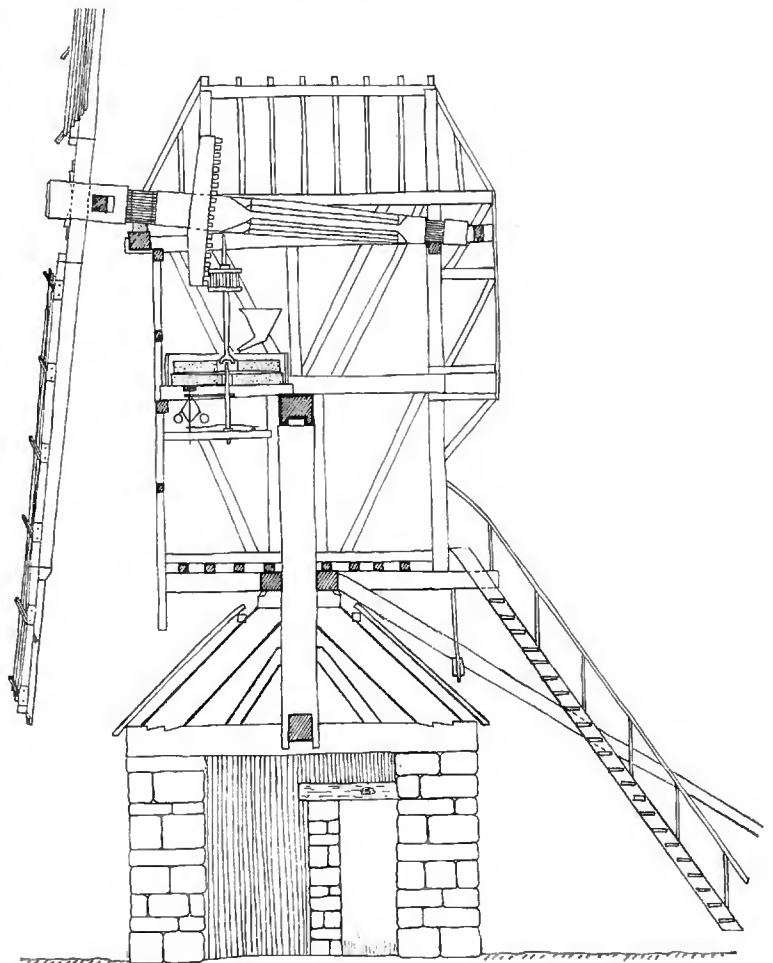
The last S.M.G. mill holiday was four years ago when we sailed to Holland in Richard Duke's fishing drifter Adax. We had often talked of a visit to France and this year there was a good opportunity when Roy and Penny Berry offered to organise one for us. On previous holidays they had met people concerned with the preservation of mills in France and this, together with a detailed knowledge of the language and geography, made them ideal leaders of our trip. From nearly 20 enquiries there were only three definite bookings - myself, Cliff Lovett and Mark Barnard - so it was decided to travel in Roy's diesel Sherpa van, and to camp as this would enable us to stay in different places without prior bookings.

We sailed on Friday July 8th on the overnight ferry from Portsmouth to Ouistreham near Caen. We were soon passing through the attractive Normandy countryside with its fine timber-framed farmhouses, heading in the direction of Chartres, but progress was rather slow due to a fuel pipe fracture which meant that the engine was running on only three cylinders! This was quickly repaired while we waited and it wasn't long before we were scrambling around the remains of the old tower at Crucey, a picturesque ruin with only brick and stonework remaining. Soon we could see the cathedral at Chartres on the skyline over a

dozen miles away and looking large even from that distance. We arrived at Bois de Feugères where the Association Regionale des Amis des Moulins de Beauce have their H.Q. and were met by our old friends Christian Porcher and Jean Francois Amary. Tents were pitched and we were soon inspecting the reconstructed post mill. After many years of dereliction it had been blown down in a gale in 1977 and as is usually the case very little of the original structure was fit for re-use. It was possible to re-use the original post but it was weak so it was cut in half longitudinally, a steel beam was set inside and then the two halves clamped together again. The adjacent workshop is a large steel-framed building equipped with a gantry crane. It is big enough for a post mill trestle or a whole buck to be assembled under cover!

The next day Christian and Jean Francois guided us to a watermill on le Loir at Douy near Chateaudun (which sadly wasn't open until the afternoon), and then treated us to lunch in a local restaurant. Afterwards we visited the tower mill Frouville-Pensier at Ozoir le Breuil. This once very derelict mill, dated 1826, now has new floors and a new cap and four common sails which each carry two cloths, on either side of the whip. They were quickly spread and the sails turned in a good breeze, a fine sight. It is hoped to fit the millstones and their drive in the next few years. We arrived at Bazoches to find the post mill had just closed but we were able to see inside several of the post mills we visited in the following few days.

On Monday morning we made a pilgrimage to Chartres cathedral, one of the world's finest Gothic buildings. Chartres retains many of the features lost to English cathedrals at the hands of the Puritans. The niches still contain most of their saints and the early stained glass is magnificent. In the afternoon we visited Ymonville post mill and Jean Francois soon had the mill into wind and the sails turning for us. We were able to operate and admire the efficiency of the système Berton. Most wind-shafts in this area are all



A typical post mill of the Beauce & Anjou

wooden but in the derelict post mill at Sanchville we were able to see a very late (this century) iron windshaft, but still with Berton sails. We saw fine post mills at Moutiers (where the late Marcel Barbier was miller) and Levesville. At Ouarville the post mill had been propped from the ground, holding work until it can be properly repaired. In the evening we had a slide show at Christian's family home on the banks of le Loir at Bonneval. His mother had made a fine gateau to celebrate our visit and we toasted the Entente Cordiale and système Berton! It was well after midnight before we crawled into our tents.

The next morning saw us at Artenay mill which was open for a coach party. This is a very fine tower mill on the edge of the town, with Berton sails and impressive separating machinery. Many original components including the cap frame and curb remain but they face the same old dilemma - whether to replace old parts for efficient working or retain them for historical validity and risk failure in the future. The intricate curb with its caged rollers is giving trouble and we noticed that the centering wheels at the head were a couple of inches away from the curb while those at the tail were under pressure, a sign that all is not well. We took our pic-nic lunch close to the post mill at Lignerolles, set amidst thousands of acres of wheat. The Beauce is the richest arable area of France, with large fields of superb quality wheat, maize and sunflowers, and by mid July the harvest had started. We met Jean Francois at Talcy where a group of local children were visiting an exhibition by local artists and craftsmen. We obtained the key to the post mill, standing alone just outside the village, and were followed shortly afterwards by the throng of children! Talcy was unusual in having two pairs of stones in the head, but their finely-pitched cast iron drive made it clear that this arrangement was a late alteration. Most Beauce post mills had one king-sized (5-6 ft. diameter) pair of stones in the head, driven directly from the brakewheel, sometimes by a lantern pinion stone nut. The gap is controlled by a governor with a particularly neat arrangement of steelyard, knife edges and brayers, all in iron but set in a fixed wooden bridge tree. An admirable feature of these open trestle mills is the cover for the outer ends of the cross-trees and quarter bars. If these are exposed they invariably rot after a few years. It would be quite simple to make one of these covers removable so that the structure could be displayed on open days. We bade farewell to Jean Francois and his dog Pou-Pou and set off for the Anjou region via the post mill at Maves and the remains of Lory mill at Oucques. This latter mill was to have been rebuilt but the project is now threatened. The trestle has been repaired rather badly by a local carpenter, replacing the quarter bars but retaining the old post and cross-trees. No buck would be safe on it. Christian and Jean Francois have assembled a new post and trestle (which we saw in their workshop at Voves),

but there is now no money to proceed further. Meanwhile the 'repaired' trestle with no weather protection is rotting rapidly. The French have their mill problems as well!

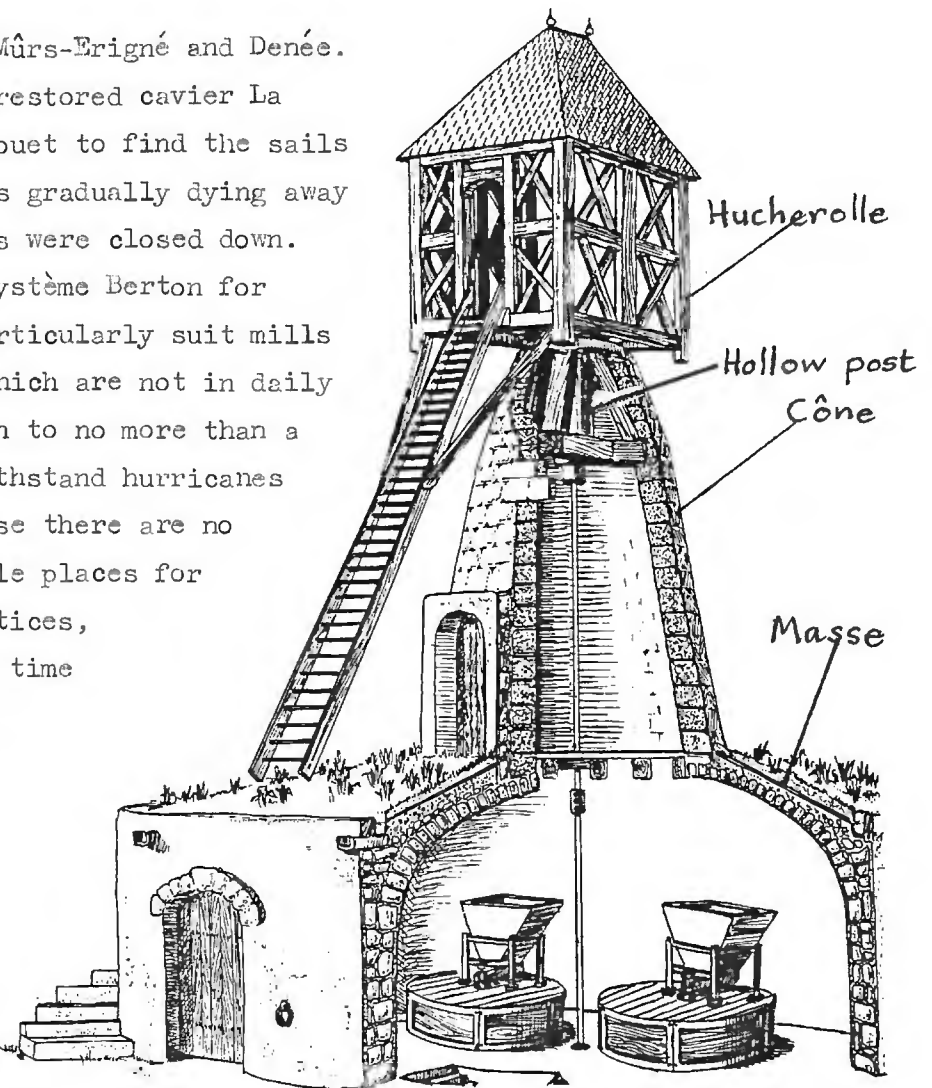
We made camp for one night at the municipal camp site at Vendôme, a lovely old town with a cathedral-sized abbey church with a detached Norman tower and spire.

On our way the next day we photographed the post mill at la Ménitré, restored by of all people the French army. We then crossed the Loire to reach Blaison-Gohier, where we saw our first cavers, or hollow post mills. These were once very numerous in the Anjou region, and the remains of over 200 can still be seen. At Blaison-Gohier there is a splendid group of three derelict cavers, picturesque ruins not seen in England these days. We pitched our tents at the camp site at nearby Brissac-Quincé and after supper visited the splendidly-named Marie Antoinette Lebastard. She is a keen member of the Association des Amis des Moulins de l'Anjou and agreed to be our guide the next day.

Our first visit was to the post mill le Patouillet near Raindron which has been restored since 1982, the owner converting the roundhouse into a week-end home. Being midweek the owner was not there so we could not see inside, but we were intrigued by the governor slung beneath the bottom floor of the buck. This is 'cavier country' though and nearby we passed the remains of nine within the space of half a mile, mostly just overgrown masonry cones. At Brissac we saw Le Moulin du Pavé, the only survivor of a group of 11 cavers. It had been repaired but with drooping sails and several holes it looked a potential derelict. Next we visited the fine tall cavier Les Quatre Croix in the garden of Msr. Horeau at St. Saturnin. The buck (called a cabin or hucherolle) was entirely new and the old one was on the ground nearby. Sadly this was rotting away and will soon be no more. We saw this at several mills and felt that these original hucherolles could easily be conserved on the ground and used to display photos and models. It raises the old question of the validity of replicas as historic buildings.

Our first look inside a watermill was at la Pommeraye, a fine working mill with an overshot wheel of around 16 ft. diameter driving a single pair of c.5 ft. stones via line shaft and spur gearing. The enthusiastic miller soon had the mill working for us and showed us a separating machine he was making. The late iron machinery had very finely-pitched cogs made of a wood called corne which seemed to be identical to apple wood. There were many watermills in this area at one time, often being worked in conjunction with a windmill, as this one had been. The mill was beautifully set in a wooded valley and numerous large blue damselflies hovered above the tail race. On our way back we photographed a fine Bollé wind engine in a field south of the D751

between the villages of Mûrs-Erigné and Denée. We arrived at the newly-restored cavier La Bigottière in Moze sur Louet to find the sails turning, but the wind was gradually dying away and soon the Berton sails were closed down. We greatly admired the système Berton for several reasons which particularly suit mills today, the majority of which are not in daily use. The sail closes down to no more than a stock's width and can withstand hurricanes without attention. Because there are no water traps and vulnerable places for rot such as sail bar mortices, Berton sails last a long time and are relatively cheap to make. With the brake on and a chain around the brakewheel, we left the mill and adjourned to the house of Msr. Chassat to sample the superb local wine and biscuits.



A typical cavier or hollow post mill

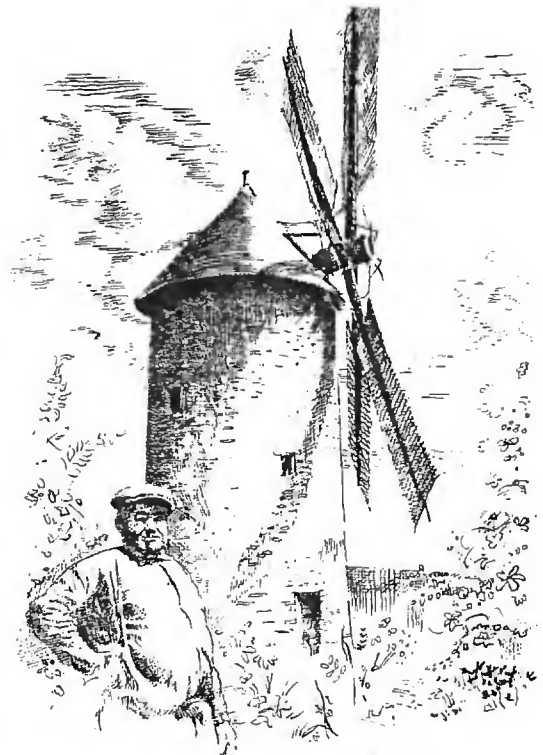
On Friday we made our way south-eastwards beyond Saumur to see the cavier la Herpinière near Tourquant, home of artist Guy Petitfils. His art covered painting, sculpture, woodcarving, tapestry, pottery and glass blowing and much of his work was displayed for sale. This cavier, like many others, had the tail of the hucherolle completely open and unboarded which gave it a sort of incomplete skeletal look, rather like some of the drainage mills in Norfolk. The fine tower mill la Fourchette at Doue-la-Fontaine was one of the last to be built in the region, and the cellar shows its origins as a cavier. Here visitors are invited to sample the local wines without obligation to buy! The mill has late nineteenth century gearing with a small iron brakewheel and a very finely-pitched spurwheel and stone nuts. This mill is complete with sophisticated separating machinery, rather similar to that seen in English watermills, when stone mills made a last attempt to rival the rollers. Our second watermill at Sarré was at work when we arrived. This is a fine complex with a modern roller milling business combined with an overshot waterwheel driving a pair of stones. So great was the lime encrustation, the waterwheel appeared to be made of stone! The pitwheel and wallower looked the same as the brakewheel and wallower

at Doue and were almost certainly from the same firm. The proprietor Msr. Lauriou and his son made us most welcome and enjoyed looking at the photographs of our efforts in Suffolk. Sarré was all movement, noise and dusty air as both water and roller mills ran continuously. In contrast, the romantic old derelict cavier at Louerre-le-Vau stood gaunt and skeletal over a field of wheat it would never grind.

We could not stay in the Loire Valley without visiting a chateau and there was a fine one only a few minute's walk from our camp site at Brissac.

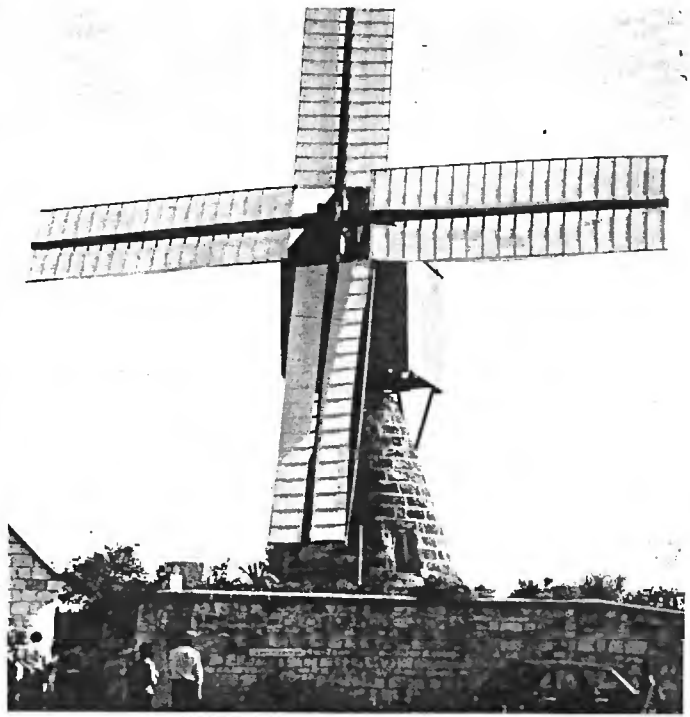
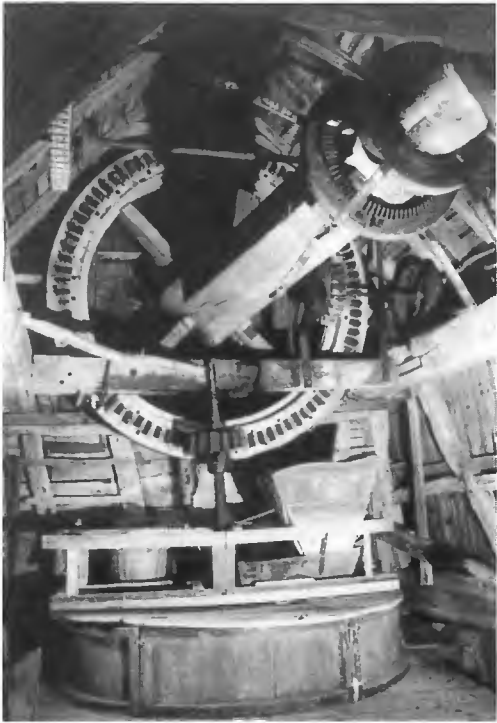
'Le Duc' still lives there, so he must have kept his head in the Revolution! The rooms were magnificent with painted ceilings and included a fine theatre still in regular use. We soon had to head back towards the Channel, but not before we had photographed the only French mill with a fantail, the tower mill la Transolière near St. Clément-de-la-Place, north-west of Angers, and visited the working Moulin du Ratz at

Challain-la-Potherie (right). Sadly there was no wind so the mill was still but the miller Msr. Paul Hoinard made us very welcome. Here the governors are mounted on extended damsels above each of the three pairs of stones with rods passing down through the floor to the brayers, an unusual and picturesque arrangement. Msr. Hoinard is one of the real old millers of France, and a character like Bill Heathershaw. We soon had to leave to drive to the ferry and join the queue of cars - mostly British - for the boat.



We left France with a feeling of admiration for all that has been achieved in mill preservation. We certainly saw nothing of the supposed animosity towards the British, quite the reverse with welcome and hospitality. It is a splendid country, not only for mills but with fine buildings of all types both old and new. The new houses still have traditional slate roofs, and good window design and attention to detail enables them to blend well into either town or country scene. Above all we had a feeling of spaciousness. France is four times the size of England with fewer people. There is not the pressure on land now found in southern England and not the urge to shoe-horn new houses into every space available. There are roadside verges with wild flowers and butterflies, little meadows and areas of 'waste land', a meaningless term in southern England. House prices are a third to a quarter





Top left Inside a typical Beauce post mill (Ouarville). Berton sail controls at top right.  
Top right La Herpinière mill.  
Left Moulin du Pavé at Brissac.  
Above Tower mill at Artenay.

those of southern England, and this is not for a remote area, but in Normandy, the Loire Valley and the premier arable region of France quite near Paris. We saw in an estate agent's window a tower mill, house, barns and several acres - all for around £60,000. If it were not for the language barrier a lot of us would move south of the Channel!

Thanks are due to Penny and Roy for arranging such a memorable holiday. I know they both enjoyed showing us the mills and renewing old acquaintances, but we would have been lost (literally) without Penny's navigation and spoken French, and Roy's adept handling of the Sherpa along innumerable winding country lanes.

## **VANISHED MILLS** PETER DOLMAN LAYHAM

Today Layham is best known for its watermill, still occasionally worked. Before the watermill was rebuilt early this century there were also two windmills in the parish. Most of this article relates to the tower mill on the road to Hadleigh but the other mill, although un-illustrated, also deserves to be put on record.

### 1. LAYHAM SMOCK MILL

This stood at Grid Ref. 0383,4026 and is first recorded on Greenwood's map (1823-4). The Suffolk Chronicle advertised it in October 1828 thus: 'Property of James Cudden (dec.). Lot 1 ... (a farm house and maltings, occupied by James Cudden (dec.)). Lot 2. A good TOWER WIND-MILL, with two pair of exceedingly good French Stones, Going Gear and Machinery complete ... in the occupation of Mr. Tillet Gardiner, tenant at will.'

He was still in occupation in November 1829. In 1838 the tithe award records Charles Brown as owner and William Hoddy as occupier of 'windmill piece and mill' and 'large malting house'. Not long after this, disaster struck. The Bury and Norwich Post of 25th January 1843 relates 'During the storm, on Friday, the 13th, the sails and shaft of the mill belonging to Mr. W. Hoddy, of Layham, were completely smashed. Mr. Hoddy had a narrow escape, as he was just about altering the sails when the accident happened.' Eventually the Suffolk Chronicle of 10th August 1844 carried this advert: 'To be disposed of ... The WRECK of a SMOCK TOWER MILL, comprising the studwork and weatherboarding, 2 pair of Capital French Stones, and the machinery, now in the mill. The whole to be removed at the purchaser's expense ... Apply to Mr. Charles Brown, on the premises ...'.

### 2. LAYHAM TOWER MILL

This was rather uncharacteristic for the area in its appearance, being similar to some big tower mills further south, in Essex. It stood at Grid Ref. 0247,3938 and although omitted from Greenwood's map was actually built in 1817, probably for James Berry, who also had the watermill. In 1833 his



executors advertised for sale by auction 'A most substantial Brick-built TOWER MILL, with Six Floors, conveniently binned, driving two pair of French Stones, 4 feet 9 inches in diameter, and one pair 4 feet in diameter; two Flour Mills, Jumper, Sack Tackle, and Sails, 11 yards of cloth .. The Mill, with the House and other buildings with which it is surrounded, have been erected within 16 years ...'.



In 1836 the watermill alone was offered for auction but in 1838 another James Berry was advertising for an assistant at Layham Mills. The tithe award records him as owner and occupier of 'watermill' and 'windmill, buildings and yards'. An accident was recorded in the Suffolk Chronicle of 30th July 1834: 'On Monday se'nnight as Robert Welham, a miller, in the employ of Mr. Berry, of Layham, in this County, was in the act of oiling the windshaft, his shirt sleeve was caught by the projecting end of a bolt, in consequence of which his hand was drawn into the machinery, his body thrown over the shaft, two of his ribs were broken, the thumb of his right hand torn off, and all the fingers so dreadfully mangled, that it was found necessary to amputate them at the joints next to the palm of the hand.'.

White's 1844 Directory lists Charles Berry as a miller and farmer and in January 1846 the estate was offered for auction. 'Lot 1 ... that newly erected Water Corn Mill, situate on the River Brett, driving 3 pair of stones, with machinery and going gears complete... Lot 2. A new and substantially built TOWER WIND MILL, with Patent Sails, cast iron shaft, 3 pair of French Stones, machinery and going gear complete, miller's cottage, spacious warehouse, drying kiln, barn, shed, etc...'. .

Unfortunately in 1847 James Berry, having presumably over-reached himself, was declared bankrupt and the mills were offered to be let in September 1847. The description 'new' as applied in 1846 may not be as unreasonable as it sounds, as discussed below. Kelly's Directories of 1853 and 1858 list William Green as miller at the windmill and Freeman Hitchcock at the watermill, which remained separate for the remainder of the windmill's life. In 1868 William Clover Smith was miller and by 1883 John Lee Clover, using wind and steam. In 1892 Thomas Clover was miller at 'Tower Mill' but in 1896 Arthur Partridge was a General Dealer at 'Tower Mill House'. In 1977 I spoke to a Mr. O. Tricker of Raydon, who remembered the mill. He said it was disused in about 1895,

although carrying sails. It was demolished c.1900, by which time the sails were off. The bricks were used to build a house in Duke Street, Hadleigh and the garden wall of Elmside, Lower Raydon.

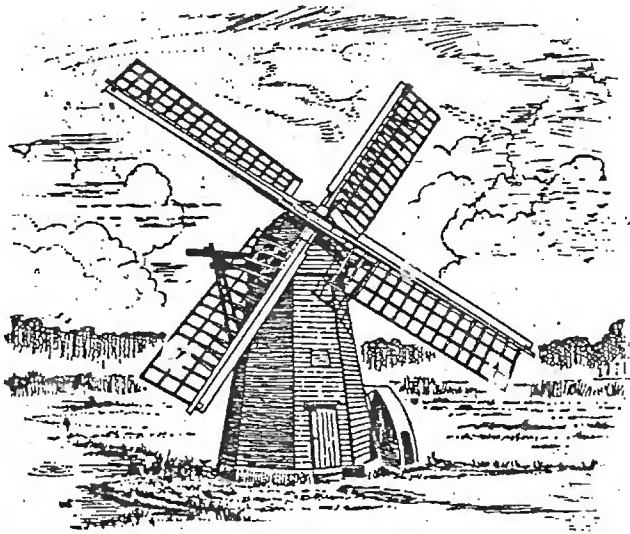
The excellent photograph, together with the above adverts, tell us much about the mill. As built it had four anti-clockwise common sails, each with 33 feet of sail cloth, a span of well over 70 feet, and was hand-winded. The reefing stage, at second floor level, was apparently of iron and was removed when the mill was modernised. The positions of the stage bearers can be clearly seen in the photograph. In about 1840-5 it was re-equipped with four patent sails and a six-bladed fantail. The sails were identical to one pair on Buttrum's Mill, Woodbridge, with 10 bays, long clamps and 'extension stocks' between the end of the stock and the end of the whip. These sails and the design of fantail were undoubtedly the work of John Whitmore, the Wickham Market millwright, who also probably fitted up the watermill at this time (also 'new' in 1846). The cap was domed, with narrow vertical boarding and a ball finial. The petticoat was separate and had a scalloped edge. The sheertrees showed evidence of extensive plating and overlays, a sign of weakness with the heavy fantail to support. The striking wheel, under the fanstage, was too close to the tower so a short chain guide was used to take it clear of the tower. The fantail was reputed to be red, white and blue in alternate blades. The tower had a marked batter and remained untarred throughout its life. The three pairs of stones were probably on the third floor, with the spout floor giving access to the reefing stage. The two upper floors had smaller windows and this concurs with the 1833 description of being 'binned', or partitioned off for bulk storage.

It was altogether a splendid mill and what a shame it didn't make it into this century as its machinery must have been of a very high quality (probably all wooden). Today it is difficult to reconcile the remaining buildings with the photograph of nearly 100 years ago, so completely has the situation changed.

## **MILLS AND ME (5)** PETER STEGGALL

HOT DAY AT HERRINGFLEET

It was already hot at 9.30 a.m. on 8th July 1971, as I drove through the picturesque estate village of Somerleyton and past the long red brick wall of the Hall park. As I walked down the track from Herringfleet Hills, the heat and the fine dusty sand felt quite Mediterranean. Across the flat grazing marshes which stretched away into Norfolk, I could see the little black mill below the river bank. When I reached it, the mill looked larger than I had remembered, perhaps because the sails had been renewed recently and were conspicuous in their fresh white paint, and because two of my colleagues looked quite small as they bent to the tailpole winch. They were



*Smock Mill Herringfleet*

for a long time and was somewhat stiff! The 97 children from the third year classes of Hillside Avenue Primary School, Thorpe St. Andrew, Norwich, filed gingerly over the two narrow plank bridges across the dikes, and then surged around the mill to settle on the grassy bank to draw their individual impressions of the old wooden smock mill.

During the invasion, the BBC men had gone to fetch Charles Howlett, the retired marshman who worked the mill for the Somerleyton Estate until a few years before. He was now over 80 but still a sturdy-looking man with white hair and kindly face, who obviously enjoyed talking to the children and answering their questions. He related how the marshes had been under 4 ft. of water early in 1953 when there was severe flooding all round the East Anglian coast. On other occasions he had had to stay with the mill for several days and nights, snatching a little sleep on the hard, narrow wooden bench inside by the brick fireplace, an unusual feature in a windmill.

At last, with Charlie's guidance, the mill was turned into the eye of the wind, but it was so light that the sails had to be turned by hand for the benefit of the children and the TV cameras. The children were then shown over the mill with its black weatherboarding, boat-shaped cap and long tailpole, wooden sail frames and green canvas sail cloths. The scoopwheel, which lifts the water into the dike and thence to the river, is encased in a round box, but its function had been superseded by a diesel-engined pump in a rather ugly corrugated iron shed.

By late morning, the heat was intense as the sun blazed down from a clear blue sky. The children, now wilting a little, trekked back along the dusty paths to the road and climbed into their coaches to go to Somerleyton school to have their pic-nic lunches.

The BBC TV men from Norwich stayed on into the afternoon. On, I think, the following evening, 'Look East' included a two-minute condensation of their day's work. It showed part of Charlie Howlett's talk with the children, and

the sails turning against the blue sky, but the majority of viewers could not have realised the many hours spent before and on the day, arranging, planning and making such a short feature. But those of us who were involved learned quite a lot on that hot day at Herringfleet!

## **A.G.M. REPORT**

The 1988 S.M.G. Annual General Meeting was held at Thorington Street watermill, Stoke by Nayland on the morning of Sunday June 26th. 34 members were present. Apologies were received from Roy Berry, Martin Harrison, Tom Loader, Don Porter, Dave Pearce, Mr. Purbrick, Niall Roberts, Chris Seago, Paul & Norma Smith, Alan Stoyel and Alan Willmott.

The minutes of the 1987 A.G.M., published in Newsletter 40, were agreed without amendment; their adoption was proposed by Marguerite Wells and seconded by Chris Armour. The treasurer, Brian Flint, reported that the accounts were generally healthy. The total balances held at bank and building society amounted to just over £2000, significantly higher than 1987 owing to the repayment of a £500 loan to Stanton mill and several donations, as well as an increase in subscription income. Expenditure was broadly similar to the previous year, except for printing and publications, which was nearly £100 higher. The payment of bank charges was queried bearing in mind the good credit balance maintained and the treasurer agreed to investigate whether this charge could be reduced or waived. It was pointed out that a little additional money in a tool fund was held on our behalf by the Suffolk Preservation Society. The accounts were adopted by the meeting (proposer Peter Dolman, seconder Penny Berry) and a vote of thanks given to the treasurer.

Editor Mark Barnard said three Newsletters had been issued since the last A.G.M., a total of 50 sides of A4. The content had been quite varied, but there was a shortage of research-based material relating specifically to Suffolk. Printing was still done at Suffolk County Council, but the new contrasty xerox machines now used did not cope at all well with photographs and in future they may have to be printed separately. He received a vote of thanks.

S.M.G. secretary John Snowdon reported that membership had increased from 147 to 158 in the last year, this figure including a few reciprocal members with which newsletters were exchanged. He contrasted this with the state of some other mills groups which appeared to be in decline. It was pointed out that the reason for this may be because S.M.G. was formed around a nucleus of local enthusiasts who had already been active for several years.

The officers and other committee members were all willing to serve for another year. However, John Snowdon said he would be happy for Peter Dolman to resume his role as secretary now that he was living in Suffolk once again, something that Peter was keen to do. John would continue looking

after the membership records, issuing reminders and printing the address labels. With this change, the committee was re-elected en bloc (proposer Marguerite Wells, seconder Chris Wilson).

Under Any Other Business, the question of subscription levels was raised. These had remained unchanged for several years and it was felt a modest increase could be justified, with a suggestion that this was a minimum subscription level. A proposal to raise the annual rate to £5, junior membership to remain at £2 and corporate membership to be abolished, was agreed on a show of hands. Penny Berry said that the mill trip to France, which was mentioned at the last A.G.M., was going ahead shortly, although the final response was disappointing.

The meeting concluded with slides of Suffolk mills in the news, for good reasons and bad, in the last year. After lunch there was a most rewarding visit to nearby Thorington Hall, a large timber framed house owned by the National Trust, by kind permission of the tenant, Nicholas Wollaston, who gave a conducted tour.

## **NEWS**

### REPAIRS TO BARDWELL WINDMILL

Repairs are about to commence at this mill, which suffered so much in last October's hurricane. A new windshaft is to be cast at a Norfolk foundry to a pattern which John Lawn is making. He will also be building four new sails and two new stocks, which will be of new pitchpine approximately 40 ft long. An opportunity will be taken to remedy the many defects in the cap, some of which possibly contributed to the accident last October. The top six courses or so of the tower will be rebuilt and the curb and winding gear overhauled. Much of the ancillary work will be organised by the owner, Geoff Wheeler, and the miller, Simon Wooster, aided by local craftsmen and other friends. It is intended to have the mill going again by next Easter and with hard work and a 'fair wind' this ought to be possible, so that Suffolk can once again boast two working windmills producing flour.

### CROSSWORD RESULT

There were 14 entries for the crossword competition in the last S.M.G. Newsletter. Of these, 13 were correct. The winner was Peter Dolman and runner-up Martin Watts. The other correct entries were from Len Ball, Rosemary Dennis, Brian Flint, Eddie Goatcher, Fred Hamond, Peter Hill, Russell Jones, Cliff Lovett, John Pelling, Jo Roberts and Alan Wallis. The solution is as follows:

Across 1.Wiston 4.Jog-scry 7.Thaxted 8.Barnack 11.Sutton 13.Lines 14.Tail  
15.Dead curb 18.Hursts 21.Triangles 24.Framsden 27.Patent 28.Vanes  
29.Vats 30.Elmer 31.Annular sail

Down 1.Watts 2.Start 3.Outwood 5.Grain 6.Canister 9.Cubitt 10.Clarke  
12.Underdriven 16.Alarm 17.Cog 19.Syleham 20.Shutters 22.Lee 23.Damsel  
25.Steel 26.Neves

### PROGRESS AT THORINGTON STREET WATERMILL

During the Spring some working week-ends were staged at the mill, with several S.M.G. and Essex Mills Group members turning out to help. Richard Duke and his friends Fred and Ted were particularly helpful, replacing the rotten wood behind the sluice guides with concrete. Fred meanwhile used his chainsaw to 'square up' a fallen oak tree which is now being worked into shape for use in the repairs to the mill structure. As a result of all this work the mill is once again in working order (as last used in 1963 when only a modern crusher was being driven) and has already hosted visits by Essex Mills Group, a rotary club from Colchester and the S.M.G. A.G.M.. Several offers of help have led to plans for an assault on the failing structure this autumn. The bases of posts and sills in the vicinity of the wheel have decayed to the point where settlement is occurring so this will be put right before tackling the stones next year. Any member who is interested in lending a hand should contact me at the mill (Higham 279). (Peter Dolman)

### THELNETHAM WINDMILL GRINDS AGAIN - BY TRACTOR!

The work-in at Thelnetham in June was supported by several members in addition to most of the mill owners, allowing much useful work to be done. In the mill the 'big' pair of stones was taken apart and set up more accurately, the spindle having got out of alignment. The state of dressing was examined and found to be hardly worn after about 20 tons of grinding. The runner was slightly out of dynamic balance so this was put right by running molten lead into the appropriate balance pot. The stones run much better now, no longer passing whole grains when running under light load. Other repairs and adjustments were made to the tentering gear, the mesh of the spur wheel and stone nuts and to the inboard bearer for the layshaft, which was replaced.

The largest single item of work was to the engine stones which had been slowly undergoing overhaul for some years previously. The stone tun was completed and a new horse and hopper made, while the hurst was aligned properly and the bed stone and spindle set up. The original tentering nut was unable to turn without removing the stone crane so a modification was made to 'spanner' adjustment after the style of John Whitmore. On the last evening of the work-in our neighbour 'Barney' Davy was summoned to drive the completed mill with one of his collection of vintage tractors. He duly obliged with a 1947 Field Marshall - virtually an oil engine on wheels, and well up to the job. After a pause while a suitable belt was procured the mill lumbered into life in a cloud of flour dust, settling down to a steady grind after a little adjustment. No major problems were encountered, apart from the belt falling off every few minutes! The stones need a little more 'running in' before they will make fine flour but they show great promise. With the completion of the hurst frame the restoration of Thelnetham mill



can be said to be complete at last. We still need to replace the flour dresser and get the oat crusher running but these had been removed many years ago so are not part of the mill as last worked.

Besides the work to the mill, progress was also made on the storage building, which now has its gables weatherboarded, and on the rebuild of a small grain cleaner, which was given a test run at the end of the week and works extremely well. It remains necessary to set it up on a bench and to arrange a suitable feed. (P.D.)

#### SAILS OFF HOLTON MILL

The dummy sails have recently been taken down from this post mill due to decay in the plywood box-section stocks. We understand that Suffolk County Council, who lease the mill and maintain it, hope to replace the two stocks and four sails by next year. It is intended to fit 'proper' sails this time round, and S.M.G. is offering advice on design for these, which will replicate the last working sails, two spring and two common.

#### WICKEN WORK-IN

The first of this year's work-ins at Wicken smock mill in Cambridgeshire has now taken place and good progress was made, despite bad weather most days. Two sides have been repaired and boarded and most of the floors and ladders have been completed. The second work-in begins on Saturday August 20th and continues until Monday August 29th, during which two or more sides will be tackled, plus other work to the cap, doors and windows, and machinery. Members interested in helping and possibly requiring accommodation are asked to contact the project leader, David Pearce, at 30, Rushams Road, Horsham, West Sussex (telephone Horsham 53909). (P.D.)

#### NEWS IN BRIEF

Good progress continues to be made at Stanton post mill. The fantail was fitted in the Spring and is now fully operative, a new stock and clamps have been made and now shutters and striking gear are being fitted on the ground to the two new sail frames. It is hoped that these sails will be in place by the autumn.

The single-storey remains of Glevering watermill, Hacheston, on the River Deben near Wickham Market, are to be incorporated in an extension of the adjoining mill house to provide ancillary living accommodation. When the old corn mill was taken down around the turn of the century, the brick lower floor was kept to house a new waterwheel for driving a water pump and saw. This was all removed in the 1950's and the building is now empty.

Letheringham watermill, also on the Deben, is undergoing structural repairs at the moment. The new owner, Rod Allen, intends to rebuild the wooden waterwheel, which survives in a fragmentary state, to generate electricity. Apart from the pitwheel, no machinery survives.

The house-conversion of Kelsale tower mill has been completed, with a new building adjoining the tower, replacing the remains of the steam mill. Another new house-conversion is at Exning watermill near Newmarket, where the machinery has been left undisturbed.

Alton watermill, at the Museum of East Anglian Life at Stowmarket, was set to work for the first time at the museum on 5th June, with the help of Simon Wooster and Mike Bryant. Further milling days will be held on August 28th-29th.

## EVENTS

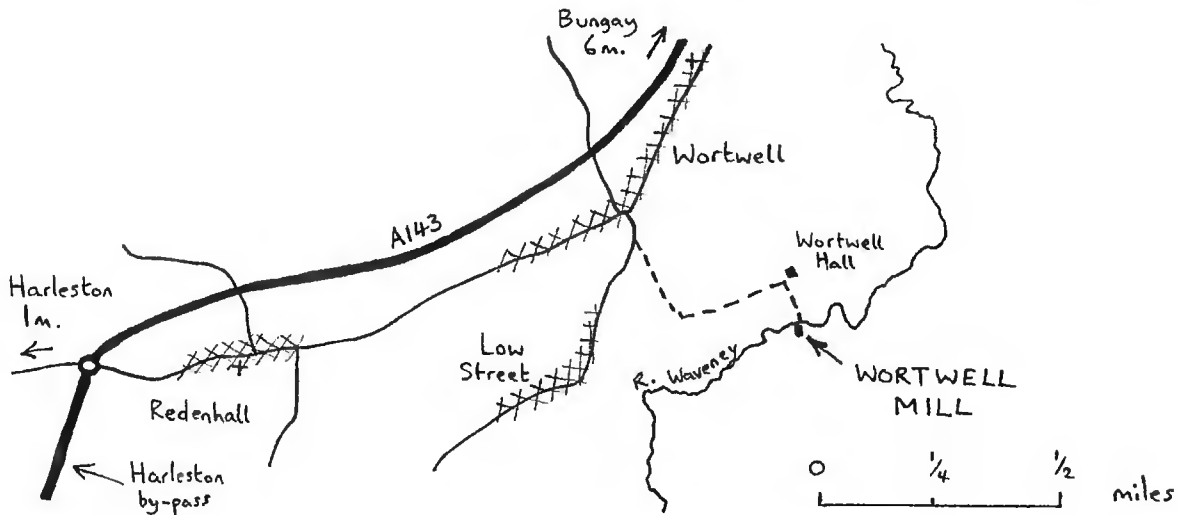


### VISIT TO WORTWELL MILL, HOMERSFIELD: SUNDAY 21st AUGUST, 2-5 pm.

By kind permission of S.M.G. member Victor Robinson we are able to visit one of Suffolk's lesser-known watermills. Known as Wortwell Mill after the adjacent Norfolk village, it stands on the Suffolk side of the River Waveney not far from Harleston (Grid ref. 282,845). It was known as Limbourne Mill in the last century and stands in the parish of Homersfield. Much of its machinery survives but the waterwheel was dismantled some years ago by the water authority to aid river flow, work having ceased after the last war. The last miller was Brian Marriage, of Pakenham watermill.

#### How to find Wortwell Mill

The mill is approached from Wortwell on the Norfolk side of the river (NB. Wortwell has recently been by-passed). At the crossroads in the village centre take the road leading south to Low Street, and after a few yards join a lane leading to Wortwell Hall. Follow this lane, which bends sharp left then right, for about  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile and the mill will be reached.



### HERRINGFLEET MARSH MILL OPEN DAY: SUNDAY 25th SEPTEMBER, 1-4.30 pm.

There will be another public open day at Herringfleet on the last Sunday in September, when the mill will be working, weather permitting. The two open days in May were very successful, with a good wind and plenty of visitors, so let's keep fingers crossed we've picked another good day!

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