

# SUFFOLK MILLS GROUP

## Newsletter

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Time seems to pass ever faster, and it is hard to believe that the year is almost at an end. 1988 has seen a variety of S.M.G. activity, from promotion of the Group through public meetings, visits to several Suffolk mills and to France, and further small-scale work at Drinkstone, Thorington Street and Herringfleet. We have also supported the work at Wicken smock mill in Cambridgeshire by acquiring a range of woodworking machinery and applewood for cogs. We hope to further promote the Group by making a number of small notice boards which can be used to display details of our work in the mills most frequently open to the public.

This Newsletter contains details of our social evening in December and also the date and theme of the public meeting in February 1989. The next issue will be in January (not long to wait!).

May I wish all our members and their families an enjoyable Christmas and a happy New Year.

Mark Barnard

### **SOME SUFFOLK MILLS** NIALL ROBERTS

As one of the many 'non-County' members of S.M.G. I am rarely able to attend any of the meetings, outings and other activities arranged by the Group but that scarcely diminishes the value of membership. Since I first became interested in mills twelve years ago (during a visit to our local mill museum in Wimbledon Common windmill) I have increasingly tried to include at least one mill visit - and that means seeing inside as well as outside - as part of any longer journey we make. A cousin by marriage has even asked me where I would like his funeral to take place so I can fit in one or more mill visits on the way there and home again - as I have done before now when attending such sad events. During recent years my wife and I have often been invited to stay with a friend who was looking after a house for its absent owner, and such occasions have provided other opportunities for mill visits. On all these occasions the newsletters of the local mills Groups have been an invaluable source of information, up-dating the details available in Arthur Smith's and Peter Dolman's county surveys of windmills and filling large gaps in the case of watermills. The officers of local Groups have been most helpful in advising on how - and sometimes whether - to contact owners of mills not normally open to visitors but that possess particularly interesting features.

One such opportunity occurred when we recently spent a long weekend based at the unoccupied house of the brother of our friend near Saxtead Green. We did not visit the mill there but its fantail was missing and its sails looked in poor condition. We used the occasion for visiting nine Suffolk mills (in addition to one in Norfolk and seven in Essex). I am grateful to Peter Dolman for advice on some mills I thought we might visit and on some others we might include together with information on how to contact their owners. The Suffolk mills consisted of three powered by wind (Bardwell, Syleham and Stanton) and six by water (Sapiston, Euston, Ixworth and Little Glemham - visited internally as well as externally; and Wickham Market and Layham - seen externally only). In addition we saw the impressive surviving road-front buildings on either side of the former gateway to Whitmore's works in Wickham Market, with a finely-carved small cogwheel incorporated in the wooden nameboard 'The Old Millwright' on one of the houses. The following paragraphs record my main impressions of these Suffolk mills and of the one Norfolk mill visited (Foulden watermill, roughly half-way between Thetford and Downham Market). A corresponding article on the seven Essex mills will, I hope, appear in the Essex Mills Group Newsletter.

We originally intended merely to drive past Bardwell windmill to see if the sails (blown down last October, as reported in Newsletter 40) had yet been replaced - which just shows how little I know about insurance claims involving 'tempest' damage. There was however an 'OPEN' notice on the gate and in we went to meet Simon Wooster who described what had happened, showed us what was left and outlined what future plans were. Besides the lost fantail, canister and sails, the cap roof had been damaged and the cap itself bodily lifted enough for two live-curb trolley wheels to fall out (within the mill) and for the cap to drop down again with a third trolley wheel jammed partly out of position. Some of the centring truck wheels were no longer in contact with the inner surface of the curb ring. Apart from putting these lesser but important matters right, we were told that the intention now is to have a new iron windshaft cast, rather than to use a second-hand shaft as reported in Newsletter 40. We were very sorry to note that the magnificent flour dresser with an impressive inscription (whose wording I do not recall) that used to be mounted in a recess in the brickwork above the ground floor was no longer there, and that the Blackstone oil engine in the separate shed had gone too.

We also met the new owners, Mr and Mrs Wheeler, and learnt how wide are the skills and interests of some of the many people who wish to preserve and operate traditional mills. Geoffrey Wheeler told us about the saddening damage inflicted upon his traction engine 'Oliver' by the falling windmill sails, and Mrs Enid Wheeler showed us photographs that recorded the dramatic event. We spotted Mr Wheeler's recently published book 'Fired by Steam',

with its many magnificent coloured illustrations of steam locomotives, and I am now the proud possessor of an autographed copy of that volume. Its energetic author told us that, besides restoring the mill itself, he plans to set the restored traction engine to work driving the stones formerly driven by the now missing Blackstone engine.

Stanton post mill received only a cursory external inspection in the rain. I had visited it when Chris Hullcoop was busy during a previous 'work-in', and I had met the owner Mr Richard Duke during an earlier visit. The mill now looked sparkling in its newly painted buck, even in the rain. Syleham post mill was more difficult to find than I expected, but I was anxious to have a photograph of its sad remains on slide to illustrate what can and does, occasionally, happen to neglected post mills in the 1980's.

At Sapiston watermill, we were welcomed by the owner Mr Cobbald who showed us the results of his preservation work to date: cleaned out pit, black Hammerite-painted pitwheel, wallower, stone nuts and spindles, with brass or bronze polished and gleaming. The stout wooden upright shaft is partly covered with graffiti from the last century and maybe from the one before. This mill is a large structure, attached to the house, with a large internal low-breast or undershot wheel with curved metal floats and three pairs of stones. A most unusual feature is that the pitwheel is mounted on the very end of the wheelshaft, with no bearing on the 'inboard' side of the pitwheel. On an upper floor of the mill is a huge bolter 24 feet long still carrying fragments of its cloth. I do not recall seeing so long a machine since visiting the restored and working watermill at Black Creek Pioneer Village outside Toronto (Canada) two years ago.

Before visiting Ixworth watermill, its owner Mrs Rogers very properly questioned me when I telephoned her, to satisfy herself that I was a suitable person to be allowed onto her land and into her mill. It is a good thing that S.M.G. was able to carry out some essential roof repair work there last year, both for the mill's sake and for mine. This is another large three-pair mill with an internal iron low-breast wheel, with the white weather-boarded mill building adjoining but at right angles to the mill house. The most striking feature when entering the mill is the massive bridge beam carrying the footstep bearing of the wooden upright shaft, and the neatly-carved large-lettered inscription across this beam: '18 I. LOWE OO'. The mill flooring is in need of attention in places. Mrs Rogers told me she would like to see the mill restored to working order one day - but how?

At Little Glemham watermill we met another 'polyvalent' (as the French would say) mill owner, Mr Thorold, who is very happy to welcome serious enthusiasts but not 'trippers'. He is a highly skilled model maker, old clock repairer and furniture restorer, and a fund of knowledge about old mills and other old buildings. His mill is situated on what he believes

was once the main street of a long-vanished village but now this 'street' is no more than a partly overgrown driveway to the mill. There is an undershot wooden waterwheel and three sets of stones. The three nuts were each disengaged differently: one used slip-cogs, another used an iron fork, and the third used a ring jack. Two of the bridge trees were wooden and tentered by normal screw devices. The remaining bridge tree was iron but was unattached at one end, and was held up indirectly by resting upon its partly twisted (horizontally) sub-tree designed for tentering. The adjustable end of this sub-tree was suspended from an iron brayer that was parallel with, though above and a little to the side of the basic iron bridge tree - a most curious arrangement - with the brayer itself being adjusted by a normal screw attachment.

In contrast to these relatively large and spacious three-pair mills, Euston watermill is a tiny dual-purpose estate mill in which the wheel drove a single pair of stones and/or a small beam pump to supply water to Euston Hall. The stones were spurwheel-driven and were engaged or disengaged by means of a horizontally-mounted screw jack that pushed the footstep bearings beam for the upright shaft towards, or pulled it away from, the pitwheel, thus meshing or unmeshing the teeth of the wallower and those of the pitwheel. The pump was engaged or disengaged by means of a horizontal lever that regulated the position of a small sliding pinion on a keyed layshaft at right angles to the pitwheel at the opposite side to that of the spurwheel-driven stones. The pump is in place but no longer used since the introduction of electricity. I am grateful to the estate manager, Mr Spicer, for allowing us to see the interior of this mill.

The Norfolk watermill near Foulden is a restoration and reconstruction of a curious combination of a small overshot wheel in a timber building containing a pair of stones, and a long line-shaft beneath the ridge of the large contiguous barn in which various farm machines are or can be belt-driven from that shaft. The waterwheel has a rim gear that drives a short counter shaft carrying the primary belt pulleys. One of these drives the stones through belting and bevel gears, and another drives the roof line-shaft. A very ingenious and instructive exhibit is a very small bolter, driven by belt through reduction gearing, which actually dresses part of the meal from the stones into three grades. Our biggest surprise at this mill was meeting Mayling Hargreaves, formerly administrator of S.P.A.B. Wind and Watermill Section, and her husband Mr Samuel Burgess. We all spent quite some time listening to the owner, Mr Martin, about his achievements, aspirations and problems. Among the latter was the exorbitant price demanded by the County Council for official brown-and-white road signs to point the way to his mill, and the confiscation by the Council's employees of the neat 'lookalike' signs that Mr Martin painted and propped up at appropriate road

junctions at the weekends.

Our last call before crossing back into Essex was at the new Trust House Forte 'Granary' restaurant at the Copdock Mill interchange on the A12 south-west of Ipswich. We had already been several times to the windmill coffee shop at the Post House hotel not far away and admired the pretty accurate full-scale (for a small mill) reproduction of brakewheel, brake, windshaft, wallower, great spur wheel and friction-drive sack-hoist, happily still in place after the redecorations. The mill theme at the Granary restaurant is manifested in a large number of black and white framed photographs of existing and disappeared East Anglian wind and watermills, all under non-reflecting glass, together with a two-metre (approx.) model of a shuttered sail (made by Richard Seago), and a collection of wall-mounted replicas of millwrights' tools. If passing that way, this is well worth a visit but be sure to have your cheque-book or credit card!

## **WINDMILLS OF SOUTH EAST ENGLAND (3)** GUY BLYTHMAN

Part Three : East Sussex outside the Brighton area

CHAILEY (TQ387214, O.S. Sheet 198)

This slender, elegant white smock mill stands on North Common, two miles north of the village, in the grounds of the Chailey Heritage, a home for handicapped children, by whom it has been well maintained. Originally it stood at Highbrook, five miles to the north, where it was erected in 1830. There it was known as Hammingden Mill. In 1844 it was moved to Newhaven, but by 1864 had been made redundant by a steam mill. It was then transferred to Chailey, superseding a post mill whose owners regarded it as obsolete and wished to replace it. The mill ceased work in 1911.

It has a single-storey base with a stage and a Kentish-type cap. Little machinery remains today apart from the brakewheel and windshaft, the former a dummy and the latter cannibalised from Punnett's Town mill. Repairs are currently in hand and new sails have been fitted as well as a new fantail to replace the previous 'skeleton' one.

NUTLEY (TQ451291, O.S. Sheet 198)

This small open-trestle post mill, situated in the attractive surroundings of Ashdown Forest, is of uncertain origin. It is not recorded here before 1840 and is thought to have been moved from Crowborough or possibly Goudhurst in Kent. It ceased work in 1908 and then became derelict but in 1928 the then owner, Lady Castle Stewart, carried out repairs and had the body underpinned to save it from collapse. Further work was carried out in the 1950's but in 1968 the structure was found to be badly decayed and in danger of collapse. The Uckfield and District Preservation Society embarked on a thorough restoration programme which culminated in 1975 when they received an Architectural Heritage Year award for their efforts. At times the restoration could be a difficult business, with the life of the mill hanging by a thread, it being hard to take out decayed timbers without bringing about total collapse. A full account of the work is given in a booklet on sale at the mill.

This is a dainty little mill, with an attractive weathered breast and a slight touch of mansard to the roof. It has two common and two spring sails driving two pairs of stones, one in the head and one in the tail, and a dresser. It can still grind occasionally for demonstration purposes.

MARK CROSS (TQ585315, O.S. Sheet 188)

This was a tower mill with a Kentish-type cap. In 1911 the cap and sails were

destroyed by fire, after which it was converted to a power mill. The tower is now a private residence.

MAYFIELD, ARGOS HILL (TQ571283, O.S. Sheet 199)

A fine and well-preserved mill in a lovely Wealden setting. It is a large post mill with a three-storey body and a single-storey roundhouse. The lower two storeys of the body have been extended at the tail to accommodate dressing machinery and the miller's office, and the bin floor is reached by a covered ladder passing upwards from the top of the extension. The high arched roof is covered with canvas sheeting painted red, making it a distinctive sight. The mill has four patent sails and is winded by a fantail mounted on a carriage fixed to the end of the tailpole, in traditional Sussex fashion. Observing the circular track around the mill for the carriage wheels, E.V. Lucas wrote in his 'Highways and Byways in Sussex', in 1903: 'Between Rotherfield and Mayfield is a little mill, trim and conical - perfect in deportment for it has (as all little conical mills should have) a white windmill on its top. Around the mill is a circular track for carts, which runs nearer to the sails than any track I remember ever to have dared to walk on.' The mill still has all its machinery, and this includes two pairs of stones, a dresser, a crusher, a whetstone for sharpening tools and a grain cleaner.

The mill was built in 1835 and ceased work in 1927. It is now in the caring hands of Wealden District Council. The roundhouse contains a museum of milling items.

CROSS-IN-HAND (TQ558218, O.S. Sheet 199)

A large post mill with a three-storey body clad except for the tail in metal sheeting. It has a two-storey roundhouse, the lower storey of brick and the upper of wood covered with corrugated iron. The patent sails and tailpole-mounted fantail are at present missing, but the carriage for the latter remains. Forty five feet high, the mill is almost as large as the huge post mill at Windmill Hill, Herstmonceux and very similar in appearance, and it seems certain that both were rebuilt sometime in the last century by Boaz Medhurst, millwright of Lewes, famed for his big post mills.

Like Chailey, this mill had an unsettled early life. Probably dating from around 1840, it was originally situated at Mount Ephraim in the parish of Framfield, but was moved in 1855 to a site not far from its present one. For some reason a local landowner, 'Squire' Huth, objected to its presence and in 1868 it was moved to where it now stands. Both removals were undertaken by Medhurst and it is likely that one or the other was the occasion for its rebuilding. At its new site the mill was accompanied for a time by another post mill whose roundhouse still stands nearby. The mill ceased work in June 1969 when one sail broke off while it was working, damaging another as it fell. It was the last windmill to work commercially in Sussex and one of the last in the country. Restoration has been a gradual process over the last fifteen years, but it is hoped that the mill will eventually be returned to working order. Inside, much of the machinery is still intact. There are three pairs of stones, two in the breast which are under-driven by a great spur wheel and a third driven from the tailwheel, and a maize kibbler.

PUNNETT'S TOWN (TQ627209, O.S. Sheet 199)

This white smock mill originally stood at Biddenden in Kent and was moved to its present site in 1859 to replace a post mill destroyed by fire. It inherited the name Blackdown Mill from its predecessor, and for some reason was also known by the curious name of Cherry Clack Mill. The mill had a Kentish-type cap and ended its working days with four patent sails. The single-storey base was later enclosed in a square brick 'roundel' which acted as a stage. It ceased work in 1929, after which the sails and fantail were removed to be followed in 1934 by the cap and machinery. The empty shell was afterwards used as a store. In 1947 it was struck by lightning, and what started out as an attempt to repair the damage culminated in the

restoration of the mill to working order. This task was carried out single-handedly over 25 years by Archibald Dallaway, for whose family the mill had originally been moved from Biddenden. A curiously shaped cap was fitted, something like the domed 'beehive' type but with a conical top, along with four common sails. The windshaft came from Staplecross smock mill, demolished in 1951. The mill was completely refitted with machinery, some of it made from agricultural machinery components. The mill may be seen working from time to time. Although some may feel the restoration ought to have been more authentic, this is nevertheless a remarkable achievement, for which Mr Dallaway deserves to be congratulated. The mill features in a number of the Sussex stories of Rudyard Kipling, where it is referred to as the 'Cherry Black' windmill.

HERSTMONCEUX - WINDMILL HILL (TQ648122, O.S. Sheet 199)

See my earlier article (Newsletter 32)

ALFRISTON (TQ518027, O.S. Sheet 199)

A small tower mill, built in 1834 and last worked in 1907. It has lost cap, sails and machinery and the tower now forms part of a house.

POLEGATE (TQ582041, O.S. Sheet 199)

A five-storey red brick tower mill, partly tile-hung, with a domed cap, patent sails and an unusual five-bladed fantail. The stage at first floor level has recently been replaced. Built in 1817, it ceased work by wind in 1943 but was power-driven until 1965. It was then purchased by the Eastbourne and District Preservation Society and subsequently restored. The machinery is complete, with three pairs of stones, a dresser and a smutter. The adjacent outbuilding now houses a fascinating museum of milling items. Currently the mill is undergoing a thorough overhaul which should see it returned to working order. It is frequently known as Mockett's or Ovenden's Mill, after former millers.

STONE CROSS (TQ620043, O.S. Sheet 199)

A small tower mill, cement-faced and painted white, with a square brick roundel and attractive circular windows, the frames of which consist of a hub and spokes, after the fashion of a bicycle wheel. The cap is more reminiscent of Lincolnshire, the East Midlands and parts of East Anglia than the South East, for the fluted boards are laid vertically, and the shape is similar to an ogee but with the finial much shorter. One pair of patent sails and the fantail cradle remain in place. Most of the machinery is intact; there are three pairs of stones, a dresser and the remains of an oat crusher. On the outside of the tower can be seen a pipe through which the waste from a smutter was ejected. The mill was built in 1876. The tower was erected by a builder from Herstmonceux named Honeysett and fitted out by Neves of Heathfield. The mill ceased work in 1937, but remains in fair condition, having been repaired by Ron Hall, its late owner. Since Mr Hall's death earlier this year the future of the mill has become uncertain.

BATTLE (Caldbec Hill Mill) (TQ748166, O.S. Sheet 199)

Situated close to the site of the Battle of Hastings, this is a smock mill on a single-storey base, built in 1804-5. It had a Kentish-type cap. It ceased work just before or during the First World War, and was house-converted in 1924. All the machinery has been removed but the mill now has an authentic replica of the original cap, along with dummy sails and fantail. The former can be turned by an electric motor.

ICKLESHAM (Hog Hill) (TQ888160, O.S. Sheet 199)

A tarred post mill with a two-storey roundhouse, the upper of wood and the lower of brick. It is unique in being the only post mill in the country carrying a roof-mounted fantail. The drive from this is taken down the tail of the mill and then down to truck wheels on the steps, by two rods connected by a universal coupling. Inside, one pair of stones and the brakewheel have been removed, but some other machinery remains including a dresser.

The mill was originally situated two miles away at Pett and was advertised

for sale in 1781, apparently new. It was moved to its present site in 1791. It ceased regular work in 1922 due to failure of the breast beam, but carried on intermittently for a few more years. The mill was restored in 1951 and further repairs were carried out in 1968 by Thompsons of Alford who replaced the breast beam. Currently the mill is undergoing a full restoration which will return it to working order, the work being carried out by Millwrights International. The present owner is former Beatle Paul McCartney, who has obtained planning permission for a recording studio at the site.

An interesting feature is the distinctive curved layout of the mill house; the builder apparently went to great lengths to integrate the house with the mill, digging the foundations on a radius struck from the centre of the roundhouse.

#### WINCHELSEA (TQ902176, O.S. Sheet 189)

Here we have a distressing tale of woe. This very interesting old mill deserved a much better fate than that it received from the 'powers that be', although it has also suffered, like Rottingdean, from being in an exposed position.

St. Leonards Mill, so named because it stands on the site of the old church of St. Leonards, is a large tarred post mill with a single-storey roundhouse. It stands facing the Hog Hill Mill across a valley, on a spot from which it was once possible to witness no fewer than 14 windmills at work. Its precise age is a mystery but it probably dates from about 1760. Like Hog Hill Mill, and a bygone post mill at nearby Udimore, it had a roof-mounted fantail, a feature which seems to have been a speciality of the local millwrights. There were two common and two spring sails carried by a wooden windshaft which retained its wooden poll-end to the last. The brakewheel was of particularly refined construction, and one of the largest in any post mill. There were two pairs of stones in the head and tail and a third unusually small pair on the bin floor, driven by a belt from a vertical shaft meshing with the tailwheel, which were used for cracking peas and beans.

The mill, an important landscape feature, ceased work in the mid 1900's and soon fell into a ruinous state. It was repaired in 1935 at the expense of G.M. Freeman KC, and a set of mock sails fitted, but unfortunately the windshaft and poll-end were removed. Keeping the mill in good repair proved expensive and in 1954 the then Mayor of Winchelsea, Anthony Freeman, who spent a great deal of effort trying to keep it in good order, offered it plus £100 to anyone willing to accept responsibility for its upkeep. Sadly no-one came forward although enough money was raised for repairs to be carried out to the body and roundhouse. In 1961 the mill had to be under-pinned as the crowntree had cracked. Later it was threatened by a proposed bypass scheme north of the town. In 1978 a gale almost blew the whole of the tail out. Rather than restore the mill completely the National Trust, who had acquired the property in 1975, rebuilt it as a landmark. Unfortunately the machinery was removed, some of it going to West Blatchington and Stelling Minnis mills, while the remainder was simply left outside to rot. At the time of the gale damage the brakewheel and stones were still in place, and also the truck wheels on the steps although the fantail was missing.

The mill was blown down in the October 1987 gale. One can only hope that the National Trust will preserve what remains and at least rebuild the roundhouse.

#### RYE (TQ917203, O.S. Sheet 189)

This was once a tall and elegant white smock mill, but in 1930 was tragically destroyed by fire. To satisfy a clause in the lease, a new mill was erected, incorporating the original two-storey base. This has never been a working mill; in fact it is a very poor imitation of its predecessor. It has a shorter smock, of which the cap is simply a continuation, and is without floors or machinery. A dummy fantail and the stocks of the dummy sails remain.

#### Sources

K.G. Farries & M.T. Mason, 'Windmills of Surrey & Inner London' (Charles Skilton, 1966)



Rev. Peter Hemming, 'Windmills in Sussex' (C.W. Daniel, 1936)  
Martin Brunnarius, 'The Windmills of Sussex' (Phillimore, 1979)  
R.J. Brown, 'Windmills of England' (Robert Hale, 1976)  
R.& R. McDermott, 'The Standing Windmills of West Sussex' and 'The Standing Windmills of East Sussex' (both Betford Publications, 1978)

#### Note

In the first article in this series (Newsletter 38) I expressed concern over the condition of Tadworth post mill, Surrey. I have now visited the mill and found it in a good state of repair with the boarding tidied up.

One omission was the Surrey tower mill at FRIMLEY GREEN (SU896563, O.S. Sheet 186). This is of uncertain age but was standing in 1784. It was disused by 1870 and an old photograph shows the ruined mill with the cap frame in place and the remains of one sail lying across the top of the tower. The massive broad tower was incorporated in a private residence in 1914 and is now no longer recognisable as a windmill. It has a slight bottle shape; possibly the lower part is the base of a smock mill.

## **MILLS AND ME (6) PETER STEGGALL**

### ON THE AIR WITH 'RUMMY' WESTON

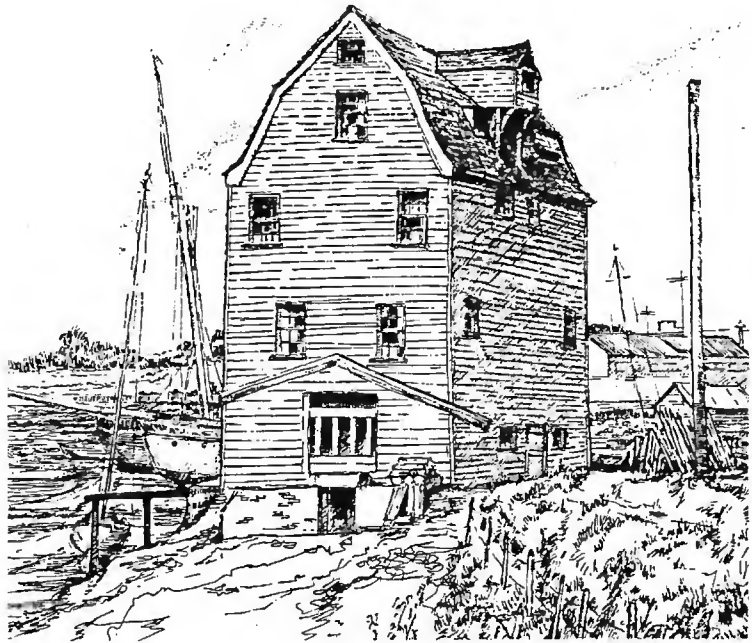
In 1976 the County Planning Officer was invited to take part in a Radio Orwell programme about mills. Professing a claustrophobic aversion to the underground studios, he asked me to take his place. Although my duties no longer included mills, I was still interested and still conducted school parties round windmills at Woodbridge and Holton. So, suppressing my own claustrophobia, I turned up on 26th April to join Chris Hullcoop, Hugh Young and Piers Hartley. We had a preliminary chat with 'Rummy' Weston, the presenter of 'Talking Point', before descending to the dreaded basement studio for the hour-long, live broadcast. From the tape recording made by my wife, Barbara, I have typed a transcript of the whole programme which included discussions on finance and procedures for preserving mills, the life-style of old millers, the responsibilities of local authorities, and the derelict state of Kersey watermill; several listeners 'phoned in about mills that disappeared long ago. Unfortunately the space now available restricts me to a summary of our discussions on Woodbridge tide mill and the windmills at Framsdan and Friston.

R.W. In days gone by every village had its mill and its jolly miller, but by the end of this century the last of the mills would have vanished had it not been for the dedication of certain individuals and groups. So, in 'Talking Point' tonight we look at mills, wind and water, and especially at the tide mill at Woodbridge and the windmills at Framsdan and Friston. To talk about them are Peter Steggall who was responsible for co-ordinating the old East Suffolk County Council's involvement with windmills, Hugh Young, membership secretary of the Friends of Woodbridge Tide Mill, Chris Hullcoop, an enthusiast who restored Framsdan mill, and Piers Hartley, owner of Friston mill. Now, the fact that Framsdan and Friston mills are still with us is entirely due to the work of enthusiasts?

P.S. The restoration of Framsdan was by voluntary labour and money. The County Council gave encouragement but was not asked for any substantial grant or loan. At Friston the Council offered a grant which is still available for Mr Hartley to claim in due course.

R.W. Why did the Council make an exception when it had decided to preserve only one of each type of windmill?

P.S. Friston mill was threatened with demolition because the old owner feared it had become unsafe, but the Council felt obliged to refuse consent because the mill was a fine example. Having refused consent the Council had to assist in its restoration. Such help is not given only to mills. There is a general power to give grants or loans towards any building of special architectural or historic interest. The County Council considered also the possibility of dismantling Friston mill and re-erecting it at the Museum of Rural Life at Stowmarket, because the owner was adamant that he did not want it restored at Friston.



Woodbridge Tide Mill (c.1975)

R.W. You were relieved that it wasn't moved, Mr Hartley?

P.H. Yes, but I fully understood the feelings of the owner who was then in his late '70's. Then I was able to buy the mill and the mill house.

R.W. Have local people come and talked to you about the mill? I imagine Mr Caleb Wright, the miller, has passed on?

P.H. Yes, but his son, Bob, has been very helpful; he worked in the mill for a time. It had been in the family virtually since it was built, certainly since the 1860's.

R.W. Is the preservation of mills really worth all the expense?

P.H. My personal interest is in restoring the mill as such and not as a commercial concern. I can see that the public may resent taxpayers' money being spent, but if people want to put their own money into restoration I can see no objection.

R.W. Friston and Framdsen have only two sails - is that satisfactory? It's like seeing the 'Flying Scotsman' without a boiler!

C.H. Not really. A lot of mills finished their working days with only two sails. At Framdsen we've still got an 18th century buck. After 200 years the timbers are not quite as sound as they were, but are quite capable of carrying one pair. I would hesitate to put another pair on what is already a front-heavy, top-heavy structure. Friston is luckier in that it was built with much larger timbers than usual, and the longitudinal timbers are in excellent condition.

R.W. Now we must look at Woodbridge tide mill, which is unique, is it not, Mr Young?

H.Y. Virtually. It was the last tide mill working in this country. It stopped working on the tide in 1954, and stopped altogether in 1957 when the main shaft broke. For those last three years it was run by a diesel engine which ran the mill too hard. But we hope that in a year or so the machinery will be back in working order. The new main shaft is ready to install and all we need is some means to drive it.

R.W. I believe the tide mill was first mentioned in 1170?

H.Y. Not the mill we have now, but there was a mill granted to Baldwin of Ufford in 1170. Mike Weaver, our historian, has traced the ownership of mills here back to Elizabethan times and before. The present one dates from 1793.

R.W. The County Council made a grant to Woodbridge tide mill. Why did you then have to appeal to the public for £50,000?

H.Y. Because the cost of restoration was estimated at £50,000 or more. The County Council's grant was £7,000 and the government gave £7,000, but even with other donations it didn't come to anything like £50,000, and we also wanted to do other things such as making a new mill pond. The original  $7\frac{1}{2}$ -acre pond is now a yacht marina, but outside is an area we could enclose and work in the same way, though the mill could run for only half an hour instead of four hours on each tide.

C.H. You could get through several hundredweights in half an hour with two stones running, and bag up flour to sell to visitors.

R.W. Mr Young, what are the advantages of a charitable trust?

H.Y. People can make covenants and the trust can recover the income tax.

R.W. Returning to the windmills - Friston mill is still standing by the skin of its teeth, because the County Council in 1965 consented to its demolition, but it was left standing. In 1968, under new legislation, it was listed and consent was refused. Now, Mr Hullcoop, how did you hit upon Framsdon mill?

C.H. I couldn't bear to see it deteriorate any further. I knew several interested people and we approached the owners, the Ablett family. The County Council gave us £50, quite generous in 1966, and we had similar amounts from Suffolk Preservation Society and Lord Tollemache. The rest of the money the Abletts have raised by opening the mill and their country bygone collection to the public.

After several 'phone calls, and discussions of other topics, the programme came to an abrupt end with 'Rummy' Weston stopping Chris Hullcoop in full flight on the technicalities of cog design, which 'Rummy' suggested made the construction of the Sputnik sound like child's play!

#### Postscript

I asked Chris Hullcoop to briefly bring the story of each mill up-to-date, for the benefit of those members not familiar with them. He writes as follows.

"It does not seem like a dozen years since our mill programme with 'Rummy' Weston on Radio Orwell. It's time we did another, as a lot has happened since, some of it good, some bad. Of the three mills we discussed, the tide mill has fared the best. When the initial restoration was completed it seemed only a dream that it would ever work again as the tide pond had been converted to a yacht marina. Thanks to the work of Hugh Young and Peter Wylie, who devoted his retirement years to the mill, the money was raised and the new pond - named Wylie's Pool - was constructed. When I first knew the mill it was derelict and I never imagined that one day the Duke of Grafton would declare open the new pond and John Snowdon and I would be millers.

Framsdon mill still stands as a prominent landmark and John Ablett holds open days in the summer. This raises a little money towards the high cost of maintenance. It was not realistic though to aim at a working mill; the sheer

cost of fitting and maintaining four fully shuttered sails is far beyond the available resources.

Repairs to Friston mill started well in 1976 with Jameson Marshall renewing a lot of the main buck timbers and all the weatherboarding and also rebuilding the roundhouse roof. Sadly Jameson Marshall went out of business a few years later and no work has been done there since. The cost of repairing the winding gear and replacing sails has greatly increased, while grants of money for listed buildings from government (English Heritage) and local authorities are smaller and more difficult to obtain. At least the mill is preserved though as a buck with machinery and winding gear. Only a few mills can be restored to working order, and these have to be maintained and constantly attended. It is far better to be realistic and achieve a good static restoration for the majority of mills. There is neither sufficient mill enthusiasts nor enough money to allow many mills to work."

## **NEWS**

### BARDWELL WINDMILL

Our report in the last Newsletter that repairs were about to start here was, as it turns out, rather over-optimistic, and the statement that John Lawn was to do some of the work was untrue. We apologize to John for printing this information, which of course we believed at the time to be correct. The situation regarding the repairs has still to be resolved, and no firm decision has been taken on how to replace the broken cast iron windshaft.

### S.M.G. GRANTS

S.M.G. has recently made grants for repairs to two Suffolk mills. £300 has been offered for work to Thorington Street watermill, Stoke by Nayland, which Peter Dolman is hoping to return to working order. The other grant is £100 towards the repair of Bardwell windmill, following serious damage in the October 1987 gale (see Newsletter 40). This mill had previously received a S.M.G. grant of £250 in 1983 at the commencement of the restoration by James Waterfield.

S.M.G. is only a small society and money for grants has to be accumulated slowly over the years. As well as Bardwell, grants have also been made to Thelnetham (£200) and Stanton (£300) mills towards major restoration work, but such assistance will always be extremely limited.

### FIRE AT COPDOCK MILL

The watermill at Copdock, near Ipswich, was gutted by fire early on Friday September 2nd. The brick-built mill building, dating from the late nineteenth century, contained modern power milling machinery for producing animal feed, having been gutted of the original gear and waterwheel in 1956. It is hoped the building can be restored; it is listed Grade II.

### STANTON UP-DATE

Steady progress continues to be made at Stanton post mill. The new stock was hoisted into place at the end of September, and a pair of sails soon followed. The new sails were allowed to turn for the first time on 21st November, but there was very little wind and they only managed two revolutions! At present only one shutter per bay has been fitted; the remainder will follow in the Spring. The old shutters have been restored and re-used. Work is now commencing on the second stock and two more sails, which Richard Duke and his gang will make themselves. With luck these might be in place by next summer. A second pair should help balance the buck, for it is still a little tail-sick, leaning hard against the tail woodwears. The fantail is working well and proving very responsive, even in light winds.



Stanton mill (early November)

### ALUMINIUM WANTED!

Following the success of the aluminium spider for Thelnetham mill, which was cast in his garden(!), Cliff Lovett is now busy casting aluminium striking gear for the sails of Wicken mill. The Wicken group are also intending to cast aluminium cranks and pivots for the entire set of over 200 shutters. As well as being much cheaper, this pioneering use of aluminium will make the sails considerably lighter.

Cliff is now appealing for scrap aluminium which he can melt down and put to very good use! The casting will be done at four different locations in Essex, Sussex, Surrey and Cambridgeshire, so scrap could be collected over a wide area. It's even worth saving old aluminium drinks cans, but check with a magnet to ensure they're not made of iron - it's difficult to tell otherwise. With Christmas coming there should be plenty of these around! If you can help, please contact Cliff Lovett on Clacton 422495 or Dave Pearce on Horsham 53909.

### WARDEN FOR BUTTRUM'S MILL

Suffolk County Council is to appoint a part-time warden for Buttrum's Mill, Woodbridge, to supervise regular opening of the mill at weekends and Bank

Holidays during the tourist season. This will enable the mill to be properly promoted as a tourist attraction (at present it is officially open only by prior arrangement) and should lead to it becoming far better known. Buttrum's is the last complete windmill by millwright John Whitmore, and its elegant and technically advanced machinery make it one of the country's finest tower mills.

#### PETER x MELANIE

We are delighted to announce that Peter Dolman, S.M.G.'s secretary and founder-member, became engaged to Melanie in October. The wedding is planned for next Spring.

## EVENTS

### S.M.G. SOCIAL EVENING: SATURDAY 17th DECEMBER AT HOLBROOK MILL; from 8pm.

Our social evening this year will be held at Holbrook watermill, the home of Ken and Jenny Read. Ken and Jenny have repaired the mill building and converted the empty upper floors to residential use. Ken is restoring the 'Little Giant' turbine and eventually hopes to use it to drive the two pairs of stones on the lower ground floor (see Newsletters 27, 28 and 30). At present the turbine is raised and can be easily inspected.

A buffet with wine and beer will be provided together with an opportunity to meet other members and to show slides. The mill fronts the B1080 just south of Holbrook village. Don't confuse it with the adjacent Mill House, which is in separate ownership!



#### Parking

Please park in the mill grounds. Access is off the minor road to Lower Holbrook, not directly off the B1080 (see adjacent map).

Please note that you cannot park outside the mill at the front because of dangerous bends in the narrow road.

### VISIT TO THELNETHAM MILL: SUNDAY JANUARY 1st 1989, from 2pm.

As a change from our usual visit to Herringfleet on New Year's Day, this year we will be opening Thelnetham mill which, wind permitting, will be at work.

Advance Notice The 1989 S.M.G. public meeting will be held in Ipswich Town Hall on Saturday February 18th. The theme of the meeting will be mills on film (the 8mm and 16mm moving variety, not 35mm slides!).