

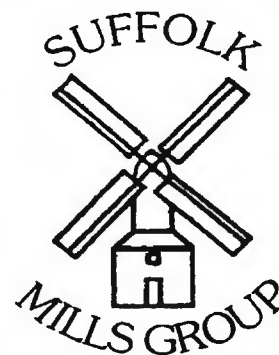
SUFFOLK MILLS GROUP

Newsletter

Hon. Secretary: PETER DOLMAN
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The last newsletter appeared at the beginning of April, and a lot seems to have happened since then. April was not the best of months. Following the news that the superb watermill at Great Bardfield in Essex had been destroyed by fire, we learned of the death of Richard Duke. Richard was a remarkable man and a loyal friend of Suffolk Mills Group, which he joined from the start. I feel privileged to have been able to join the boat trips he led, to Holland on the 'Adax' in 1984, and to Norwich on the 'Annie D' in 1991. Whether sailing, farming or windmilling, Richard was always good company and he will be sorely missed. One of our regular helpers at Herringfleet mill, Bob Haylett, also sadly passed away in April. As well as taking pleasure in showing visitors the mill at work, he also distributed posters advertising the open days, cycling round a wide area from his home in Loddon.

On a brighter note, our recent events have been most successful, with good numbers coming to Bures mill and to the A.G.M., and bright, windy open days at Herringfleet on May 9th and August 1st. The County Council's tourist information leaflet on mills is now available, and a complimentary copy should be enclosed with this newsletter.

Details of the following two events can be found at the end of this newsletter:

Sunday September 26th: Visit to Wixoe watermill

Saturday December 4th: Social evening, M.E.A.L., Stowmarket

I am gradually becoming familiar with our word processor and part or all of this issue may be produced on it (not so familiar that I can say for certain!). Finally, many thanks to those of you who have sent me material - keep it coming please!

Mark Barnard

SMALLBRIDGE HALL FARM, BURES

The watermill of a 19th century model farm

Leigh Alston

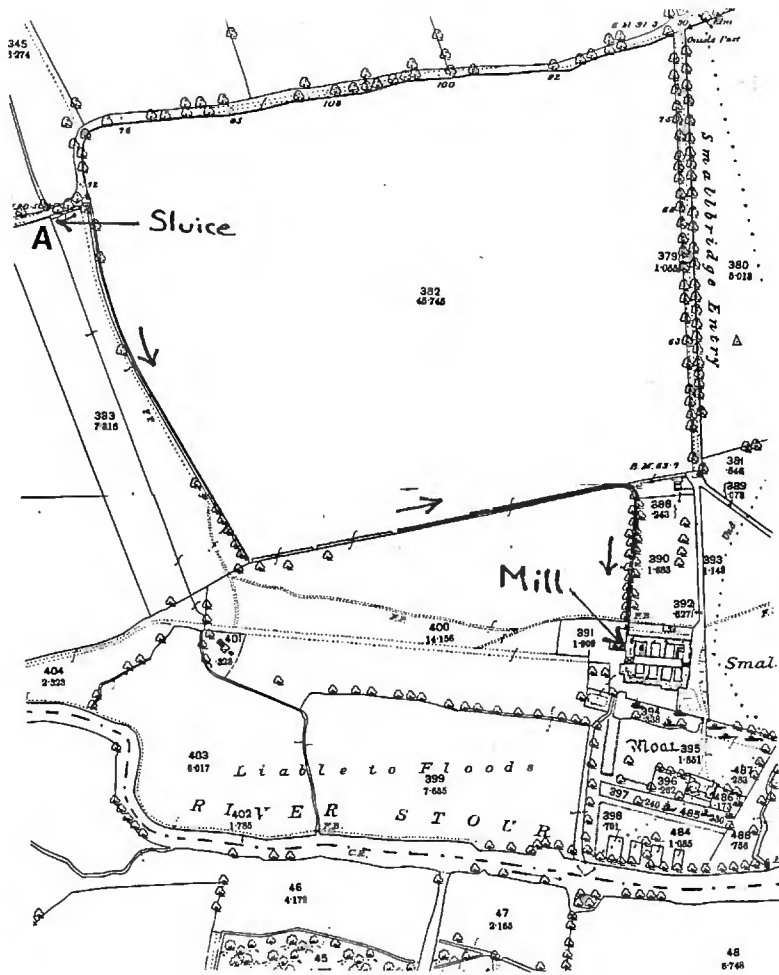
Smallbridge Hall lies within a medieval moat on the northern bank of the river Stour (Grid Ref. TL928332, Fig.1). The 16th century house was the main seat of Sir William Waldegrave, who completed it shortly before entertaining Queen Elizabeth there in 1561, and it survives as an imposing piece of Tudor architecture. The range of 19th century farm buildings at its gate suffers in comparison, and is usually overlooked. The purpose of this article is to redress the balance a little, and demonstrate that Smallbridge model farm has as great a claim to the attention and protection of

the architectural historian as the Hall itself.

The Model Farm

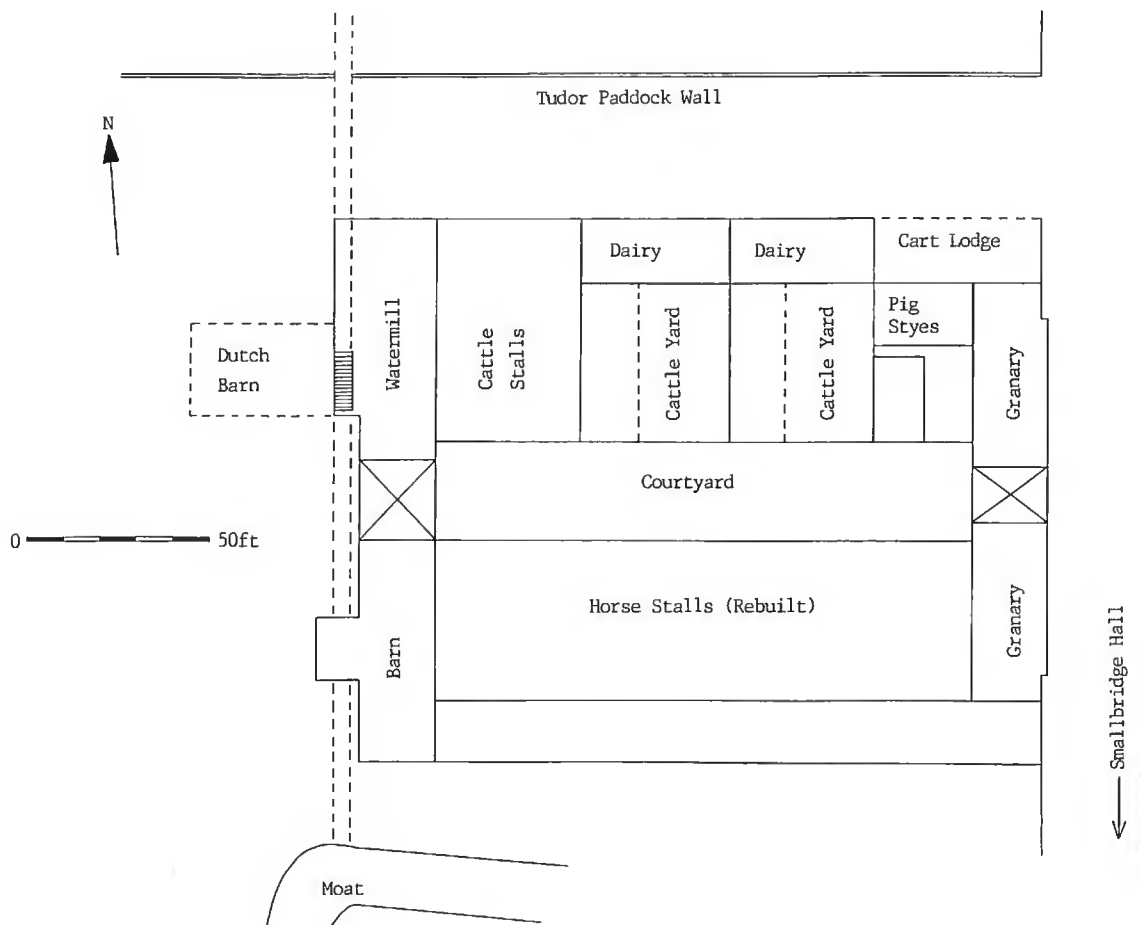
Having lived at Smallbridge since 1375, the Waldegrave family finally sold the estate in 1705, and while it remained as a gentleman's residence until at least 1750, by 1800 the Hall was occupied by a tenant farmer. Encumbered by debt, and with both house and farm buildings in a dilapidated condition, the 547-acre estate was again sold (for only the second time since 1375) in 1849. On the 27th of July that year George Wythes Esquire of Reigate, Surrey, paid £11,350 for it at auction in the city of London. Wythes continued to reside in Reigate, and the Hall remained a tenant farmhouse until its renovation earlier this century. A report drawn up for the new owner in February 1850 by William Downes of Dedham recommends the repair of the existing mansion, and 'to pull down the old and to erect an entire new set of Agricultural Buildings upon an improved arrangement as per plan furnished to Mr Jackson. To repair the present set would be an injudicious waste of money whilst the materials of them being extensive, sound and excellent for reconverting, would go far towards those required for the erecting the new ones.' (Suffolk Record Office, Bury St. Edmunds, Acc. 324). Downes, or perhaps his father, had been commissioned to survey and map the parish of Bures Hamlet in 1819, and was familiar with the area; although the plan to which he refers has not survived, there can be little doubt that he was personally responsible for the design of the new buildings.

A map of the Smallbridge estate published prior to its sale in 1849 clearly shows the range of farm buildings lying to the east of the modern entrance drive on a site which is now a rubble-strewn field. On the strength of Downes' recommendation, presumably in 1850 or shortly thereafter, the 16th century buildings were demolished and an 'improved arrangement' laid out in what had been a walled paddock on the opposite side of the road. The fact that a 'contractors agent' from Cumberland was in residence at the Hall in 1851 may be relevant to the date of construction. Much of this model farm survives largely untouched. The nature of the re-used oak timber and brick with which the inner walls, including those of the mill, are partly constructed suggests that the barns and outbuildings that Downes demolished were contemporary with Smallbridge Hall itself. Fig.2 shows the functional arrangement



LEFT:
 Fig.1: Extract from
 O.S. 1st Edition of
 1886 (reduced to
 approx 10" to 1 mile)

BELOW
 Fig.2: Ground plan
 of farm complex



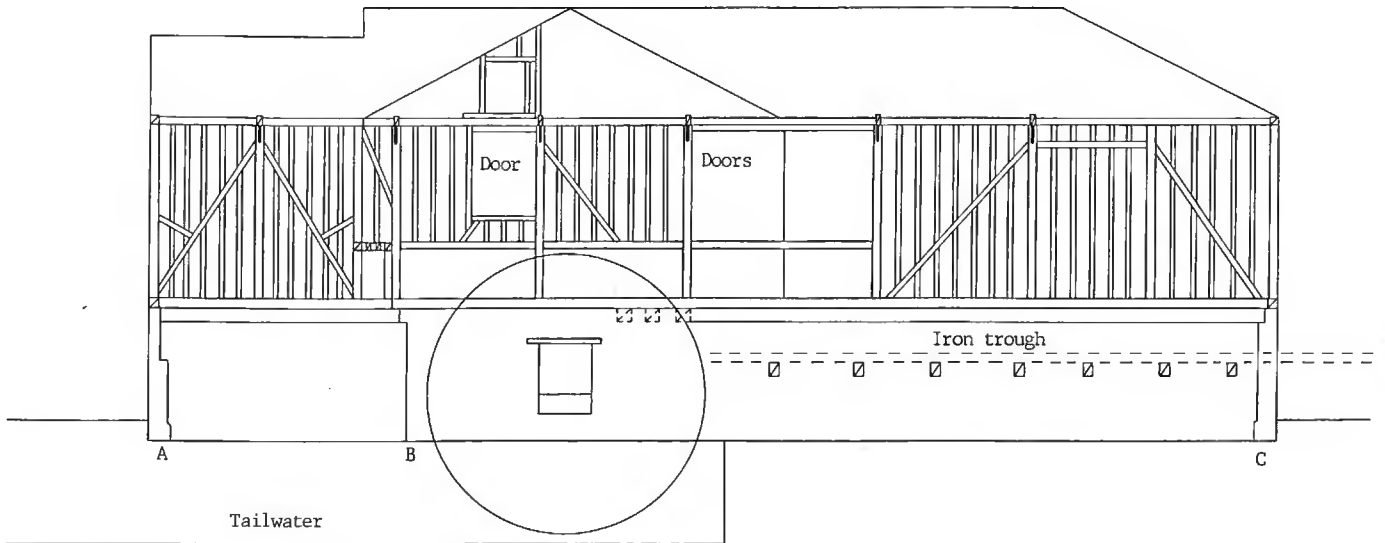


Fig.3: Western internal elevation A-B-C

0 ————— 20ft

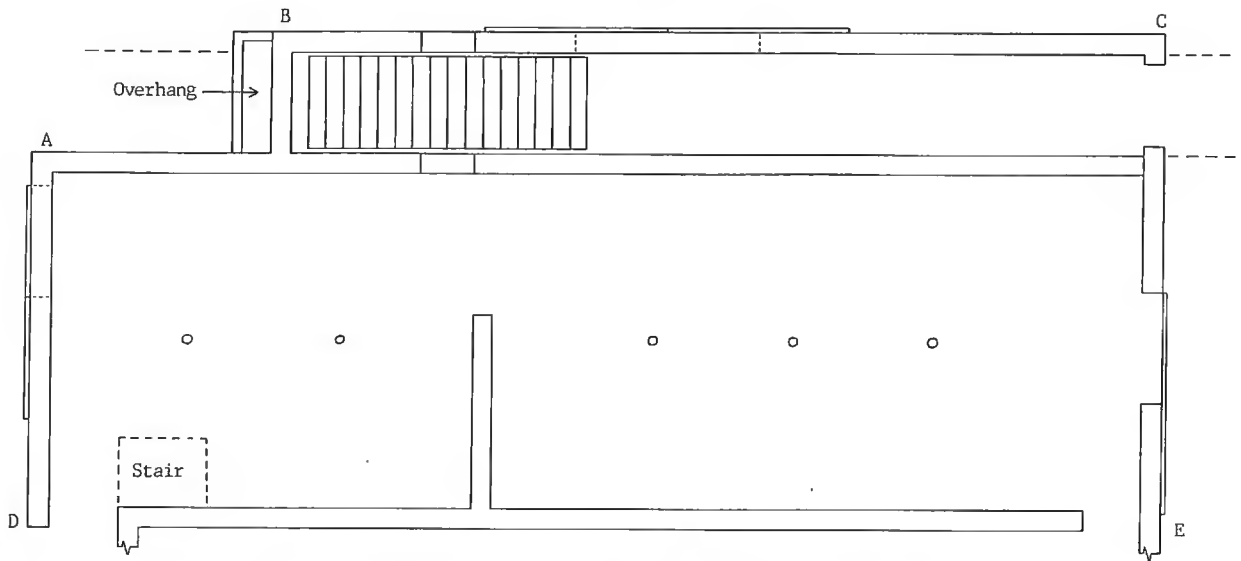


Fig.4: Ground floor plan of mill building

0 ————— 20ft

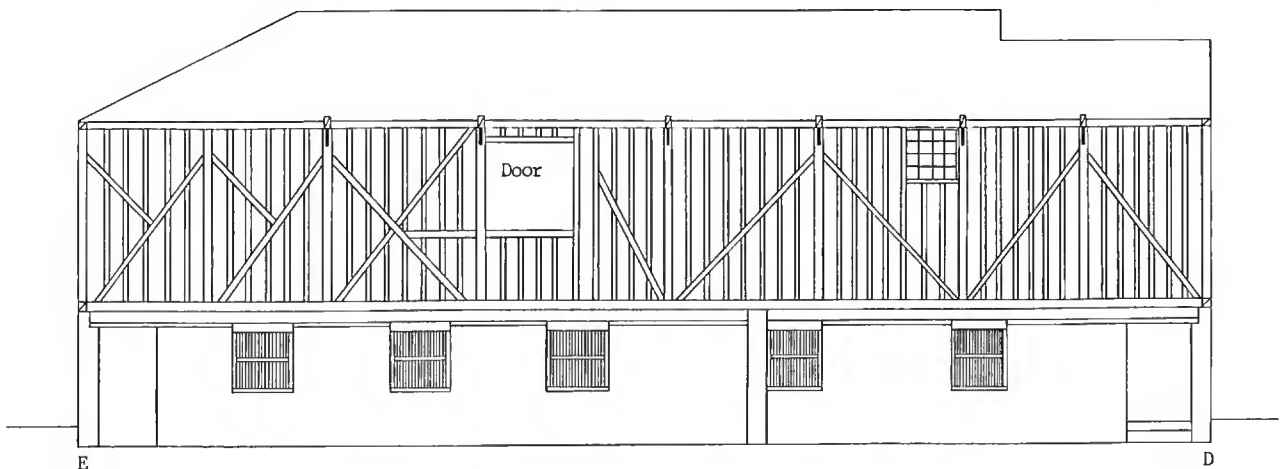


Fig.5: Eastern internal elevation E-D

0 ————— 20ft

of the new range, which must have presented a dramatic contrast to the typical farm buildings of the day. The Victorian industrial ethic was applied to agriculture. Although materials salvaged from the earlier farm buildings were re-used in internal dividing walls, along with spoil from the brick-kilns of Bures, the outer walls are constructed with display and grandeur foremost in mind. Only the finest quality red and white bricks are in evidence. The central courtyard is approached through a high pedimented arch, surmounted by a clock (now sadly supplanted by a painted dial), which has led local people to liken its facade to that of a railway station. Behind the symmetry of its mock windows the front range held grain bins on its first floor, and the remains of a chimney on the ground floor may indicate the presence of a brewhouse. Small blocked arches beneath the steps to the granary once housed the resident rat-catchers. Each compartment within the complex leads logically into the next, with the unspoilt pig styes offering the most telling evocation of a past farming age. Only the horse stables and yards to the south have been substantially altered for the needs of modern agriculture. At the western end of the courtyard the barn is linked at roof level to the one component of the complex whose function is not immediately obvious.

The Watermill

The efficiency with which all obvious signs of this building's original purpose have been removed is perhaps best illustrated by the ability of the present author, having been informed of the existence of a watermill at Smallbridge, to mistake a nearby sheep-dip channel for its wheel-pit! Having eventually recovered from this embarrassment I was fortunate enough to receive a guided tour of the former watermill, now converted into a barn and used for storing animal feedstuffs, from the one man who still remembers it in operation. Mr. Des Norfolk has owned Smallbridge Farm since 1958, having then purchased it from the estate of the Bristol family of Ickworth into which George Wythes' son brought it by marriage. The Hall was sold separately. By a fortunate coincidence Mr. Norfolk's father, a cattle dealer from Marks Tey, Essex, had done business with the farm in the 1920's and had taken his young son along with him. Although the watermill had ceased to function by 1929, Mr. Norfolk remembers seeing water dripping from the wheel as a boy of five in 1927, and since he was personally responsible for

removing the floors and converting the building into a barn in c.1960 it has been possible to reconstruct the mill's modus operandi in some detail.

The length of the mill leet is one of the most impressive aspects of the whole model farm. More the half a mile upstream (880 metres to be precise) the flow of the Assington Brook was diverted by a sluice gate, which still exists (Fig.1, point 'A'), into the course of a nearby ditch. From thence it flowed into a clay aquaduct, following the contours across country, until finally emptying into an iron trough which delivered it through the wall of the mill to the waterwheel. Although following existing boundaries for part of its length, at least 400 metres of completely new channel was required, and the previous field system was drastically altered to accommodate it. One of the tasks allotted to the boys working on the farm was the plugging of mole holes in the clay conduit. Fragments of these high clay banks can still be seen along the course of the leet, though most were systematically destroyed during farm improvements in 1960-2 and by the building of a new tenant's farmhouse to the north of the mill in 1929. The precise point at which the clay aquaduct joined the iron trough is uncertain, but was certainly upstream of the breach in the 16th century paddock wall. The 25-inch Ordnance Survey of 1886 shows a footbridge over the channel to the north of this wall. By this remarkable mechanism a headwater of some 4ft 6ins was achieved at the wheel.

Figs.3 and 4 have been reconstructed largely from masonry scars within the existing building, which consists of a brick ground storey and weatherboarded studwork superstructure. All floors and dividing walls have now been removed, and the wheel pit filled in. The iron trough which delivered the flow to the waterwheel was contained within a narrow brick passageway, which also encompassed the wheel itself, and was carried on a series of joists (Fig.3). The wheel was visible only through two inspection 'windows', one of which survives, blocked, in the west wall. The sill of this window takes the form of a substantial sandstone block, with an iron plate let into its upper surface, upon which the waterwheel once had its bearing. The entire mill was floored over, some seven feet above the present concrete floor, with the joists resting upon shelves in the walls and carried on iron pillars (Fig.4). The wheel projected above

this level, and was boxed in at the height of the two upper wall-plates which are themselves carried upon brickwork. The waterwheel would therefore have measured approximately 16ft in diameter. The purpose of the large joists (as indicated by scars in the brickwork) which appear to interrupt the wheel is not clear, and the first floor outshot above the tailwater is also enigmatic.

A threshing drum sat immediately above the wheel upon the raised platform which enclosed it. Haystacks were built on bogie wheels about the farmyard, and pushed on rails into the dutch barn adjoining the west wall of the mill, from which the sheaves would be loaded into the drum through the small door over the wheel. Like most doors in the mill, this slides on ten-inch bogie wheels by means of small iron rails which are fixed to the side of the building. The separated chaff and straw would then be unloaded through the large sliding doors to the right of the drum (the horizontal timber obstructing these doors appears to be a contemporary fixed barrier). The grain, however, would either be unloaded through the sliding door in the south gable wall to be carted along the length of the courtyard to the granary, or would be ground for animal fodder by means of a single pair of stones located somewhere in the south-east corner of the mill near the stairs. Little can be ascertained about the precise position or arrangement of these stones, though they are presently domiciled in a pit near the corner of the moat.

The exact nature of the transmission of power from the wheel is similarly uncertain. Mr. Norfolk recalls an iron rod running just above head level beneath the ground floor ceiling which connected with three pulley mechanisms attached to the east wall. These pulleys, visible from the ground floor, ran through the ceiling to power at least three machines on the milling floor, a chaff cutter, a cake breaker and an oat crusher. Although the wheel, which is believed to have been of iron with wooden paddles, was removed in the early 1930's, this machinery was powered by a petrol engine until the final demise of the mill c.1960. The east wall carries no scars to assist the interpretation, though the ground floor dividing wall is ideally placed to have shielded a vertical transmission shaft geared from the wheel. The scar left by this wall in the concrete floor falls short of the wheel bearing (Fig.4), but the wall itself may very well have continued further.

A single window illuminates the entire milling floor, though light would have entered through the open doors. Indeed the sliding door in the east wall has no obvious purpose beyond the admission of light and air, since it opens directly onto the slate roof of the cattle stalls. The north wall (not shown) contains only the small entrance door and the brick arch through which the iron trough entered the mill, and the south wall is pierced only by the aforementioned unloading door on the milling floor. At ground floor level the mill is ventilated by five grilled windows which open into the cattle stalls, which may equally have been intended to ventilate the stalls. This lower floor was used in the latter period of the mill's life solely for storing mangle wurzels and other feedstuffs. A prosaic note pencilled inside the hinged door to the courtyard reads 'Feb. 8 1899. Cut 48 lambs. Turned out wet after cutting', and is signed 'Phillip'. The top of the brick tailwater arch can just be seen, a few inches above the modern floor. From the mill the tailwater emptied into the nearby moat, though the earliest Ordnance Survey (Fig.1) appears to show a separate channel to the river. Its course may have diverted to avoid undercutting the barn midstreay, though for much of its length it remained underground. Wild ducks were driven upstream into its conduit to be netted.

Earlier Mills at Smallbridge

Watermilling at Smallbridge has a long and frustrating history. Long, because the first reference to a Smallbridge mill dates from 1090, and frustrating because I am unable to locate its exact site. The Stoke by Clare Priory cartulary (Suffolk Records Society, 1983) contains a charter of 1090 whereby Gilbert Fitz-Richard donates his income of 20 shillings a year from his mill at 'Smalbruge' to the monks of St. John at Clare for the lighting of their church. The mill continued to appear on the Priory's Bures rent roll until 1502 (when its tenant, Sir William Waldegrave, paid 15 shillings for it), but is conspicuous by its absence from the next surviving rental of 1541. Gilbert's father, Richard, the founder of the house of Clare, held only one mill in Bures at Domesday four years earlier, and this may well be Smallbridge mill rather than Bures mill itself. A 1411 court of the neighbouring Clare manor, Bures Netherhall, refers to a piece of pasture lying between the manor of 'Smalbregg' and the mill called 'Smalbregg melle', which Sir Richard Waldegrave had occupied on his death. Unfortunately I am unable, as yet, to positively

identify either pasture or mill, but 'manor' in this context probably means manor house, and suggests a close proximity.

Early medieval watermills often stood upon relatively small watercourses, since early technology was better able to manipulate these to produce a headwater than the large, comparatively slow-flowing main rivers, which demanded large outlays of time, money and expertise to dam or leet. In this light the name of the cottage shown beside the natural course of the Assington Brook in Fig.1 (no.401) may be suggestive: 'Little Mill'. This is in fact a late 16th century cart lodge which was associated with a 17th century farmstead of the same name. Unfortunately another medieval mill, known as the Curdmill (serving the local cheesemaking industry), stood on the main river some 250 yards to the west, and may have given its name to the adjoining farmland. Nonetheless, the curdmill's distance from the cottage, and the fact that it lay on the opposite side of the river, makes a strong if inconclusive case for Little Mill as the approximate site of the 1090 Smallbridge Mill. Bearing in the mind the historical truism that every Suffolk puddle has boasted a watermill at one time or another, the matter is complicated by the appearance of yet another medieval watermill on the Assington Brook some 500 yards upstream, which in turn possessed a water-powered flax mill during the 19th century! Hold Farm was almost certainly built as a 'model' demesne corn mill by the Waldegraves around 1520, when the earlier Smallbridge mill disappears from the records, but was converted into a farmhouse a century later. Could this be the eponymous 'little mill', with the earlier mill lying elsewhere or perhaps by then demolished and forgotten, or could it occupy the very site of that earlier mill? I am tempted to request answers on a postcard. Whatever the truth, the antiquity of watermilling in the Smallbridge vicinity has been demonstrated.

Conclusion

Smallbridge Hall farm is an imposing example of an early Victorian model farm, with the additional interest of a watermill. With the exception of its southern range of buildings, the original complex is remarkably well preserved, with many contemporary fixtures. In September 1993 the entire farm is to be sold for only the fourth time since 1375. The model farm complex (which is listed) already carries industrial planning consent, and it is to be hoped

that any conversion will be sympathetic to the tremendous importance of the site.

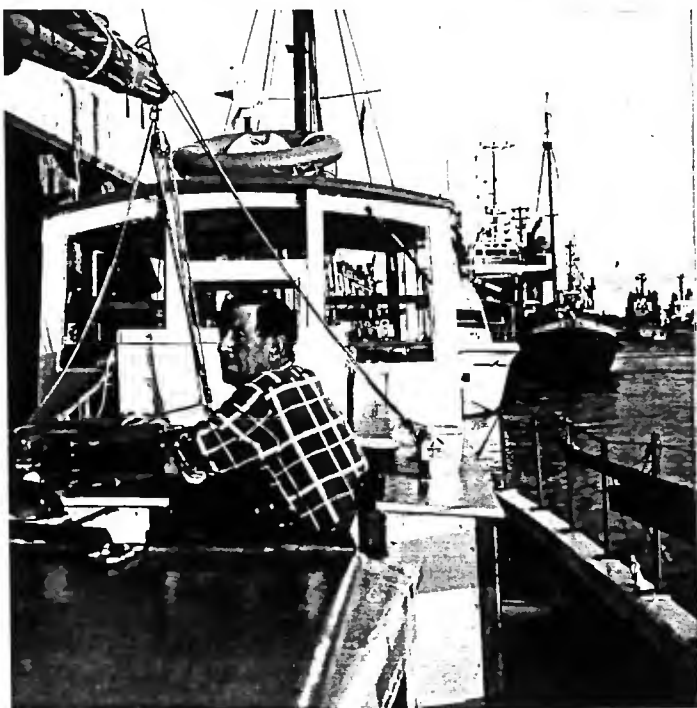
I would like to express my personal thanks to Des Norfolk for the great hospitality he has shown me, and for the length of his memory, and I should observe in closing that while a footpath passes within a few feet of the watermill, the buildings are not accessible to the public.

RICHARD DUKE: FARMER, SAILOR & WINDMILLER

Chris Hullcoop

Richard Duke, a member of S.M.G. from the start, died during April at the age of 79. We have lost a man who throughout his working life had experienced the great changes that have taken place during this century in farming and seafaring. Add to this the dangers of active service in the Second World War and his great depth of enthusiasm for old ships and windmills which led him to buy, restore and operate them, it can be seen that he was a remarkable man.

Richard was born into a family farming in Cambridgeshire and Essex. They were progressive farmers and during his early years he saw the fine teams of horses gradually replaced by the tractor. At the age of 13 he decided to try life at sea and commenced his training on the Worcester, at Greenhithe, Kent. During the 1930's



Richard on the 'Annie D' in 1991

seagoing jobs were difficult to obtain and the various jobs he took, whether on land or sea, always tested his initiative and skill. One of these was helping to crew a great J Class yacht whose owner was well intentioned, but whenever he took the wheel the crew had to work very hard to correct his mistakes!

Between seagoing jobs Richard continued to work on the family farms whose land adjoined the post mill at

Great Chishill in Cambridgeshire. He got to know Bill Pegram who enjoyed showing him how to work the old mill. In the years just before the mill ceased work Bill was not too fit and Richard would work the mill himself, grinding his own grain and that of others to help the old miller. The mill still stands, preserved but not working.

Richard eventually joined the tanker fleet of Shell Oil and was soon promoted to captain. The war saw him in Atlantic convoys which brought vital supplies to Britain but always with the threat of U-boats. Often he would see nearby ships vanish in vast explosions, victims of submarine attacks. Later he was posted to the Mediterranean, supplying fuel to the Allied forces. One night his ship was torpedoed and the crew escaped in lifeboats. A Chinese member of the crew complained that he was unable to see and when Richard examined him, found that his scalp had been peeled forward, covering his eyes. Richard folded it back into place and the man survived the ordeal!

While on leave from the war in the early 1940's Richard joined the S.P.A.B. as a life member. He joked that the Society could have a good deal as his chances of survival were slim. He did survive though, to be a member for more than 50 years.

After the war Richard sailed with Shell all over the world and eventually retired from deep sea service to run the family farm near Saffron Walden, Essex. Both farming and the sea were in his blood and over the years he owned several Thames barges. I recall that in the 1960's Richard Smith organised a day's outing on Richard's barge the 'Millie'. What a day! Bright, sunny and windy. I talked to Richard about old mills and he described how he had worked at Great Chishill and said that one day he would like to own a windmill. He asked me to keep in touch.

In the summer of 1984 Richard took a party of S.M.G. members to Holland in his Scottish fishing drifter 'Adax'. We spent a memorable week cycling around looking mostly at windmills. When we were shown hospitality it was nice to say "You must visit us on board our ship for a drink this evening".

In 1985 Richard surprised many when he purchased the derelict post mill at Stanton (built 1751) and its mill house. Already into his seventies, when most would have been putting their feet up, here was Richard still farming, sailing regularly across the North Sea

and now taking on the formidable task of restoring a post mill! Four years later the mill was working again with four full-sized patent sails. Many have wondered how Richard was able to achieve this at such an age. His experience of leadership and organisation as a ship's captain and running a large farm was of great value. At sea and on the farm his crew were paid but at the mill they were volunteers who had to enjoy the work and feel that it was appreciated if they were to return and perhaps even bring a friend to help. Richard knew that he needed the knowledge and skill of people like Vincent Pargeter, Peter Dolman and Chris Wilson, with their great experience of restoring and working windmills. Like the good captain he was, he understood people and had lived in close proximity with them in the confines of a ship, both in peace and war. He would never let a disagreement or misunderstanding develop into anything which would prejudice the mill's restoration. He used to say that you don't really know what people are like until you have sailed with them, and preferably through a storm.

Four nine-day 'work-ins' were held in 1986 and 1987 and then the work continued on a weekly basis with Richard and two retired engineers, Fred Davis and Ted Wardage. They called themselves 'The Last of the Summer Wine gang'. Here were retired men in their seventies making and fitting two pairs of full-size patent sails, fully shuttered, rebuilding the winding gear with all new woodwork, setting up machinery with new bearings, etc., all to a high standard. What an example to us all! Richard was awarded the Windmill Certificate of the S.P.A.B. for his outstanding initiative and achievement at Stanton mill.

The last holiday that we spent with Richard was in 1991 when we sailed from Pin Mill to Norwich on the 'Annie D', his tough little former naval vessel in which he regularly crossed the North Sea. The sea was kind to us on that occasion but we were glad to be with such an experienced sailor as Richard methodically drew a course on his chart and pointed out dangerous wrecks and sandbanks.

Last year we took Richard for a trip on Chris Seago's steamboat 'Stickleback', cruising almost silently on the Broads and stopping to photograph and admire the drainage mills. We planned a similar trip this Spring but it was not to be.

Richard led a most interesting and enterprising life which is an inspiration to us all. With his passing not only have we lost a good

friend but also a store of memories and experience that can never be replaced.

We offer our sincere sympathy to Richard's family and especially his wife Annie.

Richard kindly requested that donations could be made to S.M.G. in his memory and a collection was taken at his memorial service at Holbrook in May. A memorial fund has been opened and we plan to mount a plaque on the roundhouse wall of Stanton mill next year.

LETTERS

David Barton of 1, Sunningdale Avenue, Ipswich IP4 5SH writes:

Regarding Maulden's mill at Framlingham which is featured in an article by Muriel Kilvert in the January 1993 S.M.G. newsletter, I feel I may be one of the few people who can recall seeing both the Framlingham and Wickham Market Whitmore engines at work. My grandfather Johnson who lived in the Whitmore 'farm house' in Chapel Lane would let me take the order for coal to Mr. Rackham and I would stop and watch the engine through the window of the engine house. My outings never took me to the boiler house where the furnace was fired.

At Framlingham the engine and boiler were beside one another and conditions were more workaday than at Wickham Market. The engineer was a Mr. 'Glory' Carr. Why he earned that nickname is probably lost in the past. Like the Cobbold's brewery engine at Ipswich, the Framlingham engine was fitted with a condenser pump that was a continuation of the piston rod. I suppose it would have been around 1938 when I cycled to Framlingham to see the mill with an introduction from Mr. Albert Braddock who had been an engineer at Whitmore's like his father before him.

If one compares the plan illustrating Miss Kilvert's article and the illustrations I feel one cannot place too much reliance on the accuracy of the latter. The premises were at the end of a driftway and the artist would have had to produce an imaginary aerial view of the mill and malting. The first engraving of 1888 seems to illustrate the scene more accurately than that of 1893 in my opinion.

A friend informed me that the Maulden family was upset that the engine was not preserved as part of the history of the town when the mill was stripped of all the machinery following the sale in 1955.

Michael Roots of 14a, Cricket Ground Road, New Lakenham, Norwich NR1 3BQ writes:

I would like to hear from any member with information on the drainage mill which once stood at Barsham (TM400910) which was built by the Norwich millwright Nathaniel Lock in 1815.

Ian St. John of Old Hall, East Bergholt, Colchester CO7 6TG writes:

I have been restoring the top part of a Climax windpump. It has a 10ft diameter windwheel and the engine has an 8ins stroke. Unfortunately I am unable to use it as intended and so reluctantly am offering it for sale. All the galvanised angle-iron is red oxide primed and has a black bituminous top coat. The platform planking has been replaced with cedar. The tower cap I have had fabricated

from steel at my local engineering works, patterned on the old shattered cast iron one, and so overcoming a weakness of the original design. The gear wheels are in good condition and have a newly-made gearbox cover. I have re-made the vane stem and brace.

Although I have restored the top part of the windpump I do not have any of the lower part. Climax windpumps are still being made but under the name of Mid Wales Welded Productions Ltd. They inform me that the top part of the windpump, the part I have for sale, would cost £3350 new. I have no real idea how to price my restored windpump so have made a guess at its value by deducting £2000 off the new price and am therefore asking £1350. I am sorry to see the windpump go but will feel alright about it, knowing it will be used and appreciated.

Tony Bonson, Midland Mills Group's editor, writes:

Midland Mills Group has recently published No.12 in its series, 'Wind and Water Mills'. This is an A5 size booklet of 48 pages, excellent value at only £2.50 (plus 40p for postage) from Mr. Barry Job, Meadowside, Clayton Road, Newcastle-under-Lyme, ST5 3ET. The series has articles about mills and milling from all areas of the country and even abroad.

REPORT OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 1993 A.G.M. of Suffolk Mills Group was held on 20th June 1993 at Stanton post mill, by kind permission of Mrs. Annie Duke. 30 members and friends attended. Apologies were received from Chris Armour, June Baker, Duncan Breckels, Ed Goatcher, Mrs. M. Laughton, Alan Loasby, Rory Ogilvie, Patricia Parr, Douglas Pluck, Bob Sharp, John Snowdon and Alan Willmott.

The meeting commenced at 11.24am with an introduction from Chris Hullcoop. There was a short period of silence in memory of Richard Duke, who had died in April.

The report of the 1992 A.G.M. (see Newsletter 54) was accepted as a true record (proposed Roy Berry, seconded Chris Wilson). Bob Malster was told that work after the meeting on the striking gear of Buttrum's Mill had been successful and was much appreciated.

Acting treasurer Peter Dolman presented the year's accounts. Receipts were slightly down and payments up by nearly £100, but there was still a small surplus. Our insurers (Prudential) will no longer provide cover for us and we will need to make alternative arrangements by autumn 1993. No grants were made this year. The Group's deposit account contains about £3200 in a Royal Bank of Scotland Premium Account. Peter felt there was no need to increase subscriptions for the coming year. The accounts were accepted as a true record (proposed Penny Berry, seconded Brian Flint).

Mark Barnard reported on his 16th year as editor. Three

newsletters had been produced averaging 13 A4 sides per issue. Production and format had not changed much over the years. The print run had been slowly increasing and was now around 180. Reproduction of photographs has caused concern and is still not really satisfactory. A word processor had been purchased earlier in the year and would be used for newsletters in due course.

Secretary Peter Dolman said membership was still slowly increasing and currently stood at about 170. We seldom attend the C.O.G.S. meetings organised by the S.P.A.B. owing to pressure of time but for the most recent meeting we made a written contribution which was appreciated. The Group's archive is expanding. Recently Whitmore and Binyon drawings formerly in the possession of Rex Wailes have been copied, an additional set being sold to the Suffolk Record Office.

Roy Berry thanked Chris Hullcoop, Peter Dolman and Mark Barnard for all their hard work on behalf of the Group and led a round of applause.

Election of the Committee for the coming year followed. Des Codd had offered to become treasurer; as there were no other volunteers, it was agreed that the offer should be accepted (proposed Bob Malster, seconded Michael Roots). Marguerite Wells offered congratulations to previous treasurers, especially Brian Flint. Chris Wilson said he was available to re-join the Committee now that he had retired. His offer was accepted immediately (proposed Roy Berry, seconded Penny Berry). It was agreed the remainder of the Committee would serve for another year (proposed Marguerite Wells, seconded Quentin Garlick).

Under Any Other Business, Brian Flint asked for an up-date on the Creeting post mill buck. Chris Hullcoop said he was unaware of any definite progress on the proposed move. S.M.G. produced a report for the owners last year and arranged for Eastern Electricity to donate steel for the cradles. We are prepared to make a small grant towards the cost of the move but we cannot do the work. If nothing happens, the buck will need temporary protection from the weather. Roy Berry said Essex Mills Group was pleased to be invited to visit Bures mill with S.M.G. in April. In return, any S.M.G. member who wants to attend E.M.G. visits is most welcome. Michael Roots, now the vice-chairman of Friends of Norfolk Windmills, said he would like to see joint visits with Norfolk too.

Chris Hullcoop showed slides of Suffolk mills in the news during 1992-3. There then followed a tribute to Richard Duke in the form of a fine series of slides assembled by Chris Hullcoop, and a collection was taken towards a plaque in his memory to be placed on the roundhouse of Stanton mill. At the end of the meeting a bouquet of flowers was presented to Annie Duke.

NEWS

REPAIRS AT BAYLHAM WATERMILL

Baylham mill, just off the old A45 half way between Ipswich and Needham Market, is one of the county's finest watermills and the last complete mill on the river Gipping. Its condition has slowly deteriorated since the 1960's, and in the last couple of years several sizeable holes have opened up in the plaintiled roof. Following lengthy negotiations with the owner, Mr. Onians, repairs started in July. The mill will be completely re-roofed and repainted with lead-based paint, the weatherboarding made good and windows repaired or replaced as necessary. In addition, the collapsed wheelhouse is to be rebuilt and the engine shed repaired. The mill is to be fitted with rainwater goods for the first time. While this will slightly change its appearance, it is felt to be best for its long-term survival.

English Heritage has offered a 40% grant towards the cost of much of the work and the County Council is making a grant of £2500. The work is being supervised by Mid Suffolk District Council

The mill, which dates in part from the late 18th century and contains a total of five pairs of stones, is one of the very few that S.M.G. has yet to visit. We'll try next year! (M.B.)

THELNETHAM MILL REPAINTED

Thelnetham mill is once again looking resplendent following a complete repaint (except the cap roof) by millwrights Thompsons of Alford. As the mill is listed Grade II* it was still possible to use traditional lead paint, as applied when the mill was first restored in the 1980's. The tower was tarred with proper coal tar which should prove a more effective barrier to moisture than the bitumen emulsion which was used before. It also looks better, going on with a glossy sheen which slowly dulls as the surface hardens. A grant towards the cost of the work was made by St. Edmundsbury Borough Council. (M.B.)



Top: Re-roofing in progress at Baylham watermill in July

Right: Chris Hullcoop at work cladding the cap of Drinkstone smock mill

Below: Tarring in progress at Thelnetham mill



PROGRESS AT THORINGTON STREET WATERMILL

There is little progress to report this summer as help has dwindled. The upstream stones, which were the last to be used, have been set up and provided with a new spout and can now be run. Several batches of corn have been put through and a reasonable meal is produced although not quite as fine as the French stones should be able to achieve.

The waterwheel buckets are the current priority. Through sitting in one position for a long period, about a quarter of them have corroded badly and two or three have completely disappeared now! Apart from losing power they make the wheel very out of balance. The wheel has been assembled in such a way it cannot be dismantled without destroying the starts (and these are caked in limescale which has set like rock!). The nuts and bolts holding the buckets have rusted up completely and are also rusted solid into the rim and starts, meaning they have to be drilled out. One of the bolts is in such a position that it can't be drilled at all so all we can do is to cut off the end and lose the fixing. Enquiries are being made as to where new buckets can be bent, preferably free or very cheap as the cost of the metal alone is £15 each and at least eight, and probably 12 need replacing in the near future.

Work will continue through the autumn and items to be tackled include the stone tun to the French stones, the waterwheel and two more windows.

Please consider lending a little help to this old mill. It is one of only two in the county to retain the true character of an original working mill (the other being Wickham Market) with all the miller's tools and effects still lying where he left them. Other mills have lost this character, either through disuse or restoration. Although wood or metalworking skill is helpful there are jobs that could be done by most unskilled people. Working days for the autumn are: Sat & Sun 2nd-3rd October; Sat & Sun 6th-7th November; Sun 5th December and Sun 2nd January 1994. (Peter Dolman)

NEWS FROM DRINKSTONE

Repairs at Drinkstone proceed slowly, with the smock mill cap roof now two-thirds complete. The old roof, made from wood salvaged from pallets, was put on in 1978 and in 1979 we clad just over one half the tower with several layers of thick (0.025") black horticultural troughing polythene sheet. This work is recorded in

S.M.G. newsletters at the time. Virtually all the materials were donated so it was no-cost work. It is interesting to see how these holding repairs have lasted.

The sheeting on the tower is still in perfect condition and has not let a drop of water through, but the cap roof had rotted badly and was falling to pieces. Pallet wood is strong and can be used for no-cost holding repairs to floors, but it has no resistance to decay as we have proved! Contrast this roof with the holding roof put onto Wicken smock mill by Chris Wilson in 1971 and taken off in 1991. Like Drinkstone it had to be low-cost so he salvaged aluminium sheeting from the body of an old removal lorry. The ribs were band-sawn from oak. After 20 years with no maintenance it was still in perfect condition, even down to the aluminium nails!

The roundhouse roof of the post mill is now showing distress at the eaves. There comes a point in the life of an old tiled roof when it is beyond patching up, and hammering in a nail can jar it sufficiently to start a small avalanche. The roundhouse roof at Drinkstone is fast approaching this state but hopefully we can patch it up again. We will need plenty of plaintiles - any sort will do, they all blend into the mixture and are soon harmonised by the various species of lichens. So if you have any plaintiles stacked away forgotten behind a shed we would be pleased to have them.

It would be nice to have some help at Drinkstone; I'm usually working on my own so progress is inevitably slow. Please give me a call on Felixstowe 671462 if you can spare a day. (Chris Hullcoop)

A WIND FARM FOR SUFFOLK?

Plans are being drawn up for the erection of five 40m high wind turbines on the Suffolk coast at Easton Bavents, just north of Southwold. The company behind the scheme, New Generation Projects, already owns East Anglia's only existing wind farm at Winterton near Great Yarmouth. This has ten 31m high turbines. The Suffolk scheme, which would generate 2.5 Mw of electricity, is bound to be controversial as the site lies in an A.O.N.B..

GREAT BARDFIELD FIRE

News of the tragic fire came just as the last newsletter was being completed. The speed with which the mill was consumed is described by Vincent Pargeter in the current Essex Mills Group newsletter. The fire was discovered at 11am, and despite the fire brigade arriving within 15 minutes the mill was reduced to ashes in three-quarters of

an hour. By 3pm only a blackened skeleton remained. Vincent goes on to describe the mill in detail, reinforcing one's sense of loss.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Repair work is under way at **Ixworth watermill**, which changed hands last year. It is understood the work includes partial re-roofing, some structural repairs, repair or renewal of windows and boarding and decoration with lead-based paint. St. Edmundsbury Borough Council has grant-aided the work.

Buxhall tower mill looks a lot smarter now as most of the sash windows were replaced earlier this year. The owner is considering building a domed roof to protect the surviving cap frame and winding gear which has been open to the elements above a concrete 'lid' since the old cap roof was removed in about 1950.

Following the death of Richard Duke, **Stanton post mill** and mill house will be sold in the near future. If any member is interested and wishes to be kept in touch of developments they should contact Chris Hullcoop on Felixstowe 671462.

The future of the derelict **Little Glemham watermill** is still uncertain as to our knowledge the property remains unsold.

Narborough watermill near Swaffham in Norfolk is for sale for £75000 through Bidwells' Norwich office. The mill is complete but no house is included.

EVENTS

S.M.G. VISIT TO WIXOE WATERMILL: SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 26th from 2.30pm.

Wixoe is a comparatively little-known mill, the second-highest on the Stour. A timber-framed building, it incorporates beams from a 16th century house. Although much of the iron gear was removed for scrap during the last war, a good deal of interest still survives. The mill is to the west of the village at TL714427.

S.M.G. SOCIAL EVENING: SATURDAY DECEMBER 4th, from 7.30pm. at MUSEUM OF EAST ANGLIAN LIFE, STOWMARKET

This year's social evening will once again be held in the Education Centre of the Museum of East Anglian Life. This is a room in the primary school at the end of Danescourt Avenue, a turning off the Finborough road out of the town. Families and guests are as ever most welcome to come along - and do bring some slides!
