

# SUFFOLK MILLS GROUP

## Newsletter

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Since the last newsletter S.M.G. has had some success in thwarting plans for the demolition of Sproughton watermill by persuading both English Heritage and Babergh District Council to revise their views on the application. However, the public inquiry is only postponed until July this year so it's a case of 'a battle won but not the war'. More on this interesting case inside. Only one S.M.G. event has taken place since the last issue, the social at Stanton mill, attended and enjoyed by an encouraging number of members. As I write it's less than four weeks to our public meeting in Ipswich, when Martin Watts has kindly agreed to come up from Devon for what is sure to be an enlightening insight into 'The Miller's Craft'. The dates of this and planned future events are as follows.

S.M.G. meeting, Ipswich library	Saturday February 25th
S.P.A.B. Windmill Meeting	Saturday March 18th
S.P.A.B. day tour to Essex	Saturday May 6th
Herringfleet mill open day	Sunday May 7th
National Mills Day	Sunday May 14th
S.M.G. Annual General Meeting	Sunday June 18th

Thumbing through 60-odd issues has made me realise how much we need an index to our newsletters. I hope to include one, at least covering the main articles, in the next issue.

Please don't forget my plea for more material. In forthcoming issues I hope to include features on Holton mill and on the demise (well, almost!) of the Suffolk post mill. Has any member reminiscences of now-vanished post mills in the county, or of Holton mill before its 1960's restoration? If you have I would love to hear from you.

Mark Barnard

## SOME MILLS "DOWN UNDER" Roy Berry

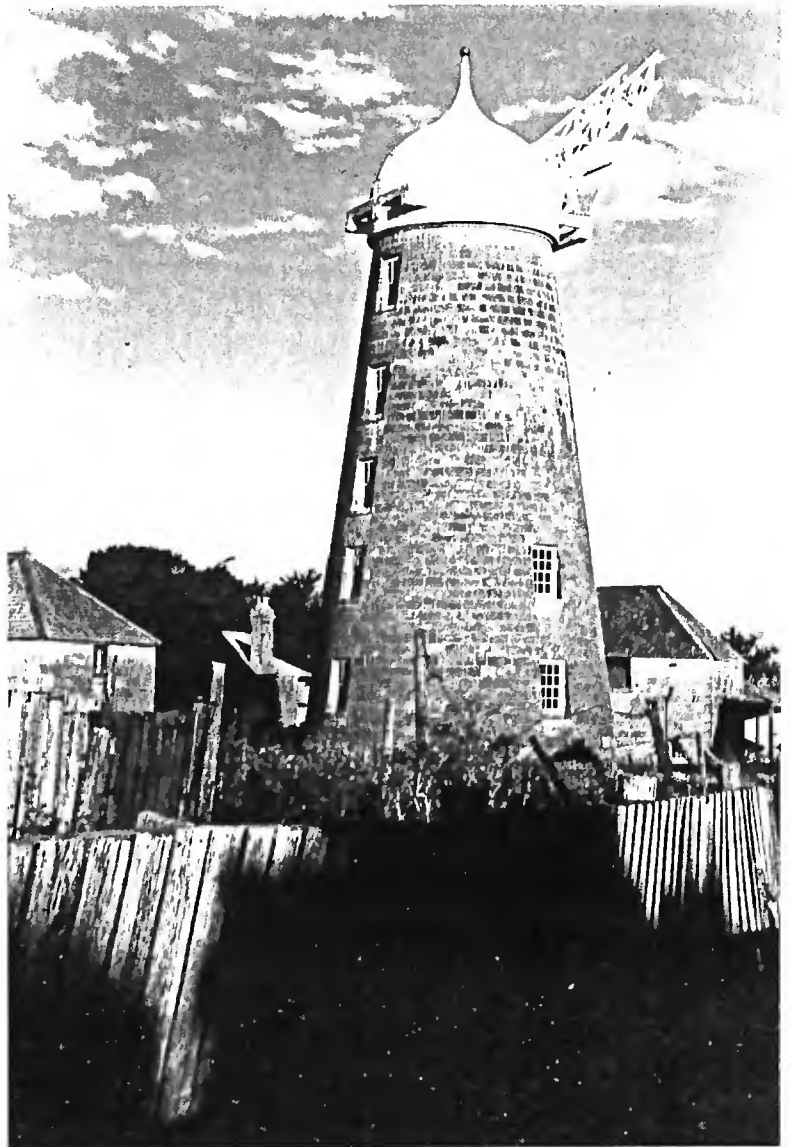
When Penny and I went to Australia last Spring, the main purpose of the visit was to see old friends and to see some of the famous sights - Sydney Opera House, Ayer's Rock, the Great Barrier Reef. However, we vowed to keep our eyes open for mills and to this end I spoke to T.I.M.S. member David Jones before leaving and he was able to give me a list of five members living in Australia who I might contact.

We started off by spending three days in and around Sydney and on the final day discovered, near the Lord Nelson, said to be the oldest pub in 'Oz', Windmill Street and Windmill Point. Both of these are near the Rocks, the site of the very first settlement. Windmill Street is above and behind the waterside at the Rocks.

Windmill Point is by the water where a spit of land divides Darling Harbour from the older landing place at the Rocks. No traces of any mill remain. One of these mills was probably the first in Australia.

From Sydney we flew down to Hobart, Tasmania, where after spending most of the week with friends we set off on Good Friday to drive to Launceston (pronounced Laun-ces-ton locally). We had heard of Callington mill at Oatlands and thought we would take a look en route. The mill looks fine, its style rather reminiscent of Lincolnshire. It is however built of sawn local sandstone blocks. There is a fanstage but the drive is incomplete and there are no sails or machinery though we were told the intention is to replace these eventually. The ogee cap which from a distance looks impressive is of fibreglass and polyester resin. The structure seems very sound, some good floors have been put in and the mill has an attractive curtilage consisting of its original stables, cart lodge, pig sty, an engineless steam mill, a well and a semi-bungalow style miller's house. The people of Oatlands seem proud of their mill, and one hopes its restoration will continue and that care is taken over authenticity.

From Oatlands we forged on northwards via Tunbridge and the attractive settlement of Ross to Launceston, getting there towards the end of the afternoon. We went straight away to Penny Royal Mills. It was a hot day without a breath of wind so we were quite surprised to see the short paddle-like sails turning as the tower mill came into view. This was immediately explained as we got closer and they came to a rather abrupt stop. The motor had been switched off! Four o'clock was closing time so we were unable to get into it or its neighbouring watermill, but a good deal of faking had been done on both. It seemed that the sails might have been shortened in the



Callington Mill, Oatlands

interest of safety of visitors on the stage. The watermill had two external overshot wheels, a very small one which seemed to be working from a piped and pumped supply and a larger one with only about six feet of launder remaining and supported on one side, not by its bearing but by a small diameter steel rod driven into a drilling in the shaft and resting on a wooden block. Penny Royal watermill was apparently taken to pieces at an inland site, brought to Launceston block by block and re-erected as the main feature of a hotel complex. I do not know if the windmill's site is original but, from the local topography, would doubt it. Across a busy highway was another watermill. This was on its proper site and some milling artefacts remain. There are three large external grain silos. The mill is now used as an art gallery and restaurant. After a meal there and a good night's sleep at a motel we flew back to mainland Australia the next day.

At Melbourne we were met by our good friend Bernie Livingston who was to be our companion for the next ten days or so and a very competent guide to the state of Victoria. Bernie shares with me an interest in old cars and two with Penny, printing and sculpture, which he teaches in a college in Mildura. One might expect the mills to be a bit neglected in this period. Not a bit of it! We saw more mills in Victoria than anywhere else, but sadly we were only able to get into one.

On leaving Melbourne we saw a number of mills in and around Kyneton. The first of these was a windmill, Hall's Mill at Green Hill. This seems to have been built in 1855 from bluestone, a local basaltic stone. It has a pleasant if somewhat remote situation with a tree-lined track to the mill and its nearby house. The tower is in very good shape and is capped off with corrugated iron, a very popular roofing material in Oz. It has a ground floor and a spout (one supposes) floor and joists for three others above. There is no cap frame and no machinery. The old miller's house was undergoing restoration work and the man doing it told us that the mill was also going to be restored.

Quite a short distance from Green Hill and to the north east of Kyneton is Skelsmergh Mill, Karlsruhe, a large steam mill built in 1859. Like the windmill at Green Hill, this is built of bluestone. Some idea of the mill's size can be gained from the fact that a severe hailstorm broke sixty windows in 1862. Its builder William Degraives seems to have been a charitable man for in 1865 after bush fires in the locality he marked 'paid' the accounts owed to him by farmers who had suffered the fires, despite having problems of his own.

Campaspie or Riverview mill was Degraives' other mill in Kyneton. It is larger than Skelsmergh and was built two years earlier. When it was built it was bigger than most buildings in Melbourne and was probably the biggest mill in Victoria. Around it grew the hamlet of Riverview, the core of which was twenty cottages put up by Degraives for his employees. He also provided a 'grammar' school for their children. The steam-driven machinery for the mill was installed by one Robert Bodington. The mill had a very tall chimney and there are arched entrances to the stables. Campaspie mill was short-lived and closed down in the early 1860's, re-opened briefly and then closed for good, the work then

being transferred to Degraives' other mill at Carlsruhe. In 1876 the mill was sold to farmer Joseph Ward whose descendants own it now. We were unable to gain access to either of these mills.

We were pleased to hear of a mill in Kyneton which was open to the public. This was Willis Brothers, a steam mill in the centre of the town. The only problem was that when we arrived there at about 6pm on Easter Monday it had closed for the day. It was also near a level crossing which caused huge hold-ups in the heavy Bank Holiday traffic and made it impossible to even get a decent photograph. Although the site was bought in 1856 there was a great deal of local opposition to its building and it was 1862 before it was completed. It was originally a smaller version of the Degraives steam mills to the east and west of the town. By 1865 in the ownership of James Brown the mill had gained an enviable reputation as a producer of high quality flour. It was leased to Willis Brothers in 1897. By 1903 extensive modernisation including the installation of roller plant had taken place, and in 1907 the mill had earned enough for them to buy it. The family operated it until the late 1960's, making mainly biscuit flour. After languishing for a period the old mill was given a new lease of life starting in 1977. David Willis went on a search for machinery to replace that gutted out only a few years earlier and found it no easy task. A '2000 gallon, 100 horsepower' Cornish boiler was installed in 1988 and the working mill is now one of relatively few open to the public 'down under'.

Another mill, this time water-powered, which is open to the public is Anderson's Silver Stream mill at Smeaton. It was not actually open when we were there but it was possible to walk around in the failing light of early autumn evening. The energy of the water is put to work via a 28ft diameter, 7ft wide pitchback wheel, its supply being brought in at first on a leat on an embankment, and then by a 'flume' (or launder) of cast iron sections supported by trestles. The mighty wheel delivered its power through a rim drive, there being a very worn externally toothed ring gear at its periphery which drove a spur pinion, now absent. Whilst nosing around the site in near darkness I literally stumbled across a single-throw crankshaft about four feet long and with a throw of 8-10ins near the chimney stack. I guessed that it might have come from the portable steam engine which was brought there to keep the mill working when soon after the mill was built it stopped work due to drought.

The mill was built by three Scottish brothers called Anderson. Unlike most diggers they had been lucky in the gold mines and decided to invest in business. After their first venture, as building contractors in Melbourne, they went into sawmilling in 1855 using a water-powered mill. John, who had been trained in Scotland as a millwright and engineer, seems to have been the leader of the trio, the others being William and James. By the time the sawmill started at Bullabrook their mother Sarah, and brothers David Thomas and Robert had joined them. From 1856 they bought land in the Smeaton district and, encouraged by the boom in local farming, in 1862 they built their new mill. The big wheel, then described as overshot, weighed 25 tons and cost £1500. At the time it was the biggest waterwheel in the southern hemisphere. Water shortages were a problem so steps were taken to improve the



Anderson's Silver Stream mill, Smeaton

steam plant supplying alternative power. In 1870 a device of new design called an ejector condenser was fitted, providing more power and reduced fuel consumption. Over the years, however, the mill's prosperity decreased as the productivity of local farmers plummeted (a drop of 80% 1871-5) and town-based buyers of flour began more and more to buy from millers having a nearby railhead. It was not until 1895 that rolls were finally installed. In 1896 the mill's beam engine was idle, the wheel reliably giving enough power for corn milling and, as befitted a Scottish company, the production of oatmeal, flaked oatmeal, digestive meal, pearl barley, split peas and cornmeal.

In 1898 a new Leffel turbine was ordered from Springfield, Ohio. It was intended that it would replace the old waterwheel, now described as breast-shot, and the 60 h.p. steam engine. This it failed to do so the wheel continued and the turbine was relegated to the 'lighter' task of generating, in tandem with a gas engine, electricity to illuminate the mill. David Anderson ran the mill until his death in 1929, his widow and son carrying on until the 1960's. In 1987 the mill became the property of the state, a grant of \$A20,000 (about £10,000) being made for its purchase and restoration. In 1988 it was opened for the first time to the public with the support of the Anderson family. Restoration work is continuing and the mill's records are deposited in the industrial archives of the University of Melbourne. I am very happy that this fine mill is being preserved for generations to come.

The last watermill we saw in Australia was at work when we arrived. It is a modern flour producing plant at Bridgewater,

whose proprietors are Watermill Company Ltd. The mill was built in 1873 and is the only flour mill in the southern hemisphere still using water power. Numerous British and American turbines have been used over the years. A 321 h.p. Gilkes installed in 1954 is the one in current use, sharing the work with two 320 h.p. Westinghouse electric motors. There is a fall of 18 feet to the turbine. We were shown around the mill by a youngish foreman who explained that the roller mills were of American manufacture. Bagging machines weigh and bag flour at five bags per minute and there is a facility for bulk filling 22 ton road tankers. A good deal of blending of flours takes place especially for the biscuit industry. Animal feeds are also manufactured, the company tending to cater specially for horse breeders. Although the mill started life using an inefficient undershot wheel running in a cut made in the solid basalt, the site had been carefully selected. It is at a point where the river Loddon runs swiftly due to a natural fall of 30 feet over a distance of half a mile. As time went on steam and diesel engines were used and two huge Ruston diesels of 200 h.p. and 114 h.p. remain, now disused. There was also a 450 h.p. Ruston. The difference in power ratings was so that no more power than that needed to supplement the turbines need be provided. Until the 1950's the mill boasted extensive railway sidings. The mill's development has been projected forward by the need to rebuild and equip following disastrous fires in 1892 and 1934.

Our final Australian mill was in Brisbane on our last day in the country. It was a tower mill, unusual in having one pair of stones wind-driven and one pair man-driven by convicts in a treadwheel. Built in 1828, it had gone out of use and been converted to a signal station by 1862. Once again we were foiled in our attempt to see its interior due to being there on the wrong day. However, as it has been used for several different purposes since its milling days perhaps it didn't matter too much.

All in all, Australia doesn't seem to be rich in mills but there are some to be found by the enthusiast.

## **VANISHED MILLS     Peter Dolman**

### WINDMILLS IN WRENTHAM

#### Fletcher's Mill (Grid Ref. TM495822)

The oldest mill in the parish, this originally stood along Mill Lane where Kirby's map of Suffolk shows it in 1736 (Grid Ref. 503826). The Tithe map names 'Mill Hill Field' as the site and as late as 1904 the O.S. map still names 'Mill Cottages' near the site. At some date prior to 1782 it was moved to a new site near the main road and is recorded on subsequent maps until its demise.

The mill is listed in 1839-40 as belonging to Jonathan Johnson Goff, also in his occupation, and was worked in conjunction with the tower mill. Goff died in 1849, his widow Mary continuing the business under the superintendence of their son John Johnson Goff. In 1851 the census lists Mrs. Goff's nephew George Hupton as a miller and he seems to have been running this post mill, being listed as miller in 1858. Following the financial difficulties of Goff the mill was sold in 1861, being described as 'A piece of

productive arable land... with a POST WINDMILL thereon... driving two pairs of French Stones, with a small granary adjoining, now occupied by Mr. George Hupton'. In 1868 John Fletcher is first listed as miller and he remained there until his death in 1897. His widow Louisa continued at the mill until her death in 1915 aged 84, although she is listed as miller only until 1908. Her son



Thomas is recorded as 'miller' in April 1909. The last miller is said to have been H. Hupton (known as 'Dewey') who then went to work at the tower mill. The mill is said to have worked as late as 1923 but judging from its condition in photographs this is untrue and a date nearer to 1908 is more likely. It was part of the Benacre Hall estate, along with the tower mill but it is not clear when they acquired it. The 'small granary' mentioned above gained an even smaller cottage by the turn of the century and in the 1920's was used as a rehearsal room for the village band! The windmill lingered on until 5.45 a.m. on May 12th 1931 when it collapsed. The remains could be seen for a number of years but it was eventually cleared away and nothing survives.

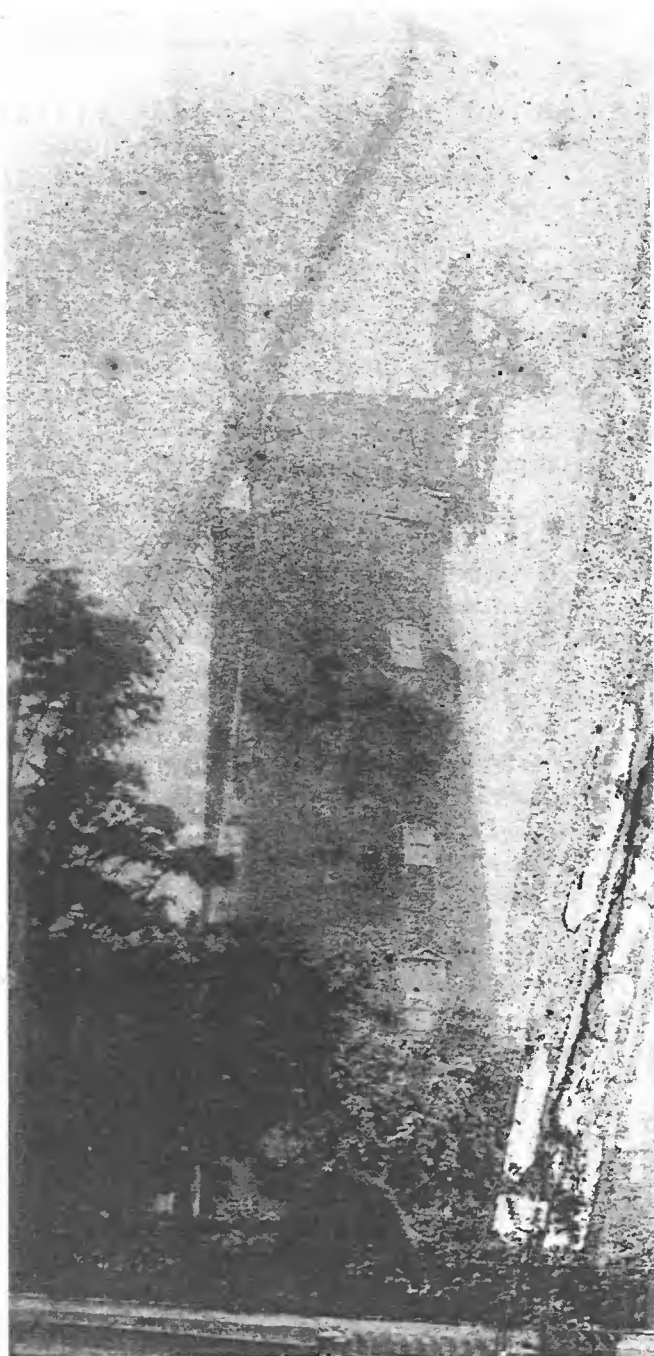
Fletcher's mill was a fairly ordinary post mill with an open trestle on very low brick piers. In photographs of the derelict mill it is clear that it was an old mill; the sidegirts had been overlaid and the tail had been extended. It had four common sails, one of the last to do so in the county and had a tailpole with a cartwheel at the end. The buck roof had a small dormer-like bulge on the left side which must have been necessary to clear part of the machinery inside as it does not appear to have been a hatch. The buck was lit by hatches, not windows and although the sides and back were white, the head and roof were covered with tarred felt. The trestle was also tarred. In addition to the two pairs of French stones (head 4ft 8ins and tail 3ft 6ins) there was a flour dresser. Photographs of the wreckage reveal some more details: the windshaft was iron, in one piece, and did not have a bore for a striking rod (which of course would not be required); the brake-wheel and tailwheel were a matching pair of six cant clasp-arm wheels with wooden cogs and its gearing was said to be similar to Westhall mill, in which case the stone nuts were possibly also wooden.

#### The Tower Mill (Grid Ref. TM499823)

This mill appeared between 1825 and 1837. It was built to work with (and replace) the old post mill and was probably built by J.J. Goff senior. After his death in 1849 it was run by his widow and son for a while. The 1851 census lists Mary Goff at the 'Wind and Steam Mills and Malt Office', employing eight men, with John Johnson Goff as 'Superintendent of Mills'. In 1851 J.J. Goff



junior went to take over the large 'Black Mill' at Southwold (a post mill) and the Wrentham mill was let to Robert Kidall, who was also a corn merchant. He is listed in 1853-5 but in 1855 an advertisement appeared calling in debts; he had either failed or died. J.J. Goff left Southwold and returned to Wrentham in October 1856, being listed again in 1858 and in 1859 'Goff and Leishman, Wrentham Mills' were advertising various commodities for sale such as linseed oil cake, seeds, flour and coal. They seem to have soon failed however for in 1860 there is a notice that John Johnson Goff and Robert Hastie Leishman, millers and general merchants, were assigning their effects for the benefit of creditors. Sales followed; in March 1860 their effects, including 'a four feet



hurst with silent feed' were sold and in 1861 J.J. Goff's estate was auctioned. Lot 1 included 'Wrentham Mills, comprising a substantially built Tower Mill, having eight floors and four patent sails, driving three pairs of 4 feet 6 inches French Stones... Also, communicating with the Tower Mill, a STEAM MILL, with three floors, a 10-horse power high pressure beam engine, driving three pairs of superior 4 feet French stones...' Lot 5 was the old post mill and in addition there was another post mill at Thurlton in Norfolk. Thomas Hurwood seems to have taken over; he is listed in 1868-9, 1874 and 1879. The 1871 census lists him as 'Master Miller' employing three men. He died in 1880 aged 63. In 1874 John Gunn is also listed as miller and it is possible he was also involved with the mills. In 1883 James Gunn is recorded and he ran the mill until his bankruptcy in 1895. The mill, described as 'A tower windmill, equipped with steam power, five pairs of stones, and of six floors' was bought by Sir Alfred Gooch, Bart., of Benacre Hall, for £700. It is interesting to compare this description with that in 1861, the earlier one being correct as to number of floors. The estate let the



mill to Benjamin Carter and Son but almost immediately disaster struck, the cap and sails being blown off in a 'cyclone' in about 1897, reputedly falling on a wagon and killing a horse. Benjamin died in 1900 aged 77 and was followed by his son, Samuel Henry Carter. The mill carried on driven by steam only and between 1908 and 1912 was converted to the roller system of flour milling. Samuel Carter died in 1926 but had given up the mill before this, Charles J. Rowling being listed in 1916, using a gas engine as power source. He was brother of the miller at Wickhambrook, on the opposite side of the county. Rowling is listed until 1933 but may well have switched to feed milling as the mill is said to have been dismantled in 1919. Business continued up to the time of the tower's demolition (and beyond) in September-October 1964 but the tower itself had not been used for years, being described as a 'shell' in 1947. The reasons given for demolition were that it was 'unsafe' (which was patently untrue) and that the mill got in the way of vehicles turning in the yard (a more plausible explanation).

The mill is quite fully described in the sale notices quoted above. The tower was well recorded in recent times but only one faded photograph is known to exist of the complete mill. The tower was of tarred brick and contained seven floors above ground. It appeared quite slender but was probably nearly 15 feet across at the curb. It was about 65 feet high to the curb; the stones would have been underdriven on the third floor with a reefing stage at second floor level. The steam mill was in a separate building next to the tower. In old photographs the chimney appears to be as tall as the mill, and very close to it. The cap was a typical Norfolk boat shape, with an almost straight ridge and a gallery. The fanstage was unusual for a Suffolk mill, raking backwards almost in the Lincolnshire manner, and had a six-bladed fantail. The four large patent sails ran anti-clockwise and were operated by a chainwheel and long unguided chain. It was a fine mill and must have been an impressive landmark in its day.

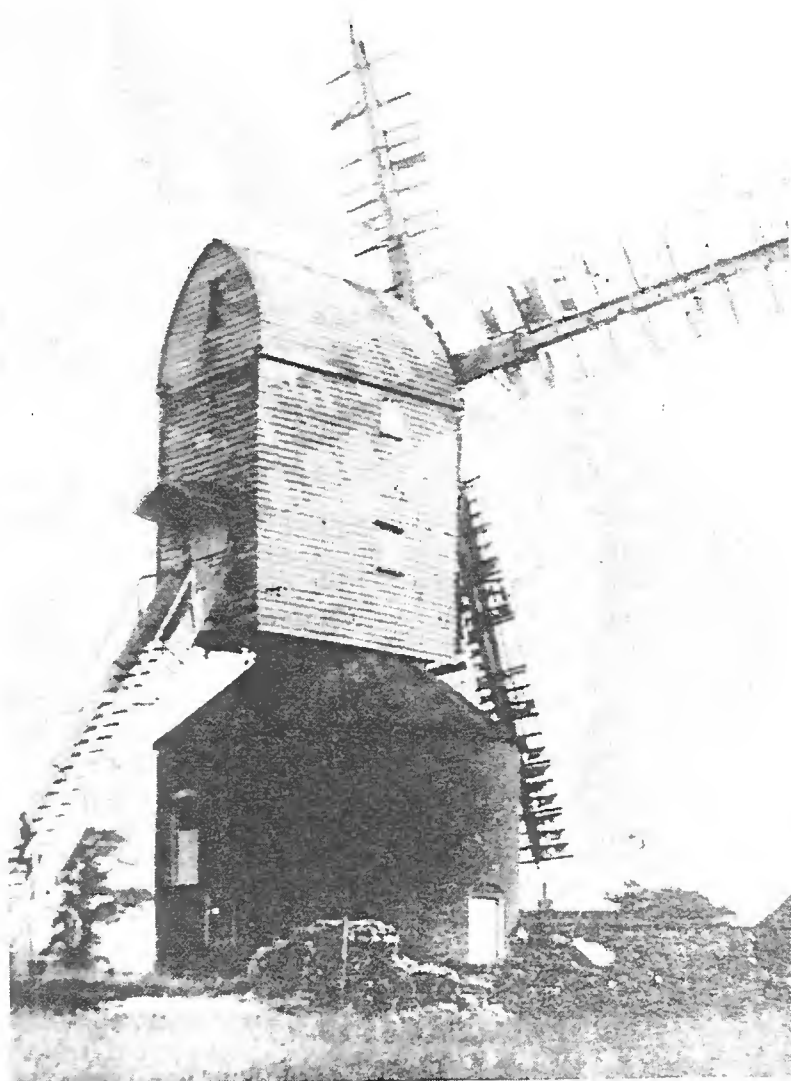
#### Carter's Mill (Grid Ref. TM499819)

This post mill is first recorded on Greenwood's map of 1823-4 but probably dated from around 1800. A number of newspaper notices relate to this mill but some could equally have applied to Fletcher's Mill. Given the relatively settled ownership of that mill however I suspect that the notices all apply to this mill.

The first is in 1805: 'To be sold by auction... A Messuage and Windmill... in the occupation of Mr. Francis Watling, under an agreement for a lease, to commence at Michaelmas next for 7 years, at the yearly rent of £25.' This may well be the start of the mill's life, having been built speculatively and offered for sale complete with tenant. In 1811 'A post windmill in full trade... with two pair of French stones, with regulators to each, flour mill etc., now in the possession of Mr. Daniel Hill' was offered for sale. By the 1830's the miller at Middleton post mill, Joseph Balls, was owner, the mill being let to Samuel Haward but he died leaving his widow Sarah in possession. Following Joseph Balls' death in 1837 the mill was put up for sale when it is described as being freehold; a roundhouse is also mentioned. Another attempt to sell was made in 1840 when the tenant is named as Mr. Goff, at

£30 per annum and in 1842 a mill (probably this one) was available for letting, with Wrentham farmer William Benns as contact. The tithe map of 1839-40 lists Sarah Haward as owner and occupier and she is listed as miller in 1844, but from the various advertisements it seems that the mill was let to various millers. In 1847 it was again offered for sale, being described as having 'a brick round-house, large corn bins... late proprietor Mr. Samuel Haward, deceased.' In 1855 George Candler is listed as miller but in 1858 Benjamin Carter is listed, and continues to be until 1896 when Benjamin Carter and Son are listed as millers by wind and steam, implying that they had the tower mill by this time, as mentioned above. After Benjamin's death in 1900 at the age of 77 his son Samuel gave up the post mill, concentrating on the tower mill. In 1900, 1904 and 1908 Arthur Benns is recorded as miller, but not in 1912. Judging from the derelict state of the mill by the early 1920's it must have been abandoned at about this time. Arthur Benns had previously been at Sotterley post mill, which disappeared about 1900; perhaps he took this mill to continue his business after a disaster at Sotterley, or perhaps he thought trade would be better at Wrentham.

After ceasing work the mill was abandoned; the tip of one sail had broken off and it is possibly this which led to work ceasing. The fantail had also been blown off and by the 1930's the mill was beginning to sag, both sheertrees having failed, letting the head down onto the roundhouse roof. It was still reasonably intact when examined in 1950 but soon after the front fell out, letting the windshaft drop; it was probably only the bottom sail resting on the roundhouse which stopped it coming right out. Understandably the mill did not last long in this state, being condemned and pulled down in early April 1955, reputedly by Amos Clark, the elderly Suffolk millwright. Some of the smaller items found their way into a local mill enthusiast's



collection but I don't know what became of them.

As it ended up Carter's mill was a fine and very tall mill, the tall roundhouse having two floors. This came about because the daughter of a miller (which one is not clear) was killed while playing and being hit by a sail. The mill was raised eight feet as a result. It was apparent that the old steps were re-used in the taller mill as to the end they showed clear evidence of being spliced at each end and also being overlaid. The fantail had six blades and was mounted high above the ladder, which in addition to being stretched, tapered, from 4ft 9ins at the bottom to about 3ft 6ins at the top between the strings. There was no tailpole, the steps being braced to the body with iron tie rods. The buck was a 'large pattern' one, built full length without any tail extension. It was lit by two smallish windows on each side. The door, which was a double one, not a half-door, was covered by a curved porch. The bottom of the buck did not follow usual East Suffolk practice in being only boarded to the bottom rail with no extended petticoat. There appears to have been a circular skirt to seal the roundhouse roof, like the one at Syleham mill. The roundhouse and the head of the mill were tarred, the remainder being white.

Internally the mill was complete to the end, with a two-piece iron windshaft holding a wooden clasp-arm brakewheel with wooden cogs and brake. The iron wallower had five spokes, an unusual number, and was mounted on an iron upright shaft. The two pairs of stones in the head were underdriven by an iron mortise spurwheel driving iron stone nuts. These were disengaged by being lifted and held by a pin. This was reputedly done by hand but anyone who has tried to lift a stone nut off the ground, let alone up a splined shaft, will know that some form of mechanical assistance would have been required, perhaps by a lever or differential pulleys. The evidence had gone by 1950. The layout of the drive and tenting was very neat, with a single wooden bridgetree spanning the mill and carrying all three footstep bearings; adjustment was achieved by inset iron bridgetrees working through a pin onto the bearing. There were two governors in the head, both driven off the upright shaft by belt.

The sack hoist was belt-driven in the usual way, from a pulley mounted on the front of the brakewheel. The dresser drive was through an iron skew gear on a cross shaft above the windshaft, then down to a pair of pulleys on the stone floor and thence to the rear where the dresser was mounted across the tail. Part of the drive was missing in 1950 as the pair of pulleys were on the left, but the dresser pulley was on the right. The sails were typical double shuttered patent sails, seven feet wide and about 65 feet span, running anticlockwise. The striking rack and chainwheel were inside, the chain being on the left. It still carried a striking weight in 1950.

As late as 1931 three windmills stood at Wrentham in close proximity; following the demolition of the tower mill in 1964 there is now no trace of them. We are fortunate that all were well documented and numerous photographs exist to remind us of what there once was.

## PAYMENT OF SUBSCRIPTIONS BY STANDING ORDER

*While the use of a Standing Order does simplify payment of subs in most respects, in one it causes problems to your poor overworked Secretary and Treasurer. I am referring to those of you who have not responded to the request to amend your Standing Order to the new subscription level. The subscription was raised to £6 last summer and as well as some who paid the lower sub through our inertia in dealing with the increase there are a sizeable number of you who have yet to complete a new form as requested. Please do so! Those members affected will receive a blank form with this newsletter. (Peter Dolman)*

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## NEWS

### E.N. ONIANS

Mr. Onians of Baylham mill died in January. Yet another link has been broken with the days before World War Two when milling and farming in Suffolk were on a small scale and employed large numbers of people.

A farm of some 130 acres went with the mill. This was considered quite large in the 1920's and gave employment to the farmer and a number of farm hands. Before the war as well as farming, Mr. Onians was miller, merchant and general dealer and although on a small scale, wage costs were low and such businesses prospered, giving much-needed employment to local people. Mr. Onians was hard working and never took a holiday in his life. Any surplus profit was invested in property, giving income to the business and over the years good capital appreciation. He was noted for making a hard bargain but once hands had been shaken his word was his bond.

After the 1960's Baylham mill became more and more derelict until by 1992 large holes in the roof became a serious threat to the interior. To his credit Mr. Onians, then nearly 90, put the work in the hands of a local contractor who completely re-roofed the mill and repaired and repainted the exterior boarding. In September last year a bus carrying some 50 S.P.A.B. members on their Suffolk tour parked by the mill and a pleasant hour was spent examining a fine complete interior quite new to them all.

We hope the good work that Mr. Onians started in 1993 will continue with repairs to the gates and perhaps one day the wheel might turn again. (C.H.)

### DOUG CAMPBELL

We were saddened to hear of the sudden death in January of Doug Campbell at the age of 73. Although not a member of S.M.G. he had been the mainstay of the volunteer millers at Pakenham watermill for 15 years or more and will be sorely missed. At his memorial

service donations to his memory in lieu of flowers were requested on behalf of Pakenham watermill and if anyone wishes to respond to this request then their donation may be sent to Suffolk Preservation Society, Little Hall, Lavenham CO10 9QZ (P.D.)

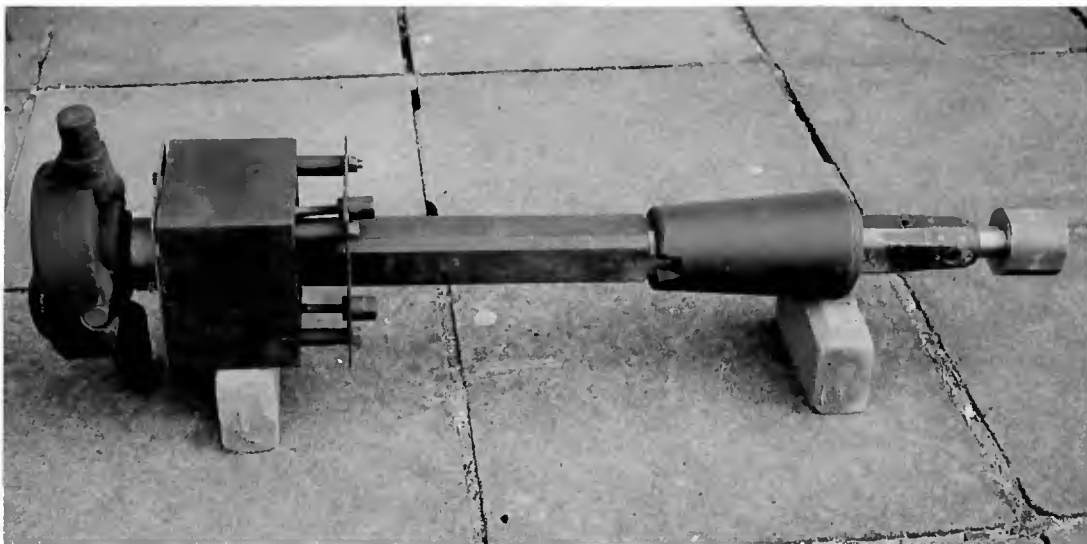
### TONY AUSTIN

Late last year we heard that one of our founder members, Tony Austin had died. Living in Kent and actively involved with Kent Mills Group, Tony did not take part in our activities but had remained a loyal supporter through the years. Our sympathy goes to his widow Jill. (P.D.)

### REPAIR OF STONE DRIVE AT PAKENHAM

There is an old story about a man who took a pair of shoes to be repaired, but shortly afterwards leaving the town and forgetting the shoes. A dozen years later he found the ticket in a drawer and, as he was due to visit his old town soon, decided to call for the shoes if the cobbler was still there. Indeed he was and on seeing the ticket said 'Ah yes, they will be ready next Wednesday sir'.

Some years ago Peter Dolman and I spent a lot of time at Pakenham watermill helping to guide the various groups of apprentices who worked on the mill and dressing and setting up a pair of stones. This was in the days when John Popham was director of Suffolk Preservation Society, owners of the mill, and Richard Byers was custodian. We thought it would be nice to set up to working order a second pair of stones, so we dismantled the quite unworkable pair of French stones nearest to the head pond. The spindle and bearings were in a shocking state, having been repaired over the years and now the repairs needed repairing. I took home the neck box, spindle, mace and all the bearings and associated odds and ends, hoping to make repairs over the winter. A dozen years later, due to many mill commitments, the Pakenham



The stone spindle assembly as repaired

stone gear still decorated the corner of my shed! Last winter I thought it was time repairs *were* made and the parts returned to Pakenham.

The old square section had been repaired at both ends with a sleeve on the neck, now deeply grooved, while the base had been bored to take a new foot which was worn and very loose. An old friend Richard Powling had access to a large lathe at British Telecom at Martlesham and the neck was turned true with great precision and a new footstep made. The three neck brasses were worn and the tapered adjusters were at their limits. To give them another 100 years wear they were trued to fit the newly turned neck and backed with brass strip to make up the adjustment.

Cliff Lovett made a new footstep brass from a piece of 3ins diameter phosphor bronze rod, the original having worn oval and beyond repair to working order. Much other work was done, including a new key to hold the stone nut cone and the replacement of a broken stub on the mace.

All the pieces were assembled at Drinkstone and in October they were taken to Pakenham in Brian Flint's car and received at the mill by Doug Campbell. Phil Bailey supplied a good wooden tool chest used by him in his apprentice years before the last war. All the small pieces such as bearings are stored in the locked box for security. The steel bearing surfaces on the spindle were wrapped in grease-soaked rags to prevent rust.

I did not volunteer to set up the stones as in the past I have made similar promises which I have been unable to keep. This would be a very attractive job though as the machinery is the most interesting part of a mill to work on. All the difficult work has been done and it would be very satisfying to see it all take shape in the mill. (C.H.)

#### SPROUGHTON WATERMILL INQUIRY ADJOURNED

The public inquiry into the called-in listed building application for the demolition of Sproughton mill has now been adjourned until July 25th 1995. This follows a two-month adjournment called on November 23rd, the day the inquiry opened, because of important new evidence on the cost of repairs.

As reported in Newsletter 58, S.M.G. considered the £270,000 figure for repair costs prepared by Maddocks Lusher Matthews, structural engineers acting for the owner, Patrick Hughes-Reckitt, far too high. The mill was also examined by English Heritage's chief engineer, who concurred with Maddocks Lusher Matthews' findings. As a result, English Heritage raised no objection to the demolition.

Faced with this situation, S.M.G., acting in concert with the Wind and Watermill Section of S.P.A.B., decided to ask Brian Morton, a leading structural engineer in the field of historic buildings (and who happens to live in Suffolk), to visit the mill and report on (a) whether the mill could be saved at significantly less than £270,000, and (b) whether it was in imminent danger of collapse, as had been claimed. After careful assessment of the existing engineer's drawings and a two-hour visit to the mill,

Brian Morton was left in no doubt that the mill building was nowhere near as bad as had been claimed, and most certainly in no imminent danger.

The gable end walls of the mill have suffered severe settlement, probably due to being built on made ground. However, the central section is built over twin arched brick culverts of very substantial construction and as a result is well founded and not subject to settlement. Brian Morton concluded it was only necessary to underpin the gable ends, not the entire building, and that most of the structural repairs to the brickwork could be carried out before underpinning commenced. In marked contrast the Maddocks Lusher Matthews approach envisaged complete underpinning prefaced by substantial temporary works such as damming the watercourses, all greatly adding to costs.

English Heritage have now accepted the validity of Brian Morton's approach and have produced a revised estimate of repair costs which is £107,000. As a result, English Heritage have revised their views and do not now wish to see the mill demolished unless the owner can demonstrate that repair and conversion are not viable. Babergh District Council reported the new advice to their Planning Committee in January 1995 and they resolved to recommend that the Secretary of State refuse consent for demolition.

What happens now? S.M.G. believes the marketing of the mill must start all over again. Now that the estimated repair costs are so much lower, a more positive approach to selling the mill must be taken than in the past. We look forward to seeing evidence of this in the months ahead. (M.B.)

#### WICKEN WINDMILL REPAIRS

The 12ft diameter fantail was completed on February 5th 1994, and the mill cap was set turning to wind. The teeth on the cast iron steering worm have rapidly developed a shine with use, and the continual turning of the fantail has become a familiar sight in Wicken and the surrounding fens, for the first time since the winding gear jammed in the 1930's.

The main attention on site has switched to the sails. The timber for the stocks (douglas fir) and the whips (larch) has been in the yard for a considerable time, together with the smaller timber. Each stock is estimated to weigh about  $\frac{3}{4}$  ton in its worked-up state; they were first chain-sawn roughly into shape before planing (and some adzing) began.

During the first 1994 work-in emphasis was on the sail whips. Sail bars and uplongs had mostly been thickened prior to the main work-ins, and the sail frames came together quickly during the second session, with just enough time to give them a first coat of lead paint. They are standing on trestles in the yard awaiting finishing this year.

The sails are of the broad, steeply weathered East Anglian type, following the measurements in Hunt's record books, and old photographs. With 9ft sail bars the sails are slightly narrower than Thelnetham's, but Wicken mill being taller and differently



geared we expect it to be a very effective performer. The underlying subject of sail design for traditional mills is interesting and not currently fully resolved. Practice in some parts of the country favoured long narrow sweeps, others tended to broad sails; there is also a considerable variation of sail speed and duty between mills. More on this another time, perhaps.

Over the winter work has been progressing on a number of fronts. Considering those items on the 'critical path', the brake-wheel is gradually taking shape in Leicestershire. On site Alan Wallis is fabricating a proper centring system to hold the wheel on the windshaft. The shaft carries integral cast iron squares which would be better suited to a brakewheel set further forward; the new centring jig will be in keeping with traditional millwrighting, but will provide a secure and stable fixing on the cast squares. In Suffolk, Chris Hullcoop is very kindly making the pattern for the gear teeth segments. This is a complex job, with multiple curvatures. Other work in progress includes completion of the striking gear parts, particularly final machining and bushing of bearings, and casting and drilling of shutter cranks. A completely new wallower is being built as the original suffered greatly when the roof failed in the 1960's.

Thanks again to our helpers, whose work is much appreciated and has greatly aided the progress of the repairs. The main work-ins this year will be June 24th - July 2nd and August 19th - 27th. We make no promises, but the expectation is that the stocks will be hauled up 'mandraulically' during the year, followed a little later by the sail frames. It is likely that the sail frame lift will coincide with a main work-in. For more details on these and other work sessions, Dave Pearce can be contacted on 01664 822751.

#### BARDWELL WINDSHAFT FITTED

During the autumn the new cast iron windshaft was craned into place in Bardwell mill, marking another step in the long haul back to work for the mill so devastated in the great gale of October 1987. On a less happy note we have heard that Geoff Wheeler, the mill's owner, is in hospital, and we send him our best wishes for a speedy recovery.

#### SAXMUNDHAM ROUNDHOUSE FOR SALE

The petrol filling station right next to the Saxmundham roundhouse has now closed and the whole site, with roundhouse, outbuildings and a 4-bedroom house, is currently for sale. Planning permission exists for four new dwellings. The asking price is £115,000 and the agents are William H. Brown (01728 603232).

The tall white brick roundhouse, probably dating from the middle of the nineteenth century, is one of the most imposing in the county, and still retains its trestle and cut-off main post. Sadly the building has not been maintained and a large part of the conical roof is now missing. This was one of Suffolk's tallest post mills and came down as long ago as 1907. S.M.G. hope to record it as its future looks decidedly bleak. (M.B.)

## WINDMILL RESTORATION GATHERING PACE IN CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Another of the group of fine windmills to be found in Cambridgeshire has recently received a new cap and is about to receive four new sails. The Great Mill, Haddenham is a very large tower mill dating from 1803 and retains all its machinery, including a vertical smutter and bolter. The old cap and sails were removed in the 1970's and for some time it has presented a forlorn appearance. Late last year a new cap, built by Thompsons of Alford, was lifted into place and the sails (without shutters) will shortly follow. At present the sails will be unable to revolve as the brakewheel is yet to be renewed, and the fantail is not finished so the cap is fixed. As funds permit the work will continue but when the sails are fitted the mill will present a very fine appearance.

Most of the funding for the work so far has come from East Cambridgeshire District Council, who are also supporting work at Wicken and Soham Shade mills. This last named mill, a small six-sided smock mill, has been in tatty condition for many years, with some weatherproofing work carried out to protect the machinery. Thompsons are about to begin work on the complete restoration. Virtually every restorable windmill in Cambridgeshire will have been restored when this mill is complete; a record to be proud of and sadly not matched here in Suffolk (although we do try!).

I hear that further repairs are to be undertaken at Fulbourn smock mill; truly a lot is happening over the border! (P.D.)

## NEWS FROM NORFOLK

The restoration of the massive Old Buckenham tower mill in south Norfolk will soon be progressing with installation of a new cap. Little Cressingham wind and watermill is also to receive a new cap. These works are being delayed through the recent illness of Norfolk millwright John Lawn and we wish him a full and speedy recovery. (P.D.)

## WIND FARMS UP-DATE

The number of active wind farms in England and Wales stood at 21 in August 1994, with another four under construction. The 25 schemes comprise a total of some 450 wind turbines whose capacity amounts to around 150 megawatts. Cornwall has five wind farms and one under construction, a total of 87 turbines, while mid Wales has no less than 169 turbines. There are four wind farms with 64 turbines in the south Pennines, and one farm with 24 turbines on Anglesey.

In terms of operators, National Wind Power has the most sites with five - Mynydd-y-Cemmaes in Montgomeryshire, Kirky Moor in Cumbria, Cold Northcott in Cornwall, Llangwryfon in Dyfed and Bryntitli near Rhayader. These involve 100 turbines with a combined capacity of some 32 MW. The operator with the largest number of turbines is Ecogen, with more than 100 producing power on two sites in the Llandinam area of Powys, another 24 at Rhosgoch on Anglesey and 11 at St. Breock in Cornwall. (M.B.)

## MILL HOLIDAY IN CRETE

Following last year's successful tour of Cretan mills a repeat is being offered. There is a full itinerary of wind and watermills, some in working order, and the tour is based at two hotels over seven nights, departing Heathrow on 21st October 1995. The cost is £870 (excluding holiday insurance, but inclusive of all charges) with a £50 supplement for single rooms. Details can be obtained from Island Holidays, Drummond Street, Comrie, Perthshire PH6 2DS.

## EVENTS

### S.M.G. PUBLIC MEETING 'THE MILLWRIGHT'S CRAFT'; IPSWICH CENTRAL LIBRARY LECTURE ROOM, SATURDAY FEBRUARY 25TH 1995 at 7.30pm

This year's public meeting takes a look at the craft of the millwright. We are delighted to welcome as our main speaker Martin Watts, now resident in Devon. A leading member and past Chairman of the S.P.A.B. Wind and Watermill Section, Martin has carried out a good deal of research into the historical development of millwrighting, and is also now in business as a millwright. He has been recording and photographing mills since 1969, and worked as miller-curator of Worsborough watermill near Barnsley before moving to a watermill near Totnes in Devon in 1982. This he repaired to working order and worked for several years.

The second speaker is S.M.G. secretary Peter Dolman, who will relate some of the findings of his ongoing research into the famous nineteenth century Suffolk millwrighting firm of Whitmore and Binyon.

The venue is the splendidly-refurbished lecture room in the Ipswich library; the entrance is in Old Foundry Road. **Please do try to come along to help make this event a success, and display the poster enclosed with this newsletter.**

### VISIT TO HOLME MILLS, BIGGLESWADE

We will be arranging a visit to Holme Mills at Biggleswade, Bedfordshire in the Spring. This is the home of Jordans, the well-known millers, who have kindly extended an invitation to us. The visit may have to take place during the working week. **Please contact Chris Hullcoop on (01394) 671462 as soon as possible if you would like to come on this visit.**

### OPEN DAY AT HERRINGFLEET MARSH MILL: SUNDAY MAY 7TH 1995

Please note that this year's first Herringfleet opening will not be on National Mills Day but on the Sunday before. A little *faux pas* perhaps but at least it will provide a chance for your Chairman and Editor who run the mill to go to another on N.M.D.!

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