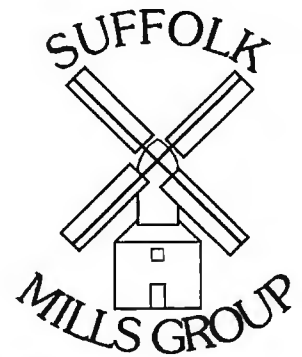


SUFFOLK MILLS GROUP

Newsletter

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This year has got off to a good start for S.M.G.. We had an enjoyable public meeting in March at which Alan Stoyel gave a fine account of his life with mills, from his days as a schoolboy in Kent, via Cornwall, Scotland, Portugal, Belgium and Spain, to his present day work for the Royal Commission. Thanks, Alan, for a most enjoyable evening. In early May the post mill buck at Creeting St. Mary was opened, fulfilling a long-held desire to see the future of this important mill remain assured. Less welcome was the lack of wind on National Mills Day and, on a more serious note, the latest news about Sroughton watermill (see below).

This issue of the newsletter is being hurried out in time to coincide with the notice of our A.G.M. at Mildenhall on June 16th. See you there? This and other diary dates are given below.

A.G.M. at Lark Mills, Mildenhall
Work-in, Stanton post mill (Week 1)
Open day at Herringfleet windpump
Work-in, Stanton post mill (Week 2)
S.P.A.B. Weekend tour (east Kent)

Sunday June 16th
July 20th - 28th
Sunday August 4th
August 10th - 18th
Aug.29th - Sept.1st

Mark Barnard

FRANCO - BELGIAN TOUR Mark Barnard

Having heard of the successful Friends of Norfolk Windmills excursion to Holland in 1994, I decided to join them on their next foreign visit, to the Franco-Belgian border. By the time of the mid-May departure I was in the midst of an office move at work, and only too glad to abandon the country and be whisked around some new mills by luxury coach!

After a mid-morning Channel crossing from Ramsgate to Ostend, we arrived at our base, the Comfort Inn at Villeneuve d'Ascq, a new town close to Lille, in early evening. There we were met by Jean Bruggeman, chairman of ARAM Nord - Pas de Calais, the local mill society, who was to be our guide. Villeneuve d'Ascq is the headquarters of the society, a fact announced by the presence of a pair of large post windmills, a superb sight for the users of the adjacent motorway in this otherwise unremarkable suburban area. These mills were a short stroll from our hotel, although the first evening was reserved for a visit to the mill museum next to them which was opened last year. The simple but attractive new building housed various items of machinery including hurst frames and roller mills, a complete tool kit of the last millwright in Flanders and original components salvaged from mills now restored. While it would be nice to have a similar museum in England, I was left wondering whether some of the bits displayed could not have been left in situ. Jean Bruggeman showed us slides of local mills

with Niall Roberts ably translating. We learned that the first post mill had arrived at Villeneuve d'Ascq in 1976 on a lorry from Offekerque near Calais, where it had been abandoned. In its early life it had been an oil mill, and on rebuilding in the early 1980's it reverted to this now rare function. In 1979 the second post mill was moved here. This was a flour mill which had ended its days as a power-driven buck on the ground, not unlike some in England. By 1988 this too had been rebuilt. Various larger items in the museum are displayed outside, including several sets of edge-runner stones (one of which is being reassembled to be driven by a diesel engine) and a water-driven forge with tilt hammers.

Friday saw us head towards the coast, stopping to visit a water-powered paper museum (in a new building) at Esqueredes near St. Omer, before reaching Watten. Here we were greeted by the turning sails of the newly-restored tower mill, perched on a wonderful site above the town. The tower has an octagonal base, and re-uses stone from the nearby monastery. Everything else is new, for little more than a shell survived. A few minutes earlier we had passed a similar but derelict tower which, we were told, contained wooden machinery. Several of us thought of asking Niall what the French was for 'we'd much prefer to see the derelict'!

After an excellent lunch (yes, a full two hours!) we headed for Wimille near Boulogne, passing on the way the Channel tunnel terminal and the rebuilt post mill at Coquelles. Such is the pace of change in this area my 1985 Michelin map seemed hopelessly out-dated. In contrast to all the new roads, Grisendal watermill is tucked away down a tiny lane and proved well worth a visit. A substantial stone building on four floors and dating from 1811, it worked as a roller mill until 1987 and everything has been left in situ. There are three different motive power sources: turbine, gas engine (1935) and diesel engine (1957) and four sets of rollers, all French-made.

The day's last two windmills were in marked contrast. At Guemps we inspected a partially-restored tower mill, which had been given a cap built off a fabricated steel frame! Still, some old machinery was left, including a silk machine 12ft long and the final drive to the two pairs of stones. It was a pity we didn't see the nearby cast iron windpump which Vincent Pargeter showed slides of at the S.P.A.B. Windmill Meeting in March, which would have been of particular interest to those from Norfolk. As if in compensation we stopped off at what for many was the best mill of the day, the tower mill at Offekerque, where an engine still drives one pair of stones via an external belt. We noted a most interesting *unrestored* (at last!) interior: two pairs overdriven, wooden machinery including a lantern pinion wallower, wooden stone crane and a dead stone curb with a groove in it for centering. After the others no-one cared that only one sail was in place.

On Saturday we ventured in the opposite direction along the Belgian border, the first stop being at St. Aubert, a few miles south of Valenciennes. The tower mill here has been restored because it is the last surviving one in the Nord with a pair of edge-runners for oilseed crushing, although the final drive to them is missing. A pleasant journey on minor roads amid improving weather took us to Maroilles (watermill exterior only) and on to



Grisendal
watermill at
Wimille



Moulbaix post mill: miller Joseph Dhaenens with Niall Roberts

Grand-Fayt, where the watermill was under repair and largely dismantled. Just before we left there was an attempt to return a couple of windmill poll-end patterns to Villeneuve d'Ascq via the boot of our coach, but they were just too big to fit in! After lunch we visited the village of Felleries for a rather prolonged (I thought) stop at a restored wood-turning watermill cum museum, before arriving at Le Moulin de Sars at Sars-Poteries, one of the high points of the tour. Here we were welcomed as friends by Mme. Delmotte, whose family had worked it until 1963. The building is very old, and was raised in height in brick in 1780. It last worked by a Francis turbine, and everything is still in place, including three pairs of stones and the casing of an enclosed hopper boy. Regaled with alcoholic drink and savoury cake, we were reluctant to leave.

On the way back we paused in the town centre of Maubeuge, where a brick tower incorporating a smock mill-like frame had been faithfully (as far as we could see) rebuilt on its old foundations. This seemed a shame, as such an unusual structure deserved to be retained in its own right, especially as its setting had been ruined by a huge new office building. We hurried on to Moulbaix in Belgium, lured by the prospect of a post mill in full-time commercial use. Shortly after our arrival the sail cloths were duly spread and the mill started up. It displayed many of the features which characterise post mills in the area: double quarter bars, closely-set diagonal bracing rather than studding, vertical boarding, a shingled roof with external hoist protruding from the rear gable and a 'pannier' extension on one side which housed a large silk reel flour dresser. There were head and tail stones, driven by all-wood gearing. The miller, Joseph Dhaenens, uses electricity as auxiliary power. Long may he continue.

On Sunday morning we went inside the two post mills on our doorstep. The oil mill has been beautifully reconstructed and is a quite amazing set up. The buck has just two floors, the lower one with a row of five stamps and wedge presses on one side and a metal stove for heating the crushed oilseed before being pressed on the other. Upstairs are all the drives, the stamps and presses driven directly via cams on the windshaft and the rod for stirring the heated oilseed via a pinion meshing with the brakewheel. I'd love to see it working - what with the vibration from the stamps and the fire risk from the stove, oil post mills must have had a short life. The rest of Sunday morning had been reserved for the unique tower mill with rotating floors at Templeuve, but sadly we were unable to see it for some reason and instead went to the conventional tower mill at Leers. Miller here is S.M.G. member (yes, they get everywhere!) Christian Porcher, who explained he was milling barley because in France a tax is paid for milling wheat for bread. The mill has a well frame for centering the cap, a bit like the ones once found on Anglesey.

After a lunch stop in the centre of Lille (as busy as an English city on a Saturday) we crossed into Belgium and proceeded to Zwevegem, near Kortrijk, where there are two windmills. At the post mill, called Mortiers Mill, we were greeted by some Belgian enthusiasts who showed us round for the rest of the day. The mill was grinding barley, powered by Dekkerised sails. It doesn't have a pannier, but the tall buck has an 'extra' floor *below* the steps.



Villeneuve d'Ascq *Above: the post mills and mill museum*
Below left: the one pair of stones in the flour post mill
Below right: stampers inside the door of the oil post mill





The tower mill at Deerlijk, with its long first floor ladder

We then visited the nearby tower mill at Deerlijk, where we could have spent the rest of the day there was so much to see and admire. In common with many Flemish mills it produced both flour and oil, but is unusual in that all the oil machinery is also intact, just as it last worked. The flour mill was last used in 1986, the oil mill in c.1965. It was built in 1888, replacing a post mill which burnt down, parts of which have been re-used. The ground floor houses a double oil mill (for extracting the maximum oil from a given amount of seed), supplemented by a late 19th century cast iron hydraulic press, installed in 1906, which was steam-driven. The height needed for the drives to the oil mill means that the ladder to the first floor is formidable - no less than 31 treads long. There are three pairs of overdriven stones, set so tightly together that a double sack hoist is required to serve them (there are no bins), and a live curb with centering frame. As if all this wasn't enough, the auxiliary steam engine is also complete. The future of this remarkable mill is uncertain; we can only hope it is safeguarded.



Inside Deerlijk tower mill, showing the oil mill on the ground floor (above) and part of the well frame for centering the cap (below)



We concluded the day with two tower mills south west of Kortrijk. That at Menen has just been completely restored or renewed, with 80% State aid. As well as millstones it has a pair of edge-runners on the ground floor, sharing space with a rather smart video slide display of the restoration. We noticed that the winding chain around the iron stage (like Deerlijk) is continuous, the winch simply pulling its way along for as far as is necessary.

Monday dawned fine and sunny, which was a pity as we were booked onto the Ostend ferry at lunchtime. Before we left we met with a party of mill lovers from Majorca, some of whom had visited Norfolk last year. After the obligatory group photo there was just time to fit in two more post mills, at Boeschepe, close to the Belgian border, and Gistel, near Ostend. Gistel is the world's only hollow post oil mill and we were determined to see inside it. Niall Roberts disappeared to find the keyholder and, just as we were about to give up hope, re-appeared with the miller as well! The oil mill is contained in the roundhouse, and as we looked round the sails were set and the operation of the edge-runners demonstrated. To accommodate the drive through the post, the head pair of stones is set forward of the brakewheel. The buck was destroyed by fire in 1977 and the whole corn mill part only dates from 1979-82. Admiring the exemplary restoration, we thought of the contrasting fate of a certain post mill across the Channel, blown down and subsequently cleared away.

Gistel was a fitting end to what had been a most interesting and stimulating trip. It was not quite our last mill though as Michael Roots made sure we didn't miss a single Kentish mill on the way back! Thanks must go to the FoNWi organisers, John Capps, Michael Roots and Malvern Tipping, and also to Niall Roberts for his invaluable translation service. Perhaps it's time S.M.G. organised something similar again?

PUTTING MILLS IN THE PICTURE (4) Peter Steggall

CONSTABLE COUNTRY - WATERMILLS

'When I look at a painting of a mill by John, I see that it will go round, which is not always the case with other artists'; a comment by Constable's brother Abram. Actually, although John's pictures of watermills are convincingly realistic and superbly artistic, they show nothing of the working parts except for the occasional waterwheel; indeed how could they show more?

I have been looking again at Constable's pictures of watermills at Stratford St. Mary, Dedham and Flatford, and the more I look the more interested I become.

Of Stratford mill I have been unable to find any picture which shows the whole of the building. The biggest and best-known (4'x6' in the National Gallery) shows only a corner of the mill, with part of the wheel, at the left hand edge of the picture. Most of the space is occupied with a background of meadows, trees, sky and clouds, with the river, a barge and boys fishing from the bank in the foreground. My theory, which is borne out by many other mill pictures by Constable, is that he was just as interested in the beauty of the rural setting as he was in the mills themselves.



Dedham mill and lock, by Constable

Now, in 1996, all that remains of the mill at Stratford is a six-foot grey brick wall enclosing an open, roofless space between the village street and the river. On the other side of the road are two new houses behind a gateway labelled 'Mill House'.

In 1978, in my book *East Anglia*, I wrote of Dedham mill that it was still used by corn merchants but had been so enlarged that any fragments of the little mill seen in Constable's pictures were completely dwarfed and hidden; from his familiar viewpoint, huge willows masked the mill and the tower of the church. Since then the corn merchants have gone, and the huge, rectangular, four and five-storey building is a complex of flats, with further new dwellings extending to the rear beside the mill stream above the sluice and lock. The buildings obscure the former view of the church tower except for the top few feet of its flagstaff. The whole area by the river and in the village is busy with tourists and cars, but there is still much beauty and interest.

At Flatford, the scene of Constable's best-known pictures, the mill is well maintained, recognisable, and well used as a Field Studies Centre leased from the National Trust. From Constable's viewpoint at the south end of the footbridge by the Thatched Cottage, the mill has long been virtually invisible because of the line of willows which have grown up along the river bank since the demise of horse-drawn barge traffic. From his other favourite painting location, just downstream of the lock, the mill and the house are still clearly seen across the river. I have often wondered why, as far as I can ascertain, Constable never painted

the downstream side of the mill, facing Willy Lott's Cottage. It is the most handsome and uncluttered elevation, and is complemented by the house at right angles. Perhaps it was because he could not have shown the mill in an expansive rural setting. Like Dedham, Flatford is a real 'honey-pot' for tourists, but thanks to the National Trust and other authorities, the mill and other buildings and their surroundings have been well preserved.

Research and commentary on Constable's work and 'Constable Country' are of perpetual interest to amateurs and professionals alike. Perhaps some of our expert readers will fill in some gaps or correct some of what I have written. Next time it will be 'Constable Country - Windmills'.

(P.S. In my first article I mentioned a print, bought about 40 years ago, of Edward Seago's picture of 'Burnham Overy' windmill in Norfolk. When our editor, Mark Barnard, saw it recently, he told us that it was in fact Blakeney! I was in Norfolk in September 1995, and found the Blakeney windmill, cap gone, but brick tower intact, with flat roof, in the middle of the Friary Farm Caravan Park. The batter of the tower is much more pronounced than the Burnham Overy mill, which I saw again.)

EARNLEY SMOCK MILL Luke Bonwick

Earnley mill near Chichester, West Sussex (SZ817983) is one of the last unrestored smock mills in England. Built probably around the end of the 18th century, it is thought to have been raised in 1827, and this date appears on one of the bricks, together with the initials 'T B'. 1827 could also be the date when the mill was modernised, and some of the iron gearing was installed; patent sails were not fitted however. The mill was worked for about 100 years by the Stevens family, and ceased work around the end of the Second World War. Until then, visitors were permitted to look around the mill for the princely sum of 6d!

In the early 1960's the two common sails, which were in poor condition, were removed by the then owner, Mr Darby. Not much was done to the mill until 1978-9 when the cap and remaining spring sails were taken off, and pulled apart. It is unclear whether the mill was roofed over subsequently because most of the top two floors are now (April 1996) missing and the spurwheel is badly rotted.



However, much of the iron gearing from the cap has survived, such as the fan star and fantail drive shafts, along with many other small wooden parts. I could not find any traces of the brakewheel, but the iron windshaft remains, its tail end stuck firmly in the ground. At some time in the 1970's the smock was re-boarded and a new flat roof has now been fitted (see photograph on p.10).

Inside the mill much of the machinery remains. On the ground floor are two French and two composition stones leaning against the wall. There are two opposite doors at ground floor level, one leading into the attached single-storey building, now used as a workshop. Many wood and iron parts lie in heaps around this floor. The first floor was the spout floor and must have been very cramped because it still contains two flour dressers and another machine (possibly an oat roller), all in fairly good condition. Apparently a pair of Peak stones were driven on this floor by engine, which was housed in the workshop. There is also a door to the stage on this floor, and another above on the stone floor. The base of the upright shaft is supported at stone floor level by the two main bearers, but most of the flooring has now gone. Two pairs of millstones were overdriven on this floor by a wooden clasp-arm great spur wheel, which remains in poor condition, and the flour was collected in a central meal bin. The French and composition stones have been lowered to the ground floor, while the pair of Peaks are set up as garden ornaments. Above the spur wheel is an iron bevel gear rim, which may have driven the dressing machinery on the first floor by belt, because two layshafts remain. The third floor has completely gone, but served as the bin and dust floor. At the top of the upright shaft are the four compass-arm spokes of the wallower. The sack hoist was probably friction-driven from the underside of the wallower, as at Polegate and Shipley mills.

From the outside the mill must have presented a splendid sight when in working order. The octagonal three-storey smock was tarred black and there was a wide stage without a railing at first floor level, above the brick base. From this stage the sails were set; there was one pair of single-sided spring sails, with elliptical leaf springs, and one pair of commons, rotating anti-clockwise. The ogee-shaped cap was horizontally boarded, with a typical Sussex fanstage and a six-bladed anti-clockwise fantail. The fanstage displayed an interesting feature, in that it was enclosed with a petticoat. The fantail drive was through a worm gear meshing with an outward-facing iron rack.

LETTERS

Peter Lewis of Asterley mill, Shropshire, writes:

"Your editorial in the January newsletter invited contributions on the problems of encouraging younger people to take an interest in mills, particularly in view of the ominous lack of young members in SPAB. This struck a chord with me since the long-term care of the mill here is a point of concern. Two thoughts occur to me: one is somewhat critical (of SPAB meetings), the other constructive, I hope. I will set them out briefly.

At the SPAB meetings there are many people present with wide experience in mills and I have learnt a good deal over the years by keeping my ears open (and my mouth shut until relatively recently). As a result I have much to be grateful for. However there is also frequently a negative side to these meetings: some experts - and here I certainly do not refer to people in the Suffolk Group - seem to derive greatest satisfaction by criticising others efforts or by vying to demonstrate the depth of their knowledge. This can create an inhibiting atmosphere for younger people who may find it difficult to identify with the Section. Generally the younger generation is positive and is receptive to a positive message.

Turning to a more optimistic idea, I hope to make an all-out effort to cultivate interest among young people when the mill here is complete. I plan to contact local schools and to offer them visits at minimal charge, or free. This particularly applies to primary schoolchildren - I am sure the Jesuits have the right idea! I aim to encourage interest by offering appropriate prizes for the best drawing or narrative produced following a visit. Youngsters would also be encouraged to visit a second time, bringing their parents. I hope to produce suitable information aimed at children: perhaps four years in the teaching profession many years ago were not entirely wasted.

Whilst the mill is under reconstruction it is not appropriate to actively seek visitors, but I make a point of inviting anyone who shows interest to come along and bring their family.

I appreciate that I have some advantages in my position. Living on the premises makes life less complicated and it helps that there is no wind-driven rival very near. Finally, I am fortunate in not requiring the mill to support me in any way in the future."

NEWS

URGENT WORK AT SPROUGHTON MILL

The saga of Sproughton watermill continues. Despite plans for a residential conversion which were approved by Babergh District Council, nothing has actually been *done* to the building. As a result it has continued to deteriorate and an inspection in mid May revealed the need for urgent works as the corner of the gable end nearest the river was falling away. This was shored to prevent collapse, and on May 30th repair work to this end commenced. It is hoped that most of this gable end can be saved, but total rebuilding has not been ruled out (under the listed buildings legislation, only the minimum necessary can be done by the District Council). The opposite end has been strapped back with scaffold poles to guard against a collapse onto the mill house (which is in different ownership). The work is expected to cost in the region of £30,000 - £40,000. (M.B.)

PAKENHAM WINDMILL LOTTERY CASH BID

An application for £32,000 has been made to the National Lottery Fund for repairs to Pakenham windmill. If the bid is successful a

Friends organisation will be formed which will have control of the mill. The bid is being supported by, amongst others, the Suffolk Preservation Society, the Duke of Grafton and local councillors.

The condition of the mill has been slowly deteriorating for the last 20 years or so. Now the weatherbeam, fitted by Amos Clarke in the 1940's, has failed and in late April the fantail was removed. The sheers and overlays also need attention. The total cost of the work is estimated at £42,000, the aim being a return to full working order to encourage educational visits. If the bid is unsuccessful, the Bryant family who own it say the sails will have to be removed for safety reasons. A decision on the bid will not be made until July at the earliest. Let's hope the money is forthcoming. (M.B.)

NEWS FROM DRINKSTONE

Work started again at Drinkstone mills at Easter and the dry weather of April and early May has been a great help. This year we hope to attend to the sides, tail, steps, fan and winding gear of the post mill.

It is difficult to decide how best to do this with the very limited resources of money and man hours. It would be nice to completely re-board but, with the cost of the new boards at over £1,000, it would be wrong to nail them straight onto a frame needing substantial and very sensitive repair. As Drinkstone post mill, dated 1689, is one of the oldest in Britain, great care is needed to conserve as much as possible of the old frame. Thus although it is quicker and easier to replace a stud, from the conservation point of view it is far better to splice on a new end or fit a concealed steel tie. As the old frame is extremely uneven, all surfaces would have to be overlain with fillets to bring them to a common level for good boarding. All this takes an inordinate amount of time and patience as we found at the head. It would have taken far more money and time, particularly time, than is available, so it was reluctantly decided to patch up and paint the existing boards yet again. Some new boards have been 'dodged' in and others overlain with some of the exterior-grade plywood given to us by Marlows in the 1980's. I.C.I. at Stowmarket have kindly donated some paint and now both sides have been primed and undercoated. Flashband has been used to cover small areas of wood around old nails, on joins and to seal the head board - side board join. This versatile material can do wonders in extending the life of old boards. The late Michael Organ of Ramsey mill once said that had I been on the *Titanic* with a roll of Flashband that ship could have been saved!

To reach the sides of the buck safely and in comfort all that is required is a single scaffold platform and three roundhouse roof saddles. The platform is erected at the level of the lower window sill with a central pole passing through the window opening. Two more poles are fitted in front and behind and these pass through two neat 2"x2" holes cut into a board. Stout scaffold boards and a handrail are fitted, making simple, strong and safe platforms on either side. From the platforms the buck sides to the eaves can be reached and from the three saddles the area up to the platforms. To reach the buck roof similar platforms on either side

are fitted at the level of the top window. When the platforms are removed the four small holes in each side are easily covered by wooden plates, screwed so they can be removed when the platforms are required again. What could be simpler and cheaper? I'm afraid that the vogue for all-over scaffolding will raise the cost of maintenance so much that mills will receive insufficient care, hastening their demise.

We do need help at Drinkstone this year. If you can lend a hand please phone me on 01473 711504 (work) or 01394 671462 (home). I am more easily found at work. (Chris Hullcoop)

TURNING SAILS AT HOLTON

Members may recall that four new sail frames of authentic design, two commons and two springs, were fitted to Holton post mill at the end of 1992 by E. Hole & Son (see Newsletter 55). Two new sail cloths were also provided, but as an easy method of securing them had not been devised they have not been used.

On the late May Bank Holiday Monday open day at the mill, Chris Hullcoop fitted stainless steel rods across the heel of each common sail. A cloth can then be attached to each rod with four sprung steel 'dog-clips', a single-handed operation, enabling it to be drawn across in the usual manner. Chris could not find dog clips big enough so ingeniously made his own, fitting them to each cloth at home during the winter. It was quite a windy day but even with both cloths spread, the sails turned only fitfully, with much pushing required. The main reason was a binding brake, partly caused by the brakewheel being slightly eccentric. Other reasons are probably lack of use, the growth of vegetation round the mill, and possibly the sails being out of balance. The dog clip fittings also need adjusting as the cloths do not reach to the bottom of the frames, and until this is done the cleats cannot be fixed.

Once the sails are finally fitted and turning properly we intend to video the mill. We may even try to make a film of all four of the County Council's windmills in action! (M.B.)

CREETING BUCK OPENS

The conversion of the re-sited former post mill buck and dovecote at Alder Carr Farm, Creeting St. Mary into a wood-turning workshop has been successfully accomplished. On Saturday May 4th, amid traditional Springtime festivity including Morris men and maypole dancing, a 'green man' officially opened the building (see adjacent photograph). It has been completely re-boarded, retaining the old weather-boards underneath, while



inside most of the original plaster between the studs has been conserved and limewashed. Pigeon nesting boxes have been left along two sides of the upper floor. Tenant Geoff Laws is delighted with the spacious interior, which is well worth a detour on any molinologist's route. (M.B.)

STANTON POST MILL: WORK IN PROGRESS AND 1996 WORK-INS

In April a 'mini work-in' took place one week-end when the troublesome neck bearing was adjusted. This work will be described in the next newsletter, along with the main summer work-ins.

Meanwhile, planning for the restoration has been going on and a grant application is about to be made to English Heritage. As this will take some time to process it is not possible to begin anything too drastic in the work-ins this summer. However they should prove interesting to mill enthusiasts as the work will be largely restoring machinery, the very heart of a working mill. The original 1751 brakewheel is hanging together fairly well but needs heavy repair around the brake rim; the 19th century iron gearing and its wooden ring is in need of repair or adjustment; the wheel runs out of true and requires re-wedging on the shaft, and all the fastenings need attention as it creaks while turning. The upright shaft will also probably need some attention, if only a good clean down. The two pairs of stones are in fairly bad condition and will need extensive work, and possibly stone dressing. The floor around the stones is a mess, and will have to be rebuilt, as will the stone tuns (although it may be possible to line the originals, to preserve the appearance). The aim is to have the mill working properly by the end of the year.

There are other jobs to be done, such as top sheeting the roundhouse roof and replacing the rotten fantail gearing bearer.

So, there is plenty to keep us busy, requiring a mixture of abilities and with a high chance of job satisfaction in that an improvement should be readily visible. Do please consider coming along, either for a day or two or a longer period. The facilities of the house are available, including some sleeping room, and there is plenty of space to pitch a tent or park a caravan. Basic provisions will be available and there are frequent tea breaks! The dates are **Saturday July 20th - Sunday July 28th and Saturday August 10th - Sunday August 18th**. Please contact me on 01359 250622 if you plan to come. (Peter Dolman)

NEW PUBLICATION WORTH ACQUIRING

An excellent little book has appeared called *Threshing and Thatching: Traditional Crafts and Village Life in East Anglia*, by Pat Freeman, published by the East Anglian Traction Engine Society. It is the latest of several publications on themes related to local history by the Society, and takes as its core subject the village and locality of Wrentham. The mill interest lies in the detailed chapter on Wrentham's mills. While this was originally based on the write-up in S.M.G. Newsletter 61, much additional material has been gathered from a multitude of sources including a lot of oral testimony, especially on the gradual demise of the tower mill. There are also some nice pictures including one of Carter's post mill in working order and several

of members of the Carter family. There is a great deal of general interest beside the mills and altogether this is a very good effort with comes highly recommended. It can be obtained from the author at 11, Avenue Road, Chelmsford CM2 9TY, price £7.50 post free. (P.D.)

FAMOUS DUTCH MILL GUTTED BY FIRE

De Walvisch, one of the famous group of five giant tower mills at Schiedam in Holland, was gutted by a great fire on the night of February 15th 1996. The cause was a short circuit on the second floor. Damage was estimated at f.2M (about £800,000). The mill was well insured and will presumably be reinstated. The mill featured in the *Guinness Book of Records* as the world's tallest complete windmill. (M.B.)

EVENTS

S.M.G. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: SUNDAY JUNE 16th at LARK MILLS, MILL STREET, MILDENHALL

This year's A.G.M. is being held in Mildenhall, at the former roller mills on the River Lark. This is a fascinating site which was developed in a major way after the introduction of roller milling, and has some fine buildings. In the afternoon there will be an opportunity to see mills across the border in Cambridgeshire. Full details are given on a separate sheet with this newsletter.

*** 'HANDS ON' WORK ON MILLS ***

'WORK-IN' 1 AT STANTON POST MILL: JULY 20th - 28th

'WORK-IN' 2 AT STANTON POST MILL: AUGUST 10th - 18th

REPAIRS & DECORATION AT DRINKSTONE MILLS: ongoing through Summer

Unlike some mills groups, S.M.G. has always provided an opportunity for its members to participate in practical work on mills as well as visits and meetings. Summer is the time for such work, and we hope members will feel able to lend a hand at either Stanton or Drinkstone (or even both!). Details of the work and contact points are given in the above News section.

HERRINGFLEET WINDPUMP OPEN DAY: SUNDAY AUGUST 4th, from 1-5pm

This will be the second opening of the mill this year, and we hope there will be more wind than on National Mills Day. If any S.M.G. member living within about 10 miles of the mill can help publicity by putting up a poster or two, please contact Mark Barnard on 01473 265162 (office) or 01473 727853 (home).
