

SUFFOLK MILLS GROUP

Newsletter

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For those who have been closely involved with Suffolk Mills Group from the start, it is hard to believe that 1997 will see us celebrate our twentieth anniversary. An account of the formation of the Group was given in the first newsletter. The date was 28th May 1977, and the venue Woodbridge tide mill. The turnout was described as 'disappointing' (some things haven't changed!), although the discussion was 'lively' and the meeting 'easily controlled' (the disruptive element was obviously absent!). We are returning to the tide mill for our twentieth A.G.M. on June 22nd.

I hope to publish a review of the twenty years of S.M.G. in the next newsletter. As a small group, we can be proud of our achievements, but what of the future? We badly need more young members, and also new faces on the committee (preferably young new committee members!), in order to generate fresh ideas and enthusiasm, and to organise some events. There are many worthwhile and exciting things we could do to promote mills in Suffolk, but little will be achieved without more help.

Coming up in under a fortnight is the first of the year's events, the Ipswich public meeting, which will see Brian Flint and Chris Hullcoop speak on the past, present and future of Suffolk windmills. This and the following dates should be entered in your 1997 mill diary now.

S.M.G. public meeting, Ipswich	Saturday February 22nd
S.P.A.B. Spring meeting, London	Saturday March 15th
S.M.G. visit to Jordans	Tuesday April 15th
NATIONAL MILLS DAY	Sunday May 11th
S.P.A.B. Day Tour (Cheshire)	Saturday May 17th
S.M.G. visit to Walton mill	Sunday May 18th
S.M.G. Annual General Meeting	Sunday June 22nd

Mark Barnard

SOME MILLING MEMORIES Simon Cauthery

I was originally trained and employed as a Flour Milling Engineer / Flour Miller by Henry Simon Ltd. of Stockport. At that time (early 1960's) this company was probably the world leader in milling machinery manufacture and complete plant installations. Unfortunately they were by then coasting in their reputation and the lucrative post-war years and failed to keep abreast of changing requirements in the market. After two take-overs, all that's left is now Japanese owned! However it was a very interesting career and gave the opportunity to travel to the most unlikely sort of places and especially, early on, to work in some mills which had changed little since the turn of the century!

I think my first mill experience was in about 1948 when we lived next door to Bowman's Mill at Ickleford. This was then water and diesel powered and I well remember as a small child being given the treat of getting up early to watch the millers start the engine, which involved heating the cylinder head with a blow-lamp and (I think) starting on compressed air. I was very impressed!

Although not a water-powered mill (or steam even, at this time), my first actual practical milling experience was at Priday Metford & Co. Ltd., City Flour Mills, Gloucester where I was sent as a trainee for a year. At that time (1959-60) Gloucester was a proper and busy working port with much barge and coaster traffic up the Severn from the Bristol Channel. Pridays was a family business and a typical small port mill with good road, rail and water access and a medium capacity output of about 20 sacks per hour. The machinery was mostly by Simon and Robinson and dating mainly from the 1920's. Drive was by main motor and lineshafting.

I had to help out in all departments from grain intake and unloading through to packing. One of my favourite times was when the grain barges came up from Avonmouth. Pridays had two - one a 'dumb' barge and the other with a Gardner diesel and these were discharged by Priday's own suction pneumatic discharge system and thence by overhead chain conveyor to the dirty wheat bins in the mill. I was usually invited down for a cup of tea and a gossip in the little cabin where there was a red hot coke stove and kettle always on the boil. It's hard to remember now but in 1960 a lot of people working at the mill were veterans of the 1914-1918 war and I only wish now that I had questioned them closer. As it was they had quite a few tales to tell; the barge skipper was on armed trawlers and 'Q' ships and one of the shift foremen had been a Farrier Sergeant.

We visited Gloucester when on holiday three years ago and it was rather sad to see the Gloucester docks as little more than a sort of theme park. What warehouses remain are for leisure, retail, and so on. The mill itself was still there, shut down but not yet stripped out.

My first mission with Henry Simon was to assist in re-commissioning a large mill in Holland. This was one of those monster mills with roller mills and sifters as far as the eye could see but by far the most memorable thing was the 1,000 H.P. Stork steam engine, the twin horizontal cylinders driving by ropes to an enormous pulley. I couldn't keep away from the engine room (palace might be a better word). I believe this mill (Noury and Van de Lande) has long since ceased working. Incidentally, I drove from Manchester to Holland in my 1934 Austin 10 (this was in 1960) via Harwich with the car being loaded onto the ferry by crane into the hold. The car aroused considerable interest in Deventer and someone wanted to buy its tyres.

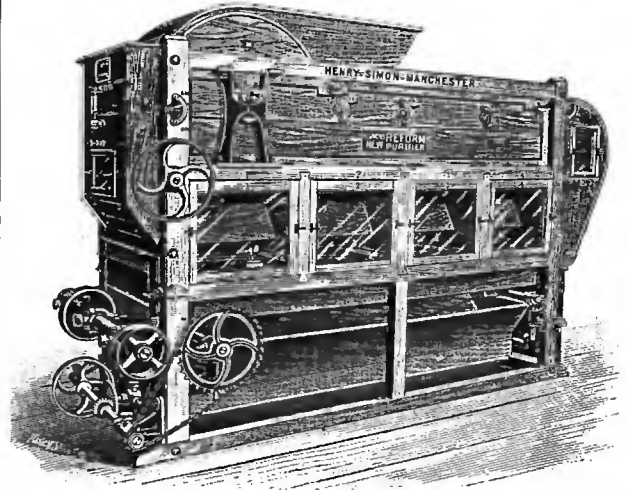
Later that year I was sent to a small mill to give 'technical assistance' although I was completely baffled by what I found. Witherington & Over Ltd. of Sonning, near Reading, was powered by two waterwheels and a standby diesel. It had a throughput of about four sacks an hour, 110 volt D.C. electricity and numerous other quaint features. I well remember asking the men packing bran why there were three sticks of differing height by the packing spouts.

The answer was obvious - the headroom was only about six feet so the long stick was to tamp the bran at the bottom of the sack, the medium stick when the bag was half full, the short stick when the bag was full. Simple! In attempting to adjust the roller mills I soon found that any increase in grinding pressures caused the lineshaft speed to drop so had to desist. The emergency stop was an electrically powered sluice gate to stop the water flow. The 110 volt supply came from a room full of glass accumulator cells. I was sorry to leave but there really was very little that I could contribute. One of the machines, a purifier, came straight out of Henry Simon's 1892 catalogue of which I have a copy.

After some years in the technical office and away commissioning mills in the U.K. and overseas (with rather more modern machinery), I married and looked for more settled employment and was engaged by Wm. C. Duffield Ltd. to manage their mill at Buxton near Norwich. This was in 1969 and the mill had a capacity of about three sacks (one tonne) of flour per hour working mainly Turner machinery dating from the 1920's and 1930's driven by 40 H.P. water turbine and electric motor onto lineshafting. We had a visiting millwright who regularly called to replace the applewood teeth in the turbine shaft drive gear. It was quite a struggle to keep the mill going, both from a mechanical point of view and

Roller milling machinery in Henry Simon's 1892 catalogue

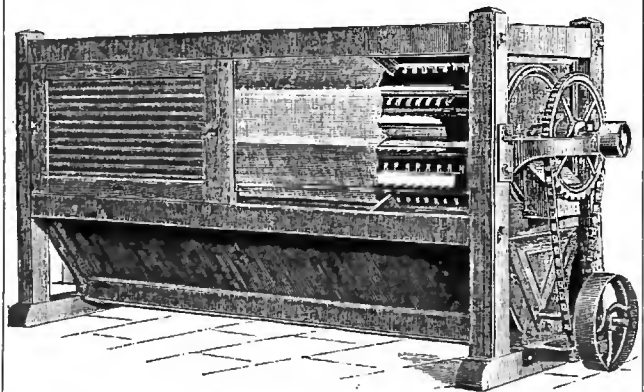
THE "SIMON" PATENT
NEW "REFORM" PURIFIER.



DIMENSIONS AND PRICES.

WITH PATENT TAIL ASPIRATION.								
Size of Machine.	Extreme Length.		Extreme Width.		Extreme Height.		Revolutions of Exccn. Shaft per minute.	PRICE.
	Ft.	In.	Ft.	In.	Ft.	In.		
Single	10	8	3	10	6	6	8 x 3	£120
Double	10	8	5	7	6	6	8 x 3	150
WITHOUT PATENT TAIL ASPIRATION.								
Single	9	3	3	10	6	6	8 x 3	£115
Double	9	3	5	7	6	6	8 x 3	140

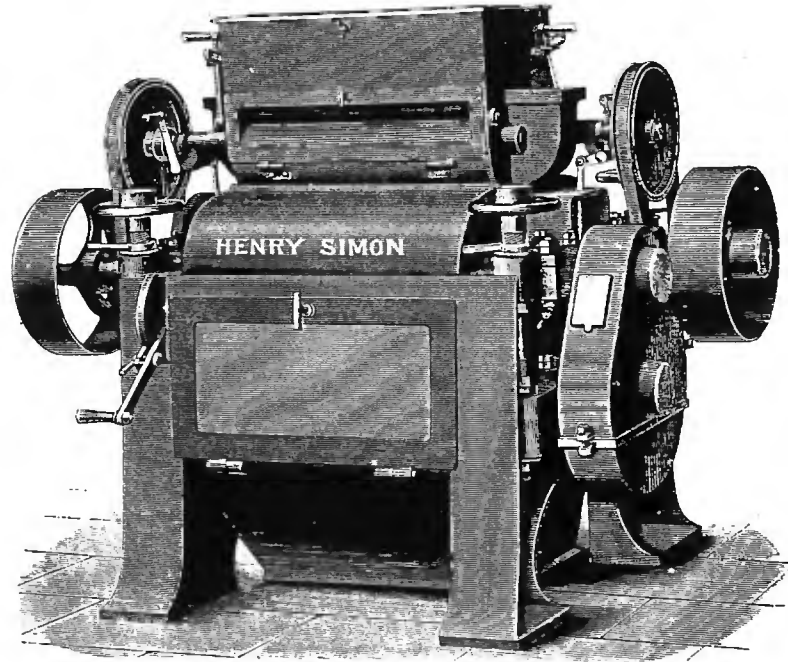
PATENT
CENTRIFUGAL DRESSING MACHINES.



DIMENSIONS AND PRICES.

No. 1.								
Size of Machine.	Extreme Length.		Extreme Width.		Extreme Height.		Revs. per Minute.	PRICE, including Silt cover.
	Ft.	In.	Ft.	In.	Ft.	In.		
2½ sheets	11	11	3	4	5	3½	140	£67 10
3 "	15	7½	3	4	5	3½	180	72 0
No. 11.								
Size of Machine.	Extreme Length.		Extreme Width.		Extreme Height.		Revs. per Minute.	PRICE, including Silt cover.
	Ft.	In.	Ft.	In.	Ft.	In.		
2 sheets	10	3½	2	7	4	4	120	£52 0
2½ "	11	11½	2	7	4	4	120	55 0
3 "	13	7½	2	7	4	4	120	58 0
Double Worm in Hopper							extra	£3 10
Patent Improved Brush							"	5 0

THE "SIMON" FOUR-ROLLER MILL. HEAVY PATTERN.



DIMENSIONS AND PRICES.

Approximate Size of Rolls.		Extreme Length.		Extreme Width.		Extreme Height.		Size of Pulleys.				Revolutions.		PRICE.			
								Fluted.		Smooth.		Fluted.	Smooth.	Fluted.	Smooth.		
In.	In.	Ft.	In.	Ft.	In.	Ft.	In.	In.	In.	In.			£	100	£	85	
16	9	4	8	3	6	4	0	16	5½	20	5½	375	220	£	100	£	85
20	9	5	0	3	6	4	3½	16	5½	20	5½	375	220	115	100		
24	9	5	3	3	6	4	3½	16	5½	20	5½	375	220	125	110		
32	9	5	11	3	6	4	3½	16	5½	20	5½	375	220	145	125		
24	10	6	0	3	7½	4	4½	16	5½	20	5½	350	180	145	125		
32	10	6	8	3	7½	4	4½	16	5½	20	5½	350	180	160	140		
40	10	7	4	3	11½	4	9	16	5½	20	5½	350	180	200	180		

Henry Simon's Four-Roller Mill (1892)

to get people to run the three eight-hour shifts. We had a large flat store nearby and it was at times a constant shuttle to keep the mill fed and many was the Saturday or Sunday I spent the day filling the Seddon tipper lorry from the flat store by auger and then driving 50 yards to tip another 8-10 tonnes into the dirty wheat bins.

Duffields had two other mill units at that time; one at Tharston and the other at Saxlingham Thorpe. The Tharston mill (run by Harry Duffield) was a little gem and kept absolutely immaculately. It was a four sack unit, powered by turbine and a 40 H.P. Ruston oil engine. The machinery which was a small-scale version of standard roller milling equipment was by William Dell of London. At Saxlingham the mill had been waterwheel powered and the substantial four-storey brick building housed four pairs of 4ft 6ins diameter stones. (I still have the Clarke & Dunham balance weight cover plate off one stone.) These stones were by

now individually motor driven and in constant use, making special wholemeal biscuit flour.

In 1969 the Duffields made the bold decision to build a new flour milling unit with a capacity of 40 sacks of flour per hour and to close down and sell off the Buxton and Tharston mills. The new mill unit was to be in the Saxlingham mill building with the stones being re-located to the area previously taken up by the waterwheel. It was my job to supervise and organise the whole thing and a very exciting and stimulating experience it proved to be. The whole project was completed in nine months at a total cost of £200,000 which was good going even then.

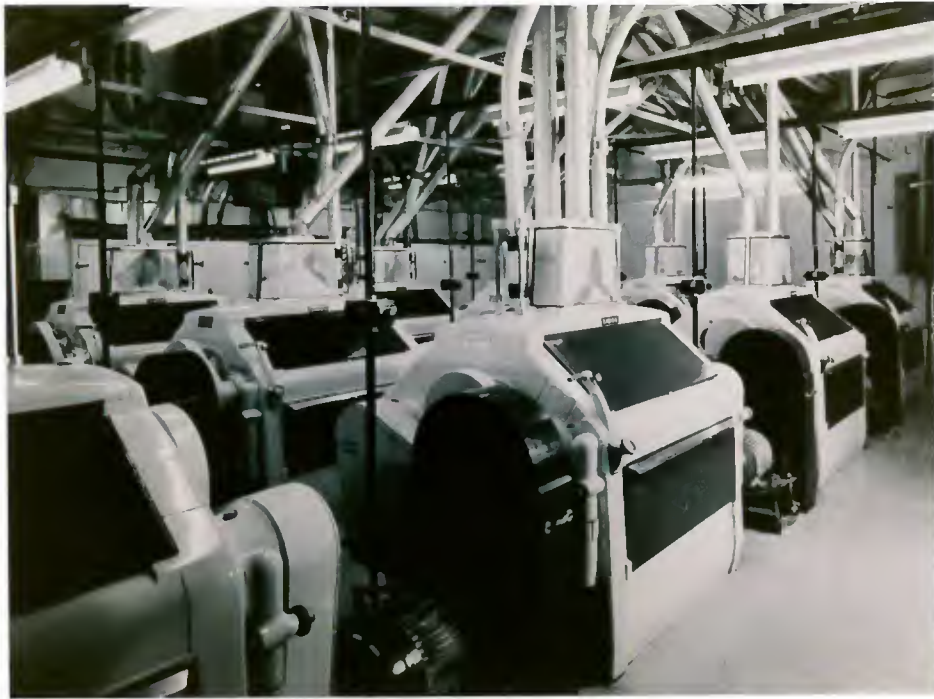
The main machinery contractors were Henry Simon Ltd.. I can still remember with amusement their project engineer's amazement at some of our ways and thoughts! Although we were building a substantial steel frame structure including storage bins onto the first floor brickwork of the old engine house, it was not considered necessary to carry out a soil survey. Harry Duffield said that his grandfather always said that there was more money spent below ground than above it and if it could stand the weight of the boiler chimney it would be O.K. for the new structure! I think planning and building regulations in 1970 were a little less strictly applied.

It was sad to see the other two mills close. I believe some of the Tharston machinery went to the Strangers Hall museum in Norwich. I still have one of the Buxton mill lineshaft pulleys. It's of wooden construction, very substantial, and I have mounted it on its side on a short pedestal with a glass top over the spokes to make a very effective coffee table.

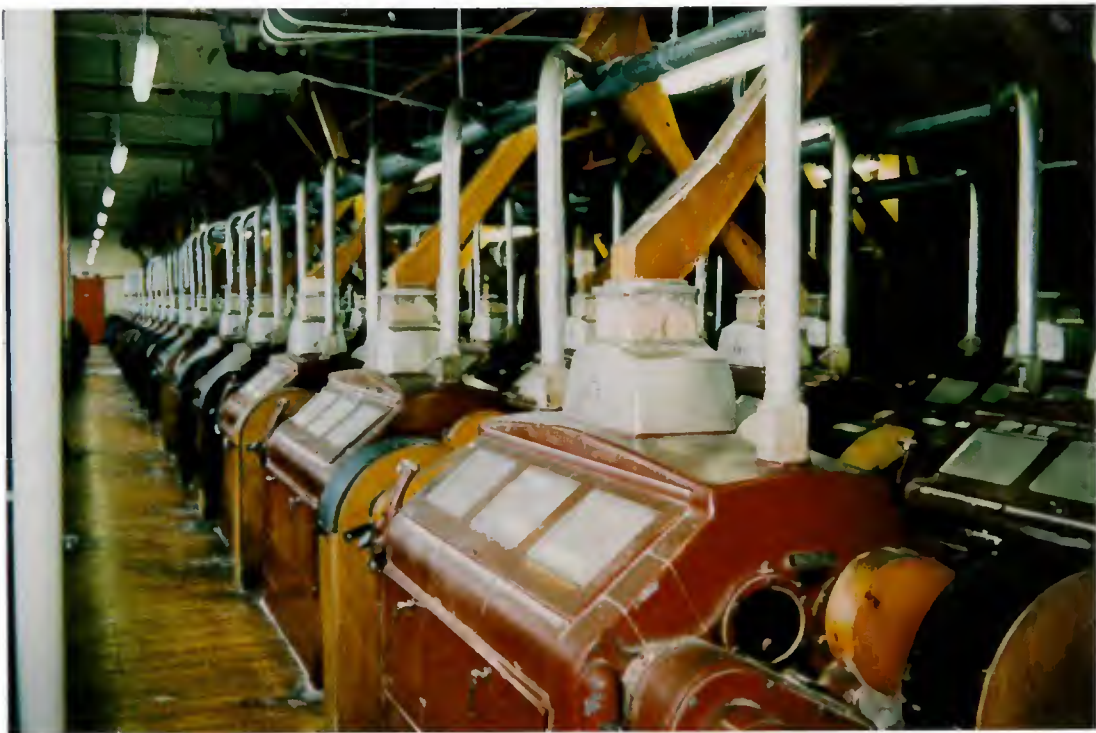
After three years at Duffields we moved to South Africa and since then my milling experiences have been rather more up to date. It is amazing how in the comparatively short space of about



The old Saxlingham mill (March 1969)



Simon's roller mills at Saxlingham
installed 1970 and now dismantled



Rank's roller mill at Hull: about 50 years old,
it is probably the last of its kind in use

25 or 30 years the milling industry has progressed from the many small and antiquated operations which must have been just viable at outputs of less than one tonne per hour, to the present day system controlled by three major producers and a handful of independents, where to be commercially viable a capacity of at least 200 tonnes a day of wheat has to be processed (7-8 tonnes of flour per hour). Furthermore a modern mill is now almost entirely computer controlled with wheat blending, moisture addition, roller mill settings and the like all carried out automatically. I suppose it's progress but it has taken the skill and pleasure out of the art of milling.

Unfortunately Duffield's 'new' mill of 1970 was unable to remain competitive in the 1980's and shut down and was dismantled after just 20 years operation, although they run a very successful animal feed production unit on the site.

I believe there is still one of the old style giant mills left, Rank's mill at Hull, which is scarcely changed since it was rebuilt after the last war. It has two roller mill floors, all centrifugal dressers, all suction filters and all lineshaft driven from a monster slow revving electric motor in a gleaming tiled and polished motor room. This is essentially a pre-war concept and well worth looking at before it disappears.

PUTTING MILLS IN THE PICTURE (5) Peter Steggall

CONSTABLE COUNTRY - WINDMILLS AT EAST BERGHOLT

On permanent view in Christchurch Mansion, Ipswich, is a beautiful oil painting (13"x20") by John Constable of 'Golding Constable's Kitchen Garden'. It was painted in 1815 and shows in great detail the view looking east from the back of John's father's house (which is no longer there) near the church in East Bergholt. Beyond the kitchen garden are fields and hedges and trees, and in the distance, small but clear, is a white windmill, probably a post mill. A little to the right, on the skyline, one can see what might have been the sails of another mill.

In the Victoria and Albert Museum, which has the largest collection of Constable pictures, there is an oil painting (7½"x14½") of 1814 entitled 'Spring - Ploughing in flat country near a windmill'. It shows a man following a plough drawn by two horses across a field between a cottage and a windmill - it looks like a post mill (see p.8). That mill and cottage may also be the subject of a pencil, pen and ink and watercolour picture (5"x8 ") 'Cottage and Windmill', 1832 (in the British Museum), but to me that looks more like a smock mill. The V & A also has 'Windmill and Sheep', a pen and watercolour picture (5 "x8 ") which shows a similar mill, probably at East Bergholt.

In all four of these pictures, the windmill is a feature adding interest to a wide landscape in a small picture, whereas watermills, particularly at Flatford and Dedham, were the actual and dominant subjects of many of Constable's largest and best-known pictures. Those two mills have survived and there are visible remains of the one at Stratford St. Mary; I wrote about them in June 1996 (Newsletter No.65). In contrast none of the



'Spring - Ploughing in flat country near a windmill'

pictures of windmills at East Bergholt gives a precise location, and none of the mills has survived.

At first I thought that the two (if there were two!) windmills seen in the distance beyond 'Golding Constable's Kitchen Garden' were on sites mentioned by Brian Flint in his book *Suffolk Windmills* (1979); he quotes NGR 083349 and 084350. The former is the location of what is now 'Old Mill House', and the other is about 250 yards to the north-east beside Mill Road. However, neither the tithe map of 1837 nor its accompanying schedule records a windmill at either site, or indeed anywhere in East Bergholt, even though there are several 'Mill Fields'. It is interesting to note that the two sites referred to by Brian were, in 1837, owned by John's brother, Abram, who had succeeded their father, Golding Constable, as owner and operator of Flatford watermill. But the parish map of 1816 shows a windmill at Mill Road, which was probably the one seen from the family house. That mill appears on the O.S. map of 1890, but not on the 1905 edition.

I went to East Bergholt in November 1996, and found what must have been the windmill site at Mill Road (NGR 084350). There is still a small, separate enclosure corresponding with one shown on the old maps, including the tithe map. It is now surrounded by twentieth century orchards, and looks like a disused coal yard. It contains an old, pantiled, red brick and weatherboarded building which may have been associated with the mill of which I could see no remains. Just across the road is 'Mill Cottage' which appears to be late Victorian. At 'Old Mill House', according to the present owner, there is no trace or evidence of a windmill; Peter Dolman tells me there was a mill there but that it had disappeared by the time of the first Ordnance Survey (1796-1800).

Looking back, I appear to have been tilting at rather elusive paper windmills, and to have added nothing to our stock of knowledge, but I have spent several enjoyable hours in the Suffolk Record Office and at East Bergholt. I intend to repeat the

experience soon in the neighbouring parish of Brantham, where Constable also drew one or more windmills.

VANISHED MILLS Peter Dolman

LONDON ROAD, BECCLES

This site (Grid Ref. 422898) is unusual as two large tower mills occupied it in succession. The first mill is recorded on Greenwood's map (1823-4) and in 1823 Joseph Oldring is listed as miller; he died in early 1824. Samuel Clutton, with premises in Hungate Street, took the lease in February 1827 and the executors of Joseph Oldren (sic) attempted to sell the mill in January 1834 when Clutton is given as tenant at £150 annual rent, the mill being described as a '*substantially built brick tower windmill, with patent sails, six floors, three pairs of stones...*'; the lease was stated to expire in January 1837. In 1839 another Joseph Holdren (sic) is listed and the tithe map of 1840 gives William Delf as owner and Joseph Oldring as occupier. This Joseph met with financial difficulties, causing him to auction his effects in April 1842 and to offer the mill to be let, by which time it had four pairs of stones and also had a flour mill, stripping mill, jumper and smutter. It was obviously a substantial mill and it was put up for auction in May 1842 when it was acquired by Robert Burtsal, owner of Ellingham watermill and several windmills at Bungay and elsewhere. He offered it to be let in October 1842 although he is himself listed at the mill in 1844. David Walker is listed in 1850 and in 1854 J.D. Eastaugh of Ingate mill sold the goodwill to Charles Hadingham, of Waterloo mill, Bramfield. Charles Hadingham took an eight year lease for £80 per annum from Robert Burtsal and following Burtsal's death in April 1856 and the subsequent auction in July he was able to acquire the mill.

At some point it was rebuilt to the extraordinary height of over 80 feet, with nine floors. The 1856 sale notice gives no clues but since Burtsal had been a wealthy man and Hadingham was then relatively young I suspect that it was during Burtsal's time that the rebuild took place; this is given further weight by the mill being called 'Paramount Mill' in 1855. Charles Hadingham added a Riches & Watts (of Norwich) 10 H.P. vertical steam engine in 1857 which was coupled to three pairs of stones and the flour dresser. The mill continued thus until in 1890 Charles Hadingham announced that he had added porcelain roller mills (a bad move, as they were a blind alley in milling technology). In February 1894 Charles' executors (he had recently died) announced that they would continue the business, C.W. Hadingham assuming control.

The mill was tailwinded on March 15th 1896 when the fantail was blown off and this seems to have prompted the dismantling of the old machinery and sails. The old engine and boiler were offered for sale in July 1896 and the sails and the old engine (now of 14 H.P.) were offered for sale in September 1896, the mill having been refitted with new roller plant by Turner and a 20 H.P. horizontal engine, also by Riches & Watts. In January 1897 it was offered for auction but was withdrawn at £975, being subsequently sold to Nathaniel Pells of Castle Mill. He ran the tower mill as a steam roller mill for many years, presumably ceasing in 1909, when

he sold the Castle Mill. It may have been run by Green for a while (although still in Pell's ownership) but had certainly finished by 1912. It is not clear whether the sails did in fact get sold in 1896, for 'wind gear' is mentioned in passing in the 1897 sale particulars and the sails were said to have been removed c.1903 according to Robert Martin, the local millwright (whose earlier namesake had probably built the mill). Many postcard views of the mill survive so it may well have made it beyond 1900. The cap remained to the end, which came following an auction of the by now gutted mill in October 1922. Demolition took place in 1923, two photographs being taken, one of which catches the windshaft, stated to weigh four tons, in mid flight.

The various sale particulars and photographs show it to have been a splendid mill, worthy of the name 'Paramount'. The ground floor was 25ft inside diameter and contained a partitioned office with fitted desk and safe and the top floor was 15ft inside diameter. The mill was variously claimed to be 100ft or 90ft high. However, taking known dimensions and distant photographs to reduce parallax I would estimate it to have been about 85ft over the cap, with 75ft span sails. When a windmill it was driven by four 10-bay patent sails with shutters of almost equal width both sides of the whip. The four pairs of French stones were on the third floor and there was a reefing stage at second floor level. The cap was a typical boat shape with the tail gable smaller than the front and a curved ridge. It had a gallery and deep vertical petticoat. The sheers only projected a little way with the fly frame built on overlays; below this was a long chain guide. The fantail had six blades. The tower showed no sign of having been raised, being of even batter all the way up although there was a 'tide mark' level with the stage. The tower was very well built, with windows on alternating floors aligned to avoid weakening it too much. As last worked it had roller mills on the first floor, with other machinery above including purifiers, reels and a centrifugal. In addition two pairs of stones and an oat crusher were retained, no doubt to cater for animal feed business. An unusual feature was a speaking tube between ground and eighth floor, to allow sack hoisting to be co-ordinated. It was a powerful mill and in the 1890's Claude Aldridge's (of Barningham Mill) grandfather went inside it while it was running in a breeze expecting to see two pairs of stones in use and found to his amazement that it was driving all four.



The mill in c.1895

VANISHED MILLS: SECOND THOUGHTS ON BREDFIELD

Re-reading my notes in the last newsletter on the earlier post mills I became troubled by some aspects of the January 1829 sale notice. Firstly, although the present A12 does indeed clip Bredfield parish, the earlier Turnpike did not, passing through Melton and missing Bredfield by over half a mile! None of the reference books I have seen show any Turnpike roads in Bredfield at all, although some of the through roads may have been improved by 1829. The vendor, William Westrup, was definitely at the northern post mill site in the 1820's and it is quite possible that the mill had indeed been moved by the time of his advertisement (in several local papers) for the auction on 2nd January 1829, bearing in mind the new lease just started. In March 1831 Westrup was selling his effects when at Melton. In May 1831 Westrup was bankrupt, '*late of Bredfield, now of Melton*'. From the subsequent letting notice it is clear he was at the large post mill to the west of Melton which later found its way to Weeley, Essex. Another dubious statement in the 1829 advertisement is that it was the only mill in four adjoining parishes. In 1829 Bredfield was surrounded by Dallinghoo Wield (which had no population, let alone a mill), Dallinghoo and Boulge which had no mills, and Hasketon (two windmills), Melton (watermill and one windmill), Ufford (watermill and one windmill) and Pettistree (one windmill) which did. Three out of seven is a bit different to the claim!

Taking all the above I believe that I have been misled by a particularly fraudulent advertisement, issued by a trader in severe financial difficulties! The local historian Val Norrington (from whom a lot of the references used for my article came) is of the opinion that the mill for sale in 1829 was on the same site as the earlier ones. Like me, she is mystified at the reference to a Turnpike road. It just goes to prove that you can't believe what you read in the papers! I am also very suspicious that the mill which burnt down in the dead of night in late February 1831 was the same one that William Westrup (an impending bankrupt) had been running for nearly ten years when at Bredfield. Did he perhaps have something to do with the fire?

NEWS

WICKEN CORN WINDMILL REPAIRS IN 1996

There has been considerable progress at Wicken in 1996, culminating in the erection of the sails in July. In the early part of the year the Group concentrated on preparations for the sail lift. The sails themselves had been essentially complete in 1995 and ready for lift-on, the largest outstanding task being to complete the required number of coats of lead paint. The painted surface of the stocks and sail frames is enormous, and despite the best efforts of the painting team, painting was only just completed in time for the July target.

The other major tasks prior to sail erection were to make and erect the new brakewheel and brake. The originals had survived sufficiently to act as patterns, but their condition was too poor for re-use in a working mill. The components for the replacement

compass-arm brakewheel were completed and fitted during a work-in early in the year, after years of highly skilled effort. This included making and fitting a new and reliable centring on the windshaft, to replace the old and life expired timber arrangement. We have still to make most of the brakewheel gear segments, which will not be needed for some time. The wheel was erected onto the windshaft piece by piece, a heavy and exacting task in itself. Meanwhile the brake was finalised, of heavy elm segments. Fitting the brake band was also a considerable challenge.

The sails were erected by hand over a period of four days, beginning on July 6th. We were fortunate to have the invaluable advice, assistance and guidance of Vincent Pargeter, the Essex County Council millwright, over the first two days. The only concessions to modern methods were the use of Tirfor winches (anchored to the rear of Andrew Kite's AEC lorry), and, of course, many nylon ropes. With adequate man (and woman) power, the sails went up without serious mechanical hitch, the most difficult aspect probably being the fitting of the stock clamps, and the fitting of the striking rod, which at Wicken has to be inserted from the front after the stocks are in place.

We are currently assembling the striking gear, and working on the internal machinery. This year we expect to fit sufficient shutters for the sails to idle in a moderate breeze. Inside the mill we will concentrate on all those items which will be necessary to allow the first pair of stones to work, and the first sack of corn to be ground (in approximately 18 months to two years I hope).

We again wish to thank all the volunteers who have worked on the mill over the years: your help has been invaluable. We are now very much in sight of completing the repairs to the mill, and will be holding our usual two work-ins this year. The proposed dates are: June 7th-15th; August 23rd-31st. We hope to see you there! (If you would like to come along please contact Dave Pearce on 01664 822751.) (D.P.)

WORK AT DRINKSTONE IN 1996

The end of 1996 saw the twin mills at Drinkstone standing out boldly in their many gallons of new white paint.

The aluminium covering has been on the smock mill cap for over two years and on the post mill for over a year. Before it could be painted, the first task was to scrub the metal with detergent followed by a good rinse. The surface was then scratched with a wire brush to give a rough surface for better paint adhesion. The special etching primer had to be made up by mixing two components, one based on yellow zinc chromate and the other based on an acid. It was very encouraging to see the hazard symbols and warnings displayed on the containers. So often you feel that many treatments including paints have been made so totally foolproof you could use them as sandwich spread. Unfortunately this can mean that the product has lost many of the qualities needed for its intended purpose. Of course toxic paints should not be included in children's paint boxes, put on their toys or on kitchen surfaces. North Sea oil rigs, chemical plants and windmill roofs are not for young children or those likely to consume rather than use the

paint for its correct purpose.

Undercoats and top coats followed, I.C.I. at Stowmarket having kindly donated some white paint. I wondered what their technicians would think as I added some black to the brilliant white they had worked so hard to produce! This was to make the paint a very light silver colour more appropriate to old mills.

For several years the smock mill has been adorned by a substantial but inelegant gallery essential for the repairs. This has now been removed and the ten small holes at curb level through which the gallery supports projected have been fitted with covers which are hardly noticeable. Thus with the components stored in the mill the gallery/platform could be quickly and easily set out again to allow maintenance. Few think of provision for maintenance these days and costly all-over scaffolding absorbs much of the funds intended for maintenance. The builders of many tall

Lincolnshire tower mills set two neat holes about four feet apart a little below the petticoat. Thus when the cap roof needs repair or painting it is easy to fit a platform based on two substantial bearers passing through the brickwork. Any part of the cap roof could then be reached by turning the cap. We should try to think more about ways of making maintenance affordable, otherwise it will be done infrequently and ineffectively, and mills will not survive.

On the smock tower itself laths have been nailed on as further anchorage for the black polythene sheets which have lasted for nearly 20 years. The 16-sided horse mill which forms the base has been further patched. A few new boards, some more Flashband here and there and three coats of paint will see it through many years yet. Rather like a giant pepper pot the unique smock tower looks better now than it has done for years.

At the post mill (pictured right) the winding gear needed



some more attention. The very old fly blades now turning their third windmill had to be patched and painted. The single pair of flypost stays were in good condition but it is always best to have a second pair and these have now been fitted about two feet below the first pair. As well as adding strength the two pairs of stays allow quick and easy access to the fly spindle bearings and the top gears. The roundhouse roof has been further patched, not elegant but waterproof and at minimal cost. It would be nice to repair this roof properly one day, but unfortunately there is not enough money or volunteer time. We have to accept what can be done with available resources.

Several fans of Dad's Army have called to see the post mill. The episode where Captain Mainwaring and his men capture the mill as a military exercise was repeated on T.V. last year. It was done rather well, with Corporal Jones climbing onto a sail just before the mill started. He goes around on the sails (or rather a dummy does) while the Captain goes into the roundhouse to try to stop the mill by jamming his baton in the machinery. He emerges from the roundhouse with his baton crushed and Corporal Jones falls from the sails into a pond. Lots of scriptwriter's licence, but all good fun. Winifred Clover remembers the day the episode was filmed and how Captain Mainwaring (Arthur Lowe) fell into some nettles and had a good swear! All this was 25 years ago.

Another job was to re-felt the roof of the 1860's wooden chassis railway carriage in which wasps had made a nest. Fortunately the wasps did not bother us and we respected them, so no stings or cyanide.

Thanks are due to those who helped during 1996: Brian Flint, Richard Powling, Malvern Tipping, John Capps, Zen and Lucy Rabenda (who taught me to swear in Polish!), Des Codd, who collected our paint from I.C.I., and Denis Bowers who undertook drilling and welding on demand. The mills look well and are now another year closer to their fifth century. (C.H.)

PAKENHAM WINDMILL WINS THE LOTTERY

News just announced is that Pakenham windmill's application for grant aid from the Heritage Lottery Fund has been successful. A trust will be formed to administer the mill, which will be returned to working order. S.M.G. will report on future progress.

CORTON'S WINDMILLS

Michael Soanes (of Woodside, Long Lane, Corton, NR32 5HD) has just published a booklet containing a very detailed account of the various windmills in the parish, including of course the tower mill which survives in house-converted form. It is well illustrated and includes technical as well as historical details. I recommend any of you with an interest in Suffolk's bygone mills to contact the author for a copy. The price is not known. (P.D.)

VANDALS STRIKE AT HERRINGFLEET MILL

Herringfleet mill was entered by vandals in January, who forced a door, removed several weatherboards and rummaged through the interior. The incident underlines the mill's vulnerability. (M.B.)

EVENTS

S.M.G. PUBLIC MEETING: 'SUFFOLK WINDMILLS'; LECTURE ROOM, IPSWICH CENTRAL LIBRARY; SATURDAY FEBRUARY 22nd at 7.30pm

This year we have two 'home grown' speakers, Brian Flint and Chris Hullcoop, who will look at the past, present and future of the county's windmills. Brian's many years of research culminated in the publication of his book *Suffolk Windmills* in 1979, while Chris has devoted much of his spare time over the last 30 years to the repair of Suffolk's mills. Please make the effort to attend so we get a good turnout to launch our 20th anniversary year.

VISIT TO JORDANS AT HOLME MILLS, BIGGLESWADE: TUESDAY APRIL 15th; meet 11.30am by the flour mill

Our member John Jordan has kindly agreed to show us around this famous site where there is a flour mill, a feed mill and a cereal plant. Unfortunately Health and Safety regulations will prevent us from seeing the cereal plant. While it may be possible to glimpse parts of the cereal plant, members particularly interested in the cereals must bear in mind this limitation on our visit. There will however still be plenty to see in a fine watermill riverside setting and the good company of John Jordan.

Holme Mills is about a mile south of Biggleswade, just off the A6001 Henlow road, at NGR 185430.

HERRINGFLEET WINDPUMP WORKING DEMONSTRATION: NATIONAL MILLS DAY, SUNDAY MAY 11th, from 1-5pm

The planned New Year's Day opening of Herringfleet did not take place owing to the snow and ice (remember?). This means that the first opening of 1997 will be as usual on N.M.D., when we hope for windy weather and plenty of visitors.

VISIT TO WALTON SMOCK MILL, FELIXSTOWE: SUNDAY MAY 18th from 2pm

Our member Stephen Bloomfield has kindly agreed to our visit. We will be able to see the excellent conservation work on the tower carried out by carpenter Rick Lewis, and the aluminium roof fitted by Chris Armour. Soon after the work started those familiar words 'Its worse than we thought' were heard. With a tight budget, some compromise had to be made but Rick is a man who really enjoys his work and he pressed on regardless to see it finished.

We must not forget that five years ago Stephen saved the mill from destruction by fire. He carried buckets of water into the smoke-filled tower preventing the blaze from spreading until the fire brigade arrived.

Walton mill is on the south side of Walton High Street at NGR 290358. Go through the gateway immediately to the right of the Murco garage; there's plenty of space to park by the mill.

S.M.G. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: SUNDAY JUNE 22nd at 11am

Our twentieth A.G.M. will see us return to where S.M.G. was born, the tide mill at Woodbridge, for what may prove a nostalgic occasion. More details in the next newsletter.

STANTON WINDMILL WORK-INS: JULY 19th-27th & AUGUST 9th-17th

What can be done at this year's work-ins depends entirely on the number of volunteers attending, so plans are fairly open at present. Repairs to sails and fly carriage are likely to be a high priority as well as getting one pair of stones running. The usual work-in arrangements apply: there is space for tents and some accommodation could also be available. The full facilities of the house can be used for cooking, washing, etc. and basic provisions can be provided if required. Please let Peter Dolman know if you would like to help (01359 250622).

Other Events

Friends of Norfolk Windmills Anniversary Dinner

Like S.M.G., Friends of Norfolk Windmills was formed in 1977 and to celebrate they are holding an anniversary dinner at the Oaklands Hotel, Yarmouth Road, Thorpe St. Andrew, Norwich on Saturday April 5th. The cost will be approximately £15 each (excluding bar charges). The invitation is extended to S.M.G. members and anyone wishing to attend should contact Bernard Grayling, 2, Davidson Close, Norwich NR7 0XD (01603 434804), enclosing a £5 deposit, before the end of March.

We would like to arrange a joint visit with the Friends and hope to do so later in the year.

Suffolk Mills Course, Flatford Mill Field Studies Centre

Peter Dolman will once again be running this short weekend course to study some of our surviving mills in detail, with a chance to play at miller thrown in. The course starts on the Friday evening and finishes at 5pm on the Sunday. The cost is £107 for residents and £84 for non-residents, which includes meals and transport. This year two courses are running: March 21st-23rd and September 26th-28th. Contact the FSC at Flatford Mill, East Bergholt, Colchester CO7 6UL.

Friends of Norfolk Windmills trip to Holland

Following their enjoyable Franco-Belgian trip in 1996, the Friends have arranged a visit to West-Brabant, between Rotterdam and the Belgian border, with the help of the local mill society. Four full days are planned in Holland, from June 6th-9th, visiting some 25 different windmills plus the Kinderdijk. The sea crossing is on the new high speed ferry which comes into service on the Harwich - Hook route at the beginning of June. Travel in Holland will be by coach. The cost is in the region of £250. If interested please contact John Capps on 01508 480301 *as soon as possible*.

Island Holidays visit to the mills of the Cyclades

A new Greek mill tour is planned for 1997 following the successful trips to Crete. Mills will be visited on Paros, Mykonos, Tinos and Andros. The cost of the 8-night tour is £975. Details from Island Holidays, Drummond Street, Comrie, Perthshire PH6 2DS (01764 670107).
