

SUFFOLK MILLS GROUP

Newsletter

No.69
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Hon. Secretary: PETER DOLMAN
Mill Farm, Upthorpe Road, Stanton,
Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk. IP31 2AW

Editor: MARK BARNARD
41, Melbourne Road,
Ipswich, Suffolk. IP4 5PP



Much water has passed under the bridge, and wind through the sails, since the last newsletter nearly six months ago. S.M.G.'s first appearance at the Suffolk Show was greatly enjoyed by those who manned our stand, and although we did not recruit a single new member (despite several promises!), there was plenty of interest shown in the mill model and old photographs. Our A.G.M. in June was reasonably well attended, as was the September visit to Old Buckenham mill. On the repairs front, work was carried out at Stanton (during two 'work-ins'), Drinkstone, Great Wheltenham and Thorndon.

During the summer we circulated all members of the Group and the SPAB Wind and Watermill Section with news of the impending sale of the Drinkstone mills. The response was good and we hope that the property will now pass into the hands of an enthusiastic SPAB member.

Pressure of time has so far prevented the publication of a newsletter article to mark our twentieth anniversary, but I hope this can be put right in the next issue, due in February. I would very much welcome other newsletter contributions from members as my stock of material is now very low. Please help if you can, especially with mill memories or visits.

The mill diary for the next few months is as follows.

S.M.G. Social evening (Stowmarket)	Saturday December 6th
S.M.G. public meeting (Ipswich)	Saturday February 21st
SPAB Windmill Meeting (London)	Saturday March 21st

Mark Barnard

VISIT TO WEST-BRABANT Mark Barnard

This Friends of Norfolk Windmills visit in early June resulted from an invitation by the local mill society, 'De Westbrabantse Molens', made during last year's Franco-Belgian tour. From past experience I knew that the combination of Dutch mills and enthusiastic and knowledgeable local guides would make for a memorable visit, and so it turned out.

Our small party was whisked across the North Sea on the new high speed ferry from Harwich, an experience in itself on what was only the fourth day of the new service. At Hoek van Holland we were met by Ton Meesters and Piet Kruisenga, who had organised everything for us, including the waiting air-conditioned coach. Various mills were pointed out on the way to our destination, mere appetisers before the main courses over the next four days. Our base was the village of Hoeven, about eight miles west of Breda, in a conference centre converted from the former Bovendonk

seminary. This is a large and impressive example of Dutch neo-gothic architecture, replete with decorative brick and tile, which we seemed to have almost to ourselves! After dinner we walked to Hoeven's windmill, *De Toekomst*, an 1862 tower mill built into a mound. The restoration in 1969 had retained all the later power-driven machinery. This, as we were to discover, is still unusual in Holland, later machinery and even auxiliary engines normally being removed in mill restorations, even today. The voluntary miller, Niek van Eekelen, showed us how the Fok sails worked. Their curved leading edge (all in timber) has a flap at the outer end which can be tensioned so that centrifugal force makes it open to spill the wind above a certain speed. Even though there was little wind, the mill was started up for us. Like many privately-owned mills we saw, it had a sail revolution counter, as a subsidy of about 32p is paid for every 150 revolutions, up to an annual maximum of about £1000.

Friday dawned warm but calm as we set off at 8.45am sharp. Our first two mills, Huijbergen on the Belgian border, and Halsteren, were tower mills built into mounds. Halsteren mill was painted white, in the Zeeland tradition, and had two Old Dutch and two Fok sails. The miller, Frans Moerland, still uses it for producing animal feed on a part-time basis and he duly spread two sail cloths (bright yellow plastic!) and got the sails turning. It was repaired in 1947-8 after war damage, and we noticed that the tail beam was a crowntree re-used from a post mill. Next was *De Vos* at Heense Molen, a beautifully maintained tower mill, set on a mound but not built into it. The mill was built in 1714 to replace a 1650 post mill. Various parts of the post mill had been re-used, including the prick post (which still had a carved flower motif



De Vos at Heense Molen

and traces of red ochre paint), the sheers and the very large brakewheel. It was easy to see that the second pair of stones had been added later. By this time there was a good breeze, and as Ton was voluntary miller here he took great delight in demonstrating it for us. I just had time for a quick peek at the c.1930 diesel engine and hurst frame in a separate little building nearby before it was time to move on.

After lunch in Nieuw-Vossemeer we visited the large smock mill *De Assumburg* in the same village. This was brought here in 1897 from the Zaan area near Amsterdam, where it had been an oil mill. Many such industrial mills in the Zaan area were sold off in this way in the late 19th century as they were no longer competitive. However, in the West Brabant area windmills were still being built at this time as the population was expanding. Although *De Assumburg* had been heavily restored and no longer worked, the massive oak framing of the smock and its main floorbeams made it easy to imagine its earlier, highly stressed use. The lower floors housed several mill models. A cross on the nearby dyke was a reminder of the terrible 1953 floods. Here they swept away the mill house and most of the miller's family.

For the remainder of the day we crossed into the Province of Zeeland, bringing back happy memories of the S.M.G. trip with Richard Duke in 1984. *De Hoop* at St Philipsland was the smallest corn mill we visited, a pretty smock with yellow-ochre coloured weatherboarding, attractively situated beside the estuary. Still complete, it worked until 1972. The day's last mill was on the island of Tholen. Here the survival rate of mills is high, and the area's isolation meant that most mills worked until the 1960's. Nearly every village has a mill, and some have two. Heaven! We drove past the tower mill at St. Annaland and headed for the post mill, whose sails were turning fast. It dated from 1684, was heavily restored in the mid 1960's and no longer grinds. We were also told that the body was now slightly smaller and the decorative elements on the breast were not part of the local tradition. Like other post mills we saw, the brakewheel drove two pairs of stones direct, one pair in the conventional way and the second pair via a stone nut set forward of the brakewheel, driving down to the floor below. The trestle had paired quarter bars and a finely-carved date 1772 on the main post. As we had a little time to spare, we drove round the island before heading back to Hoeven. It was wonderful to see mills in or around every village. Suffolk must have been like this once, I thought.

One advantage of our accommodation was the spacious and comfortable communal areas, where each evening we relaxed by watching mill videos and slides. Not a moment was wasted!

On Saturday we ventured north into the polderlands of South Holland Province, where the combination of green fields and waterways looked glorious on a sunny and clear morning. First stop was *Peilmolen* at Oud-Alblas, a drainage tower mill with a large iron scoopwheel, which we didn't go inside as it was now mainly living accommodation. From there we could see the morning's other two mills merrily turning, and we walked to them, which somehow made our visit even more enjoyable. The first mill, *De Hoop*, was also a tower mill, but with a reefing stage. It had that



Smock mill De Hoop at
St Philipsland



Post mill at St Annaland,
Tholen



St Annaland post mill: the direct drive off the
brakewheel to the two pairs of stones



Working wipmolen and tjasker at Bleskensgraaf

unmistakable atmosphere of a mill in regular use, in this case as part of an animal feeds business. During our visit it was grinding maize. Close by, but in the parish of Bleskensgraaf, was a splendid wipmolen or hollow post mill. Miller here was Aart Schouten, who had organised the day and joined us on the coach in the afternoon. This mill had been raised 1.3m in 1872 in order to install a larger scoopwheel as more lift was needed, and larger sails, spanning just over 28m, were fitted. The scoopwheel was replaced by an Archimedian screw in the 1950's. To reach the body involved a steep climb up no less than 39 steps. Close by was a tjasker, built anew by Aart Schouten in 1985, also spinning merrily, and a large 1923 diesel engine driving a turbine pump which was started up specially for us. By now it was getting very warm and humid and it was a relief to be ushered into an air-conditioned dining room at our lunch venue.

Next we alighted at one of those mills where the friendly welcome from the owner seemed just as important as any technical or historical detail. Mrs Vellinga-van de Vooren, owner of the aptly named *De Vriendschap* (friendship) at Bleskensgraaf, did indeed welcome us as friends, and let us wander through her living accommodation in the lower half of the tower, up to the intact milling machinery above. The mill was built in 1890, and stands right beside the river. Once everything came in and out by boat, which could be taken through an arch (now bricked up) into the base of the tower. Ton said the gearing must have come from a drainage mill as it is not very refined and was designed to run at high speed. Among the stone dressing implements stored in the mill I was puzzled by three wooden shutters. Ton explained that these were for blocking out the natural light, as stone dressers preferred to work under artificial light. We moved on to another hollow post mill, *De Broekmolen* at Streefkerk, where a group of

voluntary millers were honing their skills ready for examination day in a week's time. Here we saw the snug living quarters in the half of the thatched base not taken up by the drive to the external scoopwheel. We left early as the sky darkened ominously, and by the time we arrived at the Kinderdijk the last of the mills were stopping. We just had time to get from the coach to the cafe cum souvenir shop before a great storm broke. For a while the mills disappeared from view as drenched visitors plodded back from their afternoon walk to seek refuge in the now crowded cafe. We were not surprised to later learn that it was one of the worst rain storms in Holland for many years; several professional dingy sailors taking part in a competition were drowned. After about an hour the rain cleared and we walked through the world-famous group of some 20 drainage mills to the sole hollow post mill, *De Blokker*, but this time we couldn't get inside. However, some of us went in tower mill No.2, the one mill normally open for tourists.

On Sunday we visited mills fairly close to our base. First call was Roosendaal post mill, now in the southern suburbs of the city. I say 'now' because this is a mill you need to keep on a piece of string. It's been moved no less than four times since it was built in Brussels in 1684. It came to Roosendaal in 1897, from Antwerp, and was moved to its present site in 1967. Perhaps it should be moved again, as new housing has crept right up to it on one side, somewhat spoiling its setting. The mill originally had head and tail wheels, a layout not found in Noord-Brabant, where the brakewheel would have driven two or three pairs of stones. The brakewheel was converted from compass-arm to clasp-arm construction in 1939; we were told that compass-arm gearwheels are unknown in Holland after 1700. The frame of the mill was heavily renewed, perhaps not surprising given its history.

Next we looked round the tower mill at Nispen, the last mill in the country with four van Riet sails, with ultra-streamlined aluminium leading edges controlled by wires extending down to the back of the tailpole. Nearby was the village of Wouw, with a fine church and of course a windmill. This was a biggish tower mill, which ran daily until about 1987 and is still used on a part-time basis. The miller, Johan van Kaam, had a pair of stones grinding barley for us, and each of his sails was dressed with the national flag. On one side of the mill there was a plantation of young trees; we saw several of these, cash crops which are threatening to spoil the traditional open Dutch landscape.

After lunch we returned to Roosendaal to see the city's tower mill, *De Twee Gebroeders*, like the post mill now set amid housing. This was another example of a late mill (1872), re-using many older parts, in this case from a smock drainage mill. Needless to say, it was grinding, and lots of people were looking round.

The next mill was a little gem, certainly one of my favourites of the trip. Called *Heimolen* (hei is Dutch for heather, once common in the area), it stands in the parish of Bosschenhoofd, east of Roosendaal. It is a tower mill set into a mound, built in 1866 and replacing a smock mill whose octagonal base can still be seen inside the mound. It is still used about three days a week by the Franken family, and has a good unrestored interior. Niall Roberts was keen to learn more about a pair of peculiar

composition stones used here, with grinding faces covered with a pattern of small oblong holes. We had also seen them at the previous mill in Roosendaal. The miller seemed nonplussed and couldn't understand what all the fuss was about, and said they are dressed all over like any other stone! Talking of stone dressing, the stone nuts and quants in these Dutch mills are huge, and raising them out of the way is a major operation. This mill still retained the old windlass, with a rope from the windshaft, although a modern tackle had superseded it. The Fok



Heimolen at Bosschenhoofd

sails here are now automatic, rather than controlled by individual springs; to make this change the 6m long cast iron windshaft was drilled in situ, a task that took four weeks!

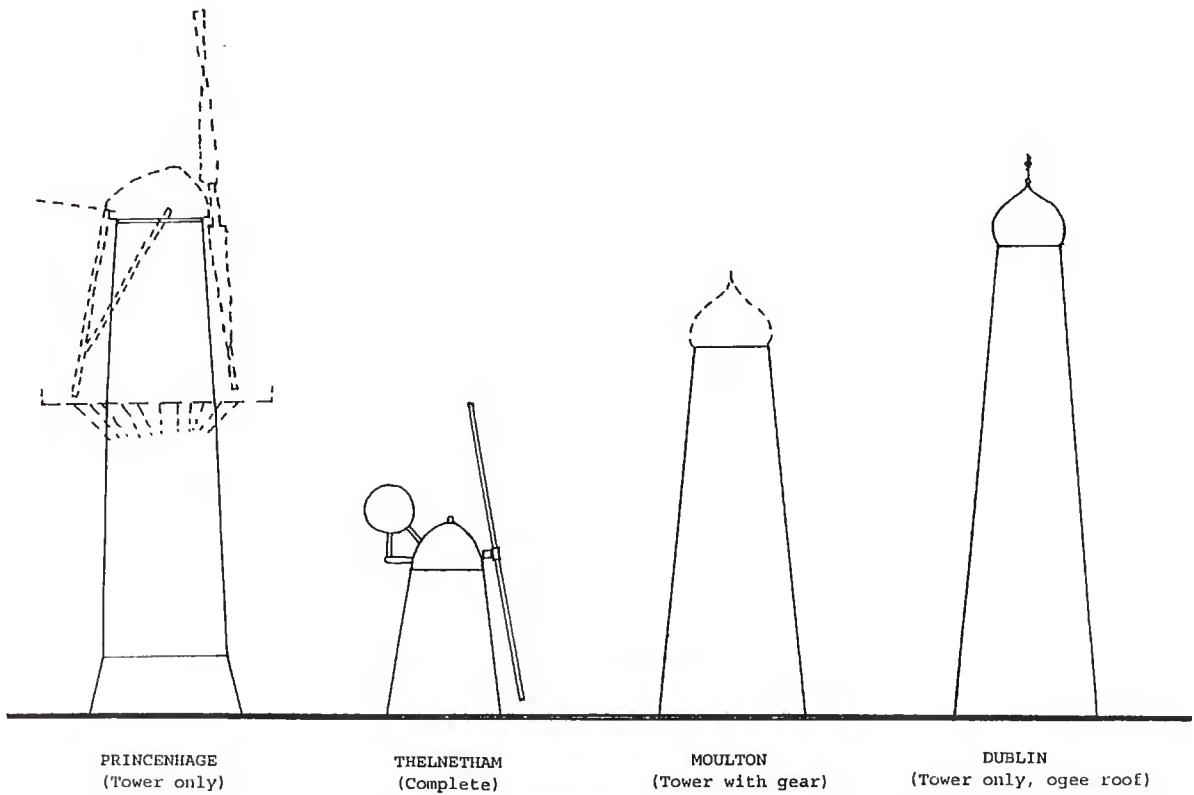
We proceeded on a few miles to Etten-Leur, where the tower mill *De Lelie*, reduced to a stump after a fire in 1937, was being rebuilt as part of a local regeneration project, with the aid of sponsorship. The cap and machinery had yet to be assembled, but we saw the new windshaft and steel stocks on the ground outside, and received a warm welcome. It was, however, disappointing to learn that the village's other windmill is likely to be demolished.

The last mill of the day was also just a tower, but what a tower! Princenhage, a suburb of Breda, boasts the world's tallest windmill, standing 32.26m (over 105ft) to the curb. It dates from 1899, being built off the base of another tower mill which burnt out. This accounts for the slender profile, a change of batter at the level of the former iron stage adding to its distinctiveness. Incidentally, stage level is 20.54m, just enough for Thelnetham mill to turn underneath! Patent sails were fitted soon after it was built, but it was out of use before 1920 and was dismantled in 1929. The floors are in place, but with many large voids where silos have been removed it was deemed too dangerous for us to climb. Ton has researched its history and a restoration is being promoted. Unlike most incomplete (i.e. without sails) mills, this one is quite rightly protected by being on the list of national monuments.

With Monday morning it was time to bid farewell to Hoeven and start on the journey home, but not before four more mills had been visited. Our final post mill was *De Akkermolen* at Zundert, which looked an absolute picture with its open trestle and turning



Above: Princenhage Mill c.1920 (left) and today.
Below: Princenhage in scale with some other mills





De Akkermolen at Zundert

cloth-spread sails, set within a neat hedged enclosure. Like other post mills we saw though, much of the structure had been renewed in recent years, including the main post and crowntree. One was left feeling that too much of the old was being sacrificed in a bid to keep mills working, but such is the level of commitment and quality of new workmanship that it is difficult to be too critical. This mill still had one wooden stock and sail whips, and preserved on the ground outside was one of the old rivetted steel stocks. Like

many of the mills we saw, this one is owned by the municipality, and our visit was deemed important enough for the mayor to turn out!

At Bavel tower mill, another built into a huge mound, there was a restaurant in the base and from here various tours are organised by the owner, Janus van Riel. We were treated to coffee and a quick look round the mill, which was undergoing repairs. Next, at Den Hout, Ton and Piet demonstrated their prowess at spreading and taking-in sailcloth as the mill was opened up, made to turn and 'put to bed' with typical Dutch efficiency. Piet was voluntary miller here and the mill was well looked after, and not over-restored. Two interesting points I noted were shutters instead of windows (also seen elsewhere) and heavy raking holding-down timbers from the curb to the ends of the two dust floor beams.

The last mill, *De Arend* at Terheijden, was still in full-time work and provided a high-point on which to end the tour. It carried a fine 1742 datestone with its original name, *Nassau Siegen*, but was burnt out in 1755. The internal re-fitting is commemorated with deeply-incised lettering along the beam carrying the foot of the upright shaft, naming the first miller and the date 1756. This is a large mill with a stage, built at a time when milling soke was still in operation in the locality. As might be expected it is well set up inside, with elevators, large bins and even a little shop on the ground floor. Until November 1996 the three pairs of stones were driven solely by wind power, the last commercial flour mill in the country not to have auxiliary power to the stones, according to miller Herman Schippers. Now one pair



De Arend at Terheijden



De Hoop at Den Hout



Ton Meesters, Niek van Eekelen and Piet Kruisenga
in conference at Roosendaal tower mill

can be electrically driven, but wind is still used nearly all the time. Output is ten tonnes a month. The grain is crushed before being passed through the stones: we were told this produces more white flour (this was also done at Wolphaartsdijk tower mill, visited by S.M.G. in 1984). With some reluctance, for the mill was at work and the sun was shining, we climbed back onto the coach for the drive back to the ferry.

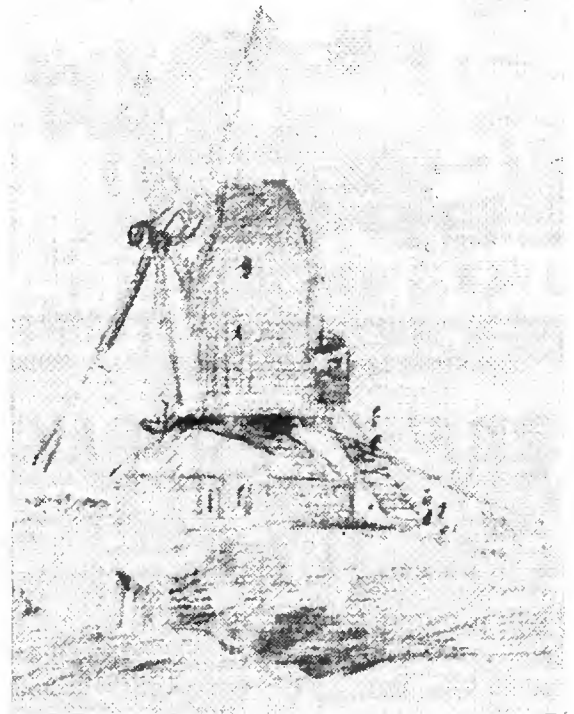
The Dutch are rightly proud of their mills and always enjoy showing them to visitors. Even so, the tour laid on with such energy, efficiency and good humour by Ton, Piet and all their mill friends could not have been bettered. Although a great deal was packed into 3½ days, we were never hurried. Nothing was too much trouble. When Niall Roberts had difficulty understanding the way the runner stone was supported off the bridgetree, not only were technical details promised, but contact was made via the mobile phone with a mill we were due to visit later that day, and arrangements made for a pair of stones to be specially dismantled! As well as our Dutch friends, sincere thanks should also be extended to John Capps and other FoNWi members for their part in a memorable trip. A worthy successor indeed to the S.M.G. foreign jaunts of the 1980's, and a hard act to follow.

PUTTING MORE MILLS IN THE PICTURE Peter Dolman

I found Peter Steggall's articles in newsletters 67 and 68 about the mills pictured by Constable in his home territory illuminating, and I know that other members enjoy Peter's articles. However I think Peter is slightly off the mark in some of his comments and he appears to be unaware of other information which is available about the area's mills. There is also the recent rediscovery of a super picture which illustrates one of the mills (see below).

EAST BERGHOLT

I don't think that the picture 'Golding Constable's Kitchen Garden' shows a second windmill, and the drawing 'View over Golding Constable's Farm' (1814) clearly depicts one mill. The second mill, at Old Mill House, is shown on Hodskinson's map of Suffolk (1778-82) and both mills are referred to in Sun insurance policies in 1779 and 1782: 'Golding Constable of East



The recently discovered Constable sketch of 1815

Bergholt in Suffolk, Miller. Windmill called the Black Mill on the Heath in said parish in his own tenure £200. Another windmill near call'd the White Mill in his own tenure £400...'. The second mill had gone by the 1805 Ordnance Survey and may have been pulled down, or may have been moved elsewhere. We shall probably never know.

The local paper carried a picture of a recently discovered Constable sketch of a windmill dated 24 May 1815, which is thought to be the East Bergholt mill (but this is not certain). It shows a typical post mill with single storey roundhouse and a porch extension on the lower floor of the buck. The mill was worked until at least 1874 by Jacob Mecklenburgh and is last recorded on the 1881 Ordnance Survey map. Its foundations were visible in the 1930's and may still be there, under the former coal yard.

BRANTHAM

The situation here is more complex than Peter suggests. Firstly, the post mill in the 1814 sketch, which I think clearly depicts an open trestle mill, was actually an Essex mill, standing in Lawford parish. When auctioned in 1825 no roundhouse is mentioned.

The 1802 sketch is actually entitled 'Windmill near Cattawade'. For many years art historians have called it 'A Mill on the banks of the River Stour' because they thought it was the same mill as that in the 1814 sketch. As it has a roundhouse, and the river is too wide, this cannot be correct. Ken Farries provides the answer in his Essex Windmills book. It was most likely to be the mill just off Mistley High Street. It is marked on an admiralty chart of 1804 (at Grid Ref. 105319) and stood just in Lawford parish, on reclaimed land. It is visible in Constable's landscape 'The valley of the Stour' (1805) and is referred to in sale notices of 1810 and 1816 as a post mill. In 1816 the ground lease only had eight years to run, the mill to be removed after this which seems to indeed have happened.

The other mill in Brantham, which was attached to Stutton New Mill, would have been a candidate for the mill pictured in 1802 but for the fact that it does not appear until the 1837 Ordnance Survey, being missing on both Greenwood and Bryant's maps of Suffolk in the 1820's, and not being mentioned in a sale notice of Stutton New Mill in 1833 on the bankruptcy of William Tills. The new occupier, Robert Death, erected the mill



The recently rediscovered view
of Stutton New Mill c.1840

(probably by moving it from elsewhere) and he was recorded there in 1837 on the Tithe map, as noted by Peter. The mill changed hands again in about 1850 when Christopher Sadler took over and I believe that he dispensed with the windmill, if it had not already gone by this time. Sadler fitted up steam plant in the 1850's at the watermill. The windmill was certainly gone by 1881. A circular paved depression with crumbling brickwork was remembered by locals early this century at the site, suggesting a sunk roundhouse. This is borne out by a wonderful naive landscape which has just resurfaced after 150 or more years. It shows a panoramic view from Court Farm, Brantham, and was probably painted to give a reminder of the old country to the family which emigrated to Canada in 1840. It turned up earlier this year when descendants made a return visit and called at Brantham Hall, the present owners of the windmill site, where Mr and Mrs Keeble have gathered much information on local history. The picture shows a post mill with what seems to be a white roundhouse with a doorway partly below ground level (it is rather crudely drawn however). Another windmill is shown in the distance, probably one of two post mills at Bradfield, Essex. The Stutton New Mill and house are clearly depicted but the mill in particular is rendered very simply. A two masted ship sits in the creek leading to the mills.

WILF FOREMAN - A PERSONAL APPRECIATION

Dave Pearce

Wilf Foreman was a man of great and varied talents. I think than amongst everything else he was interested in engineering, and particularly mechanisms, from an early age. He once told me how his father, who was engineer at the Shipton-on-Cherwell cement works, had been called out before breakfast to attend the works steam engine which could not maintain power. Wilf's Dad found that there was no mechanical failure, but that the steam condenser was not performing. It seems that what stuck in Wilf's mind was not only the sight of his father toiling in mud and water to clear the condenser (it was cooled by the River Cherwell), but also another example of the subtlety of operation of seemingly straightforward machines. It would not be immediately clear to a young lad that if the condenser performance dropped off sufficiently, very soon the engine would not be able to work.

Wilf's early career did not involve engineering, but he was able to develop his interests in music and buildings. He became apprenticed with a firm of architects in Oxford, and Wilf's wife Sylvia still has some of his architectural drawings from this time. He did not stay in architectural practice: economic conditions in the 1930's depression militated against an architectural career, but the surviving drawings show the basis of his individual style. Among these is a drawing by Wilf for the construction of a wooden body for a Riley car which he rebuilt. It did sterling service, and epitomised that combination of practical ingenuity, determination and intellect that typified Wilf.

Wilf won many prizes as a boy trumpeter, and he played in local dance bands from an early age, becoming fully professional on leaving Oxford in his early twenties. During the next 25 years

his varied musical career took him all over the world, ultimately playing in the wind section of the Cape Town Symphony Orchestra.

Wilf will be remembered and thanked by future generations for his magnificent drawings of traditional mills, starting with the *Watermills of Oxfordshire* (published by SPAB in about 1970). This project came about fortuitously. Wilf and Sylvia has returned to Oxford, Wilf to 'retire'. He took an interest in local history: I remember being shown an article in the *Oxford Mail* on Wilf's researches into the remains of the home laundry system, whereby the vast volumes of washing generated by the Oxford college system had been coped with by teams of women working in tiny back yard laundries. The surviving evidence consisted of numbers of flat irons buried in back gardens, and the occasional little building. One day, looking for something of interest to fill a few hours, he asked the City and County Museum for a suitable project. They suggested he measure and sketch a small derelict building at Barford St Michael. He was captivated by what he found, and the first of Wilf's watermill records was under way.

The style of Wilf's drawings is individual and direct: there is no emphasis on the building itself, which in a watermill was likely to be of secondary interest to Wilf. The mechanism is all (or nearly all). You might not always be able to recreate the structure exactly, but the essentials of the important mechanisms are all there. Much of the machinery will have gone by now. Wilf put extra life into the drawings by giving them a hand drawn finish, but underlying this, the components important to Wilf were as accurate as possible.

In parallel with the watermill survey, Wilf became much involved with the Coombe Saw Mill project. Coombe was the Blenheim Estate sawmill, and has a stationary steam engine and an (unwatered) waterwheel drive. One lasting memento of Wilf, now conserved at Coombe, is his reconstruction of a small farm mill: 32in stones and gear drive on a hursting. This, and other machinery, had once been water-driven on the Great Tew estate (Tracey Farm).

Wilf took a prominent role in the first years of the repair of Wheatley windmill. This is a survivor of a relatively rare class of tower mill, built a little before fantail winding and shuttered sails became general. Wheatley had common sails throughout its working career. Eventually a fanstage was fitted; legend suggests the fantail was not successful, and whether or not this is true, the mill did not have a fantail latterly. It is a pity that Wheatley was not repaired in the 1930's when there may have been an opportunity. When Wilf and the Wheatley Windmill Committee got there in the 1960's the mill was in a very poor state. Wilf measured up and drew the mill as a record of what remained, and to indicate how it should be reconstructed. The cap frame and the interesting shot curb (rollers in a wooden cage) were dismantled, and work began on restoring the tower, on a shoestring budget. After some years Wilf had to give up active involvement at Wheatley, but the project remained dear to his heart. He was pleased that the Wheatley Committee has been able to commission Chris Wallis to continue the repairs, starting with a proper reconstruction of the curb, and moving on to the roller race.

Some years earlier, having noted the lack of a book on local mills, he wrote *Oxfordshire Mills* (1983). As a veteran writer and performer of a good number of radio broadcasts on mills he was well suited to such a task: I remember particularly a piece of radio fiction set years ago in Standlake mill on Christmas Eve. *Oxfordshire Mills* brings together a tremendous amount of information drawn from many sources, together with reminiscences and, of course, many examples of Wilf's drawings. I still refer to my copy frequently.

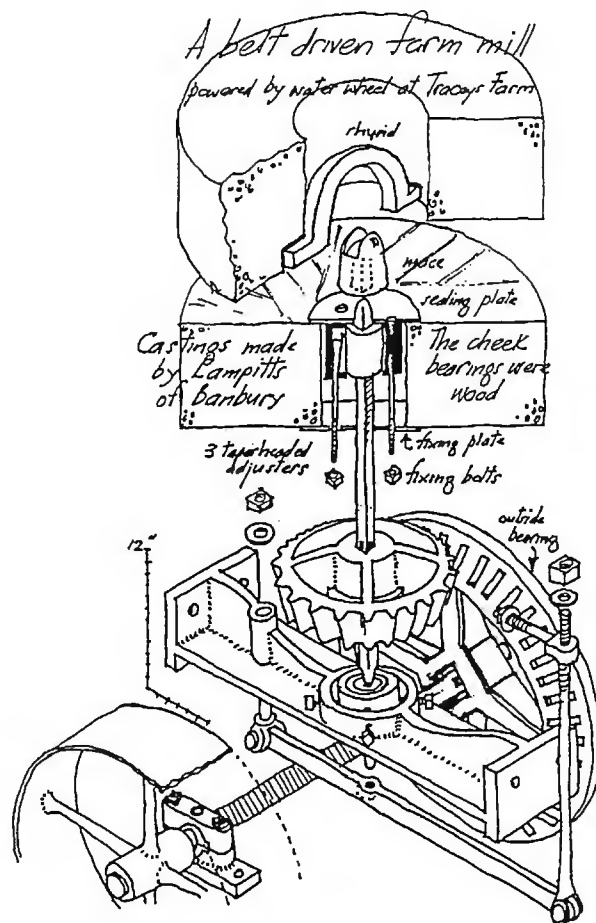
Wilf continued to draw up watermills and windmills. Particularly with windmills under repair, he would pass the finished drawing to those responsible for the mill, in the expectation that the drawing would not only provide an exciting record of the mill, but also that sales of copies would contribute to restoration funds.

The Foreman drawings are a treasure (see typical example above). They will provide inspiration for our successors. It would be fitting if a full set were to be gathered together, and copies made available. Fortunately Sylvia has a bound set of the Oxfordshire watermill drawings, and I know of the following windmill drawings: Bloxham Grove, Chinnor, Theltenham, Ullesthorpe, Wheatley, Wicken corn mill. There may be other windmill drawings; there are certainly other watermill drawings. Can I ask anyone with information to contact me? (01664 822751).

I am pleased to say that Wilf and Sylvia were able to come to Wicken mill while the sails were being erected in July 1996. At Wicken the striking rod (nearly 18ft long) has to be inserted from the front of the poll end, after the sail stocks are on. I know that it gave Wilf pleasure to take part in this interesting task.

I shall always remember Wilf as a kind and ingenious man. This is so when I glance up at his watercolour of Lidstone mill hanging on our wall at home, and presented to Liz and I to mark our wedding. Similarly when I am faced with an interesting and complicated piece of mill machinery, or with some intractable engineering problem at work, it often comes into my mind that 'Wilf would enjoy this puzzle'.

Wilfred Robert Benjamin Foreman was born on 22 January 1910, and died in Oxford on 7 February 1997.



NEW PUBLICATIONS

Windmills of Suffolk - Illustrations of the remaining Windmills of Suffolk by Dean Regan. Published by the author; 1997. Price £5.95.

It is nearly 20 years since a book on Suffolk windmills appeared; high time for another you might think. Unfortunately this rather pathetic effort is not it. For a start, only 30 are illustrated (including some minor remains); East Bridge (at the Museum of East Anglian Life), Crowfield and Peasenhall smock mills and tower mills at Bungay, Blundeston, Corton and Reydon are overlooked. The illustrations are mainly pen and ink drawings, similar in style to those of Roger Brown in his 1970's book *Windmills of England*. Many of these are accurate and good records, presumably based on photographs. Why then are some so inaccurate as to be laughable? Drinkstone post mill is shown in working order, Stanton mill with a porch and 6-blade fly, Pakenham in full working order, Buttram's (sic) with brick granary and a shingled cap. The text is truly incredible in the number of errors of fact and observation packed into so few words about each mill. If that wasn't enough, the location map re-draws the county completely! Every windmill listed is several miles adrift and some marked locations don't even have a mill! This book is definitely not recommended to the serious molinologist. But perhaps £5.95 is not a high price to pay for an object lesson in how *not* to do it. (Peter Dolman)

The Windmills of England by Rodney de Little. Colwood Press; 1997. Price £29.95.

This major new 192-page book has not hit the shops yet (as I write), but I have seen a copy and it is good! There are numerous superb photographs and an expanded text from the author's earlier book, *The Windmill: Yesterday and Today* (1972). The cost is relatively high but this is because of the photographs, which are printed in a better than normal fashion. It has mistakes in it of course, but what written work doesn't. (Peter Dolman)

NEWS

20TH ANNIVERSARY COMPETITION RESULT

There was only one entry to the competition in the last newsletter, from Luke Bonwick. Luke managed to get 16 correct and is therefore a worthy winner. Here are the answers.

1. Saxtead Green
2. Four
3. 26
4. Mildenhall
5. Snape
6. Grinding cement clinker
7. Pumping water for the saltworks
8. Sir Alfred Munnings; Mendham Mill
9. Thorpeness
10. Cockfield tower mill; 1891
11. Eye
12. 1962
13. Wilfred Clover
14. Boxford
15. Framsdon
16. Bardwell
17. Herringfleet
18. Tricker's
19. Robert Martin
20. Creting St Mary

WORK AT GREAT WHELNETHAM MILL

Having completed first-aid work on the windmill tower it seemed a shame to leave the fine little building housing the engine-driven

stones to fall into ruin. Most of the roof was engulfed by ivy with slates intact on the east side but with several large holes on the west side. Removal of the ivy caused many slates to slip and it soon became obvious the whole roof was beyond patching up. We carefully removed all of the slates and saved just enough to re-slate the east side. Woodwork under slates has to be in good condition with everything level and accurate, otherwise the slates will not bed down well. While the woodwork on the east side was capable of taking slates again with a little repair, the west side of the roof was not. There was not sufficient time nor money to rebuild the roof and buy the several hundred secondhand slates required, so a compromise had to be reached. We therefore nailed on lengths of 4" x 2" which spanned over the bad areas and covered the roof with blue-grey finished sheets of galvanised steel called Countryclad. Thus the roof was cheap, made quickly and looks quite well. The weatherboards on the west side were all missing and this part of the building was only held up by the strong internal boarding. So new weatherboards were bought and dried, and we have now started to fit them.

Without clairvoyance it is difficult to know what standard to reach in holding work. In some cases a costly and time-consuming job is done which would last 30 years, only to be removed a couple of years later when the work is done properly. In other cases work planned to last five years has to last 50. So with hindsight it's easy to say that a better job should have been done or a pity such a good job was done only to be ripped out a couple of years later.

Perhaps mills, like us, should consult fortune-tellers. Instead of seeing 'travel to distant lands' and 'tall dark strangers' the mill fortune-teller might gaze into the crystal ball and say 'I see four sails fully shuttered, a miller bagging up flour'. Or more likely 'I see no mill but there are two men in funny hats with a tripod and there is a notice by the road, I think I can just read it - wim...wimp...got it, WIMPEY!'. (C.H.)

STANTON MILL UP-DATE

The two summer work-ins came and went, with the mill not looking any different now to what it did before, at first glance. The truth is different, of course. The first week concentrated on the fan carriage and steps. There was rot in several timbers so the steps and fantail were shored up and the carriage removed. One new cross piece was required, together with extensive repairs to the outer bearer where the fly posts rested. Bad design and poor workmanship had allowed water to enter all the joints and there was much decay, even in the fly posts. We also replaced the rusty mild steel bolts with the original wrought iron ones which were fit for re-use and which fortunately had not been thrown away. The carriage wheels were cleaned and painted, and all the new and re-used timbers were cleaned down to bare wood, treated with preservative and then repainted.

The slatted platform on the carriage was rebuilt with an additional slat as the gaps were too great. Proper attention was paid to drainage, and all fixings were stainless steel. Once the carriage was back together the lower part of the ladder was



Work on the stone curbing

dismantled as the foot of the right string was known to be bad. The bottom eight treads fit into pieces of oak lining the inside of the strings and these came out as a unit. The left string, spliced in 1986, was sound but the right one was very rotten and had to be cut back and spliced over about five feet. On assembly the wood was all cleaned and repainted, and mild

steel bolts replaced with stainless. The other job done was to continue to lay the new flooring around the millstones, a very fiddly task.

During the second work-in the fantail was completely stripped down to allow rotting boards to be replaced. The blades had been assembled without paint in mating faces, so quite a lot of rot was encountered. The blades were totally dismantled to allow the old paint to be cleaned off. Any rotten boards were replaced, or moved down to allow the rotten ends to be cut off. New battens were provided and the blade shape was altered to match the originals (one of which survives). All work was reassembled with great care, and lots of paint and Protim. Copper clench nails were used on the boards and stainless steel fixings where possible. The metalwork was cleaned and painted, and our local blacksmith sorted out the tip stays which didn't fit properly. All this work took three people a week and was much more time-consuming than might appear. At all times the mill was left winding so the fly looked rather odd. The fly has been balanced with bolted-on lead weights.

Another job was to rebuild the top platform, which was rather rickety. The tailpole, and remainder of the ladder, was scraped and painted. The tops were covered with Belzona flexible membrane, the high performance coating used on the cap of Thelnetnam mill.

The floor around the stones was completed and a start was made on rebuilding the bedstone curbing.

Further work is on hold at present as English Heritage and the Department of Culture, Media and Sport are considering the plans for the full restoration submitted last Spring. The problem is that the mill is a scheduled Ancient Monument and so requires formal consent before any repairs (other than essential maintenance) are carried out. We have dealt with most of the urgent matters now so have to get approval before we can go much further. A record of the mill is also required (see below). The newer pair of sails (1989-90) will have to come down next summer as they are showing signs of distress and may well be a write-off.

A big thank you to those that helped this summer. More mill bashing will be on offer next year, same time, same place!

Two interesting stories have come to light about Stanton mill this year. Firstly, a visitor to the S.M.G. stand at the Suffolk Show mentioned that they had a stuffed dog (a King Charles spaniel) which had belonged to Albert Goodman, the miller. This dog (actually a bitch called Rosie) came to a sudden end by jumping off the top platform, breaking its neck, in 1891. It was such a favourite that Mr Goodman had a local taxidermist stuff and mount it - and it is still in good condition! It passed through the daughter of Mr Goodman (who erroneously attributed the accident to Hepworth mill, which the Goodman family had earlier) to its present owners, who live at Wingfield.

The second story is less bizarre, but equally unlikely! A recent visitor was a descendant of the Sturgeon family, who ran the local engineering works and who once owned the mill. On a visit to the 'Cutty Sark' at Greenwich he noticed that the ship's manifest, open at a random page, contained an entry to the effect that flour for the ship had been purchased from 'Mr. Sturgeon, miller, Stanton'. How ever did they manage to swing that deal? (P.D.)

CULFORD WATERWHEEL LISTED

The fine model farm complex at Home Farm, Culford has recently been listed Grade II*. Attached to the main barn is a wheelhouse with low breast-shot waterwheel. This dates from 1890 when the complex was remodelled to house Lord Cadogan's prize dairy herd. The wheel drove various machines via lineshafting, as well as a water pump and probably originally a pair of stones on a hurst frame. The set-up is described fully in newsletter 28. (M.B.)

LISTING OF LARK MILLS REJECTED

The Department of Culture, Media and Sport has rejected a bid to list Lark Mills at Mildenhall. As the machinery has been removed, the listing depended on the architectural and historic interest of the buildings themselves. These, while good examples of their type, were not considered sufficiently 'special' to merit listing. Fortunately there is no threat to the mill at present, and some protection already exists as the mill is within a conservation area. (M.B.)

THORNDON ROUNDHOUSE ROOF REPAIRED

The minor windmill remains in Suffolk have sustained considerable losses in recent years. Since Peter Dolman's contemporary survey of some 20 years ago many of the mill sites he described have now vanished under houses or simply been demolished for their hardcore. Only two roundhouses are listed and a couple of years ago we helped to prolong the life of the fine Saxmundham roundhouse. The other listed roundhouse is in the village of Thorndon and like Saxmundham it contains crosstrees, quarter bars and the lower half of a splendid post. Unlike Saxmundham the roof

was intact but leaking badly in places. After a thorough survey we decided that a couple of day's work could give the roof another ten years life. We had Clarkes of Walsham deliver heavy Ruberoid felt, mastic, laths, nails and some plywood and on a fine Sunday in late September Mark Barnard, Stephen Bloomfield and myself started work.

The ten metre long rolls of felt were halved and then each piece cut lengthwise to give four tapered pieces. Larger holes and steps in the roof were covered with plywood and old carpet covered minor blemishes. Each segment was stuck with mastic at the edges and nailed down with laths and 3" or 4" nails. By the end of the day we had covered nearly half of the roof, taking in the worst area. A week later we returned to patch up the remaining half and by the end of the day we had the roof good and watertight.

The original roof was well made but badly designed. The tapered roof boards spanned some 10ft but as they are only an inch thick they must have sagged almost immediately. The roof is also of very shallow pitch which means the boards are virtually flat at the eaves. The roof was kept watertight by a thick layer of a pitch-like substance. In recent years through lack of maintenance this has cracked in places, letting water in to rot the boards. Over the years all manner of props have been applied and at first sight it looks very unsafe. Outside though it never gave us any nasty moments, but we refrained from the 'Hokey Cokey' just in case.

A little 'stitch in time' holding work is well worth the effort. It keeps open the options for more years and demonstrates to all concerned the value of the building. The owners, Mr and Mrs



Chris Hullcoop & Stephen Bloomfield at work at Thorndon

Lock, are very appreciative of the work we have carried out. The mill has been in their family since its days at work by wind power, and they hope to be able to commission permanent repairs in the not-too-distant future. (C.H.)

BARDWELL TOWER MILL

It is now over ten years since Bardwell mill was badly damaged by the hurricane of October 1987, and a determined bid is finally being made to bring the mill back into working order. Enid Wheeler is hoping to obtain grant aid from English Heritage and St. Edmundsbury Borough Council towards the estimated £50,000 needed. A Friends organisation has been set up to help with fund-raising, and the first event will be on Boxing Day when the family's traction engine *Oliver* delivers parcels round the village.

A recent worry has been a planning application from a developer to build two large detached houses immediately behind the mill, one on the site of the 1930's warehouse which has recently been demolished. S.M.G. has objected to the proposal, mainly on the grounds that the new houses will interrupt the flow of wind onto the sails. At the time of writing a final decision on the application has yet to be made. (M.B.)

HELP WANTED IN RECORDING MILLS

One of S.M.G.'s stated aims is to record our surviving mills. There are currently a couple of mills which require a detailed survey (although most are equally in need). Firstly, the owners of the post mill remains at Rougham have offered us free access to carry out a survey. In the last 20 years there has been great deterioration and the Estate would like to conserve it if possible. A detailed survey should help to show what is needed to stabilise the remains for the future.

The other record is of Stanton mill. I need a survey of its present condition, to indicate what original work remains and what repairs or alterations have taken place, and am looking for one or more members to help. The work will be a contribution towards the full repair of the mill, and the finished record will go to English Heritage and form part of the national archive. Please contact me if you can help. (Peter Dolman)

THE DATA PROTECTION ACT AND SUFFOLK MILLS GROUP

The Suffolk Local History Council newsletter recently carried an item on the Data Protection Act and its effect on societies like S.M.G.. The Act requires any body which keeps records of its members on computer files to register unless it is an 'unincorporated members' club'.

For the record, the Committee feels that S.M.G. is an 'unincorporated members' club' within the terms of the Act and is therefore not subject to registration.

The only information kept on the main membership file is each member's name, address and renewal date. This file is also used

for producing the mailing labels. Those members who pay subscriptions by Standing Order are on a second file which keeps details of their bank to enable us to check that payments are being made.

Members have the right to object to these records being kept on computer file, and to insist on their removal. The records are not disclosed to any other person outside the committee. (P.D.)

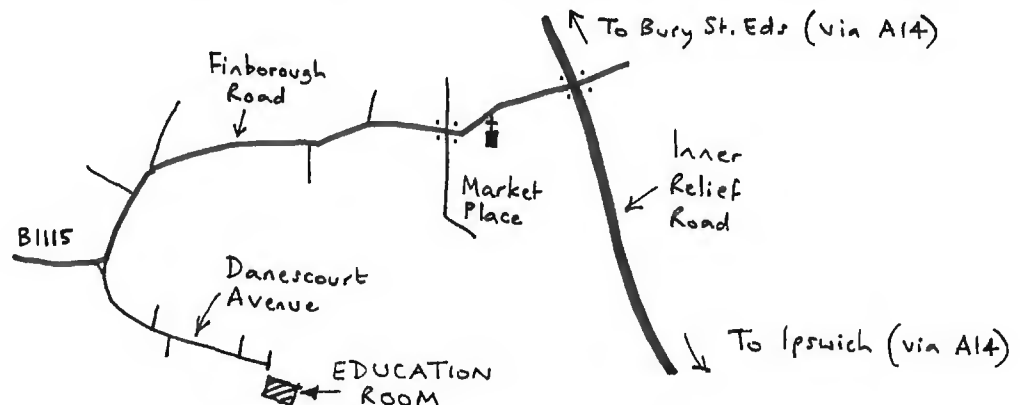
HAPPY BIRTHDAY, DORA!

Congratulations to our oldest member, Dora Hoggett (nee Bryant), who was 100 in November, and who was born at Stanton mill.

EVENTS

S.M.G. SOCIAL EVENING: SATURDAY DECEMBER 6th, from 8pm, at THE EDUCATION ROOM, MUSEUM OF EAST ANGLIAN LIFE, STOWMARKET

This year we are back in Stowmarket for our pre-Christmas social meeting. For those of you who haven't been before, the Education Room is part of a Primary School in Danescourt Avenue, off the Finborough Road west of the town centre (see sketch map below). If you can, please bring along contributions of food and/or drink for the buffet, and of course any slides or videos you wish to show.



HERRINGFLEET WINDPUMP: JANUARY 1st 1998??

In the past two years we have been frustrated in our bid to revive the once traditional New Year's Day opening of Herringfleet, either because the mill was out of action, or because of inclement weather. All we are saying this time is that it's *possible* that the mill will be opened on January 1st, but only if the weather makes it really worthwhile: bright, dry and windy. If the elements look like being co-operative, please give Mark Barnard a ring on 01473 727853 to check whether the mill will be open.

S.M.G. PUBLIC MEETING: SATURDAY FEBRUARY 21st 1998

This will feature Jon Sass as main speaker, and be held in Ipswich library meeting room. More details in the next newsletter.
