

# SUFFOLK MILLS GROUP

## Newsletter

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So, we're here at last, the Millennium and the year MM, something which seemed strangely distant not so long ago. What will be the fate of our windmills and watermills in the new century? Here in Suffolk, while there have been disappointments and losses, on the whole the outlook is quite encouraging. Maybe this is because most of the windmills which lingered on after the war - especially the post mills - were lost in the 1950's and 60's, and because our watermills have not suffered wholesale conversion as in so many parts of the country. Reading an account of the windmills of Nottinghamshire recently, it was depressing to see how many of the derelict towers had been spoilt by insensitive residential conversion, while the last post mill roundhouse complete with trestle (Besthorpe) was protected by listing, but not by a roof. Lincolnshire now has more working windmills than any other county, yet two of its real gems, Lutton Gowts and Hibaldstow, are seemingly doomed (please tell me if I am wrong!). Much will depend on the value future generations place on our old mills, and on the availability of skilled millwrights to maintain and repair them. Time will tell.

Numbers at our December social at Stanton were a little disappointing. Please make a special effort to support the forthcoming public meeting, when Michael Harveson will be giving a fascinating insight into mills in parts of the world the average enthusiast will never reach. Also, don't forget my appeal for newsletter material - there must surely be something out there?

The mill diary for the first few months of the century looks something like this.

S.M.G. Public Meeting, Ipswich  
SPAB Windmill Meeting, London  
S.M.G. visit to Syleham post mill  
National Mills Weekend  
SPAB Day Tour (Northants)

Saturday February 19th  
Saturday March 18th  
Sunday May 7th  
Sat/Sun May 13th-14th  
Saturday May 20th

Mark Barnard

## THE SEARCH FOR HORSEWADE MILL Bob Malster

In medieval times Ipswich had a number of watermills serving the townspeople, who were forbidden to take their grain outside the town for grinding. There was a mill close to Stoke Bridge which was moved bodily by hydraulic power in the 19th century and survived as part of Eastern Union Mills and then the yeast factory until about 1930, and there was Handford Mill which in

the 19th century was crushing oil seed and extracting the oil. Both of these are well known, but there was also Horsewade Mill, which disappeared about 1650 after a life of some 500 years.

Not a single picture survives of Horsewade Mill; it is marked on no maps, and even its site was unknown. Indeed, one authority has stated confidently that Horsewade was merely an alternative name for Handford Mill. "Don't believe it!" retorted my co-researcher when I reported the finding of this apparently authoritative statement. And the search for Horsewade Mill began in earnest.

One Saturday afternoon we walked down the upper part of Portman Road (once called Mill Street) towards Handford Road and the site of Handford Mill. There is a steep descent towards the marsh, and the old Mill Street cuts through the edge of the high ground, almost as if a now-disappeared stream flowing down from springs to the north had eroded a deep gully as it cascaded over what must have been almost a cliff face.

It is not too difficult to find the site of Handford Mill, though the construction of modern flats has obliterated all physical trace of the former mill buildings (demolished c.1885 to make way for a laundry). The stagnant end of the Alderman Canal, the old course of the River Gipping, points to the site; an old photograph shows a Gipping barge lying athwart the canal at the mill wharf. From Handford Mill the old course of the Gipping is no more, though one can still find clues to where it ran. A penstock still to be seen on the mill site admitted water from the canal into Peter Bruff's brick sewer, which was laid in the bed of the former Gipping in the 1880's, when it was necessary to flush the sewer out.

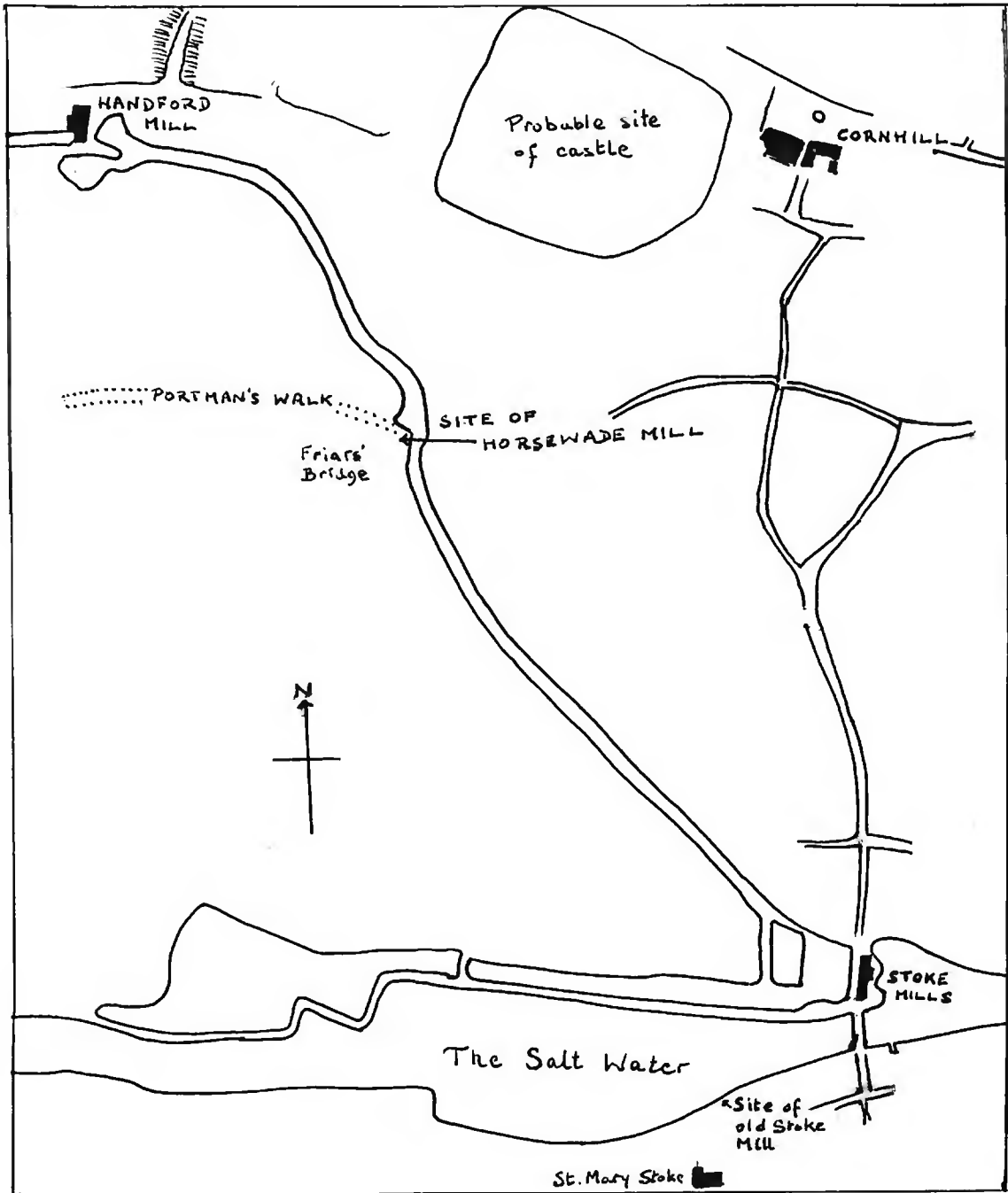
Turning to walk towards that part of the river that on old maps is sometimes named 'the Salt Water', we followed the towpath and found ourselves looking down on the marshes to the east. The elderly Ordnance map we had with us indicated with a slender arrow that the ditch ten feet below the canal flowed in the direction we were walking, in the opposite direction to the flow of the canal. Before the carrying out of the 'landscaping' that was creating wildfowl ponds and other features at marsh level the ditch had had an outfall into the main river somewhere below Horseshoe Weir.

The canal, of course, was the old course of the Gipping, not a canal at all. A river flowing along the side of rising ground ten feet above a ditch flowing in the opposite direction? Suddenly the old course of the river did not look at all natural; it was, perhaps, a canal in fact as well as in name? Had that channel been cut at some time in the distant past as a leat for Handford Mill? Had it been dug out by the monks of the two Ipswich priories who in the Middle Ages had an interest in both Handford and Horsewade mills?

It just happened that as we walked along my companion pointed across the weed-filled old waterway to the patch of ground where archaeologists have found signs of Roman occupation between the 'canal' and Handford Road. We began to dream of Romano-British labourers unloading barges lying at a Roman wharf. Ridiculous!

Our fancies seemed less fantastic later when we discovered that this waterway formed the boundary of the Manor of Stoke at the time it was held by Ely Abbey. When you stand there and look at the surroundings, it is clearly an artificial channel, yet it must be a very old one indeed. Could it, just possibly, have been cut in Roman times, perhaps to bring water to a Roman mill?

That split in the river channel that is such a feature of old maps of Ipswich just could not be natural, we agreed as we passed



A sketch map showing the position of Handford, Horsewade and Stoke mills, based on Joseph Pennington's map of 1778.

the site of the lock that enabled barges to go on upriver to Stowmarket and then examined the site of old Horseshoe Weir. The river would have flowed naturally down the middle of the valley; the original weir must have been put in at some time to direct the flow into the new artificial channel, to feed Handford Mill - without the weir the channel would always have been as stagnant as it is now.

That afternoon we thought we identified the site of Horsewade Mill in Ranelagh Road, close to The World of Leather and MFI, where an old small-scale Ordnance map from the turn of the century shows a cut-off water-filled channel that could once have been a millstream. It was so obvious; Portmans Walk, across the former Corporation Marshes, pointed directly to the site and had clearly been the road to what was referred to in the AD 970 bounds of Stoke as a 'merscmylne', a marsh mill or perhaps 'the mill in the fen'. 'From Hagenfordabricge to Horswad into a merscmylne' says the Anglo-Saxon perambulation. Yes, the Horsewade was a ford across the river just at that point, and that had to be where the mill stood.

It wasn't, of course. Jill Freestone, the energetic local history recorder of Stoke, provided me with copies she had made of old terriers or schedules of properties in the Manor of Stoke, and there I found the answer.

A terrier which appears to date from the 1560's, transcribed and translated by Claude Morley, lists the meadows and marshes held by the Bailiffs of Ipswich, including 'one piece aforesaid by itself late inclosed from old time called Odenholme and lately called portmen's medowe lying in the fresh meadow between the salt water there on part of the South and the great river in part on the other part...'.  
'

The Bailiffs also held three acres of marsh 'called le Harpe and le Hopper belonging to the water of the lord of the manor of Stoke'; these two pieces appear to be those lying between the salt water and the fresh water stream immediately west of Stoke Bridge - a later map shows that one of these pieces of marsh is shaped somewhat like a harp. These abut towards the west on a marsh called Leighamsmarsh, after a former owner, Thomas de Leigham (or Layham, a village on the River Brett below Hadleigh); the abutments of a further 'pightle of meadow or pasture' which went with Horsewade Mill seem to place that mill at Friars Bridge, the crossing of the 'sweet river' - the fresh water - that gave access from the town to the marshes. The Horsewade and Friars Bridge were one and the same; the name would have changed after the coming of the Grey Friars some time just before 1298.

Horsewade Mill thus made use of the same stream that had already passed the wheel of Hagenford or Handford Mill. It might be that this lower part of the freshwater Gipping originated as the course of a stream flowing down from springs on the edge of the high ground to the north in the vicinity of what is now Warrington Road. That stream, in fact, that scoured out the defile that is now the former Mill Street.

*Note Information on Handford Mill and Stoke Tide Mill can be found in Newsletter 13 (December 1979).*

## CROSSWORD COMPETITION    Compiled by Mark Barnard

After a break of eight years the famous S.M.G. crossword is back! All the clues are connected to mills and milling, with obscure or very difficult solutions avoided. To enter, simply remove the entry form at the end of the newsletter, fill in the solutions to the clues printed below and send it to the Editor. Entries must be received by **Saturday June 3rd**. The draw will be made at our A.G.M. which is usually held later that month. The prize is a book token for 2000p. Your chances of winning will be many times greater than winning a tenner in the Lottery!

### CLUES ACROSS

1. See 30.Down
4. See 15.Down
9. Mill lift (8)
10. Midland mill author (4)
11. Kept upright by 8.Down (4)
12. Fantail centres (5)
14. (& 3.Down) Windmill author (2,6)
15. River on which Whitchurch silk mill stands (4)
16. Auxillary drive (8)
17. Author of 'Discovering Windmills' (5)
20. Timber tower (5)
22. East Kent windmill (6)
23. Enemy of all mills (4)
25. 'Behold! A Giant --' (Longfellow) (2,1)
27. Part of striking mechanism (1,5)
29. 2.Down thought wind-powered stones should always be this (10)
31. (& 28.Down) The Dutch would streamline these! (7,5)
32. (& 6.Down) Pivot for triangle (5,4)
33. Thatched Somerset windmill (6)
34. 'A windmill is always -, always feminine, complex, sometimes exasperating, sometimes even dangerous' (A Couris Thing, BBC TV) (3)

### CLUES DOWN

1. Innovative device fitted to Windmill Hill post mill and Clayton tower mill in Sussex (5,9)
2. Windmill author who retired to Suffolk (6)
3. See 14.Across
5. Irrigation waterwheel (5)
6. See 32.Across
7. Picturesque Norfolk drainage mill (7)
8. Usually found in a roundhouse (7)
13. Cambridgeshire town with two windmills (5)
15. (& 4.Across) '-- Windmill', a standard work by Rex Wailes (3,7)
18. Sits on the curb (3,5)
19. 19th century Suffolk millwright (4)
20. Mend sacks, perhaps (3)
21. Tower mill by John Whitmore (7)
23. An odd number of sails (4)
24. Early millstone fixing (4)
26. Molinology is the study of these (5)
28. See 31.Across
30. (& 1.Across) According to Rex Wailes, the finest post mills were built here (4,7)

## HOLTON POST MILL Mark Barnard

Holton post mill occupies a fine windmill site above the village and a mill has probably stood here since medieval times. As the mill and its half-acre plot of common land were held copyhold of the manor of Wissett and le Roos, changes of ownership over the years were recorded in the court books. Eleven court books, covering the period 1652-1894, as well as the mill deeds, are deposited at the Suffolk Record Office (Ipswich branch) and have proved invaluable in compiling this history.

The earliest reference which has been identified in the manor court books is in July 1702, when Francis Nocke was admitted as copyholder upon surrender of John Goodell. (Prior to this date the entries are illegible except to a specialist.) In October 1721 William Leeder was admitted as copyholder. The association of the Fiske family with Holton mill started in October 1722 with the admission of James Fiske, and continued with Thomas Fiske who became copyholder in July 1732. Thomas and Susannah Fiske surrendered copyhold to Henry Fiske of Colchester in April 1742.

His nephew, William Fiske, was in turn admitted copyholder on 29th August 1759, when it was stipulated that the half-acre mill plot was 'not to be enclosed or ploughed'.

The mill was advertised for sale in the *Ipswich Journal* of 28th March 1761, being described as a 'Well-accustomed WINDMILL ... with all the Sails, Stones, Gears, Implements, and Appurtenances thereto belonging'. It could not have been sold, for on 1st March 1763 William Fiske mortgaged the mill to Henry Negus the younger of Bungay for £47 12s 0d, the sum to be repaid by 1st June the following year. In October 1764 Fiske again mortgaged the property to Henry Negus for one year, to the sum of £40, and at the same time granted rights to the mill in perpetuity to Brame Oxford, a miller from Old Buckenham in Norfolk.



Holton mill in the 1950's

This was in effect a change of ownership, and Oxford was admitted as copyholder in March 1765, at the same time enclosing an area of waste land near the mill. In 1773 Oxford used Holton mill, together with another windmill he owned at Old Buckenham, as security for a loan of £300 from Henry Negus.

The earliest surviving insurance certificate, Sun Fire Office No.327542, of 1766, is endorsed with the names of Negus and Oxford. In 1773 the mill was insured for loss or damage by fire for the sum of £100, and a 'stud and tiled' house also for £100.

A little light is thrown on the trade of Brame Oxford as a result of his bankruptcy in 1778. He had been in partnership with Thomas Rockhill of Wenhashton for two years as a corn and flour merchant. They bought large quantities of grain, re-selling the majority of it wholesale, and grinding the rest into meal and flour. Like some other millers, they also dealt in coal. They became indebted to one Richard Dresser of Blyford to the sum of over £154 for wheat he had delivered to them.

In 1779 the mill property was bought by James Tillott, a carpenter from Halesworth, for £370. In the 'Bargain & Sale of Copyhold' it is described as

'all that Messuage or Tenement late of the said Brame Oxford with the Stable and all the Granarys Outhouses Yards and Appurtenances thereto belonging - And also of All that Piece of Land situate and being in Holton aforesaid being Parcel of the Common Pasture of Holton called Holton Hills containing by Estimation half an Acre together with the Windmill now standing and being thereon...'

Samuel Barrell is recorded as miller at Holton in the Register of Baptisms in 1816 and 1818, and in 1829 William Taylor was miller. In 1820, on the death of James Tillott, ownership passed to his son, John Tillott, of Wissett Lodge. Subsequently his son, also John, became owner.

In 1835, following the death of the second John Tillott, the mill was advertised for sale by auction as part of Tillott's estate. Lot 6 comprised

'At HOLTON - A capital POST-WINDMILL, with Brick Round House, two pair French Stones, 4ft. 7in., and one pair, 4ft, Flour Mill, and the usual going Gears. Also, a Brick and Tiled DWELLING-HOUSE, divided into Three Tenements, lean-to Sheds, and other Outbuildings, Yards, and Garden, in the occupation of William Taylor, Scrutton and Butcher.'

The reference to two pairs of 4ft 7ins stones is clearly wrong. All other descriptions (including another the same year) mention just two pairs in total and the mill is too small to have contained three pairs. The dwelling house referred to is the most northerly of the four detached cottages fronting Mill Road immediately below the mill. The miller, William Taylor, lived in the tenement at the south end, still called Mill Cottage. Lots 7-9 comprised the other three cottages, each of which was divided into two tenements. Unlike the mill and its half-acre plot, all

the dwellings were freehold.

At the auction the mill was bought by Samuel Wilkinson, a miller from Blythburgh, for £600. To raise the money he obtained a mortgage of £550 from Mrs. Julia Barnby of Halesworth, and in 1842 he arranged a further mortgage of £115 from Rev. Benjamin Philpot of Great Cressingham, Norfolk. William Taylor continued as miller during Wilkinson's ownership.

By 1835 the mill structure (including sails) was insured for £200, and the machinery, namely 'Standing and going gears two pair of mill stones wire machines and Dressing Mills', for £50.

Unfortunately, by 1842 Wilkinson was unable to meet his debts and Julia Barnby, as mortgagee, assumed ownership. In the following year his land holdings at Blythburgh and Holton were advertised for sale by auction. The miller, William Taylor, had just over seven years of his lease granted by Wilkinson to run, and paid a rent of £30 a year for the mill and house. By this time he was assisted by his son, also William. The mill did not sell, and when William Taylor senior died in 1845 his son became sole miller, although the 1851 Census also records a young journeyman miller, Thomas Beckett.

The mill property was finally sold in 1851 for £390. The buyer was John Youngs of Wenhaston, who installed his son and trustee in the sale, Edward Gotta Youngs, as miller and copyhold tenant. When John Youngs died in 1861 the mill was again put up for auction, being described as 'an excellent Post Wind-mill, brick round house, and spacious granary, stable and outbuildings, all in thorough repair...'.

Both the mill and cottage below were bought by Andrew Johnston of Holton Hall and became part of the extensive Holton Hall estate. Edward Gotta Youngs remained miller until about 1870 when he went to Blackheath post mill, Wenhaston. His successor, John Cox, was in turn replaced by William Gipson in 1873.

The Holton Hall estate was offered for sale at a major auction in July 1886. The vendor was Thomas Buxton, who had been Andrew Johnston's mortgagee. The mill was offered for sale freehold, having been enfranchised in 1873. The mill and miller's house were on a yearly tenancy at an annual rental of £27 10s 0d. As well as the house there was a stable and engine shed, steam power being recorded as an auxiliary power source in trades directories from 1883. These outbuildings, some of which still stand, were directly behind the miller's house.

The mill was probably not sold at the 1886 auction, for on one auction catalogue the mill lot is annotated '£300 withdrawn'. William Gipson is recorded as miller in trades directories until 1896, but the mill is marked 'disused' on the 1903 revision of the 25-inch Ordnance Survey map. A Suffolk miller, Mr. Cole of Stradbroke, is recorded as stating that it stopped about 1904 when in good order. Gipson could not have retired, for he was only 51 in 1896, so exactly why the mill ceased work is unclear. Notes collected by Stanley Freese record that the mill was damaged in a gale in c.1895 and repaired by Ted Friend, a millwright from Wenhaston. It is also recorded that the mill was worked on Sundays to annoy churchgoers!

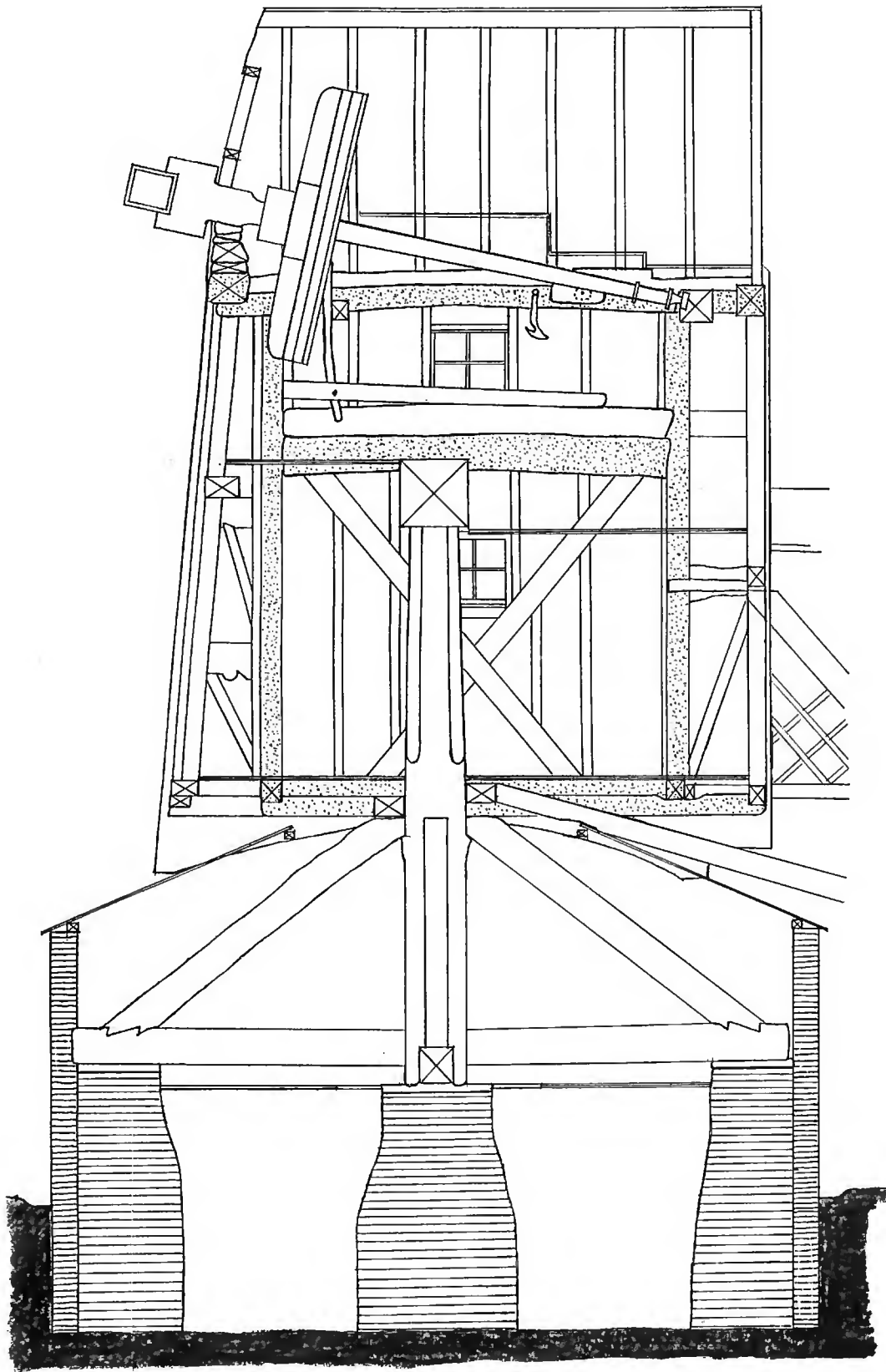


The mill as it stands today is the result of a great deal of alteration over the years and was accurately described by Neville Martin's workers who carried out the 1960's restoration as 'all bits'. The original buck is framed in oak and is 11ft 8ins long by 9ft 3ins wide overall (measured on the spout floor). The side girts have several carved inscriptions, the earliest of which appears to be 'T H 1745'. This is followed by 'F + Swan 1749', 'M Chandler 1752', '? x Swan 1753', 'I x Lungley 1753', 'John Swan 1754', 'I x B 1755' and 'James Brown 17??'. A further carved name, 'W + Bedwell', has lost its date, but from its position it is likely to be earlier than 1750. No other 18th century dates, or carvings of comparable quality, have been found in the mill. The reason for the carving of all these dates within a ten year period is unclear. While they may indicate a rebuilding of the mill, this must remain speculation. None of the names has been definitely linked to the parish (although a John Swan, one of a family of Halesworth millers, died in 1771), and at least some are likely to be journeyman millers. All the inscriptions are on the rear 3-4ft of the side girts, close to the original floor level, while the centre and front portions of these timbers are completely clean. One interpretation is that during this time the mill contained only a single pair of stones, on a half-floor in the head, leaving the centre and tail more open, providing ample opportunity for the carving we see today.

The increase in the insured value of the mill from £100 in 1773 to £250 in 1835 reflects a modernisation which was carried out during this time. The extent of this work can still be made out today. Perhaps the biggest change was the addition of the brick roundhouse. Its semi-basement provided additional storage without increasing the overall height of the mill, saving on the cost of a new ladder and sails (which had to be reached from the ground). The base of the post just above the horns is heavily weathered, convincing evidence that prior to the construction of the roundhouse the mill had an open trestle. The lower half of the post was octagonal, but when enclosed it was made round, and much of the weathered face was removed in the process. Most probably this was a deliberate attempt to 'clean up' the post, to match the cross-trees and quarter-bars, for these timbers must have been renewed at this time as they are entirely unweathered. The post is small for the size of the buck, the top of the upper section, also octagonal, measuring just under 16ins across flats.



An enhanced rubbing of the earliest date in the mill



— Feet  
⊗ = Original Buck Frame

**Holton post mill: section through buck & roundhouse**

Another principal component which has been renewed is the crowntree. The old crowntree was tenoned into the side girts, and to remove it the tenons were sawn through, leaving the blocked mortices, 20ins long by 3½ins wide, visible today. It would seem that the mill was not dismantled to carry out this major task, as the peg holes in the side girts and upper side rails align exactly. The side girt - corner post joints, as far as can be seen, also appear undisturbed. The new oak crowntree, 23ins square and still in perfect condition, was lap-dovetailed into the underside of the side girts in the normal manner. As the original side girts, weakened by the mortices at their point of maximum stress, had started to fail (the right hand one is cracked), they were reinforced by secondary oak girts set immediately above.

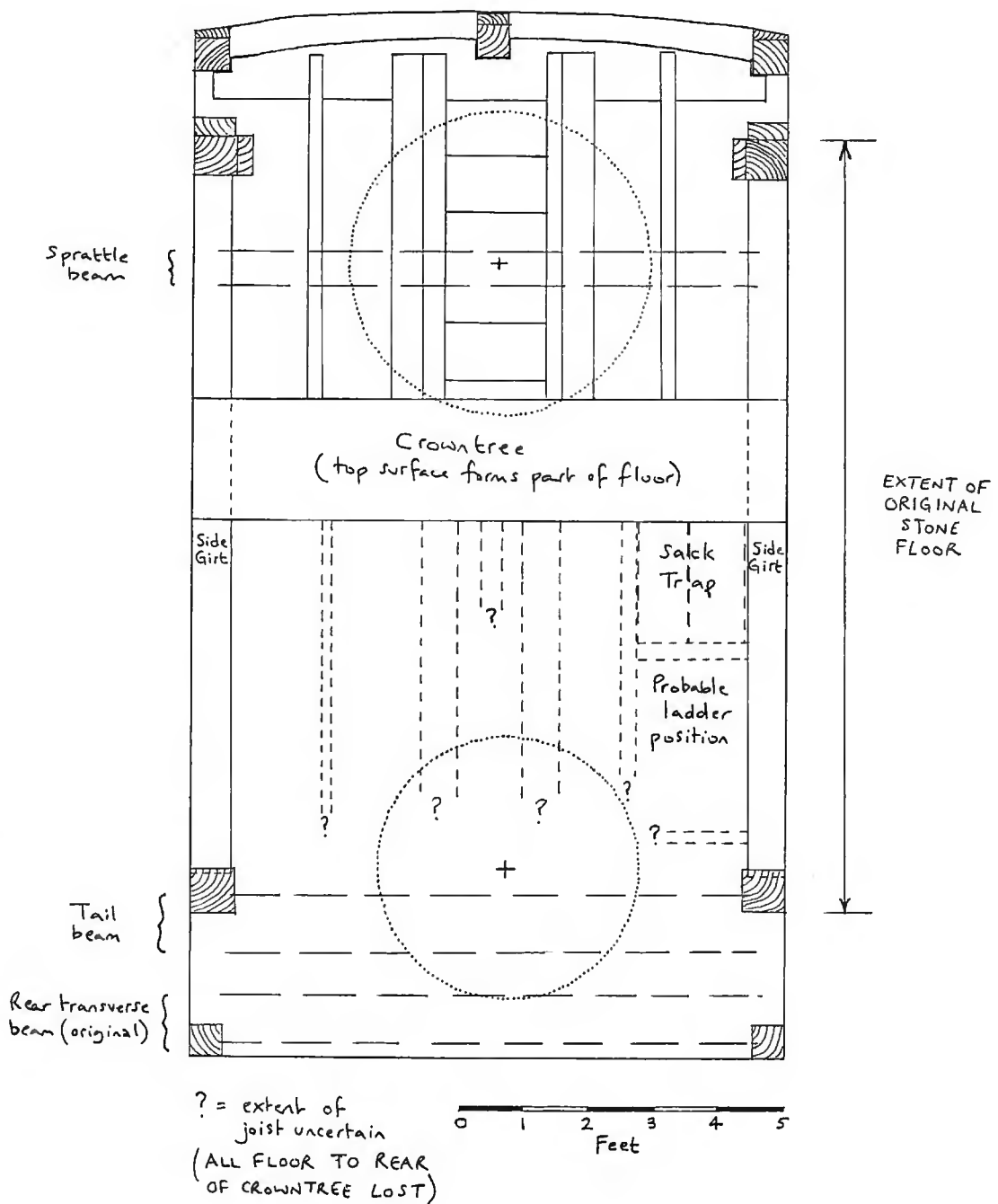
The buck was extended at the head by 2ft 4ins (as measured along the side of the spout floor) and at the tail by a similar amount, to give an overall length of 16ft 4ins. This provided space for a second pair of stones and the auxillary machines referred to in the 1835 insurance policy.

The head extension tapers back to the end of the original upper side rails, giving a distinctive forward-sloping breast, thought to be unique in surviving English post mills (although recorded at nearby Middleton and Sibton mills). The addition is well-framed, with pitch pine false corner posts supported by diagonally-braced oak sub-framing at each side. Some of the oak is nicely shaped and clearly re-used. As built, the upper side rails extended beyond the corner posts by about 15ins, probably once carried on curved brackets like the jetty of a house. The weatherbeam thus projected well forward of the breast. This is a feature of older or more primitive post mills, designed to allow sails to clear crosstrees when the windshaft was inclined at a shallow angle.

The top side rails also carry on beyond the rear corner posts, supporting an oak transverse beam, apparently original and in situ, more or less on the line of the later extension. This transverse beam contains pegged mortices for one central stud above and three studs below. On the spout floor the corner posts contain the mortices for the transverse beam which formed the head of the original doorway, at a near-identical height (approximately 5ft) to the present doorway. Unfortunately the rear false corner posts are now boxed-in with 1960's timber, but are said to be pine. From the evidence it would seem that the roof and upper part of the buck projected at the rear. The sheers carry on under the tail extension where they would have formed the basis for the rear platform, perhaps with some sort of open porch. There are photographs of other Suffolk post mills with similar rear overhangs: for example, Earl Stonham, Stonham Aspal and Kent's Mill, Mendlesham. Such an excrescence could have housed an auxillary machine such as a bolter, and the oak transverse beam referred to above has score marks from a large pulleywheel within a cut-back section on its right hand forward face.

It seems likely that much of the intermediate framing of the original buck was renewed during this early 19th century

modernisation. Almost certainly dating from this time are the unique diagonal braces in each side frame, extending down from the ends of each side girt and halved over each other. Unlike the original studding, the side girt mortices for these timbers are not pegged. Only the right hand pair of these crossed braces now survive, and even these are faced with the 1960's softwood which is so characteristic of the interior. Such was the extent of renewal in the 1960's that very little secondary framing survives with certainty from the mill's working days. The roof, which



**Holton post mill: plan of stone floor**

would have been raised and enlarged in the 19th century to permit the construction of a bin floor, has been entirely rebuilt.

The only photograph to show the mill in working order is an undated view from the road. The poll-end is projecting well in front of the sails, indicating a wooden windshaft. The old clamps in place until the 1960's were cut to clear a wooden poll-end. As the present shaft is iron, it must have been replaced fairly late in the mill's working life. The tailbeam is of pitchpine, and seems contemporary with the installation of the windshaft. The sprattle beam, of oak, could also be late; it contains the heavily oil-stained glut box for the stone spindle. The brakewheel is of all-wood clasp-arm construction, with a diameter of 7ft 9ins. The bearers for the head stones are still in place, a very neat and well-finished piece of work in pitch pine. This is clearly a replacement floor as there are blocked mortices in the crowntree for earlier joists. The tenting arrangement for the head stones (fairly conventional) can still be worked out, but all of the parts, with the exception of a hanger for the brayer, have long gone.

Physical evidence for the tailstones all but disappeared when the tail half of the stone floor was rebuilt at a lower level in the early 20th century (the assumed date for the removal of all the machinery except windshaft and brakewheel). The only evidence of tailstones that can be seen today is a mounting for a tailwheel on the windshaft, cut-aways for the tailwheel cogs on the tailbeam (giving an approximate diameter of 5ft 10ins for the wheel), mortices for tailstone bearers in the crowntree and a small wooden pulley fixed to the right corner post, below the old stone floor level, presumably for a crook string. The last tail stones were set well back and the final form of the rear half of the stone floor is unclear. As much as can be gleaned from visible evidence is shown on the accompanying plan. In 1965 the remnants of the sack-hoist could still be seen in the roof, but this disappeared when the roof was rebuilt the following year.

*In the next issue there will be a short account of the 20th century history of Holton mill, when it acquired a new mill house and a fantail!*

## **VANISHED MILLS** Peter Dolman

### **BOXFORD SMOCK MILL**

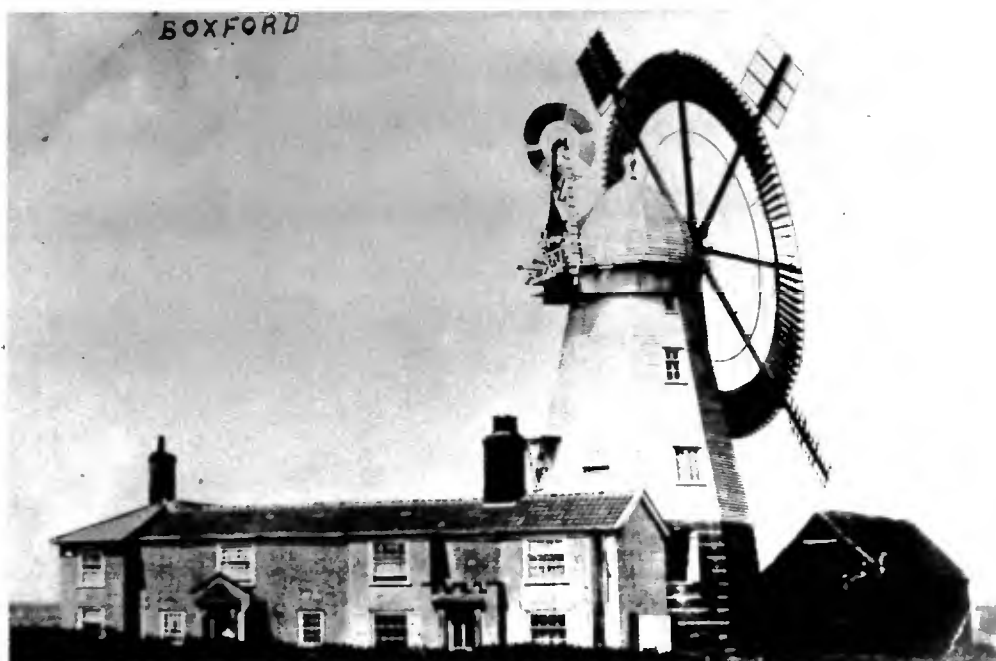
This mill is one of the few to have gained fame beyond its immediate neighbourhood, for the reason that it was one of only four mills to have been fitted with an annular sail, and was referred to in several letters and articles in the trade magazine *The Miller* in the 1880's. Without the special sail it was still an important mill, however, and was one of the finest of its type in East Anglia.

It stood at the top of the hill leading out of the village to Sudbury, at Grid Ref. TL95934021, on what was probably an old windmill site. It is indicated on Hodkinson's map of 1778-82 and the smock mill was built c.1788. It was virtually identical to

Dalham mill, both being the work of one of the Ballingdon millwrights (probably Hurwood). When first built it had a low brick base, or possibly no more than a low plinth. When advertised for sale in 1802 it was described as a 'capital bricked smock windmill'. The (un-named) proprietor was retiring; the mill 'was erected about 14 years ago, on the most substantial and improved modern principle; it has two pair of French stones, 4F.6I. diameter with flour mill, dressing machine, easing lighter...'. This last reference is one of the earliest mentions of a governor in Suffolk.

In 1807 it was again for sale, the proprietor James Mayer having taken 'an extensive water mill' elsewhere in the county. By this time a third pair of stones, of 4 feet diameter, had been added. In this respect it exactly matched Dalham mill. In 1820 it was offered to be let; 'Mr. Boreham' was on the premises. In 1830 John Gosling was at the mill. A correspondent to *The Miller* in 1882 wrote that it was raised 'about 30 years ago' but this is in error. An account of an accident in 1836 refers to the stage 'about 20 feet' above the ground. Thomas Foster, an employee of Mr. Gosling, was blown off to his death during a gale. The mill was actually raised by 16 feet, gaining a two storey base of stepped brickwork, as seen on other similar mills in the area. It ended up nearly 60 feet high and 28 feet diameter at the base.

The tithe map names Mrs. Edith Gosling as owner and occupier and she remained until at least 1853. Amos Tiffen was in occupation by 1858 and in 1860 it was offered for sale with him as tenant, described as 'the High Mill'. It is likely that Tiffen was able to buy the mill, still equipped with common sails (and probably hand-winded) at this time. In the following year he employed the millwright Alfred Clubb, of Colchester, to modernise the mill, and it is then that the annular sail was fitted. It was based on that at Haverhill, but differed in several respects, so as not to infringe Chopping's patent. It was about 50 feet



diameter, with a double set of radial vanes, and was almost uncontrollable in gusty winds! It was later modified, losing the inner row of vanes and gaining four double-shuttered patent sails which projected beyond the outer rim. These steadied it, and gave a lot of extra power. It would have worked much better in strong winds than the Haverhill mill, which had a similar sail without the extensions.

The mill was taken over by Stephen Scarfe in the 1870's and he also worked the watermill in the village. Scarfe thought the annular sail superior to conventional ones but a terrific gale on 18th January 1881 took much of the sail off, breaking the iron cross and effectively preventing its repair. The journeyman miller at the time, Ernest Gowing (who later had one of the Sweffling post mills), recalled that at the time the sail was destroyed the mill was running all three sets of stones! A new windshaft and four conventional patent sails were fitted by Collins of Melton and in this form it worked on until the 1900's. There is some confusion as to when it was demolished; one source says 1901, yet it is shown as being in use on the 1902 O.S. map and Scarfe is still listed as using wind power in the 1908 directory. A postcard exists of the mill with the vanes out of the sails, and it is said that it was stopped for want of £10 worth of repairs. It was probably demolished between 1910-15. The mill house survived until the early 1970's when two new houses were built on the site.

Boxford mill's internal arrangement is well documented, thanks to its similarity to Dalham mill and the first-hand testimony of Mr. Gowing. The stones were all mounted on a hurst on the lowest floor of the smock (originally at ground level) and the spur wheel, of timber clasp-arm type, ran underneath, completely enclosed in boarding. At Dalham, the solid wooden stone nuts are disengaged by means of slip cogs and the governors are perched high above the stones, driven off extended damsel spindles. It is highly likely that Boxford mill was the same. Two dressing machines were hung below the ceiling, driven by belt from a layshaft driven off the crown wheel on the bin floor. From the way the dressing machines were described above, it is likely they were a bolter



Boxford mill after 1881

and a wire machine. Why one of each should have been needed I can't say, but this duplication was not uncommon in large mills and can still be seen at Stansfield tower mill. Perhaps one was used to make the white flour and the other to grade the tailings.

At Dalham the upright shaft is in two parts, with a universal joint on the bin floor. The original oak windshaft at Boxford is said to have been three feet across at the head and probably had a six-spoke compass-arm brakewheel. Dalham mill's was of this type and was later converted to clasp arms. The Dalham wallower had been replaced with one of iron but the Boxford type is not recorded.

Externally, the cap was a large beehive type with a prominent finial. There was a short pent-roofed extension to the rear, which would have originally shielded the hand winding gear. At Dalham this drove by way of a spur pinion on the inside of the wooden curb and Boxford probably had similar. The six-bladed fantail had been tacked on to the rear of the cap with vertical posts with double cross bracing. The posts were restrained by iron rods to the top of the cap. Striking was by rocking lever. In its final form the mill had no reefing stage but this would have been level with the top of the brick base. The cap had a simple iron-railed gallery and, up to 1881, the sail could be serviced from a lethal looking platform tacked onto the mill above a window. A small staging was fixed below the rear of the cap to allow servicing of the striking and winding gear.

The annular sail had 120 vanes 5 feet long and the extensions were 9ft by 6ft. As it finished up the sails were double-shuttered patents of 10 bays, running anti-clockwise.

## NEWS

### ANNIE DUKE

Annie Duke, widow of Richard Duke, died in July last year. She was 60. Many of us remember the enthusiasm and support she gave to Richard, helping him in a very practical way with his sailing barges and in later years at Stanton post mill.

She spent her childhood on the wild and beautiful Scottish island of Islay. The impression it made then drew her back for visits throughout her life.

On the mainland, attending Grammar School, she wielded a hockey stick in the first eleven and achieved distinction in art and literature. She studied these subjects at college and taught for a while at a girl's school. She met and married Derek Moll, a young naval officer and went to live at Dereham in Norfolk. After a few years they parted and Annie met Richard. The family lived for a while at Pin Mill on the barge *Leslie West* before moving to a fine old farmhouse at Alton Green near Holbrook. This was a real family home where Annie and Richard welcomed their friends and their children's friends with meals and catered for everything from rock group sessions to quieter S.M.G. social evenings.

Annie showed great courage and compassion in nursing Richard through his last days at their home. After Richard's death she



moved to Stutton with her youngest son Alisdair and they had only been there three years when she died.

Her funeral at Harkstead church was attended by over 300 people and the coffin and chief mourners were led in and out of the church by a piper in full Scottish dress. She was buried the next day beside Richard in the churchyard at Great Chishill in Cambridgeshire.

We remember Annie seen bright and busy amongst ropes and shipboard equipment, making tea, and painting boards at Stanton mill. We will not easily forget that kindly smile and her lovely quiet Scottish accent. (C.H.)



Annie Duke seen with Richard (extreme right), together with Chris Hullcoop (holding Annie's dog Jilly), Peter Dolman (on steps left) & four French mill enthusiasts, at Stanton post mill in May 1986.

#### JOHN LAWN

John Lawn, the Norfolk millwright, died in December. He was 63. His childhood was spent in the village of Old Buckenham and over most of his lifetime he observed the decline of its fine and unusual tower mill. He attended Diss Grammar School and on leaving joined the R.A.F., as did his brother who became a helicopter pilot. He left the air force in 1966, joining Thermos in Thetford as a plant engineer. While there he bought the fine and very tall tower mill at Caston in 1969. Soon after that he joined Philip Barratt-Lennard who had been working with Vincent Pargeter. As Lennard & Lawn they worked together for several

years before going their separate ways. John Lawn worked on many of Norfolk's tower mills, both corn-grinding and drainage. He also did extensive work at the magnificent Gunton Park sawmill. His brother the helicopter pilot would often call by the mills on which John was working to photograph his work from on high.

On several occasions we were able to attend 'lift-ons' of mill caps which were always commemorated with ale or champagne and John's enthusiasm and good humour.

Towards the end of his life he undertook repairs to the Old Buckenham tower mill he had known all his life, and although ill he was able to complete this work and see the mill in good shape for the next century. (C.H.)

### SPROUGHTON MILL COURT CASE

Despite changing hands in 1995 and the subsequent grant of consent for a residential conversion, the only significant repair work at Sproughton watermill has been at the behest of Babergh District Council. This included extensive shoring, scaffolding and rebuilding works, carried out under the 1984 Building Act and the 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act.

In September last year Babergh sought to recover the cost of some of this work through a case heard at Colchester County Court. The judgement went in the District Council's favour, and they were awarded nearly £19,000 including costs. Co-defendants were Stephen Jones and Josephine Descorps, the latter being the alleged owner. After hearing the case, however, the judge was wholly unconvinced that Mme Descorps actually existed; it was Mr Jones who was the *de facto* owner.

Babergh District Council are to be congratulated on pursuing this difficult and time-consuming case. Let's hope the eventual outcome will vindicate their actions. (M.B.)

### WICKEN WINDMILL RESTORATION PROGRAMME

Wicken windmill is being restored by the voluntary millwrights of the Wicken Windmill Preservation Group, starting in late 1986. After many years of work the mill is now essentially complete, structurally and externally. In 1999 the Group was able to concentrate largely on the mill machinery, with the intention of having the 'western' pair of stones operational as soon as reasonably practicable.

Starting at the top, we have made and fitted almost two-thirds of the 208 sail shutters, following the casting of a further tranche of shutter fittings at the Wicken Mill foundry. The job will be completed after the next set of cranks and spigots is cast in the Spring. The rim of the replacement brakewheel has been machined to the correct bevel. This was done by using the mill in the guise of a giant wind-driven lathe: a jig was mounted off the cap sheer, so that a router could be traversed across the wheel rim at the correct angle. The sails were set running, and the face of the rim carefully trimmed. Final adjustments are now being made prior to fitting the 11 new gear tooth segments, cast in alloy at Wicken.

We decided to move from the original concept of wooden teeth on the brakewheel for two principal reasons. The first is that a high quality of timber would be required, particularly in the grain structure, to take the many tooth mortises in the wheel rim. 85 would be needed in this case, and in the end we had inadequate supplies of good elm. The second reason is to demonstrate that the design and manufacture of cast gear tooth segments is possible by the small groups of determined individuals who engage voluntarily in the restoration of windmills. It will not become easier to maintain traditional windmills, and in the future I firmly believe the technique will be needed again at one mill or another. (In any such case I would emphasise the need to record the old decayed wheel in detail, and to preserve the components as far as possible.)

The wallower has received major attention. The particularly large original rotted badly following the failure of the cap roof in the 1950's and 60's. The replacement has been erected on the upright shaft, and the bevel face turned in situ. The original design has been followed closely, but with 'second order' changes to the tooth shape in the interest of smoother running. Currently we are mortising for the teeth. Beech wood cogs are being made and fitted, following Hunt's previous recogging of the old wheel in 1899. (Hunt's account books refer to 'Bevil wheel geared with 65 beech cogs' for 16 shillings and 3 pence. Labour was charged additionally: 'EM at mill 5<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> days', £1/8s/9d, apparently on several jobs, and TBH (presumably Hunt) spent 1 day 4 hours cutting cogs and boring a brass, apparently without his time being separately charged.)

The stone nut for the west stones is of iron with 18 wooden cogs. New cogs have been fitted, and the wheel reinstated on the stone spindle. The western set of stones was missing, and we have replaced them with a set of 4ft 6ins burrs, understood to have once been in Gamlingay smock mill. The original Wicken glut box survived, and this has been set in the bedstone. The glut box bearing brasses were very far past their best! These are being replaced by phosphor-bronze bearing pads from the Wicken Mill foundry, which are currently being machined.

The new stone furniture for these stones is progressing well. The replica round vat now stands on a level wooden plinth, and is accompanied by horse, hopper, and grain and meal chutes. A bin has been made, smaller than the old ones, to suit requirements particularly of safety and access on the bin floor. Some work has been done on the mill structure of course, principally tarring the tower. The paintwork on the sails has received some attention, and considerably more will be needed in 2000.

We wish to thank all those who have helped with the restoration so far. This year's main work-ins will be held on May 20th-29th and August 19th-28th. We will be continuing the work described above. If you'd like to help or want more information contact Dave Pearce on 01664 822751. If you are 'on the web', the Wicken Windmill internet site has moved to <http://www.wickenmill.fsnet.co.uk/> This site contains details on all the planned work-ins and open days this year. (D.P.)

### STANTON WINDMILL WORK-INS

The mini work-in in December saw more progress in setting up the stones and machinery, with plenty of practice at stone dressing. We ran out of time, so the runner stone is still waiting to be replaced. The timber for the new sails has now arrived and is sticked up to dry. We will be having another mini work-in on April 15th-16th, and the full work-ins will be on May 27th-June 4th and August 5th-13th, when work will begin on the new sails, and repairs to the buck roof. (P.D.)

### SUFFOLK MILLS ON THE INTERNET

By the time you read this, progress should have been made on the new Suffolk Mills Group web site. This is still in development but will eventually have information on the Group, and on the county's mills. It is also intended to have an index to the newsletters. These were indexed by Peter Steggall (1-60) but the rest also need to be done. Would any member care to volunteer to do this? Any suggestions for content would also be welcomed. The address is currently <http://website.lineone.net/~suffolkmills> although as this is rather cumbersome we may try for a snappier address, if we can do this for little or no cost! Stanton mill also has a web site under construction, <http://stantonwindmill.members.beeb.net> as does Thelnetham mill, <http://www.thelnetham.freereserve.co.uk> Other Suffolk mills are mentioned on various web sites and links to these will be set up.

## **EVENTS**

### S.M.G. PUBLIC MEETING: 'MILLS OF THE MUSLIM WORLD'; SATURDAY FEBRUARY 19th at 7.30pm, at IPSWICH TOWN HALL

The subject of our winter meeting is the amazing vertical-axis windmills of the Middle East. Michael Harveson is a retired schoolteacher who has travelled widely in the area, studying these primitive machines, which pre-date those of western Europe by several centuries. Michael has written an authoritative study of the 'Persian Windmills' and will have copies available to purchase at the meeting. The talk will also cover the equally primitive horizontal watermills in the remote Atlas Mountains of North Africa. These mills are not so rare as the windmills, having spread to many other parts of the world but their continued use in the modern age is remarkable.

### S.M.G. VISIT TO SYLEHAM POST MILL: SUNDAY MAY 7th from 2.30pm

This visit will give members an opportunity to see the recent conservation work carried out on the roundhouse, as well as the machinery inside it and the oil engine. The mill is at Grid Ref. TM214777, down a farm track off the Wingfield Road. Parking will be signposted on the day.

### NATIONAL MILLS WEEKEND: MAY 13th-14th

As usual we will endeavour to publicise those mills open over the weekend, including Herringfleet, Stanton and Thelnetham. Look out for details nearer the time.

# CROSSWORD COMPETITION ENTRY FORM

To enter the competition, complete the puzzle below using the clues on page 5, together with your name and address, and post to the Editor, Mark Barnard, 41 Melbourne Road, IPSWICH IP4 5PP.

Entries must be received by Saturday June 3<sup>rd</sup> 2000. **Good luck!!**

Name .....

Address .....

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