

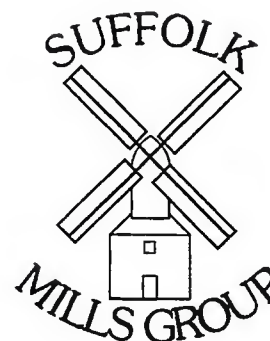
# SUFFOLK MILLS GROUP

## Newsletter

No. 77

June 2000

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



There has been a steady trickle of encouraging news about Suffolk mills since the start of the year. Repairs have been completed at Pakenham windmill, work continues on the new cap frame for Bardwell mill at Richard Seago's yard in Norfolk, and at Stanton post mill the first of two week-long work-ins has just finished. English Heritage has offered grants towards repairs to Euston watermill and Friston post mill, and St. Edmundsbury Borough Council launched 'The Miller's Trail', around mills in the north of their area, to coincide with National Mills Weekend. The publicity certainly helped Pakenham windmill and Bardwell mill which had good numbers of visitors. We had an enjoyable day at Herringfleet, where despite light winds at first, the day ended with the bunting-dressed sails turning steadily. Even my rain-affected Bank Holiday open day at Holton post mill was cheered by the news of Ipswich Town's Wembley triumph!

On the debit side, numbers at the February public meeting were disappointing, and we may need to look again at the way we publicise these events. Coming up is the A.G.M. at Pakenham windmill on July 2nd, a good chance to see the recent work and also the 1877 railway carriage, the subject of an article in the next issue. This and other forthcoming events are listed below.

S.M.G. Annual General Meeting	Sunday July 2nd
Stanton post mill work-in	August 5th-13th
SPAB Mills Section weekend tour	August 31st-Sept. 3rd
S.M.G. visit to Ecotech, Swaffham	Sunday September 3rd

P.S. Please don't forget about that article you meant to write for the newsletter!

Mark Barnard

## HOLTON POST MILL: RECENT HISTORY Mark Barnard

Little is known of what happened to Holton mill, or who owned it, in the early years of this century. One small clue is provided by recently discovered pencil graffiti around the doorway into the basement of the roundhouse. These indicate that, between 1911 and 1915, the basement was being used for the bulk storage of cans of petrol.

The present mill house, in whose generous grounds the mill now stands, was described in the 1885 auction catalogue as a 'Comfortable Villa Residence' and was called Ash Cottage. It is said to date back to the 18th century. Transformation to its present mock Jacobean appearance came in 1915, at the hands of Herbert George Broom, a local building contractor, who owned the property until the late 1930's. The pargetting and chimneys were modelled on a house at Walpole called The Elms which still

stands. It seems likely that the mill was incorporated into the grounds at this time. This made sense as a vehicular right of way to the mill from the vicinity of the house had long existed. The mill was stripped of almost all its machinery and the rear half of the stone floor lowered to create a small studio, lit by a Crittall window. For good measure, to ensure the fine views could be fully enjoyed, a gallery was added at the rear on the top floor, reached by a glazed door. The earliest postcard views, of c.1920, show the mill in this state.

By 1925 a fantail had been fitted to enable the mill to keep head to wind, even though it was no longer working. Whether by now the mill was still used as a studio or was merely an attractive feature of the grounds, it was regularly maintained. Interior pencil inscriptions record that the mill was painted in October 1930, June 1932, July 1934 and 1936, either by Ernest Haward or Robert Martin. Another inscription notes the fitting of a new fantail and carriage by Robert Martin in September 1938; presumably the earlier one was unsatisfactory.

During the war there was extensive mineral working in the parish to provide aggregate for the construction of military airfields. As one of the very few preserved Suffolk windmills at that time, the County Council sought and obtained an assurance from the Air Ministry that the mill would not be undermined.

Little maintenance was carried out during the war years and when the mill house was acquired by Col. Irwin in 1947 he found the mill in a dilapidated state. He offered to convey the mill free of charge to the County Council, but this was declined as another post mill (Saxtead) was already being preserved with public funds. An appeal for funds was therefore launched in 1949, and the Holton Mill Restoration Fund was established. Some £260 was eventually raised. In 1950-1 the exterior cladding and steps were repaired and the mill



Holton Mill in June 1933 (S. Freese)

re-painted (the paint being donated by the S.P.A.B.), at a total cost of £315. Another £53 was spent in 1957 on repairing the fantail.

By the early 1960's the elderly Col. Irwin realised that more extensive repair work was required on the mill he picturesquely described as an 'expensive weathercock'. Neither the County Council nor the Suffolk Preservation Society could offer any help. However, in 1963 a small group of volunteers commenced work, probably the first voluntary mill repair project in the county. Their work is described by Chris Hullcoop below.

By March 1966 the County Council's attitude towards the mill had somewhat changed, a Planning Committee noting that it was 'widely considered to be of outstanding interest because of its landscape value'. In view of this, and the work done by the volunteers, the County Council decided to lease the mill for a period of 50 years. A promise of financial support towards the cost of repair work had already been secured from the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works, and a full restoration commenced in earnest in 1966. The contractor was Neville Martin of Beccles, who had worked on the mill with his father in the 1930's. The buck frame was extensively repaired and completely re-boarded, and a new buck roof was made. There were also repairs to the step strings and a new roundhouse roof. Finally, in March 1968 four new sails were fitted, mounted on hollow stocks and with dummy common frames for lightness in view of concern about the weak state of the head. The work cost about £1200.

Routine maintenance work was carried out in the 1970's, and in 1982 more extensive work including renewal of the main steps, a new stock, and removal of the rear gallery, glazed door and Crittall window. In the late 1980's the sails were once again declared unsafe. In line with a more enlightened approach to the repair of all the County Council's windmills, it was decided to strengthen the head so that accurate replicas of the last working sails could be fitted. Vincent Pargeter specified the work to the head, comprising a galvanised steel bracket and strainer wires to anchor the weather beam (which is tilting forward), and Peter Dolman supplied drawings for the new sails. These were hoisted into place late in 1992. On October 22nd 1998 villagers saw the mill's four sails turn for much of the afternoon, the first time in over 90 years.

## **REMINISCENCES OF HOLTON MILL** Chris Hullcoop

Was it nearly 40 years ago that I worked on the post mill at Holton St. Peter near Halesworth? A sobering thought, but I will try to remember something about it.

I first heard of its plight through Mr Hales, an engineering and general contractor whose premises occupied the old gravel pit next to the mill. He told me that its owner, Colonel Thomas Irwin, had all but despaired of the mill's repair and was reluctantly thinking about demolition. He had asked Mr Hales if he could do the job and what the cost would be.



Elderly retired colonels loomed formidable in my mind and it was with trepidation I rang the doorbell of the substantial mill house. The colonel (pictured right) answered the door and I told him of my interest. He immediately invited me in, asking if I would prefer sweet or dry sherry! Acting on the adage that 'A little help is worth a deal of pity', I asked if I might be permitted to carry out a little repair work on the mill at weekends. The colonel said certainly and although well over 80 would help where he could and I would be most welcome to stay overnight in the house if I wished to attend the mill on both Saturday and Sunday! I quickly revised my prejudiced view of retired colonels!

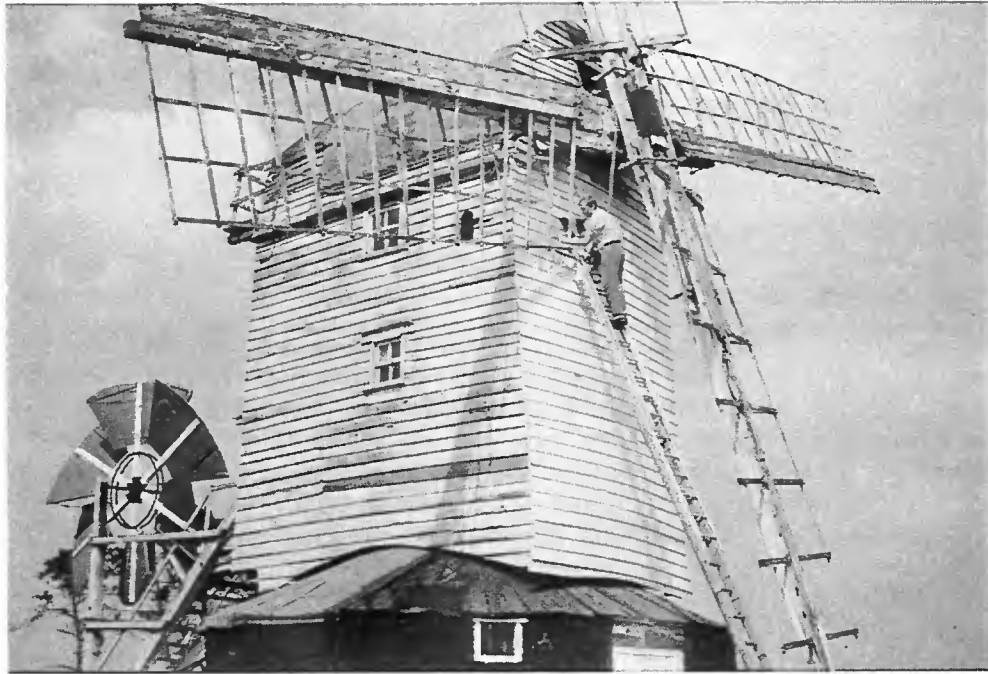


Much of the roundhouse roof was bare boards and the first job was to replace the felt. Some of the weatherboards had fallen off while others were loose on rusty nails. We soon made good the boards on the head, sides and tail and on the buck roof we spread a tarpaulin, nailed and battened on. I.C.I. at Stowmarket kindly donated some white paint and soon the old mill was looking brighter.

Colonel and Mrs Irwin were great characters. He served in India at the start of the last century and had taken part in a cavalry charge on the North Western Frontier. He fought with great bravery in World War One, winning the Military Cross and was lucky to survive his wounds. Too old to serve in World War Two, he organised the local Home Guard. Mrs Irwin was originally Australian and once had been a ladies champion rifle shot. Any rabbit tempted by lettuces in the kitchen garden was quickly despatched by a single shot from her rifle!

I had mostly worked on my own at the mill and was pleased when in 1964 Stanley Freese retired to live in nearby Wenhaston and volunteered to help. He cycled to the mill and worked there in his usual shorts. His knowledge and experience of mills was considerable and he was a congenial companion. I remember once I was using a chisel which slipped and somehow cut his leg quite badly with much blood. He only laughed and said he thought working on mills safer than cycling on busy roads which outside restricted areas had no upper speed limits! Poor Stan could be a bit embarrassing though. The Irwins were kind enough to give us meals at weekends, and after some ten hours work, which I would help prepare and serve. Stan would go to the mill on weekdays, starting at say twelve and place himself at their table at 12.45pm! He meant no harm of course but it was a bit much really.

The machinery had long been removed from the mill and all that remained inside was the brakewheel. This lack of machinery, together with the doubling of the side girts, prevented that sag so often seen in post mills. We felt some extra support was



Chris Hullcoop at Holton mill in 1963. The view shows well the last working sails (B. Flint)

needed under the centre of the weather beam and a vertical prop was fitted with the weight taken further in towards the post. The weather beam was also rolling outwards, so a substantial tie rod was attached to the left end of the weather beam connecting back to the rear corner post. Once the structure had been made safer we reluctantly removed the spring sails as the stock had broken in the centre and the sails were drooping. We made some minor repairs to the remaining pair of common sails and they were made ready to turn. I improvised some sail cloths from old pieces of hessian dyed red and on a windy day the sails were soon turning. Colonel and Mrs Irwin were delighted and opened a bottle of champagne.

They were wondering what to do with the mill and fortunately the then County Planning Officer for East Suffolk, Mr. Oxenbury, lived not far from me in Felixstowe. I was able to tell him of the mill's virtues (not its vices!) and convince him that a lease should be arranged.

By mid 1965 Colonel and Mrs Irwin had decided to sell up and move into care. I felt it was a little too early as both were quite sprightly. With a large house they could have had a live-in carer. This could easily have been paid for by the sale of a fine winter scene by Dutch old master Aart van der Neer. Such a painting today would make about £1M. It hung in their drawing room and a year previously the colonel had drawn my attention to it, at the same time straightening it up. The cord behind broke and I just managed to prevent it crashing to the floor. I fitted a substantial picture wire! They had made up their minds though and the property was sold for £12,000.

It has been said that a better, more complete mill could have been leased by the County Council. Certainly there were better ones then standing but it is always the attitude of the owner that is so important. To appear at the door as a complete stranger and be asked if I preferred sweet or dry sherry meant a lot.

## SUFFOLK WINDMILLS Peter Dolman

### WALTON SMOCK MILL

The 1805 O.S. map only shows one mill at Walton, in Mill Lane; the first map to show the present mill, in Walton High Street (Grid Ref. TM290358) being Greenwood's of 1823-4. At some time between these dates the mill was built. The deeds to the property, which was copyhold, show that prior to the mill's erection John Page, a tanner, owned the site. At the court Baron on 13th January 1816 the property passed to John Page the younger, miller, of Walton, for £15, 'whereon a cottage and windmill had been then lately erected'. John Page was formally admitted as tenant on April 11th 1817 and at the same court he passed it on to James Westhorp, a shopkeeper, of Walton. James and his wife Molly were formally admitted at a court in May 1819; Susannah Bacon of Walton was also mentioned in connection with the use of the mill. Large amounts of money were tied up in mortgages and bonds, and with the business evidently not going as well as might have been hoped for, trouble struck. In the *London Gazette* of 29th January 1825, James Westhorp's bankruptcy was announced. He was described as formerly of Walton, Suffolk, shopkeeper and Hairdresser, since of Walton aforesaid (partner with Joseph Bacon, in the trade and business of a miller), afterwards of Walton aforesaid, miller on separate account, and late of Woodbridge, Suffolk, shopkeeper and hairdresser.

In the *Suffolk Chronicle* of 9th September 1826 the mill was advertised for auction on 26th September following Westhorp's insolvency.

*Lot 2: All that TOWER WINDMILL, with the sails, tackle, going gears and apparatus...now in the occupation of John Ruffles or his under tenant, at the annual rent of 40L.*

It was described as being copyhold of the manor of Walton cum Trimley. It appears not to have been sold.

The mill was again advertised for auction (with 'new patent sails') on 14th March 1837 (*Suffolk Chronicle* 11th February 1837) when still owned by the creditors of James Westhorp (who were Henry Dance and Simon Bacon); the mill was occupied by John Holdren, although still let to John Ruffles. The *Suffolk Chronicle* for 18th March 1837 has James Holden (sic), miller, of Walton selling his effects and on 25th March the mill was advertised to be let, application to be made to Mr. Chaplyn, of Nacton. James Chaplyn, a malster, bought the mill for £360 and was admitted as tenant at the court on 4th May 1837. John Ruffles was miller at the post mill in Mill Lane, Trimley for many years, which he owned.



The tithe map and apportionment of 1845 give James Chaplin as owner, and John Ruffles and another as occupier so it was still sub-let. The *Suffolk Chronicle* of 15th April 1848 advertised the auction on 2nd May of

*A capital Four storey Smock Tower Windmill, driving 2 pairs of French stones, with new Patent Sails, winding herself, flour mill.... for many years in the occupation of Mr. John Ruffles, at the rent of £28 p.a.*

The use of the term 'smock' is unusual; they were normally referred to as 'Tower Mills' in this area.

On the death of James Chaplyn in June 1846 the property had passed to his four daughters, only one of which was of age in 1848. Again no sale seems to have been achieved and the sisters continued to let the mill. In February 1857 the mill 'in occupation of John Bloomfield' was sold to Robert Hughes (in 1845 Hughes was tenant of the post mill in Mill Lane, Walton).

In 1858 John Bloomfield is listed at the mill in Kelly's directory. The owner, Robert Hughes, died in 1871 and in his will left the mill to his nephew William Hughes, a harness maker, of Ipswich, and a friend, Henry Durrant. In 1877 John Bloomfield was given permission to install a steam engine 'with necessary machinery & gear attached ... to act either independently or to work the machinery' and in 1879 and 1883 John Bloomfield and Son are listed. William Hughes died in 1890 and the surviving owner, Henry Durrant, sold the mill to the tenant for £405. John Bloomfield died in February 1899 and in March his widow sold the



mill and nearby baker's shop to Messrs Hayward Brothers (of Woodbridge tide mill and steam roller mill). One of the Hayward brothers (Leonard) died in 1933, prompting the sale of the business to Geoffrey LeMare Atkinson. He did not want the Walton mill so it was sold in July 1934 to George Bloomfield, house furnisher, of Walton, with a covenant not to use the premises as miller or corn merchant. It remains in the Bloomfield family to this day. Despite the same surname, they are not related to the earlier millers.

The above history of ownership, while being very detailed, does not say much about the mill's development. From the sale notices it is clear that patent sails and a fantail had been fitted between 1826 and 1837 and in this form the mill worked until the steam power was added in 1877, as noted above. In late 1889 the sails are said to have been blown off and it is clear that the interior was altered at this time, a large new grain bin being dated January 28th 1890, and a ladder bearing the date 1889. The mill also switched to using a gas engine at some point, remains of gas piping still being evident.

Remarkably two photographs of the mill with sails exist, one taken in the 1860's. In *Walton - Views from the Past* (1992) are two pictures of the mill, both dated 1893, with a rather erroneous caption. One picture is obviously earlier however, showing the mill with sails. In the other picture the mill has lost its sails and indeed machinery (you can see right through it at first floor level). A new storage building has been erected adjacent to the house and it is also likely that the cap has been removed down to frame level, although the picture is very indistinct.

Walton smock mill is almost unique in having more brick base than timber smock frame (there were no similar examples in Suffolk and only one at Croxton Kerrial in Leicestershire and a few in Cambridgeshire come close). It is a small mill, only 14ft 5ins across flats internally at ground level, with very little batter. The stones, two pairs, were underdriven on the first floor and the hursting was supported by four vertical posts down to ground level. The bottom of the smock is 2ft above the second floor level and is 13ft 5ins across flats. The curb is of oak, in two layers with the top oversailing internally to provide a keep flange, and is 11ft 7ins outside diameter. The floor heights are: ground to first floor 10ft 8ins; first to second (bin) floor 7ft 8½ins; second to third (dust) floor 6ft 1ins and third floor to top of curb 8ft 5ins. The mill has unusual framing features; the cant posts are braced to the dust floor beams by large knees on the top surface, the frame panels have only one diagonal brace (to 7 of the 8) and the oak sill is anchored to the base by very long iron tie rods. These have unfortunately been built in very close to the outside of the brickwork, with the result that it has cracked and disintegrated badly at the corners.

No machinery survives, but the floors and bins remain, one of which is the former flour machine bin. An iron bearing box survives in the base, formerly taking the steam or gas engine power into the spurwheel, and the curb retains the iron track for the centring wheels internally and the iron rack for the winding



worm externally. From old pictures the mill had four double shuttered patent sails of eight bays, a boat-shaped cap and six blade fantail.

After deteriorating over many years, when the original boarding was covered by corrugated iron sheeting, the timber frame of the smock was repaired and reboarded in 1996, and a new roof constructed, clad in sheet aluminium (see Newsletter 66). At about the same time the mill house was also refurbished.

## PUTTING MILLS IN THE PICTURE (12) Peter Steggall

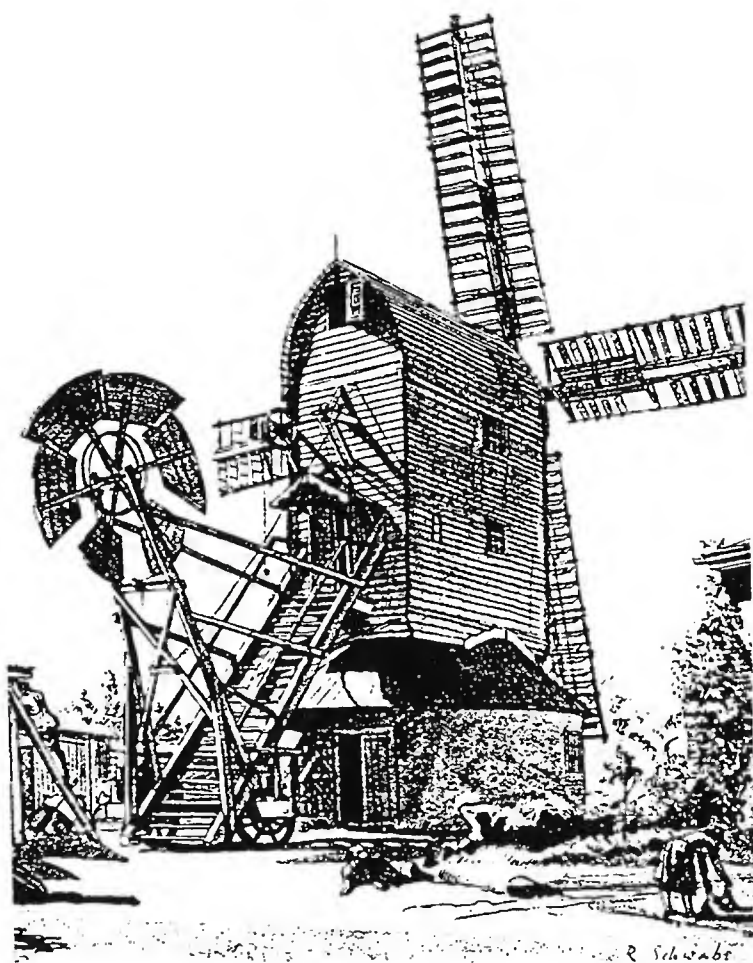
### RANDOLPH SCHWABE AT PEASENHALL

In 1939 Blackie & Son Ltd published *Suffolk Scene* by Julian Tennyson, a great grandson of the poet Alfred Tennyson. In spite of the imminence of World War Two, or perhaps because its threat to our lives and country made us more than normally conscious and appreciative of our heritage, the book was a great success. It was reprinted in 1939 and eight more times by 1949, and there have been more reprints since then. I have always regarded *Suffolk Scene* as one of the best of all books about the countryside and people of Suffolk; it is beautifully written and

so obviously a labour of love. How sad that the author, serving in the army, was killed in action in Burma in 1945.

My copy of the book still has its original dust jacket, the whole of which - back, spine and front - carries a beautiful drawing of the village street at Sibton. A small arched brick bridge carries a road over a little stream which runs along in front of thatched and tiled cottages. A horse and two-wheeled cart stand in the street. I found in March 2000 that the scene had hardly changed - except that the horse and cart had gone!

But it was the frontispiece to the book which prompted me to write this



WINDMILL, PEASENHALL

R. Schwabe

article. It is a finely drawn detailed picture of a post mill at Peasenhall, the next village to Sibton. The artist of both drawings was 'R. Schwabe'. As you can see from the reproduction, the mill was complete and apparently still working, some time before the war.

I had never seen any other pictures by this artist, and I knew nothing about him until I made enquiries at Ipswich museum. Randolph Schwabe lived from 1886 to 1948 and was 'water-colourist, draughtsman, etcher and lithographer of architectural and figure subjects, also some landscapes; theatrical designer and book illustrator'. He was an official war artist 1914-18, and Professor at the Slade School of Art from 1930. My thanks go to Lisa Harris of Ipswich museum, who also provided me with a photocopy of a watercolour and pencil picture, in the Borough Council's collection, of Lavenham guildhall in 1946, a scene then somewhat disfigured by a very tall post carrying telephone lines.

All that I have written so far shows yet again how easily I become distracted from my declared theme of 'Putting Mills in the Picture'. 'Retournez à nos moutons' - or rather to our 'moulins' - I find, in Peter Dolman's *Windmills in Suffolk* (1978), a 1971 photograph of a rather haphazard array of buildings at Peasenhall. On the left is a small smock mill with an ogee cap but no sails. On the right is a brick roundhouse with a conical roof. Other buildings stand between the remains of the two mills. Peter refers to a 'small post mill with roundhouse, which ceased work in 1938 and was pulled down about 1957'.

To me the post mill in Schwabe's picture looks far from small, which reminds me that Brian Flint, in his *Suffolk Windmills* (1979) says the sails were shortened after they had hit the head of and killed a girl. Brian also tells us that the smock mill was moved in about 1882 from Cransford to Peasenhall, but was not refitted with sails; it was powered by a steam engine.

I went to Peasenhall in March this year and was fortunate to encounter Mrs Cole who told me that her husband's family had owned the site for about 150 years. She knew about the death in the early 1900's of the girl who was struck by the sails. The smock mill now looks somewhat dilapidated, but the brick roundhouse is protected by conical sheet metal roofing. The buildings between the two mills are still there, and so is Mill House, the corner of which can just be seen on the right of Schwabe's picture. The owners hope soon to clear and tidy the mill buildings and to repair the smock mill. In the meantime the overall scene is virtually unchanged since the 1971 photograph.

## NEWS

### PROGRESS AT STANTON POST MILL

Since the last report there have been both a 'mini work-in' and the first of the summer work-ins. In April the main job was to get the runner stone back into place. The conventional way is to wind a rope around the windshaft and use the sails as a windlass but with only two sails this was impossible. There is insufficient headroom to get a proper chain hoist in position so I had to improvise. With sufficient strong helpers, and a safety

rope wound around the windshaft, we managed to get the stone up to about 80 degrees off horizontal before running out of chain hoist! Brute force then got the stone past vertical and on its way down again and it was soon back in its rightful place, after about four years wait. The plaster on the back was in fairly good condition, but the stone was badly out of balance. Richard Duke had balanced it by inserting a steel ball bearing under the bridge bar, which put a huge point load on the cast iron and led to it crumbling away. We had put this right in 1996 when the stone spindle was altered to allow proper balancing once more and as a result the balancing achieved by Richard no longer applied. With a large running gap, the stone was put in gear and run by wind as slowly as possible, with large lumps of lead and weights tossed onto the stones to see what happened. If the mill got too fast these were flung off at speed, leading to some hilarious avoiding action by the intrepid stone balancers! Eventually we got it running fairly evenly so it was stopped, the plaster chopped out in the appropriate place, and molten lead of equivalent weight run into the void. After another attempt at running it we achieved a reasonably even running gap at up to full speed. The plaster was then patched up to complete the job.

The summer work-in got off to a bad start with the wettest Bank Holiday weekend for some years. Fortunately there was plenty of sorting out of timber to be done under cover. A load of Douglas fir was obtained from a well-known supplier in Lincolnshire. Sadly it proved to be worse than I had expected and much was rejected as unsuitable, mainly due to the high degree of sapwood. The best pieces were ripped down to make laths and sail bars, the next best for the whips and the remainder for the stock. I had intended not to have any sapwood in the stock at all, but will have some, unfortunately. The old clamps, which turned out to be oak, were fit for re-use. After a slightly wobbly start with the splice joints in the stock, we settled into a routine of cutting them by circular saw, finishing by hand. Thank heavens for gap filling glue! The stock will be in seven layers, six of them in two pieces, 10"x11" in the middle and 42ft long. The whips will be in four layers, in one length, 5"x6" and 26ft long. A departure from the old arrangement will be to use long taper pieces between the whip and stock, to throw the sail tips forwards. This should remove the problem with the old sails, which hit the roundhouse roof with the vanes open! It may be that the original sails had this feature, but no clear photograph of them has survived.

The other main job was work on the roof of the buck. Once the weather had improved by the middle of the week the old paint was scraped off the roof sheets, which were then primed. The old boards were taken off to expose the rafter feet and purlin, most of which was in a delicate state. A start was made on reinforcing the purlin (which is bowed nearly a foot out of straight in its length) by trimming off the decay to the outside and plating it with some of the Douglas fir.

The main jobs to be done in August are the construction of the stock and sail frames. I will get the timber Protimised between work-ins and also hope to have the whips and taper pieces glued together in advance, to save time. The other main job will



be the buck roof. A second platform will be built out on the right side, to allow for similar repairs to those on the left. The rafter feet and purlin on the left should be sorted out fairly quickly, which will allow the roof to be boarded up, the steel sheets replaced, and the whole side to be painted. It is unlikely that the roof will be completed in the week but much depends on the amount of labour available. In June I had three constant helpers with more on some days, which allowed work to progress on two separate fronts. Hopefully more of you will come along in August! The dates are August 5th - 13th; there is plenty of room for tents or caravans. The available space in the house has already been bagged, but other covered accommodation might be available. The pace of work is relaxed (more so than at Thelnetham, for those with long memories!) with frequent pauses for refreshment and lots of chat about mills. Another task will be the construction of 108 shutters for the new sails, with wire frames, timber backs and canvas covers. Volunteers for this monotonous, but essential, task are sought. This could easily be done away from the mill. To volunteer your help in this or in the work-in, please contact me at The Windmill, Upthorpe Road, Stanton IP31 2AW, or telephone 01359 250622. (Peter Dolman)

#### WORK AT PAKENHAM WATERMILL

Last year an application was made for extensive new visitor facilities at the mill, part of a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund. These proposals were subsequently withdrawn. A more modest scheme, with a small forward extension of the engine house to enable this building to act as a visitor reception area, has now received consent. However, another ambitious scheme is now being pursued, which will be reported in a future newsletter.

Meanwhile, the mill has been awarded a 75% grant from the Suffolk Environmental Trust (which administers money from the landfill tax) for internal work. This includes restoration of the remaining two sets of stones; completion (at last!) of flooring work on the stone floor; replacing sluice gates onto the wheel, and realigning drive shafts and the sack hoist. Other work is planned to the bypass weir and the banks of the mill pond. (M.B.)

#### BARDWELL WORK ESCALATES

A considerable amount of extra work has been found necessary following removal of the cap from Bardwell mill last summer (see Newsletter 75). Both sheers rather than one are now to be renewed, together with the whole fly frame, possibly the weatherbeam too, and six new iron curb segments are to be cast (only two had been allowed for). Fund-raising continues apace, and both St Edmundsbury Borough Council and English Heritage have pledged extra grant aid. (M.B.)

#### CRANFIELDS SITE SOLD

The Cranfields flour mill site in Ipswich has been bought by the East of England Development Agency. The Victorian brick buildings will be retained for conversion, but the concrete silos will be demolished. The aim is to market the partially cleared site for a mix of office, residential and possibly hotel uses. (M.B.)

## MILLER'S TRAIL LAUNCHED

National Mills Weekend (May 13th-14th) saw the launch of the Miller's Trail, a joint initiative by St Edmundsbury Borough Council, Suffolk Mills Group and the various mill owners and parish councils involved. The trail comprises a circular route suitable for car, cycle, horse or foot travel, centred on the group of mills open to the public at Pakenham (wind and water), Bardwell, Stanton and Thelnetham. Other tourist venues are also highlighted on the trail leaflet, the centrepiece of which is a hand-drawn map of the area. Suffolk County Council contributed enhanced tourist signing and the whole project was funded jointly by St Edmundsbury Borough Council and the National Lottery through 'Awards for All', the grant being applied for by S.M.G.. The new trail leaflet was launched by the mayor of St Edmundsbury, Mrs Margaret Horbury, at Pakenham watermill and the newly restored windmill. The mayor also visited S.M.G. secretary Peter Dolman at Stanton mill where she enjoyed some shortbread made from Thelnetham Mill flour and was shown around the mill on a baking hot day in full regalia!

The Miller's Trail leaflet is available free of charge from the mills and other tourist centres in the area, and a presentation copy of the map (suitable for framing) is also available from the Tourist Information Centre in Bury St Edmunds.

## NATIONAL MILLS WEEKEND

In addition to the launch of the 'Miller's Trail', Suffolk was again able to field a good number of mills open to the public on what turned out to be a fine, if calm, weekend. The public was much in evidence, especially at Bardwell and Pakenham, where special events were once again laid on. Drinkstone mills were open, also reporting a good attendance. At two mills,



Radio amateurs at Pakenham watermill

Stanton and Pakenham watermill, radio amateurs set up short wave sets to communicate with the other mills taking part in the scheme both here and abroad. At Pakenham the radio was run by members of the local radio club from the old sack store outside but at Stanton the radio was inside the mill, with the aerial run from the top of

the mill down to the ground. Twelve other mills were contacted by Ian Dilworth, at Stanton, including Pakenham - so later in the day Ian went to see the Pakenham team in person! (P.D.)

### PAKENHAM WINDMILL REPAIRS COMPLETED

Repairs to Pakenham windmill were finished just in time for the National Mills Weekend deadline, and the mill is once again a familiar landmark on the A143 road just south of Ixworth.



Millwrights Thompsons of Alford have undertaken extensive work to the cap frame, with new sheer splices and overlays, a new weatherbeam, tailbeam and rear cross-beam, all in oak. Half the gallery has been renewed, plus all the decking on gallery and fanstage. The cap was lifted back in place on March 10th, registering 9 tonnes on the crane (photo left). The fantail followed on April 27th (the fan frame also had to be renewed). The sails only needed minor work and the steel stocks have been re-used. Only a half set of shutters has been put back, using the ones in best condition, some with heavy accretions of lead paint and clearly very old. New windows and doors have also been made, and the tower tarred. Inside, visitors will find the mill thoroughly cleaned, ladders repaired and

stone furniture varnished. A dust box on the dust floor has replaced the extract pipe which vented through a window. Hopefully this will keep the mill cleaner in future (the electric hammer mill for animal feed remains). We hope the mill gets the visitors it deserves, and that it is regularly maintained from now on. (M.B.)

### DEMOLITION AVERTED AT OULTON

The stump of Arnold's Mill, beside the River Waveney just north of Oulton Dyke (TM502946) was nearly demolished recently by the Drainage Board. It has been given a 12-month stay of execution after the owner of the surrounding land stepped in and offered to put together a plan to preserve it, maybe even replacing the



upper half of the tower and reinstating its original external appearance. The windpump probably dates from the 18th century and was dismantled around 1900, the stump converted to a diesel-driven pump house.

We understand that the Drainage Board did demolish one pump nearby, and we fear this could be the stump at Somerleyton (TM480959). (M.B.)

#### NEW ENGLISH HERITAGE GRANTS FOR TWO SUFFOLK MILLS

Two Suffolk mills have recently received offers of English Heritage grant aid. One is the watermill at Euston, where repairs to the iron waterwheel are about to commence. The tower is due to be scaffolded in September so that structural repairs can be undertaken. The mill, which both ground corn and pumped water, and is thought to incorporate 17th century fabric, is to be properly recorded and its history researched.

Friston post mill has been offered over £45,000 for major repairs to the trestle, renewal of the fan carriage, fan and steps, and work to the roundhouse. Decay in the ends of the quarter bars has caused the post to settle onto the crosstrees, and the remedial work is now considered urgent. (M.B.)

#### NEW BOOK ON BECCLES MILLS

Beccles and District Museum has just published *The Lost Windmills of Beccles* by Barbara Knox, with contributions by Peter Dolman and Russell Garnham. This 44-page A5 format paperback tells the story of the corn mills of the town, with detailed descriptions of the five 19th century windmills. It also includes details of the Gillingham post mill which stood close to Beccles bridge. There are 22 black and white illustrations and a map. The price is £3.50, and copies are available from Peter Dolman (address on p.12). Please add 50p for postage.

#### CHANCE FOR MILL OWNERS TO HAVE MAKEOVER!

The BBC are looking for neighbours to take part in the next series of *Changing Rooms*, one programme of which is to be centred on a mill in Suffolk (i.e. the mill is the backdrop, they aren't looking for a conversion). Your room must be larger than 12ft x 12ft (14ft x 14ft if it is a main bedroom), you and your neighbour should live no more than five minutes walk apart, and there should be two people in each team, resident in the house in question. If interested, Peter Dolman has entry forms.

#### WINDMILL FOR SALE

S.M.G. has been contacted by David Bent, of Lincolnshire Mills Group. He has reluctantly decided to sell the tower mill at Swineshead that he had started to restore in the 1980's. The mill has no cap but various bits have been collected to allow one to be constructed, and the adjacent granary has been converted into a residence. David and his wife have decided to move because David spends most of his time at Green's Mill in Nottingham, where he is employed as miller, leaving no time for his own mill, and leaving a 'mill widow' for much of the week! David also runs

the mill at Sibsey for English Heritage on its working days and will be giving this up at the end of the year, should anyone like to take over there. The asking price for Swineshead is £95,000 (including the residence) and anyone interested should contact David at North End Mill, Station Road, Swineshead, Lincolnshire PE20 3LP. (P.D.)

### MILL BOOK FOR SALE

The editor has a spare copy of Peter Dolman's *Windmills in Suffolk* which was published in 1978 and has been out of print for many years. The card cover is badly creased and marked, and a small part of the front is missing. However the inside pages are complete and undamaged. Price £6 plus £1 for postage. Phone Mark Barnard first if interested (01473 727853).

## EVENTS

### S.M.G. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: SUNDAY JULY 2nd AT PAKENHAM WINDMILL, commencing 11am

This year we thought we would mark the completion of repairs at Pakenham windmill by holding our A.G.M. there, by kind permission of Mike Bryant. We will assemble in either the sack store or the base of the mill, depending on numbers and available seating. The mill will be open throughout the day for members to view at their leisure, and the nearby watermill will also be open at this time (admission charge). An agenda is enclosed with the newsletter.

### WORK-IN AT STANTON POST MILL: AUGUST 5th - 13th

The tasks for the second week's full-time work at Stanton are described by Peter Dolman in the News section above.

### S.M.G. VISIT TO ECOTECH CENTRE, SWAFFHAM: SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 3rd

This new attraction at Swaffham in Norfolk comprises an environmental discovery centre with high-tech interactive displays within an interesting modern building. However, the main reason for the visit is the chance to climb the U.K.'s largest wind turbine. This is a working machine capable of generating 1.5MW of power, which incorporates a viewing platform reached by a climb of 300 steps inside the tower.

We have booked two guided tours of the turbine, at 3pm and 3.30pm. Each is for a maximum of 12 people. If you intend to come, please contact Mark Barnard on 01473 727853 by July 15th so that your place can be confirmed. If you turn up on the day you may not be able to climb the turbine!

If you are part of the S.M.G. booked party entry will cost £5.40 inclusive of the turbine tour. Without the turbine tour the cost is £3.50. Prices for children are £4.25 and £2.95 respectively. Ecotech is located beside the A47 near the Safeway superstore.

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