

SUFFOLK MILLS GROUP

Newsletter

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Much of the period since the last issue has been dominated by the Foot and Mouth epidemic which has seriously affected rural tourism as well as agriculture. Fortunately Suffolk has escaped comparatively lightly, but even so all footpaths close to areas used by livestock remain closed for the foreseeable future. Thus the opening of Herringfleet windpump on National Mills Weekend was cancelled, and the mill will probably not be run for the public this year. This seemed to set the tone for a rather subdued National Mills Weekend in the county, with mills reporting little difference in visitor numbers.

This issue contains an up-dated version of an article about Howard's Mill on the Halvergate marshes which first appeared in the Friends of Norfolk Windmills newsletter in 1990. This isolated windpump has been partially restored by owner Richard Seago, and is now being offered for sale. The question of succession is a real problem for restored mills owned by private individuals and trusts - however good the present ownership, eventually a mill has to be passed on, often to the highest bidder. How should an intact mill be valued? If there's a house with it, valuation is a bit easier, but what about a working mill on a modest plot with a few outbuildings? Ultimately it is what people are prepared to pay, but, as Chris Hullcoop often says, a complete mill is only an asset in the hands of a competent owner; for the ignorant or misguided it is a big liability. Tuxford tower mill in Nottinghamshire (no house) is currently being offered for sale at £195,000, a price which seems destined to find no new owner at all, let alone the competent and enthusiastic one the mill needs. By comparison, Howard's Mill at £32,000 seems a bargain!

Forthcoming events line up as follows.

S.M.G. Annual General Meeting	Sunday July 8th
Stanton post mill work-in	August 18th-27th
SPAB Mills Section weekend tour	September 6th-9th
S.M.G. visit to Euston watermill	Sunday September 16th

Mark Barnard

OF MILLS AND MEN (7) Chris Hullcoop

THE SEARCH FOR IMMORTALITY

For thousands of years men have sought immortality and the elixir of eternal youth. In the old days deals were made with gods, one sold his soul to the devil while another had a portrait in the attic which aged while he remained young. Modern solutions involving the frontiers of medical science are no less doubtful. A few seek to create clones while others choose to be frozen in the hope that one day they will be brought back to life. Some thought

the secret had been found by old George Vincent of Thelnetham mill when at the age of 91 he announced he was getting married to a lady of 16. Could the secret have been Gordon's gin or was he 30 years ahead of Pfizer! The secret has never been found and most would agree it is unlikely to be and undesirable that it should.

However, when it comes to listed buildings, including old windmills, immortality is ordered and expected with little thought, planning or compromise, as Tommy Cooper would have said, "Just like that!". Mills, like men, were not made to last forever; three score years and ten plus a little bit more if we are lucky is all we have.

Cathedral builders more than anybody sought immortality for their inspired and magnificent work. The protected interior of a cathedral can survive a thousand years or so untouched and without deterioration, but the roof covering will need regular replacement and all of the exterior facing stone will need replacement after 500-1000 years.

At the other end of the scale Henry Ford would have been aghast at those who expect immortality from his Tin Lizzies (Model T's). Ford would argue that he built the cars to last a few years after which time they would be outdated and worn out, to be scrapped and replaced by new models. Like those responsible for the maintenance of cathedrals, the owners of Tin Lizzies have to make compromises. The cars are not driven every day and usually over winter in heated garages. They come out in summer for rallies and short journeys, and if an original component fails it is replaced at great expense with a perfect replica. Given this care the cars should keep going for the foreseeable future.

Unlike the cathedral builders, those who built windmills were not inspired by spiritual values or immortality. They were more like Henry Ford and provided a plant or factory for the very necessary and very ordinary production of bread flour or animal feed. They knew that the plant would be worn out and obsolete after 50-100 years when it would be scrapped and new plant built. They would have been as horrified as Ford if told their mills had to last indefinitely for purely sentimental reasons and would have branded us degenerate and probably crazy.

As I have noted before, a windmill is a complex structure with some components existing in a well-protected interior while others are continually exposed to the weather. These are broadly divided into four:

1. Internal machinery.
2. Structure.
3. External machinery (sails, winding gear and its supports).
4. Covering.

Similar categories would apply to cathedrals or houses.

As conservationists seeking at least longevity for our work we have to look at these components in different ways. The lead covering on a cathedral roof will need replacement every 100-200 years while the weatherboards on a smock mill will need replacing more frequently. When it comes to preserving original components, the structure and machinery of a mill are vastly more important than the ephemeral covering. Obviously a covering material must be

the same or of a very similar appearance to the original. Insistence that it is exactly the same and applied exactly as the original builders did could easily cause the 'double whammy' of continuing excessive expense and eventual loss of the mill.

The builders of a 19th century smock mill would have nailed the boards directly onto the frame. Even when fitted well, with soakers and flashings, the first storm to combine rain with high winds would drive water onto structural timbers. The builders would say this does not matter as by the time the boards needed replacement the mill would be outdated, half rotten, worn out and ready for demolition and replacement. They were right. The original boards with paint, tar and patches lasted 100 years or so, into the time when roller mills took over. Photographs of many smock mills taken before demolition in the early years of the last century show original boards.

Suddenly the goalposts were moved. Those smock mills that survived demolition were not only reprieved but now had to be as immortal as a cathedral. Look at the recent history of a smock mill saved from demolition about 1960. The weatherboards were in a bad way but the pitch pine cant posts were still 80% sound. The boards were replaced in exactly the same way as when built, but probably with poorer materials and less care. By 1980 leakage was causing concern and it was decided to reboard. It was found that the cant posts were now only 50% sound. One had to be replaced completely while others required considerable repair with new wood. This done, the boards were again replaced in just the same way as built and nailed directly to the frame. By 2000 the covering was leaking again and this time a survey showed that the cant posts were only 20% sound and a complete frame rebuild was debated. Because of an insistence that the covering, which like the lead on a cathedral roof needs periodic replacement, was replaced in exactly the same way as built, much or all of the greatly more important original structure is lost. This loss of original structure is accompanied by large and unsustainable financial loss and so the 'double whammy' is achieved.

So what is the difference between the cathedral and its builders and the smock mill and its builders? The cathedral builders hoped their church would last a millennium or more and fitted a roof covering to the highest standard but accepted that it would require replacement every one to two centuries. The smock mill builders knew their plant would only have a limited life and thus did not waste money on expensive covering. The cathedral builders' aims have by and large been achieved. For one reason or another these buildings are our most cherished and we continue to fit new roof coverings and exterior stonework as required. The smock mill builders' aims have been changed dramatically and they would be justified in crying "Foul". They would say that if we had asked them to build their mills to last as long as the cathedrals they would have made a better job of the covering.

A smock mill is a fragile and vulnerable wooden structure, not designed or built for immortality. If it is expected to last for centuries with the original structure intact then the design of the covering has to be re-thought. It is difficult for weatherboards to waterproof a vertical wall, but when the wall has

a batter (lean) as in a smock mill it is virtually impossible. At two smock mills, Wicken (corn) and Sandwich, a solution has been sought by using several layers. First plain boards have been nailed directly onto the frame. Felt has then been applied to the outside of the boards, followed by battens about an inch thick and finally the weatherboards. Thus the original external appearance has been maintained and any windblown rain getting through the weatherboards is stopped at the felt and runs down and safely out at the base of the smock. A covering like this will go a long way towards helping the mill last for centuries. It is not how the original covering was fitted but then the aim of the original covering was *not* to allow the mill to last for centuries.

The purist might argue that everything should be exactly as original, but forgetting that essential component of what was the aim of the mill's builders and what is the aim of its repairers today. They might say "Where do you stop, the next thing could be steel cant posts". This would be wrong. As I have tried to show, the covering has to be dealt with quite differently from the structure and machinery.

These compromises can be made by those with experience and good judgement. Perhaps like men, mills will not achieve immortality, but if they are to last as long as the cathedrals we have to do better.

VANISHED MILLS Peter Dolman

BRADWELL MILL

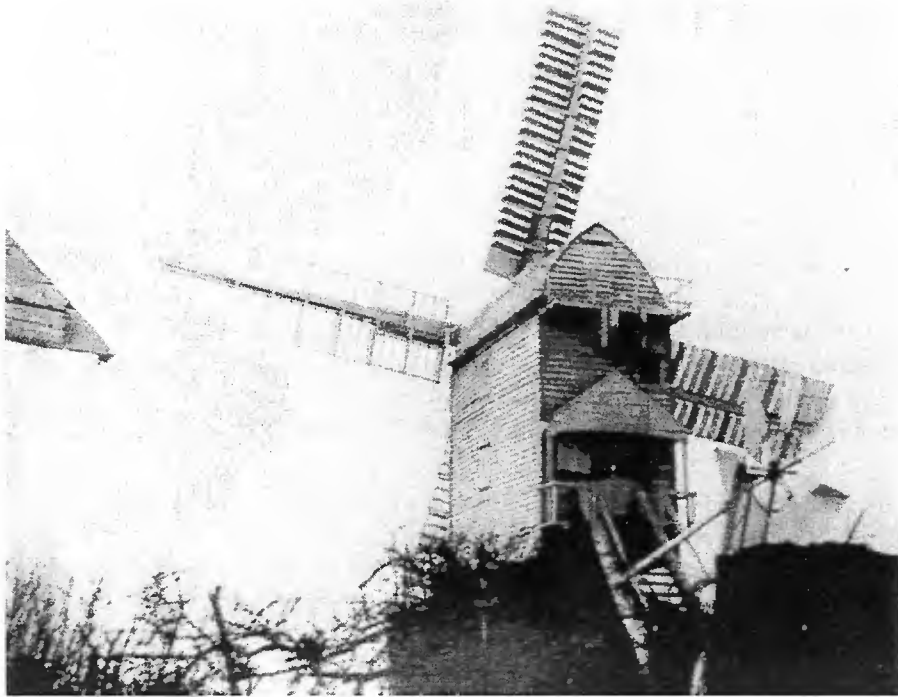
Bradwell is now (since 1974) in Norfolk but the mill stood for all of its life in Suffolk so is fair game! It stood to the north of the main road just outside Great Yarmouth at Grid Ref. TG510041. The tithe map also names the site of an earlier mill as Mill Hill, at approximately TG505042.

Bradwell mill is shown on Kirby's map of 1736 and could be an ancient site. Edward Hovell of Gorleston, miller, insured the mill with the Sun Insurance Company in August 1780 for £200, including a 'Round house communicating'. In July 1828 it was offered for sale by Private Contract, having been rebuilt recently:

A Capital Substantial FREEHOLD POST WINDMILL, nearly new, with two pair of French Stones; good Round-house, and corn floor over the same.

At that time the proprietor was George Botwright who was listed as miller in Pigot's 1830 directory. At attempt to let it was made in April 1834 when 'Patent Sails' are mentioned.

It was badly damaged in a gale on 29th November 1836 (in fact the *Suffolk Chronicle* wrote that it had been 'blown down') and in the following month was offered for sale 'in its damaged state'. The tithe map 1839-42 gives John King as owner and occupier. In July 1839, September 1842 and March 1843 attempts to sell by auction were made, the mill being 'late in the occupation of Mr. Robert Hilder, bankrupt'. William Clark is listed in directories in 1844 and 1847, and Stephen Clarke in 1853, 1858 and 1864. It seems to have been associated with Burgh Castle mill for many



years as the Clark(e)s were also there, and its last miller, Robert Disney, was also at that mill. In 1868 Smith & Son are listed as millers, in 1869 and 1874 George Benns and in 1879 William Disney. Robert James Disney is recorded from 1883 to 1900. In 1904 he is only listed as 'Corn Dealer' at Mill House so the mill would appear to have gone out of use by this date. The last man to work the mill for Disney was Mr. E. Snowley, who went to Burgh Castle mill after Bradwell was closed. Snowley told Stanley Freese in the 1930's that Bradwell mill stopped following gale damage around 1895 so the trades directories may be misleading, or his memory may have been unreliable! It was demolished very early in the 1900's, and the roundhouse survived until perhaps the 1950's (?). In the 1930's, it was being used as a depot by ToCH.

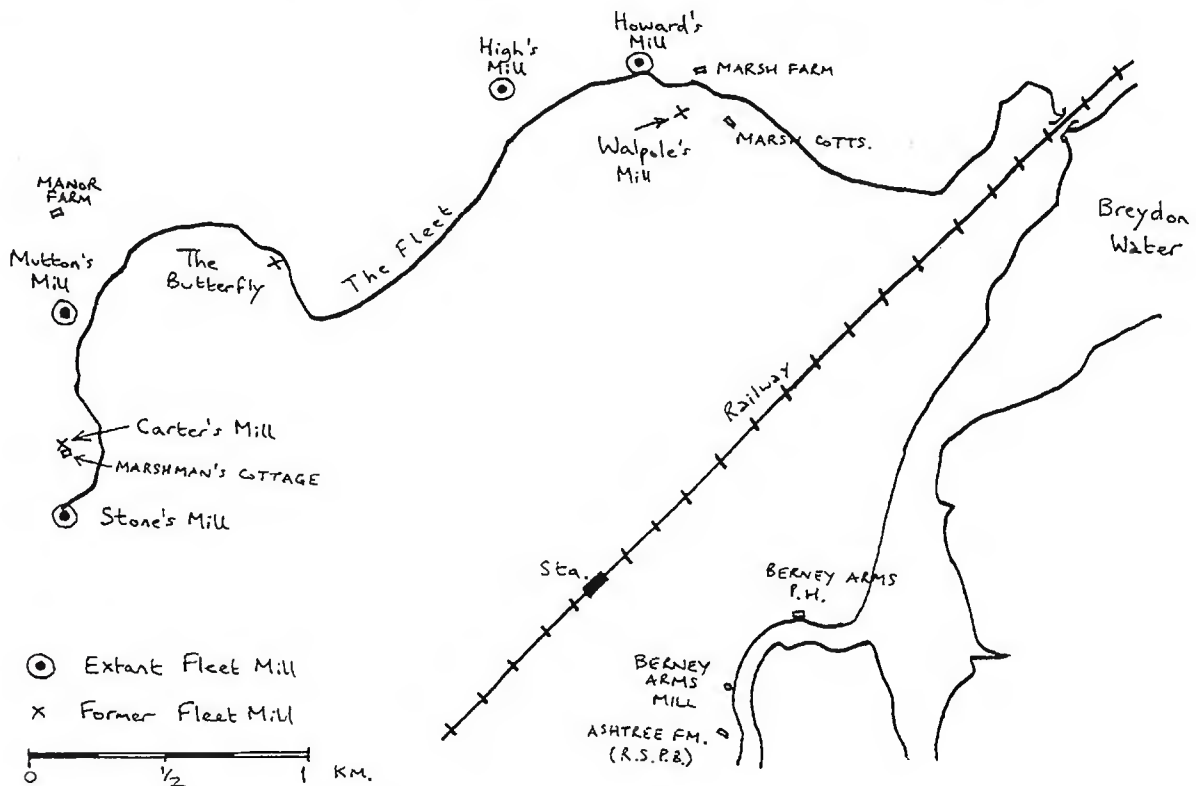
Bradwell mill was typical of post mills in the eastern part of Norfolk, with a large, well-proportioned buck, which carried the two trademarks of a mill of this type, a prominent rear porch, and a balcony around the top. This latter feature was, no doubt, of use in maintaining the mill, but its main use was as a viewing platform as it would have given clear views out to sea. The roundhouse already existed by 1780, as we have seen, and in a picture taken in 1937 it is possible to see that the walls appear to have been raised slightly. It finished up with a fairly shallow roof and a first floor at crosstree level. The mill was powered by four double-shuttered patent sails of eight bays, and ran anti-clockwise. Two pairs of stones were driven in the head, and a flour dresser was in the tail. The mill was winded by a fantail of six blades, and this may have been a relatively late addition, not being mentioned in any of the sale or letting notices referred to above. Many mills in the Yarmouth area had fantails on the tailpole but Bradwell mill followed Suffolk practice, being mounted above the ladder and driving 'very large' wheels, according to Snowley.

BEN HOWARD'S MILL, HALVERGATE Richard Seago

At the turn of the last century seven drainage mills could be seen at work pumping into Halvergate Fleet dyke. Six were of the tower type, five of which represented the finally developed Broads mill with wide, double-sided patent sails and flyer. The seventh example along the Fleet was a white-painted smock known as The Butterfly which was apparently built by Hewitt's of Berney Arms, and had only a short working life. Each Fleet mill drove a scoopwheel as did most of the mills towards Yarmouth. All these mills continued working until 1946-7 when an electric pump was installed at the Breydon end of the Fleet, thus making the sails redundant. The new pump maintained the levels of the Fleet dyke sufficiently low so that the marshes drained by gravity, regulated by sluices.

By 1960 only four of the mills remained - all slowly deteriorating following each winter storm. In the late 1970's I was considering purchasing a drainage mill to repair; my first choice was one of the Fleet mills. One, Mutton's Mill, was already under repair, and of the three derelicts the most complete example was known as Howard's Mill, in the parish of South Walsham Detached. In 1978 the owners agreed to sell the mill to me. By the end of that year I realised my childhood dream of owning a Broads tower mill. The weatherboarded boat-shaped cap was blown off in January 1978 so the first task was to weatherproof the tower by fitting corrugated steel sheets in place of the cap boarding.

Between 1979 and 1983 I was occupied in completing the restoration of Palmer's hollow post mill at Upton and also repairs



The sites of the seven windpumps along the Fleet dyke

to my cottage, so no progress was made on Howard's Mill. Three of the brick arches over the windows and one of the doorway arches had collapsed so the first task was to repair the brickwork and install four new windows and two new doors. Howard's Mill is unusual for a drainage mill in having two windows on each storey, so the interior is very well lit. All windows and doors were in place by the summer of 1985 and on September 13th that year the windshaft with one pair of dilapidated sails and cap frame were lifted off the tower by crane. The cap frame was transported to my yard at South Walsham, but the windshaft remained on site to be collected when the sails had been dismantled.



Howard's Mill in about 1980 (P.D.)

During the winter of 1986-7 I commenced construction of the new cap frame using English oak and pitch pine for the main structure. Much of the original ironwork on the cap frame was in very poor condition so a new set of truck wheels were cast re-using the original carriages. The new frame gradually took shape during 1987, and in February 1988 the new pitch pine fly frame was test-fitted. New elm cap ribs were sawn from planks which had been drying for three years, and by Spring 1989 the new frame was ready for transportation to the mill.

The curb is made of eight cast iron sections resting directly on the brickwork. These castings were generally in good condition, but badly rust-scaled. As a result, the curb was sand-blasted and painted before fitting of the new cap.

There are no metalled roads leading to the mill - only rough tracks - so it was not possible for a sufficiently large crane to reach the mill to lift the cap as a complete item. This meant the cedar cap boarding had to be fitted after the new frame had been positioned on the tower. On 29th August 1989 the cap frame was successfully lifted onto the mill, and the new eight-bladed flyer slotted into its bearings. Boarding the cap took place during September with assistance from the Essex millwright Vincent

Pargeter. By the end of October all the timberwork had received a coating of white lead paint - the mill looked smarter than it had for half a century.

The next task was to re-point and partly re-face the tower brickwork which had suffered badly from years of neglect. Several hundred eroded bricks were cut out and replaced with reclaimed locally made bricks and three-quarters of the tower re-pointed with hydraulic lime mortar. Once the pointing had matured, the tower was given two coats of coal tar, a very sickly and unpleasant job!

Now the brickwork didn't leak like a sieve it was time to work on the floors. The floor beam and joist ends were all very decayed, the ends of some of the main beams already having been repaired in the mill's working life. I was lucky to obtain enough good quality pitch pine to renew all the beams and joists, using joinery quality softwood for the floorboards. By the autumn of 1994 inside the mill looked quite presentable with its new floors and the interior brickwork whitened with limewash.

During 1995 the remains of the scoopwheel were dismantled, the pit wheel removed and the scoopwheel shaft extracted through the small opening in the base of the tower for re-machining of its journals. This was carried out by a Yarmouth-based engineering firm and I then made new bronze bearings to suit. The pit wheel was sandblasted and re-fitted on the scoopwheel shaft, but without the scoopwheel castings at this stage.

Howard's mill machinery is all late 19th century cast iron, a very refined and elegant design. The windshaft has a 12in diameter neck, a removable tail section - as is normal for Norfolk windshafts - and stock canisters 11in wide. A two-piece iron headwheel is clamped around the shaft with a taper key, this being a more modern method of fitting than the two square flanges and wooden wedges which were normal practice. This 7ft 2in headwheel drives a 5ft diameter wallower with iron teeth, which is mounted on the 8in diameter upright shaft, again by a taper key. The upright shaft is in three sections with a dog clutch at first floor level. The crown and pitwheels are of very similar design to the upper gears, the 8ft pitwheel having applewood teeth, and taper-keyed. A 16ft scoopwheel is mounted on the pitwheel shaft with two centre hub castings, and has wooden starts with softwood boarding to suit the width of culvert. The brick culvert is approximately 8in wide, and in rather poor condition, the upper parts having been rebuilt in the 1930's with fletton bricks which have subsequently been blown apart by frost.

The most unusual features at Howard's Mill are the cast iron sheer extensions. They are of angle iron section within the cap itself, and become channel section where they support the fly frame, worm shaft and decking.

As with most of the Broads mills, the origins of Howard's Mill are rather uncertain. The main machinery is a product of R. Barnes, millwrights of Yarmouth (who also built Stracey Arms Mill) and dates from about 1880, but the scoopwheel has the inscription 'Smithdale and Sons Millwright Acle'. W.T. England of Yarmouth also worked on the mill as the cap frame, fly frame and the



Howard's Mill as she stands today (M.B.)

gearing are of his design. There are also two cast iron floor beam supports marked 'W.T. England Yarmouth 1911' so it seems probable that the cast iron sheer extensions were fitted at this time. It is very difficult to ascertain where one millwright's work commences and finishes. No doubt it was the same then as it is now, and that whoever tenders the lowest price obtains the job.

The mill commands views over the relatively new RSPB Berney Arms reserve and is situated in one of the most unspoilt areas of marshland in Norfolk. It can be viewed from the public footpath running alongside the Fleet dyke starting at Halvergate and leading to the north wall of Breydon Water and eventually to Yarmouth.

The cap has been winding since 1989 and the mill is in good structural and mechanical condition throughout. I am now reluctantly considering selling the mill due to numerous other commitments. I'm looking for offers in the region of £32,000 and if anyone is interested please phone me on 01603 270512.

NEW PUBLICATIONS

FRANCIS FRITH'S WINDMILLS AND WATERMILLS - PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORIES
Text by Anthony Bryan. Published by Frith Book Co. Ltd.; 2000.
Price £17.99

What a disappointment this book is, when it could have been so good! Tony Bryan has done a fair job of providing commentary on the many pictures included but the quality of reproduction, and the layout, is dreadful. Most of the pictures are printed too light and many are ruined by being spread across the centre fold.

Oh dear. The one saving grace is that included with the book is a voucher entitling the purchaser to a free mounted print of one of the views included in the book, plus the chance to buy others at a 'reduced' price. However, rather than provide a removable form to send off without damaging the book, to claim the free print one must cut part of the last page out, thereby defacing it!

I have to say the choice of pictures is not particularly exciting, and my choice for a reprint would probably be the fine view of the two Outwood mills at work in Surrey. I preferred the similar Batsford book produced by Martin Watts and Ken Major many years ago, and now, alas, out of print (along with many other good mill books). (P.D.)

BERNEY ARMS PAST & PRESENT by Sheila Hutchinson. Published by Sheila & Paul Hutchinson, 7 Colman Avenue, Stoke Holy Cross, Norwich NR14 8NA; 2000. Price £5.99

This attractively-produced 80-page glossy paperback tells the story of the small settlement around Berney Arms on the River Yare in Norfolk. The author lived at Berney Arms from the late 1940's until 1963, and draws on her own memories and those of her family and other locals to describe a way of life which has largely disappeared, along with most of the isolated buildings which sustained it. There are brief but useful accounts of the local drainage windmills from the group of three at Seven Mile House to Lockgate Mill on Breydon Water, together with the diesel and electric pumps which replaced them. Of particular interest is the section on the former cement works at Berney Arms, which the famous windmill was built to serve. The book is very well illustrated with numerous photographs and two extracts from old maps. It is already into a second edition, and for those who know and love this unique part of the world I can thoroughly recommend it. (M.B.)

LETTERS

Brian Malaws of Y Felin, Tynygraig, Ystrad Meurig, Ceredigion SY25 6AE (01974 261428) writes as follows.

I own a former corn mill devoid of any machinery and am currently restoring a waterwheel with the intention of mounting it in the wheelpit and running it by water power, possibly to generate electricity.

The wheel is 14ft in diameter and 3ft wide; the shrouds and hubs are cast iron, the axle and spokes were wooden and the soleplates of sheet iron. The buckets were originally wooden, the two boards forming each bucket being 14in and 6in wide by 1¹/₄in thick.

Although I have a replacement axle, spokes and soleplates in the original materials, I am unsure what to use for the buckets. Originally these would have been elm boards which are now difficult to obtain. There has been much debate in the Welsh Mills Society on the merits of various timber, with no satisfactory conclusion reached.

I have discovered that there is a material called 'plaswood' which consists of recycled black polythene silage bags moulded into planks and other sections. A sample piece of plank, 1 1/4 in thick, indicates that it is a very strong and dense material that can be cut with a saw, and being plastic should be distortion free and durable. When fitted to a waterwheel the material will be virtually indistinguishable from timber.

Has anyone had any experience of this material, either in use as I have suggested, or in any other use, or has anyone considered this material but rejected it for whatever reason?

NEWS

PROGRESS AT STANTON POST MILL

The assembly of the 108 shutters and their covering with cloth has been a massive task. Thanks to those members that assisted me with the covering; Chris Hullcoop, Martin Hanson, Sue Hiddleston, Luke Bonwick, Robert and Caroline Shackle.

Plans for 2001 are taking shape. The neck bearing is worn out and the bolts holding the windshaft neck on are in need of attention, so the remaining sails will be taken down during the first work-in to take the opportunity to repair the windshaft and bearing in relative safety. If all goes well then it ought to be possible to put the new sails up at the second work-in, followed by the present pair after their refurbishment. The sail frames will be modified by lengthening them at the heel by one bay; new uplongs and sail bars will be provided where required. All the existing paint will be stripped off and the whole lot primed and painted with a better quality paint than is used at present. It was hoped to have four sails on during 2001, which is the 250th birthday year of the



Peter Dolman painting the sail shutters at Stanton mill

mill, but the amount of refurbishment needed may be too great to complete in time. As in past years, work will also be taking place to the roof of the buck, floors, millstone casings and spouts, as time permits.

The summer work-ins offer the opportunity to tackle complex restoration or specialised millwrighting work among a friendly group of enthusiasts. Why not give it a try? The second week's work-in is August 18th-27th.

Postscript

The first of the work-ins has just finished, with support from a few old friends. A good start was made on the repair of the roof and there was further progress on the repair of the stone tun and roundhouse walls. The new sails and clamps have been assembled on the ground and the new shutters are being fitted. Chris Armour is attending to the striking gear and Thurton Foundry are making a new stump iron and triangle. The old sails were taken down on Wednesday 30th May and the mill now looks like a chicken according to one of the helpers! The old sails, made by Chris Wilson in 1987, were found to be in excellent shape so these will be altered and repainted. One of the clamps has a rotten patch in but may still be re-usable, with some repair. The real bonus was that the stock is in very good condition and is capable of modification and re-use. If we get all the refurbishment done by the end of the August work-in, it should be possible to put all four sails back by the end of the year. More on this in the next newsletter.(P.D.)

BUXHALL MILL TO BE REPAIRED

Repairs are to start shortly on the large tower mill at Buxhall near Stowmarket. Millwright Vincent Pargeter is to renew the two top floors in the tower (badly damaged by leaks over many years), crane off the old cap frame and remains of the winding gear and remove the concrete roof. The brickwork at the top of the tower will be made good and the curb rebuilt, re-using the old ironwork. The tower will be protected by a 'temporary' wooden roof. Owner Anders Mossesson hopes to carry out a further, more ambitious phase of work at a later date (hence the 'temporary' roof), adding a proper cap and working fantail. (M.B.)

DIG AT SITE OF MARTLESHAM WINDMILL

At work one morning my colleague Richard Powling informed me he had found the foundations of a huge tower mill some 40ft across the base. What he had in fact discovered was the winding track of a post mill which was replaced by a later tower mill, now both long gone.

A preliminary scoop unearthed some broken shutter cranks, and this summer we will make a more extensive dig which might reveal foundations and perhaps more relics such as pieces of millstone. Hopefully a little booklet could be produced telling all that is known of the mills. No photo exists of either mill although a photo of the last miller has been found.

This could be a S.M.G. equivalent of *Time Team*, with me as either the professor with his pullovers of many colours or Baldrick - probably the latter! (C.H.)

LITTLE GLEMHAM CONVERSION PROPOSAL

Applications have been made to convert Little Glemham watermill to ancillary residential use, to allow it to be used for bed and breakfast accommodation. Two en suite bedrooms would be formed in the attic, reached by a new timber stair from the ground floor of the mill building. The stone floor is designated as a guest lounge, with the missing area of floor over the two end bays reinstated. No link is proposed internally to the adjoining mill house, and no machinery would be removed. The proposed exterior treatment is largely sympathetic, with new weatherboarding, sash windows and a corrugated metal roof covering.

Glemham mill has been going downhill for many years and is now in a sorry state. The gable end was blown out last autumn, taking one bay of the rear wall with it. This has left the end of the roof largely unsupported, and places the structure, which is not well braced, at risk of total loss.

Disappointed that the present owners have not been able to carry out any repairs, S.M.G. has reluctantly decided to raise no objection to the principle of ancillary residential use. We have asked for some modification of the current proposals, including the use of clay plaintiles on the roof, and have urged the District Council to ensure that full details are provided of the alterations necessary to repair the structure and comply with building regulations. (M.B.)



Little Glemham mill (May 2001)

NEW PROPOSALS FOR VISITOR CENTRE AT PAKENHAM WATERMILL

Suffolk Building Preservation Trust has recently made a listed building application for alterations to the house adjoining Pakenham watermill, to enable it to be used as a visitors' centre. The house was purchased by the Trust last year with this use in mind. A new main visitor entrance is proposed at the rear of the house, from a car park in the former farmyard. There will be

display and exhibition space and a tea room on the ground floor, together with toilets and a lift for the disabled. A former ground floor doorway into the mill will be opened up, and a new doorway made at first floor. The Trust will retain residential accommodation in part of the house, to be separately let or possibly occupied by a custodian. Farm outbuildings will be retained and converted for educational use, storage and workshop. The mill itself is little changed apart from a new doorway into the wheelroom and a new bridge across the headrace, both to improve visitor circulation.

S.M.G. has written in support of the application. We are also in discussion with the Trust over the possible use of a small area of the house for a Suffolk mill archive. The whole project depends on grant aid from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

A fund-raising concert is being organised in Pakenham church on 14th July, with the music of Mozart and his times being played in period costume. This is followed by a supper in a marquee at the mill. Details from Caroline Byatt on 01787 247179. (M.B.)

EUSTON REPAIRS COMPLETED

Work costing some £85,000 is about to be completed at Euston watermill. The brickwork of the tower has been repaired and the top reinstated to its 18th century appearance. The central spine wall has been underpinned and jacked up. Externally the brickwork has been repointed and windows and doors repaired. The wheel has been given new buckets and the upright shaft can now turn by water power again. Most of the work has been done by the estate, with a 50% grant from English Heritage and £4,000 from St Edmundsbury Borough Council towards repair of the wheel. (See Events below)

CAMPSEY ASH MILL ON THE MARKET

The Ash Abbey estate, comprising two dwellings, the watermill and 147 acres is on the market for £2.8M. Agents for the sale are FPD Savills, 30 Princes Street, Ipswich IP1 1RJ.

The Chiltern Partnership have now completed remedial work following the unauthorised alterations to the mill (see Newsletter 73). Their work includes reconstruction of the attic walkway (re-using old joists displaced by the earlier work), reinstatement of the sack hoist and its layshaft drive, a new spurwheel (with the original preserved inside the mill) and removal of the plasterboard wall linings and making good with lime plaster.

CRANLEY GREEN ROUNDHOUSE

Mr and Mrs Fleming, owners of the post mill roundhouse at Cranley Green near Eye, visited Stanton mill during the recent 'work-in'. They are about to convert the roundhouse into living accommodation (adding a single storey building joined to it by a glazed link) and were wondering if it would be possible to re-create a buck.

All that remains of the fine 53ft high mill (for photograph see Newsletter 68, p.3) is the mid 19th century two-storey roundhouse with just two crosstrees. The buck would be of the same dimensions and external appearance of the original but containing floors only for use as a studio and viewpoint. This would be quite

possible but I feel it would have to be done in the traditional way with post, quarter bars and crosstrees. The buck frame could be a little lighter (but not a lot) as it would not have to hold sails or machinery, but it would still be a formidable structure. This has never been done before and it would be very interesting to see it become a reality. (C.H.)

BUTLEY MILL CEASES WORK

Hewitt of Butley Mills Ltd closed their mill at the end of March. The three/four storey mill straddles the boundary between Butley and Chillesford, and was originally water-powered. Subsequently a steam engine was added, later replaced by a diesel, and latterly the mill was driven by electricity. In recent years the mill has produced animal feed for the 7000 pigs of the Sewell Hewitt Farms. The demise of the mill can be linked to the slaughter of the pig herd due to swine fever. It had been hoped to rebuild the herd, but that has not proved to be feasible, and the only practical way the business can be restructured does not involve feed being supplied from the mill. (Information: Suffolk I.A. Soc. newsletter)

PLAQUE TO JOHN LAWN UNVEILED

Old Buckenham tower mill in Norfolk was opened specially on April 8th for the dedication of a plaque in memory of millwright John Lawn, who died in 1999. John spent his childhood in the village and knew the mill well. He worked on the mill towards the end of his life and managed to see the work complete, despite his illness. The circular bronze plaque, specially cast at Thurton Foundry, was unveiled by John's widow Sylvia. The local minister led a service of dedication which was very well attended and included a number of tributes. (M.B.)



Sylvia Lawn unveiling the plaque to her late husband

WEBSITES MAKING PROGRESS

The Thelnetham Windmill website has been running for a year or so now quite successfully, apart from the annoyance that the 'hit counter' does not work. Have a look if you haven't already done so at www.thelnetham.freeserve.co.uk

New this April is the stupendous Stanton Post Mill site (<http://stantonwindmill.members.beeb.net>). This is even more detailed than the Thelnetham site but does not take too long to download. It needs a few minor tweaks yet but seems to work quite well. I am gratified to see the 'hit counter' steadily climbing so someone must be looking at it apart from me!

The Suffolk Mills Group site also exists now, albeit in an incomplete form, at <http://www.smg.uk.com> A number of improvements and additions to it are planned and will be added before too long. Like the Thelnetham site, it has a non-functioning 'hit counter' at present. (P.D.)

EVENTS

S.M.G. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AT BUTTRUM'S MILL, WOODBRIDGE & VISIT TO BURGH MILL: SUNDAY JULY 8th. (A.G.M. commences 11am)

The venue for this year's A.G.M. is Buttrum's Mill in Woodbridge, by kind permission of Suffolk County Council and owners Martin and Betty Whitworth. We will assemble on the first floor. Please bring along a folding pic-nic type chair with you as available seating is limited. The mill will be open to view before and after the meeting for those members who do not know it.

We would recommend bringing a packed lunch although there are numerous places to eat in the town.

In the afternoon, from about 2.30pm, we will be visiting nearby Burgh tower mill, by kind permission of new owners Edward and Penny Creasy. This is another John Whitmore tower mill, a few years later than Buttrum's. Although empty of machinery, the tower (the largest in Suffolk) is full of interest, with evidence of its wartime use as an Observer Corps lookout.

WORK-IN AT STANTON MILL: SATURDAY AUGUST 18th - MONDAY AUGUST 27th

For details see the above news item.

S.M.G. VISIT TO EUSTON WATERMILL: SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 16th from 2pm

Euston mill is a fascinating structure which is thought to be part of works carried out to the grounds around Euston Hall by William Kent in the 1730's. Latterly it both pumped water to a header tank in the tower and ground for the estate. Repairs have just been completed (see news item above) and the mill will be turning for us. The mill is just off the A1088 Ixworth to Thetford road at TL897787. Let's hope for better weather than the driving rain on our last visit in 1985.

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