

# SUFFOLK MILLS GROUP

## Newsletter

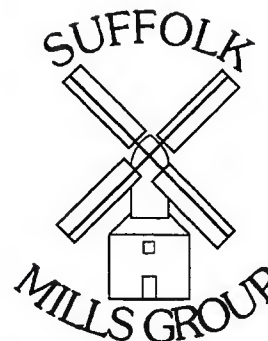
No. 81

October 2001

www.smg.uk.com

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The sudden change in the weather at the beginning of September brought the summer to an abrupt end, and those warm, even hot, days now seem a long time ago. What of our activities? Well, we had a stand at the Local History Fair at the Museum of East Anglian Life in June. This proved to be a most enjoyable weekend with much going on, including a traditional music festival, and was blessed with perfect weather. Our A.G.M. at Buttrum's Mill a fortnight later was reasonably well attended, and was followed by a visit to nearby Burgh mill. The work-ins at Stanton mill saw progress continue on the new sails, and one pair is now back in place, complete with a set of new wire-framed shutters. They look good.

The opening of Herringfleet mill this year seems jinxed. Our New Year's Day event had to be cancelled, partly due to vandalism, then Foot & Mouth disease put paid to National Mills Day, and when we finally did open it on August 12th, the day was washed out by near incessant rain, and the sails did not turn.

Even more depressing, I understand that, apart from Peter Dolman and his family, only one other member turned out for our visit to Euston watermill on September 16th. This was the only pure 'mill visit' planned for this year, perhaps just as well.

Now we are past newsletter No.80, the index compiled in 1995 will be revised and up-dated, and eventually posted on our website. Talking of websites, I am keen to include in the newsletter occasional reviews of sites of mill interest. Would any member with the necessary hardware be able to help?

Forthcoming events are listed below. The next newsletter will appear early in the New Year, and as ever I would be delighted to receive material for it!

Mini Work-in at Stanton mill  
Stanton Mill's 250th birthday  
S.M.G. members' evening

Fri Oct 19th - Tues Oct 23rd  
Sunday October 28th  
Saturday December 8th

Mark Barnard

## VANISHED MILLS Peter Dolman

### CHELMONDISTON WINDMILL

A windmill is first indicated on this site (TM200374) on Hodskinson's map of Suffolk, surveyed 1778-82. The *Ipswich Journal* of 23rd November 1782 offered a post mill for sale. On April 7th 1801 Matthew Mecklenburgh, millwright, of East Bergholt, insured for £150 with the Royal Exchange 'the building of a post mill weatherboarded' and 'the standing and going gears,



millstones and machines therein' for a further £100. The mill was occupied by messrs Wm and Jn Mecklenburgh (two sons). Whether or not the Mecklenburghs built a completely new mill or rebuilt the earlier one is not clear. The *Ipswich Journal* of August 15th 1801 carried a sale notice for a 'New-erected post windmill with pair French Stones'.

The next reference is to the mill being sold for the benefit of creditors of Henry Golding in February and October 1920. Golding seems to have fought his way out of bankruptcy as he remained at the mill, and is listed as owner and occupier on the 1838 Tithe map and apportionment. Henry Golding died in 1840 and the *Suffolk Chronicle* of April 18th 1840 carried the auction notice for 'A capital POST WIND-MILL... driving two pairs of French Stones,

Flour Mill, Jumper,... Spacious brick-built Round-House with partitioned Corn Bins capable of stowing above 600 coombs of corn'.

White's directory of 1844 gives James Walker as miller and directories of 1853-1864 give Robert Walker as miller. In 1874 he is listed at 'Wind and Steam Mills'. In 1879 George King is listed but from 1883 Elmer Brothers (George Thomas and Robert John) were listed, at 'Anchor Mills' (Wind & Steam). By this time the mills had been bought by Charles Berners, of Woolverstone Hall, and formed part of the estate. In 1892, following a request from Elmers to invest in improvements to the mills, Berners' agent Hon. H. Johnstone and Elmer Bros. commissioned E.R. & F. Turner Limited of Ipswich to build 'the best 2 sack (roller) plant in the Kingdom, with no expense spared' and the new steam roller mill duly appeared. The post mill was retained for grist work. After 1892 the windmill was not maintained well and it

eventually fell into disuse and was demolished just before the 1914-18 war. The foundations were visible in the 1970's. The steam mill continued in use up to the 1939-45 war, with 11 people employed. Eventually the trade fell off and the milling business stopped. The building was then used as a sail making works, and in 1988 was converted into dwellings.

The windmill was very nicely proportioned and had large windows. The porch and bottom of the buck were finished in a decorative style. The mill was latterly driven by patent sails and had a fantail above the ladder. Its internal arrangement is not known but it is likely to have had two pairs in the head.

When the mill was demolished, over 100 queen wasps were found in it (I was told this by the son of the man who demolished it).

## **BURES MILL THROUGH NINE CENTURIES (1)**

Witgar Hitchcock

### The Medieval Mill

A mill at Bures on the current site was first built by the Silvesters in the middle of the 12th century, soon after they had come to own the manor of Netherhall. Until the expertise of the Normans was brought to bear, the main river Stour could not be utilised for power. Netherhall was at that time the largest manor in the parish and included much of the town.

In order to site the mill on the main river, a long leat was required. At first, a narrow leat might well have been dug and a small waterwheel installed to drive one pair of stones. With only spades and carts, this was a big undertaking, for which many bondsmen and their sons must have been conscripted. In the course of the next 150 years, the leat must have been widened to take three small waterwheels across its width, as recorded in 1329, when the manor passed by marriage into the ownership of Robert de Bures and confirmed by his Inquisition post-mortem in 1331. The three wheels drove stones to grind corn, malt and thirdly to provide power for the fulling of locally made cloth.

Account rolls for the manor exist for the years 1384-5, 1410-11, 1428-9 and 1438-9, covering the period when the manorial system was at its peak. By 1384-5, the mill was no longer part of the demesne, or home farm, but was let for an annual rent of £8 plus 20 Quarters of flour worth £4 and 24 sticks of eels. Six and a half bushels of flour were sold for 6d. per bushel of 70lb. The rest went to the eight full-time employees on the demesne as livery, indicating that it was all rye flour. The eels were hung, 24 at a time, on sticks by threading the stick through the gills of the fish, like fishmongers used to display bloaters. Clearly the rent in kind was paid bit by bit throughout the year.

In 1410-11, the rent was reduced to £10 13s. 4d. plus 12 sticks of eels and in 1428-9 the rent was again reduced to £10 and 16 sticks of eels, while in 1438-9 the eels dropped out leaving just the rent of £10. These rents were higher than any others recorded in the Eastern region, indicating the value of

the mill. Clearly, not all mills were so significant. As recorded in the Paston Letters, a new mill at Dedham was demolished in 1450 by the vicar of Stratford St. Mary, who had a deep grudge against the mill owner. The mill was then said to have had a value of £20 and so a rent correspondingly lower than the rent of Bures mill.

The rents amounted to 25% of the manor's income before repairs, which were paid for by the manor. These repairs might be nil one year and as much as £11 18s. 5d. in 1438-9 when all three waterwheels were renewed and 1666 feet of boards used. That was the year when the Earl of Ormond and Wiltshire became the owner of the manor and clearly he wanted to raise the productivity of the mill. Thus he raised the banks of the leat to enable it to retain water above the natural level, resulting in the occasional flooding out of season of the water meadows upstream. To give some control of the head water level, floodgates had to be installed just upstream of the mill on the south side of the leat. When these gates were raised, the rushing outflow gouged out the floodgate hole at the head of the lower level. Were the floodgates not opened as required, riparian meadows would be flooded and this could lead to manorial court cases against the lessee of the mill. Thus it was that Thomas Spring of Lavenham, who leased the mill in 1499, was threatened with a fine of £5 by the manor of Lamarsh in 1500 and similarly in 1512.

The leat itself was now 400 yards long and took off the main river at a point where the Cambridge Brook joins it. This left the original river, which had marked the boundary between Suffolk and Essex for six centuries or more, a mere ditch, being known as *Le Oldestore* by 1462. Between the leat and the ditch was an acre of pasture known as the wooping.

For most of the time, lessees had derived little benefit from the mill and perhaps that accounted in a reduction in rent to £8 19s. 6d. in 1454. Accordingly, leases often changed hands every year. Perhaps this was due to the millers being only permitted to undertake grist milling, grinding the grain as it was brought to them and never owning it or its product. As recompense, the miller charged a fixed toll, but as Chaucer says of his miller in *The Prologue*: 'Well could he stelen corn and tollen thries'. Tolls were collected in two ways. Either there would be a toll gate which took a dribble of grain from the flow to the stones, or there was a toll dish, which could be filled to the appropriate level with meal off the stones.

Bread in medieval times was the basic food to be eaten with meat, fish, and bird. There were no vegetables or puddings as is well recorded by the steward of Dame Alice de Bryene in his account rolls for 1412-13. When John Materas, the miller of Bures, was entertained with 20 other guests on June 1st 1413, 56 white loaves and 8 black (i.e. rye) loaves were provided with one quarter of bacon, 3 chickens and 16 pigeons from the estate plus pork and veal bought in.

#### The Beginnings of the Modern Mill

In 1486, with the Wars of the Roses over and the succession settled, Sir William Waldegrave of Smallbridge, whose family had

been in Bures for a century or more, bought the manor of Netherhall, but left no records of Bures Mill, apart from a mention in a rental of 1577. That reference dates the oldest part of the existing mill, of which only a sliver remains after its demolition in 1963, to the third quarter of the 16th century, perhaps c.1560. Enough of the frame survives to show that it was almost identical to the manorial court hall at Ferriers, also belonging to the Waldegraves. Originally of at least five and possibly six bays, it was 60ft long by 16ft wide with a side purlin roof, hip and gablet, rising to 26ft and lay to the north side of the three waterwheels. The height allowed for ground and first floors plus the later flooring in of an attic.

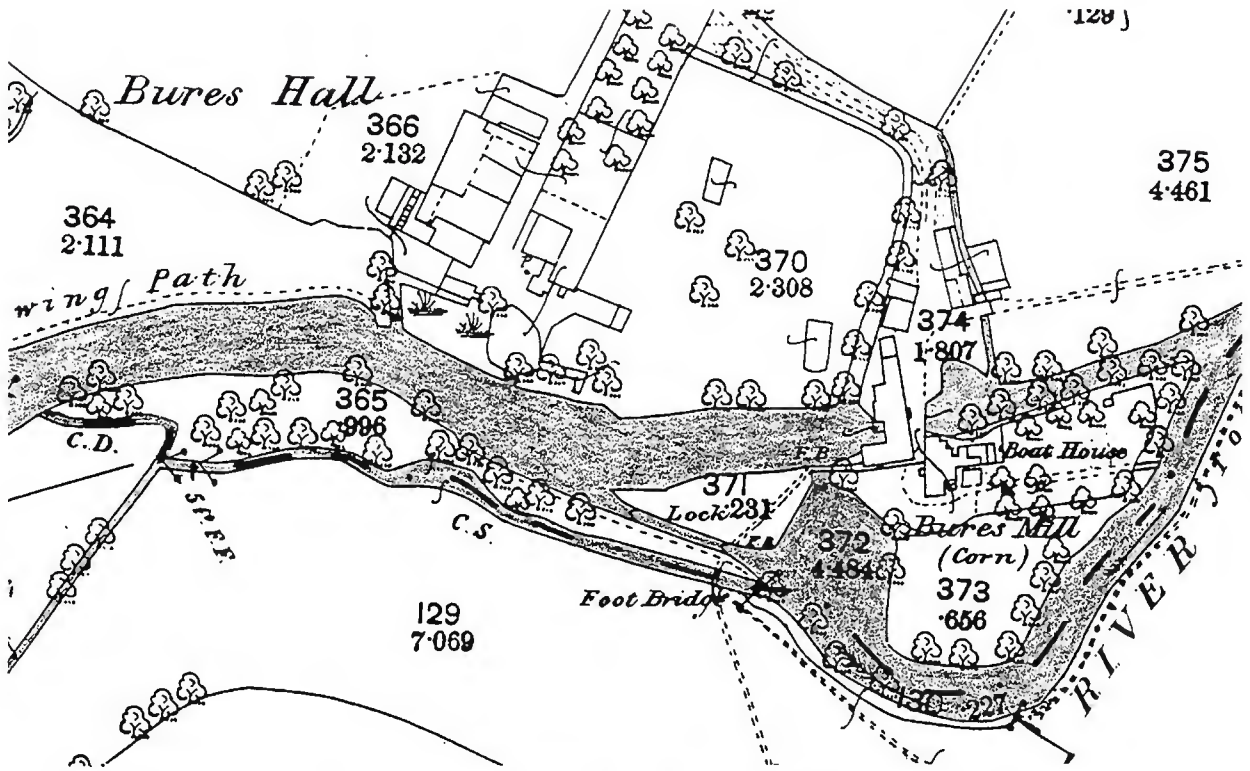
The next step was the erection of the mid 17th century Mill House with 14ins brickwork, accounting for two-thirds of the current frontage and rising to third storey attics each with dormer windows. The building of the house coincided with the new possibility of running three pairs of stones off one large waterwheel. It was then that the 16ft diameter wheel replaced the three smaller wheels as the demand for fulling declined sharply and the gristing of wheat and other grains increased. The six foot fall enabled this single large wheel to develop 18-20 h.p.. Even so, the size of the house seems out of proportion to the scale of the business.

#### Great Changes of the 18th Century

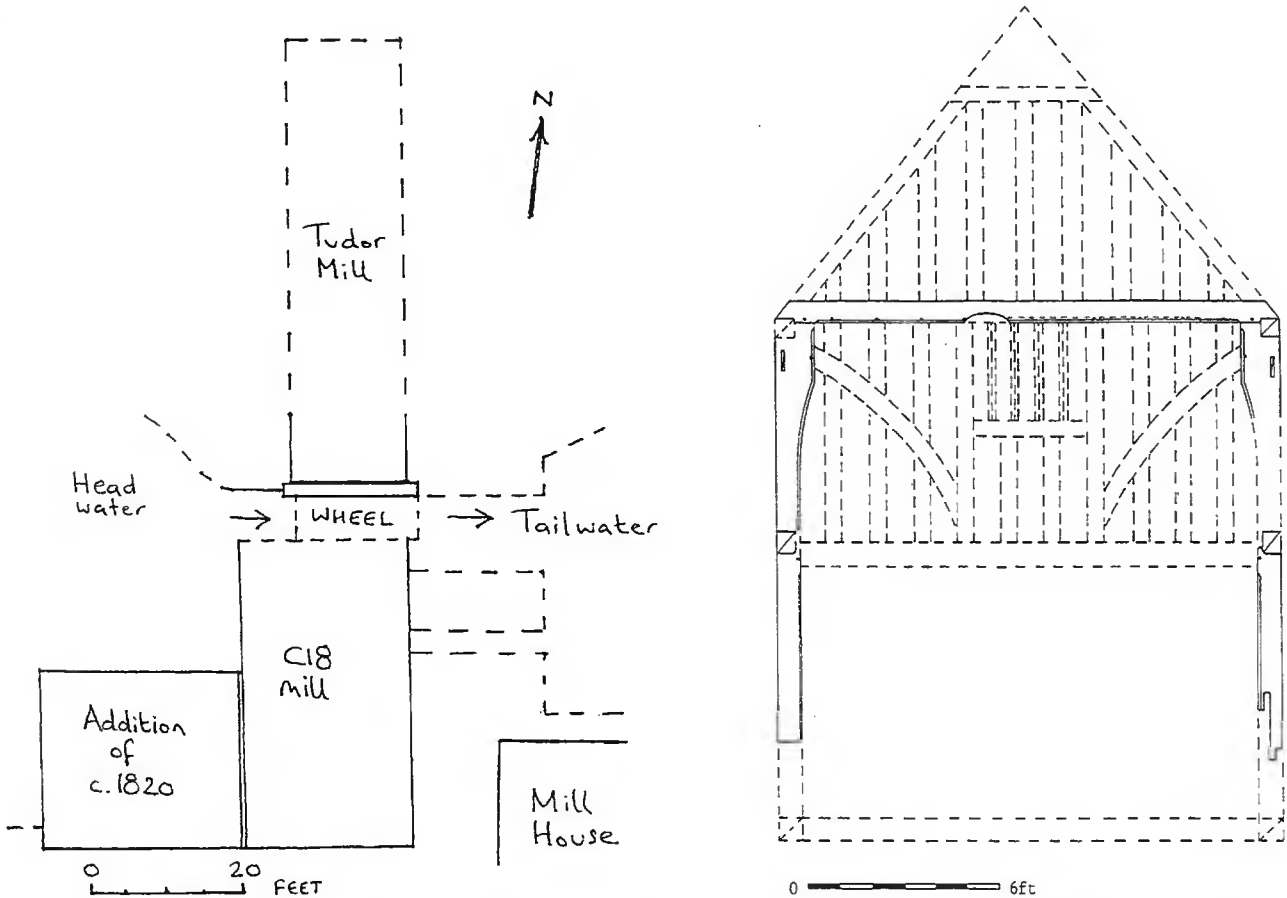
The next century brought substantial changes. Foremost, there was the opening up of the Stour to navigation from Manningtree to Sudbury, a distance of 23½ miles, in 1713. The barges, which corresponded to lighters and carried up to 26 tons each, were usually 27ft long with a beam of 9ft. They took a draught of 2ft 8ins and were drawn in pairs by horses walking along a tow path that ran along one bank or the other. In the whole length, there were 33 crossing places, entailing the horse jumping on and off the barge to cross the river. Teaching a horse to perform in that manner must have been a real art. The barge traffic consisted mainly of wheat and coal up, after transshipment at Manningtree, and corn, malt, flour and bricks down. The coming of the railways to Bures and Sudbury in 1849 signalled the beginning of the end of barge traffic. The last barge of wheat came up to Bures Mill in 1911.

The Stour was named by the Celts as a swift river and so it was in the absence of locks and staunches. 16 locks, 10ft wide, had to be built to serve the navigation and most of these were by mills. Pitmore lock at Lamarsh was an exception. By a mill, the locks were placed so as to take off from the leat not far above the mill, thus dividing the wooping. The outflow entered the main flow of water just before it was joined by the remains of the original river.

Although the Navigation Company went into liquidation in 1913, a few craft continued to use the river, paying dues to the Liquidators. The last barge went up to Sudbury in 1914-5, but Dedham Mill continued to use barges till 1930 when Percey Clover, the owner, paid tolls amounting to £1 13s 0d. Surprisingly, maximum tonnages of various classes of goods were achieved in



Extract from 1886 25-inch O.S. map



Plan of Bures Mill & drawing of the surviving end truss of the Tudor mill, by Leigh Alston (dotted timbers = evidence only)

various years after the introduction of rail transport, as shown by the following list:

Coal	22,813 tones	1860
Wheat	43,122 Quarters	1862
Flour	61,382 sacks	1868
Malt	15,912 Quarters	1851
Bricks	3,245,450	1866
Barley & oats	20,918 Quarters	1894
Oil	4096 barrels	1893

Traffic fell from a total of 20,000 tons annually in the 1890's to 10,662 in 1911. The Liquidation of the Navigation Company was finally completed in 1935.

Just five years prior to the Navigation Act, Thomas Waldegrave, who had for some years mortgaged his estates around Bures to Obadiah Osgood, a London Quaker, for £5,126, sold the manor of Netherhall with its mill to him. In 1705, he sold Smallbridge and departed to London. Meanwhile, Obadiah's daughter married a wealthy Virginia merchant, John Hanbury, who subsequently came to inherit Netherhall. In the middle of the 19th century, one of the Hanbury family became the vicar of Bures St. Mary, by when the Hanburys had long been settled at Holfield Grange, near Coggeshall. Today, the family still holds the lordship of the manor of Netherhall.

Just before selling Netherhall in 1700, the mill and part of the manor had been leased to Hugh Constable, great grandfather of the artist. The Constables held the mill till 1750 and during that time, Hugh's son Abram, the artist's great uncle, had lived in the Mill House, but documentary proof has so far been elusive.

Hugh Constable's lease of the mill coincided with a big change in country milling. Until that time, all such milling had been carried out on a grist basis. The possibility of changing over to a proprietorial basis in which the miller bought the wheat and sold the ground product arose early in the 18th century. The change required considerable capital and, in addition, the mill had to be transformed into a four storey building to give room for storing grain in bins on the two upper floors. At Bures, this was achieved by erecting a four storey building on the opposite side of the waterwheel to that of the 16th century mill. This new timber-framed building rose to 28ft and tripled the floor area of the whole mill from 2000 to 6000 square feet. On the upstream side, a mansard roof was built and on the opposite side, the building was not quite wide enough to enclose the waterwheel by two feet. The lucam that later adorned the northern end of this new building enabled sacks of grain to be hoisted off the tumbrels and wagons that delivered to the mill and so brought to the top floor to be barrowed and shot into the bins that were spouted direct to the four sets of millstones. An area of cobble bricks was sited below the lucam to prevent the stamping of the horses' feet from damaging the surface of the yard. Until the lucam was built, sacks of grain had to be barrowed into the mill and hoisted to the top floor by means of the internal sack hoist. This had a tree trunk, situated on the third floor, for mechanically winding the hoist chain up, that was still being operated until the late 1970's.



Bures Mill and Mill House from the north c.1950. The lower range nearest the camera is the Tudor mill; beyond is the 18th century addition which still stands.

The building line of this new mill was parallel to the axis of the waterwheel but the nearer the building got to the house, so the distance between the two diminished, showing that the house was built before the extension of the mill. Likewise, the fact that the waterwheel protruded beyond the wall of the new mill indicated that the wheel was in the same position as its Tudor predecessor.

For millers, who became able to trade in wheat and flour, grist milling could still be a sideline. Tolls had become payable in cash as opposed to kind and for Farnham mill in Hampshire they amounted to £200 per annum in the 1770's. In Devon, tolls of 5d. per bushel of wheat are recorded from 1807, with amounts of 4d. and 2d. for barley and oats respectively.

When the Constable's lease ended in 1750, the mill was taken on by Henry Barnard and his son George and they were followed in 1757 by Henry Barnard's son in law, William Nevill, whose grandson, William Nevill junior eventually became the lessee, only to go bankrupt on account of over extending himself. Then William Francombe took the mill, but soon also went bankrupt. After these experiences, the Hanburys put the lease up for auction at the Swan Inn at Sudbury in 1785, when it was described as *'that capital Corn and Water-Mill situated at Bures St. Mary, Suffolk, with a long head of water, numerous well-adapted*



*buildings, with every convenience for carrying on an extensive trade, with dwelling house and proper offices, and 12 acres of rich meadow land, the situation particularly eligible, being surrounded by many capital market towns, in a fine corn country, and on the navigable river to Manningtree...* The well adapted buildings would have included three stables, a carriage house, cow stalls, hen and duck houses and pigsties. In addition there was a brewhouse with copper at the back of the house in which beer was brewed from malt made in the further end of the Tudor mill and kiln dried in the brick base to the silo building that was later built. The mash tun would take two sacks of malt, which had been ground in the mill proper.

At that time, and throughout the following century, the mill would have been the centre of a lot of action. Horses and carts would be continually coming and going. Village children would be around whenever there was a barge going through the locks. Pedestrians would be collecting stones of flour for domestic use and farmers would be arriving on horseback to offer their grain. This great rendezvous for local people remained the case till 1914. Livestock was much in evidence up to 1955, but the last hens went in 1974. Soon afterwards, it would have been a liability to have had livestock near the mill as any evidence of certain diseases would have put stocks of feed in jeopardy.

*This article will be concluded in the next newsletter.*

## **PUTTING MILLS IN THE PICTURE (14) Peter Steggall**

### **MILLS AT MILLBANK**

Millbank, London SW1, as I am sure you know, is the road beside the Thames south of the Houses of Parliament. It may have got its name from Abbey Mill which, according to Nikolaus Pevsner in *The Buildings of England: London Vol.1* (1957), was mentioned in the rate books in 1525. He tells us no more, but I guess it was either a watermill on a tributary stream, or a tide mill.

In August 2000 I went to Millbank to the Tate Gallery (now called 'Tate Britain') to see 'Romantic Landscape', an exhibition of paintings by the Norwich School of artists 1803-33. Most of the pictures were on loan from Castle Museum, Norwich, while it was being refurbished. The exhibition was in part of the Clore Gallery, a recent extension built to house the Tate's big collection of pictures by J.M.W. Turner.

The approach was through rooms containing some Constables and a lot of Turners, giving opportunities of noting contrasting styles. Among the Constables was a full-size study for 'Flatford Mill', the famous picture with the horse and barges in the foreground. A small picture of 'Spring - East Bergholt' showed a man and plough with two horses crossing a field between a cottage and a windmill. There was also a large picture of Hampstead Heath, an extensive landscape with dark clouds and a rainbow over Branch Hill Pond and a tall tower mill. The label told us that the mill was imaginary; presumably Constable had added it to make the picture even more dramatic.

Among the many Turners there were no mills, but I remembered his picture of Fittleworth watermill in Sussex which I described in No.11 of this series. However, I felt sure that the Norwich School pictures would include a number of mills in the Norfolk landscape of broads, marshes and rivers, and I was not disappointed. I had a sort of 'preview' by looking at a fine illustrated book - *Art and Artists of the Norwich School* - by Josephine Walpole who had an art gallery in Woodbridge for many years. The pictures in the book included some of mills, and some of those I found at the Tate.

'Back of the New Mills' (c.1814) by John Crome showed the River Wensum north-west of the centre of Norwich. The mills were rebuilt in 1790 to replace mills which had supplied the city with water since the 16th century. Presumably water from the river was pumped by water power, but to where? An interesting subject for research, and now seen in a lovely oil painting 16" x 21" of old buildings (but fairly new then) lit by a watery sun and reflected in the calm water. Then there was a large oil about 3' x 4' also by John Crome of 'Moonrise on the Yare' 1808, with silhouettes of wherry sails, and a winding narrow waterway shining silver in the afterglow of sunset. One windmill was in the foreground, another very small and distant - almost certainly drainage mills in the broadland setting.

Another broadland scene was the subject of an etching 10" x 15" - 'East View of Gateway of St Benet's Abbey' 1813 by John Sell Cotman. That scene has been a favourite with artists for a very long time, and may still be so. It shows a brick tower with a very pronounced batter, standing within the ruinous



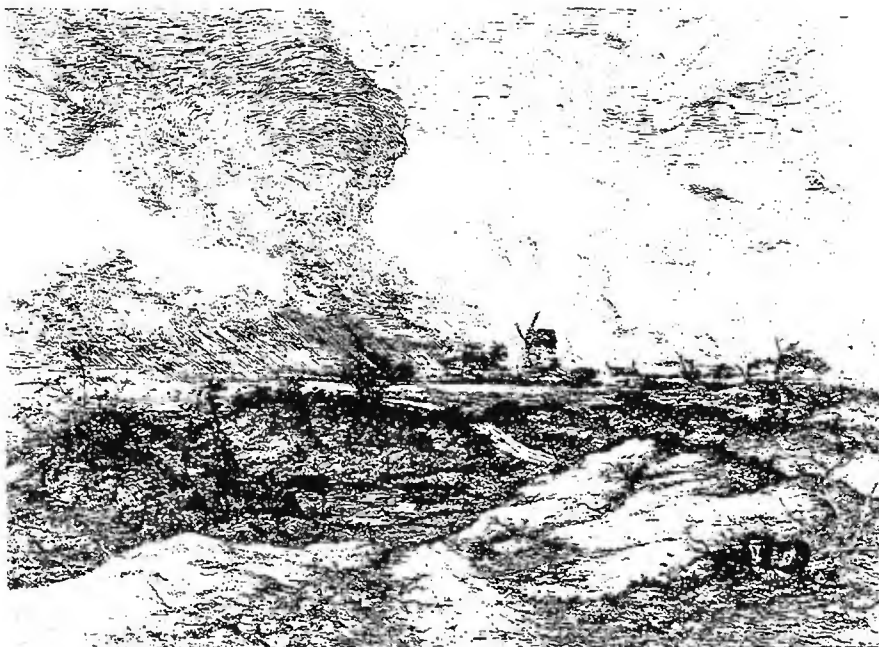
'St Benet's Abbey by the Bure' by Miles Edmund Cotman

remains of the Abbey. I am not sure if this was a drainage mill, but even in 1813 it looked in poor condition, with a rough tailpole and ragged sail frames. Cattle are grazing round the buildings, gulls fly overhead, and there are wherry sails in the distance on the unseen river. A similar, but much more colourful picture, by Miles Edmund Cotman, is reproduced in Josephine Walpole's book. It is reproduced on page 10, but I wish we could show it here in all its beauty.

Pictures by George Vincent include two of Yarmouth beach, both quite large oils. 'Dutch Fair' is mainly occupied by beached boats and a lot of people enjoying the occasion. To one side, very close, is the tall column of the Nelson Monument. On the horizon, beyond the boats, are four windmills - too far away for any detail to be seen. 'Fish Auction 1828' is the scene of much activity among beached boats, but in the background are two windmills, one post and one smock, which appear to be virtually on the beach. 'View from Yarmouth Bridge 1823' just after sunset, looking upstream towards Breydon, shows two tall mills on the west side of the river, but there is not enough detail for me to attempt a description.

'Mousehold Heath, Norwich' was, and I believe still is, a favourite location for Norfolk artists. An etching 9" x 12" by John Crome includes a post mill and a smock mill, but it is a small picture with the mills in the background. However it was made more interesting by the presence on display of the finely detailed copper plate from which the print was made.

I have noted in other articles that mills were usually incidental features in landscape paintings, rather than appearing as detailed representations of the mills as such. However the settings in Norfolk in the Tate exhibition were very evocative, including the 'mill-less' pictures. Many, particularly those with



'Mousehold Heath, Norwich' by John Crome

mills, showed a strong Dutch influence, due partly to the period in which they were painted, and partly to similarities between the rivers and marshes of Norfolk and those of Holland; moreover, some of the Norwich School of artists did paint in Holland.

The exhibition at the Tate closed on 17th September 2000, and the pictures which were borrowed from the Castle Museum have been returned, to be seen there now the museum is re-opened.

After leaving 'Tate Britain' at Millbank I went by free 'bus to 'Tate Modern' housed in the recently converted electricity generating station at Bankside on the south bank at Southwark. I went to see, not the modern art exhibits, but the huge impressive building, and the new footbridge across the Thames. I liked the look of the bridge, but it had been closed because it swayed alarmingly when people first walked across it. It became known as the 'Wobbly Bridge', and six months later the problem was still unsolved. So much for Millbank and Bankside and the 'Tates', and again I apologise for irrelevant wanderings at the end.

## **REPORT OF 2001 A.G.M.**

The 2001 A.G.M. was held at Buttrum's Mill, Woodbridge on the morning of 8th July. 21 members and friends were present. Apologies were received from Len Ball, Bob Starling, Chris Seago, Trevor Scott, Peter Filby, Alex & Rosy Hayward and Barry Hall. Chairman Chris Hullcoop welcomed everyone and thanked Mr and Mrs Whitworth and Ivor Partridge for making the visit possible. The minutes of the 2000 A.G.M. (in Newsletter 78) were taken as read (proposed Bob Shackle; seconded Chris Wilson).

Treasurer Des Codd circulated the accounts. Subscription receipts were high because some members had paid twice within a 12-month period. The lottery money for the Miller's Trail had distorted the accounts, but it did earn us some extra interest. Funding for this had been cut by St Edmundsbury Borough Council and the Miller's Trail leaflet will not be reprinted. Receipts still covered outgoings, and overall spending was not likely to increase significantly. For this reason, subscription rates would remain unchanged. We are still able to offer small grants from time to time. One grant had been received during the year, from Suffolk County Council's Buildings at Risk fund towards the work at Syleham. Tools are always needed; this year a new belt sander had been purchased. This prompted Bob Shackle to offer a second hand jigsaw, which was gratefully accepted. John Snowdon proposed the accounts be accepted; this was seconded by Brian Flint.

The Editor, Mark Barnard, reported that three newsletters had been produced during the year, with an average length of 15 pages. About a third of the space is devoted to news items, allowing people from outside the county to stay in touch. He thanked all contributors, especially the regulars such as Peter Dolman (who has now described over 60 vanished mills), Peter Steggall and Chris Hullcoop. Newsletter production remains unchanged; each issue costs about 40p. It is hoped to up-date the index now that No.80 has been reached. Peter Steggall would do this, and Peter Dolman would put the index on the Group's

website. Bob Shackle suggested we include a resume of news from adjoining counties, culled from other newsletters; Brian Flint offered to help with this. The British Library may want copies of the index and newsletters, and Bob Shackle said they should be given this in electronic form. Chris Hullcoop thanked Mark for all his work.

Peter Dolman explained that the Secretary's job is split. Luke Bonwick does the renewals, and now that he has a more permanent address in Reading, some of the past difficulties should disappear. We have 170 full members and one junior member. This is two down on last year. Complimentary newsletters are sent to the Suffolk Record Office and the SPAB. We also send 11 newsletters to other Mills Groups and one to the Suffolk Industrial Archaeology Society, on an exchange basis. Peter Dolman said he tries to promote the Group through talks, and has been working with Luke Bonwick on a website. This is now on line at [smg.uk.com](http://smg.uk.com) What is desired is a general introduction and pictures of the best mills with a brief note of which are open to the public. There will be a working 'hit counter'. Luke has designed a recruiting poster, which will be produced once an electronic file for it has been created. Bob Shackle offered to assist with this. Chris Hullcoop thanked Peter for all his valuable work as secretary.

Election of officers for 2001-2 followed. All were prepared to continue: Chris Hullcoop; Peter Dolman; Mark Barnard; Des Codd; Brian Flint; John Snowdon; Bob Malster; Rosy & Alex Hayward; Luke Bonwick. Their re-election en bloc was proposed by Chris Wilson and seconded by Bob Shackle and Ivor Partridge.

Under Any Other Business, Brian Flint enquired whether Campsey Ash watermill was still for sale. The crossword prize draw took place and was won by Brian Flint.

The meeting concluded with the customary slide show, reviewing Suffolk mills in the news during 2000-01.

## **NEWS**

### **STANTON POST MILL REPAIRS SAILING AHEAD**

Following 1½ years of hard work by mill enthusiasts from the SPAB and Suffolk Mills Group, two new sails were hoisted onto the mill on September 7th and are now turning once more. The sails have been designed to replicate the original ones that were lost in the 1930's and are larger than those fitted in the late 1980's. The other pair of sails, which had been removed in May, has been altered to tie in with the more authentic design seen in pre-1914 photographs of the mill. This was achieved by scarfing an extension of about three feet onto the heel of the whip, to add the tenth sail bar, and by shortening the point of the whip by about one foot and remorticing for the original bar, to allow the two shutter bay at the tip. The extension was done by cutting back and laminating using Douglas fir, with a gap filling epoxy resin adhesive. This same material was also used to seal the various shakes and other minor defects in the whips. New hemlaths are being provided, the old uplongs being reused for the inner

laths. All fastenings have been renewed with stainless steel. So far one sail has been finished and one only needs the laths to complete it. They will be refitted once the stock and clamps have been patched up, several pockets of decay having got into them in the 13 years that they were on the mill. These repairs will be carried out using modern timber conservation methods in an attempt to save the 99% of good timber that survives. The work to the stock and clamps is too extensive to allow the sails to be refitted this year as hoped, especially as the weather has been almost unrelentingly bad.

Other work to the mill includes the repair of the buck roof framing and the setting up of one of the two pairs of stones. The roof repairs involved cutting back the right purlin face, which was decayed in a few places but had suffered mostly from rodent damage, and plating with new timber, plus a reinforcing plate for most of the length on the inside (to match the left side, done last year). The rafter feet were plated with new oak and rejoined into the purlin. New boards sealed the gap and then the steel roof sheeting was replaced. This sheeting dated back to the 'holding operation' done by S.M.G. in 1979 and remained in good condition. The lower section was made from lots of small

offcuts so I decided to renew this with new material to avoid lots of joints. All that now remains to do is to give the roof about five coats of paint. So far it has received two, dodging in between showers! Once the painting is finished the scaffold will be taken down, restoring the mill's clean lines and allowing the last six shutters to be fitted. Oh, for a dry spell!



The mill as she now stands

Further work was done to the stone tun, and efforts will focus on this during the winter so that the aim of producing flour again can be achieved next year. The other major item of work done this summer was the replacement of the neck bearing and renewal of the windshaft neck bolts.

The windshaft at Stanton is now unique in having its poll end bolted on to the wood shaft rather than the more usual finned gudgeon. The whole weight of the sails, and the torque, is carried by four 30 inch bolts of 1 $\frac{1}{8}$  inch diameter. These frequently worked loose, and were of questionable material, so the decision was taken to renew them in steel. Lock nuts have been provided in an attempt to stop them from working loose and as they were removed and replaced the chance was taken to reinforce the seatings in the old oak shaft with epoxy resin. The poll end may have once been straight on the shaft but it is anything but now, and the windshaft neck waffles about by plus or minus an eighth of an inch. The old swing pot neck bearing had worn unevenly in the past and was completely beyond repair so a new wooden neck bearing in a steel case has been provided. Wooden bearings are quite commonplace in mills and are more tolerant of badly aligned shafts than brass.

While the sails were off the chance was also taken to remove the striking rod for straightening, a job that involved heating it to cherry red with two huge blowlamps. All the striking gear has been refurbished, with bearings bushed and new pins. A wooden bush was also fitted to the outside end of the poll end to prevent the rod from sagging under the weight of the spider.

A 'mini work-in' will be held at the mill from 19th - 23rd October, when further work to the sails will take place, and on the following Sunday (October 28th) there will be a 250th birthday party, complete with cake, for the mill which dates from 1751. There will not be 250 candles on the cake though! Members are invited to both the work-in and the party. Please contact Peter Dolman if you are planning to come along. (P.D.)

#### 2002 SUFFOLK MILLS GROUP CALENDAR

Once again Peter Dolman will be producing a calendar for fund raising purposes. This year the theme will be taken from an interesting collection of photographs of East Suffolk windmills taken in the 1920's and kindly made available by S.M.G. member Steven Binks, who has been given the originals. The calendar will be laser printed in black and white and will be large enough to use for writing notes on. Production will be to order, so if you want one, send a cheque for £3.50 to Peter Dolman (address on p.1), made payable to 'Suffolk Mills Group'.

#### FIRST AID FOR BURGH MILL

The fine mill tower at Burgh has been neglected for the best part of a century and it shows. All the floors are intact and in reasonable condition but no machinery remains. In the 1940's the Observer Corps converted the tower top into one of their lookouts. They fitted special telescopes which enabled them to spot and determine the course of enemy aircraft arriving on their bombing missions. A floor some four feet below the curb was fitted, with a slight fall one way and then covered with asphalt with a drain leading water outside. Then a circular half roof was fitted around the edge, leaving the central area clear so as not to inhibit the function of their instruments. Another unwelcome addition was the provision of areas covering most of the floors

enclosed in wire mesh. Thus the tower was converted to a high-rise hen house! One recent owner fitted a few new windows but most of the windows were left to rot and for the panes to fall out and let in the rain.

Fortunately the mill now has good owners in Penny and Edward Creasy. Their first priority is the fine mill house where previous owners have fitted 'naff' features and an extension with plastic windows! However, looking ahead they hope to commission a new roof copying the original ogee shape of the Whitmore cap and perhaps even fitting a gallery. A cap frame will not be made as costs would be just too great.

As some of you know, the firm I worked for, Levington Agriculture, went bankrupt earlier this year, releasing me rather suddenly from the nine to five. Whilst I have a very small occupational pension, it is still some years before the State pension is paid out, so the prospect of small mill jobs seems attractive. Thus for a first job I have undertaken some work at Burgh.

So far I have done some basic holding work to the windows and floors and removed the old Observer Corps roof which was very rotten. This exposed the curb which proved to be in ruinous condition. About half the cast iron curb plates were intact but the rest had broken up into halves, quarters and more. The wooden segments below consisted of two rings of elm, the top one overlapping the lower one to form a keep flange. These wooden segments are beyond repair, having been exposed to the elements for half a century. Strangely the Observer Corps roof did not cover the curb, the outer edge stopping in the angle between the inside edge of the curb and the top of the brickwork. Thus all the roof run off water was directed onto the curb. The eight holding down bolts had to be drawn out after first cutting off



Burgh mill with attached former granary and engine shed



the nuts which in over 150 years had become rust welded. The wrought iron rods are still good and will be replaced with their pads slightly higher up.

New wooden rings will be made to the same dimensions as the originals and the iron bands which lined the inside faces (still in good condition) will be re-fitted. All the intact cast iron curb segments and the larger fragments will be replaced. Thus a sound basis will be there to support the ribs of a new roof.

Meanwhile the Observer Corps asphalted floor has been repaired and the tower is now watertight. The telescope mounting is still in place and at its base are the names of the men who installed and operated it in those dark days of World War Two.

Just a casual glance at the tower shows that the brickwork is in poor condition. The mill is faced with Suffolk whites, fine bricks often used in prestigious buildings including the White House in Washington. The bricks used in the mill house are in fine condition and perhaps those in the mill were seconds. Some 5000-6000 good quality reclaimed bricks will be needed to replace large areas of facing brickwork, while in other places individual bricks will need cutting out and new bricks letting in. Bricks such as these are now hard to find and very expensive. Mr and Mrs Creasy hope to buy these soon while they are still available, but it may be many years before they can all be set in place on the tower. (C.H.)

#### EUSTON WATERMILL RE-OPENS AFTER RESTORATION

The curious watermill in the grounds of Euston Hall, the home of the Duke of Grafton, was re-opened in June by the Duke, following extensive repairs. The mill stands on the Black Bourn, a tributary of the Little Ouse and dates back to the late 17th century. The present building is thought to have been rebuilt in 1731 by William Kent and in addition to the usual millstones contains a pump and water tank in a lofty tower which formerly supplied the hall and ornamental fountains with water.

The restoration work to the building included major underpinning and repairs to the masonry of the tower as well as work to the floors, windows and roof. The undershot waterwheel has also been rebuilt with new shrouds and buckets and can now operate. The wheel shaft is dated 1859 and is by the well-known local engineering firm of Burrell. The mill contains one pair of French stones and it is planned to continue the repairs in future with a view to getting the stones running again. S.M.G. has been invited to help with this work, in association with the estate.

The restoration work was carried out mainly by estate craftsmen Peter Hammond and Michael Garrod (who rebuilt the waterwheel) and they were each presented with a framed picture of the mill by the Duke. The work was funded by the estate with financial assistance from the National Lottery, English Heritage and St Edmundsbury Borough Council. The Duke and his agent, Christopher Spicer, are to be congratulated on the successful work to date. We hope that members will come forward to offer help with getting the mill working fully. Please contact Peter Dolman for further details. (P.D.)

## EVENTS

### MINI WORK-IN AT STANTON MILL: FRIDAY 19th-TUESDAY 23rd OCTOBER

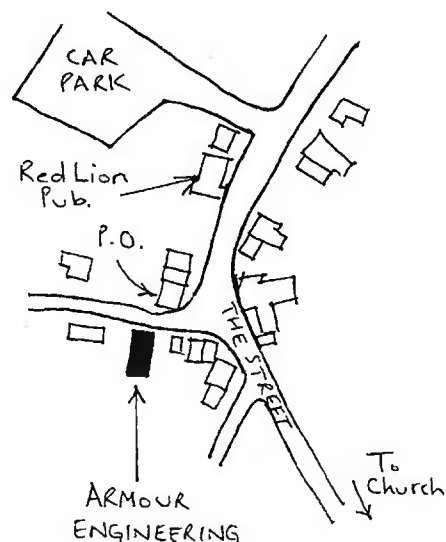
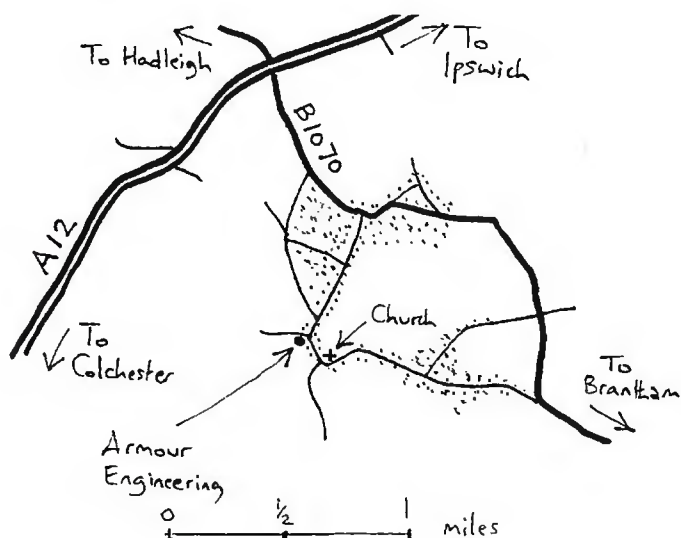
The mini work-in will involve work to the second pair of sails and possibly the stone tun. If the weather is suitable there may be work to the roundhouse walls as well.

### STANTON MILL'S 250th BIRTHDAY PARTY: SUNDAY 28th OCTOBER; from 1.30pm onwards

This event will offer members a chance to see the work done to date on the mill, and will provide a suitable occasion to thank those that have helped over the last few years. As at the 300th party for Drinkstone post mill in 1989, a special cake has been commissioned from our resident expert Caroline Shackle and in addition there will be other items on offer, as well as hot and cold drinks. As this is the day after the clocks alter, it will get dark early so if you want to see the mill in daylight, don't arrive too late. Thanks to the marvel of electric light however, we need not hurry home at sunset! If planning to attend, please let Peter Dolman know for catering numbers (01359 250622).

### ANNUAL MEMBERS' EVENING: SATURDAY 8th DECEMBER, from 7.30pm, at ARMOUR ENGINEERING, EAST BERGHOLT

A new venue this year, as we meet in the unusual surroundings of S.M.G. member Chris Armour's spacious workshop in the centre of East Bergholt, beside the post office and near the church. There is a public car park very near (see maps below). Most food and drink will be provided but further contributions are always welcome. We will have video and slide show facilities so bring along your offerings if you want to share them with other members.



Late News: There will be the year's last opening of Herringfleet windpump on Sunday October 14th, 1pm-4.30pm.

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