

SUFFOLK MILLS GROUP

Newsletter

No. 85

February 2003

www.smg.uk.com

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This newsletter is being 'fast tracked' to appear in good time for our public meeting in Ipswich on 1st March, and it certainly doesn't seem long since I was typing out the last one! In fact we have only had one event since then, the social evening at Drinkstone Mills, which everyone thoroughly enjoyed. Thank you, Rosy and Alex, for doing us proud once again.

We are slowly gaining momentum after the tragic events of 2002, although it is still depressing to get a telephone call from someone who wants information that Peter Dolman could so readily have provided. I still cannot bring myself to watch the Thelnetham video again yet; as each year passes, the people on it become more important than the work they are doing: one changes, the other doesn't.

If you enjoy this newsletter, please do try and write something yourself, even if it is only in the form of a letter. Every little helps, as the saying goes. The next issue is due in June. In the meantime, the events line-up is as follows.

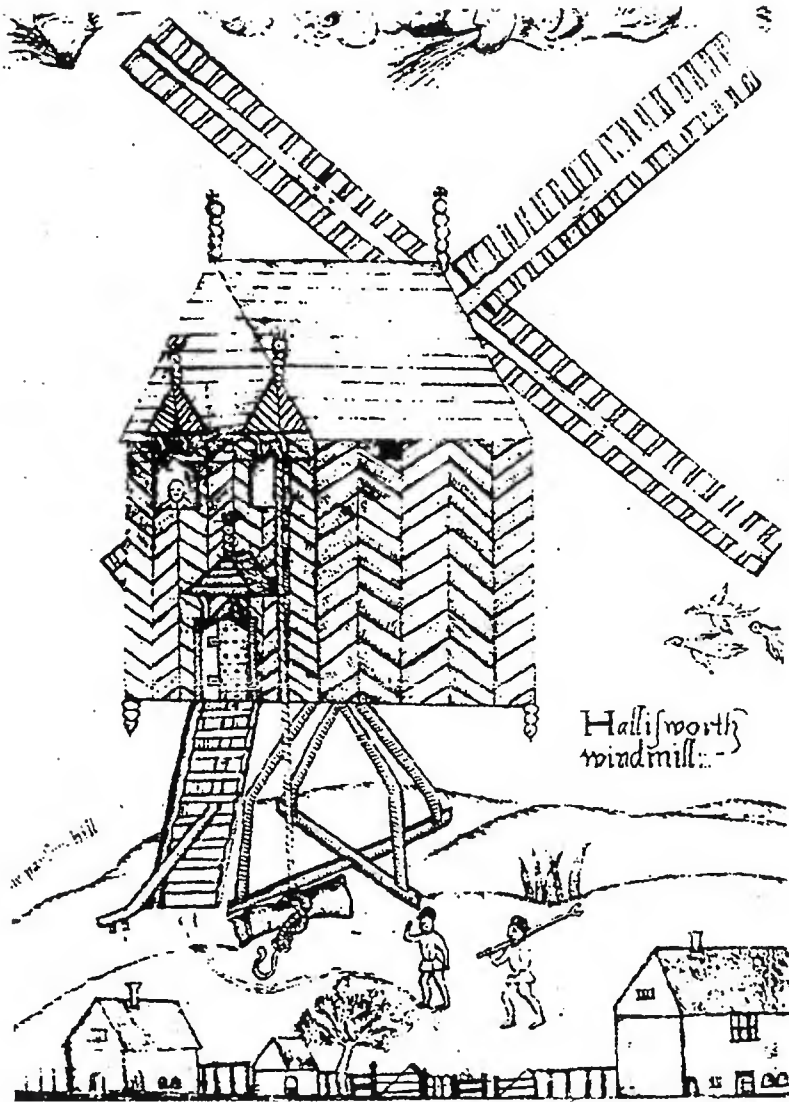
S.M.G. public meeting, Ipswich	Saturday March 1st
SPAB Spring mills meeting, London	Saturday March 15th
National Mills Weekend	May 10th-11th
SPAB Mills Section day tour (Essex)	Saturday May 17th
S.M.G. visit to Burgh mill	Sunday May 18th
S.M.G. Annual General Meeting	Sunday June 29th

Mark Barnard

A SEVENTEENTH CENTURY SUFFOLK MILL ILLUSTRATED Mark Barnard

Meaningful illustrations of named English mills before the 18th century are very rare, so I thought readers would like to see this quaint drawing of 'Hallisworth' (Halesworth) post mill, made in the early 17th century. It is preserved in a reassembled book of drawings and emblems held at the Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington D.C.. The title page is inscribed 'A booke of diueirs devices and sortes of pictures with the alphabete of letters devised and drawn with the pen... Devised and made by T.F.'. Research by J.L. Nevinson (see 'Lively Drawings of a Suffolk Scrivener' in *Country Life Annual* 1964, pp.156 & 158) reveals that the author was Thomas Fella of Halesworth.

The Fella family can be traced back to Richard Felaw, a merchant who was eight times bailiff of Ipswich between 1448 and 1472. In the 16th century the Fella family was most numerous at Bramfield, close to Halesworth. A Thomas Fella is first recorded in a register of communicants in Halesworth parish at Easter



1591. His will, dated April 16th 1637, is preserved at the Suffolk Record Office. In it he describes himself as a draper. As well as several houses, the will mentions 'all my written bookes of precedents which are of my owne writing...' which he bequeathed to his grandchild Francis Wullnowgh. The will was proved in 1639, and established Fella as a person of substance in Halesworth. Mention of his book of precedents suggests he may have practised as a lawyer or notary.

The mill is described as standing on 'the parson's hill'. Unusually, the rector of Halesworth was also the lord of a manor, which in former times would have had its own mill. A post mill

stood on this old site on Mill Hill as recently as the 1940's (see Newsletter 48). The box-like proportions of the mill are similar to post mills in medieval illustrations. The chevron pattern buck cladding may be an attempt to depict shingles rather than decorative boarding. Two gables at the tail protect an external sack hoist bollard, from which a rope hangs down to the ground, tied to what looks like a rolled up sack; the rope ends in a hook. The hoist would have been manually powered by heaving on the rope wound round the bollard. External sack hoists were I believe common in English post mills until the 19th century, and may account for upper side rails extending beyond the original tail frame (as at nearby Holton, but also noted elsewhere, including Drinkstone). Below the sack hoist is a pair of square openings, through one of which the miller can be seen! These large openings, being at the tail, would be protected from the worst of the weather; other openings were probably just tiny hatches to keep an eye on the weather. At the top of the steps is a studded door, and one can readily imagine a heavy piece of carpentry to secure the mill against thieves. The door is

sheltered by a porch carried on brackets, clearly an enduring feature. Can we trust the ornate finials crowning all the gables, and similar drop finials below the buck? Decorative work such as this was commonplace on houses of the period, and there is no reason to doubt them. If any member would care to offer any further observations or interpretations, I would be pleased to hear from them.

This is a valuable insight into the appearance of Suffolk windmills in the 16th and 17th century, and I am grateful to wall painting conservator Andrea Kirkham for finding it.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Brian Beach of Lowestoft writes:

I was very interested to read the S.M.G. newsletter for May, in which Alan Gifford told how his encounter with Saxtead Green Mill led to his interest in windmills. You wanted to know whether any S.M.G. members could tell what sparked off an enthusiasm for mills. So the following might be of interest.

When I was nine years old I went to see the film 'Oh, Mr Porter', starring a favourite of mine, Will Hay. A comedy film, it was set in an imaginary place called 'Buggelskelly', Will Hay having been appointed stationmaster of the broken-down station. Attention is drawn to a windmill, haunted by 'One-eyed Joe', the phantom miller. In the course of the film, Will Hay and his memorable partners, Moore Marriott and Graham Moffat are trapped in the cap of this smock mill, and can only escape by climbing down the sails. There follows a precarious and lengthy endeavour to reach the tips of the sails - resulting in a sudden breeze arriving, with the inevitable scene. The three of them find themselves in continuous circular motion, expressing much consternation and alarm. They are eventually saved by Graham Moffat falling off first, rapidly grabbing a hay-cart, and holding this below the sails in order to receive the other two.

That film really fired my imagination; and windmills made their mark for me. Something about the drama, the airiness, the attractiveness, the ingenuity of it all - something appealing - captured my imagination that day.

From then on I pursued the subject. Seeing my interest, my father let me look at a copy of the book 'English Windmills' Volume 1 (1930), borrowed from a colleague of his. Living in Kent, having a derelict smock mill only about half a mile away, and now learning about others around the county, I soon sought out more. One day in August 1939, about a fortnight before the outbreak of war, we were driving by Willesborough windmill, on the outskirts of Ashford. A fine smock mill in splendid condition, it just had to be visited on my part at once. As my father and I approached, the miller came out and asked whether we would like to look inside. What an opportunity! Not to be missed. I shall never forget this first chance of climbing up inside a windmill.

Over the years I have made many sketches of Kentish mills. In that county, and around other parts I have also taken plenty of

photographs. My first visit to Suffolk was during the summer of 1952, when I made line and colour sketches of Herringfleet and Walberswick, together with one or two other mills.

Going back to 'Oh, Mr Porter', I subsequently learned that the windmill used was Terling Mill, near Chelmsford, Essex. In 1988 I visited this mill, at last, having first seen it unknowingly as a small boy. The sails had been dismantled, but the beehive cap and the fan, so prominent in the film, were well in evidence. Now it formed part of a private dwelling. Shortly after my visit I received an interesting letter from a relative of the miller who had owned the mill at the time of filming, telling me of the period of the action, and describing how the stuntmen were involved. For this relative, as for other local witnesses, it had of course been a memorable time.

Brian Flint of Ufford writes:

Reading Alan Gifford's letter describing his introduction to mills in Newsletter 83 set me reminiscing back to a sunny July day in 1959. I had noticed windmills for, I suppose, about ten years prior to then, notably once near Ely when I saw about six, on one stretch of road, several with sails turning.

However, I hadn't done more than idly gaze until that fateful day when, cycling back to Ipswich from Aldeburgh, I got off my bike to photograph Friston mill looming over a field of ripe wheat.

After this I looked for other windmills to photograph although it was not until April 1961 that I went inside Saxtead Green post mill to see the fascinating machinery which really interested me as an engineer. I well remember Mr Sullivan, the owner, telling me that there was a windmill standing at Debenham, on the far side from Saxtead. My O.S. map omitted to show this site so I hadn't discovered it before but, on approaching the village I was thrilled to see the fine Whitmore tower mill still carrying two sails and the remains of a fantail. I climbed to the top and from then on was 'hooked'.

Since then I have visited many windmills (and quite a few watermills) both here and abroad and have written two books. In the 1960's and 70's I gave some help to Chris Hullcoop and others working on repairs to Framsdon, Ramsey and Drinkstone mills. I have belonged to the Mills Section of S.P.A.B. since 1968 and have been a committee member of S.M.G. since its inception in 1977.

Many thanks to the two Brians for sharing their first mill days with us. How did you get interested in mills? Do some reminiscing and put pen to paper. Do any other members recollect visiting mills in the 1930's or 1940's?

Niall Roberts of New Malden writes:

We were as shaken as everyone else in the 'milly' community when we learnt of Peter Dolman's inexplicable, premature and tragic death. We were touched by the moving obituary notices (better 'tributes') by Chris Hullcoop, Mark Barnard and Dave

Pearce, in S.M.G.'s newsletter and by Vincent Pargeter in S.P.A.B.'s 'Mill News'. We would like to add a few personal recollections.

We first met Peter (and Chris) when we visited Herringfleet in April, 1977, soon after I had first become interested in mills during a visit to our local mill on Wimbledon Common the year before. Peter and Chris were most welcoming to this amateur admirer of windmills and his two lady companions, one my wife and the other a former Benedictine nun - who, possibly more accustomed to having her eyes cast downwards than upwards, was nearly decapitated by the sails - though she adamantly denies it. Subsequently and more than once, when I telephoned Peter for advice on mills on or near one of our proposed journeys through East Anglia, he was most helpful in giving me key information about mills worth visiting in Suffolk and Essex - and not just names, contact telephone numbers and machinery of particular interest but also the kind of reception I might expect when contacting mill owners to try and arrange visits to mills that I was not free to visit when they were open or that were not normally open to the public at all. Peter's two volumes 'Windmills in Suffolk' and 'Lincolnshire Windmills' in the 'Contemporary Survey' series were invaluable as starting points for working out visiting programmes for those two counties. Much later on, Peter's knowledge was invaluable when, as Mills Research Group Chairman, I was involved in bringing to fruition the many years of work by Tony Bryan and others on the Mills Database and its published embodiment in the 'Gazetteer of Windmills in England'.

I was also greatly saddened to read of Cliff Lovett's death. Because I have always been much more of an armchair than a practical molinologist, I rarely met Cliff but I had heard and read about his very skilful aluminium-casting and wood-turning work at Thelnetham and at other mills. My one personal recollection of him is of how he kept me fed on the first day of the visit to Denmark organised by Suffolk Mills Group in 1982. That was my first expedition with S.M.G. and nobody had told me that one was expected to be utterly self-sufficient on the commissariat side. Whilst everybody else had brought field rations to last until they could make up their further supplies from what they expected to find at breakfast-time at each B & B, I had brought absolutely nothing to eat or drink. Cliff very kindly gave me a few queen cakes from the ample supply with which he had been equipped by his very efficient wife. Somebody else (John Spencer, I think) very kindly gave me an apple. Next day, I bought a packet of digestive biscuits and a box of Swiss cheese portions... I had become a practical molinologist after all.

NEWS

JOHN SALMON

With the death of John Salmon last year we have lost one of the last links with the 1920's and 1930's, when several hundred windmills were in their last working days, but when many more were being slaughtered without thought or care.

John attended Sutton Valence school near Maidstone in Kent, from where he could see the sails of Headcorn mill turning in the distance. In the summer term the boys were allowed some afternoons off for hobbies and John cycled around that part of Kent looking for mills. In the holidays he stayed with a school pal at a rectory in one of the Roothing parishes in Essex, and from here they cycled many miles looking at mills and old churches. Donald Smith in his book *English Windmills*, published in 1932, gives him acknowledgement: "To Mr J. Salmon for information and photographic views of mills in all parts of the county". Cars were rare in those days and only for the better off so John continued to travel by train and bicycle around the byways of England. He recalled a ride from Cambridge to Ely seeing many mills at work. He saw Little Laver and Moreton in Essex both working and many of Suffolk's post mills. His most vivid mill memory though was of the drainage mills behind Great Yarmouth where there were turning sails in all directions.

John went on to become a history teacher and housemaster at a public school, retiring to Suffolk in 1970. Over the years he wrote many articles and gave many lectures on old mills and the history of churches and was elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries.

In his later years he moved into Abbeyfield House in the Cathedral Close in Norwich, a home for retired folk where he had a bed-sitting room with main meals provided. Now this may sound like the usual rather sad old folks' home. Not so, to visit him there was more like an appointment with Royalty! Vehicle entry to the Close is strictly controlled and on the mention of John's name and address the barrier was lifted by a man in uniform. The house is the nearest building to the cathedral and was built in a very opulent and grand Victorian style for a dean and cost far too much of the Church's money. John's room was some 30ft long and from a bay window at the end the view of the cathedral was superb. For many years John was a cathedral guide and a few years ago received a share of Maundy money from the Queen when she visited the cathedral. To visit him there we felt rather like his pupils calling on their old housemaster. He would offer tea and buttered scones and we would talk of mills past and present, admire the gardens of Abbeyfield House and perhaps wander round the cloisters to look at the famous boss showing a man on horseback with a sack on his shoulder approaching a post mill.

A few years ago Bob Hardwick and I recorded John at Abbeyfield House on video, speaking of mills and churches and showing us the Maundy money. The tape has yet to be edited but gives a good idea of his deep rather posh voice, his humanity and his hospitality. (C.H.)

DON PATERSON

I first met Don Paterson when he joined one of our working holidays at Ramsey post mill in Essex. I asked if he would mind working on the sails as these are quite high and many do not like to be too far above ground. He laughed and recounted some hair-raising tales of his mountaineering trips to some of the highest and most dangerous mountains in the world!

Many years ago we spent a happy day drawing the very derelict South Ockendon smock mill in Essex. We did not request permission as we knew it would be refused and crept unseen into the mill. I wondered what might happen if we were accosted by someone in authority. Don told me not to worry as he would pretend to be a mad Gaelic-speaking tramp!

He was a geologist by profession and worked for many years in the Geological Museum in South Kensington. He had a great sense of humour and enjoyed a leg pull. One of the museum's prize exhibits at the time was a reconstructed rock face about 20ft high showing geological features. One day Don arrived at the museum, disguised and dressed in his climbing gear complete with ropes and all those jangly things climbers carry. He started to climb the rock face to the total consternation of the elderly uniformed attendants!

Don was a keen researcher, especially into the mills of North-west England where he spent his childhood. Over the years he contributed articles to mill journals and newsletters (including this one). I stayed with him several times at his house in Romford which was full of treasures buried amongst mountains of books and papers.

With his splendid beard he was an imposing figure at S.P.A.B. meetings. We used to joke about his resemblance to the traditional portrayals of Moses and ask if he had any new commandments for us! His twinkle in the eye and ready laugh were a tonic in a field which can at times be depressing. (C.H.)
(Don Paterson, a S.M.G. member since 1978, died in December.)

PAUL JOSLIN

In early January Paul Joslin, warden at Buttrum's Mill, Woodbridge since 1998, underwent a major operation at Ipswich hospital. We are delighted to report that the operation was a success and Paul is making a good recovery. His aim is to be fit enough to resume duties at the mill when it opens at Easter. We send Paul our best wishes.

RATTLESDEN RESCUE

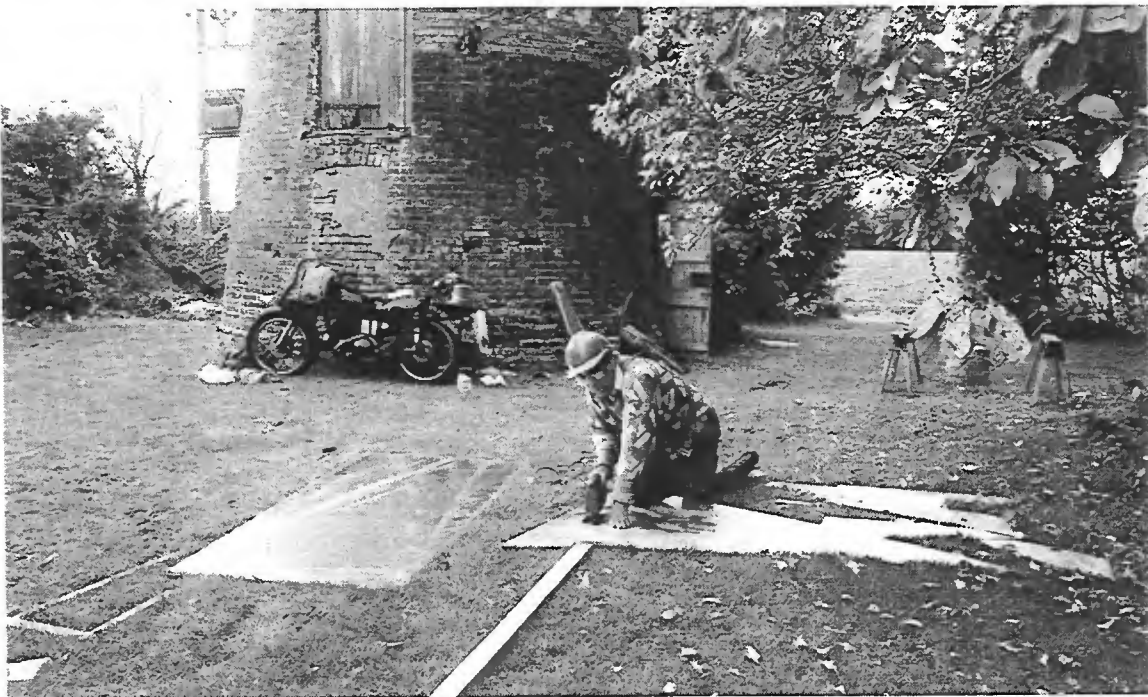
In the Spring of 1991 S.M.G. visited the mills at Rattlesden. John Jordan who then owned Hitchcock's roller mill showed us around and Mr and Mrs Blackburn allowed us to visit the little tower mill. How splendid the mills looked in the 19th century photograph in Brian Flint's book, with both windmills at work. When the roller mill was built, parts of the smock mill were left standing and incorporated into the new buildings and can still be seen today. The cap was removed from the tower mill many years ago and in 1975, before the mill was listed, a pair of stones and its drive and tentering gear were removed to be used in the repair of another mill. Substantial machinery remains though, the lower half of the upright shaft and spurwheel together with a pair of stones.

Even in 1991 the floors were becoming decayed through lack of any effective roof and after a visit early last year we could see the mill was well past its 11th hour.



WORK AT RATTLEDEN
MILL: SUMMER 2002

Left: The new roof
nearing completion
Below: Chris
Hullcoop cutting the
aluminium sheet for
the roof



Last summer I had been working on Burgh mill but the schedule there had been put back three months due to my hernia operation. It became obvious I would not be able to finish there without work extending into the dark damp days of winter and it would be better to cease until the following Spring. This gave me an opportunity to work at Rattlesden in the late summer and autumn.

When the cap was removed early in the Second World War, together with about 4ft of the tower, concrete was poured onto the dust floor to make a crude roof. It did have a fall to a drain hole and a hatch but it was never a good idea and was now leaking badly. It was decided to construct a new roof in the form of a shallow cone.

The bin floor was in a bad state of decay and the dust floor with its concrete needed to be tested. I rigged a rope from the ground over the top of the brickwork and connected it to my safety harness and climbed onto the concrete. There for 20 seconds or so I indulged in a cross between the Highland Fling and the Hokey Cokey! I could have won the Oliver Reed prize or more likely have been escorted away by men in white coats, but the concrete held up well! Before I could make the many journeys up and down the tower a platform had to be constructed to enable a ladder from bin floor to dust floor to be fitted safely. Once this was completed I could start fitting the 14 ribs of the cone frame. The inner ends of the ribs were bolted to a specially made boss and the outer ends bolted to vertical timbers rawlplugged to the inside of the walls. The aluminium covering was cut from soft high purity 16 gauge (1.6mm) sheet and secured to the ribs with aluminium nails. These nails prove quite cheap as there are very many in a kilo. Not cheap though was the high tech Sikaflex



Rattlesden mill after completion of the work

bonder/sealer used to seal between the sheets. Used in the aircraft and motor industries, it is a worthwhile investment if long life with little or no maintenance is required. I had thought of nailing on the last segment from outside and absailing down the tower but although it took much longer, a hatch and cover were made to allow easy access to the roof.

The sash windows were in a dreadful state and windblown rain was causing damage to the floors. To make and fit new frames and sashes would have been extremely time consuming and if made professionally would cost about £500 each. For maximum protection with little time and money available it was decided to fit plywood panels in the openings, incorporating a glass window one foot square to give enough light to easily see the interior. These should give many years of maintenance-free life.

The floors in the mill were mainly good but with various holes and hazardous areas. These have been repaired in some places and in others overlaid with 12mm thick plywood. All the ladders are well founded and a segment of the first floor where the boards are missing has been roped off. It was not reboarded as it forms a convenient place to store long timbers.

Mr and Mrs Blackburn do not open the mill to the public but welcome parties or individuals by appointment. They can do this with peace of mind as the interior of the mill is now very safe. We aim to have a S.M.G. visit there later this year when hopefully members can assist in lifting some steel beams to be placed under the concrete on the dust floor. These were given by John Jordan a dozen years ago when he owned the Hitchcock roller mill. At the time of our visit we marched them to the tower where they still remain, leaning against the brickwork.

The Blackburn family have much information on the history of the mills and we hope to publish a series of articles on the site in future issues. (C.H.)

PLANS FOR CRANFIELDS MILL SITE

In December outline plans were announced for the development of the 2.5 acre Cranfields mill complex fronting the Wet Dock in Ipswich. The roller mill closed in 1999, after which it was bought by the East of England Development Agency. The developers are Wharfside Regeneration, a consortium of London developers Angel Properties, John Mowlem Construction and Leisure Express. There will be an arts centre, loft-style apartments, a fitness club, an 80-bed hotel, a dance studio and a new home for the Ipswich Film Theatre. The best of the existing buildings will be retained, and others replaced, so as to maintain the dramatic waterfront skyline. Construction will begin in early 2004, with completion due in 2007. (M.B.)

FRISTON POST MILL

In Newsletter 78 (November 2000) we reported that major repair work to the trestle of Friston post mill had temporarily ceased. Since then little if any work has been done, and the mill's stability is a cause for concern. Also, water is getting in through holes cut in the boarding (made for the needle beams to

carry the weight of the buck) and through areas of missing felt on the roundhouse roof. The mill has been included in the new edition of the Suffolk Buildings at Risk register.

It is understood that urgent repairs to the trestle will be completed by the end of the year, with the help of grant aid from English Heritage. The mill is now vested in a charitable trust, the Friston Mill Foundation. It is hoped to fund further restoration work, estimated at £200,000, by grants from the lottery and other charitable foundations. However, earlier applications for lottery funding were unsuccessful. (M.B.)

CONSERVATION WORK TO BLACKSHORE WINDPUMP, REYDON

The slender red brick tower of Blackshore windpump is a familiar landmark on the north shore of the River Blyth at Reydon, near Southwold. It was built around 1890, making it almost the last traditional windmill to be built in Suffolk. It worked for only a few years before the windshaft broke at the neck, after which it was abandoned. Like the East Bridge windpump formerly at Minsmere, it drove a triple plunger pump rather than a scoopwheel, although no trace of either the pump or the watercourses which led to it can now be seen. In the early 1970's some repairs to the brickwork were carried out by the then owners, St Felix School.

Last year repair work was undertaken aimed at conserving the tower and surviving machinery. At one stage it was hoped to retain the cap frame in situ, but the timbers were far too decayed and it has been replaced in replica, but using oak. The remains of the original cap frame have been reassembled in the base of the tower. A new oak curb also had to be made, as the



Blackshore Windpump (January 2003)

original was too poor to risk. The new boat-shaped cap roof was based on drawings of the one on East Bridge mill. This has been clad in aluminium to avoid the need for costly regular maintenance. Similarly, vulnerable parts of the cap frame have been dressed over with aluminium. Nearly all the ironwork was cleaned and replaced, including the large striking wheel. Unfortunately, though, the truckwheels and their castings were severely corroded and only the large one under the neck was able to be put back. The remains of the other truckwheels have been placed inside the new cap. Much of the brickwork has been repointed with hydraulic lime mortar, and several hundred spalled facing bricks (mostly headers) have been cut out and renewed with bricks made at nearby South Cove which are a very good match. The two small window openings have been given oak frames (although interestingly millwright Richard Seago could find no evidence of frames ever being present) and the door opening fitted with a grill to keep out the dreaded pigeons.

The work has protected the surviving machinery as well as enhancing the contribution the mill tower makes to the landscape. It was made possible because of a generous grant from DEFRA under the Environmentally Sensitive Areas scheme. The same grant scheme also helps to ensure the survival of the surrounding grazing marsh which is an essential part of the mill's setting. (M.B.)

PROGRESS AT WICKEN CORN WINDMILL

In 2001 Wicken mill ground its first corn since going out of regular use in the 1930's; there is still much renovation to do though. Last year's work was concentrated on rebuilding the second ('eastern') pair of 4ft 6ins French stones, on reconstruction of the sack hoist, on the wire machine and its drive, and on final adjustments to the wallower. Outside, the 'Forth Bridge' job continues of keeping the sails' lead paintwork in good order.

The eastern pair of stones was probably the final set to work in the mill. By the start of the mill's restoration the runner was in need of major repair: its iron retaining band had rusted to the point of failure, and the plaster of Paris top fill was seriously cracked. The old plaster has now been prised off the burrs, and a new steel band made and fitted. The stone is currently without its topping: we intend to replace this with concrete as Richard Seago has done at his post mill at South Walsham. Interim balancing has been carried out on the Wicken stone, prior to adding the concrete fill. We intend to fit balance pots to the completed stone, but calculations confirm the desirability of having the runner in approximate balance prior to use of the balance pots, which are then for fine adjustment.

The sack hoist is now in working order to the original pattern, except that the special Wicken historical feature of fitting an old motor car tyre to the sack hoist pulley has been dispensed with. (The original pulley was decidedly non-uniform: it is retained as an exhibit.)

At Wicken mill the first floor is the meal floor. The ground floor was something of a machine room, as well as being the miller's office. It is known that there was a flour dressing

machine which was scrapped, probably in the late 1930's. The final drive to the machines was hung from the floor beams of the floor above. The remaining complex of hangers, belt holes and incomplete bearings is tantalising: the latest thoughts suggest that there was the intention to drive two or even three machines. Was there an earlier dresser present, for example a bolter?

The design of the replacement dressing machine has taken considerable effort. The design is based on a wire machine at Upminster, which had been converted to a grain cleaner. Selection of appropriate mesh sizes for sieving white flour from wholemeal has taken some research. The machine is now about 50% complete, and looks impressive suspended from the floor beams above.

We have been limewashing the interior wall of the tower's brick base, in the interests of originality and of easing cleaning of the mill.

This year's main work-ins at Britain's most northerly working smock corn mill are: May 3rd-11th and August 16th-25th. All volunteers are welcome! Otherwise the mill will be open during the first weekend of each month from March to November (and at other times if the sails are turning). (Dave Pearce)

GOOD NEWS FOR BURGH MILL

Last summer Chris Hullcoop fitted new curb rings in painted plywood, to the same dimensions as the originals, which were almost completely rotten (see Newsletter 81). All the cast iron curb segments have been cleaned and painted, and are now back in place. Some of the 14 segments had broken into three or more pieces, and a few of the smaller bits had fallen to the ground. We managed to find all but three of the 224 teeth, and to solve the jig-saw puzzle of fitting them together!

The owners, Edward and Penny Creasy, have commissioned a new aluminium-clad roof based on the ogee profile of the original Whitmore cap, and planning approval for this has been obtained. The roof will have a gallery around the outside which will provide a superb viewpoint some 60ft above the ground (you can just see the sails of Buttrum's Mill). Work on building the roof will start on site in the Spring.

Late last year we heard that an application for grant aid for the mill from DEFRA's Suffolk River Valleys Environmentally Sensitive Area support scheme had been successful. As a result, major works of repair and enhancement to the mill tower and attached granary will go ahead in 2003. This will include repairs to brickwork and floors and new windows all round to match those shown in old photographs.

There will be an opportunity to look round Burgh mill in May (see 'Events' below).

THELNETHAM NEWS

Thelnetham mill will be open on fewer occasions this year, as the priority will be practical work rather than opening and milling. Open days are: Easter Monday April 21st; Sundays May 25th, July 6th; August 3rd; August 24th; September 7th (all 11am-5pm).

Casual visitors will of course still be welcomed whenever the sails are turning. A work-in will be held later in the summer this year to tackle essential painting and tarring work. We are also conscious that the cap roof needs another coat of Belzona - it will be 20 (yes, *twenty*) years ago this autumn that the cap was lifted into place! Chris Hullcoop has very kindly re-cogged the 'non-organic' stone nut, and we hope to lift it back into place in early March. Further news about the work-in will appear in the next newsletter. (M.B.)

AND FINALLY...

Look out for ITV's 8-part series 'A Victorian Summer' with Paul Heiney. It starts Sunday 16th February at 5.45pm. One episode features threshing and then milling at Pakenham watermill, followed by baking a traditional Victorian loaf.

A website worth exploring is www.norfolkmills.co.uk It has info on Norfolk watermills plus those on the Suffolk Waveney.

We would like to welcome Janet Lord, Alastair Walker and Roger Cooper as new S.M.G. members. We hope to see you soon at some of our events.

EVENTS

S.M.G. PUBLIC MEETING: 'POWER FROM WATER'; SATURDAY MARCH 1st at 7.30pm at IPSWICH TOWN HALL

This year our main speaker will be Jeff Hawksley from Hampshire, who is an authority on water power and has gained something of a reputation for being able to explain in easily understood terms exactly how waterwheels derive their power, what affects their efficiency, and how they have been improved over time.

Please do come along and support this event, and do your best to tell others who you think might be interested about it. Our audiences have been thin in recent years, which is a shame especially when a speaker travels some distance specially for us. Refreshments are served at the interval and the evening will conclude before 10pm. A poster is enclosed for you to display.

NATIONAL MILLS WEEKEND: MAY 10th-11th

Please contact us if you know of a Suffolk mill which will be specially open on either day. We will run Herringfleet marsh mill as usual on the Sunday but in recent years there have been very few other local mills open which are not open anyway.

VISIT TO BURGH MILL: SUNDAY MAY 18th, 2pm-4.30pm

We chose Burgh mill for this year's first visit because there will be work in progress on the new ogee roof and possibly also on the repairs to the tower. The 1842 tower is the tallest and easily the largest in Suffolk. It is four miles NW of Woodbridge, just off the B1079, not far from Grundisburgh village.

Advance notice This year's A.G.M. will be on the morning of Sunday June 29th, at Pakenham watermill. More in next newsletter.