

SUFFOLK MILLS GROUP

Newsletter

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www.smg.uk.com

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The events announced in the last newsletter generally went well. We completed the filming for the Herringfleet video during the open day on August 1st, and much useful work was carried out at Drinkstone smock mill during the August weekend work-in. Members were made very welcome at our mid August evening visit to the RHM roller mill at Felixstowe Dock, and we hope to make a video record of it before it closes early next year.

Unfortunately, because of a lack of active members we can no longer do as much as we used to, or as some other mills groups. However, we soldier on. We will be up-dating our recruitment and publicity poster for 2005, and we have made a financial contribution towards the publication of an up-dated and expanded version of the Suffolk mills tourism leaflet. This will still be free, and will give details of S.M.G.. On another positive note, we now have a set of Peter Dolman's notes on Suffolk wind, water and steam mills and millwrights. This is a wonderful resource representing a vast amount of time and effort. It will greatly enhance many aspects of our work, not least this newsletter.

Forthcoming events are listed below. The next newsletter will appear in February, with further details of our public meeting. In the meantime, please try to send me something for these pages; you will see in this issue that Peter Steggall, a contributor for many years, is signing off, and we need more like him!

S.M.G. social evening, Stowmarket
S.M.G. public meeting, Ipswich

Saturday December 11th
Saturday March 5th 2005

Mark Barnard

VANISHED MILLS Peter Greene

GIRLING'S MILL, SWEFLING

One hundred years ago three post mills would have graced the skyline of Swefling; now none remains. The last of these mills to be demolished was Girling's Mill (Grid Ref 348640) in September 1935.

Girling's Mill was built in 1775 (see footnote). This is known as an inscribed beam was discovered while the mill was being demolished. An 'Indenture of Lease and Release' confirms that her first miller was Benjamin Artis, who acquired the land in 1772 (the mill was open-trestled and stood at or near its present location), and in 1784 Mr Artis announced in the *Ipswich Journal* the installation of two pairs of French stones. Benjamin Artis continued to work the mill until his death in 1789, after which it was run by his nephew, James Artis. By 1797 the mill was

being run by Francis Bicker until he died in 1829, when George Blake took over. It was not until 1879 that Arthur Rivers Girling, from whom the mill takes its name, became miller. As post mills increasingly fell into decline, becoming less and less economic against newer roller competition, so the turnover in millers increased. Between 1900 and 1922 no less than three millers tried to make a go of it: William Herring (1900), William Hurlock (1910) and finally Ernest Gowing (1922).

An Isaac Johnson survey from about 1832 shows the mill some 200 yards to the south of its present position, suggesting that later on it was relocated. The reasons for this move are unclear and the 1842 Tithe map shows it in its current position. The mill stood on an open trestle

until 1901 when she had a roundhouse built, though it was noted that she was less powerful after this modification. She was one of the last mills fitted with a roundhouse in the county. The two pairs of French stones in the head were underdriven from the upright shaft, but only had one governor controlling both sets of stones. There was an all-wood clasp-arm brakewheel, iron wallower and spurwheel and all wooden stone nuts. The interior was said to be very crowded with a number of extra machines including a governor-controlled cutter, belt-driven from the brakewheel via a cross-shaft. She was solely wind-driven until the late 19th century, when she became steam-assisted. The steam engine, situated in an outbuilding, also ran two 3ft stones in an adjacent shed. In 1902 an 18 h.p. Hornsby oil engine was installed, driving a pair of stones in the new roundhouse. Her sails were cloth and she was turned into the wind by means of a tailpole until around 1890 when she was fitted with patent sails and a fantail. Two of the sails had a board on the leading edge to increase their power. At the same time, the wooden windshaft was replaced with an iron one.

In 1928 one of the stocks cracked and in 1929 she was reduced to two sails. It was around this time that Ernest Gowing complained that there was 'too much running up and down stairs', and that he had to work 12 to 18 hour days after calm spells. By 1932 only the sack hoist was wind driven, with the buck used for storage, and milling was carried out in the roundhouse by the oil



The mill prior to 1929

engine. Finally, in September 1935, Robert Martin from Beccles was called in and the buck was demolished, although Mr Gowing continued to drive the stones using the oil engine for some time. The roundhouse remains, but the machinery and stones have long gone.

Footnote

It is possible that the mill, at its 1832 location might in fact be considerably older than is generally thought. In his 1621 will John Harvey describes himself as a Swefling miller; a Terrier of 1627 makes an indirect reference to a mill describing a piece of land as 'Myllmonnte'; and in the 1698 will of John Mullinner a mill in Swefling is left to his son, and was held by the Mullinner family until around 1730. Land held by the Mullinners then passed through several hands before being leased

from George Care, by Benjamin Artis. Perhaps, then, the beam's inscription of 1775 referred simply to the date of some repairs, and the mill itself dated back to the early 1600's.



Demolition in progress in 1935

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Bill Vincent from Earl Soham writes:

William Mann Kent lived and farmed for most of his life at White House Farm, Earl Soham, and for more than 50 years kept an occasional diary in which he recorded national and international events and family, farming and other local news including:

1832 May 10th - a young man named Woods killed by the Cretingham mill.

1836 January 1st - Mr Aldrich's brick tower mill destroyed by fire (site not identified).

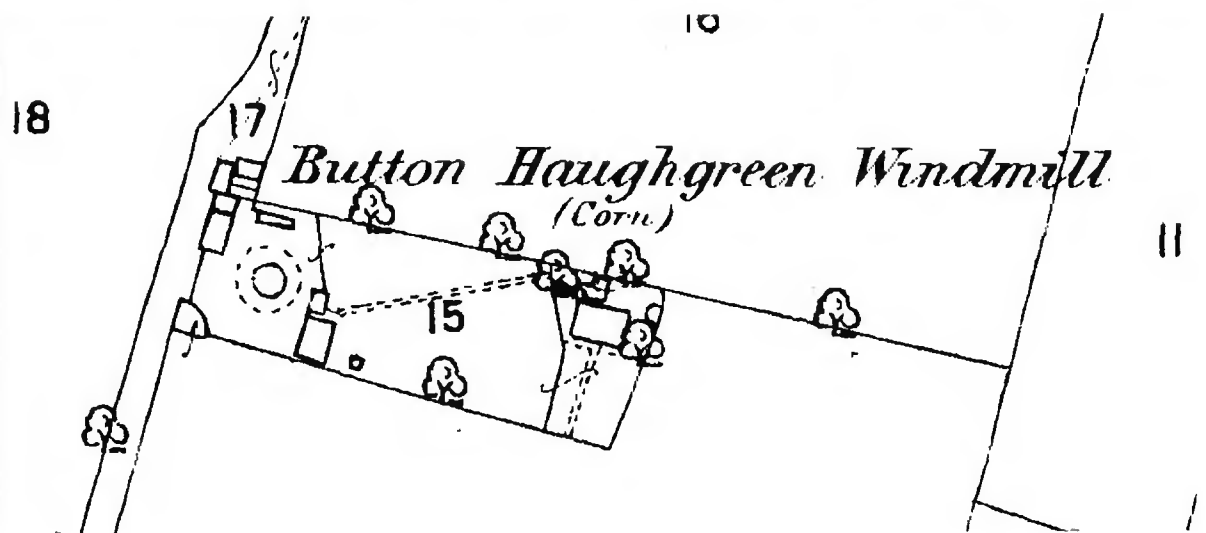
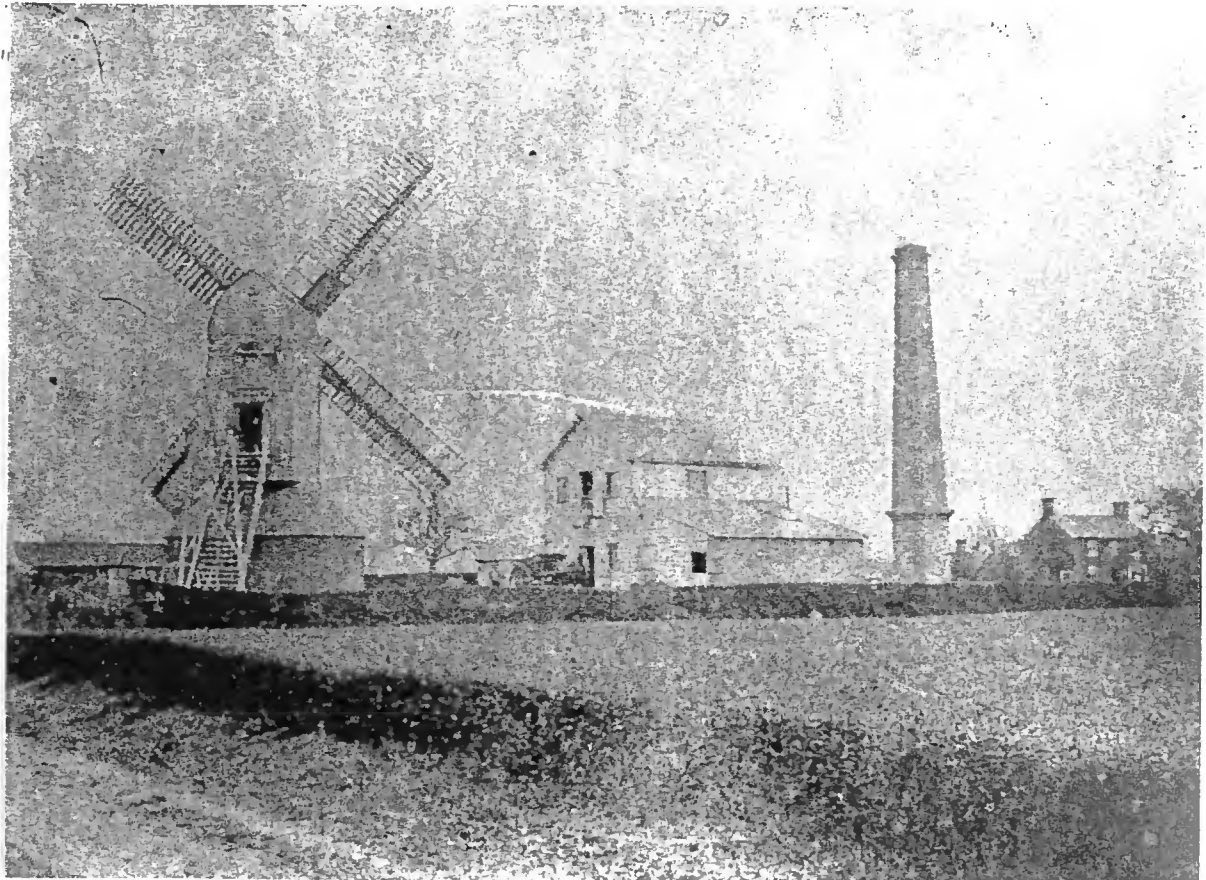
1836 January 2nd - the outbuildings of Mr Oxborrow's mill at Cretingham burnt - the work of an incendiary.

1836 November 29th - tremendous storm of wind. Saxtead mill much damaged and various other mills lost sails etc.

1863 May 22nd - auction of Mr Wm Smith's mills at Earl Soham Falcon - 1½ acres of land and Earl Soham mill sold to Mr Rouse £530. Saxtead mill with 3 acres land sold to Mr Rouse £320.

MILLS ON THE MAP

This attractive group of mill buildings stood on Button Haugh Green, Great Ashfield. The post mill is said to have been demolished over a period of years between 1905 and 1915. Just visible are the 4-bay airbrake shutters fixed longitudinally to the leading edge of each sail. All the buildings in the photograph of c.1890 can be located on the map, an extract from the 25-inch O.S. of 1884 (not to scale). The steam mill was re-fitted in 1893 and gutted by fire in 1900.



MILLS AND ME (12) Peter Steggall

LOOKING BACK - AND SIDEWAYS

During National Mills Weekend this year I went again to Pakenham watermill and visited Drinkstone Mills for the first time. Then in August I joined other members for the visit to the RHM roller mill beside the old dock basin at Felixstowe. I took with me, and showed to others, a very small photograph (reproduced below) which I took at Whitsun 1939, looking across the dock, with an R.A.F. launch in the foreground and a couple of sailing barges alongside the quay in front of the mill (then run by Marriages). I enjoyed the evening in 2004 which also involved my first venture into the vast, confusing complex of the present port; I got lost for a while trying to find my way out in the dark.

As my involvement with mills has become rather tenuous, this may be the last in this series, which began in 1987, but I would like to reminisce a little before putting my pen down. In the first article I mentioned my grandfather's connections with mills in Suffolk. Recently I have seen an extract from the 1881 Census showing that he was then 17 years old, a miller's apprentice, living in Needham Market; I believe he was working at Bosmere watermill. The 1901 Census calls him a 'Traveller Flour Miller' living at Sudbury - he was based at Clover's Mill, now the Mill Hotel.

Also in 'Mills and Me' (1) I wrote about my early memories of Cranfield's dockside flour mill at Ipswich, and my 1962 drawing was reproduced. Incidentally, having known Ipswich Dock since the late 1920's, I have mixed feelings about the recent 'Waterfront' developments in general, and in particular about what has been



Felixstowe dock basin in 1939

approved for the Cranfield's site. The series went on to record my growing interest in mills, first in Essex until 1962, and then in Suffolk where I became involved in the course of my work. That resulted in my being at the receiving end of Chris Hullcoop's efforts to persuade the County Council to do more to protect and maintain windmills. The first really serious case was Friston post mill in 1970 where with the co-operation of the owner we prevented its demolition and encouraged its restoration; but over 30 years later, though it still stands its future remains uncertain.

I also got to know several knowledgeable enthusiasts including Peter Dolman, Mark Barnard and Brian Flint. In 1979 Peter persuaded me to join the Suffolk Mills Group, but there was no conflict of interests as my work no longer concerned mills; in any case I retired two years later. Twenty five years after joining I am still a member and as interested as ever in mills in Suffolk and elsewhere. I have always admired the particular members who have run S.M.G. from the start, and have used their technical knowledge and skill so effectively to protect and restore mills, and to encourage mill owners and local authorities to do likewise. By comparison I have done very little except to write articles for the newsletter, and to attend meetings, talks and open days, but being a member has given me a great deal of pleasure and interest. May I conclude by offering congratulations to those young men - and some not so young - with a head for heights and an appetite for hard work, who started it all and achieved so much. Long may the good work continue!

THE ORIGINS OF THE SUFFOLK MILLS GROUP, OR 'SPIRITS OF THE PAST' Arthur Dolman

The story begins in 1922 when Frederick Dolman, the oldest of four brothers, was born at 22 Bank Road in Ipswich. He was followed by brother Charles and brother Arthur (me) during the next three years, and brother John four years later. We were not a well off family and our father and mother had difficulty in managing to keep us fed and clothed. The house was small with only three bedrooms and with a family of five (at that time), three uncles, a grandmother and a great grandmother to accommodate there was not much room to spare.

However, as time passed the brothers grew up and in 1939 the war started and Fred joined the R.A.F. as did Charles later on. To cut a long story short, in the latter stages Fred was in Holland and later in Germany. When he eventually came home one of his possessions was a German map of Suffolk, probably a copy of a pre-war Ordnance Survey map.

On this map there were still many windmills marked and I used to use the map to plot excursions on my scooter (this was about 1960) around the Suffolk countryside. Although my interest was photography on many occasions, just for the sake of it, I would plot a journey which included various windmills just to see how many were left. Gradually I became more interested in mills and then came the time when I visited Framsdon mill and met for the first time Chris Hullcoop and Brian Flint who were carrying out

some restoration work. Brian was also a keen photographer and was in the throes of writing a book on Suffolk windmills and together we made various journeys copying old photographs.

By this time my nephew Peter Dolman had accompanied me on the pillion of the scooter on my various rides and he also began to develop an interest in windmills. This continued after his family moved to Bromham near Bedford, and with Stevington windmill nearby Peter was quickly involved in its upkeep and in Bedfordshire windmills generally. At the age of 14 he was writing articles on Bedfordshire mills for the *Bedfordshire Magazine*. Peter's interest developed far more than just curiosity as you all know and he became more and more interested in restoration and maintenance of mills. On his family's return to Ipswich Peter quickly became involved with other mill enthusiasts in local restorations. Eventually Peter in combination with Mark Barnard and Chris Hullcoop formed the Suffolk Mills Group and from then on never looked back and his further work is well known and well respected.

This may seem to be the end of the story leading up to the formation of the Suffolk Mills Group. However, subsequent facts which have come to light could all have had an influence on the final act.

First of all, as mentioned earlier, Frederick, Charles and myself were born in Bank Road, Ipswich. Subsequent examination of early maps of Ipswich revealed that our house was within about 200 yards of both Bank Road mill and North Hill Road mill. Were the spirits of the old millers trying to influence us?

Secondly in about 1928 we moved up the Woodbridge Road towards the Albion Mills and found later that Belle Vue Road mill was originally within about 50 yards of the top of our back garden.

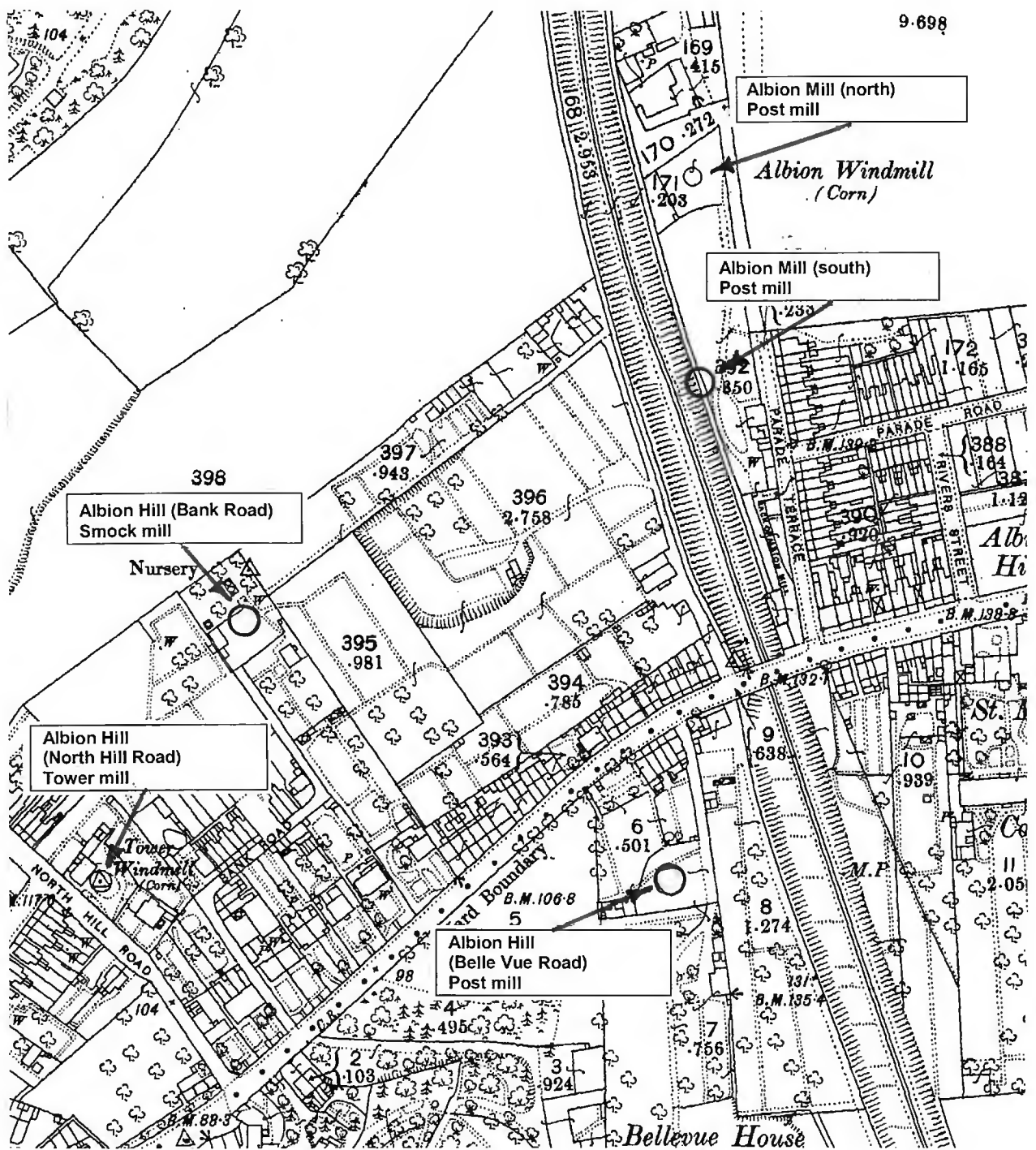
Thirdly when young we used to play on Howlett's meadow, a stretch of land bordering the Ipswich to Felixstowe railway line, this originally being adjacent to the area containing the two Albion Mills, one of which was demolished when the cutting for the railway was dug.

Next, the school which we all attended was St Marys, Albion Hill which was adjacent to an area between the school and the railway line originally containing two further mills. All these mills are mentioned in Peter's write-up on Ipswich mills which appeared in the S.M.G. Newsletters 9 and 10 in 1979.

A further coincidence is the fact that a Dutch miller visiting Norfolk saw Peter's *Contemporary Survey* of Suffolk windmills and got in touch with him as his name was also Dolman. His mill was found to be relatively near the aerodrome in Holland where Fred was stationed at the end of the war and from where the original German map of Suffolk, which started my interest, was found.

Finally, when researching the Dolman family tree, a cousin found that one of our great great grandfathers was the miller at South Cerney in Gloucestershire.

As a postscript to this account, brother Fred has this year received an identical copy of the German map of Suffolk from a fellow ex-serviceman, the map which I have had in my possession for nearly 60 years.



1884 O.S. map of Albion Hill, Ipswich with sites of mills standing in 1850 (scale 1:2500)

Could it be that Hitler was responsible for the Suffolk Mills Group being formed? Was it the spirits of the millers surrounding the Dolman family residences having an influence or was it the spirit of the great great grandfather which came through and caused a renewed interest in mills? We shall never know but all that matters really is the future success of the Mills Group and the continuing interest in the restoration and upkeep of the old windmills.

WERE THESE MILLS PHOTOGRAPHED? (3) Brian Flint

For anyone who may have missed recent issues of the newsletter, this is a continuation of my alphabetical list of Suffolk windmills, which stood reasonably complete in 1870, but which are not represented by known photographs. Again P, S and T denote post, smock and tower mills followed by the National Grid reference and date of demolition.

HARGRAVE	S	770604	After 1900
HAUGHLEY	P	029625	After 1890
HAUGHLEY	P	030644	c.1895
HENLEY	P	155515	1884
HIGHAM	T	745649	c.1885
HINTLESHAM	P	095436	After 1880
HITCHAM	P	998545	After 1900?
HOLLESLEY	P	342435	1881
HONINGTON	P	912738	c.1900 Roundhouse left
HOPTON	P	998801	After 1880 ¹
HUNDON	P	718470	On 1887 map
ILKETSHALL ST ANDREW	P	376877	After 1880
ILKETSHALL ST ANDREW	P	376877	After 1880 ²
IPSWICH (ALBION HILL)	P	176449	c.1877
IPSWICH (NORTH HILL RD)	T	173449	1891
KEDINGTON	P	701464	After 1880
KERSEY	T	990425	1907
KETTLEBURGH	S	267598	After 1880
LAKENHEATH	T	710817	After 1880
LEATHERINGHAM	P	280580	1882-3
LONG MELFORD	P	857465	1887?
MARTLESHAM	T	249464	1890-2
MELLIS	P	086738	c.1898
MONKS ELEIGH	P	965480	On 1883 map
NEDGING TYE	P	017496	1909
NEEDHAM MARKET	S	085556	After 1870
NEWTON (GREEN)	S	919402	After 1880
NORTON	P	957671	After 1880
OFFTON	P	073495	c.1900?
OLD NEWTON	P	055623	Between 1884 & 1895
OLD NEWTON	S	048643	Between 1884 & 1895
ONEHOUSE	P	032591	On 1882 map
ORFORD	P	422503	c.1885
OTLEY	S	213562	After 1900
OUSDEN	S	742598	c.1880
OUSDEN	P	725599	After 1880

Notes

- 1 Close to later mill
- 2 Very close to other mill

I am sorry to say that to date I have received no reports of missing mill photo turning up. Perhaps this latest list will result in success. I hope to conclude the list in the next issue.

Editor's note

If an member has unidentified photographs of windmills which they believe could be Suffolk examples, please get in touch as we may be able to help!

NEWS

NEWS FROM DRINKSTONE

The smock mill work-in in August went well, supported by several S.M.G. members. We would like to thank them for all their help with holding work on the smock mill and railway carriage. The base of the smock was repainted, and over a century's build-up of material was cleared from the cellar under the ground floor, to prevent damp rotting the structure. Work was also done to the flooring, and a new ground to first floor ladder has been made. The black plastic cladding on the railway carriage was renewed to help ensure the survival of this unusual outbuilding.

At the time of writing, final confirmation of the English Heritage grant for the repair of the post mill is still awaited, but if all goes to plan a start will be made in the Spring of 2005. Until then, fundraising continues apace. A concert of Christmas music is being held in Drinkstone church at 7.30pm on Wednesday 8th December, in aid of the post mill restoration fund. Tickets are £5 (£3 concessions) and are available from Val Mayhew on 01359 241228. (Rosy & Alex Hayward)

WOODBIDGE TIDE MILL LOTTERY BID

The Woodbridge Tide Mill Trust hope to initiate a thorough overhaul of the mill with the help of funding from the Lottery. It is several decades now since the mill was restored and the little pond created. Although there is sufficient water to drive the wheel for an hour or so, it is insufficient to turn a pair of stones and grind. The Trust have always had the dream that one day stone milling could be demonstrated to visitors, but how could this be done? It would be nice to take back the old pond of a dozen or so acres, now a marina. One dark night we could tow out and scupper all the Tupperware yachts, attend to the gates and waterways and have enough water to grind for about three hours... Hardly practical though, and there is little chance of enlarging the existing mill pond.

One possibility is to boost the mill's power with three phase electricity. Now the purist might react 'as Dracula to the Cross' to this heresy. But if thought out and designed carefully it need not be obtrusive and certainly not like the electrically driven dry waterwheels seen in 'Ye Olde Mill' restaurants, or the electrically driven sails on the tower mill at Thornton Cleveleys. It would act as a boost to the water which would drive the wheel as ever, but the machinery would receive an extra 'shove' by a motor of, say, 8 h.p. This shove could be applied to the very substantial cast iron spurwheel via a pinion rather like a stone nut. The motor and its gear box would be small and there is plenty of spare room around the spurwheel. It could be located in a discreet box and the sound of the mill machinery working would drown any electric hum. It would be important to be able to disconnect the electric drive completely when just the wheel was turning. Water could provide half the power and the other half would be courtesy of Powergen! It probably would not be possible to grind for human consumption but feed wheat could be ground and the process would be exactly the same. To produce flour for bread and cakes would require an enthusiastic miller (perhaps early

retired) coming forward to work the mill occasionally.

If a pair of stones are to be used, even if only occasionally, they will need a thorough overhaul. It is very important that everything is as user-friendly as possible. The mechanism for lifting the stone nut in and out of gear is very poor and will need overhaul and adaptation as those of us who have attempted to run the stones have found out.

At present the wheel is very out of balance as some of the paddles have been replaced. Although the shaft is in good condition the wheel itself is more than half way through its life. Should it be repaired or replaced? For its size it is very lightly built. If funds allow and a new wheel is made it is important to increase the size of some of the timbers rather than copy the smaller size of the originals. The very wet conditions mean that the surface of the timber gradually rots away to the point where the timber is not strong enough. A slightly larger timber would last twice as long as a smaller one.

Again this may appear to some as heresy, but it's not a bad idea to question why and for whom we are preserving the mill and what funds are likely to be available in the future. We must be realistic and some compromises will be needed and these can only be made by applying sound judgement based on experience.

Before any work can start the mill requires a thorough study of all aspects from working machinery to improved access and overhaul of the many exhibits, photographs, drawings, interpretive displays and signage. This will be carried out by architect Tim Buxbaum. We hope to advise the Trust at the planning stage, particularly on the mill's machinery. Who knows, we may yet be able to make a little film like the famous 'Tide Miller' made by Shell but showing a Jack Desborough (the last miller) of the 21st century. (C.H.)

REPAIRS TO MILL HOTEL WATERWHEEL

Millwrights Dorothea are currently carrying out repairs to the waterwheel at the Mill Hotel in Sudbury. They will be rebuilding the inlet sluice gate, replacing some of the corroded iron buckets and generally getting the wheel back into working order. The work is being grant aided under the Sudbury Old Town Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme.

WORK STARTS ON NESS POINT WIND TURBINE

In 2002 we reported that planning permission had been granted for a large wind turbine at Ness Point, Lowestoft. For various reasons the construction of the turbine was delayed, but work on the flagship scheme finally started on site in August this year, with completion scheduled for early 2005. The developer is Sea and Land Power and Energy (SLP), who have set up a company called Ness Point Ltd to manage the construction and operation of the turbine.

The turbine's tower will be 80m high, and the tip of the top blade will be 126m from the ground (higher than the spire of Salisbury cathedral), making it the UK's tallest and largest onshore turbine. The supplier is Vestas Celtic Wind Technology, and the rated output is 2.75MW.

Lowestoft is bidding to become the UK's 'wind capital', with plans for a £6M research and development centre for offshore renewable energy close to the turbine.

MEMBERSHIP

We would like to welcome the following new S.M.G. members: Mr J Butson from Bletchley; Mrs N Gooch from Ixworth; Mr and Mrs D Grixti from Stanton; Mrs C Kinnersly from Northampton; Mr L Peppere11 from Shadingfield and Mr S Whenmouth from Witham. We look forward to meeting you at some of our forthcoming events.

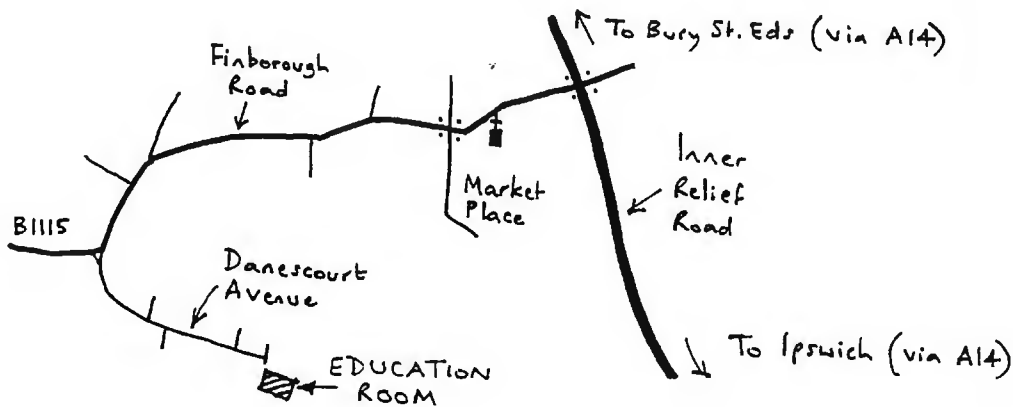
On a sad note, we report the death of Brian Beach. Brian lived in Kent for many years before retiring to Suffolk, when he joined S.M.G. and took a keen interest in our work. He was an accomplished artist and some of his work illustrated an article he wrote for the newsletter in 1996. We extend our condolences to his widow Beryl.

EVENTS

S.M.G. SOCIAL EVENING: SATURDAY DECEMBER 11th at EDUCATION ROOM, MUSEUM OF EAST ANGLIAN LIFE, STOWMARKET, from 7.30pm

This is our annual indoors get-together when we can chat and enjoy slides and video's. New this year will be a first cut of the latest Herringfleet video starring Lord Somerleyton, and film of Stanton mill at work in June 2002. As usual there will be drinks and nibbles on offer, but bring more if you want, together with any slides or video you would like to show.

The Education Room is part of a primary school at the end of Danescourt Avenue, off Finborough Road on the west side of Stowmarket. A location map is provided below.



S.M.G. PUBLIC MEETING: SATURDAY MARCH 5th 2005

Next year's public meeting will be held in the Lecture Room at Ipswich Central Library. The main speaker will be Dave Pearce. Further details in the February newsletter.
