

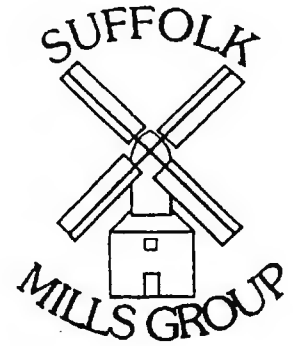
SUFFOLK MILLS GROUP

Newsletter

www.suffolkmills.org.uk

No. 105
March 2010

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It is encouraging to report good attendances at our two winter meetings, the pre-Christmas social and the public meeting in early March. The public meeting was especially enjoyable, Steve Temple giving a most entertaining and thought-provoking account of his work at Impington smock mill over the last ten years. This led to some debate about the best way of protecting windmills from lightning strikes, and the merits of fitting a keep flange to the curb to prevent cap lift-off in extreme weather conditions. We have arranged a visit to Impington mill in June (see below).

About a year ago I wrote of the impending cuts in public spending, meaning less money (or worse) for mills looked after by local authorities, and for grants. The forthcoming General Election will bring this into focus. Unfortunately very few mills enjoy long-term security. Recently I heard it said, that when someone restores an old building, the work is only complete when arrangements have been made to protect and maintain it when their input ceases. With a mill, this is perhaps an even greater challenge than the repair itself, but something a caring and knowledgeable owner is much better placed to do than his or her successors.

As ever, contributions for these pages are most welcome; the next issue is due early summer. Forthcoming events are as follows:

Herringfleet windpump open day	Sunday May 9th
Visit to Impington smock mill	Sunday June 6th
A.G.M. at Stanton mill	Sunday July 18th

Mark Barnard

THE PASSING OF THE MILL Ernest Pulbrook

The following piece is taken from The English Countryside by Ernest Pulbrook, first published in 1915. It illustrates a nostalgia for a rural way of life which, even nearly a century ago, was under threat. Thanks to Ralph Gilbey for this contribution.

With the growth and dominance of a rigid and soulless industrialism in the nineteenth century utility came to be considered above beauty and appropriateness, the workman ceased to be a craftsman taking delight in his handiwork and making things which were artistic as well as useful, and became a minder of machinery, a maker of articles to one pattern.

At first the country was less affected than the towns, but as machinery improved it was found that many industries could be carried on more cheaply and perhaps more efficiently in the large factory, and from that day the conditions of life in the country began to change. At first this was slow, but when new countries developed and foreign corn began to pour into Britain it became rapid, and the old crafts decayed, especially those dependent on a well-tilled countryside; the full effects of this transformation have been felt within the knowledge of those who are yet middle-aged. It seems but yesterday that the merrily turning sails of a windmill formed one of the most characteristic sights of East Anglia or Sussex, and the pleasant splashing and rumble of the mill-wheel one of the most common sounds of our valleys. Now the former have largely disappeared or remain mere limbless stumps to remind us of the past, while many of the water-mills are being turned into sawmills, or even factories, or perhaps utilised to generate current for lighting a country house or a village. This use to supply motive power for dynamos has saved many a mill, and will probably save many more, although for a time, when 'standard' flour was boomed, it seemed as if the old mills might again be utilised.

So it is that scattered about the country by many a silver brook and softly flowing river we come across mill-leats which are purposeless, or dams that have no mills, or find some picturesque old building empty and deserted, its wheel falling to pieces and its windows broken. No longer is the miller a jovial gentleman of independent character like him of the Dee, but a man who makes his money by some other trade, or a mere labourer who feeds the hoppers or fills the motor-lorries with sacks of flour ground by huge roller mills in a town or on its outskirts. Few could pass a mill without stopping awhile to watch the wheel and the foaming waters race out of the mill-tail, without passing the time of day to the miller leaning over the half-open hatch by its side. Even where the mill is still working we find the wheel motionless and silent for most of the time, and there is no procession of gaily painted carts filled with sacks of grain or flour and drawn by great cart-horses with brightly polished harness and ornaments jingling musically at every step.

With this passing of the mill goes a feature of English country life that has lasted since Saxon times. It is difficult to say when water-mills were first introduced; some say that they came with the Romans, but this is uncertain, and in any case hand-mills or querns would probably be in use in their time, as they lasted up to the thirteenth century. That water-mills were plentiful in Saxon days we know by the Domesday Survey, and those who have access to modern editions of, or extracts from, that monumental work relating to their districts may find reference to some mill they know well, although, of course, the present building is not the one referred to and the site may be different. When we conjure up visions of West Ham at the present day it is difficult to think that nine hundred years ago there were eight mills on what were then no doubt the pellucid waters of the Lea; there had actually been nine at an earlier date. Between Rivenhall and Braxted in Essex may still be seen a mill that existed in Edward the Confessor's time. It belonged to the

two manors and was worth ten shillings annually. On the Thames are several of these Domesday mills, one of the most picturesque of which is Streatley, which was worth twenty-two shillings a year in those far-off days.

One of the most important privileges of the old manors was that of the milling soke, or the right to compel the tenants to grind their corn at the lord's mill. To our notions this may seem unjust and savour of undesirable monopoly, but it must be remembered that the mill was erected as much for the use of the tenants as the lord, who usually leased the mill to the miller. The latter was under the control of the manor court and was liable to a fine if he took too large a toll of the corn sent to be ground or did not grind it properly. As a general rule, too, the use of hand-mills was discouraged, and on most manors the tenant was liable to be fined if he took his wheat elsewhere to be ground or did his grinding at home. It was also the duty of the tenants to do all the necessary repairs to the mill and carry their lord's corn to be ground or to market to sell.

Mills were often the most profitable possessions of monasteries, and the abbots preserved their rights as carefully as the ordinary landowner. The Abbot of Peterborough suppressed the use of hand-mills on his property, while the Bishop of Durham owned three mills. Of one of these the records say "all the villeins and men who hold of the farmer make the mill-dam and carry millstones." The millstones formed the most expensive part of the equipment of the medieval mill, for they were often imported from abroad and had to be fetched from the nearest port. The duty of purchasing these and arranging for their carriage usually fell to the bailiff, and in old manorial records we occasionally come across the expenses of such trips, from which it appears that the price would sometimes be discussed over liberal quaffings of wine. Numbers of these old manorial mills exist to this day, although in many cases they have long since passed from the possession of the original owners. An example of a mill which still stands on the land of the family who have held it for generations is to be found at Dunster, where the picturesque mill with two overshot wheels is almost hidden amidst the trees on the confines of the park.

Windmills do not belong to the same race as water-mills; they recall other memories and make different impressions. The water-mill brings to mind smiling valleys, shady nooks, and swirling waters, and seems an embodiment of the iron hand in a velvet glove, the strong exerting his power so easily and quietly that it does not seem to exist. The windmill, on the other hand, possesses a character like that of the miller of the song, and "cares for nobody". It stands stiff and stark on the top of an exposed ridge, facing all the winds that blow, its whirling sails expressing strong, resistless might and strength. Stand close to a windmill at work and the dull whistling of the sails fills one with fascination and awe. The water-mill seems to belong to summer and sunny skies; the severely simple outline of the windmill to autumn and storm-clouds. On a bright day the windmill may attract little attention, but towards the close of a dull, gloomy day, silhouetted against the dark, gathering storm-clouds, it appears to be twice its size, and in its sombre dress stands

for the very embodiment of the spirit of the storm. But its day seems to have passed more surely than that of its brother in the vale, at least in the form which has been familiar to us since childhood, for modern engineers have evolved an iron skeleton-like caricature that pumps water and can be fitted on wheels to move from place to place.

The windmill is not so old as the water-mill, being introduced into this country by the returning Crusaders. For centuries almost the development of the windmill was slow, and even now we occasionally come across a small post-mill which was the original type. These mills are set on a central post on which they revolve, a long wooden arm enabling the miller to turn the mill itself so that the sails are kept to the wind. These are much smaller than the tower-mills, in which the axes of the sails are fitted in a cap which revolves by means of a small wheel that keeps the sail to the wind, although in the earliest examples the cap had also to be turned by hand gear. The post-mills rarely work more than one or two pairs of stones, but the tower-mills contain as many as six or even eight. Originally the sails consisted of canvas stretched on frames, as their name implies, but in time the wooden shutters were introduced, as they could be opened or shut, according to the force of the breeze, more easily than the sails could be furled. All kinds of mechanisms were invented to regulate the speed of the sails and to prevent them going too fast, and it might almost be said that the windmill was not perfected until it came to be disused.

Not many years ago there were numerous windmills on the outskirts of London, but few of them remain, although some have left their memorial in the name of a road. To those accustomed to it the disappearance of a mill makes an odd gap in the landscape. Who would recognise Quainton and Brill, in Buckinghamshire, if their mills were removed? who could conceive of Friston, in Sussex, without its mill? and how the sunset will lose when the old mill at Coleshill, near Amersham, finally falls to ruin! Even in semi-ruin the windmill lends a dignity to the landscape and seems symbolical of the change and decay that have come over the countryside. Let us make the most of our mills while we may, for they are fast disappearing, only the name of a hill or a road remaining to tell us of their existence. Once upon a time they were common in the north of England, but they seem to be dying out there faster than in other parts of the country, and such a sight as the mill at Patrington in the East Riding is all too rare.

Even in the eastern counties a fine weather-boarded post-mill, such as that at Mount Bures, in north Essex, is not so common as it was, for numbers of mills present the pathetic figure of the ribless skeleton at Madingley, in Cambridgeshire. Yarmouth's last mill was taken down over six years ago, and wherever we go the same tale is told. At one time ten windmills stood on the ridge that overlooks Mansfield, in Nottinghamshire, but not a single one remains, and in Sussex, where they used to be plentiful, it is the same. Eastbourne has lost the old mill that used to mark the entrance to the town on the Lewes road; Brighton no longer possesses any mills; and farther west, in the

same county, the tomb of John Oliver, on Highdown Hill, alone remains to tell that once upon a time his mill stood close by.

But if we would write of vanished mills, of poor maimed stumps upon the hills, and decaying wheels in the valleys, the tale would be long. Some of these ruins are monuments to the industry in the past; witness the huge wheel and the triple gables of the mill at Godmanchester. Creepers hang in festoons over the gaping weatherboarding and climb the roof; its glazeless windows and the rotting covering of the wheel proclaim all too plainly that its day is over. Now all is peace where the foaming waters roared, and the angler leans over the rails of the little footbridge where in the past the miller must often have stood when his day's work was done. Even as it is to-day it impresses with its size, and reminds the passer-by that once upon a time it ground the corn of a very fertile district.

Even those simple water-mills known as clack-mills, which were once common in Ireland, the Isle of Man, and the north of Scotland, are now confined to the Shetland Islands. These were very simple mills, owned by several farmers in common. Very primitive and very small, they could be worked by the least of streams, and once set going they required no attention. The corn was placed in a hopper immediately above the stones, a projection on the one which revolved knocking an arm attached to the hopper so that a little of the grain was shaken down at each revolution. The stone was on the same axle as the 'wheel', which was set horizontally underneath the floor of the mill. It consisted of a number of fans or paddles, against which the water impinged, and there was a simple contrivance by which it could be thrown out of gear when no grinding was being done.

BUCKS ON THE GROUND Sue Burden

At a number of Suffolk windmill sites, post mill bucks have been stood on the ground as store sheds, often near a working wind or steam mill. This practice seems to have been almost peculiar to Suffolk. Brian Flint lists several in his *Suffolk Windmills*.

At Badwell Ash, a buck was moved and extensively rebuilt to form part of a power mill c.1930, with an oil engine. It originally stood at 'Mill Hill' (TL978677) where there is a mill mound, then at some time was moved to TL996692. This site has since been quarried. Peter Dolman recorded it, but by the late 1980's it had disintegrated.

The best known is the Creeting buck, a large buck which was moved from c.TM105558 to a farmyard at Creeting St Mary, where it was converted into a dovecote. It was built at its original site as a windmill in 1796.

At Hundon (TL735492) the buck was placed on the ground as a store shed c.1928. Brian Flint says he recalls the buck in the mid 1940's 'like a grey box, quite near the road' although no photograph of it is known. There was a buck on the ground at St James South Elmham, near the post mill of which the roundhouse still stands. The complete post mill was moved here from Starston



The buck at Theberton

in 1864, and its buck was demolished in the summer of 1923. Brian Flint says in his book that the buck was demolished in 1972.

At Theberton, there was a buck on the ground near the tower mill. It was moved from Little Glemham. Here it had one pair of stones driven by steam. The single storey stump of the tower mill still stands (it was dismantled c.1923), rather overgrown, in the middle of a field. A buck stood at Walsham le Willows in the complex near the post mill whose roundhouse survives. It was moved from Wortham, and had stones driven by power at Walsham. At Westhall, the top of a buck stood near the intact post mill. It was moved from Huntingfield in 1928. At its old site, the ruined roundhouse remained until the 1980's. The complete post mill was demolished in May 1957, leaving the small roundhouse with its steep pitched roof. At Worlingworth a buck on the ground was moved from Hoxne and was converted to steam. It stood at Honeypots Farm (TM223706), away from the New and Old post mills in the village.



Buck at Walsham le Willows
in 1937

In Rex Wailes' book *A Source Book of Windmills and Watermills* there is a tantalising photograph of Saxtead Mill with a tiny black buck in the yard next to it, about a third of the size of a normal cornmill buck, like the little post mill at Bloxham, Oxon. It was apparently a hollow post drainage mill, moved from the Aldeburgh or Orford area, site unknown. It was larger and more substantial than most hollow post drainage mills. In Saxtead's

roundhouse, part of the hollow post mill's post was built into the hurst that the power-driven stones stood on; I assume it is still there today. The little buck had gone by the mid 1970's.

I do not know of any bucks on the ground in neighbouring Essex. It is possible that Thornham composite mill was one once. It was one of two post mills that stood at Ringstead. One of these was advertised for sale for removal in 1837 when the tower mill was due to be built on the site. The buck is advertised as being 12ft by 22ft in plan, but in an old picture, Thornham mill looks smaller than this. It also had only one pair of stones. The tower mill was built by 1845. The post mill was moved two miles east to Beacon Hill, approx. TF719426, but doesn't seem to have been used here. It then went a mile north to Thornham c.1863. Another thing that suggests that it was a buck on the ground was that it was rebuilt as a composite mill; i.e. with no trestle, although some post mills are believed to have been rebuilt as composite mills because the trestle had rotted. It was demolished in November 1930, leaving just its little brick roundhouse which has curb anchoring bolts.

The only other buck on the ground I know of was at Seaton in Rutland. An old open trestle post mill which was moved to its final site (SP907976) in 1881 to be nearer the watermill, as both were run by the same miller. It stopped work between 1918 and 1922, and the buck is said locally to have been moved to the ground in 1919, next door to its tapered brick piers. At the same time the gable was removed and it was given a shallowly slanting flat roof. In 1981 it was used as a hay store. It was 11ft wide and 15ft 8ins from front to rear. Rutland's last post mill stood, in increasingly rickety condition, until 2004, when it was torn



The buck at Seaton, Rutland (August 1998)

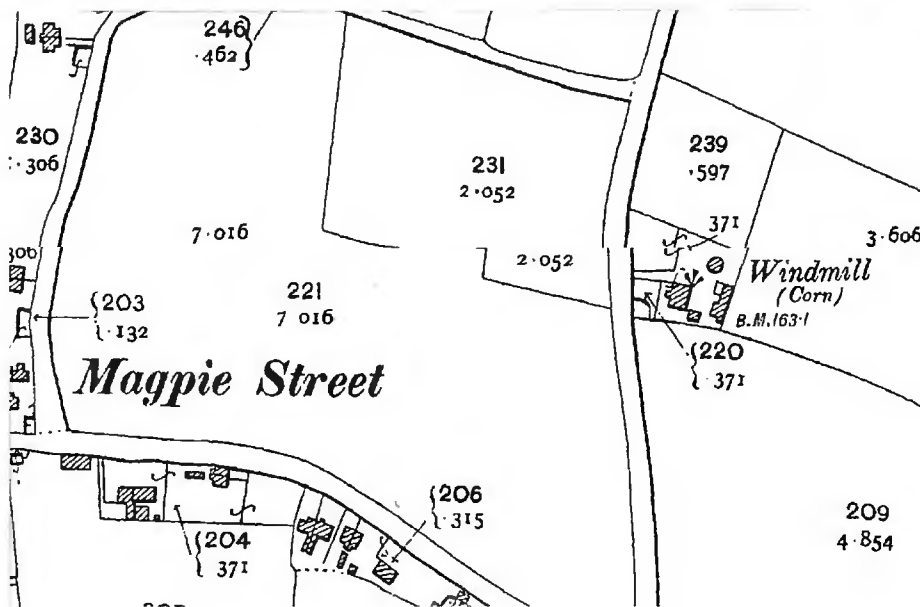
down and the wreckage burnt - a serious but not well recorded loss to the mill world. Although the machinery had been removed, it still had a lot of interesting features. It was a great pity it couldn't have been moved again, to a safe site. I don't even know if the little brick piers survive, or the remains of the Peak and French stones which had been left lying by the buck. The stones were probably head and tail, as a lot of Leicestershire and Rutland post mills seem to have been. The watermill was a house by 1988.

There are now two places where bucks on the ground can be seen. One is the Creeting buck near Needham Market. In 1987 it was in very poor condition with all the roof tiles missing. Luckily in 1996 it was fully restored, and was moved again within the farmyard. It was made part of a craft centre, and in 2000 I visited it, when it was being used by a craftswoman who sold patchwork bedspreads and lavender bags. It had inside, the pigeonholes from its use as a dovecote, and all the familiar post mill framing (see drawings in Newsletter 72). It has large, typically Suffolk, windows, a tiled half-hipped dovecote roof and black weatherboarding. The other buck on the ground is the rebuilt one at Chinnor, Oxfordshire, standing next to its now unique trestle with three crosstrees and six quarterbars. The framing of the buck was complete by 2000. It appears to be mostly new timber, but the trestle appears to be original timber. In 1967, the original buck framing, totally bare except for the metal roof, was pulled down, and Philip Barret-Lennard saved the timbers. The new site is on the other side of the road and a little further east from the old site. The buck is large and broad, and the two pairs of stones were mounted on a hurst on the bottom floor of the buck, with a long upright shaft, totally different from the layout in Suffolk post mills. The post mill at Bledlow Ridge, a few miles away in Buckinghamshire, had a similar shaped buck, as well as three crosstrees and six quarterbars, and I think it was almost certainly built by the same millwright. In 2007, the Chinnor buck had creosoted broad weatherboarding (the mill was originally white) and had a weathervane of a red kite, the beautiful big birds of prey which can be seen flying round here.

MILLS ON THE MAP

This edition's map extract is from the 1904 revision of the 25-inch Ordnance Survey (not to scale) and shows a windmill just north of the east Suffolk village of Charsfield, at Grid Ref TM256570. It is part of a small group comprising mill house and mill, with an outbuilding along the east boundary of the site. A bench mark on the house records it as an eminence, 163 feet above sea level. Our photo, taken from across the road looking east, reveals the mill to be a post mill of the tall east Suffolk pattern, on a single storey roundhouse. The mill house is a fairly modest affair, symmetrical but with casement rather than sash windows. Directory entries record the use of auxiliary steam power by 1896, perhaps giving a clue to the date of the photograph as a portable steam engine stands by the roundhouse with a belt drive from its flywheel. The mill drove two pairs of

stones in the head. The last miller, Edward William Brook, is listed until 1912, and the mill was pulled down by engine on Easter Monday of 1917.



THE MILLS RESEARCH GROUP Guy Blythman

For those who are currently unaware of our activities, the Mills Research Group was founded in 1979 to co-ordinate the academic study of traditional wind and watermills. We are a friendly group who believe that mill research is best carried out by a group of individuals who can pool their resources and also meet socially whenever the opportunity presents itself. We meet twice a year at the Mills Archive in Reading, to whom we have close links, usually in March and November at a date shortly

after the Mills Section meetings. We have an annual conference in the first weekend in October at which papers are presented on mill-related topics. On the Sunday we aim to visit as varied as possible a selection of the local mills. The conferences are always enjoyable and the papers interesting. At some point there is usually a meal in a pub, generally regarded as one of the highlights of these events.

Last year's conference was held at Crabble watermill, Dover, where we enjoyed a buffet lunch provided by the mill management. Papers were presented on Kentish windmills, tide mills, Norfolk drainage windpumps and on various unanswered questions to do with mill technology, such as why in British mills the flour dresser is never fed directly from the stones, and why in this country the lantern pinion gearwheel went out of use relatively early while remaining standard practice on the Continent. On Sunday we visited Hythe watermill, Willesborough smock mill and Rolvenden post mill.

Recent conferences have been held at Skidby windmill in Yorkshire and Peterborough Museum. This year the venue is expected to be Suffolk. The next edition of our *Proceedings*, a compilation of the papers presented at our conferences, has recently been published and is available from the Mills Archive (free to members). In the past the Group has produced the Windmill and Watermill Gazetteer and is currently involved in updating the Mills Index at the Archive. It is hoped that we will play a major role in the new technical information project.

Anyone interested in joining please contact the Hon. Secretary, Guy Blythman, at 32 Lindsay Court, Govett Avenue, Shepperton, Middlesex TW17 8AF (01932 252326 or email guy.blythman@talktalk.net)

NEWS

BETTY WHITWORTH

Betty Whitworth died just before Christmas. She and her husband Martin bought Buttrum's Mill, Woodbridge in the late 1960's, and although leased to Suffolk County Council, Betty in particular was active in promoting the mill to the public to raise money for charity. The small group of volunteer mill guides she brought together will continue to open the mill, this year on the first Sunday in the month from May to September, 2-4pm. As Sunshine Harvey, one of the young volunteers, put it, "If you ever met Betty, you'd know that she'd fit right into Heaven...getting the angels to help the mill in some way and to raise money for St. Elizabeth's Hospice! (M.B.)

THOMAS CARR

Tom Carr, youngest son of Mr and Mrs Carr of Dalham mill, died in December following a single vehicle road accident. Tom took a keen interest in the mill and had plans to commence much needed repainting and minor repair work. With his untimely death at the age of just 23 we have lost a ray of hope for the future of this important mill. (M.B.)

LIGHTNING STRIKE AT HERRINGFLEET

During our open day at Herringfleet windpump on August 9th last year we were surprised to see damage to the end of one of the sail whips. A tapering section of timber three feet in length had been cleaved off along the grain, exposing the mortice of the end sail bar. Close examination revealed no sign of rot (in fact the timber is very hard pitchpine), but tell-tale traces of sooting around the sail bar mortice. The only culprit could have been a lightning strike, some time after our last open day on May 10th. Fortunately the mill has a lightning conductor: this almost certainly prevented more serious damage. We hunted high and low for the missing piece, until a visitor discovered it underneath the corrugated iron cover of the former belt drive to the diesel pump next to the mill. The roof of the cover had a neat hole where the timber had crashed through on its way down! At the open day on October 18th we temporarily screwed the piece back in place, to improve the balance of the sails. A permanent glued repair will follow, and no lasting damage has been done.

The mill ran well last year, although the October opening had very modest winds. The repaired pitwheel cogs (see Newsletter 103) are holding up well, and when we left the mill we made sure they were above the 'pit' as any immersion in water due to winter floods would not be good for the resin. The condition of the stocks, clamps and sails is a cause for concern, although we think that the visible rot is neither extensive nor deep-seated.

Among the visitors in October were local parish councillors who are keen to help the mill by site clearance and possibly fund-raising. The mill really does need a local group of friends



The damaged sail whip at Herringfleet

if it is to continue in working order, and we will help them in any way we can. (M.B.)

PROBLEMS AT THORPENESS

A survey of the mill last summer showed that substantial repairs were long overdue. The brakewheel was wet with mould starting to grow, not a good sign. Climbing ahead of the brakewheel revealed that the front ends of the roof boards were rotten as were those on the head gable. This together with an ill-fitting storm hatch made for lots of leaks.

On another visit a more detailed examination of the weather beam revealed a large cavity. We feel though that it is strong enough if the sails stay as frames only and don't have to turn. As temporary protection for the winter, in July I applied dampcourse membrane to the gable, fixing it with gaffer tape!

The mill is owned by Suffolk County Council and the roundhouse serves as an information centre for the Suffolk Coast and Heaths project. With cutbacks in public funds there is little available for mills, and the County Council has decided to offer the mill for sale, with the small plot of land on which it stands. Agents to handle the sale will be appointed in the coming weeks. Despite this decision, we very much hope that permanent repairs to the buck roof and head will be put in hand this summer, to halt the deterioration in its condition. (C.H.)

GREAT THURLOW MILL REPAIRS

In December the Thurlow Estate submitted a listed building application for work to Great Thurlow smock mill, including removal of the sails and complete fantail assembly, repairs to the framing and reboarding, and cladding the cap roof in aluminium. Consent has now been granted with minor modifications. S.M.G. is advising the Estate on the practicalities of the aluminum cladding, which is not straightforward on something that curves in two directions. We hope the work can go ahead this year, as the mill is deteriorating (see Newsletter 102). (M.B.)

RIPPLES ON THE MILLPOND

A leak was discovered in the millpond at Pakenham watermill recently, which had caused water to penetrate the wall of the mill and spread a large damp patch on the meal floor. At one time it was feared that it might have weakened the foundations of the mill making expensive underpinning necessary. However, the latest report of the structural engineer is that this will not be necessary, and remedial measures to protect the wall from further penetration have been taken.

It is not the first time the pond has leaked and it may well be a historical problem resulting from the artificial raising of the banks of the pond in 1814. This was done in order to provide a fall of water sufficient to power a new breastshot wheel of 16ft diameter. The banks are now several feet above the level of the mill floor. The evidence of a surviving earlier sluice and wheelpit indicate that previous wheels were undershot and required less height in the pond. In 1814 Charles Lowe of Ixworth

leased the mill and decided to rebuild it on a much larger scale, introducing a breastshot wheel to provide more power.

The water feeding this very large pond comes from a stream rising near Thurston, augmented by springs on Pakenham Fen about a mile away. The skilful siting of the mill on this very reliable source is the reason why it has remained working from sometime before Domesday to the present day - nearly a thousand years. In the Middle Ages when it was owned by Bury St Edmunds abbey the pond was a valuable asset providing supplies of fish and eels. In a lease of 1523 the 'fishery' belonged to the miller. Today as well as driving the waterwheel it provides a habitat for several kinds of fish, swans, moorhen and mallard and is an attractive feature enjoyed by the 3000-4000 visitors who come to the mill each year. (David Eddershaw, Curator)

WINDING GEAR FAILS AT THELNETHAM

On a visit to Thelnetham mill in mid February Chris Seago noticed with some concern that when the fan turned there was a lot of clonking from the gears but the cap stayed put. Investigation revealed that the plummer block securing the inner end of the penultimate reduction drive to the curb had moved laterally, causing the gearwheels to jump out of mesh. This movement was caused by decay along a split in the horizontal oak bearer. We had examined this bearer last year, and having cut out enough wood to allow the hole to drain, we decided it was unlikely to fail anytime soon. How wrong we were! The movement could have been made worse by lateral pressure on the bearing as in places the cap is now tight on the tower.

Chris tied the runaway fantail after stopping it with a plank of wood, with the sails pointing approximately north-east. On February 18th Chris, Dave Pearce and I spent a day uncoupling the drive and removing the bearer. It is halved over two other



The new bearer fitted on March 7th

timbers, and secured by two coach screws, the lower portions of which proved impossible to extract. After much heaving, chiselling and sawing, the bearer came away in several pieces, complete with plummer block. Dave made a replacement in oak at the Wicken mill workshop, and re-set the plummer block, all exactly copying the old work. This was successfully fitted on March 7th. In view of the tightness of the hand winding we are considering greasing the rack on the curb to ease the pressure on the winding gear. (M.B.)

NEW BOOK OF HALLAM ASHLEY PHOTOGRAPHS

English Heritage has just published a splendid large format paperback entitled *Traditional Crafts and Industries in East Anglia*. It uses the documentary photography of the late Norfolk-based Hallam Ashley, mainly from the 1940's to the 1960's, to illustrate local trades and crafts. After an introduction about the man himself, there follows a series of full-page, dated black and white photographs of superlative quality. The section on milling also covers millwrighting, and features some lovely shots of people working, from Caleb Wright running the tail stones in Friston mill (1953) to Rex Wailes on the sails of Berney Arms (1948) and Edward Rackham stone dressing at Deben Mill (unfortunately misspelt 'Debden') at Wickham Market (1967). The book is good value at £16.99 and is a wonderful record of what already seems a distant age. (M.B.)

EVENTS

HERRINGFLEET WINDPUMP OPEN DAY: SUNDAY MAY 9th from 1-5pm

May 8th-9th is National Mills Weekend and as usual we'll be opening and running the windpump at Herringfleet. This is a unique chance to help in the operation of a common-sailed, hand-winded drainage mill, as prior to the sails turning we have to spend at least an hour in preparation. If any member wishes to lend a hand we would be delighted to see them at the mill from about 11.30am.

VISIT TO IMPINGTON SMOCK MILL: SUNDAY JUNE 6th from 2.30pm

Following Steve Temple's talk on repairs to the mill at our recent public meeting, we are delighted to have the chance to look round this fine mill. It is about half a mile north of the A14 at TL441624; turn off at the B1049 junction, and after a very short distance turn left off the B1049 and follow this road for about 400yds.

Our visit coincides with an open day at Wicken corn windmill, about 15 miles to the north-east, and members may like to combine the two.

2010 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

This will be held at Stanton post mill on the morning of Sunday July 18th. Further details will appear in the next newsletter.
