

SUFFOLK MILLS GROUP

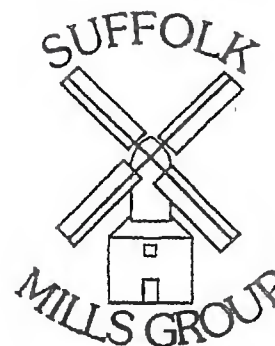
Newsletter

No.106

October 2010

www.suffolkmills.org.uk

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For various reasons the summer newsletter never materialised, and it's been over six months since the last issue, for which I must apologise. Unlike some mills groups, who have many active committee members, S.M.G. has struggled on with more or less the same small committee for many years, and we have never found a new secretary to replace Peter Dolman. Despite the encouraging attendance at the A.G.M. in July, nobody new put their name forward for the committee. This is a shame, for the Group is in good financial health and we possess a fine archive of notes and photographs of Suffolk's mills.

As I write, the government's Spending Review is looming, with obvious implications for mills, especially those owned or managed by local authorities. Thorpeness post mill is in the process of being sold by Suffolk County Council, and you can bet that other mill responsibilities will be high on their list for 'divestment'. Looking back in a few decade's time, the first few years of the 21st century may well be seen as the high point in mill preservation, boosted by cash handouts from the Lottery. Ultimately, unless more people can be encouraged to buy and repair mills, some are going to be lost, and whatever happens, compromises will be inevitable. The fate of mills such as Herringfleet – all wooden, in working order but relatively 'low tech' with common sails and tailpole, and maintained in working order by the County Council since the late 1950's – will be indicative of things to come. All the more reason to get out and enjoy turning sails and waterwheels while you can!

Forthcoming events are as follows. The next newsletter will appear in the New Year.

SMG social evening, Ipswich
SMG public meeting, Ipswich

Saturday November 27th
Saturday March 19th 2011

Mark Barnard

A MILL ON MY BACK Sue Burden

I expect some readers will be aware, or will have seen, my windmill back tattoo. With a feature of the 2009 SPAB Mills Section Spring meeting being 'A Mill on my Wall', I thought I would write about the mill on my back, as there are several windmill tales twined around it.

It shows Bocking windmill, in Essex. The mill itself, but not the sky around it, was done by Wally Poulton of Southminster (a tattooist who's well known to Essex tattoo buffs) in 1996-7. He lives and works opposite a windmill site – that of Cripplegate smock mill. It was a typical Essex smock mill with a broad tower and a large boat-shaped cap. It was demolished in 1929. Two bungalows stand on the site; one of these was once called 'Oude Molen' – 'Old Mill' in Dutch. No trace of the mill

remains – I looked at the site on Google Earth and Microsoft Virtual Earth. Wally told me that although he had sometimes done windmills in the background of tattoos of a fox hunt – quite a popular full back tattoo for men at one time – he had not done a tattoo of a windmill as such.

Bocking windmill shows quite a lot of Suffolk influence, such as large buck windows (once all sash) and a two storey roundhouse. It has had at least one pair of French burrs in the buck supplied by Bear. The roundhouse reminds me a lot of that of Girling's Mill, Sweffling, which was only built in 1901. The Bocking roundhouse was entirely rebuilt in 1898 when the mill had a pair of stones, made by Corcorans of Mark Lane, fitted to be driven by a portable steam engine. I assume before then, that the roundhouse would have been single storey with a steep pitched roof, like Mountnessing's – once a common roundhouse shape in Essex. Cut down portions of roundhouse wall remain built onto the piers, a brick width thick. There are gaps between these and the present roundhouse wall. The piers appear to have been raised by three courses when the roundhouse was rebuilt. This means the sails swing about four feet from the ground – not quite daisy cutters, but as far as I know, the mill did not have a roving stage. There is also a bit of a drop between the buck door threshold and the topmost step of the ladder. Unlike some Suffolk post mills, Bocking was unadorned (apart from the fox weathervane) – no fancy porch or coloured paintwork, except the biggest roundhouse window frame, which might have been green, and was possibly secondhand. Essex post mills were usually unadorned, unless you count a black roof and front like Mountnessing's, or a black stripe down the front of the buck like Aythorpe Roding's. About a fortnight before his death, Peter Dolman visited our mill. He looked at various details, took measurements and was quite impressed. His visit is worth an article in itself.

The sky around the mill and the millstones, done using a blue outline, were added in 2002 by Soham's tattooist, John Knappett. One of his regulars had been involved in the demolition of the base of Cobbin's Mill, on the Downham Road just north of Ely. This was big smock mill with a circular base, once a drainage mill, that was moved here. By the mid 1970's just the base was left; the cap was removed in the War and the mill must have deteriorated rapidly after that. The owner wanted it demolished, and this was done brick by brick. The mortar proved to be incredibly hard, and about two-thirds of the way through demolition, the work was given up. So that is why a fragment of the base was left, standing full height. It was still there in 2008, although in that year the mill house changed hands.

Eventually I plan to get open shutters and furled sailcloths on my windmill, but I shall be surprised if there are any windmilly yarns surrounding the third tattooist to work on it. I have not decided who will do it yet, but they must do fine lines.

MILLS ON THE MAP

This time we feature Otley post mill, which stood in the centre of the village. The photograph is taken from outside the Post Office on the corner, looking south-west, and as well as the mill it shows the two cottages immediately to the north and a later brick house to the north again. These can clearly be seen on the map (O.S. 25-inch of 1904, n.t.s.), which also marks the wooden guide post (G.P.) visible in the photograph just behind the hedge. The entrance drive to the mill can just be made out on the extreme left.

The mill, known as Davey's Mill, is said to have acquired its roundhouse late in life. The sails were removed in 1909 after serious damage, and the buck was taken down during World War One. Milling continued by suction gas plant and later

oil engine, and a new brick building was added onto the roundhouse. By the 1970's these buildings were derelict, and they were demolished in 1982 for new housing development.

WORK IN PROGRESS RESEARCHING A MEDIEVAL EAST SUFFOLK POST MILL Rick Osborn

In 1035 the manor of Worlingworth, near Eye, was given by Cnut, the king, to Bishop Aelfric who in turn gave it to the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds. Thereafter, the Abbot was the lord of that manor until the monasteries were dissolved by Henry VIII. For most of that period of half a millennium, one or more mills for the grinding of flour were maintained on the manor with the lord taking varying degrees of responsibility for them. Being staffed by literate monks, the record keeping was done well and Worlingworth has been favoured by the vagaries of time and chance so that it retains an unusually complete set of records for much of its history. Among these is a series of compotus rolls covering many years during the 14th and early 15th centuries which interestingly include the periods of the Black Death and the Peasants' Revolt.

Given that the Abbey was the owner of a large number of manors, it needed to take care in keeping track of the income and expenditure of each one to ensure that its inhabitants did not cheat the Abbey of its dues. The compotus rolls constitute what we would now call 'accounts' detailing how much was gained from the manor by, for instance, sale of produce and rents and how much was expended on maintaining the good repair of the manor's assets. The mills figure in these accounts in detailing income from their lease, if farmed out to an independent miller, or from the fees charged to people bringing their grain to be ground at the mill. In the latter case, payment was made in kind with the mill keeping a proportion of the grain brought to it. This source of income was protected by penalties exacted from any subjects of the manor who failed to take their grain to the mill. If the mill was being run directly by the manor then the latter had to pay for the repair and upkeep of the machine, up to and including its replacement, if wear and tear or catastrophic weather made that necessary. These costs of upkeep were typically recorded in a section of the expenditure part of the accounts called *custus molendini* – 'the costs of the mill'. Such sections typically itemise the parts of the mill which required repair or replacement in that year and the cost of each item and the work done on it. Given that there exist some continuous stretches of time for which the roll for each year survives, it is possible to get a picture of the maintenance schedule of the mill from which one can develop a reconstruction of the specific form of mill which existed there and gain some insight into which parts seem to have been most vulnerable to wear or failure and the intervals at which they required replacement. This is the current work in progress and I give below a brief summary of some of the findings so far and some of the problems yet to be solved.

Before doing so, a word on the languages in which these documents were written is in order. The base language is Latin but not in a form which would be particularly recognisable to anyone whose experience of that tongue were confined to the classical literature produced by Roman writers. Many of the words had come into currency long after the demise of the Empire; some of them had developed from non-standard dialects such as soldiers' slang. The grammar is very different from the classical form with word endings often omitted, indeed most Latin words are abbreviated, some to an extent that makes deducing the full word difficult. Word order is pretty well of an English form rather than the freer classical Latin one. Where the author's Latin vocabulary failed him, he used an English or Norman French word. Roman literature was almost exclusively produced by patrician authors who saw the concerns of trades people as beneath them and we therefore have little

idea how a Roman millwright named, say, a hopper. Such words in the medieval accounts come through in their English form: 'hoper' being a typical spelling. On the subject of spelling, although the Latin words are spelled fairly consistently, English had at that time not developed standard conventions and a variety of spellings for the same word are found. This is particularly the case where the word is, in fact, unknown to the writer and he has simply written what he has heard a smith or carpenter say to him. For instance the term 'windwall' is sometimes spelled just like that and at others: 'windewall' and even 'windewow'. This is but a brief account of the linguistic situation and is given simply to emphasise the difficulties and uncertainties surrounding drawing conclusions from the documents.

So, what have we learned so far? Firstly although there is evidence for there having been a watermill in Worlingworth at some point, by the time of the records which have survived in numbers – the early 14th century – the mill was a post mill. I say the mill but there is no firm evidence as to how many there were although there is circumstantial evidence to suggest that we are dealing with a single one. The post and its fixings show some features familiar from the evidence of 'modern' post mills but others which are less so. The main structure of the mill was positioned upon a single post which was supported at its base on two 'crostreen' which in turn stood upon a counter-base made from wood. The post was braced to the crosstrees by four 'poles' – presumably functioning as quarterbars. Thus far, apart from the wooden counter-base, all is familiar. However, unlike with later post mills, the entire base structure was buried by ramming earth to form a millmount around it so that probably only the top of the post was visible and what we now call the buck had its base much nearer the ground than in mills still visible today. Such an arrangement is well documented for the period in the work of Richard Holt and John Langdon and accords with the accounts of Flemish medieval mills given by Yves Coutant supported by a number of contemporary illustrations. A famous example is the picture which is part of a page decoration in the Luttrell Psalter widely reproduced on websites.

The mill was clearly clad in boards like a modern one and some of these were Estrichboard which was oak board imported from Norway or the Baltic. Since they were hand made, the nails which were used to attach the boards were relatively much more expensive than today's mass-produced types. Items like the *axis* – what we now call the windshaft – were shaped with axe and adze from a whole oak and therefore had a 'greater' and a 'lesser' end. Presumably the sails were attached to the big end since this would give greater leeway for mortising. The big end went through the 'windwall' which presumably, because of the strains upon it, was constantly in need of repair. The sails were, of course, at that time, made from cloth rigged upon a wooden frame. The cloth is sometimes specified as canvas made at that time from hemp: hence the name which comes from *cannabis*. There was of course no fantail and the mill had to be turned to wind by the miller using the tailpole which was associated with steps used to ascend to the mill door, which was furnished with a lock.

By far the most expensive single items in the mill were the stones. In 1368 a new stone cost 66 shillings and 8 pence, a sum equivalent to 200 days' wages for a carpenter. I know some chippies who might suggest that not much has changed since then! The cost would almost certainly have included a charge for quayage at the port of Ipswich. Stones were imported from either France or Germany. Expenses for the miller and two carters fetching the stone from the port are also recorded.

The vocabulary which enables us to draw the above conclusions is fairly easy to untangle. It is when we come to that pertaining to the details of mechanisms that things become more difficult. This is particularly so when it comes to things which seem to be parts of bearings of one sort or another. I list some of these below and invite any member who feels they could throw some light on the matter to contact me at rick.osborn@talktalk.net

Some structural parts which are not clearly definable are: 'stech' and 'ridstock'. 'Sykelyrenys' are attached with 'spykyngs' and seemed to be associated with the post.

The following are all made from iron and seem to be bearings or parts thereof associated with the ends of the windshaft: 'panne', 'plate', 'sole', 'halfpenny'. A halfpenny also seems to be used in relation to the post. The part which seems to be the most frequently in need of repair or replacement is the 'dagsho'. It seems to have been situated at the larger end of the windshaft and would thus take considerable strain and need frequent attention, but what exactly its nature was is something of a mystery. Any ideas would be gratefully received.

At the moment the entries in the accounts are being entered into a database to facilitate analysis with the objective of producing a more complete account in a few months time.

REPORT OF 2010 A.G.M.

The 2010 Annual General Meeting was held at Stanton post mill on Sunday July 18th. Thirty six members and friends attended. Apologies were received from Chris Armour, Sue Burden, John and Maureen Capps, Brian Flint, Rosy and Alex Hayward, Bob Malster, Bob Sharp, Peter Steggall, Alan Wallis and Alan Willmott.

Chris Hullcoop welcomed everyone crammed into the roundhouse and thanked Dominic and Linda Gixti for hosting the meeting. Mark Barnard read out the minutes of the 2009 A.G.M. (published in Newsletter 104) and this was accepted as a true record (proposed Trevor Scott, seconded Bob Paterson).

Treasurer Des Codd presented the accounts. Two grants had been made during the year, to Bardwell and Stanton mills. Interest from capital was down but a reasonable return was still being achieved. Expenditure for the year exceeded income by almost £400 but without grants for work to mills we were easily covering our costs. Total balances stood at £10,700. Dominic and Linda Gixti thanked the Group for the £500 grant for Stanton. Chris Hullcoop said money is available towards the cost of materials if any member wants to carry out repair work. The items for the cost of materials for the protection of the post of Eye mill was because the post, stored outside in Richard Seago's yard, needed re-covering. The work had not yet been done but the post is a fine one and could carry another buck. Des Codd was thanked and his report was accepted (proposed Chris Wilson, seconded Penny Berry).

Mark Barnard gave the editor's report. Two newsletters had been produced since the last A.G.M. Out of 30 pages, over 12 were devoted to news items, to keep members (especially those living outside Suffolk) informed about what's happening to the county's mills. Unfortunately the supply of articles was beginning to run dry, especially as the last instalment of the long-running *Reminiscences of a Country Miller* by Harold Hitchcock of Rattlesden Mills, had now appeared. Printing the newsletter had become more difficult as the 'cut and paste' method of assembly does not suit modern copying machines. The March issue was printed using a colour

copier on a monochrome setting to make the photographs reasonably clear. Brian Flint had indexed Newsletters 81-100 and this will be distributed when it is typed up. As this will mean we have three separate indexes, it would be useful to merge them into one. The report was accepted (proposed Dominic Gixti, seconded David Eddershaw).

In the absence of a secretary, Mark Barnard gave current membership numbers as 155 full, 2 complimentary and 10 newsletter exchange. There was still a slow decline in numbers, but overall membership compared favourably with many other mills groups. The report was accepted (proposed Janice Hedgecock, seconded Roy Berry).

Election of officers and other committee members followed. There were no nominations for new committee members so the existing committee was re-elected (proposed Dominic Gixti, seconded Enid Wheeler).

Chris Hullcoop said it would be nice to do more, but without more active members this would not be possible. David Wheeler thanked the Group for the £400 grant towards the new sails for Bardwell mill. He was hoping these would be fitted in August. Much work had been done inside the cap since the 1987 storm.

Bob Paterson said a comprehensive list of Suffolk mill sites is now on the Group's website. He would welcome feedback on the accuracy and completeness of this information, together with old photographs and up-to-date news of mills.

Recent visits organised by the Group had been poorly supported. David Eddershaw thought the visits were a good idea but people can't always get to them because of other commitments. It was agreed that visits would continue to be arranged.

The question of working parties on mills was discussed. Dominic Gixti said they would not be much help at Stanton as the work is mostly maintenance. There was a possibility of a working party at Thelnetham mill. Chris Hullcoop said the odd volunteer could be of help at Friston. Owners' attitudes to insurance is an issue. The days of large work-ins as at Ramsey and Thelnetham are gone – these needed a lot of planning.

The meeting concluded with a presentation on Suffolk mills in the news during 2009, illustrated with slides.

NEWS

NIALL ROBERTS

Niall Roberts, a loyal member of S.M.G., died this year. Living in Surrey he could not attend many meetings or visits but followed the fortunes of our mills through the newsletters.

He was an active member of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, the International Molinological Society and the Mills Research Group and wrote many papers and articles which were published in their journals.

I remember him on mill visits with notebook and pencil, recording intricate details of mill machinery. He was very interested in the way different solutions were found for the same milling problems, not only in Britain, but in mills all over the world. He was particularly fascinated by the great variety of mechanical solutions dealing with sack hoists and tentering.

Many years ago he joined us on a memorable week's holiday in Denmark. He was a well educated man (Trinity College, Dublin) and held a very senior post in the Civil Service. I well remember the look of horror on his face when our first lunch stop

was a pic-nic in a fly infested lay-by and he realised he was on a cut price holiday with a group of hard ups! On the same holiday we had to laugh when his special American Express card was refused at a restaurant! Usually looking at life from a Catholic point of view, he was happy to grant us absolution!

Sometimes we never quite knew if what he was proposing were his true thoughts on how restoration should be made or if he was playing 'devil's advocate' to ensure a debate and thorough analysis of the facts.

We shall miss Niall's keen observation of mill details not seen by most of us and his theories on their functions delivered very precisely in that distinctive 'posh Dublin' accent. (C.H.)

BARDWELL SAIL LIFT 2010

On 12th August 2010 a mobile crane installed a new stock and pair of sails at Bardwell windmill, completing a significant stage in the restoration of the mill to full working order. The previous set of sails, put up in the mid 1980's, were destroyed during the Great Storm of 15th-16th October 1987 and the mill once again carries sails after a gap of nearly 23 years.

The mill is fortunate to be supported by a very active Friends group which includes many villagers. The new sails and striking gear were made on site by Jonathan Wheeler, assisted by members of the Wheeler family, regular volunteers David Coe and Tim Cavell and millwright Adam Marriott. Some of the new metalwork was made by Michael Garrod of Thelnetham.

Jonathan is a skilled mechanical engineer and his first job was to overhaul the winding gear of the cap which had not worked properly since its installation in 2002. It was necessary to re-position and re-fix all of the truck wheels attached to the underside of the cap frame after first levelling the frame in relation to the curb – a difficult job to complete with the cap in situ.

The cast iron curb sections had been designed to be laid with their ends almost touching, but instead had been fitted with a 1/8th inch spacer between the

joints. Each of the curb plates had to be lifted, brought inboard by a few fractions of an inch and then re-fixed, closing the gaps between the sections and correcting the pitch of the toothed ring to allow the final drive pinion to mesh correctly once again.

Additional tie rods have now been fitted to stiffen the cap frame assembly and the centring wheels have been overhauled and re-installed. New, substantial, adjustable brackets were manufactured by Michael. These enable each centring wheel to be independently adjusted to achieve the minimum clearance relative to the curb, allowing the cap to be truly centred over the tower.

The fantail gearing – specifically the final drive to the curb – was overhauled. A new final drive pinion and intermediate gears were needed to allow the fantail to turn the cap effectively. Fortunately, the mill is a relatively short one so a temporary scaffold tower was erected, anchored firmly through the windows of the tower, to allow the gearing beneath the fan stage to be reached in safety. The fantail gearing now operates like clockwork and, with the fan disconnected, the cap can also be hand-winded very easily.

Before the sails could be installed, the brakewheel and great spurwheel were re-wedged to their respective shafts and checked for concentricity.

The sails are large eight-bay double-shuttered patents spanning approximately 65 feet. They have the distinctive local weather angles of 26 degrees at the root (inner end) and 15 degrees at the point (outer end). The sails have been made and painted under a temporary cover in the mill yard and occupied a lot of space. With a cherry picker and mobile crane in position there was little extra room for manoeuvre!

Despite an unexpected downpour there was little wind and the lifting operation ran smoothly. Many of the shutters had been removed from the sails but a small number had been left in place to hold the front striking gear in position. Jonathan and co. had made plywood templates of the poll end boxes (which are slightly larger than those on the original shaft) to ensure the stock fitted correctly.

One sail and both poll end clamps remained bolted to the stock when it was lifted and threaded through the inner box of the poll end. The sail and stock were slung and hoisted close to the position of the third sail bar to achieve a suitable angle of flight. Once four pairs of folding wedges had been fitted to hold the stock in position, the clamps were tightened and the second sail was then lifted and bolted into place.

The third lift of the day was the striking rod. After much discussion during previous weeks, it was decided to make the rod in two pieces, with a short removable section at the rear end, and to thread the main length of rod through the windshaft from the front once the sails had been fitted. With the striking rod in place, the repaired striking chain wheel with its shaft and pinion was lifted up and secured in its bearings.

Later, the backstays were fitted to brace the sail frames to the stock and the striking gear was connected up and tested. All was completed in time for the village's annual threshing event on Sunday 15th August when the sails turned majestically in the breeze in front of a large crowd of visitors. (Luke Bonwick)

TIDE MILL PLAN NEW LOTTERY BID

Woodbridge Tide Mill Trust intends to make another approach to the HLF for funding later this year. This follows an unsuccessful bid in 2008 (see Newsletter 102). In June a Stage 1 grant of £13,000 was secured towards preparing the new bid, which will have to focus on how the local community would be more involved in

the future. To help achieve this, and to assist with fund-raising, the Friends of Woodbridge Tide Mill has been re-launched. Although there were hopes of scaling-back the size of the bid, inflation and the VAT increase has meant that it will be for around £970,000, against a total project cost of £1.2M. Efforts to secure the matched funding are now being made. Assuming all goes to plan, a decision from the HLF is expected by March 2011. (M.B.)

SPROUGHTON MILL CONVERSION UNDER WAY

After a troubled history in recent years, the future of Sproughton watermill seems assured following the sale of the property last year and the approval by Babergh District Council in June of the fine detail of a residential conversion scheme. As reported in Newsletter 100, the second floor is being removed owing to the limited headroom, and new structural floors will be built directly over the first and third floors, which will remain in place but not be load bearing. The lucam, originally proposed for replacement in replica, will be repaired. Work is now in progress, with completion due early in 2011. No machinery survives. (M.B.)

EXCAVATION OF CODDENHAM MILL SITE

In April-May this year, the Suffolk Archaeological Field Group carried out excavation of the site of Coddenham's two former windmills, the last being a post mill demolished in 1909 (see Newsletter 100). The aim was to see if this was the site of a known medieval mill. The excavation exposed fragments of the two mills on the site in the 18th and 19th centuries, but the site had been trashed during the erection and demolition of these mills, leaving no evidence of earlier occupation. (M.B.)

THORPENESS POST MILL

In the last newsletter we reported on the deteriorating condition of Thorpeness mill, and the County Council's plans to sell it. The mill was marketed by Savills during the early part of the summer (with a guide price of £150,000), and got quite a bit of publicity. It is understood a sale is now proceeding. Unfortunately, no repairs have been carried out, and it may well be necessary to do further weatherproofing to prevent water ingress, especially onto the brakewheel, before the coming winter. (M.B.)

TRICKER'S MILL TO BE SOLD?

The tower of Tricker's Mill close to the centre of Woodbridge is a relatively little known but important survivor. Built in 1818, it is the county's oldest tower mill and now the only Suffolk windmill in a true urban setting. The cap and last two sails were removed in 1957, and after very nearly being demolished (see Newsletter 4), the tower was incorporated into a local authority sheltered housing scheme in 1975. The ground floor was converted to a common room and the first floor to a bedroom for visitors (later becoming an office). In complete contrast, the stone, bin and dust floors above remained undisturbed, with two pairs of millstones and auxiliary drives, together with the cap frame and curb. This solution has worked well, giving the tower a use but safeguarding the surviving machinery

Suffolk Heritage Housing Association, the mill's owners, has now obtained planning permission to use the ground and first floors of the tower as a self-contained dwelling. There is very little change to the converted floors, and though we have some concern about the amount of replacement proposed to make good the bin and dust floors (damaged by leaks), this work will be controlled by a condition on

the permission. It is also proposed to carry out minor repairs to the tower, and remove the uPVC windows.

It seems likely that the mill will be sold in the near future – a rare chance to acquire an important mill in the heart of one of Suffolk's most attractive towns. (M.B.)

HOLTON POST MILL

On August Bank Holiday Monday, Mark Barnard and I held an open day at the post mill at Holton near Halesworth, one of the mills maintained by the County Council.

There was concern over a few small holes in the felt covering of the roundhouse roof so I took along some mastic and a few offcuts of felt. Close examination revealed the felt was really beyond patch-up repair, having been on the roof some 40 years. We patched a few holes and splits until the felt and mastic we had taken ran out (see photograph below).

The roundhouse roof at Holton is small, shallow, close to the ground and easily reached to work on. We were soon wondering if we could fit a new layer of felt. The old felt is quite smooth and it could be random nailed to the boards and then in the approved manner a second layer could be bonded to it. This could be done in two days given fine weather.

Around 20 people visited the mill, so we asked most of them if they would be prepared to help the mill next summer. We were pleasantly surprised by the number who said they would and left their names and numbers. It goes to show that there is usually goodwill and help for an old mill, but the critical factor is management and leadership. If this is not there, the potential of this goodwill can never be realised.

The County Council is responsible for maintenance at Holton mill under a 50-year lease which expires in 2016. We hope the County Council will find the money to fit new felt to the roundhouse roof next year, but if they can't then it is possibly a job that could be tackled by volunteers.

Today it seems that whenever I visit many Suffolk mills I find leaks, damage and often urgently needed repairs which are not likely to be done. Now nearly 70, should I continue to volunteer to help? (C.H.)

PAKENHAM WATERMILL: NEW DEVELOPMENTS AND OLD PROBLEMS

In the early part of this year a number of improvements were carried out to the Millers House. The front porch was redesigned and a new brick path laid along the whole frontage of the house and mill, in place of uneven ground along the road edge that visitors previously had to walk over to get to the entrance. We now have a much improved and safer access for both wheelchair users and other visitors. At the same time new toilets were installed in the house including full disabled facilities.

The Millers House, with its restored kitchens showing something of the domestic life of the millers in the past, and its shop and ever-popular tearoom, has added a new dimension for visitors to the mill. Our visitor figures are up on last year, and so is income from flour sales to local shops, farmers markets and bakers. All this is achieved with a team of volunteers who are certainly feeling the strain! We are at present sourcing new supplies of good quality local-grown milling wheat but, as we all know, prices for the 2010 harvest have seen a huge increase over the 2009 level.

Not all news is good, however. There is still seepage of water from the millpond in spite of two previous attempts to remedy the problem. Further investigation is underway. Whatever solution the experts come up with, it is likely to be expensive! Meanwhile, in addition to this we are also faced with the need to replace the buckets on the hundred year-old waterwheel. Tenders and grant applications are being considered at the moment. (David Eddershaw)

NEW PUBLICATIONS

S.M.G. member John Orbell has written a splendid new guide to **Bardwell windmill**, including an extensive commentary on the social and economic history of milling in the parish and wider community. The story is brought up to date by a photograph of new sails under construction earlier this year. This is not a technical guide, although brief details of the machinery are given in an appendix. The guide is very well produced with excellent illustrations, and is available price £3 from the mill.

Buckinghamshire County Council has recently published an A4 format softback on **Brill windmill** (which the Council owns), by Luke Bonwick. Subtitled 'The History, Technology, Conservation and Repair of a 17th Century Post Mill', it is based on research informing the repairs completed last year. The structure and machinery are subjected to archaeological level analysis, to piece together how the mill changed over time, from its late 17th century origins to the various repairs of the 20th century. The latest repairs are then described, together with the justification for them. When so many mills have suffered in the past from the needless renewal of historic components, it is encouraging to read here that a decision was taken (although not without dissent) to retain the 1960's steel reinforcement of the frame, allowing decayed original timbers to remain in place.

The book is superbly illustrated with photographs and drawings, including complete elevations of the timber frame. It must rank as one of the most in-depth studies of an individual windmill ever published, and provides a model for similar research into other mills. It is available through the Mills Archive (www.millsarchivetrust.org) price £12 plus £3.50 postage. (M.B.)

WINDMILL MODEL MAKER

I came across this fellow last year. He is aged about 80 and makes windmills as a hobby and sells them: small (£95), medium (£150) and large (£250). They are fibreglass sheet, and Ronseal-protected timber if brown, painted weatherboarding otherwise, with ball bearings on the main sail shaft and cap-fantail to follow the wind. The model maker is Mr C Ling, 48 Westhall, Stradbroke, Eye IP21 5HP (telephone 07904 586740). (Ian Anderson)

HERRINGFLEET WINDPUMP

We have held just two open days at Herringfleet this year. On National Mills Sunday (May 9th) we were blessed with fair weather and a good breeze and the mill ran well. The second day on September 26th turned out to be a bad choice, with squally showers giving way to persistent rain later in the afternoon. At least there was some wind, and blowing from the north-east it meant we didn't have to heave the cap round very far (it is always left facing north because of the lightning conductor earth point).

Although still in working order, the mill's condition is beginning to cause concern. Both stocks are decayed inside the canister, the inner one being the worst; there is also decay in the clamps and whips, although mainly confined to sapwood. Chris Hullcoop had planned to do work this summer to extend the life of the sails, but there has not been time. The mill has not been tarred for ten years and some of the wood is now bare. At the last open day we noticed that part of the brick plinth had dropped away from the smock frame, suggesting localised failure of the foundations (probably timber piles): this will be monitored but is potentially of concern. There is local support for the mill, but whether this can be galvanised into action is uncertain. (M.B.)

FLATFORD MILL TO GENERATE ELECTRICITY

The National Trust, owners of Flatford Mill, plan to install a hydro power generation system in the former wheelpit. This will take the form of an archimedian screw, 3.4m long by 2m diameter, with a small generator enclosed in a boarded

building at the upper end. Three new sluices will be installed to control the water intake, and the visible (i.e. above water level) remains of the former waterwheel control sluice will be retained and repaired. To fit the screw, some alteration to the base of the wheelpit will be necessary, although in general disturbance to the historic fabric and environment of this Grade I building will be kept to a minimum. The scheme is designed to provide a capacity of 10kW, and predicted annual output is some 46,000kWh. Power will be used on site, with any surplus exported to the Grid. (M.B.)

MILLS FOR SALE

Peter Sellers once advertised his car: *Distinguished car seeks new owner*. Several Suffolk mills are likely to be for sale in the next few months and years. The current financial crisis is forcing some local authorities to give up their care of old mills. Without good private ownership our precious mills will soon become in that chilling phrase 'Beyond economic repair'. If they don't find owners, who will care for them? Will it be better to record them with photographs and measured drawings and then allow demolition? Otherwise we will only have to watch with anguish their neglect and slow decline into dereliction.

Please let us know, with your name and contact details, if you are at all interested in owning a mill. We can then keep you informed of any for sale. (C.H.)

BOOKLETS ON FINNISH MILLS

We have spare copies of two short Newcomen Society papers given by Rex Wailes on Finnish mills, one on post mills and the other on hollow post mills. They are illustrated with drawings and photographs. Available for a donation to the Group. Please contact the Editor.

EVENTS

S.M.G. SOCIAL EVENING: SATURDAY NOVEMBER 27th from 7.30pm; at THE QUAKER MEETING HOUSE, FONNEREAU ROAD, IPSWICH

This year's social evening will again be held at the Quaker Meeting House in the centre of Ipswich, which has proved a convenient and comfortable venue. There will be a selection of mill-related DVD's and/or slides to enjoy, together with food and drink. All this will be supplied, although contributions would as always be welcomed. We look forward to a good turnout to match the recent AGM!

S.M.G. PUBLIC MEETING

Next year's winter meeting will be on the evening of Saturday March 19th. The main speaker will be Bob Malster, on 'Suffolk Mills, Millers and Millwrights'. Further details will be given in the next newsletter.
