

# SUSSEX INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY SOCIETY

incorporating SUSSEX MILLS GROUP

Registered Charity No. 267159

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NEWSLETTER No. 91

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JULY '96

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Mysterious structure - conclusion.

Lost Mills of Sussex - Sutton Mill, Seaford

The Hundred of Manhood & Selsey Tramway

Sussex Mills Group News

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## PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES - End 1996

**Saturday August 3rd**

Mills Tour starting at Ifield Water Mill, Crawley  
at 10-30am Contact P. Pearce 01903 241169

**Saturday September 21st**

Visit to the De LaWarr Pavilion and Brede  
pumping engines. Meet in the foyer of the  
Pavilion at 11-00am.  
Contact Ron Martin 01273 271330

**Thursday October 3rd**

Visit to King & Barnes brewery, Horsham.  
Numbers limited to 30. **Booking essential.**  
Cheques payable to SIAS for £4-00 per person  
to Peter Holtham, 12, St Helens Crescent, Hove,  
BN3 8EP *not later than 11th September*. Meet in  
the brewery yard at 7-30pm prompt.

(continued on back page)

## MYSTERIOUS STRUCTURE AT DEVIL'S DYKE - CONCLUSION

In the January Newsletter I published a drawing and description of the "mysterious" structure at Devil's Dyke. Since that date I have received further information which suggests that it was used during WWI to store bombs which were being tested by dropping from the Aerial Cableway which crossed Devil's Dyke. This was erected in 1894 and operated until 1909 so was probably still extant in wartime. There are four items of evidence relating this structure to WWI use:

1. "The remains [of the Aerial Cableway] were used as target practice during the First World War when 50lb Cooper bombs were detonated"<sup>1</sup>
2. The father of the present owner of Devil's Dyke Farm knew this building as the "Bomb House" when he used to play there in the 1920s.<sup>2</sup>
3. Mr. P.Gilson remembers his father describing how bombs were dropped from the centre of the Aerial Cableway, their release being tripped by a stop on the cable. At the time he was employed at the Dyke as a bricklayer by a firm of building contractors Fields (which later became Field and Cox)
4. Mr. Fred Grant senior "...recalls the Army testing bombs during the First World War testing bombs in the Dyke by dropping them from a cable...."<sup>3</sup>

Apart possibly from (2) above there is no direct link between the testing of bombs and the building under investigation and if it were built for this purpose its location would seem to be illogical. However if it was placed at the north end of the cableway it would have been close to the Devil's Dyke Hotel and if at the south end, close to the Club House of the Dyke Golf Course. Furthermore the land on which it was built belonged to the Crown Estates during WWI so it could have been built without any consultation.

Thus, the evidence does seem to suggest that it was used during WWI, but this does not mean that it was necessarily built for this purpose. If it was built as a Bomb Store the walls would probably have been thicker, there would probably have been a blast wall across the entrance and there would have been a light roof probably of curved corrugated iron. The nature of the structure, the fact that it never had a roof, the possible lining of the internal walls and the "ticket office" in the corner all seem to point towards its erection before the war and its original use as an observation platform as I originally postulated. The fact that it was not shown on the 1914 Edition of the 6" O.S. Map is not conclusive evidence that it was not built before 1914. As it was definitely not shown on the 1909 Edition of the 1:2500 O.S.

map this would place its construction some time between 1909 and 1914.

References:

1. P. CLARK, *The Railways of Devil's Dyke*, (1976), 51
2. Mr. WILLIAMS, Sen., in telephone conversation with R.G.Martin (1996)
3. JOHN BATTEN, "Devil's Dyke", *West Sussex Gazette*, 28.06.1973

RON MARTIN

## **Balcombe Viaduct & Clayton Tunnel**

After many years of debate and rumour about maintenance of the viaduct, work has at last started in repairing the crumbling masonry and brickwork which is being replaced and strengthened. The viaduct which is 500 metres (1475 feet) long was built in 1842 to carry the London to Brighton twin tracks over the river Ouse. Now it is a listed building with its 37 arches and 20 million bricks and a triumph of Victorian engineering. The wonder is that it has withstood the pounding of the modern railway system for over 150 years.

The contract to repair the structure has been placed with Geoffrey Osbourne of Chichester and will be carried out on four stages during each of the summer months of the next four years. This is due to the dangers of working 100 feet up on the parapets in winter weather.

On the same line work is now completed in refurbishing the Tunnel Cottage over the north entrance to Clayton Tunnel. This is now available to rent. It was built in 1836 as a wages centre for workers toiling to dig the tunnel and used as a home since 1841. Contact Railtrack for information concerning renting the property.

JN COX

## **CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NEWSLETTER**

These are always welcomed, particularly if they are on 3.5" floppy disc, thus saving fingers! Word, Works, Word Perfect, or Text formats can be used, but please include a hard copy - just in case!

Bob Allen, 7, Heathfield Road, SEAFORD, E. Sussex BN25 1TH

## THE SUSSEX RAILWAYS OF COLONEL STEPHENS

### 2 The Hundred of Manhood and Selsey Tramway

The Selsey peninsular lying to the south of Chichester was originally an island and then formed part of the Hundred of Manhood (main wood) i.e. it was originally part of a huge forest. It was, and still is, primarily an agricultural and sparsely populated area except for the post war development at Selsey.

By the end of the nineteenth century, improvements in communications between Chichester and Selsey were mooted, with The Selsey Railway and Pier Act of 1888 which would have provided a connection to the LBSCR at Chichester and terminated with a pier for steamers, near the coastguard station at Selsey. Capital required was £75,000 but the scheme was not proceeded with. In 1895 a simpler scheme omitting the pier, estimated at £21,000 was proposed but this too run into difficulties, probably with local landowners, until it emerged again at a meeting attended by city worthies at the Dolphin Hotel, Chichester, on the 11th March 1896. From this meeting, the Hundred of Manhood and Selsey Tramways Company Limited was formed, which being a tramway was not subject to the Light Railway Act, but had therefore to make inconvenient detours by skirting fields and running through farms to get a right of way, with a capital of £12,000. Later demands raised this to £21,500.

H.F. Stephens was appointed Engineer in January 1897. The contractors, Messrs. Mancktelow Bros. of Horsmonden Kent, previously used by Stephens on the Rye and Camber Tramway, undertook to lay the permanent way within four months following the delivery of the materials. They were presumably also responsible for the station building, as they were of the same corrugated iron sheet on wooden frames as used on the Rye and Camber. The line opened for traffic on the 27th August 1897 It was 7 miles long (stopping initially short of Selsey Town Station). The following year a half mile extension took the line to Selsey beach. An inauspicious start to line's career was made with the first train arriving an hour late for the inaugural journey from Chichester with three coaches of which only two could be accommodated at the platform. The lines prospectus had stated "it is not intended or desired to run trains at express speeds" a statement which proved all too true in the years to follow. In 1898 a "Railway Magazine" reporter noted after arriving forty minutes late at Selsey & fifteen minutes after the train was advertised to return, "I am told that originally the Company did not state the arrival times of trains, I am rather surprised that they do so now, it is an overbold stroke of policy".

The line prospered until about 1920 indeed in 1913 powers were sought for a Light Railway Order for a branch from Hunston to West Itchenor and East Wittering with a 200 foot long pier at West Itchenor. The first world war intervened and the powers lapsed in 1921. The line continued to operate without parliamentary powers until January 1924 when application was made under the little used Railway Construction Facilities Act of 1864 for a change of name to the "West Sussex Railway - Selsey Tramway Section. More importantly this empowered the ailing line to enter into negotiation with the newly created Southern Railway with regard to re-construction, working and management of the line, having been left out of the 1923 grouping. The Southern Railway were not interested and with increasing bus competition passenger traffic decreased from 102,292 in 1919 to 13,416 in 1931, when a receiver was appointed. By November 1934 there was only one train per y each way and on the 19th January 1935 the service was "suspended until further notice". Shortly after the line's assets were disposed of for scrap.

There were eleven stations on the seven mile line and today some 60 years after closure the course of the line can still be largely followed. (a recommended excursion). The Chichester terminus was situated to the south of the LBSCR station behind Terminus Road opposite the canal basin. There was a single track connection between the two Companies but neither Companies' locomotives were allowed on the others metals. On leaving the terminus in a westwards direction a sharp curve was negotiated, before crossing Terminus Road across land which is now covered by factories, and then over Stockbridge Road. Here the line continued along the present footpath and then along the west bank of the canal, which was crossed by a bridge at Hunston. This lifting bridge was built and owned by Chichester City Council who charged the tramway £2 per annum. When it required to be opened for small sea going vessels, which during the time the tramway was operating were horse drawn from Birdham lock to Chichester basin, five men were needed for the operation which included the removal of fish plates. The concrete abutments remain. From the south side of the bridge a footpath follows the course of the railway to the site of Hunston Station which was situated to the south of the in road to Selsey.

Hoe Farm Halt was a private "station" for the local farmer/landowner with no building but Chalder some mile further on was the standard corrugated iron and timber framed structure. The next stop was Mill Pond Halt North Sidlesham. Sildlesham was the site of a tide mill erected in 1755 with eight pairs of stones. It lost its source of natural power in 1876 with the reclamation of Pagham Harbour but continued working until 1906 using steam power. The building collapsed around 1920 but the foundations are still visible. On December 15th 1910 there was a catastrophic flood which inundated 2,000 acres of the reclaimed land in one hour, flooding the line to a depth of 12 feet. A replacement service was provided by a stagecoach, a portent of things to come! At this date the Company was prosperous

enough to pay for a mile long embankment 15 feet high on which the track was re-laid. The corrugated station building was placed at right angles to the track facing the road and never replaced on the reconstructed platform. The hump where the road was raised and the embankment are still there.

Ferry Station, opened on the 1st August 1898, was situated where the track crossed the main road on a very dangerous (and still dangerous) blind bend. With no gates and increasing motor traffic, it is not surprising there were several accidents here in the latter years.

Golf Club Halt, a private "station" for members, was the site of a major derailment on the 3rd September 1923, when the fireman of the locomotive was killed. Although the inquest verdict was accidental death, the Chief Engineer (Stephen) was held indirectly to blame as there was evidence of neglect in the upkeep of the track. One jurymen declared it was possible within 200 yards of the accident, to lift out bolts supposedly holding rails to the sleepers.

Selsey Bridge Station was situated in a cutting near the present police house but has been completely obliterated. A siding just north of the station served the Trojan brickworks. Another brickworks had sidings south of the canal bridge at Hunston.

Selsey Town Station was situated opposite and to the north of the present "Stargazer" public house, originally the "Railway Arms". Chichester and Selsey Stations were the only ones with any form of illumination, both being lit by gas supplied from local gas works. There was a small goods shed and transport of produce, and in the early days the Pullinger patent mousetrap, provided an important income to the Company; of the total receipts of £2,400 in 1933, £1,800 was for carriage of goods. The loco shed with facilities for six engines was also sited here.

Up to 1912, a half mile extension to the east beach operated at least in summer.

The Company only ever bought one new locomotive "Selsey" in 1897. The other locomotive used at the line's opening, "Chichester", was acquired in 1897 but built in 1847. Various other decrepit locomotives between 20 and 40 years old were used at various periods in the line's existence. Carriages fared slightly better, three being purchased new for the opening and a further one in 1900. Seven second-hand carriages were obtained between 1910 and 1916, the time of the line's greatest prosperity.

Because of the poor condition of the locomotives and in a bid to reduce operating costs, Stephens pioneered the use of rail cars, these were basically lorry/bus chassis with flanged wheels and a body with longitudinal wooden seats. They ran as pairs

with often an open wagon for goods and luggage coupled in between. Only the leading vehicle was used as motive power the rear one being towed dead. It was noted by one traveller like, being "transported in an oil drum leaving one with a continual ringing in the ears, the stench of petrol in the nostrils and an extremely sore behind". The first set was supplied by Wolseley Siddley in 1921 followed in 1923 by a set from Edmunds of Thetford using a Ford Model T chassis and finally in 1928 two Shefflex sets.

H.F Stephens died in 1931 and did not live to see the final ignominious years of an undertaking that had started so full of hope.

*To be continued*

Further reading: -

The Selsey Tramways by Edward Griffith 1974

Branch Line to Selsey K Smith & V Mitchell Middleton Press

*The first article in this series "The Rye and Camber Tramway can be found in Newsletter No 81 January 1994*

Council for Kentish Archaeology

THE LATER DEFENCES OF KENT

SATURDAY 9th NOVEMBER 1996 (2.00 - 5.30 pm)

CHRIST CHURCH COLLEGE NORTH HOLMES ROAD, CANTERBURY

A focus on the Defence of Britain project with a review of Kent's defences from Tudor times to the 20th century.

\* with bookstalls and displays & illustrated-lectures \*

Introduction: The Defence of Britain Project- *Major Jim Earle ;Imperial War Museum*

Kent's Defensive Tradition - *Andrew Saunders .(Defence historian)*

19th Century Defences in Kent - *David Burridge(Kent Defence Res. Group)*

Air Defences of Kent in World War II- *Dr Colin Dobinson (CBA.)*

Cold War Defences in Kent - *Victor Smith (Kent defence historian)*

TICKETS Price £2.00 Payable C.K.A.:sae, please, 5, Harvest Bank Road, West Wickham, Kent. BR4 9DL

## "Solitary and Sublime Grandeur" - The Beachy Head Lights

1839 Eastbourne Some workmen with large quantities of paint were landed here a few days since to paint the Belle Tout lighthouse on the outside; the granite with which the lighthouse is built having a tendency to attract the lightning."

Although a licence was granted for a light at Beachy Head in 1664<sup>1</sup> the Belle Tout light was not erected until 1831 by Stephenson. It was paid for by 'mad' Jack Fuller the Brightling squire and ironmaster. It replaced a temporary structure erected in 1828, the new light tower being of Aberdeen granite. One source notes that the blocks were brought by ox teams from Maidstone!<sup>2</sup>

There is evidence of Belle Tout being in occupation since 3000BC although much of the earthwork has been lost to coastal erosion. As late as 1833 Parry notes that the light was on a projecting neck of land. The light is now a house, the lantern being removed some time since.<sup>3</sup> It was replaced by a framed glass structure for the BBC filming of 'The Life and Loves of a She-Devil'.

Cliff subsidence, mist and fog all contributed to its demise and a replacement light was located at sea level at the foot of Beachy Head which soars 575 feet (175 metres) above it. - 100 feet higher than the Great Pyramid of Egypt.<sup>4</sup>

Built of Cornish granite, 3660 blocks 4 - 5 tons each, the foundations sink 18 feet down into the chalk platform. The light is 142 feet high (43m); 47 feet diameter at the base (14m) and 22 feet diameter at the top (6.7m). The blocks were conveyed from the cliff top by ropeway and completion came in 1902.<sup>5</sup>

The light was a Hood petroleum vapour burner, giving 510,000 candlepower. The light revolves in one minute with 2 flashes every 20 seconds. The fog explosive gives one report every 5 minutes. The light is visible between 16 - 20 miles.<sup>6</sup>

### References:-

- 1 *Brighton Gazette* 22 08 1839 p3  
*Kiplings Sussex revisited* 1929 R Thurston-Hopkins p119
- 2 *Buildings of England - Sussex* 1961 I. Nairn & N. Pevsner p412  
*Red Guide Eastbourne* 1960's ? P412  
*handy: Guideto Kent & Sussex Coast 1863, J.D.Chambers* p132
- 3 *South East to 1000AD* 1988 P. Drewett et al  
*Coast of Sussex 1833 J.D. Parry* p211



- 4 *Red Guide p49*  
*Parry p209*
5. *Red Guide p49*

GEOFFREY MEAD



## SUSSEX MILLS GROUP



### News from the secretary.

*Saturday 3rd August 1996. Mills Tour starting at Ifield Water Mill, Crawley, at 10.30 am. Contact P. Pearce on 01903 244169.*

*Sunday 6th October 1996. Mills Group Meeting starting at 2.30pm at Barnham Mill, Yapton Road, Barnham. Subjects that I hope to discuss are insurance, National Lottery money and subjects of your choice.*

### NATIONAL MILLS DAY

This went off well for most mills with good attendance reported. The Argus did us well and helped those in the Brighton Area to increase their numbers.

### NEWS OF MILLS.

*Stone Cross. Working parties continue with clearing the area around the mill and the erection of fencing which has caused problems with S. Hall.*

*Nutley - work is in hand with fitting a new tail pole.*

*Outwood - Following the death of the last of the brothers who owned the mill, his widow Mrs Thomas is continuing to open the mill to the public.*

*Park Mill- Batemans - is now back grinding corn and the turbine is being examined with a view to use.*

*Jill - two sweeps were been removed on 18th May for ease of refurbishment at ground level.*

**West Blatchington** - *lay shafting pulleys and belting to link up with the auxiliary drive have been installed. These are non-operational and for display only. Also a model of High Salvington windmill has been put on display and illuminated for the benefit of visitors-*

**Lowfield Heath** - *Work continues with the flooring of the stone floor and start mad on the round house floor. Work is also in hand by P.James preparing drawings and specifications for work with lottery money-*

**High Salvington.** *The grain bins have been rebuilt but there has been no grinding this year due to lack of wind. ( In fact 200kg of corn was ground on June 7th 1996). Planning application has been made successfully for a building at the far end of the site to be used as a shop and toilets.*

**Ifield Steam Mill** - *This recently had an open day after its refurbishment as a craft centre. The owner of the mill also hopes to expose the site of Ifield post mill..*

**Punnets Town** - *The new owners are spending some time at the mill painting.*

**Rottingdean** - *Repair work is in hand.*

**Michelham Priory Mill** - *Work started on 12th May 1995 with dismantling the waterwheel in preparation for the major repairs to the mill. A.Mitchell from Park Mill, Batemans is to give training to stewards from Michelham at Park Mill..*

**Barnham Mill.** - *Following trouble there with the owner of the adjacent house it was put up for sale and I understand that Barry Lee the owner of the mill has raised the finance to buy the house and that contracts have been exchanged. This is good news for the mill as there was a serious problem there which should now be resolved.*

**Arthur Foord Hughes.**- *Members will, I am sure, be familiar with the paintings of windmills by Arthur Foord Hughes and some fortunate enough to have a copy of Walkers Quarterly for 1930 that shows some of his paintings. Having recently had the opportunity to study this book I am surprised at the output of his work. Before I start a detailed study of the man and his work, has anybody studied his work in depth ? Please contact me if you have as it could save me valuable time.*

**A Consolidated Glossary of British Mill Terms.** - Tony Yoward has compiled this glossary and there are nearly 2.000 items defined and includes as well as corn mills some for paper, gunpowder and flint mills. Price £4-50 plus p&p from Tony. ( if anybody has seen this and would like to write a review of it then please let me have it for the next newsletter.)

## MRG CONFERENCE 1996

The Mills research Group, an offshoot of the Wind and Watermill section of the SPAB, is holding its annual conference at Polegate windmill on Saturday 5th October. Interested members of the Sussex Mills Group would be most welcome. Papers are presented and discussed. Proceedings of the previous 13 conferences ave all been published. Papers for this year have been promised by Frank Gregory on the Mills of East Sussex, R. Hawksley on West Ashling combined wind and watermill, and by other members on Cambridgeshire drainage mills and their millwrights, mills on village signs, the 1884 millstone v cylinder trials held in France , and agricultural wind engines.

The cost will be £10 per person, including ploughman's lunch, coffee and tea and contributions to local mills to be visited, using own transport, on the following day, Sunday 6th October : Stone Cross Windmill, and Cross in Hand, by kind permission of the owners.

For further details of the conference send an SAE to Michael Harverson, 125 Parkside Drive, Watford, Herts. WD1 3BA.

Don Cox has copies of the MRG constitution, history, and publications list for any interested Sussex Mills Group member.

MICHAEL HARVERSON

he following has come to me via Peter Pearce and is written by a 15 year old mill enthusiast from Hertfordshire while on a visit to Sussex. We could do with more of this kind of note. Any volunteers ?

EARNLEY SMOCK MILL, Chichester, West Sussex

Visited: Tuesday 2nd April 1996

Position: 3/4 Mile north of Earnley, just south of Birdham, East of B2198, map reference : SZ817983

Description: Earnley mill is one of the last unrestored smock mills in England. Built probably around the end of the 18th century, it is thought to have been raised in 1827, and this date appears on one of the bricks, together with the initials 'TB'. 1827 could also be the date when the mill was modernised, and some of the iron gearing was installed - patent sails were not fitted however. The mill was worked for about 100 years by the Stevens family, and ceased work around the end of the Second World War.

In the early 1960s the two common sails which were in poor condition were removed by the then owner, Mr Darby. Not much was done to the mill until 1978-9 when the cap and remaining spring sails were taken off, and pulled apart. It is unclear whether the mill was roofed over subsequently because most of the top two floors are now missing and the spur wheel is badly rotted. However, much of the iron gearing from the cap has survived such as the fan star and fantail drive shafts, along with many other small wooden parts. I could not find any traces of the brake wheel, but the iron windshaft remains, its tail end stuck firmly in the ground. At some time in the 1970s the smock was re-weatherboarded and a new flat roof has now been fitted. Inside the mill much of the machinery remains. On the ground floor are two pairs of French stones leaning against the wall, two of which are very worn. There are two opposite doors at ground floor level, one leading into the workshop. Many wood and iron parts lie in heap around this floor. The first floor was the spout floor and must have been very cramped because it still contains a boiler, a wire machine and another grain cleaner (possibly a smutter), all in fairly good condition. There is also a door to the stage on this floor, and another on the stone floor. The base of the upright shaft is supported at stone floor level by a heavy wooden frame; the stone floor above has now gone.

Three pairs of millstones were overdriven on this floor by a wooden clasp arm great spur wheel, which remains in poor condition. The French stones have been lowered to the ground floor, while a pair of peaks are set up as garden ornaments. Below the spur wheel is a bevel gear rim, which may have driven the dressing machinery on the first floor by belt, as at Barnham mill. The 3rd floor has completely gone, but served as the bin and dust floor. At the top of the upright shaft are four wooden tenons which supported the wooden compass-arm wallower. The sack hoist was probably friction-driven from the underside of the wallower, as at Polegate and Shipley mills.

From the outside the mill must have presented a splendid sight when in working order. The 3-storey smock was tarred black and there was a wide stage without a railing at first floor level, above the brick base. From this stage the sails

sails were set: there was one pair of single sided spring sails, with elliptical leaf springs, and one pair of commons, rotating anti-clockwise. The ogee shaped cap was horizontally boarded, with a typical Sussex fanstage and a 6-bladed anti-clockwise fantail. The fanstage displayed an interesting feature, in that it was enclosed with a petticoat. The fantail drive was through a worm gear meshing with an outward-facing iron rack.

LUKE BONWICK

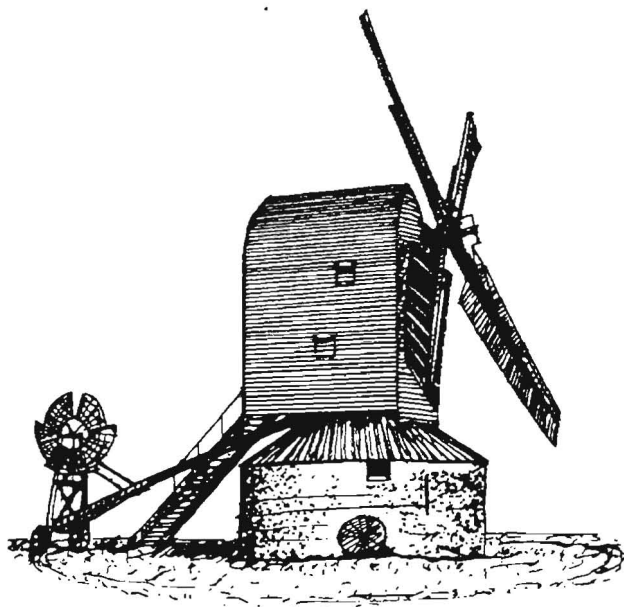
## LOST MILLS OF SUSSEX SEAFORD, SUTTON MILL

There was a mill on this site in the sixteenth century, its miller being John Hide. It may have been the same as that used by one Rennalls, who in 1638 was presented for "taking excessive toll of gristes," a charge which occurs repeatedly against him.

Sutton Mill is thought to have been built around 1773 for William Washer; a sale notice in the Sussex Weekly Advertiser of 26th December 1774 states it to be newly erected. Apparently contradicting this is another sale notice in 1802, according to which the mill was held under a lease which had commenced in 1769. It is possible that the wording is ambiguous, and that the lease was of the property as a whole, the mill itself not being built at the time. Shortly after its erection the mill had become the property of Thomas Washer, but he soon vacated it after which William Washer is again recorded as the owner and occupier until 1779. After this date he appears to have continued as owner only until his death in or shortly before 1802, when the tenant was Richard Bull.

It is known that William Bull was working the mill some time during the early nineteenth century; he was presumably a relative of Richard Bull, as was Henry Bull who is recorded there in 1828-9. A directory of 1832-4 gives Charles Osborne as miller and coal merchant, and according to the Tithe Map he was still there in 1839, when the owner was Thomas Allwork. Thomas Chambers worked it in 1845, but by 1851 he had been succeeded by Thomas Allwork. At one time Ade's grinder - the man who actually operated the mill, the "miller" being, as at a good many other Sussex windmills, essentially a foreman - was a man named Jack Osborne. Osborne was very good at his job when he felt so inclined, but was very independent and frequently left his place of employment without obtaining permission or giving prior notification, returning later as unexpectedly as he had left. He was said to have been the only man in the immediate vicinity who understood this type of work (or he would probably have been sacked!) Eventually he left Sutton Mill to take up a fresh situation nine miles away at Eastbourne. He set out for his destination and arrived there three weeks later, having meanwhile spent the greater part of his time in the Tiger Inn at East Dean. Sometime between 1855

and 1860, Ade had the mill reconstructed, raising it and adding a fantail and patent sweeps. He was to continue in occupation until 1887, after which Thomas Sayer used it until it closed in c. 1900. Latterly the mill stood with stocks and the fantail carriage still in position. It was demolished in 1909 after which houses were built on the site obliterating all trace of the structure.



SUTTON MILL SEAFORD

R. G. Max

During its life the mill saw perhaps more than its fair share of accidents. In 1773 when it had only been standing for a short time, a boy named James Stevens was struck by one of the sweeps and killed. Not long after Thomas Ade took possession of it, a sweep knocked down one of his relatives, fortunately without causing them serious injury; and some time previously had cut a sow in two. These incidents were a contributory factor in his decision to rebuild and raise the mill.

On 20th December 1856 the following item appeared in the Brighton Herald:

"An extraordinary accident by lightning occurred yesterday night at the mill owned by Mr Ade. At the time of the catastrophe there were three persons working in the

## MYSTERIOUS STRUCTURE AT DEVIL'S DYKE - CONCLUSION

In the January Newsletter I published a drawing and description of the "mysterious" structure at Devil's Dyke. Since that date I have received further information which suggests that it was used during WWI to store bombs which were being tested by dropping from the Aerial Cableway which crossed Devil's Dyke. This was erected in 1894 and operated until 1909 so was probably still extant in wartime. There are four items of evidence relating this structure to WWI use:

1. "The remains [of the Aerial Cableway] were used as target practice during the First World War when 50lb Cooper bombs were detonated"<sup>1</sup>
2. The father of the present owner of Devil's Dyke Farm knew this building as the "Bomb House" when he used to play there in the 1920s.<sup>2</sup>
3. Mr. P. Gilson remembers his father describing how bombs were dropped from the centre of the Aerial Cableway, their release being tripped by a stop on the cable. At the time he was employed at the Dyke as a bricklayer by a firm of building contractors Fields (which later became Field and Cox)
4. Mr. Fred Grant senior "...recalls the Army testing bombs during the First World War testing bombs in the Dyke by dropping them from a cable...."<sup>3</sup>

Apart possibly from (2) above there is no direct link between the testing of bombs and the building under investigation and if it were built for this purpose its location would seem to be illogical. However if it was placed at the north end of the cableway it would have been close to the Devil's Dyke Hotel and if at the south end, close to the Club House of the Dyke Golf Course. Furthermore the land on which it was built belonged to the Crown Estates during WWI so it could have been built without any consultation.

Thus, the evidence does seem to suggest that it was used during WWI, but this does not mean that it was necessarily built for this purpose. If it was built as a Bomb Store the walls would probably have been thicker, there would probably have been a blast wall across the entrance and there would have been a light roof probably of curved corrugated iron. The nature of the structure, the fact that it never had a roof, the possible lining of the internal walls and the "ticket office" in the corner all seem to point towards its erection before the war and its original use as an observation platform as I originally postulated. The fact that it was not shown on the 1914 Edition of the 6" O.S. Map is not conclusive evidence that it was not built before 1914. As it was definitely not shown on the 1909 Edition of the 1:2500 O.S.

**Sunday 6th October**

Mills Group Meeting. All members invited as well as mill owners. 2-30pm at Barnham Mill Yapton Road, Barnham, SU967039.

Contact Don Cox 01403 711137

**Saturday 30th November**

AGM at Haywards Heath Town Hall, Boltro Road, Haywards Heath.

Contact Ron Martin 01273 271330

## **Officers**

President	Air Marshal Sir Frederick Sowrey Home Farm, Herons Ghyll, Uckfield
Chairman	J.S.F. Blackwell, 21 Hythe Rd, Brighton BN2 6JR (01272) 557674
Vice-Chairman	D.H. Cox, 3 Middle Rd, Partridge Green, RH13 8JA(01403) 711137
General Secretary	R.G.Martin, 42 Falmer Ave, Saltdean, Brighton, BN2 8PG (01273) 271330
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