

SUSSEX INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY SOCIETY

Newsletter No. 101

incorporating SUSSEX MILLS GROUP

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Programme - Spring 1999.

Tuesday March 9th, 7.30 pm. Joint meeting with Chichester Museum Society in the Committee Rooms, East Pallant House, Chichester. Derek Beli, a recently retired Civil Engineer. talking on "The Protection of the Coastline". Mr. Bell was for many years the District Council's Engineer responsible for the coastline in this district, so he is well versed in local problems. Contact Chris Bryan 01243 773158

Friday March 12th 1999. 8.00pm. Sussex Mills Group AGM West Blatchington Mill Barn Contact Peter Hill 01273 776017.

Sunday March 21st Working Day at Coultershaw pump. Bring packed lunch and tools. Wear old clothes. Contact M. Palmer 01903 505626.

Saturday April 10th 9.45 am SERIAC University of Reading. Contact Dennis Johnson 0118 983 2009 or Ron Martin.

Saturday/Sunday May 8/9th National Mills Weekend. Please support your local mill with an offer of help on one of the days.

Sunday May 23rd. 11-00 am. Visit to Chichester. Meet at Railway Station, North Side. Finish at approx, 4-00pm with one hour break fo lunch.

Contact Chris Bryan 01243 773158.

RAILWAY VISIT

RON MARTIN

Preliminary arrangements have been completed for the visit to Sir William McAlpine's private railway. (Ref: Newsletter No. 100 Oct. '98 p.2), and a booking made for Sunday June 13th; opening at 12.15 pm till about 4.30 pm.

The railway is on Sir William's estate in the village of Fawley, just off A4155 north of Henley-on-Thames. A steam-hauled train ride of some twenty minutes or so is included in the entry charge of £3.00 per person, children under ten years old, free. An invitation card and map will be sent to each visitor. Hot and cold drinks are available on site, but no food.

Although our Members will travel up individually, the SIAS Group will be booked in as one, hence the organisers will need to know in advance the number of visitors expected.

Please let Ron Martin know the number of tickets you will want by Monday February 1st.

WHO WAS POLLY? WHAT WAS SHE? PETER LONGSTAFF-TYRRELL

Interest in a local structural curiosity dating from the 19th century development of the London, Brighton and South Coast railway arose with the sale at auction in late October 1998 of Polly Arch railway bridge off Lynholm Road, Polegate, adjacent to the A27 road (TQ 59020475). The maintained public footpath or bridleway under the bridge is an ancient farmland track to Lower Willingdon. As such the railway engineers had to provide a bridge when the railway revolution transformed coastal communications.

The LB&SCR railway from Brighton to Polegate opened in 1846 although Eastbourne passengers had to alight and travel by horse omnibus, owned by the landlord of the Anchor Inn, to continue onwards into Eastbourne. The Eastbourne Branch Railway opened for traffic on May 14th 1849 (until 1880) and at the same time services on the branch line to Hailsham commenced and this later became popularly dubbed The Cuckoo Line - but that is another story. An 1831 Ordnance Survey map shows the Polegate community being known as Swines Hill Gate and there is little wonder that a name change was sought.

The first Polegate station was close to the High Street level crossing, on the now turfed plot beside the current station which opened as recently as May 26th 1986. The second Polegate (split-level) station, dated 1881, now operates as the popular Brewer's Fayre Old Polegate Station restaurant and public house beside the A27 Station Road. The railway line from this station branches off to service Eastbourne, but originally the track continued on directly from Polegate to Bexhill and all stations east.

The (later) Eastbourne branch line was 4 miles and 23 chains in length and took a right turn with a falling gradient towards Hampden Park, where a station was erected in 1888. When the coastal line from Polegate to Hastings first opened there was no direct connection into Eastbourne from the easterly Hastings direction. A spur was subsequently added at Stone Cross and between there and Bexhill only the intermediate station at Pevensey existed at the time. During the following decades five halts were added. One at Collington Wood opened in 1905, only to close the following year, then in 1911 a new halt as West Bexhill opened at the site and then in 1929 this became Collington Halt.

Eastbourne is most fortunate in having its elegant railway terminus virtually intact from its Victorian origins, albeit amid the prevailing bustle of late 20th century town traffic. Originally Eastbourne station was sited where the present Post Office building operates and it was of timber construction. A temporary station north of Upperton Road replaced the wooden station in 1866. The present station,, was finished in 1872 and was subsequently extensively rebuilt and enlarged in 1886, and is at this time (late 1998) undergoing restoration.

The defunct northern aspect of the Polegate-Eastbourne-Hastings rail track triangle was formally closed on January 6th 1969, but continued with spasmodic rail works operations until 1974. A single track remained as an engineer's siding from Stone Cross junction for another decade which saw the now abandoned track being lifted and the land subsequently sold-off for housing arid industrial development.

With prevailing traffic conditions questioning the wisdom of the curtailment of the national railway network, during the infamous 1960s Dr Beeching era, many people feel that with modern housing estate expansion and travel demands there is now a real case to consider re-creating Stone Cross Halt that was erected by the bridge in 1905, close to the Friday Street thoroughfare, and served the community for the following 30 years until its sorry demise.

Polly Arch bridge continues as a curio of that period of railway transformation of the coastal communities. How did it derive its odd name? A farmers wife or daughter perhaps? The brick archway is of little architectural merit and no foundation stone or dating exists. Curiously Polly Arch was auctioned off to an anonymous German purchaser in 1996 for an undisclosed sum and the brick edifice came up for auction again on Monday October 26th 1998. Auctioneer Kevin Giblet ASVA said that about a dozen potential buyers had expressed an interest and Lot 48 had a guide price of £5,000 plus. Bidding commenced at £2,000 and rose steadily, eventually selling at £4,000. The purchaser decided to stay anonymous for the time being'. Meanwhile the question remains... Who was Polly? What was she?

On Sunday March 14th 1999 an organised trip into the Cold War era RAF Wartling Ground Control Interception radar bunker at Wartling village has been arranged by kind permission of David Harding the farmer who owns the site. Meet in The Lamb Inn at Wartling from midday. A small charge is being made towards maintenance and security at the location. Although devoid of its equipment and in a derelict state, with the lower floor flooded, the bunker is of considerable interest to many people as well as former RAF personnel who served at the RAF stations. Contact Peter Longstaff~Tyrrell telephone 01323 487170, who is organising the event, for any information. Peter is one of the founder members of the Sussex Military History Society who meet on the 2nd Wednesday of each month in the committee rooms of the Royal Oak, Station Street, Lewes.



SUSSEX MILLS GROUP



Sussex Mills Group is part of The Sussex Archaeolology Society

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DATES FOR THE FUTURE.

Friday March 12th
Annual General Meeting
starting at 8.00 pm. at West Blatchington Mill Barn
Followed by talk on watermills by Derek Stidder
Sunday March 21st. Working day at Coultershaw Pump
Sunday May9th National Mills Weekend.
Saturday July 17th Mills Tour
(details to be decided)
Sunday October 17th October Meeting

NEWS DON COX

This seems to be the quiet time for mills with people recovering from the open season before re-grouping the next year. Please let me have details of what your mill is doing in 1999. Do not keep it a secret. Let me advertise your events in this Newsletter and so increase the numbers attending events.

Update of Mills throughout the county. Peter Hill/Don Cox

The following is mainly taken from the Chairman's report to the SIAS AGM.

Barnham Mill The cap is off and being restored and a new

Selsey (Medmerry Mill) New sweeps have been fitted and there is talk of a complete full restoration with an expected cost of £400,000. (The mill and the adjacent caravan site is owned by the Bunn family who also own the Hickstead jumping course complex on the A23.)

Rottingdean Repairs and replacement of rotten cant posts are scheduled for 1999.

GRANTS DON COX

Tony Baxter who is the SIAS representative on WSCC Coast & Countryside Committee, has passed to me details of grants available under a scheme by which landfill site operators can pay out grants from money they obtain through tax on their sites. You must be within 10 miles of a landfill site and the grant is for environmental bodies. Details are for West Sussex so please contact me if you would like a copy of the scheme.

Are you on the Internet?

Simon Potter/Don Cox

Simon Potter has searched the internet and is aware of the following web sites featuring UK mills. He would be pleased to learn of other sites and to be advised of any amendments to the details listed below:

Ashbourne http://www.cart.demon.co.uk/hillhome.html
Bembridge http://www.ovi-iow.demon.co.uk/bembridge.html
Blennerville http://ppc.rtc-tralee.ie/traleetown/windmill.html

Burseldon Windmill http://www.hants.gov.uk/leisure/millmons/burwindm/index.html

Charlecote http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/tourism/charl.html

Cheddleton Flint Mills http://www.pigpen.demon.co.uk/flint.html

Crabble Watermill http://www.invmed.demon.co.uk/mill/index.html
Daniel's Mill http://www.stargate-uk.co.uk/adverts/daniels.html

Gleaston Watermill http://www.ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/watermill

Green's Mill http://www.innotts.co.uk/greensmill

Haxted Watermill http://www.mistral.co.uk/hammerwood/haxtmill.html
Houghton http://www.ecn.co.uk/e_ed_env_conHPHoughtonMill.html
Lacey Green Windmill http://www.users.zetnet.co.uk/pgoodearl/sdean/windmill.html

Little Salkeld Watermill http://www.cumbria.com/watermil/home.html
Mapledurham Watermill http://www.kidsnet.co.uk/central/maperdur.shtml

North West Mills Group

http://www.ourworld/compuserve.com/homepages/watermiil/NWMG.html

Polegate Windmill http://www.steali.co.uk/polegate-windmill

Outwood Windmill http://www.schoolsite.edex.net.uk/49/outwood_windmill.html

Shirley http://www.croydon.gov.uk/heritage Soham Windmil I http://www.elv.co.uk/elv/shademil

Upminster http://users.ox.ac.uk/-sjoh0093/upminsterwindmill.html

Willesborough Windmill http://www.ibmpcug.co.uk/-3score/mill.html Woodbridge Tide Mill http://dspace.dial.pipex.com/lbj/wbtmill.shtml

Editor; I am sure that there are many more. I received a letter from USA that had enclosed a picture of Barnham windmill taken from a web site !!!

Jack & Jill

Don Cox/Simon Potter

The newsletter, called "Remolo", of the above Mills Preservation Society contains a note of their problems in having a phone installed at the mill. The problem was that BT could not accept that nobody lived at the mill and letters thereto would not be received by the appropriate person. This was in spite of making clear to BT the person to communicate with. However the mill is now on the phone and is ex directory as it is really for emergency use only. Are any other of our mills on the phone?

Stone Cross Mill.

Michael Chapman/Don Cox

(Extract from Stone Cross Trust Newsletter with update of latest position.)

At long last work on the restoration of Stone Cross windmill has begun. The National Lottery Fund gave us formal approval to start restoration work on September 29th 1998 and we could enter into final negotiations to select a main contractor. On November 11th 1998 the Stone Cross Trust, with agreement of the Heritage Lottery Fund, signed a contract with the Chiltern Partnership who are an internationally know firm of millwrights and recognised by the SPAB.

The Chiltern Partnership will be responsible for the restoration of the windmill tower and it started work on site on November16th 1998. As there are no original drawings of the mill - as far as we have been able to discover - the preliminary work entailed a detailed investigation, logging the many pieces of wood and metalwork that SCMT volunteers found on the site and carefully saved. In fact, very little was thrown away until we were absolutely certain that it had no relevance to the mill, eg 10 wash-hand basins!! From this thorough

examination, Chiltern has identified for example, the remains of the complex woodwork that used to be on the first (spout) floor and will now be able to use these relics to rebuild that floor. Initial examination shows that with little restoration work, most of the fantail blades can be reused after 120 years. The mysteries of the windshaft brake mechanism are partly solved, as is the remote control of grain flowing to the grinding stones. It has also been confirmed that the quality of design and workmanship of Stone Cross windmill is excellent and far superior to many other mills of its type.

With winter with us, quite a bit of the restoration work - including building new sweeps - will be carried out in its workshops at Mapledurham. On November 26th 1998 with a large audience and many cameras, a crane was brought onto the site and the cap was lifted off and placed onto a lorry. A temporary flat conical cap has been placed on the top of the tower to keep the elements out and enable work inside to be carried out. The original cap together with the one remaining sweep were taken to the workshops for work to be done there. Some work will be done over the winter on the remainder of the mill. The major assemblies once restored in the workshops will be returned and it is hoped to have the restoration of the machinery and windmill tower complete and working by June 1999.

The stocks were sawn through for transportation and it was found there were 120 tree growth rings. Allowing for the timber being in the mill since 1875, this makes the wood 240 years old!!

In the meantime volunteers are needed to demolish the roundel (working days every Thursday). The roundel this will be rebuilt when English Heritage can make a decision on the type of bricks At present the storehouse is being used for temporary storage by the main contractor. As soon as this is not required, the building will be replaced. If we can keep up to schedule with the work SCMT volunteers have to do then the overall restoration could be complete by the end of August 1999 for a grand reopening.

Editor - With a long close association with this mill I look forward to the re-opening and offer congratulations to Stone Cross Mill Trust.)

The note in Newsletter No 100 about a student's recollections of Westhampnett Mill in the 1920s came at a pertinent time. Within the past few weeks a Planning Application has been made for the demolition of all the buildings on the site except the old mill and the adjacent house, the conversion of the mill into four dwellings and the erection of 27 houses.

The mill is a four-storey building nine bays long and two bays wide in red load-bearing brickwork with grey headers and yellow quoins, dressings and arches. The floors are all reinforced concrete on steel joists and columns, but in the end two bays there is no second floor and the first floor is supported on steel joists and supported on additional brick piers and cast iron columns and it is presumed that this area housed the grain store. Under the other end the mill race is still extant although dry and the remains of the wheel pit can be seen, which contained a low breast-shot wheel 3.96 m (13'0") diameter and 1.8 m (5' 11") wide. The windows are all steel casements in small panes with segmental arches and there are door openings at ground level and first floor level. The roof is gabled and covered with asbestos-cement sheeting on steel trusses and recently parapets have been raised along the eaves. There is a single-storey building adjacent to the mill which presumably housed an engine, although there is no machinery or plant extant anywhere within the building, apart from two half-bearings.

This has been the site of a mill for several centuries, possibly since Doomsday. The house adjacent to the mill has a date stone of 1772 and was probably built by the miller next door to his mill. In 1813 and 1823 and on the 1861 Figg's map it was described as "Burnt Mill". The mill was water-powered with an enclosed breast shot wooden wheel with iron shaft, but there was frequently a shortage of water particularly during the summer months and when boring was being carried being out at Graylingwell (1). In 1851 Robert Sadler installed a steam engine but was still experiencing a shortage of water in 1856, not even enough to run the steam engine (2). There were five pairs of stones, three for barley, and one each for wheat and malt (1)

The mill burnt down in October, 1904, apart from the engine house

and was rebuilt in 1906. There is a terra-cotta date "stone" let into the east wall. There was a National gas engine and a Dawson 2 1/2 sack roller plant and two pairs of stones (1).

"In the 1930s power was supplied by a turbine engine, which also provided power for some limited electric lighting. At weekends when the mill was not in operation a small Petter engine was used" (2).

The mill was owned by the Sadler family from 1851 which also had premises in East Street, Chichester (in 1886), in Little London and East Row in Chichester (in 1905), at Fishbourne Mill to manufacture cattle cubes (1918 - 1928) and in Terminus Road Mill, Chichester (in 1828) (2). In 1931 the buildings to the east of the old mill on the Madgewick Lane frontage were built by Messrs. Harrison and Garthwaite as "the first bakers of meat biscuits for dogs" and this was taken over by Sadlers in 1937 (3). The mill has been burnt down at least once since 1906.

References

- (1) Uncorroborated notes from S.Fry of Sandtiles Distributers Ltd., the present owners of the site.
- (2) NEWBURY, KEN, River Lavant (1987), 17, 19 and plates 10-12
- (3) Notes obtained from Chichester District Museum, 10.11.98

PASSPORT SCHEME AND DUSTY MILLER DON COX

Dusty Miller will be at your local mill soon.



Heene Mill was an old one, shown on maps of the mid-eighteenth century; however, the first non-cartographic record of it does not occur until 1825, when the Sussex Advertiser of August 15th reports the following incident:

"During the tempest at Heene near Worthing on Wednesday last, some harvesters sought shelter in a windmill (the most dangerous that can be resorted to in these cases) when one of them, a boy, was struck by lightning which singed his hair and rent his clothes, but happily without inflicting any material personal injury."

In 1839, according to the Tithe Apportionment, the occupier was William Parker. In 1851 a tithe account gives Jane Lephard (or Leppard as Directories spell the name) as occupier of the mill, mill plot and cottage.



HEENE MILL WORTHING

B.G. Martin

Jane had either inherited the mill from her first husband, a miller, or continued to rent it after his death, and by this means it came to be used by her second husband, Edmund Lephard of Heene Farm, from 1853. In 1868 and 1882 Lephard's miller was Henry Ball.

The mill was next used by Charles Botting, who had a bakery at nearby Egremont Place. Botting had died or given up the business by 1893, and the mill then stood derelict until its demolition ten years later, in June 1903. In the 1930s the site of the mill was still evident on the south side of Mill Road, between numbers 33 and 37, iust west of Grand Avenue.

Heene Mill was a large black post mill with a shallow roundhouse and common sweeps working two pairs of stones. A fine detailed drawing of it by A. Elliott, executed in 1844, could at one time be seen at Worthing Library; I do not know if it is still there.

COULTERSHAW BEAM PUMP

MICHAEL PALMER

The 1998 season was quite satisfactory with visitor numbers within 2% of the previous year. We had several visits including the Friends of Amberley Museum, a vintage double-decker bus group and a party from Duncton School. Also notable was the visit of two Americans who had got details of the pump via the Internet. The pump ran well throughout, with the river level always within acceptable limits.

We do not anticipate any major maintenance jobs through the winter, so we hope to set about improving the general presentation. We look forward to seeing a good Society turnout for the working party on Sunday March 21st, ready for opening at Easter.

Sussex Mills Group

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T.Martin A.Mitchell, S.Potter, B.Pike. R.Potts. T.Ralf.

The thirty-first Annual General Meeting of the Society was held on Saturday, 27th. November, 1998 in the Town Hall, Haywards Heath. 29 Members were present and the chair was taken by J.S.F.Blackwell.

The General Secretary, R.G.Martin, gave his annual report and likened the year to a curate's egg - good in parts. The sad death of three of our eminent members - Frank Gregory, Sir Francis Avery-Jones and Wilfrid Beswick was noted. The effort to save the anti-aircraft tower at Crawley failed when it was demolished just prior to it being considered for scheduling by English Heritage. On a brighter note the Society's involvement with the local authorities continues to grow. We serve on various bodies - the Southeast IA Panel of the Council for British Archaeology, the Coast and Countryside Committee of WSCC, the South East Regional Industrial Archaeology Conferences, the Local History Forum of the Sussex Archaeological Society.

A full programme of visits and meetings took place during the year with variable attendance. Recording had been carried out at various sites under threat - Hove Hospital, Battle Hospital, the Alliance and Leicester Building Society's offices in Hove, Brighton Market and Westhamptnett Mill as well as some general recording, a lot of which still has yet to be done. Typological recording has been done on lime kilns and on water towers. Surveying has been carried out at the Washington Limekilns, at Devil's Hole Lock on the Wey and Arun Canal and at Windmill Hill Mill at Herstmonceux.

The Treasurer and Membership Secretary, J.M.H.Bevan, presented the accounts for the year and reported that it had been a successful year financially and that there was no necessity to raise the subscriptions. There had been 42 new members in the year as compared to 27 in the previous year.

The Chairman of the Mills Group, P.J.Hill, reported in writing, on the activities of the Group during the year. As a result of Lottery Grants, work at Michelham Priory Watermill and Lowfield Heath Mill had now been completed and the work at Stone Cross Windmill is just about to commence. A visit to mills in the Hampshire took place and the October meeting at Shipley Mill had been a great success. Short reports were made on the following mills:

Barnham Mill, Medmerry Mill at Selsey, Rottingdean Mill, High Salvington Mill, Polegate Mill, West Blatchington Mill, Oldland Mill, Chailey Mill, Nutley Mill, Shipley Mill and Bateman's Watermill at Burwash. Plaques to the memory of Frank Gregory are to be placed in as many mills as possible to perpetuate his name. In West Blatchington Mill Barnl it is intended to dedicate the balcony to his memory.

R.M.Palmer reported that at Coultershaw there had been a successful year with slightly reduced visitor numbers but an increase in takings. The Working Party, held in March, was a great success and a good attendance is hoped for next year. A commemorative clock to the memory of Leslie Martin was unveiled in September in the presence of member of his family and friends.

A.E.Baxter reported that at the Arundel Pump House, the Arundel Estate had replaced the roof and re-built the gables. It is hoped that means will be found to limit the ingress of water which is currently flooding the floor and ultimately to have it opened for public viewing.

C.Bryan reported that at Poyntz Bridge the engineering work to take the twist out of the structure had not been completely successful. A Heritage Award had been given by the City of Chichester.

E.W.Henbery reported that at Ifield Watermill the work of reboarding the wheel has been completed. Various items of machinery have been acquired from Haxted Mill and an award of £1,000 has been received from the British Airports Authority.

N.Kelly reported, in writing, about the state of the Eoliénne Bollée located at St. Hugh's Monastery, Cowfold and asking if the Society was able to help to get this preserved and restored. There will be a separate article about this in the next Newsletter.

The following Members were elected to serve for the ensuing year:
Chairman
J.S.F.Blackwell
Vice-Chairman
D.H.Cox

General Secretary Treasurer and Membership Secretary Editor R.G.Martin J.M.H.Bevan Dr.B.Austen

Committee: R.E.Allen, Brig. A.E.Baxter, Mrs. P.Bracher, C.Bryan, M.H.Dawes, Mrs. D.Durden, E.W.Henbery, P.J.Holtham, R.F.Jones and R.L.Wilson

Co-opted members, ex officio: P.J.Hill, (Chairman of the Mills Group) and R.Taylor (Director of the Amberley Museum).

Hon. Auditor: P.Tye

After the AGM Prof. Ray Riley spoke to us most entertainingly about the "Trials and Tribulations of IA in Poland". He recounted how in the early 1990s the only way for him to take photographs was to disguise himself as a scruffy workman hiding his camera in a plastic bag. The city of Lodz, where he was based had several hundred textiles mills, some of the earlier ones with similarities to the equivalent ones to be found in Manchester, but the more recent ones of a much more dour character, but often, surprisingly, with ornate towers. The thought of our speaker being allowed to drive a steam train on regular passenger lines as one of the means by which the railway system makes ends meet, defies belief. The bizarre water filtration screen several hundred metres long and ten metres high, covered in brushwood with a wind-powered supply system built to evaporate water to concentrate the salt content was quite extraordinary. It was also a salutary reminder of the state of the economy and integrity of education in Eastern Europe to be told that, in the experience of the speaker, only the occasional attendance at lectures by students was sufficient to ensure a degree being obtained with no written or even oral examination.

ORAL HISTORY

RON MARTIN

The Amberley Musem is applying to the Millennium Fund for help in funding an Oral History Project and have asked the Society for assistance. The object of the project is to obtain the recollections of elderly people who have information about industrial and other processes which are no longer in current use. If any Members know of anyone who could be the subject of such an interview would they please get in touch with me.

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LATEST DATE FOR COPY FOR THE APRIL NEWSLETTER IS MARCH 14th. Copy for the newsletter should be sent to:

R.E. Allen, 7 Heathfield Road, Seaford, East Sussex, BN25 1TH, (01323) 896724

(Copy for the Mills Group section should be sent to the editor of the Mills Group News, D.H. Cox, whose address is above.)

SERIAC BURSARY

The Organising Committee of SERIAC has decided to use the small surplus which has accumulated from previous conferences as an award for a Bursary. The Bursary is intended to support the enhancement of Industrial Archaeology in the SERIAC region. The nature of the research is flexible, it may be supporting fieldwork or publication of material. Applicants do not have to live in the SERIAC region but the proposal must centre in the region.

The bursary will be up to £250. Full details of the award can be obtained by sending a stamped and addressed envelope to Mr R G Martin (whose address is above)

www.fastnet.co.uk/sias

@ SIAS on behalf of the contributors 1999