

## **Wortham**

### **Rash's Mill, Long Green (grid ref. TM081768)**

A smock mill, it was stated to have been 200 years old in the 1930's but I believe a date of 1800-20 is more likely. It is first indicated on Bryant's map of 1825-6. In the tithe map of 1838-40 John Rash is given as owner and occupier and it continued to be run by his family for at least three generations. Between 1879 and 1883 the cap and sails were blown off, and the mill was repaired extensively at this time, gaining a new iron windshaft which was inscribed T.S.SMITHDALE & SON ENGINEERS NORWICH. It is not clear whether they did the repairs or just supplied the shaft. Part of the upright shaft was replaced in iron, probably at the same time. Possibly at the same time the steam mill was built alongside, using stones. In 1894 a roller flour mill was attached to this (the weatherboarded building on the extreme left) with plant by E.R.&F Turner. In 1923 the Rash family, who may have had it since the beginning, sold it to Harold Pearce (formerly of Great Ashfield) who continued to run the mills until 1944, although the windmill stopped in 1939/40 due to getting into bad condition. There were attempts to preserve the windmill in 1947 but it would have cost £1000 to put it into good repair so the work was not done, the mills being pulled down in March 1948 instead. The last sails on the mill were second-hand, coming off the tower mill at Framlingham in 1919/20. In the 1930's the flour (from the roller mill) was sent to Cambridge and the feedstuff went to London, there being little local trade. With the flour mill and both the steam and windmills running they could produce 3 tons a day. Since 1908 or earlier the steam engine had been replaced by a gas engine and the "steam" mill finished up with a 55 h.p. diesel engine.

Wortham mill was an unusually pretty mill for the area, with a horizontally boarded dome cap with a large finial and unusual rear extension, similar to those on mills further south such as Drinkstone smock. This, and the fact that the fanstage appears to have been tacked on, suggests that it may have been hand-winded originally. Like the nearby Stanton mill, (with which it was in many ways similar to) the first storey of the timber part was half into the brick base. There was a floor below this and from the way the base batter differed from the timber tower's I believe it had been raised, perhaps when the steam mill was built alongside. The millstones were on the second floor, overdriven from a wooden clasp arm spur wheel with iron teeth bolted on. Only one pair (of two) remained in the 1930s, and these were modern composition stones as the mill was only used for grist work. There was a separate crown wheel on the third floor for the sack hoist (and dresser originally) and the wallower was an iron mortise wheel. The brake wheel was another clasp arm wheel with iron teeth. One remarkable feature of the mill which Rex Wailes and all subsequent writers have missed is that it had ten sides, not the usual eight.

### **Ling Mills (TM091796)**

The oldest mill in the parish, being shown on Hodskinson's map of 1783. This mill, a post mill, was rebuilt about 1825, probably gaining its roundhouse. A magazine article in 1896 claimed the mill to be 200 years old. In the 1830s it was owned by James Robinson and when he had financial problems in 1852 it was sold to John Fisher. In 1855 it was acquired by Benjamin Youngman (Fisher' son in law, I believe), who built a small steam mill soon afterwards., this being gradually enlarged until in 1896 it was converted into a roller mill. In 1890 Ernest Youngman took over from his father, retiring in 1909. The steam mill was always driven by a condensing steam engine, and was still there in the 1930's although I'm not sure whether it was working then as the last directory entry is for 1916. The windmill had patent sails driving three pairs of stones and following the erection of the steam mill the fantail (which keeps the mill facing the wind) had to be

mounted on the roof, which was very unusual. The windmill went out of use before the Great War, losing its sails, and was pulled down in 1918. The steam mill had 2 pairs of stones, later increasing to four, then a roller mill in addition, finishing as a 3 sack Tattersall roller mill (i.e. 3 sacks of 280 lbs. per hour). I don't know when the steam mill was pulled down, but the engine house still stands alongside the mill house and smaller miller's cottage.

### **Magpie Green (TM070785)**

This was also a post mill and is not shown on any maps until the Tithe map, of 1838, when it was owned by Henry Balding, of The Grove, and worked by John Rash, who also had the mill on Long Green. In 1844 George Adams is listed as miller and in 1853 Henry Balding is listed as miller, although it was probably let to the Rash family. As a relative latecomer it is likely that it was moved to The Grove from elsewhere. At the end of its life at Wortham, about 1900 (although it could have been as much as 20 years earlier) the body of the mill was taken to Walsham le Willows where it was set up on the ground and used with a steam engine alongside the post mill. It was still at Walsham in the late 1930's but probably was demolished about this time. It had two pairs of stones driven by patent sails and resembled the mill at the Ling except for having its fantail conventionally placed above the ladder.