

## HALESWORTH POST MILL

Standing on 'Mill Hill' (at Grid Ref. 385778), there had been a mill on this site since at least Kirby's 1736 map of Suffolk, and probably much earlier as well. Other mills were built in Halesworth but this oldest site outlived all the rest. The last mill was dated 'I.C. 1788' which may well have recorded its last major rebuild. Details of its ownership are rather sketchy but it was probably occupied by Charles Collet in 1792. In 1839 William Baker was miller (and baker) and he is also recorded in 1844 although in 1839 an attempt was made to sell it, and two other post mills also owned by Baker. Further attempts to sell, by his mortgagees, were made in 1840 and 1841. In 1847 an unspecified 'most capital post windmill ... now put into thorough repair' was offered for sale or to let and the following year the other two mills were offered for sale, having been repaired and refitted within 5 years'. In 1850 John Skinner was listed as miller. In March 1852 the mill was again to be sold, or let, the contact being Mr. J.D. Fiske of Chediston. In 1853 John Skinner is again listed. Regular advertisements to let the mill occur through the 1850's, with the lessor named as F. Fiske of Walpole. No miller is listed in 1858 other than Stephen Hadingham who could possibly have been running all the mills as he had others in the area as well.

In 1868 George Newman is listed and no further millers are listed until 1896 when James Peck occurs. The mill was probably let to another miller for much of the time without registering in trades directories.

A.S. Calver was the last owner and miller. He was preceded by a Mr. Notley who fitted the fly tackle about 1910 and later left for a watermill in Wiltshire where he went bankrupt. Mr. Calver was fairly old in the 1920's and didn't like the steps up to the buck, preferring to use the power-driven mill in the roundhouse. Accordingly in late 1925 he began to pull down the mill. A local landowner, Mr. Scrimgeour of Wissett Hall, enjoyed seeing the mill in the distance and persuaded Mr. Calver to keep the windmill going. He paid for Martin of Beccles to rebuild the upper part of the mill and to re-equip it, using mostly bits and pieces from Topcroft mill in Norfolk although the stocks at least came from Benhall mill. In this restored state, and looking very attractive (see photo above), the mill was worked until Mr. Scrimgeour died in 1937 or 1938 whereupon the mill was again dismantled! The shutters and the fly were removed and a building was erected over the fly tramway, thus preventing the mill from being turned to wind. The sails were soon taken down and in May 1942 the buck was advertised for demolition. The S.P.A.B.'s technical adviser Rex Wailes was asked for his opinion by the County Council but he said the mill was too far gone to save and it was subsequently pulled down. The roundhouse remained into the 1950's but eventually succumbed as well.

Halesworth mill was a medium-sized post mill of the north-east Suffolk type and showed evidence of several rebuilds inside, having been extended twice at the tail. Originally there were two pairs of stones in the head and tail but after the 1926 refit only one pair driven by spur gearing in the head, on the left hand side. The roundhouse existed by 1840 when it is described as being 'almost new' and had two storeys with a slated roof. The trestle was at first floor level, the post being 33" square at the base and 24" diameter at the top. Within the roundhouse the post was heavily chamfered and was almost octagonal in section. The roundhouse contained a pair of stones driven by oil engine, possibly the second pair from the buck. The mill was latterly driven by four double shuttered patent sails of eight bays controlled by an internal striking wheel using rack and pinion operation. It probably had patent sails before 1925 but I cannot say for sure. The fly had eight blades and drove one wheel only, this having strakes to avoid slipping on the stone track. A hinged sackslide was fitted to the ladder. The front of the buck was tarred, the back and sides being white. Unusually the stone floor was lit by small windows in the sides and another in the tail. The small porch was little more than a dripper board above the door.