

SUSSEX INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY SOCIETY

**Newsletter
No. 103**

**incorporating SUSSEX MILLS
GROUP**

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MAIN CONTENTS

Programme - Summer 1999

Margaret Holt

Petworth Railway Station

Water Towers - an update

Mills Group News

New Treasurer wanted

Lost Mills of Sussex -Heathfield,

Book Review: Amberley Museum Guide.

Wells in Sussex

PROGRAMME - SUMMER 1999.

Saturday 21st August 7.00 pm. Members meeting, West Blatchington Mill, (visit to mill 6.00 pm) Any member wishing to make a contribution please contact Ron Martin 01273 271330

Saturday 18th September 10.30 am All day visit to Spa Valley Railway and Tunbridge Wells. Meet at Tunbridge Wells West station (TQ 578 384). Admission charge for railway. Contact Diana Durden 01903 813603

Sunday 17th October 2.30 pm Mills Meeting at the church hall near High Salvington Mill. Contact Don Cox 01403 711137

Saturday 27th November 2.30 pm. AGM at Haywards Heath Town Hall, Boltro Road. Contact Ron Martin 01273 271330

Members who pay by standing order should find a membership card enclosed with this newsletter. Please contact Ron Martin if there is a problem.

MARGARET HOLT.

DON COX

Margaret Holt died on 2nd March 1999 after a long battle with illness. She joined SIAS very early in its life and was an active member in earlier days before her interests turned more to timber framed buildings. She did continue her interests in industrial archaeology and attended our AGM a few years ago. She will be best remembered for her article on "The Limekilns of Central Sussex" in SIH No 2 issued in 1971. I came across Margaret several times in the course of giving evening classes where she often followed or preceded my efforts. She was always helpful, would willingly supply information when asked and was eager to encourage others to research historical matters.

PETWORTH RAILWAY STATION.

DON COX

Petworth Railway Station is about 1¹/₂ miles south of the town and close to Coultershaw Water Pump. It was good to see in the Evening Argus recently that the new owners have gone to great expense to install some railway track at the site and have had two Pullman carriages brought up from Cornwall. These have been renovated and turned into bed and breakfast accommodation. The outsides are in their original livery following expert advice with the interiors more like standard living accommodation.

I remember the time when our committee discussed a request from WSCC about what could be done with this site and hopes were not good. However all is now well with the carriages parked in a siding alongside the station main building which also looks in good condition and close in appearance to that of railway days.

APPOINTMENT OF NEW TREASURER

RON MARTIN

Our Treasurer and Membership Secretary, Michael Bevan has decided to relinquish this post at the next AGM after carrying out this job in a most admirable manner for the past 20 years. We are looking for a replacement for him and would ask for any volunteers to get in touch with me.

VISIT TO TOWER BRIDGE

BOB ALLEN

The Brede Steam Engine Society is arranging a visit to Tower Bridge on Tuesday 26th October with a private "behind the scenes" tour around the machinery. We will be making our own way there but it has been suggested that there is car parking available in Greenwich and a river bus could then take us to the City. Numbers are limited with a minimum of 30 and a maximum of 40 and Brede members will have precedence, but our members are invited to make up the numbers, selected by ballot if necessary. The cost is expected to be £5.55 per adult with children under 15 and over 60s £3.75. Any members who are interested are asked to get in touch with me.

As a result of the article in Newsletter No. 100 about water towers in Sussex, various members have told me of additional examples. Herewith a supplementary list, the original one being mainly devoted to public supplies, the scope having now been widened to include farms and private ones etc:

EAST SUSSEX

EWHURST, Lordine Court	TQ 801 228	Steel
HASTINGS, Fairlight Road	TQ 848 117	N/K
HASTINGS, Windmill Road, St. Leonards-on-Sea	TQ 797 105	Brick
HELLINGLY - former Hellingly Hospital	TQ 596 124	Brick
PLUMPTON, Plumpton Green	TQ 365 181	Brick
UCKFIELD, 11 Brown's Lane	TQ 476 219	Brick

WEST SUSSEX

BECTON, Linch Farm, Bugshill Lane	SU 850 183	Brick
EASEBOURNE, Conduit Lodge, Cowdray Park	SU 892 218	Stone
CHICHESTER, Graylingwell Hospital, College Lane	SU 866 064	Brick
CHICHESTER, Central Hospital Laundry, Broyle Road	SU 860 054	Brick
KINGSTON, Seaview Avenue, Kingston Gorse	SU 087 016	Brick
LITTLEHAMPTON, Rope Walk	TQ 024 019	Steel
PETWORTH, Petworth Park	SU 966 247	Concrete
RUDGWICK, Swaynes Farm, Guildford Road	TQ 092 332	Brick
WEST WITTERING, Church Road (Dem)	SZ 797 973	Concrete

(previously described incorrectly as in East Wittering)

There are two particularly fine examples which I have seen recently, one being at Windmill Road in St. Leonards-on-Sea. This consisted of a tank contained within a red brick surround supported on eight brick piers linked with semi-circular arches. This was built in 1885 by the Hastings Union Rural Sanitary Authority to store water pumped up from a deep-well pumping station in Silverhill. It continued in use until 1909, when its use for storing drinking water ceased and it was subsequently used for storing untreated water for street watering and sewer flushing with water supplied from Buckshole Pumping Station. In 1928 its use as a storage tank ceased and the void under the tank was infilled as a three-storey house for water company use and known then as "Audley End". It is now a private dwelling and it is an excellent example of a conversion of an industrial building whilst still retaining the flavour of its original use.

The second water tower is the one at Wappingthorn Farm in Steyning. This was built in 1928/9 at the time that Wappingthorn Manor was being modernised under the direction of the architect Maxwell Ayrton. Wappingthorn Farm was built at this time and the water tower was part of this work to supply water to the farm. It is octagonal, four stories high and built of reinforced concrete. The ground floor contains a living room and a bathroom, with an external door. The first floor contains the bedroom, the second floor houses the tank and the top storey is a summer house with timber casement windows all round. It is capped with a pyramidal copper-covered roof. All stories are linked with an external spiral staircase with external doors at first and third floor levels and with a solid concrete balustrade which gives the effect of a helter-skelter. The windows are bronze in small panes with sloping shoulders. This is a quite remarkable and delightfully eccentric example of a utility building.

I am still looking for more water towers and if any Members know any that I have missed please let me know.

AMBERLEY - THE MUSEUM THAT WORKS

BOB ALLEN

This year sees the opening of a new exhibition on the History of Cycles and Cycling, a new steam locomotive building on the narrow gauge railway, and new shop displays in the Electricity Hall. Also thanks to the efforts of Ron Martin, Chris Bryan, and Peter Holtham there is a permanent SIAS display.

Because there is so much to see at the site this year's admission ticket will allow you to come back for a further visit within five days at no extra charge. If you are over 60, besides a reduced admission fee you are invited to enjoy a free cup of tea and a cake if you visit on a Friday.

Steam up weekends are on the last weekend of each month and special craft weekends are on the first weekend of the month. There is a Miniature Steam & Model weekend on Saturday/Sunday 25th/26th September and an Autumn Vintage Vehicle Show on Sunday 10th October.

THE SUSSEX MILITARY HISTORY SOCIETY PETER LONGSTAFF-TYRRELL

We meet on the third Wednesday evening of the month at the Royal Oak, Station Street, Lewes. On August 18th there will be a display of Ron Martin's authoritative collection of technical drawings of county defences.



SUSSEX MILLS GROUP



Sussex Mills Group is part of
The Sussex Archaeology Society

EVENTS

JULY 1999

Sunday 25th July Fete at West Blatchington Mill.

Sunday 1st August Alternative Power Day at Jill Mill, Clayton.

Sunday 17th October 1999 Mills meeting starting at 2.30 pm at the Church Hall almost next to High Salvington Windmill. Come for a discussion about mills, millers and milling topics.

NEWS OF MILLS

PETER HILL & DON COX

A brief update on news from mills throughout the county was included with the AGM report in the last newsletter. We have updated the news where possible.

BARNHAM

The cap has been taken off and replaced. A new fantail is being fitted. A report of this was covered by the Evening Argus.

SELSEY

New sweepshave been fitted and there is talk of a full restoration at £400,000.

ROTTINGDEAN

Repairs and the replacement of the rotted cant posts are to be carried out this year.

HIGH SALVINGTON

A split stock has been removed and a new laminated one shaped and dried after being Tanalized. It has now been refitted and is back in working order.

POLEGATE

One pair of sweeps is off for repainting. The Chiltern Partnership is currently at work at the mill repairing the brake wheel, wallower and other machinery. New shutters have been made.

JILL

Repainting of the sweeps is now complete. The trestle and roundhouse

roof have been treated with preservative and general cleaning of the grounds has been carried out. Work on the replacement of the rear steps is in hand.

STONECROSS

After receiving £142,000 from the Lottery (the results of 2¹/₂ years work by Mike Chapman) work is now going full steam ahead. Sweeps, cap and the fantail are off with the Chiltern Partnership doing the major restoration in conjunction with the stalwart band of volunteers. It was found that the cast iron curb that the cap sits upon was cracked and will be replaced putting restoration back about eight weeks.

WEST BLATCHINGTON

The North Barn was officially opened last May and is proving a very popular meeting place. Currently the mill is scaffolded for renewal of the reeving stage and we are currently awaiting a quotation for replacement of the fantail. The cap and fantail have been removed for refurbishment and this has exposed rotting timbers in the sweeps. The removal was covered by the Evening Argus on 11th May 1999

OLDLAND

Work continues steadily and official planning has now been approved for the restoration.

LOWFIELD HEATH

A very successful meeting was held by the Friends of the Mill and Dorothea Restorations and the mill has a full compliment of sweeps and it is hoped to have it working by April 1999. Restoration work continues.

CHAILEY

Major refurbishment inside the mill of museum artefacts etc has taken place including installation of the St Peter's clock. There is trouble between the developers of the surrounding area and owners of the mill. This was covered by the Evening Argus but with the wrong angle on the dispute.

NUTLEY

Work continues to prevent further decay of the trestle. The cogs in the brakewheel have been repaired and the stones have been turned for the first time since 1908.

SHIPLEY

Ongoing work includes remaking and refitting shutters. Filming of 'Jonathan Creek' is still proving financially rewarding with more filming in July. Progress is being made with an engine shed and engine.

EARNLEY

Don Cox and Peter Hill went down to talk to the owners regarding restoration. The mill is in a very poor state and will need a tremendous amount of work done.

PIPE PASSAGE (TOWN MILL) LEWES.

Peter Hill has assisted the owner in writing a history of the mill and the roundhouse.

WATERHALL (PATCHAM)

This is currently on the market for 1.2 million pounds - an £900,000 increase in 3¹/₂ years (recently reduced to £750,000)

WESTHAM WINDPUMP (SINGLETON)

This has been restored and re-erected.

IFIELD

Repairs have been carried out to the waterwheel and reinstatement of the drive to the stones is being carried out. Refurbishment of a provender and grader machines from Haxted Mill is in hand.

BATEMAN'S WATERMILL.

A successful season has been reported and redressing of the stones has been carried out.

MICHELHAM PRIORY

A season fraught with problems particularly with the pit wheel and bearings but these have now been sorted out. With four new people trained to operate the mill, 400 lbs of flour was recently produced.

WINDMILL HILL.

There is no news on the restoration of this at present.

ARGOS HILL

Recently some edge boards fell off of the sails. This has prompted some correspondence with Wealden District Council and a meeting has been arranged with them to discuss the future of the mill.

NATIONAL MILLS WEEK-END.

DON COX

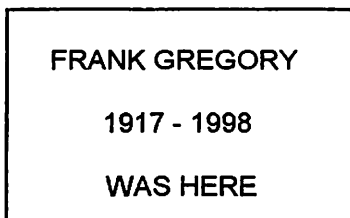
This went off well with better coverage in the press thanks to the efforts of Lawrence Stevens on behalf of Sussex Mills Group. Several mills had amateur radio stations set up and contacts were made around the county and country. I was at Shipley Mill on the Sunday and despite a poor aerial

contact was made with 10 mills. The West Sussex County Times came and took a photograph which was published. Radio coverage was obtained with Peter James on air talking about Lowfield Heath Mill. It also believed there were other reports on the air.

FRANK GREGORY.

DON COX

Plaques with the wording



have now been distributed wherever possible to mills in Sussex where Frank was known to have visited . We have more available so if you know of a mill anywhere that Frank went to and was well known please contact myself or Peter Hill for your plaque. The plaque is in brass and measures 95 x 47 mm and is supplied complete with two brass screws.

PASSPORTS.

DON COX

The scheme has now been launched as seems to be going well, better in some than others. High Salvington Mill lead the sales and have had 80 from me to date. Over 400 have been passed to mills so we have now organised the production of a further 1000. So get on selling.They are so cheap, why not offer them with a child's entry for an extra 50p where appropriate; or why not suggest buying one where there is no charge for children ! The more that are sold the more we encourage people to visit other mills. Yours could be that other mill !

ON THE INTERNET.

DON COX

Stone Cross Mill Trust is now on the internet at

WWW.SCMT.SWINTERNET.CO.UK

The article which follows was taken from the Southern Counties Historic Vehicle Preservation Trust News Circular no 253 (May 1986) by permission of the present editor.

WATERMILLS & THEIR TRANSPORT IN MID SUSSEX.

BERT URBAN

My grandfather was a miller and worked two mills which also meant that he was responsible for the millstream into them as well. My school holidays were spent with him at these mills, cycling from Sayers Common at 6.30 in the morning and arriving home at about the same time in the evening. My grandfather died in the 1950s, he worked long past retiring age and died at the age of 79 from the dust disease silicosis.

A small stream rises in the South Downs at Clayton and gathers momentum through pond and other streams round the back of Hassocks and Keymer. It flows over a small waterfall and under the Burgess Hill to Hassocks road just to the north of the Friars Oak public house, where it flowed into Hammonds Mill but this was closed very early after the war. The stream by this time was quite large about 20 feet (6 m) across and ten feet deep. From Hammonds Mill a further stream formed at a lower level being the overflow from this mill. The reason for the lower stream I will explain in a moment. We now have what was known as the top and bottom brook. Continuing westwards along the top brook one came across a massive circular brick built tube-like structure which took two thirds of the top brook, in other words the stream flowed around it. This was called the basin the reason being in severe floods the water would flow over the top of the basin out through a tunnel in the base and into the bottom brook. To carry on west the brook had one very large gate for the release of excess water and a small one. The water level could be altered by putting extra boards in or out of these gates. By the time the top brook was about 30 ft (9 m) above the level of the other. Here the obvious problem arose, leaks through the top brook walls.

In low season many hours would be spent repairing leaks. Here my grandfather had an uncanny knack of walking the path and say 'listen', he would then put his ear to the ground and say 'we will dig here'. A hole was dug about 3 ft square and sure enough the grafter would suddenly shoot downwards to reveal a hole through the bank and water rushing through. The whole 3ft square would then be filled with clay every inch being rammed with a rammer and the leak mended.

Every five years the lower half of the top brook and the mill pond would be mudded, in other words the whole stream was drained and the mud dug out and wheeled in wheelbarrows and tipped over the side banking. I can

remember him coming home with a large damp sack on his back and tipping this into a bucket of water. I think the whole village had eel pie or pudding for a few days.

We are now at Ruckford Mill which is in Hurstpierpoint. This mill along with Cobbs Mill at Sayers Common and Granary stores at Burgess Hill (now Tesco's car park) were all owned by Charles Packham & Co. The transport between them and customers in the early days was by horse and cart. Latter years the transport was Leyland, Commer and Sauer 3 tonners.

Ruckford Mill had two massive oertype waterwheels one wooden, one cast iron, the shafts run through into the cogpit through bevel gearing to the grindstones in the next floor. Here I will settle an argument I had with some windmill restorers some time ago.

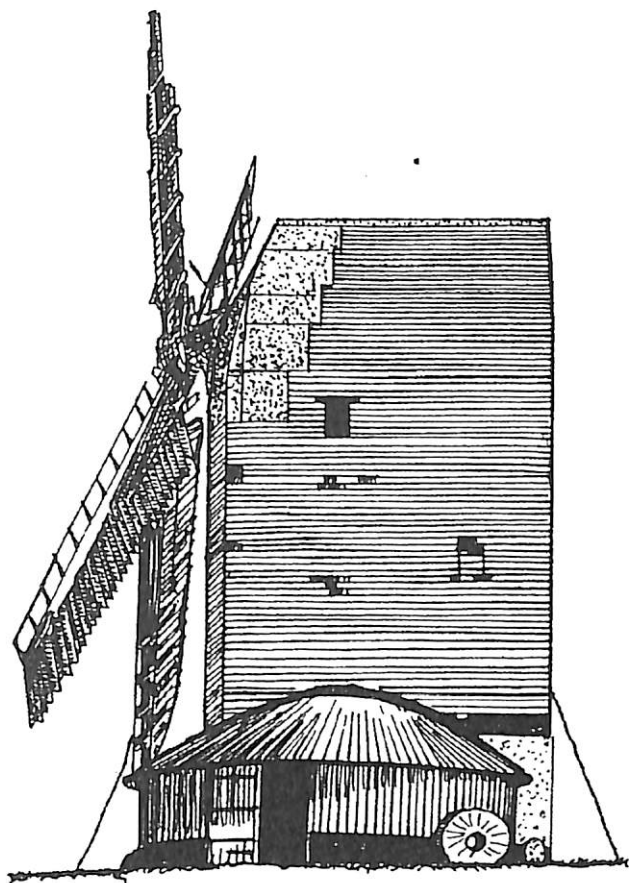
The actual teeth of the cog wheel came in sacks preformed to various angles. When a cog stripped, the old one was driven out of the cast iron rim, a new one inserted and rasped into shape for a good mesh. These cogs were made of apple wood due to the slippery nature of the wood; they soon wore into perfect mesh.

Ruckford had four grindstones, corn crusher and chaff cutter. I have seen these stones being dressed in other words chipping away at the grooves with hammer and chisel to get the perfect sample of flour.

The standby engine was a massive crude oil engine with 12 ft flywheels and the drivebelt was 2 ft wide. What a sight that was, running a massive belt the whole length of the engine house to the main pulleys set up in the roof. I am told that it was broken up and sold for scrap as the mill is now a private house.

The stream then joins the bottom brook and continues on to Cobbs Mill in Sayers Common. This mill was similar to Ruckford but had only one large waterwheel. The mill ground flour for all the local area and was packed in 3 lb paper bags or 1 cwt sacks. The standby power was a large coke gas engine. The mill and engine are still in position. From here the stream flows under the A23 to join the River Adur.

All this has been from memory



SANDY CROSS MILL

R.G. Martin

HEATHFIELD, SANDY CROSS POST MILL**(TQ 583204)**

A comparatively late arrival on the Sussex scene, this mill is said to have owed its building to an exceptionally good crop of hops. It was built by Thomas Knight, who was there in 1842. Knight was succeeded in 1858 by his son Henry, whose widow later took it over from him. The last owners were Henry's sons Walter and George Knight. Latterly the miller was George Walker and for 30 years one Fred Meopham was the grinder.

At some time the mill ceased to produce flour and the French burr stones were removed. Although the mill appears to have been in very good order when demolished in 1916, certain vital repairs were in fact needed. Their cost was felt to be prohibitive and when a good offer was received for the timbers, the mill was pulled down by the millwright Frederick Neve of Heathfield (whose firm had been responsible for much of the mill's maintenance during its working life). The fall of the mill caused rats, which inhabited the structure, to flee in all directions.

The mill was a small white one with a single-storey wooden roundhouse. It had four sweeps each with leading boards and single shutters controlled by elliptical springs. These drove two pairs of stones and a smutter. The windshaft was of iron while the brakewheel, from which the sackhoist was driven, and the tailwheel were wooden.

Sussex Mills Group

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John Beard, Sue Freed & Robert Taylor, *Amberley Museum Guide Book* (1999) 43 pages £2.50 (postage extra)

The new, all colour, guide to Amberley Museum is a very user-friendly publication, from the plan (almost a bird's eye view) of the layout on the first two pages to the illustrations of special events held, at the end. With its aid, visitors will be able to find their way round the Museum with ease. Numbers on the plan refer the reader to the pages on which information can be found. No attempt is made to describe everything in detail, for captions on the smaller exhibits will do this, but the main features in each area are illustrated and placed in their context with text information on the development of the industry or theme with an emphasis on Southeast England. Colour illustrations abound but there are also photographs from the past, those showing exhibits before and after restoration and past advertisements. Amberley boasts that it is the "museum that works" and photographs of craftsmen in the various workshops on the site prove that this is no idle boast. It is pleasing to note that the workmen in the photographs are named - you might even meet them during your visit.

As a guide to the Museum, a souvenir of a pleasant day out and an encouragement to come again this guide is effective. It is also modestly priced and deserves the attention not only of the visitor but also the student of industrial archaeology whose bookshelf it will enhance.

WELLS IN SUSSEX**PAUL.W. SOWAN**

Well-sinking records have been collected by geologists, from at least as far back as Joseph Townsend's '*On the character of Moses established for veracity as an historian, recording events from the Creation to the Deluge.*' (Bath, 1813, volume I: pp vi + 448.) That volume includes a compilation of geological observations made throughout, at least, the southern part of England, with in many cases industrial implications, and deserves study. Volume II is, possibly, of interest only to philologists.

Townsend collected his information by correspondence with parish priests and others (rather after the fashion of the authors of the first county agricultural reports). More recently, it has been a statutory requirement than any persons sinking bore-holes, mine-shafts or wells should lodge details of the strata encountered with what is currently known as the British Geological Survey (established as the Geological Survey of Great Britain in the 1830s). Data on the depths and compositions of rock strata and on

ground-water levels, are, clearly, vital to any understanding of geological structure and mineral resources at depth, and potential water supply resources. Likewise, such data guide civil and mining engineers in planning tunnels, civil engineering structures, and mines and quarries. For reasons such as these, a voluminous but little-known published well-records literature has developed (currently, professionals access the UK well-records database on-line or via CD-ROM!) Even in these days of centralised public water supplies, and long-distance cross-country water transfers across-country, the large numbers of now disused wells are still of importance in charting fluctuations in the water table and water reserves. There is much current concern, for example, about rising water table levels under cities such as Liverpool and London, threatening transport and other infrastructure, as a result of reduced inner-city water abstraction and with fewer city-centre breweries and laundries and steam-locomotive depots, and so forth, pumping water out of the ground.

All of this is of great potential interest to industrial, military, and transport archaeologists and historians. Before the establishment, approximately mid-19th century onwards, of centralised piped water supplies, and long afterwards, numerous individual enterprises, from individual houses to barracks, breweries, factories, gas works, laundries, mineral water works, power stations, railway stations, and so forth had their own on-site wells, whether draw-wells (water abstracted a bucket-full at a time) or pumped wells (steam engines or with more recently, submersible electric pumps). Published well-records, therefore, serve as potentially very useful directories of such concerns. A more practical point is that, in the investigation (or indeed development) of a former industrial site, it is as well to be aware that a more or less adequately capped deep shaft exists, as a potential hazard or as a complication in designing new works.

Sussex well-records

The more important published well-records for Sussex, collected and published by the Geological Survey of Great Britain and its more recent re-named versions, date back to Whitaker & Reid's memoir of 1899; Whitaker, Mill, and Parsons' continuation of this of 1911; and Edmunds' work of 1928. Updated versions were published in the Geological Survey's *Wartime Pamphlets* series on selected vital national resources, generally for urban areas. Most recently, in the early 1960s, the contents of some of these *Wartime Pamphlets* were updated and reissued in the GSGB's *Water Supply Papers: Well Catalogue* Series for the areas covered by selected one-inch to one-mile published geological maps. The GSGB WSP WCS papers for the Fareham (316), Lewes (319), Hastings (320), Dungeness (321), Tunbridge Wells (303), Bognor (332), Worthing (333),

Eastbourne (334) and Brighton (318) sheets are currently still in print and obtainable cheaply from the British Geological Survey at Keyworth, Notts (£5 each.) All the published well-records literature noticed here contains copious bibliographical references to other published and generally less formal sources - some of them more than obscure (the bibliographical leg-work has been done for you by the Survey's officers!)

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Series pp 332 / 333 / 334: iii + 55.

The British Geological Survey is at Keyworth, NOTTINGHAM, NG12 5GG.

An article on the Brighton Well Catalogue which will give a sample of what these records may yield will be published in the next edition of the SIAS Newsletter.

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LATEST DATE FOR COPY FOR THE October NEWSLETTER IS SEPTEMBER 14th.

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

website : www.fastnet.co.uk/sias

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