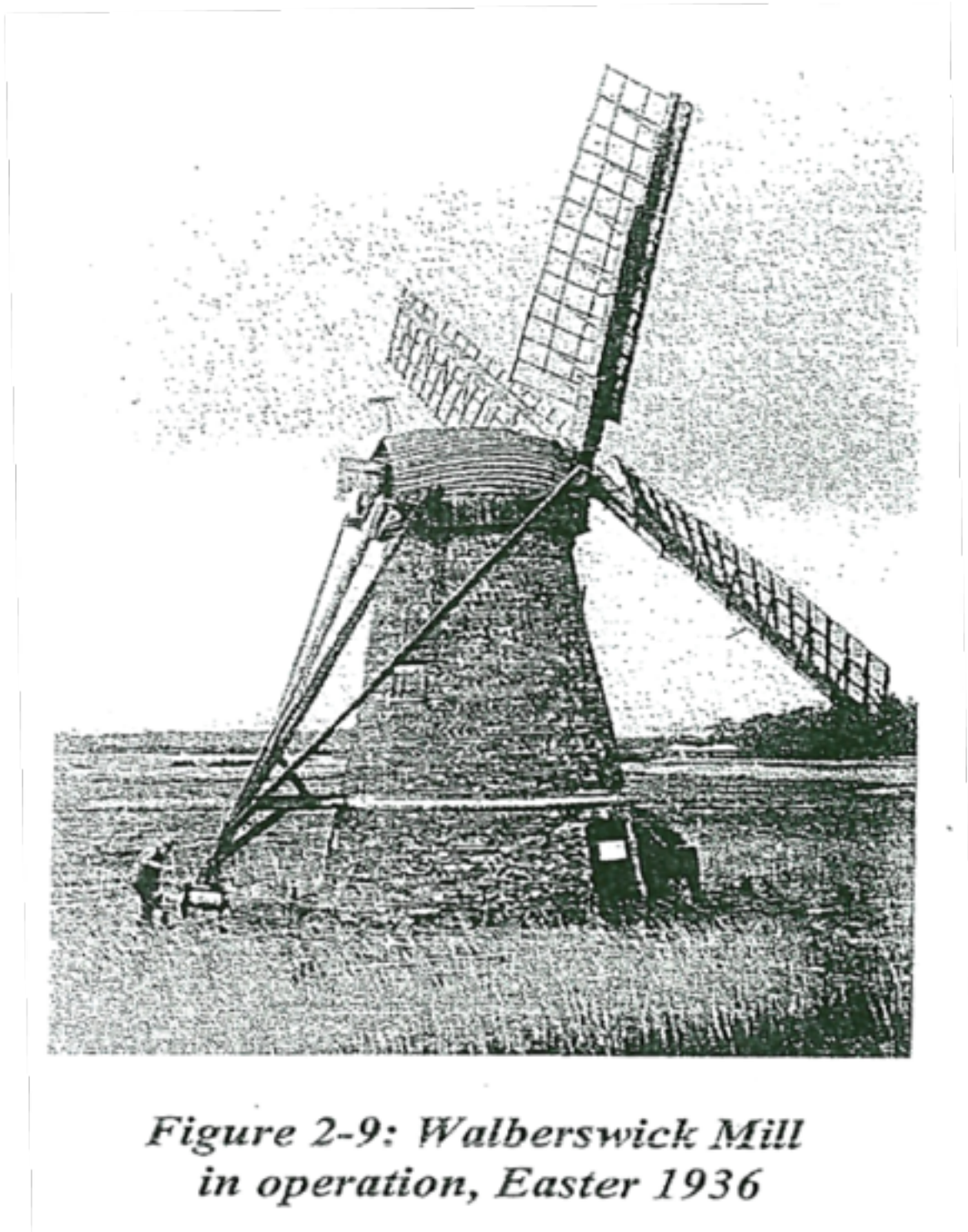


History of Walberswick Drainage Mill

Walberswick mill is a tower mill, approximately 7m tall (to the top of the masonry) of brick construction. As with most other mills of the Broadlands area, Walberswick Mill had a 'boat-shaped' cap which was turned by a tailpole (Fig. 2-9)



According to records of Suffolk mills, the tower was built in 1798 and worked until 1940. Before 1875 the land around the mill was ploughed and at this time the mill also had a pair of stones for grinding food for farm horses, in addition to the scoop wheel.

In its working days, Walberswick Mill was run by a 'millman' who would maintain the machinery and keep the sails turning at the required rate. The amount of cloth unfurled on the frames was altered depending on the strength of the wind. As the tailpole moved around, a wooden

roller ran against the concrete band set into the wall of the mill (Fig. 2-9). This served to steady the tailpole and reduce the forces acting on the cap.

In 1940 Walberswick Mill ceased working and the Westwood Marshes were reflooded as part of the World War II defences. At this time the mill suffered substantial damage from a gunnery practice, but was subsequently repaired in the 1950s as 'an example of the old pumping mills once so numerous on the Suffolk Marshes' and to be 'made available for bird watchers' (C. Tennyson and M.A. Robertson, 1951, in a letter seeking local support for the restoration). The repairs to the mill were, however, short lived; in 1960 a fire was started in the mill which destroyed much of the wooden structure in the upper part of the tower, including the cap. Since this event no further work has been carried out; the mill stands unused in a very dilapidated state.

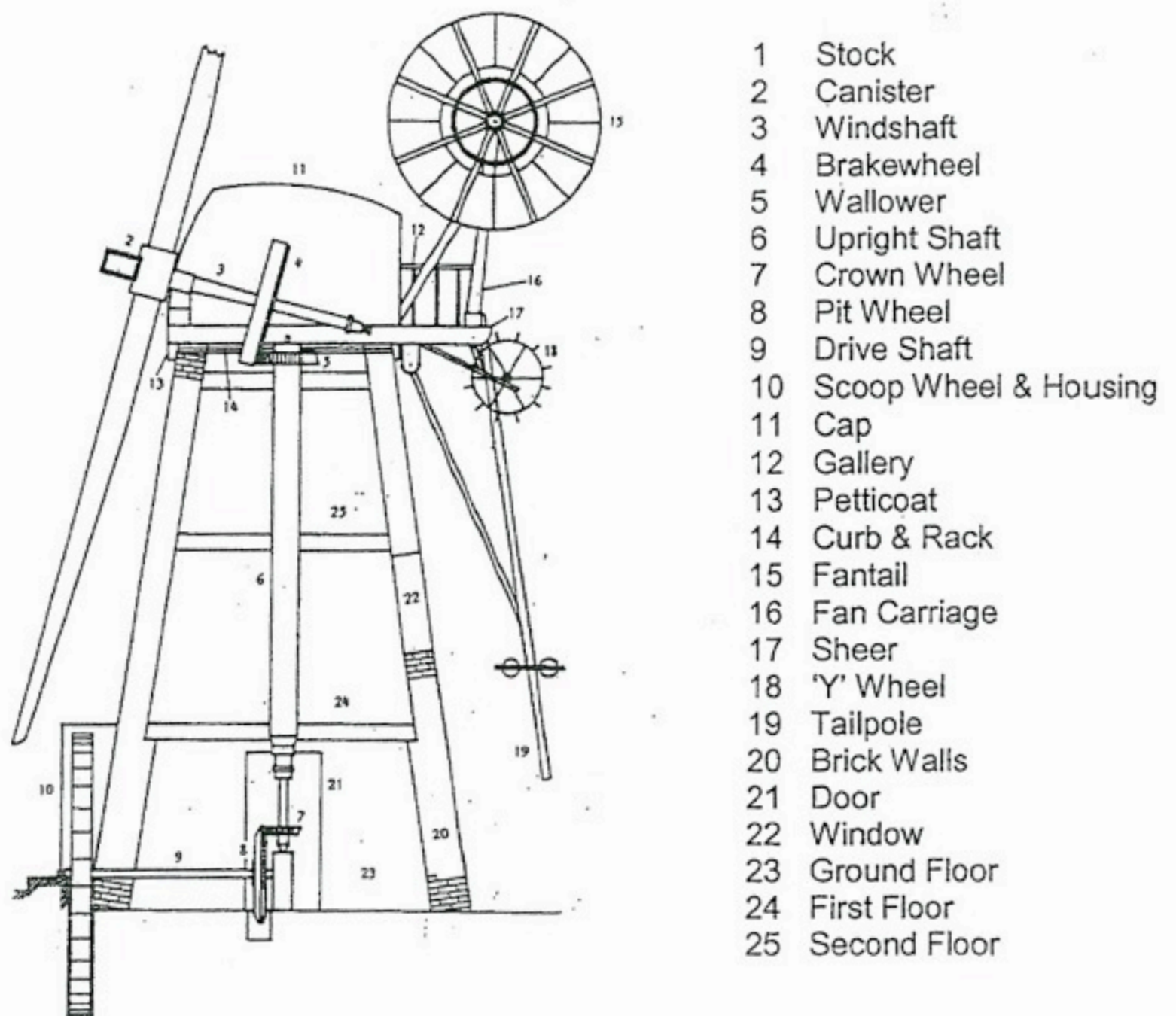


Figure 2-7: Tower mill with fantail (Smith, 1990)

The upright (wooden) shaft of the mill survived the fire of 1960, as did the crown wheel, pit wheel and drive shaft (see component parts 6–9 Fig. 2–7). It is to be noted that the Walberswick Mill did not have a fantail (component parts 15 & 16). The components are still in place, as are parts of the floors. Outside the mill, the tailpole and part of the winching gear remain, though the tailpole is in a broken and incomplete state. The dyke alongside the mill has been silted up but the iron ‘spider’ of the scoop wheel is still in place (Fig. 2.8)



Fig 2–8 Iron ‘spider’ of scoop wheel

Originally, when the wooden paddles were in place, the scoop wheel would have had a total diameter of approximately 3m (Wailles, 1956). A wooden hoodway of boarding would have existed around the outside of the scoopwheel to shield splashes; this hoodway is visible in Fig. 2.11.



Fig. 2.11 Mill in 1934