Booton Bridge and Booton Mill

To the Editor of the Magazine

Previous to 1820 there was no water bridge at Booton, merely a ford for the traffic. The following are bona-fide facts.

A gentleman who lived in Reepham went to Booton Hall to have dinner with his father-in-law, and coming home on horseback through the ford fell from his horse and dislocated his neck and died; this was on December the 15th 1811. Nine years after, a bridge was built over the ford.

On a cast-iron tablet which is 3 feet 5 [inches] wide and 3 feet 6 [inches] high, which was built in the wall of St Michael's church tower, in a vault beneath are deposited the remains of Mr David Williams who died December the 15th 1811 in the 58th year of his age. He was a native of Storney [?] near Bridgend, Glamorganshire, and many years a respectable surgeon in this parish. Also Charlotte his beloved wife who died November the 15th 1812 in her 44th year of her age; she was the daughter of Peter Elwin Esq. of Booton Hall by his first wife Miss [?] Paston of Bale in this county,

As a small testimony of respect to the memory of such estimable parents, this tablet is put here by their two sons, Peter Elwin and Richard David Elwin.

On the parapet wall of Booton Bridge, the upstream side, is the following: "This Bridge was Built by Subscriptions 1820".

Booton Mill

The wind to serve the mill finished as the trees of Reepham House plantation grew tall and was removed to Booton Hill. It stood there in working order under the tenancy of Charles Stackwood until 1900.

Charles Stackwood at that time thought it was not necessary as he had to two windmills at Cawston and persuaded his landlord to take down the mill with the exception of the brickwork and make same into a storage building for corn etc., the landlord paying the writer to cover in same with felt.

All the beautiful old oak was bought by the writer who used it to cover in the Reepham Brewery well for the late Samuel Bircham Esq. and has the date on same 1900.

The mill when at Booton was a pleasing dominant feature of the landscape. Few thought of the important part it had played in the economic life of the people or its constant battle against the wind. It was useful after the mothers and their children had gleaned the corn in the harvest field took it to the mill to be ground

into meal flour, also the neighbouring farmers who made use of the beautiful old mill to grind their second quality of corn for their pigs, cattle, etc.

There was exciting times when the new sails were fitted, the apparent danger of the workmen riding the sails. The length of the sails was about 60 feet long, weighing about 1½ tons which had to be replaced.

I am preparing an imaginary sketch of a windmill standing by the old miller's house now standing at Reepham occupied by a Mr Cole and his wife.

H E H

Please digest the above and alter same to suit you, have enclosed a sheet of paper for the alteration if you may wish to make Mrs Cross [?].

I can give you a true story of the removal of Booton Mill which anyone could read in a church.

You had better give the mill a rest till after the holidays and then send it back for a day or so.