

East Anglia Tour – July 7th 2021

Pakenham Water Mill (well worth a visit: <https://pakenhamwatermill.org.uk>) is a fabulous site to begin our 'high Suffolk' tour, very ably organised by our very own Brian Aket. Just shy of 70 miles, the tour wends its way through a myriad of small Suffolk villages, all with their own & distinctive charm.

Starting with coffee and biscuits at the Mill at 9.30 and after much chat, the 8 cars (4 pre war and 4 post war) departed at sensible intervals. The all important driver's briefing from Brian, included giving us his mobile number, ending with him saying "....give us a call if you have a problem; not that I'll be able to do anything about it, but I'll tell the pub you'll be late for lunch!"



Brian Aket's 12/50 (Twiggy) takes pride of place at the lunch stop. Paul Baker's TA21DHC is in the background with Jack Clover's Speed 21 Special tucked in behind the 12/50. Just visible under the trees is Paul Gallifant's Silver Eagle.

Highlights of the morning tour include Westhorpe Hall (where Mary Tudor, Queen of France, died), the village of Gislingham (where a Viking called Gisling arrived in 910AD), Mellis Green (one of the largest remaining areas of Common Land), the delightful town of Eye (it was once surrounded by water and is named after the Saxon term for an island) and Wingfield College (beyond the Georgian facade lies a rare medieval Great Hall and cloister walk from the chantry college dating from 1362).

Arriving in Laxfield about Noon we settled for a wonderful lunch at the Royal Oak pub, all sitting outside, suitably distanced of course. Laxfield, like many Suffolk villages, can date itself from pre-Norman times and is sited on land cut back from wild forest. For most of its history since, it has been a village of free 'yeoman' farmers and has a marvellous museum in the Guildhall.

Suitably refreshed, the trip back to Pakenham passed Saxted Green Post Mill (still in working order), the massive Aspoll's Cider Mill and Brockford & Mid Suffolk Light Railway (the latter closed in 1952, but in 1990 a group set up to preserve the memory of the MSLR on the site of the old Brockford Station cattle dock).

Returning to Pakenham Water Mill, we were served with tea and a fine selection of home made cakes. Thank you Brian!

NB: The history notes were penned by and courtesy of Brain Aket.

Paul Baker