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MOATED SITE AT GISLEHAM SUFFOLK

by Paul Durbidge

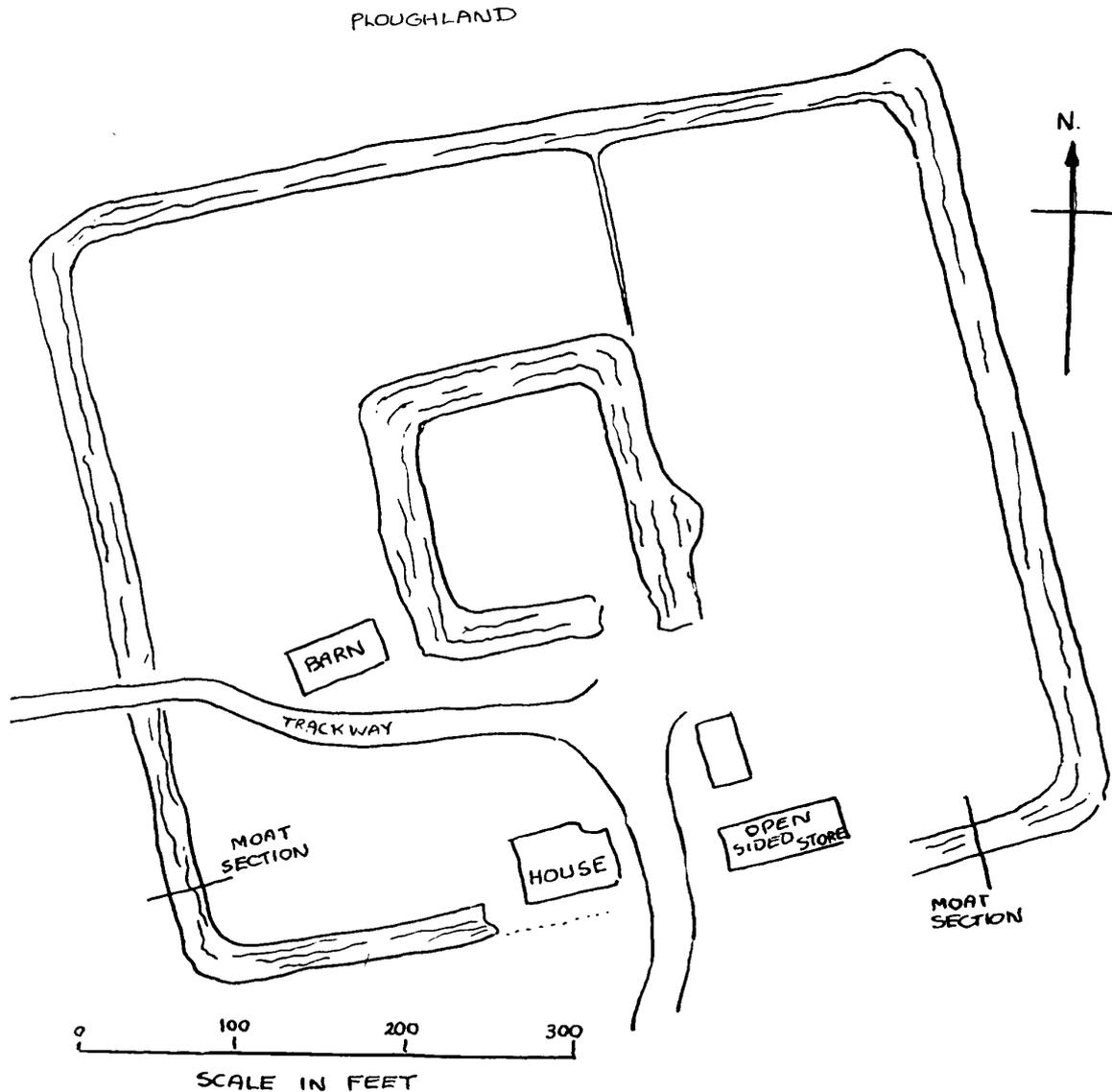
There are in Britain well over five thousand moated sites, the most common being either square or rectangular in shape. They are usually found in areas that have clay subsoil which can provide water by seeping and also prevent the water draining away. The majority appear to be of medieval date when they provided security against thieves, cut throats and the considerable feuding of families, consequently the need for moats in some areas would be greater than others.

There are two moated sites in close proximity to Gisleham, both being at Carlton Colville and both of different shape, though as far as their purpose or date is concerned very little factual evidence is known of either. The first, known as the Mardle, was just behind the Bell Public House. It was circular in shape with an enclosing moat of roughly ten feet in width, the enclosed area being 64 ft. in diameter and approximately three feet high. Several sherds of grey ware and also green glazed pot sherds of medieval date having been found in gardens close to the feature, but whether they are anything to do with the structure is open to question. Osiers were apparently used for basket making there and also the retting of hemp is recorded and no doubt it was both a working and meeting area as the name suggests. Any opportunity to test the enclosed area was terminated when the feature and adjacent land were covered with building rubble and soil during the early 70's, now only a very small part of the moat is visible alongside which stands a large mature willow tree.

The second of the two moated sites is roughly 250 yards further along the road on meadow land, with the moat of roughly 20 feet in width surrounding a piece of land 71 ft. by 73 ft. The land is well raised, with the upcast from the moat being thrown inwards, and the moat is quite wide for such a small piece of land. Compared with the Mardle it would have obviously involved much labour to produce the end result. As, on the majority of moated sites, nothing remains above ground apart from a number of trees and bushes, but it is well worth a visit to the interested reader if only to speculate as to its intended purpose.

At Gisleham lies one of the largest of the East Anglian double moated sites, suggesting that whoever had it constructed some time during the middle ages was a person of some considerable wealth. The sheer size of the site alone is impressive. The perimeter moats measure 527 ft. by 474 ft. with moats of up to 20 ft. in width and originally up to nearly 9 ft. in depth. Positioned roughly in the centre of the enclosed area is a second moated area enclosing a land mass of 102 ft. by 130 ft. with 30 ft. wide moats and access by way of an earthen causeway. Once again there is no trace of original buildings. The land is raised high and it would have been here where the brick and timber domestic buildings would have once stood, with barns, outbuildings, and probably orchards, retained by the outer moats. The majority of the Gisleham site is plough land with various trees and bushes lining all the moats; buildings consist of a large barn in red brick which originally had a fine thatched roof and adjacent small timber buildings, in various stages of decay. Much of the thatch has now gone leaving the rafters bleached by the sun, while a large ivy clings to one gable of the barn and more elder and ivy reach upwards towards the sky inside the roofless building. Steel framework bolted to the walls for running machinery wheels are now silent as too are the disused farm machines through which grow long nettles as nature gains mastery of the old barn. Just inside the inner bank of the southern moat stands the remains of what was once a fine large house built of soft red brick. Alterations through the

years show clearly in the front of the house, and even in its ruined state it is obvious that it was once a building of some character.



DOUBLE MOATED SITE AT GISLEHAM SUFFOLK

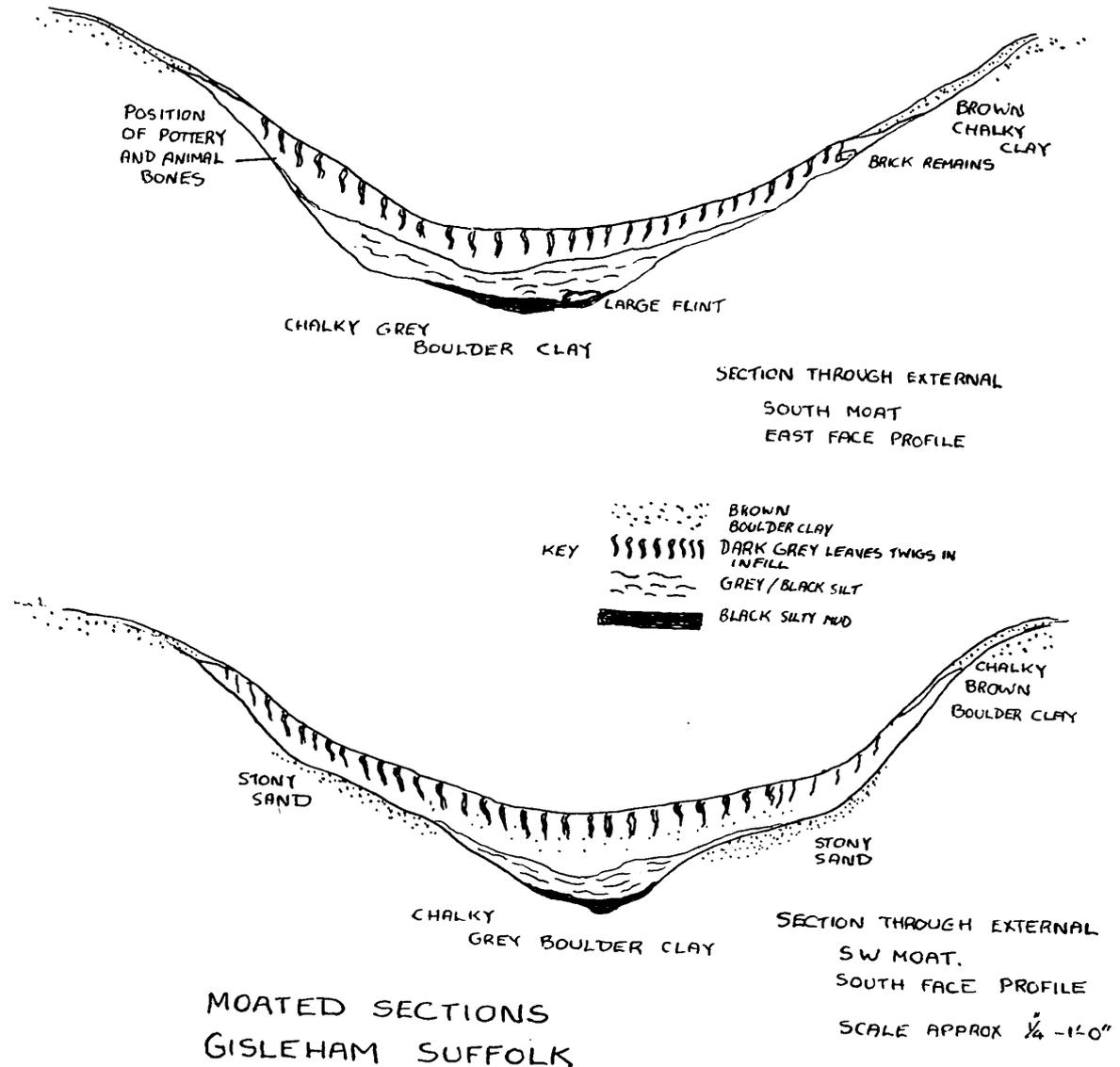
SHOWING POSITION OF THE

TWO MOAT CUTTINGS

SEP 1986

Since my last visit to the site some twelve years ago there has been considerable decline, and it seemed a good exercise to try to record the trees and shrubs growing along the moats, bearing in mind how quickly things can change. So in early September a survey of the trees was undertaken and two sections through dry moats were marked out; one was positioned in the S.W. external moat, the other on the south side. The south section was marked out some forty four foot from the internal corner, after several dead bushes and branches had been dragged out of the way. We hoped we would miss the mass of roots from several hawthorn bushes that were growing close by. The trench was marked and some infill removed before we had to finish for the day, but during the evening heavy rain gave the first indication of water content remaining in the infill. Attempts were made to cut through the infill a short distance away to draw the water away, which did seem to contain much of the flow and allow the section to continue, apart from the occasional need for removing water after a lapse of a few days. The sides of the cutting proved difficult because of the boulder clay and also the presence of a number of roots. However, the gradual removal of the sides uncovered a red house brick just below the surface and later part of a small angled coping brick, both of which suggested a 19th century date.

Continued work on the inner face of the section produced two pieces of heavily stained animal bone and a short time later fragments of pottery. With the sides proving very difficult to work the pottery came as a complete surprise and subsequently made the operation more interesting. It came in the form of two pieces of part base, probably from a jug or flagon, in light grey fabric with traces of pitted green glaze on a round bottomed base. Further fragments of coarseware encountered from the same side were of unglazed form, grey on one face and brown buff on the other, and all the sherds suggested a 14th century date. The removal of the centre fill revealed a make up of decayed leaves, twigs, and mud, but nevertheless, apart from the smell, it was reasonably easy to remove, although water seepage was again a problem.

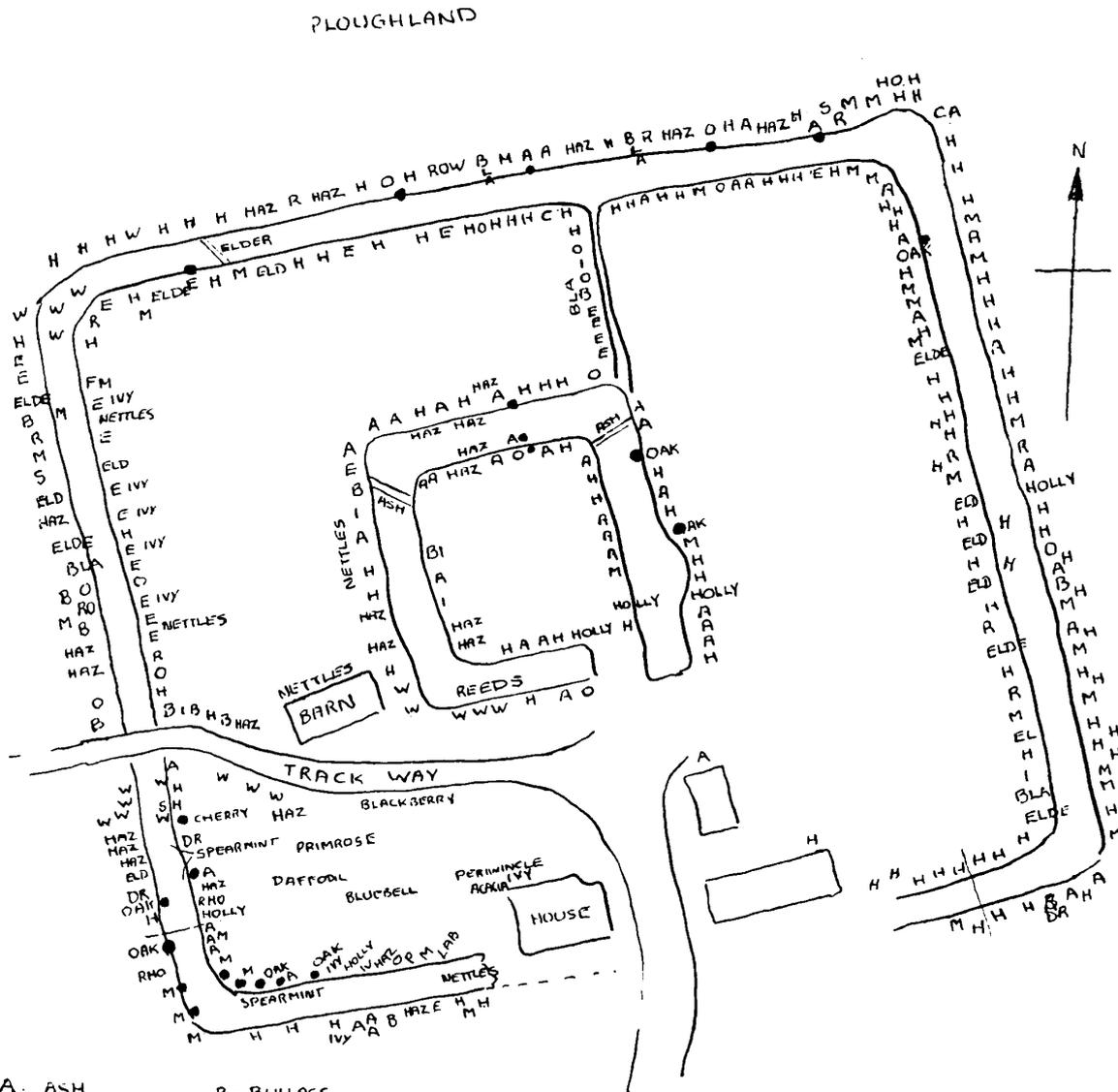


Completion of the centre section of the cutting showed a small bowl shaped bottom in the grey boulder clay, beside which lay a very large nodule of flint, which may have rolled in down the sides or been thrown in at some time. The amount of silting up or infill amounted to two feet nine inches, giving a depth of about eight feet six inches as the floor of the moat at this point, and while it would be unwise to suggest the pottery encountered dates the whole site, it was nevertheless recovered in context with the section infill.

Of the animal bones recovered the majority appear to come from either young sheep or goat, including two heavily stained jaw bones, the remainder belonging to domestic fowl.

The second of the two sections on the south west side was difficult from the start, with the concentrated mass of trees and large roots going horizontal in several cases. Finally, it was possible to position the cutting some 95 feet from the S.W. corner, and the section was cut with considerable difficulty from roots as well as overhanging bushes. Unlike the previous section, there was no water

problem, with the infill consisting of an almost peaty mix of leaves, twigs, and later thick mud, terminating on grey clay. This time there was no datable evidence, or animal bone, only a few small stones that had rolled down the sides soon after the moats had originally been dug. The small hollow in the centre of the moat compared with the previous section, although the sides of this one had been dressed with coarse stony sand, as if to lessen the sharpness of the moat profile. The amount of silt accumulated over the years amounted to roughly 2 ft. 9 ins., giving a depth from floor to present ground level of approximately 8 ft. 6 ins. Compared with similar moats at Raveningham, again a double moated site, the infill is comparatively little, which suggests they may have been cleaned out fairly regularly when the occupants were living there. Infill within the moats surrounding the inner enclosed area now consists of large fallen trees and many dead branches, and the water content here is always in evidence. During the survey of the trees bordering the perimeter area, it was possible to walk almost the entire way round, with the exception of the west corner, which still retained its draught of water.



- A - ASH
- BI - BIRCH
- D - DOGROSE
- E - ELM
- ELD - ELDERBERRY
- ELDE - ELDER
- HAZ - HAZEL
- H - HAWTHORNE
- M - MAPLE (FIELD)
- R - ROSE
- RHO - RHODODENDRON
- SW - SHELL WILLOW
- B - BULLACE
- BLA - BLACKBERRY
- FM - FIELD MAPLE
- RO - ROWAN
- W - WILLOW
- CA - CRAB APPLE
- S - SLOE
- O - OAK
- P - POPLAR
- LAB - LABURNUM
- - TREES OF 40 FEET OR MORE

DOUBLE MOATED SITE GISLEHAM
 DETAILS OF TREE DISTRIBUTION
 IN AND AROUND THE
 MOAT AREA'S
 OCTOBER 1986

A visit to the site during early April of 1987, showed a considerable amount of water all the way

round, and a marked increase around the house area in the centre. The banks of the moats were also covered in patches of primrose and most of the trees had begun to show green at the start of the warm weather. Several cowslips were to be seen on the edge of the ploughland, while in the overgrown garden near the derelict house there were again more primroses in some profusion, and clumps of daffodils in what was once a large and comparatively tidy garden.

In conclusion, I would like to express my thanks to all those who contributed in the project – moated sections are notoriously difficult and give few returns for all the hard work. My thanks go to Peter Wilks, Allen Weller and Dave Cuming, for all the digging, Dr. N.B. Eastwood for an interesting new approach to the unseen features, to Mary Goffin who was a source of inspiration in recording the trees, to Carolyn Reeder who suddenly made me realise I did not know much about trees, to Mike Reeder for his valuable knowledge about timber-framed buildings, and also to David and Ben Swift, Bea and Kevin, again for their work and involvement on the site.

Finally, my thanks are due to Mr. E.E. Cooke of Hall Farm, Gisleham and Mr. A.E. Cooke of Grange Farm, Gisleham, for giving permission to work on the site.

GISLEHAM MANOR MOATED SITE – STANDING BUILDINGS

by Mike Reeder

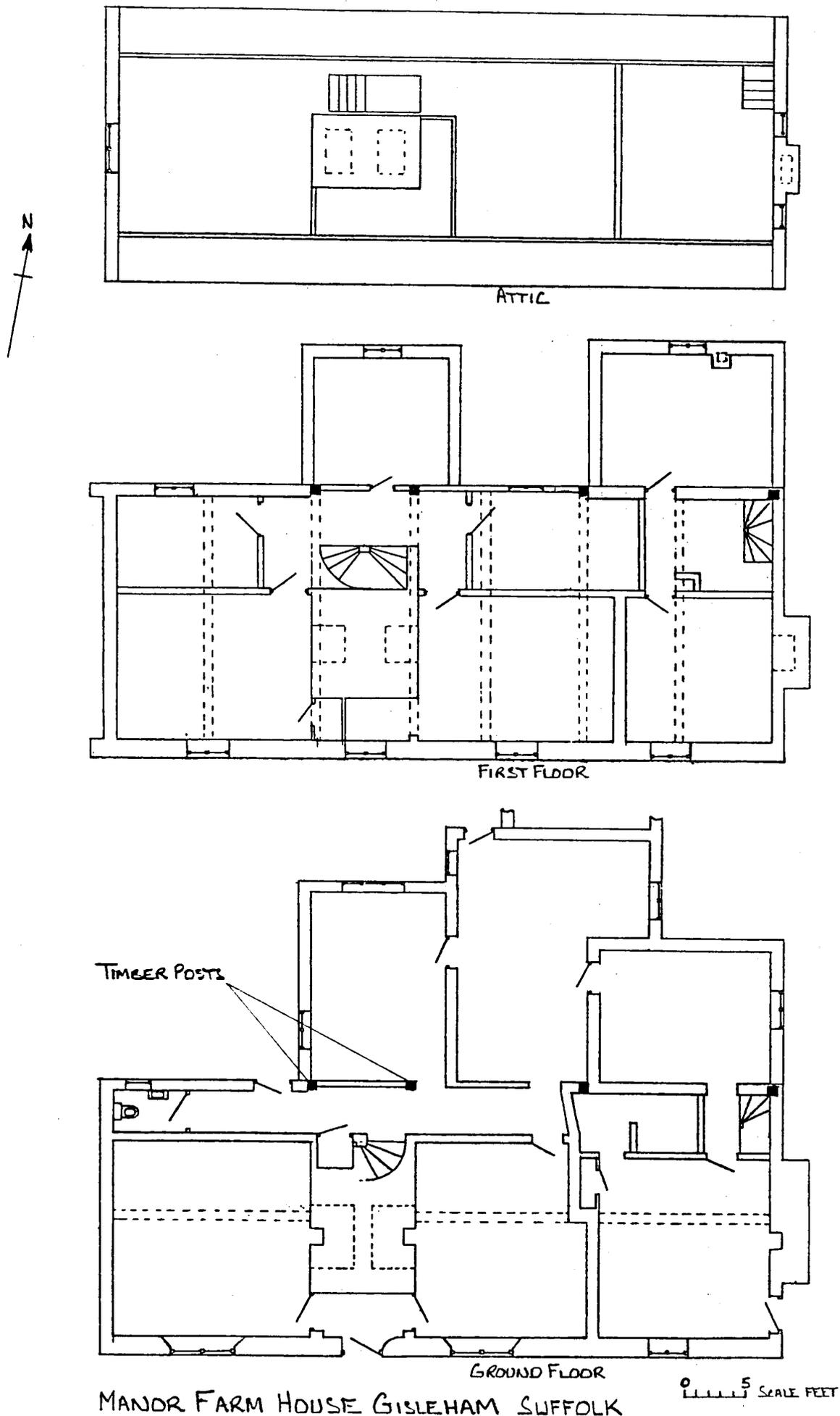
Just inside the southern edge of the outer moat stands an uninhabited farmhouse. This house is now dilapidated, many slates are falling off the roof and some parts of the structure are collapsing. Only the front is accessible from outside unless one is equipped with means of penetrating the dense undergrowth.

At first glance this building is an unpretentious late 18th or early 19th century brick built slate roof farmhouse. A close scrutiny of the outside raises many questions:- The main chimney stack coming out of the roof roughly at one third of the length of the house and the front door being in line with this chimney – points to a typical 17th C baffle entry house. A vertical unbonded joint in the brickwork on the front wall seems to indicate that it is a brick facade built in two separate periods, presumably because the house was then two dwellings. At first floor level a carbelled brick string course suggests that the facade may be built around a pre-existing longitudinal timber beam. Looking at the north end of the house a large brick chimney protrudes from the end wall and the angles of this wall under the roof either side of this chimney are plastered. The rear of the house has had large additions added, probably all 19th C and modified many times. One amusing feature is a dormer window in the roof of one of the extensions. This dormer, so obvious from the outside, cannot be found inside for it has been ceiled across during some later change. What can be seen of the rear wall of the main house is plastered not brick. The south gable wall is a recent rebuild.

Internally this house is difficult to interpret for many modifications have been carried out and much of the structure is covered up, and some of the floors are now unsafe and one staircase has collapsed, making investigation hazardous. No doubt the house has been through more than one cycle of single to multi-occupation and therefore the layout has changed many times, raising many questions. Particularly on the first floor level, the floor boards are not laid to conform with the present division of the rooms and some areas of the boards are of oak up to 16 inches wide, a suggestion of antiquity.

This suggestion of antiquity is also seen on the inside of the plastered area of the rear wall, for embedded in this are some interesting oak timbers. A 9 inch x 9 inch wall plate runs the full 55 feet length of the building, one scarf joint has been found in this length. Four 10 inch x 8 inch posts with jowled tops swelling to 10 inch x 14 inch still support this wall plate, the post at the west end cannot be traced and the two easterly posts may have lost their lower ends. Therefore, two posts can be seen to remain complete and are supported on a sill beam 4 inches above present floor level. This sill beam has been cut through in two places for doorways and can only be traced for a total of 16 feet. In the east gable end wall two 10 inch x 10 inch tie beams run from the back corner post, one at wall plate level and are at 7 feet 6 inches above present floor level.

Both these tiebeams can only be traced for about 6 feet before becoming lost in the brick chimney stack. Five other tiebeams are attached to the back wallplate and span the building.



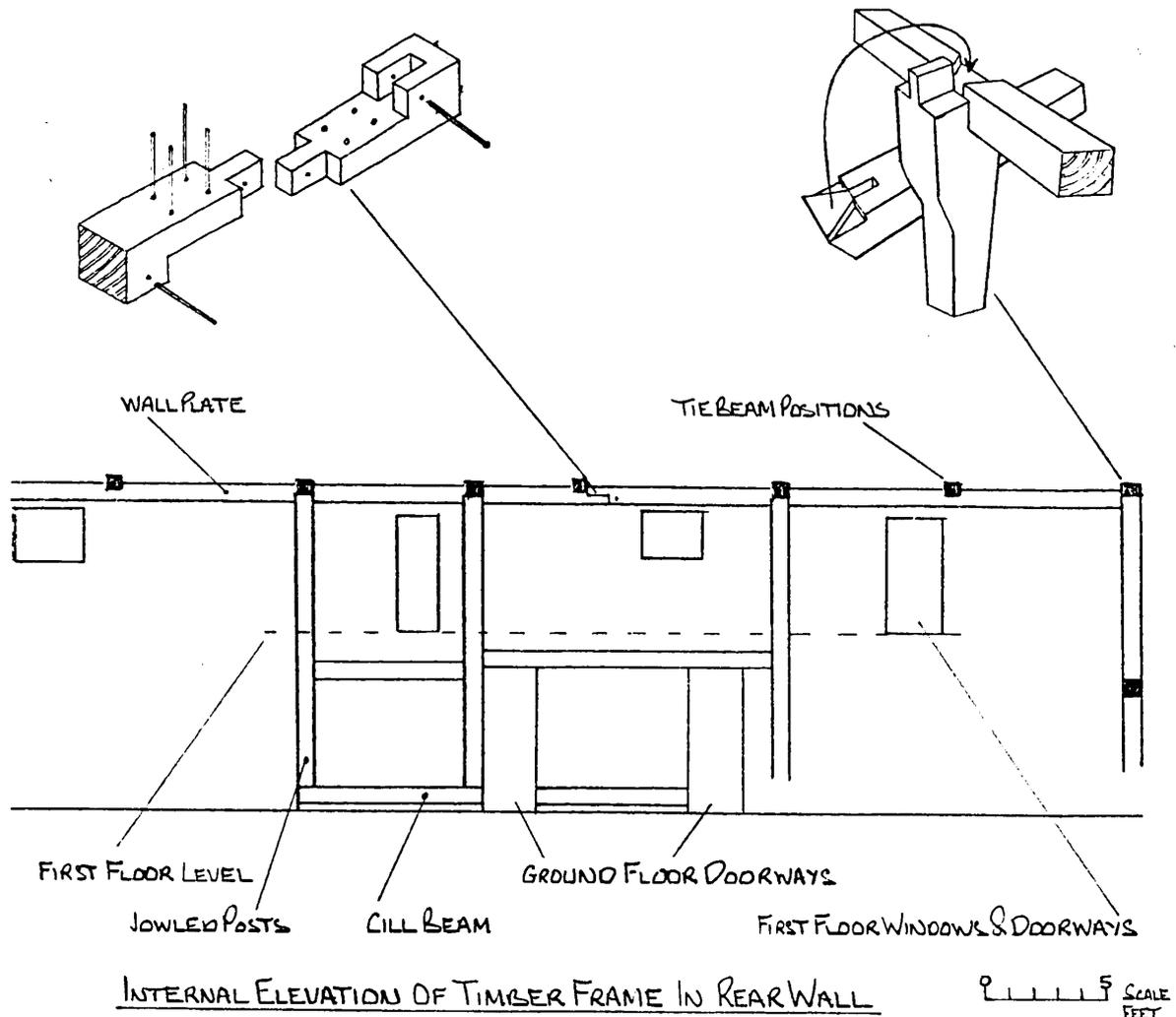
SCARF JOINT

EDGE HALVED SCARF WITH BRIDLED
ABUTMENTS ONLY TWO EDGE PEGS CAN
BE SEEN BUT THERE ARE PROBABLY ALSO
FOUR FACE PEGS.

FOR MORE DETAILS OF THESE & SIMILAR JOINTS -
'ENGLISH HISTORIC CARPENTRY' BY CELIL A. HEWETT PUBLISHED BY PHILLIMORE
IN 1980 IS AN EXCELLENT SOURCE.

POST HEAD & TYING JOINT FOR TIE BEAM

JOWLED POST WITH TENON, LAP
DOVETAIL IN WALL PLATE.



INTERNAL ELEVATION OF TIMBER FRAME IN REAR WALL

5 SCALE FEET

By the size and quality of the wall timbers they ought to date from the 16th century. The scarf joint and the corner post head joint were in common use through to the mid 17th century. If this was originally a 16th century house of about the size it is now, the only remains would seem to be this partial rear wall framing and maybe some of the tiebeams. The roof must originally have been of much steeper pitch and therefore it is unlikely that any of the original timbers remain, unless they were cut down and reused. It is possible that the front wall framing or part of it at least remains encased in the brick front wall. If this could be found it would then prove that the house, being at least 55 feet long and 20 feet wide, was a very important building.

As the existing driveway to the site is aligned exactly on the centre of this house, before turning to now pass to the east, it was thought that perhaps a gatehouse had commanded the access to the moated site. The timber frame as found does not suggest a gatehouse with a roadway through it. Maybe if this moated site is mediaeval, there was a gatehouse at this point which was replaced by a house in the 16th century and part of the moat filled in to provide a new access. A moat would by then have lost much of its defensive role and become more of a live stock enclosure and a simple gated access would

be much more convenient than a restricted gatehouse access. Further documentary research should reveal more information about the house and the site in general. Maybe if the deterioration of the house continues further evidence will be revealed.

Also remaining in the outer moated enclosure are a brick and pantiled open fronted cartshed and a brick and thatch barn. Both appear to be 19th century and are unused and decayed.

16th CENTURY STRANGERS IN NORWICH

by Lilian Fisher

Problems connected with sharp trade practices, labour relations and immigration seen to be continually before us, and it was no different in Tudor times ! During some work I have recently done, I turned up some interesting information about life in Norwich in the 16th Century – at a time when the wool trade was bringing such enormous wealth to the region, where there were three times as many sheep as people.

If we should think that life in Tudor times was less disciplined than now, or that there was less government intervention, then we would be quite wrong. Every aspect of life was closely controlled, and the lucrative wool trade was no exception. There were stringent laws to encourage the export market and to protect the home market. The export of raw wool was actively discouraged, for it was more profitable to export the finished cloth. At home, everyone except Royalty, had to wear home produced cloth, and even shrouds had to be made of wool. There were also strict Guild rules to control the working practices of the spinners and weavers, and to regulate the standard of work. Minimum wage rates were set, and although woman and children were considered suitable to carry on the spinning of the wool, only men were allowed to weave the cloth. Town weavers had to have four apprentices; country weavers two apprentices, and no married man, foreigner, or woman could be apprenticed.

Farmers sold the raw wool to merchants, who operated the 'putting out' system, taking the wool to the spinners' and weavers' homes to be turned into cloth. Then, unless the merchant had a cloth show room, such as the one in Dragon Hall on King Street, Norwich, huxters collected the finished pieces to take to Market. Huxters were rather frowned upon (and the name has developed connotations of shady dealings), for they seemed to do nothing – just made money by buying and selling. Not only that, they often acted illegally by sending wool abroad. Wardens regularly inspected the weavers' homes and huxters' warehouses, and each piece of cloth was examined and a seal applied if it passed inspection. But even the wardens couldn't be totally trusted, for inspectors were appointed to supervise the wardens.

By the mid 16th Century, however, the boom seemed to be over and both export sales and quality declined. Dutch fabrics – the New Draperies, such as velvets, bombazines and fustians – were stealing the market, for they were finer and more luxurious than the local Worsted cloths. Even the home markets were beginning to prefer imported goods – nothing new to us ! To add to the troubles, farmers in pursuit of greater profits, found loopholes in the regulations and began to sell their raw wool abroad, thus making a shortage in England and causing unemployment. By 1542, the export of wool was completely banned, although some audacious smuggling was carried on.

Despite all efforts, trade slumped even further, and Norwich suffered. In desperation in 1564, it was decided to invite a few 'Strangers' to come to Norwich from the Continent to teach their new skills to local weavers. This radical and enterprising idea coincided with the religious persecution of Huguenets and Walloons. Thirty master weavers with ten servants (or apprentices) were to be allowed in, and were to be given churches to worship in. Predictably very many more than 300 Strangers arrived, giving rise to anger amongst the Norwich people. As religious persecution was stepped up on the Continent, for example the St. Bartholomew's Eve Massacre, so the numbers of Strangers coming to England increased rapidly. Soon 4,000 Strangers were in Norwich, and more were on the way. Many were Anabaptists, and radical. Many were accused of drunkenness, and there were quarrels about retailing the cloth. Norwich merchants wanted to keep the retailing in their own hands; the Strangers wanted to be able to sell their cloth to whomever they wished. Feelings were running high in the town, and in 1570, a group of Catholics tried to rouse up the citizens to throw out the Strangers, but the plot misfired, and three of the plotters were executed. One of the plotters was Hobart of Hales Hall, who escaped with his life, but was imprisoned.

Nevertheless, despite the acrimony, trade began to flourish again, and when Queen Elizabeth I visited Norwich in 1578, she was treated to an exhibition of weaving by the Strangers. Perhaps harmony would have prevailed, but an outbreak of plague swept through Norwich the following year, and all the old ill-feeling and prejudices were aroused. There was rioting in the streets, for local people blamed the Strangers' dirty habits for the outbreak of plague. They were accused of breaking local public health laws. For example, they were accused of washing the raw wool in the river, which was forbidden. Even worse, the Strangers were accused of emptying chamber pots in the street, and not washing away the contents with water ! The new wave of plague was particularly virulent, and sadly depleted the population, of Norwich. The Strangers were particularly hard hit.

I found no further information after this date. Clearly, the Strangers must have been gradually accepted, intermarried with Norwich families, and merged their identities. It all seems so familiar though, and despite changes in society and the increase in knowledge gained over the centuries, in many ways, human nature doesn't seem to have changed much !

CHANGES IN THE LOWESTOFT SCENE 1986-87

by Jon Reed

This year has seen many changes which affect both the appearance and the way of life in Lowestoft and Oulton Broad.

The most major alteration is the demolition of the old laundry building, which housed the Lowestoft Museum for many years after the laundry moved out, and several other buildings including the bus garage and a net store used as a warehouse by Lowestoft electrical. This left a clear space from Gordon Road south to Surrey Street, taking in part of The Prairie, on which is being erected the Britten Shopping Centre. This will, no doubt, be a good thing when it is completed. However, at the moment it has resulted in the loss of a large car park and in quite long detours for pedestrians, who can no longer walk through from Clapham Road to London Road North beside the Library. Although the Bus Station in Gordon Road is still in use, the garage has been moved east of Whapload Road to Newcombe Road.

Speaking of buses, a major change in the service took place in 1986 with the introduction of a sizable fleet of minibuses by Eastern Counties. Called 'Miniline', the buses run at frequent intervals and provide a much improved service between the centre of the town and all the outlying housing estates. In the few months since they were introduced those minibuses, which take about 20 passengers, have become a familiar sight around the town.

By contrast, the British Rail line to Ipswich has been scaled back. There is now only a single track between Lowestoft and Woodbridge. The journey is no quicker as a result, still taking a nominal 1½ hours. Indeed, while the track lifting was going on this stretched to well over 2 hours and many times the connections with the London trains were missed, stranding passengers on Ipswich station. As part of the works, the manned level crossing in Victoria Road, Oulton Broad was changed to an unmanned, ungated crossing. There are two schools of approach to this by drivers. They either hesitate to cross, just in case the lights have gone wrong or rush across as quickly as possible in the hope of missing any hypothetical approaching train.

On the roads things have not changed much. Oulton Broad bridge over Mutford Lock was found to be giving under the weight of juggernauts and a ban on vehicles over 8 tons was imposed in 1986. Some work on strengthening the bridge was begun in December 1986, and when finished in March 1987 the weight restriction was removed. In Lowestoft the Katwijk Way roundabout system was altered to open up the south western end of Alexandra Road. This is now 'one way' from Regent Road to the roundabout. The Pakefield Terminus junction was completed in 1986. The latest effort is the complete resurfacing of London Road South from St. Peter's Road to Carlton Road. This caused its complete closure for a while. During the excavations the foundations of the old tramlines, laid in 1905, were found still in situ. Finally, the dangerous bus lane at the north end of the Pedestrian Precinct was closed down during 1986.

Industry has seen some changes for the worse and some for the better. Eastern Coachworks finally succumbed in January 1987, total closure following the privatisation of the National Bus Company. S.L.P. (Sea & Land Pipelines) was taken into receivership in the summer of 1986, but was taken over by Wimpey and is still in existence. C.W.S. opened a new warehouse in Harbour Road during 1986

and, towards the end of the year, Cosalt moved to the Oulton Works site near Sanyo. Brook Marine are suffering problems after a management takeover.

Commercial concerns have also seen some changes. A new estate is being built at the western end of Bloodmoor Lane opposite Stradbroke Road (a new roundabout has been put in at this junction). Rosedale Gardens now have a large Gateways Supermarket with an adequate car park. In Victoria Road, Oulton Broad the store that was Calor Gas, then used by Taylors newsagents, is now Eastbike, selling motorcycles and some cars. Mann Egerton have opened their new car showroom on the corner of Mill Road and London Road South, on the site of the old Wesleyan Chapel and some houses. Kirkley Run Garage has been demolished. The pedestrian precinct has lost a Hot Bread shop. Two estate agents, John Howard and Hanbury Williams have had to move as a result of the Britten Centre project. Hanbury Williams have taken over the old Bus Station-office next to Woolworths and John Howard are now in Queen Elizabeth II Place. The Wherry Hotel has been extended and is now, yet again, under new ownership. The Hotel Oulton Broad, just up the road, has completed its reconstruction and now has a swimming pool and a completely new entrance. The former Coopers Warehouse in Mariners Street has been rebuilt and renovated as council offices. In Surrey Street the National Westminster Bank has built an extension filling the gap between it and the Post Office back entrance.

Social amenities have improved for the elderly with the opening of Levington Court sheltered accommodation on the site of the old Wesleyan Chapel in the High Street in January 1987. The development of the St. John's site in South Lowestoft is proceeding rapidly with the erection of more sheltered accommodation. 1986 also saw the introduction of a mobile library which visits places near South Lowestoft and Oulton Broad once a fortnight.

Apart from the demolitions already noted, regrettably the last houses in Old Nelson Street were demolished in February 1987 to make way for a new Magistrate's court, the piling for which has been started next to the police station. Also the Trimoco garage at the north end of the High Street has been demolished. Details of the history of this site appear in the March 1987 newsletter (Vol. 15, No. 7).

This is probably not a totally comprehensive list of the changes which have taken place, but it gives the majority of the alterations to the Lowestoft scene in the last year or so.

FINDING ROMAN ROADS BY DOWSING

by Dr. N.B. Eastwood

In October 1986 I attended a weekend course on 'Dowsing and Archaeology' at Madingley College, Cambridge, at which Dr. David Trump described the survey he was engaged in concerning the Roman roads of the fens, and Prof. Bailey described the identification of the foundations of earlier churches in and around existing mediaeval churches.

I had long been familiar with the method of dowsing with a forked twig, in which the two branches are held in the hands and a positive finding is signalled by a sharp upward movement of the twig. Dr. Trump demonstrated the use of a pair of bent metal rods, which converged as he walked over concealed archaeological features such as the footings of walls, old wells and ditches. In the course of the weekend, the whole class of about a dozen students had mastered this technique.

It appeared that the drainage ditches of Roman roads could be relied on to give a very sharp reaction and that between these ditches lay the carriageway ten paces wide; therefore, Dr. Trump had been able to identify numerous such roads and to indicate their significance in relation to the river ports of the fens and to the Roman economy in general.

Prof. Bailey described the results of dowsing in and around churches, also with the aid of rods. We were permitted to douse inside Madingley church and were able to identify with twig and rods, the existence of the footings of earlier walls, remaining from when the church was narrower than it is now and also to discover the bellfounder's pit, close by the tower in which an itinerant mediaeval bellfounder had cast the church bell.

At the earliest opportunity, I visited the Via Devana – the Roman road on the Gogmagog Hills south of Cambridge, to get the feel of a real and visible Roman road. It was as described. On either side was a strongly reactive ditch as checked with both twig and rods, and between the two a largely unreactive carriageway ten paces wide. There was a small reaction along the centre line of the road.

I could now make a start with Burgh Castle. Clearly a fort of this size must lie at the centre of an extensive communication system – and so it proved. I was able, by dowsing, to identify roads radiating out towards Cobham, Gorleston and Corton, and, to the west, towards Caistor St. Edmunds, Bramerton and the Acle road, where it can be found at the corner opposite the Stacey Arms. I was able to intercept the road to Caistor St. Edmunds at various places during a visit to Helvergate and then to follow it further at Claxton, at the crossing of the A146 and at five crossing points on roads east of Caistor. The straight road for 1km. west of Framingham Pigot lies on the Roman road.

I took the opportunity to identify numerous Roman roads in the vicinity of Caistor, which must represent, as is known, a substantial town. In a similar manner I examined the road to Bramerton and also the road emerging from the east gate of Burgh Castle, which can be traced to Gorleston, where it underlies Church Lane and continues down Baker Street and into the Harbour.

In the course of these explorations, I identified about ten Roman villages including one lying south of Gorleston, and in our district, groups of parallel Roman roads representing Roman settlements in Corton, Gunton, Pakefield, south of the South Pier at Lowestoft and North and South Oulton Broad.

From the dowser's point of view, Oulton Broad is a remarkably rich Roman area. It is thought that in Roman times, the Waveney may have taken a direct route to the sea through Lowestoft and in such case, the crossing at Oulton Broad would have been crucial to the southern defences of Burgh Castle.

Numerous roads radiating out from Burgh Castle and its coastal satellites crisscross the Waveney District. Many can be identified in Everitt's Park. One, which can be found near Kirby Cane coming from the Tasburgh direction, can be found in Everitt's Park where one of its ditches is marked by a large dead elm and a large oak. It then follows Victoria Road and Kimberley Road and enters the sea south of the South Pier at Lowestoft. Another crosses Yarmouth Road opposite Denes High School on a bearing of 060 and can be found in Everitt's Park where one of its ditches is marked by the swamp cypress at the west end of the park. Confirmation of the line of this road may be found at the north end of Princes Walk and at the point where it crosses Northgate. This crossing is marked by oak trees on both sides of the road – the one on the west side stands in the north-west ditch and the one on the east side in the south-east ditch.

In looking for the Roman roads, a very striking fixture is how well oaks, ashes, sycamores, hollies, elms, pines and other trees grow in these old ditches. Many of our hedgerow trees grow in Roman ditches and most of the major trees in Everitt's Park do likewise. These observations make it possible to arrive at a very comprehensive view of the Roman communications of the fourth century, developed to meet the threat of invasion from Europe. By noting the bearing of Roman roads crossing the present shoreline, one can deduce their course and where they are likely to have intersected with other roads. Such points of intersection about one or two kilometres from the present shoreline probably represent the position of the Roman shore.

A dowser will also find reactions from other structures. The bridges at Lowestoft and Yarmouth give a strong reaction across their full width. There is a wide reaction in Everitt's Park which is continuous with a wide sinuous reaction through Oulton Broad South. This could represent a former course of the Waveney or possibly defensive ditches or a combination of both. A similar reaction occurs under the uneven roadway in Caldicot Road adjacent to the Broad and also in Hall Road between Holly Road and Chestnut Avenue.

The problem, of course, arises as to whether Roman roads found by dowsing are real Roman roads. One form of evidence is the pattern of the dowsing reaction to the known Roman Road on the Gogmagog hills. Better is the evidence from the Roman road found by dowsing crossing the northern part of Corton Road. Its south ditch lies one pace north of the traffic turn left sign for Corton Long Lane. On a subsequent occasion, I examined the face of Corton cliff and found this Roman road clearly apparent emerging from the top of the cliff face between groins 13 and 14 (just north of the nudist beach).

Another Roman road was identified from crop marks on a bearing of 080, intersected by Dorking Road, Lound, just south of Elder Farm. This road was identified by dowsing there and as it crossed the old A12 at Hopton and at Coast Road, Hopton. It reached the cliff edge south of Beach Road, where its ditches can be found by dowsing and also seen in the cliff face. It should be noticed that the signal picked up by the dowser extends beyond the end of the ditch. In this instance the dowsing signal continues from the end of the north ditch of this road on a bearing of 080 down to the sea margin 70 paces away.

It should also be noted that the dowsing signal can be deflected by metal and that therefore a ditch

traced by dowsing inside a ferroconcrete building may not be present at exactly the site of the dowsing reaction, either by a deflection of the signal by the metal structure or one may be picking up the signal from the cut end of a ditch destroyed during the digging of the foundations.

No firm explanation of the dowsing reflex has yet been generally accepted, but it is likely to be a manifestation of the human magnetic sense. This is an aspect which I am at present actively pursuing.

IN DAYS GONE BY

by Ron Ashman

One of the Last Horsemen

When I see the harvesting in progress I cannot help looking back in my mind to similar scenes of my childhood. Nowadays the golden corn is cut by a combine harvester that separates the grain and leaves a trail of broken straw around the field, this to be either burnt where it lays or to be bundled into those huge round bales that nobody seems to want and that tend to be left in odd corners of fields like abandoned giant Swiss rolls. How different it was in my childhood when the corn was cut by a 'binder', and the sheaves stood in 'shocks' to dry before being carted and stacked. This was not the finish as the stack had to be threshed, which, due to the length of time, would be left to the slacker winter months.

Agriculture has seen a vast change in its methods over the past thirty years. Not only has mechanisation improved the efficiency and removed much of the hard work – with regard to the combine harvester it has changed what could have been a dawn to dusk activity for a lot of workers for over a month, into a few days work for a few workers – it has also changed our countryside and its crafts, as we have seen the demise of crafts such as blacksmiths, wheelwrights, wagon makers and harness makers. Hedgerows and trees have been removed to create larger fields and sprays have removed wild plants such as the once prolific red poppy. Straw burning has become a controversial part of the harvest scene, but farms no longer keep horses or their quota of fattening bullocks which used to steadily tread straw into manure in the yards.

I feel that today's children have missed out in some aspects of the harvest. They have not been part of shock building, hiding amongst the sheaves, leaning against them on field picnics, chasing rabbits that ran from the ever decreasing stand of uncut corn, or, after a day in the barley fields, the removing of the prickly barley awns from their clothes.

During my schooldays in the late 50's I spent many a happy hour working on a farm with my grandfather, who was employed as a horseman and acted also as farm foreman, stack builder and thatcher. Grandfather was employed by the late Mr. H. Rolph who farmed the land to the north of the village of Lound which bordered the waterworks. Four horses provided the main motive power on the farm and were assisted by one Fordson tractor. The crops grown included barley, wheat, hay and sugar beet that are common today and too that are now rarely seen in this area, oats – some of which were retained for horse feed – and mangolds which were for the bullocks.

Although my grandfather worked long hours during the week, he never worked on a Sunday except, that is, to feed his horses. Every Sunday we walked along the footpaths that crossed the meadows to the Methodist Chapel on Bunkers Hill. This building still stands but has long since ceased to be a place of worship, I believe it is now used as a store. For the harvest festival he would make small sheaves of corn to decorate the chapel and would act as auctioneer at the sale of produce on the day following the Service. I cannot remember him ever going away for a holiday, he would spend a few days at home and on local trips, with the occasional trip to Acle Sale. His garden and allotment provided most of the family requirements in vegetables for the year. The potatoes were stored over the winter months in a clamp, a thing not seen much today, after all the small ones had been removed to be retained as chicken food. Near the chicken run, which was in a pit, there was a small brick fireplace where these potatoes were boiled in a large old fashioned black saucepan. When they were cooked we would pinch a few, peel and eat them, they were lovely. What was left was mashed, mixed with bran and fed to the chickens. The chickens not only supplied all the family with fresh eggs but the surplus was sold to what I believe was called the Egg Marketing Board (remember the little Lion?). Twice a week their van arrived to collect these eggs. Another side line was the rearing of about twenty cockerels, some of which were allocated for the family at Christmas and the remainder sold to friends at quite a low cost.

The cottage where he lived was aptly named; it was called Stone Cottage and was built of brick with flint facing at the front and back. The cottage was close to the farm buildings, stood approximately half a mile from the nearest road, and was reached by a wide farm track. In the cottage next door lived the man who looked after the bullocks when they were brought into the yards during the winter months. The cottages and the farm buildings have been demolished except for a few of the bullock pens that were around the yard, and new houses have been built on the vacated land.

My grandfather retired in 1959 and Mr. Rolph continued for about a year when he also retired, the farm was sold and so were the horses. During the summer months grandfather occasionally helped his old friend Ted Fenn on his farm in Lound, and it was during the hay harvest in 1961 that he collapsed and died. Mr. Rolph had been one of the last farmers in this area to retain horses when most of the others had moved towards the sole use of tractors. These animals were magnificent creatures and it was a sight to see them, after a hard day's work had finished, indulging in an energetic roll on the meadow as the day drew to a close.

The Farm Horse

Over the past 2000 years the horse has not been the only power source in farming, as the earliest form was man (women, children, and possibly slaves). From the little we know of Saxon times it seems that horses were scarce and expensive. In the Domesday Book the plough teams listed were almost all of oxen and it was only about three hundred years ago that the heavy horse emerged as an important farm animal. The process of substituting the horse for the ox was slow and both worked side by side up to this century (the latest reference found mentioned a team ceasing in Sussex in 1929).

There were four main breeds of horse used on British farms. The first was the Suffolk Punch which could be recognised from its chestnut colour, its broad forehead and long muscular shoulders. The second was the Shire which could be black, brown, bay, roan or grey, with its long lean head and feathered feet. Outside East Anglia, the Fens and a few northernmost counties, the Shire was the recognised power unit on English farms. The Clydesdale was similar to the Shire and took its place in Scotland. The fourth breed was the Percheron which was different from the others in that, far from being developed slowly over the centuries from indigenous stock, it was introduced to this country this century. The Percheron originated in France and, although it came to this country before the first World War, it did not become popular until after this. The war needed not only men; a huge number of horses were required to pull the guns and other equipment. As home stocks became depleted a commission, was sent to North America to acquire the necessary animals. Although the earlier colonists had taken the Punch, Shire and Clydesdale to that continent the Percheron had been introduced later and became very popular. Therefore the horses supplied to our army included a high proportion of this breed and they in turn became very popular with our servicemen. The Percheron had been bred to stand up to heavy draught work on hard rough surfaces, were faster than most British breeds, and were renowned for their docility which made it easier to break them in. Most foal's were born black and assumed a dappled colouration as they matured. Two of the horses my grandfather had were of this breed, the other two were possibly Shires.

To support its huge bulk a heavy horse required large quantities of food. Grass and hay alone were not an adequate ration so a protein food was also given. My grandfather's horses had crushed oats mixed with chaff (chopped hay) and hay. In some areas beans were used instead of oats, or even as a mixture.

The stable was used only for feeding and at night in the colder months the horses would be turned loose in a partly covered yard that was well littered with straw. Under the cover there was a hay rack where they could obtain food as and when they wanted. In the summer months they would spend the nights and the days when not working on one of the meadows. When in the stable they were in stalls side by side and tethered by a headstall, a leather halter with a rope attached, the rope passed through an iron ring on the side of the manger and through a hole in a square block of wood called a sinker. A knot tied at the bottom of the sinker kept the horse secure and allowed it to move its head in all directions. Horses need an ample supply of fresh air and the traditional half door on stables was probably developed for that reason.

The harness was stored in a room next to the stable. That used for draught work consisted of three primary parts, the collar by which the horse pulled the load, the pad which took the weight of the shafts, and the bridle. Basically the harness was of leather, but the pad had a wooden frame with a grooved bridge (a chain passed through this bridge from one cart shaft to the other), and the collar was reinforced with wooden 'hanes' to which the chains were attached (by which the load was pulled). It may be interesting to note that the collar was put on upside-down over the horses head and twisted to

its right position after it was resting on its neck.

With the passing of the horse age we have lost forever sounds such as the heavy breathing and creaking harness as the horse pulled a heavy load. Somehow the clatter of the diesel engined tractor is not quite the same.

The Harvest

In my memories of the corn harvest the crop was cut by a 'binder', but before this started my grandfather would mow a strip around the field edge with his scythe wide enough for the tractor and binder so they did not flatten the corn. The binder in its working position was too wide to move along the trackways (or roads) and through the field gate posts. To overcome this, two auxiliary wheels were attached to enable the machine to be pulled sideways.

The standing corn was cut by a reciprocating knife between a row of fixed fingers. Revolving sails gathered the crop onto the knife and made it fall uniformly onto the horizontal platform canvas after being cut. From this canvas the corn was carried to the sheafing mechanism, by two more canvases placed nearly vertical and parallel to each other with the corn passing between them, where the sheaf was formed, tied, and ejected butt ends first at the side of the machine. The binder travelled anti-clockwise around the field and a gang of workers went clockwise and stood the sheaves together in groups called 'shocks' (in some areas they were called stooks).

With the present day combine harvester the corn is ripe when cut, as it is threshed straight away, but with the binder it had to be cut when it wasn't quite ripe because with all the subsequent handling the grain would have been scattered over the fields. As there were no sprays to reduce weeds the sheaves contained quite a mixture of these and were placed in shocks to let them dry before stacking, because to stack straight away could lead to it getting warm due to internal combustion, and eventually to catch fire. The corn remained in the shocks for one to three weeks.

To allow the tractor to manoeuvre on corners they were kept clear of sheaves, which was achieved by the use of retractable 'tines'. These were extended on the approach to a corner and retained the discharged sheaves which were released after the corner had been turned.

Before the introduction of myxomatosis many rabbits could be found in the fields. Mr. Rolph would arm himself with his 12 bore shotgun and, helped by the dogs present, usually bagged quite a number. The rabbits tended to hide in the uncut corn until it was reduced to a small area and then make a break for safety. At the end of each day those that failed were shared out among the workers.

The use of the mechanical reaper did not become the norm until the beginning of this century. The oldest method recorded, going back centuries, was the use of the sickle – not to be confused with the hook, the sickle had a narrow blade with a serrated cutting edge. With this the reaper passed the blade around a few stalks of corn, grasped them close to the ears, and then cut through the stalks. These were tucked under his arm whilst another handful was cut and so on until he had enough to tie into a sheaf.

An improvement on this method was to use a broad bladed hook and a crook, the crook being similar to a walking stick, which was placed around the corn stalks and these were cut with the hook. By this method a whole sheaf could be cut at a time. Further improvement came in the 19th century with the use of the scythe. Although these had been around for some time, they had not been suitable for corn reaping. The reaping scythe had an important addition, which was a cradle, made of willow that was fitted between the blade and the handle. This ensured that the cut crop was laid out in a regular swathe across the field. Without this the corn would have fallen in all directions, causing the gatherers to spend more time in forming the sheaves. With all three ways the corn had to be tied by hand and, as they did not use twine, a band was made out of corn stalks, which employed an army of workers to complete the laborious task.

The impetus for the development of the horse drawn mechanical reaper came largely from North America where the wide open fields in sparsely populated country demanded automation to deal with the crops. Development in this country started about 1800 and a variety of machines were tried, some with horses pulling and some with them pushing, like the Bell reaper of 1828. At the Great Exhibition of 1851 American made reapers were displayed which caused quite a stir and revived interest in the home developments. Although some of these reapers formed the corn into sheaves, they still had to be tied by hand, and it was the invention of the knotter (that produced the self-binder) that enabled these machines to bind the sheaves with twine. Such a machine was exhibited at the 1876 Royal Agricultural Show.

Farming, like many industries today, did not make use of new techniques quickly. The change from

hand reaping to combine harvester evolved over approximately a century. Combines were available in the 20's but were slow to be utilised, and between the two world wars a variety of methods were used on British farms, as I have seen a reference to the use of the hook and crook as late as 1938. I suppose it was all a question of economics.

When the wagon had been emptied it was taken to the loaders in the field where a man on either side pitched the sheaves to the loader on the wagon. This was loaded with the sheave butts projecting over the sides (heads inwards), laid in orderly rows in such a way that the sheaves were bound together – to make a safe load. Each succeeding layer fore and aft over the ladders was made to project a little more, thus enabling the load to be bigger without increasing the height unduly for the pitchers. When the shocks on either side had been loaded, a command of 'gee-up' made the horse move on. This was where the horse was more convenient than the tractor because with the latter one of the pitchers had to climb onto it and drive forward, consequently he got behind with his pitching. When loaded, a trace horse was coupled to the wagon and both horses pulled the load to the stack. The trace horse had a pair of chains connected to its collar and these were hooked into rings at the end of the wagon shafts.

Stacking was dry, dusty work, and grandfather always took with him bottles of lemon barley water and cold tea. These were stuck into the side of the stack and, between loads, would be pulled out to wash the dust from his throat.

Barley was dirtier and dustier than wheat or oats, the awns (the thin spiky bit at the end of the grain) got into clothes and irritated. I remember it was a losing battle trying to pull them out, as you never seemed to find them all.

When all the corn had been safely stacked grandfather would thatch them with good quality wheat straw, held down with split hazel stakes and binder twine. Here the corn would remain until the threshing machine came.

Thrashing

Like most of the farmers in the area, Mr. Rolph did not own a thrashing machine, so he hired one. This equipment usually arrived in a little procession consisting of a tractor towing a tarpaulin covered thrasher and folded elevator. The thrasher was set-up beside the selected stack with the tractor placed a few yards away and facing it. A crossed belt was fitted from the tractor drive pulley to the thrasher drive pulley, from which all of the thrashers moving parts, and the elevator, were driven. Grandfather always referred to the machine as the 'drum', which I assume came from the drum-like receptacle into which the unthrashed corn was fed, or from the 'drumming' or humming noise the machine made when running.

In earlier times the corn was thrashed and winnowed by hand in the barn. On a hard floor between double doors, on either side of the barn, the grain was knocked out of the ears with flails. The husks, chaff and dust were then removed from the grain by a process called winnowing, where the wind blowing through the double doors blew the lighter materials away leaving the heavier grains behind.

Stacking

Then all the corn had been cut and the sheaves had dried sufficiently it, was time for them to be stacked, to await the winter months when they would be threshed. For this operation three wagons were required, but the farm only had two – which met the requirements of the farm for the rest of the year – so one of the tip-carts was converted into a type of wagon called a hermaphrodite. The shafts were removed from the cart, a platform with a wagon type forecarriage was attached, and the shafts were then re-fitted. To enable the wagons to carry the maximum number of sheaves, ladders were fitted at the front and back (these were slatted wooden affairs the width of the wagon).

Grandfather's job was to build the stacks. The rectangular area it was to cover was first marked out in the field with sticks, then a thick layer of hedge trimmings was laid down to keep the bottom layer of sheaves off the ground. Sheaves were placed in the middle after the fashion of a large 'shock' and others were laid round them with the ears inwards and slightly higher than the butt ends. This was to stop the rain from penetrating the stack, any water hitting the side would run down the corn stalks towards the outside of the stack. This process as grandfather worked round and round, starting from the outside and working towards the middle, each sheaf laid so that it overlapped the previous layer. Between loads grandfather would stroll around the stack and critically examine it to ensure that it was symmetrical. Any sheaves that stuck out would be knocked back into place. This had to be done immediately because if left the stack would settle and it would have been impossible to knock them back. The sides of the stack were not vertical but were pitched out slightly, with the top similar to a house roof. The reason for the outward sloping sides was that, when completed, the top was thatched,

and, when it rained, the water falling from the thatch was kept clear of the stack bottom so that it did not seep into the corn.

The ultimate disgrace in stack building was for it to bulge, or slip, so that it had to be propped-up with poles. Mistakes such as this would be seen by locals and would encourage comments like, 'I'm surprised your stack's still there, it has so many legs I thought it might have walked away'.

In the early stages of building the sheaves were thrown directly from the wagon being unloaded onto the stack. As this progressed in height an elevator was brought into use, which was powered by a small petrol engine, although I can remember seeing a horse-powered elevator. With this the horse was coupled to the shaft of the driving mechanism and went round and round in a circle underneath the elevator.

Various machines were designed and developed to do this work from the 18th century, initially as separate units and then as combined machinery. Also, up to the latter half of the 19th century, these machines were stationary types. They caused a lot of unrest with the workers at the time as they saw their winter jobs going. Feelings were such that in 1830 they arose in rebellion to destroy machinery in many counties, including Suffolk and Norfolk.

The driving power for the early machines came from the horse, hand or water, and later developments saw the adaptation of steam, also improvements in thrashers saw the introduction of the portable machine. It may be interesting to note that the early steam engines were not self-propelled but had the ignominy of being pulled to their place of work by two horses.

When everything had been set-up and everybody was ready, the tractor drive was started. Sheaves were pitched from the stack onto the drum top where a man picked them up and cut the binder twine bond with a knife – this had a piece of string attached to it which was tied to his wrist – and passed the loose sheaf to the feeder who fed it into the drum. The noise of the machine settled down to a steady hum as the men reached their steady working speed.

Inside the machine the corn was fed into a concave bowl where the beaters worked like the flails. From here the straw travelled along the straw shakers, where any remaining grains were released, to the outlet at the back where it fell on to the elevator. The grain, husks, dust, etc. went through a series of riddles and sieves, and an air blast from a fan, until the almost clean grain reached the bottom of the machine. From here an internal elevator took the grain back to the top from where it went down through the remaining sieves and a second air blast until it reached the corn spouts. The grain had to be put into sacks, which were attached to metal hooks near the spouts, so that it could be transported to a store. Each sack was weighed and any shortage made up of grain from an old batch that stood beside the scales. The sack top was then tied with binder twine that came from the man cutting the sheaf bonds on the drum, and the sacks were moved by tip-cart to the store.

Unfortunately the stack was both home and larder to many creatures. As the stack bottom approached, the mice and rats abandoned their homes, and many nests of little pink mice would be disturbed.

During the day the chaff and cavings would be regularly raked from under the drum, to prevent it choking up. The straw was stacked loose, although Mr. Rolph did use a Baler in later years, and was used as litter in the horse and bullock yards.

These thrashing machines were fascinating pieces of engineering, made mainly of wood and iron, with everything driven by belt, pulley or crank. I suppose you could say that the thrashing drum still lives today, although in a much changed form. It is self propelled and with a cutter attached to the front – in other words a combined harvester.

Mangolds and Hay

The last crop of the year to be harvested was the roots, that is the mangolds and sugar beet. The procedure in grandfather's time was very different to the harvesting of sugar beet today where one machine can carry out the entire operation. Beet always seemed to be harvested in cold, wet and muddy conditions and involved much stooping that played havoc with back joints, the hands being affected by the cold and wet.

The beet were lifted one row at a time with a horse-drawn implement that was similar to a plough, were then picked-up and 'topped' with a beet hook. The tops were placed in one pile and the beet in another. As the men worked their way down the field, they left behind rows with alternative piles of tops and beet.

The sugar beet were then hand-loaded on to a tip-cart and taken to an area near the road, from here they were hand-loaded on to lorries and transported to the Cantley factory.

The mangolds were moved and piled into a long heap (called a clamp) near the field gate, where they were first covered with a thick layer of straw, then with a layer of soil. This covering protected the crop from the winter frosts. The tops were not wasted, they were fed to the horses and bullocks.

Another crop that I have not mentioned, that was important for the farm animals, was hay. I can remember grandfather sowing the grass and clover seed with a seed fiddle – you may have seen the one that was on display in the old museum. This implement consisted of a light wooden box which was carried under the loft arm with a strap over the shoulder, and a canvas receptacle to hold the seed attached to the top. Below there was a small wheel, with four crossed pieces, that revolved on a spindle. Round the spindle passed a thong which formed the string of the bow. An eccentric on the spindle moved a little hopper which kept a regular stream of seed falling on to the wheel. As grandfather walked along he moved the bow forward, then back again, which made the wheel revolve in alternate directions, sending the seeds spinning out all round. I must admit that I do not know why this seed was sown with the fiddle and not with a seed drill like all the other crops, but there must have been a good reason.

When the hay had been cut and dried in the field it was stacked. After this material had been in the stack for a while it settled and became compacted, which made it difficult to remove when required. This is where a Special cutter was used, which can best be described as a broad blade, with a wooden handle at right angles to the blade. (A cutter was on display in the old museum.)

To remove hay from the stack, the thatch was removed from one end, the top was cut away until a flat platform was left that could be cut up as required. The cutter was used by holding it with both hands and pushing it into the stack beside the left foot, then working it up and down and forward. The hay within the area cut, to a depth the length of the blade, could then be easily removed. The cutting continued until the bottom of the stack was reached, when another length of thatch was removed and the process started again. The hay was usually taken to the hay loft in the barn where it was either chopped-up (into chaff) before being fed to the animals, or put into the hay racks in the stables and yards.

The Barn and the Farm

The barn was used mainly for storage and preparation of animal feeds. It was not a separate building as seen on many farms, but was part of a tall long building (that was built north to south) with the barn at the north end and the stables at the south end. Enclosed yards ran the full length of the west side of the building, two for the horses and one for the bullocks. Round the bullocks yard were covered stalls which had a half door that opened onto the yard and were large enough to house one animal. A strong wooden fence separated each stall and opposite the door there stood a wooden feeding trough (manger) with a hay rack above. A passage ran between the outside wall and the mangers which was used when feeding the animals. There were additional bullock stalls and a yard on the east side of the barn.

Access to the barn was through tall doors on the west side. There were four doors (two up, two down) which stopped approximately two feet from the ground, the gap being filled by a lift board that was held in place in grooves in the door frame. The lift board was originally used to keep straying animals, like pigs, off the threshing floor when the doors were open. The top two doors were only opened when a high wagon load of hay was being taken to the hay loft.

When the bullocks were brought into their winter quarters they were fed mainly on chopped mangolds. The beet were taken from the clamp, a few cart loads at a time, and stored at one end of the barn. The beet slicer was driven by a small petrol engine and is best described as a horizontal circular plate with cutters shaped like a cheese grater, set into a large bowl with a plate fixed to the side of the bowl to hold a mangold while the grater sliced it away. The mangold chips fell down a chute into wicker baskets which were used to carry the food to the animals. The bullocks were looked after by a character called Wally, who I had helped on many occasions. I can still remember carrying those baskets along the dimly lit passages (farmers were never over indulgent in the supply of lighting) and the smell of the hot breath of the animals.

At the north end of the barn there was a suspended wooden floor, the width of the building, that served as the hay loft. This was reached by a staircase alongside the barn wall. At the top of the stairs stood a wooden hopper for the rolling mill situated below, where grandfather would tip sacks of oats that were to be rolled and fed to the horses. In the corner stood the chaff cutter which consisted of a horizontal wooden chute, into which the hay was placed, with a wheel fitted with cutters at the end. When the wheel was revolving at speed the hay was pushed into it, with the cut chaff falling through a

hole in the floor into the chaff room below.

When the bullocks were sold the yards and stalls were cleaned out and the manure placed on the 'muck heap', where it was left to nature before being spread onto the fields.

The barn had served as a great place of amusement on wet school holidays, for there were many places to hide for a game of hid and seek, and if it was reasonably empty the earth floor was ideal for a game of football.

Farming has changed much since my grandfather's day, the old methods and ideas have given way to the new, and many of the skills he had are no longer required. The horse has gone, as have the traditional skills for stackbuilding and thatching; stacks of straw and hay bales now require knowledge more in line with the building trade.

As some breweries are now using horses to pull their drays and one city council is trying a horse drawn rubbish cart, plus the prospect of oil running out eventually, we may once again see horses working on farms and the return of the horseman.

OUT AND ABOUT

by Paul Durbidge

Field work during 1986/87 has been quite varied, from the survey and moated section at Gisleham, Suffolk in September, to walking the route of the Kirby Cane Bypass, as well as the yearly erosion measurements taken at Covehithe.

The moated sections at Gisleham were undertaken at a time when the weather was exceptional for the time of year, allowing three aspects of the site to be examined; namely, the dry moats, the tree survey and the investigation of the derelict house situated just inside the perimeter moat.

As a request from Norfolk I agreed to walk the route of the proposed bypass at Kirby Cane, with an invitation to society members again to take part. Letters were written to all the respective land owners for permission to walk their land and, with the exception of two non-replies, all said yes.

The first area chosen from the list was completely non-productive, possibly by reason of the well established crop, and possibly by reason of the heavy clay which abounds in that particular location.

A second area close to Kirby Cane village was more yielding, with small amounts of pottery and tile encountered on high ground, along with fragments of metal from an American fighter which crashed nearby during the last war. The soil, which made up the field surfaces at this point, was considerably lighter and even with a crop of sugar beet still in the ground it was possible to recover material even though it was usually small in size.

Some pot sherds were Romano British in date, as were two pieces of tile, one having combing to one surface, while other pot sherds appeared to be both early and late medieval. The oldest fragment found was a sherd of radish brown fabric packed with small grits, which is characteristic of the Neolithic B period.

Flint industry, mostly in the form of flint flakes, some being trimmed, was encountered over a wide area and these remains could belong to either Neolithic or Bronze Age date, as none of the material had any clear cut indications of either period.

Further finds of pottery from the Low Countries were represented by blue and grey Westerwald and several salt glaze fragments which may have been either German or English in origin, as there were no distinguishing patterns to indicate either.

Slopey ground always seems a likely source of discoveries and the upper limits of Pewter Hill appeared classic for searching as the name suggests. The road between the last search area and Pewter Hill is a narrow one, and it is possible to see a slight hollow at one point, suggesting the present surface overlays an ancient one at almost right angles. It is possible this may be confirmed when the bypass begins as at this point a cutting will be made through opposite sides of the road, so it will be worth monitoring as the work progresses.

Several pieces of earthenware, reinforced with oyster shell, were observed on the slopes of Pewter Hill, as well as more flint industry, this time including a number of scrapers. Further pottery finds had traces of green glaze on some surfaces and could be safely attributed to the medieval period, while three broken red tile fragments, with thick upstands, showed again the Romano British presence was

close by. Prior to the fieldwalking at Kirby Cane, comparatively little was known of the extent of Romano British activity in the area, although there is record of a kiln being discovered during the early part of this century.

Two other interesting features, not far away, were shown to me by a local farmer who had noticed two large black patches in his field, amongst which were numbers of small heavily burnt flints. The flints were white in colour and heavily crazed like cobwebs, on all the surfaces. Flints of this colour and pattern have usually been subjected to intense heat, and then cold water, thus resulting in the form we see today. Often such stones were used for heating liquids in pottery vessels that could not be used in direct contact with a fire, the flints being heated in the fire and then dropped into the liquid, adding some warmth to the beverage.

However, the flints observed amongst the blackened soil would suggest another purpose, one that was used by the North American Indians up to comparatively recent times. Known as steam huts, water was poured over hot stones very much the same as the sauna is used today. Frequent use of the huts would account for both the soil colouring as well as the burnt remains of the flints, although to what period they belong is difficult to say at this stage.

When field conditions allow, it is hoped to continue fieldwalking more of the land close to these particular features, in the hope that additional evidence may come to light as to their origins. Already quite a large amount of archaeological material has been observed in the area, and one wonders what else lies undiscovered in what is proving to be a very productive location.