

Volume Two : 1967-68

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THE TOWN UNDER THE CLIFF

by Hugh D.W. Lees.

One of the earliest references to the 'town under the cliff' is to be found in Gillingwater's Account of Lowestoft 1790 for there we find the following passage (viz.p.55) - "How long the market and fair have been held at Lowestoft will appear from the following account of the grant taken from Bishop Tanner's Collection, in the registry at Norwich. Wherein it is said that in the reign of King Henry IV (1399-1413) the king granted to William de la Pole, marquis and earl of Suffolk, one Market and two fairs below the village of Lowestoft in Suffolk, which is the ancient demise of the Crown of England. . . .". In a foot-note Gillingwater adds "It appears from hence that in the reign of Henry IV the fairs and Market at Lowestoft were held below the cliff". The Market held on Wednesday was removed from beneath the cliff to the area in High Street now called 'The Old Market', but in 1698 when the Corn Cross was erected it was again removed to the present Market Place, nearly in the centre of High Street (White 1885). Until, in this day and age we find it established on the Triangle.

This part of Lowestoft had an old world charm, all its own, apart from the smell of tanned nets and fish etc. Many of the cottages were flint-faced and had pantile roofs of that warm red shade of the days gone by. Here you could find a self-contained community, having its own shops – butchers, bakers, grocers and shoemakers, together with the 10 or so 'pubs' on the 'Beach', not forgetting a Post Office at No. 70 Whaplod Road and a barber's shop.

Working from the south to the north part of this district, we will take each street in turn. Starting with Hamilton Road, known in the old days as Bath Road. Here was built in the year 1824 a new Bath House (for we learn from Whites Suffolk 1844 that – hot and cold baths were established here many years ago by Mr. Wells) on the South Beach by four gentlemen, who sold it in 1830 to Mr. Walter Jones. Writing at that time White described the building thus: – "It is an oblong pebble building with rusticated angles and has a spacious reading room, and hot and cold baths. . . .". This building is much the same as it was when erected 144 years ago, as can be seen from the illustration (not reproduced as of poor quality), and marks the southern boundary of the demolition of this part of the old town, now being witnessed.

We now come to Coleman's Square. Here lived Benjamin Cook, who let Bathing Machines. This was an old, established business, for we find the following announcement appearing in the local press in July 1884;

Established 1768

The Old-Established Bathing Machines

situated between the NORTH PIER and the NEW LIGHTHOUSE, LOWESTOFT.

CHARLOTTE COOK

(Relict of the late Benjamin Cook)

Respectfully announces to the VISITOR or PUBLICK, that she has BATHING MACHINES and HOT BATHS always in readiness and that the splendid shelving sandy beach (varying only a few feet at any time) rendered Bathing practical throughout the day. Ladies and Gentlemen taught the art of

Swimming. Ladies attended by Mrs. Cook.

The only Hot Sea Bathing. Hot and Cold Sea Water carried to any part of the Town.

David Cook - Manager.

Close by was Nelson Road, known in the old days as Nelson Score East. Here was the PRINCE ROYAL together with three cottages, while on the other side (north) two cottages known as Rose Cottages but in days gone by 'Seaside Cottages', also on the same side four other cottages known as 1, 3, 5 & 7, Nelson Road. No. 1 was called 'Ethel' Cottage' and No. 5 (viz No. 2 Garden Cottage). Not forgetting Ratcliffe net tanning premises. Here latterly Darling had a waste paper store until it was burnt out.

Moving further north along Whapload Road, on the corner of No. 48, there used to stand a row of 11 cottages known as 1 - 11 Strand Cottages, Strand Street. At No. 2 lived a Robert Storry who in 1855 carried on, what the Directory described as "The Strand Brewery" – it was still there twenty years later.

Round about the 1870's James Fletcher, better known perhaps as 'Posh Fletcher', the friend of Edward Fitzgerald, lived at No. 8. Between Fishery Street and Sturgeon Street stands the last pub on the 'Beach' The Rising Sun. If present plans go through this will go and then there will be none of the 10 or so pubs left.

On the corner of No. 52 Whapload Road was Spurgeon Street, where there were 9 cottages, while just past the Rising Sun was Fishery Street, here were two cottages known as No 1 and 2 Fishery Street. Further along the road on the corner of No. 64 we come to Salter Street containing 3 cottages. From a sale announcement in the Lowestoft Journal dated February 17th 1912, we have here again a good picture of these cottages, for we read . . . "Lot 17 three Brick, Stone and Tiled Cottages, being Nos. 1, 2 & 5 Salter Street, Whapload Road. Each containing two bedrooms, two Sitting rooms and usual offices, as in the occupation of Jillings, Tills and Sharman at the rental of 3s. 3d".

On the corner of Wilde's street, once known as Wilde's Score East, stood a bootmakers shop. It became in later years Emerys grocers shop and was last occupied by Squires as a grocers. On the northern corner stood two cottages known as Nos. 74-76 Whapload Road, these were demolished in November 1967. Next to these cottages came the Primitive Methodist Chapel. This building was there before 1863 and was closed when the Methodists built their new Chapel in St. Peter's Street in 1876. The building on the Beach was pulled down in January of this year. Next came the FISHERMENS HOSPITAL HOUSES. These were built in 1838 with two additional ones added in 1907. Several stone plaques which used to be seen on these buildings were removed in 1964 and have been placed on the new Arm's Houses erected near St. Margaret's Church, which replace those on the 'Beach' pulled down 14th February 1968.

But to return to WILDE'S STREET, down here stood the GAS HOUSE TAVERN, pulled down October 1967. The earliest record I have of it is dated 1855 when one, Charles Goldsmith, beer retailer, lived there. Close by was Cumberland Square, with its fine brickwork. There were 5 cottages which were pulled down in November 1967. The Gas Works was first established in 1838 by Mr. James Malam. In 1850 it was taken over by The Lowestoft Water, Gas and Market Company and produced gas until 1963.

Just past the Fishermans Hospital Houses on Whapload Road was No. 102, this house was pulled down some while prior to the former. So now we have come to the corner of RANT SCORE EAST, this alone of all the streets leading off Whapload Road will remain when the development takes place. On the northern corner stood the WAGGON AND HORSES. In 1840 it was kept by one, William Pye and was there as late as 1906, when a renewal of the licence was sought. Next to it came the DUTCH HOY. There was another tavern of this name at No. 99 High Street from 1823 - 1846, it then became the SHIP AND RAILWAY. The one on the 'Beach' however was there from 1853 and was then kept by a member of that old Lowestoft family of Capps. Isaac Capps is recorded as having it at that time.

It was not until the year 1863 that most of the streets and squares on the east side of Whapload Road (or Whapload Way as it was then called) received names. For we find the following recorded in the minutes of the Improvement Commissioners:- "At a meeting of the Improvement Commission, under and in execution of the Lowestoft Improvement Act 1854, held at their offices on Monday the 8th day of June 1865 at 11 o'clock in the forenoon.

The names suggested by the Paving Committee for the streets and places on the West side of Whapload Way (sic) have been taken into consideration. It was ordered that they shall be as follows:
– Rant Score East, Anguish Street, Wild Score East, Cumberland Square, Nelson Score East,

Coleman's Square and Neave's Court. Up to this time, the district had been known as North or South Beach. To take the second mentioned in the above list, here at No. 6 Anguish Street was THE SUFFOLK FISHERY TAVEN, kept in 1883 by one, Robert J. Linder. It remained a tavern up to about 1927, the last landlord being Robert Norman. Another tavern in this street was THE SAILOR'S RETURN at No. 24. The earliest record of this being 1855 when it was kept by Mrs. Elizabeth Capps and William Burwood Capps. This ceased to be a tavern in 1927 and later Joseph Flerty opened it as a dairy, after which it was carried on by Mrs. Elizabeth Thurston. Also in this street was a greengrocer at No. 12. In 1892 this shop was kept by one, S. SMITH. By 1900 however, it had been taken over by the Moss family and they continued trading until 1914, remaining a greengrocers shop until after the last war.

There was also close by both BARCHAM STREET and BARCHAM SQUARE. The name no doubt referred to the time in the 1830's when Bachelor Barcham had a boatyard on the 'Beach'. In Barcham square there were 13 cottages in 1883, but by 1914 only 6 remained (Nos. 8 - 13) and the rest went soon after that.

In East Street, which runs from Hamilton Road to Rant Score East, there used to be two cottages known as 1 and 2 Inkerman Cottages, now part of Beeton's Net Works and said to be the site of the INKERMAN'S ARMS. Also near here was the BALACLAVA ARMS said to be on the site of Jone's fish premises. Towards the end of East Street in 1902 was built the North Beach Bethel. It was in use until the one on Battery Green was opened. On the corner of East Street and Rant Score East stood the FLOWING BOWL. It was kept by one Thomas Liffen as far back as 1863. It remained a pub until 1932 when these premises became known as The Working Mens Social Club.

Some of the West side of Whapload Road is still as yet untouched, but much of it has been absorbed by Birds Eye Foods Ltd.

Starting right back, as one turns out of OLD NELSON STREET, next to No. 34 known as the BOW HOUSE which is thought could have been another Tavern known as THE CANTEEN, referred to in Pigots Directory for the years 1823 and 1824. By the year 1830 the name of Richard Thornton appears in the Directory as having a Brewery at the south end of High Street, now known as Old Nelson Street. It appears when viewed from the south, the houses now numbered 55 - 59 look as if they have been 'built in' to the rest of the houses on this side of the road.

We soon come to a row of cottages once known as Nos. 1 - 6 Bath Cottages, which used to be at the entrance to Frost's Alley Score, most of those went in the Air Raid together with property in the Score. Further along is a house which used to be known as THE MAY FLY INN. In 1863 it was kept by Abraham Porter, who later went to the OLD MARKET INN in St. Peter's Street. In 1865 we find a William Alexander living there who described himself as 'a beer retailer and hairdresser' until 1869. Next to this house on the corner of Herring Fishery Score (once known as Nelson Score) is a grocers shop. This trade had been carried, on here as far back as 1874 when one John Gooderham was there. Christ Church was built just 100 years ago. It was put up as a memorial to the Rev. Francis Cunningham, Rector of Lowestoft 1830 - 1860.

In Christ Church Square were 14 cottages, most of these were demolished in 1911 to make way for the Central School to accommodate about 430 children. This school was bombed, on 13th June 1941 at 03.45 hours, when full of soldiers. One poor fellow was blown up into Ayers Pigeon Loft at the rear of 104 High Street. Close by was another row of 13 cottages known as Day's Buildings. These ceased to be occupied after the turn of the century. Right on the northern corner of Christ Church Square used to stand THE FISHERMANS ARMS TAVEN. In 1840 this tavern was kept by Richard Saunders and then Charles Saunders up to 1874, after which Robert Hook became the Landlord. It remained a tavern up to 1922 from that date it became a Fishmonger's and remained so until 1938. After the last war it was pulled down and the Herring Industries Ltd, Cold Store was built on the site.

We have now come to Spurgeons Score, here on the corner at No. 87 was a butchers shop. In the year 1863 one William Scarf was there. George Goldsmith had it for a while, after which Samuel Howard ran it. In 1892 William Richard Boggis took over the business and was there until 1907. From that time Sidney Cook had it and was the last of his trade to occupy the shop until 1934. By 1938 it had become a confectioners. Next door at No. 89 in 1902 Robert Butcher opened as a hairdresser, but by 1907 this business had been taken over by Albert Meek, who continued until 1913 after which it was acquired by Sefton Gordon Flatman. After 1914 he too had gone. In 1922 Joseph Flerty had opened this shop as a confectioners and dairy. In 1930 he had removed to No. 24 Anguish Street, where the SAILORS RETURN had been. The premises in Whapload Road once again became a barber's shop. In 1930 when Godfrey Girling came there, he was to be the last to ply his trade on the 'Beach' and by

1932 he had gone. These last two buildings were pulled down in March 1967 and become an addition to Chromglaze Ltd., who built on the site.

The buildings from Maltster's Score to Rant Score have now been acquired by Birds Eye Foods Ltd., and pulled down and these include Cumberland Place. Next to Wilde's Score came White & Willow's fish yard, with Wildes Cottage next to it. Here used to be seen the date '1831' in green bottle glass. William George Chapman, boat owners also had premises close by. Going further north come to Nos. 129 - 131 Whapload Road, these two houses were known at one time as 1 and 2 Providence Place. Here we came to SPARHAMS BUILDINGS a row of five cottages, followed by two more houses known as No. 133 and 135 occupied by Day, Boat Owner and Gooderham, Coal Merchant.

On the northside of Rant Score, Youngman and Preston had their Brewery which closed up after the 1914-19 War. At one time these premises were occupied by Coastal Canneries Ltd., and Diver & Son, beer bottlers, the latter are still there.

The main part of the Eagle Brewery was acquired in 1957 by Birds Eye Foods Ltd., who demolished the old buildings to make way for their factory extension.

On the corner of Martin's Score, Butterfields' had their fish yard. Later on these premises were taken over by Seago and Harrison, marine store dealers. After a fire at these premises the site was cleared and Birds Eye Foods Ltd., erected their canteen. Swan and Crowe had a Cooperage next to this site, while Arthur Gouldby, fish merchant, had premises abutting on to SCARLES BUILDINGS, a row of 15 cottages. These cottages were condemned by order of the Town Council as far back as 1935. On the corner of CROWN SCORE, are four houses which used to be known as Nos. 1 - 4 WHAPLOAD BUILDINGS, now being known as Nos. 171 - 177 Whapload Road. A little further along the road, we come to the last of the old Pubs on this side of the road called THE EAST OF ENGLAND TAVERN. The first reference I can find was for the year 1879, when it was kept by Edward Field. After 1934 it ceased to be a tavern and became the headquarters of the NESS POINT ANGLERS CLUB. These premises were pulled down in December 1967. Passing HASTINGS HOUSE we come to a row of houses which used to be known as Nos. 1 - 6 BURTON PLACE and at the present time, Nos. 287 - 295 Whapload Road. Next came NOBB'S BUILDINGS, a row of 12 cottages. These buildings were the subject of a Borough of Lowestoft (No. 21) Clearance Order 1936 and dated 9th October 1936. The last two cottages occupied were No. 6 and No. 11 in 1938. Not far away are the premises of The Gourock Ropework Co. Ltd., and have been used in that trade for over 100 years. The earliest record I have found is dated 1864 when a William Francis is described in the Directory for that year as 'rope and twine maker' living at 3 LANCESTER PLACE. It appears he built these three houses for above the door of No. 2, now 321 Whapload Road, was placed a tablet having the following inscription:-

LANCESTER
PLACE
W 1864 F

By 1964 however we find Shentons the engineering firm had acquired the three houses, putting on asbestos roofing and facing the front wall with cement, thereby losing all trace of the tablet mentioned above.

In 1879 we find Samuel Capps Francis living at the above address until the year 1885.

In the 1890's Little and Thomas had a Ropery here, followed in 1907 by Gourock Ropery Co. Ltd., who have occupied these premises since. At the rear of these premises, let into the upper window frame, is a curious old stone, with the following inscription which reads thus:-

1 6
W
J M
76

Other than the house bearing a tablet stating 'Rebuilt in 1828' and Cliff Cottage, now The Sparrows Nest, this concludes the survey of 'The Town under the Cliff'. No account has been taken of the 11 Scores, as they more or less belong to the High Street Area.

In the Lowestoft Journal dated May 14th 1938 was published the details of the Borough of Lowestoft Redevelopment Area No. 1. under the Housing Act, 1936, listing a matter of 161 properties. It is interesting to note that just 50 years afterwards the schedule has been completed in the demolition which we have seen going on around us.

In 1881 there were 441 houses and 2,755 inhabitants in the parish of Christ Church. (White's Suffolk 1885).

HUGH D.W. LEES.

THE ROUND TOWERS TO NORFOLK AND SUFFOLK PARISH CHURCHES.

by Claude J.W. Messent, A.R.I.B.A (ret.)

Fifty years of research and study of round towers to the parish Churches in Norfolk and Suffolk has not enabled, the author of this article to set down a hard and fast set of rules for dating every example, but many things have been observed, during that half century and what now follows are the conclusions come to from information obtained by personal research and that of other people, which has been most kindly supplied.

It has been discovered that many of the sites of these Churches with round towers consist of some form or other of raised ground. In some cases almost a complete mound, some only very irregular raised ground, yet others which show a completely artificially raised mound, but not just a modern one. Now some archaeologists have suggested that these raised sites are Pre-Christian. Some heathen form of worship may have taken place on them and upon the introduction of Christianity; the site was taken over for the erection of a Christian place of worship. The earliest ones may have been of wood, but more likely the walls were of flint rubble, the easiest obtainable building material in the district. Dressed stone from far afield being too expensive and most difficult to obtain.

The origin of these round towers is a most controversial subject. Many theories have been put forward, but the most feasible appears to be the great lack of dressed stone for the four corners of square towers and the unsuitability of flints for quoins. Hence the obvious answer was a circle. Obviously this lack of dressed stone could equally apply to towers of secular defence as well as Church Towers. Now that points to the second reason for their existence. Defence was most necessary on the eastern side of England, being of course nearest to the Continent from which all invaders came. The tower has always been recognised as the most important structure in a system of defence, not only as a fighting stronghold, but as a point of watch and observation and is even spoken of in Old Testament Scriptures.

Now approaching the subject from the architectural constructional point of view, we find in many round towers what might be termed a first storey unglazed window opening on the east side. If the round tower was built as part of a Church it is impossible to understand the reason for the existence of that opening, but if originally built as a tower of defence such an opening could have been used as a safe entrance by the aid of a ladder, which could be withdrawn at the approach of the enemy. These openings appear well above the tower arch, which in several instances is little larger than a doorway opening, so we find the first storey opening showing inside the Church. In all these cases the round tower and the adjacent west wall of the nave are of two quite different dates of erection. The tower in every case being at least a hundred years the earlier, Saxon and Norman in a few cases, Saxon and an early period of Gothic in several others.

Much has been made of the fact that nearly a third of these round towers have had an octagonal top added at a later date. Usually the late 14th or early 15th century, when eight corners were made in their construction, not of imported stone, but local made bricks. At the same period a good restoration of the circular part was made.

In a short article like this it is absolutely impossible to mention every round tower in Norfolk and Suffolk, but a fair survey can be made by going to various districts. By far the most closely spaced examples are those in south-east Norfolk and north-east Suffolk. Some examples being scarcely two miles apart. But in other areas there are scattered about isolated examples of great interest. In mid-Norfolk at both East and West Lexham, near Litcham, are round towers to both Churches almost oval on plan. Both appear to decrease in width as they increase in height and their very definite Saxon fenestration would date both to before the year 1000. In fact the general construction of East Lexham tower with its rather crude flintwork would suggest one of the earliest examples in existence. Date

possibly 900 A.D.

The triangular headed double windows in the top storey of these round towers with central wall baluster are definite examples of Saxon work. Some twin windows have semi-circular heads to each of the two sections. By far the best example of the triangular heads is to be seen in Haddiscoe Church, near Loddon, in the south-eastern Norfolk section. Roughton, near Cromer and St. Mary-at-Coslany, Norwich, are two further examples well worth a visit. At Howe, half way between Norwich and Bungay, is a very early example well worth examination and study. The top has been reconstructed with a conical roof covered with tiles and no top storey windows, but further down are circular and semi-circular windows with mid-wall glass line, definitely a sign of early Saxon work. Gissing and Forncett, both in South Norfolk, between Norwich and Diss, show much early construction. These Norfolk examples are taken at random but are a fairly representative list for the investigator to pursue. Before we leave the northern county of East Anglia, the example at Tasburgh, near Long Stratton should be pointed out, as it has two stages of flint panelling just over half-way up, the centre lower stage, one facing direct west, has a long narrow semi-circular headed window, the glass line being midwall, a definite Saxon feature. There is one very similar example in Suffolk at Thorington, near Halesworth. There is one lot of flint panelling here about midway up. Reverting to Norfolk again there is rather a similar example at Thorpe-next-to-Haddiscoe, rather similar to Thorington, but only slight resemblance to Tasburgh. These three flint panelled round towers are the only ones in existence in the whole of England.

Buttresses seem quite out of the question where a round tower is concerned, the architectural construction most certainly does not call for it, thus it is most surprising to find down a long lane, almost a trackway, a round, tower nearly oval on plan and situated on a lofty mound, almost a cliff, above the Deben estuary at Ramsholt, near Woodbridge. Three buttresses run up almost the full height. One facing direct west, the second north-east, the third south-east. There is no evidence of Saxon work, therefore it seems safe to presume it is of Norman date. It may have replaced an earlier tower. Some authorities suggest that there might have been a Roman watchtower on the site. Another round tower of Norman date with buttresses is to be seen at Beyton, near Bury St. Edmunds, but in that case the buttresses were added to strengthen the structure in Mediaeval days.

Suffolk again has something further unique in round towers to Parish Churches in a completely detached tower at Bramfield, near Halesworth. The tower at Little Snowing, near Fakenham in Norfolk, although detached now was originally attached to an earlier Church. At Kettlestone, close by, there is what appears externally to be an octagonal tower from bottom to top, but internally it is round. One wonders if the octagonal part is a later added covering to a round one.

The structure of towers can quite often best be studied in ruined examples. Such we can find at St. Nicholas Church, Feltwell, which is built partly of carstone. Other ruined round towers can be seen at Hardwick, near Long Stratton, at Dilham near North Walsham, St. Julians, Norwich and in Suffolk at Wortham, near Diss, which is quite a large ruin and is the widest round tower in the whole of England, being about thirty feet wide.

Finally it should be pointed out that symbolism has paid a large part in all periods of Church architecture and a religious approach to round towers has brought forth the theory that circular towers are similar to any emblem representing the eternal.

Many of these East Anglian round towers have large pieces of carstone in their walls, especially at their bases and the darker it has weathered the older it must be, mostly Saxon from 967 onwards, they are chiefly to be found in the north-west quarter of county within the vicinity of the still existing Snettisham quarries, and in the Downham Market area between Middleton and West Dereham.

The ruined round tower Church at Appleton, on the Royal estate near Sandringham has quite a lot of carstone in its walls the courses diminishing in depth from the ground level upwards. As previously pointed out, these ruined examples reveal many constructional details to those in research for knowledge about those round towers.

C.J.W. Messant, 30th December, 1967.

WEST STOW: Interim Report on the Excavation of a Pagan Saxon Village*by Stanley West.*

Historically our knowledge of the post Roman, pagan Saxon period depends upon the written records of later Saxon times, which give the history of the colonisation of Britain and the establishment of the Anglo Saxon Church and the vicissitudes of the kingdoms (in particular, Bede, c.700; the Anglo Saxon Chronicle, 9th C.).

Archaeologically, however, our knowledge of the pagan Saxon period - from about 400+ to c.650 A.D. has, in the past, depended almost entirely on the discovery and excavation of their cemeteries, which are often rich in objects. Unfortunately, many of these cemeteries were found in the 19th Century and the "excavations" were little more than grave robbing, with no attempt to keep the associated grave goods together. Nevertheless, a considerable quantity of Anglo-Saxon objects are now housed in the various museums and a great deal of scholarship has been expended upon the classification and study of these objects. This effort, although a most valuable beginning to the understanding of Anglo Saxon archaeology, tells us very little about the economy and way of life of the people concerned. Only in rare instances have settlement sites come to light and of these, only Sutton Courtenay in Berkshire has undergone any degree of excavation and that only as a rushed emergency excavation. The need for the entire excavation of a pagan Saxon settlement is therefore obvious and the exploration of the site at West Stow should provide a great deal of information of vital importance to the understanding of this, the formative period of English history. The difficulty has been in the past to locate a settlement without the encumbrances of continuous occupation into modern times. West Stow provides the ideal conditions. The site was apparently abandoned in the 7th Century and apart from ploughing, in the 12th-13th Centuries, has lain abandoned ever since. Furthermore, it is threatened by the extension of the Bury St. Edmunds Corporation Rubbish Tip, which provides the necessary condition for the Ministry of Public Building and Works to undertake the excavation.

The site is some 8 miles north west of Bury St. Edmunds, about a mile downstream from the medieval church of the present village. The site originally chosen was self-contained on a low sandy knoll on the north bank of the River Lark, some four acres in extent, bounded to the south by the river itself and surrounded to the north by an old arm of the river, still supporting patches of rush and presumably wet in Saxon times.

The site was discovered by Mr. Basil Brown in 1948, when a small sand pit in the north east corner was being exploited and he recorded three "hollows" or huts with Anglo Saxon pottery and bones. Subsequently Miss Vera Evison of Birkbeck College, London, conducted a series of small excavations along the northern perimeter of the site. Two further Anglo Saxon huts and a number of pits and ditches were discovered, along with indications of an earlier Iron Age settlement.

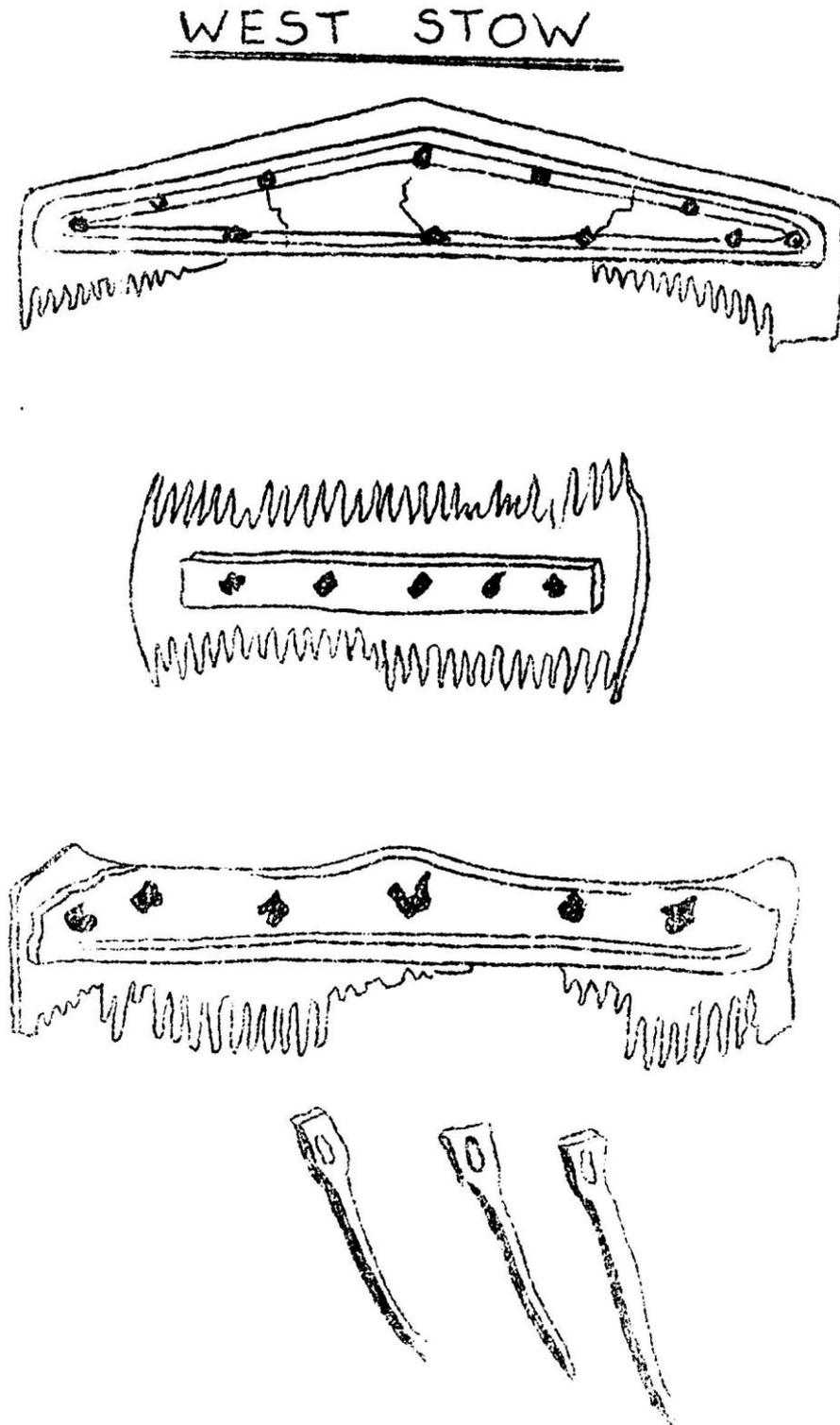
The writer has now completed three seasons' excavations for the Ministry of Public Building and Works and approximately half of the settlement has been stripped and excavated.

The occupation of the site appears to have begun in the latter part of the early Iron Age, although Neolithic flints and axes and a Bronze Age arrow head indicate occasional use of the site in earlier phases of the prehistoric period. The Iron Age occupation consisted of a typical farmstead settlement with a small group of round huts associated with enclosures. The pottery indicates an occupation basically belonging to the first century B.C. with both hand made and wheel thrown wares. This farmstead was abandoned during the Roman Period when the centre of occupation seems to have been concentrated in the Icklingham area, some two miles to the west. However, a Roman Pottery industry flourished on the nearby heath and two of the recorded ten or twelve kilns were excavated actually within the area of the Saxon settlement in 1948 (see Proc. Suffolk Inst. of Archaeology vol. xxvi, pt. 1, 1952). Some of the pottery produced by those kilns was ornamented with stamped concentric circles enclosed in pendants - a form of decoration which bears remarkable resemblance to some of the Anglo Saxon pottery nearly 450 years later. It could well be that the Anglo Saxons found some of these earlier Roman pots and copied the ornament.

The Anglo Saxon occupation in the Lark Valley was dense and was clearly effected by penetration up the river from the Wash, as is evident from the distribution of the cemeteries, with resultant concentrations in the Cambridge Region and the Mildenhall - Bury St. Edmunds area. In the immediate area of West Stow there are four known large Anglo Saxon cemeteries indicating a considerable population exploiting land already made available by the Romano British population.

The Pagan Saxon occupation of the village, is on present evidence, thought to have lasted rather more

than two hundred years, from some time before 450 A.D. to some time after 650 A.D. Therefore the site was abandoned and finally ploughed in the medieval 'ridge and furrow' technique in the 12th - 13th centuries. This ploughing was apparently brought to an end by the disposition of a considerable layer of blown sand amounting to two - three feet in depth along the south side of the site.



The method employed in the examination of the site is the use of mechanical 'diggers to remove the blown sand and topsoil over a large area of the site, in order to completely uncover features such as groups of post holes, huts and ditches, that their relationship with one another might be studied before excavation.

Careful plotting of all dark marks is then carried out and finally each of these is excavated in turn. The

plan of the post holes and features is very complex, but gradually a pattern is emerging for the development of the village. It appears that the Anglo Saxon settlers penetrated along the river and established their first huts along the southern areas of the hillock, the northern half being laid out in plots, divided by ditches.

These plots soon become derelict and the houses spread all over the top of the hill. At present we have examined twenty eight huts of the 'Grubenhäuser' type; i.e. those with some form of sunken floor or cellar, exactly comparable with those found on the Continent. These are rectangular structures which we know to have been plank built and thatched with reeds, as two burnt examples were found in the second season. There is evidence that some huts were reserved for specific purposes, such as weaving or sleeping quarters. Furthermore, the pattern of distribution of those huts is beginning to indicate possible groupings among them, which might be interpreted as family units. Two larger above ground buildings, 26 and 30 feet long respectively were found in the 1967 season, considerably larger than the rest of the huts, which range from 12 to 18 foot long. There is, as yet, no evidence of a Great Hall of the kind that one might expect from the Anglo Saxon Sagas (as in Beowulf) but there is of course the possibility that such a Hall still awaits discovery in the second half of the site. All the buildings on the site were of wood, so that apart from the occasional burnt structure, all that remains for us to interpret are the dark marks in the sandy sub-soil which indicate the positions of posts. The intense heat that is often experienced in the West Stow region in summer dries out the sand very rapidly, so that constant watch is required after showers of rain to ensure that all the post holes have been recorded, as some disappear entirely when really dry.

Over 800 'small finds' have been made in the three seasons in the three seasons' work to date and include 70 Roman coin and other Roman objects. These do not indicate a Romano-British occupation on the site, as there are no buildings of that date and further more many of them are found in Anglo Saxon huts. These Roman objects may well indicate a survival of the Romano-British population, no doubt as second class citizens, into the Saxon era. That this would have happened is much more likely than the older idea that the Romano-British population was either driven westwards or massacred.

The nature of the soil is such that bones and objects made of bone survive extremely well and among the most numerous of those are bone combs, of which we now have some sixty five, either as fragments or whole. Many of them show an extreme degree of wear and taken with the large number of sheep bones present on the site, might well be interpreted as wool-carding combs; probably serving a dual purpose. Weaving is very well attested, with plentiful evidence in the form of loom weights and spindle whorls, so that some form of carding comb can be expected.

Many other objects of all kinds have been retrieved from the site – pins, brooches, iron shears, beads of glass, amber and bone; iron knives, and a great quantity of pottery. Very few weapons have been found as no doubt they were prized objects, but the nearby cemetery provides the evidence of warriors in the community in the form of swords, spears and shields.

The bone material from the site is in an excellent state of preservation and the very large quantity of animal bones that have been recovered will provide most valuable economic evidence. The statistics from this material are not yet available, but from impressions in the field it would appear that sheep were perhaps the most important animal, followed closely by oxen. Red deer, roe deer, horse, pig and dog are also present in various numbers, as well as quantities of bird remains.

Samples of charred wheat and grain impressions on pottery should add further economic evidence.

It is hoped that the excavation at West Stow will continue for further seasons until the whole site has been uncovered. Clearly this site can be expected to provide a very great deal of fresh evidence for the Anglo Saxon period.

Stanley West.

RECOLLECTIONS BY A VETERAN BRASS-RUBBER.

by J.F. Williams.

They all began a long time ago – in fact in Victorian days – when I was a schoolboy and enthusiastic! My father, to my delight, often used to speak to me about my grandfather, who died in 1875, but as I was not born till three years later, in 1878, I had never known him. For many years he had been the Assistant Secretary of the Royal Astronomical Society, lived for most of his life, first of all at Somerset House in the Strand, and afterwards at Burlington House in Piccadilly.

As I grew up I became more and more interested in these tales of my grandfather, and as it seemed to me his fascinating doings among his friends. I gathered that in his early days he had been much interested in Egyptian hieroglyphics, and in 1836 had written and published a short book on the subject, illustrated by selected specimens at the British Museum and elsewhere reproduced from rubbings. In connection with this my father told me that he had been awarded by the Society of Arts with their silver medal in 1833, "for his method of taking impressions of engraved stones." My father showed me this medal, together with some of the materials which had been used for the purpose of copying the Egyptian stones.

This so roused my interest that on the very next day (28th July, 1893) we made tracks to Hackney church, where my father was Churchwarden, and I proceeded to take a rubbing of Christopher Urswick's brass, using the "approved method", rather smudgy I'm afraid, but quite effective.

This was the first brass-rubbing I ever made, and it was the beginning of it all, but not long after this I luckily came across Macklin's excellent handbook on Monumental Brasses, which at once put me on the right methods, and has been my guide and companion ever since. By the end of 1893, through a summer visit to Norfolk, I had made myself proficient, and found that I then had a collection of more than forty rubbings, though by this time I was using orthodox heelball in place of the "ancestral" method which I had started with.

All this was many years ago, but I have been at it ever since, and when at length I had to give up the job owing to old age in 1960, I found that I had got together a collection of no less than 1282 figure brasses, as we call them, irrespective of innumerable inscriptions and odd fragments. Not that all these rubbings of mine are of special merit. It all depended on circumstances. Sometimes on time, when I found that I had but a few moments to spare and everything had to be done very hurriedly; or at another time, when an unexpected brass turned up, and I found that I had no paper to use for a rubbing I used a sheet of newspaper instead, and on one occasion I made use of the back of a poster that I had purloined from the vestry! But in most cases there was plenty of time to do things properly and I made a good rubbing. A few of the large and famous figures, like those at Acton, Trumpington or Pebmarsh, I naturally took more care about, though I never used my rubbings for display.

But in addition to this it has always been my custom, through all these years, in any church that I visited, to note the existence of any slab that had formerly held a brass, but which in the course of time, for some cause or another had become spoiled. The brass itself had gone, but in most cases it had left behind it a rough outline of the original figure. And I often used to make sketches of these matrices, or casements, and for convenience sake, I have mounted these drawings in two exercise books, and have had them bound up. In looking through these books of late, I have been astonished to find that they contain together some 398 of these sketches! Not all of them have to do with brasses, but the majority of them do. From time to time I have included in my sketches a fine stone-coffin lid which I have come across lying loose and uncared for in some corner, or it may be a fragment of an incised slab, worthy of recording. But it was with the missing brasses in which I was chiefly interested. Unless the stones had been worn away entirely by use, enough indications generally remained which would enable me to get something of a rubbing from which a drawing could be got.

It is to, this side-line that I wish to draw attention in this paper, and I give a couple of illustrations from my books which will explain things.

Of course many of these slabs which I have copied still retain, and sometimes very sharply, the outline of the brasses which they originally held, a sort of shadowy ghost of what was once there. And it is these outlines that I have tried to record. They must be carefully compared with the brasses which still exist and can be studied, for these neglected matrices, empty though they are, are often able to supply us with further valuable information, and so are worthy in all ways to receive our attention and care. There is still plenty of work to be done to rescue these lost brasses from oblivion.

And the method of doing this requires little equipment. Just like brass rubbing itself the requirements are very simple. You will not need any rolls of lining paper to begin with. Minute rules as to brushing

away every speck of dust from the matrix need not worry you very much. What you will want will be an old newspaper, not necessarily of the day's issue, but preferably let it be as stout as possible, and a large piece of heelball to make your rubbing, together with a tape measure, or foot rule, to take accurate measurements. Other useful equipment may be added according to taste, but the above will be the only essentials needed.

Then after reaching the church and discovering the matrix that you want to copy, which sometimes takes a considerable time, for church officials have a habit of paying little attention to these old slabs that have lost their brasses as being of no use, and they are apt to bury them under hassocks or rolls of matting, or anything else where they can be put out of sight, and so perish. By spreading the newspaper over the slab as far as it can go, and then using the heelball and your finger you will be able to produce a rough outline which will begin to have some meaning. This you will want for your drawing at home, though further measurements should be taken on the spot with the tape, if thought to be necessary. The newspaper may then be torn up or thrown away. It has served its purpose and there is nothing attractive about it when the drawing has been done.

Of course those despoiled slabs which are pictured in these two books of mine can by themselves give but a faint idea of the brasses which they originally held. They are merely dim outlines or shadows which have lost all design and beauty, but they are worthy of study and attention by all who are familiar with brasses and brass rubbing, and they have much to tell us. These drawings of mine are of course but a tiny fraction of the many, probably many thousands, of lost brasses which are still found existing in the countless ancient churches throughout England.

The limited number of those which have come under my notice during a long period are to a large extent to be found in the eastern counties, many of them are small and perhaps insignificant, but in themselves they seem worthy of further study.

J.F. Williams.

LINKS WITH LOWESTOFT CHINA?

by Charles Goodey, Lowestoft correspondent of the East Anglian Daily Times

In 1756, Hewlin Luson, squire of Gunton, found on his estate "some fine clay of earth" and sent a small quantity of it to one of the china manufactories in London with a view to ascertaining what kind of ware it was capable of producing.

The result, according to Gillingwater, Lowestoft's only historian, was that it "proved to be finer than that called the Delft ware", which the Dutch had been making for several centuries.

"Mr. Luson was so far encouraged by this success", Gillingwater continued, "as to resolve upon making another experiment of the goodness of its quality upon his own premises; accordingly, he immediately procured some workmen from London and erected upon his estate at Gunton a temporary kiln and furnace and all that other apparatus necessary for the undertaking; but the manufacturers in London being apprised of his intentions and of the excellent quality of the earth, and apprehending also that if Mr. Luson succeeded he might rival them in their manufacture, it induced them to exercise every art in their power to render his schemes abortive."

They "so far tampered" with the workmen that the latter spoiled the ware "and thereby frustrated Mr. Luson's design".

But "notwithstanding this unhandsome treatment, the resolution of establishing a china manufactory at Lowestoft was not relinquished but was revived again in the succeeding year, 1757 by Messrs. Walker, Browne, Aldred and Richman, who, having purchased some houses on the south side of Bell Lane, converted the same to the use of the manufactory."

They, too, suffered sabotage from the only workmen then available from London, who "very nearly totally ruined their designs" but, luckily, they discovered what was going on in time to remedy the damage and when Gillingwater wrote his "History of Lowestoft" in the closing period of the 18th century he was able to report that "they have now established the factory upon such a permanent foundation as promises great success. They have enlarged their original plans and by purchasing several adjoining houses and erecting additional buildings, have made every necessary alteration requisite for the various purposes of the industry."

They employed a "considerable number of workmen and supply with ware many of the principal

towns in the adjacent counties and keep a warehouse in London and have brought the manufactory to such a degree of perfection as promises to be a credit to the town".

Actually, the factory carried on to 1802 when for a variety of reasons (no one can positively say which), it was shut down.

By then, their products, mostly domestic ware but many others of a very high order as well, had travelled not only throughout the Kingdom but extensively on the continent and today Lowestoft china is so greatly in demand by collectors of ceramics that even an odd cup can fetch anything from £7.10s to £25 – or more.

Meanwhile, William Chaffers, author of the monumental "Marks and Monograms on European and Oriental Pottery and Porcelain" – almost the standard work on ceramics – had made the almost incredible mistake in the 1860s of ascribing to the little Lowestoft factory the vast quantity of porcelain turned out for the European market by the Chinese, who had discovered the secret of true porcelain-making centuries before.

The error was not rectified until another expert, Frederick Litchfield, revised the book in 1897 and, in the interim, a rather virulent controversy had raged among ceramic cognoscenti as to whether Lowestoft really had produced any porcelain at all!

The matter was settled once and for all in 1902, almost exactly a century after the factory had closed, when workmen, digging up one of the floors of the brewery into which the premises had been turned, found another hidden level which was littered with 'wasters' and other bits of the Lowestoft ware along with many of the moulds which the factory had used.

At last the truth was established and today every museum of note – the Victoria and Albert in Kensington, the British Museum in Bloomsbury, Ipswich, Norwich, the Fitzwilliam in Cambridge and Great Yarmouth in particular, have given the East Anglian porcelain a worthy place in their collections – and are still keenly looking out for any more noteworthy examples.

Curiously enough, Lowestoft itself has never taken a serious interest in its world famous 18th century products and only in recent years, when prices have flown sky-high, has a more enlightened body of its city fathers sought to add to the meagre collection, mostly loaned or given, it has been able to show to the public in the past. Nor has any effort ever been made by the civic authorities of the town to preserve even a single stone of the factory, the last association with which has been bulldozed this year with the sweeping away under the Chapel street development plan of the workmens cottages opposite the factory site now occupied by Winsor and Newton, makers of artists brushes etc.

Way back in 1954, my friend Charlton Chapman found in the garden of his 18th century house, Kingsmead, Yarmouth Road, Lowestoft (formerly a farmhouse on the Luson estate) what he and I were sure was Luson's experimental kiln. He carefully excavated it, I photographed it and wrote an article about it which was published in the "East Anglian Daily Times" appealing to the town to take an interest in what one might have assumed to be an important find in the history of the Borough. But no one took the slightest interest and eventually Mr. Chapman filled the whole thing in and carried on gardening on top of it. Now, only a few hundred yards away from his home what may be another link with the old manufactory has turned up. In 1959 Mr. Frederick Woolger, a director and secretary of an Oulton company, bought a plot of land at 150 Yarmouth Road, barely a stones throw from the site where Hewlin Luson used to live.

Mr. Woolger started building on it in the following year and moved into his new house in the August. When he started cultivating his land, once part of the Gunton estate on which the original clay was found, he was pestered, by continually turning up quite near the surface innumerable bits of red earthenware, pottery and porcelain. "I have been picking it up and throwing it away for years", he told me. "I must have got rid of half a cwt of bits and pieces which were quite an embarrassment and a nuisance to me. When I first found the specimens, I thought someone must have had an accident and buried the debris in the garden. But no one has ever lived in this vicinity until our row of houses were built and when I discovered how widespread the pieces were all over the land, I began to wonder where they all come from."

Mr. Woolger's site extends several hundred feet from his front to the bottom of his rear garden, which is separated from the remains of the old hall by a wood. He has discovered that there is a vein of lightest coloured clay running across the foot of his land. "And the further you go towards the wood, the more prominent this becomes. It all seems to add up to some connection with the Lowestoft china clay", he said. Also near Mr. Woolger's land there is, at the corner of Gunton Church Lane, what used to be a big pit from which it is thought some of the clay used in the Lowestoft porcelain was

excavated.

It is known that there was once a business in the vicinity making tiles, etc. (probably from the red clay) while in the town itself clay pipes were certainly manufactured from other clay found in the neighbourhood. There are, indeed, some pieces of those old pipes among Mr. Woolger's finds, which have also included bits of an earthenware jug as well as pottery and porcelain, some of which is decorated in underglaze blue like the early products of the Lowestoft factory.

Have they, I wonder, any connection with Luson and his momentous discovery? Perhaps, like Mr. Chapman's kiln, we shall never know.

Charles Goodey.

FURTHER FLINT DISCOVERIES

by A. Collins.

In the twelve months that have elapsed since the last report great strides have been made in furthering the interest shown in our local flint industries and workshops, indeed some members have been ranging far and wide in their search for new sites. Most, if not all of the surface sites are now planted and so are inaccessible until the crops are gathered in.

Much remains to be done in other spheres. Tentative enquiries will shortly be made as to the possibility of a Palaeolithic section to be done by the Society at Darmsden a site brought to the notice by Mr. D. Collins of Southwold. Two very quick visits were paid to the pit in order to try and confirm that 'implements' were present and the visits were rewarded by the discovery of several 'pebble choppers' of Clactonian style. It must be stressed however that the site is strictly private. A pit to the north, which is on the other side of the valley yielded a very fine Archevlian scraper and bar hammer flakes (these have diffuse bulbs of percussion). The gravel differs from the former pit by being less pebbly and more angular.

The pit at Camps Heath has been searched and yielded nothing, the gravel however is of a similar type to that of Darmsden, it is not however of the same level.

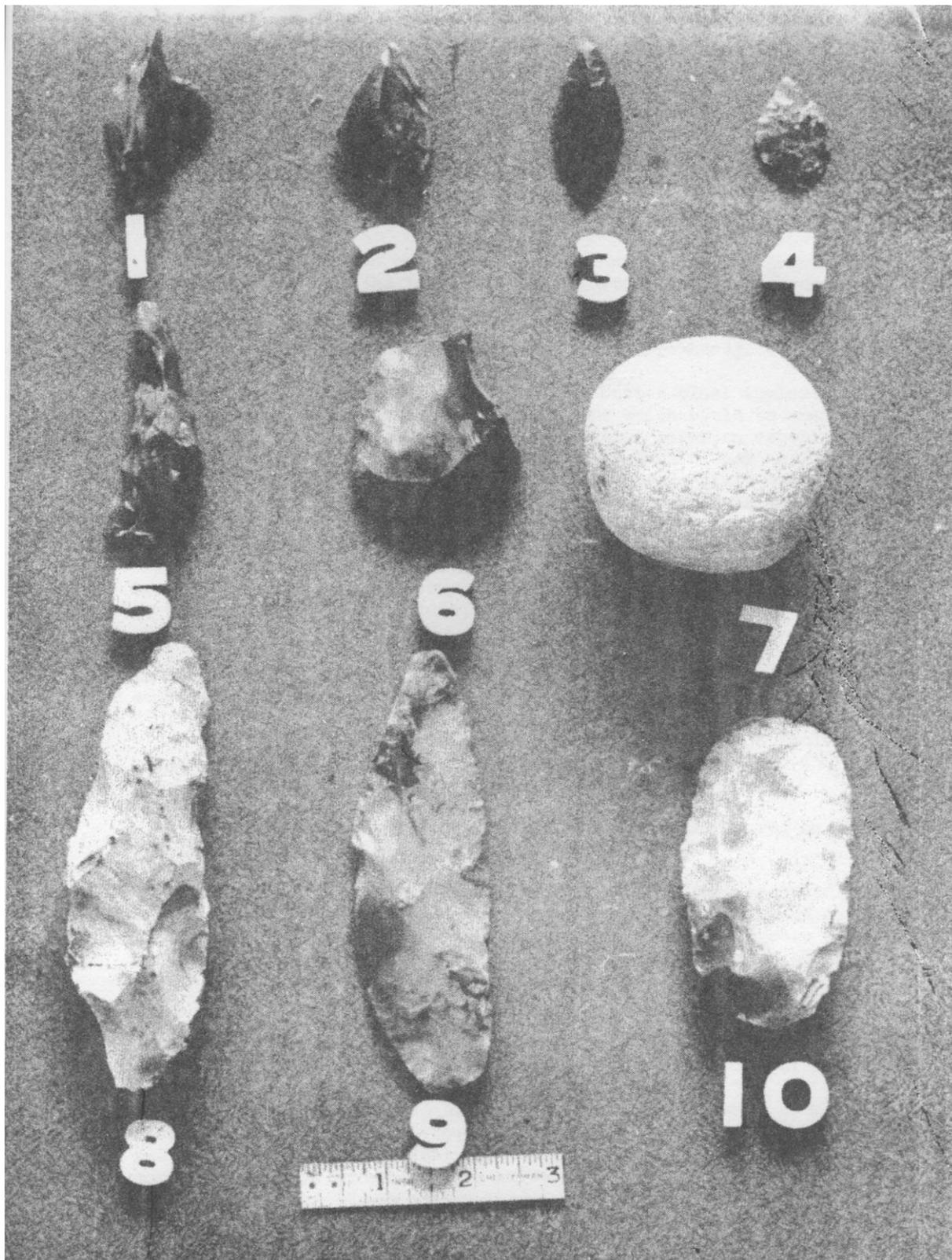
A visit by a Society member and myself to Henley on Thames was well worth the effort, the net result of our search was one small Archevlian Ovate, two Abbervillian type hand axes and several Clactonian chopper cores, also masses of flakes. A pit at Ditchingham was also surveyed revealing a possible flake or two of the Palaeolithic type, the top soil yielded blades and cores of the Mesolithic style.

As yet the upper Palaeolithic is not very well represented in our area. Solutrean laurel leaf blades are reported near Ipswich, and one from Southwold, while gravels of the bec-de-flute type have come from Kessingland. These in my opinion are too well made to be Mesolithic, and are identical to specimens from La Madeleine of Magdalenian date. Coupled with these are small blunt backed knives which have a marked similarity with Abri Audi knives.

The Mesolithic period is well represented at Manor Farm, Kessingland, all the usual type of Mesolithic industry are present namely obliquely blunted points, micro burins, notched blades, blade scrapers and diminutive cores from which blades have been detached. Some archaeologists also include Thames picks upon the Mesolithic but I have included those under the Neolithic. Stray finds of the Mesolithic period have been found at Ditchingham and Carlton Colville. Positive searching on land which is fairly low lying should yield a few more sites. With the Neolithic period a different story can be told. Sites have been discovered all over our area. Axes from Blythburgh, Benacre and Kessingland. Thames picks from Kessingland and Carlton Colville. A sickle and knives from Kessingland.

Convex knives from Kessingland, Carlton and Corton. Leaf shaped arrow heads from Pound, Farm, Oulton Broad, Kessingland and Blundeston. Scrapers, fabricators hammerstones etc. from all sites. By far the most prolific site is the one at Manor Farm, Kessingland. The author of this article hopes it will be possible to excavate in the Autumn when volunteers will be required. Such an excavation will most probably help to solve many questions for as yet there are no answers.

That the site was well populated and favoured in prehistoric times is attested by the large numbers of artefacts and the vast area the site covers. The occupation of this site was from upper Palaeolithic right through to the Bronze age (this has been confirmed by a society member who recently found a carved and tanged arrowhead).



The photograph is of some of the better class implements from Manor Farm. Implement Number 1 is a borer which could be used for making holes in wood or bone, using a Neolithic borer, an experiment was carried out by boring an inch hole through a piece of oak an inch thick taking a time of 55 minutes. Number 2 is a bec-de-flute graver, a fine example and rare on an English site. This specimen is Mesolithic as I believe they are unknown in following ages.

Numbers 3 and 4 are leaf shaped arrowheads. Number 3 is unusual in that it is made from a very fine blade and has inverse ripple flaking on the flat edge of the blade, both are of Neolithic date.

Number 5 is a fabricator, these slender rods are used for pressure flaking or sometimes as 'strike-a-lights' for making fire in conjunction with iron pyrites.

Number 6 is a scraper, sometimes referred to as a 'half moon' scraper, these better class scrapers are usually attributed to the Bronze age, they were probably used for scraping skins.

Number 7 Hammerstone, several have been discovered on the site ranging from the Mesolithic to the Bronze Age.

Number 8 a so called Thames pick because they are fairly common in the Thames valley. Usually Neolithic but have been known in the Mesolithic, they are of fairly robust manufacture and were probably mounted in an antler 'sleeve' e.g. a hollow piece of antler about four inches long which was in turn mounted on a forked stick.

Number 9 is a straight edged sickle beautifully ripple flaked, a similar one in the British Museum was discovered in Sussex. These identify the type of Neolithic settlement as Neolithic "B" of Peterborough.

Number 10 is a small oval axe, similar ones were found in a Mesolithic workshop at Thatcham in Berkshire but this specimen is thinner and is probably of late Mesolithic or very early Neolithic. This would, more than likely, have also been hafted in a 'sleeve' owing to its small size.

To conclude, much of the vast assemblage of implements from these various surface sites could well belong to any period, a scraper for instance could be from Mesolithic onwards, likewise a fabricator or hammerstone, a site can only be attributed to any period by the characteristic implements of the period, namely Mesolithic – obliquely blunted points. Neolithic – leaf shaped arrowheads, Bronze Age carved and tanged arrowheads. To gain experience in excavating a Palaeolithic section in a gravel pit, it is proposed to organise a trip to a very prolific site at Henley on Thames, for particulars contact the author at "La Madeleine", Wash Lane, Kessingland.

A. Collins.

THE GOVERNMENT AND SOCIETY OF SUFFOLK IN THE LATER MIDDLE AGES.

by R. Virgoe – University of East Anglia

I intend in this paper to give a general survey of the society and government of Suffolk in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; though I must emphasise that this is only a brief sketch and even so there are major omissions, e.g., almost nothing is said of the clergy or the life of the peasantry.

1. Society Suffolk today has very much the same boundaries as it possessed in the Middle Ages: now as then it is one of the biggest English counties. In population, however, there has been a big change. In the twentieth century the population of Suffolk has been one of the smallest among English counties; in the Middle Ages it was one of the biggest. In 1377 the Poll Tax assessed 58,610 adults in the county, together with ca 2500 in Bury and ca 1500 in Ipswich. This number was exceeded only by Yorkshire, Lincolnshire and Norfolk. The causes of this comparatively dense population, heaviest in the South and East of the county, were, no doubt, several: partly it was a reflection of good soils and fairly intensive farming by mediaeval standards; partly the numerous ports and havens along the coast. There were, too, probably social factors: a weak manorial system, a high proportion of free men and, at least in parts of the county, a system of partible inheritance of land, meant more opportunities for possession of land and thus earlier marriage and more children. But doubtless the most important factor was the great growth of the cloth industry in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. It was this above all that made Suffolk one of the richest areas of the country in the fifteenth century and one of the main areas of economic growth. It is this economic prosperity which is mirrored in the numerous magnificent parish churches of the county.

Agriculture was, of course, the primary industry. During the sixteenth century Suffolk was to become a major source of food for the rapidly expanding London market, and already the good river communications and numerous ports made profitable the export of wool and grain to other parts of England and the Continent.

Most of Suffolk's chief towns, except Bury, were ports. Dunwich was already in decline and overtaken in importance by a series of havens and ports such as Aldeburgh, Lowestoft, Orford and the havens on the Orwell. It will be remembered that Chaucer's Merchant "wolde the see were kept off

any thyng Bitwixe Middleburgh (the Wool Staple port in the Netherlands) and Orewelle". And in the Orwell Estuary Ipswich was by the fifteenth century an important port, though the proximity to London of the South Suffolk cloth villages, and the fairly easy routes to the growing metropolis meant that Ipswich failed to take its natural share of the exports of cloth from its hinterland.

The cloth industry in Suffolk was important and during the thirteenth century expanding population created a buoyant market. In Sudbury, Halstead and other places on the Suffolk-Essex border there were signs of a vigorous cloth industry by 1300. But the big expansion came, in spite of falling population, in the second half of the fourteenth century, when, for various reasons, English wool was increasingly manufactured into cloth in England rather than exported raw. Suffolk, Essex and Herts., were lumped together for the excise duty on cloths sealed: in these three counties the number sealed rose from ca 700 in 1355 to 5,600 in 1395. The main areas of the industry were first round Hadleigh, Lavenham and Bury; then among a group of villages headed by Long Melford, Nayland and the Waldingfields; and thirdly in Sudbury, Clare and the villages roundabout. Ipswich remained an important centre of the industry, but there was a general tendency towards a more rural industry. This was partly because of the increased use of water-power, partly to avoid the restrictive guild regulations of the corporate towns, and partly through the encouragement of manorial lords such as the Clares and their successors at Clare and the Earls of Oxford at Lavenham, who could profit considerably from the new wealth the industry brought to their villages. Such villages could become as big as towns but were not incorporated. They bred a race of semi-industrial, semi-rural entrepreneur clothiers, very different from their continental equivalents at Bruges and Ypres, at Paris and Lyons, at Florence and Milan. The fifteenth century 'Herald Debate' shows that the contrast was felt by contemporaries: the French herald points out that "In England your clothiers dwell in great farms abroad in the country, having homes with commodities like unto gentlemen, where as well they make cloth and keep husbandry, and also grass and feed sheep and cattle."

Perhaps the most famous of these Suffolk clothier families were the Springs of Lavenham. Thomas Spring, who died in 1440 was a substantial clothier, his son, Thomas II (d. 1486) was wealthy enough to leave the then great sum of 300 marks for the erection of Lavenham steeple, and 200 marks for the repair of the Lavenham roads. His son, Thomas III (d. 1524) was the wealthiest man in the county, save the Duke of Norfolk. He married his eldest son to the daughter of a great Suffolk gentleman and purchased for him large estates, whilst his younger daughter married a son of the Earl of Oxford. The Springs remained one of the major Suffolk families, becoming Knights and baronets, until the late seventeenth century.

There were many other clothiers like the Springs on a rather smaller scale: the many small independent weavers become dependent upon them, even if not falling into the ranks of paid labourers. But though money talked, merchant families did not become part of the elite of the shire until they bought land, married into gentry families, and retired from business. It was the landed gentlemen headed by the few great magnates, notably the Duke of Norfolk, who controlled and represented the 'community of the shire'. Power and prestige were more widely dispersed in Suffolk than in many counties: there were many gentry families and large numbers of substantial freemen – the yeoman whom Thomas Fuller described as "gentlemen in ore when the succeeding age will see refined". But though these yeomen and, below them, the numerous small free tenants could be influential in times of crises – 1381, for instance, and in the hostile reaction to Cardinal Wolsey's tax of 1524 their influence was largely confined to the affairs of the township or hundred. The 'community of the shire' comprised normally, those who could attend the monthly county court and could vote at elections of knights of the shire to parliaments. And of these gentlemen and substantial yeomen a fairly small number of gentlemen at any particular time – those who might serve as sheriffs, knights of the shire, justices of the peace, etc. – were dominant in local affairs.

The dominant position of these families was, of course, primarily based upon the possession of land. In Suffolk, as elsewhere, a considerable proportion of the land was in the hands of the Church, Bury St. Edmunds Abbey, in particular, held vast estates and its Abbot was always one of the great magnates of the county. Considerable estates were also held by Ely Priory and the Bishop of Norwich, and other monastic houses had substantial holdings. Comparatively few baronial and gentle families lasted throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in the male line, but particularly with the growing use of entail, the main blocks of estates were rarely totally fragmented, the families that succeeded to them also succeeding to their predecessors' place in the shire. Thus the honour of Clare passed via the De Burghs, to Lionel, the second son of Edward III, and from him to the Mortimers and thus to Richard, Duke of York, until in 1461 they fell to the Crown. Again the great estates of the

Bigot Earls of Norfolk descended via the Segraves to the Mowbrays and in 1485 to the Howards, whilst the lands of the Ufford Earls of Suffolk passed in 1383 to the De la Poles. This last family founded on merchant wealth, acquired in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries further great estates by marriage and royal favour, and the rivalry of De la Pole and Mowbray was a major theme of Suffolk politics in the fifteenth century. Other noble families such as the De Vere Earls of Oxford, the Bouchiers and Willoughbys also had large estates and power in the county. Among the gentry there was also a considerable turn-over among influential families. Some, like the Tendrings, Shardelowers and Carbonnels, died out; others fell into obscurity. In their places rose new families, some later to be ennobled, such as the Waldegraves, Jenneys, Brandons, Drury's and Wentworths.

Clearly the pattern of land-ownership had considerable influence on the administrative and political geography of the county. For besides being subject to the King and his representative in the shire everyone owed obedience, service and dues to other forms of jurisdiction: to those lords who held feudal rights, to the holders of 'liberties' to the corporations of boroughs, to the Bishop and his representatives. The 'community of the shire' did exist, but it was not a simple or monolithic society. Rather, it was, as Professor Cam has said "a bewildering network of rights" which affected all men: which they lived with naturally but which the historian has great difficulty in disentangling.

2. Government. How was this society governed? It was, of course, dependent on the government of the nation at large, and essentially on its head, the King. Although many individuals and institutions had rights, privileges and jurisdictions, these in the last resort, at least in the temporal sphere, depended upon the fulfilment of the duties – of doing justice and administering efficiently – which accompanied them.

The King could and did interfere if they were being abused. But normally the King's authority in the county was represented by his officials and those whom he commissioned to act for him.

(i) Like all other English counties Suffolk had at its head, acting as the King's chief representative in the county, the Sheriff. Suffolk was, in fact, linked with Norfolk under the same sheriff until the reign of Elizabeth I, but the two counties were administered quite separately. The Sheriff, who, by the fourteenth century, was normally a local gentleman who served for only one year, had an enormous range of functions. As judge he presided over the county court and made his 'tourn' among the hundreds twice yearly, where he did justice on less important matters and took 'view of frankpledge'; as police officer he was responsible for making arrests and keeping the gaol; he had to execute all judicial and other writs and impanel juries; he was responsible at the county court for the return of knights of the shire to parliaments (and could have considerable influence on the election); as captain of the shire he had to lead the 'host' and collect levies for the King's armies; as financial official he had to collect the King's dues and fines, levy 'purveyance' for the support of the King's Household and finance from local sources the repairs of the King's buildings; and for this he had to account in detail at the Exchequer at the end of his term.

In practice, of course, the burden was less. He always appointed an under-sheriff, who was responsible, with a number of clerks, for the administration of the county, and supervised the bailiffs and constables of the hundreds – the minor units of local government of which there were about twenty in Suffolk. Increasingly, too, the sheriff's duties in the Later Middle Ages were being divided among new officials appointed by the King for specialised duties: coroners, escheators, commissioners of musters to levy troops, commissioners of oyer and terminer to do justice. Above all the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries see the rise to prominence of the commission of the peace, a group of gentlemen and lawyers commissioned by the King originally mainly for judicial purposes but constantly tending to have their functions extended: by 1500 they had already superseded the sheriff entirely in judicial matters and the once greatest office of the county was slipping towards its present purely nominal status.

(ii) Even at his most powerful, however, there were considerable geographical limits on the Sheriff's authority. These limitations were the result of the existence of numerous liberties, franchises and privileges which exempted their holders from part or all of the sheriff's jurisdiction. Of these by far the most comprehensive and important were the liberties of St. Edmund and of St. Etheldreda belonging respectively to the Abbey of Bury St. Edmunds and the Priory of Ely.

Suffolk was very unusual in having two great liberties within its border. Their origins went back before 1065 and originated in royal grants, the effect of which was to exempt eight and a half hundreds in west Suffolk and five and a half in East Suffolk entirely from the jurisdiction of the King's local officials. The functions of the sheriff – judicial, military, financial etc., – were performed by the steward of the liberty or if, as at Bury, this was a hereditary post, by his under-steward. It was he who

kept the courts, levied fines, represented the abbot before the King, executed royal writs and supervised the petty officials. The Sheriff had no right to enter the liberty to perform his duties unless the steward was failing to execute the King's writs or do justice, when a royal writ could be obtained empowering the sheriff to 'enter' the liberty. This is important because it emphasises the point already made – that holders of such liberties were in fact performing such duties as King's officials: they were not independent lords, though it is true that in Bury itself the abbot had authority possessed by few other lords in the kingdom.

The division of the shire between the liberties and those areas outside them, was of considerable importance. Taxation assessed on the shire, for instance, was divided: the franchises paid half and the 'geldable' the other half. The Liberty of Bury continued to have separate assizes down to the nineteenth century and is the basis of the present administrative county of West Suffolk. Other lords held liberties over smaller areas and with more restricted rights e.g. the lords of the honours of Clare and Eye. Clare was in fact, within the liberty of Bury, so conflicts of jurisdiction were inevitable. In 1468 Edward IV created a large liberty for the Duke of Norfolk, including his Sussex and Surrey estates as well as those within East Anglia, and this was later revived for the Howards. There were, too, innumerable petty privileges held by other individuals. But it is the two great liberties that make Suffolk unique and its administration so complex.

(iii) One other group of privileged institutions must be touched upon. In Suffolk, as in other counties, there were a number of incorporated boroughs, i.e. towns with charters giving them various powers of self-government and exemption from some of the jurisdiction of sheriffs and other officials. These charters were granted by the lords, and as elsewhere, it was those towns on royal land which found self-government and privileges easier to obtain. Ipswich and Dunwich were the two main royal boroughs, and their great measure of independence – control of trade, police powers, execution of writs, election of representatives to Parliament – can be contrasted with the very subservient position of the considerably larger town of Bury St. Edmunds towards its lord – the Abbot. In spite of great, and sometimes, as in 1381, bloody conflicts, Bury had to wait for its first charter until 1606. Such considerable places as Clare and Lavenham also failed to move to Borough status.

This brief survey of secular administration should be matched by a survey of ecclesiastical administration which, with its control over wills, marriages and morals, as well as the spiritual life of men, was almost as important for the layman, much more so for the cleric. But time and space presses. It must suffice to say that Mediaeval Suffolk was, of course, part of the diocese of Norwich and divided into the archdeaconries of Suffolk and Sudbury. There were a number of 'peculiar' exempt from archidiaconal, and some exempt monastic houses outside Episcopal control, but in general ecclesiastical administration was simpler, more systematic than the temporal. Both are strange to modern eyes but, both were products of and adapted to the people and the ideas of the society that had evolved from early feudalism and would itself suffer radical change in the religious and secular revolution of the Reformation.

Definitions of terms used in the article above (2008 addition)

oyer and terminer [Middle English, partial translation of Anglo-Norman *oyer et terminer*, *to hear and determine* : *oyer*, *to hear* + *terminer*, *to determine*.]

Es'cheat'or n. (*Law*) An officer whose duty it is to observe what escheats have taken place, and to take charge of them. ESCHEAT n. reversion of land to feudal lord, crown or state, due to failure of heirs; *v.i.* & *t.* to revert or cause to revert. escheatage, n. right to receive by escheat.

CASTLES IN SUFFOLK

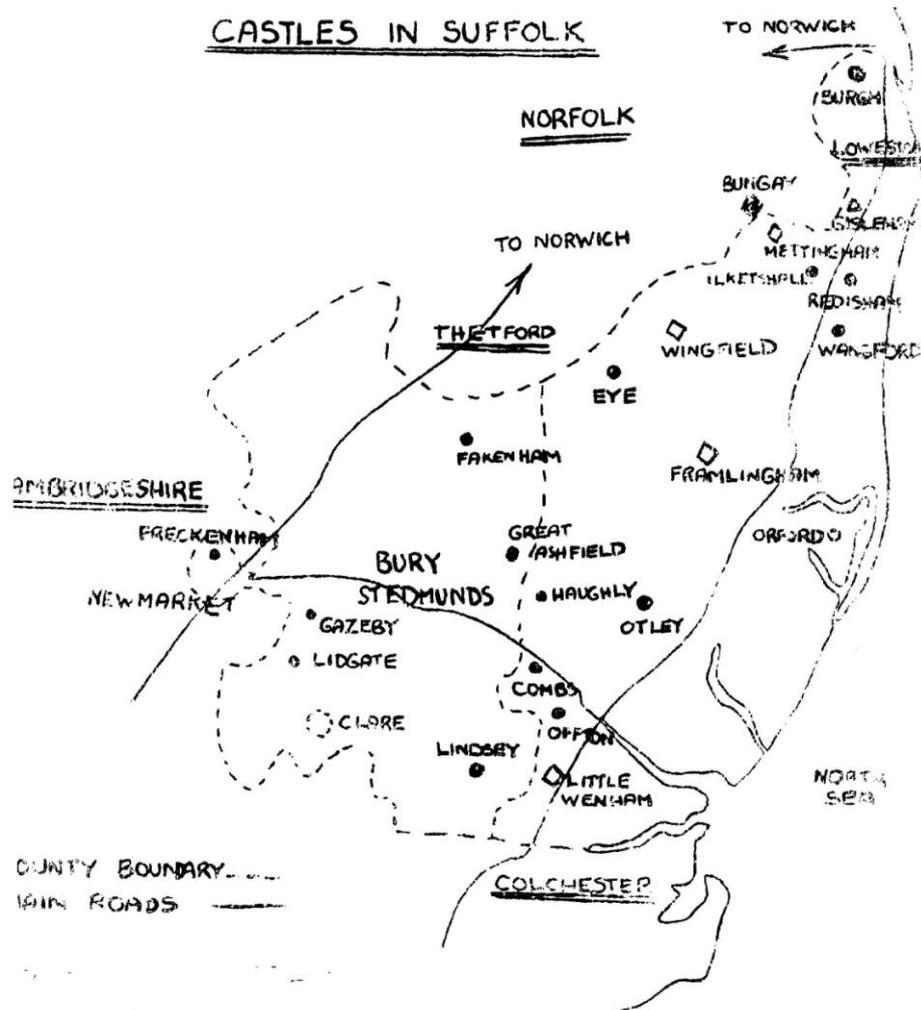
by R.J. Kedney

There are over 20 castles in Suffolk alone, scattered throughout the county, generally placed where they can control the river crossings and therefore the routeways. The majority are of the motte and bailey type and thus date from the period after the Norman conquest or the Anarchy in the early 12th century. They were constructed of earth and timber and well suited to the needs of the conquerors being quick and easy to construct and proving well defended bases from which to control the surrounding countryside. The motte consists of a mound formed by digging a ditch, usually circular, throwing the earth inwards and making a mound ranging in height from an average of approximately 20 feet increasing to 80 feet and over e.g. Haughley. This was capped by a wooden palisade surrounding a wooden tower which was often only used as a lookout and final refuge but where there

was sufficient room it could have served as a permanent residence. The bailey or lower enclosure was also moated and palisaded and housed, the offices of the castle, the stables, the hall, the chapel and the well. In some cases the castle had more than one bailey e.g. Lidgate with three baileys, in others such as Redisham and Wangford the bailey if it existed has now vanished, as they can easily be ploughed out.

As the wooden defences were open to attack by fire and the axe they were in time replaced by stone. This was a long and costly process undertaken only by the King and the rich noblemen particularly during the period of conflict in England in the twelfth century. This rebuilding took two forms initially, the shell keep and the square keep. As the weight of the latter was often too much for the unsettled ground of the motte a stone ring wall around the top of the motte replaced the timbers and thus formed a stone shell. The buildings were then ranged around the inside of the wall as at Clare. Here the motte was mentioned in 1090 but the castle was enlarged later and the shell keep constructed in the thirteenth century.

Square keeps were known on the continent at the time of the Conquest and William built the great keeps at Colchester and the Tower of London but Suffolk's examples are somewhat later. Little remains of the first stone hall at Framlingham only the section remaining in the wall of the present castle. The Bigod family who built Framlingham also built a strong keep at Bungay where only the foundations and the basement remain today. It is 12th century and being built of stone could not be burnt or cut down and was a tower keep (that is higher than it was long) and was thus too high to be scaled. The walls are the thickest in the country (25') as a defence against the battering ram, but its weakness was that the corners could be under-mined thus causing it to break and fall outwards. The only surviving 'mine' is to be found at Bungay and is used by visitors to gain entry to the very strong for-building that defended the entrance stairs. Once miners had picked their way through they then proceeded to widen the mine with side galleries which were supported with pit props and packed with bracken.



When the mine was complete the miners withdrew and set fire to the bracken and so caused the masonry to break. Hugh Bigod realising that continued defence was useless surrendered, the castle to

Henry II who left the mine as a reminder to Bigod of the royal power.

The next development in castle design was the round keep, which was a successful counter to the mine for the under-mined section of a round building falls inwards and thus leans on the rest of the wall. Orford Castle is one of the earliest of the round keeps, but though circular inside, the main block is polygonal on the outside. Three rectangular towers have been added to give additional rooms and it thus loses some of its advantages as a round keep. Orford is doubly important in the story of castle development for it is not only one of the first moves to the round keep but it is also the first castle to have full documentation of its building. Started in 1166 it took seven years to complete and served the dual role of acting as a royal counterbalance to Bigod's castle at Framlingham and as a centre for coastal defence against any continental invasion. The keep retains many interesting details such as private rooms, garde robes (toilets), the chapel, a kitchen and a true dungeon in the entrance block (the latter is a comparatively rare feature).

Framlingham marks the beginning of an even more important break with tradition for it is the first castle to be built without a keep in the country. The curtain wall is defended by thirteen mural towers and the former hall and chapel were destroyed when the present castle was built in 1150. Thus the role of the keep as a place of final refuge ended, and the new development using the curtain wall with mural towers was begun and led on to the great concentric castles of Edward I in North Wales. In addition to the main entrance through one of the thirteen towers, Framlingham also had two postern gates which could be used for sallies against the enemy or for retreat if the main gate was taken. Little remains of the original medieval buildings inside the castle, but the reconstruction drawing on show in the castle gives an excellent impression of the period and plan.

Castles in the 13th and 14th centuries developed on the concentric plan as a defence against the ballista or great stone throwing machines which were developed after the Crusades. Successive defensive rings of stone and water were used to keep the ballista as far away as possible from the living quarters. Particular attention was paid to the castle entrance as this was the weakest point and so the keep came to be replaced in part by the great gatehouses. Though the concentric plan was not implemented in Suffolk, Bungay and Mettingham have strong gateways. At Bungay the drawbridge pit has been excavated and the bridge was found to be lifted by counterbalanced weights which swung downwards in grooves. At Mettingham the gate house is the most important part of the castle which still stands. Licence to crenellate was granted in 1342 but the castle was granted to a college of priests in 1390 and was badly decayed by 1562 when an inventory was taken. By this time the military significance of the castle in East Anglia had declined and though military trappings were retained as decorative features at Wingfield and Mettingham those were primarily homes rather than fortresses.

As has already been stated, stone castles were both difficult and expensive to build, and so built only by the king and the rich nobles, but at a local level the manor house served the same role. It served as an administrative centre and as defence against bands of robbers being defended by a moat and a stockade, but only the moat survives today in many cases. In time the wooden hall was replaced in stone or where this was not available by brick for by the 15th century the knowledge of how to make bricks had been re-introduced from the continent. When the Romans left, the knowledge of how to make bricks left with them and it is not known when it returned. Little Wenham Hall is therefore of considerable national importance dating from circa 1270 it is one of the earliest medieval brick buildings in England and is one of the earliest moves towards the domestic home comparable with Stokesay and Acton Burnell in Shropshire.

Moated sites are particularly common in Suffolk and Essex but cannot be dated with any accuracy, moats were used in the Middle Ages and beyond but the early examples intended for defence differ from later decorative moat by being crossed originally by a timber bridge, the latter having an earthen bank crossing. Very little research has been carried in the field on moated sites and therefore the articles in this and the previous issue of the Annual Report are particularly valuable beginnings. Notes on moats in Suffolk are to be found in the Victoria County History of Suffolk but by now those are rather dated and need to be reviewed. By far the most important site in North East Suffolk is the very large double moat at Gisleham. The shape and size of local moats vary from the small oval at Carlton Colville to the very large, outer rectangular moat at Gisleham (both are described in the 1966 report). Generally the moats are still wet in sections at least, and reasonably well preserved particularly where they surround a later house and seem to be located in a low lying area of meadowland near woodland.

As towns are comparatively rare in a rural county like Suffolk it is not surprising that there are few remains of medieval town defences. The nearest are to be found at Bungay and their extent shown on the plan in the guide to Bungay Castle, whereas at Clare much of the present town is located inside the

castle baileys. These took the form of banks and a timber fence, the largest section today stands near the castle in the park and is known as the Castle Hills. Ipswich and Framlingham were probably defended in a similar fashion, part of the Ipswich embankment was excavated in 1959 and a report is available from the Ipswich Museums. At Framlingham a small section of the Town Ditch can be seen in the grounds of the castle.

Suffolk therefore has examples of many of the major features of medieval defence works, some of national importance such as the castles at Orford and Framlingham and others of only local importance such as the many motte and baileys and numerous moated sites. I hope this article will help to place them into an historical sequence but the reader can only appreciate them after further reading. Many good general books are available and the Ministry of Works guides to the castles they administer are excellent and should be read before touring the castle.

B.J. Kedney

THREE PARISHES

by Reverend B.W. Bean

I have been asked to write something about my three parish churches. It would give me much satisfaction to be able to do this in a manner suited to archaeological experts such as some of you, but though I fully share your interest, I lay no claim to expert knowledge.

However, knowledge is not everything. When one has spent 15 years in one parish, worshipping weekly in its venerable churches, dwelling upon their past history and delving into registers dated from 1553, one feels a deep respect for those from whose labours we now derive so much benefit.

There was a time when no churches existed in East Anglia, when our Rectory lawn was the site of a Bronze Age smithy, turning out weapons of war and agriculture, relics of which may be seen in the British Museum.

Then in 633 A.D. St. Fursey from Northern Ireland built his mud and wattle monastery within the deserted walls of Burgh Castle and may have built our churches. Or it may have been his co-apostle St. Felix, Burgundian Bishop of Dunwich. The fact that Flixton was named after him would lend credence to this, but whoever it was, their work was not in vain, for today if you visit our three churches, you will find each is a gem. Ashby in the fields with its tiny congregation, averaging less than a dozen each Sunday, still fills to overflowing on major festivals. The rood screen reminds us that before the plague scattered the population, it was not unlike the 'golden church' of Lound. The crusader tombs in the sanctuary also remind us that there were noble residents and the registers tells us that men like Sir Ashurst Allen were incumbents. The 15th century chalice bears the inscription 'For the town of Ash' and later vessels were the gift of a knightly family.

We need not for one moment consider our present isolation an 'Ishabod', for the glory has by no means departed. How many parishes have restored their towers, refashioning their bell cradle with their own hands and presented the fabric, as the present parishioners have done? You will find if you visit the church at Easter or Harvest, that not all the churches in East Anglia in all their glory are arrayed like this one, but there is one thing I find hard to forgive. Less than a century ago, a prehistoric boat was unearthed on the shore of Fritton Lake. There was no Archaeological or Local History Society in those days to proclaim another Sutton Hoo, so the local inhabitants apparently used it as fuel!

Space does not permit more than a mention of the Round Towers of both Ashby and Herringfleet, or the relics of St. Olaves Priory embedded in the church steps of the former. I would however refer you to the Ordnance Map XIXC which shows the Ashby village. Mr. S. Long our churchwarden will tell how his ploughs have come to grief on buried foundations.

Herringfleet church has long been over-shadowed by the parish church of Fritton, one of the most unique specimens of Saxon architecture in England.

In spite of this we can boast of our Norman arch, fortunately preserved through the centuries by the thatched porch. The seemingly stone pillars and facings which form the minstrels gallery (only the uninitiated call it the organ loft) are said to be the ancient Rood Screen. There is evidence for this I believe, the walls are plastered (I won't say adorned) with monuments of the late Squire-archy. Their great contribution however, was the east window, a unique mingling of glass secular and ecclesiastical, collected by the late John Leathers who fought with the French in the Franco-Prussian

war of 1870. He collected the remnants of war shattered churches and municipal buildings, brought them home and had them made into a window for the Church of which he was patron. With the exception of Mr. Cecil Long, Church-warden for nearly a quarter of a century, I know of no one who has made a detailed study of it, a piece of work the Archaeological Society might well undertake.

Two other windows are medieval, the head of King Edmund incorporated in the east window is reputed to have been taken from Fritton Church.

Somerleyton Church, like Ashby and Herringfleet, dates from the 15th century. Its exterior is a superb example of flint facing. Experts have photographed the east end because of its perfection. The tower is square and massively built, as it needs to be to contain a peal of 6 bells, two of which are pre-reformation. One of the main features of interest is the tomb of Sir John Gernigan with the inscription:-

"Jesus Christ, both God and Man,

Save Thy servant, Gernigan."

The other item of interest is the rood screen, which has to be seen to be appreciated. Its preservation during the years of the Reformation is due no doubt, to the fact that the church lay within the Estate boundaries, but the fact that the sixteen saintly portraits retain their original colouring, is what makes it unique. True, some well-intentioned person once took it into his head to touch up the green and red background and even to smarten some of the scarlet robes, but, thank God, he went no further. A booklet by Lawrence E. Jones of the Historic Churches Preservation Trust is available, for details, if you apply at the Rectory.

The windows are also impressive. Two are 15th Century, said to have been rescued from St. Olaves Priory at the dissolution. The Wentworth Memorial, a mammoth monument is one of only six in the country which bear the sculptors name. Students of history will find endless scope in the monuments, windows and registers. The Rector is always willing to act as guide if you phone Blundeston 221.

Reverend B.W. Bean

THE NORFOLK WHERRY

by Eugene C. Ulph. Beccles

To lovers of Broadland, especially those of the early years of the century, no greater loss has been occasioned than the complete eclipse of the Norfolk trading wherry. Always a most conspicuous object on a Broads landscape, it was a never-failing attraction for the artist or photographer; to quote the late John Knowlton "there's a picture in every wherry – a wherry in every picture".

As to its origin, this is somewhat obscure, and down the centuries several craft designated "wherries" bore no resemblance to the graceful craft so familiar to our two counties. Our Norfolk wherry had a long low hull, clinker built, and was pointed at both ends, its black hull relieved only by the white painted 'snouts' – seen at bow and stern. There was a tall massive mast, carrying a huge black sail, supported on a gaff at an angle of about 45 degrees and unlike the sails of a yacht, a wherry sail had no boom. Most of the space in the hull was naturally occupied by the hold, capable of carrying up to 50 tons according to the size of the vessel, while at the stem was the cabin for a crew of two, a very cosy affair with its low berth each side and a handy cooking stove with an open fire. The wherry, like the old time farm wagon was not a drab affair, gay colours, scarlet and blue predominating, adorned the superstructure and the hatch covers, which, all being removable, gave free access to the hold. To pass under fixed bridges the mast and sail could easily be lowered, despite its great weight, for the mast, set in a tabernacle was so perfectly balanced with big blocks of lead at the foot that it swung beautifully down, eased by the single halyard running through blocks at the bow. When certain kinds of cargo were carried, such as corn in sacks, or cases of goods, unloading was greatly facilitated by lowering the mast a little and using it as a derrick, the cable, running through a pulley block at the masthead being attached to the winch at the foot of the mast. At the top of the masthead was the wherry's ornamental 'vane' or large burgee, invariably red in colour. In bygone days this figurehead on many a wherry took the form of the famous 'Jenny Morgan' of an old popular song – a Welsh girl, complete with high hat and shawl, holding a bunch of leeks. Other wherries belonging to some firms or companies displayed a distinctive 'house' badge or emblem.

It is certain that our Norfolk wherry is a direct descendant of the medieval 'keel', which in turn would seem to owe something to the long ships of the Vikings. The keel was the mode of local transport from the earliest days, and latter examples differed little from the wherry save for rig, for the keel was

square-rigged, the one sail being mounted on a mast amidships. The real bar to fast movement of course, is a square rig, especially on our winding rivers; with wind astern and a fair tide its sailing powers are immense, but these favourable conditions are so conspicuous by their absence that the day dawned when the fore-and-aft rig supplied the answer to the keelman's problems.

In the halcyon days of the wherry, cargoes were plentiful, despite the fact that at the dawn of the present century some 300 craft were plying our three main rivers and their tributaries. Many a coaster coming in at Lowestoft and Yarmouth discharged its cargo into the holds of wherries for transhipment to Norwich, Beccles, Bungay and smaller towns and villages, despite the fact that quite a network of railways existed in these areas. Coal for gasworks, maltings and domestic use, timber for local yards, corn for millers and maltsters formed the bulk of cargoes carried in wherry holds, though general merchandise for grocers and others often reposed snugly under a wherry's colourful hatches. Road making materials such as granite and flint were often carried and during haymaking and reed-cutting a wherry's hold was often the only means of moving hay and reeds. With the setting up of the sugar-beet industry much of the beet was taken to the factory at Cantley, on the Yare, by wherry.

And what of the men and sometimes women (for oft times the crew consisted of the skipper and his good lady!) who manned the so noble craft? A more virile and hardy race was nowhere to be found, unless it be in the sailing trawlers and smacks around our coasts, and very often it transpired that your wherry-man had served an apprenticeship in the brown sailed fleets in his younger days. A wherry's crew worked hard, in winter and summer, in fair weather and foul – often for a scanty living, and when the day's work was over, it was suspected they imbibed, often not wisely, for 'as drunk as a wherryman' still is an expression which dies hard! Yet who is to condemn them for their 'drops' after a day spent barrowing twenty tons of granite from a wherry's hold down a narrow, sagging plank on to a wharf, or on a day without a breeze, to quant the wherry several weary, back-bending miles to its destination, or failing that some friendly riverside hostelry?

The eclipse of the wherry, it could be said, commenced with the First World War and was finally sealed by the Second. Its doom was spelled, without doubt by the combustion engine, and as more and more lorries came on to the road, less and less wherries could be seen 'a sailing'. A few had their masts and sails removed to become lighters towed by some fussy little tug, but the majority sunk, as it were, up some narrow dyke, or were run up a mudbank, there to end their days until they rotted away, or become so overgrown with herbage that they eventually became part of the very river bank itself!

The passing of the wherry occasioned an amount of regret, though it was realized that commercially the day of sail had irretrievably gone. There were those, however, who felt that at least one of the old-timers should be preserved, and if possible, kept at work. To this end the Norfolk Wherry Trust was formed and inaugural meetings held in several Broadland towns and villages and money raised to get hold of one of the very few remaining craft, thoroughly restore it and once more put it into service. Finding a wherry in a fair condition was almost a hopeless task, but eventually a hull was found on the Norwich river and taken to a Yarmouth shipyard. The hull of this wherry which bore the name 'PLANE', was thoroughly scraped, examined and extensively repaired while a new mast and sail were made. The 'PLANE', it transpired was the old original 'ALBION', built in 1898 by Brighton at his Oulton Broad yard for Messrs. W.D. & A.E. Walker of Bungay; it was Brighton's last but certainly his best.

So the great day came when a re-furbished 'ALBION' staged her great come-back, hoisted sail by Yarmouth Bridge with Norwich as her destination and though an almost wind free day made towing an unlooked for necessity, it detracted little from the importance of the great occasion. Cargoes were plentiful at first, but these eventually fell off and summer cruising with camping parties on the various rivers and broads is now its only occupation.

There is one feature of the 'ALBION' which deprives it of being a typical Norfolk wherry, it is the fact that in being one of the very few carvel-built wherries it differs from its familiar clinker-built Norfolk brethren. 'ALBION', to the old school, lacks that graceful deck curve from stem to stem, instead there is trace of a flat deck amidships, with a sudden upward slope to both ends of the craft. However, it was the only possible choice, for no other hull in good enough condition could be found to merit preservation.

Thus, then the simple story of those grand old ladies of the Broads; to an older generation they will remain – with the also rapidly disappearing riverside windmill – a beautiful memory. Time marches on and with it has gone that huge black sail.

Eugene C. Ulph. Beccles