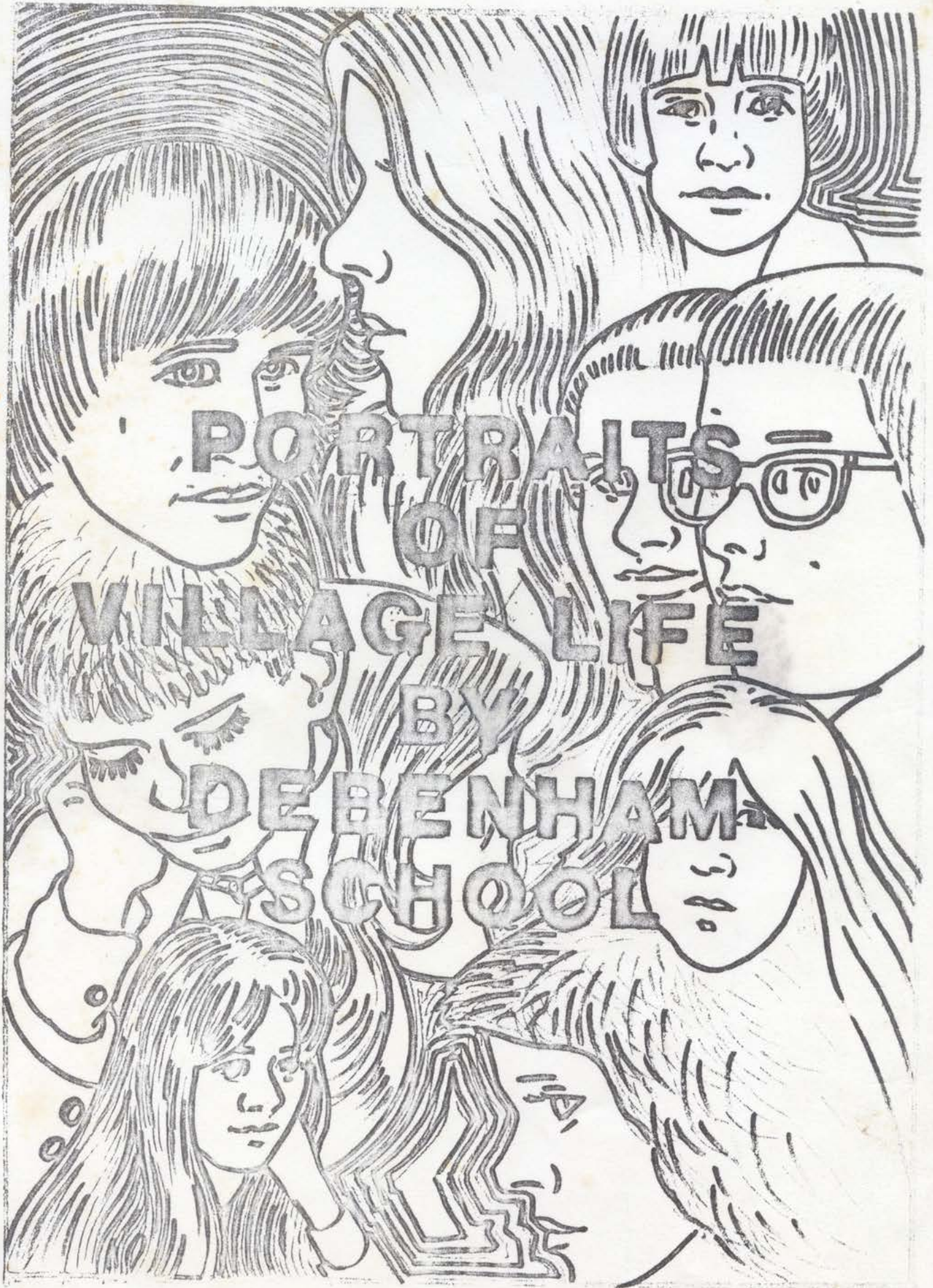


PORTRAITS  
OF  
VILLAGE LIFE  
BY  
DEBENHAM  
SCHOOL



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# PORTRAITS OF VILLAGE LIFE

Written And Illustrated

By

THE PUPILS

Of

DEBENHAM MODERN SCHOOL

## Foreword

The pupils of our school live in some of the most beautiful and unspoilt villages in Suffolk. To many of the children, the familiar scene is simply 'home'; but we have encouraged them to look with a keener eye at their surroundings, perhaps to do a little research, and write about the people, past and present, the buildings, the work, the scenery and the interesting stories that make their own village the place it is.

This magazine contains the writing of over a hundred of our pupils, aged eleven to fifteen years. The choice of material was their own and there may therefore be many important omissions. Thus, in no way is this intended to be a comprehensive guide book, and, although we have checked many items, there are undoubtedly inaccuracies.

We send our thanks to the many people in the villages who have answered numerous questions from the children and supplied so much interesting information.

Editors.

\* \* \*

## OUR HERITAGE

We don't have the time,  
We're busy building bungalows, bridges, blocks and bombs.  
We're busy producing, profiting, progressing.  
We're busy marketing, making machines and making money.  
Yes we're busy; we're modern.

They had the time,  
Those old craftsmen.  
They carefully carved the wooden  
Roofs and pews of old churches.  
They rounded the flints and fashioned the fonts.  
They had the work but had not our worries.

They hold the years,  
Those old buildings,  
The memories of what used to be,  
So please don't destroy them,  
Because we need our memories,  
And so will our children.

Sally Keeble

# DEBENHAM



## DEBENHAM HIGH STREET

Most of the houses in the village are painted in misty colours; mainly white, pink and sky blues. They are slanting and very close together. The older houses are in the middle of the village and the newer ones on the outskirts.

As you walk down the High Street you feel the air of togetherness about the houses.

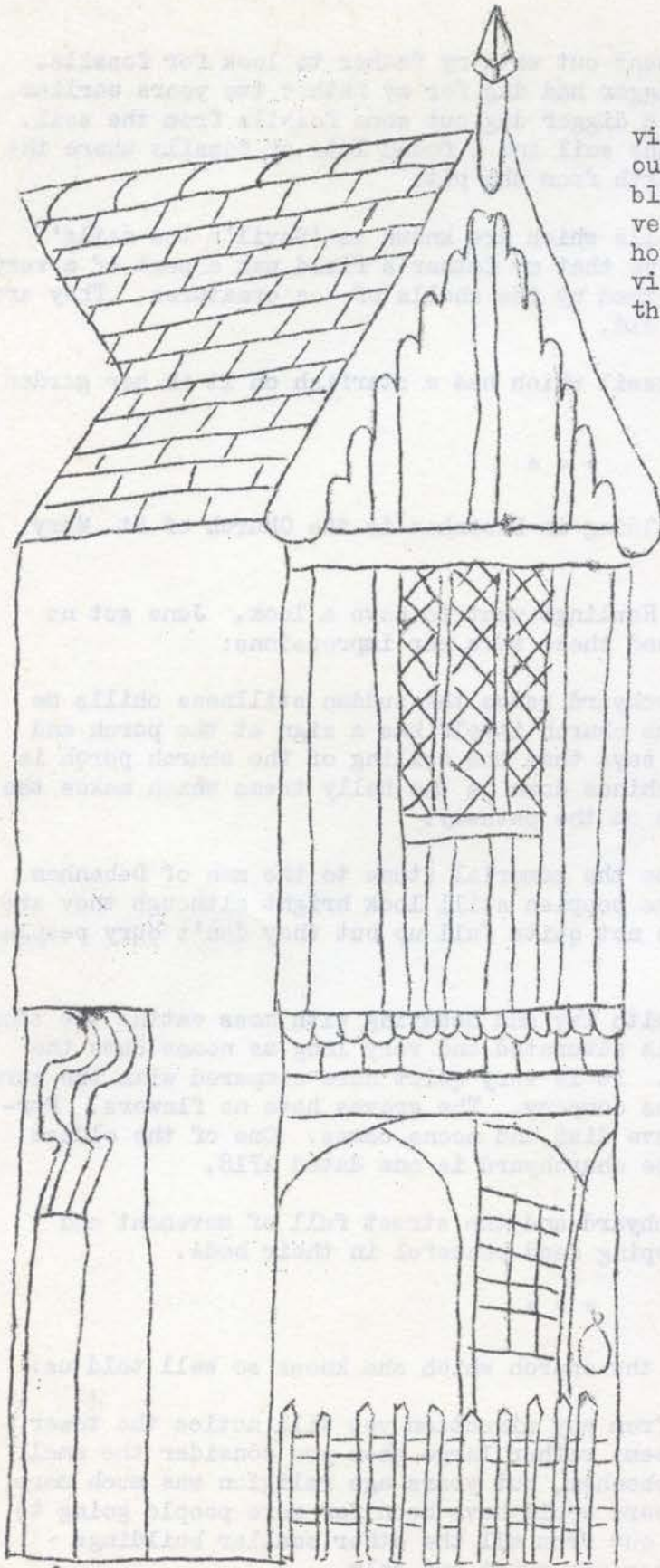
In the olden days the houses were full of oak beams and there are old beams still remaining in a number of the houses. The walls are mostly made of plaster or brick. The gaps between the timbers used to be filled in with hazel twigs, clay and straw. Horse hair was mixed with the plaster on top.

On the roofs were tiles, reed thatch or straw thatch. Very few of the houses had slate roofs as this had to be brought all the way from the slate mines in Wales.

In the reign of Queen Elizabeth I and earlier this village became very rich and famous for sheep farming. The farmers sold the wool to foreign countries until some Flemish people came to live in Debenham and taught the people of Debenham the art of weaving.

About 1650 Debenham became an important cheese-making town. Many farmers then kept cows instead of sheep

Mary Baker.



M.J.W.

First year pupils at Debenham Modern School begin their study of History by learning a little about pre-historic times. Several boys and girls surprised their class-mates by bringing to their lessons a number of fossils which they had found in or near the village.

Nicola Balch wrote:

On 28th April, 1974 I went out with my father to look for fossils. We went to the pit which a digger had dug for my father two years earlier. My father was surprised when a digger dug out some fossils from the soil. When I went out I looked in the soil and I found lots of fossils where the digger had turned over the earth from the pit.

I found some fossil shells which are known as 'Devil's toe nails' and two belemnites. We believe that my father's field was a part of a very big sea. The fossils were formed by the shells of sea creatures. They are probably fifty million years old.

Mrs. Jackson found a fossil which has a starfish on it in her garden in Crowfield.

\* \* \*

Probably the oldest building in Debenham is the Church of St. Mary Magdalene.

June Ransome and Tanya Rawlings went to have a look. June got no further than the churchyard and these were her impressions:

As I walk past the churchyard gates the sudden stillness chills me as much as the cool wind. The church itself has a sign at the porch and a chain across it. The sign says that the ceiling of the church porch is in need of repair. The sun shines down on the holly trees which makes the shadow of black spikey leaves on the pathway.

Around the yard I notice the memorial stone to the men of Debenham who died in the two wars. The poppies still look bright although they are artificial. The graveyard is not quite full up but they don't bury people there now.

The tombs are covered with ivy and decaying with moss eating the stone. The grass around the graves is saturated and very long as noone cuts the grass in winter as it is wet. It is very quiet here compared with the street with only the birds singing as company. The graves have no flowers. Perhaps relatives and friends have died and noone cares. One of the oldest graves that I have seen in the churchyard is one dated 1718.

I walk out of the churchyard and the street full of movement and noise contrasts with the sleeping dead peaceful in their beds.

\* \* \*

Tanya, who went inside the church which she knows so well told us:

As you enter Debenham from any direction you will notice the tower of the church. The church seems rather large when you consider the small number of people living in Debenham, but years ago religion was much more alive than it is today and there would have been far more people going to church. The building stands out from all the other smaller buildings around it, even though they too are quiet and calm.

A few hundred years ago there were three churches in Debenham, but now only St. Mary's remains. Until 1352 it was under the administration of Ely. After the Reformation it passed to the Framlingham family who lived at Crow's Hall. You can see the tomb of Sir Charles Framlingham and

his wife in the chancel and on the wall above them is his coat of arms.

The most ancient part of the church is the lower part of the tower which is Saxon. Originally the tower was 20 feet high, but in 1667 it was struck by lightning.

In the belfry are eight bells which were cast in 1761 and then they were re-hung in steel frames in the 1930's.

The entrance to the church is from the west through a porch which is badly in need of repair. At the back on the left side is the font which is made of stone and has a pointed oak hood. On the stone pillars you can see where Oliver Cromwell sent his men round to knock off the heads of the saints as he did not believe in churches decorated like this. On the right just before you enter the chancel is a wooden lectern and on the left is a stone pulpit.

About twenty-five years ago the south aisle roof had to be completely restored as it was severely damaged. The damaged lead was sold to help cover the cost, but new lead was not put back.

Every year hundreds of visitors come from all over England to visit Debenham Church.

\* \* \*

Debenham, of course, takes its name from the River Deben which rises here. Andrea Race found out about some activity on this river in earlier times:

Once many merchants and traders came to Debenham to buy wool and sell furs and hardware. They mostly came on barges down the River Deben. A few years ago when some workmen were cutting down and digging up part of the River Deben they came across some exciting finds which were Italian coins that the traders probably used.

Sheep farming made Debenham quite a rich village in the fourteenth century. This is why one of the public houses is called 'The Woolpack'. With the money from the wool trade the church was extended and houses such as R. Rose, the butchers and the Deben Rush Weavers were built. At one time the Rush Weavers and the butcher's shop used to be all one house.

\* \* \*

When the sailors stepped ashore in Debenham they were certain to find plenty of hospitality. Robert Hayward wrote:

The house where I live used to be a part of 'The Eight Bells' public house. Outside my next door neighbour's house there are two trees. On one of them there is a metal ring where horses used to be tied. There used to be sixteen pubs in Debenham before 1812.

A lot of the pubs were inns where visitors could stay for a few days. Barges used to come up the River Deben and the sailors used to stay at the inns.

\* \* \*

Yvonne Davis who lives next door to Robert added:

My house in the High Street is about four hundred years old. At first it was part of a public house. The government has put a Preservation Order on my house. This means that the front part of our house can not be changed. Every room in my house has old oak beams. Upstairs there are three bedrooms which are all very big. Downstairs there are two rooms which were part of the house when it was first built. The bathroom and kitchen have been added.

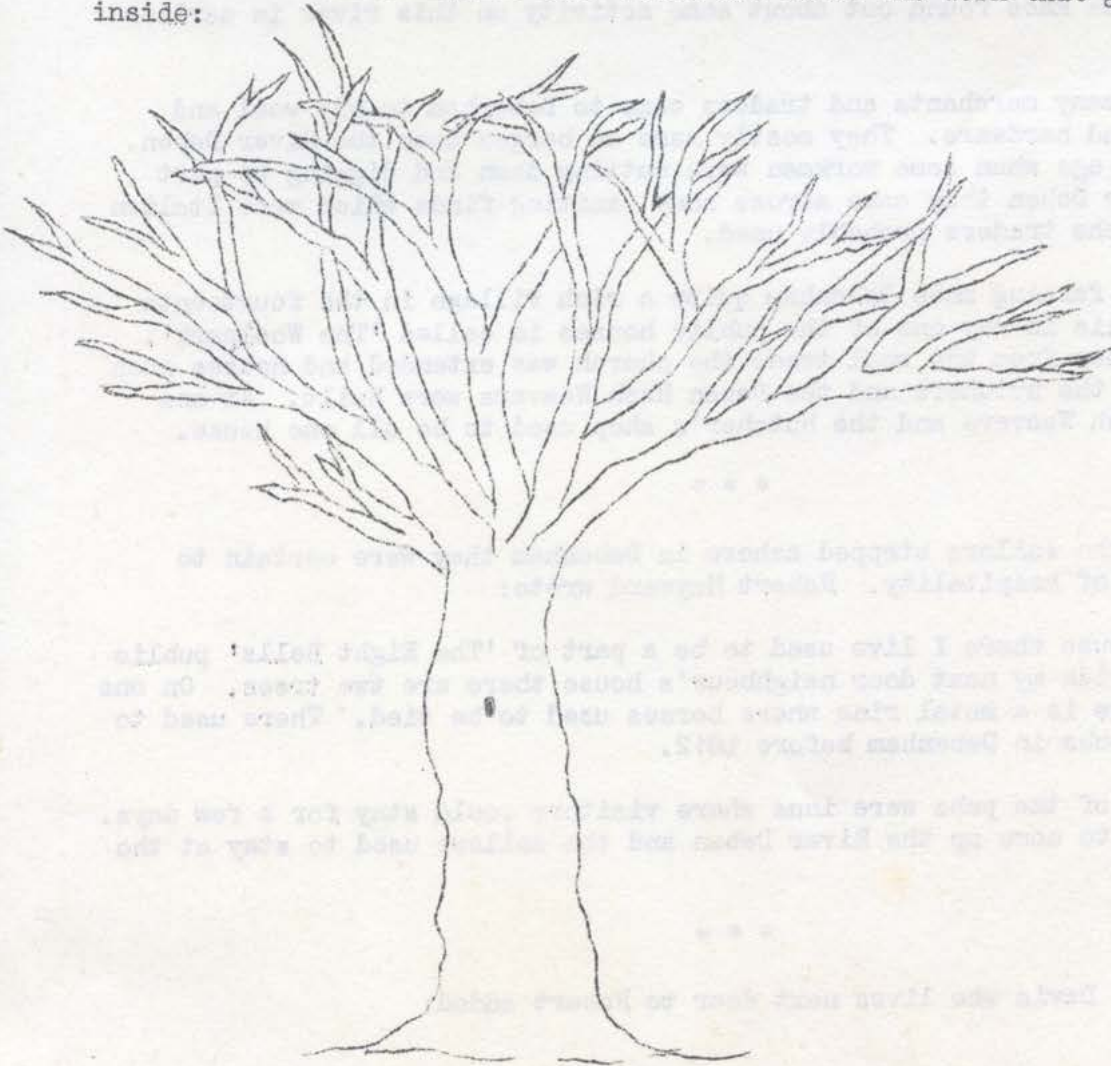
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Owen Sease had a similar tale to tell:

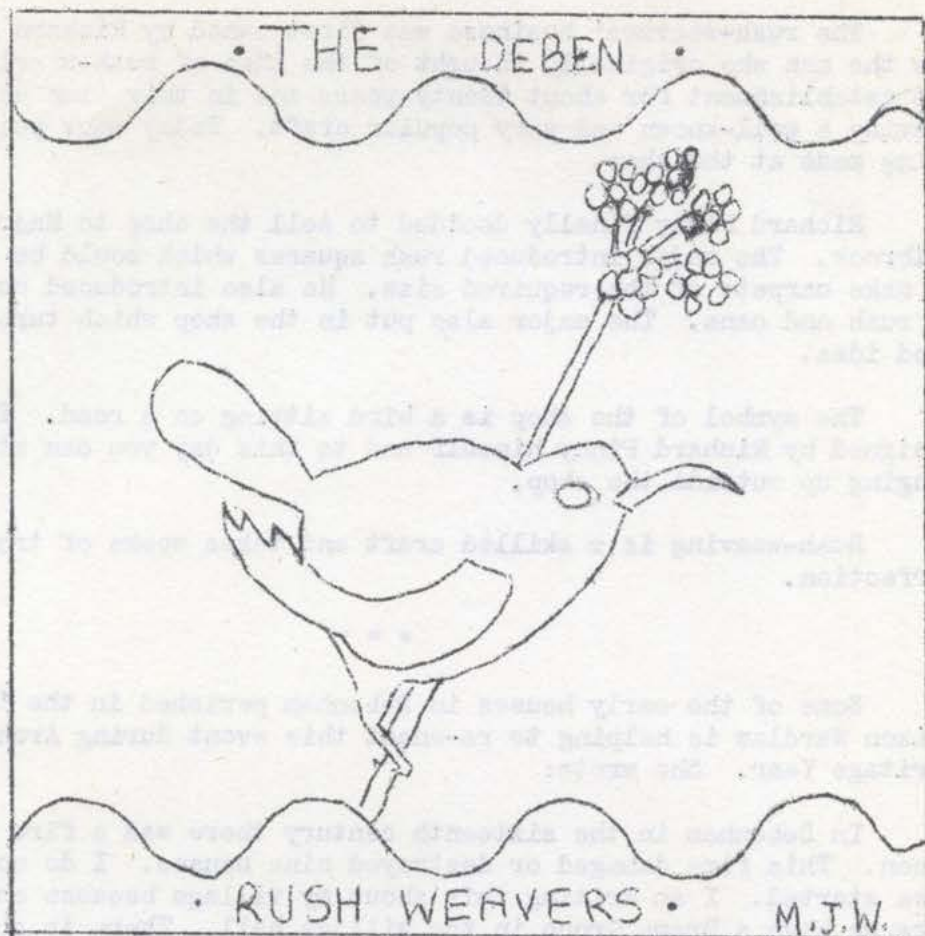
At first my house was an inn called 'The Buck's Head', which included two more houses joined onto it. Our house is the middle one of the three. This inn was there for about a hundred years. They did not make much money after all, so they closed down. The three houses were like this for about a year. After this the shop was sold to a hairdresser. The hairdresser did well at first, but then there was a shortage of money so they sold the shop to Mr. Turner. He made the place into three houses. People started to live in these houses before the war. Now there are Mr. and Mrs. Mills living in the right hand side and Mr. and Mrs. Freeman on the left hand side. We live in the middle house.

\* \* \*

One of the houses which the sailors from the barges would have seen as they walked up the High Street would have been what we now know as The Deben Rush Weavers. Eunice Read found out about the work that goes on inside:







The rush-weavers have been in Debenham for approximately twenty-eight years. It used to be just a workshop and things were only made to order, but about eight years ago part of it was made into a shop selling the articles made there.

Canes are sometimes used in the shop for re-seating chairs, but rushes are mainly used. The rushes used to be gathered in Earl Stonham and the lowlands of Suffolk where they grow in the river beds. However, they are now imported from the continent.

Many articles are made in the workshop and these include table-mats which are made over a wooden block and place-mats that are made in a slightly different way on the looms. Flower pot covers are also made and their only use is for show. Donkey hats have even been made in the rush-weavers' shop but they are only made to order.

The looms are only used for making place-mats and they require both the hands and the feet to operate them. The place-mats are made in long strips with a few threads to separate each of them. The mats are woven together with different coloured thread. The pattern as well as the colour of the thread can be changed. There are four looms in the rush-weavers - three downstairs and one in a small room upstairs.

Much of the weaving of flower pot covers is done by outworkers in their own homes. This also applies to nearly all the weaving of baskets. There used to be quite a number of people employed in the business but now there are only two or three people working in the shop and about four outworkers.

The rush-weavers' business was first owned by Richard Pinny and he was the man who originally thought of the idea of rush-weaving. He owned the establishment for about twenty years and in this time he made rush-weaving a well-known and very popular craft. Today many people own something made at the shop.

Richard Pinny finally decided to sell the shop to Major Mason of Holbrook. The major introduced rush squares which could be sewn together to make carpets of the required size. He also introduced chair re-seating in rush and cane. The major also put in the shop which turned out to be a good idea.

The symbol of the shop is a bird sitting on a reed. The sign was designed by Richard Pinny himself and to this day you can still see it hanging up outside the shop.

Rush-weaving is a skilled craft and takes weeks of training to reach perfection.

\* \* \*

Some of the early houses in Debenham perished in the 'Great Fire'. Alison Wardlaw is helping to re-enact this event during Architectural Heritage Year. She wrote:

In Debenham in the sixteenth century there was a fire on the village green. This fire damaged or destroyed nine houses. I do not know how the fire started. I am writing this about my village because on Saturday mornings we have a Drama Group in the village hall. There is going to be a fair in the village, so we said that we would act the fire on the village green. The fair will start at 6 o'clock at night.

I obtained my information about the fire from an old man in the village. After I had found out about the fire I was very interested in the history of Debenham.

\* \* \*

Vivienne Carter took us away from the High Street to tell us about the Old Stowmarket Road:

The old road from Debenham to Stowmarket now forms part of the bed of the River Deben. In order to follow the course of the road you must start at the Butts.

The road has not been used as a main road since the early nineteenth century. There are a few families who live down the road still and use the road. There is a lane which turns off the road and which leads up to the main road to Wetheringsett. The Stowmarket Road ends near a field a couple of miles away but once it did carry on and join up with the Stowmarket road that we use now.

In the eighteenth century there were carriages on the road. They were used for taking people from Debenham to Stowmarket. Debenham was quite an important town then. The road also had carts on it carrying a load for Stowmarket. Then the road was just dust but it is now covered with tar. In winter the men and women faced the danger of falling out of the horse-drawn carriages and drowning in the pot holes in the road which were full of water. In the summer big cracks would appear and the wheels

of the carriages would get stuck and turn over and the people would fall out. There might also have been highwaymen lurking behind the trees or in the bushes. If you were on the road you might also have seen cattle being driven along the road to market.

Now in the winter the road is covered with water and sometimes it is very slimy and horrible to walk on. When you reach the road where it is in the wood you can not see very well because the wood is quite thick. There is a path that runs beside the road for a little way. As you walk further down the road it gets more eerie and makes you feel as if you are being followed by a hairy ghost. It is so horrible you wish you could run all the way to get out of its reach, but the feeling is always there.

The road provides a walk up to the little lane that turns off and you walk up the lane to reach the Wetheringsett Road. You can walk all the way down the Old Stowmarket Road and then turn round.

One day why don't you go for a walk down this road of history?

\* \* \*

Possibly along this road came some of the equipment for the Gas works about which Jill Cook has written:

'Restcot' is now quite an ordinary house in Water Lane, but it was not always a private house for it once played a vital part in the daily life of Debenham.

'Restcot' was the Debenham Gas works. My great-grandfather was the manager of it. Last thing at night he would go round the street and put all the lights on. Then he would come home and go to bed. He would get up at 7 o'clock and go round and put all the lights out that had been on during the night before. Then he would have to check the gas because in the garden there was a big basin-like thing. He would also have to stoke up the fires. There was once a fire at the gas works which damaged some of the house.

This part of the story of 'Restcot' ended sadly when electricity took over and gas was no longer needed and was never seen lighting up the streets of Debenham again.

\* \* \*

Just as Debenham today lacks a gas supply it also lacks any rail link with the rest of the country. However, Melvin Mayes has a railway story to tell:

Debenham at the moment is rather cut off and out in the wilderness; the only way out of the place being by private car or the infrequent bus service. However, around the turn of the century people could have thought about travelling to Ipswich in a completely different way - by rail.

At this time of course the great age of railway building had just passed its peak and at the time the country was awash with bankrupt companies that had proposed, announced and started to build small branch line railways but had failed in attracting traffic to their lines. Some companies like the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company made a success of their lines but others like the Mid-Suffolk Light Railway Company failed miserably. This company did build a line across the middle of Suffolk,

from Haughley Junction to Laxfield from where the line was to continue on to Halesworth but the money for this section ran out after about one hundred yards of track had been laid beyond Laxfield station. However, the line from Haughley to Laxfield survived into the nineteen twenties.

This line missed Debenham by about three miles and ran north through Aspall instead of Debenham. The halfway point on this line was Kenton and a line was proposed and started between here and Debenham and on to Westerfield Junction just north of Ipswich. This line ran out of money and stopped just before it reached Debenham station.

The earthworks from Kenton to Debenham had been completed and a bridge built over the Debenham to Eye road. The line ran on an embankment most of the way from Kenton to the Eye road bridge and from there for about another two hundred yards and then into a cutting which at its deepest point was about 40 feet from the bottom to the top. This now ends in a rubbish dump, but a level crossing was built at the top of what is known as London Hill on the Debenham to Wetheringsett road. This was as far as the line reached and no one is sure as to how the line would have continued.

Stories of course grow up around a site like this and my grandfather who, as a young lad, helped to build the Debenham part of the line used to tell a story about two men who had just received their wage packets on the Friday night. As the workmen were feeling rather rich the cards were got out and gambling commenced. One person who was losing heavily suddenly accused the other of cheating and because nerves were heated after a long day's work a fight soon developed and after a few minutes there was one body on the floor and the other person was standing up shaking with fear.

As the murderer was scared of being found out he quickly buried the body in the part of the embankment that had been built that day. He then started to run across the bridge over the Eye road. At the same time an engine was returning to Kenton. As the man was trying to run out of the way of this he tripped and fell over the side of the bridge. His body was found next morning.

My grandfather used to say that you can still see the ghost of this man running across the bridge and falling onto the road below. Whether this is true or not I do not know but the possibility can not be dismissed.

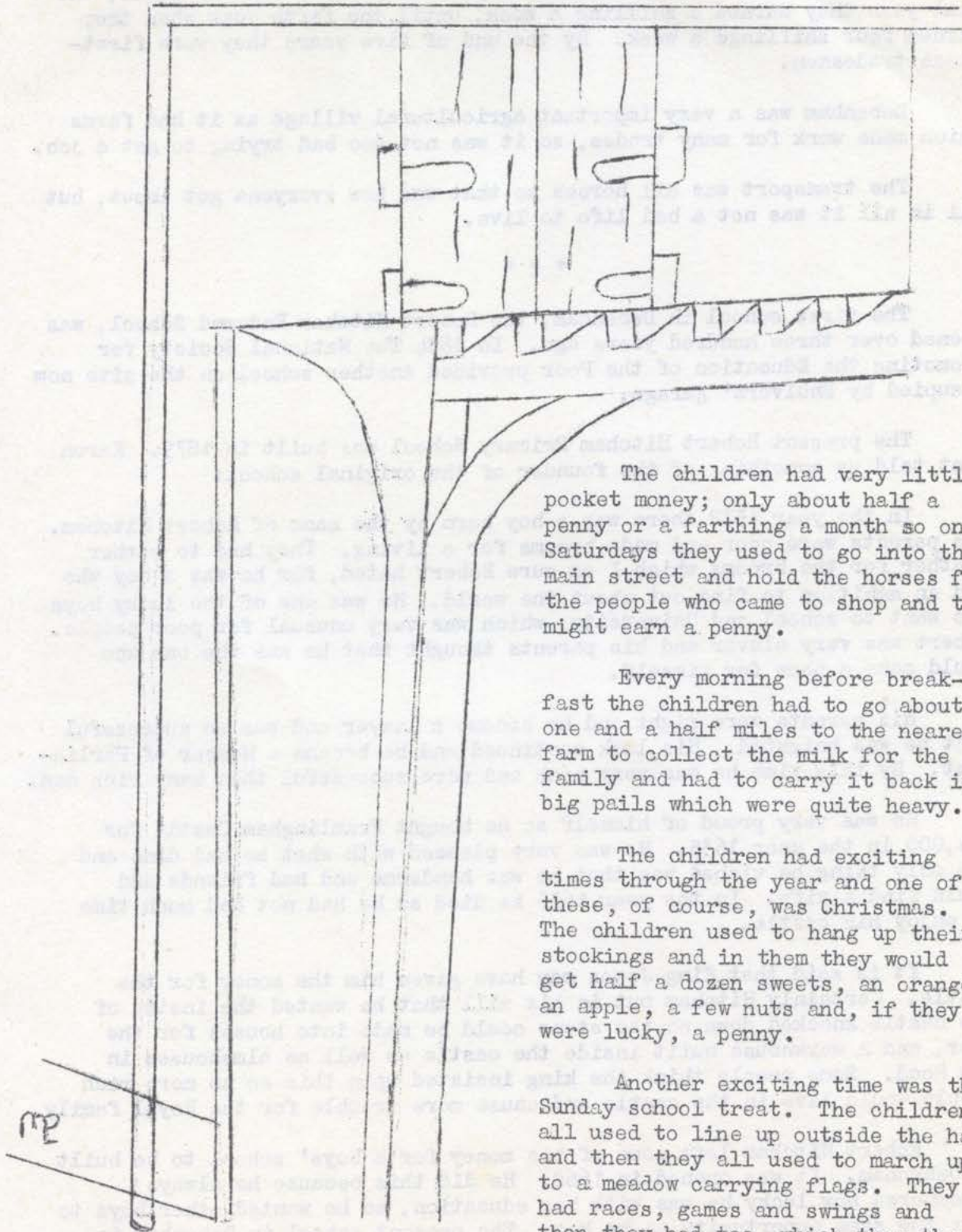
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Linda Challis added to our knowledge of the children of Debenham at the turn of the century and wrote:

The infants were sent to the girls' school for one year and then they were sent to the boys' school. In the boys' school they were packed in long forms from the ages of twelve or thirteen down to the very young ones and all squashed together like sardines.

The cane was used a great deal to keep discipline. To pass the time in school they had reading, writing and arithmetic, as it was called then and as the child grew up drawing and geography were added. The playground was very small and consisted of stones. This was used for ten minutes in the morning and ten in the afternoon, but it was not used at lunch time as everybody went home to dinner however far away they lived.

The children used to write on a slate for all their lessons and not in books as we do now.



The children had very little pocket money; only about half a penny or a farthing a month so on Saturdays they used to go into the main street and hold the horses for the people who came to shop and thus might earn a penny.

Every morning before breakfast the children had to go about one and a half miles to the nearest farm to collect the milk for the family and had to carry it back in big pails which were quite heavy.

The children had exciting times through the year and one of these, of course, was Christmas. The children used to hang up their stockings and in them they would get half a dozen sweets, an orange, an apple, a few nuts and, if they were lucky, a penny.

Another exciting time was the Sunday school treat. The children all used to line up outside the hall and then they all used to march up to a meadow carrying flags. They had races, games and swings and then they had tea, which they thought was delicious because they had cakes.

At about 6 o'clock the parents came up to gossip and the band came to play and after a jolly night of singing the band played The National Anthem and everybody went home, tired but happy, looking forward to the next year.

As the children reached the age of twelve and thirteen they had to find a job. If their fathers could afford it, they used to bind their boys to a trade. This meant that they had to work for their employers for five years with only Saturday afternoons off, from six o'clock in the morning until six o'clock at night. The first year they would earn no wages; the next year they earned a shilling a week, until the fifth year when they earned four shillings a week. By the end of five years they were first-class tradesmen.

Debenham was a very important agricultural village as it had farms which made work for many trades, so it was not too bad trying to get a job.

The transport was all horses so that was how everyone got about, but all in all it was not a bad life to live.

\* \* \*

The first school in Debenham, the Robert Hitcham Endowed School, was opened over three hundred years ago. In 1834 The National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor provided another school on the site now occupied by Shulvers' garage.

The present Robert Hitcham Primary School was built in 1879. Karen Hunt told us something of the founder of the original school:

In the year 1572 there was a boy born by the name of Robert Hitcham. His parents were poor and made brooms for a living. They had to gather heather for the brooms which I am sure Robert hated, for he was a boy who had an ambition to find out about the world. He was one of the lucky boys who went to school and University, which was very unusual for poor people. Robert was very clever and his parents thought that he was the one who would make a name for himself.

His parents were right and he became a lawyer and was so successful that he was knighted. His luck continued and he became a Member of Parliament. By this time he was very rich and more successful than many rich men.

He was very proud of himself so he bought Framlingham Castle for £14,000 in the year 1635. He was very pleased with what he had done and the only thing he wished was that he was handsome and had friends and could find a wife. In the year 1635 he died so he had not had much time to enjoy his castle.

It is said that King James may have given him the money for the castle. Certainly Hitcham put in his will that he wanted the inside of the castle knocked down so the stone could be made into houses for the poor, and a workhouse built inside the castle as well as almshouses in New Road. Some people think the king insisted upon this so no more rich people would live in the castle and cause more trouble for the Royal family.

Robert Hitcham left some of his money for a boys' school to be built in Debenham. It was opened in 1668. He did this because he always remembered how lucky he was with his education, so he wanted other boys to have the same opportunity as he had. The present school in Debenham is named after Robert Hitcham so the people still remember him.

\* \* \*

Pamela Cole who was a pupil at the primary school added:

In the school there is a picture of Sir Robert Hitcham and as you walk along the hall which is about 60 feet long it looks as if the eyes are

following you. They say that the school is haunted, but I don't know what the ghost is like. I don't think it is Robert Hitcham because the school was built after he was dead.

When I was at the school there were terrible floods and the headmaster came out in his boat to collect pupils who lived nearby and could not get to school.

\* \* \*

Karen Barker, a modern teenager lives in Gracechurch Street and has far more leisure time than the children of whom Linda Challis wrote. Karen told us:

A place I like to play is down a lane called Hilly Villy. Last year a boy was playing with matches down there and he set light to a stable. There was a horse in the stable and Adrienne Outhwaite saved the horse's life. She got £5 and a gold badge from 'Blue Peter'.

\* \* \*

Debenham is by no means frozen in the past for a number of thriving businesses can be found in the village today. Ian Bloomfield wrote of the agricultural engineering works which you see as you enter Debenham on the road from Ipswich:

Bloomfield's of Debenham was started sixty years ago by a man named Malcolm Bloomfield who mended and sold steam engines. He had seven sons and seven daughters. The sons carried on the business.

After serving an apprenticeship with Garnets of Leiston old Mr. Bloomfield decided to go into his own business. He used to mend motor-bikes for the army.

\* \* \*

Debenham is also the place where Kia-ora Cup Squash is prepared and distributed. Patrick Eaton wrote:

My father makes soft drinks in a small factory at our home. We deliver these to cinemas and theatres.

The fruit concentrate comes from our supplier in 50 gallon barrels and we put some of it into large tanks and then add water. It then goes through pipes into one of three machines. Three people are needed to each machine. One person puts the cups in at one end and they go under some fillers. The next person puts the tops on the drinks. They then get sealed mechanically. The third person takes the drinks out and packs them into boxes.

We make two different sizes of drinks which are orange and pineapple and lime flavours in the 10 oz. cups. In the 7 oz. cups go sweet lime, orange and strawberry.

We make all the drinks at our home but we take lorry loads to Nottingham as we have some men there and vans for taking the drinks to other places in that vicinity.

I also work for my father in my spare time and I enjoy it.

\* \* \*

Paul Hardcastle and Colin Mayes reminded us of how farming methods are changing when they wrote about the chicken farm where Paul works in his spare time:

At the chicken farm in Low Road, Debenham there are about a thousand chickens. Most of them are white but there are a few brown ones.

The chickens live in cages inside huts where the lights are always on. There are four rows of cages with one on top of another in five huts and six rows of cages in the other three. There are eight huts in all. In these huts there are big feeding hoppers which are pushed along the rows with food inside them. The chickens can get their water by pecking a nib out of which, when the chicken's beak pushes the nib up, the water comes.

The chickens stand on a slope so when they lay eggs the eggs can roll down into a trough at the bottom so that we can collect them. We collect the eggs on a trolley which is pushed round the huts. The number of eggs collected is put on a chart. All eggs are taken away twice a week.

The cages are kept clean by a sort of belt which is under the cages. When the belt gets dirty a handle is turned and the mess falls into a hole.

When the old chickens can not lay any more eggs they are taken by a big lorry to a factory which makes soup. When the new chickens come in they do not lay eggs for some time.

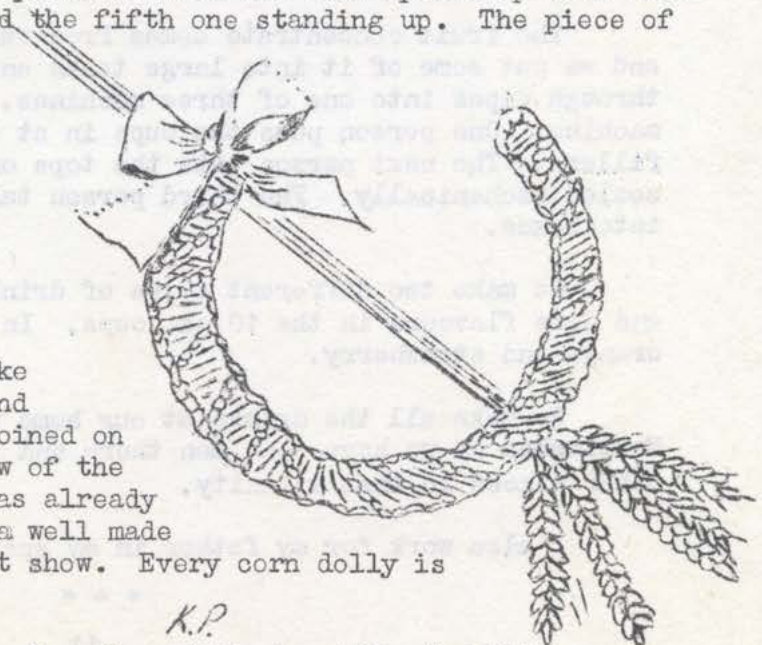
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Helen Smiter was able to find two people who still make Corn Dollies and Helen told us:

Corn dollies have been made for hundreds of years. They were supposed to provide protection against fires and bring good harvests in the future. They would have been made and put on the last cart at the end of the harvest. There are different shaped dollies for different counties. The Suffolk one is the horseshoe. Some others are the lantern, staff, doll and various types of plaited ones.

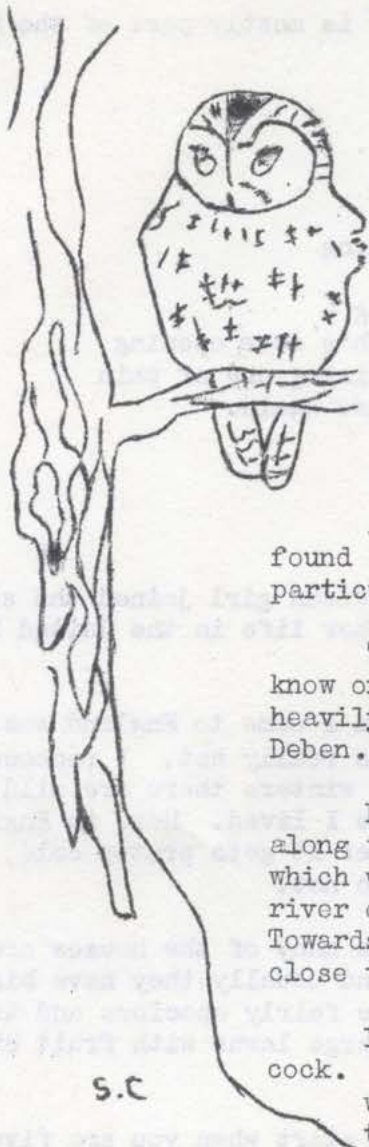
First you have to cut the straw into lengths. There must be a thick end and a thin end. Then you soak it to make it pliable. Five pieces of straw are tied together with a piece of wool and then opened up with four making the shape of a cross and the fifth one standing up. The piece of straw which is standing up is placed on top of one of the others and the underneath piece is then brought over it and placed on top of the next piece. In this way the corn dolly is woven into shape.

It takes about 50 - 60 separate pieces of straw to make one lantern dolly. The thin end of the new piece of straw is joined on by inserting it into the hollow of the thick end of the straw which has already been used in the weaving. In a well made corn dolly the joins should not show. Every corn dolly is finished off with a plait.



I obtained my information from Mrs. Aldred and Mr. Griffiths.





A large number of birds and animals can be found in the vicinity of Debenham and these are of particular interest to Adrian Last who wrote:

The best place for observing wild life that I know of is the area called the 'Gulls'. This is a heavily wooded area near the source of the River Deben.

Last summer there was a kingfisher living along the river. It was feeding on sticklebacks, which were plentiful. As the summer drew on, the river dried up and the supply of food lessened. Towards the end of the summer it was easy to get close to the kingfisher and study it in detail.

If you are lucky, you can see snipe and woodcock. These can be found in marshy plantations or wet lowlands, but it is often difficult to spot them. The snipe is a very nervous bird and will take flight at the slightest movement. With long legs and beaks, both the snipe and woodcock are adapted to living on marshy ground.

There are plenty of old, disused farm buildings where barn owls roost. Under the roosts are owl pellets which the owls regurgitate after eating mice. They are composed of fur and small bones. I know five owl roosts and there is one owl in each roost.

The hares are hunted by the Eastern Harriers two or three times a year. The men, horses and dogs turn off at the local pubs in Debenham. The hunting takes place from December to February. Pheasants and other game are shot by a party of men who hire the shoot from my father.

Many rabbits live in the woods and sandpits, where they breed each year. When there is a plentiful supply myxomatosis spreads rapidly. The rabbits' eyes swell until they go blind and cannot see to find food or water, or to escape from foxes and dogs. I think this is a terrible

disease and ought never to be spread by man to control the numbers of rabbits.

There are two pairs of grey squirrels living in the woods, but they can rarely be seen as they are so wild.

I know this area very well, because it is mostly part of the farm where I have lived all my life.

\* \* \*

#### Death of a Rabbit

'Twas a cold, clear winter's morning  
Quiet, peaceful  
The birds singing, rabbits playing -  
Bang! Silence, silence like death's door opening  
Then a cry of pain, the last agonising cry of pain  
Gone, dead never to see the sunrise again.

Horst Baumguertal

\* \* \*

Earlier this year Dorie Fuller, an American girl joined the school and she has written of the contrast between her life in the United States and her new way of life here in Debenham:

The first big difference I noticed when I came to England was the weather. In the States in the summer it gets really hot. I remember one time the temperature got up to 120°, and the winters there are mild. It very rarely snows, at least in the part where I lived. Here in England it is the opposite, because here in the winter it gets pretty cold, and even snows! In the summer here it is not too hot.

The housing is different as well. Here many of the houses are of historical interest and mostly two storey, and usually they have big flower gardens. In the States the houses are fairly spacious and are usually bungalows. Most of the yards have large lawns with fruit bushes and large shady trees.

Schools are a lot different. Here you start when you are five and leave when you are sixteen and there are not so many children of different races in the schools. Most of the children I have met at my new school were born in or around Debenham.

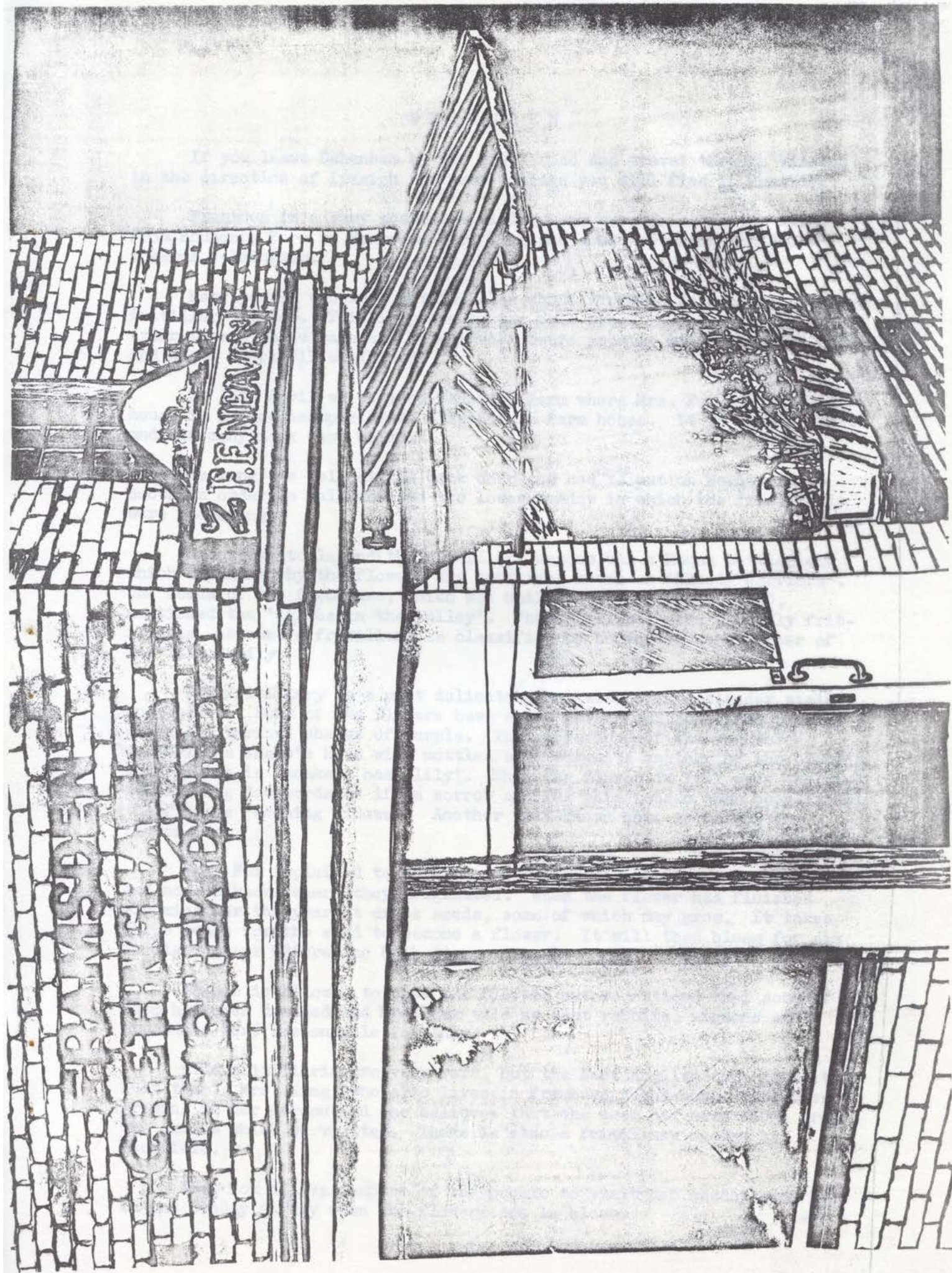
In the States most children of 16 and over drive their own cars to school. In the States children start school when they are six and leave when they are eighteen and there are mixed races.

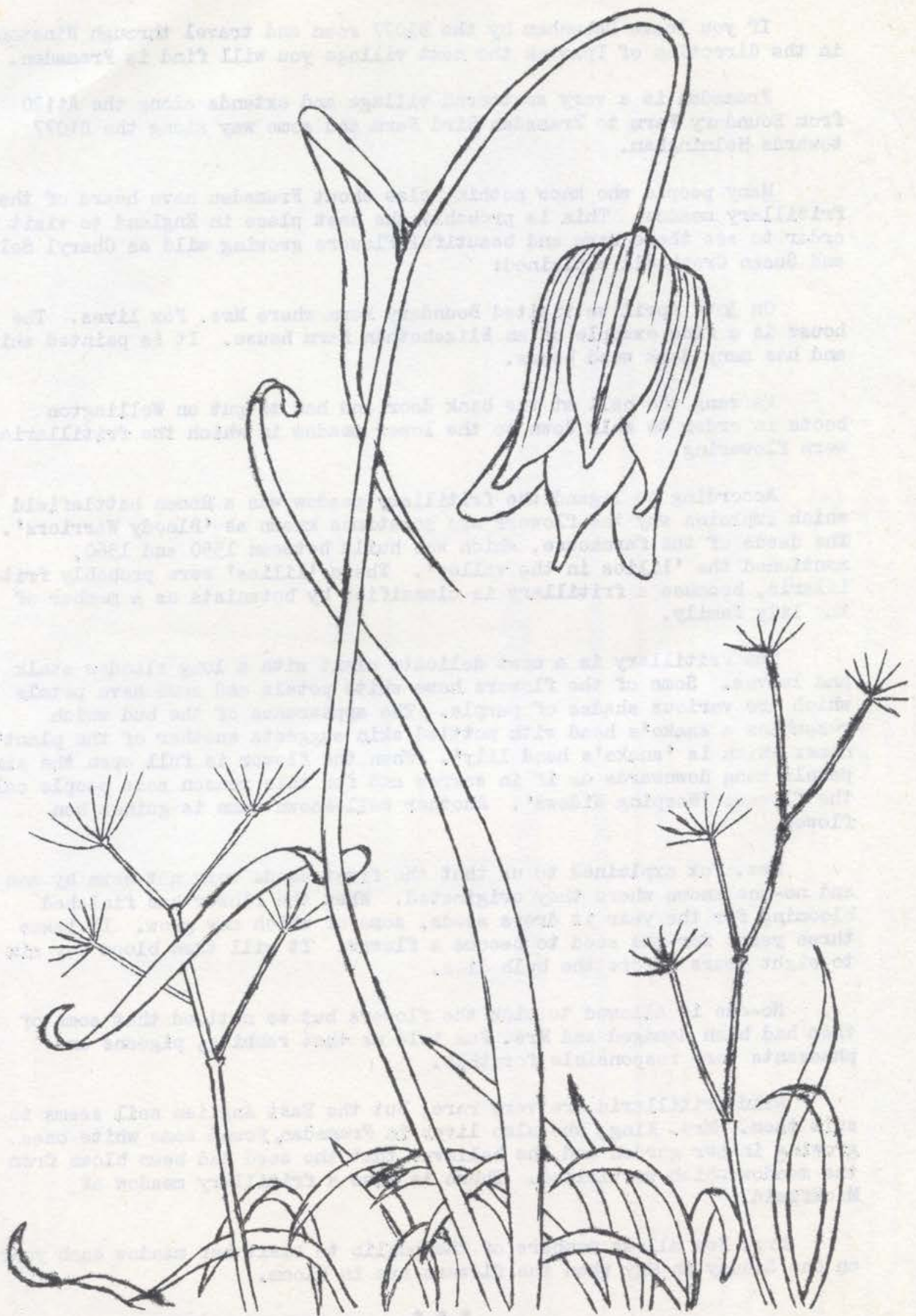
Meals in school are different because you have a hot sit-down meal and in the States we used to pay over the counter like a snack bar

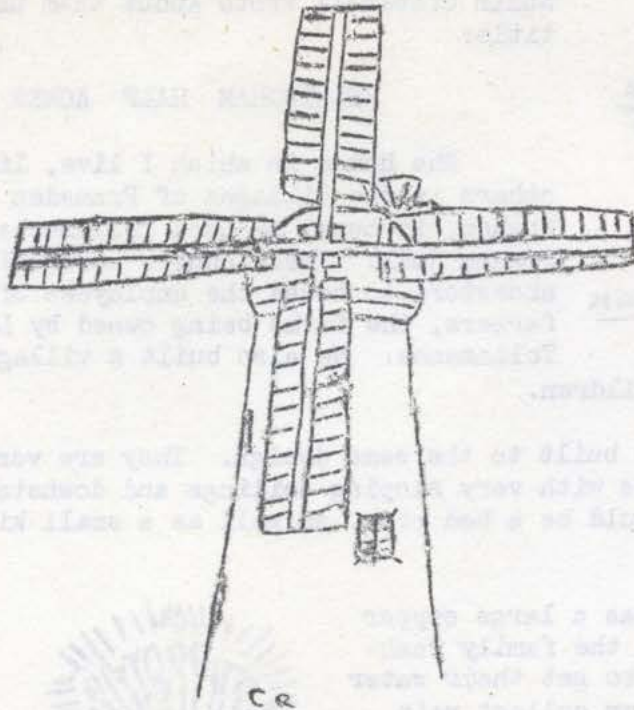
Holidays are kind of different. You have Harvest Supper and we celebrate Thanksgiving Day. You let off fireworks on 5th November and we use fireworks when we celebrate Independence Day on 4th July.

England and the States are alike in a lot of ways, but I have discovered there are many differences as well.

\* \* \*







If you leave the A120 and re-join the B1077 you will pass Framsdon Mill on your left. Gillian Skippings described the mill for us

Almost as soon as you leave the village of Debenham you can see a white object against the sky line. When you get nearer to Framsdon you will see that this is Framsdon post mill.

The history of this mill began in 1759 when John Smith bought a piece of land off Gibson Mann, a local brewer. Over the next few years the mill changed owners many times.

In the 1930's the mill ceased work. The mill

can be seen to-day as it would have been in the eighteenth century. In the seventeenth century the mill would have looked quite different. It had no brick round house and the sails were common. This meant that they were light wooden frames with cloths spread over them.

In 1836 the mill was modernised and four new double shutter sails were bolted on. In the eighteenth century the use of cast iron had not spread far and Framsdon mill and most of its machinery were nearly all wooden.

After the mill ceased work it stood derelict until 1966 when a group of volunteers started work on the restoration of the old post mill. This work was made possible by Lord Tollemache making grants and the East Suffolk County Council providing material. That is why a small charge is made when people visit the mill.

When the mill is open there are many visitors. It is usually open to the public on special occasions such as at Easter. Visitors are allowed to go right to the top of the mill and from there, if it is a clear day, you can see Saxted mill which is about eight miles away.

\* \* \*

David Crane who lives at Mill Cottage added:

The mill is 73 feet high and has a solid oak post in the middle, which is why it is known as a post mill.

The buck, which is the part of the mill above the brick round house has three floors. The first floor receives the flour from the second floor where it is ground. The top floor has the main shaft of the sails. The fan tail has been removed from the mill but the new wood is ready to be put on. The wood is oak and it would need a crane to lift it to the required height.

\* \* \*

Beyond Framsdén mill there are several rows of houses, all built in the same style. Susan Cracknell wrote about them under the title:

#### HELMINGHAM HALF ACRES



The house in which I live, like many others in the villages of Framsdén and Helmingham, is owned by Lord Tollemache of Helmingham Hall. These houses were built by his ancestors to house the employees of the tenant farmers, the farms being owned by Lord Tollemache. He also built a village school

for the farm workers' children.

All the houses are built to the same design. They are very small, having two rooms upstairs with very sloping ceilings and downstairs there is a small room which could be a bed room, as well as a small kitchen and a larger living room.

Originally there was a large copper in the kitchen where all the family washing was done. They had to get their water either from a hand pump or collect rain water in wooden water butts.



The houses were usually built in pairs and about twelve houses stood in a row. Occasionally they were built in threes. All the houses have arched doors which are painted, like all the paintwork on the outside of the houses, in traditional cream. On the door printed in bold figures is the number of the house.

Each house had half an acre of land. Some was used as an orchard where apple, pear and plum trees grew and the rest was divided into two sections with a path down the middle separating them. One side was sown with wheat and the other vegetables. Each year the crop was rotated so wheat was on the right one year and on the left the next.

Each year new corn seed had to be planted and it would have been done in one of two ways. The first was by the method of dibbling. This is where a man walked in straight lines on the land with a dibble in each hand. A dibble was either made from wood or iron and it had a handle at one end and a rounded point on the other. It would be pushed into the soil leaving holes into which small children would then drop seeds. The other method was by a small hand-drill which was usually owned by one man and then borrowed by his neighbours for a small sum of money.

At the planting season many children were absent from school because there were many jobs to do on the land. The village schoolteacher had a hard job in keeping the children at school.

Once the corn was ripe it was cut and thrashed. The wheat was cut with a sickle and then thrashed with flails later on in the year. After it had been thrashed it was taken to Framsdén mill where it was ground into flour.

Most families went gleaning. This was when they went after the binder in the harvest field and collected up the scattered ears of wheat

which lay on the ground. They had to do this especially if they had large families so they had enough flour to last until next harvest, because if their stores went down they would not be able to have any more bread.

The housewives had to bake all the families' bread. Once the bread was made it was baked in brick ovens which were usually in the out-houses. Two or three houses shared an oven. The oven was heated by a fire underneath, the fire being made from faggots, which are bundles of sticks and twigs. Once the fire had been lit it took about an hour for the oven to get hot. The bricks would turn from black to red. When the housewife thought that the oven was ready she would throw a handful of flour onto the bricks. If they sparked she knew she could start baking. The bread took about an hour to bake and after it had been taken out, if the oven was still hot the housewife sometimes cooked her joint of meat.

The bread was very important food, because it was eaten at most meals. At breakfast the children usually had bread and warm milk mixed together and dinner usually consisted of bread and cheese.

Faggots were a very important part of the household economy. If they had no faggots they could make no bread. To save them the housewives did all their baking the same day. They needed about a hundred faggots each year, two for each bake. Many of the farm workers got some of their wages in the form of faggots. The rest had to be cut from the hedges.

Every family kept pigs. The pigs provided them with meat, such as pork, bacon and ham. The pigs were fed on waste vegetables, and straw left from the harvest was used for their bedding, also every family kept hens. The cockerels were killed for meat on special occasions and the hens provided eggs. They were fed on household scraps.

The people who lived in these houses treated their gardens as miniature farms, and they were nearly self-supporting.

\* \* \*

Julie Cracknell, who like all of the children from Framsdon, attended Helmingham Primary School wrote about her visits to Helmingham Hall:

Helmingham Hall, the home of Lord and Lady Tollemache was built during the reign of Elizabeth I. It is very large and has a wide moat around the outside. This is full of different types of fish and has two rare black swans. There are front and back drawbridges which are pulled up at night.

The hall stands in a large park which has herds of deer roaming around. You can sometimes catch a glimpse of them from the road. It has a long driveway to the front entrance and a rear tradesmen's entrance and there are two lodges at the bottom of the main drive and cattle grids to stop the deer getting out.

During the summer months the public can come and look around the gardens nearly every Sunday. You can also go on safari rides on a specially converted trailer to see the deer herds and the mountain sheep.

In the hall the rooms are very large. The walls are lined with paintings, mostly of Lord Tollemache's ancestors. The furniture is very valuable as it is very old. Lord Tollemache has lots of servants to do all the work. There are also three gardeners and three game keepers to

rear pheasants so Lord Tollemache can have shooting parties during the winter.

I have been to Helmingham Hall several times as Lady Tollemache always gives the children from Helmingham school a Christmas party. There is always a large Christmas tree from the park standing in the front hall. It is so tall it nearly touches the ceiling.

\* \* \*

Come on let's make for Helmingham  
To Helmingham away  
For green is green at Helmingham  
And there the young deer play  
And there is peace at Helmingham  
Who needs can get it.

Come for a walk to Helmingham  
Come now 'tis early May  
Come whilst the popple leaves are pink  
See ducks swim on the lay  
For if there's toil at Helmingham  
I've never met it.

Walk in the park at Helmingham  
Down Tanty Corner way  
Swing on the oak beside the rails  
And use away the day  
And paddle in the mere pond's murk  
You'll not regret it!

Come see the knights at Helmingham  
At Helmingham they say  
They kneel on either side of nave  
And there, hands clasped, they pray  
And all is silent save the swifts  
Who could forget it?

A.J.P.

\* \* \*

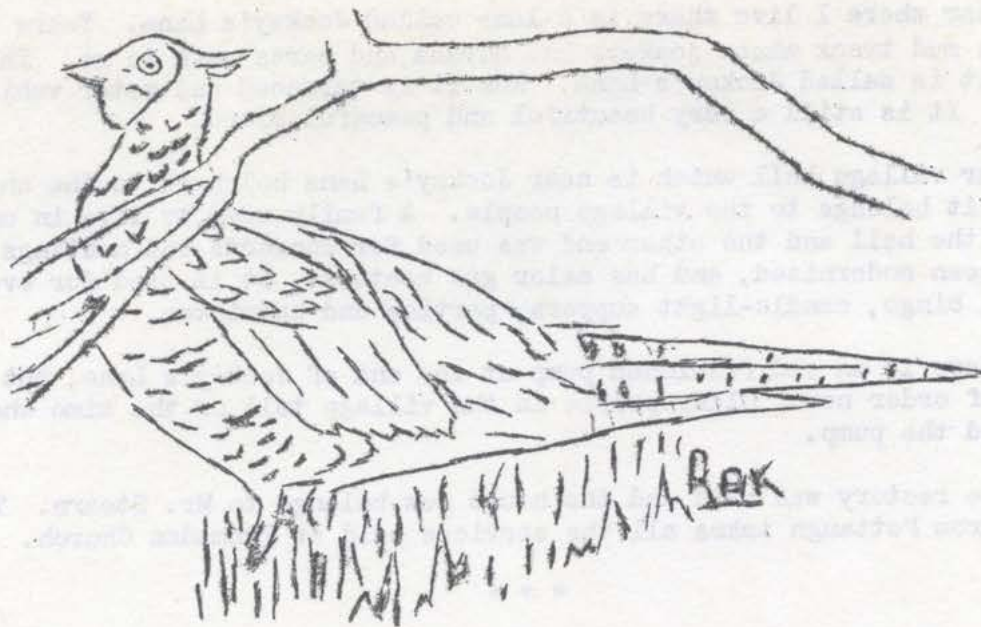
Many of our pupils have first-hand knowledge of a 'shoot' as they do the important job of 'brushing'. Victor Kemp described a day's shoot at Fransden:

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Popple - poplar

Lay - a large pond





I woke and looked out of my bedroom window and saw a cold, wet, misty morning. Just the kind of morning for staying in bed, but no - I had to get up because in about an hour I had to start work.

That hour soon passed. I put on my boots, leggings and mac. I picked up my stick and waited at the end of our lane to be picked up by the brushing lorry. Soon along the road came the lorry. I hopped inside. There were other people there. Altogether there were about 20 men. When we stopped we split up into two groups; Mr. Cracknell's group and Mr. Stubbs' group. (They are the two game keepers).

One of the groups took a long way round to the field or wood in which we were going to brush and that is done to get more game into the area. Meanwhile the other group went straight to the site. The group that was already at the site waited for the other group to come up so they could walk the field together, keeping in a straight line. At the end were the guns. When the game was shot it was taken to the game cart where the birds were put into pairs and lined up. We had seven drives (or shoots) that day, four in the morning and three in the afternoon.

The sort of game we shoot are pheasants, partridges, coots, moorhens, rabbits, hares and even foxes, but different game have different seasons.

After we had finished all the drives and had been paid we went home. We were taken right to our gate so we had no more walking to do. I arrived home at about 4.30 and I felt very weary.

\* \* \*

In order to find Framsdon Street and centre of the village it is necessary to turn left off the main road just beyond the mill. The Post Office is now the only shop in the street, but David Crane told us that his grandfather, Mr. Abblett owned a butcher's shop where Church Farm Cottage now stands. The out-buildings used to serve as a pig sty and a slaughter house in the days when Mr. Abblett was famed for his pork sausages.

Linda Jeffery's house is situated a little further down Framsdon Street and Linda wrote:

Near where I live there is a lane called Jockey's Lane. Years ago it was a mud track where jockeys and horses and carts used to go. That is why it is called Jockey's Lane. Now it is tarmaced and motor vehicles use it. It is still a very beautiful and peaceful place.

Our village hall which is near Jockey's Lane belonged to the church and now it belongs to the village people. A family used to live in one part of the hall and the other end was used for concerts and meetings. It has been modernised, and has calor gas heaters. It is used for evening classes, bingo, candle-light suppers, parties and badminton.

There is an old fashioned pump at the end of Jockey's Lane, but it is out of order now. Older people in the village tell of the time when they used the pump.

The rectory was sold and the house now belongs to Mr. Stearn. The rector from Pettaugh takes all the services held at Framsdén Church.

\* \* \*

Jeremy Bilner discovered some interesting detail in Framsdén church:

I visited the church one sunny, spring Saturday morning and noticed how over-grown the churchyard was. The flint walls of the church were absorbing the warmth of the sun. Inside the church it was cool and silent, apart from the echo of my footsteps and the cawing of rooks and cooing of doves from Church Cottage.

In the porch there is a list of rectors who had once served at Framsdén. The earliest was the Rev. Cressingham. Unfortunately it did not give the date when he was there. The earliest date of the rectors was that of a Rev. Dubel in 1314.

When entering the church you cannot help noticing the vast size of the building. It has two aisles, the main nave and a smaller south aisle. The roof of the south aisle and the porch were restored in 1948 when the Rev. James Dobbs was rector. The honorary architect was H. Munro Cautley author of the book 'Suffolk Churches and their Treasures'. My eyes were drawn upwards to the double hammer beam roof of the nave and I noticed details or rose shapes on the ends of the roof beams. The windows are perpendicular in style. I was rather disappointed in the windows because they have no stained glass patterns or pictures. The glass between the lead panes is simply plain or tinted red or green.

I found the pattern of the tops of the windows repeated in wood-carving on the ends of the stalls in the chancel. In the chancel I also found carved misericords. The seats lift up and on the underside of the seats there are ledges so that people could perch on them and appear to be standing during long services. There were various carvings on these misericords; one of which was of a lion, but this had part of its face missing. There were also mythical beasts, part bird, part dragon. A large figure, probably Saint Edmund was holding a perfect carving of a church. A winged creature was flying towards the church which appeared to be protected by the saint in the folds of his vast gown.

There are various faces carved in stone on the walls and in the corners facing each other. From their head dresses the figures appear to belong to the Tudor period or earlier. These faces also appear on the outside walls.

The lighting in the church is supplied by electricity but the lamps which hang from the beams are converted oil lamps.

The oldest memorial inside the church is that of Elizabeth Brownrigg dated 1678. The communion table is dated 1628 so it would have been new when Elizabeth Brownrigg worshipped there. The communion cup is Elizabethan and, because of its value, is not kept in church on week-days.

The Victorian rectory is now a private house and the owners told me that in the late 1800's the rector had a room built on to the house and it was used as a school room for the young people of the village. The same rector had the church hall built.

At one time Framsdén church was used by nuns from London, who had moved to live at the manor house known as Framsdén Hall.

It has been said that one rector of Framsdén, believing he could fly, jumped from the church tower and landed unharmed at the bottom.

I found my visit to the church very interesting and I found out many things that I had not known about the church before.

\* \* \*

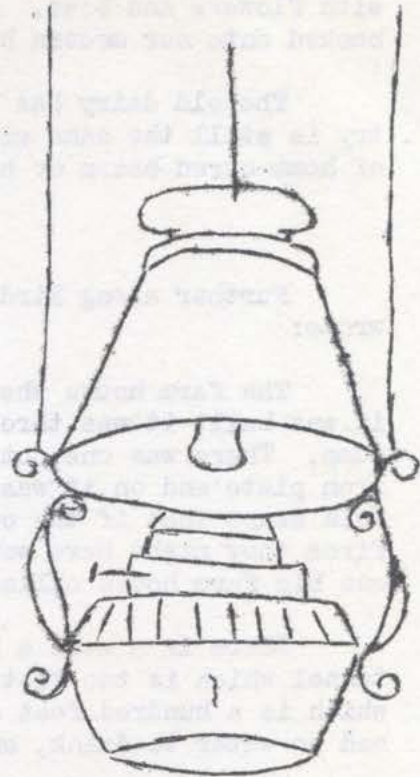
If you travel straight on through Framsdén Street and up the hill you will see Framsdén Hall with its red brick Tudor barn by the roadside. A mill at Framsdén was mentioned in Domesday Book and it is thought that this was a water mill situated between Jockey's Lane and Framsdén Hall.

Bird Lane where Sally Dunlop lives forms a loop off the main route to Cretingham. Sally described her house:

Churches Farm, Framsdén where I live is a Suffolk farm house. It is approximately four hundred years old. It is of architectural historic interest and has a wood beam framework with lath and plaster walls.

It has been changed a little by each family who have lived here. I often wonder how many children have slept in my bedroom. There are four large bedrooms leading from a long landing and over that there are two attic rooms. The bedrooms once had small black iron fire places which are now covered over.

Downstairs the two big rooms have many beams showing and are separated by a huge chimney. This would once have been an inglenook fire place. One day we hope to take out the modern brick fire place and restore it. We have made changes by joining the kitchen and hall together. We have spent hours cleaning beams to make them look as they did years ago. My parents, especially my mother, have stripped layers of paint off an old pine table and chest and a pretty corner cupboard to make them look as they would have done years ago.



We have uncovered a cast iron Victorian fire place which is decorated with flowers and bows. Behind this we found a brick Dutch oven, but it backed onto our modern boiler so it had to be covered up again.

The old dairy has been turned into a tack and cloak room, but the pantry is still the same with great meat hooks along the beams to carry sides of home-cured bacon or hams.

\* \* \*

Further along Bird Lane is Moat Farm, the home of Andrew Fox who wrote:

The farm house where I live is about four hundred years old. When it was built it was three houses and in one end of the house there was a pump. There was one outside too. On one end of the house there was an iron plate and on it was written 'Insured by the Suffolk Fire Office'. This meant that if the owners of the house paid some money to a club any fires they might have would be put out. Later the houses were made into one big farm house called Moat Farm.

There is a well a hundred feet down in the ground and there is a tunnel which is two feet wide and two feet high which leads to the moat which is a hundred feet away. Years ago my grandmother and grandfather had no water to drink, only the moat water.

Inside the chimney in our house there are some iron steps. When you get a little way up these steps you find another chimney which comes into the middle chimney, but it was bricked up when it was made into one house. This chimney originally belonged to the third cottage.

\* \* \*

#### C R E T I N G H A M

Not far beyond Moat Farm, Framsdon is the village of Cretingham. James Abbott wrote:

Our village has a small Post Office owned by Mr. and Mrs. Spink. Mr. Spink is the postman.

The church is very old and it is only possible to ring one bell because if all seven bells were rung the 14th century tower would fall down. Work to repair the tower would cost over £6,000. Inside the church visitors can see a font decorated with roses and lions, a hammer-beam roof and some box pews.

The public house is on the hill near Oak Corner. It is called 'The New Bell Inn' and is owned by Mr. and Mrs. Appleby. This inn used to be four houses and the old 'Bell' was near the church.

\* \* \*

Polly Appleby added:

The largest house in our village is Cretingham House, which is supposedly haunted by a vicar. He came home one night and found the young verger with his wife. He went into the kitchen and got a carving knife and killed the verger.

On the floor in that room there is a blood stain that will never come off. Many people believe that who-ever lives there will find their marriage will break up. There have already been couples living there who have found this to be true for them.

The 'New Bell Inn' is also supposed to be haunted by a milk maid who lives on the third floor of the house and if the family have a girl of about eighteen to twenty to stay, as they frequently do, then they say that there is a lady sitting on the end of the bed. Nobody is sure of how the ghost originated.

We have a pack of otter hounds in our village that go out once a week in the hunting season to the rivers. The otter hounds' main prey are coypu and water rats, but once in a while they catch an otter. Sometimes the hounds suffer from bad bites, but in every pack there is a sort of doctor who goes round licking the bites clean; or, if the bite has poison in it, he will suck at the wound until the poison is out.

The pack consists mostly of fox hounds, one pure bred otter hound and Stumpy and Shag, who are half fox hound and half otter hound.

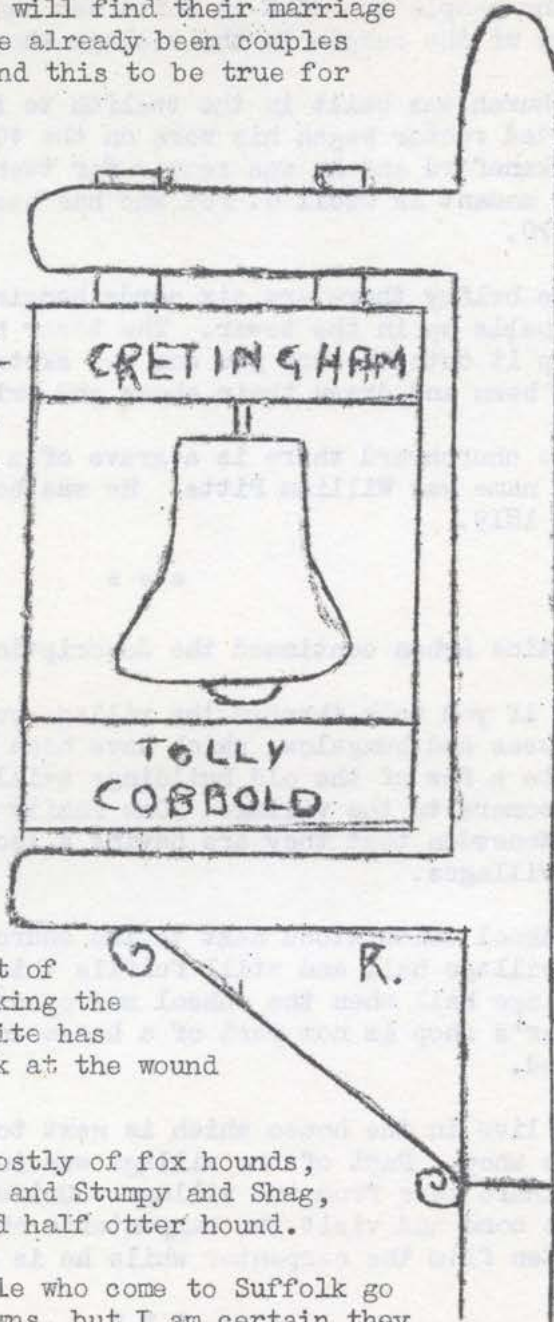
I am sure that people who come to Suffolk go to the more well-known towns, but I am certain they would enjoy themselves if they left the main road for a few miles to visit Cretingham.

\* \* \*

#### M O N E W D E N

A traveller who faces 'The New Bell Inn' at Cretingham and turns right will be on the road to Monewden.

A number of attractive old thatched cottages line this road. The traveller must then turn left in order to find the Church of St. Mary, Monewden, which is built of flint with a homely looking porch of red brick. The interior of the church has been described by Diane Martin:



At the east end of the church stands the altar. On it are two candlesticks and a cross made from brass. On the left hand side is a memorial of marble to the people who died in World War one. The window above the altar is in memory of the people in the village who were killed in World War Two.

The church was built in the twelfth to fourteenth centuries, but the first recorded rector began his work on the 10th April, 1290. His name was John De Drekeneford and he was rector for twenty-four years. The rector we have at the moment is Cecil G. Fox who has been our rector since 17th January, 1970.

In the belfry there are six cords hanging from the roof. These lead to the six bells up in the tower. The tower has recently been repaired. If you go up it onto the top you can see sketches on the slate floor where people have been and drawn their shoes and written their names inside them.

In the churchyard there is a grave of a man who sailed around the world. His name was William Pitts. He was born on 6th June 1767 and died on June 1st 1819.

\* \* \*

Christine Arbon continued the description of this tiny village:

Today if you walk through the village you will see cars rushing past and some houses and bungalows which have been built within the last ten years. Quite a few of the old buildings still remain and these are of interest to new-comers to the village. One family are so interested in the history of Monewden that they are having a lecturer come to give a lecture on Suffolk villages.

The school which stood next to the church and closed in the 1930's became the village hall and still fulfils this function. The barn which was the village hall when the school was open is now used for keeping pigs. The shoemaker's shop is now part of a house and the mill house has recently been repaired.

I now live in the house which is next to the carpenter's shop and the blacksmith's shop. Part of the village was in the film Akenfield and so were three characters from the village. Quite a lot of photographers and other people come and visit the carpenter's shop and the blacksmith's shop and they often film the carpenter while he is at work.

\* \* \*

Jane Cousins, who also lives in Monewden described the custom of 'Beating the Bounds':

Whilst some of the villagers of the parish were looking at the old record books in Monewden they noticed that in 1887 some of the villagers had gone 'beating the bounds', which they discovered meant walking round the exact bounds of the village. They looked forwards in the records to see if it had been done since 1887 and found that there had been a few attempts but the men had stopped at the public houses and never completed the journey.

A few of the villagers got together and decided that they would organise an expedition of 'beating the bounds'. They drew up maps for the route they would take, which was the route of 1887 and then they made all the arrangements.

On 14th October, 1972 twenty-two walkers, including five children, assembled at the start. It was ten-thirty on this warm Saturday morning. They started out on the nine and a half mile trek over ploughed fields, over ditches, through hedges and through a few people's gardens.

During the morning something was done that records show was done in 1887. This meant the local carpenter carving a broad arrow with a hammer and chisel on five trees.

The walkers stopped for lunch at the 'Queen's Head', Brandeston. Brandeston is an adjoining village and Monewden has no public house. Of course they did not have the traditional nineteenth century meal which included a side of beef, but they made do with soup, ham sandwiches, ale for the adults and orange squash for the children. After the forty minute rest they started again. After dinner the going was a lot worse. There were even more stinging nettles, ploughed fields and hedges.

Whilst negotiating part of the River Deben they came across an unexpected wasps' nest. However, only a few got stung, and the only need for the so called 'hospital car' which met them at points where they crossed the road was to deal with these wasp stings and a few scratches

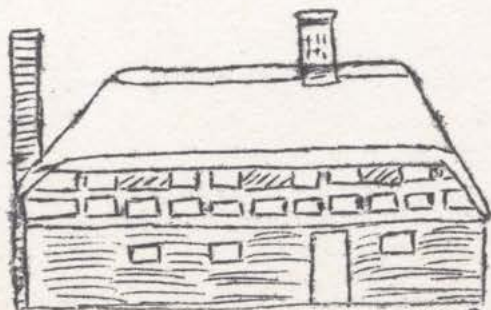
During the afternoon one of the traditional ceremonies was performed. Two men lifted the vicar up and bumped him against an elm tree.

On the homeward stretch a farmer and his wife emerged from a gap in the hedge with hot apple pies and drink for the walkers. This revived them for the last half a mile or so. At five o'clock the tired but happy party of walkers finished and went their separate ways for a nice sleep at home.

Records show that this time was slightly up on the 1887 time.

I wonder when and if this will ever be attempted again in the village of Monewden.

\* \* \*





**WINSTON  
PETTAUGH  
CROWFIELD  
GOSBECK**

ROSIE TAYLOR



## W I N S T O N

Part of the village of Winston is passed by a traveller as soon as he leaves Debenham on his way to Ipswich on the B1077. In the fields beside the road the traveller may glimpse the sheep described by Roger Denny:

At Winston Hall Farm where I work in the holidays, Suffolk sheep are used for cross breeding to produce fat lambs. They are crossed with the Scotch half bred.

When sheep are born they are called first lambs, and then hoggets until they are nine months old. Then, when they have been shorn once, they are called shearlings. Shearing starts in June. The wool is called a fleece. It is worth a lot of money and is sold by the pound. In order to be sure that the fleece will be of good quality, the sheep go through a big tank, called a sheep dip, to stop fly. Fly is a disease which eats at the wool of the sheep. The fly lays its eggs in the wool and when the maggots hatch out, they eat into the sheep, spoiling the wool as they go. As well as fly, sheep can get foot rot. We have to trim and pare their feet with a sharp pen knife, and if a lot of the flock gets it, we have to put them through a foot bath.

When first born, the lambs have milk, and then a mixture of crushed bran, oats, bean meal and flaked maize. When older, they have whole beans. In April or May, the lambs are taken away from their mothers and put onto a diet of layer. By now, the ewes, or lambs' mothers, are kept in the yard for a few weeks and not given cattle beet any more. After this they go onto the meadow.

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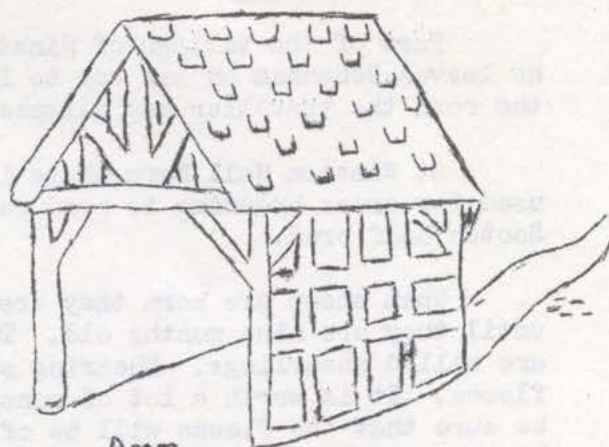
Beside Winston Hall is the ancient parish church built of flint with an interesting gabled porch of red brick:

Where guinea fowl and rooks alone are heard  
And mauve dog violets with ground ivy crept  
A minor peal with mournful rural call  
Rang out where village slept  
"Who can beat us five?"

Then tufted sallies danced their changes round  
And peelings loosened grinning gargoyles' place  
And wide-flung beeches with their copper leaf  
Witnessed a changing face  
"Beat us five who can."

Then chamber organ's shrill and piercing sound  
Mingled with ringer's raucous guiding call  
And private gravelled pathway to the porch,  
Was kept up from The Hall  
"Can who beat us five."

The turning cock'rel on the weather vane  
Perched on the barn with yellow, crusted thatch  
And twizzling first away and then towards  
As though the sound to catch:  
"Us five who can beat?"



Amm.

Then jumbled clanging seemed to make the gods  
With faces two upon the chancel seat  
Grin even wider still as if to say:  
"They here wi' dusty feet."  
"Who beat five can us?"

Then late arrivals at the Tudor porch  
Scurried 'long rabbit tracks between the tombs  
And fearful handling of the iron latch  
Caused laughter at it booms  
"Five, who can us beat?"

There coco' matting deadened shoe-heel sounds  
And covered humbled flag-stones subtle charm  
And jumbled "'mighty and most merciful"  
Besought no fear of harm  
"Beat us five who can!"

When incense was the smoke of tortoise stove  
When clear air was as scarce as was the heat  
And fuel was kept inside the three-lock chest  
And draught blew cold on feet.  
"Us can who beat five."

At last, their pealings called in Suffolk's change  
And they in their still, down-turned silence hung.  
And Suffolk's truest thought the custom strange  
And tongues no longer sung  
"Who can beat us five?"

Now, pigeon sticks no longer are disturbed  
For only one each week for service tolls.  
His partners' message through the louvers float  
O'er what was meadow rolls,  
"Who can ring us five?"

A.J.P.

\* \* \*

Winston Green is reached by taking the first road to the right past 'The Cherry Tree' public house. There are several farms in Winston and the white building of Bennett's Farm house can be seen across the fields to the right of the road leading to Pettaugh. Kevin Adams wrote about this house:

I live at Bennett's Farm house, Winston just outside the village. My house is made of wattle and daub and when we did some cementing we saw it. There is a brick extension at the end of the house because it was not big enough for our family. The house was once two houses, but now it has been made into one large house. It has tiles on the roof but before it had tiles it was thatched. Inside it has a lot of beams about three feet thick.

I have lived in this house for twelve years and I came here when I was one year old. The house used to be in front of a wood which was all round it, but now the trees have gone and it has been made into fields.

\* \* \*

Steven Hunt who lives quite close to Kevin told us:

In our village there used to be an old lady who lived in an old cottage, surrounded by trees. When she died, the house was left just as it was, with flowers and curtains at the window.

I am rather scared to go near the cottage, because I can sometimes see a shadow at the window as if she is standing there. When I stand waiting for a bus, I can hear creaking noises, and footsteps as if someone is coming.

Although it is three years since the old lady died, I often think I can see her in her garden with her flowers.

\* \* \*

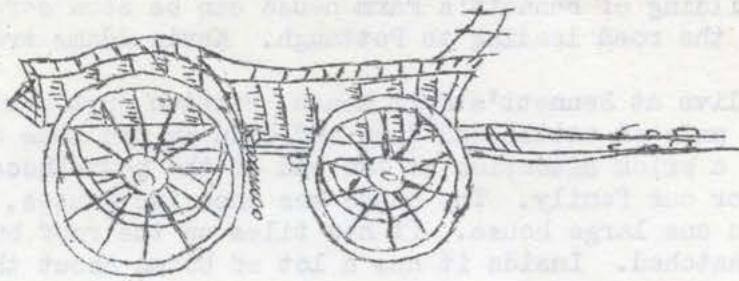
## P E T T A U G H

Pettaugh is the next village to Winston and a traveller who turns left at Pettaugh cross roads will find Pettaugh Mill which has been described for us by Rosalyn Clifford:

Pettaugh Mill was built nearly a century ago. It was owned by a Mr. Cooper and then by two brothers George and James Cutting. It is still advertised today as G. & J. Cutting Ltd. It was a flour and provender mill, the word provender meaning meal or animal feed.

The main building is made of red brick and is four storeys high. The walls of this are still firm and a new building was added in 1968, where the windmill used to stand. The windmill was separate from this building and stood until 1960 when it was dismantled because of severe damage caused by lightning a few years previously.

In 1912 the mill owned a steam engine which pulled a trailer called a 'rolley'. This trailer had four wheels with solid tyres. These were made of rubber and had no inner tubes. The steam engine was driven around to farms to power the threshing machines and sometimes took the threshed corn back to the mill to be ground into flour.



In 1921, the driest summer recorded, it was decided that a well should be dug in the village. Some men began digging on the village green and at a hundred feet they were lucky and came upon an underground stream. A hand pump was installed for the villagers' use and a small petrol driven engine also, to pump the water down to the mill pond to cool off the engines in the mill when they over-heated. If the pressure of the water in either pump slackened a man had to go down the well to see what was wrong. Before going down the well the person who was going to go down lowered a candle tied on a rope. If the candle went out the air was foul and not fit for a man to breathe. When this happened a sack was lowered on a rope and pulled up and down. Thus the sack's movements circulated the air and got rid of the gasses.

In 1932 a Ruston Hornsby diesel powered engine was installed in the mill to power the machinery. This was a hundred horse-power single cylinder horizontal engine. They used horses and wagons for delivering the flour, etc. as well as the steam engine and 'rolley' until the Ruston Hornsby engine was installed. It was when this was installed that the mill bought their first lorry, a petrol driven Daimler with a two ton pay load. This also had solid tyres the same as the 'rolley'.

A number of years passed and they bought more lorries. Among these were Dodges, Commers and Bedfords. The mill still uses Bedfords now. It has two - a Bedford TK and a Bedfore TKM.

In 1938 the water mains came to Pettaugh and taps were installed. The old people were suspicious of these and still used the old hand pump.

The mill stopped dealing in flour in 1961, the year after the windmill was dismantled. It is now known as G. & J. Cutting, Provender Millers, Pettaugh, and is quite well known for animal food stuffs. It also sells dog biscuits, rat poison, fertilizers and cattle salt licks.

It is now run by James Cuttings' two sons and has nine employees, one of whom is my father who has worked there since 1948.

#### Pettaugh Village

Pettaugh village is very small,  
In it stands a windmill tall,  
On the green there is a pump  
On the handle there's a great big lump,  
All the people that in Pettaugh dwell  
Send their corn to Pettaugh mell,  
They grind it fine and keep it clean  
And send it back to Pettaugh green.

'Dick' a mill worker composed this poem in the 1930's and it is still known today by some of the workers.

Stuart Page reminded us that the meal from the mill used to be carried by horse and wagon and Stuart told us that his father's uncle was the carter.

Next door to Pettaugh Mill stands the parish church which Martin Clifford described:

Pettaugh church is called St. Catherine's. From 1423 to 1964 there have been 41 rectors at Pettaugh. On the stone font inside the church there are carvings of people and animals, but the faces have been chipped off. The bell was made about five hundred years ago. I have been up the church tower and seen the bell which has a crack in it.

The prayer desk was reconstructed in 1968. There were two piscinas discovered behind the plaster in the south wall during the restoration in 1923-30. A piscina is a stone basin in a recess and used for washing the vessels used in the Mass. Some pieces of stone were found buried in the chancel piscina. They may have formed part of the arch of the original church. The organ was built by John Rayson of Ipswich in 1941. There used to be three doors leading into the church but now there are only two because one of them has been filled in. In the east end there is quite a good stained glass window given by one of the prominent families of the village.

#### C R O W F I E L D

Here I am standing in Crowfield Street,  
Who are the people I'm likely to meet?  
Where do they live and what are they like?  
I know them all, young and old alike.  
Some people have come from all over the place,  
I know young and old, each cheerful face.  
I can see the old tower standing so straight,  
To keep out the public, they've shut up the gate.  
It has stood there for nineteen lonely years,  
Seeing all Crowfield's worries and fears.  
Our big white water tower gleams in the sun  
It sees all the cars that from Ipswich have come  
And travel at speed and brake at the junction  
(Hoping that their brake discs will function!)  
You can hardly see the tower by day,  
It doesn't seem to matter wherever you stay.  
I can see the old tower standing so straight,  
To keep out the public they've shut up the gate.

Alison Smith

\* \* \*

Beyond Pettaugh lies another agricultural village called Crowfield. Shirley Hart has discovered something of life on the farms in earlier times:

Harvest at Crowfield about thirty years ago was a major event of the year. The whole family helped and their day began at six-thirty. My father told me about when he used to help on Goslings farm where I now live.

The first job of harvest was cutting round the fields and in the ditches. This was done with a scythe. The grass and weeds obtained from this job were used for feeding livestock. The fields were then mowed round with a scythe which this time had a cradle fixed to it. The cradle made the

corn all fall into rows so that it was easier to tie into bundles. The bundles were then carted and used to feed livestock as well.

The actual cutting was done next. This was done by two horses pulling a binder. The fingers sorted the corn and the knives in between cut the corn. The sails then pushed it down so that it lay flat on the canvas. The canvas took it to the packers. Here a knotter came over and tied it into sheaves. They were then thrown out at the sides in rows. These were then ready for stooking. This is putting eight sheaves together, four each side leaning inwards.

When the binder went round, the men stood around with sticks and stones to try and capture some rabbits which were usually in the middle. If they managed to catch any they would take them home and perhaps have rabbit pie for supper the next night or in the field the next day.

The stooks had to be left for two weeks in the field until the church bells had rung twice. It was supposed to be bad luck to bring them in before. When all of the cutting had been done carting began. This was a tiring task.

After the carting had been done, sometimes women came to the fields from the village to glean. A lot of corn was collected this way and the women could have this for the chickens which most people kept at that time. However, if the farmer did not wish the field to be gleaned then he would leave a 'policeman' in the middle of the field. This was the name given to a single sheaf. When the women saw this they knew they were not allowed to glean in that particular field. This was often done if the farmer wanted to put chickens on the field to feed.

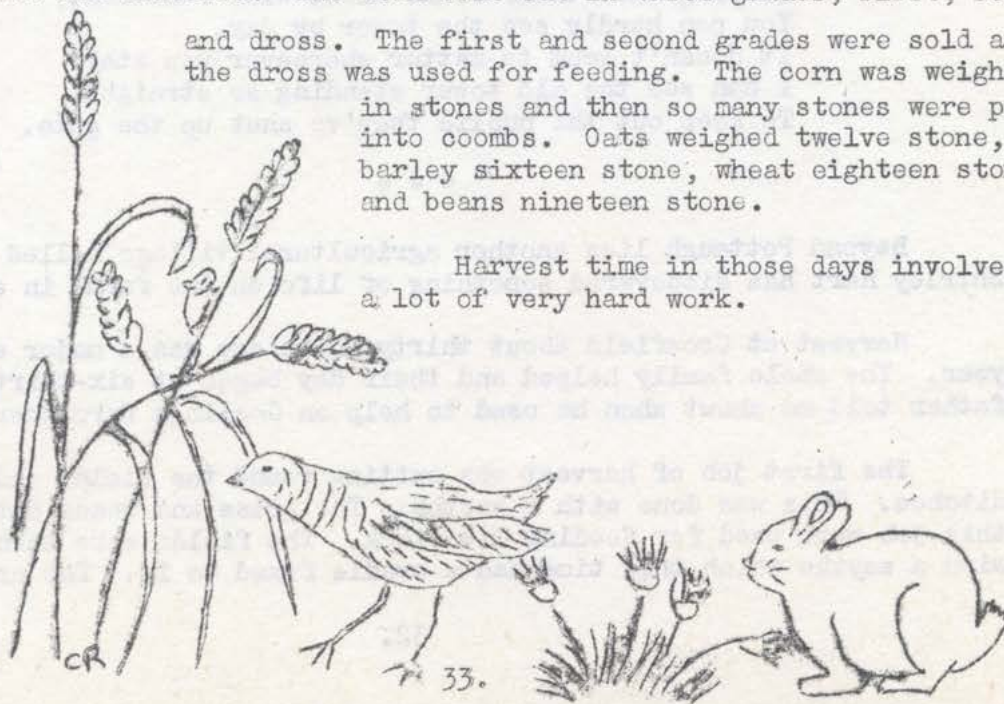
When all the sheaves had been carted and stacked in the stack yard, they were thatched by a proper thatcher. This was done to keep them dry. The stacks were about five yards by ten.

By the time all of these jobs were done it was getting quite late in the year. The thrashing engine was the next machine used. It was driven by a steam engine.

The drum knocked the corn out of the ears. Chaff came out of the sides and was bagged up and used for feeding. The straw fell onto shakers. The short straw fell through and was also used for feeding. This was called colder and came out of the back at the bottom. The long straw was then stacked out and thatched. The corn came out in three grades; first, second

and dross. The first and second grades were sold and the dross was used for feeding. The corn was weighed in stones and then so many stones were put into coombs. Oats weighed twelve stone, barley sixteen stone, wheat eighteen stone, and beans nineteen stone.

Harvest time in those days involved a lot of very hard work.



Christine Hayhoe has described Crowfield Church:

If you walk a mile down a road, just off the main road, you find you come to a church. As you have your first glance it gives the impression of a Tudor cottage despite its belfry which was put there instead of a tower.

It is a fourteenth century gem in flint and wood. It also has a fifteenth century timbered chancel. Apparently the chancel is one of about three similar ones in East Anglia that is made of this type of wood, and there are only about six in the country.

The windows have oak mullions. These are upright divisions between the lights of windows. On the windows are pleasant pictures of Jesus in stained glass and there are a few words written on them.

On the hammerhead beams, carved in great detail, are the twelve apostles. Below these, on each side of the chancel steps, there are groups of angels. As you look at the pews and choir stalls you can see the splendid poppyheads of the pews. These have a great variety of fruit and foliage such as apples, pears, currants, strawberries, gooseberries, hops, ivy, olives, beech and maple.

Underneath the altar lie three generations of Middletons. In the chancel there are two tombstones. These are a seventeenth century tombstone with the cross of the Winfield family and an eighteenth century heraldic tombstone of the Harwoods. Sir Henry Harwood erected a dove cote in 1731. It still stands today and has nests for about four hundred birds.

Sir William Fowle Middleton, who was born in Crowfield Hall, died in 1860. His wife had restoration work undertaken in memory of her loving husband.

All Saints Church was once surrounded by a moat. Now the moat is only at the front of the church.

They have an organ at the back of the church. This organ was built in 1913, by Norman and Beard. At the back of the church are four tablets with extracts from the bible. Also on the wall are two more tablets with the names of the people who died in the Second World War.

\* \* \*

At the far end of Crowfield, close to the road which leads to Coddenham stands the ruins of Crowfield Mill. Kevin Walker and David Gray told us:

The mill stands on waste land. It was built in June 1920 by E. F. Hammond and H. W. Hare. The cogs of the mill are very rusty and most of them are out of place, but one or two of them still work.

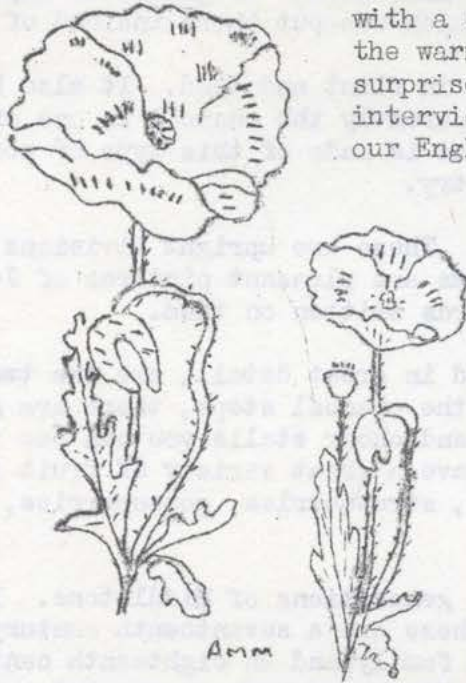
There are two very large concrete wheels with metal surrounds which were used for grinding grain during the war. The top four floors were built of boards but the lower part of the mill was built of bricks.

\* \* \*

Alison Smith told us that Mrs. Gibbons is one of the most interesting people living in Crowfield. Alison has written this account of a conversation between herself and Mrs. Gibbons:

Mrs. Gibbons senior is known by all in Crowfield. She has a warm, friendly personality and is always willing to welcome visitors to the house.

When I went to interview her during our half-term holiday, I knocked loudly on the back door. A few moments later Mrs. Gibbons opened the door with a smile on her face and welcomed me into the warm kitchen. She said that she was most surprised to see me. I asked her if I could interview her for a talk I was preparing for our English lesson.



My first question was to ask her how long she had lived in Crowfield. As we sat down in the dining room to talk, she gave me a short answer saying, "Seventy years." When she first moved to the village, she lived with an aunt in the school house. There was no electricity or water. In the back garden, however, they had a concrete covered well, and the water was drawn up into the kitchen by means of a hand pump. Some people were not as lucky as this. They had to collect their water from the pond.

After this we went to make some hot chocolate in the kitchen. When this had boiled up all over the stove, I collected my mug and took it through to the dining room. Mrs. Gibbons chased around the garden with a mug and a bun for the gardener and then she came back to talk to me.

I asked her if she remembered anything from the war days. Mrs. Gibbons said that during the First World War she worked in munitions in Ipswich. They had a three week rota system. The first week, they worked from seven o'clock to half-past two, the second week from half past two to seven o'clock and the third week from ten o'clock until seven again. The first day she started, Mrs. Gibbons told me, was a Wednesday and on the Friday she received the grand total of fourteen shillings!

Later on she married and lived in a large house which they named 'The Gables'. While she lived there, they employed a maid. One day, Mrs. Gibbons left instructions with the maid to peel some onions and put them in the stew before she got back. When Mrs. Gibbons did come back, she was greeted by a horrible smell. She asked the maid what the cause was, but she did not know. Eventually, after prodding about in the stew, Mrs. Gibbons picked out something else instead of an onion. The maid had by accident picked her best bulbs from the garden.

Mrs. Gibbons is a Christian and has been all her life. She attends the village church every Sunday. Her interests include knitting and of course gardening as well as sewing, cooking and reading. She is very knowledgeable about gardening, although she doesn't do much now and she has won many Women's Institute and fete competitions.

Mrs. Gibbons is a wonderful person and I hope that we see her about Crowfield for many years to come.

\* \* \*



Nicholas Palmer read that many archers from these Suffolk villages left the farms to go to France to fight in the Hundred Years' War and that a certain Wodehouse of Coddenham won fame at the Battle of Agincourt. Nicholas allowed his imagination to travel backwards over five hundred years when he wrote:

"The archery contest was starting in ten minutes, only another half-mile to go. I wonder if anyone will beat him today. No - old Wodehouse is too good ....." I remember thinking those words as I walked along the leaf strewn road from Crowfield on the way to the archery contest at Coddenham. It was autumn and golden leaves carpeted the path in front of me; a pheasant ducked its head, eyelids flicking across wary, suspicious gloss-black dots.

We arrived at Coddenham, and after many greetings, slapping of backs and whispered betting the contest began. The contestants, of whom I was one always lined up in groups of four in front of their respective targets, aimed and fired. One group after another went up until my time came. To my horror I saw that I had been matched against Wodehouse, the most accurate archer in the area. What a fool I would have looked if I missed! Wodehouse gracefully whipped out an arrow from his quiver, taking it around in a long arc to line it up against the bow. The taut bow string slowly pulled back and then released from its hold, it spat forth the arrow which sped in a straight line to its destination - the bull's eye.

Next it was my turn. I was shaking with fear, the string pulled back further and further. The muscle in my forearm knotted and bulged and an agonising pain shot through it. My arm began to shake. I thought, "I have to fire now or I'll miss." The string sprang forward, I looked at the target. It had hit the bull's eye; I sighed with relief. But I still had not beaten him. The contest came to an end and money reluctantly changed hands from its rueful faced previous owner to its smiling new one. It was then that an announcement was made. King Henry wished all able-bodied men to join him at Dover to cross to France in one week. Everyone cheered with excitement and rushed off to the local inn to get drunk - which they did.

Next day the long trek to Dover began. It took the whole of six days to get there. The seventh day we slept and awoke refreshed just in time to join the ship. We set sail at midday but on the way across many of the twenty thousand soldiers aboard the ships contracted some kind of fever and by afternoon quite a few bodies had been thrown overboard. We arrived late that night and couldn't see the appalling conditions in which we had to march the next morning. The roads could hardly be called such as they were little more than rivers of dark, stagnant mud that stank like rotting bodies.

It was in these conditions that we began to march once again next morning. Bare fields and trees with the occasional withering vine made the bleak view that was all we had to cheer us. With the terrible mud that tried to hold us down like cold, black gruel, none of us felt at all encouraged. It took practically the whole of two days to march to Agincourt, where we decided to make camp. It was that night of 24th October, 1415, that it was decided that stakes should be driven into the ground so that, should an attack by the French take place, the horsemen would be thrown from their horses.

Early the next morning a detachment of men was sent out to fulfil this need. I was among these soldiers and was not a little concerned about the energy I would use through driving in the stakes, maybe not having



enough left to fight. But my mind was soon put at rest, for when we reached the area to be staked, we found that it was so soft, owing to the rain, that the sturdy shafts of wood almost pushed in. The job was soon finished and the group returned to the camp. Every man was in easy reach of his weapon, searching the horizon with narrow eyes whose lids partly concealed the darting pupils within.

It was then that the sound of horses' hoofs was heard - beating like the roll of a drum. Each archer hurriedly grabbed his bow, knuckles showing white; the tension brought on by the mingled feelings of fear and excitement as he did so. The first Frenchman was sighted just in front of a whole train of roughly twenty horses and riders that kept riding from behind the corner of a small wood. The leader rode straight into the previously placed stakes which immediately tripped his horse. The little man shot into the air and crashed to the ground with an almighty thud and clatter, first landing on his side then rolling onto his back. The rider remained in this position waving an arm in an effort to rise, but owing to the adhesion of the mud and the weight of the armour this proved impossible.

The army of horsemen that followed, not having time to stop, had no choice but to plough through the accumulating pile of helpless soldiers, horses and the stakes - not one got through. The order to fire was given and we archers in our ranks began to slaughter the oncoming French. Arrow after arrow sped from my bow sinking deep into the guts of the French. Blood was spattering the immaculate armour and gushing like crimson water over a waterfall from each mouth. I stopped shooting for a few seconds to observe the horror displayed in front of me. I looked to my right and to my surprise there was Wodehouse, whom I had lost contact with on the crossing. The burly man was eagerly shooting at a rate I would not have thought possible. Exhilaration was ablaze in the man's eyes. He was totally absorbed by the battle. I watched an arrow from Wodehouse's bow. It shot high into the air glinting against the morning sun and then sank, coming to a sudden halt as it entered the body of an enemy a few inches below the ribs. The stricken man went stiff and then screamed with all his voice. He began to writhe and kick with flying arms as his brain was tortured by the pain he must have been going through. The man threw up both feet into the air and then lay still as a leaf on a windless night to be covered by yet another body.

Suddenly a stab of pain in my left arm told me to start firing again; an arrow cut a three inch slit on the edge of my arm. The pain seemed to die away and I began to fire once again. The battle continued for half an hour by which time every attacking Frenchman was dead. Swordsmen went around among the bodies putting any unfortunate attacker out of his misery.

After the battle Wodehouse was called to King Henry's tent and many men in our group were asking why. Secretly I thought that what was happening was inevitable. A short while after, Wodehouse came out with a grin on his face, showing his pleasure at having been made a knight.



Although there have been many changes in Crowfield since 1415, the view seen by the archers can not be very different from that described by Karina Calver:

The view where I live is really beautiful throughout the year. There are always interesting things to see and one of the nicest things is watching the wild rabbits running across the stretch of fields. However, I can remember one rabbit that never managed to get that far.



My friend, Wendy and I were out for a country walk one day during the summer of 1972 when we found a poor rabbit in a shallow ditch. It was suffering from myxomatosis. We knew it would have to be put out of its misery, but neither of us could bring ourselves to kill it, so we returned home to fetch my brother, Derek. He then came and killed the rabbit. I think I will always remember this incident because it was the first time I had seen a rabbit suffering from this horrible disease.

Although there is some wildlife that suffers, I am glad to say that most of the animals of the countryside live happy lives.

The scenery is mostly trees, hedges and fields which look really lovely when the sun is shining upon them. Across the first field is the village water tower. It has been very well looked after and has recently been repainted which makes it stand out well. As well as supplying our village it also supplies other surrounding villages.

The fields have footpaths at the edge which are a quicker way to get to your destination and they are also delightful for country walks. We all love walking along the footpaths in the summer. Occasionally we will take a picnic along with us. Then we find a nice place to set out our food and we sit and enjoy the meal and the scenery.

When we look out of the window at the back of the house we can see the Mendlesham mast. It is lit up all the day and night to warn the low flying aircraft and it makes an interesting view to watch at any time.

I was born in Crowfield and still live there and I don't really have an urge to move any where else. I am glad to live in the countryside and I hope all the beauty and freedom will not be spoilt in the years to come.

\* \* \*

Josie Taylor who lives in Crowfield wrote of Hemingstone Fruit Farm where she has worked in her holidays:

The farm started in 1960 and at that time 4,000 trees were planted and only one person was employed. At the present time there are 40,000 trees planted and thirty-four employees who are mostly women.

The apples go through many stages before reaching us, the first stage being the actual tree planting. This is done from November to March time, depending on conditions. It is two years before the trees bear any fruit. Next comes pruning. This is done from November to March and also in the summer. Pruning keeps the trees in a nice shape and it stops them from

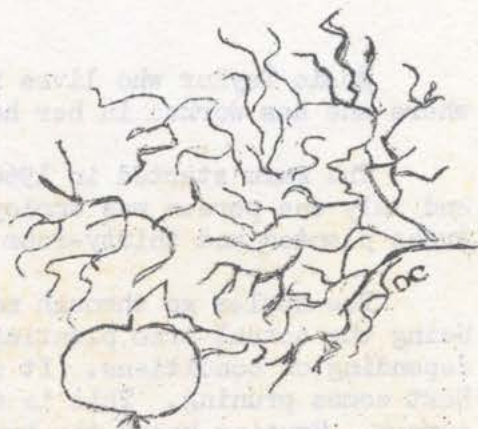
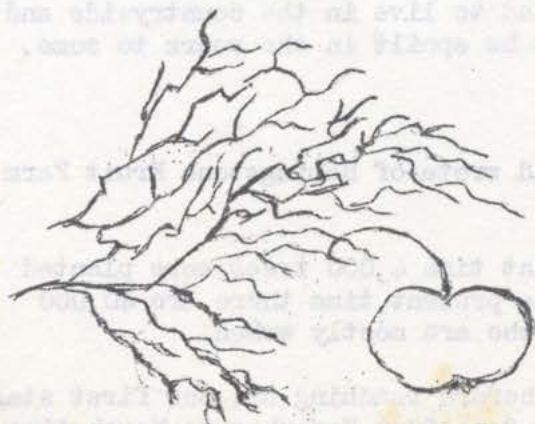
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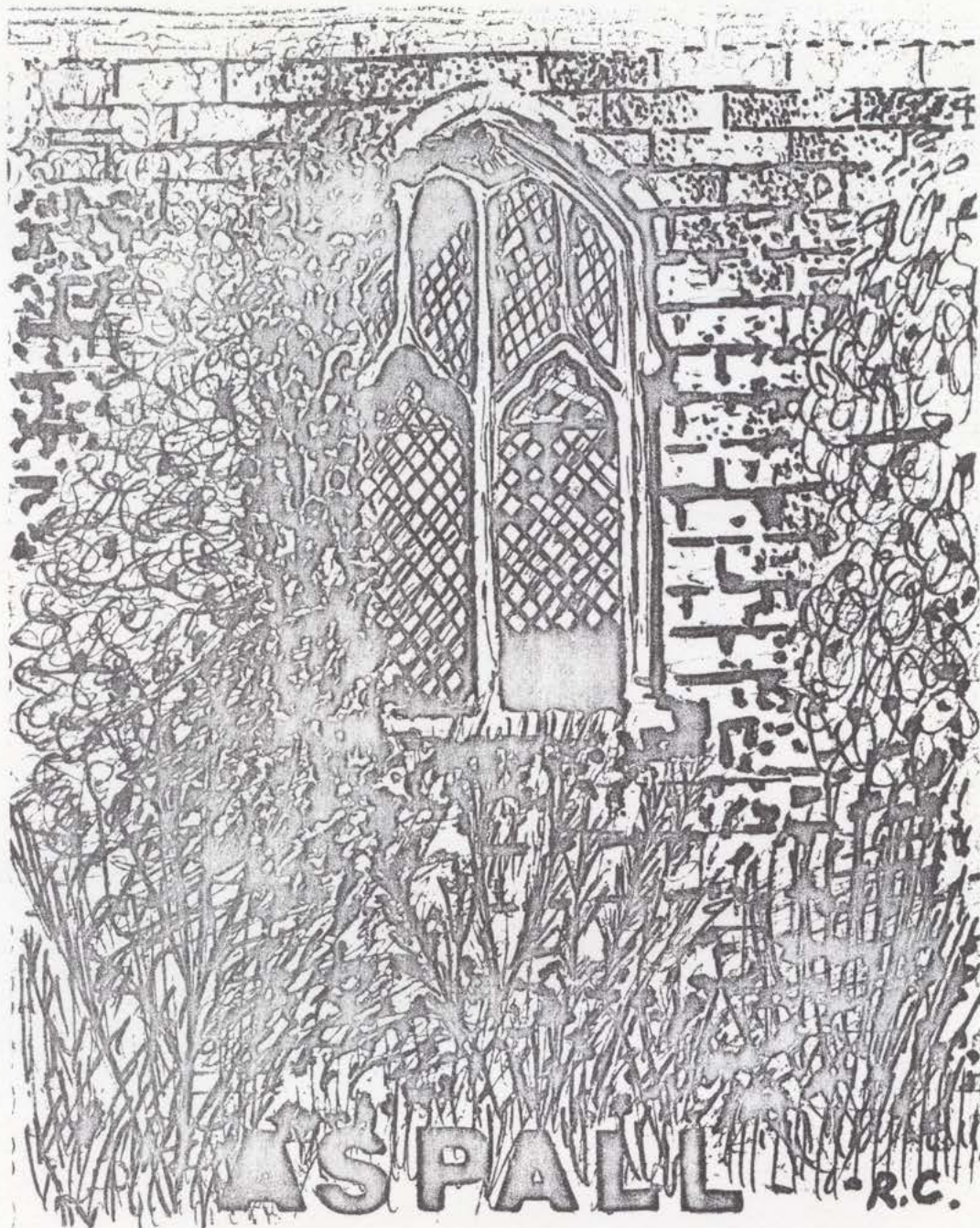
growing too tall. If they grow too high a lot of ladder work has to be done and this takes much longer. Next comes the spraying which is done from when the buds begin to burst right up until picking time. Spraying is necessary to combat various diseases such as scab and mildew. Insecticides are also used when needed. Next comes thinning which is done when the apples are about the size of hazelnuts. If there are about five apples in a clump two of these are picked off and this allows more room for the other three to grow to a nice size. After thinning is done it is called a uniform crop. This is when all the apples are of similar size.

The next thing that has to be done is the picking. This is done between August and October. After the apples have been picked they are put into big wooden crates and put into cold storage. Different types of apples have to be stored at different temperatures. Cox are stored at 38°f and Golden Delicious at 32-34°f. Next comes the packing. This starts in October or November depending on how quickly the apples have been picked. When the apples are ready they are sold to wholesale markets throughout the country. One thousand tons of fruit has been produced this year alone.

I will now give you an idea of what happens to the apples in the packing shed. Three bins of apples are piled on top of each other in a stacker. The stacker lifts the crates up and tips the apples into a flotation tank. The flotation tank is full of water. Someone stands at the side of it and picks out all the rotten apples and throws them into a rot bin. The apples then go up into the sponge drier where they are slightly dried off. They then go on into the polisher and drier where they are completely dried and polished. The apples then drop down onto the sorting table and here they are sorted into three different grades. After they have been graded they go onto the sizer. This is a machine with different sized holes in it. The apples drop into the right sized holes and drop through onto the right sections of the cross flow belts. The cross flow belts take the apples across onto the packing table and they drop into the right sized sections. Here they are either packed by hand or by machine. After they have been packed they are put onto a conveyor belt and they go round to where they are weighed and sealed. They are then stacked and left until a lorry comes to take them to be sold.

\* \* \*





**AS PALL** - R.C.  
**RISHANGLES**  
**BEDINGFIELD**  
**THORNDON**  
**KENTON**

## KENTON

A road which leaves the main street of Debenham beside Mr. Neave's butcher's shop leads to Kenton. Along this road, which in Spring is lined with cowslips, you will find Oak Tree Farm owned by Mr. Rose who also runs a drainage business. William Bester explained:

Mr. Rose owns five hundred acres. Mr. Rose's son David runs the farm, which grows barley, wheat, sugar beet and brussel sprouts. There are three cows which give milk for the family's own use. There is a drying shed which is a special place used for drying corn.

Mr. Rose and his son Bernard also run a draining business. When they go draining, they take a tractor and an implement which digs a long hole in the ground at a depth of about one and a half yards. Pipes are then laid in the holes, and the earth and stones are heaped back on top. These pipes assist in draining water-logged soil. About thirty people are employed by Mr. Rose.

\* \* \*

The village of Kenton has been described for us by Rosemary Page:

I have lived in Kenton for four years. It is a small village with a population of about two hundred and fifty people. There is a public house called the 'Crown' and a post office, but there are no shops.

About nine hundred years ago the English and the Danes held a battle on the outskirts of Kenton and Debenham. On the site of the battlefield stands a large house named 'Blood Hall'. This unusual name probably resulted from tales of the slaughter that once took place on that spot. Many of the beams in the house were made from old ships' timbers. These were discovered when the roof was being repaired.

Another interesting house in Kenton is the moated Kenton Hall. It is very large and surrounded by lawns and gardens laid out with crazy paving.

A railroad once passed through Kenton. It ran from Haughley to Laxfield. Cattle used to be brought to Kenton station for transport to other places in Suffolk.

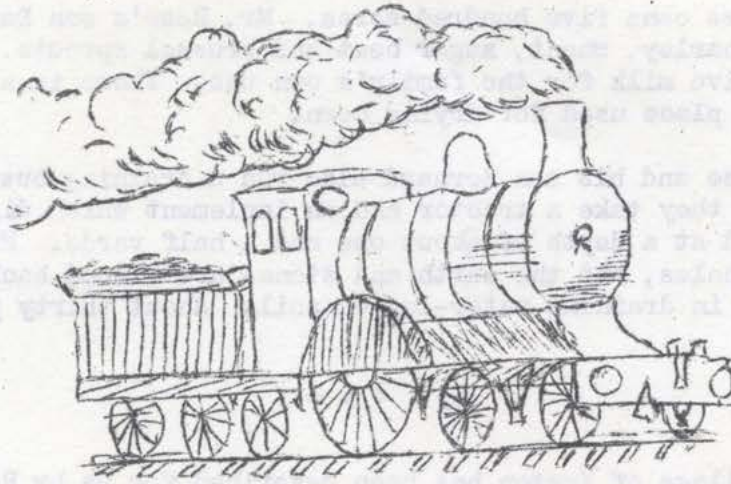
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The remains of this railway at Kenton interests David Parker who wrote:

Behind our house there used to be an old railway and there is a ramp where they used to load up the cattle and horses on to the train. At the right of our house there is a piece of black soil where they used to load up the coal. The line actually used to go through the middle of our house, which was built about twenty years ago.

The lines used to start at Worlingworth and go to Kenton through Aspall and then as far as the primary school at Debenham.

About two hundred yards away from our house there is a pond called the Station Pond and that is where the trains used to full up with water.



\* \* \*

#### B E D I N G F I E L D

Beyond Kenton lies the village of Bedingfield. A road to the right past Bedingfield Post Office leads to a farm where Dale Parker and Josie and Chris Kemp live. The farm is situated beside the church which has been described for us by Josie Kemp:

Every village has a landmark. In the case of Bedingfield the landmark is the church. From the outside it just looks like a very plain Gothic style church, made from stone and flint. However, if you look around you can find out many interesting things about it.

In the porch there is a brass plaque which tells you that the porch was built in the year 1371 by Peter De Bedingfield of Flemings Hall in this parish. The windows, subsequently destroyed, have now been restored by Thomas and Gwendolen Morris in September 1951.

As you walk through the porch you come to the main church door. This is covered with information about Bible Churchman's Missionary Society and some missionaries in Kenya which the church helps support. There is also information about Women's Fellowship meetings, Sunday School and Pathfinders. Pathfinders is a nationwide bible class movement for young people, from eleven years upwards.

In the roof of the porch there are ancient spandrils with traced fillings. These are believed to be the oldest part of the church.

As you walk towards the west end of the church, coming in at the north door, you come to the tower. In it hangs one fifteenth century bell from Norwich. There is a ladder at the foot of the tower, in the belfry, which leads up to the clock. The clock was given as part of the 1914-1918 War Memorial. About one year ago the face of the clock was re-painted with gold leaf.

In front of the belfry is a huge iron bound chest, which, before the safe was installed, was used to store the parish valuables.

As you walk on you come to two organs, one on either side. The one to the left was given by Saint Ann's Church, Nottingham. If you look to the right, in the corner around a small harmonium there is a semi-circle of small chairs and a huge poster board covered with pictures coloured by the Sunday School. In between these two organs there is a fourteenth century font. The shaft of it is believed to be older.

You then come to the vestry door, which is opposite the north door. Beside the vestry door, to the left, is a hanging plastic folder containing pamphlets about Christianity. To the left of this is the Roll of Honour which contains the names of all the people from this village who were killed in the First World War. To the right of the vestry door there is a framed sketch of the church. Beside this is the Register of Incumbents of Presbyters, Vicars and Rectors from A.D. 1300.

As you walk down the aisle, on either side, the windows are mainly nineteenth and twentieth century glass. Some of the pews have poppy heads and scrolls on them which were mostly defaced in Cromwell's time. If you look straight up you can see the huge double hammer beams, and occasionally a stray bat or starling.

At the end of the nave, you come to the chancel steps. When a marriage or confirmation takes place, this is where the people involved should stand. To the right of the chancel steps, is the pulpit which is decoratively carved with vines and grapes. To the left is the lectern, usually called the reader's stand because on it, is placed a huge bible from which the lessons are read at each church service. At the steps of the pulpit is the rector's seat and carved book rest. Beside this on both sides of the chancel are the choir stalls. Hanging above the choir stalls, to the right of the chancel is a hatchment of the Bedingfield family of Flemings Hall 1371-1929. At the end of the left choir stalls stands a huge organ. The organ was installed to commemorate Queen Victoria's Jubilee on July 6th 1887.

Opposite the organ is a brass plaque which is a record of all the Bedingfields interred beneath the porch and chancel. At the end of the chancel you come to the altar rail. The altar rail has a tapestry kneeling mat at the foot of it, on which the congregation kneel to take communion. Inside the rail is a paten with a rayed head of Christ, which is one of the sixty surviving pre-reformation ones. The date is about 1520.

In the centre of the east wall is the Holy Table which is said to be a good example of early Jacobean work. At the back of the table in the centre is a solid brass cross with the following inscription: 'To the Glory of God and in memory of Eliza Shaw, died 28th December, 1901'. Also there is a similar inscription on the solid brass stand for the prayer book, but instead of Eliza Shaw it reads Antoinette Guppy, 1912. Also standing on either side of the cross are two brass flower vases. The ladies in the village take it in turn to polish the brass work and arrange the altar flowers.

On either side of the Holy Table are two huge solid looking chairs, which are used for the bishop when he visits the church.

If you bother to look, what seems to be a very ordinary fourteenth century building can be of historical and general interest to anyone.

\* \* \*



## BEDINGFIELD VILLAGE PUMP

### I'm A Pump!

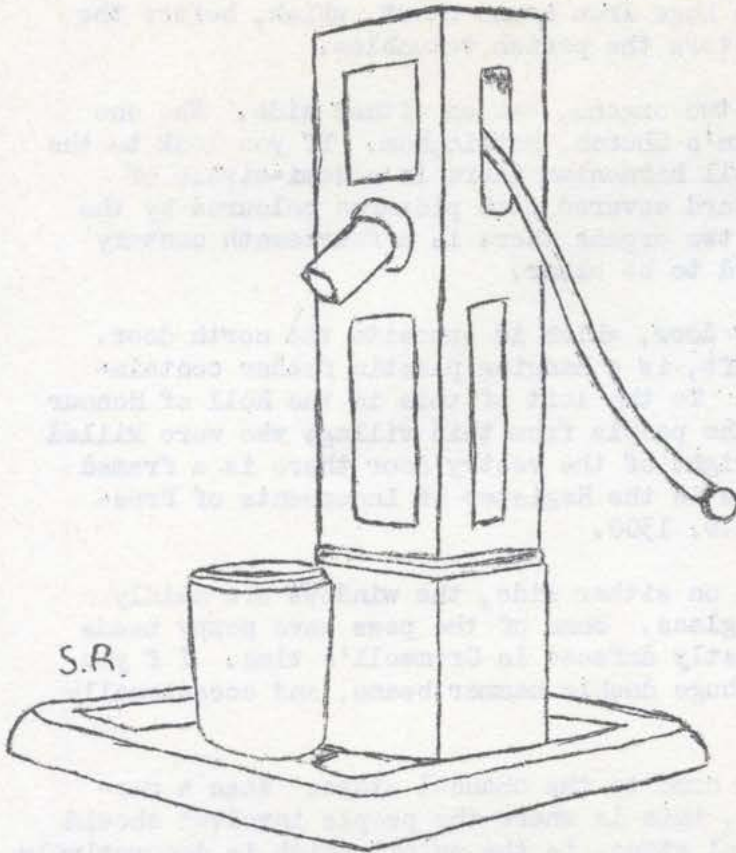
Old and rusty, retired I stand,  
In the centre of the village -  
Watching the world go by.

I was once the most important feature  
Of this pretty little village,  
But now, alas, I go unnoticed,  
I'm getting overgrown with weeds.  
Doesn't anyone care any more?  
Fifty years ago I was very precious  
But now, modern taps have replaced  
me.

Josie Kemp

\* \* \* \*

If a traveller turns right  
at Bedingfield church and follows  
the road for about one mile he  
will be rewarded by a view of the  
fourteenth century moated manor  
house called Flemings Hall, the  
ancient home of the Bedingfield  
family.



Charles Schug has described this house and its present owner:

Flemings Hall has big thick oak doors and small diamond shaped panes making up the windows. The roof has a dip in it. This is due to the weight of the tiles. Each chimney, one at each end, looks like a leaning tower of Pisa. The man who lives there is called Angus McBean. I am going to tell you a bit about his life.

Angus McBean was born in a mining village in South Wales, and after leaving grammar school, he went to work in a local bank.

The first stroke of luck he had was when he was 13 years old. He won first prize in a raffle. He won a camera. That camera, won 58 years ago, was the beginning of a great career for him.

After getting the sack at the bank he went to work in the antique and interior decorating department of Liberty's in London. He stayed there for seven years. He got the sack by having a row with a customer. After getting the sack he began to grow a beard. This meant that he was not looking for work. No one would employ a man who wore a beard in the early 20th century.

His first real contact with the theatrical world was in 1929. His job was making masks and scenery for films. He once made a mask for Clemence Dane's film, 'The Happy Hypocrite' which starred Ivor Novello. The best photograph he thought he ever took was of Sir Laurence Olivier playing 'Hamlet' at the Old Vic in 1937.

He tried to find a place to keep all his thirty years of negatives. He tried several organisations but no one would have them, so he sent them to the Harvard University in America. The total weight of these was  $4\frac{1}{2}$  tons.

The eight bedroomed house he is now living in was built in 1380 and modernised in 1580. Ever since he moved there twelve years ago he has been restoring the house to what it is today. It gives him great pleasure to restore his house and old furniture. Two years ago he designed and printed some wallpaper for Hintlesham Hall in Suffolk.

\* \* \*

#### T H O R N D O N

When the traveller leaves Flemings Hall he should return to Bedingfield Church and travel on past Manor Farm on the road to Occold. A left turn before Occold leads him to the B1077. He should turn left and then right to Thorndon. Sally Keeble is our only pupil from Thorndon, but helped by her friend, Sally Capon she found plenty of interesting things to tell us:

About fifty years ago Thorndon was a self supporting village. There were many farms in Thorndon and most jobs on the farms were done by the horses. At one time there were over one hundred and ten horses in Thorndon. The job which the horses didn't have to do was the thrashing because there were special thrashing engines to do this work.

There used to be two pubs in Thorndon, the 'green Man' and the 'Black Horse'. The 'Black Horse' is still in Thorndon but it does not make a good profit these days. There were also two blacksmith's shops and a carpenter in Thorndon at one time and Thorndon once had its own village shop and fire station.

Kerrison School was founded by Sir Edward Kerrison. At first Kerrison School was just a thatched cottage which held six or seven boys. One day the few boys got angry and burned down the original school. Later Kerrison School was rebuilt.

Thorndon once had a windmill but it was struck by lightning on 22nd September, 1922. There used to be a man in Hestley Green who made baskets for a living. The Mid Suffolk Railway which was opened in 1902 used to run through a part of Thorndon.

Thorndon Church was built in 1358 and the Lych gate was built between 1914 and 1918 in memory of the men who died in the War.

There were a Tailors' and Boot and Shoe makers in Thorndon. The village once had a bakery where bread and cakes were baked and later sold at the local shop. Today the old bakery is just a private house. Thorndon also had a pork butchers shop. There used to be a reading room which was often used for playing cards.

There were no tarred roads and no electricity or water supply in Thorndon until about thirty years ago and if you wanted any water you had to fetch it from the wells.

The pre-historic objects which were found in Thorndon are now in the British Museum. We know Thorndon is a very old village because there are still a lot of Roman remains.

\* \* \*

## R I S H A N G L E S

From Thorndon the traveller must return to the B1077 and further along this road towards Debenham he will find Rishangles. This village used to be called 'Rushangles' because of the rushes that could be gathered along the banks of its streams. Martin Goode and Wendy Jones explored the church, surely its only visitors for many years. Wendy wrote:

The church is situated three miles from Eye in a small village called Rishangles and is partly hidden behind the local village shop.

Over the years the thick green vines have crept up the old flint walls of the Norman church. The large portal has a sturdy oak door with a heavy iron latch. The arched windows of patterned stained glass with lead are dull and weatherbeaten. Like most churches this one is built in the shape of a cross.

A small river used to flow through the churchyard. At one time boats used to go up and down the river. The church was well known for its use in smuggling goods from the river. The pulpit holds the key to the mystery, as under it is a trap door which leads to an underground passage. The passage leads on for nearly two miles and the smugglers used to go through it. At Thorndon Church the passage from our church would end.

The church has been derelict for over nine years. You cannot get in as it has been bolted from the inside and there is only one other way out and that is through a secret tunnel that leads into the graveyard. One year at midnight the bells rang and nobody knows what caused this. My belief is that many years ago the first church service was held on that day.

Our church and its grounds are old and have been neglected. If this church were looked after with such an interesting history it could attract many visitors.

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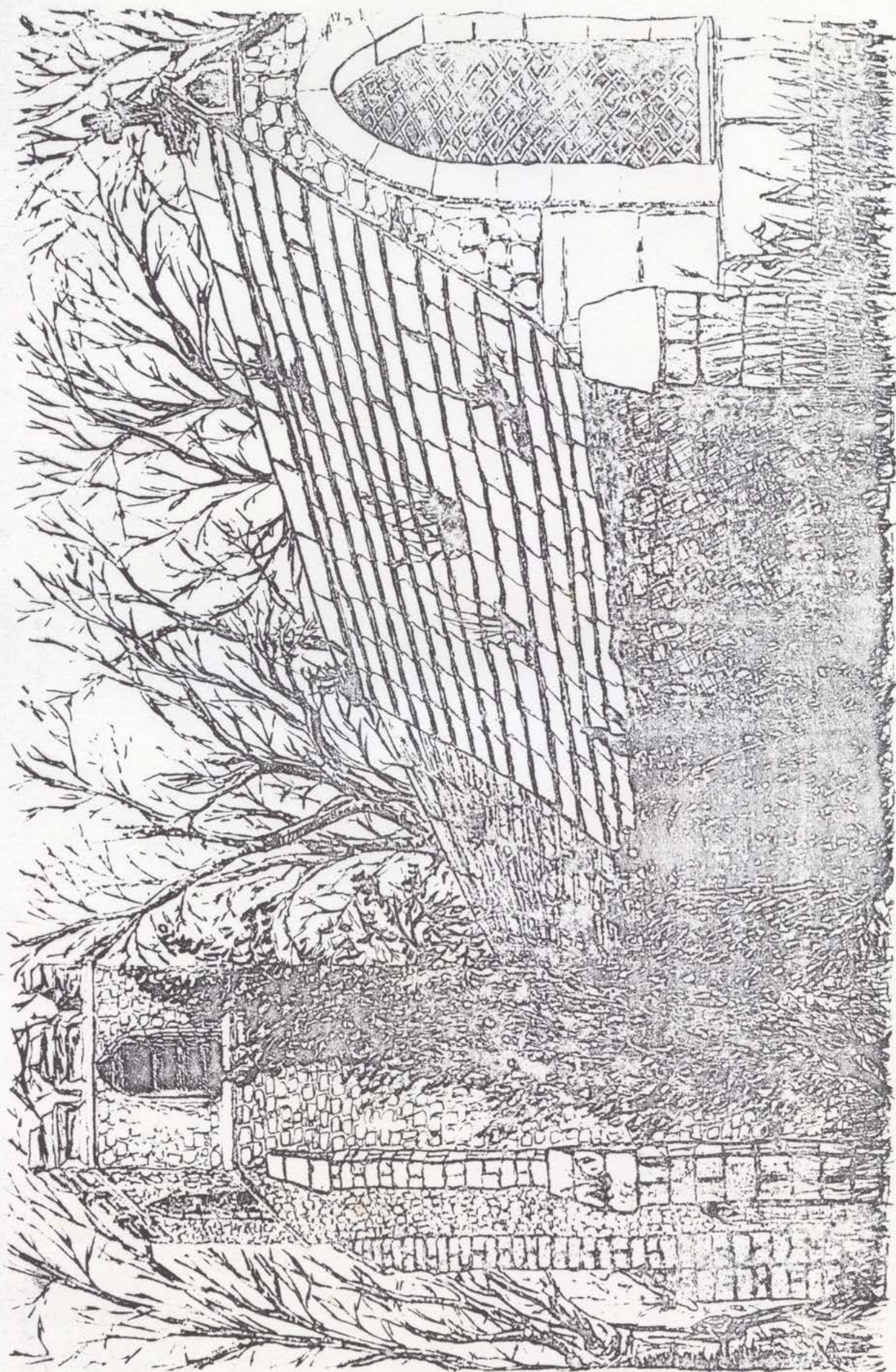
Opposite the church is a Baptist chapel which Amanda Woodhouse described:

The Baptist Chapel was built in 1869 and quite a lot of activity goes on there. There are services, Sunday School, F.O.Y. and women's meetings. The roof was re-slatted about three years ago, and gas heating replaced the old stove, which was completely worn out. The old organ was replaced by an electric organ last year.

\* \* \*

The situation of Martin Goode's house further along the B1077 was obviously a place to be avoided years ago. He told us why:



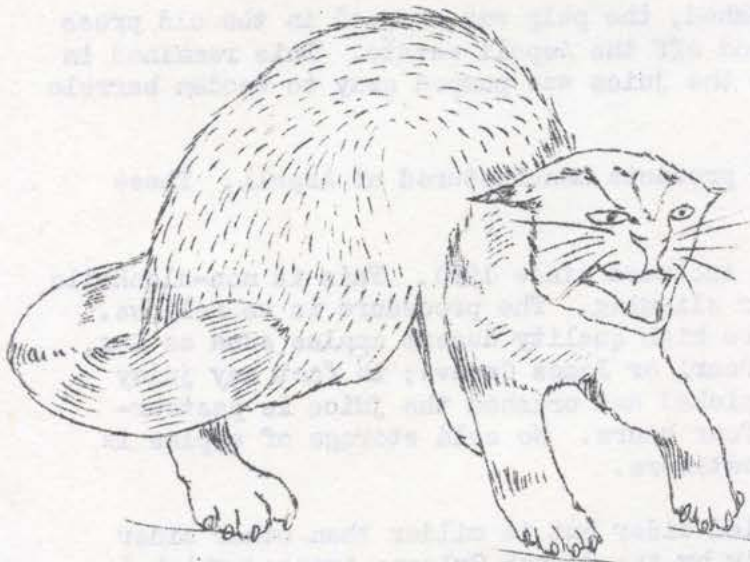


WILLIAM MAGUIRE

D. RELICT CHURCH, RISHAIGLES

My address is Cat's Corner, Rishangles. My house has not got a special name or number; it is just known as Cat's Corner. You may be wondering how the place got its name.

Where the house is now there was once a large forest and in the forest were some wild cats. When the wood-men were cutting down the trees some of them were attacked by the wild cats so they named the place Cat's Corner.



Our house is over four hundred years old. It is made of wattle and daub and it is covered with plaster. In some places you can see the wattle and daub where the plaster has crumbled away. When we were repairing the walls we found a copy of the 'Diss Express' dated 1875.

Before the First World War our house was a bakery. It still has the igloo ovens that they used. You can see the position of the ovens from the outside of the house. During the Second World War our house was the place where people came to get their gas masks.

I certainly enjoy living here in such an interesting old place.

\* \* \*

#### A S P A L L

Having passed Martin's house the traveller soon reaches Aspall which is close to Debenham. Although the village is small, two of its products are known far and wide. On the left hand side of the road is Aspall Cyder House of which Stephen Haarn wrote:

Lots of people like drinking cider but very few stop to think about the long process of producing this drink. Aspall cider starts off as apples growing in one of the orchards deep in the quiet heart of Suffolk.

First the apples are picked from the trees which grow only by organic substances. No chemical or toxic sprays are used to combat pests. From there the apples are brought to the Cyder House and put on a concrete pad. When the modern Swiss press is working the apples are floated along by water into a hopper and then augered up into another hopper where they are crushed into pulp. Then the pulp is let down into cloths supported by oak slats and pressed. This latest Swiss press is capable of producing about three hundred gallons of juice an hour.

From the press room the juice is pumped into oak wats to ferment for cider with no additives. This process takes two or three months. Finally it matures in two thousand gallon oak wats under the Norfolk reed thatch which helps keep it cool however hot the weather may be. After blending

and sweetening the cider is then bottled and sold in three varieties. These are still medium sweet, still dry and still extra dry.

Years ago the work was done by the original cider mill which was built in 1728 from granite stones which formed the circular trough and a horse was used to pull the granite wheel round to crush the apples, which were in the trough, into pulp. The cider mill was used until 1947.

After the apples were crushed, the pulp was pressed in the old press which was built in 1729 from wood off the Aspoll estate. This remained in service until 1970. After this the juice was pumped away to wooden barrels to ferment.

There are still two other products manufactured at Aspoll. These are apple juice and applegar.

Apple juice has only been included since 1970. This is non-alcoholic and is recommended as an aid for slimming. The procedure is as follows. The apples are picked. These are high quality desert apples such as Cox, Lamborn, Worcester, Discovery, Pearl or James Greave; in fact any juicy eating apple. After they are picked and crushed the juice is pasteurised and bottled within twenty-four hours. No cold storage of apples is used and no preservatives or sweeteners.

Applegar is partly acidified cider but is milder than other cider vinegars. This is made naturally by the French Orleans process which is to fill large barrels three quarters full with cider and then air is allowed to flow through each end of the barrel at the top. This process acidifies the cider and takes several months.

The products manufactured at Aspoll are sold in health food shops and pure food centres all over the United Kingdom as well as in the Common Market countries, Ireland and the Channel Islands.

\* \* \*

Joy Mark did some research and told us a story that began with an ear of barley:

In the village of Aspoll, there is a beautiful house called Aspoll Hall. It is a large gabled building surrounded by a moat. Its windows look out onto large lawns with many tall trees. Here, as a girl, lived Anne Chevallier, who became the mother of the famous First World War leader, Lord Kitchener.

Her father, John Chevallier, was very interested in agriculture. It was one day, when a farm labourer was returning home to Aspoll, after threshing at Debenham, that the story began.

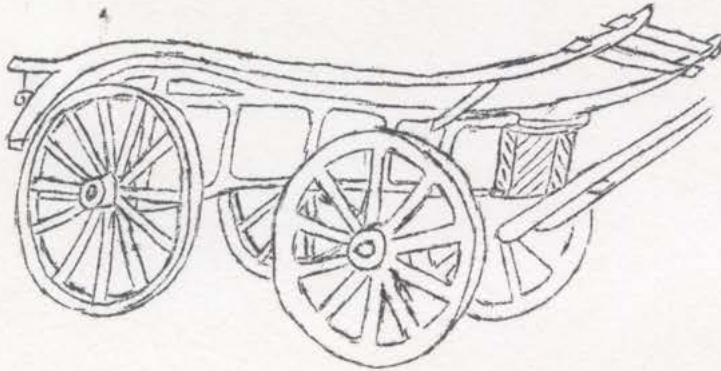
The man, walking along the two mile long road, felt something uncomfortable in his boot. He took off his boot and found that it was an ear of barley. When he arrived home, he planted the grains in his garden and to his surprise, they grew well.

One day as John Chevallier was passing the garden, he happened to spot the ears of barley. He thought they looked good and asked the labourer if he could have a few ears. From these few ears of barley, he was able to raise enough seed for a whole field. It was the best barley he had

ever grown.

The news of the barley spread quickly and Chevallier soon became famous. The seeds were distributed across the country and across the Atlantic. The one ear from the uncomfortable boot has yielded millions and millions of seeds to sow acres of land all over the world.

\* \* \*

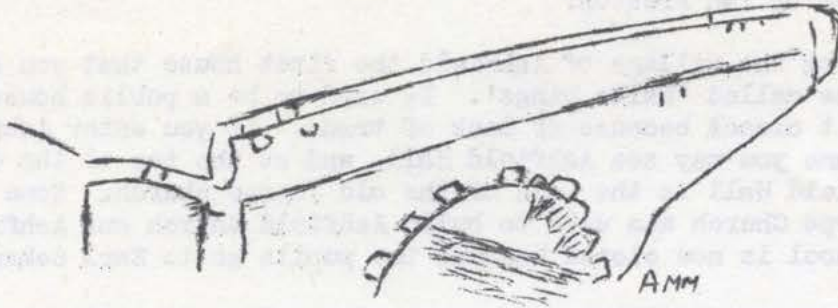


ASHFIELD  
EARL SOHAM  
BEDFIELD  
MONK SOHAM





## ASHFIELD



The left turn out of Debenham just past Shulver's garage is the road that leads to Ashfield. Two miles along this road, on the right hand side is Barley Farm, the home of Robert and Louise Starbuck. In rainy weather this year, Robert and Louise were cut off by floods and 'Dead Man's Bridge' was impassable. It was this bridge that inspired Robert to write:

It is late in the evening in the year 1875. As the light fades the men on the farms go home. Two men stop on a decaying wooden bridge and a violent fight starts. One man produces from his lunch sack a hand hook. There is a jab, and the warm sticky blood oozes out of the wound. In desperation the man takes the body of his adversary to the farm where he places it up the smoking chimney.

In 1975 I live in this farmhouse and I tell people bones drop from the place where the body is said to have been put.

The smoking chimney was one of five fires which could burn in the scullery. The cooking fire was one where the cooking pot would stand. You can still see the hook. Next to the cooking fire was the bread oven and then two coppers, a large one and a small one.

Other parts of the farm are the outbuildings, which are older than the house. There is a barn where a family could live. Words have been scratched on the wall telling that a family lived there with their animals in 1787.

An outbuilding not connected to the house, caught fire about six years ago. In this barn there was an old horse cart dated 1799 which was destroyed. The buildings were much older.

One part of the house which we have changed is the kitchen which we have moved to the old store room. About ten years ago before we came to live here, new windows were put in and a new staircase was put in at the back of the house.

We have decorated half of the house, but we are taking a long time over it because of the old wall paper, which in parts is seven layers thick.

When we first came here it was mid-July and the grasses were all growing wild. Roses were growing all over one wall of the house and half of the garden.

All our family would be bored if we had to move out of Barley Farmhouse to a warm, comfortable, draught-free modern house and we would also miss the ghost story.

\* \* \*

A left turn off the Framlingham road brings the traveller into Ashfield village described by Ian Freston:

When entering the village of Ashfield the first house that you see is a big white house called 'White Wings'. It used to be a public house called 'The Swan' but it closed because of lack of trade. If you enter Ashfield by way of Thorpe Lane you may see Ashfield Hall, and at the top of the drive leading to Ashfield Hall is the ruin of the old Thorpe church. Some of the rubble from Thorpe Church was used to build Ashfield Church and Ashfield School. The school is now closed because the pupils go to Earl Soham school.

The village is now building a new community centre with the proceeds they got from a fete and a dance, plus donations from some people in the village. The centre is built mainly out of glass and timber.

The population of Ashfield is now 198 people. Nearly a third of the population has moved into Ashfield since 1971. Ashfield also has a small post office but it only sells postal orders, stamps and other odds and ends.

In the village there are five farms. They are all arable. In Ashfield Lane is a new chicken farm where they have broiler hens.

During world war two the windows in Ashfield church were blown out by a land mine and it was many years before the windows could be replaced.

The main Stowmarket coastal, which cuts the village in two, was originally a Roman road and it is very straight. Just after the war some council houses were built in the middle of the village and they are quite attractive.

At the end of the lane is a foot path which comes out somewhere near Crows Hall. I have lived in Ashfield all of my life and I think it is a lovely quiet village. Ashfield covers roughly four square miles.

\* \* \*

Glenda Read gave some details about the church:

The church is St. Mary's and originated from a Danish watchtower. Remains of this can still be seen in the grounds of Thorpe Hall. The old church was moved to its present site in the 19th century and the designer of the new church was William Constable Woolard of Long Melford. The first stone was laid by Lord Henniker on 30th August, 1835.

In the graveyard a tree was planted to commemorate the Silver Jubilee of King George V. The stained glass window over the altar was shattered in the war by the first land mine to be dropped in this country.

In the year 1967 Ashfield received the award for the best kept village and a notice of this can be seen in the church porch. Ashfield has an ordinary village church with an extraordinary history.

\* \* \*

Just beyond the church is Sunnyside Corner. Leslie Forman had an alarming tale to tell:

My house at 2 Sunnyside Corner was built in the war. It was built in 1941. The builder had a difficult job because it was built on a pond. This pond used to supply the village with water many years ago. Before they built the house the pond was drained, but they must have left a lot of mud. My house is sinking one inch in four years. You can't notice it sinking but upstairs in my mother's room there is a great crack in the walls.

\* \* \*

### EARL SOHAM

Rejoining the road to Framlingham, half a mile further on the traveller will find a right turn that leads to the beautiful village of Earl Soham described by Lesley Michelmore:

I live at the Falcon Inn, and although it was built in the sixteenth century it looks more modern from the outside. Inside the walls have old timber beams. Sash windows, however, have been installed at some later date.

On the village green is a Falconer carved in oak which was erected by the Women's Institute and is now the village sign. An event held yearly, in July in the eighteenth century was the lamb and stock fair, which was presumably for selling cattle. Opposite the green is the Forge garage which was originally the smithy. Further down the road over the bridge is Victoria Terrace which used to be a barley-maltings but in the late nineteenth century was divided into seven cottages.

Close to my house is the grocer's shop which is a good example of a Regency house with a fanlight over the door. Next to it is the Georgian Red House which is now the Doctor's home, with a surgery in a small room beside it. A little further up the road is Soham Lodge, a manor house surrounded by a moat, and on the corner is the Victorian primary school, which is a one storey, slate roofed building. The road

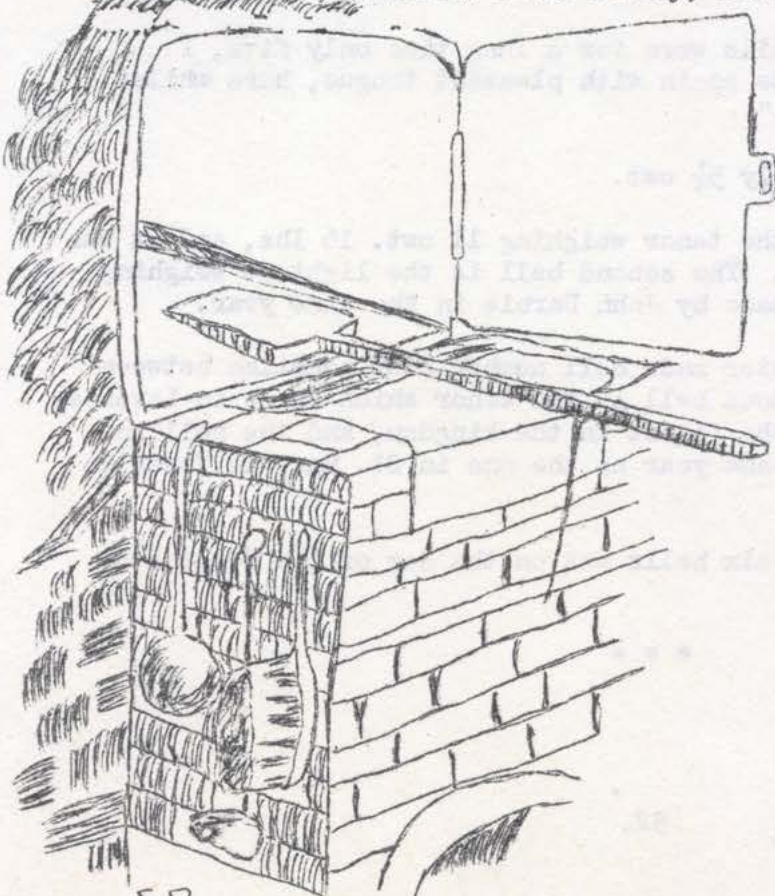
then leads up a small hill to St. Mary's Church with a few old cottages painted white and pink to the right of the church.

\* \* \*

Delicious home made bread is baked by Mr. Ashwell whose bakery has been described by Martin Wharmsby:

The bakery in Earl Soham was established in 1910. Home made bread and cakes are sold in the shop. Mr. Ashwell, the owner of the shop died a few years ago but the sons of Mr. Ashwell have taken it over. They get up at about five o'clock in the morning and make the dough. They put it into the tins and put them in the oven.

\* \* \*



The church is situated at the far end of the village and Lesley Michelmores has written:

St. Mary's church at Earl Soham is a fairly small and very old building. Parts of the church date back to the fourteen hundreds. The first part of the church, however, must have been built many years before as the first vicar arrived in 1294.

The main part of the church has been added to, as there is such a variation in ages of the structures. The Dukes of Norfolk, who were Lords of the Manor at the time, were mainly responsible for the building of the church.

A man called Thomas Edward built the tower of the church. This fact is known because the buttresses which were added in 1510 have an inscription stating this. Thomas Edward is presumed to have been the second duke.

Some two hundred years before the addition of the buttresses the side windows of the chancel must have been installed because they date back to about the year 1320. The main part of the tower was built about thirty years after this in 1350.

The third duke, John De Mowbray is said to have built Earl Soham Lodge, and the fourth duke is believed to have been responsible for the rebuilding of Framlingham Church. The fourth duke is also presumed to have given the order for the making of the third and fifth peal of the bells, at the same time as the nave was built.

The bells themselves are now a cause of worry for the present vicar. Warning has been given that the bells must be rehung but the cost of such a job has been approximated at four thousand pounds.

Today the church has six bells, These were given at separate times. All the bells have inscriptions on them. The treble has inscribed upon it the words:

"We who are now six bells were for a long time only five, I came last and celebrate again with pleasant tongue, here whilst I hang, the happy day."

This bell weighs approximately  $5\frac{1}{4}$  cwt.

The heaviest bell is the tenor weighing 11 cwt. 16 lbs, and it was made by John Darbie in 1663. The second bell is the lightest weighing over 4 cwt. This was also made by John Darbie in the same year.

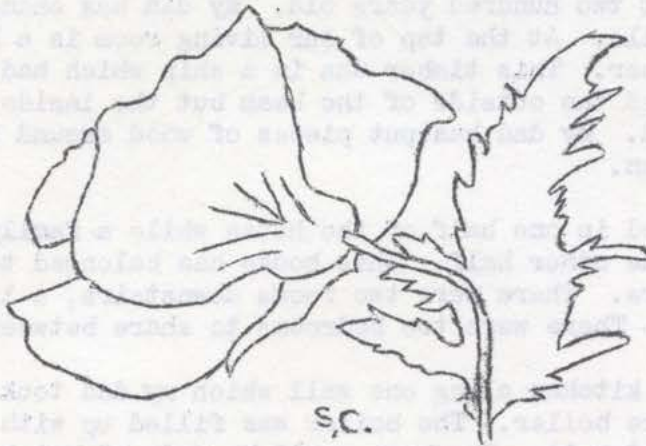
Miles Graye of Colchester made bell number four sometime between 1600 and 1630. His most famous bell is the tenor which hangs in Lavenham Church. Ringers say it is the finest in the kingdom, and the bell in Earl Soham was made in the same year as the one in St. Mary le Tower in Ipswich.

The first peal of the six bells was on the day of the funeral of Queen Victoria.

\* \* \*

## B E D F I E L D

A left turn beside the cemetery at Earl Soham takes the traveller down a leafy lane to Bedford, a village, which, according to Philip Daly is haunted by the ghost of a dog.



Several generations of Karen Shaw's family have lived in this village. Karen wrote:

My house used to be the village post office in the First World War. It was then moved next door a few years later and was owned by an older member of my family, Mrs. E. E. E. Bacon. The village school was built in 1868 and it is still in use. My father used to go to that school when he was a boy and so did my great great grandfather.

When my great great grandfather went to school it was quite different from now. Every morning he got up at five o'clock, got dressed in his working clothes and went stone picking for two hours. Then he would go home and have his breakfast which would probably be bread and dripping. He would then change into his school clothes which would be short trousers, braces and a shirt. He would work all hours of the day, go home for dinner and return home finally at about eight o'clock. Then he would have his tea and go to bed. That would be just one day's work. Boys left school at twelve or fourteen instead of sixteen in those days.

\* \* \*

Robert Girling's family have lived in Bedford for some time and Robert told us about his grandfather's barn:

In Bedford beside my grandad's old house which is about four hundred years old, is a five bay barn. It is very large and years ago it would probably have been moved if the owner moved. It used to have a thatched roof but now the thatch has been taken off and a galvanised roof has replaced it. It has a loft high above the floor on which to store hay. The farmer's men used to take wagons of wheat or beans right into the barn. There the wheat was threshed by a hand flail which is a jointed tool.

The beams are of very good oak and are still very strong, much better than the oak beams in many old houses. A five bay barn is a barn which can be divided into five parts. The floor is made of concrete and small bricks. The barn is about four hundred years old. The walls are made of wood and brick and in places the wall is made of baked clay.

\* \* \*

Like many of our pupils David Wright lives in a moated farm house. He told us that in the war a tank went into his moat and a helicopter landed in his field.

Clive Bloomfield lives in Rectory Cottage which has seen many changes. Clive wrote:

Our house is about two hundred years old. My dad has changed it and rebuilt a few of the walls. At the top of our living room is a beam, which used to be a ship's timber. This timber was in a ship which had had a fire. The fire slightly charred the outside of the beam but the inside or the heart wood was untouched. My dad has put pieces of wood around the charred beam so it cannot be seen.

Our ancestors lived in one half of the house while a family called the Butchers lived in the other half. This house has belonged to our family for two hundred years. There were two rooms downstairs, a little scullery and a kitchen. There were two bedrooms to share between a family.

Downstairs in the kitchen along one wall which my dad took down and rebuilt, there was a fire boiler. The boiler was filled up with water and then you lit the fire under it. The base would be made of brick with a hole in the middle so that the flames would hit the actual boiler. Then there was a very old fashioned kitchen range with an open fire. In front of that there was an old spit. Next there was an oven which nearly all houses had, and that was a Dutch oven. Another thing was a very large meat hook.

The way into the house was through a solid oak door. We have still got the door-way to which the solid oak door was attached. The man who built the houses put beams in the walls and then between the beams he put clay mixed with straw so the straw would hold the clay together. He got the clay from a pond outside.

\* \* \*

A right turn in the centre of the village will lead the traveller to Bedfield church which lies at the end of the lane with only farmland beyond. Julie Chambers described the church:

I think that our quaint little church is rather interesting. The name of our church is St. Nicholas.

The church is an ancient structure of flint, built in the perpendicular style. The chancel is Norman. This is clearly shown by the differing rubble on the outward facing of the walls. The east window was inserted in 1872 and was given by the Rev. F. E. Tyrwhitt-Drake who was rector from 1866 to 1874.

The Holy Table is Jacobean and is probably the work of the same craftsman who made the pulpit and the font-cover, unfortunately I don't know his name. The organ is a Bevington instrument.

The screen is 15th century and is one of only three in Suffolk that bears a memorial inscription to the donors. This inscription is on a painted strip below the eight panels but most of it has disappeared, though the names of 'Robert and his wife Alice' are still clearly to be seen.

The 14th century font is a typical East Anglian font and like so many such fonts has an octagonal bowl. The 17th century font cover is a most unusual example of Jacobean craftsmanship.

The tower is dated about 1230. The 12th century Norman doorway is best seen outside and is thought to have been built at the expense of St. Thomas Becket. The porch itself belongs to the Early English period.

The records show that there were four bells in 1553 and only one of these lanted until the 19th century.

In the churchyard is a cross of Cornish granite, erected in memory of the ten men of the parish who fell in the Great War of 1914 to 1918.

\* \* \*

Returning from the church to the main village the traveller will pass 'The Crown', an attractive public house with white washed walls and a neat silver thatched roof. Here, Gary Farrington told us, Worlingworth Football Club celebrates its many victories. The club's ground is in Bedfield.

#### M O N K S O H A M

A left turn from Bedfield main street leads the traveller through open farm land to Monk Soham. Christopher Bushby told us that the site of the old abbey can be seen from the air and that it was to this abbey that monks from Bury St. Edmunds were sent to do penance.

Anne Elliott described the village:

Monk Soham has a population of about two hundred people. The main employment is farming. There is a Builders Merchants which employs about eighty to a hundred people. Most of these people come from different villages.

The church is situated away from the village but years ago it was surrounded by houses. These were made mostly of straw, but were burnt down when the villagers fled to the other part of the village. They fled because of the plague. One house was left made of clay and bricks. I live in that house. It had a farm which was once small and had chickens. However, it is now large and is mainly concerned with pigs.

The church has no vicar as he retired a few years ago and the vicar comes from Dennington. Bedfield and Monk Soham have joint services and the same vicar. The vicarage has been made into a Youth Club. On a Monday there is a boys' club, Tuesday youth club and in the morning on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday from 9.30 to 12.30 there is a play group. Once every month on a Thursday there is an over sixties club.

A few years ago there were two pubs but these are now closed. The post office is also closed. This used to sell groceries but now we have to go to the next village which from my house is three miles.

There is no school and the children have to go to Bedfield. Pupils have to make their own way to school unless they are under eight. The infants can ride in the taxi.



Robert Grimsey wrote of the church:

St. Peter's Church, Monk Soham is situated in an outlying part of the parish. Several houses including the old school are situated close by.

The walls of the church are built out of flint bound together with mortar. In places the walls have been plastered over to help prevent collapse. The roof is made of slate and not of the usual lead.

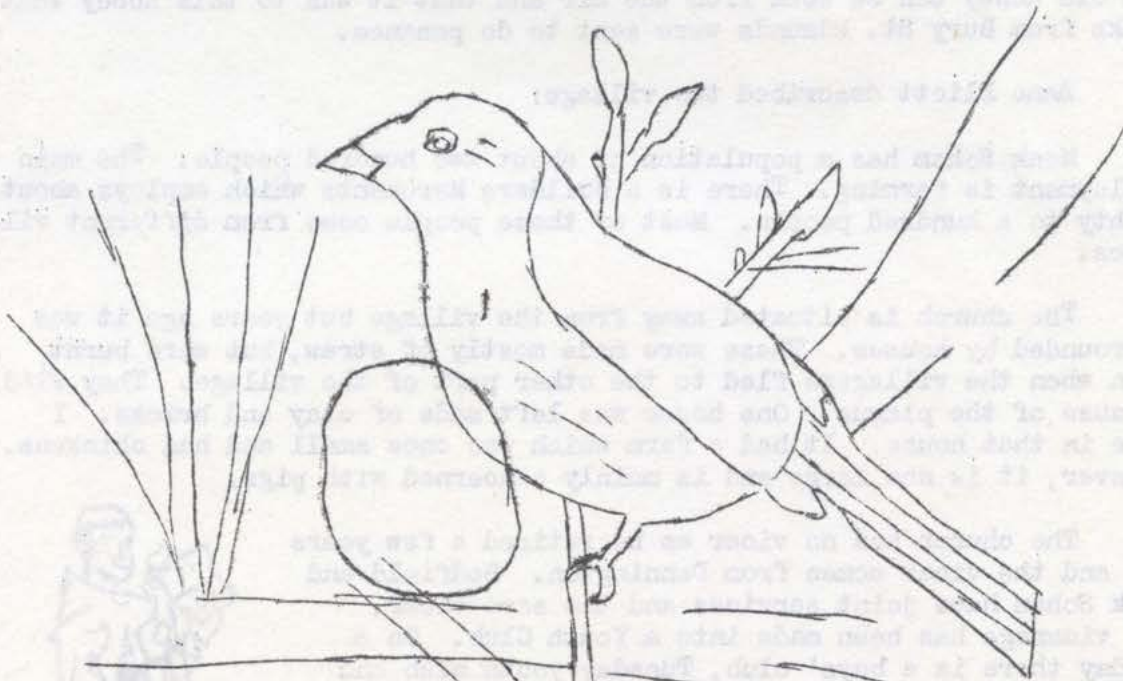
On entering the south door you are confronted by a cast iron boiler which heats the church, along with gas and paraffin. Oil heaters used to heat the choir stalls. Lighting was originally oil, and some lamps remain. Today the church is lit by electric spot lamps hidden high in the roof. Electricity is also used to power the organ which is situated by the altar. The interior of the roof has a considerable number of beams including hammer beams but these have had their heads removed. The font is situated to the left of the door and is made of sandstone and has an inner lining of lead. There are pews for approximately a hundred and twenty people.

In the belfry there are five bells which are rung regularly every Sunday for the services.

There are said to be tunnels leading from the church to Bedford Hall and two or more other houses are connected by these tunnels.

The church is well worth a visit. However, if you decide to visit it on a wet day you will want wellington boots as the paths are very muddy.

\* \* \*



Mark Farrington is particularly interested in the church bells:

I have had lessons with the church warden and I can ring the treble bell and the second bell. From the belfry window there is a lovely view of Monk Soham.





**Mickfield, Stonham. Aspal,  
Stonham, Little Stonham,  
Wetheringsett**

JOSIE TAYLOR

## M I C K F I E L D

To reach this interesting group of villages the traveller must turn into Gracechurch Street, pass the Modern School and after about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles he must turn right to find Mickfield. On his left the traveller will pass the Tropical Fish Centre where the fish for sale are attractively displayed in individual pools. Inside the building is a display of rare and interesting fish which are not for sale.

In the centre of the village stands the tiny 14th century church which is well known to Denise Johnson and a senior member of the village who told Denise about life in Mickfield when he was a boy:

The person who I am writing about is an old man who has lived in the village of Mickfield nearly all his life. There were seven in his family, he being the oldest born in 1891. Recently he told me what kind of life he led when he was a young boy of nine or ten, so the year this recollection took place was 1899 - 1900.

His father at the time was earning about ten shillings a week, which wasn't much for a family of seven to live on. Their food mostly consisted of rice and dry bread. He said he could remember that every Saturday night his mother and he used to walk three miles to a grocer's shop to buy some rice. They couldn't afford the best rice so they bought chicken rice, which cost about three halfpence a pound. This was put into a big iron saucepan and put over the hob of the fire to boil. There was no sugar to put on it, so salt was sprinkled on to give it more flavour. This was their Sunday dinner. Their drink was made from a piece of bread which was toasted black over the fire. Boiling water was then poured over this. It made it the colour of tea but he said it tasted horrible.

When they wanted milk it would be collected from the farm in a big can. This was skimmed milk and was cheap as it cost one halfpenny the can.

They could not afford eggs. He said he could remember having two hens and the eggs they had from them were the only eggs they had. They never had a whole egg. It was halved and shared with his brother or sister. His mother used to boil the eggs hard and spread egg onto a piece of dry bread. This was their breakfast.

When they had fish, again they never had a whole one. It was cut in half and shared. He said they used to argue over the fish. The argument was about who would have the head part and who would have the tail part, as there was more meat on the head part.

At a certain point he was so hungry he told me a short story about what happened. Around Christmas time the person next door made a plum pudding. This was made in a cloth and when it was cooked she took the cloth off the pudding and some of the pudding was stuck to the cloth. She gave the cloth to his brother and himself to take the pudding off and eat. He said he will never forget that so hungry were they that they ate the cloth as well.

All the children used to sleep in the same room and sometimes there were three or four in a bed. They never had any blankets so in the winter time they had to put old coats over themselves to keep warm and the clothes which they took off they used to put over them as well.



They had no electric lights in those days, to their means of lighting was a candle. Sometimes they had to be sparing with a candle as perhaps they had only half a candle in the house.

They could not afford a daily newspaper so they just had the Mercury every Friday. He used to have to walk over three fields to school every morning. He said the school mistress had a beard and she used to wear a bonnet and tie her beard in the straps of her bonnet.

When he started work on the farm he was thirteen and got eight pence a day. When he was fourteen at harvest, he did half a man's harvest and got half a man's pay which was six shillings. When he was fifteen he did three quarters of a man's harvest and got nine shillings and when he was sixteen he did a man's harvest and got twelve shillings. After they had finished their day's work they used to go round hunting for a rabbit. When the binder or sail engine had almost finished cutting the field they used to stand around with sticks and stones and see if they could catch a rabbit. Then they would auction the rabbits off and the money they got went towards a party called a largess.

Although he had a hard childhood he is still well and strong so it proves that a rough life and hard work does not always harm you in the long run.

\* \* \*

### STONHAM ASPAL

Leaving Mickfield the traveller should rejoin the road from Debenham and head for Stonham Aspal; an interesting village name as Mark Chilvers explained:

The name Stonham comes from an old Saxon name. Ham is Saxon for home and Stonham or Stoneham as it was originally called, means the home with a stone wall round it. Aspall was the name of the family who lived in Broughton Hall which was the local manor house.

The village became the Ham or home of the Aspalls who spelt their name with two l's. So that is how Stoneham Aspall got its name although through the years the 'e' has been left out of Stonham and 'l' off Aspal.

\* \* \*

On the left hand side of the road there is a small jig-saw factory which sends its fine hand-made products all over England.

The traveller will find it well worth-while to take a left fork in order to find the real centre of the village with the C. of E. primary school opposite the church which has been described by Suzanne Taylor, who lives at the public house next to the school:

The public house where I live is called 'The Ten Bells' because in the wooden tower of the village church opposite there are ten bells which were given by Theodore Eccleson and which were re-hung in 1954 because one had cracked and the others had to be put on ball-bearings.

The building of the church began in the 13th century. It is made of flint and stone and is the only church with a wooden tower and ten bells in this area. The north chapel of the church is dedicated to St. Lambert and there are only two churches of St. Lambert in England.

As you walk into the church it is quiet and pleasant. At the east end of the church there is a big stained glass window which displays the pictures of Easter. Underneath is the great wooden altar with massive wooden legs which look like eagles' legs.

By the side of the altar there is a stone statue of Antony Wingfield who is said to have kissed his girlfriend when she had smallpox and died from that.

There are four choir stalls. On the two front ones there are carved statues. There is a lion, eagle, angel and a bull. These represent Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

On the right there is a pulpit which used to have a sounding board over it but it was removed and made into a table in 1842. On the opposite side stands a beautiful pipe organ which was given by the people of the village and was dedicated by the bishop. Mr. Cooper was the organist and played for fifty years and is now buried in the churchyard near the main gate. At the back of the church is the font which together with the pulpit are the oldest things in the church.

Mrs. Spall now plays the organ and has done so for a long time. Her husband used to be the school headmaster. He is now buried in the churchyard by the church near where he used to sit in the choir. There are eight rose trees which have been planted in remembrance of him.

I can see the church from my bedroom window and I often think it looks dignified and welcoming.

\* \* \*

Gary Hannon said that his grandfather was once a pupil at Stonham Aspall School. In those days the cane was used a great deal, and Gary's grandfather remembers putting a book inside his trousers to soften the blows. He left school at twelve years of age and then he worked at some stables.

\* \* \*

Beyond Suzanne's house on the other side of the road lives Barry Gardiner. To look at his modern house the traveller could not guess that it had the interesting past which Barry described:



Our house 'Wesleyan' used to be a chapel. The chapel was built in about 1860. I do not know who built it. The chapel was a Methodist chapel. The owner, before my father bought it was the Methodist Trust.

My father was the man who converted it into a house. He knocked down the little cottage next door to the chapel and that is now part of the garden. He took the roof off the chapel first by throwing the tiles to the ground. Then he knocked the walls down. There were some wooden frames in it, so we knocked these down as well.

My house is now a pink one. It is made out of bricks and stone. There are eight rooms in it. The beam which used to go through the chapel goes through our house. My parents, my brother and I live in the house. We have still got the

bricks and wood and window frames from the old chapel.

\* \* \*

The traveller should now turn round and head for Stonham and Little Stonham. On the way out of Stonham Aspal he will pass a group of modern homes which were built on the site of a Roman villa.

#### STONHAM AND STONHAM PARVA

The traveller now reaches the main Ipswich to Norwich road and opposite him he will see the ruins of Stonham Maltings described by Judith Woollard:

Stonham Maltings was built about 1880 but now it has been destroyed by demolition and fire. The maltings was built for processing barley into malt.

The large building was three hundred feet long by ninety feet wide and it was made from bricks. It had a double span roof which was made from slate tiles. To keep the floors up were iron girders and iron pillars. The water tank was joined on to the large building and held twenty-five to thirty thousand gallons of water which was pumped directly from an underground borehole.

At one end it had eight large barley storage bins with a cistern on the ground floor. There was the ground floor and two other floors and the grain store was built above the other floors. There were three large kilns for drying and there were six fires to dry the malt and on the other end were malt storage bins.

There was a smaller building with a single span roof which was slate and the building was made from bricks and the floor supports were made from

old ships' timbers. There were storage bins and a cistern beneath and there were four floors. On the side of the maltings were two large fires with one large kiln and malt storage bins.

The process for the barley was three days in soak in the cistern and then it was spread on the floor to grow for ten days and then dried off on the kilns and then became malt. Each process involved fifty tons of barley.

In 1963 an experiment with chemicals involved was tested and this reduced floor growing time to four days. This was later banned by the government because it could have been a health hazard.

The malt was used by breweries all over England and some was exported to other countries. When the maltings was opened thirty men were needed to do the processes but after it was modernised eight men could do the same job. The maltings was then closed in 1970 and re-opened in 1972 as a mill and grain store.

The smaller building has been partly demolished and the large building was partly burnt down. It caught fire on 10th November, 1973 about tea-time. There were two turn-table fire engines plus ten other fire engines and a fire service rescue vehicle. People were evacuated because of the sparks and a wall which was moving slightly. Firemen said if it had fallen down the house next door and the 'Brewers' Arms' would have been burnt down as well. The walls kept the fire from spreading but one of the fire engines had to come back three times because people saw smoke coming from the middle of the maltings.

It is now a burnt out shell. Iron is crippled and twisted and the wood that is left is useless. It is flooded and heaps of burnt barley are mixed with bricks and rubble on the ground floor. It is dangerous because the maltings is next to the road and if you walk on the path you see that the water trough is joined on by burnt wood. Danger signs have been written on the walls.

\* \* \*

Janet Robinson lives at 'The Brewers' Arms' beside the maltings and she told us:

Locally our pub is called 'The Tap' and the explanation given me by an old man was that when the maltings were first opened the workers had to collect all their water from 'The Brewers' Arms'.

\* \* \*

Judith Woollard who lives on Angel Hill to the left of the cross roads told us:

Our hill has taken its name from a public house called 'The Angel' which was once my great grandfather's farm house and bakery. The brick oven can still be seen and there are two stone lions lying down near the front door. 'The Angel' is now a private house.

By turning right on the main road towards Norwich the traveller will reach Stonham Parva.

Allen Rooke wrote:

Stonham Parva is half on the main Norwich to Ipswich road and half down a lane called Church Lane. Travelling from my house towards Ipswich you will pass the pub called the 'Magpie' which has a sign that stretches right across the road.

There used to be a lot of pubs with signs that extended across roads, but one of them fell over killing some people, so in 1817 a law was passed saying that all the unsafe signs were to be taken down. They were dismantled and burned. That left only the light weight signs standing like the 'Magpie' sign. The 'Magpie' used to be a coaching inn and some of the rooms do not have any windows. They were the rooms in which the servants slept. Some of the windows were bricked up when the tax on windows was introduced.

Often seen in the pub is a man called Ted Brown who is a very good darts player. He is a farm worker and does not like taking holidays. He won the News of the World darts championship once, but as the first prize is a holiday he does not really want to win.

\* \* \*

Half-way through the village a lane to the left leads past the school to the church. Just before the church are Mill Cottages behind which is the ruin of a windmill. The last sail of this mill blew down in 1909. At the end of the lane stands the church. Michael Smith told us an unusual story about a quarrel between a vicar and his choirmaster:

Our village church is about 600 years old and it is 70 feet tall. About a hundred years ago there was a vicar who forbade people to sing in the church.

One day the choirmaster gathered his choir together and they went up in the balcony. When the vicar came in they all started singing. The vicar was so angry that he prosecuted the choirmaster for a breach of the peace.

Just recently a film was made at our church about what happened one hundred years ago when the vicar caused trouble for the choirmaster.

Children from the primary school in our village took part in the film and we are looking forward to seeing the film when it is shown

\* \* \*



When the traveller returns to the main road and turns left he will find Stonham Parva Baptist Chapel described for us by Sheena Woollard:

The chapel which I am writing about is a solemn stone colour on the outside with blue doors and window frames. As you go through the gates on one side you will see several laurel bushes. In front of the chapel is a car park. The chapel is not very attractive from the outside, but once you get inside you can see how warm and welcoming it is.

There are three rows of seats with the pulpit straight in front of them. Beside the door are some stairs to more seats. On each side of the chapel are two newly installed heaters. The chapel has recently been decorated and new carpets have been put down and new curtains of velvet have been hung round the pulpit.

The land on which the chapel was constructed cost eight pounds and there is about a quarter to half an acre of land. There are two vestries and there were sixteen original trustees. The first baptismal service appears to have been on 27th May, 1822 when three people were baptised.

The only records the chapel has go back to 1861. The older records must have been destroyed. There are now roughly twenty-eight chapel members. The first Women's Meeting started in 1951. I like the chapel as I used to go to Sunday School there each Sunday when I was little.

\* \* \*

#### W E T H E R I N G S E T T

Very close to Wetheringsett is Mendlesham Airfield with its Second World War memories. Beverley Stannard reminded us of those days when she wrote:

During the last war Wetheringsett played a very important part in the air defence because not more than half a mile away from our house is Mendlesham Aerodrome.

In 1940 a man from the Air Ministry arrived in Wetheringsett to survey the land to see if it was suitable for an aerodrome. The people in the village thought he was a German spy because he lived all alone in a rented cottage and he wore a white mac. In those days any stranger who came to the village and wore a white mac was suspected of being a spy. After he had been in Wetheringsett for a time, the villagers forgot about him and not long after that they found out that he was from the Air Ministry and some workmen would soon be coming to start building the aerodrome.

In 1942 the aerodrome had been completed. It had three main runways in the form of a triangle with perimeters which are lanes where the aeroplanes are taken when they land so they can be reloaded with bombs till they are wanted.

The first aeroplanes to fly in were the Spitfires. They were followed by Fortresses and then the Liberators. The main sort of aircraft were the Liberators. My father lived in a house alongside the aerodrome. He was about twelve at the time and he can remember getting up in the morning to watch the first squadron go out. He would count how many there were and then wait for them to return about twelve o'clock to see how many came back.





He got up one morning and counted thirty planes as they went out. When twelve o'clock arrived only four of them returned and with these four came a German fighter. As the four planes came down to land the German fighter opened fire and damaged all the planes. Before anyone could stop him the German fighter got away.

My father told me how sometimes the under carriage would not open as the plane came down to land and so they had to land on the plane's belly. My father said they were very lucky if the plane did not burst into flames. He also told me about an incident where this occurred.

One night he was woken up by the sound of shouting and crying. He opened his window to see what was happening and there up in the sky was a plane with both engines on fire and the under carriage was stuck. The pilot must have told the rest of the crew to jump out of the plane and he would stay to try and land it himself because two or three parachutes were floating to the ground. As the plane came in to land, my father saw that one of the crew when he jumped had got his parachute caught and he was shouting and screaming because as the plane came down to land he was between the plane and the ground. Both the pilot and man were killed because the plane blew up as it reached the ground.

However, all this happened thirty years ago and I am glad I was not around at that time.

Now the aerodrome is still there and the runways are rugged and stony. The areas in between the runways are used for growing different crops. The only aeroplanes that use the aerodrome now are the spray plane and two privately owned planes but that is much better than the aeroplanes that were used as war weapons.

\* \* \*

A right turn off the Norwich Road and a left turn at the War Memorial will take the traveller to the attractive village of Wetheringsett. Dominating the skyline for miles around is the Mendlesham television mast. Beverley Stannard has written a poem about the mast.

From miles around you can see it looming  
The Iron Giant of Mendlesham.  
At night you see its red eyes piercing  
the blackness of the sky.  
There it stands, cold and grey, balancing  
on a silver ball.  
To us its just a tall mast - something that's  
always there.  
But to strangers or passers by its the Iron  
Giant of the sky.

Colin Pittock who lives in Wetheringsett told us about his father's interesting hobby, which has a link with local history:

My father has a collection of about four hundred old bottles of different shapes and sizes. Many have names of firms on them. Some have come from Ipswich, Bury St. Edmunds and Stowmarket and most of them were bought in the villages and towns around Debenham.

My father has about thirty 'alley' bottles which are the ones with the marbles in the neck. My dad thinks that the bottles must have cost more to make than the drinks inside them.

In his collection my father also has small and large Victorian ink bottles most of which have sheared lips. The people who made these bottles did not know how to finish the top part of the neck so they broke it off as straight as they could. The glass is very thin and very sharp at the top.

One of my father's bottles was dated by the museum 1785 and my father was told it was used for feeding medicine to cattle.

There are also fifty ginger beer bottles in the collection. Some of these are hand-glazed and therefore very old. Some of the large bottles would have been used by the farm workers to carry their beer or other drink into the harvest field. The bottles would have been carried in wicker baskets. When a man wanted a drink he would put the big bottle on his arm and place his finger through the hole in the handle on the neck of the bottle. He would then be able to drink.

Some of my father's most valuable bottles are the fire bottles. These are small blue bottles and in Victorian times people thought that if they threw the bottle in the heart of the fire it would put the fire out. As the idea did not work, few bottles were made and those which are found today are very rare. Books say there are only twelve registered in this country.



Possibly some of Mr. Pittock's bottles may have been passed over the bar of the old 'Griffin' public house, now no longer in use. Wendy Noon told us that the 'Griffin' had the reputation for being a meeting place of highwaymen. Yvonne Nunn added that Wetheringsett Manor is now an hotel and Debra Jackaman wrote:

Prior to the 1914-18 war, flower shows with sports were held in the manor grounds and these were most popular. My grandfather used to work on a farm near the manor. He used to get up at 5 o'clock in the morning and he finished work at 6 o'clock at night. He used to earn 28 shillings for a seven day week and he looked after nine cart horses that used to eat mixed hay and clover.

\* \* \*

In the centre of Wetheringsett is the most beautiful scene of all the villages in the area we have described and is perhaps one of the prettiest spots in all England. A number of thatched cottages, including the Post Office, huddle around the magnificent 14th century church. Sally Maguire wrote of the church:

There are two ways to get into the churchyard. You can get in through a little gate or you can go over a bridge. The bridge is rather old and some of the planks on it are loose. The little stream that the bridge is built over goes half way round the churchyard. On the outside of the door there are two stone lions, one on either side.

The church has only one stained glass window which casts a green light over the chancel. The Bible on the lectern is very old and some parts of it are torn.

The organ was given to the church, by the rector in memory of his youngest son, Francis John Moore. He died September 7th, 1856. The first rector was Philip De Eye in 1229. Since then there have been 40 rectors. The present one is George Malcolm.

The font was installed in memory of Mabel May Ribbons who died on 21st September, 1959.

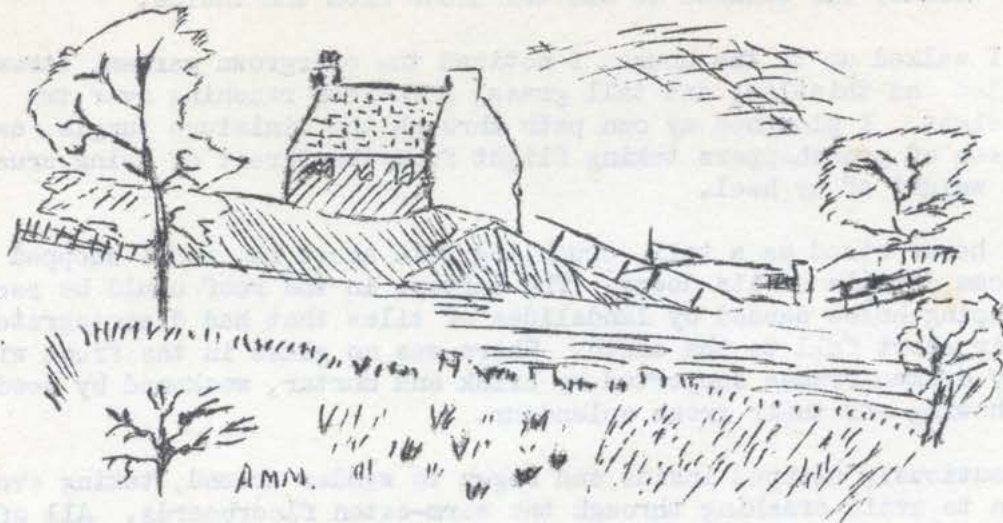
On the north wall of the church hangs a copy of a plaque, dated 1715, giving details of bequests to the poor of the parish. John Sheppard left money for an annual dinner to be given to twenty poor people. It was to be served in the steeple and arrangements were made to pay the cook, the bellringers and the rector for saying prayers.

\* \* \*

Jonathan Seaman told us an unusual story about a former 'rector' of Wetheringsett:

George Ellis, an ambitious young man, managed to obtain a certificate that gained him the rich living of Wetheringsett. He married the patron's daughter and the village looked upon him as their rector from 1883 to 1888. During this time he conducted many marriage services. When his fraud was discovered, he was condemned to penal servitude, and an Act of Parliament was necessary to make legal the marriages he had conducted. On the list of rectors hanging in the church, there is a vacant space for those years.

\* \* \*



Debra Jackaman told us that another former rector of Wetheringsett was Richard Hakluyt whose books about the voyages of English sailors and explorers won him great fame. Richard Hakluyt is buried in Westminster Abbey.

\* \* \*

Beside the church is a white thatched house where Jonathan and Rachel Seaman live. In front of their house is the beginning of a narrow path that leads to the Carnser which Rachel enjoys exploring. She wrote:

The carnser is not a building but is a beautiful area of country land. There is a small river which goes right the way through the carnser which has fields and lush green woods on either side.

The carnser starts as just a small path which does not get larger but has a wood one side and several more paths. This place is only small. There is a meadow that fences off the side of the wood. But soon we are out of this and there is still a woody bit which carries on, but gets slightly narrower as you go. There is a field now where the rectory was further back. The stream trickles slowly along. The path also carries on, but close to the meadow now.

The wood has ended and so has the meadow and we walk on to a plank which is over a ditch and crosses into the true carnser, which has many paths, fields and woods and each promises a different adventure.

We go along the first path which follows the stream. Here is the first bridge and there is the first wood. This is the time to go through that wood as pretty yellow primroses peep out from behind the trees and cowslips hang their delicate heads. Daffodils stand straight and smart, tall as soldiers but with their elegant heads bobbing now and then as the wind blows a gentle spring air which is warm and soothing.

We do not cross the bridge as we hurry back because sudden clouds are coming across the sky. We then cross the plank. The rain holds off no longer and it sweeps down. The day is no longer bright and sunny and rain water swells the once gentle stream.

\* \* \*

William Maguire also likes exploring the lanes of Wetheringsett and he wrote about a discovery that he made one day:

Along a small, winding lane near our cottage, is an old derelict house. I decided one weekend to see the house from the inside.

As I walked up to the house, I noticed the overgrown garden, strewn with nettles and thistles, and tall grass, sometimes reaching over two feet in height. I ploughed my own path through the miniature jungle, catching glimpses of grasshoppers taking flight from the threat of being crushed under the weight of my heel.

The house stood as a tall, crumbling ruin above me, and I stopped to take in some details of its decay. The rafters in the roof could be seen through gaping holes caused by landslides of tiles that had disintegrated after their short fall to the earth. There was no glass in the front windows, only broken frames supported by brick and mortar, weakened by weeds and ivy showing off their green splendour.

I cautiously stepped inside and began to wander around, taking every precaution to avoid crashing through the worm-eaten floorboards. All of the walls were showing strips of thin wood behind plaster that tended to be turning to dust through age. The supporting ceiling beams had been riddled with woodworm, giving the effect of dartholes of some previous match. The stairs were warped under the constant use of bygone years. They led up to the landing and to the doorways of the bedrooms, empty and damp.

The floors were covered with bird droppings, which piled up under the nests, a percentage of which were covered by old brown leaves scattered by the wind into the house for shelter.

The house will probably be pulled down soon, but it could make a splendid property if it were restored.

\* \* \*

#### HERITAGE YEAR

##### A WARNING

Through the towns and country  
The maniac runs;  
They call it PROGRESS,  
Progress - It's murder!  
Don't stand still,  
You'll get swept under,  
Under the carpet with everything slow.

They had the time  
Those people before us.  
The craftsmen who sweated and toiled and tried.  
They took a pride in their carvings  
And wouldn't stop until free of doubt  
That this one was better than ever before,  
And no man could better it, ever.

If this maniac keeps on running  
We'll not be able to see,  
For there are so many towers,  
Silhouettes against the sky.  
We need our old buildings  
To remind us of time;  
Time - a long forgotten word!

Tina Clarke