

SOUTH ELMHAM AND DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

NEWSLETTER

Issue No. 25

September 2010



**THE VILLAGE POST OFFICE AND THIMBLE COTTAGE AT ST. MARGARET
SOUTH ELMHAM 1901**

Chairman's Notes

I recently had the privilege of being Lesley Dolphin's "Sofa Guest" on B.B.C. Radio Suffolk. Each day Lesley has a guest to chat with, she interviews them about their lives and what they do. I was asked to come into the studio in Ipswich on the afternoon of the 21st July at 2.30 to talk about ...well me! That sounds as if I'm important which of course I'm not, but as Lesley said to me afterwards what I had to say was very interesting for her and her listeners. I had to send in a brief autobiography beforehand so she knew what questions to ask, but I had no prior knowledge of what she might be asking therefore making the interview hopefully spontaneous and natural.

We talked about my life, Hulver Farm, its history and how I came to be here, the growing of wheat straw for thatching houses and a little bit about the various camps and events that take place on the farm.

Over a period of forty minutes between news, music, traffic reports and coverage of a major fire at Chelmondiston, I sat with my cup of coffee on the little sofa thoroughly enjoying myself.

So, why am I telling you this? Well it occurred to me that this is oral history, although achieved in a popular way on the radio, my voice has been recorded for posterity, and I have a copy of it on C.D. to prove it. Last year The History Group put in an application for an "Awards For All" National Lottery grant to purchase recording equipment and other useful items for us to use. But with the closing of that particular scheme there was a rush of applications for the last month that it was running, and we were therefore unlucky. Committee member Tim Maycock was advised that we should reapply under the new Lottery Grant Scheme. We have had some excellent advice from Mr Nick Patrick from Rumburgh who works in radio and has a keen interest in oral history as well. He has offered to provide training in the use of the equipment and also in interview technique.

We all know people who ought to be recorded and, should we get it, the equipment will be available for all members to use.

One person whose memories perhaps ought to have been recorded was the late Audrey McLaughlin. She will be remembered as a keen historian who did so much for the History Group. Her main task recently was publicity, writing a piece for the Halesworth Community News, and creating and distributing posters around the towns and villages advertising History Group events. Big shoes to fill indeed but fill them we must. The committee is now looking to co-opt a new member, if anyone is interested please let either me or Caroline know.

There are three excellent speakers coming up, Dr Lucy Marten in September talking about Norfolk and Suffolk in the 9th and 10th centuries. October's meeting will have Mel Spurling telling us about Henham Hall and Lady Stradbroke in W.W.I., with the welcome return of Stuart Bowell with his talk on East Anglian Brick Buildings in November.

Paul Watkin.

Editorial

The sudden loss of Audrey McLaughlin in July came as a shock especially to those of us working with her on transcribing the inventories of South Elmham. We have subsequently agreed to continue this work and produce a booklet of them with an index of the many personal names and artefacts which we hope would be of help to those interested in the people of South Elmham and their personal possessions. Caroline Cardwell has written an appreciation of Audrey, and Audrey herself wrote a book review of *The River Waveney its Navigation and Watermills*, both are in this issue.

In May we lost another local historian Judith Middleton-Stewart. Two years ago she spoke to us about ‘Screen painting in Medieval Norfolk Churches’ (See Issue 18 page 8 for a review of that talk) I have reviewed her life and her book in this issue.

The history of two very different houses is included in this issue. Middleton Hall is just 250 metres outside the boundary of South Elmham, in Mendham. Here is the remnant of a very ancient and grand house with equally grand and interesting residents. The present owner, Michael Allen, has kindly given us an extract from his book on its history. The other house, Saint Margaret’s old Post Office is much smaller and has far fewer written records to assist in writing its history, yet Bernard Duffield has made a bold attempt to interpret its development over the past 400 years. Only those who have tried to do it have an idea of how much work this involves.

This year I am hoping to produce a calendar for 2011 with contemporary pictures of South Elmham taking advantage of the very reasonable offer by Micropress to print them. They would sell for £5 and would be two sheets of A4 spiral bound for each month with the picture in the upper sheet and the calendar below. We would make a cautious run of 100. A modest return on each copy would help boost funds for paying our speakers.

Our January social lunch has not yet been organised, the venue and date will be circulated later.

Basil Harrold

An Appreciation of Audrey McLaughlin

It is difficult to believe that our friend and colleague Audrey is no longer with us. Her death in early July, after a very short illness, was a great shock to us all.

Her funeral was held at South Elmham St. Margaret and she is buried in the churchyard there in a place and a village that she had come to love so much. She told me that she had always been so happy with all her friends there and had found great company and shared interests with all the History Group.

Her contribution to the life of the Group was considerable; she organised an Inventories Study Session once a month, guiding the novice researchers through all the complexities of the scripts and archaic terms and yet managing to make the inventories come alive. She had also started an enormous project – transcribing and translating the South Elmham manorial court rolls; it was her great delight to settle down with a battered roll and work hard at deciphering what was often a very damaged text, photographing and working it all out to put on the computer. Her experience of medieval documents had been gained when she lived at Walsham-le-Willows and, working with Stanley West, published Towards a Landscape History of Walsham le Willows in 1998, in the East Anglian Archaeology series. However her help for the History Group was extremely practical, from sorting out the publicity and putting up programme information in all the local villages to co-ordinating our day school, the course run with SLHC and many other events.

On a personal note I will miss her considerable knowledge, her acerbic wit in debate and argument, her endless fascination with the medieval world and her generosity in sharing her researches and discoveries. She was a good companion on walks round the South Elmhams, when her knowledge of wild flowers and birds added to our pleasure and great company on days out. Something of her spirit will join the thousands of people who have lived and worked on the Bishop of Norwich’s manor of Elmham, and with whom she had such affinity.

Caroline Cardwell.

Middleton Hall

700 years of history, but who was its greatest builder?

This old property overlooks the Sconch Beck in the Waveney valley, and has done so for around 700 years. According to Blomefield's 'History of Norfolk' (1741), Bishop William de Middleton of Norwich (1278-1288) 'raised the family of the Middletons, lords of the manor of Middleton Hall in Mendham, Suffolk'. We have found no direct evidence that he did so, but one of the Bishop's palaces was just across the fields from Mendham at nearby St Cross South Elmham. Clearly, it would be quite likely that any gift of land from the Bishop to his lay relatives would be near or part of one of his domains. Thus in 1289, the year after the bishop's death, a meadow of Richard de Middleton is referred to in a feoffment, or grant of freehold property, given in Homersfield. The location described appears to be part of the land subsequently documented as being within the farm boundary of Middleton Hall. Middleton Hall is situated at the extreme limit of Mendham Parish where it borders Homersfield, but its historical lands were in Homersfield and St Cross as well as Mendham.

The Middleton era lasted until 1504, and we have discovered around 60 14th, 15th, and 16th century documents including wills, inquisitions post mortem, feoffments and quitclaims from which to piece together the more than 200 years of the Middletons. Some of them are in sharp relief, some less so since there were many Williams, reflecting their eminent predecessor, and several Richards.

Residence as distinct from ownership in Mendham started from 1343. The Middletons obviously built at Mendham. It is also likely that the Middleton family dwelling was somewhere on the present site throughout the time they lived in Mendham. We are sure this was the case for the later Middletons.

The Middleton era ended in 1504 with the death of Thomas Middleton just 2 years after the death of his father Robert. Thomas died childless and intestate, but under Robert's will the property passed to Cecily, Robert's wife and the mother of Thomas. Unfortunately, today there is left no part of Meddyltons (Middleton Hall) that was the dwelling place of the Middletons.

Cecily died in 1509, and there is evidence that before her death she had sold Middleton Hall to Thomas, Earl of Surrey, son of the Duke of Norfolk. There is no doubt that he owned Middleton Hall as 3rd Duke of Norfolk, although he never lived in the place, but his mistress, Elizabeth Holland did live there. It was Elizabeth who built the oldest part of the present Hall.

The story of Bess Holland is as colourful as any in the reign of Henry VIII, during which the 3rd Duke of Norfolk was the most significant English nobleman for the best part of 25 years. Bess was the daughter of Thomas Holland of Swineshead, Lincolnshire. Her brother George was secretary to the Duke of Norfolk, and she too worked at the Duke's Kenninghall palace looking after the children. The Duchess of Norfolk and the Duke had fallen out and the Duke banished his wife to Hertfordshire in 1534. Bess was installed as mistress of Kenninghall, and the Duchess wrote to Thomas Cromwell saying Bess was but 'a washer of my nursery for 8 years', and claiming 'he keepeth that harlot Bess Holland'. In fact Bess was one of Anne Boleyn's ladies in 1533, and after her death her brother Thomas Holland was her heir with a right to her lands in 'England, Wales, Calais and the Marches'. So she was a well connected young lady of considerable substance.

The house that Bess built.

Bess is first recorded at Mendham in 1544 when she was granted fishing rights in the river Waveney. They ran from Blake Pool (Bungay) to Homersfield bordering Limborne common on the way. Limborne had long been farmed by the Middletons.

Mendham had been chosen as her retreat since the Duke had land there to gift, and it was within easy travelling distance of Kenninghall. Elizabeth had built her house in Mendham before 1546 as we know from events following The Duke's fall from grace in 1546 (he was incarcerated by Henry VIII and then condemned to death). On December 14th 1546, the king's officers arrived early at Kenninghall and demanded to see the Duchess of Richmond (the Duke's daughter) and Elizabeth Holland who were only just risen. They confiscated Elizabeth's jewels and dispatched trusty servants to all the Duke's other houses in Norfolk and Suffolk, *'not forgetting Elizabeth Holland's house, newly made, in Suffolk, which is thought to be well furnished'*. Later documents make clear this house was Myddletons, and the reference 'new' identifies Elizabeth as the builder.

The Duke escaped with his life because of the death of Henry VIII on the eve before the day appointed for the Duke's execution. But he remained in the tower, and Bess obviously saw no point in waiting for him, so she married Henry Reppes at Mendham. As part of the marriage she gifted to him an equal share of Middleton Hall. Soon afterwards she was pregnant, but both she and the child died during childbirth in 1548, and there is a graphic, contemporary record of the caesarean operation she underwent. Thus the short, eventful life of Bess Holland came to a tragic end. There were no direct descendants, but her bequest to posterity was a well documented insight into life at the time, and a well-preserved Tudor House.

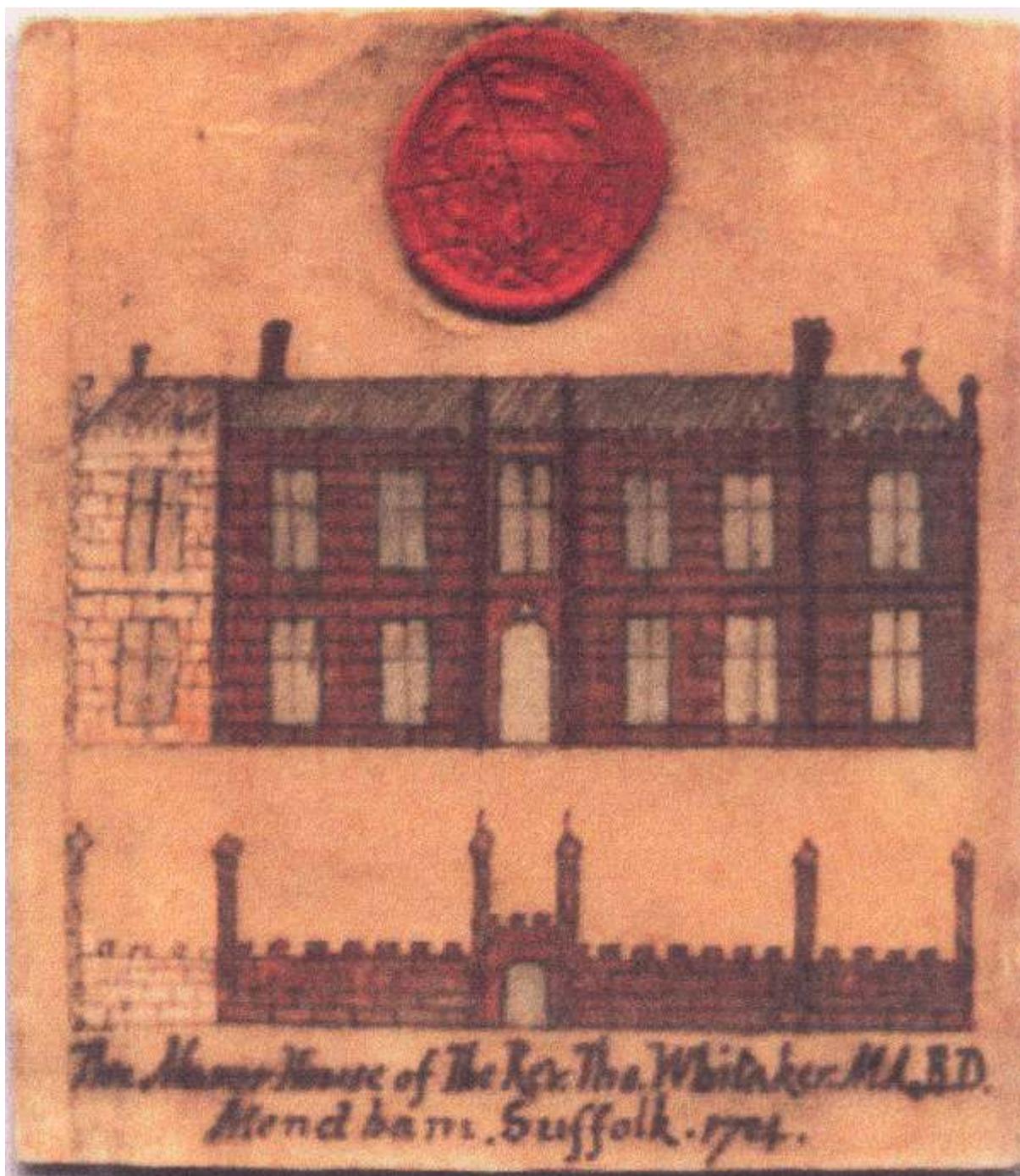
What exactly Bess had built is impossible to say, but it was clearly much more



extensive than the North/South wing of the present Hall which is all of it that is left standing today. (See photograph) This North/South wing has been expertly confirmed as mid 16th century.

Geophysical survey and an archaeological dig has confirmed the foundations of the house shown in the picture below dated 1724, which is also depicted on an estate map of Middleton Hall a few years before that. One can see that the 'lost' mansion is very different to the North-South wing, and the experts say that stylistically it is probably late 16th or early 17th century brick cladding over an earlier timber-framed house. This because the foundations they excavated were rubble and (Tudor) brick fragments, suggesting foundations intended for timber-framed walls rather than brick. It is thus likely that

the timber-framed building (*newly built*) was erected by Bess Holland.



This is the 'lost mansion' from the papers of the Whittaker family

Sir Henry Woodehouse was Bess' rival as builder.

After the death of his wife Bess Holland, Henry Reppes married again before 1551, this time to Anne Wooton. Anne was the widow of Thomas Woodehouse, and a considerable heiress in her own right. Anne moved into Middleton Hall, and when Henry Reppes died in 1558, she was left Middleton Hall for her lifetime.

Later in 1558 Anne then married her third husband, Bassingbourn Gawdy from the distinguished legal family of Gawdy Hall at nearby Redenhall. They lived both at Middleton Hall and Berdwell Hall, West Harling, Anne's main property. But she was apparently fondest of Middleton Hall.

When Anne Gawdy died in 1587, her life tenancy of Middleton Hall ceased, and the Gawdys moved to Berdwell Hall which they had inherited from Anne. Then Henry Reppes' will came into force, and through a tangled skein Middleton Hall passed to Sir Henry Woodehouse, whose mother had been Anne Reppes, Henry Reppes' sister.

Sir Henry was a widower; his first wife, a Bacon, had died in 1585, and sometime after this he married Cecily Gresham. She was probably the inspiration of the building work Sir Henry undertook, which was considerable. She may even have contributed to the financing of it, coming from the wealthy Gresham family.

At least two major construction projects are dated from this period. The first is the present east-west four bay Tudor range, containing the present buttery and dining room. It is built at right angles to the present north-south wing. The dining room/great parlour has a magnificent decorated plaster ceiling with the Gresham grasshopper emblem an integral part of the design. In the centre were the arms of Woodehouse impaling Gresham. The ceiling is dated about 1595. At around the same time, according to Phillip Aitkens, the east garden wall was built. It still stands today and is notable for the oblong recesses incorporated in it for straw beehives or skeps.

The second major construction project around this time was the brick cladding of the 'lost' mansion and associated work to the half-timbered west wall of the north-south wing. Still remaining is the west facing south end wall which has an intricate diaper pattern, and at its south-western corner a diagonal buttress finished with the stub of a circular pinnacle. This is remarkably similar to the pinnacles shown in the picture of the lost mansion. In turn the pinnacles pictures are almost the same as those that can be seen today on the wall enclosing Waxham Hall, the ancestral seat of the Woodehouses. Clearly memories of home inspired Sir Henry!

Conclusions.

It is difficult to judge between Bess Holland and Sir Henry Woodehouse as the greatest builder of Middleton Hall. There is enough uncertainty surrounding the 'lost' mansion and the scope of original Bess Holland house to make an honourable draw the best conclusion unless and until further knowledge or data become available. If you have such knowledge or come across any in your researches, please do share it with the author of this article.

Michael Allen, July 2010

The Old Post Office St Margaret South Elmham

By Bernard Duffield



St Margaret's post office and Thimble Cottage in 1901

This article is principally about *The Old Post Office*, but is also seen in the context of *Thimble Cottage* next door, since their construction was at the same time. I have not had access to *Thimble Cottage* either, and in any case it has been altered extensively in the late 20th century by builders with little sympathy for the structure.

Construction date

The Old Post Office and *Thimble Cottage* were built at the same time as one structure c1650 and although no records survive, it is possible that they were once a single property. (See later) It has original oak timber framing and joints, and because of this is listed Grade 2.

Construction

It appears that *The Old Post Office* had just two ground floor rooms with bedrooms above in the eaves.

In size, the original property was quite small being just 7.9 metres (26 feet) by 4.8 metres (15 feet 9 inches), and probably one of the smallest dwellings in St Margaret. On the tithe map of 1838 it was the only building (along with *Thimble Cottage*) to have just a yard recorded, rather than gardens like other properties. The structure is recorded as two properties at that date. There is a substantial garden in front now, but this was probably originally nearly all common land, which ran all along the street and was opportunely added to the properties later in the 19th century. Within the frame structure the original door at the front was probably where the middle front window is now, which was previously a door in the 19th century. (See *photograph*) The back door may have been where the present gap in the sole plate is, between the present dining and sitting rooms. There are no traces of original windows. It is not known if the dormer was an original feature, nor whether the roof was thatched or tiled.

Although the building dates from around 1650, many of the oak timbers are reused from earlier buildings, such as the heavy floor beams running front to back, with mortices for

joists being sawn down the middle and turned 90°, to serve a similar function in this smaller property. The mortices are about six and a half by one and a half and 4 inches deep. The marks of the one inch auger, used to rough out the mortices can be seen in some of the empty cavities. The peg holes to secure the tenons are about three quarters of an inch in diameter. There is a massive 9" by 9" chamfered beam running the depth of the original house, carrying the main weight of the house), parallel to those beams. At some point there was failure (a collapse or subsidence) in the framing at the front as the beam is eight inches lower at that end.

The sole plate on which the house was built, is still obvious at the rear of the house, with traces elsewhere and up to ten inches wide. The only original framing remaining at the front elevation is in front of the chimney. There are still the four original oak roof trusses spaced about five feet apart and about five inches by four and a half in section.

The chimney is probably original with the construction, although dating of the bricks has not taken place as they are under a render and externally there is later Victorian era repair. At its base the chimney opening is seven feet six inches wide, and was obviously used for cooking as well as heating. The hearth goes back three feet and the width of the chimney stack as it appears at the eaves is just fifty inches, so the bulk of it is within *The Old Post Office*. If the structure was originally two households, of similar dimensions, why was the chimney not equally shared? The grate in *Thimble Cottage* is small and could hardly have been used for cooking. This puts the weight in favour of one dwelling originally. To further support this proposition, the alcoves either side of the chimney, on both the ground floor and upstairs, go back 6 feet, well into *Thimble Cottage*, which is termed "flying freehold". There is no evidence that it was ever a baffle entry building. The beams in front of the chimney are original and there is no trace of a door as the framing is undisturbed. At about a spade's depth, the subsoil is solid clay, so the pond out the back of the property was probably dug for clay to fill in between the timbers. I have also found traces of horsehair and dung within the fillings.

For the next 250 years, we know nothing of its development, but by the early 20th century there was a single storey pantiled extension to the left, the shop, the original ground plan remained the same. (See photograph, dated in the first few years of the 20th century) In the photograph the barn like building to the left of the extension appears to have been around for some time, so it is likely that the shop extension had also been built many years prior to the turn of the century.



The timbers and part of the fireplace in the main room of the Old Post Office

The property was extended to the left using bricks made at the St Cross brick works, some time after 1901. (Changes made to the gable in 2006, revealed more St. Cross bricks.)

A chimney was put in to the rear of the building which contained a range and a bread oven to the right. The house was extended with the addition of two rooms at the rear, though whether it was done at the same time as the chimney, or some time previously is not clear. The bricks of the chimney are the same St Cross product, dating it to the same expansion and also to the rear of the building.

There was further extension to the back of the house in 1993. The back wall was pushed out by a few feet, which can be seen by the change in the angle of the gable and the shallower angle of the pantiles.

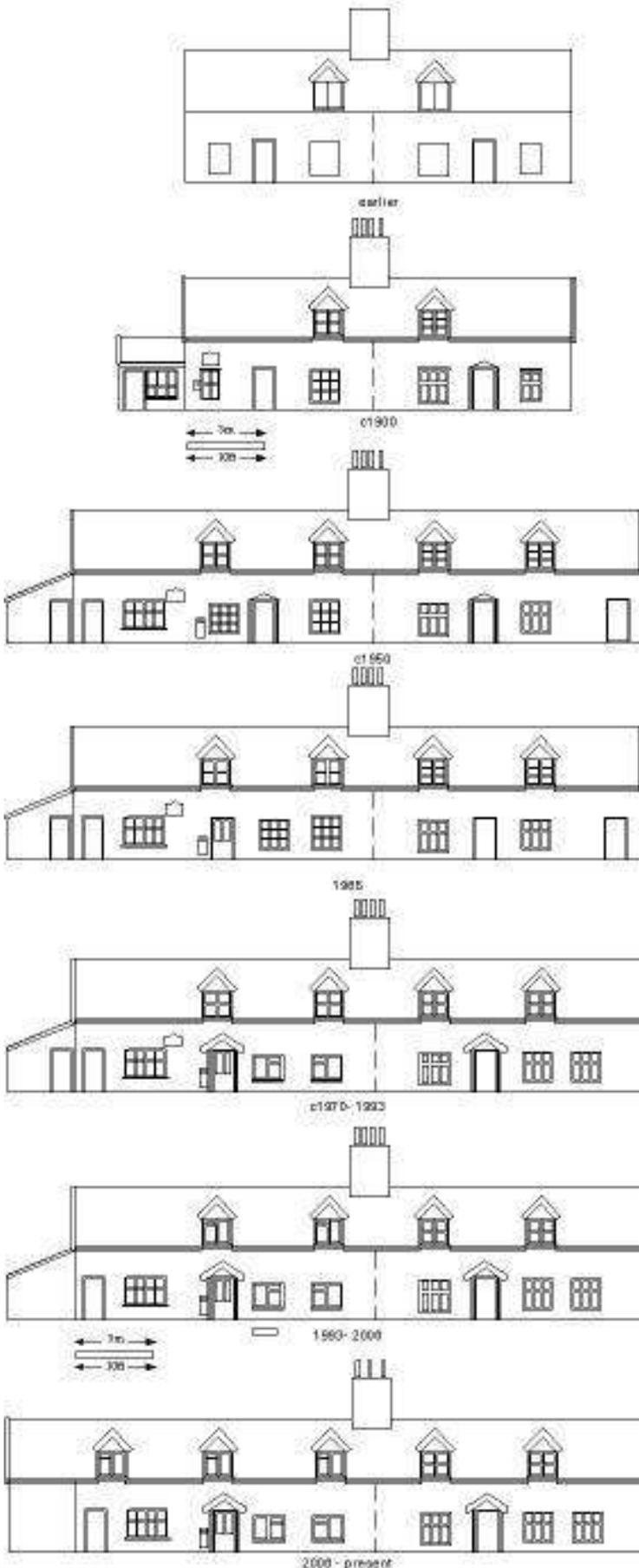
In 2006 the left hand bedroom was extended over the single storey warehouse. In 2009 the final extension was completed where the kitchen / utility gable was extended flush with the rest of the gable. This enabled the remodelling of the kitchen and utility and an ensuite to the downstairs bedroom which occupies the former warehouse.

In its time as a post office, there were three different post boxes, the small Victorian one (*in Photograph*), a GR one which lasted well into the fifties and the EIIR which is still with us today.

Earliest references to the property along with *Thimble Cottage* show it was part of the Adair estate at Flixton and today is Number 36, the 36th house on their books. It was sold in 1926 to private owners.

The front elevation

The original dimensions are known but other development is not known until we get to the turn of the 20th century photograph. The doorway and window to its right have been swapped over since the 1901 photograph. Upstairs we do not know if there was a dormer but it seems likely that there were some windows to let light into the rooms.



At first glance some of the profiles appear similar but there are small changes in window formats gathered from photographs. The front door and window in *The Old Post Office* were reversed and the porch or lack of it also changed.

The records of the occupants

I'm sure their fascinating story will appear before too long, written by Sue Glazer.



The Old Post Office and Thimble Cottage as they are today

Occasional Papers

Finds and oddities that could be disregarded.

Gardiners Farm

Viewing a farm that was deserted and empty, with a most interesting granary arrangement in the upper storey of the house, I found in the dairy [or buttery] whitewashed, brick floored and bare, a little red notebook hanging on a nail. With a string through the corner, it had been left by whoever cleared the house. On the outside in black letters was MILK ONLY – the first page written in pencil starts at 30th January 1938 – 2 pts 6d and continues through Feb to April, the milk selling at 3d a pint, all carefully added up to 8s. Then there is a gap [for the war?] and the next entries are 10 years later – 1948. Labelled Hostel, the milk record continues from July through August, milk apparently at 2 ½ d a pint. The following pages branch out – 2 pheasants and two hares came to £2. 4s in January 1949, and the hen pheasant was sold for 12s the week before to “Edwards”. A further gap takes the accounts to October 1948 when the list is much more detailed, including all sorts of household items – 50 eggs and waterglass [for preserving], 1 cwt of Kositos [flaked maize] 1 new doormat at 18s and 1 second hand one at 10s, and an egg crock. New furniture included 1 occasional square table at £1.2s.6d, a fancy tablecloth 12s 11d, and a table centre 2s, a kitchen chair, table and chest of drawers. There is the distinct impression of setting up or improving the house and far and away the most expensive luxury a Cossor wireless £11. 11s, the list ends with two Tilley table lamps costing £2.12s.6d [no electricity]

Moving to November 1948 there is a list of heifer calves bought at an average of £5.11.6d each, with their names – Polly, Sally, Blackie Tip tail, Rushie and Darkie – were they extending the dairy herd in those days with the Milk Marketing Board and profit in milk for many a small farm.

After this there is one undated week when the groceries and housekeeping bills come to £1.7s.1d and include meat, sugar, pork for brawn, papers, bananas and oranges, tomatoes and mutton. Following this burst of organisation, the entries fade altogether except for a note on an otherwise blank page – Daisy Monday owe 2s.4½ d; Mon 4hrs, dripping 3d – Wed named, has no entry. And there it all finishes!

The farm was Gardiners Farm at – well I had better not say – but I go past it occasionally and see it all modernised, altered, shaved, mown and overtidy. I forgot to say that whoever lived there had been a great gardener, there were lovely flowers and roses, and I imagined her as a young woman with her calves, and new furnished kitchen listening to the wireless and planning ahead. This little booklet gives a brief snapshot of life on this farm, nothing is important and it could all so easily have been lost. It is a kind of oral history and a tiny detail that might be useful to an historian in the future. The accident of survival led me to take the little red notebook off the nail in the dairy where it had hung for perhaps 50 years and hang it on a nail in my kitchen.

Caroline Cardwell

Judith Middleton-Stewart

1934-May 2010

We all had a taste of the enthusiasm of Judith Middleton-Stewart in February 2008 when she came to talk to us about screen paintings in medieval Norfolk Churches. This was something that I expect she would never have dreamt of doing as a young woman training as a physiotherapist at St. Thomas's Hospital in London. She later went to Southern Rhodesia where she became well known as a radio presenter, also becoming a hospital superintendent. On her return to England she began a new career by studying the history of art at the UEA, her Doctorate later being published as *'Inward Purity and Outward Splendour, Death and Remembrance in the Deanery of Dunwich, Suffolk, 1370-1547.'* (See review on page 14) Another work due for publication this year concerns the medieval documents of Mildenhall.

Born into a religious Welsh family she had been church warden at Spexhall where, with her ability as pianist and cellist, she also played the organ. She was editor of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History Newsletter and served on the Institutes council for many years. Her dynamism enabled her to combine all this with bringing up her family and running a guest house where she was also able to show her ability as a cook.

We have lost a woman of great talent and charm, and an enthusiast for local history. The great church at Blythburgh, that she loved so much, was filled with her admirers at her Requiem Mass on the 3rd of June.

B.P.H

Book Reviews

The River Waveney – Its Navigation and Watermills

By Douglas Pluck

(Published 1994 by Morrow & Co., Bungay ISBN 0 948903 13 9)

This book contains a description and history of all the watermills on the Waveney from its source at Redgrave/Lopham Fen to its outlet at Great Yarmouth. Descriptions include the type of mill such as undershot, overshot or breastshot and mill parts including smutters (machines for removing dirt from wheat) and temise (a sieve used to produce fine flour). The latter is pronounced Thames; the saying "you will never set the Thames on fire" refers to the sieve not the river and indicates that the person doing the sieving is shaking it too slowly. Fire plays a large part in the history of mills; most were built of wood, fire was a constant hazard and, together with insolvency, the cause of the end of most. The author begins the history of each mill with its mention in the Domesday Survey and appearance on the Suffolk maps of Kirby 1736, Bowen 1760, Faden and Hodkinson 1783 and Bryant 1824/5. There are a few references from the Middle Ages – in 1264 the rights of a watermill at Flixton were granted to the Priory there. In 1399 the miller was John Skillely who was imprisoned in the monastery of Langley 'for his wickedness of eating flesh on Fridays'.

Of most interest to me were the chapters on Homersfield and Limbourne. The latter still survives and can be reached by walking along the Angles Way footpath through woodland full of moschatel in the spring and over the meadows. I have just one reference to Limbourne in a manorial court roll of 1351 when pigs and geese were put on the fen by people who had no right of common so it obviously did not belong to South Elmham manor. I now know it belonged to Bungay Priory.

Early references mention two mills but this probably implies two sets of stones in one building rather than two mill buildings. It is possible that one set of stones was used for the fulling of cloth (shrinking and dressing woven cloth). In 1767 the mill was advertised for sale as a bunching-mill for hemp (beating the hemp to separate the fibres). It is now a Listed Building Grade II.

A mill was recorded in Domesday at Humbresfelda (Homersfield) and is shown on early Suffolk maps. It belonged to the Bishop of Norwich as part of his manor of South Elmham and is mentioned in the manorial accounts where details of costs of its upkeep are recorded. The mill was leased out but repairs were undertaken by the manor. These included new stones bought at Yarmouth and transported by river to Beccles, new iron spindles and the hire of a carpenter making a wooden mallet on the fulling-mill. Much of the work on the wheel required the damming and draining of the mill stream – no easy task in the 14th century. The mill stream itself was leased out; it was a valuable source of fish, particularly of eels. Apparently the Waveney was renowned for silver eel and during the 20th century as many as half a ton in weight were caught in one year and sold to London hotels and restaurants. Operations at Homersfield did not cease due to fire but because the river bank broke at the weir. In the early 1920s the miller opened the sluice gate to let the water onto the wheel and nothing happened. The water had disappeared from the mill race due to a breach in the river bank and was never repaired. Demolition of the mill building followed soon afterwards.

The author, Douglas Pluck, is a Suffolk man. A chartered surveyor he retired in 1983. He is a life member of the Wind and Watermill section of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings and served on the committee for nine years. He is also a member of the International Molinological Society and the Association for Industrial Archaeology.

Audrey McLaughlin

Shock!

The Black Dog of Bungay

By Dr. David Waldron and Christopher Reeve

Hidden Publishing 2010 (ISBN978-0-9555237-7-9) £9.99

Near the beginning of this book we are told that the Black Dog of Bungay was a myth generated by a Londoner called Abraham Fleming. He had neither been to Bungay nor Blythburgh, but nevertheless wrote a pamphlet called *A Straunge and Terrible Wunder* within a month of the event. In this he described how on August 4th 1577, during a thunder storm of unusual ferocity, a black dog ran down the aisle of the parish church in Bungay *it passed between two persons, as they were kneeling upon their knees, and occupied in prayer as it seemed, wrung the necks of them both at one instant clene backwards in somuch that even at a moment where they kneeled they straungely dyed. This is a wonderful example of God's wrath.....* Further into the pamphlet is this *on the selfsame day in like manner, into the parish church of another town called Blibery..... the like thing entered, in the same shape and similitude, where placing himself upon a maine balke or beam, whereon sometime the Rood did stand, sodainely he gave a swinge through the Church, and there also, as before, slew two men and a lad, and burned the hand of another person.....* Earlier in the pamphlet he gives us his true message *But wee will not be warned, wee will tumble still upon the bedde of wantonnesse. And drink ourselves drunck with the wine of sensualitie, that while wee lye wallowing in the sink of our Sodomitical sinne wee may bee consumed with a Sodomitical or a Babylonicall destruction.*

None of the local accounts, and there are several of them, mention a black dog but all attest to a terrible storm. In Bungay two men in the church belfry were killed, and in Blythburgh a man of forty and a boy of fifteen died. That is all, and you may ask why write a book about it?

Most of the book concerns itself with the origins of Black Dog stories in European mythology and the psychological effects of the turbulence of religious changes of the 16th century. The final chapters are about the making of 'Old Bungay', an aim to regenerate Bungay after the great depression of the early 1930's by rekindling pride in Bungay's colourful history. This was successfully initiated by the town's GP, Dr. Cane.

B.P.H.

Inward Purity and Outward Splendour

Death and Remembrance in the Deanery of Dunwich, Suffolk 1370-1547

By Judith Middleton-Stewart

Boydell Press The centre of East Anglian Studies 2001 ISBN 0 85115 820 X

The title of this book comes from the writing of Abbot Suger of St. Denis (c.1130 AD). He was arguing for the importance of homage through outward ornament. There was a great flowering of late Medieval Church ornament in England, and Judith Middleton-Stewart's interest in this shines through her writing as she describes the heritage of the old Dunwich Deanery. Our local history is here brought to us by meticulous study and brilliant interpretation of medieval documents, art, and architecture.

By dealing with The Deanery of Dunwich it confines itself to the Blything Hundred which includes Rumburgh but of course not South Elmham. Like Eamon Duffy's book 'The Stripping of The Altars' she illustrates history by quoting personal bequests and inventories. Rumburgh Priory inventories reveal the special affection of the Benedictine monks there for the seventh century Saint Bee. There was a silver light which hung before her image, and she had two black velvet tunics and some jet beads. Rumburgh was one of only two Saxon priories in Suffolk. (The other was at Bury St. Edmunds)

There were 1960 registered wills in the Deanery of which 445 were made by women (16%). These women were mostly widows; wives needed permission from their husbands to make a will. Forty six pages are devoted to wills and testators. Henry Everard from Linstead was obviously a man of property owning land in three parishes, but his will of 1465 paid out a total of £1-7s-8d. It is likely (because of what appeared in the son's will later) that Henry had an agreement with his son to give him his property before he died, provided the son paid a priest to pray for his father's soul for fifteen years. As we have found in South Elmham the names of priests frequently appear among executors, supervisors, and witnesses, and may also have been the scribes.

Of the Churches in the Deanery of Dunwich only Blythburgh has extensive records of its early appearance. Hamlet Watling made watercolour paintings of the stained glass in the 1840's before much of it had been blown out. It is a pity that there are so few illustrations in a book so dedicated to church art; only two of these meticulous paintings are included.

There is so much written detail it is difficult to give an overall review. Fonts, memorial brasses, gravestones, lights, lamps, images, chantries, parish gilds, and obits; all this and much more are discussed. For anyone interested in the late medieval church of East Suffolk this book is a must. It is the product of an orderly and brilliant investigative mind.

B.P.H.

End Piece

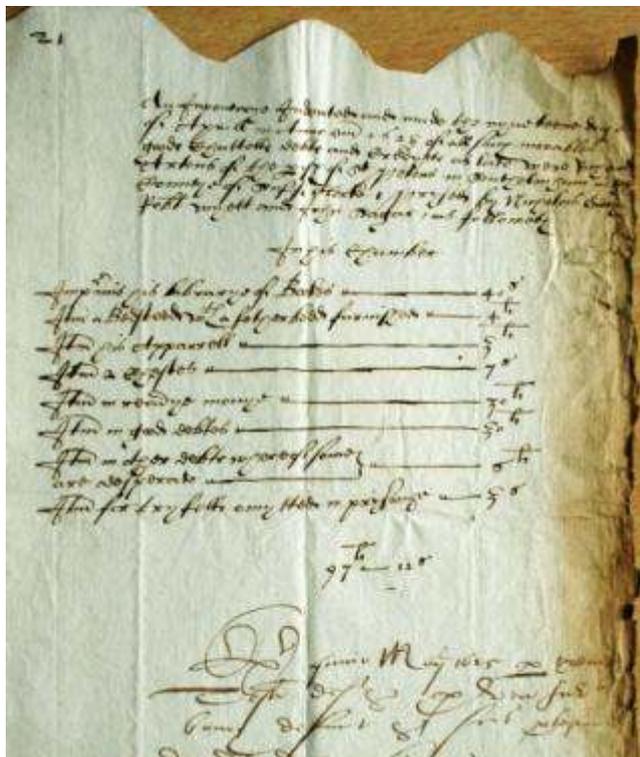
PAPER MAKING

Who made the paper for the South Elmham inventories? They are hand written on 16th and 17th century paper which, for the most part, remains in excellent condition. Some sheets are indentured, or cut from a copy by a wavy line to prove their identity, some retain the original rough margins of the paper making process, and some appear to have been crumpled up without serious damage to the paper. The poor quality of the photocopies produced in the Record Office make some of them very difficult to read, and this has encouraged us to take our own photographs of them. Handling their soft flexible paper has kindled an interest in the history of its manufacture.

The technique of paper making first developed 2000 years ago in China. It penetrated slowly Westward via Samarkand, Baghdad, Damascus, Cairo, Fez, finally reaching 'Europe' at Xativa in Moorish Spain in 1151 AD.¹ The first Chinese paper was made by macerating plant fibre and suspending this in clean water. A paper mould, made from a bamboo frame with a sheet of woven fabric stretched across it, was then lifted up through the watery suspension to collect a layer of fibres. The mould was then put out in the sun to dry, and when dry the sheet of paper was removed from the mould ready for use. Other materials such as fine bamboo strips held together with horse hair have been developed to form the mould cover, and of course these have left their mark on the paper produced. By the time the Moors were making paper in Spain it is likely that wire replaced natural fibres in the moulds. The number of these wires per inch can be counted by examining paper; that from the Gutenberg Bible (1450) was 28.

The first mill in England was John Tate's mill in Hertford established in 1496, this had 32 wires per inch. The raw material for this paper was rags, and the rag trade was viciously competitive and to start with dominated by the French. Paper making, perhaps for this reason, was initially hesitant, but by the seventeenth century there was a big expansion in paper mills in England. By 1700 there were 116 mostly but not exclusively in the South East. Our nearest mills were Dernford, Cambridge from 1664 and Taverham on the Wensum (5 miles NW of Norwich) from 1701. Perhaps the finest paper was made at Whatman's Turkey Mill at Maidstone in Kent from the mid 18th century to the present day. They now lead the world in producing specialist papers for electrophoresis of proteins including DNA.² There have been eighteen mills on the Waveney but only one produced paper. This was at Bungay Staithe, and it produced white paper between 1780's and 1864 when it was burnt down.³

The paper used for our inventories may therefore have been imported from France. In this view I hope that somebody may prove me wrong.



The inventory of Richard Arton of St. Peter South Elmham dated 1625. The indenture and original paper edge are clearly shown

1. Papermaking. David Hunter Pleiades Books 1947 Chapter IV
2. Paper Making in the British Isles. Alfred Shorter. David and Charles 1971 pages 15-16
3. The River Waveney Its Navigation and Watermills. D. Pluck. Morrow & Co. 1994 page 137