

THE OLD COTTAGES AND FARM-HOUSES OF SUFFOLK.

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INTRODUCTION.

The preservation of rural England is a subject uppermost in the minds of most of our Members and of Archæologists in general all over the country, but in spite of this great concern for the English countryside much is going on to destroy its rural beauty.

The object of this article is to draw special attention to the destruction and bad restoration of many fine old cottages and farm-houses in Suffolk and also to point out that in spite of this sad state of affairs what a splendid heritage even now still exists in East Anglia.

There is probably nothing that strikes the observant traveller more than the homeliness and charming simplicity of the many types of fine old cottages and farm-houses that he sees nestling in the villages and hamlets up and down the county. They certainly do not stand out so majestically as the fine old parish churches, nor do they take such an important place as the halls and other country seats that nearly every village possesses, but they have an individuality of their own and appear to be a natural part of the landscape. Their charm is no doubt due to the fact that nothing but local materials were used in the olden days, as transport was then very difficult. It is through easy transport that many of our fine old villages have been spoilt, cheap bricks having been carried to a district where nothing but stone buildings previously existed and the introduction of slates and modern patent tiles to places where thatch and local hand-made tiles were the only roofing materials.

Some of the worst crimes committed on our old cottages are the stripping of thatched roofs and the placing of corrugated iron direct on to the rafters with an external coat of red paint in a very poor effort to give a distant effect of tiles. Another very bad practice is the application of dark painted strips on externally plastered buildings, which have been previously covered with a light colour, in an effort to imitate half timber work, this creates an utter sham, and worst of all it is generally done by a person who has no knowledge of half timber work, thus giving a wrong impression altogether. Many fine old Tudor chimney stacks have been allowed to fall to pieces with decay through lack of pointing and have often been restored with modern bricks and chimney pots. These practices are by no means confined to Suffolk. The author of this article has travelled all over the country and seen the same kind of things going on in many counties.

It is only necessary to take a twenty mile trip from Ipswich to Scole, just over the Norfolk border, in order to see examples of such bad work. To mention but one example of cottages formerly thatched. The village of Yaxley has been absolutely spoilt by several cottages which have roofs now covered with corrugated iron which has been painted a hideous red. A cottage on the east side of the road near Broome has had some dark strips painted on it in imitation of half timber work.

There are several architectural points to be considered in the design of our old cottages and farm-houses, and if these were more carefully studied and practised in the design of modern buildings, better results would follow and we should be saved from many modern monstrosities. It should, however, be pointed out that all qualified modern architects, given the proper facilities by their clients, do their utmost to design new rural buildings in keeping with their surroundings. We archæologists are often asked why we lay such stress upon the beauty of such humble dwellings and buildings as cottages and farm-premises. Part of the answer has already been given in pointing out that only local materials were used in the olden days, but there are the architectural points to be considered such as the higher pitch of the roofs in the old work compared with the new and a greater projection of the eaves, which gives a deeper and darker shadow in the sunlight. The lowness of pitch and the skimpiness of eaves' projection are two of the biggest eyesores in modern buildings. The proportion of window space to wall space is another consideration. The modern craze for more sunlight in the homes has been overdone with the result that window space has been equal to or larger than wall space, which gives a very ugly external appearance. The economy in modern houses which demands short chimney stacks, has resulted in a twofold failure, not only do they look bad externally, but their lack of height often encourages draughts, and to cure this, large ugly pots and revolving cowls are added to these squat stacks and ugliness is thus increased.

Several ancient dovecots still remain adjacent to various halls and farm-houses in the county, and Georgian shop fronts are still to be seen in many of the large villages and small country towns of the county; some of the former are fast falling into decay and several of the latter have had their small picturesque panes taken out, their bars destroyed and one large sheet of plate glass inserted, which completely spoils their quaintness. These interesting survivals of former days will be dealt with under separate headings later on in this article.

BRICKWORK.

Brick has been one of the most extensively used materials for the building of the old cottages and farm-houses of Suffolk. As far as the buildings we have in mind are concerned, the history of brickwork dates from about the commencement of the 15th century, as prior to that date there were no bricks used from the Roman period till they were reintroduced by the Flemish weavers and those who came over with them. There are one or two examples of pre-15th century bricks,

the most important being at Little Wenham Hall, where they are creamy-grey in colour and said to date back to the second half of the 13th century.

Bricks vary a great deal in size, shape and colour and the oldest bricks—15th century—are generally found to be about two inches thick and nine inches long. They are generally dark red colour and of rather a rough texture, being hand-made their richness of colour helps them to contrast well with the greenery of the countryside.

Bricks, as is well known, are made of clay, or brick earth, as it is sometimes called, dug out of the earth and allowed to weather, afterwards moulded into shapes and then baked in a kiln or clamp. There are many suitable brick earths in Suffolk and good bricks are still made in several districts.

Brick earth, besides containing sand and clay, has many minor ingredients, the most important being oxide of iron and lime; these are both the chief binding and colouring agents of bricks, and it requires a maximum amount of oxide of iron to produce a dark rich red. Where lime predominates in the earth a white brick is produced. There are all shades between these two extremes, the four most prominent colours being red, pink, yellow and white, or dull grey white, to which they soon weather, and any length of time fails to give them a pleasing appearance. The yellow bricks, on the other hand, weather very well and are to be seen to their best advantage in parishes where the chalk ridge of West Suffolk gives way to the Fen country, as at Brandon, Lakenheath and Mildenhall, in the north-west corner of the county.

During the 18th century larger bricks began to be used, and as they increased in size their pleasing appearance decreased. This increase was caused by the brick tax, which was introduced in 1784, and bricks were then made up to three inches thick. This increase is often helpful in ascertaining the date of a building.

There are numerous examples of cottages and farm-houses in Suffolk with fine brickwork, but it is impossible in an article of this limited length to give more than a few of these, and for this reason many fine examples are left unnoted, not because they are of insufficient importance.

Most of the early brick dwellings in Suffolk are quite plain in appearance and depend for ornamentation mainly on their gables and chimney stacks. The gables are often finished off at the top of their slopes with just plain brick on edge with a projecting course immediately beneath; these gables are slightly less in pitch than the actual roof of the building. The brick gables usually project slightly at the eaves and are corbelled down the face of the front and back walls respectively.

There are many fine moulded brick chimney stacks to be seen and to point out a few examples the two stacks to the farm-house to the south-east of the church at Letheringham, near Framlingham, are outstanding examples; these, however, are said to have been practically rebuilt, but are faithful reproductions of the originals. Another example of three octagonal clustered chimney stacks is to be seen to

the gable of Thorpe Hall Farm at Hoxne, near Eye, and another fine example is to be seen at a farm-house at Naughton, near Needham Market, where there are four octagonal shafts joined at their caps and bases. A large chimney of Tudor bricks is to be seen at Syleham, near Harleston, but the main walls of this house are of stud and plaster. Another farm in the same village, called Monks' Hall Farm, has a moulded brick chimney stack of Elizabethan date and a crow-stepped gable at the south end of the west wing, which is early Jacobean. At High House Farm at Otley, some seven or eight miles north of Ipswich, there is a fine six shafted chimney stack, this farm is in rather a remote part adjoining a by-road leading to Monewden and quite close to the boundary between Otley and Clopton. Rockylls Hall Farm at Shelland, near Stowmarket, has good brick chimney stacks.

As mentioned previously, a gable is often corbelled out at the base of its slope; sometimes the corbelling is as much as six inches, and then it often forms the base for a finial or ball ornament, in most of which cases the same kind of ornament crowns the apex of the gable. A number of gables are often found curved, some with double curves, and these can generally be put down to Dutch influence.

Other ornamentations of brickwork consist of brick panelling between windows by slightly projecting portions of the brickwork. In some Georgian examples we find pilasters and projecting brick pillars from the walls with moulded bases and plinths below and architrave, frieze and cornice above, these being carried out in the various Orders of architecture, such as the Doric, Ionic, Corinthian and Composite, but this kind of treatment is chiefly confined to town houses and the larger halls, though examples are to be found in rural districts.

In houses of the Jacobean period moulded brick pediments are often come across, and examples exist of these plastered over and marked out to look like stonework, this is one of the very few shams in old work, and can generally be put down as somewhat later than the original brickwork.

In the earliest brick buildings the bonding of the bricks was more varied than at the present day and the general Flemish bond consisting of alternate headers and stretchers in the same course of present day solid brick walls was not always used. The old English bond consisting of alternate courses of headers and stretchers was often used and patterns made with light red stretchers and dark colour headers, some almost black, occur in many farm-houses and premises.

Many brick cottages and farm-houses have their roofs covered with plain tiles, these are usually about $10\frac{1}{2}$ ins. long by $6\frac{1}{2}$ ins. wide and about $\frac{1}{2}$ in. thick and are either provided with nibs (two slight projections on the underside at the top), so as to hang on laths, or else have two holes at the top for pegs or nails; these plain tiles are slightly bent longitudinally and being hand made they give a good rough texture to the roof which helps to harbour mosses and lichens. Plain tiles are sometimes used in mouldings to brick chimney stacks and doorways and help to form the fillits to them. Plain tiles are sometimes bedded flat between courses of brickwork for ornament and they are most suitable for the small roofs of dormer windows.

Pantiles are of Dutch origin and are made of baked clay, the same material as ordinary tiles. A pantile is both concave and convex in shape, and an Act of Parliament passed in 1722 fixed their minimum dimensions at $13\frac{1}{2}$ ins. by $9\frac{1}{2}$ ins. by half an inch thick. They are regarded in some parts of England as being inferior, but this is by no means the case as, when they are well bedded on reeds in good hair mortar, they will last a very long time and keep a building quite water-tight. They are made in the same colours as ordinary tiles, and modern ones are sometimes made covered with a black glaze and others with a dull black smut colour. Both plain and pantiles were made in the old days of the same or similar colours to bricks, and yellow ones, which are very uncommon, are to be seen in the north-west corner of the county. In many Cambridgeshire villages they are quite common.

In considering roof coverings, thatch might be noted here, it is of two kinds, reed thatch, which is mainly confined to the Broads district of north-east Suffolk, and straw thatch which is found all over the county, the former kind is always used for churches, as it has a much longer life, and is even now imported into counties all over the country where reeds are not grown. Roofs covered with this material need a certain amount of attention from time to time, and as thatching is a special trade many minor buildings are neglected, with the result that the thatch is stripped off and in cases where tiling is too great an expense we have the terrible result of corrugated iron covering them, as pointed out earlier on in this article.

All the various features of brickwork, mentioned above, help to give a very dignified appearance to the various buildings and show that no pains were spared in the early days to finish off satisfactorily a work once begun. There was none of that haste and desire to scamp details that has so often been prevalent since the commencement of the present century. Even the humblest cottage is a witness to careful workmanship, and shows that care and trouble have been taken in executing the smallest detail.

Bricks are often used in conjunction with other materials, especially flint work where they are used to straighten up the corners or quoins, as they are called, and also for the arches and jambs to the doors and windows. The bases of half-timber buildings and those of clay lump are often of brick and bricks are often used at the top of flint gables and for horizontal courses running through flint work.

A number of Jacobean and Georgian farm-houses have built-in gardens surrounded with high brick walls, these are usually erected with what is known as garden wall bond, which consists of three courses of stretchers and one of headers. These walls are sometimes finished off at the top with a tile or even a thatched coping.

FLINT WORK.

Flint is possibly the oldest building material in Suffolk, and pits were dug for mining flint in pre-historic times. Coming to historic times, pits or mines are known to have existed in the north-west part of the

county around Brandon, over two thousand years ago. There are still a few men engaged at the present day in the flint mining industry, and several of them can trace their descent back five hundred years.

The tools used in flint mining are few; they are the pick, shovel, crowbar and bucket. They dig down into the ground until they come to the flints, which are generally about thirty feet below the surface; they then branch out in all directions and form steps and landings in the chalky ground by which they descend and ascend, and the chalk and flints removed are brought to the surface in buckets which are small enough to be carried on the head. This primitive method of mining is still used at the present day. They do not go further down than fifty feet as water is generally found at that level and means of pumping it out have not yet been resorted to. It is to be hoped that something in this way will be done before long as the best flints lie in the water. Four layers or "seases" of flints are found. They are known respectively as the "topstone," "wallstone," "upper crust" and "floorstone." Flint in the water at the bottom of the pits is known as the "blackstone." The bottoms of the shafts are worked by candlelight, the candles being fixed in pieces of chalk.

The great importance of the flint industry in the olden days was not so much due to the demand for building materials as for flint implements and later for gun flints, which were made by men known as "knappers." Small quantities of these gun flints are still exported to certain tribes in Africa, as damp renders gun-caps unreliable.

The greatest demand, as far as buildings are concerned, has been for flints for church work, and often cut flints have been required for facing work, whole and broken flint rubble being generally used for cottages and farm-houses and in the inner parts of church walls, which are generally two or three feet thick, while towers are often five or six feet thick at the base. Thus it will be realized that an enormous quantity of flints have been used in the past, especially during the 14th and 15th centuries, when church building was at its height in East Anglia.

In the best class of work the black inner face of the cut flint is placed on the outer face of the wall, and sometimes forms flush panels with the brickwork or stonework. Some flints are not so black in section as others, they sometimes appear quite a light grey.

There are many examples of farm-houses and cottages in and around Brandon, Mildenhall and Lakenheath, and further afield towards Bury St. Edmunds several good examples can be seen.

In other parts of the county flints with outside surfaces of a golden red can be seen, these are obtained from gravel pits, and the presence of oxide of iron is the reason for their colouring. Examples of this kind can be seen at Flempton and Hengrave, near Bury St. Edmunds.

There is another variety of flint much smaller in size, which is generally found on the seashore or on the surface of land near the coast; these are generally only two or three inches in diameter and are mostly used whole as rubble. Examples of cottages and other buildings built

of these flints can be seen in and near Kessingland, Southwold, Dunwich and Aldeburgh. Some flint buildings have small flint chips inserted in their mortar joints, this is known as "galleting," or "garreting" work, and was done partly for strengthening purposes and partly as a method of decoration, the flint chips were inserted in the mortar before it had properly set.

Whole flints are known locally as "cobble stones," or "kidney cobbles," these names were generally applied to flints when used for paving streets and pathways. Examples of these can still be seen in some of the small country towns. Occasionally we meet with cut flint paving, used for churchyard paths, these are sometimes interlaced with courses of bricks.

CLAY LUMP.

Clay Lump has been in use in Suffolk for the last three hundred years at least, and is still sometimes used at the present day, though the surface finish is generally different. Cement rendering is now used instead of the old process of an outer coat of clay slurry topped with tar, sanded and colour washed.

Suffolk possesses some of the most suitable clay for the making of the lumps, and the best districts are the northern part of the county to the south of Diss and in the Eye, Debenham and Framlingham districts. The clay is first dug near the site where the building is to be erected and spread out in a layer about a foot thick. Stones larger than a walnut are removed. The clay is then watered, and short straw or grass is spread over it and trodden in by a horse, the straw being used as a binding agent. The clay having been thus prepared is then put into wood moulds or frames, and the block thus formed is generally eighteen inches long by nine inches wide by six inches deep. The blocks are formed on level ground and left where made for three or four days, when they are generally sufficiently dry to be turned up on end and wheeled on a barrow to a platform where they are left to dry out. This generally takes a month or two, according to the season of the year. Sometimes the clay is raised in winter for use the following spring.

In the old days the clay lumps were always built on a plinth of brick-work or flint-work, the lumps being set in clay mortar and finished with an outer coat of clay slurry, topped with tar, then sanded and coloured, sometimes pink and sometimes cream or white, even brighter colours are used, such as lavender, orange or red, but these colours soon get dirty and require to be redone almost annually to look decent at all. The number of coats of colour wash in time becomes very thick and clay lump buildings often appear plastered, and it is often very difficult to distinguish them from half-timber or brick buildings which have been rendered over with plaster, and mistakes are often made.

It is absolutely essential that the outer surface of the clay walls be kept waterproof, because as soon as any water gets through, the clay disintegrates and falls to pieces like wet sand, on the other hand if

they are kept dry they will last for two or three hundred years. In exposed districts clay lump buildings are generally left tarred, but this finish is nearly always confined to barns and other farm premises. Lumps of clay can often be found in stud and plaster walls and quite a number of buildings are of this composite construction. Thatched roofs are most suitable for clay lump buildings as their widely projecting eaves help in protecting the walls.

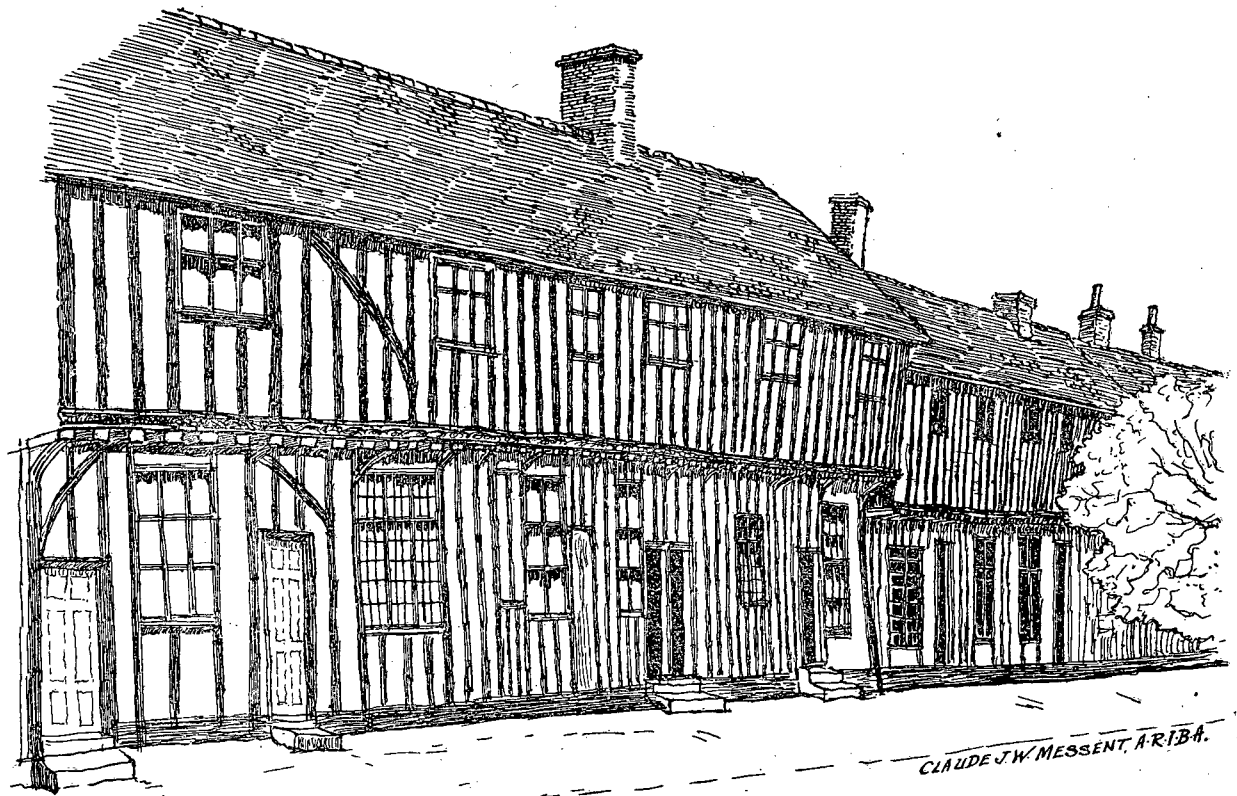
HALF-TIMBER WORK AND WEATHERBOARDING.

In the Middle Ages Suffolk did not possess such large forests as Essex, Kent, Surrey, Sussex, Cheshire, Lancashire and Herefordshire, but timber was more plentiful than in Norfolk. Consequently there are not so many half-timber buildings as in those other counties, but it is richer in them than Norfolk, and there are quite a fair number of examples still to be found, which show that the craftsmen who built them were quite up to the standard of other counties.

These half-timber buildings were generally built on a dwarf wall of brickwork or flint-work, which formed the base and so prevented the timber-work from coming into direct contact with the damp earth. The timber-work commenced with a large oak sill laid directly on the brick base; vertical posts were tenoned into this oak sill; the upper ends of the posts were fixed into a horizontal head-piece which supported the storey above, the latter often projecting in front of the storey beneath. The next floor was constructed in a similar manner, the whole forming a wood frame or cage skilfully tenoned and pinned together.

The spaces between the vertical posts were sometimes filled with brickwork, the latter occasionally being laid diagonally left and right, when they are known as "herring-bone work." Sometimes the spaces between the posts were filled with mortar made of clay which was stuck on to vertical hazel sticks which had been previously laced horizontally with straw or tar-line; this work is locally termed "rizzes." Each of these forms of infilling between the vertical timber-work had its disadvantages. In the case of brickwork it is impossible to bond the bricks to the vertical timbers, and in the case of clay mortar a shrinkage occurs in setting, causing a small space to be left between the infilling and the timber studs. In order to overcome the draughtiness and damp caused by these fissures, the exterior of many half-timber buildings have been completely rendered over. It has become the fashion in recent years to strip the plaster off half-timber buildings which have been rendered and to fill up any fissures with cement.

There are several interesting old cottages and farm-houses of half-timber construction still remaining in Suffolk, well-known examples are to be seen at Lavenham and Long Melford. Perhaps the most interesting row of old cottages with all timbers exposed is to be seen in the street leading to the Church at Bildeston, and shown in Illustration No. 1 to this article. An example of a large house can be seen in a three-storey house at Grundisburgh, near Woodbridge, which has been well restored and has its two upper storeys projecting out one



No. 1. HALF-TIMBER HOUSES AT BILDDESTON.

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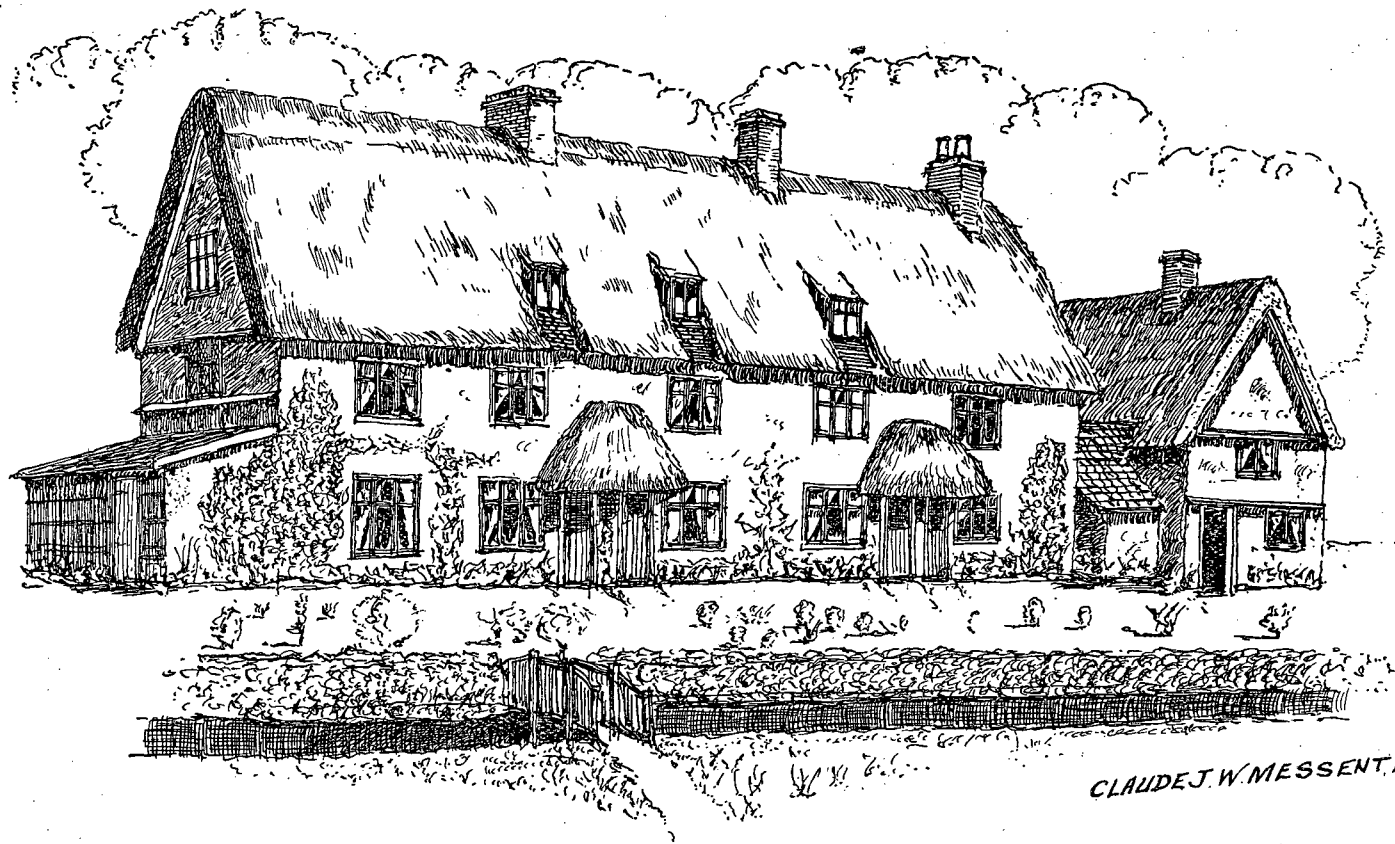
beyond the other. A very interesting farm-house is to be seen in Street Farm, at Dennington, near Framlingham, where only part of the timbers are exposed. At Blythburgh, near Southwold, there is a fine half-timber house, which has been rather modernised, but well restored, it has a good thatched roof of the original pitch, and its west gable is weatherboarded. The weather-boarding of timber-framed buildings is mostly confined to Essex and Kent, but a few examples exist in Suffolk, especially near the Essex border, an example of cottages finished off in this manner can be seen on the right hand side of the main road from Ipswich to Felixstowe, near Trimley. A good example in the centre of the county can be seen at Bacton, near Stowmarket. A fine half-timber gable can be seen to a house on the main road from Ipswich to Great Yarmouth at Ufford, near Woodbridge. In a more rural setting there is a fine half-timber gable to a farm-house at Barnham, in the northern part of the county a few miles south of Thetford.

The number of timber framed buildings rendered over externally is very large, some of them, as mentioned previously have lumps of clay in their walls. There is a very fine example of this type to be seen in a row of three-storey cottages at Worlingworth, near Eye, these are known as "The Guildhall." They form an exceedingly charming group set in truly rural surroundings, as shown in Illustration No. 2 to this article, the high pitched roof, which is covered with thatch and has three dormer windows, helps much to give quite a dignified finish to the row, and the smaller dwelling in the extreme right helps to complete the picture. A good example of more humble dwellings is to be seen in the pair of thatched cottages at Lidgate Road at Dalham, shown in Illustration No. 3. This pair is typical of many in rural Suffolk. Imagine what it would look like if its thatch was stripped off to the rafters and flat sheets of corrugated iron put on! or the same thing done to the previous example illustrated at Worlingworth. Such crimes should not be permitted if Rural England is to be saved, and such should be the aim of every member of our Society. It is no exaggeration to say that these things are being done. It has already been pointed out in this article what has been done at Yaxley.

FARM BUILDINGS AND DOVECOTES.

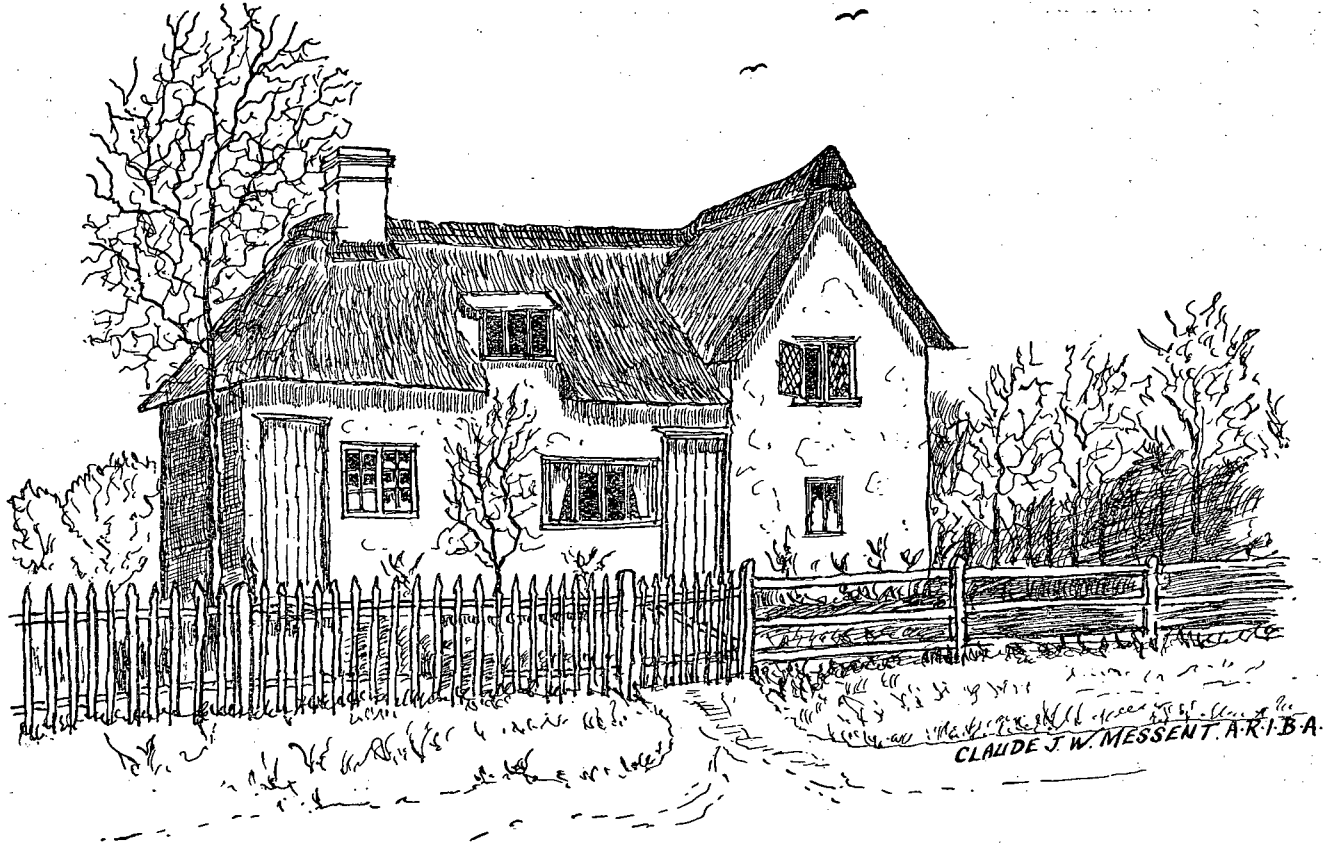
Undoubtedly the most striking object in a group of farm buildings is the barn. It was built to store the result of a year's labour on the farm. First comes the ploughing of the fields, then the sowing, then the reaping, and finally the threshing and storing in the barn. Some barns date back to early mediaeval times. There are 14th century barns in some parts of the country. Tithe barns were instituted for the purpose of storing a tenth of the farmer's produce, which was claimed by the Church, and grange barns were attached to monasteries, and were used by certain Orders of monks who helped in farming land which was possessed by a monastery.

Suffolk possesses many fine examples of barns built of various materials. Sometimes they stand alone, but more often are built in conjunction with other farm buildings. In some sets of farm premises



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No. 2. OLD COTTAGES KNOWN AS "THE GUILDHALL," AT WORLINGWORTH, NEAR EYE.



No. 3. COTTAGES OF STUD, PLASTER AND CLAY, ON THE LIDGATE ROAD AT DALHAM.

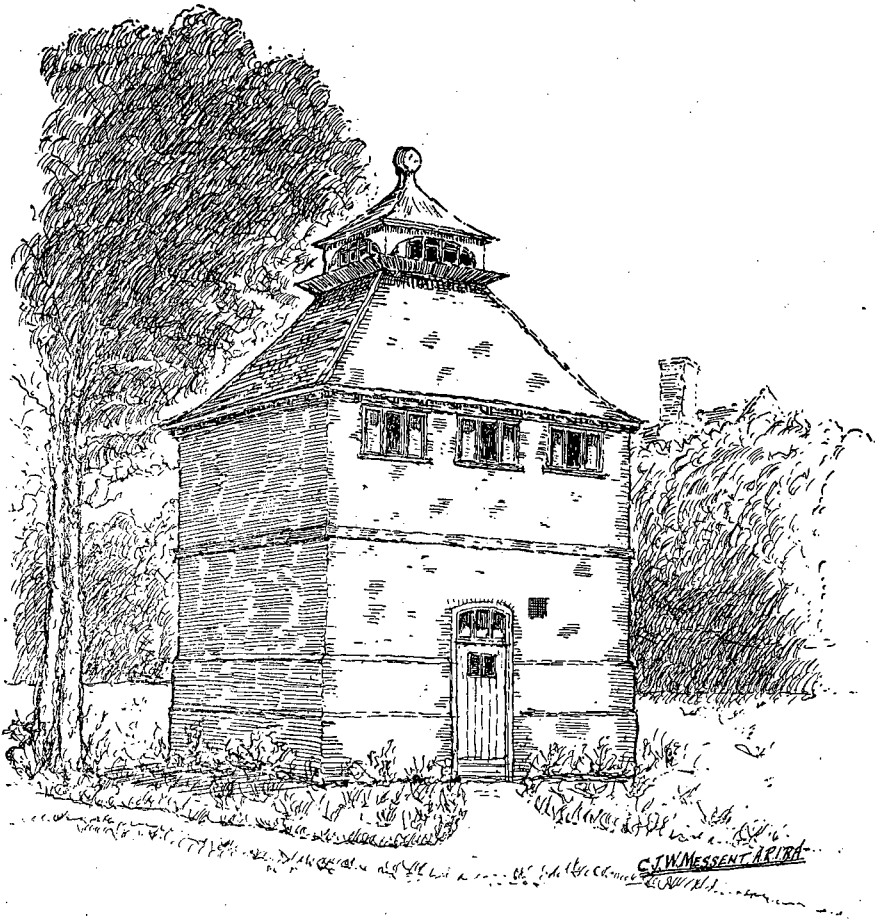
two courtyards are formed with the barn coming between ; sometimes only one courtyard occurs with the barn forming one side. In the Fens, farms are often found with the house and buildings all attached and running in more or less a straight line by the side of a dyke. In other parts of the county this arrangement occurs occasionally and the same ridge line of the roof is continued over house, barn and granary, the last mentioned being often built over the cart-shed.

One of the largest and most interesting barns in the county is to be seen at Herringfleet, near Lowestoft. This barn is built of bricks and flint, and the two materials form a chequered or draught board pattern on the external surface of its walls. Occasionally the date of erection is placed on a barn, either in the form of brick headers slightly raised in front of the main brickwork of the walls, or else wrought iron date figures are nailed to the wall, generally near the top of a gable. This latter arrangement is to be seen on some farm-houses.

Dovecotes, or pigeon-houses, are fast falling into decay and disappearing ; they originated amongst the monastic buildings, where they were called " Columbariums." Amongst some monastic remains they are said to date back to late Norman times. The remains of one at Bury St. Edmunds is certainly of the mediæval period, if not earlier. The monk who had the special duty of seeing after the pigeons was called the " Columbarius."

Most of the remaining dovecotes in Suffolk are of the 17th and 18th century, and some appear to be even later. The inside of these buildings has a central revolving ladder, so that all the nests can be reached. The number of nesting-places in each pigeon-house often runs into hundreds, and the nests are generally about six inches square and over a foot deep in the wall, and generally enlarge at the back. These buildings are of various shapes, sizes and materials, though brick was the most favoured material. Some of the nesting-boxes are " L " shape on plan, thus giving the pigeon an opportunity of turning round on her nest.

One of the largest examples to be seen in Suffolk is situated a short distance to the south-west of Kentwell Hall at Long Melford, it is situated in the park in most beautiful sylvan surroundings. It is built entirely of brick and is raised on a double plinth of brickwork, as shown in Illustration No. 4. It has a pyramidal roof which is crowned with a square louvred entrance turret, which in turn has a pyramidal roof finished off at the top with a ball finial, there is a perching platform all round beneath the entrance holes. The main building is divided into, as it were, two storeys by a slightly projecting string course of brick about ten inches deep. On the south side there is a doorway with glazed panels, at the top of this wall immediately beneath the eaves of the roof are three light windows, the side divisions of which are glazed, but the middle ones are left open for ventilation. The eaves of the main roof project several inches, and the feet of eleven rafters show on each of the four sides and appear as medallions in the cornice.



No. 4. DOVECOTE AT KENTWELL HALL, LONG MELFORD.

In the south-west corner of the garden of Coldham Hall at Stanningfield, near Bury St. Edmunds, is one of the finest brick dovecotes to be seen in Suffolk. It is built of red brick with white brick dressings to the window openings (most of which are blocked up) and to the arches of the corbel table which runs round the whole of the building just below the widely projecting eaves. This pigeon-house is raised on a battered plinth just over six feet high, the roof is of the usual conical shape to a circular building and is covered with old English plain tiles which have weathered to a delightful hue; the top is crowned with a cupola which is supported on six legs and has a circular cornice and hemispherical dome with knob pinnacle. There is a slightly projecting porch on the north side with a low pointed arch of gauged brickwork. There is another very good example of a brick dovecote about 200 yards to the south-east of Gosbold Hall at Thrandeston, near Eye. This pigeon-house is rectangular on plan, measuring 12-ft. by 14-ft. 3-ins. It has ornamented curved gables, which are corbelled out at the springings and show Dutch influence. There is a doorway on the north side. The louvred vent with the pigeon holes is in the centre of the ridge of the roof, which latter is covered with old English plain tiles, as is also the little pented roof to the ventilator. A string course of bricks laid diagonally occurs immediately beneath the eaves. This dovecote was evidently built upon rather soft ground as two or three settlements are shown by cracks in the walls; these no doubt occurred at an early date as is shown by old wrought iron "S" ties in the walls.

What may be considered to be the most picturesquely situated pigeon-house in the county is to be found hidden in a wood on the opposite side of the road to the Hall at Aspal, about a mile to the north of Debenham. This example is situated on what appears to be an artificial mound with a dry moat all around except for a filled in causeway on the south. This dovecote is a most unusual shape, being hexagonal on plan; each of the six sides measuring nine feet long. It is of timber and clay construction on a brick plinth and has a rather high pitched roof covered with pantiles which for antique ones are unusually dark. This example was converted into a fruit store in 1919, when lead ridges were placed on the hips of the hexagonal pyramidal roof and the six external walls roughcasted, the latter containing many small pieces of broken glass, and some small casement windows were inserted. The date of the restoration has been recorded by the insertion of small pieces of green broken bottle glass into the roughcast before it set to form the figures 1919. The door is on the south side and appears to be original. Many may regret that this dovecote has been converted into a fruit store with windows, but when the example at Crowfield is seen fast falling into decay and now nearly past repair, it seems better that these very interesting relics of the past should be put to a modern use, even if it means altering them somewhat, but this should only be done where absolutely necessary.

The district surrounding Wickham Market seems to be the richest in dovecotes in the county, examples still existing at Easton, Pettistree, Dallinghoo and further north at Saxmundham and Yoxford; there is also one each at Great and Little Glemham.

The example at Easton, a very pretty and well restored village, is octagonal in shape and built of brick. It is on the Duke of Hamilton's Estate and stands back about 400 yards from the main road on the south side and is most picturesquely approached by a winding pathway which leads through woods and over three or four wooden bridges spanning running streams. This dovecote is at present used as a private garage, but in spite of this, it has lost none of its ancient appearance, only the central revolving ladder has been taken away. The nesting boxes inside are all constructed of brick and are in a very good state of preservation as is also the roof, which is almost conical in form owing to the fact that the interior is nearly circular and the eight hips of the roof are so slight that the plain old English tiles which cover it are laid continuously over the hips thus giving an almost conical appearance from a short distance. A cylindrical cupola and finial crown the roof. There is a slightly projecting porch on the south side, the remaining seven sides are thickly covered with ivy, the roots of which have eaten very deeply into the mortar joints. It would probably date back to about the middle of the 18th century.

In a meadow adjoining the farmyard of the Home Farm at Pettistree is to be seen a very interesting example of a dovecote. It is square on plan, measuring 9-ft. 4-ins. each side and is divided into two storeys. The bottom storey consists of four open arches in a flint wall with brick dressings and quoins, the upper storey is of brickwork which was cement rendered at a later date. There are nearly three hundred nesting boxes inside, these consist of horizontal timber shelves with vertical partitions of clay, each box is approximately nine inches square. The roof is square pyramidal in shape and is covered with a rough surfaced plain tiles with three courses of slates at the eaves, the former are so rough that they have harboured a good coating of mosses, so that in sunlight the roof is a mass of crimson, green and gold. The usual cupola with finial crowns the roof. It is said to date back to about 1775.

The example at Dallinghoo is in a meadow at the back of White Horse Farm. It is built entirely of timber with weather-boarded sides. It is square on plan and has sixteen pigeon holes in rows of fours all together on the south side. The entrance door is on the north. The roof is covered with slates with lead ridges and finial. It is about a hundred years old.

One of the largest pigeon-houses in the county is to be found in the woods of the park about two hundred yards to the south-east of Hurtz Hall at Saxmundham, to the east of the main road. It is a handsome brick structure octagonal in shape, each of the eight sides being eight feet long. The roof is quite high pitched and is crowned with a fine lantern which has glazed traceried windows, unfortunately the glass is falling out in several places and the tracery perishing. There is a door on the south side. This example dates from the 18th century.

Another large brick dovecote is to be seen in the courtyard to the farm premises to Cockfield Hall at Yoxford. Some of the buildings date back to Tudor times, and are of fine old brick-work with pointed

arches. The dovecote is octagonal and the walls are carried up to form a parapet to the roof. The eight corners to the parapet are crowned with pinnacles and from the general design of the building it would appear to be a product of the Gothic revival of about 1835. It may have replaced an earlier structure. It still houses pigeons, but not on its former scale, when this kind of building was used to rear pigeons for food, and when pigeon pie was a favourite dish.

There is another timber example at Hoxne, it is rather similar to the one at Dallinghoo.

Several examples of dovecotes have been described at length and no excuse is given for doing so in this article as they are a type of rural building which has gone out of use and it is to be hoped that the very few which now remain compared with the large number of two centuries ago, will be preserved, as much as possible in order to let future generations see what they were like.

At Earlham Park, in the extreme west of the city of Norwich, an old 18th century dovecote has been preserved by the Corporation, and this is an example which should be followed wherever possible.

THE OLD VILLAGE SHOPS.

The Village Shop, like the Inn, is the meeting-place for the villagers, but where the latter provides little more than drinks, the shop supplies practically everything, and a visit to one would surely astonish a city dweller. As these shops are generally rather small everything seems to be crowded up, and it is no unusual sight to see legs of ham, cheese, articles of apparel, and dustpans and brushes all displayed on the same counter. Hardware, such as pails, waterpots, and oil lamps, are often strung up on linen lines which cross and re-cross the shop at all sorts of angles. These lines are often hung perilously low, and the customer whose height is at all above the average has a risky journey if he hurries across the shop.

Some of the old shops date back to the 17th century, but in Suffolk they are mostly 18th and 19th century work. The small panes of glass and the many bars in the windows were a necessity owing to the limited size in which glass was cast in bygone days, and larger sheets were very expensive; but it is this limitation of size which makes these old shop fronts look so charming. They were generally built with a slightly convex curve externally and the top of the window was usually finished off with a neatly moulded cornice.

There is a very good example in the village street at Metfield, to the north-west of Halesworth; it is double-fronted with central doorway, and forms part of a Georgian house.

Another good example, but with more of a bow front, is to be seen on the main roadway from Ipswich to Lowestoft, at Wangford, on the west side of the village street. It consists of two windows with a central doorway and again forms part of a Georgian house, but projecting porch roofs were added to the doorways during the Victorian period.



CLAUDE J. W. MESSENTARIBA

No. 5 GEORGIAN SHOP FRONT IN THE MARKET PLACE AT WOODBRIDGE.

Many of the small market towns of Suffolk have Georgian shop fronts preserved. The one in the Market Place at Woodbridge is exceptionally fine and is shown in Illustration No. 5 to this article. It shows what was a large shop in Georgian days with two doorways and three windows, the central one treated in rather an unusual fashion, but nevertheless quite in keeping with the traditional design of the period. Possibly the now blank spaces beneath the two pediments to the doorways were used for the name of the owner and the name of the trade respectively. The whole building is a good example of early Georgian work.

Hadleigh is another market town which has a few examples remaining of old shop fronts. Others can be seen at Sudbury, Bury St. Edmunds, in fact in most of the old towns of Suffolk. The long village street consisting of Botesdale and the two Rickenhalls has two or three good examples to show. Clare and Long Melford can also show a few examples, but delight is most when some archæologist or other person discovers one in an out-of-the-way village.

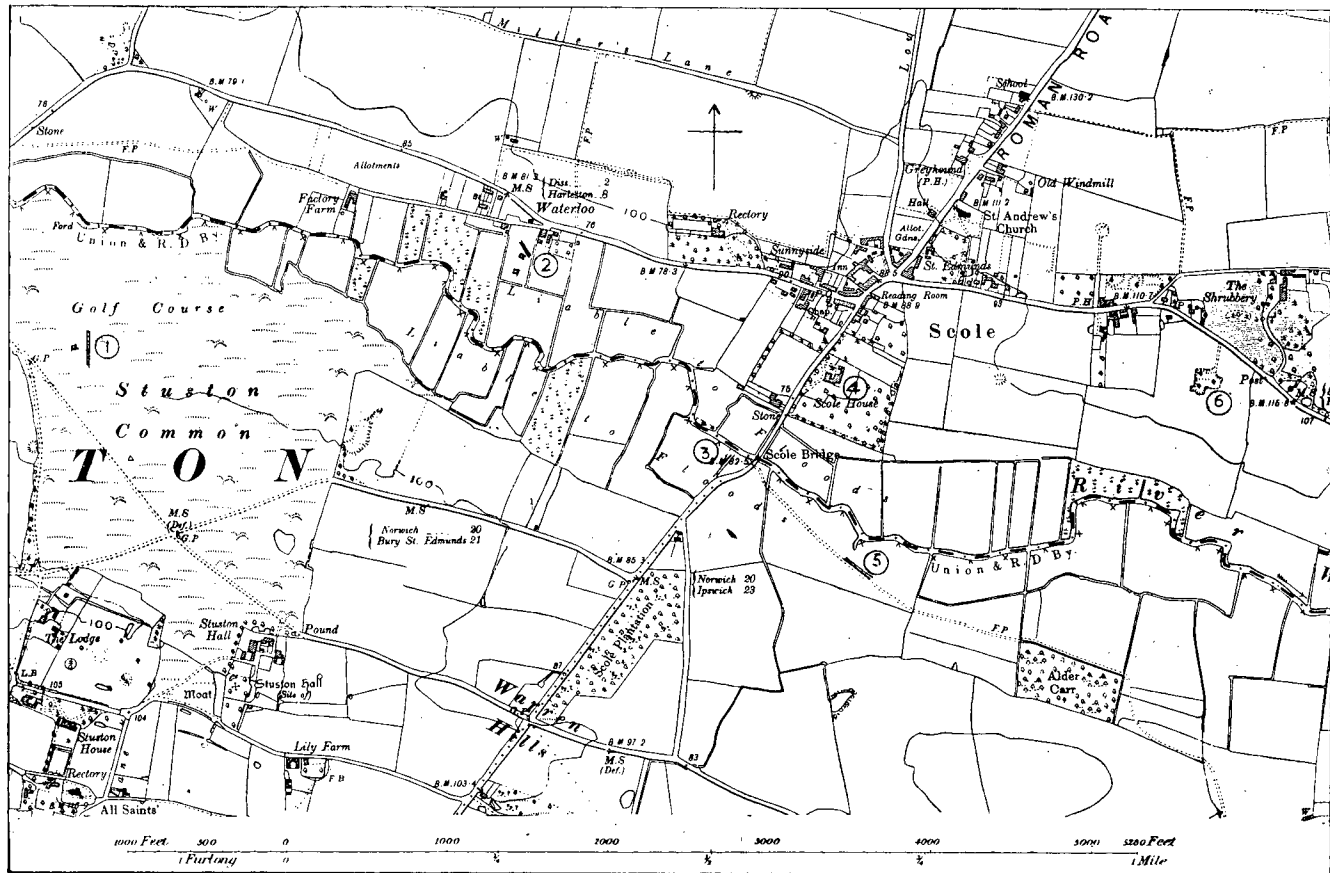
VILLAGE TYPES.

Before concluding this article on the Old Cottages and Farm-houses of Suffolk I must make some mention of villages in general. Although it may not appear right that they should be classified they naturally upon analysis appear to belong to certain types. We often come across the "Street" type of village such as Earl Stonham on the Ipswich to Norwich road, or the two Trimleys on the Ipswich to Felixstowe road and numerous others. Then there is the "Village Green Type," e.g., Cavendish and one or two of the South Elmhams. Then there is the type with a waterway flowing through the village street such as Walsham le Willows. Again there is the very scattered village with several out-of-the-way hamlets of which Wickambrook is an instance. Another type is the village built on two sides of a hill with a running stream crossing the middle of the village street at right angles like Kersey. Then there are such coast villages as Covehithe and Walberswick. Others have two village streets forming a "T" plan, like Yoxford. Sometimes we come across two distinct villages in one; one being a hamlet to the other, as Wetheringsett with Brockford Street.

There are variations of all these types and several villages are combinations of two or three types, but all have a certain individuality of their own which gives them a charm that cannot be very readily explained and that can more readily be felt than put into words.

Finally, may it be stressed again that rural Suffolk will be preserved as much as possible and it has been the aim of this short article to try and point out what a splendid heritage still remains. Many important architectural gems of Suffolk have not been mentioned for reasons previously stated, many of them being too well known already, such as the carved plaster work on the house adjoining the churchyard at Clare, but sufficient has been said to show what a great issue is at stake.

CLAUDE J. W. MESSANT, A.R.I.B.A.



PLAN. PLATE I.

Based upon the Ordnance Survey Map, with the sanction of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office.

STUSTON COMMON



WORKED FLINTS

Flint saws



CLAUSIUS A. D. 41-54
Second brass
Ob. Head bare lt.
Rv. Minerva advancing lt.
holding shield and
javelin.



TITUS A. D. 80.



MARCUS AURELIUS
A. D. 161-180
Can be dated
A. D. 161-163



PHILIP I A. D. 244-249
Antoninianus with
silver wash worn off.
Ob. Bust radiate lit.
Sol walking lt. rt hand
raised, lt holding whip,
star in field lt.
Rv. Felicitas standing lt
holding caduceus and
cornucopiae.



VOLUSIAN A. D. 251-253
Second brass
Ob. Bust laureate rt.
Rv. Felicitas standing lt,
holding caduceus and
leaning on column.



VICTORINUS A. D. 268-270
Antoninianus with
silver wash worn off.
Ob. Bust radiate rt.
Rv. Sol walking lt.
rt hand holding whip,
star in field lt.

TETRICUS I
A. D. 268-273



Model copper axe.
Grave furniture.