

During the demolition or reconstruction of old cottages and inns, it is desirable that a watch should be kept for witch-bottles under the hearth or threshold. The position should be carefully noted, and whether the bottle is corked; if possible, it is advisable to submit it for examination in as complete a condition as possible.

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*Great Saxham Hall.* The Hall with its fine portico replaces Nutmeg Hall, an Elizabethan house rendered fantastic in 1774, and burnt down in 1779. This note attempts to establish the authorship of the design of the present house.

Shoberl, in the Suffolk volume of *The Beauties of England and Wales* (1813), noted that 'the old house was accidentally burnt down in 1779' and that a new one had been 'erected N.W. of it from a plan of Mr. Adam'.<sup>8</sup> H. M. Colvin, in his standard *Biographical Dictionary of English Architects, 1660-1840* (1954), on the authority of Shoberl, lists Great Saxham Hall, 1779, under the works of Robert Adam.<sup>9</sup> It seems, however, that Adam produced two separate designs, neither of which was executed.<sup>10</sup> Craven Ord visited the house in 1788, and recorded that, after the fire of 1779, a new house was begun N.W. of the old one, 'from a plan of Mr. Adam but was not proceeded in. Mr. Hutchison Mure now resides in a very good house built from a plan of his own'.<sup>11</sup>

Gage, writing in 1838, in a work familiar to Suffolk antiquaries,<sup>12</sup> confused the name of the architect, calling him William Adams, and wrongly attributed to him the fantastic alterations of 1774. But he made amends by reproducing an elevation of that vanished fantasy, and by remarking that it was Hutchison Mure 'who built the centre' of the mansion, which 'was finished by Thomas Mills in 1798'.

It is nevertheless uncertain whether Hutchison Mure's centre-piece is the one we see to-day, though it is probable. Thomas Mills' son, in a MS. diary written in 1818,<sup>13</sup> recorded that Hutchison Mure 'commenced building a mansion upon a most extensive scale. He however never completed it, and sold the property to

<sup>8</sup> p. 129.

<sup>9</sup> p. 35.

<sup>10</sup> His first plan was apparently produced early in 1763, the second in 1779: see A. T. Bolton, *The Architecture of Robert and James Adam* (1922), I, 49-50. Bolton reproduces plans of both (I, 40-42). He also gives references to the originals in the Soane Museum, with details (II, appendix p. 15).

<sup>11</sup> Add. MSS. 7101, fol. 11.

<sup>12</sup> *Thingoe Hundred*, 109-110. An engraving of the elevation of the S. front after the alterations of 1774 faces p. 108. It is possible that Gage was thinking of Robert's brother William, who supplied the business ability to the famous firm of the Adam brothers: it was Robert who supplied the architectural genius.

<sup>13</sup> *Penes Mrs. G. St. John, of The Dove House, Stutton.*

my father, who rebuilt the Hall and has added largely to his domains by purchases in the adjoining parishes. . . .’ On a point like the rebuilding of the Hall by his father, we should expect the diarist to be authoritative. In fact, we must either accept it at its absolute face value, or else interpret his word ‘rebuild’ in the sense of ‘remodel’. In the second case, Gage’s statement might be allowed to stand, indicating the precise limits of Mills’ work. From Colvin,<sup>14</sup> we learn that the architect employed by Mills in 1797 for the work on the Hall was Joseph Patience, junior, of Wormwood Street, Bishopsgate, London. His plan was exhibited in the Royal Academy in 1797, as ‘building’ in that year.

Both Gage and the diarist agree that Mills rebuilt the church at his own expense in 1798. Here ‘rebuild’ must certainly be qualified, for medieval porch, doorways and tower survive. The diarist further adds that Mure had spent ‘considerable sums in embellishing the grounds under the great Mr. *Capability* Brown’. These embellishments presumably include the handsome ‘temple’ and characteristic serpentine lake in the grounds.

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*When Did King Redwald Die?* This question touches the heart of the mystery as to which king was buried beneath the great mound at Sutton Hoo. It is nevertheless a question which has escaped discussion because all writers have been content to assume that Redwald must have been dead when his son Eorpwald came to the throne about 626-628. This is a natural, if over hasty assumption, and has been made from medieval times onwards, but we, who are contemporaries of the living ex-kings of England, Belgium, Egypt, Jordan, etc., may well pause to consider what happened to kings in the seventh century. Did they also lose their thrones at times, and yet preserve their lives?

The answer is very clearly in the affirmative, Redwald’s own step-son Sigbert abdicated in order to enter a monastery. Caedwalla of Wessex (685-688) and his successor Ina (688-725) both gave up their thrones and went off to Rome to die. In France we have amongst others, the example of Dagobert of Austrasia. His retirement was involuntary and he was only a child when it happened. Grimoald had him tonsured and sent off to a monastery in Ireland but, as Levison<sup>15</sup> says, ‘He did not take the life of the young king but chose the more humane method of deposing him *after the fashion of that age*’ (my italics). After many years he came back to his throne.

<sup>14</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 446.

<sup>15</sup> Levison, *England and the Continent in the Eighth Century*, 1946, p. 49.