ST. PETER'S HALL, SOUTH ELMHAM.

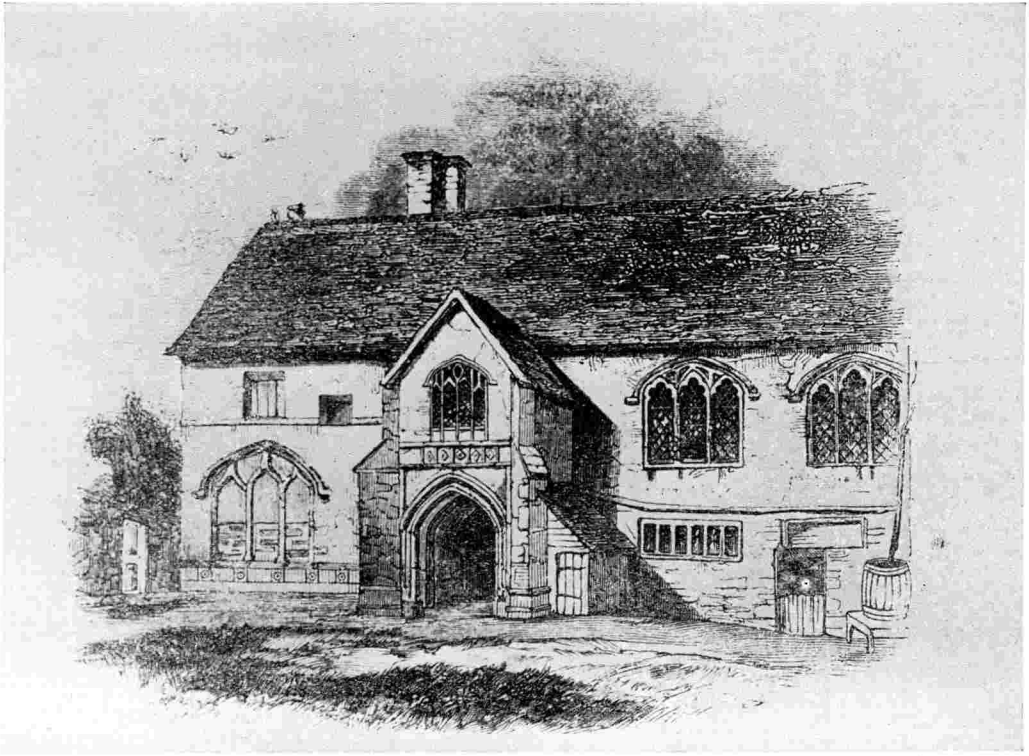
By The Rev. E. Farrer, F.S.A.

In that triangular portion of North-east Suffolk, on a level plateau between Harleston, Halesworth and Beccles, in almost the centre of that district which is most commonly known as "The Saints," is situated one of the most interesting old houses, not only of Suffolk, but of East Anglia. It is known as St. Peter's Hall, and was the early home of the family of Tasburgh.

As the place was visited by members of our Archæological Society during the summer months of 1928, it has been thought that a paper thereon might be welcome to the readers of our Proceedings, and as I had previously written on the subject in 1913 in the papers of our local journal, for which I had collected together most of the wills known to exist of the Tasburgh family, it was suggested to me that I should take the task in hand; and herewith is the result.

First of all, then, I will attempt to describe, what is there, still to be seen, both externally and internally, and then to put on record what our Historian of North-east Suffolk, Rev. Alfred Suckling, has to say about it, quoting from the Tasburgh wills anything that may throw light on its history, and drawing such conclusions, as have been arrived at, from what is seen, or may have been known about it.

The house is surrounded by meadow land of good grass, but whatever timber there may have been has all been taken away, and yet surely in days gone bye "High Suffolk" so called, was noted for its plentiful supply of oak, and to-day for a long distance around



ST. PETER'S HALL.

From Suckling's History of Suffolk. Vol. I.

St. Peter's Hall, there is not a tree of any value, nor is there much even to look at. About ½ mile distant from it southward stands the Church, and as one travels on the road from this to St. Margaret's Ilketshall, St. Peter's Hall, seen to the north of the road, has every appearance of being what it is, an ancient structure, and on drawing near to it, the southern side comes full into view, giving in summer time a pretty picture of ancient walls and Tudor chimneys, and an old tiled roof, all of it on the far side of a wide piece of water at one time probably the moat. This may be seen in an illustration of the south side of the house, offered with this article.

And now as to what the house consists of, or what remains to-day of St. Peter's Hall. It is quite possible with regard to its chief rooms and chambers above that it may never have been much larger than it is to-day, in that our forefathers, in the 15th century, in the same grade of life as that of the Tasburghs did not occupy houses as large as some people are inclined to think. Here we have a main block facing north and south, with a wing at the western end thereof running northwards and the height of it is two storeys, with attics above. Quite probably there may have been rooms and offices on both sides of the fore court, and certainly a wall on the northern side with a gateway which is mentioned in one of the wills.

And now we will venture to describe what one sees on the southern frontage, and at once I fancy it will be acknowledged from a look at the illustration herewith included, that the architecture is of a very ecclesiastical type, both with regard to the entrance doorway, and the windows above, and yet curiously enough there is no appearance on this side of the building, of these having been inserted at a later date than the erection of the house. In the centre of this southern side, on

a little terrace raised above the wall of what was probably once the moat, is a small and quite early doorway, the arch of which is just pointed, with one rib of a roll moulding, and a dripstone, while eastward of this door way rising upwards to the very eaves is a huge chimney, which later on, when we visit the interior we shall see, serves the great fireplace in the hall of the original house; and on the eastern side of this chimney is a triple-light stone-mullioned window, the head thereof beneath the dripstone being filled with segmental tracery, and furthermore the upper storey on the western side of the little doorway, is lighted by another window somewhat similar to that described, but without any upper tracery or dripstone. All other windows on this side are I think of modern construction when the house was overhauled for restoration, like many other old manor houses once part of the Adair estate.

Passing round to the northern side of this block of masonry we reach what is now, and always was, the front of the house, and here we find the display of ecclesiastical architecture still more pronounced, in fact, almost overwhelming for a gentleman's residence even in the 15th century. In the centre is a church porch of two storeys gabled, with buttresses reaching right up to the gabled roof, and on the lower floor the whole space between the buttresses is filled with a stone doorway of which the arch is just pointed, the four shallow hollows or recesses of the moulding being carried downwards to within one foot of the ground; and then to the upper floor of the porch is a window of four lights with cinquefoil-headed arches, while in the tracery above is a quatrefoil, the whole surmounted by a flat and semicircular dripstone. Between the two storeys of this porch is one even more ecclesiastical addition, in the shape of a string course of ornate decoration in dressed stone, filled in with cut flints,

which string course is divided into seven compartments, each one consisting of a shield surrounded by different ecclesiastical patterns or designs, and the same is used again on the bases of the butresses, where we find the Sacred Monogram, and a letter M both crowned. These are very curious devices for any gentleman to have placed on his house even in the 15th century. It seems to me as if some of the work belongs to a period very much earlier than the rest, for we get here both the Decorated and Perpendicular periods combined.

On either side of this porch are two windows, all of ecclesiastical design, two of them are for the ground floor on the eastern side, and the other two for the upper floor on the western side. There are still four more windows to the northern frontage, two on either side, but all of them more modern, and in no sense ecclesiastical. There can be no doubt, as will be shown when we reach our consideration of the interior, that the two lower windows were arranged to give light to what was once the great hall or living room, though it is quite possible that these were added only after the division of this apartment had been made about 1500; if so the two others were inserted for the solar, now, or possibly even then, divided up into bed-chambers. Each of the four ecclesiastical windows consists of three lights, those below have upper tracery, while those above are wanting in this extra form of decoration. Of the two lower ones the design is exactly the same save that the easternmost is certainly wider and a little taller, and has a decided dripstone, while the other one has no dripstone whatever. Again though the tracery in the upper portion of these two windows is similar in design, and very flamboyant, the one being wider than the other causes the appearance of each to be dissimilar, and this is further augmented by the fact that the wider window has cinque-

foil arches to each head, whereas in the smaller window the heads are trifoliate. It seems almost incredible to think that any architect would make these slight differences in two windows lighting the same room. It does warrant anyone thinking they must have been removed from some ecclesiastical edifice which for some cause or another had been demolished. The upper windows westward of the porch have triple lights with cinquefoil heads having no tracery of any kind above, but with plain yet decided dripstones. All along beneath the windows of the great hall is a string course or dado of similar workmanship and design to that on the porch; and on the floor of the porch lies a very early memorial stone, which once upon a time covered perhaps the coffin but certainly the remains of a priest of the church, the stem and pediment of a cross are still there, but the arm and top of the sacred symbol have been cut away. From its design, this must be years older than the house, or the porch, and possibly belongs to the 13th century.

Joined on to the north side of the house at its west end, is a further stretch of building which I am sure is nothing near so early in date as the main block itself, the height of it, and the way the junction is made, would have been impossible, if all were erected at one and the same time. Looking at it from a distance, to use a common expression, it does not seem to fit at all. It consists, all the same, of three storeys, and the roof thereof is covered by the same small and flat red tile, and there is a gable at the northern end. The windows have all been renovated, but may still retain their original dimensions and type, for they are all small, rectangular, with wooden mullions, some of which have every appearance of being ancient, though now covered with paint. As an entrance to this wing there is a small doorway near its junction with the main block, which leads into the kitchen and offices. I may

mention here, that in the illustration of St. Peter's Hall, in Suckling's "History of Suffolk" drawn by himself in 1819, this wing is not shewn, which is rather extraordinary if it then existed, and the entrance into the kitchen and offices is given in the lower floor of the main block, with a long and narrow mullioned window of six lights eastward of it. This illustration shows many great alterations to have taken place during the restoration. I believe the chimneys were much of the same type as they appear to-day, all the same they are I think modern copies; and there was certainly no ridge tile.

On the gabled end of the wing is a coat of arms, about which there has been much discussion. The shield is surrounded by a Tudor form of decorative framework, and it has thereon an early example of the quartered coat of Delapole and Wingfield, the latter bearing "the wings in lure on a bend sinister." I have consulted many authorities, and during the years since I first saw it at St. Peter's Hall I have sought for information, as to any connection between the Delapoles and this immediate neighbourhood and found none. It is my personal opinion that it was brought hither by the member of the Adair family who restored the house. I well remember in 1907 how that Sir Frederick Adair told me he owned 73 farms in Suffolk, most of which he had seen; moreover at Flixton there were portraits and other objects of interest brought away from manor and farmhouses restored by one of his ancestors. We know Wingfield Castle was their property, but it would be incredible that a shield of the most important family connected with it, should have been carried away to adorn a gable at St. Peter's Hall; however, I have little doubt, in my own mind, but that this is the reason for its present position. The historian never saw it, and one gathers from his account he had his eyes well open to discover any heraldry, but he says he found

none. Though I have visited many of the Adair farms, I have been unable to discover more than this.

At the east end of the main block of the building there is a square headed doorway which leads into the garden, and outside the house, near the ground, south of this doorway, is an excrescence, two feet in height, covered by a stone water table. I know not what it is or may have been, unless it gave light and air to a vault, cellar, or crypt, which existed or may still exist beneath St. Peter's Hall.

With regard to the wide piece of water, on the southern side of the house, it extends eastwards beyond the garden, where it turns in a northerly direction, while on the western side of the house it expands into a large pond; and stretching away northwards quite near the buildings, is a piece of low ground, which looks like the western side of an ancient moat filled in, and I was informed many years ago, when paying a visit, that just beyond the buildings now standing on the other side of what was the fore court, is another pond, which has the appearance of having been detained for water, when the northern side of the moat was filled in, and it seems so likely that with a wall and gateway on the northern side of the fore court, which is recorded in an early Tasburgh will, there stretched beyond that wall a moat, with the portion opposite the gateway bridged.

It will have been noticed, I fancy, by many of the members who visited it in 1928 that no particular care was taken, in the recent restoration, to retain externally the original features and appearance of the residence, though we may congratulate posterity that nothing much internally was destroyed. The walls have twice been covered by a sort of cement, and all the modern windows are of a poor 19th century type. I state this fact lest visitors should be disappointed at the present

aspect of the ancient home of the Tasburghs, St. Peter's Hall.

And now for its interior. We enter through a doorway, inside the porch of which the door consists of massive oak, carved in a variety of the linen-fold pattern, with a very massive iron handle, and we find ourselves standing in the westernmost portion of what was once a large hall, or living room of the family, reaching in its original condition to the east end of the house, with, at the west end of it, a couple of doorways in stone, each having pointed archways with numerous mouldings, dividing the hall off, as with a screen, from the buttery, kitchen, and other offices; and of course this hall in its primitive state had an open timber roof, and of this roof one small relic still remains, now standing upright in a little window westward of the porch. It is the octagonal pillar of the King post, which supported the roof in the late 14th century and afterwards.

There is no doubt but that the huge wall containing a wide chimney and fireplace which divides the ancient hall into two apartments, was erected probably quite late in the 15th or early in the 16th century; the doorway of oak, with a square head to it, and decorations in the spandrels, is certainly of that date of workmanship. The moulded beams of the ceilings of these two rooms, which have the usual stops at either end of the said mouldings, is a further proof that they were formed when the division was made about 1500. There is one further fact to corroborate my statement as to the date of the division of the great hall into two apartments. There is a large and long open stone fireplace which is in the southern wall, served by that massive chimney stack, the lower portion of which may still be seen outside the house, and the west end of this fireplace is partly covered by a small portion of the dividing wall, which brought to an end the use of the old chimney, and introduced a more modern one of 16th century type.

To visit the western portion of the house one must travel back and pass through the southernmost of the two stone doorways, into a passage running along the south wall of the house. On the right hand as we go, is a little staircase, the lower flight of which is lighted by a small three-light mullioned window of oak, and in front is the door leading into the kitchen and offices, in the which is a lot of old timberwork, and at one corner an ancient two shelved aumbrie or cupboard. Several of the old fitments of the kitchen date back many years. Ascending by that narrow staircase to the upper floor, we alight on another corridor, also by the south wall, and out of this corridor leading into bed-chambers are doors of oak consisting of long and narrow wainscot, and these doorways also have square heads with a single flower carved in each spandrel, of the same date as those below. The room on the northern side, now divided up, was in its original condition all one, as the ceiling of timber, with its deep and heavily moulded beams distinctly shows. This ceiling is one of the features of the house. It is divided up into rectangular compartments, a usual design for that period. The whole of it is now covered with white-wash, and looks like plaster, but it is most certainly composed of timber. There is but one fireplace on this storey, square in shape, and of very simple design, nevertheless it is I think quite early in date. One further ascent brings us to the attics, in which one can see many signs of the early alterations, and the more recent restoration, for some of the brickwork is evidently of the 19th century. There is no sign now of the supports, in the centre of which, in early days was that King-post.

I would like now to put on record here for the benefit of those who have not the chance of reading it elsewhere what the Rev. Alfred Inigo Suckling has to say about it in his " History and Antiquities of the County

St. Peter's Hall. (North Side)

ST. PETER'S HALL. (SOUTH SIDE)

of Suffolk," Vol. I., pp. 229—231. I cannot say that I entirely agree with some of his conclusions, but at any rate he saw it more than 100 years ago, and we can be certain that what he describes and depicts with his brush, pencil, and pen existed in those days—moreover his little sketch of the house is very interesting, and I would like to reproduce it here. I was well acquainted for nearly 40 years with his relative the late Mrs. Suckling, of Highwood, near Romsey, in Hampshire, who before her death succeeded to the Barsham estate. We often discussed the places about which the Historian had written in North-east Suffolk, and I remember well she had rather a poor appreciation of his archæological and antiquarian abilities, though she recognized to the full what he himself styles his "arduous and extensive" work, and the energy he displayed about it. Her vast collection of material would greatly supplement the historians work were it available. Here is what he records of St. Peter's Hall.

"I have sought in vain for a specific document to identify the period of its commencement, but from the analogy of its architecture to that of buildings whose date is ascertained, I should ascribe its erection to John Tasburgh, the father of the grantee of Flixton Nunnery. This gentleman died in 1509. In his will he desires his body to be buried in the churchyard of St. Peter's, towards the west under the steeple . . . A small portion only of St. Peter's Hall is standing to attest its former importance, which following the fate of all old mansions is converted into a farmhouse. The mansion when entire formed a quadrangle as usual of which stables and offices made up a part. The domestic and ecclesiastical styles are singularly combined in this building, though the latter seem to predominate; and the occasional discovery of old floorstones of a sepulchral character intimates that the projecting porch led to the chapel of the dwelling, not into the hall;

and yet the ceilings of the chambers where the two large, and upper windows are observed on the right hand of the porch are flat, divided into small squares by the girders above, and covered with plastered mouldings in the manner usually seen in dwelling houses of an early period. The interior, however, has been divided into its present arrangements, with portions of the demolished part of the house, and the antique character of these greatly deceives a modern investigator, and creates much confusion. It is very remarkable that although the exterior is rather profusely ornamented with escutcheons, not a single shield is charged with an armorial cognizance. Surely the Tasburghs must have been "gentlemen of coat armour" long before the 15th century. The building is cased with the finest squared stone, but appears, notwithstanding, to be in a very crazy and dilapidated condition. Part of the moat of very unusual width shuts in the south side of the premises." The historian had seen copies of the Tasburgh wills from which he quotes, and which I intend using later on. Before I finish with Suckling's account I must copy one further paragraph. It gives the date of his visit and exhibits I think a certain callousness about what we archæologists of to-day regard with a feeling of veneration."

"In the year 1819 when the writer was visiting this parish, collecting the materials which form the matter of the present notice, a person of gentlemanly address drove up to St. Peter's Hall, tenanted by the late Mr. Alden, the then churchwarden, inquiring if the church contained any brass effigies, as he was travelling through the country collecting such records of ancient families, with a view to their cleaning and restoration, promising to return them shortly to their original places. St. Peter's Church afforded nothing to add to his collection, having been stripped by some earlier iconoclast. The writer remembers that the applicant's

gig-box was half full of brass effigies, which it is vain to hope ever found again their respective matrices. The observation is simply recorded to expose a system of plunder once recklessly pursued and to warn all churchwardens to repulse applications of a like nature." I think it is a pity the historian did not follow up "the person of gentlemanly address" and then and there expose such reckless spoliation.

There is no doubt but that in the 15th century, and probably much earlier St. Peter's Hall was the home of the Tasburgh family. The account of them given in Suckling's History of Suffolk I, 197—199 which has been used, almost verbatim, by Dr. Copinger in his "Manors of Suffolk" VII. 178, is as far as the early members of the family and their origin, rather problematical; however, I will give it here. Suckling says "They were of direct Saxon origin. Torolf a free-man of Bishop Stigand held a manor in the parish of Tasburgh in Norfolk, at the time of the Conqueror's Survey, whose successors were Richard and Matthew his sons, and Ralf who lived in 1199, and afterwards, about 1239, assumed the name of Tasburgh from the place of his residence. In 1247 Ralf de Tasburgh was lord of Boylands or the woodland manor in Tasburgh, and had infangetheof, or liberty to try all theft committed by his tenants, in his own court-baron and leet there; and to execute them, and take their forfeited goods. In 1280 his son Roger sold their estate to Sir Richard de Boyland. About this time they migrated to Suffolk, and we find them settled at St. Peter's, Southelmham, early in the reign of Edward III." He then gives a pedigree taken from Harleian MSS., 1560, which, except that dates are given, is a very similar pedigree to that of the 1561 Visitation, printed in "The Visitations of Suffolk," by W. C. Metcalfe in 1882.

The first name recorded in Suckling's pedigree is

wanting in that of the Visitation, namely Thomas Tasburgh of St. Peter's, temp. Edward III, who married a daughter and heir of . . . .Toll. Now the name of Tasburgh does not occur throughout the county of Suffolk in the year 1327 Subsidy List, which was the first year of Edward III, but there does occur under South Elmham the name of John Tolle, assessed at 4s. 3d., one of the seven largest taxpayers in the whole of South Elmham. There was a John Tolle of Bungay, see Pat. Rolls 15 Edward II, 1321 to 1334. and there is a covenant of the Priory of Flixton with John Tolle of South Elmham in 1328, and in the Stowe Charters a settlement of a suit as to rights of common and passage through the lands of the said John, who hath lately enclosed his pastures with a gate, ditch, etc.

I would suggest that a Tasburgh married the daughter and heir of John Toll, and so inheriting an estate in South Elmham, moved thither in the 14th century. Suckling records for this early landowner a coat of arms, but I find on consulting Burke and Papworth, it can have nothing to do with Suffolk, and no coat for Toll or Tolle appears in any of our East Anglian lists.

We will begin the history of the family with the 1561 Visitation, and with "John Tasburgh of St. Peters, South Elmham, Co. Suff, who married a da of Neche, and by her had a son and heir Thomas." Here we are on firm ground, for the will of John Tasburgh or Tasborough of St. Peters was proved in 1473, but it does not seem to me possible for him to have been a son of Thomas Tasburgh and his wife a daughter of . . . Toll, early in the reign of Edward III, as recorded by Suckling. I had hoped to have given the wills of the owners of St. Peter's Hall, about this period, in extenso. Unfortunately my copies of the same were lost during a move in 1915 thus I must content myself by recording the extracts made by me in 1913, but I

am confident I selected therefrom, every item relating to St. Peter's Hall, the land connected with it, and the direct descent of the main line of the family.

Here then are my extracts from the will of "John Tasborough of the parych of seynt petars of South-elmham, beying in hollemende and good memory." He commences by bequeathing "6s. 8d. to the High Altar of St. Peter's Church for tythes forgotten" and then "for the glasyn of the wyndowe in the west end of the Stepille, and to a Tabylle of alabastre and the makying of ye reredos fore the seyd Tabylle, with other costs to ben done in the seyd Chapell to ye seyd Tabylle necessary." He bequeathes to "his son Thomas all my lands, tenements, meadows pastures which I now hold of the Duke of Norfolk, and also all the land bought of John Mannyng. The manor of Boys to my son Edmond, and his heirs and in default of male issue to my son John," and he adds two more sons, Robert and Edward, to inherit in default of the male issue of Edmond or John. To his wife Margery he bequeaths several lands. "Yf sche kepe her soole wtowtyn husband" and for a residence during her widowhood he allows her a place called Howerys, Holverys or Hulvers "wche is new edified" but should she remarry the same to be sold, and the money thus produced is to be "disposed of in prests syngen, and other almessedede doyng, most plesyng to God." The son John gets a tenement in Norwich, and Edward gets "the best portewos, a grayle and a processionary," and further than this "the power to purchase of his mother the Deyyre in the West town of Zermuth." His daughter Ann gets £40 "yf she be well governed and rewelled be hir moder and her frends, and mary after there advise." The feofees are instructed to make a lawful estate to Elys Lumhaxs (? Lomax), an Agnes his wife. And finally, the said John Tasborough bequeaths his body to be buried "in the Chapell of

our lady Mary Virgin, in the north syde of the church of St. Petyrs befor ye image of our seid lady." This will was proved at Norwich by "Ellis Lumhelxz" in October, 1473.

On this will of John Tasburgh I must make a few comments. There is little doubt but that his wife was of the family of Neche or Neech, who held property in Mendham and the neighbourhood around, and therefore not far away from St. Peter's Hall. The coat of arms which is said to have been used by them is, Party per fesse, argent and sable, three pales counterchanged. This is declared in the 1561 Visitation, but I do not find it in the early lists. We get several children named in the will, besides Thomas the the son and heir, who is also given in the Visitation pedigree—vix., Edmond, John, Robert and Edward, also Ann one unmarried daughter, and one married daughter possibly in Agnes Lumhaxs. The fact that John Tasburgh had a tenement in Norwich to bequeath, might point to a connection with Tasburgh, which is near to Norwich, and the Dairy in the west town of Yarmouth is also interesting. A Robert Tasburgh was Bailiff of Yarmouth in 1498, and again in 1529. But I think the most valuable item in the will concerns the parish church and its fitments, the glasing of the window, and the making of the alabaster reredos table. This is the first bequest of the kind I have met with, in an East Anglian will, although I think Mr. W. L. Hildburgh, F.S.A., records some in his articles on Alabaster plaques printed in "Archæologia." They are very beautiful, but very rare. I have looked to purchase the same for forty years, and only discovered one specimen perfect. It is unfortunate that no specific sum was given for this addition, the executors had to meet the cost whatever it was. The tomb of John Tasburgh may still be seen in St. Peter's Church, let into the north chancel wall.

John Tasburgh was, I presume, succeeded in his estate at South Elmham, by Thomas Tasburgh his son and heir, at least there is the authority of the Visitation pedigree for such an assertion. He is there given as "Thomas Tasburgh of St. Peter's Gent, son and heir to John, married to a daughter of . . . . Pulvertoft in co. Lincoln Gent, and by her had issue John, son and heir." There was a lease from the Priory of Flixton to Thomas Tasburgh, son of the late John Tasburgh of St. Peters, South Elmham, of an enclosure called Myttemounteclos abutting on the road called Pynchonesway leading towards Bungay 19 Ed. IV, 1479. Mr. Frederick Johnson, of Norwich, told me that he could not find the will of either Thomas or his wife at Norwich, and so I have thought it likely that he did not reside in Elmham, or die there, and that possibly his mother, Margery Tasburgh may have rented it from him, and resided therein, instead of "Holwerys," the home provided for her widowhood by her husband. The wife of Thomas Tasburgh did not belong to the county, and the only other one of that name residing in the county was "Alys, daughter of Richard Herberd als Yaxley, who married Richard Pulvertoft of co. Lincoln Gent."

The next will from which I made extracts, is that of Margery Tasburgh, who outlived her husband John Tasburgh eleven years, made her will as "Margery Taseburgh of St. Peters Southelmham on 16th February 1484." There can be no doubt, I think, that the house and lands of St. Peter's Hall, had passed to Thomas Tasburgh after his father's death, but to Margery the widow was bequeathed several lands and tenements, as her dower, which, as she remained without a husband, unforfeited by any remarriage she had the power apparently to give or sell at her pleasure, thus "To Edward my sonne" she bequeathes "my clos called prests clos, and my place Hulweryspittell,

with a clos called Grunds, with the weyes before the parsonage gate, and a medowe called Damyongs, and a pightell, and two acres of land by the church land of the parson of St. Peter's, and a medowe called Hudds medowe." This last mentioned piece was to pass, at Edward's death, to the augmentation of the benefice of St. Peter's. To a daughter "Phillippe Illary" is bequeathed a certain amount of household stuff, and she enjoins her son Edward to pay to Phillippe his sister 13s. 4d. a year, for her life while single, and if the said Phillippe Illary be married then "to loose the annuity." Two other daughters are mentioned "Dam Anneys Lumhals" and "Alice Cok, the wife of Harry Cok." The testator was very lavish in her gifts to religious institutions. She remembers the "Freres" of the Order of St. Francis, the Friars of Norwich, and the lazars there, the monastery of Mettingham, and each individual monk in it, the nuns of "Brosiard" which is Bruisyard, and "an honest prest Sir John Randolf." He is enjoined "to sing in the chapel of our Lady for me and for my husband for seven years," and she gives to him, "my masse book, my Chales, a vestement of Rede motle, with an awbe, the lesser Reed chests, a Bason of Latton, the leist cheste, 4 silver spoones, a littill gyrdell harnessyd with silver, and a great pelwe (pillow), and his chambyr within my parlour, and free entry for seven years, and to have my house called Talbotts in St. Petyrs parych for the payment of one years service." Thomas her eldest son, is mentioned only once, to him she bequeaths "a standyng pece of silver with a Kevor to the same, and a lesser salt without kevor" and with the bequest she makes a stipulation "That he deliver unto my son John a peaceable estate of the renters in Norwich in St. Peter permontegate, nor trouble his brother Edward in any of his lands, and if he do so trouble him then myn executors to restrayne or defende him wt my gifte aforesaid," and then to "Annes" wife of her son

Thomas, she gives "a goune furred with mynks, and my best girdell." To John Tasburgh, her grandson, and son of the aforesaid Thomas, she gives "a calfe of a yere age." And lastly she gives her body to be buried "by myn husband," and the will was proved by the executors, Edward Tasburgh of Southelmham, and Henry Cokke, of Stowmarket on 5th June 1485.

There are a few points in this will, on which I must comment, for instance on the fact that Thomas the eldest son of Margery Tasburgh, and apparently the owner of St. Peter's Hall is not named as her chief executor, which would surely have been the case did he reside in the same parish; whereas Edward the second son, who did reside there, and her son in law Harry Cokke of Stowmarket, are the names recorded. Evidently Thomas Tasburgh had done something in opposition to his mother, or we should not have found that stipulation in her will, that he should not disturb his brothers in their estates. I cannot but think, after reading through the will carefully, and considering the arrangements made by Margery Tasburgh, for her chaplain, that her residence in South Elmham must have been St. Peter's Hall, and that she had some direct interest in the property. "The chamber within my parlour" would fit so well that upper room at St. Peter's Hall, with the fine timber ceiling and fireplace with two bedchambers at the far end of it, whereas I doubt whether in 1484 there would have been any other house in St. Peter's parish able to provide a room so described. Furthermore, I think, Margery must have been a widow when she married John Tasburgh. She left behind her, at her death, a daughter Phillippe Illary, who was a spinster; and possibly Mrs. Henry Cokke may have been her sister, though certainly "Dam Anneys Lumhals" mentioned in this will was the same as Agnes, wife of Ellis Lumhaxs, in the former will, and was sister of Ann Tasburgh, who was under age when her father died.

The third Tasburgh will from which I took extracts, is the last of the series in any way connected with St. Peter's Hall. It is that of John Tasburgh, son of the aforesaid Thomas, and grandson of John Tasburgh (whose will was proved in 1473). It was drawn up in 1510, and the first paragraph of any importance is that concerning his wife who was Olive, the daughter of John Everard of Cratfield in Suffolk. He says "My wife Olyff to have her dwelling in my place, that is to say the parlour with the kechyn, and one of the garret chambers till my son be of full age, she keping her soole unmarried. I wol she have as ys afore rehersyd, terme of her wydowhode, the gardyn as yt ys incloseyd wtin the mote, and the medowe before the Gate, and the clos called Stye land with the Rokewod medows, the fencing at hyr charge except the hedge on the syde between Rokwod, and the said medowe, and she to pay no rent but 3.s. by year for ferme to the parson, and then for to have 2 young neets and 2 calvys in Somer and a loode of strawe in wynter, also to have the lytell house undre the whet chamber, to lay in her Beests mete, also sufficient firewood to brun necessarly, and yf sche wol not have them to her oryn (own), to do yt draw or digge in the pasture at her charge."

Olive Tasburgh gets an allowance of 40s. paid every half year by her husband's executors, "tyl the heir come to hys ful age," after that the same allowance is to be paid by him, but if she should marry again she would have only 20s. a year "to therintent she may be good moder to her chyldren and myn." I presume the dairy was entirely hers, for she gets "16 milch kine, and the best horse" this latter she is to choose for self, with another for her servant, she is to have half the swine, and "a bullock to hyr lardour ageynst the next Christmas." She was to have "all stuff of household as yt was, or (e'er) my brother Henry Everard brought any to my howse, except silver

plate." However of this she receives a portion "my Gobelet with the cover, gilt, my salte, 8 silver spones, and my Nute." This is, I think, a cup formed out of a cocoanut, and set round the rim with silver.

John the elder son, who was heir to the estate when he came of age, under an entail made by his grandfather, also receives some silver "My hold mazer and the flat pece with 4 silver spongs." Agnes the daughter gets only 4 silver spoones, and then one other piece of plate is recorded "the gold cupp to be sold to make redy money for my buryeing." To Agnes, the daughter, the testator bequeaths £20 "whether she be marryed or a Nunne" and in addition what her mother promised to give her, and moreover she is left "wholly at the finding and charge of her moder." Elizabeth the other daughter mentioned also gets £20, and whatever more is to be at the discretion of the executors.

John Tasburgh seems to have purchased shortly before he made his will the property in St. Peter's parish which belonged to his uncle Edward Tasburgh, which latter was bequeathed to him by his mother Margery Tasburgh. This property was evidently then not paid for, so in his will he enjoins on his executors to do this, and to keep it in their hands till Edward his second son should be 22 years of age, then he is to receive the same, but if he die before he reaches the age of 22, then it is to pass to John the elder son "according to the entail to the name of Tasburgh made by his grandfather."

Two interesting bequests relate to other than the family. One old retainer whose name was Christian Cleder is "to have her dwelling in the Almshouses, and she is to have choyse after olde Wellys departs before Wellys' wife," and this clause is added "If my

uncle Edward will not kepe the said houses wind tight, and defend the water, I wol they be kept by myn exors," and besides the house the old lady gets "her Sunday mete within my place, or else 4s. 4d. a year, and two lode of fagot wode."

The other paragraph concerns a boy named John Crane, he to be "kept as long as he lyveth yf he be styl lame with my wife terme of her life, and after by myn heir, and yf he may amend and have hys lymmes ageyne, myn exors to find him to scole for two years, and make him a prest at my cost." Olyff Tasburgh the widow, and William Raybet his brother in law, are the two executors appointed, and he orders them to have his body buried in the churchyard of St. Peters "towards the west under the stypell." This will was proved in London, in the Lord Bishop's house near Charing Crosse, on 15 October, 1510.

There is no need to comment on this will, but some few facts may be deduced therefrom. John Tasburgh and Olive his wife had four children, two of them sons, John the elder, heir to the entailed estate, and a second son Edward, who settled at St. Andrews Ilketshall; also two daughters, Agnes and Elizabeth. They are not recorded either in the 1561 Visitation pedigree, or that in the Harleian MSS, quoted by Suckling, the historian.

From the several details in the will concerning St. Peter's Hall, it might well be the main block of the house we see to-day, with a range of buildings on either side of the forecourt, and a wall with a gate at the far end, and that which is called "the mote" certainly encloses the eastern and southern sides, that is, the southern side of the house and the garden. We find the widow Olive Tasburgh the chief executor, with a residence in the house, and endowed with some land,

and a fair sized dairy of cows. She would, undoubtedly with the help of her husband's brother-in-law, William Raybet, farm the estate, and her own land. I would suggest that this member of the Raybet family might be an ancestor of the Rabetts of Bramfield, which is not so very far away. Seeing that John Tasburgh died just 37 years after his grandfather, and 26 years after his grandmother, at whose death in 1484 he was a mere boy, he could hardly have been much above 40 at his death in 1510.

I have never seen, either the original of the Tasburgh pedigree in the Harleian collection or a copy of it, save that given in the 1st volume of Suckling's "History of Suffolk," but knowing well that all such early pedigrees, like those of the 1561 Visitations, are dateless, I think it probable that our historian may have supplemented the aforesaid pedigree with those useful appendages, taken no doubt from the wills which he quoted, but had he read carefully through these wills he would have found that the dates were given to the wrong people. For instance, concerning the date of 1509, he gives it the boy John Tasburgh who in the will of 1510 was yet under age, and then to John Tasburgh who married Olive Everard he attributes 1473 as the date of his death, when this date really refers to the death of his grandfather. This renders as rather untrustworthy the further statements in that pedigree.

In the year 1524 a subsidy was collected, and under South Elmham we find "John Tasburgh of St. Peters, gentleman, in landes £26 13s. 4d." that was his assessment, and he paid £1 6s. 8d. This was the boy "under age" in 1510. He married twice. His first wife was Alice daughter of a man named Dibney of Garboldisham, in Norfolk; and Blomefield, the historian, when writing of that place, records that in 1530 took place "the burial of Susan Dibney by

her husband, John Taseburgh and Will Bolton being sons-in-law." His second wife was Elizabeth daughter of John Davy of Norwich, and widow of a man named Tracy. To him was granted in the year 1544 "the premises of the Priory of Flixton," where I presume he took up his residence and he is said to have died in 1552. According to the Visitation pedigree of 1561 John Tasburgh had by his first wife, a son and heir, also John Tasburgh, who is styled in that pedigree "John Tasburgh, of St. Peters Southelmham," and it is quite probable that he was residing in St. Peter's Hall, if his father was at Flixton; and he would be likely to remove to Flixton at a later period. He is said to have married "Elizabeth daughter of John Tracey of Norwich, and by her had a daughter Frances." This lady married Thomas Bateman.

With this, the last John Tasburgh of St. Peters, I bring to a close my account of St. Peter's Hall. The later history of the Tasburgh family is much more intimately connected with Flixton than with their old home, nor do I suppose that any alterations or additions would have been made at St. Peter's Hall, after the acquisition of the grant of Flixton Priory in 1544. One wonders how far back can be traced their coat of arms thus described in Papworth "Argent a chevron between three pilgrims' staves each supporting a pouch (or palmer's scrip) sable, garnished or. Tasborough or Tasbrough of Southelmham Suffolk." I think it is a 16th century coat, and may have been adopted soon after the acquisition of Flixton, and I cannot agree with the Suffolk historian that the Tasburghs were "gentlemen of coat armour" long before the erection of St. Peter's Hall.

The details extracted from those three wills is so intimately associated with the old house I am inclined to think that John Tasburgh, who married Olive

Everard, and who died in 1510, was responsible for the alterations which are evident to-day and which have given to it such an ecclesiastical appearance; and herein I am partially in agreement with Suckling, but I cannot think it at all likely that this John Tasburgh erected the house. The great hall, which evidently had an open timber roof, and the long open fireplace, are of an earlier date, and there must have been a residence on the site long before 1500. The will discloses that the Tasburghs of the late 15th century were strong adherents to the faith of their forefathers, and were also much attached to their church, and its doctrines, hence possibly we see here the innate love of John Tasburgh for ecclesiastical architecture. But from whence did those windows and the decorated string-courses, of certainly rather different styles of architecture, come? It was stated by some of those who visited the house last summer. that similar material to that used in St. Peter's Hall, may still be seen in the garden of the vicarage at All Saints, South Elmham, which was taken from the decayed church of St. Nicholas, also in South Elmham. It is, I think, more easily understandable that these ecclesiastical details were designed for a sacred edifice, and brought hither at a later date, than that they were designed and wrought for the place where we see them to-day; besides which, this will more easily account for the old coffinstone of the priest, on the floor of the porch.

It has been suggested to me by Mr. H. C. Casley, of Ipswich, that the ecclesiastical details connected with St. Peter's Hall might have been removed from the Chantry Chapel which they had erected on the north side of the chancel of St. Peter's Church, and moreover, he adds, "If it got into disrepair, they would have been compelled to put it in order, and as they had no sympathy with the Reformed Religion,

what more likely than that they should take the remains to their house. It ought not to be difficult to establish from whence they were taken and under what ecclesiastical authority. This would establish the date, and probably enable drawings to be found."

I must before I conclude give what details are known, of the later history of St. Peter's Hall and the land connected with it. According to Dr. Copinger the family still held on to it till the death of Lettice, the daughter of John Tasburgh, and wife of John Wyborne, of Hawkwell, in Kent, which occured on July 1, 1738. Probably that may be the date when they ceased to own Flixton Hall. Suckling, who lived near to it and who had much better opportunity for learning its later history than any other historian, says that the estate passed from the Tasburgh family into that of the Barnardistons, but he gives no date. From this family it passed to a Mr. Price, of the City of London, of which gentleman it was purchased by William Adair, which would be, I presume, either late in the 18th or early in the 19th century, and in that family it long remained, and one of them was responsible for all the restoration which can be seen to-day in and about St. Peter's Hall.