

THE MANOR OF DAGWORTH WITH SORRELS

IN

STOW HUNDRED

IN

SUFFOLK

FORWARD

It was some considerable time after we came to live in Dagworth, twenty six years past, that I came to realise that the name did not derive from the colloquial, 'dag' or early morning mist which is characteristic of these low lying woods and meadows.

Having discovered that the name derives from that of an otherwise unrecorded Anglo Saxon landholder, Dagga, it seemed that during the course of a thousand years or more a great deal had happened; and that it should be recorded albeit in an amateurish way.

I was greatly helped in the first place by the Reverend Nigel McCulloch, then Vicar of Haughley, who generously, and painstakingly, since he wrote it in longhand, gave me the basic information and much else that refers to the Manor of Sorrels, so closely associated with Haughley, subsequently published in his 'Haughley Past and Present'.

It seems that the population of Dagworth with Sorrels hardly varied from the figure of 150 from Anglo Saxon times until after the construction of the Eastern Union Railway in 1846, which took a few away, but not too many. Given a generous life span of 40 years, the 5,000 acres of the Manor has supported something of the order of 5,000 people. By now, their progeny must be worldwide. There is some evidence of that but the same applies to every Manor in the county, until very recent years the source of adventure based on stability.

Apart from those that I have mentioned in the account, Winston Churchill, Arthur Bryant, G. O. Sayles and other Historians in an endeavour to follow the correct and chronological background, from thoroughly readable books. For the more detailed information about Dagworth, I am indebted to the Norwich Record Office which keeps the papers of the Bishop of Norwich and to the Suffolk Record Office and, in particular, to Miss Amanda Arrowsmith, the County Archivist for her help.

From the last two I have had copies of maps and documents which support the account. The other sources I have used are: 'The Anglo Saxon Chronicles', 'Coppinger's Manors', Kirby's, 'Suffolk Traveller, 1829, Edward Page's 'Suffolk Traveller, 1844' and, 'The Victoria History of Suffolk'.

And finally, I must thank Mrs. Constance Storrs, M.A. for reading and correcting the seventh draft, giving such expert comments on Mediaeval History that left me with little alternative than to write this, the Eighth and, I hope, the final one.

Dagworth: February 1985

P. de V. Patey

DAGWORTH

In Ethelred's day we knew the Danes
Had passed close by our Village.
From Gippiwick, they skipt our lanes,
For Cambridge, bent on pillage.

Cambridge - Grantabrig was the name,
A way across the swampy Cam.
Grantchester that Brook brought to fame,
The way to the Heart of England.

From Dagga's Hall we heard their yells,
On the road above the valley.
We hid our women, our beasts, ourselves,
While they despoiled Haggale.

But Dagga's Place was not allowed
To live in peace and plenty.
The Normans came and Breme was called
To serve King Harold and his Country.

And when they failed that Autumn Day,
And both men died on Hastings Field,
Hugh Montfort took his Norman pay
By way of land that Breme had tilled.

Then, William and his Norman Knights,
Replacing the Saxon easy ways,
Exacted tax beyond all rights,
And changed the order of those days.

In Domesday Book he penned the name
First Dagaworda, then Daggeworda,
Twas not until sad John's Reign,
That Dagworth become the order.

From that time on, throughout the years,
Until the Eighteenth Century,
The Manor lost with poor Breme's tears,
Formed the price of men's cupidity.

And now, in no less troubled times,
Haply, the valley has returned,
A place of peace of ordered lives,
That, for us, our forebears earned.

And, when our neighbours, Suffolk born,
Quite often speak of Dagworth Ford
As Dagga's Dock, a phrase well known,
They use an ancient, hallowed word.

Invaders are few, but kept away,
Since we are very homely,
By a sign on the winding way,
That says, 'To Dagworth Only'.

DAGWORTH WITH SORRELS

"To understand things as they are we must understand how they came to be what they are." (G. O. Sayles)

By any measure Dagworth, lying in the river valley between Haughley and Stowmarket, is a very ancient place. How long it has been a settlement we do not know. It was certainly well established and more populous than today, long before the Conquest, before which there is little recorded history of its being. Indeed, to quote again from the Author of 'The Mediaeval Foundations of Britain', up to that event, "We are making bricks with little straw".

It is generally accepted that at the time of Suetonius, the Romans established a staging camp at Haughley. Hollingsworth gave it more significance than it deserved in claiming that it was a garrison on the Antonine Way; and, that the military road ran from Colchester via Haughley to Thetford and then on to Lincoln and the North. We now know that their main routes were Ermine Street on the West and the Norwich Road from Colchester on the east on which Coddenham was a far more important settlement than Haughley.

So why did they have a camp at Haughley? The significance of the Orwell Estuary as a point of entry providing easy access through Suffolk and Cambridgeshire to the Heart of England would have been equally apparent to the Romans as it was later to the Vikings and then to the Stage Coach operators, the Canal builders, the Railways and to the developers of the A45. To provide flexibility of movement the road had to be kept open and garrisoned; a cross country road, if you like, which is the way the Coach operators described it in the Eighteenth Century.

By its very proximity and its fertile land, Dagworth must surely have been a supplier to the Garrison for both produce and service. It is part of a pattern experienced even now by occupying Powers, that suppliers adapt to the occupation. And, Dagworth was on a supply line, albeit a rather swampy one, the River Gipping. From Jocelyn of Breckland we have the account, much later of course, of the stone for the Abbey at St. Edmundsbury being poled up the Gipping, and then the River Rat, to Rattlesden, and then trundled the rest of the way by road.

At a time when roads were rutted tracks, frequently impassable and dangerous, the River was the safest and cheapest way to move loads. The ancient use of this waterway is immortalised in the local name for the Ford at Dagworth, 'Dagga's Dock'. This will also account for the very depth of the sunken road from there towards Haughley, worn away over close on two thousand years.

The road from the Ford to Sorrels, the sub-Manor house, is of much the same depth ten feet or more below field level even now after years of modern cultivation that has eroded much of the topsoil which floats happily down the lane, into the River when we have heavy rain.

The site of Dagworth Hall must always have been the centre of the Settlement. Farming on that side was on heavy land. On the South side of the stream it is light land, much easier to work but, probably, not all that accessible when the flow of the stream was not contained as it is now. So, a son, perhaps sets up on the other side, at Sorrels.

The interesting thing about Sorrels is that it is built on exactly one Ploughland, banked and levelled into the rising ground, like a tennis court. This indicates that whatever might have been there before, the demesne was laid out in Anglo-Saxon times, providing space for a home and a stockaded enclosure for workers, cattle, fodder and forage. Probably quite a defensive area.

Dagworth Hall must have been much the same but the pattern is less easy to discern. After the Conquest, in the hands of the new nobility (Vikings from Normandy) it became a great house up to the point where it could entertain the King and from then onwards declined to become a piece of property, currency for doweries and investment. The Commonwealth briefly checked the nepotistic process until the Restoration, after which time freehold ownership gradually took over. But that took some time, ten generations.

ANGLO SAXON TIMES

From the Oxford Dictionary of Place Names we have some indication of the nature of pre-Conquest Dagworth. As, 'Doecca's Halh and Worp', it would have been the Hall house and land owned or tenanted by Doecca. The dictionary suggests that Doecca may be the Old English, 'Doegga', a short form of name as Daeg was for Daegheard. A modern interpretation would be Day's Hall, Place or Farm. The name could, therefore, originate at any time from the 5th Century after the final withdrawal of the Romans in 442. And it has stuck.

In the Domesday Book, 1085, the name is, 'Dagaworda', then in 1116, 'Daggeworda' and then, 'Daggewurthe', (1216, Feet of Fines), and, far from changing it, the new Norman occupiers gradually took their names from it. But that comes later.

From the time that the Romans withdrew, the whole Country was vulnerable to the incursions of Northern European tribes. The Saxons were the first. The Norwegians and the Danes, generally classed as Vikings, were not slow to realise the opportunity offered for plunder in a relatively mellow and productive land. In their language, Viks were creeks; and they were the people who sailed the North Sea in shallow bottomed craft that they could sail, pole and push far up into the estuaries. To them the Orwell Estuary was a gift and they used it for at least five hundred years but not continuously.

But, by the year 875, the Danes had occupied London and had fortified Reading, using their practice of infiltration into the East Coast estuaries. The account of this is vividly recorded by Winston Churchill, another great man who came to the defence of England when so much seemed to be lost. In 875 it was Alfred who stopped the rot; and defeated the Danes at the Battle of Ashdown.

Prior to that event he had, briefly, contemplated the imposition of a tax to pay off the aggressors, Danegeld. After his victory at Ashdown it seemed unnecessary. It was, however, re-imposed in 991 by Ethelred II, the Unready, to pay off the invaders who continued to ravage the Country from the east. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle recounts their repeated forays through this Valley right to the Heart of England. Dagworth's share of the Tax was 30 shillings, a very considerable sum. But it was a sizeable place.

Dagworth encompassed some 5,000 acres which would then have been described as 50 Hides, or 42 Carucates. A hide was 100 ploughlands and a ploughland, a day's ploughing, was a chain by a furlong (220 yards by 22, ten cricket pitches by one), our late lamented acre.

All the land was owned by the King and apportioned for reward, service or rent, or combinations of those, to his subjects, a practice that continued as the Feudal System broken until Cromwell's time.

An Anglo Saxon King had five ranks below him. They were the Athelings, the Eorls, the Gesiths or Thegns, the Coerls and the Theows or slaves. These were invariably bound for service to the King. Of similar status to the lower ranks, but freed from bonds of service, were the Sokemen (Socmanii), Danish warriors who had settled here with some degree of ownership of their land but having to pay dues for their protection. There were also two other classes between the Coerls and the Theows. These were the Villeins and the Bordars, part of the depressed Anglo-Saxon peasantry who had the use of their land in return for service to the landholder.

Running across all this there were also 'Free Men', usually referred to as Freeman. As the foreign compilers of the Domesday Record had some difficulty in coming to terms with the already complicated structure of Anglo-Saxon society, it is not surprising that they put varying interpretations on the status of Freeman in one part of the Country and another. In Suffolk, Freeman were probably ranked with Sokemen, freed from service locally but owing it to the Monarch.

In the Reign of the last Anglo Saxon Kings, Edward the Confessor and Harold, Dagworth was part of the Royal Manor of Haroluestuna (Harleston), Harold's Town, and held by a Freeman named Breme. Thornei, now Stowmarket after being known as Stow Thorney, was also a Royal Manor and it is interesting to record that the King's Bailiff had his house and his warehouse there, on the bank of the Gipping on the site of the Stowmarket Timber Company's recent yard on the Creeting Road; on the waterway from Dagworth providing the best way of transporting dues in kind from the Royal Manors. Maybe Dagga's Dock was a bustling place? Under Breme's management, with some benefit to himself?

Undoubtedly, the most influential man in the area was Gutmund who had only a minuscule holding in Dagworth, (possibly the Fishponds) but 1,100 acres in Haughley, in addition to extensive lands in Essex. Gutmund was originally a Sokeman but he rose to the rank of Thegn with residence here on the site of Haughley Castle, suggested by the Reverend Nigel McCulloch. From the same source, Gutmund's brother was Wulfric, Bishop of Ely and he, himself, aspired to the hand of the daughter of Earl Wofgar of East Anglia.

Bremer was another Freeman living in the Manor. His name means 'Of Breme's Place', and it is probable that he was a relative. It is reasonable to think that he farmed the land South of the Stream, Sorrels, the part of the Manor to which, as we shall see, Earl Roger Bigod laid claim.

These three owed service to the King. Breme paid it with his life, at Hastings. Gutmund probably suffered the same fate. Bremer survived.

The whole business of Hastings was most unfortunate. King Harold knew of William's intention to invade throughout the Summer of 1066. He was prepared for it but sustained northerly winds prevented the Normans from crossing until September. In the meantime, Harold's treacherous brother, Tostig and King Harald of Norway, landed with an army in the North. Harold diverted his forces to Northumbria and roundly defeated the invaders at Stamford Bridge on Wednesday, 20th September. Tostig and King Harald were slain. Then the prevailing wind changed allowing William to cross the Channel and land at Pevensey on Michaelmas Day, 29th September. His landing was unopposed and, with Harold so far away, he had two weeks to consolidate his position and to construct a defensive earthworks, entirely reversing the original plan of battle.

After a truly remarkable switch of forces from the North to the South, involving the raising of fresh levies on the way, Harold Godwinson mounted an attack on the Norman Army, in defensive positions, on Thursday, 14th October. Even so, it was a close run thing. Had Harold's new levies not pursued a diversionary retreat by the Normans, thinking that they had won the day, the outcome could have been very different.

The final blow was undoubtedly the chance arrow that killed King Harold. It is strange to think that no one knows the name of the archer, for it was he, assisted by the unusual weather conditions of the summer of 1066, who entirely changed the history of England. To subdue a whole country so united as England against invaders, in one battle, was more than William of Normandy could have possibly hoped for. And it was largely due to the weather.

Its effect on Dagworth, and countless other places, was disastrous. Having lived for centuries under the threat, and the reality, of Norse invasions under the rule of weak, or strong, kings leading to the saintly, but ineffective reign of the penultimate Saxon King, Edward the Confessor, the nation felt confident under the leadership of Harold Godwinson; and that was destroyed in one day. (After the feckless Ethelred fled the country in 1016, Edmund Ironside succeeded. He defeated the Norsemen in five successive battles, ending with his own defeat at Ashington by the Danish force under Canute, son of Sweyn; all accomplished, and lost, in a span of two years. Edmund succeeded when he was twenty and died when he was twenty two. Having a Dane as King seemed a sensible way of avoiding further depredations and it proved correct until 1035 when Canute died. His heirs were two drunken louts, one of whom died in 1042, "as he stood in his drink at Lambeth". Ethelred's son, Edward, entirely schooled in the Norman culture, was brought back from Normandy to fill the void, having in good faith, no doubt, nominated William as his successor. William, in his turn, exacted an oath of allegiance from Harold Godwinson, whom he saw as his most likely opponent, but under very dubious circumstances.)

The Normans, themselves, were also Norsemen, the ones that had directed their attentions, advancing through the Low Countries, and conquering most of Central Europe as far south as Sicily. William's conquest of England did not, however, deter the Vikings. The raids went on and one of the Conqueror's early measures was to re-impose Danegeld, not to pay them off but to pay for the cost of fighting them. Dagworth had once again to pay its 30 shillings a year, and a lot more into the bargain.

And so we come to the most violent change in our history. As Tennyson put it, "The old order changeth, giving place to new, and God fulfills himself in many ways". Those, including Breme and Gutmund, who had supported the late King lost their lands. The manors were re-allocated to Norman Knights. The old aristocracy struggled to find favour and keep remnants. Where they might seem to be of use to the new Order, some were successful. Earl Roger Bigod, who has some part in the claim to Sorrels, was one of these, even though he failed in his claim here. But they remained a twisty lot throughout the first half of the second Millenium, and beyond.

THE NORMANS

William, the Bastard as he was generally and not very affectionately known, had a learned brother, Odo, Bishop of Bayeaux, whom he appointed Abbot and Bishop of Peterborough, then the foremost Benedictine monastery, founded in the 7th Century by the King of Mercia. His given task was to sort out the recalcitrant Anglo Saxon priests, monastic and secular, and to use them to codify and make a complete record of the whole country.

The outcome, exactly twenty years after Hastings, was the Domesday Record, or Book, produced in 1086. Even to this day it remains as the most detailed record of everything, in the widest sense, in England; people and their ranks, land holdings, horses, ploughs and cattle, down to the last pig, including woodlands, arable, pasture and land to sustain the hogs.

Whilst the Domesday Record was primarily designed to record ownership and population, their possessions and values, clearly with a view to the degree of taxation that could be imposed, it records how the Anglo-Saxon era ended and how the Norman one began in a way no other record has done. The survey provides the first firm knowledge of Dagworth and of Sorrels, even though the latter is not named as such. It was the land Eorl Roger claimed, and lost to Hugh de Montfort.

The one thing that was untouched in this transfer of ownership, and still allowed to be free of taxation, was the Church lands. Dagworth had its own church, St. Margaret's, on Church Field which must have stood on 30 acres (Ploughlands), for the maintenance of its priest. Sorrels, at Tothill, was building another church, St. John's, possibly with Eorl Roger's support, to establish a separate Manor. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle indicates that after the Conquest, Viking raids were concentrated more on the North of England than through the Southern (Eastern) estuaries, and Roger felt safe in investing in a site on the main road to St. Edmundsbury. Others, later, followed the same course of thinking, but apart from a brief period in the Eighteenth Century, it never came to anything. By then all remnants of the Church of St. John had disappeared, as had those of St. Margaret's in the valley. Both are shown on R.W. Morden's map of Suffolk in 1692. St. Margaret's is mentioned in a Will of 1485, leaving to it a legacy of '2 bushels of barley', now one of the perks of Old Newton?

St. John's Church, curiously known as 'Jones in Tothill', still half built in 1086, was completed and continued to serve the small population of that part of the Manor, Sorrels and Tot Hill where the majority lived. Morden shows a cluster of houses there in 1680 and in 1692. They are also shown in the first Ordnance Survey of 1836 with St. John's site on a well defined road from the top of Fishponds Way to Rush Green.

What we might now describe as development at Tot Hill indicates a return of confidence after the sacking of Ipswich in 991, and the complete subjugation of the whole of East Anglia, starting again at Ipswich in the years 1010 - 11. On the latter occasion, the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records that the Danes harried and burnt in East Anglia, 'even penetrating into the uninhabited fens'. They then went on through Cambridgeshire, Buckinghamshire and right down to Wiltshire, acting in the same way. There can be no doubt, whatsoever, that Dagworth, with Haughley and Stowmarket, suffered as they had for centuries, and continued to live in a state of fear, or uncertainty.

Those who looked for the silver lining to the cloud that had descended on England in October, 1066, must have felt some greater degree of security. Whilst Harold's three sons made an attempt to reverse the status quo by coming 'unexpectedly from Ireland into the mouth of the Avon with a pirate host', the citizens of Bristol stoutly resisted them. They retired to their ships with their plunder. In the North it was a different story. Robert, appointed Earl of Northumberland by William, was slain in 1069 with 900 of his men. William's conquest at that time was more effective in the South than in the North but the South had to pay.

For an assessment of the opinion after 20 years of William's rule, in 1086 when the Domesday Survey was completed, from the Chronicle we have:

'These sums he took by weight from his people,
Most unjustly and for little need.
He was sunk in greed,
and utterly given to avarice...
Whoever slew a hart or a hind
Was to be blinded.
He forbade the killing of boars
Even as the killing of harts...
Hares also he decreed should go unmolested.
The rich complained and the poor lamented.'

Whilst much of that refers to the prohibition against taking ground game, regarded as a necessity by the Anglo-Saxon peasantry, the first line concerns the full impact of the Domesday Survey which had already begun to make its mark on the formerly easy going system of taxation. An invaluable record for future historians and the basis of land rights even until today, it came as a death knell to the people. The entries for the Manor of Dagworth, repeated for every manor in the Country, described as 'One league long by half a league broad' (3 miles by 1.1/2 miles), the length running from Stowmarket to Bacton, and Harleston Manor to Old Newton the other way, but not in those exact terms, the entries read as follows:

'DAGGAWORDA. 1.1/2 carucates delivered to Hugh de Montfort and 1/2 carucate in exchange mentioned in Survey. The Soc belongs to King and Earl. There were also 11 bordars, 3 serfs, 2 plough teams in demesne, 2 belonging to men (reduced to 1 by Survey), wood to support 60 hogs, 9 acres of meadow, 1 mill, 13 beasts (reduced to 10 by Survey), 12 hogs, 16 sheep, 40 goats. A church with 30 acres of land, 1.1/2 acres meadow. Value of holding 60 s., held under Brema a Freeman who was killed at Hastings. In the same Manor was Bremer, a Freeman by commendation only, having 11.1/2 acres, 1 bordar, half a plough team which had disappeared at the time of the Survey. Value 3 s held by William, son of Gross of Hugh de Montfort. Hugh held this third holding - half a Freeman having 20 acres worth 3 s.

That part referred to the land in the valley. The church was St. Margaret's.

With regard to the Sorrels side, the Survey continues:

"In the same DAGWARDA, Roger (Bigod) holds in demesne 6 socmen belonging to Tornei, the King's Crown Manor (Manorium regis de regione), with all customs. And they have among them 1 carucate of land and 4 bordars. Then and afterwards 3 ploughs, now 2. And 5 acres of meadow. Then and afterwards worth 30s., now 20s. Half a church, (St. John's still being built) with 25 acres of free land. And these 6 socmen Hugh claims as his by livery of service (ex-liberatione). Dagwarda is 1 league long and 1/2 league broad. And it pays 30s. in geld whoever may be the tenant."

(Hugh de Montfort was one of William's six principal officers, created Constable of England, and also known as Constable of Haughley. It probably emphasises the importance attributed by the King to the defence of this area that such a 'high and mighty' man was made responsible for the manors protecting the traditional Viking route, Stowmarket, Harleston, Haughley and Dagworth to name those that concern us.

It is clear from the text of the Survey that there was some difference of opinion between himself and Earl Roger as to the tenancy of the other productive part of the Manor. Not surprisingly, Hugh prevailed.

Roger Bigot, his original name, had risen from being a tenant of Archbishop Stigand of Elmham, to found a family that was to dominate East Anglia. His territory was East Suffolk but, like those before and after him, he was a schemer. Frustrated in his ambitions under William's rule, he gave his support to William's son, Robert of Normandy, in his plan to take over the English Throne. Despite this he lived on as the founder of a great English family whose name constantly recurs, for good or bad, in our history - the Norfolks. Like, the de Montforts.)

As Winston Churchill put it, "The history of many an English village begins with an entry in the Domesday Book". Disregarding the dispossession of Breme's family, the high impost of rents and the re-imposition of the hated Danegeld (Geld) by 1087, the year of the Conqueror's death, as we might now say, "in a tragic accident at St. Gervase in Normandy, when riding his horse", Earl Hugh was in complete control in this area and, in Dagworth, William, son of Gross, was his man.

The lower part of Dagworth where Breme had lived, now occupied by the Norman tenant was not off the beaten track. It had its own road structure on the lower road from Stowmarket to Haughley, in use until the Second World War, with a cross road from Old Newton to Tot Hill, with a population of 284, so far as the records show, and probably all workers, not children or followers.

For comparison, Stowmarket was not all that much greater. Old Newton had 36 on the roll and Haughley, with its garrison numbered 762. But Thornei was still 'Manorium regis de regione' and Haughley the seat of the Constable, and no doubt, as in Roman times, Dagworth, with its fertile land and its

water communication to the sea, fell back into its familiar role; but now with harsh claims on its profitability and strict rules concerning the wild life that could be taken from the land, and punitive taxation. As the Chronicle reports of 1086, "Alas, how wretched and unhappy the times were then! So fever stricken lay the unhappy people in those days that they were never far from death's door, until the pangs of hunger finished them off". In that same year St. Paul's was burnt down, as well as many other churches in London, as were also almost every important town in the whole of England.

The son of Gross, William, changed his name in the Norman style to William de Gross. Whilst there is no reason to suggest that the family did not continue to live here, by the time of the reign of King John (1199 - 1216) there is no further mention of the name. By then the Manor was held by Walter de Aggeword, yet another interpretation of the name of the place and, no doubt, more easy to the Norman tongue. It could well be the same family.

Walter was married to Adeline, a ward of King John. Wardship was not relationship. It most frequently occurred when the heir was a minor and the estate reverted to the King. So Adeline may well have been of the family of William de Gross who married Walter who then chose to affiliate himself with his wife's property by calling himself, 'de Aggeword'. Pure speculation.

Whatever the relationship was, it probably explains Hollingsworth's (The History of Stowmarket, 1844) report that on 11th March, 1216, King John broke his journey from Cambridge to Framlingham to stay with Walter and Adeline; and that he was accompanied by a hundred ladies and gentlemen and their followers. It gives some idea of the stature of Dagworth Hall at that time that it could accommodate and entertain such a large and lordly party. It was undoubtedly a costly exercise for the hosts. Both the King and Sir Walter died later in the year. One hopes the events were not caused by the King's stay in Dagworth.

Whilst Copinger described the account as pathetic, it is most unlikely that it was not based on written evidence; and that the evidence came from the old Parish records discovered by the Rev. Hollingsworth in an ancient chest in the Parish Church. Having used these for his own history, they were not seen again.

Walter was succeeded by his son, Robert, who no doubt was tired of tongue twister and called himself, Robert de Dagworth, thus establishing the name.

Adeline retained the ownership of the Manor until her death which supports the suggestion that it was she who had inherited, rather than Walter. Then Robert's son, Harvey, (or Hervey in some accounts) inherited until his death in 1253 when the title came to his son, Osbert de Dagworth.

THE MONASTIC INFLUENCE

The powerful influence of the monasteries on whom the Administration was so dependent in an illiterate age had, by now, brought about certain changes in the ownership of land; particularly in the areas such as Bury St. Edmunds, where the Abbot claimed the right of direct access to Rome, the highest Court in the Christian world. This was, indeed, a considerable regulating force against the excesses of Kings who had enormous fear of being cut off from the Christian community, either by Interdict or Excommunication, and the effect of that on their subjects.

In 1154, when Henry II came to the Throne, the monastic land in Suffolk was vested in the Abbot of St. Edmundsbury which was a Benedictine foundation and the second greatest in the land after Peterborough (whose supremacy had been established by Odo of Bayeaux, the Conqueror's brother). This land took in most of West Suffolk up to the Hundred Road that ran through Haughley Park, between Woolpit and Wetherden, and some to the East of it, Harleston, Dagworth and Old Newton to mention those closest to our story. Apart from some monastic holdings, such as that of the Abbot of St. Osyth in Stowmarket and Chilton, East Suffolk was held by Hugh Bigod, Earl of Norfolk, from Framlingham Castle.

Like his ancestor Roger in 1086, this Hugh backed the wrong horse. He encouraged and supported King Henry's rebellious sons against their father and, in particular, Henry, Duke of Normandy, who was known as 'The Young King of England'. Hugh tried to raise the Eastern Counties against the King in 1172 in support of another traitor, Beaumont, Earl of Leicester, who landed in Suffolk that year with a host of Flemish Mercenaries, expecting rather more support than he eventually got.

Advancing westward, Leicester destroyed Haughley Castle in 1173 and that was about the peak of his achievement. Humphrey de Bohun, Constable of Haughley, loyal to the King and undoubtedly nettled by the event, raised an army of Suffolk peasants who intercepted Leicester's forces at Fornham and roundly defeated them 'with forks and flails'. The part of Hugh Bigod's penalty that concerns us is that King Henry gave the Manor, Rectory (and therefore the tithes), and advowson of Stowmarket, and appropriated the church at Old Newton, to the Abbot of St. Osyth, who established his country house at Abbots Hall.

Whether we suppose, or not, that the Abbot of Bury was on the side of the pretenders, the effect of this action was to divorce West Suffolk from East Suffolk administratively. And they were to remain as two separate counties for the next 800 years. And even now, they retain their differences.

BACK TO THE DAGWORTHS

We left the Dagworths in the long Reign of Henry III (1216 - 1272), during which his Queen, Eleanor, gained control of the Kingdom with the active co-operation of Simon de Montfort, a direct descendant of the Constable of Haughley. These two acted as Royalty and granted their favours to their supporters accordingly.

Osbert de Dagworth, now calling himself, 'de Daggord', clearly played his cards correctly and gained grant of Free Warren, a quite important concession when ground game was such a material part of the people's diet.

Even so, there is some doubt at that time as to the ownership and title for, on the death of Adeline de Dagworth, despite the succession to the ownership by Robert, and then Harvey, the Manor was transferred to Henry de Essex as part of the Rayleigh estates. But, clearly, some sort of a compromise was arranged perhaps another marriage relationship, since Isobel de Daggord, Osbert's widow, held the Manor in Dowry until her death on the Friday after the Exaltation of the Cross, 46, Henry III, which would have been in 1262. That which follows is complicated by five of the Dagworth men dying during the Reign of Henry III, two of them leaving widows in dower named Isobel.

Richard de Dagworth, son of Osbert, was 'in age' a minor. The manor reverted to the Crown and held in trust by Baldwin Fillol as 'Intermediary between King and Fillol'. Harvey de Dagworth, in the custom of the time, had given the Wardship and Marriage of Richard to William de Hungerford who, doubtless seeing the value of the inheritance, married the youngster to his own daughter, Isobel de Hungerford. The young Richard did not survive for long and his young widow was shown as dowered of Manor. This brought a forth a protest from the Steward of the Earl of Cornwall, no doubt casting covetous eyes on the Dagworth lands adjacent to his Royal Master's possession in Haughley. Cornwall was the brother of King John. Somehow we seem to get back to a former, undefined relationship between the Monarch and the distaff side of the Dagworths.

Cornwall's Steward did not have too much luck. Within three or four days his men were ejected from the Manor by John Fillol's father who then promptly sold the wardship and marriage to the Archbishop of York, a very thoughtful insurance against any future aspirations.

Having survived Richard, the younger Isobel died in 1262, leaving the Manor to her second son, John, who having doubtless studied the options that were available, demanded the rights of Gallows and Excise, Bread and Beer as well as Free Warren, which last seems not to have been passed down with the title.

John and, indeed he may be Sir John de Dagworth, with his clear eye for business, married Maud, the eldest daughter of Simon de Scaccro, a Shropshire landowner of great wealth. Maud was in her own right 'seized of the office of Usher of the Exchequer' which passed to her son, another John, on her death.

The elder John held the Manor for only ten years, dying in 1272 right at the end of the old King's reign or even a little after, since his son, John, was a minor in the wardship of Edward I. This one was certainly a Knight and with a good head for financial opportunities.

His mother had two sisters, Laura and Beatrix, who had been well dowered by their father, Simon, and were in Wardship. Young Sir John bought out his aunts' Wardship and Marriage and then sold them to John of Gaunt, doubtless at a profit. (This, of course, was not the John of Gaunt, son of Edward III and Duke of Lancaster. He was yet to be born, in 1340.)

Sir John married Alice de Beaumont, co-heir with her sister to the Earl of Leicester, descendant of the traitorous Leicester who had been routed at Fornham a hundred and fifty years earlier. Clearly, old scores were forgotten; the marital link was no disadvantage. For, when Sir John died in 1331, he was 'seised of demesne of Office of the Crown, one messuage, a garden, a warren, coppice and 363 acres arable land in Dagworth by service of three long arrows'. But that is certainly not all since there would have been a considerable inheritance from his mother and from his wife's share of the Beaumont estates. He was almost certainly the last Dagworth to live here.

His son, Sir Nicholas Dagworth (the conjunction had been dropped), is the first of the of the family to feature in our National history, having been placed to do so by the alliances of the two previous generations. Living in the long, eventful and ebullient reign of Edward III (1327 - 1377), he was, like the first Elizabethans, a man of enterprise and adventure. Much favoured by the King for his service in the early years of the Hundred Years' War, he was appointed Captain of Aquitaine. He was also Marshall of the Itinerant Justices (Justices in Eyre), and Usher of the Exchequer, inherited from his grandmother.

From Edward Page's 'Suffolk Traveller', 1844, we gather that he was also Lord of Blickling in Norfolk. From the Blickling history written by Gervase Jackson-Stops, it transpires that he built the first Blickling Hall on the site of the present Tudor Mansion where Henry VIII paid court to Ann Bollyn, at which time it was owned by the Bollyn family. And, it is there that he is buried.

Sir Nicholas married Alianora, daughter of Walter Rossale of Shropshire, possibly consolidating the de Scaccario connection in that County. But they had no children. He had a sister, Thomasine, to whom he granted the Lordship of the Manor of Dagworth, possibly as a dowry on her marriage. And it may be that in the interests of his sister, despite all his other commitments, he did not neglect Dagworth. It is recorded that in 1334, for the relief of certain lands here he made the traditional service to the Crown of 'Three fletched arrows, feathered with eagles' feathers, held in capite'. Whilst there were plenty of fletchers about at that time, one wonders where they got the eagles' feathers from.

The following year, 1335, Nicholas sought, and obtained 'Licence to enfeoff Henry de Elyingham, Chaplain, and John de Hadisco, and for them to regrant to Nicholas and his wife, Margaret (second wife?), and the heirs of the bodies'; a land dispute, no doubt. It seems to have had a negative response since we next hear that Nicholas and Margaret levied a fine on the manors of Henry de Elyingham and John de Hadisco to effect a settlement. There is a smell of Norfolk trying to encroach into Suffolk, Ely and the Haddiscoe marshes.

At the time of Nicholas' death in 1363, the Manor belonged to Thomasine. She married Lord Furnivall and they had a daughter, Joan, who inherited the Manor in 1382. Joan married Thomas Nevill, brother of Ralph, Earl of Westmorland. They had two daughters, Maud and Joan. Christian names in families tend to be repetitive, either through filial respect or lack of imagination; it is not all that clear, but it does present problems to those who write about it.

Before we get too far away from this period, it seems appropriate to mention another member of the Dagworth family, a soldier of fortune, who achieved much in France, with due reward, under Edward III. He was Sir Thomas Dagworth, a commander of the King's Army against France from 1345 until his death in an ambush in 1352. Sir Thomas twice defeated Charles de Blois at La Roche Derrain, and remained there as Keeper of Brittany.

Having tried to find out the family connection, which there must be since there is only one Dagworth, I have failed and must therefore bow to the late Sir Arthur Bryant's comment 'The name of this brave man does not even appear in the Dictionary of National Biography'. His service under Edward III was not entirely altruistic. There were rich rewards. For the ransom of Charles de Blois, alone, he received a reward of £4,900, an enormous fortune in those days; and there were many more. It is not known who collected the fortune of Sir Thomas. Possibly a nice girl in Brittany.

Sir Nicholas Dagworth did not, seemingly, serve under Richard II, the last of the Plantagenets whom I have grouped with the Normans in this account because of the continuity of blood relationship with the Conqueror. Henry II, the first Plantagenet, was the son of Matilda, William I's granddaughter. And, indeed, she was also the lineal descendent of Alfred the Great and Egbert. This relationship did a great deal towards re-uniting the Nation, under the symbol of the Planta Genista, the common broom - which did not always sweep that clean. But, names became more Anglicised, 'de's went out of fashion, although that is not very well illustrated by the Tax Roll of Dagworth in 1327, in the first year of the Reign of Edward III. This was a period in which the Country was becoming over populated and the productivity of the land deteriorating. Twenty years' later the matter was adjusted by the Black Death. The Tax Roll was only concerned with those who paid tax and it gives no indication of the population which was probably about two hundred.

'Johanne de Dagworth	4sh	Robert Markys	1sh.
Johanne de Elmham	8/3	Willmo de Crosson	1sh.
Johanne de Bosco	6d.	Robert Capon	2sh.
Ricardo de Newman	1sh.'		

The first named was the Sir John who bought out his aunts. A wealthy man and a large landowner, his four shillings tax brings the others into perspective. John Elmham would likely have held Tot Hill and Sorrels. For the others we have the choice of Old Bells, Wassicks, Haugh Farm, Redhouse, Fishponds and Boards, running along the Valley. It may, indeed have been wider, bringing in Netherall in Old Newton which certainly held land here in Tudor times.

The effect of the Black Death which had gradually spread up from the South of Europe, via the South Coast Ports, to the whole of England, over a period in which we thought we were safe, was to isolate towns and villages, to lower the value of land and to make labour scarce and costly. And that is how Thomasine would have appreciated her inheritance in 1363. I doubt that she was entirely dependent on it.

Thomasine's elder daughter, Maud, married that very distinguished man, John Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury, a small man of undistinguished appearance of whom Shakespeare wrote:

'Is this the scourge of France?
Is this the Talbot so much feared abroad
That with his name mothers still their babes?
I see the report is fabulous and false;
I had thought to see some Hercules,
A second Hector, for his grim aspect
And large proportions of his strong knit limbs.
Alas, this is a child, a silly dwarf.
It cannot be this weak and srithled shrimp
Should strike terror into his enemies.'

But he did so, and a lot more. He was General of the army in France under Henry VI, twice Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Admiral of the English Fleet, Lieutenant of Aquitaine, Earl of Wexford and Waterford, Baron Dungarvin, Steward of Ireland and Knight of the Garter. In 1453 he was killed by a cannonball while marching to relieve Castillon. His son, Lord de Lisle, was killed in the same engagement.

It is not entirely surprising, having recounted all that, that the ownership of the Manor of Dagworth by the Talbots has escaped the National Biographers. However, in Winston Churchill's words, 'The valiant Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury, was killed with most of his English in his foolhardy Battle of Castillon.' And the event had, strangely enough, some effect on Dagworth. After his death the ownership of the Manor was divided, shared by Maud and her sister, Joan. Joan was married to William de la Pole, Earl of Suffolk, a member of a Lincolnshire family of merchants and money lenders who had ingratiated themselves into the King's favours. But, for four years between the fatal impact of the cannonball on John Talbot, and 1459, the Manor was held in the name of Thomas Misperson, probably an agent, while things were being sorted out.

And, in that year, 1459 (there is nothing quite like being on the spot), the Lordship went to William de la Pole, as part of his wife's inheritance. However, one war gave over prominence to another, the War of the Roses, York and Lancaster, and it was not a good time to get quick conveyancing - in Churchill again 'The most ferocious and implacable quarrel of which there is a factual record'. The title was not settled until 1492, in the Reign of Henry VII, who, to my mind, is the most important pivot in our history. This is not the place to enlarge on that.

When William de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk, died in 1450, his son, John, Earl of Lincoln, had become 'attainted' on account of his support for Lambert Simnel. (He had even attended the Pretender's 'coronation' in Dublin.) He was, therefore, not allowed to inherit. Suffolk had not died peacefully. Having been impeached for his mishandling of the army in France, he was sentenced to five years' exile. On his way across the Channel, he was taken aboard the warship 'Nicholas of the Tower', the largest in the navy, and summarily beheaded, against the wishes of Henry VI and Queen Margaret who had tried to protect him. This undoubtedly accounts for the leniency accorded to Edmund de la Pole, his second son, who was permitted to inherit the old Duke's lands, including the Manor of Dagworth - Sorrels, the first time that it is named as such. John, Earl of Lincoln, who would have inherited, had the family behaved differently, was killed at the Battle of Stoke in 1487. The arrangement made by Henry VII in 1492 was undoubtedly in accordance with his own maxim, 'A King who wishes to be strong must always have money.' The de la Poles, Merchant Bankers we might call them now, were not to be destroyed for political motives.

After the short reign of Richard III (1483-1485) ended at Bosworth, the grandson of Owen Tudor by Katherine, widow of Henry V, whose own mother was Margaret Beaufort, great-granddaughter of John of Gaunt, Henry VII, who married Elizabeth, the daughter of Edward IV, combining the interests of both York and Lancaster, taking the Welsh family title of Tudor, began to reunite the nation on a sound basis of government and economy.

TUDOR TIMES

The next Lord of the Manor, taking us into the reign of Henry VIII, was Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, a great favourite of the new King until he committed lese majeste by marrying Henry's favourite sister, Mary Tudor, the Dowager Queen of France. (The now famous 'Mary Rose' was named after her.) The Royal rage went on for quite a while. Brandon was banished from Court but, living at Westhorpe Hall with many manors and considerable wealth on both sides, Charles and Mary's life was more than bearable; the centre of an elite rural community.

In time the King relented. They were restored to his favour even to the extent of promising that their offspring should have precedence to the throne, after his own. That promise entailed the tragedy of Lady Jane Grey, their granddaughter, who reigned for nine days in 1554 before being beheaded. Her husband, Lord Dudley, suffered the same fate at the same time.

But, of course, these were dangerous times for people in high places. For example, Old Newton (of which part of Dagworth is now part), had by then become a manor and it was held by the mother of Cardinal Pole, Margaret, Countess of Salisbury. Following an uprising in Yorkshire, said to be instigated by her son, she was imprisoned in the Tower of London and executed there, by order of the King, in 1541, when she was 71 years of age.

With the exception of Henry VII who realised that a man without a head could not caught up, all the Tudors were completely remorseless to those who opposed them. Cardinal Pole, same family as the Suffolks, well aware of the danger, decided to leave the Country in 1532 and wisely delayed his return until 1553, the year of Queen Mary's accession; and then with some fortuity died in 1558, the year that Elizabeth I came to the throne.

In the meantime, the Manor of Dagworth-Sorrels was re-granted to the Crown 'in exchange for other lands'. The consideration is not stated. It is sufficient to say that by this time the great landowners were beginning to wheel and deal in properties, at another time of over population when a lien on land and property was to fragment direct ownership and management; the change from desmenes that had proved unprofitable, to leasing.

And so, we are fortunate in this respect to have an original document (Norfolk Records Office) in the 31st year of the reign of Henry VIII (1540), recording the tenancy of land in Dagworth and Sorrels.

This is a Rent Roll, prepared by Robert Glanvyle,, Bailiff. No arrears are shown as it is the first account submitted by the Bailiff "to the Lord King'.

It is worth recounting in full to indicate how the tenancy and the ownership of land had, by then, been divided between so many people and interests in this small area. The Rent Roll, now in the Norfolk Records Office, was prepared in the 31st year of the reign of Henry VIII (1540) and yet refers to the Duke of Suffolk, whatever the arrangement made in 1538 may have been. It is in Latin and rather decayed. This explains the gaps, which are indicated, in the following translation:

RENTS FREE AS CUSTOMARY TENEMENTS IN DAGWORTH

Receipt of £14.15.11½ of rents free as well as customary tenants by the rental made there upon this account and exhibited, examined and approved, that is to say (missing), Everton 9s.4½d., of John Fortur 18s.10d., of Henry Woodcrofte 4s.4½d., Thomas Baxter (missing), John Wells 3s., William Dollyng 20d., William Sharpe 2s.9d. & half farthing, Robert John 7s.1d., & ½ farthing, John Pundre 2s.11d., John Wage 34s.4d., Helen Baldry 12d., the Abbot of Hayles 16d., Humphrey Revett 3s.4d., John Gernham 10½d., Henry Sagon 8d., William Stannard 3s., John Thurmose 14d., Robert Marks 20d., (cf. 1327 Rent Roll), John Hogger 11s.6d., Thomas Kegyll 4s., John Spryng 9d., the Prioress of Deptford 4s., John Bradway 1d., James Torrell 10s., the heirs of William Tymperle 30d.,

William Thyng 18s.1d., Ralph Hogger 23s.4½d., John Kyng 25s.8d., Andreas Sp. (missing), Robert Maynour 2s., the heirs of Robert Mandyll 10s.2d., Simon Fludde 16d., the tenants of the Manor of Netherall 2s.4d., the heirs of Robert Mandyll 13s.6d. (another portion), the Manor of Wyverstone 5s., the Township of Wattisfield 2s., Nicholas Preston 12d., and, William Freeman 12d., in total as appears above, according to the said rental. Total: £14.15.11½'

'THE FARM AT THE SITE OF THE MANOR OF DAGWORTH

And of £8 of the site of the Manor there, with all lands, meadows and marshes belonging to the same site, thus leased to Nicholas Shyffield by indenture of the Duke of Suffolk dated 18th June in the 29th year of King Henry VIII (1538 - here we have the answer), for the term of 40 years, as more fully appears in the same indenture.'

'RENTS IN SORRELS

And of £6.7.10 of rents of free as well as customary tenements there per annus according to the same rental, that is to say, of rent of John Chenery 38s.3d., Richard Meller 9s.1d., John Rise 13s.8d., Martin Nutman 2s.10d., John Bacon 6s., Richard Muskett 23s.½d., Thomas Rychman 4d., James Cockerell 15d., William Belle 14d., Wm Fawsett 18d., John Wageke 5s., William Stysted 18d., John Gage 3d., William Betts 14d., William Drewry, knight, 3s.8d., the tenant of the late Margart Gowle 14½d., the tenant of the land of Thomas Sawer 6s.6d., and Thomas Buxston 11s.1d., as appears by the said rental.
Total: £6.7.10d.'

'PROFITS OF THE COURT

And of 16s. 5½d. of profits of the court held this year at Dagworth and Sorrels with 4s. of common fine, 11s. of the fines of lands and 17½d. of other profits as appears by the Roll of the same (Court), upon this account exhibited and examined. And of 23s.4d., of profits of the court in Bekelyng ... (This refers to the manors of Bekelyng in Snape and House Erle in Alderton which were owned by the Duke of Suffolk and included in the same Roll. These four manors remained linked in transfer of ownership for a considerable time.)

So the whole Manor brought in for the Duke of Suffolk, who no doubt had to share his profits with the Monarch, about £30 a year. If that seems to be a trivial amount it should be related to the daily rate of wages. In the reign of Henry VII it was 1d. a day. Due to the extravagant mode of life, and ambitions of his son, Henry VIII, the rate had at least doubled. Inflation had been curbed by the Father and excited by the Son, even so far as to require a basic wage of 3d. a day, but no higher. So the £30 a year was the equivalent at the modest assessment of £15 a day now, of a return of £36,000 annually, taking the highest in the first case and the lowest in the second. It was a valuable property, and but one of many owned by Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk.

Of more interest, however, are the names of those listed in the Roll, the majority of whom lived and worked on holdings in Dagworth Manor; or who rented land here to be worked by others. (Sorrels is dealt with later.) In the first category we have Nicholas Shyffield, farming Dagworth Hall Farm and paying the modern equivalent of some £7,000 a year. On that basis, John Wage, John Fortur, Ralph Hogger, John Kyng and one or two others would have been the farmers in the Valley.

The Abbot of Hayles who had been granted the advowson of Haughley by the Duke of Cornwall somewhat earlier, may still have retained the Fishponds. The Prioress of Deptford might be paying the rent on a grateful bequest, who knows? And, the corporate landholder of Wattisfield and Wyverstone, what were they doing here? Perhaps an investment which they sub-let, retaining their direct title from the Lord of the Manor?

All the others, by and large, would have been smallholders and cottagers with names that, given some changes in spelling, are with us today.

The 'Profits of the Court' reflects the contractual duty of the Lord of the Manor to act as Justice in his own territory in which he had all game rights, wards and marriages, escheats, (the rights of lapsed properties), and all the goods and chattels of fugitives and felons.

In 1546, the last year of Henry VII's reign, the Manor was granted to Sir Thomas Darcy. Within three years, with the assent of Edward VI, the Manor was re-granted to the Bishop of Norwich. The consideration is unspecified except that part of it consisted in the Bishop giving Sir Thomas the Market Rights in Stowmarket. These were retained by the Darcy family until 1927.

In 1549 the Bishop, retaining the Lordship, leased the Hall and its land to the Alexanders. That arrangement went on until after the execution of Charles I in 1649 and, under their more direct ownership, until the end of the Commonwealth (1660). In using the term, 'Alexanders', I am covering the point that Dagworth Hall was seemingly let to a family group, with a number of people taking an interest. Copinger records that in 1618, there was a suit pending between Robert Salmon and John Draper respecting the Manor. In this suit it was said that the Manor was in the possession of Robert Dawes who was in heavy debt, perhaps with a threat of distraint. A conveyance of the property was awarded by the Court, and made in favour of Robert Flick and James Alexander. Now, James Alexander was the son-in-law of Captain Flack of Creeting; it seems probable that Flick and Flack were the same person. This had the important effect that when the Long Parliament decreed that all such lands should be offered to the tenants, James Alexander was in possession. Copinger records that the land was sold to James Alexander in 1647, but it may have been a year or two later. At the Restoration of the Monarchy under Charles II in 1660, the Bishop regained his rights.

STUART AND HANOVER

The Bishop of Norwich did not renew James Alexander's lease. On 15th April in the first year of the reign of Charles II (1660), he leased the Manor to the widow of William Coleman of Bury St. Edmunds, listing himself, John Clarke and Edmund Eyre as executors of William Coleman's estate. This lease was renewed in 1676 to William Coleman (presumably a son and on the death of his Mother), with Edmund Eyre and Thomas Palmer of Ufford as trustees. Like previous, and subsequent contracts, this lease included properties in Alderton and in Snape, £44 per annum for all, £30 for Dagworth and about the same as in 1540 for that part of the Manor, allowing for inflation excluding Sorrels and the other land. In other words, Dagworth Hall and Farm. The plan attached to the Charles II Contract confirms this. It shows the Hop Grounds, too.

That lease operated until 5th April, 1694, the sixth year of the reign of William and Mary, when the lease ran out. I think the lease had run out prior to that date, probably on the death of William Coleman, because the document of 1694 reads as a renewal of a former lease which is missing from the records. This one, 1694, went to Samuel Clarke of Snailswell in Cambridgeshire at £44.8.0. a year, still including Snape and Alderton but here undoubtedly restricted to the central property.

In 1714, the first year of the reign of the first Hanoverian King, George I, on 28th September, the lease was given to Robert Clarke. He surrendered this lease on 1st October, 1722, and as if to establish his new honour, renewed it eight days later, in the name of Sir Robert Clarke, Hart. Things were clearly going well with the Clarkes. His lease was renewed on 2nd October, 1729, again in 1737 and finally on 26th March, 1746. And that lease went on until 1755, in the reign of George II.

In the next lease, 16th July, 1755, there was a change in the title of the contract in that it referred to 'Dagworth and Sorrels', which must be a mistake since it still clearly covered only the Hall and its lands. It was granted to George William Hayter for a term of 21 years, on the same basis as before. It was renewed on 24th November, 1758, by the Bishop of Norwich in favour of George Hayter in a document that is particularly interesting in that it lists the names and the acreages of the fields included in the contract. And, these are all those of Dagworth Hall and Farm. Nothing on the South side of the stream, apart from a few protuberences; and, nothing up the Valley. Perhaps the other properties were dealt with directly by the Bishop's lawyers, near the Red Well, in Norwich?

From the time of the Alexanders none of the lessees lived here; they sub-let. We have an indication in a letter written by Simon Codd of Haughley on 19th September, 1768, addressed to John Morphew, Attorney at Law, Near the Red Well in Norwich. Obviously frustrated in getting an agreement with George William Hayter, he states that he is in occupation of 199 acres, 2 rods and 26 perches of land in Dagworth and that he wishes to continue to do so 'whoever takes over the lease'. Now Simon Codd's claim represents Dagworth Hall Farm less the Hall,

barnyards and gardens which were undoubtedly let to someone else. It is no new thing for farmhouses to be sold, or let, separate from the land.

Dagworth Hall was then occupied by a member of the Blomfield family of Little Stonham. He was Captain Thomas Blomfield who had a son, Captain Thomas Valentine Blomfield who was stationed in the latter part of his Army service in the Penal Colony outside Sydney, New South Wales. On his retirement from the service in 1822 he was given a land grant as a Settler. One of his great-grandsons, R.C. Blomfield, lives in Armidale, N.S.W.

All the contracts between the Bishop and the various lessees from the time of Charles II included Manorial Rights, 'All lands, tenements, meadows, common pastures, ffishing, ffowling, hawkings, huntings, Courts lost and view of ffrankspledge, escheats and all the goods and chattels of fugitives and felons'. The earlier contracts were for 40 years, later for 21 years; but there were many renewals before those periods elapsed due to change of tenancy or deaths and, in one case, Robert Clarke's ennoblement.

On 7th August, 1775, four years before George Hayter's lease ran out, there is a letter to the Bishop of Norwich from the Rev. George Haggitt, Rector of Rushden, asking that the Bishop should renew the lease formerly held by William Haggitt, deceased, of Ipswich; and that the new lease should be in the names of himself and Thomas Haggitt of Scarborough. As there is no record of such a former lease, one wonders whether the Reverend Gentleman felt that he was a more entitled person to rent Diocesan land than George Hayter, a merchant living in Pancras Lane in London; and that he decided to try it on. It savours of Trollope and Barchester and his application was successful, after some time.

NINETEENTH CENTURY

On 29th September, 1824, the lease was granted by the Bishop to the Rev. Henry Heigham, as the last surviving executor of the Rev. George Haggitt, for 21 years for £30 plus £15.16.0. for the other land in Alderton and Snape. As there is clearly at least one contract missing from the records, it is possible that the Rev. George Haggitt obtained the lease of the 206 acres of the Hall and Farm, and the Lordship rights, earlier than 1824, and that this contract was a renewal. One can only note with envy the stability of rentals over two centuries.

That lease was renewed in 1831 during the reign of William IV and again, on the death of Henry Heigham, on 29th September, 1838, Michaelmas, a pattern that runs through all these renewal dates in the farming tradition. The new lease was in favour of the Rev. George John Haggitt of Bury St. Edmunds for a further 21 years, which he did not survive.

He died on 9th September, 1845, during the preparation of a renewal of the lease in which he had nominated his executors, the Rt. Rev. John, Bishop of Chester, and Henry William Oakes of Nowton, with benefit to his widow, Harriett Haggitt. The title of Lord of the Manor passed to Mrs. Haggitt for the term of the lease.

The list of landholders in Dagworth in 1844 is headed 'The Manor of Dagworth with Sorrels held by Rev. J.G.Haggitt as lessee from the Bishop of Norwich'. Out of the population of 169, it records only the following:-

'William Armstrong - Hop Grower	Geo.Grimwood - Malster
Ann Gladwell	Jas. Jennings - Farmer and
Mrs. Jacobs	Hop Grower
John Peck, Red House - Farmer.'	

This was the last year that James Jennings farmed Dagworth Hall Farm which was about to be taken over by Thomas Woodward, leased from George Haggitt, in 1845. Grandfather of the present owner of Dagworth Hall and Farm, and of White Hall in Old Newton, bought from the Lankesters of Stowmarket in 1875, Thomas Woodward was a man of great energy and enterprise. But, this was the time of great achievement. The Eastern Region Railway was being built taking six acres of Dagworth land, bringing good and bad with it, loss of labour against compensation and secondary work, with cheaper transport. Some could not face the change. James Jennings may have been one. Others, such as one of the Blomfields, became an engine driver on the railway and took his wife and seven children off to live in London. There was an aura about that, something like the airline pilot of the present day.

Thomas Woodward with his hop fields on the north of the river quickly removed the unusual, round ended, Hop Store from over the Ford, where it is shown on the 1839 Tithe Map, to its present site next to Dagworth Hall. There is an inscription inside in '1846. This barn was fixt on this ground'. He also built an hexagonal horse mill close by. He must have been a very industrious man, with time for everything, except idleness, including eighteen children. His industry was passed on. The farms he came to own are still a showpiece of traditional mixed farming, still in the family and owned by his grandson, Phillip Woodward, and his great-grandson, Tim Woodward.

Geo. Grimwood also left an inscription. On the front wall of Maltings, there is a brick, inscribed, 'I Grimwood malted hear (sic) 1844'. The Maltings themselves disappeared, apart from their footings and a trace of the oven arch, around 1937 when Lady Piercy, living at Sorrels, had the four cottages converted into one house, incorporating the oak staircase from Rougham Hall which was demolished about that time; also, a tombstone 'In quies portu' it says, and, indeed it now is. Whether the ghosts that occasionally make themselves manifest there, and in Dagworth Hall, are awaiting their next appearance I do not know. They have certainly done so in the past twenty years.

Having mentioned Hop growing, I should mention that Hollingsworth claimed that Dagworth was the first place in England where they were grown by the Normans who had little taste for our ale. The earliest map I have of Dagworth is one prepared by Samuel Bury, 'for Samuel Clarke Esquire', in 1686/7, a fragmentary document that supported the lease of 1694. It shows a hop ground, 1 acre 1 rod and 12 perches, between Barnyard Moor and Little Fen, down by the River below, 'Chapell Field'. James Jennings had 9 acres of hops and this area was extended to at least 15 acres by Thomas Woodward in 1859, explaining why he needed to have the oast house on a more convenient site. They are not grown here now, but wild hops abound in the woods.

The extension of the Eastern Union Railway from Colchester to Stowmarket and beyond cut right through Dagworth and, indeed, established a Station here which, for some reason they called Haughley Junction. Historically, this was a proper extension of the service to Stowmarket, financed by the merchants there, with the construction of the Stowmarket Navigation Canal in 1796. Whilst the Eastern Union eventually destroyed the canal trade, it extended the movement of farm products to a far wider area. There was not all that much passenger traffic; for one thing it was costly and, for another, there was no great incentive for travel, only when it was necessary.

By 1855, John Peck had left Red House Farm, now a Fruit Farm owned by Mr. F. J. Noy, and handed it over to Thomas Becher, probably as a tenant of the Lankesters whose property and farm at White Hall was occupied by Mr. R. C. Nottidge. The East end of the valley, Boards Farm was owned by John Edgar Rust (Esquire on the Tithe Map indicating that whilst he was the Principal he did not necessarily live there). James Ward, Esq., lived at Tot Hill but did little in the way of farming. Robert Lingwood farmed the much smaller Hop Farm, south of the ford but part of Dagworth Hall land. Later, this became a market garden run by a Mr. Humble whose brother lived opposite in one of James Ward's cottages by right of working at Tot Hill. It seems probable that Hop Farm was at one time the village Smithy; there must have been one, and that is the right site for it.

Most of what has been written so far is related to the north side of the Manor for which the records as a separate entity are continuous from the reign of Henry VIII. As if to support the original claim by Roger Bigod that these were two separate manors (and that he should have Sorrels), history seems to have proved him right; for the Manor of Sorrels developed on different lines eventually becoming far more integrated with Haughley and Stowmarket, even Harleston, than with Old Newton as the land in the valley became.

It, therefore, seems right to go back to the start, 1086 or thereabouts, briefly to record the story of the Manor of Sorrels. It would have been confusing to do it otherwise, jumping from one to another, because the pattern is rather different.

Whilst the account may seem repetitive in its introduction, it is designed to give those on the south side of the river an identity with the history of the land they occupy, not at all complete but, perhaps, providing a basis for some future Bigod to establish his claim.

THE MANOR OF SORRELS

The name 'Sorrels', seems likely to have been inspired by the Anglo-Saxon devotion to horses of any colour including, in this case, red. The best known indication of this reverence for the horse must be the White Horse at Uffington, in Berkshire, re-cut by the Saxon King, Alfred.

We have already seen that there were two distinct Manors here before the Norman Conquest. Each was recorded separately in the Domesday Book, twenty years' later. During that period a contest had been going on between Earl Hugh de Montfort, Constable of England, and Haughley, and Earl Roger Bigod, the erstwhile tenant of Archbishop Stigand who had prospered under Anglo-Saxon rule to the extent that he had to be accepted into the new Order.

It may be speculation to suggest that Sorrels, lying more or less between King Harold's Royal Manors of Thornei (Stowmarket) and Harleston, could have been owned by Gutmund, a Freeman who was, like Breme, killed at the Battle of Hastings, retained Anglo-Saxon loyalty on which Roger based his claim. Since the Church of St. John (curiously known as that of 'Jones in Tothill'), was only half completed at the time of the Domesday Record, it might appear that its construction was motivated to establish the form of separate identity from Dagworth which had its own Church, St. Margaret's in the Valley.

The Church was given 25 acres of glebe land when it was eventually completed. It was situated some two hundred yards down, on the right hand side of the now non-existent road from Tot Hill to Harleston. And that is where it appears on John Speed's Map of Suffolk in 1610, and those of R. W. Morden in 1680 and in 1692, well after the Musketts of Harleston Hall had acquired property at that nodal point on the Main Road. Both Speed and Morden named it as 'Dagworth'.

Earl Roger's claim to the Manor of Sorrels was doomed to failure despite his belated efforts to present it as a complete community. His contender was too firmly established in the Conqueror's favour and he, himself, like so many of his family in the next half millenium, had acted traitorously, in this instance by supporting the claims of Robert, Duke of Normandy, William's son, in his claim to the Throne of England.

The effect on our history cannot be assessed. William, in order to control Robert, as any Father might do, went off to Rouen in 1087, got thrown off his horse and died of his injuries on 9th September, leaving his monumental work based on the Domesday Survey, unfinished. What he might have done, based on the information of the Domesday Survey, had he been given the time to do it, will never be known. It has gone down in history as a Tall Roll; but, in the mind of a far more thinking man, it could have been the basis for a far more egalitarian society. Its direct interest to us is that two of the most powerful Earls in the Kingdom squabbled over the Manor of Sorrels close on a thousand years ago.

If one wonders why de Montfort made such a point of acquiring the Lordship of Sorrels, the answer must lie in the fact that although he was the Constable of England, he was better known as Constable of Haughley Castle, a defensive appointment against the Anglo-Saxon rump at Framlingham. Having been provided with Harleston, Dagworth and Thornei to maintain his garrison at Haughley, Sorrels was essential for its roads and the river route to the Bailiff's store in Stowmarket.

The man he put in charge of the joint properties, Dagworth and Sorrels, was William, son of Gros, who sounds a solid fellow and was likely to have been a Norman farmer who had been called to serve in the invasion, just as Breme had to serve King Harold. With the appointment went the rights of the Lordship and its duties. The change of his name to William de Gross seems to reflect his new status; later it was to become 'de Dagworth' in the custom of the time, and the foundation of an influential family; as explained in the first part of this account.

Whilst the Tax Roll of 1327 deals with the joint Manors under Sir John de Dagworth, it only becomes clear from the Tax Roll of 1538 in the reign of Henry VIII (p. 17), that the separate identity of the two Manors remained. And, indeed that Dagworth Hall and its land, then occupied by Nicholas Shyffield, was deemed to be sufficiently valuable to be assessed apart from the others. Even so, the fourth part of the Roll, 'Profits of the Court', shows that matters of Law and Order were the responsibility of the Lord of the Manor as a whole. He, of course, was Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, brother-in-law of the King, living at Westhorpe, with many more Manors under his belt.

The general boundary between Dagworth and Sorrels is the river. At some time, however, as if to secure the Ford, (Dagga's Dock), Dagworth extended its operations south of the river, taking in Old Newton Meadows down to Hop Farm and beyond to the (Sorrels) Maltings; establishing their own Maltings and Oast House on the Sorrels' side. This was all perfectly sensible since it was almost in the curtilage of Dagworth Hall. But it does account for the curious boundary between Old Newton and Haughley that now exists.

In 1538 John Chenery was farming Sorrels and, because of its immediate proximity, he must have had the Maltings. In the next Century we find a Geoffrey Chenery paying rates to Haughley Parish and then, in 1671, the induction of a new Vicar of Haughley, John Chenery, one who had livings elsewhere in Norfolk and Suffolk. This was a common practice in the reign of Charles II, when the Established Church was eliminating the Dissenters. The gap of one complete generation of Anglican Priests during the Commonwealth had led to a shortage of applicants for rural parishes.

Under the system that still existed, that the King owned all the land and that he allocated control of it, and the responsibility for collecting dues, to the Lords of the Manors, there was no such thing as a Freeholding. If you had land it was similar to a leasehold system without a terminal date. The sole consideration was that you paid your dues. Son followed father or, since this was a time for land speculation, holdings were sold off to non residents, of whom there seems to have been a considerable number.

As an example of disposal, William Betts holding land in Sorrels at 14d. rent, but living in Harleston, left the proceeds of the sale of it for building a new aisle in Haughley Parish Church. It would have been about twenty five acres which gives some indication of its value.

A similar holding was in the name of William Belle, son of John Belle of Holdbellys (Old Bells), in Dagworth, but more closely associated with Haughley from the time that frustrated by the Haugh Lane approach to their property, they built a better outlet on to the Bacton Road; and a grander house by the way, New Bells. William was an important man with 'Appointment at Court'. John Belle's son, Roger was probably the landholder in Sorrels by 1538. His daughter married Sir Anthony Brown of Bury, of whom more follows.

By far the most influential, however, was Richard Muskett of Harleston Hall who owned properties in a number of parishes hereabouts. He was a man who looked for key positions like any modern property dealer. One such was at Quarries' Cross where they owned 'landes and a shoppe' which his son, Richard, wished to Will to his Grandson in 1633, only to find his intentions frustrated by his legal advisers in Bury St. Edmunds, Sir Anthony Brown, Mr. John Dickerson and Mr. Rockett, described as a Scrivener, acting, the old man claimed, 'in councele'. Dickerson even went so far as to marry the widowed mother of the female beneficiary they had established in title, only to be let down by the child's early demise - leaving the grandson to inherit.

The Muskett's property in Sorrels, at 23s. d., was the greatest after that of John Chenery, around what we know as Tot Hill where there are two fields that bear their name - Great Musketts and Little Musketts. And there, in 1549, they built a house which, in their self effacing way, they called 'Musketts'. Even to this day there is a Richard (H) Muskett living in Dearborn Bennett, Michigan, who retains a keen interest in all this.

Another land holder was William Fawsett, the last Catholic Priest appointed by the Cistercian Abbot of Hayles in Gloucestershire before the Reformation and the dissolution of the monasteries. He must have been a secular priest since he held the land in his own right which suggests that he may well have come into it by succession, i.e. from here.

Appointed to the benefice of Haughley in the reign of Henry VIII in 1537, he remained in office throughout five troublesome reigns until his death in 1566, latterly supported by Roger Belle who had the advowson, with the Ministry of Haughley, com Shelland, and, undoubtedly, St. John's at Tot Hill, half way between them.

It is worth recording that over 400 years were to pass before the Catholic Mass was once again celebrated in Haughley Parish Church, on 11th June, 1983. The Celebrant was Father James Walsh, OSB, of Quarr Abbey.

William Fawsett would have been a secular priest since he held the land in his own name. His Abbot still held some land here despite the fact that the Dissolution of the Monasteries was in progress between 1536 and 1539. By the latter date the Abbot of Hayles had been deprived of the Advowson of Haughley (and, no doubt, his land in Sorrels and elsewhere), after a tenure dating back to the reign of Edward I.

Margaret Gowle, whose tenants held some land in Sorrels, was from the neighbouring Manor of Stowmarket, where the Gowle Charities and two roads, Gowle and Margaret, preserve her memory. This is a bit of mediaeval overspill in the Shepherds Lane area, next to her own land. The house there, 'Shepherds', is said to have monastic origins and, even the occasional ghostly reminder. It could well have been an Infirmary for the old monks of St. Osyth and Abbot's Hall. A previous owner, Mrs. Baines, found some of their footwear which showed remarkably little sign of use. This could have been due to the age of the dwellers or, alternatively, the state of the approach road which even to this day would not encourage walking.

This still leaves a number of unknown tenants, some with considerable holdings, such as Sir William Drewry, Thomas Sawyer and Thomas Buxston. I fancy the last had some connection with an earlier Keeper of Haughley Park who had aspirations to develop the local meat trade more profitably.

By 1549, the Lordship had passed from the Duke of Suffolk to the Bishop of Norwich whose records seem to deal almost entirely with Dagworth Hall and its farmland. The Bishop was deprived of this, and other Lordships, during the Commonwealth. His rights were restored in the reign of Charles II, after 1660. The first contract in 1663 has disappeared, but it was renewed by one of 15th April, 1669, between the Bishop and Judith Coleman of Bury, widow of William Coleman. Whilst the schedule, in the form of a rather tattered map, covered only the main farm, the contract passed on the rights and responsibilities of the Lordship; which seems to have been the continuing practice from then onwards.

One assumes that the Chenery's were still at Sorrels in 1671 when John Chenery was the Vicar of Haughley. The Musketts certainly retained their ownership of the prime property at Tot Hill whose development is reflected in subsequent conveyances of the property - 'All that messuage and farm with the cottages stables barns outhouses yards gardens orchards ... situate in Old Newton and Haughley ... called Musketts ... amounting to 18 acres and 13 perches (more or less)'. In other words, they had the Village on the main road and some land north of Dagworth Lane which is the only part of Sorrels in Old Newton.

In 1680, Mordern marked down the conurbation around Tot Hill firmly as Dagworth, with its own Church and quite a number of houses on the four branches of the Crossroads, one of which was the main East Coast route from the Continent to some of the most important towns in the centre of England.

It seems strange that this place that had all the makings of a main road village and, in the 18th Century, a regular stopping place for the cross country Coach Route, 148, between Harwich and St. Neot's, for some reason, fizzled out, so that today there is rather less there than there was 500 years' ago; and, Dagworth has preserved its original identity, down in the valley where little stirs.

In the first half of the 18th Century, the entire Estate was taken by William Ward of Old Newton, who was born there in 1710. He moved in to Sorrels about the time of his marriage in 1745. By 1760 he had rebuilt Musketts, using the then fashionable Woolpit bricks, and moved there. The family had considerable influence in Haughley over the next Century and a half.

He had two sisters - Mary and Ann. Mary married William Snell from Needham; Ann married James Harrison of Wetherden. Another farming family was to be involved - the Pecks of Red House, in Dagworth Manor; for we see that the Tot Hill land was now farmed from Sorrels by Thomas William Snell Peck as tenant of James Ward.

On the death of James Ward in 1864, his executors, Rev. Edward Ward, D. Downing and J. Hayward (the local Solicitor who was also Lord of Haughley Manor), sold the Estate to Samuel Snell of Ipswich. He died in 1893 leaving the property to Edward Ward Snell, but, prior to that, in 1874, Edward Ewer Ward, whose original name was Harrison (he was the Grandson of Ann Harrison, nee Ward), was appointed Vicar of Haughley, six years' after the death of his Great Uncle, Reverend Edward Ward.

By the time of his death in 1887, the Wards had combined with the Snells, the Pecks and the Harrisons as considerable landowners and, in addition, provided from Sorrels two more incumbents for Haughley. There is much more about this influential family in Nigel MacCulloch's book and in particular, his account of the work of the Reverend Edward Ewer Ward, 1875/6 shortly after his appointment.

The Wards retained their ownership of the Tot Hill Estate until 1918 when it was sold to George Reeder Thurlow, who owned the leather belting factory in Stowmarket, an important business in the day of the threshing machines, to provide a home and occupation for a son who had been disabled in the First World War. Many soldiers returned from the devastation of Flanders felt the need to reconstruct their lives by working the land, either on farms or smallholdings. Not too many were successful in the tight economic climate of the Post-War years, when it was cheaper to import than to grow.

The late Joe Stearn of Onehouse, lived at Sorrels with his uncle who farmed the land at that time. Having told me how the river flooded in 1921 and how the water reached Sorrels, Phillip Woodward went one better. On 12th August, 1912, when the harvest on both sides of the valley had been stooked, four and a half inches of rain fell within an hour or two and all the crop was washed down to the Boards Farm area.

After that tenancy had ceased, the farming reverted to Tot Hill House where Mr. Addison was the tenant until 1960. Sorrels and the Maltings were sold to Lady Piercy who undertook the conversion of the four cottages there into one, demolishing the Maltings and its barns at the same time. The staircase, much of the timbers and the tombstone on the facade came from Rougham Hall after the great fire there. Its old identity is now preserved only by the brick, inscribed "I Grimwood malted here (sic) 1846". The house was further improved by John Danielli and then by the Writer and his Wife who bought it in 1959 and lived there until 1972, since when it has passed through a number of hands, gradually deteriorating.

Sorrels, on the other side of the roadway, has had the happy experience of owners who have successively improved it, and are still doing so. After Lady Piercy came, Captain Knight, RN., then Mr. & Mrs. Andrews, retired from British Columbia (with a great joie de vivre and love of trees). When they left the property was bought by Mr. Freddie Hill, a descendant of Rowland Hill who, after the death of his wife, sold Sorrels to Sir Peter Hampshire, the retired Governor of Trinidad. They moved on in 1980, having sold to Mr. & Mrs. John Ketterer.

Another property that was sold off from the Estate was the smallholding curiously known as Pentre Istra, seven acres of land on which Mr. John Narey founded his and his family's now very large Garden Centre at Eden House on the boundary of the old Manor. After the Nareys left, Pentre Istra, now Dagworth Nurseries, was bought by a Mr. Snell who wanted to turn it into a caravan site. Planning was, in fact, rejected, but the awful prospect induced us to buy it and, having done so, to make it operative as a nursery again. It was really more of a market garden and, I would say, running it, even with our gardener living there, was a purgatory on earth. We were quite glad to get rid of it eventually to the Haughley Research Farms of the Soil Association who, to our surprise, appeared to be more interested in land values and building development than growing whole food. It is still a market garden, reduced in size and ably run by Mrs. Noble.

Somewhere along the line of these transactions, the Lordship of the Manor passed to another local Lawyer, George Gudgeon, spurred on, no doubt, by the opposition's achievement in Haughley, Mr. Hayward's Lordship.

After Mr. Addison's tenancy expired, the farming land and Tot Hill House was sold to Mr. Stennet, a member of a large farming family from Fornham, from whence he farmed it for a few years. It then passed to Mr. John Morley, who lives there, but not in Tot Hill House. That was sold separately to Mr. J. F. Reed in the Seventies. That was Musketts.

There has been little mention in this account of Fishponds. The existing traces of the fishponds are in the woods behind the Nurseries, very distinct and still retaining their old Ornance Survey number. When, until a few years' back, Mr. Hammond Taylor owned Fishponds Farm in Haughley, part of the land that went with it was Waterrun, in Sorrels, and presumably at one time, the land encompassing the Fishponds. It would have amounted to about twenty five acres in all and must surely have been the Abbot of Hayles' holding in Sorrels.

Under a succession of owners over the past twenty years the old Waterrun cottages have been developed into a handsome residence, now owned by Mr. & Mrs. Macrow.

Another block of cottages sold off somewhere along the line was that now called 'Aukland House, owned by Mr. and Mrs. S. Scott. When the Tot Hill Farm was still working in the old style, Mr. Humble, the stockman of Tot Hill, lived there. His brother was the tenant of Hop Farm, directly opposite, where he ran a market garden, part of a County Council resettlement project. It cannot have been too much of a success. The land has now reverted to a wilderness.

As this is for the record, there should be a mention of Miss Quinton who lived at 'Lilacs' for many years, until the 1960's, cultivated about ten acres from her wooden bungalow, and loved the place dearly. When she had to leave because it was getting beyond her, the District Council took it over as a place for unsociable families. The first were the Cattermoles who seemed very nice people and must have been there for some other reason, such as a shortage of housing. The tragic death of their only son in a cycling accident made it too painful for them to live there any longer. The next tenancy took the thing into the ground, an unfortunate elderly lady with a bedridden father and a sub-normal grandson. The site was bought by Haughley Research Farms under the pretence of extending the nurseries for organic food production; and then, the part with the bungalow sold to Mr. Foster for re-development, which he undertook admirably and later sold to Mr. & Mrs. C. Knight. They renamed the 'Lilacs' as 'Rowangold'.

With the changed pattern of farming over the past fifty years, the majority of the farm cottages that were then still occupied, or merely in existence, have gone under the plough. What a fortune has been wasted when you consider that any old derelict cottage or barn fetches as much as a new house on an estate!

Unlike Dagworth Manor, where there are still a number of good, substantial old farm houses, each with a wealth of history, for some reason there were only ever two in Sorrels; unless one includes Eden House which was built at a later date.

CONCLUSION

Those who know Dagworth today think of it as a rather isolated place, down a difficult and narrow lane, with a few houses on either side of a ford that can be as forbidding as Beecher's Brook in wet weather. Those two features do much to preserve our privacy. We know that Dagworth was the Hamlet that served the Manor of Dagworth and, undoubtedly, a bustling place from Saxon until Tudor times.

What is not so well known is that the Manor of Sorrels on the south side of the river also established its own hamlet on Tot Hill, and called it Dagworth. Although it had far greater potential than the original, it petered out.

Possibly, the innovation was unacceptable, a threat to Haughley or, even in the immutable Suffolk mind, an extension of the Norman's renaming Dagga's Dock.

In 1843, this is how Hollingsworth described Dagworth in his History of Stowmarket.:

'The ancient Hall that long maintained its venerable existence amid these bright meadows has yielded at last to the innovations of the age and not to the hand of time. The greater part of it was pulled down after having served as a farmhouse. *Brave Knights and noble ladies in all the chivalrous pride of those romantic ages have often paced with hawk and hound around the woods of Dagworth and Haughley, and have returned in the evenings from the ling willow-covered meadows which abound with cranes and herons, to these hospitable halls; but the scene has changed, the living actors lie under the pavements of our churches, the wild birds have gone, nursery or hop grounds have broken up their lonely retreats, and Dagworth Hall has passed away like a wreath of smoke from the labourer's cottage that now reposes in forgetful care over its foundations.'

The innovations of the age referred, no doubt, to the building of the Eastern Union Railway which took up six acres of the land and was, no doubt, quite profitable to James Jennings who would have been about to hand over to Thomas Woodward, in whose family it has remained with few farmers having the claim to compete in the practice of mixed farming.

Hollingsworth's interpretation of mediaeval life is a chimera. The majority did not live beyond forty, probably choked to death in their hospitable halls.

A hundred and forty years' later, we still have every kind of bird in the valley, far too many in our gardens; and, on occasions, we still entertain the odd brave Knight and Noble Lady but, nowadays, they arrive with rather less clatter.

(* p.t.o.)