

Dedham Vale Society



Summer 2006 No. 60

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Front Cover

Giffords Hall, where the Dedham Vale Society's Summer Party took place in May 2006

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Guests at the Giffords Hall Summer Party

LOWER BARN FARM, DEDHAM

A photograph of the farm was published in the last edition and since then a resubmission has been made for planning permission which has now been granted much to the committee's dismay. Ironically, the Society's policy towards redundant farm buildings is that they should be used for business activity, but because of its proximity to Flatford and its central position on the valley floor the committee felt strongly that Lower Barn Farm should remain in agricultural use rather than become an industrial site.

The planning department at Colchester Borough recommended approval after Highways expressed no objection to the use of a single-track lane for the vastly increased traffic-flow which would be generated. At the planning meeting a member of the committee spoke for the allotted three-minute period objecting strongly to the proposal and in doing so mentioned light-pollution, traffic, noise, proximity to Flatford and the fact that the AONB deserved special protection from the Borough Council in order to preserve its beauty and tranquillity; but to no avail. A short discussion followed during which photographs of the farmyard were projected showing a group of completely derelict buildings. The surrounding countryside was not illustrated and no context was given. A Councillor then described the situation as being "a no brainer" and proposed that the application be accepted. A unanimous vote in favour followed. Afterwards the Chairman commented that the application was looked upon favourably partly because neither the National Trust nor the Stour Valley Project objected to it. (The Project, of course, has to remain neutral in these matters but the National Trust can and did make strong representations opposing it.) A local developer made the point, also outside the meeting, that the attitude of the Dedham Vale Society was responsible for what he described as the parlous state of the retail businesses in Dedham. The same planning committee will be asked to decide the future of the Buntings site at Great Horkesley. What hope for that?

Moorhouse Farms are planning further diversification; this time a "green burial site" at Coles Oak Lane, Dedham on meadows leading down to Stratford Road. Reference Number is 06/1376.

THE SUMMER PARTY MAY 24TH

Despite much concern about wet weather this turned out to be a wonderful evening in late Spring with a very large number of members and their friends enjoying the sunshine and exquisite surroundings of Giffords Hall and its gardens. A very big thank you is due to our hosts Mr and Mrs James Brocklebank and also to the team behind the scenes led so ably by Sarah Carr and Nella Probert.

DEDHAM VALE SOCIETY WEB SITE

The winter newsletter reported that the committee had agreed that a website should be set up in order to keep members and the general public better informed about DVS activities. The setting-up process has been taking place during the six months since then and it is expected that the new site will be up and running by Autumn 2006. Minutes of meetings, articles from the newsletter, items of interest and significance to members as well as contact details will be included when the web site is fully operational.

The address is **www.dedhamvalesociety.org.uk**



Bar Staff at the Party – Geoff Probert and Mike Parker!

TRAIN HOOTER DISTURBANCE

Following the Hatfield Rail Disaster Enquiry a number of safety recommendations were introduced, one of which was that locomotive drivers be required to sound their horns as they approach rail crossing points for public footpaths. This new regulation, which does not apply during the late night early morning period, caused considerable noise pollution problems for residents living in the Ardleigh area where there are four separate footpaths shown to cross the track within a very short distance. Following a Tendring Council noise-abatement order the practise has now ceased but only for a six month review period and at a cost. The four footpaths have had to be closed at one point where they cross the line. In two cases this is said to be temporary although it is not clear if and when they will re-open. In the case of one of the other two it was reported it had ceased to be a right of way before this latest action.

It does appear that closing rights of way is an excessively draconian decision. Surely pedestrians crossing railway tracks look in both directions as they step forward?
(Editor)

NOTE BY PLANNING SECRETARY, SUFFOLK - SUMMER 2006

This will be a very short note. Very, very little that is worthy of note has happened in that part of the AONB which lies to the north of the River Stour during the seven or so months that have elapsed since I last put fingers to the keyboard. The other reason for writing very little is that all too often I seem to attract critical, even aggressive, comment on what I do write!

Babergh District Local Plan Alteration No 2 was finally adopted by the council this summer and at almost exactly the same moment I was invited to comment on the first stages of the preparation of the **Babergh Local Development Framework** which I understand will eventually replace the Local Plan. Fortunately the important adverb is “eventually”!

Although there is a steady flow of applications for alterations, improvements and extensions almost nothing that would damage either the appearance or tranquillity of the Vale has reared its ugly head on this side of the River. The one exception is the County Education Authority which has applied to erect a large 18 metre high mast, complete with transmission dish and flat panel antennae for the reception of the “School Broadband Network” at East Bergholt High School. Although not actually in the AONB the school lies on the edge and this mast would be highly visible from the AONB. Suggestions that the service could be provided from the East Bergholt Telephone exchange have so far met with no response. This is a sad development after so long a pause in applications to construct yet another of these ugly, intrusive structures.

The paragraph above might give the impression that we are living in bucolic tranquillity “Far from the madding crowd’s ignoble strife,along the cool sequester’d vale of life”. In fact sadly nothing could be further from the truth. In the hamlet where I live we suffer from the intrusions of the aircraft overhead, the careering traffic along the B1068 - our attempts to persuade the Highway Authority of this reality has so far produced little more than a flood of statistics arguing that we do not know what we are talking about -, the inconclusive auction of our erstwhile pub which leaves us guessing as to its future and as a final irony an errant learner driver has now demolished a large section of my garden wall which lies down a by-road described as “unsuitable for heavy traffic”. Perhaps it should have read “*heavy-handed traffic*”

David Eking, Planning Secretary, Suffolk,

August 2006

A CHANGE OF SCENE AT STOKE-BY-NAYLAND

Charles Clover, Environment Editor for the Daily Telegraph and DVS Committee Member, reported at the end of July that a copse of poplar trees at Stoke by Nayland was to be felled. Local papers and television news caught up with] the story more recently.

Poplars were planted locally in considerable numbers in order to supply the now defunct match industry with timber but they were not required as matches were increasingly manufactured abroad. The two storms in the late 1980s put-paid to several plantations but one which survived obscures the view of Stoke by Nayland Church, a scene 'sketched' in 1837 by John Constable and which was on display at Tate Britain's recent Constable exhibition.

The Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Project, the body which has done so much in recent years to maintain the beauty of the Vale, is funding the work, which after the removal of the trees, will create a woodland and wetland area. This will become a public open space and, more importantly, allow the view to be revealed which Constable thought worthy of artistic expression resulting in his six-foot wide 'sketch'. Unfortunately he died suddenly in his sleep at the age of sixty and never completed the final piece.



Stoke by Nayland Church and the Poplar plantation

DOUBLE CELEBRATION FOR DEDHAM VALE AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

2006 marks a special year for the Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Project. This year AONB's celebrate 50 years of existence, following designation of the first AONB, The Gower in 1956. The Dedham Vale AONB was designated in 1970. Later, in 1981 the Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Project was established making this the 25th year of the Project.

Over the last 25 years there have been many changes within the Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley. Much has been achieved to improve the landscape, encourage biodiversity, involve the local community, improve rural facilities and promote sustainable tourism and transport.

From the onset, the Dedham Vale Society has worked tirelessly for the benefit of the Dedham Vale. By raising the profile of the Dedham Vale, they helped to secure the declaration of the Dedham Vale as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in May 1970. Since 1981 the Society has worked in close partnership with the Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Project. Keith Turner commenced as the first Project Officer in 1981 and still continues to have close links with the Project.

As a complete newcomer to East Anglia in 1981, Keith had no idea of what he was letting himself in for. However, he was soon introduced to landowners and local communities, from whom he had nothing but support. "Looking back the seven years with the Project were hugely enjoyable and the effect on me was lasting. My interest in the landscapes Constable painted remains undaunted and the many personalities I met in my visits around the Vale remain with me still".

Since 1981, the Project has seen many changes not least extension to cover the whole Stour Valley. Today, the Project team consists of seven members of staff (some part time) with different areas of responsibility, to include, planning, biodiversity and landscape, community and communications, transport and tourism and habitat management. Katherine Blake heads the team as Project Manager. "The first 18 months of my Project Manager role involved shaping and the consultation and partnership approach to produce the first management strategy for the AONB and the valley. It was published by the ministers deadline of March 2004. Now the challenge is implementing the strategy and achieving our partnership vision".

The Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Project has been working closely with its partners for the last 25 years. From the many achievements, the five areas below give some indication of the projects impact in the AONB:

1981 First farm enhancement scheme at Peyton Hall Farm, Boxford

1985 Installation of Fen Bridge.

1999 Project to save our rarest tree the Native Black Poplar begins. The Clone bank at Lamarsh was established and cuttings planted along the valley from trees in South Suffolk and North Essex.

2004/5 The Dedham Vale and Stour Valley Management Strategy was prepared by the Dedham Vale and Stour Valley Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) on behalf of local authorities. The strategy production process brought together for the first time a wide range of key partners, who reached agreement on joint policy guidance for the AONB and Stour Valley. The Strategy will have a lifetime of five years (2004 – 2009).

2005 The Project secured £46,000 worth of support from various partners to promote and run a pilot shuttle bus service, the Dedham Vale Hopper. The service commenced in July 2005, with an hourly service linking Manningtree Station to Flatford, East Bergholt, Stratford St Mary, Dedham and Lawford. (unfortunately there is no service running at the present as we were not able to secure funding, but we remain hopeful of restarting the service in the future).

“The Valley and the AONB continue to face ever increasing pressures. I feel it is more important than ever to retain the natural environment and quality of the valley. As was the case in 1981, we continue to work in partnership with other organisations and local people. We cannot achieve the objectives of the Management Strategy alone and appreciate the work that our partners undertake”. “I look forward to continuing a fruitful relationship with the Dedham Vale Society and invite members to contact us with any potential project or schemes we may be able to work on. As a reminder, we now have a Sustainable Development Fund Scheme for awarding to initiatives that will benefit the AONB – do call any member of the team to discuss this.”

For more information about the Dedham Vale AONB, or a copy of our recent annual report visit the Project’s website at: www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org or telephone: 01473 264263. For more information about Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and special events planned for the 50th Anniversary celebrations, visit: www.visitaonb.org.uk

The Nayland Meadow Project

Background

In March 2004, following an appeal for contributions, the Nayland with Wissington Conservation Society purchased 16.98 acres of land bordered to the north by the River Stour and to the south by a strip of land owned by Bunting & Sons adjacent to Horkesley Road. The Nayland with Wissington Land Company Limited, now a registered charity, was formed to own and manage this water meadow in perpetuity. The sum of £65,000 was raised (in under five months) to purchase this land and grateful thanks are due to the more than ninety individuals and organisations who supported the appeal.

Fishing

The fishing, which now belongs to the Land Company, has been made exclusively available to all residents of the parish of Nayland and Wiston. An earlier agreement with the Colchester Angling Preservation society and previous owners of the land was not continued. Notices were installed in early June 2004 to this effect.

The Plan

After discussion it was decided to apply for an Arable Reversion Grant under the Defra Suffolk River Valleys Environmentally Sensitive Areas Scheme. This would involve seeding with a suitable grass/conservation mix, a single hay cut followed by sheep grazing annually. Grants for fencing the land, on the inside of the public footpath, were obtained from Defra and the Suffolk Environmental Trust who have also funded a small area of planting as shown on the plan.

Centre-spread, Dedham village from the air – Courtesy Dedham Vale and Stour Valley Project





Fencing

It was necessary to fence the meadow to protect the sheep and any grassland nesting birds from the users of the public footpath which borders the land on the west, north and eastern boundaries. Grants were applied for to fund the provision of gates and fencing and a small area of planting. The sum of £3,400 was obtained from the Suffolk Environmental Trust, with Babergh District Council (as a third party) contributing 10% funding to the Landfill Operator. Fencing took place in March/April 2005.

The Pond

The Environment Agency approached us with a view to creating a permanent wetland habitat and pond. This "back water" habitat is identified by the Environment Agency as important for maintaining fish stocks. After planning permission was granted work commenced in early February 2004. The shallow pond is linked to the River Stour by a short channel (culvert beneath the footpath) and will gradually be surrounded by reedbeds. (Plants sourced locally.) The Dedham Vale and Stour Valley Project are helping us with habitat improvement work. By early summer 2006 some reed growth was taking place and damsel flies and dragonflies were abundant.

To compensate for the loss of flood plain capacity a shallow scrape was created on the opposite side of the meadow (beside the weir). The total cost of the pond scheme was about £25,000 and was jointly funded by Defra and the Environment Agency at no cost to us. Maintenance is carried out by the EA assisted by the Dedham Vale Project with local volunteers when required.



The view from Horkesley Road across the narrow strip owned by Buntings, to the meadow and village beyond.

The Wildflower Belt

The area between the fence and the public footpath along the riverbank was hand sown with a wildflower and grass mixture in late April 2005, to create yet another habitat. This was slow to germinate initially but after an autumn cut last year this species rich strip is now growing well, adding to the environmental diversity of the land and to the enjoyment of walkers along the public footpath. Inevitably there are thistles, hemlock and burdock which need regular cutting back and pulling. Labour for this job is not easily found and so we rely on volunteers to lend a hand.

Planting

The final phase of the project took place in late November 2005 when two classes from Nayland Primary school helped plant 150 native species of trees and shrubs in the south west corner of the field. 15 volunteers dug the holes one day and the children came the next day to plant the trees. The weather was perfect and a good time was had by all. A £200 grant from Suffolk Environment Trust, together with other donations, was used to fund this.

The future

The purchase of the land by the Nayland with Wissington Conservation Society and its management under the auspices of the Land Company has created a unique opportunity for an area of water meadow within the Dedham Vale AONB and Nayland Conservation Area to be reinstated and enhanced for the benefit not only of the local environment, but also for the people of the parish and visitors to the Stour Valley. We look forward to many new species of birds, insects and amphibians being attracted to these newly created habitats.

July 2006

THE DVS COMMITTEE

Three committee members are retiring at this AGM; Francis Dodgson, Dora Nichols and Jeremy Cohen.

Frances has represented the East Bergholt area for the last four years, keeping the Society aware of planning applications and other related matters.

Dora has worked as Joint Planning Officer for the Essex side of the river since 1998. The other Planning Officer for Essex was Judith Fowles who retired last year.

Jeremy is also retiring having volunteered originally in 1990 as 'Assistant Secretary, North' overseeing planning applications to the north of the river. Until that time, the Society's Honorary Secretary not only looked after the day to day running of general business but also the planning applications for the whole of the Vale, both Essex and Suffolk banks of the river. In 1995 Jeremy became Committee Chairman, a post he most ably held until 1999 when once more he became a 'back-bencher' but with no less commitment to the Society's interests.

The enthusiastic dedication that all three retirees have shown over the years has been invaluable.

We need younger people on the Committee and Dora fitted the bill perfectly! But whatever your age, if you feel strongly about the Vale and its importance and you are concerned for its future and you feel that you would like to join the Committee please contact Sarah Carr. It has always been considered that each village should have a representative so that matters concerning that particular area can be brought to the attention of one of the Planning Officers more quickly. At the present time we need representatives for the following areas: Polstead, East Bergholt, Nayland, Stoke by Nayland, Stratford St Mary, Higham, Wormingford, Horkesley.

DEDHAM, SEVENTY YEARS AGO

The following is the third part of the recollections of the late Roger Freeman who died in the Autumn of 2005 a few weeks after dictating this vivid account of his early life in Dedham.

Seventy years ago the village was much more class-conscious. There was a good deal of difference around the locality and there is no doubt that some people thought they were high and mighty and would not even look at some of the lowly people who lived in the council houses. Today, of course, the whole scene has changed. It is far less class-conscious and the population is somewhat different because the people I would call the old ~ Dedhamites have really been driven out because of the soaring house prices.

“Dedham today has only a handful of the people who were there when I was lad. It has not been a typical East Anglian village for many years in the sense that the average Suffolk village, seventy years ago, was very agricultural Dedham had a large number of big houses, many of which were Georgian or Victorian, occupied over the years, very often, by officers retiring from the military in Colchester. The popularity of Dedham Vale through Constable’s paintings would have had a bearing on this. Certainly when I was a lad, several of these houses were owned by retired clergy, Canon this and Canon that, Major General this and Major General that, Admiral so and so. Dedham seemed to have far more of these houses than villages further up the Vale.

People occupying large houses further up the valley tended to be from professions. It was notable to me that there were far more clergy and far more military retirees in Dedham than in adjoining villages. Perhaps East Bergholt was similar, but there was no doubt that the area in general was considered a nice one to retire to.

The farm-labourer’s wage in those days was very low indeed, and really a pittance, I suppose. But the children of the farm-workers that I used to play with, I have to say, were always happy. There was a book produced by a certain academic about a village in Suffolk between the two wars which annoyed me because it tended to show farm labourers as being very down-trodden, and, I think, in his work he actually pities them. Whereas to my knowledge, although life might have been hard, I can never remember any moans or groans about poverty from these labouring people whose children I knew. If anything they were a happy crowd who accepted that life was hard having known nothing better. Their staple diet might have been rabbit and chicken, either home-produced or poached and they lived out of the garden.

I would say that on most farms there was a cowman, usually a local lad, but I don’t know what proportion of the labouring class in the village worked on farms but it was the occupation of the majority apart from, perhaps, those who lived in the council-houses from where a high

percentage of the men pedalled-off to the BX plastics factory each day. That was a source of a good wage and was looked-upon with relish by those people who didn't have the advantage of working there.

The village in those days was typical of all the villages in the area in that it was largely self-sufficient. There were cobblers, a blacksmith, a baker and a butcher. You name it, there was everything essential to life. In fact at one time there were at least four cobblers in the village, three of whom were men with a gammy leg or gammy arm or something. It seemed to be a regular job for people who had that sort of affliction. And, of course, there was a corner-shop in most areas of the village. In fact nine in Dedham when I was a boy! By a corner-shop I mean a little shop where you could buy a can of peas, a box of matches or a can of paraffin to keep your lamps going. There were two on Lamb corner, my home at the time. Heaven knows how they made a living but they had no other form of income that I knew of. They have all gone, of course, and the pubs the same way.



Shoebridge Hill where Roger met Sir Alfred and Lady Vi

There were eleven public houses at the beginning of the last century but today only one “local” remains, the other two, (the Sun and the Marlborough), depend, I would say, largely on tourist money; the rest have all gone. But this is typical of most rural communities which were pretty self contained. The nature of things has changed. Of course, the culprit is the motor-car. We wouldn't do without the damn thing but the fact is that it has been the downfall of all the self-sufficient local communities because everybody now worships at Asda or Tesco.

Dedham, like all the other villages in the area is very convenient for commuters and the exit from the village in the early morning is quite extraordinary. You can't blame people; it's a very pleasant place to live but the whole nature of livelihood has changed. Napoleon was a bit ahead of his time when he called us a nation of shopkeepers but we certainly are today. We don't seem to produce much and that applies equally to farming and just about every other productive industry. But I'm getting off-trail. Let's get back to those far-off days and the second World War.

We had a lot of fruit-farms in the area, particularly in Langham and Boxted and also in Stoke-by-Nayland and Holton St Mary, but the whole farming industry had gone from being predominantly dairy to arable in five or six years of war. Labour, of course, was a problem, the younger men having left for the services. We were then faced with getting older men back onto the land, retired men in their seventies. I can remember we had a man called Horace Ellis, a wonderful character who, as a schoolboy, had waved the flag as the railway was opened from Ipswich to Felixstowe. That shows you how old he was in the 1940s. I always remember him scything round the outside of a field in 1946 to clear the way for the first combine harvester in the area. I always wished I had taken a photograph of the contrast between those two forms of harvest.

I should mention the characters in the village, typical of most in those days. The majority of the oldies had nicknames. I don't know how they came about and many applied to families as a whole. There were the Dumberlans, the Hoggereasons, the Squeak Jennings, (Mr Jennings being one of the oldest of the village residents now, having at one time worked for Mr Moorhouse.) There were the Niggereasons, the Soapysoames, the Hamstarlings, the Youngham, the Oldham, all of which has now died-out but was, one time, commonplace. People would say, "Have you seen Dumber today?" "Have you seen Squeak?" "Have you seen Drib?" "Did you see Mrs Drib?" It was extraordinary but it was common.

There were so many characters in the village, and again, I'm sure this was true of other villages. There was Oscar Radford, the gravedigger, who always had his hook strapped to his bar and if you ever talked to him and mentioned a name he'd say, "I didn't know him, but I dug his grave". It was almost his catchphrase. There was old Armstrong who wore rubber boots all year round and little Jimmy who was his henchman. Armstrong was a great big fellow but Jimmy was quite short and you would see them outside the Sun when the Sun was very much more a local pub, waiting for it to open at midday on a Saturday. I recall Jessie the paper-woman who had an extraordinary rate of travel with a very small box on wheels in which she had the newspapers. She would walk up and down Grove hill, Lecture House Hill and Long Road at a tremendous pace. She was a woman in her forties or fifties and I think she kept going well into her sixties. She lived with the Bartrams down Monks Lane and they owned the paper business.

Then, of course, there was Les Frances the postman, quite the opposite to Jessie and as they were often in Long Road at the same time, the contrast was considerable. I shouldn't think that Jessie was five foot whereas Les must have been well-over six foot. Tall, gangling chap. I always remember talking to him about some of the people who lived in Dedham. He said, "Roger, there is only one man among the gentry here who is a real gentleman" and I said, "well, who is that and why?" He said, "it's Mr Mortimer because he doesn't call me Frances like all the other toffs do - he says Mr Frances". He didn't stand trouble from anyone and he was a postman for many, many years.

Of course, there were other characters beyond what I call “The labouring classes”, or those that were considered the labouring classes in those times. Alfred Munnings, for example. In my opinion he was a loud-mouthed old rogue; yes he was very talented but I think he traded on his fame and, of course, a lot of the gentry and would-be gentry who would normally give him a wide berth were only too keen to be friends with him because of his fame and talent. I have to admit that I thought he was gentry until one day when I was cycling into Dedham it must have been 1945 when I was sixteen or seventeen and when I got to the top of Lecture House Hill on the stretch of road between there and Shoebridge Hill going towards Dedham village, I encountered Sir Alfred and Lady Munnings on horseback. There was probably twenty-five yards between them and before I actually saw them I could hear raised voices and they were having one hell of a row and when I got near, I was amazed. I overtook Lady Vi and cycled between them for a while until Sir Alfred told me to something, something off boy. Lady Vi was answering him in equally strong terms. It seemed that they didn’t care a hoot about being overheard but then I suppose that was typical of Sir Alfred, he didn’t care a damn.



Higham Hill, at the top of which Freddie Bowcher put the Daimler through the wall

He had a reputation for being unkind to small people. I knew a local builder who had quite a talent for painting. He decided that to actually get some praise for his work, from the right source of course, he would set up his easel and paint beside a track where Sir Alfred regularly rode his nag for a morning outing. I think this was somewhere above Long road, I can’t be sure. However, he started painting and was slightly out in the track but not actually obstructing it. Sure enough, along came Sir Alfred on his horse but instead of heaping praise on this poor fellow he shouted out “Get out the bloody way man”. Munnings didn’t suffer fools gladly, but I did think he traded on his fame a bit.

Lady Vi was another character. She was slightly eccentric, I think, very prim and proper on the surface although her language could be extremely strong if the occasion arose. In later years she had a dog called Black Knight which accompanied her everywhere. When the dog died she had it stuffed and carried it around with her. We had a very outspoken lady in the village, slightly butch but awfully nice named Miss Dick Cunningham. Miss Dick didn't mind what she said. She was in Spearings the grocers in Dedham Street, now the chemists, when in comes Lady Vi with Black Knight tucked under her arm. Miss Dick says "Morning Lady Vi, are you going to carry around Sir Alfred like that when he pops off?" Lady Vi didn't see the joke and never spoke to Miss Cunningham again."

The Munnings were certainly an unusual couple. They were very friendly with Freddie Bowcher who was a very, very wealthy bachelor who had several racehorses at stud in Higham on the hill towards Higham Bridge. Bowcher went around in rags and when I say rags, - I've seen his toes projecting from a pair of plymsolls, going into Spearings. It wasn't because he was poverty-stricken because he was incredibly frugal; he just didn't buy himself new clothes. He certainly bought new racehorses. On one occasions he had a very large car in his drive in Higham and I can recall going there and seeing a car-shaped hole in the brick wall on the opposite side of the road. Apparently Freddie had got into his car, begun to manoeuvre it but lost control before he could do anything with it. He was a great friend of Sir Alfred's who obviously didn't mind the tattered garb that Freddie went round in.

In a passage from Munnings' autobiography volume three, "The Finish", he describes the journey from Dedham to Newmarket by car, "*Now we are coming to Higham, famous for me because there is the home of the great Freddie Bowcher, who has appeared in my story as the owner of 'Cryptical', winner of the National Hunt at Cheltenham in 1928. Leaving Higham Green, ahead of us is an ancient house which was once an inn, and passing the drive gates of Bowcher's house we see his Daimler where it stands in the open, day and night, winter and summer.*"

Gossip was a favourite passtime, certainly in the days before television took over and Dedham certainly had its scandals.

Here I have to draw the line at Roger's account of other goings-on which would suit the Sunday newspapers but not this publication! (Editor)

BOXTED: PORTRAIT OF AN ENGLISH VILLAGE

*By Douglas Carter; to be published 20th November 2006 £30
170+ pages with 175 mostly colour images. (Pre-publication price £20)*

A portrait of this quintessentially English village, located in North Essex on the Essex-Suffolk border, from prehistoric to modern times. An agricultural community from Roman times, it enjoyed a brief period of great prosperity in the middle ages through the weaving industry and survived the 1930s depression through innovative horticulture and fruit growing. Its two manor houses have a rich history going back to Saxon times. The story of the village touches upon recalcitrant vicars, witch hunts, the Black Death, Boudicca's sacking of Roman Colchester, fugitive royalists following their defeat at the Siege of Colchester, the 'caging' of drunkards, Edward the Third's tryst with Sibyl, the wife of the Lord of the Manor, recusants, heretics and non-conformists, US and Polish airmen at Boxted airfield, an unsolved murder and the meeting place of a group of notable twentieth century English artists. All of the most interesting buildings are described and pictured accompanied with tales of the doings of some of their past owners.

Foreword: Dr Ronald Blythe (author of Akenfield)

"scholarly and intimate, as a good guide should be, and parts of it could serve as essential information about many a village"

(Until 19th November 2006 this book can be purchased for £20. Contact Jeremy Carter e-mail crispin@aspects.com or Stephen Whybrow e-mail stephenwhybrow@msm.com)

USEFUL PUBLICATIONS, COMPANIES AND ORGANISATIONS

"The Building Conservation Directory", an invaluable reference for all those involved in the conservation, refurbishment and maintenance of historic buildings. A direct link to suppliers, consultants, craftsmen and conservation organisations. Full colour 232 pages and costing about £20. Available from Cathedral Communications Ltd, High Street, Tisbury, Wiltshire SP3 6HA Telephone 01747871717.

"Campaign to Protect Rural England", 128 Southwark Street, London SE1 0SW
Tel: 020 7981 2800 E-mail info@cpre.org.uk

"The Listed Property Owners' Club", Lower Dane, Hartlip, Kent ME9 7TE
Telephone: 01795 844939 www.ipoc.co.uk

"Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings", 37 Spital Square, London E1
Telephone: 020 7377 1644 info@spab.org.uk

"Royal Institute of British Architects", RIBA HQ, 66 Portland Place, London W1N 4AD
Telephone: 020 7580 5533



*“Waiting for the Party to begin”
Giffords Hall*