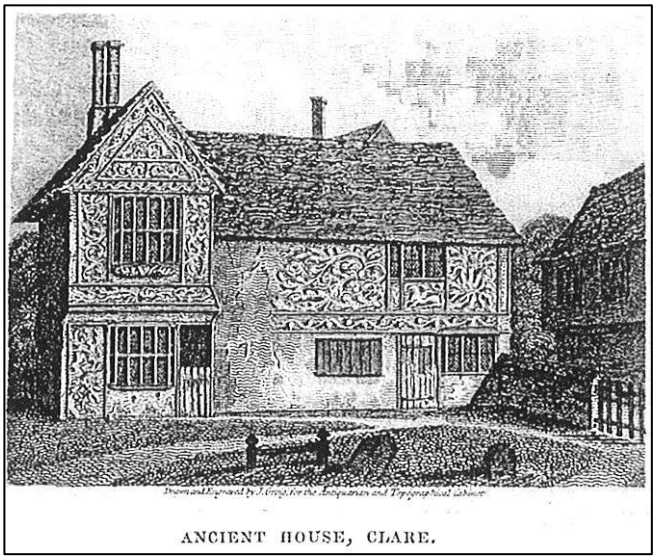
The Landmark Trust

THE ANCIENT HOUSE

History Album



ANCIENT HOUSE, CLARE.

Written and researched by Julia Abel Smith in 1999

Updated in 2015

BASIC DETAILS

Built	**14th century, with a late 15th century east wing and a 17th century west wing**
Listed	**Grade I**
Owner	**Clare Parish Council**
Lease acquired by the Landmark Trust	**1998**
Let for first holiday	**Autumn 1999**
Repaired	**February - July 1999. Museum opened May 1999**
Architect	**Philip Orchard of The Whitworth Co-Partnership**
Builders	**Roger and Adrian Valiant of F.A. Valiant and Son of Barrow**

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SUMMARY

The Ancient House is one of the best known houses in Suffolk, situated on the High Street in Clare opposite the main entrance to the parish church, St Peter and St Paul. Its chief glory lies in the rich, boldly moulded pargeting - the plaster decoration that covers its north facade. Supporting the chamber window is a finely carved oak bracket containing the arms of the Hamelden family, supported by two leaf-clad woodwoses (wild men of the woods). The Hameldens probably built the house, and they may have installed a chantry priest or perhaps lived here themselves. It has been known as the Ancient House since about 1810 when an engraving with that title appeared in the *Antiquarian and Topographical Cabinet*.

No one can be sure about the original form of the Ancient House. It seems likely that a 14th-century house, possibly incorporating a shop, lay along the High Street. At the north end of this there was a cross wing (now the front room of the Museum). At the end of the 15th century an architectural show piece was added behind the cross wing, and the orientation of the house changed so that it faced the church rather than the street. The newer part comprised the massive front door and hall; the parlour with its very fine ceiling; and a chamber above, each with a room behind. The carved leaf stops on the ends of the floor joists are similar to ones in Clare Priory and the Bell Hotel, and may have all been carved by the same family. Access to the first floor chamber was probably by a steep staircase winding down from the archway immediately to the south of the present bedroom door.

The older part along the High Street was probably replaced in the 17th century with a two-storey wing incorporating the chimney. Later on, certainly before 1810 and possibly about 1767, the original staircase serving the chamber was removed; a new door was made into the chamber, the front door was blocked up, and a new staircase serving the first floors of both parts of the house was inserted.

There are two types of pargeting, raised and incised work, and the Ancient House has both. The craft was particularly popular in the 16th and 17th centuries, and it was often used to cover timber-framed buildings in Suffolk. Alec Clifton-Taylor, in *The Pattern of English Building*, mentions watching two elderly pargeters working on repairs there with a compound of lime and sand, horsehair and horsefat. The nature of lime plaster means that eventually it has to be renewed, and as a result the designs and date on the Ancient House have changed over time. On the west gable there is the date '1473', but it had been 1672 at the beginning of this century. The shield of three chevrons is that of the de Clare family.

In the 1920s an American offered to buy the Ancient House with the intention of shipping to the USA, but Charles Byford pre-empted this offer and subsequently presented the house to Clare Parish Council. In 1978 the ground floor of the Ancient House opened as a local history museum, with the curator's flat above.

RESTORATION BY THE LANDMARK TRUST

By 1992, the building needed major repairs to enable the museum use to continue. Clare Parish Council approached the Landmark Trust to see if it could help in any way. It became clear that if the Trust took over part of the building for holidays, the Museum could stay in the other half. A successful application was then submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund and in 1999 work began re-ordering the Ancient House to provide a Landmark in the eastern half, with the Museum on the High Street side. The internal restoration has been done with a 'light touch' working with Philip Orchard of the Whitworth Co-Partnership as our architect and F A Valiant and Son as our builder.

The most significant change to the appearance of the front of the house has been the re-instatement of the front door. When the present staircase was put in, the front door was blocked up and another opening made to the side of the parlour window. We blocked this later door, thereby improving that room, and made a new oak front door. A brick floor was discovered at the entrance and this was extended into the hall. The door from the hall to the parlour had been lowered, but we found the original doorhead and, with difficulty, fitted a new door.

The parlour with its large fireplace has been made into the sitting room. Later window sills were removed in here (and the bedroom) to reveal the knarled and knobbly originals. The asphalt floor was taken out and re-laid with reclaimed pamments. The fireplace bressumer was badly damaged, but has now been carefully repaired by splicing in a new piece of seasoned oak into the gap. A kitchen has been made in the room behind the parlour which had been a museum storeroom.

Upstairs, the chamber with its view of the church is now the bedroom. We removed a ceiling that had been put in earlier this century at a lower level than the original, and replaced it with a new one of three coats of lime and haired plaster on riven chestnut laths following the profile of the original. There are new doors to the landing and bathroom and a new floor in the little closet - the original staircase opening. There had been two doors on either side of the fireplace, leading to the caretaker's kitchen on the left, and a bathroom on the right. We took out this later partition and thereby restored the room to its original medieval form. The door to the left we blocked off and made the airing cupboard.

In the bathroom, overlooking the garden, we discovered the original window with its diamond mullions, which we repaired and gave new elm wooden shutters just as it would originally have had. This meant that the later windows were not only unnecessary but also out of place and so we blocked them all up by reinserting studs, green hazel wattles and daub. We discovered the original, steeply sloping floor under years of later flooring and this we have renovated. This whole room is a testament to the concept that timber-framed buildings 'move and breathe'. The whole house was limewashed inside and out, and the gutters removed to improve the appearance. Clare Ancient House Museum is still housed on the ground floor.

Introduction

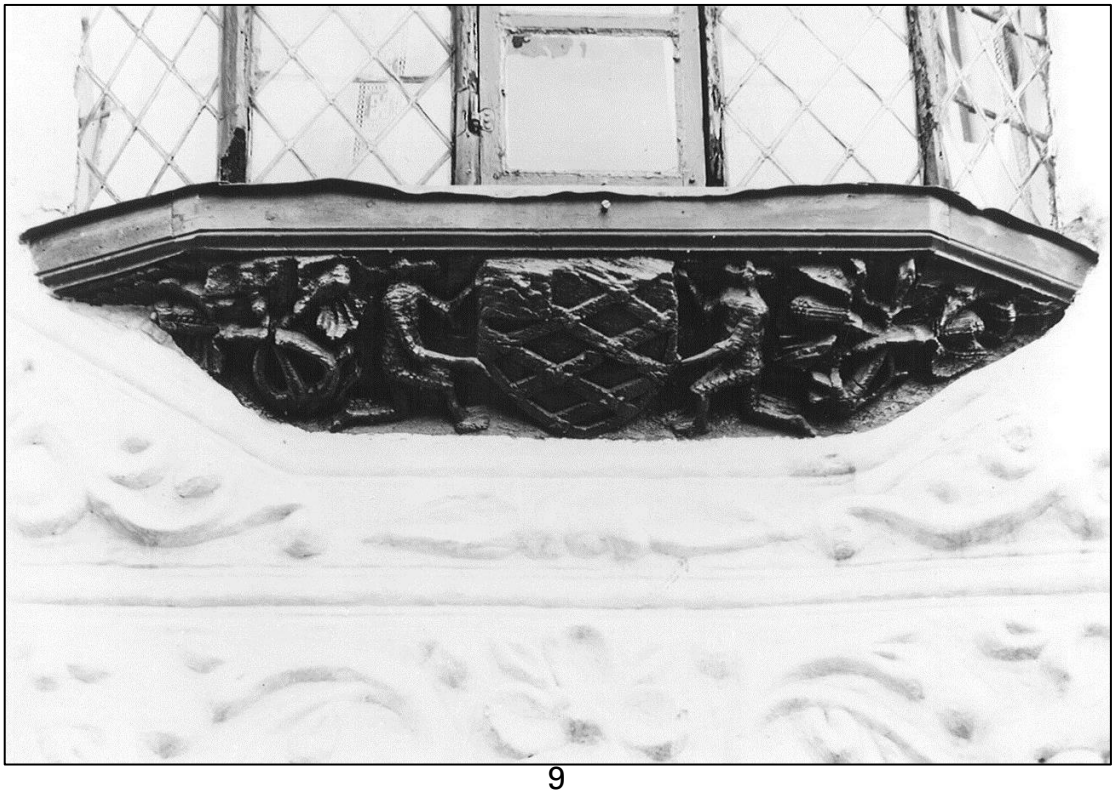
The Ancient House is one of the best-known houses in West Suffolk. Its position on the high street in Clare – opposite the main entrance to the parish church – ensures that it frequently appears on postcards, in calendars and in local history books. With its pargeting (or plaster decoration) and finely-carved timber, it is the archetypal Suffolk village house.

Supporting the chamber window is an oak bracket carved with the arms of the Hameldon family, supported by two leaf-clad woodwoses (or wild men of the woods, of medieval mythology). The Hameldons probably paid for the house to be built, and they may have installed a chantry priest there.

The building has been known as the Ancient House since about 1810, when an engraving with that title appeared in *The Antiquarian and Topographical Cabinet*.

The original form of the Ancient House is largely unknown. It seems likely that a 14th century house, with a cross-wing to the north, sat parallel to the high street. This house possibly incorporated a shop. At a date towards the end of the 15th century, a new wing was added to the north east corner and the orientation of the house was changed so that it faced the church rather than the street. The newer part comprised a parlour with a fine ceiling, a chamber above, and a further room behind both these spaces. The older part along the street was probably replaced in the 17th century. Later on, before 1810 and possibly around 1767, the original staircase (serving the chamber only) was removed, a new opening in the chamber was made, the front door was blocked up and a new staircase was installed to serve the first floors of both parts of the house.

The Ancient House with a detail of the carved bracket supporting the chamber oriel displaying the Hamelden arms supported by woodwoses or 'wild men of the woods.' (RCHME)



In 1978 the ground floor of the Ancient House opened as a local history museum, with the curator's flat above. By 1992, the building needed major repairs to enable museum use to continue. In the spring of that year Clare Parish Council approached the Landmark Trust for help. It became clear that if the Trust took over part of the building for holidays, the museum could stay in the other half. A successful application was submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund and in 1999, work began to re-order the Ancient House to accommodate a Landmark in the eastern half, with the museum on the high street side.

**The 14th-century 'high end' cross wing is in the centre;
the late 15th -century 'show' wing is on the left;
on the right is the 17th -century wing that replaced the earlier
house (with its service wing which became a garden). (RCHME)**

The History of the Ancient House

The core of the Ancient House is the front room of the museum. This may have been the cross-wing of a 14th-century house facing the high street with an open hall to the south, since replaced. The number of closely-positioned studs at lower level on the west side of the front room indicate that this part may have been a shop or commercial premises (with the studs supporting a counter or shelf), possibly with a coffin door in the south west corner. (These narrow doors, sometimes less than two feet wide, were often found in medieval shops.) Living accommodation would have been located behind.

In the latter part of the 15th century part of the back of the cross-wing was dismantled and the massive front door, hall, fine-timbered grand parlour, and first floor chamber were built, along with two rooms (now our bathroom and kitchen) behind. In so doing, the owners altered the orientation of the house so that the most important part faced the church rather than the street. The new part was an architectural statement – a showpiece built by a rich and important client – with finely-carved window bracket, barge boards and ceiling timbers in the parlour. At that time it was not pargeted in its present fashion.

Two ceilings with carved leaf stops like the Ancient House. Above is the Cellarer's Hall at Clare Priory; below is the Bell Hotel. (*Country Life*)

In a *Country Life* article of 1926 on Clare Priory, appended to this album, there is a photograph of the ceiling of the Cellarer's Hall, which is very similar to that in the parlour of the Ancient House. The Cellarer's ceiling probably dates from the end of the 15th century, when Cellarer's Hall became the Prior's House. It is described as 'one of several in Clare, all with a strong family resemblance...There is also a very similar ceiling in one of the upper rooms of Paycocke's House at Coggeshall'. The Paycocke family had moved to Coggeshall from Clare by the middle of the 15th century; Paycocke's house, now owned by the National Trust, was built at the beginning of the 16th century for Thomas Paycocke on his marriage to Margaret Horrold. The bride came from an important clothier family in Clare. The National Trust guide describes the main bedroom ceiling at Paycocke's as 'an excellent ceiling in which oak boards are laid on the upper face of joists. Upper chambers of very fashionable timber houses in Essex and Suffolk were ceilinged in this way'. Perhaps the Paycocke family employed carvers from Clare? In any case, at the end of the fifteenth century there was obviously a group of wood workers in Clare producing work of exceptionally fine quality, including the parlour ceiling at the Ancient House. The other ceiling depicted by *Country Life* as belonging to the same ornately-carved group is in a back room of the Bell Hotel at the corner of Clare's market place.

Access to the first floor chamber was probably via a steep interior staircase opposite the east wall of the parlour, winding its way up to an archway immediately to the south of the present bedroom door. During restoration work the remains of a door latch were found in the plaster of the wall opposite the parlour door, indicating that the original staircase may have been enclosed with a door at the bottom.

Carved bracket to the first floor oriel window showing the Hameldon shield supported by woodwoses.

The first floor room behind the chamber (now the bathroom) was originally unusually well-lit, with two windows facing south and east. During the course of works the Landmark Trust blocked up the east window and opened the south window. In so doing, it was found that the shutter grooves in both windows survive. The original use of this room is a mystery, but it should have been occupied by someone in need of good light, perhaps a writer or a clerk.

Oriel windows could provide an important punctuation device on the facade of a house by counteracting the strong horizontal lines of the jetty. This feature began to appear in timber-framed buildings towards the end of the 15th century; the oriel window at the Ancient House is therefore an early example of the type. Supporting the five-light chamber oriel is a carved oak bracket featuring a central shield of arms supported by kneeling woodwoses (wild men of the woods), also known as green men. The corbelled base of the window was made from a solid oak balk, and provided a perfect opportunity for the carver to practise his craft.

Two other 15th-century brackets can be found nearby, on the facade of the Swan Inn on the High Street and on a ground floor window at The Grove on Callis Street. Another bracket very similar in style can be found at a house called Monks Barn on the main street in Newport, on the Essex/Cambridge border. Here the carver's theme is the Virgin and Child attended by angel musicians.

Thomas Walford of Birdbrook, a historian who worked on the history of Clare at the end of the 18th century, made a detailed drawing of the brackets at both the Ancient House and the Swan Inn, and wrote of the former:

Monk's Barn, Newport with its carved bracket depicting the Virgin and child attended by angel musicians.

> *There is ... some curious carving of arms beneath a window of the House opposite the south porch of the church which from the similitude of the Arms to those of St. Leger commonly called Sellynger and I.S. 1672 in an oval at the west end of the house, lead one to imagine that it was once the property, if not the residence, of a descendant of that family, which was related by marriage to Edward Earl of March, afterward Edward IV; for Sir Thomas Sellynger alias St. Leger married Ann Duchess of Exeter the sister of Edward IV...'*

In fact, the arms appear to have been those of the Hameldon family, of Holton in Suffolk. On Friday 29th July 1910, the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and Natural History took their Annual Excursion to Clare. Their Institute Proceedings explain:

> *Members assembled at the Church of St. Peter and St. Paul at Clare where they were received by the Vicar, the Rev. J.R.M. Vatcher...who...proved a most valuable guide to the old houses standing within his parish. The old house standing by the churchyard was the most interesting...the arms represented upon a carved shield were the source of much discussion. The Hon. Secretary remarked that the arms were those of Hameldon of Holton, co. Suffolk.*

Joan Corder confirms this in her *Dictionary of Suffolk Arms.* In heraldic terms the arms of Hamelden, Hameldene, Hameldon or Hameldone are described as:

> *Argent a fret Azure charged with eight fleur-de-lis Or, on a Canton Gules a star of eight points Or.*

The arms belonged to Sir Lawrence Hamelden of Holton in the County of Suffolk in the time of Edward II (1307 - 1327). There are two Holtons in Suffolk but the parish of Holton St. Mary further along the River Stour, beyond Nayland, seems more likely than Holton St. Peter near Halesworth in the north east of the county.

In his *Journal of Excursions through the county of Suffolk, 1823-1844,* David Elisha Davey notes that in the time of Henry VI (1422 - 1461), a

The Hamelden shield on the parclose screen in Brent Eleigh Church

Sir Laurence [sic] Hamelden held 'of the Earl of Oxford', one fee[1] in Waldingfield Parva, 12 miles east of Clare. The presence of the arms on the bracket at the Ancient House suggests an association with Sir Lawrence or a member of his family, and the suggested dating of the parlour and chamber coincides with the height of the Hameldon family's favour and influence, but the precise connection is unclear. It seems unlikely that the Hameldons were connected to Clare Castle and its royal family, given the wider historic background of the Wars of the Roses: Sir Lawrence's allegiance to the Earl of Oxford made him a supporter of King Henry VI and the Lancastrian cause, whereas the de Clare family were Yorkists.

Situated between the parish church and the Castle, and almost opposite the Guildhall, the Ancient House occupied an important position in the village. It may have been a small court, with the well-lit room behind the chamber used as a clerk's office. A more likely explanation is that the Hameldon family endowed the house for a chantry priest, employed to sing masses for their souls, to live in, with the room behind the chamber used as his study. The link between the family and the church is underlined by the presence of a green man and woman in the roof of the south porch of Clare church. A green man often appears in church porches and this link with new life in nature became a symbol of Christian belief in the resurrection. Green men would therefore be appropriate supporters of the family shield displayed on the house of their chantry priest. Pevsner and others have referred to the Ancient House as 'the Priest's House', but this cannot refer to the parish priest (in the 14th century, a house and land at the site of the Old Vicarage in Callis Street, was granted to the Vicars of Clare as 'a messuage in perpetuity' for their use). Interestingly, neither the antiquarian Thomas Walford nor

[1] A knight's fee was a parcel of land (normally about 100 acres) held in return for homage and allegiance. In practice this meant that in times of war, the Earl of Oxford could call on Sir Lawrence to provide men at arms.

the writer of the Suffolk Institute Proceedings refers to the Ancient House as a priest's house.

In his will dated 1502, John Fenn, a wealthy clothier in Clare, mentioned a legacy of ‘a tenement in the High Row next to churchyard both the old and the new parts’. This description, which must refer to the Ancient House, tells us that the grand new wing was regarded as new at the turn of the century. It also suggests that the Hameldon family had by then relinquished its links with the house. The College of Arms has no record of the Hameldon arms in 1530, so it appears the family name may have died out during the first quarter of the 16th century.

Sometime in the 17th century the old hall along the High Street was replaced with a two-storey wing incorporating the chimney. The south wall of the original cross-wing (the museum’s front room) was pushed out by about a foot, leaving the central storey post-free. This wing was much humbler than the east wing – the headroom upstairs is very low and as no evidence has been found for a staircase, access to its first floor was probably via a wall ladder through a trap door.

At some stage in the 18th century, and certainly before 1810 when an engraving shows the front door as blocked up, the two parts of the Ancient House were incorporated into one. This must have set in train the need for a single access to both wings, and the removal of the original staircase, which served only the grand chamber and the room behind it. To facilitate the new staircase (serving both wings), a doorway was formed in the chamber next to the old staircase opening and the front door was blocked up. An upstairs passage was formed to lead to the west wing. To separate the Landmark from the museum, we have blocked up this awkwardly-shaped passage and created a housekeeper's cupboard within.

The pargeting

The Ancient House is the most famous pargeted house in West Suffolk, although the present decoration is almost entirely reproduced. Pargeting, or parge-work – decoration wrought in plaster, mainly on the exterior of houses – is mostly found in the prosperous areas of south and southwest Suffolk which benefited from the cloth trade. Cloth was already an important trading item in Clare by the 13th century. With no local stone available, oak and clay were used to build houses. To protect the clay, houses were covered with plaster, on which further decoration could be wrought. The word pargeting is derived from the French word parjeter: to throw all over.

Pargeting on the gable face at the Ancient House.

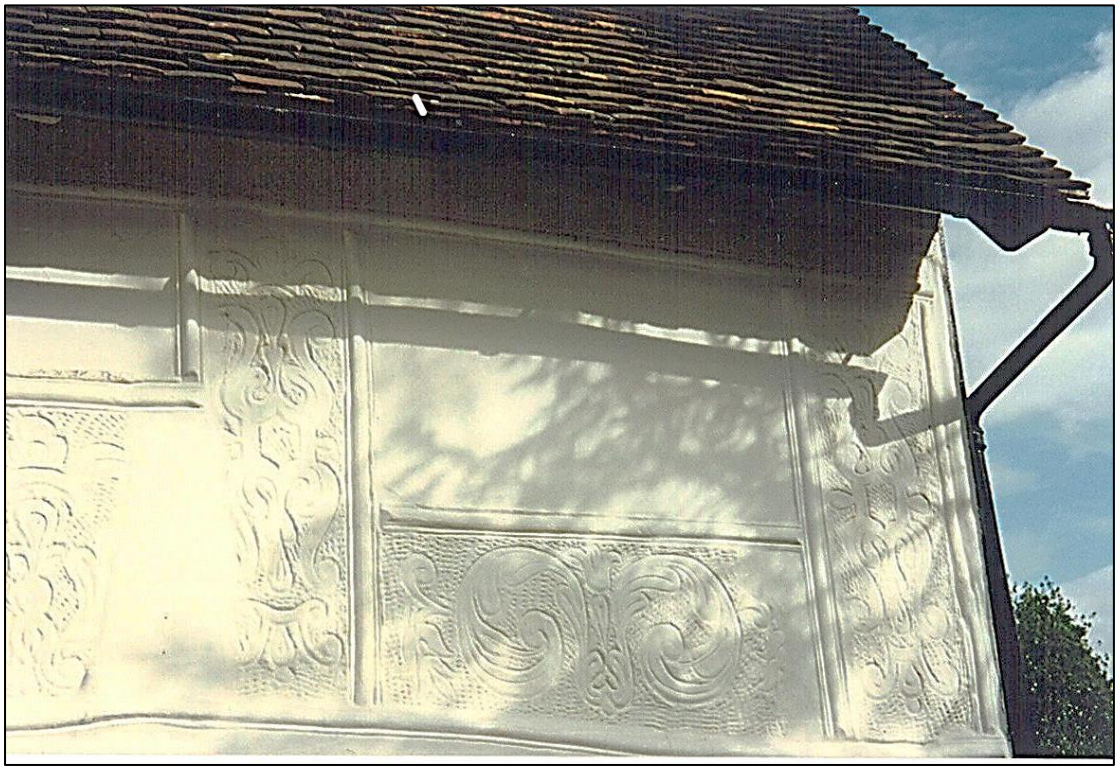
The Ancient House pre-1939. Note the 'monster' under the right hand window and the lack of pargeting on the west wing. (RCHME)

Incised pargeting on the west wing.

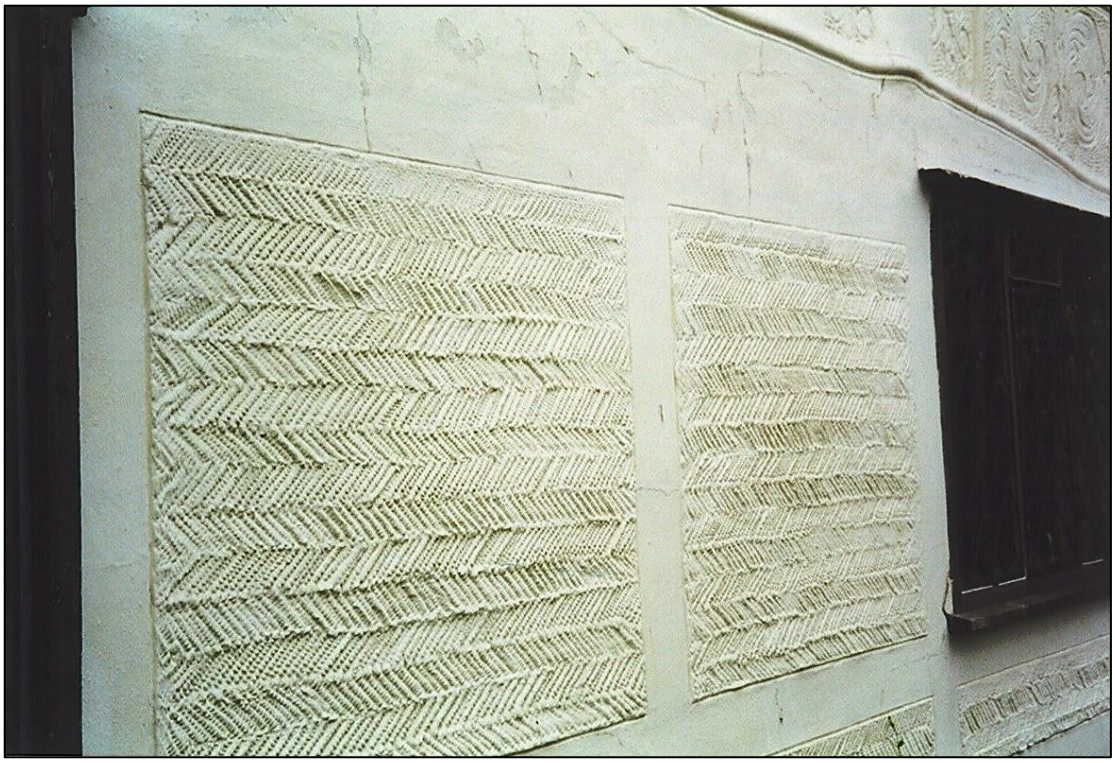
There were two types of pargeting: raised and incised work. Raised pargeting came to England in the time of Henry VIII, who used continental craftsmen at his palaces. The craft filtered out to the provinces and was particularly popular in the 16th and 17th centuries. In the reign of Charles II, a charter forbade anyone who had not served a seven-year apprenticeship from carrying out parge-work. At this time, much pargeting was carried out on earlier timber-framed houses.

Plaster used for pargeting decoration was made up of ground lime, sand and hair scraped from animal hides, for stiffening. Oil and chalk could be added to toughen the mixture. It was the hair that made high relief work possible; horse hair was generally used but ox hair was apparently better. Road scrapings and cow dung were also sometimes added. To colour the plaster, vegetable dyes were mixed in, but these were liable to fade. Ox blood, ground bricks or ground tiles gave Suffolk plaster its distinctive terracotta colour or "Suffolk pink" hue (a term frequently and incorrectly used to describe rose pink, which is less robust).

Incised pargeting was carried out with a variety of combs, small rakes and moulds. Some raised pargeting was produced by making a deep wooden mould, brushing the inside lightly with oil to prevent sticking, and then filling it with plaster and pressing it against the wall. The surface onto which it was worked had to have been scoured and brushed with water for a better hold. This was probably the method used to make the winged lion or griffin which at one time filled the panel above the museum entrance of the Ancient House. The lion was illustrated in G. Bankart's book *The Art of the Plasterer* (1908), but had been replaced by a flower by 1939.



Incised pargeting on the west wing.



Herringbone pargeting on the west wing done by Sid Martin in the 1950s.

The famous pargeting on the north side of the Ancient House, with its swirls, loops, leaves and flowers, is in high relief – in some cases five inches deep. This would have been carried out with wet plaster built up with a small trowel, and has been carried out with plenty of freedom. David Mitson, the Landmark Trust's site foreman, remembers Sid Martin being filmed by the BBC in 1957 restoring the pargeting on this front, and the reporter being rather taken aback when Sid explained that the best tool for the work was a teaspoon.

This bold, loose decoration and the misleading date, 1473, on the west gable lead many to believe the pargeting on this part of the house is much earlier than it is. Pargeting is notoriously difficult to date. However, it seems most likely that it dates from around 1672, which is the year Thomas Walford saw with the initials, "I.S." 'in an oval on the west end of the house'. This date was replaced by the year 1473 early in the 20th century, along with the De Clare shield. The initials "I.S." may refer to John Smith, who produced his own trade tokens. The original oval in the gable on the high street side had decoration similar to that found on one of Smith's tokens, now at Moyse's Hall Museum in Bury St. Edmunds, so he seems to have used pargeting on his own premises to promote his trade logo. With its double aspect and prominent situation, the Ancient House was perfectly sited for showy decoration.

The design of the incised work on the west side of the house beyond the gable, which is entirely different in style and more disciplined than that on the north side, probably dates from the time that the west wing was replaced in the 17th century. By the more refined 18th century, pargeting had come to be regarded as old-fashioned. Photographs taken by *Country Life* in 1926 show the very fine pargetted panels beyond the gable on the west side had been obscured. They have since been revealed.

In his book *The Pattern of English Building* (1972), Alec Clifton-Taylor adds a cautionary note about dating pargeting, with specific information about the Ancient House:

> *Like all other plasterwork, pargeting soon gets dirty, and every time its appearance is refreshed with a new coat of limewash or colour-wash the crispness of the outlines becomes a little more blurred. Moreover, the cumulative effect of coat after coat of limewash is to add substantially to the weight, so that after a time the wall may no longer be able to carry it, and pieces fall away. There can be no doubt, therefore, that the larger part of our seventeenth-century pargeting has been lost for ever; and a great part of what is left has had to be renewed. Some years ago I watched two men repairing the seventeenth-century pargeting on the Ancient House (1473) at Clare in Suffolk, a house on the south side of the churchyard which is probably more often photographed for its plaster ornamentation than any other in England. Under the aegis of the Ministry of Works, the two elderly pargeters, with a compound of lime and sand, horse-fat and horse hair, were working on a low scaffolding. Most of the existing plaster (which was itself a renewal, for it is known that this house once had a fabulous winged monster below one of its windows) had to be entirely removed. No moulds were used; they were relying on photographs. What we see now therefore is a reproduction, approximate and not exact, of what was itself not original. The work has been well done: the only alternative to renewal was destruction; and with such an essentially free-hand craft, little may be lost when the plasterers are men of skill and sensibility. But it is as well to realise that a substantial proportion of the pargeting to be seen to-day, including many dated pieces, belongs to the late- sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in spirit rather than in fact; and furthermore that many examples which are now white ... would seem originally to have been coloured.*

The shield of arms on the west gable is that of the de Clare family; it is made up of three chevrons. These are particularly appropriate heraldic devices to be found on the Ancient House, as a chevron represents two rafters of a roof of a timber-framed house. The importance of good oak is shown by the fact that, as valuable gifts, it was presented by monarchs such as Henry III and Edward I to deserving subjects.

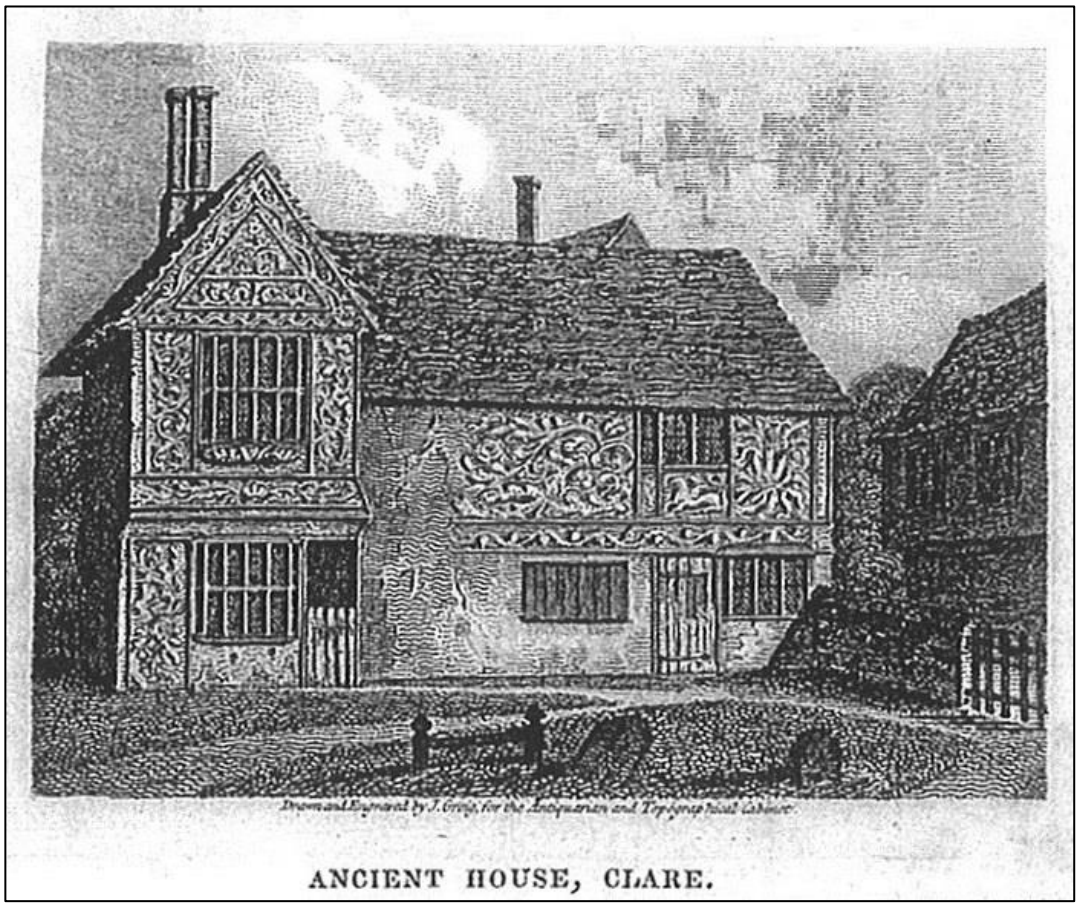
Later History of the Ancient House

In 1610 the garden, which then extended further south, was let separately for grazing. The house at that point was either used as a workhouse or an almshouse. After the plasterer John Smith, John Snell, a draper, and John Harvey owned the Ancient House before Samuel Brise bought the freehold in 1767, when it was let as a bakery. Brise lived at Sigors, on the high street opposite, and built a billiard room at the bottom of the Ancient House garden for his own use. This is now the site of the office of the solicitors, Wayman and Long. When he died aged 94 in 1827, Brise left the house to his niece, Elizabeth, and she left it to her grandson, Lt. Col. Mathew.

It appears that the house has been known as the Ancient House since the beginning of the 19th century, when an engraving entitled *Ancient House, Clare* (dated 1810, by J. Grieg) appeared in an article on Clare Castle and Priory in *The Antiquarian and Topographical Cabinet*. The text refers to:

> *An ancient house, standing on the north (sic) side of Clare church, attracts attention from its ornaments, consisting chiefly of armorial bearings and foliage; but, being much defaced with whitewash, it is nearly impossible to ascertain exactly the figures.*

The 1810 engraving shows the original front door with its ogee arch and the window above completely plastered over. There is a wicket gate directly to the right of the parlour window, which was the position of the front door when the Trust acquired the Ancient House. To the left of the museum entrance there was a window, shown in the print with closed wooden shutters. Above the door, the pargeted 'dragon' is shown to good effect. The print also shows a wall abutting the front of the house on the street side. With no graveyard railings, the house opened directly onto the churchyard.



Engraving which appeared in 1810 edition of *The Antiquarian & Topographical Cabinet*.

The tithe map of 1848 shows the west wing extending as far as the present garden wall, and this may be where the baking took place as no indications of the presence of bread ovens have been found inside the house. In 1848 the house was owned by Henry Mathew and let to George Pearson, a baker. In the late 1920's, an American offered to buy the Ancient House with the intention of shipping it to his home country. However in 1929, Charles Byford pre-empted this offer and purchased the Ancient House by private treaty for £900. He bought it with a sitting tenant, George Dyson, a coach painter, who paid a rent of £12 a year.

When this tenancy came to an end nine years later, Mr Byford presented the Ancient House to Clare Parish Council. Through his philanthropy, he had saved the house from being dismantled and shipped to America; it would have been a serious loss to the townscape. The Deed of Gift of 3rd March 1938 reads:

> *'The free gift of said hereditaments to the Council in order that they may be preserved as long as possible substantially in their present state and to ensure retention of said hereditaments in Clare aforesaid for the benefit of said Parish thus avoiding the threatened removal to another country.'*

Interestingly, at a relatively early date in the history of architectural conservation, the importance of the Ancient House is recognised, as the Deed continues:

> *'The Council shall use their best endeavours by the exercise of all reasonable means to preserve said hereditaments...as an object of archaeological interest and beauty and if and when any structural or other alterations are deemed necessary or desirable before proceeding...the Council shall take the opinion and advice of the Suffolk Preservation Society and/or the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings and due weight and consideration shall be given to the advice derived from either of these Societies or both of them.'*

After George Dyson, there was an interval before Mr Parker moved in in the 1930s as sexton. During the Second World War, the present bathroom was a bedroom and the W.C. was in the far corner of the garden. In the early 1950s, Mr Ellingham took over as sexton and lived here with his family until he retired in the early 1970s. In 1978, Mr Michael Byford opened the Ancient House as a local museum. When the museum was forced to close, the Parish Council began searching for an appropriate use and approached the Landmark Trust in March 1992.

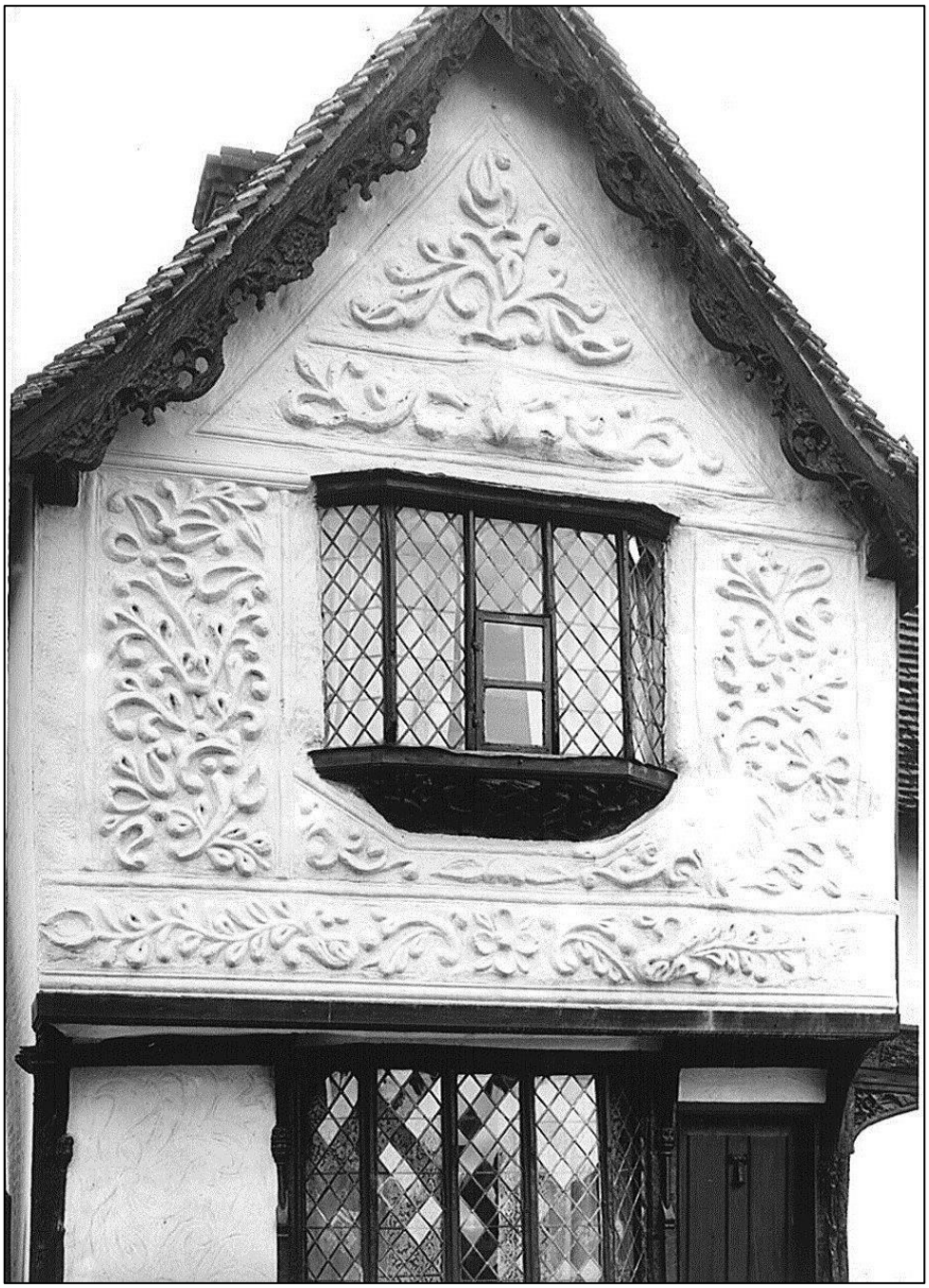
Repair of the Ancient House

In April 1992, Landmark received a letter from Clare Parish Council asking if we could help them secure the future of the Ancient House. They needed to find a considerable sum of money to restore the house and were looking for sources of funding and help. In his letter of 5th May Robin Evans, Director of Landmark, replied:

> *I presume you probably wish to keep the Museum going in some form but lack the finance to achieve this. A possibility might be that the Museum could continue in part of the building and Landmark could take the remainder for conversion to holiday accommodation. We have done similar exercises very successfully elsewhere in the country and I am confident that the two uses could work well together.*

In autumn 1997, Landmark was granted £82,200 by Heritage Lottery Fund for the restoration of the Ancient House. Legal agreements were drawn up to give Landmark the lease of the whole building from the Parish Council; the Ancient House Museum sublets their premises from us. The builders began work in February 1999 and the museum opened in May that year.

When we acquired the Ancient House it was divided horizontally, with the museum on the ground floor and a flat above. Our project was to divide the building vertically, creating a Landmark for two people in the east wing, with the museum in the west wing. The parlour, with its large fireplace, was the obvious room for a sitting room, and the chamber, with its view of the church, became the bedroom. Behind the chamber was the bathroom and kitchen of the former curator's flat. Initially we planned a second bedroom in that bathroom, however it was felt that this would only be big enough for a cot and if a couple did want to bring a baby, they would put a cot into the main bedroom. By removing the later



The front door when it opened directly into the sitting room.

partition between the former bathroom and kitchen, the original form of the medieval back room was reinstated.

The most significant change to the appearance of the front of the house has been the re-insertion of the front door. When the present staircase was put in, the front door was blocked up and another opening created to the west of the parlour window. The 1810 engraving shows that the front door was completely plastered over but when we acquired the building, the door frame had been revealed. We blocked the door into the parlour, and made a new oak-boarded front door. We discovered a brick floor at the entrance and have extended this into the hall with paviours cut from reclaimed pamments. At the back of the hall, we blocked the entrance into the museum. In the lobby under the stairs, pasted to the back of the door, we found the front page of *The Suffolk Chronicle* dated 7th May 1842. A piece of wallpaper found during decoration has been left above the lobby.

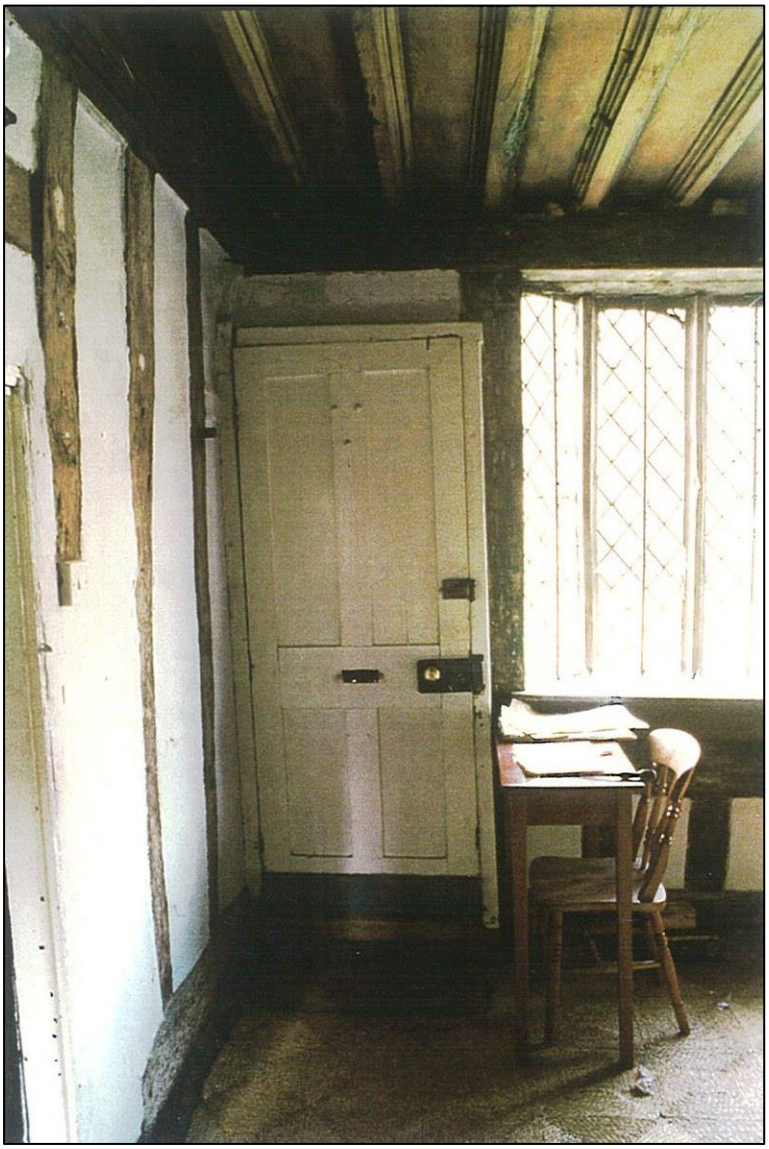
The internal restoration has used a 'light touch'. For example, sockets and switches have been surface-mounted to avoid cutting into the plaster and daub, which gives a slightly old-fashioned look. We held many discussions about the position of the staircase, as its present position makes the hallway somewhat cramped. An early proposal was to move it to the side of the kitchen so that it would rise to where the bath is now, but we felt that that involved the destruction of too much original fabric. The second proposal was to move it further back towards the back door, but this would have meant losing the hall lobby and somewhere to keep the all-important Landmark deck-chairs, without greatly improving the hall space. Finally we decided to leave well alone. Whilst the hall space is a little tight by the front door, we have retained the kitchen and bathroom spaces as well as the hall cupboard. Moreover,

the staircase in that position is part of the historical development of the building.

The top of the stairs

The fragment of wallpaper found in the entrance lobby.

The back of the blocked front door before re-opening.



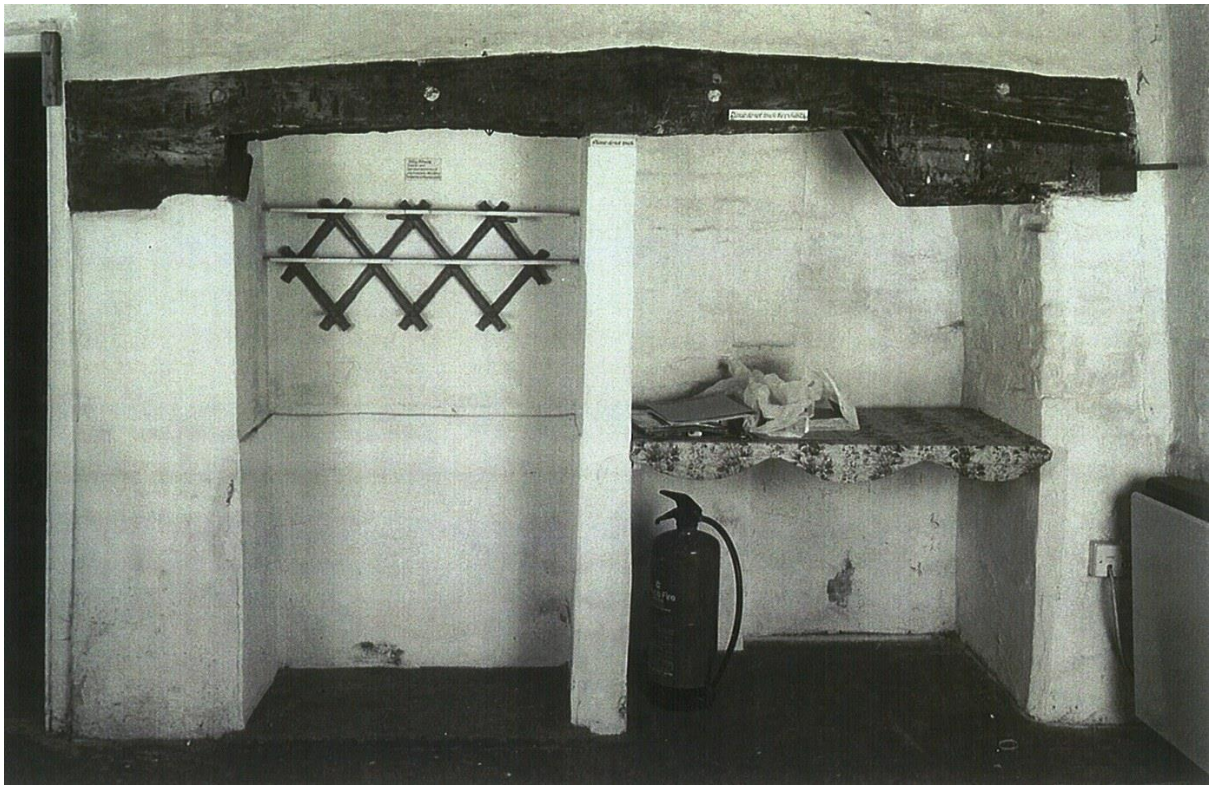
The front door from the sitting room.

The sitting room bay before the addition of the opening lights.

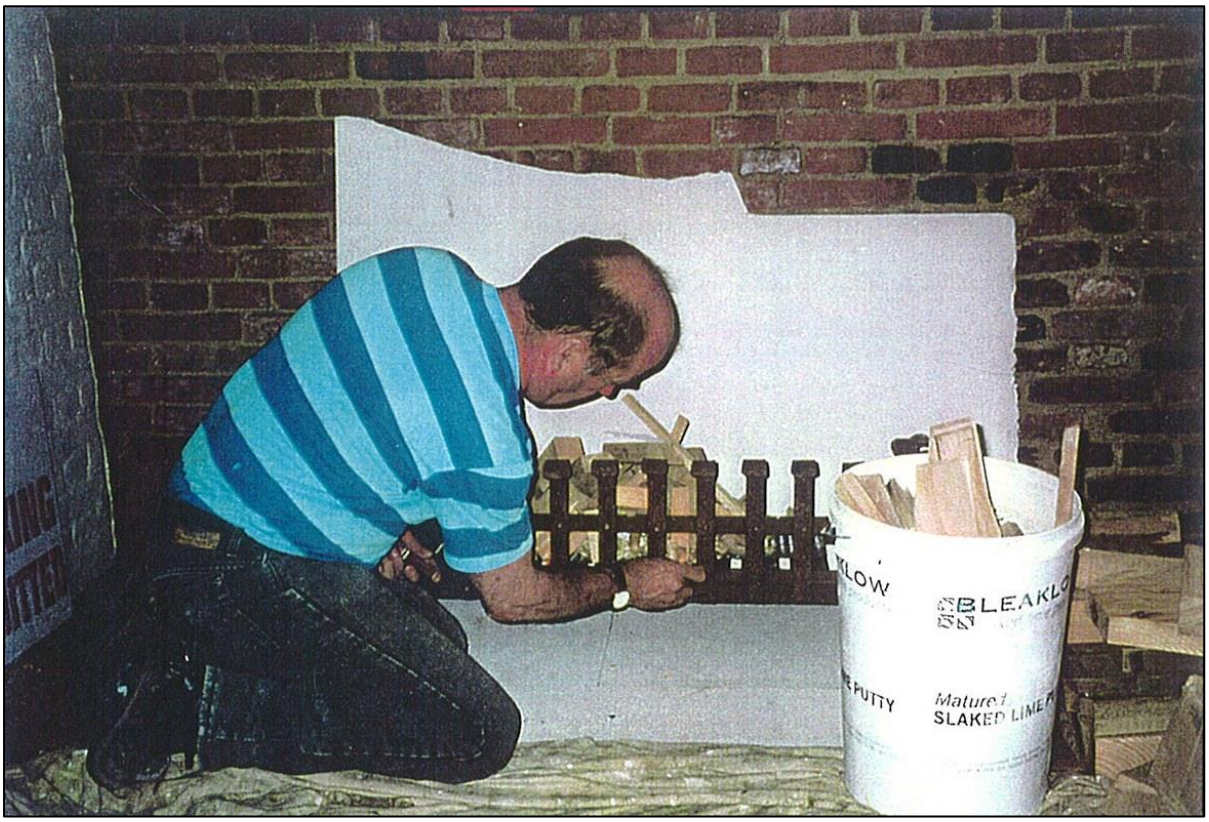
The old front door blocked and a new stud inserted.

The door into the sitting room

The original doorhead re-exposed and repaired.



The fireplace with its damaged bressumer, and divided into storage. (Nicolette Hallett)

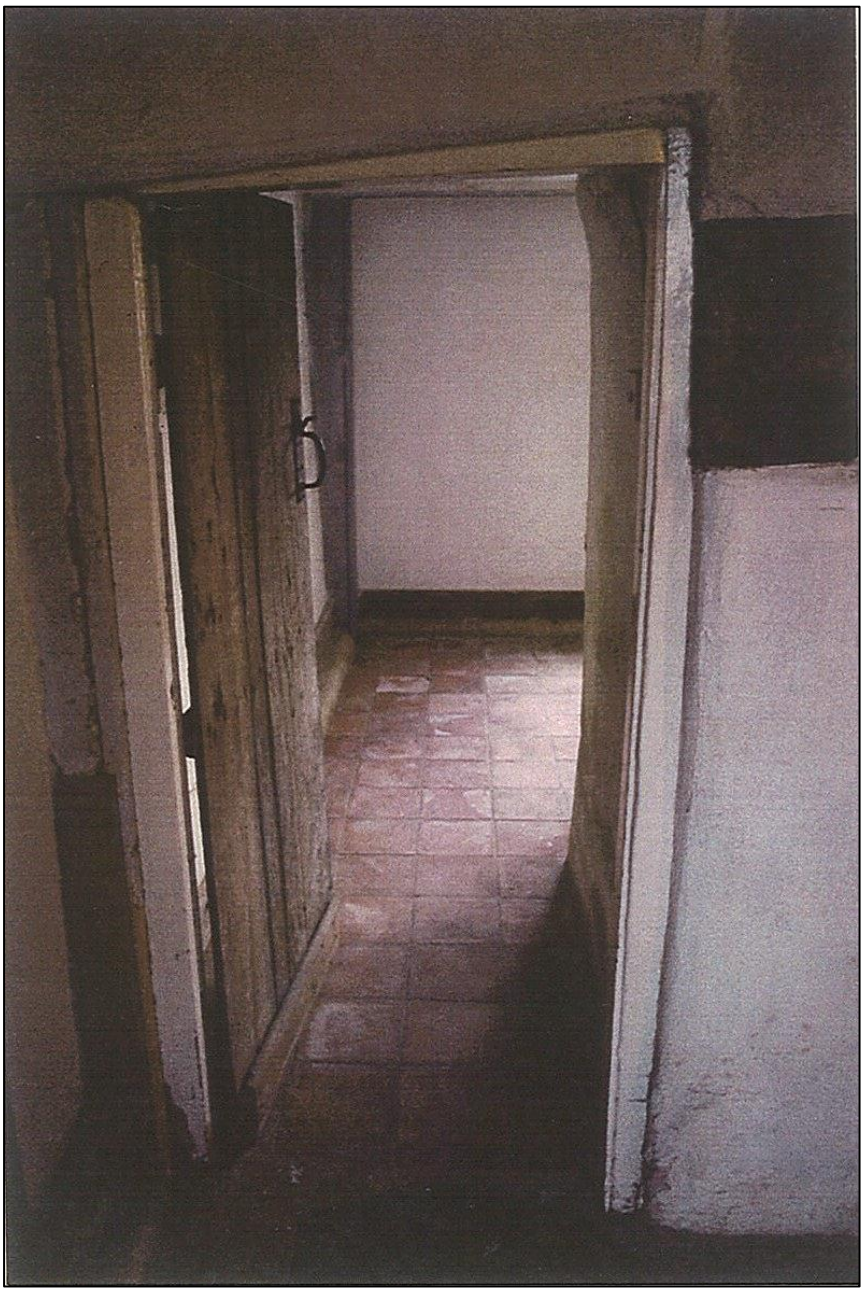


Testing to see if the chimney draws well at the time of restoration. A woodburner stove was installed in 2012.

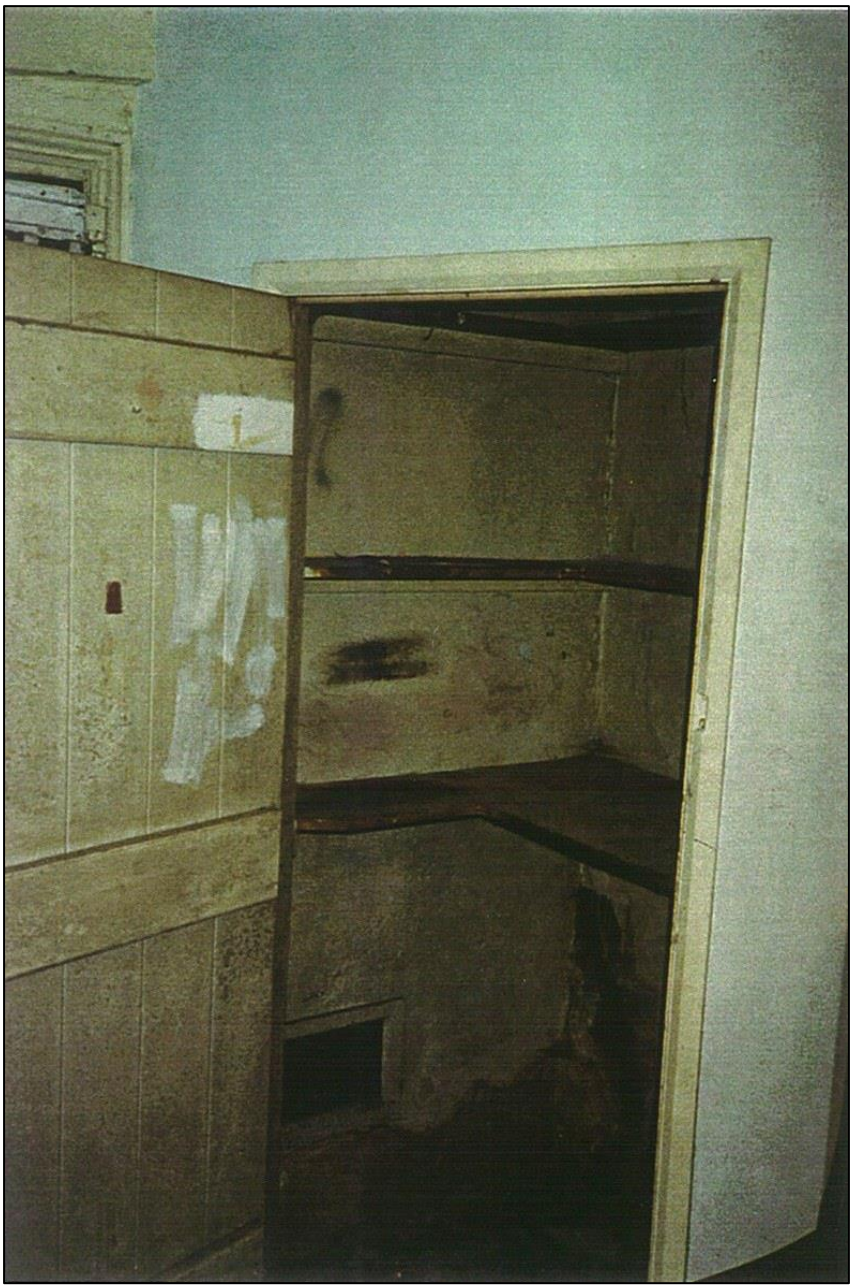
The parlour is the most important room in the house on account of its ceiling, which required no repair. The door from the hall into the parlour had been lowered but we found the original door head and, with much difficulty (due to the uneven levels), hung a new oak-boarded door. The leaded lights were replaced in 1995 but we modified them so that the tops of the side-lights can be opened. We removed the unsightly security bars at the windows and the later sill, which obscured the gnarled and knobbly original. We took out the asphalt floor and laid pamments reclaimed from a redundant maltings in Bungay, East Suffolk.

The fireplace had been much changed over the years. It is thought that a chimney fire damaged the bressumer quite considerably, and we have spliced a new piece of seasoned oak into the gap that we found. We removed the brick wall that had been inserted into the centre in the 1940s to create two storage areas, and cleared out the fireplace to reveal sound fabric, putting back new bricks at the back and sides. As we were unsure how the chimney would draw – the opening being so much bigger than the diameter of the flu – it had been intended to put a wood-burning stove in the fireplace. This was indeed installed in 2012.

The room behind the parlour was used by the museum for storage, and we have created a kitchen there. We put in a new drainage system which joins up with that from the bathroom. The units are maple and we added a slate shelf in the pantry cupboard. The back door needed repair and we have replaced the bottom rail, panels and lock. We did not change the pamment floor that we found there.



Looking into the kitchen from the sitting room.



The larder cupboard

The chamber with its ceiling in the lowered position.

The collar purlin and ties exposed during repairs.

On the landing the two top stairs have been replaced in oak and the housekeeper's cupboard has been made in the previously awkward passage that led to the museum wing.

In the chamber there were previously two doors, one on either side of the fireplace. The left door led to the old kitchen and the right one to the bathroom. We have blocked up the left-hand doorway and put an airing cupboard here. In 1992 the chamber ceiling was made of sawn laths which were probably put in earlier in the twentieth century, at a lower level than the original. This ceiling has been replaced with one of riven chestnut laths following the profile of the original ceiling. The laths were fixed to the underside of the insulated rafters, and then covered with three coats of lime, sand and hair plaster. The bracket above the fireplace needed repair, as did the gable end, although we left all the sound timber that we could. Like in the parlour, we took off the later window sill to expose the old one. There are new doors to the landing and bathroom, and a new floor in the little closet which was the original staircase opening. As in the other rooms, the chamber has been rewired, and we have decorated it with distemper, a paste of chalk and a little pigment.

The bathroom has been most radically altered during our works. When we arrived it was divided into a small kitchen to the east and bathroom to the west, with a later window facing east and two later windows facing west. There was evidence of two original windows facing east and south that had been blocked up, so we were most excited to find beneath the old kitchen units two of the original diamond mullions in the south window which we have unblocked to make an airy and light bathroom. We also found the original shutter rail and have made elm shutters for this window. Due to Dutch Elm Disease, this wood – a difficult material to work – was hard to find. With the south window

reinstated, the later windows were not only unnecessary but also out of place in such an old space, and have been since been blocked up again by reinserting studs,

The chamber with the doorway to the original stairs on the far right.

green hazel wattles and daub. The bath has had to be put on blocks due to the fall in the floor and it has been boxed in with softwood; the runners are elm, to match the shutters. We have placed the new large water tank in the attic above. The original floor was discovered under layers of later flooring; the renovation of this floor completed the transformation of this room. The floor boards are unusual in that they are half-lapped on their edges. This whole room is a remarkable testament to the concept that timber-framed buildings 'move and breath'.

Externally, we have taken off most of the gutters to improve the appearance of the building. We had planned to paint the timbers, but they have a coating which discolours limewash.

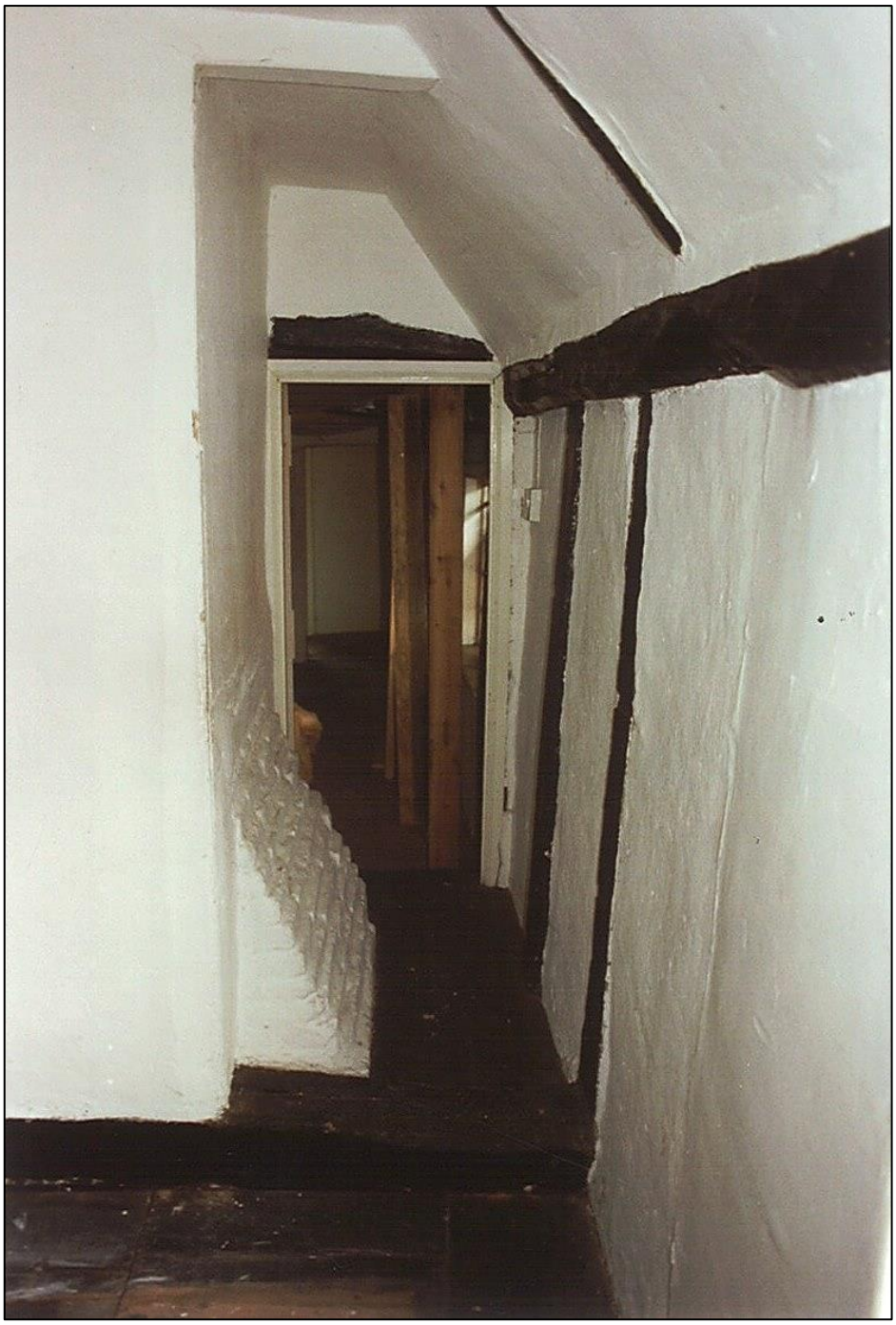
In the part of the Ancient House which is now the museum the biggest changes took place at the room at the back, where we put in a new staircase because the other one was no longer accessible. At the top of it we built a W.C. and a tiny kitchen area for the museum stewards to make their tea and coffee. The other first floor rooms in this part, with their extremely low ceilings, are to be used for storage. The museum re-opened to the public in May 1999.

The eastern part of the bathroom when it was the caretaker's kitchen.

Architect Philip Orchard investigating what remains of the blocked 15th century window.

The east facing window in the bathroom was blocked up as below.

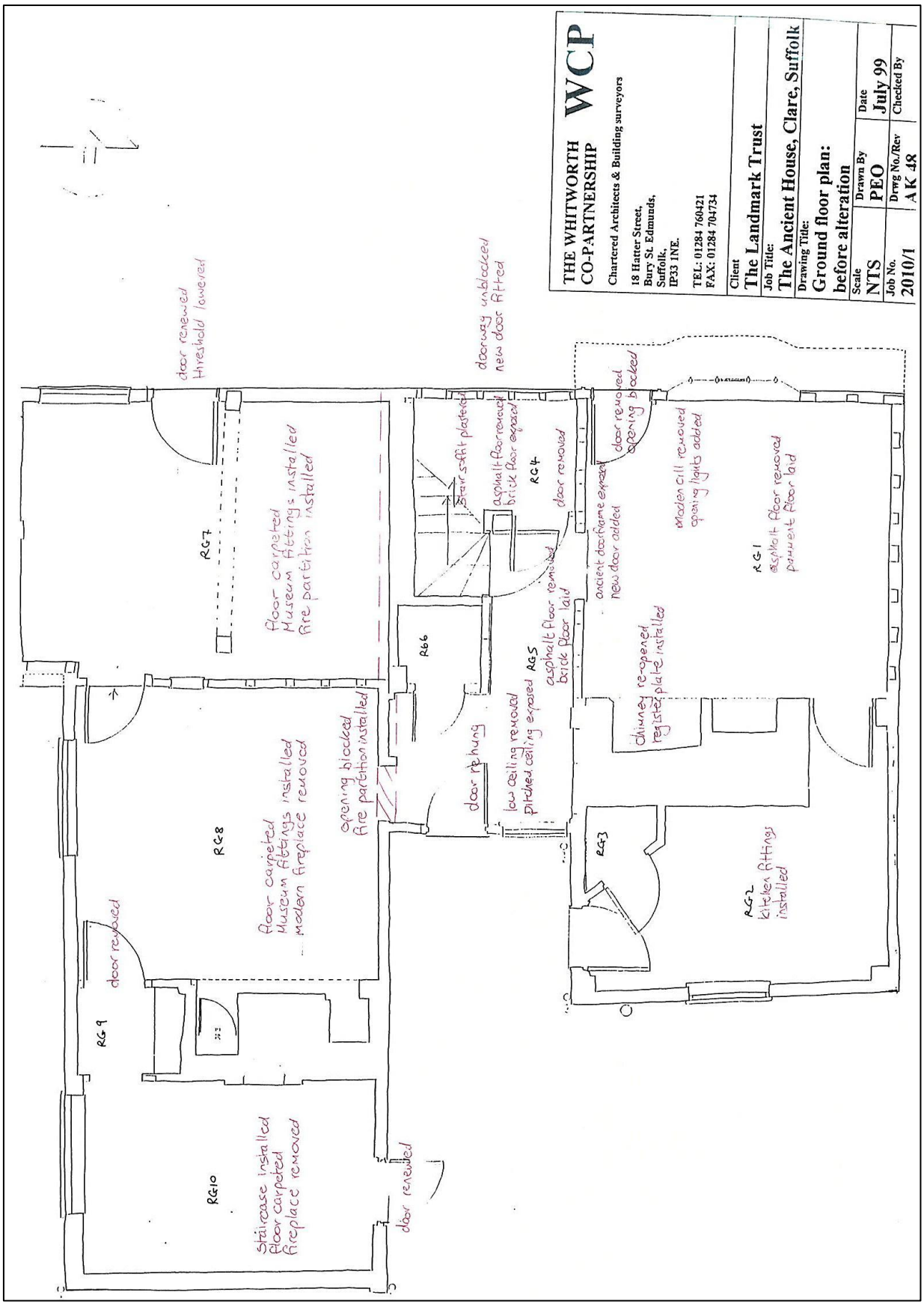
The main room of the Museum downstairs.



The passage way past the chimney stack above the Museum.

The northernmost room above the Museum.

The awkward passage that led through to the landing.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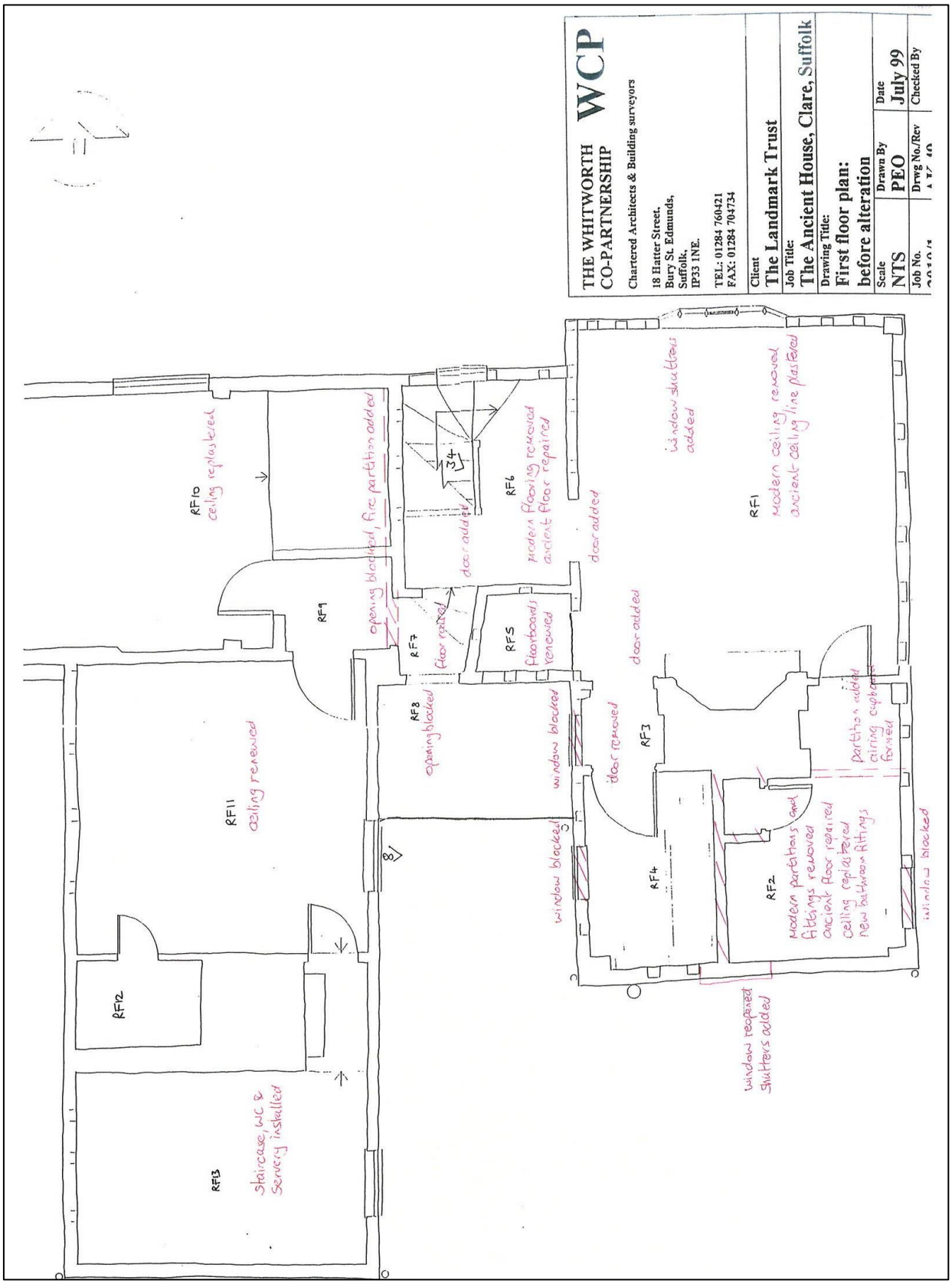
The Landmark Trust
Job Title:
The Ancient House, Clare, Suffolk
Drawing Title:
Ground floor plan:
before alteration
Scale
NTS
Drawn By
PEO
Date
July 99
Job No.
2010/1
Drwg No./Rev
AK 48
Checked By
door renewed
Threshold lowered
doorway unblocked
new door fitted
RG7
Floor carpeted
Museum fittings installed
fire partition installed
stair soffit plastered
asphalt floor removed
brick floor exposed
RG4
door removed
door removed
opening blocked
ancient doorframe exposed
new door added
modern sill removed
opening lights added
RG1
@asphalt floor removed
pavement floor laid
RG6
opening blocked
fire partition installed
door rehung
low ceiling removed
pitched ceiling exposed
RG5
asphalt floor removed
brick floor laid
chimney re-opened
register plate installed
RG8
floor carpeted
Museum fittings installed
modern fireplace removed
RG3
RG2
kitchen fittings
installed
door renewed
RG9
RG10
Staircase installed
floor carpeted
fireplace removed
door renewed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Job Title:
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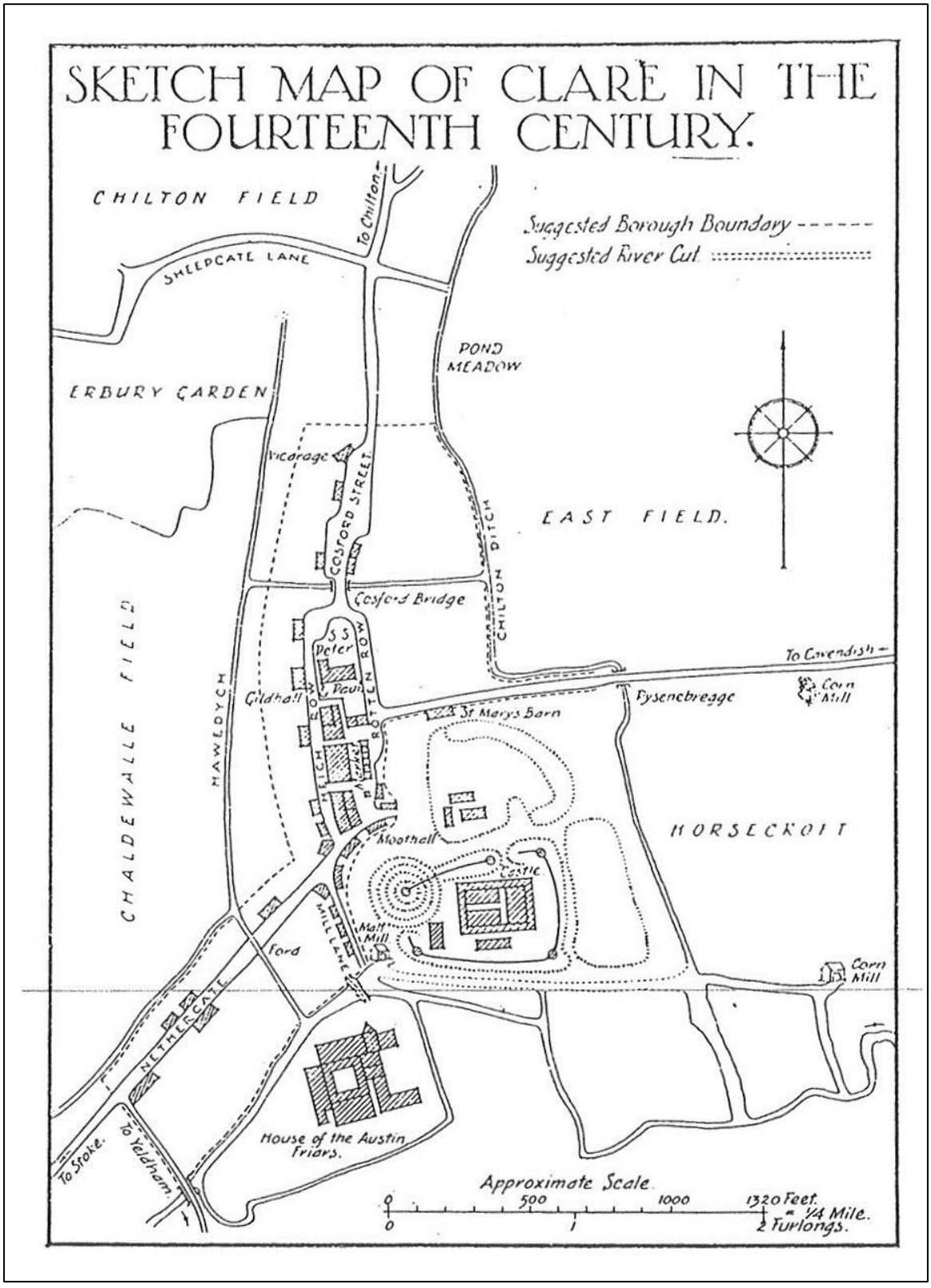
Drawing Title:
First floor plan:
before alteration
Scale
NTS
Drawn By
PEO
Date
July 99
Job No.
Drwg No./Rev
Checked By
RF1
modern ceiling renewed
ancient ceiling fine plastered
window shutters added
door added
RF2
modern partitions & fittings removed
ancient floor repaired
ceiling repaired
new partitions fitted
partition added
fitting cupboards formed
window blocked
RF3
door removed
door added
RF4
window blocked
window reopened
shutters added
RF5
floorboards renewed
RF6
modern flooring removed
ancient floor repaired
door added
RF7
floor raised
RF8
opening blocked
RF9
opening blocked, fire partition added
RF10
ceiling replastered
RF11
ceiling renewed
RF12
RF13
staircase, WC & services installed

The town of Clare

To the north of the town, on the road towards Chilton and Poslingford is the remains of a Romano-British camp. It has a double vallum (rampart) and double fosse (ditch) and was positioned defensively with a good view of the surrounding neighbourhood. Thomas Walford tells us that the camp is one of the chain of camps from the great Roman station of Chesterford in Essex to Burgh Castle in Suffolk. The name, Clare, is probably Celtic, meaning "clear" or "bright", which may be a reference to the waters of the Stour, the only river in Suffolk with a Celtic name, meaning "powerful". During the Anglo-Saxon period, Clare held a position of some importance being situated on the border of the Anglo-Saxon kingdom. At the Norman conquest, it was in the hands of Earl Aluric and there was a market.

The map of Clare in the 14th century shows what a compact place it was, with the Castle taking up by far the largest amount of land, the Priory across the River Stour to the south-west and the rest of the town grouped around the market place between the Castle and the Church of St. Peter and St. Paul. The tower is 13th-century and the nave was rebuilt from 1460-1520, when the Ancient House was acquiring its parlour, and chamber. The chancel was repaired from 1617-1619. The sundial on the south porch enjoins dawdlers to *Go about your business*, a command that might have been appropriate for Detmar Blow when he was in charge of restoring the tower as a memorial of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. In the West Suffolk Record Office there are three firm letters written in the Autumn of 1898, from Philip Webb, Chairman of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, to Mr Blow exhorting him to spend more consecutive time overseeing the work on Clare church tower. He offers Mr Blow some technical assistance in the most courteous manner and then says: "Tell Mr Gimson the Leicester cottages

can wait". Ernest Gimson was a furniture maker in the Arts and Crafts tradition.



Clare in the 14th century

Just by the Church, the Ancient House held a central position almost opposite the Guildhall on the High Row. Further on towards Nethergate Street is the Swan Inn. The remarkable ten foot long inn sign was no doubt originally an oriel bracket in the domestic part of the Castle. In most accounts it is dated to the beginning of the 15th century but the middle of the century, c1455, seems more likely because of its carved heraldry. This heraldic display can be interpreted as Yorkist propaganda, carved to support either Richard, Duke of York, or his son, Edward IV, who gave his mother Dame Cicely Neville, the Clare lands. The two shields at either end represent the double claim of the Yorks to the throne. That on the left belongs to Richard, Duke of York, descended through his father, from the first Duke of York, fifth son of Edward III, and the quartered shield on the right shows Richard's maternal line: the families of Mortimer and de Burgh, who were descended from Lionel, Duke of Clarence, the third son of Edward III. In the centre, the swan chained to the tree, was the crest of Dame Cicely Neville, Duchess of York, mother of Edward IV. The Swan Inn sign can be regarded as visible acclamation of the White Rose.

In the 15th and 16th centuries, the cloth trade was booming in Clare. The Old Bear and Crown Inn in Market Street was the Wool Hall and in front of it stood the market cross. Spinning was carried out by the women usually in their homes; the yarn was then woven into cloth; it was fulled or cleansed to remove oil and impurities and made thicker by matting the fibres, in one of the mills by the river, and then dyed before being sold in the market or at the annual fair which took place on 5th March. The Paycockes originally came from Clare before they moved to their famous house in Coggeshall which was built after the marriage of one of the Paycockes to Margaret Horrold, from the wealthy Clare clothier family. By the 18th century the cloth trade had all but

disappeared, its decline having been hastened by Mr Poulter, an attorney who lived at the

‘Go about your Business’

The oriel window base believed to have come from the castle.

Priory and forbade the taking of apprentices. Daniel Defoe, who wrote an account of his travels, published in 1724, wrote of Clare:

> *'a poor town and dirty, the streets being unpaved. But yet the civil and spiritual courts are held at it and it has a good church, it shows still the ruins of a strong castle, and old monastery. It has a manufacture of says.'*

In the 18th and 19th centuries, Clare was the centre of a wide area of agriculture with farmers selling their goods at the local market. A Corn Exchange was built in the Market Place when the old market cross was removed in 1839. When the local railway line was laid in 1863, it became easier for farmers to take their wares to distant markets and the importance of the market at Clare began to decline. The station was a particularly busy one transporting coal, grain, sugar beet, sheep and pigs. With the exception of the railway company's vandalism at the Castle, the hand of the Victorians is barely visible here. The atmosphere remains one of an unspoilt market town, which has known greatness.

The remains of the 13th century castle keep.

The Castle

An HMSO publication of 1954 is particularly helpful in clarifying the early history of castles:

> *'A castle was a private fortress, of king or noble, and was a product of the feudal system. That system ... was based upon the personal service of vassals to the King in return for grants of land or jurisdiction. Many vassals had lesser men owing them allegiance, and each in turn came to seek the protection of a fortress, to which he could retire in case of conflict with his neighbours ...This system did not exist in England before the Norman conquest.'*

Clare was one of the earliest castles in England and a visit to the Country Park, which Suffolk County Council opened in 1972, gives an excellent idea of the large area it once covered. It was a strong fortification and consisted of a high conical mound, or motte, for the keep, with two baileys or courts below, enclosed by earth ramparts. The inner bailey was separated from the outer by a wide and deep ditch. On the top of the motte are the remains of the 13th-century shell keep which probably replaced a wooden palisade.

In the outer bailey (where the playground is situated today) there were vineyards, farm animals and all the services, while the inner bailey (with the disused station) contained extensive domestic buildings with gardens and well stocked ponds. The 15th-century carved inn sign at The Swan on the High Street may well have come from beneath an oriel window in this part of the Castle. After the death of Cicely Neville, Duchess of York and mother of Edward IV, Clare Castle began to decline as it was no longer an important seat of local power.

The site of the Castle was owned by the Crown until Edward VI gave it to Sir John Cheke but was it was recovered by Queen Mary and afterwards became the property of the Duchy of Lancaster. At the beginning of the

17th century, the Castle was a ruin and in the 18th century, stone from the Castle was used for repairing the road. The ruins became the property of the Barnardiston family and in the reign of Charles II passed to the Elwes family who owned it until 1825 when it was purchased by John Barker of Clare Priory. Despite the protestations of the Barker family, and with scant regard for its antiquity and historical importance, the Victorian railway station was built right inside the Castle's south bailey in 1863, with the track slicing through the ramparts. In 1907 the Castle belonged to Sir George Digby Barker and then by descent to Lady May. Today it forms the focus of Clare Country Park.

The Priory

Since the dissolution of the monasteries the Friary at Clare has been a domestic house known as Clare Priory. Volume II of the Victoria History of Suffolk (1907) tells us that:

> *'Richard de Clare (d.1262), Earl of Gloucester, was the first to introduce the Friars Heremites of St. Austin to this country, and it is generally assumed that the first establishment of the Austin Friars was at Clare, and that they were brought here in 1248. Austin Friars like the rest of the mendicant orders were not permitted by their rule to hold other property save the site of their house but here the rule was interpreted in a somewhat liberal sense. The high position of the founder and his posterity, coupled with the fact that Clare was the parent house of the order in England, placed this friary in a somewhat exceptional position, particularly as Clare was a favourite residence in the 13th and 14th centuries.'*

A mendicant order was one that normally relied on begging for alms and there were strict rules delimiting the surrounding countryside to avoid controversies with neighbouring orders. Richard de Clare's grandson, Gilbert "the Red", married Joan of Acre, the daughter of Edward I and Queen Eleanor and when she died in 1307, her funeral was held at the friars' church in the presence of her brother, soon to be crowned King Edward II, and most of the English nobility. In about 1296, she had built the convent chapel and dedicated it to St. Vincent where she was laid to rest. After her death, Joan attracted a certain mythical reputation and Austin chroniclers tell of her grave being opened many years later and the corpse being incorrupt, whilst the cure of agues and fevers were put down to her miraculous powers.

Joan's daughter, Elizabeth de Burgh, was responsible for building the Chapter House, Dormitory, and Refectory but she herself was buried at the Franciscan Nunnery outside Aldgate, London. Elizabeth de Burgh's granddaughter, another Elizabeth, married Lionel, created Duke of Clarence in 1362. Although he married again after her death and went to live in Piedmont, where he died, the Duke had expressly asked to be buried at Clare. He was initially buried in Pavia but eventually, after a long delay, the body was brought back to Suffolk and was buried in front of the high altar at the Friary lending the Augustian house further prestige.

In her book on Clare Priory, (1962), K. Barnardiston attributes to Osbern Bokenham the extraordinary *Dialogue at the Grave* of Joan of Acre. It is a supposed conversation, which has been put into 18 verses, between a "secular asking" and a "friar replying" about the lineal descent of the Lords of the Honour of Clare from the time of the foundation of the Friars 1248 unto the 1st May, 1456. Bokenham was an Austin Friar at Clare, an admirer of Chaucer, and contemporary of John Lydgate, the writer and Benedictine monk at Bury St. Edmunds. He presided over Austin chapters of the English province in 1461 and 1463.

The work traces the family tree, with much extolling and praise, of the de Clare family from Richard, the founder of the Friary, to Richard, Duke of York, father of the future Edward IV. In 1456, the year after the beginning of the Wars of the Roses, the Duke of the York was fighting under the White Rose for the crown of England. In the *Dialogue,* the writer serves two purposes: first he pays homage to the family of his Patron and Founder, and secondly, he offers literary support to the Yorkist cause by emphasising their royal connections and rightful claim to the throne. The Duke of York was Patron of the Priory and seven of the eighteen verses, describe *this Prince myghty* and his *gracious lady,*

Dame Cicely Neville. Their numerous progeny are noted with their spouses where appropriate, so the reader is left in no doubt that the Yorkish line is a strong one. The cause of the Clares was ultimately successful for although the Duke of York was killed at the battle of Wakefield in 1460, his son was crowned Edward IV the following year.

In less than a century however, Henry VIII dissolved the monasteries and Clare Friary was suppressed in 1538. It was then sold to Richard Friend who left it to his sister Thomasine Barker. In 1604 it belonged to Thomas Barnardiston and later Mr Poulter, the attorney, who left it to Joseph Barker in his will of 1745. Joseph died unmarried and left his house to his sisters, Martha Shrive and Lydia, wife of Jospeh Sayer, Sergeant-at-Law. The Shrives' son bought out the Sayers and left the Priory to his cousin, Lt. Col. John Barker in 1803. Sir George Digby Barker retired from the army in 1902 and carried out much restoration work, opening rooms and removing partitions. His daughter, Lady May, inherited the Priory and was living there when Geoffrey Webb wrote his article on it in *Country Life*. She died in 1954 and now the wheel has gone full circle: the first public mass was celebrated in a temporary chapel at the Priory in 1953 when a small community of Augustinian monks took up residence after 400 years. They are still there and the public is welcome at mass on Sundays.

THE DIALOGUE AT THE GRAVE

This dialoge bitwix a seculer askyng, and a frere aunswerynge at the grave of Dame Johan of Acres shewith the lyneal descent of the lordis of the honoure of Clare, fro the tyme of the fundacion of the Freeris in the same honoure, the yere of our lorde MCCXlviij. unto the first day of May the yere a MCCCCLvj.

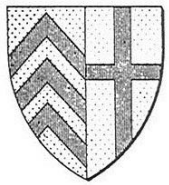
What man lyeth here? sey me sir Frere.—
No man.—What ellis?—It is a woman.—
Whos doughter she was I wolde lefe here —
I wol you tell sir, liche as I kan;
Kyng Edwarde the first, aftir the conquest began,
As I have lernyd was hir fadir;
And of Spayne borne was hir modir.—

What was hir name?—Dame Johan she hight
Of Acris.—Why so declarid wolde be?—
For there she sey first this worldes light,
Borne of hir modir, as cronicles telle me:
Wherefore in honoure, O Vincent! of the,
To whom she had singuler affection,
This chapel she made of pure devocion.—

Dns Ricardus Comes Glovern, qui, circiter annum MCCxlviii, induxit fratres ordinis S Augustini in Angliam, et Dna Matilda Comitissa Herefordiæ uxor ejus

65 F

'The Dialogue at the Grave' from *Clare Priory by K Barnardiston*



Dns Gilbertus filius et hæres dicti Ricardi, et Dna Matilda filia Comitis de Ulster uxor ejus

Was she ought weddid to ony wight?—
Yea sir.—To whom?—Yf I shulde not lye,
To Gilbert of Clare, the Erle by right
Of Gloucestre.—Whos son was he?—Sothlye
Another Gilbertis.—This genealogye
I desire to know: wherefore telle me,
Who was his fadir? yf it plese the.—

Dns Gilbertus filius et hæres dicti Gilberti; et Dna Iohanna de Acris, filia Edwardi primi, uxor ejus

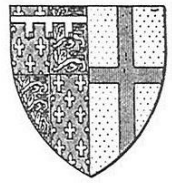
This Gilbertis fadir, was that noble knyght
Sir Richard of Clare; to sey al and sum,
Which for a freris love that Giles hight;
And his boke clepid, De Regimine Principum,
Made first frere Augustynes to Ingelonde cum,
Therein to duelle: and for that dede,
In heven God graunt hym ioye to mede.—

Dns Iohes de Burgo Comes de Ulster, et Dna Elizabetha filia et hæres in parte dci Gilberti, uxor ejus

But laterally, who was, telle me,
This Richardis wife, whom thou preisest so?—
The countesse of Hereforde and Maulte hight she,
Which wan dethe the knotte hadde undoo
Of temporal spousale bitwixe hem two,
With divers parcels encrecid our fundacion,
Liche as oure, monumentye make declaracion.—

Of the first Gilbert who was the wife?—
Dame Maulte, a lady full honourable;
Borne of Ulsters, as sheweth ryfe
Hir aarmes of glasse in the east gable,
And, for to God, thei wolde ben acceptable.
Her Lorde and she with an holy entent,
Made up our chirche fro the fundament.—

Now to dame Johane turn we ageyn,
Latter Gilbertis wife, as to forne seid is,
Which lyeth here: Was she bareyn?—
Nay sir.—Sey me, what frute was this?—
A braunche of right grete joy, I wis.—
Man or woman?—A ladie bright.—
What was hir name?—Elizabeth she hight.—



Dns Lionellus Dux Clarentiæ, et Dna Elizabeth filia et hæres dicti Iohis, et Elizabeth uxor ejus

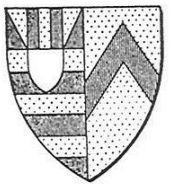
Who was hir husbonde?—Sir John of Burgh.
Eire of the Ulstris: so conioyned be
Ulstris armes and Gloucestris thurgh and thurgh,
As sheweth our wyndowes in housis thre,
Dortour, Chapiter hous, and fraitour which she
Made out the grounde, both planncher and wall.—
And who the Rofe?—She allone did al.—

Dns Edmundus Comes Marchiæ; et Dna Philippa filia et hæres dci Leonelli, et Elizabeth uxor ejus

Had she ony issue?—Yea sir sikerly.—
What?—A doughter.—What name had she?—
Liche hir modir; Elizabeth sothely.—
Who evir the husbonde of hir myght be?
Kyng Edwardis son the thrid was he:
Sir Lyonel, which buried is hir by,
As for such a Prince, to sympilly.—

Dns Rogerus filius et hæres dicti Edmundi et Dna Elianora, filia et hæres in parte Cancie, uxor ejus

Lefe he ony frute this Prince myghty?—
Sir yea, a doughtir, and Philipp she hight,
Whom sir Edmond Mortymer weddid truly,
First erle of the Marche, a manly knight,
Whose son sir Roger by title of right,
Lefte heire a nothir Edmonde ageyn:
Edmonde lefte noone, but deide bareyn.

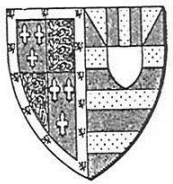


Dns Edmundus filius et hæres dicti Rogeri et Dna Anna filia Comitis de Stafford, uxor ejus

Right thus did cese of the Marchis blode
The heire male: Wither passid the right
Of the Marches londis, and in whome it stode
I wolde fayne lerne, yf that I myght.—
Sir Roger Myddil erle, that noble knight,
Tweyn doughtris lefte of his blode roial;
That ones issue deid; that othris hath al.

What hight that ladie whos issue had grace
This lordship tatteyne?—Dame Anne I wys,
To the erle of Cambrigge and she wife was,
Which bothe be dede, God graunte hem blys.
But hir son Richard which yet liveth, is
Duke of Yorke by discent of his fadir,
And hath Marchis londis by right of his modir.—

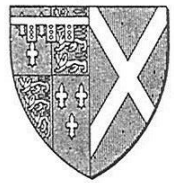
Is he sole or maried this Prynce myghty?—
Sole, God forbede! it were grete pitee.—
Whom hath he weddid?—A gracious lady.—
What is her name, I the praie telle me?—
Dame Cicile sir,—Whos doughtir was she?—
Of the erle of Westmerlond, I trowe, the yengest,
And yn grace hir fortuned to be the hyest.—



Dns Ricardus Comes Cantabrigiæ et Anna filia et hæres Rogeri Comitis Marchiæ, post obitum fratris fia Edmundi, sterilis

Is there ony frute bitwix hem two?—
Yea, Sir, thonks be god, ful glorious.—
Male or female?—Sir bothe two.—
The nombir of this progeny gracious,
And the names to know I am desirous,
The order eke of birth telle yf thou kan,
And I wil evir be even thyn owen man.—

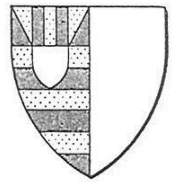
Sir aftir the tyme of longe bareynesse,
God first sent Anne, which signyfieth grace,
In token that al her hertis hevynesse
He as for bareynesse wold fro hem chace.
Harry, Edward, and Edmonde, eche in his place
Succedid; and after tweyn doughters cam
Elizabeth and Margarete, and aftirward William.



Dns Ricardus Dux Ebor. filius dictæ Annæ, et Dna Cecelia filia Comitis Westmer: land uxor ejus

John aftir William nexte borne was,
Which bothe be passid to goddis grace:
George was next, and after Thomas
Borne was, which sone aftir did pace
By the path of dethe to the hevenly place
Richard liveth yet: but the last of alle
Was Ursula, to him whom God list calle.

To the duke of excestre Anne maried is
In her tendir youthe: But my lord Herry
God chosen hath to enherite heven blis,
And lefte Edward to succede temporally,
Now erle of Marche; and Edmonde of Rutland sothly
Counte bothe fortunabil. To right high mariage
The othir foure stonde yit in their pupillage.



Longe mote he liven to goddis plesaunce,
This high and mighty prince in prosperite.
With virtue and victorie god hym avaunce
Of al his enemyes, and graunte that he
And the noble princesse his wife may see
Her childres children or thei hens wende
And aftir this outelary, the joy that nevir shal ende

Amen

CLARE CASTLE, AND PRIORY,

SUFFOLK.

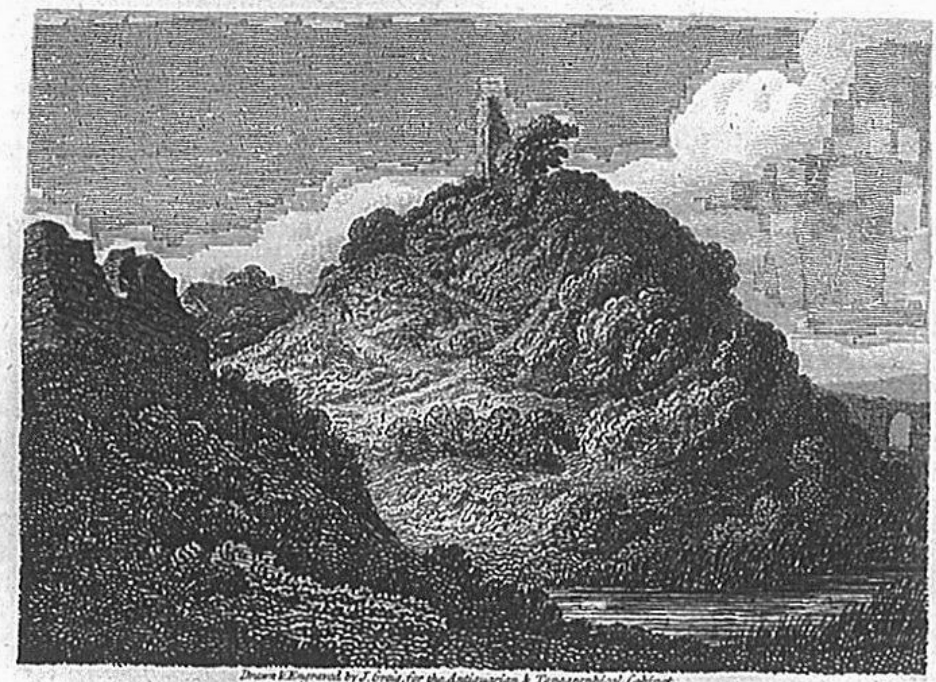
THOUGH no authentic history of the nearly ruined Castle of Clare can be collected, there is little doubt but that it was built about the time that the castle of Hedingham, in Essex, was founded, that is, soon after the Saxon heptarchy. It has been in its present ruinous state from time immemorial, and it appears that its history was very imperfectly, if not altogether unknown to Camden, who says nothing about it; but he observes, "the town of Clare gave name to the noble family of Clares, who were descendants of Guthbert, a Norman." It is situated on a hill, on the south side of the town, having nothing of its original strength and magnificence remaining. A part of the wall, forming a passage up to it, still exists, but so long a period has elapsed since its foundation, and so little attention has been paid to preserve it from the ravages of time, that in a few generations it must unavoidably sink into utter decay, and nothing more of it be seen than a small portion of the stones of which it was built. Surrounded with verdure, it still forms a striking object of beauty to the lover of antiquity, who will often regret that no care has been taken nor any labour bestowed to preserve its fragments from falling into decay.

Near the Castle stands Clare Priory, a house of Augustine friars, founded about the year 1248. Its foundation may be traced from some whimsical lines, which were copied from an ancient roll which formerly belonged to Aug. Vincent. The lines are in dialogue, and the pictures of the secular priest and friar are curiously worked on the roll of parchment. The title of the roll, which is printed or written in red letters, is as follows:

"This dialoge betwix a secular askyng, and a frere answering at the grave of dame Johan of Acris, shewith the lineall descent of the lordis of the honoure of Clare from the tyme of the fundation of the freeris in the same honoure, the yere of our Lord M.ccxlviii unto the first of May, the yere M.ccccix.

Q. What man lyeth here sey me sir Frere?
A. No man.—Q. What ellis—A. It is a woman—
Q. Whose daughtir she was I wold lefe here—
A. I woll you tell sir liche as I can,
King Edward the furst aftur the Conquest began,
As I have lernyd was hir fadir
And of Spayne borne was hir modir.
Q. What was hir name?—A. Dame Johan she hight
Of Acris—Q. Why so declarid wold be?
A. "For there she sey furst this worlds light,
Born of hir modir, as Chronicles telle me"
Wherefore in honoure, O Vincent of the!
To whom she had singular affectioun,
This Chapel she made in pure devoutioun.

1



Drawn & Engraved by J. Greig, for the Antiquarian & Topographical Cabinet.

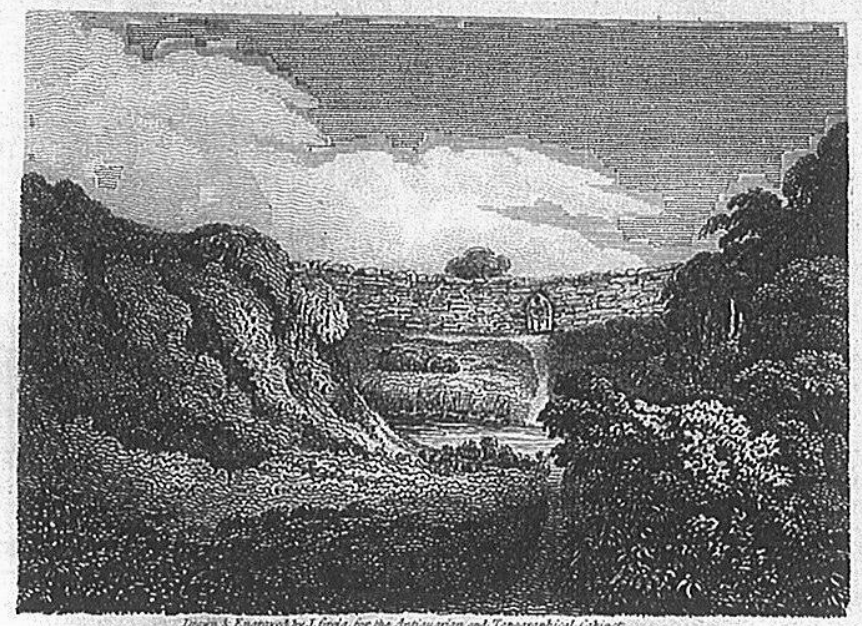
CLARE CASTLE, AND PRIORY.

Q. Was she ought weddid to ony wight?
A. Yea—Sir—Q. To whom? Yf I shuld not lye
To Gilbert of Clare, the Erle by right
Of Gloucestir—Q. Whos Son was he?—A. Sotheley
An other Gilbertis—Q. This Ginealogye
I desyre to knowe, wherefore telle me
Who was his fadir, if it plese the!
A. This Gilbertis fadir was that noble knight
Sir Richard of Clare: to sey all and sum
Which for Freris love that Giles hight,
And his book clepid, "De Regemine principum;"
Made furst Frere Augustines to Inglonde cum,
Therein to duelle, and for that dede,
In heven God graunte hym joye to mede—

Q. But letirally who was telle me,
This Richardis wiff whom thou preisest so?
A. The Countis of Heriford and Mauld hight she,
Which whan deth the knotte had undoo
Of temporal spousaile, betwixt hem twoo.
With divers parcels encresid our fundatioun,
Liche as our monumentys make declaratioun.

Q. Of the furst Gilbert who was the Wyff?
A. Dame Mauld, a Ladye ful honourable
Borne of the Ulsters as she with ryff
Hir Armes of glas in the Est gable,
And for to God thei wolde ben acceptable
Hir Lord and she with an holy entent,
Made up our Chirche fro the fundament—
Now to Dame Johan turne we ageyn
Latter Gilbertis Wyff, as to forne seyd is
Which lyeth here—Q. Was she baryn?
A. Nay Sir—Sey me what fruite was this?
A brawnshe of right grete joye I wis—
Q. Man or Woman?—A. A Lady bright;
Q. What was hir Name—A. Elizabeth she hight.
Q. Who was hir husband—A. Sir John of Burgh,
Eire of the Ulstris; so conjoyned be
Ulstris Armes & Gloucestris thrurgh & thrurgh,
As shewith our Wyndowes in housis there,
Dortour, chapiter hous, and Fraitour, which she
Made oute of the ground, both plauncher andwal—
Q. And who the rofe?—A. The alone did al—
Q. Had she ony Issue—A. Yea Sir sikerly—
Q. What?—a doughter—Q. What name had she?
A. Liche hir Modir Elisabeth sothely—
Q. Who evir the husbonde of hir might be,
A. King Edwards Son the third was he,
Sir Lionel, which buried is hir by,
As for such a Prince too sympilly—
Q. Left he onye fruite this Prince mightie?
A. Yea Sir, a doughtour and Philip she hight,
Whom Sir Edmond Mortimer weddid truly,
First Erle of the Marche, a manly knight,
Whos Son Sir Roger by title of right,

2



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CLARE CASTLE, AND PRIORY.

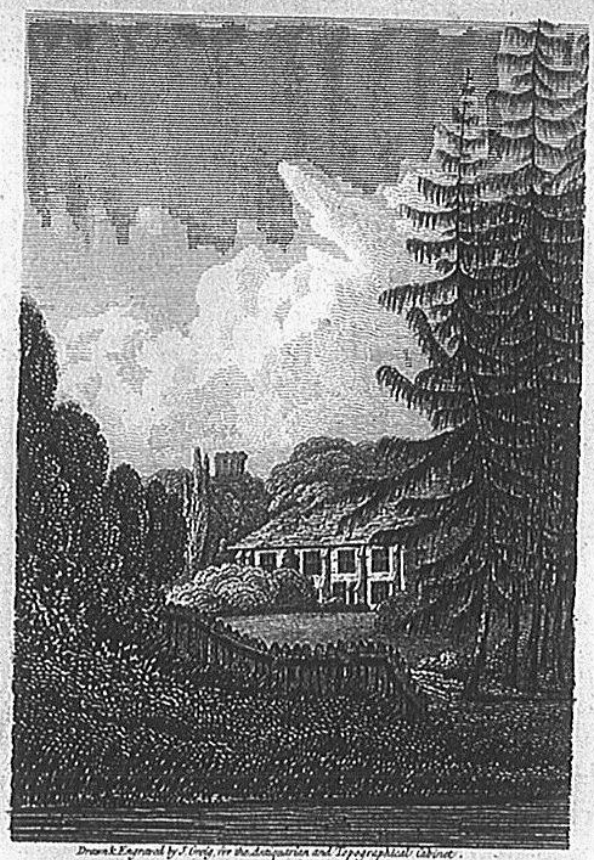
Lefte heire another Edmonde ageyn :
Edmonde left noone but deid bareyn—

Right thus did cese of the Marchis blode
The heire male—Q. Whider passid the right
Of the Marchis Londis ? and in whome it stode
I wold fayne lerne, if that I might.
A. Sir Roger myddil Erle that noble knight
Tweyn doughtris lefte of his blode roial ;
That ones issue deide, that otheris hath al.
Q. What hight that Lady whose issue had grase
This Lordeschip to atteyne—A. Dame Ann I wys
To the Erle of Cambridgge and she Wyff was—
Which both be dede, God graunte them blys—
But hir Son Richard which yet livith, ys
Duke of Yorke by discent of his fadir,
And hath Marchis londis by right of his modir—
Q. Is he sole or married this Prynce mighty ?
A. Sole : God forbede it were grete pite—
Q. Who hath he wedded ?—A. A gracious Lady.
Q. What is hir name I the prey telle me ?
A. Dame Cicile Sir—Q. Whos doughter was she ?
A. Of the Erle of Westmorelonde I trowe the yengest,
And yet grase her fortuned to be the hyest
Q. Is ther ony fruite betwix hem twoo ?
A. Yea, Sir, thonks be God ful glorious—
Q. Male or female ?—A. Yea Sir bothe twoo—
Q. The nombir of this progeny gracious
And the names to know I am desyrous,
The ordere eke of byrth telle yf thou kan,
And I will evir be even thyn owen man ?
A. Sir aftir the tyme of long bareynes
God first sent Anne which signyfyeth grase
In token that all her hertis hevynes,
He, as for bareynes wold from hem chase.
Harry, Edward and Edmond ech in his plase
Succedid, and aftir tweyn doughtris cam
Elisabeth and Margarete, and afterwards William.

John aftir William nexte borne was
Which he passid to goddis Grase.
George was nexte, and aftir Thomas
Borne was ; which sone aftir did pase
By the path of deth ; to the hevenly plase—
Richard liveth yit, but the last of all
Was Ursula to hym whom God liste calle.
To the Duke of Excestre Anne married is
In hir tendre youthe : but my Lord Herry
God chosen hath to enherite heven blis,
And lefte Edward to succede temporally
NowErle of MarcheandEdmond of Rutlondsothely
Conute, bith fortunabil to right hygh mariage.
The othir foure stond yit in their pupillage.

Long mote he liven to goddess pleasuance,
This hygh and myghty Prynce in prosperitie

3



CLARE PRIORY.

With vertue, and vyctory god him avaunce
Of al his Enemyes, and graunte that he
And the noble Princes his Wyff may see
Her childres children or thei hens wende
And aftir this Outelary the joye that never shal ende.

Amen.

The above is an exact copy from the original roll in English, most of which is written in the old English letter. There is a Latin roll of the same annexed to it, which, on account of the length, cannot be inserted.

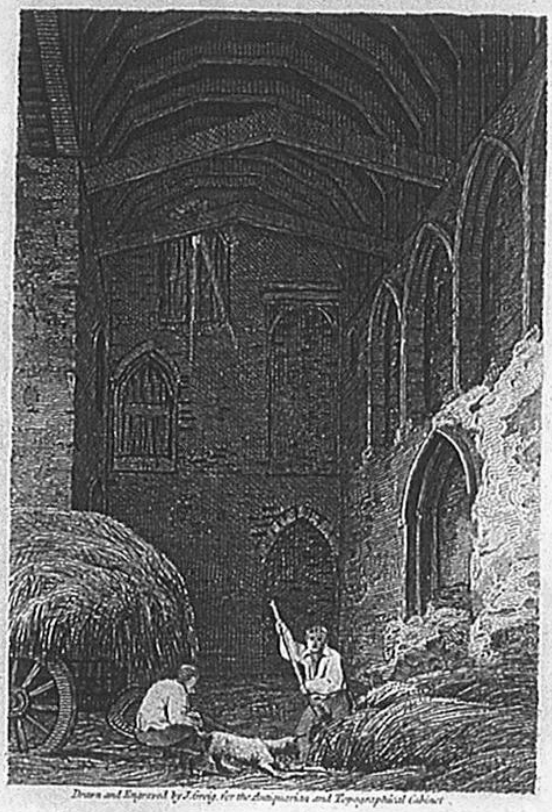
In this Priory church, which is now used as a barn, lies buried Joan of Acres. She was the second daughter of king Edward I. by queen Eleanor, and born in the first year of her father's reign at Ptolomias, a city in the Holy Land, commonly called Acres, where her mother remained during the wars that Edward I. had with the Saracens. At the age of eighteen she married, and outliving her first husband mentioned in the roll, married again to Ralph de Monte-hermer, who had been her former husband's servant. She died at her manor of Clare, on the 10th of May, A. D. 1305. Here likewise was interred the body of Edward Monte-hermer, the eldest son of Ralph Monte-hermer and Joan of Acres. Having obtained the king's favour, he had the title of earl of Gloucester and Hertford bestowed upon him.

Lionell, or Leonell, duke of Clarence and earl of Ulster in Ireland, was also buried in the chancel of this Priory church, together with his first wife Elizabeth, who was daughter and heiress of William de Burgh, earl of Ulster, as it appears from the roll before mentioned. Elizabeth died A. D. 1363. Lionell was the third son of Edward III.

"In all the World was then no Prince hym like
Of hie stature and of all semelinesse
Above All men within his hole kyngrihe
By the Shulders, he might be seen doutlesse;
As a Mayde in halle of gentillnesse,
And in All places sonne to Retorike,
And in the field a Lyon marmoreke."

Not long after the death of his first wife Elizabeth, he married Violenta, the sister of John Galeas, duke of Milan, with whom he received a large marriage portion. The manner in which this marriage was celebrated deserves particular notice.—Attended by a great company of English nobility, he went over to Milan, where the wedding was celebrated in such a sumptuous way as has perhaps never been

4



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INTERIOR OF CLARE PRIORY CHURCH.

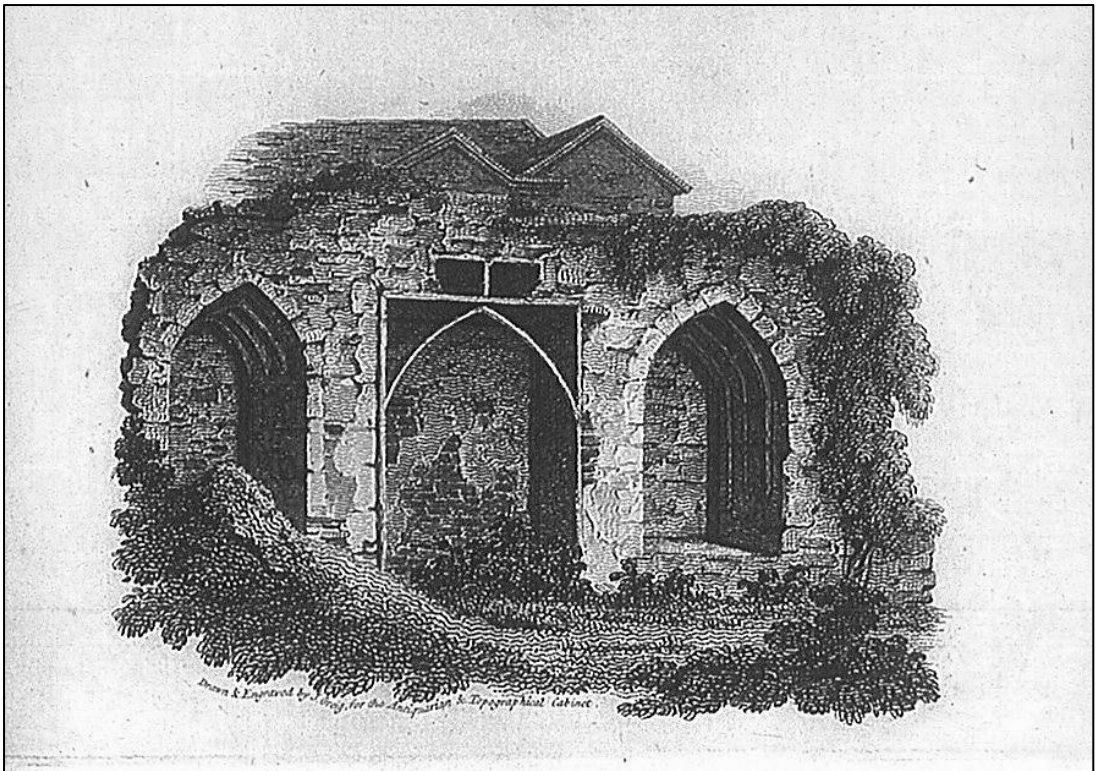
exceeded; but as Stow makes mention of it in his Annals, his account of it is given as follows:

"In the month of April Lionell duke of Clarence, with a chosen company of English nobility, went towards Mellaine, there to marry Violenta, the daughter of Galeacius the second of that name, duke of Milan, at whose arrival such abundance of treasure was in a most bounteous manner spent in making most sumptuous feasts, setting forth stately sights, and honouring with rare gifts above two hundred Englishmen who accompanied his son-in-law, as it seemed to surpasse the greatnesse of most wealthie Princes; for in the banquet whereat Francis Petrarch was present amongst the chiefest guests, there were above thirtie courses of service at the table, and betwixt every course, as many presents of wondrous price intermixed, all which John Galeacius, chiefe of the chosen youth, bringing to the table, did offer unto Lionell. There were in one only course seventy goodly horses, adorned with silk and silver furniture and in the other silver vessels, falcons, hounds, armour for horses, costly coats of mayle, breastplates glutering of massie steel, helmets and corselets decked with costly crestes, apparell distinct with costly jewels, souldiers girdles; and lastly, certaine gemmes, by curious art set in gold, and of purple, and cloth of gold for men's apparel in great abundance. Such was the sumptuousnesse of this banquet that the meats or fragments which were brought from the table would sufficiently have served ten thousand men. But not long after, Lionell, living with his new wife, whilst after the manner of his own country, as forgetting or not regarding his change of ayre, addicted himself overmuch to untimely banquetings. Spent and consumed with a lingering sicknesse, he died at Alba Pompeia, called also Languvill, in the marquisate of Mont-ferrat, in Piedmont, on the vigil of St. Luke the Evangelist, A. D. 1368, in the 42d year of his father's raigne. Cambden, in his Annals of Ireland, says, that Lionell was buried in the city of Papiy, hard by St. Augustine the Doctor. He also says that his bones were removed, being brought over to England and entered a second time at Clare, in the convent church of Augustine Friers."

The following lines by an unknown author likewise commemorate this wedding:

"The Kyng his sonne sir Leonell create
Duke of Clarence, and to Melayn him sent
With Chevalrie of Fame well ordinate,
And squyers, fresh, galaunt and sufficient
With Officers and Yomen as appent—
This Duke royall of Clarence excellent,
At Melayne wedded was then in royall wise
With that Lady fair and benevolent
Full royally, as to such a prince should suffice,
And all the rule he had by Councell wise

5



PART OF CLARE PRIORY.

From Mount Godard, unto the Citee of Florence
And well beloved was for his sapience—
In Citees all he held well unitees
Greate Justes ay and joyous tournements
Of Lords and Knights, he made great assemblees
Through all the lande, by his wise regimentes.
They purposed whole by their common assentes
To crown him Kyng of all great Italy,
Within half a yeare, for his good governaly—"

Note. Lionell had by his first wife one daughter, named Philip, of whom some account is given in the roll before-mentioned.

In the Chronicle of John Harding the following history is given:

"His wife was dedde and at Clare was buried,
And none heire he had, but his doughter faire,
Philip that hight, as Caronicles specified.
Whom Queene Philip christened for his heire:
The Arch-bishop of Yorke for his Compeire;
Hir Godmother also of Warwyk the Countesse
A Lady was of all greate worthynesse—
Chyldren he had noone, but Philip heire
By Elisabeth his first wyfe, which the kyng
Edward maryed to Edmond Mortymer
The Erle of Marche, that was his warde full yyng
Who gate on hir Roger their derelynge."

According to Milles's account, Philip the only daughter of Lionell Plantagenet, duke of Clarence, was married to Edmond Mortimer, earl of March, by whom he had a son, Roger. This Roger had a daughter, Anne, who, marrying Richard of Cambridge, transferred the right of the kingdom to the house of York.

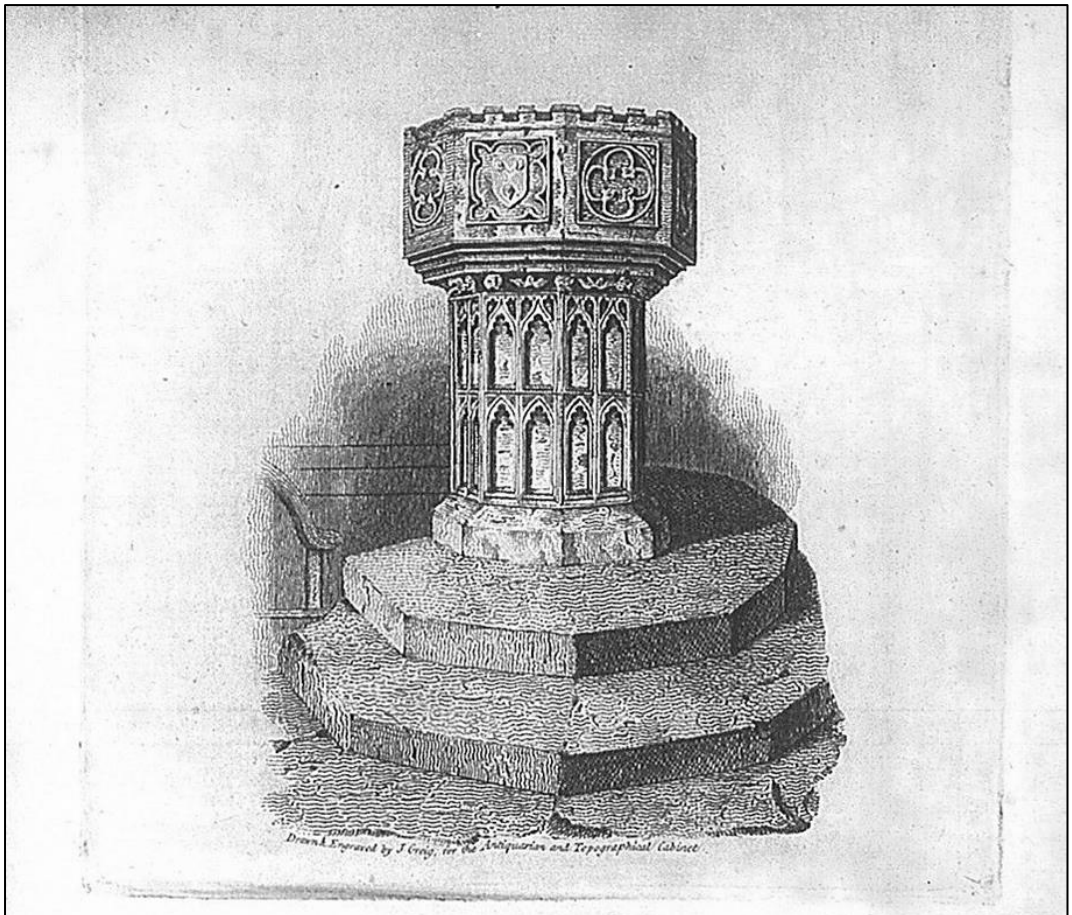
In this Priory church the following persons were also buried.

Richard earl of Clare (who it is thought by some was the founder)—dame Alice Spencer—sir John Beauchamp, knt.—John Newborne, esq. who, with others, assisted in bringing over the body of Leonell duke of Clarence into England—John Wiborough—William Golderick—William Capel—and Eleanor his wife—lady Margaret Scroope—John Kempe, esq. Robert Butterwyke, esq.—Joan Cavendish, daughter of——— Clopton—dame Eleanor Wynkepery.

Note. Elizabeth de Burgh, daughter and heiress of William de Burgh, earl of Ulster, first wife of Leonell, and grand-daughter of Gilbert de Clare, inhabited the Castle of Clare, A. D. 1347.

Clare Priory, was a priory of friars of the order of St. Augustine, who dwelt there A. D. 1248, but it was afterwards changed to a college of a dean and secular canons. It was granted to Richard Friend, 31 king Henry VIII. A portion of the buildings has been occupied as a dwelling from nearly that time. They have been recently repaired, but retain all the marks

6



FONT IN CLARE CHURCH.

of their origin. The Priory, as it is still called, was lately the property of William Shrive, esq. who had it from the family of the Barkers, to whom it has returned. Annual value 324*l.* 4*s.* 1½*d.*

Having no authentic documents respecting the building of the parish church of Clare, which is an ancient and a beautiful structure, it must be passed over without a history; but from its stately appearance, there is great reason to suppose that it was built chiefly at the cost and charges of the lords, who allowed the inhabitants of the town the use of it. The font is of stone, and evidently of the same age as the church.

The following is the list of the dukes and earls of Clare.

A. D.
1. Richard Fitz-Gilbert
1139—2. Gilbert earl of Clare
1152—3. Roger de Clare
1174—4. Richard de Clare

Note. At the death of Richard, the title lay long extinct in that Glouchester.

1362—5. Lionell D. of Clarence, third son of king Ed. III.
1411—6. Thomas D. of Clarence, second son of Henry IV.
1462—7. George D. of Clarence, brother of Edward IV.
1624—8. John Hollis, earl of Clare, lord Houghton.

A. D.
1637—9. John Hollis, earl of Clare, eldest son of the above.
1665—10. Gilbert Hollis, only son of John the last earl of Clare.

The following is a translation of a copy of letters patent granted by Elizabeth de Burgh, widow of Lionell, duke of Clarence, and grand-daughter of Gilbert de Clare, giving permission to sell or exchange a small piece of ground, situated in her market of Clare, with three persons, who are called guardians of her chancery in Clare. The seal of the chancery is affixed to it, but some part of the wax being broken, only the remains of the quarterings of the Clare family (viz.), three chroroness, and the earldom of Gloucester, a cross, can be made out. The impression in the middle of the compartment is very imperfect. As this lady was the widow of Lionell, it is most likely the achievement of the duke. The original deed, which is written in French, is in the possession of Thomas Ruggles, esq. of Clare, to whom we are indebted for the copy. It exhibits a striking and a curious proof of the pride and absurd affectation of royal prerogatives in the nobility of those times. All the parade of *royal* letters patent are made use of by a *subject*, to give a tenant of her honour of Clare leave to exchange a place in the market only sixteen feet long and eleven

7

ANCIENT HOUSE, CLARE.

wide, with the guardians of her chancery, as they are called. For this purpose, the first person plural is made use of—"*Given in our Castle of Clare, the seal of our chancery being affixed.*" It proves, however, that Clare possesses the grant of a market, which, by some, has been doubted. It shews also that its noble owner, as well as our gracious sovereign, held a court of chancery, and also put the great seal into commission, that the court was held at Clare, and that the Castle in the year 1347 was inhabited by Elizabeth de Burgh, dame de Clare, who (as it was before noticed) was buried in the chancel of the Priory church.

"As tous ceup que ces lettres verront ou—— Elizabeth de Burgh, dame de Clare, '*salutz in semp.*' As William holds of us, by favour of our court, a place in our market of Clare, near that of Walter Abory, which measures in length sixteen feet, and in breadth eleven, by the favour of our court, for the rent of fourpence *per ann.* Be it known that We grant, by our special letters patent, and give leave to the said William to exchange the said place in the said market with William Sorrel, Johan Peche, and William Shepherd, guardians of the chancery of our lady of Clare—To have and to hold to them and their successors, guardians of the said chancery of Us and of our heirs, for the aforesaid rent of fourpence *per ann.* for ever. And as We have given leave to the aforesaid William Sorrell, Johan Peche, and William Sheppherde, guardians of our said chancery, to purchase the said place of the said William in the market by exchange, to hold of us and of our heirs on the terms aforesaid, without being in danger of any encroachment to them and their successors from us or our heirs on the aforesaid purchase.

"Given in our Castle of Clare the fifteenth day of May, in the year of the reign of our lord the king Edward the Third, after the Conquest."

An ancient house, standing on the north side of Clare church, attracts attention from its ornaments, consisting chiefly of armorial bearings and foliage; but, being much defaced with whitewash, it is nearly impossible to ascertain exactly the figures.

To the rev. William Daking, of Boxted, in Essex, the proprietors of this work are indebted for the above particulars.

The de Clare family and its claim to the throne

The de Clares and their successors, the de Burghs, the Duke of Clarence, the Mortimers, and the Dukes of York, were one of the wealthiest, most powerful and important families in England in the period between 1066 and the accession of Henry VII in 1485. As kinsman and supporter of William the Conqueror in 1066, **Richard of Bienfaite, 1st Lord of Clare,** was well rewarded. He was the son of King William's cousin, Gilbert, Count of Brionne in Normandy, and in the Domesday Survey of 1086, he was described as Richard de Clare. He was also known as FitzGilbert (*fils de Gilbert*) and was one of the most notable Suffolk magnates. The Conqueror gave him some 170 Lordships, of which 95 (including Clare), were in Suffolk. By 1090 he was issuing deeds from his Castle in Clare. Clare thus became an administrative centre of all the manors of Clare, known as the Honour of Clare, which included lands in Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex.

Richard, 3rd Lord of Clare, moved the Benedictine priory, a cell of Bec in Normandy, from the north bailey of the Castle to Stoke-by-Clare and made the Castle his main residence. His son, **Gilbert, the 5th Lord,** was made Earl of Hertford by King Stephen. **Richard, 6th Lord of Clare,** married to the sister of the wife of King John, was however, a leader in the fight against his brother-in-law and was one of those who drew up the Magna Carta in 1215. **Richard, 8th Lord of Clare,** who was also 7th Earl of Gloucester and 5th Earl of Hertford, invited the Augustinian friars to England and founded Clare Priory in 1248. **The 9th Lord of Clare, Gilbert "the Red",** was very active in seeking reforms from Henry III and attended what is regarded as the first democratic parliament set up by Simon de Montfort. However, he changed sides and supported Prince Edward (later Edward I) against Simon at the Battle of Evesham. In 1290 he married Joan of Acre, the daughter of King Edward and Queen

Eleanor. He was the wealthiest of the de Clares with lands in Wales, Ireland, and 26 counties in England. In 1292 the Earl and Countess spent Christmas at Clare with great magnificence.

Joan of Acre took over the lands at Clare on the death of her husband in 1295. She had been born at Acre in Israel when her father, Edward I, was on a crusade. She married secondly, Ralph de Montherner, the guardian of her son, and built the chapel of St. Vincent at Clare Priory, where she was buried in 1307. Her son **Gilbert, 10th Lord of Clare,** was killed in 1314 at the Battle of Bannockburn fighting for his uncle King Edward II. As there were no heirs, the male line of the Lords of Clare came to an end.

After some family wrangling, in 1317 the de Clare lands passed to Gilbert's youngest sister, **Elizabeth de Burgh**, who became known as The Lady of Clare, *Domina Clarae.* She was the daughter of Gilbert the Red and Princess Joan, and therefore granddaughter of Edward I. Although she was married three times, Elizabeth is known by the name of her first husband, John de Burgh, Earl of Ulster, who died in 1313 leaving her a widow aged 18. The hand of such a wealthy heiress was a prize sought by the most powerful men in the kingdom and a match like this was generally arranged by the king himself. (Elizabeth's elder sister, Margaret, had the misfortune to be married to Piers Gaveston.) Rather than wait for royal instructions, it seems that she next married for love, making a match with Theodore of Verdun. However, she was widowed once more by 1316. Thirdly, she married Roger d'Amory, with royal consent, although he fought against the king in 1321-2. The de Clare lands were consequently forfeit and Roger died by 1332. By the time Elizabeth was 28, her lands had been returned to her and Edward II had been deposed by his wife, Queen Isabella, and their son crowned King Edward III.

Elizabeth's cousin, the new king, stayed at Clare Castle in May, 1340. She maintained her royal links and the Black Prince, Henry of Lancaster, Princess Isabella, Lady Despenser, the Countess of Ulster, and the Earl of Northumberland were all numbered as her friends or family. The main castle buildings within the inner bailey at Clare were extensive and Elizabeth had a household of about 250 people with a marshall's department of over one hundred horses.

In her widowhood she was well known for her piety and love of learning. By 1346 University Hall at Cambridge began to be known as Clare College after Elizabeth de Burgh's generous benefactions. At the Priory in Clare she built the Chapter House, Dormitory and Refectory, and she spent much of her time either at her Castles of Clare or Usk, or at her house in Bardfield, Essex. Towards the end of her life she spent more time in London with the Minoresses, at their House, the Minories outside Aldgate. This Franciscan nunnery, dedicated to the order of St. Clare, was founded by Elizabeth's great-uncle, Edmund, Earl of Lancaster, brother of Edward I. She was buried there when she died on 4th November, 1360.

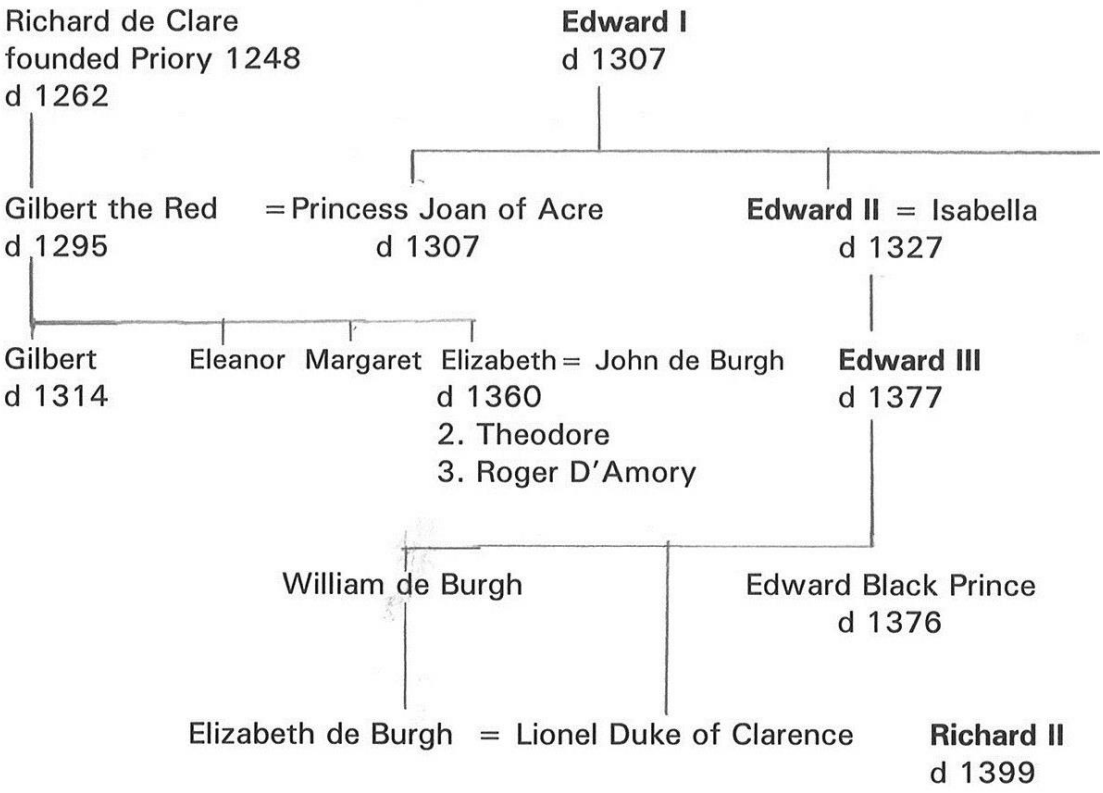
Elizabeth's granddaughter, by her son William de Burgh, was another Elizabeth, and was married as an infant to **Lionel**, the third son of Edward III. By this marriage, he inherited the de Clare lands. In 1362 he was created **Duke of Clarence** and he became Clarenceux King of Arms. His wife died in 1363 and he later married Violante of Milan who brought with her much wealth, and lands in Piedmont. Lionel died the same year as his second marriage (1368) and although he was buried in Italy, his last wishes were honoured when he was finally laid to rest with his first wife at Clare Priory. (Geoffrey Chaucer was a page in his household before becoming valet to Edward III.)

In 1368 **Phillipa,** only daughter of Lionel and Elizabeth married **Edmund Mortimer**, Earl of March, to whom all her estates passed. He gained his majority in 1373 and it is at this point that the de Clare family's claim to the throne of England becomes apparent. Before the accession of Richard II (the son of the deceased Black Prince, eldest son of Edward III), Parliament decided that, should the King die with no heirs, the throne should subsequently go to Edmund Mortimer, married as he was to the granddaughter of Edward III. However, Mortimer died in 1381, and his son Roger Mortimer, met his death aged only 24 in 1398, the year before Richard II was forced from the throne by Henry of Lancaster. Roger's son, **Edmund Mortimer, 5th Earl of March**, succeeded him aged only eight years old in 1398. However, his right to the throne was overlooked when Richard II's crown was usurped by Henry of Lancaster, (son of John of Gaunt, the fourth son of Edward III). Ultimately this was the main cause of the War of the Roses later in the century.

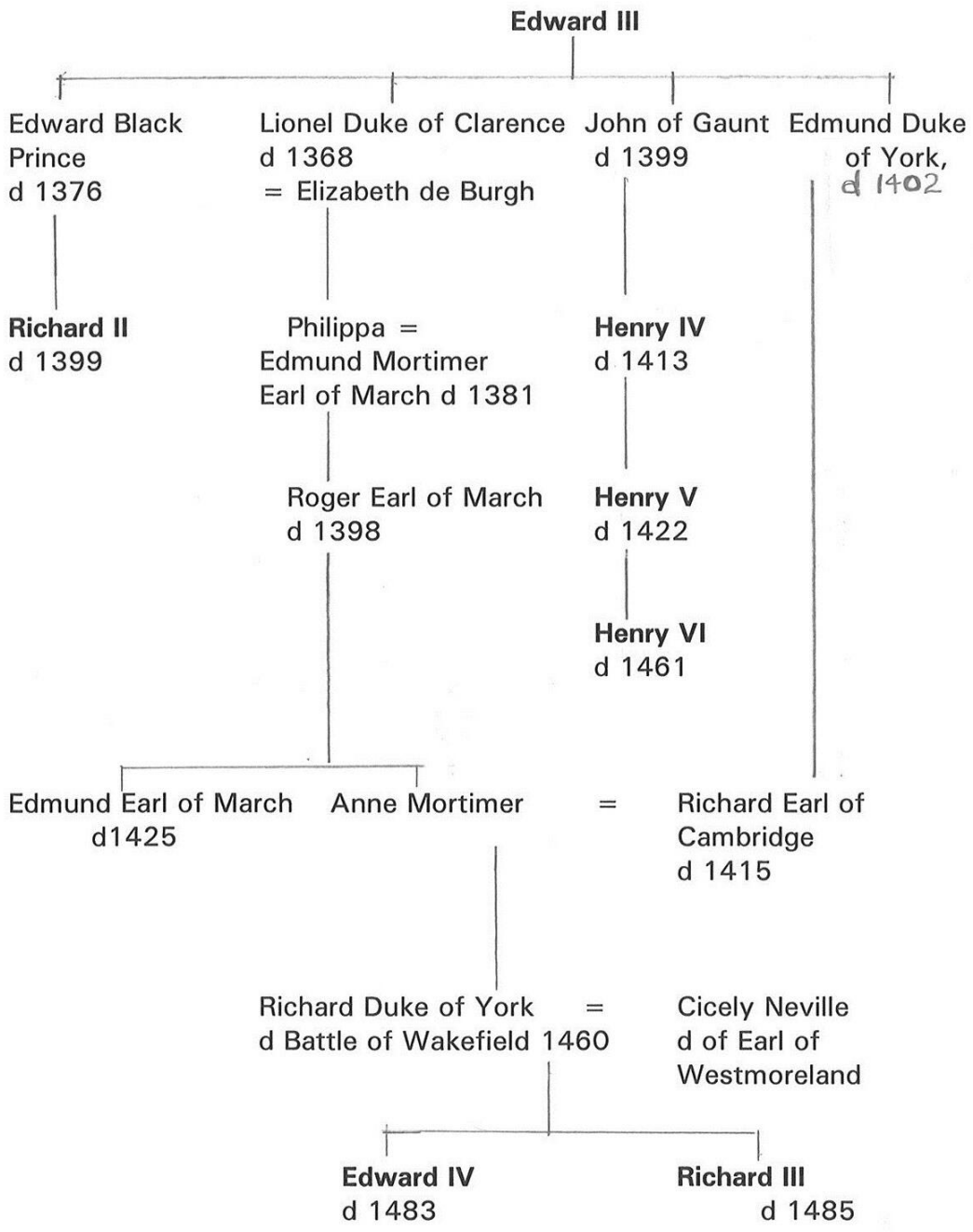
In 1415 there was a plot to put Edmund on the throne, but he himself warned the then King, Henry V. Edmund died childless in 1425 and his sister, **Anne Mortimer** married to their cousin Richard, Earl of Cambridge**,** inherited the Clare lands. Their son, **Richard, Duke of York**, was to become heir to the throne, if Henry VI died childless, for his claim was strengthened by the fact that he was descended by both parents from Edward III. (His grandfather was Edmund, Duke of York, fifth son of Edward III.) With the insanity of Henry VI and the precariousness of his position, the Wars of the Roses between the Houses of York and Lancaster began with the Battle of St. Albans in 1455. At the Battle of Wakefield, in 1460, Richard, Duke of York was killed, leaving his son, **Edward, Earl of March and 4th Duke of York,** to carry on fighting for the Crown. He **w**as eventually triumphant and was crowned **King Edward IV** in 1461, by right of his descent from **Lionel, Duke of Clarence.** It was King

Edward's younger brother, George, Duke of Clarence who was reputedly drowned in a butt of malmsey wine, after much treacherous and troublesome behaviour.

The de Clare and Plantagenet family trees in the 14th century



The Wars of the Roses

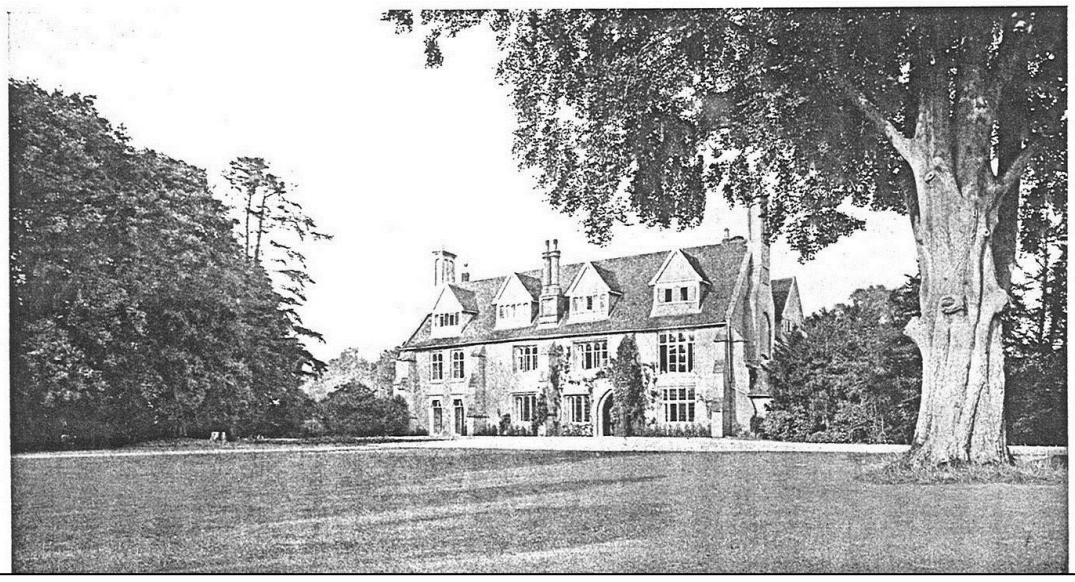


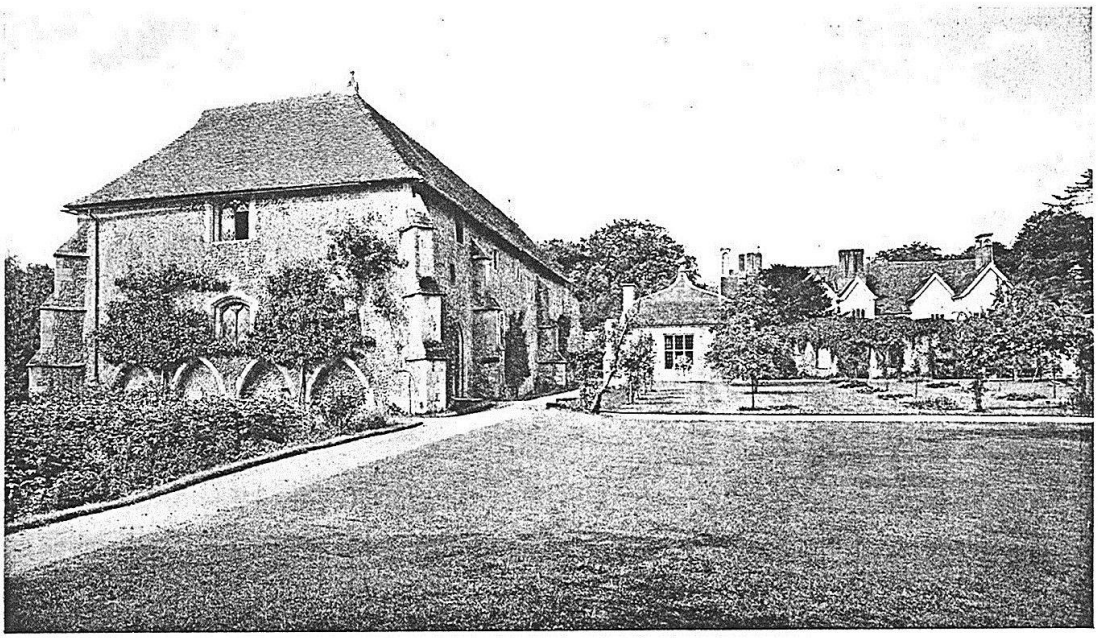
COVNTRY HOMES GARDENS OLD & NEW

CLARE PRIORY, SUFFOLK,
The Residence of LADY MAY.
AND
CLARE VILLAGE.

THE Lady Elizabeth de Burgh, the foundress of Clare College, Cambridge, is also the most prominent figure in the history of Clare township. For, though her family had reigned there since the Conquest, it is with the building of the surviving parts of the priory, largely by her gifts during the period of her residence there in the middle years of the fourteenth century, that the history of the place takes on any considerable personal or antiquarian interest. Thanks to the very detailed household accounts which have been preserved from this period of her life, there is a certain amount of really personal detail with which to fill out the catalogue of her marriages and estates—all that remains in most cases of these great mediæval ladies.

Like all great landed proprietors in the Middle Ages, the Lady Elizabeth was constantly moving about, though the practice of "eating up" first one group of manors and then moving to another was being modified to some extent in her time, and she seems to have divided most of her later life between the two castles of Clare and Usk, the centres of her two groups of estates. Sometimes she even sent from Clare to Usk, or *vice versa*, for money—on one occasion some eighty pounds, requiring a large military escort and taking five days on the way. At Clare the remains of her castle are very large, but not especially impressive, consisting of great earth ramparts of the two baileys and a remarkable mound, 53ft. high and crowned with one of the few surviving masonry fragments, a curved wall of flints with slight buttresses having stone dressings. The scale of the place can best be imagined from the number of the Lady Elizabeth's household, about 250 persons, involving a marshal's department of several hundred horses. The two great baileys must have been almost completely filled with buildings to accommodate all these, and, in addition, there were the retinues of her guests, for she entertained often and magnificently. As an example of her hospitality, in May of 1350 she entertained the Princess Isabella, Lady Despenser, the Countess of Ulster, and the Earls of Lancaster and Northumberland, all at the same time, and household expenses rose from £2 10s. a day to £7 2s. 4d. Here it is, perhaps, admissible to mention Marie de St. Pol, the widow of Aymer de Valence and foundress of Pembroke College, Cambridge. She was the close friend of Elizabeth de Burgh, and often stayed with her at Clare and Usk; the Lady Elizabeth, who rarely went visiting, would sometimes stay with her friend at Fotheringhay, and there are entries in the accounts for messengers to the Countess of Pembroke bearing Christmas presents. There was a difference of ten years in their ages, Elizabeth de Burgh being the elder; but they both attained the happy independence of widowhood about the same time: and in the fourteenth century that meant a great deal. The detailed evidence of the Clare accounts fully bears out the tradition of their friendship, and the retinue of the Countess of Pembroke must have been very familiar to the Clare folk. Among the amenities of Clare Castle a vineyard is mentioned as early as Domesday Book, and the Lady Elizabeth's butler had this one in his department and another at Woodham Ferrers as well. There is a legend that the name "Claret" derives from that of the Clare family, but it is without foundation, so far as I know, and can hardly be adduced as evidence either of the nature or the quality of the Suffolk wines of that time. The only probable relic of the domestic part of the castle dates from the early years of the fifteenth century, considerably after the Lady Elizabeth's time; this is the inn sign of the Swan (Fig. 14), originally the base of an oriel window. This timber is some 10ft. in length, and the evidence of large scale, together with the exceedingly distinguished heraldry with which it is carved—the Royal arms with the label of the eldest son, Mortimer and de Burgh quartered,



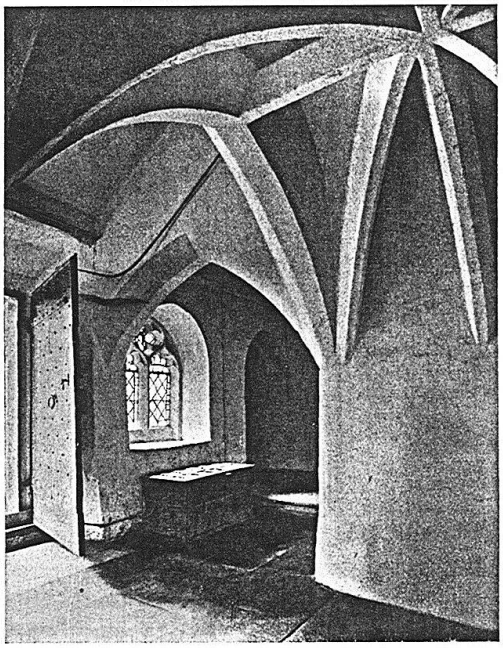


Copyright. 2.—THE INFIRMARY AND THE HOUSE FROM THE EAST. "COUNTRY LIFE."

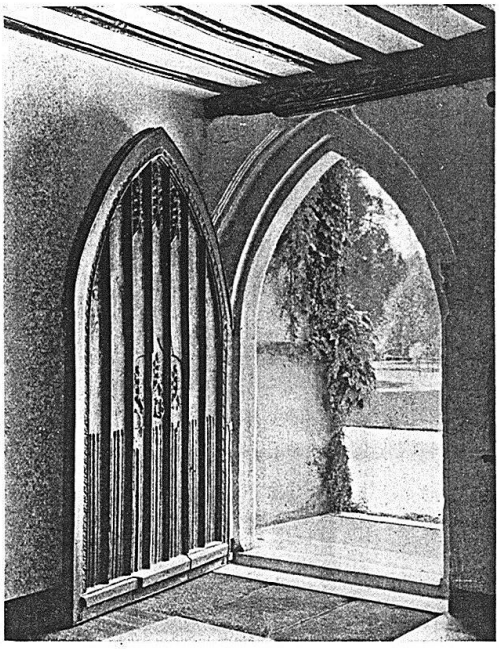
The windows of the Chapter House are in the cloister wall. (The billiard-room with the ogee roof is modern.)

the swan gorged with a crown, and the crescent and star, these last two both Royal devices—make it more than improbable that this fine piece of work came from any building in Clare but the castle. There are three other such oriel bases in Clare: two are carved with heraldic devices and one with a series of creatures, apparently a hunting scene; but these are all quite small in scale compared with the Swan. One of them can be seen under the little upper window in Fig. 15.

Clare Priory is said to have been founded by Earl Richard, the Lady Elizabeth's grandfather, in 1248; there is some difficulty about establishing this date, but one not later than 1250 can be assumed, and that is two years before the next early house of Austin Friars, established at Oxford also by the Earl Richard. The dates of the various buildings of the priory and much other information are contained in the cartulary of the house, now among the Harleian manuscripts in the

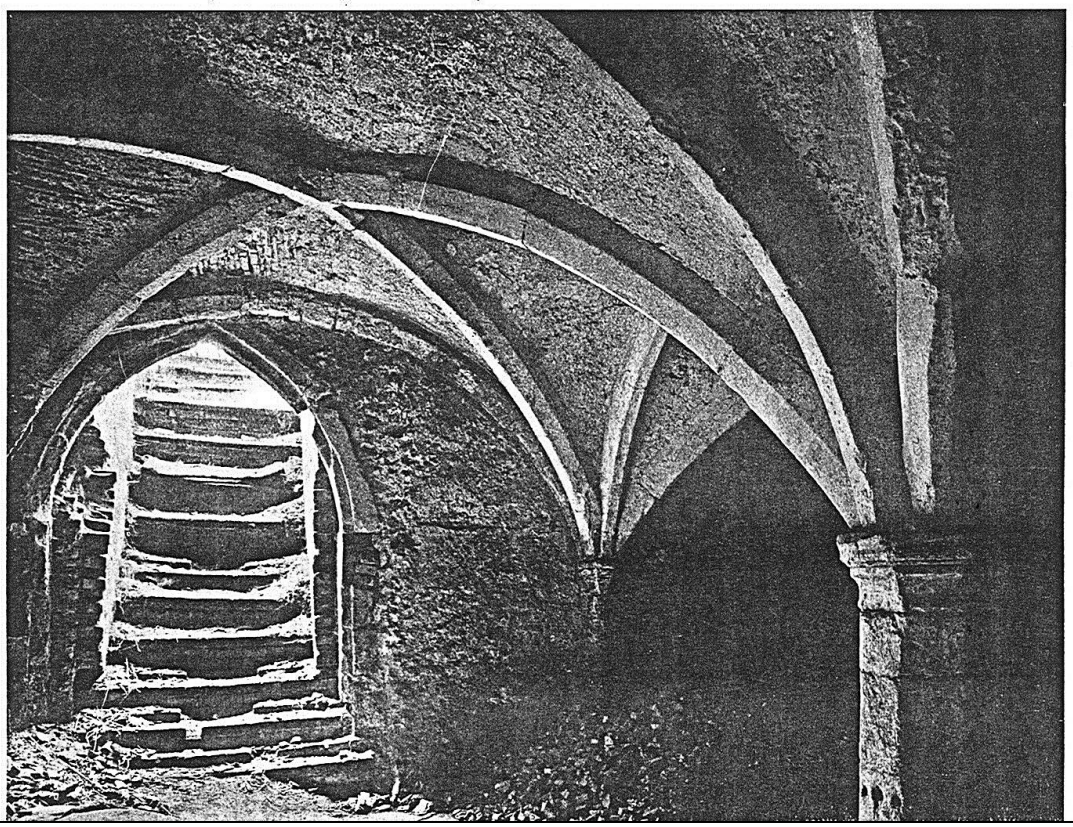


4.—THE LITTLE LOBBY AT THE SOUTH END OF THE WEST (HOUSE) RANGE.



5.—THE DOOR OF THE HALL.
Similar to two in the Parish Church.

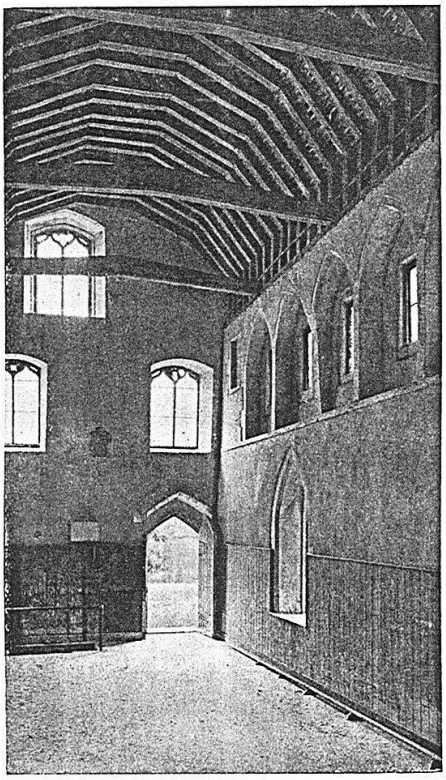
British Museum. And these documents are supplemented by a curious dialogue poem in English, dating from about 1460. The poem appears to be, in some sort, a political tract in support of the Yorkist cause, and may well have emanated from Clare Priory, which was enthusiastically on the side of Richard of York, father of Edward IV. In the dialogue, a friar, speaking as a member of the Clare community, recounts the glories and especially the pious gifts and endowments of the Clare family as the ancestors of Richard of York, and, judging by the cartulary, the facts are fairly accurate. The earliest building at



the priory was, naturally, the eastern end of their church, but of this nothing now remains; there is a grant of indulgences to contributors to the fabric dated 1278, the first of a series of such documents preserved in the cartulary, and by 1305 the whole eastern end of the church would seem to have been completed, for in that year the Countess Joan of Acre, daughter of Edward I and mother of the Lady Elizabeth, was buried there with great pomp in the presence of the King and his Court. The site of her tomb has been identified at the eastern end of the wall of the fruit garden of the present house; the western and later part of this wall, *i.e.*, the south wall of the church, can be seen in Fig. 3; close by the tomb is indication of an archway now filled up; this, it is suggested, led from the chancel into the chapel of St. Vincent, built by Joan of Acre, of whom the poet says:

> Wherefore in honour O Vincent of thee
> To whom she had singular affectioun
> This chapel she made in pure devotioun

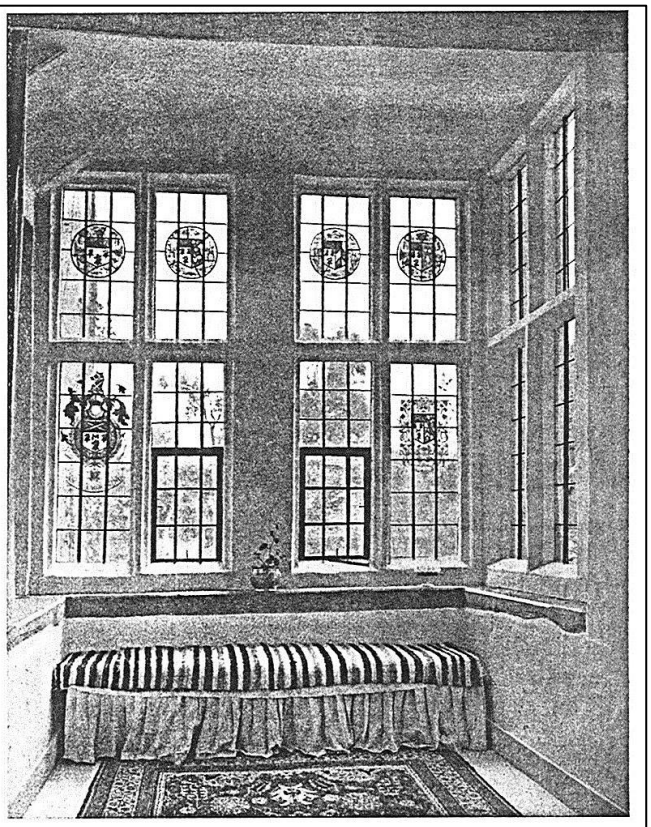
—a fair specimen of the quality of the verses. The church, including the wall in Fig. 3, would seem to



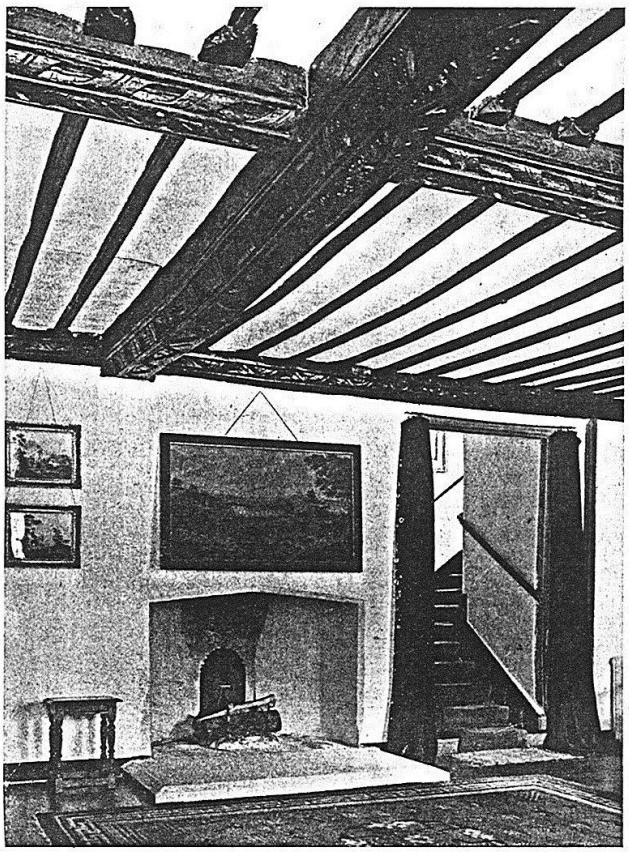
7.—INTERIOR OF THE INFIRMARY.
On the upper floor was the library.

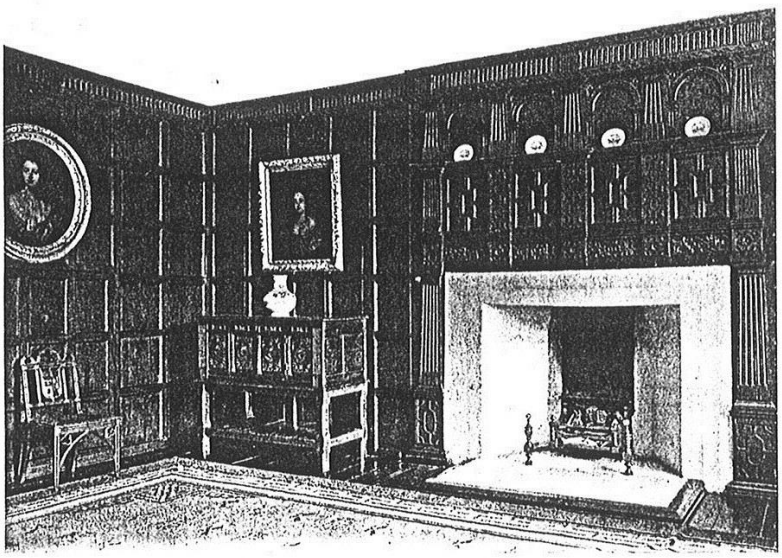
have been finished by August, 1338, when the dedication took place. The other surviving buildings are the walls of the cloister garth, a few odd foundations of dorter and frater, the infirmary (Figs. 2 and 7), and the house itself on the west side of the cloister (Figs. 1, 3 and 13), being originally the butteries and cellarium on the ground floor, with, probably, the guest rooms and the lodgings of the head of the house above. All these seem to have been building between 1310–14, when money is first subscribed for them, and 1380, when they were dedicated. These works, with the chapter house, of which the door and two windows survive in the cloister wall, would be going forward throughout the period of the Lady Elizabeth's residences at Clare, and, indeed, were built by her charity—

> As shewith our wyndows in housis thre
> Dortour, Chapiter House and Fraitour whych she

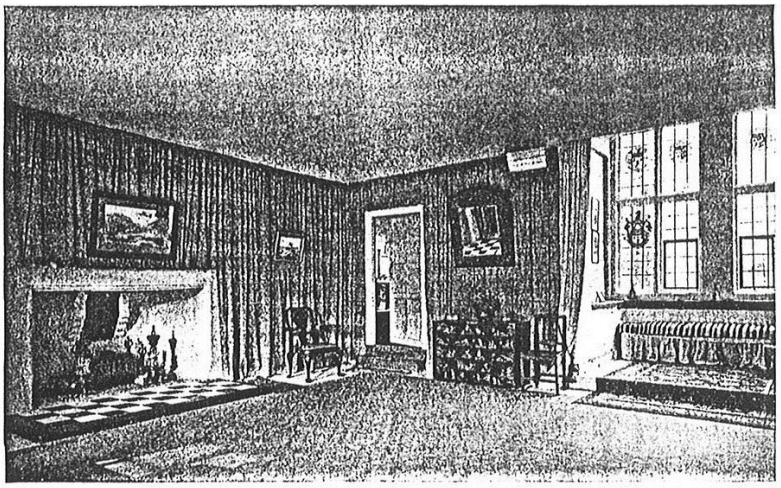


8.—THE ORIEL WINDOW IN THE DRAWING-ROOM.

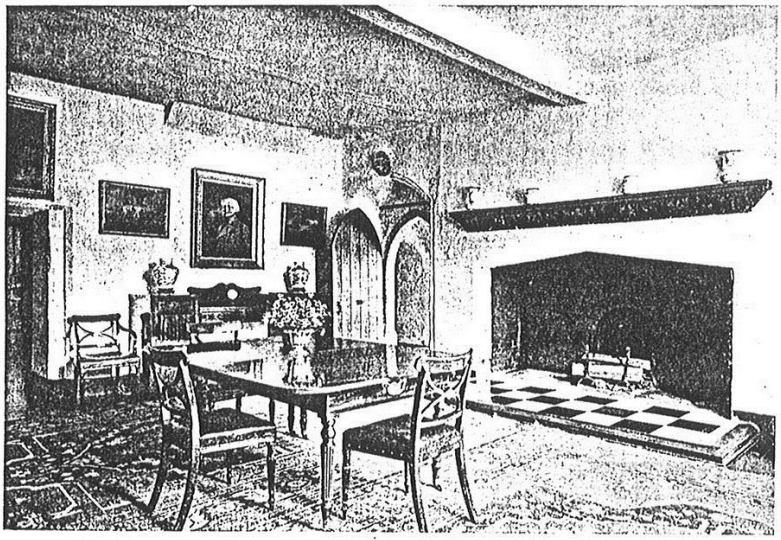




10.—THOMAS BARNARDISTON'S PANELLED ROOM.



Copyright. 11.—THE DRAWING-ROOM. "COUNTRY LIFE."



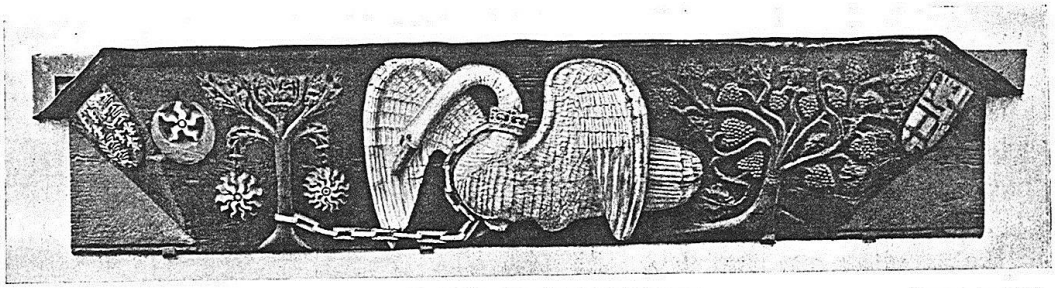
Copyright. 12.—THE DINING-ROOM. "COUNTRY LIFE."

There was also a bell tower, for which money was left in 1360, but of which no vestige remains.

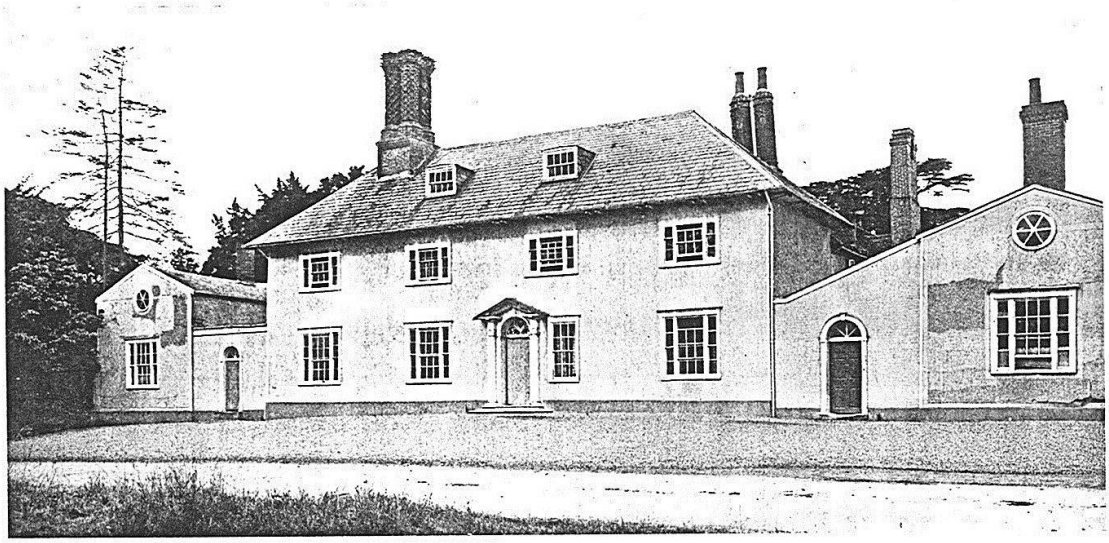
The personalities appearing in the history of the priory before the Dissolution in 1538 are neither very numerous nor very vivid. Beside Joan of Acre, other notabilities were buried in the church, including Lionel, first Duke of Clarence, and his wife, Edmund Mortimer, third Earl of March, his son, and Edmund Mortimer, fifth Earl of March, the last of the Mortimers. Some of these graves have been located in the fruit garden, and slabs of stone now cover the Duke of Clarence and his wife. Apart from these distinguished burials, we have records of the names of some half a dozen heads of the house; one distinguished inmate, John de Bury, who became Provincial of his Order, flourished about 1460, and was strong against the Lollards; and, lastly, Thomas Tapley, one of three members of the community at Clare who were arraigned for heresy in 1528. Tapley confessed to the Bishop of London that he had "walked in the fields at Bumpstead with Miles Coverdale and talked of doctrinal matters." As a family property the buildings have enjoyed an even quieter history, passing, with a short interregnum of buying and selling, from the descendants of Richard Frende, the King's Trumpeter, to whom they had been granted at the Dissolution, and whose daughter married Thomas Barker, to the Barnardistons; and from them, by way of a lawyer of the name of Poulter, to the Barker family, whose descendants still have them. Poulter lived during the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth centuries, and was not a very amiable character. He is said to have cherished strong feelings against the clothmakers of Clare and to have harried them from the place.

The house, as it is at present, is an almost perfect example of the easy transition from a monastery to a dwelling. The western range of building, containing the offices and prior's lodgings, was, by nature, more conveniently divided into chambers than the others, and the work that had been done to this part in the late fifteenth century further marked it out as the obvious choice for the house itself. The fifteenth century work is said to have been done after a fire, and it seems probable that the ceiling in the present hall is of this date. This ceiling is one of several in Clare, all with a strong family resemblance (Fig. 17); the finest of them has now been removed from Church Farm and is in the Victoria and Albert Museum. There is also a very similar ceiling in one of the upper rooms of Paycockes House at

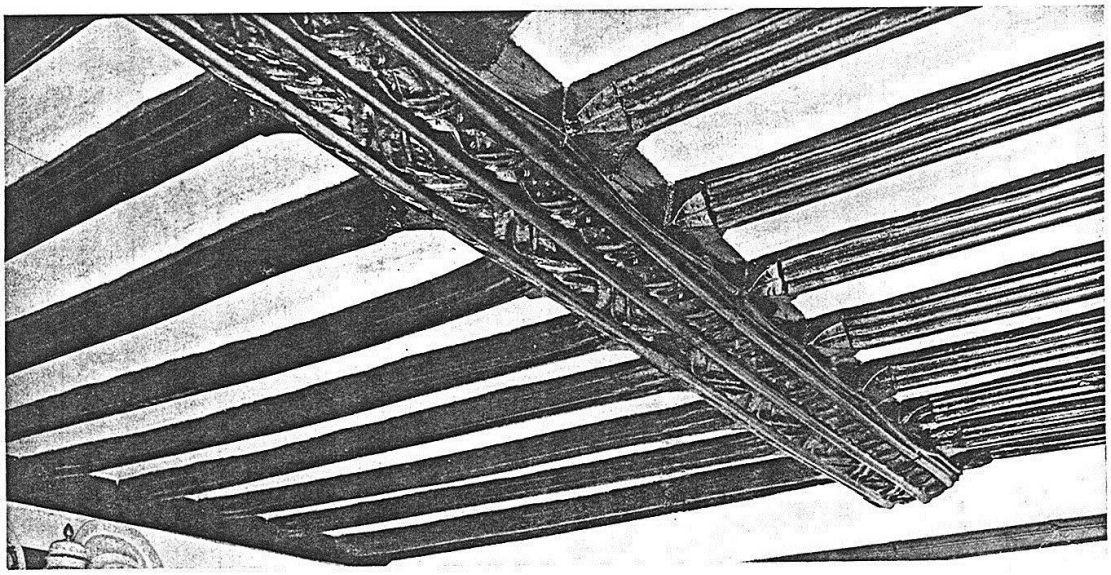
Copyright. 13.—CLARE PRIORY: THE HOUSE FROM THE CLOISTER GARTH. "COUNTRY LIFE."
The centre gable is modern.



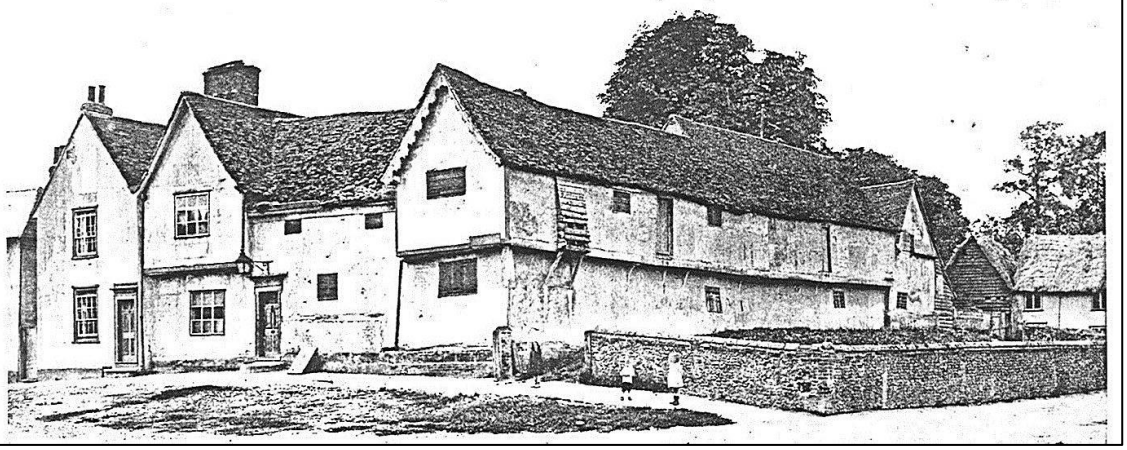
Copyright. 14.—THE SIGN OF THE SWAN INN. "COUNTRY LIFE."
This was once the base of an oriel window.



Copyright. 16.—THE CLIFTONS. "COUNTRY LIFE."



Copyright. 17.—CEILING AT THE BELL HOTEL. "COUNTRY LIFE."



Coggeshall. The panelled upper room (Fig. 10) is dated 1604 and bears the initials of Thomas Barnardiston (died 1618) above the fireplace, the position of which was altered in the early nineteenth century. The most striking architectural feature of the house is, undoubtedly, the little lobby (Fig. 4), with its decorated window still containing some fragments of original glass and the curious starfish-like vaulting. This lobby provides communication between the dining-room and the offices, and gives on to a charming little court; the back stairs, a much diminished remnant of the original access to the lodgings on the upper floor, also give into this space. The hall door of the priory is noteworthy (Fig. 5); it makes an interesting comparison with the two other fourteenth century doors of the parish church.

Mention has been made above of various features in houses of the village of Clare itself. The general effect of the streets is extraordinarily attractive. They are, for the most part, wide, and the prevailing style of building timber-frame houses, in the majority of cases covered with plaster and colour-washed generally in creams or yellows, but occasionally pinks and even greens give a delightful effect of cleanliness and gaiety. The use of colour wash is not confined to the older houses, and many undistinguished brick buildings of the last century have conformed with the local fashion, and thus fitted themselves to the character of the place. While many of the timber-frame houses date back to the fifteenth century, the parge work, which is one of their most attractive features, dates from the late sixteenth, the seventeenth and even more recent centuries. A fine example is the Church House (Fig. 15), in which the early woodwork and the Jacobean pargeting are both of the most elaborate of their kind, though the latter has been much restored. Examples of all the usual parge patterns—herring-bone, shell, etc.—abound in Clare, and the work is still done there, though with less discretion, it seems, than in former times. Fig. 18 is typical of the generality of buildings in this remarkable village, though its commanding position gives the picturesque grouping of the Old Malting a special distinction.

Two houses at Clare call for more than mere general reference—Nethergate House and The Cliftons (Fig. 16). The first of these is best described as a twin brother of Paycockes House at Coggeshall, but with the centre part rebuilt at the end of the seventeenth century in a charming local variety of what is best called the Transitional Classic style, carried out in timber and plaster. The house is full of interest both inside and out and has been very tenderly restored by the late owner, Lady St. John Hope. The Cliftons, on the opposite side of Nethergate Street, is, to modern architectural taste, perhaps the most important building in Clare. It is difficult to praise sufficiently either the elevation illustrated here or the no less distinguished garden front, a simple design of two large windows on the ground floor, similar to those on the street front, and, in the middle, a fine boldly designed door, with, above, two small square windows, and a great semicircular one surmounting the doorway. The roof is handled with the same mastery, and the relation to the site—on the garden side a lawn slopes upward from the house, and on it are one or two fine cedar trees—is as satisfactory as in Fig. 16. The house is a late eighteenth century adaptation of an earlier building, of which the fine cut and moulded brick chimney-stack remains, and also the good simple Jacobean panelling in the dining-room. The interior planning and design are eminently reasonable and good, but have not the distinction of the exterior. And whoever the builder of this little masterpiece may have been, he has left nothing else to compare with it in Clare.

GEOFFREY WEBB.

A PRINCESS'S PROGRESS

Letters from the Gold Coast, by H.H. Princess Marie Louise. (Methuen, 16s.)

SOMEWHERE in these letters home Princess Marie Louise—or "Mary Lewis," as the Coast natives seem to have preferred to call their Royal visitor—refers to "the never-ending demands" made on those responsible for the administration of the Colony "and their splendid, loyal response to the call of duty." One of the first reflections to which the book gives rise is that such tours as those undertaken by Her Highness and by the Prince of Wales must give the greatest encouragement and delight to British officials in lands at the fringes of Empire, of whom she says, "We cannot even begin to know what loneliness these men have to endure." It is one of the happy things which the modern developments of travel have made possible that members of the Royal Family have been able to visit the distant and less civilised parts of our Colonial possessions, giving a sense of personal interest and closer connection, which must cheer those of their countrymen who face the difficulties of administration, and becoming to the inhabitants the incarnation of that rule which so long has been known only by name and delegated authority. As a woman and "daughter of the daughter of the great white Queen," Princess Marie Louise was, too, a particularly acceptable visitor to the Ashantis, where the Queen-Mother is of paramount importance, all descent being exclusively in the female line.

"It is absurd to pretend you know a country if you only see it all smiling and 'dressed up,'" writes the Princess, and certainly, though the Gold Coast did its best to "dress up" for her, the material seems to have been too scanty to allow of a complete costume. Her car stuck fast time after time and had to be hauled out by sheer man power, pontoons sank, rivers were in flood, she slept the night in a village from which at dawn a lion had snatched away a native woman, and lunched on a veranda where, just before her arrival, a black mamba had been killed. "I own to being a little disappointed that its death took place before, and not during, my visit" is her comment. The terribly heavy rains, heat and mud, and even tsetse flies seem to have disconcerted her little, as her verdict is:

> In spite of the heat and rain, in spite of the loneliness and hardships, I might say in spite of every discomfort and drawback (and the Coast offers you many), you love it.

After all, the charm of "strange countries" is, like that of beauty, in the eye of the beholder, and to this traveller's eye nothing is uninteresting save, perhaps, mines and machinery, a certain coolness towards which may be discerned by a sympathetic reader. She describes a West African chief's palace there, tells of an early morning ride or a tornado, or gives an account of local history, and all are vivid with her own interest, though to her sister and correspondent she laughs at her letters: "I fear they are very much like parts of a Child's Guide to Knowledge ('Gold Coast Section')."

The best way of reviewing such a book is, generally, to quote from it, and with this in view I have dog's-eared pages which contain passages most likely to give the flavour and value of the book at a glance. I might have hoped to quote from two, and with that in my mind I have dog's-eared twenty-four. This, of the crocodiles of Tumu, must stand for all:

> About 4.30, feeling thoroughly refreshed through a two hours' sleep and a large tea, we walked out to the famous crocodile pool, about a mile distant from the camp. The pool abounds with these horrible-looking creatures; but, strange to say, the villagers can go in and out, filling their water-pots, and even bathing, and are neither attacked nor harmed. The explanation of this extraordinary phenomenon is that the crocodile is the "familiar spirit" of man; never being assailed—because if he were injured or killed, the man would suffer a like fate—he also never assails. That, I say, is the explanation given, and the crocodile must be aware of it!
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> The fact remains that we watched the ladies from the village wandering in and out of the pool quite undisturbed and unafraid, even though they had to push the crocodiles aside. Quite a number of these reptiles lay basking in the sun by the side of the water. We tried to hurry them into the pool by throwing large lumps of dry earth at them, but never managed to hit one; and they merely blinked at us with their evil little eyes.

Among the many interests of the journey was that of following for some part of the way in the footsteps of her brother, Prince Christian Victor, who died in the Boer War at Pretoria, and now and then encountering men who had served with him in the Ashanti Campaign of thirty years ago. She even stayed under the very roof that had sheltered him at Cape Coast Castle, a place which, to the student of minor Victorian literature, is also associated with that tragic figure, the poetess "L. E. L.," who died there of poison in 1838, in Mrs. Browning's words—

> with all her visions unfulfilled save one,
> Her childhood's, of the palm trees in the sun
> And lo! their shadow on her sepulchre!

It is too painfully true that half the world does not know how the other half lives, but it should not be true of the halves of the Empire, and such a book as this, and such a journey as it records, must accomplish much towards a better understanding.

B. E. S.

Near London, by Marcus Woodward. (Geoffrey Bles, 2s. 6d.)
The Streets of London, by G. B. Rawlings. (Geoffrey Bles, 5s.)