

11.

GOLDINGHAM HALL

The manor of Goldingham, known locally as Goggum, extends to the Belchamp brook on the North, Smeetham Hall and the Auberies to the East, to land once held by Jenkins and Butlers to the South and, for several hundred yards on its Western boundary, it borders the Romano-British site at Hill Farm, Gestingthorpe. Several small finds from the Roman era 50 A.D. to 410 A.D. have been found on Goldingham land and it may be conjectured that a trackway connecting the Roman sites at Braintree, Gestingthorpe and Melford passed across this part of Bulmer.

Goldingham is a Saxon name and by the time of Edward the Confessor (1060) it was held as a manor, by a "free man", Godwin, with three ploughs and was valued at 60 shillings. After the Norman Conquest of 1066, considerable changes in land ownership occurred; with the Conqueror rewarding his adherents with the properties of the defeated people. Toward the end of the 11th Century, Robert Malet, Great Chamberlain of England under William, gave Goldingham to one of his Knights, Sir Hugh, who promptly adopted the manorial name as his own. The grant commences:-

"Robert Malet, to all his friends French and English, greeting. Know all men that I have given to my good Sir Hugh de Goldyngham, and his heirs all my lands and tenements which I had of the gift of the King in Bolemere and situated between the fee of the Earldom of Boulogne, and the land of Oto and the son of Oto de Beauchamp and the burial ground of Bulmer"

Shortly before the grant to Sir Hugh the Domesday Book was compiled and in 1086 the manor consisted of two plough teams, twelve beasts, one rouncy (a riding horse), two hundred sheep, sixty six swine and five hives of bees. The descendants of Sir Hugh were to own Goldingham for 500 years.

Foreign Expeditions

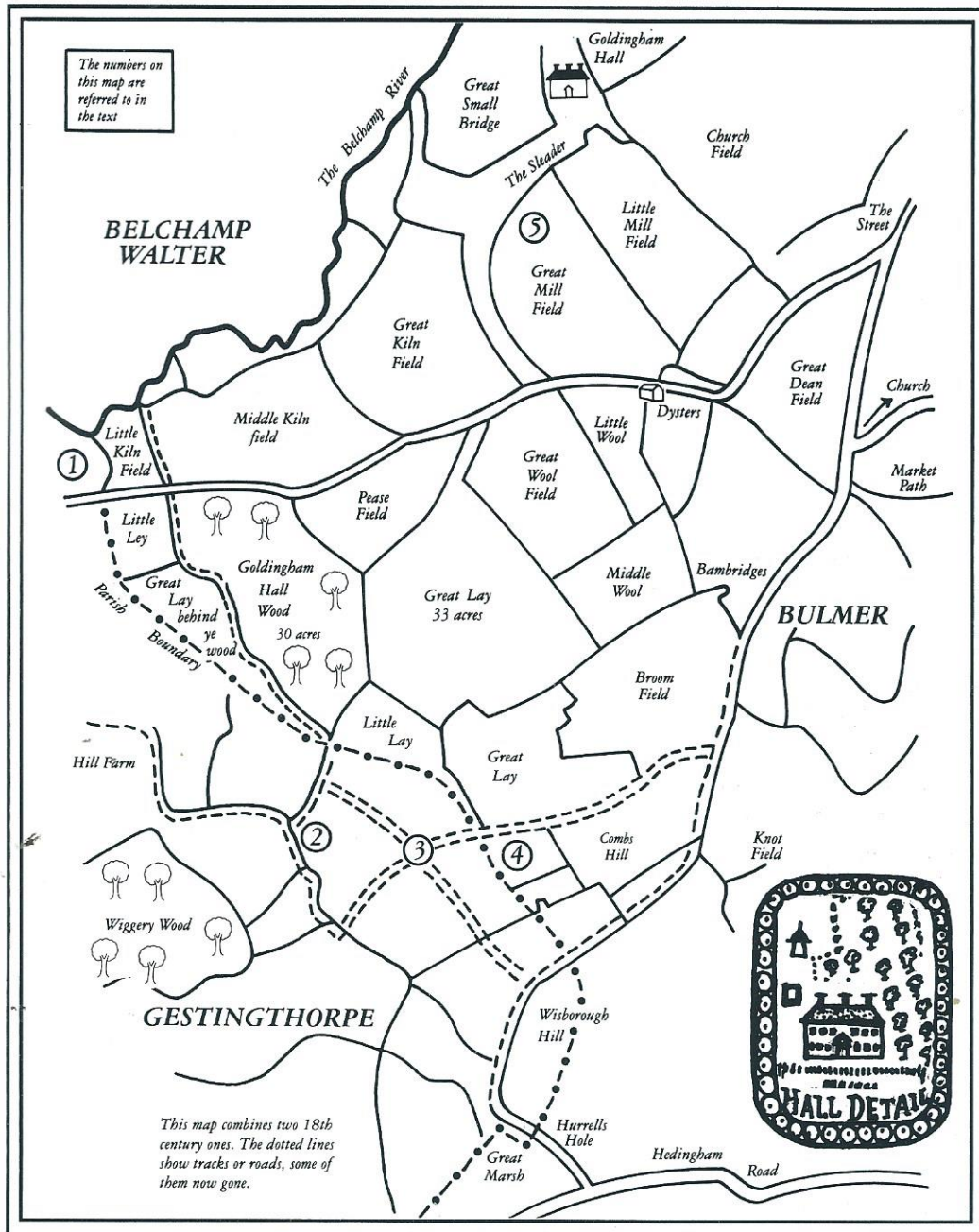
On 11 April, 1298, Sir John Botetourt of Overall Manor, Gestingthorpe, issued a complaint in Westminster that -

"Whilst he and his men were under Kings protection, Alan de Goldingham William and John his brothers (and others) entered his free warren at Gestingthorpe, County Essex, hunted therein, carried away hares and rabbits and assaulted John, son of Matthew, his warrener."

Our next Goldingham went a bit further to make his assault. When Edward III decided to lay claim to the throne of France in 1346 the Knight John Goldingham from Bulmere was in personal attendance upon the King and this exonerated him from finding other men at arms for the force to invade Normandy. If his rouncy was fed on Bulmer grain and the Knight on Bulmer (or Gestingthorpe) game they must both have done well in the battle of Crecy.

Road Improvements Take 400 Years

In 1535 the Jury of the Overall Manor Court protested to the Lords of the Manor of Overall and of Goldingham "that the highway next Le Lymekiln is damaged and



Goldingham Hall

The numbers refer to the text.

This old chalk working (No. 1 on map) was on the boundary between Gestingthorpe and Bulmer and it could be argued that it took four hundred years to do anything about it because during the depression of the 1930s Phil Rowe worked on a County Council work scheme at 10d an hour to widen and improve the road at this point. Botanists will be interested to know that it was this project which planted the non-indigenous wild flowers which grow in that area today.

London Lords of the Manor

From the 16th Century wealthy Londoners, like Sir Stephen Soane, Lord Mayor in 1599, and Sir Hugh Middleton “who brought the new River to London”, owned Goldingham and farmed with a bailiff or tenants.

From the time of Samuel Berkely (1755) a map exists at the Record Office and one can

compare it with a parish map of 1808. Goldingham Hall Wood extends to thirty acres. A field name is Mill Field (in a document of 1392) and this eminence may possibly have been the site of a manorial mill. In 1794 the beaters of the bounds noted that a great part of Goldingham Wood had been stubbed up. The map of 1808 shows that Wick Grove Croft (2) and the grove on Peasefield have been amalgamated into larger fields, the wood is down to 13 acres and there is indication of a building at New Barn.

It is interesting to see that a track passed from Goldingham Wood and went across the Brook to Belchamp Mill. Perhaps corn was sent there after being stored at New Barn during the early 19th Century. Older residents remember the agricultural dwellings at New Barn: one house on the Tithe Map in 1840, two cottages with twelve inhabitants for the 1851 Census. The same Census records ten families living in the cottages at Lower Houses where a fourth dwelling once existed. These houses were occupied by fifty people and owned by Goldingham. Nearly all the men were farm workers. This housing of workers away from the farm house is discussed under Smeetham Hall. Mr. Chatters remembers two horse teams being based at New Barn and Mrs. Hearn remembers watching, as a child, men dig the well which was a deep one. The last inhabitant, a Mr. Bruce, left during the 1930s.

Isolation

The map of 1808 clearly shows not only Gallows Green (marked 3 on the map) but also a lost farmhouse and barn (4). This house is believed to have been the pest house or isolation centre for smallpox victims. The wooden barn was later dismantled and rebuilt close to Upper Houses until damaged in the gales of 1978. Tom Rowe remembers playing amongst the debris of the original site.

There are extant Goldingham manorial court rolls from the 14th Century until the last court was held under the Lordship of R.J. Preston in 1865. The latter courts dealt with leasehold and copyhold transactions within the manor.

R.J. Preston owned Goldingham at the tithe assessment of 1840. The land was farmed by John Firmin who paid a rent of £114 and a tithe of £48 on the 408 acres of Goldingham that lie within Bulmer. He was a churchwarden and kept the church accounts. There is a fine Firmin table tomb in the churchyard.

The actual manor house had previously stood midway between the present farm buildings and the pond to the North. Some time after 1836 a fire destroyed this building and the present house was built. Two of today's residents remember hearing of the fire from elderly people. A bailiff's cottage stood close to the site of the old house.

In 1882 ownership passed to a relative, R.J. Preston Whyte. He appears to have borrowed substantially against the value of Goldingham although he is believed to have considerably improved the house and been one of the first people in the neighbourhood to install plumbing and flush toilets. It may have been during his ownership that a good deal of chalk was removed from the large chalk pit (5) where old lime kilns were shown on the map of 1876. In 1895 Preston Whyte was Lord of Goldingham with George Humm as his bailiff.

Twelve Plough Horses

In 1902 the property was sold to Murray M. Blacker for £7,000. Blacker had spent some time in the U.S.A. Mrs. Hearn (nee Rowe) was parlourmaid from 1907 to 1914. A kitchen maid and cook also lived in. She remembers that two men had the daily duty of hand pumping water from a garden water pump into the attic water tanks which Whyte had installed. Blacker put up several of the existing farm buildings and was reputed to be a generous man ready to find work for the unemployed. Mr. Chatters, whose father was head horseman, remembers that in addition to the horses at New Barn, there were twelve ploughing horses at the Hall. Up to nine men walked to work there from Belchamp Walter; and including domestic staff, there were occasions when forty people were employed. The footpath used by the Belchamp workers was also used by a postmistress who delivered letters on a route from Bulmer through Goldingham to Belchamp Walter.

In 1914 Goldingham was sold to Gordon Molineux Miller for £8,300. He was in the trenches in France when the deal was completed on his behalf by his brother. Fred Pryke was foreman.

In 1936 during the agricultural depression, the farm was sold by Miller for £5,000. It was resold six months later to a Scots farmer called Bain. He is remembered for bringing his livestock to Sudbury Railway station and then driving them along the roads from there to Goldingham.

During the second World War, Farmer Bain was organiser of the Home Guard. Rifle practice took place in the chalk pit (5) and other training was organised on the meadows to the north of Lower Houses.

In 1946 the farm was sold to S.M. Nott for £14,000 after which the remaining off-hand cottages were sold, those at New Barn were demolished, a new bungalow was built and a modern grain store was constructed. Several hedges were removed but the lower meadows were established as cricket bat willow plantations.

In 1972 Goldingham was joined to Hill Farm, Gestingthorpe. The process of history continues and in 1974 Bill Chatters, the last man to walk to his work at Goldingham from Belchamp, retired from work and by 1978 with the partial retirement of Frank Billimore there were no residents of Bulmer employed full time at Goldingham; but Ashley Cooper, who farms Goldingham today, uncovered its story for us. Since doing this Ashley has published two books "The Long Furrow" and "The Khyber Connection" both the products of much local research.