Farm Developments in nineteenth Century Suffolk. Richard Glass.   
Suffolk can claim many ‘firsts’ in farming development from Jethro Tull’s drills to Charles Poppy’s original farmers’ club, Arthur Young’s statistics, Garrett’s engines and Fison’s fertilisers. New livestock breeds became associated with the county including the Black Faced sheep, the Suffolk Punch horse, Red Poll Cattle and Black Pig. Improved plant types included Chevalier Barley which rapidly became the dominant strain in British cultivation. interest was also given   
to fruit growing with the Greengage, lady   
Heniker’s Pear, and a regional apple evolving   
in suffolk. The region produced secretaries   
and governors of the leading national and   
regional agricultural organisations.   
the establishment of the extent to which the   
county was at the forefront of agricultural   
change and innovation in the mid-nineteenth   
century is one of the aims of this research.   
Nationally farming was becoming increasingly   
commercialised and one indication of this   
is the adoption of industrial-style premises.   
Model farms were built, from scratch, to plans   
drawn up by architects and agriculturalists.   
they were widely publicised and readers of   
The Farmers’ Magazine and The Journal of the   
Royal Agricultural Society of England could see   
plans and engravings of the finished complexes   
as well as learn about their productivity and   
effectiveness. New machinery was employed,   
using new sources of power, New fertilisers   
were utilised. this whole enterprise was housed   
in large purpose-built, specialised model farms,   
or farmeries. they were expensive to create and   
depended upon highly capitalised landlords,   
or individual farmers of vision. New buildings   
included covered stockyards, ventilated dairies,   
narrow gauge rail systems, underground   
manure tanks and engine/wheel houses.  
Experimental farms were run by some   
of the larger agricultural associations and   
tested out some of the new ideas publicised   
in the name of high farming. they too were   
expensive, but in the maintenance rather than   
the founding as they were more likely to be   
adaptations of existing facilities rather than   
entirely new constructions. these farms carried   
out carefully planned experiments designed   
to test the effectiveness of high farming’s new   
techniques. Such exercises may have involved   
the yield of crop and animal varieties, efficiency   
of new machinery and power sources, fertiliser   
improvement both natural and man-made, soil   
improvement and drainage. Such experimental   
farms, run by the national agricultural   
bodies of England and Scotland, were   
investigative in nature and the trial results were reported  
in widely read periodicals.   
tenant farmers had access to these changes   
via the professional literature, national and local   
newspapers, and the network of local farmers’   
clubs and societies. Such clubs of which there   
were several in Suffolk, ran libraries, lectures,   
visits and discussions. this flow of information   
was lubricated in the mid 800s by rapid   
developments in printing technology, progress   
in image reproduction, rapid expansion of the   
railway and telegraph networks.   
through these means small farmers were   
exposed to the new ways in farming and many   
were inclined to adopt some features of high   
farming. Not all practitioners were convinced   
however, and debate between practical and   
theoretical farmers filled many letters’ pages   
in local and regional newspapers. the bona fide   
Suffolk farmer found the forces of high farming   
much easier to resist than the forward looking   
experimentalist. those small farmers who   
did take on the new methods opened up the   
possibility of radical change in their workplace,   
surroundings and techniques.  
the extent to which farmers invested in new   
buildings was by no means consistent across the   
county of Suffolk. the change in farmsteads was   
piecemeal and incremental rather than radical   
and wholesale. Examples of model farming were   
instigated in Suffolk by the aristocracy (Duke   
of Grafton) large landowners (Chevalier) and   
entrepreneurs (Webb).  
the methods employed to investigate   
the Victorian farm changes in Suffolk were   
threefold. Firstly, a sample was drawn up   
representing the three main soil types found   
in the county. these samples represented a   
range of farm sizes and tenures. the farm   
buildings were visited, sketched, measured and   
photographed. the farms were then located on   
the 1830 tithe Survey maps as well as the 840   
ordnance Survey maps. Scale drawings were   
made of the farms and buildings from these map   
sources. By this range of methods it was hoped   
that changing patterns of fields and buildings in   
the period of so called high farming would be   
revealed. in particular how far was development   
and change limited by physical factors. overall   
50 farms were investigated, based upon the   
three core areas of Bury St Edmunds, *Hadleigh,*   
and Wickham Market. Each of these represents a   
discrete and successful farmers’ club catchment   
area, based respectively upon Sand/Chalk,   
alluvium, and Clay/Sand.  
the data thus collected was presented as a   
set of maps, sketches, photographs and graphs.   
overall a number of trends were noted with   
some interesting differences both between and   
within the three sample areas.   
Fields were categorised as having become   
more or less regular in shape, and smaller or   
larger. the degree to which buildings become   
more or less regular was also assessed. the   
result should be therefore an analysis of the   
to which Victorian farm buildings and fields   
became more geometric and spacious during the   
drive toward greater efficiency and intensity in   
the nineteenth century.  
in all three areas the number of scattered   
buildings dropped by half and linear farmsteads   
vanished. all three areas also show a marked   
move toward geometric arrangements of   
buildings. this clearly charts the evolution of the   
courtyard farm.  
there were great regional differences.   
the area of late enclosure around Bury St   
Edmunds was already dominated by huge   
planned complexes by 830. Change in the   
Hadleigh and Wickham Market area was much   
more piecemeal with a development toward   
the geometric symmetrical ideal of modern   
efficiency.  
Field shapes and sizes appear to have   
remained more stable, with fewer obvious   
changes than in the buildings. there was a ten   
to fifteen percent change in the size of fields and   
their shape. this remodelling was consistently   
to regularise field shapes and increase their size   
and was more likely in the areas of small fields   
and early enclosure in the heavy clays than in   
the light soils of Breckland and the Sandlings.