

PROCEEDINGS  
OF THE  
CAMBRIDGE ANTIQUARIAN  
SOCIETY

(INCORPORATING THE CAMBS & HUNTS  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY)



VOLUME LXXV

for 1986

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## DOVECOTES OF SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE

E. M. DAVIS

Pigeons have been bred as a source of food during the winter since Roman times. The practice of keeping doves in dovecotes was possibly introduced by the Normans and certainly in medieval times it was the custom for the lord of the manor to have a dovecote for his own needs. None of these early dovecotes have survived in South Cambridgeshire though the dovecote at Merton Manor Farm, Gamlingay (Fig. 4) is possibly on the site of one recorded in 1280 (V.C.H.). By the seventeenth century dovecotes must have been a familiar sight in most villages, and the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries saw a great increase in their number. It was estimated by Samuel Hartlib, Milton's friend, that at the height of the pigeon trade in the mid seventeenth century there were about 26,000 dovecotes in England – perhaps as many as three in each parish.

With improved farming the breeding of pigeons declined in the nineteenth century and many dovecotes were converted into labourer's cottages to meet the pressing housing needs of the expanding population. Some dovecotes continued to be used however until the Second World War, though many were converted to granaries or used as stables and stores. More recently some dovecotes have been converted to dwellings, studios or garages. The dovecotes that have survived, relatively unaltered, are therefore becoming increasingly rare.

### *Dovecote Surveys*

Two valuable sources have provided information for the present survey of dovecotes. The earliest is a photographic record made from 1914–1930 by the members of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society and now held in the public library Cambridgeshire Collection, Cambridge. The second survey by P. Jeevar on Cambridgeshire dovecotes was made in 1974–77. His illustrations are now an historic record of those buildings that have been demolished. Added to these sources is the R.C.H.M. West Cambridgeshire inventory of

buildings which includes a number of dovecotes; their unpublished records at the National Monuments Record have also been of use.

Since 1930, when a total of around 71 dovecotes were recorded, 20 have been demolished, and of these ten have been lost since 1974–77. Of the remaining 51 dovecotes that have been identified in 1986, two are ruinous (Herods Farm, Foxton and Chapman's Farm, Bourn) and 44 have recently been listed by the Department of the Environment as grade II listed buildings.

Some dovecotes had isolated positions within a close (often marked Dovehouse Close on early maps) though most were generally sited within the farm yard and near a source of water. A few now have isolated positions possibly because contemporary buildings have long since been demolished (Toft Fig. 17). Most dovecotes were built independently from other buildings but there are examples of some forming the integral part of a range of buildings (Coton Fig. 23) or being housed above a double barn range (Westwick). Several dovecotes occupy the first floor or attic above a granary (Great Chishill) and many more were constructed in the apex of gable roofs in a variety of buildings and have been illustrated in topographical drawings from the seventeenth century.

The earliest known plan form was round and of this type there are two eighteenth century examples (Newton, Home Farm Fig. 13, and Haslingfield, No. 29 High Street Fig. 7). By far the most common plan type is the square planned dovecote with a central doorway in one side (Swavesey Fig. 29, and Bassingbourn-cum-Kneesworth Fig. 1). Larger rectangular planned dovecotes are also found (Newton, Coach House Lane and Grantchester, Nos. 36 and 38, Millway). Both were subsequently converted to dwellings.

Some dovecotes were originally single storeyed and have remained so without alteration (Whaddon Fig. 20). Other first floor dovecotes were approached either by an internal or external staircase. The squabs (young pigeons) were collected by means of a ladder leaning against corner braces





Fig 1. Clear Farm, South End, Bassingbourn-cum-Kneesworth.



Fig 2. Flight platform and chute.

(Kingston, Church Lane Fig. 10) or by ladders secured to potences projecting from an arbre, a central rotating post (Haslingfield, Fig. 7 noted before being rebuilt, 1974).

The nesting boxes, occasionally of two sizes (Newton, Home Farm Fig. 13), were arranged around the wall in tiers, each shaped to an L-plan with the entry hole to the right hand. At Haslingfield (Fig. 7) there are fifteen rows of nesting boxes, with fifty nests to each row. Some dovecotes housed as many as 1,500 birds, and 3,000 are said to have been housed in one at Grantchester.

Most dovecotes had wooden floors suspended on brick piers at plinth height. In some timber-framed structures the lower level was nogged with brick to discourage rodents (Sawston, John Faulkner Fig. 30) and then weather boarded.

The roof types range from the conical on the round-planned buildings and the hipped and plain pyramidal on the square-planned, to ones with louvres in an interrupted pyramidal type (Papworth St. Agnes Fig. 28), to the gablet or saddle back (Great Wilbraham Fig. 5) and double saddle back (Gamlingay Fig. 3); some of the later type still retain their flight holes (Orwell Fig. 27 and Gamlingay Fig. 3). The roofs were designed to have flight holes, louvres or lanterns for the doves to enter and fly from the dovecotes. At the apex of the roof and usually at collar height internally there was a boarded flight or alighting platform. In the centre of this a square opening led into the chute constructed from four tapering wooden boards, which presumably directed the birds into and out of the dovecote. A wooden trap door in the platform (Dovecote Cottage, Kingston Fig. 10) was operated by the pigeon keeper to close the dove-house.

The single entrance doorway usually had a boarded door with a circular cat-hole at the bottom; the windows are mostly covered by lathes though the circular windows at Bassingbourn (Fig. 1) are an unusual 'Georgian' feature.

### *Building Materials*

The dovecotes in the survey date from the seventeenth century and represent all the different vernacular building materials to be found in Cambridgeshire. There are 26 timber-framed examples, framed traditionally with lath or wattle infill sometimes plastered and weatherboarded. Some of these have rod holes regularly spaced across the studs suggesting the positions of the former nesting boxes (Great Wilbraham Fig. 5). The plinths are of

local field brick or later seventeenth, eighteenth or nineteenth century red brick.

Some of the best examples of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries' brick, dark red and plum coloured, and coursed in various bonds, have chamfered plinths, plat bands and decorated eaves cornices. There are eight examples and the most outstanding is Haslingfield, No. 29 High Street (Fig. 7); Barton and Foxton are both examples built of local field bricks. Bassingbourn (Fig. 1) and Shudy Camps (Fig. 31) are later red brick buildings.

The only example of a clunch dovecote is the round-planned building at Newton Home Farm (Fig. 13). The external wall is protected by a plaster render, but it may have originally been exposed. The nesting boxes are of lath and daub.

Clay lump was possibly used with brick dressings in a nineteenth century dovecote at Fowlmere; large and square planned it was demolished in 1976. Flint was used at ground floor level in the nineteenth century dovecote at Linton.

The internal walls of the dovecote, lined with tiers of nesting boxes, were usually constructed independently of the external wall, though Whaddon (Fig. 20) and Gamlingay (Fig. 3) may be exceptions. Clay bat and daub and lath was commonly used and also brick with brick or tiled floors. Some brick nesting boxes have remains of clay linings, and these were perhaps the clay pan referred to by J. Moore in *Columbarium* (Moore, 1735), who also advises a 'straw basket' lining.

The roof coverings were of plain tiles with plastered or weatherboarded gablets: there are two long straw thatched examples at Elsworth (Fig. 24) and Great Wilbraham (Fig. 5). The more steeply pitched roofs date from the late seventeenth century.

### *Dovecote conversions*

To meet the increasing demand for homes in the nineteenth century many farmhouses were subdivided as labourers cottages, and so too were the larger dovecotes (Grantchester). The smaller dovecotes were extended by lean-tos (Kingston Fig. 10) or an additional cottage (Newton, Coach House Lane, and Sawston, Orchard Lane). Usually the conversion included the insertion of a floor or floors and a staircase and chimney stack(s). New windows were fitted to light the rooms generally with segmental headed arches and horizontal sliding sashes; the boarded entrance door was replaced by the ubiquitous panelled door.

Many dovecotes within the farmyard were con-

verted into granaries, stables, or stores. Some still retain features from this conversion. The ground floor of one dovecote (Malton in Orwell Fig. 27) housed the pump used in washing coprolites.

### Conclusion

The following inventory of dovecotes is a record of those buildings that have survived; in common with other small buildings, provided there is a use for them, their future is secure. However, many dovecotes are no longer of use, especially when they form part of a working farm complex. It is surprising how rapidly a small building can deteriorate once it ceases to be cared for. South Cambridgeshire District Council Conservation Section, who prepared this survey, is taking steps to ensure the preservation of the approximately fifty dovecotes in its area. It is hoped that a scheme for the gradual repair of those buildings at risk will be agreed between the Council and the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission in the near future.

### Acknowledgements

I should like to express my thanks to the Department of Planning and Research, Cambridgeshire County Council for the computer record of listed dovecotes in South Cambridgeshire, to the Librarian of the Public Library Cambridgeshire Collection, Cambridge and to the Cambridge Antiquarian Society for the use of their photographic records, to the archivist of the County Record Office for access to estate maps of Cambridgeshire and to the National Trust for permission to publish part of the Kingston Wood map, and for the use of unpublished records in the National Monuments Record, 23 Savile Road, London, and finally to all the owners who have kindly allowed me to photograph and record their dovecotes.

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### GAZETTEER

#### **BARRINGTON – No. 4 High Street TL 39494980**

Early 18th century. Situated in a close and now cultivated as a garden. The dovehouse was converted before 1914 to a dwelling. It is said to have been used as a granary and also a game keeper's larder. Rendered timber-framed walls and grey brick; plain tiled gablet roof. Two storeys with an inserted floor, rectangular plan. Occupied.

#### **Church Farm, Haslingfield Road TL 39705010**

A dovecote was photographed in 1914 and again in 1923 standing amongst farm buildings. It was timber-framed and weatherboarded with a plain tiled gablet roof.

#### **BARTON – Manor Farm, School Lane TL 40915572**

Mid 18th century. Situated beside the farmyard. Now used as a stable but was converted to a granary perhaps in the 19th century. Walls of narrow, yellow field bricks with a plain tiled pyramidal roof. Square plan, two storeyed with former central doorway blocked and with an inserted door to one side. Interior not seen.

#### **BASSINGBOURN-CUM-KNEESWORTH – Clear Farm, South End**

**TL 32294363** (Figs. 1 and 2)

1800. Now situated with later 19th century farm buildings of light red brick with a pyramidal plain tiled roof and large lantern. Single storeyed and square planned. The main entrance had a boarded door with an iron grill shaped to the round headed brick arch; a round window in the rear wall possibly also had a grill. The nesting boxes have been removed, they may have been of clay bat; the flight platform and chute can still be seen.

#### **The Grange, Old North Road TL 34504460**

18th or 19th century. Recorded by P. Jeevar in 1974 and since demolished. Timber-framed walls with brick infill, plaster rendered and weatherboarded plinth. Plain tiled pyramidal roof and lantern with flight holes. Boarded central doorway approached by steps. Below the eaves was a small square grill similar to one in the door.

#### **BOURN – Chapmans Farm, Alms Hill TL 32715736**

Early 18th century. Situated with other farm buildings on the roadside; the dovecote is now a ruin. Red brick with a three coursed brick band. One wall has a later plaster render. The main entrance faced the farmhouse.

#### **CAXTON – Caxton Pastures Farm, Ermine Street TL 29156000**

18th century. Facing the farmhouse, but now isolated from farm buildings. The dovecote was converted before

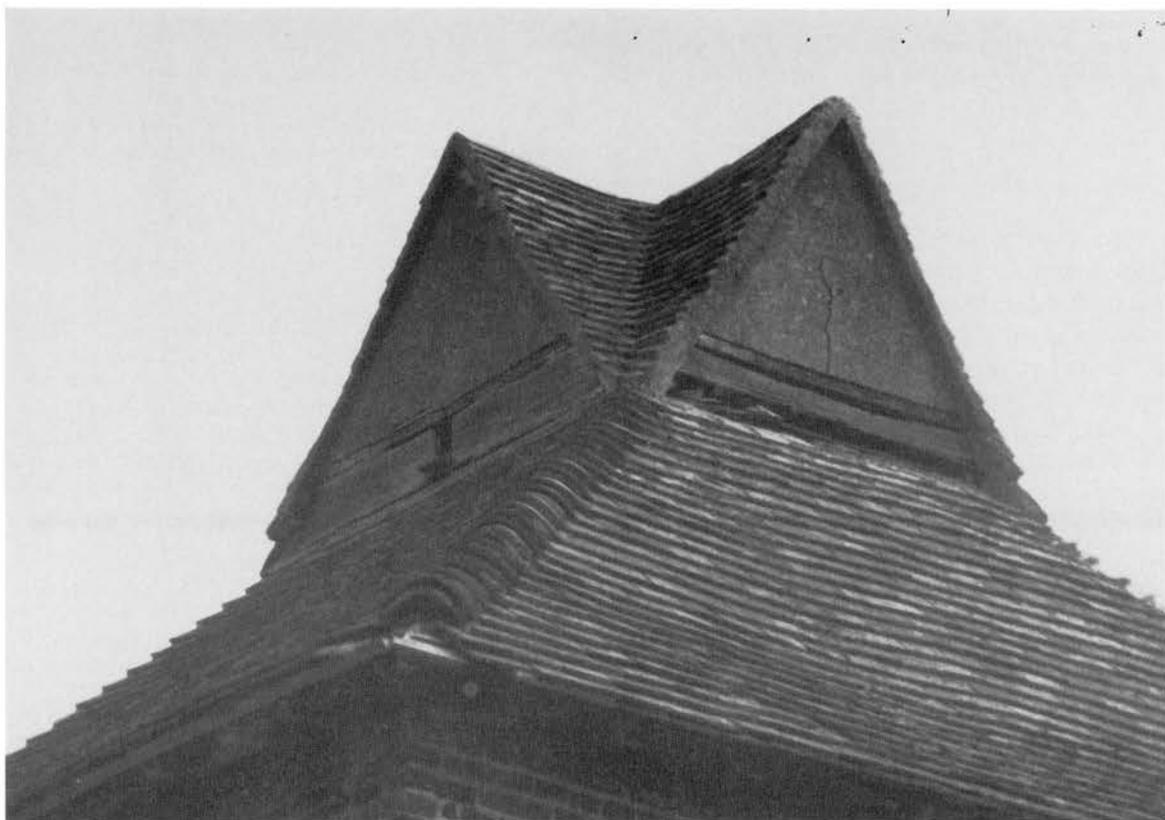


Fig 3. Flight hole and louvres.



Fig 4. The Manor House, Station Rd, Gamlingay.



Fig 5. No. 27 Temple End. Gt. Wilbraham.

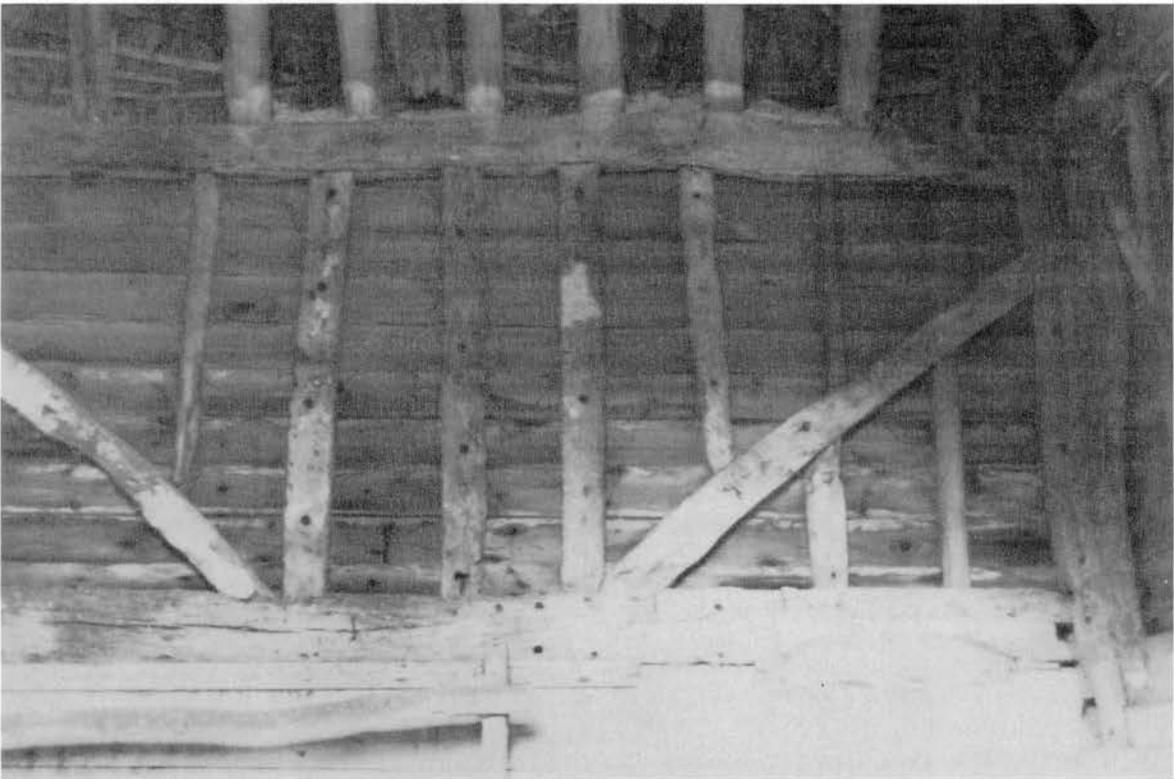


Fig 6. Wall showing peg holes in the timber studs.

1914 to a house. Red brick walls with plain tiled gablet roof. Two storeys, square planned, segmental brick arch to central doorway, inserted horizontal sliding sash windows. Two chimney stacks recently reduced and lean-to demolished. Unoccupied.

**COMBERTON – Cross Farm, Barton Road**

**TL 38185615** (Fig. 33)

17th century. Situated near the farm and within a close, the dovecote was converted after 1942 to a house. Plastered timber-frame on a stone and brick plinth. One wall was cased in clay bat in the 19th century and another weatherboarded. Steep plain tiled gablet roof. Two storeys with an inserted floor, square planned. Occupied.

**No. 12 Hines Lane**

**TL 38225638** (Fig. 32)

18th century. Possibly situated within a close, the dovecote is converted to a house. Red brick walls with three coursed brick band. Replacement plain tiled gablet roof. Side stack and inserted windows. Occupied.

**COTON – Rectory Farm, High Street**

**TL 40875892** (Fig. 23 and Frontispiece)

19th century rather than 18th century. Dovecote in the attic of a cartshed with first floor granary, attached to a stable range enclosing the farmyard. Timber-framed weatherboarded walls with a gablet and mansard roof formerly covered with plain tiles. Porched flight entry facing ridge of stable roof with platform inside. The granary is approached by an external ladder at first floor. Inside there are corn bins and wooden nesting boxes.

**CROXTON – Westbury Farm, Abbotsley Road**

**TL 24715945** (Fig. 22)

Late 17th or early 18th century, a rebuilding of a former timber-framed dovecote (RCHM). Red brick walls with plain tiled pyramidal roof. No lantern, could the flight entry have been above the doorway? One storey, square planned with about 300 blocked nesting boxes constructed in brick.

**DRY DRAYTON – Proctor's Farm, High Street**

**TL 37806220**

17th century barn with an external loft, now demolished. Described by P. Jeevar as a rare example.

**DUXFORD – The Red Lion, Whittlesford Bridge**

**TL 48504725**

Late 18th or early 19th century, converted to a house. Timber-framed walls plastered and weatherboarded. Gablet roof covered with plain tiles. Two storey rectangular plan; modern doors and fenestration.

**ELSWORTH – Martin's Farm, Boxworth Road**

**TL 32046382** (Fig. 24)

17th century. Originally with other farm buildings that were demolished after a fire. The dovecote was altered to a granary with a pigeon loft in the roof possibly in the 19th century. Timber-framed and weatherboarded walls on a brick plinth. Long straw thatched gablet roof. Single storeyed, square plan with a central boarded door of two heights. The flight platform is intact but the nesting boxes of clay bat or daub have been removed.

**FEN DITTON – Home Farm, High Ditch Road**

**TL 48756020**

18th century. Situated near the farmhouse and with

other farm buildings. The building was both a granary and a dovecote, the three coursed brick band possibly indicates the position of the loft floor. Local gault brick with a plain tiled pyramidal roof, squat lantern continuing the rake of the roof with louvred flight entry. One storey and loft, square plan. Boarded floor raised above ground level.

**FEN DITTON – Unknown**

Possibly early 18th century. Local brick walls with thatched gable roof. Wooden floors raised above ground floor with walls lined with brick nesting boxes. Single storey with central two-centred arched doorway in the long elevation. Rectangular plan. The dovecote was photographed in circa 1925.

**FEN DRAYTON – Dove House, High Street**

**TL 33866855**

Early 18th century. Dovecote formerly in the farmyard of Ridgeleys Farm. Red brick walls, pyramidal plain tiled roof, metal cap with weather vane in position of lantern. Two storeys, square plan. A chimney and windows were inserted when the dovecote was converted to a house. Occupied.

**Dutch House, Church Street**

**TL 33956815**

Dated 1708. Dovecote in the farmyard, now used for other purposes and without its original roof. The dentil eaves cornice decoration to the red brick walls is a good detail. Now two storeys high it has a rectangular plan.

**Ivy Cottage, High Street**

**TL 33916845**

Dated 1775 the dovecote was ruinous in 1974 (P. Jeevar). 500 nesting boxes of two sizes were noted in the remaining walls. The cornice to the red brick walls was decorated; the plan was 15 feet square.

**FOWLMERE – Dove House, Rectory Lane**

**TL 42154605**

Possibly 18th century. Rendered timber-framed walls with modern pantiled gablet roof. Rectangular plan with lean-to extension and 20th century fenestration. Occupied.

**Nr. Churchyard**

**TL 42254585**

Possibly 19th century, the only clay lump example with brick dressings. Square planned, two storeyed with plain tiled pyramidal roof. Demolished in May 1976.

**FOXTON – Herod's Farm, High Street**

**TL 41044819**

Dated 1796 and initialled R. J. & S. (Raynor James and Susan) on a square stone plaque above the doorway. Without its original roof the dovecote is now used as a cattleshed. The boarded door in the central doorway has a segmental relieving arch. The floor was originally boarded and raised above the ground. The interior was not seen.

**Welbores Pigeon House, High Street?**

**TL 41004830**

Built in 1706 for Mr. Wallis it is shown on the 1905 map as Wildbores. Brick walls with the upper five feet weatherboarded (possibly timber-framed) and twenty feet square in plan; the gablet roof was covered with corru-

gated iron. The building was noted by P. Jeevar in 1974. It has since been demolished.

**GAMLINGAY – No. 23 The Manor House, Station Road  
TL 24255211 (Figs. 3 and 4)**

Possibly 1660. Originally sited in a farmyard with other buildings including a barn dated 1660; a dovecote is recorded on this site in 1280 (VCH). Walls of red brick with a deep plinth; plain tiled double gablet roof with louvre and flight hole entries. Main entrance approached by steps. Single storeyed, square plan. Boarded floor originally raised above the ground, lower brick and tile nesting boxes have been sealed. The flight platform is *in situ*.

**Dovecote to east of Emplins  
TL 24285229**

Possibly 18th red brick, now converted to a house and extended with modern fenestration. Occupied.

**Blythe Farm  
TL 23705200**

Possibly 17th century. Red brick walls with double gablet roof; 700 nesting boxes. Demolished in 1974.

**GRANTCHESTER –**

**Nos. 36 and 38 Dove Cottages, Mill Way  
TL 43365532**

18th century. A lease of 1467 refers to a dovecote on the site with 130 dozen pigeons (VCH). One of the largest dovecotes with 3,000 nesting boxes. It is now converted to two houses. Walls of rendered timber-frame on a high brick plinth; (substantial timbers in the frame may be earlier;) plain tiled gablet roof. Two storeys and attics with gabled dormer windows; rectangular plan. Occupied.

**GREAT ABINGTON –**

**Newhouse Farm, Pampisford Road  
TL 52814823 (Fig 35)**

Late 17th. Situated in the farmyard and near the farmhouse, converted in the 19th century to a house. Timber-framed and plastered; plain tile replacements cover a gablet roof. Two storeys, square planned with two brick side stacks. Inserted horizontal sliding sash windows and central panelled door with a flat canopy. Unoccupied.

**GREAT CHISHILL – Rectory Farm, Heydon Road  
TL 42343897**

Early 18th century. Situated with other farm buildings, several converted to houses. Red brick walls with sawtooth and dentil brick eaves cornice; the roof has been rebuilt and the gables framed and weatherboarded. Two storeys, rectangular to square plan, with granary and dovecote. Interior not seen.

**GREAT SHELFORD –**

**Granham's Farm, Granhams Road  
TL 53114625**

Late 18th or early 19th century. Situated in the former farmyard, converted in the 19th century to a house. Timber-framed and plastered walls on a brick plinth. Plain tiled gablet roof with ridge stack and inserted windows. Occupied.

**GREAT WILBRAHAM – No. 27 Temple End  
TL 55135752 (Figs. 5 and 6)**

17th century. Situated on the roadside boundary of the farmyard, converted to a granary. Timber-framed and

weatherboarded walls on a brick plinth with a long straw thatched gablet roof. One storey, square planned with a two stage doorway centrally positioned. The interior shows the exposed timber-frame and rod holes possibly used by the pegs in the construction of clay bat or daub nesting boxes.

**GULDEN MORDEN – Nos. 32 and 34 Church Street  
TL 27814401**

Late 17th century. Situated within the curtilage of a house, possibly a farmhouse. The dovehouse was converted to two houses in the 19th century. The timber-frame has been exposed by recent renovation. It stands on low brick walls. Plain tiled pyramidal roof with 20th century glazed lantern replaces the 19th century chimney stack.

**No. 1 Dove Cottage, Church Lane  
TL 27964402**

18th century. Possibly a dovecote to Morden House, converted in the mid 18th century to a house. Timber-framed and plastered walls on a low brick plinth; gablet roof retiled with plain tiles. Two storeys. Side chimney stacks, 20th century replacement windows of those originally inserted. Occupied.

**HARLTON – The Dove House, Snakes Lane  
TL 38755249**

Early 18th century. Converted in the mid to late 19th century to a house. Red brick with deep eaves cornice of dentil and sawtooth brick work. Plain tiled pyramidal roof. Central 19th century ridge stack replaces the lantern. Two storeys, squared planned. Interior not seen. Occupied.

**HARLTON? Photograph circa 1930.**

**HARLTON – Unknown**

Photographed in circa 1925, converted to a cottage. Two storeyed with lean-to and plain tiled pyramidal roof.

**HASLINGFIELD –**

**No. 117 Dovecote Cottage, New Road  
TL 40305250**

18th century, converted to a house in the 19th century. Timber-framed and plastered walls with a pantiled gablet roof. Side stack and weatherboarded and modern lean-to additions, inserted 19th and 20th century windows. A dormer window has been added since a photograph was taken in circa 1925. Occupied.

**No. 29 The Dovecote, High Street**

**TL 40625222 (Figs. 7, 8 and 9)**

Circa 1650. The finest example in Cambridgeshire of a circular planned dovecote, originally within the curtilage of Haslingfield Hall Park. Red brick walls with very fine rubbed brick cornice and three course brick band, conical roof covered with fish-scale patterned slates; replacement lantern, finial and weather vane. Before conversion to a dwelling in 1974 the wooden arbre and potence lay on the floor of the house, the arbre tie beam *in situ*. There were fifteen rows of fifty nesting boxes totalling 750 altogether. One original window and door survive the alterations. Occupied.

**KINGSTON – Dove Cottage, Cranes Lane  
TL 34475493**

17th or 18th century, converted to a house. Timber-framed and rendered walls, plain tiled roof with gablets.



Fig 7. No. 29 The Dovecote, High Street, Gamlingay.

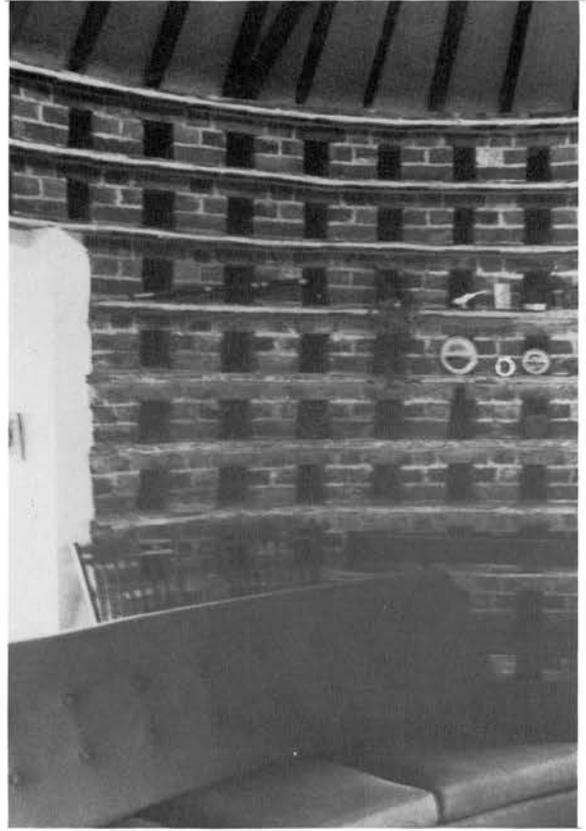


Fig 8. Nesting boxes.

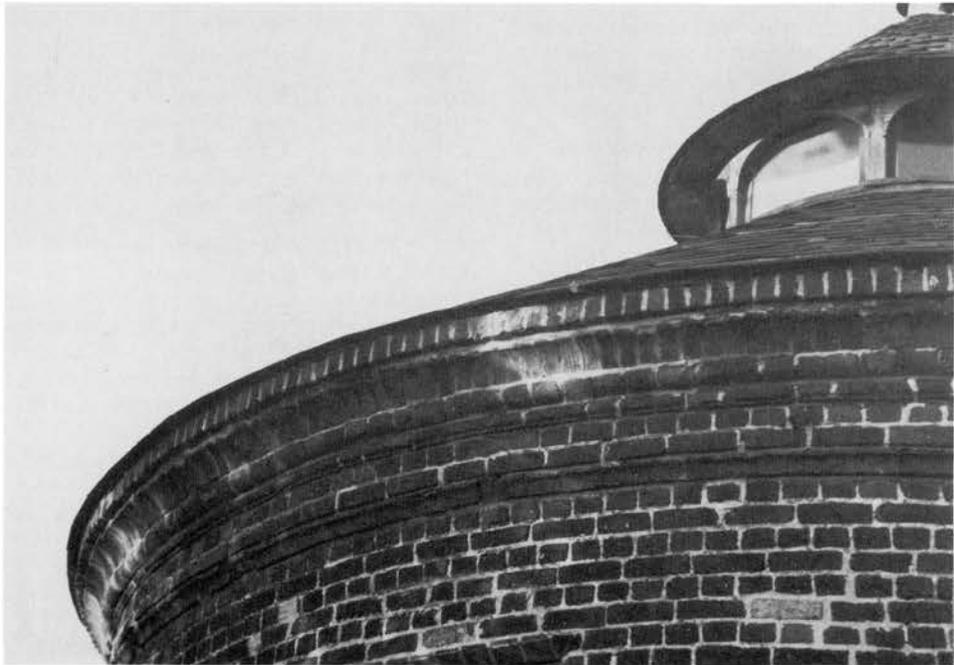


Fig 9. Cornice detail.

Two storeys, square planned. 19th century doorway and boarded door. Occupied.

**Dovecote Cottage, Church Lane**

**TL 34515532** (Figs. 10, 11 and 12)

18th century. Situated in a close now cultivated as a garden and formerly part of Library Farm. Dovecote and ground floor granary were converted to a house in the 19th century. The flight platform remains intact and angle braces between the wall plates for the ladders to rest on. Timber-framed and plastered walls with plain tiled gablet roof. Two storeys and attic, square planned. Inserted chimney and horizontal sliding sash windows and lean-tos are associated with the conversion. Occupied.

**LINTON – Dove House, Mill Lane**

**TL 56344669**

Early 19th century. Built in the angle of a boundary wall, and converted to a house in the late 19th century. Flint ground storey walls with brick dressings and possibly rendered timber-framed first floor. The pantiled roof may be a replacement. Occupied.

**LITLINGTON – Hill Farm, South Street**

**TL 31394257** (Fig. 26)

Late 16th or early 17th century. Sited within the farmyard and other farm buildings. Substantial timber-framed walls with plastered infill and external weatherboarding. Plain tiled pyramidal roof without lantern, the flight platform however is intact. Two storeys, used as a granary and store, square planned. Peg holes in studs for clay bat or daub nesting boxes.

**Bury Farm, Abingdon Road**

**TL 31064310** (Fig. 25)

Dated 1682, collapsed and demolished in 1980. Red brick walls, plain tiled gablet roof. Square plan. Segmental arched doorway with double doors and with a cut brick panel above inscribed with the date. Interior formerly complete with flight platform and brick nesting boxes.

**LITTLE EVERSDEN – Five Gables Farm, Bucks Lane**

**TL 36955346**

17th century. Sited in the farmyard with other farm buildings. Timber-framed and rendered walls; plain tiled gablet roof. Two storeys, square planned. Converted to a house with an inserted floor. The nesting boxes have been removed, flight platform intact.

**LITTLE SHELFORD – King's Farmhouse, High Street**

**TL 45275140**

18th century, converted to a small lodge in the grounds of the 'gentrified' farmhouse. Timber-framed and plastered walls; plain tiled gablet roof with an inserted dormer window. 19th century stack, inserted windows with Gothic arched heads and margin glazing bars. More recently the building was converted into a garage.

**MELDRETH – Chiswick Farm, Chiswick End**

**TL 37304563**

Late 17th century or early 18th century. Now used as a granary and store the building stands beside the road. Timber-framed and plastered walls; the plain tiled roof replaces a steep gablet roof – seen in a photograph of circa 1925. Interior not seen.

**NEWTON – Home Farm, Town Street**

**TL 43554936** (Figs. 13, 14, 15 and 16)

18th century. The most interesting of all the South Cambridgeshire dovecotes. Circular planned and built of clunch, plastered externally and lined internally with clay daub and lath nesting boxes of two sizes. The floor was boarded and raised on piers above ground level. The conical roof was possibly reconstructed in the 19th century; it has a curious gabled lantern with louvred entry to a flight platform and chute still intact. About 500 pigeons were kept in the house till 1930. The building is situated in the farmyard with other buildings.

**The Coach House, Coach House Lane**

**TL 43604938**

Late 17th or early 18th century. Sited at the end of a lane and converted to houses. Red brick walls with dentil brick eaves cornice and plinth. Formerly with a plain tiled gablet roof now included in part of an addition at right angles. The central main entrance is blocked and windows inserted during renovation in 1986 replace the earlier ones. The original rectangular plan is now two storeyed. The clay bat courses between the internal brick wall indicate the position of the nesting boxes, and were visible when the plaster was removed (1986).

**OAKINGTON – Whitehall Farm, Longstanton Road**

**TL 40936431**

Rebuilt, 20th century in yellow brick and tile hung with red tiles matching the roof tiles. Perhaps the octagonal tower is a copy of the original. The roof finial is surmounted by a wrought iron weather vane with a pigeon in flight.

**ORWELL – Malton Farmhouse, Malton Lane**

**TL 37364833**

Late 17th or early 18th century. Situated on the roadside near the farmyard. Substantially timber-framed and weatherboarded on a red brick plinth; plain tiled gablet roof with four flight holes in each gablet. Two storeys, a cart shed and first floor dovecote. Square planned. The flight platform in the dovecote is *in situ*. The cart shed was used as the pump house for washing coprolites in the 19th century.

**Laurel House, High Street**

**TL 36405040**

Date unknown; photographed in 1930 the dovecote has since been demolished. It was timber-framed and plastered with a hipped, long straw thatched roof.

**OVER – Ivy House, Fen end**

**TL 37877062**

Late 17th or early 18th century. Situated on a boundary of the garden enclosure to Ivy House. Red brick walls, with dentil brick eaves cornice. 19th rebuild of roof to a gable covered with plain tiles. Deep plinth. Two storeys, rectangular plan. Central door to rear facing into the close, 19th century doorway inserted for use as a stable with hay loft above.

**PAPWORTH ST. AGNES – Manor House**

**TL 26806470** (Fig. 28)

Circa 1700. Situated on the boundary of the garden enclosure. Red brick walls with double row of sawtooth bricks in the eaves cornice, plain tiled pyramidal roof with louvres breaking the roof pitch on two sides. Two storeys, square planned. The flight platform and chute are intact, the nesting boxes, possibly of clay bat or daub, have been removed.



Fig 10. Dovecote, Church Lane,  
Kingston.

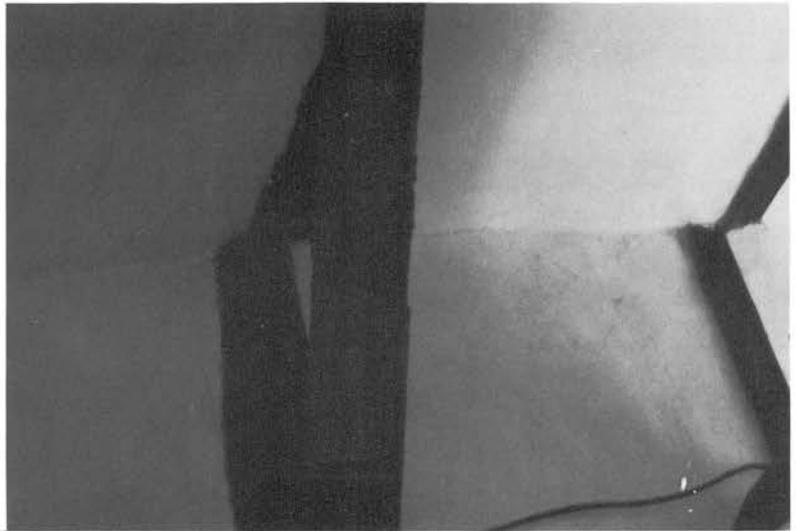


Fig 11. Corner Braces.



Fig 12. Trap door.



Fig 13. Home Farm, Town Street, Newton.



Fig 14. Flight platform and chute.

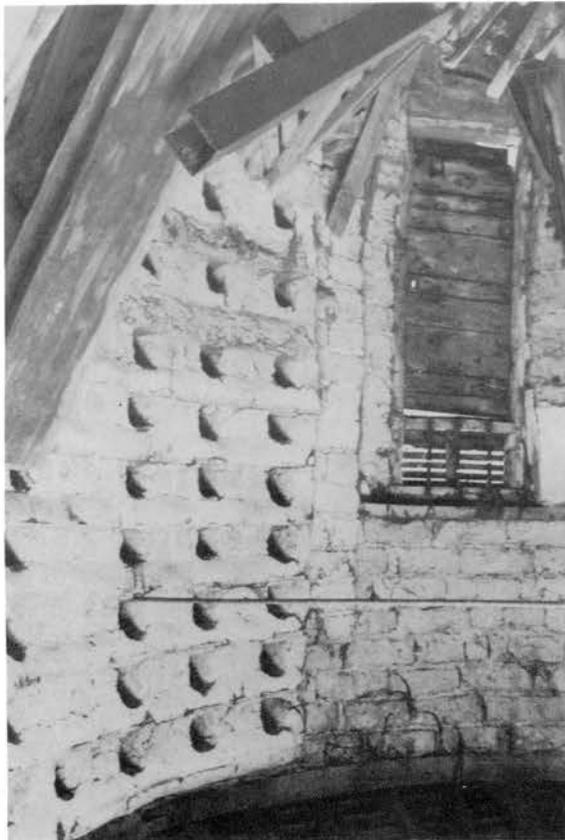


Fig 15. Nesting boxes.

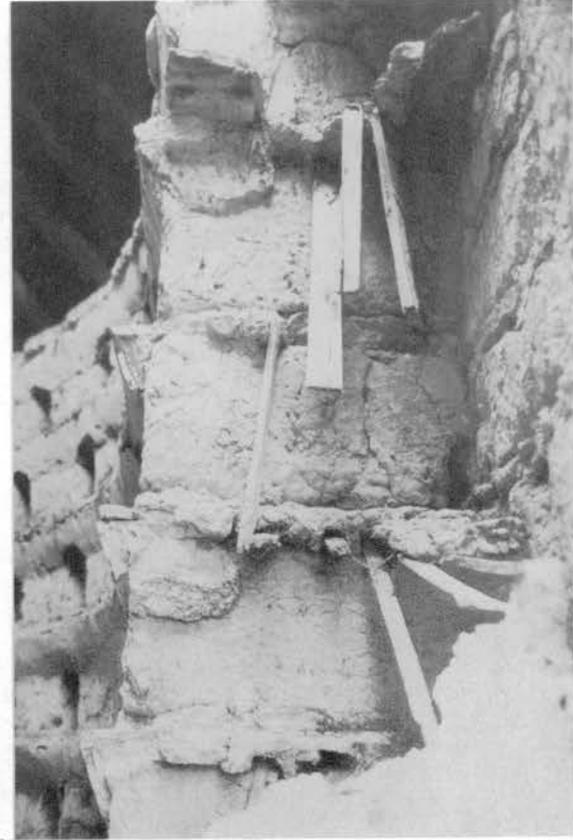


Fig 16. Nesting boxes showing lath and daub exposed.

**SAWSTON – John Faulkner Primary School, Mill Lane  
TL 48534946 (Fig. 30)**

Late 17th century. Situated originally on the boundary of a garden close with other outbuildings. Timber-framed walls plastered, with brick nogging at the lower level which was originally weatherboarded. Plain tiled gabled roof. Square plan. Boarded loft door and entrance door. The building is now used as a store by the school.

**Nos. 1, 3 and 5 Orchard Lane****TL 48734936**

Early 18th century, possibly on the monastic site of 'Monkes Ortyarde'. Timber-framed and plastered walls on a brick plinth extended in the 19th century by clay lump additions and converted into three dwellings. Plain tiled gablet roof with ridge stack. Before the recent renovation the five windows had horizontal sliding sashes. Occupied.

**SHELFORD – Unknown**

Dated 1706. Photograph circa 1930. Brick with square plan. Plain tiled pyramidal roof with small gablet possibly with flight holes.

**SHEPRETH – Manor Farm, Frog End****TL 39334741**

Possibly 17th century. Noted by P. Jeevar in 1974, the dovecote was ruinous after 1955. Timber-framed walls, with a thatched gablet roof.

**SHUDY CAMPS – Carters Farm, Main Street****TL 61704480**

18th century. Situated within the farmyard, the building collapsed in a storm in 1976. Red brick walls with three course brick band and sawtoothed brick eaves cornice. Plain tiled gablet roof. Flight platform intact.

**Barsey Farm, Haverhill Road****TL 64004542 (Fig. 31)**

Early 19th century, facing the farmhouse and now isolated from farm buildings. Red brick walls with a deep plinth; plain tiled gablet roof. Shallow pointed brick arch to central doorway with a small glazed window above. Square planned. The nesting boxes have been removed; the collars in the roof remain for the flight platform.

**STAPLEFORD – No. 4 Dove Cottage, Gog Magog Way****TL 47215201**

Possibly 18th century. Formerly part of the Bury Manor estate. Converted to a house and altered again circa 1980. Originally the red brick walls with a single coursed brick band were visible, the walls are now rendered and tile hung. Plain tiled pyramidal roof; brick chimney stack. Occupied.

**SWAVESEY – Ryder's Farm, Middle Watch****TL 36356832 (Fig. 29)**

Early 18th century. Situated beside the farmhouse and facing into the farmyard. Timber-framed and weatherboarded walls on a brick plinth, plain tiled pyramidal roof without a lantern. Square planned. Central boarded door. The flight rails made of hedgerow timber can be seen suspended from the roof. This small building is now used as a store, but was also used as a granary.

**Trinity Farm, Middle Watch****TL 36364842**

Early 18th century. Situated beside the farmhouse and

facing into the farmyard. Timber-framed and weatherboarded walls on a brick plinth; plain tiled pyramidal roof, without a lantern. Square planned, central doorway approached by steps. Raised, boarded floor. Now used as a store, it was possibly used as a granary.

**Hall Farm?**

Remains of dovehouse, noted by P. Jeevar 1974.

**THRIFLOW – Bacons Farm, Church Street****TL 44244674**

Possibly 17th century. Situated on the boundary of the farmyard. Deep brick plinth, and possibly timber-framed with plastered walls; steep pantiled, gablet roof. Square planned. Photographed circa 1930, it has been demolished.

**Rectory Farm, Middle Street****TL 43804640**

Possibly late 17th or early 18th century. Situated on the boundary of the farmyard with other buildings. Timber-framed and plastered walls on a brick plinth; plain tiled gablet roof. Central doorway with lathed ventilation above. Photographed circa 1930; has been demolished.

**No. 21 Bassett's, Lower Street****TL 43614639 (Fig. 34)**

Early 18th century. Situated within the close of the former Bury farmstead, and possibly the farmyard. Timber-framed and plastered walls on a brick plinth; plain tiled gablet roof. Two storeys, square planned with a central entrance and 19th century window and stack insertions. Occupied.

**Thriplow Bury, Lodge Road****TL 43544615**

Early 18th century. Situated on the boundary with other buildings of the former farmyard. A roof has been added to the derelict building (photograph circa 1930). Red brick walls, with central doorways at two levels. Now used as a garden store and studio.

**TOFT – Manor Farm, Comberton Road****TL 36205620 (Figs. 17, 18 and 19)**

Late 17th or early 18th century. Isolated from the farmhouse on the boundary of a former close. Red brick plinth, timber-framed and weatherboarded walls; plain tiled gablet roof with flight holes in gablet. Central boarded door; square plan. Nesting boxes numbering about 700 of clay bat and tile construction. Flight platform complete with opening for chute.

**WEST WRATTING –****Oxcroft Farm, West Wrattling Road****TL 59165132**

18th century. Isolated position between the farmhouse and farmyard. Red brick walls possibly encasing a timber-frame. Two storey, square plan. 20th century replacement plain tiles to gablet roof, and inserted windows and doorways.

**WESTWICK – Westwick Hall Farm, Oakington Road****TL 42176536**

Dated 1868. Pigeon loft in the apex of a wide spreading roof spanning a double barn with flanking aisles. The loft is approached by internal wooden ladders.

**WHADDON – Rectory Farm, Meldreth Road****TL 35274657 (Figs. 20 and 21)**



Fig 17. Manor Farm, Comberton Road, Toft.



Fig 18. Flight platform and opening for chute.

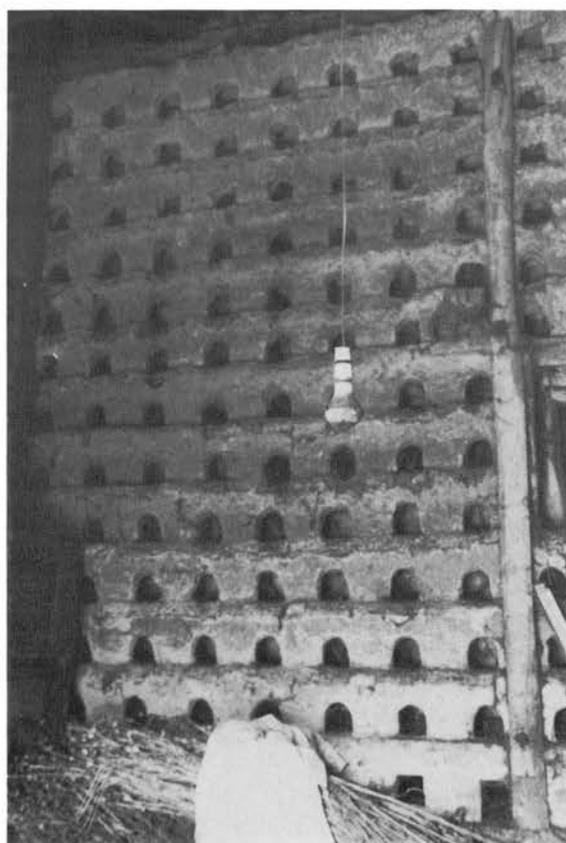


Fig 19. Nesting boxes.



Fig 20. Rectory Farm, Meldreth Rd, Whaddon.



Fig 21. Nesting boxes.



Fig 22. Westbury Farm, Abbotsley Road, Croxton.

Fig 23. Rectory Farm, High Street, Coton.

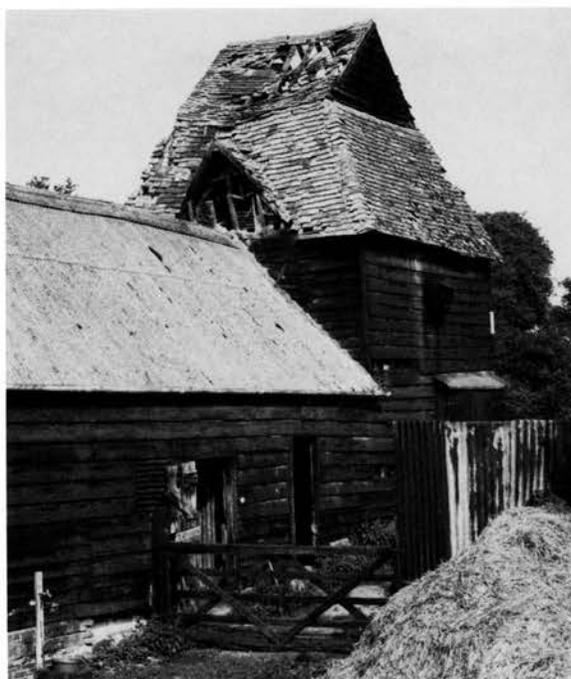


Fig 24. Martin's Farm, Boxworth Road, Elsworth.



Fig 25. Five Gables Farm, Bucks Lane,  
Little Eversden.



Fig 26. Hill Farm, South Street, Litlington.



Fig 27. Malton Farmhouse, Malton Lane, Orwell.



Fig 28. Manor House, Papworth St Agnes.



Fig 29. Ryder's Farm, Middle Watch, Swavesey.



Fig 30. John Faulkner Primary School, Mill Lane, Sawston.



Fig 31. Bardsey Farm, Haverhill Road, Shudy Camps.



Fig 32. No. 12 Hines Lane, Comberton.



Fig 33. Cross Farm, Barton Rd. Comberton.



Fig 34 Bassett's Lower Street, Thriplow.



Fig 35. Newhouse Farm, Pampisford Road. Gt Abington.

18th century, rebuilt after a fire in the 19th century and used as a 'wheat' house. Red brick walls with a low pitched slated pyramidal roof and small lantern. The original doorway faces the farmhouse and is blocked. The 950 brick nesting boxes are arranged in rows with brick ledges. This dovecote was the scene of pigeon thefts in 1823 and 1850.

#### KINGSTON – Kingston Wood Manor

Estate map for Lord Edward Harley by John Cory. Dovecote illustrated. 1720 C.R.O.

#### LITLINGTON – Bedwell's Estate

Estate map for Sir Spencer Wilson, Bart. Dovecote planned in corner of Bedwell's Close. 1782. C.R.O.

#### LITTLE LINTON (HILDERSHAM) –

##### Catley Park

Estate map for Benjamin Keene by Jo. Freeman. Dovecote illustrated in a close. 1779. C.R.O.

#### LITTLE SHELFORD – Manor

Estate map by F. Warren. Dovecote planned in corner of a close beside the moat. 1748. C.R.O.

#### *Dovecotes shown on Estate Maps*

Among the several sources of reference to dovecotes the following estate maps either show a drawing of a dovecote in elevation or plan.

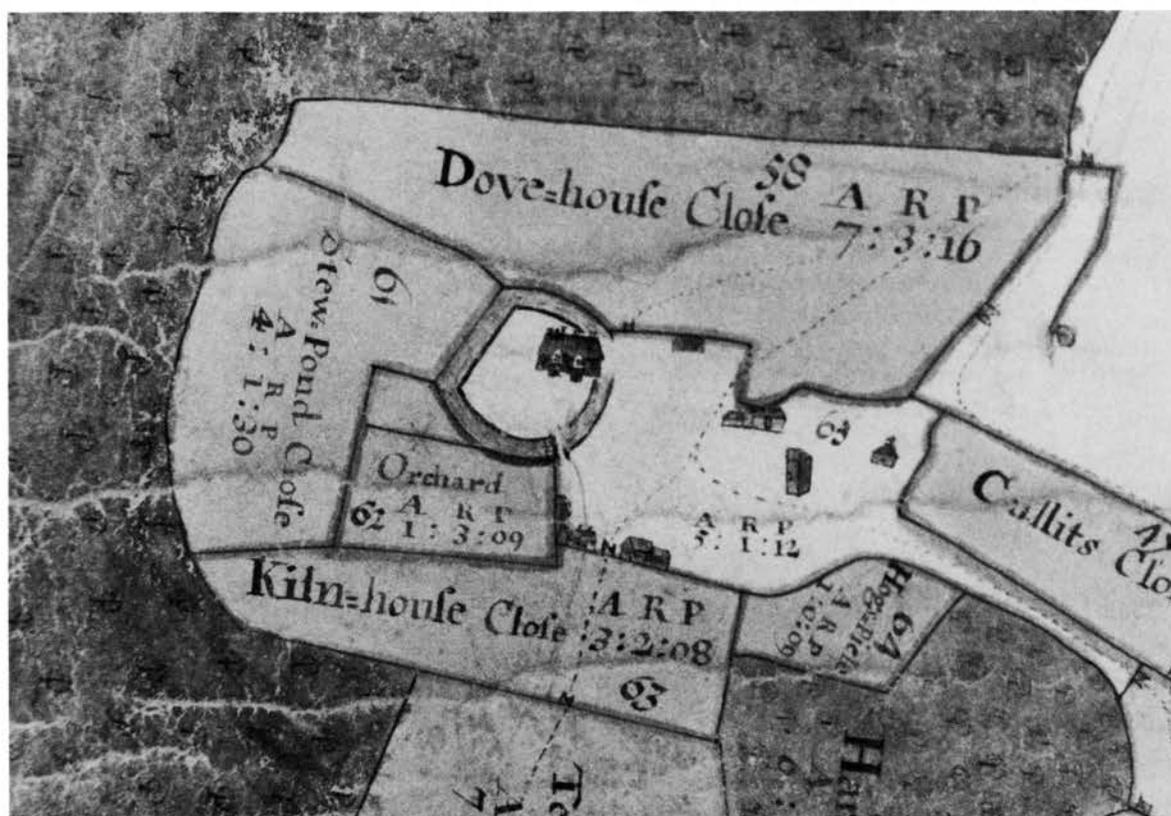


Fig 36. 'Kingston Wood Manor' part of the estate map of 1720.

#### GLOSSARY

<b>Arbre</b>	See potences.
<b>Arch</b>	To a window or door opening usually of brick with a segmental, round or cambered head.
<b>Band, or Plat Band</b>	One, two, or three projecting brick courses generally found in late 17th and 18th century buildings.
<b>Chute</b>	See flight platform.
<b>Clay Bat, or Clay Lump</b>	Unfired clay blocks formed in wooden moulds 9 × 7 × 18 inches long.
<b>Clay Daub</b>	Wet moulded clay.

<b>Coprolite</b>	Stony fossil, surface mined, used as a fertilizer.
<b>Cornice</b>	Brick bands at eaves height, moulded or with bricks set as a dentil or sawtooth decoration.
<b>Cupola</b>	See lantern.
<b>Dressing</b>	Architectural term for the material used in enhancing certain details, e.g. the door jamb or quoin.
<b>Flight Holes</b>	Openings for pigeons to enter and leave the dovecote, usually found in the gablet or lantern.
<b>Flight Platform and Chute, or Alighting Platform</b>	Constructed from planks laid across the roof collars with a central square opening for a tapering wooden chute into the dovehouse, sometimes closed with a trap door.
<b>Gablet</b>	See roof.
<b>Horizontal Sliding Sashes</b>	Unhinged window sashes that slide horizontally of two or three lights, peculiar to Cambridgeshire and the East Midlands.
<b>Infill</b>	Usually of wattle and daub, or lath and plaster inserted between the timbers of a framed building, when in brick termed nogging.
<b>Lantern</b>	Structure at the apex of a roof with flight openings for pigeons to enter and leave the dovecote, sometimes in their more decorative form a cupola. The small roofs take the form of a gable or pyramid, occasionally a cone.
<b>Lean-to</b>	An addition to a building with a sloping roof.
<b>Loft</b>	Space above the ground floor often within the roof.
<b>Louvre</b>	Horizontal opening between two boards for pigeons to enter and leave the dovecote, found in lanterns or gablets.
<b>Nesting Boxes, or Pigeon Holes</b>	Constructed of brick with brick or tile alighting ledges, of clay daub and lath or wattle, or of wood; L-planned.
<b>Pantile</b>	A moulded clay tile designed to interlock with tiles on either side and with a nib for hanging the tile. Used commonly in agricultural buildings and labourer's cottages. Similar colour to Cambridgeshire plain tiles.
<b>Plain Tile</b>	A flat clay tile measuring 10 × 6½ inches with a hole for a wooden dowel to peg it on wooden laths. Colours vary from cream, grey to pink and red.
<b>Plinth</b>	Brick base for a timber-framed building and a projecting brick base to a brick building.
<b>Potences, Arbre, and Ladder</b>	Sometimes referred to as a potence. The central pivoted post, the arbre, has horizontal timbers, potences, to which a ladder is attached.
<b>Roof</b>	Gabled roof with two slopes rising to a ridge; hipped roof with sloping ends and a shortened ridge; pyramidal roof with sloping sides and without a ridge; mansard roof similar to a gabled roof with double slopes; gablet or saddle back roof usually the hipped roof type with a gabled apex – 'gablets'; conical roof found on circular planned buildings.
<b>Saddle Back</b>	See roof.
<b>Timber-frame</b>	Walls constructed from a timber framework of posts and studs with bracing at the angles. The carpentry details are dateable. The frame is infilled with various materials and usually covered externally by plaster or weatherboarding.

## APPENDIX

*Extracts and Notes on Dove Husbandry*

The husbandry of dove keeping is now a lost art. The dovecote at Home Farm, Town Street, Newton appears to have been the last to be used as such in South Cambridgeshire. Doves can be seen in the photograph of circa 1930. The most useful early source of information comes from *Columbarium*, by J. Moore. He was an apothecary and noted for his worming preparations. His book, published late in his life in 1735 was reprinted posthumously in 1765 and again by W. B. Tegetmeier in 1879. It was presumably a handbook much used at that time.

Four volumes of the 1735 publication are held in the British Library and a copy of the late edition is to be found in the University Library, Cambridge. This edition has a copper plate frontispiece showing the equipment needed for rearing and keeping doves and also shows the dovehouse cat! A. O. Cooke used J. Moore as a source for *A Book of Doves*, 1920, and also makes interesting comparisons with dovecotes in France.

The doves were paired before they were placed in the dovecote and selected their nesting boxes, 'Two holes or breeding places for every pair for the more

room they have the more quiet they will sit and breed the better'. 'Erect shelves of about 14 inches broad allowing 18 inches between shelf and shelf (1735).' '- in breeding time when the young ones are about three weeks old, the Hen, if a good breeder will lay again, and leave the Cock to take care of and bring up the young ones.' The legs of the squabs were broken to prevent needless use of energy. (J. Moore).

'Young birds were crammed with white bread half chewed by men specially hired for the work.' (A. O. Cooke).

'- the feed to be placed in a Meat-Box shaped as a Hopper' - 'and a Water Bottle to hold three or four gallons and its belly made in the form of an egg to keep em from dunging out.' This bottle is illustrated (1765) inverted into a pan and supported by a wooden tripod. 'A Salt Cat' made from lime and cummin amongst other things was 'useful for to harden their shells'. It was left in the dovecote and was thought to attract pigeons from other houses as well as the returning pigeons. (J. Moore).

'A Salt Cat' was originally a cat stuffed with lime and cummin and roasted; in the seventeenth century accounts from Jesus College, Cambridge, a

dog was roasted for this purpose. Its main function was to attract the homing pigeons, obviously of some value. 'Charles Waterton says it was forbidden in England in his father's time to whitewash the external walls as it being likely to attract a neighbour's birds; in France whitewashing dovecotes was common-place.' (A. O. Cooke).

Apart from providing a regular source of meat for the table the doves also contributed to the farm economy by their droppings. This was much prized and 'worth ten loads of other Dung' - 'sown after the Manner as the grain and harrow'd in with it'. Tanners made use of the dung in tanning the upper leathers and 'Salt Petre Beds', were made from a mixture of pigeons' dung, fowls' dung, hogs' dung, fat earth and lime. (Moore, 1735)

Thefts from dovecotes were common and must be a contributing cause for the siting of most of these small buildings where they could easily be observed. An extract from the Cambridge Chronicle, 24th January, 1823 illustrates this.

We should like to thank South Cambridgeshire County Council for a grant to cover the cost of publishing this paper. It is also available as a separate publication.

Extract from the *Cambridge Chronicle*, 24 January 1823, concerning a robbery at Whaddon dovecote.

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*John Place, Richard Pilkin, and James Bales.*—

In this case it appeared, that Place had robbed a dovecote-house belonging to Mr. Wm. Bell, of Whaddon, of about 11 dozen pigeons. Bales, who is waggoner to Ashby of Cambridge, took them up on the road and then to London; and Pilkin, who is a porter, carried them to a shop in Holborn, where they were sold. The jury found Place and Bales guilty, and acquitted Pilkin. Bales had a good character. The Court sentenced Place to 7 years' transportation, and Bales to one year's imprisonment, to be kept to hard labor.

*Wm. Francis* was charged with receiving 31 turkies knowing them to have been stolen. The prisoner, who is a waggoner, in his defence said, that he was asleep in the waggon, and did not know of their being taken in, until he got to Ware, and that the witness now against him (Marshall) was driving the waggon at the time. The turkies belonged to Mr. Pettingall, who identified them by a mark of worsted on their wings, and overtook the waggon before it got to London. Two men, named Bandy and Rowe, are the supposed thieves; but this is the first case tried here under the new Act. (3 Geo. 4th.) where the re-

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## THE PROCEEDINGS

- (1) The Editor welcomes the submission of articles on the history and archaeology of the County for publication in the *Proceedings*, but in order to avoid disappointment potential contributors are advised to write to the Editor, to enquire whether the subject is likely to be of interest to the Society, before submitting a final text. The Editor, if necessary with the advice of the editorial committee, reserves the right to refuse to publish any papers even when an earlier approval of the subject has been given.
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- (3) Illustrations must be high quality. They should not be more than twice the size intended for publication and they should be accompanied by a list of captions.
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Members might like to know that a considerable stock of back numbers of the *Proceedings* can be obtained from the Honorary Librarian, who also has copies of many publications in the Quarto and Octavo series for sale.

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