

time and an old servant might sleep by the kitchen range.

In the graveyard at All Saints Church, Sudbourne you will find, close to the east elevation, Richard's grave (died 1833 aged 82) and eight other handsome graves including that of his wife Elizabeth (died 1822 aged 60), their son James (died 1873) and his wife Sarah (died 1878). Beside them are the graves of their children Mary, William, Rosamund, Eliza and Elizabeth.

Cowton's later history

The Chaplins owned Cowton for nearly a hundred years until William Chaplin sold it to Mr Arthur Heywood in 1887. Heywood had purchased the Sudbourne estate the year before from Sir Richard Wallace. Later, much of the Sudbourne Hall Estate was broken up. In 1918. Knight Frank & Rutley's particulars included:

Lot 50 Cowton Farm, 116 acres rent £125. 8 shillings p.a.

Lot 51 Red House Farm, 114 acres rent £77 p.a.

Lot 52 Ferry Farm, 471 acres, rent £342. 15 shillings p.a.

Lot 53 Firs Farm, 209 acres, rent £138 p.a.

World War II meant radical change for Cowton. Most of Sudbourne became a military training area in 1942, requiring the total evacuation of all residents and no farming. British and American troops trained here using live ammunition, and shrapnel is still found. The last field going down to Chapmans Creek is still occasionally described as 'Tank Field'. Like the marshes at Boyton, will have been used for tactical training with tanks. There was supposedly a concealed park for tanks there – again paralleled by the concealed parking for tanks along Butley's Clump Road. Sudbourne people did not return until 1948.

When we bought Cowton in November 1995, a local informant volunteered that Churchill and Eisenhower had met there before the D Day landings in Normandy on 6 June 1944. Sadly, there is no evidence for this and in answer to my question of 25 September 1996, the Churchill Archives Centre replied, '*having studied Martin Gilbert's biography of Churchill and the*

chronology of events in the war years, I don't think that it would have been possible for the two of them to meet at all. Churchill was travelling for most of 1943 or in London, Chequers or Chartwell. Eisenhower meanwhile was in North Africa from where there is a fairly constant exchange of telegrams between him and Churchill.' However, war stories still appear. I recall a picture of a house in Melton under the headline '*Family home was secret war base in WWII*'. We are glad that the war left Cowton with the foundations and arches of what was a Nissen hut. Its low brick walls now surround a kitchen garden.

Diane Fulcher tells me that in 1948 Cowton, together with Poplar Farm, Red House Farm and Stanny Farm was bought by Henry Fulcher (1904-1982). It was farmed as one, a total of 960 acres including marsh. Thirteen men were employed and Alan Hilliard was Manager. He and his wife Judith lived at Red House Farm. One of the men, Harry Pipe, lived at Cowton. Through Judith Hilliard, I am hoping to hear news of his son, Robin Pipe and his sister, Helen.

Judith recalled that in the 1950s none of these employees had a car. Fortunately there was a shop on the corner of Sandy Lane in Iken which was also a post office. On Wednesdays there was a bus to Saxmundham returning at 5pm, and on Saturdays there was a bus to Ipswich. For entertainment and relaxation, there was the *Chequers* pub in Sudbourne.

Robert and Hannah Skepper rented Cowton from Henry Fulcher during the years 1968-1973 after buying Ferry Farm and building their new house. Our predecessors at Cowton were John and Marion Laurence who bought it from Henry Fulcher Ltd in 1982.

The future

The heading of this article included 'unanswered questions'. Resumed access to the Record Office may produce information on the earlier farmhouse and its likely date of build. There is no plan of the complex layout of the buildings and they merit interpretation by an architectural historian. It would be good to learn more of the part the Chaplin family, so well-known in the area, played in regard to All Saints Church, Sudbourne since so