

# SUDBROOKE HOLME



by HELEN SHARPE

My introduction to Sudbrooke was shortly before the First World War. As a small child, I was travelling by horse and cart to Dunhome, with my parents and sister, where the weekend was to be spent with my grandparents. On this occasion, instead of turning off the main road at Langworth, we continued to Sudbrooke where a right hand turn took us to Scotherne and subsequently Dunholme. The 15 mile journey was already becoming tedious, when suddenly, flanked by tall trees, the beautiful park gates and lodges of Sudbrooke Holme came into view. My curiosity was aroused! To any child a perfect fairy tale background was provided. In answer to my questions I was told that the estate belonged to Colonel Sibthorp. Being familiar with Hainton, Ranby and Market Stainton Halls, I was able to understand a little of what this meant. But sadly it was not possible to catch as much as a fleeting glimpse of the hall itself.

With what genuine pleasure it was then that, in January 1976, I received photographs of both hall and gardens. My desire to view, which had lain dormant for so many years, was realised. But before exploring the parklands and gracious dwelling (now alas no more) it would seem appropriate to search the past and examine the present in order to gain some insight into the village of Sudbrooke itself.

That in Sudbrooke some form of village life existed before Norman times would seem highly probable. The area was and is rich in streams, the Anglian word "broc" being pronounced and meaning brook. In Domesday Book 1086 it was recorded as Subroc, Holme, Sudbroc. In the Lincolnshire Domesday Survey 1116-18 it was Sudbroc, Holm and by 1824 it had assumed a spelling similar to that of today—Sudbrook, Sudbrook Holme.

From White's Directory (1842) we learn that Sudbrooke was a small parish of scattered houses about five miles east of Lincoln. It had 84 inhabitants and

about 1,000 acres of fertile land nearly all the property of Richard Ellison, Lord of the Manor of Scotherne. Included in the list of residents were Elizabeth Elvidge school mistress, Rev George Davies Kent curate, Samuel Pilley farmer and chief constable, Richard Settrington farmer, Francis Turner parish clerk and Thomas Wright gardener.

By the late 19th century a different Sudbrooke was emerging. Colonel Coningsby Charles Sibthorpe, residing at Sudbrooke Holme, was Lord of the Manor and chief land owner. Notable additions to his staff were C. T. Meyrick land steward and C. E. Terry landscape gardener. Two of his tenant farmers held land of 150 acres or more. For the villagers changes were taking place also. A taste of town life was now feasible. Transport to Lincoln on Tuesday, Friday and Saturday was provided by Henry Ormsby, carrier from Scotherne. And Langworth station, two miles east of the village, on the Hull and Lincoln branch of the Great Central Railway, offered an alternative service. The turnpike road from Lincoln to Horncastle was replaced by the "new" road, later to become the A158.

At the present time, even when the well designed "executive" dwellings on Wragby Road and St Edward's Drive are included, Sudbrooke is still a small village. Further developments, which may result in some more smaller houses, a shopping centre, a village hall and a Primary school, are under way. By the end of the century Sudbrooke as we know it may no longer exist, but doubtless many more people will have the enlarged experience of living in a modern house situated in a beautiful natural environment.

## CHURCH AND CHARITIES

As far back as the Norman conquest the church was an integral part of village life generally. In 1271 it is

recorded that Sudbrooke had a rector—one Robert Galle. An early church built of red brick was in use until 1860 when, requiring extensive repairs, it was rebuilt in stone as a memorial to Richard Ellison who had left £2,000 for this purpose. Situated amidst firs and yews, its simplicity and beauty are most impressive. Recently it was of interest to note that the only visible concession to the 20th century is strip lighting.

Designed in Norman style and having an aspidal chancel, nave, south porch and a western bell gable with one bell, it is chiefly a copy of the church of Steetley in Derbyshire. Both exterior and interior walls are enriched by Norman ornaments. The round arch of the doorway is decorated with 15 beak heads and each of the seven windows in the nave has a pair of heads. On the south side of the chancel are memorial windows to Mrs Ellison, widow of Richard Ellison. A memorial stone to Anne, late wife of William Beresford, who died in 1678 can be seen in the church where she is buried. A foliated capital near the plain font is the only survival of the ancient church.

The Ellison Trust Fund provided annually a sum of £20 for the poor of the parish. In 1876, under the will of Mrs Humphrey Waldo Sibthorp, £100 was left to the rector for distribution to the poor.

Long before the Education Act of 1870 which allowed regions to elect a School Board, impose an education rate and compel children to go to school, a generous Richard Ellison had provided (before 1842) a Dame's School for the instruction of the poor children of the village. By 1868 all children were able to attend Scotherne school which was supported by funds left for this purpose by the late Richard Ellison. A large part of the family fortune was derived from navigation charges on the Foss Dyke between Torksey and Lincoln.

A fine collection of water colours including works by Peter de Wint, a regular visitor to Sudbrooke Holme, was left to the nation by Richard Ellison. These were housed in the Victoria and Albert Museum with the proviso that they were not to be viewed on Sundays. In order to comply with these instructions, the pictures were fitted with blinds.

The ringing of the "Shrive" bell on Shrove Tuesday became known as "Pancake Bell", and to the day school scholars was a herald of good things to come. On hearing

it, the school closed for the day and the scholars marched down to Sudbrooke Holme where they received an orange from the Lady of the Manor. It is more than likely that a pancake would be served at mid-day, when the orange, if still available, would make certain a pleasant flavour.

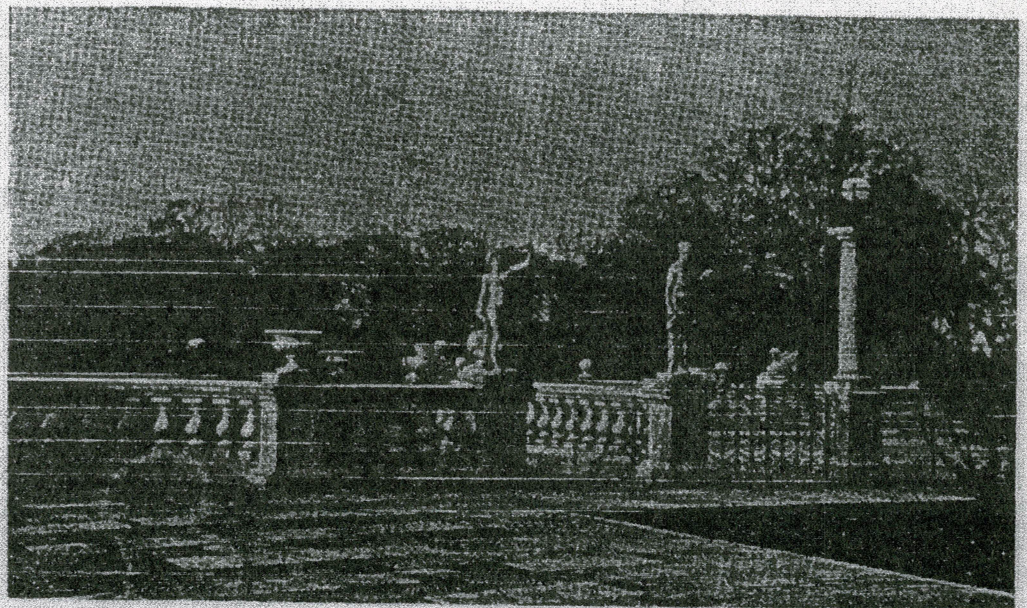
## SUDBROOKE HOLME

To some it may be sufficient to be reminded that Sudbrooke Holme was once the property of the Sibthorps whose family seat is at Canwick. Others may be interested to learn that in 1629 there was a large house at Holme and that by 1634 Christopher Beresford of Leadenham was the owner. His son William, in 1699 married Anne Ascogh whose marriage settlement was the property. In 1736 the estate was sold to Dame Elizabeth Bucksworth and by 1759 Richard Ellison of Thorne, Yorkshire became the owner. With the exception of the south front which was later extended, it was he who built the palatial residence "Sudbrooke Holme".

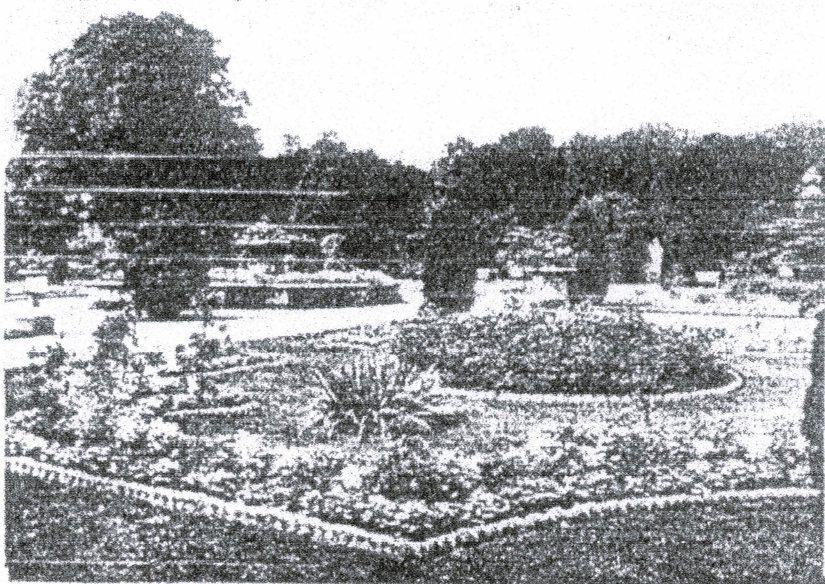
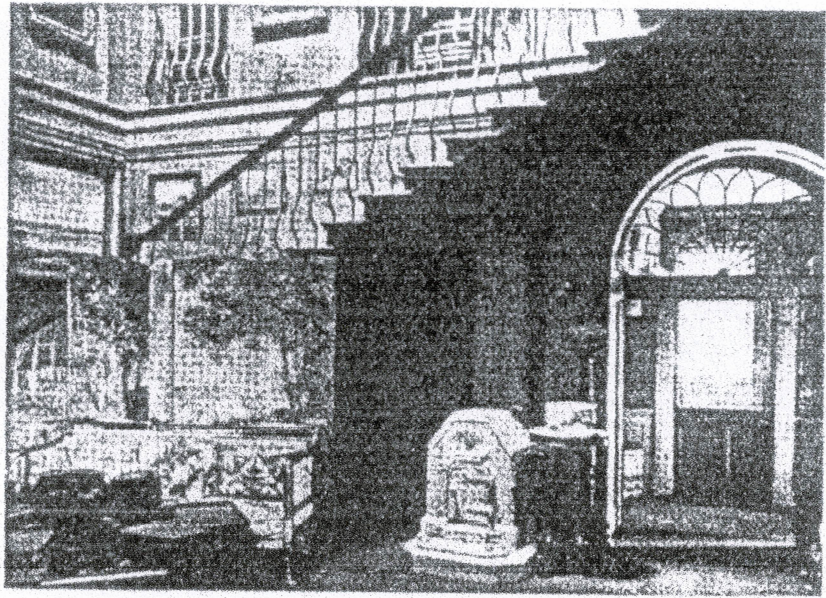
According to the Lincoln Date Book (at what must have been one of the weddings of the season) on 23rd July, 1777 Colonel Humphrey Sibthorp Esq., M.P. for Boston, married at Thorne Miss Susannah Ellison, a lady of the most amiable disposition, and possessed of a large fortune. Five children were born of this union, two of whom served the county in parliament and in the army. In 1804 Colonel Sibthorp assumed for himself and his heirs the additional name Waldo in grateful remembrance of his kinsmen. On the death of her father in 1859 the estate passed in part to Mrs Humphrey Waldo Sibthorp and her daughter Mary.

In 1877, Colonel Coningsby Charles Sibthorp (who had dropped the name Waldo) purchased the estate and it remained his property until 1919. Under his guidance the standard achieved by the Ellisons was more than maintained. In an atmosphere of much that was gracious and beautiful, a peaceful and happy life was possible for both master and man. But change was imminent. The First World War laid the axe to a way of life which was never to regain its ascendancy. In 1919 Colonel Sibthorp sold the estate and retired to the Dower House, Canwick, the effects being sold at a five day sale in March 1920. A few years later the hall

Statues on the terrace, with acetylene light on top of the column



Sudbrooke Holme:  
the Central Hall,  
with fanlight  
over the garden  
entrance



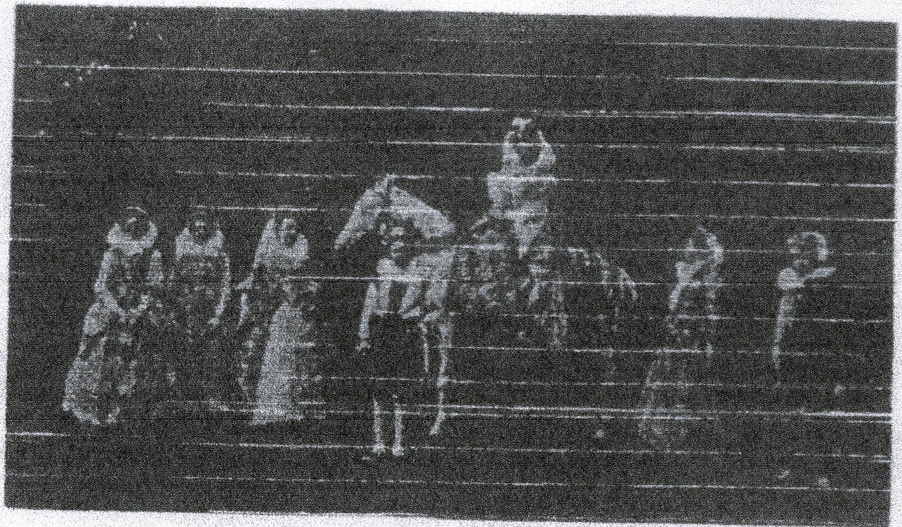
The Italian  
Garden

The upper lake  
and waterfall



The Grand  
Empire Pageant,  
July 1909

Queen Elizabeth and the Court Ladies (page boy was the son of C. E. Terry, the landscape gardener)



became "a heap of rubble", and was finally demolished in the mid 1920s.

At the present time the main entrance, with its wrought iron gates and stone posts bearing lions and the arms of the Subthorpe family, is still to be seen on the Wragby Road. Unfortunately owing to delapidation the gates no longer function and they are left open permanently. The lodges with their gabled roofs, mullioned windows and well kept gardens are a reminder of the previous resident owner. Stables and coach house, approached by a gravel path, are in use at the present time, but for motorised transport.

But let us leave the present, and approach by the long carriage drive which winds its way through woods and parklands, until it reaches the principal gates hung on imposing stone and brick columns, and then continue to the Mansion itself.

Built in 1780 in Georgian style, it was famous throughout the county. No expense had been spared in order to enrich its interior with ceilings, wall panels and mantelpieces in the Adam style. On the ground floor were housed valuable collections of Old English, Chinese and continental porcelain, old glass, pictures and Persian carpets - no name but a few. Here too was the library with its Adam bookcases and collection of books. Ample provision was made for entertaining and each of the 28 main bedrooms had floors and much of the woodwork in solid mahogany.

With an indoor and out door staff of 50 or more, employment was provided for men and women of Langworth, Scotherne and Sudbrooke. A "tied" cottage with many emoluments and wages of £1 per week was the general pattern for outside workers; those indoors received board residence, uniform and about £25 per annum. All the household staff was expected to attend Matins on Sunday when the women wore sober dresses and black straw bonnets, and the men dark suits and bowler hats.

#### THE LANDSCAPE GARDENS

According to April Cadthorpe, "the gardens were as splendid as any in the land". Credit is due to Mr C. E. Terry, who joined the staff in 1899 and was responsible for the extensive alterations, which occurred between 1903-1907. The high standard of workmanship was widely acclaimed. As an indication of their proficiency, gardeners seeking promotion liked to have two years' practical experience at Sudbrooke. Mrs Mary Hare, daughter of the late C. E. Terry, has in her possession plans of work carried out by her father.

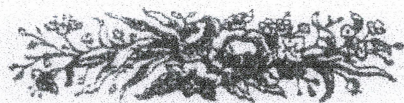
Frequently during the summer months the gardens were open to the public when the Primrose League or some charity benefitted. Attendance by the villagers was a foregone conclusion, and a number of Lincoln people availed themselves of the opportunity to visit the stately home. Those who could not afford transport-walked.

Enriched by the natural setting of the parkland and by the interest and support of Colonel Sibthorp, the coronations of King Edward VII and King George V were memorable occasions.

As at Hainton Hall, school treats were provided by the Lord of the Manor. Village children and those from surrounding districts, conveyed in farm carts or wagolettes, were able to disport themselves in the parklands where organised games were arranged. The tea prepared by the housekeeper made the occasion an unqualified success. Some scholars from Lincoln were entertained similarly. Skating parties for the villagers provided interesting and pleasurable occasions for all ages in the winter.

The Grand Empire Pageant of July 1909, which served as a reminder of an England of the past, was a magnificent event. Lavish costumes, accurate in detail, and the use of the natural surroundings were contributory to the splendid result. The subjects portrayed included the Signing of Magna Carta, Queen Elizabeth and Court Ladies, the Flight of Pocahontas and John Smith and Cromwell remonstrating with Gaiffir Oldacre. In order to accommodate the crowds careful arrangements were made. Mrs Mary Hare remembers watching both the erection of the stands and the pageant.

In conclusion I should like to thank Mr and Mrs S. Curtis, Mrs M. Hare and Mr and Mrs G. Thorratt for their untiring efforts in supplying information and illustrations for this article.



Next month:  
HOLBEACH