

HOXNE HERITAGE WALK

7. Heckfield Green.

Heckfield Green was an area in which flax was processed [heckled] for the production of coarse linen called drabbet. The wide open green lies between Cross Street and the hamlet of Chickering and parish of Denham. The lane near to the Village School is called Witton's Lane after the family who lived at Red House Farm.

In the summer of 2009 the Norfolk Archaeological Unit were excavating a site which Orwell Housing Association had obtained for a new housing development, since named Tudor Close. A series of ditches and gullies dating to the medieval period were uncovered, which probably represented old boundaries up to the roadway. These boundaries date from the 11th, 14th and 16th centuries and evidence points to the production of cereal crops and to metalworking.

A large number of pottery sherds were recovered from the ditched areas, along with a group of 11 silver coins dating from 1553-1568. The coins, (three groats, five sixpences and three shillings found as a group) were probably contained in a purse, which was lost and became covered over in a ditch.

The groats [four pence] belong to the reign of Queen Mary I [1553-1558]. One example is from the earlier part of her reign, whilst the others date from her marriage to Philip of Spain. The remaining eight coins belong to the reign of Queen Elizabeth I [1558-1603] and date from 1560-1568. The name Tudor Close refers to this find. In the old farm outbuildings opposite Red House Farm an old carrier's cart was found. This belonged to Amos Witton, who carried goods and passengers to and from Diss in Norfolk.

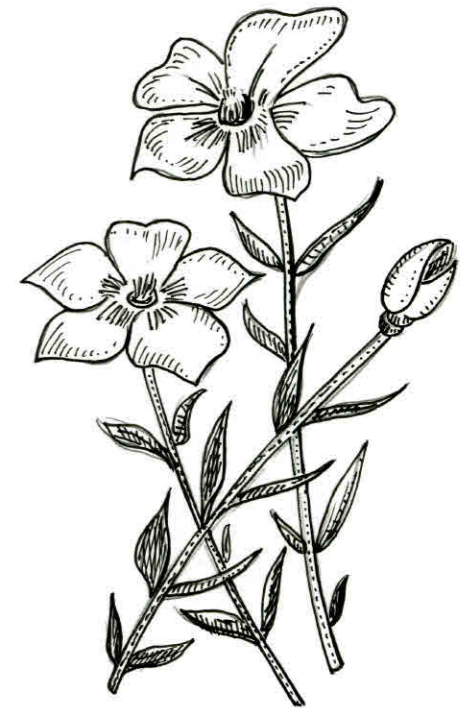


Tudor coins

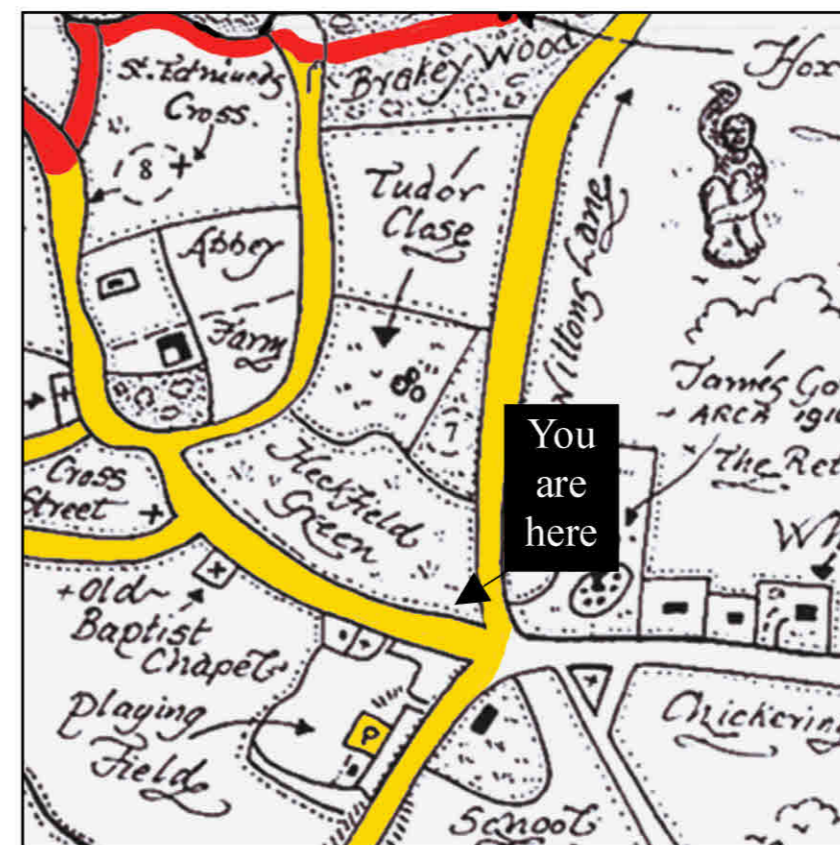


Heckfield Green has a number of thatched cottages and farmhouses. An open trestle post mill stood on the edge of Heckfield Green. The Jolly family were straw thatchers. The local author, artist, musician and teacher Leslie Norman lived at The Homestead, now Three Ponds. His father was the schoolmaster Henry Norman. The Retreat, formerly The Royal Oak ale house, was the home of James Henry Govier [1910-1974] the British artist and Swansea School painter, etcher and engraver.

Cross Street has numerous houses and cottages and at one time had a post office and shop, two garages and a bakery. The Old Wheelwrights was occupied by Aubrey Leggett [1895-1969] who, with his father Herbert, constructed and rebuilt the well shelter in Cross Street, the rails to Goldbrook Bridge, the well shelter in Low Street and the lych gate at the entrance to the church. The decorative brick walls are a feature of the village, being made at the Estate Brickworks in Hoxne during the 19th century.



Flax



Cross Street Well