



COPDOCK & WASHBROOK

A LOOK AT THE PARISHES IN PAST TIMES

BOOK 1

From the research notes of
the late Richard Graham Pipe

**This online edition is fondly dedicated to
Isobel Strickland
who has worked tirelessly
for the village environment of
Copdock and Washbrook**

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Introduction

My father, Richard Pipe, was born in 1907 and died in 2005. He lived for very many years at 'Dakons' in Washbrook Street. His great love was local history and he spent very many happy hours at the Suffolk Record Office researching the history of Copdock and Washbrook and the people who lived there. During his lifetime, he published several small books on Copdock and Washbrook including:

The Story of Washbrook Street
Copdock and Washbrook Walkabout
Copdock and Washbrook Foothpath Guide
Foothpaths in Local History
Copdock — A View of the Parish
The Survey of Copdock and Washbrook
A Short History of Washbrook Church

and was working on a further book when he died, leaving lots of notes.

With the valued assistance of Jean Austin, who lived in Copdock for many years and attended Copdock and Washbrook School in the 1950's and who also has a great love of local history, this booklet is a write up of many of my father's unpublished notes. There's still more of my father's notes to edit, so watch for future publications.

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Copdock and Washbrook

These civil and religious parishes were originally, in the eleventh century, manors in Belstead, which were owned by "absentee landlords". The lords of these had in all sixteen villein tenants, later to become 'copyholders'. Then there were three freemen who were tenants and two who held their own land, to which may be added a third, who is not described as a freeman, but held his land as a manor and almost certainly was free. So, in 1086 there were farms totalling nearly a thousand acres. The Washbrook church had 34 acres of free land, and there were two manors having shares in a church (one fourth each). There is some uncertainty about the 'shares' in churches, some maintaining that each share represents a whole church. We must assume that some land was allotted to each church for the maintenance of its priest.

In 1844 the acreage of Washbrook was given as 1414 and at the commencement of the twentieth century there were approximately 800 acres of arable, with small amounts of pasture. Amor Hall had most pasture, far more than any other farm. In effect, the farmers here utilised the land to the uttermost, turning every possible acre into arable. Today a different method continues the drive for maximum production. Trees and hedges have been eradicated, fields have been thrown together to facilitate the use of large machines. We now have few of the four-acre enclosures which were formed to accommodate sheep who provided the wool for our cloth. Those enclosures, and their boundary hedges, usually four or five hundred years old, are as much part of our inheritance as the old houses.

Coming now to the ownership of the land, it is not surprising that much of it was owned by Ipswich men. It was not uncommon for men who were born in the rural districts of England, and made money in business in the towns, to return to the countryside to spend some of their wealth in the purchase of land. In Copdock and Washbrook such men replaced the nobles who held land directly of the king. Washbrook had gone, in the first place, to a Norman abbey on the

death of the Countess of Albamarle. Later it became the source of income for a nunnery in Kent founded by Edward III. During the dissolution of the religious houses, Henry VILE gave the estate to his trusty 'Knight Harbinger and Chief Sewer' Sir Percyval Harte, who lived in Kent. (The Knight's duties consisted in going before the royal party when on a progress, to arrange for accommodation and feeding; he then had the task of seating the members of the party in order of precedence at table — the word 'sewer' coming from the Old Fench 'asseoir' to cause to sit). Thus, for as long as five hundred years, the land of Washbrook was managed by bailiffs and the profits sent to distant places.

The son of Sir Percyval Harte mortgaged the estate, but was unable to meet the demands for repayment and as a result of this, he sold it to a Suffolk man named Thomas Bedingfield, a successful lawyer who had already bought Copdock.

We now look somewhat more closely at the ownership of the land of Washbrook. When William, Duke of Normandy was safely crowned King of England, he made it abundantly clear that he owned all the land of his Kingdom and that lesser mortals held parts of it by his grace and favour. When we examine the findings of the Domesday surveyors we find that the various manors and estates were held by great people, who sub-let in turn to lesser people. In some cases these second-class persons sub-let again, to the most humble of the inhabitants — farmers, villeins and cottagers.

The demesne of the manor was always let to one farmer, with some others taking parts of it for short periods. We have details of the tenants in 1586 and these will be described later. For the moment we will see what we can know about the position in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

Early in the thirteenth century the family of de Belsted was active in the land business. This family seems to have originated in the

appointment of a bailiff at Amor Hall to look after the interests of the Abbot at Aumale. He was called John de Belsted, first in 1255 and again in 1364. This can hardly have been the same man, so we must assume that one of two things applied. Either the name was given automatically to the 'proctor' of the manor, whoever he might be, or the second man was perhaps a grandson of the first. The original appointee may have been a Norman monk, but a later John de Belsted could not have been one, for in 1314 'John de Belstede' and Isabella, his wife, were engaged in a deal involving land in several parishes and 'William de Belstede', a parson of 'Sprouton' was also named.

Another family who were almost continuously buying or exchanging land in Washbrook were the Costins. The elder John Costin was a miller at Layham, and his son (also John) took the lease of Sparkford Mill in 1295. Three years later, John junior obtained the lease of some land here for thirteen years. In 1299 John de Belsted exchanged land with Costin, who by that time seems to have acquired quite an estate. In the same year, William le Kac and his wife exchanged a piece of land on the Wenham Road, with part of a wood, for two pieces in the field called Sparkfordfeld in Hintlesham, and at the same time Richard Fullers and Lucy his wife joined in the game, letting Costin have other land in Sparkfordfeld in exchange for land in the croft of Berefeld. The impression is created that Costin was trying to consolidate his lands close to the mill.

In his England in the Eighteenth Century (Pelican History of England) Dr J H Plumb points out that the smallness of the population in that period made it easy for those who exercised political power, or were born to privilege, to know one another quite intimately.

It is a striking fact that many prominent families who are connected with the history of Copdock and Washbrook were related by marriage, or were closely connected by business or religious ties.

The local historian may be allowed a little light relief when reviewing the part played in the history of Copdock and Washbrook by East Anglian families. Obviously money was a factor but marriage also brought about a change of ownership of the Copdock Estate.

In 1489 Richard Doket willed his lands to Roger Rokewood of Euston, who later sold the property to William Spenser, the Ipswich merchant who was the MP for the town in the first Parliament of Henry VIII. Spenser's daughter Maryon married William Foster, who came from Shifnal in Shropshire. Their son Robert married Elizabeth Goldingham of Belstead, one of a family who had held that manor from the eleventh century until 1560.

The Rookwoods were noted for their eccentricities, as much as for their recusancy. One of them was imprisoned for that offence in 1578, while Ambrose Rookwood was convicted of complicity in the Gunpowder Plot and executed in 1606. It was possibly he who commissioned the building of Coldham Hall in 1575, although it is thought that his father Robert was responsible. The family home was at Stanningfield for three centuries before the plot which was intended to blow up the Palace of Westminster when James I and Parliament were there.

Other marriages which brought more distant families into our history included Brewse to Wingfield, Brewse to Moundford of Thetford. By a second marriage of Mary, relict of William Brewse, to Sir Clippesby Gawdy, the Gawdy family came to Little Wenham hall. They owned land in Copdock and Washbrook. Sir Bassingbourne Gawdy married Anne, the daughter of Sir Charles Framlingham of Crows Hall, Debenham. Gawdy owned many large flocks of sheep distributed widely over Suffolk when he lived at Crows Hall.

The Timperleys of Hintlesham were related to the Rookwoods by marriage, both families being Roman Catholic. In the seventeenth

century the Lord of Hintlesham was Nicholas Timperley IV, frequently fined for refusal to attend the Anglican Church. He borrowed money from Ipswich businessmen, among them Edmund Knappe.

Also by marriage, the Timperleys were related to the Bedingfields family, another Catholic family. Anthony Bedingfield was a noted Jesuit and also borrowed money from Knappe. A very old-established family, the Bedingfields had their home at Flemings Hall, founded by the Flemings, who gave their name to the manor before the reign of Henry III and continued to hold it until the middle of the fourteenth century, when Alice, the daughter of Peter le Fleming married a Bedingfield; the Bedingfields lived in the Hall until 1922.

A branch of the Bedingfield family was at Darsham, where the man who mattered a great deal to Copdock and Washbrook was born. Thomas Bedingfield was born in about 1593, he became a student at Gray's Inn in 1608 and was admitted to the Bar in 1615 and became a lawyer of national repute; later he was appointed Attorney-General of the Duchy of Lancaster and was knighted by Charles I. In spite of spending much of his life in London, he kept up the family home at Darsham.

As noted previously, Spenser's daughter Maryon married William Foster, a man who was called a 'furious zealot'. It was their grandson who brought about the loss of the lordship of the manor through his indebtedness. Part of this was caused by his recusancy, for repeated offences of which he was heavily fined. He borrowed money from Sir Thomas Bedingfield and as a result, the astute lawyer was able to buy Copdock for the trifling sum of £200. Two-thirds of the land of Amor Hall had been let to Henry Foster in 1635 for 41 years but when Sir Henry Harte put Amor Hall up for sale it was again Sir Thomas Bedingfield who acquired that manor for £4,900 in 1636. Bedingfield became the first man to own both manors, which became known as the Copdock Estate.

So, by the mid-seventeenth century, Washbrook — for the first time — was owned by an individual whose home was in Suffolk. A survey carried out in 1586 gives us invaluable information on the layout of the home farm and the names of the tenants who cultivated the fields. Elizabeth, the daughter of Sir Thomas Bedingfield, married William Grey of Merton in Norfolk. Their son, Thomas, inherited the estate of Sir Thomas Bedingfield (his grandfather). This Thomas became MP for Norfolk and married Elizabeth Windham. The Windhams lived at Felbrigg, near Cromer. They bought Felbrigg Hall from Sir Richard Palgrave and a close friendship continued between the two families for many years. One of the Palgraves presented a rector to Copdock. The Windhams were also acquainted with the Grey family of Merton. Elizabeth (1685-1758) married Thomas Grey, son of Elizabeth nee Bedingfield, and it was the son of Thomas and Elizabeth, William, who became a very successful lawyer and was created Baron Walsingham. He added 'de' to the surname, in accord with his elevation to the peerage. The Copdock Estate remained in the family until the middle of the nineteenth century.

The new owner was the Rev James Tooke-Hales-Tooke, who showed interest in the Estate and the welfare of his tenants, the first Lord of the Manor to do so, building new cottages, restoring the churches and in the end electing to be buried in Washbrook churchyard. He was rector of Scawby in Lincolnshire. Other members of the Hales-Tooke family succeeded to the estate but when the Copdock Estate was sold by auction in 1919 much of the land was bought by the East Suffolk County Council, who created smallholdings for about six farmers under the Small Holdings and Allotments Act of 1908. However, Amor Hall Farm was acquired by the Ipswich Industrial Co-operative Society, who farmed the land for more than thirty years. Fen Farm was for centuries considered to be a part of the Amor Hall property; towards the end of the twentieth century it was bought by an independent farmer.

Washbrook

Washbrook is a rather uncommon name for a parish. Benjamin Pitts Capper, in his Topographical Dictionary published in 1808 gives one other — a hamlet in the parish of Winston in Gloucestershire; he also mentions a river with this name in Yorkshire.

Although Copdock is usually shown on maps, it is unlikely that Washbrook will be included. This may, at least in part, be due to the fact that Copdock lay along the original London Road while Washbrook was largely in a valley hidden from view. Another feature having some effect is that Washbrook was never a nucleated village, its housing being scattered over an area measuring about one mile East to West and three quarters of a mile North to South.

No famous people have claimed Washbrook as their birthplace, nor have any events occurred here which would have attracted the attention of national historians. Probably the most exciting event which the local people would have related for several generations was the passage of Queen Elizabeth I along Washbrook Street on her way from Ipswich to Hadleigh in 1561. At that time the way from Ipswich to Hadleigh was from the London Road where it meets Sprites Lane (now Scrivener Drive) and Poplar Lane (now superseded by the present Hadleigh road) along Poplar Lane to its junction with the road to Sproughton (A1113, previously A1100) crossing this to enter Pigeons Lane and Washbrook Street, which ended in Hintlesham, reaching the Hadleigh Road at Thorpe's Hill.

Boundary between Copdock and Washbrook

When the survey for the commutation of the tithes was carried out for Copdock and Washbrook, there was disagreement about where the actual boundary between the two parishes was and a specific survey was undertaken and an Award made to clarify the boundary:

Award under the provisions of the Tithe Commutation Act 1837.
Geo Chapman, Land Surveyor, of Arundel Street, Westminster
John Ranson of Sproughton, farmer.

Whereas by Article of Agreement indented and made in 1837 between the Rt Hon and Rev Thomas, Baron Walsingham, the Hon Thos de Grey, Richard Bruce, George Anthony Alderton, James Josselyn, John Baker, William Trent, Mary Syer and the Hon and Rev Frederick de Grey, on the one part, and the said Thomas, Baron Walsingham, Thomas de Grey, Mary Syer, John Baker, James Josselyn, William Trent, George Anthony Alderton, Richard Bruce and Robert Hearn and the said Frederick de Grey of the other part. (Reference to a meeting of the respective landowners and tithe owners whose interest in the land and tithes is not less than two-thirds of the land subject to tithes and two-thirds of the tithes. There being disagreement about the Parish Boundary, the making and executing of the Agreement was hindered, so the survey of the boundary was put in hand. Chapman for Copdock, Ranson for Washbrook.)

Beginning in Mr Cotton's Long Fen, where the run of water empties itself into the river, opposite Mill Meadow — the middle arch of the bridge divides the two parishes. Over the bridge to the watercourse running down by the side of the road in Mr Cotton's Bridge Meadow. By the said watercourse through Stackyard Meadow and across the driftway leading to Amor Hall. Up the Street and across the road leading to Wenham. Through the garden of Geo Sheppard, leaving his house on your left in Copdock. Up to where the watercourse runs out of Mrs Syer's fen into Monuments (Mrs Syer), up there by the ditch against the hills to the corner against Nine Acres, right along by the fence of Nine Acres to the corner of the road, turn left up the middle of the road to New Hall Farm, right down the road to the corner of Hunger Field, to the corner of Mr Josselyn's Root Hill.

Right, over the fence into Hunger, by the side of the fence against Root Hill and (formerly Hilly Field) turn left into New Field down by late Hill Field into Mr Josselyn's Best Fen, straight across to the fence against the driftway. Go over into the driftway by the gate next the Cottages belonging to Mr Cotton, up Hollow Road about 4 rods beyond the gate into Mr Josselyn's Ten Acres, across to a post standing in Church Lane.

Over into the lane, to the left along the middle thereof to the gate going into Bush Lands, occupied by Jas. Gentry (Lord Walsingham), go in at the gate and up by the side of the fence against Copdock Piece to the corner, over the fence there into Copdock Piece, along the top thereof to the corner of the said field into Twopenny, keep along the top of twopenny to the corner, over into Mr Trent's Pear Pightle, turn to the right by the side of the fence until you get opposite to the upper corner of Middle Pightle, then turn across Pea Pightle to the said corner, over into Middle Pightle up by the side of the fence by Mr Gentry's field (Lord Walsingham) to the corner, turn to the right over into Pond Field keeping by the side of the fence of Mr Gentry's Woodclose Field (Lord Walsingham) and round to the corner against a little piece formerly The Pit, over the fence into the said Little Piece, keeping round it against Woodclose Field into the road, then turn to the left along the middle of the road (Church Lane) to the pond of Mr Trent's premises, over the pond into the Orchard, leaving the yards, house and premises of Mr Trent on your right in Washbrook. Along the Orchard into Little Pond Pasture by the side of the fence against Mr Gentry's Threepenny Field (Lord Walsingham) into Middle Pightle Twopenny. Go down by the fence against Threepence into Church Lane and turn right along the lane to the corner of Saxon's Lane, over the fence into Mr Chamberlain's field and keep by the side of the fence against Saxon's Lane until you come opposite to the corner of Mrs Syer's Saxon Field, then cross over the lane into that field at the corner against Eight Acres, go along by the side of the fence against Eight Acres about 30 rods, then turn to the left and go straight across

by the side against Threepenny, over into Pear Pightle, turn there into Saxon Field to the fence against the corner of Mrs Syer's cottage garden, late Kerry's, against Saxon's Pasture Piece, go over there into Saxon's Pasture keeping by the side of the fence against the cottage garden to the corner thereof. Over into the little piece of pasture opposite the house and barn.

Kerry's Four Acres. Mr Chamberlain's Round Hole. A timber oak marked 'x' on map. Over into the road to the post standing against the pond. Tabour's Garden. Go over there into Mr Syer's Kerry's Four Acres and go along round by the fence of Tabour's Garden (leaving all Tabour's premises in Copdock).

Over the road and into Mr Cole's field, occupied by Mr Chamberlain. Along the fence by Claypits, round by the top of Claypits and round the little grove, all on your right, round to the left by the fence against John Cole's field, turn right on the road, cross over into Mr Alderton's Osbornes Field at the corner, in against Pond Field go up Osbornes by the side of Pond Field fence to the corner by the Waldingfield Charity Lane, go over the corner into Pond Field and keep by the side of the fence against the said Charity land into Home Pightle, along the fence to the watercourse, over into Moated Field, turn left by the watercourse ditch down to the pond by Mr Alderton's premises. Round the pond and by the watercourse into the road, leaving all Mr Alderton's premises in Copdock.

Turn right on to the turnpike, go up the middle of the road to the gate leading into Mr Martin's Saints Field (Lord Walsingham), go in at the gate and along by the side of the fence against the Seven Acres to the corner, into Twelve Acres, across there to a post upon the bank against Smallermore Lane opposite the gate leading into Mr Josselyn's Smallermore Field. Go in at the gate and keep along by the side of the fence into the Eight Acres, along the fence against Mr Martin's Little Field (Lord Walsingham) to the corner, over into Mr Martin's Four Acres (Lord Walsingham) up by the side of the fence

against Mr Josselyn's field (Mr Deane) formerly Cuthbert's Grove; over into Upper Four Acres, along there by the corner by Long Nine Acres to where the Capel bounds come, and where are the exterior bounds of the two parishes.

Population Changes

The population of England grew apace after the Conquest; it became politically desirable and economically possible to form new parishes, each capable of supporting a priest. The Manor of Great Belstead remained intact, but the parish took the name which had been adopted by the residents, derived from their occupation in the making of woollen cloth, of Washbrook.

In the beginning, Washbrook had a population of about 130 men, women and children. Although naturally there were always a few immigrants, the increase in population which slowly developed during several centuries was almost entirely due to improvements in diet and living conditions. Had the figures been recorded, as they have been since 1801, they would probably have reflected accurately the fluctuating prosperity of a rural population — years of good and bad harvests, epidemics of disease among both animals and humans, wars and civil disorder, all would be followed by some loss of life or diminished reproduction.

Before the Norman Conquest, the estate of Aelfric of Wenham carried 12 tenants. By 1327, seventeen householders were recorded. We have no evidence of the local impact of the epidemics of plague which afflicted the English people during the fourteenth century — not even of the worst, the so-called Black Death. The lack of information suggests that we may have been among the fortunate communities who suffered little.

In 1568, the fifteen names of the principal householders again show little change.

The first significant rise in both population and prosperity is shown by the Hearth Tax return of 1674. Of twenty-eight houses (two of them vacant) ten had but one hearth, but there were six with five or more hearths, indicating a number of prosperous yeomen who had built substantial houses, probably during the preceding century. A few of those houses are still standing, and date from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the majority being of the earlier period.

In the eighteenth century, similar partial lists of residents give us very little idea of the total number and the rental of 1678 is matched by one in 1766 which accompanies an agreement between the Rev Richard Bullock and the 'occupiers' as to tithe payments in cash instead of kind. There were fourteen of them. A very useful table of inhabitants in 1785 comes as close as any to showing the number of families at the time; this shows that there were 213 men, women and children here, and a particularly useful feature of this list is that the occupations of many of the men are given. Headed by Mr Hallum, the curate, is a short list of the trades people and farmers. Peter Dorseter, the blacksmith, had four in the family. Samuel Norfolk was the landlord of the White Elm and his 'family' numbered seven, but we may suppose that some of these were servants living in. The cooper was appropriately named John Cooper, with one child. The only shoemaker at that time was James Waspe (we know that later there were two).

The village shop was kept by James Shulver, with four in the family. Thomas Bickmore was the wheelwright, probably using the shop which in 1741 John Marven bequeathed to his two sons — it stood at the corner of Mill Lane. The mill was worked by John Roberts and his nine strong household almost certainly included one or more employees; he might well have had several children.

The Parish Registers during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries record the baptism of no more than six infants, on average, each year. It was not until after 1800 that the annual figure rose to twelve.

In 1797 there was a real danger of an invasion from France, at a time when the Army and Navy were in a deplorable state. However, a number of Naval victories reduced the danger of invasion in the Autumn of that year. The next few years were notable for the exploits of Horatio Nelson, but a peace treaty with France was short-lived. The first years of the new century were marked by the war against Napoleon, which had disastrous effects on the rural population.

The war caused prices to rise and wages to stagnate and there was a real danger of starvation among the rural poor in many parts of England. The regular diet of the working man was replaced by bread. If work was not available in the parish, the Law of Settlement made it difficult for a labourer to move about seeking a job.

In 1795 the Magistrates in Berkshire met at a northern suburb of Newbury called Speenhamland. They intended to introduce a fixed minimum wage, related to the price of bread, for the County. However, it was only too obvious that the farmers would resist such a plan and an alternative was adopted. The Magistrates were persuaded to supplement wages out of the rates and this system of averting extreme poverty was adopted widely through the Country as time went by. The 'Speenhamland Act' as it was commonly called, provided a dole for 'every poor and industrious person' from the parish, with an addition for each member of his family, the payment varying with the price of bread. This system enabled the large employer to avoid paying a living wage, while it placed a burden on independent ratepayers and forced the working man to become a pauper.

Bastardy was a problem which affected rural society relatively little in the sixteenth century and even later, but a number of changes led to aggravation of the problem from about the middle of the eighteenth century. Enclosure was one of the causes in many parts of the country, while the practice of demolishing cottages to force the poor out of the parish led to overcrowding and a relaxation of the moral

code which had earlier guided society. The Church had maintained that illegitimate children could be legitimised by the marriage of the parents, provided that they were free to marry at the time of the birth of the child; however, Common Law regarded only children born in wedlock as legitimate.

The effect of this situation on Washbrook can be gauged (if only partially) from the Parish Registers. In the half-century between 1750 and 1800 the average number of children baptised who had only the mother's name given as the parent was one in four years. In the following period, there was a startling increase — fortytwo baptised between 1800 and 1850 — only one of these was born in the Tattingstone House of Industry.

The Minutes of the House (Union Workhouse) at Tattingstone contain some details which suggest the prevalence of bastardy in Samford at the end of the eighteenth century and the whole of the nineteenth. In 1790 Thomas Cole (who was at Green Farm, Washbrook) paid out £1 16s 6d on account of Bastardy. Every mother of an illegitimate child was paid one shilling each week for its upkeep, for the first seven years. Strenuous efforts were made to 'capture' the putative fathers of these children — forced marriage was the objective. In 1775 it was ordered that Mr Hobart of Washbrook be paid £5 11 s 0d for the apprehending and marrying of Richard Scott and removing him to Bromley, Essex.

Taken together, the Speenhamland system, low wages and the shortage of housing, it is remarkable that more children were not born out of wedlock. It must be remembered that many were, who were taken to be the children of the 'granny', who had perhaps five or six daughters, among whom it would be taken as normal that one or another would be brought to bed of a child 'on the wrong side of the blanket'. We have recorded instances of this. Here we are usually dealing with a couple 'going steady' who simply did not see any prospect of marriage.

This would have been the case of Sarah Chaplin, who boldly Christened her son Robert Cole Chaplin — shortly after the baptism, she married Robert Cole. Naturally some girls were unwise, to say the least. In 1811 Elizabeth Sparkes called her son William Grimwood. The probably father was William Grimwood, baptised at Washbrook in 1790 (son of Thomas and Sarah Grimwood) but there were also two married men in the parish called Grimwood (William's father Thomas, born 1754 and by this time married to his second wife, Caroline, and Robert, born 1786 and William's brother, and married since 1808 to his wife Mary, nee Pead); we know not whether the putative father was able to give her any financial assistance — and William Grimwood (if he was the father) didn't make an 'honest woman' of her (but married Mary Ann Twaits at Belstead in 1818).

The majority of unmarried mothers seem to have assumed that their children must carry their mother's surname, with or without the attribution to a putative father contained in a Christian name. There was, of course, no legal reason for this assumption. Perhaps Mary Ann Parsons was well-advised, or was wiser than she knew, when she called her son George Charles Goldsmith, omitting her own name.

Perhaps merely by the accident or scarcity of written evidence, we know of few women who consorted with a number of men. Caroline Grimwood bore three children between 1826 and 1831. She was no wide-eyed teenager, either, being 25 years old on the first occasion. It seems to have been a family weakness, as her mother had a child out of wedlock before she married 45 year old widower Thomas Grimwood in 1799 at Sproughton, and Caroline's sister (Sarah born 1808) 'fell' in 1827 at the age of 19; another sister, Amy, (born 1819) 'fell' and took her son to be baptised and dubbed 'base' in 1847 when she was 28.

At the time of the first National Census in 1801, Washbrook's population was just under 280. In 1810, there began a steep rise which lasted until the middle of the century, by which time we

boasted a population of well over 500. Although every parish showed some increase during the period 1800-1850 due to improvements in diet, medical care and housing conditions, Washbrook was remarkable for the amount of that increase. This rapid growth created a severe shortage of accommodation — overcrowding was common, while a number of primitive hovels sprang up to cope with the growing number of families. It is clear that insufficient building was being promoted to deal with the situation. This may have been in part the result of the policy of the Lord of the Manor, for comparatively little of the land was freehold. After the peak of the population increase had been passed, there was a change of ownership, following which a number of new brick-and-tile cottages were built; this change coincided with the disappearance of about a dozen houses and cottages, most of which must have been very old and semi-derelict.

A gazetteer of 1808 states that Washbrook had 278 inhabitants living in its 42 houses. The Tithe commutation Survey shows that in 1838 there were 55 houses and cottages, in which were some 500 people.

With an average density of ten persons per dwelling it is not surprising that some irregularities took place. It was inevitable that living conditions should deteriorate. The numbers of children and women of child-bearing age who died premature deaths is some indication; from 1800 to 1829 there were only two or three interments of women under 40 years of age, but between 1830 and 1850 the number rose to eleven.

The housing conditions may be compared with those recorded by the Census of 1961; the population was 368 and the number of private households 118, all living in structurally separate dwellings providing more than one room for every individual (or to quote the official figure, the number of persons per room was 0.66).

The Parish Registers disclose that of the marriages solemnised between 1801 and 1851 only 39 were blessed with children, while 49 apparently produced none. Certainly these statistics are unreliable; a number of reasons can be adduced to account for the absence of baptisms relating to those couples. They very likely left the parish or they may have preferred not to have their children baptised. There are a few instances in the Registers of adults being baptised and of a number of children being christened at the same time.

The general tendency was for few births at the beginning of the century, the numbers increasing towards the middle and the rate of infant mortality declined towards the end of the half-century; perhaps it might be expected that large families would have suffered these losses more than small ones. Certainly, of those recorded as being baptised between 1800 and 1850, the largest family was that of Isaac and Ann Chisnell — fourteen children were born to them between 1823 and 1849 and of these, seven died either in infancy or before the age of three years.

In spite of the general opinion that improvements in living conditions and medical care combined to prolong the lives of the people during this period, it happened that four of Ann's children died after 1839. This may be attributed to failing health of the parents, especially of the mother, who bore eleven children in fifteen years. The same cannot, however, be the cause of her first three babies dying prematurely — the first born after two years and the two following in the year of their respective births.

Prominent Parishioners in 1844 (Copdock)

John Aldridch, gent,
James Bishop, parish clerk Robert Cook,
blacksmith
John Daldry, shoemaker
Hon & Rev Frederick de Grey Lt Gen Sir Samuel
Trevor William Mumford Jay
James Josselyn
George King, wheelwright William Roberts,
corn miller John Marven, carrier to Ipswich
George Shepherd, shoemaker William Woods,
schoolmaster Thomas Bickmore, farmer
Rod Bruce, farmer
James Chamberlain, farmer (Mace Green)
John Ranson, farmer
John Cook, farmer
Mrs Mary Syer, farmer (New Hall)
Charles Fryer Woodward, farmer (Copdock Hall)

Prominent Parishioners in 1844 (Washbrook)

Thomas Garwood, shopkeeper
Robert Hearn, maltster and vict The Swan
Daniel Kerridge, registrar and relieving officer
John Raw, gent
John Watcham, painter/glazier Frederick Wright,
joiner
Herbert Cotton , farmer (Amor Hall) John
Daking, farmer
William Trent, farmer
John & Isaac Game, farmers (Birch House)
James Gentry, farmer (Washbrook Green)
John Lott, farmer (Rookery)