The Landmark Trust

FRESTON TOWER

History Album

No burgess on his wedding day

Which falls in whitethorn merry May
Shall happy be in house or bower
Who does not visit Freston Tower
- Trad. rhyme

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April 2004

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FRESTON TOWER BASIC DETAILS

Built:	**1578/9**
Built by:	**Thomas Gooding, Ipswich merchant**
Listed:	**Grade II***
Acquired by Landmark:	**1999, by deed of gift from Mrs Claire Hunt**
Opened as a Landmark:	**May 2004**
Grants:	**Heritage Lottery Fund, English Heritage**
Architect:	**John Woodcock of Richard Griffiths Architects**
Contractors:	**Reades of Aldeburgh**
- Site foreman:	**Henry Mann**
- Plasterer:	**Tim Hambling**
- Carpenter:	**Andrew Dennis**
Structural Engineer:	**Brian Morton & Edward Morton of The Morton Partnership Ltd.**
Work to Pinnacles:	**DJT Steel & Cladding Ltd.**
Building Analyst:	**Bill Wilson of Wilson Compton Associates**

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Photograph of Freston Tower by Edwin Smith, *c.* 1960. The figure is probably Lenny Spriggs, gamekeeper for the estate at the time.

SUMMARY

> 'Upon the banks of the beautiful river Orwell, has stood for centuries, and still stands, Freston Tower. Every sailor belonging to the port of Ipswich knows it well; every traveller in the county of Suffolk, who has any love for the tranquil in nature, must have noticed, if he has sailed from Ipswich to Harwich, this picturesque object towering above the trees, and looking upon the widest expanse of water which the river scene affords.
>
> Thousands of conjectures have been formed as to its origin and use. After many years of promised hope to unravel the mystery, the present work will afford an entertaining and instructive record of its origin.'[1]

Freston Tower is a landmark in two senses. Mrs Claire Hunt gave it to the Landmark Trust in 1999 so that many people, rather than one private owner, could enjoy her holiday retreat. It is also a conspicuous landmark: a six-storey Elizabethan brick tower on the south bank of the River Orwell, which lies three and half miles from Ipswich, the county town of Suffolk.

Dendrochronology has enabled us to date the tower to 1579 or very soon after. Thus technology has at last settled the debate about who built the tower and when they did so. In 1579 the owner was Thomas Gooding, an exceptionally wealthy mercer (or supplier of fine cloths) and Ipswich dignitary, who owned houses in Ipswich, but at that time, lived mainly at Freston Hall, the house adjacent to the Tower. He was buried in the chancel in the parish church, and his will of 1595 mentions tapestries, velvets, silks and 'armour as well for horsemen as footemen', so he was a man aware of his own importance. He bought the manor of Freston from the Latymer family in 1553, but why did he wait 26 years before building the tower?

The *raison d'etre* for the tower was conspicuous display: an accepted means to command respect for any Tudor gentleman. So perhaps one clue lies in the fact that in 1576 Gooding was granted arms: six red lion heads, separated by a horizontal red bar on a yellow ground. The tower would have provided the perfect vehicle to proclaim his new status, with its indent for a shield on the roof, and the two panels, possibly used for heraldic display on the south side. He may also have wished to impress Queen Elizabeth, who visited Ipswich in August 1579 and probably sailed down the Orwell, passing the new tower to starboard on her way to Harwich. Gooding may have used the tower as a look out for his ships, although by 1579 he was an elderly man and his fortune was truly made. Perhaps another reason for building the tower was to celebrate the birth of his grandson, Thomas Gooding, who finally ensured the succession of the Gooding family.

By the mid 1700s, Freston had been acquired by the Wright family, then sold to the Thurstons and Tarvers. Charles Berners bought it in 1795 and in 1937 it was sold with the rest of the Berners estate to Oxford University. Mr and Mrs Hunt bought it as a holiday home in 1962. In 1999, Claire Hunt gave the tower to the Landmark Trust so that, in her words, 'lots of people can enjoy a building where I have been very happy'.[2]

[1] The preface from *Freston Tower; or, The Early Days of Cardinal Wolsey,* by The Rev. Richard Cobbold, London, 1850

[2] Mrs Hunt lived to see FrestonTower open as a Landmark but passed away in 2005.

RESTORATION BY THE LANDMARK TRUST

The tower had been well cared for by Mrs Hunt over the years but still needed a considerable amount of work to make it into a Landmark. The entire tower was scaffolded for almost a year to repair the exterior. The brickwork required light repointing in many areas, using lime rather than cement based mortar. Originally the brick mullions and surrounds of the windows were rendered to resemble stone - a building material that is so lacking in East Anglia - and this decorative finish has been reinstated, using old photos for evidence.

The original windows were lost long ago and we have installed new leaded lights in bronze casements to recapture the glitter the tower would have had in Elizabethan times. The two plaques on either side of the fourth floor window on the south side may once have held Thomas Gooding's coat of arms. The lead roof was still in good condition, but structural repairs were needed to the pinnacles, the top of the staircase turret and to the arcaded parapet. We have replaced the crenellations to the stair turret, basing the work on early photographs.

Inside, the arrangement of the accommodation is as follows: the top floor, which has the grandest windows and best views, is the sitting room. Below that is a double bedroom then a twin bedroom, then a bathroom and separate loo, then the kitchen, and finally the hallway on the ground floor. The kitchen, bathroom and all services have been renewed. The timber floors have been repaired, and the missing ceilings renewed with traditional lime plaster.

Freston Tower has been returned to its original splendour from the outside and is probably more comfortable than it has ever been on the inside. More than four centuries after it was built, it will continue to stand sentinel over the Orwell estuary as proudly as ever.

EARLY HISTORY OF FRESTON MANOR AND THE LATYMER FAMILY

Freston means the tun, the farm or place of the Frisians, the Germanic people from Frisia, now part of the modern Netherlands. They formed part of the mix of Germanic peoples, known as the Anglo-Saxons. According to W.A. Copinger's *Manors of Suffolk*, the manor of Freston was held by Robert, son of Wimarc, in Saxon times. There was a church, 40 pigs, 140 sheep and 24 villeins. In 1086 Freston was held by Richard, the son of the immensely powerful Earl Gilbert de Clare, and the church of St Peter was on its present site. By 1234 in the reign of Henry III the manor was held by Philip de Freston, an Ipswich burgess. From 1304, it passed through the hands of the de Freston, de Holbrook and de Woolverstone families. When Thomas Woolverstone died in 1458, the manor passed to his daughter and heiress, Elizabeth. She married as her first husband, William Latymer, gent., who probably came from the parish of St Mary Stoke in Ipswich and died in 1480. Their son, William, was Lord of the Manor in 1524 and was one of the Commissioners for the Hundred of Samford. His name appears first among the fifteen names listed for the Manor of Freston in the Subsidy Return of 1524 and his goods were valued at £40.

The Latymer family probably lived in the house thought to have been built in the 15th century, next to the later tower. William Latymer married Anne Bocking and died in 1529. Their third son, another William, became Dean of Peterborough. It was the Dean's son, Edward, official of the Court of Wards and Liveries, whose will dated 16th March, 1624, left provision for the foundation of the Latymer schools of Hammersmith and Edmonton.

The Dean's eldest brother, Edward, married Margaret Thwaits of Manningtree, and when he died on 20th May, 1541, was the last Latymer to be buried in the church at Freston, where the family coat of arms is still in one of the nave windows. (There is an inexplicable mistake in that the dexter chief contains a sexfoil instead of a cinquefoil.) In 1547 the third Duke of Norfolk held the manor while imprisoned in the Tower of London, and by 1550 Christopher Latymer was once again Lord of the Manor. In 1553, the year of Queen Mary's accession to

the throne, Christopher Latymer sold Freston manor to Thomas Gooding, the second son of Matthew Gooding of Blaxhall.

THOMAS GOODING, BUILDER OF FRESTON TOWER

The sale was completed at Easter 1553, but the details of the transaction were disputed. Professor Diarmaid MacCulloch has thrown light on a Chancery case between Christopher Latymer and Thomas Gooding, which ran from 1556 until 1558. In the lawsuit, Gooding said that the sale price of £1,190 was to be paid in instalments. He claimed that he had satisfied the conditions of the agreement and lent Christopher a sum of money. This suggests that this was not in fact meant to be an ordinary sale, but a form of mortgage, and Gooding did Latymer many other favours. Then he found that Christopher had brought an action of debt. Christopher's answer was that part of the agreement was that he could, within eight years of 1553, fell 40 of the best oaks in Freston Wood, and that two months after the indentures, Gooding should make him a lease of the manor of Freston for £20 a year for two years. He maintained that Gooding then cut the oaks himself and did not make the lease. Finally, however, Gooding took away a bill of respite of payment against the defendant's will and Gooding's replications clained he had performed all covenants, apart from not paying £100 payable in he last October, which he retained by Latymer's consent. He denied carrying away any of the 40 oaks, or refusing to make a lease.

It seems that Gooding was intending major construction work: perhaps he sealed his triumph over Latymer by rebuilding the manor house, Freston Hall. After its sale in 1976, the house next to the tower, which has been divided into several dwellings, was restored and a large open fireplace was revealed in the oldest part, within the stepped gable with diaper work to the south (work strikingly similar to that of the tower itself). In this wing, timber-framing was set on brick walls up to the first floor, (as at Fleming's Hall, Bedingfield c1586) with wattle and daub partitions inside and the roof was constructed with rafters pegged in pairs. The walls were remarkably plain but if they were built by Gooding, as a prosperous mercer (a supplier of fine and costly cloths), he would have covered

them with hangings. Certainly, he mentions 'one large covering of tapestry work, a carpet of tapestry' and 'one hanging of tapestry' in his will, as well as chairs with red velvet, yellow satin and silk coverings.

We do not know the year of Thomas Gooding's birth but when he wrote his will on 10th April, 1595, he considers 'the many years I have already spent in this world' and when he died in October that year, his son and heir, Robert, was 'sixty years and upwards'. Robert was therefore probably born between 1530 and 1535. Since Thomas had a daughter by an earlier marriage, he was probably born between 1505 and 1510, in the riverside village of Blaxhall, on the Alde between Aldeburgh and Wickham Market. His first wife, the daughter of Robert Harlwin, came from the neighbouring parish of Campsey Ash and by her he had one daughter, Thomasine. Gooding's second wife, Dorothy, gave him two sons, Robert and Thomas, and two daughters, Alice and Dorothy, all of whom were generously provided for in their father's will.

By the 1550s, Thomas Gooding was taking an active part in the corporation of Ipswich. The town had become a borough under King John in 1200. The privileges of the royal charter meant that within the Liberty of Ipswich, free men could trade, and sell and develop property without outside interference, thus allowing the town to become economically and socially self-sufficient. Ipswich was run by twenty four councillors, and twelve portmen (or aldermen), six of whom were Justices of the Peace, with two portmen acting as joint mayors or bailiffs for one year. According to Nathaniel Bacon's *Annals of Ipswich*, Gooding was elected bailiff from 1557-8, and 1560-1, at the annual elections on 8th September in the Guildhall. He was, therefore, a powerful merchant in one of England's most prosperous ports.

The Liberty of Ipswich included control of the River Orwell as far as the open sea at Landguard Point. With its navigable estuary and easy access to the northern ports of the continent, Ipswich was able to vie with Bristol, Exeter and Southampton. In the third quarter of the sixteenth century there were 179 ships

registered at Ipswich, putting it second in national importance to Yarmouth, where there were 193 ships.

The prosperity of the town was based on the wool trade, which reached its peak in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Initially, raw cloth was exported to the weavers on the continent, but as the home industry developed, finished cloth was despatched through the port of Ipswich from famous cloth villages, such as Lavenham, Long Melford, Kersey and Lindsey.

Ipswich had two centres. International trade centred round the parishes of St Clement's and St Mary Quay and St Peter's, by the docks. Ships sailed down the Orwell with cloth, hide, corn and cheese and returned with timber, iron, wine, lances, shields, horsehides and fine cloth from Spain, France, the Baltic and Low Countries, and with fish from Iceland. It seems likely that the armour for horsemen and footmen that Gooding bequeathed to his son were imported. The other area of activity in Ipswich was the Cornhill, which developed as the commercial centre. In 1556, Gooding paid £88 for a plot previously belonging to Sir Anthony Wingfield in the parish of St Mary Tower. This was a house on the south side of Tavern Street at the north-east corner of the Cornhill.

Thomas Gooding was not a conscientious portman. On 10th June, 1561 (by now probably in his fifties) he was reported as not being let off the £8 he owed as a Scott and Lot (tax) payment. The next paragraph in the *Annals of Ipswich* tells us that

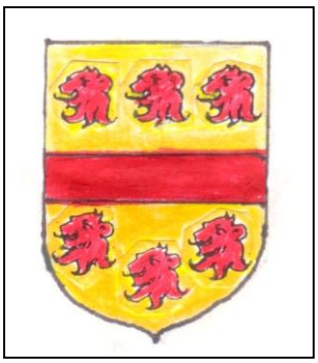
> *Thom: Gooding hath negligently behaved himself in the office of Portman, and he, intending to retire into the country, and not from henceforth to execute the said office, therefore it is ordered that he shall pay for his fine as well as for discharge of Portmanship as all other offices, as for his former neglects, in all £40.*

A lease of 1617 drawn up for his grandson, also called Thomas, presents a picture of the estate in Freston to which Gooding retired. In the house there was a great parlour with a great chamber above. The farm comprised 270 acres with barns, stable and three yards, one with a pond, one for carts and the dovehouse

yard. There were rose gardens, and orchards with apples, pears, medlars and quinces. The estate was well-wooded and the family could go hawking and fowling.

We next find him as High Collector for the 1568 subsidy, levied for the use of Her Majesty, in Ipswich. In and around the town, Gooding's lands were valued and taxed at £50, the same as those of Edmund Withipoll of Christchurch Mansion, and Thomas Seckford of Seckford Hall, Great Bealings. No estate was worth more than these.

Eight years later, in 1576, the Queen's Herald made a Visitation to Suffolk. These county surveys, begun in 1530 and ended in 1689, were initiated by commissions from the Sovereign to the Kings of Arms every 25 years or so, to investigate pedigrees and examine the right of a family to bear arms, so that a check could be made upon spurious claims. If the rights of a family were recognised, a grant of arms was made. On his visit in 1576, Robert Cooke, Clarenceux King of Arms, granted arms to Thomas Gooding: *Or, a fess between three lions' heads erased Gules*. In lay terms they can be described as: *On a gold base, a band formed by two horizontal lines, between three lions' heads cut off with a jagged base line in red*.



The Gooding coat of arms

Perhaps we should gloss over the fact that according to a 17th century Garter King of Arms, Robert Cooke seems to have been an active grantor of arms, giving *Arms and Creastes without number to base and unworthy persons for his private*

gaine onely without the knowledge of the Erle Marshall. On Freston tower there are two shouldered square panels high on the entrance side, which could have displayed the new arms. Thomas Gooding married twice and we do not know his second wife's name or whether she came from an armigerous family but perhaps one of these panels displayed her shield. At the top of the staircase, above the door to the viewing platform, there is a shield-shaped indent for a further display of the arms, of which Gooding must have been so proud.

Perhaps a desire to display his new arms in part prompted the building of the tower at Freston. Another prompt may have been the visit of Elizabeth I to Ipswich, her first visit since her Progress of August 1561. In the summer of 1578, the Queen passed through Suffolk on her way to Norwich but confined herself to the west of the county, visiting the Sir William Cordell's grand new house at Long Melford, the Drurys at Hawstead, dining at Lawshall on 5th August, (tradition has it at Coldham Hall, built for Robert Rookwood in 1574) before staying in Bury St Edmunds where her arrival coincided with an outbreak of the plague. This caused her to change her route: she went on to Norwich via Euston and returned via Hengrave Hall, the great house built by Sir Thomas Kytson, and went on to Cambridgeshire. This is chronicled in Thomas Churchyard's account of the progress from 16th to 22nd August.

The Corporation of Ipswich had expected a visit from the Queen that year as they did some basic cleaning up in the town. The Ipswich treasurer's accounts for 1577-1578 include work to "bewtyfy" the town in case she came, and John King, scrivener, was paid 1s 8d 'for his paynes and chardges employed againste the Qwene's majeste's coming'. When she did not come, perhaps they received a promise of a visit the next year. This would have given Thomas Gooding time to build the tower on which to display his newly acquired arms. Joists from the lower ceilings in the tower were constructed from trees felled in the winter of 1578/1579 or the spring of 1579, which would coincide with a speedy build in time for a royal visit that summer.

Elizabeth sallies forth in her coach from Nonsuch Palace, *c*1582, perhaps starting a Progress. Begun in the 1530s, Henry VIII's Nonsuch set the standard for royal building. It was demolished in 1682.

(*British Museum*)

From 22nd until 25th August, 1579, Queen Elizabeth was indeed in Ipswich. After visiting the Waldegraves at Smallbridge Hall, Bures, from Ipswich she went to Harwich, presumably by water, passing Freston Tower en route. In his *Royal Progress*, published for Queen Elizabeth II's visit to Suffolk in 1961, Norman Scarfe writes of the 1579 visit, 'Again the records are disappointing, a few notes in the accounts of the borough's chamberlains ... One concerns "the Queen's men which cam to enquer for the countries being cleare of diseases." Another was a payment for looking after "Mr. Bond one of the Queen's chaplins".'

THE WILL OF THOMAS GOODING

No details exist about the latter years of Thomas Gooding's long rural retirement. He died on 30th October, 1595 probably by then in his eighties. His will, drawn up in April that year, is a document that says much about the lands and wealth he amassed, the luxurious lifestyle he enjoyed, and his desire to make fair legacies to his family, all of whom he remembered with generosity.

An appendix to this will taken from the Inquisition Post Mortem, states that Thomas Gooding 'held the manors of Freston and Kesgrave, together with lands and houses in Ipswich, Woolverstone, Little Bealings, Newbourne, Playford, Martlesham, Foxhall, Wherstead, Nacton and Holbrook.' In accordance with his will, he was buried in the chancel at Freston Church, where David Elisha Davy later recorded the indent for the brass plaque, lost when the church was refloored in 1875.

THOMAS GOODING'S WILL

The tenth day of April 1595 I Thomas Gooding of Freston in the county of Suff gent., considering the uncertainty of man's life together with the many years I have already spent in this world, and therefore by common course of nature not like to continue long in this life, but through Gods mercy in Christ Jesus hoping and hastening to a better life, do therefore make my will. My body shall be buried in Freston church before the chancel door. And I will that my executors shall provide a fair grave stone to lay upon me with a plate of brass wrought into the same, and some good sentence of holy Scripture engraven therein together with my name.

I give to Robert Gooding my eldest son and to his heirs one yearly rent charge of 26s 8d out of my lands in Kesgrave, to the intent that he or the owners of Freston Hall shall bestow the same upon the poorest inhabitants of Freston from time to time. Also I do give unto the said Robt Gooding and his heirs for ever one other yearly rent charge of twenty shillings out of my said lands, to the intent that he or they shall yearly procure therewith some honest, learned and godly preacher to make four sermons in Freston church.

Unto my daughter Alice Burman the wife of Robt Burman my land in Wherstead, and after her decease to remain to her children and their heirs. Also I give unto the said Alice my copyhold land in St Margarets parish Ipswich and in Barking. Also unto the said Robt and Alice during their two lives that house wherein they and one Henry Crane now dwell in the town of Ipswich, and after to the children of the said Robert and Alice and to the heirs of the said children.

Unto Dorothy Balls my daughter the wife of John Balls of London, goldsmith, my houses in the parish of St Mary Elms in Ipswich.

Unto Thomas Gooding my son and to his wife my tenement in the parish of St Mary at the tower in Ipswich and my lands in Holbrooke – the said Thomas not to challenge any of my copyhold lands.

Unto Thomas Gooding my grandchild the son of Robert Gooding my son, my manor of Kesgrave and my lands in Kesgrave, Bealings, Martlesham, Foxhall and Newbourne.

To Thomasine Gooding my dau (sic) during her natural life forty pounds a year. The like annuity to my daughter Alice Burman. Unto the said Thomasine my daughter my tenement in Nacton. Unto my nephew Mr Edward Gooding of Ipswich one gown cloth and to my nephew William Gooding of Rendlesham one gown cloth. To my sister Hayward one gown cloth. I will that the said Thomas Gooding my grandchild shall have to him and his heirs all the marsh lands which Mr Richard Margette hath mortgaged unto me. Unto Thomasine my daughter three hundred pounds in money. And to Robt Burman my son in law two hundred and three score pounds. To my sister Hayward thirty pounds. To Christopher Balls the son of John Balls twenty pounds at his age of one & twenty years.

To the Bailiffs, Burgesses and Commonalty of the town of Ipswich the sum of forty pounds to be lent out to four young occupiers from two years to two years for ever. Also to the Bailiffs etc. of Ipswich twenty pounds to be yearly laid out upon wood and coal and to sold out again to the poor of Ipswich at the same price for which it was bought.

To Thomas Burman the son of Robert Burman fifty pounds. Unto Robert Gooding my son all my armour as well for horsemen as footmen. To Thomasine my daughter a great silver salt with a cover gilt, two bowls parcel gilt, one can lipped and covered parcel gilt, one dumb bed, one large covering of tapestry work, a carpet of tapestry, one hanging of tapestry, one chair the back of red velvet, one chair with a green back embroidered, one stool covered with yellow satin, one great chair looped, one low stool covered with silk. Unto Alice Burman my daughter and Thomasine Gooding my daughter all their parcels of goods equally to be divided between them: three great chests bound with iron, four pictures in the parlour, a long damask table cloth, two skillets, three posnets, a cheese press, all my brewing vessels, one bedstead with image work etc. etc. All the rest of my household stuff I give unto Thomas Gooding my son. And I ordain my nephew William Gooding of Rendlesham and Mr Richard Cattlyn of Wolverstone, executors. Witnesses: William Hawes, Henry Crane, John Hubbard, Christopher Hayward, etc.

Probate proved 13th November, 1595.

THOMAS GOODING'S SUCCESSORS

When Thomas Gooding died his son and heir, Rbert Gooding, 'was aged sixty years and upwards.' It is clear from his fathers' will that Robert expected to take over the manor of Freston but, curiously, the only item left to him directly was the armour for the horsemen and footmen. Various household items and 'all the rest of my household stuff' went to his sisters and younger brother, and Robert himself was not named as an executor. Robert's son and Gooding's grandson, another Thomas, was bequeathed lands in five villages north of the Orwell, as well as some mortgaged lands. It appears that Robert married at a relatively advanced age in 1577, when a marriage settlement was drawn up for his future wife, Margaret, daughter of James Radcliffe of Norwich. She is described as 'welbeloved' in his will of 23rd December,1601, in which she and their son Thomas are named as executors.

The second sentence of Robert's will is surprisingly dramatic:

> *I commend my soul into the hands of my maker and creator, from the bottom of my heart beseeching him to accept of the death and passion of his most dear son as a sufficient ransom for those many and grievous sins whereby I have provoked his Maistie.*

Did Robert enjoy a dissolute youth before eventually settling down? It is clear from his 1601 will that his family was still young: at that time only two of his five daughters were married, and his younger son, John, was still "an apprentice in London … at the Rose in Bread Street".

Robert Gooding died at Freston on 23rd January, 1602; he requested to be buried, like his father, in the chancel of the parish church. His son and heir, Thomas, married Mary Burley of Depden in West Suffolk and their first child, Margaret, was born in 1604. This suggests that this Thomas was born around the time Freston Tower was being built. Can the tower also be seen as a part of a dynastic celebration? Within a short space of time, the family had been granted arms and, at last, perhaps the prodigal son had married and produced a male heir?

The succession of Thomas Gooding, the gentleman, was ensured, and to cap it all, the Queen herself was due to sail down the Orwell and could therefore admire the new creation.

Thomas Gooding II and Mary Burley had three sons and three daughters. They did not appear to make Freston their permanent home, for in a lease of 1613 drawn up between the Goodings and Christopher Hayward, possibly a cousin, Thomas Gooding is described as "of Ipswich, gent". It is in this informative document that we find the first documentary mention of the tower, since it is reserved for Thomas and Mary 'to be taken down and carried away by the said Thomas.'

LEASE OF FRESTON MANOR, DRAWN UP IN 1613 BETWEEN THOMAS GOODING (II) AND CHRISTOPHER HAYWARD.

Mansion House called Freston Hall; barns, stables, hay chambers, yards, gardens, orchards and other houses belonging, tog with all lands, meadows, pastures, feedings, now occ by said Christopher Hayward, all part and parcel of the demesne of manor of Freston:

Entry with 2 clappers	
Fenn, pond yard, but yard, dovehouse yard	*20a*
Marshes (2) called Middle Marsh	*12*
Pastures and flowerlands, with marsh against the flowerlands	*12*
All those fields called Wolfreston fields	*40*
2 bottoms or swamps called aldercarrs with pastures between	*8*
1 pasture called Okey piece	*5*
Calves pightle adj and the marshy grounds, the N head of wh.	
Abutts middle marsh	*10*
1 marsh pightle and tyle kilne pightle	*5*
1 close of arable called Rye Clapper	*12*
barne close	*3*
1 close called maslow field	*18*
church pightle	*9*
ca	*160*

excep 1 house, tenements and yard where Thos Bishop now dwells and allowing ingress etc to said house and lower rooms of the house called the Board House and other rooms within Freston Hall

exc the great parlour
great chamber over the great parlour
chamber wherein Thomas and Mary G (sic) lodged when they lived at Freston Hall – adj the great chamber

exc also the maid's chamber adj Thomas and Mary's

exc also the 2 chambers on the ground under the chamber of Thomas and Mary and the maid's chamber;

except the use, together with the said parlour, of the hall of the said house for passage or other needful occasion;

exc also pump and pump yard and the yards about the house for passage, dropping of meat etc and other needs of household use as the said Christopher shall use the said yards.

Exc also the roses growing in the gardens belonging to the house, with liberty to take up and plant new;

Exc also ingress etc to said garden at pleasure of Thomas and Mary and further exc ½ apples, in the orchard and garden, ½ the pippins growing in the barn close and ½ the medlars quinces and pears.

Further reserve for Thomas and Mary, heirs etc THE TOWER standing in or by the said orchard, to be taken down and carried away at the pleasure of said Thos.

Also allowing 1 horse, grooming keeping with Christopher's;

Exc also all woods, timber, trees, underwood, brushwood and ingress for carts etc for cutting and carrying away all said woods;

Reserving liberty to take conies [rabbits] *and all hunting, hawking and fowling*

Also reserving 5th crop of meadow called pond yard to be cut by Thomas.

Lease to run from Feast of St Michael Archangel, for 15 years.

The concept of removing a six-storey tower brick by brick defies belief but that must be what he had in mind. We can perhaps sympathise more with such a caprice if we remember that the tower may in part have been erected to celebrate Thomas II's own birth. What is clear is the affection that the Thomas and Mary Gooding held for Freston. They still want the occasional use of their rooms and to use the old family home as a retreat for hunting and other rural pursuits rather than for permanent habitation. The lease to Christopher Hayward was renewed in 1618.

Thomas Gooding II died at Freston on 12th August, 1624. Two years before, his oldest son, Thomas, had been buried at Freston aged fifteen but he had two other sons, Robert, aged eleven, and little Jermyn, aged four. Freston Hall, as we have seen, was no longer the family's main seat and had been let, certainly since 1613, and from this time the Gooding family's links with the place begin to fade.

THE WRIGHTS, HAMMONDS, THURSTONS AND TARVERS

In 1635, just after he came of age, Robert Gooding II, described as of Bramford, decided, with his brother-in-law, Richard Nightingale, to sell the manor of Freston. They offered it to John Havers of Stockerston, Leicestershire for £2,315 but Chancery Records describe an altercation. In an uncannily similar case to the earlier one of Gooding v Latymer, the prospective buyer claimed that timber had been felled and that the estate was heavily encumbered with debt. However, it appears that the sale did go through as there is an agreement between John Havers and Anthony and Thomas Gosnold in 1638.

By the time of the Civil War, Freston belonged to John Wright I, a merchant from Wapping, who moved to the parish of St. Clement's in Ipswich. John Ogilby's 1675 Road map from King's Lynn to Harwich shows a building marked "decayed/ruin" approximately where the tower stands, but between the map survey and its publication, John Wright seems to have carried out some extensive restoration works. In 1675 he leased it to Stephen Clarke of Copdock, but

reserved the tower for himself, as well as "the new building on the south side of the hall, with all the rooms therein", and he also mentions gardens lately planted. This interest in the house and tower leads us to surmise that John Wright I was responsible for putting up the brick porch by the present front door, most of which has now fallen down. That he was a rich and cultivated man is clear from the items recorded in his will dated 29th May, 1683: scarlet gowns, cornelian and mourning rings, as well as his silver watch to "my son, Samuel". His books were to be divided up by his daughters, and the "virginals I give to my daughter, Alice, my India cabinet to my daughter, Martha, but what is in it to be divided up amongst my three younger daughters". His son, Thomas Wright and his son-in-law, William Hammond were to be his executors.

The lands he refers to in Woolverstone and Freston were his wife's marriage settlement but the clause that is most important to us is the following: "I give to my son, John, all these houses, lands … in the occupation of Stephen Clarke, called Freston Hall or the Tower".

In 1685 Freston manor was leased to William Gardner, tailor of Ipswich, but in 1692, John Wright II renewed the lease with Mr Clarke until 1703. Twenty years later he wrote his will on 19th January and gave his manor at Freston to his nephew, Thomas Wright, (son of his brother Thomas) a mariner of the City of London, as well as the advowson (the right to present the incumbent to the parish church). He died on 11th February, 1723, aged 78 and was buried with his wife, Rachel, in the church tower at Freston, where their tombstone may still be seen.

In 1727 there is a lease between Thomas Wright, gent., and Jonathan Rosier, yeoman, for the hall for two years. When the lease expired, the house was advertised "to be let, ready furnished" in The Ipswich-Journal of April, 1730:

> *The mansion house called Freston Tower, three miles of Ipswich, containing a large Hall, three Parlours, four Chambers, two large Garrets, a good Kitchen, Brewing-Office and Utensils, two Cellars, a large Orchard,*

Garden, Stable, and Pasture for an Horse in Summer. Enquire of Mr. Thomas Grimwood Linen-Draper in Ipswich.

Thomas Wright died, a rich man like his grandfather and uncle, in 1739. He left some valuable jewellery in his will, including a diamond ring to his sister, and his seal, and coat of arms set in gold, as well as Freston Tower and Farm to his cousin John Hammond, a mariner. However, in 1741 Hammond's son and heir, William, sold the manor to Thomas Thurston of Holbrooke. Later on, as John Kirby's *Suffolk Traveller* of 1764 tells us, 'The Hall-Farm ... much reduced from what it formerly had been, was sold to Mr Luke Tarver of Ipswich.'

In 1767 the hall was advertised as a treatment centre for small pox but the patients had to provide their own tea and sugar and pay for their washing, and were charged six, four or three guineas a week. Six years later there was another notice advertising a curious combination: inoculation against small pox at Freston with the added incentive of on-site sporting facilities: *The situation of Freston Tower House is quite delightful – with opportunities for fishing, fowling etc ... boats and nets provided.* This enterprise was run by a Mr Buck, "an eminent surgeon at Ipswich", until 1779. However, the possibility of all such activities came to an end when Mr Tarver's daughter, Cordelia, and her husband, Thomas Neale, sold the farm to Charles Berners for £6,000 in 1795. At its acquisition, Berners commissioned a survey of The Tower Farm in Freston from Isaac Johnson, and the draft in the Suffolk Record Office is dated 23rd September, 1795.

THE BERNERS FAMILY

This transaction was just one in a long series beginning in 1749, when Charles's father, a London silk merchant, acquired 72 acres in Woolverstone. It ended in 1937 when the 6,000 acre estate, which included Woolverstone Hall and extended over much of the Shotley Peninsula, was sold to the Nuffield Trust for the University of Oxford.

Woolverstone Hall, built by John Johnson from 1776.

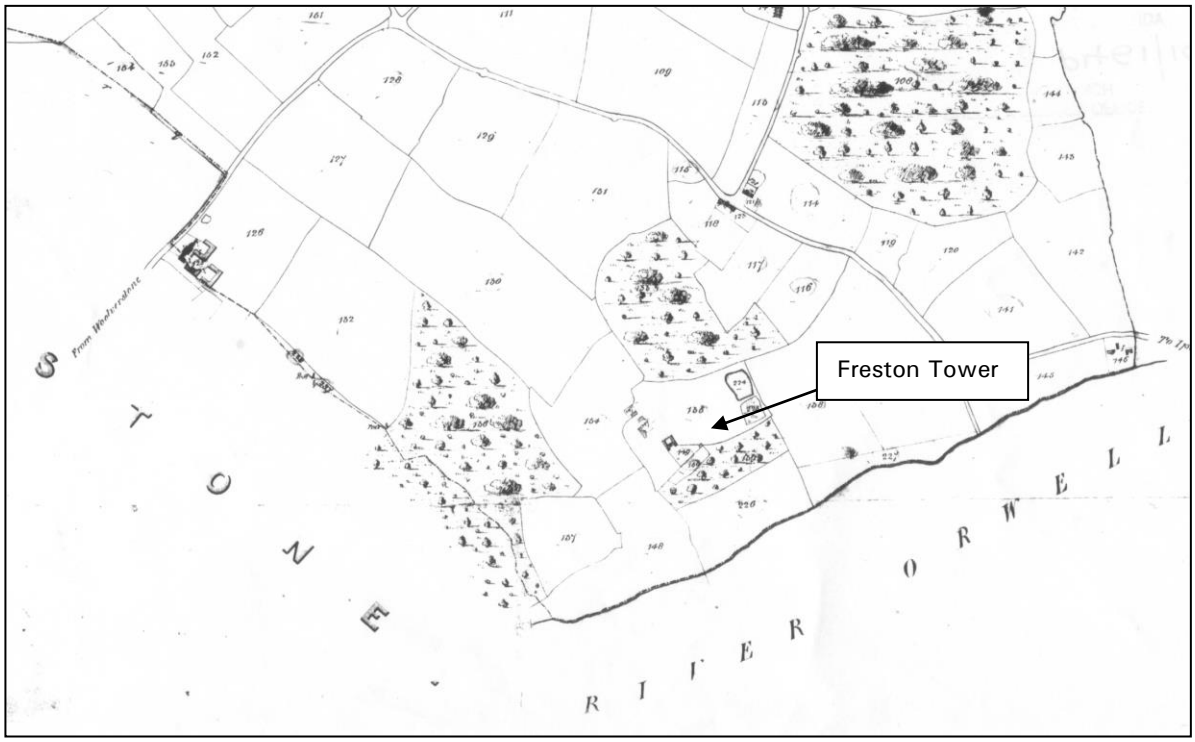
Charles Berners commissioned a series of watercolours of the buildings on his new estate from Luigi Mayer. A preliminary study for the tower is dated September, 1799.

Luigi Mayer's pen and ink study of Freston Tower in 1799, a preliminary study for his commission. (*V&A*)

Two versions of *Landscape with Freston Tower,* by George Frost, *c*. 1790, the earliest known depictions of the tower.

At Gainsborough's House in Sudbury, there are two more images of the Tower, by George Frost (1745 – 1821): a drawing in black chalk and a watercolour. The black chalk is described in an exhibition catalogue of June, 1976, as possibly one of the fruits of a joint sketching trip that Frost may have done with John Constable, *c*.1802.

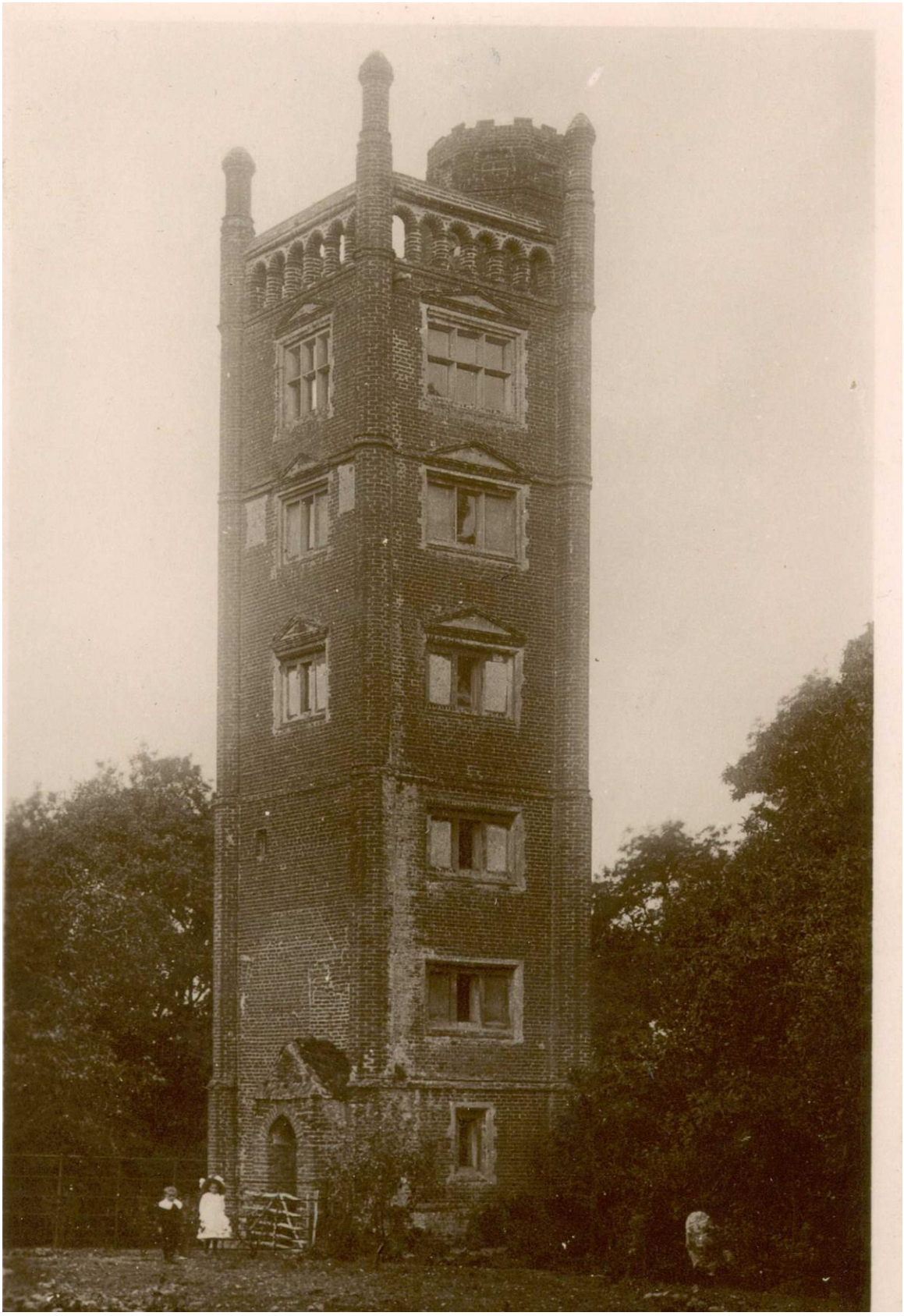
When Charles died in 1815, Freston along with the rest of the estate, passed to Hugh Berners. In 1839 the farm was surveyed again, this time by John Spurling of Shotley, for the 1841 Tithe Map, on which the Tower is shown in black, meaning that it was unoccupied.



Detail from the 1841 Tithe Map

Hugh Berners died in 1852 and was succeeded by his son, John, responsible for one of the longest and most romantic drives in the county, which brilliantly incorporates Freston Tower as a fashionable landscape building. In her book, *Exploring the past through place-names: Woolverstone*, Sylvia Laverton describes the new drive, which extended *from the Hall across Woolverstone Park to the river and on through Freston Park to emerge, via an avenue to copper beeches, at the bottom of Freston Hill*. The drive met the public road at Monkey Lodge where the "wrought iron gates carry the initials JB as does the plaque dated 1861 on the south front". The gate house owes its name to the pair of monkeys which used to stand guard on the gate pillars until they were removed to Faringdon, the Berners' Berkshire home. The family motto, "Del fuego io avolo" (I escape from the flames) commemorates an escape from a fire in the outbuildings at Woolverstone Hall, from which all were saved, due to the warning clamour of the family's pet Barbary apes.

Let us hope John Berners enjoyed his new drive because today we reap the benefit of the trees he planted so carefully. When he died in 1886, he was succeeded by his brother, Hugh, who died in 1891. His son, Charles Hugh, who took over, died in 1919.



An early photograph of Freston Tower. The shadow of the hipped extension on the SW elevation, with its finials and entrance at first floor level, is particularly clear in this image. Note too the blocked (or boarded) window lights, decaying window dressings, porch and hurdle, presumably to keep cattle out.

An early picnic excursion to the tower, approaching along the foreshore. Only the top floor windows are fully glazed, suggesting perhaps that the view was being 'saved' until all five floors had been scaled. The mysterious shadow of the missing building is again in evidence.

In 1935, Mr J.A. Berners was living at Woolverstone and received the following letter about the Tower from the Secretary of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings:

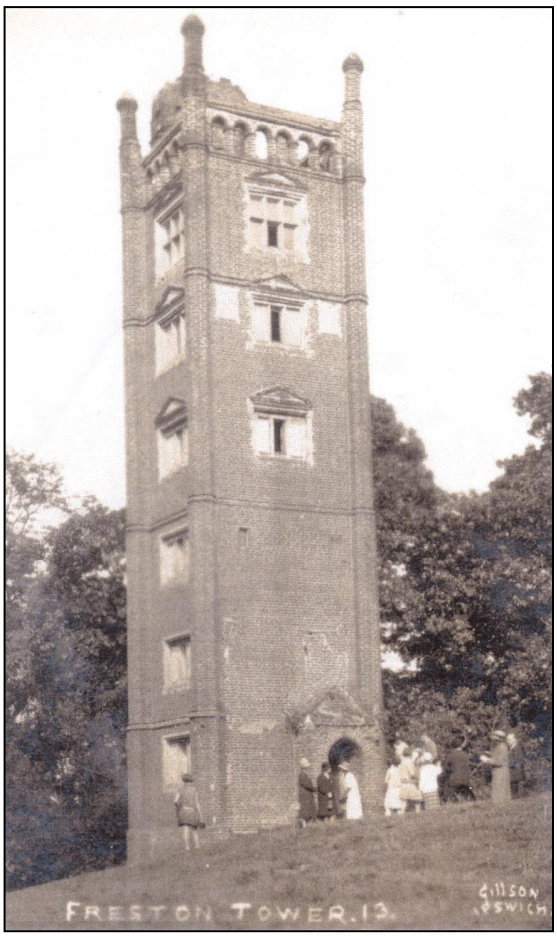
> *I hope you will forgive me writing to you from this Society, which I serve as Secretary. An architect member,* (John MacGregor) *who has had much experience in the upkeep of ancient buildings, informed my Committee recently that he felt the parapet and pinnacles of Freston Tower were becoming insecure. In his opinion a strong wind might do damage to them. He said they needed pointing.*
> *The Committee felt that it would not be right to let this information pass without giving it to you, and at the same time I am to add that our member said he thought no more was necessary than the proper cleaning out of the joints and repointing to give the parapet and pinnacle stability.*
>
> *My Committee advises that the mortar to be used for this pointing should be finished flush, or very nearly flush, with the brickwork and it has found that a mortar suitable for such conditions can be made as follows:*

Six or seven parts of coarse sharp clean sand should be mixed with one part of lime, ground, slaked or hydrated, beaten up with water at the same time. This may be left to stand, being kept moist. When it is wanted it may be used in the following way:

Six or seven parts of the mixture may be taken and "knocked up" with one part of ordinary Portland Cement, the whole being thoroughly incorporated. My Committee has found it common in such cases for builders to advise the darkening of mortar. It suggests that this is a mistake. The mortar of old buildings, where it has not been covered with lichen or moss, is white, or nearly white and when an old building has been pointed with darkened mortar it loses a great deal of its beauty due to the variation of colour in its surface.

I take the liberty of enclosing a copy of our annual Report.

I am, Yours faithfully, etc. etc.



A photo from the SPAB's files, probably dating from around the time of John McGregor's visit. The figure at the far right is thought to be Charles Berner. The crenellations to the stair turret appear to be still in situ, although they had gone by the time the National Monuments Record photographed the tower in 1950.

The very heavy handed, cementitious repointing we found on the parapet suggests that these very specific, if somewhat interfering instructions, were not been acted upon! Two years later in 1937, Woolverstone Hall and Park were acquired by Oxford University for £185,000. Lots 3-10 comprised the "Park, Lodges, Homestead, Dairy, Cat House and Freston Tower". (The Cat House is a pretty Gothick cottage down by the jetty, now surrounded by the Royal Harwich Yacht Club. It is supposed to have been built by Charles Berners in 1893. According to local legend, it was used to guide smugglers, who knew when they saw a cat in the window that it was safe for them to land. In fact, the Cat House has a huge false window facing down the Orwell painted on a crenellated wall. Painted at the bottom looking through bars used to be a grey and white cat with an hourglass. Unfortunately it has been redone with a cartoon-type cat in front of the bars and no hourglass.)

FRESTON AFTER THE BERNERS 1937 – 1962

In June, 1942 Margaret Howard, a little girl of eight, moved to Freston Tower Farm with her parents. Her father worked for Mr Mayhew of the Home Farm, Woolverstone, who rented the park from the University. At that time the Tower was used as a store for straw and hay for the colts on the park and the village children used to enjoy jumping out of the windows, and sliding down the straw shutes, before swimming in the river. Margaret remembers the Army keeping an eye on the landing craft stored further up the Orwell in readiness for D Day.

The Hall was divided into four cottages and in 1954 Mr and Mrs Baldry moved into one of them with their son, John, a carpenter for a firm in Ipswich. There was no electricity and they used water from the well in the courtyard. Mr Baldry worked as a horseman for Mr Mayhew and his younger sons went to Freston School. In 1957 John Baldry and Margaret Howard got married. Almost fifty years later, Mr & Mrs Baldry became Freston Tower's first gardener and housekeeper.

The next year Cluttons were instructed to sell the Woolverstone Estate on behalf of the University of Oxford, with Lot 14 comprising "Freston Park with Freston Tower and Four Useful Cottages known as Tower Cottages including valuable commercial timber 56 acres". A year or so later, the cottages, along with Freston Park and Deer Park Lodge, were sold to Mr Perkins of Perkins Diesel Engines of Peterborough. In 1976, Philip Ransome bought the cottages, restored them and he and his wife lived in Tower House, the one with the diapering and stepped gable.

MRS HUNT'S TOWER

On 17th April, 1962 Mr and Mrs Hunt acquired Freston Tower with half an acre, from the Trustees of the Briggs Family Trust. Mrs Hunt explained that her husband always wanted to be an East Anglian. "He was a sailing addict and once capsized his catamaran on the Orwell. We had restored our house in Highgate, so we thought nothing of taking on the Tower". The park was owned by a local farmer and the Hunts had a gate from the garden with access to a foot path down to the river. In 1962 the Tower was in "surprisingly good condition and had been mothballed most expertly. The first thing to do was unbrick many of the windows but we left the ground floor ones as a security measure. I remember carrying buckets of rubble up and down the stairs. All the windows had dimpled glass, which we took out. We also had to dig out the entrance hall floor. There was no wiring, and we had to put in a cess pit."

The Hunts decided to decorate the interior very simply so they painted the walls with white emulsion. Clement Theobalds releaded the roof in 1981, and the parapet was repaired with handmade bricks. "We camped out there for sailing weekends, but after my husband died, I got a part-time paid job with the Citizens' Advice Bureau, I commuted to London for three years. I used to take the 7am bus from Freston, which took local people to work and it was at the time when they were changing the trains from diesel to electricity. I lived one winter at the

Tower when I was doing jury service but there was always a draught and one morning my shirt was frozen stiff".

On 6th December, 1973 *Country Life* published an article entitled "Threat to a Suffolk Estuary, Proposed Bridge over the Orwell" and it outlined the particular threat to the Tower:

> *The scenery around Freston Tower is truly idyllic; a foreground of parkland, shaded by cedar trees, and falling into one of those odd little valleys known as swales, that are a feature of the country along the Orwell; and with the river and the thickly wooded far shore as a background. But if the proposed Orwell bridge is built, it is likely to cut right across this arcadian scene; for it is only here that there is sufficiently high ground for the approaches of a bridge that has to be high enough for ships to pass beneath it.*

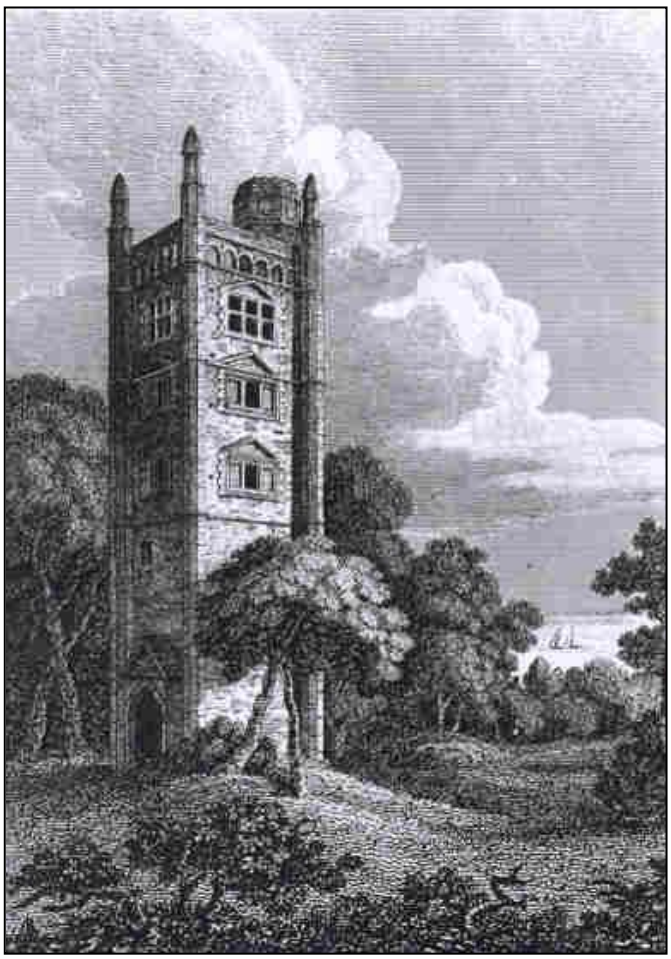
Happily the setting of the Tower has not been compromised and the elegant lines of the Orwell Bridge may be felt to enhance the view. Mrs Hunt enjoyed watching the bridge being built from either side: "one day there were two ends and a gap, and at the end of the day they had been joined up."

In 1984, Mrs Hunt moved to Maid's Causeway in Cambridge and whilst she retained great affection for the Tower, by 1998 she no longer had a use for it. She wanted to give it to Landmark as she knew the Trust was of a scale where she could deal directly with the people concerned. Tom Gondris of the Ipswich Preservation Society therefore arranged a meeting at the Tower in December, 1998, between Julia Abel Smith of Landmark, and Mrs Hunt. It was the start of discussions whereby Mrs Hunt very generously gave us the Tower, so that, in her words, "lots of people can enjoy a building where I have been very happy".

Acknowledgements: Dr John Blatchly and Mrs Sylvia Laverton.

Julia Abel Smith

Freston Tower by George Campion, from G R Clarke's *History & Description of Ipswich,* 1830



From *The Beauties of England and Wales*, Vol XIV (1813)

THE LEGEND OF ELLEN DE FRESTON

Of all the theories that have attached themselves to Freston Tower over the years, by far the most romantic is that of Ellen de Freston. Scientific methods bring their certainty and dendrochronology has now resolved the debate over the date of Freston Tower's construction (1578/9) once and for all. However, this old tale has been the most resilient in local lore and deserves not to be forgotten entirely.

It all began with a novel by the Reverend R. Cobbold, published in 1850 and called *Freston Tower: A Tale of the Early Years of Cardinal Wolsey.* Cobbold imaginatively weaves various genuine historical details – that a William Latimer held the manor of Freston in the 1480s, that Wolsey hailed from Ipswich where he founded a college, that a six-storied tower stands on the banks of the Orwell, that Wolsey studied at Oxford and founded Cardinal's College (today's Christ Church) – into a rattling narrative of love and jealousy.

Cobbold recounts that the tower was built in the late fifteenth century by Lord de Freston for the education of his lovely, talented and indeed golden-haired daughter, Ellen, at the suggestion of a young scholar named William Latimer. Both Latimer and the young Thomas Wolsey were in love with Ellen, but shy Wolsey departed aged 14 to study in Oxford without declaring his feelings. Latimer, meanwhile, was engaged as Ellen's tutor for a timetable designed around the tower's plan (though some versions suggest it was the other way round):

> *The Lower Room to charity from 7 to 8 o'clock.*
> *The Second to working tapestry from 9 to 10.*
> *The Third to music from 10 to noon.*
> *The Fourth to painting from 12 to 1.*
> *The Fifth to literature from 1 to 2.*
> *The Sixth to astronomy at even.*

And it was while studying the stars that Ellen ended up in her tutor's arms on the roof. When Wolsey learnt of their engagement, so bitter was his disappointment that he decided to enter the Church. Lord Latimer, ignorant of his true feelings, then invited Wolsey as an old family friend to solemnise the marriage. Wolsey

made a special trip from Oxford to conduct the service, but this was to be his last visit to his native town. Cobbold even suggests that Wolsey's obsession with the building of the very expensive gatetower at the entrance to the Oxford college he went on to found, was a jealous attempt to outdo Lord Latimer's tower on the banks of the Orwell. (Cobbold again mixes fact with fiction: this tower is known rather irreverently as Tom Tower, but after the great bell it contains rather than its founder, who ran out of money before the tower could be built. In fact, it was to be designed by Christopher Wren in 1681 for the then Dean, John Dell and so the tower itself has no real connection with the Cardinal).

Cobbold's story and variations upon it have been passed down in the area for the last 150 years, gaining verisimilitude as the years passed. As late as 1992, it appeared as fact in a book on East Anglian curiosities. We now know the truth – but this does not prevent the Rev. Cobbold's version from remaining a very good story!

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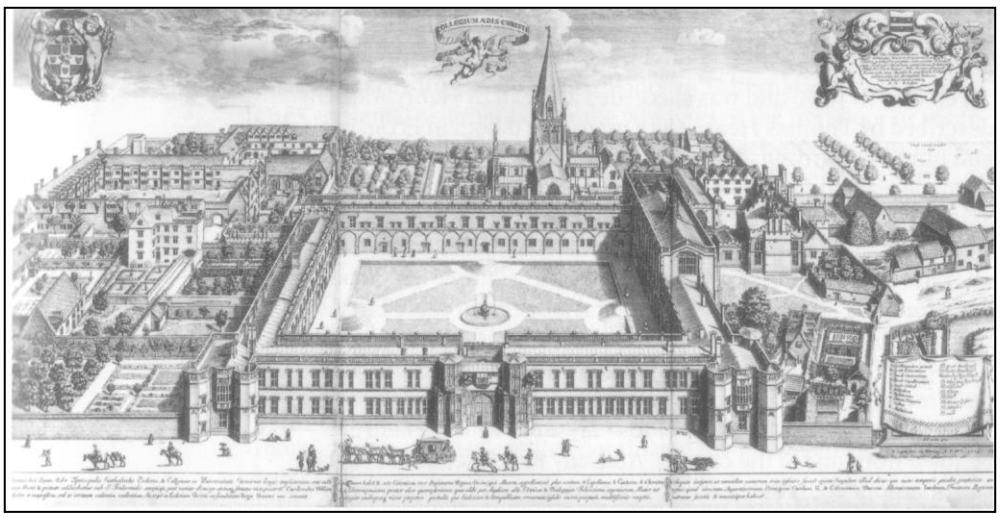


Christ Church, Oxford, in 1675, with Wolsey's unfinished gatehouse in the foreground.

FRESTON TOWER BEFORE RESTORATION

South Elevation

View from NW

The sad state of the exterior

(The tower after restoration to compare)

CLAIRE HUNT'S TOWER IN 2000

First floor kitchen

Second floor: bathroom

Third floor: bedroom

CLAIRE HUNT'S TOWER IN 2000

Fourth floor: bedroom

Top floor (and below): sitting room

LANDMARK'S RESTORATION OF FRESTON TOWER

Summary of building analysis and archaeology

Freston Tower is undoubtedly a tower to be looked at rather than, originally at least, to be lived in. It has no fireplaces and the curious 'hearth' in today's kitchen (which, in the absence of a chimney, puzzled us at first) turned out rather to have been another exit at first floor level, whose shadow can still just be made out on the exterior above the porch where a small window in the tower is positioned above the former roofline (it is much clearer on the early photos). This doorway must have led to another range or ranges, lost long ago. The brickwork in these areas was less well-finished and the absence of main windows at this level, plus the positioning of the small window and string course are all clues that something is missing. We also found plaster behind the surviving brickwork of the porch, suggesting the porch abutted a wall that was once internal. There must have been other structures there, but we have found no conclusive evidence either from historical documentation, from archaeology of the standing structure or even from below-ground geophysical investigation of the site by the Suffolk Archaeological Unit.

Similarly, we have we been unable to date firmly the landscaping of the formal platform at the edge of which the tower stands, although it seems probable that the two were contemporaneous.

Freston is a typical example of Elizabethan eclecticism. Classical pediments, still innovative in the 1570s, are placed above windows mullioned in an earlier style, vying with crenellations and pinnacles and a parapet that is almost Venetian. The builder attempts a bravura of hierarchy as pediments and finally transoms produce increasingly elaborate but nevertheless essentially mediaeval windows. It was an era of uninhibited experimentation: the Duke of Somerset had built the first complete Classical house in England in the Strand in 1547 and thirty years on, *parvenus* like Gooding were still experimenting. It was hard for us to know how to present these hybrid windows in a 'convincing' Classical manner – until we

realised that the most 'honest' approach was rather to follow the Elizabethans in creating a fine show from the outside without worrying too much about pattern book correctness.

The brickwork is of the highest quality and the mortar remarkably durable, proved by its survival for four and a half centuries with only minimal repointing required. It seems two gangs of bricklayers were involved in the tower's construction: at first floor level, the bricklayer used no queen closers (these are specially shortened bricks used to bond brickwork at the corners), whereas above the first floor string course, queen closers are used.

The outer lights of the windows are shown blocked in the early photos and the haired lime plaster that was used suggests this was done at a relatively early date. The internal plaster was a puzzle: emulsion paint on crisp ashlar lines and all looking very 'Restored'. However, analysis of early plaster from above the exposed lintel of the blocked doorway on the first floor was found to be two layers of haired lime plaster (probably primary) covered with a very thin, lime-rich plaster skim which predates the 20th century. During restoration, these areas of plaster were carefully melded into areas of modern, like for like lime plaster.

The exterior also yielded clues as to the building's original finish. There was evidence of render in the pediments and on the moulded brick mullions, although the mouldings around the pediments themselves seemed only to have been limewashed. A small area of a reddish pigment that could have been ruddle (a reddish painted finish) was found beneath ivy on the least exposed NE elevation, leading to the intriguing possibility that the tower may once have been ruddled all over. The evidence was inconclusive, however, and the trouble taken with the diapered brickwork was splendid enough (as well as easier to maintain) so re-ruddling was never seriously entertained.

We asked Peter Minter of the Bulmer Brick & Tile Co. to examine the parapet brickwork, which was in poor condition and appeared to have been rebuilt. He thought the surviving parapet was probably an eighteenth century replacement or addition, since the coping bricks were moulded rather than cut and did not feather in to the brickwork below. He also thought the pinnacles had been rebuilt several times and that the finials were a later alteration. Lacking evidence as to their original form, we have left the finials as they were but did give them new brick cappings.

Early spring 2003: scaffolding up…

…and then screened.

The building's restoration

When Landmark took Freston Tower on in 1999 as a gift from Mrs Claire Hunt, it was a rare instance of a building coming into our care that was not in any great distress but at risk from inappropriate domestication. Claire Hunt and her husband had repaired and maintained their unusual holiday home lightly and with great sensitivity, an approach that set the tone for our own restoration work. The lead patch on the roof dates from their work. Towers have inherent problems and none more so than at Freston. The roof pinnacles were leaning alarmingly and had been fitted with iron braces. The render around the windows had almost completely disappeared and 1960s oak window frames, while carefully made, were leaking quite badly and unattractive with their modern plate glass. The brickwork was generally sound but needed repointing in certain areas, especially those most exposed to the prevailing weather and earlier attempts at repointing had been rather clumsily carried out in cementitious mortar. The parapet brickwork was lifting, we suspected because of corroded metalwork. We also soon realised that the crenellations to the stair turret had been lost and the turret's blocked-in *occuli*, or round openings, suggested earlier changes.

Eroded bricks and poor repairs to the parapet before work began.

Inside, the building was fitted out very simply: there was nautical bench seating on the top floor with canvas squabs, rush matting on the floors and hammocks slung from hooks in one of the bedrooms. The ground floor windows had been blocked for security. The Hunts' only mildly radical intervention was the creation

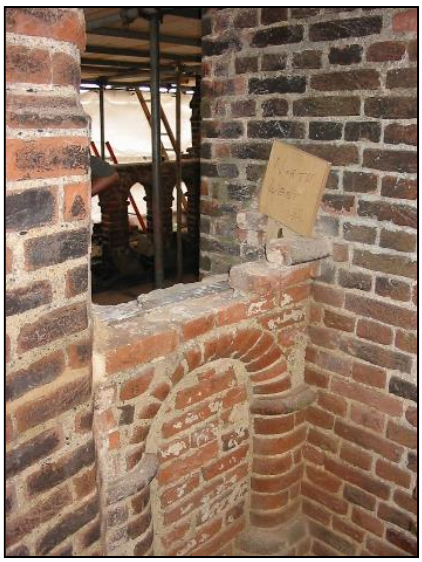
of a kitchen on the first floor and a cloakroom and bathroom on the second floor where stud partitions and new doors had been put in.

Our Trustee Theo Williams oversaw the work on behalf of the Landmark Trustees, which appropriately coincided with Theo's retirement after forty years as a Trustee.

John Woodcock of Richard Griffiths Architects was the project architect and his methodical, careful and quite formal approach soon became a hallmark of the restoration.

Once we examined the tower closely, it was clear from the condition of exposed timbers above the windows and repaired timbers in some of the floors at high level, from some badly eroded bricks and lots of cementitious repairs around the windows mullions that it had endured quite serious weathering and deterioration. Comparison with early photos also showed that the crenellations to the roof turret had been lost.

The tower was shrouded in scaffolding and weather screens for most of a year, taking 6 weeks to erect and nearly as long to take down. The opaque weather proofing was of course a boon to the contractors but also somewhat disorienting.



Notes like this appeared to remind us where we were

The scaffolding at last allowed the external brickwork to be closely pondered. Almost all had never been repointed and it has a magnificent ancient patina as well as a complex hierarchy; pediments above windows, string courses, reducing wall thicknesses and diapering. The architectural balance of simple and bold scale at the lower levels gathers momentum as ornamentation and status increase and as the eye rises to the upper rooms. We quickly realised how important it was to reinstate the complex silhouette of the pinnacles, parapet, crenellations and occuli, all as important as the brickwork and window patterning to the building's character.

It was decided to keep the stump of the external porch after the Landmark Trustees visited Freston on their East Anglian tour in 2002. They decided that, as the romantic mystery of the blank ground/first floors on this elevation could not be unravelled, restoration of the later porch was superfluous.

The sheer number of windows (26 in all, 33 including the blind ones on the stairs) was always impressive. A large amount cementitious repair to the window mullions was discovered – seemingly a 1930s restoration to judge from the correspondence from the SPAB alluded to above - beneath which we found that the Tudor brickwork was badly damaged. Removal of the remaining cementitious render was the only option and it was fortunate that we had pre-manufactured enough special handmade bricks to do the work without delay. The beauty of today's craftmanship in replacing the moulded bricks was inspiring and it was hard not to feel some reluctance as they were painstakingly plastered over once more with lime render, in imitation of stone as originally intended.

INTERIOR

Ground Floor - hallway

The single-light window has been made by unblocking the centre opening – from the internal face of this window, the other parts seem historically not to have been windows anyway. The triple light window has similarly had the centre light

reopened. The outer lights had been blocked long ago and we decided not to disturb them, for a degree of privacy.

The brick floor, installed in the 20th century but typical of East Anglia, has been left undisturbed. The front door is as we found it, basically sound and with lots of patina although it was meticulously repaired by Reades to improve its weather tightness.

The new oak cabinet with a beech worktop in the entrance hall provides storage capacity and gave space for an extra sink, in anticipation of muddy walks along the estuary.

Staircase

The staircase, with its magnificent newel post, is one of the chief glories of the tower, inside as well as out. The treads and risers are a mixture of oak and elm which we have repaired as conservatively as possible. The patches will soon weather in with wear.

First Floor - Kitchen

Claire Hunt's kitchen was open to the stairs, with simple oak tongue and groove panel doors and a single run of kitchen units in the same position as our replacements, which were made by M S Oakes (Reade's parent company in Lowestoft). The partition and door are also new but in the same style as the one Claire Hunt put in to create the bathroom on the floor above.

The "fireplace" is an early modification to an historic doorway that probably led to a two-storey extension. The lintel to the doorway was uncovered during the works to confirm it as a door and it retains early plaster and graffiti. The slate hearth was repaired. The kitchen floor is new oak. The table was specially made by Claire Hunt to be dismantable to get it up the stairs.

All the tiles Claire Hunt had in the kitchen and bathroom were carefully removed and reused in the kitchen, although those above the kitchen units are new, to match the "Delft Children's Games" pattern that Claire Hunt had introduced

Second floor – bathroom
Here, an ancient door frame remains as evidence of an earlier door on the staircase, perhaps reflecting a desire for greater privacy that others have felt in the past. Such a door might also have been part of a separation that may have existed historically between the two-storey extension and the uses of the Tower at these levels – perhaps between service and polite areas?

The bathroom itself is a reworking of that installed by Claire Hunt and the cloakroom simple refurbishment.

Lower Three Storeys versus Upper Three Storeys
The Landmark restoration in fact emphasises a situation that seems to have existed both historically and through Claire Hunt's more recent occupancy, placing all the service accommodation in the lower three floors, with the three upper storeys are reserved for the more 'polite' activities of sleeping and entertaining. This allowed us to keep the upper floors unaltered – the architecture too being more refined on the top three storeys.

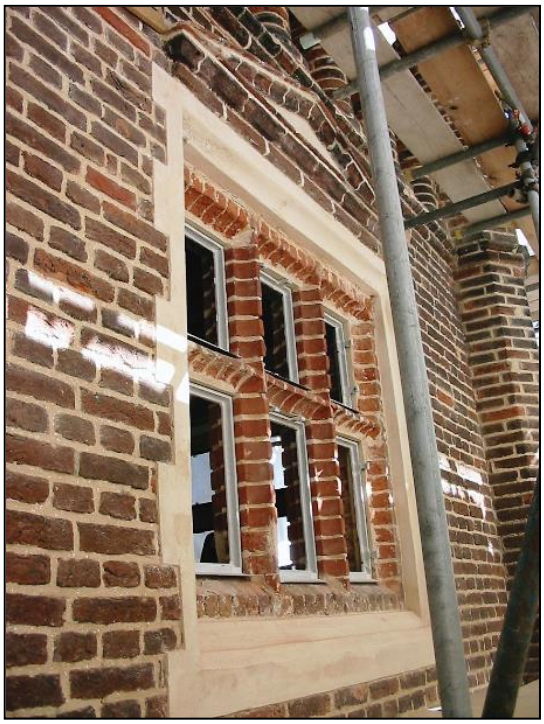
The exterior
Traces of black paint were found on the exterior faces of the blocked stair windows, to give the impression from a distance that they are real windows. We have repeated this trick. The windows as a whole we found to have suffered from both erosion and misguided repairs in cement that merely exacerbated the problem by trapping water behind. Removing the cement brought away more of the decayed Tudor bricks beneath than we had hoped, but it was important to get the window repairs right – these were load-bearing mullions, quite apart from the need for weather tightness and aesthetic appeal (the mullions play an integral part in the architectural hierarchy – even from the inside, you can tell from them

alone whether you are on a 'service' or 'polite' floor). The moulded replacements for the mullions on the upper floors were a delight to behold.

As for the window frames, we managed eventually to get consent to replace plate glass by leaded lights, which will give the tower back the glitter so beloved by the Elizabethans. Diamond and rectangular panes were both in use by the 1570s; we chose rectangles. The frames themselves were specially made in 'architectural' bronze, a low maintenance material in a marine environment. A special mock-up was made to check their installation and abutment to brickwork in advance.

The replastering of the window dressings, executed by plasterer Tim Hambling and his apprentice, is a fine example of modern craft skills and its crispness and symmetry an essential contribution to the final display. Various trials were carried out to find the best colour limewash for the window dressings and pediments. This final coat to the render has a functional as well as aesthetic rationale, since it will provide a degree of protection while the lime render beneath carbonates fully as well as looking good. It will eventually be sacrificial, since it would simply not be economic to re-scaffold the tower with the frequency required to renew the limewash. Thomas Gooding would have faced the same dilemma; it seems entirely plausible that, like us, he could not resist this one-off flourish once the scaffolding was up.

Repairs to the windows

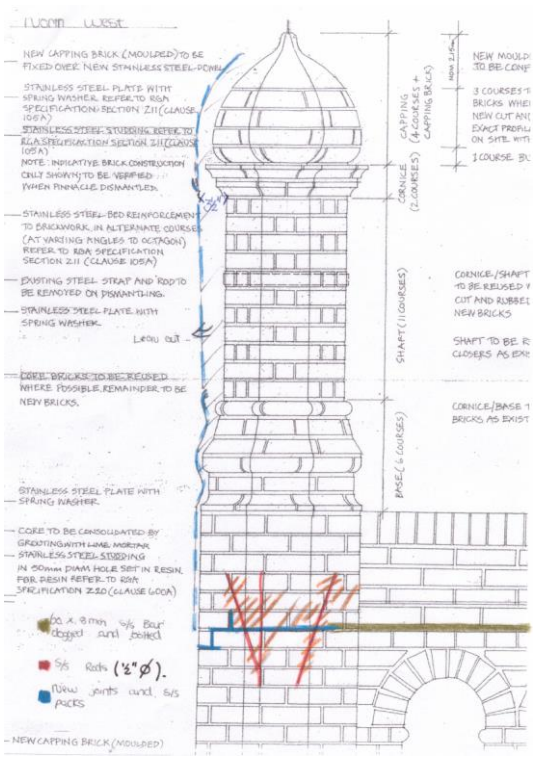


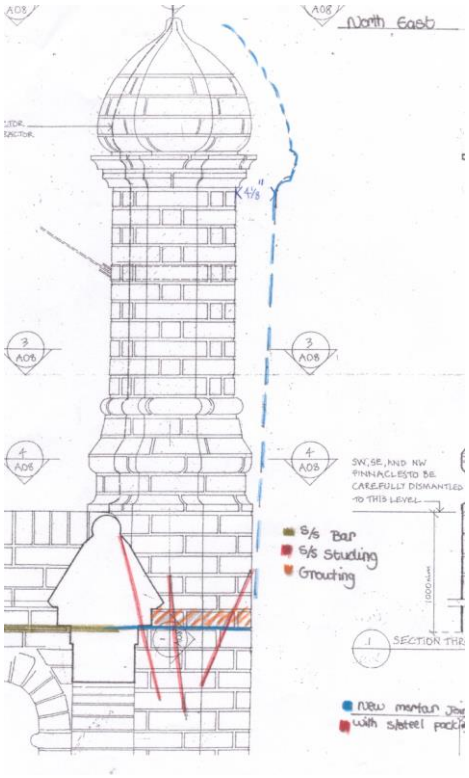
The roof saw perhaps the most dramatic difference, with the replacement of the crenellations, re-setting of the pinnacles and replacement of many of the coping stones with new ones specially made by the Bulmer Brick & Tile Co. It was the sharp-eyed site foreman, Henry Mann, who noticed a shield shaped shadow above the door onto the roof around the time that we found out about the granting of arms to Thomas Gooding in 1576. Henry also found a French coin, dating from 1862 and the reign of Napoleon III, tucked into the leadwork of the parapet, perhaps left by a French visitor.

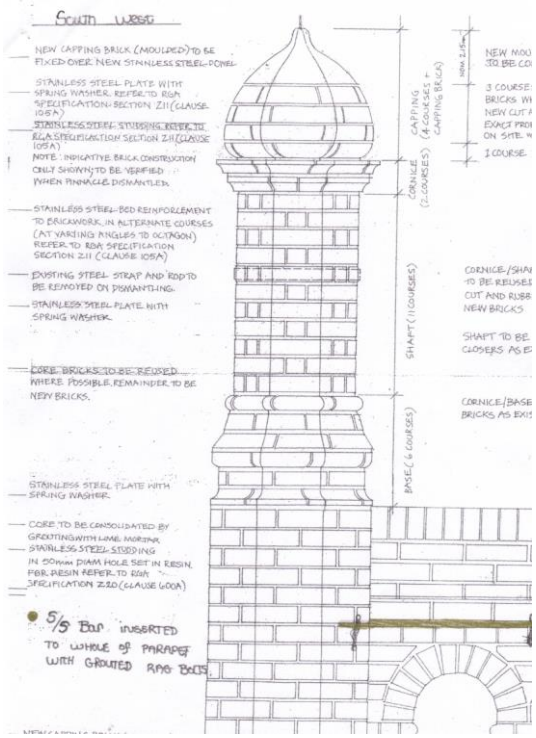
As for the pinnacles, all were leaning. The rusting iron braces tying them in looked impressive but once the scaffold was up we quickly realised that they were doing nothing as all the bolts on the back had rusted away. There is a scar on the outer brickwork which shows where a bracket has rubbed in the wind for years, also mockingly reminding us of our irrational fear of brickwork that is out true but otherwise perfectly sound. We initially thought that the pinnacles would have to be dismantled and rebuilt but our structural engineers, the Morton Partnership, advised otherwise. Remarkably, their innate stability comes mostly from compression, the mortar playing little or no structural role. The urgency of their stabilisation was in fact debatable, but while the scaffolding was up, we thought 'better to be safe than sorry.' Specialist contractors DJT Steel & Cladding Ltd were brought in, who cut through three of the pinnacles at the base and, with a lean and twist and some wedges, repositioned them. Stainless steel ring plates were applied to give low level restraint and the parapet was also strengthened with vertical ties.

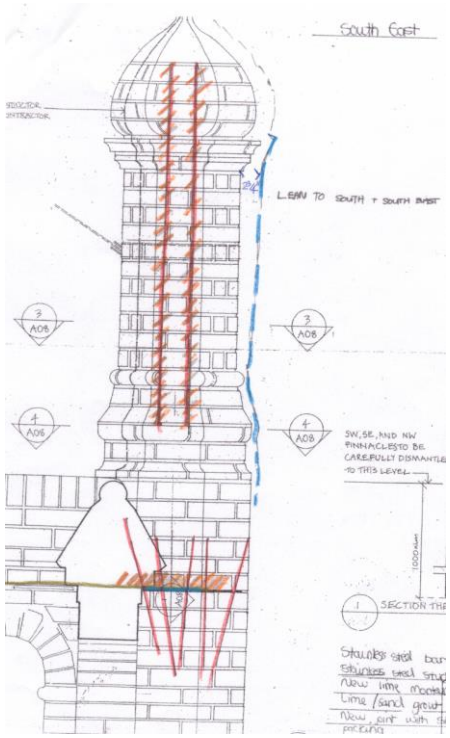
We did little in the way of landscaping, other than to emphasise the historic plateau on which the tower stands by re-establishing the levels around the tower where they had eroded and also by differentiating the plateau from the more natural setting of the park beyond. The chestnut tree beside the tower was heavily pruned prior to the restoration to allow scaffolding to fit and to remove

Specification for the Repair of the Pinnacles









Repairs to the pinnacles and parapet

The men who straightened….

… the leaning pinnacles

Coping stones waiting to be set.

The finished job, old bricks carefully reused with clumsy former repairs also apparent

diseased and unsafe branches – but it has kept the tower company for long enough to be allowed to stay.

One of the key people through the restoration was John Baldry who lived at nearby Freston Cottages. He and his wife had been Claire Hunt's gardener and housekeeper and keyholders, who kept an eye on security for her. Mr Baldry helped us with the same job and, at the end of the restoration in 2004, was appointed gardener, with Mrs Baldry as our first housekeeper – a happy continuum.

Henry Mann (site foreman) and Tim Hambling (plasterer) relaxing in the sun outside the tower, after a job well done!

Funding & Donor Acknowledgments

Landmark received grants from English Heritage and the Heritage Lottery Fund for the restoration of Freston Tower.

We also received generous support from the following trust funds:

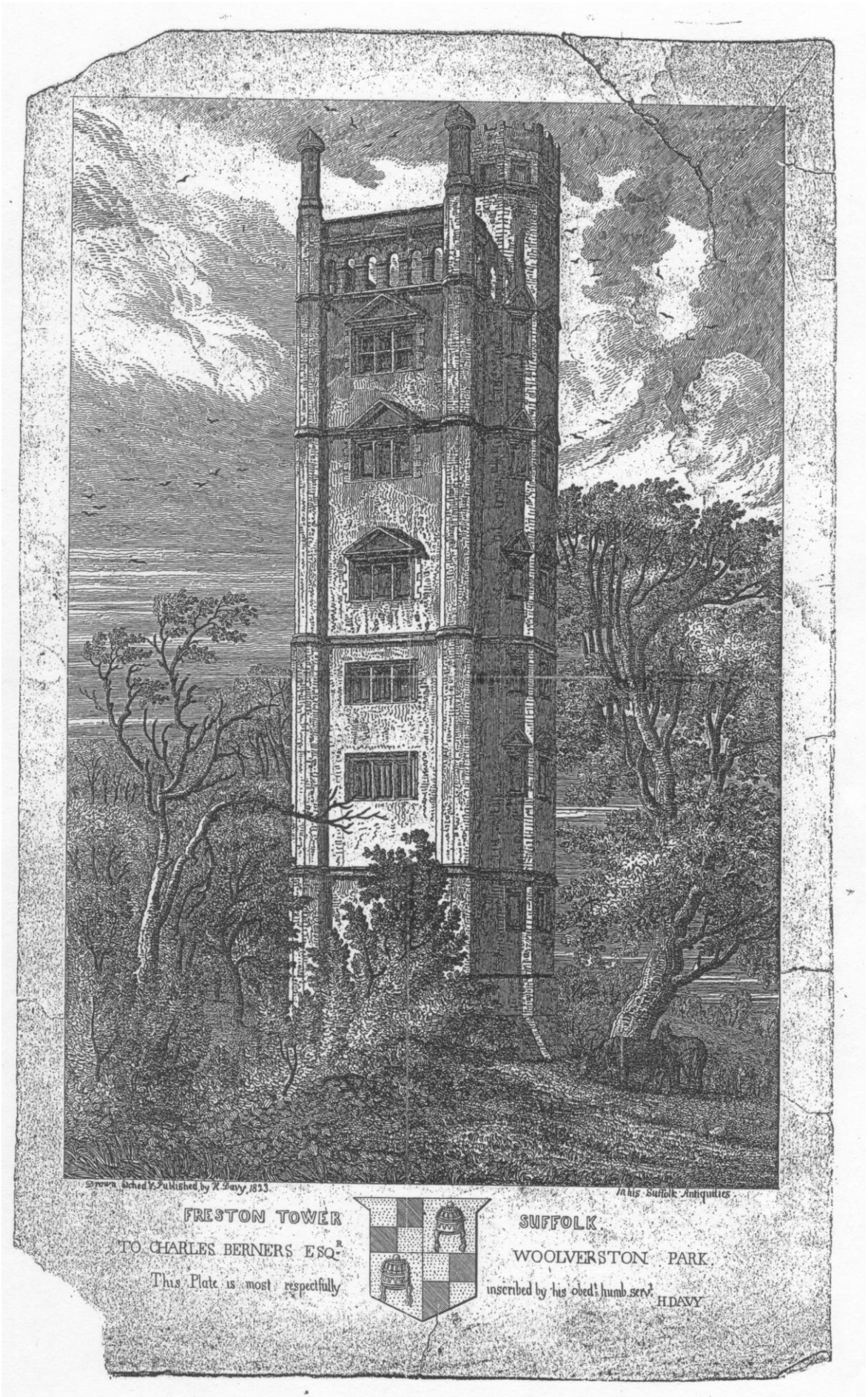
Fagus Anstruther Memorial Trust
Ian Askew Charitable Trust
Carpenter Charitable Trust
Mary Carter Charitable Trust
R & S Cohen Foundation
Alan Evans Memorial Trust
Stuart Heath Charitable Settlement
Idlewild Trust
Inverforth Charitable Trust
Nichols Trust
Scarfe Charitable Trust
RV & RH Simons Trust
Hazel Wood Charitable Trust
The Veneziana Fund

Alexander Wright and Sarah Newman left gifts in their wills. A funeral collection was made in memory of Ronald Quinn.

Dorcas Fowler made a gift in memoriam of her friend and fellow Landmarker, Gerard Evans.

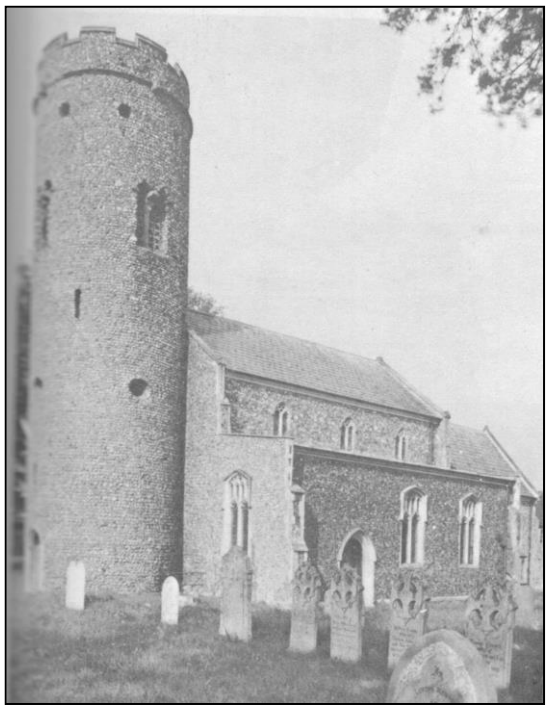
We would like to thank all the above for making the restoration of Freston Tower possible, as well as the many individuals who made donations to the project through the Freston Tower Appeal, including Patrons of The Landmark Appeal.

Finally, many of the books on the bookshelves were generously donated and chosen by Dr. Richard Jurd.

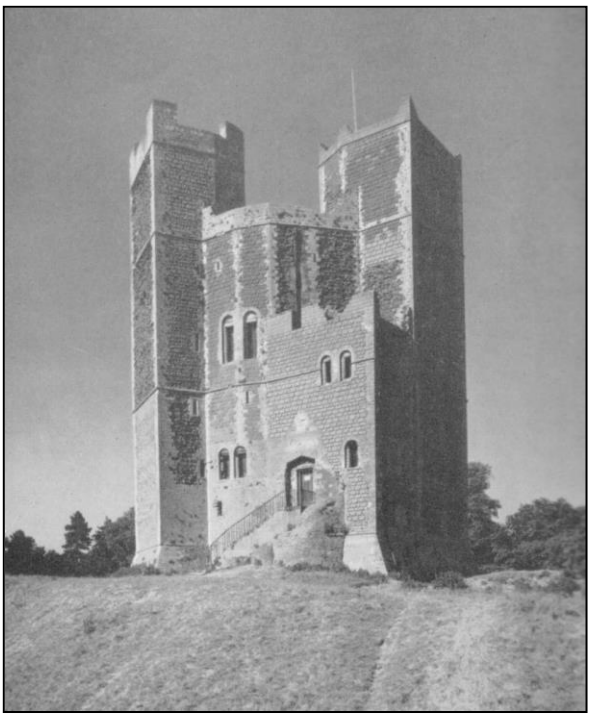


From H Davy's *Suffolk Antiquities* (1823)

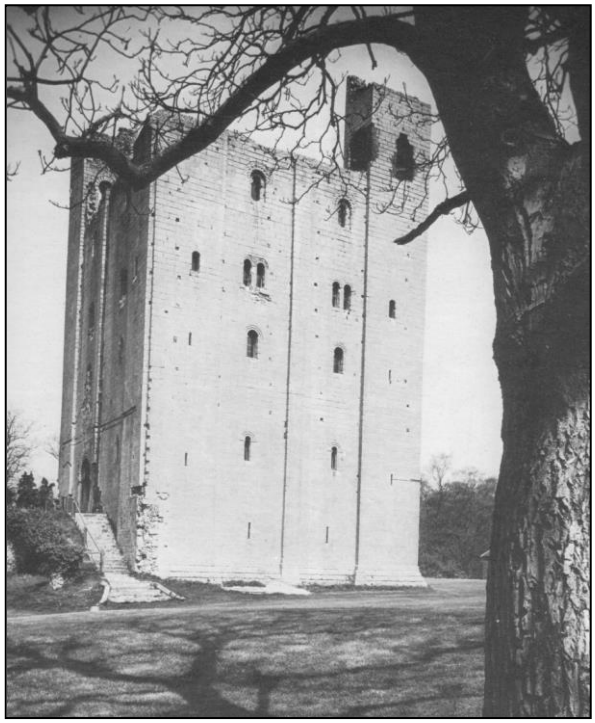
FRESTON IN CONTEXT OF EAST ANGLIAN TOWERS



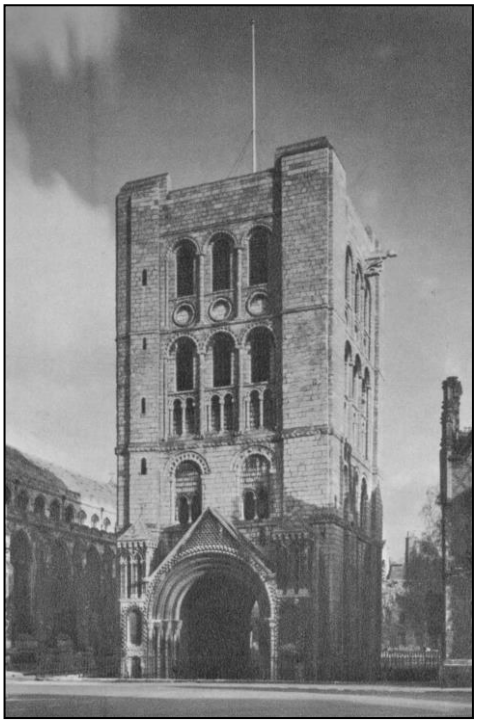
Forncett St Peter, Norfolk: a pre-conquest church tower.



The Norman tower keep at Orford in Suffolk (1165-7).



The magnificent tower keep at Hedingham Castle in Essex (*c.* 1140).



The Norman Tower in Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk.

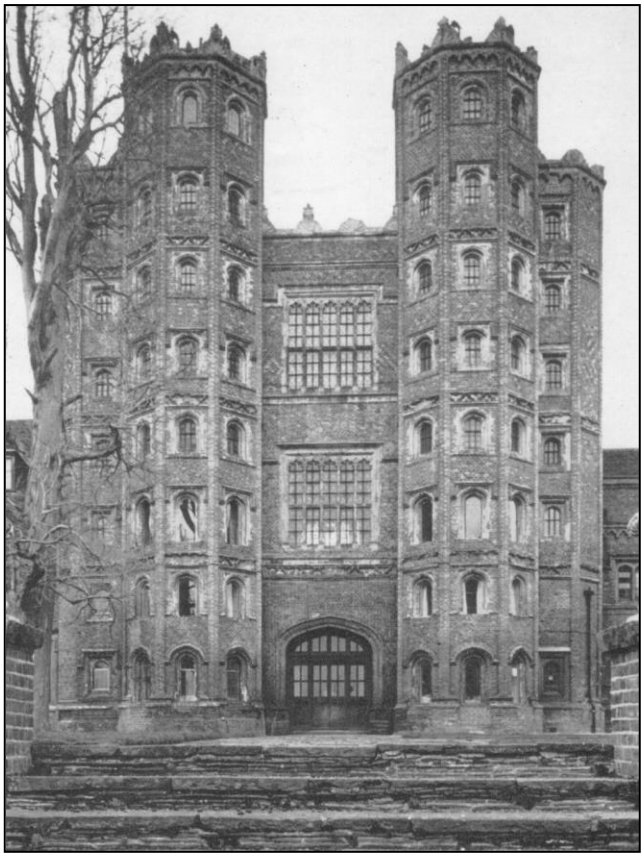
FRESTON IN CONTEXT OF EAST ANGLIAN TOWERS

The English have always loved building towers. There are a considerable number of pre-conquest church towers, eg at Forncett St Peter, in Norfolk, and a love for bell and change ringing ensured that the practice of building church towers continued into both the Georgian and Victorian eras. The Normans were masters of power building and their tower keeps at Orford, in Suffolk (c1170) and, unforgettably, at Castle Hedingham in Essex (c1140), showed lesser mortals exactly who was boss.

One of the finest ecclesiastical buildings erected in the twelfth century is the Norman Tower in Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, the mighty gateway to the abbey holding the relics of St Edmund. It was built of stone, but its basic form is remarkably similar to later brick gateways in East Anglia. Until the nineteenth century it boasted battlements. It is solidly square with protruding corners and string courses, and its central entrance arch is given prominence by size and decoration. More recently the tower has served as a campanile to the adjacent parish church of St James, now the Cathedral. The great bell tower that Henry VI proposed for King's College, Cambridge, was mentioned in all his plans for the college. It would have been square with pinnacles, and at over 120 feet high, would have soared over the chapel.

The Tudor Age was, however, the golden period for domestic towers, which can be divided into three groups: gatehouse towers, porch towers and prospect towers. Generally they were built of brick, had a viewing platform on the roof, and a chamber below, usually with large windows on all or most sides.
By the end of the fifteenth century prosperous private builders in East Anglia were beginning to erect gatehouse towers to dramatic effect. They were intended to demonstrate the importance of the builder to the world outside: power building at a time when ordinary people lived in humble single-storey dwellings. They all follow a similar form: brick with polygonal angle turrets, one of which was

The gatehouse at Christ's College, Cambridge (*c.* 1505, refaced in the 18thC)



The gatehouse at Layer Marney (*c.* 1520).

sometimes expanded to house the staircase. They are decorated with string courses, diapering, stone quoins, battlements, carved brickwork and terracotta. Edward Bedingfield, who obtained a Licence to Crenellate in 1482 from Edward IV, raised a monumental tower at Oxburgh Hall in Norfolk, which is not dissimilar to Archdeacon Pykenham's deanery gatehouse of 1495, of red brick with elaborate diapering, at Hadleigh, in Suffolk.

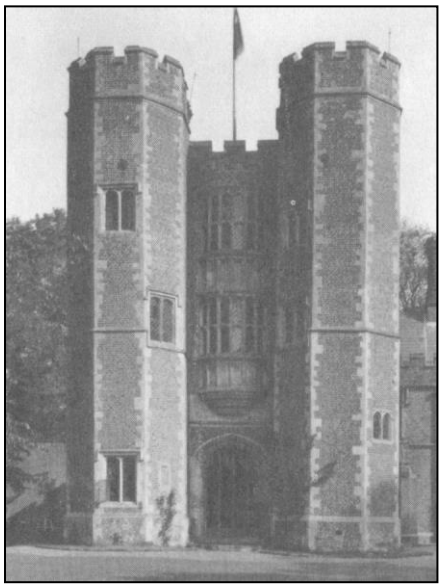
To this group may be added the finely decorated gateways of three colleges at Cambridge: St John's and Christ's (the latter in stone, but both founded at the beginning of the sixteenth century by Lady Margaret Beaufort, the mother of Henry VII) and Trinity, refounded by Henry VIII. East Anglia is perfect terrain for tower builders. One who took full advantage of the coastal flat lands of Essex was Sir Henry, later Lord Marney, whose tower can be see from miles away. A Privy Councillor to both Henry VII and Henry VIII, the gatehouse he built at Layer Marney rivalled everyone else's. Pevsner wrote the following description:

> *Lord Marney's showpiece is a gatehouse with four towers, higher than any other Tudor mansions that had preceded his. These gatehouses were the ambition of the age. They were no longer needed for fortification and reached fantastic heights of display, especially in the brick counties of the East.*

It seems therefore, that gatehouse towers were the preserve of the royal circle in the first half of the sixteenth century.

Within four miles of Freston was a gatehouse (demolished 1843) built by one of the most famous Tudor courtiers: Thomas Wolsey. The Cardinal's short-lived college in Ipswich, intended as a feeder-school for Cardinal College (which became Christ Church) in Oxford, was founded in 1528. The principal northern entrance to the college was through a brick tower house of five storeys, three on a square plan, surmounted by a two-storey turret with a smaller staircase turret attached; and like Freston, it probably had polygonal corner buttresses. The King dismissed Wolsey because he failed to arrange a divorce from Catharine of

The surviving gatehouse to Cardinal Wolsey's Short-lived college in Ipswich, founded in 1528.



The gatehouse tower is all that remains of Lord North's house at Kirtling (1530).

Aragon, suppressed his college, and seized the building materials for use at Whitehall, which had formerly been Wolsey's own York Place.

The dissolution of the monasteries under Henry VIII poured wealth into the pockets of those officers ordered to implement it. The first Baron North (son of a London merchant and Chancellor of the Court of Augmentation, which was set up to dispose of monastic spoils) spent lavishly on a new house at Kirtling, on the border between Cambridgeshire and Suffolk. Today, its gatehouse tower is the only remnant and its stone quoins, crenellations and two-storey oriel window represent the conspicuous display beloved of new money. Another crown officer to benefit from the dissolution was the unlikeable first Baron Rich, who acquired Leez Priory in Essex, idyllically situated on the River Ter, near Felsted. Richard Rich, pilloried in Robert Bolt's play about Sir Thomas More, *A Man for All Seasons*, put up an impressive three-storey gatehouse tower there similar to those mentioned above at the three Cambridge colleges.

Finally, whilst not strictly a tower, Erwarton gatehouse in Suffolk must be included here. More of a celebration of turrets (there are no fewer than eight), it may be contemporary with Freston Tower.

The idiosyncratic gatehouse at Erwarton, probably built by a contemporary of Thomas Gooding though dated by Pevsner to 1549 on heraldic grounds.

The gatehouse to Leez Priory in Essex (*c.* 1540).

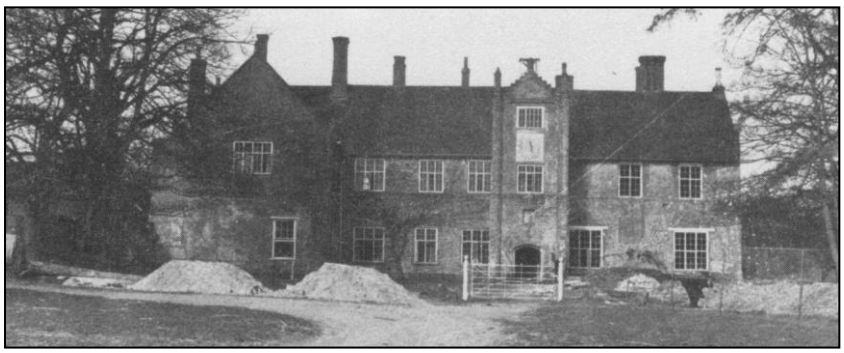
Of the Norfolk and Suffolk estates that the Parkers inherited by marriage from the Calthorpes, Sir Philip Parker sold the Norfolk ones and settled at Erwarton. He was knighted by Queen Elizabeth on her 1578 progress to West Suffolk, so perhaps he too built the gateway to impress his monarch on her visit to Ipswich the next year. The village of Erwarton lies a few miles beyond Freston on the Shotley Peninsular and this impressive gatehouse is further evidence of the tradition of decorative brickwork in this area in the sixteenth century. It did not, however, find favour with Captain Francis Grose who wrote in the Suffolk section of his 'Antiquities of England and Wales',

> *The gate is, by travellers, generally noticed as a curiosity, not for the beauty, but extreme singularity of its form, which alone has procured it a place in this work. From the whimsical taste of its construction, it was probably erected about the time of Elizabeth, or James I. A period when architecture seems to have been at its lowest ebb; the buildings of those days being neither Grecian or Gothick, but an unnatural and discordant jumble of both.*

The second category of Tudor tower often found on East Anglian houses is the porch tower, where the porch has two or more storeys rising into the roof - a lower version of Freston Tower attached to the front of a house. They can be dated to the second half of the sixteenth century with a few examples belonging to the early years of the reign of King James I. Some have been demolished, such as the one at Shadingfield Old Hall, but there are five other good examples existing in Suffolk alone. Three are fairly close together in the east of the county: Thorpe Hall, Horham; Fleming's Hall, Bedingfield; and Bruisyard Hall, near Framlingham. Haughley Park is in the centre of the county, and Coldham Hall, Stanningfield is to the south west. Their common elements are pedimented six-light windows and, with the exception of Bruisyard, pedimented entrance archways, stepped gables, buttresses, and pinnacles. The grandest example is Coldham Hall where the buttresses are in the form of two orders of fluted pilasters, with an eight-light first floor window. Thorpe Hall has the tallest porch with four storeys, the others have three, apart from Fleming's Hall, which has a two-storeyed timber-framed porch faced with brick.

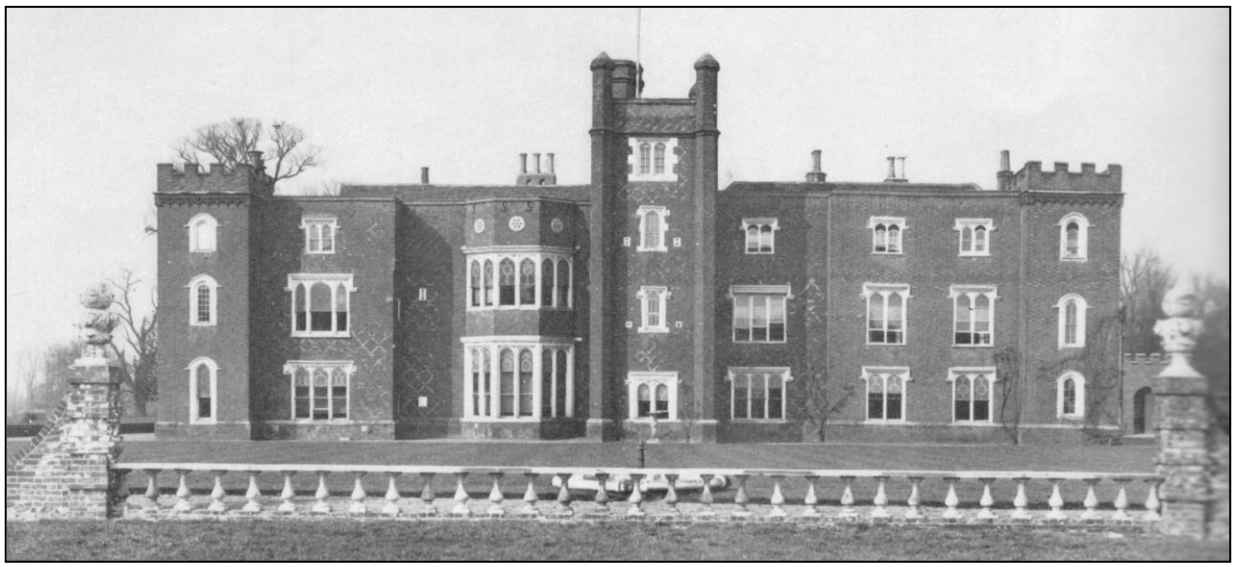
TUDOR PORCH TOWERS

From top: Fleming's Hall, Bedingfield (*c.* 1586); Coldham Hall, Stanningfield (1574) and Bruisyard Hall, near Framlingham (*c.* 1540).



In 1574, Robert Rookwood started building Coldham Hall on land owned by his family since the reign of Edward III. (Ambrose Rookwood was implicated in the Gunpowder Plot and executed in 1605.) Fleming's Hall was built c1586 by a branch of the Bedingfield family from Oxburgh, contemporary with Freston Tower and Coldham. Bruisyard Hall was built by Michael, the son of Sir Nicholas Hare, Master of Requests to Henry VIII and Edward VI, Chief Justice, and Master of the Rolls, and of the Privy Council to Queen Mary. Haughley Park has been dated to c1620, the estate having been granted to Sir John Sulyard in return for his service to Queen Mary in 1554. The date of Thorpe Hall is uncertain, but the ten-light windows on either side of the porch indicate a date towards the end of the sixteenth century. Coldham and Fleming's Halls were built by ancient families; and Bruisyard and Haughley Park were erected with money from royal service.

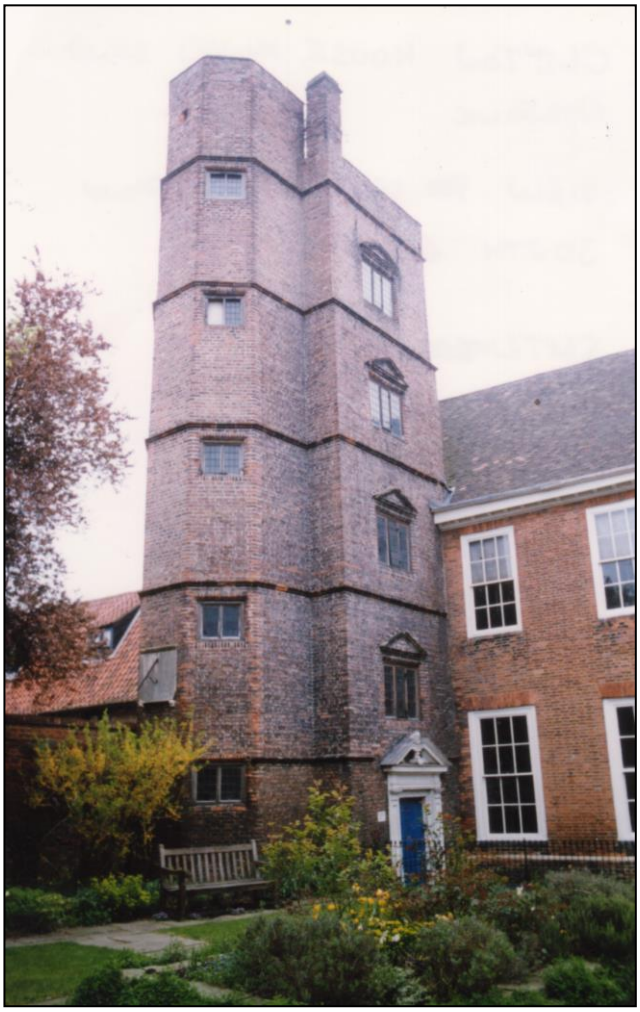
The final category of Tudor domestic tower is the prospect tower, and it is into this section that Freston fits. Often serving both a practical and recreational purposes, they are two-way buildings: meant to be admired from the outside but to provide views from within or on top as well. The tower at Freston was meant to be admired from the south entrance side but its show side faces the River Orwell, with its polygonal staircase studded with a multitude of windows. The prospect tower at Belhus, near Aveley in Essex, (demolished in 1957), was strikingly similar to Freston. Since the tower was part of the façade at Belhus, the staircase is incorporated in a rear turret although, as at Freston, it projects higher that the three other pinnacles. Belhus was built by John Barrett, a notable lawyer, who died in 1526, and described it as "newly builded" in his will. The Thames is two miles away and would have been visible from the top of the four-storey tower, decorated in the same way as Freston with angle buttresses, pinnacles and diapering. There is an arcade around the platform at Freston, but the parapet is plain at Belhus. The similarity is so strong that it is tempting to think that Thomas Gooding had seen Belhus on a journey to London by water and created his own free-standing version at Freston.



Belhus, near Aveley in Essex, built in the 1520s. Sadly demolished in 1957, the profile of its gatehouse tower is strikingly similar to that of Freston Tower.

At St Osyth's Priory, also in Essex, where Lord D'Arcy created a splendid house after the dissolution, the lookout tower terminates the south-east end of the main range. It is a striking piece of architecture faced in chequered limestone and septaria (or so-called pudding stone). As in so many other cases, the St Osyth prospect tower is a waterside building, facing westwards over the mouth of the River Colne and east towards the North Sea. John, Lord D'Arcy, married Frances, the daughter of Lord Rich of Leez Priory. Was this an example of keeping up with the father-in-law?

The Freston tower, dated to 1579, is directly comparable to two Norfolk towers, at Clifton House in King's Lynn and Bracondale in Norwich, and for the first time a whiff of commerce enters the picture along with display and recreation. We know that the Freston and King's Lynn towers (and very probably Bracondale too) were created by men of business, one overlooking the Orwell and the other the Great Ouse river, where their ships could be seen plying to and fro.



Clifton Tower, King's Lynn, in 1996 before its recent restoration and some of the wonderful wallpaintings which adorn its interior. There is no evidence of any comparable paintings at Freston.

In his report on Freston, Bill Wilson wrote:

> *The Clifton Tower has five stages rather than six and has a plan consisting of rectangular rooms one above the other linked by a winder staircase to the south, which rises above the parapet … It is externally less decorative than Freston, without polygonal corner buttresses or brick diaper and with timber mullioned windows rather than brick ones which remain of the same size and dimension to each stage. In addition the internal rooms are lit from two sides only up to the third floor because of the existence of a wing of Clifton House abutting it and communicating with it on two levels …The principal look-out room however, on the fourth floor, had a third three-light mullioned window facing north toward The Wash, since blocked. All these principal windows are pedimented.*
>
> *The dating of Clifton Tower is problematic, but the evidence points to only three candidates as builders: George Walden, in which case the date must be 1577-79 (directly contemporary with Freston), and either Alderman John Spence or Thomas Snellinge who could have built it at any time between 1589 – 1623. Stylistically 1610 would fit all the details, and especially the important wall paintings which decorate the second-floor room.*

Walden and Spence were Lynn merchants, while Snellinge was mayor in 1623. All three were, or had been, rising forces in the political, commercial and social spheres of the town, and must have been the kind of men with whom Thomas Gooding could easily sympathise.

The tower at Bracondale on the outskirts of Norwich has strong similarities with Clifton and Freston. It was probably built early in the 17th century and is of brick with string courses, battlements and pedimented windows. The staircase is in a square block at the back, with mullioned two light windows, whereas the windows on the main front are bigger and grander than those at Freston or Clifton, with transoms and eight lights. It is located within a mile of the River Wensum.

In comparison with Bracondale and Clifton, which could be described as masculine buildings, Freston Tower is more feminine. It has none of the heavy, geometrical blocking of the former two, and all the decoration is concentrated on the outside with surprisingly bare interiors, in direct contrast to Clifton, with its relatively plain exterior but comfortable interior with fireplaces and wall paintings.

It seems likely that Freston Tower's internal decoration took the form rather of 'soft furnishings'. From his will, we know that Thomas Gooding, as a successful mercer, was fond of tapestries and luxurious velvets, silks, and satins. It is therefore almost certain that he would have hung the top chamber with textiles, and in the account of the tower in his *History and Description of Ipswich,* 1830, George Rix Clarke writes:

> *The best apartment seems to have been on the fifth storey: it is higher than any of the others; and was, probably, hung with tapestry as the small nails yet left in the wood seem to indicate. The top is formed by a number of open arches, and each of the small turrets at the angles terminates in a pinnacle.*

The polygonal staircase tower at Freston provides a further excuse for display, with its numerous windows, and the balustrade and pinnacles give the whole an elongated, elegant appearance. The battlements, that have been replaced on the staircase tower, add to the lively silhouette, and the rendered window dressings, meant to imitate stone, once again give the windows a pleasing accent from afar. The original rendered dressings succeeded in fooling various writers, one of whom described it as Caen stone.

The original 'porch' remains a mystery for it seems that the original entrance was at first floor, directly above the present front door, and that the structure was decorative with what appears to be the outline of two pinnacles on either side. That the arrangement was original seems to be confirmed by the fact that the string course between the ground and first floors was not continued on the south/entrance side.

Having admired the view from the top room, Gooding's visitors and family would have proceeded to the roof, where curiously, the best prospect, uninterrupted by the staircase tower, is to the south away from the river. On their way down, they would not fail to notice the shield displaying the new coat of arms above the door. 1580 was the heyday for Elizabethan banquets, when dessert (or the banquet course) was taken out of doors or in a banqueting house, specially built for the purpose. As at the Banqueting Houses at Chipping Campden, here the

family came at the end of the main meal, to drink rare wines and eat fruit, small cakes and sweetmeats, while enjoying the outlook over the garden. It is not difficult to imagine Thomas Gooding, the elderly grandfather possibly somewhat short of breath after his climb, and his family, gathering on top of the tower doing exactly the same as the Hicks at Campden, but enjoying the outlook over something that encompassed just a little more than a garden.

Julia Abel Smith

In Chelmsford, there is a small terrace of houses dated 1904, called Freston Terrace. The date plaque includes a fine, three dimensional depiction of Freston Tower. Who its builder was, and what connection he may have had with Freston Tower, has yet to be discovered!