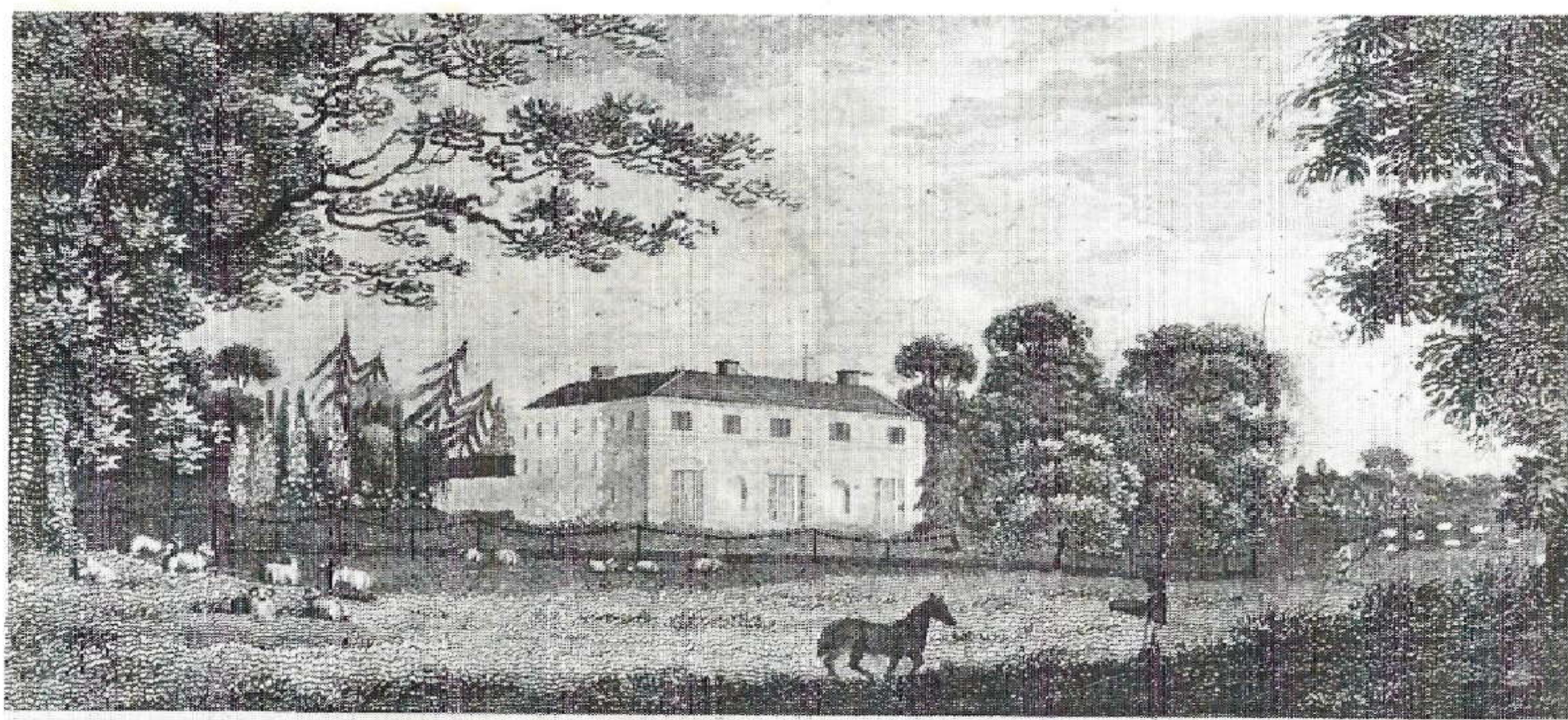


WHERSTEAD

*People and events
associated with the
Head Office of
Eastern Electricity*



The Seat of Sir Robert Mordaunt Bart. at Wherstead near Ipswich, Suffolk.



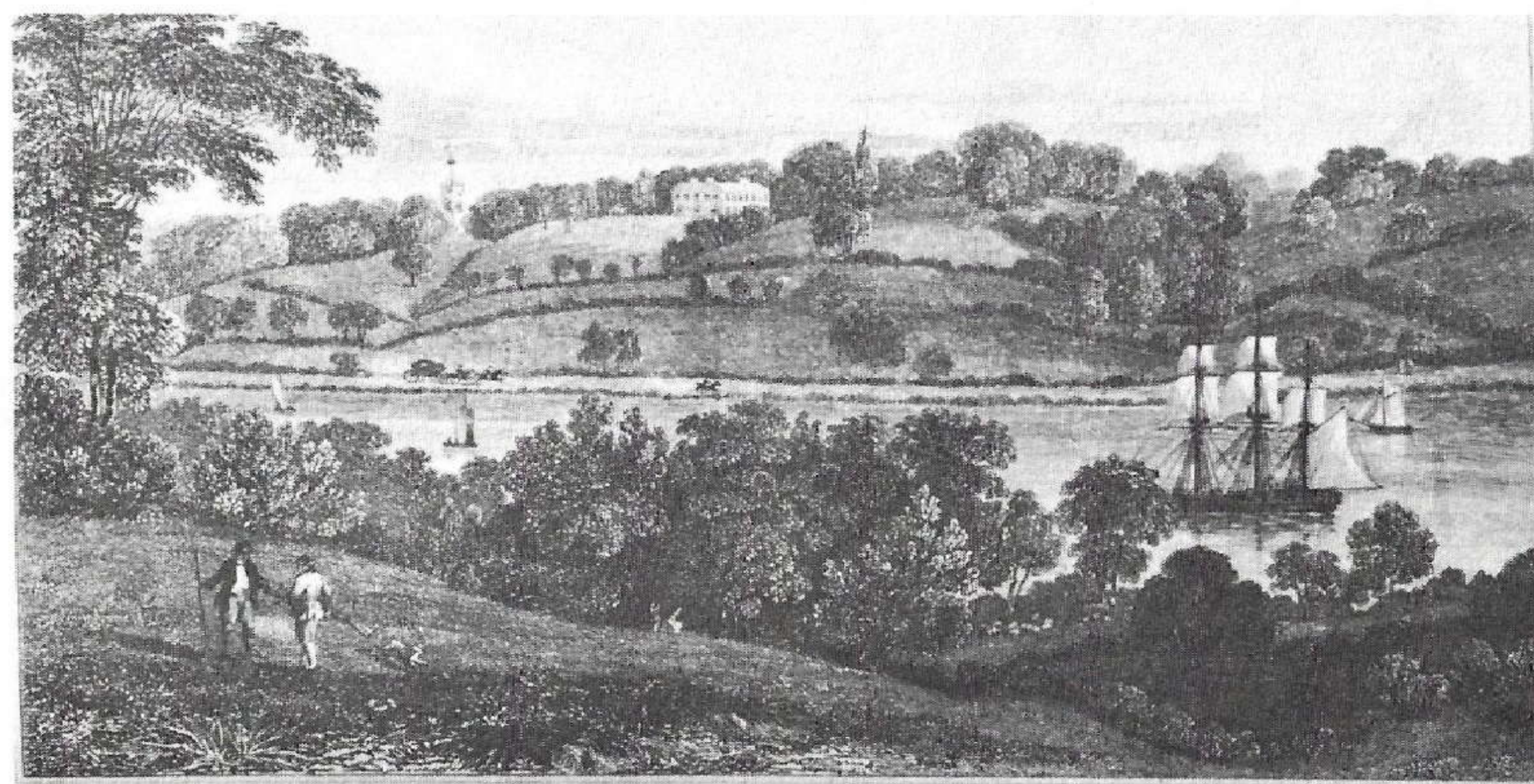
Wherstead, the head office of Eastern Electricity, stands in the Parish of Wherstead some three miles to the south of Ipswich, with fine views over the Orwell Estuary.

It came into the possession of Eastern Electricity in 1948 along with 16 acres of grounds and, under the conscientious stewardship of the Board, this fine historical country house has been maintained, improved and augmented. The old house subtly blends with the extensions which have transformed a country residence into the headquarters of a major public authority serving seven million people who live and work in an 8,000 square mile area of Eastern England.

In 1977 the stable block of the old house was restored and renovated, a Jubilee Year preservation which had the added advantage of providing an attractive working environment for the Board's architects.

WHERSTEAD

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WHERSTEAD LODGE, SUFFOLK, the Residence of the RT HON. VISCT GRANVILLE



River Orwell from Wherstead

Wherstead Mansion appears in Domesday (1086) as part of the Manor of Bourn Hall, one of seven manors now in the Parish of Wherstead. In his book on Wherstead, the Rev. Barham Zincke, local historian and Rector of Wherstead, identifies the manors as Wherstead Hall, Bluegate Farm, Bourn Hall, Thorrington Hall, Pannington Hall, Lees or Smiths Farm and Redgate Farm.

Wherstead and Wolsey

The Manor of Bourn Hall was at one stage vested in the Priory of St. Peter at Ipswich, and in 1528 when the Priory was suppressed by the Pope, the Manor was granted to Cardinal Wolsey, who conveyed it to his Cardinal's College in 1529. In 1530 the College presented one vicar to the living of Wherstead, a fact which is recorded in the Church.

Wolsey was born in Ipswich in the early 1470s, the son of a poor man, probably an innkeeper or butcher. He rose rapidly through the Church, being successively Archbishop of York (1514) Lord Chancellor and Cardinal (1515) and Papal Legate (1518) a role which gave him complete power over the Church in England. He set out to establish a College at Oxford (Christ Church, begun in 1525), associated with a College or School at Ipswich.

A Papal Bull in 1526 sanctioned the establishment of the college at Ipswich. Wolsey also obtained from the King licence to build a college in the Parish of St. Matthew in Ipswich or in any convenient place in the town. A site of about six acres near the Orwell (the Priory of St. Peter) was chosen. Before the end of May 1528 Wolsey obtained from Pope Clement VII bulls for suppression of St. Peter's and seven other monasteries in East Anglia and the appropriation of their lands as well as the advowsons of five Suffolk churches for his college. The Charter of the college dedicates it to the Virgin Mary and provides for it to be known as the Cardinals College of Ipswich.

The foundation stone of the Ipswich College is now at Christ Church, Oxford, and on it is written in Latin "In the year of Christ 1528 and the 20th of Henry VIII King of England on 15th day of June laid John Bishop of Lydda". In September 1528 121 tons of stone were delivered to the Ipswich site. One thousand tons were promised before Easter. Temporary use was made of the Priory and of the church, St. Peter's, enabling the college to be in being in 1528. The Corporation of Ipswich agreed the college should take over the Ipswich Grammar School endowments and lands, although this was never in fact carried through and the transfer in the Court Record is marked "vacat".

The indictment against Wolsey was dated 3 November 1529. Wolsey was pardoned in February 1530 and allowed to retain his appointment as Archbishop of York. The fate of Wolsey's education project was in the balance. Christ Church was saved but not Ipswich. At Michaelmas 1530 the Commissioners' verdict was that all its endowments (including the Manor of Bourn Hall and the advowson) should be forfeited to the King by reason of the praemunire of Wolsey (i.e. overriding the common law by the misuse of his ecclesiastical

authority as Papal Legate). Wolsey died some two months later. The college building was demolished and the stone used for the Royal Palace of Whitehall previously the Cardinal's Palace known as York House. Wolsey's Gate is the only remaining fragment.

Sir Edward Coke – Chief Justice

In 1609 the manor of Bourn Hall was purchased by Sir Edward Coke. Coke (1525–1634) was the Chief Justice of England. He was called to the Bar at the Inner Temple in 1578 and became Recorder of Norwich in 1586. Six years later he was Recorder of London and nominated as speaker of the House of Commons, and 1593 became Attorney-General, in which post he led the State trials of Essex and Raleigh. Coke is described by Trevelyan as 'one of the most disagreeable figures in our history' and 'the most brutal Attorney-General who ever served the Stuarts'.

In 1606 Coke was made Chief Justice of Common Pleas. In this capacity he opposed James I when he tried to revive the Court of High Commission, hitherto used only in ecclesiastical trials, and to subject everybody to its jurisdiction, from which there was no appeal. At the insistence of Bacon, Coke was made Chief Justice of the King's Bench, and over 'Commendams' which concerned the rights of Bishops to hold other valuable posts, he lost his job.

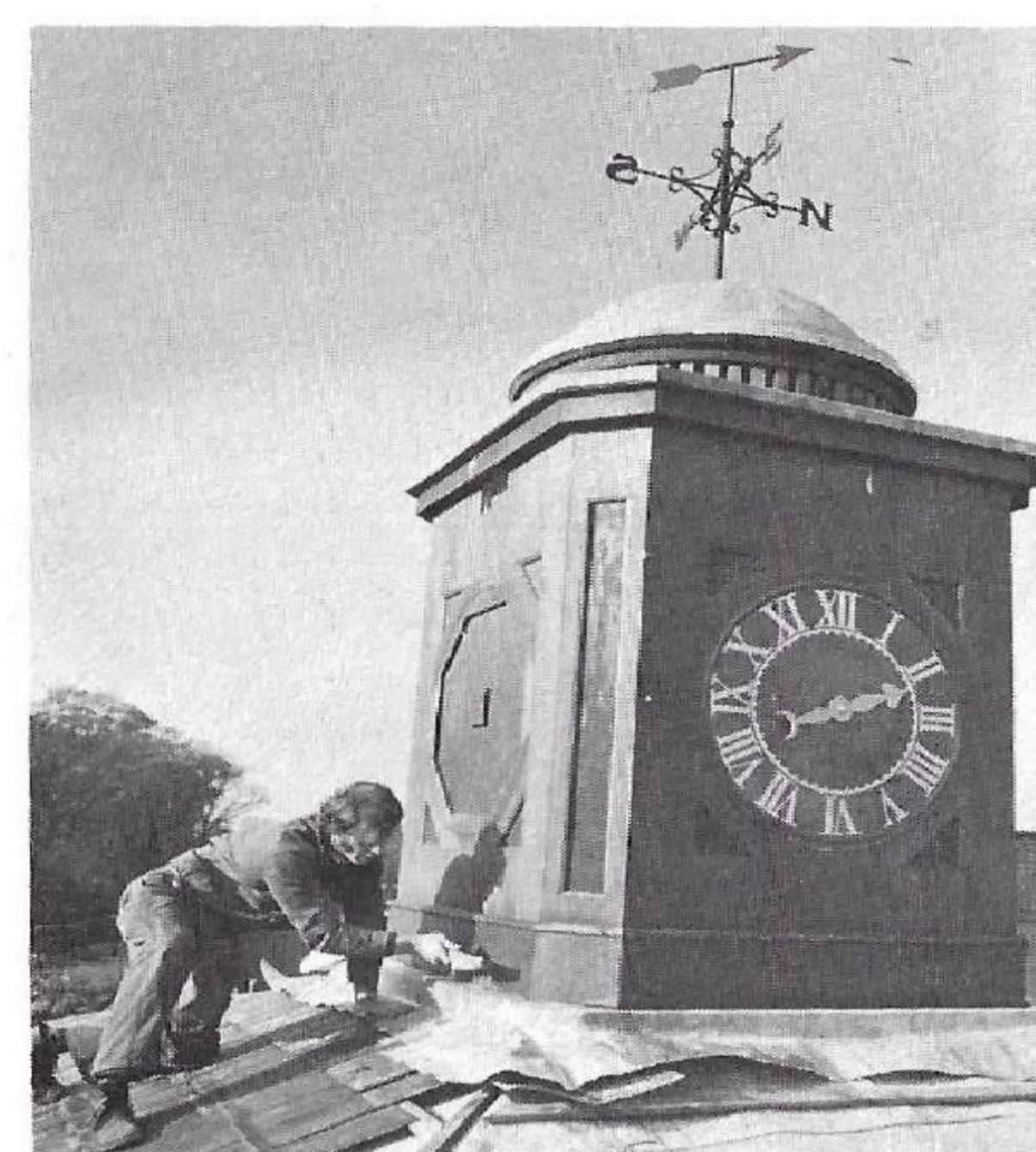
At 65 Coke took up a career as a statesman, opposed James and was put in the Tower. Whilst there he continued with his legal work and was released in 1622. He continued in the House of Commons and when Charles I required money for wars with Spain and France in 1628 the Commons insisted on considering grievances first and at Coke's insistence framed the famous 'Petition of Right'.

Sale of the Manor to Admiral Harland

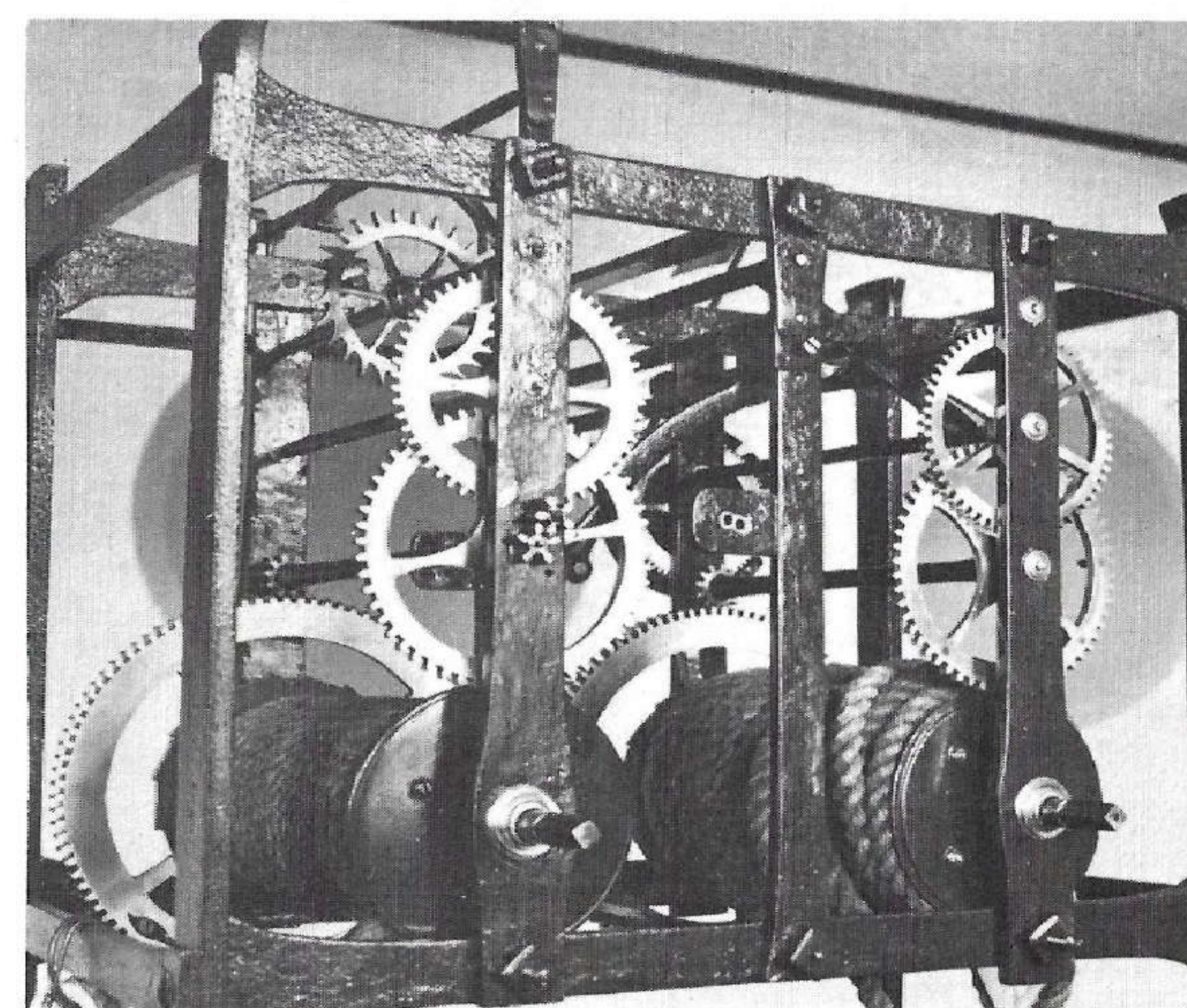
Chief Justice Coke held extensive lands and provided in his lifetime estates for each of his younger sons. In later years these large estates, which included the manor of Bourn Hall and lands in Wherstead, were added to the Great Estate of the family in addition to properties which their wives brought with them.

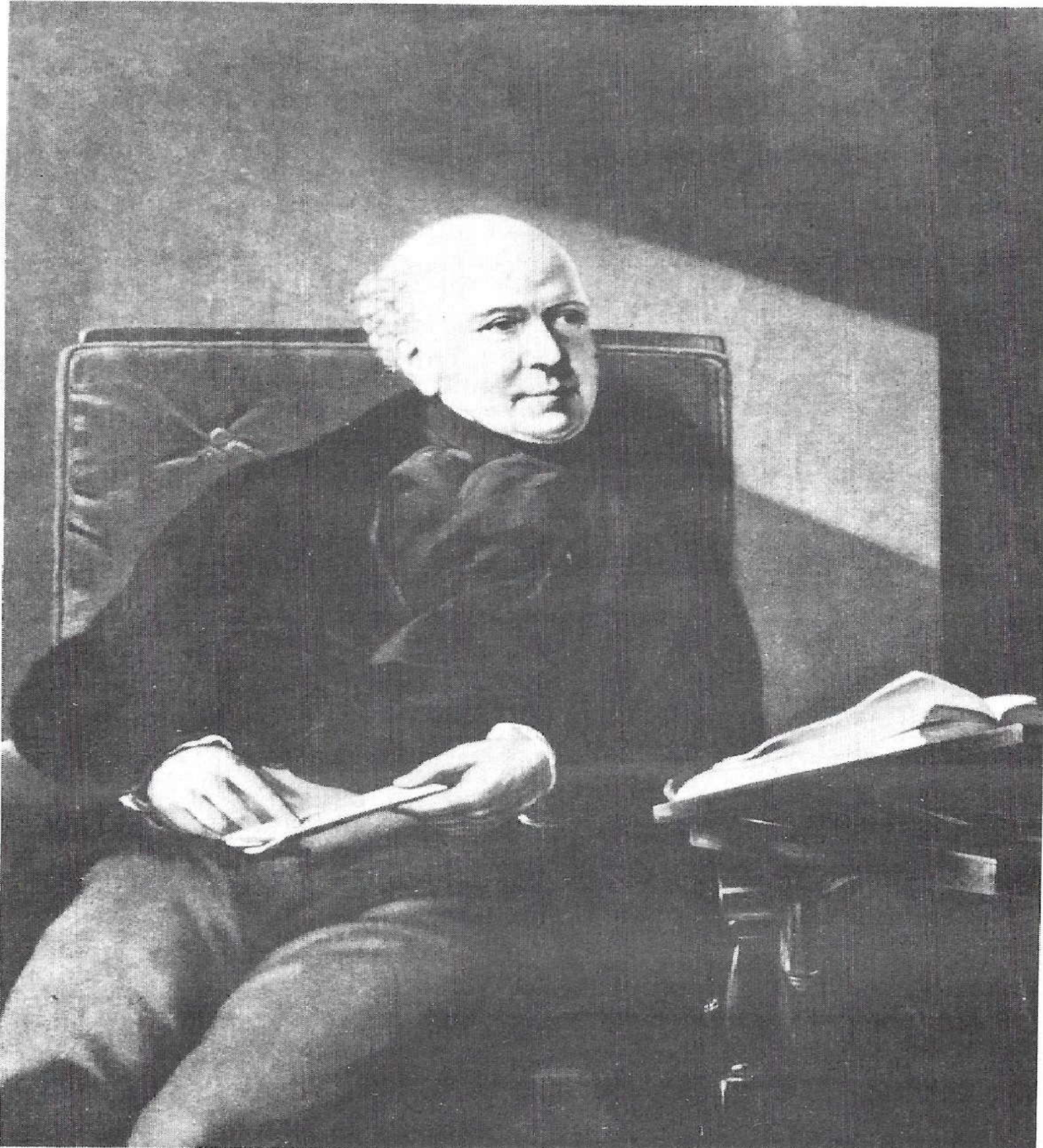
Various manors in Wherstead, including that of Bourn Hall, were purchased by Sir Robert Harland (Bt.) on 26 December 1780 from Thomas William Coke for £17,000.

Sir Robert Harland had been promoted Admiral in 1770 and created Baronet in 1771. He was Commander in Chief East Indies and Plenipotentiary to the Nabob of Arcot up to 1775. He commanded the Channel Fleet under Keppel and on Keppel's court martial, following the escape of the French fleet off Ushant, resigned in 1779 on a point of principle. In 1782 when Keppel became First Lord, Harland was appointed a Lord Commissioner of the Admiralty. He was married twice, first to Miss Marlow of Ipswich and secondly to Susannah Reynold by whom he had four children including a son, Sir Robert Harland.



The clock surmounting the stable block was taken down from the tower at the beginning of the restoration work and carefully restored by Michael Wood and Harry Cook of Eastern Electricity. It is believed to date from about 1690; a second face was added later. The bell, dated 1750, was found to be cracked and was recast by the Whitechapel Bell Foundry. It is a single handed clock, striking the hours. The clock tower has been restored as far as possible to the original design.

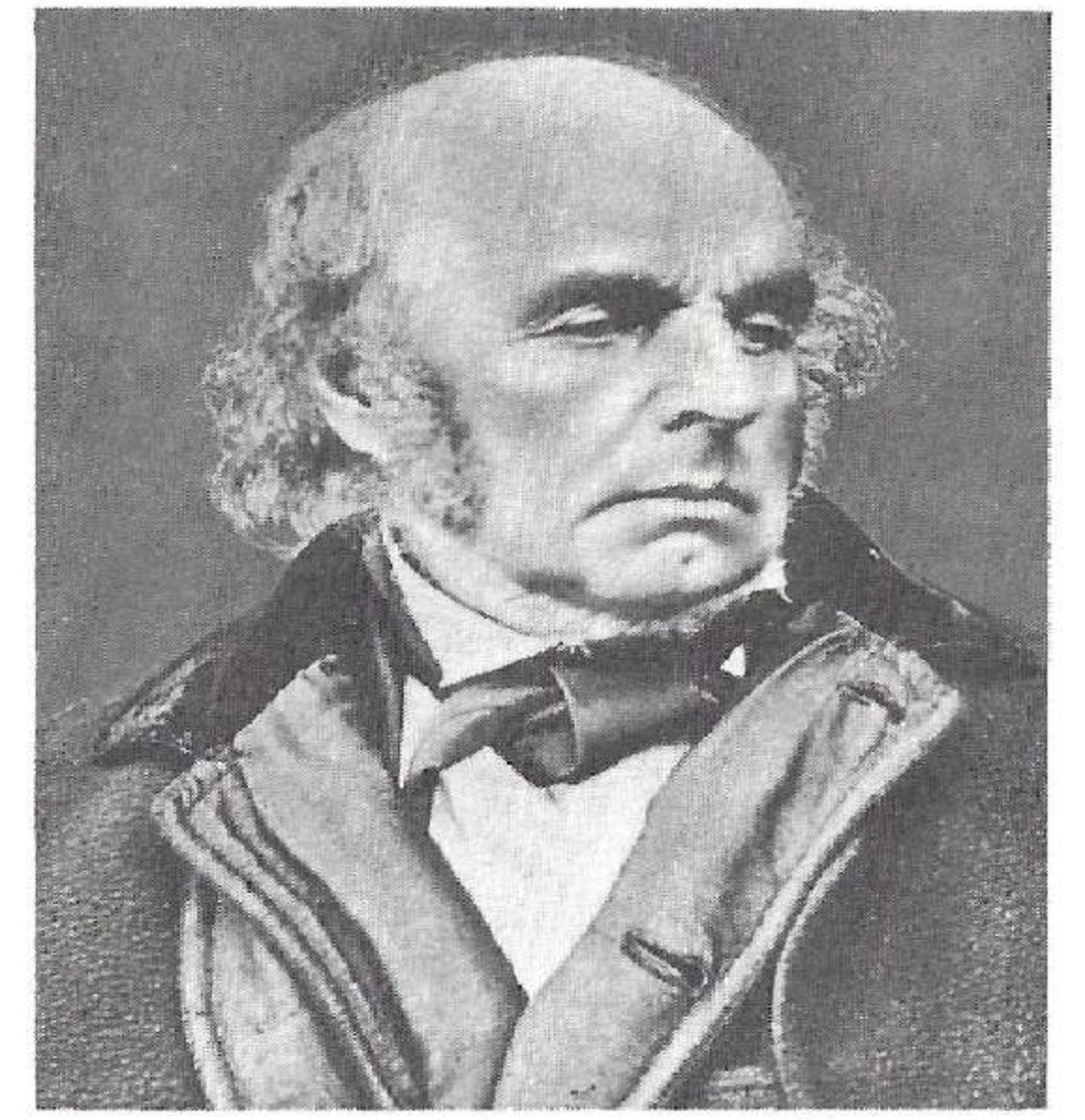




Sir Robert Harland, (2nd Bt.), Aged 78



Chief Justice Coke (1552-1634) by Paul Van Somer. Given to the Inner Temple by Mrs. Anne Sadleir.



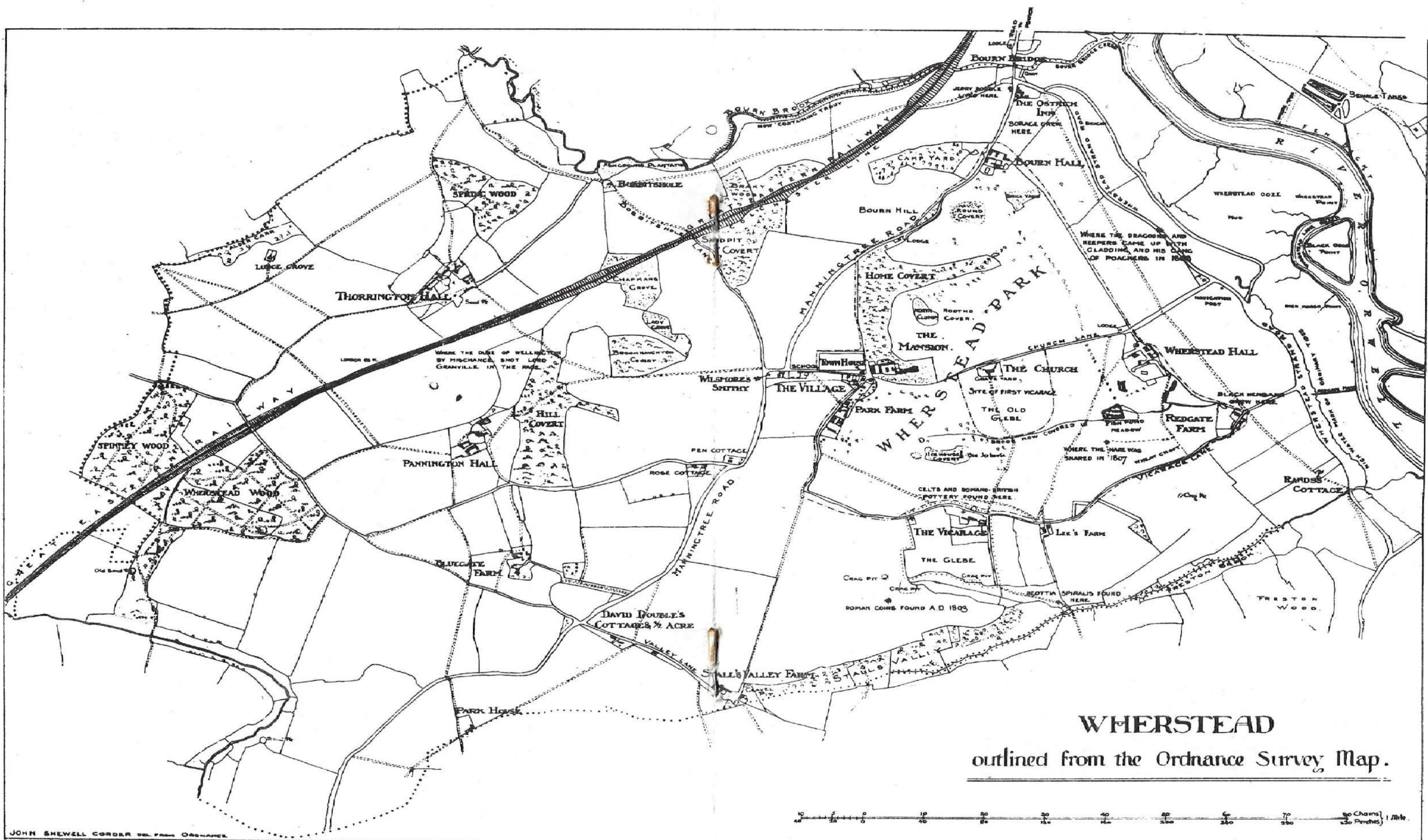
Edward Fitzgerald

Purchase of the House by the Harlands

The actual house on which Eastern Electricity's head office (shown on the map as The Mansion) now stands had been in separate ownership from the Manor of Bourn Hall, and the house on it had been occupied successively by an Abraham Spurling and a Charles Lucas. It was sold in 1714 for £460 to Ellis Brand who rebuilt it and sold it in 1748. Brand, who had been a Rear-Admiral in the Navy, is buried in Wherstead Churchyard.

In 1791 the house was sold to Dame Susannah Harland, widow of the first Sir Robert, and the following year it was substantially extended by her son Sir Robert Harland at a cost of £50,000. It seems likely that it was at this time that the main centre section of the present stable block was built.

The origins of the stable block as a whole are unclear, but a 1637 map in the possession of Suffolk Record Office shows a house with some outbuildings approximately on the site of the present structures.



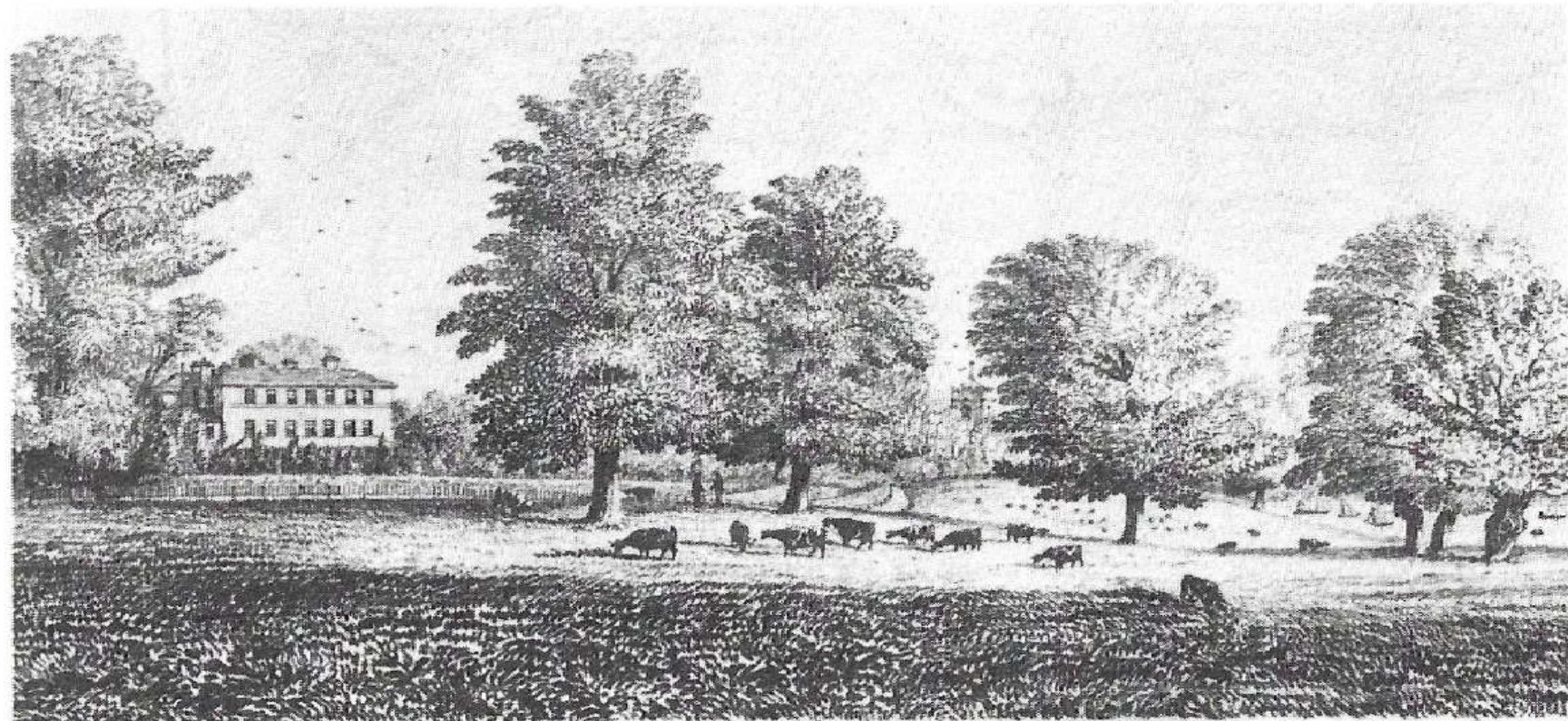
WHERSTEAD
outlined from the Ordnance Survey Map.

In 1798 Lady Nelson, writing to her husband then serving in the Mediterranean, referred to Sir Robert as friendly, but added that "no gentlewoman ever went to his house". She did however, visit Wherstead — "the house not finished, a want of money they say is the cause". Lady Nelson was shocked by the bedroom decorations, being "not at all gratified by the indecent ornaments of a gay young man, fine naked figures and very handsome looking glasses at the bottom of the bedstead".

The Rev. Barham Zincke attributed the 1792 extension to Sir Jeffrey Wyattville, but this now seems doubtful as in 1792 Jeffrey was a young man of 26 who had just entered James Whyat's office, and it is improbable that in his first year he secured a commission worth £50,000. Moreover, as architect to George III, Sir Jeffrey was meticulous in listing his distinguished clients, and the name of Sir Robert Harland is nowhere mentioned by him.

The grounds of the house were laid out by Humphry Repton in 1792/94 and it is interesting to note that among this landscape architect's other projects was the laying out of the grounds of Milton Hall, Cambridge, which is now also in the possession of Eastern Electricity, being the Cambridge Office.

In 1847, following more tenancies, the Harlands returned to Wherstead. After the deaths of Sir Robert Harland and his wife — who are buried in Wherstead Church — and of the ensuing tenant for life the Rev. Charles Vernon, the estate passed to Captain Dashwood, whose wife was related to the Harlands.



WHERSTEAD PARK, SUFFOLK.
THE SEAT OF LADY HARLAND.

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died in 1818 and the following year the house was let to Lord Granville. From 1825–35 the house was let to the Fitzgerald family, one of whose members, Edward, was the translator and adaptor of the famous "Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam". There are some interesting books and personal possessions of Fitzgerald in Christchurch Mansion, Ipswich.

During the tenancy of Lord Granville visitors to Wherstead included Huskisson, Canning and the Duke of York. Wellington stayed at the house on a number of occasions and was admitted a freeman of Ipswich in 1821. In 1823 he proved less than the perfect guest, as history records that he accidentally shot his host Lord Granville in the face!

An estimable member of the Vernon family, who owned Orwell Park at Nacton, was Admiral Edward Vernon (1684–1757). He was known as 'Old Grog' because he usually wore a program sea cloak or trousers in foul weather. Vernon required the rum drunk by his sailors to be diluted with water, an unpopular mixture which gave the word 'grog' to the language.

For many years according to Zincke, there was in the drawing room at Wherstead a carved and gilt altar taken by Admiral Vernon from a Spanish ship he had captured.

This Century

The Dashwoods returned to the house in 1914, converting half the house and the stable block into a convalescent hospital for soldiers injured in the Great War. The family lived at Wherstead until Charles Dashwood sold the property about a year before his death in 1935 to Stuart Paul of Freston. The house remained empty but the stable block was occupied for a year in 1937 by young refugees from the Spanish Civil War, and the house and stables were occupied by the Army in the 1939–45 war.

Horses were last kept in the stable block between 1900 and 1914 when the house was occupied by Mr. (later Sir) Bunnell Burton. In 1906 it was recorded that he and his family required a staff of 28 to run the house and grounds, as well as four gamekeepers.

After 1914 no horses were kept, though the Burton's coachman, Mr. Edmunds, continued to live in the flat above the stables.

Charles Dashwood installed his chauffeur, Mr. Bennett, in the stable flat in the 1920s, and used the archway of the stable block to house his beautiful French Delaunay Belleville limousine, which was too high to fit into the garages on the other side of the stable yard.

The Village Hall

The stable block has for many years played a significant part in the life of the village of Wherstead, housing as it does 'The Room' or village hall.

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The estate was held, following his untimely death, for his infant son Charles Dashwood, and the family used the house until shortly before the turn of the century.

The Clock above the Stables

The clock in the turret above the stable block can be dated with more accuracy than the building itself. It was originally a one-faced clock, probably serving a gable end, and is one-handed, which would fix the date of its making before 1690 when the minute hand was introduced on clocks.

The clock in the turret has an "anchor" escapement of a type attributed to William Clement, who employed it around 1671. The Wherstead clock does not have a compensated pendulum, a feature which was introduced in 1721. The bell which strikes the hours is dated 1750.

A conjecture therefore is that the clock was removed from the house when it was rebuilt by Ellis Brand, and the bell cast quite separately. However, it has been suggested that the clock was originally situated on the old West Gate of Ipswich, and brought to Wherstead after the gate was demolished.

The Age of the Horse

On the 1839 Parish Tithe Map the main stable block is shown, although the extension at the southern end and the lodge gatehouse had not yet been built.

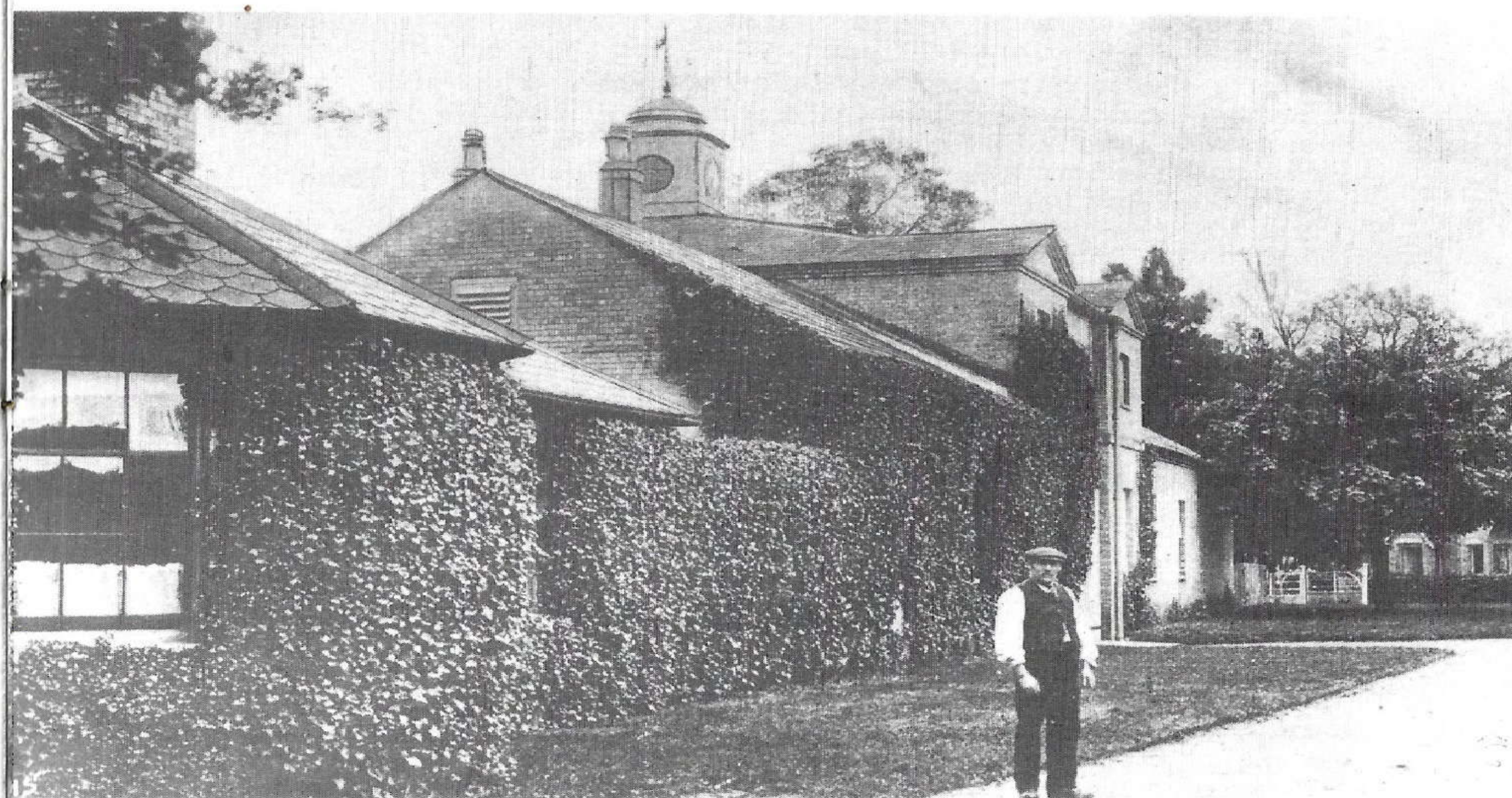
The ground floor of the stable block comprises four rooms, originally designed to stable 20 horses. Above were hay lofts and accommodation which was in domestic use until recent years. Sir Robert Harland was an enthusiastic breeder of carriage horses, and employed four to pull his carriage long after the improved road surfaces around Wherstead had rendered the old heavy carriages obsolete — a practice considered ostentatious by the local gentry.

Sir Robert's horses were a cross between Suffolk Punches — in those days a far lighter horse than today's massive beast — and hunter sires, and his strain was characterised by white stockings. Just before his death in 1848 he sold two pairs of these carriage horses for 300 guineas each pair.

Comings and Goings

The house and stables changed hands many times in the 19th and first half of the 20th centuries; in 1814 the Trustees of Sir Robert Harland's marriage settlement exchanged the estate with that of Mr. John Vernon of Nacton. Sir Robert married John Vernon's sister Arethusa Vernon. John Vernon

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The date of this photograph of the lodge and stable block is unknown but it believed to be about the turn of the century.

Before the First World War the accommodation which is now the village hall was prepared by Mr. Charles Dashwood for his wife to entertain residents of the village. Here she held sewing parties and other diversions.

In the Great War there was a break while the convalescent soldiers used the premises, but after the War it was again used for social purposes, and even when the Hall, including the stable block, was bought by the Paul family there remained an arrangement whereby Mrs. Dashwood could have the use of the room if she so required.

During the 1939–45 war soldiers were billeted in the house and made full use of the "Room".

The Wherstead Village Hall Committee took over the running of the premises in 1942, formalising the arrangement for its use for village functions.

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The Stables – Now

Following the purchase of Wherstead by Eastern Electricity in 1947 the stable block continued to be used for a variety of purposes. The ground floor provided storage accommodation for the Board, and the flat, by now divided into two separate units, was occupied. The large front room of the building continued in use as Wherstead Village Hall – and is to remain so.

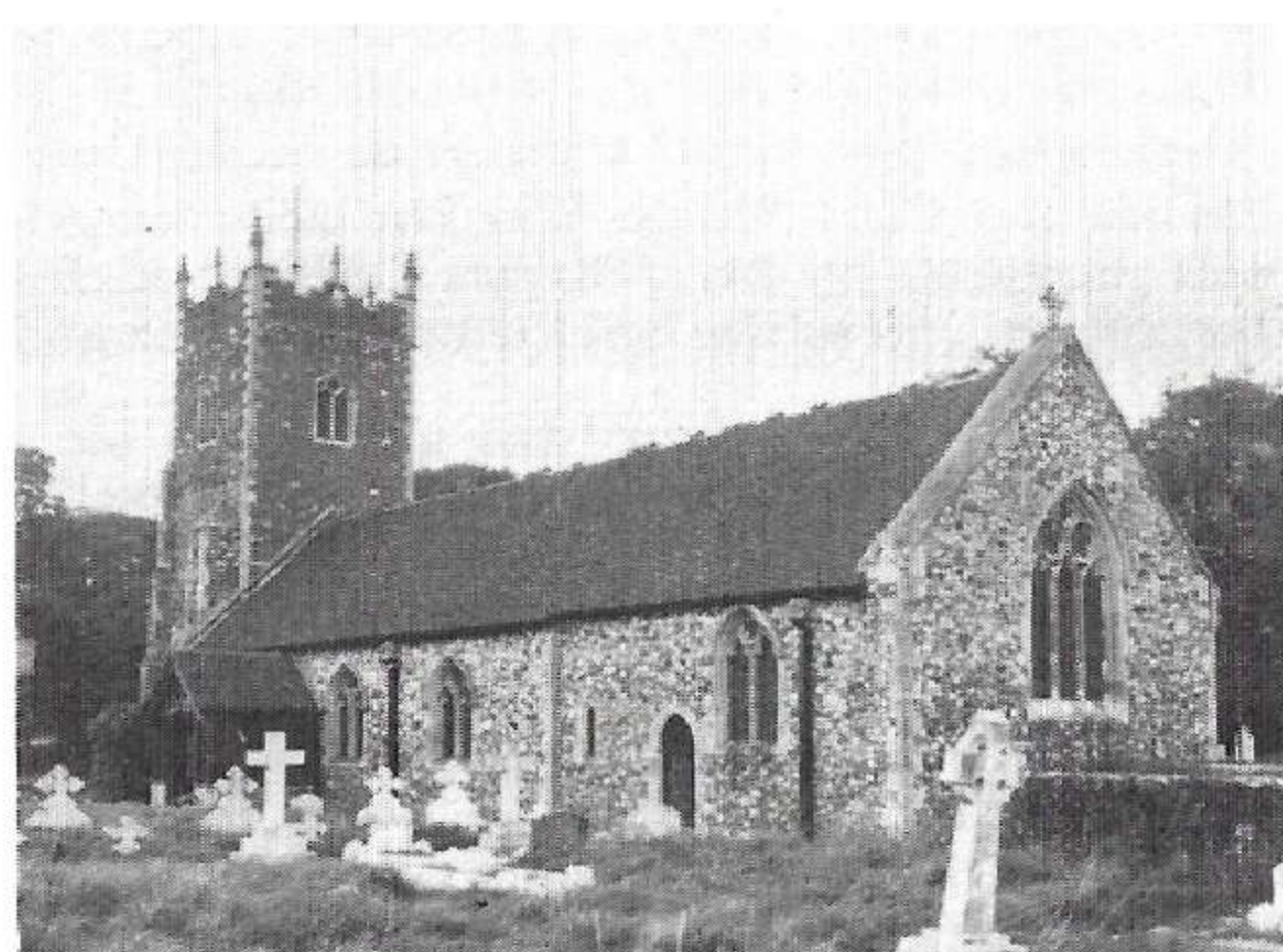
The general condition of the building had, however, deteriorated considerably by 1976, and it lacked the basic amenities. Although it was a listed Grade II building the decision had to be taken whether to demolish or restore the stable block.

It was decided to restore, partly on the grounds of preserving a fine old building, and partly to make better use of the accommodation. The Board's Architect was given this brief, and was asked to incorporate in his work improvements to the Lodge and the resurfacing of the yard.

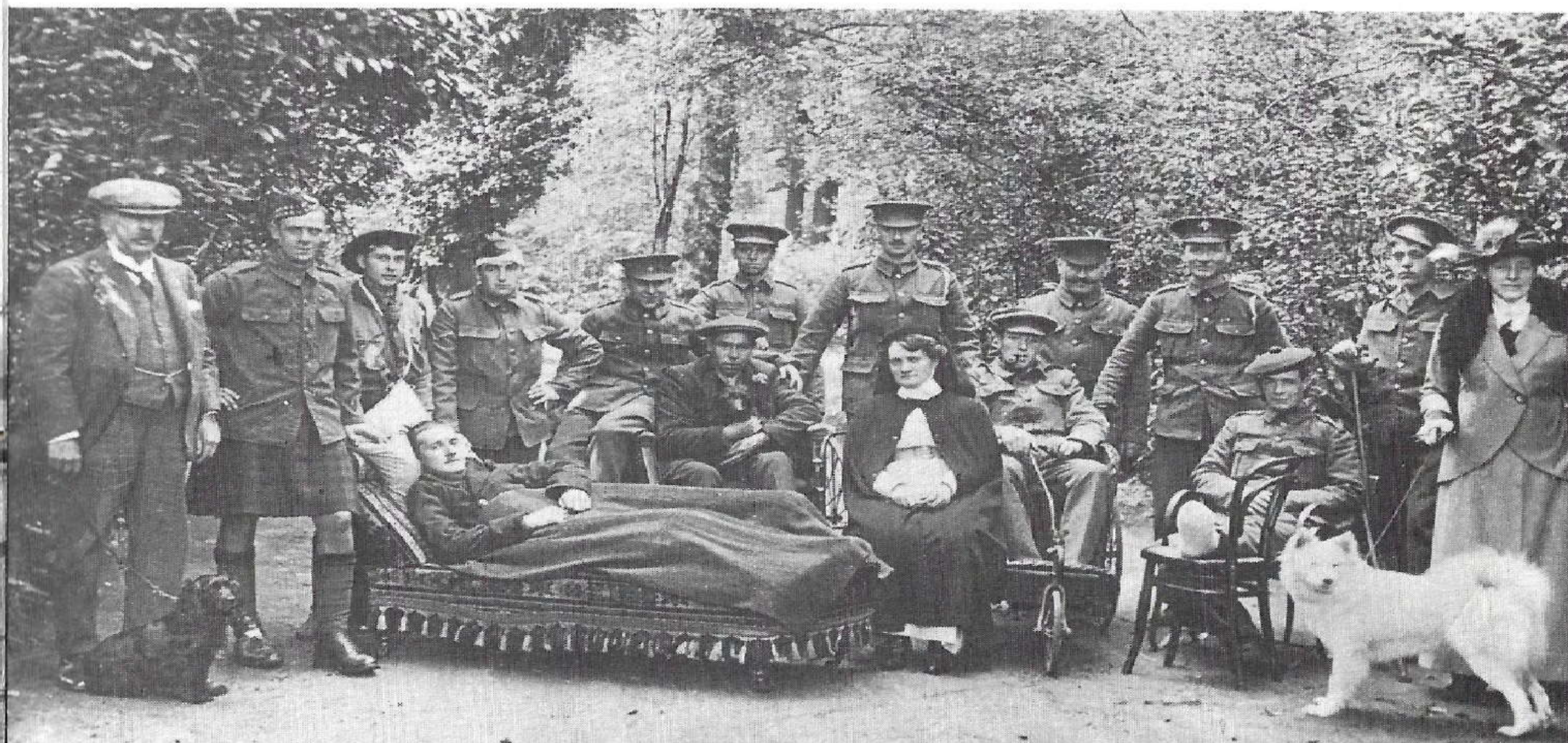
It was decided that the character of the stable block should be retained where possible, and that the least amount of structural work necessary should be done. Apart from the village hall, which was to be retained in its existing form the larger rooms were planned as offices, with the smaller rooms providing services. The flats were to revert to a single unit, as in the past.

The use of the larger rooms required additional windows, and both here and elsewhere new materials were carefully chosen to match or blend in with the old. Office accommodation consisting of two rooms each 70 square metres (750 square feet), and three rooms each 60 square metres (650 square feet) in size has resulted from the restoration.

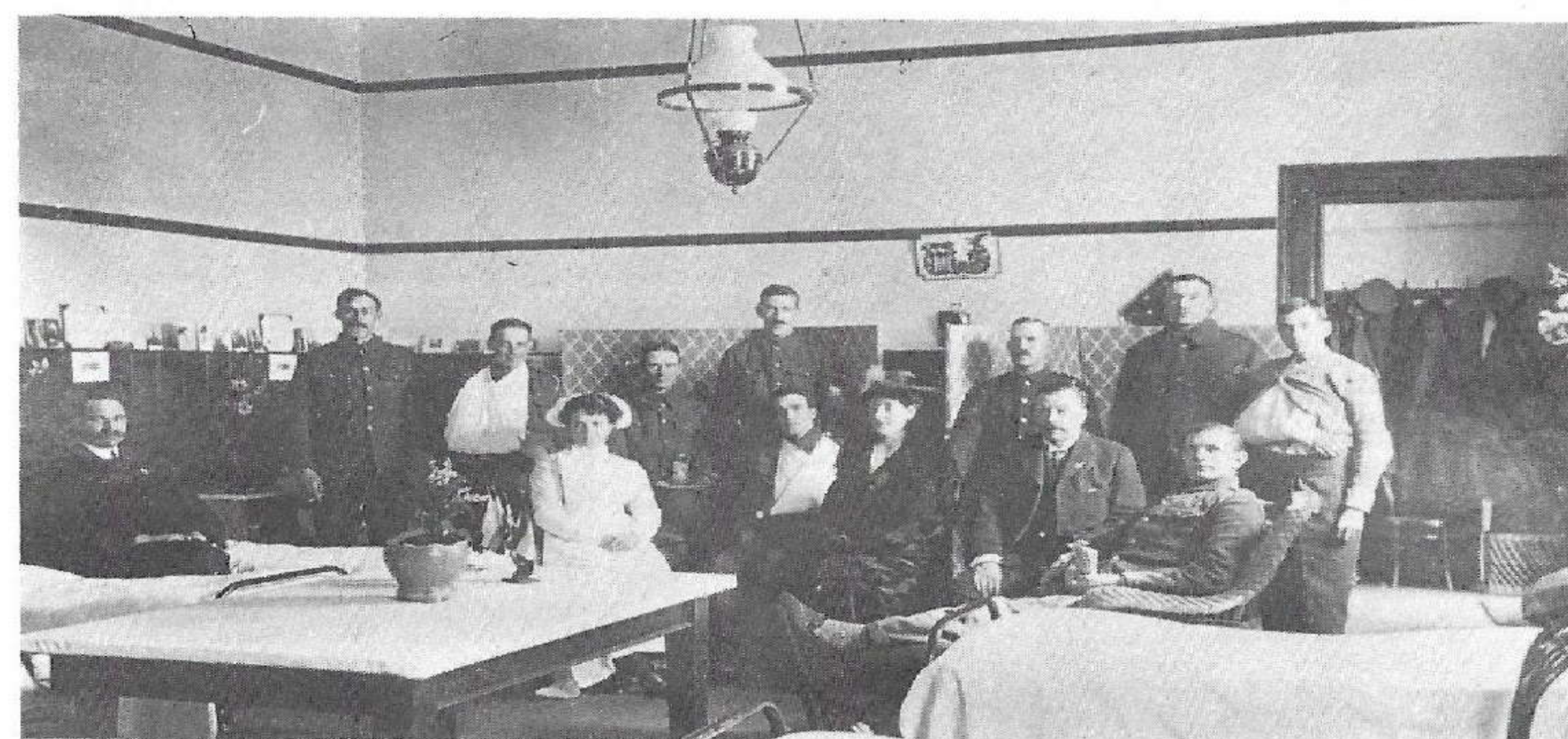
Work commenced on the stable block in the summer of 1976 and was completed in March 1977.



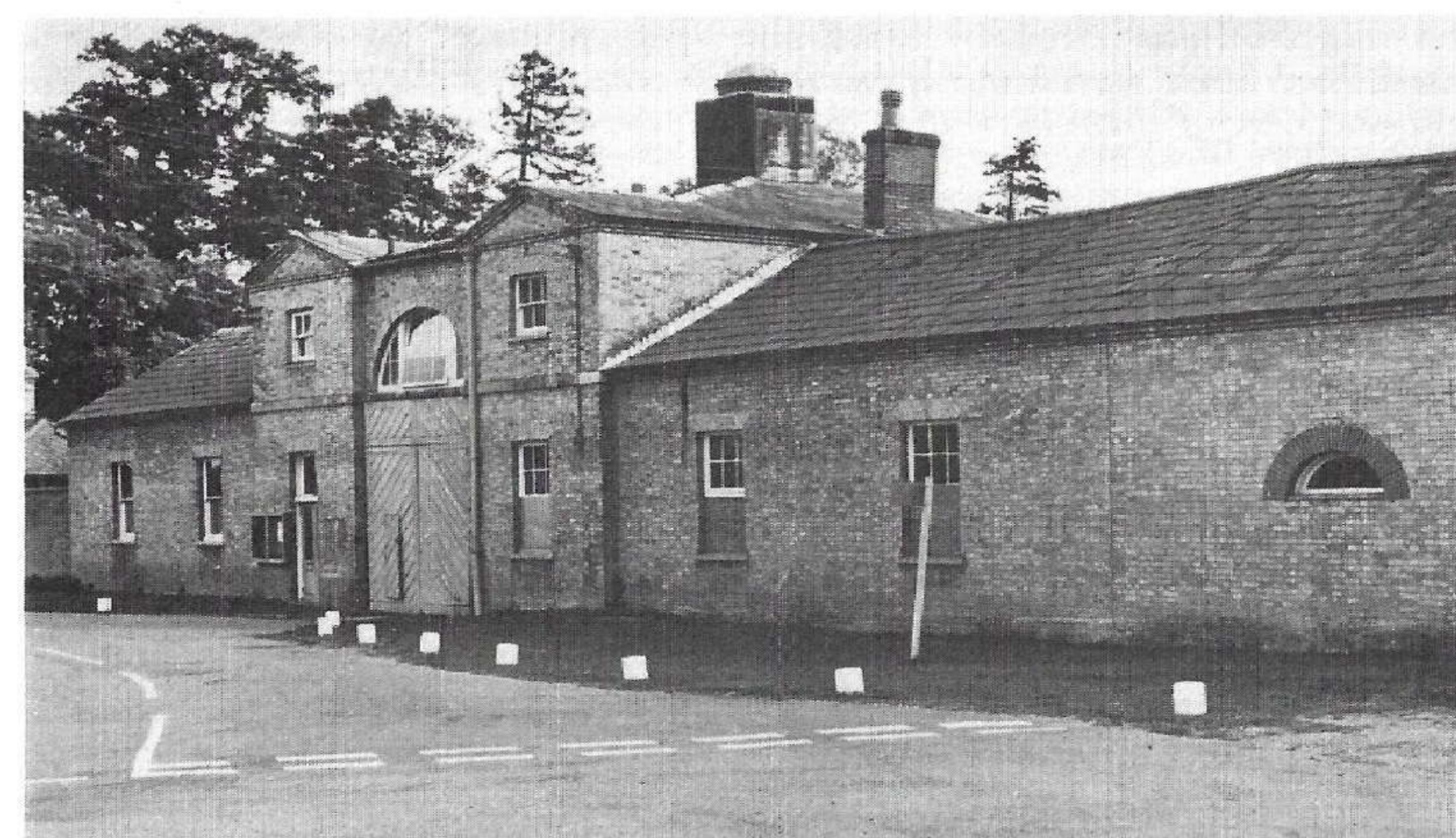
St. Mary's Church, Wherstead



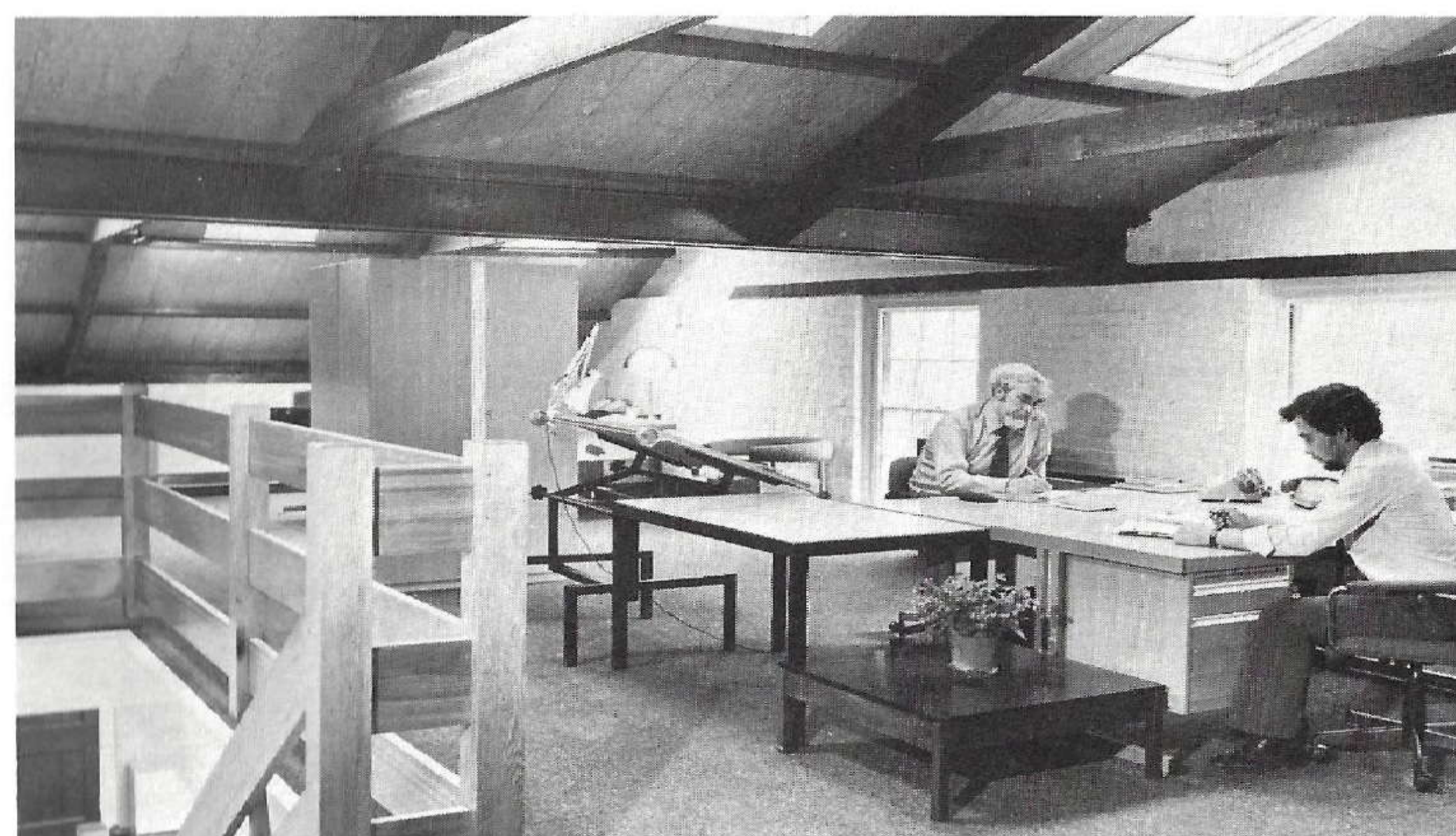
Mr. and Mrs. Dashwood with some of the soldiers who convalesced at Wherstead during the first world war. One of them liked it so much he married his nurse and settled in the village



This room in the stable block is now a village hall but at the time this photograph was taken – sometime during the 1914-1918 war – it was being used as a ward for convalescent soldiers



*Top: The Wherstead stable block restored in Jubilee Year.
Above: The west elevation of the stable block before renovation.
Right: The old hayloft transformed into an office.*



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