

A HISTORY OF HARDWICK HEATH



Compiled by Anna Valdiserri

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Ancient Evidence

Evidence of Stone Age habitation, in the form of worked flint flakes, have been found in the garden of the Rangers House. These probably date from the Mesolithic or Middle Stone Age, dating the habitation at between 5,000BC-10,000BC.

An Anglo-Saxon burial site found in Hardwick Lane during housing development shows that people were present in the area during that period.

Monastic Property

The ancient name *Herdwyk* is supposed to be derived from the *wick* or rent paid to the cellarer of Bury Abbey for the right to feed flocks and *herds* on the heaths and pastures here. The first mention of this place by name is in a writ of King Stephen that St. Edmund may peaceably hold Hardwick. King Edmund, son of Edward the Elder, granted the land to the Abbey in 945. At this time Hardwick, part of a much larger estate, was used simply for sheep grazing, and remained so for a great number of years. The Hardwick flock was famous for being one of the finest in the county for centuries. The sheep were horned animals with black faces and legs and were believed to have descended from those originally belonging to St. Edmund Abbey.

In the Bury Abbey Register or *Aphabetarium*, dating probably from the later part of the 12th or beginning of the 13th century, some interesting notes as to the customs of Hardwick may be found. The tenant Richard Siwat "shall pay yearly for the brakes or fern of the heath at Michaelmas 1½d., and at Christmas a hen. He cannot give his daughter in marriage without licence, nor marry himself without licence."

Hardwick was for many years extra-parochial, probably because of it being owned by the Abbey. This meant that it was not attached to any parish, paying no tithes, and forming what was virtually an independent property entirely on its own. This also meant that it had no church of place of worship. Eventually, it was linked to the parish of Hawstead.

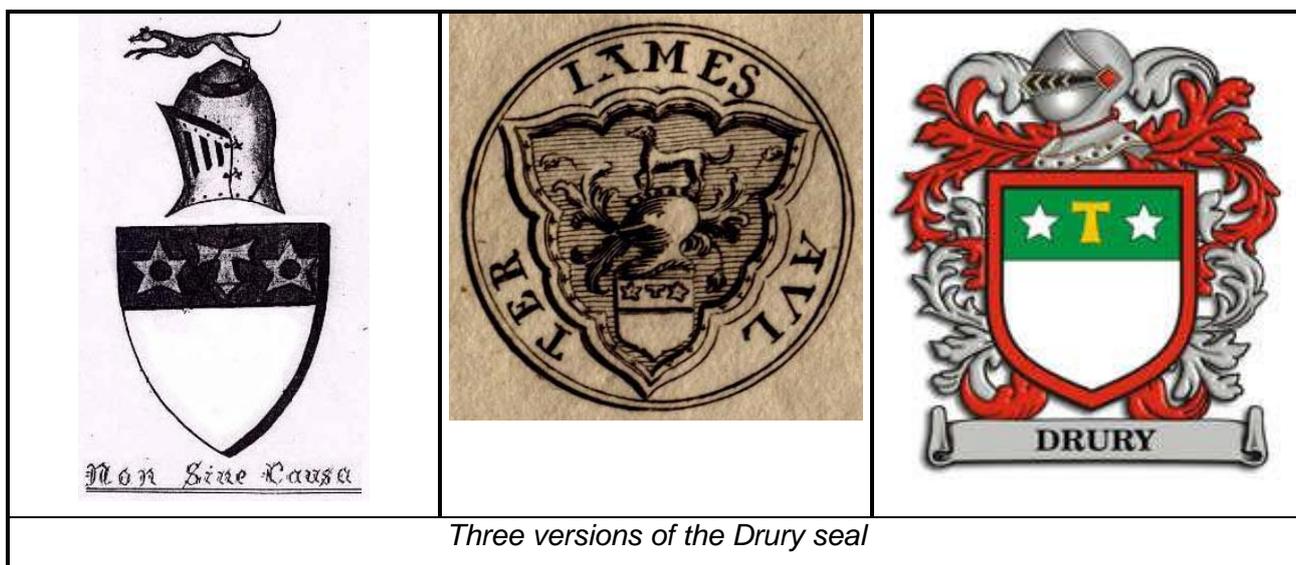
Private Property

At the Dissolution, in 1539, the estate that included Hardwick was broken up. Parts became property of the Drury family of Hawstead, while the remainder, including Hardwick, changed hands often. In 1546, by "all woods... called Hardwycks Wood... 50 acres in Bury St Edmunds, Nowton, Stanefield and Gt. Horningsherth" were granted by the King to Sir Thomas Darcy.

Hardwick's next owner was Sir Robert Southwell, Master of the Rolls of the Court of Chancery in 1541-1550. Sir Southwell was granted several manors from Henry the VIII, several of which he sold on. Hardwick was sold to Sir Thomas Goodrick, who in 1597 bequeathed Hardwick Lodge to his wife. The estate was then sold to Thomas Stanton of Bury.

Sir Robert Drury, the last male representative of the Hawstead branch of this widespread Suffolk family, purchased "the hereditaments called Herdwick or Hardwick wood with the buildings

thereon” for £1100 on 19th April 1610. It has been stated that all Drurys and Drewrys descended from Sir Drieu of Normandy, who is believed to have fought under William the Conqueror at the Battle of Hastings in 1066. His Knight's fee was an award of land near the Abbey St. Edmund's in Suffolk. The Drurys became one of the most prominent knightly families of medieval Suffolk, England, with at least eighteen Knights, five of whom were Sheriffs of Norfolk and Suffolk, and four Knights of the Shire. By exchanges of land and purchases, by the Drurys became owners of nearly all the parish of Hawstead.



His father Sir William Drury of Hawstead was born in Hawstead. He married Joan St. Maur, daughter of Sir William St. Maur, who died on August 16, 1518. He remarried to Elizabeth Stafford, daughter of William Stafford and Dorothy Stafford, in 1520. Elizabeth Stafford was Lady of the Bedchamber of Queen Elizabeth. By her had Robert, his son and heir, Charles slain at Nieuport in Flanders in 1600, and four daughters: Frances married firstly Sir Nicholas Clifford and secondly Sir William Wray of Glentworth. Elizabeth wife of William Cecil, Earl of Exeter; Susanna who died unmarried 1607; and Diana, second wife of Edward Cecil, Viscount Wimbledon.

Sir William Drury was made a Knight of the Garter, was declared "most able commander in the Irish Wars", was Sheriff of Suffolk in 1583 and one of the representatives in Parliament for the county in 1585. His career came to an abrupt end in 1589, when he fell in duel against Sir John Borough while in the command of a regiment of 1000 men accompanying Lord Willoughby to France in the expedition sent to aid Henry 4th. At his death Sir Robert Drury inherited, amongst other properties, the "Manors of Hawstedd cum Buckingham alias Talmagies...in Hawstedd".

Sir Robert Drury, child of William Drury of Hawstead and his second wife Elizabeth Stafford, daughter of William Stafford and Dorothy Stafford, was born 30 January 1574-5 at Durham House within the precincts of Westminster and was therefore fifteen at the time of his father's death. In 1591 Elizabeth sent the earl of Essex with a small army to help Henry IV against Philip and the League. Robert Drury went in Essex's train and at the Siege of Rouen 8 October 1592 was knighted by Essex, at the age of 16, for his gallant behaviour.

As soon as he came of age he connected himself with one of the best families in the county by marrying Anne, the eldest daughter of Sir Nicolas Bacon of Redgrave, the first baronet of England. In 1603, he was elected one of the knights of the shire, an honour that he enjoyed as long as he lived. He patronised Dr. Donne, to whom he assigned apartments in his large house in Drury Lane and who subsequently became Dean of St. Paul's.

Sir Robert and his wife Anne had two daughters: the elder, Dorothy, died at the age of 4 years; the younger, Elizabeth, reached almost 15 (c. 1596-1610). Tradition reports, that she died of a box on the ear, which her father gave her. This conceit rose probably from her being represented both on her monument (in Hawstead Church) and in her picture, as reclining her head on one hand, an attitude which is uncommon except in the case of nudes. Another tradition relating to her is that she was destined to marry Prince Henry, eldest son of James I. She was certainly a great heiress and their ages were not unsuitable but the truth of this claim is unproven. Dr. Donne wrote "An anatomie of the world" and also "The Progresse of the Soul" on the occasion of her untimely death. The "Progresse of the Soul" includes the often-quoted lines:

“her pure and eloquent blood
Spoke in her cheekes, and so distinctly wrought
That one might almost say her body thought.”



Elizabeth Drury

Elizabeth's death seems to have produced a great change in Sir Robert's designs and plan of life. Not long afterwards, he left Hawstead in his grief. Influenced by love of a district which held so many precious memories, he moved to nearby Hardwick, where either he built or else improve the

mansion known eventually as Hardwick House. There he carried many of the treasures belonging to his former residence, Hawstead Place, a moated Tudor mansion house. He built in his grounds an almshouse for six women, but this was pulled down in 1811 and houses for a similar number of poor women were erected, four in Hawstead and two in Bury St. Edmunds.

Sir Robert Drury could not have spent much of this time with his wife Anne, daughter of Sir Nicholas Bacon, knight, and baronet of Redgrave, co. Suffolk, what with his martial expeditions and his external peregrinations which the inscription on his monument in Hawstead Church records. He seems to have been a fairly common type of the Elizabethan rich young gentleman, a restless high-spirited adventurous man.

It was while Sir Robert Drury was at Hardwick that plans were made for the construction of a chapel, most probably to be erected in the mansion. At any rate, pending the building and consecration of such a chapel, Sir Robert obtained special permission from the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1613 to offer up prayers and receive the Sacrament in his own home. However, the chapel was fated never to come into being, for Sir Robert Drury died on April 02, 1615. Hawstead Church contains his marble monument and that of his daughter Elizabeth.

When Sir Robert Drury died, his estates, including Hardwick and the Grange of Hencote, were divided between his three living sisters. The Hardwick estate came to his sister Frances. The representation of the line of Drury of Hawstead devolved on his kinsman Sr. Henry Drury of Hedgerley, co. Bucks, knight, his third cousin once removed.

Lady Drury resided during her widowhood at Hardwick House, and in 1616 procured a renewal of the license for a chapel there. The place chosen for that purpose by this lady of fortune and rank, was an absolute cellar; and puts one in mind of those caverns in which the primitive Christians are said to have sometimes performed their religious services, for the sake of privacy. She died at Hardwick House 5 June, 1624, and was buried in Hawstead chancel the next evening, the register alone recording her death, though she had left a void space after her husband's epitaph for the insertion of her own.

Frances Drury was first married to Sir Nicholas Clifford, son of Nicholas Clifford, Esq.. She remarried to Sir William Wray, with whom she had a son, Sir Christopher Wray. At her death in 1642 the latter inherited the estate.

Sir Christopher Wray married Albinia Wray, with whom he had three sons. In 1656 either Albinia Wray, then a widow, or her son Sir William Wray sold the Hawstead Drury estate, including Hardwick, to Thomas Cullum, Esq., younger son of John Cullum, Esq., of Thorndon, Suffolk for £17,697. The sale description of the property describes it as **90 acres free of tithe, with sheep walk for 300 animals and heath for them to feed on, plus woodlands producing timber and pollards. There were also 120 acres of plough around it.** Thomas Cullum had a map of the estate drawn up in 1663 to show off his property, which provides us with a sketch of the structure

of the house at the time. The house had a long roofline, with three gables, three chimneys and a back porch in the middle, forming from the air, a shape like .



Hardwick House as represented in a map of the estate, 1663

Cullum Property – Sir Thomas Cullum

A Cullum family lived at Thorndon, near Eye, in East Suffolk from the 14th century. A Cullum residing at Thorndon in 1381, who was appointed one of the jury to try the rebels who followed Wat Tyler, was ancestor of the Cullums whose names are to be found on the earliest pages of the Thorndon Parish Register, and on the earliest Court rolls of that parish. They were smiths and freeholding landowners, and by the 16th century they had risen to be the wealthiest family in the village.

Thomas Cullum was born in about 1586-7. He was the second son of John Cullum and Rebecca Smyth, daughter of a well-to-do family of yeoman farmers from Bacton. John Cullum's precise relationship with the Cullums of Thorndon is uncertain. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that he was of above-average means, for in 1607 he apprenticed Thomas to John Rayney of Gracechurch Street, London, one of the wealthier city drapers.

Thomas Cullum completed his apprenticeship in 1615, and was taken on as an assistant by John Rayney. On the 30th December of that year he opened an account book in which he entered his total annual capital, expenditure and income as of that date. This account book, one of the earliest of its kind, is a unique survival, and allows us to follow his career as a businessman and landowner.

His initial capital consisted of £17 savings and £75-2-6d loaned at interest to friends and acquaintances, while he was expecting to receive another £200 as his share of his recently deceased father's estate. He supplemented his wages with private sales of cloth and textiles, and he ran a dyeing business of his own, while he continued to loan money at interest. By 1620 he had accumulated £978-9-8d.

In 1621 he borrowed some money from relatives and purchased a one eighth share in his master's business for £1,250.

In 1623 he married Mary Crispe, who at the age of twenty-one was thirteen years his junior. She was the daughter of a wealthy London mercantile family, while her mother's family, the Pakes, were well-established members of the Essex gentry. She was to bear him eleven children over the next fourteen years, of whom six died in infancy and one in childhood. Over these years "physic" was to become one of his principal expenses. In one year he spent 50 on medicine, in another no less than £80.

In 1622 Thomas Cullum opened his own shop, and in 1624 he left the employ of John Rayney. In 1624 he was also elected to the livery (or upper echelon) of the Draper's Company. Soon after he took on another apprentice, a son of another Suffolk farming family, and between then and 1642 he took on eleven apprentices, each one paying feed that further enhanced his capital.

During the years 1632-41 his annual profit averaged £1,766. Bequests and apprentice's fees averaged £73, making his total annual income £1,839. His annual expenditure averaged £682, and he allowed another £195 to cover bad debts, leaving him with an annual net profit of £980. He kept a stock of cloth and textiles with a value of about £3,000. The greater majority of his remaining capital, which increased every year, was loaned out at interest.

Of his £682 annual expenditure he spent £294 on food, £77 on apparel, £65 on wages for servants and employees, and £20 on fuel for heating his property. General household expenses accounted for another £33. Rent and repairs on his property totalled £81. "Extraordinary expenses", perhaps the cost of non-essential items or luxuries, or membership of the Draper's Company, varied but averaged £67 per annum. His only other expense was medicine, which varied considerably each year, but averaged £17 per annum.

He did not engage in rash speculation, nor did he participate in the monopoly trade, and he avoided investment in real estate until he was almost sixty, renting his shop and his house.

Regrettably little is known about his private life and character. His political and religious views are unknown, and family records throw no light on his private life or his character as an employer, a husband or a father.

Mary Crispe died in childbirth in 1637 and was buried in All Hallows, Lombard Street. She left two sons and two daughters to grow to maturity. Thomas Cullum spent £258 on her funeral, and never re-married.

When Charles I summoned the Long Parliament Thomas Cullum was fifty-three, and when the Civil War started he was fifty-five. His wife's cousin, Sir Nicholas Crispe, was a very active royalist, and he was also related through marriage to Sir George Strode, another prominent royalist. There is no evidence as to where Thomas Cullum's sympathies lay, but the Civil war threw him into public life.

In 1642 he was appointed Commissioner of Excise, a very lucrative post, which earned him £9,162 in eight years. In 1643 he became Alderman of Cordwainer Ward, and Master of the Draper's Company. In 1646-7, a year of particular crisis, he acted as Sheriff of London, one of the highest offices in the city.

The Civil War years were costly. In 1642 he had to provide £2,000 as a dowry when his daughter Rebecca married a member of the Throckmorton family, and he ended that year £800 poorer, the first year in his financial life in which he made a loss. Mary, his only other daughter to live to maturity, did not marry. In 1643 he was the principal contributor to a war loan, paying £1,052 out of £3,750 in the names of his sons, and it is doubtful that he recovered any of this. His year as Sheriff of London cost him £2,400. Finally in 1647 he was imprisoned in the Tower of London during a "purge" of City figures on suspicion of complicity in a Royalist uprising, although he was set at liberty after a few months.

There is no evidence that Thomas Cullum was either a strong Parliamentarian or a secret Royalist. He was a businessman with a flair for commercial affairs. Living at a time of unrest, and his involvement in the government was no more or no less than the authorities would have expected of him, nor was his record better or worse than that of many during those years.

Thomas Cullum resigned from the Excise in 1650 and the aldermanship in 1652, and he did not become Lord Mayor of London, the usual follow-on for those who served as Sheriffs of the City.

In 1644 he had bought a few properties in London. In 1648 he bought a large number of houses and other premises in the city, and by 1654 he was making an annual income of over £1,000 in rents. Cullum Street in London, between Fenchurch Street, Leadenhall, and Gracechurch Street, is so named because of his property there. From 1648 he also invested in the East India Company.

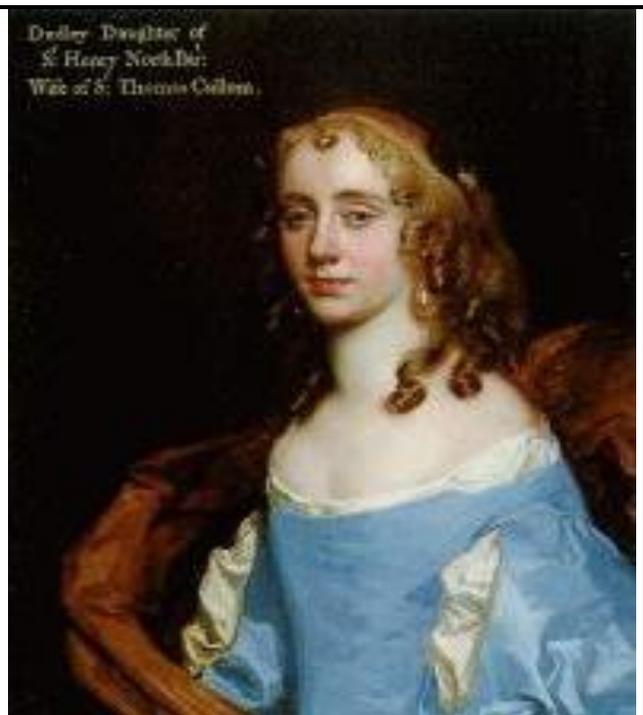
In 1656 he purchased the Hawstead estate from the Drury family and chose Hawstead Place as his country seat. In this same year his son Thomas married Dudley North, daughter of the Lord of the Manor of Mildenhall, and a cousin of the Barons North of Kirtling in Cambridgeshire. The Norths had risen through the law, court intrigue and speculation in monastic property a century earlier, and were among the wealthiest families in East Anglia.

In 1657 Thomas Cullum retired from London to Hardwick. At the Restoration, with the coming to the throne of Charles II in 1660 he was created a Baronet. However, his activities appear to have aroused suspicion in certain circles, for in 1661 he was included in a general pardon to people

implicated in various crimes and misdemeanours, which included alchemy and witchcraft. However, the amnesty did not include responsibility for arrears of excise, and in 1663 he had to pay the Exchequer £2,200 to avoid investigation into his finances.



Sir Thomas Cullum, 1st Baronet, attributed to Gerard Soest, c. 1660



Dudley, wife of Sir Thomas Cullum, 2nd Baronet, by Sir Peter Lely, c. 1660

Thomas Cullum, Esq., died in 1664 at the age of seventy-eight, and was the first of eight generations of Cullums to own Hardwick. His account book gave his fortune as £43,805. He was buried under a splendid monument in the choir of Hawstead church.

Cullum Property – the Cullum family

His eldest son **Sir Thomas Cullum** (1633-1680) inherited his Suffolk estates and his title, while his second son John inherited his business and his London and Middlesex property. It is said that Sir Thomas Cullum was dissolute and selfish while his wife Dudley was melancholy and suffered from bouts of extreme depression. It is therefore no surprise that according to the surviving family papers they suffered a very unhappy marriage.

Sir Dudley Cullum, the 3rd Baronet, was High Sheriff for the County in 1690 and MP for Suffolk in 1702, besides being a botanist of some distinction. He made great additions to Hardwick House in 1681. The stone porch, with the Drury charges carved upon it, was brought from Hawstead Place, as was also the statue of a man bearing a club or “Hercules”, having on the pedestal the date 1578. In the upper corridor was a very curious series of 41 emblematic designs, with Latin mottoes, painted on panels. These were taken from what was known as the painted closet, probably an oratory, in the Hawstead House.

At his death in 1720, without issue by his first wife Anne, daughter of Lord Berkeley of Stratton, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, or her successor, the baronetcy and estate descended to his cousin **Jasper Cullum**. He was the oldest surviving representative of the Middlesex branch of the family, who was High Sheriff for the County in 1722.

The first Cullum to make his home at Hardwick, in about 1730, was his son, the fifth baronet, **Sir John Cullum**. His wife was Susanna Gery, the heiress of Sir Thomas Gery, and as a result Gery became a family name.

At his death in 1774 his eldest son, the **Reverend Sir John Cullum**, FRS, FSA, succeeded him. He was appointed rector of Hawstead in 1762, and in 1774 vicar of Great Thurlow. He was an eminent scholar and his achievements obtained for him the fellowship of both the Royal and Antiquarian Societies. He devoted his life to studying the countryside around Hawstead and Hardwick, and in 1785 he published a classic "History of Hawstead and Hardwick". It was he in 1760 who planted the two large Cedars of Lebanon and probably many of the older trees still present in the park. One of the copper beeches, also planted in 1760, was believed to be amongst the earliest to take its roots in English soil. Copper beech is a variety of the common beech, and all the examples in cultivation are believed to be "sports" from the purple variety, which itself was a natural sport discovered in a German wood in the 1800s.

The Reverend Sir John Cullum's description of the impacts on of plant damage occurring in East Anglia on 23rd June as a consequence of the Laki fissure eruption of AD 1783 are still used by scientists to study the potential of Icelandic volcanic eruptions to modify the environment of the British Isles.

"The aristæ of the barley, which was coming into ear, became brown and weathered at their extremities, as did the leaves of the oats; the rye had the appearance of being mildewed; so that the farmers were alarmed for those crops. The wheat was not much affected. The Larch, Weymouth Pine, and hardy Scotch fir, had the tips of their leaves withered; the first was particularly damaged and made a shabby appearance the rest of the summer. The leaves of some ashes very much sheltered in my garden suffered greatly. A walnut-tree received a second shock (the first was from a severe frost on the 26th of May) which completed the ruin of its crop. Cherry-trees, a standard peach tree, filbert and hazel-nut-trees, shed their leaves plentifully, and littered the walks as in autumn. The barberry-bush was extremely pinched, as well as the hypericum perforatum and the hirsutum: as the last two are solstitial and rather delicate plants, I wondered the less at their sensibility; but was much surprised to find that the vernal black-thorn and sweet violet, the leaves of which one would have thought must have acquired a perfect firmness and strength, were injured full as much. All these vegetables appeared exactly as if a fire had been lighted near them, that had shrivelled and discoloured their leaves. - penetrabile frigus adurit.

At the time this havoc was made among some of our hardy natives, the exotic mulberry tree was little affected; a fig tree, against a north-west wall remained unhurt, as well as the vine on the other side, though just coming into blossom. I speak of my own garden which is high; for in the low ones about Bury, but a mile off, the fig trees in particular were very much cut."

(Cullum, Rev. Sir John. 1783: Of a remarkable frost on the 23rd of June, 1783. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London (Abridged volume 1781-1785)* 15, 604.)

John Cullum did marry, but had no children. At his death in 1785 his brother, **Sir Thomas Gery Cullum**, FRS, FSA, and FLS became the 7th Baronet. Before inheriting the estates he had practised as a doctor in BSE. He also belonged to learned societies, whilst his interest in heraldry won for him the office of Bath King of Arms. It is, however, through his experiences in natural history and botany that he is chiefly known. His studies and experiments in connection with both sciences won for him a national reputation. The genus "*Cullumia*" was named in his honour.

His oldest son, the **Rev. Sir Thomas Gery Cullum**, the 8th baronet, succeeded him in 1831. He entered the ministry and became vicar of Knettishall and chaplain to the Duke of Sussex. Like his father, he was also a botanist of some standing. A picture from an 1834 publication shows the house as having 6 gables, wings with bay windows, and very high chimneystacks. A single story small corridor was also built across the front of the building to house a picture and statue gallery. The Rev. Sir Thomas carried out major additions and enlargements in 1839, including the addition of embattlements and crenelations. The first reports of extravagant gardens with architectural features date from this period. He was also responsible for the building of the Swiss Cottage, or Dairy Cottage, on Home Farm Lane in 1843 after a visit to Switzerland.



Hardwick House, c. 1830



Swiss or Dairy Cottage, on Home Farm Lane

He had no sons, and his brother, John Palmer Cullum, who succeeded his father as Bath King of Arms, had no children. Consequently, at Thomas Gery Cullum's death in 1855 the baronetcy became extinct.

Thomas Gery Cullum's only child Arethusa married the Right Hon. Thomas Milner-Gibson, President of the Board of Trade under Lords Palmerston and Russel. Her travel diaries, 1822-1830, have been preserved. These cover her tours in Germany, France and Italy, which are recorded in considerable detail with some very lovely sketches.



George Gery Milner-Gibson Cullum, by Charles Forbes, 1885.

Their youngest son, Gery Milner-Gibson (1857-1921), adopted the name Cullum into his name, making it a triple-barrelled Milner-Gibson-Cullum, in the hope that he might succeed to the family estates at Hawstead and Hardwick. He did inherit the estate, and spent the greater part of his life at Hardwick, devoted to the study of history, archaeology and genealogy. He was also an autograph collector.

He was a well-respected local figure, standing as Sheriff of Suffolk in 1888 and as the only honorary Mayor (i.e., not a Councillor) of BSE in 1913-14. He was instrumental in establishing Moyse's Hall as the borough's first museum, and loaned a number of family items for public display. During the last nine years of his life he served the office of Curator.

In the 1870-1880s the House was greatly extended and improved, becoming three times the original size. Extensions were built on either side, with turrets at the ends. The porch was elevated. The gardens were also greatly developed, with terraces, metal fences, balustrades and over 10 garden urns. At the back of the house were extensive conservatories and a statuary. On the East side of the building a low Venetian indoor riding school was built.



Hardwick House – Front view



Hardwick House – Front view



HARDWICK HOUSE (SOUTH FRONT).

Hardwick House – Back view



Hardwick House – Back view with the conservatories

The estate also included other notable buildings, some of which remain today. The Gardener's Cottage became what is now known as Hardwick Manor. Home Farm House, on Home Farm Lane, was once the centre of a large complex of farm buildings. The Lodge on Hardwick Lane was and is the main entrance to Hardwick. This building has been more recently extended in the original style. The main gates and pillars across the entrance were moved in more recent years

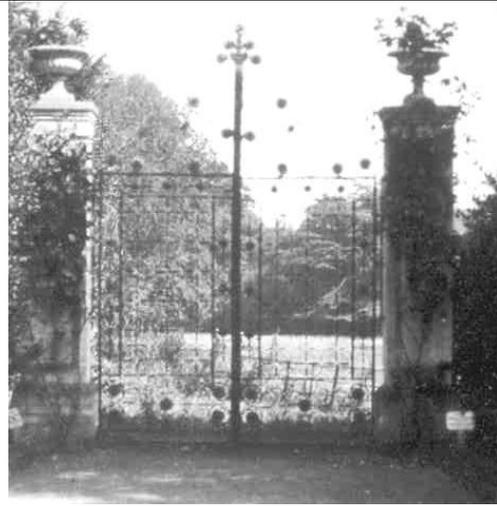
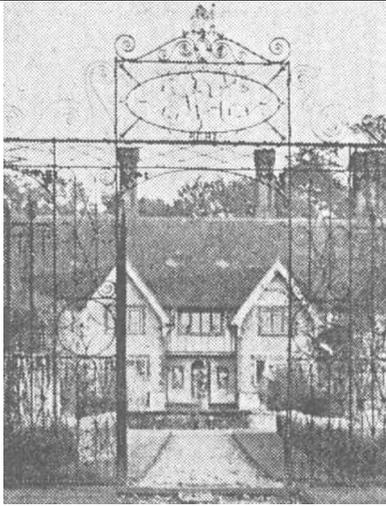
along Hardwick Lane to what is now the entrance to the Nurses Home. The gates are sadly gone, but the pillars and fencing can still be seen.



Home Farm House on Home Farm Lane



Lodge Cottage on Hardwick Lane, with the original gates



Examples of ironwork - gates

During the First World War the property, in common with other properties of a similar nature, was farmed in order to provide food and forage. A picture exists of the lawn in front of the house being cut for hay. Gery Milner-Gibson-Cullum was fond of the Suffolk Regiment, and allowed them the use of the property for training ground. In addition, wounded soldiers from the hospital at Hengrave Hall would have days out on the property.



The front lawn cut for hay during WWI



A member of the Signallers Regiment stationed at Hardwick during WWI



Wounded soldiers from the hospital at Hengrave Hall on a day out at Hardwick. Notice George Gery Milner-Gibson Cullum sitting in the middle.

Before the death of Gery Milner-Gibson-Cullum, Hardwick Heath was described as “a handsome mansion built in the Elizabethan style, and standing in a beautifully wooded park known as Hardwick Heath”. The approach to Hardwick from Bury was a pretty lane stretching from Southgate to Westgate road. Vehicles could enter only from the lodge gates, but the Heath was open to all comers, and the beauty of the copper beeches, hawthorns and other fine trees was much appreciated by visitors, especially in spring and autumn.

HARDWICK,
BURY ST. EDMUND'S.

BANK HOLIDAY.

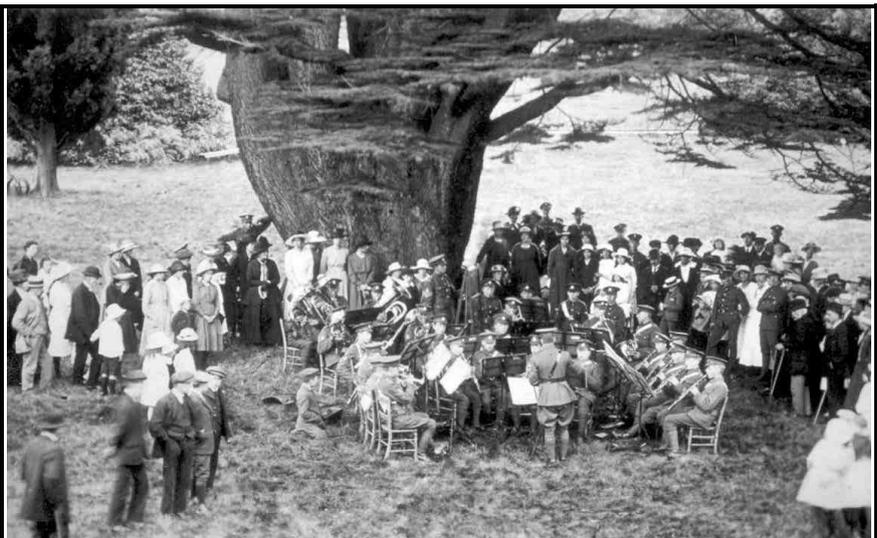
Grand Garden Fete.

TWO
FULL MILITARY BANDS.

Miniature Rifle Competitions.

Two Grand Stage Performances.

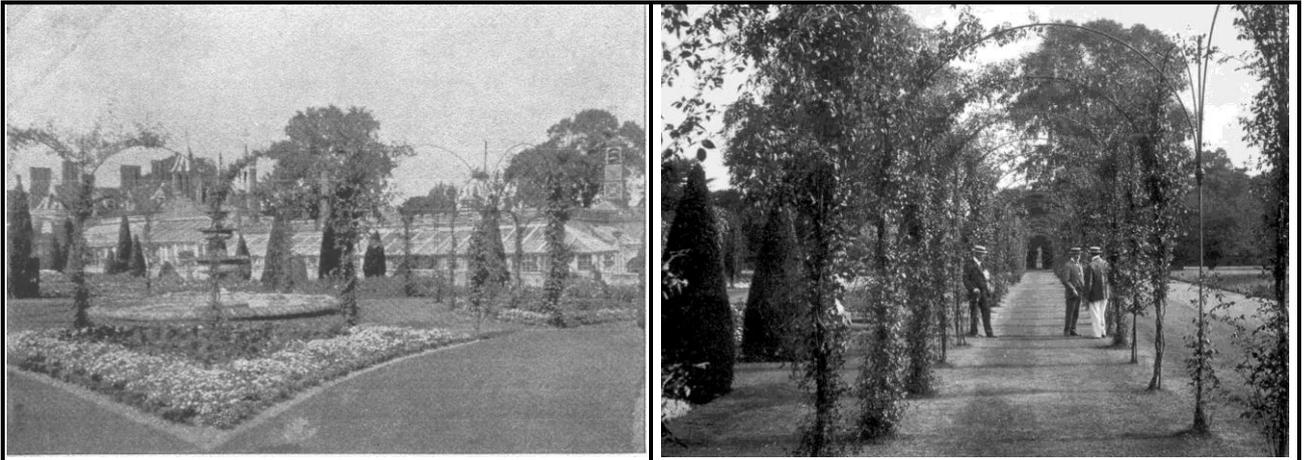
The most charming grounds in Suffolk.
Arrange your Picnics and come in
Thousands.



Grand Garden Fete

The gardens, plantations, and grounds were “delightful, and in a picturesque dell a winding path lead through ‘the wilderness’”. The gardens included a long range of conservatories, well stocked with orange and lemon trees, crimson taxonia, and other choice exotics. A beautiful cedar tree was a conspicuous feature of the gardens. In the summer the beds were a “blaze of blossoms”. The rosary was located some distance to the west of the house.

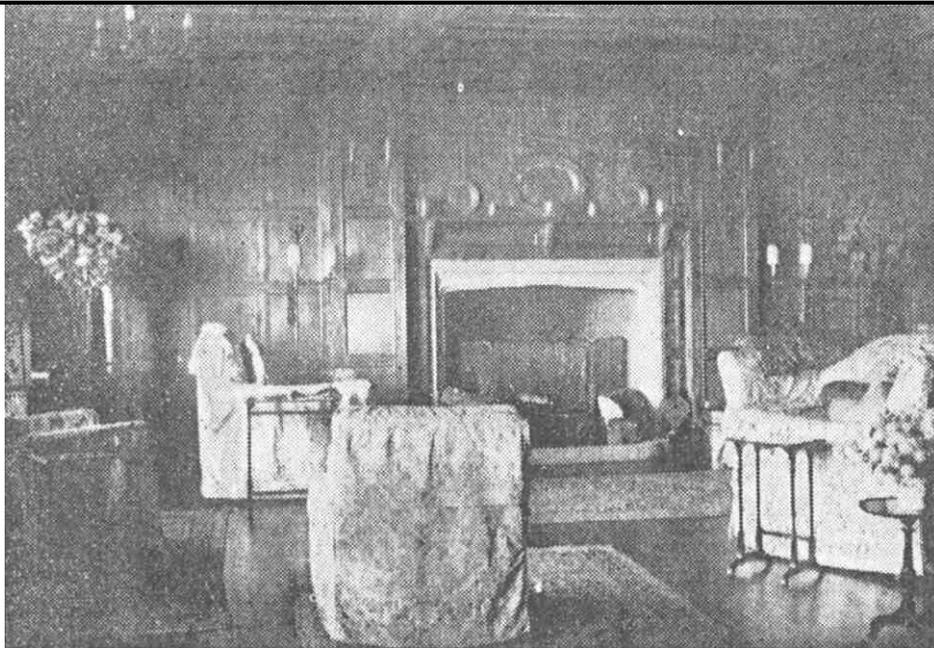
The grounds included magnificent avenues of sycamores and yews. Yews also marked the site of an Italian garden. On the estate was also a Pet cemetery, including the graves of several dogs, among which a black Labrador known as “Ching”.



Pictures of the Gardens, showing the conservatories, the Yew Avenue , a terrace on the rear of the house and the main fountain. Notice George Gery Milner-Gibson Cullum standing on the right.

Amongst a large collection of art treasures may be specially mentioned some beautiful and antique carvings in marble; two oblong panels with figures of adoring saints and angels, painted by Giotto

di Bondini early in the 14th century; the Madonna and Child with two saints, by Vittore Crivelli; a miniature of Geo. Fleetwood, by Samuel Cooper; and a great number of family portraits. Of special interest was a painted copy of a stained glass window formerly in the great chamber of the cellarer at Bury Abbey. There were also two roundels of stained glass from the destroyed hospital of St. Petronilla's Hospital, in BSE. One window contained painted glass formerly at Strawberry Hill, and before that at Bexhill Church, Susses, the two principal figures representing King Henry III and his wife Eleanor of Provence.



The Drawing Room

In the entrance hall was an Etruscan tomb brought in from Chiusi in 1841. It was surmounted by a reclining figure leaning on one elbow. In front of the sarcophagus was a group in relief representing a gladiatorial contest.

There was a splendid display of oriental and especially armorial china in a room specially devoted to it. Other forms of bric-a-brac were well represented, including a great part of the silver gilt plate which belonged to Napoleon I, and accompanied him on the retreat from Moscow and his exile at Elba, being finally taken at the battle of Quatre Bras in 1814.

The library was richly stored with volumes of heraldic, genealogical, and antiquarian interest, besides several volumes of the correspondence of Sir John and Sir Thomas Gery Cullum the sixth and seventh baronets. There was also a magnificent collection of autograph letters, including many Royal signatures, one of John Milton's receipts for "Paradise Lost", and an extraordinary series illustrating the history of France.

Gery Milner-Gibson-Cullum, never married and his two cousins did not marry or have children, so that there were no male heirs in the family. A clause in his grandmother's will making the inheritance pass only down the male line prevented him from bequeathing the estate as he chose.

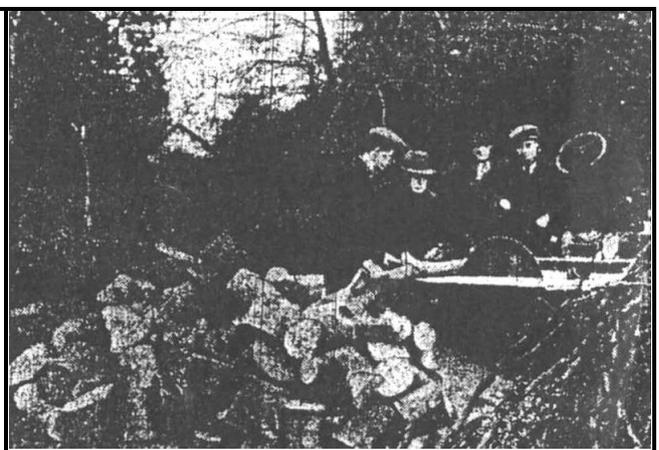
He therefore decided to bequeath many items, including the collection on display in Moyse's Hall, to the Borough for the enjoyment of the local population. In addition he presented many other family heirlooms, including most of the portraits, china and other objets d'art. His extensive library of books - chiefly of genealogy and local history - was also bequeathed to the town and is now housed in the West Suffolk Record Office. The family portraits, spanning the seventeenth to twentieth centuries and including notable works by several leading British artists, were on display in various buildings in the town and later moved to the Manor House Museum.

The demolition

Upon Gery Milner-Gibson-Cullum death in 1921 the estate became Crown property. The Hardwick estate was a substantial property consisting of over 725 acres of land in the parishes of Bury St Edmunds, Hardwick, Horringer and Nowton. In the depression of the 1920's no buyer for the whole could be found. The property was therefore split and sold in instalments to separate buyers. Those contents of the house that were not donated to the borough were sold in 1924. The estate was also put on the market in December 1924 and bought by Mr Towher of Littleport for resale. Some was sold to sitting tenants (e.g., Hawstead Farm). Still, the main part of the estate was not sold. It was put on the market in May 1925 and much of it, but not all of it, was sold. In November 1926 fixtures and fittings were sold prior to the demolition of the house. Eventually much of the grounds were divided into individual building plots, which sold readily. Still, the house remained unsold and sadly it was therefore demolished and sold for building materials.



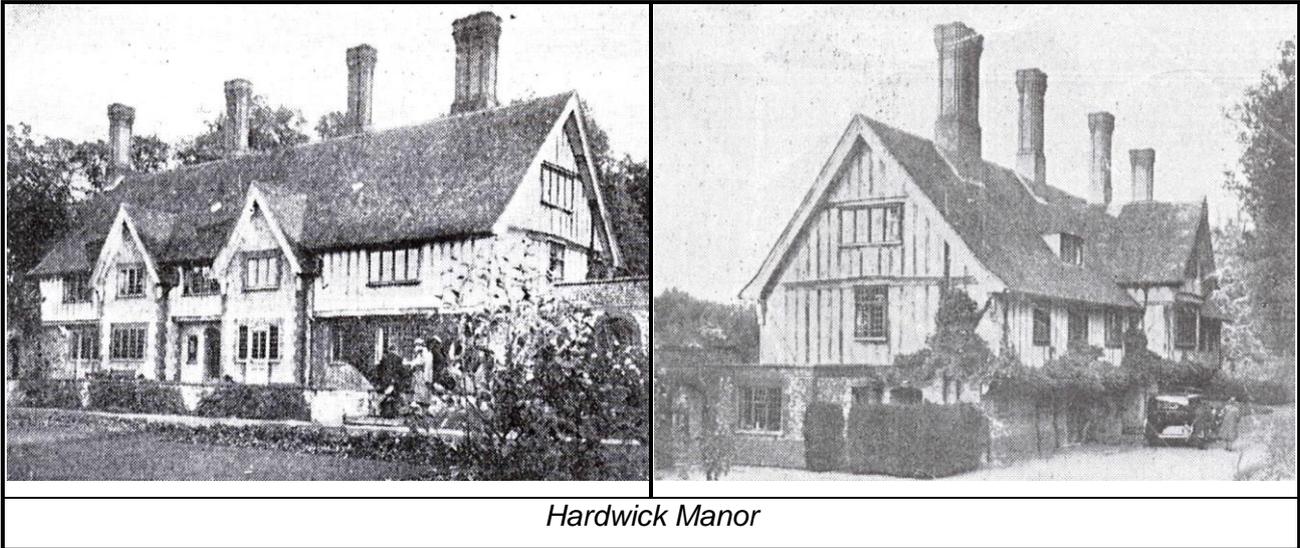
Demolition of the House



Timber cutting on the estate

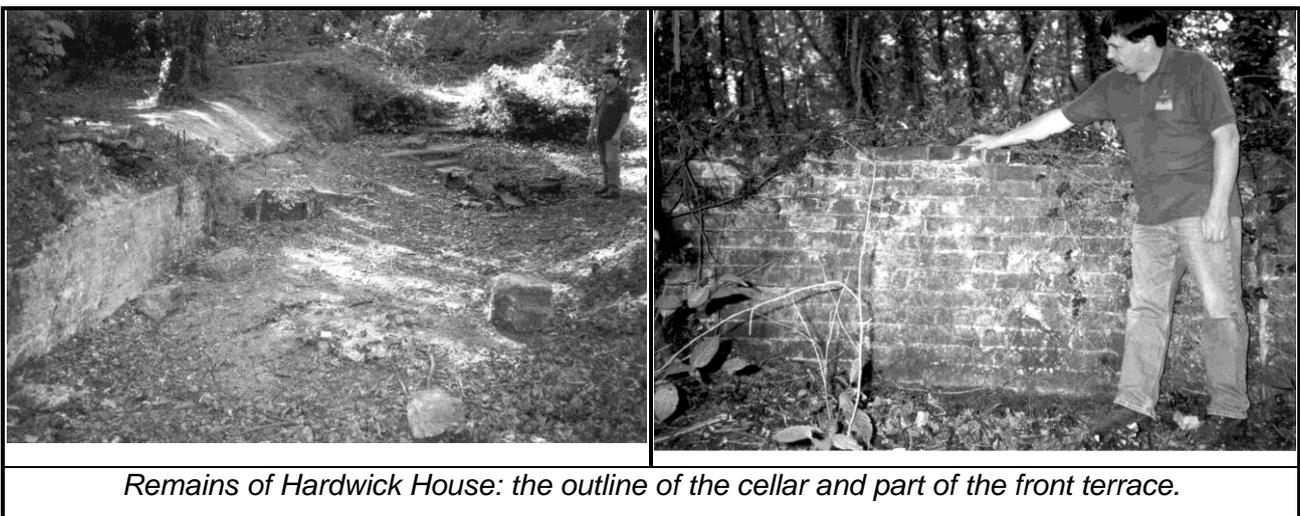
Two gentlemen bought large sections of the estate. An unnamed gentleman from London purchased a considerable part of the estate west of the central right-of-way leading from the narrow lane as one walks from the Butts?. One of his objects in doing so was to preserve the many beautiful trees that abound in that portion of the Park. A new drive and gateway were constructed at the top of the Vinery Road, leading to a residence situated not far from the old hall, later known as Hardwick Manor, which originally was perhaps the Dower House but in later years became the Gardener's Cottage. This cottage was converted into a Tudor mansion, and for this purpose Mr Hewitt purchased much of the old oak from the House and other building materials. Mr

Harvey G. Frost, builder and contractor, of BSE carried out the conversion. Grounds and garden were laid out, this part off the estate reaching to the lawn of the old hall, and this resulted in the preservation of an avenue with a statue at the top? and of the yew avenue?.



Mr Harvey Frost himself purchased some 28 acres of the section of the estate described as the Hawstead end?. This was one of the prettiest parts of the estate, a huge open space in which were some magnificent cedar trees, being surrounded by lovely woods. Mr Frost opened up a charming drive with fine gates, and built a house in the open space.

The demolition contract for the house stipulated that it had to be taken down to below the foundations. Now only a few traces remain. The materials removed included doors and windows, the lead of the roof, the stonework, floorboards, glass houses and garden ornaments. Even the turf was sold. The waste was burnt on a huge fire. Some of the original estate buildings still remain, such as The Lodge House on Hardwick Lane and the Dairy Cottage on Home Farm Lane.



The park did not entirely escape the destruction. The Eastern Counties' Timber Co. had a large number of men and timber drags busy felling and carting away many of the magnificent old trees that had been the glory of the park for years. Scores of people, including many children, used

perambulators, boxes fastened on wheels, wheelbarrows, and indeed almost every conceivable contrivance taking away the trimmings from the trees for much-needed firewood in those days of coal shortage. As much as four tons a day were cut with a circular saw driven by the engine of a Ford motor-van. The total number of trees that were felled and cleared is unknown, but it is known to be over 213 trees, including oak (73), beech (65), elm, ash, spruce (25), birch, cedar, Scotch (24), larch (11), poplar and willow. Some of the large, picturesque oaks were, luckily, of little commercial value and were therefore spared.

POW camp 260

During and after the WWII Hardwick Heath was used as a Prisoners of War Camp. Each POW Camp was assigned a number, the one based on Hardwick Heath being listed as 260. The accuracy of these numbers is somewhat dubious as there were no accurate records kept and as well as this some camps numbers were assigned to other camps when they were closed down. Other local POW camps included: Camp 26: Barton Field Camp, Ely, Cambridgeshire; Camp 56: Botesdale, Diss, East Suffolk; 71: Sheriffhales, Shinfal, Salop, Newmarket (GPC) West Suffolk; 85: Victoria camp, Brandon Road, Mildenhall, Bury St: Edmunds, West Suffolk; 130: West Fen Militia, Ely, Cambridge; 131: Uplands Camp, Diss, Norfolk.

One of the remaining records of life on the POW camp is the German POW newspaper "LAGERECHO", available in digitised form on the World Wide Webb for the period 1946-1948. This indicates that the camp was in use until at least 1948.

No generalisation can be made about living conditions in a POW camp, as they varied greatly from camp to camp. Factors such as weather conditions, supplies of food and medicine, the period of the war when captivity was spent and indeed the individual personality of the camp commandant were all deciding factors to the conditions endured by prisoners.

The camps themselves on mainland Britain varied from site to site but the majority, and Hardwick was no exception, were constructed from corrugated tin and wood. These structures were known as Nissen huts and can still be seen today in rural parts of Scotland and Wales. A typical POW camp would have included the following facilities: pillbox; POW barracks; latrines; ammunition stores; canteen; camp office; chapel; kitchen; and guard barracks.

After the end of the war, the POWs housed on Hardwick Heath were put to work on local farms. Italians built the concrete roads for the newly planned Mildenhall Road Estate.

Recent Times

The section of the Heath with the football pitches was bequeathed to St Edmundsbury Borough Council by Gery Milner-Gibson-Cullum. The remainder of the heath was bought from private landowners over a period of time, during the 1950-1960's. There was a will on the Borough Council's part to provide an open space for sports and recreation for the citizens of Bury St Edmunds in general and for the newly built Nowton Estate in particular.

The most recent developments include the building of a Changing Rooms block for the use of local football teams. This was built in 1992. Following this the car park was resurfaced.

A wildlife garden project was started in 1999. The Garden, located near the car park and largely accessible to accompanied wheelchair users, offers visitors the opportunity of looking at easily created wildlife-friendly garden features. The features include a pond and marsh area, a wildflower meadow bed, a log pile, a bird feeding station, two bird boxes, a compost pile, a hedge, and a woodland area with selected ground flora species. The Garden is maintained by volunteers and used by a local Special Needs school for the Sustainable Development aspect of the National Curriculum.

Hardwick Heath is at present a favourite spot with dog walkers, as it is the only open space in Bury St Edmunds where dogs are allowed off lead. Other popular activities in the park include football and other games and fishing in the Pond. The local Hospice uses the heath for its annual fete, and yearly visits from the Circus bring in crowds of children and adults. The Park is maintained and developed to improve the facilities for these varied uses.

Nevertheless, the management of the heath is not appreciated by all. During an internet search, we found a quote from FOREST (Freedom Organisation for the Right to Enjoy Smoking Tobacco). In a "Submission to the Health & Safety Executive on the Proposal For An Approved Code of Practice on Passive Smoking at Work", in December 1998 the Director of FOREST complained about the ban on smoking for staff at the West Suffolk Hospital: "Smokers are required to walk to **Hardwick Heath – a badly lit area of waste ground** - at the back of the hospital."