

Home Farm has a complex of barns and byres where dairy farming was practised until the 1980s and where cattle are still fattened (Fig. 1&2). The following extracts are from Stephen's diary.

*July 31. On the Monday morning he went round with Francis King before breakfast. Started cutting the beans - 16 acre field. We went up to Capel with the binder and tractor. The binder went wrong and would not bind properly despite numerous attempts to correct the mechanism. We did some shocking of the beans - and in the evening went down to see some oats finished.'*

*August 1. The usual trip round before breakfast. The binder was still wrong - but the mechanic from Sudbourne came round and had a look at it. He was some time in trying to diagnose the trouble - but during the afternoon he changed the needle on the binding mechanism - and after that it went alright, much to everyone's relief. The needle he put in was the old needle which he had taken off during the winter as being too old - but it seemed to serve the purpose very well. We did a little shocking of the beans. In the evening went down to see some oats being finished off with the other tractor binder. There was quite a crowd hunting the rabbits and all the little boys turned out in force.'*

*August 2. The binder went on cutting the beans. After breakfast we discovered that the grass drier was going to come into action. We loaded a cart with green stuff - but never saw the stuff dried, because the mechanics took up all the time before lunch in setting it in order. The whole machine is not really completed yet. There is a blower driven by a diesel engine and the drying business is driven by oil. After lunch shocked a few beans and hunted rabbits. There must have been about 80 rabbits killed in the beans; I also killed a largish rat!'*

*August 3. Spent most of the day at Sudbourne. It was a wet day - & rained steadily most of the morning. Peter and I had a good look round the gardens and grounds of Sudbourne Hall whilst King was at a Bailiff's meeting. We saw some very poor peach trees in some extensive glass houses and some good tomatoes and figs. There are some very fine shrubs and trees in the gardens which are themselves enormous. Before the [Great] War - they employed about 30 gardeners: now there are only 5. Oliver showed us round in the afternoon. We saw the blackcurrant trees and the sawmills - also some of the park-land that is being ploughed up under the government scheme. Here we saw a subsoiler and the work it does - also a pile of chalk. We had tea with Oliver and his wife and had a look round the nursery of young trees - very interesting.'*

*August 4. Spent the day with the tractor binder cutting oats - a 27 acre field. We cut about 24 acres in the day. Took turns to go on the tractor and on the binder. The weather kept fine and the cutting was fairly easy. The oats were Scotch Abundance, but rather a patchy crop. We could not quite finish cutting them because the oil was running out. A pity!'*



Fig. 3. Loading hay near Butley Church before the war



Fig. 4. Dale Farm, Wantisden is now at the heart of the estate created by John Kemble after the requisitioned land was released at the end of the war