

## 7. THE HAVEN GROUND

This group of houses situated on the double bend in the road between the Church and the Tye has grown a lot in our century. Eighteen people lived there in 1871 and the number has now risen to sixty-three.

In 1840 the title map shows Haven Ground Farm on the inside of the first bend with a long pond opposite. The two small enclosures at the back of the four farm buildings were called pightles - the usual local name for the small fields near a farm house. "They're in the calves' pightle" said of a couple meant that they were courting. The Gamekeeper's cottage was on the other bend and two farmworkers cottages were on the left hand side of the road going towards the Tye. Fruit trees and shrubs are still to be found on the site.

### **Anything Wrong with Bulmer Girls?**

In 1871 the census taker called the area the Halping Ground and only the house was left of Haven Ground Farm. Isaac Radley, a farmworker, lived in it with his wife and five daughters. The other two cottages also housed farmworkers, William Butcher and Henry Marsh. All three men were Bulmer born but it is interesting to see that they had all gone (just) outside the parish for their wives who came from Henny, Belchamp and Twinstead. A very high proportion of the farmworkers at this time took their wives



*Haven Ground Cottages*

*Peter Stothard '74*

from neighbouring parishes and not from Bulmer itself. Was it better to woo away from the family's immediate gaze? And of course the bicycle was imminent which would make it possible to err and stray even further afield.

### **A Model Dwelling**

An entry in Col. Burke's notebook for 1885 tells us what happened next: "A very old farmhouse, of stud and plaster work and used as a double cottage, being past repair, was pulled down. A double cottage of brick on the same site and covering almost exactly the same extent of ground was built from my own drawings by E. Green for £340 using old materials as far as possible - there wasn't much."

These model estate cottages are characteristic of their period. One of Bulmer's present day builders, working opposite recently, was fascinated by them because, as he put it, "No one part of them looks the same as any other". Each window, gable, roof line and detail was deliberately designed to be different. Another similar Col. Burke design is to be seen at Smeetham Hall Lane. For one local farm house he commissioned an architect but so altered the plans that they finished up "as largely my own".

A history of council house design can also be studied in the area: pre-war brick and pebble dash, post-war Airey concrete blocks, then later conventional colour washed brick and old people's bungalows of the 1950s. Private bungalows were built along the line of the pond in the 1960s.

### **Heathens?**

Finally the old two acre meadow (if our hedge count is reliable, one hedge goes back to the Conquest period), was sold by the Parish Council to the County Council for the new Primary School. The County Architects produced an interesting design which was architecture rather than boxes. There were lots of visitors to see it at work. A Greek Inspector of Schools wrote, "You have octagonal space, this made me a wonderful impression." It has proved to be a very successful building. Sliding partitions enable its three classrooms and hall to be opened up for theatrical or other occasions. It has needed a temporary classroom on two occasions during its short history. One place name expert says haven could well be heathen. Heathen Ground does not seem quite right for a Church of England School, however.

What really makes this a haven today are the gardens of the houses here. Whether you like roses or vegetables, these gardens delight the eye.