



**We Live Here: Bredfield
“My first year, and now”**

Spring PHOTO Project

2023

Introduction

This Spring 2023 photo project was borne of a desire to communicate through photos and brief narratives, our pride about living in Bredfield, our curiosity about the lives of those who live/have lived around us, and our interest in sharing our experience of living in this award-winning small village of 2022 in Suffolk.

1 Semer Cottages - Anne Henderson



Why did I move to Bredfield?

I was looking for a weekend cottage - nothing too big and in a community.

I loved the house, it was just the right size for weekendening, but I had no idea that I would end up living here.

I liked the neighbours - Rosemary and John invited a few people to their house for a cuppa whilst I was in the process of buying and already I felt part of the community.

I moved in in 2000 - coming most weekends and slowly the weekends got 'longer' and I decided to move from Highbury to Bredfield in 2003.

I have never regretted it.



Devonia – John and Rosemary McCarthy (and Rosco the chocolate lab)

My grandfather, Frederick Martin, purchased “Devonia” in 1949 and lived there until his death in 1964. Cecily continued to live here until 1985, at which time John and I purchased “Devonia”.

Cecily left “Devonia” in October 1985 to go and live with her sister Dulcie in Monewden. As the house was empty, John was able to get to work renovating the house, with the help of Joe Arbon’s building company, John’s father and mine. This included all new electrics, central heating, a new kitchen and bathroom and downstairs toilet (the existing one was outside attached to the house). Of course there was a lot of painting and decorating to be done. I was unable to help as our first daughter was born in January 1985, so she kept me busy.

We finally moved into “Devonia” in April 1986. It was a great relief to John, as he was working, and spending most evenings and weekends at “Devonia” trying to get things finished before we moved into our new home.

A house I had known all my life, with very fond memories.





Woodcote – until 2020, Kath Woods
(see profile page – “An hour with.....Kath and Sheila Woods” for written details.







May Tree Cottage - Rob and Liz Whitman (and Jack Russell, Alfie)

We moved to May Tree Cottage in the summer of 2018, having lived in our last home for over 26 years, so it was quite a big move for us packing up our family home.

We were in fact a long way into the process of buying another property in another village but saw May Tree Cottage advertised late one Friday afternoon in April 2018 and by Saturday (despite Rob saying there was absolutely no way we were going to view it) and by then already fifth on the list to view, we had agreed to buy it! It just felt so right for us the minute we walked through the door, even though part of the object of our move was to have much less garden than we already had (it's about the same size but with a lot more hedges to maintain, but is much enjoyed by our five grandchildren!) and to be located in a much larger village with many more facilities we could walk to (Bredfield is about a third of the size of where we were living!) Despite not quite fulfilling those requirements, another reason for our

move was to live this side of the Orwell Bridge and closer to Woodbridge and the Suffolk coasts and heaths, which we've certainly achieved.

It's hard to believe we've been in Bredfield nearly five years already, but we've enjoyed every moment of living here in such a beautiful, rural setting with our views across the fields to Boulge, the constant wildlife and glorious sunsets and count ourselves very lucky indeed. None more so than during the COVID pandemic when, despite missing family and friends, we couldn't think of anywhere we would rather have been locked down than here and enjoyed how busy Caters Road became with walkers and cyclists! Since we've been here, we've replaced the kitchen, redecorated inside and out and created a small wildlife pond but don't have any plans to change the cottage as it suits us just fine as it is.





1 Primrose Cottages – Dan and Nikki Attwood

Well, not a lot has changed apart from us in the 12 years since we graced Bredfield with our presence! 😊

We compromised location over size and by gum, we are so glad we did.

We love living here and have no intention of leaving anytime soon. Despite the beloved pub closing, we have made good friends along the way, and do our best to keep the pop up bar in action!

Who could ask for a nicer bunch of neighbours and community spirit eh?

We are unique and blessed in so many ways.



Lord's Waste - Nick and Helen Young

We first saw Lord's Waste in March 2010 and were invited in by the then owner Peter Grainger, who was moving to Melton. We sat by the fire and drank coffee while we chatted. After nearly an hour had gone by he said "Oh, but you'll want to look around?!" We didn't need to - we had fallen for the place immediately.

We built a new kitchen and had quite a lot of remedial work to do - not so easy, as it's a listed building, dating back to 1796. Initially it was just three workshops with living accommodation above, built on wasteland belonging to the Lord of the Manor - hence the unusual name. So we're squatters really!

Not long after we moved in, we met an elderly lady from Australia whose distant ancestor had been one of eleven children brought up in the middle room. He was caught stealing a ham from Hungarian Hall and was sent out to Australia in chains.

In the 1930s, the three properties were bought by a London travel agent whose nephew, the Ipswich architect Eric Sandon, turned them into a family home.

We have lived here since 2010. We love the village, have wonderful neighbours, and never want to leave.





Moat Farmhouse – Rachel Kearton

We moved to Moat Farmhouse, Bredfield in 2015 having bought the house from a lovely couple, Richard and Chris. Chris was a teacher and had very kindly researched a lot of information about the house for our children to explore. Apparently, the beam in the dining room comes from an old ship hull that was most likely broken up in the boatyards of Woodbridge. The door to the sitting room comes from the old Melton jail (and still has the hatch cut into it for checking on prisoners!) while the beams elsewhere were matched together during construction hundreds of years ago, by aligning Roman numerals still visible today. When we first arrived Len and Sue were living opposite us, Len having lived in Bredfield all his life. He told us of the time when, as a boy, a German fighter plane had been brought down behind our house and he saw the pilot. Len could also remember a bull being kept downstairs in the car port! We moved to Bredfield from Melton, but before that had lived abroad in a capital city for several years. It was a very welcome change for us all, particularly with a big safe garden for playing football and other games, while also being blessed by our visiting wildlife that makes use of the large pond. Later on, when our family dog came to join us, we have enjoyed the closeness of the countryside for long walks and adventures, as well as enjoying the friendliness of neighbours – it's the perfect combination.

Pictures: when we arrived the house was pink; last year we changed the porch (and temporarily put a cricketer on the front lawn!); we've been gifted the third photo from many years ago, but other than the porch (again!) not much has changed.





Ivy Cottage – Sheila Woods
(see profile page – “An hour with.....Kath and Sheila Woods” for written details.



Bumbles – Stewart, Jo and Samuel Belfield

We moved to Bredfield in September 2016. Save for the optimistic placing of two Swift nest boxes, the front of our house hasn't changed much. I don't think we were much different from many others, in thinking that the prospect of the back of the house - the garden and the patio - were the most important factor. So, our photos are of, and from, the back of the house.

The nice people from whom we bought the house had a thing about out-houses: there were two sheds, a greenhouse and - dominating it all - a huge set of stables. The stables were initially useful for storing stuff and our son found lots of wood, pipes and plastic guttering, which he used to erect large, intricate race tracks for his model cars, or create a series of waterfalls (pictured)!



However, the stables finally had to go. It took a lot of time and effort to find anyone to take them down and take them away. Once gone, we were left with a huge slab of concrete. Aiming, eventually, for a wildlife-friendly garden, having a fifth of it covered in concrete wasn't perfect. However, the prospect of digging-up all that concrete was too daunting. So, it was slabbed and a small, pretty summer house placed upon it.



Aster Cottage – Kevin Whybrow and Julie Crabb

Kev and I moved into Aster Cottage in November 2016. We had spent a lot of time in Suffolk over 20 plus years prior to this and had been searching for the right place for us both for most of 2015. We both still worked full time – Kev in Colchester and me in North London - and so could only enjoy Aster and Bredfield at weekends or in holiday time. Leaving on Sundays became more and more difficult. When the first Covid lock down caused us to pull out from a planned holiday in March 2020, and our work became remote/furloughed, we hunkered down at Aster and happily made this our home serendipitously sooner than we had expected.

When we first arrived, it seemed that every service we needed to make to the house was the same price! The cooker cleaned? £50. The chimney swept? £50. The alarm serviced? £50! Those days have definitely disappeared! And since 2016, the changes we've made have been mostly to the garden, general decoration, including the external colour of the house, replacement of the soffits and fascias and some additional secondary glazing of some of the windows.

We love Bredfield!



2 Forge House – Sophie and Callum Clement-Smith

Callum and I moved here with our son Bertie in June 2021 from Southampton. We were both born and raised in Suffolk but had lived out of the county for 14 years. Having a child helped us recognise it was time for us (and our dog Nellie) to move back to the countryside. We had a rather particular search criteria for our move; equidistant to both our parents, 2 teaching jobs close by, a large garden and an old house, if possible. Early on in our search we looked at Bredfield with another property, but 2 Forge house was a perfect fit and we only made it to our car before putting in an offer.

Two years here and we have no regrets about moving back to the County, with space for chickens and as much veg as we can keep the caterpillars off. Not to mention baby Rupert.

The next plan is to lay down some long, deep roots.





The Hermitage - Janie and Peter Taylor

Peter and I moved to Bredfield at the end of 1991, into The Hermitage, Ufford Road, from our previous home in Little Bealings. We both worked for BT at Martlesham in 1991, so ideal for commuting to work. We needed the 4.8 acre plot as I had a horse who, like me was expecting a little one. Our first born, Lucy arrived in March 1992, same day as we received planning permission and the foal was born in May 1992. Our second child, Luke arrived in 1994. So both children have grown up in Bredfield.

(The house is 15/16/17th Century..... not quite sure. Sold as 17th but a visiting builder thought it was 15th because of the size of rooms.) In 1991 there were 2 bedrooms and a downstairs bathroom next to the front door.

We started building work in 1992, as shown in first picture, adding a large kitchen, bedroom with en-suite and redoing the front door and entrance hall and moving the bathroom upstairs. The two dormers window were also added. It's now a 4-bedroom house. We later added a sun room on the south side (side not shown in picture). We have made many changes but many of the original beams are still in place. Inglenook and bread oven remain. Whilst redoing the end bedroom the original wattle and daub fell down and the room was opened up to reveal more black beams, which we have kept exposed.

The first photo below is midway through building work, the second photo is in March 2023.





I have also added the older pic below, from 1950's I think, which I was given recently. I was also given lots of other pictures of previous residents of the Hermitage, including 'the pocket lady' at Church Fete.



3 Primrose Cottages - Liz, Jon, Hetty and Lily Thompson

We moved into number 3 Primrose cottages in July last year and got married two days later! How much more could you cram into one week!

We absolutely love Bredfield. We came from a new build in Hollesley and we were looking for a cottage for a project. Number 3 Primrose Cottages is definitely that! However, we've been cracking on with it and loving every minute!

We've added our lovely conservatory for a nice light, sunny room to eat in. Then we've redone the attic room for Hetty. We've double glazed the front of the house, fitted a new front door and bricked up an old front door. Not to mention we've decorated the whole of the downstairs! The garden has started its revamp and will continue hopefully this summer with the addition of a summer house

What a great place to be ... we love it!!





Little Orchard

We bought Little Orchard in 1974, on moving to Suffolk for work.

The land had originally been a meadow belonging to Chapel Farm, and the house was built in 1957/8 to replace an ex-army hut where the previous owners had lived while developing a small-holding to supplement the father's income as a nurse at St Audry's mental hospital. Later, in the sixties, his two sons each had a slice of the original plot to build their own houses.

We extended Little Orchard to its present size in 1976/7, installing central heating, double-glazing and insulation. We tried to match the existing appearance as far as possible, even

sourcing metal-framed windows to match the original Crittall ones. We couldn't understand why the builders were so slow in starting work, but there was a drought in the summer of 1976, and they knew it was impossible to dig out footings by hand in Bredfield clay!

The house today is very little changed, but the garden has been radically simplified. A large monkey-puzzle tree blew down in a gale, all our plum trees succumbed to silver-leaf, and last summer's drought was the death-knell for two mature apple-trees.

Coming from a city, the most striking thing about life in Bredfield in the 70s was the silence at night: there was very little traffic on the A12 after 10 pm, and car tyres were much quieter anyway. For our first three years, we slept here, but drove to work in Martlesham and Ipswich. We knew hardly anyone apart from our immediate neighbours. All changed when our two sons were born. Immediately, we were drawn into village life – the Bredfield and District Community Council, Toddler Club, and later the village Primary School and bell-ringing at St Andrews. We became part of the very cohesive, caring community which still exists today.





2, Primrose Cottages - Alli Girling

I moved to Bredfield in 2016 after living in London for 25 years. Having grown up locally in a small village I hoped to find somewhere with great community spirit and a pub! The pub sadly closed before I moved here and I never got to set foot inside the door, but I certainly found a great community and absolutely the best neighbours! My house hasn't changed much since I bought it, apart from a lick of paint, but I love gardening and have made quite a lot of changes to both front and back gardens which are ongoing projects - as is researching the history of Primrose cottages.

From sitting in the garden, drink in hand, chatting to neighbours and listening to the friendly banter from the bowls club next door, to a highly competitive night at the village quiz, a hilarious evening at the pop up bar or helping out with the wonderful tea ladies at the village fete, there is never a dull moment. I've met many lovely people whilst volunteering in the shop or out walking the dog too. Everyone is so friendly and I feel very lucky to have found a home in this special village.





**Thank you to everyone for showing their pride,
curiosity, and willingness to share in this
first photo project!**