



# THE ICKNIELD WAY ASSOCIATION

## **The D House, Euston, Suffolk (Guidebook Map30)**

Many thanks to Mr Nigel Rush of Rymer Farm, Barnham for providing this history of the D house.

Dear Mr Northrop,

Thank you for your letter re the Icknield Way walk. I give you permission to park cars on the meadow in front of Rymer House on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of 23<sup>rd</sup> of September 1997.

The "D" House. So-called because it is the shape of a letter D. The back is straight while the front is curved. Built in 1828, as were the other cottages across the road. I am a Tenant farmer of The Euston Estate and these were, until a few years ago, farmworker's cottages which housed some of our men. As the need for workers has declined, the cottages have been returned to The Estate and the half of the "D" House nearest Thetford is inhabited by The Duke of Grafton's gardener and the other side by Arris Calver and his wife. The Calver family have lived there for the whole of this century. Arris is one of 6 brothers and one sister. Nobody knows why the house was built in this shape and there is nothing like it anywhere round here or on the Estate. We can only put it down to architectural enthusiasm in that period. I can tell you that the accommodation is very cramped inside however charming the outside.

The area of the cottages is known as "Rymer Point". The reason for this is that 9 parishes meet near or at this point. There is no other place like it in the country and many people have puzzled over this down the years. On the other side of the road to the "D" house there used to be a pond and a cattle pound, to accommodate cattle being driven to Bury market. This led some historians to think that it was water that the parishes needed but they did not examine the water supplies of the 9 parishes otherwise they would have seen that the most of them were well supplied in their own right. Rymer is generally taken to mean Ry (as edge) and Mer (as water). It is the second highest point in Suffolk (after Chedburgh). Going clockwise, the 9 parishes are Barnham (cottages across the road from the D), Euston (D House), Fakenham Magna (Rymer Farmhouse), Sapiston, Honington, Troston (the meadow), Great and Little Livermere and finally Ingham.

Some years ago I spent a considerable amount of time doing historical research to try and establish the reason it turned out to be very simple. The reason was clay. There is an area of about 60 acres of clay subsoil round The Point, in an otherwise sandy Breckland area and this was a valuable resource in the days when houses were built of clay and wattle. Naturally, all the adjacent parishes extended their boundaries into this area to get "a bit of the action". This was why we had so many pits round here, although most of them have been filled in. The pond in the Meadow is one such dried out in 1976. My father said it dried out in 1921 as well. We draglined it out in 1976 and found it to be all blue clay.

During my research I found that the parish boundaries dated back to the time of King Molmutius (circa 550 BC) and his son King Billin (who founded the first port of London, Billingsgate). The Icknield Way was then a Druid road called the Sarn Iken. Contrary to many people's thoughts, the Romans did not make the roads, they straightened and improved them. When the Romans came they had the sense to leave the boundaries and Hundreds alone.



Chesterton knew this if you read his poem "The Road to Gloucester". The first verse (from memory) goes:

*"Or ere the Roman came to Rye  
Or down the Severne strode.  
The rolling drunken Englishmen  
Made the rolling English Road."*

When the Romans came they were fought by Boedacia and if she had chariots, then she had roads.

I hope this will give you a little information of this area.

Yours sincerely,

Nigel Rush

*Icknield Way Newsletter, Autumn 1997*

*D House is located where the Icknield Way crosses the A134 south of Thetford.*



*Photo of the D House, c.2011  
by John Boardman*



*Different view  
on a sunny  
day, by an  
unknown  
photographer*