SUFFOLK VILLAGE SIGNS

IXWORTH VILLAGE SIGN SUFFOLK

Bob Mitchell

IXWORTH VILLAGE SIGN - SUFFOLK

The Sign (taken from the village sign notes)

The whole sign is designed to present the context of the village through the ages. Each of the 4 plaques represent an important period of history for this developing community. The name of Ixworth is probably a spoken corruption of the Saxon person Gysca (Gysca's Place). The design at the top of the sign indicates that Ixworth stood on the ancient trackway known today as the Peddars Way. It probable existed before the Romans arrived so they adapted it as a military road after the revolt of Queen Boudica of the Iceni and today it is largely intact running to Holme-next-the-Sea on the Norfolk coast. The current name probably derives from the Latin, pedester, meaning 'on foot'. It was used in the middle ages by pilgrims bound for the religious shrine at Walsingham, along with itinerant traders and animal drovers. Note the detail of the firs of the Breckland, often planted to mark droving routes and the pack horse train being led by a man on foot.

The village sign was erected in 1983 and made by Harry Stebbing and Brian Gaze.
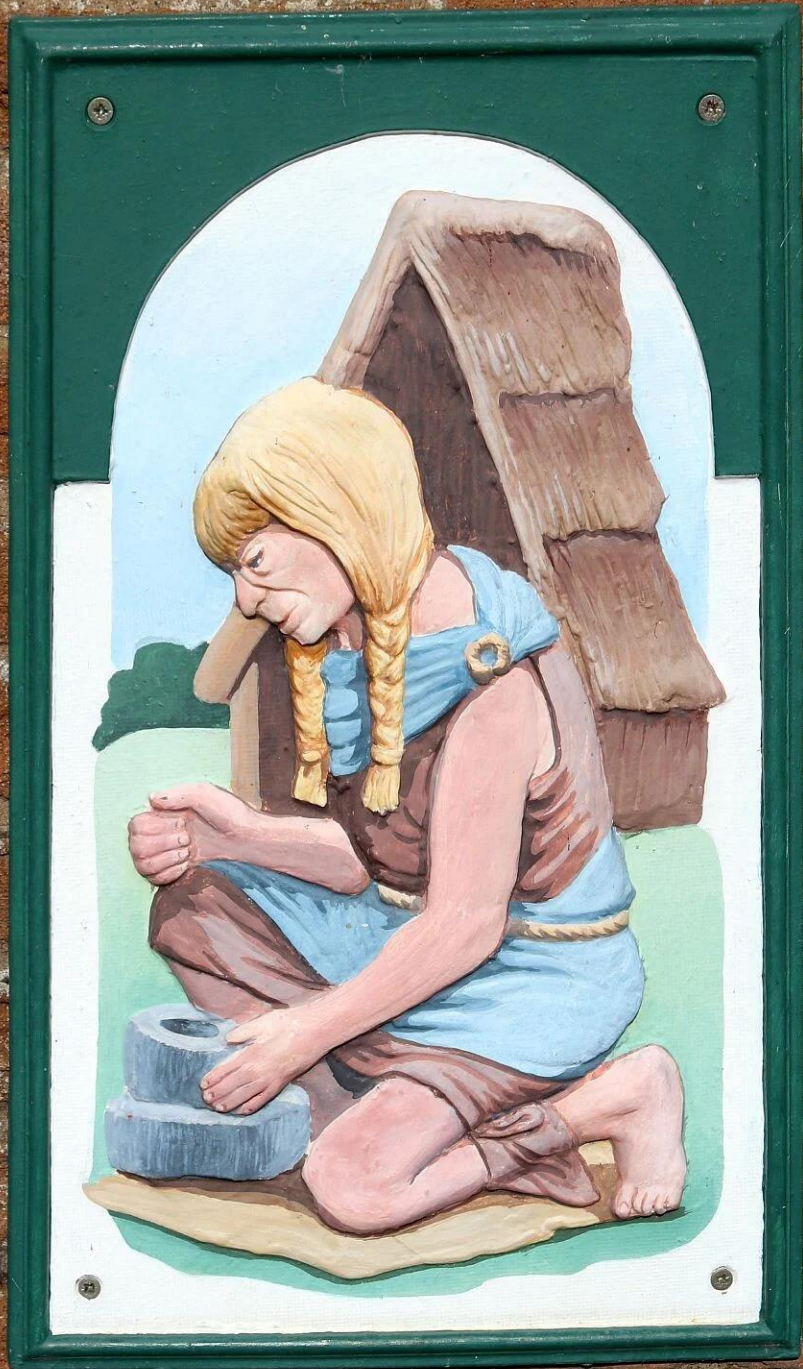
The Name and Population

Called Ikewrth c.946, Iccawurthe 1047-65 and Kkewortham in 1086. It means "The enclosure or enclosed farmstead of a man called Icca", from Old English (A.D. Mills). A population of 2,365 at the 2011 census.

The Romans

The Romans built a fort just south of today's village in the 1st century AD, which later became a Roman market town of some 7 acres. At least 3 Roman villas have been discovered locally and several Roman roads converged on the town, including, probably, the Peddar's Way. Many Roman artefacts and coins have been discovered around the village including those excavated prior to the opening of the by-pass in 1986.

A Roman, at some leisure, is depicted on this plaque.

The Anglo-Saxons

After the Romans left Britain around 400 AD came waves of Saxon and Angle migrants, mainly via the river system. They settled in small, scattered, hamlets very close to the river Blackbourn (named after the Saxon 'Hundred'). They lived in thatched structures similar to those reconstructed locally at West Stow. Many Saxon graves have been uncovered over the centuries since, which include skeletons and beautiful personal adornments such as brooches and clothing pins. The Domesday book of 1086 records 2 sizeable Saxon Manors in Ixworth at the time of the Conquest.

This plaque records a Saxon woman at work grinding corn.

The Normans

By 1086 there was only one Manor in Ixworth under the control of the Norman Robert le Blund. Later his son, Gilbert, founded the first Ixworth Priory of Augustine, or Black Can.nons, close to the parish church c1100. The Priory was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary. On Gilbert's death, the lordship passed to his son William who rebuilt the Priory on a different site of some 30 acres, in 1172. The Priory was dissolved in 1537 but parts are incorporated into the current 'Abbey'.

This plaque depicts a monk fishing in the ponds which can still be seen from today's bridleway

The Middle Ages

The Middle Ages saw the building of most of the important and impressive timber framed buildings seen today. The oldest of these can be seen around this Village Sign, as can the original market site granted in 1384. Ixworth became a small town and local service centre at the heart of a large agricultural community. In 1844, as an example, there were 3 inns and 3 beer houses with many other trades and occupations listed in local directories. The population at this time was just over a thousand.

In deference to the village roots in the countryside, this plaque represents an agricultural labourer of past times.

SUFFOLK VILLAGE SIGNS

IXWORTH VILLAGE SIGN SUFFOLK

Bob Mitchell