

Raymond Hubbard is a horseman and countryman from East Anglia who has studied the history of the Suffolk Punch horse since 1948. He's reached an interesting conclusion . . .

The Suffolk horse and its history

I've been interested in the countryside and the Suffolk horse all my life, and have spent a lot of time looking into the history of the breed and trying to make sense of its development. Readers may like to discover more about the Suffolk Punch as a result of my research.

My links with the Saunders and Gleeds

I started work at Langmere Hall for Albert Saunders, cousin to William Charles Saunders, when I was eight and a half-years-old. When Albert left Rushall School he went to work for the Gleeds at Rushall Hall. Mr Gleed was the great grandson of Francis Gleed of Dickleburgh Hall, whose horses were bred in line from Crisp's horse of Ufford, from whom all modern Suffolks are said to descend.

Albert became head horseman for Mrs Gleed as her husband died young. In 1900 Albert's father bought him half of Langmere Hall. The house, land and buildings were shared, and when the other farmer died he brought his half, returning it to one farm.

Francis Gleed's gravestone (with that of his wife, son Richard aged 21 and two little girls aged two and one) are in good condition in Dickleburgh Churchyard. Another son, Ellis, is buried at his feet; he owned the third Gleed horse in line, described in the first Stud Book.

The 'Suffolk Trinity'

Outside the main gate of the Suffolk Showground are three beautiful sculptures of a Suffolk horse, a Red Poll cow and a Suffolk sheep. When the plans were drawn up a Large Black pig was included, but Essex claimed the pig was theirs.

The Suffolk sheep was first bred by Coke of Holkham in Norfolk. He kept Norfolk Horns on his estate farms. He bought a flock of Merino sheep from Spain, but they did not do well on the Holkham soil, so he sold them and bought a flock of South Downs. Coke liked to experiment



(1) Raymond Hubbard, off to a ploughing match with Suffolks, Sharper and Boxer.
 (2) 'Mr Gleed's Bung-tailed Horse, foaled in 1805', in *Horses of the British Empire*.
 (3) A horse of the Suffolk type pictured harrowing in the medieval Luttrell Psalter.

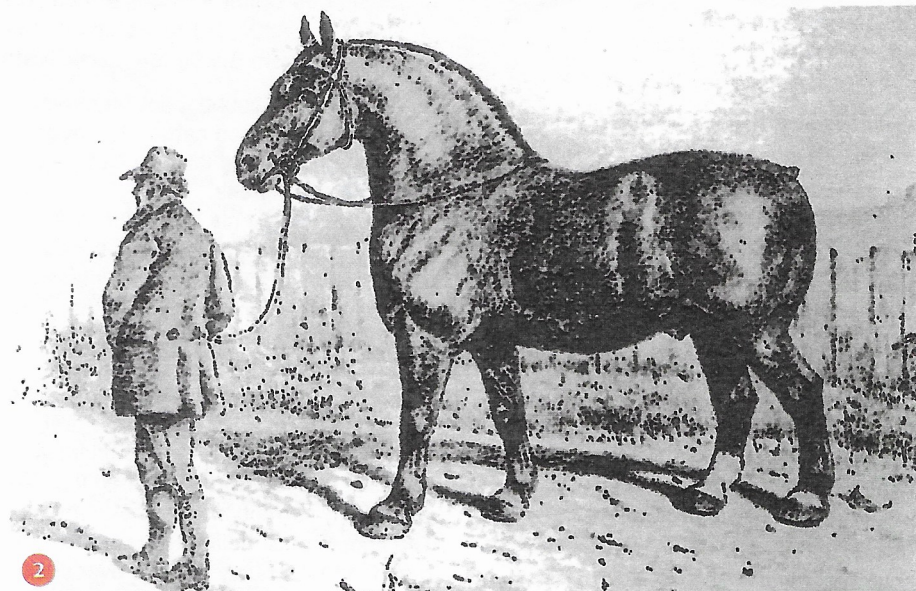
and had a Norfolk Horn ram put with a few South Downs. The lambs had the black face and legs, but no horns like the father, and when they were older the fleece was better quality than the Norfolk Horns or South Downs.

Then he crossed a Norfolk Red cow, noted for its beef, with a Suffolk Dun, noted for its milk. The new cross was found to be a good milk and beef dual purpose animal.

Mr Reeve of Wighton, a Holkham tenant, and his relative, Mr England of

Bingham took up this new breed in a big way. In 1810 Mr Reeve showed a bull and two two-year-old heifers of his Red Poll cattle. Henry Euren, who was editor of the *Norwich Mercury*, became the first editor of the *Red Poll Herd Book*, and was secretary until 1894. He was also editor and secretary (1884-1899) of the *Hackney Stud Book*: Hackneys had been developed from the Norfolk Trotter.

The Red Poll Cattle Society held the 13th International Congress in 2011, attended by participants from all over the

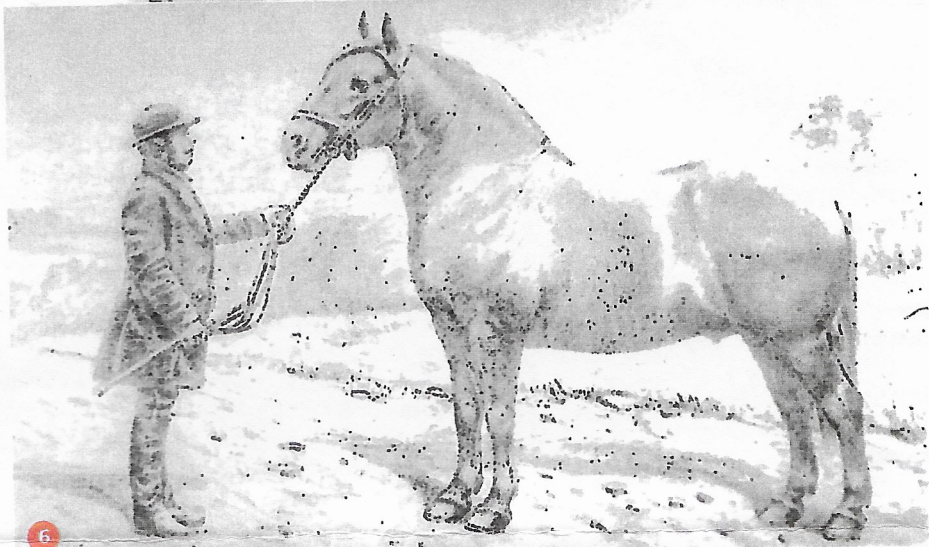
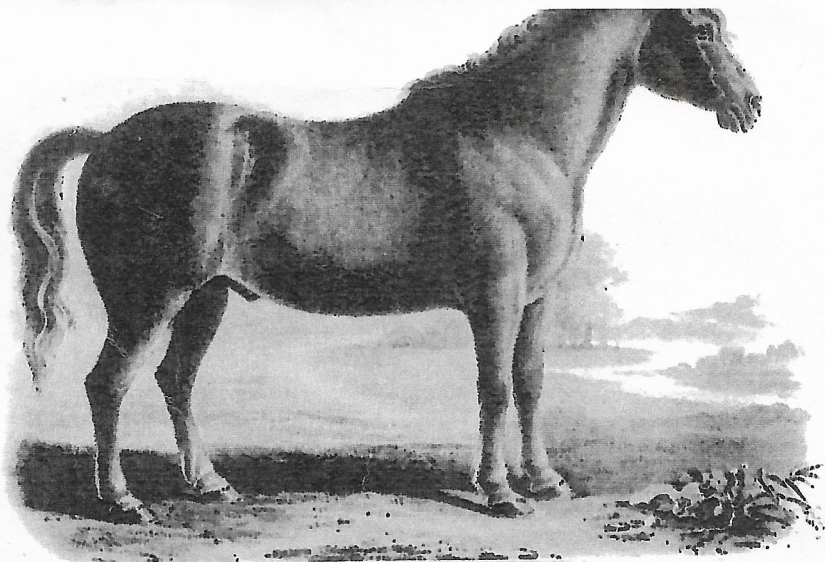


world. A souvenir brochure was produced for each member, and when the Congress visited the Suffolk Show that year I was presented with one as they back my view that the Red Poll is a Norfolk animal, a fact explored in the brochure.

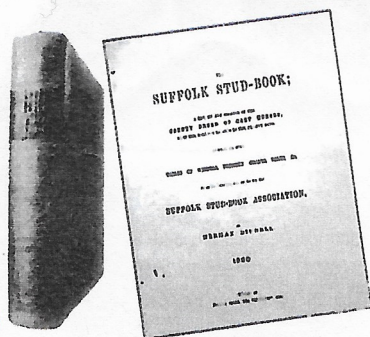
The Viking connection

The Suffolk Horse was in my view first brought to Norfolk by the Vikings. The great Viking army arrived in the Hemsby area of Norfolk in 865 AD, settling in an area called The Fleggs. They built houses, cultivated land, brought their families, and stayed a year before leaving their families behind to travel with the main army via Lincolnshire to York, where they settled for three years. Leaving groups behind they returned to Norfolk, and at Thetford fought with King Edmund who fled to Hoxne where they caught and killed him.

These Danish Vikings were farmers and used horses for all their farm work, while the indigenous people used oxen. The Vikings took their horses with them wherever they went. The Norfolk people had not seen horses doing farm work and copied the idea with horses they bartered for from the Vikings, as did Lincolnshire farmers. These Danish horses were bigger than the horses we had in Britain. After the Ice Age Britain separated from Europe and were left with nine breeds of pony.



(4) 'The Suffolk Punch', in an early 19th century engraving from Professor Low's *Illustrations of the Breed's of the Domestic Animals*. This stallion is described as the property of Mr Denny, Egmoor, Norfolk. (5) *The Suffolk Horse History and Stud-Book*, published in 1880. (6) The stamp of horse that appealed to Mr Crisp, here with his Cup Bearer (426) from the *Suffolk Horse History and Stud-Book*.



The Vikings went almost everywhere. The Norwegian Vikings did not come lower than Lindisfarne on the East coast but went around Scotland and then Ireland, Iceland, Greenland and America. The Swedish Vikings went to Russia and on to Kiev, Constantinople and Italy and the Danish Vikings to Norfolk and Spain. There exists a breed of horse in Belgium, Jutland, Russia and Italy and one or two other countries that looks very like a Suffolk.

There were no horses in Iceland until the Vikings arrived, and in 930AD the Althing (the world's oldest Parliament) passed a law to stop the importation of any other horses. Alcum, a monk, wrote: "A Viking chief told Alfred how the lands from where he came in the north of Europe were very long and narrow, and that all his men could either pasture or plough there by the sea." He was one of

the chiefs of his country, yet he had no more than 20 horned cattle, 20 sheep, 20 pigs and the little land he had was ploughed with horses.

Researching for his book *Britannia*, Camden travelled from London through Suffolk and Norfolk up to Lincolnshire. He had never seen a horse like the 'Suffolk' before he went into the county of Suffolk, and did not state it was special to Suffolk because he found it again in Norfolk. *Britannia* was first printed in 1586 and after five printings the sixth and last was published in 1607 after many corrections had been made. The people of Suffolk have regarded the breed in their county as pure ever since they started to respect them. I have every copy of the Stud Book except Volume 1, but have the use of the first volume from Cupiss of Diss, who printed the first Stud Book continuing until 1960 (Cupiss was owned by one of my Venture Scouts).

In the second edition of the Stud Book dated 1886 Herman Biddell states that some horses in the first edition should not have been entered and in the early

volumes some are included where the father or mother were not known. For example, horse No 1377 in the Stud Book – "no pedigree of dam could be found".

Evidence

The Luttrell Psalter, which dates to the 1330s, is often used in modern books to illustrate farming from the past. We find a horse pulling harrows and a vehicle, and these are of the Suffolk type. The Gorleston Psalter is another which illustrates similar horses. In 2004 another Psalter was found in Lord Macclesfield's library dated 1325, with the art work by a Norfolk monk. Included are two horses ploughing, also of the Suffolk type. This evidence seems to me to show that in Norfolk two horses were being used for ploughing before other counties.

In 1325 the St Omer Psalter (the family came from Mulbarton, Norfolk) tells of the Norfolk horse. In 1604 Thomas Blundeville of Newton Flotman, Norfolk, discusses horse breeding in his book and praises the Norfolk horse: he also wrote the first book on shoeing →

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horses in 1609. In 1534 Fitzherbert wrote about how Norfolk horses are fed and how two are used on a plough in the county. In 1780 Marshall comments on how Norfolk horsemen work from 7.00am until noon and make a second journey from 1.00pm-3.30pm, and will do more work with their two horses than anywhere else.

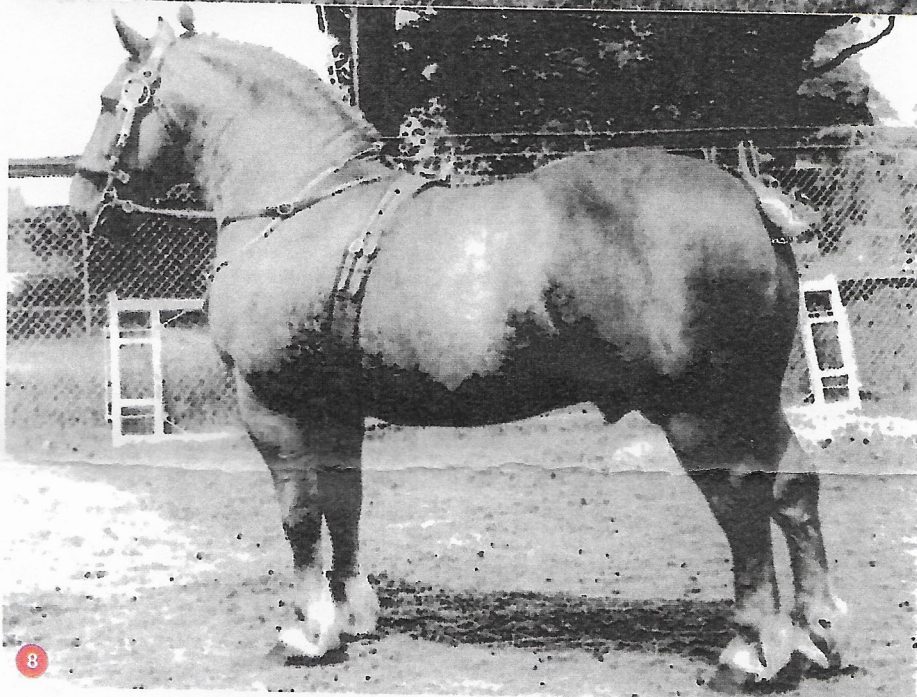
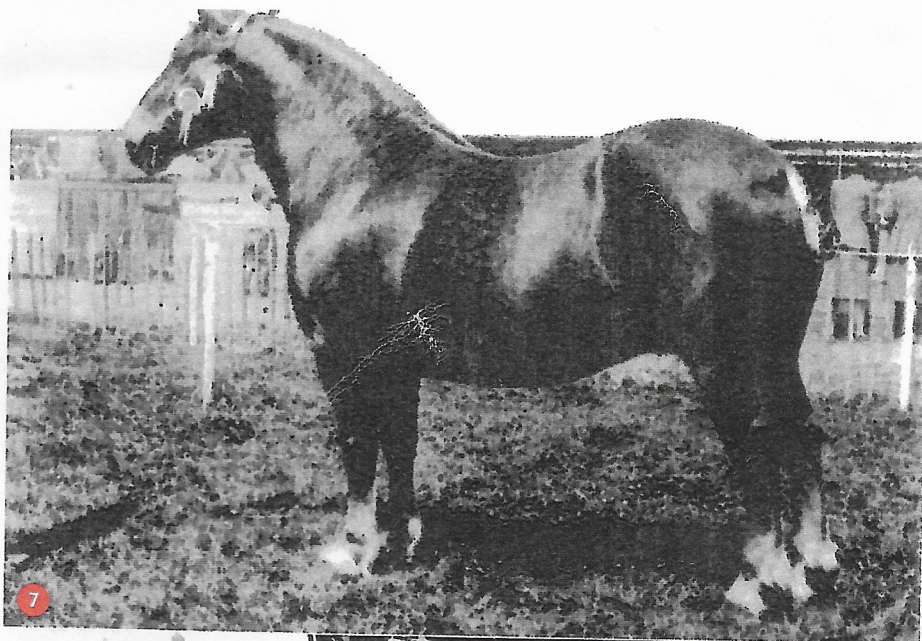
In 1796 John Lawrence says "There is a breed of horse in Norfolk fitted for saddle and draught, they are called the Belgium type." In the same year Nathaniel Kent wrote: "The Norfolk horses are allowed to be the best working horse in this Island." In 1829 John Stacey notes: "A Norfolk man can hardly travel 20 miles out of his county without seeing four horses yoked to a plough and a boy to lead and a man to drive them; this is making agriculture too expensive." In 1864 William Wright says: "The Norfolk horse of the Belgium type are a most useful class of cart horse, they are quick and action steppers and first rate workers, better constitution, better legs and better feet than those of our neighbours in Suffolk."

In 1957 the Royal Show was in Norwich and a large exhibition by the Museum of Rural Life, Reading on East Anglian Farming in the Past confirmed what I had found. In 1960 an exhibition at the Castle Museum in Norwich covered 4,000 years of Norfolk farming. Norfolk county archaeologists and historians have helped me with maps of Viking invasions across the world, including one of The Flegg district of Norfolk when the Vikings were there. The distinguished writer Elwyn Hartley Edwards wrote that: "The Suffolk Horses are of a Viking stock and were brought here in 865AD by the Danes."

Crisp's Horse of Ufford

Suffolk horse breeders claim their horses are all pure since Crisp's Horse of Ufford. In the 1886 Stud Book, a mare, Maggie No 1896 (sire: Kersey's Duke 775, dam: Depper by Kersey's Duke 775) shows a mare bred by her father, not good practice. In the Stud Book 1921 it had been removed. So were H J Stiff (Redgrave), William Sampson (Benhall) and Sidney Minter (Sweffling), as they had given false entries. The 1922 Stud Book included A M Keith (Trimley) Brevity No 11170 and Bonnibella No 11171. The books had been printed but had not yet been sent to members, so 'Cancelled' was stamped in red above the two horses.

In 1924 F J Hammond (Thorndon) had his entry removed. Some breeders bred



their mares with a rough stallion, then entered the foals from a pedigree stallion to sell them, such as Catlands Duke 296. Biddell said his mother was a bay and his half brother was a bay which travelled as Traveller 71.

The Norfolk Suffolk Horse Society (for there was then a society in Norfolk) had more stallions on the road than there were in Suffolk. It is only in areas where the Vikings went that you get a horse identical to the Suffolk.

Charlie Saunders admitted that he wanted to see the Suffolk as big as the Shire. He put some mares with a Shire stallion and three foals were born exactly like a Suffolk, although bigger, and he

entered them in the Stud Book.

Albert Saunders always kept Suffolks as he used them when he was horseman for Mrs Glead of Rushall Hall, whose husband, if you remember was great grandson of Francis Glead of Dickleburgh Hall. Those who spoke of the Belgium type of horse thought that as it was nearer to Norfolk that is where they came from.

William Wright's 1864 comment (above) was what made the Suffolk people think. They looked at their horses and realised it was true, and that is when Arthur Crisp brought it up at the meeting of the Suffolk Agricultural Association and began to make improvements.

(7 & 8) Horses from the middle of last century, George Colson's mare, Rowhedge Myrtle, champion at the Royal Show in 1950, and Springfield Commander, bought in 1952 by the Adams family from Albert Deptford, March, Cambridgeshire: this respected stallion was by Cuttawade Commander and left 90 foals. (9) At the Woodbridge Horse Show, Ipswich, 1949, the stallion line-up was headed by Cuttawade Commander, nearest the camera, with George Colson's Naunton Victor in second place and W C Saunders' Naunton Price in third. (10) Randy Hiscock's stallion, Garretlands Golden Eagle, at the age of eight, imported from America in 2002 following considerable research.