

Wags' story brought the house down



■ Wags Aldred during his stallion leader days and, inset, telling his story.

Photo: CONTRIBUTED

Sir, – Wags Aldred (letters, July 25) was a stallion leader who from the age of 14 would walk a Suffolk stallion along the road from farm to farm serving as many as a dozen mares before they got home at night.

The fee was traditionally always five guineas of which the groom had the odd shillings – and the gov'nor the pounds.

Wags' story went like this:

"My stallion, Lord Foch, served this mare and the farmer said 'I ain't gonna give you nothing boy but come round Christmas Eve and I'll find you a turkey.' Well, by the time I'd cycled over

after work, they had had the sloe gin out for people calling all day collecting their turkeys, and were well away.

"When I knocked at the back-kitchen door the farmer's wife opened it, while still plucking a big stag turkey, and said 'there he is', pointing to the farmer asleep, spreadeagled in a chair.

"She poured me some of her 'hum brewed, and then she cut off a big red wattle off the side of this turkey's head, crept over, and tucked it into the base of her husband's flies.

"Our giggling woke him up. He

yawned, looked around, and she nodded down at this wattle, whereupon he tucked it in."

There was no professional storyteller in the room who had the inherited natural skill to put a story together as Wags could or for that matter any other of our old Suffolk boys. I love them all for what they had that we have lost. I later produced a book of Wags' stories but it was this one that brought the house down on my storytelling birthday night.

**NEIL LANHAM,
Botesdale.**