

Weaving a future with an ancient craft



Rush carpets hand-made in Suffolk have graced stately homes throughout the country and even a Royal residence. **Sarah Chambers** visited the Old Maltings at Oulton Broad to find an ancient craft still alive and well at The Waveney Rush Industry

WALKING into the pitch-roofed loft of the Old Maltings at Oulton Broad is like stepping into a scene from a fairytale. Long, Rapunzel-like tendrils of half-woven rush hang from a central beam as a small army of women, their hands protected by gloves, plait them together. The pungently sweet, earthen smell of crushed rushes fills the air as the chattering weavers tame the tough strands to create items of simple beauty from carpets to cat baskets. These muted blond rushes create a calming ambience which is as soothing as the watery setting for this traditional old workshop. Just yards from the maltings building, the waters of the Broads lap quietly against

MALTINGS MAKEOVER:
Anna Truman, director
of Waveney Rush
Industry, right,
SP 08 Waveney Rush 7

OLD FASHIONED:
In the mid 1950s, above,
Joy Jenner uses the
mangle after cleaning
rushes, watched by
Joyce Spall
Photos: SIMON PARKER
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