

# WINTER NEWSLETTER 2021

## VOLUME 17-5



Bishop Bonner's Cottage Museum,  
Dereham Antiquarian Society  
& Town Archive

### Letter from the Chair *Trevor Ogden*

A happy Christmas, everyone. On 8 December we had our first face-to-face meeting since March last year, and I think that everyone there enjoyed it. There are details later in this Newsletter. Hexachordia were booked in May 2020, and we could not have believed then how things would turn out. But nevertheless membership numbers are close to where they were five years ago, we have speakers arranged into 2023, and we plan to open the Museum in May as usual. Experience makes us plan tentatively, but we can look forward to the New Year.

However, with case rates still fairly high and the omicron variant spreading fast, we plan to hold the January meeting online, and are looking at the best way of holding the AGM in February. But by the time you get this it will be the shortest day, by the January meeting there will be snowdrops in gardens, and by the AGM there may be a few early daffodils about.

The Museum does depend on volunteers, and from that point of view we are not as well off as we were a few years ago. It is sad that we are only able to open for two part-days a week when so much effort goes into the exhibitions. If you mention the Museum in Dereham, many people say that it never seems to be open. To open on Friday mornings and Saturday morning and afternoon, from May to September, is a total of 133 sessions, each needing two people. Please consider again if you can do a few sessions, as a contribution to making Dereham an interesting place to live, and contact [ken-hawkins@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:ken-hawkins@tiscali.co.uk) if you want to know more. A new exhibition for 2022 will be John and Ellenor Fenn, featuring John's work on the Paston Letters and Ellenor's with children. Using funds from the Heritage Lottery Fund as part of the Paston Footprints project, we have been able to buy new display boards, get display panels printed, and to purchase a TV on which we plan to show animations of John Fenn and the characters that feature in the Paston Letters, which have been prepared as part of the Paston Footprints project. Please come and be a part of it.



*John Fenn and his house, from an animation we plan to show in the Museum*

Building work has continued inside the Museum. We have not been kept in touch with each stage, but the old brickwork round the fireplace in the entrance room has been repeatedly sprayed with limewater to consolidate it, and it is now drying out. We have told the Town

Council that we need to be able to prepare the exhibits from 1 March. Outside the Museum, the last of Dereham's new wayfinding panels is due to be erected, but we understand that staff shortages in the Town Council have delayed this

By the time you get this, it will be late to buy Christmas presents, but perhaps not too late, or perhaps you will get a token to spend. I asked members of the committee what books with historical connection they have read this year. Here are some of their replies, in chronological order.

*Boudica*, by Manda Scott. A series of four novels about our very own warrior queen.

*The Anglo-Saxons: A History of the Beginnings of England*, by Marc Morris. Overview of the six centuries of A-S dominance.

*The Viking Great Army and the Making of England*, by Dawn Hadley and Julian Richards. Published this year and taking into account the most recent discoveries. "It sounds like a page-turner."

*The Pastons and their England*, by HS Bennett. First published in 1922, an interesting and informative account of 15<sup>th</sup> century England (especially Norfolk) as brought to life in the Paston Letters.

*The Brothers York*, by Thomas Penn. While the Pastons struggled to find justice and keep their property, nobles and kings struggled for power and survival.

*The Diary of a Country Parson 1752-1802*, by James Woodforde, edited by James Beresford. The entertaining day-to-day life of the Rector of Weston Longeville, including his occasional visits to Dereham.

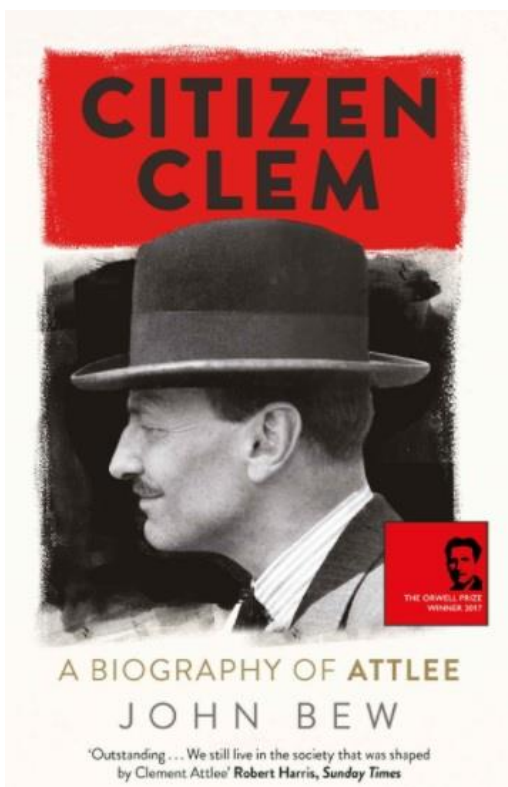
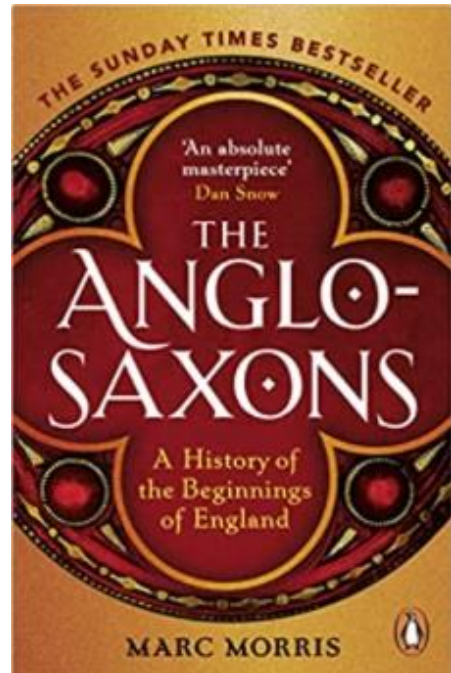
*The Cloak that I left*, by Lilius Rider Haggard, and *Children of the Empire*, by Victoria Manthorpe. The first is a biography of the local novelist Henry Rider Haggard by his daughter, and the second is the story of Henry and his siblings from West Bradenham Hall. Both are "an excellent read".

*The Secret Life of Bletchley Park*, by Sinclair McKay. Makes much use of the recollections of people who were there.

*Six Armies in Normandy: From D-Day to the Liberation of Paris*, by John Keegan. An outstanding military history of the 3 months from D-Day to Paris.

*Citizen Clem*, by John Bew. A biography of Clement Atlee, the environment and growth of his vision, and its post-war fulfilment as Prime Minister. Heard as an audiobook.

That looks enough to fill 2022, but just in case, on the 6<sup>th</sup> of January we should be able to get the 2022 book that we're all looking forward to, *A History of Norfolk in 100 Places*, by David Robertson, Peter Wade-Martins, and Susanna Wade-Martins. I wonder what else people will read next year.



**SCARNING** is a parish and village on the road from Dereham to Swaffham, about 2 miles east from Wendling station on the Lynn and Dereham section of the Great Eastern railway and about 2½ west from Dereham, in the South-Western division of the county, Launditch hundred, Mitford and Launditch petty sessional division and union, Dereham county court district, rural deanery of Elmham, archdeaconry of Lynn and diocese of Norwich. The church of SS. Peter and Paul is a fine building of stone, in the Perpendicular style of the middle of the 15th century, and consists of chancel, nave, chantry chapel, south porch and a massive embattled tower containing a clock and 5 bells: the stained east window, erected in 1845, is a memorial to the Rev. Philip Du Val Aufrere, a former rector, and his second wife, and there are other stained windows: the rood screen is still in a very high state of preservation, retaining its original gilding and colours in a comparatively fresh condition, and on the east side at the south corner of the screen is a small sanctus bell in its original oak frame: the chancel retains a piscina, and in the chantry chapel, now used as a vestry, is another piscina and an aumbry: the church was restored in 1859, and in 1894 the tower was partially restored, under the superintendence of Mr. Herbert Green, architect, of Norwich, the buttresses to the nave entirely rebuilt, and new gates erected to the churchyard, the whole cost being defrayed by Dr. Augustus Jessopp, rector 1879-1911: the church affords 450 sittings. The register dates from the year 1538. The living is a rectory, net yearly value £400, including 14 acres of glebe, with residence, in the gift of Edward Henry Evans-Lombe esq. and held since 1919 by the Rev. Austen Lennox Watt A.K.C.L. Here is a Congregational chapel, erected in 1884, seating 130 persons. The Village Hall, built at a cost of £3,000 by Mrs. Caroline Evans, of Wimbledon, Surrey, who also endowed it, was opened in 1902 for social gatherings,

concerts, lectures and similar meetings, and will seat 200 people. The charities include the Rector's Dole of 3s. 4d.; White Bread Meadow of 3a. 2r. 3p. producing £9 yearly; £2 7s. 4d. being the interest on £86 10s. invested in Consols; Burrough's charity of 6s. and an allotment of 5a. 3r. producing £9; under a scheme formulated in 1915 by the Charity Commissioners the above charities have been united, and are administered by the trustees as the Scarning United Charities. Edward Henry Evans-Lombe esq. D.L., J.P. is lord of the manor and Walter Divers esq. and Arthur Wright esq. are the principal landowners. The soil is clay and loam; subsoil, clay. The chief crops are wheat, barley and turnips. The parish comprises 3,494 acres; rateable value, £5,300; the population in 1911 was 707.

Sexton, Harry Hurrel.  
Post Office.—Miss Marian Holliday, sub-postmistress. Letters through Dereham. The nearest money order office is at Dereham & telegraph office at Wendling, 2 miles distant

Pillar Letter Box, Scarning road  
Wall Letter Boxes, Daffy Green & Scarning bridge  
Free School, founded in 1604 by William Seckar & endowed with 86 acres of land, to which an allotment of 16a. 2r. 3p. was added at the inclosure in 1776; a new school-room, with a house for the master, were erected in 1850, at a cost of £900, & in 1885 a classroom was added for 45 infants; in 1910 the buildings were further enlarged & improved for modern requirements: since 1883 the school has been administered under a new scheme by a governing body of 8 persons, of whom 4 are co-optative & 4 representative: the endowment now (1921) produces an income of £150 yearly; the school will hold 162 children: Edward, 1st Baron Thurlow & Lord Chancellor 1778-92, & several other eminent men were educated here during the masterships of the Rev. W. Potter & the Rev. St. John Priest; George L. Miller, certificated master

**PRIVATE RESIDENTS.**

Divers Walter, Manor house  
Pitt Rev. Richard Warcup M.A.  
Russwurm Mrs. The Grange  
Watt Rev. Austen Lennox A.K.C.L. (rector), Rectory  
Williams Mrs. The Grange  
Wilson Sir Fdk. D.L., J.P. The Dale

**COMMERCIAL.**

Barrett Soames Geo. farmr. Podmore  
Bell Thomas, farmer, Brookside farm  
Bell William, farmer  
Boddy William Walker, wheelwright & assessor & collector of income tax  
Bone Arthur, farmer, Poplar farm  
Bone Martha Elizabeth (Mrs.), farmer, Old hall

Bone William, bailiff to Mrs. M. E. Bone, Old hall  
Brown Bertie, farmer, Godwins  
Browne Charles Frederick, farmer, Chestnut farm  
Burton William, farmer  
Burton Patrick, bricklayer  
Curson Jn. Geo. farmer, Daffy Green  
Divers Walter, farmer, Manor house

**Commercial ctd ...**

Farrow Christmas, farmer  
Flood John, farmer, Daffy Green  
Girdlestone Walter, New inn  
Guyton Wm. Jn. farmr. Daffy Green  
Harrison John, farmer, Lawrence ho  
Holland Harriet (Mrs.), beer retailer  
Hood George, Carpenters' Arms P.H.  
Kemp Edward, farmer, Dereham Church farm

Lawn George H. farmer, Arch farm  
Lincoln Thomas, farmer, Daffy Green  
Milk David Wm. farmer, Park farm  
Milk Sydney Herbt. farmr. White ho  
Moody Stephen, poultry farmer, seedsman & vermin destroyer, Podmore  
Roberson William, farmer, School farm

Smith George, boot repairer  
Village Hall (Geo. L. Miller, hon.sec)  
Wade Frederick, farmer & butcher, Hillfield house  
Wade Walter R. Black Horse P.H.  
Webb George, farmer, Broadway  
Wiggett Walter, farmer, Gatehouse farm  
Wright Arthur, farmer, Church farm



## A History of Norfolk in 100 Places *Peter Wade-Martins*

Here is the fifth - and final for us - extract from the book by Peter and Susanna Wade-Martins and David Robertson, using locations which have public access to tell the story of Norfolk over the last million years. This new paperback is due to be published on 6 January by the History Press: it will cost £17.99 but can be ordered in advance for £13.75 (including delivery) at <https://www.hive.co.uk/Product/David-Robertson/A-History-of-Norfolk-in-100-Places/25945946>. Peter and his co-authors are also giving a talk to Norfolk Wildlife Trust at Cley on 3 March next year.

### Salle fifteenth-century church



*photo: John Fielding*

Mortlock and Roberts in their wonderful 2017 guide to Norfolk churches say ‘... this is a mighty church which draws one back again and again by virtue of its exceptional interest and great beauty.’ This is surely the most magnificent rural church in Norfolk, standing within a group of other exceptional churches at Cawston, Heydon and Field Dalling, all being built within 40 years of each other. There is so much to see, both inside and out, and it is difficult to focus here on specific detail. Don’t hurry your visit.

The church, with its tower 38m high, reflects the great wealth of the county derived from the wool trade. It stands almost alone in its landscape with little trace of a village nearby. Surely churches built on this scale were more to demonstrate the wealth and social standing of the donors than to serve the needs of the local community.

In the frieze of shields above the west door the third from the right carries the royal arms of England for Henry V as Prince of Wales, and the fifth from the right has the royal arms of England after 1405 thus giving the tower a date of 1405-13. There is a dedication inscription by William Wode, the rector, stating that he built the chancel from the foundations and completed it in 1440. These and other indicators firmly place the construction of the whole building to a limited period in the first half of the 15th century.

Look out for the angels in costumes of feathers (or armour?) swinging censers in the spandrels over the west door. Similar costumes on angels can also be seen on the hammerbeam roof of nearby Cawston church, and in a stained-glass window at Cockthorpe church, and on saints slaying dragons on the Ranworth screen. On the west side of the



photo: Peter Wade-Martins

highly ornate top of the tower are two 'P's, reflecting the dedication of the church to St Peter and St Paul. Note the richly decorated battlements over the two-storied porches, the transepts, aisles and nave and the elaborate tracery in the square sound holes in the tower.

Salle is an impressive and complete example which has retained many of its original furnishings. It is the sheer scale of the church with its soaring arcades on such slender clustered pillars, the wide chancel and the transepts which give a feeling of light and space. The slender columns rise towards the arch-braced roof. The bowl of the font depicts the seven sacraments and the crucifixion. On top of the bowl sits a very impressive unpainted wooden cover which can be raised on a rope through an original pulley on a painted crane fixed to the balcony above. The wineglass pulpit, with panels painted alternately red and green with stencilled devices, has been raised to be part of a three-decker Jacobean arrangement. There are several stained-glass figures dating to the 1470s, and on the floor are brasses of the 1450s, including one to John Brigge of 1454 showing him depicted as a very thin figure in a shroud. Upstairs in the north chapel are fine stone roof bosses repainted in the 1950s.

In the chancel the carvings on the misericords and the faces on the arm rests, polished by the sleeves of generations of choir boys, and the sound holes under the choir stalls should not be missed. The screen is less complete; some panels in the lower section have apostles, and on the doors are the 'Four Latin Doctors'. The communion rail is 17th-century. Finally, look out for the parish chest heavily bound with iron straps secured with three locks requiring the presence of three parish officials before it could be opened.

*The church is open at all reasonable hours, and there is plenty of parking space on the grass in front. Sadly, there is no guidebook. On advertised days the church tower can be climbed, and from the top the landscape of this part of Norfolk is laid out before you including the spire of Norwich Cathedral just visible to the south east. (NR10 4SD)*

### **Further reading**

Parsons, W L E, 1937. Salle: The Story of a Norfolk Parish, its Church, Manors & People (Jarrod & Sons)

## You wouldn't think that ventilation had a history, but... Trevor Ogden

In August the Department for Education followed advice from the SAGE committee (1), and announced that about 300,000 carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) monitors were being made available to schools in England, to enable them to test whether their ventilation is adequate to protect against Covid-19. From what I hear, they are now being widely used. These days in the open air there are about 410 parts of CO<sub>2</sub> in every million of air (410 ppm), but because we all exhale CO<sub>2</sub> there will always be more of it where people are. If the ventilation is diluting this, it will also be diluting any virus that they have exhaled, so CO<sub>2</sub> concentration is a quick



*Tindall's Wynd, one of Dundee's back streets, in the 1880s*

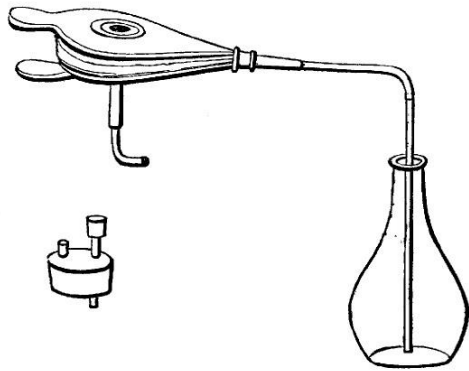
and easy way of checking whether ventilation is good enough. You wouldn't think that ventilation had a history, but using CO<sub>2</sub> to check it goes back at least to the poorer parts of Dundee in the 1880s.

Had you been out and about in the back-streets of that city between 12.30 and 4 am on the Spring mornings of 1886, you might have seen a horse and covered van, and mysterious figures carrying large flasks and pumps in and out of lodging houses. The figures were from Dundee's University College, and the horse and van had been lent to them by the city Sanitary Department. The men were collecting samples of air from bedrooms, and analysing them in the van for their concentrations of CO<sub>2</sub> and airborne microbes. "Those houses were visited without warning of any kind to the inhabitants, so as to avoid the risk of having the rooms specially ventilated in preparation for our visit ... The one-roomed houses

were mostly those of the very poor. Sometimes as many as six, or even eight, persons occupied the one bed. In other cases there was no bed at all. The occupants of the two-roomed houses were as a rule much better off, belonging mostly to the artisan class." (2)

The team found that the average concentration of CO<sub>2</sub> in one-roomed houses was about 1100 ppm, in 2-roomed houses 1000 ppm, and in houses with four rooms or more, 770 ppm. They also made measurements in schools, finding that "boys tend to make the air of a room more impure than girls do". The wards in Dundee Royal Infirmary were rather better, and jute mills they visited were worse. The authors did their best to compare the death rates from various diseases in these environments with the microbe concentrations that they measured. They concluded that the air of a dwelling house must be considered bad if it exceeded 1000 ppm, and a school if greater than 1300 ppm.

Methods have changed a lot since those days. The Dundee scientists were using equipment like that shown in the drawing. The bellows draw air in through the short curved tube and exhaust it into the flask. The bellows were worked until the flask was judged to be full of the pumped air, and then the flask was closed with the stopper, taken out to the van, and the contents analysed. With practice, this could be done in about 20 minutes. Today we use electronic gadgets a few cm tall, which give a result instantaneously.

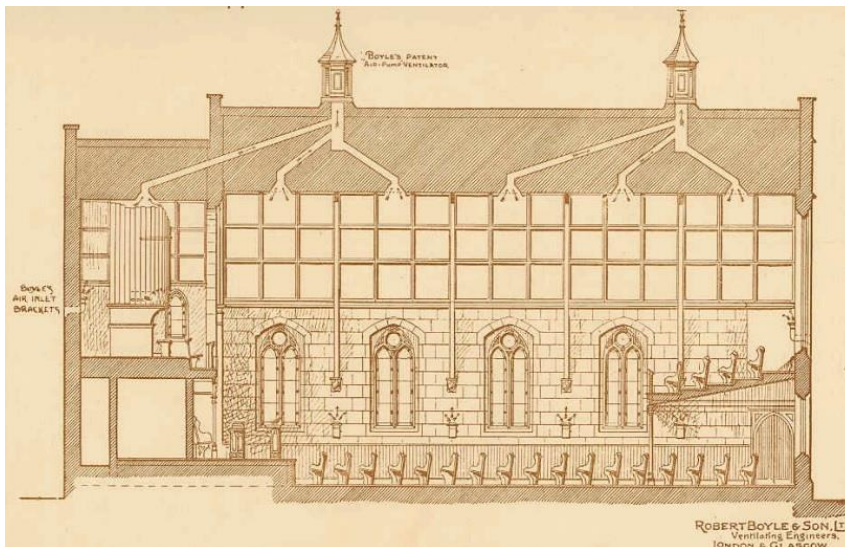


1880s and 2020s methods of measuring carbon dioxide

However, standards of acceptable CO<sub>2</sub> concentration have changed surprisingly little from the Dundee surveys. The Factory Inspectorate was very keen on adequate ventilation, and in 1898 the Cotton Cloth Factories Regulations laid down a limit of 900 ppm CO<sub>2</sub> for acceptable conditions. 123 years later the SAGE paper quoted recommendations by HSE and overseas authorities, and concluded that “A consistent CO<sub>2</sub> value < 800ppm (absolute value) is likely to indicate that a space is well ventilated ... Sustained high CO<sub>2</sub> values (>1500ppm) are likely to indicate overcrowding or poor ventilation and mitigating actions are likely to be required.” We kept an eye of CO<sub>2</sub> at DHT’s Hexachordia concert on 8 December, and most of the time the concentration was well below 500 ppm.

The argument for measuring CO<sub>2</sub> hasn’t changed either. 120 years ago the Inspectorate was aware that lead, stone dust, and cotton dust in the air were killing or injuring thousands of workers, but there were no methods for measuring those substances in the air, so they used CO<sub>2</sub> concentration to check ventilation. Today we can measure all those other things, but we are unsure of what is the dangerous concentration of the Covid virus, or if we can measure it, so we are doing exactly what the Inspectorate did then - judging dilution by ventilation by measuring CO<sub>2</sub>.

However, the Inspectorate had another method of encouraging adequate ventilation even before the Dundee CO<sub>2</sub> measurements, and I wonder if this approach has left any traces in Norfolk.



The Boyle system installed in a large Baptist church. The cowls on the roof suck air out of the building, which is replaced by make-up air entering just above the heads of the congregation.

In his 1884 annual report the Chief Inspector of Factories recommended a ventilation scheme marketed by Robert Boyle and Son, Ltd. The Boyle System was to construct special cowls on the roofs of buildings that were designed to suck air out of the building when the wind blew, without any need for fans, or need for any sort of power supply. There were vents in the walls of the building which admitted make-up air from outside, and the

incoming air could be heated, although I don't know how often that was done. The Heritage Group of the Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers has preserved several Boyle catalogues on their website. For example, the drawing shows how it was applied to Worthing (Sussex) Baptist Church, and there are other diagrams showing the system in hospitals, theatres, a court house, a billiard room, a barracks, and of course factories ([http://www.hevac-heritage.org/electronic\\_books/robert\\_boyle/4-ventilation-2.pdf](http://www.hevac-heritage.org/electronic_books/robert_boyle/4-ventilation-2.pdf)).

The roof cowls came in various external designs, and many of us will get a feeling that we have seen remains of this sort of system somewhere without realising what they were. Last summer I visited the National Civil War Centre at Newark (a very interesting museum), and it looks as if they still have a Boyle system in part of the building, with roof cowls, inlets, and a vent from the main room into the roof space (not shown). That part of the building was a school in the 19th century, and I expect that they wanted to supply fresh air to the pupils and not to allow a build-up of their bodily exudations (especially perhaps the "more impure" air from the boys). Perhaps they also had gas lighting, which would have needed ventilation.

Does anyone know of remains of any such system locally? If so, please contact me on [ogden@ogs.org.uk](mailto:ogden@ogs.org.uk). I expect that they went out of use as more and more buildings had electric power, and cheap and efficient fans became available. My final photo is a compilation of old photos of Toftwood, Crown Road, and Shipdham schools (thanks to Robena Brown for raiding her collection). There used to be suspicious-looking cowls on all three, and the Crown Road ones are still there. Were they indications of a Boyle System, or some less sophisticated ventilation system?

Finally, Boyle's had a system for dealing with pandemics as well. They made a special cowl for smallpox and other infection hospitals which incorporated an "asbestos furnace" to destroy the germs. It would be good to find one of those, but I don't expect that any have survived. Maybe the buildings burnt down!

- (1) Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies, June 2021. [tinyurl.com/4s8yyukw](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/92444/20210623_sage_report_on_the_covid-19_pandemic.pdf)
- (2) Carnelley, Haldane, and Anderson (1887) Phil. Trans. R. Soc. Lond. B 178:61–111



*What looks like a Boyle installation at the National Civil War Centre at Newark. The cowl sucked air out of the building, and the inlet vents in the walls are helpfully picked out in black!*





*The inlet vents from within the Civil War Centre*



*Toftwood, Crown Road, and Shipdham schools, and their ventilation cowls.*

## Recent talks

### September : Elizabeth Fry - Tea with Betsy *Ken Hawkins*



By virtue of one of the lesser known features of Zoom, Trevor was able to make a connection with 'Betsy' - Elizabeth Fry.

Betsy was born in Norwich: she recalled being nervous, especially of guns, and did not like being left alone in the dark, where she wept. Her mother died when she was 12. Her father owned Earlham Hall and she was familiar with that area of Norfolk. In 1844, her son William Storrs Fry and two of his daughters died of scarlet fever, and she also lost another grandson. Her husband's sister, also Elizabeth Fry, died too. (Her mother was also Elizabeth, which was why she herself was known as Betsy.) By contrast, her youngest son was married that year.

She was a Quaker - a member of the Religious Society of Friends, who used 'thee' and 'thou' to refer to individuals: 'you' was used to refer to many people, but then began to be used for 'important' individuals, which ran against the Quakers' wish to consider all people equally. She wore the plain clothes of the Quakers, though her family was less strict than some, and in her earlier years her clothes were not so plain.

She met her husband Joseph in Earlham when he came courting her when she was 19; after their meeting he left a watch and departed for an hour, saying that if the watch was still there when he returned, he would take it and not come back: she still has the watch, and moved from the plainest person in her own family to the gayest of his.

Like many other Quakers, Betsy's family were bankers, her father was Joseph Gurney (her own maiden name) and ran Gurney's Bank (later run by her brother Joseph-John), while her mother was distantly related to the Barclays. Their reputation for being honourable, reliable and fair underpinned this. Betsy referred to the events of 1828, when confidence was lost in the banks because of many swindles, and customers withdrew their money; for her, it meant selling the house at Plashet (near London), and only with much help from others did she and her husband come through.

Betsy had started a Sunday school at Earlham when she was 18: it grew to 86 children. She also started schools at Plashet and Newgate. But she was probably best known for her work in prison reform. She first visited Newgate prison in 1813, convinced that treating prisoners with humanity was the only right way. She returned in 1817 (having had children in the

meantime), and found she could engage with the women prisoners. This led to the establishment of a school for their children, though the adults also wanted to learn. Their behaviour also improved, and Betsy organised work for them. In 1818, she was invited to address the House of Commons, and made practical recommendations which led to the 1823 Jail Act, reducing from 100 to 5 the number of crimes for which execution was specified; it also provided for the separation of men and women, and of convicted prisoners from those awaiting trial. Both nobility and royalty were interested in what she was doing, presenting a dilemma given the Quakers' beliefs of modesty and equality. In the process, she met Princess Alexandrina in 1831, whom she met again in 1840 as Queen Victoria, who gave her £50 which she used to start a refuge for former prisoners.

She visited Ireland in 1821, visiting jails and asylums, though she found this exhausting. She also visited many other countries, though declined to travel to Russia or America.

She considered that prisons were in a poor state following the war with France, combined with the activities of the 'Peelers' in finding criminals. Some prison governors also used the prisoners as free labour. The 1823 Jail Act led to prison overcrowding and hence transportation: she sought to provide education for those being transported, enabling them to use that time to good effect, especially in learning patchwork.

Betsy mentioned her involvement in finally bringing slavery to an end, in the early stages of training nurses, and in encouraging coastguards (blockade men) to learn to read, in order to alleviate their isolation. And all of this was alongside support for homeless people.

She acknowledged that her work did affect and depress her at times, and she did sometimes get criticised (even from her own family) as a result of devoting herself to the work. She herself thought that setting up the British Ladies Society was her most significant achievement.

Our thanks go to Georgette Vale for her assistance in making this link to Betsy Fry.

## **October : Harriet Kettle and Gressenhall Workhouse, presented by Andy Reid** *Robena Brown*

*all photos from Robena Brown's collection*

Andy began by giving a brief summary of Harriet Kettle's life to establish a time-frame.

A child of the new Victorian age, Harriet Kettle was born Harriet Clarke in 1838/9 in Cranworth and died aged 78/9 in 1916, the year of the Battle of the Somme, at Gressenhall Poor Law institution. She spent the first 25 years of her life in various institutions, viz. Gressenhall Union workhouse, both Walsingham and Wymondham Bridewells/Houses of Correction, the County Lunatic Asylum and the Bethlem Hospital in London. From 1865 Harriet spent the last two-thirds of her life in Shipdham and Toftwood as a married woman with a growing family. Her life was extremely eventful.

Harriet was a child of humble origins who pushed against the institutional control of life in nineteenth century England. She misbehaved, rebelled and never conformed - by doing so she generated many entries in records of the time, even having her own words recorded at various times.

Harriet was born in a 'one-up-one-down' labourer's cottage at High Common, Cranworth which was, and still is, a scattered community of cottages, a common-edge settlement enclosed in 1796. To the north lay Letton and the much larger village of Shipdham.

All of Letton and four-fifths of Cranworth was owned by the Gurdon family of Letton Hall. It is a fine building designed by John Soane and built 1785-88. (He also designed many prestigious buildings including the 'Old Lady of Threadneedle Street (Bank of England). He was knighted for his architectural services in 1831 - RB.)

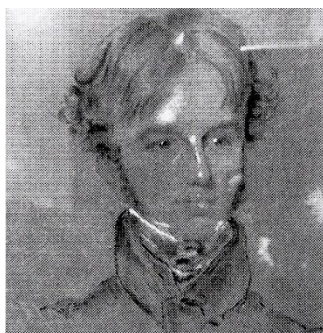
At the time of Harriet's birth in 1839 the lord of the manor was Theophilus Thornough Dillingham Gurdon who died in 1849 and was succeeded by his first son, Brampton Gurdon who died in 1881. He was a liberal MP for West Norfolk and was succeeded by Robert Thornough Gurdon, who was made Baron Cranworth and was the first Chairman of Norfolk County Council. He died in 1902.

The Rev Benjamin Armstrong noted in his celebrated diary that when he visited Letton Hall in the 1850s, 'everything was refined and beautiful' noting 'powdered flunkeys and silver plate'. The Gurdons and their contemporaries had a very comfortable existence but they had a very good reputation as landlords to the many cottagers on their estate.

Cranworth-cum-Letton combined in the sixteenth-century. In 1832, Philip Gurdon, third son of Theophilus Gurdon became Rector, also of the adjoining villages of Southburgh and Reymerston. He lived in Cranworth Rectory on an annual income of £1,200 which was very good for the period.



Philip Gurdon was a remarkable man. He played cricket for Norfolk, was a breeder of prize-winning poultry, Hon Sec of the Norfolk Agricultural Society, a magistrate, and a member of the Board of Guardians of the Mitford & Launditch Union responsible for Gressenhall Workhouse of which he was Chairman from 1852 to 1865. Serving also from 1860 as a member of the visiting justices to the County Lunatic Asylum at Thorpe he must have met



*Philip Gurdon 1825*

Harriet on numerous occasions through his parish work and wider community responsibilities.

By 1841, Philip Gurdon and his wife had five daughters and kept eight servants. He had a very comfortable lifestyle though his memorial in Cranworth churchyard is very modest.

He was a tolerant man, much involved in the 'Hundred of Mitford Society' which encouraged industry and good attendance amongst the labouring class. He pushed for allotments in Cranworth and supported the immigration of labourers from Cranworth. All of the Gurdons had a strong spirit of philanthropy.

Many of his good works are reported in the 'Norfolk News'. In 1830 the Gurdons and 30-40 special constables led a pursuit against rioting agricultural labourers and their campaign of machine-breaking. At the time there was an undercurrent of violence, anti-authority in the countryside. In 1851-3 there were reports of violence resulting from poaching at Letton. It was an unequal society with extreme poverty of labourers in contrast to the luxury of Letton Hall and Cranworth Rectory.

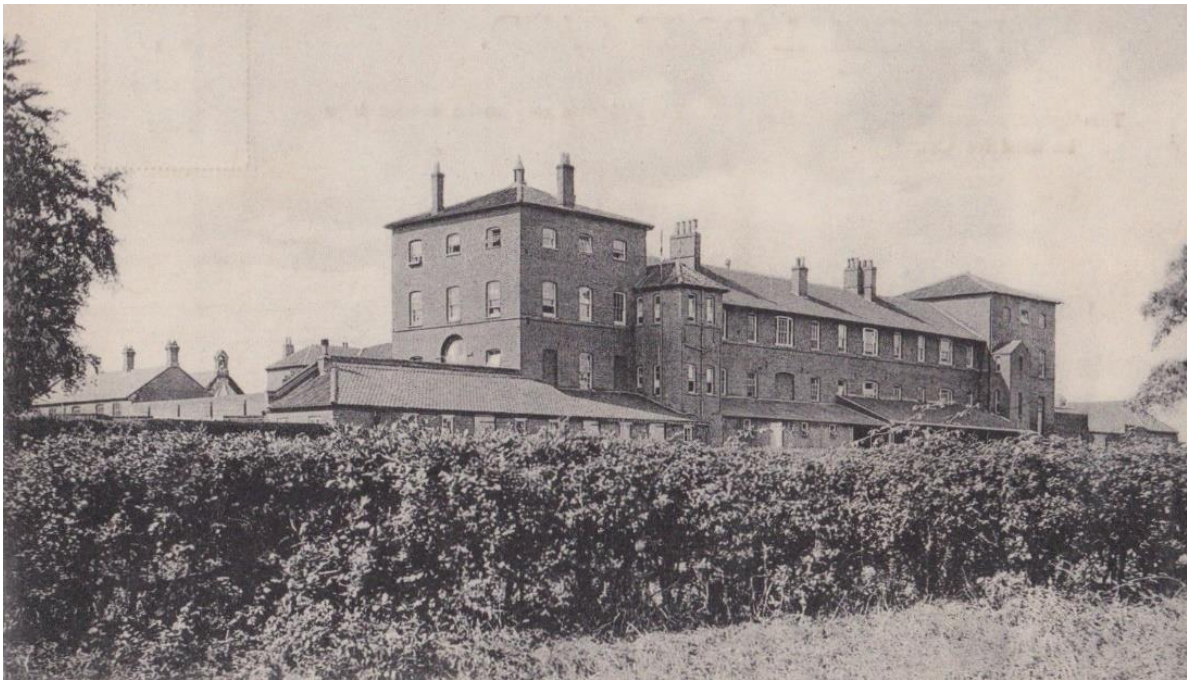
Harriet's grandmother Ann married Richard Clarke after the birth of her ninth child (he was probably the father of them all) including Harriet's father John (Clarke later known as Kettle) who was born in 1813. After Ann's marriage they had 5-6 more children and lived into their 80s, in extraordinary overcrowded conditions in their two-roomed cottage. Their children became part of the non-estate dwelling rural underclass.

They may well have been members of gangs of agricultural labourers working on farms in the surrounding area. Crime was part of their response to poverty. 'Most of the family were thieves' was a comment made by one Prison Governor about one of Harriet's uncles in the 1840s.

Harriet's father was John Kettle, alias Clarke (1813-1871). He was recorded as being a labourer, baker, fiddler, cook, and transportee to Australia (twice): he had a career in larceny beginning in 1836. He was transported to Australia, probably in 1838, and he returned to find his wife had died and three of their children were motherless. The three children had been placed in Gressenhall workhouse. In 1848 John Kettle remarried and the following month was charged with the theft of five chickens which were discovered by the authorities under his bed in his house in Shipdham; this time he was transported to Western Australia where he remarried bigamously and died there in 1871.

Nothing much is known of Harriet's mother who was probably named Elizabeth from Outwell. She appears to have died insane though the circumstances are not known but it may well have been a result of the stress of living in dire poverty with three children and no husband to support them since he had been transported.

By the 1841 census, Harriet and her older sister Matilda and younger brother John were all inmates of Gressenhall workhouse and were all still there in 1851 where Harriet, aged 12, was known as 'Kettle' not 'Clarke'.



*Gressenhall Union Workhouse*

Life in the workhouse was hard. Harriet complained of the irksome monotony and confinement as described by the Medical Officer at the Norfolk Lunatic Asylum. Gressenhall was a well-run workhouse, at least until the 1860s. Its masters were competent and their work was overseen by a Board of Governors which was parsimonious, consisting mainly of farmers, but the leadership of that Board was enlightened in the form of Frederick Walpole Keppel who had a close relationship with James Kay, the Poor Law Commissioner, and was very committed to humane treatment of workhouse inmates. He was followed by the Rev Thomas Paddon of Mattishall and then by Rev Philip Gurdon from 1852 onwards so there was humane and enlightened leadership in the workhouse.

A plan of the workhouse in 1849 showed the 1836 changes made to the building following the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834. Enclosed yards were created surrounded by walls in an area at the front of the building. Those walls are gone but the footings were discovered

when Andy Reid worked at Gressenhall as the Liaison Officer. They may relate to a female exercise yard. Yards were bisected by open drains which carried away contents from the privies which stood in the corner of each yard.

The workhouse was very crowded when Harriet was an inmate and girls washed only once each week. In 1842 there were 58 girls aged 5-15 housed in dormitories 17 x 6 metres. In 1893, 90 girls shared 34 beds! In these circumstances epidemic diseases spread rapidly eg measles, typhus, scarlatina, ophthalmia, scabies (known as 'the itch') and scrofula, a condition in which the bacteria that cause tuberculosis generate symptoms outside the lungs. Clearly this was an overcrowded, unhealthy environment.

Diet was meagre by design. Each week the inmates had meat and vegetables once, and suet pudding and vegetables once, otherwise it was simply gruel and bread - cheese made up the rest. The daily routine was marked by the ringing of a bell and only varied on Sunday due to a religious service taken by the clergy in the dining hall, usually of low church persuasion.

The workhouse schoolchildren had only very occasional treats. Harriet went with the girls to Wombwell's exhibition of wild beasts in Dereham. He allowed the workhouse children to have free entry.

Christmas dinner was a highlight but was banned in 1856 and 1857 as an unreasonable charge on the rate-payers. It was restored on the motion of Frederick Keppel in 1858.

The infant school was supported by inmate Lydia Thompson who generously received ten shillings in 1843 for her good conduct and industry, though the children were not, however, educated. Harriet was possibly taught by Harriet Pinson, daughter of the workhouse Master, George Pinson who went on to become Governor of Norwich Castle.

Harriet Pinson ran the school extremely well and when she left in 1845 received the high praise from Sir John Walsham, Assistant Poor Law Commissioner, that she was conspicuous for excellence by her absence.

The school deteriorated from 1844-49 and there were no fewer than six Mistresses in quick succession, three of whom couldn't cope with the workhouse girls. Stability was restored in 1849 when Charlotte Wigg was appointed school mistress. She served for almost a decade until 1859. Aged 22, it took a while for her to find her feet and get established. In 1849 HM Inspector of Workhouse Schools, Mr Bowyer, noted the lack of discipline in the girls' school - no doubt Harriet contributed!

Charlotte Wigg was helped by the appointment of an infant teacher that reduced class numbers from 70 to 50 which made for much a more manageable class. The curriculum was the 3Rs plus large doses of religious instruction with vocational elements. The teacher instructed the girls in household management using books such as 'Instructions in Household Matters' and 'The Young Girls' Guide to Domestic Service'.

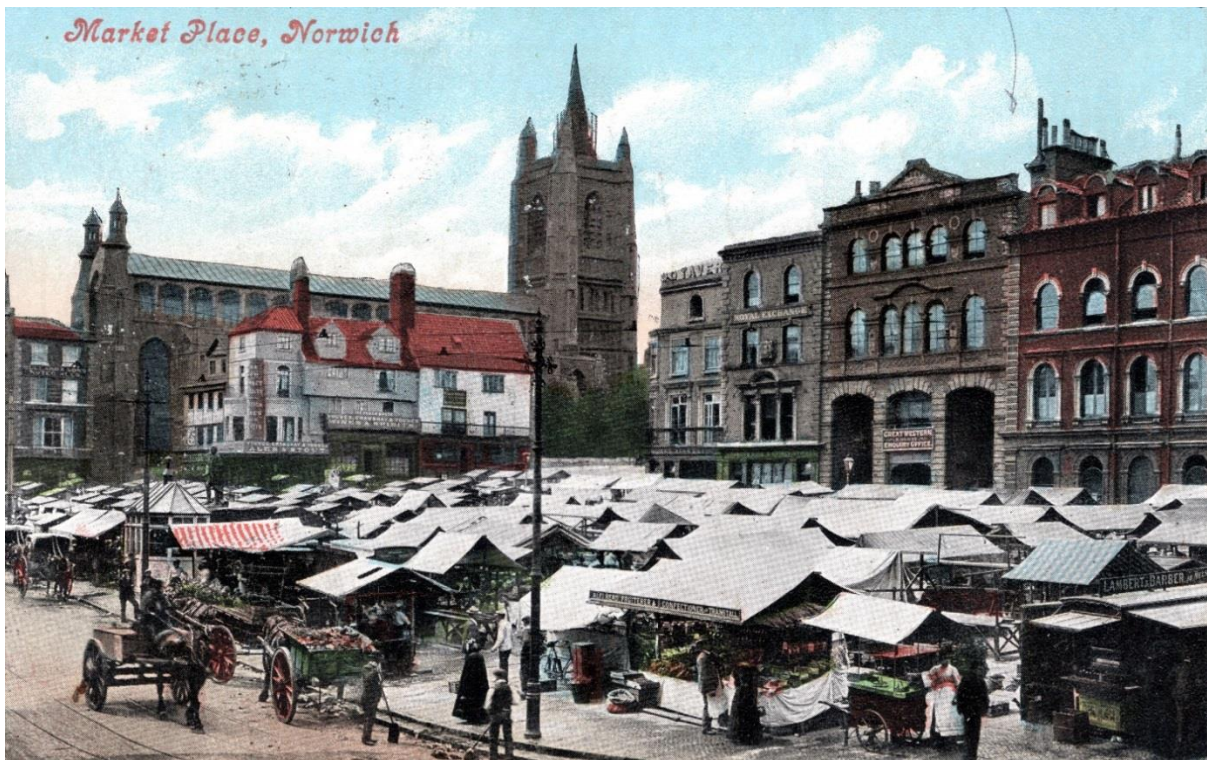
By 1851 Harriet was rebellious. A punishment cell had been created with a blocked window on orders of Dr Kay. Harriet would have been taken there on numerous occasions to be dressed down and punished by the Guardians after many misdeeds. Her first offence in that year was 'insubordination and improper conduct towards the school mistress'. Charlotte Wigg was asserting her authority and Harriet was punished by solitary confinement in the cell on bread and water for two days. This did not stop her behaviour and two weeks later Harriet was back in the cell again. In 1853 she received 42 days' detention in the cell for destroying food, wilfully disobeying the master and making great noise and disturbance by using obscene and violent language. Her use of obscenities was particularly shocking to her contemporaries.

In 1852, aged only 13-14, Harriet was summoned before the Magistrate for the first time for a serious misdemeanour and convicted of her offence; she was sent to Walsingham House of Correction for 14 days.

Shortly after that she left the workhouse and went to Norwich working as a 'girl on the town', ie a sex-worker of the day. This was not an inevitable choice as most of the girls leaving the workhouse went into domestic service and a few followed more prestigious paths since two became school teachers. Harriet probably chose her line of work and freedom after the monotony and confinement of the workhouse. There is a possible reference to her in 1853 when she was a witness to a robbery in a Norwich brothel and was warned to abandon her course of life by the magistrate. She took no notice.

There were clearly risks of abuse and disease in that life. Girls were regarded as adult from the age of 12 so one aspect of the underworld of Norwich at the time which we would find shocking today is the extreme youth of many of the sex-workers - often under 16 years of age.

On the evidence of local newspapers, the area around Norwich Market Place seems to have been one huge red-light district where those activities were very much in the open. According to nineteenth-century literature, the lanes and courts of Norwich around the Market Place, St Stephens and King Street contained many public houses and lodging houses which were often run as brothels.



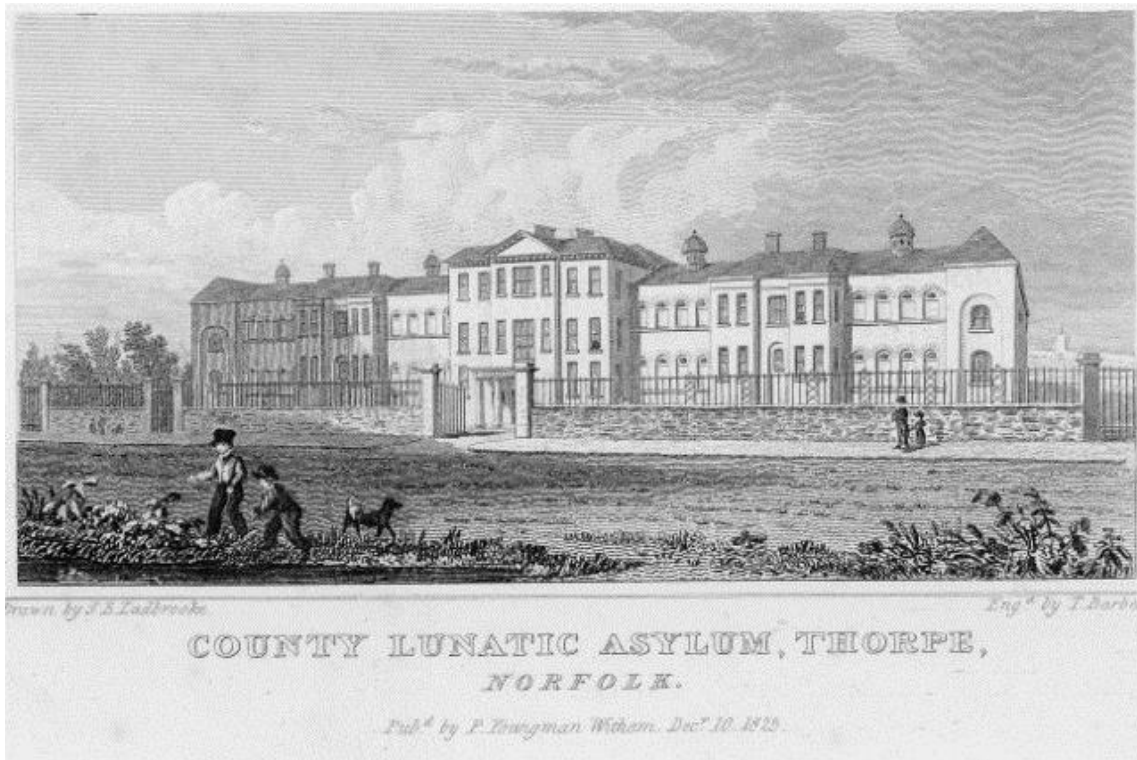
This was the subject of great complaint. Responsible people were outraged and shocked by the way that sex-workers openly solicited for business. There were campaigns from the 1830s onwards - many originating with the Evangelical Christian group to suppress what was referred to as 'the great social evil'. The Licensing laws were applied to suppress those activities in some public houses.

By 1856 Harriet was back at Gressenhall workhouse. She got into trouble again and the first time she was simply reprimanded by the Chairman of the Board of Guardians, Rev Philip Gurdon. Later in January 1856 there was a much more serious episode of 'violent conduct towards officers of the house' and she was sentenced to 21 days in Walsingham House of Correction, required to give sureties of her good behaviour which she was unable to do - for who could do that for her? So her sentence was extended to 12 months in Walsingham. It was a smallish prison which operated the separate cell system so she was alone in her room and the rule of silence prevented her talking to anyone, which must have been extremely difficult for her. Harriet fell into a pattern of behaviour known as 'breaking out', eg smashing

windows, tearing clothes, destroying every useful article within reach and generally yelling and screaming as if a lunatic.

Harriet was regarded as a lunatic after several similar episodes and after six months, in July 1856, she was transferred to the County Lunatic Asylum at Thorpe which had been opened in 1814. (Norfolk was one of the first counties to establish an asylum.) When Harriet was admitted there she came under the care of Dr Edward Casson and her treatment was termed as 'moral' involving light and voluntary labour and included amusements such as boat trips and dancing. Meat and vegetables were served every day and the patients could choose their clothing and card playing was allowed and even encouraged in the evenings. This could not have been a greater contrast to Gressenhall or Walsingham.

Harriet still 'broke out' from time to time and is recorded as saying "I am a damn sight more rogue than fool" and she revelled in being bad, not conforming to the expectations of the time but she was no fool. All who knew her recognised that she was intelligent and knew what she was doing. Punishments for breaking out were seclusion, low diet and the shower-bath which was a fearsome shower of applied successive bursts of cold water and was used as a way of controlling patients who had manic episodes. She managed to remain at the County Lunatic Asylum until the end of her 12-month prison sentence, after which she was discharged and she may well then have gone back to Norwich to her former occupation.



Later she went back to Gressenhall, perhaps because there was then not enough work on the streets of Norwich but this cannot be confirmed. In December 1857 she was accused of violent and abusive conduct towards the workhouse porter, Thomas Butcher. His wife Mary Ann was the assistant matron and she became Harriet's *bête noire*.

On Harriet's first occasion of violent and abusive conduct she was simply admonished by the Rev Philip Gurdon and she promised to behave better in the future but she did not keep her promise. There were further episodes and on 20 November 1858, the most serious to date: she assaulted Mary Ann Butcher and with two other inmates, she destroyed a bed and bedding and attempted to set fire to the workhouse. She attested that she had tried to 'burn down the bloody building'. Taken before a magistrate she was sent to the prison at Wymondham House of Correction.



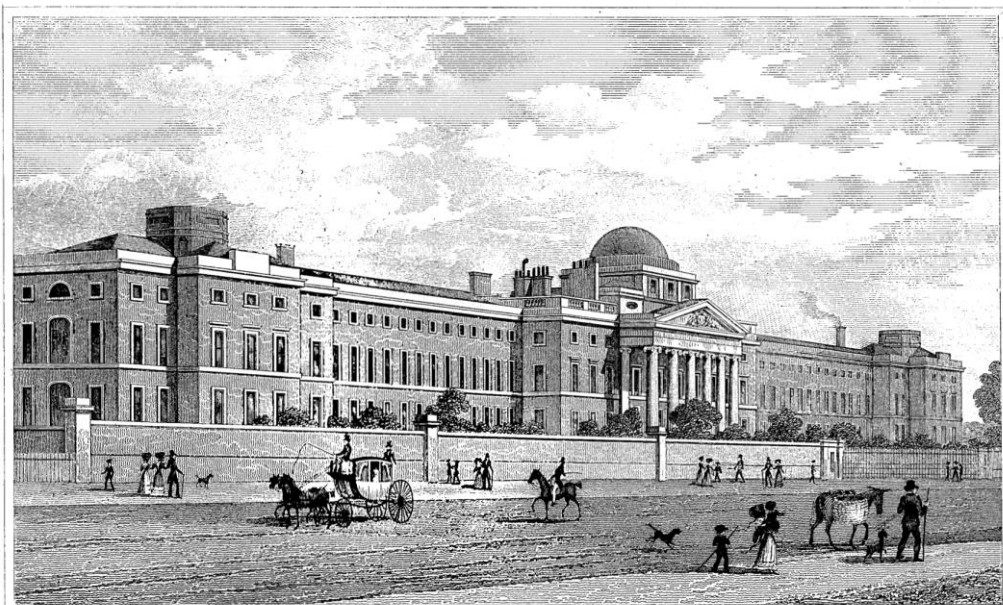
At Wymondham she was very unruly and broke the windows and would do nothing but scream and swear. This had the effect which she was probably seeking for she was then certified as insane and transferred to the Norfolk Lunatic Asylum where she remained for some time.

She was taken in July 1859 to the assizes but made such a scene in court that she was once more certified as insane and taken back to the asylum. Her case was not processed and she remained there until March 1860 where no incidents were recorded for the whole of that period. She was quietly happy in the asylum then in March 1860 she was taken to her trial. It was reported in the Norfolk Chronicle that 'the prisoner exhibited the utmost excitement and evidently acted as though she was insane'. She declared she would take her own life and that 'no man should conquer her'. Perhaps Harriet was an early feminist. She didn't discriminate between men and women in the objects of her anger.

She was convicted and sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment, which she began in Wymondham House of Correction. This had become a women's prison after improvements in 1831 though it had had a much longer history as a bridewell. In 1777 it was described by prison reformer, John Howard, as one of the vilest prisons in England. Like Walsingham it had separate cells and the silent system operated in the day rooms. The prisoners were not allowed to talk to each other and the Matron, Emily Greenfield, had a long career there starting in 1847 as a turnkey and warder, becoming matron in 1854, serving in that capacity until 1878.

She had great influence over Harriet at times and tried to educate all the prisoners and seemed to have made real efforts, supported by the chaplain, to reform them and recover their characters as women.

Harriet did push back. She 'broke out' again by being noisy and violent and she was transferred to the asylum in April 1860, after only one month in Wymondham. At the asylum the Medical Officers were quite clear that she was not insane so after an interval she was transferred back to Wymondham and the authorities there were not happy to have her back because she was disruptive and interfered with the discipline of the prison. They, and the Guardians at Gressenhall, were determined that Harriet should be punished, so engineered her transfer to the Bethlem Hospital in Southwark. It must have been quite an experience for Harriet to travel 4-5 hours by parliamentary train from Norwich to London.



Drawn by Tho. H. Shepherd.

Engraved by J. Tingle.

NEW BETHLEM HOSPITAL, ST. GEORGE'S FIELDS.

The Bethlem Hospital (origin of the word bedlam) building dates from 1815 though it has a much longer history. Harriet was kept in the female criminal wing. Ostensibly, Harriet had delusions of possessing property which was possibly an excuse to obtain a transfer to an asylum. The medical superintendent at the hospital, Dr William Hood, was quite clear that she had no delusions but that she was cantankerous with her fellow patients, showing no evidence of insanity.

She served her sentence and in 1861 she was discharged but was readmitted, pregnant, to Gressenhall workhouse in 1863 but she lost the baby. The circumstances are unknown.

There were conditions on which outdoor relief could be given instead of an order for the workhouse so Harriet was given outdoor relief on the grounds that she was in need of it for medical reasons. However, the Board of Guardians, still under Chairman Rev Philip Gurdon, decided that Harriet was more trouble than she was worth in the sense that it was a much quieter life for all to give outdoor relief to her home, then in Dereham.

She was discharged afterwards and received outdoor relief again but then in July 1863 she was readmitted to Gressenhall briefly and then to the County Lunatic Asylum having taken an overdose of laudanum which was a very common drug much used in the nineteenth-century. (The Pharmacy Bill of 1868 later made it a designated controlled poison.) Pharmacists opposed this bill on the grounds that it deprived them of most of their trade.

It is not known why Harriet took an overdose - she denied that it was a suicide attempt and she had a further long spell in the asylum and was eventually discharged in April 1864 when once again she was given outdoor relief from Gressenhall.

On 22 June 1865 Harriet married William Head, an agricultural labourer living at Shipdham Road, Toftwood, which was then an expanding working-class suburb of Dereham being gradually developed. The road from Dereham to Shipdham ran straight across Toftwood Common until enclosure in 1813. In 1882 the Ordnance Survey map shows development along the main roads to Shipdham and Scarning Fen but little elsewhere. The occupations of people in 1871 (according to the census) were an interesting mix of agricultural labourers, tradesmen and people working in the new factories in Dereham and on the railway.

Now Harriet Head, she settled down for the first time in her life. They had four children from 1865-73: Matilda (named after her sister), Ernest, Alice and Laura. In 1873 the School Board was created and in 1875 the school was opened in Toftwood. There was a need for



school places in Toftwood since there was only education provision in poor quality dame schools. Establishing elementary education was a battle since it involved cutting across traditional working-class ways of life such as having children at home looking after younger children which was an important part of the domestic economy. This was seen by families as intrusive. Compulsory education was enforced by an inspector appointed by the Board.

Harriet had battles with the school. In 1876, when her son Ernest was punished by the schoolmistress, Emily Eliza Goodall, she stormed into the school and grabbed Miss Goodall by the throat, pulled her hair and pushed her across the room. She was prosecuted and bound over to keep the peace. It is remarkable that William, on behalf of Harriet, then prosecuted Miss Goodall for assaulting their daughter Matilda. Harriet used the law (from which she had herself suffered) in her own, and her family's interests, and not for the last time by any means. Shortly after attempting unsuccessfully to prosecute Miss Goodall, she then prosecuted a neighbour for assaulting her and there were several other prosecutions in subsequent years. Her biggest legal battle was with Robert Potter who owned a granary adjacent to Dereham Railway Station (opened 1847). A siding ran alongside the granary from which grain trucks offloaded. Robert Potter was the son of a Cranworth farmer who had been William and Harriet's landlord when they lived in Shipdham. Robert Potter prosecuted William for non-payment of a bill but William (acting for Harriet) mounted a counter-prosecution on the grounds that the goods (flour and coal) supplied were of poor quality and the battle continued for several episodes at the County Court. Eventually, Harriet won so they did not have to pay, and in the process (according to the local newspaper) she advocated her husband's cause with considerable skill. Her warm and pertinent answers created a good deal of hearty laughter in court. Thus, a cottage dweller succeeded in beating a prosperous farmer and merchant.

There were further run-ins with the school when Harriet and William moved back to Toftwood and for the rest of their lives they lived in a cottage in Shipdham Road, probably between the Stone Road junction and the Millwright's Arms, close to the school which Harriet frequently visited. Her youngest daughter Laura, on behalf of a neighbour, took food in for a child's lunch and in the process got into a confrontation with the new schoolmistress, Ada Chapman. Laura was excluded from the school. Her mother Harriet was furious and she stormed off to Ada Chapman's lodgings threatening violence, to do her terrible injury and this resulted in yet another appearance in court which again resulted in Harriet being bound over to keep the peace - but she had her day in court and the Dereham and Fakenham Times reported the case verbatim and the wonderful account of Harriet holding court and being thoroughly defiant, admitting nothing, daring the magistrate Robert Thornagh Gurdon (Lord Cranworth of Letton Hall) to send her to Norwich Castle asking to be tried at the assizes. The magistrates were not prepared to do that and at the end she was just bound over. When she left the court room the large crowd outside waiting to watch her emerge from court begs the question of how famous was Harriet locally that this should occur.

The Head family expanded though eldest daughter Matilda sadly died in childbirth in 1892 and her son Arthur was then brought up by Harriet and William which led to further confrontations with the school. Their son Ernest married Sarah Fulcher and their daughter Edith Sarah Head worked as a kitchen maid at Houghton Hall.

William and Harriet brought up their children and grandchildren and would have been married 50 years in 1915. Harriet was still having run-ins with neighbours and there was a regular pattern of prosecutions and counter-prosecutions. She used the law in her own interests but the last decade of her life was much quieter. In 1916 she had a fall, broke a leg and was taken to the infirmary wing of what had been previously Gressenhall workhouse and she died there later that year aged 78/9. Descendants of Harriet Head née Kettle live in Norfolk today.

Andy's excellent book *Harriet Kettle: Pauper, Prisoner, Patient and Parent in Victorian Norfolk* can be purchased from Poppyland Publishing or Amazon and is highly recommended.

**November : The Norwich Castle: Gateway to Medieval England Project, aka *Royal Palace Reborn*, presented by Dr Robin Hanley, Project Director and Assistant Head of Museums, Norfolk Museums Service** *Ken Hawkins*



*drone photo Perspective Media Ltd for Falcon Tower Crane Services Ltd*

Robin promised us a history of the Castle, plans for the future and a snapshot of work in progress, but opened by noting that this was a £13.4m project: the main funder was the Heritage Lottery Fund (now the National Lottery Heritage Fund) but many others were also contributing. Its aim was to re-create the palace of the Norman kings, particularly reflecting the visit of Henry I at Christmas 1121. When finished, there will, for the first time in 900 years, be full access for everyone to all 5 levels of the keep, from basement to battlements. It will include treasures of national importance from the British Museum on a permanent basis, making it a premier heritage attraction. He also mentioned two significant factors - that the keep was a focal point, but the project went well beyond this; and that during consultation, a common feature was that visitors found the inside of the castle confusing.

The original castle was timber, which started to be replaced with stone by William II (Rufus) and completed around 1120/1. This was broadly contemporaneous with the construction of the nearby cathedral (land acquired 1094). The castle was besieged on a number of occasions, but then became a prison from 1345 to 1887. The keep then became the prison, with other buildings on the mound meeting other necessary purposes. The prison took on a modern character in the 1790s, built by John Soane - the keep was retained as a shell, with buildings erected inside. This was rebuilt as a panopticon by William Wilkins in 1822-8, with the keep occupying only a small portion of the total space. The keep was refaced 1834-9.

The castle entered its final changes into a museum in 1888-94, undertaken by Edward Boardman. The prison blocks were retained as galleries, with many of the internal buildings again removed.

The current plans include a new entrance (providing a view of the east wall of the keep), with a shop and café. A glass bridge will provide access to the principal floor. Robin gave us a detailed tour of the new arrangement through drawings, photographs and artists' impressions.

The final segment of Robin's talk showed a range of photos of the work in progress, though emphasising that the museum has been, and is, open throughout these works, planned to be

completed in summer 2023. The new areas are taking shape behind the hoardings - much of the preparatory work which will ultimately be hidden has been completed. And in all of this, great care is being taken to protect the historic fabric of the castle.

For more information, see [www.museums.norfolk.gov.uk/RoyalPalaceReborn](http://www.museums.norfolk.gov.uk/RoyalPalaceReborn).

## **December : Hexachordia** *Ken Hawkins*

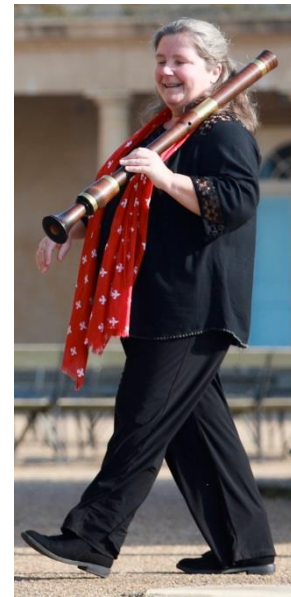
Our December 'talk' was a mini concert given by Hexachordia at the Wellspring Family Centre. We had an excellent mix of stories, images, music and songs, followed by seasonal refreshments. A summary is pointless - you needed to be there to appreciate it. See <https://www.hexachordia.com/> for details.



**Sarah Doig**  
viols, lute, vielle,  
voice & recorder



**Tony Scheuregger**  
lute, gittern, guitar  
flute, recorder & voice



**Jane Scheuregger**  
voice, recorder, bagpipes,  
shawm, rauschpfeife &  
crumhorn

## **Perhaps Dereham's most celebrated artist?**

### **John Craske 1881-1943** *Carolyn Coleman*

Have you heard of John Craske, the former resident of Dereham who, quite by chance, became a minor celebrity in his time, known across the Atlantic in the USA even more than in his home town?



John was born in 1881 in Sheringham. His father, Edward Craske, was a deep sea fisherman and John went to sea with him and his older brothers from the age of 14. But the fishing industry was changing as sailing fishing vessels were gradually overtaken by steam powered trawlers and the family moved inland to Dereham in 1905. It was here that he met and married Laura Eke, his devoted wife.



Later on, John became an invalid - an abscess on the brain which at the time was either not diagnosed or was inoperable, left him with repeated bouts of nervous exhaustion, sometimes laid up in bed for days or weeks. The family doctor, Dr Victor John Duigan, recommended sea air to recuperate and painting as a way to occupy himself. Laura and John therefore made several visits to the coast and stayed at times at Blakeney, Wiveton and Hemsby, but they always returned to Dereham and finally settled at 42 Norwich Road.



When John was well enough, he worked in the family fish shop at the (then) number 21 Norwich Street, with the smokehouse behind. When he was ill, Laura continued to work and the family also helped them out. It was Laura who, realising he could not paint in bed, showed him how to embroider. From then on, he produced a fantastic series of pictures, almost all showing scenes of the sea, of the coastline, of fishing and boats and all created with coloured threads.

John invented his own stitches to convey the rolling motion of the waves and even sailors admired how he captured the way the boat leans into the wind and sits on the water.



An avant-garde writer and poet, Valentine Ackland, came across John's work by chance when holidaying in Norfolk and immediately bought 'The James Edward' - a large water colour of a fishing boat. Her friend and fellow writer Sylvia Townsend Warner also appreciated the rare quality of John's work and together they assembled a sizeable collection of painting and tapestries. Some were exhibited in London and caught the eye of an American art collector, Elizabeth Wade White, who organised exhibitions in New York in 1941 and 1949. The proceeds from sales at these exhibitions supported John and Laura until his death in 1943.



As well as the exhibitions in London and America, there have been exhibitions at the Aldeburgh Festival, in 1971, in Norwich in 2015 and in Dereham, organised by the Dereham Antiquarian Society, under the leadership of Terry Davy, in 1993 - the fiftieth anniversary of John's death. Terry also published a booklet about John's life which has been reprinted with full colour illustrations - details are below.

John is buried together with Laura at the Dereham cemetery on Cemetery Road. Sylvia Townsend Warner donated many of her Craske works to the Aldeburgh Festival. Works owned by Peter Pears are on display at the Red House, Aldeburgh.

The embroidery on the left, belongs to Dereham Heritage Trust. Locally, several more belong to the Duigan family collection. There are also works at the Glandford Shell Museum, Norfolk Museums and the Sheringham Museum and many stored in the archive at Aldeburgh.

You can read more about John and his life and work on the Dereham Heritage Trust website. Or you can buy a copy of Terry Davy's illustrated booklet from the Trust for £5, or you can read more about his life and buy the book online at: <https://aboutdereham.org/john-craske/> or from [hello@aboutDereham.org](mailto:hello@aboutDereham.org).

## A Toftwood Christmas, 1941 *Trevor Ogden*

One of the books that we were given for the Archive last year was *Betty's Wartime Diary 1939-1945*, edited by Nicholas Webley (Thorogood, 2002). The book is an entertaining read, as this excerpt illustrates.

Betty was a widow who was 60 in 1941, and who cooked at a pub near Dereham. At the request of Betty's family, the editor changed her name and some others, and did not give the pub's location, but it was frequented by airmen from local bases, and there are clues that it may have been in Toftwood. Some friends, the Wentworths, lived in a nearby big house which Betty and some friends could use at Christmas.

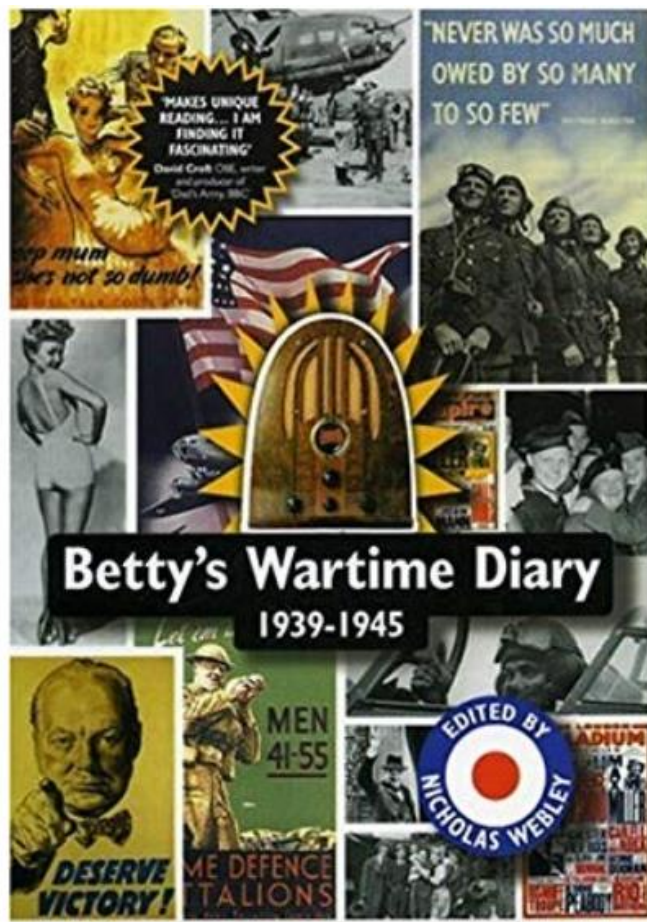
How did Betty get this Christmas spread? She and her friends did a lot of gardening. Most round the table were undoubtedly honest. Fred was "often out with his gun after rabbits, pigeons and the like, and Jack liked to shoot too. But the others included an alleged poacher, and black marketeers, and it sounds as if all of these activities helped out at this Christmas, 80 years ago.

*Tuesday 23<sup>d</sup>* So this year for Christmas dinner there will be me, Stanley, Mr Head, Mavis and her aunt Kate, Beryl, George, Fred, Jack, Young Freddie, French George and about six of the boys from Coltishall and Swanton Morley said they hope they will be able to come. Fred has done his usual best and there will be no shortage of food. We have more pheasants hanging in the outhouse than we can ever eat and Jack has the most enormous turkey I have ever seen and even Fred said that 'it don't look natural with legs that size on it'. Glim and Patricia have decorated the drawing and dining rooms to look very Christmassy with holly and ivy from the wood...

*Christmas Day* It is ten past two in the morning and it has been a lovely day. We sat down for dinner at two o'clock sharp and there were eighteen of us round Mrs Wentworth's huge table. Glim sang some songs after we had the Christmas pudding and port and Stanley banged out some of the old songs on the piano. After that everyone helped to clear up as quickly as possible. Then we all went for a walk in the woods to blow the cobwebs away. We came back just as it was getting dark and settled down for the evening playing cards, having a few drinks and talking.

A few days before this, Hitler had declared war on the United States. This must have lifted the atmosphere, and it was to have an impact on the pub clientele in the coming years.

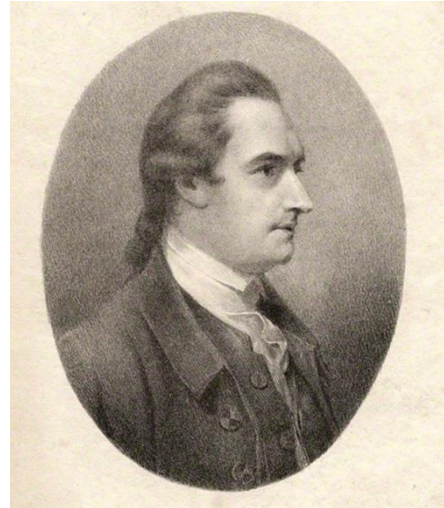
The book is still available, hardcover, paperback, or on Kindle.



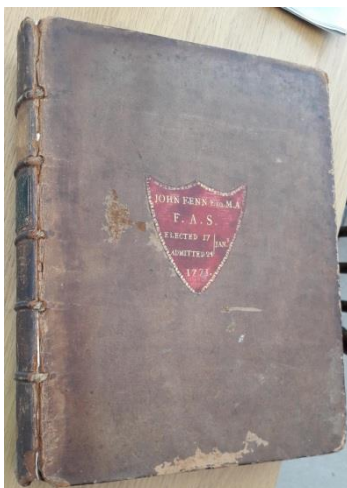
## John Fenn and his *Archaeologia* Volumes Trevor Ogden

John and Ellenor Fenn, distinguished former residents of Dereham, have become familiar names to DHT in recent months, with our input into the Ellenor Fenn Garden, and our display about the couple that was in a nearby shop-window for two months. We plan that when the Museum reopens in May, it will include a special exhibition about John and Ellenor and their friends and work. John is internationally known for editing and publishing the unique collection of letters of the Paston family, which give us such a lively picture of the life of a gentry family reaching back to the 1400s. Our exhibition has had generous support from the lottery-financed Paston Footprints project, which has been promoting celebrations of the Letters in various parts of Norfolk.

As part of that support, Paston Footprints has presented to us the first ten volumes of the journal *Archaeologia*, beginning in 1770, which were once John's proud possession. I think that it's true to say that DHT and its predecessor the Antiquarian Society have not received a gift like this in our 68 years of existence, but it needs a bit of explanation.



John was born in Norwich in 1739. The household soon moved to North Elmham, and after a spell at Scarning School John went in 1751 to Botesdale School. This was near Diss, but of greater significance that it was near the residence of Thomas Martin, an antiquarian, who it is thought, picked up John's interests in heraldry and history, and taught the young man to read and understand old manuscripts, and in particular introduced him to the Paston letters. The details are a bit obscure, but in due course John came into possession of the hundreds of manuscripts of the letters, and when John and Ellenor married in 1766 and moved into Hill House at the top of Dereham Market Place, the letters came too. Transcribing and editing them became John's life work, and he published the first two volumes of the letters in 1787. Three more followed in due course, becoming a great source of information to historians. For more about the letters, visit the forthcoming Museum exhibition.



*One of John Fenn's  
Archaeologia volumes, with  
a badge recording his  
election to the Society of  
Antiquaries*

One of the early public recognitions of the quality of John's work was his election to the Society of Antiquaries at the start of 1771. The Society had been established in 1707, but John's election coincided with the start of the Society publishing a major journal, *Archaeologia*, so John received the first few volumes of the new journal from its start, and it is John's own copies that have been given to us.

I mentioned that they were John's proud possession, and it certainly looks from the volumes that he valued the recognition that membership showed, and at a time when one's standing in the social hierarchy meant so much, he enjoyed being in the company of other distinguished members. In several of the volumes John has noted attendance at the Society's annual St George's Day meetings, and you will see from the illustrations the details he gives. It seems that King George III, as patron of the Society, might have been there himself, and John is careful to distinguish the number of Fellows like himself, but also Privy Counsellors, peers, and eldest sons of peers. He had bound with our volumes the introductory letters from distinguished members which led to his election, and also manuscripts of work he did for the Society on their history, and the earlier publications they had issued.



[ v ]

T A B L E  
o f  
C O N T E N T S.

I. *OBSERVATIONS* on an Inscription on an ancient Pillar now in the possession of the Society of Antiquaries. Page 1

II. *Illustration of some Druidical Remains in the Peak of Derbyshire*, drawn by Hayman Rooke, Esq. By the Rev. Mr. Pegge. 19

III. *Historical Notes concerning the Power of the Chancellor's Court at Cambridge*. By the Rev. Robert Richardson, D. D. F. A. S. late Rector of St. Anne's, Soho. 25

IV. *Observations on the Practice of Archery in England*. In a Letter to the Rev. Mr. Norris, Secretary. By the Honourable Daines Barrington. 46

V. *Illustration of an unpublished Seal of Richard Duke of Gloucester*. By the Rev. Dr. Milles, Dean of Exeter, P. S. A. 69

VI. *Conjectures concerning some undescribed Roman Roads, and other Antiquities in the County of Durham*. In a Letter to the Rev. Dr. Kaye (now Dean of Lincoln) from John Cade, Esq. of Durham. 74

VII. *Letter*

The start of the contents list of volume 5

The actual content of the volumes is of secondary interest, and in any case it has all been made available online (at a price) by Cambridge University Press. You will see from the start of the contents list of one of the volumes the range of subjects that were covered, including "Druidical remains", the practice of archery, a ducal seal, and an article by John Cade on Roman roads in County Durham. (One of these roads is still called Cade's Road as a result of this paper.) In the next 200 years, *Archaeologia* published many important advances, and it continued under that name until 1991, when it was succeeded by *The Antiquaries Journal*. John didn't know what a venture he was helping to get under way. He was evidently proud of his volumes, and we can be proud that they have finally come back to Dereham and our care, and we are grateful to the Paston Footprints project and the Heritage Lottery Fund for bringing this about.

The recommendation of John's membership of the Society, bound with one of the volumes

We whose Names are underneath, being Members of the Society of Antiquaries, do recommend John Fern of East Dereham in the County of Norfolk to be a Gentleman versed in and fond of the Study of Antiquities.

Nov. 24. 1770.

John Smith Master of Laws Coll.  
Richardson D.D. Master of Eman. Coll.  
R. Farmer. Eman. Coll.  
Henry Baker  
Mat Duane  
Edward King

Thursday Nov. 29. 1770.

This Certificate was delivered to the Secretary of the Antiquarian Society by Edward King Esq. — now — considered to be fixed up the usual time, which is six weeks.

John's record on one of the pages of the attendance at a Society of Antiquaries meeting

13

St. George's The King, Honorary Total Quotick Number  
Day President one Peers, Eldst  
Council Fellows Number, Sons of Peers, Army  
23 April e Fellows Foreigners. Counsellors e  
Judges.

12 March

1784 . 358 . 45 . 401 . 43

## NAHRG Local History Lecture Programme 2021/22

NAHRG is the county local history and archaeology club. Every winter, it organises a monthly lecture series at the UEA on a Saturday afternoon. The 2022 programme is shown below: non-members of NAHRG are welcome to try one or two lectures free of charge before joining.

### January 22

The Landscape History of the Broadland Marshes : Recent Research  
Tom Williamson (Professor of Landscape History, UEA)

### February 19

Church Angel Roofs Beyond East Anglia : A Case Study From Somerset  
Brendan Chester-Kadwell (Landscape Historian)

## March 12

Broads Waterside Heritage

*Alison Yardy (Senior Historic Environment Officer, Norfolk HES)*

## April 2 AGM and lecture

A History of Norfolk in 100 Places

*David Robertson (Historic Environment Adviser, Forestry Commission)*



**The Thomas Paine Centre** is on the right towards the end of Chancellor's Drive from the Security Lodge. It is signed as such over the side entrance but the main entrance is styled 'Norwich Business Centre'. There is a convenient **bus stop** very close to the Thomas Paine Centre/Norwich Business School block. **The West Car Park is closest** and is open on a pay-and-display basis at weekends (£1.00 flat fee). The entrance to it is on the right off Chancellor's Drive, just after the bus shelters (ignore the 'staff only' sign). The Centre is marked 52 on the maps around the site. The West Car Park is marked as P3. A downloadable version of the campus map is available on request.

*Norfolk Archaeological & Historical Research Group*

[www.nahrg.org.uk](http://www.nahrg.org.uk) [enquiries@nahrg.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@nahrg.org.uk)

## Membership matters

If you are not currently a member, can we invite you to consider joining? Our membership year runs annually from 1 March to the end of February; the normal subscription rate is £12 for a single member, £20 for two people at the same address. From September each year, we offer half price membership for the remainder of the subscription year, and new joiners paying full rate from January will have membership to 1 March in the following year. In normal circumstances, we can take payment at one of our meetings, but while these are suspended, there are two ways open for payment, as set out below. The membership form is at

[http://www.derehamhistory.com/uploads/1/6/2/3/16236968/dht\\_membership\\_leaflet\\_2020.pdf](http://www.derehamhistory.com/uploads/1/6/2/3/16236968/dht_membership_leaflet_2020.pdf), or you can request a copy from Ken Hawkins. Then either send your completed form, with a cheque payable to Dereham Heritage Trust, to Ken Hawkins, DHT, 26 Hillfields, Dereham NR19 1UE, or scan and email [ken-hawkins@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:ken-hawkins@tiscali.co.uk) your details, and pay by bank transfer to Dereham Heritage Trust, sort code 20-28-20, account 10179752 - but if you use this method please make sure you quote your surname as a reference so that we can recognise the payment as coming from you.

## Programme of events 2022

We have a full programme of speakers and events planned through the year, though it has to remain open to change. We hope to resume in person meetings when government guidelines and safety considerations allow and are keeping this under constant review, but for January and possibly onwards, we are showing on line presentations; if you get this Newsletter by email, we will send you links to these. Some of our talks have been recorded in advance; in those cases, we send you a web link which will enable you to watch a presentation at a time of your own choosing (up to the date of the meeting). We will also send you a second web link to a Zoom meeting to take place at the scheduled meeting time of 19:30 on the planned meeting date. This will enable you to join a virtual DHT meeting, usually involving the presenter, to allow you and the other participants to ask questions and join the discussion. For the others, the presentation takes place on the scheduled night as usual (but on line). Our recent 'meetings' have enabled those who had seen the talks to take part in some very interesting and extended discussions. We hope and believe that the same will apply for our future talks too. **If you get this Newsletter through the post, but would be able to get Internet access, please let Ken Hawkins know, and we will send**

**links to your chosen email address.** Where possible, recorded talks are available to members for a week or so after meeting date; you can find them on our website.

We are not making the usual £1 charge to members to watch the talk or join the meeting, but we **welcome donations** to offset our costs - our speakers still deserve full recompense for their time and effort! Payment can be made by cheque or bank transfer as noted in the [Membership matters](#) section above. Thanks to those of our members who have donated.

A last minute hitch means that we cannot confirm the topic for the **January talk**, but will make sure everyone is informed early in the New Year. The link for the meeting at 7.30pm on Wednesday 12 January is [https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88294984708?pwd=dIhrUVlXWlNhM3hoVHB4VHhKRjY3QT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88294984708?pwd=dIhrUVlXWlNhM3hoVHB4VHhKRjY3QT09;); Meeting ID: 882 9498 4708, Passcode: 590763 (but you shouldn't need those). If you know any non members who might enjoy the talk, please ask them to contact [ken-hawkins@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:ken-hawkins@tiscali.co.uk) so that appropriate payment arrangements can be made.

**Our Annual General Meeting is scheduled for 9 February: please take this as notice of the meeting.** As this issue goes to press, the future under Omicron is uncertain. If it seems unsafe to hold an in person meeting, we have the Charity Commission's permission to hold this one online and will bring a resolution to enable us to change the constitution and enable us to hold future AGMs online. In addition, we invite anyone who wishes to do so to submit a resolution to the AGM: please send it to arrive by 10 January 2022 to Sue Rockley, [suerockley84@gmail.com](mailto:suerockley84@gmail.com), or 1 Manor Farm Cottages, Scarning, Dereham NR19 2LL; 01362 694886.

For the full programme, please turn over.

## Next issue

We plan to produce a Newsletter every quarter, in March, June, September and December; the press date for the next issue is **1 March**. If you have material for this issue, please send it to Ken Hawkins. And please don't hesitate to get in touch with us if you have any other comments of any sort. In between Newsletters, our website [www.derehamhistory.com](http://www.derehamhistory.com) is updated regularly so please have a look now and again.

**HAPPY CHRISTMAS!**

## **Please keep this page as your reminder of our 2022 programme**

*Planned meeting dates continue to be the second Wednesday of each month. When we can restart physical meetings, they will be at Trinity Methodist Church, 31 Trinity Close, Dereham NR19 2EP (off Theatre Street), and start at 1930. Admission to talks is £1 for members of Dereham Heritage Trust and £3 for non members. Visitors are always welcome, with the fee payable on the door, refreshments included.*

Not every presenter wishes to use an online mechanism, so the schedule below is tentative and open to change. We will keep members informed of changes to our plans, but you're also welcome to contact us to check on any particular session.

12 January (online)

**to be confirmed**

9 February

**AGM** followed by **Nine of the 100 best sites in Norfolk**

Peter Wade-Martins, Susanna Wade-Martins and David Robertson

9 March

**Revealing the story of the Pastons: one of Norfolk's great treasures**

Rob Knee

13 April

**The history of the Norfolk Wool Trade**

Joy Evitt

11 May

**Restoration of ponds on the Neatherd and Etling Green**

Andy Hind

8 June

**History of footpaths in Norfolk**

Sarah Spooner

13 July

**In search of Boudica**

Natasha Harlow

10 August

**Hobbies**

Martin Flegg

14 September

**The Glaven Ports to 1800**

Jonathan Hooton

12 October

**Lost Buildings of Dereham - Part 2**

Sue Walker and Robena Brown

9 November

**Norfolk Postal History 1579 to 1950s**

David Leathart

14 December

**Dereham in the 1980s - The Films of Michael Burton**

Brent Scholes