

Winter Newsletter 2018

Volume 14-4



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

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Annual Dinner Ken Hawkins

25 members gathered for our Annual Dinner in October, and enjoyed a three course meal at The George Hotel in Dereham. We were very well looked after and had an area of the Hotel entirely to ourselves.



Letter from the Chair Peter Wade-Martins

At our most enjoyable annual dinner on 10 October I raised over coffee a series of issues for members to consider. It seems right to bring you up to date on where we are with these.

Changes to the constitution

This Newsletter goes out a month or so before our 2019 AGM on 13 February. It will be an important moment for the Society because you will have before you two proposals, (a) to make some revisions to the constitution and (b) to change the name of the Society to *The Dereham Heritage Trust* which we feel rather better reflects our current role. We are aware that there have been previous proposals to change the name, though none came to fruition. But the need for a more modern image has remained, and indeed has increased.

“Antiquarian” is a word which is seldom used today but was more appropriate in the 1950s when the Society was formed.

In the last newsletter I did invite members to send in their comments on this proposed name change, but our Editor, Ken Hawkins, received no comments. So, we assume that there is no significant objection to the change. Nevertheless, to give members a further chance to express their views on the new name and on the revisions to the constitution they are all set out in full detail with this newsletter. You are very welcome to send in your views before the AGM so the committee can consider them. Please email comments to the Secretary, Amanda Lovejoy at amandalovejoy666@gmail.com.

The concept of a Dereham Heritage Centre

Bishop Bonner's Cottages are a unique and wonderful survival, and we can thank our predecessors for saving them and making them into Dereham's museum. But with their low ceilings, winding staircases and very narrow passageways they are less than ideal for explaining the full history of the town. Without a dedicated teaching space, disabled access and toilets they hardly match modern educational needs. Their use is inevitably very limited. Dereham deserves a new centre to provide meaningful displays on the history and heritage of the town to complement, but not replace, the displays in the cottages.

Almost all traces of the industries which made Dereham famous in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, like Hobbies, Cranes, Metamec, J J Wright and Baldings engineering works, Stammers flour mills and Greens Nurseries and many more have all gone. And Dereham is now set for another major expansion. The yards in the town centre around which many working families lived have almost all gone too. We must not lose these memories and the town surely deserves an opportunity to explain its rich history to the next

generation. A heritage centre could provide this opportunity, and, with a tourist information centre included, it could be a real asset to the town.

The committee was planning to include the costs of an architect's feasibility study to look at locating such a centre on the open space next to the museum in a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund. But with the Fund about to close on its existing schemes in early January there was insufficient time to do so. So, we hope to revive the proposal to include the costs of developing the Archive Centre and the feasibility study for a Heritage Centre in a fresh bid once the next generation of HLF grant funding is announced in the New Year. But we should not embark on these projects unless we feel that our small society has the resilience to see them through. To begin with our small band of volunteers will be fully stretched preparing the new displays in the museum for the start of the 2019 season. Then we will need to review realistically what else we can take on. Volunteers who would like to be involved on the committee, work in the archive Centre or be on duty in the museum would all be most welcome!

Membership issues

At the Annual Dinner I floated the idea of increasing subscriptions, since the Society has been running its finances at a loss for several years, and that must not be allowed to continue. The committee has agreed to recommend at the AGM that individual membership should rise from £10 to £12 and joint membership from £17 to £20. Admission charges at lectures will stay at £1 for members and £3 for non-members. That is **real** value for your money.

Committee changes

We are sad to announce that our phenomenally efficient secretary, Amanda Lovejoy, has decided that she will have to stand down at the February AGM. And at the time of writing we have no obvious successor. We are looking for someone with administrative experience who can take our organisation forward during what we hope will be an exciting period of expansion and development.

Ken Hawkins has taken over as Treasurer as well as Newsletter Editor, and Catherine Hawkins has kindly offered to become the new Volunteer Co-ordinator, an important role organising the volunteer rota in time for the opening of the new season for the museum in which we can promise you several new displays.

A Happy New Year to you all.

AGM - Constitution & Membership rates

This is the formal notice of our AGM, to be held at 19.30 on Wednesday 13 February 2019, at our usual venue of Trinity Methodist Church, 31 Trinity Close, Dereham NR19 2EP. As reported above, the Committee is proposing a number of changes to our Constitution. With this Newsletter, you will find a copy of the Constitution as it currently exists, a copy with the changes which we propose, and a separate list explaining the reasons for those changes. There will be a formal motion at the AGM to propose acceptance of those changes, plus a separate motion to change the name of *Dereham Antiquarian Society* to *The Dereham Heritage Trust*. Finally, there will be a motion to propose that individual membership should rise from £10 to £12 and joint membership from £17 to £20; if approved, the new rates will apply for renewals and new memberships from 1 March 2019.

If you have particular views on any of these, but especially the proposed changes to the Constitution, please get in touch as soon as possible; any comments received before our committee meeting on 8 January can be considered and could result in changes to the proposals. Send any thoughts to Amanda Lovejoy, amandalovejoy666@gmail.com.

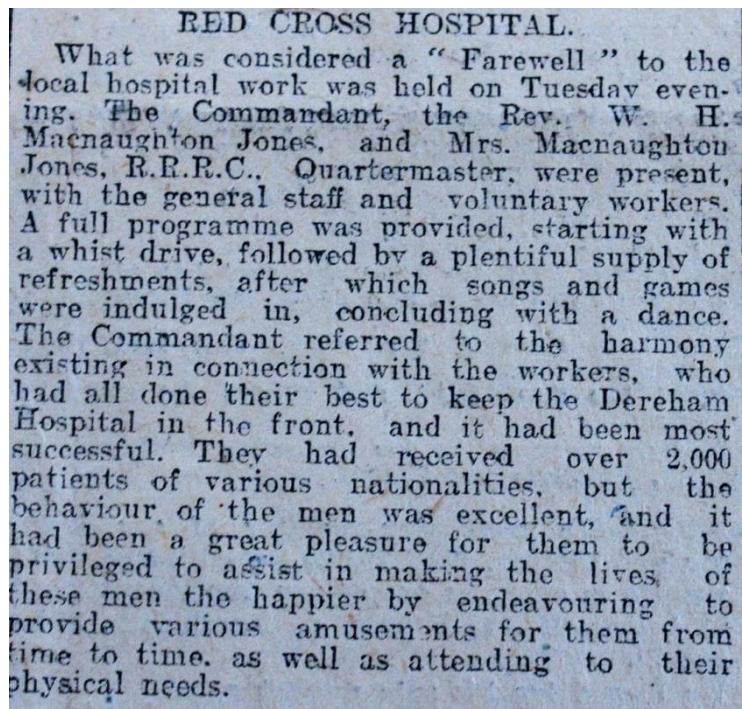
Extracts from the Dereham and Fakenham Times - January to March 1919 *Robena Brown*

On 4 January 1919 an announcement was made that the Royal Norfolk Show, which had not been held during World War One, would resume its annual summer show at Eaton Park on 18-19 June.

During the month of January there were many suggestions and much debate within the local newspapers concerning the design and placement of suitable memorials to honour the war dead. (It was not, however, until October 1922 that 22-year-old Prince Henry, Duke of Gloucester, was to unveil the East Dereham War Memorial to honour over 150 fallen from the town in the conflict.)

In the Dereham and Fakenham Times of 8 February 1919 it was reported that 40 returned prisoners of war had returned to the town and had been present at the 'welcome home for Norfolk men' at St Andrews Hall on 1 February.

The final parade of The Dereham Company of the Norfolk Volunteer Regiment took place on Sunday 23 February. All equipment was handed in with the exception of uniforms and great coats and the whole of the Company was entertained to supper on Saturday 1 March when there was 'some speechmaking'.



Dereham and Fakenham Times 29 March 1919

Local Recall Project

Archant has launched a *Local Recall* project: "Through the use of specialist scanning equipment, Local Recall aims to digitise the historic EDP archive and make it compatible with voice technology such as Amazon's Alexa devices. One day in the near future, you'll be able to say 'Alexa, tell me the headlines from 1969' and your voice device will be able to respond with what took place on that day. But before this can happen, the scanned archive material needs some care and attention from dedicated community archivists - which is where you come in. We need a number of volunteers to help us ensure that our archives are in a state to be shared - because whilst computers can do a lot for us, sometimes there's no beating the human eye for spotting errors in the scanned articles. If you have access to a computer and an interest in local history, Archant would like to hear from you." Visit <https://localrecall.archant.co.uk/volunteer> or email LocalRecallProject@archant.co.uk to find out more or to register to take part.

Notes from our recent meetings *Ken Hawkins*

14 November : Rural Schools in Victorian Norfolk Susanna Wade Martins

A full hall was pleased to welcome Susanna Wade Martins to give a talk on Rural Schools in Victorian Norfolk, based on work which was published in the Journal of the Norfolk Historic Buildings Group. When Queen Victoria died, there was a national system of elementary education, which had been made compulsory in 1880; by 1900, most villages had a school. Norfolk was lucky to have an extensive range of records tracing the development of this system.

To provide context for the talk, we were shown some quotations which highlighted opposing views on the purpose of education.

God bless the squire
And all his rich relations
And teach us poor folk
To keep our stations. (*apocryphal 19th century*)

Keep me from all wickedness, lying, stealing, swearing, envy, hatred, malice; make me humble, patient, contented in my station, lowly and reverent to all my betters. (*morning prayer learnt by children in Pulham Market*)

An education system to create 'a nation clothed in black coats engaged in commerce and trying to get the better of one another'. (1906)

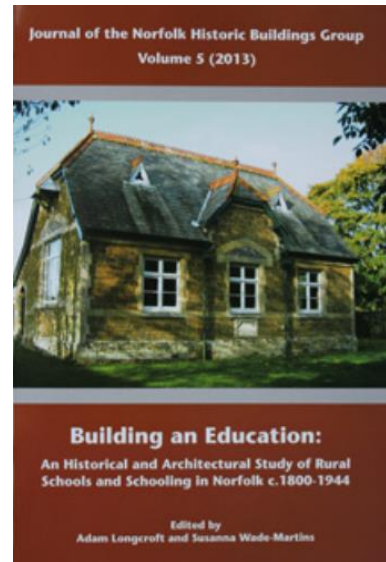
'Let us educate the young in such a way as to keep them in the country districts in the wholesome air in which they were born.' (1906)

Some schools were in existence from bequests and charities by the early 19th century, though they were of variable quality, and not without some criticism and objection. At this time, two bodies were established - The British and Foreign School Society (BFSS), and The National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor (NS). BFSS Schools came from a dissenting background, often in towns, for the children of merchants and tradespeople (in Dereham, the school was funded by the Lee-Warners of Quebec Hall), while NS Schools were supported by the established church (and in Dereham, fundraising was needed to get the school built). Both of these set up schools, and though there was some support, many met with obstacles, such as resistance from parents and children who wanted the latter to be able to work on the land; some night schools were set up, but were used to justify employing children during the day. These early schools were usually of a simple single-room design, sometimes sited in a church yard.

The number of schools grew slowly as they gained acceptance, and the presentation included slides of a wide selection of schools across the county.

Finding teachers was a problem. NS Schools used pupil teachers, with mixed success. Dereham in 1859 had 3 pupil teachers who did well in their exams, but some failed to do the work required and lost their positions.

In addition to these sets of schools, there were some smaller, so-called Dame Schools (though not all were run by women), but records of these are sparse, and the limited information that is available largely comes from government commissions who had an interest in promoting the British and National Schools. Nevertheless, parents often preferred these, as they were less bound by regulations and offered higher flexibility.



Over time, the government realised that education could not be left to the two Societies, and offered funding for further schools; this depended on the submission of plans, and these are still in the collection of the Norfolk Record Office. Many were still based on one large room, but increasingly having side classrooms, entrances for girls and boys, and a gallery layout (raked seating allowing all pupils to be easily seen).

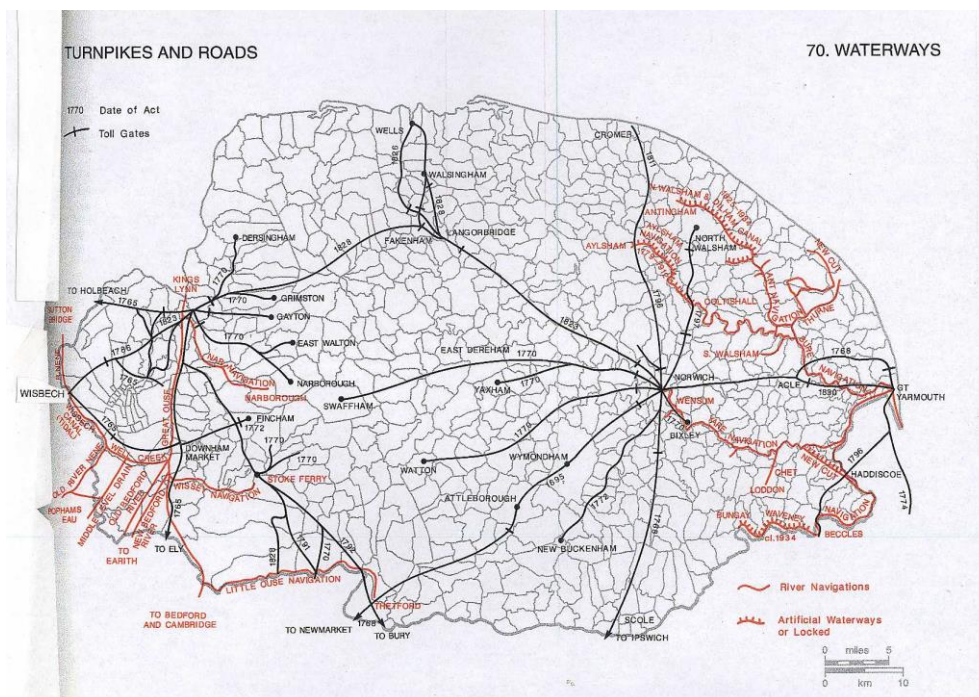
As a result of all this activity, literacy had increased since the 1820s, but it was still evident that there were not enough schools, so provision was made for Board Schools to fill the gaps. This prompted a spurt of school building by the churches, to avoid the secularisation that Board Schools would bring. The Board schools were not always basic or plain, and slides were shown of some with decorative brickwork and interesting architecture, while internally there were more classrooms.

In 1902, the County Councils took over the Board Schools. Norfolk Education Committee surveyed numbers and facilities of their schools, and these records remain: over half still had infant galleries. Teaching of girls emphasised domestic skills, for women to be ready to run the household, while boys were trained for gardening or work on the land.

To conclude her presentation, Susanna noted that by 1944, teachers were qualified, church links much reduced, though these changes were slower in rural areas and problems in getting good teachers remained.

12 December: Milestone and Waymarkers Carol Haines

Carol introduced her talk by referring to the wide variety of street furniture, but she explained that she was concentrating on highways.



*reproduced with permission from Peter Wade-Martins (ed)
An Historical Atlas of Norfolk, 1993, The Norfolk Museums Service*

In the 16th century (1555) it became a statutory requirement for every able bodied man in a parish to spend 4 days each year working on the roads, increased in 1563 to 6 days; not all had to provide physical labour - a landowner might loan a horse and cart for transport of materials. Problems emerged with this, for example for small parishes through which ran a major route. Parliament started to look at ways in which users could pay, with the first toll

road authorised in 1663. In Norfolk, the Wymondham to Attleborough toll road was the third in the country. The first Turnpike Trust was established in 1706, with a range of powers, including use of parish labour and stopping up of side roads. Numbers grew slowly at first, but accelerated in the second half of the century as the industrial revolution gathered pace leading to movement of people into towns and more goods needed to be transported. Between 1750 and 1772, 400 toll roads were established (including most of Norfolk's), growing by 1830 to over 1000.

Although a large county, Norfolk had comparatively few toll roads, which Carol thought was related to the county being a cul-de-sac, and with good soil (so roads were not hard to maintain). Most were among the 10 coming to/from Norwich, plus a web around King's Lynn. Locally, there was a Norwich to Swaffham route, with a branch to Yaxham.

After this introduction, we were treated to illustrations of a range of associated artefacts, starting with toll houses, such as the one at Etling Green; those in the west of Norfolk followed Telford's design, with a central bay to enable the toll gate keeper to see traffic approaching. Next, we were shown pictures of water pumps, needed to enable the dust to be laid on the road: these could be distinguished from 'ordinary' pumps by the greater height of the spout, necessary to enable water to be delivered to a water cart for transport.

Moving on to stones, the first illustration was of a terminus stone, marking the end of the Lynn Southgate Turnpike, the only one known in Norfolk. The more familiar milestones started with a requirement in 1767 for Turnpike Trusts to erect milestones, though other bodies also put up milestones. The first ones were often square or shaped like gravestones, with Roman numerals, but these were difficult to read when passing them at speed, so there was a move to Arabic numbers. These were still hard to read when the inscription was parallel to the road, so designs of a broadly triangular nature were introduced. By the end of the 1700s, cast iron came into use, initially as plates fixed to the stones, and later forming complete posts.

Carol then moved on to more elaborate items, such as the obelisk at Holt; this had a matching one in Dereham, but this was lost in 1946.

In 1889, county councils were formed and many of these (including Norfolk) erected many stones and, later, other signs. As motor cars came into greater use, legislation in 1903 authorised 3 types of sign - prohibitions, warnings and speed limits; a rare survivor (now listed) at Overstrand was illustrated. Other signs then appeared, for example those put in by the Automobile Association, as well as county council village entry signs. Most of these had disappeared, though a few were still found. More recently, milestones and posts were lost as a result of the 1940 invasion scare, when rural markers were buried and urban ones removed or defaced; there are 370 known in Norfolk, against 700 shown on old maps, but some of these are still being found today.

The talk was rounded by showing current road signage, and explained the road numbering system now used.

As noted, Carol's talk included reference to the Dereham Obelisk, lost in 1946. Carol has provided us with this picture and some snippets of information about this, and is looking to see if she can find more about its matching companion in Holt (still very much present). Can anyone provide any more information or photographs of the Dereham version? We will publish what we can in the next issue.



Museum update *Natalie Small*

Work has already been underway for a couple of months in preparation for the 2019 season. We have been working closely with Dereham Town Council to arrange a chimney clean and minor repairs inside the building. In preparation for this, our Museum team has dismantled all of the displays and carefully packed them away. While waiting for the repair work to begin, our team has been working on plans for next year's displays. We will be retaining the ever-popular Hobbies display, and some enhancements will be made to the domestic room as well as the central upstairs room which contains details about the building. New displays will include Metamec Clocks, Dereham Shops and Businesses, and Dereham Marketplace. Research is currently being done into each of these themes and the displays will be assembled early in the new year.

The museum will be open on Saturday 4 May through to Saturday 28 September 2019.

Opening hours will be:

Wednesday: 1.30pm - 4pm

Friday: 11am - 2pm (to coincide with Market Day)

Saturday: 1.30pm - 4pm

If you would like to volunteer at the museum next year, we would love to hear from you. You are welcome to volunteer as little or as much as you like. Please contact our new Volunteer Co-ordinator Catherine Hawkins at cg.hawkins@outlook.com.

Dereham Windmill World War One Centenary Exhibition *Robena Brown*

In 2018 we produced a pictorial exhibition to commemorate the centenary of the WWI armistice for a display within Dereham's beautifully restored 1836 Fendick's tower mill.

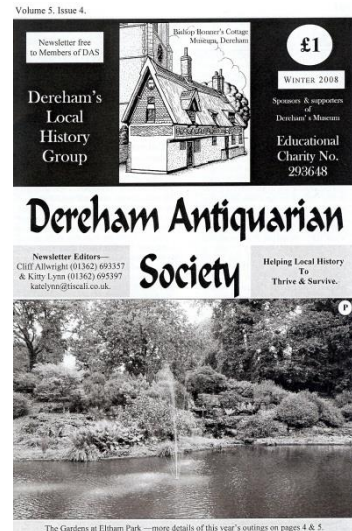
The Society had many appropriate period photographs taken by Herbert Cave of Church Street and these and others were used to chart the progress of the war, the photographer's work and also the life of Dereham soldier William Barnes who died in the war and whose death plaque (or death 'penny' as they were known) is stored in the archive.



The exhibition which involved input from many members remained in the windmill from the end of October until after the armistice centenary and was seen by many visitors.

Past Newsletters

There were no Newsletters for winter 1988 or 1998, but the 2008 Newsletter ran to 24 pages, and gave an update on the then recent activities - outings to Boston and Eltham Palace, plus a lecture on Bletchley Park. There were also many pages of news from the 1880s and extensive articles on 'Keeping clean' and 'Doctor Jessop, Scarning vicar'.



Programme of events 2019-20

Here is our programme up to February 2020. Full details are also available on our website (www.derehamhistory.com/talks.html), which will also carry any necessary last minute changes. They are printed into our 'Talks Programme' cards - available at all of our meetings.

Wednesday 9 January 2019

**Rethinking the Romans in Norfolk:
12 years of research at Caistor
Roman Town**

Speaker: Dr Will Bowden

Wednesday 13 February 2019

Annual General Meeting
followed by
A Scullery Maid at Blickling Hall in the 1930s
Speaker: Lizzie Scott

Wednesday 13 March 2019

Royal Portraits and their hidden depths
Speaker: Michael Nash

Wednesday 10 April 2019

The library at Blickling, history and future
Speaker: Bunty Gotts

Wednesday 8 May 2019

Norfolk's Medieval Literary Treasure
Speaker: Dr John Alban

Wednesday 12 June 2019

History of the Wool Trade in Norfolk
Speaker: Joy Evitt

Wednesday 10 July 2019

Carts and Carting - medieval and Norfolk
Speaker: Mary Fewster

Wednesday 14 August 2019

Members' only event

Wednesday 11 September 2019

Kett's Rebellion
Speaker: Barbara Miller

Wednesday 9 October 2019

Annual Dinner at The George Hotel tbc
Venue to be confirmed

Wednesday 13 November 2019

'Seahenge' - history and display
Speaker: Hannah Jackson

Wednesday 11 December 2019

to be arranged

Wednesday 8 January 2020

King's Lynn - History and buildings
Speaker: Michael Aldiss

Wednesday 12 February 2020

Annual General Meeting

Unless otherwise indicated, all meetings are 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 Antiquarian Society and £3 for non-members. Visitors are always welcome, with the fee payable on the door, refreshments included.

Membership matters

Our membership year runs annually from 1 March to the end of February, but we are pleased to offer reduced price membership for any new member joining between 1 September and the end of February. These reduced rates are

Individual - **£5** (currently £10)

Couple at the same address - **£8.50** (currently £17)

Family at the same address - **£11.50** (currently £23)

Subject to decision at the forthcoming Annual General Meeting, membership rates will increase from 1 March 2019. You can join at any of our meetings, or use our membership form from the website at

http://www.derehamhistory.com/uploads/1/6/2/3/16236968/membership_leaflet_2018.pdf, but return it to Ken Hawkins, 26 Hillfields, Dereham NR19 1UE, with your cheque payable to 'Dereham Antiquarian Society'.

And finally

We plan to produce a Newsletter every quarter, in January, April, July and October. The press date for the next issue is **15 March**: if you have material for this issue, please send it in 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 is updated regularly so please have a look now and again.

Can you save us some money? If you did not receive this Newsletter via email, but would be willing to do so, please let me have your email address: we won't pass it on to anyone else without your permission, and we won't use it for anything but Dereham Antiquarian Society business.