

Newsletter free
to Members of DAS



SPRING 2005

Charity No. 293648

DEREHAM'S LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

Dereham Antiquarian Society

Editors – Cliff Allwright & Kitty Lynn

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- *The Paston Family part 1 of 4*
- *Dereham Disasters – floods*
- *Spong Hill*
- *Unearthed W.W.I Notes – the first of eight quarterly parts*
- *Hot Spot – Cycling Cliff*
- *Tunnels under Dereham – part 1*
- *Society Programme details for the next three months*
- *Also all our regular columns are inside.*



Muse News



Competition



Letters



Cottage Comments

Dereham Disasters



Picture Parade



Society Snippets



Comedy Corner



Museum Matters



Happening History



Outings



Well I Never



Food for thought



W.W.I Diary



Blast from the Past



Me! Idiots?

Memory Lane



Hot Spot



The Vault



Archive Antics





Letters

Letters will be answered by the appropriate person, i.e. a member of the committee, society, archive gang, museum or muse group

From the Editors

Well Happy New Year – and have we got a good newsletter for you – well we think so. OK so its dearer now but you've got 4 extra pages, printing cost do rise annually unfortunately; anyway if you're a member you get it free! Put the kettle on and have a relaxing read – there's something for everyone, whether you like history ancient or modern, comedy, competitions, or are just interested in what's happening in the society or museum – you'll find it here. Enjoy.

Don't forget we like hearing from you and will willingly put in any article you give us with one exception it has to be on one of our topics unless you can start a new one of course.

New Articles – Hot Spot – this is where one person nominates the following person and each has to write something about their life. It's Cliff's baby so he started it off and Kitty was oblivious until she reached the second page that she was next – but she's done it. **Dereham Disasters** will be covering the four elements' effects on Dereham over the years. **Memory Lane** is about shopping in Dereham. If you have memories of the old shops let us have some memories for the lane – it's one way to record history for posterity. **Blast from the Past** is on any archaeological finds in the area so if you know of some – please write in.

Kitty's Favourite – Food for Thought, thought up by Cliff.

Cliff's Favourite – He's excited about what the Hot Spot could do.

P.S. We're already thinking about next year – **Memory Lane** will be about working in Dereham so if you did please give us a memory – it doesn't matter how large or small, we take them all.

DON'T LEAVE IT ALL TO THE EDITORS.

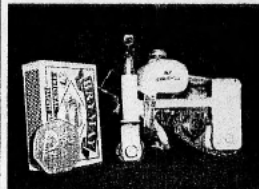
Final date for entries in Next Newsletter – May 18th.

Cliff it's a blank space – is anyone out there, we've had no response

Obviously not.
Right Kitty's getting tough now –
Loose an article if it's the same next time.
Think it's a threat, it's a promise – until it's all blank. I'll teach you.

YOU LAZY LOT.

Latest News



What is it? It's the baby model of the loonycycle, enough said. But how is he going to ride it?

Kitty has no idea and is getting fed up with Loonycycles. She's heard of grass widows but a loonycycle widow – that's taking the P!

The Annual General Meeting

The 52nd AGM was held on 9th February, when Eddie Dell was unanimously re-elected Chairman. To help Eddie we elected three Vice-Chairmen: Mr Peter Bradbury, Mr Ron Clarke and Mr Bob Davies. Mrs Kitty Lynn was elected Museum Curator with Dr. Louie Mangar Museum Secretary and Mrs Pat Skittrall Museum Treasurer. Ms Rose Prior was re-elected Society Secretary, Mrs Joan Cole Society Treasurer and Mrs Sheila Jones as our new Programme Secretary. Mr Tony Jones and Mrs Margaret Davies were elected as Committee Members. We wish them all a successful year.

Members listened to the Chairman's Report and the Museum Curator's Report detailing last year's activities. The two Treasurers presented their reports – Mrs Skittrall explaining our recent approach to Dereham Town Council for moral and financial support. No change would be made to current subscription rates. Mrs Jones explained she was trying a new venue for this year's October Dinner – the Café Verde at Mattishall. To try to reduce parking problems experienced last October in Dereham.

The meeting did not finish Any Other Business as it was abruptly terminated by Mr Davies to bring on Mr Norman Fahey, the evening's speaker. Later Mrs Lynn found a spot to continue and ask for volunteers for Museum Cleaning and Setting up Displays for 2005. MING courses available for 2005 were as under:

15th March – Inspiring Learning for All

20th April – Museums and the Law

September – Care and Conservation of Photographs. All courses at the Castle Museum, Norwich. (Date unknown)

The Society has been asked to assist the Dereham Society to run next year's Town Quiz. This will involve helping provide question masters and publicity. More details will be given later.

The Chairman and the Museum Curator emphasised the need for everyone to recruit more members and please support the Museum in 2005 in every way they can – volunteer, visit it when it is open, fundraising and publicity.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Archive Antics	4
Blast from the Past	8
Comedy Corner	9
Competition	21
Contact Details	24
Cottage Comments	4
Dereham Disasters	16
Food for thought	5
Hot Spot	6
Keeping up with the Jones	4
Last Comp. Answers	10
Letters Page	2
Memory Lane	24
Met Idiots ?	19
Muse News	18
Paston Family	11
Picture Parade	10
Planning Calendars	5
Society Snippets	4
The Vault	15
Under Dereham	20
W.W.I Unearthed	23
Well I Never	19



Cliff the Cycling King

*Senility clearly began early for Cliff –
taken ca. March, 1948*



This is an idea that I've had in mind for many years, and in fact I even suggested it to Terry when he was editor of the Newsletters. I make no apologies for the fact that I've filched it from the Fuchsia Society, who ran it in their newsletters while we were members, and the idea is that the first budding author writes a short story about some event in his/her life, albeit sad, funny, or downright stupid. At the end of his epistle he/she then nominates the next victim for the Hotspot. It needn't be very long, and can come from any era in your life, so why not give it some thought. To give you some idea as to what I have in mind, I'll start the ball rolling, and we'll see what happens. If nothing else, it would help members to get to know a bit more about each other, so here goes.

I was one of those bizarre people, a "Club Cyclist", and the war years, say from 1940 till 1953, were halcyon days for us. With petrol for private vehicles virtually non-existent, there were very few to bother us, and the cyclist was the king of the road.

I joined my first club in February 1940, on a chilly morning when the snow was still on the ground, and basically carried on till about 1956, apart from the time I was abroad in the army, from 1944-47. During that time my life virtually revolved around cycling – on a "push-bike" that is, not some noisy, stinking, oil-leaking chunk of ironwork. The "racing season" ran right through from February or March till October, starting with "rough-rider" events, and followed by time trials over ever-increasing distances, beginning with the odd 10-mile event, and succeeded by 25s, 30s, 50s, 100s, 12-hour, and even, for some misguided souls, the 24-hour masochisms. There was no massed-start racing allowed on the open road in those days – those came only some time after the war ended – I think in 1952.

I rode the first three distances regularly; the 100-mile a couple of times, and on one occasion I even started a 12-hour, though I gave that up with boredom after about 110 miles. Back at the "digs" I had some breakfast, changed my bike, and rode over to meet the Club for tea (there was no sticking your bike on the roof rack and driving straight home in those days). I covered about 185 miles that day.

My typical week would run something like this, and I'll start with Saturday. I had to work from 8 till 12.30, then, once I'd had lunch, it depended on whether or not I was racing the next morning. If not, as often as not a few of us would go for a short ride out – about 40-50 miles.

If I was racing the next morning I'd get my bike ready, and then if we were riding "away" we'd ride out to our "digs" for the night, get the bikes ready, and hike ourselves over to the nearest pub for the evening – just social affairs, often several different clubs getting together, and I don't remember anyone ever coming back even tipsy.

On Sunday, because the last man in any time trial had by law to start before 9.30 am, and as on some occasions there'd be as many as 150 riders starting at one minute intervals, we perforce needed to get up early for a light breakfast, and ride out to the start. Race over, we had breakfast proper, changed the bikes, and rode over to meet the rest of the Club, either for lunch or tea depending on the time we were ready and how far we needed to go.

On Monday a clique of us, usually about twenty, went ice-skating at Haringay (which is now for some reason spelt "Haringey") Arena, and made general nuisances of ourselves. In fact it was at one of those sessions that I met Pearl, who wasn't a cyclist but in some obscure way became absorbed into the group. It was a sight for sore eyes to see her at the end of the "whip", when the lot of us all held hands and sped round the pivot in the centre. There, at the end of the chain, she was travelling at an incredible speed, and when she let go she hurtled across the ice and (usually) stopped just before hitting the barrier. The times when she didn't manage to stop account in part for her somewhat unpredictable behaviour thereafter.

Tuesday was a training night. I didn't finish work till 6 o'clock, and occasionally till as late as 8p.m. if we had a rush on, so on the "early" nights I'd go home for tea, I was living in Haringay then, while on the "overtime" nights I'd simply go down to the works canteen for a quick snack and start my training run from there. Dependant on the time of year, and what distance we were racing at, I'd ride round either the "short" circuit round Hertford (about 25 miles), or the "long" circuit right up to just short of Hitchin, (about 50 miles). Whichever circuit we all chose, it was a point of honour to join the rest of the Club at one of three neighbouring teashops out near Hatfield, each of which catered almost exclusively to cyclists.

Around 10 o'clock, by some unknown alchemy, you found each of the three venues simultaneously disgorging their customers, and anything up to a hundred bikes would burst out onto the road for a gentle ride home. Then some feeble minded idiot would start a "burn-up", and it was every man for himself, spread all over the road, all the way home.

Wednesday was Club night, when we'd all get together to guzzle tea and attempt, usually in vain, to justify the diverse reasons why we didn't do a better ride on Sunday.

Thursday was another training night similar to Tuesday, with the same idiotic chase home, ever hoping that some bobby didn't notice that your battery was flat. It was fun though.

Friday was "massage night", and several of us would get together at the home of a fellow cyclist who was also a professional masseur, to be rubbed, scrubbed, pummelled, and drenched in White Horse Linament after which, fortified by our hostess' newly-baked rock cakes, we'd all huddle round their minute television screen, waiting for The News.

Not that we were particularly interested in that as such; no, what we all awaited with baited breath was the first appearance of the glorious Sylvia Peters, the first, and at the time only, lady newsreader, resplendent in her mandatory black evening dress – well, it appeared black, but it might have been any dark colour, because at that time there was only black-and-white television of course, and only one station – the BBC.

So now we're faced with the bizarre vision of half a dozen or so lecherous cyclists breathing heavily over that microscopic screen. Then someone suggests, "Why don't we drop in at the television studio on the way home and meet her as she comes out?"

Alexandra Palace, from where B.B.C. television was transmitted, was less than two miles away, and the idea was greeted with enthusiasm, and so it was that half a dozen scruffy individuals, myself not among them, went hurtling toward the Palace, and I watched them go, envisioning the surprise (?) that the dazzling Sylvia would receive, on leaving the studio, to discover a mob of lascivious, heavy-breathing ruffians, all reeking of ammonia, awaiting her.

Of course, it never happened – or did it ???

Cliff Allwright

In the forlorn hope that someone just might think it an acceptable idea, I tentatively nominate Kitty Lynn as "Hotspot" for the next issue.

Spong Hill by Kitty Lynn

So what is Spong Hill? - Spong Hill has been known as the site of an Early Anglo-Saxon cremation cemetery for many years although it was originally thought to be Roman. A misinterpretation in 1711 of the finds led to the Ordnance Survey marking it as the site of a 'Roman Station' (1906 2nd edition 25").

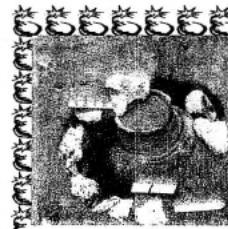
This site is often mixed up with the sites around Elmham Church and the Anglo-Saxon Cathedral but as you can see from the map it is reached a little before entering North Elmham when coming from Dereham.

The cemetery seems likely to have served a fairly large area, probably taking in small villages and isolated farmsteads. It has been calculated that the population using the cemetery is likely to have been in the region of 446 - 768 individuals at any one time in the 150 - 200 years the cemetery was in use. Individuals of all ages and both sexes qualified for the same rite of cremation. It should be realised that this burial site was not only for the poor, for at that time cremations were common practice and not many inhumations (burials as we know them) took place. A total of 2284 individuals have been identified from the cremated remains on the site, but the actual number originally deposited within the cemetery is likely to have been nearer to, and possibly in excess of, 3000. This makes it if not the largest Anglo-Saxon burial site then certainly one of the biggest. Evidence so far shows the size of the site to be 1.4 hectares, but this is all that has been excavated so far. There is no indication of the size of the cemetery at the onset of its use, or when it was at the height of its use, or what size the population was at that time. It is not known whether it was just slowly phased out or abruptly went out of use as did many Anglo-Saxon cemeteries at a similar time and in a similar fashion.

Cremation of the deceased seems to have taken place not at the cemetery but nearer to the home, where it was likely to have been conducted by the family. There are indications that the same pyre sites were sometimes used more than once; however they were usually well cleared of previous pyre debris beforehand. Evidence suggests that the deceased was placed supine and extended on top of a carefully constructed pyre of logs and brushwood infill. There appears to have been little, if any, tending of the pyre after lighting and it is probable that, apart from a vigil being kept, the pyre was not touched until it had burnt out or cooled down, possibly being left overnight. Variable quantities of the bone were collected, a sample from each skeletal area, but never all the human remains. This may have been dictated by the inclination of the collector, by the 'status' of the deceased, or by incomplete combustion of the organic tissues of the body. As well as the human remains, animal bones and other grave-goods were also collected, and occasionally



Map showing Spong Hill
N.B. The Spong Hill site is on private land



fragments of other pyre debris. Urns found at the site were more or less uniform in size except for those of infants and juveniles which are noticeably smaller than the rest. However more recent studies show a new theory on sizing of the urns. Briefly not only did it depend on your status in the community but also on your age and gender - infants have shorter vessels, old adults taller ones, females' pots had wider rims, but they weren't as tall as the males' urns. Not only was this a determining feature but there was also help from the contents of the vessel which told the archaeologists more than the body remains. Some evidence shows that people were dressed when they were cremated.

Unfortunately room allows no more information. If you wish to know more please either visit the museum or buy the new pamphlet on Spong Hill available there.

Comedy Corner

Ma At The Gate



When Ma got to Heaven and stood by St. Peter's side,
She said "Get on with it young man; do I get to go inside?"
St Peter typed her into the computer and said "Oh dear; Oh dear.

According to our records you are already here".

He waited for the details and then he read it out to Ma.

"You've been coming here, bit by bit, since just after the second war"

In 1946 we had your tonsils, and your adenoids:

In 53, your appendix, In 59, some haemorrhoids.

In 61, your wisdom teeth arrived with bits of jaw;

Varicose veins in 62, and again in 64.

In 69, all your teeth booked in followed in 70 by your hair;

Then in 73 your hysterectomy left not a lot to spare.

In 84 your gall bladder came to join all the rest.

In 86, some lumps and bumps, followed quickly by a breast.

In 90 the other breast arrived, as well as the mole off your nose.

In 92 we got half a lung, a kidney, and three toes.

In 95, your right leg came, with a hip joint, and a knee.

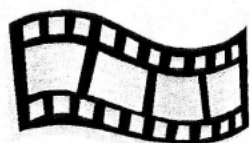
96 was a quiet year, only a boil as far as I can see".

"Young man, get on with it" said Ma, Let me in, just stand aside.

You can't keep me here all day chatting, there's a queue building up outside".

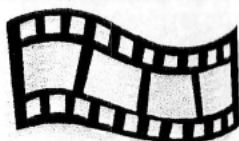
St Peter looked up from the screen, "Yes come on in" he said with a grin.

"You've had more than one foot in the grave for years, so percentage wise - you're in".



Picture Parade

TENANTS OUTSIDE
BISHOP BONNER'S COTTAGE



An old photograph taken outside the door toward the southern end of Bishop Bonner's Cottage, date unknown, but the old shutters, which were later removed, were still on the windows at that time. Those that are there now were put on in 1999. These were obviously the tenants – does anyone know who they are?

Winner and Answers to last issues Competition



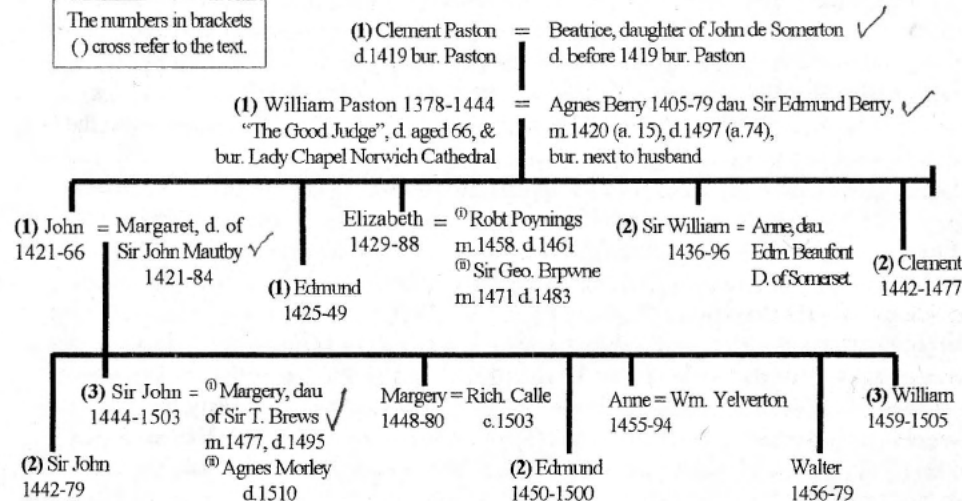
Answers: - Winner: - Mrs Pat Skittrall

- 1) Henry VIII. 2) Bosworth Field. 3) Colonel Blood tried to steal Charles II's Crown Jewels. 4) Charles I & Oliver Cromwell. 5) George V. 6) Prince Albert. 7) William IV. 8) Eleanor. 9) Hastings. 10) 1st of England, 6th of Scotland. 11) When William III (of Orange) reigned. 12) Victoria's, on the first stamp. 13) 3 x 2 = 6 Lions (or leopards as they were called until the middle of the 19th century), are on the Royal Coat of Arms. 14) Westminster. 15) Alfred the Great. 16) Westminster Palace. 17) William and Mary. 18) William Rufus. 19) 8. 20) Field of the Cloth of Gold.

I had to be crafty here, Pat would not have accepted winning if she had seen her name when proof reading this newsletter. Nice to see some replies could do with more though – try and get into double figures please, i.e. more than ten replies. Correct entries are drawn from a hat at random. Kitty

The Paston Family by Peter Bradbury

The numbers in brackets
() cross refer to the text.



Part 1 – The Letters Period (1422 – 1509)

The village of Paston on the north east coast of Norfolk is three miles south of Cromer and stands a mile or so inland on the old coast road between Mundesley and Bacton. It has hardly changed from medieval times when the Paston family were farmers there. The church containing several Paston memorials is 13th century with a thatched nave roof and stands near to the Paston Great Barn, and a large house, built on the site of the original Paston manor house, stands behind it. From this small village originated one of the most illustrious of Norfolk families. They started out as farmers in the 14th century and finished as Earls of Yarmouth in the 18th century. The line died out with the death of William Paston, 2nd Earl of Yarmouth on Christmas Day 1732, he had outlived all his sons.

After residing in Norfolk for around 500 years the last of the family had to flee to France to escape the bankruptcy court. How this ignominious event came about I will reveal in the subsequent articles in this series.

Public attention was first drawn to the Pastons in the year 1787, when two volumes of original letters, written to and from members of the family between 1422 and 1509, were published by John Fenn Esq. of Hill House in East Dereham (the house is still there in the Market Place). The work was presented to King George III, who was an ardent antiquary and collector, for which Fenn received a knighthood. The Paston Letters give an incredible insight into medieval life and are mandatory reading for students of late medieval history.

In 1378 there was born to Clement (1) and Beatrice Paston, a son named William (1). Clement Paston was determined to establish his family seat at Paston village, and raise his status in the county. He realised that the safest way to protect his son's inheritance was to see he had a good

education. In the early days it is probable young William was taught by the monks of Bromholm Priory at nearby Bacton and later, with help from his uncle, he went to London to study law. On graduating as a lawyer he returned to Norfolk to commence his career, and soon began to rise in his profession. At the age of 34, the City Authorities of Norwich employed as their Counsellor, and there is a 1412 document showing a payment of 13 shillings 4 pence for his "services recently rendered."

In the county William became trustee for the properties of some of the largest landowners, and executor to Sir William Calthorp. This display of confidence was a remarkable testimony to the esteem in which he was held.

Williams's promotions continued with his appointment as Steward of the Bishop's Court in Norwich, and due to Bishop Courtenay's influence at the court of Henry V, he was later made a JP. All this legal work increased his wealth and enabled him in 1419 to buy the manor of Oxnead near Alysham. Situated on the banks of the River Bure this manor much later, in the 17th century, was to become the seat of the Pastons.

The year 1419 was also a sad one for William due to the death of his father Clement (1). He was buried next to his wife Beatrice in Paston Church. But the next year 1420 proved to be a happy one because William, who was now 42 yrs old, married a young lady named Agnes Berry. She was 15 years old and the heiress of Sir Edmund Berry of Harlingbury Hall in Hertfordshire. They made their home at Paston, where 12 months later their first child John (1) was born. This eventful year 1421 also brought more joy because William became Serjeant at Law. This was in recognition of his professional experience, and was the grade from where Judges were selected.

With the marriage of William and Agnes the Paston Letters were about to commence!

The first of the existing letters is from Agnes to William written about 1440 informing him of the visit of a young lady named Margaret Mauteby to meet their son and how well they behaved to each other. This was a girl from an old and wealthy family of Mauteby near Caister on Sea. She had been selected to become John's wife. This kind of prearranged marriage became known as a "marriage of convenience" and was the rule amongst the nobility and the landed classes in 15th century England. The marriage agreement was drawn up between both families involving transfers of land and monies; these were usually long drawn out affairs until both parties were satisfied. The matrimonial couple were not consulted in any way!

William and Agnes had three more sons and one daughter, namely Edmund (1), William (2), Clement (2), and Elizabeth (see Chart). In 1427 William bought the manor of Gresham near Felbrigg Hall from Thomas Chaucer the son of the poet, and two years later in 1429 at the age of 51, became a Justice of the Common Bench on an annual salary of 110 marks (£73.33p). By this time the terms of the arranged marriage of his eldest son John (1) to Margaret Mauteby were agreed, and after John's 21st birthday in 1440 they were married. John was still an undergraduate at Peterhouse in Cambridge and after graduating he and Margaret went to live in Gresham Castle, his father's property near Felbrigg.

William Paston (1) became known as the "Good Judge!" and after a long and distinguished career, died in 1444 at the age of 66, and was buried with great ceremony in the Lady Chapel of Norwich Cathedral.

John Paston (1) at 23 became head of the family and found himself in control of his father's large properties and having to uphold the Paston position in the county. He soon found he would need all his skill as a lawyer to preserve both the properties and the integrity of the family. The "Good Judge" had made enemies by his judicial decisions and now they had their chance for revenge, also many

envious eyes were looking at the wealth and properties in the hands of an inexperienced young man. Within a year of John (1) inheriting they made their move. The Vicar of Paston removed the stakes marking out a new road denying any agreement made with "The Judge" and the right of his widow Agnes to the manor of Oxnead was challenged. Not long after John (1) had become a JP, one of the most outrageous events occurred in January 1450, when Lord Moleyns sent 1000 armed retainers from his seat in Wiltshire, and attacked and occupied Gresham Castle. At the time John (1) was away on business in London and only his wife and children together with twelve servants were living there. A forced entry was made and the family were forced to flee to the Paston townhouse in Norwich. John (1) immediately petitioned Parliament and the Lord Chancellor for redress against Lord Moleyns, but due to the troubled times (Jack Cade's Rebellion), it took a year before Gresham was recovered. Some writers consider 1450 as the beginning of the period of lawlessness which led to the First English War (The War of the Roses 1455-1485); certainly most of the troubles endured by the Pastons were caused by the breakdown of the Feudal System of law due to the weakness of Henry VI. In fact lawlessness in Norfolk had reached such a level that Henry VI commissioned the Duke of Norfolk to visit Norfolk to inquire into the causes. John Paston along with several other leading figures of the county drew up a list of grievances to present to the Duke. This led to an assault on John (1) outside the door of Norwich Cathedral by a notorious gang leader named Charles Nowell and five of his men. John's life was saved by the timely intervention of some of the Sheriff's men!

On the death of his father William, John had become legal adviser to Sir John Fastolf of Caister Castle, indeed had become a trusted friend of the old knight, and when Fastolf died in 1459 was named as the heir to all his properties. Fastolf was one of the richest men in England and this great fortune now belonged to the Pastons, but for how long? Magnates like the Dukes of Suffolk and Norfolk were not about to be challenged by the likes of the Pastons, and for the next twenty years 'The Family' were to be constantly fighting to protect the Fastolf inheritance. The first attack came in 1461, the Coronation Year of Edward IV, from John Mowbray the 3rd Duke of Norfolk who seized Caister Castle claiming John was not the rightful owner. John (1) successfully petitioned Edward IV and regained Caister pending the result of the "inquisition post mortem" to ascertain his rights, the 3rd Duke died three months later and was succeeded by his teenage son, another John Mowbray. John (1) in an attempt to forestall future attacks on property, and to gain the support of a powerful pardon, boarded out his teenage second son John (3) into the household of the new 4th Duke of Norfolk who lived at Framlingham Castle in Suffolk, and installed his 19 year old son John (2) in the court of Edward IV, hoping to gain influential friends, and the 'Ear of the King'.

There followed more troubles for John (1), now MP for Norfolk. He was attending a meeting in the Shirehall when he was attacked by one of the Sheriff of Norfolk's men and stabbed twice in the chest, only the thickness of his doublet saving his life! The Sheriff was Sir John Howard, a cousin of the Duke of Norfolk. The news of the incident reached the King who summoned them to appear before him but John (1) ignored the first two until finally a third summons arrived with the threat of execution for not attending. On arrival in London he was thrown into the Fleet prison, but two weeks later, after the cause of his disobedience had been heard, was pardoned and Howard was sent to prison in his place. Edward IV replaced the Sheriff and issued a proclamation to be read in the Shirehouse.

When he turned 21 years. John's eldest son John (2) received a Knighthood from Edward IV, but this seemed his only achievement during his two years as a courtier and his father ordered him home

to Caister Castle where he could help his father defend their properties. After the opulence of life at court he was not prepared to accept the change to his lifestyle, and secretly ran away from home, hoping to rejoin the Royal Court. His father disowned him, but, after several months of pleading by his mother, Margaret, and the increasing necessity of John's (1) presence in London he reluctantly allowed Sir John (2) to return.

JOHN DE LA POLE 2ND DUKE SUFFOLK
The problems continued in 1465. The Duke of Suffolk seized Drayton and Hellesdon, destroying the Manor House at Hellesdon, sacking the Church, and pillaging every house in the village. To add to John's (1) despair he was once again committed on trumped up charges to the Fleet prison. After seven months he was released in January 1466, but he was a sick man and worn out by continual pressure. On May 21st 1466 he died aged 45 while still in London. His body was transported by foot from London on a bier lead by a priest with six poor men walking on either side carrying burning torches back to Saint Peter's Hungate, the Paston parish church, in Princes Street, Norwich. The journey from London took six days. After lying overnight in Norwich the body was taken to Bromholm Priory for a very spectacular service.

Sir John (2) at the age of 24 became the head of the family and virtually became resident in London, leaving the running of his Norfolk and Suffolk properties to his mother Margaret and brother John (3) with lots of advice from his maternal grandmother Agnes (61) who lived in Norwich and sometimes with Sir John (2) in London. A most important employee was Richard Calle who was a loyal and long serving Chief Bailiff and General Manager, of whom we will hear more presently. In August of 1469 the King was captured by the Earl of Warwick and held prisoner till October of that year. The 4th Duke of Norfolk taking advantage of the situation, besieged Caister Castle using a force of 3000 men. To defend it was John (3) and a small garrison with enough supplies to last one month. Eventually they surrendered and were allowed to march out minus their weapons. This time Caister would be lost to the Pastons for five years.

As if the loss of the jewel of the Fastolf inheritance was not enough to bear, Sir John's (2) sister Margery, in the midst of all the troubles, announced she was betrothed to his employee Richard Calle and intended to marry him. Her mother Margaret could not believe her daughter could bring such disgrace on their family and proceeded to question her further. Margery explained how over a year ago she and Richard has secretly 'plighted their troth'. Today this would equate to becoming engaged, but in the 15th century this act of exchanging vows was considered the same as the marriage vows and recognised as no less binding by the Church. Once that was avowed, the question was at an end, and no human hands could untie the knot, to interfere with it was a deadly sin! Richard Calle appealed to the Bishop of Norwich to inquire into the matter, and free the point from any ambiguity. The Bishop could not refuse. He sent for Margery Paston and for Richard Calle, and examined them apart. He told Margery that he was informed she loved one of whom her friends did not approve, reminded her of the great disadvantage and shame she would incur if she was not guided by their advice, and said he must enquire into the words that had passed between her and her lover, whether they amounted to matrimony or not. After hearing the words she had used, the Bishop examined Richard Calle and his statement agreed with hers. When Margery returned after her examination her mother's door was shut against her, and the Bishop was forced to find her lodging in Norwich until he announced his verdict. The Bishop found in their favour and arranged for them to stay at Blackborough Nunnery near Kings Lynn until their marriage at Christmas. From this time on Margery is never again mentioned in the Letters.

To be continued.

The Vault

By Cliff Allwright

Early Archaeological Matters



This is a bit of a mystery. I've copied it from a faded and badly tattered letter dating from the first of February 1955, addressed to "The Secretary, The Dereham & District Archaeological Society", which was the name by which the Society was founded, written the year after its inauguration, and before changing to Dereham & District Archaeological & Antiquarian Society and finally to its present name, and beginning "Dear Mr. Lake".

The question was: who wrote the letter – his address was in Elmham – and who was Mr. Lake? Might he have been the Secretary of the Society at the time? And were the "fragments" he refers to part of the our Spong Hill material? And did the writer turn up on the 9th with his 10/-?

Whether or not we can solve those questions, I feel that the letter may be of interest as a glimpse into the Society's early activities, so for what it's worth, here's what it says:

Dear Mr. Luke,

I much appreciate the Societies (his spelling) kind recognition of my very insignificant part in the work on the Elmham Urn-field. I'm afraid I have contributed little or nothing to the question, and I am afraid that I have not yet managed to see Dr. Puddy's final drawings of the plotted sites. My own feeling is that from a wider point of view the fragments found are entirely duplications of the patterns from Shudy, Lincolnshire etc., (*I'd never heard of anywhere with that name, so I checked with my Mapfinder and discovered that there is a 'Study Camp' in Cambridgeshire, and also that there are 'tumuli' shown a little to the west of the camp. Is that the place he means, I wonder – Cliff*) and as the Urn material in the Castle will not be published for at least ten years nothing can be contributed from the actual fragments. What seems to be of more interest is the implications, in that these cemeteries were often on the outskirts of a settlement, and would have worked outward in order of age. On this assumption there could have been some settlement to the northward. I think that the irregular layout and grouping is probably explained by the presence of forest, and there appeared to be a possible line N. E., which could have been following a trackway from the Blackwater to the settlement.

Mr. Boston did tell me that he found a moat, and it is very interesting to hear that you are going to work on it, as I have put in quite a lot of time on these East Anglian moats, and did some digging in the one at Bittering, so will gladly pass on the various ideas I have formed.

I will make every effort to come to the meeting on the 9th, and bring 10/- with me.

Yours sincerely,

Signature illegible.

Since writing this article, one question at least has been answered. Rose kindly checked back in the old Minute Book to the very early days of the Society, and found that Mr. J. Luke was Secretary in 1955 and 1956, after which he resigned and apparently joined another group. Thanks, Rose.

Floods of Dereham



August 1912 was a particularly wet month in Norfolk. Several days of continual rain culminated on Monday 26th August, when torrents fell for over twelve hours. The Dereham to Wymondham railway line and most roads became impassable. Dereham suffered less than other areas. Bath Avenue was flooded, gardens were covered with water and basements flooded to a depth of four feet. Enormous accumulations of water on the Neatherd ran like a river through Mr Gray's stackyard to Norwich Road. The drains there were hopelessly inadequate to cope and the road became flooded for a distance of 150 yards and two feet deep. Although Council workmen were quickly put to work, throughout Tuesday it was necessary to ferry people across the flood in one of the Council's carts. At Washbridge a large area was submerged and men were busy until early Tuesday morning removing pigs and livestock to safe quarters. Many roads in the town were flooded and those at South Green and Toftwood were under water to a depth of several feet and a Council cart was provided to carry pedestrians through. Scarning Fen and Rushmeadow were submerged. Near the bridge in Rushmeadow Road the river, swollen into a torrent, washed away a large part of the bank and left a huge hole in the dirt road.

Excerpts Taken from More Memories of Dereham by Terry Davy.



Washbridge 1912

All day Storm in the County Torrential Deluge

At Washbridge a very large area was completely submerged, several houses narrowly escaped being flooded, and access was only possible at the back. Some of the people experienced much anxiety for their livestock, and in one case men were busy until the early hours of Tuesday morning moving pigs etc to safe quarters.

Large portions of the roads as well as gardens at South Green and Toftwood were

under water to the depth of some feet, and there again the Council provided a horse and cart to convey foot passengers through the flood.

For a time vehicular traffic could only get along with great difficulty. A motor car and coal wagon were among the vehicles temporarily stranded at Scarning railway, and motor cars had to be drawn through the water by horses. Scarning Fen and Rushmeadow were submerged and there was a lot of water on Rushmeadow Road. Further along at the bridge the stream and furious river had struck a weak spot in the road and washed away a quantity of earth leaving quite a large hole. Some of the Gressenhall roads were deeply flooded and rendered almost impassable near the river.

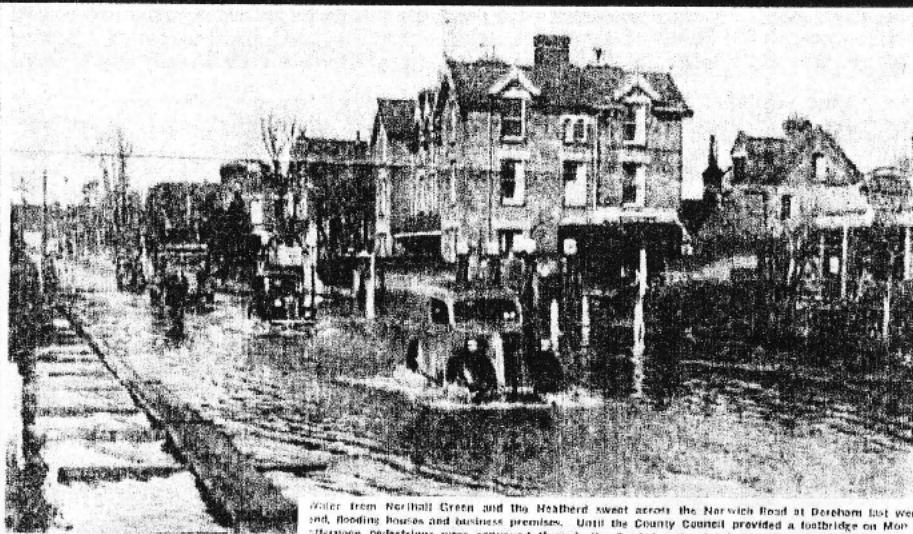
Except taken by Joya Gilbert from The Journal 31/8/1914



Here is a photo from the archives showing the flooding that occurred at the junction of Shipdham Road and Westfield Road in Toftwood. Unfortunately there is no date, but I would guess, from the horse and cart, the lack of today's buildings, and the state of the road that it would be around 1935.

The shop on the corner has until recently been owned by a real workaholic who opened from 6 a.m. till 10 p.m., and his shop was affectionately known as "Open All Hours", named after Ronnie Barker's long-running television series of that name, or "Arkwright's" after the character he plays.

(Continued on page 18)



Water from North Hall Green and the Neatherd swept across the Norwich Road at Dereham last week and, flooding houses and business premises. Until the County Council provided a footbridge on Monday afternoon pedestrians were conveyed through the flooded water by lorry. Our photograph, taken Tuesday, shows the footbridge on the left, with cars ploughing their way through the flooded road.

Flooding in 1947

I apologise for the rotten quality of this photo, and its text, but as you can imagine, considering that it was copied from the "Dereham & Fakenham Times" dated 22nd March 1947, it was pretty far gone, but at least it gives some idea of the extent of the flooding.

The text, as reproduced here, is illegible, but it says "Water from North Hall Green and the Neatherd swept across the Norwich Road at Dereham last weekend, flooding houses and business premises. Until the County Council provided a footbridge on Monday afternoon pedestrians were conveyed through the flooded water by lorry. Our photograph, taken on Tuesday, shows the footbridge on the left, with cars ploughing their way through the flooded road".

As a point of interest, a small headline under the photo reads "Dereham's Town Crier Dead". Unfortunately the paper had been torn off there, so there was no further information.

Muse News By Kitty Lynn



Cliff Allwright Oct 2004

Displays are now well on the way to being finished ready for the opening of the Museum at the beginning of May. I've been hard at work on my new display featuring the Public Houses that have been in Dereham since 1750. I'm still working on Inebriates' Heaven but have not completed work before the 1750's as this includes a lot of detective work piecing little items together from the County Petty Sessions. The reason it is taking so long is the fact that in the Dereham area of Norfolk the Petty Sessions didn't include Brewster Sessions (listings of licences for Taverns etc) and thus I have at least ten times as many to trawl through.

Other people have begun with the preparation work for 2006 – Barbara Mathias on Law and Order in Dereham, Joya Gilbert on A Typical Kitchen Scene and its history, including such things as laundries and domestic servant agencies in Dereham, Ron Clark on Basket Making for the Shop Scene and Basket Makers in Dereham.

Well I Never

by Cliff Allwright.



Dereham's town sign depicts St. Withburga standing by the two deer, which were giving milk for Withburga's nuns, and the Steward, who was aiming to kill the deer. He thought that if he succeeded in this, the nuns would starve, and they would be forced to leave the area, but as he rode toward the deer, with his hound in the lead, his horse tripped, and the Steward's neck was broken as he fell.

The sign was erected in 1954, and by 2004 the wooden figures were showing distinct signs of deterioration, so the Council decided to replace it with a new set of figures made in a poly resin. The figures were taken down one by one and taken away to be copied.

Both the old and the new sets were brought back to Dereham early in January 2005, but when they tested the weight of the new figures it was apparent that the present beam

across the road couldn't take the weight so both sets are at present stored in the Committee Rooms at the Assembly Rooms, and are on show to the public.

Pearl and I went to see them, and were given permission to take some photos. While we were there one of the workmen engaged in the work explained that the possibly of the new figures being so much heavier than the originals had never been considered, and he told Pearl that he could barely manage to carry the original hound, and couldn't even budge the new one, which had required two men to carry it to the table where it was at present. As for the figures of the Steward on his horse, two men were able to carry the original model, but it took eight men to move the new one, while the new deer figures were equally difficult to move. So, at present, everything is at a standstill while they decide what to do about the beam.

If you haven't been to see them yet – do it soon – the opportunity will never present itself again.



St Withburga old and new
21st January 2005

So you think you've met idiots ?

All articles featured here are true.



Idiot #1

I am a medical student currently doing a rotation in toxicology at the prison control centre. Today, this woman called in very upset because she caught her daughter eating ants. I quickly reassured her that the ants are not harmful and there would be no need to bring her daughter into the hospital. She calmed down, and at the end of the conversation happened to mention that she gave her daughter some ant poison to eat in order to kill the ants. I told her that she better bring her daughter into the Emergency Room right away.

Idiot #2

Seems that a year ago some Boeing employees on the airfield decided to steal a life raft from one of the 747s. They were successful in getting it out of the plane and home. When they took it for a float on the river, a Coast Guard helicopter coming towards them surprised them; it turned out that the chopper was homing in on the emergency locator beacon that activated when the raft was inflated. They are no longer employed at Boeing.

Is that Kitty with sunglasses on after a bad night out? Up there. ↑
You'll see why we ask in the next newsletter in her hot spot.

Under Ancient Dereham

By Mervyn Payne

(from information found in our archives)



Subterranean tunnels have a peculiar fascination. They give rein to fantasy and mystery, rein to the wildest imaginings.

Norfolk folk love the romance of a tunnel, even if there is no more convincing proof of its existence than the testament of the oldest inhabitant, whose grandfather ever affirmed that his grandfather once broke into it.

Almost every Norfolk town and village treasures a legendary tunnel around which has multiplied a motley array of traditions of fugitive priests and monks, of smugglers, of lovers, of good men and bad who, according to the report, found refuge in it in the wild and warlike days of long ago. Moreover, whispers of haunted tunnels are by no means uncommon.

Often such subterranean ways are said to run from some church to the site of a Norman castle that has long since crumbled into ruins, or they are alleged to link church to rectory, or else a lone monastic sanctuary. It is occasionally believed that they can be traced from church to church, often at a distance of two miles and beyond.

An Engineering Problem

It goes without saying that the boring of a subterranean tunnel is no mean undertaking, and some degree of engineering ingenuity is required. This fact is seldom taken into account by those who imagine that our ancestors of five or six centuries ago catacombed the Norfolk countryside with underground ways. These ancients in truth did excavate secret tunnels and cellars so far as the means at their disposal allowed, for a bitter scourge of tyranny made this necessary for personal safety and freedom, but tunnels of length were rare exceptions.

To delve to the bottom of any tunnel legend is a tantalising business, and as often as not one's quests are in vain. To obtain definite proof excavation is almost always necessary, and for this the average investigator has neither the time nor the means. And so these traditions of underground ways flourish and become more fanciful with the passing of the years.

It has been my lot now and again to track down once and for all some mysterious tunnel legend. For the most part it has been my misfortune to fail, to find nothing more substantial than a mass of eerie traditions, some of which had their birth in primitive folklore. And yet the slightest whisper of subterranean ways still makes my blood tingle, and I get no rest until I am away on the elusive quest.

In a Historic Corner

It was even so recently, when an exiting rumour of underground ways in East Dereham's most historic corner sent me hurrying there. The most romantic corner of this ancient township is bordered on one side by Little Becclesgate, on another by Little Fields, and it twists and turns along St. Withburga's Lane, hugging the Guildhall, which retains fragmentary evidence of its medieval associations, past Bishop Bonner's Cottages and the grey weather-beaten stone of the Parish Church of St. Nicholas.

My first discovery was in an old-world garden in Little Fields. Here I was shown the brick-built entrance to one of Dereham's reputed tunnels. "It is our air raid shelter now", the housewife told me.

to be continued



Competition

These are all places that you can or could have visited in Norfolk over the last 30 years – some may be shut now.

I'm kicking off with perhaps the easiest – Ancient Monuments. Write the name of it by the number on the form and send it back to me. Finally answer which is the odd one out and why it is? The prize is a voucher for £5.00 which can be used either as money off the 2005 outings or a year's subscription for the Dereham Antiquarian Society. All correct entries will be put into a draw and the winner notified and given their voucher in the next newsletter. Correct answers will be in the next newsletter along with the winner's name.

1) The remains of a 15thC castle, built by Sir John Heydon during the War of the Roses. In 1560 his grandson added the outer gatehouse, which was inhabited until 1920s when one of the turrets fell down.

2) Walls of a Roman 'Saxon Shore' fort, built in the late 3rdC, overlooking the River Waveney. The monument can only be approached on foot.

3) Remains of an abbey church dating from 13thC including presbytery and north transept with chapels.

4) A fine example of a Norman castle. The rectangular keep, one of the largest was built around 1140 by William D'Albini.

5) The Priory of Our Lady was founded in 1103 by Roger Bigod. Little of the original remains but others have added to it. Legend says the Virgin Mary appeared in a vision to locals requesting the chapel. Henry Fitzroy, Henry VIII's son is buried here.

6) The ruins of a substantial early medieval manor house surrounded by a shallow rectangular moat.

7) A Norman Motte and Bailey castle and chapel keep, said to be the largest in diameter in England.

8) This ruin of an 11thC chapel, possibly built on the site of the cathedral for the Anglo-Saxon bishops of East Anglia, was converted into a fortified house and enclosed by earthworks in the

late 14thC by Hugh le Despencer, Bishop of Norwich.

9) A pit stop for pilgrims over the centuries, with a recreated herb garden. The priory was inspired by the Monastery at Cluny in France and was home to a community of monks until 1537.

10) The extensive remains of a Benedictine priory. The original nave of the priory is still in use as the parish church.

11) This unique polygonal keep survives almost intact and was built between 1165 – 1173 by Henry II to control barons.

12) The remains of a monastery founded in AD1020 by King Canute. A gatehouse with interesting carvings, 18thC windmill tower and a perimeter wall around the 34 acres with fishponds.

13) The remains of a Roman fort, including part of a defensive wall, a gateway and buildings along a main street.

14) The only Neolithic flint mine open to visitors in Britain, excavated in 1870.

15) The Roman Catholic national shrine to Our Lady. A small 14thC chapel connected with the ancient shrine which has now been destroyed.

16) One of the finest complete Romanesque buildings in Europe, building beginning in 1096. The second highest spire and largest monastic cloisters in England. The nave bosses are unique as is the world renowned collection of medieval carvings.

17) A pilgrimage church containing the Holy House to our Lady, standing in extensive grounds.

18) The remains of a Norman manor-house which became a castle with earthworks, set by the side of a village. The castle formed part of William de Warenne's Norfolk Estates.

19) Remains of an Augustinian priory founded nearly 200 years after the death, in 1030, of the Saint it's named after, the patron saint of a Scandinavian country.

20) The vaulted basement of a 14th century merchant's house.

Unearthed W.W.I. Notes



This document was one of many we received in a mixed bundle of photographs and papers, which were donated to the Archive in August 2004, by Mrs Shirley Davy, of 7 Elm Park, Toftwood, and was part of the collection of her husband the late Terry Davy. Many of its contents were shown as having been copies of the Dereham and Fakenham Times, but many also were unidentified.

1. **8/8/14** Territorial force embodies, leaving the town with only five firemen.
2. **15/8/14** Sixteen members of the National Reserve were called up. All were old soldiers, and some had been taken from the harvest fields.
3. **5/9/14** Reserve battalion of the Territorial formed, known as the Reserve 5th Battalion Norfolk Regiment.
4. **3/10/14** Stories of woundings and exploits begin to arrive, stories of conditions in the trenches in France. Story of forty Germans surrendering to a Dereham motor mechanic, Pte. John Mitchell.
5. **10/10/14** Story of a court case re: Harry and Charles Ketteringham and Hugh Fanthorpe obtaining horses under false pretences.
6. **24/10/14** Meeting to consider the establishment of a small hospital in Dereham for wounded soldiers from Military Clearing Hospitals. To comply with War Office Regulations the soldiers must be under the care of a member of the Royal College of Surgeons, and fully trained nurses to deal with the surgical cases.
7. **24/10/14** Story of Gressenhall Mill Fire. The fire alarm was mistaken for Zeppelin bombs
8. NOTE: Tommy Atkins was the name given to British Soldiers. In all the old War Office forms of soldiers' accounts, the method Company Officers were to pursue in keeping them was illustrated by a finished example. The name was "Thomas Atkins".
9. **31/10/14** Captain Woodward, who took over command of the Depot on Monday, said 3,000 soldiers would be quartered in the town over the winter months. Police made house-to-house visits to ascertain the extent of available accommodation. Many women were disturbed by rumours that they would have to transform their 'front rooms' into bedrooms. There were now 600 Territorials in the town – 100 having joined the Home Service Battalion from Colchester on Monday, and there are another 150 of the 5th Norfolk's at Colchester who have not registered for foreign service, to come.
10. **31/10/14** The manager of the U.D.C. Gasworks was instructed to put out all street lights at 11 o'clock. Whilst this precaution has been taken at Dereham the glare in the sky caused by the lights of Norwich may be seen each evening. The Waterworks are under guard night and day, and barbed wire has been fixed on the perimeter walls under instruction of the military authority.

*To be continued
in the next
newsletter*

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Oldfield & Sons, ironmonger's and hardware stores,
13 Market Avenue, c.1929



Memories of by Kitty Lynn



OLDFIELD'S - 1969

A tinkling and a clattering, old men, shaved wood, shiny metal, sparkling glass, iron filings, blow torches, many little boxes and drawers, and a few coarse jokes, until they remembered me. And in one of those drawers were the 2" nails I'd been sent to get. Of course being a youngster I had to wait, perched high upon a tall dusty wooden stool, until the men had finished their business. I handed over the half crown, got the change and a pound of nails in a brown paper bag. It promptly split in my bike basket going down Stone Road on the way home. My bike got a puncture and Dad never did get those nails.

Your turn now !

*The question is who will Kitty
nominate for the Hot Spot ?*



**Next Issue
8th June
2005**