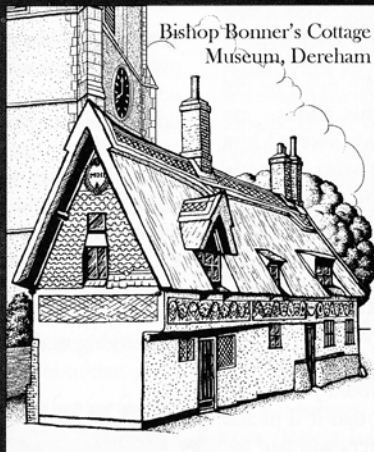


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# Dereham Antiquarian

Newsletter Editors—

Kitty Lynn ~~01362 269539x~~

~~back to the future~~

Cliff Allwright ~~01362 269537~~

# Society

Helping Local History  
To  
Thrive & Survive.



# LAW & ORDER SPECIAL

The former Courtroom in the Assembly Rooms which closed in 1980

**Stop Press**—Our museum has just gained full accreditation—more details in June's issue

Welcome to another newsletter, Unfortunately Cliff retired as an editor over the Xmas period due to ill health or as he put it hugging his head between his hands, 'my brain's not working, Kitty'. I've assured him by saying, when did mine ever work properly anyway. So until he thinks he's better I'm carrying on alone, however I've left him on the front of this newsletter forever hopeful for my mate.

To those of you who don't like local history I'm sorry about the content but whilst I'm doing it alone that will be the main theme of the historical research—What else would you expect from a local historian.? I know that it'll please some of you as I've got the letters and had the phone calls to prove it. Still if anyone feels strongly about it they can always do it themselves! Which brings me to — how disappointed and let down I feel by you the members of this society at your lack of interest in our local history—surely someone somewhere has done or seen something relevant to be recorded in this newsletter. In 20 years' time are people going to say were there only two or three people who were interested and could be bothered to record our history when there were over eighty members. Were they so careless?—Personally you see I don't have to worry as I'm often recorded in one way or another. Not that I particularly want to be but I feel it's my duty as an antiquarian—for that is what we are supposed to do besides of course collect antiquities. Perhaps you can spot my desperation with the one memory in this newsletter—O. Blake is Kenny's (my hubby) aunt who although no longer living in our area can recall shopping and going to school in Dereham as she grew up in North Tuddenham.

A lot of the information contained in these pages (local history) is my own research so if anyone wishes to use it please ask first as hopefully in a couple of years it will be part of a larger booklet on the Law & Order of Dereham. (Don't forget it's copyrighted to me not the society).

On the off chance that somebody has sent in an article and it's not featured here, that will be because I tend to work six months ahead of when these newsletters are given to you. I have to start then to be able to fit it into my

spare time and sometimes there can be a small piece of research that eludes me for quite a while (However, I normally manage to track it down). Writing of which, does anybody know anything of the history of the Guildhall?—We've pictures in the archive of when it was renovated for the council—masses of them—but precious little else apart from the listings that I've been researching as to who owned them and when.

At which having had my moan I will leave you saying make a cuppa, sit down and enjoy.

*Kitty*



## Chairman's Corner

by Tony Jones

At the time of writing we have just held our Annual General Meeting for this year, so I thought it would be helpful for members who did not attend to have a summary of the main topics discussed.

There were 39 of us attending the meeting which was conducted in an atmosphere both friendly and constructive.

Before opening the A.G.M. I paid tribute to Len Smith who, sadly, passed away recently.

In his museum report, Bob Davies explained that the Town Council intend to carry out some remedial work on the museum shortly with hopefully, more to follow next winter.

At the archive we now have the reference copies of the Dereham & Fakenham Times 1880—1980 loaned to us by the E.D.P. Dereham Office. Both the Society and Museum accounts are in a fairly stable state and some funding has been secured to help the latter.

It was decided to raise subscription levels to £10 for an individual, with proportional increases for a couple and for a family. Admission charges for our talks would be £1 for members, £2 for non-members—both to include coffee.

There was general support for Sheila to book the King's Head, North Elmham, for this year's annual dinner in October.

All those serving on committees and others already elected, were re-elected. Rosemary and Ray Fraser were elected on to the museum committee—Rosemary being the new Museum

Secretary.

In my annual report I informed the meeting that a new 35 year lease for the museum had now been signed.

The archive situation remains a cause for concern in as far as we do not have any security of tenure. However, enquiries are ongoing in an effort to solve this problem. Also, we are trying to arrange for temporary premises should we be faced with an emergency.

Following last year's invitation from the Museums, Libraries and Archives body to apply for museum accreditation, after a great deal of hard work the necessary papers were submitted and we are now awaiting an answer.

For some time the Dereham Area Partnership have been striving on our behalf to get better signposting for the museum and have now been

## Programme Guide



### Wednesday—April 9<sup>th</sup>

Event— DAS Meeting  
Place— Trinity Church Rooms, Dereham  
Time— 7.30pm  
Speaker— Peter Bradbury  
Talk— Lincoln Cathedral

### Saturday—April 26<sup>th</sup>

Event— Arcadian Club Meeting  
Place— Scarning Village Hall, Scarning.  
Time— 2.30pm  
Speaker— Jean Smith  
Talk— The Clothes Dr Jessop's parishioners wore—from the rich to the poor.

### Wednesday—April 30<sup>th</sup>

Event— DAS Meeting  
Place— Trinity Church Rooms, Dereham  
Time— 7.30pm  
Speaker— Rev. Jonathan Boston  
Talk— Cowper Evening

told a new sign should be in place soon, possibly located somewhere at the top of Church Street. Again, I ask for more assistance at the museum and archives from members. Finally, if you wish to contact me, don't hesitate to phone on (01363) 820580 Best wishes to you all.

## Society Snippets



I would like to give a reminder about your subscriptions. Unfortunately if they are not paid before May then this could endanger your ability to book on the yearly outings and/or gain admission to our meetings. It also means that the next newsletter (June's issue) will not be sent to you as you will have been taken off our Society's mailing list. Renewal of membership is always available but the same membership number on your card cannot be guaranteed. If you should need any assistance please don't hesitate to contact me. Finally I would like to thank all those who have already paid. New subscription fees are £10—single & £17—couple

If you wish to check to see if I have received your fees please contact me on 01362 693688.

Thanks. Joan Cole (Membership Secretary)

### Wednesday—May 14<sup>th</sup>

Event— DAS Outing  
Place— Coach trip to Ipswich—where there is a Victorian Museum covering Natural & Local History. There is also Christchurch Mansion which displays rooms from the C16<sup>th</sup> to a Victorian Kitchen  
Time— 9am—Cherry Tree Car Park— hopefully back by 6.30pm  
Cost— TBA

### Wednesday—June 11<sup>th</sup>

Event— DAS Outing  
Place— Visit to Lincoln. We are welcome to visit the Cathedral in the afternoon although a guided tour cannot be guaranteed. There is also the Medieval Bishops' Palace (English Heritage)  
Time— 8am—Cherry Tree Car Park— hopefully back by 6.30pm  
Cost— TBA

## DAS Activities by Peter Bradbury

### Wednesday Evening Lecture 9<sup>th</sup> January 2008

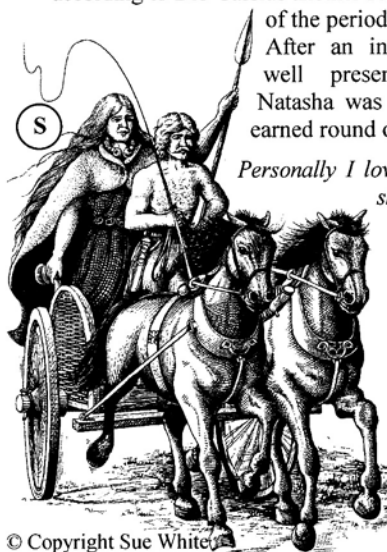
The January evening lecture was given by Dr Natasha Hutcheson, and her subject "Boudicca and the Iceni" attracted a full house of members and friends. To begin with Natasha spoke of the Iron Age period in East Anglia, giving a description of the environment and lifestyle of the people, whilst showing digital images portraying excavated sites and discovered artefacts.

After a break for refreshments, the lecture continued with the Roman Invasion of AD 43 and the events leading to the rebellion of the Iceni tribe. On the death of Boudicca's husband King Prasutagus in AD 60, seeing an opportunity to overcome the tribe, Roman forces moved into Icenian territory (Suffolk/Norfolk), plundered the royal palace, flogged Boudicca, and raped her daughters.

This provoked Boudicca to lead a revolt. With the support of the Trinovantes (Essex area) and other tribes, she destroyed the Roman colony of Colchester, sacked London and St Albans, and slaughtered the 9th Roman Legion. According to the Roman historian Tacitus, some 70,000 Romans were killed by the Celtic rebels. She was finally defeated in a battle near Towcester by the main Roman army; she escaped but died soon after either by poison according to Tacitus or illness according to Dio Cassius another Roman historian of the period.

After an interesting and well presented lecture, Natasha was given a well earned round of applause.

Personally I loved the goat - sheep (evidently it is very hard to tell one or other from the bones) and also, as Natasha called it her 'Google pig'. (One she found free of copyright



on the Google website which she was assured by them was an Iron Aged pig)—A very good evening—Editor.

## Doctor Jessopp, Scarning Vicar



Taken from the Arcadian March 2002 Newsletter. Members of the former Arcadian Club will notice that I've split this article into two as it is rather long to fit into the two Arcadian Club's pages allowed. Besides, it covers two topics that will be covered in our articles this year. Only the first part is relevant here, it being on Manorial Courts. The second is on the Black Death and so will feature in the winter's issue on health. Kitty

### ROLLS OF THE MANOR COURTS

In his essays, Dr Jessopp occasionally refers to the value and importance of the Rolls of the Manor Courts in researching the past. The following is therefore used on his explanation of their importance, given in his essay 'The Black Death in East Anglia', - Fred Hoskins

In the thirteenth century it may be said that in theory all the land belonged to the sovereign. The sovereign had indeed assigned large tracts of territory to A or B or C but in certain circumstances these tracts came back into the hands of the sovereign and were re-granted by him at his will to whom he chose. In return for such grants A or B or C were bound to perform certain services in recognition that they were tenants of the king. They were called tenants in chief.

The tenant in chief had his castle or mansion but was necessarily a non-resident landlord farming his possessions through the agency of a bailiff or letting them out. He could not sell the land but could sublet it to a tenant who in his turn was bound to render services to his overlord. It was inevitable as time went by that the sub-tenant regarded his estate as his own. The process went on till it was becoming a serious difficulty to discover how the king was to get his services.

In the eighteenth year of King Edward I a statute was passed forming landed estates, each to be known as a manor in which the lord resided. Sub-tenants held their land under the lord and paid him rents and gave services. At

certain intervals the sub-tenants were bound to appear before their lords and give accounts of themselves; bound to show cause why they had not performed their services; bound to pay their rents whether in money or kind. But above all, to pay a fine where small patches of land had changed hands including inheritance. If a tenant died, the lord laid claim to some of his livestock and in all manors, if a man died without heirs, his land was taken over by the lord.

These periodical meetings at which all this business was transacted were called the Courts of the Manor and the Records of these Courts were kept on long rolls of parchment with exceeding and most jealous scrupulousness. Every tiller of the soil who occupied a piece of land, however small, was sure to be a tenant under some lord of the manor; when he died a record of his death was entered upon the Court Rolls of the Manor. The name of his successor was inscribed; the amount of fine set down which his heir paid for entering upon his inheritance; and if he died without heir the fact was noted, the lands which he had held being forfeited to the lord.

Augustus Jessopp also gives interesting examples of the many disputes between the lord and his tenants for non-payment of inheritance tax and indeed of disputes between individuals as revealed in the records of the Court Rolls. Here is a small selection which throws a fascinating light on life in bygone days.—Fred Hoskins

'Henry Anneys, at Lessingham, could work on the fears of Alice Bakeman and extort a douceur from her without resorting to violence. Mrs Bakeman had succeeded to the property of some dead kinsman, and Mr Anneys heard of it. He called on the lady and informed her that for a consideration he would save her from paying an heriot (inheritance tax) to the lord; he had certain information which he could use either way. Finally, it was agreed that Alice should give the rogue a cow as hush money, and with the cow, Mr Anneys departed.

His triumph was brief. When the time came for holding the next court, others came round the poor woman, and made it quite evident that the lands she had succeeded to were not heriotable at all, and that Henry Anneys was a swindler.

So the case was brought before the steward as usual, the cow was ordered to be returned, and a substantial fine imposed on Anneys.

Almost the first thing that strikes a novice who looks into the village history of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries is the astounding frequency of bloody quarrels among the rustics. In the records of the Courts Leet for Norfolk it is very seldom indeed that you can find a court at which one or more persons, male or female, are not charged with "drawing blood" from somebody. Whether it was by punching their opponents on the nose, or whether they used their knives, I hesitate to decide; but I suspect, from the frequent mention of knives and daggers, that sticking one's enemy with cold steel was not so very un-English a practice as popular prejudice is wont to assume it to be.

At Lessingham, about Christmas time. 1349, there was a free fight of a most sanguinary character, men and women joining in it freely. It seems to have arisen from someone finding a horse wandering about the deserted fields. As a stray, it belonged to the lord—the finder took a different view; somebody cried 'Halves!' and somebody else said 'I'll give information,' and somebody else replied, 'So will I,' whereupon arose a bloody battle as has been told.

About the same time, at Hunstanton, Catherine Busgey, evil-disposed old hag that she was, had stripped a dead man of his leather jerkin. Did she proceed to wear the manly attire that she might be dagger-proof for the next encounter? Rash woman! The dead man's friends recognised the well-known coat, it was forfeited and handed over to the lord.

It may be presumed that where a scoundrel escaped the plague altogether, while others were dying all around him, or where another recovered after being brought to death's door, in such cases the man would, as a rule, be a person of exceptional strength and vigorous constitution. Such fellows, when the evil spirit was upon them, would be ugly customers to deal with.

Gilbert Henry of Tibenham was a somewhat audacious thief when he walked into John Smith's house, where there was none alive to bar the door, and carried off certain bushels of malt and barley, with other goods not specified; and not content therewith, stripped the dead

man of his coat and waistcoat.

The value of these articles of apparel was not assessed very highly—only sixpence each—and Master Gilbert, after paying the price of the garments, seems to have gone away with them. It is hardly to be wondered at that neither steward nor lord greatly coveted that coat and waistcoat.

Another wretched pair—a man and his wife—had deliberately cleared a crop of oats off an acre and a half of land, and stacked it in their own barn.'

*And so the sorry story goes on as related by Dr Jessopp from his researches of Court Manor Rolls. The peasants were exceedingly poor and what would seem to us now to be petty theft was to them opportunism not to be missed. One can only sympathise with them in their daily struggle for existence.—Fred Hoskins.*

*Next time— something on Schools if I can find something, unless somebody else has something that Jessopp wrote about Schools. **I do hope so!***

## The Vault by Kitty Lynn



*Here I'm going to mention a couple of people who over the years have worked in the courts at Dereham*

Firstly **Mr Charles J. Wray**

A born and bred Derehamite, Mr Charles Wray has been involved with the magistrates' court in one way or another since before WWI. On leaving Dereham Church School at the age of 14 he began working for Major Jack Barton, as the office boy. (Major Barton was a local solicitor who at the time was the clerk to the justices and coroner in Dereham.) When the first war came, he tried to enlist in the Royal Artillery twice but each time was turned down through having a heart problem. He persisted and eventually was accepted in 1916 and saw service in India, Mesopotamia and Persia, leaving the Army in 1921 as a corporal.

He returned to Dereham and went back to Major Barton's office doing magistrates' court work. He started getting more and more involved with this side of the business and when the second war began, he recalls dealing with a great number of emergency regulation offences.



Mr Peter McKee (left) and Mr Charles Wray (right) (photographs taken from the D & F Times)

When Major Barton died around 1947, Mr Leslie Allwood took over the role of clerk and Mr Wray continued as his assistant. Along with this duty, he added another feather to his cap, that of assisting Mr Allwood in his duties as clerk to the general commissioners of income tax. Having been due to retire in 1961 he just kept on working as quoted in 1975: - "If I'd have finished there I'd have done something else. Nothing was really said about it and I just carried on." At the ripe old age of 79 in 1975 he commented he would help with any office work for which he was needed and "if they want me I'll also be able to lend a hand with some of the general office work at Hood, Vores & Allwood."

In 1975 when the courts in Dereham underwent a re-organisation Mr Wray at the age of 79 was still working there and lived with his sister (Mrs Lillian Hurn) in Neatherd Road. Although work always came first he was an avid sports fan having been involved with the George Bowls club as their secretary for over thirty years (also listed as treasurer in a 1949 directory) and a proud holder of a Norwich City football season ticket.

I discovered that there have been several Wray families living in Dereham from our Dereham Directories 1896—1972/3 in the archives. So I have listed them not in alphabetic order but in date order of when they first appear in the directories.

The first in 1896 was H. Wray, living at 15, Cemetery Road. By 1906 he had moved to Ash Villa, Swanton Road, but between 1947 & 1949 his address was 8, Neatherd Road. By 1955, the

next Directory there is no mention of him.

If my presumptions are correct C.J. Wray's family were joint second to become established in Dereham. I have assumed that like most families in the 1800's some sons have the same initials as their father's before them. C.J. was born 1896 and in 1906 a Mr C. E. Wray is listed at 9, Cemetery Road and is the assistant overseerer. Something obviously happened to C.E. Wray (the war?) for in 1915 Mrs Wray is the assistant overseerer living at 32 Wellington Road. Later on in 1947 she becomes a rate collector still living at the same address. (It is on this fact that my presumption is made as it would have enabled Charles to have secured the position at Major Barton's solicitor's office on leaving school—not an easy position to gain without the right contacts or proper connections—and what better if your father and mother are both assistant overseerers). By 1955 she is named as Mrs C. Wray living at 20 Neatherd Road and here she continues to be the head of the household until 1966. Funnily enough in 1966 living at 1 Neatherd Road is a Mrs L. Hurn, (C.J.'s sister and thus Mrs C. Wray's daughter) however, before this she is not mentioned and with no mention of the firm Kingston and Hurn after this date I can't help but think she might have been Hurn's wife—can anyone help? In 1967 C. J. Wray himself is mentioned as living at 1 Neatherd Road and I know for certain that he lived there with his sister at least until 1975. (ref: *The D & F Times*).

Joint second in the 1906 listings is W. Wray who lived at 8, Washbridge but by 1906 he had moved to 9, Foundry Square, London Road and there he remained until 1916. In the 1926 directory there is no mention of him.

Next is Miss Wray who lived at King's Road between 1916—1926 and that is all I know.

Fifth is B. Wray who had moved into 31 Theatre Street by 1926 and then to 22 Elvin Road by 1947. In 1958 he is mentioned as residing at 1 Stanton Close, Elvin Road but by 1960 this address has a new name, that of Mrs I Wray. I assume that this was his wife and as mentioned must be a widow. It is not until 1968 that a new name appears, that of G. Wray—a son perhaps? But after 1969 there's no mention of him anymore.

Joint sixth is A Wray living at 14 Littlefields in 1947 but it is the only record of this name.

However the other sixth entrance is S. Wray who moved into 23 Beeclesgate Estate in 1947 probably one of the first people to live in that house. By 1958 a Mrs R. E. Wray is listed (widow?) and again another change to that of I.W. Wray in 1963 who remained there until 1972/3 when he moves to 51 Sandy Lane West. But here is the curious thing there is then listed at 23 Beeclesgate Estate in 1972/3 a M.R. Wray—one wonders why this has happened, perhaps a brother, son etc—can anyone enlighten me?

An S.J. Wray moved into 56A Sandy Lane in 1955 and stayed there until 1966 when he moved to 86 Sandy Lane (or was that when certain parts of Dereham underwent a new numbering system because of the new postal codes?)

And finally the last two contenders:

K.B. Wray lived at 76A Sandy Lane between 1961—1967 and

H.O. Wray who lived at 22 Jubilee Avenue between 1963—1973

Secondly **Mr Peter McKee**

Born in Dereham in 1885 Mr Peter McKee lived most of his life in Dereham apart from the 15 years spent in the army. We first come across him listed (*Mason's Dereham Directory of 1926*) as living in Baxters Row just after WWI, with the next directory record of 1947 when he is living at Beeclesgate (*some of you will know when I say the house with the tunnel entrance – see booklet Under Ancient Dereham*). He obviously remained there for in the article I found about him (*D & F Times - 01.05.1970*) he is still there with his son Kenneth.

The paper states that people who have cause to attend Dereham County Court can rest assured they will be well looked after by usher Mr Peter McKee, who at 85 must be one of the country's oldest court officers. Mr McKee had been carrying out his duties at the monthly courts for about seven years. Did he ever think he was too old for the job? He states how he is still very active and enjoys playing bowls with the Old People's Club Team but adds -

"When you are over 80, you are getting on a bit, I suppose," he conceded. "I shall retire when I feel I can no longer climb the stairs up to the courtroom." Yes, you guest; it he remained there until they closed in 1980 when he could no longer climb the stairs to the courtroom – it

# A NUTSHELL OF HISTORY

....researched by Kitty Lynn.

*If ever I feel down I just glimpse into the past and suddenly I'm feeling happier and certainly grateful to be alive today.*

*Take for instance what it would have been like after a party to find yourself left alone on a windswept hill top in the dead of night some two hundred years ago. Even knowing your way, would you have been able to make it home as easily as today?—no taxis or cars then. Because....*

## CRIME & PUNISHMENT

*For centuries, crime was rife amongst rural communities and the punishment was brutal. Hangings and mutilations were everyday events, and the village stocks were filled with petty offenders.*

Banks of mist drift across a windswept landscape. In the distance, the sound of footfalls on gravel, the clink of chains and the occasional snatch of conversation in a foreign tongue herald the appearance of a rain-spattered and pathetic line of figures, shoulders hunched against the cold. As they pass, the low cloud lifts briefly, revealing a vast stone fortress rising from a high point on the moor, surrounded by a sprawl of mean houses.

The appearance of Dartmoor prison has changed little since it was built in the early 19th century, when chained Napoleonic prisoners made their way between the gates and the nearby quarries. What has changed, though, is the whole nature of punishment. At the time it was built, the prison was an oddity—a vast concentration of prisoners in a country that

### DARTMOOR PRISON

When Dartmoor prison was established in the early 19th century, it was something of an oddity. Before this time, there had been little call for prisons, other than small goals which had served mainly as a staging-post for prisoners on their way to the gallows. These short-stay prisons had been damp and unsanitary, with crowded mixed cells. They were run as a business by unpaid gaolers who sold their charges everything. The prisoners simply perished from hunger or cold if they could not pay for food or winter fuel.



### ANIMALS IN THE DOCK

Throughout the Middle Ages, animals were tried for human crimes. A sow and her piglets, for example were hung for murder, while a cockerel was burnt at the stake for witchcraft, after laying an egg!

otherwise had little call for large prisons: capital punishment was the rule for all but the most petty felonies, and those criminals who escaped with their lives were more likely to be transported than locked up.

### WIDESPREAD CRIME

These harsh penalties did little to deter criminals, and crime of all sorts was rife in rural Britain. The statistics make chilling reading, and by comparison with medieval times, today's Britain—even in the worst inner-city areas—seems a safe place.

Crime was so widespread that commentators down the ages believed it was simply part of the human condition, and impossible to reduce or eradicate. This was partly due to the fact that most crime went unpunished, and the chances of detection and conviction were low.



But the underlying motives of rural crime can only be fully understood in the context of British rural society and the way it was structured in medieval times.

Prior to enclosure in the 18th and 19th centuries, most country dwellers lived in small, tight-knit communities and farmed the land around their villages on the 'common field' system. Each villager had narrow strips of land distributed in several fields. Everyone scratched a living from their own patch of land, and was also expected to work on strips of land belonging to the lord of the manor—these extra strips were scattered freely among the rest.

This system provided ample opportunity for crime on the most petty level: people would nibble away at their neighbour's strip when ploughing, or furtively cut their neighbour's wheat at harvest time. After the crops were in, it was tempting to glean grain from the adjoining land, or to graze cattle on it.

Such crime was covered by village by-laws, and dealt with by a hierarchy of petty officials and local office-holders: the reeve made sure everyone worked on the lord's land; the beadle dealt with trespass; the ale-tester made sure beer was of the requisite standard; the woodward made sure that the local woodlands were not depleted.

Petty theft (of less than one shilling—5p) was dealt with on a similar system, but the stealing



### STEALING LIVESTOCK

Thieves often quietly picked off livestock as they grazed in the fields.

of any sum greater than this was a felony, and punishable by hanging. The harshness of the penalty, however, did not seem to act as much of a deterrent, and theft even from fellow village members was very common.

Some of such criminal activity was planned, but most theft was opportunist—a chance of something for nothing seen and seized—so the more opportunities there were, the higher the crime rate. At harvest time, the very abundance of food made it easy for the thief to fill his belly; and since harvest work took place out of doors there were easy pickings in empty houses and from the pockets of workers'



**West Berks Association**  
FOR THE PROSECUTION OF FELONS

**SIX POUNDS REWARD.**

**Whereas**  
During the Night of Monday, December the 21st, 1833, some person or persons stole **Seven Turkeys**  
From a Fowl House at Anville Farm, near Hungerford, the property of Mr. WILLIAM CURNICK.

Whoever will discover the Offender or Offenders, shall on Conviction receive the Reward of £1 from Mr. Curnick, and £5 from the West Berks Association.

**MATTHEWS and HULBERT,**  
Hungerford, Dec. 21st. 1833.

WILLIAM CURNICK, FARMER AND PROPRIETOR, ANVILLE FARM, HUNGERFORD.

### OPPORTUNIST CRIME

During the summer months, when people were out all day in the fields, crime was at its peak, with easy pickings to be had in the empty labourers' cottages. Later in the year, during the lean winter months, villagers sometimes made off with fowl and butchered livestock by night.

**FATAL BRAWLS**

In Medieval society, heated arguments often ended in bloodshed, with the brandishing of lethal weapons like daggers and swords. Deaths from knife-wounds were common wherever there were large social gatherings—in the market place, in the fields or outside the church or ale-house. Most homicides were punishable by hanging.



doffed clothing.

Theft from homes was easy. Door and windows could be barred from within, but few doors had locks, so houses were especially vulnerable when the owners were out. And the wattle and daub construction of these simple dwellings was so fragile that most thieves simply smashed in the wall if they couldn't get in through the door or window. In an agricultural society, though, material wealth was tied up not in what we would today regard as consumer goods kept in the home, but in farm produce, and it was valuable livestock that accounted for most of the criminal's haul. Stealing in the field was more difficult than stealing from

homes; livestock transported itself, and anyone with a modicum of sense could round up four sheep single handed; a gang could easily drive off a whole flock. Horses were a popular target, because they were the most valuable farm animal, but young lambs, sheep and plump cattle were favourites, too, since animals were often left grazing unattended in large groups.

**CRIMINAL CUNNING**

Low cunning was just as effective a criminal technique as stealth. A man buying boards at the woodyard would load a couple of extra planks while the vendor's back was turned; and a shepherd might give a sheep a well aimed knock on the head, and tell his employer that the animal had died of the scab. The unwanted carcass would be a welcome addition to the monotonous diet of beans and rough black bread. Market days and festivals provided the thief with opportunities of a different sort. Holidays of any kind were accompanied by a great deal of drinking, and a merry farmer celebrating the sale of a few sheep was more easily relieved of his money than a sober man might have been. Simple clothing had few pockets, and purses were usually slung from the belt by a thong. A quick slash with a sharp blade soon parted the sovereigns from their rightful owner.

If the farmer managed to escape the cutpurses

**THE SCOLD'S BRIDLE**

In medieval Britain there were special punishments for women. Scolds (nagging women or compulsive gossips) were either ducked on the cucking stool or led through the streets, wearing an iron bridle, with a pointed bit.



**PETTY SESSIONS**

The monthly petty sessions, which were set up in 1631, continued the tradition of the ancient leet courts, dealing with the minor grievances of local people—like tavern brawls and vagrants.



nothing of doing it again. Where there was no obvious culprit, suspicion would often fall on strangers to the village. Many itinerant tradespeople, minstrels, beggars and vagabonds were hanged for offences they did not commit, simply because they were

convenient scapegoats. Often, though, the accusations were justified, especially after enclosure created a whole class of landless poor. As a protection against strangers, every person who stayed overnight in a village or town required a guarantee of good behaviour from a resident. People who stayed longer than a few nights were required to join a tithing group or vill—the groups of villagers jointly responsible for keeping order.

Trial by a jury of '12 just men and true' was essentially a Norman concept, introduced by Henry II in 1166. Earlier justice was fairly arbitrary, and usually involved the lord of the manor hearing the accusations and denials, making a decision on the basis of merit (or according to who had laid the highest bribe), and then sentencing the man. If the truth was in doubt, the process of law itself could be as dangerous to the accused as the punishment. Trial by ordeal required the prisoner to walk across red-hot metal, to carry a red-hot bar, or at the market, he was still not safe: robbery on the road was a considerable danger. Simple village folk armed themselves with daggers and staves, but were no match for gangs and bandits with bows and arrows or, later, flintlock pistols. Rogues on the road stole not only money, but horses and—literally—the shirts from their victims' backs. Theft and murder often went hand in hand—largely because the death penalty was imposed for both. Medieval villains might be considered compassionate if they 'hamstrung' their victims by severing their leg tendons to prevent pursuit, violence was endemic not only because the law punished murderers and thieves equally, but also because medieval attitudes to violence and death were quite different from those of today. Fighting seemed to many people to be a perfectly sensible way of resolving a dispute, and if the fight ended up in the death of one of the combatants, it simply reinforced the justness of the winner's case. Attitudes to rape were similar. If a man wanted his way with a peasant woman, then he was expected to 'use a little compulsion as a convenient cure for her shyness'! Detection of a felony was a group responsibility; on discovery of the crime, a villager was obliged by law to rouse the neighbours, and institute the 'hue and cry' to pursue the villain. This in itself was not a popular task, because a violent criminal who killed once would think

convenient scapegoats. Often, though, the accusations were justified, especially after enclosure created a whole class of landless poor.

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**THE GALLOW TREE**

In the past, the death penalty was imposed for theft as well as murder, and the gibbet was a familiar feature in the landscape.



to immerse one arm in boiling water. If the wounds healed within three days, the charges were dismissed. Trial by 'cursed morsel' demanded that the prisoners eat food containing a feather: choking indicated guilt.

**PEINE FORTE ET DURE**

Refusal to plead led to further discomfort, known as *peine forte et dure*. This was ordered in the Judgement of Penance, read from the bench: 'That you be taken back to the prison whence you came, to a low dungeon which no light can enter; that you be laid on your back on the bare floor, with a cloth around your loins, but elsewhere naked; that there be set upon your body a weight of iron as great as you can bear—and greater.' The only food permitted was three morsels of 'the coarsest bread' a day.

The full force of the legal system was reserved for the common people: the rich and the clergy by and large got away with crime. An old proverb runs 'pore be hangid by the necke, a riche man by the purs', and where bribes didn't work, intimidation often did.

Norman law swept away many of the arbitrary barbarities meted out by local courts, and instituted



a system of circuit judges who visited each area four times a year to try serious crimes. The jury system, however, only evolved slowly into its present form, and for a long while the jury was not expected to be impartial. For felonies, punishment was straightforward and predictable—the gallows. Before 1783, when the drop scaffold was introduced, hanging involved slow death by strangulation. For traitors, however, the gallows alone were not considered punishment enough: a diligent executioner would cut the victim down while he was still conscious, and it was the drawing (disembowelment) that usually proved fatal. Despite the apparent savagery of hanging as a punishment, it was for a long time regarded as relatively humane when compared to the lopping off of useful limbs.

Such mutilation was commonplace, especially in the centuries before the Norman conquest. To the enforcers of the law, mutilation had all the advantages of advertising obedience: the countryside was crowded with people who had been branded on the face or hand, or who had lost limbs, scalps, nose, ears, eyes, upper lip or tongue as a deterrent to their more fortunate able-bodied fellows.

The stocks and pillory were frequently used to punish dishonest merchants and purveyors of adulterated food. A baker would appear in the stocks with a loaf tied round his neck if he was caught selling underweight loaves. As with hanging, there were imaginative variants to the simple pillory. One favourite was to nail the victim's ears back—the left ear one day, and the right ear the next. The irresistible urge to dodge missiles meant

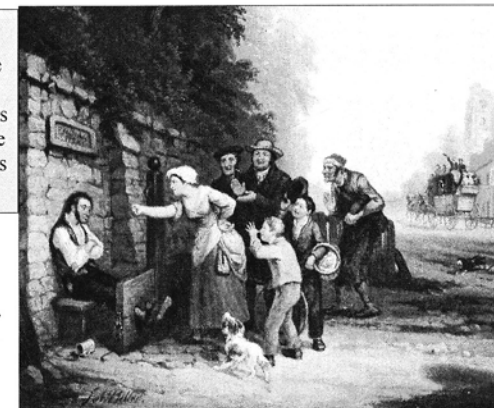


**LOCAL POLICING**

In the 18th and 19th centuries, the formidable Parish Beadle looked after the interests of the village community. He kept order in the churchyard, dispersed noisy urchins and hauled itinerants off to the roundhouse for creating a nuisance. He also placed 'dissolute women, drunkards and brawlers' in the stocks. He was later replaced by the friendly village bobby.

**CONFINED TO THE STOCKS**

Many petty offenders—like dishonest bakers—were punished by a spell in the stocks. The culprit would be locked in by his feet and occasionally by his hands as well, and then abandoned to the fury of the village rabble. The spectators would hurl insults and missiles at the helpless man.

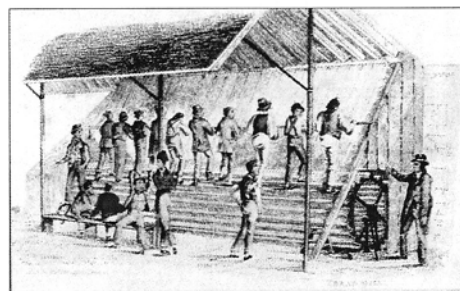


that the offender often tore chunks out of his ears.

Some punishments were reserved specifically for women. Scolds (nagging women) were half drowned on the cucking stool, or were led bridled through the town centre wearing an iron mask fitted with a sharpened bit that projected into the mouth. Women guilty of petty treason—an offence which included killing one's husband or employee—were invariably burned at the stake.

**TRANSPORTING FELONS**

The establishment of colonies in America provided a convenient alternative to hanging—the felon could be disposed of by being transported. The War of Independence eliminated this option in 1775, but the ending of transportation to the American colonies sowed the seeds of large-scale imprisonment as a punishment for felonies. For some 30 years, until the penal colonies were established in Australia, some criminals who would have died on the gallows were imprisoned in 'hulks' instead. These were rotting galleons, anchored offshore and turned into makeshift prisons. Wars with France accelerated the change in attitudes: healthy felons were given the option of fighting for the



**THE TREADMILL**

The treadmill was introduced as a substitute for transporting felons to the colonies. It was hoped that the men would be swiftly reformed by the gruelling routine of stepping up and down on the treadles.

crown to save their necks; and French prisoners of war had to be accommodated, leading to the building of Dartmoor prison.

The evolution of the prison system as we now know it was accelerated by social reformers such as John Howard, Elizabeth Fry, and James Mill, who advocated the wholesale replacement of capital punishment by imprisonment. Finally Sir Robert Peel's criminal law reforms of the 1830s swept away the death penalty for hundreds of crimes, ending a system of barbaric 'justice' that had existed for ten centuries.

*Next time—continuing the theme 'glad to be alive today' with—Unwillingly to school. Find out what it was like in the early days of schooling.*

**Copy deadline**—Any articles for the next newsletter to be received by 4<sup>th</sup> May 2008 .

Please let us have some letters to put in next time somebody must have gone to school, surely?

I can't have been the only one!

What was it like being at school in war time?

Do you remember any of your teachers? What were they like? Did you play truant or were you a local school teacher?

Or something completely different.—

Did you work in the Guildhall?

All names can be kept out of this newsletter but, like our local newspapers we have to know your name —just for our records—no-one else need know who you are, if that's your wish.

Unfortunately if you keep your silence up I'll have no alternative but to cease doing this newsletter—I'm fed up with being sent to Coventry and doing it all myself apart from Cliff's help.

Make the time if you care !!! I do.

*Kitty*

## Old Dereham By Kitty Lynn

### Dereham's Law & Order.

The Liber Eliensis (1169) mentions the Bishop's Lock-up (prison) and Courthouse having been built in 970 by Abbot Brithnoth. This was at a ruling given by King Edgar via Aethelwold, Bishop of Winchester, who had possession of Dereham through Ely. It is the first mention on record of any type of court in Dereham. These buildings ended up being called the Bishop's Courthouse and Prison, and in the early days the Courthouse was sometimes given the nickname, Dereham's Castle. Also on this same site stood the Market Cross until it was removed in 1706.

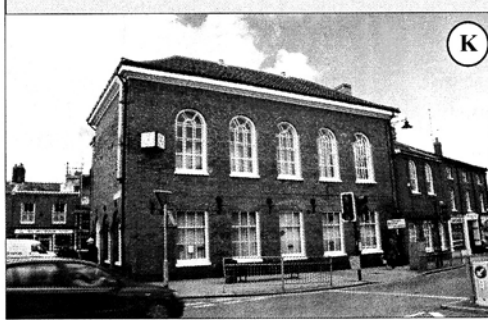
The next recorded example of the court sitting at Dereham was in 1621 when Charles I came with his wife, Henrietta to preside over the Manor Court. It was his first Court and Dereham remained one of his wife's favourite places even after his death when she had returned to her native land. (He lost his head, she lost her manor of Dereham.) The Court Books of the Manor of East Dereham of the Queen were until recently in the possession of the lady of the manor and dated back to 1623. When Boston & Puddy wrote their book in 1952, Mrs Vores was the lady of the Manor (*where are they now? Well I think they're in the Norfolk Record Office—but can anyone confirm this?*)

The court dealt with petty offences like selling bread and ale at different prices to those fixed by the regulation of weights and measures. Ten years after Charles's first visit in 1631 Simon Chandler and Alice Sherwyn were presented for receiving into their houses divers persons of suspicious character to the bad example of others. It was also presented that widow Row had permitted her geese to be an annoyance before the pit called the Sandpit. (*This was opposite the Akassha Tandoori Restaurant in the Market Place.*)

Other recorded cases include John Roote, from Swanton, who was convicted of selling illicit measures of flour in 1644 and fined 2s. 4d., John Rash who had sold bread contrary to the assize and was fined 5/- and that of William Sheringham (amongst others) who had sold Ale contrary to the Assize, each of them being fined 3d.

Locally law and order was administered by the

The Assembly Rooms 2007



parish constables, which were called Headboroughs in Dereham. They executed the justice's warrants, removed vagrants and had powers of arrest. The court dealt with a wide range of offences from licensing alehouses to cases of theft.

In 1644 constables, scrutineers, sealers of skin and ale founders were appointed every Michaelmas. It would appear that crimes became more serious in 1646. A few examples of those mentioned are, 'Robert Becket, gentleman, was charged with having drawn blood from the body of William Neeve; as had Thomas Church upon the body of John Osbourne gent; and that William Neeve, Walter Chimney and his wife had assaulted Robert Beckett. At the next court we find that Robert Beckett (who had taken the place of John Neeve as bailiff) had taken a certain distress, which was rescued by Mr Neeve who was fined for the offence. In the same year the bailiff was in the wars again for it was presented that Richard Chamberlain had made 'an assault on Robert Beckett on the 24<sup>th</sup> January last at Estdereham with a short sword and drawn blood upon his body of the said Robert and forthwith rescued from the same Robert one horse of the value of 50/- which the said Robert as bailiff of this parish had taken for payment of debt.' So it appears that crime was obviously rising – was this the beginning of our rising crime rate? Maybe it certainly lead to the parish having more constables as a little while after this report we seem to have double the number of constables for by 1677 the Court Leet had elected four people 'to the office of constable of the town of Estdereham'. Not only this; they also elected, 'two ale-tasters; two leather searches (*men who marked and registered the approved of leather*) and two hog ringers

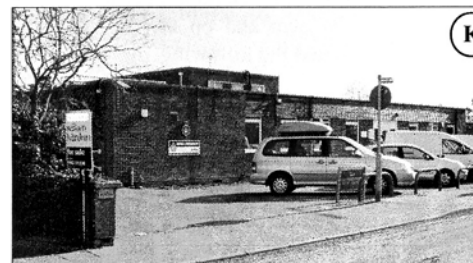
(*basically piggy finders and gatherers*)'. By the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century the Court Leets were replaced by the Quarter Sessions Courts. These were ruled by justices of the Peace who met every Easter, Midsummer, Michaelmas and Epiphany. The courts sat only at Norwich, King's Lynn, Swaffham and either Little Walsingham or Holt so Dereham people were forced to travel.

In 1788 Robert Raby and William Wigg plus two others became the Constables of the town of East Dereham for the next year.

When the County Police were organised in 1839 the parish constable faded into the past. The last parish officer to continue was that of pindar – the man who put stray cattle into the pound. (*The Pound was originally at the end of Norwich Street diagonally opposite the King's Head – hence the first recorded name for Norwich Street was Pound Street. In 1770 a new pound was built at the junction of Theatre Street and Cemetery Road.*)

From 1868 magistrates met at the Assembly Rooms on alternate Fridays and by 1883 they met every Friday except for 1896 when they met on Thursdays for some reason I've been unable to ascertain.

As to when the police station was originally built I've been unable to find out only that it was built in the same area in Commercial Road as the new one built by the Potter Brothers in the late 1960s. The first Superintendent of Dereham Division in 1891 was called Symonds, (*I'd like to assume that was when the station was built; it would make sense but it would be an assumption.*) He was followed in 1896 by Superintendent T. Chambers, and his Sergeant was called T. Watson. (*Further lists can be found in the Dereham Directories in our archives*)



Dereham Police Station 25.02.2008.



.Superintendent Symonds with the Dereham Division, c.1891

*along with plenty of court cases heard at Dereham—all reported in the Dereham & Fakenham Times – but I've no room here to mention anymore.)*

The Norfolk Quarter Sessions with over 600 years' service were replaced by Crown Courts at the beginning of 1972, when in Norwich they moved from the Shirehall to Bishopsgate. Unfortunately the last case to be heard was not a local one and lasted for six weeks with no general public attending – what a pity – I used to enjoy going to the Shirehall during my school holidays and listening to the cases.

The above closure was shortly followed by the closure of the County Court in Dereham from January 1<sup>st</sup> 1981. The announcement was made by Judge Adrian Head at the County Court at Fakenham when he said the decision had been made by the Lord Chancellor's office on the advice of the presiding judges of the circuit. Judge Head reported that he would no longer be sitting at Thetford as it would cease to be in his bailiwick. Bury St Edmunds and Lynn would keep their divorce jurisdiction, with most other cases being heard at King's Lynn. He also stated that Fakenham, Dereham and Cromer were particularly small courts which were used too infrequently and therefore it made more economic sense to concentrate courts in the larger centres. *Why am I not surprised – I wonder if they'd think the same today?*

### Court Buildings in Dereham.

#### **Buildings prior to the Assembly Rooms**

Until recently all the information I had I've already mentioned, however I've just found a document called the Parliamentary Survey of East Dereham Manor, Norfolk 1649. In it, it states that one Scarlett Neve (gent) aged about fifty in the tenth year of Charles I reign (1631) owned the Market Place and thus all the rent from the stalls and the yearly fairs. However,



after this comes the most interesting part as it concerns the buildings where the assembly rooms now stand. It reads as follows:

'All that decayed, ruinous house commonly called or knowne by the name of the Prison-house sett, lying and being in the Market street of Eastdereham consisting of about six Rooms, with All that house on the East side of it called the Tollhouse, and a Small peece of ground sometime a pinfold conteyning about thirteen yards in length and nine yards in bredth and its worth per annum.'

### The Assembly Rooms

#### The building

The present building was built in 1756 for the cost of £450, the money being raised by £50 shares in the building. However with the passing of time the original subscribers died or moved away and the Headboroughs were made trustees. Thus they received the rents and applied them to various projects for the benefit of all the local residents. The building is a good piece of plain architecture which over the years has had many alterations. The south wall, opposite Just Curtain and Blinds' side entrance originally had open arches between the ground and first floor levels. The Market Toll House was added in Victorian times and the modern extension adjacent to Quebec Street in 1964. In 1965, when more office space was needed the adjoining blacksmith's shop and cottage were demolished and some large flint foundations were found; were these, those of the so called Dereham Castle? I personally doubt we'll ever know.

Inside, a small staircase, added soon after construction, leading off from the main entrance hall to the first floor had disappeared by 1952



How the back on Quebec Street used to look c.1901

The Georgian Room upstairs in the Assembly Rooms



when Boston and Puddy wrote about it in their book. However in the main room upstairs there is a gallery with a very good iron railing balcony at one end and a low dais at the other. The portrait of George III which hangs in this fine Georgian room was presented by Viscount Townsend in 1783 to the Headborough. The painting itself is a copy of the official royal portrait by Ramsey. The majority of the painting was done by Ramsey's assistants with the artist just filling in the more complicated sections. The decorative carved and gilded frame made by Rene Stone and Isaac Gossett is said to be worth almost as much as the actual painting itself.

Under this main room in the late 1960s – 1970s was where the offices of the East Dereham Urban District Council used to be.

#### Uses over the years

In the beginning they housed the local Headborough offices and were also used as a place of entertainment for the locality.

The builder and master of Quebec Castle, Samuel Rash, felt that Dereham ought to have a school of its own and on the 20<sup>th</sup> August 1783 he circulated the following:

"Some Proposals by Mr Rash about East Dereham Assembly Rooms, Submitted to the consideration of the Resident Vicar, Churchwardens, Feoffes of the Headborough Estate, Headboroughs and other worthy inhabitants of East Dereham. That the charge of immediately putting the House and Furniture into necessary repair, be laid out of the Headborough Rents, which Rents have always been applied to the

public use of the parish. The House etc. when repaired, to be let to a responsible tenant, who will give the best rent, subject to proper articles. That the house be employed by the tenant for all public meetings as formerly, except that the lower rooms, when not used for such public meetings shall be for the use of a Schoolmaster, to teach the children of the poor inhabitants of East Dereham, who shall be deemed proper objects of such charity, the plain rudiments of the Christian Religion, Reading, Writing and the necessary rules of Arithmetic."

The result was that in 1788 there was a Sunday school for girls in the Assembly Room which was run by the wealthy ladies of the town where a 'few plain principles of Christian religion' were taught.

Other judicial services besides the Quarter Session and other courts, already mentioned earlier, have been the Probation Services who were there until 1996.

The Athenaeum Club had a billiard room and a Library; probably one of the first lending libraries in the town. The remaining ground floor rooms were used as offices by the East Dereham Urban District Council (now the Breckland Council) until they moved into their new building Elizabeth House (2004) near Tesco's. The Town Council Offices are still housed in the Assembly Rooms today along with the Citizen's Advice Bureau, with additional accommodation being let on a casual basis to various organisations.

But the Assembly Rooms were not built purely for business. There are plenty of records showing how the rooms began to be used for local entertainment, sometimes with lavish balls and the highlight of society being asked to them. In 1861 Parson Armstrong records a scene: 'December 12<sup>th</sup> – We took our darling Helen to the Assembly, her first Ball. The darling looked to be so charming ..... there were 120 present – all the best families in the neighbourhood whom we knew, and many aristocracy visiting in those houses....' The Norfolk Chronicle on 6<sup>th</sup> January 1838 shows another social function: 'The conservatives of East Dereham on Monday the 22<sup>nd</sup> January to celebrate the birthday of the Rt. Hon, Lord Sondes.'

There were routs, assemblies and lectures held weekly, one of them being Mr Francis



The election results are announced from the window of the Assembly Rooms, c.1910

Noverre, the famous Georgian Norwich dancing master who held a class there each week.

Many more are mentioned in the Dereham and Fakenham Times from 1880 until the present date – one of them being an event which was part of the Dereham Festival in 2006.

However something that I find ironic is that both the court and the police station in Dereham have always been on the same site since they were first established – hardly anything else has done.

So for those of you who don't know where the Assembly Rooms are, they are at the north end of the Market Place and the police station is in Commercial Road.

*Next time, hopefully—the Guildhall and some of the past schools of Dereham*

## Old News by Kitty Lynn



*A Murder is always of interest to many but this one happened on our doorstep so to speak—No. 14, Northgate in 1951. The other interesting fact that must be stated was that Mr Reynolds was one of two of the last people in Norfolk to be hung for his crime. Here is a full story of how and what happened—although why is still not clear even today. Rather than distort any facts by putting my own thought or views I believe it is imperative to quote directly from the Newspaper as this article is in the living memory of some folk still about. If you have any further information on the subjects mentioned here please let us know so we can add them to our archive record, thanks.*

*(Continued on page 18)*

**Dereham & Fakenham Times**9<sup>th</sup> February 1951**Girl Found Dead: Man Detained**

A police search was carried out over a wide area of Norfolk yesterday afternoon after the body of Ellen May Ludkin, aged 19, had been found in a shed near her home, Park Farm Cottages, Dereham. It is understood that there were head injuries. Less than three hours later, after police had stopped vehicles on roads leading out of Dereham, and buses in all parts of the county had been searched, a man was detained.

Miss Ludkin was the daughter of Mr and Mrs W. A. Ludkin. There are three brothers and a sister.

16<sup>th</sup> February 1951**Remanded on Charge of Murder**

Alfred George Reynolds (24), of 14, Northgate, Dereham, a labourer, was charged at an occasional court at Dereham on Friday with the murder of Ellen May Ludkin aged 19, of Park Farm Cottages, Dereham on Thursday week.

Det. Supt. S.C. Kybird told the court he saw Reynolds detained at Park Farm Cottages. Reynolds was taken to Dereham Police Station, where he was later cautioned. He made a statement. Further investigations were made, and a post-mortem examination carried out. On Friday afternoon, continued Det. Supt. Kybird, Reynolds was again cautioned and made a further statement.

Reynolds was remanded in custody to appear at the Shirehall Magistrates Court tomorrow, when it was intimated a further remand would be requested. Legal aid was granted.

The magistrates were Mr H.W. Fox (chairman) and Mr A. J. Myhill.

**Inquest Opened**

The inquest on Miss Ludkin was opened at Dereham Police Station on Friday by the Dereham District Coroner (Mr L.H. Allwood), and adjourned until June 16<sup>th</sup>.

Evidence of identification was given by the father Mr William Albert Ludkin.

Dr. N.E.D. Cartledge said that in his opinion death was due to a gun-shot wound in the face from very close range, and had been instantaneous.

23<sup>rd</sup> February 1951**Dereham Man Remanded on Murder Charge**

Albert (*their mistake*) George Reynolds (24), a labourer of 14, Northgate, Dereham, appeared on remand before the Taverham magistrates on Saturday charged with the murder of Ellen May Ludkin (19), of Park Farm Cottages, Dereham on February 8th.

He was remanded in custody for another week. Det. Supt. S. C. Kybird applied for the remand on behalf of the police.

Mr. V. N. Brenner (Daynes, Keefe & Co.) appeared for Reynolds and had no objection to the remand.

When told that he would be remanded Reynolds replied. "Right you are".

2<sup>nd</sup> March 1951**Dereham Murder Charge: Further Remand**

Before the Taverham magistrates at Norwich Shirehall on Saturday, Albert (*their mistake again*) George Reynolds (24), a labourer, of 14 Northgate, Dereham, was remanded in custody for another week, accused of murdering Ellen May Ludkin (19), of Park Farm Cottages, Dereham, on February 8th. Det. Supt. S. C. Kybird applied for the remand on behalf of the police. Mr. V. N. Brenner (Messrs. Daynes, Keefe & Co.) appeared for Reynolds, and had no objection to the remand. When told he would be remanded again Reynolds replied, "Right".

16<sup>th</sup> March 1951**Murder Charge at Dereham**

*Alleged Statement That Girl Said "Shoot Me"*  
An alleged statement that the trigger of the gun which fired the shot that killed Ellen May



Where Ellen Ludkin used to live—  
Park Farm Cottages, Etling Green—25.02.2008

Ludkin, of Park Farm Cottages, Dereham, was pulled by the girl herself was read at a special court at Dereham on Tuesday, when Alfred George Reynolds (24), a labourer, of 14, Northgate, Dereham, was charged with murdering the girl on February 8th. There was evidence that Reynolds and Miss Ludkin who was 19, had been very fond of each other for about two years, and that the girl was shortly to have a child.

Reynolds was committed for trial at the Assizes. No plea was entered and his defence was reserved.

Mr E. C. Jones, prosecuted on behalf of the Director of Public Prosecutions, and Reynolds was represented by Mr John Duigan (Messrs. Daynes, Keefe & Co).

Mr Jones, outlining the case, said the girl met Reynolds about three years ago. It was not until last October that he was invited into her home. At that time she was pregnant, for which Reynolds was responsible.

Reynolds approached the girl's father, who agreed that they should get married provided Reynolds was prepared to work.

**Ordered to Rest**

At the time of her death, went on Mr Jones, Miss Ludkin was nearly nine months pregnant, and had been ordered by the doctor to rest. She was not allowed out. On February 6th and 7th Reynolds visited the house and was told he could not see the girl.

About 2 p.m. on February 8th he went to the house and the girl went out to talk to him. It started to rain, and the girl's mother saw they were talking in a cycle shed. After a time the mother saw Reynolds go into an adjoining field and return to the shed with a gun.

The next thing the mother heard was the girl exclaiming something such as "No Alfie," and the report of a gun. The mother went out and met Reynolds at the entrance to the shed. He said, "If you go in there I will shoot you too." The mother fetched a neighbour, and Reynolds said to him, "Get out of this or I will blow your brains out." He threatened the neighbour by putting the barrel of the gun in his ribs, and the neighbour had to run to his house.

Reynolds went away, continued Mr Jones, and about 3.30 pm. returned to his mother's house with the gun, and said: "I have brought the gun back. I have shot Ellen." Afterwards Reynolds

wandered in the lanes and fields and talked with one or two people before he was eventually arrested near the girl's home.

The girl's mother, Mrs Gladys Ellen Ludkin, said that after she heard the shot she ran out and saw her daughter lying in the shed. Reynolds came out carrying a gun. He walked up the garden and threw the cartridge away. Witness went for her neighbour, Mr Mayer, and when he came Reynolds threatened him.

Dr N.E.D. Cartledge, of Dereham, said the girl had severe head injuries, which caused death, and were consistent with gunshot from very close quarters.

**"Complained of Dreams"**

Cross-examination by Mr Duigan, Dr. Cartledge said that in 1946 he had attended Reynolds, who complained of pains in the head. He diagnosed a chill. Later in 1946, according to his notes, he had again attended Reynolds, who complained of disturbed rest and dreams.

Dr. David Hamilton Fulton, pathologist to the East Midland area laboratory at Nottingham, also stated that the gunshot wound was the cause of death.

A shotgun, a spent cartridge, a number of live cartridges, two cartridge wads, and a number of pellets, were produced by Det. Chief-Insp. G. Price, of the firearms investigation department of the Home Office laboratory at Nottingham. The gun, he said, was faulty. It could be discharged by banging the stock on the floor. Witness demonstrated this, and also that it was possible to discharge the gun by actuating the bolt when the mechanism failed so that it could not be fired by squeezing the trigger. Witness was satisfied that the spent cartridge had been fired from the gun. The wads and pellets were also similar to those fired from the gun.

Albert John Mayer, of Park Farm Cottages, said that when he answered Mrs Ludkin's call for assistance he saw Reynolds near the shed with a gun. Witness said: "Put that down, Alfie." Reynolds mumbled something, told him to "get out" two or three times, and poked the gun into his ribs. Witness went back to his house. About five minutes later Reynolds came to his house, but said nothing, and witness told him: "Go on. I don't want trouble here." Reynolds left.

The girl's father, William Albert Ludkin, said

he disapproved of Reynolds' association with his daughter. About October, witness became aware that his daughter was pregnant, and when Reynolds came to him and asked if he could marry his daughter witness agreed provided Reynolds got a job. Reynolds did so. Sometime in January, went on Mr Ludkin, he saw Reynolds and told him that, as he had lost his job, witness did not think he could marry his daughter.

On February 6th Reynolds came to the house late at night. Next day he came in the evening, and witness told him that as the girl was under doctor's orders she could not come out.

About 5 pm on the day of the girl's death witness saw Reynolds coming down the hedge in the field behind the house. Reynolds said: "There have been four or five of \_\_\_\_\_ (no wording just a line in original document. Kitty) running after me and they haven't got me yet." just then P.C. Freeman took hold of Reynolds.

**Fond of Each Other**

Cross-examination by Mr Duigan, Mr Ludkin agreed that Reynolds and his daughter were very fond of each other and that they had given him some trouble about sleeping out.

Arthur George Reynolds, the accused's father, said that on February 8th he heard his wife scream out that Alfie had shot Ellen. He came down, thinking his own son was telling lies to scare his mother. Accused replied: "No, dad, I am not. I have shot her." There was a gun and cartridges in the room. His son left, saying he was going to give himself up to the police.

The previous Monday his son had left his employment with a builder.

Mr Duigan—Is it right to say he has been considerable trouble to you since he came out of the Navy four years ago?

Mr Reynolds—Yes and to his mother, Mr Duigan—Was his conduct such that you once asked the Bench for a medical examination to be made of him? —I did.

Did he, when he was at home, ever suffer from imaginary complaints? —He did Has he wakened you up in the night shouting that he had got lockjaw and rheumatic fever? —Yes, he used to get nightmares.

Mr Reynolds agreed that he had seen his son take a knife from the table and say he would do himself in.

Edward George Andrews, an agricultural

worker, of 1, Crown Road, Dereham, said that at 4.25 pm. on February 8th he saw Reynolds in a field at Neatherd Moor. After exchanging names, Reynolds said. "Have you seen any old cops about?" he replied, "No why?" and Reynolds said, "I done a murder." Reynolds added, "That's the honest truth, I have, I shot Ellen in the bicycle shed." Reynolds then went off in the direction of Park Farm.

P.C. Charles Wells said he saw Reynolds at Neatherd Moor at 4.15pm. The same day. He told him to come with him, but Reynolds lurched forward, took him off balance, turned and ran away across a field. He pursued him but could not catch him.

Leslie Charles Seaman of Bintry, an apprentice at Messrs Oldfield, Dereham, said he sold Reynolds a dozen 12 bore cartridges in the shop one Thursday morning in February.

P.C. A. Freeman said he was keeping guard over the shed when he saw Reynolds come across a field towards the house. Witness said, "All right, Alfie," and Reynolds answered, "I know I have had it. It want to give myself up."

**Alleged Statement**

Det. Supt. S. Kybird produced a statement, alleged to have been made by Reynolds when cautioned, in which he said, "It was not my fault. It was not her fault, Her father was at fault."

The alleged statement added that he had known the girl for three years, and had had intercourse with her all that time. Last June she told him she was pregnant and he made up his mind to marry her, but he could not get work. Just lately he had got a job and told her he would marry her in two or three months. At first her father agreed, but later he refused to let him see her, and told her if she left the house he would call the police.

Reynolds, it was alleged, added that he called at the house the night before, but her father refused to let him see her. "I almost went on my hands and knees to ask him to let me see her, but he refused," the alleged statement read. He went round the following afternoon, when he knew her father would be at work. She came to the back door and "as soon as she sees me she burst out into tears and cried bitterly." He asked her to come and see his mother, but she said if she set foot in the lane her father would fetch the police and have her taken

away. Then he went and fetched his gun. "Ellen asked me what I brought the gun for and I told her to shoot rabbits," the alleged statement went on. "She was crying very much indeed. She said she was not crying because of the gun but because she could not get out to see me."

He told her he would leave her forever, and she said that if he did she would go to her bedroom and jump out of the window, because she could not live without him. "Then we both burst into tears and fell into each other's arms. I asked her if she wanted to go with me, and she said she would never go with anybody else. I have never seen her so upset before. She was not afraid of me and she said she was not afraid of the gun. I said I was going to shoot myself and she said, 'Shoot me first: you can't leave me in this world all alone.' she said 'Let's go together'."

He loaded the gun and pointed it at his own face, but she again said "Shoot me first," pulled the gun and pointed it at her own face "I had hold of the butt and we stood looking at each other," continued the alleged statement. "She said, 'Goodbye, darling—keep your promise'. I had my right hand on the butt and the left hand down by my side. She pulled the trigger."

The gun exploded and she fell to the ground, but it was too dark to see what had happened. He put another cartridge in for himself, but he did not shoot himself immediately because he wanted people to know why they had done it. When he left the yard he was going to go to the

police station, but he decided to have a last look at Ellen.

He ran away from the officer on Neatherd Moor for the same reason.

"We have loved each other for 2½years and we know we could not live without each other." the alleged statement concluded. "I'm not sorry now because I know I shall be with her. It would have been nice to have a little home of our own."

When he was charged, said Det. Supt. Kybird, Reynolds said, "I want to go with her now. I don't want to wait."

Mr Duigan successfully applied for legal aid and for a certificate for two counsel.

*So what happens next? How does one of our founding members of the society become involved? Find out in the next newsletter when the story will be concluded.*

# I remember

I was only a youngster but I used to go and clean for Mrs Ludkin at Park Farm, nice woman and Ellen was a sweet girl. I remember him of course, Alfred, he was a bit strange in the head, nice enough though. Oh it as shocking, terrible when you know someone that well. My mother didn't want me going there after that but I still did—we needed the money.

O. Blake, Hingham.

## D.A.S.

(Block capitals)

## Where am I?

Competition Volume 4, Issue 4



Name .....

Address .....

Post Code ..... Tel: (.....).....

# Competition

Just fill in the gaps below and return the form to me. I can promise that none of them are more than five minutes walk from the centre of Dereham. (Nunn's Place seems to me to be fairly central these days).

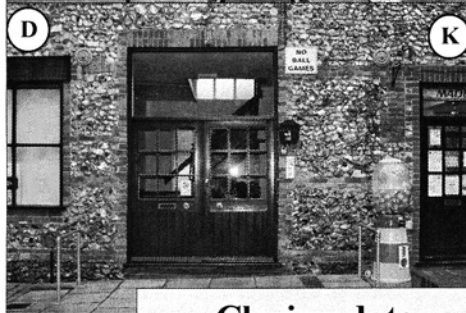
The prize is a voucher for £5.00 which can be used either as money off the 2008 outings or a year's subscription (2008 or 2009) for the Dereham Antiquarian Society.

Anyone can answer it as the only person who sets it is me and all my computer files are protected so that even my family members don't have access.

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.



Please return the competition answer slip form to: - Autumn Competition, c/o Kitty Lynn, Well House, Paper Street, Clint Green, Yaxham, Dereham, Norfolk, NR19 1RY.



**Closing date**  
**10<sup>th</sup> May, 2008**

/ = separate word begins

## Answers (Block Capitals Please)

Where am I standing? A \_ / \_ e / \_ a \_ / o \_ / A \_ i \_ / \_ o u \_ .

What is the name of the shop in the distance in picture A? \_ \_ \_ o \_ .

What type of shop is it in picture C? \_ o \_ \_ u \_ u e \_ e / o o \_ / \_ o \_ \_ .

Name the café shown on the right in picture D. \_ u \_ \_ e ' / \_ a \_ \_ .

# Church Clangers



Thank God for Church ladies with typewriters. These sentences actually appeared in church bulletins or were announced in church services. We have broken the list into five topics, the last being

### Church Business

1. For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs.
2. Remember in prayer the many who are sick of our community. Smile at someone who is hard to love. Say "Hell" to someone who doesn't care much about you.
3. Don't let worry kill you off—let the Church help.
4. Please place your donation in the envelope along with the deceased person you want remembered.
5. This evening at 7pm there will be a hymn singing in the park across from the Church. Bring a blanket and come prepared to sin.



**Taken from the**  
**Dereham & Fakenham Times**  
23.1.1970

### At the Snuff of a Candle

Mr Leslie Allwood, the Dereham solicitor, told me this week that he is trying to discover some information about "candle auctions" for a client in France who is writing a book on the subject. Apparently the candle auction is a means of selling goods in which a lighted candle burns while the bids are being made. The last bid lodged before the candle goes out secures the purchase.

(Continued from page 7)

wasn't there any more!

The article says how at the time he was busy painting and showed an example hanging up above his mantelpiece. He states how one of his three daughters (all of whom live in America) has the same love of painting and has made a name for herself as an artist over there.

*I doubt he's alive now – though I've been unable to find anything else out about him – who knows - he'd be 123 now! Mm. probably not then.*

*Now on to a different topic but on the same subject—law & order.*

### Dereham's Gallows, Stocks & Pillories

The Bishop's gallows have long ceased to exist on Gallowtree Moor, now the Neatherd Moor. Only the same 'Galley' farm serves as a reminder of the local Palatine powers that the Bishops of Ely exercised in the Manor of E. Dereham. Old Dereham had its usual complement of village appliances for dealing with summary justice for minor offences. These included its ducking stool for disorderly women, the stocks and a pillory. In the account for the Headborough's or Leet land the following is recorded:

- 1615 Paid to John Mayes for making the Coukestoole (*ducking stool*)
- 1630 Paid for meringe (*mending*) the hinges of the stocks
- 1658 For the pillory maken  
For the Corlen (*I think this is a person's name or a named job but I can find no translation for it*) the pillory  
For 12 quarts of bere (*beer*) for the rasen (*raising*) of the pillory
- 1659 For the toune well and the wiping (*whipping*) post.

And with that I've finished for now... *Kitty*



The Neatherd Moor—c. 1910

Photo copyright coding throughout is—

## Winner and Answers to last issues Competition



**Winner: -** Mrs Leslie Griffin  
**Answers: -**

- 1) Where am I—On the steps in Nelson Place.
- 2) What is the name of the way etc.—Nunn's Way & Norwich Street.
- 3) Street at end of photo 3—High Street

(P) © Peter Bradbury (K) © Kitty Lynn  
(C) © Cliff Allwright (V) © DAS Archives

## Dereham Antiquarian Society

Dereham's Local History Group

### The Committee

Chairman – Mr Tony Jones  
(01362) 820580

Vice Chairmen –  
Mr Peter Bradbury  
(& Publicity Officer)  
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Mr Ron Clarke  
(01362) 687370

Mr Bob Davies  
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Society Secretary – Mr Tony Bailes  
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& Society Treasurer – Mrs Joan Cole  
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Programme Secretary – Mrs Sheila Jones  
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Museum Treasurer – Mrs Pat Skittrall  
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DAS Newsletter  
c/o Mrs Kitty Lynn  
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Clint Green, Yaxham,  
Dereham,  
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Ghartly No. 295648

## Well I Never by Kitty Lynn



*Whilst looking through newspaper clippings in the archives I came across a curious article. It reads as follows.*

*Taken from the E.D.P May 15th 1921.*

### Two Glasses at Dereham Defence Force Recruit in Trouble

Yesterday, before the Dereham Bench of Magistrates, Sir Ralph Hare presiding, Arthur George Reynolds, of East Dereham, was charged with having been drunk and disorderly and assaulting the police at East Dereham on May 12th.

Police-sergeant Adcock said he was in Dereham Market Place in plain clothes, when he received a complaint that there was a row in the fish shop in Wellington Road. He saw prisoner with a crowd of other young fellows on the path outside. He was drunk, and witness advised him to go home. He refused, and struck witness a violent blow on the left eye. Witness took him to the Police-station.

Prisoner said he went to the pictures at eight o'clock, and did not come out until ten o'clock. He only had two glasses of beer in the Fleece.

Sergeant Adcock—I understand that is more than enough for you.

Prisoner alleged that Sergeant Adcock struck him five blows, which the-sergeant denied.

Police-constable Lown also gave evidence.

Corporal Chambers, of the Defence Force, said he saw the prisoner in the Picture House from 8pm until 10.20pm, when he was quite sober.

Prisoner said another man had got his mate down on the floor in the shop and he went to take his part.

Sir C. Berney, of the Defence Force, said prisoner enlisted last month, but they were not going to keep him.

In reply to Mr Brett, prisoner said he was wounded in the left arm during the war and was in receipt of a pension.

The Chairman said the Bench were satisfied and prisoner would have to go to prison with hard labour for 21 days.

*An Arthur George Reynolds is mentioned on page 8 as Alfie's father. It seems to me to be feasible that this is the same man; the dates would work. Even if Arthur enlisted right at the end of the war and was only 16, he would have been 25 when Alfie was born in 1926/7 being 24 in Feb. 1951.*

*But does anyone know different?*



Next Issue  
11<sup>th</sup> June  
2008

Stop Press—Museum has gained full accreditation—more details in the next issue