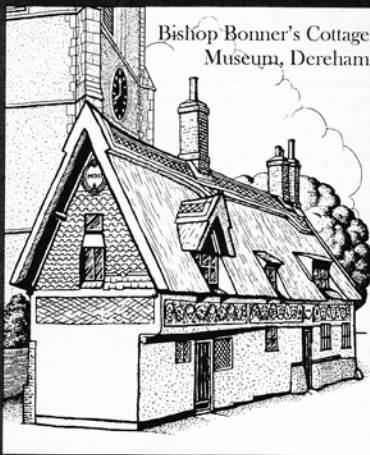


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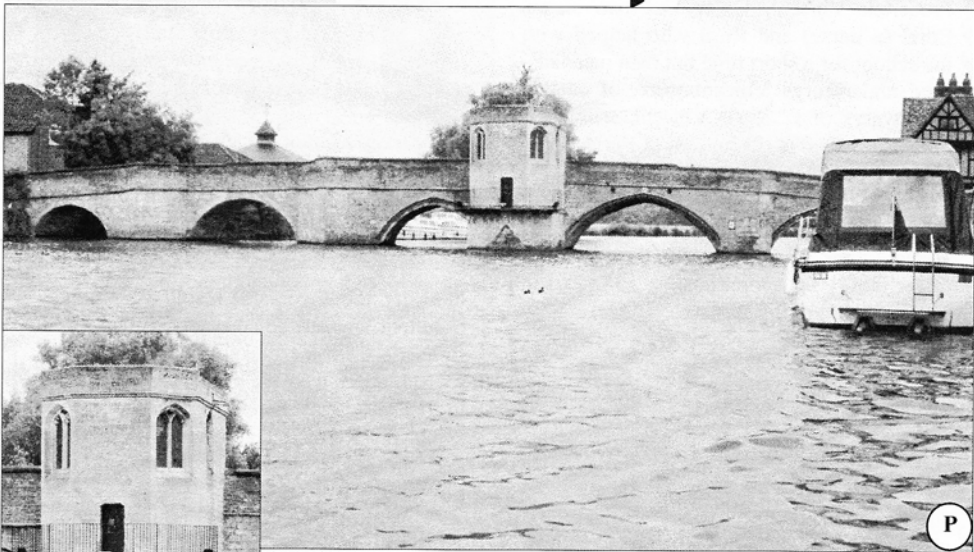
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Dereham Antiquarian

Newsletter Editors—
Cliff Allwright ☼☼☼☼☼☼☼☼
& Kitty Lynn ☼☼☼☼☼☼☼☼
☼☼☼☼☼☼☼☼☼☼

Society

Helping Local History
To
Thrive & Survive.



P

The Chapel on the Bridge in St Ives—but find out who is sitting inside the chapel and the problem they had with the front row. (p. 5).



Letters

Copy deadline—Any articles for the next newsletter to be received by 12th November please.

No room for much from me this time—but I've bagged this page for my farewells in the next issue. All I'll say for now is that, anybody who knows me knows that after five years I stop doing what I do and change direction. Why—well, for one thing I get bored doing the same thing for any longer, and begin to feel caged but secondly I think it's good to change as one can get set in one's ways and thus tend to go stale in one's attitude and of course thirdly someone else should have a go and how can anyone if somebody takes over something completely.

Yes, I've done this newsletter for five years come Xmas, time for someone new.

Now for some letters.

Kitty

Dear Kitty

Re: DAS Newsletter—Private Schools: Dereham.

The Hythe School in Elvin Road, Dereham was run by Miss Grace Vincent, daughter of Frederick Vincent. Grace had two sisters Ethel (a nurse) and Rosa who helped with the school for a short time but then married.

Fred and George Vincent were, of course, the owners of F. & G. Vincent, wholesale grocers, located at the bottom of Elvin Road.

You may also be interested to know that Fred Vincent's grandson, aged 89, is still living in Dereham, although no longer at the Hythe. I think the house was in the ownership of the family for approximately 150 years in the beginning of the century.

Best wishes

Anne Ketteringham

The second letter was sent to Peter Bradbury by our President, Rev. Jonathan Boston.

Dear Peter

Thank-you so much for sending the photographs of the Accreditation Certificate Presentation event.

Not only was it a most enjoyable and successful event, it was a wonderful achievement



K



K



K

Top to bottom:
Photo 1—members arriving & getting comfy.
Photo 2—Here's one certificate,
Photo 3—here's the other—what other?

marking the successful result of so much excellent and sustained effort. It has lifted Bonner's from the ranks of the local home-spun, of which there are many happy examples, to that of a "real" Museum. Please pass on, again, my warmest congratulations to Tony and the whole Society for making this possible.

With all good wishes and thanks
Yours Jonathan.

My thanks for the letters, Kitty.



Chairman's Corner

by Tony Jones

The museum having been awarded full accreditation, we felt it would be appropriate to have a celebratory evening and this was duly held on 13th June at the Meeting Point.

As well as our own members, we invited representatives from the Town Council and the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council—the body responsible for accreditation.

Among those present were the deputy mayor Linda Monument, councillors John Gretton and Philip Duigan and the town clerk Tony Needham. Also, we were pleased to have Nic Boyer, M.L.A.'s Regional Development Manager, Jamie Everitt, Norfolk's Museum Development Officer and Natasha Hutcheson, Jamie's predecessor.

Needless to say, the evening would not have been complete without our President, Reverend Jonathan Boston. Nic Boyer formally presented the accreditation certificate to Jonathan who, in his reply, proceeded to entertain us as only he can.

The local press were unable to join us, but a photograph and a write-up appeared in the Dereham Times.

I thought that Bob Davies's comments concerning me were most kind and, indeed, a very nice gesture. I also would like to thank Rosemary and Ray Fraser, plus helpers, for all their hard work to make the evening possible—the invitations, phone calls, arranging the venue, getting the food and liquid beverages etc.—all easier said than done. Again, thank you. All in all, I believe it was a very good event. The number of members there that evening was most gratifying and I do hope that all those present had an enjoyable time.

It has been suggested that we should arrange a social evening in December—a joint arrangement for members of the Dereham Society and ourselves. If this goes ahead as I hope it does, further details will be announced on our September trip or at the following meetings.

And that reminds me that as well as these talks, we have our annual dinner on 8th October, which, hopefully, many of you will be able to attend.

In the meantime, best wishes to you all.

Programme Guide



by Sheila Jones

Wednesday—October 8th

Event— The DAS Annual Dinner
Place— King's Head, North Elmham.
Time— 7pm for 7.30pm.

Wednesday—November 12th

Event— DAS Meeting.
Place— Trinity Church Rooms, Dereham.
Time— 7.30 pm.
Speaker— Gwendoline Page
(Ex Communications Officer).
Talk— 'Bletchley Park and its
Communications'.

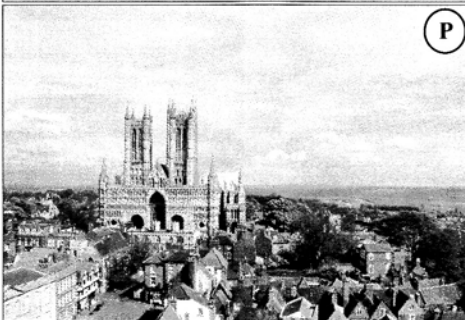
Wednesday—December 10th

Event— DAS Meeting.
Place— Trinity Church Rooms, Dereham.
Time— 7.30 pm.
Speaker— Gill Page
Talk— 'Antarctica'.

DAS Activities

by Peter Bradbury

P



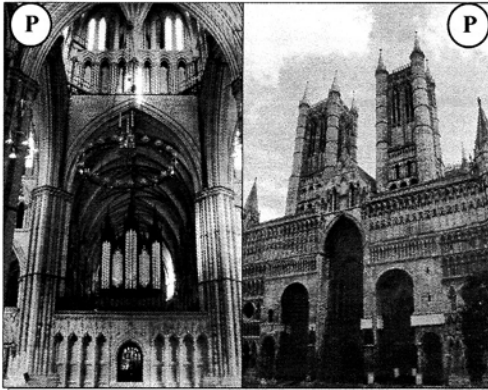
Lincoln Cathedral

Wednesday Outing 11th June 2008

Lincoln

This month's daytrip was to the City of Lincoln with its famous cathedral on the hill. As

(Continued on page 4)



Lincoln Cathedral (on the previous page also)
 left: Nave & Choir Screen
 Right: The West Front

(Continued from page 3)

we approached the city the sun came out giving a wonderful panoramic view of the city with the cathedral towering above it. The city is divided into two levels; the top of the hill includes the castle and cathedral, the bottom is the main shopping and commercial area both being connected by the notorious road called Steep Hill. The River Witham which runs through the city provided some lovely riverside walks. The more agile society members who climbed Steep Hill had the chance to explore the many craft shops, bookshops, and art galleries before arriving at the top of the hill on which stands the Castle with the Cathedral opposite. The castle built by William the Conqueror in 1068 and was accomplished by destroying 166 Saxon houses within the old Roman Fort causing the villagers to resettle at the bottom of the hill. In the grounds stands a Victorian prison next to today's Crown Court. The old prison, now a museum, houses one of the four surviving copies of Magna Carta sealed by King John in 1215. From the wall walk good views of the cathedral and city were possible. Opposite the castle stands Lincoln Cathedral which was built 1072-1075 by Bishop Remigius, where in the afternoon we were conducted on a guided tour of the building by one of the cathedral guides. The main features included were Saint Hugh's Choir, the Angel Choir, the Bishop's and Dean's Eye windows, the Chapter House and of course the famous Lincoln Imp. Our thanks are due to Sheila for organising a most interesting and enjoyable day out.

Wednesday Outing 9th July 2008 St Ives/Hemingford Grey, Cambs.

On the wettest day of the week a bus full of intrepid members and their friends set off to visit St Ives and Hemingford Grey, Cambridgeshire. The old market town of St Ives on the banks of the River Great Ouse is famous for its 11th Century Chapel dedicated to St Ledger, built in the middle of an ancient stone bridge spanning the river. This is the oldest of three bridges of this type in the whole of England. Starting from the bus station, which used to be the Cattle Market, it was only a short walk to Market Hill and the Broadway where open markets have been held since the Middle Ages. Looking for indoor attractions here we found the Norris Museum given to the town as a gift in 1933 by William Norris. It is run by the Town Council and is free. There are over seventy listed buildings in the town and in Market Hill stands a statue to Oliver Cromwell who lived here for a time and owned a farm in the suburbs. During the Civil War by order of Cromwell two arches of the stone bridge were demolished and a drawbridge built over the gap to prevent an attack by the Royalist Troops. After the Civil War the drawbridge was removed and the bridge repaired. This can still be seen by observing the two different shaped arches at the eastern end. After having lunch our coach took us the short distance to the beautiful village of Hemingford Grey where we had a guided tour of "The Manor", a 12th century Norman building with Tudor additions. It is reputed to be one of the oldest continuously inhabited houses in Britain. Recreated and made famous as the house of Green Knowe by Lucy Boston in her series of classic children's books, the moated house is surrounded by four acres of garden renowned for its collection of over 200 old roses and Dykes medal winning Irises. Inside the house we were shown some of Lucy Boston's exquisite award winning patchwork quilts. Before leaving for home we travelled to the neighbouring village of Hemingford Abbots for a splendid tea provided by the W.I. in the village hall.

Sunday Church Visit - 22nd June 2008 Tittleshall

Tittleshall St Mary's Church was this year's guided tour of a North Norfolk church, and 21

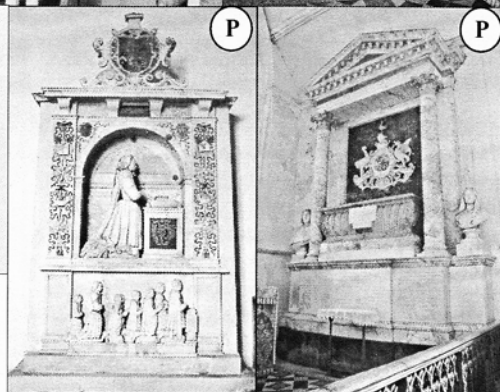


Left: Nobody ever sits at the front—members of the Dereham Antiquarian Society sitting in the Chapel over the bridge at St Ives (the bridge chapel is shown on the front page of this newsletter)

Top right: - the tomb of Sir Edward Coke—Chief Justice

Centre right: - the tomb of Bridget Coke

Far right: - the tomb of Thomas Coke—Builder of Holkham



of us travelled to the lovely village set in a Conservation Area a few miles from Litcham, where our President the Rev. Jonathan Boston lives, and where he recently retired as the Rector of St Mary's. The church is Norman 14th century with a mix of Decorated and Perpendicular architectural styles, consisting of: 14th C. tower, 15th C. Nave and Chancel. There are no aisles. The importance of the church lies in it being the resting place until 1870 of the Coke's of Holkham Hall, their coffins being stored in their, now sealed, mausoleum built onto the north side of the Chancel. The last coffin placed in there contained Thomas William Coke, Earl of Leicester, known as "Coke of Norfolk" the great agriculturist. We were privileged to be shown his funeral hatchment hanging on the mausoleum wall by Claire Le Messurier, chairperson of the PPC; this is not normally accessible to visitors. Luckily for us the magnificent family monuments are in the chancel and cover a period of 300 years of the Holkham Dynasty. The oldest is a wall tablet to Winifred, the mother of Sir Edward Coke she died 1569. The next one is to the first wife of her son

named Bridget Coke nee Paston who raised a family of 6 boys and 2 girls. She died aged 33 in 1598. She is shown in Elizabethan dress kneeling at a prayer table with her children shown also kneeling in prayer along the foot of the tomb. Perhaps the best tomb is that of Lord Chief Justice Sir Edward Coke designed by Nicholas Stone, Master Mason to James I and Charles I; it has a life size effigy of Sir Edward in his Judge's gown. Although he died at Stoke Poges in 1634 he wished to be buried next to "his first and best wife" at Tittleshall St Mary's. The remaining two Coke monuments are dwarfed by the one to Thomas Coke, 1st Earl of Leicester who died in 1759. He was the builder of Holkham Hall. It includes two busts by Roubiliac of the Earl and his wife Countess Margaret Coke. A pleasant Sunday afternoon spent in yet another lovely part of North Norfolk was completed by afternoon tea in the 17th century Bull Inn at Litcham.

Old News by Kitty Lynn



O.K. I've changed it—due to a recent letter in the Dereham Times I began to think about the lack of interest some people have in their town and wondered if and when this had happened before. Whilst searching for something on entertainments in the town I found the following articles. Evidently they had their troubles before 1924 to get Dereham to celebrate and so a special Dereham Day was planned.

01.08.1925 Dereham Day

Preparations for Monday's Great Carnival
Given fine weather on Monday, there is every reason to believe that the preparations of the last few months will culminate in a red letter day in the annals of Dereham. Commencing with the procession, which was briefly described last week, the day will be one of complete and care-free fun, in which the most serious and business-like things will be the winning of prizes or the selection of dance partners. Anybody seen looking worried and frowning is likely to be arrested by the Jolly-boys and sentenced to immediate extermination by King Carnival.

(In my opinion we could do with King Carnival & the Jolly-boys out there today—at least



**SPEND
BANK HOLIDAY
MONDAY NEXT
AT
DEREHAM DAY**

*MID-NORFOLK'S SUPER FETE,
CARNIVAL, SHOW and SPORTS*

A Jolly Peppy Fete for the inhabitants of Dereham and all the villages for miles around. Get to Gosper Road at five-o'clock and wait for the Surplus Mazon, a novelty worth watching for. Then see the Great

CARNIVAL PROCESSION

through the Market, Back's Row, South Green, Lynn Hill, Gosper Road, Neotherd, Crown Road, Norwich Street and Church Street.

COME IN COSTUME and WIN A PRIZE.

In THE VICARAGE MEADOWS a host of Amusements await you—
**SPORTS, CONCERTS, SIDE SHOWS, BAND
GAMES and DISPLAYS**

DON'T MISS THE GREAT FIRE

which will be put out (perhaps) by the Dark Town Fire Brigade.

ALL OLD AGE PENSIONERS should enter the DABBY & JOAN RACE.
DANCING ALL THE EVENING.

PROGRAMMES Etc. on Sale Everywhere, contain Full Information.
L.N.L.R. EXCLUSIONS.

Admission to Grounds 6d. Children under 14 half-price.

TEN HOURS FUN





The Carnival Parade through the Market Place 1925.

some days anyway)

There is an excellent programme of sports. Races have also been provided for old couples and for disabled men with artificial limbs. Other diversions will include coker-nut (*coconut perhaps?*) shies, hoop-la, darts, and bowling, a ladies' cross bowls competition, concerts, dancing displays, and first aid.

08.08.1925

DEREHAM DAY

Big Crowds and a full Programme

A Successful Venture

Show, Sports and Competition Winners

The success of the first Dereham Day, an attempt to re-establish the town as the centre of all mid-Norfolk activities far exceeded the anticipations of even the most optimistic supporters. The main streets were gaily decked with flags and streamers and the cottages around responded right royally to the town's invitation to them, large crowds coming in by rail and road throughout the day. It says much for the organisation of the affair that, while it was somewhat in the nature of an experiment, no serious hitch occurred and the programme was carried through punctually.

THE OFFICIALS

The organisation of the event was carried out by a large committee of which Mr. E. R Hill was chairman, Mr Harry Lambert secretary, and Mr N. E. Atkin treasurer, the members being Messrs R. Jex, R. Jarred, W. E. Baldry, R. Garratt, G. Holliday, V. Barden, W. E. Terrett, E. Smith, H. Lowe, J. O. Allen. E. E. Bigge, G. W. Pells, T. Lloyd, and W. B. Tebbutt. Mesdames B. Leech, S. Chambers. W. A. Norris, G. B. Reeves, J. Phillippo, T. Cramner, E. E. Bigge and W. George; the Misses I. Hooper, P. Dunn, and M. Leech. This was divided into sub-committees, with chairman and secretaries as follows: -

Sports: Mr E. R. Hill (chairman), Mr A. Beck (secretary); Carnival, Mr B Leech; Amusements, Dr. J. K. Howlett (chairman), Mr G. B. Reeves (secretary); Finance. Mr N. E. Atkin; Advertising, Mr H Lambert and Mr G. B. Reeves.

THE PROCESSION left the New Hall at one o'clock, led by the Marshal (Capt. Hooper). It was of great length and consisted of humorous and decorative items too numerous to mention. Much of the success of the procession was due to the efficient service of the police in regulating not only the crowd, but also the progress of the procession itself. A heavy shower fortunately ceased as quickly as it commenced, and did



little else but lay the dust. The winners in the various classes were as follows:

Trade cars: 1st - H. Smith, 2nd - Crown Laundry, 3rd - Blomfield. The Judges (the vicar, Dr J. K. Howlett, Mr H. J. Barnaby and Mr E. R. Hill) considered Messrs. Hobbies' car too elaborate to be allowed to compete with others, and awarded it a special prize.

Horse & Van: 1st. R. Gray, 2nd. Moy, 3rd Blomfield.

Tableaux: 1st- W. Mason (Egyptian Water-carrier), 2nd - Mrs Cranmer and children (old woman that lived in a shoe), 3rd - Mr H. Skeet and children (Newly-weds)

Decorated cars: 1st - King Carnival, 2nd - An Indian Car, 3rd - Mr F. A. Bigg.

A crowd of nearly four thousand people were present on the Vicarage meadow and Mr Fox's meadow, which were decorated for the occasion. Among the very large number of



stalls and side shows may be mentioned "Shooting the Shute." This was a decided novelty and consisted of the fire-escape shute arranged as an amusement being very popular until one boy ripped the canvas in his decent and fell out; fortunately he was not seriously hurt.

THE HORTICULTURAL SHOW which was the annual exhibition of the Horticultural Society, was held as part of the fete, and proved a great attraction, a continued stream of visitors giving the display the admiration it deserved. The silver cup awarded by the president,

Mr E. R. Hill, for the best display in the amateur classes was won by Mr E. Claxton of East Tuddenham, with 48 points. The runner-up, Mr H. Cross, won the Society's silver spoon for the best amateur vegetable classes. In the sweet pea classes Mr L. Barrett, of Scarning won the first prize for the third year in succession, while, in the roses, Messrs A. J. Allen of Norwich staged a splendid display, which secured the Society's gold medal. An excellent show of begonias and ferns by Mr Rowland Hill was awarded the Society's silver medal. The secretarial

work in connection with the show was well carried out by Mr. E. Smith and his assistant Mr. C. Barnard, the task of judging being fulfilled by Mr. J. C. Sheddick and Mr. H. C. Wier.

Here follows a very long list of prize winners for every type of vegetable imaginable.

THE SPORTS

There was an attractive programme of sports, of which all the names are listed in this section of the paper - *but I'm not going to enter them all here as it would take too much room. However here is a list of some of the sports here - 50, 80 & 100 yard races for boys, then girls and finally adults. Followed by the usual three legged races, and egg and spoon races. Then*



Top left—the procession passing through the town on its way to the vicarage grounds for the Dereham Day .

Centre: - the first prize trade turn-out, won by Mr H. Hill, of Dereham.

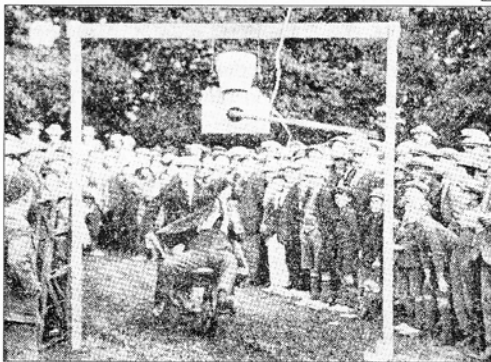
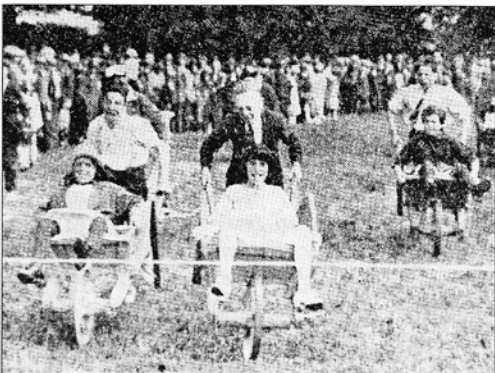
Left: - St Withburga and her Nuns. A clothing tableau in the procession at Dereham's Day.

the more interesting ones - a Darby and Joan race for old age pensioners, a wheelbarrow race, a one-legged race for ex-service men with artificial limbs and finally tilting the bucket.

The £2 first prize of the bowls drive, for which there were over 60 entries, was won by Mr W. Baker, the others being divided between Messrs Norman Smith, F. Pease and A. Dack.

OTHER ATTRACTIONS

The "Pom-Poms Concert Party" of Norwich provided three half-hour sessions of mirth and melody and a pretty exhibition of Maypole



dancing was given by school children, trained by Miss Harrison. A display of ambulance work by members of the Dereham St John Ambulance Brigade included rescue work from a burning house, and created great interest. The Hindolveston brass band played selections during the afternoon as well as setting the tune for the procession and providing the musical programmes for the dancing in the evening. After tea there was a parade of revellers in costume for the purpose of judging.

Children: most original 1st - C. Cracknell, 2nd - J. Wray, 3rd - G. Short. 4th - D. Nichols.



Children: best dressed 1st - Misses D. Norris and Cox, 2nd - M. Barton and J. Nailor, 3rd - J. Edwards, 4th - M. Steward; special R. King and R. Cox.

Adults: most original 1st - R. Jex, 2nd - Miss Howes, 3rd - Mr Skinner, 4th - Savoury & Gilbert. Adults: best dressed 1st - A. Jex and Miss A. Jex, 2nd - Miss Jarvis, 3rd - Mr Sturgeon and Miss Stevenson, 4th - Miss Skeat; special, Mr Cox and Miss Goddard.

The catering for teas was carried out by Mr G. Smith. The day closed happily with dancing, which was kept up till a late hour.

The judges for the carnival parade were Mrs Macnaughton-Jones, Mrs R Jarred, Mrs H. Lambert (jun.) and Mrs Garrett.



Top right—The Wheelbarrow race at Dereham was a "bumping" success.

Top left: - Tilting the bucket was an amusing event at the sports at Dereham on Monday.

Above; An Egyptian water carrier—Mr W. Mason's tableau which ensured 1st prize.

Left - Some of the entrants in the "Darby and Joan" race for old age pensioners at Dereham on Monday.

A NUTSHELL OF HISTORY

....researched by Kitty Lynn.



The only fairs that I really remember going to on a regular basis were the Mart at King's Lynn when I was at Tech in the early 1970's and the one held in Dereham at the back of Cherry Tree Car Park from the late 1960's to the 80's. The latter was held twice yearly and my memories are a little fuzzy to say the least.

Mainly due to a swift half in the Cherry Tree at half hour intervals—just to settle my nerves, you understand. Eventually this would lead to me falling flat on my face somewhere at the fair. Ah, the good old days of youth when you could fall over without worrying about how you'd feel the next morning. However I confess I still go to them and enjoy them just as much as I always did, only now there's no quick half. Nowadays the fair in Dereham is held in various places—it seems wherever they can put it. Lately it's been held on the Fleece Meadow at the back of the Memorial Hall.

But what are the origins of our fairs to-day?

THE FUN OF THE FAIR

To largely sedentary rural communities, fairs were wonderfully exciting events, thrilling glimpses of the world beyond their parish boundaries and a rare opportunity to sample wares quite unavailable locally.

The medieval fair was the highlight of the social and economic calendar. Unlike the more frequent and ubiquitous markets, there was a strong festive element—the festival. Fairs were special occasions. The customary tranquillity of the country town would be transformed into a bustling, colourful throng of tradesmen, merchants and entertainers. Itinerant pedlars, mountebanks and cheap-jacks mingled with shepherds and ploughmen, minstrels and pilgrims. Wool from the local abbot's flock was sold alongside spices from Venetian traders, Spanish iron, French wines, Kentish hops and Cornish tin. The great fairs, like those of St. Ives, Sturbridge, Winchester and



MUMMERS AND MOUNTEBANKS

Unlike regular country markets, fairs were considered special occasions and a strong festive element pervaded the commercial atmosphere of the traditional fair, with minstrels and mummers providing a colourful backdrop for the hawking of goods, the haggling over horses and the hiring of labour.



St Bartholomew, have long since disappeared, but their legacy remains, not only in today's fun fairs and agricultural shows, but also in the pattern of rural settlements and in trading institutions.

The law of the fair is the basis of all British business law; it governed standards of trade and of weights and measures—Troy weight, introduced into Britain after the Norman Conquest and used until metrication in the 1970's took its name from the fair at Troyes in France. The layout of fairs conditioned the street pattern of the country towns which grew up around them: the wide concourse of booths and stalls centred on the church or manor was the forerunner of today's High Street. The fair also pioneered the wholesale distribution of goods, and the theatre.

The fair was of paramount importance to the countryman; for the farmer it represented an annual moment of truth; for the labourer it meant a weekday free from drudgery, possibly the only such day in the year. To both it was their only chance to buy anything from outside the locality. In many places it became the time for paying annual rents—and sometimes settling old scores.

The Middle Ages was the heyday of fairs; 3300 charters were granted in the 13th century and a further 1560 in the next 100 years. But most fairs were very much older than their charters, with origins elusive and immemorial. Some locate the origins of ancient fairs in periods of truce between adjacent hostile communities, when they would gather together

THE KING'S CHARTER

Fair charters were granted by the king, and this gazetteer, published in 1783, lists 3362 annual fairs in 1637 locations. Charter holders were responsible for keeping the peace and blunting sharp practices. In return they could charge entry fees and rent to stallholders.

STOCK MARKETS

The showing and selling of livestock has long been an important part of country fairs, and many country fairs of today, like the Agricultural Show at Rosedale, Yorkshire have become almost exclusively devoted to the marketing of livestock.

at their boundary and use the occasion for trade and revelry. Others see them developing from festive gatherings or at the intersection of trade routes.

HILLTOP FAIRS

The sitting and timing of fairs often confirm their ancient origins. At Weyhill in Hampshire up to half a million sheep changed hands at a hilltop site near the boundary between three parishes, at the crossing of two old trackways and close to an Iron Age barrow. Similar hilltop fairs took place all over the country, notably

O W E N ' s NEW BOOK of FAIRS,

PUBLISHED

By the King's Authority.

BEING

A COMPLETE AND AUTHENTIC ACCOUNT
OF ALL THE

F A I R S

I N

E N G L A N D and W A L E S,

As they have been settled to be held since
the Alteration of the STILE.

Noting likewise the COMMODITIES which each FAIR is remarkable for furnishing; also the DAYS on which Markets are respectively held; with the Distances from LONDON; and the Number of Members which each Place sends to Parliament.

A NEW EDITION.

To which is added,

An ABSTRACT of all the ACTS of PARLIAMENT relating to FAIRS.

L O N D O N :

Printed for W. OWEN, No. 11, Fleet Street;
and Messrs. GOADBY and Co. at Sherborne.

M DCC LXXXIII.

N. B. All the Lists of Fairs are full of great Mistakes, and in no wise to be depended on, unless signed with the Hand-writing of

W. Owen



THE CHARTER GLOVE

The charter holder's power was often symbolized by a large decorated hand or glove which would be paraded through the streets to proclaim the fair and then kept for its duration.

at Woodbury Hill, near Bere Regis, St Giles Hill, Winchester, Silbury in Wiltshire

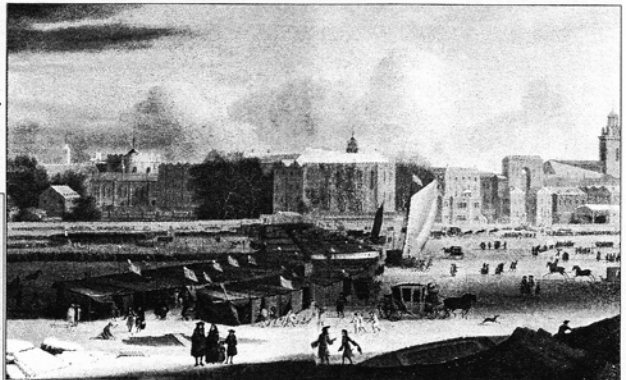
and Lee Gap in Yorkshire. Many are near henges or ancient earthworks. The ox roast, traditional at fairs and carnivals to this day, may well be a relic of the blood sacrifice demanded by pagan burial rites.

The timing of old fairs is equally revealing of their antiquity. Many were clustered around the quarter dates of the old, May, year. The two most popular days were Mayday itself and Michaelmas—both related to festivals in pre-Christian Britain. These were also quiet times in the farming year, the beginning and end of the growing season.

With the coming of Christianity, many new religious foundations appropriated the old pagan sites, and fairs became associated with saints' days, usually the saint to whom the local church was dedicated, and were often held in the churchyard itself. The involvement of the Church in fairs was to be a long and highly profitable one. When the Normans reconstituted the old fairs, the charter which gave the holder rights to the revenue of the fair, was often granted to a local bishop or abbot, specifically as a means of endowment of a religious house. Eventually the spectacle of a holy place on holy days being used for such unholy practices as

ON THE RIVER

Frost fairs on the river Thames were held regularly throughout the 15th, 16th, and 17th centuries when the river used to freeze over, as its flow was impeded by the massive pontoons of the old London Bridge.



dancing, drinking, wrestling and trading led to the banishing of the fair from churchyards, and later Sundays. With the Reformation the connection between church and fair was finally broken.

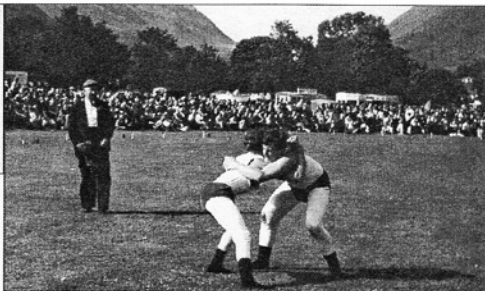
At the height of the Church's influence, there were sometimes violent clashes between towns-people and the abbot or bishop who held the charter over control of the fair and the town. A charter gave the holder virtually complete control of a town for the duration of the fair, which in some cases, for example, Winchester, could last as long as 24 days. The charter-holder was responsible for maintaining the peace at the fair, and for blunting sharp practices as far as possible. Civil law was suspended and authority vested in special courts—courts of Pi-powder, a corruption of the French word for pedlar, *pie-powder*, meaning 'dusty feet'. A jury of traders tried complaints brought by other traders or the fair officials. Judgement came on the spot, with the malefactors fined or taken off to the cages, stocks, or whipping posts provided for the edification and entertainment of other fairgoers.

TRONAGE AND STALLAGE

The proceedings were wide open to abuse, the charter-holders using the courts to drum up more revenue from traders on trumped-up charges. Similarly, the tolls to which they were otherwise entitled were levied with considerable severity; they could charge tolls on all attending the fair, stallage for setting up a stall, tronage for the use of the tron—the giant beam weighing machine that dominated many fairs. By exercising these rights in full, they could operate a stranglehold on normal

FIGHT FAIR

Drawing large crowds from the surrounding countryside, fairs provided a great opportunity for sporting competition, whether village against village in tug of war, or man against man as in this wrestling bout at a Cumberland fair.



business, preventing even local trades—bakers, butchers and so on—from trading from their own premises during the fair on the grounds that it would interfere with their right to stallage.

At the larger fairs, officials operated under the aegis of police; others worked the tron or supervised trading standards. Leather-searchers were responsible for checking the weight and quality of hides. The Ale-taster could demand a sample of any liquor offered for sale. And there was plenty for him to sample; licensing laws were suspended at fair time and any householder displaying a sprig or 'bush' of evergreen above the door could sell ale.

The typical medieval fair lasted three days: the eve, feast day and morrow of the saint. The eve was the show day with proclamation and procession when most of the wholesale business was transacted. The feast day was the general market and sports open to all, and the morrow saw the conclusion of business. The major fairs were longer but kept generally to the same order of events. At Woodbury Hill the first day was given over to the wholesalers and those seeking annual sales contracts; the second

was for the gentry and the third for the common folk. Subsequent days were for specialists in various types of stock. Sheep, cattle and hens all had their day and the fair was wound up, as were many others, with a day of horse-trading and racing.

By the 13th century, a network of fairs had developed that supported large travelling populations of merchants and showmen on a regular circuit beginning at King's Lynn on St Valentine's Day and continuing through to November. Many fairs had their period of dominance. Two of them, Sturbridge Fair, near Cambridge, and St Bartholomew's Fair in London were bigger and more famous for longer than any others, though for different reasons.

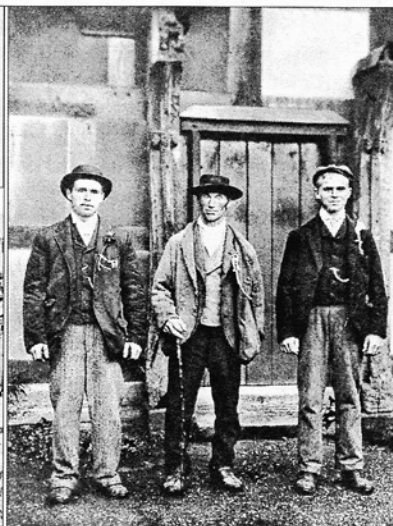
STURBRIDGE FAIR

At Sturbridge, chartered to support a hospice for lepers in 1217, the reasons were largely economic. Bulk goods could be brought by sea

TRADE IN MAN AND BEAST

At mop and hiring fairs those seeking work presented themselves wearing tokens of their trade in their hats or lapels.

Shepherds often wore a hank of wool, grooms a piece of sponge and carters a length of whipcord. Horse trading was also an important part of many fairs, and specialist fairs such as the June fair at Appleby are still thriving today.





FUN FAIRS

Usurped by fixed shops and markets, many specialist fairs declined, their original idiosyncrasies preserved only in their names. Many, such as the Nottingham Goose Fair now survive solely as funfairs. But although the brash music and bright lights of the modern fair, with its merry-go-rounds side-shows and dodgems may seem a far cry from the traditional fairs of old, many modern fairs still preserve some of the anarchic spirit of excitement that has characterized the fair for centuries.

to Blakeney or Lynn on the Norfolk coast, and thence by barge to the fair site. Packhorse trains brought wool from the south and west along the Icknield Way, together with Cornish tin; from the north they brought cloth, wool, salt and Derbyshire lead. Kentish hops and Wealden iron came by the sea route; cheese, cattle and horses came from all over the country. Consignments of imported goods were also on offer at Sturbridge: silks, velvets, fine glass and china, Norwegian tar and pitch, linens and lace, furs and amber, precious stones and spices.

Sturbridge was where the royal court purchased its cloth and clothing, and many large abbeys their year's victuals. Traffic to and from the fair was prodigious. Cambridge and the towns round about were filled to bursting with visitors. Sturbridge maintained its standing well into the 18th century, when canals and improved roads throughout the country robbed it of its importance. It fell into steady decline until, in the 1930s, it was proclaimed for the last time to an audience of an ice-cream barrow and two customers.

Part of the decline of Sturbridge was owing to the fact that it had never really been a pleasure fair. St Bartholomew's, by contrast, was blessed with a boisterous, anarchic spirit from the very beginning. Founded in 1133, it was at first a cloth fair with sidelines in livestock and slaves. But as early as 1600 trade had been almost totally eclipsed by the pursuit of pleasure,

though it was not necessarily what might pass for pleasure nowadays. Bull-baiting, cock-fighting and shin kicking contests vied for attention with mock and real executions, and riot and gluttony were rife. Alongside such excesses, though, were the beginnings of the circus and the theatre.

The first exotic animals were brought to these shores to feature in wild beast shows intended to display the mysteries of the Creation. Early Miracle plays dramatized the major events of the Bible for an unlettered audience. Then came Mystery plays, exemplifying the lives of the saints, and Morality plays, illustrative of correct behaviour. From these developed the secular theatre of the Elizabethans.

The increasing licentiousness, debauchery and mayhem of 'Old Barthelmy' over the years attracted several attempts to suppress it, until in 1855 it met the hardening of Victorian attitudes head-on and, to few regrets, it was finally abolished.

FUN FAIRS

However, the legacy of St Bartholomew's has proved stronger than that of Sturbridge, and it is largely as pleasure fairs that the medieval fairs have survived, their original idiosyncrasies preserved only in their names—the Nottingham Goose Fair, the Egremont Crab Fair, and so on. The old specialist fairs for cheese or cherries, leather, textiles, even gingerbread, are no more.

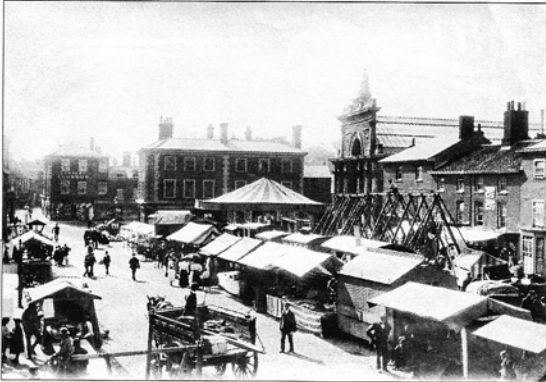
The only fairs that have retained their specialities are the stock fairs—some of which have evolved into the present-day agricultural shows—and especially the horse fairs like the June Fair at Appleby, Cumberland and Lee Gap in Yorkshire.

Ultimately, it has been the fun fair, the least regarded and seemingly most peripheral element of the traditional fair that has kept the spirit of the fair alive. Trade fairs withered away as their functions were usurped by regular, well-appointed markets and the spread of permanent shops in country towns. Specialist fairs fell victim to their specializations, overtaken by changing methods of manufacture and distribution. Recently there has been a new surge of fairs—those specialising in enactment and old fashioned goods, this has mainly come about through the fact that in the more rural areas of Britain there are now a considerable number of artisans once more working from

home, due either to the discouraging rental for shop frontage or the remote location of the specialist. These fairs offer the same facilities as the once olden day markets did to the general public—something hand crafted with love and affection at an affordable price.

Unfortunately any ancient stock fairs were ended by outbreaks of epidemic diseases, and by modern regulations regarding husbandry and hygiene. Still the fun of the fair persists, and the helter-skelters, side-shows, merry-go-rounds and dodgems of the modern fairground are the direct descendants of the boxing booths and curiosity shows, the menageries and lotteries of the old fairs.

Next time—continuing the 'glad to be alive today' with—Keeping Clean



DEREHAM'S HARVEST FAIRS c1900.

Were held on the first and third weekends in September. The Market Place would be filled with roundabouts, swings and stalls, all busy from noon till 11pm on Friday and Saturday.

In the 1920s, some of the rides would be working on Thursday evening and the takings were donated to the Hospital.



Old Dereham By Kitty Lynn



The Memorial Hall

Where is the Memorial Hall?

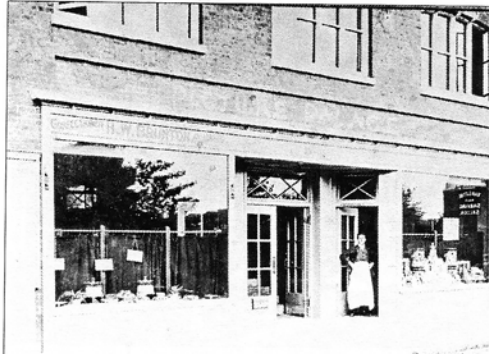
The Hall is a Grade 2 Listed Building fronting onto Norwich Street approximately half way down on the northern side and opposite Morrison's car park.

It is the largest of a small group of domestically scaled buildings of mixed use constructed in similar red brick walls (one colour washed) with pantile roofs and all built at different periods.

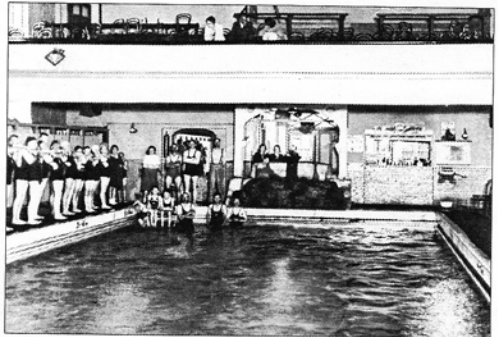
The building has been described as an interesting specimen of late eighteenth or early nineteenth century factory architecture of a simple form with features reflecting its utilitarian provenance. (The front has rusticated pilasters at each end with only the front northern side.)

What is the Memorial Hall used for today?

At present the property is in use as a Public Hall for the people of Dereham. The Dereham Operatic Society, one of the principal users of the Hall, owns the building on the opposite side of the cart shed and their access to side stage is from the cart shed lean-to.



The Hall is in multi-purpose usage all year and potentially every day. It is mixed in its community and commercial use, the latter providing revenue for upkeep and operating costs. The flat-floored hall has a maximum seating capacity for 260 with a further 109 seats in the balcony. It is used by local groups for operetta, lyric theatre and other drama performances. The Hall converts for meetings, dances, dinners and shows, and at one time was used for boxing and wrestling matches. It, of course, has its ceremonial use in regard to its foundation as a Memorial Hall; its commercial uses include a weekly auction. Other groups use the Hall for dancing classes, Tumble Tots etc.



What is the History of the Memorial Hall?

With every building built there is a person with a reason to build it so who was it? And why?

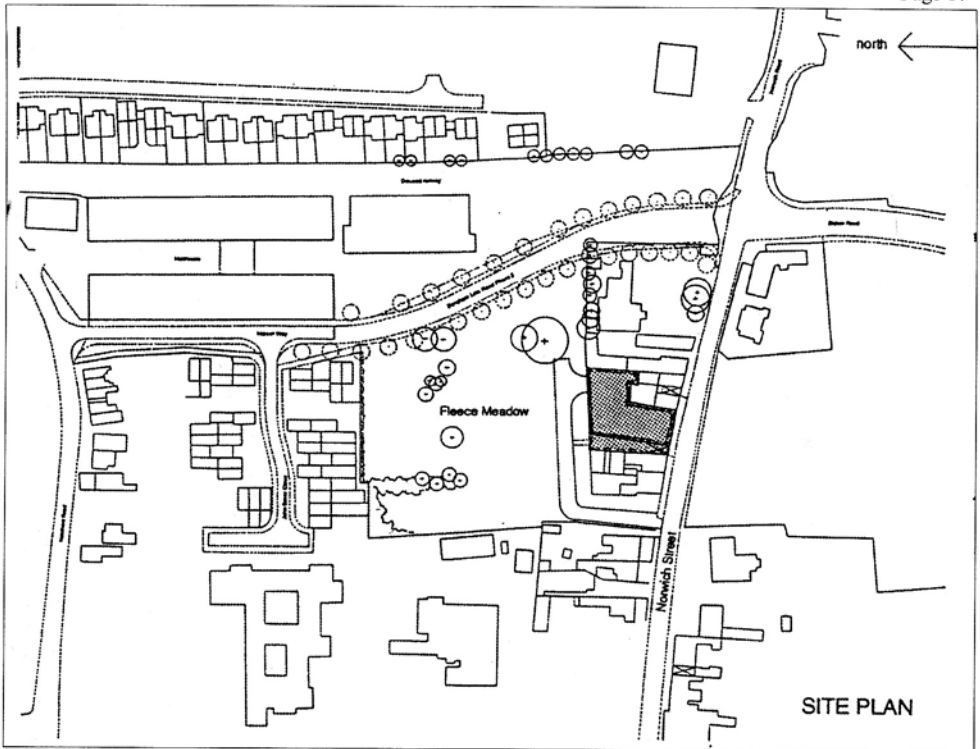
A man named James Elvin moved into Dereham and by 1818 he had built his coachworks in Norwich Street. Here he continued to work gaining a reputation for his works and was succeeded when he died in 1880 by his son, Charles Norton Elvin.

The firm gained a very high reputation for their work. This was no doubt enhanced with Charles studying and finally becoming a well-known authority on heraldry. He wrote a dictionary on the subject which is still highly acclaimed today. Perhaps this is why a firm in the middle of rural Norfolk built coaches for nobility, gentry and royalty such as the Czar. *Please note I'm not inferring that their handiwork was not good, even brilliant, but they would have needed that certain edge that*

Above left—A front view of the Memorial Hall 2007

Left—the two shops

Above—the Swimming Pool



is still needed to make a profitable business known world wide and I have a feeling that this was down to the heraldry research in some part.

On Charles's death in 1895, Thomas Elvin, his son took over for a short period. (Hence we find their name in several places in town - Elvin Road, Elvin House and Elvin Lodge.)

However, in 1908 business declined and the building was purchased to become a public hall. In the sale details it is described as a "large, three storey building with yard and stabling suitable for Motor Works, Laundry, etc". Much of the interior was changed (demolished) at this time, except for the three storey section on the Norwich Street frontage - that of the rusticated pilasters at each end.

The hall was then divided into several areas for different purposes.

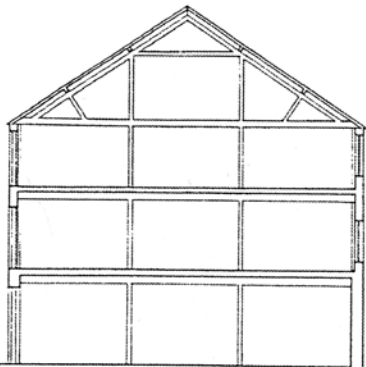
On the ground floor there was a shop on either side of the entrance - Perry's sweet shop on the left and Faux, the hairdresser, on the right. The two upper floors were made into living accommodation.

Later the intermediate floors of the building were removed and a balcony formed at the

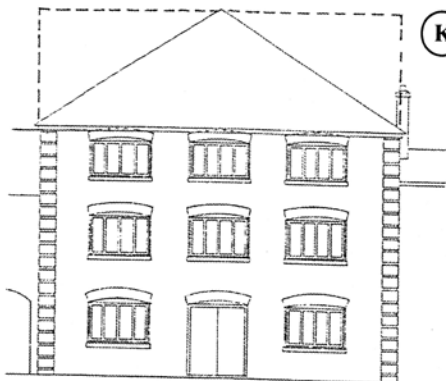
south end with a proscenium stage at the opposite end for concerts and meetings.

During the First World War when the moving pictures arrived in Dereham the hall became the Picture Palace and there was a show every evening; 6d and 1/- (2½ and 5p) downstairs and 1/6 (7½p) in the balcony. Matinee for children on Saturdays, 1d downstairs and 2d upstairs. There were heroes and villains, damsels in distress. Pearl White tied to the railway lines with the express approaching! Comedies with Laurel and Hardy and Charlie Chaplin, and later Tom Mix and his horse and, always, the Serial - a real thriller which reached a critical point only to be "Continued Next Week"! All this was accompanied by a piano or, on special occasions, a small orchestra. Mr Bert Fanthorpe remembers playing his violin every night for 10/- (50p) a week.

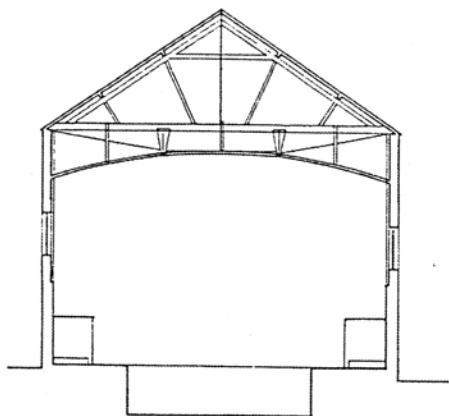
With the introduction of sound, the cinema lost trade to the Exchange Theatre in Dereham and there was talk of closing it. However in 1934 there was a grand opening - it had been converted into a 18m x 17.5m heated swimming pool, with cubicles along the side wall. This was very popular in the summer but not in the



section through coachworks 1818



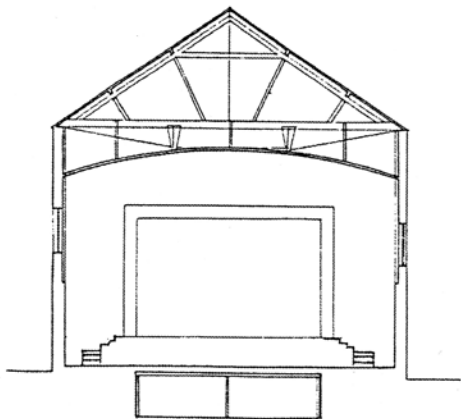
south elevation - 1818



section through swimming pool 1936/37



south elevation - 1908



section through Memorial Hall 1949



south elevation - 1996

CONJECTURAL RECONSTRUCTIONS

winter, so the floor was replaced each November and the Hall used for concerts and dances.

During the Second World War the town was filled with troops and evacuees and there was such a demand for entertainment that the Hall became a cinema again, called the Pool Cinema. It was run by Mrs "Billy" Wright. Her husband ran the Exchange Theatre and both cinemas changed their programme mid-week so it was possible to see four films a week.

The hall was purchased by the Urban District Council after the war, reverting to public use and in 1949 named the "The War Memorial Hall" in honour of the fallen in the two World Wars from Dereham.

The stage lighting, which cost £1,700, (prior to 1952) had been purchased largely from a grant of £1,000 from the Arts Council, "the Dereham Players" (now DOS) making themselves responsible for the rest. The walls of the Hall were decorated with shields bearing the badges of the various units and regiments in which Dereham men served in both wars and outside in the entrance there are plaques listing their names.

For the technical minded - building specs.

- At the time of removal of the intermediate floors the roof trusses were strengthened and the side walls restrained by the insertion of a steel bowstring to the bottom chord connected to steel channel stanchions which ran from the eaves to the first floor level and were bolted through the wall to round cast plates.
- An arched steel member linked with the bowstring acts as bracing to the connection with the stanchions and is the former for the timber boarded barrel vaulted ceiling over the Hall.
- It is not clear at which stage this reinforcement was added, but presumably when the internal floors were removed for the cinema.
- The extensions at the rear of the property provided a crossover for the stage and very constrained dressing room space.
- Side stage space was very limited.
- The single storey outbuildings on the east flank provided a bar and server.
- The front section of the building provided a small entrance foyer and toilets.
- Stone memorial panels were inserted into the flank walls of the recessed entrance to

Now & Then Norwich Street
1914 & 2007.



the Hall.

- The two upper levels were converted into a caretaker's flat with a projection/control room on the top floor over the flat.
- The remaining rooms on the third floor are not in use except to provide access.
- The property has undergone a series of modernisations in the 1970's and 80's.
- A new access road was constructed in 1994 from Norwich Street to the rear of the property for servicing the building.

So why is it a Listed Building?

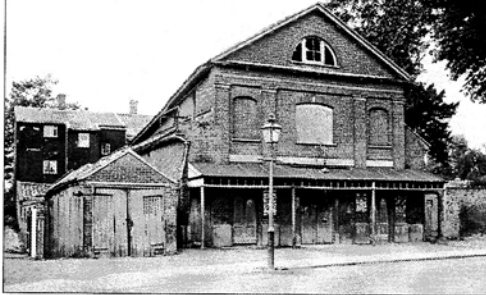
The relevance would seem to rest in the rarity of extant coachworks buildings in East Anglia. The removal of the interior floors and its supporting structure in 1908 and changes to the fenestration, doorways, stairways and other features, however, has been very damaging to its historical value in this respect.

Reference to the proscenium and balcony in the Listed Building record suggests that the later uses of the building as cinema and theatre might be valued as a reflection of social history; it is assumed rather than as being of intrinsic architectural merit—the acanthus leaf border to

the proscenium is identified as a feature. And finally—there is no reference to the use of the building as a swimming pool in the Listed Building record. WELL - We have the picture to prove them wrong and guess what - the pool still exists, although now permanently covered over I'm sure it could be proven to be still there for any doubting Thomases with a surplus amount of energy and time to dig.

The Vault by Kitty Lynn

c1915



The Theatre and its Players.

Boston and Puddy's book on Dereham starts off Theatre Street with "The chief building in Theatre Street is of course the Theatre."

What Theatre? Well if you weren't here before 1952 you'll know nothing of it except that the site now holds the Theatre Royal Surgery - one of the two Doctors' Practices in the town. So let's spin the clock back and find out its history.

In bygone days most of the entertainment was provided by local talent. The town was also visited by travelling companies of actors who played in barns, at the inns or the Assembly Rooms.

There is an early record of the company which normally played at the Norwich Theatre visiting Dereham in 1749 and paying in a barn next to the King's Head. This company visited Dereham every two years and performed for Dereham theatre goers such items as, Henry the Fifth in 1757, and the Merry Wives of Windsor. In 1759 the plays were "The Beaux Stragem" and "Romeo and Juliet". The company continued to visit Dereham every two years until 1792.

"It is quite possible that Mrs Sarah Siddons played in Dereham in 1778 for, in the previous

autumn, a Mr and Mrs Sarah Siddons had been engaged by the Norwich Company at a salary of £3-3-0 a week." So writes Mr R. P. Mander, the archivist to the Vic Wells Company in the Dereham Parish Magazine 1951.

He continues "In September, 1778, Mrs Siddons joined the Bath Company and gradually became famous. "In 1789, the Norwich Company was again in Dereham and, engaged as an extra to play small parts, was a local farmer's daughter, Anne Perfrement. It was at one of these performances in 1789, that Thomas Borrow, a Recruiting Sergeant with the West Norfolk Militia saw her and fell in love - the story continues, George Borrow is born at Dumpling Green, etc. etc. but that's another story.

In 1792, John Brunton, manager of the Norwich Company, tried without success to secure a better building in the town for use as a theatre. This is surprising, for in 1756 the Assembly Rooms had been built on the site of the old Market Cross.

In any case the Norwich Company soon after ceased to visit Dereham, which then came into the circuit of the Norwich and Suffolk Company of Comedians, which, under William Scraggs, who is buried in Beccles Churchyard, had toured the market towns of East Anglia for many years.

Scraggs secured David Fisher, late of the Theatre Royal Norwich, to manage the Company, and he took complete control of his own formed company in 1812. That year with the help of his sons he built a theatre in Wells followed four years later with ours in Dereham. Others followed and by 1828 he owned a dozen in Norfolk & Suffolk. Behind the Theatre in Dereham he built a house large enough for most of his Company to stay at and so the town became their base.

The Fishers were a remarkable family. David Fisher (senior) was born at Hethersett, near Norwich, in 1760 and, after leaving school he followed the trade of a carpenter. Having been endowed with a fine natural voice he joined the Norwich Amateur Dramatic Company and showed such promise that he was persuaded to adopt the stage as a profession. It is almost certain that when Fisher first visited Dereham he played in the barn theatre.

He had four sons and a daughter who all became members of the Company. The eldest son,



Right: "Journey's End" presented by the Dereham Players: left to right, Messrs Edwards, G. Allen, N. Abbott, L.H. Allwood, R. Gamble, W.G. Jacomb-Hood.
Below: The last concert performed by the "Odds and Ends" Concert Party
Left to right: Mr Harry Lambert, Mr Clifford Foyster, Mr Barney Simmons, Mr Gerald Bayfield, Marie Lambert, Edna Batterby and Marian Pratt.



David, was a good violinist and a clever scene painter. It is believed that most of their scenery and 'props' were made in the house behind the Theatre at Dereham. Charles, the second son, played the 'cello and the organ and looked after the financial affairs of the Company. George and Henry were both musical and George had a printing press on which he produced playbills and posters for the Company.

David Fisher died at Dereham in 1832. He was buried in the churchyard of St. Nicholas Church, near the South Transept. *(All the tombstones between the Transept and the South Porch have since been moved to the south boundary wall and the area is now reserved for cremation ashes).*

During the following years the Theatre became less popular. Members of the family found other work and the Company was disbanded in 1844. By 1861 the Theatre had become known as 'St Nicholas Hall' and it was known by this name until reverting back to its former name after the turn of the century.

The Theatre continued as a theatre until 1902. During the 1914-18 War the Theatre was used as a canteen for the troops.

After the War it was again used for various social events and a former resident of Theatre Street remembers George Thorpe standing outside, in the early 1920s, shouting "Threepence, Sixpence, Ninepence." - Probably for a boxing match.

By 1935 the Theatre was almost derelict and restoration work was carried out. The balcony and boxes were removed, a level floor was laid instead of the original sloping floor and a new and lower roof replaced the old unsafe roof. The Theatre was then used once more for concerts and dances.

Terry Davy says in his book, 'More Memories of Dereham'— "What native of Dereham can forget the performances by 'The Mountebanks'

Concert Party with 'Banjo' Saunders or 'The Odds and Ends', formed by Mr Harry Lambert, which included popular singer, Barney Simmons, and comedian, 'Buster' Newell. 'Buster' performed 'in the vernacular' as they say, complete with genuine country smock and straw in his hair! Between the wars couples smooched to the music of Bert Fanthorpe's 'Harmony Aces' at the Saturday night dances. The building was used less and less and became very shabby."

(Well sorry, Terry, I can't, I'm not old enough, having been born in 1955.)

Researching this has left me with several questions to answer—

1. When Boston & Puddy wrote their book on Dereham (1952), the theatre was up for sale. Who bought it?
2. The Junior School used the Theatre as classrooms until the new school was built. When?
3. The Hall was used as a Salvation Army Barracks at sometime—but when?

Can anyone tell me?

And finally.....

In 1977 a group of Dereham doctors acquired the building and had it demolished to make room for the town's first purpose built surgery to replace their cramped accommodation in Park Road.

It was found impracticable to retain the facade but the new building bears the name, 'Theatre Royal Surgery'.

Doctor Jessopp, Scarning Vicar



I begin this quarter's Jessopp section with some anticipation—I've been reading some of his books and find that it's rather reminiscent of the four elderly gentlemen I've been recording recently. They ramble on about what seems useless information until you analyse it and wow it's packed with detail. It becomes hard to decide what to write as there's so much of it, and all of it is relevant in some way or another. Anyway, here goes...something on leisure—everything in italics is by me, all the rest are excerpts from his books.

Taken from The Arcady of our Grandfathers.

He writes about how at one time (70 years previous to Jessopp's time) Scarning school was run by (people believed) a Jew and mighty scared of him they were, or so it appears, from what is written. But it's the piece after this that is of interest to us today.

It appears that the constable in those days was a much more powerful personage than Policeman X., and that if he found a vagrant skulking about, he would think very little of shutting him up in the cage for the night, with the chance of forgetting him next morning. So in the case of a fight—no rare occurrence—the cry of “constables” would empty the alehouse yard in a twinkling and the combatants would take to their heels, absolutely cowed by the terror of the law.

And yet, as far as I can learn, it never would have entered into the head of a labourer of those days to appeal to the law.

“I've heard my mother say many a time,” said one old body to me, “that she blessed the Lord there was cock-fighting, or she didn't know how she could have got on at all.” She kept the cocks in separate pens. Sometimes they would get out, and would fight anything. One day one of them escaped, and forthwith went for the old gander. “I was only a little girl, and I was right frightened; and I holloahed to mother, but the old gander he got the master of him with his pinions, and he knocked him over into our dyke by the common, and mother she had hard work to save him from being drowned, and when the old gander saw him in mother's arms he came a-hissing and a-creaking at him like a Christian!” The cockfights were held anywhere where there was a deep depression, an old marlpit being a favourite place; but that indefinite spot “back o' the alehouse” was the more usual resort, John Barley-

corn being the master of the ceremonies for the most part.

And this leads me to another very notable difference between the rustics at the beginning of this century and the moderns.

From all that I can learn, and I have taken no little pains to arrive at the truth, I have no hesitation in saying that the agricultural labourer of seventy years ago was less frequently a sot than he whom we now have to do with. To begin with, he had no time at his own disposal and no money to spend. But thus was not all—he hardly knew what ardent spirits meant. There was a good deal of beer and cider giving in the farmhouses, and he took all he could get; but gin and the other fire waters he never tasted.

One of my very disreputable “special correspondents” is an old heathen of 87. He has been a wicked old vagabond, and, by all accounts, was at one time a noisy, quarrelsome, blasphemous bully of much vigour and energy; and all the more dangerous because “the best of company.” Now, since his temptations have left him, and he has become blind and infirm, he has become religious in his talk, though still at times remarkably jovial. One day I found him very feeble and apparently sinking; the old woman who has been touchingly faithful to him for fifty years or so was crying at his bedside. A drop of rum would bring him to—but where was she to get it? My heart could not but be softened to the wretched old man who lay there the wreck of a grand physique; I couldn't see him die. I sent for the cordial, and, by the help of the stimulant and some more generous food for a week or so, he revived, and is likely to last another year or two. We have had many a long talk since then.

“God A'mighty has put up wi' a deal from me, he has, and I don't think he'll be hard upon me somehow,” he broke in one day. “Some on 'em talks o' being conwarted. But I don't mean to say as I've ever been conwarted. I wasn't never given over to drink enough for that.” Solemn as the occasion was, and profoundly touched as I was by the piteousness of all that the words implied, I confess that I found it very hard indeed to smother my appreciation of their grotesqueness. But by questioning him, and waiting, and tempting him to confide in me, it became evident that, so far as he had any distinct meaning in this extraordinary speech, he meant that he had never had delirium

tremens!

It was as if in this broken-down and grossly ignorant old man there lurked a survival of the old belief in the Dionysus possession: that never came, he thought, if you only drank beer. When he was young no one ever heard of anything else—no working man at any rate. He was a man grown before he ever tasted gin. "Gin came in with the railroad chaps. I used to tell 'em, 'Mates,' says I, 'them bottles o' yourn don't hold enough for me. I don't like getting drunk—I like drinking!'"

Whether he was right or wrong I know not, but it is his firm conviction that at the old alehouses there were no spirits to be bought. It used to be whispered that there was a good deal of smuggling carried on by the help of the carriers' carts that were always moving along the roads night and day; but, for the farm labourer, brandy was a little known nectar. Nor was this all. The public-houses, in these old days, were almost confined to the high roads. Old Bickers protests that sixty years ago there was only a single public-house "between Dercham and Fransham Kennels," a distance of nearly six miles. At this moment, though the traffic on this same road is not a third of what it was, and the population more sparse, there are at least nine!

And so the story rambles on keeping one captivated till it is way passed bedtime, but what did Jessopp like to do in his spare—leisure time. I've been searching but so far as I've been able to ascertain—I've not read half of the Jessopp books I've got yet—the little spare time from mardling with the local inhabitants

So what have I found out so far—I've only had time to read two out of the seven of his books I've collected so far. He definitely like to mardle with his local inhabitants that's a certainty. The classic passage which I think shows what he liked doing best is taken from Trials of a Country Parson and the chapter called Snowed up in Arcady.

I was awaked at the usual hour of 7am by Jemima knocking at the door; and when Mr Bob had growled his usual growl, and I had declared myself to be awake in a surly monosyllable, Jemima cried aloud, saying, "It's awful snow, sir—drifts emendjous!" I drew the curtains open, pulled up the blinds, and lo! There was snow indeed. This morning there was no road!

"My dear", I said, "I'm afraid we are really snowed up!" Now, what do you suppose was the reply I received from her Royal Highness the Lady

Shepherd? Neither more nor less than this—"What a jolly day we will have! We needn't go out, need we?"

Going down to breakfast—their day starts at eight as for some reason Jemima can't manage 8.30—evidently the minutes are a nuisance.

... We went down as usual to the library—and, I am bound to say, we were just a little depressed, because we had made up our minds that no postman in England could bring us our bag this morning. To our immense surprise and joy, there were the letters and papers lying on the table as if it were a Midsummer Day.

Musing over his post—he states although he gets letters like other people do including townfolk he also gets—offers to make him a life governor of the new college for criminals; invitations to be a steward at a public diner of the Society for Diminishing Felony;

They continue with plotting the day realising that it's going to take much longer than one day to do everything they want to.

On this particular morning we had adjourned from the library to the breakfast room and were opening our letters in high spirits, and notwithstanding the bitter wind and the snow, when a hideous sound startled us. There, under the window, the snow steadily falling, drawn up in a single file, were four human creatures, two males and two females, arrayed in outlandish attire, and everyone of them playing hideously out of tune. It was a German band..... *he pays them and narrates of other incidents with bands and then going to his one luxury, his library, to indulge in his favourite hobby—sorting (transcribing) and copying old documents—only ones before the fifteenth century you understand—anything else according to him is not real history—or at any rate doesn't bring him the same satisfaction. Next thing he knows is Lady Shepherd tells him Tinker George is calling for him to read through one of his letters. He tells her to deal with it.*

An hour later I got up to warm myself. "May I speak?" said the Lady Shepherd. "I let Tinker George go away, but I'm afraid you'll be sorry I did. I think you would have liked to see him." "What's the matter?" "He's been writing to the dear Queen" (the Lady Shepherd always speaks of "the dear Queen") "and he came to show you the letter, and to ask what address he should put on it". Tinker—George—writing to—the—Queen! What did the man want?.....

Sorry run out of room.....P.S. Mr Bob is one of their dogs.



“Bob!”

Dereham’s Volunteer Pointsman and His Work.

Dereham & Fakenham Times - 18th July 1925

Motorists visiting the town during recent weeks have been interested and sometimes amused, to observe a diminutive but efficient civilian doing point duty on Stimpson’s Corner. This is Mr Robert Farman, more popularly known throughout the town as “Bob” who has created no little discussion by his self-appointed task. Finding himself unemployed, he undertook to do some useful voluntary work in preference to lounging about the town. He comes on duty and goes off at regular hours, and is so careful in his control of the traffic that he acts as a safety valve on the dangerous crossroads. At first he created some amusement by holding up every approaching vehicle until he had ascertained that the roads were clear, but now he has earned such a reputation for efficiency that some drivers are apt to take advantage of his presence and cross the corner without sounding their hooters.

Local drivers know that if Bob “gives them the down” they are quite safe, but complications sometimes arise when strangers ignore his signals. This is, perhaps, forgivable, as many bystanders at corners have no knowledge of road signals, and tend to create accidents rather than prevent them. This is not Bob’s way, for he will hold up a charabanc for a perambulator rather than let any risks be run.

The white gloves which he wears while on duty have stirred many people’s curiosity. They were sent to him as a joke by one of the townfolk with the remark that all policemen in big towns wore them. Bob, seeing the greater recognition which they would give him, adopted them, and has used them ever since - except on washing days. Owing to circumstances, Bob, though unemployed, cannot draw unemployment pay, but if he thought his voluntary job would bring any remuneration, he was mistaken - though local drivers occasionally reward him. He stands as an example to others in providing efficient voluntary service. He was the first voluntary pointsman in Norfolk, though it is reported that there are now two others.

Stimpson’s Corner (1914).

Today it is the traffic light crossroad junction between the King’s Head, Guy’s Health Food Shop and the Lounge.



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