

The Norfolk Ancestor



MARCH 2020



The Journal of the Norfolk Family History Society
formerly Norfolk & Norwich Genealogical Society

Hitler's Norfolk Tree

WHILST watching a re-run of the BBC's QI programme with Stephen Fry recently I was intrigued to hear the story of the Hitler tree in Norfolk. At the 1936 Olympic Games held in Berlin, in addition to a medal, all 129 gold medal winners were given an oak sapling by the German Olympic Committee. These were the games at which Jesse Owens famously won four golds which was the same number won by the entire British team.

One of the British recipients of an oak sapling was Norfolk sailor Christopher BOARDMAN. He was the helmsman of the six metre sailing yacht Lalage. Despite failing to win any of the eight races in the regatta held at Kiel, the crew managed to amass enough points to finish one ahead of the Norwegian crew. Boardman and the rest of the British crew refused to go to Berlin to get their medals because they were unhappy with what was going on in Nazi Germany at the time.



Christopher Boardman

As helmsman, Christopher was given the oak sapling to bring back to his home at How Hill near Ludham. He was born in June 1903 and his father was the architect Edward Thomas Boardman, the son of the perhaps more famous Edward Boardman. His mother was Florence Colman, the daughter of J J Colman of the Colman's Mustard family. His younger brother Humphrey also represented Britain in the double skulls at the Olympics in 1928. Christopher was a member of the crew of the British J-class yacht Endeavour in the America's Cup of 1934. In World War II he joined the Royal Navy Reserves and later commanded the corvette HMS Snowdrop.

How Hill Oak



The oak was planted by Christopher in the grounds of How Hill where it grew well for many years. It was nearly destroyed by a How Hill Oak stray German bomb in the war and it suffered very badly in the Great Storm of 1987 which was the year that Christopher died. In 2013 it was cut back severely to try to make it grow back stronger. As a result it produced a good crop of acorns which were then harvested to try to continue the line. However, by 2017 attacks by honey fungus killed the tree. It was decided that a fitting memorial to its history was

needed and North Norfolk chainsaw carver Arnie Barton was commissioned to carve one in the stump of the old tree. It is now known as the 'Olympic Oak'



The memorial

Roger Morgan MN 17267

Norfolk Family History Society

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New Membership Rates:

MEMBERSHIP rates for the Norfolk Family History Society have remained the same for many years during which all costs have increased significantly.

The trustees have decided after much consideration to increase membership rates and some of the membership types. Full details are in our renewals' section

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The Norfolk Ancestor

The Norfolk Ancestor is a quarterly journal published in March, June, September and December. Opinions expressed in this journal are those of individual authors and do not necessarily represent the views of either the Editor or the Norfolk Family History Society which cannot take responsibility for the accuracy of facts in the articles submitted.

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Kirby Hall Library Opening Times

Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 10.00am - 4.00pm

First Sunday in the month 10.00am - 1.00pm

Group Meeting Venues

LONDON Society of Genealogists, 14 Charterhouse Buildings,
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(Meetings approximately every six months, 2 - 4 pm)
See later in this edition for more information.



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Welcome to your March Edition



WELCOME to the March, 2020, edition of Norfolk Ancestor which kicks off a New Year.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition as much as myself and Roger have enjoyed putting it together.

By the time this drops onto your doormat or computer, the time for making New Year's resolutions will be long gone. But if yours was to write an article for the Ancestor we would love to hear from you.

We have plenty of space at the moment for your articles, whether they are about your family, about family history research or simply about Norfolk history. We would love to hear about your successes (and failures).

Photographs are particularly valuable. The deadline for articles for the June edition will be 15th April. This edition of the Ancestor includes the annual renewal form. You can renew membership either by using this form or online via our website.

You will see that we have made some slight increases in membership rates - the first for many years. There is also the option now to just receive the magazine online. I know many of you value having printed copies and I can assure you that there are no plans at present to go totally digital.

We would also like to mention our Facebook page which has over 2,400 members. Joining is free and you don't even have to be a member of the Norfolk Family History Society, although if you are reading this you will already have joined us.

Over the past couple of years many people have broken down brick walls and been helped with their research by fellow Facebookers. Why not give it a look? You may be surprised by just how much information there is on the site.

With All Best Wishes

Peter

Norfolk Ancestor Editorial Team

Peter Steward	Joint Editor
Roger Morgan	Joint Editor
Rob Reeve	Proof Reader

The Suckling House Story

Roger Morgan looks into the history of one of the oldest houses in Norwich

The picture shows Suckling House on St Andrew's Plain. The owners of this site have been traced back to William de ROLLESBY in 1285 but the original building was probably built by the FAIRCHILD or PARLET family in the mid 14th century. In 1338, 1346 and 1357 John Fairchild is recorded to be paying rent for the privilege of enclosing the Turpis Vicus now known as St Andrew's Hill. Fairchild was possibly ordering his adjacent properties to form a single large house and may have built the Great Hall.



Queen Philippa

The 14th century saw a boom for people involved in the wool trade in Norwich and a colony of Flemish weavers was established by Queen Philippa, the Belgian born wife of Edward III, in 1335. As a result a grand hall was needed and many of the early owners of Suckling House were described as drapers or mercers. There was a building on the site in 1414 when Thomas Parlet split the site. The southern part was bought by John CAMBRIDGE who paid £180, a huge sum for that time indicating that there must have been a grand house there. Parlet sold separately the northern part, said to

include 'a tenement with buildings' and 'a vault with arches built of stone and lime under said tenement'. In 1426, Cambridge bought the northern piece and reunited the whole site and passed it to his son Thomas who was a mercer and Sheriff in 1457.

Four of the next five owners were also Sheriffs in Norwich. Robert Suckling (born 1520) bought the house in the 1500s and gave it its current name. He was also Sheriff of Norwich as well as Mayor in 1572 and 1582 and was a burgess (official representative) in the parliament of Elizabeth I.



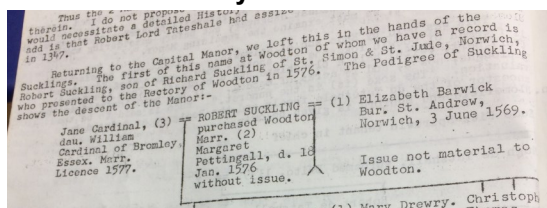
The Suckling family crest was a buck or stag, but a piece of honeysuckle was added in 1578 following a suggestion from Queen Elizabeth after her visit to Norwich, 'suckling' being a Norfolk word for honeysuckle.

The surname Suckling was first found in Norfolk at Woodton, a parish in the Loddon hundred. Robert Suckling was a mercer and his parents were Richard (a baker) and Jane née SWAYNE. Robert had an estate in Woodton and also lived in Norwich. He was married three times, firstly to Elizabeth BARWICK with whom he had nine children. His son Edmund (1560-1628) was Dean of Norwich in 1614 and is buried in the cathedral. Robert's second wife was a widow called Margaret BARRETT but they had no children together. When she died in 1576 he married Joan CARDINAL and had two further children. The house in St Andrew's would have had a large household as all their workmen and apprentices would live there with the family.



Stained glass panel in Suckling House

Extract from Kirby Hall records



Robert died in 1589 and was buried in St Andrew's churchyard next to Suckling House. He was succeeded by his son John. In the early 17th Century Sir John erected two alabaster tombs in St Andrew's Church, the first dedicated to his mother and father (Sir Robert and

Lady Elizabeth) and the second to himself and his wife Martha. He was an MP who attained the rank of Secretary of State for both James I and Charles I. As a result he accumulated manors, farms and other assets throughout the country.



Sir John and Lady Martha had six children. Their second child John was a celebrated cavalier poet and playwright. Suckling House was sold by Sir John to his half brother Christopher BARRETT in 1595. He decided to divide the house into two again. He stayed in the north half but sold the south part to Giles COZEN in 1608. Cozen was the father of John Cozen who became the Bishop of Durham. The house was then further divided into a number of smaller places. The Great Hall and main house was used by a number of wine merchants who used the vaults for storage. At some point the original level of the floor was raised.

Horatio NELSON had strong connections with Suckling House and the Suckling family. His father was Reverend Edmund Nelson and his mother was Catherine Nelson née Suckling. She was a woman of some influence as her grandmother was the sister of Sir Robert Walpole, Britain's first prime minister. It was Walpole who helped Catherine's brothers Maurice and William Suckling to get good jobs. Maurice joined the Royal Navy and distinguished himself in naval actions. He would later inspire the young Horatio and do much to enhance his naval career. Nelson was born in September, 1758, but sadly his mother died in December, 1767, when he was only nine years old. His grandmother Ann Suckling died 11 days later.



His father Edmund was left to bring up his surviving eight children. At sometime in 1768, Horatio and his older brother William were sent to study at King Edward VI Grammar School in Norwich. It is likely that during this time he stayed in Suckling House with his great aunt Mrs HENLEY who is recorded as living near the chancel end of St Andrew's Church in the late 18th century.

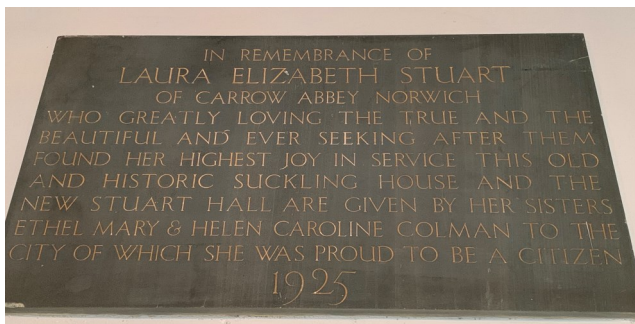
The last recorded use as a residence was 1915. By 1916 it was in a poor state of repair and the whole building was bought by the Norfolk News Company Ltd. Structural renovations were carried out between 1918 and 1921 as some parts of the building were deemed to be unsafe. The south side wall next to St Andrew's Hill had to be rebuilt. The roof was repaired and the floor was lowered again.



In 1923, the house and site were bought by Ethel Mary COLMAN and her sister Helen Caroline. In November, 1923, Ethel became the first lady Lord Mayor in England with Helen acting as her Lady Mayoress. The sisters wanted to restore it and use it as a place of education for the people of Norwich. In 1925 a large hall was built on some waste land that lay unused to the east of Suckling House. It was designed by renowned Norwich architect Edward BOARDMAN who also renovated the existing house. He set out to build a public hall holding 450 people which had modern high tech equipment like a cinema projector and screen. The hall was named Stuart Hall in memory of Laura Elizabeth STUART née Colman, the older sister of Ethel and Helen who died in 1920. Laura was married to James Stuart the Lib-

eral MP for Hoxton in London's Shoreditch. He was a privy councillor and managing director of Colman's Mustard. James and Laura were involved in many good works and the Stuart Court Memorial Trust was set up in tribute to James after he died in 1913. The James Stuart Gardens can be found on Recorder Road in Norwich with a red brick and stone gateway designed by Edward Boardman.

Suckling House and Stuart Hall were given to the city of Norwich by the Colman sisters who wanted it to be used for '*the advancement of education in its widest and most comprehensive sense*'. It was opened to the public by HRH The Duke of York on October 25th, 1925.



Plaque on the inside wall of Cinema City

Cinema City

Cinema City opened in Suckling House and Stuart Hall in April 1978. The Norfolk and Norwich Film Trust spent £33,000 converting the buildings into a cinema for 230 people. Further changes were made in 1981 with the addition of a new projection box and stairs. A box office was put in the foyer and a bar was built in the great hall with a kitchen in one of the vaulted bays. Between 2004 and 2007, a major development occurred as the cinema temporarily moved to Norwich Playhouse. It reopened in 2007 with three cinema screens and a new digital projection system. The great hall became a bar and restaurant called "The Dining Rooms At Cinema City".

In 2012, Cinema City received development funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund for Norfolk at the Pictures which is a film education charity based at Cinema City. In 2016, further Heritage Lottery funding was used to develop an accessible education and exhibition space which was named The John Hurt Centre after



the famous Norfolk-based actor. It is located on the first floor at Cinema City and can be reached from the central courtyard. The centre has two separate rooms which are available for hire. The Colman Room is suitable for meetings and workshops and the Marchesi Room is a bright space with views on to St Andrew's Hill with displays telling the story of cinema in Norfolk. Both rooms have film presentation facilities and wi-fi.

News From Kirby Hall

The Lady Lord Mayors of Norwich

By Roger Morgan MN 17267

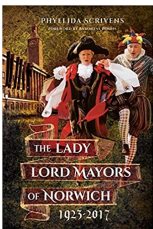
On Friday, 18th October, renowned Norfolk author Phyllida Scrivens gave a thoroughly entertaining and informative talk describing her fascinating book about the Lady Lord Mayors of Norwich. In her talk, Phyllida explained the enormous amount of research that

goes into the production of a book like this. She described the hours of patient evidence gathering that is required and the numerous one-to-one tape recorded interviews carried out with the living former Lady Lord Mayors.

The meeting was very well attended and the audience was treated to numerous amusing anecdotes gleaned from these interviews which gave a great insight into the day to day workings of a Lord Mayor. The talk was very well illustrated by a series of interesting photographs.

During the Question and Answer session at the end of the talk we were all surprised to hear from

one member of the audience who had actually been introduced to Lady Lord Mayor Ethel Colman when he was a small boy. Phyllida is currently researching material for a proposed new book on the Thorpe Great Railway Disaster of September 1874. As we said in the September 2019 Ancestor she would love to hear from anybody doing research into the people involved in the disaster.



MANORS & PROPERTY DOCUMENTS

WE have recently uploaded a further database of manorial records, deeds and documents to NORS which is easily searchable as is our extensive catalogue of library records.

Manorial records are often overlooked by family and local historians but they are an invaluable additional source of information.

**Copy of an Admission
dated 6th January, 1820,
from the Manor of Ban-
yards, Lalfords and But-
leys**

Even if your ancestors or persons of interest did not own land or property, they may have occupied land or property as a tenant and their name can appear in the documents and records.

List of Rental Payments due to be paid to the Lord of the Manor of Thornham for the year ending Michaelmas Day 1833.

Manorial records include court rolls and documents detailing tenancies, admissions, surrenders and indentures.

These documents will often give the name of the Lord of the Manor and/or his steward (who would usually deal with the day to day administration of the manor) together with the names of tenants (current and past), the owners or occupiers of adjoining property, the rent payments and a description of the property.

The documents may also provide details concerning the customs and administration of the manor.

In addition, many property deeds outline

[illegible]

He advised that on the 2nd day of Jan. 1930
I then was found to see a Census dated the
2nd day of Dec. 1929 & made between the R. L. H.
(Charles George C. West Canterbury (thru an alias
the Ruler) of the final Raymond Frederick
Barlow of Hollingsworth Park, Newmarcher in the
City of Norfolk & King's Col^d in New Norfolk, Army
& George Henry Highby of 1, Riverside St. (Canada)
Specimen in the City of London Eng. (Barlow called the
Junkies) of the 2nd year & George Channell of 183
Barrowfield Rd. St. John's North London M. 133
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(now dated) & the 2nd R. J. Barlow were described
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Frederick) West Canterbury deed on the 24th Dec. 1920
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West Canterbury) under a Voting Deed dated the 30th
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day of Jan. 1930 in pursuance of the proviso of
sec 129 of the Law of Property Act 1922 was
and by me on the 20th Census

March 2020

UPDATING THE PARISH REGISTER TRANSCRIPTS

WHEN the current NORS website was introduced, we discovered in the files from the previous website a number of errors which prevented upload to the new system. These were corrected but the team making the corrections noticed that there were also errors in the data which could not quickly be addressed.

When NORS was first introduced in 2009 the transcripts uploaded were largely prepared from printed or hand-written transcripts most of which dated from the days of fiche. The quality of fiche varies and, with the unsophisticated fiche-readers of the time, the accuracy of the transcriptions varied and, with no system of checking, it is not surprising that errors occurred. The advent of computers led to big improvements in the legibility of the images and, with the introduction of a checking system in 2011, we believe we now produce new transcriptions of high quality. We do not claim to be infallible as the difficult hand-writing and water/mould/mouse-damage sometimes defeats even our most experienced transcribers and checkers.

In the past year the checking team has been tackling some of the pre-2011 transcripts on NORS, correcting errors and making additions where previously illegible data has now become legible. In some cases little work has been needed but for the Norwich parishes so far examined there have been substantial alterations. We are at present concentrating on rechecking the old transcripts for the Norwich parishes. The checking work started by Paul Harman and taken over by me is now done by a team of four - Keith Jay, Lyn Offord, Paul White and myself. We are checking the work of our current 25 transcribers and, in the case of re-checks, dozens of past transcribers. It is a slow ongoing process.

We would like to point out that users of the NORS website should not limit their searches over time as new material is being added to the database most weeks and re-checked Norwich data is gradually replacing the inaccurate early versions.

I would like to express my appreciation of my team colleagues without whom NORS would be a less useful site and I would have given up in despair at the enormity of the task before me.

Margaret Murgatroyd MN 10400 Transcripts Checking

Yarmouth Memories

Peter Steward recounts his memories of Great Yarmouth

MY holidays as a boy were restricted to three places – London, Tunbridge Wells and Great Yarmouth.

I loved Yarmouth with a passion that I could never really explain. To me it was just somewhere magical that I loved going to. I can remember the excitement of getting up in the morning to be told we were going to Yarmouth.

It was only many years later, when I started to look into my family history, that I found most of my ancestors come from Great Yarmouth or the surrounding areas.

So I began to delve into the history of the town and in particular The Rows where many of my ancestors lived. I have mentioned these tight little streets in the past and, if you want to get a feel for them, just pop along to the Time and Tide museum in the town where they have a reproduction.

Most of the Rows have now gone but two iconic parts of the town still exist and provide a picture of hugely contrasting fortunes.

The Winter Gardens



Sadly the Winter Gardens on Great Yarmouth seafront are on the list of Britain's most at risk buildings according to Historic England and, as time goes by, the Grade 2 listed attraction decays even further and its future continues to be uncertain.

Ironically the original structure was not intended for Great Yarmouth at all. It was designed and constructed in Torquay by John WATSON and William HARVEY between 1878 and 1881 at a cost of £12,783 (approx £1.5m today). The ironwork was by Jess TILDESLEY of Staffordshire. The structure wasn't a success in Torquay and so was taken apart piece by piece and re-constructed in Great Yarmouth where it was felt it would have a brighter future.



The structure has a cast iron frame and is 170 ft in length. The Historic England website goes into great detail about the structure. The decision to bring it to Great Yarmouth was made by borough council surveyor J. W. COCKRILL who felt it would lengthen the holiday season and bring "a better class visitor" to the resort. On wet days it could provide shelter for 2,000 people.

The Winter Gardens was purchased for £1,300 - a fraction of the original cost and about £150,000 at today's prices. The building was dismantled in sections, transported by barge to Norfolk and re-erected at the entrance to the Wellington Pier in 1904. Despite the long journey, not a single pane of glass was broken. Cockrill added a brick entrance arch and porch to act as a cloakroom and, in 1909, a maple floor was laid for roller skating. The building was subsequently also used for concerts, dancing and even a German Beer Cellar. There were floral displays inside and an organ above the entrance to the west end.

In the late 20th century, the glazing panels in the roof were replaced and some structural work undertaken.

The Winter Gardens is a Grade 2 listed building due to its rarity. It is the last surviving seaside Victorian cast iron and glass winter gardens in the country.

It is also of great architectural and historical interest. When constructed it was

one of the three largest cast iron and glass seaside winter gardens in England.

Sadly the venue has been closed for over 11 years and it has been claimed that it is "deteriorating daily." In 2018 the Victorian Society listed it amongst its top 10 buildings "crying out to be saved."

Great Yarmouth Borough Council has invited tenders for a commercial partner or consortium to propose and run a sustainable business within the historic landmark. The appeal is backed by the Heritage Lottery Fund, which has indicated that funds for repair would be available with a suitable operator on board. In October 2019, the decision was taken to board up damaged windows whilst steps are taken to find a buyer. It appears that to dismantle the building would cost more than £1 million.

The Winter Gardens has been described as "a people's palace of glass and steel, a seafront cathedral of light."

It has also been described as: "A landmark structure gleaming and brilliant in the hot Norfolk summers and complimenting huge East Anglian skies."

Back in 1903, the building was a symbol of the new leisure time promised to the population. It was claimed that it gave people the chance to see glimpses of faraway places thanks to its exotic collection of plants from all corners of a flagging empire and beyond.

For the millions of holidaymakers packing the resort in the early decades of the twentieth century, escaping for a few days from the factories and the daily grind, the Winter Gardens was an unexpected paradise. As much part of the experience as the sticks of Docwra rock, the pleasure beach rides and "sands of finest brown sugar."

Sadly as the British seaside diminished in popularity, so did the Winter Gardens as it slumped to its present condition where, unless drastic action is taken, the only answer might be to demolish it and that would be a terrible, terrible shame.

The Waterways

In contrast, Great Yarmouth Waterways has enjoyed a renaissance. Situated almost a mile from the Winter Gardens, a massive re-



generation project has brought the waterways back to their former glory and once again turned them into one of the most pleasant tourist attractions in the town.

The hugely impressive Venetian waterways had fallen into disrepair after many years of neglect. That's before an army of volunteers, supported by a Lottery grant and the backing of Great Yarmouth Borough Council, succeeded in turning them into a major part of Great Yarmouth's leisure life.

The restoration cost £2.7 million with the gardens being inspired by the waterways of Venice. The waterways are, like the Winter Gardens, a Grade 2 listed attraction and were originally opened in 1928 - 10 years after the First World War and 11 before the second.



The restoration was completed in time for small paddle boats and canoes to return in 2019 towards the end of the summer season.

The gardens include picnic and sitting areas, along with picturesque bridges, pergolas and cafes. The original planting ideas have been followed and this gives the waterways an historic as well as very modern look.

Finally on the subject of Great Yarmouth, I was able recently to pick up a real bargain on Amazon with a reproduction copy of the first part of Charles PALMER'S epic history of Great Yarmouth, Gorleston and Southtown.

"The Perlustration* of Great Yarmouth, Gorleston and Southtown" was first



published in three volumes in 1872 and gives a unique insight into the town with descriptions of roads, buildings and many of its well known characters. It is ideal if you want to learn something about The Rows.

Palmer originally edited “The History of Great Yarmouth” by Henry MANSHIP and the perustrations became an extension of this work. Palmer was the only son of John Danby Palmer and Anne Palmer (nee BEART). He was born on New Year’s Day, 1805, and educated at a private school run by a Mr BOWLES in Queen Street, Great Yarmouth. In 1822 he was articled to Robert CORY and became an attorney in his own right in June, 1827. He practised law at Great Yarmouth until his retirement.

For many years he lived in an Elizabethan house at 4, South Quay, which his father had purchased in 1809. He became an alderman and, in 1854, was elected mayor. He also served as deputy-lieutenant for the county of Suffolk. Charles Palmer was a huge benefactor of Great Yarmouth and worked unstintingly to help develop the seafront as a seaside resort with the new Marine Parade and the erection of a series of buildings, notably the Britannia Terrace, the Carlton Hotel (as it became), the Assembly Rooms (Masonic Lodge), and the Wellington Pier. In 1830 he was elected a fellow of the Society of Antiquaries.

He died on 24th September, 1882. He was married to Amelia GRAHAM but they had no children.

*The word perustration which I suspect is little used today is defined as “an act of inspecting, surveying, or viewing a place thoroughly.” The word was first used in the mid seventeenth century and comes from the Latin perustratio which was the act of roaming or traversing.

Two websites that may be of interest are:

Historic England at <https://www.historicengland.org.uk> and the

Victorian Society at <https://www.victoriansociety.org.uk>

The Norfolk Giant

St Mary's Church West Somerton



ON Christmas Day last year whilst on a walk around Winterton with my family, I stumbled across the grave of the so called 'Norfolk Giant' in the churchyard of St Mary's, West Somerton. Robert Hales was reported as being 7ft 8in (2.4m) tall and apparently led an extraordinary life.

Some reports claim that Robert was born in 1820 but the inscription on the grave indicates that he was actually born in 1813. He was baptised on October 31st, 1813, at West Somerton Church. He was one of nine children of William Hales (1771-1845) and Elizabeth DRYBALL (1772-1828). Their children were Nathaniel (1801-1850), William (1803-), Hannah (1805-), Sarah (1807-), Mary (1811-1841), Robert

(1813-1863), Ann (1815-1846), Hester (1818-) and Thomas (1820-1897).

Robert's father William was a local farmer and both he and his wife Elizabeth were over six feet tall. It is reported that his five sisters averaged around 6 feet 3 inches while his brothers averaged 6 feet 5 inches. His sister Mary was thought to be 7 feet 2 inches. At first Robert found work on the Norfolk Broads helping out on the wherries that transported goods like coal and timber between Norwich and Great Yarmouth. He joined the navy at 13 but he continued to grow taller.

As anyone who has ever visited Nelson's flag ship the Victory in Portsmouth harbour will know, the gaps between the decks of an English warship were very small and it would have been impossible for him to work on one. Robert was forced to leave the navy when he was 17 because of his size.

Robert's sea career was short-lived after he met with a similar problem sailing to Calcutta on the brig Neptune. When he was fully grown he weighed 33 stone (210kg) and had a 62in (157cm) waist.

Robert's sister Mary married Joseph LASKEY at St Nicholas Church in Liverpool on March 24th, 1838. She was described as a giantess and Joseph as a travel-



Robert Hales' grave in St Mary's, West Somerton

ler with an exhibition. She was 7 feet 2 inches tall and, together, she and Robert toured the country fairs in a bright yellow caravan, exhibiting themselves at places like the Tombland Fair in Norwich and the Britannia Fair in Great Yarmouth. Joseph acted as their manager. Sadly Mary died from pneumonia in 1841 at the age of 30 whilst in Guernsey. Two years later Joseph married Mary and Robert's sister Anne at St George the Martyr in London in 1843. Robert did not approve of this marriage and the group soon parted company.

In an extract from his memoirs published in *The Friendly Societies' and Licensed Victuallers' Journal* in December 1857, Robert was described as being

“cheerful, healthy, and good natured with a prepossessing cast of countenance, so that few are found who do not take an interest in his welfare. His face is the index to his heart, which is warm, upright, and sincere.”

After the death of his sister, he was travelling in South Wales and spent the day on a hunting excursion with Sir Watkin William WYNNE. On his way home to his hotel he had to cross the River Usk via a wooden foot bridge. There was a particularly high tide running and this, together with rising flood water, created a raging current that washed away some of the railings and planks where he was standing. He fell into the water and was carried down the river calling loudly for help. People who saw him were unable to help as he was travelling so fast. Robert was carried over three miles to Newport where he was spotted by the master of a barge moored near the shore. A boat was sent to pick him up and by the time he was rescued it was estimated that he had been in the water for six hours.

Another strange story involving Robert took place on a stage coach travelling to Great Yarmouth. He had spent the Easter week in Norwich and was on his way to visit his friends at West Somerton. He boarded the coach on a dark and very gloomy night in Norwich and soon became aware of a fellow passenger sitting opposite him. Throughout the journey the sociable Robert tried to engage the stranger in conversation but to no avail as he got no reply. The mystery was solved in the morning when Robert woke up in bright sunshine to discover that his travelling companion was in fact a large bear! It was muzzled and confined with a card on its collar saying *"To be forwarded to Mr Wombwell's Menagerie, Great Yarmouth fair"*.



In 1840, he was introduced to the young Queen Victoria at Epsom. He also met Prince Albert and several lords including the Duke of Wellington. The queen mentioned the striking resemblance of Robert to the late king George IV when he was the Prince of Wales. A year later he was presented to Louis Phillippe and the elite of the French court.

In February 1848, Robert attended a dinner in the London Tavern where he was noticed by Henry BENNETT who was the agent of Phineas T. BARNUM the owner of the American Museum in New York. Bennett suggested that Robert should visit America and exhibit himself. At first he was reluctant to take the trip but when he heard about the money he could make and the warm welcome he would get, he agreed to go. On 25th November, 1848, he boarded the Royal Steamer Canada bound for New York.

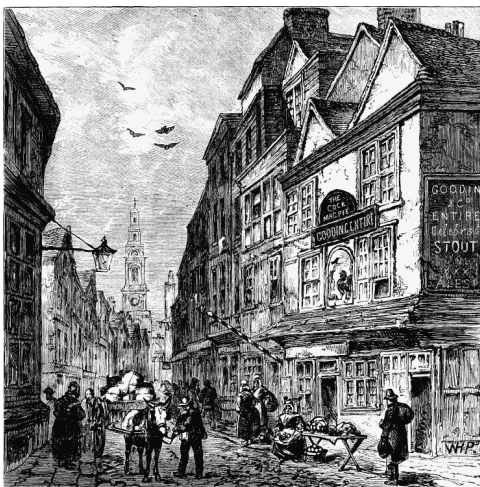
On the journey he made many friends and learnt about the American customs. One night he was entertaining some passengers by dancing a hornpipe which he had learnt from his days on board the brig Neptune. The wife of one of the

passengers, Charles FREBERG, was holding up her son so that he could see the performance when the boy suddenly jumped forward and unfortunately fell into the sea. Instantly Robert leapt over the bulwark and dived into the water to rescue the boy. He surfaced from under the water carrying the lad in one hand and, being an expert swimmer, headed for the boat that had been lowered. He received a hero's welcome when he climbed back on board with the child in his arms. The following day the steamer arrived in New York after a 19 day passage. When he was about to leave the ship the whole crew and all of the passengers gathered around Robert to shake his hand and wish him well.

He was warmly received by the people of New York and on Monday, 18th December, it was announced that he would appear in public. Huge crowds thronged the streets to see him. He next appeared in Philadelphia where the doors were opened at 9 am and closed at 10 pm. It was estimated that in 13 days more than 28,000 people had been to see him. Similar sized crowds were seen at Boston and Lowell.

Robert sailed to Havana on the famous steamer Ohio with his agent and a small dwarf, General Mole. When he went onto the ship, the captain quickly realised that the berth the giant had been allocated was not nearly big enough for a man of his size. He thought quickly and arranged for two state rooms to be made into one for the party. The lower berths of the two rooms were lengthened to provide a space for Robert to use. Later P.T. Barnham allowed Robert to use one wing of his magnificent mansion in Bridport where he stayed for several months. Some reports claim that while he was living in America Robert met and eventually married a giantess from Bantry, County Cork, called Elizabeth (Eliza) SIMPSON. She was also touring with the circus and some people claimed that the marriage was merely a stunt arranged by Barnham to attract more people to his show. There was even one suggestion that 'Eliza' was actually another man posing as a giant woman!

When he had fulfilled his engagements in America, Robert felt homesick and, despite repeated requests for him to stay, he decided to return home leaving Elizabeth behind. In January, 1851, he sailed back to Liverpool and eventually returned to West Somerton. After spending a few weeks with his loved ones, he was encouraged to move to London. He became the landlord of the Craven Head Tavern in Drury Lane. He was very popular with the customers and the tavern was a well run and respected establishment frequented by



The picture shows Drury Lane in 1840 with the Cock and Magpie pub. The Craven Head Tavern was opposite this.

many of the aristocracy. Not long after a visit from Colonel Buckley of the Guards Regiment, Robert received an invitation from Queen Victoria to visit Buckingham Palace. On 11th April, 1851, he was presented to the Queen and the royal family at the palace. She gave him a gold watch and chain which he wore with great pride until the day he died.

Robert stayed at the Craven Head until 1855 and, during his time in London, he met and married a girl from Kent called Maria Charlotte Webb. What happened next is open to some speculation. Some people believe that the couple moved to Sheffield where they ran an old coaching inn called the Burgoyne Arms in Langsett Road. The 1861 Census shows a Robert and Maria Hales living at this address.

A handwritten census form from 1861. The first column contains the number '87'. The second column has 'do' and 'Burgoyne Arms'. The third column lists '1' and 'Maria'. The fourth column lists 'Robert Hales' and 'General'. The fifth column has 'do' and 'do'. The sixth column has '11.00' and '12'. The seventh column has 'Publican (retired)' and 'School'. The eighth column has 'Sheffield' and 'London'.

Interestingly the information shown on the census gives Robert's age as being only 40 when in fact he would have been 48. The other surprising fact is that living with the couple is a 12-year-old son rather oddly named General who was born in London some three years before Robert met Maria. There had been earlier suggestions that Robert in fact had had a son with Eliza Simpson while living in America. He also was good friends with General Mole in America.

Sadly Robert's health began to deteriorate and the couple moved back to live in a caravan at Cumber Corner in Bighton. He survived on an income from selling leaflets that told the story of his life. He finally moved to 3, Wellington Road in Great Yarmouth and died on 22nd November, 1863, probably from bronchitis. The probate records show that in his will he left a sum of £600 to his widow Maria. His body was interred in a sarcophagus shaped tomb in St Mary's, West Somerton, alongside the graves of his parents and other family members.

The inscription on the tomb reads:

*Beneath are deposited the mortal remains of Robert Hales
The Norfolk Giant whose height was 7 feet 8 inches. He
died at Great Yarmouth on 22nd November, 1863. Render
the dust must be your bed, vain are opposing powers. The
wise the strong and crowned heads must lie as low as ours.
This tomb is erected by an affectionate widow.*

The tomb has been restored by stonemasons after falling into disrepair. Robert's birthplace was demolished in the 1960s but two pieces of memorabilia remain. His lantern and giant walking stick are on display in Great Yarmouth at the Time and Tide Museum.

Roger Morgan MN17267

A Gallipoli Diary – Part Three

In the December issue of Norfolk Ancestor we carried the second of a three part feature on the diaries of Lieutenant Charles Earsham Cooke MC.

Lieutenant Cooke was only 21 years of age when he died in the First World War. Charles left a series of diaries which underline the horror of war during the Gallipoli campaign.

We are very grateful to Charles' nephew Richard Cooke for permission to reproduce extracts from the diaries.

In part three we carry extracts up to the time when Charles finished writing his account. We start with an impending Turkish attack on July 23rd.

July 23rd – Friday. Owing to Turkish attack being expected, we had slept in our boots and puttees overnight. Also had rifles and revolvers charged. We also now have to wear the new respirators perpetually on us. This day we all had to remain in our dug outs as far as possible but this was rather knocked on the head by the new draft of 250 men and five officers which arrived about 6 am. Of course they were all over the place in batches. Shells ensue. Anyhow I did no signalling. We have to establish a signalling station in case the telephone breaks down owing to shell fire. It often does. There seemed to be an attack on early on in the afternoon on the left of the Turks.

July 24th – Saturday. Another glorious breeze, thank heaven! These new people still careering about, more shells, the fools! They won't learn till some have been killed. Signalling apparently must continue today – a most unheard of thing. We stood to this morning. How nice! What a life. Must today write letters. Must have censored many hundreds during last week to a fortnight. The men seem to be making up for lost time. The new draft seem to be a most undisciplined lot, thank heaven we have but 20. They have only just been issued out with their rifles and bayonets.

July 25th – Sunday. The first Sunday that I have realised is a Sunday. Had no orderly room and general slack. Diarrhoea too rotten for words. Signalling and shelling continued as usual.

July 26th – Monday. Shelling rather severe. Nothing doing all day but at night I had to go and be at Pink Farm by 7.30 with three others to be pointed out a place to dig on at 12.30. It was to dig a sap about 230 yards long. I relieved the 4th East Lancashires. Rotten diggers, hardly done anything at all. Our men did at least twice as much and we worked until 4 only. We had no casualties, thank heaven.

July 28th - Wednesday. Nothing much doing but rest. Oh I was inoculated against cholera.

July 29th – Thursday. German aeroplane went over at 6.30, dropped bomb in Senagalese lines, no damage done, however. The bombs made an awful noise both in dropping and going off.

August 2nd – Monday. A German aero again came over in the cheekiest fashion, dropping another bomb, this time though at 4 in the afternoon. Of course none of ours in sight.

August 3rd – Tuesday. German right over the beaches. Whether it dropped a bomb or not I don't know. At noon I was again inoculated against cholera, double dose this time and done by our doctor who compared with the other man we had is a wash out. Takes several seconds longer over it making men's arms blue.

August 6th – Friday. Attack on the left. In the afternoon a huge bombardment. They took about four trenches. They say it was awful. The trenches were all so shallow.

August 7th - Saturday. Up at 4.30 am. Bombardment commenced. Bombardment was intense.

August 10th - Tuesday. T. Forshaw went down to base a nervous wreck, is also affected in regions of chest from fumes of bombs.

August 11th – Wednesday. I had in morning to go for an interview as a sort of eye witness to T. Forshaw's gallantry for VC.

After over another week of action, Charles talks about an illness that began to take hold of him.

August 19th – Thursday. Early in the morning was sick, feeling terrible all the day. Had to report to Major Churchill, camp commandant. Had a touch of fever I think. I slept well next night though.

August 25th – Wednesday. Had a bath and good breakfast but then started feeling deadly rotten. Ate nothing for the rest of the day.

August 26th – Thursday. Had decent breakfast but nothing rest of the day.

August 29th - Sunday. Went on church parade feeling awful. Doctor said I should not have gone.

August 30th – Monday. Still in bed, toast only as usual.

August 31st – Tuesday. Still in bed.

September 1st – Wednesday. Toast only. Doctor comes every day as deadly yellow.

September 2nd – Thursday. Have written some letters. Received some two days ago. Two from home and one from Uncle Fred.

This is Charles' last entry. He was a member of the 1st/9th Battalion Manchester Regiment and kept his diary from May 7th to September 2nd, 1915. The fighting from August 7th to 9th at the Vineyard, Helles Section, was led by Lt W. T. Forshaw and Charles, who was at the time a 2nd Lieutenant. It resulted in Forshaw being awarded the Victoria Cross and Charles the Military Cross.

A report in the London Gazette had the following to say about Forshaw, who came from Lancashire: "When holding the north-west corner of 'The Vineyard' against heavy attacks by the Turks, Lieutenant Forshaw not only directed his men but personally threw bombs continuously for over 40 hours. When his detachment was relieved, he volunteered to continue directing the defence. Later, when the Turks captured a portion of the trench, he shot three of them and re-captured it. It was due to his fine example and magnificent courage that this very important position was held."

Forshaw later achieved the rank of major. He survived the war and died on 26th May, 1943.

Following his illness, Charles was invalided home with "fever". He recovered and re-joined the regiment in April, 1916. The regiment went to France in February, 1917. On May 6th/7th Charles was wounded whilst establishing a rifle pit trench. He was taken to hospital in Rouen on May 7th but died from wounds to his legs on May 24th.

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The Yarmouth Mayors

Sometimes when searching for ancestors you just need a list of names to check through. So here at Norfolk Ancestor we decided to introduce a new feature based around lists. We start this month with a record of all the Mayors of Great Yarmouth. If you recognise an ancestor here do let us know and send us some details and we can feature them in a coming edition of Norfolk Ancestor.

Originally Yarmouth's local government structure was headed by Bailiffs. In 1684, a Mayor was introduced for the first time but only for five years. In 1702, a Mayor was once again introduced by charter and, although the position was removed for a decade in the 1990s, it was restored and remains in place to this day.

The Mayor normally takes office in October and the year given is that in which they begin their term.

1684 Sir Thomas Medowe, 1685 Thomas Bradford, 1686 Samuel Fenn, 1687 Mitchel Mew, 1688 John Albertson.

1702 Benjamin England, 1703 Benjamin England, 1704 Joseph Cotman, 1705 Anthony Elys Jnr., 1706 Richard Ferrier, 1707 Samuel Fuller, 1708 Anthony Elys, 1709 William Browne, 1710 James Artis, 1711 Henry Borrett (died in office), 1711 Samuel Wakeman, 1712 John Spurgeon, 1713 William Spooner, 1714 Andrew Bracey, 1715 George England, 1716 John Ireland, 1717 Thomas le Grice, 1718 Jonathan Pue, 1719 Anthony Elys, 1720 Richard Ferrier, 1721 Christopher Brightin, 1722 William Pacey, 1723 John Pearson, 1724 Richard Ferrier Jnr., 1725 Henry Lombe, 1726 Nathaniel Simonds, 1727 Samuel Artis, 1728 George Ward, 1729 Robert Ward, 1730 John Bird, 1731 Anthony Taylor, 1732 Thomas Cooke, 1733 William Brown, 1734 Barry Love, 1735 Samuel Wakeman, 1736 John Parson, 1737 Thomas Milles, 1738 Thomas Horsley, 1739 Thomas Ellys, 1740 Christopher Bernard (died in office), 1740 George Ward.

1741 William Harmer, 1742 John Cotman, 1743 Joseph Neech, 1744 William Browne Snr., 1745 Joseph Cotman, 1746 Samuel Killeth, 1747 Thomas Martin, 1748 William Browne, 1749 Robert Abbon, 1750 Robert Ferrier, 1751 James Ward, 1752 Christopher Taylor (died in office), 1752 Giles Wakeman, 1753 William Butcher, 1754 Richard Baker, 1755 John Cotman, 1756 William Browne, 1757 Joseph Cotman, 1758 Giles Wakeman, 1759 Joseph Cotman, 1760 John Ramey, 1761 Thomas Martin, 1762 John Barnby, 1763 John Goslin Love, 1764 Richard Moyse, 1765 John Narfor, 1766 William Fisher, 1767 John Fisher, 1768 Robert Lancaster, 1769 Richard Baker, 1770 Colman Manclarke, 1771 Anthony Taylor, 1772 Henry Gooch, 1773 John Ramey,

1774 James Fisher, 1775 William Taylor, 1776 Thomas Pitt, 1777 Nathaniel

Pitt, 1778 Joseph Ramey, 1779 James Turner, 1780 William Fisher, 1781 John Reynolds, 1782 William Palgrave, 1783 William Taylor, 1784 John Reynolds, 1785 John Watson, 1786 William Fisher Jnr., 1787 Benjamin Fielding, 1788 James Fisher Jnr., 1789 Samuel Tolver, 1790 Robert Warmington, 1791 George Thompson, 1792 Edmund Lacon, 1793 Jacob Preston, 1794 William Taylor, 1795 Sir Edmund Lacon.

1796 Dover Colby, 1797 James Fisher Jnr., 1798 Sir Edmund Lacon, 1799 William Fisher Jnr., 1800 Samuel Barker, 1801 Jacob Preston, 1802 James Fisher, 1803 Robert Cory, 1804 Francis Riddell Reynolds, 1805 William Palgrave, 1806 William Fisher, 1807 Edmund Knowles Lacon, 1808 Robert Warmington, 1809 James Fisher, 1810 Benjamin Fielding, 1811 John Fisher, 1812 Sir Edmund Lacon, 1813 Jacob Preston, 1814 William Palgrave, 1815 Robert Cory, 1816 Isaac Preston, 1817 Samuel Paget, 1818 Edmund Preston, 1819 Thomas Bateman, 1820 John Goate Fisher, 1821 John Danby Palmer, 1822 Isaac Preston, 1823 Francis Riddell Reynolds, 1824 William Barth, 1825 Samuel Costerton, 1826 William Barth, 1827 John Mortlock Lacon, 1828 John Preston, 1829 George Bateman, 1830 Edmund Preston, 1831 John Preston, 1832 John Baker, 1833 John Danby Palmer, 1834 Isaac Preston, 1835 Isaac Preston, 1836 William Barth, 1837 George Penrice, 1838 Simon Cobb, 1839 Samuel Jay, 1840 Samuel Thurtell Palmer, 1841 William Johnson, 1842 Samuel Thurtell Palmer, 1843 Samuel Charles Marsh, 1844 William Hurry Palmer, 1845 Samuel Thurtell Palmer, 1846 William Norton Burroughs, 1847 Phillip Pully, 1848 Phillip Pully, 1849 David Abraham Gourlay, 1850 Charles Pearson, 1851 Charles Pearson.

1852 Samuel Charles Marsh, 1853 James Cherry, 1854 Charles John Palmer, 1855 Charles John Palmer, 1856 Charles Cory Aldred, 1857 James Worship, 1858 Robert Steward, 1859 William Worship, 1860 Samuel Nightingale, 1861 Robert Steward, 1862 Robert Steward, 1863 Robert Steward, 1864 Robert Steward, 1865 Charles Cory Aldred, 1866 Edward Pitt Youell, 1867 William Worship, 1868 Samuel Nightingale, 1869 Charles Woolverton, 1870 Edward Harbord Lushington Preston, 1871 Edward Harbord Lushington Preston, 1872 Charles Woolverton, 1873 Henry Teasdel, 1874 Robert David Barber, 1875 John Eager Barnby, 1876 Thomas Burton Steward, 1877 Charles Diver, 1878 Edward Henry Harvey Combe, 1879 Charles Cory Aldred, 1880 Thomas Burton Steward, 1881 Charles Cory Aldred, 1882 Charles Cory Aldred, 1883 William Barnard, 1884 Edward William Worledge, 1885 Thomas Burton Steward, 1886 Thomas Burton Steward, 1887 Richard Martins, 1888 Frederick Danby Palmer, 1889 John William Budds Johnson, 1890 James Sutton, 1891 Frank Burton, 1892 Charles Henry Wiltshire, 1893 Richard Martins, 1894 Frank Arnold, 1895 Thomas Alfred Rising, 1896 Henry Edmund Buxton, 1897 Ernest De Montesquiou Lacon, 1898 James Ryley, 1899 Benjamin Howard Press, 1900 Charles Somerville Orde, 1901 Walter Diver, 1902 Walter Diver, 1903 Thomas Green, 1904 Alfred Charles Mayo, 1905 Robert Nudd (died in Office), 1906 Charles N. Brown, 1906 Edward William Worledge, 1907 Frank Arnold, 1908 Charles Alfred Campling, 1909 Theophilus Witter Swindell, 1910 Thomas Alfred Rising, 1911 Frank Arnold, 1912 Reginald Granville Westmacott, 1913 David McGowan,

1914 David McGowan, 1915 Edward William Worledge, 1916 Edward William Worledge, 1917 Arthur Harbord, 1918 Arthur Harbord, 1919 William Henry Bayfield, 1920 William George Knights, 1921 Frederick Brett, 1922 Ernest James Middleton, 1923 Richard Frederick Ernest Ferrier, 1924 Mary Ethel Leach, 1925 Alfred William Yallop, 1926 Ernest James Middleton, 1927 George Platten, 1928 Harry Thomas Greenacre, 1929 Arthur Henry Beevor, 1930 Frederick William Lawn, 1931 Arthur Henry Beevor, 1932 Harry Robert Middleton, 1933 Percy Cecil Ellis, 1934 Arthur Harbord, 1935 Ada Mary Perrett, 1936 Harry Thomas Greenacre, 1937 Eve Keturah Carr, 1938 Arthur William Hollis, 1939 Ernest Robert Herman, 1940 Ernest Robert Herman, 1941 Frederick Henry Debbage, 1942 Frederick Henry Debbage, 1943 Frederick William Lawn, 1944 Philip Robert Hill, 1945 John William Beckett, 1946 Herbert Stewart Matthes, 1947 Frank Herbert Stone, 1948 Frank Herbert Stone, 1949 Frederick Kruber, 1950 Cecil R.E. Matthews, 1951 Herbert James Shorten, 1952 William Alfred Barfield, 1953 Frederick James Page, 1954 Thomas Cotton, 1955 Laura Madeline Gilham, 1956 Laura Madeline Gilham, 1957 Katherine Mable Adlington, 1958 Herbert Ronald Muskett, 1959 Ernest William Applegate, 1960 William Edward Mobbs, 1961 Edgar Barker, 1962 John Birchenall, 1963 John Phillip Winter, 1964 Henry Duncan McGee, 1965 Arthur William Ecclestone, 1966 Frank Herbert Stone, 1967 Kenneth Lionel Collett, 1968 Ethel Violet Fleet, 1969 John Malley, 1970 Kenneth Henry Hammerton, 1971 Alfred William Harvey, 1972 Cora Batley, 1973 William John Davy.

Borough restructured and now includes Flegg UDC and parts of Lothingland UDC

1974 John Milton Bishop, 1975 Ernest James Craske, 1976 Joseph Alexander Laird, 1977 Henry Samuel Miller, 1978 George Trevor Scott, 1979 John Phillip Alexander Clymer, 1980 Ronald George Webb, 1981 Frank Gordon Chapman, 1982 David Ernest Arnold, 1983 Barry George Coleman, 1984 Henry Duncan McKee, 1985 James Minion Benson, 1986 Brenda Margaret June Mills, 1987 George Sherratt Johnson, 1988 Derrick John Henry Maddeys, 1989 James Robert Shrimplin, 1990 William Dougal.

The role of Mayor is removed for a ten year period.

2000 Bertie James Edmund Collins, 2001 David Walter Thompson, 2002 John Hudson, 2003 Jonathan Miles Russell, 2004 Michael Taylor, 2005 George William Jermany, 2006 Susan Bette Robinson, 2007 Paul Andrew Newton Garrod, 2008 Terence Robert Easter, 2009 Anthony Thomas Smith, 2010 Michael Thomas Jeal, 2011 Barry George Coleman, 2012 Colleen Monica Walker, 2013 John Markham Burroughs, 2014 Marlene Ellen Fairhead, 2015 Shirley Ann Weymouth, 2016 Malcolm Dudley Bird, 2017 Kerry Susanne Robinson Payne, 2018 Mary Susan Clare Coleman, 2019 Michael Thomas Jeal.

New Members and Members Interests to January 10th, 2020



Compiled by Carole Taylor
Membership Secretary
email: membership@nfhs.co.uk

Welcome to the March 2020 issue of the Norfolk Ancestor.

Please note that the renewal reminder form is inside this issue. Last quarter the Trustees announced an increase in membership rates for the coming year, the first increase in almost 30 years.

Due to numerous requests from members we have also extended the option of an E-Ancestor to all of our members worldwide. We have tried to contact all members advising them of their options re renewal and apologies to anyone who has not been contacted.

Paying by Bankers Order or online by debit/credit card significantly reduces our administration time so, if you are able to renew using one of these options, it will be greatly appreciated.

If you already pay by Banker's Order this is indicated by an X on your magazine postal label and your renewal will be taken from your account on 1st April. Of course, we will continue to accept cheques and cash for renewals.

We also offer 10-year and life memberships but these can only be paid for by cash or cheque. Please contact me if you wish to take up this option.

Each year we reclaim over £5,000 from the Inland Revenue thanks to those members who have completed a Gift Aid Declaration.

Signing up is simple - either click the Gift Aid box when you renew online or complete the paper Gift Aid Declaration form attached to the renewal sheet or send an email to giftaid@nfhs.co.uk.

Once you have signed a Gift Aid Declaration this stays in force until you advise us to cancel it. If you have completed a Gift Aid Declaration and are no longer a UK taxpayer you must let us know so we can cancel the declaration.

A reminder to all members to review their Members' Interests on a regular basis and contact any other members who may be researching the same surname. Please let us know of any successes you may have had using this facility.

Regards

Carole

New Members to 10th January 2020

The Society welcomes the following new members

18034	Mr B.	Hull	UK	18073	Mr S. A.	Burrell	UK
18035	Mr D.	Bowman	UK	18074	Mrs R.	Pennyfather	UK
18036	Mr H.	Lyon	UK	18075	Mr. G.	Crask	USA
18037	Mrs L.	Emmans	UK	18076	Ms L.	Foyster	UK
18038	Mr B.	Jones	UK	18077	Mrs Y.	Wyatt	NZ
18039	Mrs P.	Gordon	USA	18078	Mr R.	Gage	USA
18040	Ms J.	Rains	UK	18079	Mrs D.	Charlton	UK
18041	Mrs L.	Smith	UK	18080	Mr J.	Sleightholm	UK
18042	Mrs J.	Lee	UK	18081	Mr R.	Stephens	UK
18043	Mrs L.	Cozens	UK	18082	Mr G.	Sutton	UK
18044	Rev R.	Leeming	UK	18083	Mrs L.	Savory	UK
18045	Ms. K.	Baynard	USA	18084	Ms C.	Moss	AU
18046	Mr S. T.	Snell	UK	18085	Mr S.	Roman	UK
18047	Mr C.	Overland	UK	18086	Ms K.	Powell	UK
18048	Mrs M.	Kendrick	AU	18087	Mrs J.	Purdey	AU
18049	Mrs C.	Walker	USA	18088	Mr J. L. B.	Garnham	UK
18050	Mr D.	Boutle	UK	18089	Mr W.	Eastoe	UK
18051	Mr B.	King	UK	18090	Ms D.	Holloway-Reeves	UK
18052	Mrs J.	Mantell	UK	18091	Mr J.	Fox	UK
18053	Mrs I.	Sambrook	UK	18092	Mr C.	Kilmurry	Ire
18054	Mr C.	O'Donoghue	UK	18093	Mrs J.	Gifford	UK
18055	Mr C.	Hall	UK	18094	Mrs B.	Thurling	AU
18056	Mrs H.	Slater	UK	18095	Mr J. W.	Lee	UK
18057	Ms A. R	Smith	USA	18096	Mr M.	Russell	UK
18058	Ms J.	Gosling	UK	18097	Dr J.	Chalker	UK
18059	Mrs C.	Gosling	UK	18098	Ms A.	Ashley-Smith	UK
18060	Mrs S.	Vaughan	UK	18099	Dr R.	Maguire	UK
18061	Mrs K.	James	UK	18100	Mrs L.	Armstrong	AU
18062	Mrs J.	John	UK	18101	Mrs E.	Britton-Cumming	UK
18063	Mr I.	Kemp	UK	18102	Dr A.	Leak	UK
18064	Mrs E.	Mclellan	UK	18103	Mr G. T.	Maddison	USA
18065	Mr A.	Edwards	UK	18104	Mrs V.	Brunton	UK
18066	Mr T. C.	Gray	UK	18105	Mrs B.	Price	UK
18067	Mrs D.	Murrell	UK	18106	Mr M.	Morton	UK
18068	Mr N.	Britcher	UK	18107	Mrs C.	Grogan	UK
18069	Mrs J.	Mackay	UK	18108	Mrs K.	Lynch	UK
18070	Dr R.	Tebbenham	UK	18109	Mr J.	Taylor	USA
18071	Mrs A.	Maclachlan	UK				
18072	Mrs S.	Brinded	UK				

18110	Ms	L.	Siegloff	AU	18127	Mr.	R.	Spiller	UK
18111	Mr	G. I.	Riseborough	UK	18128	Mr	K.	Turner	UK
18112	Mr	M.	Braham	UK	18129	Ms	M. A.	Baker	UK
18113	Mr	J.	Bartra-Pettengill	USA	18130	Mr	K.	Williamson	UK
18114	Mr	R.	Storr	UK	18131	Mrs	E.	Mott	UK
18115	Mrs	S. M.	Mcintier	UK	18132	Mr	S.	Stangroom	UK
18116	Miss	C.	Burbage	UK	18133	Mrs	D.	Fernando	UK
18117	Miss	P. J.	Gulliver	UK	18134	Mr	J. M.	Clapham	UK
18118	Mr	R.	Barber	UK	18135	Mr	A.	Horn	UK
18119	Mr	P.	Boughen	CA	18136	Mrs	F.	Wallis	UK
18120	Mr	J	Englehardt	USA	18137	Mr	D. G.	Freeman	UK
18121	Mr	P.	Newton	UK	18138	Mr	P.	Barrett	UK
18122	Mr	M.	Everitt	UK	18139	Ms	S.	Burgess	DK
18123	Mr	N.	Donnelly	NZ	18140	Mrs	A.	Foster	UK
18124	Sgt	R.	Cooper	USA	18141	Mrs	J.	Pengelly	UK
18125	Miss	K.	Owens	UK	18142	Dr	D.	Whitworth	UK
18126	Ms	P.	Raven	UK	18143	Mrs	A.	Tills	UK

Members' Interests Search Area Codes

KEY

CN = Central
 NC = Norwich & District
 NE = North East
 NW = North West
 SE = South East
 SW = South West
 YM = Gt Yarmouth



Other areas
 are identified by Chapman codes.
 A copy of these can be obtained from Kirby Hall.

To contact other members researching the same surname.

First login to the NFHS Website (success indicated by 'Logout' top right), then under the 'Membership' / 'Members Interests' menu select the required Surname from the drop-down list and click on "Contact".

An e-mail address or postal address will then be forwarded to you.

If an e-mail is not received soon, please check e-mail spam folder. When corresponding by post please remember to include a stamped self addressed envelope.

Members Interests to 10th January 2020

No.	Name	County	Area	Period	No.	Name	County	Area	Period
18030	WEST	NFK	NW	18C-19C	18048	DAWSON	NFK	ALL	ALL
18030	WALTON	NFK	NW	18C-19C	307	HAYLETT	NFK	ALL	ALL
18049	EGGLETON	NFK	ALL	ALL	17610	FROST	NFK	ALL	ALL
18049	BAYES	NFK	ALL	ALL	17610	POWLEY	NFK	ALL	ALL
18049	PEASE	NFK	ALL	ALL	17610	COURENS	NFK	ALL	ALL
18092	AMESS	NFK	ALL	17C-18C	17725	PITCHELL	NFK	ALL	ALL
18092	CROWE	NFK	ALL	ALL	8541	WALLOWING	NFK	ALL	ALL
18092	FISH	NFK	ALL	ALL	15356	GROUT	NFK	ALL	ALL
18092	GREEN	NFK	ALL	ALL	17999	COBB	NFK	ALL	ALL
18077	WEBB	NFK	ALL	20C	18118	NEAL	NFK	NW	ALL
18077	CRICK	NFK	ALL	20C	16966	PALMER	NFK	ALL	ALL
307	HAYLETT	NFK	ALL	ALL	17875	GREEN	NFK	ALL	ALL
17987	PIGGEN	NFK	ALL	ALL	17914	CHESTER	NFK	ALL	ALL
17987	ARMINGER	NFK	ALL	ALL	17914	SPALL	NFK	ALL	ALL
17987	WILSON	NFK	ALL	ALL	18130	BRIDGES	NFK	ALL	ALL
18048	LANGLEY	NFK	ALL	ALL	18130	WALPOLE	NFK	ALL	ALL
18048	MILK	NFK	ALL	ALL	16693	ROBINSON	ALL	ALL	ALL
18048	BUXTON	NFK	NW	ALL	16693	WHISKEARD	NFK	ALL	ALL
					16693	SOFTLEY	NFK	ALL	ALL

Can You Spare Some Time For the Society?

NORFOLK Family History Society relies on an army of volunteers and we are always looking for additional help.

If you can spare some time, you will find being involved with the society very rewarding.

We would love to hear from people with experience in or enthusiasm for publicity or IT or anyone who would like to check transcripts or take on the role of membership secretary.

If you would like to help the society in any way please contact Volunteers' Co-ordinator Carol Reeve on volunteers@nfhs.co.uk.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

NOTICE

PLEASE DO NOT DELAY

RENEW TODAY

DO NOT PAY IF YOU HAVE
A BANKER'S ORDER IN PLACE

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Treasurer

Kirby Hall

70 St Giles Street

Norwich

Norfolk

NR2 1LS

Norfolk Family History Society

REGISTERED CHARITY No 1055410

REGISTERED COMPANY No 3194731

Renewal of Membership 2020-2021

Please insert your membership number here.....

Please renew my/our membership of NFHS for the year ending 31st March 2021 for which the under-mentioned subscription is enclosed. (circle as appropriate).

	One Year	10 Year	Life
Worldwide E-Ancestor	£10	£75	£165
UK Posted Ancestor	£15	£120	£265
Europe Posted Airmail	£21	£157	£346
Rest of The World Posted Air-mail	£25	£187	£412

PLEASE USE CAPITALS

Surname(s) Title.....

Forenames

Address

.....

..... Post Code.....

Telephone Number (STD Code)

E-mail address

Cheques/Postal Orders should be made out to **Norfolk Family History Society**.

Signature

.....

GIFT AID DECLARATION

Details of donor (Please complete in CAPITALS)

Membership Number

Title.....Forename(s).....Surname.....

Address.....

.....

.....Post Code.....

I want the Norfolk Family History Society to treat all the subscriptions and donations I have made in the last four years, and all subscriptions and donations I make from the date of this declaration as Gift Aid Donations, until I notify you otherwise.

I understand that I must pay an amount of United Kingdom income tax and/or capital gains tax at least equal to the tax that the charity reclaims on my donations in each year (currently 25p for each £1 given).

I can cancel this declaration at any time by notifying the Society in writing.

If my circumstances change in the future and I no longer pay sufficient tax on income and/or capital gains equal to the tax the charity reclaims, I must inform the Society in writing.

Date...../...../..... Signature.....

Privacy Policy

NFHS will hold your name, contact details, members' interests, membership and Gift Aid status on our network. This information will only be used to communicate with you and HM Revenue and Customs. It will only be shared with those Trustees and Volunteers who service your membership and other members where you have given your prior consent or, where the law requires it. You have a legal right to object to your details being held in this way and, if you wish to exercise this right, or wish to have a copy of the full details, please write to the Data Protection Officer at Kirby Hall. Full details are also available on our website.

Please tick the box to confirm that you have read the privacy policy

☐

USING THE MEMBERSHIP WEBSITE

We often receive emails from members re address changes and password resets. These are all things that members can do themselves and help reduce the administration time of our volunteers.

Forgotten Your Password?

- Go to norfolkfhs.org.uk.
- Click on 'Members Login' (Right hand corner of blue menu tab)
- Click on 'Forgotten Password'
- Enter your login i.e. Your membership number followed by the first three characters of your surname.
- Click on 'Request New Password.'
- A new password will be sent to you. Need a password that is more memorable? See below.

Changed address/Email/Telephone Number?

- Go to norfolkfhs.org.uk
- Click on 'Members Login' (Right hand corner of blue menu tab).
- Enter your login and password.
- Select 'Membership' on the left-hand side of the blue tab and then click on 'Amend Details'
- Overwrite the details you wish to change and click on 'Update'.
- The message '***Your profile information has been successfully updated***' confirms the changes have been successful.
- Check that the page contains your correct details.

Change your Password?

- Go to norfolkfhs.org.uk
- Click on 'Members Login' (Right hand corner of blue menu tab)
- Enter your login and password.
- Select 'Membership' on the left-hand side of the blue tab and then click on 'Amend Details'
- At the bottom of the screen enter the password you wish to use in future.
- Re-enter the password to confirm.
- The message '***Your password has been changed successfully***' will appear at the top of the screen.

Rob's Round Up *with Robert Parker*

Bringing you information on what is available to the keen family researcher

Australia. FamilySearch adds 164K Victoria, Inward Passenger Lists (1839-1923).

Bristol. Ancestry adds over five million parish register entries for Bristol (including scans of the registers); Marriages and Burials (1538-1812), Baptisms (1813-1918), Marriages and Banns (1754-1935) and Burials (1813-1994).

Britain. Bombing Britain air raid map has launched online at <http://www.warstateandsociety.com/bombing-britain>. From first attack in October 1939 through more than 30,000 UK locations that were subject to air raids during World War Two.

Cambridge. FamilySearch adds Cambridge Parish Registers (1538-1983).

Church of England Record Centre and Lambeth Palace. Library is moving to a new building in 2021. 30th April, 2020, will be the last day that either of the current reading rooms will be open.

Deceased Online. New subscriptions. Basic annual subscription (now called 'Silver') will remain at £89. A limit of 450 record views for this subscription. For heavier professional and corporate users the 'Gold' subscription has been introduced at £249 for a maximum of 2000 views, and a 'Platinum' subscription at £499 for 5000 views.

England. FamilySearch adds England and Wales, National Index of Wills and Administrations (1858–1957), Hampshire Parish Registers (1538–1980), Middlesex, Westminster Parish Registers (1538–1912).

England and Wales. GRO have added death indexes covering 1984-2019.

England and Wales. FindMyPast released a national set of almost 15 million probate records 1960-2019.

Hackney, London. TheGenealogist added the Borough maps and field books to their Lloyd George Domesday Survey records.

Herefordshire. FamilySearch adds Bishops' Transcripts (1583-1898).

Huntingdonshire. FamilySearch adds 126K Parish Registers.

Military. TheGenealogist adds 50 new regiments to their Regimental Records and Histories Collection bringing total coverage to over 70 different regiments.

Mixed. MyHeritage adds 40.1 million new records in the second half of September. Includes an update to the existing collection Netherlands, Population Registers and two new collections: United States and Canada, Index of Obituaries and the Denmark, Copenhagen Police Registrations.

Mixed. MyHeritage adds 44.4 million new records in the first half of September: 9.7 million from three new collections and 34.7 million added to six existing collections from the Netherlands. The new collections include a New York City Birth Index, a New York City Death Index, and the Australian World War II Nominal Roll, 1939–1945. The updates to existing Netherlands collections include Civil Deaths, Marriages, and Birth collections as well as Church Baptisms, Church Burials, and Church Marriages collections.

Norfolk. Findmypast new Norfolk Parish Records come from over 2,500 registers and include over half a million new baptisms (adding 307 new parishes), over half a million banns and marriages (covering 461 new parishes) and over 400,000 burials from 301 new parishes.

North Buckinghamshire. TheGenealogist adds maps and field books into The Lloyd George Domesday Survey, 1910-1915.

Scotland. More than 3,000 new baptism records (1752-1855) from Presbyterian churches have been added to ScotlandsPeople.

Scotland. Findmypast adds 500,000 Roman Catholic records from Scotland.

Scotland. FindMyPast adds over 121K new records to their collection of Scottish newspaper birth notices.

Scotland. FindMyPast adds 201K new records to Newspaper Marriage & Anniversary Notices.

Tower Hamlets, London. TheGenealogist has released the Lloyd George Domesday Survey records (1910-1915).

Warwickshire. TheGenealogist updates their collection of tithe maps and tithe records covering the years 1837-55.

Warwickshire. FamilySearch adds 49K Parish Registers (1535-1963).

Worldwide. FamilySearch expanded its free online archives in September 2019 with almost 13.2 million new indexed family history records and over 13.6 million

digital images from across the world. New historical records were added from Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, England, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Portugal, Russia, South Africa, Spain and the United States. The United States Deceased Physician Files, United States Census 1880, United States



World War I Draft Registration Cards, United States Cemetery Abstracts and United States Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Military Servicemen in World War 1 Records 1919. Digital Images came from Italy, Peru and The United States Census 1880.

Worldwide. Online archives. FamilySearch expanded its free online archives in August 2019 with 23.3 million new indexed records and over 7.6 million digital images from all over the world

Recommended twitter account to follow @UlsterHistory. They are a leading Irish family research organisation and book publisher.

Remember to check with your local library; they may have Ancestry, Findmypast and even the British Newspaper Archive available for you to access for free. You just need to join your local library.

Rob's Round Up is brought to you by Robert Parker,

<https://myfamilygenealogy.co.uk>

New record sets are identified from the world wide web and Social Media including Facebook and Twitter.

Robert Parker

myfamilygenealogy.co.uk

email: rparker@myfamilygenealogy.co.uk

Editor's Corner



By Evelyn Simak, CC BY-SA 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org>

I have featured one of my favourite pieces of land in Norwich on a number of occasions in this magazine.

Rosary Cemetery in Rosary Road, just off Thorpe Road, was established in 1819 by Thomas Drummond, a nonconformist minister. The first burial in November, 1821, was the re-interment of Drummond's wife Ann who had died two years previously and been buried in the Octagon Chapel in Norwich. After his death in 1852, Thomas Drummond was buried in the same plot as his wife.

It was the first non-denominational cemetery in England and laid out on a former market garden.

Today a number of Norwich luminaries are buried in the cemetery including many from the Colman family and you can read about many of them by searching various internet websites. My interest in the Rosary was spiked when I found out that, not only are a number of my ancestors buried there, but my 3x Great Uncle and his son were superintendents of the Rosary for a combined total of 65 years. Trying to find out what the role of a superintendent of the Rosary involved proved to be quite problematic. But then, thanks to a friend of the

Norfolk Family History Society, Phyllida Scrivens, who many members will know for her talks at both Kirby Hall and other parts of Norfolk, I was put in touch with local historian Nick Williams who was able to fill in many of my blanks.

It appears that from its opening in 1819 through to 1968, the Rosary had a superintendent who lived at the cemetery lodge and the first of these was my 3x great uncle Britiffe Edmund DEW (1792-1876) who held the post from 1821 until his death – well over 50 years.

Nick told me that the role of superintendent appears to have changed substantially over the years. Initially Britiffe Dew was a gardener by trade who took on the same role when Rev Drummond opened the Rosary in 1821. Obviously the men knew each other in some capacity.

It is quite likely that Britiffe Dew could have decided on the lay-out of the cemetery and this has made me very proud. One thing almost certain is that my ancestor would have dug graves and maintained the grounds.

By the late 19th century, the Superintendent's role was to manage the Rosary on behalf of a group of trustees. The role would include the supervision of funerals, the security of the grounds and managing the grave diggers and the groundsmen who worked there.



The grave of Britiffe Edmund Dew (1792-1876) in the Rosary Cemetery

Drummond had two houses built on Thorpe Road at the junction with Rosary Road where the Norwich City Supporters Club now stands. One was his home until bankruptcy forced its sale in 1841 and the other was a cottage where the Dew family lived. Later, in 1860, a lodge was built beside the main entrance to the Rosary and that accommodated the Superintendent and his family until it was sold by Norwich City Council in 1991.

Britiffe Dew certainly moved into the new lodge and is listed as living there in the 1871 census with his son Henry James Dew becoming his assistant. Henry took over as superintendent on his father's death in July, 1876, and he lived at the lodge. Britiffe is buried in plot B173.

Henry retired on a pension paid by the trustees in June 1885 but died in December – suggesting that he had retired through bad health. Henry is buried in plot B172 along with his first wife Mary who died in 1851 and his second wife Sarah who lived until 1895.

Nick kindly sent me a list of all the Dews buried in the cemetery – up to 20. So very soon I will be getting on a number 14 or 15 bus from my home to Norwich Thorpe Railway Station and paying another visit to this very serene and peaceful place that holds so many pieces of my past.

It is good to know that my Dews played a vital part in the setting up and upkeep of the Rosary.

If anyone else has further information on the post of superintendent of the Rosary I would love to hear from them.

Peter Steward MN14801

Vacancy For Membership Secretary

NORFOLK Family History Society is looking for a membership secretary.

This is a vital voluntary role with the post holder being responsible for maintaining our membership records, entering renewals and new members. He/She is also responsible for providing lists of information for the Norfolk Ancestor and creating mailing lists to members.

The job of membership secretary has grown in the past few years and is vital to the smooth running of the society.

Full training will be given. If you are interested in the position or would like more information please contact Carole Taylor on

membership@nfhs.co.uk

Letters, Notes and Queries

This is the area given over to society members. If you have a query or a nugget of interest please send it to us along with your membership number and email details so that other members can contact you. Don't forget that you can also use our Facebook site to request and receive help.

Subscription rates

I agree with others that the time is right for a UK E-Ancestor subscription rate. I thoroughly enjoy reading the mag when it plops through the letterbox but I only ever keep the most recent copy.

I too am concerned at the amount of paper that is printed then scrapped. I now have a subscription to "Readly" which for £8 per month enables me to read literally hundreds of magazines on my phone, laptop or desktop. As someone with quite a few interests, this not only saves me a considerable amount of money but I also feel I am doing my bit to save the planet. My final "printed" subscription (Motor Sport magazine) runs out this month and is not being renewed! Kind regards

Mike Dodman, Bromsgrove, Worcs. mfdodman@gmail.com

Editor's Note: I too use Readly and can thoroughly recommend it.

One Napp over the eight?

My 4x great grandparents Thomas NAPP (c1774-1843), gardener and latterly inn-keeper of The Cauliflower Inn, Loddon, and Elizabeth his wife late WOODS (c1778-1857), had ten known children: Mary Ann (1799-1844) - my 3x GGM, Thomas (1800-1879), John (1802-1866), William (1803-1804), William (1805-1876), Robert (1807-1808), Robert (1809-1810), Thornton (1810-1882), George (1815-1815) and Elizabeth (1818-1840). Is eight consecutive children of the same gender a Norfolk record, or can anyone beat it?

Here is an image of Thomas's and Elizabeth's grave in the churchyard at Holy Trinity, Loddon.



Alan Harper MN 13133

mail@agharper.plus.com

DNA Confusion

Dear Peter

Thank you for your excellent magazine – always a fascinating read! I can trace my ancestors with reasonable certainty to Fletcher Christian and other mutineers but the DNA test I applied for didn't help at all.

I realise you must be very busy but I wondered if you could help my confusion about requesting DNA testing please?

Two years ago my sister and I both applied to a company called "EasyDNA" for testing to hopefully trace some of our ancestors.

The reports we got were very complicated and the results were:

For my sister: **Maternal Ancestry Report** Haplogroup J1;

Time of Origin 27,000 years ago; Place of Origin Western Asia

For me: **Paternal Ancestry Report** Haplogroup R1b;

Time of Origin 25-35,000 years ago; Place of Origin Central or Southwest Asia

These results were of no value to me in my family history research – should I have tried a different company or asked for a different study?

I would be grateful for some guidance please?

Christopher Nobbs (MN 5963) chris@thenobbs.net

Editor's Note—Do contact Christopher if you can be of help.

Mayflower 400

Dear Editor

I am forwarding a copy of the message I sent to Maureen Selley at Devon Family History Society, as requested in the article on page 16 of the December Norfolk Ancestor.

Dear Ms. Selley,

I am writing in response to an invitation in the Norfolk Ancestor (December 2019) to contact you in regard to the Mayflower.

Although I have lived in England for more than 43 years, I am an American by birth and ancestry. Among my ancestors are Francis Cooke and Richard Warren, passengers on the Mayflower and my 10th great-grandfathers. My late wife Laurel Lynch Clinton also had Mayflower ancestors: John Howland, Edward Tilley and his daughter Anne. John Howland and Anne Tilley married after their arrival in America.

It would be reasonable to infer that Laurel and I met as boy-girl-next-door in some town in the north-eastern USA.

In fact, when Laurel and I met in 1962 her family had been settled in California for about 120 years and I was the first in my family to travel west of Omaha.

Our families had met long before that however. We both trace our ancestry back to Peter Folger who came from Norwich, Norfolk and was one of the first settlers of Nantucket Island, Massachusetts.

Thus Laurel and I were seventh cousins, a fact that we did not learn for about a decade after our marriage.

Our son Douglas is consequently a quintuple Mayflower descendant.

Robert H Clinton MN 9032

rhclinton@tranquility.net

DIANA SPELMAN BA

Norfolk Research Specialist **(since 1982)**

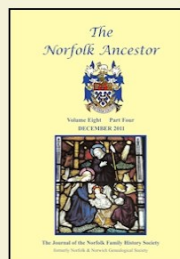
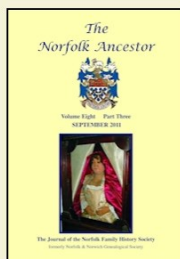
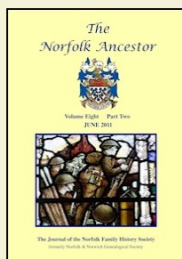
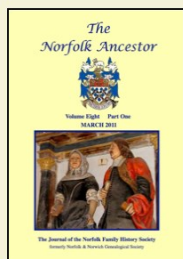
Medieval to Modern
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Manorial records
Photography



74 Park Lane
NORWICH NR2 3EF
Tel: 01603 664186

Email: dianaspelman@waitrose.com

Scanned Ancestor Copies



Copies of the Norfolk Ancestor from 1992 onwards are now available to NFHS members on the Society's web site.

More on the SKEDGE family

Dear Editor.

I think this is the first time I have been moved to write something for the journal and if you think others might be interested please use it.

I was very interested to read the article in the September journal "So Much For Bagpipes" by Janelle Collins and also Mike Nicholls' article in the December journal "More On The TUCK Family".

Although I have not researched the "TUCK" family to any length, I had come across them during my extensive research into the SKEDGE family. Skedge is an unusual name and to have it mentioned in two editions of the journal is something of an event.

However, I hope that both Janelle and Mike will not object if I put forward details from my own family knowledge and research. Henry Tuck's grandmother is indeed Elizabeth Skedge (born 1758) the daughter of William and Elizabeth Skedge and she married Samuel Tuck in 1781.

I do not believe that Ann Skedge who married James Norton (and from whom Alan and Steve in Janelle's article are descended) is Elizabeth's sister but her niece Ann (born 1782) the daughter of Philip and Ann Skedge. Philip and Elizabeth being brother and sister.

The details about the land in Blofield are interesting. I did not know that the land next to the Tuck's smallholding was actually owned by the Skedge family. Charles Skedge (1867-1952) was my husband's great uncle and was variously a farm labourer, farm steward and farm bailiff. My husband's grandfather James was Charles' brother.

My other point is that Charles only had one son, Bertie Richard, and it was this son who was the Chairman of Blofield Parish Council for many years and not a grandson of the same name.

Mike Nicholls wonders if there is a connection between the Skedge/Nortons in Canada and Charles and Bertie Skedge in Blofield. I can tell him that the link is a Charles Skedge (born 1757) who was Elizabeth and Philip's brother.

I would be delighted to hear from Janelle Collins or Mike Nicholls or anyone else if they would like to contact me.

Eileen Skedge MN 7082 eskedge@aol.com

If you have any more information that might help Eileen please contact her direct on the email address above.

Group Reports

Correspondence about individual groups and meetings should be addressed to the following organisers:

London: Mary Fisk, Flat 3, Butterfield House, 7 Allen Road, London N16 8SB
Email: mary975@btinternet.com

DISS FAMILY HISTORY GROUP

Programme 2020

All meetings in Diss Methodist Church 7 pm for 7.30 pm unless indicated.

Email for details of our House Meetings and to book a place.
bettymorley@btinternet.com.

All enquiries regarding meetings of the group should be addressed directly to the organiser Betty Morley at 'Thwaites,' Fersfield, Diss, Norfolk, IP22 2BP.



10th March	Bloody Murder in the Spike—some goings on in Guiltcross Workhouse, Kenninghall	Edith Polston
17th March	What did they suffer from? House meeting 1.30 pm at Wendy's house. Must be booked	
14th April	"Researching the History of Your Home" with Stephen Poulter—author of a number of local history books. Researching history of 17th century Norfolk cottage over 300 years. Stephen will describe the processes involved in enabling anyone to set out on their own journey of discovery.	Stephen Poulter
12th May	Identifying and Dating Victorian Photographs	Tom Doig
9th June	The Huguenot Daughters	Gill Blanchard
14th July	The Widow Kett	Georgette Vale
11th August	To Be Announced	Simon Pawley
8th September	A Most Notorious, Naughty, False, Lying Fellow	Sue Paul
13th October	Sex, Murder and Mayhem in English Church-	John Vigar
10th November	To Be Announced	
8th December	Christmas Social Evening	

Diss Family History Group

A Jolly Good Chap!

'A Jolly Good Chap' was Steve Smith's subject when he spoke to the Diss Family History Group on 8th October. Steve is one of our regular speakers and it was a pleasure to welcome him back. Betty opened the meeting with a poem about an unremarkable young farm labourer who lied about his age when he joined up because he wanted recognition and respect, which he achieved in his service and his death at the Somme. It was particularly poignant and apt because Steve's talk was a tribute to his Great Grandfather Frank Smith who lost his life in World War One.

It was a photo of Frank in uniform on the wall in his grandfather's house and a family trip to The Somme that fired the imagination of the 13-year-old Steve. When he was older he was able to act on his ambition to research Frank's war and walk in his footsteps and it was this journey that would launch his career as historian, author, battlefield guide and researcher.

Frank was born in Lenham in Kent, the son of an agricultural labourer. He married Edith Chittenden in 1901. It was a happy marriage and they went on to have seven children but Frank would never see his youngest son. When World War One broke out in 1914, Frank was 34-years-old. He said he wanted to make his family proud and enlisted in the 8th Battalion of the East Kent Regiment at Canterbury (known as the Buffs because of the colour of the uniform worn by the regiment in an earlier century).

The 8th had been raised and was commanded by Colonel Frederick Charles Romer, a veteran of The Boer War and attached to the 72nd Brigade of the 24th Division. By August, 1915, after training for months, Frank's Battalion was considered ready for action. On 31st August they boarded the SS "Seriol" bound for Boulogne and from there they travelled by train and by foot to their camp at Manninghem.

Steve said that only one member of the 8th Battalion had ever seen a front line trench in this period, so goodness knows what information was passed onto the troops. On 21st September they received the order to move. Their destination



was Loos in Northern France. On 25th September they approached the firing line via Vermeil and were led into battle by the 64-year-old Colonel Frederick Charles Romer, his sword raised. Sadly, they came under heavy machine gun fire from both flanks. Romer was shot in the shoulder but continued on until he was killed by a bullet to the heart. The order was given to retreat and the battalion was led from the field by Lt. James Vaughan who was awarded the Military Cross and given a citation in The London Gazette for his bravery.

A description of the scene after the battle was given by an Observation Officer of the German Field Artillery Regiment when he crawled into No Man's Land and saw the bodies of hundreds of the English dead among whom were several officers. He paid tribute to the courage of the men and remarked about the dead whitehaired colonel on the wire, who could only have been Romer by the description. He has no known grave.

Frank survived and didn't see action again until they ended up near Ploegsteert Wood, (nicknamed Plugstreet by the troops) until June, 1916, when the 8th launched an unsuccessful attack on a position known as the Birdcage following which they were moved back to The Somme where the battle had been going on for a month.

On 18th August, the 24th Division attacked the Germans to the south of Delville Wood while the 8th were ordered to capture two German positions called ZZ trench and Machine Gun House. He sustained serious injuries to a leg when he went over the top at Guillemont and was sent back to England on the New Zealand hospital ship 'Marama.' In his letter written to Edith shortly after the battle he appears upbeat and makes light of his injuries, as so many of the soldiers did. It would take a year for him to fully recover.

On his return to France, Frank spent some time in the Labour Corps before rejoining the Buffs, this time the 7th because the 24th Division had lost so many men by this time. He was killed while crossing a bridge at Vendeuil, south of St. Quentin. His body fell into the canal and was never found. The indomitable Edith badgered everybody she could think of to find out what had happened to her beloved husband and then, one day, a letter arrived from the wife of a soldier who had witnessed Frank's death. At last she knew the truth. So many of the dead would remain unknown because the dog tags were not made of durable material so they rotted away in a short space of time.

Edith kept all Frank's letters and postcards as well as any official documents and they remain in the family to this day. He is not just another name on a memorial. His memory lives on and will be passed to future generations. Frank Smith made his family proud.

As always Steve's talk was accompanied by photographs of people, places and military maps. The road to Guillemont has remained unchanged to this day. He is always pleased to answer questions and is contactable to help members if they are stuck with a problem. We look forward to his next talk.

To the Hammer Born – Confessions of an Auctioneer

At Lopham Village Hall on 22nd October, Stephen Poulter came to talk to Diss Family History Group about his present career as an auctioneer, into which he stumbled, largely by accident, as he recounted in his talk 'Confessions of an Auctioneer'. Originally Steve had owned a bookshop in Hoddesden, Hertfordshire, but the advent of the e-book and the online market was a death knell to the small bookseller so Stephen knew that he would have to up his game.

He realised that there was a market for secondhand books so he went to car boot sales and auctions where one could buy a box of books very cheaply. The downside was that each book had to be researched to find out if it had a value. Finds like a beautiful Victorian Bible he purchased for £15 and sold for £75 were rare. He encouraged people to come into his shop and browse when he opened a vintage tea shop. It worked.

By 2015 he was also selling on eBay and Etsy and was doing quite well but he made the decision to sell his shop in Hertfordshire and moved to Needham Market where he continued with his online business. He became a regular customer at the fortnightly auctions held by the Sawbridge Antique Centre and was asked if he would like to help out sometimes. Stephen found that he really enjoyed it and took on more work. Then he thought it would be interesting to research the history of the auction.

There is in existence an account of a Babylonian marriage market in the 5th Century BC witnessed by Heroditus who commented that the prettiest girls attracted a higher price. There were slave markets in ancient Rome as well as sales of plunder from wars. Hundreds of thousands of white slaves were sold across the Ottoman Empire and of course we all know about the iniquitous trade of slaves from Africa who were sold as though they were cattle in fairly recent history. In Samuel Pepys's time, candle markets were very popular where a length of candle was lit and bidding could only start when it had burned to the last inch and stopped when it burned out.

In 1674, the first auction house was opened in Stockholm but it wasn't until 1744 that James Baker founded what would become Sotheby's in 1744 in Britain. 1766 saw the emergence of two more big players in the field, Christie's, founded by James Christie and Tattersall's, founded by Richard Tattersall. Bonham's opened in 1793. There was money to be made in art and jewellery. Aristocrats fleeing the French Revolution brought with them as many valuables as they could carry, which they needed to survive. Whole estates and country houses were auctioned off, particularly between the wars.

In 1927 a picture of James Christie painted by Gainsborough sold for 7,200 guineas - and a pilot biscuit, which survived the sinking of the Titanic, fetched £15,000. Stephen said, Provenance is important but sometimes a good forger can outwit all the experts as did Hans Van Meegeren, who specialised in the Dutch artists, particularly Vermeer. Hermann Goring even bought one. In 1947 Van Meegeren was exposed and sent to prison but only served one year.

The same modern technology which caused the demise of so many bookshops like Stephen's has also revolutionised the bidding rooms because now people can bid online. Stephen went on to tell us about some of the tricks of the trade, not all legal, that can occur at auctions across the country. Bidding rings can manipulate the price and pop-up auctions selling suspect goods will have disappeared by the time the dissatisfied customer returns to complain.

Stephen finished with a quiz in which we had to guess if the items he showed on the screen made their reserve price or exceeded it. Then he held up some odd contraptions to see if we knew their function as well as showing a list of names which applied to collectors of certain things. Luckily, we weren't playing for points, as most of us failed miserably. For example, what some of us thought was an apple picker was in fact an early burglar alarm and who knew that a Tegeologist collected beer mats? We do now.

On 29th October we had our first house meeting, courtesy of Wendy Beaney, at Roydon. The talk, 'Ramblings of a Barnard's Boy' was given by Wendy's friend of 40 years, Robert Shields, known as Uncle Bob to her children. He was born in Hull in 1940, the second child of a teenage mother and a father who was in his early sixties.

When Bob was 18 months old, his mother ran away to London. It was wartime, his father couldn't cope with two small children and Bob and his sister were placed with a foster mother who unfortunately couldn't manage and they were placed with Dr. Barnardo's, the children's organisation with the ever open door. In 1942 Bob was sent to a home in Clone, Scotland, and then came back to Eye in Suffolk to be fostered, with his sister, by the woman who would take the place of his mother in his heart. He describes Maudie as a dear old lady and he would return to visit and stay with her for holidays until his marriage. He remained in contact for the rest of her life. Maudie was a spinster who lived in a cottage with no modern facilities and she cared for four children altogether.

Bob said she was paid five shillings for him and six shillings for his sister. It was not a lot of money but they were provided for. At the time Bob was four and a half and his sister was six. They attended the local school but Bob says the teacher could not engage his interest. He learned to tell the time by watching the clock.

In 1951, Bob returned to residential care at Dr. Barnardo's home in North Elmham. Watt's Naval School had been a training ground to equip Barnardo's boys with the necessary skills to enter the navy although Bob said that when he arrived it had reverted to being a standard home. It was an extensive house with its own school on the ground floor.

The children earned pocket money by doing chores. They had to queue up to receive it on a Saturday and then they could spend at the home's tuck shop. Watt's was a self-contained community where Bob could engage in many sports. Church was a big part of life at Watt's and Bob was confirmed by the Bishop of Norwich.

Watt's closed in 1953 and Bob moved on to a Dr. Barnardo's home in Clacton,

as did his sister. The building had been the former John Groom's Crippleage. Again, there was lots of sport which Bob enjoyed, particularly football, cricket and shinty.

Bob says that Barnardo's stood him in good stead and they never sever contact with a child. They will be there to talk to for the rest of their lives. Dr. Barnardo's grandson was at the last reunion Bob attended. Bob Shields grew up to be a model citizen and has just received his second community award.

He married very young but the relationship didn't last and then Bob met somebody else who turned out to be the love of his life and he married for the second time. He did meet his mother again when he was in his teens but another boy was around and she mistook him for Bob. At that moment he was able to emotionally detach himself and never saw her again. Bob brought with him his file which contains all the documentation of his life at Dr. Barnardo's plus the poems he has written, one of which he read to us. He has a great sense of humour. The talk was followed by tea, coffee and home-made cake.

Jenny Jenkins



FHF Members - Changes to document ordering at The National Archives

With effect from 31st March this year, the document ordering procedure at the National Archives will change.

Readers will be able to order a maximum of 12 documents for the same day, plus up to 12 documents ordered in advance (i.e. a maximum of 24 documents per reader per day).

The new procedure will run for an experimental six month period. More details can be seen at:

<https://nationalarchives.gov.uk/about/news/changes-to-document-ordering/>

London Group of the NFHS

We have our programme at the Society of Genealogists booked up until October.

Meetings will be between 2 and 4 pm as usual with refreshments provided afterwards in the Society of Genealogists' common room. If you are in the London area please come along.

Scheduled events are as follows:

Saturday March 14th: Talk by Ian Waller—Brick Walls and How to Tackle Them

Saturday October 17th: Members' Day

My contact details are Mary Fisk, Flat 3 Butterfield House, 7 Allen Road, London N16 8SB or Email: mary975@btinternet.com

Mary Fisk

We will have a full report of the London group's meetings in a future edition of Ancestor.



VOLUNTEERS

The Norfolk Family History Society relies on the work of an army of volunteers and we are always looking for more.

If you can spare anything from a couple of hours a week, or even a month, to come into Kirby Hall on a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday or require further information, please email volunteers@nfhs.co.uk, please include your membership number.

We are looking for a volunteer to manage and improve our publicity and also a transcript checker. Ideally we are looking for people with experience in these fields but enthusiasm is the most important attribute.

We are also looking for an IT Co-Ordinator to help with the society's infrastructure.

Dark Days at Dunkirk

THIS May sees the 80th anniversary of the evacuation from Dunkirk during the Second World War.

Whilst sorting through some papers in Yorkshire, I came across an old and delicate pamphlet entitled "An Account of the Actions of the 58th (Suffolk) Medium Regiment R.A During May 1940". Admittedly not a title that trips off the tongue but the booklet itself is an important historic document of the events leading up to the evacuation.

Artist's impression of the Dunkirk beaches 1940



I know we are talking about a Suffolk regiment here but some of those involved may have come from Norfolk (there is a list of names of those involved, so this may lead to further research in the future). Many Norfolk soldiers would have been evacuated from the beaches of Dunkirk, however, so we make no apologies for including what happened to those who fought in the Suffolk regiment in order to give a very strong flavour of what it was like in May 1940.

My father-in-law, a true Yorkshireman, was a member of the Suffolk Regiment and his name is listed (hence my specific interest in the booklet).

The 58th Suffolk Medium Regiment of the Royal Artillery was formed on April 1st, 1939, and on May 1st, 1939, the 67th Medium Regiment RA was also formed as the booklet explains:

"This duplicate regiment was formed entirely at Ipswich, all recruiting in West Suffolk, going to swell the 5th Suffolks and the Norfolk and Suffolk Yeomanry.."

After training in England, the two regiments sailed from Southampton to Cherbourg on January 16th, 1940, and subsequently moved from La Hutte to Fresnay and on to Evereux, Breteuil, Bonnoeuil, Breteuil and Vermelles.

A feel for what the men experienced is included in the pamphlet's introduction:

"The winter was of almost record severity and January was the worst month. For the whole of January, England and Northern France were covered in snow. Great difficulty was experienced in keeping vehicles on the road as even anti-freeze mixture froze in radiators. For the march up from Fresnay the temperature was many degrees below zero Fahrenheit."

The pamphlet then describes the actions of the regiments from Sunday May 19th, 1940, onwards and on May 27th came the order to retreat to Dunkirk:

"About midnight 26/27 May Lt Diamond who had been sent as liaison officer to HQMA at La Tache arrived with a message ordering the regiment to destroy the guns and proceed to Hogstaad near Dunkirk via Quesnoy, Messines, Vlamertinghe and Eiverdinghe.

"The batteries destroyed their guns by removing dial sights, sight clinos and breech mechanism and knocking sight brackets, wheels etc about. They then proceeded as independent columns on the route given to Hogstaad. By about 11.30 am the Regiment was assembled at Hogstaad and proceeded to Houthem where they sorted out what kit they could carry, and burnt all correspondence etc."

The diary continues:

"The CO went to Dunkirk and obtained a movement order in writing for the Regiment to march to Bray Les Dunes immediately for embarkation.

"Captain Twomey and RSM Fordham assembled all the vehicles of the Regiment with one driver each and led them to the place ordered for destruction, here they were knocked about, and put out of action to the best of the ability of the few men in the short time available.

"The regiment marched on foot to Bray Les Dunes (about ten miles) arriving about 9 pm and remained for the night on the sea front.

"No rations had been available for issue on this day, and the two days of preserved rations had been used up; the last two drawings of rations had been on less than a half scale. Water was scarce. The weather all day was again hot and sunny, vast columns of smoke drifted from Dunkirk, over the beach, and Bray – the result of enemy bombing raids in which oil tanks and buildings had been set on fire."

Tuesday May 28th – "In the morning whilst the regiment was on the dunes, German planes attacked Bray and machine-gunned our columns coming into it.

There was a lot of anti-aircraft fire. In the embarking and arrangements on Bray beach, we were given Serial Number 2 for embarkation, but many other units arrived thick and fast through the night and day and it became evident that all could not be embarked there, so the 58 Medium Regiment with various others were ordered to march along the sands to embark at Dunkirk (about 6 miles). After a short march a part of the beach was reached which was crowded with units and on which embarkation was proceeding at two points. As the Regiment could not proceed beyond all this congestion the CO found and reported to an Embarkation Office where a Brigadier seemed to be in charge in a private house just behind the Belgian Coastguard Fort in the dunes. Here we were allotted Serial No 26 (verbally) for embarkation on the beach and the Regiment prepared to spend the night spread along a portion of the dunes.



“Just before dark several new ships, chiefly minesweepers, were sighted approaching, and Lt Hitchcock waded into the sea, hailed the boat put off from one of these, and commenced to embark 230 Battery. 239 Battery and RHQ were then brought up in parallel columns to form additional embarking parties in other boats.

“The Minesweeper HMS Kellet could only take 450 of our men and they were embarked. They consisted chiefly of 230 Battery and RHQ and a few 229 Bat-

tery with also the HQMA Staff of III Corps and a number of “hangers on” from other Regiments. When HMS Kellet put off, Major Mason was left in charge of seven other officers and 230 men chiefly of his own battery, and RHQ and a few of 230 Bty and of our F/3 RASC section. These returned to the Dunes for a short sleep.”

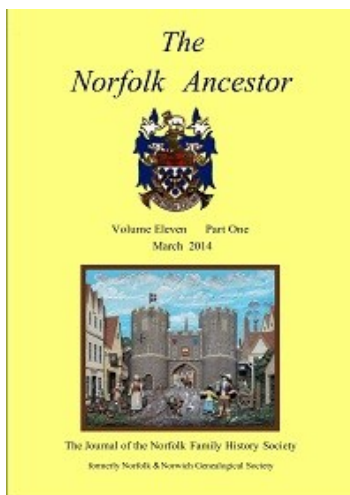
British troops awaiting evacuation



Find out what happened to the remainder of the Regiment in the next edition of *Norfolk Ancestor*.

Peter Steward MN 14801

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Articles should preferably be typed. **Please keep articles to 3 pages maximum - 1200 words approx.** Electronic versions are most helpful.

All material from **regular contributors** for inclusion in the **June 2019** issue should be sent to the Editor at Kirby Hall or e-mailed to him **NO LATER** than **12th April**. Our thanks in advance to all those who submit material for publication.

Notes and Queries

We welcome Notes and Queries, offers of help and items of information and general interest. Entries as brief as possible please, preferably less than 150 words. **Membership number and email address should be included.**

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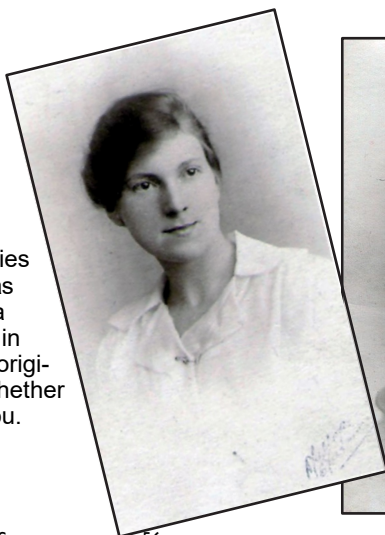
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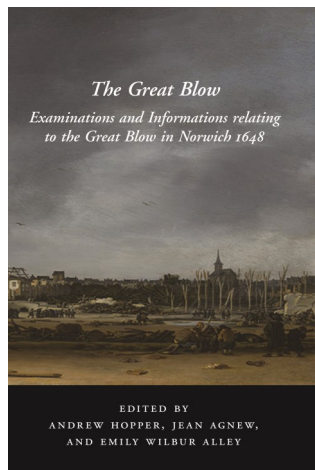
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Ancestor Bookshelf



The Great Blow

Edited by Andrew Hopper, Jean Agnew and Emily Wilbur Alley, published by Norfolk Records Society
ISBN 978-0-9957736-1-5

This book gives a scholarly account of the events leading up to, and immediately following, the largest explosion in 17th century England. It prints in full all of the 278 testimonies taken after the massive blast which shook the city centre of Norwich in April, 1648, following a riot. It also outlines the sentences handed out to the rioters in the aftermath. Written in old English, the statements taken by the city magistrates can be hard to read initially but they provide a fascinating insight into the development of a popular royalist insurgency in civil-war England.

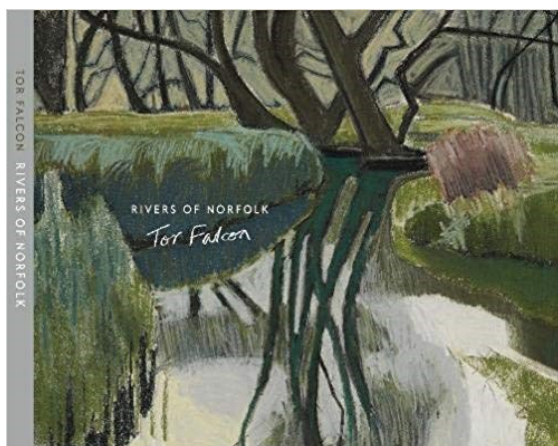
Roger Morgan MN17267

The Rivers of Norfolk

By Tor Falcon

ISBN-13 978-1527241442

Norfolk-based artist Tor Falcon spent four years walking the rivers of Norfolk recording them in a series of chalk pastel drawings. She followed 38 named rivers, streams and trickles from their sources to their mouths. In this book each river is illustrated with several pastel drawings which are explained with notes from Tor. On her journeys she talked to farmers, fishermen and local people to gain an insight into the importance of the rivers to their lives. The book contains over 100 images which are interspersed by Tor's observations. In her very readable notes she talks about the geology, geography, history, environmental issues and conservation problems surrounding the waterways. It is a fascinating account which is beautifully illustrated.



Roger Morgan MN17267

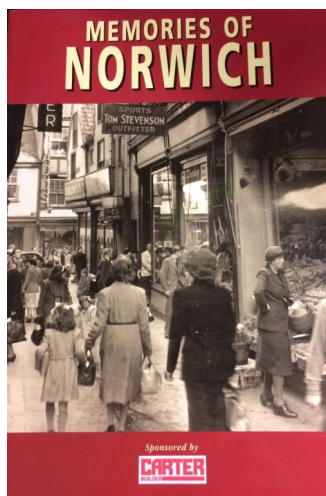
Ancestor Bookshelf

Memories of Norwich

Published by True North Books Ltd

ISBN 1 900463 73 3

This book is packed full of excellent photographs taken in and around Norwich. Many of the pictures come from the 1940s, 50s, and 60s and will surely evoke fond memories of the city. It contains sections on work places, transport, shopping places, the war years, events and occasions showing people at work and at play. The images are interspersed with well researched text that will remind people of how things were. This is not a history book but is more of a nostalgic look back at life in Norwich. This is a very readable book which paints a fascinating picture of a thriving city.



Roger Morgan MN17267

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An American Pioneer

By Peter Steward

A NORFOLK-born woman survived famine and attacks by Native Americans to become one of the pioneers that helped to make America.

Temperance FLOWERDEW was born in Hethersett in 1590 and, after sailing to the New World, became the wife of two governors of Virginia.

Temperance was an early settler of the Jamestown colony and played a key part in the development of the area and in 2018 was named one of the greatest women in the history of Virginia by the Library of Virginia.

Now a new book by English historian Mary Allan has further recognised the part that Temperance paid in the history of what became the USA.

Mary describes Temperance as "a lady with ambition." She refers to her research as "a labour of love to give the women who feature a platform so that they can appear, however briefly, in the spotlight of history for the valuable contribution they made to the establishment of America as we know it."

Temperance's nephew Edmund ROSSINGHAM described her as "Norfolk born, sharp as the wind off the sea."

Temperance was the daughter of Anthony Flowerdew (circa 1550-1610) of Hethersett and Martha STANLEY of Scottow. The Flowerdew family were landed gentry and for generations their seat had centred around Hethersett. Temperance enjoyed a carefree existence growing up in the country with occasional visits to London which would have taken days.

Mary states that life would never have been dull with relatives and other well connected families from neighbouring estates frequently coming to stay at Hethersett. The children were occasionally allowed to join the grown-ups at table.

On 29th April, 1609, Temperance married Richard BARROW in London - a marriage surrounded by mystery and carried out through a special licence. A few days after the marriage the newly-weds boarded the Falcon and headed for the



newly founded colony of Virginia. Richard Barrow died on the journey and Temperance walked into what became known as the Starvation Time, during which many died from starvation. Temperance survived. There was some suggestion that she returned to England before returning to the colony when fresh supplies arrived but there is no evidence to support this and it is thought that she was probably one of the lucky ones who survived.



She met George YEARDLEY who became governor of the colony and who was knighted for his work. He and Temperance had three children - Argoll, Elizabeth and Francis. Her nephew Edmund Rossingham stated that Temperance was "quite some woman in a man's world whose advice was often sought especially by the younger colonists."

Temperance also had a natural affinity with any new colonist with a Norfolk background. This included John ROLFE from Heacham who married Native American POCAHONTAS.

In addition to surviving the starvation time, Temperance also avoided an uprising by native Americans which saw the slaughter of more than 350 men, women and children.

When George died, Temperance was left a wealthy woman. Almost immediately she married her late husband's successor as governor, Francis West. Sadly Temperance died shortly after, leaving three young children. She left her estate to her children, something that was challenged without success by Francis WEST.

Mary's book tells the story in a simple and flowing style that helps us to understand the life of a pioneering woman of redoubtable character—one of the women who fostered a nation. Mary's book also features a number of other female pioneers of America.

The book "Women In The New World—Nine narratives of those who helped to make America 1587-1700" can be obtained direct from the author at a price of £10. Send a cheque made out to Mary Allan to Quarry House, 24 Bloomsfield, Burwell, Cambridge, CB25 0RA.

The photograph on page 60 is one used to depict Temperance Flowerdew but is not necessarily her, just giving an idea of her style of dress.

Norfolk Family History Society

Let Us Know What You Think



WHAT articles do you enjoy reading in the Norfolk Ancestor and what would you like to see more of? We would like to hear from you.

With your help we can make the magazine more vibrant. We would welcome any comments (good or bad). They can be sent to the editor via e-mail at the contact address on page 66 of this edition or can be sent to him at Kirby Hall.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Don't forget that there's lots more information on our official web site.

<http://www.norfolkfhs.org.uk>

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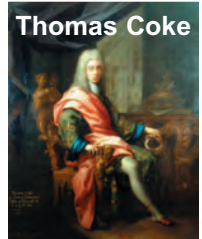
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The Coke Hat

THE hat pictured on the back cover is known today as a bowler but originally it was called a coke hat, named after the Coke family of Holkham Hall. The Coke family has lived at Holkham since 1609, when the founder of the family fortune, Sir Edward Coke, purchased the manor of Neal's. Holkham Hall was built between 1734 and 1764 by Thomas Coke, the first Earl of Leicester. Sadly Thomas died in 1759 and never saw the house completed.



In August, 1849, the London hat maker James Lock was commissioned by the Coke family to design a low crowned, close fitting hat which would be suitable for the gamekeepers at Holkham to wear. Originally it was thought that William Coke, a nephew of the first Earl of Leicester of the second creation was responsible for the commission. Hence the hat was given the name 'Billy Coke' or Billycock'. However, further research indicates that it was in fact Edward Coke, younger brother of the second Earl of Leicester, who actually ordered the hat.

The brief was to produce a hat which was extra strong in order to protect the gamekeeper's heads from low hanging branches, while out horse riding. Prior to this the keepers would wear top hats which were too high, frequently got knocked off and were easily damaged. Lock and Co gave the task of making the new hat to its chief hatters Thomas and William Bowler.

By December, 1849, the Bowlers had produced a prototype ready for inspection. It was a very hard hat with a round, low crown and small brim, covered in a rough finished felt. The story goes, that when Edward Coke came to check his order, he threw it on to the floor and stamped on it several times. The hat passed this test of strength with flying colours and Edward was happy to pay 12 shillings for it. The Coke hat or bowler proved to be very popular with the working classes in Victorian times. Comedians like Charlie Chaplin and Laurel and Hardy enhanced this popularity. In later years it was adopted by the middle and upper classes, especially civil servants, clerks and bankers. Oddly it was also taken up by Quechua and Aymara women in Bolivia in the 1920s.

Lock and Co. of St James's still manufacture the hat and it retails at around £300 to £400. At Holkham the team of keepers still wear the 'Coke' hat with as much pride today. The privilege of wearing a traditional bowler hat is earned after one year's service on the estate.

Roger Morgan MN17267



Holkham gamekeepers at lunch 1909

What is the Connection?



The top picture shows the magnificent Holkham Hall in North Norfolk. The other shows a simple bowler hat but there is a surprising connection between the two. To find out what the connection is turn to the inside back cover.

