

Volume Seventeen : 1984-85

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**TWO LOWESTOFT WILLS FROM THE SUFFOLK RECORD OFFICE AT IPSWICH
TRANSCRIBED**

by Jon Reed

TESTAMENTUM THOME WYLGORE NUPER DE LOWESTOFT

1. In the (name) of God Amen I Thomas Wylgore of Lowestoft of hoole
2. mynde and good remembraunce beyng the 14th day of the monyth of
3. Decemb(e)r in the yere of our Lord God anno 1506 yerys I ordeyn
4. and make my last will in this wise First I Comende and bequeth
5. my Soule to allmyghty god and to our blisshed lady Saynt Marye
6. and to all the Sayntes of hevyn And my body to be buried in the
7. cherch yerde of the parisch of Saynt Margaret of Lowestoft
8. aforesaid to the which Heye Awter I bequeth 6d Also I
9. will have a certeyn Songe (1) in the said cherch be the space of
10. a hoole yere Also I bequeth to Will(ia)m Wilkinson 13s 4d
11. yf it may be born Item I bequeth to Edmund Brymley a Spruce
12. cheste Arid the Residue of all my goodeys not bequethed I geve
13. and bequeth in to the handys of myn executors whom I ordeyn
14. and chose Willyam Thomson and Robert Adove of Lowestoft
15. aforesaid that they may dispose my goodeys to the most pleasure
16. of allmyghty god And weele of my sowle Also I bequeth to
17. eche of them for ther labor 6s 8d given at Lowestoft
18. foresaid the Day and yere abovesaid.

Probatum etc Coram nobis Offic etc: /apud Mutford/ 23 die mensis February A(nn)o D(o)mini millesimo quingentesimo sexto (1506) etc.

NOTE: The year began on March 25th (Lady Day) until 1751, February 1506 was therefore two months after December 1506, December being the tenth month.

(1) A 'Certain' sung. The mention of the testatar's name each Sunday in the bede-roll recital.

TESTAMENTUM THOME EVERYCH NUPER DE LOWYSTOFT

1. In the name of God Amen the 31st day of the monyth of Octob(e)r and
 2. The yere of our lord god allmyghty 1500 I Thomas Everych of
 3. Lowysoft within the countie of Suff(olk) beyng of perfight mynde
 4. and goode memorye make._my_testament of this maner as shall folowe
 5. In primis I bequeth my Soule to god allmyghty our lady Saynt Marye
 6. and to all the Saynts in hevyn And my body to be buryed in the
 7. chersch yerde of Saynt Margar(e)t of Lowystoft aforesaid Item I bequeth
 8. to Isabell my wiff the same house that I wonnyd (1) in for the terme
 9. of her lyff seyng no wast (2) and after the decease of the foresaid
 10. Isabell my wiff I will that And (sic) Alice my dowghter be able to
 11. bey my house to have the preferment of the sale halff the value with
 12. in the price that it shall or may be sold for And yf so be that the
 13. foresaid Alice my doughter fortune never to be able to by the foresaid
 14. house than I bequeth to the foresaid Alice my doughter halff the
 15. value of that money that myn executors shall sell the said house for
 16. after the decease of my wiff Isabell Item I will that my wiff Isabell
 17. shall have for the terme of her lyff that house next ajoyned to
 18. my foresaid house which is oon of that twayn howsys that William
 19. Hawkyn of Whetacre hath bowght of me with in the town of Lowystoft
 20. foresaid as is to shewe by excepc(i)on(?) of writyng be twyx hym and me Ite(m)
 21. I bequeth to Isabell my wyff all maner of stuffe of houshold The Residue
 22. of all my gooddys not bequethyd nor legat (3) with the Adwauntage of that
 23. tweyn howses that I have sold to William Hawkyn foresaid with the advauntage
 24. of the sale of my foresaid house after the decease of Isabell my wiff I
 25. bequeth to Robt Jettor of Lowstoft and to Isobell my wiff whom I ordeyn
 26. and make myn executors and attorneys to pay my detts and to dispose my
 27. gooddes for the wele of my soule and for the soulys of my frends and be(ne)factours
 28. These witnesses Robt Sutton prest of Lowestoft foresaid and Thomas
 29. Hewtun parish clerke of the same town with oth(e)rs and
- PROBATE MADE 24th April 1501 before the official of the Archdeacon of Suffolk at Lowestoft by the executors

(1) O.E.D. Won or wone = to dwell

(2) Assumed to mean not allowing the house to deteriorate

(3) O.R.D. To legate = to give by will

CHANGING LOWESTOFT*by Adrian Parker*

In the monthly newsletter (Vol 13, No. 3) November 1984 I gave a quick review of some of the more obvious changes and developments in Lowestoft during 1979-84. As a matter of record, this report aims to extend that list, and it is intended to encourage members to submit their notes on such changes for the monthly newsletter and to collate them in future Annual Reports, in the manner of the rural Parish Recorders in Suffolk.

Town Centre

London Road North through traffic ended January 1978. Service vehicle access hours progressively restricted 1979-81. Buses removed from central section in May 1981, from northern section in September 1984, and from Post Office section in May 1983. Rebuilt as pedestrian area: (1) Surrey Street to Gordon Road in 1981-2. Clock erected 1982: Prince of Wales plume celebrates the Royal Wedding in 1981. (2) Regent Road to Milton Road rebuilt late 1983 and west side rebuilt Spring 1985. (3) Suffolk Road to Surrey Street rebuilt early 1984.

Marina:- north arm extended as 'Marina Link' to Battery Green roundabout in 1976, and renamed as Gordon Road in 1983. East or central length of Marina closed 1980 for Fine Fare development, and southern section of Marina put through Battery Green beside Cosalt premises to Battery Green Road.

Catlings (112 London Road North) closed 1980 and demolished for Fine Fare.

Battery Green Car Park and Fine Fare store opened November 1982.

Odeon Cinema closed December 1978: demolished early 1980.

W.H. Smith shop opened early 1982.

Marina Cinema closed December 1984.

Harbour

Bridge entrance deepened and widened 1979-80. Hamilton Road surfaced 1979 and North Pier rig module yard constructed 1980.

Flour silos erected end of 1979. Coastal Cannery, Rant Score converted 1983 onwards. Ness Road netstore ('Breeze Building') demolished end of 1983 (reputedly the last netstore built before World War I at the height of the fishing boom). Birds Eye Walls Steakhouse Complex Rant Score East/Gasworks Road built 1984-5.

Old netstores/depot at 325 Whapload Road demolished December 1984/February 1985. Hamilton Dock laboratories demolished 1984.

Waveney Dock fish markets (north and west, including Europa Canteen) demolished late 1984. Pierheads re-piled Spring 1985.

South Lowestoft

St. John's Church demolished early 1978. Sunday Schools and rectory demolished Spring 1984. Hostel for the homeless, Belvedere Road, built 1984-5.

Lorne Park Road/London Road South flats built on bombsite 1983-4.

Esplanade – Parade Road South to Claremont Pier sea wall rebuilt September 1984-June 1985.

Roads

Uplands Road closed 1981. Hollow Lane closed 1982.

Cemetery roundabout/Minden Road improved early 1983.

Gorleston Road/Sands Lane roundabouts built 1983.

Victoria Road/Colville Road/School Road roundabout and junction late 1984.

Oulton Road petrol station road widening late 1984.

Durban Road/Waveney Drive/Riverside Road junction altered March 1985.

Belvedere Road/Horn Hill junction altered April 1985.

Church Road/St. Margarets Road/Rotterdam Road junctions altered March 1985.

Buildings etc.

Swonnells Maltings conversion started at end of 1983, working in the western block throughout 1984.

Arnold House, High Street converted 1983. 49-50 High Street converted 1982.

Oulton Broad Motel closed Spring 1984 and reconstructed by early 1985.

Repairs to Mariners, Crown and Martins Scores March 1984. Wall to upper Mariners Score rebuilt March 1985. St. Margarets churchyard wall rebuilt November 1984 onwards.

High Street Methodist Chapel demolished Spring 1984. Redevelopment started October 1984

UPPER DOORWAYS IN ROUND TOWER CHURCHES

by W.J. Goode

Most of us must have seen those doorways or openings above the Tower Arch in many of our churches. Although in general they are only mentioned in Guide Books when seen in Round Tower Churches, they are nevertheless also to be seen in many early Square Towered Churches. The reason given for these doorways in the Round Towers, is that they provided an access to the upper floor in times of Raids by the Vikings when a rope ladder would be pulled up behind the villagers making them safe from the raiding party.

The Irish Round Towers to which they are likened are all about 90 feet tall. They had about seven floors capable of holding many people and valuables. The East Anglian examples in existence at the time of the Viking Raids were never above 40 feet and often only at the height of the nave ridge, about 35 feet, with only one floor above the ground.

The Irish Towers were constructed of the local stones which would enable a much faster rate of building than with our local flints. With flints, the maximum height one could build was 10 feet in one summer season, while the stones used in the Irish Towers enabled a continual building process to carry on during normal building weather, meaning there was almost no limit to the height one could build in one year.

These Round Towers of East Anglia then, many of them quite local, are where we can find these curious doorways. At Ashby, Haddiscoe, Mutford and Thorington, (the one here was discovered recently), they can be seen from the nave. At Blundeston, Gisleham, Hales and Wissett, they can be seen within the towers on the first or second floors. Most of them were blocked up and plastered over when they were no longer required. Some remained as alcoves within the towers, but few of these are ever recorded. In recent times, a few have been re-discovered when the plaster has been removed from the nave west wall for some reason. Generally, when found today, they are at least restored so that they may be seen from the nave as the past history of the church.

It is this curiosity of a doorway about 15 feet above the ground that causes so much speculation and controversy. The whole argument is well summed up in a statement by Rev. Claude Messent in our Annual Report Vol. 2. 1967/68:- 'We find in many Round Towers what might be termed a first storey unglazed window opening on the east side. If the Round Tower was built as part of a church it is impossible to understand the reason for the existence of that opening.' For this statement to be correct, it must mean that the towers were here prior to 865, for R.H. Hodgkin, a renowned historian writes in 'A History of the Anglo Saxons' 1935 says:- 'In 865 the Vikings came and took up winter quarters among the East Angles and were horsed, and they made peace with them. The landing in East Anglia in the autumn of 865 thus marks the beginning of the Danish Conquest as distinctly as the landing at Pevensey in 1066 marks the beginning of the Norman Conquest.'

The above statement makes it quite clear that the Vikings were virtually conquerors and in occupation of East Anglia from 865 onwards and therefore the towers must have been here before then if they WERE built as strongholds. Furthermore, by the Norman Conquest, raids from across the sea were virtually a thing of the past, and so upper storey strongholds were no longer required. Yet, many post-Conquest towers, Square, that are 12th to 13th century as well as Round, contain these doorways. Some still visible from the nave as at Toft Monks, an octagonal tower (that may have started life as a Round Tower), has a remarkable array of five alcoves, two were probably nave windows, but the others pose some interesting questions. Shotesham in Norfolk is a Square tower where an upper doorway is to be seen in the south wall, but there are a number of other Square towers where this upper doorway is above the tower arch as in our Round Towers.

Why were these doorways still being built in these towers?

The original reason given cannot be the answer, so we must look for another. The alternative most generally given is that they were 'Sanctus Bell Windows' for the purpose of the Bell Ringer observing the Mass and the Altar and knowing when to ring the Sanctus Bell. This again is a poor effort to answer such a question, because a peep hole or small window is all that is required for this purpose,

and indeed many later towers are so equipped. There is positively no need for a full doorway for this use.

To determine the need and use of this doorway we must return to the original plan and layout of our Parish Churches. The earliest were a simple rectangle, (some with an apsidal east end) and a simple division between the chancel (Holy end) and the nave (Secular end). The most important point to remember is that there were NO SEATS for the general congregation. Seats or forms along the north and south walls of the nave were provided for the children and infirm. Our present day saying 'The weak go to the wall' is a reversal of the courtesy extended to the weak in early England. It is hard to visualise when standing in church today, the scene at the Mass in those far off days when everyone was standing and even moving around to get a glimpse of the priest and the Altar. Squints in chancel screens and arcades, (Woodton in Norfolk and Bardfield Saling in Essex) are examples of squints from the south aisles looking towards the altar.

From the open nave, let us now look at the towers. The towers from the 15th century always had a stair-turret built with them for reaching the upper floors, at least as far as the Bell Chamber. Towers from the 13th century or earlier, however, rarely have this feature as part of the original plan. Looking at the Round Towers, we find that a great number still have no stair turret, and where they have been built later, almost all are 15th century. This was the time when seating became general in our Parish Churches. Was there therefore some connection? Of those still without stair turrets most have trap doors in the upper floors, reached by means of a series of ladders. A few have internal staircases. None of these staircases I would hasten to add are original with the date of the tower. Although a great many seats and roofs may date as far back as the 14th or 15th century, little earlier woodwork remains. Fires, rot from leaking roofs and Beetle, have all done their best to rob us of the ancient woodwork of our churches. Well meaning restorers have done the rest.

The few internal staircases in general follow the tower wall, and after a half to a full circle of the tower enter the first floor at the edge of the room. I would think they are very similar to the original design. One or two cases have cast iron staircases, almost certainly of the last century, but did these replace wooden ones from the same place?

Leaving the overriding reason for these doorways for the time being, let us look at this room, about 15 to 20 feet above the ground floor of the tower. These Round Towers vary from 8 to 14 feet in diameter, if we leave aside Ashmanhaugh, a 19th century rebuilt tower of 6 feet diameter, and Wortham, the only very wide tower with a diameter internally of 20 feet. Imagine a circular room of these dimensions, and what priest could resist making good use of it?

Some suggested uses are:- as a Vestry; a Priest's study; a Store for Church valuables; a Curate's bed-sitter; a room with a bed for a Priest saying Mass for departed souls during the night hours, or even storage for armour for the Lord of the Manor. He was required to provide a certain number of men from the Parish in time of war. No one knows for certain the use to which these rooms were put, but they were certainly much too useful to be left unused.

We now come to a means of access! Those with a staircase that follows the wall of the tower have a simple answer, especially where no upper doorway can exist into the nave. It is probably in the original position, and the room only loses about one square yard where the stairs emerge into the room, and a hand rail at the top, generally still there, makes them safe. Consider the most common entrance at present, a ladder leading to a central trap door. A hole in the centre of the room, where a table would be useful, and a dangerous hole that leaves very little useful space to spare. This method also makes the ground floor of the tower useless if the ladder is fixed. We are left to find some alternative means of entrance; the obvious is through the wall. Where else do we put a staircase to this room other than within the church. Hence it must be on the east within the nave.

The great stumbling block to a visual appreciation of these stair-cases is the seating of our present churches, and our belief that reverence prevents the movement of those at worship. I realise it still seems incredible to us to have a staircase down the middle of the nave, and when I finally convince people of this use of the upper doorway, they invariably add a west gallery, saying the doorway gave access to this gallery, and a staircase against the nave west wall led to this gallery.

We know that western galleries were in position, or built in the 17th century, but none that I know of are earlier. While a gallery would of course be possible, it would be a needless structure unless it was there for some special purpose, and that would be purely conjecture. I therefore suggest a staircase down the centre of the nave as the most likely position. An open staircase would allow worshippers to stand and participate in the Mass from behind as well as the sides whenever the church was full.

Another alternative is of course against the nave west wall with a square landing at the top by the door. Only one Round Tower has a first floor doorway in any other position, and that is Bexwell, near Downham Market, which has one on the west, but even here, there is another of the same size, at the same height on the east. Both these doorways still retain old doors,

Conclusion:- While we shall never have a positive proof of this, we have, I believe proved conclusively, that the old theories were far from reality.

MESOLITHIC CAMPS BESIDE THE HUNDRED RIVER

by Mr. P.M. Durbidge

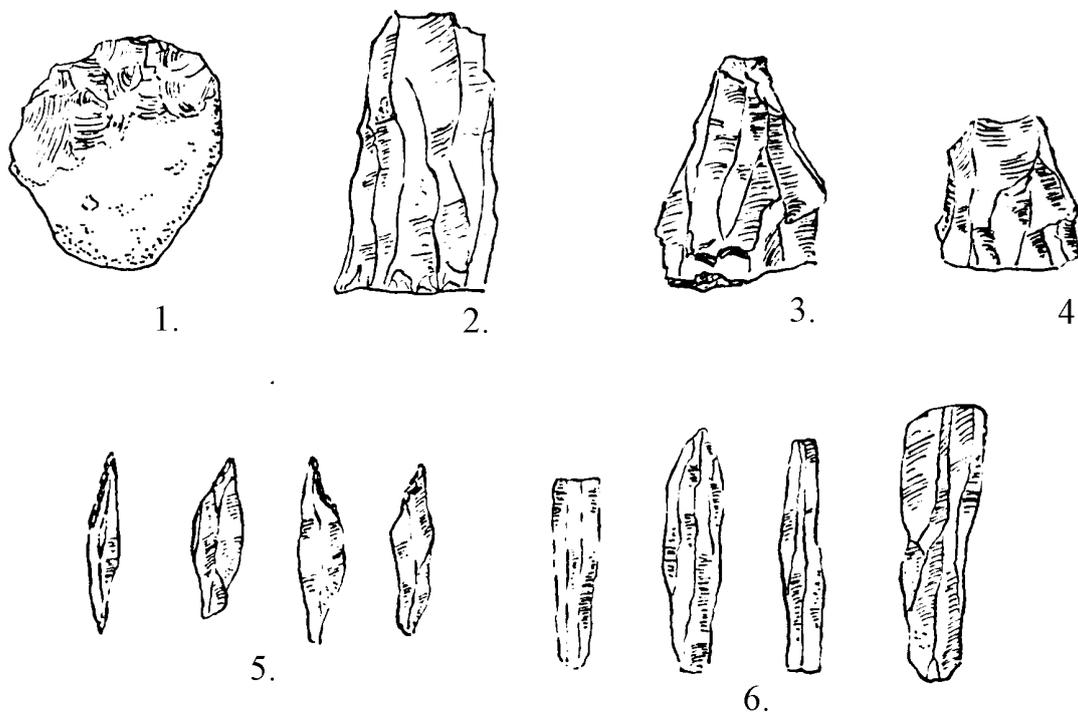
The area of the River Hundred near Kessingland, Suffolk, has long been a source of interest to the archaeologist by reason of the number of individual finds made there over a relatively short period of time.

The dredging of the river near the Latymere Dam some years ago uncovered several large, well stained, animal bones, and remains of horn cones from an Auroch. A year or so ago continued dredging of the river near Rushmere produced two more horn cones and remains of fragmented bone, this time the horn cones were much larger, but again they belonged to an Auroch. Domestic cattle are descended from the wild auroch or urus and these animals were very large, standing nearly six feet at the shoulder and armed with very large horns. Later domesticated farms became decidedly smaller by reason of restricted food and general well being. As well as the auroch, remains of several antler tines were also uncovered and thought to belong to red deer. So far these are the first to be seen from this location, often being dredged up from nearly five feet down in black peat. Obviously the whole area in the vicinity of the River Hundred has greatly changed since early times, but we do have clear evidence of human occupation of various parts from about 7,000 BC. The high ground on both sides of the present marshland would have been very dense forest made up of birch, pine, and alder, while the present marsh is presumed to have consisted of large stretches of freshwater fen and occasional reed swamps.

At some stage the hunter fishers of the Mesolithic came to this place and from the evidence of their camp sites it seems they decided that the location was a favourable one. These people were highly mobile and it is thought they lived in small family groups, pursuing a source of food from the forest in the form of elk, deer, wild pig, and several of the smaller animals, while the inland waterways provided fish and water birds. From evidence of their flint industry it appears they settled on small areas, after clearing forest and scrub, close to the edge of the water, before forming their temporary structures from branches and hides. These would have no doubt been strengthened by turf and thickets during the colder winter months and probably they contained one or more hearths in an attempt to keep warm. It was obviously a very precarious way of life with only the strongest surviving. A number of these camp sites have been found on both sides of the river at Benacre, Kessingland, Gisleham, and Rushmere, no doubt there are several more as yet undiscovered, the ones we do know are all relatively small in area. At Kessingland the occupation area is situated on high ground close to the edge of the marsh and the remains- of the flint industry has been recovered within an area some thirty yards square. Soil conditions at this point are fairly light and acidic turning to heavy ground on the lower levels where comparatively little material has been found. From the higher ground have come numbers of small flint blades, some segmented, and a number of cones and waste flakes, as well as a small number of points and burins. Pebble sized stones have been used for cones and where they have failed to flake properly the battering at the reverse end showed they were utilised as strikers. Small Sarson stones were also used for hammerstones and quartz pebbles also appear to have been employed for the same purpose. The majority of the cones are of grey to black flint and include both two and single platform types with the occasional multiplatform, while shattered pieces of blade cones are also present.

The blunted blades and microliths encountered here, and on the other locations, would have been set in wooden shafts and used for a wide variety of purposes including boring, cutting, and also for use as barbs. The presence of three cone axeheads, identified by the single transverse cutting edges, indicates that the owners were probably also making use of the forest timber for their own purposes, such as material for platforms and stages at the water's edge, saplings used in the shelter construction, and in conjunction with stretching out fishing nets and so on.

Certainly the water played a major factor in the life of these hunters and it is likely that being highly mobile it is the way they entered this location with later penetration into the thick forest after the camps had been sited. Fish including pike were part of their diet and while as yet we have no finds of bone implements, it is certain that they had a bone or antler industry, from which hooks and fish spears would have been made. Remains of these may be in the peat that makes up the present marsh, but it is certain that there was such an industry as we have found two graves and a Beck de-Flute, the latter frequently used in the groove and splinter techniques for producing various sized splinters of material for an assortment of purposes, especially hunting.



Mesolithic Flint Industry
from Kessingland
Scale half size

1. Badly flaked Core
2. - 4. Blade Cores
5. Microliths
6. Blade like flakes

Two of the implements were recovered at Kessingland, a short distance from the Mesolithic camp site, while the third was picked up with additional material from the same industry at Rushmere. This find spot is roughly a mile from the previous finds and is roughly a thousand yards from the river, the ground surface this time is relatively flat and while the flint remains are not as prolific as the former site it is from here that the first tranchet axe was found.

The majority of the flint here is orange to dark brown and in some places where the ground is heavy there is a high damage rate, by reason of farm machinery and soil conditions. Again the occupation area is small with the bulk of the material in and around a twenty-thirty yard square with Neolithic implements being encountered both within these confines and beyond. Some material is patinated like the small light grey scar on a blade which was later flaked on one end to form an end scraper, the lightness of this later working shows clearly against the rest of the implement. Similar colour changes are noticeable on a number of waste flakes and scrapers showing the readiness to utilise a suitable material previously used some considerable time before.

As far as the Mesolithic is concerned there is still much to be done in the way of fieldwalking, and this particular location has I feel much to offer. It is possible that the discoveries of antler remains and the auroch bones may also have some connection, some years ago a skeleton of an auroch was found in Eastern Denmark with a tiny triangle of flint embedded in the vertebra, the result of a Mesolithic arrowshaft.

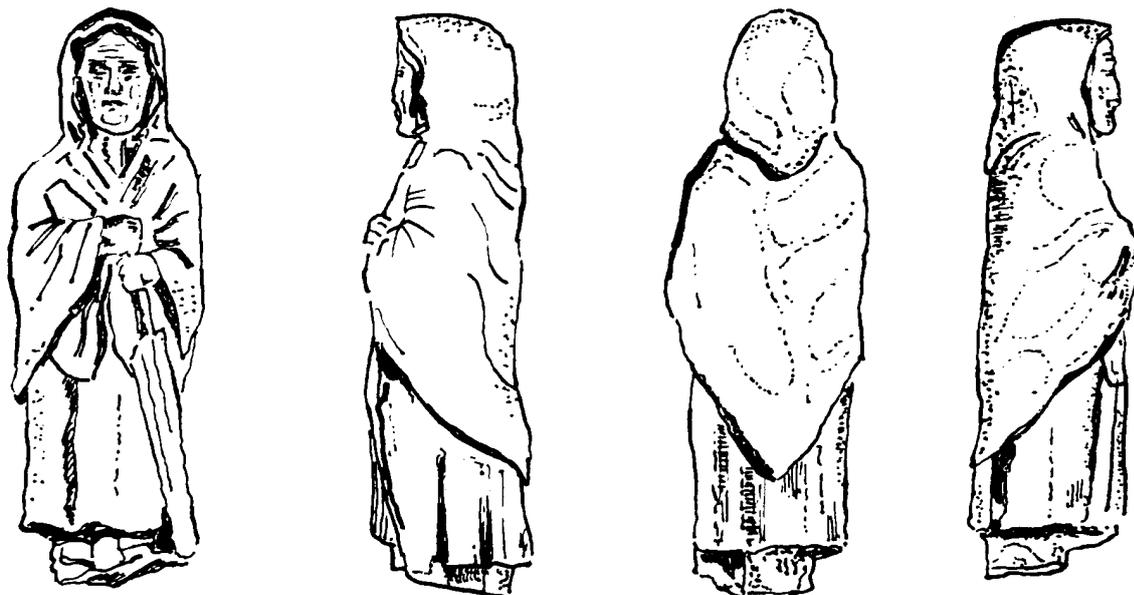
The presence of deer in the forests would have provided antler and bone for both barbs, harpoons, punches, and an array of pins, so it would be worthwhile to look for any signs of cutting or sawing on

any antlers that may later come up from the peat deposits of the river. When situations allow, visual inspection of the upcast may well be rewarding after the drying out period, for the sheer depth of peat may possibly produce a few surprises from time to time, and whatever does emerge one can expect it to be in good condition by reason of the properties of the material in which it has lain hidden for so many years.

PIPE CLAY FIGURINE FROM OULTON BROAD

by Mr. P.M. Durbidge

From time to time we hear of objects being dug up or found on open ground and later put away in a drawer or on the shelf in the shed, and later forgotten about for a number of years.



Pipe Clay Figurine from Oulton Broad Suffolk. (full size)

Such a situation happened at Oulton Broad several years ago when a man decided to cultivate some waste ground near Elmhurst Avenue. While turning over the ground he uncovered a small buff coloured figurine. Some years later he gave the small figure to Miss D. Smith who became interested as to its possible history, later it was very kindly donated to the Lowestoft Museum. The figurine is solid cast and made of pipe clay, it measures 7.9 cm in height and is of a female wearing a ground length cloak with a hood over the head, the right hand appears to hold a book while the left holds a parasol.

The object compares favourably with a similar figure found in a garden at Attleborough, Norfolk, in 1978, apart from the face being removed, possibly deliberately, while the Oulton Broad discovery was found in very good condition.

I am indebted to Dr. S. Morgeson and Mr. D. Butcher who were most helpful regarding the identification and history of the figure. It appears that many of these were exported from the Low Countries during the 15th and 16th centuries and they are particularly well known in London, with most of them showing saints. It is almost certain that this figure represents St. Sitha or Zita, who was born in Tuscany in 1218 and who later became a domestic servant for a wealthy weaver at the age of 12. Later she became a devote Christian and spent the greater part of her life helping the sick and poor. Subsequently, a number of supernatural happenings were attributed to her. After her death in 1278 she was proclaimed a saint by many people and regarded the patroness of domestic servants, this was no doubt due to the fact that ordinary people were able to identify with her and because she was not one of the figures from the distant past. Canonisation did later follow and her popularity spread right across medieval Europe.

St. Sitha can be seen in at least three East Anglian churches, on the rood screens at Barton Turf,

Norfolk, and also at Westhall, Suffolk. In addition a panel of the chest in St. Marys, Denton, Norfolk, also depicts the saint along with other figures, the chest itself most likely being made up from parts of the former rood loft.

‘THE DEFENCES OF LOWESTOFT’ - AN ERRATUM ON SUFFOLK

by Adrian Parker

Members of the Society may not realise where our Annual Report gets to, and how it is kept as a work of reference. The article on this subject in the 1983-4 Report has brought forth still more information from Mr. Charles Trollope of Fingringhoe, whose expertise I have previously acknowledged; this can conveniently be read as a supplement to the original paper.

In relation to the other fortifications on the Suffolk coast, what I wrote about Landguard and the Martello towers needs amplifying. Although Landguard Fort was rebuilt in 1717-20, it seems that it was more or less levelled and started again in 1745, and this is the origin of the oldest part of the present Fort.

On the Martello towers, my previous source suggested that the bigger Slaughden (Aldeburgh) tower had been built in 1800-06, after the main chain. Mr. Trollope, who has researched the fort record books, states that in fact all the Martellos were completed in 1810-12. The bigger Slaughden tower is a four-leafed clover shape and had 4 cannon, whilst all the others were circular and intended to be large enough for 3 guns on top. It seems that there were several phases, starting with a decision to construct 26 towers in 1798 from Hampshire to Shingle Street, Suffolk; Slaughden was added to these in 1800. However, there were lulls in the perceived risk of invasion, – after the Peace of Amiens in 1803 for a year and after Trafalgar in 1805 until 1810, when Austria had been defeated at Wagram and Napoleon’s long march on Russia was about to affect British commerce in the Baltic. In the end, by 1812 there were 103 Martello towers, of which 18 were on the short Suffolk coast from Shotley to Aldeburgh and eleven of these still exist.

As a successor project it is intended to gather together information on the 1939-45 defences of Lowestoft and the coast of Waveney District.

CARLTON COLVILLE AND CANON BIGNOLD

by Mrs Mary Goffin

Editors note. (The source for the Carlton Colville Chronicles were notes written by Canon Bignold in the parish registers between 1900 and 1940. These were transcribed and edited by Mr. J.R. Goffin and published as a book by the Parochial Church Council of St. Peters, Carlton Colville with the assistance of the Norwich Union Insurance Group in 1983).

During the preparation for printing of the Carlton Colville Chronicles of Canon Bignold and since its publication many local people have passed on information about life in Carlton Colville during the incumbency of Canon Bignold and also personal memories of him.

He was a very tall man, approx, 6 ft. 4in., who always carried a stick and often raised it and shook it at children perpetrating some misdemeanour. He frequently wore a heavy black short cape and large black hat. For many years he rode a double barred bicycle made specially for him which he rode around the village and delivered the Parish Magazine personally, saying this was his opportunity of meeting people. Several memories were related by ex-choirboys who remember how strict he was with them. The choirboys were paid 2d. per week, 1d. for attending choir practice and ½d. for attending morning service and ½d. for the evening service, this in approximately 1918. By 1920 they were paid 4/4d. per quarter there being 16 boys and 5 men then in the choir. In the late 1920’s when Mrs. Miller was the organist there were 6 girls in the choir. The Rector insisted on a full choir always and if any boy was absent for more than two consecutive weeks without reasonable excuse, he was sacked. Before attending morning service they had to attend Sunday School in the Church Hall and they were then marched from the hall to the Church. At Christmas Miss Christine Bignold, his niece, always gave each member of the choir a present. ‘We had morning Sunday School in the Old Schoolroom and then lined up and went to Church. Afternoon Sunday School was held in the Church,

when different children were called on to say one of the Commandments or Texts or Collects for the day. One day we were standing in the porch and one boy was behaving badly when all of a sudden Canon Bignold swung round and gave him a terrific punch on the head! After that no more trouble.' – an extract from a letter from a woman who had grown up in Carlton Colville. Another person remembers him as being very tall and bearded. He wore iron heels on his boots so he could always be heard coming and the choir boys could avoid being caught misbehaving. If he did catch them he would give them a good cuff round the ear to punish them.

During his long Ministry he baptised and later confirmed and married most of his parishioners. He was in the habit of asking local couples whom he married for a wedding photograph which he then inserted in a special album. Unfortunately, this album does not seem to have survived but a similar album containing the photographs of many of the men who enlisted in the First World War is preserved, treasured and kept in the Parish Chest. This album was the source of many of the photographs appearing in the Carlton Colville Chronicles. Beside many of these photographs are short notes – very many state 'Died for England' and the date. Others mention the name of the ship or regiment with which the men served. Some give details of post World War I life, i.e. Reuben Roe emigrated to Canada; Eric Goodall was ordained and went to Transvaal.

Maree Newton visited several old parishioners and I quote some of the anecdotes related to her: 'Mr. Spindler, a bricklayer and carpenter, was doing some work at the Rectory one very fine sunny day. An aeroplane was overhead doing sign-writing on the clear blue sky. The words it wrote were 'Bile Beans'. Old Bignold came outside and stood looking up at the plane for some time and then turned to Spindler and said *'Look what they are doing to my Master's beautiful sky. No good will come of it.'*

One Goddard, the gardener at the Rectory just before World War II lost all the tomato plants in the Rectory greenhouse much to his and Bignold's disappointment. Shortly afterwards he was walking by the dead well (cesspit) in the Rectory garden when he noticed a number of young tomato plants growing in the sludge (apparently tomato pips pass right through the body when eaten and are often found growing in sewage sludge). Goddard rescued these young plants and took them into the greenhouse. Bignold, when he saw them, enquired where they had come from and on being told was disgusted and said he would not eat any of them.

In later years he often sat on the back of a pew with his feet on the seat and gave the sermon. His sight was failing and he would often preach with his eyes closed. Towards the end of his life he was taken to Church in a wheelchair and took the service, but mostly then his Curate gave the sermon.

The report in the Carlton Colville Chronicles of the bombardment of Lowestoft in 1916 aroused many memories. An elderly man from the Victoria Road area of Carlton Colville (now Oulton Broad) mentioned walking out to Carlton Marshes 'bomb dodging' as he termed it. Several villagers were reminded of the people of Lowestoft coming along the country roads to Carlton and beyond at the time of the bombardment. Some remember families sharing their homes or being given refuge in their barns and outbuildings. Others remember their parents offering cups of tea and refreshments to those passing along the lanes. My brother-in-law was reminded that his mother walked out from Lowestoft with the pram and five young children and that his older brother managed to get 'lost' so that he was able to remain and see the exciting, to a small boy, events. Shortly afterwards the family left Lowestoft to join their father serving with the Royal Navy at Chatham, they never returned to Lowestoft. On June 17th 1917 Canon Bignold mentioned a German Zeppelin which came down in flames. When it was seen coming down by Nellie Saunders (now Mrs. Lamb.) and her sister Jessie (now Mrs. Shales) and a friend, thinking it was coming down near Southwold set out to find it and ended up in Theberton. The people there gave them breakfast and money to come home by train.

CLUBS

From the Parish Magazine and from conversation with older village people, I find that there have been a variety of clubs flourishing and adding to the enjoyment of many people. One of the earliest was a Parish Coal Club, which was established in 1889 and by 1894 had 94 members according to the Parish Magazine of February 1894. The members paid into the Club a weekly subscription of not more than 6d. and not less than 3d. Donations to the Club enabled a bonus of 3/8d. to be added to each members subscription – 61 tons of coal were distributed at a most needy time. Coal was bought at the wholesale price of 1/- per cwt. in 1897.

Fishing has always been a popular pastime. Suckling in his History and Antiquities of Suffolk of 1846 mentions 'The inhabitants of Carlton Colville claim a right of free fishing in Spratt's and other waters in Carlton Ham. In the reign of Queen Elizabeth there was a suit between the said inhabitants and the

Lord of the Manor, who claimed an exclusive right of fishing therein, when judgement was given in favour of the inhabitants.’ In recent years the argument for the right of the people of Carlton Colville to fish these waters was again raised. The interested anglers later formed themselves into the now flourishing Carlton Colville Angling Club.

The Carlton Colville Games Club was started in 1920 with Mr. George Yeates, the school Attendance Officer, as Secretary with athletics and cycling as the first sports. Stanford Balls of Carlton Hall later asked Mr. Herbert Waters, who had a small holding of 2½ acres at ‘Holmfield’, The Street, to organise a football team. Balls field, where Carlton Colville school is now, was used as the football field and the team was soon flourishing and in 1923 they won the Division II Cup of the Lowestoft and District League. Ex-players recall the most welcome hot ginger drink which was served to the players by Mrs. Waters, who also made ice cream for the players when it was warmer.

A Cricket Club was formed in 1921 and played on Pond Meadow loaned by Mr. B.C. Crake of Bell Farm. Also in 1921 the first of many Annual Sports competitions were held on the meadow adjoining Hedley House.

Carlton Colville Village Dramatic Society, a branch of the National Village Drama Society, was formed in 1923. The players were trained by Miss J.M. Frost, a teacher at St. Peter School and sister-in-law of Mr. B.J. Quadling the Headmaster. From the Parish Magazine we learn that the second production was due to have been presented in March 1924, but had to be postponed because of the outbreaks of measles and scarlet fever in the village. Two comedies were eventually performed in the village schoolroom in May 1924, reported in the Lowestoft Journal as ‘the best entertainment ever given in the village.’ The Parish Magazine comments ‘the acting of the members has very greatly improved since last year.’ Maybe this explains why I have been unable to find a report on the first production!

LOST LANDMARKS

Blacksmiths There were once two blacksmiths shops in the village – one on the Street opposite the end of Rectory Road and the other on the Beccles Road corner with Marsh Lane. Mr. William Moyse was the blacksmith on The Street and it was his cousin William James Moyse who had the shop at Beccles Road. Frank, the eldest son of William James worked there and carried on the business until he died in 1941. His brother John, a builder, took over the blacksmiths shop employing Bob Lake as smith until he retired. John used the premises as a store until the late 1960’s when part of the building fronting Beccles Road was demolished to improve the sight line of the road junction. The blacksmiths premises on The Street were also demolished at about this time and the land used for building.

Sanatorium This was a corrugated iron building, used as a barn until it was burned down in 1982, in a field adjoining the footpath by Fairfield Loke. It was also referred to as the Fever Hospital where patients with infectious diseases were treated. Mr. Houghton drove the ‘Fever Van’ and Mrs. Fanny Knights was the caretaker.

The Mardle also known as the Old Osiers was an ancient circular moat of pre-Saxon time situated between the Bell Inn and Wheatacre House. At one time it was used as a watering place by cattle drovers. Later it was used for soaking hemp and growing osiers for basket-making. In the 1920’s an iron wind pump for pumping off the excess water was erected there by Mr. Page of Wheatacre House.

The Pond There was a pond on land between Wheatacre House and Record House on The Street opposite Bell Farm and horses from the farm used to go there to drink. This pond also abounded with frog spawn in the Spring to the delight of local children. At one time there were low white rails part way along the frontage with The Street, but they did not prevent small boys pushing little girls into the water! In the early 1970’s both the Mardle and the Pond were filled in.

Penny-farthing Bicycle At one time a penny-farthing bicycle was a landmark in the hedge between ‘Sunnyholme’ Rosa Terrace, The Street and the corner of Rectory Road, the sign for the cycle shop kept by the Motts family. Just round the corner in Rectory Road was the hut where Postman Beckett sorted the mail and mended shoes and on the opposite corner were allotments. There were also allotments on the field where the Community Centre is now built.

ROAD NAMES

Frogs Lane This was a footpath beside Ramsey’s, the Old Post Office (now Plummers Shop), which skirted Peacock Cottages and led to a pond where in the season frogs abounded. This area now forms part of the gardens of some bungalows in Meadow Way.

Bell Field Lane The footpath that now runs from Famona Road between the houses to the Churchyard

was originally called Bell Field Lane as it ran from beside the Bell Inn across adjoining fields to the Churchyard and you entered the Churchyard over a stile.

Lay Piece This was the name once given to the footpath across Mobbs' land from Carlton Colville school to Hedley House.

Waters Avenue was named after Mr. Herbert Edmund Waters. He lived at 'Holmfield', The Street and leased 2 acres as a market garden. The Gardens development was later built on part of his land. He was the local milkman, obtaining milk from Bell Farm opposite his home. His milk round covered Gisleham, Mutford and Kessingland as well as Carlton Colville. He was a member of the Parochial Church Council for 40 years and the Parish Council for 21 years, a committee member of the local football club and a School Manager for Carlton School. He and his wife celebrated their Diamond Wedding in 1963.

From a Lowestoft Journal report we learn why Mr. Waters did not have a road named after him earlier. Apparently the Lothingland R.D.C. had adopted the name Famona Road before the Carlton Colville Parish Council were aware of it. The Rector at the time, Rev. D.G. Blyth, objected 'to the name Famona Road being thrust upon us', but in the meantime the R.D.C had informed the developers that the road should be called Famona Road. Nothing changes! The Parish Council is still complaining that the District Council (now Waveney D.C.) does not heed their requests. I have been unable to discover why the R.D.C. or the Developers chose the odd name 'Famona' for a road in our village.

White Horse Corner This was mentioned in the Carlton Colville Chronicles and referred to the crossroads of The Street, Hall Road and Rushmere Road. There were a pair of cottages there with the wooden head of a horse, painted white, on the gable end. Turrell the gamekeeper lived in one of the cottages and his son 'Razor' Turrell lived there after his father died. 'Shaver' Girling lived in the other cottage and the corner has also been known as Shavers Corner and Girlings Corner. The cottages, now demolished, occupied the area where the bus lay-by is now. The same area is now named on the bus timetable as Secrets Corner after Mr. Secret who had a shop where the Mace shop is now.

Barrack Yard another one mentioned in the Chronicles was in The Street where the garage now stands.

Mort-a-Way or Mort-e-boys was the name given to the area of the junction of Rushmere Road and Gisleham Road. The origin of this name is not known, some sources suggest a connection with a possible battle at Bloodmoor Hill and the dead were brought there. There was a large black stone in the lane to Bloodmoor Pits, at the back of Cooks' Farm at Gisleham, which is said to have some connection with the Battle and another on the grass verge opposite Bloodmoor Lane on Lowestoft Road, only this stone was white.

The children of St. Peters School divided themselves into three groups, those from the Beccles Road area were referred to as 'The Ship Inn' children, those from the Rushmere Road as the children from 'Up the Hill' and those from the centre of the village as 'The Street' children.

Carlton Hall was also known as 'The White House' at one time. 'The Glebelands' was the former name of the property in Cotmer Road now known as 'Morton Hall'.

PEOPLE

Mrs. Ruth Rouse lived to be over 100 years old. Although born at Mutford, she lived at 55 The Street for over 50 years. To celebrate her 100th birthday in 1967 a team of five bellringers rang a special peal at St. Peters Church. Her daughter, Mrs. Ellen THACKER is now in her 91st year and until recently lived at Belvoir Cottages, The Street, but now lives in Beccles Road.

Mr. Bertie Quadling was the Headmaster of St. Peters School from 1901 until his death in 1926. His only daughter Verona was only 16 when she married in 1925, her bridesmaids were Rita Scowen and Alice Waters, now Mrs. Myall, to whom I am greatly indebted for giving and checking so much information. The report in the Lowestoft Journal of the wedding not only gave the usual details of the bride's attire, but also recorded all the gifts received and the names of their donors!

William Henry Spalding of Garden House, The Street was Parish Clerk and Sexton and retired from these duties in 1938 in his 80th year. In 1983 Garden House was greatly altered and several houses built in the gardens.

He was succeeded by Edward Oakes of Belvoir Terrace, The Street, as Parish Clerk and Sexton.

Benjamin Thomas Dodington was the local undertaker, carpenter and joiner. His workshop was in The Street where Carlton Colville Service Station is now. Eddie ROWE, brother of Mrs. Dodington

succeeded him.

Miss Peggy Gabriel was the daughter of Lt. Col and Mrs. Gabriel of The Dell, Cotmer Road and died of influenza on November 16th 1918 in London. Her parents wanted her buried in Carlton Colville, but because the influenza was then considered to be very infectious, the Medical Officer of Health insisted on her being cremated and the ashes brought to Carlton in a marble chest. This was the first cremation service held in Carlton. Her parents wanted the chest to be deposited on a bracket on the North side of the Chancel. The following is taken from the Vestry Minute Book:- 'A Special Vestry Meeting was held in the Vestry of the Parish Church on Thursday January 16th 1919 at 2.30pm for the purpose of viewing a design for a Mural Monument it is desired to be erected in the Church by Lt. Col. Gabriel to the memory of his daughter, and to confirm or otherwise the same. The Vestry after having viewed the plans prepared, decided the casket should be built into the Chancel wall and the mural monument placed in front of it thus hiding the casket from view. An added note by Canon Bignold 'The Casket contained the remains of a young lady who had been cremated and consisted of white marble. The above resolution was passed to meet the views of a Parishioner who very strongly objected to the casket being seen. The relatives – this being the case – now prefer that it should be buried in the Churchyard. This has been done'. At a Special Vestry Meeting in May 1919 a design for a Brass Tablet in memory of Miss Peggy Gabriel to be erected in the Parish Church was approved.

William Andrews was a principal landowner in Carlton Colville who built and lived in Hedley House in 1873. His son was Rev. William Hale Andrews who married Louisa Sophia daughter of Rev. Edward Jermyn Rector of Carlton Colville from 1806-48. William Hale Andrews succeeded him as Rector of the Parish from 1848-94 and he died at Hedley House in 1901. His son Lancelot William Hale Andrews, a bachelor, was Rector of Rushmere from 1892-1902 and he returned to live at Hedley House until his death in 1929. His nephew Fredk. Herbert Watson Rector of Cronsfield, inherited Hedley House and died there in 1950.

Mr. Lewis Smith, who lived in 'The Lodge', Hedley House with his wife and daughter, was the gardener and chauffeur, but left the village in 1945.

Rev. W.G. Barnard Smith was curate to William Hale Andrews from 1888-92 and later lived at The Uplands although he was Rector of North Cove. He had three sons, the eldest was killed in World War I and the other two went into industry and the estate was sold for building development.

Rev. Edgar Hay, Rector of Carlton Colville for three years, announced in 1897 his resignation as Rector for health reasons. 'I have found the bracing East Coast climate far too keen for my constitution' – extract from the Parish Magazine. He exchanged his living with Rev. G.G. Gutters, Rector of Plymtree, Devon, but in the Parish Magazine we read that 'he was instituted Rector on 29th January 1898, but as he had been ill with influenza the doctors ordered him abroad for the winter'. In his absence Rev. R.A. Bignold, who had come with him from Plymtree, acted as Curate-in-charge of the Parish, but the Rev. Gutters died in March 1898 and the Rev. R.A. Bignold was offered the Living, so commencing his long Ministry in Carlton Colville.

John Soloman had 12 children, 7 girls and 5 boys and they lived in a small cottage 3 Gisleham Corner (Mort-e-boys). He was the father of 'Spratt' Soloman whose photograph is in the Carlton Colville Chronicles. His wife died when the youngest child was 2 years old and his daughter May (the Postwoman) brought the family up. There is a story told how John, coming home from the pub one night thought something seemed 'to come at him'. Afraid to go further in case the ghost 'got him' he slept in the hedge. In the morning he found the 'ghost' was a sun-flower blowing in the wind.

Miss Alice Fulcher and her sister Miss Eade Fulcher were two elderly sisters who are remembered for the long black dresses, black bonnets and black boots which they wore. They lived at Byron House, Uplands Road.

Harry John Jacob had 8 children and lived in a black tarred cottage between Garden House and White Horse Corner, The Street. He was the village boot repairer. Mrs. 'Popsy' Jacob is one of his daughters.

Charlie Nunn was the local poacher. He lived at Peacock Terrace and his daughter Georgina helped him. They never went out in the daytime, but when they set snares at Bloodmoor they left a lighted candle in the window to show they were at home.

The Old Post Office, The Street. A photograph of the Old Post Office appears in the Carlton Colville Chronicles. In the 1870's the Postmaster was Mr. R.C. Clarke, but by 1890 Mr. Arthur George Thompson, uncle of Sam Thompson who married Vera Baker, the Postwoman, was the tenant of the Store. After him Mr. Walter Ramsey was Postmaster and he was succeeded by his son Lenny. By the

time Mr. C. Plummer bought the shop in 1961 the Post Office had been transferred to its present position in Rounces Lane. This change was made because the Post Office demanded extensions and alterations to the premises which the owner found too costly to comply with. When Mr. Plummer took over the shop he found all one wall was covered with small cupboards or boxes and when they were removed a hook for tethering horses was found on the inside wall which suggests that part of the shop had once been stables.

During World War I Miss May Soloman was employed as the Post Lady and she did her deliveries around Carlton on her bicycle. Miss Vera Baker (now Mrs. Thompson) did the post round from 1926-37. When not on postal deliveries she worked in the shop (Ramseys). She was paid 14s 3d. (70p) per week for her Post duties, which she started at 6am by sorting the letters, plus a further 5s 9d. (about 28p) for her work in the shop. Her uniform consisted of a long navy blue serge coat and skirt, a navy 'Bush Hat' with GPO badge on the side and black lace-up boots. On the corner of Rectory Road was a small hut where Beckett the postman, who shared the round, sorted his mail and also did some boot repairs. 'Trammy' Sharman was the postman at Oulton Broad. In World War II Nancy Soloman did the post round from 1943-1946, and although there is a Postwoman at the GPO in Lowestoft today, she is not employed at Carlton Colville.

THE REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS, DEATHS AND MARRIAGES – BEFORE AND AFTER 1837

by Lilian Fisher

The 1830s have become known as the Decade of Reforms, the most famous of them being the Reform Act of 1832. Other reforms, those influenced by the Utilitarian school of thought, were the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act, which brought such misery and degradation to the poor, and an Act of 1836 which introduced the civil registration of births, marriages and deaths. This Act also allowed Dissenters to be married in their own chapels and buried in their own churchyards, and it came into force in 1837.

Before that date, all records of births, deaths and marriages had been kept by the parish priest, and whilst the population remained small, and whilst everyone attended church, this procedure had worked reasonably well. However, a rapidly growing population, the growth of whole new industrial areas, and a falling away of church attendance, together with often gross inefficiency on the part of the clergy, made a change essential. There was a link between the Poor Law Amendment Act and the new civil registration system, for the registration districts were allied to the districts formed by the Work House Unions, and the new registrars were, at first, appointed by the Board of Guardians.

The original intention of the Civil Registration Act had been that all marriage preliminaries for Anglicans, Dissenters and Catholics alike should be civil. However, the Lords restored the option of church banns and so preliminaries as well as the ceremony and recording were back in the hands of the clergy. The Anglican clergy were not at all pleased about the Registration Act, feeling that power was being taken from their hands, which, to some, degree, it was. In some dioceses, the clergy told their congregations they need have nothing to do with the new system, and this was quite true, for the civil registration of births, deaths and marriages was, at first, voluntary, not compulsory and tied up with National Insurance and the Welfare State, as it is today. In fact, registration did not become compulsory until 1874, which is why some of the earliest civil registers are not complete. There was right from the start, the realisation that valuable information could be gleaned from efficient registration, and a Dr. William Farr, medical practitioner and mathematician was appointed to compile statistics, particularly relating to epidemics, of which cholera was the chief scourge of the day.

Apart from the lack of compulsion to register, as with any new system, there were teething problems. So far as births were concerned, objections were raised that nothing in law prevented the mother of an illegitimate child naming whom she pleased as the father. Indeed, in the first month of registration, one such complaint was made by a named father, which does not, of course, prove or disprove anything! But, whether true or false, the registrar was obliged to enter the facts as given by the informant. This remained the state of the law until 1878, when, as now, the father of an illegitimate child was not named in the registers unless he accompanied the mother and volunteered the information. However, fears of wrongful naming were grossly overestimated. A study of the early birth registers reveals that illegitimate births were fairly frequent, also that many were born in the workhouse.

It does not take much imagination to realise that each blank space where the father's name should have been represents someone's personal misery and hardship in an age of blatant double standards and often heartless treatment meted out by society to those who transgressed the conventions of the day.

When studying early Death registers, one is struck by the often ingenuous seeming entries under the heading 'Cause of Death', such as 'a flux', 'hooping cough', or 'old age' (for someone aged 65!). We are aware that in 1837 medical and scientific knowledge were not very advanced. For example, it was only in the 1820s that medical schools developed in the University of London, Sheffield and Birmingham, and not until 1858 that procedures were set down by which a Physician or surgeon may qualify. There is, however, an even simpler reason for such entries. Until 1858 the cause of death was given by the informant of the death, often a relative, and was the informant's opinion – or even guess! After 1858, the words 'Certified' or 'Uncertified' appeared in the entry, depending on whether or not a doctor had certified the cause of death. Not until after 1874 was there an independent check on the registers and the insistence on a medical certificate. After that date, a doctor's name and qualifications appeared after the cause of death. It is easy to see that before the procedure was tightened up, it was possible for deceit to be practised by someone with a strong personal or financial interest in inventing a birth, or more particularly a death. A famous case of last century was the supposed death of one Anne Slack, who had an estate of some £6,000 in trust for her, and from which, according to the terms of the trust, she was paid interest on only one half of the estate. The lady did not even know the other half of her inheritance existed, but some other person found out, and in 1842 notified the Registrar of St. George's, Hanover Square of Miss Slack's death. A will was then forged in favour of a fictitious niece, Emily, and the imposter gained £3,600. Other deceivers appeared from time to time taking advantage of the loopholes in the system and the lack of means of detection, for the police force was still in its infancy. These deceivers, however, only falsified the fact of death. Others, more unscrupulous, went further! Between 1846 and 1848 there was quite an epidemic of husband and child killing in Colchester. This was mainly for the sake of the money paid out by death clubs, which left a surplus after funeral expenses had been paid, and of course highlights the dire poverty of the times. The affair came to light eventually when the police demanded the exhumation of one of the victims and arsenic was discovered. The dead man's half sister was arrested, convicted and hanged in 1848. When a man could die in agony the day after he had been seen out in good health, and an informant could register the Cause of Death as a 'Visitation of God', then it was time to tighten up the system! Of course such cases were extremely rare, and only of interest because of their curiosity value.

The formalities attached to marriages had long been a source of anxiety. Oliver Cromwell, in 1653, had been the first to introduce civil marriages and an efficient recording system, but this was abolished with the Restoration. At the beginning of the 18th Century a marriage was, in theory, preceded by the calling of Banns on three successive Sundays which gave any member of the congregation time to make his or her objections. In the small parishes, where everyone knew each other, there is no doubt this is what happened, but in the large towns, and particularly in London, the situation was very different.

Marriages could be celebrated in or out of church, with or without witnesses, without preliminaries, and often without any records being made. All that was necessary was the presence of a clergyman, some of them unfrocked, some pretending to be clergy, but sometimes the genuine clergy who lent themselves to quite scandalous practices for the sake of the high fees involved in clandestine marriages. In London it was business on a grand scale, with touts and marriage shops. Some of the records which were kept make strange reading to our more conventional 20th Century eyes. A Mr. Ashenden, Chaplain to H.M.S. Falkland had a marriage shop in Fleet Street, and one entry in his books reads, 'Patrick and Margaret married. Would not give their names'. Another entry expresses surprise that both parties were sober! In 1753, a Bill to prevent clandestine marriages was introduced, and ruled that a marriage had to be solemnised in the Church of England after Banns, in daylight, and with doors open, thus leaving no room for doubt or secrecy. It also stipulated that consent must be obtained for minors. Jews, Quakers, Catholics and all Dissenters were excluded. There was lively debate before the Bill was finally passed. Its opponents (amongst them Charles James Fox who had himself eloped with an heiress eighteen years his junior) were not so much concerned with the hardship inflicted on Non-Conformists, as they were with what they saw as an interference in personal liberty. After the Clandestine Marriages Bill was passed, there was one last fling and then the doors of the marriage shops closed for ever, leading to a far more serious and responsible attitude towards the institution of marriage. The Bill did not apply to Scotland, and runaway couples could go over the

border to Gretna Green, which became famous for elopements. The present situation is that all preliminaries for civil marriages and for those taking place in Non-Conformist and Catholic churches take place at Register Offices. The Church of England remains independent, as do both Jews and Quakers, but all records are carefully checked at local Register Offices and again at the General Register Office at St. Catherine's House, and most importantly, all completed registers are carefully stored.

As we can see, the new system which began in 1837 was far from perfect, but from faltering beginnings, an efficient, reliable and professional Civil Registration Service developed, which has served as a model for countries all over the world.

DARKNESS WITHIN DOORS

by David Butcher

The cache of 17th Century footwear discovered in the chimney breast of a Suffolk farmhouse*, as reported in local newspapers some months ago, surprised me with the sheer number of shoes involved – but not with their actual presence. After all, the shoe is a traditional good luck symbol and everyone knows of its association with weddings. There's more to it than mere good fortune, however, because it is also a potent fertility symbol. The idea of a foot's insertion into a shoe being analogous with the sexual union between a man and a woman requires no explanation, and its association with marriage and houses was meant to bless both match-making and home with the gift of children.

There are other things which turn up in the chimney breasts of old houses, too, and they are of altogether darker and more sinister appearance, with origins rooted perhaps way back in our Celtic past. In particular, I'm thinking about witch-bottles, which were incorporated into rubble core or brickwork to ward off evil spirits. There were some of these bulbous little pottery vessels on exhibition in the keep of the Castle Museum, Norwich, the last time I was there and their contents are absolutely typical: iron nails and pins, human hair and finger-nail parings. Iron was a very powerful force for good in Celtic belief, of course, a legacy no doubt of the time when it was the 'new' metal of its day, while hair and finger nails have another potency. They do, after all, continue to grow for a considerable time after the death of the body.

But if such receptacles and their contents were meant to protect a dwelling from dark forces, they could equally have a connection with human fertility. Again, by analogy, it is not hard to see the comparison between a bottle and its neck and the female womb and the vagina. This duality of purpose is best seen in the Bellarmine wine-jar, which is sometimes found built into chimney stacks and which is notable historically for its association with the Jesuit cardinal whose Counter-Reformation teachings made him unpopular with Protestants. His reputedly (a Protestant reference, one supposes) is that forbidding visage which lowers from the shoulder of the vessel. I wonder? I wonder if the face isn't that of something far more ancient and occult given a new name and a new form.

The chimney of a house, through being an orifice, is in a sense liable to attack from outside. But what of the other openings? – the doorways and the windows. Well, it is not at all unusual to find the remains of birds and small animals buried or immured beneath threshold or sill. The report about the cache of shoes mentioned the finding of the bodies of two or three kittens and theorised about their being put into the house to ward off the presence of mice and rats. What, then, about the buildings where rodents turn up in the fabric? Or rabbits, or dogs, as is sometimes the case. What are they there for?

Sacrifice seems to be the idea where the corpses of mammals and birds are concerned – an act of propitiation to the gods, a seeking of their favour on behalf of the owner of the house, and a way too of repelling the forces of evil. I'm not saying that this was what the housebuilders of three and four hundred years ago had directly in mind, but it was a custom which had obviously been handed down over many, many generations. One can only hope, in the interests of humaneness, that the creatures used were dead before being out into the fabric. If anyone is inclined to doubt this idea of sacrifice, it is worth remembering the strong tradition concerning one of St. Columba's followers in the founding of Iona. I forget his name now, but he reputedly volunteered to be killed by his fellow missionaries and was then buried beneath the main doorway of the monastery's church.

On a less ominous note, houses also have their other, more acceptable talismans both inside and out.

A favourite one in East Anglia was the fossilised sea urchin, which the farm labourer picked up in the fields and prized as a farcy loaf (farcy deriving from pharisee, an old dialect word for 'fairy'). The object was taken home and kept safely somewhere in the belief that, while it was in the house, none of the residents would ever go hungry. Then there is the horseshoe nailed onto, or above, the lintel of the back door, as potent a force for good as the string of hagstones which often hung nearby. I remember the ones my grandparents had on their cottage, and I remember too the house-leeks in our own scullery at home when I was a boy – lightning repellers of great effectiveness! Presumably the idea behind this was that the spikiness of the leaves acted, by notions of sympathetic magic, as a repulse to any forks of lightning.

Finally, as far as this article is concerned at least, we come to the colour green. How many houses do we see painted in it? How many people, for that matter, actually wear it? It is taboo – the fairy hue, the colour of the stuff of life itself – and it is best left alone. The idea is with us yet (even though we may not be aware of it) and, in looking at the unkempt green man who peeps at us from his tree on certain pub signs, just what are we looking at? Is it, as some anthropologists believe, a folk memory that homo sapiens carries of proto-man? Or is it a manifestation of ourselves? – something which we don't care to acknowledge as existing, but which lurks just beneath the veneer of civilisation in all of us.

Had time and space permitted, much more could have been written here about what once got built into houses – and that is only one of many examples where the dark side of human nature has long found its expression.

* Editors note – The report on shoes was in the Eastern Daily Press 29th August 1984 and repeated in the Lowestoft Journal Extra 4th September 1984. It concerned 20 shoes, 3 mummified kittens and other items found by Mr. M. Willembrock in his house at Barley House Farm, Winston, near Debenham, Suffolk. These finds may be seen at Moyse's Hall Museum, Bury St. Edmunds. Further details of this find are included in 'Painted Brick Chimneys – Superstitious Finds in Chimneys' by Timothy Easton, published by the Debenham History Group.

June Swann, Keeper of the shoe collection at Northampton Central Museum, collects and analyses all records of shoe finds and has produced a booklet 'Shoes Concealed in Buildings', published by the Northampton Museum.

A LATE 18th CENTURY HISTORY BOOK REVIEWED

by M.G. Reeder

Recently I bought a book entitled 'Universal History' written by the Rev. H.I. Knapp A.M. and published by Langman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown, Paternoster Row, in 1816.

This book claims to be 'an abridgement adapted to the use of families and schools'. It is leather bound and although well used it is in good condition. There is no indication of the original purchase price, but listed in the back are details of the publishers other educational books. These have prices of several shillings each and no doubt this book cost a similar amount. Although it is very difficult to accurately define income levels for that period, a weekly wage range, averaged over a year, from 8/- (40p) to 15/- (75p) probably includes labourers to skilled craftsmen and small farmers. Therefore it is unlikely that many families had a copy of this book or that many schools had more than one copy. In these circumstances it would seem that new editions would not be frequent. My copy is a fourth edition, 'with corrections and additions', no indication is given for the dates of the previous editions. Some of the additions are obvious, for in the last few pages the latest twist in the long running disputes with the French are related – Bonaparte's return to France from exile on the 1st March 1815, the battle of Waterloo and Bonaparte's re-exile to St. Helena in the autumn of 1815.

Probably this book was written and the first edition was published in the 1790's and from an inscription inside the cover which reads, 'Master John Bolton, Sanford, Essex, April 5, 1863', it was still considered usable for education of the young seventy years later.

This book claims to cover the whole of history, from the creation to 1815. I bought it to learn from, not to mock the many now out-dated facts and conclusions it contains. For although I would not be prepared to argue for the literal truth of very much in this book, it does show clearly one overall and overriding truth. That is that evolution has been ongoing and has affected ideas and truths just as much as objects, and that unless we have now reached the peak of evolution, and who given our

present day access to records of and capacity for analysis of past years is arrogant enough to believe that, then in much less than 200 years time virtually none of our currently held historical truths will have any relevance. What we believe today and how we view the past are surely because of the circumstances we now find ourselves in. Whether as individuals, groups, or nations, social and economic interaction or isolation, must influence our interpretation of the actions of others whether in the present or past, and must influence those features which we class as significant. Is this process any different from the way that all past ages worked? Therefore the following outline of the 'Universal History' may be both interesting in itself and help to enlighten us as to some other areas of life in the late 18th century.

Generally an air of certainty and confidence prevails throughout the book. Much of my comment will be focused on those areas where the Rev. Knapp is obviously himself in doubt. Throughout the book many precise figures are given with no explanation as to how they are arrived at and no references to sources are given. This method enables a great deal of history to be contained in a small space and at a time when books were relatively very costly this style may have been considered essential. Was it also that those who wrote text books were of a class who would not expect to be questioned by students? Whereas today everyone expects to be questioned, so that sources and references are given for virtually every statement in order to divert the questioner!

The Rev. Knapp begins by dividing history into Epochs.

The First Epoch, or Ancient History, comprises the time which has elapsed from the Creation of the World to Constantine the Great. To this Space are allowed, at least, 4312 Years.

The Second Epoch, or The Middle Ages, is from Constantine the Great to the Reformation. (At this time the features, as it were, of Europe, undergo a total change).

The Third Epoch, or Modern History, begins at the Year 1519, and is carried down to the Present Time.

For the sake of clearness and precision, the preceding Epochs are divided into smaller portions of time, called Periods. Ancient History contains Eight – Middle Five – and Modern Three; making together Sixteen Periods.

Ancient History

First Period – From the Creation of the World to the Deluge. Contains, according to the Hebrew Pentateuch, 1656 Years.

Second Period – From the Deluge, to the Departure of the Israelites out of Egypt. Contains something less than 800 Years.

Third Period – From the Departure out of Egypt to the Foundation of Rome. The latter Circumstance, it is supposed, took place 753 Years before the Birth of Jesus Christ. Contains 800 Years.

History now begins to unfold itself, and the dates may be relied upon with more confidence. From this time the Roman Era is to be used, and the periods are considerably shortened. What remains, therefore, to be said concerning Ancient History, is dated from the Foundation of Rome.

Fourth Period – From the Foundation of Rome to the Capture of Babylon by Cyrus. Contains 216 Years.

Fifth Period – From Cyrus to the Entrance of Alexander the Great into Asia. Contains 204 Years. From the Foundation of Rome, 420.

Sixth Period – From Alexander the Great to the Ruin of Carthage. Contains 188 Years - From the Foundation of Rome, 608. (This was the acme of Roman greatness).

Seventh Period – From the Ruin of Carthage to the Birth of Jesus Christ. Contains 145 Years. From the Foundation of Rome, 753.

Here begins the Christian Era, from which all subsequent Occurrences are invariably to be dated. From this time History might admit of being divided into Centuries; but the division of it into Periods will be found preferable, as it will furnish us with more complete pictures.

Eighth Period – From the Birth of Jesus Christ, to A.D. 312, when Constantine the Great embraced Christianity.

The Middle Ages

First Period – From Constantine the Great to the Fall of the Roman Empire in the West. Contains 164 Years. A.D. 476.

Second Period – From the Fall of the Roman Empire in the West to its Re-establishment by Charlemagne. Contains 324 Years. A.D. 800.

Third Period – From the time of Charlemagne's receiving the Imperial Crown at Rome, to the first Crusade, in 1097. Contains 297 Years.

Fourth Period – From the Beginning of the Crusades to the End of the Fourteenth Century. Contains 303 Years.

Fifth Period – From the End of the Fourteenth Century to the Election of Charles V as Emperor in 1519. Contains 119 Years.

Modern History

First Period – From the Reformation during the Reign of Charles V in Germany, to the Beginning of that of Lewis XIV in France, 1643. Contains 124 Years.

Second Period – From the beginning of the Reign of Lewis XIV to the End of that of Lewis XVI in 1793. Contains 150 Years 186.

Third Period – From the Beginning of the French Revolution to the Present Time. Contains 25 Years.

This gives c. 4000BC as the date of the creation. This is very close to that worked out by Bishop James Ussher from Ireland in 1654. He calculated from the genealogical and other dates given in the Bible that creation had occurred at 9am on October 26th 4004BC. Had this precise calculation been discredited by the late 18th century?

Is this far away from our present historical outlook? A recently published book is entitled 'A History of the World'. The publishers blurb claims it is 'a history of the world for adults and secondary school students' and that it covers five thousand years of human history. It would appear that we still consider man-as-we-know-him beginning at about the same time as the Bible.

The first Enoch, periods one to seven inclusive, covering from the creation to the birth of Christ are a retelling of the Old Testament plus the Rev. Knapp's own 'reflections' interspersed in this. For instance on the fall of Troy he comments:-

'the story says by means of a wooden horse, though it is more probable by the treachery of some of its inhabitants, who, according to another account, introduced the enemy at night by the Scoon gate, over which there was a large image of a horse, which it is not unlikely gave rise to the former story.'

My own schooldays history teachers would have rapped the Rev. Knapp's knuckles for holding such commonsense, undramatic, views of history!

At the end of the third period of the first epoch he adds a chapter of his own on the origins of wars in which he reflects upon man's continuous attempts to destroy his fellows. He states 'that wars have almost constantly prevailed among men, ever since they were created'. He poses the question – 'It is very fit to enquire what motives could possibly have urged them to aim at the destruction of the human race; – a race ordained by Heaven to multiply in the earth, and to cultivate it?' He does not simply state that is due to original sin, but gives a very reasoned outline of fear and greed leading to conflict and concludes that this is due to – 'the innate and fatal proneness in man to evil'.

The rest of the first Epoch which ends in A.D. 312 is filled with wars and the rise and fall of nations. Assyrians, Syrians, Greeks, Turks, Egyptians, Athenians, Spartans, Babylonians, Persians, Jews, Israelites, Scythians, Trachinians, Lacedaemonians, Carthaginians, Romans, Macedonians, Sicilians, Spanish, Gauls, and Africans all fight furiously.

During all of this, in the seventh period, the Roman empire is forming and Christ is born. Period eight has the Romans expanding their empire to its limits.

Rome falls and the empire in the west is lost at the start of the second Epoch. In Britain the Saxons take over and found a united kingdom. 'Upon the whole, those times were marked with peculiar horror and distress. We scarcely read of anything but wars, earthquakes, and pestilence. Invasions, and plunder, malice, inhumanity and revenue, prevailed on every side; in short, nothing was to be witnessed but scenes of the most shocking devastation, and carnage'. This was the Rev. Knapp's summing up of these periods.

In the second period of this Epoch, Mahomet founds his religion and the Bishop of Rome assumes the appellation of Pope and control over all Christianity. A chapter entitled – 'Streets of Ambition and Tyranny' follows this. It is a reasoned and improving homily from the Rev. Knapp and lists the faults and excesses of Rome and the impossibility of for long maintaining a large empire.

During the third period Britain has the Viking raids, the Saxons are restored to power and the Normans

invade. But it is the Pope extending his power which promote the comment – ‘never were more fables fabricated and spread; nor were there ever more ridiculous ceremonies invented, than in these unhappy times of ignorance and corruption.’

Things seem to be getting even worse, for the fourth period starts with the statement – ‘The beginning of this period exhibits to our view the world in a state of almost universal warfare’. Then is related, with enthusiasm, the story of the crusades to rescue Palestine from the infidels. Six million crusaders, the Rev. Knapp tells us, set out with dedication to exterminate the infidels. Then conscience pricks the Reverend and a paragraph of regret and condemnation follows. ‘But here let us remark how contrary such a spirit of revenge is, to the precepts and example of Our Blessed Saviour. He was the Prince of Peace, and forgave even his murderers’.

They (the crusaders) were a thirst for blood, and bore their enemies an implacable hatred. Instead of displaying the principles of their religion superior to those of Mahomet, they trod in his very footsteps and sought to establish Christianity by the sword’.

He ends the crusades episode with the comment – ‘Great deeds of valour were performed in those days, but very few if any, lasting benefits ever resulted from them’. And then lists the defeats which forced the Christians to withdraw. A little further on he states – ‘The crusades it must be observed, were not undertaken against unbelievers only, but also against Christians’. Then he denounces the Church of Rome’s various Inquisitions, but has to concede that during these science, art, and learning, in general began to flourish. Various intrigues and wars throughout Europe, ending with Richard II being deposed, bring the fourth period to an end.

In the fifth period Richard III is not a favourite monarch – ‘whom the English history has not to record a king of greater cunning, falsehood, perfidy, and cruelty’. Then comes the discovery of America, a broadening of minds, Rome being questioned, and the reformation begun, and so we enter modern history A.D. 1519. Queen Elizabeth receives much praise from the Rev. Knapp for – ‘completely effecting that happy Reformation, which was so much wanted and wished for. This Reformation, which had begun in England under Henry VIII from his shaking off the papal yoke, received a temporary check, during the bigot reign of his daughter Mary; but it shone forth, with redoubted splendour, under the pious, wise, and spirited Elizabeth.’ She is also praised for humbling the Spaniards. ‘Non of the Stuarts reigned with either ability or success’ we are told. European intrigues are related always the Rev. Knapp is much against Rome and Spain.

The second period runs from 1643 to 1793, this of course covers the civil war, surely one of the most traumatic events of recent British history. In this book it immediately follows a plague and is described. ‘England had afterwards, (after the plague) to witness a most shocking and disgraceful sight in the execution of Charles I her king, through a rebellion, headed by the puritanical Cromwell, who succeeded him, though he did not reign long, under the title of Protector. The two sons of Charles ascended the throne’. Is that really all people were told of those years which now seem to fascinate us so much? General warfare continues throughout Europe until 1748 when – ‘Europe now experienced a general cessation from hostilities’. There follows ten pages on the French revolution! It is as though the English revolution was too painful to detail but the French could be analysed in depth. The Rev. Knapp waxes lyrical upon the – ‘vile depravity’ – ‘insidious writings’ – ‘insurrection, conflagration, and murder.’ All the French are lashed by his pen, their greatest sin seems to be not being English, for to bring the book to its original ending he describes England.

‘That happy country, where the hearts, as well as the hands of the natives, are ever ready to defend and relieve the unfortunate and persecuted:- a country, whose industry meets with the most liberal encouragement; where monarchy is not suffered to be converted into tyranny, or liberty to degenerate into licentiousness.

It is of such a country that subjects may justly be proud, and that Providence has chosen it to be the happy instrument of procuring release and happiness to enslaved Europe. This has been the highly – favoured bark, which has outlived the storm: the formidable bulwark, which, like the rocks that gird its shores, has remained fixed, undaunted, and unmoved, amidst the waves of sedition, the wreck of kingdoms, and the dilapidations of states:- repelling, at one time, the wild fury of demagogues; at another stemming and stopping the proud torrent of insensate ambition. Yes, favoured by the signal protection of Heaven, England has stood up, and been firm; she has waved her standard on high; she has called to nations from far; and her voice has been heard and answered from the ends of the earth. Around her reconciling cross, have been seen rallying the honourable, the loyal, the pious, and the brave: beneath her protecting shield have been received the royal exiles, the devoted nobles, the persecuted ministers of differing communions:- they have sought and found there a secure asylum, and

have been supported by her liberal hand. Thus his England aspired to, and attained the high distinction of being, the firm opponent to tyranny, the happy reconciler of nations, the glorious restorer of liberty and peace to a suffering world’.

The Rev. Knapp was an intellectual in tune with the ruling philosophy of his age. Are there still historians today turning as blind an eye as he to general conditions around them? Others were not so blind. William Blake was not impressed in 1804 by ‘these dark Satanic Mills’. William Cobbett was so critical that he had to seek sanctuary in America in 1794 and again in 1817.

Many modern historians agree that real wages declined during the Napoleonic wars and afterwards. Bread riots occurred frequently around 1800, industry was stagnant, unemployment high and food prices soared. The conditions of the majority of workers was bad in 1790, it remained bad in 1830, this is E.P. Thompson’s view (1). And of the state of this country at the end of the Napoleonic wars E.J. Hobsbawm writes (2) ‘At no other period in modern British history have the common people been so persistently, profoundly, and often desperately dissatisfied. At no other period since the seventeenth century can we speak of large masses of them as revolutionary’.

The Rev. Knapp’s history may not be to our taste today, but many times in this book we see him facing and grappling in public with the problems of belief versus practice in the conduct of men and states. Individuals reactions to events as they perceived them were probably always as diverse as our reactions are today. And still today we readily deduce beliefs from actions and vice versa, we project these back to past ages and make a complete picture from a few fragments. In doing this we may miss out the similarity of the past to the present.

(1) The Making of the English Working Class – Pelican 1968

(2) Industry and Empire – Pelican Economic History of Britain Vol 3 – 1969