



Chair's Report *Peter Wade-Martins*

Heritage Open Days will soon be upon us

This year the museum will be taking part in Heritage Open Days alongside many other attractions in Dereham and across the county. On the Fridays and Saturdays in that period, that is 8-9 and 15-16 September, entries will all be free. Opening hours are Fridays 10.00 to 1.00 and Saturdays 10.00 to 4.00. Bring the family and see some of our new displays. This year the reception room has a new look, where we have made a real attempt to create a cottage atmosphere. This gives you an ideal opportunity to explain to children what life was like before the days of washing machines and electric cookers! If you haven't yet seen the wooden Hobbies camera we purchased last year now is your chance.



Coming to our Dinner? Book before 22 September - see page 6

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Group visits

If the idea of a guided tour appeals to your organisation, we have comprehensive arrangements in place and Hilary Williams is the person to contact at hilary.williams@talk21.com. For groups of more than 10, we would divide the party in two and, in consultation with Rev Paul Cubitt, arrange for some of the party to see the church and then change over. For more details, please visit www.derehamheritagetrust.org.uk/museum/group-visits/. (See also the next article.)

A health check

We are far enough through the season now to assess how well we are doing at the moment.

Our new website had 339 views during July compared with 298 in June, so that is good.

On museum visits, numbers are worryingly down, which we do not really understand. Last year up to 5 August there were 237 visits. This year there have been 164 over the same period. All suggestions welcome.

At our monthly lectures numbers have been consistently higher than previously: 32 in May, 24 in June, 40 in July and 32 in August. That may be because of a combination of good speakers, advertising on our Facebook page and excellent posters being designed for each meeting by Katie Goodman.

Community toilets scheme

We have been asking Dereham Town Council what has happened to the proposal to set up a Community Toilets Scheme whereby some shops and business would be open for the public to use their facilities. A scheme was put together two years ago by aboutDereham and submitted to the Town Council. The scheme was approved in principle, money was put in the budget but since then the Council has been silent on the subject. When visitors to the

museum ask, we suggest the Romany Rye pub in Church Street, which is a bit of a liberty but the pub doesn't seem to object. The reputation of the town toilets in the alleyway in Barwell Court off the Market Place is not good. It is surely time that we had an open debate in the town about the matter. If you have a view, why not write to your town councillor?

Stop press! We have bought Sir John Fenn's seal, used by him when he was High Sheriff of Norfolk in 1791/2. More details next time.



Group Visits to the Museum *Jane Heyburn and Hilary Williams*

We have been fortunate to welcome several special visits to our museum.



In May an enthusiastic group of 23 girls from the Mattishall Brownie Group were welcomed to Bishop Bonner's Cottage Museum as part of their Collection Badge. Accompanied by Brown Owl they were introduced to the Museum by Robena who explained the history of the building, both inside and out, and the people who had lived there in times past.

Having divided into smaller groups they set about exploring each room, its contents and displays completing the picture quiz as they did so. The Toy Shop and Kitchen room proved the most popular.

Following the visit the group sent lovely handcrafted thank you cards which were much appreciated by both of us.

This was followed in June by a group visiting from Norwich Community History Group. They were so interested and contributed to discussions. Reverend Paul Cubitt and two welcomers from the congregation of St Nicholas' Church hosted a visit by half of the group whilst the other half enjoyed the museum, with a changeover half way through. Men's Shed visitors came the next day for a complimentary visit to repay them for the work which they did in preparing extra shelving for the museum.

Year 1 pupils from Scarning Primary School came to learn about the lives of the people who lived in the cottages and the building. 60 pupils passed through the door! They were lively, interested and well behaved. We hope to welcome them again next year.

We were pleased to welcome the Meet Watton group in August, when we were able to share visits to the museum and the Church. We greatly appreciate the willing cooperation of St Nicholas' Church in helping to make Dereham a welcoming town.

Thank you to the team and other volunteers who offer their invaluable help. Our visits team consists of Jane Heyburn, Katie Goodman, Liz Walker and Hilary Williams. Catherine Hawkins has the necessary role of coordinating volunteers.

John Frere (1740-1807) - The Antiquary Who Changed Our Understanding of History *Robena Brown*

Currently on display in Bishop Bonner's Cottage Museum is a well-researched, interesting exhibition of the life and times of Sir John Fenn (1739-1794) and his wife Lady Ellenor Fenn (nee Frere, 1743-1813), both of whom left notable legacies of social improvement within their beloved home town of East Dereham. One of the many display panels from our museum exhibition shows below that Sir John 'changed our understanding of history' achieved through many years of painstaking work on the transcription, interpretation and, eventually, the publication of the private letters of many centuries of the Paston family of Norfolk, which he presented personally to King George III in London in 1787.



Portrait of Sir John Fenn, by Henry Walton 1775 © B.Frere

Exhibition panel currently on display in Bishop Bonner's Cottage Museum

SIR JOHN FENN

◆ 1739 - 1794

John Fenn was a most extraordinary figure, not just in Dereham but in the history of modern times. Yet he very rarely receives much credit for his work, even in Norfolk, his birthplace. He changed our understanding of history and how it is studied.

He realised the significance of the Paston Letters, the earliest and largest surviving letter collection in the world, providing first-hand testimonies of life in the Middle Ages, a social voice from a family that would otherwise have been lost, if it were not for Fenn and his work. He made the letters easy for a modern audience to read whilst also telling the story of the Paston family in Norfolk.

Fenn achieved all of this as well as having a busy life as a Commissioner of Land Tax, magistrate, Deputy Lieutenant and later High Sheriff of Norfolk. He and his wife Ellenor also both worked to improve the lives of the poor in the parish.

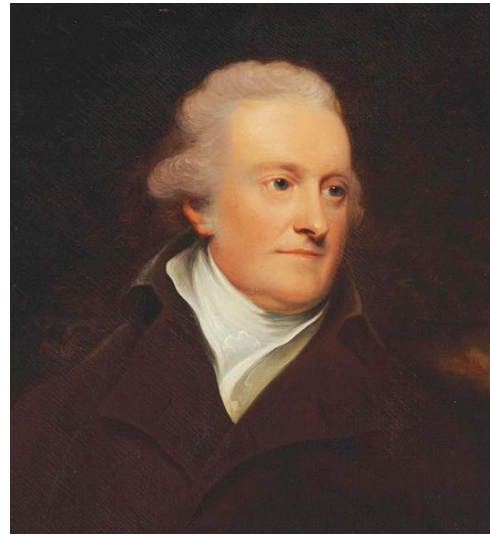
Another remarkable character of the period was Fenn's great friend and brother-in-law, the antiquary John Frere, whose most notable discovery was made after Fenn's death of 1794; however, John Frere did not receive the credit he deserved for another 60 years, long after his own death.

Educated at Scarning School and later Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge, both men were dedicated antiquarians with a close family bond after leaving university with a shared great interest in history.

Born at Roydon Hall near Diss, John Frere was a wealthy landowner essentially leading the life of a country squire with the leisure and means to explore his historical interests. From 1771 he was an active member of the Royal Society of Antiquaries but it was in the 1790s that he made the remarkable discovery that 60 years later reverberated through society creating immense controversy.

Only six miles from John Frere's Norfolk home lies the village of Hoxne in Suffolk and it was here that he was made aware of a large cache of flint tools lying alongside the fossilised

bones of long-extinct animals, suggesting a previously unthinkable, and unknown, coexistence, which did not sit well with contemporary religious beliefs.



John Frere FRS, FAS (1740-1807)

In a letter dated June 1797 to the Society of Antiquaries John laid his findings before his fellows describing the many items he had examined and accurately assessing their age and significance:

'They are, I think, evidently weapons of war, fabricated and used by a people who had not the use of metals. They lay in great numbers at the depth of about twelve feet, in a stratified soil, which was dug into for the purpose of raising clay for bricks.'



One of John Frere's Hoxne Handaxes c400,000 BCE
© The Trustees of the British Museum

'In the same stratum are frequently found small fragments of wood, very perfect when first dug up, but which soon decompose on being exposed to the air; and in the stratum of sand, were found some extraordinary bones, particularly of a jaw-bone of enormous size, of some unknown animal, with the teeth remaining in it. I was very eager to obtain a sight of this; and finding it had been carried to a neighbouring gentleman, I inquired of him, but learned that he had presented it, together with a huge thigh-bone, found in the same place, to Sir Ashton Lever, and it therefore is probably now in Parkinson's Museum.'

The situation in which these weapons were found may tempt us to refer them to a very remote period indeed; even beyond that of the present world; but, whatever our conjectures on that head may be, it will be difficult to account for the stratum in which they lie being covered with another stratum, which, on that supposition, may be conjectured to have been once the bottom, or at least the shore, of the sea.'

'The manner in which they lie would lead to the persuasion that it was a place of their manufacture and not of their accidental deposit; and the numbers of them were so great that the man who carried on the brickwork told me that before he was aware of their being objects of curiosity, he had emptied baskets full of them into the ruts of the adjoining road.'

'It may be conjectured that the different strata were formed by inundations happening at distant periods, and bringing down in succession the different materials of which they consist; to which I can only say that the ground in question does not lie at the foot of any higher ground, but does itself overhang a track of boggy earth, which extends under the

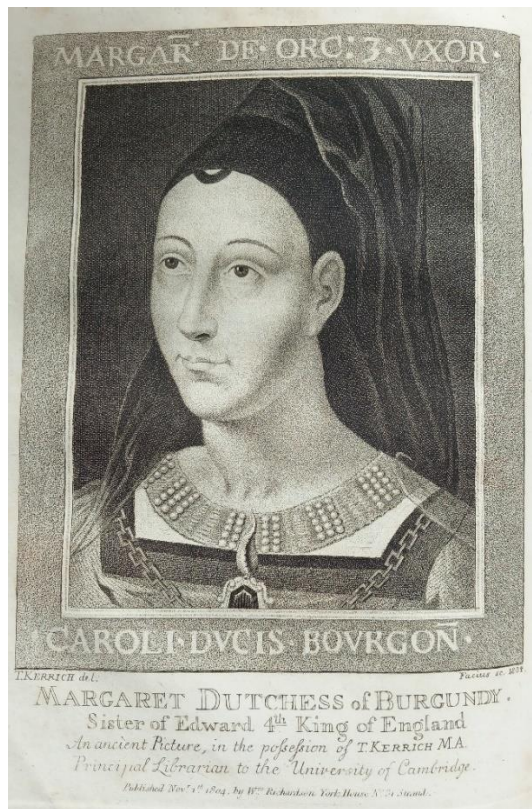
fourth stratum; so that it should rather seem that torrents had washed away the incumbent strata and left the bogearth bare, than that the bogearth was covered by them, especially as the strata appear to be disposed horizontally, and present their edges to the abrupt termination of the high ground.'

John Frere concluded by asking that should the Secretary of the Society of Antiquaries think that his findings were worthy of the notice of the Society that they would be laid before his fellows. He also gave five handaxes from Hoxne to the Society but it was, however, three years before his submission was printed in 'Archaeologia', the Society's official record.

We must take into account that John Frere's discoveries and conclusions contradicted and challenged the accepted beliefs of the very age of the earth, its people and fauna. Prior to this the world was believed to have been created in 4,004BC. It should be remembered too that Charles Darwin's controversial theories outlining natural selection were not yet formed until he gathered evidence after taking ship on HMS Beagle in 1831, and Mary Anning's first fossils were dug in 1811, all after the death of John Frere in 1807.

John Frere was an extremely brave man to put his critical theories before his learned peers and the religious and scientific communities of the day. It was 60 years later before other archaeologists were able to find similar artefacts that completely supported his conclusions.

It is a pity that John Fenn died in 1794 and never shared his great friend's wonderful discovery and that John Frere died in 1807 before later archaeology proved his theories to be correct. They were both men who gave a great deal to the world of their day - still as important in this century as over 200 years ago.



Margaret, Duchess of Burgundy, and her brother Richard III

The connection between the two men continued even after their deaths. John Frere's son William (1775-1836), had been brought up by his uncle and aunt, John and Ellenor Fenn, in East Dereham as if he had been their own son. Sir John Fenn was appointed High Sheriff of Norwich in 1791 and knew that this appointment would take up so much of his time that he would have to defer the publishing of his fifth volume of Paston letters. When Sir John died in February 1794, William took his uncle's completed manuscript of transcriptions of many

more Paston family letters that had been prepared ready for publication and, as editor, William published them exactly 200 years ago in 1823 in Volume V of the Paston Letters.

When John Fenn died he bequeathed his library to John Frere and the ten volumes of 'Archaeologia' that formed part of his much-valued Dereham library then passed to John Frere, and, finally to us at Dereham Heritage Trust where they are held in our archive after being donated to us by the Paston Footprints project in conjunction with the UEA in 2021.

References:

Royal Society of Antiquaries 'Archaeologia' 1800 p204 'XVIII. Account of Flint Weapons' by John Frere, Esq. F.R.S. and F.A.S.

'Original Letters, Written During the Reigns of Henry VI, Edward IV, Edward V, Richard III and Henry VII' by the Late Sir John Fenn, KT, M.A. and F.A.S.' Vol. V 1823 Edited by William Frere

Annual Dinner - 11 October

As reported previously, we have arranged a dinner for members at the Beeston Ploughshare (a community owned pub - <https://beestonploughshare.com/>; 01328 598995) at 19:00 on Wednesday 11 October. The menu available is shown below. **We need a deposit of £10 per person (paid to DHT) to secure your booking. Bookings and payments are needed by 22 September.** The balance, plus the cost of drinks, coffee and any extras on the night, will be paid directly to the Ploughshare on the night. (Your deposit is returnable only if the booking is cancelled more than 7 days before the meal.) The meal price will be 2 courses for £20 or 3 courses for £25, with drinks, coffee, etc extra.

In summary, what we need is

- names of all people coming and which meals they want (see list below - for example, Jane Bloggs S2, M5, D1)
- a note of any particular dietary requirements
- would you need a lift to get there and back? or could you offer that to another member?

Please supply this information by email to ken-hawkins@tiscali.co.uk (preferred) or by phone to Ken on 07561 813243.

- a deposit of £10 per person *Please make payment by cheque to Dereham Heritage Trust, sent to DHT, 26 Hillfields, Dereham NR19 1UE, or by bank transfer to Dereham Heritage Trust, sort code 20-28-20, account 10179752 with 'Dinner' plus your surname as reference - **please let Ken know the payment has been made.** All bookings and payments will be acknowledged.*

Starters

- S1 Prawn cocktail
- S2 Soup of the day
- S3 Roasted vegetables on fresh focaccia

Mains

- M1 Oven baked chicken breast served with spring onion mash, tenderstem broccoli and chicken gravy
- M2 Willgress of Fransham sausages, mash potato, Yorkshire pudding, steamed veg and gravy
- M3 Beef chilli, smokey rice, sour cream, nachos, guacamole and green leaf salad
- M4 Seabass pan fried with crushed potatoes, steamed veg and a lemon and dill cream sauce
- M5 Sweet potato and red pepper pasta, served in an oregano cream sauce with garlic bread

Desserts

- D1 Sticky toffee pudding, vanilla ice cream
- D2 Triple chocolate brownie, custard
- D3 Cheesecake of the day served with pouring cream
- D4 Carrot Cake with Chantilly cream

Recent talks *Ken Hawkins*

June : **The Roman Town at Caistor St Edmund** *Andy Woodman*

Andy, Vice Chair of Caistor Roman Project presented a talk, standing in for his Chair, Mike Pinner, who was unable to join us.

Caistor Roman Project is a community project, started in 2012: it is now a charity with over 100 members plus students, a main aim of which is making people feel better through involvement, while developing a fully professional approach to the work done. All the work of the Project was conducted by locally trained volunteers, with professional input only where required.

Caistor St Edmund (*Venta Icenorum*) is sited on the River Tas, now one of only 3 greenfield (not built on or developed) Roman regional capitals. It was noted from a 1929 aerial photograph that there seemed to be a Roman camp laid out as a standard provincial town, contained within square walls.



Image from <https://caistorromanproject.org>

The first excavation was in the 1930s, by Donald Atkinson. 70 years later, Will Bowden for Nottingham University found a 7th century Saxon building, sited outside the town walls. It was also established that the town was not developed after Boudica's time, nor was the River Tas suitable for seagoing vessels, but its early development was comparable to other towns. The buildings fell into disuse in the early 3rd century but grew again later that century and into the 4th. The town provided a significant regional focus to the 9th century.

A number of sites have been dug by the Project, all of them in the area outside the town walls but within the wider triple ditches outside. It is in this area that a Saxon settlement has been found.

From 2014 to 2019, the Project dug test pits (and provided training) at Old Hall.

In Wymer Field, the triple ditches were examined, with finds of animal bones chopped up to extract the marrow, all of a similar age. In the inner ditch, a young foal from the early 2nd century was found. A small Christian object was found from an early Saxon workshop, together with red deer antlers. And on the last day of the dig, a 4th century female skeleton was uncovered, to be reburied and left for the future.

In 2017, Old Hall was dug. A Roman pottery kiln was found, but no evidence of iron age occupation. In the area, there were signs of industry.

Temple Field had been investigated before and in 1951 a monumental gateway was discovered, which seemed to be linked to a road emerging diagonally from the town. In 1957, school teacher Sophia Mottram and a group of school students worked there. In 1989, Tony Gregory published the results of his field walking, revealing evidence of occupation earlier than in the town. Before that, in 1985, David Gurney had collated what was known at the time, after which the area was covered over again, grassed and scheduled. On the southern outer wall there was a large two storey building with a tessellated pavement inside. Later work showed this to be two temples, probably built in the 1st and 2nd centuries, the later one extending and partially replacing the earlier one. In the early part, a Trinovantes gold coin was found; there was also multicoloured painted plaster. Andy believed that the evidence indicated this was a special site before the first temple was built. 9 coins were found where the first temple was demolished, one for each emperor from AD57 to 117. Post covid geophysics indicated the extension had an apse; the building had a tessellated floor and high quality painted plaster. There was evidence of feasting and a pipeclay Venus was found, considered to be a 'tourist souvenir'. Iron age pottery was also found, showing pre Roman habitation; there were also signs of occupation outside the walls.

A site (now scheduled) near the Caistor Hall Hotel had been investigated by Surgeon Commander Farman Mann in 1938. There was evidence of bronze making AD40 to 70.

Friston Field to the south was researched in 2022. Trenches contained demolition material, bones and pottery from the 1st and 2nd centuries and an aqueduct made of iron, lined with clay. This work also suggested that the temple could predate the town, with an earlier presence than on other parts of the site. The pottery indicated that people had a good life.

Going back to the start, it was conjectured that a religious focus might be the reason for the town being located there.

July : Blickling: a treasured estate Dr Megan Dennis



The suddenness and completeness with which the scene bursts upon the eye strikes a simultaneous chord rather than a scale of impression: a backwater in time ... a vanished line of Norfolk grandees, the generous vitality of Shakespeare's England, the childhood of Anne Boleyn, and muted by the imprisoned mist of time, faint memories of famous knights, the pomp of Bishops' courts and the last of the Saxon kings passing through water-meadows that gave his manor its name.

Megan opened her talk with this quotation from Christopher Hussey in *Country Life* (1930), as it still captures the impact on visitors today. The site was been known since the Domesday Book (*Bekeling* - water meadow around a stream), owned by Harold Godwinson (he of the battle of Hastings), but then passed by William the Conqueror to the Bishop of Thetford, later transferred to the Bishop of Norwich. Over time, it passed to Sir Nicholas Dagworth (1378) when a moated house was built on the site of the present Hall. Further owners were Sir John Fastolf (the model for Shakespeare's Falstaff) and Geoffrey Boleyn (Anne's great grandfather), reaching Henry Hobart who built the present Jacobean house. It remained in the family's possession until 1940, when the 11th Lord Lothian, Philip Kerr, bequeathed it to the National Trust; it was the first complete country estate to be gifted to the Trust under the Country Houses Act.

The restrictions which arose during the main part of the covid epidemic prompted a period of reflection at Blickling, leading to a decision to focus on the complete estate - the hall and its contents, the formal gardens, the lake and tenanted land. These elements were considered in turn.

The collection A major focus has been the birth at Blickling of Anne Boleyn in 1504. There are various pictures and objects believed to be associated with Anne, though not all stand up to detailed examination. A second famous name connected to Blickling is that of Catherine the Great from Russia: John Hobart, 2nd Earl of Buckinghamshire, was an ambassador at her court and when he left, Catherine (with whom he had developed a "close" relationship) gave him a number of lavish gifts including a large tapestry - to hang it required a wall to be knocked down and the room enlarged. Another major feature is the Long Gallery, where pictures were supplanted by a knowledge based library developed just as knowledge of the world was being recorded.

The building Megan noted that it was easy, but mistaken, to assume that the building was always as it is now and always would stay that way. She showed a fireplace which had been altered over time, and situated in three different places. Just as in houses now, contents are also acquired, changed and disposed of.

The gardens The gardens too have evolved, currently to the 1930s design, though the walled garden is medieval, having been established before the current building.

The estate, parkland and lake are also an intrinsic part of the whole.

Megan's talk then moved on to the people associated with the estate, especially the last owner Philip Kerr, who was eccentric, being teetotal and anti hunting and shooting (though he hosted this activity on the estate). He removed much Victorian material from the house but died young in 1940 when, as a Christian Scientist, he refused medical treatment. In bringing people to the fore, the plan was to present all of their stories - owners yes, but also the often overlooked women, the old and the young, family members and workers. There was also a desire to include the intangible heritage - oral history and stories, performing arts, social practices, workers' skills and craftsmanship.

Megan concluded by noting that there had been a moth problem during the period when the hall was closed through covid; this had been resolved using micro wasps, which laid their eggs in the moth eggs and subsequently ate them. This had now been replaced by an infestation of silverfish ... and so it goes on.

August : Rare and Beautiful Norfolk: The conservation movement in Norfolk - a history *Dr Susanna Wade-Martins*

Susanna's talk opened with a quotation from David Dymond's *The Norfolk Landscape*: in 1841 John Sell Cotman had said that Norfolk was 'rare and beautiful', but Dymond noted that it was less beautiful than in the past but an increasing number of people now cared about its buildings and its landscape.

These changes came in part from an increasingly mobile middle class anxious to see the countryside preserved, often without consulting poor workers. In the 19th century, Norfolk was an exemplar with many different habitats (broads, fens, salt marshes, shingle spits) and a wide range of cultural features (it was prosperous and populous, with rich archaeology - and more medieval churches per area than anywhere else).

Sir Thomas Brown (1605-82) lived in Norwich and wrote about archaeology and natural history and collected birds and eggs. He questioned what happened to birds in winter and developed early ideas of migration rather than hibernation. Sir James Smith (1753-1817) was a botanist contemporaneous with the Swedish Carl Linnaeus (originator of the still used Linnaean Classification system). His work was translated into English by another Norwich botanist, Benjamin Stillingfleet. On Linnaeus's death Smith acquired his collection and books and moved back to Norwich. Dawson Turner (1775-1850) studied seaweeds as well as being a collector of specimens. He indulged in one of the fashionable hobbies of the time 'extra-illustration' or adding pictures to existing publications.

The Norfolk and Norwich Literary Institute was formed in 1822, and the Museum founded in



Illustration from A.H.Patterson *Nature in Eastern Norfolk* 1905

1825, followed by other Societies in the county. These marked a time when the importance of the environment was starting to be realised - not just collecting. Railways were developing, facilitating greater access to sites, a trend accelerated as motor cars arrived on the scene. The restoration of churches was attracting interest from the Victorian clergy. The turn of the 20th century also saw moves to stop collecting and shooting, while legislation was being introduced to protect birds, and protection societies were formed at Breydon, Cley and Blakeney; the RSPB was formed in 1899. A society for

archaeology (The Norfolk and Norwich Archaeological Society) was formed in 1846 and a national congress held in 1888 proposed the recording of antiquities on 6 inch maps, though no evidence of action has been found. The Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists Trust was founded slightly later, in 1869. The National Trust was formed in 1895: Blakeney was an early purchase - the first coastal nature reserve.

In 1913, the Ancient Monuments Act gave the government responsibility for scheduling and several castles in Norfolk were scheduled, though little more then happened until the 1920s. The Norfolk Archaeological Trust was formed in 1923 and the Norfolk Naturalist Trust in 1926, in response to perceived threats from: ploughing of sites; the tension between provision for cars and the natural environment; growth of 'beauty spots' with unconstrained access; planting by the Forestry Commission; the sale of large estates; and the growth of holidaymaking in the Broads. Purchases were made of Binham Priory and Bishop Bonner's Cottages amongst others. This period also saw the introduction of guidebooks to sites.

The Scott Committee in 1941 stated that farming, then considered to be fully developed, was the key to preservation: only a minority thought that farming might be damaging. 1947 saw the formation of National Parks - though The Broads was not included at the time and only joining the National Parks family much later. By the 1980s there was an emerging view that agriculture was not good for the environment. In Norfolk, a major issue was a proposal to drain Halvergate Marshes to provide arable fields, defeated by the Broads Authority. This led to a succession of stewardship schemes, where farmers are paid to provide environmental benefits instead of purely agricultural operations. Rewilding initiatives are the latest projects on this line.

The Story of James Harwood (Part 2)

Beanie Brown, Sue Dewing and Marlene Secker of Shipdham History Group

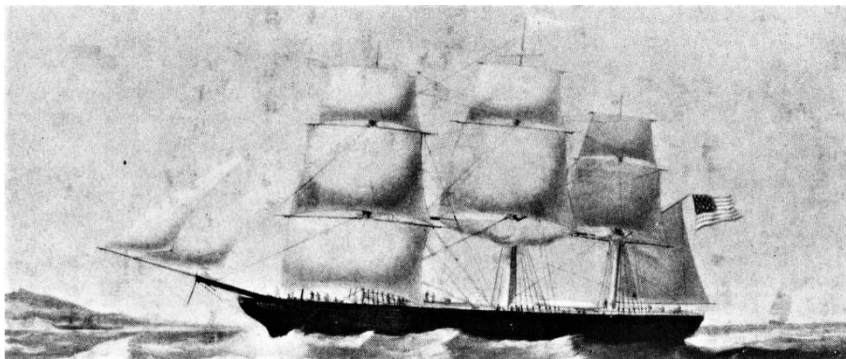
Originally published in Shipdham News - July/August 2022



To recap, James Harwood was persuaded to leave his village of birth by Mormons from the USA who visited the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel in Chapel Street, now demolished, for a better life far away from the poverty and many diseases that prevailed in Shipdham in the 1850s and which had taken the life of his mother Mary who died in 1845 and his sister Anna who died the year before.

We left James, then aged only 16 years, ready to leave England bound for the new Mormon settlement of Salt Lake City which had been founded in 1847. We continue using James' own words from his autobiography written in 1912:

'It was 300 miles to Liverpool, which distance I travelled by railroad, stopping the first night at Peterborough, the next night I reached Liverpool. After being there about a week I took passage in the sailing vessel named Olympus, which sailed in February 1851 for New Orleans.'



Painting of the *Olympus* reaching land in March 1851

'We had a very rough and stormy passage. In one storm lost our masts and some of the rigging. We becalmed near Cuba and lay there for nine days, reaching New Orleans in March 1851, after a passage of two months. We stayed in New Orleans a week and took passage on steamboat for St. Louis, we were two weeks making the trip.'

LIST OF PASSENGERS.						
REPORT AND LIST of the Passengers taken on board the <i>Olympus</i> of Kennelmont						
whereof <i>H. A. Wilson</i> is Master, burthen <i>174 1/2</i> tons and <i>3/4</i> ths of a ton, bound						
from the Port of <i>Liverpool</i> for <i>New Orleans</i>						
NAMES.	Age.	Sex.	Occupation, Trade or Profession.	Country to which they severally belong.	Country of which they intend to become inhabitants.	Remarks relative to any that may have died, or otherwise left the vessel, during the voyage.
<i>William Howell</i>	<i>34</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Minister</i>	<i>England</i>	<i>New Orleans</i>	
<i>Martha</i>	<i>37</i>	<i>F</i>				

'Had the cholera on board. Several died. Thought I should not get through. One night after we were all in bed the steamer stopped at quarantine island and we were all ordered on shore until we were cleaned up and free from the terms of cholera. After a few days a steamer came for us and landed us at St. Louis. We were all put on shore on the wharf. All the emigrants seemed to have some friend there for them and when all was gone I was left sitting on my baggage knowing no one and no one knowing me.'

Rich	17	83 Tailor
James Harwood	17	84 Grocer
Robt Jarvis	17	85 Laborer

Olympus Passenger List showing James' name, age and occupation as 'Grocer'

'Soon a man came up and asked me if I had anywhere to go and if I had no friends. I told him I had not. He said 'Come and go with me'. I did so; his name was Fred Wright. He took me to his house, I arranged to board with him until I could work. I had a sovereign (\$12.50) left and I paid for one week board with him until I could get work. I concluded to rest and look around during the week for work, having partly learned the harness trade, I concluded to try and get work in that line.

'The first shop I went in and asked for work the boss asked what I could do? I told him how long I had worked at the trade so he concluded to hire me to work at one dollar a week and board. That looked all right to me and I went to work for him. During the summer the cholera was very bad. People were dying all around. I got frightened and concluded to leave the city and get work.

'I went with some others. The water was very high that year and all the bottoms were covered with water. The farms were flooded and we had to wade a great deal of the way. We found a place to work clearing a farm, burning brush etc. We had a rough time of it. I was unused to such work. The food was principally corn bread, bacon and molasses. Our beds were laid on branches spread on the ground and the water would run in streams over our beds. I stayed until I thought the cholera was over and went back to the city. On entering it the first thing I met was a wagon load of coffins. I did not ask if they had anyone in them but was quite alarmed, but seeing I had come back I would keep on, which I did and went to work in the shop.

'The Mormons had meetings on Sunday in a Concert Hall which I attended regular and also meetings during the week. I should have said that when I left home I intended going through to Salt Lake the same year by getting a job of driving teams for someone, but when we got to St. Louis the last company had left so I would have to stay until next season. I was quite homesick sometimes, but as a rule got along pretty well. The Elders and Missionaries at all times, up to this time, decided that Mormons did not believe or practice polygamy and being a Mormon myself, of course, I believed them. The people of St. Louis said they did practice it and it was for that and other unlawful things they were driven out of Nauvoo but I did not believe them.

'About this time my religion was put to the test. During that fall John Taylor and A. O. Smoot arrived at St. Louis on the way to Europe and they preached in the Hall on polygamy and declared that it was true and was practiced and they were on their way to England to preach and proclaim that doctrine. That upset my faith considerable. After it had been denied and contradicted by the Mormons so much I had made up my mind to see Salt Lake and satisfy myself, but I never was as strong in the faith afterwards. They were committing unlawful things and lying by saying they did not do so.'

James sustained a painful foot injury from oxen in harness when the animals tried unsuccessfully to escape. He was knocked unconscious and painfully lame for some time afterwards.

'A few nights after when forming camp and putting out the guard a company of emigrants passed by and laughed at us for putting on a guard. They went on a little further and camped, turned their cattle loose without a guard. A little time after a band of Indians were seen coming on horseback towards our camp. We marched out to meet the Indians. They kept circling around the camp. When anyone pointed a gun at one of them he would drop on the other side of the horse and ride away in that manner. They saw we were too much for

them. They dashed across the creek to the other camp and stampeded their cattle and followed them off.

'We started out on the old pioneer route following it day by day. Some days were long and tedious before reaching a place suitable for camp. Occasionally we were troubled with roving bands of Indians but they did not molest us very much, we were strong and pretty well armed. One night when we camped on the Platte River the captain got up a kind of scare to make us wake up to the danger we were in. He had a party of men go out at night and attack the guard, pretending they were Indians. When the guard was fired on they raised the alarm that we were attacked by Indians. He thought we did well and was satisfied with the test.'

James recalled that very large herds of many thousands of buffalo crossed their path and scared their cattle causing stampedes and many of the teamsters were injured. He said that it was hard work to get out of the way but that it was exciting to witness. They were never short of fresh meat for a young buffalo would be killed when food was needed but they were not allowed to kill buffalo for sport.



Bison (then called buffalo) in enormous herds on the plains in the 1800s

'Thousands in number would cross the road and the noise made was like the roaring of distant thunder. After we got through the buffalo country, left the plains and got into the mountains our cattle became less excitable and did not need so much watching. We always rested on Sundays unless our camping ground was unfavourable when we would move on.

'In the mountains the passes and canyons were narrow and large camps could not be easily made. There were springs and streams and plenty of wood and brush grass for the cattle to eat. On the plains it was sometimes quite difficult to get something to burn. Our journey through the Rocky Mountains was made without any serious accident. The roads were very steep and rocky in some places and wagons had to be let down over the steep ledges with ropes and chains.

'After travelling 1,500 miles, taking about six months, we made camp on the beach in sight of Salt Lake City on the 6th of September. It was a beautiful sight. At the time the city was quite small. The houses were all small adobe buildings standing on lots of half acre under cultivation with different kinds of garden vegetables. In the distance south of the city were grain fields, to the west the Great Salt Lake.

'The next morning we were aroused from our sleep by the distant sounds of roosters crowing, the first we heard since crossing the Missouri River. The feeling we experienced then was a happy one, as we felt that our journey was over. We had reached the promised land and no Israelite felt no greater than we felt after the hardships of our journey.



A typical waggon train of the period

'Weary and footsore, having walked most of the way, it was thought a sin to add extra weight our oxen had to draw, we looked upon them as our salvation. No one can realise what we passed through or can form any idea of our feelings after making the journey and entering Salt Lake City and again be amongst civilization.'

'The people were very good to us, giving us vegetables etc. We camped in the city for a week and gave our cattle a good rest. After which time we hitched up again and started south intending to go until we came to a place that suited us.'

Having shared James' story so far with you we now find him ready to move on until he reached Lehi in Utah where he made his home, became a saddler and successful farmer, married and raised a family. An incredible journey for a young Shipdham lad who was brave enough to undertake such a journey into the unknown for his faith and a better life.



The Founding of Salt Lake City in 1847

Wenham Pocket-watch - The one that got away

As an accredited museum one of our aims is to improve and extend our collection when possible. Sometimes we are very lucky, such as in the case of the beautiful historic eighteenth-century tipstave unique to East Dereham which we added to the collection last

year but sometimes, for a number of reasons, we are unable to secure the item we have identified as important to the heritage of the town.

In June, we inspected the pocket-watch shown below which came up for sale by local auction in Aylsham together with a number of very interesting contemporary watchpapers. It had been made in 1851 by David Wenham, one of the family of watch and clockmakers that lived and worked in Dereham in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Watchpapers cut from plain or printed paper were used as liners in pocket watch cases to create a tighter seal. The papers within the Wenham case were particularly interesting as can be seen in the photograph. This practice began in the eighteenth century and was popular until the early twentieth century when wristwatches became more practical and fashionable.



David Wenham 1851 pocketwatch made in East Dereham

WENHAM David EAST DEREHAM Osborne 1782-1851. Presumably David, son of John and Martha Wenham, born 6 Jan. 1782, bapt. 11 Jan. 1782 at Dereham. Market Place 1830 (P), 1836-46 (W&K), 1851 (S). On Parliamentary Register 1835-7 but did not vote. Longcase clock reported. Noel-Hill recorded a watch in Rochdale Museum HM 1819. Silver pair case verge watch No.30695 HM 1841 sold Sotheby's, Oct. 1975.

'Norfolk & Norwich Clocks and Clockmakers' edited by Clifford & Yvonne Bird

Dereham Heritage Trust attempted to buy the watch for the town museum, however, we were unsuccessful. Nevertheless, photographs were taken of the watch for our records. Should another become available we will do our best to secure it for Dereham.

Chrome Flex from Brent Scholes

Norfolk Libraries have re-purposed some laptops so library card holders can borrow them free of charge to access the internet. The laptops are Google Chromebooks with Chrome Flex operating system installed. They do not have Windows, nor are any applications installed, other than a web browser. Some applications can be accessed from the internet, but any work created (e.g., in Microsoft Word) must be saved to a memory stick or similar, as it is not saved anywhere else. A "MiFi" wireless router that acts as a mobile Wi-Fi hotspot is plugged into a USB socket of the laptop. The County Council pays for the MiFi running costs. Of course, many venues have Wi-Fi, but some do not.

I've tried this out successfully at Dereham Trinity Methodist Church Hall, including showing a film from East Anglian Film Archive through a connected digital projector. I connected the projector via my DisplayPort to HDMI adaptor. Chromebooks don't have an HDMI socket, but a DisplayPort socket. They do have a VGA socket.

The laptop and MiFi adaptor were borrowed from Dereham Library, which have two for loan at present, as part of the pilot of the project.

I thought that groups might show films or host Zoom speakers, for example. Testing beforehand would be essential. The loan period is two weeks, but renewal in the usual way for books may be done. Only personal holders of library tickets may borrow these, not Group library tickets, so the individual is responsible.

Norfolk Libraries have just released them at all libraries in Norfolk this week. Just go into the library to request a loan.

History lectures by month at Gresham College 2023-24

Gresham College has again sent us details and an invitation to attend their lectures. They are all ticketed but free! The lecture series are hybrid as you can watch online, in person or on replay at a later date. Sign up to watch through the links below.

September 2023

Wed 20, 6pm, [Ancient Goddesses of Sex and War](#), Professor Ronald Hutton; Central London Venue TBC/ Online/ Watch Later gres.hm/ancient-goddesses

October 2023

Tue 3, 6pm, [Writing after Windrush](#), Dr Malachi McIntosh; Gresham College, Barnard's Inn Hall, Holborn/ Online/ Watch Later gres.hm/writers-windrush

Thu 5, 6pm, Renaissance, Professor Kate Dossett; Gresham College, Barnard's Inn Hall, Holborn/ Online/ Watch Later gres.hm/women-harlem

Thu 12, 6pm, Africa, Professor Madhu Krishnan; Gresham College, Barnard's Inn Hall, Holborn/ Online/ Watch Later gres.hm/literary-africa

November 2023

Tue 7, 6pm, [Pilgrimages, Pandemics and the Past](#), Tom Holland; Gresham College Barnard's Inn Hall Holborn/ Online/ Watch Late gres.hm/pilgrimages-holland

Wed 8, 6pm, [Were There Pagan Goddesses in Christian Europe?](#), Professor Ronald Hutton; central London Venue tbc / Online/ Watch Later gres.hm/pagan-goddesses

Wed 22, 6pm, [Antisemitic Conspiracy Theories: Past, Present and Future?](#) Professor Richard Evans, Gresham College, Barnard's Inn Hall, Holborn/ Online/ Watch Later gres.hm/antisemitic-conspiracy

February 2024

Wed 14, 6pm, [Dragons: A History](#), Professor Ronald Hutton; central London Venue tbc / Online/ Watch Later gres.hm/dragons

March 2024

Wed 6, 6pm, [Ritual Nudity in History and Religion](#), Professor Ronald Hutton; central London Venue tbc / Online/ Watch Later gres.hm/ritual-nudity

April 2024

Wed 24, 6pm, [The Western Magical Tradition](#), Professor Ronald Hutton; central London Venue tbc / Online/ Watch Later gres.hm/western-magic

June 2024

Wed 5, 6pm, [Witch-Hunting in European and World History](#), Professor Ronald Hutton; central London Venue tbc / Online/ Watch Later gres.hm/witches-europe

Committee roles

In recent times, the work of DHT seems to have got a bit more complicated (and sometimes intense), so the opportunity has been taken to make sure we are clear between ourselves as to which Committee member is taking the lead on which activities. In case you have any queries, we thought it would be useful if our members also had this information.

- Robena Brown - Cataloguing of the collection, responding to archive enquiries, Trinity Hall arrangements for talks
- Katie Goodman - Website, Facebook, aboutDereham website, posters, assisting with cataloguing
- Catherine Hawkins - Volunteers and rotas for the Museum
- Ken Hawkins - Treasurer, newsletter, membership
- Jane Heyburn - Museum displays, supported by others
- Sue Rockley - Secretary, speakers for talks
- Peter Wade-Martins - Chair, property matters and publicity
- Hilary Williams - group visits and links with St Nicholas' Church, assisting with Museum displays

Membership matters

If you are not currently a member, can we invite you to consider joining? From September each year, we offer half price membership for the remainder of the subscription year (ie to the end of March), while new joiners paying full rate from January will have membership to 1 April in the following year. The membership form is at <https://derehamheritagetrust.org.uk/membership/> or you can request a copy from Ken Hawkins. Then either scan and email it to ken-hawkins@tiscali.co.uk or post your completed form with payment.

The Norfolk Record Society is holding its Autumn Lecture online via Zoom on Thursday 14 September 2023 starting at 7pm: *John Cruso of Norwich: accomplished networker or social aspirer?*, by Professor Christopher Joby, Research Associate at SOAS, University of London.

John Cruso of Norwich (1593-after 1650) was a man of many parts. He was a Dutch and English poet, translator, military author, successful merchant and hosier, Dutch church elder and militia captain. From the paratexts of his published works, he also appears to have been an accomplished networker, with an extensive social and literary network. This presentation will examine how well he really knew the men to whom he dedicated his works and reflect on whether, in some cases at least, we need to talk in terms of idealized patrons. Furthermore, it will analyse what Cruso's network tells us about social and literary networks and networking in general in early modern Norwich.

For more information, and to access the booking form, please visit: [Autumn Lecture - Norfolk Record Society](#). The lecture will be recorded and made available on the NRS website.

DHT programme of events 2023

We have a full programme of speakers and events planned through the year, though it remains open to change. For the full programme, please see the back page.

Next issue

We plan to produce a Newsletter every quarter, in March, June, September and December; the press date for the next issue is **15 November**. If you have material for this issue, please send it to Ken Hawkins. And please don't hesitate to get in touch with us if you have any other comments of any sort. In between Newsletters, our **new** website <https://derehamheritagetrust.org.uk> is updated regularly so please have a look now and again.

Please keep this page as your reminder of our 2023-4 programme

Planned meeting dates continue to be the second Wednesday of each month, at Trinity Methodist Church, 31 Trinity Close, Dereham NR19 2EP (off Theatre Street), starting at 19:30, and ending with light refreshments before close at 21:00. Admission to talks is £1 for members of Dereham Heritage Trust and £3 for non members. Visitors are always welcome, with the fee payable on the door, refreshments included.

13 September

Christopher Saxton and the Making of the Image of England, c.1570-1620

Dr Victor Morgan

11 October

Dinner

Beeston Ploughshare - booking essential

8 November

For a Time Lost: Researching the Gressenhall Church Band

Bridget Yates

13 December

Local shops of yesteryear

Robena Brown

10 January 2024

What the Normans did to and for Norwich

Adrian O'dell

14 February

The Widow Kett

(Georgette Vale)

13 March

Annual General Meeting

The following dates are planned for 2024; the programme is being prepared.

10 April, 8 May, 12 June, 10 July, 14 August, 11 September, 9 October, 13 November, 11 December