



Chair's Report *Peter Wade-Martins*

This will be my last report as Chair of the wonderful Dereham Heritage Trust. I will be stepping down as Chairman and as a Trustee in December. We have achieved so much while both Trevor Ogden and I have taken it in turns to be the Chair, and there is plenty we can feel proud of, but there is much more DHT can do for Dereham!

The 2024 museum season

This has been our best season ever, with just over 1,000 visitors to the museum if you include specially arranged events. Real thanks should go to our volunteers, organised by Catherine Hawkins, who have kept the museum open at all advertised times, except for a slip-up on one session. Excluding special visits, numbers have risen as follows:

2018	276
2019	416
2022	454
2023	619
2024	942

The Picturing Peace exhibition in the middle room, inspired by the art of the fisherman John Craske, with the themes "Where do you go when you need to escape?" and "What brings you peace?" was very moving. I found a different picture to focus on each time. Well done Katie Goodman.

Jane Heyburn organised displays featuring shops and business in the town during the nineteenth century. Upstairs in the North room the display was arranged as it may have looked while occupied by Ann Coe, who died in 1911. In the reception room there was a box of mystery items for people, especially children, to handle and identify. That was fun.

Assembly Rooms opened for HODs

In addition, we opened the ballroom in the Assembly Rooms for the first time during Heritage Open Days with the permission of the Town Council and we linked that to a new guidebook/history of the Assembly Rooms. Some visitors remembered that the last time they were there was when they had been summoned to appear before magistrates when the ballroom was the courtroom!

Monthly lectures

Our monthly talks have become increasingly popular, with numbers rising from 31 in January 2019 to 46 in September 2024. Brilliant posters and Facebook advertising have both made a real difference. Beanie's bookstall is becoming very popular and that provides more opportunities for us to meet and chat over tea afterwards.

Dating BBC

As reported elsewhere in the Newsletter, for the first time we have scientific dating evidence for the three cottages. Using a combination of dendro-dating tree rings and an analysis of oxygen isotopes in the individual rings, we can now say that the south cottage with the jetty in the front wall is the oldest dating from between 1575 and 1600, while the strengthening of the roof timbers in the north cottage (probably when the brick and flint gable wall was added) dates to between 1680 and 1705. The middle cottage was a later fill-in. So, the three cottages were built over a period of at least a hundred years.

The Archive Centre

While we remain desperately short of space for the archive, with large heavier items still stored in my workshop at home (an entirely unsatisfactory arrangement), at least for documents and smaller items that situation is now better with Rev Paul Cubitt offering us the

use of an attic room in Church House, for which we are enormously grateful and pay a small rent.

A Heritage Centre for Dereham?

The committee's visits to the museums in all the surrounding market towns have shown us that it would be extremely difficult to set up a new centre, which Dereham needs and deserves, without the active involvement of the Town Council. The meeting we held in the Golf Club in February was an overwhelming success with total support for the idea of a centre and since then a petition has grown and grown. We can only reiterate that BBC is a wonderful building, but it hardly meets museum storage standards and there are no toilets or teaching space and indeed enough display space to tell Dereham's great story. We must persevere!

I wish DHT a long and successful future.

Chanter's Jigge

We hope that you will want to join our pre Christmas event on 11 December, when Chanter's Jigge will provide entertainment and we will arrange seasonal refreshments. This is a more complex event than most of our talks, so we ask for your co-operation - **please note we can't admit people to the Hall until 19:15**. On the evening, admission is £5 for everyone, members and non members alike. We're confident it will be worth every penny!

In order to make sure there is room - and refreshments - for everyone, we ask you to book your place for this event. Please email ken-hawkins@tiscali.co.uk or call/message 07561 813243 to say how many places you want. After 4 December, we are opening bookings to non members, so please act now! We will do our best but cannot guarantee admittance to anyone who hasn't booked.



Bishop Bonner's Cottages - Artist Showcase

On Saturday 14 December, the doors of Bishop Bonner's Cottages will be opening for something a little different. For one day only, the museum will be playing host to its first Artist Showcase, with local artist Clare Welfare.

An extremely gifted artist, this special showcase is the culmination of Clare's MA in Fine Art and will be the first time Clare has exhibited her artwork in Dereham. Exploring ideas surrounding the nature of rural folklore and the experience of telling and listening to folk tales, the event's centrepiece will be the final piece Clare produced for her degree, 'A Sainly Tale' - a beautifully illustrated digital animation featuring stories of Saint Withburga in Dereham. The perfect temporary addition to our cottages on St Withburga Lane!

We are extremely proud to be presenting Clare's wonderful talent to the community; please come along and show your support.



The poster features a light blue background with a vertical strip of colorful, abstract brushstrokes on the right side. At the top left is a small illustration of a cottage with a chimney. Text on the poster includes: 'Dereham Heritage Trust & Bishop Bonner's Cottage Museum', 'Promoting Dereham's History & Heritage', 'Artist Showcase: A Sainly Tale with Clare Welfare', 'Saturday 14th December 10AM - 1PM', 'Bishop Bonner's Cottages St. Withburga Lane, Dereham', and 'FREE ENTRY Donations welcome'. Decorative pink leafy branches are placed above and below the main text.

Saturday 14 December, 10am to 1pm at Bishop Bonner's Cottage Museum.

Free Entry (donations welcome). Please note that the Museum has no heating - dress warmly!



Trevor Ogden took this photo 10 years ago

The date of Bishop Bonner's Cottages *Peter Wade-Martins*

For as long as anyone can remember people have tried to guess how old our row of three cottages at the bottom end of Church Street really is. They were part of a longer row of cottages called Paternoster Row on the west side of Withburga Lane, but the rest were demolished in slum clearance in the 1930s. It was a miracle that these cottages were not pulled down too, but no doubt the remarkable eighteenth-century lime plaster parquetry decoration on the front wall saved them and has also saved them from road widening!

When we produced the guidebook to the cottages in 2023 we believed that the south cottage would prove to be the oldest, based on the carving of the mantle beam stops over the fireplace and the jetty in the front wall. The more elaborate stops over the north fireplace suggested that was a bit later.

The appliance of science

Now we have the results of scientific dating which rather brings the debate to a close.

Tree-ring dating or dendrochronology First of all, we tried standard tree-ring dating and we brought in the Nottingham Tree-ring Dating Laboratory who drilled out two cores, one from a roof truss in the north cottage and one from the mantle beam over the fireplace in the south cottage. Other beams were examined but did not have enough rings to produce a long enough ring sequence to produce a result.

Tree ring dating is where you examine the sequence of ring thicknesses, which vary from year to year according to the prevailing weather of each year. A warm wet summer produces wide rings and a cold dry summer produces narrow ones. But your core sample has to be a match with a known and dated sequence, and that is not so easy, for some reason in East Anglia. Sadly, with neither sample could we get a match.

Isotopic dendrochronology The samples then went to another laboratory in Swansea for isotope dendrochronology, which measures in a mass spectrometer the level of an oxygen isotope in each tree ring and compares these readings with a master oxygen isotope chronology for Central England.

The cost, by the way, was £950 per sample (£200 for the initial tree-ring dating and £750 for the isotope analysis). We asked the Town Council for some help with this, as it is their building, but they were not willing to do so. So, we dipped into our reserves and went ahead anyway.

The results

South cottage The mantle beam had 41 measurable rings showing that the sample was likely to have been felled between **AD 1575 and 1600**.

North cottage The roof truss in the north cottage (which may actually have been from roof strengthening and not quite original to that roof) had 55 measurable rings showing that the sample was likely to have been felled between **AD 1680 and 1705**.

So, that gives a time span of about a hundred years from building the south cottage to the strengthening of the roof in the north cottage. That is roughly in line with what we had expected, although the south cottage is a bit earlier. We now have facts and not speculation.

We could do more and test the mantle beam in the north cottage which would give us a date for that fireplace and north gable end. We could also test an original timber in the north cottage, dating from before the gable was built, but we now at least have some facts to go on.

So, is the south cottage the oldest house in Dereham?

Bishop Bonner's Cottage Museum visitors 2024 *Ken Hawkins*

Another Museum opening season is over, once more thanks to all our volunteers (and to Catherine Hawkins who organised the rota and dealt with the many changes to it). Our target was to open for 66 three hour sessions - Friday mornings 10 till 1 and Saturdays 10 till 4, from 3 May to 28 September. In the end, we opened for all but one of those sessions, when last minute issues meant that we could not provide the 2 volunteers necessary to steward the Museum safely. Over the season, we admitted 814 adults and 154 children, generating £1056 admission fees, £129.95 of sales and £226.52 in donations - a total of £1412.47 of valuable income.

But these figures disguise some considerable variations. They include three categories of admission other than our 'standard' entry (£3 for adults, children under 16 free but must be accompanied by an adult).

- Special visits were arranged for Scarning School (2 visits), 1st Dereham Guides, Mrs Craske and a guided tour.
- We also opened on two weekends offering free admission to adults with children: 13 adults and 15 children availed themselves of this offer (as well as 43 paying adults in the same sessions).
- Finally, we opened for two weekends bookending the national Heritage Open Days week*, when we had a staggering 457 adults (free admission in accordance with HODs rules) and 32 children visiting.

Saturday was understandably the day when most of the children visited, with overall visitor numbers greater on Saturday mornings than on Saturday afternoons (though not by much).

In order to understand as much as we can about our visitors, we invite all to complete a short Feedback Form. Some 9% of our visitors filled in this form and the results are instructive, even though they have to be interpreted cautiously given the comparatively low return rate. The following notes are based solely on that small sample of 73 returns.

We were pleased to see that all but one said they enjoyed their visit 'a lot' (with one 'a little' and none 'not much'). As in previous years, it was aspects of the building itself which were cited most often as what interested people (and some 43 of our guides were sold), but other aspects also featured strongly.

Visitors from Dereham were only a small proportion of the total, while we attracted 43 from other parts of Norfolk, 7 from the rest of England, and one each from Wales, France and New Zealand.

Emphasising our belief that we are still something of a well kept secret, only 4 people reported having visited in the last year, 17 had visited before though more than a year ago, while 99 were on their first visit. Visitors were 38 male and 80 female; the vast majority were in the age ranges 41-60 (28) or 61-80 (64) with only 3 over 80 - but we had 5 aged 17-21 and 10 aged 22-40. The 14 children's ages were stated as 6 months, 5, 7, 8[2], 9, 10, 12[4], 14, 15, 16.

We also looked at the 65 entries in the Visitors' book, which of course provided limited and unstructured information. The main useful information was about their home locations and here the pattern was very similar to the results from the Feedback Form; the main difference was that there were more overseas locations reported - Canada [2], France [2], Netherlands, New Zealand, USA.

*An added feature this year was having the Assembly Rooms open for the two HODs Saturdays (see next article). This attracted 264 adults and 22 children in all, with a modest amount of sales made. This brief note completely fails to do justice to the 'buzz' around the two days.

The Assembly Rooms - Heritage Open Days September 2024

Jane Heyburn

Following a 'scouting' visit earlier in the year plans were made to show the room at its best: perfectly proportioned, high, large windows and a musicians' gallery. On the walls there is a coronation portrait of George III and one of Lord Kitchener, looking slightly different from his 'Your Country Needs You' poster. There is also a small picture of the Magistrates Court.

A few weeks were spent researching the artwork and accessing artefacts from the DHT archive which related to the displays we were planning. Mannequins were borrowed and dressed in costumes from a production of *Pride and Prejudice*, so we could give an insight into the regency assemblies held in the room. An assortment of fans from our archive and a pair of pink satin shoes were displayed, as well as a poster explaining 'the language of fans' showing how the placement of a lady's fan indicated her thoughts!

Information boards were placed around the room explaining the historical and social use of the room for visitors to read at their leisure.

A display was put together relating to the use of the room for the Petty Sessions and included the picture of the court, 19th century handcuffs, a metal police whistle and a truncheon dating from George III from our archives, as well as examples from local newspaper reports outlining the crimes that were dealt with.

As the room was also used for political meetings we used Katie Frye as an example. She visited Dereham on many occasions rallying support for Women's Suffrage. This display was supported by posters and photographs.

The room was transformed and on Saturday morning we decorated the outside of the building. When the doors opened visitors climbed the sweeping staircase to a room emptied of its normal furniture and instead entered a room highlighting Dereham's past.



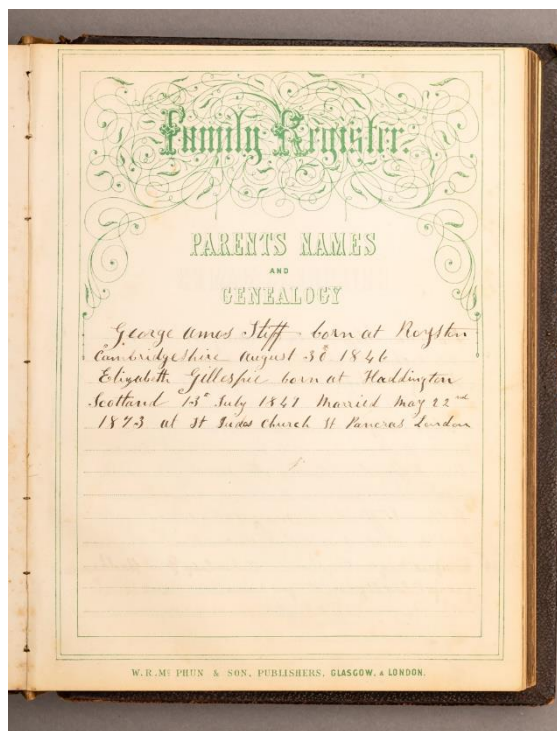
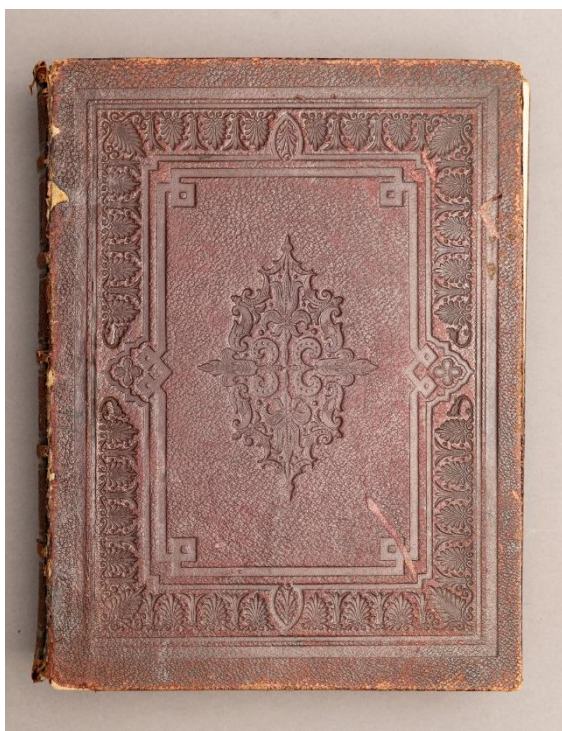
Photos: Katie Goodman

Over the two Saturdays over 300 visitors were recorded. A booklet about the history of the building was produced by Susannah Wade-Martins and we had colouring sheets and stickers for children. Finally, we offered a large, gold picture frame and two glittery crowns which visitors could use to take 'selfies' in a take on the King George III portrait. It was very popular!

It was an enjoyable two days, well worth the effort and one we hope we can repeat next year, although I think more mannequins are needed.

A Family Bible and A Mystery *Sue Day*

There isn't a family historian in the world who would not give their eye teeth for a Family Bible! It was often the practice in Victorian times to give a newly married couple a Bible with special pages inserted for the recording of births, marriages and deaths. I have such a Bible, a massive tome (32.5cm x 25cm x 8cm), that was given to my husband's Scottish great grandmother on the occasion of her marriage in 1873. Names and dates of life events continued to be entered until the 1950s. It has been an invaluable resource for building my husband's family tree. But there has been no evidence of such a Bible on my side of the family ... until recently.



This is my husband's family Bible. I was expecting that the Trollop Bible would be similar, but it turned out to be very different (Photo credit: Ash Day)

It all started with a casual remark at the Family History Federation's Really Useful Family History Show Live in St Ives, Cambridgeshire on 20 April this year. I visited the Mid-Norfolk Family History Society's stall and mentioned that I was descended from the Trollop family of Dereham and Scarning. The gentleman I was speaking to was Glynn Burrows, Chairman of the Society. Serendipity! Not only could Glynn recall the eccentricities of one of my Trollop ancestors, but he also mentioned that he knew of the existence of a Trollop Family Bible. From then the search was on.

It was soon established that the Bible was deposited in the archives of the Dereham Heritage Trust and both Glynn and Robena Brown, the archivist, kindly sent me scans of the accession records and the notes that had been made at the time of the Bible's acquisition by the Dereham Antiquarian Society. While these were immensely helpful, they were also puzzling.

Firstly, the Bible was catalogued with the names Brotton(e)-Trollop(e). I have the Trollop Family Tree with good provenance dated to the early 16th Century, but the Brotton(e) name does not appear anywhere. Secondly, from the details on the accession record the Bible seems small, compared with the one from my husband's family, with dimensions 22cm x 16.5cm x 8.5cm.

Other documents gave a context for how the Bible came to be in the archive and what it contained. A letter from the donor, Miss Joan Starkey, explained she was the last surviving

member of her branch of the Trollop family, and that she wished to deposit the Bible in a public collection. Fortunately the Bible was accepted by the Dereham Antiquarian Society in 1992. At that time it was thought to date from 1684. The rest of the accompanying documentation consisted of handwritten manuscripts and typed copies of the family information that the Bible had contained. Subsequently, for some unknown reason, the original information that had been contained in the Bible was removed. The first pages of the Bible had been torn out and are also missing, so that the surviving text begins in the middle of *Genesis* Chapter 10.

MARY BROTTON - 1684 (D.A.S.Transcript)

George Pound, of Charles & Mary BROTTONE - baptised 18th ? 1684
 John Pound, of Charles BROTTON(E) - born 17th Sept 16..?

John & Mary TROLLOP ? 16..? (? = married?)

Brightmar TROLLOP, son of John & Mary TROLLOP - b. Oct 5th 1717

(b.1729?	John TROLLOP, son of Brightmar & Anne)	(?1739)
(1743	Anne TROLLOP " " ")	
(1745	Brightmar " " ")	
(1748 March 15th	Mary " " ")	in BIBLE
(1758 Nov 4th	Sarah " " ")	
(1761	Mary " " ")	
(1764	Valentine " " ")	19th Jan 1764
(	(or Benjamin?)	Scarning register

(1808 Feb 20th James, son of Valentine & Mary nee HARVEY Scarning register
 (Privately baptised Feb 22nd 1808 register
 (Died 1872 4th June E.Dereham 1851 census

James TROLLOPE, master tailor, E.DEREHAM, married Susan, and lived
 48 Norwich Road, E.Dereham

(b.1838	George, son of James & Susan
(1839	Mary, died 1841
(1841	Valentine, died 1842
(1842	Walter, b. 3rd Aug 1842, see below
(1845	Jabez, Jan 16
(1846	Dinah, Dec 13
(1849	Edwin, Mar 15th, died Nov 16th 1849

Walter TROLLOPE, son of James & Susan, b. E.Dereham, m. Phoebe RILEY,
 moved to Norwich 1900, and moved to Ealing (London) 1910

(Their children:

(	James Francis, died 13.6.1932, not married
(	Jabez Armiger, died 8.8.1947, not married
(	Edith, died ? 1946, not married
(	Gertrude, died 26.8.1952, not married
(	Hilda Ellen, died 2.2.1942, married, see below
(	George, ? in Canada, ? now deceased, ? not married

Hilda Ellen TROLLOPE married ? STARKEY

(Their children:

(	Madeleine, now deceased
(	Joan, now lives in Hanwell, Middlesex

It was Miss Joan STARKEY who last held the Family Bible and presented it
 to the Bishop Bonner's Cottage Museum on 25 April 1992

Typed transcript of the original family tree entries made by the Dereham Antiquarian Society. The references to 'Pound' associated with the Bretton names in the transcript appear to be spurious as it does not appear in the Parish Register entries (Credit: Dereham Heritage Trust)

Using the usual family history websites I was unable to find any reference to a Brotton(e) family in my Trollop tree, but I did find a marriage record for Charles Bretton and Mary Greene, who married in the Church of St Nicholas, Dereham on 31 October 1683. They appear to have had two sons. George Bretton, son of Charles and Mary Bretton, was baptised on 18 February 1684, and was buried on 14 May 1686, at St Nicholas Church Dereham. A second son, John, was baptised on 24 September 1686. Mary Bretton was buried on 7 April 1688 and Charles Bretton on 8 October 1697, both at St Nicholas Church,

Dereham. I have found scans of the original Registers for these entries on the *Find My Past* website. The handwriting is ornate but legible. The names, dates and basic details appear to correspond with the transcripts if one accepts that 'Brotton(e)' is actually Bretton. The handwriting in the scanned Registers could be interpreted as such. What I have not found is any possible intermarriage or other connection between the Bretton family and the Trollop family other than both are located in the Dereham area.

A general search for the name Bretton on the scanned Parish Registers held on *Find My Past* reveals a range of entries for baptisms, marriages and burials in Dereham, Scarning and the surrounding villages, the earliest being the marriage of John Bretton to Alice Michall in Scarning on 21 September 1595. Bretttons continue to appear in the records, including the Electoral Registers into the twentieth century.

It appears that what began as the Bretton family Bible, after the demise of this branch of the Bretton family, came into the ownership, by some unknown means, of the Trollop family, who then maintained it and continued to add information until it was eventually passed to the Dereham Antiquarian Society.

I traced the line of Trollops from whom Miss Joan Starkey was descended. Most of the information transcribed by the Dereham Antiquarian Society seemed to be correct but I was able to add some detail. The Trollop family originated in West Norfolk. To summarise, the generations are as follows:

- 1 John Trollop (1630 - 1690) and Katherine Baker (1638 - 1687)
- 2 John Trollop (1666 - 1723) and Elizabeth Board (1667 - 1735)
- 3 John Trollop (b 1691) and Mary Brightmer (b 1693)

(John was baptised in Wiggshall St Germans in 1691, while Mary's baptism is recorded in the register of All Saints, Necton. Probably it was during this marriage that the family settled in East Dereham and this was when the Bible came into their possession. The next generations are recorded in Scarning before moving further afield. An 'e' was added to the Trollop name in the process.)

- 4 Brightmer Trollop (1717 - 1802) and Anne Farmer (1723 - 1803)
- 5 Valentine Trollope (1764 - 1816) and Mary Harvey (1772 - 1836)
- 6 James Trollope (1808 - 1872) and Susanna Ward (1806 - 1892)
- 7 Walter Trollope (1843 - 1912) and Phoebe Riley (1846 - 1930)

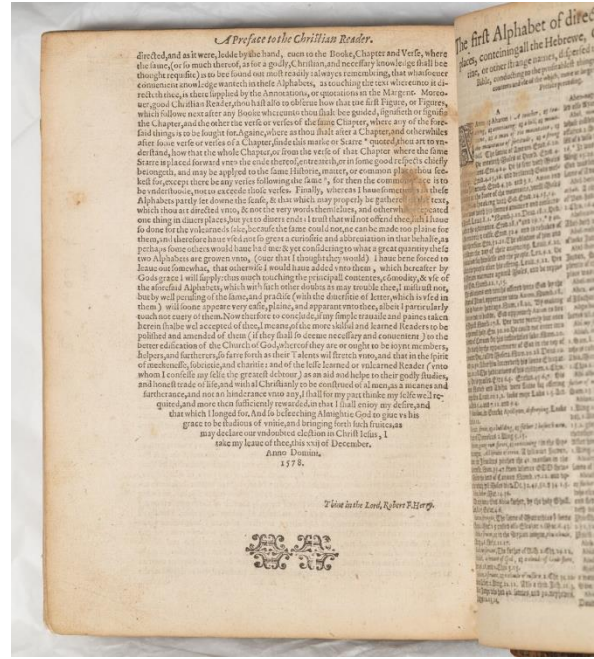
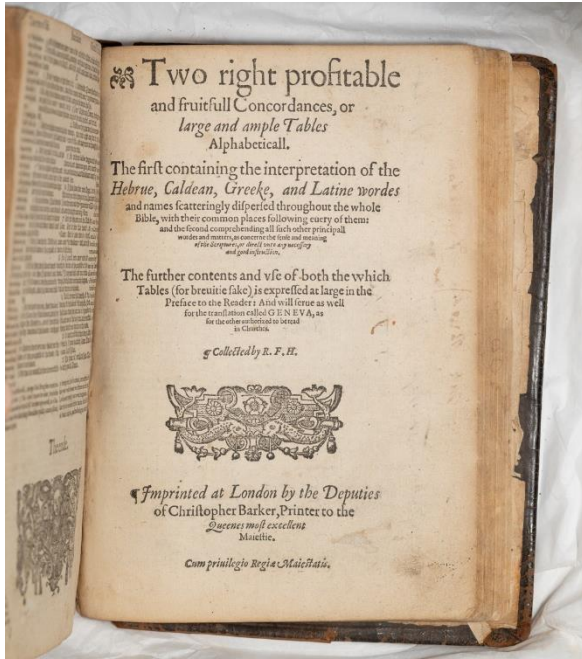
(Walter was the sole survivor into adulthood of James and Susanna's children.)

- 8 Hilda Ellen Trollope (1880 - 1942) and Ernest Hudson Starkey (1886 - 1924)
- 9 Hilda and Ernest had two daughters, neither of whom married, Madelaine Muriel Starkey (1915 - 1991) and Joan Eleanor Starkey (1920 - 1994).

It was Joan who donated the Bible to the archive in 1992.

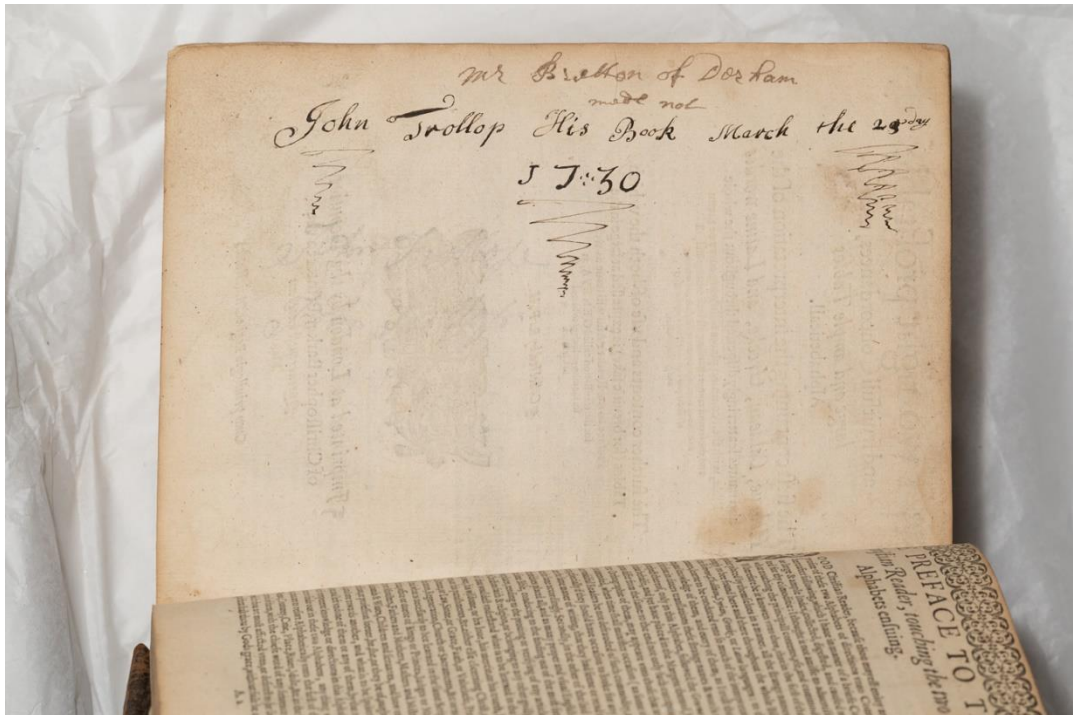
Obviously I was eager to see the Bible, and in September of this year, my son, Ash, and I were able to visit Dereham and to see the Bible for ourselves. We were met by Robena in Bishop Bonner's Cottage Museum. She had brought the Bible from the archives, and she kindly let us handle it and photograph it. Despite its fragile condition we were able to gather a great deal of information from it.

The archive record dated the Bible to 1684 because that was the earliest date recorded on the transcription of the Bretton family tree. Information in the printed Bible suggested that it was probably 100 years older than this and had been printed during the latter years of the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. There are two reasons for believing this to be the case. One is that the Bible contains a Concordance written by Robert F Herry, dated 1578. The other is that the printers of the Bible are 'the Deputies of Christopher Barker, Printer to the Queen's most excellent majesty'. This can only mean Queen Elizabeth I.



Evidence suggests that the Bible was printed during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I (Photo Credit: Ash Day)

That left the question of the connection between the Bretton family, the Trollops, and the Bible. In the centre of the Bible we found a page with the signatures of Mr Bretton of Dereham and John Trollop, the latter dated to 1730. If the Mr Bretton who signed the Bible is Charles Bretton, we know he died in Dereham in 1697. He perhaps wrote the initial Bretton family tree entries. John Trollop seems to have acquired the Bible about 30 years later and presumably he and his successors began to enter their own family details from then on.



The signatures of Mr Bretton of Dereham and John Trollop (Photo Credit: Ash Day)

There is still much that we don't know. It does not appear that the Bible was originally intended to be a repository of family pedigrees, although this is how it came to be used. We do not have the original family tree entries, so cannot check the original detail against the

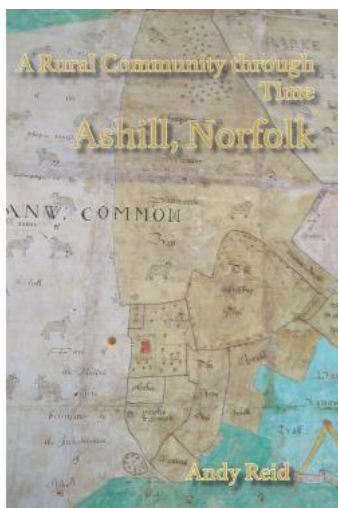
transcripts. If the Bible was printed in the late 1500s, where was it until it came into the possession of Charles Bretton? And what happened to it before John Trollop acquired it? The Bible itself seems to be a rare survival from the Tudor period, when Bibles were only starting to be printed in English rather than Latin, hence the necessity for Robert Herry's Concordance. While the Bible has been invaluable for its information about the Trollop family tree, the book still has many questions to be answered.

With thanks to Robena Brown and the Dereham Heritage Trust, and to Glynn Burrows who gave me the lead.



The author, holding the Bretton-Trollop Family Bible in Bishop Bonner's Cottage Museum, Dereham, with Ash Day who took the photographs (Photo Credit: the author, with the permission of The Dereham Heritage Trust)

A Rural Community through Time: Ashill, Norfolk



This book, by our member Andy Reid and published in October 2024 by Poppyland Publishing, shows how the village of Ashill has evolved over time and introduces the reader to some of the notable people, from all ranks of Ashill society, who, over the centuries, have contributed to that story.

It describes the parts played in Ashill's history by the lords of its manors, its rectors and its landowners but focuses particularly on the lives of the ordinary people of the village: the bondmen, the yeomen and tenant farmers, the craftsmen, the labourers and their wives and widows. It explores changes in the landscape of the parish, the conflicts over common rights and tithes, and the campaigns of agricultural labourers for a better livelihood.

Available from <https://www.poppyland.co.uk/>.

The 1824 Act, and how William Hyde Wollaston contributed to Satellite Navigation *Trevor Ogden*

By the time you read this, 2024 will not have long to run, and unless things have changed between now and then, the nation seems to have ignored the bicentenary of the Weights and Measures Act 1824 (Note 1 - see the end). This Act was very important for trade at the time, and perhaps we in Dereham should remember it, because the famous scientist William Hyde Wollaston, born in Dereham rectory, had a big input into the Act, and the work he did for it still affects us in a surprising way. Here's how.

Everyone needs standards

As soon as people started trading in goods, even textiles or copper ingots, they must have realised the need for fair ways to measure quantities. The Mesopotamian rooms at the British Museum display several ancient standard weights, including the mina shown in Fig 1. The display gives a translation of the inscription on the item: "This was a copy of a weight made for Nebuchadnezzar, following the standard of Shulgi, the 'Old Sumerian King' (2094-2047 BCE)." So whoever made this weight for Nebuchadnezzar (605-562 BCE) was anxious to link it to more authoritative standards 1500 years older. Also from the ancient Middle East, the Old Testament contains at least nine references to the importance God attaches to honest weights (Note 2).

Coming closer to us in time and place, in Norfolk before the Roman conquest, the Iceni were minting gold coins to a very tight weight control which must have used standard weights and sensitive scales. John Talbot's study of hundreds of examples of Iceni gold staters found that typically 50% of them were within 0.1g of their target weight (Note 3). 0.1g is about 1/300th of an ounce, and very roughly the weight of a modern British postage stamp, so the mints must have been very careful about the weight. For the period after the Romans had left, excavations at the Early English royal centre at Rendlesham, near Sutton Hoo, have found standard weights that copied Byzantine coin denominations which were at that time used in trade with continental Europe (Note 4).

Later in the Middle Ages, Clause 35 of Magna Carta said, "There shall be standard measures of wine, ale, and corn (the London quarter) throughout the kingdom. ... Weights are to be standardised similarly". The 1824 Weights and Measures Act lists over 50 Acts of Parliament defining weights and measures between the reigns of Edward III (1327-77) and George III (1760-1820) which the new Act repealed or amended. In the reign of Henry VII (1497-1509) standard bronze bushel measures had been distributed to 60 cities (Fig 2). The process operated down to markets like Dereham's (Fig 3), where local courts could enforce fair trading using sets of weights.



Fig 1. A cast of a Babylonian mina weight of about 600 BCE, which claims to be a copy of an even more ancient standard. British Museum Trustees (Dept of Egyptian & Assyrian Antiquities). Used under a Creative Commons licence

<https://collection.sciencemuseumgroup.org.uk/objects/co57653/nebuchadnezzar-shulgi-standard-black-stone-weight>



Fig 2 The Bronze Exchequer Standard Winchester Bushel volume measure, distributed in the reign of Henry VII. (Photo ©The Board of Trustees of the Science Museum. Used under a Creative Commons Licence <https://collection.sciencemuseumgroup.org.uk/objects/co58279/exchequer-standard-winchester-bushel-measure-winchester-capacity-measure-standards>) Image contrast enhanced.

Despite all these efforts, the Introduction to the 1824 Act complained that “different Weights and Measures, some larger, and some less, are still in use in various Places throughout the United Kingdom ... and the true Measure of the present Standards is not verily known, which is the cause of great Confusion and of Manifest Frauds.” It was “necessary for the Security of Commerce, and for the Good of the Community, that Weights and Measures should be just and uniform.”

Perhaps the need for Britain to standardise its weights and measures was brought home by French activity in this area. With the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815, Britain and France would now compete in trade rather than on the battlefield. Amongst all the confusion after the French Revolution, the National Assembly had found time to define a new measure, the metre, as one ten-millionth of the distance from the North Pole to the Equator along the meridian through Paris. In a heroic surveying effort, the distance was accurately measured between two points on this meridian whose latitude was known, the belfry at Dunkirk to Montjuic Fortress in Barcelona, which enabled the Pole-Equator distance to be exactly calculated. But something more practical was needed for use, and from 1799 a platinum bar kept in Paris was adopted as defining the standard.



Fig 3. Dereham's town scales of 1776, used to check the honesty of traders' weights. The five comparison weights range from ¼ ounce (7.1g) to 8 ounces (226.4g). On display in Bishop Bonner's Cottage Museum.



Fig 4. The distance scale on a pre-1800 Italian map of the south of France. The scale illustrates the variation of the unit “Milliarium” (thousand paces) between one Italian region or city and another, Piedmont, Ancona, Ravenna, etc. At the bottom is the very different scale for France. Travellers must have been relieved when the different states of continental Europe adopted the standard metre. (From a map displayed in the State Archives of Siena.)

Wollaston and the 1824 Act

In preparation for new “just and uniform” standards in Britain, the House of Commons appointed a Select Committee on Weights and Measures, and for technical advice, the Committee called on Rev John Playfair, Professor of Natural Philosophy and former Professor of Mathematics at Edinburgh University, and William Hyde Wollaston.

William Hyde Wollaston was the son of Francis Wollaston, who had been rector of Dereham and a distinguished amateur astronomer. From Dereham rectory Francis observed the 1769 transit of Venus and reported his measurements to the Royal Society (Note 5). His son William was born in the rectory in 1766; William’s nephew was later vicar of Dereham for 40 years and the family retained a connection with Dereham parish church until 1872. Francis and family moved to Chislehurst in 1769, while William was still a young child, but he would have remembered his father’s observatory in Chislehurst and instruments there, in particular the skill Francis showed in adjusting the pendulum so his clock synchronised with the stars to the nearest second. Forty years later, William became perhaps the most distinguished British experimental scientist of the early 19th century, with an astonishing talent for understanding scientific principles and new discoveries and turning them into practical instruments or analytical techniques. Perhaps these skills were inherited from his father Francis. (There was a display in Bishop Bonner’s Cottage Museum at the 250th anniversary of William Wollaston’s birth in 2016; this material, by Susan Walker and Phillip Duigan, is now available online with our archived items on www.derehamhistory.co.uk (Note 6). William has had a recent biography, *Pure Intelligence - the Life of William Hyde Wollaston*, by Melvyn C Usselman (2015). I took most details of Wollaston’s recommendations for the 1824 Act from this biography.)



Fig 5. William Hyde Wollaston in 1827

Wollaston and Playfair both recommended using a “seconds pendulum” to define a standard of length. If a weight on the end of a fine string is used as a pendulum, the period of swing, from one side to the other and back again, depends on the length of the string. A pendulum has a period of one second (a seconds pendulum) at the latitude of London when the length of the string is 39.13 inches, so in principle a person can set up a pendulum, adjust the pendulum until the period is exactly one second, and then the length of the string defines 39.13 inches. Perhaps William remembered his father working on the pendulum of his clock.



Fig 6. Part of a set of measurement standards mounted in a wall in Sheffield city centre.
(Nicholas P Vaughan)

Having defined the inch from the pendulum, this could be used to define the unit of weight: in Playfair and Wollaston’s recommendations the weight of a cubic foot (12 inches) of water at 56.5°F was defined as a thousand ounces avoirdupois and a pound as 16 of these ounces. Then volume measure was derived from the pound: a gallon was to be defined as the

volume of 10lbs of water, a pint one-eighth of this and a bushel, used for dry goods, as eight gallons. In a system like this, the temperature at which the standard is defined must be carefully specified: if the temperature rises, the water will expand and occupy a larger volume, so the cubic foot weighs less.

(A neat consequence of this is that there are 50 pints to the cubic foot and 50 pints is six and a quarter gallons. Gardeners who are wondering if the latest shower means that maybe they don't need to do any watering may care to memorise that a tenth of an inch of rain therefore represents about half a gallon per square yard. In modern terms, a millimetre of rain is a litre per square metre, so you need to carry on watering if it just rains a few millimetres.)

Unfortunately, Parliament could not stomach standards that depended on a carefully adjusted pendulum and when the 1824 Act was written, it turned Wollaston and Playfair's tidy scheme into a dog's breakfast. The standard yard was defined as the distance at a temperature of 62°F between gold studs on a straight brass rod bearing the date 1760 "now in the custody of the Clerk of the House of Commons". The Clerk was also custodian of a brass weight to be taken as the standard. The Lord High Treasurer was to have a brass measure made which defined the gallon. As a concession to Wollaston and Playfair's science, if these standard objects were somehow to be destroyed or seriously damaged, they were to be replaced using a seconds pendulum. Inexplicably, the reference temperature was changed from 56.5°F in Wollaston and Playfair's proposals to 62°F in the Act and this meant other awkward adjustments, so that the cubic foot of water no longer weighed 1000 ounces, but approximately 997.137oz. Copies of the new standards were to be sent to other cities and places, and "other Places and Persons in His Majesty's Dominions or elsewhere".

No doubt in 1824 the Clerk of the House and the Lord High Treasurer hoped that replacement of their lumps of metal, and implementation of the pendulum-based scheme, would never be required, or at least not in their time, but unfortunately only ten years later disaster struck. In 1834 the Houses of Parliament and contents were badly damaged by fire, and the standards had to be replaced. However, the 1824 Act seems to have been then disregarded and a new standard yard and a new pound weight were constructed by comparison with the surviving copies of the originals, so Playfair and Wollaston's work disappeared into history. Playfair had died in 1819 and Wollaston in 1828, so they did not witness this betrayal of their principles. Various other changes to the system were made over the years, until eventually in 1963 the yard was defined as 0.9144 metres (so an inch is exactly 2.54cm) and the pound as 0.45359237 kg (Note 7).

Wollaston and Playfair's legacy

On the face of it, the 1963 definitions meant that the decisions of the French National Assembly finally triumphed over Imperial measures, but from the point of view of scientific metrology, the work for the 1824 Act was a significant milestone. The traditional way of defining standards of distance or mass was by standard pieces of metal and this remained true until the middle of the 20th century. Could these be trusted to remain the same? With increasing accuracy of measurement, unexpected changes were found, and there was always the danger of events like the Houses of Parliament fire, or worse. Wollaston and Playfair instead tried to define standards in terms of a universal natural law, that of gravity, so they did not depend on standard pieces of metal. Over the past 60 years, this principle has been accepted and universally applied to the fundamental standards; lumps of metal have one by one been abandoned and replaced by definitions in terms of unchanging and universal natural laws.

The first changed definition was for time - the second - which is now in terms of an oscillation frequency of caesium atoms. The time taken for 9,192,631,770 of these oscillations is defined as one second. It is implemented using the average of over 450 atomic clocks in more than 80 national laboratories. The metre was then defined in 1983 as the distance

travelled by light in a vacuum in 1/299,792,458 of a second. Finally, in 2019 the kilogram was defined in terms of speed of light, the second and a universal constant called Planck's constant. Wollaston would have been amazed at the science but would have approved of the principle of using laws of nature to make the definitions, as he and Playfair had tried (Note 8).



Fig 7. A GPS satellite, seeing us home with the help of very accurate time measurement. (Public Domain)

Does it matter? Thirty years ago the extreme precision of these definitions did not very obviously impact ordinary life, but now most of us depend on them in satellite navigation. The satnav in your car or your phone is checking radio signals from four or more satellites and depends on precise and reliable time measurements of the signals, which can be translated into distances to each satellite and hence your position on a map (and the map itself depends on very accurate distance measurement). In a nanosecond - a thousand millionth of a second - the radio waves, like light, travel about 30cm, which is why the satellites must use precise definitions and atomic clocks for their time measurements. We do not know if the standards will need further refinement in the future, but if so they will certainly continue to use the principles that Wollaston promoted, of defining standards in terms of the universe's

fundamental constants, and not pieces of hardware kept in Paris or anywhere else. It would obviously be going too far to claim that Dereham's son William Hyde Wollaston was the father or even grandfather of satellite navigation, but perhaps we might make a case for him being a distant cousin!

Notes

- (1) *An Act for Establishing and Maintaining Uniformity of Weights and Measures* https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1824/74/pdfs/ukpga_18240074_en.pdf.
- (2) There was a time in my life when I was trying to think every evening about a different verse from the Old Testament Book of Proverbs. One day I had been in a meeting all day trying to negotiate a change to a British Standard, and it all seemed rather pointless. My Proverb that evening was "The Lord delights in accurate weights" (Proverbs 11:1, NIV 1978), so I was encouraged. The other Old Testament references to the importance of accurate weights are: Deuteronomy 25:13-16; Leviticus 19:35-26; Proverbs 16:11, 20:10, 20:23; Ezekiel 45:10-11; Amos 8:5-6; Micah 6:10-11.
- (3) John Talbot *What is Icenian coinage?* Oxford University D Phil thesis, 2015 (Table 4.4). <https://ora.ox.ac.uk/objects/uuid:070214b6-8d06-4e55-a0f6-06125531e76c/files/me885fa2ce5071a9d2447aa88351b9468>
- (4) Scull C, Minter F, Plouvier J (2016) *Social and economic complexity in early medieval England: a central place complex of the East Anglian kingdom at Rendlesham, Suffolk*. *Antiquity* 90 (354): 1594-1612.
- (5) Trevor Ogden *Francis Wollaston and the Transit of Venus*. Dereham Heritage Trust Newsletter, Spring 2021. <https://derehamheritagetrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/2022-1dht-newsletter-18.1-mar22.pdf>
- (6) *William Hyde Wollaston - Dereham's Forgotten Scientist 1766-1828* <https://www.derehamhistory.co.uk/william-hyde-wollaston---derehams-forgotten-scientist-b1766.html>
- (7) See the Wikipedia articles on *Pound (mass)* and *Yard*
- (8) See the three Wikipedia articles, *Second*, *Metre* and *Kilogram*.

The Picture Postcard - a valuable historical resource *Robena Brown*

The subject of the picture postcard may, on the face of it, sound uninteresting; however, the rise and decline of this form of communication was not just an inexpensive means of keeping in touch with family and friends as well as aiding the compilation of attractive Edwardian postcard albums but resulted in the legacy of a vital historical resource.

The first picture postcards were produced in Edinburgh from 1894. From late Victorian and Edwardian times to the middle of the twentieth century the humble postcard was the chosen means of communication for millions of people. The image on the front determined which card the seller bought to enhance a friend or family member's 'PC album', or the image came from a photographer's studio, and if privately taken with an early camera the films were developed at the local chemist who very often printed them with a postcard backing. With a personal message on the reverse, and a view important to the sender or receiver, they have become a vital source of information for both family history researchers and local historians.



I will focus on local postcards and do not have the room here in our newsletter to discuss every variation but start with the two cards shown above which were both posted in 1903 and were printed examples, not actual photographic prints. The date of the image is either contemporary to, or precedes, the postmark. At that time, the reverse contained only the addressee's details and the half-penny stamp.

Since 1840 when Roland Hill's first postage stamps were issued the price of sending a postcard in 1900 was still only one half-penny (½d). This doubled towards the end of World War One, rose again to 1½d in 1921 but back to 1d in 1922.

When card size was reduced it became obvious that the sender needed more room for the message. The 'divided back' came into being in 1902 and soon the front was completely taken up with the image and in many cases a title in explanation of the view. Nearly every family had a postcard album - it was the collecting hobby of the times.

Early prolific producers of picture postcards were Wrench (top left), Valentines, Francis Frith and Raphael Tuck, to name but a few, not forgetting the local printer and publisher F W Count who occupied the premises later known to us all as 'Chambers'.

Many enterprising photographers left their studios to take images of local landscapes which were then produced as photographic postcards and the RPPC (real photographic post card) was born. Some of those we know of in our area were the inimitable Herbert Cave of Church Street in Dereham, Bailey of Watton and Boughton of Thetford.



Mr and Mrs Herbert Cave on their 1908 wedding day



Herbert Cave's studio after the 1915 Zeppelin raid

We have Herbert Cave to thank for the wonderful Dereham and area photographic record of the early years of the twentieth century. The images above are reproduced from glass plate negatives, a valuable record of the heritage of the town and surrounding area during World War I sold to the public as photographic postcards that any city - let alone a mid-Norfolk county town - would be proud of.

Cave photographs of places and people were retailed through tobacconists, stationers (F W Count) and post offices. They are easily attributed to him for we are lucky that his name was printed on most early cards and imprinted upon later ones.

He continued to produce studio and landscape images up to and during World War II. The latest example we know of is of a locally barracked British soldier taken c1940, shared from a family collection. Herbert Cave died in 1952.



It is of course vital to date historical evidence and attributing an image to a certain photographer narrows down the date of the image. Having been fascinated by Herbert Cave and his photographs for many years it is now possible to spot one of his images from the props which he used in his studio. The photographic postcard images above on p18 all show Herbert Cave's familiar studio prop and scenic backdrops. From left to right, the World War I Red Cross Nurse, an unknown young lady wearing a fashionable wristwatch of the day, and Mr and Mrs Carter of Shipdham, all posed for Herbert Cave in his instantly recognisable chair.

To give some idea of the popularity of postcards, in 1908-9 the Post Office recorded the delivery of 860 million cards that year, with even more being exchanged in later years.



Shipdham postman William Shearing before World War I with many sacks of mail for delivery

Sending a postcard in the morning was as good as a modern text or online message. With multiple daily collections and deliveries, many arrangements were confidently made to meet up later the same day. This is inconceivable using the postal system today!

Local knowledge is key to dating postcards if they have not been used in the mail. New or lost buildings, shops and roads are key, as are the fashions of the times when people are shown in the image, and many (usually children) often appeared out of curiosity to watch a photographer take pictures, appearing in the published view.

Multiviews help us to date images by grouping those taken at a similar or the same time. Very few cards have a date upon them unless they have been posted. Collectors who study cards (deltiologists) prefer cards to be pristine but I like those which have been 'postally used' for the extra written information and postal details provided.

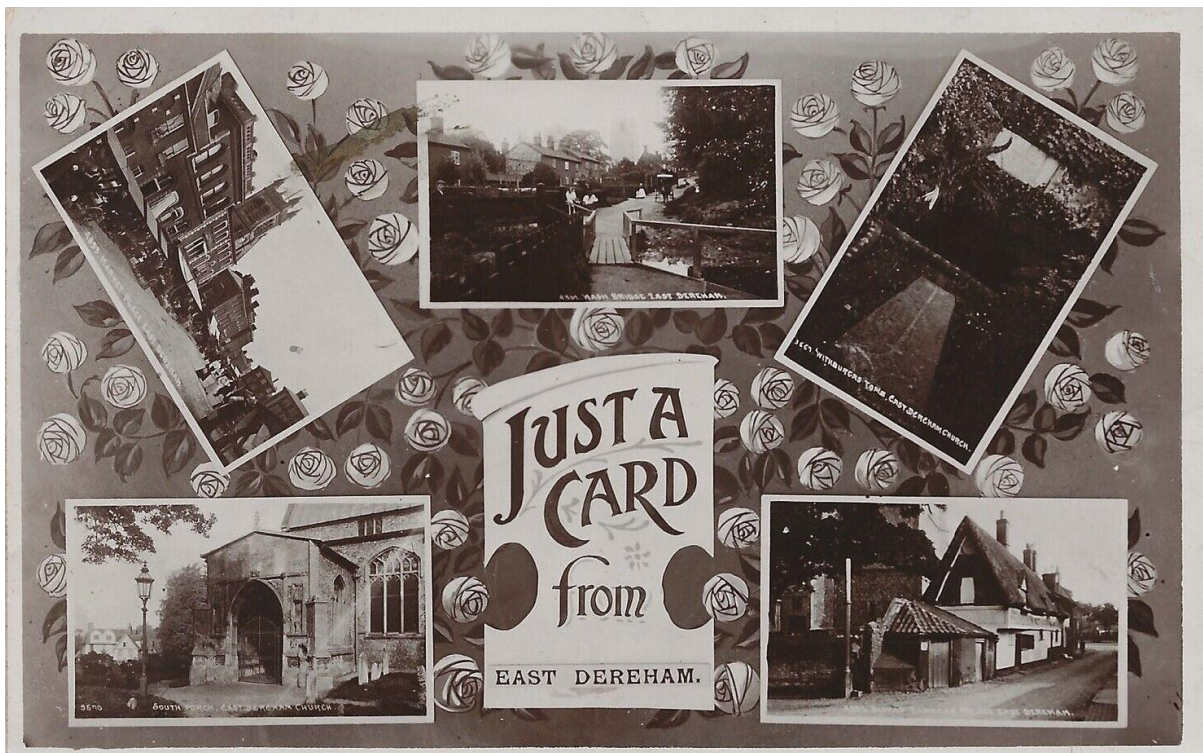
A card which is postally used helps with dating so that the postmark on the reverse has to be later than the date the card was produced and thus when the image was taken - unless, as a fellow collector was told once when giving a slide presentation of Norfolk broads postcards, the postmaster who stamped the cards was unable to get the date right on the handstamp due to regular insobriety: however, this of course would have been a very unusual circumstance!

By dating postcards of the same image, eg Bishop Bonner's Cottages, we can trace the changes and development of the building through time and a good record of those changes has been compiled by Sue Walker and Peter Wade-Martins allowing us to establish the history of the appearance of the cottages from the late nineteenth century to modern times.

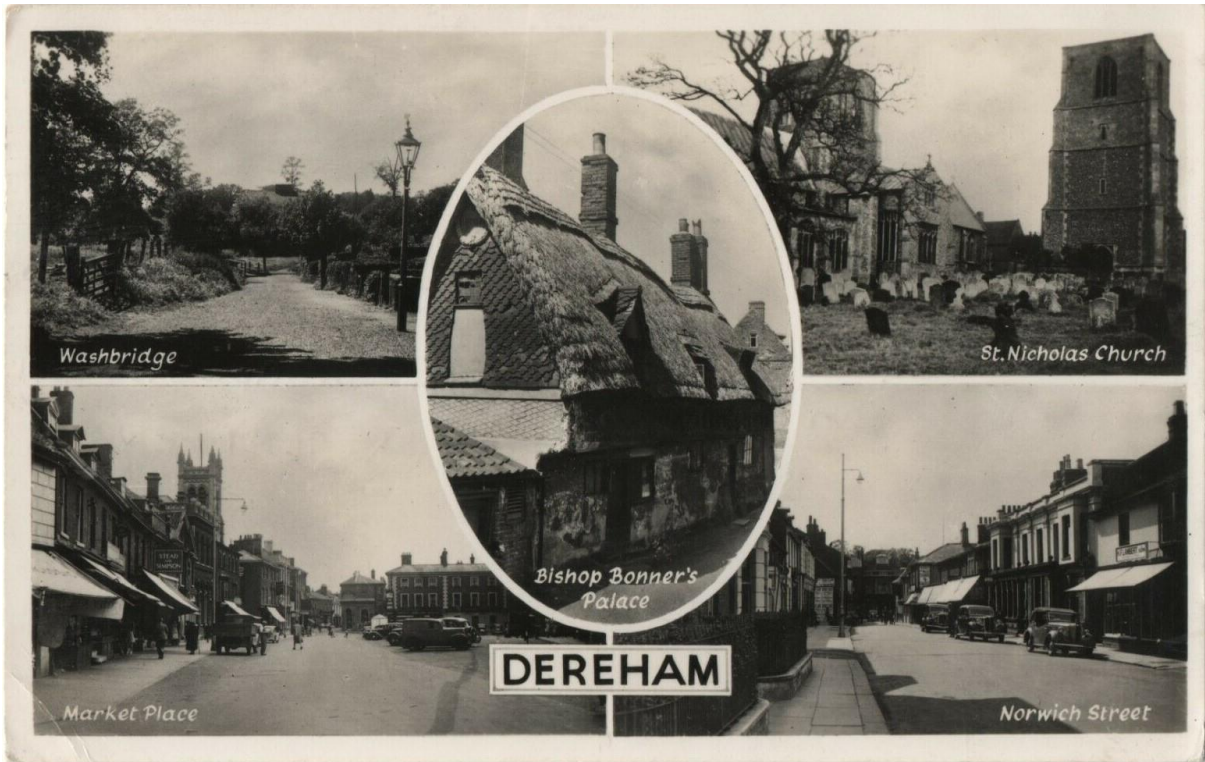
The many changes in Dereham Market Place can also be plotted through time in the same way with the appearance and disappearance of certain features.



Dereham Market Place Annual Fair c1900

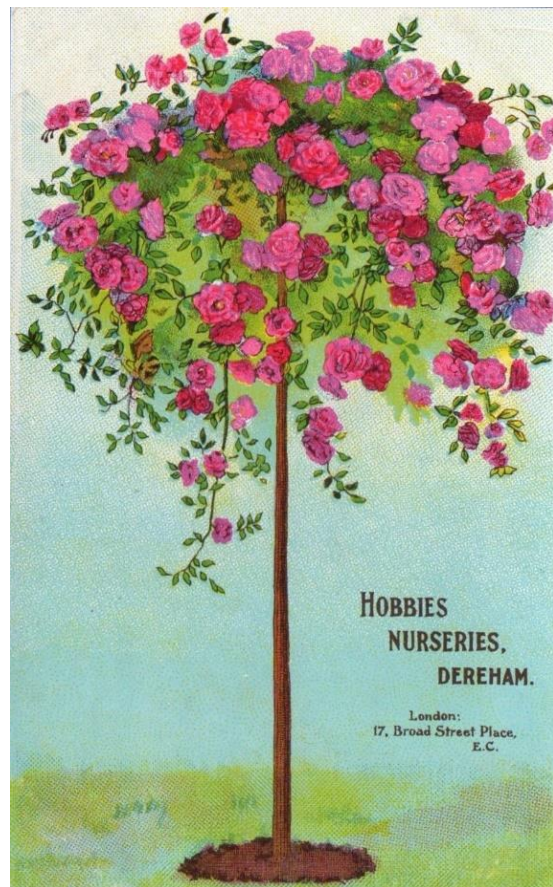


Dereham Multiview posted one week before the outbreak of World War I in 1914

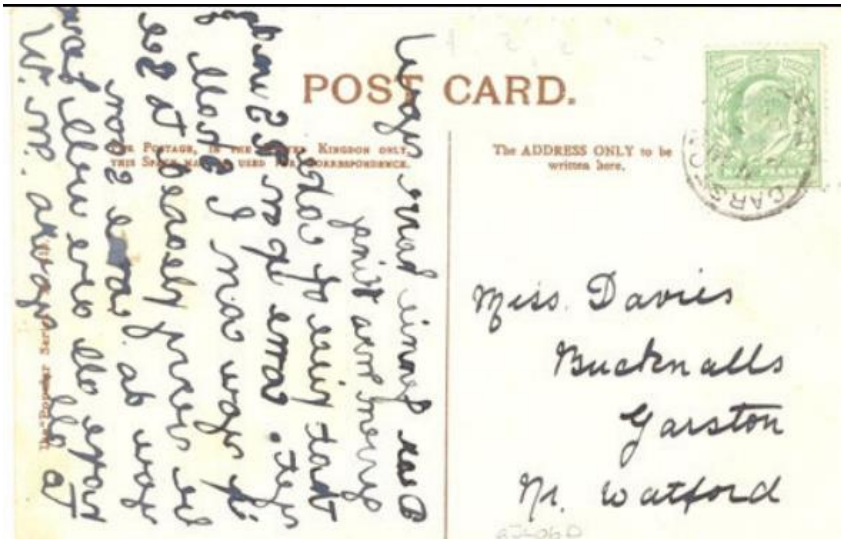


Dereham Multiview posted 1957

Businesses used postcards to advertise while corresponding with their customers. The cards below are examples of those used by Hobbies of Dereham advertising their fretwork kits and machines, and their nursery business, which is perhaps less well known.



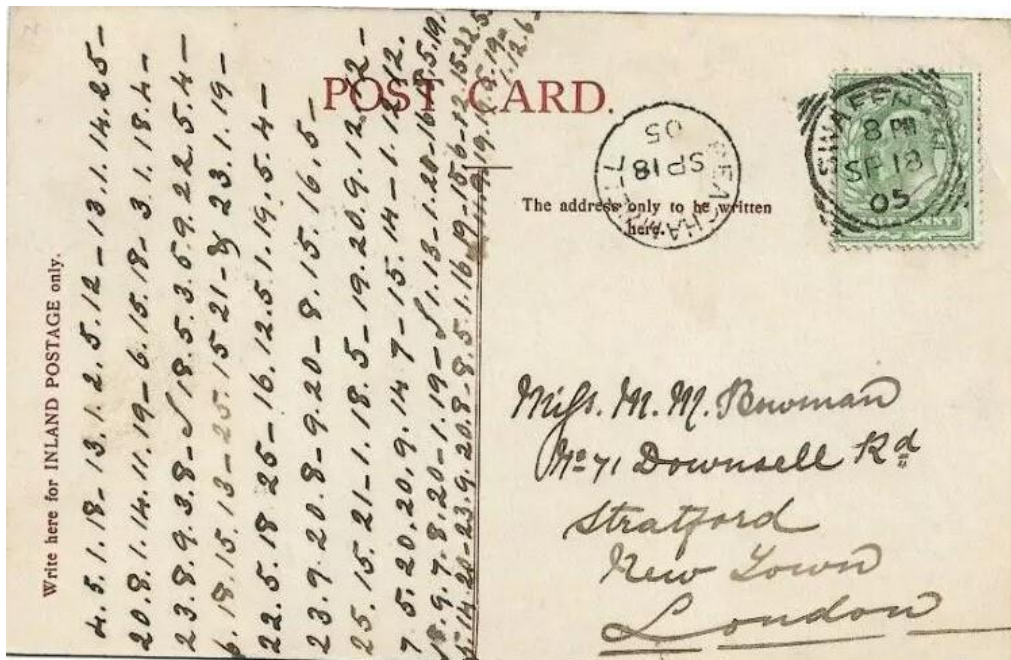
Hobbies advertising postcards



Not all postcards were serious. This early light-hearted card would have appealed to young courting couples and would have been printed with any number of destinations on the signpost!

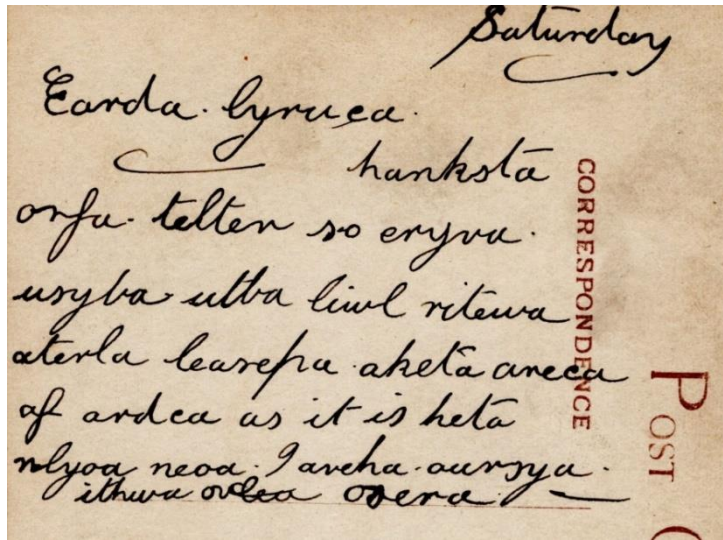
This brings to mind the issue of the postman and family members being able to read messages which were visible to all. The writer and the recipient often resorted to using private codes or to write the message as a mirror image so that the addressee would have to hold the card up to a mirror to read it. Many sweethearts exchanged messages in this way as the 1907 card above shows.

There were a number of codes adopted by couples to keep their correspondence secret. A simple code was to write each letter as it was numbered in the alphabet.



My friend Sue's grandparents used such a code that we would know today as 'pig Latin' where the initial consonant or consonant cluster is transferred to the end of the word with the addition of a vocalic syllable. That may sound complicated but isn't in practice. Hence 'pig Latin' becomes 'igpay atinlay'. As teenagers in Dereham during the 1960s and 70s we adopted such a 'secret code' for private conversations known then locally as 'Matsell' though

whether this originated in Mattishall I cannot say. We recall some variations very similar to the early twentieth century code of Sue's grandparents. This card was sent from Rose to Curly and the code is decipherable:



Translated as: 'Dear Curly, thanks for letter so very busy but will write later please take care of card as it is the only one I have. Yours with love Rose'.

The content of this message is clearly not such that privacy was necessary, but it was probably fun to do anyway and was a special bond between the pair who later became husband and wife.

Other known secret ways of corresponding were 'muddled messages', shorthand, semaphore and the aforementioned number codes.

If a postage stamp was placed on the card diagonally then that denoted the sending of a kiss!

By 1939 the use of cards had dramatically reduced though the almost obligatory sending of holiday views - 'wish you were here' - and the increasingly saucy ones, carried on throughout the twentieth century.

We hope to extend and improve our own collection of postcards and will be grateful for any offered to us. They help us with research and for educational purposes.

Recent talks *Ken Hawkins*

September : A new warship: The Gloucester, the Western Design and the Cromwellian Navy : Dr Benjamin Redding

Our talk opened with the end of the *Gloucester*. It was lost on 6 May 1682 when it struck a sandbank off Great Yarmouth. Ben showed a painting by Johan Danckerts depicting this event - though it was wrong in most major respects. It showed the ship having run bow first into a sandbank, whereas the sandbank was in fact underwater and it was the stern which was damaged and let in water, from which the ship ultimately sank in less than an hour. Unfortunately, it was carrying James, Duke of York, the brother of Charles II and future King of England; as the danger of sinking was not at first recognised, he delayed leaving - and protocol demanded that no one else leave until he did, resulting in up to 250 deaths. The sandbanks were known as a hazard, but there had been a dispute the evening before about whether to pass them to landward or seaward: the route chosen was insufficiently seaward. And so ended the life of a ship which had a very interesting story to tell.

The remains of the ship had been sought in recent years, but their distance from shore and the poor underwater visibility had made the search difficult and dangerous. But it was ultimately found and its discovery announced in 2022. We were shown a composite photograph showing many cannons and other remains; objects recovered included wine bottles (with almost fifty still sealed though the wine was found to be corrupted), a high class cane, spectacles and a King Charles I coin.

Ben then went on to tell us about the lifetime of the ship. The *Gloucester* was launched in 1654 and spent 6 years as a Commonwealth warship, fighting in battles with Spanish, Dutch and Danish fleets; this was at a time of great growth in the number of naval ships from little over 30 to around 180 by the end of the Interregnum. It was a large third-rate warship, built in Limehouse and designed for war; it was named after the siege of Gloucester in 1643 (a Civil War battle). On Christmas Day 1654, it sailed from Portsmouth to the West Indies as part of 38 ships in the Western Design, a plan to attack and take Spanish holdings, though the destination was withheld from the crew and the 3000 soldiers being carried. The *Gloucester* itself carried 280 crew and 30 soldiers and had 54 guns. The captain was Benjamin Blake, while the fleet was under the command initially of General-at-Sea William Penn and then by William Goodsonn from the summer of 1655. As Ben went on to explain, this venture was a failure, largely owing to disputes between Blake and Goodsonn.



Isaac Salmaker, *The Island of Barbados*, c. 1694, Oil on canvas, Yale Center for British Art.
<https://collections.britishart.yale.edu/catalog/tms:1029>

The fleet reached Barbados in January 1655 and remained there for two months, while more ships were added, mainly captured Dutch ships, bringing the total to 60. In April, they travelled to Hispaniola, the largest island in the Caribbean, seen as the key place to capture. There, the fleet split into two, one part on each side of the main town, Santo Domingo, through which a river ran. Goodsonn considered that a chain across the river would prevent ships moving in, so took soldiers 40 miles to the west, where they landed and made their way to the town. This resulted in much illness and exhaustion and when they reached the river, it was to discover there was no chain. By May, it was concluded that they could not take the town, and so they retreated. They went instead to Jamaica and took that, but then most of the fleet returned to England, though Goodsonn, Blake and the *Gloucester* remained. Blake now became Vice Admiral but he and Goodsonn had growing disagreements, including whether to remain to defend Jamaica or to move on to attack other places; in general, Blake wanted to mount more attacks, and felt that Goodsonn was too passive and was not pursuing the mission's objectives.

Little was achieved in 1655-56 and in July 1656, Blake's command was terminated, though many had supported him because of the Hispaniola debacle and the dying of crew through tropical diseases (the *Gloucester's* crew had more sickness than any others in the squadron). So ended this episode in the life of the *Gloucester*.

Blake returned to England, joining Stepney Meeting House. In 1659, Goodsonn married Ann Spencer, a member of that church, though this was not his own religious group as Goodsonn was a separatist and something of a religious radical. Ben said that, at a time when a

person's religion was a key factor, it would have been evident during their time at sea and would very likely have played a part in their differences.

For more information, see Ben's free-to-access article 'The Western Design Revised: Death, Dissent, and Discontent on the Gloucester, 1654-1656', The Historical Journal, volume 66, issue 5 (2023): <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/historical-journal/article/western-design-revised-death-dissent-and-discontent-on-the-gloucester-16541656/BA40026252C2366E2D793939B20F31AB>.

Ben is donating his speaking fee to UEA's project; if you wish to contribute, please visit <https://www.uea.ac.uk/about/giving-to-uea/our-causes/the-gloucester>.

October : Annual Dinner

22 members enjoyed our second Annual Dinner at the Beeston Ploughshare; as last year we were made very welcome and enjoyed great food at a great price. Our current thinking is to return there in 2025 once again.

November : When the Medics came to Norwich, August 1874 Phyllida Scrivens

To set the scene for the main part of her talk, Phyllida spoke first about healthcare at the beginning of the 19th century. 'Healthcare' for the most part was conducted by a barber surgeon - haircut and shave, pulling teeth and amputations - a risky process. (The rich were treated at their homes, which was much safer.)

The Royal College of Surgeons and the British Medical Association (BMA) were started in 1832, leading eventually to training, qualifications and certification. At the same time, the Anatomy Act put a stop to bodysnatching. In 1858, the Medical Act led to the formation of the General Medical Council.

Phyllida offered a description from Dickens' Martin Chuzzlewit which captured well the typical doctor of the time. At this time, sons often followed their fathers into the medical profession; once there, there was a pathway from dressers (responsible for preparing for treatments, restraining patients - no anaesthetics - and clearing up afterwards) through apprenticeships of up to 5 years.

In this same period, Elizabeth Garrett Anderson became the first woman to become a member of the BMA, but the BMA then decided not to admit any more women, a decision not reversed until the 1890s.

The BMA had visited Norwich for its Annual Congress in 1846; 1874 saw a return. Attendees numbered some 500 surgeons, physicians, doctors and dentists, mostly from Great Britain but also with some from France, Belgium, Russia and America.

For the last night of the congress, Jeremiah and Caroline Colman, who had a reputation as excellent hosts, had planned a dinner to be held in marquees, but very heavy rain forced a last minute change of plan, and the Colmans moved the event into Carrow Works School, using the great hall and other smaller rooms. Happily, all was managed by a Mr Snelling and was seen as a great success with no expense spared. The top table included Mayor Samuel Gurney Buxton, Dr Edward Copeman, Sheriff Robert Chamberlin, alongside Jeremiah and Caroline. Other attendees included Horace Croft Hastings, a surgeon from East Dereham - Phyllida invited anyone interested to research further information about him (see below!). Also present were Dr James Paget (who gave his name to the hospital in Great Yarmouth), Dr Joseph Clover (a leader in anaesthesia) and Dr Michael Beverley (who gave a controversial speech about the adverse health impact of unhygienic procedures at the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital).



*Standing left to right: Sir Frederick Bateman, William Cadge, Thomas William Crosse, Dr Peter Eade
Seated left to right: Edward Copeman, President of 1874 Conference, William Peter Nichols, George Warren
Watts Firth. Credit: Wellcome Library*

A further incident occurred when Dr Eugene Magnan from Paris invited delegates to a demonstration of the effects of alcohol and absinthe on two dogs. Chaos ensued at the demonstration and the dog injected with alcohol died. Dr Magnan nevertheless continued to inject the second dog, which thankfully recovered. Much later, the RSPCA brought charges against him and four others, though the magistrates dismissed them for lack of evidence.

As well as the dinner, local shops offered special prices for attendees and a number of excursions were arranged, including to Somerleyton Hall. An art display, featuring works from the Norwich School was held in St Andrews Hall.

Phyllida concluded by noting that this congress took place at a time of change in medical practice. She showed a graph indicating that life expectancy, which had been more or less constant up to 1874, then started to increase significantly, a trend followed for the next century.

By way of a footnote, Phyllida referred to a major railway collision at Norwich Thorpe only 4 weeks later on 10 September, in which some of those at the congress were involved. She has written about this in her book *The Great Thorpe Railway Disaster 1874*.

Jane Heyburn adds information about Doctor Horace C Hastings:

The Dereham Doctor mentioned in Phyllida Scrivens talk 'When the Medics came to Norwich' was Horace Hastings, born in Longham in 1820 to Thomas, a farmer, and Anna Hastings.

By 1841, he gave his occupation as medical student, a pupil of Mr. Burrell Parkerson, a surgeon, with whom he was lodging in Dereham. Horace was admitted as Licentiate of the Apothecaries Company London in 1843. In 1849, he was admitted as a member of the Royal College of Surgeons. The following year he married Isabella Margaret Hunt at St. Martins-in-the-Fields in London. On the 1851 census the couple are listed as living in the Market Place, Dereham, possibly in premises previously belonging to retired surgeon, Mr William Warcup, along with a house servant, Susan Bennett, and errand boy Richard Neal.

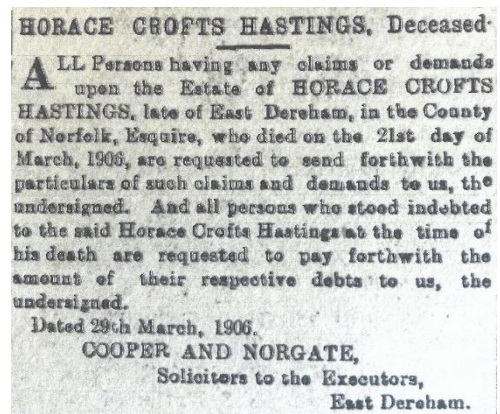
In 1851 a son, Wilfred Ridley, was born but, sadly, eight years later Isabella died aged 39. His medical practice appears to be successful and he was a mentor to Francis Long, a medical student who lodged with them. His sister Mary has taken over the running of the household and Wilfred was receiving an education.

Tragically, Wilfred died in August of 1862, aged 10 years.

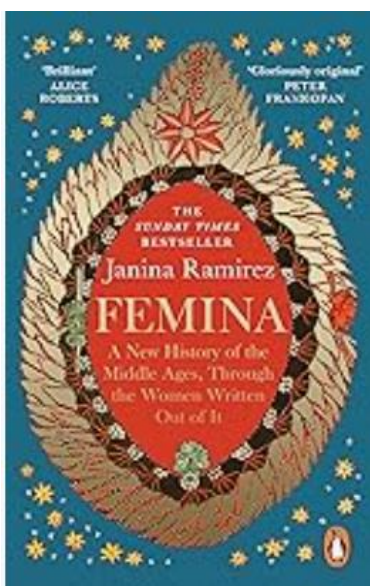
The 1871 census lists Horace as still living in Market Place with his sister Mary and three servants. It is noted, in the Norfolk Chronicle of 1872, that Horace Crofts Hastings was made Surgeon-Major in the 3rd Norfolk Rifle Volunteer Corps and the following year he is attending the BMA Conference in Norwich. By 1883 he was one of a number of surgeons/physicians in Dereham, had responsibilities with the Gressenhall Union and was Public Vaccinator of the East Dereham District in addition to running a flourishing practice. There are numerous newspaper accounts of his being called out to accidents and incidents as well as taking part in the political life of Dereham.

At some point Mr Hastings retired, and there was an auction of part of his household furniture in September 1893. On the 1901 census he is listed as Retired Surgeon, aged 81 years, living on Swanton Morley Road, Dereham, still with his sister Mary and one general domestic servant.

He died in 1906 leaving £179 3s 2d, the equivalent today of £18,385.



Gresham College Lecture *Hilary Williams*



A dark November evening was truly enlivened for me by the sparkling Janina Ramirez in an online lecture via Gresham College. The theme of the lecture was that women were powerful in medieval times. The Reformation meant that the role of women was proclaimed to be in the home according to the teachings of Calvin and Luther. Medieval convents were small but many were closed as, of course, were male houses. The title of her lecture was *Why Writing Women Back into History Matters*. Time allowed the examination of the evidence of only three women as, responding to questions, Janina could have included many more.

The first woman she discussed was Birka Woman. She was buried in Solar, Norway, in the Viking age. The burial was a treasure trove of artefacts including weapons, horses, a gaming set and expensive garments woven with silk and silver thread. She had a truly lavish burial which was unusual at the time. DNA revealed her skeleton to be female. She must have been truly revered by the Swedish

community who interred her. She is now known as Birka Warrior Woman.

The second woman was the inspirational polymath Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179). She was a scientist, an artist, a writer and a musician who lived a long life. Janina argued that only Leonardo da Vinci, working three centuries after her, can compare to her. It was suggested that we listen to her music on YouTube after the lecture which I duly did. I was so impressed that I have ordered a CD which transports me to the medieval world in beautiful chants.

The third woman was the feisty, highly intelligent Jadwiga (1373-1399). Born in Hungary she became queen of Poland and her marriage to Jogalia of Lithuania founded the long union between Poland and Lithuania. She later became a king (not a queen) in 1384 when the concept of queen regnant was relatively uncommon in Europe. She became very powerful, learnt seven languages and was a feared and respected leader who led an army into battle.

I learnt much in this lecture which was delivered in such a lively manner. I do recommend the Gresham College online lectures to all with an interest in history. The lectures are free - just a donation is requested.

To watch a recording of this talk, visit <https://www.gresham.ac.uk/> and select the WATCH NOW link. For details of forthcoming talks, select the WHAT'S ON link; the autumn programme is almost over now, but it will surely be refreshed before long.

Norfolk and Norwich Historical Association

The Norfolk and Norwich branch of the Historical Association has reformed and advised us of a new programme of events. Its stated aim is to mount a programme of diverse, fun and interesting talks and tours and to welcome new members of all ages.

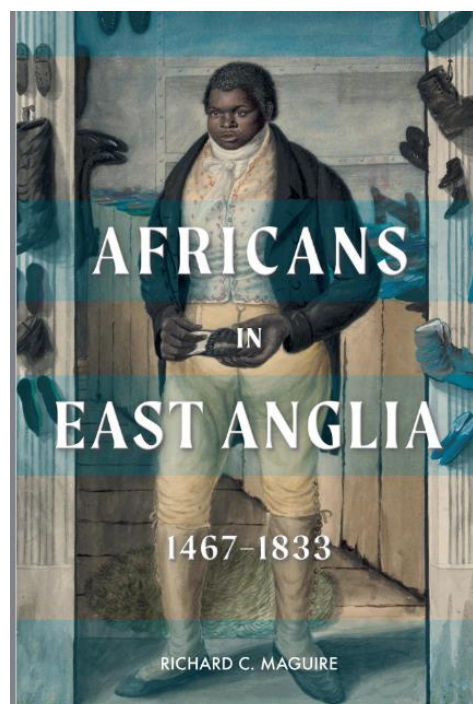
Talks will be hosted by Norwich Castle. Events/Tours/Walks will be charged at £5 per event or an annual regional membership fee of £15. These fees will apply from September 2024 to August 2025 and subject to annual review. Check their programme at <https://www.history.org.uk/branches/resource/1209/norfolk-norwich-branch-programme>.

Our member Hilary Williams recently attended one of its lectures and reports here on the lecture *Africans In East Anglia 1467-1833*.

Can you believe that people of African origin ventured as far as East Anglia and integrated into society? I enjoyed a lecture on this topic given by Dr Richard Maguire at the recent Norfolk and Norwich meeting. It was truly fascinating. The Association is now up and running again after a lapse of a few years. We meet in the comfortable environment of the lecture theatre at Norwich Castle.

Dr Maguire explained how Africans were welcomed to this region and took up working class employment initially. He stressed that there was no inherent problem with people of African descent and they successfully integrated into East Anglian society. He has researched parish records, newspapers and paintings for evidence of their lives

Between 1467 and 1599 their location was mainly on the coast. They were invited, not forced, to



come to our region. In the 17th century more moved inland and by the 18th century there were many more..

Here are some of the facts I learnt:

- Africans who came to Norfolk were usually baptised and therefore they could not be slaves.
- Eylys, 'a moor' in the records, was on a ship the crew of which were accused of piracy in 1467 in Great Yarmouth. Fourteen of the crew were hanged but Eylys was a cabin boy or 'boy of the shippe'. He was not seen as guilty and was the only one to be freed 'but leyd many yeers after'.
- Thomas Blackamoor married a local girl, settled in the area and had many children.
- Peter Lynn aged 11 was 'a moor mulatto' apprentice who worked his trade here.
- There were tradespeople established here too. James Dumbleday set up a business as a victualler.
- Caesar Hockwold was a brickmaker.
- Dr Allan Minus became mayor of Thetford and assumed a more middle class lifestyle.
- In the Swing Riots of 1830 some working class leaders were African men involved in setting fire to machinery.
- Norfolk society was against the slave trade. Africans in Norfolk played a positive role in our local history.

How then did people become prejudiced against persons of colour as we have sadly experienced? Dr Maguire felt the answer to this was the love of money which led to the dehumanising of a whole social group in the slave trade. This deprivation of rights and regarding others as subhuman was the mechanism by which the appalling treatment was excused. Many people became wealthy plantation owners. We have of course seen this dehumanisation in Nazi Germany in the 1930s.

I do recommend the Association's lectures. The next one is on 15 December at 14.30 entitled *Norfolk Secrets Vulnerability, Spies and Traitors* by Simon Kinder who is Head of History at Gresham School. It should be another interesting afternoon. Please book if you wish to join at norwichha@gmail.com. You will not be disappointed!

Norfolk Record Office programme

Norfolk Record Office continues its range of talks, events and research courses.

Forthcoming titles include

Behind the scenes tour

Movie memories

Maps

Outrage*us archives

Roll of Honour of Norfolk women

School Days

Calming colouring =====>>>

Research workshops

- Introduction to family history
- Advanced family history- part 1
- Advanced family history- part 2
- Introduction to house history
- Advanced house history

Poor Relief - from parish responsibility to the union workhouse.

For details and booking, visit <https://norfolkrecordofficeblog.org/events-for-winter-2024/>.



A first for Dereham - and a first Dereham Heritage Trust!

Hilary Williams

St Nicholas' Church held its first ever Christmas Tree Festival from 23 November to 1 December. The aim was to raise funds for Dereham Cancer Care and 'A Room with a Loo' for St Nicholas' Church. We joined twenty nine other organisations all beavering away to add to the festive spirit. It was a chilly morning but the volunteers were fortified with hot drinks.

The theme of our tree was *Christmases of Dereham Past*. Katie Goodman made such fascinating decorations with photographs of a snow covered Dereham in past years. These photographs attracted much interest even as the tree was being prepared! In addition she made decorations from images on Christmas cards in the past plus others with dried orange slices on cinnamon sticks. We also had the logo of our own special Bishop Bonner's Cottage on shaped wooden hangings.

Visitors to the festival enjoyed morning coffee, afternoon tea and mulled wine at the weekends - we hope you were one of them.



Many thanks to Katie, Catherine Hawkins and Sheila Gregory [and Hilary - ed] for all their help especially in assembling a slightly misaligned tree. It was a great community event and the teamwork from Dereham Heritage Trust is much appreciated.

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 1 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 post your completed form with payment or scan and email it to ken-hawkins@tiscali.co.uk. Your subscription can be paid by cash or cheque at a meeting, by posted cheque to Dereham Heritage Trust, 26 Hillfields, Dereham NR19 1UE or by bank transfer. The account details are: Dereham Heritage Trust, sort code 30-99-50, account 29575362; please add your surname as a reference.

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 February**. 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 website <https://derehamheritagetrust.org.uk> is updated regularly so please have a look now and again.

Annual General Meeting

Notice is formally given that our Annual General Meeting will be held at 19:30 on Wednesday 12 March 2025 at our usual venue of Trinity Methodist Church, 31 Trinity Close, Dereham NR19 2EP. The documents for this meeting will be circulated in the new year. Please note that there are no admission charges to the AGM.

*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 £2 for members of Dereham Heritage Trust and £4 for non members.** Visitors are always welcome, with the fee payable on the door, refreshments included.*

11 December	A Christmas celebration <i>Chanter's Jigge</i> NB - £5 for members and non members alike - booking required (see page 2)
8 January 2025	RAF Sculthorpe Heritage Centre <i>Ian Brown</i>
12 February	Newhaven Court: Love, tragedy, heroism, intrigue <i>Helen Murray</i>
12 March	Annual General Meeting (no admission charges) followed by local films of 1930s Dereham <i>Robena Brown</i>
9 April	The remarkable life of Thomas Fowell Buxton - the Liberator <i>Alison Dow</i>
14 May	Jack Cates - the Last Norfolk Wherryman <i>Dale Wiseman</i>
11 June	Treasures from DHT collections <i>Robena Brown and Katie Goodman</i>
9 July	Norfolk and the Mayflower <i>Rob Knee</i>
13 August	to be confirmed - visit to Mid-Norfolk Railway Museum
10 September	Stones, bones and herbs - treating everyday ailments in medieval England <i>Dr Joy Hawkins</i>
8 October	to be confirmed - Annual Dinner
12 November	to be arranged
10 December	Christmas past <i>Dr Mary Fewster</i>