

# News

Volume 7 Issue 4



# Letter

Autumn 2014

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## FORTHCOMING SPEAKERS

**at: Trinity Methodist Church Hall, Theatre Street, Trinity Close,  
Dereham NR19 2EP ..... Starting 7.30 pm**

**September 17**     Twenty Years of MI Recording - Tom Garland  
                              Followed by AGM

**October 15**        Lives of the First World War - Melanie Donnelly

**November 19**     The origins of Father Christmas - Mike Wabe

**December**                    There is no meeting in December

## **A few words from your Editor ...**

Hello and thank you to all who sent in contributions to this Newsletter. Throughout this WWI Centenary year please write in if you have a story about your WWI Ancestors.

Also it would be lovely to hear from our overseas members, how easy do you find it to research in your country?

Is there anything you would like to see in the Newsletter, please let me know, I look forward to hearing from you.

*Kate (Editor)*

**Format for Newsletter Contributions ....** Preferably typed using Microsoft Word or Works, or handwritten, then please either:

- email the file to me at [kate.easdown@btinternet.com](mailto:kate.easdown@btinternet.com) or
- post handwritten copy/CD/floppy disk, to me at the address on the back of the Newsletter

**Please contact Sheila Moulton, the Membership Secretary if you change your address or email address (contact details on back cover).**

**Deadline for inclusion in the next Newsletter - 15<sup>th</sup> October 2014**

## LET'S LOOK AT A CHURCH

### No.75 – All Saints, Runhall



Have you ever wondered why there are so many round towered churches in East Anglia? There are 124 of these distinctive buildings in Norfolk alone and the explanation for their characteristic feature ranges from the difficulty of constructing corners out of flint, the prevailing building stone, to the need for defensive structures to guard against Viking raids or even a decree by King Athelstan in 937 AD that all churches should have bell towers of standard dimensions. The fact is that nobody really knows, not even The Round Tower Churches Society founded in 1973 and enjoying the patronage of none other than the Prince of Wales. Perhaps the church builders simply built round towers because they thought they were a good idea and like most people in our region wanted to 'do different'. Runhall, All Saints, the subject of our article, is one such church and a fine sight it is too, a neat, compact, little structure which when approached up the slight rise upon which it sits presents us with a most pleasing picture. The main reason for the church's compact appearance is that it lacks a chancel as this was destroyed by fire in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century and never replaced, although to my mind, this omission contributes to the building's *bijou* appearance and does little to harm its proportions. It is a fact, that chancels were not as important a feature of churches after the Reformation when communion was

awarded a rather less central place in religious life. History records that the local squire at the time of the fire was a Roman Catholic who used the partial destruction of the church as an excuse not to attend the Protestant services which he would have considered heretical. Recusancy, or refusal to attend Anglican services for reasons of conscience, was not uncommon in those days when the Church of England was still a relatively young institution and was of great concern to the government, so much so that in some churches the verger took a register of those who attended and those who were absent without a good reason found themselves liable to a fine. No wonder our squire was not unduly worried by the fire at his allotted place of worship - one only hopes he was not a secret arsonist as well as a recusant! Runhall, a quiet, straggling little village which today boasts little more than 350 souls is set among narrow lanes in the heart of Norfolk just south of Mattishall and All Saints is undoubtedly its finest feature. As one enters the church, one's eyes are first drawn to the west end with its 14<sup>th</sup> century font, in fine condition, considering its age, and featuring an octagonal bowl carved with quatrefoils standing on a stem decorated with arches also of quatrefoil design. Behind this, is a venerable old door, resplendent in medieval ironwork, which leads to the base of the tower. In the body of the building are rows of plain benches decorated with simple fleur-de-lis ends but these are enlivened with the rich colours of many lovingly decorated kneelers. The pulpit is simple but pleasantly carved and behind it, a rather curious niche with an *ogee* (having a double s-shaped curve) arch. A painted inscription above the altar table runs along the wall behind which the chancel would have once stood and proclaims in ornate lettering AS + OFTEN + AS + YE + EAT + THIS + BREAD + AND + DRINK + THIS + CUP + YE + DO + SHEW + THE LORDS + DEATH + TILL + HE + COME. Before we leave we read, in this anniversary year, the memorial listing the nine men of Runhall who gave their lives in the Great War – a sadly substantial number for what was then a very small village.

The original parish registers for All Saints, Runhall are held at the Norfolk Record Office (Cat Ref. PD 319) and consist of Baptisms and Burials 1558 – 1997, Marriages 1558 – 1982 and Banns 1755 – 1885. Microform copies start in 1558 but finish in 1904 for Baptisms and 1900 for Marriages and Burials with Banns covering the same dates. Archdeacon's and Bishop's transcripts start in 1699 but end in 1885 for Baptisms and Burials and in 1837 for Marriages. The parish chest is quite small covering mostly the twentieth century but there are Terriers (registers of landed property described by site, boundaries and acreage) covering the period 1784 -1955, a copy of a deed dated 1782, the parish records for Coston, Poor Law Commissioner's appointment of registrars for West Flegg, Costessy and Wymondham 1837 plus finally, a Constable's warrant to make out a list of householders eligible to serve as parish officers from 1881.

## **HOW NOT TO RESEARCH YOUR ANCESTORS**

Last year an article and photograph appeared on the front page of the Watton & Swaffham Times. The picture showed gravestones in the churchyard of St Mary's Church in Watton. It would appear that someone trying to read the stones had taken some kind of wire brush to them, scouring away lichen, moss and the dirt of years. Decades of weathering had been removed but only over the engraved names so that the damage to the stones really stood out.

It is not possible to work out the family of the perpetrator as the group of seven affected stones cover several different surnames, but are all grouped together in one part of the graveyard, so almost certainly are a related family.

We all know that really useful information can be gained from gravestones, but the thoughtless action of whoever caused this damage can only be called unintentional vandalism. Even more annoying is that all the information on the graves has been recorded and published and this record is available both in the Church and at the local library.

I visited the churchyard last week to check on the gravestones and am sorry to say that the damage looks almost as fresh as it did last spring. I think it will take many years of weathering to hide the damage and the scratching on the surface of the stone is probably permanent.

If you are interested in memorial inscriptions with the Mid-Norfolk Family History Society's area of interest (approximately 10 mile radius of Dereham) have a look at the Society's website [www.tsites.co.uk/sites/mnfhs/](http://www.tsites.co.uk/sites/mnfhs/) or contact Kate (Editor) – details on back page of this Newsletter – to find out what is available.

*Susan Page*

## **TRADE DIRECTORIES & GAZETTEERS** **Gill Blanchard June 2014**

Gill started a detailed talk showing how Trade Directories could be said to be an early Yellow Pages, that recorded businesses and trades that were

operating at the time and as they covered a wide range of society. This would include gentry, clergy, the professions and many private individuals of means.

She went on to show that they could be used with other sources such as Electoral Registers and Census returns to add knowledge of our ancestors and their lives such as neighbours and the neighbourhoods that they lived in.

When was market day? When was post delivered? What transport links were there? Where were the schools, banks, post offices, chapels and churches? What pubs and shops were available?

In other words flesh can be added to the records of birth, marriage and death that are a structure to hang a picture of the life of our ancestors.

She concluded her presentation with this slide of resources that can be used to develop an understanding of our relatives.

## **Finding Directories and Gazetteers**

### **Print**

- Guildhall Library, London
- The National Archives
- Local Reference Libraries
- Local Studies Libraries
- Local Archives and Record Offices
- Family History Societies

### **For Sale**

- CD ROM from all major genealogy suppliers
- Antiquarian and second hand book sellers

### **Online**

#### **Free**

- British History Online
- GENUKI
- Google Books
- Norfolk Sources
- Historical Directories
- Vision of Britain

#### **Pay to View**

- Ancestry, findmypast and The Genealogist, Origins Network etc.  
– free trials available

[www.historicaldirectories.org](http://www.historicaldirectories.org) is particularly helpful.

## BARNHAM BROOM'S WAR MEMORIALS

This year, being the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the start of World War 1, it seemed appropriate to research a war memorial and having recently completed the recording of Barnham Broom's memorial inscriptions, what better place to start? Their war memorial board in the church only has eight names on it, but another commemorating 'Those of the parish who also served' has forty four. Even so, I thought, that with the vast amount of material on line, it wouldn't be too difficult.

Where to begin? Firstly, as both memorials only give minimal information e.g John Bush, Alfred Fox etc., I listed all the names and using Findmypast (FMP), found them on the 1911 census. Fortunately there are only 85 households and I checked each one for males aged between 11 and 50, for apparently the conscription age was extended to 55 in the last year of the war. No actual addresses are given, just 'Barnham Broom', but I did collect relationships, occupations and places of birth. While doing this I discovered that the forenames on the memorial boards were not necessarily their real names e.g. William Cullum, although undoubtedly listed on the memorial correctly as the name by which he was known, was not really William at all, but Henry William – probably called William to differentiate him from his father, also named Henry.

All of the eight men who died were born locally and by consulting FreeBMD, I discovered that the nearest registration office would be Forehoe. This is a very easy to use site and using the ages and places of birth from the census, I found my men's year of birth, registration quarter and their REAL forenames fairly easily. Armed with full names I checked the Commonwealth War Grave Commission (CWGC) website, together with *Soldiers who died in the Great War* on FMP, discovering service numbers, regiments and other service information, including, date of death and place of burial/commemoration. Also in some cases, extra information is

given, such as place of enlistment and next of kin.

It was at this point that the true worth of our Memorial Inscription (MI) booklet for Barnham Broom came into its own with regard to two names.

1. William Waters is recorded on a headstone, amongst other family members as ‘died 12 Apr 1917, aged 18’, no mention of where, how, or even that he was a soldier. He doesn’t appear in *Soldiers who died*, but the CWGC website shows his burial place as Barnham Broom churchyard. Obviously not all soldiers, who died in the war, have headstones of the familiar white CWGC design and this ‘ordinary’ headstone is his official memorial, probably maintained by the Commission..

2. Charles Davey is also commemorated on a family headstone as a corporal, ‘died of wounds, France 6 Apr 1918, eldest son of John & Rose Davey’. Again, he is not listed in *Soldiers who died* and the only Charles Davey, for that date, on the CWGC site, is a member of an Australian Regiment. Unlikely to be my man! However, perseverance paid off, for via The National Archive of Australia website, I learnt, that this Charles Davey, was born at Barnham Broom, enlisted at Brisbane Australia and his next of kin was John Davey. Digging a little further on FMP, I discovered that he had sailed as a third class passenger from London for Brisbane on 7 May 1914, just three months before Britain’s declaration of war.

Quite pleased with my efforts, I e-mailed my information about the eight men who died back to the churchwarden. Almost by return she informed me that my information agreed with Martin Edwards’ website. What website? Sure enough, he has a website - [www.roll-of-honour.com](http://www.roll-of-honour.com). I selected Norfolk – Barnham Broom - all the details I had discovered were there – no research needed, just the click of a mouse! However, I did have a small consolation prize – against Charles Davey it said ‘no further information currently

available'. This is no longer the case, for I submitted my findings, together with sources, to Martin Edwards, his Roll of Honour has been amended and now includes John Davey's details..

But, do I hear you ask? What about those 44 who also served? Perhaps not surprisingly, on receipt of the churchwardens reply, my enthusiasm suddenly waned. My foray into war memorials was interesting to say the least, but realism has taken over. I realised it could be very time consuming and difficult to turn those forty plus 'simple' names of villagers into soldiers with service numbers and regiments. I think I will stick with my churchyard memorial inscription recording for now; after all, there is always a chance that someone else will have 'done' Barnham Broom's 'Those who also served,' too!

*Tom Garland*

## NEW PUBLICATIONS

### YET ANOTHER CHURCH & CHURCHYARD JOINS OUR MI BOOKLET COLLECTION



#### **WRAMPLINGHAM ST PETER & ST PAUL**

Almost 200 Memorials

22 A4 pages

£3.40 (£2.30 plus £1.10  
p&p)

*See our web site for the full list*

## HOW TO GET A WILL – (POST 1858)

Prompted by the announcement in the Spring Newsletter that the London Probate search room had moved to The Royal Courts of Justice, I thought I would attempt to obtain my grandfather and great grandfathers' wills without travelling to London.

Firstly, a little explanation as to why a will should be in London at all. On 1 Jan 1858, the responsibility for probate in England and Wales passed from the Church Courts, to the Principal Probate Registry. From that date, when a person dies, any will is presented to a Probate Registry where it is 'proven' and probate granted to the executor (authority to execute the wishes of the deceased in accordance with the will). Copies of both the grant and the will are then passed to the London Principal Probate Registry where they are filed. At the end of each year an alphabetical list (calendar) of grants issued in the previous 12 months is created - effectively an annual index to wills. It is these yearly calendar books that we can search for free at the London Probate search room. If we find a record of probate being granted in the calendar we can then apply for a copy and the relevant will. There is a fee and it isn't instant, but can be forwarded by post. However, if the deceased dies **intestate** (without leaving a will) approval to dispose of the assets of the deceased is also granted as 'letters of Administration'. These are also recorded in the annual probate calendars.

But we don't have to go to London, *Ancestry.co*, available at most libraries, by subscription or, as in my case, via a friend, now carries copies of the calendar books (1858-1966) on-line. No need to visit London or trawl through the annual books.. Just enter a name, from your family tree to discover whether probate was granted very quickly. It will even accept just a surname but unless you have an unusual one, the results could be overwhelming.

Three examples found during my search of the probate calendars on *Ancestry*:

1. **Garland** Charles Henry of Coronation Rd Salcombe Devonshire died 18 March 1923 **Probate** London 10 May to Thomas Garland retired bank official Effects £427.3s. 10d

[Note: Probate granted shows that there should be a will. But although the right year, this entry has the wrong second name, wrong address, even wrong county – there are plenty of clues to help you find your man]

2. **Garland** James of 16 Guildford Rd, Canterbury, ironmonger assistant died 13 March.1923. **Administration** Canterbury 19 May to Henry Charles Garland, plumber. Effects £312. 19s 1d

[Note: This is my great grandfather - Grant of Administration issued at the Canterbury District Registry. This **immediately told me that there was not a will**, but interesting facts for free – date of death , address, occupation and the name and trade of his executor , plus the size of his estate]

3. **Garland** Frank Frederick of 33 Old.Park Avenue Canterbury died 13 April 1952 **Administration (with will)** London 4 July to Edith Sarah Garland, widow. Effects £368.11s 5d

[Note: Again everything fits – this is my grandfather. Administration (with will) means that the executor had either died or was unwilling to carry out the task or, in this case, an executor was not named in the will

To proceed, I suggest you google *PAIS application for probate search*

This takes you to [www.justice.gov.uk](http://www.justice.gov.uk) where there is more information, together with application form PA1S, which can be downloaded. You don't actually need the form but completing it ensures that you provide all the information required.

Unfortunately, unlike BMD certificate applications, there are not any reference numbers in the calendars. You send details of the deceased

(from the index), and a cheque for £6 payable to *HM Courts & Tribunals Service*, to:

Postal Searches and Copies Department, Leeds District Probate Registry, York House, York Place, Leeds LS1 2BA

They will do a 4 years search for your man/woman for your £6. However, if there not a record you will not receive a refund [hopefully you will have discovered, that probate was granted in the *Ancestry* calendar, before applying, so this is unlikely]

Remember, if the calendar says **Administration** there will not be a will..

If a will has been proved you will be sent a copy of the will, as well as a copy of the grant, (justice.gov.uk website gives further information). My grandfather's will took almost exactly a month to arrive and was very disappointing. Written and dated about four weeks before his death, it was little more than a scribbled note – “In the event of my death I leave everything to my wife Edith, but if dead, to my sons Frederick and Reginald”, witnessed by his sister and brother in law.

**This all seems very basic and simple, but some of our members may not be aware of the procedure. Let me know if, I have got it wrong, or you would like me to put my brain to other ‘HOW TO’ Subjects, or better still why not write up your experiences in finding information and give my brain a rest.** *Tom Garland*

## NEW MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Submissions and changes must be made before April 1<sup>st</sup> for inclusion in the directory.

Member – 459 change of address

Mrs A Txxxxx, ----, ----, ----, ----

Email: ----@-----.

## LOST AT SEA

Sidney Frederick Worship Codling was born 24 September 1892 in Overstrand, Norfolk. When I started researching him I was unable to find a marriage for him or a death in the GRO records. I discovered that he had died 30 December 1917 in Egypt. Further investigation showed that he died at sea on the *H T Aragon*.

Sidney was one of many children born to John and Alice Codling. John was the innkeeper at the White Horse Inn, Overstrand. By 1911 Sidney was working as a commercial clerk but the following year he joined the army as a private, enlisting with the Kings Own Royal Regiment (Norfolk Yeomanry). He was later to be promoted to a Lance Sergeant.

Sidney's battalion sailed out of Liverpool bound for Gallipoli on 25<sup>th</sup> September 1915. It would not become the 12<sup>th</sup> (Yeomanry) Battalion of the Norfolk Regiment until February 1917. Strictly speaking it did not become part of the Norfolk Regiment until it became 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion. The battalion disembarked from the *Olympic* at Walker's Pier in Anzac Bay on the night of 10/11<sup>th</sup> October 1915. They marched 3 miles to Dixon's Gully and dug in. The regiment was attached to the 54<sup>th</sup> East Anglian Division.

On 21 October 1915 the regiment came into contact with the 4<sup>th</sup> Norfolk Battalion and for the next 2 months they would alternate with the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion in manning the trenches to the right of Hill 60. This position overlooked the Sulva Plains. When the regiment had left Liverpool it had 26 officers and 504 other ranks. By 27 November it had been whittled down to 14 officers and 301 other ranks.

While the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Battalions of the Norfolk Regiment left the peninsula relatively early, the 12<sup>th</sup> would remain for much longer. They were told that their evacuation would not take place until 23<sup>rd</sup> December. Over the course of December troops were evacuated from Anzac and Sulva Bays. This began from 13<sup>th</sup> December and by this stage the regiment had been divided into three different troops; the smallest troop of 21 men, remained in the trenches, laying down fire as if the whole regiment was in position. The other two parties were embarked, but the twenty-one men remained in the trenches until 0140 on 20 December. They in fact got off three days sooner than they thought, in three groups in 5 minute intervals. The evacuation

was just in the nick of time, as the Turks were probing and suspicious of the reduced activity on the peninsula.

The regiment embarked for Egypt with just 13 officers and 221 men fit for duty. In the period 11 October to 20 December 1915 six had been killed and twenty wounded. All the others had succumbed to disease and exposure. What remained of the regiment arrived at Alexandria 0800 on Christmas Day.

The regiment spent the whole of January 1916 at Sidibishr, about 5 miles from Alexandria. They became part of the 1/1<sup>st</sup> East Mounted Brigade and were desperately in need of equipment and, of course, reinforcement. On 22 February they were transferred to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Dismounted Brigade. The total strength of the brigade was 149 officers and 2,398 other ranks. They spent the first part of March 1916 training in their new role as dismounted units. Finally, on the 14<sup>th</sup> March, they were attached to the 42<sup>nd</sup> Division.

On 17<sup>th</sup> March 1916 they arrived at El Kubri, near Suez. The Norfolk Yeomanry were detached on 21 March to cover the defences at Crew's Post, beyond the Suez Canal and in the desert. It was a fairly uneventful period.

The regiment was shipped to Sollum, Egypt, on 29 July 1916. They were tasked with keeping an eye on the Sennusi, a group in Libya, which had been encouraged by the Turks to fight a guerrilla war against the allies. The regiment saw no action at this time.

On the 26 December the whole brigade was to be reformed as an infantry brigade. The Norfolk Yeomanry was to become one battalion, known as the Yeomanry Battalion of the Norfolk Regiment. Each of the 3 squadrons became a company and a troop was taken out of each of the squadrons to form D Company. On 11<sup>th</sup> February the battalion officially became the 12<sup>th</sup> (Yeomanry) Battalion, Norfolk Regiment. It was assigned to the 74<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division.

By the beginning of March 1917 the 12<sup>th</sup> was in Alexandria, and they received a large draft of reinforcements. The 12<sup>th</sup> entrained for El Kantara on 10<sup>th</sup> April, bound for Palestine. On 15<sup>th</sup> April it was put into the line east of Wadi Ghuzze, near Gaza.

At 1.00am 17 April 1917 the battalion marched to Wadi Ghuzze, near Raspberry Hill. Initially the battalion was held in reserve. They could see the fighting but took no part in it, being held in reserve for the rest of the month and into May. Although the battalion had avoided many casualties there were some cases of sores, septic throats, scarlet fever and diphtheria. Finally the 12<sup>th</sup> would get their taste of action in operations against Beersheba and Sheria. On the night of 30/31 October 1917 they marched up to near Wadi Saba. On 1<sup>st</sup> November the majority of the 12<sup>th</sup> were sent forward to overwhelm a Turkish position designated as Z5. The battalion took the position and a number of prisoners, leaving behind some machine-guns and snipers to cover the retreat.

The 12<sup>th</sup> were marching north on 3<sup>rd</sup> November and Major M E Barclay went forward with a handful of men to reconnoitre towards Sheria. This position needed to be captured, as water was at a premium. The attack on Sheria commenced 6<sup>th</sup> November with the 12<sup>th</sup> in support. The outlying Turkish positions were overwhelmed and the final approach to Sheria was made at dawn on 7 November, with Sheria being taken at 6.30.

By 25th November the battalion was marching on the Gaza to Jerusalem. A small donkey found standing by its dead mother was acquired by the battalion and named Abdul. It became the battalion's mascot and remained with them and at the end of the war was brought back to England where it was paraded in Norwich.

By 30<sup>th</sup> November 1917 the 12<sup>th</sup> was to the west of Jerusalem. It spent the next week building roads. It was planned that Jerusalem would be attacked on 8 December.

The Norfolks advanced up a stony slope, the enemy falling back when the 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion took a line of trenches at 5.00am. The Turks were lining up behind walls as the 12<sup>th</sup> advanced over the crest of the hill. The 12<sup>th</sup> continued its advance, fighting through the gardens and through a village for one and a quarter miles to reach their second objective Khirbet El Burj. The Turkish machine-gun and artillery fire was heavy, so the next target was put on hold for the following day. However, in the morning they discovered that the Turks had abandoned their positions.

The 12<sup>th</sup> would now play a supporting role in the continued advance and from time to time they would also have to repair roads. The weather conditions were appalling and often the men's overcoats and blankets had to be left far behind in the rear, making the nights uncomfortably cold.

I am unable to ascertain how or when Sidney Codling and the 12<sup>th</sup> joined the SS *Aragon*. But the 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion arrived at "Windy Bay" in Malta on 23<sup>rd</sup> December. They remained there for four days. They had spent Christmas day in safety but things were soon to change for the worse. On 30<sup>th</sup> December 1917 Sidney Codling drowned after the torpedoing of HM Transporter *Aragon* while entering the port of Alexandria, Egypt, with the loss of 380 officers and men of the commonwealth forces. The *Aragon* was torpedoed approximately 8 miles from Alexandria at 11am on Sunday 30 December 1917. It sank in 20 minutes. Her escort *Attack* was also torpedoed and sunk about 5 minutes later.

Sidney Codling is named on a war memorial at Chatby, a district on the east side of the city of Alexandria. The memorial commemorates 980 commonwealth service men that died during WW1 and have no other grave but the sea.

I was able to find a first-hand account of the sinking of the ship *Aragon*:-

"For two weeks we laid at anchor in shelter off the harbour at Marseilles, awaiting sailing orders each day, until at last they came and the ship sailed, in company with another Transport, the "*Nile*", and an escort of destroyers. On board were some 160 Nursing Sisters, 150 Military Officers, 2200 troops and the Ships own officers and crew, numbering in all a total of 2700 souls. Besides this, the ship was laden with the whole of the Egyptian Xmas mail, comprising some 2500 bags. From Marseilles we proceeded to Malta, in safety, and with but little excitement. For a part of the voyage the sea was heavy and many were sick..... We arrived at "Windy Bay" Malta, on the 23rd December, where we remained for four days, thus spending the Xmas in safety. On the fourth day we again put out to sea, in company with the "*Nile*" and a fresh escort of destroyers, three in number, two of which were Japanese, the other British. Everything went well until the moment of actual torpedoing. This was on Sunday morning, the 30th inst., and our port of destination was just becoming distinctly visible to the naked eye on the horizon. Everybody was eagerly gazing at the sight from every place of

vantage, and looking forward to be soon landed safely. Indeed, many had packed all luggage and were already attired for disembarkation. One heard many congratulating themselves on the safe passage.

The ship, with the British destroyer “*Attack*” was just entering the Channel, which leads into the Port, and had actually passed inside of the first “buoy” which indicates the entrance to the Channel, when a wireless message was intercepted from Trawlers in the Channel, stating the presence of mines therein. The “*Attack*” immediately signalled to us to follow it, at the same time turning seawards. One of the Trawlers was also observed to be Flying the same signal, indicating that by an order of earlier period, it had been sent to direct the ship through the Channel. The destroyers signal was at once obeyed, that being the senior ship, and the “*A*” manoeuvred to follow it. In doing so she had to keep well away from the “buoy”. The submarine was lurking at the “buoy” and was unable to Fire its torpedo as the ship entered the Channel, because of the close range, but immediately she turned to follow the “*Attack*” she presented a perfect target for the enemy, who took full advantage of the situation. The officers on duty on the bridge saw the periscope of the submarine, and at the next instant the wake of the torpedo, which was coming straight for the ship. An endeavour was made to turn the ship, and avoid the torpedo, but it was of no avail, as the ship was going very slowly. The explosion was a dull crashing blast, and the ship shuddered like a reed. I was on duty at the moment, and all the glass in the office came crashing on my head. Next instant the ship was alive to the awful fact that what we had been dreading had actually happened, and everybody was at “stations” in record time: orders being obeyed with wonderful precision. The first great duty to every man was the rescue of every sister, [nurses] and they were all mustered in their respective boats and lowered to the water before any other order was given. This operation took but a few minutes and was carried out without a hitch, the boats being the best in the ship, and in a position to afford greatest possible facility for getting off..... the Wireless call for assistance had been transmitted and replies received within a few seconds. By the time the sisters’ boats had got clear, the ship had taken a heavy list to starboard and had sunk deep astern. For a few minutes she seemed to remain thus and during this time the destroyer had run up alongside. The troops were ordered to get “off” and they managed to do so by attaching ropes from the ship to the destroyer. On other parts of the ship troops were ordered to “take the water” and rafts were let loose. In a few minutes the sea was full of struggling men. On the

boat deck where I was performing duty, the ship's boat crews were working in vain to get off the remainder of the boats, which had become jammed by the list. One could feel her going fast, and the list was rendering it impossible to stand upon the deck. About fifteen minutes had elapsed from the time of the explosion, when the Commander gave the order – “Every man for himself”. Then there was a rush to get over the side, but nowhere was there any sign of panic. The discipline throughout was astounding, and troops clung on to each other, singing and cheering until they reached the water level, and then broke up into struggling masses. Just at this moment a groan and a cry of – “She’s going” went up from everybody, and she began to sink rapidly astern. I found it time to move, and managed to scramble on hands and knees to the side, where the destroyer was still at rescue work. One rope still remained attached to the destroyer, and to this I climbed and was sliding down – when alas! - it was cut, thus throwing me into the sea between the two ships, where I sank like a stone with all my uniform, boots and all on. When I got back to the surface I found myself in the midst of a mass of struggling humanity. It was a grim moment! Somehow I succeeded in getting to the destroyer, and got aboard, but some few seconds elapsed before I recovered my senses. Then I looked around – the destroyer was crammed with men: some wounded and bleeding, others stripped of clothing; many were laid out unconscious and dying. The “A” was disappearing rapidly amid a roar of rushing water, and the smashing of internal fittings. Scores of poor fellows still clung to the decks, and now at the last moment were attempting to throw themselves into the sea, rather than be “sucked under”, but from the great height to which the bow had raised, they were being killed outright as they touched the water. It was an awful moment! With one great surge, a roar of inrushing water, and the explosion of the ship's boilers, she went beneath the surface. Once out of sight, a grim silence seemed to settle on all, and I shall never forget the expression written upon men's faces, as I saw it then. The spot over which she sank seemed enormous, and all around were struggling men and wreckage, upturned boats and rafts, to which they were clinging. One lot of Scotch lads I saw nearby were standing shoulder to shoulder on a raft, knee deep in water, and singing “Loch Lomond”. It was pathetic! On the destroyer all hands were busy helping unfortunate ones, and preparing to clear a way for her to move ahead, when a shout rang out and next instant there was a terrific explosion. The middle of the destroyer had been smashed and men blown into the air. Oil, fumes, splinters of wood and steel flew in every direction,

and she broke in halves and commenced to sink at once: the two ends, bow and stern – rising into the air and the middle sinking rapidly, where the torpedo had hit. There was no chance to do anything but “jump for it” which I did, as did also everybody else who could do so. It is impossible to describe the “mess” there was around those severed remains of that fine destroyer as they sank, and there was little hope to be entertained for those who could not swim, as the only means of rescue remaining were the two Trawlers, who were near at hand, and upon which the Sisters were: besides these, only the “A’s” boats were available for rescue work; everything else, excepting rafts and wreckage, had disappeared.

However, these boats did wonderful work, and took hundreds of rescued fellows back to the Trawlers, where the Sisters worked unceasingly and with great heroism. Other Trawlers soon became visible on the horizon, and were rushing at top speed to the scene, but as the port was at least eight miles from the ship, they took quite a while to arrive, and many went down in the interval.

For more than an hour my senior officer and I were struggling for existence, before a Trawler picked us up, and it was a long time before either of us could “stand up”, as the temperature of the water was very low indeed. On board the trawler we had an exciting time, as we feared both submarine and mines. The Trawlers did fine work indeed, and but for their presence, few would have survived. As they became filled, they went back to port. Those with the Sisters were the first to reach land, and it was about 2.30 p.m. when they landed, everyone being safe.”

*Sue Harris*

## **NORFOLK RESEARCH**

Parish Records, Census Searches  
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£5 per hour

Send SAE or IRC for details to:

W Hepburn, 11 Preston Avenue, Wymondham, Norfolk NR18 9JE  
Or contact by email: [Willie.h.1945@virgin.net](mailto:Willie.h.1945@virgin.net)

## THE DEREHAM WAR MEMORIAL BOOK

Following on from the Spring Newsletter the following soldiers are commemorated on Dereham's War Memorials:

**Private Bertie Beckham** served with the Norfolk Regiment 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion. He was born in Dereham. He died of wounds on 11<sup>th</sup> February 1917 aged 20 and is buried in Bethune Town Cemetery, France. On the 1911 census Bertie is a GPO messenger living in Crown Road with his parents and siblings.



**2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Clare Beauchamp G Belding** served with the Northamptonshire Regiment 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion. He was born at South Creake Norfolk. He was killed in action on 11<sup>th</sup> March 1915, aged 41 and is commemorated on the memorial at Le Touret Memorial, Pas de Calais, France. On the 1911 census he is a colour sergeant with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Northamptonshire Regiment stationed at Floriana Barracks Malta. Clare Belding is commemorated on the War Memorial in both South Creake and Dereham. His eldest brother was a physician and surgeon in Market Place, Dereham which might well account for his entry there.

**Private Amos John Bell** served with the Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regt.) Amos was born in Dereham. He died of wounds in France on 19<sup>th</sup> May 1918 and is buried at St. Sever Cemetery Extension, Rouen, France. From the 1911 census we know he was working as an errand boy and lived at Albion Terrace, 7 South End Dereham with his widowed father and siblings. His older brother Ernest is also commemorated on Dereham War Memorial having died of wounds in 1915.

## YOUR LETTERS

### *A useful tip from Christopher Harpley*

The last time my youngest daughter Lynda and I went to the Norfolk Records Officer, she printed off Six Wills, all to do with the name Harpley. Three for Wiggenhall for about 1680 and three for Wicklewood about 1750.

I recently badly broke my left ankle which is now held together with nuts and bolts. As I was not going anywhere soon Lynda gave me these Wills and told me to sort them out to see if I could come up with anything.

As most of you know some old Wills are not at all that easy to read and these were no exception, especially the Wiggenhall ones. By luck more than judgment, I started to highlight names, places and dates with a light yellow Highlighter Pen. What a difference it made to making out what the words were. Try it on Parish Registers you have printed off as well.

***National Register*** – taken on 29 September 1939 by British Government and recorded personal details of individuals in order to issue Identity Cards and ration books. Should go on line within next two years, but you can sign up for progress updates.  
[www.1939register.co.uk](http://www.1939register.co.uk).  
*Sue V*

***Little Dereham.*** In London Gazette for 1918 was found Joseph L. MacKinder of Little Dereham, awarded the Military Medal in World War One. The 1911 Census showed this to be Little Dereham, Long Sutton in Lincolnshire. In her recent talk, Gill Blanchard pointed out the existence of such as Bartholomew's Gazetteer, a copy of which is in the MNFHS Library. This gives the whereabouts of Little Dereham directly.  
*B Scholes*

## **Dates for your Diary ...**

### **Suffolk Family History Society Fair and AGM**

Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2014-07-25

For more details see [www.suffolkfhs.co.uk/](http://www.suffolkfhs.co.uk/)

### **Lanarkshire Family History Society Family History fair**

Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2014

For more details see [www.lfhsshow2014.weebly.com](http://www.lfhsshow2014.weebly.com)



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### **Visiting Norfolk to do some research?**

Why not stay at Albert's Cottage in the village of Ashill? Over 200 years old, the character cottage overlooks the village pond. Fully furnished, the cottage has two bedrooms, one with a four poster bed and the choice of storage heaters or a log burning stove.



The inside of the cottage is complimented with a delightful garden and private parking.

Contact Mary or Dennis for details

tel: 01760 723884 or 078796 22458

Email [mary@breckfield.freemove.co.uk](mailto:mary@breckfield.freemove.co.uk)

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