

News

Issue 15 -4/4



Letter

Winter 2015

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PROGRAMME

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

20 January	The 1939 Register - The Home Front from home! by Myko Clelland
17 February	To be announced
16 March	Kindertransport Boy and past Sheriff of Norwich by Phyllida Scrivens

**Wishing all our Members a Merry Christmas
and a Happy New Year**

A few words from your Editor ...

Hello again and thank you for your contributions to the Newsletter.

You will be surprised to see the location of *Let's Look at a Church* in this issue. Denise and Roderic, who put so much work into visiting and writing articles about the churches in our area, visited the Holy Land recently, and we thought the Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem would be the perfect setting for the Christmas Issue of the Newsletter.

All the Members of the Committee would like to wish all our readers a Very Merry Christmas and a Very Happy 2016.

Kate (Editor)

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

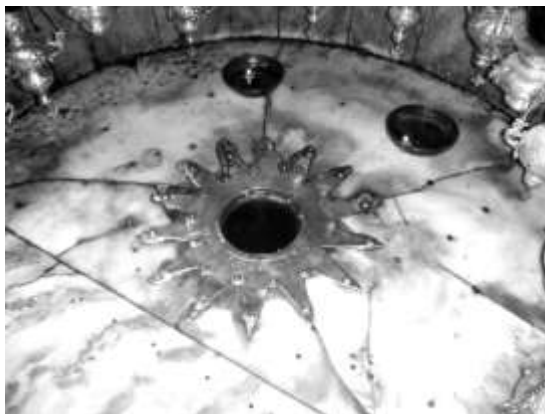
- email the file to me at kate.easdown@btinternet.com or
- post handwritten copy/CD, to me at the address on the back of the Newsletter

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: 20th January 2016

LET'S LOOK AT A CHURCH CHRISTMAS SPECIAL

No. 80 – The Church of the Nativity, Bethlehem



In Bethleem is a fayre chirche of our lady in whyche is a place where Crist was born.

So reads ***Information for Pilgrims unto the Holy Land***, a popular medieval guide for travellers quoted in Rosamund Mitchell's fascinating book ***The Spring Voyage*** (John Murray, 1965). Mitchell recounts the story of a group of travellers who made the journey by land and sea to the Levant in 1458, an arduous trip expected to take weeks if not months and for many of whom a visit to Bethlehem was the crowning experience of the whole pilgrimage. When we went to Israel earlier this year, our arduous flight from Heathrow to Tel Aviv lasted under five hours but one of the highlights of this rather more secular holiday was also a visit to the Church of the Nativity. Bethlehem lies just over five miles south of Jerusalem in the area governed by the Palestinian National Authority so the short journey from our hotel in the Israeli capital took us through a check point in the so-called security fence – at this point a high wall richly decorated with colourful graffiti glorifying the Palestinian cause – which divides Israel from Palestine. One of Mitchell's pilgrims found the road from Jerusalem to Bethlehem 'the most beautiful he had seen in all

those parts' – alas not any more. Regarding the 'ruinous condition of what had been a noble church built above the cave where the Holy Child was born' however, not a lot has changed. The Church of the Nativity, which is on the UNESCO list of endangered World Heritage Sites, is undergoing extensive restoration at the moment and is in rather a mess with scaffolding everywhere both inside and out. It seems that the various faiths which run the church could not agree on how the work should be carried out so the Palestinian Authority which relies heavily on tourism for its revenue and is funding the improvements stepped in in 2013 and hope to have everything up and running in another two years. The famous Manger Square, in which the church lies was not as large as we had imagined, nor was the plain square exterior of the building particularly impressive, but as we were to discover, its treasures lie within. Entrance to the basilica is via a tiny doorway and the necessity of stooping low has earned it the name 'Door of Humility' although the reason for its small size is tactical rather than spiritual in that the original door was partly bricked up by crusaders anxious to foil enemies bent on charging in on horseback – an early form of ram raiding. Once inside, after our eyes had adjusted from the dazzling sunshine outside, the first thing we saw was an ancient intricately carved wooden door and a bold geometrically patterned mosaic floor. Passing into the gloomy interior of the church, which was presided over by a monk whose face wore a look of extreme ennui as he perched on a high chair guarding a huge pile of candles for sale to tourists, our eyes were drawn upwards to a magnificent host of silver chandeliers as intricate as they were gigantic and each festooned with glass Christmas baubles seemingly to get into the yuletide spirit. In fact, despite being March, there was a quite a festive feel to Bethlehem altogether. When we drove through the streets to Manger Square, Christmas trees and pictures of Santa Clause were much in evidence and here in the church as we queued to enter the Grotto of the Nativity hidden loudspeakers played 'O come, all ye faithful' at us. Indeed the overall impression was rather like one of those German Christmas shops which purvey festive fare all year round. The wait seemed interminable but the boredom was somewhat relieved by a grim looking priest who appeared from nowhere and started kissing the icons in a desultory manner before hastening to his other duties. There were holy pictures everywhere in vivid hues and sumptuous gold leaf and a group of pilgrims ahead of us knelt in reverence to venerate some images of saints before the Iconostasis – a wall of icons separating the nave from the sanctuary. As mentioned earlier, no one Christian denomination has

overall control of the building and it is divided among the Armenians, Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholics, each group jealously guarding their own area of jurisdiction. We were warned by our tour guide before entry to mind our P's and Q's and not mess with any of the monks as these representatives of 'muscular Christianity' bear scant resemblance to your average mild mannered Anglican cleric and frequently indulge in fierce interfaith brawls requiring police intervention occasioned by real or imagined territorial slights. This is quite apart from the events of April 2002 when a group of armed terrorists who had taken 200 hostages were besieged in the church for 39 days by the Israel Defence Forces. On the day of our visit, there were no fisticuffs or other unpleasantnesses however and a holy peace reigned. At last, we reached our goal and gingerly ventured down the somewhat precipitous steps to the Grotto of the Nativity. Early pilgrims carried candles but we at least had the modern blessing of electricity to light our way yet one of our party turned back fearing a tumble – o ye of little faith! The Grotto of the Nativity, the place where Jesus was born according to Christian tradition is what is described as 'denominationally neutral' although the ornamentation is said to show Armenian Apostolic influences. The actual birth spot is marked by a large fourteen pointed silver star set in the marble floor and surrounded by silver lamps. Packed like sardines into the birth cave of Our Lord, we could only marvel at how little it resembled the homely stable with cheerful shepherds and reverent monarchs depicted yearly on our Christmas cards. After examining the altar above the star with its decorated hangings and ornate lamps we next proceeded through a small chamber containing paintings and made our way via a subterranean passage to a cramped chapel containing a number of contemporary religious artefacts where St. Jerome is said to have translated the Bible into Latin. By now, we were beginning to suffer a little from claustrophobia and it was with some relief that we ascended to the relatively modern Catholic Church of St. Catherine which is built in Gothic revival style and seemed quite airy and inviting after the Stygian depths from which we had come. Somewhat dazed, we stumbled back to our coach past a magnificent model of St. George slaying the dragon and a large sign bearing the word SILENZIO showing a saint touching his lips – a memorable day.

Roderic & Denise Woodhouse

AGM 2015 - CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Another year another AGM. I could simply say, 'no real change' Thanks to the efforts of our committee, all who do far more than their post titles might suggest, and thanks to the continuing support of the membership everything is ticking along nicely.

Membership stands at 177. Graham is still managing to arrange interesting speakers and our meeting attendance remains good averaging 35. This is about the same as last year and, although 22% were visitors, some did become members

Kate still manages to produce an interesting Newsletter, although I feel that I still need to make my annual plea on her behalf: She can only print what we submit - so if you have a family history experience, or find something of interest, please send it to Kate and let her decide on its suitability

I think Roderic and Denise are overdue for special thanks for continuing to provide us with the 'church feature' every issue. I have heard that some members actually collect the newsletters mainly for these articles.

We are still recording memorial Inscription – now on our '95th churchyard and sales continue , 90 booklets sold during the past year, providing very useful funds. That's in addition to the monies received from findmypast for transcriptions and our contribution to the Burial Index.

Our Statement of Expenditure against Income (printed elsewhere in this issue) appears to be in the black and we have £5141.79 in the bank. We were successful in our bid for a grant of £120 to improve our microphone system and upgrade the laptop. Having said that, the writing is on the wall with regard to the laptop, although to maintain our Burial Index we really do need retain a pre windows 7 operating system.

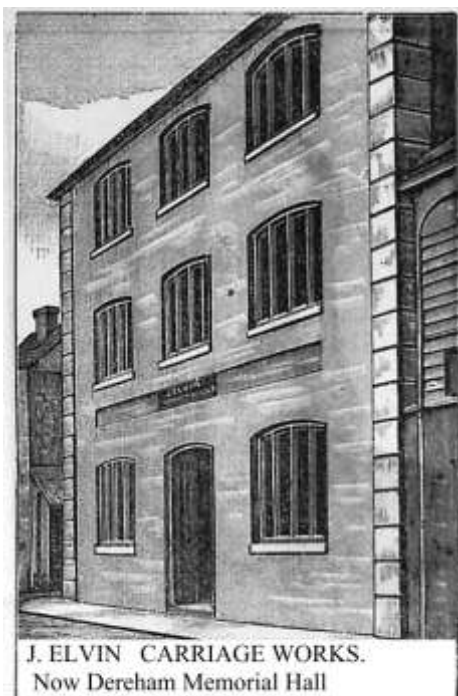
I must add my thanks to those members who entered our competition to improve the Members Directory cover, thank you. But in the end it was

decided just to improve what we had. Unfortunately this was too late and we had to hurriedly compromise to meet the print deadline. We will do better with the next issue.

One of our members questioned the standard of the print in one of our MI booklets and, following on from the observation, Kate changed the font in the latest newsletter, which we hope makes it easier to read. This prompts another plea for me to finish with - We have been going for a long time – we are set in our ways – if anyone has any ideas on how we might improve our service to you – no matter how trivial – please let us know.

Tom Garland

DEREHAM – AS IT WAS



Reproduced courtesy Norfolk Library & Information
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MID NORFOLK FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY - INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st JULY 2015

EXPENDITURE

Newsletters (printing, postage)	£ 533.41
Less advertising revenue	£ 20.00
Meetings and events	£ 1,048.78
Less door takings	£ 310.10
General admin. (post, stationery etc)	£ 738.95
FFHS Subscriptions and Insurance	£ 77.56
Publicity	£ 118.31
Projects	£ 16.09
Literary purchase	£ 30.56
Equipment (assisted by grant)	£ 51.54
Sundries	£ 128.66
Less unpaid cheque (subscription)	£ 9.00
	£ 1,678.41
	£ 13.00

Excess income over expenditure

TOTAL

BALANCE AS AT 31st JULY 2015

LIABILITIES

Accumulated Fund

Balance as at 31.7.14	£ 4,302.65
Less excess exp. over inc	£ 212.15
Plus excess inc. over exp.	£ 358.64
Balance as at 31.7.15	£ 5,054.14
Underspent cheques	£ 61.60
	£ 148.74
	£ 5,141.79
	£ 4,662.24

I report that the above Income and Expenditure Account is in accordance with the books and records supplied to me

Signed

Ray Vane

Date 27th August 2015

INCOME

Subscriptions	£ 360.87
Publication sales	£ 202.69
Less policy postage commission	£ 64.18
Miscellaneous sales	£ 176.20
FFHS On-Line commission	£ 271.49
Donations	£ 58.24
Grant (L. Potter Fund)	£ 130.00
Bank interest	£ 2.70
Sundries	£ 5.00
Expired cheque recredited	£ 18.94
	£ 1,477.50
	£ 1,524.50

Excess expenditure over income

	£ 212.15
	£ 2,192.83

ASSETS

Cash at HSBC Bank

Community Account
Business Money Manager Account

	£ 1,392.86
	£ 3,748.93
	£ 4,345.22

	£ 5,141.79
	£ 4,662.24

INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

HIGHWAY ROBBERY

We have recently recorded the memorial inscriptions (MIs) at Hardingham, where there is a block floor slab in the church chancel, in memory of a Reuben Gilman. Unfortunately, the inscription, including the date of death, is partially obscured by choir stalls. More out of curiosity than expectation, I went online and looked at GENUKI for possible clues regarding the hidden part of the inscription. It was here that I found an extract from the Norfolk Chronicle for 29 September 1781, in which Rueben became the victim of a highway robbery

It reports, that at around 7pm on Sat 22 Sep 1781, six gentlemen returning from Norwich, were separately stopped in or near Forhoe Wood; in the parish of Kimberly, by two footpads armed with pistols and clubs. All the men, except one, who refused to submit and received many violent blows before making his escape, were robbed. This included Mr Rueben Gilman of Hardingham, who was relieved of four Guineas and some silver, to the amount of five pounds. (equivalent to the spending power of about £314 in today's money). "One of the robbers was about six feet high, pale complexion, dark hair, had on a surtout coat, spoke with a soft voice and very quick. The other man appeared to be upwards of five feet high, stout made, a ruddy complexion, had a brown coat on, and both with hats flapped".

No use whatsoever, in my original quest to discover Rueben's date of death, but what a lovely story – if only he had been MY ancestor. Whilst attempting to discover more, I came across a series of extracts transcribed from British Library microfilmed copies of East Anglian newspapers. This is an on-going project by members of the Foxearth Local History Society, [www.foxearth.org.uk/newspapers], which was the source of the GENUKI robbery story. Each year, between 1740 and 1957, may be searched individually, (using 'CTRL +F', *find* facility) but there is only one newspaper per year, not all relevant to our immediate area and obviously not everything has been transcribed. However, it is easy and free to use. Although for my purpose, it could have been a lengthy search for I didn't know Reuben's year of death.

Eventually, I went on to have my first encounter with the ‘new’ British Library Newspaper Archive site and discovered that this has the potential to be a superb family history source [www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk]. You can select your date range and carry out a search of a particular newspaper, or all the countrywide newspapers in the database (I chose to search the *Norfolk Chronicle* which is available from 1776-1898). Searching is free. The results whet the appetite and you then have to pay to download the full articles. The cheapest rate is a two day package at £6.95 or 7 days at £9.95 with 500/600 credits. This may appear to be ‘Highway Robbery’ but even taking into account that the index is subject to Optical Character Recognition (OCR) errors, especially in the earlier newspapers, it could still be more fruitful than spending hours scrolling through complete newspapers. If you haven’t been to www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk yet, you may be interested in how I found Reuben Gilman’s date of death:

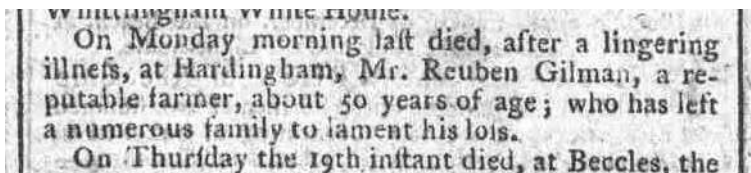
Using the *Advanced Search* option. I only entered the key word “Reuben Gilman”. I chose the *Norfolk Chronicle* and the date range 1721 – 1800. Selecting *SEARCH* produced just nine hits – the most likely being as follows:

Sat 28 Nov 1789 HOME NEWS 1493 Words

“ t Mr. Reuben Gilman, reputable fanner, about 50 years of age; who has left a numerous family to lament his lots. On Thursday the ... ?

Note the two minor OCR errors, “*fanner*” and “*lots*”. The latter is due to the long ‘S’ of the period and could have been predicted, but “*fanner*” occurs because of poor print quality, had I used “*farmer*” as a search word it would not have found this hit,

Downloading cost me 5 credits, (from the 15 given free as an introductory offer, when I registered). The download consisted of the whole 1493 words of the ‘Home News’ newspaper column. However, the words “Reuben Gilman” were highlighted, so I didn’t have to plough through the whole article to find the relevant part, which I have ‘cut and pasted’ below:



This gave me Reuben's date of death as "Monday morning last" i.e. 23rd Nov 1789 which was the main information I needed to complete the hidden part of the MI.

Time taken - very little (once I had mastered the basics of the system)

Footnote: Although this, my first use of the website was very successful, it may have been 'beginners luck', for spending a couple of hours searching for evidence of my own ancestors (in Kent) was a dismal failure. However, this is an on-going project and maybe the local paper with my people in has yet to be digitised. It could be next on the list and done tomorrow!

Tom Garland

A PIECE OF RAILWAY HISTORY - THE CAVELL VAN



This early carriage was photographed at the Forum in Norwich where it was on show for a few days in October, as part of the cities celebration to mark the centenary of the death of First World War heroine nurse Edith Cavell.

Looking resplendent, almost as good as new, after a £35,000 restoration, the van now fitted with replica catafalque and altar, was originally built for The South Eastern & Chatham Railway (SE&CR) and was the prototype for this class of railway stock.

This is the actual van used to transport the body of Edith Cavell. Edith was born at Swardeston, on the outskirts of Norwich, and was appointed matron of a hospital in Belgium in 1910. After war was declared she continued to run the hospital and also helped many allied soldiers escape back to the British lines. Unfortunately, The Germans discovered her activities and on the 12 October 1915 she was executed by a firing squad. After the war, on the 15th May 1919, her body was returned to Britain, where it was transported from Dover in this van, No 132, to London and subsequently Norwich, where she was buried with full military honours in the grounds of Norwich cathedral

Later in the same year, Van 132 was used to convey the body of another World War 1 civilian hero, Captain Charles Fryatt. He was Master of the Great Easton Railway passenger and freight steamer operating between Harwich and the Hook of Holland. In March 1915 the ship was intercepted by a German U Boat, ordered to 'heave to' and surrender. However, instead, the Captain ordered 'full steam ahead' unsuccessfully attempted to ram the submarine. The following year his ship was intercepted by a flotilla of German torpedo boats, after a 'show trial' Fryatt was executed in July 1916.

But, perhaps the van's most famous ceremonial duty was when it was used to transport the body of the 'Unknown Warrior'. On arrival at Dover on 10th November 1920, the coffin of a soldier, who had been selected at random, was transported in 132 to Victoria Station where it arrived on platform 8 at 8.32 pm, where it remained overnight under armed guard.

The following day, Nov 11th, the coffin was transported on a gun carriage to the inauguration ceremony at the cenotaph and subsequent burial in Westminster Abbey. A plaque at Victoria station commemorates the vans overnight stay, and every year on 10th November a small remembrance service, organised by the Western Front Association, takes place between platforms 8 and 9.

The repatriation of all three bodies was well advertised and many of our ancestors alive at the time, would have seen the SE&CR van as they lined the stations on route, standing in solemn silence as the train passed by. Many thousands more would have seen the events, including the van on Pathé newsreels of the day

The luggage and general cargo van, no 132 owned by the Kent & East Sussex Railway, which has a line between Tenderden and Bodiam in Kent. The van is usually parked at Bodiam Station where it is maintained as a museum to Edith Cavell. Admission is free and accessible when the station is open.

Tom Garland

NORFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL AT YOUR SERVICE THE NORFOLK HERITAGE CENTRE – THE FORUM NORWICH

Did you know that the Norfolk Library Services offer free access to the following websites

1. Ancestry Library Edition – Available at all Norfolk libraries (Norfolk library card number needed)
2. 19th Century British Library Newspapers – Accessible, all Norfolk libraries and Home Computers (Norfolk library card number needed)-
www.norfolk.gov/librariesfindit
3. Picture Norfolk – Local paintings/photos/drawings etc from 1840s to

present - Accessible from Any Home Computer -
www.picture.norfolk.gov.uk

4. Norfolk sources – (See web page below) Includes numerous Trade Directories - Accessible from Any Home Computer –
www.norfolksources.gov.uk

This is an easy way to check for ancestors in Local Trade Directories (If the norfolksources.gov.uk doesn't work) Begin at: www.norfolk.gov.uk

Click on “Libraries” (picture)

Click on “Leisure and Culture” (text)

Click on “Local History and Heritage” (picture)

Click on “Norfolk Sources” (picture)

You now arrive at the screen– “Welcome to Norfolk Sources”

For Trade Directories click on the period you are interested in or “All”

Insert a name , place or trade, click on “Search” and you will be presented with a list of the Directory pages that meet your search criteria. Then to view the appropriate Directory page simply click on the number.

BUT, and there always is one – you will have to search the page manually – your selected word, although on the page, will NOT be highlighted.

This advice appears on the page: Norfolk Sources will search on the word or words exactly as you enter them e.g 'Norwich Castle' will give results for Norwich Castle but 'castle Norwich' will not.

The above information is taken from the latest Norfolk Heritage leaflet
Contact: Norfolk Heritage Centre

2nd Floor, Norfolk & Norwich Millenium Library

The Forum, Millenium , Norwich NR2 1AW

Telephone:01603 774740 Email: Norfolk.studies.lib@norfolk.gov.uk

Website: www.library.norfolk.gov.uk

LIFE IN A SMALL VILLAGE

Although it's necessary to research the significant dates of our ancestors lives, where I can I like to find out more about them, particularly if they lived a very long while ago. In many cases this is not possible but occasionally you get lucky.

My great x 10 grandfather, John Rouse, was born in Cratfield, Suffolk on 23 July 1570. He had two older sisters and later a third younger sister was born. He was the only son. I was so lucky that Cratfield is one of the villages that have parish records dating back to 1539. On 5 September 1538, following the split with [Rome](#), Henry VIII's Vicar General Thomas Cromwell ordered that each [parish](#) priest must keep a book in which all the baptisms, marriages and burials of the parish should be entered. So the registers in Cratfield go back to when they were first introduced.

On the same day as his birth John was baptised in Cratfield church using a 15th century Seven Sacrament font. This font still exists and is now considered one of the finest in the country. It is rather strange to touch the actual font which has been touched by John's parents more than 440 years ago.

John's bride was Margery but I have been unable to trace their marriage and hence I don't know her surname. No doubt they married in an adjoining parish where Margery lived and the parish registers no longer exist. John and Margery had at least 6 children between 1595 and 1608 so they probably married about 1594 when John was aged 24. The children I've traced were three boys and three girls, my direct ancestor being the 4th child and second son.

Life in the village was very local. The children would "beat the bounds" with sticks each year to drive the knowledge of the parish boundaries into their minds. Every field had a name and every family's history, rise or fall in its finances and every scandal were known by the people of the parish. Everyone would have known who was a member of the parish and who

was not. In Elizabethan England the village constable was allowed to break into any house where he suspected adultery was taking place. People would lend money to their neighbours in the village with the result that it was a network of small debts and loans.

The seasons governed the year. Ploughing and harrowing would take place in January and February then the spreading of manure followed. New trees and hedges were planted, trees were pruned and timber cut. In March and April the men cultivated the wheat and rye fields and sowed the oats and barley. Early vegetables were planted. In April, ditches were cleared. May was a time for newborn lambs. One task followed another with no time for rest. In July there was haymaking and the cereal harvest ran from August until September. Then the wheat and barley was threshed and the seed corn for the wheat selected and sown. On average only five wheat grains were harvested for every one sown. One of these five would be kept back as seed corn for the following year. If the spring had been dry or the summer wet and the yield even slightly reduced below that of a good year, shortage would be inevitable. There was a dangerously narrow margin between survival and famine. Cattle weighed about one-third of their modern equivalent and sheep produced a fleece weighing little more than 1lb. Care of animals was poor and often cruel.

John's father, named Gregory Rouse, died in October 1607 and he made John, his only son, his sole executor. I have a copy of the will in which Gregory left John all his lands and tenements, messuages and hereditaments plus 40 shillings to each of his grandchildren. As well as money left to other family members Gregory also left money to his son John's servants. I thought it very strange that someone would leave money to their child's servants but when I looked into this further I found that:- "Tudors saw that prosperity lay in serving those above you so there was no disgrace in being a servant. Wealthy people often had very well-bred personal servants who might even be their relatives".

However, John was to die only 14 or 15 weeks after his father, with his father's will still unproven. John's widow, Margery, was about 4 months pregnant with her 6th child when he died. I have a copy of John's will in

which he leaves all his messuages or tenements and appurtenances in Cratfield, plus meadows, pastures, feedings and hereditaments in Cratfield and the adjoining parish of Laxfield to be held until his son John, still only 9 years of age, attained the age of 21. He leaves money and property to his other children but there is no mention in his will of the child his wife was carrying so possibly he was not aware that his wife was expecting another child. John's widow was to be the sole executor. A note has been attached to the will which advises that Margery was to be the executor of both the will of her husband and that of her father-in-law. Margery was pregnant at the time so was loath to travel so Barth Stiles [possibly a solicitor] went to Cratfield to see Margery Rouse and dealt with both wills.

Margery would have benefited from the considerable legacy left to her husband by his father and in addition she inherited more from her husband. However life must have been very difficult for her and her fatherless children.

Just seven years after her husband's death Margery also died, her children still being quite young. Margery's will also still exists and in the will she distributes the land, property and contents of the house plus money to her children and provided for the continued education of her younger children.

I have also been able to trace an inventory following Margery's death which was a real eye-opener in which the details gave me so much information into how the family lived. The inventory is in a very poor condition and I spent many hours attempting to transcribe it fully. The inventory is far too detailed to list here but to summarise the rooms listed were:- 'the haule', 'the new parlor', 'the old parlor', 'the new parlor chamber', 'the ketchin chamber', 'the ketchin', 'the buttry', 'the buttry chamber' and outside the house, 'the pasture', 'the barne' 'wheate in the chamber' and 'the dayry'. The items mentioned were vast and the beds and bedlinen seem to have been considered of some significant value. In the hall were virginals, a keyed musical instrument rather like a small harpsicord. I like to think that my ancestors were musical.

There was a large dairy which had milk and butter making equipment and wheat, hay and oats were in the barn. Hens, cattle, sheep and pigs were kept as was butchering equipment. Carts and ploughs were amongst many implements available for working on the farm as were horses for transport. What a different life to that of our own. Amongst the more personal effects were “one blessed bible, one great psalter, one old statute booke with others”. Other documentation that I’ve found suggests that the family seemed to be an active part of the church life, as no doubt was most of the village.

There were many mentions of Gregory Rouse in the church accounts. It would appear that he was dealing with the church accounts for several years. From the wording of the accounts it is also possible that he acted as a Constable for a while. It seems my family were people of note in the village.

During the time of John & Margery Rouse life was very unsettled. Soldiers were moving around the country as we were fighting the Spanish. Even the common man was expected to be prepared to fight if we were invaded. The church was unsettled with the religion of the country having changed from Catholic to Protestant and back again to Catholic and then, during the time of John Rouse, Protestant once again while Elizabeth I was queen.

Much was happening in the country during the lifetime of John and Margery. In 1583 parliament passed very severe laws against Roman Catholics causing unrest throughout the country. In 1587 Queen Elizabeth I signed the death warrant of her cousin Mary Queen of Scots after Mary was implicated in a plot to murder Elizabeth. Seven days later Mary was beheaded. In 1588 the Spanish Armada was defeated by the English naval force, a cause for much celebration throughout the country. In 1597 an act was passed for the punishment of “rogues, vagabonds, and sturdy beggars”. These were people that went about begging as poor scholars, or on pretence of losses by fire or shipwreck; fortune tellers, gipsies, common players and minstrels, jugglers and tinkers. Those that did not work for wages when they were able to were to be punished by whipping,

and sent from the parish to that where they were born, or last dwelt.

However, Queen Elizabeth I was basically a popular ruler and on her death in 1603 she was succeeded by her cousin who became James I, the first monarch to reign over both England and Scotland. James had not been on the throne long before he upset the Catholics. He would not implement religious tolerance measures and ordered all Catholic priests to leave the country. A number of Roman Catholic nobles and gentlemen plotted against Protestant rule and planned to blow up the King, Queen, church leaders, and both Houses of Parliament with 36 barrels of gunpowder in the cellars beneath the Palace of Westminster. Guy Fawkes was later executed. Although this plot did not succeed, how would this news have affected the people of Cratfield? It must have been very worrying. The church records document the harsh winter of 1609/1610 where severe frosts lasted from December to April with the loss of bird life and animal stocks. This harsh weather would no doubt have impacted on the lives and stock of the Rouse household and possibly have delayed the sowing of seed in spring.

The uncertainty of war, religion and weather must have made life extremely difficult, unsettling and disturbing for my ancestors. The life these people lived was hard even for my family who appear to have lived what for that time was a very comfortable life. However no doubt we would have found their lives hard and very frightening.

John & Margery's 4th child, Gregory Rouse was born in 1603. He is my Great x 9 grandfather. He remained in Cratfield throughout his life as did his youngest child Ann my great x 8 grandmother and two more subsequent generations. As Cratfield parish records exist for this period of time I hope to find more about this branch of my family. *Sue Harris*

RESEARCHING YOUR WWI FAMILY

Last August our speaker was Elizabeth Budd, her subject was - *Researching Your WW1 Family*.

A question was asked about Widows' Pensions and Elizabeth did some research and wrote back as follows:

I was interested in the question I was asked about at the end to do with widows' pensions. I did some research so I could report back. There is a really useful guide to surviving records here: <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/disability-dependents-pensions-first-world-war/> and this book could be interesting: <http://www.amazon.co.uk/Wars-Forgotten-Women-British-Widows/dp/0752461796> As I suspected, the allowance does seem to have ceased if a widow remarried and when children reached 18/21 for boys and girls respectively. Interestingly, the US at least appears to have still been paying WWI pensions as of last year (although very few remain now). I'd be grateful if you could pass the information on the questioner.

Elizabeth has kindly sent us a handout - *Useful Websites for Researching Your Military Ancestors* – this is too large (2 x A4 sheets) to include in the Newsletter but I will email a copy to anyone who wants one (please email me kate.easdown@btinternet.com) or send me a stamped addressed envelope.

Kate (Ed)

YOUR LETTERS

Help Wanted: BRACEY and WRIGHT – Ernie Wright is researching the BRACEY/WRIGHT family. Kate Wright and Albert Ernest Bracey married 1902 and lived in Norwich. Their children were: William Albert, Arthur Edward, Kate Elizabeth, Alice, Margaret, Ada, Rachel, Irene and Jack.

All of the children of Kate and Albert Bracy were married in Norwich. Kate's parents were Daniel Robert Wright and Julia nee Daines who moved to Manchester and started the Wright family in Lancashire, this may have been at the start of the Industrial Revolution.

If you can help with information please either contact me, Kate (Editor), and I will pass the information on.

NEW PUBLICATIONS

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Key to awards – see overleaf

Key: D.S.M. – Distinguished Service Medal; D.F.M. – Distinguished Flying Medal; D.F.C. – Distinguished Flying Cross; M.C. – Military Cross; M.M. – Military Medal; M.B.E. – Member of the Order of the British Empire (Military); B.E.M. – British Empire Medal; S.O.E. – Special Operations Executive. T.D. – Territorial Decoration; Croix de Guerre T.O.E. – Croix de Guerre des théâtres d'opérations extérieurs.



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