

News

Issue 17 - 4/4



Letter

Winter 2017

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Meetings are held at: Trinity Methodist Church Hall, Theatre
Street, Trinity Close, Dereham NR19 2EP

On the third Wednesday of the month ... Starting at 7.30 pm

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

A few words from your Editor ...

Hello again

Another year is coming to an end and the Mid Norfolk FHS is still going strong. How research has changed over the years, it used to be necessary to travel to where the records were kept, usually London, making a long, expensive day, and now, you just settle down in front of the computer with a coffee and a bar of chocolate, and leisurely do your research in the comfort of your own home. How times change!

Best wishes to everyone for Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Kate (Editor)

Format for Newsletter Contributions Preferably typed using Microsoft Word 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 -
29th January 2018**

LET'S LOOK AT A CHURCH

No. 88 – St Andrews, Deopham



Deopham is a small village south-west of Norwich which lies within a scattered parish containing a number of settlements and it would probably be true to say that not a great deal has happened here since the glory days of the Second World War when Flying Fortresses of the US Army Air Force sallied forth into the 'wild blue yonder' from the nearby airfield, now long disused, to drop their bombs on the Reich. The parish church, St. Andrews, a substantial structure in flint with stone and some brick dressings boasts at 100 feet one of the tallest towers in Norfolk, a not unworthy claim, and it is nothing if not imposing within its sparse rural setting. As well as being one of the tallest towers in the county, that of St Andrews, which is in the Perpendicular style and dates from about 1450 is, according to Mortlock and Roberts (***The Popular Guide to Norfolk Churches***), also one of the most distinctive in that in appearance with its bold buttresses it is more like those to be found in the West Country than in Norfolk. Having said that, it is certainly not unique round here in that it closely resembles that of its smaller neighbour St. Andrews Hingham which the listed buildings website suggests was built in direct imitation of Deopham's an observation borne out by comparing the two which indeed bear a striking resemblance. Leaving the churchyard, we venture into the lofty and spacious interior of the building, with its fine late medieval tie-

beam roof, and discover a number of interesting features, not the least a notice, suitably decorated with droppings, which informs us of 'bat research in progress' and asks us please not to disturb this. The tiny creatures appeared to be absent during our visit but as quietly as we could, we examined the 15th century perpendicular style font which although quite plain apart from a simple tracery decorations is sturdily built. There is at present in the church reputedly seating for at least 400 persons, a number probably not achieved since Victorian times and the pews although somewhat crude in style are quite old and along with the usual poppyheads have pleasing pagoda-like bench ends. The piscina in the chancel - a stone basin used for cleaning the communion vessel after mass which usually has a drain hole allowing the consecrated water to drain onto holy ground, is the finest of the two to be found in the building, the other one being in the south aisle, and it is beautifully carved and well worth close examination. There are five bells, the oldest dating from the 1300's and although they are not at present in use, an appeal is afoot to raise the necessary funds to get them rehung. Before leaving, we note the information on display that the parish celebrated its eighth centenary in 1946 and the first Vicar, who went by the name of Robert, took office in 1146.

The original records are held at the Norfolk Record Office (Cat. Ref. PD485) comprising Baptisms 1560-1645 and 1681-1872, Marriages 1560-1642 and 1681-1883, Burials 1560-1642 and 1681-1927 and Banns 1755-1901 and 1927-1974. Microform copies cover the same dates except Marriages which end in 1900 and Burials in 1903. Archdeacon's and Bishop's transcripts all start in 1691 but Baptisms and Burials end in 1874 and Marriages in 1837. There is a very small Parish Chest relating to the nineteenth century consisting of a Writ of Charles I for enjoyment by the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury including a grant of free warren in Deopham dated 1629 with annual acknowledgements by the sheriff 1629-1870. Also to be found is a survey of the parish giving occupier, acreage and land use details 1818, an extract from an inclosure award 1814 and the Tithe Apportionment for 1843.

Roderic and Denise

Woodhouse

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2017

At the AGM I was re-elected. Yes. I am still Chairman of The Mid-Norfolk Family History Society and fortunately, I can report that we have had another good year. Our membership is still falling, down to 155 but, despite increases in cost and thanks to Graham's, varied speaker programme, our monthly meetings are still attracting average audiences of around 34 people. Matt Walker is receiving favourable reports regarding the society's new website, although we are still looking for more. If you haven't commented yet, do have a look at <https://midnorfolkfhs.wordpress.com>, but can I ask that you don't google, as it is not yet open to all and google will take you to the old tsites version.

Kate, our Editor, tells me that she is always looking for contributions, but despite our reluctance, or ability, to supply her with material, she still manages to produce an interesting Newsletter. We even had a member who re-joined "because she missed it" and another who has collected 76 issues and thinks Roderic and Denise deserve "to be mentioned in Dispatches" for their regular "Let's Look at Churches" articles, and I am sure the rest of us think so too.

The list of MI booklets on our website, now exceeds 100 showing, our aim to record all the memorials in all the churchyards, within a twelve mile radius of Dereham, has almost reached fruition. Unfortunately, the churchwardens of the few that haven't been done, have made it clear, they don't want us to do them, so it is almost time to declare the project finished.

Most members will be aware, as a by-product of our contribution to

the now defunct National Burial Index, for many years, we have been able to provide print-outs of transcriptions by surname, of burials from parish registers, within our circle. However, the old technology, is really struggling to keep up, but following discussion at the AGM, it is thought that the index, which contains around 150,000 entries, still serves a useful purpose and we are going to try to develop a new way of presenting the data.

On the financial side, the Income/Expenditure Account for the year ending July 31st 2017, see page 7, shows that we have £4913.91 in the bank and, despite rising prices and falling membership, causing a decrease in subscription income, we managed to run the society within budget. Incidentally, during the past year, we sold an amazing 189 MI Booklets. The Account shows an apparent large reduction in Newsletter expenditure, again due to less copies being required, and partly due to the use of postage stamps previously purchased, to avoid increase in postal charges. Nevertheless, the Committee felt, unanimously approved at the AGM, that we should raise the meeting charge from 50p, which it has been since we started twenty odd years ago, to £1. This will still include tea and biscuits.

Finally, I would like to thank all the Committee for their efforts during the past year, all do far more than their post titles might suggest. What is more, together with new newly elected members, Matt Walker and Julian Crutch, all were re-elected to serve for another year at the AGM. However, although we are all happy to continue to serve on the committee, I feel that we are running out of ideas, so I end with a question “How can we improve the society to provide what YOU want”? Ideas, anonymous or otherwise will be appreciated.

Tom Garland

CONCLUDING THE SEARCH FOR GEORGE LONG'S FAMILY

Continuing the story of my research, on behalf of the current owner of George Long's model steam engine Anthony Case, who resides in Somerset.

The Newspaper article re-produced in last month's newsletter suggests, George, a carpenter/wheelwright by trade, constructed his traction engine in a shed in his back garden., However, I am sure he must have enlisted the expertise of his father and/or elder brother, because both were 'iron moulders', working in an agricultural machinist shop. A possible example of their work can be found in Dereham Cemetery, where the grave of George's parents, who died in 1910 and 1926, still retains its unique surround, consisting of 26 metal hoops, showing in fine detail, the rose, or bramble, branches from which they were moulded.



From past experience, the first stop in discovering clues into a life story is a death notice or obituary in the local newspaper. But, despite extensive searching, none could be found for any of our Long family. Consequently, initially at least, the census was our prime source of information.

The returns, together with the 1939 Register, tell us that George lived in a two-bedroomed terraced cottage at 68 Baxter Row, Dereham, from birth in 1881, to at least the start of the Second World War. In 1891 we see his household had grown to eleven (parents, 3 boys and 6 girls and the family also occupied the adjoining cottage, number 70. By 1939 all the girls had married, with changes of surname to Sadler, Burleigh, Dye and Mayes, to name four, leaving just the three boys, all still bachelors, occupying 68/70 Baxter Row. There is no record of any of them ever marrying, which helps explain why, despite several readers contacting local "Longs", on my behalf, no one could find any who could place George in their family trees.

Tom Garland

YOUR LETTERS

This month I received two THANK YOU LETTERS

John Clarke has written in with a big thank you to Roderic and Denise for their 'Lets Look at Church' articles. He would also like to thank them for the help they have given him with his research into the Marsham side of his family, taking the time to send him information and photographs of tombs in the churchyard. So a very big thank you to Roderic and Denise.

I have also had a letter from the Church Warden at Great Melton who purchased 10 copies of the booklet, the Memorial Inscriptions of Great Melton, and told us that it had been well received in America. The Churchwarden sends her thanks to Tom Garland, Iona Folliard and Sheila Moulton for a superb job.

MID-NORFOLK FHS NATIONAL BURIAL INDEX PROJECT

The Mid-Norfolk FHS National Burial Index Project has been available for Members to ask for free NBI searches. Unfortunately, the program does not work on Windows 10, only on the older versions of Windows. For a long time now it has been on my computer, which was 10 years old and ran on Windows Vista. Unfortunately, my faithful old computer has finally given up and I now have a Windows 10 machine.

As a result of this the Society cannot, until further notice, provide Mid-Norfolk FHS National Burial Index searches. Tom is working on a way to adapt the program to Windows 10, and we will let you know when this is successful.

Kate (Editor)

BEETLEY TANK VETERAN'S MEMOIRS PUBLISHED



Mid-Norfolk Family History Society has published the war-time memoirs of the late Aubrey Burton of Beetley. Mr. Burton was well-known for his work with Dereham builders Potter Brothers, from 1947 to 1979, but his wartime service as a Wireless Operator/Gunner with the Staffordshire Yeomanry in the secret Duplex-Drive (swimming) tanks was largely unknown. Training with these tanks took place at Fritton Lake, twice having to escape from a submerged tank. As well as landing in his tank on Queen White sector of Sword Beach on D-Day, he took part in the assault crossings of the rivers Scheldt, Rhine and Elbe. Along with other surviving veterans who helped liberate France, he was awarded the Legion d'honneur in 2015. He died in 2017, aged 93. Thanks to his brother Chris, and our members Russell Johnson and Jean Palmer, for their assistance with this project.

A Staffordshire Yeomanry Trooper at War. My war in a Duplex-Drive (Swimming) tank, by (former Sergeant) Aubrey Burton.

The booklet (48 A4 pages, some in colour) is published on demand and is available for £8, or £9.22 by post (cheques payable to Mid-Norfolk Family History Society). To order, please contact Kate (details on back page).



Aubrey Burton on left

THE WILLS OF OUR ANCESTORS

"The past is another country," wrote LP Hartley. *"They do things differently there"*. In contrast to today's world of change and instability and uncertainty, our ancestors - at least, in the days before the Industrial Revolution - lived in a society which was comparatively stable and unchanging. Men knew where they stood in society, what they had to do, what they could expect and what they could look forward to.

So when it came to making a will, it is perhaps not surprising that the standard religious formula for its opening remained unchanged until the civil courts took over the process of proving them in the nineteenth century: "In the Name of God, Amen", it always begins. The best way to look at an ancestor's will before the 1650s is as a sort of liquidation exercise. At death, three elements of you which had formerly been united would be separated for good: your soul, your body and your goods would each be going their separate ways.

If a man left no will, the common law and the custom in that area came into force. It was no problem: it was, in fact, rather cheaper than if he left a will. If it went through the proving process in the church courts, there was tax to pay on the estate and all the trouble of getting probate granted. More to the point, a man living what we might call a "normal" life cycle and dying at a ripe old age had usually put his affairs in order long before he died as a matter of course. A typical yeoman farmer, for example, might die in his late sixties or early seventies. He had married fairly young and raised a family - say three sons and two daughters. His wife was still alive and showed every sign of outliving him. His two daughters would have had what was coming to them at the time they got married:

money or livestock and perhaps a few trinkets, all of which had gone to help them set up house with their new husbands. In this situation, what was the point of making a will? What was left? A few odds and ends whose fate had long ago been agreed upon. His widow would be taken care of, just as he had been, by the children.

If a man left a will, in contrast, it usually meant that there was unfinished business to attend to. Men made wills to circumvent the custom, to exercise the power the document gave them to influence what happened after they died. By controlling the disposal of his worldly goods, a man could usually control the behaviour and fate of his family from beyond the grave. As so many wills explicitly state, it was drawn up "*in order to avoid contention*".

So when you look at a run of wills from the sixteenth, seventeenth or eighteenth centuries, you find the same sort of issues and the same sort of concerns cropping up again and again. The testator has one or more under-aged children. Who will look after them when he's dead? Who will pay for their education? Above all, if the widow re-marries, what guarantees will the testator have that the heirs of *his* body will inherit *his* wealth when they come of age, rather than any later children born to his widow by another man, or the children of a completely different family brought into his household by the marriage of his widow with a widower?

It was to make provision for these situations that men usually made wills.

Simon Pawley

An article in the October issue of Family Tree tells us that FreeCEN is being re-launched and will offer a new look and more research tools.



FreeCen is part of Free UK Genealogy, a registered charity, which believes family history records should be freely available to everyone. To this end over the past 18 years volunteers have been transcribing record for this and its sister sites FreeBMD and FreeREG. A massive undertaking.

The new website at <https://freecen2.freegen.org.uk> contains all the records of the previous site but with a fresh look, in line with the other two.

The project leader is asking genealogists and family history researchers to try it out and telling them what they like or dislike and how it could be improved. The database is still being worked on and many more volunteers are required.

For example the Norfolk census is completely transcribed for 1861, 1871 and 1891 but for my county, Kent, 1861 - 53%, 1871 - 10%, and 1891 only 5%

Do try it out and if you have a few hours to spare, maybe volunteer to help complete this mammoth task

Tom Garland

EXTENDED PILOT TEST OF CERTIFICATE DATA IN PDF FORMAT

The FFHS has advised us that the General Registration Office (GRO) *has* launched a further Pilot Test of certificate data in pdf format.



Details as follows: The pilot service from 12 October 2017 will provide portable document format (PDF) copies of digitised historical birth and death records. The pilot will run for a minimum of 3 months to enable GRO to assess the demand for this service over a prolonged period.

Applications for each PDF cost £6, must be made online, and include a GRO index reference. England and Wales records which are available as PDFs in this extended pilot include: Births: 1837 –1916, Deaths: 1837 – 1957

Note: A PDF is not a certificate and has no “evidential” value, and therefore a certificate is required for official purposes, e.g. applying for a passport, driving licence or giving notice of marriage.

If you are using the site for the first time you will need to complete the registration process. You will only need to go through this process the first time you use the system. Once registered your details will be stored for future reference and you will be asked to confirm the information is correct when making an application.

Editors Note:

This is another chance to purchase the information contained in birth and death certificates at a reduced rate. i.e. £6 instead of £9.25.

Remember it is NOT an official certificate, but it contains all the information you would find on a certificate apart from the official crest and issuing authority. The certificate will be delivered as a PDF file to your computer.

You must register to order, “official” or PDF certificates, from the GRO on line. It is easy and you only have to register once by going to:

<https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates>

(or simply google GRO certificates)

To order on line you need the GRO index reference i.e. Year, Quarter, Registration Office, Volume and Page number

This information is also on the same website at “Search the GRO index”, where searches can be made +/- 2 years of a given year.

Alternatively GRO the reference is also available on

<https://freebmd.org.uk> (google freebmd). This is easier to use as it has no year restriction but has not been updated to include additional maiden names and ages at death for the historical dates.

The pdf version is only available on line.

Once ordered You will receive an email to tell you when it is ready to view. The PDF will remain “ready to view” for three months.

Kate

NO MORE MICROFILMS AT THE LDS FAMILY HISTORY CENTRES

In the past many of us have spent hours scrolling through hired microfilm and fiche at the Church of Latter Day Saints (LDS) Family History Centres, which we have ordered from their extensive catalogue. They have now decided that as the majority of their data

has been digitised and is available free of charge at www.familysearch.org, to discontinue this microform rental service at all their family history centres. There are still some microfilms in the process of being digitised which may take a couple of years to process but, these are thought to be ones of low demand and/or containing data available elsewhere.

However, the LDS Family History Centres will still play a major role in our family history research for in addition to providing access, using their computers to FamilySearch, most also give free access to fee-based sites such as Ancestry (international edition), Findmypast, MyHeritage and the British Library 19th century newspapers. In addition, all will continue to provide help and guidance with our family history research.

There are about 4500 LDS Family History Centres around the world, including over twenty in the UK. To find your nearest, contact number and opening times go to <https://familysearch.org/locations>

TFG

SHIPDHAM HISTORY GROUP – Little Gladys

A few years ago, a chance conversation during a ‘Munch and Mardle’ community meal at Cranworth with an elderly lady called Lily about lost parents went like this:

‘When my Mum Laura died she only had one regret and that was she never knew what happened to Little Gladys.....’

Intrigued to learn more I was drawn into a story of love and betrayal I’d not met before.

Lily's Mum's sister Gladys married a Birmingham born soldier called Fred and both her young children, Clarence and Winifred, were left homeless after her premature death in 1922 from influenza.

After the funeral in Barford, Lily's mum Laura returned to Shipdham bringing both homeless children to join her loving family and they were brought up by her and her husband along with their own children. Clarence happily remained with Laura's family throughout his schooldays until he joined the army.

Winifred (known to all as Little Gladys since she so resembled her mother) was still a young child living with her Aunt Laura when she received one visit from her errant father, Fred, who had not been seen since before her mother's death. He demanded to take the child out for the day and while Laura had serious misgivings she felt powerless to prevent him for he was the child's father.

He never came back to Shipdham or ever returned Winifred to Laura. Clarence never saw or heard of his sister again. No wonder that when Laura died in 1957 she still mourned the loss of the young niece she'd loved as a daughter and wondered what had happened to 'Little Gladys'.

The public tree we compiled on Ancestry was as comprehensive as was possible with the scant family information used to supplement the usual records and we assumed that we wouldn't be able to help solve the family mystery. The records alone are nothing without the human story behind them.

But we take no credit that an out-of-the-blue email from Australia one day inviting contact resulted in conversations with Winifred's descendants. She was alive and well aged 95 years living with a large and loving family on the other side of the world. So how did she get there?

Winifred's earliest memories were of the Birmingham orphanage her father Fred put her in immediately after taking her away from her aunt Laura's loving home in Shipdham. He never once visited her there

afterwards.

Two years later Fred had remarried in Birmingham and his new wife Margaret was shocked when told by a neighbour that he had a daughter in the nearby orphanage with whom he had no contact.

She immediately walked to the orphanage and arranged the release of the child and Winifred recalled the delicious fish and chips Margaret bought for her on the way home and the single bed she could for the first time call her own beside which she prayed each night with her new stepmother and half-sister.

Predictably, Fred yet again abandoned his wife and children leaving Margaret unsupported to raise them. She emigrated to a new and better life in Australia in the 1950s taking Winifred and her child with her. Winifred grew up loved and happy, later to marry and have a large family of her own.

When we had all made contact and both sides were able to fill in the gaps in Winifred's life story, she was 95 and quite deaf so was sadly unable to talk to her newly discovered Norfolk cousins on the telephone but many letters were written and calls and emails exchanged between younger relatives on both sides of the world and everyone was happy.

Winifred and all her Shipdham born cousins have since passed away. We were so glad that Lily knew her mother's mystery had been solved before she died last year. Winifred had been overjoyed to learn of her early days and to discover she'd had a brother, though sadly Clarence had already died but contact was made with his family and the descendants all keep in touch. It felt so good to have been of help to both families.

Another extract from Beanie Brown's Notes for a Society in Feb 2018

CHURCH HISTORY DAY



On Sat 26 August 2017 Garvestone, Reymerston and Thuxton churches together with Garvestone Chapel simultaneously opened their premises for a History Day.

The chapel display was particularly comprehensive mostly repeating a display that was used in 2014 to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Primitive Methodism in Garvestone . The Church Steward was keen to show us the part of his *Durrant* family tree who had all lived in Garvestone. This went back 14 generations to John who was buried in the churchyard in 1571. He went on to explain that he and his sister will be the last of the village line.

Each of the churches, also had its own display of local family histories' supplemented by documents on loan for the day from the Norfolk Record Office. This provided a unique opportunity for the public to visit these places of worship while learning a little of their history and the people who lived there.

I found the demonstration of bell ringing, whereby the bells start and finish 'upside down,' particularly interesting, especially in answer to the question 'what stops the bells going past the vertical,' to be shown a broken safety stay. As well as bell ringers, church wardens were on hand to direct us to the churches points of special interest, you could try your hand at brass rubbing, climb the church towers or, just sit quietly and enjoy a cup of tea and cake.

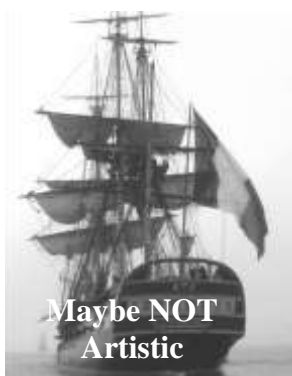
Hopefully, this type of event will be repeated, giving us all an excuse

to visit even more of our local village churches, which were so important to our ancestors.

TFG

FRENCH TRICOLOUR ON DISPLAY IN NORWICH

Earlier this year Norwich castle staged an exhibition, devoted to Lord Nelson.



On entry to the display, the first exhibit was a large, no mammoth, French tricolour, measuring 16m x 8.3m. Unfortunately, it is now very faded and fragile but it once proudly flew from the French, 74 gun, Le Généreux, one of the ships that opposed Nelson's fleet at the Battle of the Nile in 1798. Apparently, although this man of war took part in the battle, it managed to escape, only to be

captured eighteen months later in Feb 1800, by HMS Foudroyant, captained by Sir Edward Berry, who later presented the ensign to Norwich City. Since then, apart from the Trafalgar Centenary celebrations in 1905, this symbol of British supremacy of the seas, has been in storage.

In preparation for the latest event, Norfolk Museum Services, hired St Andrews Hall in Norwich, one of the few places big enough to allow the flag to be laid out on the floor. Here it was carefully vacuumed to remove small splinters of wood and other battle debris which was retained for further examination and the repairs to 'bullet' holes etc were studied and recorded, in readiness for the exhibition. At the castle, except for a few metres at each end which just would not fit in the space available, the flag was once again laid

flat, taking pride of place alongside many other items of Nelson memorabilia.

In my ignorance, although I appreciated that in battle, ensigns were essential to distinguish between friendly and enemy ships, I thought the large flags shown in paintings of ships of the line, as shown in the picture above, were purely 'artistic licence'. One is never too old to learn!

Few of us will be able to claim a sea-faring ancestors who served under Nelson but, we all had ancestors alive at the time of his famous victories. Undoubtedly, they would have shared in the country wide intrigue and adhesion of the Sea Lord who saved the nation. All good stuff when we are trying to put our family histories in the context of the times.

Tom Garland

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