

# **The Journal of the Framlingham and District Local History and Preservation Society**

**7<sup>th</sup> Series Number 3  
October 2016**

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Hon. Secretary: C. W. Seely  
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Minutes Secretary: D. Ransom  
Hon. Treasurer: Nick Morgan  
Journal Editor: M V Roberts

All enquiries regarding Society membership should be addressed to the  
Honorary Secretary:  
Rendham Barnes, Rendham, Saxmundham, IP17 2AB  
telephone 01728 663467

For back issues of the journal, correspondence for publication, and proposals  
for articles, contact the Editor:  
43 College Road, Framlingham, IP13 9ER  
telephone 01728 724324 mobile 07930 494888  
bobrob2100@hotmail.co.uk

Framlingham History Website: [www.framlinghamarchive.org.uk](http://www.framlinghamarchive.org.uk)

*Heir of Antiquity! - fair castle Town,  
Rare spot of beauty, grandeur, and renown,  
Seat of East-Anglian kings! - proud child of fame,  
Hallowed by time, illustrious Framlinghame!*

From: *Framlingham: a Narrative of the Castle,*  
by James Bird (1831)

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L. R. Squirrell's pastel drawing of the *Castle Gateway* in 1924 is held in a private collection. Permission to reproduce free of Artists Rights has been generously granted by the artist's daughter, Mrs Annette Kenny

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# FRAM

7th Series Number 3

October 2016

Registered Charity No: 274201

Our Society has had a mutually beneficial relationship with The British Association for Local History for many years. The Association's scholarly journal, *The Local Historian*, lists the articles published in each issue of *Fram*, a measure that has resulted in various research enquiries from interested parties to your Editor from time to time. One of *Fram*'s editorials was quoted in full (with permission) in the BALH's *Local History News*, and our former treasurer Tony Broster had an award from the BALH for his article in *Fram*, "An Investigation of Gas Production in the Nineteenth Century with particular reference to Suffolk". I felt proud when I was there in London at the BALH Annual General Meeting, when Tony received it.

An article in a recent issue of *Local History News* notes the decline in recent years in membership of many local history societies similar to our own. Even just in the county of Suffolk there are many such societies, and I wonder whether some or all of these are experiencing a similar decline in numbers. So far as our own Society is concerned, my personal impression is that attendances at our lectures and outings have held up reasonably well in recent years. Nevertheless, when first I joined our Society twenty-one years ago, some members at the lectures had to overflow into the back room of the main hall, even then perhaps leaving one or two to stand; rarely does this happen now. Being realistic there are so many membership bodies in this town eager to welcome new people; perhaps the most recent, the Friends group at Framlingham Library. There is no doubt in my own mind that our Society will always have a loyal following, but members also have, I would suggest a positive role in spreading the word among friends and colleagues that the Framlingham and District Local History and Preservation Society has so much to offer with its winter lectures, summer outings, and, not least new friendships.

Now an appeal. When our predecessor, the *Society's Newsletter*, first appeared in the late '60s, its contents comprised, for the most part, one or two page items of local historical interest. More recently (as noted above) longer articles, fully foot-noted have often tended to dominate our contents. These we greatly value, but, I would like to emphasise here, shorter pieces would be greatly welcomed. Such pieces could recount memories of our historic town thirty, forty, fifty years ago, anecdotes of events, mini-histories of individual buildings or local worthies.

History is the day before yesterday; it needs to be recorded, and cherished. Finally an apology. Our last issue included on its final page a poem "The Mansion House", ascribed there as "Anon". The poem was in fact by our member Sue Pike; sincere apologies from your Editor to Sue.

Bob Roberts

## THE JAMES BREESE COLLECTION

James Breese moved to Church Farm, Saxtead in 1889. In that long period of agricultural depression, he farmed in a very businesslike way, and kept detailed records, including all purchases for both farm and home. Framlingham being the nearest town, he naturally had several accounts with local tradesmen. When paid, the bills were put on a spike, and 'filed' in the loft. After James died in 1944, these accounts and later ones to his sons remained there until the farm was sold many years later.



James Breese farmed at Saxtead but still favoured traditional horse power.

Our President was talking to his son Alfred one day, when he first mentioned that his son Jim had quite a few old Fram invoices if he would like to see them some time. When that day came, seven black bin liners rammed full of paperwork were presented! About a third of this material amounting to around 4,200 items was for Framlingham alone, covering 165 different businesses, from 1882 to 1957. The intention is that a representative example of each business will be shown on our website, forming an important record of the town in that period. The remaining invoices are mainly for other companies in Suffolk and some from further afield.

J. MAULDEN'S STEAM FLOUR MILLS AND MALTING

BRIDGE STREET, FRAMLINGHAM.

BRIDGE STREET STEAM FLOUR MILLS,  
FRAMLINGHAM.

Mr James Breese

BOUGHT OF  
**JAMES MAULDEN,**  
MALTSTER & MILLER,  
Corn, Coal, Cake and Seed Merchant.

→ TEA, TOBACCO, AND CIGARS. ←

TERMS - CASH. Empty Sacks and Bags not returned will be charged for.

1897									
Dec 1	5/10	Wheat	-	8	-				
	1	Yarn	4	10	-				
15	3	Hops	-	3	-				
			£	5	1				
21	1/5	Wheat	4	12	6				
			9	13	6				

## THE WINTER PROGRAMME 2016 – 2017

Meetings will be held at the United Free Church Hall, Framlingham on the third Wednesday of the month at 7:30 p.m.

**Wednesday 19th October** AGM followed by:  
*Mr David Ransom*                      *A Choirboy at the Coronation*

Mr Ransom was a Westminster Abbey chorister 1949 – 54

**Wednesday 16th November**  
*Mr Steven Govier*                      *The Hoxne Treasure*

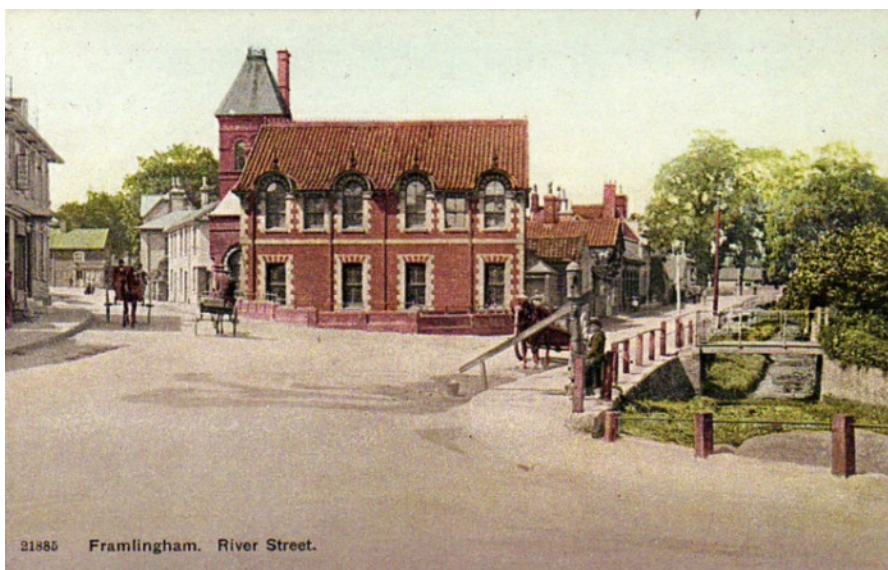
**Wednesday 14th December**  
*Mr John Beckett*                      *Old Postcards*

**Wednesday 18th January**  
*Mr Geoffrey Robinson*              *Henry Adams Cupper – a Suffolk Pioneer*

**Wednesday 15th February**  
*Mr Anthony Cobbold*              *The Cobbold Family*

**Wednesday 15th March**  
*Mr Bob Webb*                      *East Suffolk Railways*

**Wednesday 19th April**  
*Mr Mark Beesley*                      *Leonard Squirrell 1893 - 1979*



The United Free Church started life as the town's first purpose built steam mill in 1853. It was not a success, and was eventually sold to The People's Hall Company in 1867. In 1885 it became the Methodist Church, and later amalgamated with the United Reform Church to become the present United Free Church - Framlingham Historical Archive



# EASTON PARK MANSION – WW1 RED CROSS HOSPITAL

By Simon Last

Having carried out research into some of the men that were treated at the Easton Park Mansion Red Cross Hospital during World War 1, I wanted to try and discover more about what life was like for the wounded soldiers sent to the village.

I started by searching the old Framingham Weekly News newspapers and found a letter in the Saturday 25th March 1916 edition, written by an Ex-Patient, as per the extract below:



I can well remember that fateful Saturday some way back in January. The Divisional Bone Specialist (I am a bit hazy about the correct appellation, but this will serve), had paid his monthly visit to Ipswich, and apparently my look of abject boredom had turned the balance in my favour to the effect that what I required was a complete change of air, scenery, food and bed. Consequently I was recommended for massage at Easton Park.

“Going to Easton, are you?” said poor Palfreman, when the big man had gone. “Lucky beggar – wish I was back there.” Palfreman turned over in his bed and set his teeth.... He told me reluctantly next day that Easton was simply great. Game for dinner four times a week, dances for patients who are able every night – in fact, when he had warmed to his job the colours he painted with were so brilliant that I came to the conclusion Easton could be little short of Heaven – and he wasn’t far wrong.

This Ex-Patient had painted such a lovely picture of the atmosphere of Easton Park Hospital - could I now find more evidence to support this?

I knew that the late Peter Farley had written a book called *The Hamiltons of Easton* and I had seen some World War 1 era photographs and information in that – via Peter's wife I was able to contact another Easton researcher Brian Boon.

Brian was able to share some further information and additional photographs with me that showed more about the social life within the Hospital.

The first photograph shows some of the men and nurses in fancy dress for some entertainment that they were providing to the other men in the Hospital and possibly the local villagers.



From another newspaper article in the Framlingham Weekly News dated Saturday 1st April 1916, we know they also had a Hospital Band.

### ***The Hospital Band***

It would require an extremely vivid imagination to discover “music” in the weird din created by the Easton band. The instruments are as follows; Bass drum, kettle drum (H & P biscuit tins), melodion, tin whistles, triangle, cymbals (saucepan lids) and kazoos. The band “came about” like this: One morning the hospital awoke to find a big hole in one of the kitchen windows. How it came there nobody knew, though a football had been seen in close proximity the night before. That of course could not have done it.

At any rate there was nothing for it but to find the wherewithal and get it repaired. So the band toured the village and with the aid of much speech making and noise, succeeded in “filching” from the inhabitants the sum of twenty-five shillings. The window was repaired and new instruments added to the band.

The second photograph shows a group of men and nurses with the Duchess of Hamilton outside Easton Park and was taken between 7th December 1917 and 5th April 1918, which is known due to one of the soldiers being identified and his service records obtained from his family.



The man on crutches with a cigarette (third from left in the middle row) is Private James Henry LEWIS Service number 6861 of the 2nd Battalion of the Australian Imperial Force. He was wounded in France and embarked to England on 12th November 1917 and was admitted to the Suffolk Hospital, Southampton for treatment for gunshot wounds to his back and both buttocks. On 7th December 1917 he was transferred to Easton Park for convalescence and when he had recovered enough to re-join active service he returned to France on 4th June 1918.

Private Lewis's family in Australia have a letter dated 27th November 1922, sent by Fay Hamilton, which proves how close the soldiers became to the family whilst staying in Easton and how fondly they remembered their time spent at the Hospital during the war:

Government House, Brisbane - 27th November 1922

Dear Lewis,

I was pleased to hear from you – your letter followed me a long way into Western Queensland, where I was staying on a sheep station – Wellshot. The Manager, Mr Inglis, is the son of a tenant of ours in Scotland – I got back here on Saturday, and go to Sydney on the 11th. I am afraid from what I hear that Condobolin is many hours journey from Sydney. Is that so? I would so much have liked to see you again. I remember you quite well.

I shall be at Government House, Sydney, from the 12th December to the 28th, when I sail for home, so write there if there is a chance of seeing you, and how far you are from Sydney.

Nurse Raynor is still alive and I will send her your message – also to Mr and Mrs Goodwin. I am sorry to say that owing to bad times and heavy taxes we have had to sell Easton Park and all the farms. It made us very unhappy parting with the old home. Mr Allen the butler is still with us in Scotland. Poor old Watson who used to fetch the papers is dead. Nurse MacBeth is married to Mr Nesling and Nurse Capon is married to someone a long way from Easton. I saw Mood and Mason, and Brennan and Southall when I was in Sydney, and I am going to see Moore when I go back, but I have not heard from Kemp or Morrison or Irembath. Are you on a sheep station?

Kindest regards and I hope to see you if not too far for me to go and come back in a day from Sydney.

Yours sincerely, (Signed) Fay Hamilton

Although the ravages of World War 1 were heart-breaking to so many families, at least relatives knew that Easton Park Hospital provided a safe, caring, friendly environment, which is quite simply summed up by the end of the Ex-Patients letter in the Framlingham Weekly News dated 25th March 1916:

*"If I should ever have the misfortune to be rendered hors de combat again, all I hope is, they send me to dear old Easton Park."*

Sources:

Peter Farley, *The Hamiltons of Easton*

Brian Boon – Easton Researcher

Private Lewis's Granddaughter in Australia

Postcard – own collection

British Newspaper Archive website: Framlingham Weekly News (FWN) 25th March 1916 & 1st April 1916



# THE EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF ELECTRICITY IN SUFFOLK

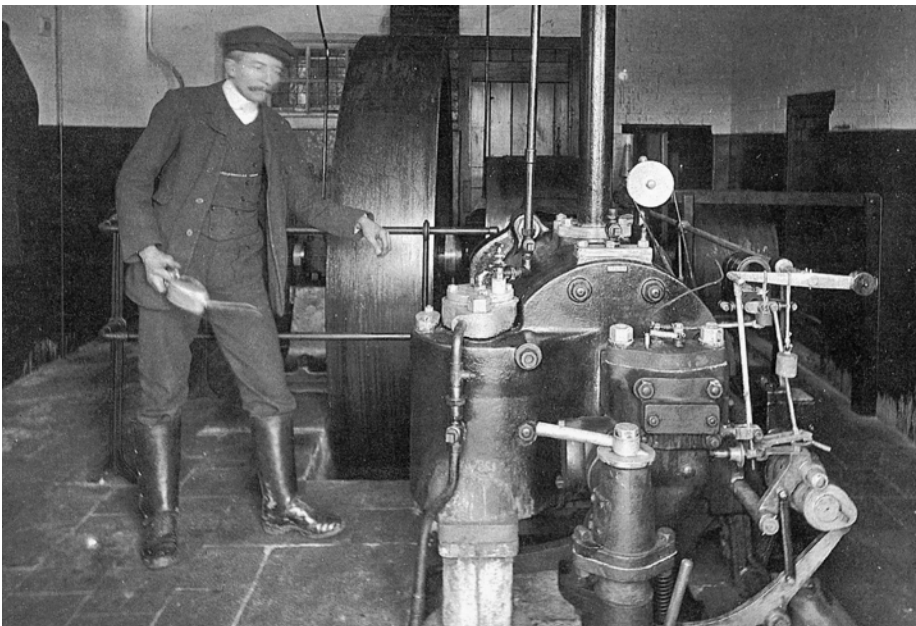
## THE SUFFOLK ELECTRICITY SUPPLY COMPANY

by John F Bridges

### Part 2

After the 1914 – 1918 war, the demand for electricity was increasing, but **East Anglian Electricity Ltd** (EDEL) along with many others were struggling financially. In 1921, salaries were reduced by 12.5%,<sup>1</sup> and by the same amount again three months later, along with requests for the bank to extend their £10,000 loan. A directive was sent to Sudbury and Braintree offices informing them that their telephones would be disconnected. Napier Prentice resigned as managing director in 1923, but would stay on as a director for three years with a retainer of £259 p.a.<sup>2</sup> He was clearly having difficulty in taking a back seat, as it was noted that he was 'continuing to take control of company business and entering negotiations'<sup>3</sup>, and unless he stopped, they would terminate his directorship. Bernard Drummond was later appointed General Manager of EDEL in 1924 with a salary of £1,000 p.a., plus commission on net profits.

The Felixstowe undertaking was now the largest operated by the company and the main offices for EDEL were now located there. The managerial, engineering, commercial and accountancy work were all performed by a dozen people, which included the typists <sup>4</sup>. Drummond recalled in his early days there that the diesel engines were very heavily loaded at night, and the battery was used to deal with peak loads. There was significant risk of breakdown, and something had to be done. The Electricity Commissioners would not allow any additional plant at that time, so the short term solution was to raise the cost of electricity from 7d to 8d per unit (14% increase), this being the maximum rate allowed <sup>5</sup>. It had the desired effect and lowered the demand on the plant.



Early gas-engine to drive dynamo at Felixstowe

Phil Hadwen

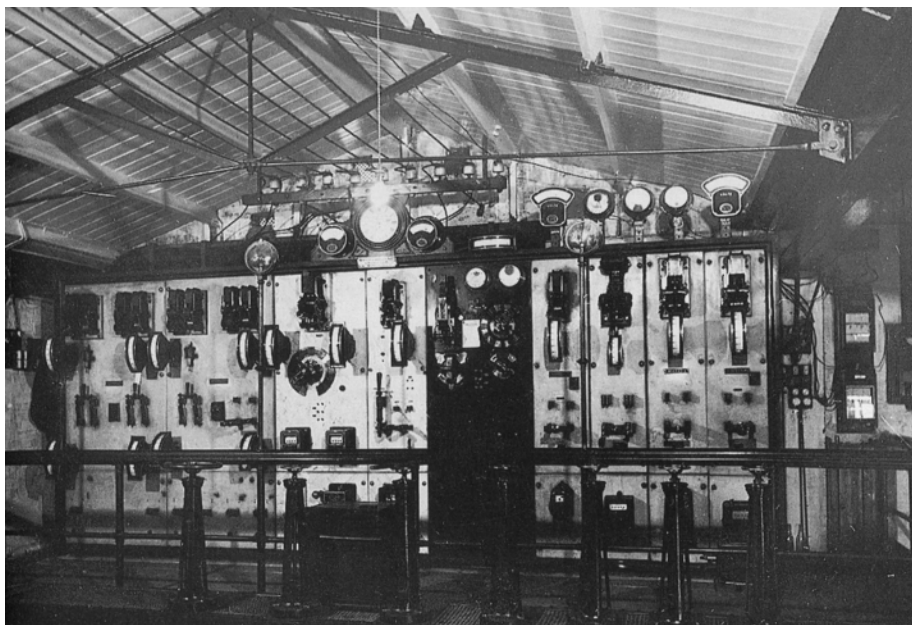
<sup>1</sup> SROI, IK400/2/1/1, EAESCL, Director's Minute Book, 1921-1925, 28th April, 1921

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 12th July, 1923

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 7th August, 1923

<sup>4</sup> TFR, op. cit., Vol. V1, No. 4, 1943, p. 3

<sup>5</sup> TFR, op. cit., Vol. V111, No. 1, 1945, p. 3



Switchgear associated with Felixstowe town electricity supply, 1916

Phil Hadwen

The limit for DC distribution in Felixstowe was being reached, and the next step was to make an AC supply available to the more outlying parts of the town. Rotary converters and switchgear were installed in the main generating house, with cables laid to three sub stations in the outer areas. In 1924, agreement was reached for a 6,600 volt underground AC supply to be provided in bulk from Ipswich. The supply was taken over by the Felixstowe Urban District Council in 1929 <sup>6</sup>.

By 1921, EAEL were supplying electricity in Stowmarket, Diss, Felixstowe, Needham Market, Beccles, Braintree, Framlingham and Sudbury, with further developments in Witham, Wroxham and the Waveney Valley. Needham Market was supplied from Stowmarket in 1922 by the 3300 volt 'Gipping Valley' high tension overhead line. This was an AC supply provided by a Bull Motors 30 KVA alternator set <sup>7</sup>. In Beccles, the DC supply was bought in bulk from Elliott and Garrard's Engineering Works.

Other private companies were supplying electricity by this period to towns such as Aldeburgh (from 1912), Bungay (from 1926), Halesworth (from 1922), Lowestoft (from 1901), Newmarket (from 1901), Orford (from 1912), Southwold (from 1904), and Woodbridge (from 1913).

The Sudbury supply was started in 1921, and the residents there were also required to guarantee £4,000 <sup>8</sup>. The power house needed to be close to water for engine cooling purposes, and the building pressed into use is the present Quay Theatre. A second-hand marine engine was found from a Submarine Chaser lying at the bottom of Felixstowe docks<sup>9</sup>. Following extensive work to the engine, concrete bases were then cast, and the engine and generator located in place, ready for the DC 3 wire system to be put into operation. These works were overseen by Napier's son Courtney Prentice. The 6 cylinder petrol engine was rated at 120 HP. It was later converted to run on Producer gas, at reduced capacity.

Napier Prentice arrived for the official start up. The flywheel was turned, followed by a large bang, then silence. The engine did eventually start, but they were then beset by overload problems. A hole was then knocked through the wall, and they brought up a steam ploughing engine and coupled a belt from it to the dynamo. A diesel engine was later used, but that was also problematic and led to protests from the Sudbury Advisory Committee<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> TFR, *Ibid.*, p. 5

<sup>7</sup> TFR, *op. cit.*, Vol. V1, No. 4, 1943, p. 4

<sup>8</sup> SROI, IK400/2/1/1, EAESCL Directors' Minute Book, 1921-1925, 15th August, 1921

<sup>9</sup> TFR, *op. cit.*, Vol. V111, No. 2, 1945, p.12

That in view of the present unsatisfactory supply of electrical power and light in Sudbury, the Directors be advised to see the diesel engine and fittings forthwith and arrange for the immediate purchase of a 160 BHP Lanz steam plant.

The new steam plant was ordered at a cost of £1350, and was in operation by early 1922.



Electricity cables supported from chimneys on the Mills almshouses, Framlingham  
Author's collection

EAL at that time was not a statutory undertaking, and therefore did not have powers to dig up the roads or to locate poles in the street. Instead, they had to erect them on private land, and also made extensive use of supports via chimneys and associated buildings.

If you lived in the country, well beyond the town boundary, and wished to have an electrical supply, then you needed to be sufficiently well off to have your own installation. Several companies such as Tamplin and Makovski of Ipswich and Pudney in Bury St Edmunds could provide that service. Charles Garrard of Framlingham was also an established installer of both gas and electricity. In 1925, he installed Petter lighting systems into several large houses, including Dennington rectory, the White House, Bruisyard, and Sweffling Lodge <sup>11</sup>. The development of mains electricity into rural areas was therefore an obvious area of growth for small electricity supply companies, as the larger Corporations did not have the authority to go beyond their municipal boundaries.

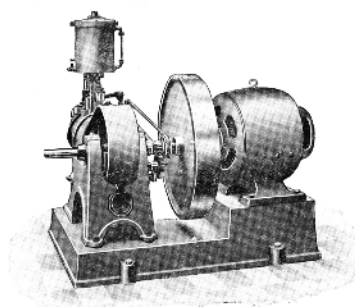
## **ELECTRIC LIGHTING & TRANSMISSION OF POWER.**

### **C. C. PUDNEY & Co.,**

(LATE CRAMPTON, OLIVER & Co.)

11, Guildhall Street, BURY ST. EDMUND'S.

Advertisement for country house electricity installation, c.1905  
West Suffolk Illustrated



Complete Country House Installation fitted with Steam, Gas or Oil Engines. Accumulators, &c. Suction Gas Plants

ELECTRIC LIGHTING PLANTS complete with all accessories from 40 lights capacity, price **£95** with accumulators.

Best British made lamps stocked & supplied at lowest prices.

**OSRAM & TANTALUM.** Current taken one-half.

Electric Motors for all purposes. Telephones, Bells, and all accessories.

ESTIMATES FREE. INQUIRIES INVITED.

<sup>10</sup> SROI, IK400/2/1/1, EAESCL Directors' Minute Book, 1921-1925, 7th October, 1921

<sup>11</sup> Country House and Estate, April-May, 1925

EAEL in 1924 was still not in a good financial position to exploit this situation, partly as no allowance had ever been made for depreciation. Drummond recommended that the company be devalued by two-thirds of the share capital. After much protracted discussion, it was agreed to wind up the company and start a new one. In May 1925, it was reborn as the **East Anglian Electricity Supply Company Ltd. (EAESCL)**. New plant was acquired, mainly diesel powered, to provide a more reliable service. In 1925 American investor Mr Harley-Clarke of the Chicago based 'Utilities Power and Light Company', who were looking to provide investment capital in British electrical undertakings, set up the Greater London and Counties Trust (GLCT). Drummond was approached by Harley-Clarke<sup>12</sup>, a deal was done, and in 1926 the company passed into American hands.

One of the largest electrical holding companies in this country was the Edmundson Electricity Corporation, and 95% of their shares were acquired by GLCT in 1928<sup>13</sup>. A year later all the subsidiaries in GLCT were consolidated under Edmundsons, including of course EAESCL. Alexander Anderson, who had been chief engineer for Edmundsons, was appointed managing director of EAESCL and remained there until his retirement in 1943<sup>14</sup>. By the early 1930s there were increasing concerns over the financial stability of the American parent company. The situation worsened until 1936 when a new British consortium took over and liquidated GLCT, leaving Edmundsons as the parent holding company of EAESCL and several other electricity supply companies.

**EAST ANGLIAN  
ELECTRICITY  
SERVICE**

**The Company supplies  
Electricity in various  
—— parts of ——  
Suffolk and Norfolk**

**For particulars apply—  
THE EAST ANGLIAN  
ELECTRIC SUPPLY CO., Ltd.  
ELECTRICITY HOUSE, STOWMARKET  
Telephone No. 46**

1926 had been an eventful year for the EAESCL. It successfully applied for a Special Order to legalise the supply of electricity to towns in Suffolk, and authorise the supply to a number of towns and surrounding villages in Essex. Braintree, Halstead and Sudbury would be connected by overhead lines. Later that year the Company promoted a Bill in Parliament seeking to provide a supply of electricity **throughout** Norfolk, Suffolk, and specified areas in Essex. This was opposed by most local authorities, but did become the East Anglian Electricity Act, and was on the statute book in July 1927. The Act did make provision for the existing undertakers to make applications to extend their areas, which they had not been moved to do before then. This led to an uptake in the more densely populated areas around the large towns, leaving the company with the more rural areas having fewer customers, which would potentially be less profitable.

1931 advertisement. Electricity House was in Ipswich Road, Stowmarket

1926 was also the year in which the 'Electricity (Supply) Act' came into being. A Central Electricity Board was to provide the recognised distributors with bulk supplies via a National Grid, which at that time did not exist. Massive power stations were to be built, where the alternators were driven by steam turbines, to provide AC power at 132,000 volts. The local section of the main Grid would extend from Colchester, and follow a route diagonally across the county to Great Yarmouth. Distribution companies including EAESCL would provide

<sup>11</sup> <sup>12</sup> TFR, op. cit., Vol. V111, No. 1, 1945, p. 1

<sup>13</sup> L Hannah, *Electricity Before Nationalisation*, 1979, p. 228

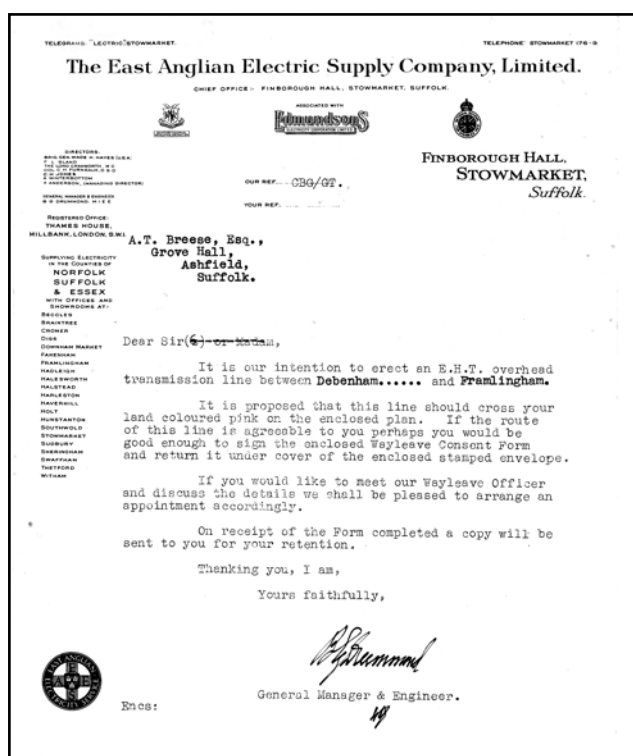
<sup>14</sup> EEM, op. cit., Vol. V1, No.1, pp. 12-15



secondary transmission systems from the sub stations where the voltage was reduced. There would no longer be a need for these companies to actually generate power, only to distribute it. It was not until 1933 that the Grid was completed, and East Anglia was one of the last areas to be joined up to it.

Napier Prentice died in 1931 aged sixty five, at his home in Little Coggleshall, Essex, and did not see the final work in completing the network in Suffolk. His lifetime captured the full range of electrical development, from the early arc-lights through to the National Grid, and we should applaud his pioneering work.

The cost of providing a supply of electricity to a house, and the subsequent running costs, was always paramount in deciding whether to sign up. In the 1930s, an 'Assisted Wiring Scheme' was introduced, where the consumer was provided free of charge, 'three lights and a plug' provided they agreed to buy electricity on the domestic two-part tariff for at least one year. This tariff consisted of a fixed charge that related to the size of the property, and a lower rate for the actual electricity used.



Way-leave consent letter, signed by Bernard Drummond, c.1936

James Breese Collection, via author

In 1936, the EAESCL acquired Finborough Hall near Stowmarket, which would become their headquarters. A company magazine, 'The Finborough Review', started in 1938. It would take further time for the local distribution network to be completed. Way-leaves had to be negotiated with the landowners where the transmission lines would pass. Farmers would receive 5/- (25 pence) for each pylon on their land, and an additional 15/- (75 pence) compensation if it impeded ploughing. Framlingham was the last town in Suffolk to be connected to the Grid, when the 50 HP Ruston and Hornsby engine ceased working on the 12th January, 1938<sup>15</sup>. The rhythmic beat of the engines, which had been audible over a wide area of the town, were now silent. Cyril Hopes, the manager, reflected in later life on this time<sup>16</sup>:

We evacuate the engine room and become the Service Centre. We throw down the slide rule and take up the ready reckoner and the guileful expression of the

<sup>15</sup> SROI, FWN, 15th January, 1938

<sup>16</sup> C.F. Hopes, personal notes, 'The Good Old Days', author's collection

salesman. We go outside our local town and into the surrounding villages and farms. We must forget generators and study our quota for installations. We are in our stride with cookers, water heaters and refrigerators for domestic users; and mills, pumps and milking machines for farms. This, when £130 to £150 of business a month was an economic proposition for the salesman, and £200 to £400 was a good month. Cookers at £7 7s and free wiring, 13 gallon water heaters at £5 5s, three lights and a plug point installed free – all were economic propositions to suit the times.

The war interrupted all this work. When peace returned, there was a steady demand for new installations and equipment. The problem was the shortage of coal for the large power stations, and the post war period was blighted by power cuts. The very harsh winter in early 1947 added to the problems, when domestic electricity was cut off from 9am to midday and from 2pm to 4pm.

The new Labour government formed in 1945 was to see the nationalisation of the electricity industry. Lower prices were promised for electricity, whereas they would actually need to rise to keep pace with the huge investment that was needed. The Electricity Act received Royal Assent in August 1947. Vesting Day, 1st April 1948, saw all the former companies and municipal undertakings being taken into national ownership. Fourteen new 'Area Boards' were formed, with Suffolk being in the Eastern Electricity Board (EEB).

There were twenty one local authorities formed into the EEB, covering an area of 7,760 square miles, the Suffolk ones being Felixstowe UDC, Ipswich Borough Corporation and Lowestoft Borough Corporation. Private companies in Suffolk were Aldeburgh Electric Supply Co., Bungay Gas and Electricity Co., East Anglian Electric Supply Co. (incorporating Bury St Edmunds from 1938), East Suffolk Electricity Distribution Co., and Newmarket Electric Light Co.<sup>17</sup>. The areas covered by these organisations varied enormously, with Aldeburgh being three square miles, and EAESCL 2,464 square miles. The Board initially moved into Finborough Hall until Wherstead Park, a listed building dating from 1792, near Ipswich, was ready to become the new head office. Finborough Hall was retained as a Sub Area office.

The other large company at that time was the East Suffolk Electricity Distribution Company which was formed in 1927 as a subsidiary of Power Development Company<sup>18</sup>. Overhead lines at 11,000 volts were erected from Ipswich to supply electricity to places such as Saxmundham, Leiston, Orford, and the Hollesley Bay Labour Colony. They purchased the Thorpeness electricity undertaking in 1929 for £2,000. From 1935, Wickham Market and Aldeburgh were connected along with Snape Maltings and several large country houses, e.g. Sudbourne Hall, Little Glemham Hall, Bawdsey Manor, Gedgrave Hall and Rendlesham Hall. Several of these places already had their own DC plant or were supplied by a local company, which were no longer required when connected to the Grid. A cable was laid across the bed of the river Alde between the parishes of Aldeburgh and Iken. In 1939, the traffic bollards outside the White Horse in Leiston were provided with electric light. Much work was also carried out in the early war years to supply military installations such as Butley aerodrome (Bentwaters), Wantisden Camp and the Thorpeness Wireless station.

We will finish this article with passing reference to the Cliff Quay Generating station in Ipswich. This massive complex with a design capacity of 270 MW was developed from 1936 by The Ipswich County Borough Council, but was taken over during construction by the British

<sup>17</sup> Cecil Melling, *Light in The East*, Eastern Electricity, 1987, p.18

<sup>18</sup> SROI, IK400/3/1/1, East Suffolk Electricity Distribution Company Ltd., Directors' Minute Book, 11th November, 1921

Electricity Authority in 1948 and in service a year later. The cost was estimated to be over £8,000,000. There were six 45,000 kilowatt steam turbines, driven by their associated steam raising boilers which consumed over half a million tons of coal a year.

This was all a far cry from those early DC installations where the dynamo was driven by some second-hand source of power, and the cables fixed to chimneys. Despite such major steps forward, some rural areas in Suffolk were still without an electricity supply in the 1960s. Time has again marched on, with Cliff Quay being closed in 1985, and demolished in 1994.

Form No. 81 No 29423

**ORDER FORM**

To The E. F. Bond  
**THE EAST ANGLIAN ELECTRIC SUPPLY CO., LTD.**

Local Office: Framlingham

Date 26. 4. 49

Please carry out the undermentioned work and supply goods as specified below at price quoted or pulling at date or of completion £ s. d.

<u>2 Cottages (High St) 15/16/17 Green (Regent St)</u>			
<u>3 light switches</u>			
<u>1 light 2 way switch</u>			
<u>complete with lamps</u>			
<u>each cottage</u>		<u>8</u>	<u>9 6</u>

HENRY M. THORNTON  
 CHARTERED ACCOUNTANT

Total Cash Price £ 16 19 -

Signature of Purchaser H. F. Breese  
 Address Red House Inn, St Giles

Co.'s Representative Blackburne

TERMS :—Net Cash.

w.x.ltd.339/69 579 321

The Framlingham office was still using up its stock of old forms post nationalisation

James Breese Collection, via author

I would like to thank Steve and Sue Williams for their generous assistance based on their extensive knowledge of Stowmarket history and the Prentice family. The late Phil Hadwen gave permission for the use of photographs from Felixstowe At Work.

Please refer to Part 1 for additional reference details

## TO BURN OR NOT TO BURN? Sir Henry Thompson's place in the History of Cremation

By Alison Pickup

This was a question that vexed society over the latter part of the nineteenth century. Sir Henry Thompson, one of Framlingham's greatest sons, was a lead protagonist in the movement towards cremation being an acceptable form of burial. He was the son of a grocer with a shop on Market Hill, but rose to become a distinguished physician and surgeon to royalty, specialising in the genito-urinary tract. A generous benefactor to the town he provided the clock in St. Michael's in memory of his father. Sir Henry is commemorated by a blue plaque on the Hill, placed there by the History Society. Cremation now seems commonplace but at the time it was a strongly and often bitterly argued question.



*Sir Henry Thompson* By John Everett Millais (1881)  
Tate Modern Oil paint on canvas: 1257 x 914 mm

To cremate the dead has been a long established practice for functional and cultural reasons. However, attitudes to the disposal of a corpse have changed. Not many people would probably agree with Diogenes of Sinope, one of the founders of Cynic philosophy, who, when asked what he wanted done with his corpse he apparently left instructions for it to be thrown outside the city wall so wild animals could feast on the cadaver.

Over the millennia burial customs have varied. It appears, although the evidence is limited and disputed, that Neolithic man practiced funerary rites<sup>1</sup>. Other early societies such as in Turkey, at Catalhoyuk, between the eighth and sixth millennia BC, buried their dead under the floor of their houses<sup>2</sup>. In Britain, in the Paleolithic, skeletons were often covered in red ochre and buried with grave goods such as that of the 'red lady of Paviland' in Wales (actually later to be determined to be an adolescent male) discovered by William Buckland in 1822. In the late Bronze Age cremation appears to have been the most common form of burial with the remains being interred in barrows. However even this is not consistent as there is also evidence of excarnation prior to burial, similar to the sky burials seen in some other countries. Whichever way burial took place it seems to have been accompanied with a degree of ritual and respect.

Excavation of pagan Anglo Saxon cemeteries indicates a mix of different burial styles, both inhumation and cremation, with and without grave goods, sometimes with both being found in the same cemetery. Of course there are also the boat burials as with Sutton Hoo, which continued into the ninth century<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Parker Pearson p.149

<sup>2</sup> Kerrigan p.96

<sup>3</sup> Jupp & Gittings p.67



The arrival of Christianity in the sixth century, amongst believers, gave rise to a more standardized form of burial in England which in some forms continues to this day. The provision of graveyards and inscribed grave stones without grave goods became standard practice based on Benedictine monasticism. Whilst the interpretation of the Bible and the meaning of purgatory etc., changed it was only in the eighteenth and nineteenth century that these burial practices came into question. The Enlightenment altered views on the nature of death and advances in medical knowledge took death from superstition into science. However, as the industrious and industrial revolution advanced major problems arose principally due to the number of bodies generated by rapidly expanding populations. Basically the traditional churchyard had run out of space. From 1760 – 1764 the number of deaths is estimated to be 885,000, for 1845 – 1849 it had risen to approximately 1.9 million<sup>4</sup>. This had major public health issues in that some of the deceased had died from cholera and other infectious diseases and the practice of burying one body on top of another meant that overcrowding was such that the burials were often above ground level. All this was taking place in the centre of crowded metropolitan areas with a major adverse impact on public health.

This problem was not limited to England. On the continent Governments had stepped in to provide public cemeteries away from the centre of towns, but in England it was left to commercial enterprise to fulfil this role. The writings of a Dr. George Walker in *Gatherings from the Graveyards* (1839) led to a major public outcry as to the state of burial and articles appeared in newspapers, periodicals and the *Lancet*. Whilst a bit over dramatic and decidedly gothic in its accounts (not reading for the faint-hearted!) it led to the formation of many cemetery companies financed by the sale of shares, the process being simplified in the Cemeteries Clauses Act of 1847. Early examples are those of Kensal Green Cemetery, the first garden cemetery in London and Brompton Cemetery in the same borough (Kensington and Chelsea).



Brompton Cemetery - Main Avenue

However Sir Henry remained concerned that 'burial beneath the soil is full of danger to the living' and that whilst cemeteries helped, by practicing inhumation society was 'laying by poison'<sup>5</sup>.

Sir Henry had long been interested in cremation and on a visit to the Great Exhibition in Vienna in 1873 had met Professor Brunetti of Padua who was exhibiting a model of his

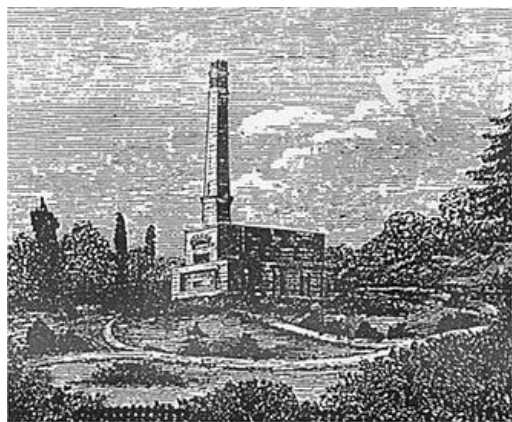
<sup>4</sup> Jupp & Gittings p.219

<sup>5</sup> Thompson *Contemporary Review* Dec 1873 p.p. 319 - 328

cremation furnace. There had been many articles in favour of cremation in such journals as the British Medical Journal, the Lancet and the Contemporary Review but cremation still remained more or less illegal. The Government appeared to be worried that cremation could be used to cover up a murder. It was only in 1903 that cremations were formally legalized. The established church had many objections to cremation, the most famous being that of the Bishop of Lincoln who preached against it in Westminster Abbey in 1874 – ‘On burning of the Body and Burial’ he argued that cremation was incompatible with Christian teachings and likened it to a reversion to paganism. A later Bishop of Lincoln was cremated – times change!

Despite the legal, medical and religious opposition Sir Henry remained determined that it was the way forward. He may not have helped his cause in that in ‘The Treatment of the Body after Death’ he does advocate the economic benefit of returning the post-burning constituents of the body to the earth in the form of bone meal. He even calculates the weight of the amount of ashes and bone that would be produced per annum by the London dead (206,820 lbs.!). Obviously cremation on any scale could only take place when higher temperature burning fuels such as gas and coke were easily available. Thus it can be seen, in part, as a product of the industrial revolution, as despite the overcrowding problem, it would not otherwise have been possible as the quantity of wood needed to achieve the same effect would have been too great. In the same article he analyses Brunetti’s experimental results and concludes that ‘the rapid and perfect combustion of the body’ was perfectly possible. This article did not go unnoticed with a fairly vitriolic response by Philip Holland (Medical Inspector of Burials) ‘the theory on which the main conclusion is based is entirely without reasonable foundation’ and based his objections both on his belief that the bodies were no threat to public health and the emotional/religious aspect of cremation<sup>6</sup>.

To this end, the first meeting of what was to become the Cremation Society of England was held on 13th January 1874 at Sir Henry’s home. The signatories to the declaration were many and various including such luminaries as John Millais, George du Maurier and Anthony Trollope. A particularly useful supporter was Ernest Hart, editor of British Medical Journal, the Sanitary Record and the Medical Record – it guaranteed support in these influential journals.<sup>7</sup> Its first objective was to work with the cemetery companies and other public bodies to instate cremation as part of their practices. A later meeting raised funds to investigate suitable furnaces. The cremator shown below was finally selected and land purchased at Woking close to a large existing cemetery and rail line.



Cremator constructed by Professor Paolo Gorini of Lodi, Italy, at Woking Crematorium in the 1870’s

The Cremation Society then tested the new furnace on the body of a horse and found it was suitable for purpose. However due to local objection and the uncertain legal situation, plans went on to hold. It was only after a very sad case where Dr. William Price was

<sup>6</sup> Holland, Contemporary Review; Dec 1, 1873; 23, p. 477

<sup>7</sup> Parsons p. 30

unsuccessfully prosecuted for the cremation of his five month old son that the Cremation Society resumed operations and a bill to clarify the legal position was put before Parliament which failed. However the Society took heart from the verdict on Dr Price and proceeded with the first three human cremations being performed at Woking Crematorium in 1888<sup>8</sup>. By the turn of the century several crematoria had opened across the country. In 1902 an Act of Parliament *for the Regulation of burning of human remains, and to enable burial authorities to established crematoria* was passed. The new Act of Parliament gave powers to the Home Secretary to make Regulations which were published as Statutory Rules and Orders in March, 1903. Cremation had finally become both legal and acceptable although it was only condoned by the Roman Catholic Church in 1963.

Sir Henry remained President of the Society until his death in April 1904 and was cremated at Golders Green Crematorium. As the Society put it 'He was *no mere ornamental head, but combined the functions of an active and deeply interested chairman of committee with those of a zealous and skilful advocate of cremation in the press and on the platform*'. Whilst his other skills and abilities were many (surgeon, writer, painter etc.) it is probable in his pivotal role as the 'father of cremation' he will be remembered.



Golders Green Crematorium

by ceridwen (<http://creativecommons.org>, via Wikimedia Commons)

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<sup>8</sup> Cremation Society of Britain <http://www.srgw.info/CremSoc/History/HistSoc.html>

## FRAMLINGHAM HISTORICAL PHOTO ARCHIVE

<http://framlinghamarchive.org.uk>

The idea of creating a web based historical photo archive for Framlingham originated in 2008. Our Society agreed to fund the project and the website was designed for us. We presently have over 600 photos to view, which are in various categories, i.e. Townscape, Trades and Services, Castle, Church and Chapel, Education, Events and Pastimes, People, Transport and Wartime.

If you do not have your own computer, then you would be able to see the photos in the library, where the staff would be pleased to assist. You can also view for free there, the Framlingham Weekly News on line, where you can search for people and events etc. between 1859 and 1939.

The cost of hosting the photo archive had been steadily increasing year on year, and it was felt that we should seek alternative options. We must offer a large thank you to Simon Garrett who has spent much time considering these options, and has now changed the hosting to a charity based organisation, whose name you will see on the bottom of each page. The new hosting cost is dramatically less than we would be paying, had we not changed. Simon has also improved the general look of the site, by using the latest software, achieving a more modern and fresh look. Please do visit the site.



Paxman Class 15, at Framlingham station, 1960. This colour photo has recently been added.