

THE JOURNAL OF THE FRAMLINGHAM & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY & PRESERVATION SOCIETY

7th Series Number 5

October 2017

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*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 5
October 2017
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The year 2017 is a busy one in terms of history matters for our town. The major news has been the initial £1.2 million phase of the project by English Heritage to enhance visitor facilities at the Castle, along with further conservation of the structures. A new café and retail area have been introduced at ground level, and a mezzanine floor constructed to replace the floor that was removed many years ago.

Prior to the works, Historic England prepared a most extensive report for English Heritage, which sets out the history, development, use and significance of those buildings in relation to workhouse architecture. I am very pleased to say that the co-authors of that report, Dr Emily Cole and Kathryn Morrison have allowed our History Society to reproduce their work in our Journal. It is an extensive report, and will be included in this and future issues, to provide an important record of this aspect of the town's history.

The Lanman Museum itself remains in its present location, with an existing doorway that had always been blocked, now opened up to lead onto the mezzanine. The Museum's shared office space with English Heritage which was above the old shop has now moved into new dedicated accommodation in the adjacent Red House. The contents of the office, which include many files, old photographs, books, ephemera and the complete bound printer's edition of *Framlingham Weekly News (FWN)* from 1859 to 1939, have all been in temporary storage with English Heritage at Wrest Park in Bedfordshire.

The *FWN* will not be returning to the new office due to structural loading issues on the floor. They will be located along with other artefacts in new storage accommodation recently secured near Framlingham. These important newspapers may be read by subscription online at 'findmypast.co.uk' or 'britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk' or free in Framlingham library only. This year is an important one for the Lanman Museum, as it is sixty years since the Museum on the Market Hill was officially opened by its President, the Earl of Cranbrook. This was the fulfilment of everyone's hopes back in 1953 following the history exhibition that had been held in the Assembly Hall. The Museum has since moved on more than one occasion, first to Double Street, then to the Old Courthouse in 1979 when the History Society and the newly named Lanman Museum operated as separate charities. The Museum moved again in 1984 to its present position in the Castle, which was always the intention of the original members from the outset.

On Saturday, 7 October, the History Society and the Lanman Museum will be holding an Open Day in the Unitarian Meeting House in Bridge Street to mark the 60th Anniversary of the Museum. We do hope you will call in and see us any time between 10 a.m. and 4.30 p.m.

If you have any spare time next year, you might like to consider being a steward at the Museum, between June and September. A session is for two hours, between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. or 2 p.m. and 4 p.m., as often as you like. For more information please contact Diana Howard on 01728 747308.

John F Bridges

A CENTURY OF SERVICE
JOHN SELF'S SHOE SHOP

By
John Bridges

It is just over one hundred years ago that John Self junior opened his shop in Albert Place, and externally it has changed little in that time. We do need to go back even further in time to find the origins of this building, as boot and shoe manufacturing started there in about 1865.

Following the death of John Peirson in 1861, his lands and property were put up for auction. These included the Broadwater estate, land on which the Albert Road houses were built (Lot 10), and the steam mill (Lot 8), which is now the United Reform Church. In addition, Lot 9 on the 1862 auction drawing shows the Ancient House and associated outbuildings. The boundary between Lots 9 and 10 is the wall of the Ancient House. Lot 10 was bought at auction by the Suffolk Freehold Land Society, who then divided the area into 26 plots. These would be purchased by members who had shares in the Society. Plot 4 which abutted the Ancient House was bought for £20 by John Mann, a coal merchant. As no buildings were shown on Lot 10, it is assumed that the original boot and shoe shop was constructed soon after the plot was sold. At that time it would have been very much a workshop for making boots and shoes to order, rather than a display of goods for sale.

Charles Cone was born in Framlingham in 1824, and became a shoemaker, working initially in Church Street, before re-locating to the Albert Place premises around 1865. His first advertisement in Framlingham Weekly News was in September of that year. There were also regular entries in the Lambert's Almanac trade directory section, initially as a boot and shoe 'Maker', and from 1889 as a 'Warehouse', suggesting that bought in factory shoes were then becoming more common.

The 1871 Census shows him to be forty eight years old, and living with his wife Amelia, daughters Alice, aged fourteen, Helen, aged ten, and son Charles Sheppard Cone, aged twelve, (Sheppard being his mother's maiden name). Charles is described as a Master Shoemaker, employing two men and three boys. His son Charles took up the same trade, but in 1891 he is plying that in Saxmundham.

**CHARLES CONE,
BOOT & SHOE MANUFACTURER,
ALBERT PLACE, FRAMLINGHAM,**

IN returning thanks to the Inhabitants of Framlingham and its neighbourhood for the liberal patronage bestowed upon him, begs to solicit an early inspection of his

NEW STOCK OF SUMMER GOODS,

Consisting of a large variety of

Ladies' and Gentlemen's Boots and Shoes in the leading styles.

In the Stock will be found a very choice assortment of

LADIES' SUMMER WALKING SHOES.

CHILDREN'S BOOTS AND SHOES OF EVERY DESCRIPTION.

Gentlemen's and Youth's Cricket and Gymnasium Shoes.

The old Stock Selling Off at greatly reduced prices.

THE BE-SPOKE DEPARTMENT

Under the personal superintendence of C. C., and best materials and workmanship guaranteed, with reasonable charges.

The boot and shoe trade was always very important, as most people had to walk to their destination, on roads and tracks that were not well maintained. Of all the main trades in a town, this one gave an opportunity to be self employed. The 1901 Census for Framlingham shows that there were twenty four people employed in the boot and shoe trade, and 50% of them were self employed. The main materials needed for shoe manufacture were available in the town, as there was a tannery near the bridge in Bridge Street (location of present Tanyard Court).

It seems that Charles had done well through his endeavours, as it was noted that the five houses in Fore Street that were burnt down in 1905 all belonged to him. Fortunately, he was insured with the Norwich Union Fire Office.

By 1901 his son had returned to help his father. Charles Cone died in 1907, aged eighty three, and his wife Amelia in 1912, with the effects of her will being £2,796. Their son Charles then carried on the trade for a short time.

In 1916, the business was sold. John Self junior who bought and extended the shop was



Cone's original shop front prior to extension by John Self'

already well established in Framlingham, being the son of prominent business man Mr John Self, who had taken over in 1884 the substantial outfitting shop of Clodd and Larner in Well Close Square (now Clarke and Simpson). John senior came from Springfield in Essex, where the 1881 Census shows him to be twenty five years old, an outfitter's manager, and Wesleyan local preacher. There was much competition in all these trades, and as everyone from a wide radius purchased their clothing in the town, their prices had to be competitive.

The 1891 Census shows John to be thirty five years old, along with wife Emily, and children John, aged nine, Emily, aged seven, Grace, aged five, George, aged four, Hilda, aged two and Frank, three months old. In 1916, John junior would have been thirty four years old, and it seems likely that the rewards of his father's hard work enabled them to purchase the Cone business, which John junior would run. The premises were extended with the additional window and central door position.

We are fortunate that John senior's hobby was photography, and he sold postcards printed from his glass negatives in his outfitting shop. The considerable number sold means that many have survived and provide us with an important record of the town at the turn of the century. John married his sweetheart Mabel Lambert in 1910, following a courtship of several years. Their families were well matched, as Mabel's father was Robert Lambert, who had been proprietor of the Framlingham Weekly News, and also a strong Methodist. The courtship was complicated by the fact that Mabel was living and working in Halesworth, which

necessitated many bicycle trips for both of them. Post cards were the other means of communication. A copious supply of cards produced by his father, combined with three post deliveries a day meant that they were regularly in contact

John senior died in 1927, and his obituary said 'No man ever worked more zealously for the benefit of his fellow townspeople.' He held many positions including district councillor, chairman of Plomesgate Guardians and Council, County magistrate, chairman of the Parish Council. He was a staunch Methodist and often spoke from the pulpit.

John then ran both businesses for the next thirty one years, until he died in 1958. His daughter Brenda then carried on the shoe shop. It was in 1966 that Glynis Kerry started working there, and when Brenda retired in 1985, after a few weeks of closure, she re-opened the shop on 1 July 1985, and purchased it in 1987.



Glynis Buckles in the shop, 2007

Long service has been the keystone of this business. Ann Bilverstone started working there in 1986 and Sheila Curtis in 1989, and between them they put in 107 years of service. When Glynis retired in 2016, she had completed fifty years. Fortunately, Linda Main and Donna Hammond stepped in, and following refurbishment, opened in July 2016 trading as Castle Shoes. They are providing important continuity for this Framlingham business.

THE RED HOUSE FRAMLINGHAM CASTLE PART 1

This is the first of a series of extracts from a report produced on the Red House in Framlingham Castle by Historic England. The Red House, formerly Framlingham Workhouse by Emily Cole and Kathryn Morrison (2016) Research Report Series 023-2016

<http://research.historicengland.org.uk/>

(Please note figs. & refs. refer to those in the original article)

The Red House was erected in the Inner Court of Framlingham Castle in 1664 as the parish workhouse, on the site of what were probably service rooms at the low end of the medieval Great Hall. The workhouse was built by Pembroke Hall (now known as Pembroke College), Cambridge, in fulfilment of the will of Sir Robert Hitcham, who died in 1636. As far as is known, the earliest use of the term 'Red House' occurs in a document of 1699

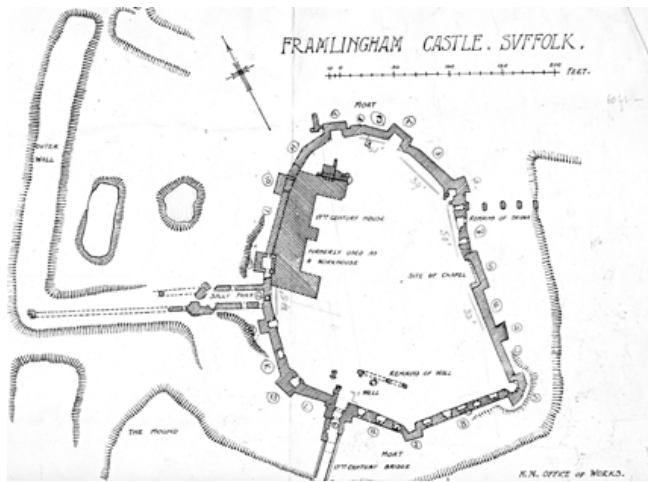


Fig. 3 A site plan of Framlingham Castle dated 1919, showing the location of the workhouse, comprising buildings of the late 16th century, 1664 and 1729. (TNA WORK 14/685)



Fig. 4 The Red House, Framlingham Castle, from the south-east. The workhouse of 1729 lies to its rear (north). (© Historic England, K. Morrison)

Pembroke Hall is known to have commissioned the London surveyor Peter Mills to design two other buildings connected with Hitcham's will: almshouses in Framlingham (1654) and the Hitcham Building (1659-61) at the college in Cambridge. It is possible that Mills, who is best known as the architect of Thorpe Hall (1653-56) near Peterborough, designed other buildings for Pembroke Hall. He may have provided the design for the workhouse in Framlingham Castle.

The Red House is one of a very small number of purpose-built workhouse buildings to survive nationally from the 17th century: the only earlier survival in the whole of England appears

to be the south range of Newbury Workhouse in Berkshire, built in 1626 and now used as a museum (listed Grade 1). No other 16th or 17th-century workhouse buildings are known to survive in Suffolk, other than in adapted buildings such as Hadleigh Guildhall.

Contrary to statements in the current guidebook and site presentation panels, the poor were not residents of the Red House in the 17th century. The building was intended to provide stock, implements and a place to 'set the poor on work'. Those who were unwilling to work in exchange for their relief or dole (commonly referred to in Framlingham as 'collection') were sent to the workhouse to spin or weave during the day under supervision, but continued to live in their own homes. Those who did not require supervision to work were given stock and implements, and allowed to work in their homes. The building was not designed to include the residence of the workhouse master (known as the 'workmaster' or 'governor'), but may nevertheless have ended up serving this purpose.

Although the Red House, as constructed, was a non-residential building, it adopted a standard lobby-entry house plan, with three rooms on each floor: an essentially traditional layout which made no obvious concession to its specific purpose. It thus replicated the conditions in which the poor worked (at spinning and so forth) in their own homes, and must be understood within the context of a cottage-based textile industry. A combing and weaving shed was also built within the castle as part of the workhouse of 1664, but nothing is known of the structure, which would presumably have been more industrial in character.

Until the building was completed in 1664, the workmaster, John Kilbourne, lived in the adapted north range of the surviving castle buildings, alongside the quarters of the schoolmaster, Zaccheus Leverland, and the schoolroom – the school being a separate institution established under Hitcham's will. Mrs Kilborne was also involved in teaching children: perhaps in helping them to spin or to read, a duty undertaken by the workhouse's Governess in 1705. Leverland's room and the schoolroom are represented by the surviving section of the north range, which appears to have been called the 'White House' by 1729. Kilbourne was promised a new house in 1664, but there is no evidence that this was ever built: he and his wife may have remained in the north range or moved into part of the Red House.

In 1666, just two years after the workhouse was completed, it was used as a pest house – presumably temporarily – during the plague. Around the same time, the governor (probably still Kilbourne, who clearly had difficulty getting work out of his unwilling charges) ran off with the valuable stock. This was a major setback for the enterprise.

For some time – a period which is poorly documented – the building ceased to operate as a workhouse. By the 1690s it had become the home of a bailiff named John Earl, who apparently ran an alehouse on the premises and paid no rent. This fits snugly into a national pattern: a great many workhouses set up in the early to mid-17th century went into abeyance in the later 1600s. The notion that it might be possible to generate profit through pauper labour – especially from paupers who were essentially unwilling to work – was misplaced. As Kilbourne discovered, workhouses proved expensive and, above all, troublesome to operate.

The north range of the castle was still standing, though in poor repair, in 1697, when Richard Porter approached Pembroke Hall on behalf of the town of Framlingham to ask if they could use it as a workhouse – essentially reviving the scheme of 1664. Porter argued that this was needed due to the high unemployment rate amongst men in the parish, and especially amongst those who could not spin. In 1698, however, the north range was being valued, and it was sold in 1699 for the value of its building materials to a John Corrance. It was demolished in early 1700, to the indignation of those promoting the workhouse project.



Fig. 5 The north range or White House, from the north-east. (© Historic England, K. Morrison)

However, by this time the Trustees of Hitcham's Estate had come up with an alternative proposal. In April 1699, they concluded that Framlingham Castle should be used as a workhouse for around 10 poor children, who were to live on the premises and learn to spin; the proposals were agreed by Pembroke Hall in January 1700. The plan was very much in the spirit of contemporary 'incorporation' workhouses elsewhere in England (see Appendix). The schoolroom and workroom were to be located in the truncated north range (fig 3). The schoolroom remained under the control of the schoolmaster (and presumably continued to admit non-workhouse children), whilst the workroom was in the charge of the workhouse Governor and Governess, Thomas and Anne Harding, who were also responsible for the care of the children. These years in the workhouse's history were somewhat tumultuous – there were complaints, for instance, when the ground-floor room in the north range, appointed as the children's workroom, was handed over for parish use in 1703-4 – and the new scheme was not a success. The number of children declined, and in 1708 it was decided to admit adults, rather than children, to Framlingham Workhouse, and to save money until there was enough to 'make the Workhouse fit' to receive the poor. In 1729 a large new block was constructed adjoining the north elevation of the Red House, on the site of the



Fig. 6 The 1729 workhouse block, from the north-east. (© Historic England, K. Morrison)

medieval Great Hall, including lodging rooms and work rooms for indoor paupers (fig 4). This was built by the parish rather than the Hitcham Trustees, who nevertheless contributed to the costs of building and running the establishment. A workhouse test was applied for the first time: the poor had to enter the workhouse as a condition of receiving relief. This existed in tandem with an outdoor relief system, principally benefiting the industrious poor. Many 'test' workhouses were set up nationally following the passage of the permissive Knatchbull's Act in 1723, and although quite a few were purpose-built, few survive. One of

the best survivals, and comparators, is the workhouse at Rochester (1724). The 1729 block at Framlingham – today little more than a shell – seems to have had a central entrance and stair (represented in the present-day building by a large brick-faced arched window piercing the castle wall), with a large heated room to either side on each floor. No plans of the building are known to pre-date the gutting of the ground and first floors around 1840.

The 1729 workhouse institution did not initially spread into the Red House, and the two structures are unlikely to have inter-communicated until a later date. Similarly the north range – first called the ‘White House’ in 1729 – was retained for use by Hitcham’s Charity. The exact functions of the Red House and White House in this period are uncertain, but parts of them seem have been used to accommodate elderly people waiting for places in Hitcham’s almshouses.

A house within the town was conveyed to Pembroke Hall for the use of the schoolmaster in 1711.² The school itself (or at least the boys’ contingent) quit the first-floor room of the White House in 1722, relocating to the upper floor of the Market Cross, which had been built by Pembroke Hall around 1677. From there it moved in 1788 to a new building on the north side of Hitcham’s almshouses. However, the schoolroom in the north range of the castle was referred to as the ‘School Chamber’ as late as 1727, suggesting that some educational function may have continued for a time after 1722, perhaps for girls. The whole of the White House became part of the parish workhouse in 1797. It may have been at this time that the ground floor was converted into a bakehouse. The 1806 inventory must have included the structure of 1729 and the White House, but not the Red House. It listed furnishings in a workroom, back house (bakehouse), pantry, committee room, sick ward, library, lodging rooms, and pest house. The Red House became part of the parish workhouse in 1813, and it is likely that doorways were created to communicate with the main workhouse block at this date.

When the New Poor Law was introduced in 1834, Framlingham parish was absorbed into the newly-formed Plomesgate Union. In 1836-37, a new union workhouse was built at Wickham Market to a double-cruciform plan devised by John Brown. During the few years when Framlingham served as a union workhouse, before the residents moved to Wickham Market, it was adapted according to New Poor Law principles, with separate airing yards and a ‘Union School’.

Around three years after Framlingham’s indoor poor had been transferred to their new institution, the 1729 workhouse block was converted into a ‘Town Hall’, usually referred to as a ‘public hall’ or sometimes as the ‘Castle Hall’. The first floor and internal walls were removed, though the attic floor was left intact, probably reflecting its use as a dormitory for an adjacent girls’ school (see below). In 1889, the early 18th-century organ gallery from St Michael’s Church in Framlingham replaced an earlier gallery in the south end of the building. The church’s organ gallery had been criticised by earlier Victorian writers and was thus deemed disposable. It was served, in the hall, by an early 18th-century stair which may also have come from the church, or perhaps from the 1729 workhouse block.

The hall of the castle had a variety of functions and was the setting for a range of events. For instance, it was used as a court house (possibly until a new court house was built in 1872), and as a drill hall by the Framlingham Rifle Corps (from 1859). Meanwhile, as well as the hall, from 1841 the White House (or at least its upper floor) accommodated a girls’ free school while the Red House became the house of the schoolmaster of the boys’ school. The Red House ceased to be the schoolmaster’s house around 1882, and became home to the drill instructor and his family. In fact, the building was divided into two residences: one for Pembroke College’s caretaker, and the other for the drill instructor or sergeant.

Framlingham's fire engine was housed at the Castle by 1855, and appears to have been kept in a coach house with a large doorway, on the ground floor of the White House, next to the old bakehouse. The building also housed an armoury.

The 1729 block continued to be used for public gatherings until 1913, when Pembroke College placed Framlingham Castle in the guardianship of the Ministry of Works. It seems to have been around this time that the building began to be widely (but inaccurately) named Framlingham's 'poorhouse' rather than 'workhouse', perhaps in an effort to make the site sound more picturesque. The stigma associated with the word 'workhouse' was very strong at the time – indeed, it was as recent as 1911 that the term 'workhouse' was formally replaced by 'poor-law institution'. Using the term 'workhouse' would not have been compatible with attracting visitors to a historic site. None of these objections pertain today (2016), and the term 'workhouse' is used throughout this report, for historical accuracy. It should also be noted that the 1729 workhouse block was persistently but misleadingly referred to as the 'Great Hall' or 'Main Hall' for most of the 20th century.

Preservation works at the site, such as clearing growth and rubbish, began immediately in 1913, but were not completed before the outbreak of the First World War. The 1729 workhouse was used as an officers' mess in 1915-16. The site did not open to the public until the mid-1920s. The Red House was used as the foreman's house from 1914 and subsequently became the residence of the site's caretaker or custodian. The middle ground-floor room was a kitchen, in the mid-20th century, and serviced a tea room in the easternmost ground-floor room until 1955. The present kitchen, at the west end of the ground floor, served as the scullery.

An extensive repair programme of the 'custodian's house' or 'cottage' was carried out in 1955-57. The windows throughout the house were repaired and reglazed, the roof was effectively rebuilt and two of the gables and the chimney stack were dismantled and rebuilt. Inside the building, much of the floor structure was reconstructed (with new beams, joists and floorboards), and the ceilings replaced with plasterboard. Not all of the oak used in the repairs was new, or from the site, making it difficult to identify original fabric in the present building. The partition walls between the westernmost rooms on both ground and first floors were rebuilt, and that on the first floor moved westwards to accommodate a new bathroom and fire escape. The level of intervention – despite evident disrepair and beetle infestation – is astonishing by modern standards, and the Inspector of Ancient Monuments, to give him his due, expressed some disquiet at the time. The Red House was not provided with water or drainage until around 1947, and heating, hot water and electricity were installed only following transferral of the site to English Heritage in 1983.

In conclusion, the Red House is of supreme interest and significance as a rare surviving example of a purpose-built 17th-century workhouse. It survives extremely well, despite varying levels of alteration – the most interventionist being the repair programme of 1955-57. The floor plan remains largely as it was in 1664, the changes made reflecting the needs of modern living (for example, the insertion of a bathroom in the 1950s). The building's relationship with the adjacent workhouse block of 1729 has varied over the years – although they are not now joined, there was a physical connection in the past, probably created after 1813. The central room on the ground floor of the Red House was the kitchen from the 1920s until 1955, servicing a tea room in the current sitting room; the wall to its west dates from 1955.

² Loder 1798, 373: 'Michael Baldry, as Schole-Master of Sir Robert Hitcham's Free-Schole at Framlingham holdeth half a Burgens. Late purchased of him, for the Schole-Master's Habitation: which was Richard Baldry's 1673. Lionel Bredstreet's 1659. By the annual rent of 2d. ..' Baldry was still the school-master when he died in 1732.



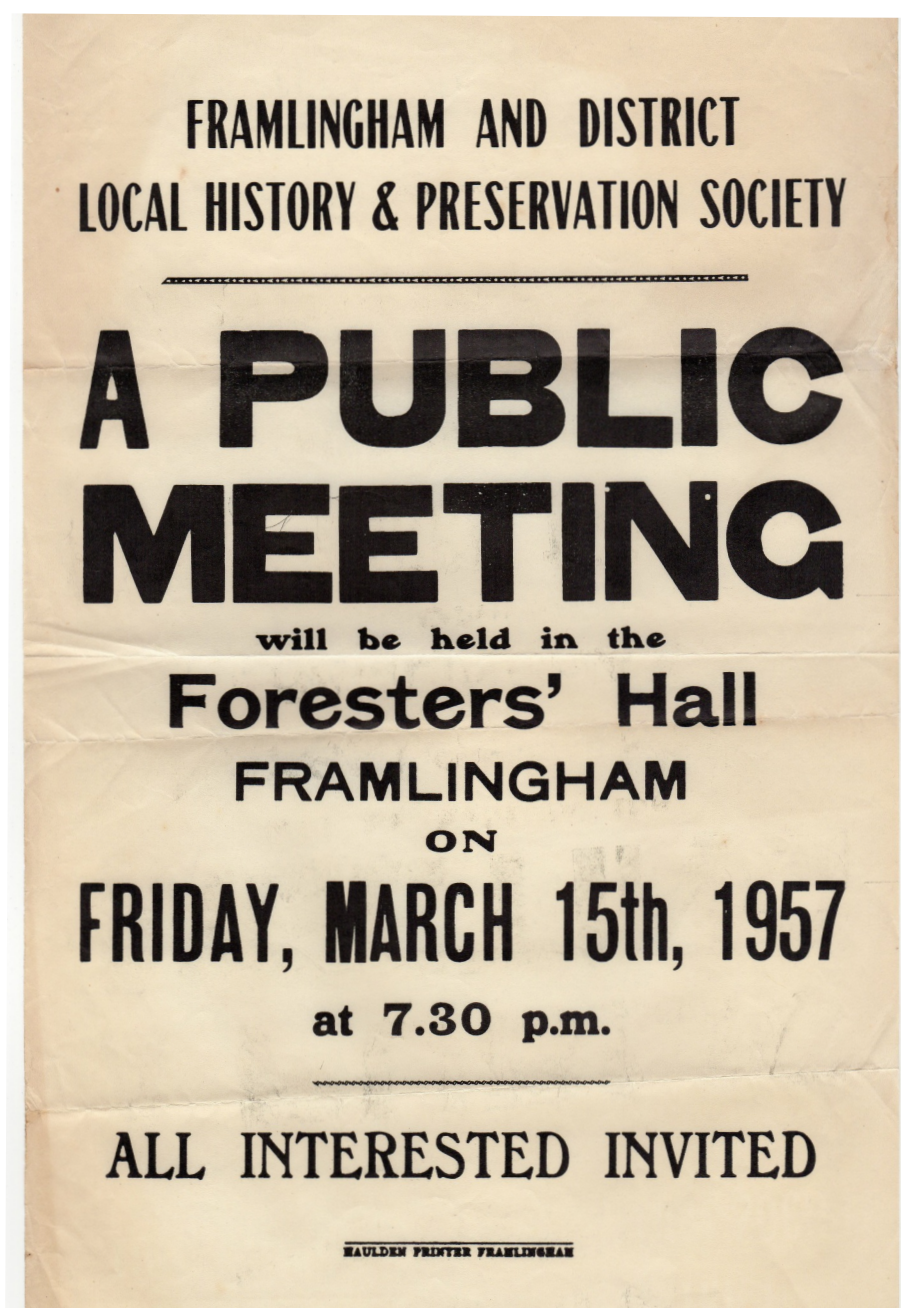
Castle interior with Red House on the left, the Workhouse of 1729 in the centre, and the White House on the right. (Framlingham Historical Photo Archive)



An artist's view, c.1905 (Framlingham Historical Photo Archive)

THIS SEASON'S PROGRAMME

Wed 18th Oct (AGM)	The Early Days of Electricity in Framlingham	John Bridges
Wed. 15th Nov	St. Audrey's Workhouse to Asylum 1764-1993	David Phelan
Wed 13th Dec	Henry Adams Cupper - A Suffolk Pioneer	Geoff Robinson
Wed 17th Jan	Mill to Methodism The History of the Free Church	Peter Webb
Wed 21st Feb	Suffolk between the Wars	Dr. Nick Sign
Wed 21st March	A History of Cheese-making in Suffolk	Vivia Bamford
Wed 18th April	An Auctioneer's Lot	Geoffrey Barfoot



First annual meeting of the Framlingham & District Local History & Preservation Society, 1957

MEETING HOUSE – MEETING PLACE
CELEBRATING THE TRICENTENARY OF
FRAMLINGHAM UNITARIAN MEETING HOUSE

By Suzanne Bartlett

Part Two – continued from April 2017

(Margaret) Lucy Tagart was the youngest daughter of the Reverend Edward Tagart and Helen Bourn. She was born in London in 1836 and baptised by her father in the Portland Street Chapel in January 1838. Lucy's mother had previously been married to Thomas Martineau, elder brother of James and Harriet. The Martineau family were brought up as Unitarians and are well known in Norwich, with Martineau Lane below County Hall being one of the main roads into the city. It was whilst in Norwich that Edward Tagart was re-acquainted with Helen, whom he had first met when studying for the Unitarian ministry at Manchester College, York¹ along with James Martineau. After her husband's death in 1824, Helen spent time in Norwich with her in-laws, who being Unitarians, worshipped at the Octagon Chapel. It was here that Edward Tagart, at only twenty-one years old, became Minister in 1825, thus giving him the opportunity to continue his acquaintance with the now widowed Helen, for whom he had some affection. They were married in Manchester, Helen's home town in 1828 and afterwards moved to London. The Martineau family did not approve of their association and this might be the reason why Edward spent so little time in Norwich.

Tagart accepted a renewed invitation to take up a previous offer at York Street, St. James's just at the time his ministry in Norwich had become untenable because of his broken relationship with the Martineaus. In 1833 his expanding York Street congregation moved to the newly built Little Portland Street Chapel in Marylebone where he remained as minister until his death in 1858. To begin with his ministry was well received by the intelligentsia who attended his services, many of whom he got to know through his active involvement with the Linnean and Geological societies and the Society of Antiquaries. However, his popularity was not sustained – there is a suggestion that having independent financial means put him at a disadvantage with some of his congregation and the fact that he was not always sensitive to their needs caused upset. Also his role as a committee member of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association took up a lot of his time. He was particularly interested in the Unitarian communities in Transylvania, and it was on a return journey from Hungary, where he had gone to offer assistance to this persecuted group of Unitarians, that he died.

In contrast to Florence Hill's family, who moved house several times during Florence's childhood, the Tagart family remained in London after their move from Norwich. They lived first on Hampstead Heath and then on Finchley Road, after their eldest daughter, also called Helen, had married and left home. In all there were six children, but two boys, both named Edward, had died young. Helen was the eldest, then Emily, with Lucy being the fourth child, born between the two Edwards. Willie was the youngest in the family, and at the time of his birth his mother was forty-five. Lucy had a sweet and lovely nature, as described by her father when comparisons were made between Lucy and Florence, the character in *Dombey and Son*, by Charles Dickens. Identifying their daughter with a Dickens subject was not so surprising, for the Dickens family regularly worshipped at Little Portland Street chapel and were friends of the family. Lucy was evidently proud of the family connection with Dickens, and she maintained a small archive of letters and portraits of the author, which she would show to visitors to College Chapel in Stepney. In 1909, Lucy is in correspondence with a Mr. A. Nicholson in Manchester, to whom she loans some of her Dickens memorabilia. In one letter she says, 'It is with some hesitation that I entrust you with these photographs' and then

continues to give an insight into Dickens's relationship with his wife, Catherine. 'My father and sister were present at the performance of the 'Frozen Deep' where Mrs. Dickens seemed very unhappy and the separation took place shortly afterwards. My father wrote very strongly to Mr. Dickens and that was the last intercourse they had.'² It was during the production of *The Frozen Deep* in 1857 that Dickens met and fell in love with Ellen Ternan, and it is evident from Edward Tagart's letter to Dickens at the time that he disapproved of Dickens's behaviour.

Dickens was also acquainted with the Hill family, who were part of the close-knit social circle in Highgate. Dr. Southwood Smith, Florence's maternal grandfather, asked Dickens for support regarding his plans for a Sanatorium. The two men also corresponded regularly in connection with the employment of children in mines and other industries. After receiving a copy of Southwood Smith's report to the royal commission on the subject, Dickens wrote and told him how proud he was to know him. Maybe in tribute to Southwood Smith, the hero in *Bleak House* is the doctor Alan Woodcourt, whose focus is treating the poor in the slums. The Hills were also acquainted with George Eliot, whose step-son Charles Lewes was married to Gertrude Hill. Also amongst the social circles that both Florence and Lucy's families mixed with was Lord Byron, Leigh Hunt and Elizabeth Gaskell, who had married William Gaskell, Edward's friend from his time at Manchester College. So I imagine with all these literary and liberal thinking people as friends of her parents, both Lucy and Florence were brought up in an environment where to question and discuss topical matters was the norm.

Lucy maintained an interest in the Unitarian communities in Hungary since travelling to Transylvania with her father prior to his death in 1858, following on from a family holiday in Switzerland. Although the civil war in the region had taken place ten years previously,

'The riven heart of the country still bled with unhealed wounds [and] had left evidences of ravages, buildings unrestored, homes destroyed, fields untilled, roads unmended, and the countenances of men were anxious and depressed; but the spirit of the Hungarians was still unsubdued. Especially was this the case with the Unitarians of Transylvania.'³

There had been an effort by the Austrians to suppress Unitarianism, and through Tagart's appeal to the British and Foreign Unitarian Association where he had been secretary since 1841, over £2,000 was raised for the community in Transylvania which he took with him on the visit. Edward was hoping to set in place the opportunity for Hungarian students to come over to Manchester to train at the Unitarian college, but because of his untimely death, this did not happen immediately. The journey by train and horse-drawn carriage to Hungary and back was long and arduous. Lucy and Edward had to endure travelling in extreme heat, and on one occasion were refused any refreshment at an inn where they had stopped for the night. But with great stoicism Lucy recounts, 'Almost fainting and in despair, suddenly the music of a gipsy band broke upon our ears. Instantly thrilled and revived, the music roused and electrified us, and all troubles were easily borne.'⁴ Suffering such discomfort must have taken its toll on Edward, for after travelling for twenty-six hours from Dresden to Brussels on the return leg of the journey, he collapsed from exhaustion. Unable to rise from his bed, seven days later he began to have fits. Meanwhile his younger brother had been summoned from England but arrived too late to be present at Edward's death later that day. It was Willie, the youngest son, who rose to the occasion and went to Brussels to accompany Lucy home, along with their father's body. James Martineau conducted the funeral service and afterwards Edward was buried in the family grave at Kensal Rise cemetery. His role as minister at the Little Portland Street chapel was taken over by James Martineau.

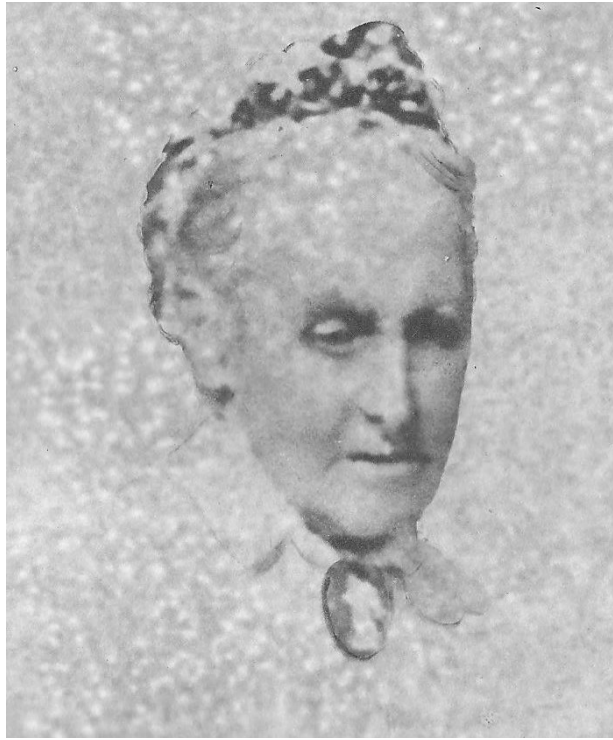


Figure 1: Lucy Tagart (Suffolk Record Office, n.d)

Inspired by her father, Lucy took up the baton of maintaining links with the Transylvanian Unitarians, returning to Hungary many times. Considering that in those days this was not an easy journey to undertake and had had such unhappy consequences on that first journey Lucy took in 1858, it seems remarkable that she was so determined to carry on travelling back and forth to this remote region. Her obituary in the *Inquirer* notes that she developed this work 'far beyond what could have been foreseen in [her father's] time.'⁵ Lucy first returned to Transylvania in 1890, when she was accompanied by Florence Hill. This would have been after they set up the Postal Mission in London but before the Village Mission was created in Bedford. Lucy went again to Hungary in 1896 in order to visit the Hungarian exhibition in Budapest. In 1901 she led a tour of twenty-eight people there, including ten women. The purpose of the tour was to be present at the opening of the new buildings for a Unitarian College at Kolozsvár, the capital of Transylvania, in the southern province of Hungary. It is evident from all the recollections that Lucy gathered in her book *The Hungarian and Transylvanian Unitarians* that there was a great feeling of comradeship between the Hungarian and English Unitarians, despite the language difficulties. Hungarian was not an easy language to learn, so Latin was used as the common form of communication between them. However, the Hungarians spoke Latin with such a strong accent that the English found it difficult to understand. By the twentieth century, this problem had been eased as a result of many of the Hungarians learning to speak English, mainly from their American colleagues with whom they also had close relations.

Lucy has been described as always being 'bright, reasonable and courteous' and making visitors to the College Chapel 'to feel at ease and quite at home.'⁶ She also seems to have taken delight in the task of match-maker, 'enjoying nothing more than bringing young couples together'⁷ despite the fact that romance appears to have been absent in her own life. For her eighty-eighth birthday in November 1924, celebrations were held at Essex Hall, the Unitarian Headquarters in London. Lucy's popularity is evident from the people who attended the event from as far away as Scotland and Wales and with congratulations received from more than six hundred people from all over the world, including the ninety year-old Bishop Ferencz from Transylvania. In her response to the address

given by the Reverend W. G. Tarrant, Lucy expressed regret that young people of the day had little interest in spiritual matters and as a result was unaware of what it was like to grow old as happily as she had done. Six months later Lucy died. Her funeral was held at Hampstead Cemetery on 28th May, 1925 and in his address the Reverend W. G. Tarrant said of her:

'Blest in her own faith and hope and love, she was ever eager to share that blessedness with others [...] We all knew her wide-embracing sympathy, especially for the poor and lowly, extending to many lands and races afar off; we knew her generous hand, so unostentatious in its giving, her unwearying diligence in the work which was given her to do.'⁸

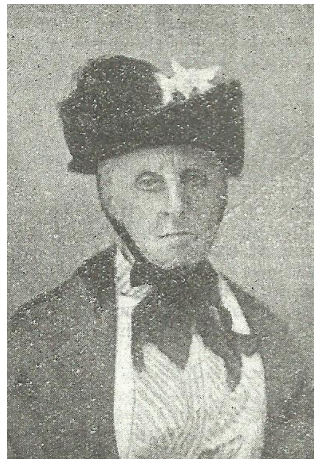


Figure 2: Lucy Tagart (Memorial Notices, The Inquirer, June 6, 1925: 359-60)

The Village Mission in Suffolk came about through the work of Reverend Alfred Amey, minister at the Framlingham Unitarian Meeting House in 1889. Wishing to extend his ministry, which was in danger of ending through poor attendance, Amey would cycle round lanes in the vicinity with a portable harmonium and hold services wherever he could gather a congregation, be it in barns, cottages or even out in the open air. Amey had met Florence and Lucy at the London-based Central Postal Mission, so when he thought about increasing his congregation in Suffolk, who better to approach to assist him than the two women who had introduced him to the Unitarian faith? Florence and Lucy were secretary and chair respectively to the Postal Mission in London and the Bedfield chapel was an extension of this work. By establishing a place of worship in the village they were able to provide spiritual and practical support to those suffering from poverty in this rural area.

Florence and Lucy, as officers in the Postal Mission, arranged the building of Bedfield Chapel, which was used as a community centre as well as a place of worship. Lucy Tagart also purchased several dilapidated cottages in the village which were renovated and let to local people at a nominal rent. One of these, Cowslip Cottage, was used as the local headquarters for the mission and it was here that Florence and Lucy would stay when visiting Bedfield. The cottage was also used as a retreat for London visitors, although some of them found the facilities quite primitive, with no running water or proper sanitation. Later the cottage provided a refuge for conscientious objectors during World War I, including those who came to Bedfield to escape persecution and also help work on the land, replacing the farm workers who had gone to war.

The chapel at Bedfield was completed in 1895 and officially opened a year later. It was the first Unitarian chapel ⁹ to be built in Suffolk – the others all having belonged to other congregations before becoming distinctly Unitarian. The chapel was variously referred to as the 'mission room', 'tin tabernacle' or 'iron church', and was only ever meant to be a temporary building, but with the intervention of two world wars and diminishing congregations, the 'tin tab' survived for over a hundred years, with only one major refurbishment in 1991. The success of the Mission in Bedfield was such that it was noted at the Eastern Union of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches meeting held in Ipswich in 1896 that the new 'iron chapel' was free of debt, thanks to the Postal Union. After the winding up of the Postal Mission in the 1950s, responsibility for Bedfield Chapel's upkeep came under the Framlingham Unitarian Trust, with pastoral support being provided by the Ipswich minister.

The success of Amey's ministry and the support provided by Florence and Lucy through the Postal Mission can be witnessed through the many articles and notices written by Amey and others in the local press. In November 1901 Amey began writing a "History of the Old Meeting House Congregation, Framlingham" in the *Framlingham Weekly News*. From these thirteen instalments we learn about the seventy households that were registered as 'consistent attenders' in 1774 with the congregation consisting of eighty people on average. He notes that the first Sunday School in Framlingham was started up in the Meeting House during Rev. Samuel Say Toms' ministry (1773-1829). During Amey's time, two services were held both at Framlingham (11 a.m. and 7 p.m.) and Bedfield (2.30 p.m. and 6.30 p.m.). It would not have been possible for Amey to attend all these services, especially as he was still using a bicycle to get around at that time, so visiting preachers came to help out. On Sunday 29th October 1899 services were held at Framlingham Meeting House to celebrate the re-opening of the Chapel and the organ. This must have been when the south and east galleries were removed and the pulpit moved from the North to the East wall ¹⁰. The visiting preacher was Rev. G. Lansdown from King's Lynn. There was a public tea the following evening, after which a public meeting was held. The Old Meeting House celebrated its 239th [sic] anniversary 26th -28th October 1901 with a sale of works and a service on the Saturday, two services on the Sunday with a further sale of work and a public meeting on the Monday, the latter of which was arranged by Miss Tagart. This pattern of services, public teas and meetings seem to be repeated on several occasions, indicating the degree of engagement the Unitarians had in the town during Amey's ministry.

The dedication and hard work that Florence and Lucy put into both the Village and Central Mission is undoubtedly worthy of recognition. But I don't believe that they wished to draw attention to themselves, and were perfectly content to carry on their work 'behind the scenes'. Perhaps their old-fashioned values harked back to the end of the eighteenth century when Unitarians were trying hard to be accepted as respectable Christians and women 'were required to play the subordinate role expected in a patriarchal society.'¹¹ The two women worked well together as a team. Lucy appears more outward-looking, as befits the President. She organised outings, holidays and study schools for postal mission workers throughout the country, as well as arranging for tracts and other publications to be sent out to isolated communities. She had some financial means, and this had allowed her to buy the cottages in Bedfield and also Battle Chapel in Sussex. Florence, as Secretary, was the one to carry out most of the correspondence, writing thousands of letters of support to Unitarians worldwide. She also accrued financial means later in life – Octavia had left her a cottage at Toys Hill, Chartbrow in her will – and after Lucy died she was able to buy more cottages in Bedfield as well as the chapel at Battle.

Florence Hill and Lucy Tagart carried out a great service to the community, not only in London with the Central Postal Mission and the Suffolk Village Mission in Bedfield, but far beyond. During 1913, the mission corresponded with over a thousand new enquiries while

still maintaining almost two thousand correspondents; six hundred and fifty theological works were lent out and thirteen personal visits made. The Travelling Library service continued to support Unitarian communities around the country in addition to the preachers that were provided to unsupported places around the country. This is an incredible amount of work to be carried out in one year by Florence and Lucy and their small band of women supporters.

In considering the legacy left behind by Florence and Lucy, we need to look no further than the refurbished Framlingham Meeting House which was celebrated on Sunday 8th May 2011. These two women had a lot to do with the preservation of the Meeting House, albeit long after their deaths. When they set up the Bedfield Chapel, they had also bought several cottages in the village, all named after flowers by Lucy – Cowslip, Clover, Daisy and Jasmine. After the death of the last tenant, it was decided to sell all the cottages. The chapel was by this time little used and was closed in May 2010. As the building was a temporary structure, it was not feasible for it to be refurbished. The plot was sold, the chapel pulled down and a modern house built in its place. As a result of these sales, Bedfield Chapel Trust (after Florence Hill, which as well as the chapel included Jasmine Cottage) and Bedfield Trust (after Lucy Tagart, which covered all the other cottages as well as The Old Rectory) had accrued a considerable amount of money. After extensive negotiations, the effort by the trustees to secure the Bedfield monies for local use in the spirit of Miss Hill and Miss Tagart were eventually realised when the Charity Commission relaxed its attitude towards trust mergers. Plans for the refurbishment of the Meeting House were drawn up by the architect Tim Buxbaum and subsequently put into effect by Robert Norman builders.



Figure 3: Framlingham Unitarian Meeting House (*S.Bartlett, 2016*)

Cliff Reed retired from his ministry in 2012. Raymond Seal, lay pastor, shared the pulpit at Bedfield and Framlingham with Cliff between 2004 and 2011. Jim Corrigan was then appointed as interim minister of Ipswich and Framlingham in 2012 and when his tenancy ended a decision was made to break the link between the two towns, first made in 1959 when Rev. Nicholas Teape became minister. The Rev. Matthew Smith took up his joint ministry in Framlingham with Bury St Edmunds in 2014. For the first time in fifty-five years, since Rev. Wright Broadbent retired, there is now a Unitarian minister living in the Manse in Framlingham, helping to keep the legacy of Florence Hill and Lucy Tagart alive. Should the two women be here today, I am sure that they would be delighted that their dedication and hard work has contributed towards keeping the Unitarian Meeting House in Framlingham active, not only as a place of worship but also as a valuable community resource.

¹ Manchester College was a dissenting academy for religious nonconformists who were prevented from either attending or obtaining a degree from Oxbridge universities at the time.

² Tagart, M.Lucy. Letter to A. Nicholson. 29 Sep. 1909. (920 NIC/18/11/3). Liverpool Record Office & Local History Service.

³ Tagart, M. Lucy. Ed. *The Hungarian and Transylvanian Unitarians*. London: Unitarian Christian Publishing Office, 1903. Print. p.1-2.

⁴ Tagart, p.4.

⁵ The Inquirer. "Memorial Notices." *The Inquirer*, 6 June 1925. p.359

⁶ Causebrooke, Arthur. *College Chapel Echoes*. London: Arthur H. Stockwell Ltd., 1942. p.20.

⁷ Causebrooke, p.21.

⁸ 'Memorial Notices.' *The Inquirer*. 6 June, 1925. Print. p.360.


⁹ Older Dissenting Meeting Houses in Suffolk, such as those in Framlingham, Ipswich and Bury St. Edmunds, had mixed congregations to begin with and later evolved into being solely Unitarian when the other denominations dispersed to set up their own places of worship.

¹⁰ Moving the pulpit so that the congregation faced east could be seen as a move away from the radical nature of earlier Unitarianism and a wish to be accepted within the wider religious community

¹¹ Peart, Ann. "Forgotten Prophets – Unitarian Women and Religion." *Unitarian Perspectives on Contemporary Religious Thought*. Ed. George D. Chyssidis. London: Lindsey Press, 1999.

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