

FRAM

Newsletter no. 9

April 2024



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Introduction

It gives me great pleasure to commend the Society's April 24 Newsletter to you. Once again, our President John Bridges has demonstrated not only his remarkable enthusiasm for all things historical associated with our town, but also the breadth and scope of his interest – from boxing to floods and motoring to doodlebugs! Our thanks too to Alison Pickup for adding a contribution to the Newsletter and for dealing with the essential routine of producing it so admirably.

I am also delighted to report that with membership numbers holding up very well, and the fact that subs have been paid promptly this year – for which many thanks – our finances are very healthy and our current activities can continue at the very reasonable subscription rates of £12 for a single person and £18 for a couple living at the same address. The accounts appear later in this newsletter.

We will soon be offering three 2024 summer visits for you to enjoy from June through to September. Stand by for further information. Last year one of our members suggested the visit to the house and garden of painter and gardening enthusiast Sir Cedric Morris at Benton End, Hadleigh. It was a very interesting outing and may I appeal to you all to continue to let us have any thoughts or ideas you may have for future visits.

Have a great summer!

David Ransom (Chairman)



Framlingham History Society website

The History Society now has a new website at <https://framlinghamhistory.uk/>. This contains information about the Society, most importantly the programme of talks and visits! It also contains copies of previous newsletters and other articles, and a series of audio interviews recorded in 2007 entitled "Our Town in Sound".

A recent addition is the newly-published Framlingham Photo Project 2011 archive.

Simon Garrett (simon.garrett@simongarrett.co.uk)

Society Accounts for the year to 30th September 2023

Framlingham History Society

Income	year to 31 th July 2022	year to 30 th Sept 2023 (14 months)
Events	£85.64	£7.00
Visits	£389.00	£1,420.00
Subscription	£1,186.80	£1,062.00
Interest	£18.06	£263.95
Misc income	£75.00	£78.00
Total Income	£1,754.50	£2,830.95
Expenditure		
Events	£0.00	£0.00
Lecturers	£315.00	£260.00
Room Hire	£150.00	£90.00
Society subs	£50.00	£50.00
Office	£129.70	£9.88
Insurance	£75.00	£75.00
Visit costs	£430.60	£1,375.00
Programme printing	£70.00	£197.00
Bank Charges	£45.00	£96.80
Total Expenditure	£1,265.30	£2,153.68
Bank balance (adjusted)		
Current Account		£2,525.68
Deposit a/c		£7,067.68

Note: The year end has been moved to end of September so the figures for 2023 are for 14 months.

Captain Percy Rayner Green lived at Saxtead and was the father of our committee member Michael. Leigh Trevail has a long-standing interest in the motoring history of our county, and has recently published *Eastern Counties Motor Club, Over Seven Decades of Affordable Motor Sport*. He has also prepared an appreciation of Percy Rayner Green with his exploits in the mighty V8 Ford, which follows.

Captain Percy Rayner Green (1910 - 1956)

For the first few years of the E.C.M.C Captain Percy Rayner Green (known as Ray) along with his white 1936 Ford V8 convertible were a regular sight at the race meetings. Together they competed at the original Sprint at Bentwaters, the first two race meetings at Fersfield and the early races at Snetterton. As well as our events Ray also took part in those organised by the Cambridge Car Club.

Ray was a good friend of Sidney Allard and his right hand man Tom Lush. This ensured that this pre-war drophead coupé with its Mercury engine with aluminium cylinder heads was no boulevard cruiser. Clearly Ray had no time for theories on aerodynamics or weight because the ornamentation on the front of the car increased over the period that he campaigned it, with the results proving that there was no substitute for cubic inches. In his report on the Fersfield races Competitions Secretary Hugh Murland noted that *Rayner Green was acting in the best sporting tradition greeting overtaking (and overtaken) cars by doffing his cap*. You don't tend to see that nowadays.

Sadly, Captain Percy Rayner Green died of cancer in 1956 aged only forty six. The following was penned by Hugh and featured in the E.C.M.C. Review of September that year.

CAPT. P. RAYNER GREEN AN APPRECIATION

When the Eastern Counties M.C. was formed in January 1950, and the initial publicity on its formation appeared in the local press, a letter was received by the Secretary on the following day from a farmer near Framlingham, expressing interest and stating that he had been wondering when Motor sport activity was going to develop in this area.

Such was the Club's first contact with Rayner Green, and from the start he was one of the keenest of Competitors in our events, quickly becoming well known for the verve with which he handled his large white Ford V8; and certainly no less for his cheerful demeanour and perpetual good humour.

Both in the E.C.M.C events and those of other clubs he figured frequently in the awards list, and although in the early days he claimed that he lived too far away to serve on the Committee, eventually he was persuaded otherwise. It was only illness that diminished his activities, both as a Committee member and Competitor.

One could not help liking Ray, and his friendliness and sportmanship will long be remembered. He will be greatly missed by many of us.

H. F. Murland



Fersfield near Diss 1951.

And later that year at the
inaugural meeting at Snetterton
Heath organised by the A.M.O.C
© Guy Griffiths Collection



Bottisham Speed Trial 27th April
1952

© Roger Bowyer Collection



Kicking up dust at the Great Chishill Hill Climb near Royston 28th September 1952 © Richmond Pike

Again at Snetterton. This time it's the E.C.M.C. meeting of 25th April 1953. © Richmond Pike



Captain Rayner Green in uniform.

Many thanks to Michael Hammond of the Guy Griffiths Collection for the use of the Snetterton photograph.

A Brief look at the Roles Portrayed by Women in Medieval Illustrations

by Alison Bowman

When re-examining various Psalters and other manuscripts for the talk last year on the Medieval Farming Year the portrayal of women's roles became very apparent. As a principal source I was looking at the Luttrell Psalter produced just before the Black Death in 1348. As it revolves round rural life in Lincolnshire there is little to show of the roles played by more urban women where a merchant class was beginning to emerge, and where some women did have independent occupations.

In the Psalter there is a fairly clear definition of the two main classes – the ruling elite and the labouring peasant. It is exemplified both by the clothes worn and the occupations shown. It has to be remembered that the reality was probably rather different, and the Psalter is an idealised account to show Sir Geoffrey in a good light. However, given that most depictions of women are as the Virgin Mary or as one of the numerous saints, it is interesting to have a picture of a more ordinary life. There is no reason to think it was any different to any great degree across most of the country.

We first get a glimpse of the ladies of Sir Geoffrey Luttrell's household at the start of the Psalter where they are shown sending him off to war. He was required to give service to the King as part of his lease of the land and also to supply men from his estate to fight if necessary. This took place approximately every two years leaving his lady (Agnes Sutton) in charge albeit supported by stewards. He would probably have left her with all the keys to strong boxes etc. for the financial management of the estate.



The two main occupations for single peasant women were either working the land or in live-in service. Service paid less but was more secure as service contracts were made usually for a year whereas land work was seasonal. On marriage most women gave up service but then she would become a lord's tenant and be obliged under the terms of the tenancy to fulfil land duties. Marriage was the most common route for single women (a survey of one Lincolnshire village showed that 96% of women were married or widows). In running the tenancy there was little division of labour between the sexes with women performing all the tasks alongside her husband. Indeed, from the late 13th century tenancies were often held in jointure so on the death of the husband the land passed to the wife. (Richard Smith *Women's Property Rights under Common Law*).



There are many illustrations of women at work in the Luttrell Psalter such as this one show women reaping whilst a man ties up the sheaths



Feeding chickens

Milking (from the Making of the Book of Flanders)



Wine Making from September in the book of Flanders



Hard manual work, breaking clods in the field



And what might be considered 'women's' work of spinning and carding



Master of the Dresden Prayer Book or workshop (Flemish, active about 1480 - 1515), illuminator *The Annunciation to the Shepherds*, about 1480–1485. (J. Paul Getty Museum)

This illustration of the Annunciation shows what appears to be a woman shepherd. As with the Luttrell Psalter the dress is an idealised version of what peasant women wore but is a beautiful illustration with good colour preservation (tempera colour and gold leaf).

There are some images of middle class women to be found such as this one where a woman is bringing her husband in front of a judge from the *Feudal Customs of Aragon*. Medieval women did have some legal rights and had equal pay in some professions such as thatching and reaping. After the Black Death the shortage of labour increased women's bargaining power to the extent that statutes such as the Statute of Cambridge (1388) tried to limit their earnings. Only rarely did they hold any official position or join tithings or act as reeves or jurors



From the same manuscript we also have this illustration of a female bread maker having the weight of her loaves checked by an official showing that women were involved in daily commerce. Ale-wives are famous and the brewing of ale (made from barley until the 14th century) was largely the prerogative of married women who brewed the ale around other domestic chores. Not everybody did everything so you might buy your ale but sell your bread, often from other women.

If you look at these women's headwear they are finer and more complex than those of the scarves of the peasant women. In some ways headgear is the delineator of social position

Initial Q: A Woman with Bread Loaves before a Man Holding a Scale

Moving up the social hierarchy the illustrations show women in a variety of activities but not involving any manual labour



Sir Geoffrey and family feasting (it is speculated that the monk second from left was the main illustrator).

One of the ladies of the house being attended to by her maid. Her hair is being twisted into a complex coil which appears to be in fashion at the time. The maid is holding up a mirror to the finished side for approval. On her knee is a double sided comb and what may be a lockable jewel box at her knee.



In this illustration a woman is playing a board game - some form of backgammon? (note the hairstyle would seem to be the end result of that started in the previous illustration). There does appear to be some dispute going on!!

Women can also be seen riding and hunting both with bows and spears although the dress would seem to be very elaborate for these activities!



From *The Taymouth Hours* 2nd quarter of the 14th century (British Library)

And finally an image from the upper echelons of society showing a woman as part of a hawking party. Note the elaborate headdresses.

Limbouurg brothers (fl. 1402–1416) *Très Riches Heures du duc de Berry* Folio 8, verso: August

I think that a conclusion I have come to from looking at these and many other illustrations that life for women was far more varied and in many senses wider than I had previously thought. They were involved in commerce not just domestic or agricultural chores, albeit in a restricted range of activities.

Whilst many things have changed some still have not, particularly for peasant women. Women were paid on average 70% of that paid to men for the same job. They were expected both to run the household and work...sound familiar?

All illustrations unless otherwise stated are from the Luttrell Psalter (1335-40?) courtesy of the British Library



News



Friends of St Michael FOSM are holding an event in the Castle Community Rooms on Sunday, 30th June at 2.30 p.m. The first part is entitled 'Framlingham, A Trip Down Memory Lane in Old Photographs'. Following a break for tea and cake, the second part is 'The Framlingham Pageant of 1931'. An introduction and film showing highlights of this spectacular event. If you were unable to see the Pageant film when our Society showed it last October, this is a further opportunity. Look out for FOSM information with latest details.

Poster for 1931 Pageant (JFB)

Joint Meeting with WI. When the new Castle Community Rooms (CCR) opened, many organisations were vying for space to hold their meetings. Our Society preferred to stay in the United Free Church which has served us well for many years. The WI found their only option at CCR was Wednesday evenings. They were aware that some members might wish to attend both events which would not be possible, both being on the third Wednesday of the month. Their President Jess Nicholls suggested we have a one-off joint meeting which is an excellent idea. This will be held at the Castle Community Rooms on 18th September, starting at 7.30 p.m. There will be a short presentation by our President outlining the history of our Society along with old images of Framlingham. After the break, the WI will provide a presentation, details to be determined. I do hope our members will support this event, which should be a good social occasion.



The Framlingham Floods. An Historical Retrospect

The floods caused by storm Babet brought devastation to the low-lying parts of the town on Friday 20 October 2023. Looking back over time, the occurrences of flooding have been well recorded in *Framlingham Weekly News* (published 1859 to 1939) and *Lamberts Family Almanac* (1871 to 1916). Richard Green's *The History, Topography and Antiquities of Framlingham and Saxtead* of 1834, refers to the 1614 flood. More recently, there are U Tube videos, such as one in 2009 showing water up to the steps of the Railway Inn. The following descriptions of flooding are based on the above sources.

1614 "The 21st of Januarre, Anno, 1614, ther was sutch a water at the Mill Bridge, as the like as neuer seene in any man's tyme then lyueynge..." There had been two water mills, with one located near Tanyard Court.

1853. A very remarkable flood took place here on 25th April, 1853. At eight p.m. the Mere presented a sea of water. When the inundation was at its height, it stood above the centre of the arch of the Mill Bridge, an event which far exceeded anything of the kind then known within the last 75 years. This was more than two centuries after the last flood of 1614.

1875 July. The Mere was flooded to a higher point than reached last winter. The hay crop...has been floating away day by day. Such a flood that had not been known for 22 years.

1879 July. Similar floods [to 1853] occurred in July and September 1879. The July flood exceeded 1853 by 10 inches. No question that it was through neglecting to keep clear the course of the river. Read's fellmonger's yard [Tanyard Court] deluged to 18 inches by noon and at night 3 feet. H Fairweather [Bridge Cottage], house and premises flooded to a depth from a foot to three feet. The dribbling stream of late years...has allowed us to grow careless in the matter of keeping the channel at its proper width and depth.

1882 Great flood at Framlingham and all low lying parts in neighbouring parishes. About two feet lower than 1880 as river has been widened and cleared of debris.

1889 October. The sheets of water soon filled the streets, blocking all the gratings of the sewers. A cottage on the Post Office bridge was submerged several inches. Mr Bonney [Gentlemen's Corner] also flooded; lower parts of houses in Station Road as well as the Railway Inn. The scene from the Free Methodist Church [The United Free Church] to Station Road and Riverside was that of a flowing river; and the school rooms of this church were submerged some four inches.

All approaches to the Post Office and station under water, and only by carts and horses could letters be posted. Reads fellmonger business submerged some two feet, while the Sale Yard [Elms flats] was inundated. The Yard was united with the Mere, forming a gigantic lake, extending to beyond the Little Lodge, and covering some 40-50 acres.

1897 Floods at Framlingham.

1902 July. The road from the Post Office to the station was flooded to a depth of 18 inches, recalling the floods of 1879 and 1880s. Many cottagers who were visiting the town for their weekly shopping were compelled to return with empty baskets.

1910 November. Abnormal rainfall began at 5pm and there has been a continuous downpour for more than 48 hours. Residents in Albert Place and other low-lying parts of the town are in a sad plight. Floors have been under several inches of water.

1912 August. Abnormal floods. The low-lying parts were all many feet under water. Furniture and various belongings were washed away and never recovered. For many hours there were scenes of desolation everywhere. The cut corn on many farms has been washed into the ditches. Residents in Albert Place showed

a cut mark in the bricks showing the high water mark of 1879, which was not met by three inches, but some neighbours said it was higher.

1916 September. 30 hours of rain. The Meres and low-lying areas quickly inundated. Cellars and basements flooded.

1929 Weather report for the year. Drought started in January and continued with slight breaks over most of country until autumn, then followed by heavy rain and floods. Heat wave in December.

1936 As soon as floods subsided...

1937 May. People were roused from sleep to rescue stock, furniture and all manner of goods and chattels. The night was full of activities as the work of succouring those distressed went on till dawn. The Brooks [Brook Lane/Vyces Road] again suffered terribly, but the most dramatic occurrence of all was the destruction of the bridge opposite Mr Brand's shop [The Wine shop]. Brooks rose to about 3 feet above ground, water rose to 4 foot in pig sty and 1 drowned. Charles Nesling's cattle and horses on Meres. His son saw the danger, caught a pony and rode bare back to round up cattle. Driven back to farm for safety. Rail line impassable. The bridge at Mr Robinson's farm [Little Lodge] suffered the same fate as Station Road bridge.

1939 February. John Self spoke of a tree across the river at Broadwater which acted as a dam and kept water back into the town. Mr Potter said that twice in two years, householders had suffered from severe flooding.

1952 November. Furniture removed from downstairs rooms.

1993 Elms car park partially flooded.

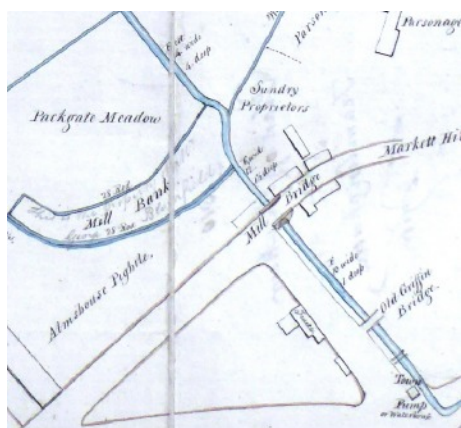
2009 Water in Station Road up to pavement level outside Railway Inn.

Most towns and villages developed alongside a river, with the surrounding higher ground draining the water into it. Although there are many complex reasons for any flood, in its simplest form, it is a matter of water flowing through a system. If the resistance to flow is high, e.g. excess vegetation and obstructions in the river, then the flow will be reduced and water backs up. For much of the time poor maintenance does not manifest itself as flooding because water flows are low. However, when rainfall conditions are abnormal as seen last year, then significant flooding occurs. A well-maintained river course would reduce the extent of flooding, but not prevent it. If you try to put an excessive amount of water into any system, it will overflow.

From the recorded events in the last 200 years, major floods occurred in:

1853, 1875, 1879, 1882, 1889, 1902, 1910, 1912, 1916, 1929, 1937.

It is difficult to make an objective comparison between these events and the floods of 2023 as the historic evidence is often not adequately defined. However, a best estimate is that the 2023 floods were at least 12 inches (305mm) higher than those previously recorded.



1834 map showing Mill Bridge (JFB)



1889 flood in Albert Place (Framlingham Archive)

1912 flood in Albert Place Photo taken 24 hours later when the water had subsided about a foot. (Framlingham Archive)



1937 Flood in Albert Place (Framlingham Archive)

The road next to the present Wine Shop collapsed into the river in the 1937 flood. (Framlingham Archive)





October 20th 2023. The level of the flood on the Spring Pump indicates this is the highest recorded. (JFB)

Boxing Matches in the Castle

I came across this fascinating story in *Highways & Byways in East Anglia* by William A Dutt, 1932. While describing the castle, he goes on to say:

It seems not at all improbable that the fiercest fighting ever witnessed at the castle was between some famous East Anglian pugilists in the first half of the eighteenth century. For it was here that John Slack, the Norfolk champion, and John Smith, the Suffolk champion, fought in 1744. The encounter lasted only five minutes, and resulted in the Norfolk champion's favour. Smith, however, was not content with one thrashing, as may be seen from an advertisement issued shortly after the fight, in which he stated, "At the Great castle at Framlingham, Suffolk, on Monday, 12th November, there will be a severe trial between the following champions, name — I, John Smith, the Suffolk champion, do once more invite Mr John Slack, the Norfolk champion, to meet and fight me at the time and place aforesaid, for the sum of forty guineas; and although I had the misfortune to be defeated by him before, I am much his superior in the art of boxing, and doubt not but I shall give him and the company entire satisfaction."

This challenge the Norfolk champion accepted, agreeing to "meet the above hero for the said sum at the



"The Bruiser Bruised; Or, The Knowing Ones Taken-in" satirical print Louis Philippe Boitard c 1750 . It depicts the boxing match between Jack Slack and John Broughton © The Trustees of the British Museum

time and place mentioned," and adding that he had no fear of being unable to "support the character he had hitherto maintained," His confidence was justified; Smith again "had the misfortune" to be defeated. I do not know how it came about that the castle was chosen as a fitting place for these encounters, for it was then, as now, in the possession of the Master and Fellows of Pembroke Hall [Cambridge]. Can it be that the Master and Fellows were supporters of the "Science of Manhood?"

Doodlebugs and Rockets, Norfolk and Suffolk, 1944 to 1945 This new book by our President has recently been published by Poppyland Publishing. *Terry Gilder* has reviewed it.

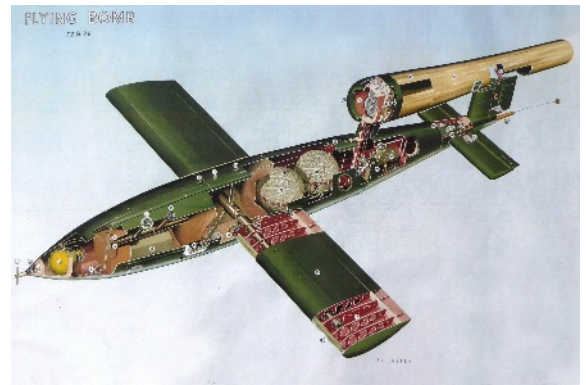
John Bridges is one of our best current local historians. His latest book is a well researched account of the impact of this act of warfare on the two East Anglian counties. John's historical interests began with studies of life in Framlingham, the town of his birth and of his present residence. The current book follows his previous publication on the impact of the Second World War on the town of Framlingham.

In *Doodlebugs and Rockets* he marries a wider ranging study of the two forms of aerial attack with a consideration of its particular impact on the two counties. Extensive research, involving national and local

record sources, together with reference to a comprehensive book list, has ensured a detailed, but very readable account, of this crucial period in our Second World War history. Given the time span John was able to speak to several people who lived through the Second World War and who have chilling memories of the doodlebug drone as it passed overhead. The book is nostalgic reading for that generation but should no less appeal to younger persons who ought to know about this story.

John gives informative background to the phases of the two forms of attack which show how Hitler's forces made this rather last ditch attempt to reach our shores with the menace of explosives from the sky. It was fortunate that we had gained a foothold on the mainland of Europe. John records that the first two V1s exploded in Suffolk on the 16th June 1944, that is very soon after the D Day landings on the 6th June. The V weapons were named Vergeltungswaffen meaning vengeance weapons. Whereas the V2, the larger and more potent weapon had been in planning and preparation prior to the V1, the latter was launched first in what may be seen as indeed a revenge for the successful D Day landings.

John explains how the advance of the allies to nullify the launch sites in France and Belgium caused a change in German tactics so that the V1s were launched from Heinkel bombers which meant that more passed over East Anglia, though they were still being aimed primarily at London. He details the varied and intense efforts by our artillery forces to shoot down the rockets, and the skills developed by our fighter pilots in engaging the doodlebugs. (V2s could not so be dealt with; their arrival was sudden and devastating). In the chapter entitled *The Diver Strip*, which was the term for a chain of artillery batteries down the East Anglian coastline, he cites their location and activity. An interesting anecdote connects the House in the Clouds in Thorpeness with this aspect of the war.



The V1 or Doodlebug (Parham Airfield Museum)



3.7-inch Heavy Artillery guns on the coast, with Orford castle as a backdrop (Imperial War Museum)

Of particular interest to Suffolk was the extremely hazardous attempt to destroy the V2 sites by sending pilot-less aircraft packed with explosives. These were sent from Norfolk and passed over Suffolk before heading across the North Sea. Pilots were involved, both in the initial launching (they parachuted from the craft when it was on its course) and they followed in radio-guidance planes. The most spectacular and violent was the one which blew up south of Blythburgh on the 12th August 1944 killing one of its pilots who was none less than Joseph Kennedy, elder brother of the future President.

Halton Crescent, Ipswich, where 4 people were killed and 19 injured when a V1 struck on 18 October, 1944. (David Kindred)

The meticulously assembled appendices record each V1 and V2 incident in Norfolk and Suffolk, as well as the locations of the gun site locations. This was a frightening period of the war, and it is fortunate that it came so late in the conflict and that our defences met the challenge with such purpose. All this John explains fully and graphically in this detailed and graphic account of this brief but vital period in our history.





The V2 rocket. One was fired at Ipswich but landed in Hoxne! (*Steve Snelling*)

The book is available at Framlingham Bookshop on the Market Hill for £10, or from www.poppyland.co.uk

Framlingham Photo Project of 2011

Simon Garrett

In 2011, the Framlingham Camera Club launched the “Framlingham Photo Project” (FPP), which was intended to create a photographic “time capsule” of life in Framlingham in that year. The result was nearly 3,000 photographs. Many aspects of town life were included. Shops and businesses were recorded, as well as schools, clubs and events during the year. This archive is now online on the Framlingham History Society website at <https://framlinghamhistory.uk/>.

The purpose outlined by the club at the time, was to “...take a ‘snapshot’ of the town and its people in 2011. The intention is to make a photographic record, that will be available to be exhibited in around 30 years time.”

The 30-year time scale might sound rather modest, given that we’re nearly halfway through that period already. In practice, recent attempts to create archives intended for future generations have had rather variable success. Creating a long-term archive is more difficult than one might think, and the task is full of unexpected difficulties. Paradoxically, ancient records have often had a better survival rate than more recent ones.

Throughout history, many documents were written on parchment or before that on papyrus. Papyrus documents can, in a dry climate, survive thousands of years. Many ancient Egyptian documents on papyrus survive today. In damper Northern Europe papyrus documents survive decades, and parchment or vellum documents last much longer if kept dark and flat. Parchment is made from untanned animal skins. Longer lasting Vellum is a form of parchment made from young calves or lambs.

More recently, most documents use paper, made from wood or plant fibre. Acid-free paper printed or written on with archival pigment ink can last 1,000 years, but most paper degrades much sooner.

The longevity of computer storage is measured in years or decades at the most, and there are surprisingly many ways that digital information can decay. There are many forms of digital storage media. Old-fashioned magnetic tape can store information for 30 years, but only if kept in controlled temperature and humidity. Hard drives can store information for 10 years or more, but if the drive is in regular use it may well fail mechanically before that. Semiconductor storage (flash drives and memory cards) similarly fail after around 5-10 years, unless the information is rewritten every few years.

A more serious problem is that both hardware and software formats of storage rapidly become obsolete. Nearly all storage media that were state-of-the-art 30 years ago are now long obsolete and cannot be read except by specialist companies with (expensive) historic equipment. Even if the data can be read, it may require long obsolete software to understand it.

A notorious example is the *BBC Domesday Project*. This project ran between 1984 and 1986, 900 years after the Norman Domesday Book was compiled, and created a modern survey of the United Kingdom. The original Domesday Book was a written record of people and especially of property in the new Norman kingdom of England. Copies survive to this day.

The *BBC Domesday Project* took advantage of what was then new technology to store not only text, but multimedia: sound, still images and video. It was compiled mainly by school children, and included articles on local social history and geography, and 3D virtual tours. The resulting archive was stored on LaserDisc, a state-of-the-art format that has long-since become obsolete. The software required to retrieve the data was written in a long-since obsolete computer language that ran on long-since obsolete computers. As if this were not bad enough, the difficulty in accessing the archive was understood only in around 2002, when the hardware and software were already difficult to obtain. It took a further 10 years or more for the information to be recovered fully, and it was provided to the National Archives only in 2018.

However, it is not available to the public. The copyright of the original material is not recorded, and it has been deemed impractical to contact the tens of thousands of contributors. Also, the hardware used in the creation of the material is also subject to copyright issues that apparently cannot be solved. It is thought that the material cannot be made publicly available until at least 2090! This is assuming it hasn't now been stored on another soon-to-be-obsolete storage medium.

It is hoped that the Framlingham Photo Project 2011 may not have quite such problems. Unlike the *BBC Domesday Project* which used state-of-the-art technology, the FPP project uses mature standards to store images, and this is thought to have a greater chance of longevity. However the storage medium used for the project – DVD disks – may eventually become obsolete. This is one of the motivations of putting the archive online: to use multiple means of storing the information, hopefully to improve the chances of longevity, and of course: to make it publicly available.

The Framlingham Photo Project 2011 consists of photographs, each with a title and caption. The Framlingham Camera Club consisted of photographers rather than historians or archivists, and sometimes the titles and captions were not provided (or were not correct). When compiling the online version I have tried to provide at least generic titles or captions in cases where detailed information was not available.

A sad postscript: the Framlingham Camera Club also faced the problem of limited lifetime. Membership declined, and in 2022 the club was closed.

Winter Talks 2023/24

The Mediaeval Farming Year in Pictures

Wednesday 15th October 2023 *Alison Bowman*

As an introduction Alison gave some background on her interest in the subject and commenced with a pie-chart of the priority work of the seasons through the whole year in the period which proved to be an autumn start as with our society, basically with sowing in October and handling the harvest grain – milling and using the wool produce by weaving.

The talk was highly illustrated with examples from manuscripts as well as on other media such as stained glass and tapestry. The various Books of Hours mostly belonged to Dukes, monarchs, or other high-ranking nobility whilst psalter owners covered a broader social range including less exalted land lessees such as Sir Geoffrey Luttrell, a Lincolnshire landowner and it is his psalter produced c1340 just before the Black Death that formed the basis of the talk.

The brilliant, expensive colours used on vellum, with the illustrative skill needed meant that these exquisite objects were a status symbol clearly demonstrating the power of the owner, comparable to owning a Rolls Royce in the 1930s. Such was their popularity that Peterborough Monastery set up a 'production line' of scribes to work on them often as copyists only. The illustrations were mainly added later.

The style of art had a wide range because of the wide area from which they were drawn – Flanders, Chantilly, Norwich, Although examples survive from as early as the eighth century, psalters reached the height of their popularity between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries, when they were among the most frequently and lavishly illustrated of medieval texts.

The lifestyles shown included milking, ploughing with oxen, sowing, cutting corn, sheepshearing, pig killing, threshing, milling, and of course wine making in France as shown the Duc de Berri's Tres Riches Heures. Mediaeval life shown is nearly all rural, from the farm dogs chasing crows, to servants cooking Christmas dinner, the nobles in May going hawking or dentistry being done, bathing or wheeling a disabled child in a barrow. Grotesques added to the fun of the pictures as did the huge snails depicted in large size fighting against well armed knights as if they had a chance of winning. They believed that God placed the stars so the zodiac painted with the scene of each month was just as Christian as the seasons following in turn to that mediaeval age of faith.

World War II Coastal Defences in Suffolk

27th January 2024

Dr John Greenacre

There are some myths associated with memories of World War II. Much of our received knowledge comes from the legacy of physical remains and the cultural legacy of *Dads Army* and these two things give a somewhat false picture. We know now that the UK wasn't invaded but this was not seen as the case at the time. The Nazis had swept through Europe, so why not Britain if they could cross the channel. This was widely believed at the time.

German plans for invasion concentrated on landing on the Sussex and Kent coasts, other plans went up as far as Essex and Suffolk. The threat diminished after 1940 and the Battle of Britain and the invasion of Soviet Union in 1941, but it remained, nevertheless, a threat. Nine German divisions – 200,000 men – would land. This was the same number who swept through France. What would have stopped them if they got over the Channel?

We still see pillboxes although they don't look much but we don't see most of it. Pillboxes were a small part of a much wider system of defences which had matured by 1940. These comprised lines of defence going in land from the coast, known as *stop lines* designed to stop or slow a German advance.

A broad defensive structure went from Lowestoft to Aldeburgh along the coast. Gun emplacements ran all down the coast with overlapping coverage. These anti-aircraft guns could also sink shipping and were manned by the Royal Artillery. There is very little to see today but they were imposing at the time. They were test-fired once, which blew out the windows of surrounding areas, but were not fired again until they were dismantled. Much of the defences to stop troops getting off the beach was buried on site and some of it is now emerging due to erosion.

Pillboxes were usually sited more inland and had different functions according to the type. Some were for infantry and some for artillery. There were dozens of different designs, some of which are unique to Suffolk. They were mostly manned by regular troops back in the UK following the Dunkirk evacuation. Communication lines and trenches ran between them. This was a complex and well-thought-out network of defences. Infantry and regular artillery were dense along the coast with observation posts and gun batteries.

The impact on the civilian population was considerable. Consideration was given to forced evacuation of the coastal strip. In the end it was left as voluntary, but an estimated two-thirds of the population did evacuate. Parish invasion committees were set up with representatives from areas such as medical, police, landowners, the home guard etc. Their role was to draw up plans for what to do in the event of an invasion, e.g. evacuation, emergency water and food supplies, gas attacks etc. The Home Guard were the link to the regular army. They were later used in training in readiness for D Day, which also impacted the local population. The cultural legacy of *Dads Army* portrays the Home Guard as well-meaning but bumbling and ineffective. This could not be further from the truth. Britain was well prepared for a possible invasion. Home Guard units were large. Most were men of military fighting age in protected occupations or were very young. Most had day jobs as well as Home Guard duties.

Across the country there 1.5 million in the Home Guard, all were volunteers. The numbers volunteering was overwhelming, and it took time to train and equip them. There were 50,000 in the Suffolk regiment of the Home Guard. Some men were older, veterans of the First World War, with a lot of experience. For example, Major Gilbert Kilner, who had been a machine gunner in the First World War and ran a cider factory. He made adaptations to guns to make them more useful. There was a shortage of equipment with so much left behind on Dunkirk beaches. There were many suggestions from home inventors, some of which was

produced as a stopgap, and much of this ended up with the Home Guard, such as the Smith Gun. Most of these weapons had no use after 1944 and were destroyed.

The Home Guard developed over time and diversified. Some focused on anti-aircraft, others specialised in surveying or supported the regular artillery, plus there was conscription into the Home Guard. Publicity photographs were aimed at the domestic market, but also at the United States to put pressure on the US to join the war. These showed the Home Guard embedded in domestic settings. They were expected to fight where they stood and lived – duty and self-sacrifice.

Auxiliary units were a branch of the Home Guard. These were men with local rural knowledge who could be self-sufficient and live off the land. They were secret units aimed at sabotaging the Germans if they invaded, not unlike the French Resistance. These units were on a suicide mission, they had private secret bunkers with food for two weeks. They couldn't tell their families. There is a reconstruction of one at Parham.

I hope I have shown that we need to be careful about how we think of the physical and cultural legacy of Britain's coastal defences. And this is not to mention the whole system of air defences that ran in parallel to coastal and land defences.

The Leiston Garrett Dynasty: The Importance of Being Richard

20th March 2024

Frazer Hale

In the 1770s in Woodbridge one blacksmith and edge-smith stood out and that was Garretts. They were toolmakers of the highest quality bladed hand tools that held their edge. The family had done well. They were particularly known for making sickles used to cut corn, an activity undertaken by men and women equally.

Woodbridge was a busy shipbuilding town – and when Richard Garrett (1st) finished his apprenticeship in 1778 he moved to Leiston. It was not unusual for journeymen to move to new towns with less competition. At the time Leiston had a population of 750 and was surrounded by farms where there would be demand for farming implements. He did well and by 1783 his forge employed ten men and one horse. He married and had children, the eldest, Richard (2nd) taking over the business from his father in 1805.

Farming was changing during this period; enclosures were creating larger fields requiring larger tools. Scythes became more popular. These were complex to make, some were even bespoke and harder to work, generally becoming the province of men with women reduced to gathering and gleaning the corn. At this time a star was added to the Garrett name on its products as a quality mark of authenticity. This was designed to cut down on the number of lower quality fake Garrett products appearing on the market.

Richard (2nd) was more of a businessman than his father. He had a vision for expansion of the company. Richard married Sarah Balls. Sarah's father held the patent for a threshing machine. The patent came with Sarah and Richard invested heavily to enable the business to manufacture threshing machines, which made the process much easier. The changing nature of farming sometimes followed technology and was sometimes led by it.

By 1830 Garretts employed 60 men and had ten horses. They continued to make improvements in threshing machines and to move from horsepower to steam power. They also manufactured horse-drawn seed-drills which reduced wastage and transformed the process of seeding a field. Richard built a proper foundry and started to make cast iron. This was specialist work requiring new skilled workers. Richard and Sarah had three sons – Richard (3rd), Balls and Newson (builder of Snape Maltings).

In 1830, Richard (3rd) became head of the company at the age of 23yrs. He married Elizabeth Dunnell, who, he acknowledged was a major contributor to her husband's success. In 1837 Richard (2nd) died. Richard (3rd) had entrepreneurial flair and took the business to a new level. Under his leadership it established a global presence. In 1847 Garretts began production of the portable steam-engine. These were easy to use and flexible with different fireboxes to burn different types of fuel. They were built for 90 years during which time they sold 20,000.

By 1851 they produced a huge range of agricultural machinery, often for export to the 'colonies'. There was constant innovation; their success and skill being recognised by the award of numerous medals at agricultural shows both here and overseas. Success led to increased profits meaning that Richard (3rd) could afford to take risks. At the Great Exhibition Garretts had a large stand and did extremely well, winning almost too

many orders. By this time Garretts employed 300 workers, all of whom were recognised for their contribution to the success of the company and were rewarded with a trip to the Great Exhibition. This was a huge outing, arriving by boat with a brass band and put up in hotels, for most who had never been outside Suffolk.

At the Exhibition Richard (3rd) met other manufacturers from all over the world including Samuel Colt, manufacturer of firearms. Colt had developed the use of standardised parts and a method of production known as flowline which had greatly improved productivity. Richard decided to use this method to fulfil increasing demand and built the Long Shop designed around the flowline method. This building, known as The Cathedral, was well light and ventilated but incredibly noisy. The introduction of this method of production increased production from seven steam engines a week to seven in a day. Eight stages were identified as the steam-engine moved down the line, parts being added at each stage.

The need for efficient transport was essential. There was the well-used coastal route from the quay at Slaughden but transport by road was difficult. The Aldeburgh Turnpike Trust was responsible for the roads in the area. Richard (3rd) found himself in dispute with them over the poor state of the roads. The Trustees response was to blame Garretts for the heavy loads transported. So, Richard became a Trustee and invested considerable funds to repair the roads. This included re-location of some houses and households and the flattening of a particularly troublesome hill. Five years later the railway arrived. Richard was also frustrated by the railway company appointed to build the line, complaining of poor service and poor management. So, in 1859, along with his brother Newson he built the East Suffolk line with a branch line straight into the works. By 1860 Garretts employed 600 men. In 1866 Richard (3rd) died. His had been a transformative career. Not only had he transformed the business, he was also concerned about the quality of food and campaigned for standards to be improved. He even bought a brewery in Camden as part of a campaign for fresh beer. In 1861, along with his son, Richard (4th) he had opened the Mechanics Institute, understanding that the company's success was built on its workforce.

Richard (4th) was well respected in the world of agricultural machinery and under his leadership there was continued innovation. In 1884 Richard (4th) died and his brother, Frank, took over. The business continued to grow but increased competition squeezed profits. The company sold many portable steam-engines to the Tsarist regime in Russia, however, the Russian Revolution of 1917 brought the Bolsheviks to power, who reneged on the monies owed to Garretts and company lost huge sums.

Frank was the last sole Garrett owner of the business. He saw the factory through the First World War, during which 2000 employees, mostly women, made munitions. In 1915 Stephen Garrett was killed. This was a great loss of potential for the family and the business. In 1918 Frank died and running the business was taken over by his son Frank (2nd). Frank (2nd) was a professional soldier and had no expectation that he would find himself running the company.

In 1919 the Agricultural and General Engineers Ltd (AGE) was formed. This functioned as a co-operative of UK engineering companies to ensure they did not compete with each other in the home market but were big enough to compete with the United States. However, they had not predicted the Great Depression or the General Strike and fairly soon it became clear that the profitable companies were propping up the failing ones. In 1932 a receiver was appointed to wind up AGE.

After AGE Garretts did survive but Frank made some unwise investments. They continued to make steam engines and electric vehicles but by 1930s things were looking bleak. The company was bought out by Beyer Peacock and Co. Ltd. of Manchester. They made powerful trains sold all over the world, for example India, Australia and South America. Garretts made parts for their trains.

The Second World War saw the factory devoted to military contracts again, but they struggled to get paid by the government. After the War with the move from steam to diesel, Garretts made machines that made machine tools; cardboard box making machines; dry cleaning equipment and tumble dryers. In 1973 the business was bought up by a Saudi Arabian company. The workers were treated very badly and in 1984 the company closed.

In 1984 the Museum was inaugurated, making this year the 40th anniversary. The museum is proud of the fact that it is one of the first that is carbon neutral.