FRAM

The Journal of The Framlingham & District Local History & Preservation Society

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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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Editor: M. V. Roberts, 43 College Road, Framlingham

(In May of last year, your Editor was interviewed live on BBC Radio Suffolk, about Framlingham. This is an abridged version of that interview).

Question

Now, over the weeks since the beginning of this year we have been featuring different towns and villages in Suffolk and speaking to local historians about their history. Today is the last one in the current series. We are going to find out about beautiful Framingham; it is steeped in history, so for the next ten minutes or so we'll talk to Bob Roberts of the Framingham and District Local History and Preservation Society.
Bob, anyone who knows anything about Framingham knows how beautiful it is. How long has Framingham been in existence?

MVR Certainly it was there in the Domesday Book in 1086 and from the number of entries for Framlingham in the Domesday Book, it was a big place. I notice when you were referring to Framlingham you called it Framingham. This is a source of great confusion because over in Massachusetts in the USA there is a place called Framingham, founded by Nicholas Danforth from Framlingham, but somewhere along the line the L got dropped; and there is also a Framingham elsewhere in the UK.

Q Do you have links with Framingham in Massachusetts?

MVR Indeed we do. At the Lanman Museum, which is run by a separate trust in Framlingham Castle, we have many items relating to Framingham Massachusetts, we have a long and happy relationship with them.

Q And have you had people from Framingham over here and *vice versa*?

MVR Absolutely so. It is a much larger place, I might say, than our Framlingham, about twenty times the size.

Q I am sure it is as most things are in the States. I did struggle earlier because I was not quite sure whether I should call Framlingham a town or a village.

MVR Well if you called Framlingham a village I am afraid you might get a brick through your window. No, we are definitely a town. And in fact it is interesting you should ask that because often when I am away at meetings and conferences and I say I live in the town of Framlingham and we have a population of about 3,000 people, they say, "Oh, have you still got a village store?". I say, "Village store, come off it, we have a good range of shops there and all the basic amenities you would associate with a prosperous market town."

Q Which it is of course. Now how proud are the people of Framlingham about their parish?

MVR Oh very much so indeed. I do not like to do an estate agent's spiel for Framlingham, but in *Country Life* a couple of years ago they did a survey of the small country towns in England, as to their desirability in terms of amenities, architecture etc. and Framlingham came out ninth in the list, the ninth most desirable place to live in the UK.

Q Well it doesn't surprise me at all, or anybody who knows Framlingham at all. So, people that live in Framlingham, Bob, are they people that have lived there for most of their life or do you get transient people?

MVR That is a very good question, because I would think 30, 40, 50 years ago, most people living in Framlingham had been born and bred, if not in the town, in that immediate surrounding area, surrounding villages etc. That is not nearly so much the case nowadays; it is partly, I suppose, the penalty of success - we are such a desirable place to live in, people want to come and live here. On the other hand, it means that property prices shoot up and there is a desperate lack of affordable housing and it means that a lot of young people born and bred in the area just cannot afford to live in Framlingham.

Q So sadly maybe we are seeing a trend as in many other Suffolk towns and villages, that youngsters, the generations, are not being able to carry through.

MVR One could use the emotive word gentrification. It is sad in a way, because quite recently you had a good range of social classes and age ranges etc. That is not quite so much the case nowadays, I think most people in Framlingham, dare I say it, are a bit like me - middle aged, retired, middle class, not terribly well off but surviving, and it is a great pity that youngsters would have great difficulty getting a toe-hold in a place like Framlingham.

Q So tell us a bit about the local history and preservation society.

MVR We have been around for almost 50 years, we celebrate our half-centenary in a couple of years' time. We are a registered charity. We have a series of lectures each winter, one a month from November through to April, on topics concerned with Framlingham and with Suffolk as a whole. We also have a preservation section which is concerned with planning applications appertaining to Framlingham; we comment to the Suffolk Coastal District Council about those planning applications. We publish a journal, *Fram*, and that appears three times a year. It purports to be a scholarly journal, about 24 sides of A4. Also we undertake little projects for the benefit of the town, like we restored an antique crane at the rear of a shop on the Market Hill, a couple of years ago. You might say, where do we find the money to do all these things? Several years ago our former Secretary, Andrew Lovejoy, answered a series of enquiries from a gentleman in Bermuda, about the local history of Framlingham. When that gentleman passed away, he left the entire contents of his UK bank account to us, which was quite small, it was only to pay cab fares etc, but it was nevertheless £10,000; all that in response to just a couple of letters that we had written to him.

Q Marvellous! Talking about old buildings, Bob, what is the oldest building in Framlingham?

MVR It has got to be the castle hasn't it? That was put up in the late twelfth, early thirteenth century. It replaced another castle; a wooden castle, but the Framlingham Castle as it now stands is, of course, flint and stone. Framlingham Castle is an absolutely magnificent edifice. It is one of the earliest curtain-walled castles in the UK, but sadly in the mid-seventeenth century a large part of it was gutted and taken away to re-build, would you believe it, the town of Southwold, which had been destroyed in a fire. So basically all you have at Framlingham Castle now is the curtain wall with its thirteen towers, plus what used to be the old poor house, which is a much more recent structure, within the curtain walls.

Q But, as you say, it is an absolutely stunning building.

MVR Yes, it is a tourist honeypot. 75,000 people a year come to visit Framlingham Castle.

Q It's not just the castle that you come to see that is available, there's all that beautiful ground as well, around it.

MVR You have got the meadows and you have got the mere, which is fantastic, and the mere of course has very recently been restored with grants from many sources, and is now a really beautiful piece of scenery. I speak from experience because my little cottage in College Road actually looks out over the mere and it is wonderful to see it.

Q And as well, the lovely St. Michael's church.

MVR Absolutely so, with all the painted tombs.

Q What is the loveliest thing about that church, because I know there are plenty of things that are, I know the organ is one of the things that stand out?

MVR Yes it has a very fine organ but I think the painted tombs are probably the high spot of that church and isn't it extraordinary that they have survived. We had a lecture about William Dowsing to the historical society only a couple of years ago. William Dowsing was an iconoclast and in the seventeenth century when graven images in churches were thought not to be a good thing, he went around destroying them left, right and centre, all over Suffolk, but for some reason he left the painted tombs in Framlingham church alone, so one wonders whether someone crossed his palm with silver.

Q They are beautiful, and what is the next big thing for Framlingham, because I know that on the one hand you are desperate to attract tourism, to bring the money in to keep things going, like the castle and the church, but there must be a fine line when you think, Oh hang on a minute, you don't want to put Framlingham too much on the map because you don't want it to be over-run?

MVR When I first heard about Framlingham, before I had even been to the place, I tended to think of it just as a tourist honeypot, but in fact it goes far beyond that; it is very economically self-sufficient. Considering what a small town it is, it has plenty of light industry and this has to be a good thing because it is said by the local inhabitants that more people travel into Framlingham to work than travel out of it to work, so it ain't a dormitory suburb, thank heavens.

Q So, are there lots of people who have been there all their life?

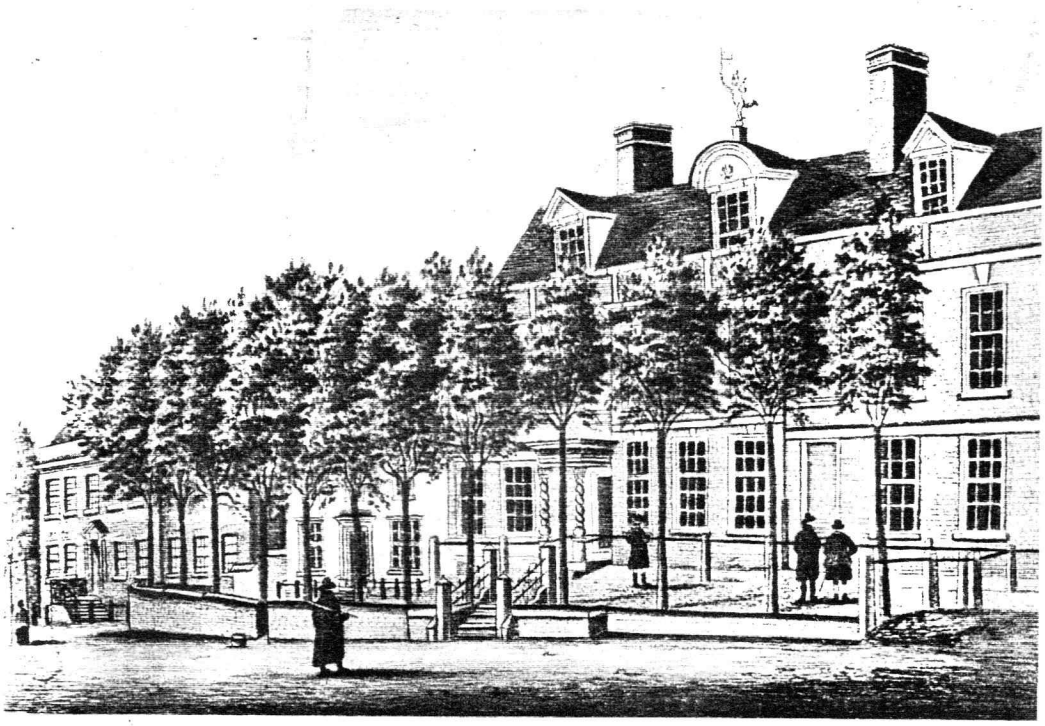
MVR It is a declining number I'm afraid. I'm afraid the incomers are to some degree taking it over, not that I am against incomers by any means. In fact, if I can be mildly controversial, the one thing I do miss in Framlingham is that we do not have the ethnic minority population there, that you have, say, in Ipswich or that I know and love in the east end of London, where I chair an educational foundation, and I think that to have that sort of input from other races is a good thing for a community, which creates a vitality which as yet we do not have in Framlingham, but I am confident that it will come.

Q Just finally Bob, what are your hopes for Framlingham for its future?

MVR I would like to see it continue to be economically self-sufficient, I would like to see newcomers as well as older inhabitants making full use of all its facilities and shops because we cannot take all those things for granted. We are on a knife-edge; we are a fragile economy and unless local people use local facilities then we might become a dormitory village.

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE GUILDHALL, OR MANSION HOUSE, FRAMLINGHAM

By O. R. Sitwell [1]



The Mansion House, Market Hill, 200 years ago.

In Richard Green's *History of Framlingham*[2], this building is referred to as "the Guild-hall", but it is known that the existing building is one built in 1564 on the site of an older establishment which was indeed [serving] a Guild, though probably a Guild of laymen concerned with upkeep of part of the church, and which was dissolved by Edict in Henry VIII['s] reign in or about 1547.

Although the guild had been suppressed, the buildings were still standing in 1555 when Queen Mary and Phillip [*sic*] of Spain came to Framlingham to install the young heir to the Dukedom of Norfolk in his Manor, for Green states that by letters patent she granted the tenement called "le Gylde House" to Sir George Howard, Knight.[3] How it passed into the hands of Simon Pulham is not stated but in 1564 the latter pulled the old buildings down and erected on the site thereof the present building.

It would seem probable that the old Guild had played some part in the affairs of the town and it would appear that there was some pressure brought to bear on Simon Pulham to incorporate into his new house some place where official meetings could continue to be held. This would appear to have resulted in the building on the north side of the mansion proper of a special chamber separate at the rear from the rest of the building, [that is] the present splendid room with its ante-room overlooking the street. It is approached by its own stair. A study of the building as it appeared when built as taken from an old sketch now in the Museum[4] and from which the picture above is taken, shows that the main entrance was not central, which seems strange until one realises that this entrance not only led to the private parts but also to the stair leading to the council chamber, and thus allowed ingress and exit for business purposes without in any way disturbing the occupants of the house proper.

Fortunately this part of the building escaped the alterations made by Stephen Starling when in 1865 he converted the lower part of the mansion into a draper's shop with the bow-fronted shop windows that now face the street.[5]

The question naturally arises as to who were these merchants or townsfolk who had business that required a special meeting place? It is likely that the earliest were members of the Borough who had financial reasons for wishing to control the fees payable for use of a stall in the markets.

Markets were held on Tuesdays, Fridays and Saturdays, and it is recorded that as far back as 1284 there were often 39 or 40 temporary stalls on the hill, on most of which tolls were payable. Rector Golty makes mention of the Borough as existing in his time 1630-1650, and although he came back in 1660 after the Restoration he has left no record of how [the] matter stood then. As the Manor had by then passed to Pembroke College the Borough as such may have ceased to exist.

However, there may have been other applicants for the use of the Council chamber. The official of the Manor Court would, one suppose [have] met in the castle,[6] but not long after the execution of the 4th Duke [of Norfolk] in 1564, Queen Elizabeth I ordered the castle to be used as a prison for recusant priests[7] and so presumably the Manor Court, which recorded all inheritance of property within its jurisdiction, would have [had] to find a new place in which to sit.

When the holding of these courts came to an end, which was when all copyhold could by law be translated into Freehold, there were still those who required to sit in secret and these were the Guardians [appointed under the terms] of the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1832.[8] They awarded financial assistance where it was deemed necessary, and they also set the rate of pay for that assistance. These duties however came to an end in 1886 when District Councils took over the duties of rating and relief.

Now the council chamber is part of the offices of Messrs. Turner & Ellerby and separated entirely from the house next door.[9]

Editor's Notes:

1. This article in an edited version of a typescript which was included in a file of papers that had been passed to the Society's former Honorary Secretary, A. A. Lovejoy, at an earlier date (perhaps when the author passed away). Many of the papers contained in the file, which are mainly in Sitwell's autograph, bear the date 1974. They include transcripts and abstracts of original documents relating to Framlingham and its surrounding area, and primary and secondary source references. The file will in due course be placed in the Lanman Museum, and may prove a rich resource for further articles in this journal. Sadly, this original paper is not referenced, and the Editor has not been able to source all the matters quoted.
2. R. Green, *The History, topography, and antiquities of Framlingham and Saxsted* . . (1834) p. 187.
3. *Ibid.* p. 188.
4. Lanman Museum reference FRMLM:1986. 693, pen and ink drawing. On the evidence of the façade of the building and the costume of the figures, the image has been dated by the Museum *circa* 1780. Only very loosely can it be described as depicting "the building as it appeared when built". There is an MS annotation on the item's Museum catalogue entry "Edmund Clodd" - this may be an attribution to the original artist.
5. Stephen Starling, draper, had a long career on the Market Hill. He is last listed in *Kelly's Directory of Suffolk* (p. 138) in 1900.
6. Green, *op. cit.*, p. 80.
7. J. Booth, *The Prisoners of Framlingham* (1930) *passim* gives the date of establishment of the prison as 1580, but refers back to enabling legislation of 1558. (A copy of this rare pamphlet is held in the Lanman Museum)
8. See also this issue pp. 9 - 16.
9. So far as the Editor is aware, this remains the case.

THE BIER AT FRAMLINHAM CEMETERY

***By* Ian Moore**

The bier at Framlingham Cemetery was built around 1890[1]; to the best of our knowledge it was built by my great great grandfather.[2] As he used to be a wheelwright and carpenter, the Framlingham Parish Council asked him to make the bier.

Oak was a popular wood at the time, so the bier is made of this. It is all the original wood, except where the handle has been replaced. The bier was first built for use with a horse. The handle was replaced, as the bier is now hand and not horse-drawn.

Only one horse was needed to draw the bier; this was harnessed by leather straps. The horse used to wear leather shoes, so as not to make a noise when walking. These shoes were on display at the shed in which the bier is kept, but sadly are now missing.[3]

When a horse was used, the coffin was taken from the church to the cemetery using the bier. As it is now hand-drawn, a hearse is now used from the church to the cemetery, with the bier used only from the cemetery gates to the grave-side.

The bier is kept at the cemetery in a shed there. The cemetery attendant in the winter months repaints the bier black.

To place the coffin on the bier, it must be rolled on to it. There are rollers on the bier itself, with a stopper at the front, and another which is put on after the coffin has been loaded, to stop it moving.[4] The bier is approximately four and a half feet wide, so that flowers can then be displayed down either side of the coffin.

Editor's Notes

1 Abridged from Ian Moore, "Hearses old and new in my locality" (Unpublished dissertation, 1991) pp. 5-6.

2 *Vide Fram: the Journal of the Framlingham and District Local History and Preservation Society*, 4th Series, Number 8 (December 2003) pp. 18-19, for listing of members of the Moore family in charge of the business.

3 A leather shoe as worn by a horse, though for a different reason, is on permanent display in the Lanman Museum, Framlingham.

4 Earl Soham had a similar Victorian bier, although it was last used for the purpose many years ago. It is now on permanent display in the Lanman Museum, Framlingham.

THE CARE OF THE POOR IN SUFFOLK

By John Black

This article reviews the provision for the poor and needy in Suffolk from the Anglo-Saxon period up to the closure of the workhouses in the 1930s. It does not cover specifically services for the sick and mentally ill, though sickness causing inability to work was, except for the rich, synonymous with poverty. Lepers were a special category; they were not allowed to own property and were sent to specially designated houses (lazar houses) well away from habitation. Between 1150 and 1250, one hundred and thirty leper hospitals were established, but only seventy in the next one hundred years; this was due to a gradual decrease in the incidence of the disease in England, though East Anglia was the last area to see a reduction in numbers.

The Anglo-Saxon Period

In Anglo-Saxon England there does not seem to have been any formal provision for the poor, who were presumably looked after by their feudal superiors or by their extended families. A few Benedictine abbeys, at Canterbury, Battle and Whitby, and the beginnings of Bury St. Edmunds, were founded before the Norman Conquest, and would have perhaps have had a role in poor relief.

The Normans and the rise of the religious houses

With the coming of the Normans, numerous religious houses were established in England during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, but after the thirteenth century the number decreased. Early arrivals were the Cluniac monks at Lewes in 1080 and Castle Acre in 1089. They were followed by the Cistercians, the Augustinians (Black Canons) and the Premonstratensians (White Canons). The monasteries founded by the Cistercians were in remote places and the giving of alms was not an important function for them; the other foundations provided shelter for poor travellers and pilgrims, and also the sick. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the mendicant orders established numerous priories, the most important being the Franciscans (Grey Friars), the Dominicans (Black Friars) and the Carmelites (White Friars). The friars built their priories in the towns, giving them access to the people to whom they preached; they offered no shelter for the poor, but distributed alms.

Though the Synod of Aix in 816 obliged religious houses to distribute alms, the concept of charitable gifts to the poor did not take root until the eleventh and twelfth centuries. From this time until the fourteenth century, giving to the poor was largely channelled through the religious houses, and was thought to improve the donor's chances of salvation and shorten the time spent by the donor in purgatory; there were doubtless also gifts of disinterested compassion and also elements of "conspicuous waste". Apart from the regular distribution of alms by the monasteries and priories, food, money and other necessities were given away on the saints' days of the religious houses, and at funerals. When the parish system was established, the priest was supposed to give one quarter of his income to the poor, and bishops had a similar obligation.

Hospitals (also known as the bedehouse, spital, maison dieu, mallardy, lazar house and almshouse) were, in the main, founded by the great abbeys, but also by private persons. They were not hospitals in the modern sense, but rest-houses for poor pilgrims and travellers, though they also looked after the sick. They denied admission to pregnant women, the

physically handicapped, and the mentally ill. Spiritual healing, rather than physical treatment with medicines, was practised, since sickness was generally regarded as the result of sin. (Nevertheless, Baldwin, a monk who probably studied medicine at Chartres, was called to England to become physician to Edward the Confessor; he subsequently became abbot at St. Edmund, and was retained as physician to William the Conqueror; he died in 1097.[1])

During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, secular hospitals, often with a physician attached, were established for the sick poor, and trade guilds and fraternities founded hospitals which were primarily concerned with their own members. This change came about partly from disillusion with the religious houses and partly because, after the Black Death, the wages of the survivors had risen and their living conditions had improved. The unemployed in general were now considered idle and slothful, and poverty was thought to be a self-induced disability. Secular provision (at least in Suffolk) reached its final conclusion with the Dissolution of the Monasteries between 1536 and 1540.

The Abbeys and Priories of Suffolk

The most important religious house in Suffolk was the Benedictine Abbey of St. Edmund, founded in 633 and extended in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. In 1020, the monks assumed the guardianship of the shrine of St. Edmund, and the Abbey became a centre for pilgrimage. It had a large infirmary for sick monks and an almonry for poor pilgrims and travellers.

Six dependent hospitals were established in the city by the Abbey[2]. St. John's Hospital (1216) was founded for sheltering destitute men; closely associated with St. John's Hospital was St. Petronilla's Hospital (Petronilla was traditionally St. Peter's daughter), which was set up in the twelfth century originally for female lepers, but was refounded in the fifteenth century to serve the poor. St. Nicholas' Hospital was established about 1216 and was intended as an almshouse. St. Peter's Hospital was the official Lazar House, and was originally intended as a refuge for leprous priests. The most important of the six hospitals was St. Saviour's Hospital (1184) which provided shelter for aged clergy and the poor. There was also St. Stephen's Hospital, about which little is known.

Two other abbeys of lesser importance were established in Suffolk, the Cistercian Abbey at Sibton (*c.* 1150), and the Premonstratensian Abbey at Leiston (1152). Though the list may not be complete, there are records of over twenty priories[3] founded between the late eleventh century and the end of the thirteenth century. The Augustinian Butley Priory (1171) was the richest, as shown by its surviving gatehouse. The Franciscan Priory at Dunwich (1277) was also of importance, and was unusual in having a leper chapel. Other priories were built at Alnesbourne, Clare, Dodnies, Eye, Felixstowe, Herringfleet, Hoxne, Ixworth, Kersey, Letheringham, Little Welnetham, Mendham, Snape and Sudbury (Dominican and Benedictine houses), and at Woodbridge. In Ipswich, two Augustinian priories were established in the twelfth century, Holy Trinity (rebuilt in 1194) and St. Paul's (1135-9). The Dominicans founded a priory in 1263 and the Carmelites in 1298. There were two hospitals in Ipswich, St. Mary Magdalene (1199) for lepers, and St. Leonard's Hospital, which was probably established at about the same time. A third hospital, a lazar house, was that of St. Edmund Pountney, dedicated to Edmund Rich, Archbishop of Canterbury from 1234. There were three nunneries[4], at Bruisyard (1366), Bungay (*c.* 1160) and Campsey Ash (before 1195).

The Dissolution of the Monasteries

By Henry VIII's Act of Dissolution (28 Henry 8 c. 10 *et seq.*), most of the religious houses in Suffolk were suppressed between 1536 and 1540, though in Bury St. Edmunds St. Saviour's Hospital was not closed until 1542, and St. Peter's in 1544 or 1545.

Various estimates have been made of the number of people made destitute by the Dissolution; an early figure of 80,000 is now thought to be an over-estimate. According to Trevelyan[5], 5,000 monks, 1,600 friars and 2,000 nuns were pensioned off. Many monks and friars became parish priests, which supplemented their inadequate pensions, but those nuns who did not get married were probably reduced to penury.

Whatever the numbers dependent on the religious houses for alms or shelter, the Dissolution must have added to the number of vagrants and professional beggars, which had been a problem since the fourteenth century. Numerous acts had been passed to control the situation. Already, in 1349, the Statute of Labourers (23 Edward 3) had enforced work for the able-bodied under the age of sixty. An act of 1495 (11 Henry 7 c. 2) stipulated that beggars and other idle persons should be put in the stocks for three days, then whipped and returned to their place of origin. In 1504, there was the beginning of a recognition that unemployment and beggary might be caused by a genuine inability ("impotence") to work, caused by old age or physical disability. In 1547, the Vagabond Act (1 Edward 6 c. 3) invited parishes to set up houses for disabled people. In 1601, the Poor Law Act (43 Elizabeth c. 2) consolidated previous piecemeal acts, and created overseers of the poor in every parish, who were responsible for providing employment for the able-bodied; pauper children were to be apprenticed, and "Houses of Correction" were to be built to reform vagabonds. All this was to be paid for by parish rates, levied on property owners. The system persisted more or less unchanged until the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 (4 & 5 William 4 c. 76).

Charity from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century

London was the first city to institute a compulsory poor rate, and Ipswich soon followed this example in 1574, a register of the poor having been established in 1569.[6]

Henry Tooley of Ipswich, who died in 1551, left his fortune to the poor of the town. The primary purpose of the bequest was to maintain an almshouse near the Church of St. Mary Quay. In 1565, a group of townspeople agreed to establish a municipal poorhouse to complement the work of the Tooley Foundation; the building, on the site of the former priory of the Black Friars, was known as Christ's Hospital, and was granted its charter in 1572; relief was to be provided for the aged, the orphaned, and the sick, and correction was to be given to vagrants and idlers, "the lazy drones of the Commonwealth". The inmates were given various occupations, such as carding, spinning and weaving. Those who refused to work received no food. When funds were available, part of the burden of outdoor relief was borne by the Tooley Foundation.[7]

One of the most important charitable foundations in the county was that established by Thomas Seckford, in Woodbridge, in 1587. This consisted of an almshouse of six dwellings for twelve poor men; three poor widows were employed as nurses for the sick and infirm almsmen. There was no resident accommodation for women. In 1842, a new building, "The Hospital" was completed, and in 1869 a new almshouse for married couples and single women was constructed. In 1978, Jubilee House was built, to accommodate the more physically frail. In total the hospital, almshouse and Jubilee House ultimately provided accommodation for 55 residents.[8]

The former Framlingham Poorhouse at the Castle a hundred years ago

(Selected by the Editor from the collections of the Lanman Museum, Framlingham Castle, this image is reproduced by kind permission of the Museum Trustees. It is taken from a booklet of photographs, no title-page, cover title Framlingham (*un-dated,* circa *1900) and shows what may have been the original configuration of the façade of the south wing of the Poorhouse, with its two doors, one for its pauper school and Master's residence, the other for the "home" for the pauper children. The south wall of the north wing is, again, significantly different in this picture to what is there now, this part having been the bakehouse/kitchen etc. of the Poorhouse, with female paupers' dormitory above. A similar image, dated 1909, and from a different angle, appears (number 37) in J. F. Bridges,* Framlingham: portrait of a Suffolk town *(1975).*

The Poor in Framlingham

Framlingham is remarkable for its provision of almshouse accommodation in relation to its size. In accordance with the will of Sir Robert Hitcham, in 1654, twelve single-storey dwellings were built (ground floor and attic bedrooms), using bricks and tiles from buildings demolished within the castle. The houses were for church-going widows and widowers, who were provided with a hat and blue coat for the men, and a bonnet and gown for the women.

In 1703, under the provisions of the will of Thomas Mills, six two-storey almshouses were built in the town, with two more funded from his servant William Mayhew's will. In 1724, the Parish Workhouse, or Poor House, was built against the western wall of the castle by the trustees of Sir Robert Hitcham; it originally had a "small dark dungeon" for "confining such inmates who proved disobedient to the rules of the house".[9]

The History of the Workhouse

The continued drain on the parish rates by the increasing number of "impotent" poor, the homeless, vagrants and beggars called for a new solution to the problem. Bristol was the first city to set up an effective workhouse, where parishes combined under a special Act of Parliament (7 & 8 William 3 c. 32), to create a Corporation of the Poor; the "New Workhouse" was opened in 1698[10]. By 1725, more than a hundred workhouses had been opened in the whole country. In 1756, a Local Act of Parliament (29 George 2 c. 79) was passed, setting up a new authority of twenty-eight parishes in Suffolk. Its aims were outlined in a pamphlet:

> We propose to incorporate to administer proper comfort and assistance to the sick, infirm and aged, introduce sobriety and virtue among them, and in an especial manner to render their children useful to society by acquainting them with their duty towards God and man . .

In June 1756, fifty clergy and squires gathered at an inn in Ipswich to establish a new-style workhouse.[11] Two years later, the Nacton House of Industry was opened on Nacton Heath. By 1776, eight workhouses, housing from 150 to 350 inmates, were opened in Suffolk and Norfolk, the inmates being employed, according to locality, in making fishing nets, ropes, corn-sacks or ploughlines.

In Suffolk, workhouses or Houses of Industry, were constructed in 1765 at Bulcamp (serving the needs of Blything Hundred), Shipmeadow (for Wangford Hundred) and Tattingstone (Samford Hundred); workhouses were also built at Cosford (date uncertain) and at Melton (late eighteenth century).

At Bulcamp, the workhouse was so unpopular that it was partly destroyed by a riotous mob even before it had been completed.[12] The reason the rioters gave for their behaviour was that the number of men employed in harvesting was not sufficient to do all the work, and that the poor should be allowed to work in the fields. Soldiers were sent from Ipswich and were obliged to use force to disperse the mob. One man was killed and six were taken to the gaol in Ipswich. The house was finally opened in October 1766 with 56 paupers; by April 1767 there were 352 inmates.

Bulcamp was not the only place to suffer a disturbance. When several parishes in the Woodbridge area refused, in August 1765, to pay outdoor relief, and instructed the former recipients to seek food and shelter in the new Workhouse (presumably Nacton), about five hundred men, armed with cudgels and similar weapons, and many women and children, assembled at the White Hart in Wickham Market[13], where the Directors of the Poor were meeting. The mob was confronted by a force of dragoons at Nacton which charged and scattered them.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, it became clear that housing people in workhouses, with the virtual abolition of outdoor relief, was not an economy but was in fact extremely expensive; the parish rates were increasing at an alarming rate. Outdoor relief began to increase again. The Speenhamland system, which subsidised from the parish rates the low wages paid to labourers, made matters worse, and the rates rose still more, predominantly in the south and east of England. The management committee of the Nacton Workhouse met (ironically), at the White Hart in Wickham Market, at the end of the eighteenth century to consider the situation; what they decided is, however, not clear.

Thomas Malthus advocated the gradual phasing out of the Poor Law, since he believed that it encouraged the poor to have more children than they could support. His friend, Harriet Martineau, in a series of political novels and papers, described how those who accepted outdoor relief came to a disastrous end, while only those who entered the workhouse had any chance of prospering.

That there was corruption in the Poor Law administration there is no doubt, particularly in Suffolk. There were also abuses by the inmates. The first Poor Law Annual Report described the conditions at Bulcamp, where three generations of a family had lived continuously in the Workhouse.[14]

As a result of these abuses and the ever-rising parish rates, the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 (4 & 5 William 4 c. 76) was passed. The Act was intended to make a clean sweep of outdoor relief, and was aimed at driving unemployed able-bodied men into the workhouse, where conditions would be worse than those of the humblest labourer; clearly this was intended to deter entry. As a further disincentive, men, women and children were to be separated. Conditions were often appalling; children were exposed to distressing sights, and were often in contact with the mentally ill. Also, casual wards ("spikes") were set up for tramps, where conditions were even harsher than in the able-bodied ward and the work, such as stone-breaking, even more pointless and humiliating than in the general wards, where such tasks as bone-crushing, picking oakum (tarred ropes to be untwisted and teased out for caulking the seams of ships) and the grinding of corn might have been seen to have had some purpose.

Under the terms of the Act of 1834, fifteen thousand parishes were combined into 600 Poor Law Unions, under the surveillance of elected Guardians of the Poor. Funds were also made available for assisted emigration, mainly to Canada. The *Suffolk Chronicle* reported in 1836 that 200 emigrants from the Hoxne Union sailed from Ipswich to Quebec.[15] Public opinion was in favour of the new Act; Thomas Carlyle said, in 1839, "The New Poor Law is an announcement that whosoever will not work ought not to live".

As a result of the new Act, more workhouses were built, one at Wickham Market in the Plomesgate Union, and ten more after 1838. In 1855, according to White's *History, Gazeteer, and Directory of Suffolk* [16], the nineteen workhouses were in the following Unions: Blything, Bosmere and Claydon, Bury St. Edmunds, Cosford, Hartismere, Hoxne, Ipswich, Mildenhall, Mutford and Lothingsland, Newmarket (part of), Plomesgate, Risbridge (Suffolk & Essex), Samford, Stow, Sudbury (Suffolk and Essex), Thetford (part of), Thingoe, Wangford, and Woodbridge. The *Directory* also gave the figures for occupancy. Before 1834, the workhouses rarely contained more than half their total capacity of seven thousand, but by 1855 the total occupancy was five thousand and fifteen. To quote the *Directory* again, before 1834:

> the out-door able-bodied paupers were very numerous in all of this and other agricultural counties, owing to the long continued mal-administration of the Old Poor Law, which was eating like a canker into the heart of the nation, pauperising the labourers, taking away the motive and reward of industry, and oppressing that capital which should employ and remunerate labour . . . The Poor Rate collected in Suffolk during the three years ending Easter 1750, averaged £29,063 *per annum*. In 1803, they amounted to £124,658; in 1823 to £259,748; in 1833 £266,157; in 1839 to £145,757; and in 1840 to £141,536.[17]

This demonstrated the financial savings produced by the New Poor Law.

In December 1839, the list of inmates at Wickham Market Workhouse was as follows:-

> Aged and infirm 24, insane 12, able-bodied sick 1, able-bodied out of work 41, vagrants 3, orphans 10, illegitimate 11, illegitimate with mothers 13, widows with children 7, other children 38, total 160. [18]

Unfortunately, there are no pre-1834 figures. By 1851, the situation had changed, the main occupants were now the sick and elderly, children without parents, and unmarried mothers with children.

The Riots against the New Poor Law

The New Poor Law was not popular. At Bulcamp, a second riot broke out in December 1835; the main reason for it was (again) the segregation of men, women and children. The Minutes of the Guardians of the Poor read

> December 21, 1835. It having been reported to the Guardians that a considerable body of men, armed with pickaxes, crowbars and other instruments of destruction, was advancing in different directions to attack the Workhouse and the Committee there, a messenger was dispatched to Colonel Bence, with whom, upon his arrival, the matter was discussed, with the result that messengers were immediately sent to adjoining towns and parishes for such constabulary forces as could be collected on this emergency. A van soon arrived from Wangford, filled with persons willing to be sworn in as Special Constables. Constables and Special Constables came too, from Halesworth.

Southwold refused to join the relief force. The Riot Act was read by the Rev. A. Collett, and the mob finally withdrew.[19]

The Governor of the Workhouse was empowered to provide "suitable refreshment for the Special Constables and any military who might arrive". Bulcamp continued to be unpopular, and even recently the threat "I will send you to Bulcamp" was used against naughty children.

Further disturbances occurred in December 1835 in Ipswich. In March of the following year, the *Suffolk Chronicle* reported on the trial of six men charged with attempting to destroy St. Clement's Workhouse on 16th December.[20] Surprisingly, they were acquitted on a technicality. The contents of the workhouse were auctioned off in 1840, but it is not clear when the building was demolished.

In 1846 James Withers Reynolds, a shoemaker, spent several months in Newmarket Workhouse, with his wife and children.[21] The first verse of his poem, "Written from Newmarket Union", goes as follows:

"Since I cannot, dear sister, with you hold communion,
I'll give you a sketch of life in the Union,
But how to begin, I don't know, I declare:
Let me see: Well, the first is our grand bill of fare,
We've skilly for breakfast; at night bread and cheese,
And we eat it and then go to bed if you please,
Two days in the week we have puddings for dinner,
And two, meat and potatoes, of this none to spare;
One day, bread and cheese - this is our fare.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, it was once again obvious that reform of the Poor Law was required. A Royal Commission was appointed, which reported in 1909. However, its recommendations were not immediately implemented due to the outbreak of the First World War in 1914. Nevertheless, the Old Age Pension was introduced in 1909, and the National Insurance Act (1 & 2 George 5 c. 55) and unemployment benefit in 1911. In the post-war depression of the 1920s and 1930s, the number of unemployed claiming relief rose alarmingly, and, after much debate, the Local Government Act of 1929 (19 & 20 George 5 c. 17) abolished the Boards of Guardians (of the poor) and replaced them by Public Assistance Committees, acting under the Ministry of Health. The Poor Law Act of 1930 (20 & 21 George 5 c.17) consolidated previous legislation. Most of the surviving workhouses closed during the 1930s and were converted into old people's homes, hospitals, or, finally, into flats.

Notes

1. E. A. Hammond "Physicians in Medieval English Religious Houses". *in Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 32 (1955) pp. 105-20.
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3. R. Green *The History, Topography and Antiquities of Framlingham and Saxted.* (1834) p. 226.
4. *Ibid.*
5. G. M. Trevelyan *English Social History.* 3rd edition (1946) p. 108.
6. J. Webb *Poor Relief in Elizabethan Ipswich.* Suffolk Records Society, vol. IX (1966) p. 18. (The volume includes an extensive calendar).
7. *Ibid.* p. 11.
8. C. & M. Weaver *The Seckford Foundation* (1987) *passim.*
9. Green *op. cit.* p. 21.
10. N. Longmate *The Workhouse* (1974) p. 23.
11. *Ibid.* p. 26.
12. J. B. Clare *Curious Parish Records and Workhouse Riots* (1903) pp. 49-53. [See also J. Black, *ed.* "The Bulcamp riots" *in Fram.* 3rd series, no. 4, August 1998, pp. 10-15].
13. Longmate *op. cit.* p. 27.
14. Clare *op. cit.* p. 54.
15. *Suffolk Chronicle*, June 1836.
16. W. White *History, Gazeteer, and Directory of Suffolk* (1855), pp. 28-9.
17. *Ibid.*
18. E. P. Cockburn *The Workhouse, Wickham Market, Suffolk, now Deben Court* (1991) p. 6.
19. Clare *op. cit.* p. 55
20. *Suffolk Chronicle*, March 26 1836.
21. Longmate *op. cit.* pp. 96-7.

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GUIDED TOUR - FRAMLINGHAM
19 JUNE 2005

***By* Andrew A. Lovejoy**

(For many years the Society's former Honorary Secretary has conducted tours around the town of Framlingham for parties, large and small, from far and wide. Naturally, these tours have varied over time, according to the origins and interests of the individual tour parties. Here is the text of Andrew Lovejoy's presentation for a party from Woodbridge earlier this year).

Framlingham has been described as embedded in a Suffolk countryside more noted for its gentle charm than its grandeur.

People have been in the Framlingham area for a long time. There is evidence nearby of an Iron Age settlement boasting from West Harling, Norfolk pottery. And the name Framlingham ending in "ingham" suggests that Framlingham as a settlement has its roots in the sixth or seventh century.

The oldest building still standing is the Castle, built between 1190 and 1210, a Grade I listed building. It is followed closely by the church of St. Michael and the Archangels, part of which dates from about 1300. The Church is in the Perpendicular style.

The town was dominated for centuries by the presence of the Castle and its aristocratic occupants. The first castle to be erected as a certainty was in 1100. There is no mention of a castle in Framlingham in the town's entry in the Domesday Book in 1086. The motte and bailey castle of 1100 was pulled down on the orders of Henry II in 1173, and the present castle was built from 1190 onwards. The Bigod Earls of Norfolk from 1074, Thomas Brotherton, son of Edward I in the 1300s, the Mowbray Dukes of Norfolk in the fifteenth century, and the Howard Dukes of Norfolk from 1483 to about 1530, all used the castle as their headquarters, and all played a leading social and administrative part in the running of England in their day. The second Duke of Norfolk who died in 1524 in the Castle, and the famous 3rd Duke of Norfolk who was integral to the running of England in the reign of Henry VIII in the early sixteenth century, are particularly noteworthy.

The town obviously profited from the spin-off from the Castle's leading role. In 1286-7 Roger Bigod, Earl of Norfolk, who died in 1306, granted the citizens of Framlingham a fair on four days over Michaelmas and a market on Tuesdays, Fridays and Saturdays throughout the year. In 1324 Thomas Brotherton added a Whitsun fair as well. The population of Framlingham in 1330 was about 1,000 persons. The town then was certainly not a village, but even a substantial town with a thriving economic base.

The fortunes of Framlingham changed when the Howard Dukes of Norfolk left Framlingham Castle for a more comfortable domestic dwelling at Kenninghall, near Diss, in the 1530s. Eventually the tie with the Howards was cut when the Castle and the various Howard interests here were sold in their entirety to a very senior lawyer, Sir Robert Hitcham, in 1635. He died in 1636 bequeathing his holdings to his old Cambridge college, Pembroke, and Framlingham became, for a while, a backwater.

The town was then called to stand on its own two feet, no longer being one of the social and political centres of East Anglia. By 1700 the town was more than heralding its future as a local centre for the sixteen villages surrounding it. In 1724 the population of Framlingham was 1460 persons practising twenty-six different trades. The eighteenth century consolidated the town's local importance; there were even sixteen licensed public houses in Framlingham in 1750.

The nineteenth century saw a great burgeoning of activity in Framlingham in line with the rest of Victorian England. Framlingham ran its own affairs, including the education of the young, a duty of which it was particularly jealous. From 1870 onwards, however, Framlingham was no longer an autonomous body, as various government decrees played an increasing part in the day-to-day affairs of the town, including matters concerning education, which around 1900 proved to be very controversial in the town, even to the point of some town councillors being threatened with distraint of their goods.

The town at that time was approaching that period of the height of the British Empire. To say the town's citizens were patriotic would be an understatement, as the three-day celebrations demonstrated on the announcement that Mafeking in the Boer War had been relieved. It was an extraordinary outpouring of the townspeople's sentiments at the end of Queen Victoria's reign. The difference between rich and poor in 1900 was pronounced and stark. The rector at the time received as a stipend £120,000 in today's money, whilst a farm labourer at Saxtead received eleven shillings a week, or £1,600 a year at today's prices.

The twentieth century in Framlingham was heralded by some giant leaps in technology, with the introduction of the telephone and the automobile to Framlingham in 1906. (However, a pumped water supply to every house did not arrive until 1938!)

Framlingham was adapting to new ways and ideas. The town all said and done fared well in the last century. The population in 1951 was 1,900 persons. In 2000 it was about 3,250 persons. An article in *Country Life* recently noted that Framlingham was one of the ten best communities to live in, in the United Kingdom. Much of that accolade was earned by the presence here of a Conservation Area with its seventy-four Listed Buildings.

THE LANMAN MUSEUM

Although it is many years since the Lanman Museum separated from our Society to form a different Registered Charity, from time to time it is useful for me to swap my Editor's hat for that of a Museum Trustee, to advise Society members as to recent developments at the Museum, and its hopes for the future. Since 1982, the Museum's main display and work areas have been accommodated on the first floor of the west wing of the old Poorhouse at Framlingham Castle; a mixed blessing in a sense, insofar as we have a guaranteed huge audience in the form of Castle visitors, but at the same time have to live with major constraints in regard to a limited floor area and (very necessary) protracted negotiations before we can effect any alteration at all to our space in a Grade 1 Listed Building, (other than just moving around the exhibits). We have, however, one added benefit from our presence at the Castle, in that we have the willing support of the English Heritage staff there, and not least that of the Castle's Custodian, Diana Howard, who has been for a number of years (of course, in an independent capacity) a member of the Museum's trustee body.

A duty which Diana took on more recently is that of Museum Stewards' Secretary, to ensure that the Museum's public service desk is staffed by volunteers at the busiest times during the summer peak period, from June to September. The duties of stewards at the Museum are (potentially) many and varied, but do *not* include receiving and accounting for cash - entrance to the Museum is free (*i.e.* included in the cost of admission to the Castle itself). While we don't have a Job Description for what is a totally unpaid job, basically stewards are there to "meet and greet" visitors, keep an eye on what is happening in the display area, and, when they can, answer simple enquiries (many of which relate to the Castle in general, the town of Framlingham, and the surrounding area, rather than being about the Museum itself and its artefacts). How much further this is taken depends on the individual steward: some like, when it seems appropriate, to give visitor(s) a mini guided tour of the display area, or at least of the major exhibits.

Individual stewards normally undertake a minimum of one two-hour stint every four weeks over the summer period - a few do much more than this. As existing stewards move away or have other, more pressing commitments, or simply become older or frailer, the Museum is always on the lookout for more fit and able-bodied recruits: anyone interested might care to contact Diana Howard on 01728 724182, to discuss it further.

Going on to a more up-beat note, the trustees have recently been able to purchase some fascinating medieval items of jewellery, found locally, most notably a pendant and a sergeant-at-law's ring. They are currently on display in the main hall of the Castle, which is fully accessible to movement-impaired persons - sadly it has not yet proved possible to provide such access to the Museum's main display area. Obviously antique jewellery of this kind is not cheap, and had to be the subject of a protracted statutory valuation process before sale and purchase were completed. The trustees are extremely grateful to the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council and the Headley Trust for the substantial grants that they were each able to give towards these purchases. Their acquisition, in a sense takes the Museum on to a different dimension, in that hitherto virtually all its holdings have dated from a much more recent period, predominantly the late-nineteenth and early to mid-twentieth centuries.

Finally, the Museum continues to explore, as a joint venture with Framlingham Historical Society, the possibility - remote or otherwise - of establishing a history and heritage resource centre in the town, where far greater access might be provided for researchers and other interested parties at every level, to the riches of the Museum's collections and, not least, to the knowledge of Society members and of trustees of both charities.

Old men may dream dreams.

Watch this space.

MVR

DEPARTURE POINT

A meeting of the Framlingham Parish Council was held on Tuesday evening, at the Court House, Mr. John Self, Chairman, presiding. There were only eight Councilors [*sic*] present. After the reading of the minutes, Mr. T. T. Buckmaster protested against the payment of Mr. H. Fairweather's, the Cemetery caretaker, account, but the majority present carried that the account be paid. Mr. Buckmaster said he should call the attention of the Auditor to the matter.

From: Framlingham Weekly News, September 9, 1905

"History is five minutes ago"

THREE THOUSAND PEOPLE IN THIS TOWN
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