FRAM

THE JOURNAL OF THE

FRAMLINGHAM AND DISTRICT

LOCAL HISTORY AND PRESERVATION SOCIETY

3rd Series Number 12

CONTENTS

ENTRANCE LINES

DEAR SIR, - I would caution the public against travelling on the Great Eastern Railway on Mondays. The train which is due at Framlingham at 8.20 has reached that Station at or about 10 o'clock for the past fortnight; and down passengers have had the mortification of waiting at [Campsea] Ashe Station for about an hour and a half for the up train from Yarmouth! ...

Yours, &c.,
A VICTIM

TO LONDON AND BACK THE SAME DAY. - A cheap trip to the metropolis and back for 5s. may be taken next Friday, when a special train will leave Framlingham, Aldeburgh and intermediate stations taking up passengers as far as Westerfield.

From *Framlingham Weekly News*,
20th September, 1873

SOCIETY OFFICERS

PRESIDENT:	Canon R. Willcock	Vice-PRESIDENT and Hon. MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY:	Mrs. T. Durrant
CHAIRMAN:	Mr. M. V. Roberts	Vice-CHAIRMAN:	Mr. C. Seely
Hon. SECRETARY:	Mr. A. A. Lovejoy	Hon.TREASURER:	Mr. J. A. Broster

TRUSTEES

Mr. B. Collett, Mr. A. J. Martin, Mrs. B. Whitehead, Canon R. Willcock

---

SOCIETY NOTES

The Society held a successful Winter Lecture Season 2000-01, with all lectures very well attended. It is clear that the subject matter of the talks appealed greatly to our membership. The Society will visit Walpole Old Chapel near Halesworth on the evening of Wednesday 16th May, as part of its 2001 summer outing season. Meet at the Elms Car Park (Framlingham) at 6 p.m. with cars for the journey to Walpole (lifts will be readily arranged as required). Walpole Old Chapel is one of the earliest Independent chapels in the country. We will be guided round the Chapel by an expert.

The Annual Day-Out 2001 will take place on Thursday 21st June. In the morning the Society will visit Castle Acre, where we will take coffee and receive a talk on the village and its castle and priory. In the afternoon (and for lunch) the Society will visit Houghton Hall, the home of the Marquess of Cholmondeley. Sir Robert Walpole built the Hall between 1722 and 1735. Its interior will come as a revelation to Society members; indeed the Hall is one of the finest houses in England of its genre. Meet at 9 a.m. on 21st June at the Elms Car Park. The Society will travel to Norfolk by coach (a prospectus for the outing has already been circulated to Society Members).

On Wednesday 18th July, the Society will visit the village of Easton for a guided tour conducted by the Hon. Secretary. (An article on Easton appears in this issue of *Fram*). Easton is full of interest, being closely associated with the Dukes of Hamilton, who were resident in the village between 1830 and 1895. The visit will include a visit to Easton Farm Park (if time permits). Meet at 6 p.m. at the Elms Car Park.

For any further details and for enquiries relating to the Society contact the Hon. Secretary, Mr. Andrew A. Lovejoy, 28 Pembroke Road, Framlingham, Suffolk. IP13 9HA. Tel: 01728 723214.

STOP PRESS

As the Society's Annual General Meeting is being put back to the end of October, there will be a long interval in our activities between then and the July trip to Easton. Therefore, we can do something in September. Last year members had an enjoyable evening with Gus Kitson at Sibton, when he showed us how cart wheels are made. The Suffolk Horse has been well to the fore of late, combined with the issue of the Hollesley Bay Stud. Gus has his own Suffolk and, on Wednesday September 12th, will show us how he harnesses it, uses it and looks after it. There may be an opportunity for members to lead it in a cart (in which other members may ride at their peril!) and, ground conditions permitting, Gus may harness the horse to pull an implement. Meet at the Elms Car Park at 6 p.m. for an appointment with a horse.

STOP PRESS EXTRA!

Your Committee has decreed that the Society Dinner which we all so much enjoyed last November 22nd should become an annual event, so it will take place again this year on (when else?) November 22nd. The Speaker at the Dinner will be a leading Suffolk horseman and farrier. Book the date now!

FRAM

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

Registered Charity no. 274201

3rd Series Number 12
April 2001
Editor : M. V. Roberts, 43 College Road, Framlingham

Not quite the end of the Third Millennium but the third series of *Fram* ends with this issue, the twelfth to appear since *Fram* was reborn in its new guise in August 1997. The journal's first two series', some time ago, may have consisted of just two or four stencilled and duplicated sheets, but in that small space were compressed much local lore and history, garnished with details of the Society itself, its members and operations. This third series has been doubly blessed: we now have at our disposal reprographic technology that can produce copy at a speed and with a quality undreamt of thirty years ago, and we have a generous sponsor, British Energy Generation plc, that enables us to harness the benefits of that technology to produce a plain but substantial journal every four months of at least twenty pages.

Fram's subject coverage has also been enlarged. As well as recording the history of local people, places, and events, the journal has covered in recent articles, education and medical history, social and economic demography, archaeology and women's history. The locale of its interest has also expanded (as noted in the last issue) to encompass most of east and south-east Suffolk, with contributions which are still relevant to the development of this town and, I hope, of interest to our more local readership.

The last phrase serves as a reminder, perhaps, of the several constituencies that *Fram* seeks to serve. Pre-eminently, of course, it owes its *raison d'être* to being the house journal of the Framlingham and District Local History and Preservation Society. As such, each issue includes lists of the Society's officers and trustees, "Society notes", as well as contact names and addresses and telephone numbers for the Society. Through all its three series, *Fram* has also been available for sale through local outlets (currently the Castle, the Castle Bookshop, and Framlingham Stationers), and some local people and visitors, not in membership of the Society, acquire their copies of *Fram* in this way.

It has, however, a much wider audience. Copies of each issue of the journal are held at the British Library, at major local studies resource centres in London, at Suffolk County Record Office, Ipswich Central Library, with the Suffolk Local History Council, at Pembroke College, Cambridge and Arundel Castle, and with the British Association for Local History (which has given *Fram* several useful notices in its serials).

This much wider distribution is critically important for the status of the journal itself, and for the furtherance of the charitable aims of the Society under whose aegis it operates. Papers originally published in a journal such as *Fram* addressing local themes that have been reliably researched and are fully referenced, can often become valuable components of historical studies in a regional and, indeed, national context, that might be published in serials that have a far wider distribution, geographically and numerically, than our own small journal.

The Society itself has changed substantially since *Fram* 3rd series number 1 appeared. Dare one say it, our winter lectures are perhaps now less anecdotal and more professional than they were a few years ago; certainly they now attract far larger audiences, often almost exceeding the capacity of the meeting room that is currently used. We now have modest refreshments at the end of the lecture, and had what was, I believe, our first Society dinner late last year - to become, we hope, an annual event in future. The Society now seems to have a somewhat higher public profile in the town and elsewhere: our views have been reported in several recent issues of *East Anglian Daily Times*. Significantly, we have taken forward several major initiatives, commissioning the Mary Tudor plaque in the Castle, restoring the crane behind Carley's, re-publishing *Lambert's Almanack* 1901. And finally, individual membership of the Society has increased by more than a third, and continues to grow.

But there is no room for complaisancy - much still needs to be done. There are over two thousand people in this town who do not yet belong to the Framlingham and District Local History and Preservation Society.

THE VILLAGE OF EASTON, SUFFOLK: AN APPRECIATION

By Andrew A. Lovejoy

A first visit to Easton (population 340 in 1991 and size 1,484 acres) is a special occasion. The pretty crinkle-crankle wall, the half-timbered houses, the small, tidy and welcoming village green, the White Horse Inn, and the church on its eminence, all add up to an experience pleasing to the eye. It is not for nothing that Easton has been described as one of the most delightful and picturesque villages in Suffolk.

The visitor to the village is advised to abandon the car and venture into All Saints' Church. There it will be quickly gleaned that Easton over the years has been the residence of gentry of the most notable kind. The village's own poet, James Clarke (1798-1861), in 1849 published *A Suffolk Antiquary* (price one shilling) in which the following lines of doggerel appeared:

> Easton the delightful village
> Placed in district fine for tillage
> Where Wingfields dwelt in time of yore
> And Nassau since the Prince came o'er.
>
> Now Wingfield and Nassau are gone
> Easton belongs to Hamilton
> The noble Duke and loyal peer
> Whose entrance is much hailèd here.

The Dukes of Hamilton, who resided in Easton between 1830 and 1895, have, of all the lords of the manor over the years, left the greatest legacy. They were only in Easton for 65 years, but the influence of their presence is still there to see. Nevertheless, the short tenure of the Hamilton presence must not blind us to the fact that Easton has a long history stretching in documented terms from the Domesday Survey of 1086. The history of Easton that can be commented on goes even further back. It is a history which invites us to explore.

Prehistoric Easton

Easton has been there almost forever. It is surely not too fanciful to suggest that the first people to live and roam in England in the mid-Acheulean period of more than 150,000 years ago[1] passed through Easton's territory.

The three glaciation periods which have affected East Anglia most recently were the Anglian, Wolstonian and Devensian[2] ice ages, which are here noted in descending order of age. The Hoxonian interglacial period occurred in the mid-Acheulean times between the Anglian and Wolstonian glaciations[3]. Hoxne near Diss is the type site in England for the Hoxonian interglacial. In 1977-78 in particular, a lake-side settlement was excavated there with a lot of Acheulean hand axes, animal bone, fishing baskets etc. being found[4]. A reconstruction of the landscape for the Hoxonian period is on view at the Norwich Castle Museum. From pollen analysis, it is clear that the landscape then was made up of deciduous and yew trees and grassy glades in which pig, *elephas antiquus*, and horse were being hunted.

Easton may well have boasted a Hoxonian landscape. If we cast our minds forward a long way to Anglo Saxon times, we would find that the landscape of Easton in the latter period was not dis-similar. With water present, the proto River Deben and a landscape to match, mid-Acheulean man of 150,000 years ago would not have looked out of place in the future Easton.

Post Glacial Easton

The last ice age ended in about 10,000 BC. The archaeological finds from the parish of Easton since that date form a meagre collection. A couple of Neolithic (4000 BC - 2000 BC) flint arrow heads and some Roman coins found in a brick kiln are all that have come down to us[5]. Does it suggest that, except for the occasional hunting group and perhaps an isolated Roman habitation, the lands of Easton with its climax vegetation of oak (*quercus robur*) were virtually untouched until the time became ripe for development in early Anglo Saxon times (6th and 7th century AD)? It certainly seems so, because a study of Suffolk archaeology has shown that the clay lands of High Suffolk were the last in the area to be developed for farming purposes.[6]

Anglo Saxon Easton

Modern English history may be seen as starting with the *Adventus Saxonium* - the coming of the Angles, Saxons and Jutes to England from Scandinavia and Germany in the fifth century[7]. The 1500 Anglo Saxon burial sites in East Anglia and Southern England of the fifth and sixth century suggest that about 50,000 Anglo Saxons emigrated to this country. The figure of 50,000 people may be the tip of the iceberg. And Lincolnshire, Norfolk and Suffolk were the most populous and wealthiest part of Anglo Saxon England[8].

East Suffolk, particularly on the Sandlings to the east of the line defined by the modern A12, became a populous area in those early Anglo Saxon years. King Readwald (599-625 AD), a Wuffinga king of the East Anglian Dynasty, had his headquarters close by at Rendlesham, which the Venerable Bede called a *Vicius Regius* - a royal palace[9]. Easton in those early days would have been on the edge of a considerable development taking place, especially on the Sandlings.

Easton's soils are made up for the most part of boulder clay and clay loams (more than 30% clay and less than 50% sand)[10]. Part of Easton is named Martley in Domesday (1086) and was separately mentioned from Easton in that survey. Martley was in 1086 much more flourishing than Easton. Suffolk archaeologists are of the opinion that the clay lands of High Suffolk were developed for farming purposes in the eighth and ninth centuries. By 1000 AD, the fields and parish boundaries had become fixed. We can talk about Easton and Martley history beginning in at least 700 AD[11].

It would be instructive if we could glean information about farming in the Anglo Saxon period. Unfortunately, the direct archaeological and documentary evidence on agriculture between the fifth century and the Domesday Book is limited, and for the four centuries from 400 AD, practically non existent.[12]

Domesday Easton/Martley

Most ancient communities in England can trace their history in documented form back to the Domesday Book of 1086. Martley and Easton are well represented in that survey. What the survey tells us is that Martley consisted of at least 300 acres of worked land[13] and was much larger and more populous than Easton. Just before the Conquest, Martley was divided between Brichtmar and Edwin Grim. In 1086 Count Alan held parcels of land of 120 acres with 12½ free men, 45 acres with five free men and 2 acres with two free men[14]. Altogether Martley in 1086 boasted at least 40 working males. In other words, with wives and children included, Martley added up to a vigorous community. It even had its own church with an associated 20 acres of farmland worth 2 shillings. The site of the church has not yet been traced.

In the entry for Easton in Domesday, two parcels of land are listed. On the land of Roger of Poitou there was a free man holding 10 acres with a value of 2 shillings.

Domesday clearly recognises that Easton played a secondary role at that time to Martley. Why was that? Perhaps the answer lies in the quality of the land at Martley as opposed to that at Easton. The soil at Martley, as the original Anglo Saxon settlers would have realised, is a rich brown forest soil with a boulder clay base. Martley stands for Martens clearing[15]. Martens were pine martens which inhabited relatively open woodland, both deciduous and pine[16]. (Before 1800, pine martens were common in England, but not so much in Southern England[17]). The open clearings of grass would have produced a rich brown soil profile at the surface. The boulder clay below the surface layer would have registered with those early Anglo Saxon as being moisture retentive[18]. The rainfall at Easton is on average today only 23 inches per annum[19] which would have made soil water retention an important soil characteristic. Martley with its boulder clay soils would have appealed to our Anglo Saxon forebears.

Easton soils (at the east and southern part of modern Easton) are more sandy in character. Irrigation in summer could become a problem whilst the land immediately adjacent to the southern boundary of the parish bordering the River Deben was and is prone to flooding. Dry soils and flooding may have made old Easton an unattractive proposition. Martley was certainly scoring points in Anglo Saxon times.

There is another point of interest connected with the Domesday survey and this locality. Both Martley and Easton were apparently almost exclusively farmed by freemen and not, as was customary in other areas of manorial England, by villani and bordarii (virtually slaves). Professor Stenton reports that the survey noted 1,003 sokemen and 8,144 free men in Domesday Suffolk. Indeed, 40% of the recorded population of Suffolk consisted of freemen[20].

Easton and Martley were in the Danelaw of East Anglia. The Danish settlement (formally agreed by a treaty between King Alfred and the Danish leader Guthrum in 879) introduced in east England a new element of freedom in local society[21]. Hence, perhaps, the high number of freemen in Suffolk Domesday. Martley may have been an instance where freemen paid a standard rent to the lord of the manor, perhaps living at a manor house on the site of the present Martley Hall. As freemen they were free to migrate as they wished. We are told that freemen generally in East Anglia were maintaining themselves as independent members of society on resources which can have been little more than adequate for bare subsistence[22]. However, the acreages of farmland per freeman as noted in Domesday for Martley and Easton suggests that those sections of the community were more than surviving, and perhaps by the standards of the day were flourishing.

It would be good to locate the site of the church in the Martley section of Easton. Field surveys have been conducted in south-east Suffolk, principally on the Sandlings area. There Ipswich Ware (650-850) and Thetford Ware (850-1150) have been found concentrated round the established churches of the area[23]. No field walking or surveys have been carried out in the parish of Easton[24]. Such a survey could solve an intriguing problem - where, if at all, resided the original church of Easton/Martley?

We know little about the parish of Easton as a whole for the centuries immediately following Domesday. Henry III (1216-1272) came into possession of the estate[25]. Between 1227 and 1272 the manor changed hands when the king granted Easton to Sir William Charles. In 1463 the manor was passed from Sir Thomas Charles to Sir John Wingfield. The Wingfields were a Letheringham family, having come into possession of that manor in 1362[26].

Letheringham

Over the years Letheringham has played a not insignificant part in Easton's story. In 1174, Sir Thomas Boville founded a small priory of four Augustinian canons at Letheringham. That priory was an outstation of the monastery of St. Peter's, Ipswich[27]. Letheringham priory is of great interest. Peculiarly it does not even achieve a separate mention in the standard work by M. D. Knowles *The Monastic Order in England* (1950). At the Dissolution 1538, the priory was worth £7-2s-10d (*cf* Butley Priory in 1536 was worth £318-17s-2d and Bury St. Edmunds £1,659)[28].

Nevertheless, Letheringham priory was a feature for nearly 350 years in that locality. One can imagine the rector at All Saints Church, Easton (founded 1302) wanting a rest. One of the Augustinian canons from the Priory would then step in and officiate at services. The priory being Augustinian most certainly would be dispensing hospitality and alms to the poor and others. The priory was small and poor, but was probably much loved in that locality.

Letheringham lies on the River Deben and has a mill going back a thousand years. The River Deben flowing down to Woodbridge and the sea has had its channel much altered over the years[29] through the action of those wishing to erect mills along its course. There are five mill sites on the River Deben between Letheringham and Woodbridge.

The de Bovilles were the lords of the manor from at least 1194 to 1362[30]. In that year a de Boville daughter, Margery, married Sir Thomas Wingfield. It was the latter's family who took over Easton in 1463. In 1556 Sir Anthony Wingfield gave the Priory lands at Letheringham to his daughter Elizabeth who married William Naunton. His grandson, Sir Robert Naunton became Secretary of State to James the First (1603-25). The Nauntons built Naunton Hall at Letheringham, which was finally demolished in 1945[31].

Weather, Climate and Easton over the years

Climate and weather are crucial to the wellbeing of any community; that applies especially to communities depending on farming for their survival. The history of climate and weather in past years and centuries in England is now fairly well known. We can go back to at least 1700, when daily meteorological measurements began to be taken. We know on a day-to-day basis the weather from 1700, and also the major weather events before then. The population of Easton would have been aware of those events, which on occasion could have posed problems. A few important instances can here be mentioned.

400 AD to 440 AD was a stormy period[32] and from 450 to 850 England experienced a mini ice age. The winter of 763-4, the earliest documented weather event, produced huge falls of snow. Easton then had only just been colonised[33].

850 to 1300 were in weather terms generally kind. The vine flourished and the Manorial system saw its best years. From about 1300 the weather produced a succession of bad harvests. The vine disappeared from England, and the agrarian economy of this country became dislocated. The 1349 Black Death set the seal on events, so that by 1400, Easton would have experienced life that was anything but normal[34].

The fifteenth century was a period of recuperation, but the population number did not reach its pre-Black Death datum figure until 1600. The weather in that century was unsettled and stormy[35].

1550 to 1850 saw a little ice age, with the 1560s, for instance, marked by a succession of poor harvests, at a time when price inflation made farming particularly profitable[36]. The 17th century saw the coldest winters since the end of the last ice age[37].

The great winter of 1683-84 would have been marked at Easton by the freezing of the ground to a depth of four feet[38]. The Great Storm of 1703 claimed 8,000 lives in England and on the North Sea[39]. The equivalent of £2 million worth of damage was done in London. Defoe described the event. Easton would not have escaped. It brings to mind the Great Storm of October 1987.

The 18th century produced fluctuations in the weather when the difference in the average summer temperatures could bring either a good or bad harvest. The 1730s and 40s were warm and a great encouragement to those adopting the newly-introduced farming techniques. The 1750s and 60s were bad[40]. It all culminated in the year 1816, the year without a summer, with starvation in many rural areas. Emigration to the United States amounted to 50,000 people from Europe[41]. Did anybody leave Easton then for the USA?

From 1850 the weather was kind, which happily coincided with the period of High Farming 1850-75. 1900 to 1960 was the warmest period since the general weather pattern deteriorated in Europe from 1200 BC onwards. Since 1960 the weather has become more unsettled, presumably with the onset of global warming. The average temperature since 1970 has risen by 0.3°C[42]. Altogether, Easton has seen some major weather events though it should be added that, as far as is known, no-one over the years has taken meteorological readings in Easton.

Some Early Easton Wills

The history of a village community in this part of East Anglia is usually dominated by those at the apex of the social hierarchy, and Easton is no exception. It is therefore refreshing when insights are discovered into the lives of ordinary people living in the community. Mr. W. D. Akester, who was Parish Recorder of Easton for the 1960s, 70s and early 80s, made some transcripts of some early Easton wills which he had discovered. The earliest of these concerns a certain John Gilberd of Easton, who signed the will on 16th July 1436.

The early wills in Mr. Akester's collection bear ample evidence of the part religion played in the life of the community in the 15th century. John Gilberd ordained that he be buried in the churchyard of All Saints (Easton), that he leaves to the high altar of Easton to the light of the Blessed Mary 40d, for a trental (a series of 30 requiem masses) 10 shillings. The residue of his estate was to go to Joan his wife and Robert Ston. After her (Joan's) death, all lands, tenements etc. to be sold and from the proceeds, to the porch of Easton for a lead covering (roof) 10 marks, for a priest to celebrate for two years in the same church for her and his benefactors 16 marks. And so it goes on[43].

If we jump ahead to the Reformation period, things seem to have changed. Thomas Landis of Easton in a will dated 18th April 1541 still wished to be buried in All Saints churchyard. He left to the High Altar "for my tithes negligently forgotten" 12d. His wife Maud was to have all copyhold land and free for her lifetime. The rest of the will involves bequests to his wife and family. The overt religiosity of the fifteenth century wills is forgotten with, for instance, Robert Clare's will of 1574, as a more modern form of will is manifest[44]. The Almighty is not forgotten, but the church of All Saints does not feature amongst the bequests. The pattern of Robert Clare's will is repeated in all those following it in Mr. Akester's collection. They become much more complex, and it is clear that these wills are evidence of people in Easton living quite complicated, comfortable, and even flourishing lives. The will of John Dowsing Gent. of Easton 1700 is illustrative of those qualities; to his wife Audrey "Messuages/Tenements in Easton not otherwise devised" for the administration of his children until her remarriage. The rest of the will covers the situation in the event of her death and the parcelling out of his estate to his nearest and dearest.

The Wingfields of Easton

The Wingfields were lords of the Manor of Easton from about 1463. The 16th century saw the foundations of the modern state of England laid down. It was an exciting and a brutal century, when, with royal command exercised by such as Henry VIII (1509-1547) and Elizabeth (1558-1601), the country saw great changes, which accelerated by the end of the 1500s. Locally there was, in keeping with this, an increase in the prosperity of farmers in particular, as evidenced by the extraordinary period of the building of timber-framed houses between 1570 and 1640[45]. Price inflation fuelled by the import into Europe of Spanish gold and silver from the New World made agriculture more profitable, at a time when in England the population saw a marked increase: there were more mouths to feed. In the Elizabethan period, people discovered expectations of material comfort previously undreamt of[46]. The farming community of Easton would have thrived in the environment of the second half of the 16th century in particular[47]. Enclosure in East Suffolk was virtually complete by 1600[48]. (West Suffolk had to wait until the Parliamentary Enclosure Acts of the 18th and 19th centuries). The boundaries of the fields in the parish, which may well have been those laid out in the pioneering days of the Anglo Saxons[49], stayed much the same until the 20th century witnessed the amalgamations of fields and the cutting down of hedges. In outline, the parish of Easton in 1600 would be recognisable to us today. That would be even more apparent when the 16th, 17th and 18th century buildings of the built-up area of the village are noted. Easton indeed has a long pedigree.

The Wingfields prospered in the 16th century. Sir John Wingfield produced a family of four daughters and twelve sons. Many of the sons held high public office, and a few details follow about the principal of them, Sir Anthony Wingfield (1485-1552), Lord of the Manor of Easton. Sir Anthony was on several occasions Sheriff of Suffolk (for example November 1515 to November 1516). He accompanied Henry VIII to the Field of the Cloth of Gold, and served as Commissioner for the Dissolution of monasteries in Suffolk. In 1539 he was made Vice Chamberlain and Captain of the Guard, and in the latter capacity arrested Thomas Cromwell in the Council in August 1540. On 12th December 1546 he conducted the Earl of Surrey to the Tower. He was an executor of the King's will and was left £200. A Privy Councillor, he was created Knight of the Garter in 1541. He died on 15th August 1552[50].

The villagers of Easton at this time would have been intensely interested in the Wingfields' activities, which brought glamour, kudos and shape into the humdrum life experienced by the local people. The presence of the Wingfield family generated social comment and intercourse on a scale hitherto unrealized in what had been a quiet rural backwater. The last of Sir John's extraordinary progeny died in 1597, the sons either soldiers or diplomats at a high level[51].

Sir Henry Wingfield was killed at the Battle of Lorraine in the wars against Louis XIV. His son (his mother having died in 1675) sold the Easton estate in 1700; the malpractices of their agent there rendered the estate non-viable. The purchaser was Jane Wroth, daughter of Sir Henry Wroth, who had married in 1681 William Zuylestein. The estate was held in trust for him, and he took possession of it in 1708[52].

Easton and The Earls of Rochford

William von Nassau von Zuylestein (1645-1708) was the son of an illegitimate son of William of Orange, the future William III (1688-1702). Von Zuylestein served the cause of William of Orange with distinction in both the military and diplomatic fields. In 1693, for instance, he rescued William from danger at the Battle of Neerlinden in the Netherlands. On 10th May 1695 he was created Baron Enfield, Viscount Tonbridge, Earl of Rochford and Master of the King's Robes. His later life was spent in seclusion at his estate in Zuylestein near Utrecht. He died in 1708[53]. Although he took possession of the estate at Easton it is not known if he actually visited Easton.

The Second Earl of Rochford (1681-1710) served as a soldier. One of his claims to fame is that he was appointed as a courier to carry the news to Queen Anne (1702-1714) of the Duke of Marlborough's success at the Battle of Blenheim. He died in the rank of Brigadier General at the Battle of Almenara in Spain in July 1710. It seems he did not visit Easton and had in any case formal possession of the estate for only two years[54].

The Third Earl of Rochford (1710-1738) spent thirty years of quiet living at Easton. He was instrumental in tiling the roof of All Saints Church in 1711; the roof had previously been thatched. He was buried in All Saints in the family vault[55].

The Fourth Earl of Rochford (1717-1781) moved in the most influential society in London, and enjoyed

a notable career in diplomacy in George II and George III's reigns. In July 1766 he was appointed Ambassador in Paris. Walpole said of him that "his person is good and he will figure well enough as an ambassador"[56]. His visits to Easton were very infrequent, if at all.

In 1760 the Fourth Earl had made arrangements for his brother, the Hon. George Richard Savage Nassau, to take over the estate at Easton, which he made his constant residence[57]. Nassau married Anne Spenser, daughter of Lord Rendlesham, the widow of the 5th Duke of Hamilton. Their son, William Henry, became the 5th Earl of Rochford. There is a memorial in All Saints Church to Richard Nassau.

The Fifth Earl (died 1830) spent much time and money at Easton. He thoroughly repaired the Mansion, and had built the crinkle crankle wall in the late 1820s. He has a memorial in All Saints Church.

The wall deserves a special mention. Norman Scarfe the Suffolk author has counted 78 crinkle crankle walls in England, 45 of them in Suffolk[58], of which Easton, at two miles, is the longest. Built of a single thickness of red brick, with brick buttresses every seven yards, the wall encloses a park of 148 acres. James Clarke (1798-1861), Easton's own poet, wrote in admiration of a much loved feature of Easton[59].

> A serpentine wall encircles the Park
> Where the nightingale sings and the note of the lark
> Is heard from above the mansion of peace
> With the woodpecker tapping at Hamilton Place.

The White House, Easton

A later Sir Anthony Wingfield had moved from Godwin's Place and built the White House in 1627. That poses a puzzle. "The Mansion", as the White House was called in the 19th century at the time of the Hamiltons, was a large eighteen -bedroomed Palladian mansion in white stone. However, a south-west (rear) view of the White House on a photograph taken in 1880 tells a very different story. What is seen is probably a large rambling Stuart half-timbered house[60].

Timber-framed houses were built in numbers in Suffolk between 1570 and 1640. This came to an end with the onset of the Civil War in 1640 (in the north of England the building of timber-framed houses went on until about 1700). The rear view of the White House conforms with a house seen as being half-timbered in construction.

So when was the Palladian Mansion built? Certainly not by Sir Anthony Wingfield; such a house was not commonly built until the 18th century at the earliest. Who then could have built the Mansion as viewed in a picture in Akester's archive collection?

As noted above, the 2nd and 4th Earls of Rochford had only a nodding acquaintance with Easton. And the 5th Earl was dealing with an established situation, as a picture of the Mansion in his time has survived, showing the building straddling open countryside, before the crinkle crankle wall had been built.

The two hot contenders for being the builders of the Mansion are therefore the 3rd Earl of Rochford (died 1738) and his successor at Easton, Hon.George Richard Savage Nassau. There is no hint that Richard Nassau contemplated any building project at Easton; the likelihood is that he in any case was not able to draw on the requisite funds for such a project.

That leaves the 3rd Earl, who lived quietly at Easton for 30 years. Hardly had he arrived in Easton than he put in hand the tiling of the roof of All Saints church. Did he not show his dislike of the vernacular by seeing the end of thatching at All Saints church? It is suggested (and further research might help) that the 3rd Earl built the Palladian facade of the Mansion, whose rear façade was the large Stuart half-timbered construction built by Sir Anthony in 1627.

It is all very intriguing.

The Dukes of Hamilton, and Easton

On the death of the 5th Earl of Rochford, childless, in 1830, his cousin the 10th Duke of Hamilton was left the considerable Easton estate. The 10th Duke was 63 years of age at the time. He died in London in 1852.

Who were the Hamiltons?

They were the senior peers of Scotland, and the third oldest in the land after the Norfolks and Somersets.

The first James Hamilton of Cadzow, Lanarkshire was made a Privy Councillor in Scotland in 1440. In 1474, at the age of sixty, he married the 22-year-old Princess Mary Stuart, and sired a son who was only four years old when he died in 1479. The title Lord Hamilton was granted to James Hamilton in 1445. His successors were recognised as heirs apparent to the throne of Scotland for much of the 16th century[61].

It was in 1643 that Charles I created the sixth James of the line, Duke of Hamilton. After a life of depressing futility he was beheaded in Palace Yard. He had failed in the primary task of a nobleman of the time in that he sired no son to inherit the dukedom. The title passed to his brother William (died 1651). The 18th century dukes were for the most part a rumbustious lot. It was the fifth Duke of Hamilton who married Anne Spenser (died 1771) the daughter and co-heir of Edward Spenser, Lord Rendlesham. Her fortune was valued at £70,000. On the death of the fifth Duke of Hamilton, his widow married the Hon. George Richard Savage Nassau of Easton. Their son was the 5th Earl of Rochford and cousin to the Hamiltons.

The Hamiltons were above all expensive, extravagant and eccentric, in keeping with their status. The 10th Duke spent much of his time on the Continent, though he was a visitor from time to time at the Easton estate he had inherited. He died at the age of 85, and was buried very eccentrically in an imported Egyptian sarcophagus at a specially built mausoleum set in Hamilton Palace, Lanarkshire. In his old age he held himself straight as a grenadier and was always dressed in a military laced undress coat, tights and Hessian boots. He had an intense family pride. His collection of paintings etc. was auctioned at Hamilton Palace in 1852 for £379,562[62]. It was said that never was there such a magnifico as the 10th Duke.

The legacy of the 10th Duke was really that of his wife Susan. Firstly she put in hand the renovation and even the rebuilding of the buildings in The Street, Easton, opposite the entrance to the Mansion. In particular, the future Easton House, which was a shop in 1830, was changed to its present form. Many of the half-timbered houses in The Street owe their present façades to the Duchess's attentions.

In 1852 Susan opened the first school of any note in Easton, on the site of the present Easton Village Hall. Education was on the agenda, when Parliament for the first and not the last time made a grant of £20,000 (£2m today) for the purposes of education[63]. The Duchess, no doubt a regular reader of the press, would have been aware of the intense debate in higher circles regarding the education of the masses. The Duchess's school in Easton was a pioneer effort, coming as it did 20 years before elementary education came to everyone with the Forster Education Act of 1870. Interestingly enough, the new school at Easton was a great success. The Duchess would be delighted that the Primary School in Easton in 2001 owes much to her pioneering efforts.

Left a life interest in the Easton estate by the Duke on his death, she resided intermittently at Easton and died in 1859.

White's Easton

It is good to pause and register that besides the occupants of the Mansion House Easton Park, there were at all times ordinary people in Easton going about their daily round. The following is a short list of some of the principal villagers, extracted from the Suffolk Directory *of William White, 1855.*

Dowager Duchess of Hamilton, Easton Park (Here Occasionally)
Arey, Wm, Carrier and shopkeeper
Beard, Cooper and parish clerk
Bedwel, John, Wheelwright
Clark, James, Grocer and draper
Gray, Wm, Tailor
King, George, Shopkeeper
Leeder, George, Boot and shoemaker
Minter, Mary Ann, Schoolmistress
Newson, David, Vict, White Horse
Norton, John, Brick and vase manufacturer
Smith, David, Land agent
Snell, Robert, Hurdle maker
Stearn, Samuel Geater, gentleman
Tuthill, Samuel, Boot and shoemaker
Ward, James, Blacksmith
Worsley, Rev. Henry, M.A., Rectory

FARMERS
Catchpole, John
Crisp, Nathan
Hill, John
Hunt, Mr., Martley Hall
Kersey, John Cooper, Bentries Hall

Clearly Easton in 1855 was a fairly self-sufficient community. Unfortunately (depending on your point of view) there are no mentions of doctors, dentists, veterinary surgeons or winemerchants. The Post Office was at Samuel Tuthill's. Letters went via Wickham Market.

The Later Dukes of Hamilton

Inheriting the title in 1852, the 11th Duke spent hardly any time at Easton, being much more attracted by life in the social hotspots on the Continent, especially Paris. One of his favourite pastimes was to drive in a carriage down the Champs Elysees, Paris, drawn by 12 horses and 6 postilions in contravention of the law which forbade anyone but the Emperor Napoleon to drive with more than eight horses. It speaks volumes. The Duke was described as the Very Duke of Very Duke. His legacy to Easton is virtually nil. He died in 1863 at the age of 50[64].

The 12th Duke (1863-1895) inherited the Easton Estate at the age of 18. He married Lady Mary Montagu, daughter of the Duke and Duchess of Manchester, in December 1873. The marriage seems to have served as the catalyst which spurred these newly-weds to develop Easton, which it seems they came to love[65]. In 1873, stables for 50 horses were built within the park walls and soon after the Duchess put in hand the creation of a model farm at Easton Park. In spite of a pronounced agricultural depression, money was no object. In 1882 one of the Red Poll Suffolk cattle was sent to Smithfield, where it won first prize[66]. And in 1891 the school on the site of the present village hall was moved to a new purpose-built structure which still accommodates Easton Primary School[67]. Interestingly, school attendance at that time could be sparse; flushing duties in connection with the shooting parties on the estate took many boys away from their scholastic duties. During their residence at Easton, the Hamiltons carried out much building work, including the building of five round houses of which four survive.

The Easton estate's main importance for the 12th Duke centred on its shooting facilities. It was not rare in the years 1875-95, for £5,000 annually to be taken from sales of game off the estate. Hunting was also of prime importance. The Duke allowed his tenant farmers a reduction in their farm rents to compensate them for any damage done to crops in pursuit of the estate's hunting activities. The Duke jealously guarded this asset. He was continuously buying up land in the vicinity of Easton. The list of purchases is long and includes the Broadwater Estate of 148 acres for £7,000 in 1863 and the Great Glemham Estate of 1952 acres (1872) which was eventually sold in 1913. In 1910, the Hamilton's Suffolk lands amounted to 6,785 acres[69]. But for all that, there appear to have arisen cash-flow problems, for in 1892, a Consolidated Mortgage was taken out on the surety of the estate for £80,000 (£5,300,000 today)[70].

Horse-racing was the Duke's ruling passion[71]. He kept a string of racehorses, one of which, Strathhaven, won over 45 races. He spent vast sums buying horses to be raced in the famous cerise and French grey colours. He won the Brighton Cup in 1876, and the Steward's Cup at Goodwood in 1878. He was unsuccessful in the 1878 Grand National, when his entry, The Bear, fell at the first fence. The Bear was brought to Easton, where it developed into an exceptional hunter[72].

A photograph of the 12th Duke standing at the front door of the Mansion survives. He was of average height, but thick-set with a large head and hands which could fell an ox. He was eminently sociable, but could not suffer fools gladly, and in conversation could verge on rudeness. He was clearly of a paternalistic mould, who was and looked every inch the successful English sporting country gentleman. His dress in the photograph is fairly casual, even to the point of having a dash of the bohemian about it. He clearly enjoyed his wealth and much relished giving pleasure to others.

The Duke was outstanding as a sportsman for the locality. For the period 1875-95, he financed out of his own pocket the activities of the Easton Harriers, with one of the best packs of hounds in the country. The Harriers met on Mondays and Thursdays throughout the season, and the local tenantry were thus provided with first class hunting experience at no cost to themselves whatsoever[73]. In 1880 the local hunting fraternity showed their appreciation by presenting the Duke with a magnificent sherbet or claret service of fine old Kashmir silver-gilt work dated by experts as 200 years old and consisting of 220 ounces of

hammered silver. The Duke acknowledged receipt of the gift at a ceremony held at Easton Mansion in a most generous way[74].

The Hamiltons, as one might expect, much enjoyed travelling regularly between their various estates and visiting for hunting and other reasons members of their own class. *The Framlingham Weekly News* reported on 12th March 1892

> The Duchess of Hamilton, who is very gradually recovering from the effect of her fall when hunting with Mr. Fernie's hounds a week ago, is still confined to her residence at Glen, Leicestershire[75].

The Duke's love of extravagant hospitality led him to give a Hunt Ball in December 1879 at Framlingham Castle for the followers of his pack and for his tenant farmers over whose land the hunt passed. The Castle on that occasion was set to by 30 carpenters who converted it into a fairy palace. The preparations were on a scale which the neighbourhood were coming to expect of the noble Duke; 400 invitations were sent out. The guests included the Duke of Manchester, the 12th Duke's father-in-law. The Band of the 2nd Suffolk Volunteers played, and *The Framlingham Weekly News* for the 20th December 1879[72] reported:

> The Harrier Hunt Ball last Friday evening at the Castle was a decided success, the company was brilliant, the dancing excellent, the provisions unlimited and everything passed off without the slightest hitch. The dances, which were kept up with untiring zeal, lasted till nearly six o'clock in the morning.

The Framlingham Weekly News was unremitting in reporting anything of potential interest to its readers on matters concerning the Easton Estate and the Hamiltons. On 1st January 1881, it reported that on Christmas Night the stables at Easton Park were almost destroyed by fire. On that occasion the Duchess led to safety her favourite horse. Various local fire brigades were summoned but the person dispatched to Framlingham mistakenly went to Woodbridge to summon fire tenders. Nevertheless, the fire was out by midnight and the stables were soon rebuilt, the building being fully insured.

An anecdote about the Duke has come down to us from Miss Ella Brownsord (1897-1988), a founder member of the Framlingham Local History Society. It runs as follows:

> Our father loved to tell us the following story.
>
> Parents of Easton at the time of the 12th Duke were always admonishing their offspring on how to behave when they met members of the Hamilton family. One mother impressed on her son, if ever the Duke spoke to him, the boy was to say Your Grace. In course of time the Duke and the lad encountered one another and the Duke stopped to speak. Immediately the boy rose to the occasion and said,
>
> Be present at our table Lord
> Be here and everywhere adored
> These creatures bless and grant that we
> May feast in paradise with thee.
>
> The Duke was delighted and immediately presented the boy with a golden guinea.

Towards the end of his life the Duke became rather stout and gave up hunting. He was in fact ill, and took to travelling round the Mediterranean in his yacht The Thistle. The *FWN* carried a long obituary[77]. "It is with great regret we have to chronicle the death of His Grace the Duke of Hamilton, which took place on Thursday night at Algiers aged 50". The obituary detailed the Duke's life and all that he had done for the locality. Clearly it had to be the passing of an age (Death duties were in force for those with estates in excess of £10,000)[78]. The Duke left his wife Mary and a daughter the Lady Mary aged 11.

The legacy of the Hamiltons at Easton is considerable. They brought to the locality an example of sumptuous living at a time when many people in and around Easton lived sparse and even poverty-stricken lives. No-one, it seems, begrudged them their opulence. Indeed, the locals much enjoyed their presence, which in the scheme of things at the time was readily accepted. Today, the legacy of the Hamiltons can be seen in the landscape around Easton, and of course the village itself boasts many examples of their input. The Hamiltons made their mark and their legacy is still much enjoyed to this day.

How Rich were the Hamiltons?

The value and extent of the Hamilton estates in the 12th Duke's time (1863-1895) amounted to:

102,210 acres Isle of Arran, Bute

45,731 acres Lanarkshire
4,504 acres Kineil, Linlithgow and Stirlingshire
4,939 acres Easton and Great Glemham
Total 157,384 acres
Valued at £73,636 per annum (of which £8,017 p.a. from Suffolk).
Add: mineral rent £67,006 per annum.
Total income for year 1883 £140,642[79]

The pound sterling in 1900 would be equivalent to £66.24 today[80]*. In today's prices the Duke's total income in 1883 would therefore amount to £9,316,126. Income tax was re-imposed in the 1840s at seven old pence, and crept up to eight old pence in the 1890s*[81].

20th Century Easton

Easton in the 20th Century is far from being just a postscript to the heady days of the Hamiltons. Lady Mary Hamilton married in 1906 the Marquis of Graham. Though the Mansion House was rented out soon after the death of the 12th Duke, the Grahams were frequent visitors, Lady Mary in particular being very fond of the village. The Marquis, an active cricket enthusiast, founded the Easton Ramblers Cricket Club before the First World War. The team was of county standard, and such clubs as the Free Foresters, Eton Ramblers and Oxford Authentics found their way to Easton. Sir Pelham (Plum) Warner, perhaps the W. G. Grace of the 20th century, played at Easton on a number of occasions. The cricket field, now ploughed up, lay at the junction of the Easton/Kettleburgh and the Framlingham/Easton roads[82].

From 1919 onwards, the Hamilton's Easton estate was sold off, with some piecemeal sales taking place in the 1930s. The Mansion House was eventually sold and pulled down in 1923[83]. The connection with the Hamiltons was severed.

The 20th Century saw Easton sending its men to two world wars. After 1945, with the state of the country's economic fortunes improving enormously, Easton also benefited from the new affluence. Farming in the locality received an impetus from the arrival in 1938 of the Keer Scots family for example. They have been farming ever since, an area stretching to 1,700 acres in the Easton area in an imaginative and profitable way. The school the Duchess of Hamilton established with little regard to expense in 1852 flourishes in 2001. And a new housing development, Harriers Walk, was completed to the north west of the village in 1983. The development is tasteful and discreet. Easton Farm Park has for some time now been open to the public; the Duchess of Hamilton would surely be delighted at that. But above all, the present housing stock in Easton contributes much to the reputation it has as one of the prettiest villages in east Suffolk.

All Saints Church

The church of All Saints has been purposely left until last. Of perpendicular style, it has an interior which is certainly not a palympsest but rather an accretion of all the influences bearing on Easton since the church received its first rector in 1302. The nine hatchments to the Wingfields, Rochfords and Hamiltons stand in their own right. The Wingfield pews in the chancel are deservedly well known, and details such as the contributors for the six bells in the octagonal tower show that the building over the last seven hundred years has been much loved. The registers of births, marriages and deaths, which begin with entries in 1561 and were kept in the vestry until 1950, speak volumes[84]. The striking royal coat of arms fashioned out of a solid block of oak finds a place in All Saints which is apt and very acceptable.

The church can show one or two sad moments. In 1604 the plague came to Easton for the last time. On that occasion the rector and his daughters were carried off in quick succession. William Dowsing, the arch iconoclast of Suffolk during the Civil War of 1640-49, paid All Saints a visit on 27th February 1643. He made his mark on the church by breaking up a brass inscription and removing sixteen "superstitious paintings", destroying three crosses, and making an order to break down the steps in the church within twenty days. For those depredations, Dowsing charged the church and village 6s 8d.

All Saints church is an integral part of a community in which Christian worship has taken place over so many centuries. Practically everyone living in Easton over the last seven hundred years has frequented the church at some time in their lives, Dukes and all. The church has over those years exerted a unifying influence in Easton; it still does.

****

Easton lives. Its memory is long. Perhaps the final word should be left with James Clarke, whose grave is in All Saints churchyard next to the crinkle crankle wall. His epitaph reads:

Good Friends by all the Powers on High
Hold sacred what herein does lie
Who rest your trust in Jacob's God
Let me rest safe beneath this sod.

Notes:

1 J. G. Evans, *The Environment of Early Man in the British Isles* (London, 1976) p. 1
2 *Ibid.* p. 2
3 *Ibid.*
4 The author of this article assisted at the Mid Acheulean excavation at Hoxne in 1978
5 Personal communication, J. Newman, Suffolk County Council Archaeological Unit
6 *Ibid.*
7 P. H. Blair, *Anglo Saxon England* (Cambridge, 1995) p. 29
8 F. M. Stenton, *Anglo Saxon England* (Oxford, 1971) p. 513
9 A. C. Evans, *Sutton Hoo Ship Burial* (London, 1989) p. 107
10 G. V. Jacks, *Soil* (London, 1958) pp. 21-22
11 O. Rackham, *The History of the Countryside* (London, 1986) p. 19
12 P. J. Fowler, *The Archaeology of Anglo Saxon England;* edited by D. M. Wilson (Cambridge, 1986) p. 23
13 S. Bell, "Studies in Domesday Easton (Martley)" (MS); *Victoria History of the County of Suffolk* (London, 1911) vol. 1 pp. 434-435
14 *Ibid.*
15 Personal communication, Norman Scarfe
16 Rackham, *op. cit.* p. 40
17 *Ibid.*
18 Jack, *op. cit.* pp. 21-22
19 Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group, *Model Farm, Letheringham* (1974) p. 1
20 Stenton, *op. cit.* p. 517
21 *Ibid.* p. 481
22 *Ibid.* p. 517
23 J. Newman *in* Sutton Hoo Research Committee, *Bulletin* no. 6 (April 1989) p. 19
24 Personal communication, J. Newman
25 Letter 2.5.1982 W. Morfey to W. D. Akester. W. D. Akester Easton Archive File no. 10
26 Historical Notes, *Ibid.*
27 *Ibid.* no. 22
28 S. Harrison, *Butley Priory 1171-1538* (2000) p. 6
29 Personal communication, Mr. J. Keer
30 Historical Notes, W. D. Akester Easton Archive File no. 20
31 *Ibid.*
32 H. H. Lamb, *Climate, History and the Modern World* (London, 1982) p. 157
33 *Ibid.*
34 *Ibid.* p. 163
35 *Ibid.* p. 181
36 *Ibid.* p. 202
37 *Ibid.*
38 *Ibid.* p. 223
39 *Ibid.* p. 209
40 *Ibid.* p. 235
41 P. Johnson, *A History of the American People* (Phoenix, 1997) p. 290
42 M. Hulme and E. Barrow, *Climates of the British Isles* (London, 1997) p. 2
43 Easton Wills, W. D. Akester Easton Archive File no. 13
44 *Ibid.*
45 R. W. Brunskill, *Illustrated Handbook of Vernacular Architecture* (London, 1987) p. 27
46 J. Youngs, *Sixteenth Century England* (London, 1986) p. 304
47 D. Dymond and P. Northeast, *A History of Suffolk* (Chichester, 1985) p. 62
48 W. G. Hoskins, *The Making of the English Landscape* (London, 1975) p. 141
49 Rackham, *op. cit.* p. 19
50 *Dictionary of National Biography* (London, 1917) vol. 21, pp. 652-654
51 *Ibid.*
52 Easton and the Earls of Rochford, W. D. Akester Easton Archive File no. 2
53 Obituary, 1st Earl of Rochford, W. D. Akester Easton Archive File no. 14
54 Obituary, 2nd Earl of Rochford, *ibid.*
55 Obituary, 3rd Earl of Rochford, *ibid.*
56 Obituary, 4th Earl of Rochford, *ibid.*
57 Easton and the Earls of Rochford, W. D. Akester Easton Archive File no. 2
58 Personal communication Norman Scarfe/W. D. Ankester, W. D. Ankester Easton Archive File no. 7
59 J. Clarke, *A Suffolk Antiquary* (Woodbridge, 1849)
60 W. D. Akester Easton Archive File no. 2
61 B. Harvey, "The Hamiltons" (MS) p. 1
62 *Ibid.* p. 7
63 L. Woodward, *The Age of Reform 1815-1870* (Oxford, 1962) p. 478
64 Harvey, *op. cit.* p. 8
65 *Ibid.*
66 Personal communication, Mrs. J. Keer
67 The Schools of Easton part 2, W. D. Akester Easton Archive File no. 2
68 *Ibid.*
69 Harvey, *op. cit.* p. 12
70 *Ibid.* p. 10
71 *Ibid.* p. 13
72 *Ibid.*
73 *Ibid.* p. 15
74 *Ibid.*
75 *Framlingham Weekly News* 12.3.1892
76 Harvey, *op. cit.* p. 15B
77 *Framlingham Weekly News* 18.5.1895
78 R. Ensor, *England 1870 - 1914* (Oxford, 1968) p. 202
79 Harvey, *op. cit.* p. 20
80 Office of National Statistics
81 Woodward, *op. cit.* pp 15, 181
82 Personal communication, Mr. J. Keer
83 W. D. Akester Easton Archive File no. 2
84 Register of Births, Marriages and Deaths, W. D. Akester Easton Archive File nos. 7, 8, 9.

THE RAILWAY LINE TO FRAMLINGHAM

By J. C. Simpson

In the first half of the nineteenth century, travel for ordinary people was restricted to horse, carriage, bicycle or on foot. Few people were rich enough to own a horse or carriage and therefore rarely strayed away from their home town or village. In Framlingham, an outing to the seaside or to Ipswich was a major event. It was the dawning of the railway era that allowed people to travel, and, more importantly, enabled goods to be transported quickly and relatively cheaply to new markets. Railways were initiated for the transport of goods, not people and it was as a secondary use that passengers were carried. The railways were particularly efficient at transporting bulky goods like stone or coal quickly over large distances and, as they developed, the carriage of manufactured goods.

In the 1830s and 1840s, there were many proposals for new railways. A Railway Bill had to be proposed in Parliament before a new railway could be built or finance sought for it. The flurry of speculation to make a quick profit must have been very like the present-day "dot.com." companies. They showed spectacular growth in share price before any profit had been made. The reality of the situation dawns on investors later as some of these companies go under or have to be taken over to save them. In those days it was known as "Railway Mania". There were more proposals for railway lines than were ever built. Towns did not want to be left out of this new mode of transport, and often proposed a railway to their nearest major centre because they had not been included in another company's proposal. Many of these were simply to join on to an existing line, rather than being part of any grand design. Some were totally spurious and aimed at a gullible public wishing to invest in the latest technology.

The railway companies that were being formed in the 1840s thought that the line from Ipswich - Norwich - Lowestoft - Yarmouth would be all that was required, and did not want to venture into East Suffolk. The local population of the time did not accept this point of view, and the promotion of railways in East Suffolk was therefore left to the interested landowners and businessmen. The Earl of Stradbroke and Sir E. S. Gooch supported the line, but not all landowners wanted their estates cut in two. The then Duke of Hamilton opposed it and kept the railway out of Easton Park itself. Finally, however, the line was financed by Sir Samuel Morton Peto, the father of modern Lowestoft, and was built by Peto and Thomas Brassey, who was a large contract builder of railways. It ran from Ipswich to Yarmouth, via Wickham Market and Saxmundham. It had all the characteristics of a rural line, but was regarded as a main line until 1962, when British Rail downgraded it, made much of it a single line, and closed half the platforms. The stations became unmanned halts. At one time, they (like Framlingham) would have boasted Station Master, clerks, signalmen, and a whole bevy of porters, the railways being major sources of long-term employment, albeit at modest wage levels.

Because some of the proposals for lines in North Suffolk had failed, some local businessmen had allied themselves with Peto to form the new railway in 1850. This line was 13.5 miles long and cost £150,000, and was incorporated as the Halesworth, Beccles and Haddiscoe Railway by Act of Parliament on 5th June 1851. In 1854, it changed its name to the East Suffolk Railway (ESR) in order to promote a link between Great Yarmouth and Ipswich. This is of interest to us, as powers had already been obtained by then to open branches to Framlingham, Snape, Lowestoft and Aldeburgh. The total length of the ESR and branches was 53 miles. The line to Framlingham was built as a branch or feeder line to the "main" line, which it joined at Wickham Market.

It was finally opened on 1st June 1859 along with the rest of the ESR except the Leiston and Aldeburgh branch. The line to Framlingham had stations at Parham and Marlesford. A halt at Hacheston was added much later in 1923 by the London and North Eastern Railway (LNER), to help make the timetable look better in the competition with the buses, which were newly

emerging as cheap and quick passenger transport and to some extent starting to displace the railways. (The railways had, of course, displaced horses and carriages the previous century.) There was much rejoicing in the town when the first train arrived. The town band was on parade, but its conductor in his jubilation fell off the edge of the platform in front of the train. The driver managed to stop the train before running over the poor man, who also happened to be the Station porter.

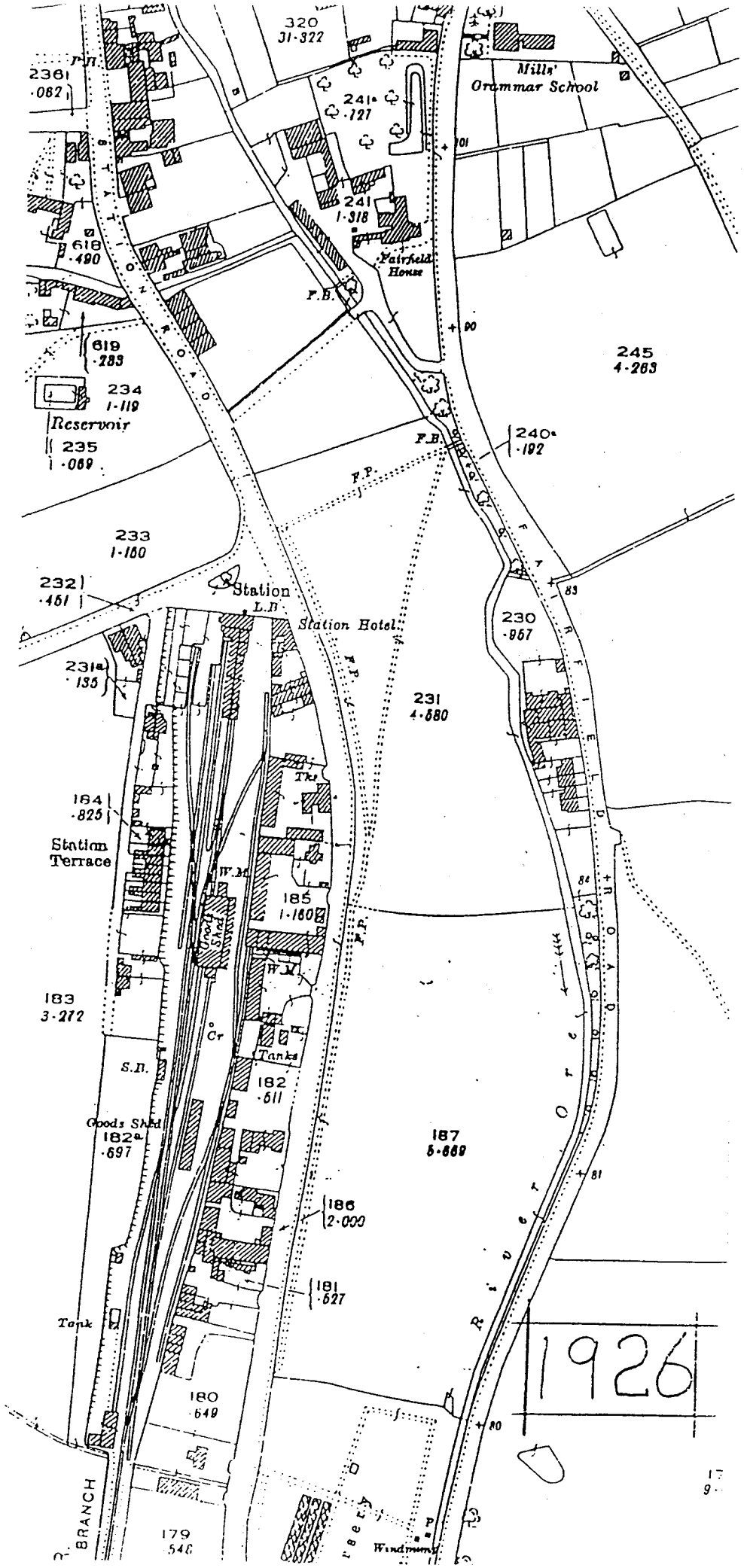
In much the same way as we have a track and infrastructure provider today (Railtrack), with different operating companies providing and running the trains, a similar system was used with some, but not all, of the early railway companies. The Eastern Counties Railway owned and provided the trains to run on ESR's own track. The initial service to Framlingham from Wickham Market was four trains a day each way. Passengers joining at Parham, Marlesford, and later Hacheston, had to buy their tickets from the Guard. This must have been one of the first lines in the country to have the "Conductor Guard" system.

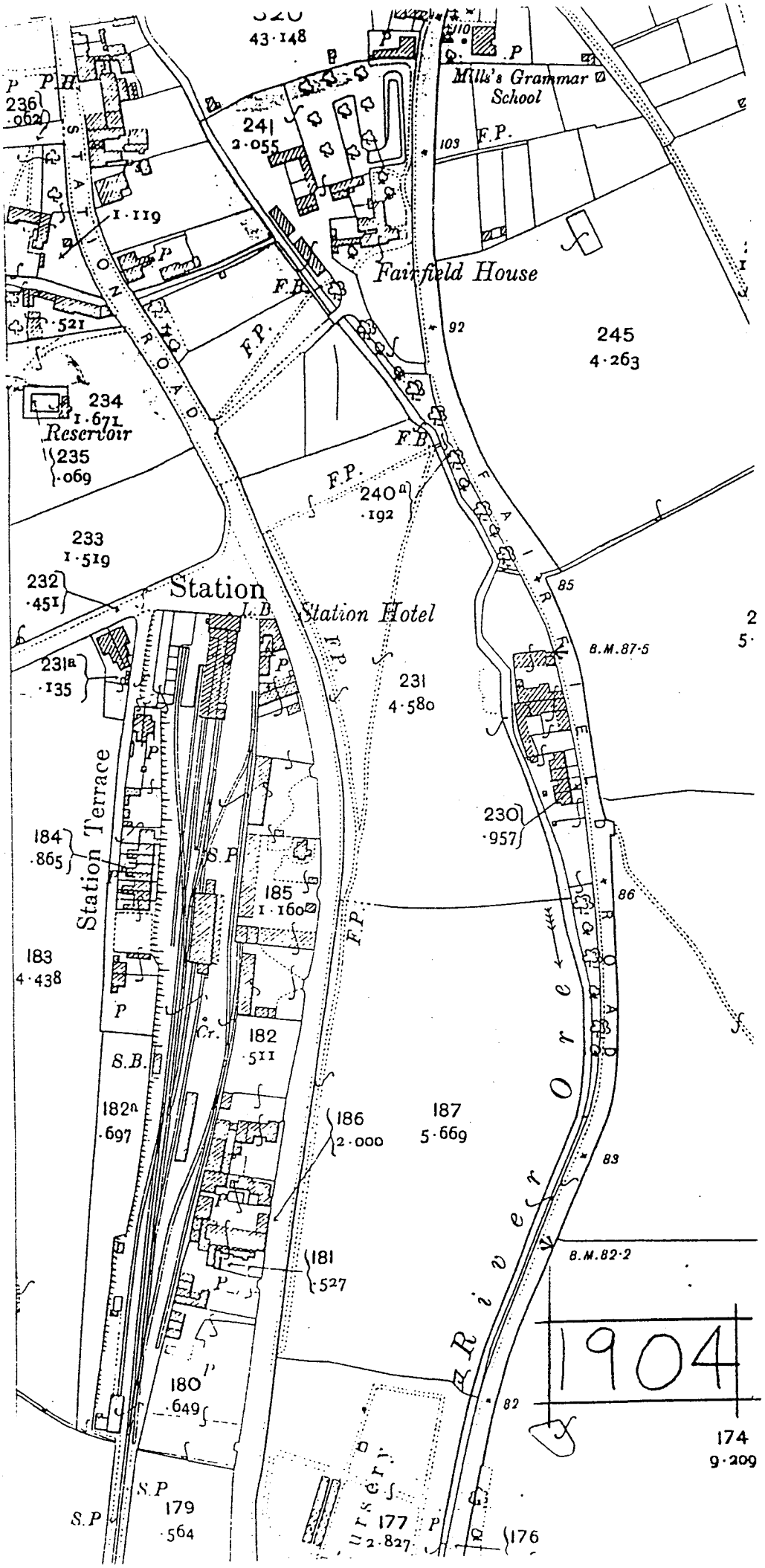
On 7th August 1862, the East Suffolk Railway and its branches became part of the newly formed Great Eastern Railway (GER), when it amalgamated with the East Anglian, Eastern Counties, Norfolk and Eastern Union Railway Companies, plus their subsidiary undertakings. After the First World War, the Government of the day re-organised all the railway companies in Great Britain into four main groups on 1st January 1923. This was one step short of nationalisation, which came 25 years later. It cost the Government nothing and put the railways on a better financial footing after the War years, when the railways were heavily used but under-financed. The GER, including the Framlingham branch-line, was transferred to the London and North Eastern Railway Ltd. In organisational terms, things carried on very much as before, the GER part of LNER being somewhat autonomous, as indeed was the Eastern Region of British Rail later.

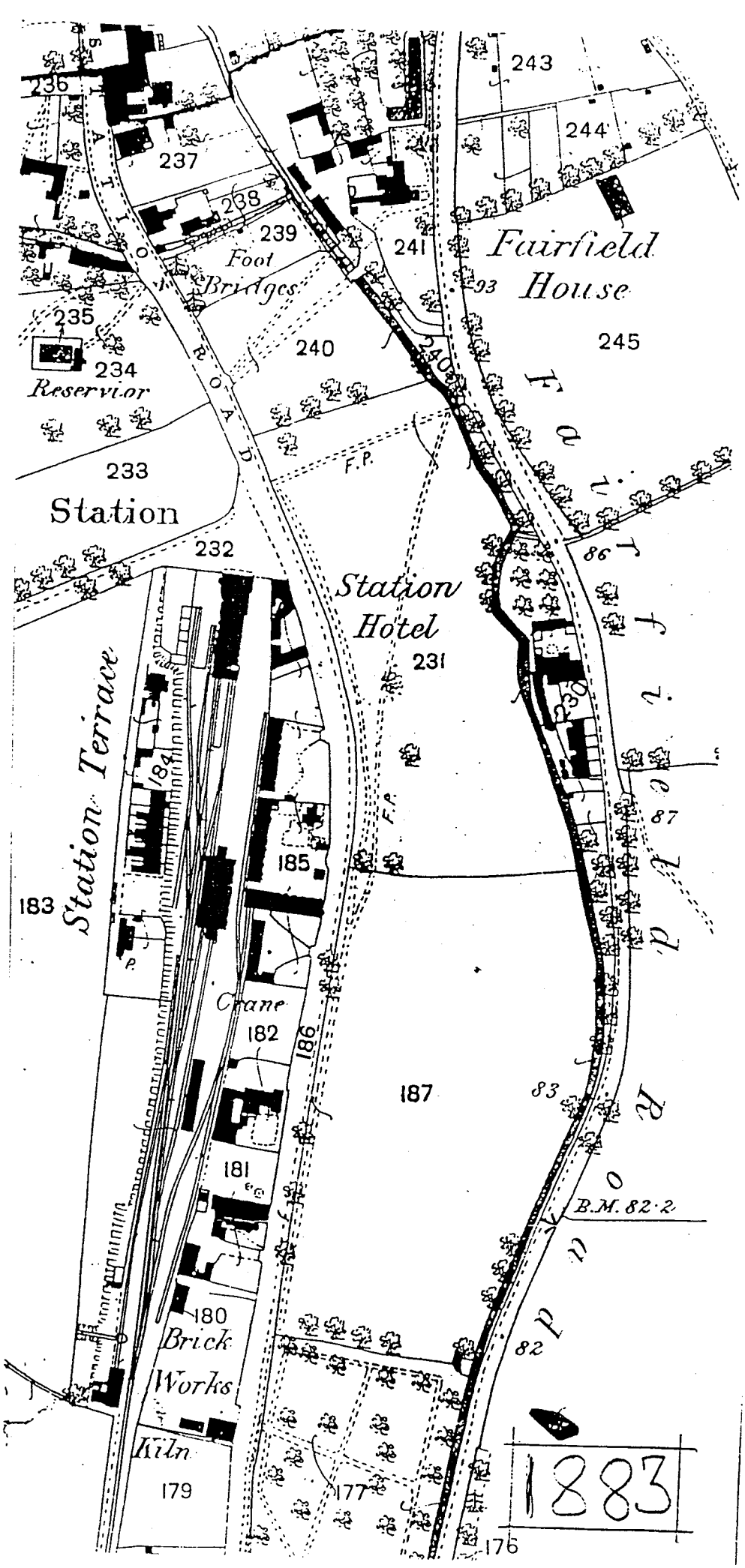
On 1st January 1948, the four railway companies were nationalised by the Clement Attlee Labour Government, and LNER passed into the hands of the British Transport Commission. The Commission was responsible for the railways nationally, for all the buses and trains in London, for road transport and for canals. Because of their many responsibilities, the Commission set up the Railway Executive to administer the railways. (A Railway Executive had existed to oversee the Railways during the war years). Framlingham branch and the main line to Lowestoft and Yarmouth became part of the Eastern Region of British Railways. The name was later shortened to British Rail, when the double-headed arrow logo was adopted.

Road haulage became very aggressive and competitive. Lorries were improving rapidly in technical specification and size. Railway pricing had long been a political football, and even in 1923, the Government had pegged the prices that the new railway companies could charge. The Railway Executive was not able to raise prices, and was bound by centrally negotiated wage bargaining. The Trade Unions were finding their feet, and the Road Haulage Association was lobbying hard the now Conservative Government. The road haulage industry had been de-nationalised (privatised as we would say today) and could charge what it liked and set about cherry-picking the most lucrative trade. It left the railways to pick up what they could with little investment, while still trying to recuperate after the War. The railways had been nationalised using loan-stock capital at 6% interest, which the Railway Executive had to find the money to pay out of its revenue. At the Railway Executive, there were committees beavering away simultaneously in opposite directions. One was looking at cheapening branch line operations by using railbuses, while another was seeing which lines could be cut out to save costs. (This was long before the infamous Dr. Beeching arrived on the scene). Based on the decision-making processes of those days, lines like the Framlingham branch were doomed.

From a planning point of view, the line should have gone further into the town when it was built and not stopped half a mile outside. Framlingham did not have a large enough population fully to sustain a railway, and it survived for as long as it did because of the goods traffic. Large quantities of grain were exported from Framlingham, as were cattle in the early days.


320
31·322
Mills'
Grammar School
241
·127
241
1·318
Fairfield
House
618
·490
619
·283
234
1·119
Reservoir
235
1·089
245
4·263
240
·192
233
1·160
232
·461
Station
L.B.
Station Hotel
230
·967
231a
·135
231
4·680
184
·825
Station
Terrace
185
1·160
Goods Shed
183
3·272
Tanks
182
·611
Goods Shed
182a
·697
187
5·869
186
2·000
181
·627
Tank
180
·649
179
546
BRANCH
Windmill
1926


43·148
Mills's Grammar School
241
2·055
F.P.
Fairfield House
245
4·263
234
1·671
Reservoir
235
·069
240
·192
233
1·519
232
·451
Station
Station Hotel
231
4·580
231a
·135
230
·957
184
·865
Station Terrace
185
1·160
183
4·438
182
·511
182a
·697
186
2·000
187
5·669
181
·527
180
·649
179
·564
177
2·827
176
174
9·209
B.M.87·5
B.M.82·2
River Ore
1904


236
237
238
239
Foot Bridges
241
243
244
Fairfield House
245
235
234
Reservior
240
240
233
Station
232
F.P.
Station Hotel
231
Station Terrace
184
185
183
F.P.
Crane
182
186
187
83
181
180
Brick Works
Kiln
179
177
176
B.M. 82·2
82
86
87
1883

Sugar-beet went by train from Framlingham to Ipswich sugar factory. My Grandfather issued the sugar-beet loading permits to the farmers, and doubtless was never short of a pheasant!

On 3rd November 1952, passenger services were withdrawn. The last train from Wickham Market ran on Saturday 1st November 1952. I was 14 years old and was on that train, but regret that I had to get off at Parham as we were staying with Percy and Kathleen Kindred at Parham that weekend. Freight traffic continued for nearly twelve years longer, but that service was finally withdrawn on 13th July 1964. Although passenger trains had stopped, special school trains for Framlingham College were run. They ran as ordinary passenger trains and anybody could travel on them with the boys, if they dared. On 19th April 1965, the line was closed in its entirety. During the summer of 1966, the track was lifted and the property disposed of. This was the beginning of the present use of Framlingham station. A steel hawser was put around the brick-built engine shed and with one quick pull by a locomotive, the whole building was demolished in seconds.

FRAMLINGHAM STATION. The station was built as a terminus with the provision of a single platform, a large goods shed, sidings to other commercial users, cattle penning and loading facilities. An engine shed for one engine was built, with the necessary coaling point and water tower. There was a signal box to control all train movements. Within the main station building was a booking hall that was approached from the large gravelled area outside the station where cars (or horse and trap) could stop. The door to the booking hall can be seen today, and is now part of the offices of the bed company that occupies land that used to be garden and cattle pens. To the right of the booking hall was the ticket office, where a full-time clerk worked. To the left of the booking hall was the Station Master's office, with a door that led to the flat upstairs occupied by him and his family. Passengers passed though the booking hall onto the platform where the waiting rooms, lavatories etc. were situated. When trains came into the station, all the windows in the flat had to be shut as they were at locomotive chimney height.

PARHAM STATION. The station is two and a half miles from Framlingham and four from Wickham Market. In World War 2, a lot of extra traffic was carried in connection with the army and air-force establishments in the vicinity. (The most important one was the aerodrome at Parham, which to confuse everyone was known officially as Framlingham aerodrome, occupied by the United States Army Air Force. In 1943 its aircraft allocation consisted of B17 Flying Fortresses under Colonel Edgar M. Witton's command of 390th Group (402 Air Bombardment Division). The Station Master's House at Parham measures 34'8" x 23'6" on the upper floor and he had use of part of the group floor (15'9" x 23'6"). The remaining rooms are station offices etc. In 1892, the platform at Parham was extended. Parham had a signal box with a 20 lever Dutton frame, but the box was abolished in 1924 when the principle of "one engine in steam" on the branch line was adopted. After that, a small ground frame controlled the siding used for unloading coal and the transfer of other goods. It is believed that the siding was worked by James Pepper Frost, a flour and coal merchant.

MARLESFORD. Railway companies always sought to economise wherever they could, and using the same design for parts of the infrastructure was a common practice. Hence, the station buildings at Parham and Marlesford are identical. Two sidings were provided at Marlesford which were controlled by a 3-lever ground frame released by a key on the train staff. The signal box was abolished at the same time as the Parham box on 26th July 1924. To augment the station accommodation, a carriage body was placed on the platform beside the brick buildings. It arrived in 1902 and was a suburban third class brake No. 297, built to diagram 501 at Stratford works in 1874 at a cost of £260, one of 72 built between 1871 and 1876 for service on the Chingford and Enfield lines. It was withdrawn in December 1901. Its value then second-hand was £8. By the time the railway closed in 1965, electricity had not reached the station-house, and the well at the back of the house from which water was pumped daily had an unhealthy proximity to the cesspool. A single siding in the form of a loop was provided to service Messrs. Gooderham and Hayward's Mill located south of the platform, completed at a cost of £303.

Marlesford and the Junction had their hour of glory in May 1956 when the Royal Train was stabled in the station overnight. A Class B1 4-6-0 No. 61252 was coupled up overnight to supply steam heating. In the morning, the engine brought the train out onto the main line to be taken on to Lowestoft by No. 61399. The changeover was not faultless. HRH The Duke of Edinburgh put his head out of the window, saw Dr. Ian Allen (a Framlingham GP of the time) standing by the side of the track and demanded to know what he was doing. The Duke was apparently satisfied with the reply that he was photographing the train.

The trains at Framlingham were controlled from the one remaining signal box on the branch. A train arriving at Framlingham would always be engine-first, pulling two coaches and perhaps some mineral or goods wagons. When everybody had left the train it would reverse up the line for about 100 yards and uncouple. The engine would then be driven forward again, the points would be changed, and the engine would run round its train and then reverse up to the other end and recouple. This procedure was repeated at Wickham Market, so that the train was always pulled; special permission had to be sought if it was to be pushed. Nowadays the engine at the rear pushes many high-speed trains, although there is a driving cab at the front. There was no turn-table at Framlingham (nor at Wickham Market), so the locomotive, although at the front of the train, would travel engine first in one direction and tender first on the reverse run. It was always the practice to keep two spare carriages at Framlingham, which could be drafted into service if there was a special need.

At Wickham Market, the platforms were not opposite each other but in GER/LNER fashion were offset from each other, and only joined by a sleeper crossing for staff and trolleys, and a footbridge for passengers. There was a similar arrangement at Saxmundham. The station at Wickham Market was a misnomer. "Wickham Market for Campsea Ash" station was the official title, but it should really have been named "Campsea Ash for Wickham Market", as the town was a couple of miles away, and the station was at Campsea Ash. Politics, I suspect, played a large part in the naming of the station, especially if they had been trying to raise money to build the railway from the residents of Wickham Market.

On 28th December 1860, only 18 months after the line opened, there was a highway robbery. "Booking Clerk Swann and Lad Porter Lawrence were committed for trial on a charge of robbery with violence upon a blacksmith from Kettleburgh between 11 p.m. and midnight on 23rd December. Inquiries to be made". (A Minute from the ECR Traffic, Locomotive and Permanent Way Committee.)

My grateful thanks to the following people and references without which much of this would have been impossible:-

Family correspondence and photographs including Miss Mary Simpson, now aged 93.
John Bridges, Little Waldingfield
Public Record Office, Kew
General Register Office
Great Eastern Railway Society (various publications)
J. M. Cooper, *The East Suffolk Railway* (1982)
L. Oppitz, *East Anglian railways remembered* (1989)
R. Adderson and G. Kenworthy, *Ipswich to Saxmundham* (2000)
Railtrack plc
National Railway Museum, York
Suffolk Chronicle and Mercury
East Anglian Daily Times
J. Booth, Framlingham College: the first fifty years (1925)

[In the next issue of Fram we shall be publishing Mr. Simpson's sequel to this article, "The Simpson family connections to Framlingham". These two items are a revised version of the lecture given by Mr. Simpson to the Society on 13th December 2000.]

EDWIN EDWARDS - ARTIST

By Helen Pitcher

Few people have heard of Edwin Edwards, the Victorian artist, but although his work has hardly been remembered here, his contribution to the world of nineteenth century art is real, and is recognized more on the Continent than it is in England.

Edwin Edwards was born in Framlingham in 1823 into a family of great significance in the story of this town. I do not have any evidence that Edwin grew up here, as his father is always referred to as Charles Edwards of Bridgham Hall, Norfolk, and Edwin was educated at Dedham (where he must have felt the influence of Constable). However, his parents maintained business interests in Suffolk, and I have no doubt that they were frequent visitors to Framlingham.

In St. Michael's church, Edwin's grandparents, George and Mary, are commemorated on a tablet over the door – George was an extremely wealthy merchant and banker. Also, in the north aisle there is a tablet commemorating Edwin's aunt Caroline, the wife of the surgeon Doctor Jeaffreson and mother of the second Doctor Jeaffreson. In the south aisle there is a tablet commemorating Edwin's brother Charles, Barrister-at-law in the Inner Temple.

Another source linking Edwin to the life of Framlingham is Green's *Guide to Framlingham.*[1] There is a page illustrating six Framlingham luminaries, three of whom link directly to Edwin:

1. Sir Henry Thompson, listed as the owner of at least one painting by Edwin;
2. George Edwards, Edwin's uncle and one of Framlingham's real characters. For our purposes, the interesting point is that Uncle George played the flute: Edwin was an extremely proficient flautist;
3. John Cordy Jeaffreson, archivist and novelist, Edwin's first cousin and Edwin quotes his writing in his own work.

Edwin was educated for a career in law, and built up a successful practice as an examining proctor in the Admiralty and Prerogative Courts, during which time he wrote various legal books including one on ecclesiastical law.

He was also a Dissenter and appears to have experienced prejudice from some quarters on this account.

However, the more one learns of the Edwards family, the more one discovers just how multi-talented they *are* (they are still amongst us!). We see doctors and lawyers, men astute in business and banking, and gifted culturally at every level. Edwin was a lawyer, a gifted flautist, a talented artist, but even more a connoisseur of art and appreciator of the work of others. He was a collector, especially of the work of Cotman, and an encourager. Furthermore, he was a talented linguist, being entirely at home in the language and culture of both Germany and France, especially France.

And so Edwin, as with so many multi-talented people, became torn between his different interests and abilities. In 1859 the crunch came during a journey through the Tyrol, where he was captivated by the colours and landscapes, and he resolved to give up the law and to devote his future to art. He had a wonderfully supportive wife, Ruth Escombe, as she had been, who had total confidence in all that he wished to do, and gave herself completely to supporting his aspirations.

Edwin went to Paris to immerse himself for a while in the art scene there. Ruth meanwhile

sorted out their affairs, and dealt with all the practicalities of their new life. On his return, they settled at Sunbury-on-Thames, where Edwin loved to paint along the river. He would rise at dawn, go out on his rowing boat, which Ruth would steady with the oars, and try to capture the elusive shades of dawn. He loved to paint coastal scenes as well, especially in Suffolk, Devon and Cornwall.

His paintings were exhibited regularly during the next few years at the Royal Academy and in exhibitions of East Anglian artists at Ipswich alongside Constable, Crome, Cotman, etc. Some of his paintings were received with acclaim, for example "Gainsborough's Lane Ipswich", a subject which Constable had already painted. One reviewer says "The painting by Mr. Edwin Edwards would have shown to better advantage had it not been hung next to a Millais." Poor Edwin – some competition!

It seems that Edward's legally disciplined mind was too concerned with fact, detail, and exactitude. In his art, Edwards could not free himself from this mind-set. His style was over-detailed, tended to be sombre, and remained utterly English, despite his time spent in France and his friendship with French artists.

However, Edwin and Ruth were people of warmth, hospitality and encouragement. A salon grew up in their home in Sunbury-on-Thames. It began with Matthew Ridley, and others joined. In 1863 two artists came from France: one was Whistler, the other an impecunious young man called Alphonse Legros. Legros was an expert etcher and much later became Professor of Etching at the Royal College of Art, but meanwhile he introduced Edwards to the art of etching. This he took up with enthusiasm, rushing up to London to set himself up with all the equipment and then trying to draw everyone else in to "have a go". This medium, which requires attention to detail and exactitude, suited Edwards well, and it is in his etchings that he met with a greater measure of success than in his painting.

Because of his salon and his friendship with different artists, Ruth and Edwin were sketched, etched and drawn by quite a few artists. I have copies of:

"Le Salon de M. Edwin Edwards à Sunbury". by Alphonse Legros;
Edwin Edwards reading;
Edwin Edwards by Charles Keene of *Punch*;
"Un morceau de Schumann", by Henri Fantin Latour.

(There is a paragraph in Jobson's *Victorian Suffolk*[2] which describes how the Edwards' took the Ferns, opposite The Ship Inn at Dunwich, for the summer. Here Charles Keene would come to stay. He liked to play the bagpipes and suck brandy balls. Here also Edward Fitzgerald would visit, and Edwin taught him how to play Spanish dominoes).

Edwin became a very close friend of Henri Fantin Latour, whose flower paintings and still lifes are in the first rank of such painting. Edwin and Fantin toured Holland together. In 1875 Fantin painted a portrait of Ruth and Edwin which was exhibited in the Salon at Paris and met with great acclaim from, amongst others, Emile Zola. After Edwin's death, Ruth gave the portrait to the National Portrait Gallery, and it is now in the National Gallery. All the sketches and the portrait reveal genuine affection for Edwin, in the artists who drew these pictures.

Edwin was very instrumental in setting up a society called The Black and The White, which encouraged the work of etchers, engravers, etc. He insisted that Frenchmen should serve on the Committee and that this be a cosmopolitan group of people. It is hard for us to realise how important these art-forms were in the days before photography.

Edwin himself took to etching with enthusiasm. A series which he created around the coasts of Devon and Cornwall were purchased by the Louvre; others are in San Francisco. Listed among his works is a print of Framlingham Castle. We wish we could track it down!

From 1870 until his death in 1879 at the age of 57, Edwin concentrated more intensely on his own work. He appears to have become very focused, almost driven to the point of eccentricity. There is a story of a French artist, a friend of Edwin's, who was astonished in 1870, the year when Paris experienced an appalling seige. To his amazement, his first visitor after the lifting of the seige was Edwin, wanting to know the latest developments in etching processes and printing.

Nevertheless, Edwin held a highly respected place amongst French artists as a friend and a discerning critic. Durarty, a French critic who wrote a long and very appreciative obituary of Edwards in *Beaux-arts Illustrés*, describes how he had sent Edwards a sketch by a new artist called Delacroix. The French weren't too sure what to think and he, Durarty, would appreciate Edwin's reaction! Likewise, because of his ease on both sides of the Channel, Edwards helped French artists to place and sell their work in England. Some of these artists, such as Monet, became extremely famous. Ruth continued to help them after Edwin's death.

Edwin's final work was an ambitious project, to try to capture something of the essence of coaching inns before they all disappeared due to the railway. He was aware that inns associated with Dickens had already disappeared. Edwin became almost manic in this task. His original work was called 'Out for Inns' and he only completed part 1, Anglia, a copy of which is in the Suffolk County Record Office[3]. The task exacted a terrible toll on Edwin. He travelled up and down between London and Norwich, in all weathers, taking with him a kind of portable glass studio in which he would install himself, while the faithful Ruth wiped away the condensation. The book contains a great deal of Edwin's own reflections and stories associated with the inns.

Edwin died, exhausted, in 1879, in Middlesex. After his death, Ruth organised a large exhibition of his work in Bond Street. One feels that she longed for him to receive greater acclaim than he had had during his life.

If you have the Internet, Edwin Edwards can be found in the Artcyclopaedia, and there you can find his prints and the Fantin Latour portrait.

And so, when we think of both Ruth and Edwin, we can be proud of the very real place they held in the world of nineteenth century Anglo-French art. In France they are remembered more than in England. Several years ago, an art dealer and print collector from Rotterdam wrote to the town. He was amazed that Edwards was not known to us.

(The material used for this article was obtained from the National Art Library, which sent us articles and obituaries of Edwin's life and work).

Editor's Notes:

1 R. Green, *A Guide to Framlingham.* 4th edt. (1895) pp. 88-89
2 A Jobson, *Victorian Suffolk.* (1972)
3 E. Edwards, *Old inns ... First division – Eastern England.* (1873)

[This article is based on a talk given to the Society after its Annual General Meeting on 18th October 2000].

AN OLD IPSWICHIAN SCHOLAR GYPSY

By W. M. Morfey
Edited by A. J. Martin

This article first appeared in The Old Ipswichian Magazine, *No. 37, in 1989. The author was Wallace Mortimer Morfey, a distinguished Old Boy of Ipswich School, and we are greatly indebted to the present Headmaster, Ian Galbraith, for allowing us to reprint it in* Fram, *and also Doctor John Blatchly.*

The author Wallace Morfey was a man of wide-ranging interests, a deep knowledge of Suffolk, and a huge intellect. His energy was prodigious, his love of the region profound, and his generosity benefitted all classes and ages.

Mr Morfey attended Ipswich School between 1913 and 1922. He took his athleticism to Oxford, where he read English and Law, and was Captain of Athletics at Magdalen. Later, in London, he captained the Thames Hare and Hounds, and in Suffolk served as whipper-in, huntsman, Master and Chairman of the Sproughton Foot Beagles. Wallace Morfey never drove a motor car and later, when he retired to Kettleburgh, simply walked to Framlingham and back for meetings and other business.

He was a collector of art and wrote the definitive account of Thomas Churchyard, the Woodbridge lawyer/artist, as well as helping to run the Suffolk Poetry Club. In the wider world, he was a Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Glovers and in 1955 was President of the National Association of Glove Manufacturers.

Mr. Morfey was a Justice of the Peace and for many years a Member of the Ipswich Borough Council, where he chaired the Education Committee. His work with this body led to a major involvement with the setting up of the University of East Anglia - which owes its name to his ingenuity. He was Mayor of Ipswich 1970-71.

Wallace Morfey was a member of the Framlingham & District Local History & Preservation Society for several years, and became its Chairman from 1978 to 1982.[2] *A devout churchman, Mr. Morfey died in 1991 at Kettleburgh, and his funeral service in the parish church there was of his own devising.*[3]

There is one Ipswichian who was overlooked in the School *History*'s list of those who have a place in the *Dictionary of National Biography* - Francis Hindes Groome, gypsy scholar and miscellaneous writer, 1851-1902. Although the *Dictionary* deals straightforwardly with his literary achievements, it gives a wilfully deficient and bowdlerized account of his life.

He was grandson and son of Rectors of Monk Soham, his father Archdeacon Robert [Groome] having a niche in the *D.N.B.* as writer of some of the best Suffolk short stories. He himself was at the School from 1865 to 1869 in one of the great periods of Holden's headmastership; his eldest brother John being one of the ten-strong Sixth of 1865-66, all of whom went up to Cambridge, six on Open Classical Scholarships, two others being made Foundation Scholars of their College later.

In his year in the Fifth Francis had had his interest in languages stimulated by the great Second Master 'Guts' Sanderson. In the Sixth he had been one of the two boys who revived the School magazine *The Elizabethan*, editing it for his couple of years till it folded when he left. Its contents, mainly literary, are signed by pseudonyms and so do not disclose his hand. There are

printed there, though, his prize-winning verses in Latin hexameters and elegiacs - long translations from poems by Gray and Tennyson. He was no hand at cricket but won cups for rowing and played in the football team of sixteen that in the December of 1869, under the prehistoric Ipswich Rules, beat eleven Old Fellows in the annual match, by a goal and a rouge to a rouge.

He left School at the end of that term and for some months read with a coach at Boughrood on the Wye, in Radnorshire in preparation for Oxford. In the autumn of 1870 he went up to Corpus Christi College as a commoner but the following spring was elected to a Postmastership at Merton and accordingly transferred to that College next Michaelmas. A bare year there as a Scholar and then he suddenly threw over his undergraduate life and went off with the gypsies.

He comes as near as one could hope for to Glanvil's Oxford scholar of Stuart days whom Matthew Arnold immortalised two centuries later. He who

> One summer morn forsook
> His friends, and went to learn the Gipsy lore
> And roam'd the world with that wild brotherhood,
> And came, as most men deem'd, to little good.
> But came to Oxford and his friends no more.

Except that in his case it was not "to little good" that forsaking the University brought him. His life on the roads with the Romanies brings to his deep scholarship a directness in all that he wrote on their life, their language and their folklore, marking him out as perhaps the finest of all gypsy scholars.

His early biographers have assumed that it was Sanderson with his love of languages who introduced him to things Romany while he was still at school. In fact it was the other way round. It was the master who a year or two later learned from Groome most of what he came to know of the Gypsy tongue.

From the winter of 1868 Sanderson was several times called upon at his house in Ipswich by Meshach Gray, a travelling tinker who did various repair jobs for him. From the gypsy he learnt some seventy or so words of their unknown language, which incited him to start making a vocabulary. One day, a year or two later, probably during a university vacation, Groome was dining with the Sandersons when his host humorously addressed his wife with a few words picked up from the tinker. "What! Do you know anything about that talk?" the Scholar asked and, as the Schoolmaster recorded, "An explanation ensued and I soon found him to be far better acquainted with Rommani than myself and to him I was indebted for a large portion of my vocabulary". Groome reports the same happening: "To one man, a clergyman and my greatest friend, I taught Rommani myself."[4] As a keen philologist Sanderson plunged into a study not only of the words of this strange unwritten language but of its grammar and accidence as well.

He dated the completion of his manuscript "Remarks on the Rommani Language, with an English-Rommani Vocabulary", as August 1872. It must, therefore, have been some time before this that Groome had acquired the very considerable acquaintance with the language that he had been able to pass on. Groome is said as a boy to have felt a singular fascination for the gypsies and their way of life and as soon as he went up to Oxford he spent much of the vacations talking with them in various counties of south east England. One Easter he went to Paris and met some French Romanies.

But in term-time too his mind was perhaps more on them than it was on Mods and Greats for he

failed "Smalls". At the end of the Lent term in 1871 he got himself smuggled into the gypsy ball given by the Boswells and the Youngs in a marquee on a meadow beside the Thames that had been put out of bounds by the Proctors. Next Michaelmas term he discovered "the whole nest of Romanies" at Headington, a great gathering place for more than a century of the travelling people with their tents on the grassy slopes of Shotover Hill. From them he learnt much of their folklore. He journeyed a dozen miles from Oxford to Sindon Hill to meet the octogenarians Dimiti and Loli Smith who were able to supply him with some 'deep' Romany words - the old inflected forms, on their way to becoming extinct.

In the Summer term of 1872 he made the acquaintance of a party of gypsy girls selling artificial flowers in Oxford. One of them was Britannia Lee married to a Hughes and as soon as term was over he decided that their life and not the University's (where he had debts of £400) should be his also. From Phoebe Bunce, an older gypsy woman, daughter of Neptune Smith (years earlier she had served eight months' hard labour for obtaining money and jewellery by a trick) he learned that the Lees were camping near Farnham. Thither he went and called out Briti to leave her husband and come away with him. He had bought a caravan at Aldershot and together they set off and travelled with other Romanies the lanes the length and breadth of England. He was just twenty-one.

From Northumberland he wrote to a friend saying he had become a Catholic and married a gypsy. The wedding must have been by the Romany rite of jumping over a broomstick, for there was no record at Somerset House[5] of any legal ceremony having taken place. Early in 1873 he was driven to selling back for £30 to Phoebe Bunce and Briti's mother the caravan that the cunning pair had sold to him for £60 the previous year. Finally he had to write to his parents appealing for money. They came to Peterborough Fair, settled his debts and he went with them back to Monk Soham. He wrote to a friend saying that his gypsy life had ended "d'une manière terriblement triste et tragique". He did not neglect opportunities to increase his knowledge of things Romany while in Suffolk and after a time went to Göttingen "to the interesting problem of living on next to nothing and picking up the German language", as he told a friend. That summer he managed to spend some time with the gypsies in Bohemia and Hungary also.

Late in the year he returned to England and during two months in London in the spring of 1874, visited hundreds of gypsies there and collected many new words. That August he obtained an assistant master's post in an establishment at Bath preparing boys for Woolwich. All the time that he could he gave to consorting with the Romanies, recording their language and beginning to develop his theory that it was they who were the carriers of virtually all the folk tales of Europe. That Christmas he was for a fortnight the guest of the Town Clerk of Bridgnorth, Hubert Smith, whom he had got to know through the latter's book published the previous year, *Tent Life with English Gypsies in Norway*, the Romany in which Groome considered poor.

(Smith, a wealthy solicitor and landowner had long been interested in the Romanies and allowed them to camp on his land. In 1870, at the age of 48, he decided to explore Norway in gypsy fashion. He enlisted the help of Noah and Zachariah Locke to manage the donkeys; while with them, to take care of the cooking, went their sister Esmeralda, just short of sixteen. At the end of the excursion Smith decided that she must some day be his wife and he got her parents to accept her as being engaged to him. "Bike'd me like a tarni grasni" - (sold me like a young filly), she later declared. There were excursions in further years and in 1874 he [Smith] took her to stay with friends in Christiania (Oslo). Staid readers of *The Times* that July were puzzled to read an announcement in the 'Marriages' column informing them that "Adrey Vallo Phillisin, Norway, the Rye, Hubert Smith Esq., romado to Tarne Esmeralda Locke, who pookers covah Lava to saw Romany Palors". Had they understood it, it would have told them that the gentleman Hubert Smith had married the young Esmeralda Locke, who tells this to all Romany brothers. He

brought her back to Bridgnorth where there was much head-shaking over their Town Clerk of 52 yoking himself to a handsome gypsy girl of 20. She had for years run wild with her many brothers and sisters, living a tent life in the green hills of the Border country. It is not surprising that she found Smith's elegant house, The Priory, to be terrifyingly large. She got him to move to something smaller and there to take out the windows from their bedroom so that she should feel less caged in. Her husband had written in his diary of her eyes "full of fathomless fire" and it was not long before the fire would sometimes flare up into quarrels between them, with her smashing crockery, windows and furniture when in a temper. On one occasion he had boxed her ears when she had picked up a silver candlestick and threatened him. In after years Esmeralda enlarged the event, saying she had chased him round the room with it and "felled him like an ox and that was good").

The Christmas visit of Francis Groome brought deliverance, for he and Esmeralda fell deeply in love. She was a girl of outstanding grace and carriage and with a fierce beauty. Groome's description of Sagul in his novel *Kriegspiel* is reckoned to have been written with her in mind.

> Her eyes, which, except on occasions, were all one saw of her, were of the first magnitude, with blues, not whites, and with brown-black, dark-lantern pupils - one moment blank and expressionless, the next positively blazing. Only when they were blank, could you see besides that she was tall and lithe and strong, that she had a wealth of wavy black hair, that her face was an exquisite oval, that her teeth were even whiter than they were regular, that ... of a sudden her eyes blazed again, and you were solely conscious of a beautiful wild creature.

To this idyllic description there needs to be added that she smoked a pipe and had a walloping way of putting down her beer. She and Francis conversed much in Romany, leaving out Hubert who could not follow it. But he suspected what was the true position and talked to Groome who promptly left, not however before having arranged with Esmeralda how they might continue their association.

A little later she told her husband she felt they were being "overlooked" (bewitched) and that she must consult an astrologer on the family's nearby camping ground at Newport. The astrologer was Groome; the consultations became surprisingly prolonged and Smith was disturbed by a request that any letters should be addressed to her at Cardiff Post Office, no longer to Newport. It was at Cardiff that the two lovers were staying together. Smith's suspicions were further aroused by her collecting letters from the astrologer at the Baldon Arms and the Falcon, Bridgnorth pubs where she went drinking with gypsy friends. The handwriting he suspected was Groome's in disguise and he had her watched. It was discovered that a second absence was to stay with Francis at Bristol and finally they were seen together in Bath.

On 3 March 1875, just nine months after the wedding, the Town Clerk instituted proceedings for divorce, claiming £5,000 damages when Groome's assets were, he said, 2s 6d. The two immediately went to London and took ship to Germany. With very little money between them Groome in desperation offered to sell all he had written on the Romanies, for he himself could get no employment, not even as a waiter. By good fortune his eye was caught by an advertisement enquiring for an English singer. Esmeralda applied in person, sang and danced with her tambourine, was accepted and rapturously applauded by the audiences. Her earnings and his work on translations enabled them to wander through Germany, Hungary and France, returning to England at the end of July.

In August they moved to Edinburgh where Francis had secured a lowly job on the *Globe Encyclopaedia*. Smith made two unsuccessful journeys to Scotland to try to persuade Esmeralda to return to him but the divorce case went forward in March 1876 and the decree was made

absolute that November. The two thereupon married under Scottish law "by declaration" in the presence of a bootmaker and a Jessie Moffat. Before long Francis became recognised as a writer of amazing activity and knowledge. He edited the *Ordnance Gazeteer of Scotland,* six volumes of which appeared from 1882 to 1886 and quickly took rank as a standard work of reference.

His writing brought him into the company of authors in various fields. Theodore Watts-Dunton, who was himself planning a gypsy novel set in Suffolk, opened his house on Putney Hill to Groome and his wife when they were visiting London. There they naturally met the now tamed Swinburne; at Kelmscott, William Morris and others of that circle. Dante Gabriel Rossetti painted Esmeralda as the dancing girl, the Romani Chi, more than once in his later pictures. From time to time she and Francis joined her family in Shropshire and camped with them at Clun and on the Long Mynd.

Meantime in 1880 he had published a book of his own, *In Gypsy Tents*, a discursive account thinly disguised of his time with the Romanies during which, he said, he had camped in every county of England. It is not easy reading but its pictures of gypsy life, seen from within, stand it far above anything then written by the many Romany scholars looking at gypsy life from without. In 1885 he joined the staff of Chambers as sub-editor and copious contributor to their *Encyclopaedia*. To this he added their *Gazetteer, Biographical Dictionary* and *Cyclopaedia of English Literature*. He wrote many articles for the *DNB*, contributed to such periodicals as *Blackwood's* and *The Bookman*, while reviewing for *The Athenaeum:* he corresponded with gypsy scholars in many countries. His articles on gypsies in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* made him known to the world as the great authority upon them.

In 1888 he helped form the original Gypsy Lore Society and acted as joint-editor of its *Journal.* In 1895 he published his *Two Suffolk Friends*, a delightful sketch of his father and Edward FitzGerald, expanded from articles he had earlier written in *Blackwood*'s[6]. The next year appeared his attempts at a novel - nearly strangled at birth, as had been said, by its apparently irrelevant title *Kriegspiel, the War Game.* Many assumed it must be a manual on German military training. It is a shapeless story but containing any amount of arresting features - murders, abductions, life in a great Catholic household, life in gypsy tents, disinterment, misbegettings, mesmerism, gypsy brawls. His friends who read the manuscript told him he had brought several of the more striking incidents in at the wrong places and suggested how the story could be reshaped. He refused to alter anything, saying he was sick of it; "its writing," he declared, "has already been a loss to the pantry". Gypsyologists praise it, saying it contains much that is lost on us Gawjos. We can only think it a failure, as did several publishers who would not take it up.

As he became more and more immersed in authorship the sedentary life of a writer's household bore heavily upon Esmeralda. She longed for the freedom of the hills of Shropshire and the Marches. There were quarrels and she went off from time to time and travelled with her own people for months on end. Francis several times took her back in response to contrite letters, but the uncertainties preyed on his health. Finally in 1898 after a longer absence than usual and despite several pleas to be taken back he had to harden his heart and wrote to her, "I never wish you anything but good, Izzie, but we must never meet again on this side of the grave. Perhaps on the other side we shall: I can't say." She was provided with an annuity for the rest of her days: forty years as it turned out.

1899 saw the publication of the magnum opus, the brilliant *Gypsy Folk Tales.* Seventy pages of Introduction are packed with good reading and learning upon the origin of the gypsies, their leaving India, their dispersal throughout Europe, their trades, beliefs, tales, customs, perpetual

travelling and above all their language. None of them could ever write, indeed they regarded with the greatest suspicion anyone who sought to put their speech onto paper. But Groome, who had showed his aptitude for languages while still at school, completely mastered, in an unbelievably short while, their tongue in his time at Oxford. The gypsy Dob Lee, describing him when he set out thence with the travellers, said of his Romany: "It was beautiful to hear him, he had it all pat and easy, same as our own people: a very short man he was and just fresh from college".

Later, with his swift and eager intellect, impatient of anything less than precision, he set himself to a study of the gypsy tongue and the modifications brought to it in a score of different ways as its speakers settled in a score of different countries each with its own language. He traced, too, their journey from East to West by recognising gentile words picked up and gypsified: as for instance during what must have been a long stay in Greece. All this equipped him to collect tales, versions of which were to be found in the seemingly inexhaustible store of Romany folk memory - their "unwritten literature."

The tales start with more than thirty from Eastern Europe and continue with ones he had heard in England and Wales. It is when he comes to setting these down that Groome's true genius is revealed. He tells them in a way that preserves the essence of a gypsy's English while discarding peculiarities that would have jarred on Gawjo's readers.

A year later his health failed and he was a confirmed invalid for more than a twelve-month. He died on 24 January 1902, fifty years old and was buried at his native Monk Soham. Esmeralda after fifteen years with the travelling people again and having lived through a few scandals, finally settled with dog and cats in her green and yellow caravan at Prestatyn. For twenty-five years she was visited there by old and new Romany scholars and by former friends who wanted their fortunes told. If any Gawjo dared to call her the Queen of the Gypsies she dismissed it as clap-trap. To the end she prided herself as being "Mrs Groome, the wife of the cleverest scholar that ever lived." In 1939 aged 85 she was knocked down by a bus and after living on for an heroic six weeks, was buried at Rhyl. At a packed St Thomas's Church, the Prayer Book Burial Service was read over her and there were no gypsy ceremonies: she said she thought that that was the way Frank would have liked it.

The article on Francis in the *DNB* astonishingly describes him as having passed "swiftly and cheerfully from a veritable Bohemia or romance" into the world of letters. The truth is wholly otherwise and the President of the Gypsy Lore Society rightly said that Groome would have been content never to have written a line upon the gypsies provided he had been allowed to live in his own fashion with the people of his own choice. The scholar at his end expressed it with greater poignancy. He described those few years when he had run off and travelled the roads as "the only life that suited me, the only happy days I have known. I ought never to have come back. It was all a mistake."[7]

Editor's Notes:

1 Obituary in *Old Ipswichian* 1992.

2 Letter 8.9.2000 from Hon. Secretary FDLHPS.

3 Obituary *op. cit.*

4 *Oxford English Reference Dictionary*. 2nd edit. (1996) gives "Romany" but Groome appears to favour "Rommany".

5 Public Record Office Records of Civil Registration (Family Records Centre holds microfilm copies).

6 *Two Suffolk Friends* includes a vignette of Framlingham life at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Archdeacon Groome had made some record of his early memories, which Francis transcribed in the book:

> I was born at Framlingham on January 18, 1810, so that I am now nearly

seventy-seven years old. The house still stands [1886] where I was born, little if at all changed. It is the first house on the left-hand side of the Market Hill, after ascending a short flight of steps. My father at the time of my birth, was curate to his brother-in-law, Mr. Wyatt, who was then Rector of Framlingham. I was the younger of two sons, my brother Hindes being thirteen months older than I was.

As we left Framlingham in 1813, my recollections of it are very indistinct. I have an impression of being taken out to see a fire; but as I have since been told that the fire happened a year before I was born, I suppose that I have heard it so often spoken of that in the end I became to believe that I myself had seen it. Yet one thing that I can surely remember, that, being sent to a dame's school to keep me out of mischief, I used to stand by her side pricking holes in some picture or pattern which had been drawn upon a piece of paper.

A drawing of the house, roughly contemporary with Archdeacon Groome's birth-date is in O. R. Sitwell *Framlingham: a short history and guide*. Revised edit. 1982 p. 22 (original drawing in Lanman Museum).

7 An extensive if at times obscure obituary of Francis Groome by Theodore Watts-Dunton appeared in *The Athenaeum* no. 3878 February 22, 1902, p. 243, and Morfey certainly had sight of it before drafting this paper (letter 5.8.1988 Morfey to AJM).

TONY THE TERRIER
A TRIBUTE TO A TRUSTEE OF THIS SOCIETY

It has been said that a man grows to resemble his pet. Does this mean that as A. J. Martin's Jack Russell failed to nip me when last we met, his master is losing his touch? Not a bit of it!

The Framlinghamian, the written organ of Framlingham College, states that: "A. J. Martin has shown promise as a boxer from an early age.". Had he pursued that career he would no doubt have won his bouts by wearing down his opponent by his tenacity - and then "stinging like (a) Bee." Like his previous terrier and the eponymous insect, Martin's persistence with a cause is legendary!

It is therefore no surprise that the Old Framlinghamians' archivist, acting on their behalf, should have been instrumental in acquiring the medals of Pilot Officer Dick Whittaker DFC for their Society, together with other materials. Whittaker was killed in action, aged 20, in 1940 after a fine war record, and the archive included documentary material, letters and photographs relating to his service.

"Tenacious Tony" spent hours on the telephone cajoling donations from people to secure the lot at auction. The College, too, were supportive with a donation, and in the dispatch of the Head's husband to the sale!

A Dedication to the life of Dick Whittaker was central to a moving ceremony on Armistice Sunday [2000] in the College chapel. All who were present were greatly touched. Tony was only two years old when Dick Whittaker died, but this did not deflect him from his course, being conscious like so many of the debt we owe to so few. Like a true Jack Russell who merges into the background after giving a good nip, Tony seeks no praise - just time to reflect before the next crusade.

A People's Champion, indeed!

[This is a revised version of an article that originally appeared in The Framlinghamian].

EXIT LINES

The stranger who would form a correct opinion of the English character, must not confine his observations to the Metropolis. He must go forth into the country; he must sojourn in villages and hamlets; he must visit castles, villas, farm-houses, cottages; he must wander through parks and gardens; along hedges and green lanes; he must loiter about country churches; attend wakes and fairs, and other rural festivals; and cope with the people in all their conditions, and all their habits and humours.

From Washington Irving. *The Sketch book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.* (New York, 1820)

THIS JOURNAL HAS BEEN PRODUCED WITH GENEROUS SUPPORT FROM BRITISH ENERGY GENERATION PLC

FRAMLINGHAM

Over nine centuries old

FRAMLINGHAM CASTLE

Over eight centuries old

the first curtain-walled castle in East Anglia

FRAMLINGHAM ST.MICHAEL'S CHURCH

Over six centuries old

the finest tomb sculptures in Europe

FRAMLINGHAM & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY & PRESERVATION SOCIETY

Working to promote and preserve the finest market town in East Suffolk

JOIN US, NOW.