# FRAM

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

4th Series

Number 5 December 2002

# *Fram*

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

**4th Series Number 5**

**December 2002**



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

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

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## SOCIETY NOTES

With regret, we report the death in September of Mr. John Morris. Until his resignation earlier this year, John had long been a member of the Society's General Committee, and, until last year, of the Town Council. A railway enthusiast, John was an engine-driver at Bressingham for several years. His quiet commitment and dry wit will be greatly missed.

A party of thirty-four Members of the Society were guests of Mr. Tony Harvey on the occasion of a visit on Wednesday 11th September to Tannington Hall. The principal part of the visit was a guided tour of Mr. Harvey's wonderful collection of horse-drawn vintage carriages and coaches. The collection is large, and showed the lengths to which Mr. Harvey has gone over many years to refurbish and conserve vehicles which now show up in all their brilliance. It was a visit of great interest ably underlined by Mr. Harvey's excellent commentary on the history, technology and general background to the various vehicles on show. Members of the Society were delighted by the occasion, Mr. Harvey being the perfect host. Mr. A. J. Martin gave the vote of thanks. At that point, horsemen and hounds came into the yard of the Hall, having just returned from an evening outing. The hounds were returned to their kennels and the horses stabled. Mr. Harvey seized the opportunity to conduct an impromptu guided tour of the stables and, in particular, the harness room. The latter, an exquisitely designed room in the Victorian mode, showed Members something of the wealth behind the Tannington Hall enterprise. Members left the Hall realising that the visit had shown them a view of another world.

The Annual General Meeting of the Society took place on 30th October at the Free Church Hall. After formal business had been completed, Paul Briscoe and Brian Collingwood shared some thoughts with members on farming over the years, in the Framlingham area.

A splendid and varied lecture programme has been arranged for this winter season, and our Committee's only concern is lest the excellent space that we hire at the Free Church Hall may prove barely adequate to hold the large numbers of people we welcome each month to the lectures.

Finally, please note that our East Anglian Film Evening on Friday 14th March 2003 will *not* be at the Hall, but at St. Michael's Rooms. Naturally, these carefully chosen films do not come free, so this will be a charged event.

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

David Pitcher's splendid book on our local branch-line will by now have won a place on the book-shelves of every member of our Society, I have no doubt. One's thoughts turn, therefore, to railway matters.

It is nearly fifty years since we had a regular passenger service from Framlingham (although according to popular legend the unquiet shades of wouldbe travellers still pace despondently up and down the platform behind the Station Hotel early each morning, complaining loudly but in vain, at the non-arrival of the morning train to Campsea Ashe). It was never my privilege to travel on the Framlingham line, but from 1978 to 1989, I was inducted as an East Anglian commuter, travelling each day from Harwich to Liverpool Street via Manningtree. In the early part of that time, the line from Norwich to London had not been electrified, and the morning train service was far less frequent that is now the case. We were, therefore, at the mercy of the only early service from darkest East Anglia into Liverpool Street, the 6.25 from Norwich.

When first I made the acquaintance of this rather important train, it trundled into Manningtree station (on good days) at half past seven. British Rail (as it then was) predicted for this service an arrival time in Liverpool Street of 8.38, well in time for the City workers on the train to be at their offices by nine o'clock. The expectations of the actual passengers were more modest: a nine o'clock arrival at platform nine at Liverpool Street was generally felt to be not a bad achievement on an average day. Progressively earlier departures from Norwich and points south along the line failed to solve the problem of late arrival in London - if anything, they seemed to exacerbate it.

The causes of delay were many and varied, but rarely reflected any discredit on the large and handsome Class 47 diesel locomotives which usually headed the train (though one of these locos did once catch fire at Hatfield Peverel, shutting down the line for half a day, and giving yours truly a blissfully unexpected one day extension to his annual summer holiday). In general, though, it was simply a matter of slow and stately progress through Witham and Chelmsford, an almost invariable dead-stand on the approach to Shenfield, twenty miles an hour through Stratford, and a mandatory crawl from Mile End before a five minute wait outside Liverpool Street.

The rolling stock for the train was not of the most modern. Carriages with side corridors predominated in the late seventies and the earliest years of the eighties, at least at the rear of the train (smarter, almost modern, stock was provided for the benefit of first-class ticket-holders, at the front). The aged Mark I coaches were survivors from the age of steam, which could readily be proved by making a smart pat on the seat cushions, producing a small miasma of soot. The heating (sometimes much too efficient) was by steam-pipes under the seats, and produced humidity levels of one hundred per-cent, steamed-up windows, and interesting little puddles on the cute tray-like fitments, just wide enough to take a coffee-cup, beneath each picture window. Arm-rests with frayed upholstery divided each facing bench seat into three, and woe-betide any latecomer joining the train at Colchester (its last official stop before London) who hinted at the propriety of raising the arm-rests to accommodate four passengers a side!

With the introduction of open-saloon, air-conditioned stock in 1981/82, and electrification of the line to Ipswich in 1987, all this changed beyond recognition. Now there are a plethora of early commuter trains from Manningtree (and Ipswich) into London, including (*O tempora O mores!*) electric multiple-unit sets. On some occasions, however, when the electric locomotive has failed, the multiple unit got lost, or the state-of-the-art turbo train has gone back to bed with a headache, we are privileged to evoke the good old days, when once again a stately Class 47 diesel locomotive brings the London train into Ipswich. Seasoned commuters know in advance that with this motive power at the front, there is not a hope of arriving in London anywhere near the booked time, but never mind! How nice to hear the big red diesel's throaty throbbing at the head of the train, instead of that electric loco whistling like a tea-kettle, or the turbo train howling like Concorde!

Generations of elderly small boys look back with affection to the age of steam on the railways, with its smoke, smell and smuts; my own railway nostalgia is for a marginally later age.

Such a reaction could typify a more general human tendency. Of course, all of us can remember, can't we, the days gone by when children did as they were told, people helped each other, the countryside was unspoilt, and we had proper winters (a *Times* columnist - apparently of sound mind - recently shared with his readers memories of snowbound winters stretching from Christmas to Easter).

A useful lesson for the historian, perhaps, as he or she explores the history and milieu of a place and community. Just as the financial analyst has to apply a factoring process in order to validate projections of income, expenditure, and profit, so the historian, while going on from the dry-old documents in record offices to the real testimony of living people, needs to make due allowance for the beguiling glow bestowed by human memory upon earlier days. To quote Thomas Campbell's graceful line: "Thus distance lends enchantment to the view." Or, in cruder terms: the past is greener.

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I recently re-read Robert Treasell's classic work, first published in 1914, *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*. The book's depiction of deprivation and affluence in a nice respectable town in southern England, and the perceived indifference of capitalism to that contrast, has been cited as a major factor in Labour's election victory in 1945. Certainly, from my own personal experience, that novel was extensively known, read and valued, becoming a significant part of the collective psyche of the urban working class of that period.

Tressell himself was a child of the middle-classes, his father said to have been an Inspector in the Royal Irish Constabulary, in short, born into what he himself might have stigmatized as a privileged elite. Perhaps as a result of this, Tressell's conceptions of the occupations and mores of "the lower classes" may appear to us naïve and even patronizing (was every workman in "Mugsborough" employed in the building trades? Were their individual domestic economies so rigidly stratified between virtuous temperance and vicious indulgence?) In fact, the novelist's view of a socialist utopia, as expressed in the novel by the well-meaning bourgeois, Barrington, might seem (with the wisdom of hindsight) slightly reminiscent of Orwell's *1984*.

Nevertheless, the effect of *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* upon the mindset of at least one generation, and its electoral impact in 1945 demonstrate, I think, that public history - individual people's perceptions of their own past and present - has a validity of its own, alongside and complementing the record of trends and events in contemporary printed and manuscript sources.

And the book itself is a jolly good read!

# DISSENT INTO UNITARIANISM: ORIGINS, HISTORY AND PERSONALITIES OF THE FRAMLINGHAM UNITARIAN MEETING HOUSE AND ITS CONGREGATION

*By* Cliff Reed

*Dedicated to the memory of two Framlingham Unitarians: Cynthia Goodwin, died 8th October 2001, and Ian Cooper, died 21st November 2001. "Good people die and no-one understands ..."*

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## PART 1

Framlingham, a quiet and picturesque market town in the predominantly rural county of Suffolk, has played its part in England's history, as is witnessed by its great castle and the magnificent parish church of St. Michael. But in Bridge Street, just below the Market Hill, stands the humbler Unitarian Meeting House. This, too, is very much part of Framlingham's heritage, and of its present. It is the story of that Meeting House and of its congregation that I want to tell.[1]

The origins of the Protestant Dissenting congregation, as it was originally known, lie in the mid-17th century, a time of political and religious turmoil. In 1654, the Rev. Richard Goltey (or Golty) was dismissed from the living of St. Michael's, Framlingham, for refusing "to take the Engagement to be loyal to the Commonwealth" - that is, the republican system of government that had replaced the monarchy following the Civil Wars and the execution of King Charles I. In his place, Pembroke College, Cambridge, appointed **Henry Sampson**.[2]

### *Henry Sampson*

Sampson had also been appointed a Commissioner for Suffolk in 1654. He was a Fellow of Pembroke College, Cambridge, where he had taught Greek and Philosophy. Although clearly a Reformed Protestant, his denominational affiliation is not altogether clear. Indeed, we should not think of denominational distinctions as having the same significance then that they were to acquire later. Nevertheless, in the 1650s, there were two major denominations within Reformed Protestantism - the Independents (or Congregationalists) and the Presbyterians. The differences between them were more organisational - even political and social - than they were theological. Both were essentially Calvinist in doctrine. So was Sampson an Independent or a Presbyterian?

On the one hand, according to the Church Book of the Woodbridge Quay Congregational Church[3], Sampson "laid the foundation of the Congregational or Independent Church" in Framlingham, suggesting that he himself was of that persuasion. But speculating on the fact that Sampson was never actually ordained, Hawes says:

> ... there was more of Independency than of Presbyterianism in Suffolk and no Presbytery near enough to confer such orders as it could give.[4]

This suggests that Sampson was Presbyterian by choice but Independent by necessity. If he had been an Independent by conviction he could have been ordained by his own congregation.

In 1660, with the Restoration of the Monarchy in the person of King Charles II, Richard Goltey was reinstated at St. Michael's and Henry Sampson was "ejected", as the terminology has it.[5] This was two years before the "Great Ejection" of 1662, when some two thousand "Dissenting"

or "Nonconformist" clergy were ejected from their livings for refusing to conform to the restored Episcopalian order and its prayer book. Sampson now gathered a congregation and preached to them at private, even secret, meetings. Although identified as Independents, this congregation may well have included Presbyterians too, their differences being buried (and largely irrelevant) in the new situation.

How long Sampson remained the minister of this congregation - the direct "ancestor" of that now worshipping at the Meeting House (and of the Congregational component at the United Free Church) - is unclear. Sampson was possibly still in Framlingham in 1663, when he wrote an account of the interior of Framlingham Castle as it had been prior to 1656[6]. His successor **Sidrach Simpson** came in 1664. In 1666, Sampson entered Padua University to study medicine. He afterwards became a distinguished doctor of medicine in London, as well as a major historian and biographer of Protestant Dissent. He was thrice-married, the first time in 1662. He died on 23rd July 1700, leaving between eight and nine thousand pounds - all to his third wife!

Meanwhile, the Framlingham congregation of Protestant Dissenters continued to worship in private, under threat of legal penalties and even imprisonment. In 1672, though, a Declaration of Indulgence brought partial and temporary respite. Dissenters were able to get licences for preachers and also for premises - often private houses - to be used for worship. Three such licenses were granted in Framlingham.

**Sidrach Simpson** stayed barely a year as Sampson's successor. He "conformed" to the Church of England, serving as rector of Stoke Newington from 1665 until 1705. He was succeeded in Framlingham in 1669 by **Samuel Baxter**. A man named **Plumstead** was minister around 1672. The next minister was **Samuel Smith** who came in 1701. He seems to have been a troublesome character; moving on to a congregation in Norwich he caused dissension there and was dismissed. He is said to have "died under reproach for immorality".

Although this congregation was, a century later, to profess itself Unitarian, this was far from being the case at this stage in its history. It belonged to the Calvinist Reformed Protestant tradition. It is possible, though, that some of its members had "liberal" or "unorthodox" leanings - Arminian or Arian - for these were not unknown in Suffolk at this time. And there was at least one person in the area who held an early Unitarian belief-system. His name was William Manning.

*William Manning*

William Manning was one of three clerical brothers from Peasenhall - the others were John and Samuel -who were all ejected from their livings in 1662. William had been chaplain at Landguard Fort, Felixstowe, from 1653 to 1659, and then "perpetual curate" at Middleton from 1659 to 1662. From 1662 he ministered to an Independent congregation in his home village of Peasenhall. In 1672 he was licensed as a "congregational teacher" in his own house; his brothers were also licensed. At this time his sermons were described as "broad in spirit but evangelical in doctrine"[7]. In 1689 he met a Presbyterian minister named Thomas Emlyn, then living in Lowestoft and acting as chaplain to Sir Robert Rich at Rose Hall. He also ministered to a small congregation meeting in a barn in Blue Anchor Lane, where Manning occasionally preached. The meeting between Emlyn and Manning was to be fateful for both men.

It is recorded that, "They conferred together upon the highest mysteries of religion"[8] and this

included the study of a new book, William Sherlock's *Vindication of the Trinity* (1690). It had the opposite effect on Manning and Emlyn than that intended by Sherlock! Mr. Sherlock's book upon the Trinity became a stumbling block to both[9]. Both came to doubt and reject the doctrine of the Trinity. Emlyn became an Arian - a sort of half-way house between Trinitarianism and Unitarianism - but Manning adopted a more radical position. "He could not persuade Mr. Emlyn to go so far"[10]. As Edmund Calamy, biographer of the "ejected two-thousand", said of William Manning, he was,

> A man of great parts and learning: but he fell into Socinian principles to which he adhered to his death.[11]

Socinianism was an early form of Unitarianism, named after the Italian theologian, Fausto Sozzini - in Latin, Faustus Socinus - who became the effective leader of the Minor Reformed Church of Poland, one of the oldest Unitarian movements in Europe. Sozzini taught the strict unipersonality of God, the divinity of the Father only, and the humanity of Jesus Christ. Although miraculously conceived, Christ was nothing other than a human being, "a true man", and "whatsoever divine excellency Christ hath ... he hath it by gift of the Father" (*The Racovian Catechism*, 1605).

Manning gathered round him a new congregation of Socinians, which was arguably the first Unitarian church in this country. The local clergy were furious, especially Nathaniel Parkhurst, the vicar of Yoxford. Manning retired in 1704, when he became deaf, and died in 1711. His Socinian congregation did not survive, perhaps through lack of a successor to Manning.

*Thomas Mills*

Although the Presbyterians and the Independents (or Congregationalists) were the major Protestant Dissenting denominations in seventeenth century England, they were not the only ones. One of the others were the Baptists, represented in Framlingham by a congregation under the leadership of Thomas Mills, the noted philanthropist and benefactor. Mills, a wheelwright by trade, was a devoted and courageous religious leader, who faced persecution and imprisonment for his faith. The Baptist congregation led by Mills in Framlingham met at Lincoln's (or the Black) Barn on Brook Lane from the 1640s until 1703 or just before. Mills bought this in 1698.

When the Declaration of Indulgence of 1672 permitted Dissenting ministers to apply for licences to preach, Mills declined to do so, "evidently not being willing to trust the tender mercies of the wicked".[12]

When Thomas Mills died in 1703, his congregation seems to have joined forces with the Protestant Dissenting congregation founded by Sampson. When this congregation built the Meeting House it was paid for, at least in part, by a bequest from William Mayhew, a Baptist and a member of Mills' congregation, who also endowed the pastorate.[13]

**Samuel Lodge** became minister of this united congregation of Protestant Dissenters in 1705. A graduate of Glasgow University - the English universities were closed to Dissenters - he was described as "a gentleman of figure and fortune, and a considerable preacher." Although the passage of the Toleration Act in 1689, following the accession of King William III and Queen Mary II, allowed the Dissenters to build their own places of worship, the Framlingham

congregation had not yet done so. Now, under Lodge, they were to rectify this situation. Land was bought for £20 from Thomas Bucke of the Black Horse Inn. It was situated at the bottom of his garden and measured 40 feet 6 inches by fifty feet[14]. According to Loder[15], the Woodbridge Quay Congregational Church gave £8 towards the building of the Meeting House, and we have already noted William Mayhew's bequest. He was

> a staunch Baptist and left money to build the Chapel for Baptists and Nonconformists in Framlingham, which was completed in 1717 and which later became the Unitarian Meeting House.

He also bequeathed, "£4-0-0 to the Dissenting minister at Framlingham as long as there shall be one"[16]. Mayhew died in 1713.

What was the new Meeting House like in 1717? Unfortunately we have no description earlier than 1834, when it was said to be "a neat square building" as it still is, of course, "having a gallery on three sides with other accommodations"[17]. There is little doubt, though, that the interior of the Meeting House would have followed the pattern customary in all such buildings at the time. With a high pulpit on the long north wall, galleries on the other three, a central communion table, and box pews clustered around, the design emphasised the predominance of the "preached Word" in worship, and the gathering of the congregation. The clear glass windows were symbolic of the unmediated light of truth, the direct relationship between the believer and God. The simplicity and purity of the Meeting House were indicative of the Puritan origins of the congregation. Although there have been major alternations since, the building's essential character remains much the same today.

An "indenture" dated 20th March 1717 refers to "an house or building lately erected and built for a Meeting House for the worship of God". The absence of any theological conditions other than "the worship of God" makes this a so-called "open trust". That is, whether deliberately or not, it allows for theological change and diversity within the congregation. The "open" nature of such trusts was to be significant in the next century, when the right of Unitarians to retain ownership of meeting houses such as that in Framlingham was challenged by their opponents. Signatories for the congregation were headed by the minister, Samuel Lodge. The indenture states that the Meeting House shall "be freely used as a place for Divine worship by such Protestants as should profess themselves to be of the Presbyterian or Congregational persuasion". It is worth repeating that these designations referred to organisational and not theological distinctions. By the early 18th century no truly Presbyterian system still existed in England. The Meeting House had a Congregational polity, and indeed, still does, the congregation being an independent self-governing church in its own right. The indenture makes no mention of Baptists.

(This original "indenture" or trust deed was renewed on 10th March 1741, 30th December 1757, 4th May 1844 and 11th March 1895).

Samuel Lodge died on 20th April 1723 and was buried in the south aisle of St. Michael's. His successor was **Richard Chorley** (1723-31). During his ministry, in 1731, a further bequest of property was made, "... for the preaching of the Gospel as long as liberty shall be allowed to Protestant Dissenters to meet and preach", that is, for the support of Richard Chorley and his successors. The benefactor was Martha Smith, an indicator of the importance of women in Congregational life, even though they were as yet excluded from the ministry and other formal leadership positions. Chorley married his predecessor's widow, Ann Lodge. His ministry seems to have come to a somewhat bizarre and acrimonious end. It is recorded that Chorley became blind

> ... and in consequence of umbrage he felt at the conduct towards him by some of his flock, he left them and afterwards attended the church.[18]

He and his wife were also buried in the south aisle of St. Michael's.

Chorley was succeeded as minister by **Thomas Cooke** (1733-39), ordained in September 1735 and died in 1739; **Matthew Jackson** (1739-40), who afterwards went to Lowestoft; and **Samuel Wood** (1740-56). Wood was ordained on 13th July 1744, when the charge was given by his former teacher at the Northampton Dissenting Academy, Philip Doddridge, a noted hymn-writer and leading figure in eighteenth century Dissent. During Wood's time in Framlingham, the Thomas Mills Trust opened its school. The first teacher, appointed in 1751, was Richard Scrivener, a member of the Meeting House congregation, as were his successors at the school, James Hill (from 1799) and then his son, William Hill, from 1829 to 1877, when the school was subsumed in the new national educational arrangements. William Hill was a trustee and lay-preacher at what was, by his time, the Unitarian Meeting House. Samuel Wood's wife was named Mary. Wood, afterwards became a doctor of medicine, and died of smallpox.

After Wood came **Andrew Bennett** (?1756-?1758), who emigrated to America, and **Jeremiah Long Field** (?1758-1760). During this period, on 20th December 1757, the house next to the Meeting House was bought "by leading members of the congregation" as a Manse, or minister's residence.[19] The earliest deeds of the house date from 1561. After Field came **John Walker** (1760-67), who went on to Walpole; **William Stuck** (1767-69), who went to Dorking; and **Henry Post Williams** (1770), "from Wales, whither he returned and died there".

The scene was now set for the longest and probably most momentous ministry in the congregation's history, which would see its transition from a presumably largely "orthodox" Dissenting congregation to a Unitarian one.

*Samuel Say Toms*

Before describing Samuel Say Toms' ministry (1773-1822), it is worth saying something at this point about the theological situation among Dissenters as they entered the last quarter of the eighteenth century. In fact "unorthodox" beliefs were now widespread in many Dissenting congregations; many were Arian, a name deriving from the 3rd/4th century theologian, Arius. Simply, Arians believed that supreme Deity belonged to the Father alone, and that the Son, although a Divine Being, had been created by the Father, and was not co-equal with him. The Son, or the Word, had become incarnate in Jesus Christ, and was an intermediary between humanity and the Father.

Increasingly, though, the more radical Dissenters were Socinian like William Manning[20], or advocates of yet more thoroughgoing forms of Unitarian belief. The first avowedly Unitarian congregation in Britain was founded in Essex Street, London, in 1774 by the former Anglican clergyman, Theophilus Lindsey. This was despite the legal penalties against the profession of Unitarian beliefs that still lay on the statute book. Lindsey went beyond classic Socinianism. His brand of Unitarian theology can be neatly summed up in this summary from an address he gave in 1790:

> ... there is ONE GOD, one single person, ... the sole creator and sovereign lord of all things.
> ... the holy Jesus was a man of the jewish nation, the servant of this God, highly honoured and distinguished by him ...

> ... the SPIRIT, or HOLY SPIRIT, was not a person, or intelligent being; but only the extraordinary power or gift of God ...
> ... this was the doctrine concerning God, and Christ, and the holy Spirit, which was taught by the apostles ...

Locally, the first known "Socinian" to join the Presbyterian - now Unitarian - Meeting House congregation in Ipswich was John Notcutt in the 1740s. He was a former Independent minister (in Cambridge) and the son of William Notcutt, minister of the Independent Meeting House (now Christ Church) in Tacket Street, Ipswich. The Notcutt family were to be influential in Suffolk Unitarian circles for the next 250 years.

A case in Debenham is also revealing. In 1766 a minister named Robert Lewin resigned from the Independent church after four years in office because of a doctrinal dispute. Samuel Dove, the historian of Debenham, wrote of Lewin,

> He was a young man of much ingenuity, but his sentiments not agreeing with the majority of the congregation he resigned the pastoral office ... and settled at the old Presbyterian meeting at Ipswich.[21]

He was minister there from 1762 to 1770, assisting and then succeeding Thomas Scott. As we know from the case of John Notcutt, Arian and Socinian beliefs were already acceptable there. Scott himself had been one of the few ministerial friends of the young Joseph Priestley during his troubled three-year (1755-58) pastorate in Needham Market. Priestley's increasing "unorthodoxy" - he was an Arian at this time - caused conflict with some in his own congregation. He later became the foremost Unitarian thinker of his day, both in Britain and America. He was also a noted scientist - the "discoverer" of oxygen.[22]

This was the atmosphere in which the young Samuel Say Toms came to Framlingham as a "probationer" in 1773. Among those who signed the letter calling him to the pulpit at the Meeting House were Zachariah Crab, Samuel Keer and John Woolner (or Woolnough). Samuel Say Toms came from a family which included a number of prominent Dissenting ministers. He was born on 6th August 1752, to the Reverend Isaac Toms and Sarah Say Toms, whose family included Samuel Say, the poet, minister at the Presbyterian Meeting House in Ipswich from 1725 to 1734. Samuel Say Toms was educated at the Daventry Dissenting Academy under Dr. Caleb Ashworth. He was ordained, aged 22, on 10th August 1774. Among those taking part in the ordination were his father, Isaac Toms. (The others were: Thomas Harmer, minister at Wattisfield, John Walker, Thomas Bocking, Thomas How, John Palmer, David Evans and Charles Crow.).

A memorial in the Meeting House preserves the memory of another member of the family. It is dedicated to:

> Sarah Toms, eldest daughter of the Rev. Isaac Toms of Hadleigh and Sarah (Say) his wife. Born Feb. 11th 1749 and died April 12th 1809.

This was Samuel's sister.

Precisely what the new young minister's beliefs were at the time of his appointment we don't know. If they were Socinian, or Unitarian, there is no evidence of it. As already mentioned, the profession of Unitarian beliefs was still illegal in 1773, having been specifically excluded, with Roman Catholicism, from the provisions of the 1689 Act of Toleration. But this was to change. The key date here is 1813, when Parliament passed to so-called Trinity Act. This removed the

legal penalties for professing Unitarian beliefs, although it did not actually make them legal. The Trinity Act allowed Unitarians to "come out of the closet" if they had not already done so. In fact, Samuel Say Toms was already "out of the closet" by this time. He and Samuel Keer were present at the inaugural meeting of the Eastern Unitarian Society in 1812. At the Society's first anniversary meeting in Norwich on 22nd July 1813, Toms was elected its President. But Toms' profession of his Unitarian beliefs was to split his congregation. In 1774 this was said to have numbered 253 people "who attended the Framlingham Meeting constantly".

The Framlingham Independent Church Book stated in 1820[23] "During his [Toms'] ministry he openly avowed Socinian sentiments since which period the congregation has considerably declined". This was clearly intended to contrast with the earlier period of Toms' ministry when, the Independent Church Book says, he presided over "a large and respectable congregation of Dissenters assembled at the old Meeting House".[24]

There was more than a tinge of resentment, even bitterness, among those of the congregation who remained "orthodox" in their beliefs and now felt obliged to withdraw, as a somewhat partisan historian records:

> Having obtained from the trustees the deeds of the chapel, he [Toms] continued to hold possession of the pulpit, thus adding one to the multitude of instances of wilful perversion of property, charitably intended for far different purposes.[25]

This complaint, not referring to Framlingham alone, was to cause the Unitarians serious problems over the next thirty years.

At the time, though, the Framlingham congregation clearly suffered significant secessions, leaving the Unitarians in sole possession of the Meeting House. The seceders formed a new Independent, or Congregational, church at least as early as 1817. They built the chapel in Fore Street in 1823.

Similar problems arose elsewhere, but not always with the same outcome. At Laxfield Baptist chapel around 1820, a minister named Latham "declared himself a Unitarian", with disastrous results. The chapel closed down for seven years, but when it re-opened in 1828 it was still Baptist.[26]

Neither Samuel Say Toms' life nor his ministry were entirely confined to these changes in his own and the congregation's profession. At the personal level, Toms married Sarah Lorkin, daughter of Thomas and Anne Lorkin, and granddaughter of his predecessor, Samuel Lodge. They had five children (Samuel Say Toms, died aged 12; Isaac Lodge Toms, a minister in Hackney, died in 1804 aged 24; Sparrow Toms; and two daughters). Sarah Lorkin Toms died in 1804. Toms then married Jane, née Freeman, the widow of James Fella of Bramfield. Both Toms' wives are buried in the Meeting House burial ground, which was opened on 28th October 1792 and continued in use for about fifty years.

As far as church life is concerned, the Proceedings for 1774 tell an interesting little tale. A member named Nicholas Buckingham had been "repeatedly guilty of drunkenness". Initially, it was proposed that he be sent "a tender monitory letter", drawn up by George Culham and signed by all the "Brethren". But this idea was set aside in favour of the "scriptural method" of conversing with the offender in private. "One Sabbath afternoon", Buckingham was summoned to a meeting at the minister's house, where, "the minister and the Brethren being assembled",

Buckingham was "faithfully warned and affectionately addressed by most present". The proceedings, "conducted with unanimity, love and tenderness", concluded with prayer, led by John Taylor. Sadly, not long afterwards, Buckingham re-offended - "he was very riotous being disguised by liquor". This time he was publicly excluded from communion and was not to be re-admitted until he made, "a public confession of his crime before the church". This he failed to do, and was "not at home" when Toms went to his house. It seems he pleaded illness and, being duly penitent, returned to the Meeting House. But, alas, this was not to last. "Sometime before Michaelmas 1776 he imagined himself directly pointed at in a Discourse ... He took great offence ..." left the congregation, " ... and joined himself to the establishment", presumably at St. Michael's.

On a more positive note, Toms became a trustee of the Thomas Mills charity in 1803, and later served as its treasurer.

Despite the events surrounding Toms' avowal of Unitarian beliefs, he was said to have "had a long, happy and successful ministry".[27] In later years he had "assistants": **William Clack** (1823-28), **Henry J. Bowles** (1828-29), and **John Esdaile** (1829-36), who succeeded him. Toms moved out of the minister's house in 1830 to live elsewhere in the town, "where, in his privacy, he deservedly enjoys, for his moral worth and unbending integrity, the respect and esteem of all classes".[28]

But no account of Toms' long ministry would be complete without reference to the celebration of his fiftieth anniversary as minister on 22nd August 1823, which "was honoured as a jubilee".[29] The day began with a service at the Meeting House, which was followed by a public dinner at The Crown, when presentations were made to Toms. Tea followed at the Manse. The *Suffolk Chronicle* carried a report of the day:

> Friday, Aug. 22nd 1823: 11-00 a.m. a respectable congregation assembled at the meeting-house. People were present from London, Norwich, Ipswich, Bury, Diss, Harleston, Laxfield etc. The Rev. J. Perry of Ipswich [Isaac Perry, minister 1813-25] delivered a suitable discourse on the occasion, in which was embraced the duties of a minister to his people. At 2-00 p.m. 60 gentlemen had dinner at The Crown. As a proof of the esteem in which this truly remarkable man is held, persons of various denominations among dissenters and some members of the Established Church were present. Meanwhile, a large party of ladies dined at the minister's house, and after dinner they were, with other persons, introduced into the room where the gentlemen were assembled at the inn.[30]

There were speeches by "Messrs. Scargill (chairman), Cooper, Latham, Perry and Clack". A gift of plate was presented to Toms "by his respected friend Mr. S[amuel] Keer of Cretingham, one of the only remaining two who signed Mr. Toms' invitation to Framlingham in 1773". He "made a fulsome speech of praise and congratulation". Toms' reply was "a speech of considerable length which seemed deeply to impress the minds of those who had the pleasure of hearing it ...", and it was "rapturously received".

At 6 o'clock the company "retired by invitation to the minister's house to take tea, and spent the evening very pleasantly together". The verdict on the day:

> All ... doubtless retired with the full conviction that true Christianity as exemplified on this occasion is most admirably adapted to interest and excite the best of feelings of the heart, and to afford the most rational and refined pleasure. The church bells were rung throughout the day, a compliment totally unsolicited.

The "gift of plate" made to Toms consisted of a silver teapot "and two other appendages for the breakfast table". The inscription on the teapot read:

> From the Congregation of Unitarian Christians and Friends at Framlingham, Suffolk, to the Reverend Samuel Say Toms, 22nd August, Anno Domini 1823. This piece of silver is presented by them, together with a Cream Ewer and a Basin, in commemoration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of his ministry there; and in testimony of their lasting respect for his virtues, his piety and his uniform integrity.

Toms retired seven years later, on 22nd March 1830. In 1832, when the Eastern Unitarian Society celebrated its anniversary in Framlingham, on July 27th and 28th, it was recorded that Toms, "the Patriarch of the District", was present. He died two years later. The press noted:

> On the 4th inst. died after a few days illness, universally respected, the Rev. Samuel Say Toms, Unitarian minister of Framlingham, after a short illness in the 84th year of his age.[31]

> On Thursday last, after a few days illness, universally respected, the Rev. Samuel Say Toms of Framlingham, at the advanced age of 83."[32]

Toms was buried in St. Michael's churchyard, beneath a prominent table tomb, bearing this inscription, which can still be read today:

> Sacred to the memory of the Rev. Samuel Say Toms, formerly Pastor of a Protestant Dissenting congregation of this town, which office he relinquished after having discharged his duties for fifty-six years. Distinguished through his life by uniform piety, inflexible integrity, enlightened liberality of principle and universal benevolence - age 82.

Both Toms and his successor, John Esdaile, subscribed to the publication of Green's *History of Framlingham* in 1834. Toms is one of those thanked by Green in his preface, dated 30th December 1833.

One or two pieces of information give us an idea of what else went on at the Meeting House at that time. A baptismal register had been kept since 1744, although it had lapsed between 1755 and 1774. There was a Subscription Library, a "Fellowship Fund in aid of the cause of Unitarianism", and a Sunday School.[33] The Sunday School was said to have been the first in Framlingham. In 1827 it had ninety members with an average attendance of seventy (UHST I, report quoted by Amey, who also claimed to have "the list of teachers for 1830").

Burials in the Meeting House burial ground include:

> M. A. Toms (13th November 1784 - 29th August 1793)
> Sarah (Lorkin) Toms (28th May 1743 - 27th March 1804)
> Ann Lorkin, daughter of Samuel Lodge (14th December 1711 - 17th September 1798)
> Rev. Isaac Lodge Toms (22nd April 1780 - 21st June 1804)
> Ann Lorkin (2nd April 1784 - 24th January 1811)
> Jane Freeman (relict of James Fella of Bramfield) the second wife of Samuel Say Toms of Framlingham, died Dec. 2nd 1817, aged 77 years.

One of the signatories to the letter inviting Toms to become minister in 1773 had been John Woolner (or Woolnough), who died in 1755. His son, John Woolnough, and his son's wife, Elizabeth, were also members at the Meeting House, and the Woolnough family were to be associated with it for several generations. They were clearly enthusiastic Unitarians. We can trace this Unitarian commitment through their frequent practice of naming their children after prominent Unitarians. Examples are: Priestley Cornelius Woolnough (1793-1865), named after Joseph Priestley; Lindsey Woolnough (1823-60) and Theophilus Constantine Woolnough (1818-83), named after Theophilus Lindsey; Channing Woolnough (1838-44), named after William Ellery Channing. Incidentally, one of the family, Constantine Woolnough, was the craftsman

who made the north windows of Dennington parish church.

Toms' successor as minister, John Esdaile, married Hepzibah Woolnough. Their grandson, Frank Woolnough, besides becoming a trustee of the Meeting House, was also the Curator of Ipswich Museum. He lived in Ipswich and was a leading member of the Unitarian congregation there. On one notorious occasion, in 1913, he resigned from the church committee in protest against the election of women to that body! His granddaughter, Helen Louise (Palmer) Butters, was the last of the family to be an active Unitarian (in the Ipswich congregation) - dying in 1991.

But the family was linked to another Unitarian - and minister at Framlingham - who is worthy of special note, **Thomas Cooper** (1854-1874).

*Editor's Notes:*

1. This paper is an edited version of the text of a talk given by Cliff Reed to the Society at its meeting of 12th December 2001. The second part will appear in our April 2003 issue.
2. See also *Fram* 3rd Series, no. 1, p.10.
3. Quoted in R. Hawes. *The History of Framlingham ... additions and notes by R. Loder* (1798), p. 440.
4. *Ibid.*
5. See also *Fram* 4th Series, no. 1, p. 23, footnote 5.
6. H. Sampson, "The History of Framlingham Castle" *in* J. Leland, *De rebus Britannicus Collectanea* (1774) vol. 2.
7. *Dictionary of National Biography* (1917) vol. 12, p. 958.
8. T. J. Hosken. *History of Congregationalism, and memorials of the churches of our order in Suffolk.* (1920).
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Ibid.*
11. See also A. G. Matthews, *Calamy revised ...* (1934) p. 337.
12. A. J. Klaiber, *The Story of the Suffolk Baptists* (1931) p. 36.
13. J. and F. Packard, *The Life and Times of Thomas Mills* (1979) [35] (This item is not paginated: the numbers quoted here and below are from the foliation assigned in the Guildhall Library copy).
14. *Ibid.* [12].
15. Hawes, *op. cit.*
16. Packard, *op. cit.* [50].
17. R. Green, *The History, topography and antiquities of Framlingham and Saxsted ...* (1834) p. 235.
18. *Ibid.* p. 234.
19. *Ibid.* p. 233.
20. See above p. 6
21. See also W. S. Fitch, *Collections towards a history of Debenham, Suffolk, collated from the MSS of Samuel Dove ...* (1845).
22. A useful listing of many of his books and pamphlets is contained in *Guildhall Miscellany*, vol. III no. 4, April 1971, pp. 287-300.
23. Hosken, *op. cit.*
24. *Ibid.*
25. *Ibid.*
26. "Laxfield Baptist Church" in *Grace Magazine.*
27. F. Packard, *The Say family: two hundred years of service* (1979), p. 9.
28. Green, *op. cit.*, p. 235.
29. *Ibid.* p. 238.
30. *Suffolk Chronicle*, 30th August 1823.
31. *Ipswich Journal*, 6th September 1834.
32. *Suffolk Chronicle*, 6th September 1834.
33. Green, *op. cit.*, p. 236

# F. CHARRINGTON: A FILE-NOTE

*By* The Editor

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An Editorial in a recent issue of this journal extolled the sense of involvement felt by many local people, young and old, as a result of the exhibition mounted by our Society on a weekend back in September 2001 in St. Michael's Church, commemorating the Framlingham Town Pageant of 1931.[1] But that exhibition also raised in a few people's minds a question and created a mystery: who was the elderly man depicted as playing the Second Duke of Norfolk?[2]

The man's actual name can easily be established: the programmes of the Pageant record an F. Charrington in the role of Duke of Norfolk,[3] and contemporary press notices expand the initial to Francis.[4] But neither the programmes nor the newspapers identify a man of that name as being among the many committee members, organizers and administrators meticulously listed in those sources as the movers and shakers of the 1931 Pageant. There are no further references to Charrington, as a person acting as a major character in the Pageant itself, in contemporary newspaper reports, other than as a name attached to a character. Most strangely of all, his name does not appear in either the Residents or the Commercial parts of the Framlingham section of directories of the time.[5]

To achieve, therefore, only a very tentative surmise as to Charrington's identity and origins on the basis of sources currently available to the researcher, one is reduced to name-hunting in contemporary sources. By definition, one could fairly describe any outcomes of such searches as inconclusive, but at least they may yet jog some surviving memories, or at the very least provide a starting point for further investigation.

There can be little doubt that the selection of Francis Charrington to play in the Pageant the leading role of the Duke of Norfolk demonstrates that he was perceived by the organizers of the Pageant as being of at least middle-class, or indeed upper-middle-class, status. Perceptions of place in the social hierarchy are clearly reflected in the assigning of parts in the 1931 Pageant. It was for those from the higher echelons to take on the roles of monarchs and aristocrats, and for members of the lower orders to serve as serfs and foot-soldiers.[6]

The visual evidence as contained in the contemporary photographs supports this assessment of class. Charrington's facial features, deportment, and general bearing would have been described at the time as distinguished and patrician. As we see him in those clear, monochrome images, he is a man in his prime in late middle age, his hair either white or grey, but obviously thoroughly enjoying and at ease with his leading role in the Pageant.[7]

So where can one turn for primary documentation, however hypothetical, for this surprisingly shadowy figure?

Only one "F. Charrington" appears in contemporary county directories, and he resided at The Drift, Moorfield Road, Woodbridge.[8] An "F. Charrington" appears in 1925 at St. Margaret's, Queen's Road, Felixstowe,[9] and in 1922 there is actually a Charrington listed with the forename Francis, at Hillside, Bungay.[10] In 1908, 1912 and 1916, "F. Charrington" is listed at The Hermitage, Ufford.[11]

To move on to yet more tenuous inferences, a Francis Charrington, second son of the Reverend Nicholas George Charrington of Herne Hill, Kent, matriculated at Merton College, Oxford, aged eighteen, in 1881, and proceeded to his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1885.[12] (He is not recorded as having taken Honours,[13] but at that time a large proportion of Oxbridge graduates would only have taken Ordinary degrees.[14]) This man would have been in his late sixties at the time of the Pageant, which seems about the right age for our Francis Charrington, judging from the photographs referred to above.

We can say with a greater degree of confidence that the father of this Francis Charrington, BA (Oxon.), was Nicholas George, the third son of Nicholas Charrington of Mile End, Middlesex. Nicholas George matriculated aged eighteen at Oriel College, Oxford, on 28th November 1839, was admitted as a Commoner (that is, not a Scholar or Exhibitioner), became Bachelor of Arts in 1843, and Master of Arts in 1846.[15] He was ordained Deacon in 1845 and Priest in 1846, served as Curate of Great Baddow[16] (near Chelmsford) and Aveley (near Romford).[17] Nicholas George Charrington completed his clerical career as Vicar of Hawkley, Hampshire, from 1865 to 1877, and died 6th July 1882.[18]

This file-note begins with a few demonstrable facts, and proceeds uncertainly to its conclusion with a large web of conjecture. The latter suggests that in F. Charrington we have a man of independent means, perhaps the younger son of a clergyman in the Established Church, who moved around extensively in the eastern part of Suffolk (why?), and was most happy to become a leading player in a major cultural and social activity in a small market town, in which there appears *prima facie* to be no printed evidence that he ever resided.

The questions that this scenario raises have perhaps a relevance that is more than purely parochial. In what way and for what reason could a middle-class elite in what one would presume to be a close-knit, if not closed, society, bring itself to admit a person from outside its ambit to take on a key role in a defining, if not unique, cultural event, in the history of its sub-region?

Some clues as to the answer to this question may just possibly be provided with the release in thirty years' time of the personal details contained in the National Census of 1931. More immediately, perhaps readers of *Fram* might be able to contribute information about this interesting intruder, based on their own recollections, or those of their parents - or even just hearsay.

MVR

*Notes*

1 *Fram* 4th Series no. 2, December 2001, p. 3

2 Lanman Museum, Framlingham Castle. Acc. 1986. 664. 1-235 "Framlingham Castle Historical Pageant" (Scrapbook). (This source contains two images of Charrington, and has been a major aid for this Note, as it was also for the exhibition itself).

3 The official programme was published in two editions (standard and de-luxe), but the texts are the same. Copies are held at the Lanman Museum, and there are several in private hands around and near the town.

4 *East Anglian Daily Times*, 11th July 1931. (Cutting in scrapbook, see note 2 above).

5 *Kelly's Post Office Directory of Suffolk, 1929., 1933.* As a rough general rule, the data contained in a particular directory would probably have been compiled some time (perhaps late) in the year preceding that in which it was actually published.

6 See official programme (see note 3 above); and based on discussions with organizer of recent exhibition, A. J. Martin.

[7] Several photographs at the Lanman Museum (note 2 above) and also those lent by John Bridges, show Charrington in this characteristic pose.

[8] See note 5 above. All directory references are to the Residents/Court sections, not to the Trades/Professional sections.

[9] *Kelly's Post Office Directory of Suffolk*, 1925.

[10] *Ibid.*, 1922.

[11] *Ibid.*, 1908, 1912, 1916.

[12] J. Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses ... Series 2* (Reprinted 1968). Vol. 1, p. 241.

[13] *The Historical Register of the University of Oxford* ... (1900). pp. 357-360.

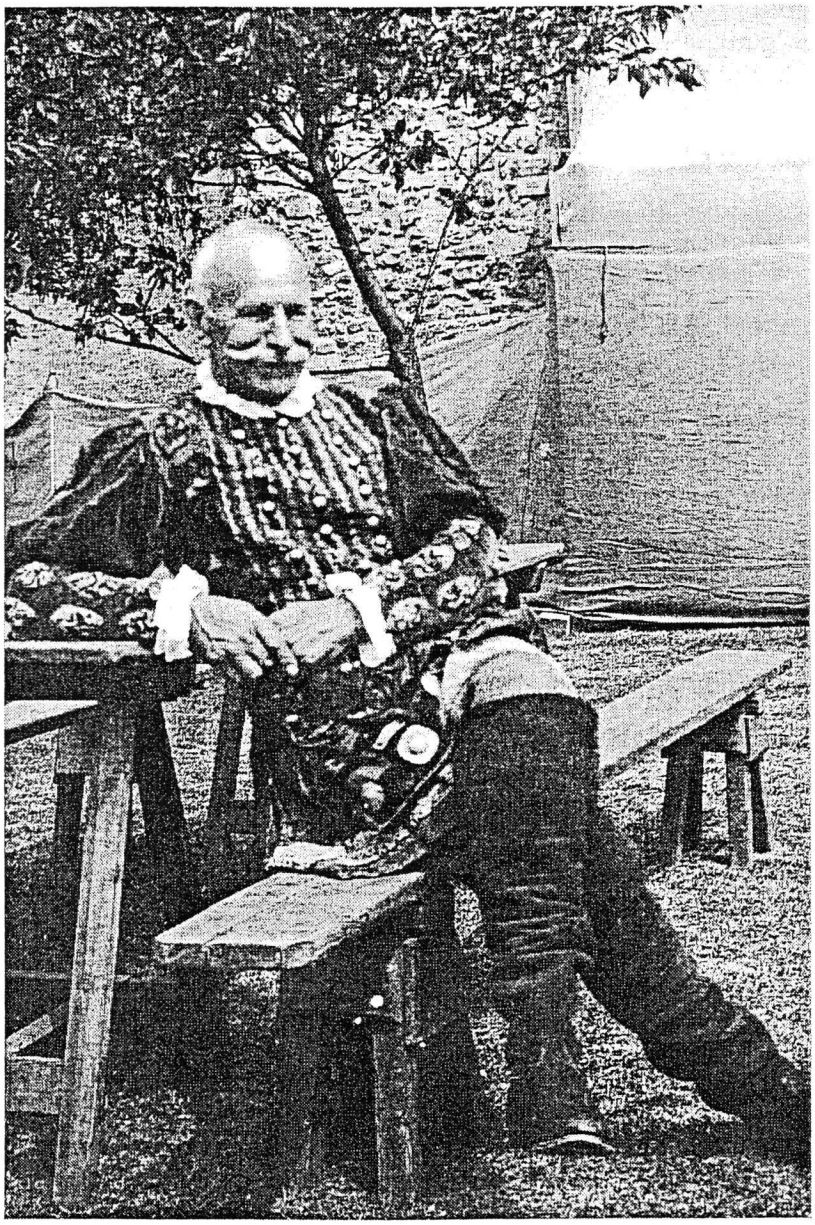
[14] *Clare through the twentieth century* (2001), p. 37.

[15] Foster, *op. cit.* Vol. 1, p. 241; *Registrum Orielense* ... Vol. II (1902), p. 440.

[16] *Crockford's Clerical Directory 1865* (1865) pp. 118-119.

[17] *The Clergy List for 1854* ... (1854) p. 51.

[18] Foster, *op. cit.* Vol. 1, p. 241.



# THE HOWARD TOMBS IN ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH, FRAMLINGHAM: AN APPRECIATION

*By* Andrew A. Lovejoy

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In any one year, thousands of people visit St. Michael's Church, Framlingham. Visitors clearly become at least visually acquainted with the tombs that lie in the chancel of St. Michael's. A few will gather that they are looking at what are some of the most prestigious Renaissance tombs in England. This paper sets out to introduce details of the history and origin of certain of those tombs.

Seven tombs lie in the chancel of the Church. They are as follows, going from right to left as viewed facing the east window:-

1. The tomb of an unknown person perhaps a very early priest of St. Michael's.
2. The tomb of Sir Robert Hitcham (1572 - 1636).
3. The tomb of Thomas, Third Duke of Norfolk (1473 - 1554).
4. The tomb of Henry Fitzroy, Duke of Somerset and Richmond (1519 - 1536).
5. The tomb of the first two wives of the Fourth Duke of Norfolk (1536 - 1572).
6. The tomb of Elizabeth Audley, daughter of the second wife of the Fourth Duke of Norfolk, died 1565.
7. The tomb of Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey (1517 - 1547).

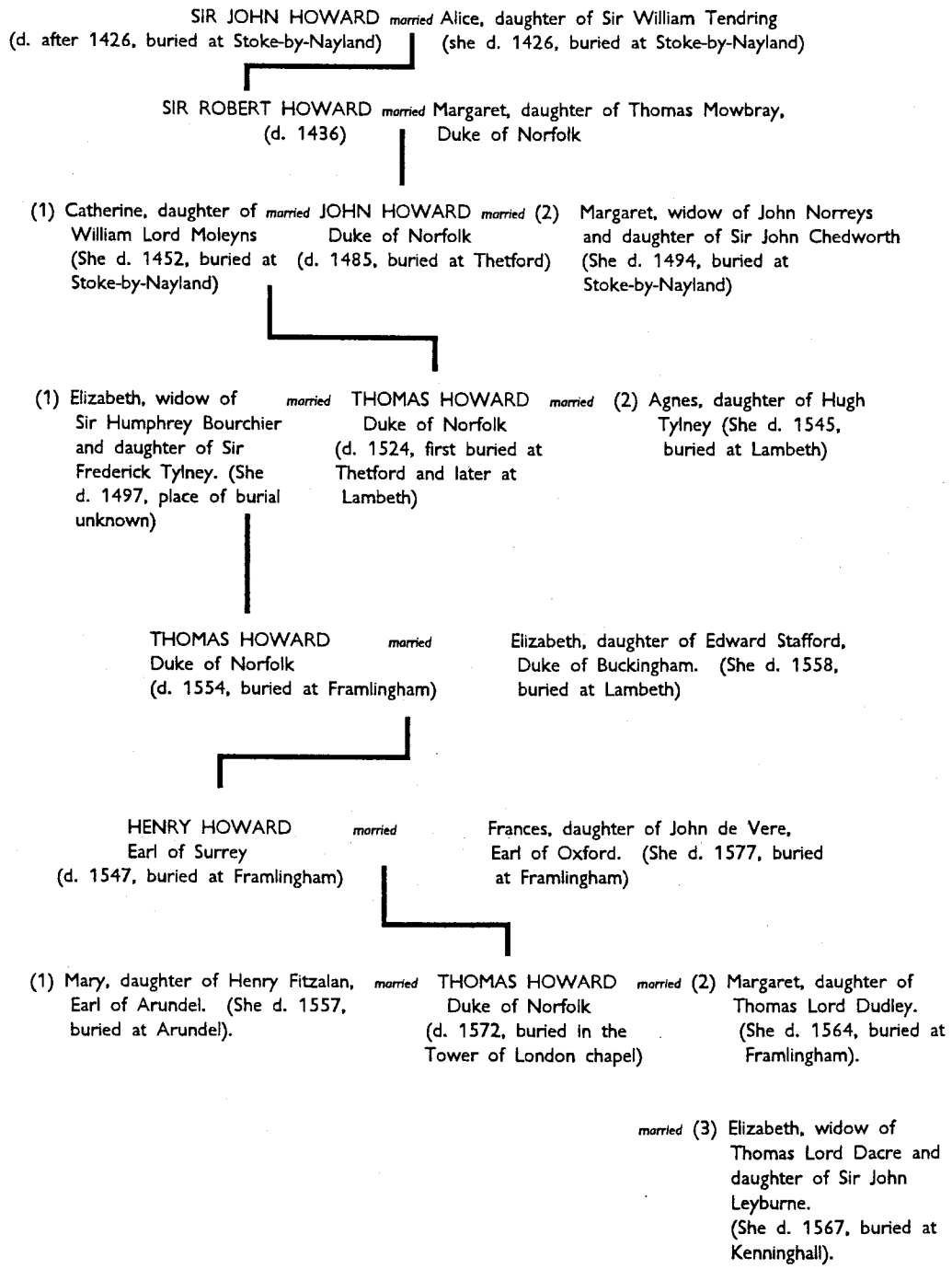
We will not here consider the tombs of Sir Robert Hitcham and Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, as they are seventeenth century creations, perhaps not intrinsically worthy of so much attention as the sixteenth century Howard tombs. The four tombs in question form a set which have attracted much interest from scholars including Lawrence Stone and Howard Colvin, who published a detailed article in the *Archaeological Journal*. Similarly, Richard Marks approached the tombs in a later detailed article in the same journal. (Citations for these are given at the end of this article.)

The Howards in the fifteenth century were buried in the parish church of Stoke by Nayland, Suffolk. Amongst those buried there were the two wives of John, the first Howard Duke of Norfolk. (1420-1485), Catherine Moleyns (died 1452) and Margaret Chedworth (died 1494). The Mowbray Dukes of Norfolk, who immediately preceded the Howard Dukes, were buried at the Cluniac Priory of Black Canons at Thetford. It was the first and second Howard Dukes of Norfolk who were buried at Thetford in 1485 and 1524 respectively. In February 1540 the Priory at Thetford was dissolved. The second Duke of Norfolk (1443 - 1524) with a particularly prophetic eye, arranged for the north aisle of Lambeth Parish Church, Surrey, to be converted to a chapel for the Howard dead. It was there that Agnes, the wife of the second Duke was buried in 1545, and the second wife of the third Duke of Norfolk, Elizabeth Buckingham was also buried there in 1558.

After the dissolution of Thetford priory, the third Duke of Norfolk replaced the existing chancel at St. Michael's, with a new chancel which in its present expansive character was to receive members of the enobled Howard family. The Howard Dukes from *circa* 1483 were lords of the

Manor of Framlingham. The first tomb to be erected in the new chancel was that of Henry Fitzroy, Duke of Somerset and Richmond, in about 1555. The last of the four tombs to be completed was that of the first two wives of the fourth Duke, Mary Fitzalan and Margaret Audley, completed by about 1568.

The genealogical table that follows, reproduced with acknowledgement here from Richard Marks' article in the *Archaeological Journal*, sheds further light on where the various Howards were buried in the fifteenth and sixteenth century:-



It might be useful at this point to say something of the calibre and status of the various Howards buried in St. Michael's. The third Duke's effigy and that of one of his two wives lie on the tomb, by the right of the altar in the south chancel aisle. The third Duke rose to the highest offices in the land, including that of Lord High Admiral and Viceroy of Ireland where he was noted for his "vigilance, moderation, wisdom and activity". He became Lord Treasurer to Henry VIII, and then in 1536 was appointed Earl Marshal of England. He visited the French court in the capacity of ambassador on the occasion of the discussions concerning the divorce of Henry VIII from Catherine of Aragon, and was a Privy Councillor throughout the King's reign. He clearly was outstanding. He gave the impression of an intelligent kindly man and was famous for the informality of his manners and his easy ways with all classes. Those characteristics were to say the least deceptive, for he was in fact cunning, ruthlessly ambitious and without mercy. He saw two of his nieces, Anne Boleyn and Catherine Howard on the throne of England, being two of the six wives of Henry VIII. Both were executed for treason; he did not lift a finger to help them. His treatment of the Pilgrimage of Grace in 1536 elicited an apology from Henry VIII to the French Ambassador. Perhaps the third Duke's crowning achievement was to die in his own bed at his new palace at Kenninghall, near Diss. It was a close-run thing, for he was attainted in 1546 and was due to be executed on the morning of 28th January 1547. However, Henry VIII died in the very early hours of that day and so the Duke was reprieved. There was for the Duke one legacy of that nerve-racking experience. For the rest of his life, he wore a collar round his neck with the words embossed thereon, *Gracia Dei, sum quod sum* (By the Grace of God, I am what I am). His was an extraordinary career, which highlighted the fact that in his day he was the wealthiest and most powerful layman in England.

Henry Fitzroy, Duke of Richmond and Somerset (1519 - 1536) lies in the tomb to the left of the altar in the north chancel arch. He was a natural son of Henry VIII. His mother was Elizabeth Blount, Lady in waiting to Catherine of Aragon. He was from birth showered with honours, created Duke of Somerset and Richmond at the age of five. A Knight of the Garter, he was a close friend of Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey. On Fitzroy's death from tuberculosis in 1536, the King put the funeral arrangements in the hands of the third Duke. Fitzroy was buried at Thetford Priory, and removed to Framlingham when the mausoleum there became ready for occupation. Fitzroy was engaged to Mary, the daughter of the third Duke, but because of their tender age the marriage was probably not consummated.

The fourth Duke of Norfolk (1536 - 1572) had three wives. The effigies of the first two lie on the large tomb to the right of Fitzroy's in the north chancel aisle. The fourth Duke married Mary Fitzalan in 1555. She died in 1557, and in 1558 he married Margaret, daughter of Lord Audley of Walden, who died in 1564. His third wife, Elizabeth, who had previously been married to Lord Dacre of Gillesland, is not commemorated on that tomb.

The last tomb to be considered is that of (probably) Elizabeth Howard, the infant daughter of the fourth Duke's second wife, Margaret Audley. The infant Elizabeth died in 1565, and her tomb has recently been restored.

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The four tombs have been the object of much architectural study and their history is both complicated and controversial. A start will here be made by describing in simple terms the points of interest the four tombs show.

The third Duke's tomb consists of a large tomb chest of hard white clunch (a type of limestone) which supports two effigies, one of the third Duke and one of his two wives. The sides of the tomb are divided into panels by columns of masonry called balluster shafts. In between the shafts are scallop shell niches heading effigies of the twelve apostles plus Aaron and St. Paul. At the corners of the tomb chest in line with the apostles are groups of balluster shafts, and on the corners on the top of the tomb are lions supporting heraldic shields. The figures on the sides of the tomb are as follows: on the south side St. Matthew, St. James the Great, St. James the Less and St. Andrew; on the west St. Peter, Aaron and St. Paul; on the north St. Mathias, St. Jude, St. Simon and St. Philip; on the east St. John, St. Simeon (?) and St. Thomas. These figures represent a very high standard of craftsmanship and their design may owe much to French influence.

The tomb of Henry Fitzroy consists of a large tomb chest, with no effigies on the top of the tomb. The sides of the tomb are divided into panels by pillars of masonry (volluted pillasters). In the panels are set haraldic coats of arms topped by coronets. The carytid terms (angels in columnar form supporting an upper surface) divide the upper surface of the sides of the tomb into panels depicting Old Testament scenes. They can be described as follows: on the north side there are the birth of Eve, God giving the Garden in charge of Adam and Eve, the Temptation, and the Expulsion; on the west, the nursing of Cain and Abel, and Adam digging, Cain and Abel sacrificing, and Cain killing Abel; on the south Noah's Ark, the drunkenness of Noah, Abraham and the Angels, and Lot escaping from Sodom and Gomorrah; on the east Moses and the Tables, and the Israelites sacrificing to the golden calf. The Old Testament panels on Henry Fitzroy's tomb have been described as low-grade late gothic shop-work. If these came from Henry Fitzroy's tomb at the Priory Thetford before Fitzroy's remains were removed to Framlingham, then it is possible that this is an instance when the third Duke, who was put in charge of Fitzroy's funeral arrangements, spent an absolute minimum on Fitzroy's tomb. The third Duke was known for being very parsimonious in his family's money matters. Fitzroy was most likely to have been considered to be part of the Howard family group.

The tomb of the two wives of the fourth Duke can be described as a very large tomb chest whose sides are divided by Corinthian columns into panels containing heraldic coats of arms. The panels have boundaries of egg and dart mouldings. On the top surface of the tombs are lions supporting heraldic shields. The two effigies on the tomb represent Mary Fitzalan and Margaret Audley.

The tomb of the infant Elizabeth Howard consists of a small tomb chest with the sides divided into panels by volluted pillasters, surmounted by a crocketted ogee arch of Gothic character. This tomb has parallels with the Bishop Alcock's tomb at Ely Cathedral.

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The dating of these tombs is anything but a simple matter, and can best be approached by dealing with what appear to be the latest tombs first. The tomb of the fourth Duke's first two wives must surely have been erected before his marriage to Elizabeth Dacre in 1567. On the other hand, the tomb would not have been constructed before the death of the Duke's first wife, Mary Fitzalan, in 1557. The style of the tomb represents the fashion of the 1560s. The tomb of the infant Elizabeth cannot have been constructed before the date of her death in 1565, while a terminal date of 1568 for the completion of the four tombs may be plausible, as it was reported that there were no "aliens" (outsiders) in Framlingham in that year.

The tombs of the third Duke and Henry Fitzroy have dates marked on them of 1559 and 1555 respectively. Those inscribed dates are not the product of idle graffiti artists, but clearly are the work of someone writing in the precise style of those times. It is suggested that the date on Fitzroy's tomb - 1555 -is the date of the erection of that tomb chest. Whether 1559 on the third Duke's tomb chest is the date of the completion of the sculpturing or erection of the tomb is an open question.

We can go further. All the four tomb chests were built from the same block of white clunch. The mason marks - A - for the sophisticated sculpturing work and - B - for the simpler work, are the same *on all four tombs*. The tombs must therefore *in toto* be contemporary. An examination of the sculptured features on the items depicted on the four tombs demonstrates such close similarities that the tombs must surely have been created by the same team of craftsmen. Furthermore, the figures of the third Duke and his wife are indisputably the work of the same sculptor as those of the fourth Duke's two wives. The facial features are very close. The carytid terms on the Fitzroy tomb show a similar treatment to the effigies just cited. So close is the Fitzroy tomb in style, with its fluted pillasters, to the tomb of Elizabeth Howard that surely the fluted pillasters on Elizabeth Howard's tomb are a copy of those on Henry Fitzroy's tomb. The lions on the third Duke's tomb bear close comparison with those on the tomb of the fourth Duke's wives. They show a typical renaissance anatomy and balance which can be safely dated to the 1550s and 60s. Parallels for the lions can be made with the lions in King's College Chapel, Cambridge.

The scholar Richard Marks has pointed out that certain items on the four tombs are not, in architectural terms, homogenous in design. The balluster shafts and apostles on the third Duke's tomb are old-fashioned for the 1550s. The Old Testament scenes on Fitzroy's tomb come into the same category. It has been said that that should not cause too many problems. In 1561 the Earl of Huntingdon died and was buried at Ashby de la Zouche. His tomb contained much detail in design dating from the 1530s. Similarly, Lord Cobham's tomb at Cobham in Kent (1561) shows the same characteristics.

In 1935, the workshop of the Priory of Black Canons at Thetford was opened up by the Ministry of Works. In that workshop, which presumably had not been used since the Priory was dissolved in February 1540, were found various funerary pieces of limestone (clunch) which had quite definitely been the work of the same sculptors as, for instance, the balluster shafts on the third Duke's tomb at Framlingham. Also found at Thetford in 1935 were two complete panels depicting the busts of a prophet and king holding scrolls in scallop-like shell niches, and also found was a New Testament scene depicting the journey of the Magi. When were the Thetford Priory workshop items created? Can those items be dated before the Dissolution or are they the work of the 1550s or 1560s?

Colvin and Stone claim that the four tombs in question were in their entirety sculptured and erected in the 1550s and 1560s. They give reasons for this conclusion.

Firstly, the chancel of St. Michael's Church was not ready to receive the Howard tombs until the 1550s; a survey of 1549 showed that a good deal of the roof timbers and lead were at that time lying in store in the Castle. In 1557 the Churchwardens sent to London to the Court of Wards for a warrant to complete rebuilding the chancel. It is true that Edward VI in the last years of his short reign (1547 - 53), as Custodian of the Howard estates, put in hand the completion of the building of the chancel. Clearly the work had not been finished when the Churchwardens' warrant of 1557 had been applied for. The third Duke was in the Tower of London from 1546

until 1553. It is hardly likely that he would have ordered any further work to complete the chancel at Framlingham in that period. Work on the chancel had been started as early as 1547 - a Churchwardens' certificate of that year noted that £50 had been spent on demolishing the old chancel and rebuilding a new one.

> -th'wiche we intende to bestow upon the buildinge up of the Churche, the'wiche Churche my Lord of Norff did plucke Downe to the intent to make yt bygger.

Secondly, a survey of the Priory of Black Canons in 1547 (seven years after the priory had been dissolved) showed that it was in a good physical state. Could not those workshops at Thetford have been used in the 1550s? Colvin and Stone are convinced that a twenty year plus gap between the 1550s and 1530s is not conceivable when addressing the dating of the various items on the third Duke's tomb and also those on that of Henry Fitzroy (which have close similarities to the items found at the workshops at Thetford in 1935). It is suggested by them that the two tombs (the third Duke's and the Fitzroy tombs) are the products of the Marian Catholic revival, which took place between 1553 and 1558. Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester at that time, was one of the leading figures behind that movement. Bishop Gardiner was also one of the chief executors of the third Duke's will (he died in 1554) and was at that time building a part-Renaissance French and part-Gothic chantry chapel in Winchester Cathedral. Did he put in hand the building of the third Duke of Norfolk's tomb at Framlingham? It remains an open question.

Richard Marks writing in 1984 presented a counter-argument. The parts on the third Duke's tomb and the Fitzroy tomb (the Apostles, the scallop shell niches and the Old Testament scenes) are not only Gothic and old-fashioned for the 1550s and 1560s, but are known to have been identical to tombs depicted in works of art popular in the 1520s and 1530s, not only in England but in France.

The extraordinary fact is that these items have no masons' marks. In short, the Apostles, the Old Testament scenes, the scallop shell niches and the balluster shafts must be something apart from those items on the tombs which are, as noted above, clearly marked with masons' marks. There does therefore seem to be a case for suggesting that the items on the tombs mentioned in this paragraph were not the work of the sculptors of the Framlingham tombs in the 1550s and 1560s.

The question can be taken further. In 1539, the third Duke sent Henry VIII a petition requesting that the Priory church at Thetford be changed into a church served by secular canons so that the Howards could continue to treat the converted Priory as the family burial site. That petition in part reads as follows:

> It. thentent of the saide Duke is ... to make a parisshe Churche of the same [i.e. Thetford Priory] wher nowe doth lye buryed the bodie of the late Duke of Richemonde the kings naturall sonn, and also ... the bodie of the late Duke of Norff father to the saide Duke ... and also entends to lye their hymself, having already made twoo Tombes, one for the saide Duke of Richemond and an other for hymself, which have alredy and will cost hym, or they can be fully set uppe & fynisshed ... at the least.

Clearly in 1540 at the time of the dissolution of Thetford Priory, two tombs, either complete or in part, existed for the third Duke and Henry Fitzroy. Richard Marks is convinced that the third Duke's tomb was complete except for the effigies of the Duke and of one of his wives. Those effigies were not constructed from the same block of clunch as the rest of the tomb. Marks is of the opinion that the Old Testament scenes and angels on Fitzroy's tomb were ready to be incorporated into a tomb in 1540. It does seem that allowance must be made for an earlier date, for some of the parts found on the third Duke's and Fitzroy's tombs, which appear to have been

designed and created earlier than the 1550s. The third Duke in his will, published in 1554, ordered that he was to be buried "in suche place and order as shalle be thought most convenyent to mye executors." In other words, no such place existed in 1554 for the third Duke's interment. Surely what the Duke indicated in his will was that a suitable location for his tomb had not yet been built. At the back of his mind may have been the fact that much of his tomb was ready for erection from parts stored at Thetford. It was simply that a new site for the family mausoleum had not yet been completed.

The inspiration for the design of the third Duke's tomb showed that the designer knew much about French court art. The third Duke visited France four times as a guest of the French King. In October 1532 he was invested with the Order of St. Michael by Francis I. From May to August 1533 he led an embassy to Francis' court in the course of which he visited Lyons, the Auvergne and Montpellier. Subsequently, he was in receipt of an annual pension of £333-6-8d from the French Monarch. Clearly, the third Duke must have been one of the few Englishmen of his time to have an in-depth knowledge of French Court art, and in particular he must have acquired a good deal of knowledge of French funerary architecture. England in the 1520s and 1530s was deeply influenced by France. The tombs of the third Duke and Henry Fitzroy seem to epitomize this. Ultimate source for the third Duke's tomb is the Bohier marble sarcophagus at La Trinte Fécamp Normandy and the Duke of Orleans' tomb at Saint Denis Abbey. The tomb of Francis I at Blois with its fluted pillars, elaborate volluted capitals, shell-headed niches and candelabra (balluster shafts) can all be found there. Paintings in England of the 1520s and 1530s depicting tombs show many details common to the third Duke's and Fitzroy's tombs. It is not for nothing that the Apostles in their scallop-shell niches could be considered as having been sculptured prior to the dissolution of Thetford Priory. The connection between some of the sculpting which made up the third Duke's tomb and the 1530s appears not to be tenuous.

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In summary then, the tombs at St. Michael's were erected in the 1550s and 1560s. However, parts of those tombs may have had their origin in the 1530s or even earlier. Inspection of the tombs' designs show a strong French influence. The third Duke was very likely to have had a significant insight into the designs of tombs both here and abroad in the 1530s. The presence in England of such tombs as those in St. Michael's with erection dates in the 1550s and 1560s and also design dates in the 1520s and 1530s should cause little surprise. There are examples in England which show that such a combination was not very unusual.

Much work went on at Framlingham Church during the period leading up to this completion of the mausoleum for the Howard Family. Where was the workshop which the sculptors used? The workshop at Thetford Priory was surely for practical purposes too far away. In 1696, the Rector of St. Michael's church the Revd. Mark Antony put in hand the removal of the Sir Robert Hitcham School for Boys from a building in the grounds of St. Michael's church to a room in Market Cross, which was then probably on the site of the present Barclays Bank on Market Hill. Could that derelict building in the churchyard which was demolished by Mr. Antony have originally been the workshop for the team working on the Howard tombs in the 1550s and 1560s? Sir Robert Hitcham in his will of 1636 (ratified by Parliament in 1653) stated "and that they should build a schoolhouse here at Framlingham".

No mention is made anywhere that the building Sir Robert mentions in his will was as far as is known, actually built. Could it be that the Hitcham Boys School was first located in the disused workshops built in the mid-sixteenth century?

One problem in particular remains. What is the identity of the female effigy on the third Duke's tomb? From the last decades of the nineteenth century until very recently it was cogently argued that this effigy was that of the third Duke's second wife Elizabeth Buckingham, by whom the Duke had three children. She died in 1558 and is buried in Lambeth Parish Church, as noted earlier. The female effigy on the third Duke's tomb in Framlingham wears a coronet, which seems to suggest it could be Elizabeth, for when she was married to Thomas Howard he was a Duke. In any case, Elizabeth was a Plantagenet descended from Thomas of Woodstock, son of Edward III. The effigy wears a ruff of a type fashionable in Mary Tudor's reign (1553 - 58). It was also suggested that the family of Thomas Howard the third Duke would have preferred to commemorate their mother rather than the first wife of Thomas Howard, Anne, daughter of Edward IV, who died in 1511 and gave birth to three children all of whom died in infancy.

In 1841 the tomb was opened; three skeletons, sex unknown, were found in coffins. Scattered around were a collection of miscellaneous bones. The matter is therefore complicated. However, recent research indicates that the female commemorated on the third Duke's tomb may well be that of the duke's first wife Anne. Help has come from the Archivist at the present-day Howard residence at Arundel Castle. There is documentary evidence that the female effigy on the third Duke's tomb is that of the Duke's first wife Anne.

It would be very informative to know the identity of the craftsmen who carried out the sculpting on the four tombs. It has been suggested that the craftsmen were associates of the master Italian craftsman Torrigani; it is just a guess. At the end of the day, we can be certain that the craftsmen who produced the tombs were the best the Howards could commission.

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The sixteenth century tombs of the Howard family in St. Michael's Church provide a fascinating opportunity for study and reflection. Their origin and history are controversial. Whatever may be said, the tomb of the third Duke of Norfolk can bear comparison for its times with anything in northern Europe. The Apostles on the third Duke's tomb represent the last major display of religious imagery in England before the full weight of Reformation theology made such things impossible. These four outstanding tombs are amongst the most significant Renaissance tombs in England. It is fitting that St. Michael's Church should be considered to accommodate one of the high spots of funerary architecture in this country. So much was destroyed during the Reformation. Luckily for us, these Howard tombs have survived when many of their antecedents, including the tombs of the first and second Dukes of Norfolk, were destroyed at the Dissolution; in that case at the Priory of Black Canons at Thetford.

St. Michael's Church is indeed a rare place of which the town of Framlingham should be proud in its status as guardian of an exceptional part of the Howard and even England's heritage. It is not for nothing that St. Michael's Church, Framlingham, has been described as being of almost royal dimensions.

*Sources*

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[*Editor's note:* For an invaluable study of the significance and use of funerary sculpture as a research resource, see Nigel Saul's "Parchment and tombstone: documents and the study of English medieval monumental sculpture" *in Archives*, vol. XXVII, no. 107, October 2002, pp. 97-109.]

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## CORRESPONDENCE

Shimmens Pightle
Dennington Road
Framlingham
Suffolk

20th October 2002

Dear Editor,

I am, of course, extremely interested in Mr. Geoff Taylor's letters to you, in the August 2002 issue of *Fram*. I have to differ with Mr. Taylor, in his thinking that his father named the field on which our house is built "Shimmens Pightle". As I stated in my letter to you of February 1998, published in issue 3 of the 3rd series, Shimmens Pightle is mentioned in Green's *History of Framlingham*, and shown on the 1847 Tithe Map as such. Since I wrote to you, and thanks to Tony Martin, highlighting the pightles of Framlingham in his Loder Exhibition in 1998, I can be sure the name of the field has been known as Shimmens Pightle for at least 250 years (Loder published in 1798 a 50 year old manuscript of Hawes). That takes us back to at least 1750.

I have had a letter from a Mrs. Willmoth née Shimman, who, I think with the help of Arthur Kirby and the Suffolk Family History Society, has found wills of Schymyng, Schymmyng, Sheming, Shemyng, and Shiming from between 1503 and 1697, all from the Framlingham area. Some were blacksmiths and one a yeoman, whose address was given as Framlingham Castle. I think it is quite likely that one of these, on the demise of the Castle, might have needed to rent a field, on the outskirts of Framlingham for a pony, if he had set up his own business. But I have no proof whatsoever, although it ties in with the fact the hedges on both sides of the field have been dated by the Suffolk County Council specialist on field hedges and woodlands as about 400 years old.

Returning to Mr. Taylor's letters, as I said in my own previous letter, Mrs. Scotchmer had told me that there was one owner of the property between his father and George Cooper; he was the man who purchased the railway carriages, but only lived here in them for a fairly short period. I was also amused by Mr. Taylor's references to the goat, which had also been referred to by the late Mr. Artie Hall.

Yours faithfully,

Brian Collett

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO THE SOCIETY'S ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – 30th OCTOBER 2002

Once again I am privileged to be able to report a highly successful year for our Society. Membership continues to be in excess of one hundred and twenty, making our Society (I think) the second largest membership body in the town of Framlingham. It is pleasing that we are able to welcome back each year people who have been stalwarts of the Society over very many years, but also many newcomers to Framlingham, who are eager to share with us our relish and excitement at the heritage of this ancient and historic town.

The most fulfilling task of all for a Chairman is to acknowledge with gratitude legacy bequests from deceased members, not only since we are thus provided with very welcome additional funds, but because, perhaps, we can think of old friends passing to eternity with happy memories of their time with this Society. Last March we were pleased to receive from the executors of the Estate of Miss Merrells, a long-time and active member, a cheque for £500. If I may quote from the letter that I received from her executor, Christopher Wood, "Her membership of the Society brought her much pleasure over many years".

The Society's Annual Dinner, held at the Conservative Club on 22nd November, attracted (as usual) a full house, and proved a most happy occasion. After the meal Mr. Roger Clark gave a most interesting talk on the Suffolk Punch breed of horses.

The winter lecture programme for 2001/2002 was well-supported – almost too well – supported for the comparatively limited space available to us at the Framlingham Free Church Hall. It may be that an alternative venue will have to be sought for these meetings, at least in the longer term, but in the meantime I am particularly grateful for the help of Alicia Bond and her able assistants in providing refreshments after each of our monthly meetings, and to John Black for publicizing them.

My only regret is that comparatively few attendees stay of for the free tea and coffee and biscuits: the social side of our Society is one that your Committee is eager to develop.

It would be invidious to pick out individual lectures over the past year for particular mention: that all were greatly enjoyed was proved by the number of questions and comments that followed every one of them (and several speakers departed from us even more enlightened about our town's history than when they arrived!). I will only say that Beryl Whitehead's lecture on the Framlingham Town Council and Cliff Reed's on Unitarianism in Framlingham and the surrounding area are being published in our *Fram* journal, so will reach the wider audience which they so clearly deserve. *Fram* is distributed not only to members of this Society, but also to selected specialist organizations and repositories, local and national, and attracts favourable notice therefrom. The British Association for Local History commented that Mrs. Whitehead's paper "provided an excellent example of work that could be replicated in many villages throughout the country. This level of local government is placed in its national context, but then given evocative life by the characters and issues in Framlingham".

And we must surely not forget the splendid array of summer visits arranged, like our lectures, by our ever-diligent Honorary Secretary, Andrew Lovejoy. Our annual day-out this year was to two quite local venues, Eye and Wingfield, but served to reveal what treasures we are privileged to have on our very doorstep of which we are hardly – or only imperfectly – aware. Evening trips to Bruisyard Hall, Huntingfield Church, and Tannington Hall were also greatly enjoyed; these mini-outings now consistently attract over thirty members, double the numbers we had for them a few years ago.

Under the auspices of the Society, Committee member John McEwan mounted an exhibition in the Great Hall of the Castle "Fading memories: postcards of John Self 1900-1910". Opened officially by the Editor of *East Anglian Daily Times*, Terry Hunt, the exhibition attracted many visitors, then went on to the senior citizens' centre in Fairfield Road, Framlingham, and the display items are now available for consultation by prior arrangement at John's house in Double Street.

We have also had an occasion of sadness, with the passing away of our long-serving Committee member, John Morris. A member of the Town Council until last year, he and Beryl Whitehead provided an invaluable link between Council and Society – his quiet and penetrating judgement and wit will be sadly missed.

We note also, with regret, the resignation from the Committee of Anne Hudson.

Our Treasurer's Report to you this evening demonstrates, I think, most effectively the financial well-being of the Society, and no-one could question the level of local public support that we have for all our varied activities. After close on fifty years, Framlingham Local History and Preservation Society has become, I believe, a valued part of the social fabric of this town – long may it remain so!

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**Departure Point**

For personal disinfection, nothing enjoyed such favour as tobacco ... Thomas Hearne, the antiquary, remembered an acquaintance, one Tom Rogers, telling him that when he was a scholar at Eton in the year that the Great Plague raged, all the boys smoked in school by order, and that he was never whipped so much in his life as he was one morning for not smoking. It was long afterwards a tradition that none who kept tobacconists' shops in London had the Plague.

From: W. G. Bell, *The Great Plague in London.*
Revised edition (London, Folio Society, 2001)

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