FRAM

The Journal of
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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)

CONTENTS

SOCIETY NOTES

If for our Society winter is a time for erudition, with the splendid array of lectures arranged for us by our indefatigable Honorary Secretary Andrew Lovejoy, so summer provides an opportunity for exploration, with our annual day-out and our three evening mini-trips. Details of these are being sent to all paid-up members (and who among you have not yet paid?) but two early dates to enter in diaries are **Wednesday 14th May** for an evening outing to Leiston Abbey and **Wednesday 18th June** for our coach-trip to the historic Norfolk town of Wymondham.

And please also note that the Society's Annual Dinner is provisionally booked for **Tuesday 2nd December** at Framlingham Conservative Club.

On a slightly more urgent note, the Lanman Museum, with which this Society has had a close, even symbiotic relationship, for many years, is still seriously short of stewards for its summer season. Although the Museum itself stays open every day all the year round (the only museum in Suffolk to do so!) its Trustees' policy is to staff it only at times when there are likely to be plenty of visitors to Framlingham Castle, where it is located. Stewards are there to provide a welcoming face to visitors, chat to them as appropriate, and generally "keep an eye on things". Dealing with cash is no longer required, but afternoon stewards are asked to change over the CCTV tape, a process so simple that even your Honorary Editor can accomplish it with ease. Please come forward all you eager volunteers, and contact Andrew Lovejoy on 01728 723214, to offer your services for just one morning or afternoon slot every four weeks from June to September.

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

My old Cambridge local, The Merton Arms in Queen's Road, is now a private house, as I wept to discover when I was in that city recently. Back in the 'sixties, it was a large and flourishing establishment (cold food only, but alcoholic drink of every description). Unlike The Pickerel nearby, where it was Magdalene College men only who could ever hope to be served, and the Public Bar of The Anchor (Queen's men only), the Merton was catholic in its acceptance of both town and gown. Therefore, it was happy to welcome an English don from Peterhouse College, Kingsley Amis, who in the early 'sixties was one of The Merton's most regular evening customers. On pub territory, Kingsley's particular interests were darts and bar billiards, and to his credit, fame and rank, and all their attendant acolytes, were never an issue, in all the time that I knew him as a customer there. Outside the confines of the pub itself, fishing, more especially tench-fishing at a lake at Hemmingford Grey, was a major interest.

However (and for this reason alone I share recollections of a major novelist in a journal supposedly concerned with purely historical matters), not a mention occurs in Zachary Leader's splendid edition of Amis' letters (London, Harper Collins, 2001) to The Merton or the bar-games or to fishing. Perhaps those references did appear in letters omitted for good reasons from Leader's selection. Or perhaps documentation was never created by Kingsley, or if created does not survive, for what were, for that period at least, significant components in the mind-set and life of a man who had a formative influence on the development of literary culture in the second half of the last century.

There is a hackneyed cliché about the dead leaving footprints in the shifting sands of time. It is surely the task of the historian or chronicler or even bystander, to ensure that those prints survive in the record for posterity, before the tide washes them away.

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For many years Framlingham has been blessed with a small but splendid museum, the Lanman Museum, housed since the early '80s at Framlingham Castle on the first floor of the old Poor-house. Sadly there is only room to display there but a small proportion of the wealth of material - artefacts, pictures, manuscripts and print - at any one time, but the Museum's Trustees have always been at pains also to provide small temporary displays devoted to particular local themes. The next of these relates to Framlingham's very own cinema, the Regal, which flourished mightily in the forties and fifties, but came to a sad end in 1963. Thanks to the support of local people helped by a double spread in *East Anglian Daily Times*, the Curator has brought together for us to see and enjoy such memorabilia as programmes, tickets, seating plans, photographs, and at least one poster.

But there is a gap.

Just as births and deaths of kings and queens and dates of battles and elections and revolutions provide only a skeletal frame-work for the student of national history, even so the opening and closing date for the Regal, and the building's subsequent change of use and then its demolition, provide only a beginning to achieving any idea of the cinema's place in the history of Framlingham. What was its impact upon habits and mores of the local population? How far did that impact extend geographically? To which local social strata was it a valued asset and to

which (if any!) was it a source of noisy nuîsance? And had it a significant role in the local economy in attracting people to the town who might also have utilized and spent money at and with other local facilities?

In crude terms, the local cinema closed in 1963 , and the building housing it was razed to the ground some three years ago. But it surely had and has a lingering presence in the collective psyche of the town that needs to be captured, valued, and preserved. All of you people who used it or remember it, please tell us. We need to know, to record, to preserve, and (perhaps) to exhibit.

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Which leads I think naturally to a much wider issue.

At a seminar that I recently attended, a senior manager from English Heritage deplored what she perceived as the current devaluation in schools and colleges of "narrative history" (kings, queens, battles, revolutions etc.) in favour of the more local, touchy-feely approach. Now, speaking personally, if narrative history is indeed perceived as irrelevant by teachers and lecturers, I deplore that trend (though I doubt its existence, to any major extent). But in any case, this perceived segmentation between narrative history and "public history" - that is, history as it is created and apprehended and shared by each individual person - seems to me frankly to be artificial, un-necessary, and ultimately destructive. There is a symbiosis between the two approaches (I was almost tempted to say "disciplines"), and to dismiss or undervalue either of them could seriously threaten our understanding of the other.

Those titans of twentieth-century historiography Lewis Namier and Raphael Samuel came to this duality from opposite ends of the political spectrum, but theirs was in many ways a common message, that of personal, local and national history existing as a single continuum, linking past to present. And I hope that in that continuum items appearing in this journal may provide a small but not wholly insignificant part.

And as a postscript, as I finished writing this piece, there came through my letterbox the February 2003 issue of *The Local Historian: Journal of the British Association for Local History*, where editor Alan Crosby muses on "the role of case studies in local history, using the experience of one parish to illuminate themes of general importance ... Case studies ... help to illustrate the wider picture and also contribute to our better understanding of what was going on - without case studies we would resort too often to over-simplification and perhaps make glib assumptions based on little evidence. The more that carefully researched case studies are available, the more likely it is that we will arrive at an accurate view of the circumstances and events we analyse". *Quod erat demonstrandum.*

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SIR JOHN WINGFIELD OF LETHERINGHAM AND HIS FAMILY: SQUIRARCHY, COURT AND DIPLOMACY IN A DISTURBED ERA

By A. A. Lovejoy

Sir John Wingfield, Knight, of Letheringham Hall, Suffolk, died on 10th May 1481. He had spent a lifetime in service to the county of Suffolk and to the Crown.[1] Perhaps his greatest legacy was an outstanding family of twelve sons and four daughters, all of whom survived to adulthood. Four of his sons, Robert (1468 - 1538), Richard (1460 - 1525), Humphrey (1474 - 1545) and John (1451 - 1509) served both the county, and also the Crown at the highest levels of government. Theirs is a story worth the telling, and one that goes far beyond the county of Suffolk into that wider world, both national and international.

We have some idea of what Sir John Wingfield's family looked like. There are two original oil paintings in existence of John and his family, one at Tickencote Hall, Rutland, and the other at Boughton House, Northamptonshire. (It is not known which of these is the original). In the centre of the image are the kneeling figures of Sir John himself and his wife Elizabeth. On his left kneels his father Robert, and on the right of his wife, his younger brother, Henry. Above and below are Sir John's twelve sons and four daughters, each with coat-of-arms appended.[2] A lozenge containing the Royal Arms and those of the Woodville family in the centre of the picture is surmounted by a royal crown. This refers to Elizabeth Woodville who had married Edward IV (1442 - 1483). Two of Elizabeth Woodville's sisters married sons of Sir John Wingfield.

The Wingfields, being senior gentry of the period, had, of course, a distinct pedigree. For the purposes of this paper one need go no further back than Sir Thomas Wingfield (1328 - 1378), who, on marrying Margaret de Bovile in 1362, came into possession of the Letheringham estate.[3] From then on, the Wingfields based their activities on Letheringham Hall, until they moved to Godwyns in Letheringham in the sixteenth century.[4]

Sir Thomas's son, Sir John Wingfield (died 1389) produced another Thomas, who married Margaret, daughter of Sir Hugh Hastings of Elsing Hall, Norfolk. Sir John's other son, Sir Robert Wingfield (1370 - 1409) married Elizabeth, daughter of Sir John Russell, and their son, Sir Robert Wingfield (born 1408) had a family of six or seven sons and five daughters. The eldest of these sons, John, is the Sir John Wingfield whose family we are concerned with in this paper.[5]

(Incidentally, Sir Thomas Wingfield (1328 - 1378) had an elder brother, Sir John, who died in 1361, leaving as his only daughter Katherine, who married Sir Michael de la Pole, and succeeded to all the estates of her father at Wingfield, Suffolk. The de la Poles thereby became owners of the property at Wingfield itself.[6]).

Sir John Wingfield and his family were quintessentially products of their time, which cannot but have had a direct bearing on their activities. For the first eighty years of the fifteenth century, the country was in a state of turmoil. Ever since Edward III had laid claim to the French Crown in 1338, the cream of England was engaged in the Hundred Years War, and then also in the Wars of the Roses.[7] In 1485, the latter ended at the Battle of Bosworth Field, but in the wider view, the Wars of the Roses were but a minor infusion in the polity of the kingdom as a whole.[8] The social upheaval that ensued through the fifteenth century was much more insidious. The evil effects of the Wars did not only lie in the material destruction or paralysis of social life in individual localities. More subtle, less perceptible, and for that reason much more dangerous,

an unstable social structure developed, thriving on lawlessness, in which livery (the equipping of armed retainers with their lord's uniform to signify sole allegiance) and maintenance (the lord's support of his followers if necessary by force) co-existed with intimidation of juries, chicanery, and impudent franchises.[9]

The country's trade, nationally and internationally, had been in decline for much of the fifteenth century. However, from 1475, the picture changed. A nation which produced and exported the greater part of Europe's wool, raw or made-up, could hardly remain poor for long.[10]

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Henry VII at Bosworth Field set his seal on his wish to rule England well. Aged only twenty-seven, he devoted himself to the establishment of peace, the restoration of law and order, the security of the realm and the creation of conditions in which men could follow their avocations in peace and with thought for the future. To these ends, he applied all his intelligence, tenacity of will, shrewdness, and daily interest in affairs.[11] The Wingfields lived through the great changes which were heralded by Henry's accession, though the changes seemed almost unnoticed at the time.[12] The life of Sir John Wingfield and his sons amply demonstrates that the machinery of government was still in place if rusting.[13] His own service for the good of Suffolk shows that some were sensitive to the fact that good governance was essential for the proper ordering of affairs.

Living the life of a country gentleman, Sir John was a knight and a Privy Councillor, though not a member of the nobility. On the death of his father in 1454, he settled at Letheringham Hall. Sheriff of Suffolk from 1455 to 1463, he held numerous Commissions for the Peace of the county. In 1477 he went with the Bishop of Bath and Wells and others to treat at Amiens with the Commissioners of the King of France, concerning the extension of the truce then existing between England and France.[14] That must have been a great undertaking for someone who had spent virtually all his working life within the confines of Suffolk.

The Suffolk in which Sir John and his family lived their everyday lives was described at the time as follows:

> Suffolk is part of lowland England. This country delighting in a continual evenes and plainnes is void of any great hills, high mountaines or steep rocks. Suffolk is nott always so low or flatt but that in every place it is severed and devoided with little hills easy for ascent. Suffolk is a maritime county facing the North Sea. It is bounded on the West with Cambridgeshire and on the South with the River Stour deviding it from Essex, on the North with the Little Ouse and Waveney dividing it from Norfolk.[15]

The wool trade made Suffolk between 1470 and 1520 the industrial heartland of England.[16] In the 1520s the population of Suffolk was about 90,000. Fifteen per cent of the population lived in the towns such as Ipswich, which in those days was the seventh richest provincial town in England, while Suffolk was the sixth wealthiest county in England.[17] It was developments in agriculture, industry, and coastal and overseas trade which created the wealth of Suffolk in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.[18] Fish and the wool trade all made their mark. The great churches along the coast of East Suffolk proclaim the importance of the coastal trade of those times. St. Michael's Church, Framlingham, which has a tower 96 feet high and 28 feet square round the base, was also financed from wool trade profits. The tower itself was not completed until the 1520s.[19]

Sir John's family was brought up at a time of prosperity in their part of England. The village of

Letheringham where the Wingfields had lived since at least 1362 had for its name a possible Anglo Saxon derivation. "Leodhere's Ham" denotes a settlement with a sound of running water.[20] (The River Deben flows through the village). The settlement has certainly been there since Domesday times. In the late fifteenth century it was situated in the wood pasture region of High Suffolk, which at that time boasted little arable land. Sheep were the mainstay then, although patches of arable did occur.[21] There had been the Priory of St. Mary at Letheringham from 1194 until its Dissolution in 1537. Founded by William de Bovile, it was a daughter community of the priory of St. Peter and St. Paul in Ipswich. Letheringham Priory was served by a small number of Augustinian monks who had what is now the parish church of St. Mary as their Priory church. (There was at that time a separate parish church a mile away near the Letheringham Mill; that building was pulled down in the seventeenth century.[22]) It was at St. Mary's Priory Church, Letheringham that the Wingfields from the time of Sir Thomas Wingfield were buried. Up until the Dissolution, the Priory Church was the mausoleum for the Wingfield family. Since 1537, nearly all traces of the Wingfield memorials have been destroyed or removed. The church today is but a fragment of its former self.[23]

The only property in Letheringham of importance over the years and which is not strictly part of our story is Naunton Hall. Built in the grounds of the Priory after its Dissolution, Naunton Hall, which was partly demolished in 1770 and completely demolished in 1947, was the home of Sir Robert Naunton, Secretary of State to James 1st. The grandfather of Robert, William, had married Elizabeth, daughter of Sir Anthony Wingfield to whom the Priory estate had been granted at the time of the Dissolution. Elizabeth was Sir Anthony Wingfield's sole heir.

The building now called Letheringham Old Hall is on the site of Sir John Wingfield's home, Letheringham Hall. The Hall as it now exists was built about 1780, incorporating many old timbers from various sources.[24] The old Letheringham Hall, owned as it was by senior gentry, was in 1450 probably a substantial timber-framed house (stone not being readily available in Suffolk), accommodating a large household right into the adulthood of the youngest of Sir John's family, Sir Humphrey Wingfield (born 1474). What then did the Hall look like around 1500? There are many examples still extant in England of timber-framed houses built at that time.[25] Letheringham Hall would have had a lower hall with direct access to a central entrance door. Above, and in separate wings of the building, would have been separate rooms dedicated to eating, leisure and sleeping. The roof of the building would have been covered in smallish oblong clay tiles (not Dutch pantiles which were not introduced to East Anglia until the seventeenth century).[26] Fireplaces would have existed, a fairly recent innovation at that time. Letheringham Hall would have looked imposing and ample in its proportions.

Sir John Wingfield (1425-1481) married Elizabeth, daughter of Sir John FitzLewis of West Horndon in Essex, in 1450.[27] Nearly the entire family of Sir John was brought up at Letheringham Hall. We would much like to know all about that. As Dr. J. M. Blatchly has remarked, such a story has gone virtually unrecorded.[28] We must delve elsewhere to gain some insight into the formative years of Sir John's family of twelve sons and four daughters, all born between 1451 and 1474.

For their times, the environment in which the Wingfields lived was a privileged one. They had money (farm rents, etc.) and solid employment in Crown service. Living as they did in what was, at the end of the medieval period, perhaps the most wealthy area of England, they were able to enjoy a standard of living that for the times could be considered gracious.[29]

If, indeed, the Wingfields lived like the Howards at Framlingham Castle, then they enjoyed a rich plenty. Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey (1517-1547) had as his typical breakfast the following: a chine of beef, a joint of mutton, buttermilk, six eggs, a chicken, and (of course) a bottle of beer.[30] Need one say more!

Education for the gentry and nobility began then at about the age of twelve. All young gentlemen were expected to read if not compose Latin prose and verse. A minority, usually accompanied by tutors, attended one of the two English universities. Large numbers of them went to one of the London Inns of Court, where they learnt enough to help them defend their inheritance, and a great deal of the essential graces.[31]

Some of the Wingfields of Letheringham were much more qualified than that. We know that Sir Richard Wingfield, Sir John's eleventh son, attended Cambridge, the Inns of Court, and also Ferrara University in Italy.[32] His subsequent life in diplomacy meant that he could freely converse in Latin, French, Italian, and perhaps German. He would also have been at his ease in classical Greek. His knowledge of jurisprudence would have been considerable. Francis 1st of France to whom Sir Richard was Henry VIII's ambassador, wrote to Cardinal Wolsey

> Monsieur de Wingfield is returning having left all here satisfied with his good affairs. He has conducted everything to the honour and exaltation of the King and to Wolsey's reputation. Thinks there is none more worthy of having important affairs committed to him. He will now be able to tell Wolsey everything at length.[33]

Of Sir John's other children we know that only one, Sir Robert Wingfield (1468-1538) was educated in another household, that of his aunt, the wife of Sir John's brother, Robert. When the latter died she married Lord Scrope of Bolton in 1492.[34] We know that Sir John's third son Henry (1455-1500) went to Cambridge University. The basic education of all Sir John's children may have been conducted by a chaplain, perhaps one of the Augustinian canons of St. Mary's Priory, Letheringham.

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All of Sir John's sons took up significant careers. Some rose to high office in employment with the Crown. Appointment to government posts was at that time almost exclusively by patronage.[35] The highest posts were in the gift of the Crown itself. Lesser posts were mostly in the hands of the nobility.

For the Wingfield sons the most active parts of their careers were in the period 1500-1540. As such, some were members of the Court which meant that they would have come under the testing eyes of the King himself. The sons who made a real reputation did so in Henry VIII's reign. Perhaps a character sketch of Henry himself is not out of place.

Professor Scarisbrick noted that

> Henry VIII was to grow up into a rumbustious noisy unbuttoned prodigal man - the bluff King Hal of legend - exulting in his magnificent physique, boisterous animal exercise, orgies of gambling, eating and lavish clothes. He was a man who lived a large extrovert ebullience at least in the earlier part of his life, revelling in spectacular living and dazzling his kingdom. He was a formidable captivating man who wore regality with splendid conviction. But easily and unpredictably his great charm could turn into anger and shouting. He was highly strung and unstable and a hypochondriac possessed of a strong streak of cruelty. [36]

Clearly not an easy man to get on with!

The fact that some of the Wingfields were in Henry's Court speaks volumes for the calibre of Sir John's sons. It is to these that we now turn.

Their names and dates were as follows:- John 1451-1509; Edward 1453-1525; Henry 1455-1500; William 1459-1491; John 1464-1515; Thomas ?-1485; Walter 1464-?, Robert 1468-1538; Lewis 1466-?; Edmund 1468-?; Richard 1460-1525; Humphrey 1474-1545. [37]

A start will be made with John Wingfield who married Anne, daughter of John Touchet, Baron Audley. He was created Knight of the Bath on 25th June 1483 and had a career in the service of the Crown. He was well known at Court being present at the Coronation of Elizabeth, the wife of Henry VII on 25th November 1487.[38] At that event he was titled Sir John Wingfield Knight Banneret. The latter was a title bestowed for conspicuous acts of gallantry on the field of battle.[39] His father died in 1481. By the custom of the area and period, estates were kept intact by leaving their title without division to the first-born child. In that way, the nobility and gentry were able to build up large estates. It meant that Sir John's brothers had to make their own way in the world.

The earliest mention of Sir John is in 1475 when as esquire to his uncle William Wingfield, he was given an advance of £13.13 shillings per quarter. From that he had to keep one man at arms and three archers in employment.[40] He became an Esquire of the Body to Edward IV, and for his efforts was awarded the estate of Ralph Bristow, an idiot who had thereby forfeited his estate. It was a cheap way to reward a successful soldier. His career certainly had its high points. He took up arms against Richard III and was attainted but was, with his younger brother and namesake Sir John Wingfield, restored by Henry VII.[41]

Sir John served Suffolk well. Until 1494 he was a Commissioner of the Peace in the county. Soon after, in 1501, Sir John was again a Commissioner in Suffolk with the purpose of raising aid for the King on the knighting of Prince Arthur, the King's eldest son, and the marriage of Henry VII's eldest daughter.[42] His life at Court, despite the fact that he had to run the Letheringham estate, which clearly took up much of his time, was notable. He was present in 1494 at the great feast given by Henry VII on the occasion of admitting his second son Prince Henry into the Order of the Bath, and creating the future Henry VIII, Duke of York, and in 1501 he was ordered to be present at the receiving into England of Catherine of Aragon, future wife of Prince Arthur and Prince Henry. His wife died in 1481. He outlived her by twenty-eight years and was buried beside her in Letheringham Priory Church.[43]

Sir Edward Wingfield, the second son, married Anne, widow of the Earl of Kent, who had been killed in battle in 1489. Sir Edward's wife was the daughter of Earl Rivers, whose youngest daughter Katherine married Sir Richard Wingfield, the eleventh son of Sir John. Thus two Wingfield brothers married two sisters. Sir Edward also played a not inconsiderable part at Court. We hear, for instance, that on 22nd February 1493 he had a grant for life of £40 at the receipt of the Exchequer on becoming the King's Carver. In 1492 he had acted during the signing of a peace treaty with France as the interpreter to the Bastard of Bourbon.[44] He spent some time abroad on diplomatic work, being present at the meeting of Henry VII and the Archduke Philip of Austria, while in 1501 he was sent on a Commission to Maximilian, the Holy Roman Emperor. He also acted as Steward for the arrangements for the reception of Catherine of Aragon.[45] Sir Edward died in 1525. His career in the service of Suffolk and the Crown, though typical for the times, is obviously noteworthy.

Henry Wingfield was Sir John's third son and was earmarked for the Church. He went to Cambridge University, and in 1480 his father presented him to the benefice of Baconsthorpe in Norfolk. In 1482, he received Papal Dispensation to take up Orders notwithstanding the fact that he had deformed hands. He was also rector of Rendlesham in Suffolk. He was, as he wished, buried in a tomb in the churchyard at Letheringham Priory.[46] A conscientious priest upholding the proud traditions of the Church and the Wingfield family, he was orthodox in his attitude to the Church in England, as was Henry VII, which is one of the reasons why the Church at that

time enjoyed a good relationship with the Crown.[47]

The fourth son of Sir John Wingfield was the second to be called John. He married Margaret, daughter of Richard Durward. With his elder brother and namesake, John, he was attainted and then pardoned for taking up arms against his sovereign. (His younger son is interesting. William, an Augustinian Canon, was the last prior of Westacre Abbey in Norfolk. On its dissolution, he became rector of the parish of Burnam Thorpe. He then married and on Mary's accession, was deprived of his living and his children declared illegitimate. William died in 1556).[48]

None of the references available tell us much about Sir John Wingfield's life. That he was a figure at Henry VII and Henry VIII's Court is clearly shown by his very title Sir John.

Sir John Wingfield's fifth son, William, married Joanna, daughter of Thomas Waldegrave. He was Sewer to Henry VII and died without issue on December 4th 1491.

The sixth son, Sir Thomas Wingfield was killed at the Battle of Bosworth Field on 22nd August 1485, fighting for Henry VII. He did not marry and may have been only twenty years of age at the time of his demise.[49]

When we come to Sir Robert Wingfield, the seventh son of Sir John, the researcher is confronted by much more detail. A list of his titles and achievements include the following: Knight of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, Marshal of Calais, Lieutenant of Calais Castle, Deputy of the Town and Marshes at Calais, Privy Councillor to Henry VIII, Henry VIII's Ambassador to the Court of the Holy Roman Emperors Maximilian and Charles V.[50] Little is known of Robert's early life except that in 1497 he was, with other members of the Wingfield family, a Commander against the Cornish rebels.[51] Sir Robert is first mentioned in State Papers for Henry VIII in 1509, when he was issued with a grant for life of a rent of £20 from the Castle and town of Orford.[52] He also in that year received the patronage of the Augustinian Friary at Orford, while in May 1511 he received an annuity of one hundred marks for life and the lordship and manor of Eye.[53] In September 1509 he became Constable of Eye Castle, and in 1510 became a Knight of the Body to Henry VIII, an honour of much distinction. His major claims to fame are that he spent much of his working life as an ambassador to the French Court and to that of the Holy Roman Emperor. In intervening periods he spent much time tending his responsibilities in Calais, the last English possession on the Continent.

In May 1510 Sir Robert went on his first embassy to Maximilian, the Holy Roman Emperor. The life of an ambassador in those days was very different from that of an ambassador today. Sir Robert, having made a good impression at the various European courts he attended, became a close confidante and advisor to the King of France, as well as to the Emperor Maximilian. Those personages virtually employed the likes of Sir Robert as if they were their own nationals. Round about 1513, the Emperor Maximilian, desiring the advancement of Cardinal Hadrian to the Papacy, sent the Bishop of Gurce to Rome accompanied for that purpose by Sir Robert Wingfield. Sir Robert sent a letter about it all to Henry VIII. It reads as follows:-[54]

> This day at 8 in the morning the Bishop of Brixsyn conveyed Wyngfeld to the Cathedral, where they waited the coming of the Emperor, who placed Wyngfeld by his side at the desk, the Spanish Ambassador being oposite. High Mass ended which was sung by the Emperiors own Chapell and the best orgons ever I heard. The Emperor, the writer, the Spanish Ambassador and the many other noble folk went to the High Altar where, a proposition containing the principal intent of the Confederation being made Dr. Moota together with the intended purpose after Wyngfelds Commission had been read by M. James de Banyiss, and the Confederation shown, the Emperor laid his hand on the Gospel of the day ..... The Spanish Ambassador then took his leave, and Wyngfeld dined with the Emperor. [55]

At one stage in his life, Sir Robert spent over seven years without a break in diplomatic service on the Continent. He lived at a time when the old order was changing, yielding place to new.

Maximilian stands forth as a figure pre-eminent of the age. He devoted all his energies and sympathies to every movement or opposition of his time.

> It is his reactions to the budding thought of modern life that we can feel the real charm and fascination of Maximilian's character. The Renaissance, the Reformation etc. all played a distinct part in Maximilian's life. He flitted from one cause or subject to another without allowing any of his ideas to reach maturity. His life was an epic poem of chivalry rich in bright colours. His was a life crowded with surprising changes in fortune. [56]

Sir Robert spent much time chasing Maximilian and Charles V round Europe. In a letter from Sir Robert to Henry VIII we get a glimpse of this ambassador's everyday experiences. The letter was written from Grattz in Styremark on 26th May 1514.

> Sir Robert to Henry
>
> Wrote last from Vienna on the 20th of the present month, which were but in answer to your letters the last of April, and of the 5th of this month. Left next morning as he intended to follow the Emperor; arrived here this day at 10 a.m.; should have arrived sooner, but owing to the unusual heat of the weather, the badness of the road, and an accident which befel his wagon, and also his sumpter-horse, he was delayed. Although the Emperor was at dinner when Wyngfeld arrived, he at once gave him audience. The Emperor has now gone three Dutch miles from here. [57]

Communications were always a problem in those days. That meant that Sir Robert did not always receive his diets (allowances) on time. A letter written from Innsbruck on 31st August 1514, demonstrates the problem.

> Arrived here yesterday at noon. Wyngfeld has no letter from Henry since 19th May (1514) therefore he is no better than a cipher. Complains of poverty, implores Henry to send him a remedy, else he must find himself where, although he may not fare so sumptuously, he shall live so he need not be in debt for it is much better for a beggar to live and die among beggars than to have the appearance of riches in extreme poverty. Will serve Henry to the best of his ability. [58]

At times things got desperate. Sir Robert in 1525 sold nearly 200 marks' worth of plate so that he then ate off pewter "which has not been done these dozen years past, being the King's ambassador".[59] Indeed, poverty is a recurring theme in Sir Robert's letters to Henry and Wolsey. Between 1509 and 1514, Sir Robert wrote seventy-four letters to the King, many stating that he wished to be recalled to England so that he could be with his own kith and kin. On 3rd April 1515, Sir Robert wrote to the Lords of the Council:

> Hopes they will remember him. Complains of being forgotten. Has spent all his money and wishes to be discharged from his affair, but can get no remedy.

The letter, a tale of woe, goes on to detail the many problems which are besetting him. It seems to have done the trick, for on 24th April 1515, an order was given at Richmond to Sir John Heron to pay Sir Robert for his diets £20.[60] The life of a personal ambassador to the Courts in Europe could be a lonely one. It is clear that Sir Robert suffered, his dignity at times was compromised, and at times, he felt very aggrieved with his lot.

Only a detailed knowledge of European history in Henry VIII's reign could inform as to the issues Sir Robert had to address in his long diplomatic career. It is enough to say that he was participating in European diplomatic affairs from 1510 to his death in 1538, at the highest level. His other interest was clearly his association with Calais. On 25th October 1520, after seven years' uninterrupted service as an ambassador, he became a Deputy of Calais.[61] Sir Robert appears to have found at Calais an atmosphere of considerable disorder. Ever since Edward III captured the town in 1347, Calais had been treated as a sovereign part of England (it was even

part of the diocese of Canterbury). For the Crown, Calais was a stepping-off point for campaigning on the Continent. For the English merchant, Calais was essential, as it was the centre of the Stapler community, which sold English wool and cloth to Flemish, Dutch, Spanish and other merchants. At Calais was set up a thorough-going credit system. The town was an essential part of English commerce with Europe, placed as it was north of the hinterland of Bordeaux and the Mediterranean. Not only wool was traded; it was also the staple point for trade in leather, skins, lead and tin.[62] The English controlled an area around Calais, consisting of the town itself, the fortress of Guisines and a strip of territory about twenty-five miles long running inland six miles from the coast[63] Calais being so important to the Crown experienced the passing of the good and great through its portals, and as an international port, must have been a hub of activity. Although the garrison that England was obliged to maintain there seemed able to subsist without mutiny upon little or no wages at all for long periods, the town's charge on the English Crown amounted to £10,000 annually above all the revenues got from trade through Calais. That charge rose to £25,000 in Mary I's reign.[64]

The town's defences were always a consideration for the Crown, and although Henry VIII spent £50,000 in his reign on them, Sir Richard Wingfield remarked in 1515 that Calais was defenceless.[65] The town was lost when, in January 1558, Francis of Lorraine, Duke of Guise, attacked the Calais enclave. By 7th January, Calais was lost and two weeks later, the fortress of Guisnes had gone as well.[66]

Sir Robert Wingfield's connection with Calais was both long and wide-reaching. On 20th September 1531, Sir Robert was granted a marsh in the Calais enclave of 4,000 acres, called the Measnebroke, in the lordship of Mark in the Marches of Calais. Sir Robert drained and ditched the marsh. Objections were then raised that such a project could tend to compromise the defences of the town, and orders went out to flood Sir Robert's marsh. As compensation he was granted £41.[67] Sir Robert served as Mayor of Calais from November 1534 to November 1535. The serious rivalry between Sir Robert and Lord Lisle, the Deputy of Calais, came to a head at Christmas 1534. A letter written by Lord Lisle reads as follows:

> On Christmas Day on which the Council and retinue here wait on the King's Deputy [Lord Lisle] all except Sir Robert Wingfield and ..[another], waited at my house. St. George's priest gave me warning that the hour was come to go to church, and the choir waited over a quarter of an hour, yet the Mayor [Sir Robert Wingfield] did not appear. I then commanded the curate to go in procession and after it was passed the Mayor and his Alderman came in, much grieved that I had not waited for him [Sir Robert]. I answered that he ought rather to have waited for me. Sir Robert replied that the Mayor was the highest justice here, and the King's Lieutenant, and I only the King's Deputy. I said the King himself had made me Deputy here, and without superior. [68]

Clearly a distinct pecking order existed in Calais in the 1530s.

To be fifty-five years of age in those days was no mean achievement. When Sir Robert died on 18th March 1538 he was becoming almost venerable. He was buried at St. Nicholas' Church,. Calais.[69] Much was written about Sir Robert after his death. In Brewer's *Calendar of State Papers*,[70] Sir Robert as Ambassador to Maximilian was described as "belonging to a class of statesmen then disappearing before a younger, more versatile and expert generation, of whom Cardinal Wolsey might be considered the chief". In short, Sir Robert had the quaintness and the precision of a man of the old school, and both qualities are visible in his conversation, his letters, and his handwriting, with a tinge of pedantry not unbecoming. He was a little proud of himself, but more proud of the Wingfields, as he was bound to be, and was easily hurt, but bore no malice.

We come now to the eighth son of Sir John Wingfield, Walter Wingfield, who has left no records. Born in 1464 he married, but died without issue.

Lewis Wingfield, the ninth son, was born in 1466. The details of his marriage are the subject

of some controversy. He probably married Elizabeth Noone. Their three sons were brought up by Sir Robert Wingfield (quite how, given the career of Sir Robert, is a mystery!).[71] In the Patent Rolls of 12th February 1492, Lewis Wingfield is described as the Escheator of Norfolk. Lewis appears to have spent his life in public service, for on 30th August 1523, he received a commission to collect the subsidy from Hampshire. That happened again in 1524. He was then Magistrate for Hampshire. He is mentioned in the will of his brother Sir Richard Wingfield, when the latter was leaving for his post as Ambassador to Spain in 1525. He certainly received an annuity from the Crown, and may therefore have been acquainted with life at Court. We know little else.[72]

Sir Edmund Wingfield, born in 1468, was the tenth son of Sir John. He married Margaret Wentworth. He is another enigma. The only mention in John Wingfield's book is that he received Ward expenses. He made his will on 14th February 1528, and it was proved on 17th May 1530.

Sir Richard Wingfield KG was Sir John's eleventh son. He married firstly Katherine, youngest daughter of Sir Richard Wideville, who was afterwards created Earl Rivers by Edward IV, his son-in-law. Sir Richard was highly gifted, and one senses that he was even more intelligent that his brother Sir Robert. Both were heavily employed in diplomatic missions throughout their working lives, though Richard seems not to have had financial problems such as Robert had to endure. His career reads like a royal progress. He is first mentioned in 1511 as being a Knight of the Body[73] and Marshal of Calais. In May 1512 he was on a Commission to the Emperor Maximilian and the Pope regarding the formation of a Holy League against France. Subsequently Tournai was captured by Henry VIII.[74] Brought up as a soldier, he was in 1497 present as a Commander with some of his brothers against the Cornish rebels. He spent some time at Calais where he seems to have got on well with his brother Robert. In 1515 occurred one of those occasions which must have brightened Sir Richard's life. On 7th November 1515, he wrote to Wolsey from Calais "that his [Wolsey's) Cardinal's hat has arrived under the charge of Bonifacio, the secretary to the Bishop of Worcester".[75]

The main events in Sir Richard's diplomatic career are his association with Francis I of France (1494-1547) and Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor (1500-1558). Sir Richard was Ambassador to Francis I from 1515 onwards. It was that association with Francis which facilitated the meeting of the Kings of England and France at the Field of the Cloth of Gold in June 1520. That event turned out to be one of the most colourful diplomatic occasions of the sixteenth century.[76]

A car-driver leaving the Channel Tunnel terminal at Calais will, if he takes the A26 motorway from Calais to Rheims, see after journeying on four miles or so, a sign on the right-hand side of the road advertising Le Drap d'Or, the Cloth of Gold. From 7th June to 20th June 1520, a meeting took place there of Henry VIII and Francis I. They talked, jousted, feasted and danced in a vale between the village of Guisnes in the English Pale of Calais and the village of Ardres on the French side. The meeting had been arranged in part by Sir Richard in October 1518.[77] The meeting, attended by six thousand people made up of the Courts of England and France, was meant to be a summit conference. It turned out to be many things. It was an Olympic games (jousts, tournaments etc.), a wine and food festival, and last but not least a Concours d'Elegance for those attending the event in their sumptuous clothes. Cardinal Wolsey turned up with a retinue of twelve chaplains, fifty gentlemen, a hundred and thirty-seven servants and a hundred and fifty horses. The Duke of Suffolk Edmund Brandon, had five chaplains, ten gentlemen, fifty-five servants and thirty horses.

It was an extraordinary event held in an atmosphere of intense suspicion by the two kings. Henry VIII exclaimed at the end of the meeting that "He had won the most faithful friend in Christendom and also the hearts of all the nobles of France". Francis was a little more guarded

and succinct when he stated "That our willings and courages were all manner of thinges".[78] The storm clouds gathered even before the end of the festivities; the French promptly refortified the castle at Ardres nearby!

After the Cloth of Gold meeting, Henry VIII met the Emperor Charles V at Gravelines. Meanwhile, Sir Richard spent hour after hour at the bedside of Francis I trying to convince him that Henry and Wolsey were devoted to him. That experience is surely established as one of the high points of interest in European diplomatic history of the sixteenth century.

Life for Sir Richard was anything but routine. On May 7th 1520 he wrote from Paris that

> This day his fellow Parker has left Calais with seven good horses. Hears that one of the most esteemed pieces that were in Italy especially the one sent by Signor Fabriccio. Is sure they will be a subject that shall be nothing tedious to the King, for I never saw or heard horses to be far led in such plight and courage as they be in. Two days after their arrival in Calais they will be ready for the King. [79]

Hardly was the meeting at the Cloth of God over, than Sir Richard became Henry's emissary to the Emperor Charles V. The matter in hand was whether or not the Emperor with Henry would declare war on Francis I, Henry was for peace and Charles V seemed to concur. A letter from Sir Richard to Fitzwilliam and Jenningham at the French Court and written from Worms on Corpus Christi Eve (May 29th) reads as follows:

> I find no difficulty on his part. The Emperor will be most content to give up hostilities, in spite of all provocations, and to submit to the Kings mediation, if none of his dominions are invaded by the French King: but if Francis invade Navarre, or any of his dominions, he is prepared to attack France without delay in more parts than one: and I assure you, is better furnished than the French probably reckon. [80]

In January 1522, Charles V wrote to Henry VIII from Ghent

> I have asked Wyngfeld to go to you to tell you some things of importance I have found no man who understands business better or is better deposed towards our Common interest. [81]

Even Sir Richard felt the strains of his career. He wrote to Wolsey on 10th November 1521

> I have not left my lodging since Monday on account of sickness. I cannot overcome it by abstinence, good diet or counsel of physic and am getting too weak to do the King's business. If I do not mend in a day or two, I shall take leave of the Emperor. [82]

Separated as Sir Richard and his fellow diplomats were from England and their kith and kin, it is not surprising that some who followed their avocation should have at times succumbed.

Sir Richard appears to have been a favourite of the Emperor Charles V. Like his father, Maximilian, Charles had an impossible task trying to control the Holy Roman Empire. Apparently his was an impressive presence and an impenetrable and somewhat haughty expression, which suggested to some that he was an unapproachable ruler. Added to that, he was attended by a suite of impressive magnificence. He ended his life disillusioned, having had to contend with the Reformation, and war was ever a consideration for him. His entrenched belief in his own sovereignty made him hate rebellion with extreme vehemence. At times he assumed an almost brutal harshness and bitterness. He cannot have been easy for Richard to get on with.[83] It says much for Sir Richard that he was able to surmount the problems which Charles V's character posed. In a letter dated 16th April 1522 from Charles V to Wolsey, we read that

Charles asked

> that the stall in the Order of the Garter made vacant by the death of Sir Edward Poynings may be given to Sir Richard Wyngfeld on account of his great loyalty. If Wolsey please he will give him the pension of 1000 livres which Poynings had (Signed by Charles himself). [84]

An event which must have pleased Sir Richard was the granting to him in 1523 of the manor of Kimbolton, part of the late Duke of Buckingham's estates (Buckingham was executed in 1521), and also rents to the amount of £40 a year from the estate.[85] He was made Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster in the same year.[86]

On 30th April 1525, Sir Richard set off to meet the Emperor in Toledo in Spain as Henry's Ambassador. International relations had just been sent into chaos by the capture of Francis I at the Battle of Pavia by the Emperor's forces in Italy.[87] Sir Richard died on 22nd July 1525 in Toledo. He had not been a few weeks there when he contracted the fatal illness which was destined to put an end to his life. The strain and stress of his recent voyage from England and his difficult journey through Spain had surely taken its toll.[88] He was buried with all solemnity in the Church of the Friars Observant of St. John de Pois by direction of Novera, the King of Arms of Spain and Richmond Herald. In that place none were buried other than by the Special Command of the Emperor.[89] Thus ended an extremely successful diplomatic career. His life did not seem to have had the characteristics of light and shade which that of his illustrious brother Sir Robert Wingfield showed, but he was much in the Wingfield mould, and at the end of the day, had more than made his mark in his service to King and Emperor.

We now come to Sir John's twelfth and youngest son, Sir Humphrey Wingfield (1474-1545). He married Anne, daughter of Sir John Wiseman of Great Canfield, an old Essex family.[90] Sir Humphrey spent his early career in service to the County of Suffolk. His work in Suffolk included being a JP from 1503 to 1507. In 1506 he with his brother John the younger looked into riots in Great Yarmouth. There is a letter from the Duke of Norfolk reminding Cardinal Wolsey of his promise to make Sir Humphrey Wingfield Custos Rotulorum of Suffolk (14th July 1516).[91] Over the years, Sir Humphrey held many commissions of the peace in Suffolk.

By 1523, he had entered the personal service of the King.[92] His career in London from then on included hearing cases at the Court of Chancery in 1529. On 14th July 1530 he was appointed one of the Commissioners who, after the fall of Wolsey, were to take account of Wolsey's possessions in Suffolk.[93] A letter from Chapuys, the Ambassador of the Holy Roman Empire to England, dated 9th February 1533, reads as follows:

> Yesterday for the second time the King went to the House of Parliament. He took his seat on his throne, the Nuncio being on his right, and the French Ambassador on his left. Behind these were all the Lords dressed like the King, in their scarlet Parliament robes. The Deputies of the Commons also in scarlet, presented to the King a lawyer who had been elected as Speaker [Sir Humphrey Wingfield], the office being vacated by the promotion of the new Chancellor. The King received him and conferred on him the Order of Knighthood. [94]

Sir Humphrey was already a leading member of the establishment. In April 1536, another £100 was paid by Mr. Secretary Cromwell to him, no doubt for his services as Speaker of the House of Commons. But not everything went smoothly. In a letter from Ipswich dated 8th August 1536, Sir Humphrey writes to Mr. Secretary Cromwell:

> At the last gaol delivery at Ipswich three felons were arraigned and being found guilty pleaded their book ... The See of Norwich being vacant, and no ordinary to hear them read, the justices repried them without any judgement. Because the keeping them was somewhat dangerous, they

were straitly and surely kept. The bearer [of this letter] one of the bailiffs can explain the circumstances of their escape.[95]

To say the least, Sir Humphrey seems to have been overwhelmed with work. In February 1537, a Commission of the Peace was issued to him in Suffolk, then in March a Commission for Sewers in Suffolk, in June a Commission for the Peace in Essex, and in July a Commission of oyer and terminer for treasons in Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Huntingdon, Norfolk, Suffolk and the City of Norwich.[96]

Money appears to have been at one time or another in their careers, a problem for most of the Wingfield sons. In 1537, Sir Humphrey appeals to Cromwell to relieve him of his great poverty. It bore fruit for Henry VIII granted him and the heirs of his body the manors of Overhall and Netherhall at Dedham in Essex and the manor of Crepingham at Stutton in Suffolk. Right up to the end of his life, Sir Humphrey was heavily involved in public affairs, mostly in Suffolk. He died on 23rd October 1545.[97] His was a life of continuous endeavour and conspicuous success. He was yet another example of a Wingfield man closely wedded to a world which he understood and served to the advantage of his county and country.

Sir John Wingfield also had four daughters but little is recorded in respect of them. They were Anne (born 1462), married John Echingham; Elizabeth (born 1457), a nun; Katherine (born 1470), married Robert Brewes; and Elizabeth (born 1472), married John Hall. [98]

Conclusion

The progeny of Sir John Wingfield (1425-1481), twelve sons and four daughters, are extraordinary in many respects. Not only did they survive into adulthood (a remarkable achievement for the time!), but having spent their childhoods and adolescence on their father's estate at Letheringham, many went on to make a significant impression in the world. Their upbringing and status as senior gentry would in any case have marked them for preferment. But their skill and aptitude in matters concerning the administration of affairs in England and abroad fitted them for exceptional responsibilities and achievements. Indeed, it was the abilities of families such as the Wingfields which made the smooth running of England possible in a time of transformation such as the sixteenth century. It is perhaps salutary to reflect that their story began in the relatively quiet Suffolk backwater that is Letheringham. And it is itself humbling to recall that those who were physically able to do so elected to spend eternity within the confines of their home village, in the grounds of St. Mary's Priory church. Clearly a huge sense of duty motivated them. For several of them, their status in both national and European affairs was without question, yet none of them aspired to great wealth. The Wingfield family's service to their country, particularly during the reign of Henry VIII, demonstrated that the monarchy's control of the country rested on secure foundations.

It is perhaps not too presumptuous to describe the story of the family discussed in this paper as a proud one. To depict them in some detail may prove that these local forebears of ours were, with their high intelligence, zealous for the cause of their country, which, but for the efforts of the Wingfields and others like them, could have foundered in the volatile atmosphere of the later years of Henry VIII's reign. They were inspired, but also sufficiently balanced to realize that one's local roots are where one's loyalties ultimately lie. Their generation of Wingfields will surely be remembered as examples of individuals who seized the opportunity to prove that in their day the nation-state was worth striving and fighting for. Thus, in a small but not insignificant way, were the foundations laid down for the more modern England.

Notes

1 J. M. Wingfield, *Some Records of the Wingfield Family* (1991), p.20. (This work by Lieutenant Colonel J. M. Wingfield necessarily forms the bed-rock of any study of the Wingfield family. Originally published London, Murray, 1925, it was re-issued in 1991 by the Wingfield Family Society, from Athens, Georgia. All references that follow in these Notes refer to that re-issue.)
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37 Wingfield, *op. cit.* p. 18
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48 Wingfield, *op. cit.* p. 36
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LORD CRANBROOK'S WALL AT GREAT GLEMHAM

By A. J. Martin

Each time I have travelled from Framlingham to the A12 at Stratford St. Andrew, I have experienced a growing awareness of a local "Great Wall". If you arrive at Great Glemham "Crown" on the corner of The Street, turn right then left, and you will see stretching down the hill of a straight road for nearly half a mile, a monumental work.

I wondered who built this wall, when, how long it took, and how many people the work employed. Where did the bricks come from and so on? I therefore wrote to Lord Cranbrook and what follows is the story of The Wall at Great Glemham.

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Great Glemham House has a direct connection with Framlingham. It was built over a period of ten years (1813-1823) by Dr. Samuel Kilderbee. This man's father, also Samuel, was Town Clerk of Ipswich from 1755 to 1767, and a wealthy lawyer in that place. The family home of the Kilderbees was the Mansion House on Market Hill, Framlingham, where they ran a drapers business. The Reverend Doctor's father acquired the manor of Great Glemham in 1787 because his wife was Mary Wayth, the last member of the principal land-owning family of the parish in the eighteenth century.

Because he was a lawyer and wealthy, Kilderbee was able to re-align the routes of the roads which bordered or encroached upon his new estate. After 1783, it no longer required an Act of Parliament to close or divert a road - merely the approval of two JPs. A diversion promoted by the Samuel Kilderbees (father and son) established the eastern line of the wall which runs past the present lodge. The approval to do this was gained at the Quarter Sessions, 8th November 1796. The straight piece of road on the south side is still called the New Road and apparently already existed, perhaps being done earlier by the Norths of Little Glemham, previous owners of Great Glemham Hall. Therefore, although the wall would not be built for another sixty years, it was the Kildberbees who established its course. Lord Cranbrook says there are traces of the old roads still to be found in his woods.

In 1871 the Duke of Hamilton, whose seat in Suffolk was at Easton, bought the Great Glemham estate. The sale was advertised in *The Times* on July 18th 1871 as by auction on August 4th at Tokenhouse Yard in London. The Hamiltons were philanthropic people concerned for the well-being of those who dwelt in their villages. The distinctive mark they left at Easton is clearly seen today. At Great Glemham, the Duke certainly provided funds for the building of the school and the chapel and may have overseen the work, for the designs are similar to others elsewhere. Soon after his purchase, the Duke ordered the building of his wall.

A little river runs from west to east through Great Glemham Park. Roads from Sweffling and Rendham arrive in the parish from the north, one at the western end of the park, one at the east. The wall runs from the river in The Street, across the front of the "Crown", turns east in a dead straight run, and then turns north to the river which goes under the road near the main entrance to Great Glemham House. The total length is a fraction over half a mile.

The wall is not quite the length it was when first built. There is now a missing section of about thirty yards from the river going southwards towards the "Crown". In 1934, there was a great flood - one of the dramatic "100 year events" which happen about once every century like the 1987 gale and the East Coast Floods of 1953. There were at this time, two rows of three cottages where there are now gardens for the present properties. The ground between the river and the start of the wall today is practically level, so that when the wall extended to the river over which

there was a parapetted bridge; it held back the water and the cottages were inundated. Local tradition says that the wall was ultimately broken down by the force of the 1934 flood. Lord Cranbrook's father rebuilt the wall and inserted arches to allow water to escape more readily at a future flood. However, there was a second flood in 1937 and the arches proved inadequate. Once again the cottages were flooded. After this, the end stretch of wall was demolished. There have been no similar catastrophes since that time, but one of the arches remains. Jason Gathorne-Hardy was told by the late Mr. Charles Chandler who lived in those cottages at the time, that during one of the floods a woman went into labour and desperately needed the doctor. The good man did reach the lady by boat on the water held back by the wall, presumably entering the dwelling via one of the windows.

On two bricks adjacent to the old pillar of the bridge on the east side of the Park are initials and a date. On one brick "JB 187-[something]" and on the other "AB". Traditionally, they denote the builders and the late Mr. Ted Cobbin told Lord Cranbrook that one of the men was surnamed Barham. But what of the date? Unfortunately, the last digit has been eroded by time and weather. We do not know, therefore, when the wall was started or finished except that it cannot have been commenced before 1871. It is said that the building took two years. It is probable that the Duke of Hamilton would have wished to enclose these three sides of the Park sooner after his purchase rather than later, so we can only assume that the eroded date was in the first half of the decade. We do not know, either, whether Mr. Barham and his mate put their initials on a brick laid at the start or the finish of the wall's construction.

It is not clear who these men worked for. They may have been employees of the Duke, either working on the estate or nearby. They may have worked for a local builder. Mrs. Ada Frost of Parham said she understood the men worked for her grandfather-in-law, James Frost. He died in 1888 and was reckoned to be the biggest builder in the area. His premises are still extant in the village.

Some time ago, the County Council repaired the bridge and built a new pillar at the other end of the parapet. The dressed stone capping which AB and JB placed on the pillar beside their bricks is still there but the County Council replaced the other with a concrete cap.

The building of the wall must have provided employment for several other workers besides the bricklayers. For instance, it is not clear where the lime came from to make the mortar. But it had to be dug out of the ground somewhere, broken up, slaked until it could be dried out and ground into a form able to be mixed with sand and water for bricklaying. This process must have employed other men as well as those who carted the lime and the sand between the pits and the site for the wall.

The wall varies in height between sixteen courses above ground for most of its length and nineteen over a short section on the eastern side. There are four further courses below ground. Say that the average of the courses is eighteen, plus the four underground. The wall is a nine inch construction and it is nine hundred yards long. A brick is nine inches long so there are four of them on each side of the wall in each course - eight to each double course - over a yard run. A simple multiplication gives a grand total of 158,400 bricks. Some of the cappings are six inches long and some are a foot. If they were all six inches long, over the 900 yards there are, therefore, the equivalent of 5,400 cappings.

There were, of course, in almost every village, brick kilns. They are marked today by depressions in the ground, pieces of brick in the field and the names of places like Brick Kiln Farm and Brick Kiln Cottage. On the slope side of the wall there is a field called Kiln Piece. This may have been where the bricks and cappings for the wall were made or they may have come from elsewhere and this was simply where the brick earth was brought and fired. There is, however, a pit in the northwest corner of this field.

So there must have been several men employed each day in building the kiln and the drying sheds, rudimentary though they may have been, for as long as it took to provide the bricks and transport them for each day's laying over the two-year period.

The end of the nineteenth century was disastrously bad for English farming. Many were leaving the industry, especially the farm workers. Cheap grain had been coming in from America on the new iron grain ships and a run of wet years culminated in the ruinously washed out summer of 1879. So there must have been several men and their families who had good reason to be thankful for Hamilton's employment.

Over the years, there have been accidents to the wall. In the 1987 gale, three large oaks fell across the road on the eastern length, smashing the wall on the other side in three places. The wall was repaired and the original bricks from the inside were used on the outside. New bricks were used on the inside so as to be less noticeable. The sides of the old bricks were as new: clean and pristine. At a point in the brickmaking process, perhaps after the wet material was laid in the moulds but before it dried out and was baked, a stoat ran across and left its footprint in a brick. This little pattern, made in a split second, is captured for all time, or for so long as the brick survives another accident.

Most people build their walls perfectly horizontal. But this wall follows the contour of the road as it dips towards the east and levels out at the end of The New Road. A wall built today on sloping ground would descend in steps on a foundation which itself was stepped. Each section would be built and the level maintained by the spirit level. But this wall has no foundation. The bricks are simply laid on the clay, four courses deep. Thus the builders kept to their contour, removing just the top soil and no more. Paradoxically, had they dug a foundation and filled it with concrete (which would surely have been daunting in terms of labour), the wall at Great Glemham would not be so sound as it is today. It would have cracked and moved, bowed and distorted. But because this wall is expertly built, though the earth may move beneath it, the wall itself will not move in any direction.

The means by which the courses are laid on top of each other and joined together side by side is known as Flemish Garden Wall Bond. Three bricks, the stretchers, are laid end to end. Then a brick is laid from the front course to the back and is known as a header. On the next course up or down, the header lays across the middle one of the three stretchers and so the bond is made without any of the joints coinciding. Not all bricks are the same length, so because the header bricks govern the thickness of the wall and where it matters that both sides of the wall must look perfectly faced, the bricklayer must choose all his headers to be exactly the same length. It appears that he has done this diligently at Great Glemham; but no doubt his job was made easier by the mould-maker and the skill of the kiln-operator in keeping his heat evenly distributed throughout the firing process so that all the bricks contracted equally.

Midway into their work, the builders marked the halfway point. They laid white bricks as headers in a diamond formation. Well beyond the 30 mph sign, going downhill on The New Road, this mark may be seen, although there is some lichen on the wall, more or less in front of a beech tree in the park. Because the bricks are headers, the diamond will appear, of course, on the park side of the wall as well.

There have been other mishaps to the wall, apart from the falling trees of 1987. Cars have lost control and have run into the two corners. Lorries have crashed into it. Each time, repairs have been effected by workers on the estate or local bricklayers. Apart from the differing colours where the lichen has yet to grow, it is hard to see these repairs. One worker said that in cleaning the bricks for re-use, it was very difficult to remove the old mortar as it was so hard.

In the 1960s, Lord Cranbrook's father had the entire wall repointed on the outer side. Once more, two men only completed the task. Their names were Hugh and "Bo" Boast. Although

they were twins, one was short and stout and the other was tall and thin. It is not known how long they took to do this tedious work, but they must have been glad when they finished. Some of this pointing has now fallen away because the men used a cement-based compound. This will not adhere to the old mortar and it would have been better if they had used that material again.

A small pedestrian gate is let into the corner of the wall at the western end. There is a dwelling on the bank opposite - Stone House. Over the years a false rumour sprang up that the gate was inserted into the wall to make a short cut for Mr. John Moseley to visit his mistress in the house. Mr. Moseley bought Great Glemham House and Park in 1829 - forty-one years before the wall was built - and it is well documented that his mistress, Mary Ann Muttitt, did live in the house and that by her he had two children. The simple truth is that there was and still is a footpath running from the road through Great Glemham Park and the gate was inserted into the wall to give access to it. The present gate was designed and made for Lord Cranbrook by Tom Eley, the son of the late Lord Cranbrook's estate carpenter. At 92 years of age, Mr. Eley is himself a skilled worker in wood and is currently the oldest inhabitant in Great Glemham. This gate of Mr. Eley's replaces the one made by his father and presumably that one replaced the original.

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At 2200 hours on August 12th 1944, a B17 Flying Fortress was prepared for flight to Augsburg in Germany. The name of this 'plane was "Doolittle's Disciples" and its pilot was Donald MacGregor from Chowchilla, Calgary, USA. This B17 was a Third Division Pathfinder with the 413th Bomb Squadron of the 96th Bomb Group at Snetterton Heath in Norfolk. It was normal on missions such as this which involved the 390th Bomb Group stationed at Framlingham Air Base (Parham), for the aeroplane to be prepared at Snetterton, fly to Parham, land and then take off as part of the larger force. Accordingly, the B17 was loaded with all guns, ammunition, bombs and flares for the target and the tanks were filled with 2,800 gallons of fuel.

The night was pitch black and the instrument flight was necessary as England did not exist as far as light from the ground was concerned. The thirty minute flight to Parham was uneventful but a keen lookout was kept for enemy aircraft: the threat of attack was a constant fear. The crew of "Doolittle's Disciples" were former B26 pilots and, apart from training in the States, had never landed a fully laden, combat ready B17 at night before. Nearing Parham it was decided to fly a standard approach to the field but not call for landing lights until just before touch-down.

The 'plane turned on the down-wind leg, notified the tower of their coming in, and said they would let him know when the landing lights were wanted. They did this when they turned on the base leg and then the final approach.

The crew could have had no knowledge of the German JU88 which had followed them round the field and was now sitting on their tail. The B17 exhaust flames made a perfect target for the German, but the Americans could not see him while he kept below the horizon, making use of the blackness of the night and his flame supressors. At 150-200 feet from the ground, they turned on their landing lights and all hell broke out.

The 'plane had approached the landing at Parham on a north to south bearing. Now, with the two starboard engines shot out, it turned through 180 degrees towards Great Glemham in the northeast. The left side of the 'plane was blown away with the windscreen and part of the right wing. MacGregor had, therefore, not only to prevent the 'plane from stalling but also from cartwheeling.

Donald MacGregor survived the inevitable crash and recorded what happened next in a memoir:

> The Lord had planted a row of tall trees that our left wing clipped beautifully and levelled the 'plane out for a good belly landing 180 degrees from our original landing direction. Our downfall was the brick wall that we ran into after landing which became a haven of safety when the bombs exploded in the burning 'plane.

Unusually, MacGregor had flown in his parachute harness. He was thrown out of the 'plane by the impact and regained consciousness by the wing. His co-pilot used the buckled up harness to pull him to the other side of the wall away from the burning aircraft.

> [The navigator/radar operator] ... went for help to a nearby home and was comforted by a kind lady and both got under a table when the bombs began to explode. Sgt. Graham went back into the 'plane to help Sgt. Flint who had become entangled in an ammunition belt ... Although badly injured, he [Flint] kept saying to Sgt. Graham over and over, "fine ... you're doing fine. We really need to get out of here!". Just as they reached the safety of the other side of the wall, the bombs began to explode ... As he left in the ambulance, Sgt. Flint's final remark was: "We're going to make it. We have to make it".
>
> ... There were many heroes that night among my crew and the brave English people who risked their lives attempting to bring out the [three] bodies of those lost in the burning 'plane. [Knowing] that the bombs would go off at any time ..., they went back into the 'plane anyway. When the bombs did go off ... on the other side of the brick wall ... I had a clear awareness of all that went on around me.

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The site of this crash, the most momentous event in the story of the wall at Great Glemham, is between the 30 mph sign and the bricklayers' halfway mark. After the war, the wall was rebuilt, presumably with Government funds for war damage. Again, this repair was so skilfully done that with the passage of time, the growth of lichen, and the effect of weather on Suffolk red bricks, it is invisible.

More recently, in 1989, Lord Cranbrook erected a memorial not far from the site of the crash but in the garden of Glemham House, for the crew of "Doolittle's Disciples" who lost three of their comrades that night in August 1944. Donald MacGregor came back for the dedication of the monument, which consists of one blade from a propeller of his aircraft. A time capsule was placed within the masonry. Mr. MacGregor gave Lord Cranbrook a picture of the aeroplane and a small booklet which he had printed containing an account of the crash, photographs of the crew and all their names, together with a small red, white and blue ribbon.

The wall at Great Glemham has now stood for one hundred and thirty years. It is itself a monument to toil and a memorial to enterprise. Thousands of people have travelled its length on flints and clay and now on tarmac. It has provided warmth on the south side and shelter on the north. It has seen fire and flood, death and the rebirth of the seasons year by year. It is reckoned to be the longest straight piece of brickwork in Suffolk. Although the crinkle-crankle walls of Easton and Bramfield and other places always cause comment, this wall, unlike Easton's, is still standing entire as proudly as on the first day it was finished. It is a good wall: a Suffolk wall: a wall of noble strength and dignity. It is certainly not a construction to be passed without a thought.

Acknowledgements

I am immensely grateful to the Earl of Cranbrook for all his help. He showed me the details of the wall; he gave freely of his knowledge regarding the estate, and corrected my first draft and added to it; he allowed me to photocopy Donald MacGregor's account of the crash. I used Charles Seely's paper on the Kilderbee family and I referred to the introduction that Ronald Blythe wrote for *A Farmer's Year* by H. Rider Haggard (Cresset Library, 1985). Len Chamberlain of Framlingham told me about bricks and their courses, kilns and foundations, pointing, headers and stretchers. Neil of Southern Cement (Ipswich) Ltd., told me about mortar. I spoke to Ronnie (Sid) Watling of Great Glemham who often repaired the wall and to Tom Eley of the same place about all sorts of things, as well as to Ada Frost of Parham. Richard Doy of Framlingham kindly telephoned someone at Bury St. Edmunds so that we think we know why the damage to the aeroplane caused it to hit the wall.

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

By Cliff Reed

PART 2[1]

Thomas Cooper

Thomas Cooper, a native of Framlingham, was born in 1791. His sister, Rachel, was married to Constantine Woolnough. Although he was to be minister at the Framlingham Meeting House from 1854 to 1874, it was many years before then, as a young man, that Cooper rose, for a time, to national prominence and played a part in one of the great issues of the age.

In 1817, at the age of 26, Thomas Cooper was appointed to perhaps the strangest post ever occupied by a Unitarian minister. He was engaged as a missionary by a wealthy Unitarian named Robert Hibbert - but it was not being a missionary that was so unusual. It was where he was to be a missionary, and to whom. The Hibbert family made their money from sugar. And sugar was grown in the West Indies, in the Hibberts' case, Jamaica. In those days, the sugar plantations were worked by slaves, African slaves: Robert Hibbert owned about four hundred. He employed Thomas Cooper to be a missionary, a minister, to his slaves. This may indeed seem strange, but some Nonconformist slave-owners in particular do seem to have felt a degree of moral responsibility for the spiritual welfare of the slaves.

And so Thomas Cooper and his wife Phoebe went to Jamaica, and stayed there for two years. Quite what they expected to find when they arrived at Robert Hibbert's Georgia Estate in Hanover Parish, Jamaica, on Christmas Day 1817, we don't know, but they were in for a rude shock. The degradation and cruelty of the slave-system horrified the Coopers, even though they were on the estate of a supposedly "enlightened" plantation-owner. But then Robert Hibbert didn't live in Jamaica, and hardly, if ever, went there. Like many plantation-owners, he left the running of the estate in the hands of managers and overseers. Cooper found such people to be as degraded and brutalised by the slave-system as the slaves themselves. He found it impossible to conduct any sort of normal ministry among the slaves, although he and his wife did what they could for them. But when the Coopers returned to England in 1821, they were determined to do all they could to bring the horrors of slavery to the attention of the public.

Thomas Cooper wrote down his observations and experience of the slave-system. They were first published in the Unitarian journal, *The Monthly Repository*, and were then taken up by the Anti-Slavery Society. They appeared as a small book published in 1824 entitled *Facts Illustrative of the Condition of the Negro Slaves in Jamaica*. The book was a devastating indictment of how slavery actually worked, and what its effects were both on the slaves and on those who held them in subjection. It helped re-kindle the abolitionist torch, which had been somewhat dampened by the abolition of the African slave trade in 1807, even though this did nothing for the slaves already in the West Indies. And although Cooper conceded that Robert Hibbert was "the best of masters", he still brought down on his head all the wrath of this influential family and their powerful friends in Britain and Jamaica.

But what did Thomas Cooper actually write? Here is a sample:

> The demoralizing influence of the slave system ought surely to be deemed a most important argument for its destruction, especially when there seems no reason whatever to imagine that it can ever be made to co-exist with true religion and virtue. The system is plainly, inherently wicked.

This was uncomfortable reading for those, like Hibbert, who owned slaves and grew rich on their labour, yet liked to think of themselves as pious, respectable and benevolent. Cooper again:

> Those who are prepared to look at the case as it really exists, cannot but perceive that Negro-slavery, in many of its features, is directly opposed to the best feelings of the heart as well as the soundest moral principles: and who will now undertake to prove, that what is morally wrong can be politically right?

And after this challenge to the political supporters of slavery, Cooper makes this attack on the slave-owners and the propaganda they were putting out to defuse the campaign for the abolition of slavery and the emancipation of the slaves:

> A few individuals may flourish by preying on the blood and sinews of that vast host of miserable beings whom the government allows them to hold in oppression; but it is impossible that they should retain their unnatural and impious hold any longer than they can keep the public in ignorance of the true condition of the slaves.

Writing of the institution of slavery, he described

> that cruel, immoral and irreligious nature and tendency of that state of oppression under which the children of Africa have, for so many ages, been doomed to suffer in the West Indian colonies.

For Cooper this was a matter to trouble the nation's conscience: "The crime of slavery is, in a great degree, a national crime".

He also had something to say about the racist stereotypes used by the slave-owners and their allies and apologists to justify their treatment of the slaves. Of the slaves' supposed laziness he wrote this:

> The unwillingness of the slaves to work is proverbial; and how can anyone expect them to be industrious? Idle or active, their wages are the same: they have no rational motive for exertion.

In other words, the slaves would be crazy if they did work hard!

Cooper's testimony was taken up by the anti-slavery movement in its campaign for emancipation, all the more powerful for having come from a minister who had lived and worked among the slaves for two years. His writings were cited in Parliamentary debates, and Cooper became a significant figure in the anti-slavery movement. But the immediate aftermath of all this was disappointing - just some totally ineffective measures to improve the lot of the slaves. But Cooper was part of a movement that would be victorious within a decade. By 1832, Cooper was testifying before Parliamentary committees, and witnessing before the House of Commons and the House of Lords. With emancipation now in sight, Cooper was concerned that it should be accompanied by education of the slaves, if they were to become what he called (rather quaintly to modern ears) "a happy and useful peasantry". Cooper was only one voice among many, but his first-hand experiences among the slaves gave him a perspective that few other abolitionists had. He played a worthy part in the abolition of slavery throughout the British Empire that came into effect on 1st August 1834.

But his efforts hadn't pleased everyone. He had so infuriated the Hibbert family that both Cooper and his wife were subjected to a vitriolic campaign of character assassination. Cooper wrote of this:

> I am become an object of brutal attack for having presumed to tell unpleasant truth in the ears of the oppressors of the unhappy sons of Africa.

It is interesting to speculate on how much of a stir the Coopers' campaign caused in their native Framlingham, and their home congregation at the Meeting House. I don't doubt that they had the full support of Samuel Say Toms, or that the "Mr. Cooper" listed among the ministers present at the celebrations of 22nd August 1823, was anyone other than Thomas Cooper.

Thirty years were to pass before Thomas Cooper returned to the Meeting House as its minister in 1854. He was then 62, but would still serve for another twenty years. From this time we have a description of the Meeting House and its minister, "the conscientious Thomas Cooper", dated April 1860[2]. It seems a far cry from what Cooper had experienced in Jamaica many years before.

> The chapel is an impregnable looking and remarkably durable brick building, a century and a half old: the red brick courses of the facing-work knitted with black brick bonding, convey an impression that every layer upon the wall is tied with iron. But the fruits of floricultural and horticultural handiwork claim recognition creeping along the walls, budding upon this side and that by the doorways, flourishing we may say quite round the building, and seem to point the moral of this sect, making earth yield its highest increase and getting the most of it upon the very margin of the house of worship, which is not so much set apart for the purpose as it is raised up in the midst of the enjoyment and study of temporal things to praise God and endeavour to learn His Will from the point of view of the realised fruits of His abundant providence.

And then this about what the reporter found inside:

> Interior of chapel small, breasted deeply round with galleries and would probably accommodate 300 people. Only 50 present. The Rev. Thomas Cooper between 65 and 70 active and buoyant ... with a pulpit manner demanding attention and securing respect.

Thomas Cooper retired in September 1874, and died on 25th October 1880, aged 88, and was buried in Framlingham Cemetery. Phoebe Cooper died July 1882 and was buried in Framlingham Cemetery on 25th July 1882.[3]

From the middle years of the nineteenth century comes a glimpse of how the congregation saw themselves and their beliefs at this time. It is a classic statement of the liberal Christianity professed by Unitarians who saw their religion in biblical terms. They had moved on from the Arian and Socinian forms of the eighteenth century to something that was theologically simpler, truer to both reason and their own straightforward understanding of the scripture. It comes from a letter dated 20th August 1837:

> We the undersigned attending upon public worship at the Old Meeting House and professing the Unitarian faith as taught by Jesus and his apostles.

For them, Unitarianism was the simple original Christianity of the first century - "the religion of Jesus rather than the religion about Jesus", as it was often put.

Five years later though, a letter of 13th February 1842 refers to

> Trustees and members of the Congregation of Protestant Dissenters assembling at the Old Meeting House for the worship of Almighty God according to the Presbyterian and Congregational form.

Why this apparent reversion to the terminology of the eighteenth century, before the congregation professed itself Unitarian? Could it possibly have had something to do with a number of legal cases then being brought or threatened against the Unitarian occupants of originally Presbyterian or Congregational meeting houses? As we have seen already, there was considerable bitterness over this issue. It was, however, soon to be resolved in a landmark event.

On 7th August 1844, a Public Tea and Meeting was held in Framlingham to celebrate the passing of the Dissenters' Chapels Act on 19th July. The so-called Trinity Act of 1813 had removed the penalties, dating from 1648 and 1689, for professing Unitarian beliefs, but had not actually made Unitarianism legal. This led to repeated problems. Theologically "orthodox" Dissenters claimed that Unitarians occupying meeting houses, chapels and other property originally belonging to "orthodox" Dissenters, such as the Framlingham Meeting House, had no right to them. They demanded that these properties be handed over to themselves, the rightful owners, as they saw it. The Unitarians argued that their beliefs did not violate the terms of the original trust deeds, that they were the continuing congregations, and that it could not be demonstrated that the original congregations were as theologically "orthodox" as their opponents now claimed. After many years of legal wrangling, the Dissenters' Chapels Act of 1844 had effectively settled the matter in favour of the Unitarians, leaving them secure in their properties. Hence the celebration in Framlingham that August day.

When Thomas Cooper retired in 1874 he was succeeded by **William Annette Pope**. After only three years, however, Pope was killed in a climbing accident on Great Gable in the Lake District. A five-year gap ensued before the appointment of **William Fielding** in 1882. But during this "interregnum", which also saw Cooper's death, the Meeting House was the scene of a very special funeral, that of the Rev. John Goodwyn Barmby.

John Goodwyn Barmby

John Goodwyn Barmby was never minister at Framlingham, but his obituary said that "the funeral service was conducted in the old Framlingham chapel, to which he was attached for many years".[4]

Goodwyn Barmby (as he was generally known) was born in Yoxford in 1820, the only son of solicitor John Barmby and his wife, Julia. Educated at Yarmouth Grammar School and originally intended for the Church of England, the young Goodwyn soon developed a taste for radical politics, combined with his own distinctive religious ideas. He became a Chartist and a follower of Robert Owen. Aged 16, as he later wrote, "I first publicly spoke such portion of the truth as was meet to small audiences of agricultural labourers at Friston, Laxfield and other places". One such meeting, at Friston on 22nd November 1838, was attended by about a thousand people and led to the foundation of the East Suffolk Working Men's Association. Several such associations, including the Ipswich one, adopted Barmby as their representative to a Chartist convention in Newcastle in 1840.

Barmby's radicalism took him to London in 1840, where he soon became involved in various publishing projects and social experiments. The incident that secured his place in the history of

political language occurred at this time. In 1840 he visited Paris to meet and talk with political radicals and revolutionaries. This is how he described what happened:[5]

> I also conversed with some of the most advanced minds of the French metropolis, and there ... I first pronounced the name of Communism, which has since ... acquired that world-wide reputation.

The word "communism" and its derivatives were thus the creation of this twenty-year-old firebrand from Yoxford.[6] Little did he know how much of a world-wide reputation it was to acquire! Back in London, Barmby founded various communist projects and coined several other words too, although "communitarian" is the only one still used today.[7]

Barmby was also a poet, and two or three collections of his work were published some years later. He was said, in his youth, to have had a somewhat Byronic appearance, and to be "a young man of gentlemanly manners and soft persuasion".[8]

Although Barmby was a communist, and the first to use that word, his communism was very different from the later political systems which we associate with that term. One of his projects was the Communistic Church, which was based on the Jerusalem Church described in the Acts of the Apostles, whose members "... were of one heart and one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things he possessed was his own; but they had all things in common". (4:32). His radical Christianity was also said to be influenced by pantheism and the philosophy of Spinoza.

In a letter of around 1846 Barmby wrote to the prominent Ipswich Unitarian and social commentator, John Glyde[9], inviting him to become a member of the "Communist Covenant". In this letter he reveals the nature of Communism as he understood it:

> Observe ... that there is nothing sectarian in the Covenant. It simply points to the historic fact that early Christianity was Communism ...

Throughout the 1840s, when Barmby was deeply involved in his various communist projects, he returned regularly to Suffolk for spiritual refreshment, spending time at the family home in Yoxford. His first wife, Catherine Watkins, shared his political and religious ideas and was herself a radical feminist. Barmby, too, was an advocate of women's suffrage. They had two children (Moreville Watkins Barmby, born 1844; Maria Julia Barmby, born 1846). Catherine died in 1853, aged 36.

By the end of the 1840s, Barmby's communist activities were coming to an end. Among his friends was the Suffolk-born radical MP and Unitarian minister, William Johnson Fox. Around this time he persuaded Barmby to enter the Unitarian ministry. He served two congregations in Devon (Topsham and Lympstone) and then went to Lancaster, assisting then succeeding the Rev. W. H. Herford. In 1854, from Lancaster, Barmby wrote a letter applying for the vacant pulpit at Ipswich. The reply he got - from Stephen Abbott Notcutt - was a distinctly brusque refusal! Perhaps Barmby's radical reputation was not to the liking of this respectable solicitor!

In 1858 Barmby moved to Wakefield's Westgate Chapel, where he ministered for twenty-one years. His deep social and political concerns were still evident. He campaigned for universal suffrage. He retained his conviction that "the Church of Jerusalem" was "the true model of a religious society". Some of the ideals and practices of his old Communistic Church were kept alive in an organisation called the Band of Faith, which he initiated in Wakefield and nearby Ossett. At this time he married his second wife, Ada Shepherd, the daughter of the Governor of

Wakefield Prison. They had two daughters, Beatrice and Mabel.

Something of Barmby's radical spirit can be gleaned from words he spoke in 1867 at a campaign meeting for universal suffrage:

> A minister of religion is in his right place wherever there is wrong to be redressed, right to be maintained, or truth, justice, virtue and freedom to be vindicated.

In 1879 failing health forced Barmby to retire to the family home, The Vines, in Yoxford. Here he continued to hold services for any who cared to join him. They were, it was said, devotional "to a remarkable degree" that was typical of him.

> From first to last he was a devotee of prayer and of spiritual communion with the Supreme Mind; while his heart and life gave outward evidence of his religion of love.

These words were written by his friend and colleague, William Blazeby, after Barmby's death on 18th October 1881.

Barmby's funeral service was held in the Framlingham Meeting House. The address was given by Blazeby, who paid tribute to his honesty, his boldness, his sense of public duty, and his sympathy for the oppressed. Barmby was buried in Framlingham Town Cemetery, where his gravestone can still be seen. It bears this inscription:[10]

> In Memory of Goodwyn Barmby,
> Preacher and Poet and true worker for God and his fellow-men -
> Died at Yoxford 18th of Octr. 1881
> Aged 60

In the 1880s the Framlingham Unitarian congregation seems to have entered a difficult period. The five-year gap after William Pope's death was followed by three short ministries - **William Fielding** (1882-4), **James Henry Cliffe** (1885-6) and **William Lee Baker** (1886-8). Furthermore, the Meeting House itself was in need of "extensive repairs" and must have been out of action for some considerable time, during which the congregation met in the "Long Room" of the Castle at the invitation of the Churchwarden.[11]

So serious was the position at the Meeting House at the end of the 1880s that, "the likelihood of its having to close down" was being reported.[12] Into this situation, in 1889, came a new minister with remarkable energy. Not only did he prevent the Framlingham cause from closing, he started another one! His name was **Alfred Amey** (1889-1902).

Alfred Amey

Alfred Amey was a convert to Unitarianism, and had all the enthusiasm of the convert. He had become a Unitarian through the agency of the Central Postal Mission, an organisation dedicated to the dissemination of Unitarianism through advertising and correspondence. Its founders and prime movers were two remarkable women named Florence Hill and Lucy Tagart. They were to become close associates of Amey in his work in Suffolk. Amey himself was described as[13]

> A man of faith; believing in his cause; endowed with a sunny disposition and genial manner which won hearts and disarmed opposition.

Florence Hill, having heard of Framlingham's plight from Amey, and being particularly interested in old meeting houses, was keen to help him in the revival of the Unitarian cause in the area. And besides reviving the fortunes of the Framlingham congregation, she, Amey and Lucy Tagart initiated a new project called the Suffolk Village Mission. This was focused on Bedfield, and involved the renovation of derelict cottages (to which Tagart gave their flower names) and letting them at affordably low rents. Central to the scheme was the establishment of a mission building or chapel to be a centre for social activity as well as a place of worship. Amey was to initiate the mission, and an account of his work describes:[14]

> A man with a bicycle, harmonium and a good pleasant voice, who soon gathered unto himself a band of willing workers. From humble and lowly beginnings, and meetings held inside and outside cottages in various villages, the field gradually widened.

The mission was very successful. In 1896 a chapel - a supposedly temporary "tin tabernacle" - was erected and soon became a busy centre of activity for the village as well as a place of worship. It remains in use today.

To the untiring efforts of Amey are credited much of the mission's success - all the more creditable considering his ongoing responsibilities in Framlingham. He travelled to and fro by bicycle whatever the weather. One visitor to Bedfield Chapel wrote [15]

> Mr. Amey came over on his machine from Framlingham, having bravely faced the elements. I understand that he never misses the afternoon service ...

Amey combined the pastorates of Framlingham and Bedfield, and this arrangement has been continued by his successors. He left in 1902. He ended his career at Clonmel in Ireland in 1923 and died in 1949, aged 95.[16]

During Amey's ministry major changes took place at the Framlingham Meeting House. It is reported that "The old Meeting House underwent further renovation and transformation in 1899", during which services were held in "the Corn Exchange".[17] The "transformation" referred to may have been the radical alteration to the interior, from its original meeting house arrangement to that which we have today. It was "turned", as the terminology has it, with the pulpit being moved from the long north wall to the short east wall. It may well be that the original pulpit was replaced at this time with the one we have today, complete with the carving of a dove above the preacher's head. The galleries on the east and south walls were removed, leaving only that on the west. The original box-pews gave way to the present bench pews at this time, if they had not already done so. The "transformation" also necessitated two external changes. The lower window in the east wall was blocked because of the repositioning of the pulpit, and the eastern door in the south wall was blocked internally, leaving only one entrance. This "transformation" was no doubt seen at the time as modernisation, and may have been dictated to some extent by the condition of the building, but nevertheless we may regret it today. The original eighteenth century interior would have been a real treasure. To get an idea of what it must have looked like we must go to Walpole Chapel, dating from the 1640s, or the Unitarian Meeting House in Ipswich, which was opened in 1700.

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As an indication of where the congregation had got to in its beliefs by the end of the nineteenth century, we have a card once displayed in the Meeting House, as it was in many Unitarian churches. The "Five Points of Unitarian Belief", which it lists under the heading "Our Faith",

were the work of American Unitarian minister, James Freeman Clarke. They are:

The Fatherhood of God
The Leadership of Jesus
The Brotherhood of Man
Salvation by Character
The Progress of Mankind
Onward and Upward for Ever

This was an optimistic, liberal faith, and it was to be sorely tested by the horrors of the soon-to-break First World War. It is probably fair to say that this was a watershed in the status and influence of organised religion in this country, and the Unitarian congregation in Framlingham was not to be exempt.

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A hand-written record book of the Bedfield Chapel Sunday School, covering the period August 1916 to October 1920, shows that close links were maintained between the mission and the Framlingham congregation under Amey's successors, who were **Richard Newell** (1903-10), **Herbert C. Hawkins** (1910-13) and **William H. Sands** (1914-25). The book also has some newspaper cuttings pasted in. One of these records:

> Another pleasant gathering in connection with the Mission took placed on January 15th, when the congregation and members of the minister's class at Framlingham were happily entertained by the Rev. and Mrs. W. H. Sands ... small tokens of goodwill were given by "Santa Claus" to those assembled.

On September 19th 1917, the anonymous recorder noted of the Harvest Festival services:

> After tea Miss Smith with Nurse Lumb of Norwich, Mrs. Wm. Smith, Mrs. Alan Bacon with Kathleen, Miss Smith's sister and I drove to Framlingham for the evening service when the Chapel was full.

The entry for June 22nd 1918 records a visit by "Miss E. R. Lee B.A.". This was Emma Rosalind Lee, a member of the Notcutt family. She entered the ministry in 1919. The entry also refers to a personal tragedy that had befallen the minister and his wife.

> In the evening our visitor did pulpit duty at the Old Meeting House, Framlingham, where a good congregation much appreciated her thoughtful earnest discourse ... At each service Miss Lee expressed the thanks of the Rev. W. H. and Mrs. Sands for the kind sympathy shown to them in the their recent bereavement when their infant daughter "fell on sleep".

Later that year (1st and 2nd September 1918) the Anniversary Services of the Suffolk Village Mission were held at Framlingham as well as Bedfield. Among those taking part was the Rev. J. Petherick, the Congregationalist minister from Leiston, who, the report says, has "shown ... cordial sympathy with the aims and religious work of Mr. and Mrs. Sands" - an interestingly ecumenical note.

On 10th August 1919, a group from Bedfield comprising, "Miss Tagart, Miss Smith, Mrs. Snowling and Winnie Lee, drove in Mr. Tubb's waggonette to hear Mr. Fincham [the Rev. F. G. Fincham] at the evening service in Framlingham". The entry adds, "Mr. Snowling cycled there". This was Alan Snowling who came to Bedfield from London as a conscientious objector. One

of his daughters, Beatrice "Nobby" Snowling, later Williams, was to become a teacher at Thomas Mills High School. She died in 1997.

On 8th September 1919, a combined party from Bedfield Chapel and the Framlingham Meeting House went on a "summer excursion" to Aldeburgh in "Mr. List's motor bus". So numerous was the party that a "private motor" had to be hired for "Mr. & Mrs. Sands & baby & Willie with his crutches and Mrs. Kerridge". Although the party enjoyed "perfect weather and enjoyable day", our anonymous chronicler comments disapprovingly "very sorry no grace sung at tea". Next year, when Bedfield Chapel had an outing to Southwold, we are told that "No-one from Framlingham" came, except Mr. Sands.

In October 1920, we read, there was a Public Meeting in Framlingham, when "Mr. Youngman [was] in the chair" and there were "good speeches from Mr. Harris, Mr. J. B. Robinson of Hapton, Mr. Petherick ... and Mr. Sands".[18] Both tea and meeting were, apparently, "well-attended".

These snippets give us some idea of the activities of the Framlingham and Bedfield Unitarian community during and just after the First World War. William Sands left in 1926. He was succeeded by the last minister that the Framlingham and Bedfield congregations were to have to themselves, **Wright Broadbent** (1926-59).

****

Wright Broadbent came to Suffolk from Liverpool, and was to serve the Framlingham and Bedfield Unitarian congregations for the next thirty-three years. During that time he kept a little scrapbook of newspaper cuttings which provide us with some glimpses of the Framlingham congregation.

A cutting hand-dated 31st November 1931 [*sic*], carries a report of the 214th anniversary celebrations at the Meeting House. The preacher on the Sunday was Mr. H. G. Chancellor, a former MP and, like Alfred Amey, a Central Postal Mission "convert" to Unitarianism. At a public meeting the next day, Mr. G[eorge] T[homas] Moss of Ipswich made some remarks which, maybe, indicate the downward trend in church life after the First World War - or show that things don't change as much as we think they do! This is what he said:

> Church attendance is out of fashion; spiritual life is at a low ebb; if we looked after the children today as they were looked after forty or fifty years ago, there would be no empty churches. We lose our children from the Sunday Schools between the ages of 14 and 18.

The reporter gave this description of the Meeting House:

> The Old Meeting House has a character of its own. It stands in a garden with a tiny graveyard at the rear where are resting several old-time worthies of this town. There is a restful look about this building. The interior reminds one of Nicholas Danforth and the Pilgrim Fathers, and Longfellow and Evangeline.

A report clearly dating from the Second World War tells us that, "the Rev. W. Broadbent of Framlingham was re-elected" as secretary of the Eastern Union of Unitarianism and Free Christian Churches at a meeting in Ipswich. From the same period comes a piece published in the *East Anglian Daily Times* on 24th July 1944. It is an appeal, written by Wright Broadbent, for funds to extend the Meeting House premises. It also gives a hint of the Unitarian ethos, as

articulated by Framlingham's minister:

> Framlingham's Old Meeting House is still a centre of the cause of freedom in religion and thought, but the work suffers from lack of buildings, for apart from the chapel and the Manse there is no vestry or room of any description.

Broadbent looked forward to "post war work among the people of the neighbourhood" and hoped "to utilise the vacant site adjoining the meeting house for the provision of rooms and a vestry". I fear that his "building fund" attracted insufficient contributions; the extra accommodation was never built. Indeed, it was many years later - long after Broadbent's time - that a small kitchen and toilet were finally installed within the Meeting House under the west gallery.

Some light on the shortage of funds implied by Broadbent's appeal may be shed by a comment of Arthur Causebrooke's. After paying tribute to the "able leadership of the Rev. Wright Broadbent", under whom "the good work is still being carried on", Causebrooke says this:

> It is a matter of regret that a legacy of £100 per annum was allowed to lapse through the negligence of the Trustees many years ago, as in these days it would be a veritable Godsend in defraying the cost of badly-needed repairs and renovations to the Old Meeting House.[19]

A happier note is struck by a report in the *Chronicle & Mercury* which records

> a large gathering of Unitarians at the Old Meeting House, Framlingham in June 1946. Distinguished visitors from the Central Postal Mission were joined by contingents from Cambridge, Ipswich and Norwich congregations.

The occasion was the twentieth anniversary of Wright Broadbent's ministry in Framlingham and Bedfield. The principal speaker was Ralph Hale Mottram, "of Norwich, the well known author and lecturer". Addressing "over a hundred people assembled on the lawn of the Manse", Mottram said that

> they had met to honour two persons who had for many years borne the burden and heat of the day in the cause of Unitarianism ... It was 20 years since the Rev. and Mrs. Wright Broadbent had entered on their labours at Framlingham and Bedfield, and the Suffolk village mission [and] the Union wished to put on record their appreciation ...

Ralph Mottram presented the Broadbents with an illuminated address, "together with a substantial cheque". Mrs. Broadbent "was presented with a gold brooch". Clearly a very happy occasion.

Wright Broadbent retired in 1959. He died on 9th March 1966, aged 80. One of his two sons, Stanley Howard Broadbent, maintained the family connection with the congregation. He continued to worship at the Meeting House and became chairman of the Trustees. He died in 1994 aged 79.

Wright Broadbent's retirement brought more than just his long ministry to an end. Since 1660, the congregation had had its own ministers, sharing them with Bedfield since the 1890s. By 1959, though, the congregation could no longer afford this. An arrangement was made by which the Unitarian minister in Ipswich would have oversight of Framlingham and Bedfield congregations too. The first to have this combined pastorate was **Nicholas John Teape** (1959-74), an Irishman who had been minister at Ipswich since 1957. He travelled between his three meeting houses on a motor-cycle.

Nick Teape died an untimely death on 15th October 1974 at the age of 55. A two-year interregnum followed, for part of which the congregation had the services of two visiting ministers from the United States, Dr. Edward A. Cahill and Robert H. Holmes. The present minister, **Clifford Martin Reed**, was appointed to the combined ministries of Ipswich, Framlingham and Bedfield on 1st October 1976.

****

As our story enters well into the realm of living memory and living people, it is probably time for a history to call a halt. One or two final items can probably be mentioned though. One of the major points of interest in the Meeting House, and a crucial accompaniment to its worship, is the fine little organ. This came to the Meeting House from a Unitarian church in Kilburn in London, which closed in 1965. This had not been its original home, though, as might be suspected by the distinctly secular decoration on the casing! Apparently, the organ was originally built for a large private house, although where this was is not known. Ever since its installation at Framlingham it has been played by the same organist, Tony Goodwin, who is also chair of the congregation. Tony had already been organist at the Meeting House for many years when this organ arrived, having started at the age of 14.

Regular worship continues at the Meeting House, maintaining a witness begun there 284 years ago, and originally begun by Henry Sampson's Protestant Dissenting congregation 341 years ago. Services are now twice monthly on the first and third Sundays, at 4 p.m. in the winter and 6 p.m. the rest of the year. The spiritual heritage we treasure is a living one, open and responsive to the changing understandings of the passing centuries, but unchanging in its commitment to the best values of its Judaeo-Christian, Reformed Protestant and Unitarian roots. I have alluded from time to time to the beliefs of the congregation and its ministers at various points in their history. I would like to close with a summary of what we affirm today, based on a statement agreed and published by the congregation a few years ago:

We believe that the whole truth about God, the universe and humanity is too great to be captured in man-made dogmas.

We affirm the fundamental liberty of every person to be true to their own conscience and experience in matters of faith.

We affirm our Christian heritage and revere Jesus as the human revealer of the divine nature and promise.

We accept that wisdom and truth can also be found in the other great spiritual traditions of humankind.

We affirm the unity of the human family, regardless of race, creed, class or gender.

Editor's Notes:

1 This article forms the second part of an edited version of the text of the talk given to the Society on 12th December 2001

2 Report of visits by Richard Gowing on 17th and 21st April 1860, reprinted in *East Anglian Daily Times*, 24.7.1944.

3 The transcript that follows is taken from "Record of monumental inscriptions in Framlingham Cemetery up to August 1992; compiled by members and friends of the Framlingham (Suffolk) Women's Institute". (unpublished typescript, 1992?). A copy of this item is held at the Lanman Museum, Framlingham Castle, and may be consulted by prior arrangement with the Honorary Secretary or the Honorary Editor to the Society.

> Lidded tomb South [side]. In memory of the Rev. THOMAS COOPER/ 26 years the Unitarian Minister at Framlingham/ born in this town 22 Feb 1792 died here 25 Oct 1880/ Also of ANN his wife/ born at Romsey 7 July 1788 died 23 Dec 1859/ interred at the New Gravel Pit Chapel Hacney [*sic i.e.* Hackney].
> North [side] Also of PHEBOE [*sic i.e.* Phoebe]/ second wife of Rev THOMAS COOPER/ born 25 Oct 1805 died 21 July 1882.

4 *The Inquirer*, 1881. See also below p. 28

5 *The Apostle*, no. 1, 1848.

6 *Oxford English Dictionary*. 2nd edit. (Oxford, 1989) vol. 3, p. 580.

7 *Ibid.* vol. 3, p. 581.

8 T. Frost, *Forty years recollections* (London, 1880).

9 Author of *The Moral, social and religious condition of Ipswich in the middle of the nineteenth century* ... (Ipswich, 1850).

10 See also "Record of monumental inscriptions ..." footnote 3 above.

11 The editor cannot identify the space within the Castle referred to here as the "Long Room".

12 A. Causebrooke, *College Chapel echoes* (1942).

13 *Ibid.*

14 *Ibid.*

15 *Ibid.* The visitor was the Reverend D. Delta Evans

16 Amey wrote a series of articles about the Meeting House and persons associated with it, *see* "History of the old Meeting House, Framlingham" *in Framlingham Weekly News*, January 18th, June 28th, July 5th 1902.

17 Causebrooke *op.cit.*

18 "Mr. Harris" would have been the Reverend Wilfrid Harris, minister at Ipswich 1920-23.

19 Causebrooke *op. cit.*

CORRESPONDENCE

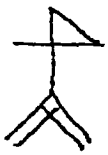
9 Church Street
Framlingham
Suffolk

18th February 2003

Dear Editor,

In his article in the December 2002 issue of *Fram* on the four 16th century Howard tombs in St. Michael's Church, Framlingham, Mr. Lovejoy refers to masons' marks. Each mason had his own mark and used it on every stone that he shaped. This was intriguing and it seemed worthwhile to try to identify as many of the marks as possible, though this month is not a good one in which to find them due to bad light. They are small, very finely cut into the stonework, and often very worn. Many are lost due to repair work and by decay, particularly on the cornices and the lower courses of stone-work.

There seem to be three different marks, thus:



A

B and

C

A is very numerous, there are a few B and one C.

An initial inspection shows many points of interest among which are:

1.Sir Howard Colvin and Dr. Stone concluded that all four tombs were created at the same time. The marks do not seem to support that view, since there are masons' marks on all 12 panels on the Richmond tomb but none on the 14 panels on the Third Duke's tomb. One wonders why. Also there are no marks on the smaller fourth tomb. Again, one wonders why.

2.Colvin and Stone state that the more complicated mark A is that of a very skilled mason but the simpler B of a less skilled. The tomb with the greatest number of marks is the Richmond tomb on which the vast majority of marks are A, which appears not only on the intricately carved shield panels but also, many times, on the simple blockwork forming the base of the tomb. It seems odd that the more skilled mason, as identified by Colvin and Stone, should have shaped much of the simple blockwork, which could have been left to a less expert mason.

I am sure that a more detailed inspection in better light would disclose further marks. These, together with the 74 that I found this month, could well solve the question of how much of the work on the tombs was done at Thetford Priory and how much at Framlingham.

There is also the puzzle of mark C.

Yours faithfully,

Nicholas R. Nottidge

Departure Point

The Regius Professorship of Modern History [at Cambridge University] was established by George I in 1724 ... Yet for more than a century the chair was treated as a £400-a-year sinecure. The first professors did not even need to lecture. One was the poet Thomas Gray of Pembroke, so prim it was said he "*walks* as if he had fouled his small-clothes and *looks* as if he smelt it".

From: Peder Richards, "History for the people" *in Cam*, number 37, Michaelmas Term, 2002.

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