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DENNINGTON GHOST

In about 1885 a girl of 11 was in bed, with the door open, in her parents' house 'The School House', opposite 'The Queen's Head', Dennington. The comforting domestic noises of her family downstairs floated up but then the child saw "a very charming old lady" standing in the doorway of her room dressed in a dove-coloured very full satin dress frilled from the waist to the hem. Her white hair was piled unusually high on her head. The visitor walked very slowly past the door again and again looking in and smiling. The next day the child asked her mother who the visitor was, and the cautious answer was that she did not know but that another girl had seen the visitor the previous week. Some years later the girl, now Mrs Barber, engaged in conversation with a visitor to the village who bore a distinct likeness to that visitor of years ago. Mrs Barber observed "I have seen you somewhere before, I am quite sure." "No, I don't think so," was the reply, "I've never been in Dennington before although I have heard a great deal about it as my great-grandmother used to live in a house opposite 'The Queen's Head'."

The above, recorded in the *EAST ANGLIAN MAGAZINE* of January 1964, was told to the author, Margaret Aldred, by Mrs Barber, then 88, who commented that it was still vividly clear in her mind. The School House, once the Workhouse, has since been demolished.

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OUR NEIGHBOUR

Robert Dougall, the TV news-reader, who has a holiday home near Minsmere, has recently been elected President of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, of which he has been a member for twenty years.

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'BONY' REMEMBERED One old woman of Farnham (5 miles east of us) remembered when a child standing beside her mother at the crossroads with a pail of water and a dipper giving drink to thirsty, tired soldiers marching to the coast. When the 1870 Franco-Prussian war broke out she assumed 'Bony' (Napoleon) must have something to do with it. She took her jug of water and went and stood at the same place, waiting for the soldiers who never came.

(From '*SOPHIA'S SON - the story of a Suffolk Parson*' by Dorothy Thompson, kindly lent by Mr Tony Martin)

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CANADIAN PIONEER

Miss Hamilton has kindly amplified the information reprinted in our 7th issue from the Framingham, Mass., News. The road that Asa Danforth, grandson of our Nicholas Danforth (1630 emigrant to New England) built at the contract price of 90 dollars a mile was from Toronto to Kingston, Ontario - 500 miles. Asa lived in a small village probably named 'Danforth' by him. It has been overtaken by the city limits of Toronto but retains its name as a district of that city.

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TV's - 36 at a time

Between the wars one of the topics of conversation was as to when the £100 car would arrive (at least two did - Morris and Ford). Then someone pointed out that the £100 car had been with us already for some time - secondhand ones. True - there was even the man who specialised in cars under £10. He could buy at 50/- and sell at £7.10/-, a respectable 200% profit margin. He had a field full of them, and a few hen droppings etc. helped to indicate what a bargain they were. There's always someone to step in and satisfy a human need. Why pay £70 for a TV? Thus there are specialists who sell at £5 upwards. Only a few miles from Framlingham an enterprising man has built a business solely overhauling or rebuilding old TV's and selling or renting these. Periodically he purchases discarded TV's in London and brings them, a van-load (36) at a time to Suffolk.

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SMUGGLING MEMORIES

"... one good lady kept a constant store of silk and spirits under the floor of the Meeting House at Leiston. In Rishangles

BRASS RUBBINGS in the NEW WORLD Indebted locally and nationally to our American cousins - or better, brothers and sisters - for their great interest in the past we share, we in Easton are especially in debt to the New World for their interest in our Church Brasses and the contribution this makes to our parochial finances. Hardly a day passes but outside my door a monster car draws up, one or more obviously transatlantic characters emerge bearing rolls of paper, cushions, with heelball and scotch tape in their hands, ready to reproduce once more in black on white, gold on black or some other thought-out variation, one or more of the ancient Brasses gracing the floor of our nave. Readers with neither time nor opportunity to visit our small, quiet, but lovely church may have access to John Sell Cotman's colour reproductions in his 'ENGRAVINGS OF SEPULCHRAL BRASSES' published in London by Henry Bohn in 1839. Though not always faithful in detail to the originals, the coloured drawings of this famous Norfolk engraver, draughtsman and artist, and the accompanying narrative and comments by Sir Samuel Ruch Meyrick, Dawson Turner, Albert Way and Sir N. Harry Nicolas give a bright impression of the brasses of our squires John Brook (1426), John Wingfield (1584) and Ratcliffe Wingfield, sad but beautiful bride of Sir Thomas Wingfield (1601).

(BRIGADIER PACKARD)

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'OUR' MURDER 99.999 ...% of our population is law-abiding and non-violent. It may be that the wilder elements in our complicated make-ups is expended harmlessly and vicariously in our heightened interest in crime and murder. Hardly any mention of Peasenhall seems complete without allusion to the murder of Rose Harsent - now nearly 70 years ago. The man accused was tried twice without a verdict being reached and he was freed. Local opinion was strong that he was guilty and he left the district. In fact he took a tobacconist's and newsagent's shop near Hammersmith Broadway, London and at least one Framlinghamian made the journey when in London to make a purchase from 'the murderer'.

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SAXTEAD GREEN TO BLAME? Many are fascinated by the gipsies; others consider them thieving anti-social rascals. In the first category was F.H. Groome, son of the Rector of Monk Soham and friend of the Fitzgerald who translated Omar Khayyam's Rubaiyat. It is highly probable that Groome first met the gipsies on Saxtead Green where the Boswells, Lees and Smiths, all well-known gipsy families, often pitched their tents in mid-Victorian times. He developed an extraordinary interest in, and knowledge of the Romany folk. A common interest in gipsy lore brought him into contact with the Town Clerk of Bridgnorth who had recently married a young gipsy, Esmeralda, of exceptional grace and beauty. Groome and the girl fell immediately in love and soon ran away. They wandered from one end of Europe to the other, she a great success as an entertainer while he collected Romany material. Returning to London Esmeralda continued her success and appeared at theatres and music halls. Groome later accepted a post on the *GLOBE ENCYCLOPEDIA* in Edinburgh where they were a great success (Esmeralda having been divorced they married - in a Presbyterian Church). Groome returned to London to become Sub-editor of *CHAMBERS ENCYCLOPEDIA* but Esmeralda became unsettled and in 1898 they parted, she to roam the country in a green and yellow caravan. Groome died in Edinburgh in 1902 and was interred in Monk Soham churchyard, his epitaph being in Romany. Esmeralda was fatally injured by a 'bus at Prestatyn in 1939.

(From *EAST ANGLIAN MAGAZINE* - August 1963)

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BACK TO EARTH A great deal of the arable farmer's skill goes into the preparation of the seed-bed and into choosing the exact time to sow his seed. Many of the old farmers before the farms were mechanised sowed only when the moon was waxing and some even do so today. But all farmers were very particular about the seed-bed and were very careful to make it as fine as they could. They would not start sowing until the soil was in good heart with a good tilth and enough heat in it to prevent the seed from lying cold for too long before germinating. One farmer of the old school boasted that he could tell the state of his land and whether he could sow simply by crumbling some of the soil in his hand and then walking over the land. He claimed he could feel the state of the soil through his boots. A 16th-century writer, Fitzherbert, wrote '*Go upon the lande that is plowed and if it synge or crye or make any noyse under thy fete, then it is to wete to sowe. And if it make no noyse and wyll beare thy horses, thanne sowe in the name of God.*' Before he sowed spring corn a farmer might test whether the seed-bed was warm enough by drawing the back of the hand across the soil. In this part of East Anglia some of the old school went much farther than this. To make doubly sure that the land was warm enough to sow barley they took down their trousers and sat bare on the seed-bed. And it appears that if, after this fundamental exercise, the land was deemed fit for sowing the barley would germinate quickly and be up in three days.

MAYPOLE MEMORIES An aged and respected resident of Dennington, dead many years, remembered the maypole being at Maypole Green, Dennington. Today, there is not unenclosed space sufficient to accommodate dancers, spectators &c. but it seems probable that areas up to quite recently used for vegetable gardens were open spaces. Incidentally the 'four-dweller' cottage there may date from Tudor times. The external view is deceptive as it shows the face-lift given to so many cottages 100-150 years ago. * * *

HOME TREASURES On 27 January members responded gallantly to the invitation to share with fellow members the interest of their 'home treasures'. Soon more than four long tables were filled with items evidencing the care bestowed upon them. Every one had a story and space precludes mentioning every treasure. Messrs Lanman, Cooper and Kerr formed a panel of expertise. Mr Cutts showed a delicate little silver rosewater sprinkler from Turkey. Mrs Goddard showed a ceramic tile of rare type found near Rendham Court. Mr & Mrs Rook displayed a children's book of about 1860 and old family photographs, some daguerrotypes. From Mr Martin came the Framlingham constable's staff (George IV) bravely decorated with the town arms; a Loder's *HISTORY OF FRAMLINGHAM* with many extra plates; a Delft plate inscribed 'Samuel & Mary Wood, Framlingham 1745'. Mr Broad showed medals (1866) awarded to his grandfather. From Miss Merrells came her grandfather's waistcoat of moiré silk and also a drinking horn of 1760. Another member produced a late Victorian microscope of superb workmanship which she had painstakingly and well rehabilitated. Mr Cooper displayed the anchor lamp, in excellent preservation, from Lord Dunraven's cruising yacht 'BETTY'. Lord Dunraven's yachts VALKYRIE were some of the first challengers for the America Cup. Also an octant (predecessor of the sextant) used in the old wooden walls sailing ships. Mrs Jones showed a clockwork roasting jack in top condition. Using the writer's tinderbox Mr Lanman demonstrated how the tinder was lit, producing some healthy sparks by means of the steel and flint. The writer's great-grandfather's 1857 school book (Leiston National School) was shown. Mrs Gosling brought a masterpiece of a mousetrap, a miniature of a man-trap and made by the Framsden blacksmith 100 years ago. Brigadier Packard showed the ten medals awarded to his father, Major Packard of Framlingham. Mrs Graves displayed three Chelsea toys of 1860 and the bosun's whistle used by her husband's great-grandfather when sailing in ss 'VIXEN' to Australia at the time of the Gold Rush. Mrs Cooper showed the chocolate box sent in 1900 to the troops in the Boer War, this to her father in the 12th Lancers. Mrs Temple had brought a Rockingham china 'umbrella house' in which scented pastilles were burnt. Mrs Walpole showed a cloissoné jug which her husband had seen in use by members of a caravan camping near his own camp on the Tibetan border of India and had bought. Mr Cannon had bought at Wells-on-Sea an 1842 snuffbox made from a Helmingham oak. Comdr. Sitwell showed a 1653 Ordinance somewhat rare because of Cromwell's Commonwealth. Also he had brought a silver butterdish on the lid of which was the small beautifully sculpted figure of a cow - the dish was a wedding present by his great-great-grandfather to his wife in 1790. Miss Brownsord displayed a pewter gill measure of about 1600 dug up in her garden. From Mr Kerr came a delicate silver vinaigrette, French about 1805, and silver 18th-century cockspurs. Miss Mole showed a jug probably of Sunderland ware commemorating Grace Darling, which her father had accepted to discharge a bad debt. Mr Charsley displayed a framed chequerboard of tempera on silk (Italian). Mr Lanman had brought one of Queen Victoria's undergarments originally given to a sale for the Red Cross; he also invited members to identify a pair of small queerly-shaped ceramic pieces and members came very near to doing so - they were palettes for cosmetic rouge. Mrs Barrett displayed a fine specimen of an opium pipe brought from China by her husband. Miss Sankey showed two small card boxes of 1860 with maple and walnut markers. Mr Tyler had brought a finely made bronze bird, thought to be Japanese. Mrs Webster showed a Baccarat glass paperweight of c.1845 and also a Jacobite snuffbox in which was a secret picture of Bonnie Prince Charlie. Mrs Packard had brought a Hungarian drinking glass of a special pink glass and about 100 years old. Mr Jones displayed two frames of coins, one of Queen Victoria Jubilee, the other of Maundy money down to $\frac{1}{4}$ of a farthing. Mr Lanman had brought a very fine chair (1780) by that genius of chairmakers, Richard Day of Mendlesham.

What a wealth of memories we have - from the Australian Gold Rush to the Tibetan border!

(These notes based on those valiantly made by Mrs May Shanks)

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When repairs were in progress in Framlingham Church in 1969 a bottle was found containing a slip of paper 'OAK ROOF REPAIRS 1908/9 - F BALDRY'. A copy of the *DAILY EXPRESS* of 1909-1-21 (as we now write it) was with the bottle. The main news therein was King Edward's visit to Berlin.

(CANON BULSTRODE)

EMIGRATION from
PARHAM

Though by no means the largest moated grange in Suffolk by far the most beautiful is Parham Old Hall in fields about two miles from Parham village. Built in the 15th century, the home of the Uffords and Willoughby d'Eresbys, now a humble farmhouse. Threequarters of the area enclosed by moat are now orchard and garden. The north and east sides of the house are original in every detail, of red brick and with fine mullioned windows nearly 12 ft.high. The moat is complete. In 1926 the grand stone gateway bearing five shields of the Willoughbys was removed to the U.S.A.

(From *SUFFOLK SCENE* by J. Tennyson)

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AS OTHERS SEE US 'AKENFIELD' by Ronald Blyth continues to sell well. Akenfield village is a composite of villages to the south and south-west of us. Various inhabitants speak their stories but under disguised names (members will recognise some). The book is brightly and racily written as the following shows, the story of farmer Jamie McIver, 60, who came in 1932 from Scotland: "It was the land of Goshen compared with Scotland. A better climate, easier working soil with no damn great lumps of granite pushing out of it. What a scene we found when we arrived! I don't know how to begin to describe it. Dereliction. The fields were wet, the hedges like forests. The East Anglian farmer had lived with his decline so long that he couldn't move, couldn't think. There he was, bogged down in the best corn area of England with ruin right up to his farmhouse door. The thought of having to restore it seemed impossible, so he didn't think about it. It was a God-sent opportunity for us Scots. Apart from its being heavier land than we had ever seen before, it was the Garden of Eden. There was something else about the Suffolk farmers we Scots couldn't understand - their snobbery. In Scotland there is no distinction between a farmer's son and a farmworker's son, for instance, but it was quite another tale in Suffolk. We couldn't understand this. Labourers' sons as well as farmers' sons came down to restore the southern farms, if the southerners did but know it. But I supposed they couldn't tell us apart. The Suffolk farmers' snobbery was quite unjustified - they were just ordinary working farmers who weren't working! That was what was happening. They were all copying the Big House, Colonel This and Sir That. Their wives were sitting in the best room with village girls as maids. A village woman would scrub a farmhouse through for her dinner and her insurance stamp - that is what times were like. But the farmers hadn't tuppence to rub together and owed money everywhere. Yet it didn't stop them looking surprised when they saw our women working out on the land. As for the labourers, what a bad deal they had. Some of them didn't get paid for weeks on end. We were more punctilious about this. I'm not boasting, it is a fact. Anybody will tell you that the Scots paid. The corn merchants and the blacksmiths came to rely on the payments made by the Scots during the Depression. Ask any of them and they will tell you. Well, that is how it was. Fancy feudalism in 1929. The ordinary village folk were being pushed about all over the place by the classy farmers. Class! They thought they were classy - that was about it. I tell you, we had never seen such airs and graces. The cottage man was also subservient by nature. He'd be touching his forelock whereas a Scot would be saying 'I'm as good as you, Jock, any bloody day!'"

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CROWDED MEETING for
MISS BUTLER

A full house gathered on 22 February to hear a talk by Miss P.M.Butler, M.A., F.M.A., Curator of Ipswich Museums and Art Galleries, on Porcelain and Pottery. Miss Butler, who is Vice-President of the Society, was talking on the subject she loves and on which she is a recognised expert. After a short introduction and explanation of the origins of ceramic ware in China she illustrated her remarks with colour slides, mostly of exhibits in Ipswich Museum and Christchurch Mansion, confining herself to English production up to 1800 including Suffolk ware from Lowestoft. Mrs John Packard, Vice-Chairman, deputising for Mr Fiske absent through illness, in proposing the vote of thanks, persuaded Miss Butler to comment on interesting pieces of porcelain and pottery which members had brought with them. Coffee was served by the Misses E.K. and M.Brownsord and their helpers and many members remained behind to discuss the talk and the exhibits with Miss Butler. Mrs Packard reported that a copy of the Dedication Service for the Framlingham World War I Memorial had been presented to the Society's Museum by Canon Bulstrode and said further exhibits would be welcomed.

(BRIGADIER PACKARD)

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SUFFOLKERS FOR
500,000 YEARS

Reid Moir discovered a wind shelter about half a million years old near Ipswich. It is regarded as the oldest building raised by Man in the country.

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NEW MEMBERS WANTED: Invite your friends and neighbours to join the Society.
Minimum Subscription 50p per annum.

Articles or information for this newsletter are welcomed and should be sent to: