

FRENCH LEAVE

On May 28 1672 our town was mystified by the sound of gunfire from the coast, the electric telegraph not having been invented whereby the explanation would have been forthcoming. The English fleet (65 ships) and the French (36 ships), anchored in three lines northward from Minsmere had been attacked by the Dutch under de Ruyter (91 men-of-war + fireships and tenders). The French fled and the English fought the Dutch for fourteen hours. The result was stated to be inconclusive but for 65 ships to hold 91+ is surely an achievement!

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In 1301 a Peasenhall man named Geoffrey Godwin was killed by a Dennington man named Bartholomew Joseph in an affray while venison was being taken in Framlingham Park. Joseph would have been outlawed had not John of Dennington, who was one of Edward I's chaplains, secured the royal pardon for him. There is a record that the Park was in Elizabeth's reign from 700 to 800 acres with 400 deer. Nothing now remains in the form of a park but the 33 acres of Framlingham College were almost the last of the park.

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CLIPPING NORFOLK'S BEARD

In 1911 alterations were made to St. Michael's Church. The Chancel was radically improved and a mosaic floor laid; Italians coming here to do this. In the course of the work the crypt was opened and the Rev. Pilkington (the Rector), Mr T. Wright (the Organist) and Mr T. Page (the Churchwarden) opened the coffin of the second Howard Duke of Norfolk. The body, which had been embalmed, was in a state of perfect preservation and they clipped a curl from the Duke's beard. This, mounted on an explanatory card, was in the College Museum. Is it still there? It may not be because in the 'thirties many items were cleared out. Some, including a suit of Japanese armour, were thrown on a rubbish heap in a yard in the town.

(MR GEO. COOPER)

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It was this 2nd Duke of Norfolk whose Will, dated 1520, left to his son a tapestry showing the story of Hercules *'made for our great chamber at Framlingham'*

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TWO SURGEONS

"Interesting town, interesting people" might be our town's motto and it applies yesterday and today. There were at one time two surgeons here, one the 'Gilbert' or Sir Henry Thompson, glamorous and proficient; the other the 'Sullivan' or Dr. Jeaffreson, quiet, hard-working but also proficient. Both had a high regard for their adopted town and each contributed to its amenities. The first gave the church clock, the second the well (no mean gift in those days) and shelter near the Haynings. Further remembrances were exhibited at the November 25 meeting, having been handed to Canon Bulstrode by Bishop Henry de Candole, grandson of Sir Henry now retired. The Canon had passed these to the Society for the museum. They gave a glimpse of the circles in which our 'Gilbert' lived. They included a present (a seal) from King Edward VII, autographs of many friends, George V, Alma Tadema the painter, Sir A. Conan Doyle the writer, Lord Chief Justice Alverstone. Mr Lanman had also made a display at the meeting of a number of objects relating to Sir Henry from the museum.

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OUR AERODROME

During the '39-45 War there was an American Aerodrome named 'Framlingham' though it was near Parham. On the eve of their departure the US Authorities proposed to leave a memorial to those of their number who served and died. This was to be in the form of stained-glass windows in the churches of Framlingham and Parham and their proposed design incorporated the Stars and Stripes, the coats-of-arms of the 390th Bombardment Group of the 8th US Air Force over a depiction of the airfield with formations of Flying Fortresses above it. The cost was to be financed mainly from sales of a somewhat ambitious book *'The Story of the 390th Bomb Group'* and a US company was formed to manage it. The book was not however, published until about July 1947 and sales did not come up to expectations. The project seems to have died a natural death. (from papers lent by Canon Bulstrode following an enquiry at the AGM as to the whereabouts of the window. This arose

FIRST WOMAN
NOMINATED
AS M.P.

In the earlier years of this century Colonel F.A. Lucas was the tenant of the Easton Park estate, renting from the Duke of Montrose. He - M.P. for Lowestoft - was a railway contractor having built the Ipswich-Yarmouth line and also the Shanghai-Peking one. While under nomination for the constituency of Camberwell, South London, he died and his wife stood in his place. She was thus the first woman nominated to Parliament in this country, but she did not win. Unfortunately later she became a recluse but pensioned off her two carriage horses to her neighbour, Plant Wolton, at Lampardbrook where they survived many years.

(Mr GEO. COOPER)

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For those who have eyes to see, Framlingham is full of interesting things. One of the first castles built to the new ideas arising from the Crusades; two of the oldest pillar-boxes in the country; one of the first 'new style' gasworks (five or six years ago). One can hardly turn a corner without spotting something of interest. Not the least is the chandelier in the parish church. A typical product of England's Golden Age, the 18th century (for the tiny minority at the top but hardly for the masses seemingly hopelessly toiling), it was made in 1742 by John Giles, Master of the Founders Company of London. It was given by John Coggeshall (who is buried in the S.Chancel-aisle) and the chandelier is remarkable for many reasons. It is in an exceptional state of preservation and is unspoilt - some others have suffered from being converted to electricity. It exhibited a step forward in technique in that the branches are bolted to a collar round the globe instead of the earlier method of hooks fitted into a tray. It was one of the few to be signed by a London maker and as a consequence other candelabra have been reasonably ascribed to Giles or his sons by comparison of design. The Rector seems to have found its original position in the church having discovered a ring fixed in the first tie-bar about 18 feet from the Chancel-arch, the only one with a ring. Hung there, the chandelier would have illuminated the three-decker Pulpit. The Royal Commission on Historical Monuments has photographed it for their records. (information from CANON BULSTRODE)

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MOATED GREEN

Mr Jones points out that it seems probable that in former times SAXTEAD GREEN was completely surrounded by a moat. Most of it survives today but mostly out of sight behind the perimeter hedges. Up to comparatively recent times coastal districts (and this includes us) experienced raids by pirates or enemies. By the time troops could be alerted and arrive the intruders would have re-embarked. Most old farmhouses have evidence of moats which could have enabled the farmer, his employees and friends to make some defence. It may be that the moated Saxtead Green was a defence. Can anyone add information?

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ANNUAL GENERAL
MEETING

On 28 October members metaphorically rolled up their sleeves and dealt with a long agenda. And right well they did, under Mr. Fiske's wise chairmanship. Sir William Hodge having indicated on vacating the Mastership of Pembroke College that he did not wish to continue as President his successor as Master, Professor A. Camps, was elected President of the Society. Miss P.M. Butler, Curator of Ipswich Museum, agreed to continue and was warmly elected Vice-President. Mr. Fiske was invited to continue as Chairman and Mrs F.Packard as Vice-Chairman, and their agreements to do so were cordially confirmed. Colonel Constable's resignation from the committee was accepted with regret and the meeting unanimously expressed their appreciation of Colonel Constable's many years' work on the committee. There being no new nominations, the remainder were elected. Mrs Cooper, Honorary Secretary and Mr Charsley, Honorary Treasurer, were appreciatively thanked for their work and for their agreements to continue.

Mr Charsley submitted the accounts, showing a surplus of £37 for the year, and these were duly passed, it being mentioned that membership continued to increase.

Miss E.Brownsord, for the Museum Sub-committee, reported progress in general. 274 had visited the museum and 67 children, most visitors coming in September.

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CONSERVATION
AREA

The East Suffolk County Council Planning Committee had asked the Society for its comments on proposals for a conservation area in our town. The Committee had offered suggestions on a number of points, mainly for the extension of the area to include that broadly between the Mills and Hitcham Almshouses and also the Badingham Road near the Haynings. The long-term implications e.g. when present buildings came to be replaced, were to be borne in mind. The Parish Council has submitted almost the same proposals and the Blyth R.D.C. supported these. The Planning Committee seemed impressed by the numbers in the Society and undertook to keep in touch with us.

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THE MILLS HOUSE
- continued

After the AGM Commander Sitwell added a postscript to his previous talks on the Tomb House. Mr Fiske had made a survey of the house and had pooled his findings with those of the Commander. One conclusion was that the original building was a typical one-room-deep farmhouse with the gable end on Station Road. When Mills acquired a rich wife and started a family it was surmised that Mills made the considerable additions to the building. Mr Fiske thought that the lower-roofed building was the forge and that the wright's shop, with its flammable wood shavings, would have been well away on the left of the Station Road elevation. Earlier this century a fire had damaged the interior of the Tomb House but, as Mr Lanman confirmed, contemporary panelling was brought from Norfolk and installed.

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FIRST SECRETARY

The first honorary secretary of the Society, from about 1955, was Mr P.J. Stannard. In fact, to many in those early days Mr Stannard was the Society. In some recognition of his long and excellent work members at the AGM voted Life Membership to Mr Stannard. The meeting also sent to him their best wishes for a speedy recovery from his operation.

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1,000 GUIDES

Commander Sitwell mentioned at the AGM that the second printing (500) of the 'Guide to Framlingham', compiled by him, is within sight of being sold out. Thus since May 30 about 1,000 will have been sold, and it was accordingly decided to order a new print of at least 1,000. In relation to the 40,000 visitors a year to the Castle that number seems justified. All profits come to society funds. The Guide now includes maps of the town and district and also illustrations kindly provided by Miss Sankey.

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In the earlier years of this century many could not read or write. Nevertheless some would buy or borrow "the Mercury" or other paper to "read the gaze" i.e. look at the pictures.

(Mrs R.JONES)

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Mr DON POTTER

We all learned with regret of the death of Mr Don Potter, a member of and a good friend of the Society. For many years his firm provided accommodation for our museum at a nominal fee of £1 a year. We are reminded of the colourful history of that firm. Mr A.G. Potter came to Framlingham in 1898 from Needham Market and started in business as a basket-maker and coachsmith. Three or four years later he started repairing and selling cycles, then in great vogue. (The company still owns the original premises in front of the Tomb House.) In 1910 he bought his first Ford, a 2-seater model N. In 1913 he became agent of the Ford Company, signing to take three cars, but the six cars he boldly signed for the next year were not all delivered because of the outbreak of war. Thereafter Potters kept pace with the tremendous growth of Fords - for over 57 years. On their return from the '14-18 war Mr Don Potter and his brother joined the firm and no small part of the firm's success was due to the sons.

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COUNTESS ANNA

Towards the end of the last century a local farmer's daughter, Anne Whitmore, took the then unusual step of becoming governess to the children of a Dutch nobleman in the Dutch East Indies. She continued after her employer's wife died and eventually married him, becoming the Countess de Geloos. Extensive plantations of rubber, tobacco and coconut came to her when widowed, but in the hands of managers they declined and were taken over for a song by a company controlled by an Essex man of title. Countess Anna considered that there had been collusion in allowing the properties to run down and thus be acquired cheaply. She waged a campaign to ventilate matters. The Speaker of the House of Commons supported her case and they jointly published a well documented account of the allegedly un-savoury business. Nothing effective transpired however, and the Countess died in Norwood, London, not in poverty but in reduced circumstances. Anne's brother and, afterwards, his wife farmed Oaken Hill Hall, Badingham, for many years to 1917.

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WHITHER CLOG
WHEAT

Sixty years ago a certain amount of clog wheat used to be grown locally. In the ear it seemed halfway between barley and wheat because the ear had 'whiskers' like barley. Today, it is rarely seen and Mr Tony Martin supplies the answer. Clog wheat was a coarser wheat grown for stock-feed and it has been superseded by better strains.

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NEW MEMBERS WANTED Invite your friends/neighbors to join the Society

RECOLLECTIONS OF
FRAMLINGHAM

Those interested in Framlingham of the past should not fail to read the two volumes of 'A Book of Recollections' by John Cordy Jeaffreson, published in 1894 by Hurst & Blackett. This descendant of moneyed and influential Framlingham families was born in 1831, the second son and ninth child of William Jeaffreson, Surgeon, and his wife Caroline, youngest daughter of George Edwards, draper, and his wife Anne, née Cordy. His success as a novelist was only too modest though his 'A Young Squire of the 17th Century' is very readable. The vivid description of Framlingham society in his 'Recollections' however, make the book difficult to put down. This was a rare period of prosperity for the town. The Corn Tax had not been abolished and this 'favoured the agricultural interest and enriched the professional and commercial people among the 2,500 inhabitants.' Particularly interesting to those searching for knowledge of 19th century education are his descriptions of life at two local schools, Woodbridge Grammar and Botesdale Grammar.

(BRIGADIER PACKARD)

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NOVEMBER 25
MEETING

To a full hall Mr W.K.Sergeant, Archivist of the East Suffolk County Council, gave an interesting talk on the material relating to our district in the possession of his organisation. The object of this, the Record Office, is to collect as much material as possible about Suffolk from any source. From the wide field of official records - of local councils, the 400 parishes, guardians, ecclesiastical bodies etc.; from private sources, families, solicitors, firms. The records are cleaned, boxed, indexed and made available to the public. Some of the earliest material is the parish register, this having been made obligatory by a regulation of 1538. The first, on sheets of paper, proved unsatisfactory and thus in Elizabeth's time 'a fair parchment book' was stipulated. At its simplest it was a list of births, marriages and deaths, but some parsons added their often whimsical comments on local and national happenings. The Framlingham 'Town Meeting Book' contained many items of interest such as the appointment of a Town Surgeon in 1742 at £20 a year, he supplying physic and treatment up to five miles from the town. Mr Sergeant brought several original records to the meeting and also a photocopy of the signature of Nicholas Danforth and of Dr. Golty from a churchwardens' account of 1631.

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MR LANMAN
REMEMBERS

Mr H.H. Lanman, the well-known Framlingham antiquarian, has done much over the years in collecting interesting objects, pictures and photographs for our museum in Double Street. His father was a clockmaker and Mr Lanman recalls that the Benson clock given to St. Michael's Church by Sir Henry Thompson had cost £460 when installed. Mr Lanman learned about clocks as a boy from his father and from the age of 17 had looked after the church clock, winding it each day for eight years. What a record of devoted service! The clock is now supervised by Blyth R.D.C. In Mr Lanman's day it used to play four hymn tunes every four hours in the day and night - at 4 am, 8 am, 12 noon, 4 pm, 8 pm, and midnight. During one day the clock weight would drop from the belfry right down into the vestry. On one occasion Mr Lanman senior was winding up the quarter ton weight when the cable snapped. The corner of the belfry had a compartment of sand to cope with this but the sand had been allowed to dissipate and broken chairs had been piled there. When the weight hit this mass chair pieces showered everywhere and on to the vestry meeting then in progress.

(Mrs F. PACKARD)

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SUCCESS OF
COFFEE MORNING

The Coffee Morning on December 5 reflected great credit on the Sub-committee and its many helpers all of whom co-operated well. The hall was soon full of customers with the stalls selling well. It was a happy morning. There was the small girl, considering a pearl necklace at 1/6d, who asked if they were real. The seller indicated her doubt and reduced the price to 1/-. She will probably expect to pay the full 1/6d. for real ones next year! Society funds benefited to the extent of a respectable £44.

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ALREADY HISTORY

Without many of us noticing it a familiar sight of yesteryear has gone and is hardly likely to return. It is the serried lines of shooks of corn following the contours of the land. A subject deservedly favoured by artists of palette and camera. The combine threshing as it cuts has eliminated stooking and several other operations. One glorious sight remains and that is the warm, nutty brown of a field of ripe wheat. Regard it friendlily - our civilisation is thanks to that. Man, the hunter, had to spend all his waking hours seeking, stalking, killing and bringing home his food. But he also collected grass seed (for that is what wheat is). Then an unknown Stone Age innovator cultivated it. This entailed a few days in spring to sow and a few more toward autumn to harvest and store. Ploughing was probably a later development - Middle East soils are not like Suffolk's. The rest of the year being free enabled Man to start thinking about improving his conditions and to indulge in cultural pursuits. Thanks to Corn!

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