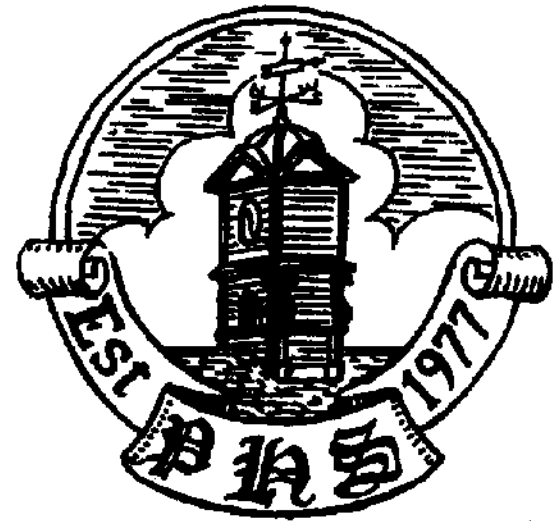


Dotton History Society



Newsletter Number 31

Autumn 2001

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For access to the archives in our research rooms
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Acknowledgements:-

Our continued appreciation to Mr Witten for displaying and
selling our publications in Tysoe's Hardware Store.

We also thank the following for their continued support by
advertising our meetings;

Lindsay's Bakery,
Tysoe's Hardware Store,
Harper's Barber Shop.
Potton Library

Thanks to Keith Lawrence for his cartoon on page 11

Society News

Census returns have been taken at ten yearly intervals since 1801 (excluding 1941). At our **April** meeting Peter Ibbett presented the results of his research into the information supplied to these census returns and what they revealed about population changes in Potton during the last 200 years. He went on to give details of the extensive research into the 1881 census returns which has been carried out by Norman Parry, which also includes a full transcription of the returns for Potton and Sutton. The Society holds copies of the Potton returns from 1841 to 1891. A census box with full details of the Society's material is available from Society archives.

The guest speaker for the **May** meeting was Martin Caddy from the Bedfordshire Sandstone Project. This group has been carrying out a survey of all the buildings and structures in the county which have made use of local sandstone. 200 million years ago our part of England lay under an ocean, causing the sandy deposits which have become the Greensand Ridge crossing our county. The resulting "Ironstone" has been used for building since at least mediaeval times. It is not only buildings such as churches which give a distinctive feel to our area but also bridges and walls. The Society has contributed its own earlier survey to the project and has added new photographs of the present state of our Ironstone to its archives.

Our traditional outdoor meeting in **June** featured a series of guided walks around the town in order to check the results of the survey of Potton's Ironstone heritage. In spite of its apparent softness, the ironstone has proved to be a resilient building material and Potton has some excellent examples of walls and buildings which use this material dating from the Victorian era when coprolite diggings produced a cheap supply of the stone. Some current Pottonians have carried on this tradition by restoring the originals or adding new examples.

The **July** meeting welcomed Bob Burn-Murdoch, curator of the Norris museum at St Ives. This Huntingdonshire town has a number of connections with Potton including that of the B1040 road. The illustrated talk showed how St Ives had developed from the Saxon settlement of Slepe. A discovery of bones in 1001 on nearby land owned by the Abbey at Ramsey lead to the establishment of a chapel dedicated to St Ivo. The two sites expanded to become one elongated town as Ramsey Abbey established a market which rapidly became one of the most important in the country. 20th Century research suggests that the bones of 'St Ivo' were probably a British farmer living in a Roman villa.

In **August** our local evening this year featured the village of Wrestlingworth. Mr Pickford contributed a series of slides taken from old photographs illustrating buildings and activities in the Parish. These included buildings which have now been demolished or rebuilt and a picture of a Bartle's bus with a Sunday school outing. Mr Pickford also provided an exhibition of his work. Peter Ibbett presented a selection of material from the Society Archives connected with Wrestlingworth. The Manors at Wrestlingworth were once owned by the Downing family who were also responsible for the most famous street in London. The latest addition to the archives was a Research Report by Norman Parry which included 1881 Census information for Wrestlingworth.

A chance find in an antique book shop lead eventually to Peter Ibbett's talk in **September**. For a mere £2.50 he had purchased a bound set of 'Punch' magazines for the year 1851 which, through their use of cartoons, articles and playlets, provided a wonderfully authentic picture of the everyday events which took place at the Great Exhibition in Hyde Park during the summer months of that year. Although the pieces were written 150 years ago many of the comments and viewpoints proved to be as relevant in today's world as they were in Victorian times.

Archives Update

There has been and indeed still continues to be much activity with our archives this summer. With hardly any exhibitions this year this has enabled us to concentrate on the jobs in hand. The photographic collection which is still increasing all the time is up to date thanks to Jean and Ken. As you may be aware we encourage members to take photographs of Potton today as this is tomorrow's history. Just a couple of projects of late have been the Ironstone walls duly recorded and photographed in Potton, the other, various new estates and the odd new houses that have sprung up.

Ernie and Maureen have been very busy sorting our paper records within the various filing cabinets and are going along the very long road of indexing. Not only are they indexing these records in the normal way but also cross-referencing them where possible to the photographic collection.

We have also had some members and others who have wished to make use of our archives, which is what they are for and who have enjoyed doing so and in the process have become much more knowledgeable about Potton and its past.

Well done everyone, please continue the good work.

Cemetery Survey

Although officially the History Society closed the survey of our cemetery at the end of 1999, I am still recording new memorials and local deaths. I feel that it is most important to keep on recording these facts now, as I remember how difficult it was to decipher some of the oldest memorials when we did the original survey. To date I have the data of 41 memorials erected in the years 2000/1 and details of 41 burials or cremations in the same period (incidentally the average age of deaths is 79, so Potton seems to be a reasonably healthy place to live). All the information I have obtained is readily available to the Potton History Society of which I am a Committee member.

K.W.Lawson, July 2001.

Potton Club & Institute. (Working Men's Club).

I am presently the Secretary of the above club (as I was 50 years ago) and I was repeatedly being asked by newcomers to the club about the origins of it, so I decided to get as much information as I could about it. I spoke to several older acquaintances and I got so many different versions that I decided that the only way I was to get a true account was to search for old minute books of the Club. I was lucky enough that most of these books had been kept from the original premises in Royston Street and the ones that were missing had been kept by a previous official and I was able to get them from him. I have spent many hours reading these recordings and hope that in the not too distant future to complete the history of the Club and produce a booklet which will be of interest to members and ex-members of the club.

K.W.Lawson, July 2001.

July Coach Trip to St Ives

When George Howe and I took up the request for a Society coach trip back in 1993 we did not realise how much this would become part of the traditions of our Society. Members have become fond of their historical outing with its blend of historical facts, visits, good eating and socialising! This year was no exception.

Our connections with the Rolyn coach company and driver Robin from Barton continued with 35 members and friends making up a cheerful and expectant coach load. Our tour revealed again the richness of our local heritage and the enthusiasm of our members in supporting these trips. I suspect that it will not be the last!

Peter Ibbett.

2001 programme

Nov 22nd Potton in 1951

Note: 7.30pm start for AGM

Dec 6th Pictorial Entertainment

Bedfordshire Conference at Clapham. June 2001

The unbroken series of local History Conferences started by Martin Lawrence to bring together Mid-Bedfordshire Societies has developed into a county-wide conference stimulating the growth of new societies. It was one of these at Clapham, which organised this years' get together. Jean McLennan, Ken Lawson and I enjoyed a full day of local history and maintained our contacts with other societies.

Angela Simco started the day with an outline of the history of Clapham which, like Potton, had connections with Ramsey Abbey, and was valued at £24 in the Domesday Book making it a valuable possession. Clapham appears to have been mainly an estate village with a river crossing Inn for cross-country travellers and drovers. The small village of 400 in the 1930s has grown into a Potton sized community of over 4000 today.

A firm tradition of these conferences is a local walk. Clapham has a church with an eye-catching tower. The base has Saxon work with an upper part that seems to be Norman in origin. It is suggested that building was interrupted by the Norman Conquest and the new Lord of the Manor had the tower completed in the new style. Our walk took us to the plain but welcoming Methodist Chapel and to the Woodlands Manor house which is now a good quality hotel.

Leaving the Manor preparing for a wedding we returned to the Village Hall to enjoy a good lunch and discussions with around 80 other participants. Keith and June Paull started the afternoon with an excellent example of how to present Local History. They had researched the War Years at Thurleigh and, using two old Aldis projectors and a reel to reel tape recorder presented an audio-visual show which recreated the atmosphere of an American War-time base in Bedfordshire. The current Mayor of Bedford, Pat Olney, talked about the history of nearby Oakley and local residents of Clapham recounted some of their memories of the village in their youth.

Local History is alive and well in Bedfordshire with societies at Clapham and Riseley providing a much needed North-Bedfordshire dimension to county activities. Plans have been laid to continue the series for at least the next two years.

Peter Ibbett

A Remarkable Piece Of Detective Work.

I recently had an appointment with Mr Ken Lawson of Potton who had done a great deal of work on the burials at Potton Cemetery. I had been told that a relative, Mary Ann SABEY, had married George INSKIP of Potton and that they had resided there. I had found this couple married at Biggleswade Parish Church on April 7th 1884, after the birth of their first child and shortly before the birth of child number 2.

Armed with the fact that George Inskip was born in 1859 and Mary Ann Sabey in 1860 I contacted Mr Lawson prior to my visit. He very kindly agreed to meet me at the Cemetery which is on the Sandy Road in Potton. He has built up an index and record of all the burials, even where the grave is unmarked. He was able to take me to the grave and at first, I have to admit, I wondered if it was the correct one as the wife's name was shown as Annie Inskip on the kerbstone to this double-space grave.

I quickly realised that his details were correct and that although his wife was shown as Annie and probably known by that name too, she was in fact Mary Ann (nee Sabey). I was elated. I had already spoken with another Potton resident, Norman Parry, who has offered through the BFHS to do research for our members. My problem was that I had been unable to find the baptism of George Inskip. It transpires that he was in fact Henry George Inskip YERRAL. His grandfather was the illegitimate son of Sarah Yerral (it seems by George Inskip).

Our George had decided to drop the name Yerrall and as he was probably known in the family as George, so Henry got dropped as well. Incidentally neither party could sign their name in the Marriage Register in Biggleswade in 1884, so they would not have spotted any discrepancies. While I was waiting for Mr Lawson I looked at the War Memorial and there was ' B. Inskip ' listed under the Great War. Was he one of mine, I wondered?. One of the documents Mr Lawson produced was a printout from the website for the War Graves Commission.

When I got home I got into that site and put in the details 'B. Inskip'. Two entries came up, one lived in Hastings, Sussex and the other was B.W. Inskip, son of George and Annie Inskip of Station Road, Potton. This B.W. was Bertie William Inskip who was born in Potton on Feb 28th 1897 and was Killed in Action on the Somme on September 9th 1916 at the tender age of 19 years. It was a sad discovery but it also helped to fill in a space on my ever increasing Sabey family tree which has over 700 names on it, with the promise of more to come.

I thought this was a fascinating story showing what can be achieved with a visit to the internet and a bit of detective work. The website for the War Graves Commission is 'yard.ccta.gov.uk' from there you are asked to put in the persons name.

The fact is that my great-great-grandfather, James Sabey, who was born in Henlow in 1825 and became a London Policeman, must be coming out in me with my ability for 'detective work'.

Alan Sabey

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Chancery June 1737.

In the PRO at Kew there is a document (C12/1911/93) which deals with a case involving Elaynor Apthorpe formerly of Potton, widow and Francis Wingfield, a lawyer and steward of the Potton estate. Although damaged the document gives sufficient details to piece together the story. Elaynor's husband, Nicholas Apthorpe had died in 1729 leaving her in possession of a house in King Street and other property.

In 1731 she asked Wingfield for a loan of £20 to fit her son Stephen to go to sea, he having been recommended to join a warship by the late Lord Torrington and also to place her daughter, another Elaynor, apprentice to a milliner. Having been refused loans by various friends and relatives she regarded this as her last chance of making provision for her son and daughter. As security for the loan Elaynor said that she was willing to sell her house and ground to Wingfield but he needed a while to think it over having heard that the property was mortgaged, a fact which was denied by Elaynor.

An agreement was drawn up for Wingfield to purchase for £20 plus a further £200 the "*capital messuage in King Street Potton occupied by Nicholas Apthorpe her late husband deceased, and then of Elaynor, abutting west on the common street and lying south next the house of George Whiskin, occupied by Mr William Hewett, and orchard close meadow c 6 acres abutting east upon the common brook and west on the row of houses in King Street, the church causeway on the north Mr Halfhydes orchard on the south parts, and piece/parcel of meadow ground lying on east side of brook which was purchased by Nicholas Apthorpe from Mr Atkinson, all of which occupied by Alexander Read as undertenant, plus anything else occupied by Nicholas Apthorpe at time of his death in Potton*"

When Wingfield tried to get the title to the properties Elaynor told him that they were mortgaged to Mr Edmund Anderson of Eyeworth. It was not until after the death of Edmund in 1734 that his executors were empowered to sell the property to Wingfield for his original £200.

The house suffered in the 1783 fire but was rebuilt, the land remaining as part of the Wingfield estate. Later documents dealing with the 1814 Enclosure and the wills of Rebecca Wingfield and Martha Monoux (formerly Wingfield), daughters and co-heirs of Francis give a clearer picture of the extent of the properties on the eastern side of King Street. The present Brookfields and the site of the former Lorien factory making up the greater part of it.

N.J.Parry.

Sutton Memories.

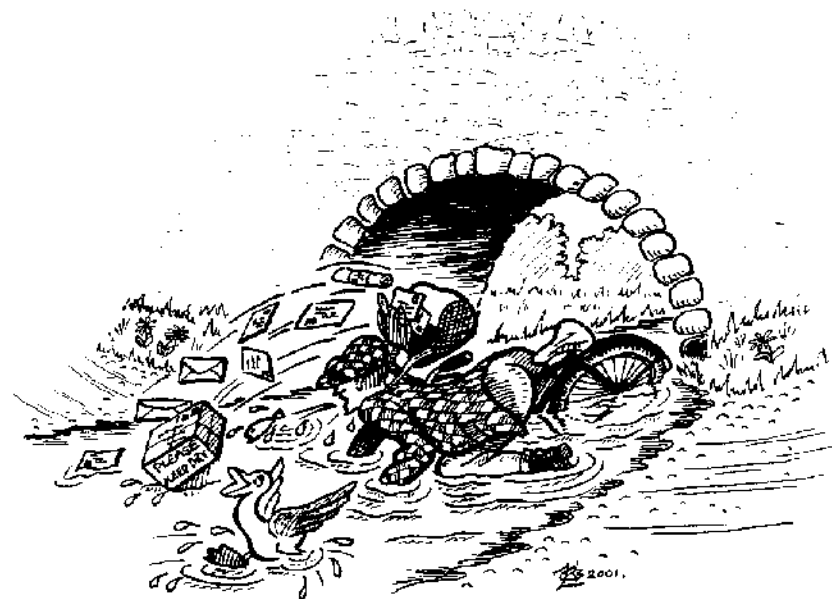
The Sutton evening in our programme last year provoked lots of memories for me. I lived in Sutton from 1972 - 1983 and kept the Post Office and Village Stores for nearly ten years. February 15th 1971 was the end of the pounds shillings and pence and the beginning of decimal currency, it was a difficult transition for some of my pensioners and even when I arrived in 1972 they still thought it was more like toy money and couldn't convert these new 'pees' into proper money. It was a long time before they decided that this decimal currency was here to stay.

The Post Office counter was just a separate drawer beside the shop till. The bell hanging over the door would ring as the door opened and I had to leave whatever I was doing in the kitchen to go into the shop to serve, guessing on the way who it might be. Whether it was potatoes or postal orders, frozen peas or pensions, bread or birthday cards, stamps or stockings, newspapers or new issue stamps, you name it, we sold it.

Bob (Darlow) our Postman delivered the mail through the village on his bike, parcels and all. He always called in at the shop on the way down to Clay End or on his way back, for a cup of coffee. I had a carver chair in the shop so he would sit and light a fresh pipe and have a rest before he went back to Potton delivering on the way at Deepdale then past the Cemetery back into Potton. We used to catch up with all the news he'd gathered on his way through and of course in a village there was always some news.

In the early 70s I had to take my turn delivering or collecting children at Dunton or Wrestlingworth playgroup. I had to put a 'back soon' sign on the door and leave a chair outside so that my pensioners could wait in comfort, I almost knew who would be coming in and when.

Bob and I had plenty of laughs. One bright, cold, Spring day he got so carried away with the sunshine that he thought he would ride straight through the ford on his bike rather than over the packhorse bridge, he hit a stone or a hole halfway across the water and his bike tipped over complete with mailbag and letters floating down the brook! Bob managed to rescue them all and came swiftly up to the shop soaking wet feet and legs and of course, mailbag. We managed to dry the socks and letters by laying them over and around the Rayburn in the kitchen while Bob drank his coffee and I hope no-one ever knew.



By delivering postcards Bob always knew whose relatives were on holiday and even postmarks became familiar from regular letter writers, not so much junk mail in those days, more of the real stuff. We had an adventure one day when someone reported a missing dog that they were looking after while the owners were on holiday. We managed to capture the dog in the long grass behind the shop and claimed the reward! It wasn't a Rotweiler, in fact it was a Yorkie!

Bob's bike had a shelf on the front, not like the box the postman has now and he very often brought a sack of potatoes for me on it. The most amazing thing, it was nearly thirty years ago, he used to bring the Post Office cash and stock with his normal delivery, bags of coins and notes, there didn't seem to be the muggers about then and we didn't used to worry about it at all. Then the age of security came and the deliveries of cash were made by van. Some years after I left Sutton, smaller Post Offices were being withdrawn and Sutton lost the Post Office and subsequently the shop.

When I first went into the shop we had all sorts of delivery vans calling, the biscuits, the sweets, the tea, the lemonade, ice cream, stockings, pies, bread and newspapers but by the time I left it was just the bread and the newspapers, the bread came from Mothers Pride in Coventry, the van called at Potton, Sutton, Wrestlingworth, Dunton and Steeple Morden. My son, Steven, kept chickens in the back garden, we sold the eggs in the shop and mostly had enough supplies to keep the shop going. We had two paper-boys delivering, one way up to the Golf Club and the other to Clay End and Standalone Farm.

In the early 70s in Sutton we had the mains drains put in. Quite an upheaval for the village and the opportunity for everyone to get rid of the cess pit in the garden and go 'modern'. Then the tanker regularly emptying these underground tanks all but disappeared. There have been many attempts to get mains gas in the village but Sutton has gone into the new millennium without it.

When I left the Post Office/Stores I was proud to be given a surprise party in the School by residents of Sutton, I was presented with a clock and a cheque and a most beautiful spray of orchids grown by George Culpan in Sutton. Dan Collier from the Old Rectory made a kind of speech all in rhyme, composed I think by Joyce Hall. I felt very honoured to have been part of the village for such a memorable decade.

Pat Thwaites.

Wartime Memories

BEDFORDSHIRE CONSTABULARY.

POLICE CYCLE MESSENGER SERVICE.

I Certify that Kenneth H. Lawson, served without pay from November, 1942, to October, 1944, as a member of the Bedfordshire Constabulary Police Cycle Messenger Service and that throughout his service he was willing and competent and discharged his duties as a Police Cycle Messenger to my satisfaction.

Dated this 13th day of October, 1944


Commander,

Chief Constable of Bedfordshire.

I cannot remember the exact circumstances in which I joined this service in the early days of World War 2, but as I recall the duties we were expected to fulfil were that in the event of a severe air raid and all other means of communication were broken we were to get on our bikes and deliver any important messages to other organisations. The only duty I can remember was to get fish and chips from Hawkin's fish shop across the road from our Headquarters which were based in the little building belonging to the Rose & Crown. I remember being on duty with Mr Fred Cox and Mr Ted Bailey, listening to their experiences in World War 1 and drinking endless cups of tea. When I got called-up for the Army in 1944, I of course had to resign from the service and I received this certificate.

K.W.Lawson, July 2001

Potton - A seat of learning?

It is known from the 19th century census returns that Potton had a boarding school in the Market Square at No. 21 but little is known about the earlier history of this establishment, although it certainly existed prior to 1841. Much earlier references to schools in Potton have come to light during research into other subjects.

Over the years Potton Charities received bequests which specified that the money was to be used for educational purposes. Details can be found in 'Potton Charities' by Patricia & Ralph Yates. Other references to schools or education include the following :

The History of Bedfordshire by Joyce Godber page 143 gives the information that John Gostwick who purchased the Willington estate from the Mowbrays in 1529 had earlier been at school in Potton. In the same year the will of William Hale, the elder of "Maston Mortene" (Marston Mortayne), CRO reference ABPR 1529:3/12 tells us that his executors were to find testator's son's son, Thomas Hayle, " to school at Potton for two years with such cattle as his father left him and I bequeath to him and his issue 20 acres of land in Houghton Field " One must assume that the cattle remained on the land at Marston and were not brought to Potton with him.

The will of Richard Rys or Rice, (ABPR 1539:6/1) made on the 14th October 1538, probate 5 August 1539, amongst other bequests leaves us the cryptic message that son Robert was to be kept at school till " he be a master of arte ". It is not clear whether this refers to a local school or whether Robert was away from the family home in Potton.

As quoted in BHRS vol.58 the will of Robert Burgoyne made on 21st October 1545, probate 15 July 1546, gives the following bequest amongst many others :- to George Gifford " whome I find

at scoole at Potton " an annuity of 20s. sterling for life to be paid yearly out of the parsonages of Langford and Potton. The document gives no indication as to who George Gifford was, one must assume that he was a relative of the Burgoynes to have warranted a life income from the estate which apparently received tithes from both Potton and Langford.

Simon Phillips, a yeoman must have been an important member of the community, his will made 9th March 1577 was proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury and a copy is in the CRO under reference FAC.prob11/60. The religious preamble which forms the first part of the will includes the proviso that his body was to be buried in the chancel of Potton Church. Amongst his bequests was " I give to the schole in Potton so long as ether John Clark vicar of Potton or James Castell schoolmaster shall continue in Potton every year twenty shillings".

There are no further mentions of schools in local probate records until 1744 when Peter Linford, a wheelwright died intestate and Letters of Administration were granted on 4th January to three people, his widow Susannah, John Cavitt a schoolmaster and John Raymond, a farmer. The signatures of all three appear on the document.

In 1837 Thomas Emery of Potton, a thatcher left all his freehold cottages in Gamlingay in trust to be sold and the proceeds to be equally divided between his four daughters, Frances, Charlotte, Eliza and Susan who was the wife of John Hodder, a schoolmaster of Saxon Street, Newmarket. This may not have been a connection with the Potton school but the entry came up in a search for the word school so it has been included here.

There are probably references to Potton schools in other documents which have not yet been researched, if anyone should come across any such references please make a note of them for inclusion in the Society's education archive.

NP

The Captain of the Men of Death.

In 1832 a pale rider came to Bedford who rivalled 'The Captain of Death' himself. That was John Bunyan's name for the great white plague, tuberculosis. Then it was cholera which wandered the town taking victims. The following notice was published by the Mayor of Bedford, Charles Bailey, from the Town of Bedford Board of Health on the 10th September 1832.

TOWN OF BEDFORD BOARD OF HEALTH

The *Town of Bedford Board of Health*, anxious to prevent the introduction of the Cholera Morbus into this Town, and to arrest its progress, should it unfortunately make its appearance, feel it their duty to direct the attention of their fellow-townsmen to the following precautions and observations, and earnestly to recommend that every householder should make them known among the members of his family, and use his influence towards carrying them strictly into effect.

HOUSE

To guard against accumulations of refuse matter in drains, cess-pools, dust-bins, and dirt heaps and to purify such receptacles by Solution of Chloride of Lime, &c.

To maintain in a cleanly and wholesome condition all reservoirs, cisterns, and sinks, and to allow impurities, where practicable to be carried away by running water.

To keep inhabited apartments clean, by frequently washing and very carefully drying the floors and to ventilate them thoroughly, as well by fires as by a free access of fresh air.

To have the windows, especially of bed-rooms, put in good repair, so that the occupants may not be exposed, during sleep, to currents of night air.

To change bed linen and furniture frequently, and to clear out those spaces in inhabited rooms which are concealed by beds and other furniture, and which are so often made the depositories of filth and rubbish.

Where persons live in crowded apartments - which should be avoided as far as may be practicable - additional vigilance should be used to preserve a free ventilation; and where offensive exhalations arise, they should be destroyed by the Solution of Chloride of Lime.

PERSON

To maintain personal cleanliness by frequent washing and change of clothing, and if available, by occasional warm bathing.

To guard against sudden changes of temperature by wearing flannel next the skin, more especially round the bowels, and to protect the feet and legs by woollen stockings.

To avoid excessive fatigue, profuse perspiration, and exposure to cold and wet, particularly at night, and to change damp clothing without delay.

DIET

To let the diet consist of plain meats, bread, and well-boiled vegetables, rejecting as injurious all indigestible kinds of foods, such as salads, raw fruits, nuts, rich pastry, and in general such articles as each individual may have found by experience to create acidity, flatulence and indigestion.

BEVERAGE

To abstain from undiluted ardent spirits, acid drinks, and stale soups or broths, and to be sparing in the use of sugar, especially if it give rise to a sour fermentation in the stomach.

To maintain regular habits, using moderate exercise, keeping early hours, and taking nourishment at limited intervals, so that fatigue or exposure may never be encountered during an exhausted and empty state of the stomach

FINALLY

To preserve a cheerfulness of disposition, a freedom from abject fears, and a full reliance that such measures will be taken by the Government and the Local Authorities as are best calculated, with Divine assistance, to meet the exigencies of the occasion.

The *Board of Health* are aware that these precautions cannot all be taken in every case, but they are convinced that the more closely they are followed the greater will be the probability of security; and though they may be thought to be of a general nature, they become more immediately important at a time when the community is threatened with the visitation of a malady which especially affects the stomach and bowels, which usually makes its attack during the night, which falls with the greatest severity on the poor, the ill-fed, and the unhealthy, and which rages most destructively in those districts of towns where the streets are narrow and the population crowded, and where little attention has been paid to cleanliness and ventilation.

CHARLES BAILEY
Mayor of Bedford.

Bedford, September 10th, 1832.

--oo0oo--

And Smallpox Too!

Depositions from Joseph Hinson and Thomas Housden of Potton, both due to give evidence in an assault case. Hinson begged to be excused because of the smallpox in Bedford, he not having had it and requested that his deposition be accepted as evidence. Housden said that he would confirm the evidence "but that he durst not come to Bedford on account of the smallpox having never had it".

From Quarter Sessions 1789, held at Bedford Record Office.

What to Believe.

One tends to regard statements made in the modern media with some degree of caution but one should not expect the same degree to be required with semi-official historical documents. Family History researchers are always told to check their sources because of transcription errors as well as possible mistakes in the recorded registers.

A recent instance illustrated this, I have been helping Lynn Epp from the Niagara area of Canada who is researching her East Bedfordshire ancestors including the Wagstaff family who occupied the former Fox and Crown public house in Blackbird Street. Lynn had come across an entry from a Pigot's Directory of 1823-24 which states that the public house was in Sun Street and that the Publican was a John Parker. The only references to John Parker in my records are in the 1841 Census, when he was a Market Gardener living in Horselow Street and his burial in 1847.

A check with the County Record Office copy of the Pigot's Directory does indeed list the Fox and Crown public house as being in Sun Street. The landlord is listed as John Parker, who according to the County Licence papers, was there from 1822 to 1824. After this date German Wagstaff took over. It may be that Parker was a temporary landlord until German was old enough to take over from his late father.

In 1830 the Pigot's Directory listed the Fox and Crown as being in Biggleswade Road, in 1839 at Moon's Corner, whilst a Slater's Directory of 1850 has the Fox and Crown in Blackbird Street. A Directory of 1851 has it back at Moon's Corner.

It is all right for those of us with local knowledge who can work out how the Directory compilers could have confused the issue but to someone like Lynn working at a distance it can be most confusing.

NP

A Day Out With The Potton History Society

We were off out at 10.00am on Sunday 22nd July from Potton Market Square on (questionably) the 7th History Society tour with Peter and George as our tour guides. Weather reports had promised a mixed bag of sun and showers, as it turned out the weather was just ideal with only the previous rains flowing under the arches of St Ives wonderful old 15th century bridge.

Our comfortable coach headed for Gamlingay where we were told to watch out for architectural delights such as Emplins. It was then on past Merton Grange with its Oxford connection, through Hatley St. George, past East Hatley at 260 feet above sea level - the highest point on our tour - eventually down to 50ft at the River Great Ouse in St Ives.

The panoramic view across the River Cam or Rhee opened out before us as we descended Croydon Hill and the driver then skilfully negotiated the narrow turn to Croydon and Arrington where we headed north along the route of the old Roman road of Ermine Street. In Longstowe, George pointed out a railway station along the course of the old line from Oxford to Cambridge which had been built with red bricks, instead of the usual yellow, just to please the local Lord of the Manor.

A running commentary by George and Peter kept us informed of the historic highlights as we viewed them leisurely from our coach. We clearly saw Bourne Windmill followed by Caxton Gibbet with its horizontal arm that now would barely support a medical student's plastic skeleton. At Papworth we stopped briefly for a review of the now famous hospital's beginnings. Then at Kisby's Hut we turned right along a familiar History Society route, the B1040 and we were enlightened by our tour guides to Kisby's place in history.

On to Hilton for a brief stop on the village green and some of us walked all the way to the centre of the turf maze, although not all those following the leader kept on track. It was noticed that some were doing a crafty conga style side step, but it was all in good fun. A great place to visit when the Walnuts are ripe.

We left the delightful Hilton and headed for Hemingford Grey, passing on the way a Dalek looking structure that historically had been a windmill. Soon we were pouring from the coach and streaming across the local cricket green to arrive at the highlight of our trip, the Manor House and gardens. It is reputedly the oldest continuously inhabited house in England, built circa 1130. Previously we had been told about it by the owner Diana Boston when she informed us of its historical delights at our meeting in February.

THE MANOR
HEMINGFORD GREY
c 1130.



We were not disappointed, there before our eyes were the massive walls of the oldest part, its ancient fireplace that once had been hidden, now lovingly restored with pieces of stone work found scattered around the garden. In that room was a larger than life box of a wind up gramophone that played 12 inch diameter "His Masters Voice" records. Instead of the Terrier (Nipper) posing in the advert it would have required a Saint Bernard dog to fit the huge proportions of the papier mache speaker horn and no doubt the company would have been called "His Swiss Masters Voice". The gramophone was made in 1929 and the record track was traced by a bamboo needle.

