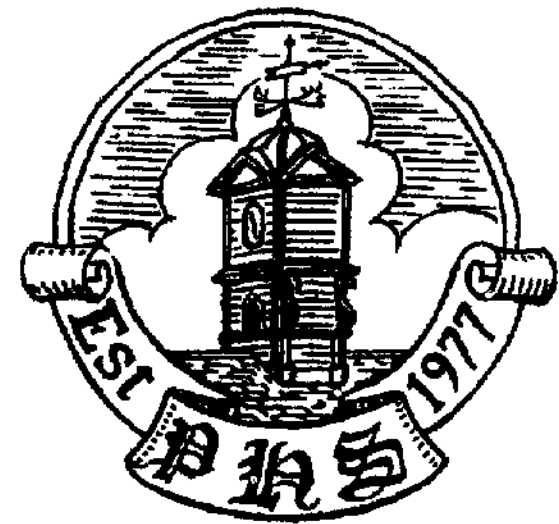


# Potton History Society



Newsletter Number 33

Autumn 2002

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## Potton History Society Committee:-

Chairman	George Howe
Secretary	Jean McLennan
Treasurer	Anita Lewis
Programme/Publicity Secretary	Peter Ibbett
Committee Members	Ernie Wood
	Ken Lawson
Newsletter Editors	Mr & Mrs Leigh

For access to the archives in our research rooms  
just telephone the key-holders,

Mr G. Howe ..... Potton 260935  
Mr K Lawson ..... Potton 261209  
Mrs J McLennan..... Potton 261867

## Acknowledgements:-

Our thanks to the following for their continued support by  
advertising our meetings;  
Lindsay's Bakery,  
Tysoe's Hardware Store,  
Harper's Barber Shop.  
Potton Library  
Potton Post Office

## Society News

The **April** meeting featured the story of one man in the last war. Pamela Ormerod had researched the experiences of her father, Sidney Cookson in the RAF, and with her husband Albert presented a series of slides that illustrated the hard work needed behind the scenes as an aircraft maintenance officer to enable front line flyers to keep in the air. Sidney worked with units in England before being posted overseas. Careful research was able to identify the ship on which he sailed to Durban before postings in Egypt and in Palestine. The talk brought to life the wartime spirit of working together in a common cause and also the logical effort required to organise the movement of men and equipment from England around the world.

At the **May** meeting George Howe and Peter Ibbett used archive material to look back at previous Jubilee celebrations in the town. Photographs from the 1977 celebrations showed a procession wending its way to the Church, and a medieval fair on the Market Square. Special events throughout the week raised profits of well over £500 creating a trust fund which stimulated the setting up of our Society and the publication of three volumes of Pictures of Potton which are still available. The second part of the evening looked back to the 1935 Jubilee when Pottonians celebrated in style with a range of ornate floats. The celebrations also included the handing over of the deeds of the new playing field in Brook End.

In **June** our annual outdoor meeting featured a walk to examine the state of the chimney pots of the parish. One part of the work of the Society is to develop an appreciation of the architectural heritage of the town. Two groups carried out some simple survey work and discovered that there is a rich and varied collection of chimney stacks and pots in the town, very few of which are called upon to convey smoke into the atmosphere in the 21st Century. Returning to the community centre members were able to compare the current collection of chimney pots with those in the past by examining part of the archive collection of photographs.

For our local evening in **July**, Peter Ibbett compiled a quiz on Gamlingay using documents and photographs from our own archives.

Items included Sport's programmes from before the 1<sup>st</sup> World War and a minute book from the 1953 Coronation Celebration committee as well as more recent newsletters and photographs. Copies of Parish documents revealed some of the hardships faced by ordinary folk in sickness and in health. Old maps showed changes in names within the parish and its development. A document written by Jim Brown in the 1980's captured some of the local dialect or 'GAMGY' talk.

David Couzens entertained us in **August** with an illustrated talk on the life of landscape gardener, Lancelot (Capability) Brown. He came from a very poor family and began as a mere gardeners boy. By the time he reached the height of his fame, every wealthy landowner had to have at least part of his land redesigned by Brown, a process which encompassed the re-routing of streams to create the essential lake and even moving entire villages if they should mar the view. Amazingly, his prowess as a designer also led to Capability Brown becoming a confidante to the aristocracy and even to the King.

In **September**, Alan Flowerday told us about his great great grandfather, Charles J Hercock, who ran a printing business in Potton Market Square from the 1870's through to 1902. Charles and his younger brother William, an ambitious London trained printer, produced a local newspaper, 'The Potton Journal', for part of this period but sadly, following Williams early death, publication soon ceased. Mr Flowerday has kindly donated a collection of material from his researches to the Society Archives, including copies of the Potton Journal previously unseen by us.

### Cemetery Project

When in the late 90's my brother-in-law, Keith Lawrence, and I became involved in the recording of gravestones at the Sandy Road Cemetery, I hadn't the slightest idea that I could get so interested and concerned about this project. When, eventually, all the gravestones had been recorded and checked I became interested in the remainder of the burials which had no memorials. With help from Mrs Mayne and other records from Norman Parry, I built up a record of all recorded burials since the cemetery was opened in 1882. I have since kept an up-to-date list of all burials and cremations at our cemetery.

I have been asked on several occasions for help from relations of the deceased to trace their ancestors and realised that an alphabetical list would be an enormous help in this research. After several weeks of sifting through my existing records, I have finally completed this. The local library have a copy of this, also the cemetery caretaker and Mrs Mayne for their records.

When we visited the Annual Conference of the Local History Societies at Riseley this year, we were shown a copy of a report compiled by Mr and Mrs Jim Crow listing the memorials of their cemetery in a type of book format. This seemed to us a good idea worth copying and I resolved to try and do it for our records.

All the 'yellow cards' which we had completed for the original survey had been sent to the record Office at Bedford and eventually, with help from Trevor Ball, they were finally located still in their unopened container gathering dust. I was able to borrow them for an indefinite period and I am now in the process of recording well over 2000 memorials for the future generations of Potton. So far I have managed almost 800, so I have a long way to go. I believe that this is a well worth task as many of the stones we recorded four or five years ago are now almost unreadable.

K.W.Lawson, July 2002

### Internet News

Three recent contacts illustrate how Pottonians have spread to all corners of the globe:-

Layna Jan Wilson ([ljanwils@shaw.ca](mailto:ljanwils@shaw.ca)) in Vancouver, Canada would love to hear from anyone connected with the Chapman family. Her great-great-great-great-grandfather (!) John George Chapman was born at Brook House in 1819. He was one of 13 children born to William and Mary Chapman. Another member of the family, Thomas Daniel Chapman (born Potton 1814) went on to be Premier and President of Tasmania. Has any Pottonian risen higher in the world?! Mrs Yates has provided information about the Chapman's which may feature in another newsletter.

Heather Keith ([hmkkr@abacom.com](mailto:hmkkr@abacom.com)) from the Quebec area writes:- 'The Potton in which I live does not appear on maps, though it is the legal name of the municipality. It is the same township (canton) as set out in the 1790's. It is on the US border just north of Vermont and is roughly 100 square miles in area. It seems that the townships were named by British Surveyors and the one next to Potton (to the west) is Sutton. The permanent population of the entire area is around 1800 with a large seasonal population attracted by the ski hill called Owl's Head and a wonderful lake 30 miles long called Memphremagog, (an Abenaki word meaning 'vast expanse of water') The local website is ([www.townshipheritage.com](http://www.townshipheritage.com)), Heather would love to learn more about Potton, England.

Suzanne Day of Auckland, New Zealand, ([suzied@xtra.co.nz](mailto:suzied@xtra.co.nz)) had an ancestor by the name of John Spicer who lived in Potton around 1794. She would like to contact any Spicer relatives. She discovered some information about John Spicer, draper, of Potton by looking up the Bedfordshire and Luton Archives using her internet connection in New Zealand!

John Spicer was the Superintendent of Potton Market in 1816 and was responsible for maintaining 'order and regularity'. Item QSR/22/1816/197 records that 'Wm Fowler, late a private soldier came drunk into the market place and broke down trusses and stands. He again came in the same condition the following week. From the stall of Jn Pyatt he took garden seeds and threw them on the ground and mixed them together. JP applied to JS for protection; JS sent for the constable, John Page, who took him into custody but soon afterwards released him on promise he would go away. He went away but soon returned to JP's stall where he threatened to kick JP 'over the wall'. James Ingle, Butcher, was then assaulted and eventually WF was put into the cage 'a strong brick building' by the constable. He was safe inside at 10pm but the cage was broken open during the night and he had disappeared. He was brought before a justice four days later.'

Local History has become International Local History!!

Peter Ibbett

## **Potton Celebrates Again**

### **The Queen's Golden Jubilee and Our Own Silver Jubilee**

Yes, after those great Millennium celebrations only two years ago, Potton was at it again. Although for a shorter period of time, it was most certainly as good. Could it be different? Well, the Jubilee Committee managed that as well, with a few of the more popular events being repeated because of their popularity.

How did our Potton History Society fit in to all this? It all started for us in 2001 when some of you may recall Sharon and Ally from the Jubilee Committee came to us for photographs of Potton for a fund raising Calendar for 2002. The Jubilee Committee chose the photographs, the captions were provided by Patricia Yates and they sold very well.

Nearer the time our history society was invited to hold an exhibition in a prime position in the Jubilee marquee (next to the Bar), to have a float in the Carnival on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> June and to head a mystery walk around Potton on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> June

There are always a lot of 'behind the scenes' activities for celebrations and exhibitions and it was thanks to the Committee and to you our members, for helping us to achieve our part in the Jubilee celebrations. Our artistic member Keith Lawrence made us among other things a wonderful board for our float and exhibition, complete with two flags informing us it was the Q.E.II Golden Jubilee and our P.H.S. Silver Jubilee. Armed with Keith's artistic board, artificial but realistic 'watch the birdie' camera, bunting and various signs, 10.0'clock Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> June was soon here and it was time to dress the float. The lorry, with friendly driver Ian Norbury, were loaned to us by kind permission of Mr. Kitchener.

The float represented 50 years of the Queen's reign. We kept this mostly to a local Potton theme, including "Recording History".

Maureen Wood was up the front with the old fashioned typewriter, Keith Lawrence encouraging the crowds to 'watch the birdie'. Beryl Howe and Christine Harper dressed as housewives of the 1950's complete with sweeping brush and Hoover. Ken Lawson as a shopkeeper, Vera Parry represented a lady in the dress of today. Jean McLennan was dressed in red, white and blue, in an outfit to celebrate the Queen's Golden Jubilee and our History Society's Silver Jubilee. Ernie Wood was dressed to remind us of the Tan Yard, Bob Darlow, complete with a push hoe was a market gardener. Peter Ibbett was dressed for tennis, representing sport, along with a lawn mower from Tysoe's and George Howe, what else but a railway worker.

All in place by 11.30 for judging and although we only entered to fly the flag for our History Society, we were more than pleased to receive third place. Well done all on the float and our driver Ian.

12.0'clock and hold tight, off we go with a second part of our history of Potton following our float. Yes, Mrs. Pokorova used to drive it round the streets of Potton in the 1950's. The Potton Car taking pride of place in the procession. Not being driven this time but towed on a trailer, thanks to Tony Crossley

What a lovely day, what a turn out, and what fun, yes, Potton folk know how to celebrate. The streets were lined with people and in the Market Square they were three and four deep. The Jubilee Committee were overwhelmed, so were we.

Do I hear someone saying "But if you were taking part, what of the Society's responsibilities in recording the event?" Yes, we even managed that as well, thanks to Chris Miles who took photos and video of us on the float, the procession in various places around Potton and indeed several other events during the Jubilee celebrations. On the float Vera and Peter were taking pictures of people and the streets, George was on the video.

After the procession it was all change. Not just our costumes but certain items from the float, plus many other items from our rooms. All had to be taken and placed for display at our exhibition in the marquee. Thank you all who helped with the quick manoeuvre, our ladies for doing their tea making from 3 to 5 o'clock and for all who manned our exhibition from around 12.00 to 5pm each day and from 10.30 on Tuesday.

We had the usual tent we use at the Potton Show but this time, although inside the marquee we had the canvas on to darken it inside. This was because we had a different display by showing a continuous slide show of Potton and it's people. With a few seats and being next to the bar, this very much helped bring local history and what we represent, to the people of Potton. We also had a photo display, but this time some computerised enlarged pictures of our Market Square, some 'then and now' photographs and others from our normal collection. Our own 25 years as a Society was also well represented. With space being at a premium, the Potton Car had to be outside, but this didn't deter the interest in it and thanks to the Jubilee Committee it was placed in the marquee each night for security.

Tuesday morning and it was about 10.30am. when we arrived to open our exhibition ready for those who wished to come on our Mystery Walk around Potton. The Jubilee Committee had warned me they thought a lot of people were interested. In view of this I arranged four guides. On arrival I soon was informed that one guide was not very well, so we were now three. A few people arrived and were looking around our exhibition and soon there were several more. The tea towels designed by Keith Lawrence for the occasion were selling well. By 10.50 I seemed to be walking about with a smile on my face and a funny pain in my tummy. By now there was a crowd inside and out.

With Peter Ibbert, John Lewis assisted by Jean McLennan and myself in place, with a deep breath, Peter and I chose some bales of straw conveniently placed from the previous evening's Country and

Western Show and used them as a stage. This was the easiest way to talk to a lot of people. I welcomed every one, informed them we would make three groups and introduced Peter, who gave a brief introduction to Potton's history. The people responded well in forming three groups, John and Jean went anti-clockwise round the town, Peter and I clockwise. Everyone wanted the long walk via the Church, which was open for people to see inside. The walkers came from around the country, Australia, South Africa, visiting friends and relations and also local Potton people, children and dogs who all seemed to enjoy what we showed them. It wasn't until I realised that I had about forty people in my group that we had, all told, about 120 altogether. I think we can say this was a huge success. Thank you guides and walkers.

The daytime events included Posh Picnics, Street Parties, It's a Knock Out, Cricket etc. on the playing fields, a Soapbox Derby down Bury Hill. Four different shows covering all tastes in the evenings - all fully booked. On Sunday morning the Interdenominational Service was very well attended, as was the Big Screen England football match that followed. At most of these events the participants could refresh themselves from the volunteer tea/coffee makers, or from Widow Thorpe's Ale House. It was thanks to their staff for keeping an eye on our stand when closed and thanks to all who helped and supported this Society over this period.

Just one more job, the packing up. After a few dry days during the celebrations thankfully, it did turn a little wet on Wednesday. But! what a great occasion and a huge success again. Thank you all on the Jubilee Committee.

We look forward to celebrating our Silver Jubilee with our special dinner at the John O'Gaunt Golf Club round about the time you read, or are reading this article. Here's to the next 25 years

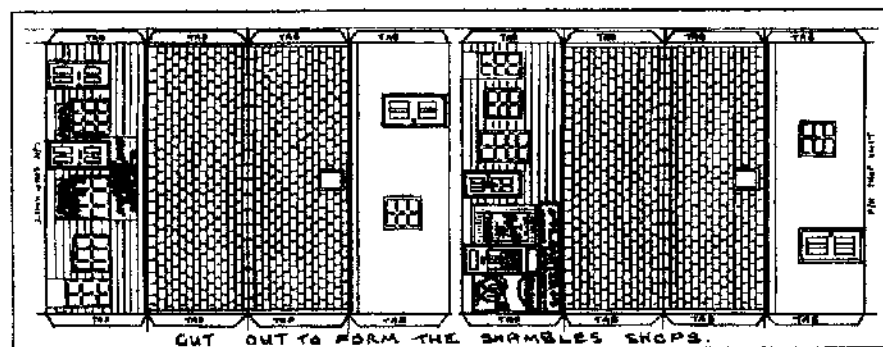
George Howe.

## My model of Potton Shambles - 1995

Not having seen the Old Shambles before you may ask what made me attempt to make a paper model of this ancient complex, now long gone. Well the reason for using paper was easy, because then I could make changes without redrawing every time I had to alter some detail or other and A4 sheet was ideal as I could soon photocopy trial cutouts, also any bigger and large flat surfaces would sag and be in need of too many stiffeners.

The other reason for making the model was more involved and was sparked off by listening to our Society's excellent speakers talking about the buildings that made up the Shambles, its central position on the town and the active part it played in its heyday, all of which fired my imagination. I began to feel that I would have liked to have walked round it, anyway that not being possible the only alternative was to make a 3-dimensional model so that I would be able to view it from any angle I care to choose.

After a couple of false starts I decided that I needed a few basic dimensions to give my model a more realistic feel to it. Enquiries to the Council drew a blank so I had to ask around and to look more closely through our archives. It was here that I was able to find my basic first clue - Bricks! Thanks to Norman, Vera and others who reproduced and enlarged excellent prints from old snaps, I was able to count the brick courses from the ground to the eaves. This gave me a positive start with 73 courses.



The horizontal number of bricks is not so straightforward because craftsmen of that period were more economical with their materials - they made every piece of brick count, unlike today where builders seem to treat bricks as two a penny. For example, when our house was renovated for the council, bricks were left scattered round my garden. I picked up all the whole bricks and stacked them neatly against the barn wall expecting them to be taken away and used on another house, but no! Thanks to the convenience of rubbish skips most reuseable materials are dumped, the bricks I stacked up neatly were left behind. Anyway it was part guess-work to count the number of full bricks along a single course and perspective will not allow a direct measurement from a photograph. I had to make several counts from various view points to arrive at a satisfactory estimate. (156 bricks).

Bricks made in those days varied in size from brickyard to brickyard, so I decided to check out the bricks in the buildings round the Market Square, I also included the thickness of the mortar. Needless to say I avoided Lloyds Bank - just in case someone thought I was casing the joint. I imagined being brought before the local magistrate and being asked what I was doing, then me pleading that I was only working out the size of the Old Shambles - and the magistrate replying, "A likely story"! Anyway after taking several measurements I eventually decided on an average brick plus mortar size of  $3\frac{1}{4} \times 4\frac{5}{8} \times 9\frac{1}{4}$  inches (82.5 mm x 117.5 mm x 235 mm). The 73 courses then gave me a height to the eaves of 20 feet (6 metres) for the two main end buildings and an overall length of 120 feet (36.5 metres) for the whole complex.

It is interesting to note here that when I copied the drawings for the earlier proposed addition to the Shambles, the view of the north elevation had on it a scale bar that indicated a length of 10 feet, when I compared this to the overall drawn length of the Shambles it worked out at 119 feet, so I was well pleased with my guesstimate!

I then set about drawing various views using the 20ft and 120ft dimensions to a scale of 1/8 ins.= 1ft. that suited my A4 paper. I then had to rely on my own assessment for the proportions of all the other details, guided by the archive photographs to achieve a visually acceptable model. However I was still unclear as to the size of the yards between the North and South buildings. A photograph taken after the old wooden section had been knocked down provided more information but there was one area I could not determine and that was the northern face of the wooden Shambles, so I decided to show that face as having long plain wooden planks. Thankfully Norman provided me with an aerial view of Potton and that showed there were two separate yards enclosed by the walled and gated passageway that led through the complex from North to South.

There were no coloured pictures of the Shambles and no-one seemed to be able to recall that aspect of my model. Paintings of buildings at the turn of the last century gave some limited clues to the basic colours of the day, so hopefully my model provides a fuller picture of 'Potton Shambles' to those of us that never saw the original structure in real life.

The added detail of the model lorry and people are as near to scale as I could purchase. The telegraph pole is made of a short brass flanged tube base with the pole made of a strip of bamboo glued into the tube. Finally whilst on holiday in Felixstowe I noticed that as the tide went out it left a gradation of sand which I collected in various sized lots for one last detail of the Shambles model, namely the paved surround of cobbles. So it just goes to prove "that graded sand makes finer cobbles!" (1/32 ins. dia).

I did not record how long it took to make but No! I did not burn the midnight oil, instead I used the matches for the wooden Shambles pillars.

Keith G. Lawrence.

## **An Appreciation of Trevor Ball**

Information from the Society's Archives is frequently quoted and used, but have you ever considered how these records have been collected, and by whom?

I would like to share with you an appreciation of the work undertaken by a founder member who served on the Committee for ten years. After spending thirty two years in Potton, Trevor Ball is moving to Sussex so that he and his wife can visit family members more easily. We must wish them both well in their new venture.

Shortly after the foundation of Potton History Society, a request was made by the Solicitor of the late Madam Pokorova, for photographs to be taken of the interior of her home, Potton Manor. Secrecy connected with the use of this property, had caused both local and national speculation since its purchase in 1946 by Otto von Smekal. After his business partner's death, the house had been burgled and damaged. It was emphasised that no information was to be given to the press, and a document to this effect had to be signed by our two photographers, Trevor Ball and Norman Parry.

There was evidence that the development of a small car had been one of the projects undertaken. Trevor, realising the potential of this discovery, suggested to the Solicitor that Michael Ware, Curator of the National Motor Museum at Beaulieu, be notified. Much interest was shown by Mr. Ware, who undertook to make enquiries among his contacts. The information obtained resulted in an illustrated talk entitled 'The Cars of Potton Manor' being given by Mr Ware to a large audience at Burgoyne School on April 24th 1986. This research work was made available to Trevor.

Further information on the activities of Smekal and Pokorova was researched, together with details of previous owners of the Manor site. Two illustrated talks were given to the Society in 1988,

followed by the publication of Research Report No. 4 - 'Potton Manor - an Enigma'. An updated edition of this fascinating saga, containing the results of Trevor's continuing research, was published in 1997.

Much excitement was aroused when films of weddings and local events, taken by George Randall in the fifties and sixties, were found in a shed. During that period the Parish Room at Brook End had been used as a small cinema and the films had been shown as popular news items. The films were cleaned and edited by Trevor and two shows were given to packed audiences in December 1979, the first of which was attended by George Randall himself. He later regaled the Committee with amusing stories of his filming days.

A grant from Eastern Arts was used to purchase 16mm film which was used by Trevor to record agricultural implements and local events, the results being added to the collection. These films have been shown during 'Pictorial Entertainment' evenings. Eastern Arts have now transferred them onto video tapes for the Society, preserving the original films on our behalf in their archives.

The transformation of fields and railway company land into housing estates and business developments was photographed stage by stage for our archives, during Trevor's many walks around the Town, sometimes at risk of life and limb from irate landowners.

A personal project was the taking of 'quiz' pictures which showed interesting building features, a number of which have now disappeared. Present day street scenes have also been photographed to enable a comparison to be made with postcard views of the early twentieth century. This work presents a 'Then and Now' theme and makes an excellent visual record of the Town's progress. Mounting boards were constructed so that the photographic collection could be more easily studied at the Society's numerous exhibitions.

Detailed illustrated studies of the lost medieval villages of Millow, Eyeworth and Edworth were presented to the Society in 1980 and 1984. This work is now held by the Heritage and Environment Department at County Hall.

From 1993, having taken early retirement, further practical help was given to the Society. Filing cabinets were painted and assistance was given in the reorganising of our ever increasing archival collection. Photographs were mounted and captioned and advice and guidance given when the photographic collection, numbering 5539 photographs, was indexed under a new system in 1998.

At a Beds. Local History Association meeting, held in February 1994, a request was made by Stephen Coleman (Head of the Heritage and Environment Department at County Hall) for field walkers. Trevor volunteered and has since visited this department on a regular basis. He became involved in field work, recording the Department's photographic collections, preparing material for displays and recording WWII Military installations in the County for the National Defence of Britain Project.

After visiting the former airfield at Tempsford with a group of people who had lost relatives when two planes collided over Deepdale on February 14th 1945, a model of a Lysander aircraft picking up an agent was made by Trevor and given to the Tempsford Museum.

On a personal level, I am most grateful for the many slides and photographs which have been produced for me as illustrations for talks and for family history research work.

It must be satisfying for Trevor to know that the results of his many varied contributions to local history will continue to be of value in perpetuity to all those who are interested in our Town and County.

Patricia R. Yates. July 2002

## If only bricks could talk: Pt 2

### The Life and Times of a Potton shop - Brick Fatigue!

Bricks are taken for granted. Created from prehistoric clay they can give character to the buildings that surround us. Those in my birthplace on the Market Square at Potton were mainly created in the late 1700's after a fire had destroyed this area of Potton. They have watched over two centuries of change and an unbroken line of Ironmongers from at least the 1830's. Most of them are still as strong as ever but the fate of one wall of bricks nearly ended the life of the building in the 1970's. From this near disaster emerged into the light of day a booklet from the 1840's which gives us an insight into the shop of that era.

The recent photograph of the building shows a passage or 'Twitchell' between it and the adjacent shop. In the middle 70's I was a newly qualified science teacher living at home with my parents. I began to be concerned about a bulge in the brickwork which was starting to appear two or three feet from the ground at the side of the shop in the passage. My father noted the problem but did not seem too concerned. Then one day a few bricks could stand the pressure no more. Just as the evening news was starting on the television and my father was preparing to enjoy a fine meal of Scottish fish which had been sent to him there was a sudden noise outside. Half of the outer wall of the side of the shop had collapsed into the passage! The passage was empty at the time and the inner and upper brickwork held firm saving the building from collapse. My father surveyed the scene and did the only sensible thing. He went back to the kitchen and finished his meal before setting about dealing with the problem!

The problem was due to converting the building from a house to a shop. Even today brickwork at the front of the shop shows where an original front door was bricked up when the building (at an unknown date) was converted into a shop. A fireplace in the lower room was removed but one in the upstairs room was left in place thus weakening the structure at ground level. Vibrations from increased

traffic in the 60's and early 70's helped to create the collapse of the outer skin of the wall.

During the rebuilding of the wall old shelving was removed from inside the shop revealing a small brown notebook from the 1840's. Hence this example of brick fatigue resulted not only in a stronger building but a rare insight into the daily sales of an Ironmonger's shop in early Victorian times.

Trade directories reveal that the shop was run by Thomas Cooper in the late 1840's. He described himself as an 'Ironmonger, Bell Hanger, Zinc, Iron plate worker and dealer in Ransome's patent ploughs'. The handwritten entries on one of the pages of his booklet illustrate the contents of the first half of the booklet. The writing is faded and not easy to decode due to the use of abbreviations.

1848	Feb 12	4 knots brass wire	3d
		2 Fine Plate Blks	1s 6d
		Reps Copper pump	10s 0d
	Feb 17	0.2.11 Bar Iron	7s 6d
	Feb 19	4.0.6 Bar Iron 12/6	£2 10s 9d
		0.3.5 1/2 In Iron	10s 4d
		2 1/4Ds Bar Copper 1/4	3s 0d
		1/2 D Copper rivets	10d
		1 Wood Rasp	1s 3d
		1 Patent Rubstone	5d
	Feb 23	6 Large Lantern Horns	2s 0d
	Mar 15	6 Snuffer springs	6d
		6 ? ? Rods	6d
	Mar 21	1 Chaff Knife	4s 6d
	Mar 27	1 1/2 Ro File	1s 2d
	Apr 6	2 ? Sheet Iron	5d
	Apr 11	25 lb 5/16 Ro	3s 6d
		1 Knot Brass wire	3d

Some of the figures will indicate size and amounts. There cannot be many authentic lists of 1847 shop prices!

13 of the 30 pages of this booklet continue in this style. A clue to the origin of these entries lies in an entry in Pigot's Trade Directory of 1830 which states that:-

*'...the neighbourhood of this town is exceedingly respectable and contains a good number of beautiful residences and wealthy inhabitants to whom may be principally ascribed the source of welfare enjoyed by those in trade here.'*

Although no clues are given in the booklet one explanation is that it is a list of items supplied to one of the nearby estates. The pages shows that Thomas Cooper provided raw materials as well as complete items. The second portion of the booklet is in a different hand and is used as a rough note pad for transfer to customers individual bills for settling at a future date. Buying on credit was not a twentieth century invention! One sample page will illustrate the change in use of the booklet:-

<i>Lee W</i>	<i>1 Knife</i>	<i>4d</i>
<i>Coxall Wm</i>	<i>Sutton</i>	<i>Pepper</i>
	<i>6 Brass Screws</i>	<i>6d</i>
	<i>Brass Pins</i>	<i>1d</i>
<i>Judd Jas</i>		<i>Adams</i>
	<i>1 ? ? Lock</i>	<i>1s</i>
<i>Pym F Esq</i>	<i>New Key Fitted</i>	
	<i>To ? Lock</i>	<i>1s</i>
<i>Hogg F</i>	<i>Sandy</i>	
	<i>1 6 Shovel</i>	
<i>Bearley</i>	<i>Woodbury</i>	
	<i>113 Fallow Ch 5/- 2 ? Locks 5/6</i>	

The entries are quick scribbled reminders and illustrate the range of customers using the shop. Mr Coxall of Sutton had sent one of his workers (Pepper) to get a few brass screws and pins. James Judd in an adjoining Market Square shop had sent his lad Adams round for a lock. A servant from the nearby Hasells Hall estate at Everton needed a new key to be credited to the account of Francis Pym Esquire whilst Mr Hogg of Sandy needed a new shovel.

The entries confirm the Trade Directory statement that the estates around the town made a significant contribution to the profits of local traders. Potton at this time had a population of nearly 1900, most of whom would have been of low income and unable to support a well stocked Ironmongers shop. The census of 1841 provides us with a list of the traders who occupied the Market Square at the time:-

George Kitchen	Baker
William Smith	Ironmonger
Thomas Cooper	Ironmonger & Brazier
Edward Masters	Corn Factor
James Judd	Draper
Jacob Allen	Gardener & Carrier
Thomas Hall	Baker
George Jarvis	Publican
David Tebbutt	Hairdresser
Charles Edwards	Baker & Farmer
William Spratt	Chemist & Druggist
James Shrosbery	Draper
John Partridge	Grocer
William Masters	Corn Merchant
William Parrott	Butcher & Farmer
Andrew Frazier	Stationer
John Tyler	Innkeeper
Charles Bond	Grocer & Druggist
William Emery	Shoemaker
Catlin Johnson	Farmer
William Peters	Carrier
Frances Kay	Bonnet Sewer
James Robarts	Merchant
David Compton	Innkeeper
Jeremiah Dison	Clock & Watch Maker

The young bricks of my childhood home would have watched the daily life of a small market town and the ebb and flow of local trade and personal relationships. Items and materials for the shop would have come and gone on the backs of the carts of local carriers such as William Peters and Jacob Allen. As the 1850's dawned talk would have been of the spread of steam and the railways and how William and Jacob would soon be out of a job.

In the next article we shall meet the next owner of the shop and find out how he used the new rail system to his advantage. We shall also learn how some of the bricks of the building sheltered a fascinating secret for over a century.

Peter Ibbett

The author would like to acknowledge the invaluable help of his colleagues in the Potton History Society and in particular Patricia Yates and Norman Parry who provided some of the original research upon which this article is based. The author can be contacted at [pjibbett@aol.com](mailto:pjibbett@aol.com).

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## **Book Review**

### **The Winter Mantle by Elizabeth Chadwick**

A work of fiction based on the true story of Countess Judith and Earl Waltheof, who were granted the lands which included the Potton Hundred by Judith's uncle, William the Conqueror. The author paints a vivid picture of the life style of the early Norman period as she weaves the historical facts concerning Judith, Waltheof and their daughter Matilda into a fascinating tale.

## **NOTICE BOARD**

### **Potton History Society Needs You!**

Another year has flown by and once again we are approaching our Annual General Meeting. Our constitution allows for eight committee members but for some time now we have had only six. In order for our Society to flourish and reach its full potential we need a strong committee at the helm so please consider giving a little of your time to this worthwhile cause.

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### **2003 Programme**

Planning is well under way for our 26th season of monthly meetings, but any suggestions are always welcome.

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### **Newsletter no. 34**

Your articles, letters, comments and memories are always most welcome. Please pass items to Vera Parry, Mary Leigh or any committee member. The deadline for copy to be included in the next issue will be 1st February 2003.