

Botton History Society



Newsletter Number 37 Autumn 2004

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Potton History Society Committee:-

Chairman	George Howe
Secretary	Jean McLennan
Treasurer	Anita Lewis
Programme/Publicity Secretary	Peter Ibbett
	Ken Lawson
	Christine Harper
Newsletter Editor	Mary 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 appreciation to Camerons Newsagents for selling our
books and to Potton Post Office for selling our tea towels.

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

Lindsay's Bakery,
Tysoe's Hardware Store,
Potton Library
Potton Post Office

Society News

At the **April** meeting Christine Harper shared with us memories of her life in Sutton. In her younger days local farm labourers would spend most of their lives in the Parish with only an occasional walk to Biggleswade to buy some clothing or to help with Brussels sprout picking. The village School has been an important part of village life with the present School expanding from its single building and cinder playground. Older children had to walk to school in Potton and would be pleased if they got a lift from a passing Bartle's Bus. Mains water replaced local wells. A range of photographs and scrapbooks illustrated changes in Sutton over the last century.

The **May** meeting welcomed Ed Burnett, Liaison Officer from the Parish Paths Partnership. The aim of the county-based initiative is to encourage more use of Parish footpaths by involving local groups and individuals in the upkeep and maintenance of our ancient footpaths. Eighty-five Bedfordshire Parishes are already in the scheme and have carried out a wide range of projects from clearing paths to producing a variety of walk leaflets.

In **June** a group of thirty members were the guests of Roxton Local History Society and were treated to an excellent guided walk around the village. The visit began inside the church with a talk on its history, other highlights of the tour were an ancient timber framed barn and the thatched chapel. After tea and cakes in the village hall we were home in time to see England lose in the World Cup.

Our attention was turned to the state of our own local footpaths at the annual outdoor meeting in **July** and thankfully fine weather allowed us to carry out our plans. Members split into three groups in order to cover as much ground as possible and took note of the general condition of the routes, signposting and wildlife as well as making a photographic record. We investigated the approach paths to Potton Wood, the path linking Biggleswade Road to Sutton Mill Road and the path from Sutton Road via Pegnut Wood to the Sheepwalk. The Society is hoping to work with the Parish Paths Partnership to produce a map or guide of local paths.

Our local evening for the **August** meeting looked at the progress of education and schools over the last two centuries. Peter Ibbett and George Howe presented the factual information from the archives. This introduction was all that was needed to trigger the memories from a large and enthusiastic audience of both members and visitors who had attended the Potton Schools. Members from other areas of the country highlighted the differences and the entire proceeding was recorded, to make a valuable addition to the archives.

Music has long been an important part of life in Potton. At our **September** meeting, Peter Ibbett used archive material to illustrate the great variety of performers who have entertained us over the years, the earliest record dating from 1867 when the Potton Penny Readings were a regular feature. Representatives from Shannon Express, the Salvation Army Band and the Marais Ensemble brought the story up to date, along with information from the audience

The Cemetery Project (continued)

I am still recording the memorials at the Sandy Road Cemetery which will always be an on-going project. In the Autumn of 2003 I was approached by the Museum Inscription Co-ordinator for Bedfordshire Family History Society, Mrs. Catherine Bentley, who had heard of my records and she asked me if I would be prepared to record my inscriptions in a revised format for their archives. I agreed without realising what a mammoth task it was going to be. Now after nearly a year I have completed the whole of the memorials both in the Sandy Road Cemetery and the Churchyard.

I was able, thanks to the programme supplied by Mrs. Bentley to obtain many interesting statistics, a few as follows. I would stress however that all the figures relate only to details from memorials, the actual deaths are much higher.

The number of deaths recorded in the Churchyard from 1602 to 1882 were five hundred and fifty-four with an average age of deaths at forty-seven and a half, whilst the Sandy Road figures from 1882 to 2003 were two thousand, one hundred and thirty two, average age sixty-seven and a half.

The frequency of surnames was interesting; the Churchyard list Smith as the most with thirty-five, followed by Edwards with twenty-nine and Raymond with twenty-five whilst the Sandy Road make Hutchinson the highest with sixty-nine, followed by Dennis with forty-six and Richardson forty-four.

Male forenames list John as the most popular with one hundred and thirteen listed, William seventy and James forty-seven in the Churchyard and William one hundred and forty-four, George one hundred and nineteen and John one hundred and ten in Sandy Road. Females list exactly the same in both cemeteries, Mary (eighty/one hundred and one), Elizabeth (seventy-two/seventy-four) and Ann (seventy-one/fifty-nine).

All the inscriptions of both cemeteries have been recorded and I have printed those which I felt most interesting and unusual. These can be seen on display at future meetings of the History Society together with other statistics.

Ken Lawson. August 2004.

Forthcoming programme

- | | | |
|----------------------|--|--------------|
| Oct 28 th | What People had in their houses
1600-1700
The Local History Writer and researcher from Ashwell provides an insight into daily life in the times of the Stuarts and Cromwell | David Short |
| Nov 25 th | 7.30 start for AGM followed by
Potton and the 1901 Census
A full transcription of the local census together with photographs of the era will enable us to walk around the town in 1901 | Peter Ibbett |
| Dec 9 th | Digital Pictorial Entertainment –
Festive Refreshments
A selection of pictures old and new provided from the expanding Potton History Society Digital Archives. | |

Letters

Re - Spring 2004 Newsletter No. 36 and the article 'Two Peters of Potton', referring to the newsletter No 4 in 1983.

When Mrs. Yates had been passed an enquiry from Sutton, Quebec, Canada, I had already mentioned this story in Newsletter No 30, Spring 2001.

I was working as a postman in Potton delivering to Sutton and I handled a letter addressed to the Mayor of Sutton, Sandy, England. It was my job to return such mail "not known", but it had come a long way from Canada to be sent back so I thought about it and delivered it to Mr. Ream at Portobello Farm, as he was the Chairman of Sutton Parish Council, which was as near to the Mayor of Sutton as I could think of. Mr. Ream was a friend of mine and we had been in Potton Home Guard together. I stayed with him as he opened the letter, he felt entitled to read it and inquisitive as to what was inside. It was from a Mr. Eberot of Sutton, near Potton in Canada asking for information about Sutton. He had a Museum and he wanted to know about the Burgoyne family. It seemed that one of the Burgoynes was an officer in the British Army in the late 1800s when we took Quebec from the French.

This was the letter that Mr. Ream passed to Mrs. Yates. So that was how the connection started.

Bob Darlow
Retired Postman.

Thanks, Bob, for the additional information on that story and apologies for overlooking your previous report. By the way, I can't wait to read your memories of Potton Home Guard. We have never had any first hand information about it from anyone before. Ed.

Party on! Potton - 2004.

Yes, Potton has been at it again, complete with the Marquee. The community spirit lives on, and your History society, with the enormous help from its members joined in the 'Party on! Potton'.

On Saturday morning of the August Bank Holiday it was off to Ben Kitchener's yard to dress the float around 9 am. This time, after enquiring as to the possibility, I decided we would have the Potton car on the float as part of the scene. The theme this time was Holidays. It was a little difficult to get the car on one of Ben's low loaders we specially asked for. But with his expertise, placing our trailer on some blocks to make it higher to make the transfer and Brian Ritchie in his Jeep with a rope to the car, we slowly and carefully eased it onto the low loader.

The difficult task over, and with our other members arriving, we set about the task of dressing the float. We decided our holiday would be "picnics", with a spot of fishing. This was displayed in five stages along the float. At the front Ernie and Maureen, with their grand-daughter Rachel who supplied a real picnic and kept the wolf from the door for all of us, very welcoming. Next was Jean, and her grand daughter Olivia. Sitting on the drop of the trailer to the low part were Bob and Chris Miles son Alex, who had an enormous fish on their line from the blow up paddling pool below. Beryl and myself were next. The Car placed back to front was next making a centre scene for a 1950's picnic setting where Brian and Jenny were dressed for that period, sitting in their deck chairs, complete with a wind up gramophone and playing 78 records. Each group had a picnic set, or hamper.

Judging was performed at 11.30. by Anita, and John Lewis. There were several floats, two traction engines, a car, and red double Decker London bus. We came joint second with Sutton W.I. Well done team.

Our involvement on the Sunday was to display information about our society and a few photo's. Peter supplied the relevant information and digi-photo's which were placed on our small display boards in the Marquee.

On Monday at 10am the Potton mystery walk began at the marquee. Peter, John and myself were the guides, with Christine in charge of our sales department. About 40 people arrived, all ages, including some children. I welcomed every one and explained the procedures and Peter gave an introductory talk. We split into three groups and proceeded around Potton in differing directions keeping the parties apart. The weather was kind to us, and in about 1½ hours we all returned for tea or coffee, and hopefully a few book sales, which we did achieve. A few minutes back in the marquee and a large shower started. We were lucky and we all had a good time.

So ended our societies involvement in the week end party. I would like to say a big thank you to all of you who helped.

This, however, was only part of the party. There were many day time activities including skate board competitions, Mountain bike displays, Posh pick-nick, Soap box Derby down Bury Hill and Potton's own Olympics. The evening entertainment was up to its usual high standard. Saturday night it was time again to dance, or listen to the German band "Sounds Express". Sunday night the all time favourite, fully booked five weeks before the event, giving local talent a chance, and what local talent we have, "Stars in Your Eyes". Monday night was time to shout Ye-Ha, as it was "Country and Western" night complete with the Bucking Bronco, shooting gallery, a card trickster, even some line dancing, and of course a live band.

Thank You, the "Party on! Potton" committee. You have all done Potton proud once again bringing out the community spirit. A Good Time was had by All.

George Howe

Sutton Packhorse Bridge

Pt2 – St Ives and its Fair

In the last article (see newsletter no 35) we introduced the packhorse trade and set Sutton Bridge in a possible context. We saw that the bridge had typical packhorse bridge characteristics and identified a possible route running from St Ives, passing through Sutton and on to Ashwell. But before we look closer at Sutton it is worth reviewing the background to St Ives and Ashwell. First let us look at St Ives.

Before 1110 St Ives did not exist. The area which was to become St Ives was part of the manor of Slepe (the name derives from an old English word meaning 'muddy, low lying ground'). In 1110 the Abbot of Ramsey who owned the manor of Slepe was granted a charter by Henry 1 to hold a fair at Easter and the site of this fair was given The name St Ives when the bones of St. Ivo, a supposed Persian Bishop, were discovered in the area. Later other fairs and markets were also established in the town.

St Ives fair was destined to become a major event in the British commercial calendar and was ranked one of the four great medieval fairs in the country. This fair, which typically lasted between 1 and 2 weeks, reached its peak in the late 13th and early 14th centuries when many foreign merchants attended. Merchants are recorded from such places as Flanders, Ypres, Poperighe, Ghent, Brabant, Malines, Amiens, St Omer, Artois and Douia. English merchants also came to trade, not only from London and neighbouring towns such as Huntingdon, Godmanchester, Cambridge, Bury St Edmunds and Ely but also from more distant places such as Lincoln, York, Beverly, Leicester, Coventry and Hereford.

A great part of the trade was in cloth, wool and hides. The cloth trade was greatly stimulated by Henry 111's large purchases of robes

for the liveries of the royal household. In 1262 for example, he pledged silver vessels to the value of £600 to merchants of Douai, Ypres and Liege for purchases at the fair. In 1237 he bought 1,100 ells* of green and murray† cloth for knights, 180 ells of murray for clerks, 340 ells of murray and green for serjeants‡, 40 course borel§ gowns for grooms, 160 ells of murray and green for ladies and damsels, 80 ells of scarlet cloth and 18 hoods, as well as finer stuffs, furs and wax.

Such purchases continued throughout his reign as well as those of Edward 1 and Edward 11. The bulk of stuffs bought were so great that in 1223 the king required the prior of St Ives to provide a 'house' within the priory for their safekeeping, and in 1242 he provided the prior with ten oaks with which to make in the priory a wardrobe for the cloths and other things purchased for the royal household.

Such an event as the St Ives fair would act as a magnet, whose influence in the local economy would be felt many miles away. Certainly any dealer in wool or cloth in East Bedfordshire or North Hertfordshire would feel compelled to trade at this fair.

Don Hill
Biggleswade History Society

*ell: a length of about 45 inches

†murray: the colour of a mulberry, purple-red

‡serjeant: a court official whose status was roughly
equivalent to a knight

§borel or burel: a type of broadcloth

The Sod. Trodden by Ancient Feet.

My allotment plot, to the east side of the old Saxon Settlement (on the old Stratton Park Estate, Biggleswade) and east of the old 'Romanway' North Road, gently slopes down to the brook at the bottom of the incline. The fields beyond the brook rise up to the open vista of the countryside and on to the horizon that greets the morning sunshine.

The brook flows northwards across the farmland fields and then skirts round the edge of Biggleswade Common as far as Bunker's Hill that fronts part of the R.S.P.B grounds. The brook then flows west along the southern edge of the Camp and Galley Hill heading for it's union with the River Ivel on the west side of the old Great Northern Railway line (strange that 'Railway' echoes the 'Romanway' – whereas in the U.S.A. they call it 'Railroad'). Both tracks cross the ford at Stratford as they head north. Just before Sandy Station they diverge and the Romanway heads North by North East. Along it's new heading it passes between Caesar's Camp on the left and the Swading plantation on the right then through the gap to Hasell Hedge. Excavations in the area of the Cemetery, Potton Road, Sandy unearthed a Roman Settlement. (Details of the finds can be seen at the Sandy Council Offices and in the book 'Roman Sandy').

Upstream from the allotments the brook meanders south on the eastern slope to Edworth, with the Romanway on the western slope rising up to the summit of Topler's Hill.

Surely, from the crest, a welcome sight met the eyes of the Centurion and his Legion as they headed northwards. Spread before them the vista of open Roman farmland in the foreground with the wooded (Sandy) hills as a backdrop, with the meandering River (Ivel) flowing across willow strewn water meadows on either side and their narrow Romanway heading for the ford (Stratford) and the gap in the hills.

Smoke from the fires at the camp and the settlement (Sandy) curling up and over the tree topped hills. To the left of the River more smoke drifted up from the potter's kiln (near Upper Caldecote). They marched downhill through the villa farm estate, (site of my allotment). This supplied wheat, part dried in ovens before being threshed, carted by heavy oxen-drawn farm wagon along with other goods – such as native apples, Roman plums, pears, carrots and celery; they extended Britain's choice at that time – to provide for the service settlement and Caesar's Camp (on Sandy Pinnacle) where, at last, respite lay ahead after the long day's march from the Welwyn Villa complex.

How different it was then from how is it today. Our maps show at a glance many points of detail that enable us to accurately know our whereabouts relating to the many structures and features across our field of view. Not so then, however, they did point the way by building their roads as direct and straight as possible so that the terrain, hills and valleys kept them along a familiar course. Also their daily distance on the march measured out each route per day from place to place, with villas, farming settlements and all the ancillary requirements to maintain their lifestyle pointing out the direction along the way. Although they did have a route map of sorts. All this to-ing and fro-ing by the Romans and Saxons passed me by as I diligently turned the sod on my new plot in 1999. The wet, soggy soil that first year was heart breaking but I stuck to it (you might say) and eventually I had turned over every spit.



"I get the feeling I'm being watched."

My First Finds.

Any odd thing that caught my eye I picked up, along with the many large stones that would help consolidate the muddy access tracks. These oddities I examined closely and I found many old service buttons from World War II. There was little doubt in my mind that these items must have come in with the discarded and shredded service uniforms together with shoddy from the woollen trade. It was used by the farmers as a boost to their soil and being organic it would rot down as a natural fertiliser, also it helped retain moisture during the hot summers. The metallic remains are the only clue to this practice, the natural fibres having long gone. Mainly artificially manufactured fertilisers are today's answer to enhanced fertility and productivity – the many discarded plastic bags that litter the headlands are clues to its use, although not all farmers are as thoughtless.

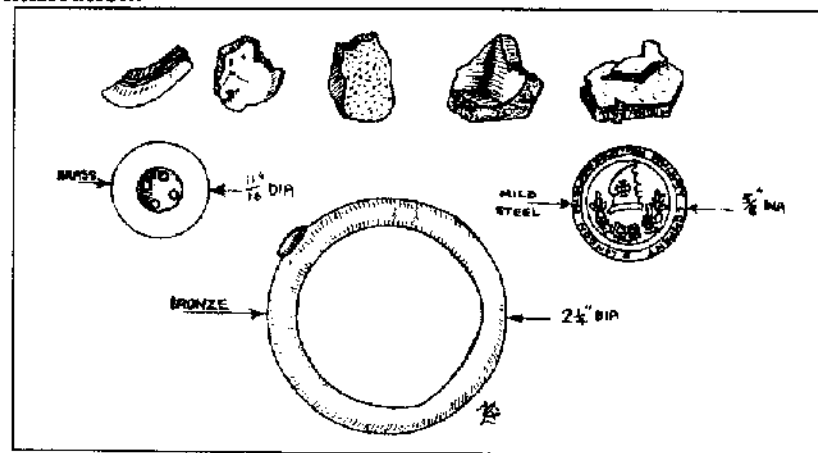
One different button turned up one day and on being cleaned and its embossed detail being lightly burnished I found it was a railway uniform button from the London, Midland and Scottish Railway Company. It was made of mild steel and very rusty. It could have once shone with a brilliant chrome finish – unlike the service buttons where the brush and Brasso must have made the base metal shine like gold, they were coated with verdigris.

One more up to date metallic disc turned out to be a 1979 U.S.A. one cent coin. It had Abraham Lincoln's head embossed on the obverse side with the words "In God We Trust" and "Liberty". On the reverse side; strange to say, the images are upside down to the other side, but if flipped over – top to bottom – both images appear the right way up (Exactly the same as a Roman coin, which I found much later). On the reverse face the wording reads 'United States of America, One Cent'. The main central stamping is of a twelve pillar colonnaded building on a plinth like base with the words above in Latin 'E. PLURIBUS UNUM' (one out of many) motto of the U.S.A. Dare I say 'Found, IBIDEM' (In the same place) – where the Romans once trod.

The Saxon Settlement at the Stratton Biggleswade site was still being excavated and recorded by the archaeologists from St. Mary's old Church in Bedford. It was a fairly extensive dig and a temporary site building was erected on the northern limits of the area, here the recorders were at work with their on-site detailed recording.

The hard work I had put in on my new allotment over the winter and spring of that first year was now beginning to bear the fruits of my labour. The new peas, carrots and potatoes were being harvested with relish and the hoeing, weeding and digging continued to nurture my crops. Also a few more artefacts began to show up as I turned over each sod. They were only small shards of pottery, but how old were they? Were they Saxon, or much earlier?

I decided to take the shards over to the archaeologists in their portakabin. I was delighted to be told that the shards were from the Roman period, so I let them keep those so that confirmation of their origin could be better assessed at their headquarters. They duly recorded my details, my plot number thirteen (unlucky for some! Not for me, I felt well pleased). This was closely followed by finding a bronze like harness ring, this was also handed in for identification.



To be continued

Keith Lawrence

Bazaar At Potton

News item from the local paper of 1898

Preparation is now in hand for the display by the History Society for the Potton Show for 2004. This article gives details of how Pottonians enjoyed their leisure in 1898.

It was in 1837 that the foundation stone of the Congregational Church was laid in Potton and the building was completed in the following year, thus its Jubilee has been attained and to commemorate it some of the friends about 18 months ago thought it desirable to renovate the place and get the manse, which is close by, thoroughly repaired. With this object in view efforts have since been made, chiefly by holding lectures, to obtain the money necessary for the work. Between £500 and £600 is estimated to be required. Towards this sum the congregation among themselves have raised £115 which amount has been considerably augmented by the sums received from the lectures and subscriptions. To further increase the amount a Bazaar was arranged and this took place under most favourable conditions on Thursday in the pretty grounds of Granville House kindly lent by Mrs Foskett. The weather was all that could be desired and the attractions so many and various to tempt the visitors to spend money but that was ample opportunity to enable promoters to realize their hope that the effort would further increase the amount to £200.

The scheme undertaken includes the re-seating and re-ventilating of the Chapel which, by the way, has once been enlarged by the addition of galleries since it was built; to put in new windows; refurbish the schoolroom and repair the manse. The stalls were arranged in tents upon the lawn, the only exception being the fancy stall and bran tub which were located under a large cedar tree and a large Japanese umbrella.

During the afternoon and evening half hour concerts of vocal and instrumental music took place in the schoolroom. These were arranged by Miss Dunkley. The Band being composed as follows:-

<i>Violins</i>	-	<i>Miss Dunkley</i>
		<i>Miss E Robarts</i>
		<i>Miss L Robarts</i>
		<i>Miss F Bungham</i>
<i>Cello</i>	-	<i>Mr W Bond Smith</i>
<i>Double Bass</i>	-	<i>Mr W Robarts</i>
<i>Mandolins</i>	-	<i>Miss Woodman</i>
		<i>Mrs Bingham</i>

A washing competition took place under the direction of Mr John Robarts, who returned from America on Tuesday. The prizes being given by those well known and enterprising soap makers, Messrs Lever Bros. The first prize was a handsome case of electro-plated teaspoons and tongs value 15/- and the second a quarter gross of Sunlight soap. Then there was a gentleman's hat trimming competition and both these events, it is needless to add, were a source of much interest and amusement to the spectators. The Potton Brass Band was in attendance and played selections from the balcony.

The Opening Ceremony was at 2 o'clock and this took place on the lawn. The National hymn 'Lord While for all Mankind we Pray' was sung and then the Reverend G Goodwin of Blunham offered prayer. On behalf of the Church, Mr C Bond Smith next welcomed Mrs James Hall, who then responded by expressing the great pleasure it gave her to be present and the hope that the sale would be as successful as expected. She remarked upon the skilful hands that had been used in bringing about much that was for disposal at the Bazaar and trusted that the friends would soon be able to complete the renovation they had undertaken. After duly declaring the Bazaar open she proceeded to make the first purchase.

In the evening the grounds were illuminated.

Jean McLennan

An Interesting Will.

Richard Lee, described as a gent of Potton and as an attorney of Barnards Inn, London, lived in Potton where nine of his children were baptised between 1670 and 1686 and where three of them were buried as infants and one at the age of twelve. Richard died in 1708 possibly aged about sixty and was buried in Potton as also was his son Robert who died at the age of forty in 1715.

A document (now catalogued in the Record Office as WG200/5) reported to have been seen by Samuel Luke in 1744 was an abstract relating to the purchase of an estate by Richard Lee and his wife Mary about 1685 from Sir St. John Moore and his son. Whether this included the Potton property is not clear. The same series of documents also has references to the Luke family in the Colmworth area from 1545, when Nicholas Luke was one of the Barons of the Exchequer, and to other Potton families, the Langhorns and the Halfhyses.

Richard Lee's will was made on 13 April 1707 and is worth summarising :-

To son Matthew - all freehold and copyhold estate in Potton and Biggleswade except the dwelling house in Potton - rent charge of £1. 3s. 4d. issuing out of Monk's Mead in Caldecott, Northill.

To son Robert - dwelling house in Potton; household goods; ladders and planks in the barn; floor of boards over the stable with bins and partitions in the granaries and outhouses; saddles, horse gear, ploughs, harrows, dragrake, skreen bushels, farm skreen, garden implements - farm at Honeydon, Eaton Socon and arable land, meadow and close belonging thereto, occupied by John Bruce and a cottage let with the farm.

To John Harvey of Ickwell Bury, Northill, Esq. - in trust, farm and arable land, meadow and close at Chawston in the parish of Roxton and Eaton Socon, occupied by John Lovell. Rents to be paid to son Robert then the farm to go his (Robert's) children, if Robert died childless to testator's grandson Richard.

To daughter Termaria Luke - a monetary bequest on trust, the interest to be paid to her until her father-in-law settles land on her to bring in an annuity. Then the capital to be paid to testator's son-in-law, Samuel Luke.

To John Harvey - farmhouse, arable, meadow and pasture land in Roxton, Beds. in occupation of George Child, in trust, to pay the rents to daughter Termaria and after her death to her heirs until their age of 21 when the farm was to be conveyed to them.

To grandson, Richard Lee - a messuage called Dixies in Eaton Socon, occupied by William Rose; a close of pasture at Eaton Townsend next Wyboston, late occupied by Robert Sibley, three closes at Hoindon (Honeydon) or Overstaplie (Staplow) in Eaton Socon, late occupied by Thomas Luffe now let to Thomas Wilson, smith; messuage and eleven acres of arable in Hoindon or Overstaplie occupied by Thomas Wilson; close of pasture at Hoindon occupied by Joseph Saunders; cottage, close and land lying about Overstaplie, Eaton Socon now occupied by Richard Darlow. Legatee to pay annuity to testator's daughter, Ann Nodes.

To grandson Robert, should Termaria die without issue or issue die before the age of 21 - George Child's farm at Roxton.

To brothers Christopher and William, - money to buy rings, (*mourning rings*). Brother William forgiven debts. To daughters, sons, daughter-in-law and sons-in-law, money to buy mourning.

To Richard Cater, to whom testator is trustee - £200.

To servant Ann Clarke, - messuage in Church Lane, Roxton, for life, after her death to grandson Robert Lee; monetary bequest; bed bedding and bedstead in the little chamber over the parlour; pillion and cloth (*probably a special saddle*) and silver porringer with letters ASML on the handle and one silver spoon; money to buy mourning: if she predeceased testator the monetary bequest to go to her brother Thomas Clarke. She may stay in the house at Potton for three months if she pleases.

To the poor of Potton, a monetary bequest to be distributed half in bread and half in money to 25 of the poorest whom the minister at Potton and Mr. Thomas Halfhyde think fit.

To grandson Richard Lee, study and books, son Robert to have the use of them till grandson reaches 21 years.

To John Harvey, money to buy a ring.

To son Matthew (executor) and his wife Ann, the residue.

To six gents who hold up the pall, rings.

To the minister of Potton, a guinea to preach the funeral sermon.

Witnesses:- Alexander Atkinson, Henry Odell, and Robert Cremer.

14 February 1707/8.

Codicil added 13 April 1708

"By reason of my son Robert's undutifulness to me I did cut him shorter in my will than I designed and for his frequent repetitions of swearing, claiming as soon as I am dead he will make the Devil to doe ". Testator then revokes the bequest of the dwelling house in Potton etc. and the study and contents and leaves them to his grandson Richard.

Witnesses Richard Read, Robert Hoslett and Jasper Brydall.

The grandchildren referred to in the will were the children of Richard's younger son Matthew who lived at Clifton. The eldest son, Robert appears to have been a bit of a rogue, in 1711 there was a petition to obtain his release from prison where he had been detained for a debt of £400 due on a bond to Matthew which should have been repaid in 1709. Matthew married Margaret the daughter of William Rudd of Biggleswade in 1695 and by 1709 when he made his will there were five children living and another expected. Matthew died in November 1709 aged 35 and Margaret married Henry Wheatley, the vicar of Shillington in February 1710. The expected 'child' was in fact twin girls born in April 1710 but neither lived more than a few days. A further tragedy occurred in June of that year when Margaret's twelve year old son was killed by lightning. It was Henry and Margaret who obtained judgement against Robert in 1711 for the £400 but whether he paid up before his death in 1715 is not documented.

In his will Matthew left to his son Richard a copyhold messuage, lands and tenements held of the manors of Biggleswade and Biggleswade Fordinge and also of the manors of Potton Rectoria and Potton Much Manured and Dixies Farm referred to in his father's will. The major part of the property went to Margaret to enable her to bring up the children. Richard, eldest daughter Ann, two other sons Robert and Edward, daughter Mary and an unborn child. There were monetary bequests to the children with the exception of Richard who was well provided for in the way of land and property.

Richard's daughter Ann was baptised in Potton on the 6th Sept. 1681. There is a marriage, also in Potton of a Mr. George Nodes, junior and a Mrs. Ann Lee on the 30th Sept. 1695, no reference to any other marriage with the same names has been found. The Lee family had some status in the community and in the registers are always referred to as Mr. or Mrs. as the case may be. Here Ann is probably called Mrs. meaning mistress a term applied to both married and single ladies at the time. The problem remaining is Ann's age. There is no reason to doubt her baptism date, nine family members were baptised at regular intervals from 1670 until 1686 indicating that there were no long delays between birth and baptism. If this is so then Ann was only fourteen when she married. It may be that all the baptisms were delayed and the only way to check this would be to find the marriage date for Ann's parents Richard and Mary.

A son, the second child of George and Ann was born on the 18th of November 1698 at Southill and was baptised George at Potton on the 14th of December. The Southill registers give the 14th Nov. and the 15th Dec for these two events. There were eight other baptisms in Southill of children of George and Ann, the first in July of 1696 and the last in February. One of these was of Termaria Nodes in Dec. 1702, she married Thomas Tidd at Potton in September 1735.

N. Parry

The Churchyard Wall

Earlier in the year the Churchyard wall of the Parish Church has been replaced and this work was carried out by the Potton Town Council who are responsible for all repairs as the wall is part of a closed churchyard.

The Council tried to obtain grants and financial help from many quarters, including the Church but there was no help available except from the Potton Charities. The cost of the wall was inflationary because the Diocese of St Albans insisted that the Council needed a 'Faculty' permission to proceed from the Diocese and needed to employ the services of an Architect of their choosing. This was done and the tender for the work was won by Bruce Hutchinson and Son, a local builder.

Before the work could commence, a sub group of the Town Councillors and the then Town Clerk, Lesley Mayne, had a meeting with Richard Lawrence of the Ivel Valley Countryside Agency to discuss what to do about the snails. These snails are protected and live near or on the Churchyard wall. They are the size of a pin head. It was agreed that the environmentalists would come and remove the lichen from the wall in which the snails might be living and take it away while the work was being done and then return it to the wall after the work was completed. This was done.

Anita Lewis

The Cylindrical Whorl Snail

The importance of the Potton population of the Cylindrical Whorl Snail cannot be under-estimated as it is one of only three known locations in Britain of a nationally vulnerable species that is found in only a handful of locations in the whole of Europe. The snail is only 2mm long and 1mm wide. It is pale golden to dark brown in colour with a silky texture. It appears from old records that the species was once more common on this site. The continued protection of this population is vital.

Extracts from an article by Richard Lawrence, who can be contacted on 01767 316358.

NOTICE BOARD

Sutton History Society

Further information on this newly formed Society can be obtained by visiting the website at suttonbedforshire.co.uk.

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AGM 2004

Once again we have reached that time of year when we offer all of you the chance to become one of our merry band of committee members. If you would like to take advantage of this unique opportunity let us have your nomination paper as soon as possible, or just have a word with any existing committee member.

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Newsletter no. 38

Your articles, letters, comments and memories are always most welcome, no matter how short or long. Please pass items to Vera Parry, Mary Leigh or any committee member. The deadline for copy to be included in the next issue is 1st February 2005.