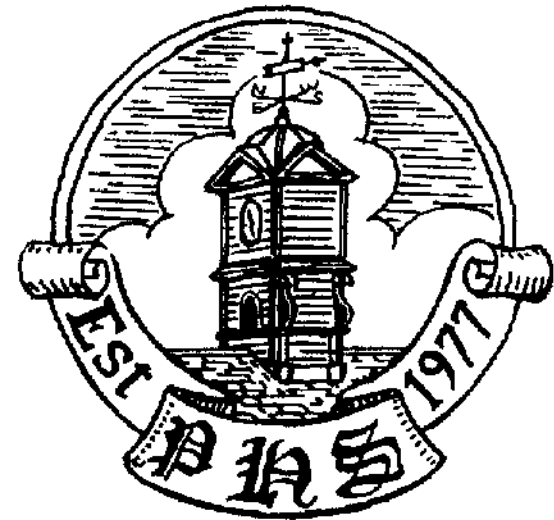


# Potton History Society



Newsletter Number 48 Spring 2010

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## NOTICE BOARD

### **Welcome to New Members**

The Committee of Potton History Society extend a warm welcome to all recently joined members and hope that they will enjoy the varied programme of monthly meeting arranged for 2010.

### **[www.pottonhistorysociety.com](http://www.pottonhistorysociety.com)**

Don't forget to have a look at the new web site. You may be able to point out something that has been overlooked. You may learn something new about the town. The society needs to hear members views and comments.

### **Newsletter no. 49**

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 August 2010.

## Society News

The **October** meeting featured society member Sean Hendy and his research into the results of the 1851 Religious Census for Bedfordshire. This was organised to find out how religion was coping with the expansion of towns and the move of labour away from villages to industrial jobs. It revealed that the established church was struggling to keep up with national changes and that Catholic and non-conformist groups were attracting greater numbers than had been thought. The Baptists were strong in Bedfordshire with Methodism on the increase. At Potton the vicar reported an average congregation of 550 whilst the local Methodists claimed 300 for their morning service with the Independents 152 and the Baptists 80 (but 180 in the afternoon). As the population of Potton was 1922 this left around half of the population unaccounted for. The official analysis blamed poor weather on the 30<sup>th</sup> March but the national figures of over 50% for non-attendance were a shock to the Church and the Religious census was never repeated.

In **November** the meeting began with the AGM. Chairman George Howe reported on another busy year with the setting up of an active Society web site by committee member Sean Hendy. The site features regular additions from the archives. Jean McLennan was thanked for her work as Secretary over the last decade and John Boston was elected to replace her.

Once the official business was completed, Peter Ibbett provided an illustrated talk featuring information in a set of ledgers from Tysoe's Ironmongers shop from the 1890's to 1930's when Henry Tysoe was responsible for its day to day running. The ledgers showed that not only locals contributed to the shop's profits but also former Pottonians as far away as Hastings and Kendall ordered goods from the Market Square shop. The ledgers featured a yearly trading analysis which showed a consistent profit of around £180 over the period of 30 years up to 1930, although turnover dropped noticeably throughout the 1<sup>st</sup> World War and showed a clear decline after the mid 20's.

At our **December** meeting the audience were treated to a Pictorial Entertainment of aerial photographs. George Howe and Peter Ibbett delved into the archives to produce a range of air photographs spanning from 1929 to the 1980's to show how the town had changed during that period of time. Also featured were a set of 2009 air photos of Potton taken by society member Chris Miles which gave a new perspective to activities in the Parish from sand extraction to the variety of shapes and colours in the local fields. An index containing a list of air photographs can be found on the Society's new web site.

Sue Jarrett of the Eatons Community Association was our speaker for the **January** meeting. The Eatons were the largest parish in Bedfordshire until they became part of Cambridgeshire in the early 1970's and now form part of an enlarged St Neots. Before the housing developments of the 1960's and 70's Eaton Socon was still a small village with well known Inns on the route of the A1. A fire destroyed its church in 1930 but it was quickly rebuilt. It has a medieval castle site near to the Mill and river locks. Eaton Ford acquired the Workhouse for the area, which has been converted into modern flats. The Eatons Community Association has erected a range of heritage signs in the area. More information can be found at [www.escan.org.uk](http://www.escan.org.uk).

At the **February** meeting John Shipman gave a talk about the experiences of his father as a Spitfire pilot in the Battle of Britain. He left the family farm in 1930 and enlisted in the RAF as a driver ACII. He flew for thirteen years of his thirty years service, achieved the highest grade of flying instructor and retired as a Wing Commander. Ted 'Shippy' Shipman saw service in the early years of the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War being involved with an interception off Whitby in October 1939 and a posting to Wick to help protect the navy. In 1940 he saw action in supporting the Dunkirk evacuation and a dogfight on July 28<sup>th</sup> 1940. John Shipman's book 'One of The Few', based on his fathers recollections, is full of detail about the

reality of the daily life of a Spitfire pilot and his aircraft. Copies can be obtained from [j.m.shipman@ntlworld.com](mailto:j.m.shipman@ntlworld.com).

The **March** meeting featured Rodney Todman's collection of Edwardian photographs of St Neots. The original glass plate negatives provided a rare insight into the world of an amateur photographer who used a Wimshurst machine to generate electricity to provide the illumination for interior and night time shots. A number of slides showed the 1914 soldiers who were billeted in the town with their guns and horses and wheeled equipment including field guns. Their march had taken them from Aberdeen and was to take them on to France. Other slides showed the Clarabut family on outings in a car and on holiday at Hunstanton as well as at local celebrations where bicycles were dressed up for fete and carnival competitions.

### A Time Capsule

It is more usual to see, or hear of, a time capsule being buried or hidden away, than to find one. But! for the first time in my life I have now seen one, and it was found in Potton.

Last week I had a phone call from Rex Whitfield who quite rightly sounded very excited with the news he was about to tell me. The old former Congregational Church, latterly the sports centre, is having its use changed yet again. This time it is being converted to flats. Some time in the first week into March a time capsule was unearthed when the builders were moving a commemoration stone placed in its position on 12th November 1903. This was to commemorate the building of a Sunday School to accommodate a very large increase in children attending the Congregational Church at this time.

What did this time capsule consist of and what condition is it in? Rex has kindly brought it to me and I am studying and copying the various paperwork and a newspaper of the 12th November 1903. As I am still working on the contents, I will inform you all in more detail in the next newsletter.

George Howe

### Forthcoming Programme

- May 27<sup>th</sup> An Undercover Story** **Anna Mercer**  
All you ever wanted to know about the social history of womens underwear, from the curator of St Neots museum
- June 24<sup>th</sup> King Street, Then and Now**  
Our archives reveal a great deal about the changes in King Street over the last 150 years. Bring your own memories and documents
- July 27<sup>th</sup> Hitchin Victorian School Visit**  
Join us for an evening out and experience the life of a Victorian Schoolchild.  
\*No meeting in the community centre this month
- Aug 26<sup>th</sup> Archive Evening: Potton in the Early 1960's**  
The first five years of the 60's saw some of the greatest changes in Potton in its millennium history. The Society Archives contain many 60's items including a WI scrapbook and the sale of Tears Farm.
- Sept 23<sup>rd</sup> The History of Surnames** **David Short**  
Where did your surname come from? What does it mean? What do our surnames tell us about Potton?  
All will be revealed
- Oct 28<sup>th</sup> Potton Land Use 1960-2010** **Peter Clarke**  
Peter Clarke grew up in Potton and carried out a land use survey in the early 1960's. His talk will compare this with current land use.
- Nov 25<sup>th</sup> Dunton**  
The Story of Dunton using material in our archives and the memories and photographs of Robert Chessum  
\*7.30pm start for AGM

## The Three Market Towns

Early in 2009 the Potton History Society, along with others in Potton, Biggleswade and Sandy, was approached by Mike Fowler of Axiom Video Productions to assist him in making a local DVD. He requested us to assist in the historical content of these towns. Our in depth knowledge both of the local history of the towns and their people would be invaluable to him in making this DVD.

Mike came to our committee meeting in April 2009 to explain his reasons and plans to make this DVD. Mike had done a similar video a few years ago at Hitchin, with the Hitchin History Society's help. Pam Rhodes of "Songs of Praise" fame, who lived at Hitchin at that time, narrated it. Mike showed a short piece to give us an idea, and understand what he had in mind. We had a discussion after this, and agreed we would support him with this project.

After a couple of meetings with Mike about what would be involved and with Mike informing us of his plans, we all placed together the various research that was required, ready for Mike to start shooting. He first of all went to all three market towns shooting various scenes, accompanied by representatives from those towns. In August, John Boston and I accompanied him around Potton with our suggestions and information where he should shoot. Mike also made visits to other places in the country where items were kept that were to do with this area. This included items such as the coin found on Biggleswade common a few years ago.

When he finished shooting all these scenes, he went on to do specific scenes with actors, Potton station and Market Square etc. As with the Hitchin video, Pam Rhodes agreed to narrate the DVD and I would like to say she does an excellent job doing this. Meanwhile Mike wrote scripts for Pam based on our information, which we checked before the filming of Pam going around interviewing people and narrating the show. We, at all three of the towns, stood by during shooting to keep our eye on historical accuracy and we

also came in useful to carry the equipment. Both John and I enjoyed helping throughout these events. We both played a part in front of the camera as well.

During all this time we were able to take photos of the shooting around Potton and even a little bit of video of Allan Wareing with his smoke machine on Potton Station. Much fun was had by all.

What are the benefits to Potton History Society? We have a DVD showing scenes in and around Potton, as well as our neighbouring towns. There is much more footage than is seen on the DVD and this will be handed to the PHS. The PHS is named on the DVD which lets the world know of our existence and when Axiom videos have sold the number of copies they wish, we shall have the remainder to sell on our own behalf.

Mike has put a lot of hard work into this DVD, as did the many who helped him. As a thank you to us and to show the world it was here, Mike put on what he called a "World Premier" of the "Three Market Towns" in the Trinity Chapel at Biggleswade on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2009. This was shown on a Big screen, with super sound. Everyone in the large audience, including Pam Rhodes, other stars in the show, the helpers and those who paid extra for their copies to enable them to attend, had a thoroughly enjoyable evening. The DVD was, in the audience's opinion, well put together and **Very Good**.

It went on sale that night and sold well. It went on sale in several shops in the three towns the following day. It appears to have sold well and is still available from these outlets. If you have not got your copy yet, it comes highly recommended by the PHS. All credit to Mike and ourselves.

George Howe

*The DVD costs £15 and can be bought in Potton from Tysoes, Camerons or the Post Office. Also from the Tourist Information Centre in Sandy.*

## The History of Potton Flower Show (cont.)

At the first meeting of 1981 it was decided to make the veg, fruit and flower arrangements open to all. Prize money would remain the same with entry fee still 5p, show admission to be 25p for adults and 10p for children. Pat Ramplin had acquired new backing material and table covering for the flower arranging section.

Profit from the Market Day had risen from £69 to £122. Thoughts for the following year were to start growing plants from seed to sell on the day. Entries for the 1981 show were 636, only slightly down on last year, opening up some classes to everyone having made no difference. Treasurer Mike Robinson reported that the bank balance was £100 up on last year due to a good Market Day and good support at the show. It was suggested that the whole of the show could be open and not restricted just to local residents. Ken Small offered to make a stand for hanging baskets, this is still in use today. It was agreed that entries could be accepted on the morning of the show and this would be made clear on the schedule. At this year's show some people were seen looking round when entries were being staged and then going home to get better (they thought).

1982 saw a big change in the show in that it became open to all, rather than just residents of Potton, Sutton and Hatley. The name was changed to the Potton Show. I look at the minutes and see the same things being talked about now. You cannot put different sorts of handicrafts together and get a fair result. You have to rely on the judge entirely.

Making the show open proved a success with 181 people entering and a total of 635 entries, a record. At the AGM the sad loss of Mr Boston was noted, also that Margaret Stewardson (Vicar's wife) and Mike Robinson were leaving Potton and would be missed on the committee. Election of committee saw Tony Joel elected to replace Mike as treasurer. There was no nomination for secretary but Jean Ashdown joined the committee and soon had her arm twisted to take the job on, a position she holds to this day.

For the 10<sup>th</sup> show Mike and Annette Carlisle, who started the show, returned to open it. Roger Brewer arranged for Mid Beds Council to print the schedules for the first time, £50 for 1000 copies. The good old days! Profits from the Market Day continued to grow, with more plants being sold. It had by now become part of Potton's annual events.

The 1983 show was described as a success at the annual meeting. Entries were 695, the same as the previous year but flower arranging was down. A suggestion was made that the front cover of the schedule be used as a colouring competition in the childrens classes, also of organising a barn dance in the marquee after the show. Both these things still happen today and the barn dance is an important part of the year's fund raising. In the first year there was to be a chicken and chip supper for £1.00. The times they are a-changing

At the first meeting of the new committee it was agreed to stage a best kept garden competition, to be judged in July by Wareley Garden Centre, assisted by George Culpman. This had some success over the years but entries were never good and the competition was eventually dropped.

There was panic the early evening before the 1984 show when the marquee was very late arriving and committee members had to help put it up. This made for a £20 discount on the bill for the marquee. Entries were steady at 683.

The barn dance was successful for a first attempt with almost all the tickets being sold but it was agreed that running the bar after a long day was too much like hard work. It has to be remembered that much moving of tables and chairs has to be done, also setting up the bar by the same people who have worked all day with the show. The town owes a vote of thanks to these willing souls. I note in the committee meeting minutes of 12<sup>th</sup> Nov 1984 that Leslie was to find a young man, I don't know if she had any success.

Colin Buxton

## The Other Potton Car

A leaflet praising its features, written in German, referring to the Delta 500G needed translation, so I sent a copy to my daughter in Bristol and a university friend obliged with a translation as follows.

### *THE POTTON CAR-As advertised when new*

*The Champion 500G is a classic vehicle and it is constructed to meet the needs of the present. Economy, reliability and road safety, demands, which today more than ever are made of military vehicles, are handsomely fulfilled by the Champion 500G.*

*Both in its exterior form and in its internal layout, it is in a class of its own. It is fast and manoeuvrable, practical and sleek, yet its servicing is undemanding and its fuel consumption is economical. The Handel engine also meets the hardest demands of non-stop operation.*

*With a body constructed from selected materials, the Champion offers plenty of room for four people. There is easy entry on both sides and plenty of legroom. The two front seats are individually adjustable and the back of the rear bench seat can be folded down with a handle, thus enlarging the load-carrying area and making the carriage of bulking items easier. The wide, fully opening rear door allows effortless loading and unloading.*

*The easy to grip lever and handbrake are situated between the front seats; the starter is operated via a relay on the instrument panel. The wind-down windows guarantee draught-proof ventilation.*

*An extraordinarily stable and stiff tubular main frame in combination with a maintenance-free rubber-tortioned suspension provides unsurpassed road handling. The front and rear wheels are mounted independently of each other; thereby the rear axle is especially protected from overloading and from excess wear and tear.*

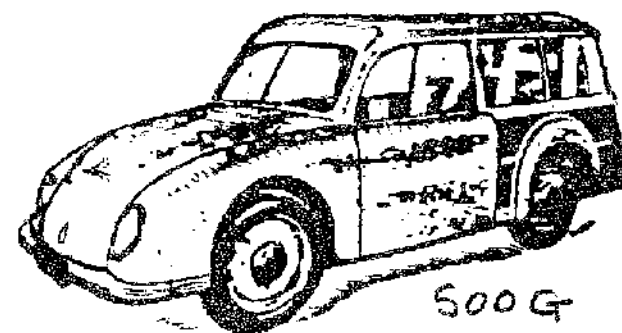
*The light, play-free gearbox works in combination with the soft-acting but strong-grasping hydraulic oil pressure operating four wheel brakes to give full control of the vehicle at all speeds.*

*The robust, water-cooled two cylinder, two-stroke engine is united and well matched with the gearbox, clutch and transmission in a closed casing. The removal of the engine or its repair is thus facilitated in a short time.*

*First class road holding is achieved with the low centre of gravity and the method of driving the wheels from the transmission system through its good power to weight ratio, the Champion 500G has very good acceleration, which makes excellent travel possible in densest traffic and on long distance journeys.*

*The Champion 500G is a vehicle designed for people and will also always be an indispensable helper when loads need to be economically transported. On Sundays and on holidays it will be a true friend that makes each weekend pass effortlessly.*

RHEUNISCHE AUTOMOBILFABRIK  
HENNH'OFER & CO.  
LUDWIGSHAFEN / RHEIN



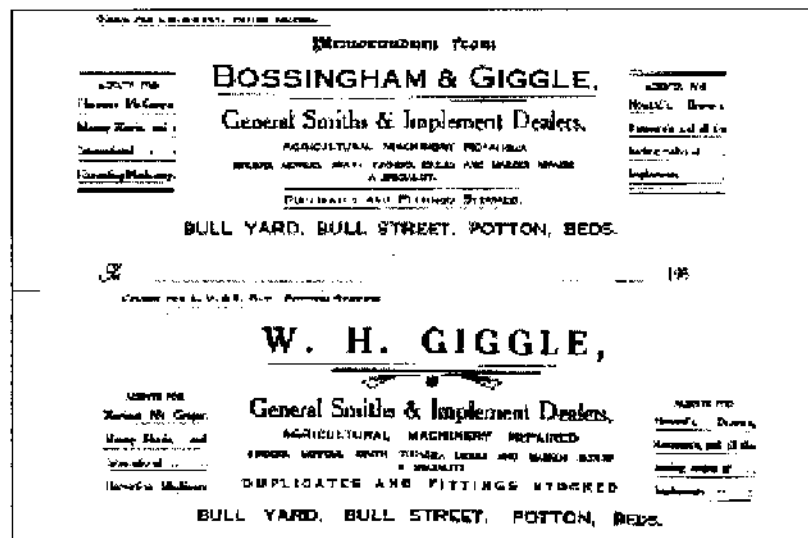
In the PHS booklet "The Potton Car" there is also a reference to this estate version with a 460cc engine of which two partially complete versions were found at Potton Manor. These were referred to as the Delta "Woody" the 500G and looking in some ways similar to the Morris Traveller. On transfer to the National Motor Museum at Beaulieu they sold one of the 500G type to the Horsmond Motor Museum in Kent

Keith Lawrence

## William H Giggle - The Other Potton Blacksmith

If asked most people will remember Ernie Smith as the Potton Blacksmith and Farrier. His premises, 'The Forge' at Brookend, Potton, was the centre for shoeing horses and is well recorded and documented.

But... little is recorded of another Blacksmith's premises that were situated in Bull Yard, off Bull Street, originally known as Bossingham & Giggle. During my lifetime the Blacksmith was William (Bill) Giggle who provided a valuable and vital service to the agricultural community.



The entrance to the yard was through an opening, between two shops, still there today. Les Carter, electrical and radio engineer, occupied the shop on the left and Frank Sharp, men's barber, the shop and house on the right. On entering the Yard the premises consisted of large timber constructed barns on the left-hand side. They were finished on the outside in brick and timber feather edged boards, stained black with a tar like preservative. These extended some way up the yard with the first building being used as a store by

Les Carter, next was used for storing the Blacksmith's materials and at the top end was the Forge and Workshop. On the right-hand side stood open hovels where the larger pieces of equipment were stored and worked upon.

Entrance to the workshop was through a stable door, a door split into two halves in height, which opened out. Immediately in front was a large anvil, in close proximity a water trough and behind that a furnace. The floor consisted of sharp sand blackened over the years with the fiery particles produced by the hammering of the red-hot iron. To the right under the windows in the external wall was a long workbench. Various sizes of metal vices were spaced along its length, drilling machines and lathes stood alone or were permanently fixed to its top. At the back of the worktop all kinds of hand tools, boxes of bolts, nuts and washers all had their place. At the far end wall stood a large wooden bureau type desk with sunken inkpots, black and red, together with various nib pens and fountain pens resting in a recessed tray. Raise the lid and the contents were there for all to see, headed notepaper for various purposes, invoices, sale notes, rulers, pencils, a desk blotter, a book of cheques and a ledger (see extract on page 17).



Giggle Unknown Bossingham

How do I know all of this?... William (Bill) Giggle was my Uncle by marriage. His wife Beatrice (nee Payne) was the sister of my mother's mother so they were my great Uncle and Aunt. My earliest recollection of Uncle Will, as he was known to the family, and Auntie Beat was during WW2, 1940 onwards. With my father serving in the armed forces in India and Burma during the war my two brothers and myself became their family, as they were unable to have children of their own. Uncle Will was a well-built man and drank a copious amount of tea, always from an enormous thermos flask, to replace body liquid lost through sweat due to the heavy work of being a Blacksmith. He also liked popping into the Green Man PH, very conveniently positioned in Bull Street next door to the barbers, every night after work for a couple of glasses of ale before returning to his home in Horslow Street for dinner.

One of the delights us three boys enjoyed was to be allowed to help him in his work, mostly in the school holidays, with the added bonus of getting some extra pocket money. The first job he taught us was to operate the bellows to heat up the coke fire in the furnace. Iron was placed into the centre of the coals and heated up to a red glow to make it pliable ready to be hammered into shape on the anvil. One item I recall making was a fire poker with a twisted handle. Lengths of iron rod, 1/8<sup>th</sup> dia. (3mm) x 6 inch (150mm) in length were held together with steel grips and heated in the furnace at one end until ready to be welded together with a hammer on the anvil. The other end was treated the same and then welded onto a length of a larger iron rod 3/8<sup>th</sup> dia. (9mm). This was then cut to the required length, heated and moulded to a point at the end. The final stage was to heat up the handle end, grip in a vice, turn with pincers and at the same time applying pressure towards the top to create a bulbous handle. A clean down with emery cloth paper smoothed of the rough edges, the finished article a strong poker worthy of a place in any fire hearth.

As mentioned earlier, most of the work undertaken was for the local agricultural industry, repairing and maintaining agricultural

machinery and implements. Local farmers brought their broken Ploughs, Harrows, Harvest Binders and Cutting Machines to the shop for repair and refurbishment.

One item I liked working on was the making and replacement of items that made up the Harrow. The Harrow consisted of a number of cross members placed at 90 deg. to one another and fixed with a spiked prong at each crossover. The members were made from a square iron bar that was drilled along its length at all of the crossover points. It was then heated up at each individual point and spread by using a hammer and a tapered steel pin to create a bulbous shape in the bar and enlarge the hole. Using a drill bit of suitable size, the hole was then finally cleaned up and the whole thing assembled at each crossover using a nut, washer and the threaded end of the spiked prong. A quick coat of paint (nearly always blue, occasionally red) to finish the job.

Another interesting job to work on was the Harvest Binders that were delivered to the yard for an overall, the work on these mostly taking place during the winter months. One major operation entailed the replacement of all the blades in the cutting assembly. These were triangular in shape with two edges being razor sharp and the other edge drilled with two holes for fixing purposes. The cutting bar assembly was the full width of the Binder consisting of two lengths of flat steel with the blades trapped in-between. They were held together with steel rivets that had a domed head at one end and passed through the bars and blade assembly. The head was located into a special recessed plate and the protruding end was then hammered to hold together the parts by spreading, tightening and finally finished with a domed head. Sometimes the wooden struts that made up the vane were damaged and needed replacing. This was a reasonably simple job as they were only bolted onto the steel framework. The setting-up of the string tying and knotting mechanism was a bit trickier to get right but once accustomed with the procedure it was really a very simple operation. I think I am right in saying that my brothers and myself all mastered that one.

All fixings were checked for tightness and if worn or damaged were replaced. All bearings, hinges and moving parts were greased or oiled. To finish the job the usual coat of paint was applied to most of the metalwork.

One of the highlights of working during the school summer holidays was the opportunity to visit local farms when machinery broke down whilst working in the fields. The most common breakdown was when the knot tying mechanism failed to tie a knot on the string that held the sheath of corn together. When this occurred the cut corn was discharged from the rear of the Binder and strewn all over the ground. This had to be gathered up by hand, bundled and tied with string into a sheath. It was not unusual after a brief inspection and assessment by Uncle Will, for him to allow us to carry out the repair if only requiring resetting, whilst he had a good old chat with the farmer. More often than not at the end of the job there was a parting gift from the farmer. A wild rabbit or hare, a bag of vegetables and occasionally a pat of freshly churned butter made by the farmer's wife. Bearing in mind that I am talking about WW2 years and the following years of food rationing, we were very lucky to be able to enjoy good tasty dinners during the following week.

He continued to operate until the introduction and development of the Combine Harvester that made the Harvest Binder obsolete. Uncle Will considered he was now getting on in years and decided he would not take on the modern machinery and agricultural implement repairs. Although he continued to do general smithy work he eventually retired and the Forge closed, sadly I cannot remember the year this happened.

Bull Yard still remains but is now with residential dwellings on the site. I am not sure if the main structure of the barns were used in the conversion but it is very pleasing to see that they are finished externally with timber cladding to the first floor in keeping with the style of the old buildings.

25		Dr. Dr. L. Capon High Hill Farm	
1942		7 5 2	
Mar 20 <sup>th</sup>	Repairs to Feed Drill	32	1 19 0
May 28 <sup>th</sup>	Repairs to Harrow	38	2 6
July 20 <sup>th</sup>	Repairs & fittings for Binder	1	1 9 0
July 20 <sup>th</sup>	Repairs & fittings for Binder	2	9 6
			2 1 0
Aug 10 <sup>th</sup>	Repairing & fitting up Binder	5	16 1 8
Sept 14 <sup>th</sup>	Repairs to Potato Digger		18 2 8
Sept 25 <sup>th</sup>	Repairs to Mower	9	6 12 0
		10	14 7 2
			20 19 2
1944			
Feb 12 <sup>th</sup>	Repairs to Harrow	16	12 0 0
Feb 27 <sup>th</sup>	Repairs to Feed Drill	18	12 3 9
			24 3 9
1944			
June 20 <sup>th</sup>	Repairs & fittings for Binder	35	14 4 0
July 17 <sup>th</sup>			
Aug 14 <sup>th</sup>	Repairs & fittings for Binder	37	39 6 6
1945			
Jan 20 <sup>th</sup>	Repairs & fittings for Feed Drill	39	38 18 2
Feb 5 <sup>th</sup>	Repairs to Harrow	40	4 0 0
Feb 26 <sup>th</sup>	Repairs to Harrow	41	9 12 0
			7 12 0
July 10 <sup>th</sup>	Repairs & fittings for Binder	50	1 9
July 25 <sup>th</sup>	Repairs & fittings for Binder	53	2 12
	To make 4 new Side Components	61	2 0
	Repair to narrow mangle	62	1 0
	Repairs to mangle	63	1 0

Extract from Ledger

John Boston, February 2010

## A Market Returns to Potton

A small number of Pottonians rallied together to bring back a market to Potton market square. It is over 80 years ago since we last had a Horse Fair and possibly much longer since we held a proper market.

The 5<sup>th</sup> December 2009 altered this. From 09.00 to 13.00 the first of a 'four seasons' market was held. No, not a farmers market. Although quite small, this was a proper market with a varied mixture of stalls. There were about eight stalls in total, including Potton Pantry (veg), Greensands (flowers and Christmas wreaths), Potton Brewery with some free samples, Potton Pig Company and a few others. The occasion was shared with the Town Council and O-2 launch of the "Cotton for Potton" shopping bags, a project to save on the use of plastic bags.

Potton Lower and Burgoyne Schools held a competition to give the bags a name and place a design on them. The winners were James Pryer from Potton Lower School and Emma Dickenson from Burgoyne School. Mr Geoff Emery from Potton Town Council, James and Emma performed the opening ceremony, with Emma cutting the ribbon to open Potton's first "Four Seasons Market".

George Howe

## Potton's Earliest Market

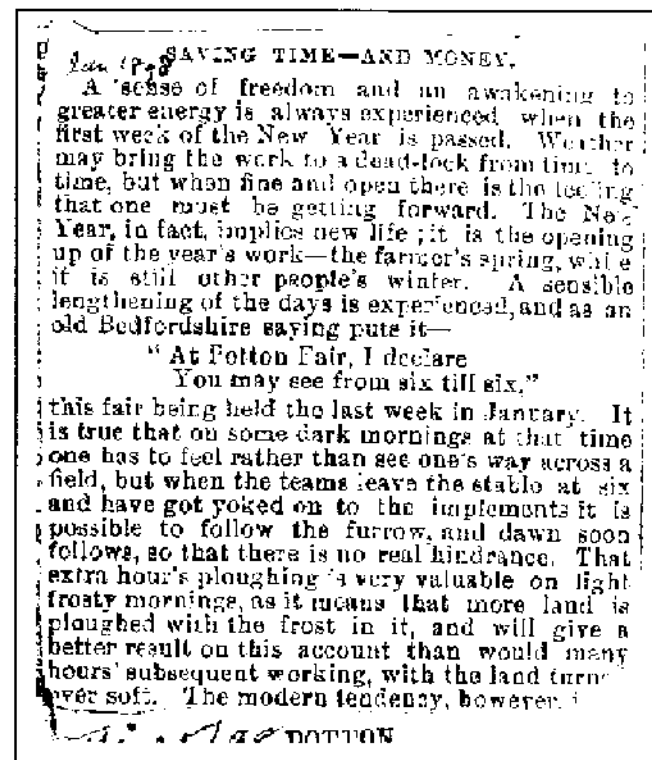
In 1066 only four markets were recorded in Bedfordshire; Bedford, Leighton, Luton and a small one at Arlesey. Markets of that period were normally held on Sunday. The right to hold markets was granted by the king to the Lord of the Manor. For more than a century after the conquest, records for such grants have not survived and Potton's original grant may date from that time. It is, however, recorded that in 1203 Potton was granted a royal licence to alter the day on which its market was held to a Saturday, "*on which day a market is held at the present time*" according to the Victoria County History published in 1908.

Ed.

*From the Biggleswade Chronicle & Sandy Times.*

## Potton Statute Fair September 24<sup>th</sup> 1892

This annual merry making came off on Monday last and favoured by fine weather appeared to give much enjoyment to numerous throngs of townfolk and visitors from neighbouring villages, the chief attraction being Mr. Thurston's steam gallopers which were placed in Mr King's meadow near the brook. The meadow and its approaches were also well filled with stalls for toys, fruits, sweets and fried fish and the inevitable bowling for coconuts. The dirty and offensive practice of squirting fluids over persons who were innocently passing about were freely indulged in. It may be interesting to those who use these "ladies tormentors" to know that several magistrates have fined sharply those who annoy their neighbours.



From a file of material collected by Mrs P R Yates

## A Question of Pigs

It seems that pigs are a recurring theme in Potton. Some early examples from Court Rolls include:-

### Manor Court 12 November 1555

6. There shall be no hogge kept on the common unringed after St Nicholas' Day

### Potton Regis 21 April 1562

Orders

6. No one to bring hogs in the cornfield before harvest be home without a lawful keeper

### Potton Regis 8 April 1596

Orders – Part of

3. Stint for pigs:- cottagers, no more than four pigs and two piglets on the common, farmers, no more than four on the common for every twenty acres

PHS member Bob Darlow recalls his father being the first Pottonian to take on a Land Settlement Association smallholding. The whole family, including Bob, made the move in March, 1940. He remembers they kept 200 chickens and 30 pigs, one of which they were allowed to keep for their own consumption. Along with a ready supply of eggs and chicken meat this must have been one family that fared a little better during times of rationing.

Most recently The Potton Pig Company has come into existence, rearing free range, rare breed pedigree pigs. Perhaps some of their rare breeds would be similar to those found on the common in 1555.

The leaflet reproduced on the following pages is evidence of another period when pigs must have been prevalent in the Potton area. The original document is held in the archives but it would be nice to have more information. Can anyone help?

# POTTON PIG CLUB

Founded April, 1888.

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## \* RULES \*

Revised at a Special Meeting, April 16th, 1904

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The following form to be agreed to by each Member on being admitted.

*I do hereby agree to become a Member of the Potton Pig Club, and promise to abide by and perform the foregoing Rules, and Regulations, and to pay the Contribution as specified in Rules 3 and 4, and for neglect and non-observance of these Rules, I will leave this Society when desired by a majority of the Members, without any legal process; and this Agreement on my part shall be an effectual bar to any proceedings which might be taken by me at law.*

## Rules

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1. That the object of this Club is to raise, by quarterly subscriptions and entrance fees of pigs, a fund to be invested in the Post Office Savings Bank for making up the loss to any member who shall lose a Pig. To be called the Potton Pig Club.

2. The value shall be estimated by two members belonging to the Club—one to be appointed yearly at the General Meeting, and one by the owner of the Pig, and in case any dispute shall arise, the Club reserves the power to choose or appoint a third person, and his decision to be final.

3. Any person wishing to become a member, he shall be proposed and seconded, and carried by a majority of members present, on a quarterly meeting night and shall pay the Secretary 1s. entrance fee on his becoming a member. Each member to pay 9d. entrance for each new pig insured, and 6d. each for every pig he may have insured on the following quarter night. When members have no pigs they shall still pay 6d per quarter to continue their membership. No member to receive any benefit within seven days.

4. These payments become due on the first Wednesday in January, April, July, and October.

5. Each member may enter with the Secretary as many pigs as he chooses, each pig to be passed by the Marker and ear marked before being eligible for benefit. None to be entered while sucking, or until well from cutting.

6. Any Member neglecting to pay his subscription on the Club night, shall be fined threepence and not paying within seven days thereof shall be fined sixpence; and in case he shall be in arrears for fourteen days from the said Club night shall not be entitled to any benefit during that quarter. All fines to go to the funds of the Club.

7. Any member who may have a yelt entered as a store, and wishing to keep it for a sow, he shall pay to the Secretary one shilling extra. Any member entering a sow he shall pay 1s.6d entrance fee, and 1s.6d afterwards as per rule 3. No member to receive more than £3 10s for any sow entered. Each sow must be entered before she is ten weeks gone with pig. And if not paid as above, in case any accident should happen, the member so neglecting will not be allowed any benefit until the sow is all right from weaning her litter.

8. On the death of any pig insured in this Club the owner shall report the same immediately to the Visiting Member, and if he is of opinion that its death arose from want of care or neglect, he shall report the same to the Secretary, who shall bring the matter before the committee to investigate, and if the report be found true, the owner shall not be entitled to any payment from the funds of this Club.