



Civic Society of St Ives

Annual Report 2014

THE CIVIC SOCIETY OF ST IVES

The Civic Society of St Ives was formed in 1968 to fight the proposed plans to route the St Ives Bypass down Ramsey Road, across The Waits, Holt Island and Hemingford Meadow.

The siting of the St Ives Bypass today is a result of our early campaigns.

The Society continues to care for the beauty and character of the town, as well as working to stimulate public interest in civic matters and to provide an information service for those who wish to know more about the town's history and development, and of the surrounding area.

The Civic Society of St Ives is a registered Charity, registration number 257286.

Its web-site can be found at:

www.stivescivic.org.uk

The society is a member of:
The Campaign to Protect Rural England

www.cpre.org.uk

and

The Cambridge Antiquarian Society

www.camantsoc.org

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Your Society is 46 years old (or young) this year. We continue to try and uphold the original aims of safeguarding the Town's heritage and raising awareness of just what a special place we have here in St Ives. Keeping it that way whilst accepting and shaping inevitable change is a major challenge. The next 10 or more years will see our influencing skills tested to the limit as thousands of new homes are built in the surrounding area. RAF Wyton, in its new role as a Military Intelligence Centre, will see many young families moving into the vicinity. We need to attract them to the Town and persuade them to visit and shop here thus ensuring future prosperity. This prosperity should also mean that the Listed Buildings (which we have in abundance) continue to stay open and maintained as Commercial/Retail outlets – rather like Tom's Cakes in the old Hurdle House/Totus shop.

However, major neighbourhood expansion brings with it great challenges and hard decisions. The challenges being mainly of infrastructure eg roads, sewerage, surface drainage, cycle ways and footpaths. Also included in the challenge arena is the capacity of Schools and NHS (from surgeries to Hospitals). All these issues will be the subject of much debate.

I hope you will agree that we should not dissociate ourselves from the debate and oppose change: it will happen anyway. Far better to stay engaged and influence wherever we can by bringing our local knowledge to bear. This will be a delicate balance but in the long term will serve the aims of your Society in ensuring that our heritage is not swallowed up by random development or over saturation of resources. We have already seen this policy of engagement work in shaping outcomes on roads (traffic congestion), New Bridges refurbishment, Town Centre road resurfacing, a rethink on the street lighting project and an acknowledgement that St Ives is at the top of the list for infrastructure improvements. Of course, this is not solely down to the Civic Society but is more about us working with others and Local Government at all levels without us becoming lapdogs. Sometimes saying "thank you" to Local Government reaps positive results.

That said should you need any reminder of our origins then please read the article on page 15 entitled "The Watchdogs of St Ives". We reproduce it this year as soon there will be much discussion, and a good deal of heat generated, on the proposed third River crossing. What is interesting in the original article is that our opposition to the route of the second River crossing was conducted in a forthright but courteous fashion. This second crossing (Harrison Way) today takes a route far more sympathetic to the Town and environment than the original proposal. Times may have changed but I hope the "Watchdogs" of today will still conduct business in a manner befitting the Society and people of St Ives should the need arise.

On a lighter note, the preservation of the Octagon moves forward with plans being developed for future use – possibly half as a Tourist Information Centre and half as a tiered seat theatre/cinema to accommodate 70 people. The tiered seating would reflect the origin of the building as a cattle auction house.

As I write (in July) the Books of Remembrance and Honour have been produced and are ready for the dedication in the Parish Church on Sunday 3rd of August. This work has been carried out on behalf of the Civic Society – thank you to all who have contributed thus far; we are still short of our financial target and it is not too late to donate (contact me). In a linked initiative Peter Plowman has led the project for the War Memorial and is seeking through English Heritage to have it recorded as a Listed Building. If successful this should protect its structure and position for all time.

The St Ives Archaeology Group (STAG), which is embedded in the Civic Society, keeps surveying and digging! The mound beyond the Bowls Club was excavated in June – sadly there was no trace of the Old Priory (see page 23). By the time you read this STAG will have excavated trenches in the Priory House lawn – results to follow. Perhaps the Lost Priory will be unearthed.

Your Society remains involved with St Ives in Bloom and this year saw some of us painting benches, lamp standards and tidying up the Town centre, Quay and the Waits. We have “Gone for Gold” and will know the result on September the 9th. If this year’s bid is successful it can only be good for Civic pride.

We are also represented on the Town Team which continues to strive towards making St Ives the best town in which to live, work and play. The launch of the Old Riverport drew a lot of interest and a new One Stop website is going to be launched soon. We are also trying to attract more local business people into the Team.

Finally, I will not depart from tradition so will publicly and sincerely thank your Committee for all their hard work. They are:

Pat Allan	Basil Belcher
Helen Eveleigh	Peter Jackson
Jane McKee	Peter Newbould
Richard Probyn	Barbara Richmond
Peggy Seamark	David Stewart
Barry Wills	

And, outside the Committee but also making an invaluable contribution are:

Brian Richmond (Webmaster and Annual Report Compiler)

Mike Davison and Howard Sercombe (note takers at monthly meetings).

Val Jones (Committee Minute taker).

The Staff of the Free Church.

Pat Allan will be standing down from his position as Civic Society Secretary after many years of service. However, he will stay on the Committee as a Local Planning Advisor. We owe him a strong vote of thanks. If anyone would like to take on the role of Secretary (rather akin to a Company Secretary) then please let me know.

Thank you for your continued support and I hope you enjoy the rest of the Report,

Peter Baker

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St Ives, Cambs
PE27 6NY

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Civic Society of St Ives Statement of Income & Expenditure
as at 30th April 2014

<u>Income</u>	Year to	Year	<u>Expenditure</u>	Year to	Year
	30/04/14	2013		30/04/14	2013
	£	£		£	£
Subscriptions/Donations	2,923	2,951	Hall Hire	339	403
Slepe Hall Donations	504	590	Annual Report	794	678
Visitors	106	72	Speakers	298	332
Memorial Fund		0	Memorial Fund		0
Social Evenings	222		Social Evenings	293	
Raffle	0	76	Raffle	0	50
Interest		0	Insurance	161	200
Gift Aid	442	583	Antiquarian Soc Subs	20	13
Heritage Weekend	86	129	CPRE Subs	34	34
Trips	396	2,060	Trips	956	960
Falklands Talk		229	Carnival Stall 2011		0
Jubilee Beer		585	Donations/Gifts	350	2,775
Deposit Acc Transfer			Deposit Acc Transfer	2,000	
			Administration	598	440
			Postage	117	120
			Phone	20	72
			Travel		0
			Web Site	45	779
			Heritage Weekend	122	24
£	4,459	7,497		5,853	6,490

Balances from
30 April 2013

Current account	4,770
Deposit Account	6,714
Total	11,484

add

Surplus for year	-1,393
Dep Acc Transfer & Interest	2,065
Total	12,155

less

2012 Payments	525
£	11,629

Balances at
30 April 2014

Current account	3,015
Deposit Account	8,779
Total	11,793

add

Receipts after Period end	0
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less

Cheques yet to be presented	164
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£ **11,629**

Report to the Trustees & Members of The Civic Society of St Ives, Charity No 257286, on the Accounts for the year ended 30th April 2014 which are set out on the attached.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to

- Examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
- To follow procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act), and
- To state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- (1) Which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the requirements:
 - a. To keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act

- b. To prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act have not been met; or

- (2) To which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed : D McGoff ACIB BSC (Open) Date 13th June 2014
Name Dianne McGoff BSc (Open)
 4 Seathwaite, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, PE29 6NY

TREASURER'S REPORT 2014

The year's accounts have been independently examined and approved. The Examiner's report and statement precede this report.

We ended the year with a £1,393 notional deficit but £2,000 has been transferred to the deposit account within this so the overall true balance for the year is a £607 surplus

This year's income and expenditure is some £3,000 down on last year which reflects the fact that the majority of the income for the Houghton Hall trip was in last year's income together with the Jubilee beer and Falklands talk income. Similarly our last year's expenditure was inflated by the final payment to the Town Council for heritage plaques and the Ingle Holt storyboard. The change in annual balances is therefore a timing issue.

We hold reserves for future expenditure, but as a small charity, we have no reserves policy.

We have again sponsored one of the 'Music on the Waits' concerts with a £350 donation.

Gift Aid remains vital to our finances contributing £442 this year which equates to the majority of our surplus for the year. Any member who pays income tax can have their subscription included in our future applications by completing the forms available from Helen Eveleigh or me.

The transfer of our deposit account to The Cambridge Building Society has

improved our annual interest earned by £58 to a total of £65.

Subscriptions are due in September payment can be made at meetings, by standing order or left at the Norris Museum in a named envelope. Standing Orders are preferred and forms for this are available at any meeting from Helen Eveleigh or me.

Basil Belcher

Treasurer
July 2014

MUSIC ON THE WAITS



Every year the Civic Society sponsors one Sunday afternoon performance of 'Music on The Waits' in St Ives. The photo above shows The Ouse Valley Jazz Band playing to a large audience on a beautiful Sunday afternoon in August this year.

MINUTES OF THE 45th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held on 18th October 2013, at the Free Church, St Ives

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Alex Wedderburn, Freda Done, Sue & Julian Limentani, Peter Newbould, Gene Jardine, Tony Barraclough, Mike Davison, Howard Sercombe, Julia Bruford, Peter & Margaret Sawford.

2. MINUTES OF THE 44th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING:

The minutes had been published in the Annual Report. It was proposed by Bob King and seconded by Bridget Smith that the minutes were accurate and should be signed by the Chairman. Passed unanimously.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES:

Nothing to note.

4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:

- I will not read out the words from the Annual Report but instead will update it and give an overview using specific examples.
- Our work this year with the Town Team deserves a collective mention. During the year we have progressed from a Town Plan Steering Group to a Town Team, so that we would have one coherent team to which Council funds and Portas funds would be accessible. The Civic Society is of course, represented on the Team. I'd like to read a list of achievements and on-going initiatives made by the Team as a whole, with help from the Team Groups and Local Government:
 - Town signage including fingerposts
 - Footpath / cycleway survey
 - Making the quay more attractive
 - Drop off and collection points for visiting coaches
 - Town map
 - Branding exercises
 - Membership of CCC bus forum
 - Support of town initiatives
- Another exciting new development within the Society has been the formation of STAG – St Ives Archaeology Group. This group has already had two outings. One over a summer weekend using geophysical survey to look for the Lost Priory of St Ives, and one a week or so ago carrying out field walking in the Holywell area.

- On the planning side, we are keeping an eye on the proposed JD Wetherspoon's use of the Warehouse Clearance shop. We would not wish to see landlords of other pubs forced from their premises by harsh competition. Many of these premises are listed buildings and very few have the potential for change of use.
- The latest debate on planning is on the proposal to place a large Morrison's store next to the Marsh Harrier. Although this project lies outside the Conservation Area, we look at it from the viewpoint of what will it do to the Town Centre. Many will have attended the public consultation in the last few days and I have tabled formal questions to their team. I will let you know the answers.
- Further downstream chronologically we have St Ives West Development, and the plan to build up to 4,000 homes at RAF Wyton / Wyton-on-the-Hill. We have formally expressed our concerns which mainly relate to infrastructure, eg: roads and drainage. On the St Ives West Development we are very keen to preserve the views along the River Great Ouse.
- I had thought that the work on refurbishing the New Bridges arches was over for the year, not so – another 10 arches are being worked on and should be complete by the end of December. Many thanks to CCC Bridges Department for their sustained focus. I believe also that the road lighting on the Old Bridge will be properly repaired. The system was found to be short circuiting, thus triggering the isolation switches.
- St Ives in Bloom was another Silver Gilt award this year, so will just have to keep going for gold.
- I would like you to join with me to thank the members of your Committee for their continued dedication and work, including Brian Richmond and Abi Luter. We have 2 vacancies on the Committee and it would help us greatly if we could have a couple of volunteers to spread the load.

That concludes my report

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:

Nothing to note.

6. TREASURER'S REPORT:

The Treasurer's Report and annual accounts for the year had been published in the Annual Report.

Proposed by Bob King, seconded by Nick Dibben and accepted.

7. ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE:

Chairman: Mr Peter Baker was re-elected as Chairman. Proposed by Colin Saunderson, seconded by Ian Penfold and elected.

Hon Secretary: Mr Pat Allan – proposed by Nick Dibben, seconded by Norma Head and elected.

Hon Treasurer: Mr Basil Belcher – proposed by Bridget Smith, seconded by Colin Saunderson and elected.

There were 7 nominations to re-elect Committee members:

Helen Eveleigh
Peter Newbould
Richard Probyn
Barbara Richmond
Peggy Seamark
David Stewart
Barry Wills

Proposed by Colin Saunderson, seconded by Bob King and elected *en bloc*.

The Chairman thanked the Committee for their hard work during the year.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

Appointment of an accounts examiner. That Dianne McGoff be appointed for the period until the conclusion of the 2014 AGM. Proposed by Barry Wills, seconded by Colin Saunderson and duly elected.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 7:50pm.

CIVIC SOCIETY of ST. IVES
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
17th October 2014
AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Minutes of the 45th Annual General Meeting.
3. Matters arising from the minutes.
4. Chairman's Report.
5. Matters arising from the Chairman's Report.
6. Treasurer's Report and to accept the Accounts for the year to 30 April 2014.
7. Election of Officers and Committee.
8. Any Other Business, including:
 - a. Appointment of an accounts examiner for 2014-2015

Resolutions:

Accounts Examiner: To appoint Ms. D McGoff, BSc, ACIB as independent accounts examiner until the conclusion of the 2015 Annual General Meeting.

In view of the County Council's proposals for future transport strategy, it is possible that a third river crossing will be put forward. In light of this we may wish to re-visit our foundation more than forty years ago. We therefore include an article of those times nearly fifty years ago.

THE WATCHDOGS OF ST IVES

Last month. Elizabeth Cann discussed the question of planners and people and championed the cause of the much-abused preservation societies. In this article W. L. Harrison, secretary of the St. Ives Civic Society, tells why it was formed and how, at a time when so many protests are inclined to be of a violent nature, the society tackled its biggest problem to date - the siting of the proposed new by-pass - with dignity. There was no banner waving and no disruption of the community. The objection was made peacefully and legally, but at the same time, forcefully.

Bridge House gone, Cromwell's Barn gone, Hemingford Mill gone, more losses on the way and on top of that the threat of a new road across the Hemingford Meadow; nobody liked it and nobody was doing anything about it. This was how matters stood in July 1968 when a group of people got together in St. Ives and decided to form a Civic Society.

They had had a hint of official encouragement because in 1967 the Civic Amenities Act had been passed and a Ministry Circular which drew the attention of Councils to the Act said:

"Good public relations will be an essential part of the operation, and local authorities will want to consider how they can best set about enlisting public support for their conservation policies. Collaboration with local civic societies may be particularly helpful in this connection."

I regret that I cannot claim to be one of the founder members; I did not come into the picture until August when the originators were scouting round for a secretary (anyone thinking of taking on a similar job should first equip himself with a thick skin or a sense of humour - the latter is recommended). There was a welcoming editorial in the "Hunts Post" and our inaugural meeting was held at the end of September; it was opened by the Mayor of St. Ives, supported by the Mayoress; about 150 people turned up and over 100 joined the Society which was duly created during the course of the evening.

The principle speaker, himself an architect, an archaeologist and a former St. Ivesian spoke on "The Threat to St. Ives". The town was threatened in a number of ways and a road across the Hemingford Meadow was only one of several, but the meeting clearly felt that it was the most immediate and it was agreed to call a meeting of the society as soon as possible.

As one looks back after the doldrums of 1969, 1970 and 1971 it seems that in the last three months of 1968 everything happened with incredible speed. On October 21st the assistant editor of the "Architectural Review" and the author of an article on St. Ives in its October issue both spoke to the society. Among the illustrations to the article was an "artist's impression" of what The Waits would look like when the western route was built; it was certainly a bit of a horror-comic. The committee never took the article very seriously; it was clearly unaware that the closing of the railway from St. Ives to March had opened up new possibilities; it took the alternative new road through what was almost certain to be a conservation area; it demolished Cromwell Terrace which has since been put on the Statutory List; and the secretary noted with disquiet that it would rob him completely of the view which made his house pleasant to live in. Unfortunately the article gave enormous offence to the County Council and has continued to do so.

In the same month a small Group was formed to study the possibility of an alternative route for the much needed relief road; it included two engineers and two architects and the County Planning Officer and the County Surveyor kindly agreed to meet the group on October 31st to explain the western plan, which had not then been studied in detail or costed.

The eastern route, they said, had been carefully considered and found impracticable; it was out of the question. We were not so sure and decided to write to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, as it then was, giving the broad grounds on which we thought consideration of an eastern route was justified.

There was no slackening of the pace in November. The Council for British Archaeology which had listed St. Ives as one of the 232 historic towns of England called a meeting in London at Burlington House at which a number of national and local amenity societies were present. Our society was represented by our chairman and myself but we took little part in the discussion.

The County Planning Officer put the case for the western route but those present were not convinced and the meeting decided to write to the Ministry and to the County Council urging that an alternative route be considered.

On November 13th the County Planning Officer kindly spared an evening to speak to the society. He complained at some length that he had been misrepresented, that someone was determined to stir up controversy, that completely false information had been put before the public; and he then went on to explain the merits of the western route.

Three days later Lord Rennet, then Joint Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, wrote to us:

"I agree that it would be desirable for the Department to review this whole matter with the County Council and the St. Ives Borough Council; and the two authorities are being invited to take part in a meeting for this purpose. I will, of course, keep you informed of the outcome."

This letter encouraged us greatly; it meant that Lord Kennet himself had looked at the problem and had decided that we had made a prima facie case.

Meanwhile our study group continued its work and its report was considered by the full committee on November 22nd. The committee decided that a full copy of the report must be sent to every member of the society and this was done.

The hot pace continued in December and a meeting of the society to discuss the routes was held on the 2nd: We wanted to hold a formal debate but no member of the society offered to speak for the western route even as Devil's Advocate.

We therefore sent out a questionnaire to every member — the number had now risen to 159 — and waited for the signed replies. Eighteen did not reply, one did not know, four voted for a western route and 136 for an eastern.

We had more copies of our report printed, with a diagram added, and a copy was sent to Lord Kennet with details of the poll. We sent copies individually to every member of the County Council and every member of the Borough Council; copies were also sent to the Civic Trust, the County Council, the Borough Council, the Rural District Council and the Clerks of the Parish. Councils of Fenstanton and the Hemingfords. Later the Chamber of Commerce helped us by kindly sending out copies with its own annual report.

On December 16th we again met the County Planning Officer and the County Surveyor and though little came of it we got the impression that an eastern route was not completely out of the question. The same evening the Borough Council held a special meeting at which our chairman, himself a Borough Councillor, moved that an eastern route be considered. The motion was lost, 10 to 4.

The following day representatives of the Ministries of Transport and of Housing and Local Government met representatives of the County and Borough Councils and the County Council was requested to study and cost both routes and report its findings to the Ministries.

The following June the County Council produced its report on both routes; its Roads and Bridges Committee voted for the western route 8 to 2; its planning committee was unanimous in its support of the western route and on the 29th July the County Council accepted without comment the reports of these two committees. We appeared to be somewhat friendless.

As it happened, however, help was on the way; at the end of November the St. Ives Rural District Council decided to oppose the western route and press for an eastern alternative. We now had what hitherto we had lacked — the general support of a statutory body. I may mention here that it was just before this that we had our first consultation with our solicitors.

In a famous story by Conan Doyle there is the curious incident of the dog in the night-time.

"The dog did nothing in the night-time.'

"That was the curious incident' remarked Sherlock Holmes."

It was very much on the cards that the Minister, after he had studied the report on the two routes, would write to tell us that our eastern route was now in his wastepaper basket; but no such letter ever came. Instead we waited in the dark until the beginning of 1972 when the Department of the Environment called for a public inquiry. Meanwhile all the blame for the town's growing traffic troubles was fastened on us.

Ahead of us now was the problem of costs. We had decided long before that if it came to an inquiry we must have professional help and thank goodness we did. In April we sent out an appeal for funds to members of the society — at that time it seemed possible that £400 on top of what we had already might just see us through.

Instantly a little darn seemed to burst and the money poured in from members and others, a heart-warming response; by the third day it was clear that we should overshoot the target and the only question was "By how much?" and this was just as well because though the balance in the bank was mounting so were the likely costs.

Our counsel said we must bring in a firm of planning consultants and consulting engineers and we agreed. Money continued to flow in and by the end of September we had over £1,000 in the bank; still it came - we were given nearly £200 during the course of the inquiry. We shall need more.

Objections to the western route had to be lodged by the end of March and our solicitors lodged ours on our behalf. It was arranged that the inquiry should take place in October and we then found that our counsel could not appear for us because of a clash of dates.

No sooner was this problem solved than another blew up. Our consultant came down to St. Ives to see the place for himself but within a few days he was ordered by his medical people to take a complete rest; fortunately for us a colleague agreed to take over.

About the same time our own chairman agreed to give evidence on amenity

at the inquiry. We had now got our team together.

During the week beginning the 13th September the County Council opened an exhibition to the public, giving information about the western route and about two eastern routes not recommended by the council. Our counsel and our solicitor visited the exhibition but practically no copies of anything were to be had there and it was not until October 2nd that consultant and solicitor obtained the truly formidable pile of maps, plans, reports, diagrams and statistics they needed.

There was thus just a fortnight to read it, analyse it and build up our case and for one black moment counsel, consultant and solicitor doubted if it were possible in the time. Then they decided that with an all-out effort they could just bring it off; and they did so. To all of them we are deeply grateful — it was a near thing.

Of the inquiry itself I must say nothing here except that it began on October 18th, St. Luke's Day, and St. Luke was clearly on our side; for more than a week the town, the river and the meadow lay under the gentle sunshine of one of the loveliest of his Little Summers.



St Ives by-pass seen from the Chubb Stream

SUMMARY OF TALKS 2013—2014

The new season of talks began on 20th September 2013 with a talk by Peter Carter:

Poaching in the Fens



We were fortunate to kick-off the new season on 20th September with another highly amusing and informative talk from Peter Carter, the last remaining Fenman still practising the original trades and crafts of his ancestors. Peter has already regaled us with tales of one of his “day” jobs as an eel catcher. Happily eel stocks have recovered in recent years, perhaps due to a succession of traditional cold winters, and the product (which he said is like fishy chicken!) is in much demand from up-market restaurants. Peter is now the proud owner of a certificate of sustainable eel fishing. The other trade which has been a mainstay of the Carter family business is willow harvesting . The willow is cut from November to March, then dried and stripped – the origin of the folk dance called “strip the willow”- and made into eel baskets and many other products; apparently green coffins made from willow are now all the rage. Carters of old also used to cut peat, of which there is much in Fenland. This was a significant industry until the 18th century, and peat blocks cut with a tool called a becket were sent as far afield as London; a skilled cutter could produce 2000 blocks a day. The advent of large scale coal mining – and importantly the railways to transport the coal around the country – meant the end of peat as a domestic fuel .

So much for legitimate business in the Fens. Most of Peter's talk concentrated on the shadier activity of poaching, a "business" which has a history in this country stretching back at least 1000 years. When England was covered in forest, and the population was small and widely spread, living off the land was easy and there was plenty to go round. After the Norman conquest much land was commandeered by the King and granted to his barons to secure their loyalty. Prime hunting land became the preserve of the aristocracy or the Church, and anyone caught stealing game or fish would almost certainly be hanged. Even into the 19th century poaching at night risked either death or transportation, whereas if you were caught during the day hard labour in prison would be your punishment. Nevertheless, many a poor labourer trying to feed his family, including Peter's forbears, would take the risk and pursue something for the pot. Peter himself learned as a lad the necessary skills of guile and patience by scrumping apples from the many orchards on the edge of Fenland around Somersham.

What was caught, and how was it done? Rabbits were the most numerous prey; in mediaeval times they were not only widespread in the wild but also extensively farmed both for food and their fur. They were usually caught with a snare, and Peter showed various types. He explained that rabbits are creatures of habit, following particular tracks and even bounding along at the same points, so the knowledgeable poacher could set a snare in just the right position to catch a rabbit in mid-leap.

Ferrets were also used, but to avoid them killing your dinner underground and you being unable to retrieve it the animals had to be either muzzled or rendered toothless; they would then drive the petrified rabbits out of their burrows and into a net spread by the poacher. Another technique was to stretch a net between the rabbits' feeding ground and their warren, then use a dog to stampede them into the net as they sought safety.

Pheasants are very tasty and not very bright, so were a popular target for poachers. A snare at a favoured transit hole through a hedge was a simple technique, and it was also possible to mount a snare on a long pole and lasso a pheasant as it roosted in the low branches of a tree. Basket traps and baited fishhooks on a length of string were sometimes used, though the latter was a rather cruel method. More humorously, Peter suggested that wheat soaked in gin was irresistible if you are a pheasant, and once drunk the birds were an easy target! A paper cone smeared inside with maple syrup and wheat would

become stuck on an inquisitive pheasant's beak, covering its eyes and again making it an easy target. Better-off poachers would use guns to shoot pheasants, and by positioning yourself down-range of a formal shoot you could target the birds which the paying guests had missed without any fear that your own gun would be heard! Of course, hiding a shotgun from suspicious eyes was difficult, so a specially designed poacher's weapon which folded in half was popular. If using a gun it was essential to collect all the cartridge cases to remove any trace of your presence. Pheasants were not just poached for the pot; if they could be captured alive Fenland pheasants in particular were highly prized for breeding and would command a good price on the black market, so netting was the method of choice if it was cash you were after rather than food. This was also the method used to catch partridges, which are ground nesting birds. Hares were a popular target for poachers in former times but now they are a rare sight, although sadly illegal hare-coursing still goes on.



Gamekeepers were ruthless in pursuit of poachers, and the penalties if you were caught were harsh

Trying to avoid and outsmart the gamekeeper was a dangerous pastime, particularly as many gamekeepers were ex-poachers who knew all the tricks! The more aggressive gamekeepers would set man-traps for unsuspecting poachers, or attach guns to trees which could be trained and fired by a trip-wire. The battle of wits resulted in some ingenious ploys. Poachers would often avoid being caught in possession by leaving their catch in the woods after a night's work and then sending their wives out to collect it the next day; voluminous skirts offered excellent concealment with little chance of being frisked! There is something rather romantic about the individual poacher outwitting the gamekeeper to secure meat for the pot, but it's a vanishing skill; not many folk now have the country lore to be successful. In Fenland particularly, drainage and intensive farming have drastically reduced the amount of wildlife which once teemed in the marshes and woodland. These days if you're hungry it's easier to get a £1 burger from McDonalds than to go rabbit-hunting!

Alan Hunter & Peter Dight spoke on 22nd November 2013 about:

The Lost Priory of St Ives

Alan Hunter gave the talk, and Peter Dight handled the projector. Both are from St Ives Archaeology Group (STAG) part of St Ives Civic Society. STAG meets in the Dolphin Hotel, with a base at Burleigh Hill Farm where activities are carried out, such as field walking, metal detecting and geophysics.

The Group works with others; The Norris Museum is one, and with Jigsaw, comprised of professional archaeologists.

Alan's opening slide stated, "Archaeologists have no morals – they'll date anything" so he provided key dates relating to St Ives -

974 an estate at Slepe given to Ramsey Abbey

At about 1001 bones were found, and these were believed to be those of St Ivo.

1008 priory established

1110 bridge built and fairground established

1238 following a fire, a priory church rebuilt

1414 bridge rebuilt in stone

1539 with the dissolution of the monasteries, the site passed to Sir Thomas Audley.

STAG has made two surveys of the St Ives Priory. St Ives Priory was comparatively small, but perfectly formed.

The barn wall still stands – from 1300s – giving us a glimpse of the kind of material that would have been used at that time for these buildings. Other priories with barn and chapel intact give an idea of what the St Ives one may have looked like.



STAG team (above) was given permission to go into what would have been the rear garden of the Priory, behind the NHS offices, where few people are able to access. A survey of the grounds has been made, along with the surrounding area, to determine what was situated where.

Aerial photos were taken from a mini helicopter, which aided a geophysics survey, using probes to penetrate the ground, taking readings from the resistance encountered by the probes. This task is carried out by working to a grid laid out on the ground, every metre. The resulting image represents every square surveyed provides an indication to what lies beneath. Thomas Audley's house was in the priory area somewhere – the NHS building is in front of the surveyed area.

A ditch 6 metres wide and metre deep marking boundary of priory – and a survey will be made of this area. Near the priory is an arc from 2nd century built by the Romans. Further surveys are to be made next August. When speaking of, or surveying any priory, it is always the area as a whole that has to be considered, and taken into account.

Two other features date from the 4th century, one was a substantial building. A path can be traced, which was in use in 15th century. Chubbs Spring is thought to have been where a water mill was located, but on this there cannot be any certainty.



*Aerial photograph of rear garden to NHS building,
with superimposed survey grid*

Excavations have been made in 1999, 1982 and 1970 in the Priory area. A dig at Cottenham was made this summer, in which STAG was involved, together with people from all over the country. Excavations follow the recognised, set pattern of one metre x one metre deep. Future priory opportunities are planned, but permission has to be sought for even a modest excavation.

Beyond the Priory, there are other opportunities among the fine examples of architecture in church buildings in this part of Cambridgeshire. Aerial photographs of the chapel at Swavesey reveal "lumps and bumps" on the surrounding ground, indicative of the layout of the whole area at that period. Field walking near Bluntisham, research near Needingworth, where an organised group scoured a set area, looking for archaeological stuff – pottery, tile fragments - recording all that was collected, and where each piece was found. These finds - many medieval - are then washed, for closer examination.

Metal detecting is carried out also, the metallic finds plotted to show where each coin (some up to the 6th century) or metal artefact was found.

PROGRAMME OF TALKS 2014 – 2015

All monthly talks are held in the Free Church, St Ives at 7.30 pm.
Non-members are always welcome and a donation of £2 is requested to help cover costs.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 26 th September 2014 | Dr Mike Osborne: Resisting Invasion in World Wars I & II |
| 17 th October 2014 | Annual General Meeting to be followed by the Rev Mark Amey giving a short talk on the proposal for changes to the Parish Church & Alan Scott (Chairman) from the Royal British Legion giving a talk entitled 'Every Man Remembered' - an update on the Royal British Legion Project. |
| 21 st November 2014 | The Godmanchester Stirling:
11 th April 1942, the story of an RAF crew from XV Sqn, RAF Wyton |
| 16 th January 2015 | Fiona Lucraft: Dining with the Georgians |
| 20 th February 2015 | Spartan Rescue: A nation wide rescue service, including the River Ouse |
| 20 th March 2015 | Alexa Cox: Huntingdon Records Office.
Whitney Archives Collection 1860 -1930 |
| 17 th April 2015 | Liz Carter: In & out of the Work house – how did they end in the Workhouse & were there alternatives? |
| 15 th May 2015 | To be arranged |

Please visit our website www.stivescivic.org.uk for programme changes.

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On 17th January 2014 we had a very interesting talk by Derek Harris on:
Up the Cut: The canals in words and music.

The talk on the 17th January 2014 not only had music but also invited audience participation in singing – possibly a first for the Society! We would need an audio version of the Annual Report to do full justice to this performance, so what follows seeks only to capture the essence of it.

The canals in England date from the mid 18th Century and the dawn of the Industrial Revolution. The new factories needed coal and raw materials, and a reliable means of getting their goods to market; the roads at the time were simply not good enough, and there was a limit to what you could carry on a pack-horse or cart. One of the first canals was built by Thomas Brindley for the 3rd Duke of Bridgewater, to transport coal from his mines in Worsley to Manchester. After it opened in 1761 the price of coal in Manchester halved. The Bridgewater Canal was an impressive feat of engineering for the time, with tunnels and the first navigable aqueduct – over the River Irwell. Its success sparked a period of canal mania; investors flocked to support new schemes. The first hurdle was to secure an Act of Parliament allowing construction to proceed. A surveyor/engineer was then engaged to plan the route and design the necessary works, and gangs of labourers known as navvies (short for navigators) dug out the cut (the men who worked the boats never used the term canal). A great deal of money therefore had to be spent over several years, depending on the complexity of the route, before any returns would be seen from the tolls levied by the canal companies for the use of their waterway. Despite the euphoria many canals were never commercial successes, particularly as by the mid 19th Century the railways were beginning to present serious competition.

The early boats were entirely open; it was only later that the addition of a small cabin would provide a floating home for the boatman's family, and pride in this very modest accommodation was evident in the traditional decoration, typically castles and roses. The boats were horse-drawn, hence the towpath alongside the cut, with children given the task of encouraging the horse to keep moving. Canal-side inns offered stabling when barges moored up overnight, and the opportunity for the boatman to drink an ale or two with any mates who happened to be passing. Such socialising would have given rise to the songs and ditties which described, and sometimes made fun of, life on the

cut. It was a hard life, particularly in the winter; sometimes it was necessary to clear ice before boats could get through. Between jobs boatmen didn't get paid, so the boats were constantly on the move looking for work; the fortunate boatmen secured a regular contract ferrying coal or iron ore from mine to market. In the late 19th century engines began to take-over from horses, and the extra power then enabled a butty boat to be towed behind, increasing carrying capacity. The engines were typically single cylinder oil fuelled, with a characteristic pop, pop, pop sound.

The Bridgewater Canal was cleverly contoured and entirely on the level, but elsewhere it was necessary to build locks which enabled the canals to cross hill and dale. The Rochdale Canal, for example, has 92 locks in just 32 miles, with one continuous flight of seven; this was hard work! The longest flight of locks on the English canal system is two consecutive "staircases" at Foxton on the Grand Union Canal. An inclined plane was later built alongside in an effort to reduce the time and effort of negotiating the locks, but this was not a success and it has fallen into disrepair. Elsewhere, valleys were crossed by aqueducts, the most famous being the Pontscysyllte on the Llangollen Canal, and even more sophisticated engineering works such as the Anderton Lift and the Falkirk Wheel could raise boats vertically from one water course to another.



Crossing the Pontscysyllte Aqueduct

Some hills such as the Pennines were simply too steep and high to get across, so the engineers' answer was to tunnel through them. The longest and deepest tunnel on the system, and the highest above sea level, is at Standedge on the Huddersfield Canal. At three and a half miles long, it would probably have taken three hours to negotiate in the horse drawn era; the horse would be led over the hill and the boatman would lie on his back and walk his way along the tunnel roof, hoping not to meet someone coming the other way!



Narrow boats on the Huddersfield Canal at Standedge Tunnel entrance

Some canals still carried commercial traffic until the mid 20th Century, but in the bitter winter of 1962/3 the waterways were frozen for three months and most business was lost for ever, though a very few canals such as the Aire and Calder in South Yorkshire remain commercially viable to this day. The Transport Act 1968 recognised that a few canals still had commercial value, and some others had attracted leisure users, but large swathes of the system were judged to have no utility and fell into disrepair, becoming choked with vegetation and rubbish. It was thanks to the creation of the Inland waterways Association and the efforts of many local preservation groups that abandoned and neglected canals have been restored for the enjoyment of leisure boaters, walkers, cyclists and fishermen. Towpaths have now become leisure facilities in their own right, and the canal environment is often a haven for wild-

life. Thanks to the vision and hard work of armies of volunteers there are now more boats on the 2,300 miles of the canal system still in use than there were at the height of its commercial life.

Derek was suitably attired in a typical boatman's rig of flat cap, muffler, collarless shirt, rough serge trousers and boots, as befits his long term interest in the history of the canals and specifically his role as a director of the Foxton Inclined Plane Trust. He gives many talks and has written a novel about life on the canals in the 19th Century

14th February 2014 Emma Turvey spoke to the members about:
Conservation of finds from Must Farm, Whittlesey.

An unfortunate coincidence of stormy weather and Valentine's Day meant that a rather smaller audience than usual was in the Free Church on 14th February to hear Emma Turvey, a conservator at the Flag Fen archaeological site near Peterborough speak about the excavations at Must Farm near Whittlesey.

Although fossils and other items had been found in the area for over 100 years it was only the excavation of clay for the brickworks at a depth up to 8 metres below current ground level that revealed, quite by chance, the remarkable Bronze Age site at Must Farm.



The first discovery, of timbers from a large platform, was made in 1999 and dated to around 1300BC, roughly contemporary with the discoveries already made at Flag Fen. Subsequent investigations revealed the existence of a fenland community, living either in round houses on the land adjacent to the fen or on wooden platforms erected in the marshes, with settlements linked by wooden causeways. Much evidence of domestic occupation was found, but the platform at Must Farm had clearly been abandoned in some haste after a fire. The area had gradually been inundated after the last ice age as sea levels rose, and by the middle-to-late Bronze Age such arable and livestock farming as had existed - evidenced by the discovery of hoof prints preserved in mud and fencing made from interwoven branches and probably used to enclose animals - was largely replaced by a more water-oriented lifestyle based on fishing and wild-fowling. Well preserved eel traps almost identical to the basket types still used by Peter Carter (as we heard in a talk last year) were found, together with the bones of various freshwater fish. One trap had a rat skull in it – obviously the bait.



A bronze age sword in situ

It is very rare for wooden artefacts to survive 3500 years, but the particular stratigraphy of the Must Farm site preserved timber by excluding oxygen; swords and daggers were found with their wooden handles intact. Metal finds – both bronze and iron – cover a period of about 1200 years and are very similar to items excavated elsewhere in the UK and continental Europe, suggesting that even then there was trade and migration across a wide area.

The most remarkable find at Must Farm was made in the 2012 season when eight log boats were unearthed. These varied in size, design and style, with the largest 8.5 metres long. The context suggested the oldest dated to around 1500BC and the youngest to 800BC. They are made of oak, which would have had to be brought from surrounding countryside as the wetlands around Must Farm would not have supported oak trees. The ring patterns of the oak even suggest that tree growth had been managed with the specific aim of using trunks for boat-building. Each boat is a single log with the centre hollowed-out. One has evidence of a hearth, possibly to enable fishing at night. All the boats had been repaired during their working lives, and boat 1 uniquely has some decoration carved on it. Boat 3 was so well preserved that it was still watertight after excavation. Interestingly, no paddles have yet been found at the site.



Boat 3 ready to sail away after 3,500 years!

Log boats are unsophisticated and only usable in sheltered inland waters, but they would have been ideal for the marshes and shallow meres of the fens. The earliest log boat ever found is 9000 years old, but it was made from relatively light alder wood; the Must Farm oak boats are much heavier and would have been much more difficult to hollow out, though bronze axes would have been available then. Preservation of the boats began immediately, as exposure to the air and uncontrolled drying would cause the fragile timber to disintegrate. Treatment with ethylene glycol, as used on the Mary Rose, begins shortly and is likely to continue for 2-3 years. Smaller wooden artefacts have been freeze dried to preserve them.

Must Farm remains very much work in progress, and other wonderful discoveries may be await the archaeologists. It is also very possible that other settlements remain buried in the clay and will never be unearthed. Already the site is of major archaeological importance, providing a unique insight into everyday life in the wetlands of the fens during the late Bronze Age

Alan Eade gave a talk on 21st March 2014 about:

The Mary Rose

There was a very good turn-out on 21st March for a talk by Alan Eade about the Mary Rose, the Tudor warship which sank in the Solent in 1545 and was recovered by a remarkable salvage operation in the 1980s. The ship and the very many artefacts also salvaged from the wreck site have been described as a unique time capsule of life in Tudor England.

Mary Rose was laid down by King Henry VII and launched by his son Henry VIII in 1511. She was of a type known as a carrack, around 130 feet long with a displacement of about 600 tons and characterised by tall stern and fore “castles” with a low waist of open deck in the middle.

The only contemporary picture of the Mary Rose is in the Anthony Roll, and from this it can be seen she was rigged with four masts and up to ten large sails. She carried a range of different types of cannon, some on deck but most below firing through gun ports in the sides of the hull. The crew numbered about 180 men supplemented by perhaps 150 fully armed soldiers, as the main battle tactic employed was to close with an enemy ship, board her and defeat the crew in hand-to-hand combat. The picture shows Mary Rose

towing a rowing boat. She carried several different types and sizes, not as lifeboats but for miscellaneous duties such as transport to shore; in battle they were streamed aft rather than carried on deck, as if they were hit by a cannon ball flying splinters could be fatal to the crew.



After launch Mary Rose was towed round to London where she was fully fitted-out, including with the complement of cannons which were cast at the foundry on the site of what is now Cannon St railway station. Over the next thirty years she saw service in wars against the French, and on 18th July 1545 was part of the fleet which put out from Portsmouth Harbour to engage a large French fleet which had sailed into the Solent. In full view of observers at Southsea Castle, including Henry VIII himself, the Mary Rose fired one broadside then tacked sharply to bring her other side to bear on the enemy. She heeled over and capsized, and over 90% of those on board lost their lives. It is suspected that when she tacked the strong breeze and the top hamper of modifications introduced during a re-fit in 1536 caused her to heel so much that the open gun ports close to the water line flooded; inevitable disaster was hastened as cannon and the massive brick oven in the galley broke loose and completely destabilised the ship. She sank in about 50 feet of water. Attempts were made at salvage by hauling on the masts still visible above the surface, but they only succeeded in pulling out the masts – which explains why hardly

any evidence of rigging was found at the wreck site. The Mary Rose settled onto her starboard side and sank into the silt of the seabed, to lay undisturbed for 300 years.

In 1782 another warship, the Royal George, sank off Spithead and lay in relatively shallow water as a navigational hazard to vessels entering Portsmouth Harbour. Many unsuccessful attempts were made at salvage, and as late as 1834 a pioneering diver recovered 30 cannon from the ship with the first recorded use of diving suits fed with compressed air. The significance of this effort to our story is that the divers also discovered evidence of the wreck of the Mary Rose and salvaged a number of items such as longbows and small cannon. There was initially a lot of public interest, but once the Royal George had been blown up activity on the site ceased and the Mary Rose returned to obscurity until the 1960s, when sport diving using the new aqualungs became popular. The search for the ship was resumed in earnest in 1965 by the Southsea branch of the British Sub-Aqua Club, and soon artefacts began to be recovered. The wreck was properly secured as an archaeological site and everything was painstakingly recorded. Remarkable discoveries were made, including a 9 ton bronze cannon, but perhaps the most evocative find was the ship's bell with the name Mary Rose inscribed upon it. Interest in, and financial support for, the salvage operation increased rapidly as a result of these finds, and in 1983, after painstaking preparation, the hull of the Mary Rose was nestled in a giant cradle and lifted to the surface.



She was recovered to an old dry dock in Portsmouth Dockyard and raised upright so that the whole of the surviving starboard side of the hull could be seen. To prevent the timbers deteriorating she was sprayed continuously with sea water at 1 degree C, and later with a solution of polyethylene glycol which will stabilise the structure and prevent decay. The hull has been on display to the public for many years, and a new museum has recently opened displaying both the ship and thousands of artefacts in context to explain the life and work of those on board when she sank.

The wreck site was a treasure trove of the sort of everyday items which revealed much about Tudor life not just at sea but also in wider society.



Many cannon of 17 different sizes, together with their ammunition, were recovered; one has been mounted on a replica gun carriage for display in the museum. The moulds used for making cannon balls were also found, suggesting this was done on board. Gunners' equipment included buckets, scoops, swabs, rammers and shot-gauges, the latter essential to ensure that the right calibre of ball was loaded. Fifty longbows made of Welsh yew, and over 4000 arrows made of lime wood tipped with wrought iron and still flighted with goose feathers were recovered; arrows were carried by the archers in quivers divided into 24 segments, indicating the war-time complement of ammunition. Although little survived of the masts and spars, many pulley blocks of varying sizes from the rigging were found.



Blocks and pulleys from the rigging



The tools used by the ship's specialist petty officers – carpenter, sail-maker, barber surgeon – revealed much about the skills of Tudor craftsmen, and even a lodestone compass was salvaged. On the domestic front, sea chests, a large cooking cauldron, bowls, plates and tankards were typical of the items found in ordinary Tudor households. Even items of clothing survived, including leather jackets with the first evidence ever found of pockets, and 24 different types of shoe. Coinage included many foreign coins, suggesting trade and interchangeability of currency over a wide area of Europe. Finally, board

games, including a wonderfully preserved backgammon set, and musical instruments such as recorders suggested life on board was not all hard work and were also indicative of the pleasures and pastimes of wider Tudor family life.

It is indeed remarkable that the ship itself and such an enormous range of artefacts, which would normally have rotted away after 450 years under water, were so well preserved. The fact that the wreck was rapidly covered in a protective layer of silt, which excluded oxygen and prevented the predations of sea creatures, meant that the Mary Rose is the most complete example ever found of life aboard a 16th century ship. A visit to the new museum will be a richly rewarding experience.

On 25th April 2014 Mike Davison gave an interesting talk on:

The History of RAF Wyton

Huntingdonshire's long association with aviation began on Portholme Meadow in 1911, but RAF Wyton was not established until early 1916, when it became a training base for bomber crews destined for the Western Front. The dangers of flying became apparent to the citizens of St Ives in 1918 when an aircraft from Wyton crashed into All Saints parish church and demolished the spire. This happened only weeks before the formation of the RAF.



An idyllic scene, but flying in the early days was a risky business

Wyton returned to farmland after WW I and activity did not resume until 1935, when re-armament to combat the looming threat from Hitler's Germany began. Within two years a permanent base with three runways, four hangars and a range of technical and domestic accommodation had been built as part of the massive airfield expansion programme. The first aircraft, two squadrons of ancient Hawker Hinds, arrived in 1936 even before the work had been completed, and in 1937 these squadrons were re-equipped with the rather more modern Bristol Blenheim. One of these Blenheims took off just 48 minutes after Neville Chamberlain's momentous radio broadcast announcing that war had been declared and was the first British aircraft to cross the German coast. This earned the pilot a DFC, which was presented by King George VI at Wyton in the first field investiture of the war. Wyton's Blenheims also took part in the first bombing raid of the war against German shipping in the port of Wilhelmshaven, but the Blenheim did not pack much of a punch and it was not until the arrival of Wellingtons, Stirlings and the Lancaster bomber that we were really able to take the fight to the enemy.

Aircraft from Wyton made a valuable contribution to the bombing campaign in the early years of the war, but one rather unusual mission was a taste of things to come for the station. In 1940 three Avro Ansons equipped with special radio receiving equipment were detached to Wyton and tasked with finding the radio beam which guided Luftwaffe bombers to their targets in Britain. Within a few days they had succeeded, and our scientists devised a radio counter-measure to confuse the German pilots. This was the start of a secret war of measure and counter-measure which underpinned the more conventional fighting and helped to secure eventual victory. The German beam system persuaded RAF commanders that they too needed a much more systematic approach to their own bombing campaign, which lacked accuracy and was resulting in alarming losses. Thus was created in 1943 The Pathfinder Force, with headquarters initially at Wyton, which went ahead of the main bomber force to find and mark the targets.

The Pathfinders were led throughout the remainder of the war by Don Bennett, who commanded RAF Wyton and then went on to head No 8 Pathfinder Group. The Force eventually consisted of 19 squadrons spread across 5 stations in Huntingdonshire and 2 in Cambridgeshire. Five squadrons were based at Wyton, one operating Lancasters as master bombers and the others with the wonderful de Havilland Mosquito, which was used to pioneer the routes and mark the targets. The Pathfinders greatly improved the effective-

ness of our bombing campaign and also significantly reduced aircraft losses; nevertheless, Bomber Command crews had the highest percentage loss rate of any service during the war and Wyton alone lost 218 aircraft.



The Avro Lancaster, mainstay of the RAF bomber offensive and the Pathfinders

At war's end the services contracted dramatically and many bases were closed, but Wyton continued to operate Lancasters and Halifaxes, and in 1950 the USAF used it as a staging post for B50 bombers joining the 8th Air Force in Europe. Temporary closure thereafter was for the best of reasons; the runway was extended for jet operations and the RAF's photographic reconnaissance fleet operating the new Canberra aircraft was based there. The Canberra was a very capable aircraft, and in its PR7 and PR9 guises continued to operate at Wyton until 1993.

Other versions of the aircraft also located to Wyton, notably the T17 operated by No 360 Sqn in the electronic warfare training role and No 100 Sqn with several different marks providing training targets for the UK's air defence fighters and ground radars. The last operational sortie of a 360 squadron Canber-

ra when the unit disbanded was fittingly made by the world's oldest operational aircraft. Wyton was also the home for 20 years of a specialist Victor squadron operating in the high level radar reconnaissance role, and Vulcan bombers were regular visitors practising their bolthole deployments in the event of the Cold War turning hot.



A parade at Wyton of almost every remaining operational Canberra marks the 40th anniversary of this remarkable aircraft

The other major component of Wyton's air wing in the second half of the 20th century was No 51 Sqn, operating initially Comet aircraft and then from 1974 the Nimrod R1. The squadron was the UK's specialist airborne electronic intelligence force, listening to the communications and radar emissions of Soviet forces during the Cold War and later of the opposition during the wars in Kosovo, Iraq and Afghanistan. The Nimrod R's intelligence gathering electronics were designed and installed by a specialist engineering unit at Wyton, which also used its expertise to develop avionics modifications for many other MOD aircraft.

A number of other miscellaneous units were based at Wyton over the years, including a detachment of Devon and Basset transport aircraft, a section of

Bloodhound air defence missiles and the Joint School of Photographic Interpretation. Operational flying ceased in 1993, but in recent years the airfield hosted the police helicopter and the East Anglia Air Ambulance. Some elementary flying training remains, including Cambridge and London University Air Squadrons, but this has now begun re-locating to RAF Wittering; the airfield north of the main runway is then scheduled for housing development. However, Wyton's future as a major MOD establishment is assured by the creation of the Joint Force Intelligence Group in newly built facilities, and the approximately 2500 personnel from all three Services, plus dependents, will continue to make a major contribution to the local economy.



The Canberra PR9 gate guardian is a proud reminder of Wyton's operational past

RAF Wyton has, over nearly 100 years, played a very significant role in the defence of the realm. It can lay claim to a number of important "firsts" and aviation records, became the ancestral home of the Canberra fleet and in the 1970s was the second busiest airfield in the RAF. As it continues in the role which characterised most of its post WWII history – Defence Intelligence – the station motto **Verum Exquiro** or **We Seek the Truth** remains highly appropriate.

VISIT TO HUNTINGDON RECORDS OFFICE – AUGUST 2014

A group of us had a private visit to the Records Office, when Sue Sampson, Public Services Archivist for Cambridgeshire County Council, began with an excellent talk about our local collection and gave us an idea of what can be found.

Until 1838 some records were kept in the Tower of London and some next to a fish mongers, showing that there was no idea of caring for them. The Public Records Act of 1838 changed this with the setting-up of the Public Records Office in Chancery Lane, London, which has since moved to Kew.

Huntingdonshire was quite late in collecting archives, only since 1933 compared to Bedford beginning in 1913, yet even then there were poor ideas of care, and it wasn't until after World War II that anyone thought to organise them properly.

Sue explained how the County obtains records by three means: on loan, when they are deposited by the owner but their return could be requested at any time, when they could even be sold and leave the UK; records can be gifted, giving the Council full ownership, or records can be bought, usually with the help of a variety of national funds.

Although some of our group have already used the Office for research, we were all intrigued to be able to go through the locked doors into the Strong Room to see how the records are kept, including paintings, and to hear how the air is monitored for temperature and humidity at all times, including a gas-suppression system in the event of a fire.

Sue pointed-out that some records we imagine would have survived have not, yet other, seemingly less significant papers, have survived in great detail. For example Huntingdon Gaol records of the early 1800s are mostly missing, yet there are good records of the requisitioning of iron railing for the War effort.

The oldest document at the Office is the Huntingdon Charter of 1205 and another particularly significant one is the Parish Register of Huntingdon St John, showing the baptism of Oliver Cromwell.

Some records show us social history, such as Workhouse records which give details of why people entered and their discharge, and court records showing how children might be before a magistrate for stealing food, made more poignant by the inclusion of a photograph of the youngster. There is a Tithe Map of Somersham from the 1840s which would have determined how much each land-owner had to pay (replacing the old system of paying with sheep or other commodities), and unusually, a roll of Honour of the St Ives Free Church which includes photographs.

Of particular interest is a Probate Inventory of John Litchfield, a Surgeon in St Ives who died in 1729; not only does this list the contents of his home, but also the potions and other contents of his shop.

Even those of us who have already used the Records Office found much of interest, and for those who have never previously ventured through its doors Sue gave us the confidence to know that the records are there for all of us; we don't have to have a specific connection with a record, we just have to have an interest in what has gone before.

Barbara Richmond

RECYCLING A 19TH CENTURY CHURCH THE STORY OF THE SACRED HEART CHURCH, ST IVES

Cambridge

After the Reformation, Catholicism had almost died out in parts of England, including St Ives and areas of Huntingdon and Cambridge.

The prolific 19th century architect, Augustus Pugin, designed a Roman Catholic church dedicated to St Andrew, which was opened in 1843 in Union Road (near the junction with Hills Road), where it served the expanding Catholic population for over 40 years. The lancet windows were manufactured by William Wailes of Newcastle-upon-Tyne who worked with Pugin from about 1838 to 1845.

The congregation grew, and in 1890 the much larger Church of Our Lady & the English Martyrs (OLEM) opened at the junction of Lensfield and Hills Roads, and St Andrew's became redundant.

St Ives

In 1899 a civil engineer named George Craig Saunders Pauling purchased a plot of land at number 2 East Street on which stood a small wooden building. This served as a chapel for three years, where Mass was celebrated for the expanding Catholic population.

In 1902 George Pauling purchased the redundant church of St Andrew in Cambridge for £1,000. He arranged for it to be dismantled brick by brick, transported by river to the Quay in St Ives, where it was off-loaded onto horse and cart and taken to Needingworth Road, where it was rebuilt at the corner of Park Road. This incredible feat took less than five months to complete

The church was opened on 9th July 1902 by the Bishop of Northampton, when it was re-dedicated to the Sacred Heart. In 1972 it was awarded Grade II Listed Building status and became part of the newly created Roman Catholic Diocese of East Anglia in 1976.

George Pauling was thought to have been a 'local' civil engineer, however, this was not the case.....

George was born in London in September 1854, the eldest of four children of Richard Clarke Pauling and his wife Jane. Richard was a civil engineer (from a family of engineers) and when employed overseas accompanied by his wife, their children were sent to live with their mother's family in St Ives, where George and his brother Harry attended school and where the four children were baptised at the Parish Church of All Saints in 1863.

When illness led Richard Pauling to return with his wife from India, the children were reunited with their parents in London where George, at the age of 14, was required to earn a living to support his family. He undertook a range of menial jobs until becoming an apprentice to Joseph Firbank, a major railway contractor.

When he finished his apprenticeship in 1875, George joined his father and brother Harry in South Africa where he became a railway contractor, first forming Firbank, Pauling & Co. with his former employer, followed by other partnerships until Pauling & Company was established by George in 1894.



Richard Pauling and his wife in South Africa

During his career Pauling was responsible for building the majority of the railway network in South Africa, particularly in Rhodesia and the Transvaal, working with both Cecil Rhodes and President Paul Kruger. In 1894 Pauling was appointed Minister of Mines and Public Works for two years and he also held the post of Postmaster-General for a short time. George Pauling was recognised as a founding father of Rhodesia and his name is still evident in places such as Paulington, Mutare, the third largest city in Zimbabwe.

Pauling & Company completed projects for railways, dams and bridges in many countries including Argentina, India, Greece, Puerto Rico and England, and George was elected to the Institute of Civil Engineers (ICE) in London in 1895, when his address was listed as Salisbury, Mashonaland, a region in North Zimbabwe.

Pauling, a convert to Catholicism, returned to England many times during his successful career and retired to Effingham, Surrey, where he funded the building of the Catholic church of Our Lady of Sorrows which opened in 1913.

George Pauling died at home of pneumonia in February 1919, aged 64, and is buried in the churchyard of Our Lady of Sorrows, along with his mother. His father Richard Clarke Pauling died in July 1894, aged 60, and is buried in the graveyard of All Saints, St Ives.

George Craig Saunders Pauling's legacy to St Ives is the thriving Church of the Sacred Heart, reported in The Hunts Post in 1902 as 'Pugin's Little Gem', and yet despite his financial generosity and skill as a civil engineer there is no record of him (yet) in the Norris Museum or in the Huntingdon or Cambridgeshire Archives.

Footnote:

George's mother, Jane Pauling, was born in St Ives in 1834 to Margaret and James Bone, a Waterman. The family lived in an area previously known as Back Streets, a collection of streets, alleyways and courtyards in the area we now know as East and West Street and North Road. This area where George and his siblings spent many years in their childhood was the site of the first building purchased by him for the local Catholic population.

Source: 'The Chronicles of a Contractor' - The Autobiography of George Pauling.

The stained glass windows in Sacred Heart Church were manufactured by William Wailes who was educated near Bishop Auckland and had an interest in stained glass from an early age. His father's debts forced William to be apprenticed, aged 15, to learnt the art of grocer and tea dealer; by 1830 he had completed his apprenticeship and went on to become a successful grocer and tea dealer, allowing him to pay off his family's debts.

Leaving his assistant to manage his prosperous business Wailes travelled to Italy and Munich in the 1830's to study stained glass, becoming a successful designer and manufacturer with work exhibited at the Great Exhibition of 1851. The work of William Wailes is recorded in the stained glass museum at Ely Cathedral and is still evident in Chichester Cathedral and many other churches across the country.

With grateful thanks to Ellen Kemp of the Sacred Heart Church for her research and notes.

Barbara Richmond



Sacred Heart Church - note the Civic Society plaque on the side wall!

LIFE WITH THE FOSSBROOKES by GORDON DIXON

The long list of the Vicars of All Saints', which hangs on the north wall, serves as a testament to the age of our church, but tells us nothing of the people themselves.

Whilst doing some research into St Ives in the Victorian era, I came across the entry for the Vicarage in the 1841 Census. The Vicar, The Reverend Yate Fosbrooke is there as the head of the household, with his wife, Mary Ann and their three children.

As the Fosbrookes did not arrive in St Ives until 1839, this snapshot was quite early in their tenure. I am not aware of all the trials and tribulations of The Reverend Fosbrooke in the first 26 years of his ministry in St Ives, but Noel Hudson's splendid book, *St Ives: Slepe by the Ouse* (upon which this account is largely based) provides a fascinating insight into his last year, which was, to say the least, eventful.

Life in the Fosbrooke household became particularly challenging in 1865 with the arrival of a new curate, Dr John Hunt. Alas, we do not have Fosbrooke's version of what happened in that last year but Hunt published an account of it in a pamphlet in 1867, following his dismissal. So anxious was he not to be identified, that he signed the pamphlet 'A Presbyterian' and altered the name of the town to 'Ousebank' as well as the names of the principal protagonists: for example Fosbrooke becomes 'Mr Coldstream'. Unfortunately his efforts to protect himself were somewhat thwarted by Mrs Hunt who annotated one copy (now in the Norris Museum) with the real name!

Initially the relationship between the two men was cordial enough and the Vicar even praised Hunt's sermons. Gradually, however, Fosbrooke began to suspect that his curate held 'unsound' views, which were at the low end of the doctrinal spectrum, in contrast to his own rather more elevated beliefs.

The picture Hunt paints of Fosbrooke in his pamphlet is that of a rather snobbish individual, who saw himself as possessing all the virtues and characteristics of an English country gentleman. Surprisingly, the two men seem to have made an effort at being civil with one another which was just as well as Hunt lived with the Fosbrookes at the Vicarage. Nevertheless, there does seem to have been a bit of point scoring. For example, in his pamphlet, Hunt describes how Fosbrooke (or Mr 'Coldstream') had attacked the views of The Reverend Frederick Robertson of Brighton. Hunt then asked the Vicar what

he thought about one of Hunt's recent sermons. Upon being told that the Vicar thought it a particularly good one, Hunt triumphantly revealed that the sermon was Robertson's.

The final confrontation between the two men took place in 1866, over the issue of a confirmation service to be conducted by the Bishop. Over 40 parishioners submitted themselves for confirmation and were prepared by Fosbrooke. He was, however, disappointed with Hunt's role in the preparations, and told him that he should have been more active in persuading candidates to come forward. Hunt felt that this was unseemly and this led to a row.

Whether because of this or some other reason, Fosbrooke fell ill shortly after the service with a heart condition from which he never recovered. Forbidden by his doctors to carry on working, he took to resting at home, looking out on the Vicarage garden and taking a particular interest in a nesting family of longbills. In a rather poignant postscript, Hunt reports that he went into the garden on the day of Fosbrooke's death in July 1866 and discovered the longbills all dead.

Following Fosbrooke's death, Hunt was in temporary charge of the parish, although he clearly would like to have been appointed as the permanent incumbent. However, he recognised that the patrons wanted someone with private means, who would spend money maintaining the church. The new Vicar was Charles Goldie who was even more high church than Fosbrooke. Within a week of Goldie's appointment Hunt was dismissed because he had preached two sermons after Fosbrooke's death, which Goldie found irreconcilable with his own views on church doctrine. Goldie's treatment of Hunt seems to have been regarded as high handed by the townspeople and the two offending sermons were widely circulated.

It is a reflection of Goldie's increasing unpopularity in the town that when Hunt came to leave, he was presented with a sum of money at a crowded meeting in the Corn Exchange. He responded by regaling the audience with his own views on religion. Hunt then left the town but his bitterness is reflected in the pamphlet referred to earlier. Of course, much of this account is seen through Hunt's eyes, and his desire to portray himself in a favourable light, but it does explain why you will not find his name in the list of distinguished Vicars, which hangs in our church

Front cover photo: The Waits (1893) by Fritz Althaus

Fritz Althaus (1863-1962)

This watercolour by Fritz Althaus shows the riverside next to the Norris Museum. Indeed it is almost exactly the same view that can be seen from the Museum windows now, although the Norris hadn't been built when this scene was painted in 1893. The picture looks towards the parish church, past the piece of river bank called 'The Waits'. The origin of this ancient name is not certain, but probably come from a Saxon word meaning a riverside or a bend in a river.

Some features in this painting can still be seen today. The parish church is little changed, nor is 'Manchester House', the large 18th-century house on the right of the picture. It then housed the St Ives Grammar School but is nowadays used as offices.

Other parts of the scene are quite different. The Waits themselves have now been built into a triangular green outside the Museum. In 1893 the area was just a muddy slope going down to the water's edge. In the background, Holt Island was then being used to grow willows for basket weaving; the willow rods were cut down every year, leaving the island much more open than it is now, with a clear view to Houghton Hill in the background.

Fritz Althaus was born in Lewisham, Kent, and first learned to draw with the help of his mother who was talented amateur portrait-painter. His father, born in Germany, was a Professor of Music. He studied under the artist Axel H Haig, an artist who boarded with his family, followed by tutelage at St Martin's School of Art, the Westminster School of Art and the Royal Institution. He lived in Maida Vale, London, while also travelling in the West Country, before deciding to move to Exeter in 1893 and to Leeds in 1908.

Several pictures of the St Ives area by Althaus are known, all dating between 1889 and 1893. He may have visited the area to paint here - there is no evidence that he ever lived here. The Norris Museum has three of his paintings in its collection, showing scenes of St Ives and Houghton. All are dated 1893 and all show autumnal or winter scenes, so they could have been painted during a single short visit.

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