



FULBOURN VILLAGE HISTORY SOCIETY

"To save Fulbourn's past for the future"

NEWSLETTER NO. 58 AUTUMN 2023

F.V.H.S. COMMITTEE 2023-2024

Chair: Glynis Arber

Minutes Secretary: Tim Vaughan-Lane

Treasurer: Ian Harrison

Archivist: Alison Rash

Committee members: Pat Meakin

Clare Champion

WELCOME NEWS!

Fulbourn Village History Society Committee explained to members at our AGM that owing to rising costs our expenditure was exceeding our income and this was not sustainable. It was agreed unanimously, that the annual subscriptions would be raised from £12 to £15. This subscription enables the Society to fund our Talks, hire the meeting room, print documents etc.

I am now happy to inform you the financial position of our archive and research has been made more secure by a grant from the Wrights Clock Fund Charity. We had applied for a three years funding of the rent paid to The Fulbourn Centre for our Archive Store and use of the Committee Room on the two mornings a week that this is available for research purposes. Our argument that this facility, run by volunteers who are members of the society (and many thanks to you all), was a community resource open to everyone and free of charge, was accepted.

We are very grateful to the Trustees of Wrights Charity for this decision which will ensure that Fulbourn Village History Society can continue in its objective to 'save Fulbourn's past for the future'.

COFFEE MORNING DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

Why not meet up just before our first Talk of the Season?

Our social event, the annual Coffee Morning, will take place on **Saturday, 23rd September at Rosemary House, off Haggis Gap from 10.30 hrs until 12.30 hrs** - there will be signs nearby! If the weather is wet, Suzy is happy to hold the event inside. Tea, coffee and squash plus biscuits are provided free. As in the past, there will also be delicious home baked cakes (donations welcome).

So come along and treat yourself.



Much of the information that Fulbourn Village History Society has about the village between 1939 -1945 comes from extracts in The Fulbourn Chronicles Vol IV whose earliest entry relating to the war years occurred on 22 September 1939.

Various measure were introduced by the government to help ensure the safety of the civilian population during WWII. Fulbourn Chronicles refer to two of these - the use of a warning siren and implementation of a blackout. The former was first mentioned at a Parish meeting:

‘The annual Parish meeting was held on Wednesday...Mr E. Mather handed in a petition, signed by 160 persons, asking for a siren to be installed in the village. This request was unanimously supported by the meeting, and the clerk (Mr L.J. Chater) was instructed to take the necessary steps at once.’ [21/03/1941].

However, the decision aroused some controversy as shown by a letter printed in the local newspaper on 28/03/1941.

‘Sirens in Villages

To the Editor

Sir, - Can any convincing reason be offered for the installation of sirens in villages? In towns, where many persons frequent the streets and where public shelters are provided and aircraft can approach almost unnoticed, the reason is obvious. But in villages the sound of an approaching aircraft is soon heard and can be distinguished. The siren is also heard from the neighbouring town. Is there any reason why anxieties should be needlessly increased, and old persons’ and children’s sleep unnecessarily disturbed and the night made hideous by the close proximity of this strident noise? Yours etc. T.H, Hennessy.’

The author was the Rev Theodore Harbour Hennessy, Rector of Fulbourn. His point of view was not shared by a parishioner, Alfred Fabb who responded:

‘Sir, in reply to your correspondent.....I would like to state that...it is the weight of opinion that should count. Both a canvas of householders and a show of hands at a public meeting prove that 99 per cent. of the people, including the wardens, A.R.P. and other voluntary workers, do think a siren is necessary, not for the sake of getting a “thrill” or “excitement” as one correspondent suggests, but for the obvious reason, to gain first hand information, however “unwholesome” that may be. With the help of the Clerk of the Parish Council it is hoped that some kind of satisfactory warning can be provided in the near future. Yours etc., A. Fabb, Fulbourn .’ [11/4/1941]

Two weeks later the ‘question of air raid sirens was discussed’ - with no outcome - at the parish meeting again. The situation evidently caused some concern as expressed by a Fulbourn soldier

‘No Air Raid Warnings at Fulbourn

Sir, I and my fellow comrades from the village of Fulbourn would like to know the reason why the public are not warned when there is an air raid on. Great Wilbraham, a village of much smaller population, can boast a siren, yet they do not even sound a whistle in Fulbourn, although the wardens have got them. This, I understand, is due to the use of whistles being stopped by some of the inhabitants of the village.

It is not a pleasant thought to the men who have left behind them their mothers, wives or sweethearts, and above all their children, to know that they may be killed or injured whilst they were asleep, just because a few persons have stopped the alarm being given. Yours, etc., Pte G.W. Sharman, Southern Command’. [18/7/1941]

It would appear that the matter was not resolved because, a year later, another letter appeared in the newspaper.

No Siren.

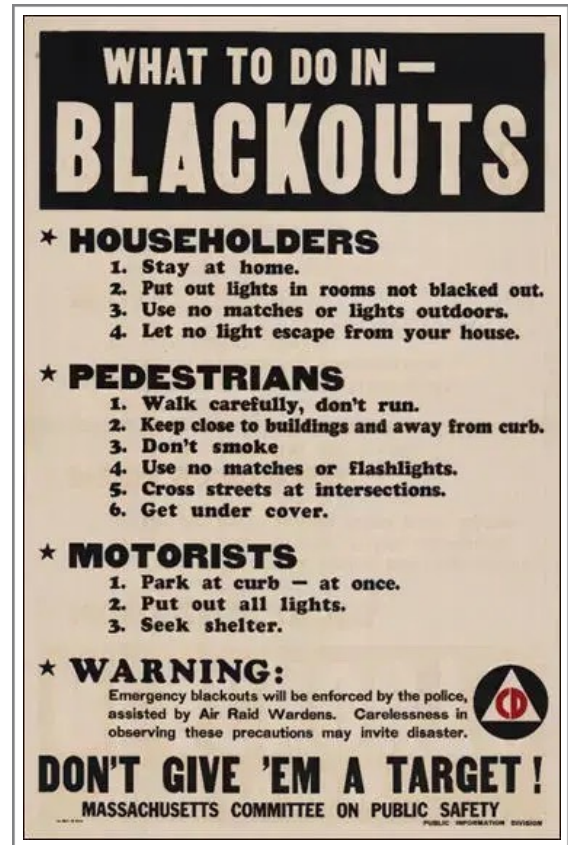
A correspondent writes: I wish to draw attention to the position of the village of Fulbourn in regard to air raids. We have no siren, or signal to let us know there is a raid on. I know many people in the village would help to get one, but certain people don't want one, but why always stand for these? We are told to be on the alert for air raids, but how can we without a warning. It should be remembered that many people have children to get up and get down stairs. It is about time something was done. [7/8/1942]

What that was is unclear as regrettably, there are no further reports on the subject of sirens in the Chronicles. There is though, one account that shows maintaining a black out was taken seriously.

'Bottisham Police Court.

Basil Percy Wallis, Harrow Close, Pierce Lane, Fulbourn was summoned for failing to screen a light in his house at 9.30 p.m.. John Chaplin, head special constable at Fulbourn said he noticed the light. He investigated and found the light was given by a fire and the window not screened. The light could be seen for 20 yards. Wallis, who is an

airman, said he was flying that night and did not notice the light from the air. His wife had made the fire up and gone out before black-out time without checking the curtains. Captain Hicks said it was not a very serious case and Willis would be convicted without penalty. He would have to pay 6s.6d costs, however. [10/05/1940]



Extract from John Beresford's transcription of Fulbourn events reported in non-local Newspapers.

'RUFFIANLY ATTACK ON A YOUNG WOMAN.-

Mr R Gilhon, of Faversham, has addressed the following to the Cambridge Chronicle:-" On Tuesday, the 25th ult., my granddaughter, Rachael Gilhon, received a letter dated Fulbourn, bearing the initials of G.M., requesting her to meet him on the next Sunday at Fulbourn.

We took no notice of it, but passed it off as a joke, thinking it proceeded from some love swain. But, behold, on the Sunday morning following, she received another letter, threatening her most fearfully. Indeed, the writer went so far as to say he was ready to murder her, or the young man her suitor; and added, 'the first come the first served.'

Even this did not put us in any fear, till the Tuesday evening following, about half-past seven o'clock, when she was about seven or eight yards from one of my tenant's doors, she was attacked by the villain, who knocked her down with a bludgeon, and left her for dead as he thought. But thanks to a merciful Providence, she was not so much injured as he thought.'

Newcastle Courant - Friday 11 February 1853
Norfolk Chronicle - Saturday 12 February 1853

A reminder that stalking, threats and violence to women is not a modern phenomenon although in this 19C case, carried out initially by letter and not social media.

A HISTORY OF SCHOOLS IN FULBOURN PART I: The early 19C by Glynis Arber

This article, based on a Presentation given at our A.G.M is an amalgamation of all the research done on Schools in the parish of Fulbourn by members of The Fulbourn Village History Society over many years. Various sources eg Buildings, Maps, Documents, Newspaper reports and Photographs were consulted all of which are in our Archive Store. Hopefully, a story emerges that gives an insight into education within the village from the early 19C to the early 21C.

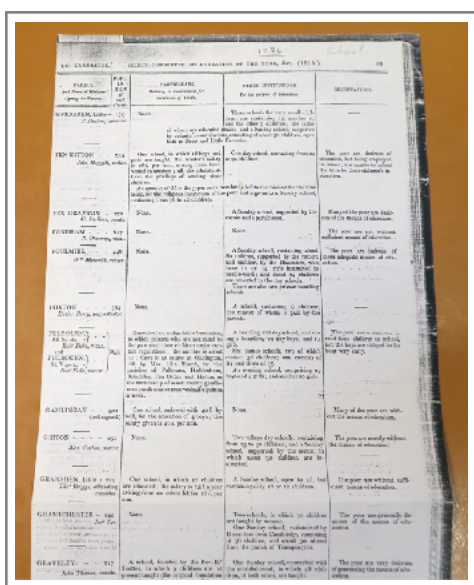
Arguably, the most helpful and even significant document in our Archives which provides information about schooling in Fulbourn during the early 19C is a rather tattered photocopy of a government report.

To find out more about this document I searched the internet and found the reference to Fulbourn schools was part of an inquiry into education by the Government. Two 'Reports on the Education of the Lower Orders' were published between 1816 and 1819 and comprehensively investigated the provision of education for poor working class children in the early 19th century.

The clergy of 12,000 parishes in England and Wales were sent questionnaires by the government as a way of obtaining information, with replies received from 11,800. Rev Fiske was one of the clergymen and taking account of the Rev Fiskes dates he was rector, the information about schools in Fulbourn must have taken place sometime between 1781 and 1826. This supports 1818 as the year when the report was compiled.

The column headings provided a considerable amount of detail regarding the parish in the early 19C. ie Parish, Name of Minister signing the Return, Population of each Parish, Particulars relating to the Endowments for Education of Youth, Other Institutions for the Purpose of Education.

There were the 30 children attending the endowed school. A boarding and day school, containing 2 boarders, 29 day boys, and 15 girls. Six dames schools, two of which contain



8 children; one consists of 2; and three of 35. An evening school, comprising 27 boys and 4 girls; and another 10 girls. Total taught during the day = 259. Total taught during the evening = 41. This was out of a population of 855.

Dame schools were run by women who were mostly poor themselves charging a small fee for each pupil. They were unlikely to be educated and were often illiterate, being more similar to babysitters than teachers. The quality of the education provided by Dame Schools was described by one of the Royal Commissioners London Investigators. He considered the women who run them to be

‘too poor, too ignorant, too feeble, too sickly, too unqualified in every way to regard themselves and be regarded by others as unfit for school keeping . . . there are few, if any, occupations regarded as incompatible with school-keeping, if not as simultaneous, at least as preparatory employments.

Domestic servants out of place, discharged barmaids, vendors of toys or lollipops, keepers of small eating houses, of mangles, or of small lodging-houses, needlewomen who take plain or slop work; milliners, consumptive patients in an advanced stage; cripples almost bedridden; persons of at least doubtful temperance; outdoor



Mary Ann Parker in old age

paupers; men and women of 70 and even 80 years of age; persons who spell badly (mostly women I grieve to say) who can scarcely write and who cannot cipher at all’.

Often the Dame school was run from the woman’s home. The one run by Mary Ann Parker was in a house situated at the junction of Ludlow Lane and School Lane, Fulbourn. Personally, I feel that Mary Ann Parker did not fit into the investigators very negative description - in her portrait she looks far too respectable!

HIDDEN HISTORIES OF ARTEFACTS HELD IN OUR STORE:

Shoe Mending Tools by Glynis Arber

Did you know that in the past, shoemakers (called cordwainers in England) were skilled artisans who made shoes out of new leather, while cobblers only repaired shoes? Indeed, cobblers were forbidden to use new leather for their repairs and it was a serious insult to call a shoemaker a cobbler (the latter term can also mean to work clumsily or bungle the task).

Information about shoe mending tools in our Archive Store has been obtained from the internet at the following websites:

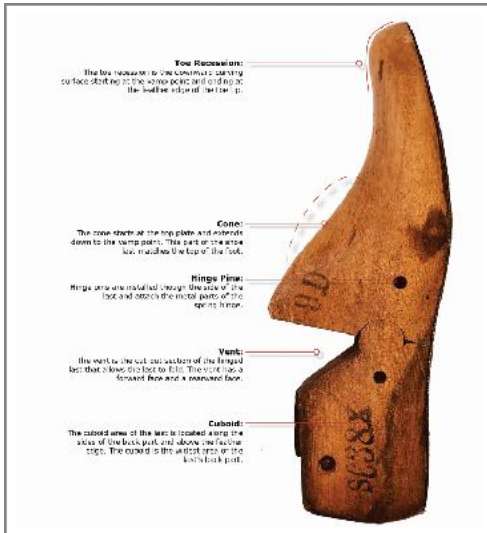
<https://shoemakersacademy.com>

<https://footfiles.com>

<https://1900s.org.uk>

<https://connect2local.com/l/191446/c/367460/a-brief-history-of-shoe-repair>

In Fulbourn Village History Society's artefact collection there are four objects labelled as a shoe last. Research reveals that these were designed to help in the making or manufacture of shoes. They are shaped like a human foot and made of firm materials such as hardwoods, cast iron and more recently, high density plastics so as to withstand contact with wetted leather and the force required to mould it. Since the early 19C they usually came in pairs to match the separate shapes of right and left feet.

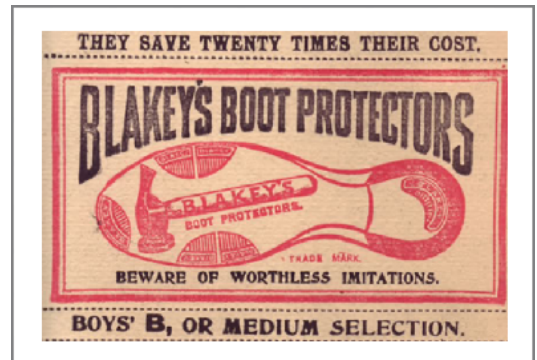


The artefacts in our store are made of cast iron, do not come in pairs, have a very rudimentary 'upper' shape, a slightly curved sole and squared off heel (see photo below).



It is therefore more likely that they were a 'hobbing foot' ie a piece of metal which supported a shoe while it was being mended. There are two of these which have three different sized sole shapes - large, medium and small. The trademark 'PARAGON No 3 REET MARK' is printed on one and that of 'BLAKEY BOOTS PROTECTORS' on the other.

An internet search revealed that the original manufacturer was likely to have been John Blakey, a prolific inventor born in Keighley, West Yorkshire, who had designed many types of innovations mainly connected to the shoe manufacturing industry. His most significant invention were 'Blakey's Segs' in 1880, which were small pieces of metal that could be nailed onto the bottom of boots or shoes to protect and extend the life of the sole and heel. No doubt the hobbing foot was a helpful instrument for this task.



In our collection we also have two single versions of the hobbing foot, one slightly larger than the other and both apparently, child sized.



It would appear that the metal shoe shape was fitted over a wooden pole. The mender sitting on a chair, would place the contraption between his legs using his knees to support it. Worn leather on the shoe was removed, new leather nailed on and then cut to shape.



It is probable that some individual households had their own version of the hobbing foot as mending shoes at home would be less expensive than going to a cobbler. These objects certainly are very common!

Shoes were obviously, a necessary article of clothing which needed to be kept in good condition. Comfort was also important, especially as the shape of a foot can change with age and shoes would be handed down to other members of the family - or sold on. One way to ensure that the leather remained in shape or a tight fit was remedied, was the use of a shoe stretcher.

Fulbourn Village History Society possess two pairs, both made of wood. The one below has a handle with a screw inserted at an oblique angle into the main frame. It is inscribed 'MEN'S MEDIUM'.



Initially, I could not understand how this would work and therefore put to use empirical research methods ie using my own shoe to experiment with! (see photo below). It seems that as the screw is tightened, the upper shoe leather is raised and stretched.



The other pair of shoe stretchers (photo below) is more straightforward and operates by a hinge.



It was difficult to determine how these worked as they were marked with '4' - a shoe size much smaller than my own (see photo below) although they may have been gently eased into a slightly larger shoe to stretch it.



Also printed underneath was 2/11 - presumably the price at the time. Since neither of these stretchers were able to adjust the width of the shoe perhaps they were mostly used to maintain the shape.

REVIEWS OF FULBOURN HISTORY SOCIETY TALKS

March 2023 'The Weird and Wonderful World of the Romans'. Report by Tim Vaughan-Lane

We welcomed Paddy Lambert, a project officer with Oxford Archaeological, to our March meeting. Paddy is a dynamic speaker, with a knack of finding and presenting unusual aspects of the everyday lives of the Romans.

Northamptonshire was a county well used by the Romans, as a source of building stone as well as various minerals and metals such as tin and iron. Britain was well away from the intrinsic issues of Rome and villas were a sign of the wealth of individuals who settled in the area. In addition, larger villas could be regarded as forts without soldiers, or administrative centres. There was already a known villa estate next to Priors Hall and this was the subject of the archaeological dig in question. Paddy told us that his managers at Oxford Archaeological reckoned that it would only take six weeks to excavate the site. However, he and his team were still there, hard at it, over a year later.

Strip trenches had already been dug on the site in 2011, but it was only in 2019 that work began in earnest, as developers were keen to proceed. Paddy recalled the moment when he was on site and there was a loud clang. A digger had hit something solid - the top of a wall, as it turned out. While this proved to be beautifully faced on the outside, the middle was filled with rubble and there was a rather crude face to its inside. Apparently, the Romans had a practical attitude to building, best summed up as 'it'll do'.



The entire team fitted inside the large lime kiln!

The 15 metre-square wall enclosed a central building, which was a temple or mausoleum - the Latin for a tomb or mausoleum is 'monumenta', hence the derivation of the word 'monument'. Thought to have been built in the 1st century, the original buildings were of a size indicative of the owner's wealth and the wall here was 2 - 3 metres in height, so that overlooking was not possible.

It wasn't known which god the temple was dedicated to, but the Romans had a god for everything; Cardea was the goddess of door hinges, who stopped evil spirits crossing the threshold, for example. However, by the turn of the 4th century a new owner had taken over and the temple had been turned into a tile factory, with its walls taken down to a single level. Stone from the original walls was used to block up doorways and clay linings added to turn rooms into kilns. It was estimated that some twenty to fifty thousand tiles were produced in the years that the tile factory was operating.

Some of the tiles had footprints of cats, foxes, deer, and birds, which had wandered across the unfired tile. There was also the imprint of a fern and a Roman sandal. Some of the tiles bore inscriptions such as "Potertrius fecit" (Potertrius made it). A few coins were found from the late Roman period, but they were only made of 1% silver, as opposed to earlier coins that would have been made of 80% silver. There was also some evidence that women worked on the site, maybe in managerial capacities.

No human remains were found, meaning that either they had been removed, or they were never there. Excavations then moved to the other side of the site where a large lime kiln was unearthed. But that is another story and Paddy will be back in March 2024 as part of our Programme of Talks, to finish the tale.