

# FULBOURN VILLAGE HISTORY SOCIETY

"To save Fulbourn's past for the future"

## NEWSLETTER No. 8 Autumn/Winter 2001

### **BUSY! BUSY! BUSY!**

Fulbourn's local history enthusiasts have enjoyed a busy summer. In July 41 members visited Ashdon Village Museum, a perfect gem of a place and an inspiration to those of us who'd like a museum for Fulbourn.

This small, user-friendly museum is well worth a visit; it opens Wednesday and Sunday afternoons from April to the end of September, from 2.00-5.00 p.m. and at other times by prior arrangement. There is a small tea room and a pretty garden to sit in on warmer days. It's only half an hour away by car, just right for a Sunday afternoon outing so why not visit?

### **COFFEE MORNING CRACKER**

The coffee morning held at the Manor in August made a stunning £283.90 for funds! Our thanks to Richard & Rosemary Townley for allowing us to use the kitchen and gardens and to all who gave their help and support.

### **READ ALL ABOUT IT!**

Some members took part in the Archaeological Training Dig held in August in Hall Orchard (more widely known as the Nature Reserve). Aileen Connor from the Archaeological Field Unit writes about the dig and its exciting discoveries later in this issue.

### **HOUSE DETECTIVE**

The Society is trying to compile an up-to-date and accurate record of all buildings in the Parish and would like every FVHS member to check, where possible, the deeds of their home and let us have the following information:

- (a) Date built
- (b) Builder's name
- (c) Alterations: dates & builder's name if known
- (d) Your name and those of any previous occupants, plus dates, if known
- (e) Any other information of interest relating to the property
- (f) Name & postal address of property
- (g) If you cannot discover the exact details please give best estimate & state "estimate"

Please contact Tony Goodall, 41 Cherry Orchard tel.880401 with your information. Once we have your information we can spread the net wider.

### **SHOPPING TROLLEY SOUGHT**

Do you have a shopping trolley you no longer need or use? Pat White, Keeper of the Society's Accessions Register, needs one to cart around records, artefacts and papers. If you can help please telephone her on 881037.

### **WANTED: MAPS OF FULBOURN**

If you have any old maps showing Fulbourn that you do not want, please remember that the Society will gladly take them off your hands. We are particularly interested in old Ordnance Survey maps of the area. Bring them to the History Hut at the AFU Haggis Gap any Monday afternoon between 2.15 - 4.00 p.m.

### **TIME TO SPARE?**

To celebrate the Queen's Golden Jubilee next year the Society will be staging an exhibition in June at the Manor Stables. We desperately need help from members in researching detail and collating information ready for making up into displays. Most of the information is available from our archives and working parties will start after Christmas.

If you can help please contact Richard Townley (tel. 880284) or complete and return one of the gold forms available at meetings.

### **BACK COPIES OF PARISH MAGAZINE**

The Society seeks copies of the Parish Magazine prior to 1976. If you are looking for a good home for all those back copies, bring them to the History Hut any Monday afternoon between 2.15 - 4.00 p.m.

### **A NEW RESOURCE**

Pat White and Tony Goodall have spent the summer developing a new resource for use by members and others interested in local history. All the photographs and newspaper cuttings which have been given to the Society (and which are still coming in) are arranged in albums, representing a very useful and easily accessible resource for anyone wanting to know more about the village. Work is also proceeding on listing these items in a database for ease of searching.

Please do come and see this wonderful collection for yourself; the History Hut is open Monday afternoons between 2.15 and 4.00 p.m. and at other times by prior arrangement with Secretary (tel.880465).

### **A.F.U. OPEN DAY**

The Archaeological Field Unit in Haggis Gap is holding its annual open day and Day Conference on 24 November 2001. The Conference will discuss recent archaeological work in Cambridge. For further details and to book a place, please contact A.F.U. on 576201 or 881614.

### **VILLAGE CLUBS & SOCIETIES**

Richard Townley seeks for the Golden Jubilee Exhibition information about the Clubs & Societies which existed between 1950-1985. Please contact him at The Manor, Fulbourn with your recollections.



## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**13 December** Eat, Drink & Listen to Tales from the Fens told by John Humphreys. Townley Hall. Letter to follow.

**25 January** Dance arranged by Ann Waldoock at Townley Hall. Details to follow.

## CAMBRIDGE ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS 2001-2002

All meetings except 9 March will be held at the Chemistry Laboratories Lensfield Road. Members of the Society are welcome to bring guests. Your Village History Society is a member of the Antiquarian Society therefore members are entitled to attend its meetings.

**12 November** Dr Derek Booth  
The Boar in our Heritage

**3 December** Mr David McOmish  
Fields Forts & Farms: Prehistoric Landscapes in Britain

**14 January** Mr & Mrs Harold & Jose Hopkins: Saints & Symbols: the Chancel ceiling of Haslingfield Church in the context of the Wendy Monuments

**4 February** Dr Catharine Hills  
Regional review of Anglo-Saxon studies

**4 March 5.45** Annual General Meeting  
Mr Mac Dowdy  
The House Within (in conjunction with Cambridge Local History Society)

**15 April** Dr Gill Juleff  
Monsoon winds forge swords of Islam- the reconstruction of early medieval steel making in Sri Lanka

**13 May** Mr Jonathan Cotton  
London before Londinium

**3 June** Mr Mark Hassall  
The Road to Corinth: Tourists & Proto-Pilgrims in the Roman World (in conjunction with the Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies)

## CAMBRIDGESHIRE FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY ONE-DAY EVENT

To celebrate its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary the above Society is holding a one-day event on 16 March at Impington Village College under the heading "Family History Experience".

There will be bookstalls, advice desks covering family research, displays by local organisations, commercial traders and rolling 30-40 minute lectures on various topics. A Ploughman's Lunch and 3 coffee/tea during the day are included in the ticket price of £7.50. Your Secretary has application forms so if you would like to go, please contact her on 880465 for further details and a booking form.

## FROM THE ARCHIVES: September 2001

Some of the most interesting papers to have been deposited this month concern a British P.O.W. adopted by Fulbourn Women's Conservative Association in 1941. His name was Pte. Douglas Benton, whose wife lived in Wales, and whose mother-in-law was Mrs A. Sargent who lived in Pierce Lane in a house called Kasr-el-Nil.

Pte. Benton was imprisoned in Germany in Stalag VIII. There are two letters and a series of post cards, some official German ones, filled in by Pte Benton

acknowledging the receipt of various comforts including games, books, snaps and, most interestingly, a flute. These cover a period from 1942 to 1944 and were addressed to Mrs Peake, The Bournes, Fulbourn and to Fulbourn W.C.A. There was also a card from a Pte W T Baker, acknowledging the receipt of books, addressed to Mrs Townley, Fulbourn Manor.

Perhaps there may be someone who can throw some more light on this interesting subject amongst our readers.

These and many other things may be seen at the History Hut in Haggis Gap any Monday afternoon between 2.15 - 4.00 p.m.

Pat White  
Keeper of the Accessions Register

## CO-OPTIONS TO COMMITTEE

Mrs Bernadette Gilbertson has been co-opted to the Committee. Bernie is involved, with Pat and Barbara White, in tape-recording the memories of village folk. Richard Doe has been co-opted to the committee for the second time. Richard has volunteered to act as the Society's Conservator. We are grateful to them both for their enthusiasm and commitment.

## THE CAMBRIDGE EXPLORER

This is a new CD-ROM that will be fascinating to anyone with an interest in Cambridge over the last 100 years. It is a Web-style interface which takes you on a journey around the streets of Cambridge in 1904. and includes the Cambridge 1904 Street Directory, together with 3 maps and over 1000 photographs throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It's published by Hugo Brown in association with the Cambridgeshire Collection. Visit the web-site at [www.cambridge-explorer.co.uk](http://www.cambridge-explorer.co.uk).

## WHERE TO CONSULT HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS IN CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Many of the places listed below require you to make an appointment or have some sort of ticket or ID, so please contact them first before visiting.

*County Record Office Cambridge  
Shire Hall Cambridge Tel.717281*

This record office holds locally created documents relating to the former counties of Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely, including many parish registers, maps, court records, taxation records, family and estate papers and copies of some Cambridgeshire records held in other places such as the 19<sup>th</sup> c. census.

*County Records Office, Huntingdon  
Grammar School Walk, Huntingdon  
tel. 01480 375842*

This holds records similar to those at Cambridge but they relate instead to the area covered by the old county of Huntingdonshire.

*The Wisbech & Fenland Museum  
Museum Square Wisbech tel.01945 583817*

This holds some historical documents relating to the Wisbech area, including parish records.

*Cambridge Family History Centre  
670 Cherry Hinton Road, Cambridge  
tel.247010*

This is sponsored by the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints and holds a wide variety of national and international sources. There are Family History Centres in Peterborough (01733 263374) and King's Lynn (01553 670000).



## **LIBRARY LOCAL STUDIES COLLECTIONS YOUR KEY TO THE PAST**

*The Cambridgeshire Collection, Central Library, Lion Yard, Cambridge tel.712008*

The principal collection of local studies materials, including illustrations, books, journals, newspapers and maps. The Collection covers the area of the old county of Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely. Smaller collections are to be found at Huntingdon Library, (covering the old county of Huntingdonshire) Princes Street, Huntingdon and at Wisbech Library (covering Fenland) 1 Ely Place, Wisbech.

No appointment necessary to use these resources!

## **SEEKING OUT FULBOURN'S MEDIEVAL ANCESTORS: AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL DIG IN FULBOURN NATURE RESERVE**

### ***Hall Orchard Moat today.***

The earthwork that can be seen at Hall Orchard on the north edge of Fulbourn Nature Reserve is surrounded by a water-filled moat when favourable conditions exist. It is managed by The Wildlife Trust as part of a Countryside Access arrangement for the nature reserve. The island has a number of trees and shrubs on it, piles of cut logs, and rank vegetation. The moat is similarly covered, with some fallen trees in it, but overall the profile is well preserved. A footpath crosses the site with wooden bridges built in the moat just above normal water level. Two ditches join the moat, one at the south-west corner and one at the north-east corner, these ditches were probably inlet and outlet channels supplying the moat with continuous running water. The interior of the moat enclosure is approximately 50m east west by 40m north south.

### ***Archaeological Investigations***

During this summer an archaeological dig has been taking place at Hall Orchard. The aim was to find out when the moat was first dug, whether anyone had actually lived on the island and if so, for how long.

### ***The 12<sup>th</sup> Century Landscape***

The archaeological remains belonging to the moated site are so extensive that it was not possible in one season to investigate whether the site was occupied before the moat was dug. There was, however, an opportunity to get a glimpse of the 12<sup>th</sup> century ground surface in three of the excavated areas where a 20 centimetre thick deposit of dark grey silt was encountered sealed below a layer of chalk upcast from the moat ditch. This buried ground surface was encountered at slightly different heights in the three areas, this could indicate that the original ground surface was sloping, although the possibility that there was more than one buried soil also can't be discounted.

### ***Moated Houses are all the Rage***

Pottery that was made in the 12<sup>th</sup> or early 13<sup>th</sup> century has been found on the site indicating that the moat must have been dug at around this time. Houses with moats around them were certainly experiencing a lot of popularity at this time and there has been much speculation as to why. Suggestions range from defence to fashion, to status. The reasons why a moat was dug around this site are difficult to fathom from the physical evidence alone, what we can say is how the moat was dug and what it would have looked like.

There was evidence in all of the excavation areas that a layer of chalk had been deliberately spread over the area

inside the moat enclosure. This would have been a good way to dispose of all the spoil from the moat ditch with the added benefit that it would have raised the interior of the enclosure above the general land surface giving any buildings on the site a prominent position. Excavation has shown that the ditch itself would have been much steeper than it appears to-day. The interior of the moat enclosure would have been slightly larger, it has decreased in size as the edges of the ditch crumbled and fell into the base of the ditch, creating a much gentler slope. Investigation into the base of the ditch, however has shown that it was only up to half a metre deeper than can be seen to-day. The ditch must have been regularly cleaned out whilst the enclosure was occupied.

### ***The Earliest Buildings***

Although little evidence for the first buildings on the site were found in this summer's excavations, nonetheless we were able to demonstrate that buildings of timber once stood on the moat platform. Pits and ditches where timber posts and wooden beams once stood have been found associated with 12<sup>th</sup> century pottery. A lot more excavation would be needed before we could begin to piece together what these earliest buildings may have looked like.

### ***The Latest Buildings***

By a combination of excavation and geophysical survey we can attempt to reconstruct something of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century phase of the household. A large stone building approximately 10 metres east west by perhaps as much as 20 metres north south was sited along the east side of the moat platform. Out buildings were located to the north and west of the main stone built house. Timber was still used in the later phases of the buildings which appear to have been occupied at least until the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Stone, especially flint and clunch was also widely used. Although a lot of the building materials were taken and used elsewhere in Fulbourn during the 18<sup>th</sup> century there is still a great deal remaining to tell us what the buildings may have looked like in their heyday. A small quantity of stone roofing tiles indicates that the roofs may once have been covered in stone, later replaced by clay tiles. Large quantities of clay roofing tiles in many different colours have been found, all the tiles seem to be of the type which would have been fixed using wooden pegs and later on, iron nails. Glazed roofing tiles have also been found, the glazes are in a variety of greens and browns and most are decorated ridge tiles.

A large assemblage of window glass was recovered from close to the south-west corner of the main building, especially from around a doorway. The assemblage included painted glass and occasional complete 'quarries'. Lead 'comes' which would have held the window glass in place were also found nearby. The building must, therefore, have had decorative windows on at least one side. A number of delicate stone mouldings have also been found, these may be internal mouldings since they are made from soft clunch.

There is some speculation that the window glass might be from a chapel, a stone scribe, bronze balance and a possible rosary bead made of jet could lend support to this suggestion although none of the evidence is conclusive.

### ***Lets Eat, Drink and be Merry***

Plenty of food remains have been found on the site, particularly from a drain on the west side of the platform and from features which may be the remains of a kitchen area. Shell fish seem to have been particularly favoured,



with large quantities of oysters, mussels, whelks and cockles found. Meat too, was also eaten, with bones from pigs, sheep and cattle being particularly abundant. Soil samples may reveal evidence for smaller animals such as rabbits and perhaps fish, and for the plants which were used for food.

Pottery can also reveal a lot about the food and drink being consumed. Pots covered in the soot from cooking fires have been found along with fine jugs and dishes which would not have been out of place on a lords table.

#### *Which Way In?*

Excavation and careful study of the earthwork suggest that the entrance across the moat ditch was on the south side of the site. Pits cut to hold timber posts and rammed with chalk have been found on this side of the moat platform in a configuration which points to a bridge structure. The moat ditch itself is also different in profile at the same point, it becomes shallower and the sides are very gentle, perhaps caused by the accumulation of silt and rubbish around the supports of a bridge. An unbuilt area to the north of this possible bridge also indicates that this may have been the entrance into the moat platform. An unusual aspect is that the highly decorated house would not have been viewed directly ahead by visitors, it is possible, however, that the entrance was shifted over time. The platform was occupied for five hundred years, many things must have changed in that time.

#### *And Finally*

Those questions which we asked ourselves before we began to dig have now been answered. The moat was dug in the 12<sup>th</sup> or early 13<sup>th</sup> century, and it enclosed a

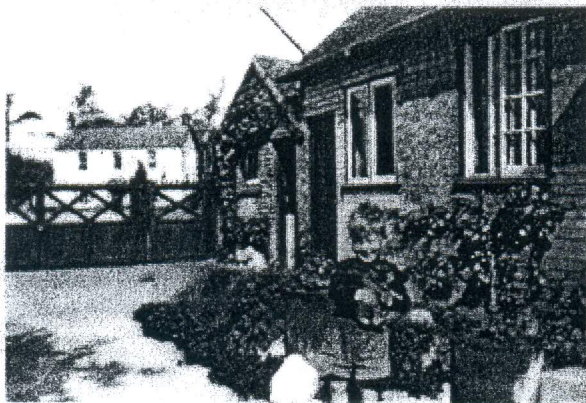
domestic dwelling which was occupied for about 500 years, in later years the house was obviously the dwelling of a wealthy family of high status. But we have also raised many more questions than could possibly be answered in one seasons work but have the potential to be answered in the future. Questions about how the house was laid out and used, what activities went on to support the household. How much the buildings changed over the centuries they were occupied and whether the fortunes of the householders changed in that time.

Finds from the site will be amongst the exhibitions at Fulbourn Community Centre on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> November from 12 noon onwards as part of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society "Archaeology in Cambridgeshire Day". Entry to the exhibitions is free before 1pm, a fee will be charged in the afternoon to include entry to the conference.

We would also like to hear from anyone who is interested in helping with cleaning and archiving the finds from the site, call Aileen or Carole on 01223 576201.

Aileen Connor  
Archaeological Field Unit

If you have something to contribute to the next edition of the Newsletter, please send it to the Secretary at 6 Cambridge Road Fulbourn.



These pictures are of the 'Lolly Shop' at Home End. Can anyone provide any information or reminiscences about the shop, or these pictures? The Society would like to know more so please contact the Secretary

