



FULBOURN VILLAGE HISTORY SOCIETY

"To save Fulbourn's past for the future"

NEWSLETTER NO. 45

Spring 2017

In Case you Missed it: REPORTS OF F.V.H.S. MEETINGS

FVHS's Festive Social Event on 9th December was a resounding success. Members and guests were intrigued, fascinated and informed by Jenny Culank's presentation 'If Only Clothes could Talk'.

Part of her extensive collection of heritage clothing was on display and later, we had the opportunity to admire and handle items. For the first time, some of the dresses were modelled by young girls who were of the same age as the original owner, Miss Dorothy Heath of Balsham Road when they were worn by her.

We were provided with the history of some of the garments, including a fragile but still beautiful wedding dress belonging to Jenny's mother.

It is intended that the clothes be conserved and added too, as they are evidence of and important statements about, the social history and the way people lived in the (fairly) recent past.

Jenny is looking for volunteers who could help with research, publicity, conservation and recording oral histories as part of this very worthwhile project. If you are interested please contact her at jenny@classworks.org.uk Tel: 01223 882383



Jenny displays one of the beautiful garments in the Collection.



Phoebe and Martha charmingly demonstrate the superb styling that was a feature of women's wear during the 1930-40s.

Other Talks enjoyed by members in 2016 during this season, included a Presentation on October 20th by Ken Sneath revealing 'What we can learn from Personal Diaries of the 17C-18C' from three very different sources -Thomas Turner a 'man of the world', Nehemiah Wellington an 'anguished puritan' and Ralph Jocelyn a clergyman and prosperous farmer. A month later, the subject title was "Mr Pickwick comes to Cambridge'. Or so a theatre bill of 1838 proclaimed. Mike Petty, the renowned Cambridge historian, entertained and educated the November meeting of F.V.H.S. with a fictional account of Mr Pickwick's travels. This was based on Mike's 30-year exploration of the Cambridge historical archives resulting in 750 editions of "The Pickwick Cambridge Scrapbook".

Tamsin Wimhurst gave our first (stunningly illustrated) lecture of 2017 about the David Parr House. It was the home of David Parr who bought it in 1886 and lived there until his death in 1927. By day he worked as an 'artist painter' for the Cambridge-based decorative firm F R Leach & Sons. By night, often working by candlelight, he decorated the walls and surfaces of this small terraced house to create an extraordinary painted interior. **Reports of later Talks in our current Programme will be included in the Autumn Newsletter while full accounts of the Talks are published in Fulbourn's Parish Magazine 'The Mill'.**

THE HOME FRONT 1914-1918: Fulbourn Residents and the Bureaucratic Process.

As WW1 progressed the Civil Service of the United Kingdom had to take on new responsibilities and departments. In this work they were assisted by officials within Local Government who were very often required to put into practise new laws such as those concerned with Food Rationing and National Registration.

Fulbourn was one of the villages that was administered by Chesterton Rural District Council (formed under the Local Government Act of 1894). Within Cambridgeshire Archives Collection there are 'Letter Books' for the war years which contain carbon copies of correspondence from the Clerk of C.R.D.C., Mr John Symonds, to enquire he had received from, amongst others, Fulbourn residents.

Although only the replies are documented it is possible to surmise what the subject matter was about and in so doing, reveal the concerns of those members of the public who, perhaps for the first time, experienced the demands of the bureaucratic process.

In January 1917 Germany began unrestricted submarine warfare, which affected the food supply being imported into Britain. To meet this threat voluntary rationing was established in February 1917 and compulsory rationing in 1918.

It operated through the distribution of Ration cards, the first being for sugar in January 1918. Letters from the Clerk to C.R.D.C. show that Fulbourn residents started to apply for forms in October of 1917 though it is not quite clear whether they were aiming to be registered as a retailer of sugar, or as a private person.

Certainly, reply letters were addressed to Mr Stephen Rolph, Pierce Lane; Mrs Teversham, Heath Farm and Mr C Haynes, Station Road. There was less ambivalence about the retailing status for the letter sent to Mr A.W. Gedney. of

Prospect House, Grocer pointing out somewhat tartly that he '*did not fill in the amount of sugar in the Army permits. Please call in and do so,*' whilst Mr E Webb, Grocer in a letter headed 'Lost Sugar Cards' was instructed that

'Careful search must be made for the sugar cards but if they can't be found, the enclosed forms should be filled in and returned.'

Similarly, Mrs Oakley of Beechwood, Fulbourn, was told to '*please make a search for cards which were no doubt supplied by Mr Gedney*' and the letter, dated 1 March 1918 ends with somewhat desperate optimism '*Probably they will be found*'. It would seem not.

On 14 March a letter was sent to her headed 'Food Control Committee' asking Mrs Oakley to attend a meeting of the committee with reference to the '*application for duplicate sugar ticket.*' The matter was not resolved as a following letter (sent 26 March 1918) states she

'must give an account showing how the cards were lost. There must have been cards, with the name of Mr Gedney written on them and you do not explain to the Committee what became of them.'

It may be assumed that Mr Gedney's name was on the cards as Mrs Oakley's designated retailer since instructions for registering for ration cards demanded the applicant

'fill up the counterfoils A B and C on the lower half of card, and give them to any Retailers you choose. The Retailers must write or stamp their names and addresses on these spaces. You will not be able to change your Retailer again without consent of the Food Office.'

The apparent non-receipt of sugar cards might well cause some consternation to those individuals who were waiting for them.

Several letters from Mr Symonds show he was aware of this. Thus both Mr L Legge of Lime Tree House, Fulbourn and Mr H.E Brown, Northfield Farm, Fulbourn were both provided with the number of their 'missing' cards and told the date they had been posted and asked to 'enquire at your Post Office'.

There may also have been communication or delivery issues with retailers. Mr Jos. Wilson of Fulbourn, (another local grocer identified from F.V.H.S. archives) after a reminder to fill in his sugar form, was provided with one for Melinda Mathews. Clearly, it did not reach her as two days later, Mr Symonds was obliged to send a letter to her directly stating r. *'I have received a duplicate application form this morning. Your card was posted to you on the 29th October.'*

Evidently, people did not always complete the ration cards correctly. It must be remembered that this was likely to be one of the first occasions that individuals had to deal with 'form filling' on a regular basis!

For instance Joseph Wilson of Fulbourn was instructed

'The cards must not, as you see on the back, be altered. You may accept these cards as an extra allowance for sugar will be allowed' and to 'send in your stock return of sugar 23 Feb last'.

while Mr A.W. Gedney received a somewhat irritated letter on 9 January 1918,

'Will you kindly inform me what particular forms you require and how many. You do not state in your letter or give any particulars'.

and later, on 1 February 1918

'Will you please fill in and sign the enclosed coupons where marked in pencil and return to me'.

Mr Symonds was also forced to deal with some persons who did not appreciate the need for deadlines. Mr Chas Taylor of Heath Farm, Fulbourn was asked to *'Please sign the enclosed form and come with it to the office tomorrow as time is up for issuing cards'.* With some impatience, a letter dated 13th November 1917 was also sent to Mrs M Harvey of Station Road,



National Ration Book c. 1914-1918 **[Image from bbc.co.uk]**

'I enclose an application for Sugar Card received this morning. The last day for delivering applications was the 5th October and you give no explanation of the delay'.

From the tone of his letters it also appears Mr Symonds became especially exasperated with Mr Oliver T. Pask, Butcher, High St, Fulbourn.

'Will you please send me the return M C 9 of Stock slaughtered in your slaughterhouse by return of post. A copy must be sent to me punctually, every Wednesday.'

Despite the emphatic underlining, it does not appear to have succeeded because Mr Symonds sent another letter a week later (28 December 1917)

'I find that no return has been made of the number of cattle and pigs killed in your slaughterhouse as required. Unless the form M C 9 is sent to me by return of post, I shall be obliged to report it, as I cannot send it on my return and then legal proceedings will be taken. You must be very careful to send them in every Wednesday.'

Mr Pask was not the only butcher in Fulbourn who was somewhat tardy with his paperwork, as an identical letter was sent to Mr Albert Whitmore, High St, Fulbourn on 11 January 1918.

Farmers had to deal with the new food supply regulations as well, and Mr A L Elliott's (of Teversham Drove, Fulbourn) assumed enquiry about the type of potatoes he was allowed to sell produced the following reply

'I am directed by the Food Control Committee to say that you are permitted to sell the British Queen and Elipse and that you should make application later for permission to sell King Edward and Arran Chief potatoes.'

Similarly, Mr H Brown of Fulbourn, was told that

'The Commissioner of Livestock informs me that you can sell sheep to your local butcher and pay the usual market expenses (4/- or 4/6) to Mr Chalk, and that the amount must be taken off the butcher's next certificate.'

It was no doubt very confusing to have to conform to so many new rules, regulations and indeed, micro-management by government officials. Visitors to the village such as Mrs Thompson c/o Mr Hardwick, Quaker Farm, were informed that cards for travellers would be available if she proposed *'to stay in Fulbourn after the 7th April'* and she would need to collect one, while Mr John Drury of Fernside, Fulbourn, after an enquiry about a change of address, was instructed to send in his registration card with the *'new address written upon'* so that a new card could be issued.

Private individuals must have wondered where official supplies of products could be obtained. Mrs G Hoppit, of Highfield Gate, Fulbourn, evidently was concerned about milk as Mr Symonds reply of 8 February 1918 shows

*'Dear Madam
There are 3-4 people who sell milk in Fulbourn - Mr Moore, Mr Wright and others. Will you kindly make further enquiries and I hope you will be able to obtain a supply.'*

Matters were further complicated by special rules for institutions and invalids. The County Asylum was within the parish of Fulbourn and a letter addressed there to The Steward, County Mental Asylum on 25 July 1918, is headed

'Special Scale of Rations for Asylums' and goes on to request 'will you kindly send me applications on Form M2 (0?)'

However, there appears to be some confusion as to the Asylums entitlement to rations. John Kemp Esq, of The Mental Hospital, Fulbourn, had applied for - too late - to be registered as a retailer of sugar and Mr Symonds with asperity, remarked in his reply letter *'I do not know why it has been sent in. Will you kindly let me know the object of it'*.

He may have had a response which required a longer explanation - and that helps to provide some appreciation of the quite complex issues involved. Five days later, a letter dated 24 October 1917 was sent to Mr Kemp

'Dear Sir

Re: Sugar

I am sorry it is too late to apply for a retailers licence and I rather doubt whether you can be considered a retailer. Where do the two individuals live? Because they would have a sugar card sent to their residence. If they resided in the Asylum they are probably included in the amount granted by the authorities. If not, and they wish to apply separately, they should send in a form to me.'

Mr Symonds ends forbiddingly 'No one should have double rations of sugar'.

There also seemed to be a problem about the sourcing of margarine as another letter to J. Kemp Esq. reveals

'Dear Sir

I do not see as you say that the registration of retailers of margarine applies to the Asylum but I wondered how in future you would obtain your supplies. Would you kindly inform us from whom you at present obtain them because I presume that they would continue to supply. Perhaps to make sure, it would be better if you would kindly write to them and enquire'.

The other institution located in the village of Fulbourn itself, the Red Cross Voluntary Aid Hospital', also has a few letters from Mr Symonds addressed to its Commanding Officer, Miss Rosalinde Townley and to its Quartermaster, Miss S Dickenson. The latter had been informed that a voucher for 801bs of sugar had been posted to her on 10th April 1918. and (17 June 1918) fresh forms enclosed

for notice of the tea supply. There may have been a more complicated situation arising later requiring a personal visit, since Mr Symonds headed his reply (July 15 1918) 'Ration Books' and went on to state '*I shall be glad if you would kindly call at my office to discuss the matter*'.

However, a letter sent to Miss Townley [Feb 14 1918] does not necessarily appear to be related to Red Cross Hospital business, but is rather a reply indicating that a scheme was about to be put into operation regarding the distribution of margarine and butter, involving parishioners being required to register with a grocer.

Most significantly, it proposes that the 'Food Control Commission will appoint a distribution officer who will send the supplies required to each grocer and in this way it is hoped the present inconvenience is overcome'.

Teething troubles within the Food Rationing system were thus apparent and certainly, there are many letters by Mr Symonds to the Ministry of Food (Printing Section) reminding them he had not yet received the ordered forms and was now in '*urgent need of them*'.

As yet, there is no obvious record of the individual who oversaw the administration and implementation of Food Rationing in Fulbourn. However, it can be inferred from the number of letters sent to Miss M Nicholls, of Fulbourn, by Mr Symonds, all of which answer queries about invalids and residential qualifications, that she was in charge of this operation.

Her father, Dr Nicholls was the village General Medical Practitioner and also had concerns about special dietary requirements for invalids. He was advised on 6 May 1918 that

'the only cases of allowance in which additional rations can be given on medical grounds are Diabetes and Tuberculosis'.

and a letter dated 14 May 1918 from Mr Symonds to the Doctor further announced

'I enclose Mrs Patten's application for 1lb butter additional rations. Will you kindly fill in the period for which the allowance is required.'

At present I am granting it for 9 weeks to the 13th July when the new ration books come out. Please also sign the Certificate on the back and return the form to me'.

Obviously, strict bureaucratic procedures were in place and Mrs W Mason, High Street, Fulbourn, was informed by Mr Symonds that

'I do not appear to have power to order sugar. Application can be made on the enclosed form to the Sugar Sub. Section, Medical Section, Ministry of Food, 29 Upper Grovesnor Street, London, W1.'

However, there appears to have been some flexibility for public events. The Food Control Commission, in a letter addressed to The Rev C Townley, said

'You are authorised to purchase 41lb's of Butter for the Fete at Fulbourn on the 25th Inst.'

This took place in July 1918 and was almost the last letter in the C.R.D.C. books covering the war years that referred to food rationing - at least involving Fulbourn. Presumably, the system by then was operating efficiently and in any event it was only a few months before the Armistice.

Although brief - about a year, this first experiment in the gradual imposition of bureaucracy upon - in Fulbourn's case - a rural community who quite possibly had not experienced it on that scale before, is quite fascinating.

It was a learning curve for all participants, including of course, very overworked local government officials such as Mr John Symonds. I must admit to a certain admiration about the way he handled - with patience and courtesy in his correspondence, the many irritations that members of the general public must have caused. He was also under staffed and under resourced for the amount of work required.

Two letters (dated 17th April 1917 and 8th February 1918 respectively) sent to the Assistant Controller of Registration at 16-18 Hills Road Cambridge, confirms this unfortunate situation.

'...with the small staff I have, we already have to work overtime every day and I could not possibly manage to make out the cards in my office. I asked a young lady this morning, as I wished to try to get the work done, but she did not consider the remuneration sufficient....'

... 'replying to your letter of 5th inst. it would take a considerable time to go through my register and make a complete list of lads born in 1900. I am already overworked and in order to comply with your wishes I should have to employ someone for this purpose. I should be

glad therefore to know whether you are prepared to make a payment to such a person and if so what would it be.'

This correspondence suggests that supply and demand had increased the opportunities for employment in clerical work at perhaps better wages than previously - even for women. Another consequence of the introduction of a bureaucratic process.

Glynis Arber

HIDDEN HISTORIES OF ARTEFACTS HELD IN OUR STORE: The Kitchen Part 2. by Glynis Arber

When I began to research the History of the objects in our Collection my first instinct was to consult the Public Library. This did not prove particularly productive and whilst some knowledge was obtained via reference books (very few available) much of the information was found on the internet, especially the websites of manufacturers! Proving it is never too late to learn a new skill.



CAST IRON COOKING POT

HISTORY AND METHOD OF USE

CAST IRON VESSELS have been used for cooking for over two thousand years. Before the introduction of the kitchen range in the mid nineteenth century, meals were cooked in the hearth or fireplace. Therefore, cooking pots might have legs so that they could stand in the fireplace or handles, to allow them to be hung over a fire.

It is unlikely the (very large) pot in our Collection is quite so old, but the flat bottom suggests it was designed to be used on a kitchen stove. They remained popular since cast iron cauldrons and cooking pots were valued for their durability, ability to retain heat and

withstand and maintain very high cooking temperatures.

Care had to be taken when removing the pot from a heat source because it could become extremely hot, including the handle. Iron is also more prone to rusting than copper and cleaning could be a problem. There were several methods e.g. just wiping out the pan, washing with hot water and a stiff brush, scrubbing with coarse salt and finally, seasoning the pan

This is a process by which a layer of animal fat or vegetable oil is applied and the pan is then heated for half an hour. The resulting film protects the pan from rusting.

ENAMELWARE



HISTORY AND METHOD OF USE

These saucepans in our Collection may look ordinary, but being ENAMELWARE, they also indicate a change in the technology and history of Cooking.

Enamel is defined as '*an opaque or semi transparent glassy substance applied to metallic or other hard surfaces for ornament of as a protective coating*'. Up to the eighteenth century nearly all enamelling was involved with the production of jewellery and works of art.

However, other uses were being discovered. In 1839 a patent was granted to iron manufacturers Thomas and Charles Clark of Wolverhampton,

Staffordshire, '*for an Enamel for Cast-Iron free from lead*' and at the 1851 London Great Exhibition, '*cast-iron enamelled culinary vessels*' were shown by Archibald Kendrick & Sons, of West Bromich, Staffordshire.

The advantages of what is now known as vitrous (or porcelain) enamelware for cooking utensils is that when fired the enamel glazed, creating a non porous surface that was easier to clean. It was relatively cheap and had the heat distribution and retention properties of cast iron combined with a non-reactive, low stick surface. This was helpful with cooking on a fire or over a kitchen range.



**Enamelware
Donated to
Fulbourn
Village History
Society by
Mary Symonds
of Station Rd
Fulbourn.**

Gas cookers, developed in the late 1800's, had a faster heat source than the kitchen range. Food often burnt or boiled over when in iron enamelled pots because of their uneven heat conducting properties.

By the early twentieth century British manufacturers had largely abandoned enamelled iron pans in favour of steel and

aluminium. Enamel over steel cookware is lighter and cheaper than stainless steel pots.

Another reason for the popularity of enamelware in the kitchen was its availability in several colours and even patterns. Its relative cheapness and durability encouraged manufacturers to expand their product line from cookware to utensils and storage containers like the ones in our collection.

Report of Extraordinary General Meeting held on 19th January 2017, 7.30 p.m. in the Meeting Room of the Fulbourn Centre.

The following proposals regarding changes to Fulbourn Village History Society's Constitution were approved by members present at the meeting.

Proposal 1 Officers and Committee

That Clause 5.1 be amended as follows:

“The Officers shall be elected at an Annual General Meeting to serve until the next Annual General Meeting and shall include Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer” .

That Clause 5.2 be amended as follows:

“The Committee shall be composed of the three officers, ex officio, and at least 4 other members to be elected annually at the Annual General Meeting”.

That Clause 5.4 be amended as follows:

“The Committee shall meet on at least four occasions annually, and on other such occasions as it deems to be necessary or desirable. The quorum shall be four members, provided that this includes at least two of the Officers”.

Proposal 2 General Meetings

That Clause 7.1 be amended as follows

“The Annual General Meeting shall normally be held during the month of May, or at such time as the Committee deems appropriate for the election of Officers and Committee.....”

Proposal 3 Subscriptions

That Clause 4 be amended as follows:

“The annual subscription is due on the 1st September annually and is payable in advance. The rate shall be determined from time to time by the Society at a General Meeting”

Proposal 4 Financial Year

That Clause 6.2 be amended as follows:

“.....The Society's financial year shall be from 1st September to 31st August”.

Proposal 5 Subscription collection process

Although not requiring a change to the Constitution, the following proposal is included for completeness as it also aligns with the simplification of the administrative process.

That the Treasurer be authorized to invite Members to pay by Standing Order wherever possible. This will be offered in addition to the current options of paying by cheque or cash.

Appointment of Trustee to The Fulbourn Centre

We are very pleased that Ian Harrison, our new Committee member has agreed to be a “User Group” Trustee of The Fulbourn Centre, representing Fulbourn Village History Society.