

Strange Days

Producing this newsletter has been a little unusual, in that I've had to look through old notes and items that I decided were worth keeping for reference. No visits to the Record Office in this time of 'lock down'. Fortunately, I have another of Steph. Hemphill's excellent articles, although this is the last. Otherwise, this issue is an assortment of local interest and countryside historical matters, part of the latter having plenty of Glemsford names.

I did wonder whether to mention the Coronavirus or the Spanish Flu of 1918/19, but the local newspapers from the Foxearth LHS Site, have no reports on the 'Flu'. However, in the Newsletter of the Halstead & District LHS for June, a member tells of her family's experience. The editor is happy for me to share an abbreviated version of the whole article about Spanish Flu, with our members.

Hopefully the next newsletter will have something from you, the members (with all this spare time!). Perhaps you live in an interesting property, or on the site of some old 'landmark', did an older family member have one of the many village allotments that no longer exist? A little bit of Glemsford that could be shared, before it is forgotten. It doesn't have to be a long essay.

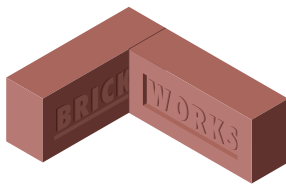
I look forward to the re-opening of the Record Office, and we all await a life that will have returned to some kind of normality, including our meetings. Meanwhile, enjoy the lovely weather.

Jenny Wears, editor
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Trade and Industry in Suffolk during the 19th Century

Suffolk has often been thought of as an agricultural county where the majority of the population had very close links with working the land. However, farming did not offer the only employment for the Suffolk labourer. Many diverse trades flourished within the county; brick-making; corn milling; building; engineering, textiles and clothing were all careers which offered an income often for life, and brought wealth to the county.



Brick-making

The brick-making industry was widespread throughout the county and the production of bricks was an ancient trade

which started during the Roman occupation. Medieval brick-making was done close to the places of construction. These bricks were partly dried in air before being fired in stacks and burnt slowly for weeks until the product was ready. By the 18th Century, bricks were becoming cheaper and more fashionable so the need for brick-making became widespread throughout Suffolk. Large brickyards which had an output of several million bricks per year were often close to towns, main roads or railways which made transportation far easier.

The small town of Woolpit was known for its quality brick, the “Suffolk white” which as the name suggests was paler than the usual red brick. The brickworks in the Sudbury area shipped a large number of bricks down the river Stour for transportation to London where new hotels and public buildings were being constructed. Bricks from the Somerleyton works were used in the Royal Albert Hall and Liverpool Street Station; these were provided by Lucas Brothers who ran the Somerleyton brickworks.

However by 1881 a new type of “shale” clay had been found outside Peterborough, which

proved to be far better to fire as it contained 10% coal and the heat it produced gave uniform heating throughout the kiln. The new Hoffman kilns which burned the shale clay were far more economical on fuel, as a result the price of bricks fell from £1.10 per thousand in 1896 to 42p a thousand by 1908.

After 1885, the number of brickyards in Suffolk fell from its peak of 115 and by the Second World War more were closed due to the blackout regulations since the firing process could be seen from the air by enemy aircraft. In 1986 Suffolk had just three working yards at Gisleham, Aldeburgh, and South Cove.

Engineering

When we think of the Victorian age the incredible progress in industry and manufacturing comes to mind.

The amazing development in civil engineering can be seen in the

bridges, railway tunnels and viaducts which were constructed then and still used today. Just as importantly the new machinery in factories which gave England its name for quality and made these industries prosperous all had their turning points during the Victorian age.

It is natural to link the advances in engineering with the large companies in the manufacturing cities in the Midlands or the North, so it is easy to forget that the engineering movement was active in small pockets of industry throughout Britain, even in such rural locations as Suffolk, which



although largely an agricultural area did provide the necessary knowledge and skill needed in a new and fast growing profession.

There were several notable manufacturing engineers based in Suffolk; one of the oldest was founded in 1778 by Richard Garrett whose father was a skilled bladesmith in Leiston. This small company in later years would be known for its quality agricultural implements, and the portable steam engine and thrashing machine. During the 1840s this small company was awarded several prizes for their thrashing machines; at the Royal Agricultural Society's meeting at Newcastle in 1846; in Northampton in 1847 and again at York in 1848, quite an achievement for a small and new company where it was not always easy to persuade landowners of that time to try modern technology. Maybe the success was due to the option that some of the thrashing machines could be steam or horse powered.

In Ipswich a new iron foundry had been set up by Robert Ransome who produced plough-shares for the farming industry; after the end of the wars with France agriculture fell into a depression so to keep the business prosperous the Ransomes branched out into civil engineering and with the advent of the railways they diversified into manufacturing railway materials. Success followed this clever move and eventually they were the first to build a railway in China (1876) under the name of "Ransomes and Rapier".

Ransomes was not only a well known name for engineering in Suffolk. By 1876, D. Gurteen and Sons of Haverhill had expanded to such a point that new premises were needed for the production of their boilers. It was noted by 1888 this local company employed 1,500 workers over two thirds of them women and another 1,500 outworkers who worked in their own homes.

Less prominent were Stowmarket's Woods & Co., founded by James Woods; he concentrated on the hydraulic and steam aspect. At Wickham Market Whitmore & Binyon had a great reputation for steam engines, water mills and machinery which was adapted for corn and flour mills.

During the reign of Queen Victoria Suffolk had stamped a place for its engineers on the Empire's map.

Textile and Clothing Industry

Suffolk has long been famous for its pretty white half-timbered houses in small towns such as Clare, Long Melford and Lavenham. Just as famous as its buildings these villages were once the centre of the wealthy textile industry of Suffolk. The most outstanding of these being Lavenham, it has often been described as one of the finest examples of a medieval village.



Its wealth was the direct result of the woollen trade which even by the fourteenth century was well established. As the years went by the trade became more organized and profitable, however the land around the village was more suitable to arable farming so raw wool had to be imported from Lincolnshire and abroad.

By the early sixteenth century Lavenham had become so rich it was ranked as one of the wealthiest towns in England (richer even than York) its cloth being exported as far as Russia. One of the richest men outside the nobility, Thomas Spring, merchant of Lavenham paid for vast improvements to its church St Peter and St Paul's. Sadly this prosperity was not to last, and due to political and economic changes Lavenham's wealth gradually began to subside, exports fell and during the seventeenth century a steady stream of skilled clothiers left for Holland to avoid High Church politics of the time. The remaining clothworkers moved to the north of England where the trade was expanding and they could work freely. Lavenham's cloth heyday was over leaving a depressed community looking for other employment.

Farming was the obvious answer so by the latter part of the nineteenth century many worked on the land, for those who did not farm the new business of straw-plaiting gave employment to 300 persons in Lavenham in 1851. Coconut matting and horsehair weaving provided jobs for 200 women (horsehair) and 40 men in the matting trade. So for some fortunate families poverty was kept at bay.

Then as now Lavenham has always been a bustling rural village although the spinning and weaving sheds have long gone and farming has suffered a decline. Lavenham still thrives as a working village, tourism now its major commodity.

The nearby town of Sudbury, not only famous as the birth place of Thomas Gainsborough (1727-1788) but is also known for its luxury silk mills which have been in production since the late 18th c when the silk weavers of Spitalfields of London moved to this rural town. During its peak the silk industry gave employment to 1,500 in the production of plain and patterned silk. Sudbury today is one of the largest producers of that fabric in Europe and is used by the American designer Ralph Lauren in his silk ties range.



Railways

Of all the advances in the nineteenth century the greatest and most far reaching was transport. The development of the steam locomotive engine and eventually a rail network would criss-cross most of England. The year 1844 saw one of the most important acts of Parliament passed, The Railway Act, which regulated the activities of the new railway companies; now good services had to be provided to carry passengers as well as goods.

Travel for most people at this time was not taken without careful planning and thought. Few people could afford to travel by stage-coach which was not only uncomfortable but occasionally hazardous, while horses were luxury items the majority could ill afford, meaning travelling usually meant walking to your destination. The advances and benefits of a rail system were vast; new towns and cities were created, prosperity was offered to small communities struggling to transport goods and receive fresh materials and produce. Travelling time was cut dramatically. A journey which may take several uncomfortable days by coach could take just a matter of hours by rail. The mail service was far quicker allowing families to keep in touch, and communication on the whole improved hugely.

The railway came late to Suffolk compared to other more industrial parts of the country, but by 1845 after a few false starts the Yarmouth and Norwich Railway linked up with the Northern and Eastern Railway at Brandon in Suffolk, so the first two places

in Suffolk with a rail link with London were Brandon and Lakenheath.

By 1848 the railway reached Newmarket at a considerable cost of £350,000 – an enormous sum. The engineers Robert Stephenson and Braithwaite connected a branch line from Six Mile Bottom, so travel along 16.5 miles of track led the passenger to Cambridge and eventually London.

Original plans suggested that Cambridge, although a major seat of learning was of inferior importance to that of Newmarket and so should be bypassed. Newmarket's racing "set" considered their sport more important than a respected and world famous university.

The railways were new and going through a trial period, and accidents did happen; embankments gave way, signalling was a new technology and time keeping a minor problem. The locomotives themselves were small and improvements needed to be made on the unreliable braking system used. In the very early years of steam travel an accident occurred near Newmarket (the exact location is thought to be Kennett) when a train toppled over a road bridge on a high embankment and landed on the road below. However such problems and risks did not deter the new traveller. Horse racing became accessible to more people in distant towns and in 1874 the race traffic for the One Thousand and Two Thousand Guineas meeting was so popular six trains left from Bishopsgate and St Pancras full with racing enthusiasts.

By April 1885 a new station was opened near Newmarket on the far side of the Heath; Warren Hill was really a roofed in cutting, but this station helped to relieve pressure on the race days' heavy traffic problem. The popularity of the steam age in Newmarket did not survive the coming of the motor car since each year more and more race-goers arrived in their cars and by the late 1970s most of Newmarket station was demolished in favour of building land for new homes. Now all that remains of the original station is part of the platform and a few plastic wind shelters.

Stephanie Prythergch-Hemphill

From the Suffolk Free Press

Supplied by Mr Hastie, Foxearth History Society

January 10th, 1894

'Glemsford. Ezra Slater, George Brewster and Bertha Brewster were charged that on the 18th Dec. they did beat PC Mobbs whilst in the execution of his duty. P.C. Mobbs said he was on duty at Tye Green at about 10 o'clock at night when he heard some men coming from Cavendish, they stopped about 20yds away and George Brewster ran away. I chased him and overtook him. I searched him and in his coat pocket found a ferret. I took the ferret and said to him, this ferret has been stolen from Colts Hall, I will take it. Brewster then got hold of my throat and the woman came up and struck me saying "go home you black b____", Slater then hit me. Brewster caught hold of the ferret. I also had hold of it, it bit my hand. I had to let go of the ferret, while I was on the ground I was kicked by Slater, the woman sat on my legs. Brewster said "I have been laying in wait for you for some time." Brewster and Slater, 1 month hard labour and Bertha Brewster fined 10s and 3s costs.'

What happened to the ferret?

JW

An Old Scramble

April 24th, 1930

'Sudbury Motorcycle Club held an interesting and amusing hill climb contest at Hill Hse Farm, the property of Mr Collis Goodchild at Glemsford, the course was marked out between Hill Hse and the road, it was 150yds long, the first of 40yards was not very steep but it was very slippery with the rain so preventing good starts. The slope gradually was gradual to the height of about 80yards when the ground suddenly rises giving a rise of about 1 in 4, the hill was so steep not a single sidecar outfit could finish the climb.'

Pandemic Reflections

Andy Harris and Jane Murray

The pandemic that killed 50 million people worldwide 1918/19 was named the Spanish Flu. There were reporting restrictions in many parts of Europe in 1918 and the first reported cases were in Spain. It affected the 20-30 year-old age group more than any other. The symptoms included fatigue, fever and headache with some rapidly developing pneumonia with the progression being devastatingly fast — healthy at breakfast, dead by the end of the day. In the UK a quarter of the population were affected with some 228,000 dying. References to this terrible infection are difficult to find because press censorship was introduced to protect morale.

The following extract is from a book by Mary Aldous and tells of how her family from Little Maplestead were affected.

“In the winter of 1918-1919, a terrible flu epidemic hit the country, I was the first to go down with it in our family. The onset was sudden, I got out of bed one morning to get ready for school and collapsed on the floor. I can still remember my delirium, or ‘light-headedness’ mother called it. Strange things happened, like the room going round and the ceiling coming down as if to crush me, and the window, looming towards me, now receding so far away as to be no bigger than a postage stamp. Then there were the faces; demons; dozens of them, all grinning and leering at me round my bed, and masses of light-houses all in my room at once. I sat up in bed and screamed. The next day my sister collapsed in the same way and joined me in mothers’ bed. Mother set out to walk to the Doctors to get us all medicine, and was just out-side town on her way home, when she too fell suddenly at the side of the road. By a stroke of luck my oldest brother, who now

worked on the farm, found her lying on the grass verge and brought her home. My eldest sister escaped the flu, she was living away from home. There was only my dad to help and he was at work dawn to dusk so we just relied on jugs of drink which he provided, no one could eat anyway. I took a long time to recover, father was no cook, but he made some mashed potatoes. One by one the family recovered and went back to good health. Other families in the district were not so fortunate and many people died. The total toll over the country was reported to be more than those killed in the war.”

The following is a brief account of the long term effects suffered by the grandmother of Jane Murray. “My grandmother had Spanish Flu as a child and was subsequently diagnosed as having Encephalitis Lethargica, and was taken to the fever hospital on a bed of ice on horse and cart. She recovered and eventually married. They had three children and it was only then that the classical side effects from the disease hit. She had fits that totally incapacitated her, with her eyes rolling back in their sockets and her limbs shaking uncontrollably and she would then be confined to bed. It was not until the 1960s that a new wonder drug L.dopa gave her relief from these fits.

Oliver Sacks introduced this new drug to those victims whose side effects of Spanish Flu were dramatically worse. Being left in a catatonic state, only to awake as if no time had passed between contacting the disease and waking.”

An article from Halstead & District Local History Society Newsletter abbreviated by **Jenny Wears**

Taxes



Taxes have been a part of life for centuries, some such as Land Tax existed for 300 years, only being abolished in 1963. 'Lifestyle' taxes came and went – taxes for male servants, 1777-1852 and female servants, for the shorter period of 7 years, from 1785. A similar period saw horses kept for driving or riding taxed, but not work horses. I suspect most of us have heard of Hearth Taxes, levied for about 25 years from 1662.



Records of both Land and Hearth Tax can help in the search for family history, but the survival and content of documents do vary.

HEARTH TAX was imposed from 1662 and the amount paid was based on 2/- a hearth, however, if the rent for your house was less than 20/- a year and you owned goods worth less than £10, or received poor relief, you were exempt. Those in receipt of a 'Certificate of Poverty' would also have been exempt. An officer called the Parish Constable was responsible for listing the householders and the monies involved, he then passed the lists on to the Justice of the Peace, quarterly. Unfortunately the names of the payees are only given until 1674 but fortunately, this is the very year of the transcribed Suffolk Lists. Glemsford is among them and the lists can be found in the local studies section of Sudbury library.



Apart from names, the number of hearths are given and also an approximate indication of empty houses. There is no apparent order in the listing, so they give no help with positioning properties within the village. Five houses were marked as being empty, but this could include those that had recently burnt down or been demolished. Many of the names are still familiar in the village – Watkinson, Middleditch, Leech, as well as Deeks, Biggs, Brewster and Macro.

I can make one definite link between the list and the copy of a document in my 'collection'. A Mr Ambrose Biggs is listed

as having 7 hearths and I happen to have transcribed his will, dated 1696. He describes himself as 'the Elder' going on to say he bequeaths 'to Ambrose, my Sonn (sic) all my Coppihould Lands, meddows and pastures belonging to my Dwelling house called The Place in Glemsford ...' This property still stands, on the Low road towards Scotchford Bridge.

I have a couple of other will transcriptions but they do not mention a property by name, but just 'in my dwelling house' or 'the house in which I dwell'.

Other names on the list, presumably with large properties are:

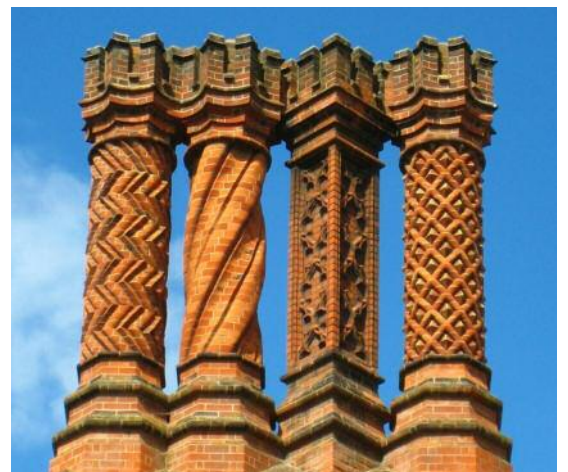
Jo Redmore, Edmund Redmore and Thos. Gallant, 6 hearths

Anthony Gaskin and William Standish and (another) Thomas Gallant, 7 hearths

Mr Turner, William Ashby and Mr Stanles, 8 hearths.

158 households were exempt, having certificates of poverty.

Jenny Wears



Shepherd Collis (Collie) Goodchild 1878-1953

'Collie' Goodchild was a Glemsford born farmer and landowner, whose father, William S. Goodchild, farmed Mill Hill in the late 1800s until his death in 1912. He came from Little Wratting, near Haverhill following his marriage. Collie was the third son and fourth child of 7. His eldest brother John went on to farm Churchgate Farm whilst the next, Charles was at Court Farm from at least 1901. Shepherd Collis was at Skates Hill Farm by 1907, and that year married Kate Mary Gardiner, from Newton nr Sudbury. They had two sons, (James) Brian and (William) Kenneth, before moving to Clockhouse Farm in time for the 1911 census. Another son, Dermot was born in 1912. Brian became a vicar in the Newmarket area.



*Clockhouse Farm
1971*

Collie remained at Clockhouse Farm but owned four others by the late 1930s, namely Lodge Farm, New Street Farm, Skates Hill and Mill Hill. The farms varied in size but as a whole, amounted to more than a thousand acres and he is said to have boasted that he paid annual Tithes of a thousand pounds. He employed more than 50 men and had a variety of animal stock, from dairy cattle, 'fat and store' cattle, sheep, chickens and pigs, not forgetting some 40 horses.

Collie rode a large horse, his transport around the village and between his farms, calling on each farm worker to pay their wages. (Probably like the one ridden by his father, in those familiar photos from the late 1800s.)

He served on the (Urban) District Council in 1913, his brother Charles being Chairman.

There are quite a few anecdotes about the man: Margaret King recalls that when they were children, and they saw him coming towards them on his horse, she and her friends would run and hide! Ramon Farrance remembers that Collie would call in at the Three Turns to buy a 'flat half-bottle of whisky, and when he got to the top of Skates Hill would chuck the bugger away'. Finally, Tom Browne, in his memoirs, summed him up as "A most dominant character whose life touched the lives of very many people in the village. He was unquestionably short tempered, (but)... he carried an enormous burden of responsibility."

Mr Shepherd Collis Goodchild died in 1953 aged 75, and is buried in St Mary's Churchyard, along with others of his family. His wife, Kate died in 1948.

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Obviously as we have had no meetings, there are no reports.

Perhaps we can be hopeful of being able to hold our meetings before the year is out, so I am listing the first two speakers for the new season that Margaret King, our secretary, worked hard to secure.

Confirmation will be sent out beforehand to confirm or cancel these meetings.

Thursday,
September 10th **Ron Murrell: The Black Death**

Thursday, **Martin Hodges:**
October 8th Living and Dying in the 19th century

Thursday,
November 12th **Annual General Meeting**

Thursday,
December 10th **Christmas Social**

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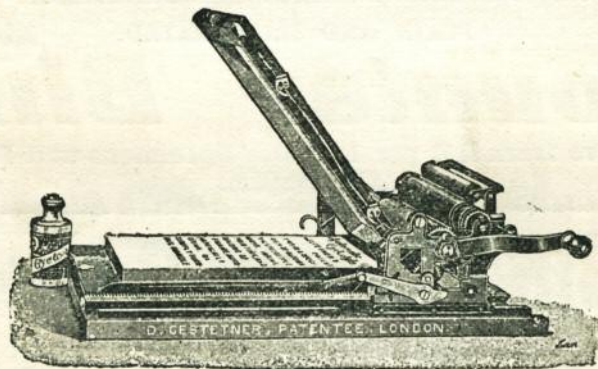
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