

FULBOURN VILLAGE HISTORY SOCIETY

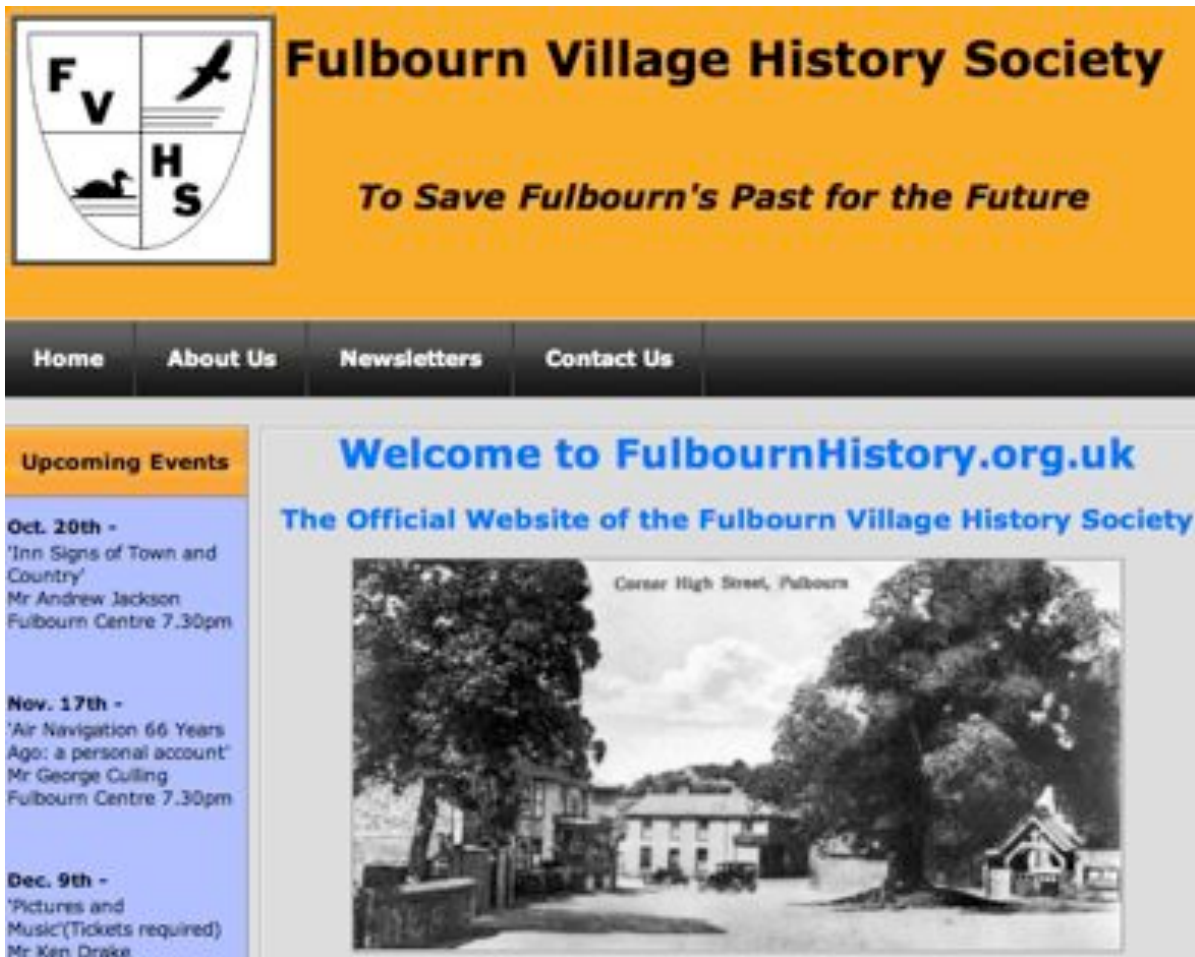
"To save Fulbourn's past for the future"

NEWSLETTER NO. 34

Autumn 2011

FVHS NEW WEBSITE IS NOW ONLINE

Thanks to the hard work of new committee member John Timperio, assisted by various members of the Society, our long planned website is finally up and running. The screen shot below gives some indication of its content, so please, browse the pages at www.fulbournhistory.org.uk and pass this address on to your friends, neighbours and relatives!



Over time, it is hoped that more information about Fulbourn People and Places will be made available via the website.

DIDN'T WE DO WELL?

CAKE STALL 21ST MAY, FULBOURN HIGH STREET.

A lovely morning and a very satisfying profit of £92.

Many thanks to all who baked and brought cakes.



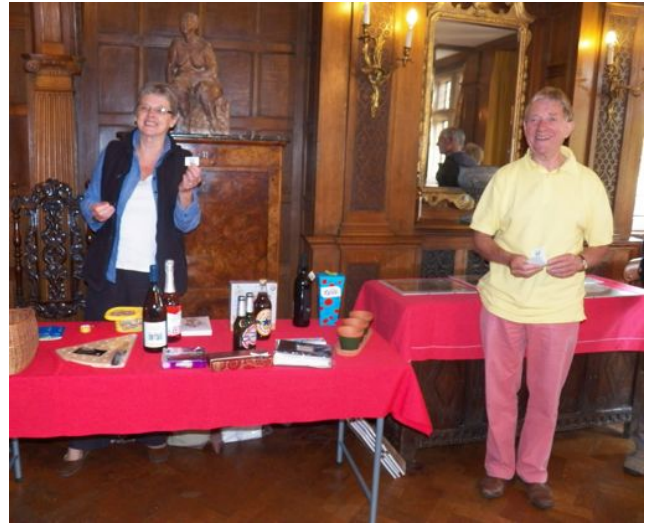
COFFEE MORNING 23RD JULY, AT FULBOURN MANOR.

Richard Townley and Jackie Swann preside over a most successful Raffle.

Members enjoyed socialising, browsing History Society Newspaper scrapbooks and Photo albums.

The profit from entry fee, Raffle and Bring and Buy Stall raises a magnificent £160!!

Congratulations, and much appreciation to all who helped prepare the room (we were very fortunate to have the use of the wonderful Hall in the Manor, especially as there was a rather chilly breeze outside), serve refreshments and 'man' the stalls/display area. And of course, thank you again, for your generosity.



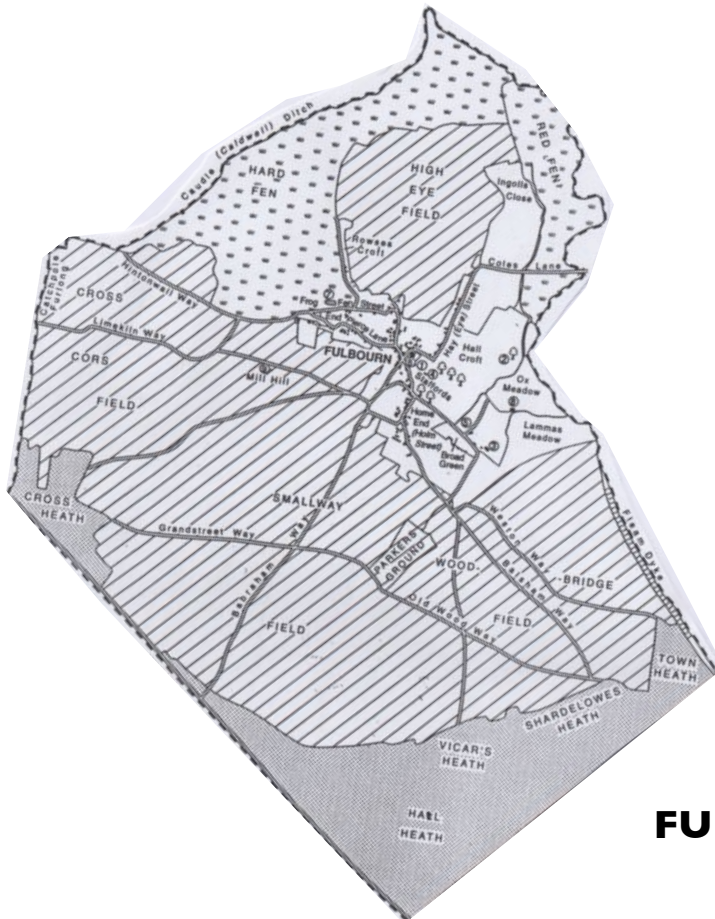
FULBOURN AND FARMING

By Ursula Lyons, with the help of the History Team,
Norman Osborne and Judy Hanmer.

Part 1. Background.

Until relatively recently, Fulbourn has seen itself as a rural community, with many of its inhabitants closely connected with the land, whether as farmers or as farm labourers or employed in associated

trades - carpenters, millers, farriers, saddlers, wheelwrights, blacksmiths, carters and shopkeepers who provided the services necessary both to agriculture and the life of the community. And so it has been on a varying scale, probably since the Middle Ages.



FULBOURN circa 1800

Since the late 12th century the arable south and west of the village was mostly divided, as it continued to be until the Enclosures, into three large fields - Woodbridge, Smallway and Crossway - plus Highfield to the north, which were cultivated under triennial rotation.

However, in the 18th century, the rapid spread of new methods of cultivation, of fertilisation and of crop rotation, followed by the Enclosures, meant that the face of agriculture changed everywhere. From then on and in particular since 1808, when the Enclosure Act was implemented in Fulbourn, a clear picture emerges of farming in Fulbourn.

Until the Enclosures, the central part of the parish was cultivated as four open fields, the main crops being barley and wheat, with some oats and rye, and turnips for livestock. Livestock included cattle and sheep (2500 in 1795) who grazed mainly on the heath land to the south. The Enclosures saw major changes in land ownership and in the landscape, not least in the northern quarter of the parish, formerly fenland, where drainage channels were made between 1806-11. By the 1830s, most of the parish was under the plough, with 4700 acres of arable land to 130 of grassland. The old manorial estates no longer existed, but Cambridge Colleges continued to own land which they had held since the early 16th century.

As for farmers and their farms, the Land Tax Assessments show that between 1778 and 1885 there was a complete turnabout of names in the Fulbourn farming community, and none of the families listed as owning or occupying land in 1788 were farming in Fulbourn by 1885. The old families such as the Jordans and the Battyls disappeared from farming, while the Hancocks intermarried with the Chaplins. The Enclosures brought new families, some of whom are still farming today, noteworthy among whom are the Chaplins and Wrights, both of whom arrived in around 1810. The Fulbourn Chronicles lists 26 names of farming families for the period between 1750 and 1850, while the 1851 Census lists 16 farmers, farming 2510 acres, together with the names of their farms and their acreages and the number of labourers they employed.

There are many references in the later Chronicles to both farmers and farms. In total, about 30

farms are named. The Ordnance Survey map of 1987 shows 15 farms, all of which are set out in the fields surrounding Fulbourn, mostly to the south, but today, the number of those who farm is about a dozen, while the number of farms had been reduced to about 12. The farms which were once situated in the centre of the village have mostly disappeared (Birds Farm), or their farmhouses have become private residences (Highfield, Meldreth, Peterhouse). As for their outbuildings, as mechanised cereal farming replaced traditional activities, Simms points out, these were no longer needed and fell into disrepair. Of the farms that remain in the centre of the village Hall Farm in School Lane, with former farmyard, is the only one that is still in the hands of the Wright family who have been there since about 1810.

As for farm labourers, in the 1851 Census when the population was about 1400, the 16 farmers listed (18 in Kelly) employed 170 men and 9 boys on 4510 acres, which makes 14% of the population working on the land. The two biggest farms were James King's New Shardelows, employing 31 men on its 777 acres, and Chaplin's Home farm, employing 36 men on 700 acres, while the smallest was William Miller at Poor Well which employed only one man on its 13 acres. By the turn of the twentieth century, the figures in the 1901 Census, when the population was 1185, show 15 farmers (20 in Kelly) employing a total of 156 labourers (which included 10 shepherds and 32 horse keepers!), which again makes 14 % of the population working on the land.

As for fifty years later, according to Simms, by 1951 over half the working population was employed in Cambridge, while a fifth still worked in agriculture. In 1950, when he first started working on the land, John White remembers there were some 22 farmers with about 49 employees, though this figure excludes family members who worked on the farm. But by 2009, there were only 12 farmers with a vastly reduced work force, often just the farmer and one other employee.

The explanation for the change in use of certain farms, in particular those within Fulbourn itself, lies partly in changing agricultural and economic conditions in Britain since the Enclosures, as in

the Enclosures themselves, which redistributed the land to make agriculture more viable and productive. The drastic fall in the price of wheat at the end of the Napoleonic wars and the severe depressions in agriculture from the 1820s to the 1840s, led to unparalleled poverty and degradation for some of the farm labourers and their families. Farms went out of cultivation or changed hands; farms were sold and bought or let out to tenants ; farming families came and went, or intermarried.

With the reorganisation of the field system through the Enclosures, many smallholders were forced to sell their holdings to more prosperous members of the community and either left the village or became landless labourers. The old yeoman families (Payne, Hancock) who had been connected with the village for centuries, were soon replaced by new farming families (Chaplin, Wright) who moved in from elsewhere to settle on the larger farms created by the Enclosure Act [Hanmer]. In 1854 thirty residents of Fulbourn not only left the land but the country out of a desire for a better life in Australia, following a national trend noted by Sir James Caird's Enquiry into English Agriculture of 1850.

The Fulbourn Chronicle records the vicissitudes of farming as experienced in Fulbourn in the nineteenth century, such as the sale of farms and barns and of stock; storms, harvest failures, foot and mouth in cattle. But on the other hand, the early 19th century witnessed great progress in agriculture, leading to wealth and prosperity for the larger farmers. Thus the Chronicles record the introduction of (labour saving) new machines: as early as 1830 we find Thomas Hancock offering to let his new threshing machine; by 1848 the first drilling machine was in use, and in 1869 Fison's new ploughing engines demonstrate Claying the Fen by Steam. Which all meant less demand for labour. In 1893 the number of unemployed doubled as a result of the failure of crops and farms going out of cultivation. Work on the land, however, still remained a ready and possibly sole source of employment for the unskilled men and boys, but it was hard and poorly paid; the labourers often lived in run-down old-fashioned thatched cottages (many of which have since been pulled

down and which have been likened to the jerry-built town houses of the time). However, they could also grow their own food as had been the case for generations before them, which must have helped mitigate their conditions.

One noteworthy effect of the Enclosures in Fulbourn was that after 1814 farmers began moving out of the centre of the village in order to be close to their new allocation of land, now together in one holding and not scattered around the four corners of the parish. Before Enclosure, not a single farmhouse was situated outside the village, since all the fields were common and open at certain times of the year to grazing livestock belonging to residents of the village. All baulks and track ways leading to the scattered holdings were communal and each farmer would own many isolated strips in the four-field system around the village and it would be impractical if not impossible for farmhouses to be situated anywhere other than in the village itself. This explains the large isolated brick farmhouses such as Valley Farm, Rectory Farm, Heath Farm, Westbourn Farm, New Shardelows, all built in the early part of the nineteenth century on the former open fields to the south and west, in the centre of allotments of newly enclosed land. The earliest may have been Valley Farm built in 1817, a handsome Georgian farmhouse, home for a while to the Wombwell family, which was pulled down c. 1970 and replaced in the 1960s by two new houses.

In the past two centuries, farming in Fulbourn has seen many changes. While in 1900 Fulbourn still had its flocks of sheep, by the 1950s sheep keeping had ceased and farming was chiefly arable. The 1920s had seen the introduction of sugar beet as a crop, while the agricultural depression of the 1930s saw the removal of hedges and the disappearance of livestock; and combine harvesters were gradually being introduced, which further reduced the number of men employed on the land.

Looking back on the twentieth century, Norman Osborne has singled out some of these changes :

“In the early 1900s Fulbourn farmers had flocks of sheep; there were dairy herds in the village; pigs were kept and bullocks, all for their meat.

Mangel, or wurzel, a large kind of beet, were grown for cattle feed; sainfoin and clover were grown for storage for winter feed for cattle; oats were grown and then rolled or crushed for feeding horses. Wheat was grown for flour and barley for brewing and for cattle feed. Sugar beet was grown for its sweet content to be made into sugar. In the 1950's this all changed with mechanisation coming in to farming. There was no more need for horses when tractors became the in thing. Combines were used for harvesting, so there was no need to cart the corn shocks to the stack yard nor to make stacks for the corn to dry out before thrashing the grain. All the horse and carts disappeared, as did threshing machines, dressers and elevators for making stacks. Crops such as mangel, sainfoin and clover disappeared and were replaced by oilseed rape, sunflower and linseed, all for their oil content, while peas and carrots are now grown for canning, and other vegetables."

(To be continued)



Reaping the c.1920 harvest at POPLAR FARM with 'three horse power' and a binder.



Threshing the harvest c.1920 using steam powered machinery.

I.T. HELP REQUESTED

Members of Fulbourn Village History Society, residents and visitors to Fulbourn, enjoying the display of photographs from our database during 'A Day in June'.

As our database is such a success and still expanding, John Patten would very much appreciate any offers of assistance entering data etc. See below for more information.



RECORDING ALL ACQUISITIONS ONTO THE F.V.H.S LAPTOP by John Patton

All information received about Fulbourn ie newspaper cuttings, photographs, artefacts etc. are listed in numerical order and hand written by Pat White into a register. These details are transferred into the 'Catalist' database on the History Society's laptop computer.

There are over 12,000 individual entries recorded so far since 1999 and new entries are usually added once a week over a two hour period. The entries are quite easy for anyone with some typing skills, but should be entered in an orderly and consistent way. There are a few quirky rules when entering data by a 'crib' sheet

has been produced outlining how to enter standard category entries.

The database has a useful search facility where any word, description, place or person can be entered and an immediate list of records are shown, with the relevant information and the F.V.H.S. numbers so that items can be quickly retrieved from the store cupboards.

I feel it is important that at least one other person should be familiar with the recording of these History Society entries, to ensure that in the future we do not lose, or allow, this valuable facility to lapse.

Note from the Secretary:-

On behalf of members, I would like to thank John for his hard work and also to take this opportunity to add the following comment.

One of the most important developments in the research facilities offered by the Society is the scanning and processing of documents and photographs which are then entered in digital format on the database.

Tony Goodall is our expert on this technology - and like John, he would welcome help. The skills are not difficult to learn and obviously, support would be given throughout the training process - and beyond. Indeed, it might be a chance to set up an informal group of interested individuals, each perhaps concentrating on one or more areas of the techniques involved (you do not have to be an expert on everything - even Tony continues to discover new and easier, ways and means to improve procedures!).

Being able to 'clean up' an old photograph or document, possibly revealing information not seen for generations is an intensely rewarding experience. F.V.H.S. expanding e-mail address list show that many of us have finally embraced the digital age (an original sceptic, even I have to admit it has proved invaluable for improved communications with members, not to mention family and friends!). So why not take this opportunity to 'upgrade' your own abilities whilst also contributing towards an increased understanding of Fulbourn's heritage.

Please contact Tony Goodall (C.880401) or Glynis Arber (C. 570887), for more details.



BOOK LAUNCH

Fulbourn Library proudly displays the book launch of 'This is Our Village Fulbourn' compiled from articles by local residents. The Archive Store of Fulbourn Village History Society was used extensively for research purposes by many of the authors who were most grateful for the assistance of Pat White and other Society members.

Membership Cards to Fulbourn Village History Society will be delivered by the end of September, to all who have renewed their subscription for 2011-2012 at this date. Whilst every attempt will be made to hand deliver cards for later payments, these may also be collected at our evening Talks from October onwards.

CELEBRITY VISIT

As part of 'A Day in June' Celebrations, we had a visit by Author, Television Presenter and Architectural Historian, Mac Dowdy.

Residents and visitors to Fulbourn were delighted to accompany Mac Dowdy around the village as he pointed out some of the many architectural features our older houses possess.



Fulbourn Manor, with its complicated architectural history, was a prime example of a very English tradition - when new wealth entered the family, existing buildings were either added to and extended or knocked down and re-built!



A fascinated audience enjoyed a general overview of information about building styles for specific houses in the village. I personally found the revelation that once an upper floor had been inserted in the original one storey open hall, it was often necessary to lower the ground level so that there was sufficient ceiling height. This meant that on entering the front door, you went down a step or two as in Manor Cottage, (see photo on page 7).



There was not time, unfortunately, for detailed investigation of the houses - though Mac Dowdy promised he would be back! However, in our Archive Store we have a number of historic house surveys relating to Fulbourn. Why not come along and browse?

A DAY IN JUNE



To be precise, Sunday 19th June 2011, when the village of Fulbourn became creatively alive with circus acts, poetry workshops, dance displays, music groups, historic building tours, art exhibition, craft workshops, stalls and of course, a photographic display of shops and pubs organised by Fulbourn Village History Society.

FULBOURN VILLAGE HISTORY SOCIETY PROGRAMME OF TALKS FOR 2011-2012

October 20th 2011

'Inn Signs of Town and Country'
Andrew Jackson

November 17th 2011

'Air Navigation 66 Years Ago: a personal account'
George Culling

December 9th 2011

'Pictures and Music' (Entry by Ticket only)
Ken Drake

May 17th 2012

Fulbourn Village History Society holds its
Thirteenth Annual General Meeting

January 19th 2012

Elizabethan Cambridge: 1952-2005
Mike Petty

February 16th 2012

'A Cambridge Grocer: the story of
Mathew's of Trinity Street, 1832-1962',
Judy Wilson OBE

March 15th 2012

'Historical Sites in the Middle East'
James Caesar

April 19th, 2012

'[The Victorian Way of Death'
Tom Doig

All Meetings except the December 9th Social event are held in the large Meeting Room at
The Fulbourn Centre. Doors open at 7.30 pm.

BELIEVE IT OR NOT..... (its your choice) - from 'WORDSMITH.'

During the Napoleonic war our soldiers were given one loaf of bread a day. Invariably they patrolled in pairs. When they suspected there was a sniper near by, one of the soldiers would put that day's bread on the end of his bayonet; then his uniform cap on top. He would then gradually raise this above the level of a bush or wall, the sniper would fire and the other soldier, seeing the position would fire back killing the sniper. Hence the saying 'Using your loaf'.

The next time you are washing your hands and complain because the water temperature isn't just how you like it, think about how things used to be. Here are some facts about the 1500s:

Most people got married in June because they took their yearly bath in May, and still smelled pretty good by June. However, they were starting to smell, so brides carried a bouquet of flowers to hide the body odour. Hence the custom today of carrying a bouquet when getting married.

Baths consisted of a big tub filled with hot water. The man of the house had the privilege of the nice clean water, then all the other sons and men, then the women and finally the children. Last of all the babies. By then the water was so dirty you could actually lose someone in it. Hence the

saying, Don't throw the baby out with the bath water..

Houses had thatched roofs-thick straw-piled high, with no wood underneath. It was the only place for animals to get warm, so all the cats and other small animals (mice, bugs) lived in the roof. When it rained it became slippery and sometimes the animals would slip and fall off the roof. Hence the saying .. It's raining cats and dogs.

There was nothing to stop things from falling into the house.. This posed a real problem in the bedroom where bugs and other droppings could mess up your nice clean bed. Hence, a bed with big posts and a sheet hung over the top afforded some protection. That's how canopy beds came into existence.

The floor was dirt. Only the wealthy had something other than dirt. Hence the saying, Dirt poor. The wealthy had slate floors that would get slippery in the winter when wet, so they spread thresh (straw) on floor to help keep their footing. As the winter wore on, they added more thresh until, when you opened the door, it would all start slipping outside. A piece of wood was placed in the entrance way. Hence the saying a thresh hold.... Well, well, well! More to come.