



# FULBOURN VILLAGE HISTORY SOCIETY

*"To save Fulbourn's past for the future"*

**NEWSLETTER NO. 50 Summer 2019**

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## FULBOURN VILLAGE HISTORY SOCIETY COMMITTEE 2019-2020

At Fulbourn Village History Society's Nineteenth Annual General Meeting, the following members were unanimously elected to the Committee of Fulbourn Village History Society:

**Chair:** Glynis Arber

**Secretary:** Rosemary Tristram

**Treasurer:** Ian Harrison

**Keeper of the Archives:** Pat White

**Webmaster:** John Timperio

**Committee Members:** Richard Bennett, Clare Champion  
Alison Rash, Charles Rowland-Jones, Tim Vaughan-Lane

A big welcome to Charles and Tim, who join us in working on your behalf for the benefit of the Members and of the Society.

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## FULBOURN VILLAGE HISTORY SOCIETY PROGRAMME 2019-2020

**Thursday, 17 October 2019**

*'Russian Revolution'* by Sean Lang who will describe the impact that the October Revolution had upon Cambridge town and gown.

**Thursday, 21 November 2019**

*'The Great Plague in Cambridge'* by Evelyn Lord. Tracing the arrival and progress of the Great Plague in Cambridge, this talk gives an account of the people and households affected by it.

**Thursday, 12 December 2019**

*'Old Time Christmas'* by Mike Hurst. Fulbourn Village History Society celebrates its annual party in style with nostalgia for Christmases past. Entry by Ticket only. (We will also have a Cake to celebrate F.V.H.S.'s 20th Anniversary!)

**Thursday, 16 January 2020**

*'Contested History'* by Martin Daunton who will discuss such questions as how should we now deal with uncomfortable events in the past like slavery? Should statues be removed or reinterpreted? Should we look for excluded voices to celebrate?

**Thursday, 20 February 2020**

*'The Remarkable Story of Heffers of Cambridge 1876-1999'* by Julia Bounford. Capturing the spirit of a past era of retail, publishing and printing, this talk portrays the character and style of Heffers, its people, the premises, outings, parties and the unexpected.

**Thursday, 19 March 2020**

*'Buried with their belts on, people and architecture at Cambridge Augustinian Priory'* by Craig Cessford. Recent excavations have provided a great deal of information on the lives and deaths of the people who lived in the Priory.

**Thursday, 16 April 2020**

Twentieth A.G.M. Preceded by Talk (t.b.c.)

**Note: This Programme will be printed on your Membership Card for 2019 - 2020 which can be collected at our meetings held in The Fulbourn Centre from 7.30pm. on 3rd Thursday of the month from October to April.**

**Subscription Renewal Forms will be delivered by hand or email in August.**

## THE POOR IN 19C FULBOURN PART I: A Case Study by Glynis Arber

**Whilst undertaking research into the family history of Charles Clements who emigrated from Fulbourn to Otago, New Zealand on the ship Corona, arriving 6 Feb. 1876, I became fascinated by one of his relatives, Sarah Littlechild. Her story helps provide a valuable insight into the lives of the poorest members of the village during the middle of the 19C.**

The eighth and youngest child of Thomas 'Missing' Clements, Sarah married John Littlechild at All Saints, Fulbourn on 18 October 1829 and was widowed only eight years later. It is not clear where she lived in Fulbourn until the census of 1851 records the family as inhabiting an almshouse. These were located in a street named as London Lane. In 'The Highways and Byways of Fulbourn' (published in 1991) a local historian, Don Crane, reports that *'London Lane (or Little London Street) was probably a nickname given to the track from Church Lane to Northfield at the time of the Census of 1851; in 1861 it was referred to as The Churchyard!'*.

However, there was another potential address. The Almshouses were noted on a drawing of 1775 as being at 'The Camping Ground'. As Don Crane explains in more detail *'Church Lane in 1806, the date of the Parish Award Map, had quite a different appearance from the present road. That part of it from its junction with High Street is roughly the same, but on turning the corner one would have seen, on the right, a row of eleven dilapidated hovels called almshouses, backing, not on the churchyard, but on a piece of land known as the Camping Close, on which a kind of football used to be played.'*

*These almshouses abutted on to the road and when they were pulled down in 1864 and eight new ones built on their present site, the whole of this stretch of road was re-aligned. To enable this to be done, a piece of land opposite (belonging to the Manor) was taken for the road and the strip of land between the Camping Close and Manor Cottage was given in exchange. (The original boundary wall of the Manor may still be seen along the southern boundary of this strip of land and behind the thatched cottage.)*

*The Camping Close was added to the churchyard and a new wall built around both the churchyard and the Manor grounds along the whole length of Church Lane'.*

This supports the probability that at that time, according to the 1851 Census, Sarah Littlechild, widow on parish relief - and her family of five children - were certainly residents in one of the Old Almshouses. It cannot have been a pleasant experience. Indeed they were a village scandal. A local newspaper reports in 1857 that they were little more than hovels in a very dilapidated state and by 1861 they had no roofs the doors were completely inadequate and they were *'not even fit for pig-sties'*.

Ten years later, in the 1861 census, Sarah's address was given as 1 Church Yard (ie also known as London Lane/Street). As Don Crane revealed, this was probably still the site of the old Almshouse's. Bringing up five children in what was essentially a slum area of rotting buildings must have been extremely difficult.

Sarah's first four children were baptised before the death of their father at age 30 in 1837.

However, three subsequent children were baptised in 1838, 1842 and 1846 which suggests they were illegitimate. That Sarah had maintained herself and her family by becoming a prostitute seems a reasonable supposition. Widowed at the age of 24 (or 21 - census ages are somewhat inconsistent) with five surviving children the three youngest being still dependent (the two eldest worked as agricultural labourers) and probably no skills (if as it appears she married at age 16) Sarah no doubt had little life choices. Yet this 1861 census also shows that Sarah, now age 48 (and too old for her previous

line of work?) was able to eventually find other employment. On it she is described as a washerwoman and may have 'taken in' laundry - although it is hard to imagine considering the overcrowded conditions in which she lived.

As Sophie McGeevor (on the University of Cambridge website) explains *'It's no coincidence that laundry feature in so many of these women's stories. Taking in washing, or going out to other people's houses to do washing ..could be planned to fit around women's work at home and childcare responsibilities.'* Of course, by 1861 Sarah was living with only the three youngest of her children who were between the ages of 16 and 22 so she may well have been able to do this work elsewhere.

There was even a possible employer near by. Closer scrutiny of the 1861 census reveals that the entry immediately before Sarah was of a Ann Marie Manning, widow (48). Her address was given as Fulbourn House Laundry and her occupation as laundress. Looking back further over the census entries just before Sarah's it is apparent that Fulbourn House was actually Fulbourn Manor - and that Mrs Manning was employed by the Townley family in the household laundry. The Manor was adjacent to St Vigor's and near Church Yard so it would have been convenient to employ Sarah as extra (non live in) help (this is, of course, pure speculation).

Sarah would certainly have been kept busy. The 1861 census shows that Fulbourn House (ie Manor) had a housekeeper, a butler, a lady maid, two footmen, a housemaid, kitchen maid, a coachman, nurse, two nursery maids and an under nursemaid. As there were three young sons and four daughters in the family it was not surprising the nursery staff were so numerous! (Where was the cook?) Staying as visitors was a governess, an East India merchant, his wife and three sons. Mr and Mrs Townley were also at home - Charles Townley being noted as a 'Landed Proprietor'.

The contrast between the life styles of the gentry at this period and those who, quite literally, had nothing, is quite stark. However, it must be acknowledged that during the 19th century and indeed later, the Townley family have been generous to the poor of the parish. It was the afore mentioned Charles Townley who donated the land for the New Almshouses.

It would seem that Sarah Littlechild in 1871 was living with her son, George and his family in Highfield, Fulbourn. At this time her occupation was described as being a 'monthly nurse' ie someone who looks after a new mother and her baby. (Sarah would certainly have had personal experience of childcare!) By the 1881 census, she is again living in the Almshouses though these would have been the new, very much improved, buildings. Sarah was also sharing her accommodation with another widow of a similar age, Hannah Hancock (72). It can only be hoped that after such a hard life, Sarah finally found companionship and some comfort. Her death was recorded in the Burial Register for All Saints, as being on December 21st 1883.

Ann Littlechild, Sarah's first illegitimate daughter, is also worth a mention - if only for extra 'colour'. The 1851 census states she was (age 13) on parish relief and in 1861 her occupation was listed as prostitute. I have not found further evidence of her in the census's for Fulbourn but there is an interesting report in The Fulbourn Chronicles dated March 21, 1857.

*Fulbourn. - Charge of Rape. - A young woman of this village, named **Ann Littlechild**, made this charge at the Bottisham Petty Sessions against a workman named Peck, employed at the Asylum. It turned out the woman was one of loose character; indeed, she said she "did not pretend to be a prudent woman, but she did not want the prisoner to interfere with her". Under these circumstances the bench dismissed the charge, but fined him five shillings and costs for the assault.'*

It appears that the assault was proved (hence the fine) but that owing to Ann's 'profession' the charge of rape disregarded!

Two years later, Ann was again in the newspaper - twice! The first time, in a report on September 24, 1859, of Bottisham Petty Session stated that *'Edward Hart, John Hart, Harriet Hart, and Ann Littlechild, all of Fulbourn, were convicted of assaulting Hannah Fabb, of Great Wilbraham....'*

However, Ann was also perhaps a victim of a potential assault herself. The account of the incident appeared in the newspaper on November 5, 1859. *'Bottisham Division. John Pettit and Samuel Pettit, of Fulbourn, labourers, were charged with having assaulted John Littlechild, of the same place, labourer. - It appeared that the defendants (who are brothers) broke open the outer-door of the*

*house of Ann Littlechild, the complainant's sister, who is a young single woman residing alone near the complainant. She was in bed, but got up and came down stairs, and found John Pettit in the house, who pretended he wanted a light. His brother shortly afterwards came into the house and she ran out in her night-dress for her brother (the complainant), who was also in bed. He immediately got up and came to her assistance, but the defendants refused to leave the house, and struck him several violent blows to the face, and knocked him out of the house, calling him a bully and other foul names. Convicted in a penalty and costs of £1 each, or 21 days imprisonment.'*

Ann was certainly a feisty character - which must be admired considering her disadvantaged family background. Survival of the fittest indeed! I have not, unfortunately, been able to find out how long she did survive.

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## HIDDEN HISTORIES OF ARTEFACTS HELD IN OUR STORE:

### Keeping Warm Part I by Glynis Arber



**HOT WATER BOTTLES.** Fulbourn Village History Society's Artefact Store contains lots of **STONEWARE HOT WATER BOTTLES**

#### HISTORY

Keeping warm, especially at night, is a basic human instinct and various methods have evolved over the centuries. For example, from the sixteenth century, fire embers were placed in metal (usually copper or brass) containers known as 'warming pans'. These had to be removed from the bed before it was occupied and could also cause fires.

Filling a receptacle with hot water and leaving it in the bed was another arrangement. These might have been constructed from copper, zinc, glass or stoneware and were fitted with a lid to prevent spills.

Cheap mass production of stone and earthenware hot water bottles during the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century made this design very popular. We have six in our Collection, all with a slightly different pattern.

#### METHOD OF USE

The hot water bottles were intended to be stood upright in a bed on the small flat end so that the sheets and blankets formed a tent. A rounded knob, opposite the flat end, was supposed to serve as the peak of the tent thereby allowing more heat to circulate. In practise, they were probably used in the position shown in the photographs. Stoneware hot water bottles have now been supplanted by those made from rubber and silicone.

We also have in our Store a very early example of an **ELECTRIC BLANKET**

It is fortunate that this object from our Collection comes with a label (alas, no instructions) describing it as 'THE SAFETY FIRST BED WARMER', otherwise we might have



have some difficulty understanding its purpose!

#### HISTORY

The devices that evolved into today's electric blankets were first intended for invalids. In 1912, an American doctor *Sidney Russell* was attempting to find a way to keep his patients warm and he invented a blanket that used electric wires covered in insulated metal tape to accomplish this. By the 1920's similar heated blankets were being used in tuberculosis sanatoriums since the inmates were advised to get plenty of fresh air and sometimes spent the night outdoors.

Many new, electrified versions were developed during the 1930's including electric bed warmers shaped like thermos bottles and flattened dome-like bed warmers heated with a light bulb.

It is not entirely clear how the Safety First Bed Warmer operated but it appears a light bulb or element was securely covered in towelling. This was presumably placed inside the bed within a wooden cradle, allowing the warm air to circulate. The electric fitting was designed to be used with an overhead light which suggests the date of the Bed Warmer was pre WWII.

When most homes were heated by open fires, the flames often needed 'encouragement'. One method of doing so was to direct a blast of strong air over the embers allowing the oxygen to 'feed the fire'. The device was called a **FIRE BELLOWS**



#### HISTORY AND METHOD OF USE

Our example probably dates from the late nineteenth to early twentieth century. Such models would be made from wood, leather and sometimes, brass. It consists of a flexible bag comprising a pair of rigid 'Boards' with handles, joined by flexible leather sides. These enclose an approx. air tight cavity which can be expanded and contracted by the handles when pulled apart and then by closing them together. It is fitted with a valve allowing air to fill the cavity when expanded and with a tube, ending in a nozzle, through which the air is forced out when the cavity is compressed.

It is not quite clear whether these **FIRE IRONS** in our Collection belong to the same set.



#### HISTORY AND METHOD OF USE

Until the late nineteenth century, the domestic open fire (wood or coal burning) was the main heating source for rooms in houses.

It gradually became superseded by the much more convenient and cleaner gas fire and central heating - though most homes did not have the latter until some years after the end of WWII.

An open fire required considerable work to maintain its heat and special tools were developed to assist with the operation of stoking and cleaning the grate. These were known collectively as 'Fire Irons' and usually consisted of a spade (for shovelling coal) plus a poker (used to adjust the placement of coal or wood fuel burning in the fireplace). There may also have been a Brush for sweeping up the ashes and a Fire rake for moving embers.

We only possess the POKER and TONGS. Iron was the most popular metal from which these objects were manufactured although the two in our Collection appear to be stainless steel. Brass was a more expensive alternative and it is possible that the brass 'Toasting Fork' (below) in our artefact store is actually, a Fire Rake!



**Please note: the information about objects in our store was researched using reference books and also the Internet.**

**This (very awkward to store!) item is a FIRE SCREEN SHEET**



#### HISTORY AND METHOD OF USE

It acted as a shield between the occupants of a room and the fireplace, and its primary function was to reduce the discomfort of excessive heat from a log or coal fire and prevent sparks escaping. Early fire screens were generally shaped as flat panels standing on attached feet, or as adjustable shield-shaped panels mounted on tripod table legs.

Ours is a *horse screen*, or *cheval screen* (cheval is the French word for horse) which was in common use from the 18th century. It is a wide screen having two feet on each side, the arrangement of the feet giving the screen its name.

Fire screens were also used to cover the fireplace when nothing was burning inside it, and were often decorated to make it look more attractive. Our fire screen is made of metal and is comparatively plain, though it does have embellished corners.

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## FULBOURN VILLAGE HISTORY SOCIETY. COFFEE MORNING 2019



Although primarily a Social Event, thanks to the generosity of members we made a fantastic profit of £54.70 - which pays for a speaker!

Many thanks also to Suzy Worzcroft for providing the wonderful venue.

### **Alec Rolph Close (1998)**

Named by the Parish Council In memory of the late Alec Rolph who farmed the area.

### **All Saints Road (1957)**

Built at the same time as Saint Vigor's Road and named after Fulbourn's other parish Church, 'All Saints' (now demolished).

### **Barnsfield (1989)**

Named after the members of the Barnes family who lived in some of the former dwellings on this site.

### **Blenheim Rise (2018)**

Named after Blenheim Apple trees.

### **Breckenwood Road (1965)**

Name proposed by the builder Mr Jakubowski when he occupied the workshops in the late 1970's.

### **Brunswick Court (1999)**

Named after the original house 'Brunswick Place' which was demolished to provide access to the site.

### **Bird Farm Road (1958)**

Named after the farmhouse, 'Birds Farm' on this site, previously owned by William Bird.

### **Caraway Road (1961)**

Named after John Caraway, Rector of Fulbourn (1434-1441) who left land in trust for the poor of the village.

### **Chaplin's Close (1981)**

Named after Joseph Chaplin for many years district councillor and Parish Council Chairman etc. who died in 1978.

### **Cherry Orchard (1977)**

Named after the house in Hinton Road of former land owner, Douglas Whitehouse who died in 1985.

### **Dunmowe Way (1964)**

Named after adjacent land 'Dunmowe's Close'. Gilbert De Dunmowe had a manor in Fulbourn in the 12th Century.

### **Farmers Row (1964)**

Named after William Farmer (1637 -1712) who bequeathed land at Brinkley to found a charity incorporating several villages, including Fulbourn.

### **Froment Close (1977)**

Named after former landowner Samuel Fromont (The District Council misspelt the name).

### **Geoffrey Bishop Avenue (1958)**

Named after the Rev Geoffrey Bishop who was a village benefactor and former Vicar of All Saints (1425-1468).

### **Grandridge Close (1964)**

Named after "Grenedich" an old name (1378) for part of Cambridge Road, (School Lane to Hinton Road)

### **Greater Foxes (1954)**

Named after the old name 'Great Foxes Meadow', (latterly Payne's Meadow) on which the estate was built.

### **Haggis Gap**

Named from a shortcut in hedge on Drove Road, derived from owners name, Haggus. (There is also a village myth that a Scotsman lived here).

### **Holmans Close (1976)**

Named in recognition of Mr Percy Holman, (School Headmaster 1907-1947) and his wife, who also taught at the school.

### **Huntsmill (1966)**

Named after Thomas Hunt of Soham, who in 1808 built a windmill.

### **Jeeves Acre (1989)**

Named after Mr and Mrs Louis Jeeves, former owner of the land on which the estate was built.

### **March's Close (1965)**

Named after Elizabeth March (1635- 1722) who was a respected village benefactor and sister of William Farmer.

### **Northfield (1985)**

Northfield Farm was demolished on this site in 1985 and the name Northfield first used in 1912.

### **Oslar's Way (1962)**

Named after Thomas Oslar who, in his will in 1722, gave £12 to buy an acre of land for a Charity.

### **Pettit's Close (1968)**

Name derived from the meadows 'Pettit's Grove', possibly from John Petyt, Rector (1375-1377).

### **Saint Vigor's Road (1957)**

This name is probably unique, as there is only one other Saint Vigor's Church in the United Kingdom.

### **Stansfield Gardens (1988)**

Named after the landowner and nurseryman Stanley Hardwick (Stans+field+gardens).

### **Swifts Corner 1965)**

Named after a piece of ground called 'Swifts', which was supposedly the recreation ground in 1899.

### **Town Close (date to be determined)**

Origin of name currently unknown.

### **The Bourns (2001)**

Adjoining Ludlow Lane, the land on which the small close was built, together with its house was known as 'Bourns'.

### **The Chantry (1985)**

Named after land owned by Queens Collage Cambridge

### **The Cornway (1990)**

In the Middle Ages, Pierce Lane was the main road or the corn way to Cambridge via Hinton Road.

### **The Croft (1963)**

Named after Croft Farm to which the land formally belonged. The Farmhouse is in Pierce Lane.

### **The Haven (1995)**

This estate was build on the former grounds of 'Field House' whose original name was The Haven.

### **The Maples (1965)**

The name was proposed by the builder of the estate, the late Bernard Sergent, and agreed by S.C.D.C.

### **The Pines (1991)**

The grounds and adjacent land of this small close contained many established pine trees.

### **Rushdon Close (date to be determined)**

Named after a Threshing machine.

### **Roberts Way (2018)**

Named after Prof. Gwyn Roberts, former Physician Superintendent of Ida Darwin Hospital.

### **Thomas Road (1953)**

The only road in the Parish named after a then living person, Dr John Glyndor Trehame Thomas M.C.

### **Weston Grove (1960)**

Named after village benefactor, Ellen Weston, who gave cottages in Highfield Gate in Trust for the poor.

### **Windmill Lane (1963)**

The Windmill after which this road was named, was built in 1808 and operated until 1937.

### **Wright's Grove (1994)**

Leading off School Lane (formerly Wright's Lane) it was named to preserve the historical reference.

### **Woodyard Close (2019)**

Was a wood yard, but know by locals as 'Humphrey Green' after Doctor Humphrey.

### **FULBOURN BEECHWOOD**

#### **Clover Court**

#### **Primrose Close**

#### **Coltsfoot Close**

#### **Speedwell Close**

#### **Comfrey Court**

#### **Teasel Way**

#### **Fulbourn Old Drift**

#### **Valerian Court**

#### **Harebell Close**

#### **Violet Close**

#### **Lucerne Close**

#### **Yarrow Road**

Named after British wild flowers as suggested by Mr Stan Hardwick, the Chairman of the Parish Council who died in Scotland on 23rd April 2019.

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## **FULBOURN VILLAGE HISTORY SOCIETY AT THE FEAST 2019**



Our Information Stand at The Feast this year attracted much interest - especially the Fulbourn Street Maps! Many thanks to all who helped set up, take down the gazebo and acted as 'stewards'.

Owing to manpower issues, we did not have a fund-raising Bottle Stall. However, if members have items surplus to their requirements, we would welcome donations to the Raffle held at our Meetings from October to April. Just bring them along that evening.