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No 8

A MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM

The Merry Mawkin

Newsletter of Friends of Norfolk Dialect

Build on sound foundations says new FOND chairman

FOND'S new chairman is **PETER BROOKS,** former vice-chairman and a founder member, elected at the recent AGM to succeed Keith Skipper, who stepped down after his highly successful three years at the helm, the maximum period allowed under the society's constitution. Peter looks forward to a challenging time ahead.....

It does not seem three years since a small band of enthusiasts called a public meeting at Yaxham Village Hall to consider what could be done to stem the tide of "mummerset" which was increasingly flowing through radio and TV programmes in which producers mistakenly thought they were portraying a Norfolk accent.

Keith Skipper was

New leader: Peter Brooks

elected as our first chairman and he deserves the thanks of all who love the Norfolk dialect for the way in which he has steered our new society through the turbulent waters always present when a new group is launched. Thank you, Keith, you will be a hard act to follow.

We are now well and truly established, are recognised at county level as having something positive to contribute to Norfolk's cult-

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What is a Norfolk dialect word?

By FOND president Professor Peter Trudgill, Chair of English Linguistics, University of Fribourg, Switzerland

All of us in FOND are interested in Norfolk dialect words. But what is a Norfolk dialect word? Even if we can agree about what a 'word' is, there are difficulties both with the term 'Norfolk' and with the term 'dialect.'

If we were to mean by a 'Norfolk word' a word which is found in all of Norfolk, and only in Norfolk, then it would probably be safe to say that there is no such thing. As I pointed out in an earlier article, some local words, like *whinbush* and *furbush*, are found only in parts of the county and not in others, and for which it is therefore difficult to claim truly 'Norfolk' status.

Then there are many other words which are found all over the county but which cannot be claimed to be truly Norfolk words because they are found not only in our county but also in Suffolk or some other neighbouring area.

Even when we find cases where there is a clear split between Norfolk and Suffolk, such as *splinters* being *shivers* in Norfolk and *slivers* in Suffolk, we have to remember, as I also pointed out in another article, that the boundary between Norfolk and Suffolk dialect is not the same as the county boundary, and so even these 'Norfolk' words can be found in parts of Suffolk.

Then there are historical problems. Knowledge of the word *mawther* 'girl' may be more or less confined to Norfolk these days, but the English Dialect Dictionary shows that it used to be known and used in Suffolk, Essex, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire as well.

The concept of 'dialect word' is also a difficult one if we want 'dialect' to mean 'confined to a specific region.' Many lists of 'Norfolk words' cite words such as *pightle*, which are actually found all over England but are sometimes considered to be dialect words because knowledge of them is confined to people who have worked in or are close to the older agricultural world, and they are therefore unknown to townspeople, and to younger people generally. Similarly, some so-called 'dialect words' are basically general English words but with a particular local pronunciation. *Troshen* is not really a Norfolk dialect word as such; it is simply the general English word *threshing* with a distinctive Norfolk pronunciation. *Blar* 'cry' is a local form of *blare*, *duzzy* 'foolish' is our variant of *dizzy*

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That blew a tempest but 40 reached AGM!

By Tony Clarke

Most voluntary organisations would be glad to get 40 or so members to their annual meeting. Imagine getting that number on a day when Norfolk was suffering its worst gale since 1987 and many of those members had to travel from various far-flung corners of the county and beyond.

Given that sort of imagination, you might have heard, carried on the wind, the distant cry: "Blast thass a-blowin' fit ter blind yer!" as trees fell everywhere, blocking roads and bringing down power lines.

The thousands whose homes were plunged back into the dark ages of Tilley lamps and candles included former Cabinet Minister, long-serving MP and general "good ow' Norfolk mawther" Gillian Shephard. As if that wasn't bad enough, Mrs Shephard also had a broken leg. But, in the true do-or-die spirit of Norfolk people, FOND's meeting went ahead, and Mrs Shephard, grateful for the warmth and light of Yaxham Village Hall, delivered a highly entertaining talk. And afterwards she and her husband became members of FOND.

EDP library

Gillian Shephard: She and her husband became members of FOND at our AGM.

Keith Skipper got there because he wasn't going to miss his chance of retiring from the chairmanship, having served his three years. The fact that Cromer resident Keith had cadged a lift with his successor, Peter Brooks, a Sheringham inhabitant, says much for the dedicated teamwork of FOND officers.

Keith, justly proud of what we had achieved in our first three years, shared Peter's view that we needed to look to the future and recruit even more members than the record 280 reported by retiring membership secretary Brenda Bizzell.

We would continue to help with school curricula, co-operate with radio and TV producers and work with the Norfolk Cultural Strategy team, said Peter. But we also needed to expand our recording programme, and to consider other initiatives, such as a residential weekend school, perhaps an annual dinner and the development of links with other dialect societies.

Treasurer Janet Woodhouse said the year's income of £1762 had exceeded expenditure by £369.84, and Robin Limmer gave a spirited report on the continuing success of The Merry Mawkin. He's the editor, so I have to be nice to him (especially as he had to remind me to do this report!) *(Watch it! — ed.).*

Your officers and committee are now: Chairman, Peter Brooks; vice-chairman and minutes secretary, Tony Clarke; membership secretary, Shelagh Limmer; treasurer, Janet Woodhouse; programme secretary, Keith Skipper; newsletter editor, Robin Limmer; committee members, Brenda Bizzell, Colin Burleigh, Jean Eaglen, Norman Hart and Vera Youngman. David Bunting agreed to continue in his much appreciated role of auditor.

STOP PRESS: Working titles being considered for the Christmas panto at North Elmham on January 5 include Mother Tarky, and Bernie and the Bewtiful Beanstalk. The script isn't written yet, but no doubt you'll have got the drift of which stories are to get the FOND treatment!

New chairman Peter outlines his plans for FOND

FROM PAGE 1

ural diversity, have a solid membership base and have successfully proclaimed the importance of an understanding and appreciation for preserving our natural tongue in a materialistic world.

We must build on the sound foundations laid. Our president is compiling A Grammar of the Norfolk Dialect which, from what I've seen of a first draft, should be a best seller.

We will continue our discussions with educationists regarding the possibility of introducing Norfolk dialect into local school curricula, co-operate with radio and TV producers to replace "mummerset" with authentic Norfolk dialect, expand our programme of social "dews" across the county and continue to work with the Norfolk Cultural Strategy team to gain wider support for our declared aims of encouraging the preservation and protection of the Norfolk dialect and to study its history and usage. We will do all we can to promote and advance its use.

We need to expand our programme of interviewing people to record examples of genuine Norfolk dialect, to establish if there might be support for a Norfolk dialect residential weekend school, possibly an annual dinner and, perhaps, develop links with dialect societies nationwide.

We have our very own "groupies" who follow us from venue to venue, but we do need more members. So, persuade a friend, twist a relative's arm and work your wiles on unsuspecting neighbours — they will soon come to thank you for parting with the modest membership fee! Honest!! The stronger we become the more influence we will have.

"Hi boy — dew yar mohr know yew're out?" "Yar bor. She give me a ha'penny t'buy a fule. Are yew fer searle?"
(From *Broad Norfolk—Written by Readers of the EDP*, 1949).

Born in the very heart of Norfolk

FOND's new chairman, Peter Brooks, was born at Dereham, and, like his predecessor, Keith Skipper, attended Hamonds Grammar School, Swaffham.

While studying in London to qualify as an environmental health officer he worked in the housing department of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council.

On qualifying, Peter moved to Warwickshire in 1951 and was with Southam Rural District Council till 1955 when he returned to Norfolk to Docking RDC and from 1958-63 he was with Smallburgh RDC at Stalham. He then moved to Sheringham-based Erpingham RDC where from 1963-74 he was chief environmental health officer, serving also with the RDC's successor, North Norfolk District Council. From 1974-81 he was public relations officer with East Staffordshire District Council and from 1981-93 worked with publishing companies.

Since 1988 he has been vice-chairman and curator of Sheringham Museum. A past chairman of Museums in Norfolk Group (MING), Peter represents independent museums in Norfolk on Norfolk County Council's Joint Museums Committee and is a co-opted member of North Norfolk Area Museums Committee.

He is author of eight local history books, an A-level textbook on international environmental topics and a history of London's Pearly Kings and Queens. He contributes to the Eastern Daily Press Saturday Magazine, Let's Talk magazine, the Norfolk Journal and other regional and national publications.

Peter is married, has three daughters, one son and six grandchildren.

January ploughing at Acle. *Picture: Clifford Temple*

My County of Skies

When are ya' gorna come to Norfolk?
Dorn ya listern ta them there lies.
Norfolk's not fla' an' borin'
It's my beautiful county of skies.

When are ya' gorna come an' listen
To the tiny lark as she rise?
From 'er nest hiddin in the grarss,
She sings in my county of skies.

When are ya' gorna watch the trees?
Chestnut, oak, poplar and pines
Sway in the wind, housing the birds,
Siloets on my county of skies.

When are ya' gorna come for a walk?
In the country you see miles an' miles.
Churches are many, spires an'steeples
Stand proud in my county of skies.

When are ya' gorna gaze 'cross fields
Patchwork of lows an' high?
From browns ta greens ta yella an whi'e
Engulfed by my county of skies.

When are ya' gorna watch a hanser?
Seagulls folla' a plough wi' their crtes,
Shapes a' fearces in the clouds,
In my wonderful county of skies.

Julie Slaughter

HOME, JAMES

I remember an old team-man, Jim, once telling me, when his mare had been frightened by a train: "She'd a bin home, if I'd a let her a went."

Ex-Land Girl

(From *Broad Norfolk - Written by Readers of the Eastern Daily Press*, 1949).

My 24 years' residence must be getting towards acceptable

I was watching my son the other day — well, looking up to him would be a more accurate description these days - and thinking how grown-up he appeared.

Then it occurred to me just how long I have now been resident in Norfolk.

This is the longest period of my life that I have ever spent in one place and, to be honest, I hope it will be extended for some considerable time yet.

However, that led me on to considering my Norfolk Nationality Request. What exactly are the criteria for obtaining one's Acceptance? The concept, previously mentioned, of "summer'n'wintering 'em fust" did cross my mind, but local lore seems to indicate that alone is not enough.

Is it purely on the basis of long-time residence? And, if so, how long is "long-time" — months, years, or decades? I have encountered incomers who still do not claim to be "Nationals" after nearly 30 years and others who reckon they have gone native after only five. My 24 years' residence must be getting towards acceptable — though I still do not claim to understand thoroughly the Norfolk psyche.

Perhaps another route might be to sneak in by the back door, as I did, and marry a local. Producing a couple of children who also speak Norfolk (although slightly diluted by my influence) might shorten the list of requirements for naturalisation. Surely we do not have to salute the flag and vow allegiance as the would-be Americans do, even though I have heard it said that Norfolk ought to have its own emblem to be flown at major events.

A VIEW BY *OUTSIDER*

Alternatively, might Mr Blunkett have the answer? When you can speak like a local you must be acceptable, but "speaking" is different from understanding." Speaking implies sounding like the native, and Norfolk must be one of the most difficult lingoes fully to grasp. Even if you can pronounce words like the locals there is still the additional problem of Norfolk grammar. For instance, exactly when and how do you invoke the double negative?

Speaking like the locals elsewhere was not quite so problematical. I have managed to pass myself off as of reasonably local extraction in Warwickshire (near Birmingham — but Brummy — not Black Country), Sheffield, Scotland (northern and southern parts) as well as in the area of my own roots in Leicester and Herefordshire.

Some, of course, were easier than others. "Der yeow cum from Beermingham?" still trips lightly off the tongue even now, while the not-quite Yorkshire tones of Sheffield are still easily recognisable. Scotland was a pleasure, from the posh-sounding "Ai come frae Dun-deeee," through the rougher Glaswegian to the nearly inaccessible country-Aberdonian. Most of these we made a reasonable hash of in our five years or so of residence. Indeed, it took my young brother only a matter of months famously to inform our mother that she would have to wait for him as "ma soocks are fallin' doon."

But Norfolk? How long has it taken you?

And I'll never understand my brother-in-law.

NORFOLK BY ADOPTION 6: In which contributors, though not Norfolk-born, have made their permanent home here. One of the county's best-known incomers is **JOHN TIMPSON**, formerly with BBC TV and later co-presenter of Radio 4's *Today* between 1970 and 1986 and chairman of *Any Questions?* in the late 1980s. Before joining the BBC he was a reporter with the Eastern Daily Press and Dereham and Fakenham Times at Dereham, the area to which he returned some 20 years ago. He has written over 20 books, including *Timpson's Norfolk Notebook*, the foreword from which he has adapted and abridged specially for The Merry Mawkin *(see also Page 19)*.

Daydream that materialised

When Pat and I first moved to Norfolk as newly-weds, 51 years ago, our families and friends thought we were quite mad. To them, East Anglia was just a flat expanse of nothing in particular except for the occasional windmill and a permanent Arctic wind, a cross between Siberia and the Zuider Zee.

I confess I had much the same picture. My two previous excursions to Norfolk had not been very encouraging. One was a family holiday with my parents in Cromer, when it rained continuously and the only entertainment was watching the fire brigade pump out the hotel basement. The other was as a National Serviceman during the bitter winter of 1947, when I spent six miserable weeks in a wooden hut somewhere in Thetford Forest.

Predictably, the Army managed to run out of fuel and we could only warm the hut by burning the chairs, the tables, and even the spare beds. We were working our way through the roof joists when we were finally dispatched to the comparative cosiness of the Austrian Alps.

Picture: BBC

John Timpson: Extolling the delights of Norfolk.

It was the chance of a reporting job in Dereham that brought me back in 1951 — and alas, the weather had not improved. There was rarely a winter when the lanes were not blocked by snow, and in our pantry at North Elmham the pickled onions froze in the vinegar and the eggs solidified and burst their shells.

The sanitation system was a bucket down the garden, the water supply was hand-pumped from a well by the back door, and on washdays we lit a fire under the copper in the washhouse to heat the water. But during those early years we developed an affection for Norfolk which has stayed with us ever since.

When the BBC job in London came along in 1959 and we reluctantly went back "down south," we kept in touch with our Norfolk friends, we came back as often as we could, and I shamelessly extolled the delights of Norfolk whenever the chance arose — much to the irritation, I suspect, of my fellow-broadcasters, and certainly to the embarrassment of some of my Norfolk friends. "Don't keep on about it," they pleaded, "or we'll be getting everybody coming here..."

For nearly three decades, as the Home Counties became more and more congested and the daily battle with the London rat-race became more and more tedious, we promised ourselves that one day we would return to Norfolk — permanently. Not every daydream materialises, but happily this is one that did. I know we shall always be incomers, but we still feel as though we've come home.

FOND INTERNATIONAL

The Merry Mawkin forges links with Nor

How we helped stage a hit in New Zealand

It all began when Mrs Mildred Moss, of Southtown, Yarmouth, wrote to Keith Skipper:

This morning I got in touch with Radio Norfolk and they very kindly gave me your address.

I have a friend in New Zealand who has gone blind and her daughter is in this play and it requires Norfolk dialect.

I will appreciate your kindness if you would translate on the enclosed tape the Norfolk dialect. She has underlined the parts she plays. Thank you for your kind attention,

Mildred Moss.

So from Mrs Moss to BBC Radio Norfolk, to Keith, to Mawkin editor Robin Limmer, to friend Rene Pearce, a retired teacher living at Halesworth (Dereham-born and a childhood neighbour of FOND's Colin Burleigh), well-versed in the Norfolk dialect and just the person to record the dialogue for Jocelyn Mangin from Te Aroha, North Island, New Zealand.

After recording Rene's readings and adding an extract from Tony Clarke's tape of his Boy Jimma book, *Mighta Bin Wuss* — with which, dear reader, you will recall we helped an Oxford Playhouse actor with his Norfolk role earlier this year — Robin sent the tape to Mrs Moss, who forwarded it to her friend in New Zealand.

Soon, the Mawkin office received the following e-mail:

Just a short note to say thanks for the tape which I received through Mildred Moss. It is wonderful to see how small things reach such a long way. My name is Jocelyn Mangin and I have a small part in this play which is being put on by the little theatre in the little town where I live. The town is called Te Aroha, which is in the middle of farming country in the North Island of New Zealand.

I was tickled to get this part as I was, in fact, born at Great Yarmouth, spent my childhood in Zambia and then emigrated to New Zealand with my family. So I have a link with you all in that part of the world. Thank you so much again for your help. I know that hearing your tape will help me more than you can imagine. Regards, Jocelyn.

E-mailed from New Zealand: Jocelyn Mangin on stage in *Vinegar Tom*.

Robin asked Jocelyn for a follow-up and on November 4th he received this e-mail:

Just a short note to let you know that the play Vinegar Tom (photo attached) has finished its run and was a great success. I was very grateful for the tape which was so very helpful. I simply played it over and over and learned parrot style. I have found the whole exercise a great learning curve, quite a challenge for me, and there was some comment from the audience as to how authentic my accent sounded.

I have passed the tape on to the local speech teacher. She thought it would be a great teaching aid. I am thrilled that we have been able to make contact over this. Isn't it wonderful that we are a million miles away but all part of the one world!

Thank you again, Jocelyn Mangin.

lk exiles worldwide

Dialect practice in Mexico

By ANDREW FORD

Mexico City,
October, 2002.

I always knew Norfolk was a big county. But I didn't know quite how big until my job took me overseas. Did you know that our beloved dialect is alive and well in several continents?

Although brought up in Norfolk, I hadn't lived there in 10 years when I went off to work in South Africa. All Londonised, I was. So imagine my surprise and delight to find that the chap in the next office to me was from Yarmouth.

Cor blas', I thought to myself, there hint no gettin' away from it, is thur? Anyway, once the mutual discovery had been made,we useter speke in quewd whenever the borss were aroun' and we din' warn him knewen' what we was abou'. Werk like a charm tha' did. The borss thew, he useter git sew savage, he useter git us wrong so orfen we evenh'wully decided ah' wern worth uh' - humerus though uh' hid bin.

Bidding farewell to South Africa, my family and I went on another foreign posting, this time to Leicestershire. Suffice to say, thanks to the comparative proximity of Norfolk, and the ability to pay visits there during time off for good behaviour, we survived. After nearly four years, we were delighted to be told we were off again, this time to Mexico.

Ah well, I thought — no chance of any dialect practice there. Worl, hew wromg I were. This time it took me about a year to find out that the lady two offices down had been born just outside Bungay. Which side of the river? I quizzed, suspicious (well wouldn't you be?) Having received assurances that it was the correct side, I arsk her woi she hen' been spekin proper orl this woil. Werl, uh' turn ewt tha' hur haxcen' hud jus' deceive me a bit, cause she'ud live in Mexiquew abew' ayhteen yair. New wunder, I thought, tha' explayn uh'.

Thinking we'd have some more fun at our new boss's expense, picture our horror to learn she had Norfolk connections. She ewnly grew up in Norwich, din' she? Orl I ken saiy is thank hivun we foun' ou' afore we dun suffen stupu'. Tha' make the blud posu'uvly querdle to think wha' moi' huv hepp'n. Another promusun carair gorn west, uh' wuduv bin.

And so we wait with bated breath to learn where we are off to next. Will it be Brazil or Bangladesh? Australia or Azerbaijan? Sweden or Southery? Wimbotsham or West Africa? Ter tell yer the trewth, tha' dewn' rairly borther me, cause I knew tha' wherever tha' is, therl prorbly be someone from jes' down the rewd....

Andrew Ford lives in Mexico City.

Correct in Canada

The National Arts Centre in Ottawa has also benefited from a selection of authentic Norfolk voices.

Eileen Leiper of North Walsham contacted Keith Skipper on behalf of her daughter Moira in Canada. She was anxious to encourage the "right sort" of Norfolk sound for a forthcoming Ottawa production which called for accents heard in this county. Keith provided copies of the Norfolk Echoes CD he compiled in partnership with Stewart Orr — and they were sent out immediately in the name of true culture.

Website visitor's e-mail request i tribute to the late, great Dick Ba

By Robin Limmer

Early in September, Pauline Dodd, FOND's indefatigable website co-ordinator, received the following e-mail:

"My grandfather, Albert Redding, sadly died this week, aged 98. All his life Norfolk was his spiritual home though he died in Hertfordshire.

"Each year, since he was a boy, he would visit his family in Methwold Hythe for his holidays. He was never happier than in rural Norfolk. His pace, his humour and even his way of talking felt rooted there.

"I am reading a tribute at his funeral on Friday and I wondered if any of your members had any suggestions for a suitable short reading that might capture the spirit of Norfolk and Norfolk folk that he so loved.

"I was prompted to call you after hearing Stephen Fry's broadcast about Norfolk dialect on Radio 4 the night before my grandfather died."

The writer's name was Jeremy Williams and his request galvanised Pauline and FOND into immediate action!

Into Pauline's mind came the prose of the late Norfolk naturalist and dialect expert Dick Bagnall-Oakeley, which begins: *'Norfolk' is not simply a word that describes a county. 'Norfolk' describes also a language, a humour and a way of life ....*

Pauline's e-mail quest for a second opinion and a picture of this great son of Norfolk led me to recall that our Skip, in his 1994 book, *The Norfolk Companion*, had used this very quotation beneath the inside titling!

So a call to Keith to sort out picture arrangements and loose ends led to Pauline adding another page to our FOND website — a tribute to Dick Bagnall-Oakeley. (See opposite page).

Meanwhile, a delighted Jeremy Williams, his mission completed at his grandfather's funeral, expressed FOND thanks!

Since the launching of the FOND website last January, and indeed during the busy weeks of preparation beforehand, the painstaking work of Pauline

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

We need you — for recording purposes!

STEWART ORR's sound update

Not much to report since the last *Mawkin*. We had a training session on September 4th, for four people. During that evening we worked on the more intricate aspects of the minidisc recorders.

Later we listened to a few unedited recordings, to show how material comes in for editing to a subsequent radio programme. This (being the raw material for Sid Kipper's Christmas BBC Norfolk programme from the Reedham Folk Festival) was greeted with some amusement. It induced useful discussion into how to record speech with an eye to subsequent editing and post production.

So far we don't have many recordings to our name. The cassettes of local characters, so lovingly recorded by Susan Palmer in the Dereham area, are to be copied for the archive, and returned to her in the near future.

I do hope that more members will come forward to help with the recording and interviewing. We have a stock of 100 minidiscs and 1300 CDs, so it would be grand to start to see the stock in my loft going down a little in number!

Anyone interested, do get in touch with any of the committee, or directly with me, on 01379 854458, or *soss@paston.co.uk*

nspired FOND's very own gnall-Oakeley

FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Dodd has gone unmentioned in these columns, at her request, but at last I'm glad to be able to pay tribute to the enormous effort she has put into this high-profile project and its success is reflected by a visit to *www.norfolkdialect.com* and the fact that by the middle of November the number of visitors to the site stood at well over 4000. Thanks to Pauline, FOND has been put firmly on the internet.

A summary of each new Merry Mawkin is put on the website and previous editions can also be "visited."

Pauline says the Guestbook has been signed by people as far away as Wisconsin and Australia, "and we have been able to solve the mystery of the tittermatorter and the harnser for another couple of visitors!" Four new links have been added to the Links page:

Bird Watching in Norfolk
htt://www.birdtours.co.uk/tripreports/england/norfolk/
Old Norfolk
http://www.oldnorfolk.net/withmenu.htm
History of Cromer
http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Park/3496/page1.html
Admiral Lord Nelson
http://www.geocities.com/Athens/3682/lord_nelson.html

If anyone has links of interest we would like to have some new ones, especially if they have Norfolk dialect sounds on them.

Dick Bagnall-Oakeley: Naturalist, dialect expert, teacher (at Gresham's), writer and broadcaster.

Words of the master

'Norfolk' is not simply a word that describes a county. 'Norfolk' describes also a language, a humour and a way of life.

Spoken Norfolk has a stout and uniquely resistant quality and only people born in the county are able properly to penetrate it and repeat it with their own tongues.

Just as their language, so also the people of Norfolk are tough, resistant and impenetrable. They guard to themselves the secrets of their language and of their humour. Yet humour there is in the Norfolk people, riotous and abundant.

When you read Norfolk tales, remember that they are tales about a highly observant, subtle and recondite people. Therefore, always think twice before you laugh at a Norfolk tale — the laugh might be on you.

Dick Bagnall-Oakeley, 1908-1974

The 'internet' for mouseless oldies

RON FISKE continues his series The Norfolk Dialect: Guides to Reading and Research.No 5, *Notes and Queries: A Medium of Inter-communication for Literary Men, Artists, Antiquaries, Genealogists, etc., London, 1850 to date.*

In the unlikely event of the writer being asked to name the book he would most like to take to a desert island, it would, without question, be *Notes and Queries*.

In sheer volume and content it is quite the most valuable repository of varied and interesting reading which, for more than 150 years, has served as the "internet" for mouseless oldies.

Furthermore, due to its bulk, it is the most affordable of books. Partsets, often cast out from new bookless libraries, can sometimes be purchased for as little as £1 per volume.

To Captain Cuttle's adage "when found, make a note of it," the editor added his own advice: "Till then, make a query." It has served its subscribers well, for, beginning life on November 3, 1849, it still, I believe, continues today, some 230 volumes later.

The writer's own set finishes at volume 204 (hence the uncertainty) and spent much of its life richly bound on a baron's bookshelf. Even so it was pleasing to discover that it was originally subscribed for by a Norfolk antiquary, G.A. Carthew.

Taking Captain Cuttle to heart, it was the writer's late-night task to read through the index of the early volumes making a note of the subjects of local or particular interest. Some of them, from Volume I, will give a sample of the coverage:

Friar Brackley - of Paston Letters fame.

Norfolk's Robert Walpole - the first Prime Minister.

The Scole Inn - a description of its famous sign.

The Harvest "Horkey" - itts etymology.

Earl of Surrey - his lost poems.

North Runcton - the "unlearned" who kept the registers during the Civil War.

Winwaloe - the Norfolk weather rhyme.

Peter le Neve - the Norfolk herald.

Norfolk's George Munford on aspects of the Domesday Book.

Shuck - the Norfolk phantom dog.

Blickling - the famous ghost.

Norwich Valentines.

Cook-eels - the Norfolk buns.

Sir John Poley of Wormegay and his frog that would a-wooing go.

In the 50th volume (4th series Volume II, Page 91) some mention is made of "bulleymung" which, it will be recalled, Mathena Blomefield used as the title for one of her little stories (see the last *Guide to Reading, No 4*).

The mention in *Notes and Queries* arose during a discussion on the meaning and feeding of "soiled horses." There, a correspondent gave the following quotation from Topsell's *Four-footed Beasts* of 1607, taken from Halliwell's Dictionary of Archaic and Provincial Words:

"In the springtime give your young horses bullimung for many daies together, for that will not only make them fat but also purge their bellies; for this purgation is most necessary for horses, which is called soyling, and ought to continue 10 daies together without any other meat...."

To this, the editor adds a definition of 'bullimung' taken from Tusser's *Husbandry* — 'a mixture of oats, peas and vetches.'

Now this is at variance with Mathena Blomefield's account. In her *Bulleymung Pit* (P.39) she tells us that bulleymung was buckwheat and that when a drove of pigs were let into a newly-cut field, they feasted on the corn which had fallen and were all found in a drunken stupor. In *Bow-Net and Water Lilies*, she returned to the subject (P.91). Still maintaining the bulleymung was buckwheat she quoted from an old farmer's dictionary:

'Never give buckwheat to horses, it fills them with bad humours, yet it is an excellent means of quickly and economically fattening turkeys and all kinds of poultry. Unless given to pigs in very small quantities with much other grain, it will violently stimulate pigs, making them tumble, squeak, climb up walls, roll in the mud, and otherwise behave as if they were intoxicated.'

So there you have it. Is bulleymung a mixture of oats, peas and vetches which you give to horses to fatten and purge them? Or is it buckwheat which should never be given to horses? Perhaps one of our farming readers can tell us?

Skuledays are gorn....

...and The Boy Colin git a job

Last toime I writ yew lot a bit 'bowt when I wuz dewin' moi skulin' at Swaffham. Well, bor, loike all things, that hatta cum tew an end.

Durin' the arly part of '47 blast din't that snow. I wuz on moi last yare and we wuz gittin' ready ter sit the Cairmbridge Skule Cerstificate. Them teachers wanted us ter be at our best fer that but that ruddy ow white stuff bunged evra where up and we coon't get ter skule. We yewsta git ter Swaffham by trearn but fer six weeks tha' ow loine wuz blocked and th'ow trearns coon't git threw.

A'mornin's we'd trudge orf down tew the stearshun ony ter hare the news that there wunt northin' gorn threw. Blast we sune shot orf hoom, dropped our skule cairses and clared orf up the Netterd ter slide on th'ow pit. Sum on em hed skearts and yewsta play ice hockey. 'Cors all this wuz a gorn on we wuz missin' our lessons and when we started agin arter that thowed we hatta dew a bit a' catchin' up. All them teachers thowt we'd nun on us pass tha exam, but we showed 'em, bor, and moost on us cum threw with flying colours.

I allus wanted ter be a skulemaster but moi parents say ter me, "Where the heck dew yew think we're gorn ter git the money to send yew ter college? That don't grow on trees, yew know." So I hatta go out and git a job.

Howsumever, I coon't leave skule till I was 16, so fer the last tarm at skule the teachers wun't tew bothered 'bout teachin' me northin' else and I spent moost a the toime tearkin' the young boys up the sports ground and a'refereein' thare football gearmes. Christmas cum and I wuz orf!

I got a job in the orfice at tha local farniture factory a'dewin' on the Bought Ledger books. Mind yew, I din't git on tew well with the company seccatry and arter a yare he got shot a'me and I got a transfer ter the orfice at the other enda' the factory, near all the sanding machines. So within a yare I'd gorn from chalk dust ter sawdust! That wuz a borin' ow job a'fillin' in toime sheets an' I cud allus get 'em dun by dinnertime, then hatta pretend I wuz busy fer the resta tha day. That cum tew an end when I gotta letter from tha King, well wunna his men , 'bout puttin' on a yewniform. That toime a'day wuz when us boys a' 18 hatta dew thare National Sarvice. That wud square a lot a' them young hellions up now if they hatta dew it. I hatta go up ter Colegeart in Norrich fer a medical. They wanted ter count ma bits and pieces an' see if I wuz fit enow fer it. Well, I'd allus ett ma porridge a'mornin's and done plenty a' sport, so they reckon I'd dew.

Moind yew, I had a helluva job fillin' the jug. Ent that amazing how yew allus want a pee when thas awkward but when they want yew tew yew carn't. They give me a test ter see if I cud tell tha difference 'tween a dot and aan' a dash and decided that I cud be a wireless opereartor a dewin' morse code and told me ter go hoom and wairt fer them ter call me in a few weeks.

I'll tell yer next toime how things tarned out.

Till then dew yew all hev a good Christmas wi' yar elderberry woine.

Yars,

The Boy Colin.

PS: Why is it when you open a tin a' evaporearted milk thas still thare?

A winter ramble

December 14, 1967 Norfolk: The ploughland was pink and snow-dappled; a pheasant, warming to the sunrise, stood in the hedge-bottom, burnished iridescent, as it stretched one wing. I was dazzled by touches of rime and gossamer as I watched a magpie prancing in a golden mist. To the east lay a meadow, green but for edging cloud-shapes and fingers of snow still in shadow.

Skirting a lowland ditch brimming with blue water I put up a snipe from a patch of rushes and as it shrieked in curving flight I also heard the 'smee-oo' whistling of a bunch of wigeon hurrying from a nearby pool. I plunged into the reed-marshes nearer the river and found them brightly and rather delicately plated with ice spread in well-spaced layers where successive tidal floods had left their frozen tops stretched

By Ted Ellis*

between supporting reed-stalks. I followed a path through the reeds. Suddenly a dark cloud filled the whole valley with gloom and in the next five minutes the crystal of ice sheets lay smothered under a thick covering of hailstones.

Now the marsh about me seemed to be draped in ermine as it shone again under a blue sky. I waded through swirling water where otters had worn a track letting off a flood between two ancient alders; and where the waters ran, they lapped against vertical plates of ice, fretting and honeycombing the edges, revealing strange crystal patterns of crosses and chrysanthemum leaves. Again the ice-flaps hinged on reeds and twigs, creaked like the timbers of a yacht under strain.

As another squall approached I heard the singing wing-beats of a herd of swans and looked up to take my fill of winter's magic as the great birds sped on their majestic way, like angels of light fleeing from the gathering gloom.

*From *Ted Ellis's Countryside Reflections, 1982*, by kind permission of Phyllis Ellis.

***Snow in the Park*— by Suffolk artist Joe Crowfoot.** *Copyright : Joe Crowfoot*

CHRIS'MAS CAARDS

That seem a rum ole dew ter me
The way the years roll by; yer see
That might be on'y yisterday
As this here year begun.
An now tha's Chris'mas Eve once more;
We'a got ar Chrismas caards up, bor;
A-hangin' there they look right gay.
I'a read'em, evra one.
We'a got a lot on that there wall,
A few surprises like, an all;
Jus' see that caard from May's young man
Wha's up above the stove.
Laast year from Spain a caard he writ
An then we haard he'd done a flit;
Now this one come here from Japan —
These young'uns don't haalf move!
An that one wi' the robin on,
Agin the pitcher, tha's from Ron.
Tha's travelled tew, an all, I'd say
Yit din't taake long a-comin
Nigh haalfway round the warld by air —
A maasterpiece ter me that fare;
In fower day that come all that way;
I reckon tha's a rum'un!
Now see that littl'un over there;
Ar little gran'son brought that here.
He done that all hisself, he say.
He'a hed a rea' good try.
That don't seem vera long ago
Since he were born, an yit y'know
I reckon he'll be six come May...
Ah, time that don't haalf fly.
That caard what show the t'ree Wise Men,
That come from Martha an ole Ben;
We met ten year ago an more
At Yarmouth by the sea.
An them tew on the ind up there,

Timeless joy

They alus git here evra year;
Tew maates I hed right t'rew the war,
They keep in touch wi' me.
Jus' look at all them pitchers there.
They'a reached us, bor, from far an near,
Wi' bells, an holly, shepherds tew,
An more'n a few wi' baads.
There's some wi' snow and some wi' ice,
An people skaatin'. In't they nice?
They come from friends both old an' new,
An all wi' kindly waads.
Here be the poos'man; wha's he got?
A caard from Charlie, like as not.
He allus poost his laate; mind yew,
He dew owe us a letter.
We'a knowed him all ar lives, y'see.
How time dew fly! That fare ter me
At Chris'mas countin' years oon't dew —
Yew count yar friends —Tha's bett

JOHN KETT, Christmas, 19

Your letters

There int no mention of dint

From Chris Sexton,
Crowthorne,
Berkshire.

Dear Sar,

In his otherwise fairly comprehensive treatment of the verb "int"and its derivative "hint " *(Merry Mawkin summer/autumn edition),* David Ford does omit to mention "dint."

Further, I do not agree that the verb stays the same in the perfect tense. His example of "I int bin t'London" is not, in my view, correct Norfolk grammar. It would be rendered by one of my father's generation (now 88) as "I hent bin t'London." "Hent" is, in fact, the perfect tense of "int."

"I int gorn t'London," in the present tense, becomes "I hent bin t'London" in the perfect. As David observes, with "int," "hent" also does not change when conjugated. My experience of the use of "int," as mentioned by the author, is that it is more frequently pronounced "in" or "it," as in "I it a gor go" ("I am not going to go," to the uninitiated).

In my view, "dint" forms the simple past tense of the verb, as in "I dint go to London." "Hent" frequently changes to "hint" in the interrogative, as in "Hint yew bi' t'London?" or, in deepest Norfolk, "Hearnt yew bin t'London?"

Yars fearthfully,
Chris Sexton.

To The Boy Colin

From David Bunting,
Holkham,
Wells-next-the-Sea.

Dear Boy Colin,

I love yer luvly Norfolk Quis which cums round every time we git another newsletter. I dunt git a many rite as a shud.

Last time I unly managed to git 17 outa 30, which int good for an old fella who rekons he know his Norfolk. Blast I shud agot Dick Bagnall-Oakeley. I could see his fearce as clear as the missus, but could I remember his name! He used to come into Holkham Park looking at the bads, and looked in on us in the earstate arfice for permission to wander over the medows.

I sed I got 17 outa 30 last time. It shuda bin 18, cos I was kinder flummoxed by one of yer arnsers. I like a bita gossip: blast me I didn't know poor uld William Cowper had married Mary Unwin a few years afor he passed away! I loike his waks, he was a good old boy wen it came to ritin poortry. So I got out me booke on por uld Willum; he was a senstive fella, and had nasty tans, feelin 'wery depressed a times.

Wen por Mista Unwin passed on, our Willum lived along a har, not in stn, as we say today, but as a cumpanyun. They ended up at Aest Derum, down the rud from Faknum. She passed on fust, then poor uld Willum follud learter on. Thay a buth berid in Derum charch.

I hoop yer dunt mind, me bewty, a mentun a this to yer. Yer a clever bloke tu think up these questyuns. Praps next time I'll git a few moor rite.

Fare yare well uld partner,
David.

Sid Kipper's Norfolk capons

No 4 - Dumplings

People from Norfolk are called "Dumplings," just like people from Yorkshire are called "Puddings," and ones what come from Lancashire are "Hot Pots" — that is, at your own risk. But among ourselves it's a compliment. So I thought I'd share with all you FOND people a few dumpling things from relations of mine.

First off there's a bit from my old mother's best-seller, "Dot Kipper's Book of Handy Household Tips." It's her recipe for Norfolk Dumplings:

Take a generous measure of plain folk. Mix in some sugar and spice ,a pinch of salt and something to take the rise. Knock out any large lumps and surround with water. Stand in a corner and leave to prove for a thousand years.

Second off is a song from my uncle George, called "East Side Story," which go like this:

Now Norfolk have jackets and turkeys also,
For which we're renowned far and wide;
An Island, a Duke, and an HMS too;
And we also talk proper beside.
'Cause we're Norfolk Dumplings, we do different too;
Our Duke live in Sussex, but what that's to you?

When we have a do, then the grass is all wet.
A thud's one divided by three;
We stand in a coup, when we've something to get
And hare's where we happen to be.
'Cause we're Norfolk Dumplings, we do different here;
Abroad's what we sail on, but what do we care?

When them others say "boles," they mean bowls in fact;
And when they say "bowels," they mean bum.
So out in the shires where they talk strange like that,
A bowls match must be something rum!
'Cause we're Norfolk Dumplings, we do different too;
Our greens are uncrowned, and we do have a clue.

Now in Suffolk and Sweden, and such foreign parts,
They've their own ways of getting along.
Well we don't tell them how to do what they do,
We just point out they're doing it wrong.

In Gimingham, Trimingham, Knapton and Trunch,
In Northrepps and Southrepps and Cley,
We say what we like, and we like what we say,
And we hope you'll all go do likewise.
'Cause we're Norfolk Dumplings, we do different too;
I may be due to do more, but, do not, that'll do!

Third off is a point from me (and if I'm not my relation then I don't know who is. But I am, so I do). A dumpling is not a small dump, any more than a sapling is a small sap. A small concert however, may well be a concertina.

Anyhow, I'm now off to tour Cornwall and call the people there "Pasties." I'll let you know how it goes.

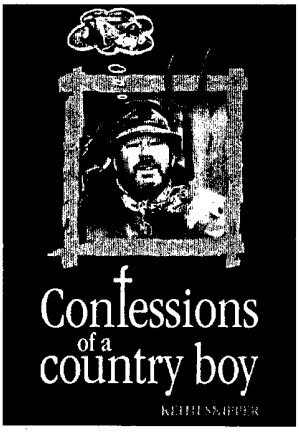
FORTHCOMING NORFOLK APPEARANCES OF SID KIPPER:

March 16 King of Hearts, Norwich — 'A Sense of Place' Literary Week
May 9 Cromer Pier — 'Folk on the Pier' Festival

Norfolk Bookshelf

Confessions of a good ol' Beeston boy

Our Skip when young



CONFESSIONS OF A COUNTRY BOY: By Keith Skipper. Published by Thorogood, in association with the Norfolk Journal, £8.99.

FOND's founder-chairman, author of some 20 previous books on Norfolk, dedicates this highly entertaining one "to the many who helped me into boyhood scrapes — and to the few who tried to get me out of them!"

That sets the scene for life in Beeston, near Dereham, seen through the life of young Skip, one of a family of 10 children, growing up in the heart of rural Norfolk in the austere post-war years.

Confessions of a Country Boy, we discover, depicts Keith in his richest vein: sharp and witty, occasionally disrespectful, always affectionate, the last person to take himself — or anyone else —seriously.

"Time may have embellished one or two memories, and the odd name has been changed to protect the guilty," he says, "but these rural ramblings can be taken as a reasonably fair and accurate record of my formative years in the middle of Norfolk....

"Distance may lend enchantment, but my country childhood has inspired much more than rampant nostalgia. I relish every chance to extol the virtues of a golden age when life was quieter, slower, simpler...."

18 years from a Norfolk golden age

Confessions of a Country Boy **spans the first 18 years of Keith's life from his birth in 1944 and is divided into 12 monthly chapters, from January to December.**

Logical, of course, because the pace of life for an agricultural family was indeed decided by the seasons.

Typical of Skip, the 12 chapters all have alliterative titles:

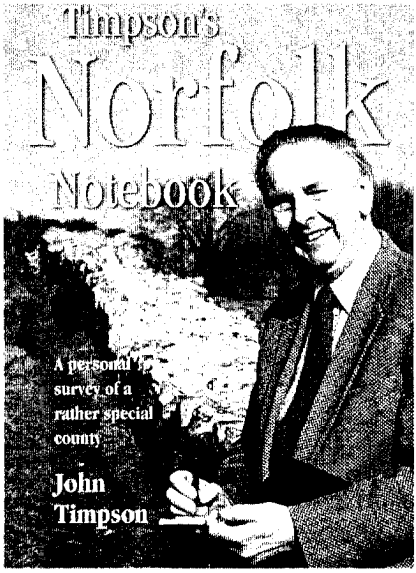
January Japes,
February Frolics,
March Milestones,
April Adventures,
May Musings,
June Junkets,
July Jaunts,
August Antics,
September Saunters,
October Oddities,
November Notions,
December Delights.

It says it all!

RHL

The acute eye and witty pen of John Timpson

Timpson's Norfolk Notebook. By John Timpson. Acorn Publishing, Bury St Edmunds, £9.95.



On Page 7 of this Merry Mawkin, John Timpson describes how he and his wife first moved to Norfolk 51 years ago, when he joined the EDP and Dereham and Fakenham Times at Dereham.

After his distinguished career in broadcasting, John and Pat moved back to mid-Norfolk some 20 years ago, since when his output of books, many of them about this county, has been prolific.

I knew John in the 1950s when I was with a rival paper, the Norfolk Chronicle at Fakenham. We met at various functions we covered, also when he kindly gave me lifts in his Ford Popular to Docking to report the rural district council meetings. Later, we were EDP colleagues before he left for London and the BBC.

So it is a pleasure to read the writings not only of someone I worked with over 50 years ago and whose career I have always followed with interest and admiration, but also of a valued member of FOND.

In *Timpson's Norfolk Notebook*, John brings an acute eye and a witty pen to every sketch, but above all a deep-seated knowledge of the county's history.

Says John: "In this Norfolk Notebook, to borrow a description of my other books, I have tried to look beyond the obvious for the unusual, the unlikely and the definitely odd.

"In the first chapter, for instance, on the Norfolk countryside, I could hardly ignore all those medieval churches, but I have looked at some of the surprises they contain rather than the grandeur of their architecture. No Norfolk calendar would be complete without a windmill, but I am just as taken with Norfolk's dovecotes and the 17th century Norfolk squire who wrote a manual on how to build them. And while we are used to seeing golden corn and bright yellow rape, how about those fields of blue lavender at Heacham and the rather less fragrant coprolite they used to gather at West Dereham — better known as dinosaur's dung!

"There is one other facet of life in this very special county which is not only unique but quite literally inimitable. I rarely attempt it — and never in the presence of a Norfolkman! It is risky for an incomer even to try reproducing it on paper, but no Norfolk notebook would be complete without at least a modest sample of the Norfolk dialect which, in spite of progress, has lived on through the centuries and I hope will continue to do so.

"May I say, with apologies to all my Norfolk-born friends:

"Fare y'well t'gether...."

Dew yew keep a'trosh'n, John!

Robin Limmer

Salvaged memory of a West Norfolk boyhood

By Rupert Sewell

Sid Kipper's piece on Londoners brought back a flood of memories. In 1940, aged 15, my first job was working on the salvage lorry for Lynn RDC. Yes, we knew all about recycling! Villages had collection points where everyone put their tins, bottles, bones — often crawling with maggots — old clothes, and paper.

Marshall Littleproud, who entertained me with tales of driving a tank in WWI, and I, were based in a barn at the bottom of Lime Kiln Lane, Gayton, almost hidden by mountains of tins. We bailed paper, flattened tins and made up loads to take to the Marine Store dealer.

Between times, we took furniture to empty properties where evacuees could be accommodated. "Blarst, but we thort them down Back Street was rum'ns." Sid's article catches the locals' mood so well.

Back Street runs along the southern edge of Gayton. I lived with my aunt and uncle in Ebenezer Cottages, which overlook the village and allotments on the north side. One day, watching Uncle Horrie digging, from over the hedge, along came Denny from the Workhouse. A dear old man, with a deep tan, wearing a shabby raincoat. "Howya' gettin' on, Denny?" I asked, knowing full well his reply: "Fair to middlin', fair to middlin'." He peered over the hedge. "What are ya doin' there, Horrie?" "Two things at once, Denny." "Oh. What's that then, Horrie?" "Diggin' this here patch, and mindin' my own business!."

Denny carried an old shopping bag everywhere. One day, on his way to the Rampant Horse, he stopped by the barn. While he chatted to Marshall, I crept up behind, and with a piece of wire, hooked a pair of old pink bloomers on to his bag. He dragged those bloomers along the road and into the pub before he found out. Denny was not a happy man!

Uncle Horrie worked as an engineer for Savage's of Lynn. Didn't say a lot; tough. Biked to work every day until he retired. But then, most of us did. A kind man, though. Took me in when I needed a home. It was at the time of the full moons that he caused my Auntie Emma and me some anxiety. On those nights he'd not get back until after closing time, and usually in an aggressive mood. Even so, looking out of the bedroom window, when there was a full moon, enhanced by the fact that the village was blacked out, was like looking at fairyland. Magical!

And thinking of this reminds me of a day when my pal Bill said: "I saw your Uncle Horrie last night, on my way back from Lynn, bending down in the middle of the road outside the Sand Boy. I asked him what he was doing. He said: 'I'm trying to roll up this here white ribbon so I can take it home'." I know. You've heard 'em before. But in those days everything was fresh and new to me, like clear Norfolk mornings in winter when the lorry's radiator had to be refilled (no anti-freeze then) and spilt water froze as it hit the ground.

Norfolk voices echo down the years. "Dew you come in, dew you'll get wrong." "She's a rum little mawther!" And many more such expressions which are, for me, constant reminders of hard but happy times.

Rupert Sewell, a member of FOND, lives at Horndean, near Waterlooville in Hampshire. His grandfather farmed at Flitcham Abbey farm.

fo

Song of Norfolk

God drew a map of England
And planted hill and wood.
He looked on stream and headland,
And saw that it was good.
Pushed far into a corner,
He left a fair domain,
Heath, down, fen and broadland,
Rich pasturage and grain.

It's on the road to nowhere,
Travellers pass it by.
Nobody comes to Norfolk
Without a reason why.
Nobody sings of Norfolk,
Though many bards there be
To honour glorious Devon,
Or Sussex-by-the-Sea.

When God made Norfolk County
He said they'd love her well,
Who, patient in their wooing,
Surrendered to her spell.
Slowly she charms — how slowly,
But once her spell is cast,
By Norfolk on her lovers,
She holds them to the last.

Norfolk's a stately lady,
She'll hold aloof for years.
"Furriners" she despises-
She's scornful of the "Sheers."
But they'll not find her fickle,
Who once her true love win,
From Brancaster to Thetford,
From Caister to King's Lynn.

We're slow of speech in Norfolk,
(Perhaps a thought too slow),
And only when we're cornered
We'll answer "yes" or "no."
Our Fathers taught us caution,
They learned with moil and pain,
That every specious stranger
Might be a reiving Dane.

The sturdy Norfolk yeomen,
To guard their rights are set,
As well befits the children
Of men who followed Kett.
But Norfolk men are loyal,
Without deceit or sham —
Ask if you think it doubtful,
The Squire of Sandringham!

When God made Norfolk County,
He showed His perfect art,
Within her proud fair body
He hid a golden heart.
So, come and visit Norfolk,
Bide till her spell is cast,
Then, once you've learnt to love her,
You'll love her to the last.

Rupert Sewell sent this poem to The Merry Mawkin. He received it from an old friend many years ago. He writes: "I'm pretty certain it was 'Anon.' Reference to the 'Squire of Sandringham' gives a hint, though which reign, is open to speculation."

BRIAN ALDRICH served as a second lieutenant in the Royal Norfolk Regiment in Cyprus in the 1950s.
Born in Norwich, he lived at Yarmouth until he was 21. During the war he attended Sir John Leman School, Beccles, and then Yarmouth Grammar School. He trained as an architect, studying at Norwich School of Art and Nottingham School of Architecture and became a partner in a large Midlands-based practice, retiring in 1996. He has lived on the northern fringe of the Cotswolds for 40 years and, he says, still misses the North Norfolk coast.
A frequent visitor to "God's county of Norfolk," he is a watercolour artist specialising in East Anglian scenes.
Here, Brian reminisces....

If that rain or if that snow, keep a'goin'

I offer below some authentic stories, beginning with a plaque which I was asked to design for the new Norfolk House in Exchange Street, Norwich, for its opening in the early '50s.

If that rain or if that snow — keep a'goin',
If that hail or if that blow — keep a'goin',
That int no good t'sit an' whine
Cause a fish in't on yar line.
Bait yar 'ook an' keep a'tryin'.
Keep a'goin'.

In my early professional training, when I was articled to Mr Alec Wright, I was asked to design a new house for a client at Weybread, near Harleston.
One day the site foreman telephoned me:
"Is that Mr Brian?" — Yes — "Well Oi dunno what to do. My brickie hev built the walls as you shew and he's now up t'the farst floor but can't git out." — Why? — "Wel yew ain't shown no door on the plans"!..... I had to pay for the demolition and apologise.

Service with the Royal Norfolk Regiment threw up some interesting comments from the men, 90 per cent of whom were drawn from the county.
Initially, as a raw recruit, I had to help those who could not read or write with letters from loved ones, mostly along the lines of miss-spelt but very appropriate phrases like *"I do miss that old thing in bed at noight" and "Dew yew meark sure yew behave yarself in the big city (Norwich) at noight."*

We were posted to Cyprus and this was both a shock and revelation to many.
Asked how he felt about living under canvas outside Kyrenia, one soldier said: "Thars a site warmer here than what it was in Cromer, Sar."

Another soldier who had worked for the LNER and thence British Railways, had lived at Drove Crossing, Thetford Heath, and his job was to open and close the crossing gates to let the cattle through twice a day. He was married and had two young boys when he joined up.
He became a member of my platoon in Cyprus and one morning after we had been on the island two months, he came to me in some state, saying: "Dew yew remember a'fore we cum to Cyprus we hid a week's embrocation leave? (I quickly corrected him to *embarkation* leave) — Yes — **"Well, Oi hid a letta from moi missus what say that arter we hid two or three luv'ly noights in bed, she felt diff'rent..." — Yes, and — "Well, she went t'the dockta, and that hive teerken agin and w'got another little'un on the way."**

South of the border down Waveney way

Snow on the Norfolk Bank **— Beccles, seen from Gillingham marshes by Suffolk artist Joe Crowfoot.**

Copyright: Joe Crowfoot

Local dialect book wins UK prize

A year ago, The Merry Mawkin crossed the border into Suffolk to review a fascinating booklet on local dialect, **Beccles Talk 2001: A Speech Odyssey,** written by Anne Frith, Dorothy Smith and Anne Bauers.

It traced the history of words and phrases peculiar to Beccles, South Norfolk and North Suffolk. It was entered into a national competition and has beaten hundreds of other entrants to win first prize, and the work has been featured on TV's History Channel.

The booklet was compiled to help record and preserve dialect words and phrases used in and around the area for future generations.

What started as a millennium project has won "Our History, My Heritage," organised by the History Channel in association with English Heritage.

Anne Frith said the project involved speaking to people from the town and children from Beccles Middle School and St Benet's Primary School.

Many dialect words started as family sayings or from rural occupations. "The result of our study is what we feared, which is that dialect is dying out fast," she said.

"First the coming of the railways was blamed for the disappearance of dialect in the latter half of the 19th century, then universal education. Now I suggest it is television and general mobility.

"Dialect survives among local people talking to friends, small children and dogs.

"But when talking to outsiders, or indeed most teenagers, local people politely modify their language so they may be understood."

Ken Glen, English Heritage education manager, said the booklet was set to become a valuable source of local reference for future generations.

By involving so many members of the community, including children, they had inspired others to think the same way.

The group planned to give its £600 prize to Beccles and District Museum.

NORFOLK QUIZ

Compiled by The Boy Colin — Answers on Page 27

Hare yew cum agin, tergether, anuther skull-scratcher:

1 Which Norfolk railway station made an appearance in the film The Go Between?
2 Where is the tallest windmill in Britain?
3 Where do Shannocks come from?
4 Which Norfolk holiday resort was originally named Shipden?
5 Michael Caine, the film star, was evacuated to Norfolk at the age of seven. To which village?
6 Who was the first member of the Royal Family to die at Sandringham?
7 What commodity known as "poor man's asparagus" is found on North Norfolk salt marshes?
8 Who wrote Revelations of Divine Love in a cell in Norwich?
9 Which of Henry VIII's wives is said to haunt her family's Norfolk home?
10 Which Eastern Daily Press correspondent wrote under the name of Jonathan Mardle?
11 What did Fred Bultitude do on Yarmouth beach?
12 Which Norwich street once had 26 pubs?
13 Who wrote The Day of the Jackal and worked for the Eastern Daily Press at King's Lynn?
14 Which is the only town in Norfolk to face west?
15 Which street in Norwich was known as Blood and Guts Street?
16 Where did Sir Christopher Cockerell test his first Hovercraft?
17 What did Will Kemp do between London and Norwich to win a bet?
18 Where can the village sign of a cat sitting on a barrel be found?
19 Where was Norwich City's first football ground?
20 Where did Horatio Nelson learn to sail?
21 Which ex-Eastern Daily Press correspondent was held for two years by the Chinese authorities?
22 A stone over the church porch at Colney records the death of John Foxe. How did he die?
23 What is the name of the Norwich public house usually referred to as The Murderers' Arms?
24 Where is an annual Epiphany ceremony held when a cross is thrown into the sea?
25 What did May Saridge bring from Ware, Hertfordshire, to Wells in 1970?

Ringing endorsement

The headmaster of a certain school in Norfolk, noted for his determination to eradicate the Norfolk dialect from his pupils' speech, observed one afternoon that the tea bell was late in being sounded.
He therefore gave the order: "Have that bell rung!"
One of the boys said: "No, that hin't, not yet, that hin't."
(From *Broad Norfolk — Written by Readers of the EDP*, 1949).

NORFOLK WORDSEARCH

Compiled by Brenda Bizzell

All these villages and towns are in North Norfolk

N	O	R	T	H	W	A	L	S	H	A	M	R	Y	T
N	V	K	B	O	B	C	R	M	C	R	O	M	E	R
Y	E	L	C	L	R	H	O	L	T	U	Y	F	K	U
A	R	W	S	T	I	S	R	S	G	T	E	Y	F	N
G	S	G	P	U	S	O	E	H	E	L	N	O	F	C
S	T	R	N	L	T	N	T	E	B	F	R	X	I	H
P	R	E	O	J	O	O	M	R	L	N	U	P	T	R
P	A	S	T	O	N	S	I	I	T	A	O	Y	S	U
E	N	H	N	W	Y	G	B	N	A	C	B	D	F	V
R	D	A	U	F	G	O	R	G	N	L	Y	C	E	C
H	T	M	G	T	S	P	E	H	A	T	E	T	R	E
T	S	I	D	E	S	T	R	A	N	D	W	O	B	N
U	M	A	H	N	Y	A	R	M	L	L	M	E	E	W
O	L	S	T	R	S	W	A	F	I	E	L	D	O	N
S	A	L	T	H	O	U	S	E	R	P	R	I	D	S

Alby
Bale
Briston
Cley
Cromer
Cromer
Felbrigg
Gresham
Gunton
Holt
Holt
North Walsham
Overstrand
Paston
Raynham
Roughton
Salthouse
Sheringham
Sidestrand
Southrepps
Stiffkey
Swafield
Trunch
Weybourne

BRENDA SAYS: *Just to be a nuisance, Cromer and Holt are there twice!*

Norfolk Squit - by the Boy Humbert*

The Missus she say tew me the uther daye: "Humbert, wot are yew a'doin' this hare weekend?" "Well," I saye, "the car need a wash an' I wanta sort my shud ouwt. Then I though' I'd set in the gardun fer a spell, with a can a beer an' read the pearper."

The Missus near fell ouver, har ow fearce wus like thunder an' har eyes cum owt like orgun stops. "Humbert," she roared, "yew hin't got time tew set arowend, thas high time yew titivated the spare rume,the emulsion is in the cupbud. Cum on, stir yar stumps, dew yew on't git no dinner."

With tha' I skidadled pre'y smartly. When the missus git har self in'er mood she in't wurth knowin'. Sew I set tew. Fust I shuved the furniture in'er the uther rume an then rowelled the carput up. I hed sum owd clorths tew cover the floor up, then I go' a brush an' the emulsion an' mearde a start.

Once I'd go' started tha' wurn tew bad. The missus brough' me a cupa' tea ar'er a couple a'hours, sew I knew I wus in har good books agin.

When I'd dun, tha' din' halve look suffun smart, sew I give the missis a showt. She cum skuttlin' upstairs. "Humbert," she saye, "yewe hin't half mearde a rare gud job a tha'. In fact," she saye, turnin' tew me with a smirk on har fearce, "yar such an expert now, yew cun titivate the uther bedrume next weekend." Cord blarst, I though', I can't win no how. Fare thee well.

**The Boy Humbert articles appear in the Harleston Grapevine community magazine.*

WHAT IS A NORFOLK DIALECT WORD?

FROM PAGE 2

(from Old English *dysig 'foolish'*), and *brawtch* 'open' is simply our way of saying *broach.*

And sometimes words we think of as being local are not local at all: *squit,* meaning nonsense, may not be known to Londoners, but it is known and used in the dialect of Herefordshire, which is about as far away from Norfolk as you can get and still be in England. And again there are historical problems — our local dialect word *harnser* 'heron' was a word that was formerly known all over the country in the form *heronshaw* 'young heron.'

In the end, though, I'm sure we can agree that if we feel that a word is our own, then it is a Norfolk word.

Patience at Weeting FOND-dew

Brancaster-born actress Patience Tomlinson put Victorian novelist Mary Mann in the spotlight at the September FOND-dew in Weeting Village Hall. Patience, whose mother lives at Stanhoe, kept her audience engrossed with cameos from the Norfolk writer's letters and books, underlining a deep affection for the work in general and local dialect in particular.

A member of FOND, Patience, who lives and works in London, made an impressive mark two years ago when she read some of Mary Mann's gruelling tales of Victorian Norfolk on BBC Radio 4. After the Weeting dew, she said: "It was a lovely homecoming, and I was so pleased to have a chance to try out my ideas for a one-woman show in front of an appreciative and encouraging audience." She was also moved to praise the telling "serenade" from FOND stalwart Bruther Will on his harmonica!

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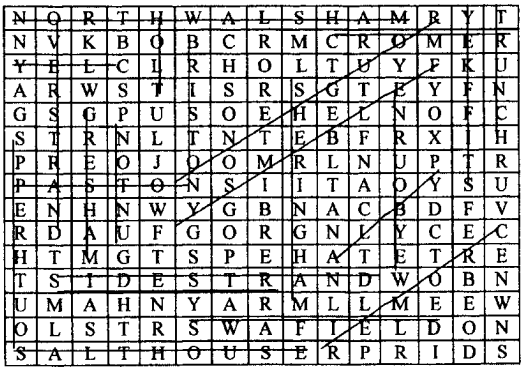
***Letters/articles for publication in The Merry Mawkin are always welcome**

Norfolk quiz —The answers

1 Thorpe Station. **2** Sutton. **3** Sheringham. **4** Cromer. **5** North Runcton. **6** Prince John (son of Queen Alexandra). **7** Samphire. **8** Julian of Norwich. **9** Anne Boleyn. **10** Eric Fowler. **11** He built sandcastles and sand models. **12** King Street. **13** Frederick Forsyth. **14** Hunstanton. **15** Ber Street. **16** Oulton Broad. **17** Morris dancing. **18** Old Catton. **19** Newmarket Road. **20** Barton Broad. **21** Anthony Grey. **22** He was trampled to death by horses pulling a wagon. **23** The Gardener's Arms. **24** Great Yarmouth. **25** Her home, which she transferred brick by brick.

NORFOLK WORDSEARCH — THE SOLUTION



FOND-dews

North Elmham Memorial Hall will be the setting again for FOND's festive fling, our **annual panto.** The date: **Sunday, January 5.** The time: **2pm.** The title? The Boy Jimma says: "That could be Mother Tarky, or that could be Bernie and the Bewtiful Beanstalk."

Other dates for your diary:

FOND-dew, Dersingham Church Hall, Sunday, March 9, 2pm.

East Anglian Film Archive show, presented by Stewart Orr, Denton Village Hall, Thursday, April 10, 7 for 7.30pm.

Dialect Evening, Cromer Parish Hall, Tuesday, April 29, 7.30pm.

FOND-dew, Hoveton Community Centre, Sunday, June 15, 2pm.

Posh FOND-dew, Wolterton Hall, Friday, July 11. *(Further details in the spring edition of The Merry Mawkin).*

Fond-dew, Ditchingham Village Hall, Sunday, September 14, 2pm.

Don't fergit yar subscriptions, tergether!

If by any chance you are one of the few members of FOND who have not yet renewed your annual subscription for the next 12 months, this is a little reminder:— a little reminder.

Please note that following October's AGM, we have a new membership secretary and address, Shelagh Limmer succeeding Brenda Bizzell.

Currently, if you all renew your subscriptions, we have 290 members, but it is very encouraging to find that numbers are ever on the increase, particularly as The Merry Mawkin continues to make contact with Norfolk exiles worldwide.

If you have Norfolk relatives or friends abroad, why not get them to drop a line to the Mawkin? Perhaps a letter for our correspondence column, or maybe even an article? We look forward to hearing from you, wherever in the world you are!

FRIENDS OF NORFOLK DIALECT

Membership application

I/we wish to join Friends of Norfolk Dialect (FOND) and enclose the membership fee of (*delete as necessary*):

£5 (single member) **£20 (educational establishment)**

£8 (family membership) **£50 (commercial company)**

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms.....Surname and initials.....

Address.....

.....

Postcode.....

Telephone.....

Please send to: **Shelagh Limmer, Mill House, Walpole Close, Broome, Bungay, Suffolk, NR35 2RP. Cheques made out to FOND, please.**