£1. Free to FOND members

Winter 2005 No 20

The Merry Mawkin

Newsletter of Friends of Norfolk Dialect

The Chairman Remembers

A Year of Highs and Steady Progress

My last year as Chairman has been one to remember.

The first highlight was introducing former County Lord Lieutenant, Sir Timothy Colman as our guest speaker at last year's AGM. His was an extremely polished performance with some very amusing recollections of family life around the breakfast table. Sir Timothy is one of our Vice Presidents and we value his membership and continuing interest in our work.

Secretary Tony Clarke's reputation as a compiler of Norfolk dialect continued with his production of our annual pantomime, ably assisted by wife Pat in her role as Wardrobe Mistress. This time it was the unfortunate Peter Pan who underwent the Clarke treatment, ably assisted by members of FOND's Executive Committee and volunteers from the audience. Again, we had a capacity audience at North Elmham Village Hall and perhaps the essence of this annual extravaganza was summed up by one lady who echoed a similar comment a year earlier — "So enjoyable, just what village entertainment was like before we had the box!" All proceeds from the pantomime, £453, were donated to the EDP/UNICEF Tsunami Disaster Appeal.

In the New Year the BBC introduced their *Voices* project to promote local accents and dialects and herald the end of the traditional "Mummerset" so beloved by radio and television producers when faced with the challenge of reproducing local speech. This is something that FOND has been striving for ever since its inception in the Autumn of 1991. There are signs of some progress, with requests being received from producers for advice on our dialect, but there is still a long way to go. The Corporation's project included setting up local discussion groups and it is rewarding to record that FOND's input, through the work of Tony Clarke, Jean Eaglen, Vera Youngman, Colin Burleigh and Bob Lister has been acknowledged in Simon Elmes' book, *Talking for Britain — a Journey through the nation's dialects*, reviewed on page 22.

In February Princess Michael of Kent, in an interview with a German newspaper let slip that Queen Elizabeth enjoys slipping into Norfolk dialect during family gatherings. It seemed too good an opportunity to miss, so I wrote to HM enclosing a copy of Keith Skipper's book *Larn yourself Norfolk* and informing her she was a "Good Ow Gal"— the ultimate Norfolk compliment! The result was a very kind letter from a Lady in Waiting telling me Her Majesty was looking forward to reading the book and thanking me for my kind sentiments. Whether this played any part in the subsequent invitation to my wife and self to attend a Garden Party at Buckingham Palace I do not know, but it was a most enjoyable occasion marred only by the distant sounds of sirens as ambulances and police cars raced toward the City to deal with a suspected terrorist attack. Friends interpretation that the invitation was simply the first step on my way to the Tower proved entirely false! — so far!!

In March our Secretary, Tony Clarke, was invited down to the National Maritime Museum to read a selection of original letters written by Nelson to ascertain whether he wrote as he spoke, or vice versa. Tony's conclusion was that Nelson certainly knew his native dialect, this being clear in sentence construction and phraseology. Nelson used no punctuation and only used capital letters for words he wished to emphasise.

Our joint project with the Children's Services Department of the Norfolk County Education Service to introduce an understanding and appreciation of Norfolk dialect into schools across the county, and its relationship to the Standard English taught today, received a boost when we were told we had been successful in obtaining a grant of £24,600 from the Local Heritage Initiative body. Ten schools have been identified and signed up to participate in the project and this partnership will start in January next year and should be interesting, productive and entertaining for all those taking part. Our thanks are due to Committee member Norman Hart for all the hard work he has put in achieving this positive result. Our President, Professor Peter Trudgill, a world renowned expert in linguistics and dialect will be intimately involved in the programme.

One of the pleasures of any Chairman is to acknowledge the help and support he/she has enjoyed over the past twelve months. To me this is not just a formality but an expression of pride in what we have achieved and which would not have been possible without the wholehearted support from every member of our Executive Committee, plus Pauline Dodd, our Email Co-ordinator, Anne Doggett, our archivist and Stewart Orr our IT Consultant who has guided us through the intricacies of choosing the right recording equipment, producing discs and providing the level of service we enjoy from all our professional colleagues.

Thank you all.

Peter Brooks

The Boy Colin's Quiz

1. Which village is now the home of Norfolk County Cricket Club?
2. How many stations are there on the Bittern Line between Sheringham and Norwich?
3. What is a pightle?
4. What was the cause of about 7,000 people losing their lives in Great Yarmouth in the middle of the 14th century?
5. Which four Norwich City players won the Barry Butler "Player of the Year" Trophy twice?
6. When was Norwich granted city status?
7. How did Tiny Little raise £50,000 for charity?
8. Where is Norfolk's oldest Primary School?
9. Which Dereham Coaching Inn was demolished in 1962 to make room for Woolworth?
10. Which Norwich School did cricketer Bill Edrich attend?

(answers on page 14)

Ghosties and Ghoulies

We may speak about the "spirit" of Christmas but at this time of the year there are plenty of other spirits abroad. The following are just a few.

ACLE:

The bridge is haunted by a man who revenged the death of his sister by killing her murderer — her husband. He slit his throat, but a year later *his* was slit by a ghostly skeleton. Some say that every year, on 7th April, fresh blood appears on the bridge!

AYLMERTON:

The remains of a prehistoric settlement here is known as the "Shrieking Pits" and haunted by a white lady who is seen crying as if her heart would break.

BINHAM:

An alleged underground passage leading from Binham Priory to Walsingham is haunted by a Black Monk.

BLICKLING HALL:

Haunted by Anne Boleyn with her severed head in her lap, in a ghostly carriage pulled by headless horses and driven by headless coachmen.

CASTLE RISING CASTLE:

Haunted by Queen Isabella who shrieks with maniacal laughter.

COLTISHALL:

Just one of many sites where the legendary 'Black Shuck' has been seen. The North Norfolk area is particularly prone to such sightings.

HICKLING BROAD:

Said to be haunted on freezing cold nights by a phantom skater.

NORWICH:

As befits our capital city there have been several reported ghostly sightings.

The Adam and Eve Pub is reputed haunted by the ghost of Lord Sheffield who was taken to die at the inn. His ghost is affectionately known as 'Sam'.

The Castle is the supposed haunt of a floating head and the wraith of a lady in black

Victorian dress. (Or have the recent redevelopment works scared her off?)

The Maddermarket is said to be haunted by a black-robed priest who returns to celebrate mass.

No.19 Magdalen Street is said to be haunted by the ghost of a woman who was murdered in a bedroom. The ghost caused considerable trouble in the 1970s when a typewriter operated itself.

RAYNHAM HALL:

A famous photograph was taken here, which reputedly showed a ghost in a brown dress with eyeless sockets, standing on a staircase.

SANDRINGHAM HOUSE:

The Royal Family is said to be haunted by a ghost who is particularly active on Christmas Eve. when footsteps are heard and things mysteriously move.

Acle

Missus lorst har voice – a dream cum true!

October, 1996

Peace on earth an' goodwill to all men. Tha's suffin' we hear at Christmas time. Well Christmas a cum arly fer me this year. In fact Um on cloud nine.

Tha' ent nothin' ter larf about realla, but tha's all ter dew wi'the missus. A few dairs ago she hed a sore thrut. She reckon she got it wen they combined the fild o' barley, wirral the muck an' dust a-flyin' about rite near our front door. I told har tha' wern't nothin' ter dew wirrat, but hold yew hard, I got a sore thrut anall. She wus suffin' pleased I got it as well as har. She say: "Now yew know how Um a-sufferin'."

So there we were dosin' ourselves wi' boiled onions, honey an' lemon. I warn't as bad as har, an'arter a time the missus lorst har voice. Sum o' yew may say, "Poor ole Norah", but as far as Um concarned tha' wus suffin' I thort ud never happen. Ter hev har not bein' airble ter answer back wus a dream cum true. Tha' did mean I hatter keep at hum ter look arter har in cairse someone cum ter the door, or ter answer the phone. I arn't orfen there durin' the day, so wen the phone rang an I answered it, tha' just went ded.

She say (as best she could): "Who wus tha'?" I say: "They just put their phone down." So wot go on here wen Um away I leave ter yew ter wark out fer yarselves.

Cum day two she wus no batter, in fact she couldn't mearke a noise at all but we got along orite wi' har a noddin' har hid an' pointin'. She say: "Um sorry I carn't tork" (in a wispa) "but wen I git batter I'll mearke up forrit." I thort, "I bet yew will anall."

Nexta day, I began ter fair sorra forra. I say: "I think this agone far enough. You orter go an' see the doctor an' let him hev a look at yar thrut." She say: "I think fer once yew could be rite."

So I rung up the sargery forra pointment an' orf we go ter Stallum. He giv har sum red pills an'said they'd clear up the problum. I say: "How long will it be afore she cen tork agin?" He say: "Not too long." I say: "Tha' mean I batter mearke the best onnit while it larst." He larft but the missus din' look too amused.

She hatter hev four o' them pills a dair, an' wen she got up on the forth dair she reckon she begun ter fair a lot batter. She say: "If tha's wot four pills ull do, wot ull I be like b'the time I're hed twen'y? I'll be jumpin' uva the moon." So tha'look as if she's a-gittin on the mend agin.

Um rather pleased she's a-feelin' batter, but I must admit th's bin nice bein' quiet for a few dairs.

Praps she could arrairnge ter lose har voice agin sum time - once a year ud be about rite, once a month ud be even better.

Reproduced from *I Din't Say Nothin' - - a'gin!* Norfolk Dialect Letters by Michael Brindid, by courtesy of Mrs Nora Brindid.

More Norfolk Expressions

Mrs Annie Nicholls from Potter Heigham has sent in some more Norfolk expressions she remembers from her childhood:

Hynder part afore	*Back to front*
He's a bottom fyer on the marsh	*Workmen would clear mud from the dykes on the marshes using a scoop like a spade, hence the phrase "Bottom Fyeing"*
Look you out when you cross over them liggers	*Be careful when you walk on the planks over the dyke*
Only a lickup for me	*A very small helping*
Collar hold	*Take hold*
Um orf to the shummakers	*I am going to the shoe makers*
A petty in the garden	*An old type outside toilet - (also known by the very descriptive words "Thunder Box". Ed.)*
That aren't Jannock	*Something that is not fair*
A bittera tissock	*A slight cough*

Can you recall unusual phrases from your childhood — or even later? If so we would love to hear from you. Drop a line to our Chairman — see back page for address.

Annie tells us that with a sister's birthday approaching she was looking for an unusual, but useful present. The answer — a subscription to join FOND. What a wonderful idea and one that could solve many a gift problem with Christmas just around the corner!

The game of Conkers

The Rev Edward Gepp includes the word conker, a horse chestnut, in his list of Essex words, although it is surely in more than local use. On investigation, I discovered that the word *conker* was a dialect word for a snail (it appears in several lists of East Anglian words, though the usual word used for a snail here is hodmedod); and that the game of conkers was originally played by pressing two snail shells together until one of them broke.

As it seems to have been played with live snails it is probably just as well that conkers came in in the nineteenth century played with horse chestnuts, and the word transferred itself to the fruit of the horse chestnut.

Reproduced from "The Mardler's Companion" by kind permission of the author, Robert Malster — still available from all good bookshops

Cor Blast, Give us a Brearke

Th'ow phone hev jist rung an' thass the Boy Peter (hon Chairman) a'ringin' up. "Hev yew got yar next bit ready fer tha Mawkin?" he say. "Cor blast," oi say, "woss it toime fer another bit?" Doan't tha toime wholly fly by when th'ow yare is a'drawin' on? So hare oi go agin.

Arter we'd got the gal Lisa wed oi rearked up a few shillins an say ter the missus "Cum yew on, gal, we betta spend a bitta toime tew arselves in the sunshine somewhere" an' hidded orf ter Majorca fer eleven days. She reckon them hotels doan't dew me a lotta good corse when oi see what they spread out ter eat oi get stuck in. Thass a small wonder we din't hatta pay excess baggage on the way home! Still, we hed a rare good toime. Oi'd took my pearper and pearnts alonga me an' found some people fewl enow to buy me a few beers fer some the daubs. Tha missus reckon oi doan't miss a trick.

We hen't bin home but a few days than oi hed a rare conflopshun. Toime she'd gorn out ter dew one of har little jobs oi went orf fer a walk. Thass when th'ow age thing took hold. Oi din't lift ma foot high enow ter git onta the karb an' down oi went, smack onta moi snout Cor din't th'ow claret flow. Arare nice young mawther offered ter tearke me home an' that ent loike me ter pass up a chance loike that. My nearbor took me ter see the narse at the local surgery, "dew yew git yarself up ter the Aand E up Norwich" she say an' the boyTom wuz good enow ter help me git thare. Arter they cleaned me up they stitched the nose up an'told me oi'd broke it. How many women pay good money ter hev thare noses altered? Oi got moine dun fer northing! As if thet wun't enow they found oi'd broke a bone in moi left wrist an' slapped half a ton a' plaster onnit. "Doan't yew cum any a' yar jokes about ken oi play a pianna arter this, corse we're heard orl a' them afore". Reckon they musta sin a few Press Gang Shows.

Oi'm a gittin on orlright but thass a helluva job a'gittin shart buttons an' shoe learces dun up but that cudda bin warse (another Boy Jimma joke!). Oi dassn't go out fer a meal corse oi'd look a right fewl hevvin' ter hev moi grub cut up fer me. Still yew're gotta laugh, hen't yew, dew if not yew't blah. Hope oi manage ter open orl moi Christmas presents orlright, an' talkin' a' Christmas thass toime fer moi message ter the neartion. Dew yew orl hev a good toime, hopefully wi' yar friends and family. Oi'm gorn ter sit in a comfy ow chair corse I're found out that in spite of what people say exercise ent good fer yer!

Fare yer well tergether

The Boy Colin

"Norfolk by Adoption" *Bryan Gunn*

Bryan Gunn was born in Thurso, Caithness, in 1963. He joined Aberdeen Football Club at the age of 14 and within two years had signed a two year contract to play in the reserves. At 18 he became goal-keeper in the first team. His manager was a gentleman by the name of Alex Ferguson. Peter Brooks has been to interview him.

Bryan came to Norfolk in 1986 as goal keeper for Norwich City Football Club.

So, what attracted him to come south of the border? Previous City goalkeeper Chris Woods had moved to Rangers and Bryan came to Norwich with a recommendation from Alex Ferguson. In 1998 he returned briefly to play for Hibernian, then following a broken leg returned to Norwich as the club's New Business Manager.

Bryan gives the impression of having settled naturally into Norfolk life and sees little difference between his native Scottish friends and family and the friends he has made here, although he does think those north of the border may be a little more "firey."

He enjoys shopping in back street speciality shops and supports family independent retailers such as Jarrolds. As far as the local accent is concerned Bryan finds a broad Norfolk one sometimes difficult to follow.

He commented that since his time at Norwich the city has changed with many more entertainment and night life opportunities but, overall, he believes life in the county offers a safe environment - "a nice place for children to grow up in." Along with his family he enjoys days at the coast, finds plenty of places to take the dogs for a walk and has a special affection for country pubs, the Wildebeest Arms at Stoke Holy Cross being a particular favourite. Bryan is also convinced we enjoy a better, calmer, climate than other regions within the UK. On the down side he thinks we have some of the worst roads in the country.

When I asked if he saw his family's future in our county Bryan replied they are very settled here and he looks forward to the future. His appointment as Sheriff of Norwich for 2002-2003 certainly confirmed his acceptance by the citizens of the city as was the granting of the Freedom of the City to Norwich City Football Club which was then celebrating its centenary.

His wife Susan has recently obtained a First Class Honours Degree in Fine Art

and as an exhibiting artist is on a short-list of thirty European artists for the prestigious Sovereign Art Prize with the winner being announced in January next year.

They have two children, Melissa aged 14 and Angus 9. When their daughter, Francessca, tragically died from leukaemia at the tender age of 2½ Bryan and Susan decided to remember her short life by setting up the Bryan Gunn Appeal to help in the search for a cure to this terrible disease. This has led to the establishment of Community Outreach Sisters whose aim is to offer assistance to those families who find difficulty in getting their children to hospital for treatment.

A Parent's Support Line, currently operating from the Norwich University and James Paget hospitals, will be going national early next year and be funded by the NHS.

For further information on the Bryan Gunn Appeal log on to www.charitygiving.co.uk ***and then link to*** bryangunnappeal

---

Viking or Bor?

By

H. J. Harcourt

Decorations by Burrell

STRANGERS who come into our midst are inclined to treat us either with benevolent condescension or with undisguised superciliousness — and then expect us to acclaim them as saviours and the harbingers of civilisation.

H. V. Morton, in his book, *In Search of England,* describes Norfolk as "the most suspicious county in England," and then goes on to give an explanation. He says the East Anglians were constantly invaded throughout ancient history, and bitter experience has taught them to divide humanity into "vikings" and "bors," the latter being loosely translated as "neighbours." The modern "viking" can

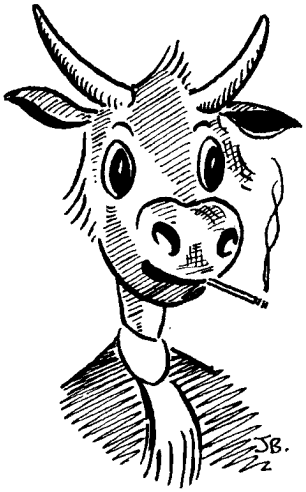
.... The modern Viking ....

best be described as the smart-alec, the laddie who comes along to tell us how it should all be done. Living, as we do these days, in a population that tends to shift from place to place more than in any other time, we meet several new faces, and we can pick out the "vikings" and the "bors" for ourselves.

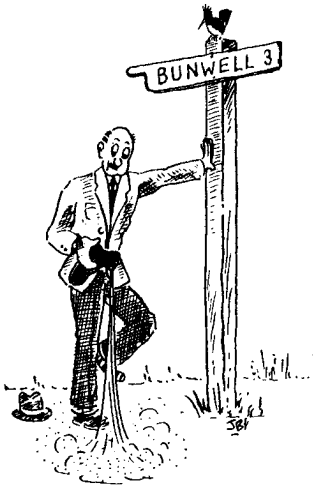
These smart-alecs have several lines, although they all approximate to the same pattern. They tell us Norfolk is flat, dull, uninteresting; our particular town or village is one-eyed, one-horse, back of beyond; we are provincial, parochial, bovine. Where they come from of course, things are different — and better.

They come from the industrial centres of Lancashire, Yorkshire, and the Midlands, where they have the advantage of constant smoke and rain, where everything is grey and grim and dour and ugly. Or they have spent all their lives in a mountainous district, with their vision always obscured by that same slab-sided mountain.

Or they come from London, where they say they lived the "full life" — catching the seven-something from Dormitoria or Suburbia to London, and the six-something back again! But in every case we must congratulate them on having had the good sense to shake the dust of those places from their shoes by moving to Norfolk. What we object to is being treated as congenital idiots because it was not necessary for us to travel to obtain the pleasures of living here.



. . . . We are bovine . . . .



. . . . Shake the dust from their shoes . . . .

We are prepared to welcome heartily and sincerely anyone who approaches us in the "bor" spirit. As far as the "viking" is concerned, we can only ask him to get rid of his complexes and inhibitions and commend to him *The Norfolker Magazine* and other literature that may perhaps bring him to a realisation that the parochialism and the provincialism is on his side more than on ours.

Reprinted from the July-September issue of *The Norfolker Magazine* 1948

(Editor's comment: "So, What's New?")

Tew C

A N

THA'S nice to set down here in my ole chair
Jus' set an' dream, tha's all,
On Chris'mas Eve . . . how quick the time go roun[redacted]d.
Now everywhere is quiet; there int a sound
Bar th'ole clock in the hall.

THAT int half cold outside; in here tha's warm.
Tha's comf't'ble, this chair;
That int wore out; tha's gittin' old, I know —
My Grandad used it fifta year ago —
I see him settin' here.

THAT were a Chris'mas Eve, an' cold 'n' all,
My haart, that East wind blew!
That night we come in orf the farm t'gether,
An' reckoned that were realla Chris'mas weather,
An' yet that never snew.

I SEE it all right clear — the fire a-blazin',
An' Grandad in this chair,
His patience cards afore him, row on row,
His ole hid grey beneath the oil lamp's glow,
An' shadders everywhere.

OUT in the kitchen, Mother's at the sink
A-waashin' up a plate.
An' from the staable Father now come in,
Wi' holly in his hat; he stand an' grin . . .
The ole dog wait . . .

THEN all the fam'la gather, one by one,
An' draw up roun' the fire,
An' Mother get the nuts, an' bring a drink.
An' there we sit tergether . . . talk . . . an' think . .
Then Grandad, he retire.

Christmas Eves: Norfolk Reverie

HE TAAK his candle slowla up the stairs;
An' then, out in the yaard,
"While shepherds watched" we hear young voices sing,
An' arter that them dear ole handbells ring.
Out there, thas freezin' haard.

. . . HEV I bin dreamin? Reckon I dropped orf!
I'm in this chair o' mine . . .
Why, someone's turned that tellyvision on,
An' in a flash them fifta' years ha' gone.
Tha's nineteen-sixta-nine.

THA'S tractors now — no hosses on the farm.
Home's chaanged an' all.
We got a proper baath, a nice one tew,
Not tin, an' hangin' like that used ter dew
On that there kitchen wall.

SO MUCH ha' gone — yet that ole clock tick on.
Tha's older'n me,
An' keep good time . . . But wha's that I can hear?
Tha's carol singin' in the yaard out there,
Jus' like that used ter be.

"WHILE shepherds watched" they're singin' just the same
Them words we know,
That tell the story of the Chris'mas dawn,
The story o' that little Baaby born
Tew thousand year ago

THA'S suthin' cold outside, an' here I set,
An' them ole' days recall.
Though times ha' chaanged since I were but a boy,
That Chris'mas message, full o' hope an' joy —
Why, that hin't chaanged a'tall!

John Kett

Duing Different

Norfolk folk "du different"
Is what they often say
Norfolk folk are different
For they were born that way
We're slow to trust, make friends or foe
But once we do we don't let go
We love our county, it is true
Of village town or city
Some lovely are, but some not so
It really is a pity
Norwich Cathedral brings to mind
A structure grand and fair
It's spire so tall, as are the walls
Still standing here and there
Of broads there are so many
Some large some small because
Each different from the other
Like all Norfolk folk of course
Our roads and lanes are different
No motorways for us
Narrow or wide we love them
Even if at times we cuss
Traffic sometimes is built up
But who can complain of this
When all around our county
Are views not to be missed
Some say so flat, but they are wrong
It's gentle slopes we have
Scenery so peaceful
It makes us feel so glad
Norfolk folk "du different"
Some words we only say
And understand together
As we go our county's way

Betty Gallaugher

ANSWERS TO THE BOY COLIN'S QUIZ

1. Horsford 2. 8 3. A small field or enclosure 4. The Black Death
5. Ken Foggo, Martin Peters, Kevin Drinkell and Kevin Keelan
6. 1194 7. He rowed the Atlantic single handedly
8. Carleton Rode 9. The Kings Arms Hotel 10. Bracondale

A Carol from St Just-near-Trunch

Sid Kipper explains

"There's a story behind this carol. It starts with an old boy in our village called 'Leaky' Lee. Now he had bit of a bee in his bonnet. Well, to be Frank, he had a complete bat in his belfry. What it was was he decided to have fresh garden peas for his Christmas dinner. So he built this great old heated greenhouse, and he planted peas at different times, and tried different sorts of animal muck, until finally, one Christmas, it was full of peas ready to be harvested.

Now there was far too many for just him and his family, so he give some to everyone in the village. And from then on he done the same thing every year, whether you wanted them or not. There was even peas for the wicked. Of course that was all very nice of him, though it would have been nicer if the peas hadn't been hard as marbles. Kirsty Cod said you could shoot pheasants with them, and then roast them ready stuffed. But most people said nothing, and left them on the side of their plates. Of course they all told Leaky how lovely they'd been, because that's only polite, even though it meant they got even more peas next year. So, when he choked to death on a pea one Christmas Day everyone breathed a sigh, and thought that's the end of that. But no such luck. Because his boy, Evan, kept up the tradition in his memory, even though we'd rather have forgotten.

Which brings me to the carol, which is called 'Silent, Tight'."

Christmas Day dawns, pour out a trickle -
Certain as eggs, she will be pickled.
Drunk as a lady, pudding half chewed;
Slumped on the table, face in her food,
Sleeping in Evan Lee's peas, sleeping in Evan Lee's peas.

All work and no play, such is her motto;
She works through the sherry - soon she'll play blotto.
Potatoes are peeled, turkey is basted,
Now she is soused, soon she'll be wasted,
Sleeping in Evan Lee's peas, sleeping in Evan Lee's peas.

While we have music - some Brahms and some Liszt;
Under the mistletoe everyone's kissed.
Carving the bird, knife not quite steady,
Never mind cuts, she's plastered already,
Sleeping in Evan Lee's peas, sleeping in Evan Lee's peas.

Dinner is served, candles are lit,
She's lit up too, her perquisite.
Why waste the brandy in flame for a show;
One little swig, the next thing we know;
Sleeping in Evan Lee's peas, sleeping in Evan Lee's peas.

Same every Christmas, she's pasteurised,
Working so hard, drinking likewise.
First she gets loose, then she gets tight;
Till she starts early her own silent night,
Sleeping in Evan Lee's peas, sleeping in Evan Lee's peas.
Sleep in heavenly peace.

Sid Kipper presents 'In Season' at Sheringham Little Theatre on March 4th, 2006

The Panto Season Is Here!
Make a Date to see ALADDIN

FOND's annual Pantomime will be held on Sunday 15th January 2006 at the North Elmham Village Hall.

This time it is the unfortunate Aladdin who is given the Clarke treatment as our new Chairman comes up with a dialect ridden script wrapped round a very suspect lamp and even more suspicious genie.

We suspect that the the Arabian Nights may well turn out to be a foggy evening in the Bacton area, but you will just have to come along to see for yourself all the show's tantalising glory.

Doors open at 2pm for the pre-show entertainment with admission just £3 per person, inclusive of light refreshments; there will be a raffle.

For the past three years we have enjoyed capacity audiences, due no doubt to the show's educational appeal. At least we think this is so for one customer was heard to say as he left the Hall, "Blast, that's taught me a lesson!"

An Awful Secret Revealed

Since joining FOND some nine months ago I have been wrestling with my conscience, should I reveal my awful secret that was undisclosed on my application form, perhaps I could make a private confession to Keith Skipper after one of his concerts; but no, I must tell my shameful story to all the Friends of Norfolk Dialect through the pages of the Merry Mawkin.

I CANNOT IDENTIFY A NORFOLK ACCENT!

I feel so much better now that is off my chest. If my fellow members want me to resign I will accept their decision. However before giving me the black ball can I please explain the mitigating circumstances of my birth. Both my parents come from over the border in Suffolk and rejoice in such East Anglian surnames as Fuller, Leggett and Largent. The Moore family have lived in Norfolk since 1607, in villages such as Pulham Market, Tasburgh and Winfathing. In about 1799 my branch of the family moved to Walsham-Le-Willows in Suffolk and have stayed there ever since. My mother's family the Fullers, come from Badwell Ash, some two miles from Walsham. My mother and father married in 1930; I came along in 1932. By that time relations from both my maternal and paternal family had gone to live all over the world. With this pedigree I was nothing but a mongrel!

When my children were young my wife and I would take them to Walsham and Badwell to see relations. The problem was they could not understand the dialect; my aunt Mabel had such a strong Suffolk accent that I had to translate what she said when we got home. All the family had nicknames and used dialect words; one of Uncle Bert's sayings when asked if he had had a good day was ' Yis, I aint seen an angry man all day'.

This exposure has left me unable to differentiate between a Norfolk and Suffolk accent. Is there a cure, or am I destined to a lifetime of ignorance?

Gerry Moore (Editor's note: ***We'll soon larn him!***)

Get it right, Mark!

On 17th November a gentleman by the name of Mark Shepherd, from Acle, logged a message on our web site directing quite an offensive attack on our local accent. He considers it lazy and ludicrous and goes on to say "The majority of people who have a broad Norfolk accent often have never travelled outside their own town or village and venture to Norwich for a Christmas treat once a year. My pride in my county is only tarnished by t the shame of an accent that makes us all sound interbred and dropped upon our heads as babies."

Bearing in mind that this attack was directed at "The Friends of Norfolk *Dialect*" it is obvious that Mark has no idea at all of the difference between accent and dialect. As all our members will know *accent* is a particular style of speech associated with a region or group of people. *Dialect* is defined as a subordinate variety of language with a non-standard vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar.

It is pertinent, therefore, to point out to Mr. Shepherd that to people throughout the UK the preservation of their local accent - and dialect - is something to be treasured. The alternative, heaven forbid, is for all of us to conform to a standard language with no regional or local accent or dialect. Perhaps Mr. Shepherd could enlighten us as to what form of language we should aim for?

As far as Norfolk in concerned we owe our language and dialect to the immigrants who came to Britain from about 420AD. They gave birth to Old English which, over time, became Modern English and eventually to the Standard English taught in our schools today. In his book *The Norfolk Dialect* our President, Professor Peter Trudgill states that English started existence as an independent language when speakers of West Germanic - whose people came across the North Sea as raiders and mercenaries - arrived during the Roman occupation of Britain. They comprised tribal groupings of Angles, Saxons, Jutes and Frisians.

Professor Trudgill goes so far as to claim that East Anglia was one of the first English speaking places in the world and "It is quite possible, in other words, that the English language was actually born in Norfolk." Our dialect has grown out of the use of Old English which in turn grew out of the Anglian dialects that were brought over from the continent during the 5th century AD. "East Anglia was probably a distinctive dialect area from the very beginning." FOND is dedicated to keeping our local dialect (not accent!) alive and to promote an understanding and appreciation of it and its relationship to the Standard English as taught in our schools today.

Dialect in Norfolk

One of my great interests in life is in the way people speak. When meeting anyone for the first time I instinctively ask myself 'now where do they come from?', before being more precise I decide first of all whether they come from north or south of the River Trent.

Dialect fascinates me. Most of my working life has been spent as a teacher and I have lived in various parts of the country. It has interested me to note how the speech of my three daughters has changed as we have moved about the country.

Forty years ago we moved to our present home in Norfolk. I have come to feel that this is where I belong. The lovely countryside, the kindly folk and the rich dialect are a constant source of pleasure to me. Apart from Norwich and Kings Lynn, Norfolk is truly rural, a collection of villages and small market towns with a delightful coastline. To get the full benefit of a visit to Norfolk you need to learn the language. In Norfolk the sound of the letter 't' is seldom heard among the natives. In Norfolk you don't 'write a letter', you 'ri a le--er'. The story goes that a teacher from somewhere foreign was trying to get his class to say 'butter'. He wrote it in big letters on the blackboard. 'Now, what does that say?' With one voice the answer came 'bu- -er' emphasising the 't' he said the word himself. 'Try again', they did 'bu- -er' a third attempt brought the same result, in despair the teacher said 'Try just once more'. They did and this time got it right, 'butter' they said. Overjoyed the teacher smiled in relief 'ah' he said 'That's 'beer'.

The natives of Norfolk have their own interpretation of the sound of the single letter 'o' as in the word 'post'. With them it becomes the sound of the double letter - the 'oo' sound. If you want to go sailing you will do so in a 'boot'. At a fete held in the grounds of one of Norfolk's many fine country houses shire horses were on display in their half-door stables. One was a mare, gently caressing her offspring. On the stable door was a notice in block letters 'DO NOT FEED THE FOOL'.

In parts of northern England the letter 'h' is dispensed with almost completely. Norfolk may be short on its 't's. but the letter 'h' is seldom missed. Of all the consonants 'h' is the one calling for most vocal effort and it is somewhat remarkable to find it so pointedly used in this slow moving, quiet, laid back part of the country.

The double 'e' sound when followed by the letter 'r' acquires a new sound in Norfolk. Out for a drink with friends you will probably have a glass of 'bear', and as you raise your glass you will say 'chairs'.

Here in Norfolk we are in danger of being overwhelmed by foreigners from other parts of England and from abroad. To them we say 'Come and enjoy our lovely countryside and beautiful villages and delightful coastline - but please , please leave our language alone. We like it that way.

Harold Clarke

Our A.G.M.


Lord Walpole

It was the outgoing Chairman 's pleasure to introduce our speaker, Lord Robin Walpole. He traced his early schooling in Aylsham, through Eton and a degree in Natural Sciences to election as a County Councillor where among other commitments, he held the chairmanship of the Planning and Transportation Committee. As an elected member of The House of Lords he is involved in a great deal of Committee work.

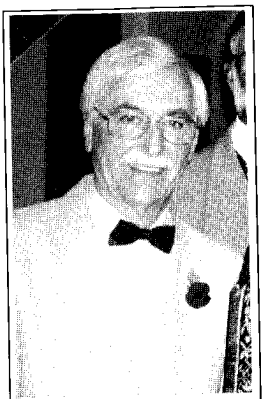
His love of his native county soon became apparent, stating that our local language is one of the most valuable assets we have and ". . it is most important that FOND keeps this alive."

Lord Walpole accepted questions at the end of his talk and it was clear that many of his audience were interested/concerned about the future of the Upper House.

In the business part of the meeting our new chairman, Tony Clarke, made a hard hitting introductory speech. After referring to the importance of FOND's current project to get an understanding and appreciation of our dialect into local schools Tony went on to say:

"I think what we all have to remember is that we are not here simply to try to breathe life into something which is virtually extinct. What we are trying to do is to conserve an important part of our heritage and encourage society at large to give it the respect it deserves. In this endeavour we still have a lot of ill-informed prejudice to overcome.

Yet, if some developer came along and proposed converting Norwich Castle into a block of flats or demolishing the cathedral, or the Custom House at King's Lynn, or Blickling Hall, on the grounds that they are too expensive to maintain, there would, quite naturally, be an outcry. These are spectacular visible pieces of our heritage. Projects such as the award winning *Time and Tide Museum* at Yarmouth are cropping up all over the place to arouse interest in the way of life of our ancestors. Why, therefore, should we sit back and allow the language they spoke simply to disintegrate without trace.


Tony Clarke

There is a danger, in groups such as FOND, that we become too parochial, preserving a manner of speech simply for reasons of nostalgia. We need to broaden the debate on dialect while, at the same time, remaining realistic as to the limitations of what we can achieve.

The fact is that, in this country, there are fashionable accents, which are usually the urban ones, and unfashionable accents, which are more often the rural ones. Ours, unfortunately, comes under the latter heading. Frankly, the most difficult job we face, even in our own county, is to be taken seriously.

Now you may think this comment is odd coming from a bloke who is best known for appearing on stage as a country yokel called the Boy Jimma. Well, we are our own worst enemies because the traditional Norfolk style of humour is not to take the mickey out of other people but to poke gentle fun at ourselves. We are past masters at the in-joke, which is why traditional Norfolk comedians don't make the big time on TV and radio.

I know you will tell me that there is a subtle difference between dialect and accent, and there is, but unfortunately they are related. We have to accept that in this age of multi-channel radio, tv, the internet and text messaging, regional accents are the dying embers of once vigorous and rich regional languages which should be recorded because they hold up a mirror to the history of England. They contained a mixture of words which either grew up in those various regions or were introduced, through the centuries, by immigrants from other countries.

What is serious, however, is that over the years our younger generation has been made to feel ashamed of its accent. There was a case, earlier this year, of a Norfolk band who had been told by music producers that they would never top the charts unless they changed their accents.

And when I went to have a haircut the other day the hairdresser said he had had some youngsters in who tried to talk like Londoners, (Heaven forbid!), because it was more cool than their "mother tongue".

We also have to bear in mind that all languages - except Latin, perhaps - continue to change through the generations. In the 16th century the first language of 37 per cent of the inhabitants of Norwich was Dutch or French, rather than English. (I'm quoting here from Peter Trudgill's book on *The Norfolk Dialect*). In Nelson's day, everybody, even admirals, spoke with a regional accent. There was no such thing as "posh talk" or even standard English.

Then the Victorians started to tidy it all up, and create a standard English language. Today, having given our national language to a large slice of the world, we are now dismantling it to the point where it is changing, probably at a faster rate than ever before. This is partly because a generation of young people has grown up never having been taught the fascinating subtleties of grammar, or even the true meaning of words.

Have you noticed how the entire human race is being dehumanised by the disappearance of the word "Who"? We are always hearing on TV about "people that" do something. Or that people from other countries are "different to" us rather than "different from"? And did you notice what I thought was the silliest offence committed against the English Language by the media around the season of Remembrance?

We were solemnly informed that the lives of the few remaining survivors of the first world war - all aged between 100 and 109 - had spanned three centuries! That would have made them more than 300 years old. Their lives, of course, had touched three centuries, which is a remarkable enough achievement anyway. A bridge which spans only one-third of a river is no use to anybody.

England was once a rich tapestry of interlocking regional accents, a bit like a linguistic jigsaw puzzle. But you may wonder what chance we have of conserving our regional accents if, as a nation, we can't even protect our national language?

Well, FOND's schools project is a start, even though it is difficult for we laymen to find our way through the labyrinth of bureacratic language employed by the

educationalised. *(jargon)* But we can't leave it at that. People of all ages, but especially young people, need somehow to be persuaded to be proud of their accent rather than ashamed of it, because it is part of their heritage.

Perhaps we can start by having an exchange of views in the Mawkin. Maybe we can ask members, through our newsletter, to put forward their own ideas on dialect and what FOND should be doing to promote it. Maybe we need new ideas for our social dews around the county with greater involvement from the members. Rather than simply inviting a speaker, perhaps we could have quizzes with teams from different areas of the county invited to compete against each other. Maybe, for one dew, we could have a competition to see who can construct the best mawkin? Perhaps this would introduce a bit more fun into our serious subject. Perhaps we can broaden our horizons by reaching out to dialect groups in other regions of England, trying to find out how they operate and exchanging ideas with them."

Tony's thought provoking address raised many questions and seemed to have struck a chord with members so, please, let us have your views on the points he raised. As he so rightly said, "Frankly, FOND will only survive as long as its members want it to". How strongly do you feel that our dialect should be conserved?

On the question of future FOND-dews it was suggested that, perhaps, small groups of local people might come together to organise a 'Dew' within their own, or neighbouring, community. Anyone interested?

Three vacancies on the Executive Committee were filled and our thanks go to these members for volunteering their services. Details on the outside back cover..

Book Reviews

A Selection of Five Books for Christmas Reading

FANBOYS AND OVERDOGS - the language report. Susie Dent.

Oxford University Press.£10.99.163pp.ISBN 978-0-19-280676-5

If you are interested in knowing how our language has developed, how words have changed, and survived, over the centuries or simply want to keep up with your children and grandchildren and the new words they are using this book is the one for you.

Do you, for example engage in memails, possess a furkid or believe in popstrology. Is there a boomburr near you, is a Chelsea Tractor in your driveway and does the lady in your life enjoy a regular dose of algotherapy?

Wherever you dip into the twenty three chapters of this fascinating book, including the shocking section on the vocabulary of swearing, you will be intrigued, enlightened and entertained. There is no other source which so graphically illustrates how our language has changed and how we are using it.

If you are a passionate male enthusiast of a hobby within so-called 'geek' culture, including comic books and video, computer, adventure and fantasy games you are a 'Fanboy' - and the lady in your life a 'Fangirl.' If, however, you are a person who is both successful and

dominant in your particular work you qualify for the honour of being called an 'Overdog.'

LOVE, LUCK, AND LESSONS FOR LIFE - Traditional Wisdom on Life's Big Questions. Ruth Binney.

David and Charles £9.99. 256pp. ISBN 13-978-0-7153-2230-7.

If you can remember the myths, legends, superstitions, customs and sayings of your youth and wondered about their origins, meanings and significance then you will find great pleasure in this book.

In our modern, technically driven world many people profess to see them as archaic with little relevance to everyday life, yet subconsciously cross their fingers for luck or avoid walking under a propped ladder!

The number 7 is considered a lucky one for many people, but they don't know why. Conversely 13 is seen as an unlucky number but does this mean you suffer from Triskaidekaphobia?

In this fascinating book Ruth Binney brings together a wide range of superstitions and folklore under the main headings of the book title. For instance the word 'Honeymoon' may originate from the custom of drinking honeyed wine. The 'moon',with its waxing and waning represents the ups and downs of married life. In Germany the word for honeymoon is Flitterwochen, literally "the fondling weeks",and who is going to deny that!

Whilst we may scoff at many of the words and phrases Binney brings before us there can be a lingering doubt that perhaps she has explained a source which has more significance than we had dreamed of.

SPECIAL OFFER TO FOND MEMBERS:

Order your copy of the book direct from the publishers, quoting Code Number Y827. You will get a £2 discount and free postage. Write to David & Charles, Brunel House, Forde Close, Newton Abbot, Devon, TQ12 4PU.

THE NORFOLK COAST - Alan Childs and Donald Mackenzie.

Halsgrove. £14.99. 144pp. 254 illustrations in full colour plus 6 full colour maps. ISBN 1 84114 428 2

Of all the Norfolk books read by this reviewer this one sets the standard for which all of them should aim. Within its pages there are potted histories of over 50 towns, villages and hamlets scattered along the Norfolk coast, all backed by a superb collection of full colour photographs and 6 maps, the former by Donald Mackenzie and the latter by Ashley Sampson. Each section has its own "Things To Do" panel which highlight places to visit, walks, local inns and restaurants and sources of information. The authors' love of all things Norfolk and how they see the urban and country landscapes shines through on every page and this is definitely a "must-have" book for everyone who treasures our local environment and wants a permanent reminder of life in this, so far, idyllic corner of England.

TALKING FOR BRITAIN - A Journey Through The Nation's Dialects.

Simon Elmes. *Penguin Books. £14.99. 333pp. ISBN 0-140-51562-3.*

This is a book for everyone interested in the English language, from the words we use and how we speak them. As the subtitle suggests, it is truly a journey through the nation's dialects and one to which FOND members have contributed.

The book was born out of the BBC's "Voices" project and is a goldmine of dialect words and

phrases from England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. In the chapter of immediate interest to FOND members (No: 6.East Anglia) subtitled "Language in a Landscape: Long vowels and Wide Horizons" the considerable differences between the written word and its pronunciation is referred to as "part of the secret of the local speech of this very special corner of England. It's an accent and a rhythm of delivery emulated nowhere else in the British Isles."

The author selects Great and Little Hautbois, known to all Norfolk 'Dumplings' as the 'Hobbies', a word of medieval origin when its form was 'Hobbesse'; not all that different from today.

The pronunciation of the village name of Happisburgh poses a real problem for visitors and incomers and it can take time to convince them it really is 'Hazebruh'.

Reference is made to the contribution provided by five members of FOND - Colin (Burleigh), Bob (Lister), Vera (Youngman), Jean (Eaglen) and Tony (Clarke) when they participated in a recording session arranged by Maggie Seeker from Radio Norfolk. They are credited with providing a "rich collection of terminology" with their inclusion of the phrase 'Muck-wash' (feeling hot) obviously being unique for it is not listed in either the County Glossary or the main index of Regional (dialect) Words.

Other Norfolk dialect words, such as 'Strides' (trousers) and 'Smur" (drizzling rain) are shared with Scotland and Northern Ireland, as are 'Mawkin' (Scarecrow) and 'Mardle' (to gossip) with other parts of the UK.

The author is Creative Director of the BBC's Radio Documentaries Unit, former Executive Producer of the long running magazine Word of Mouth and the award winning Routes of English. He has written four books on English language.

SPECIAL OFFER TO FOND MEMBERS

Order your copy of the book direct from the publishers at the reduced price of £12.99; a saving of £2. Simply telephone 01624 677237 and quote Friends of Norfolk Dialect. Your book will sent to you free of any posting and packing charge. Allow 28 days for delivery. Offer subject to availability and ends 31January 2006

EXPLORING THE NORFOLK VILLAGE. Christopher Barringer. *Poppyland Publishing. Paperback. £12.95. 83 illustrations (including 18 in full colour) plus 58 plans and maps. ISBN 0 946148 71 6*

The publisher's claim that this book is a "must" for everyone with an interest in Norfolk and its history is no false one.

The author, with 40 years as a tutor in local and regional history, has selected some 15 main villages across the county. All have different and distinctive characteristics, from the sandy soils and pine trees of Breckland and the dark heavy soil of the Fens to the marshes and open waters of the Broads to the hills of North Norfolk.

This is a book of historical detail, personal possessions of the landed gentry, of changing landscapes, former towns turned villages, political dealings and the changing Norfolk aristocracy all set out in a concise and easily readable text.

Currently a DVD is in preparation to accompany the book, and this will be available in the New Year. It will take users on a visit to several of the villages mentioned in the book plus a guided tour with the author to the Norfolk Record Office to learn about facilities and resources available there. An additional bonus will be the inclusion of several aerial photographs of the villages featured in the book.

FOND OFFICERS

President
Professor Peter Trudgill
32 Bathurst Road
Norwich
NR2 2PP
Tel 01603 618036

Chairman
Tony Clarke
30 Station Road
Beccles
NR34 9QJ
Tel 01502 713692
Fax 01502 715308
e-mail: tony.clarke@
atlas-features.com

Vice-chairman/ Education Officer
Norman Hart
Avonside
42 London Road
Harleston IP20 9BW
Tel 01379 852677

Membership Secretary
Brenda Bizzell
Walnut Tree House
Forncett St. Peter
Norwich NR16 1HR
Tel 01953 789592

Treasurer
Janet Woodhouse
Tumbleweed Cottage
Eastgate Street
North Elmham
Dereham NR20 5HE
Tel 01362 668525

Programme Secretary
Position Vacant — Anyone interested?

Acting Secretary
Peter Brooks
5 Abbey Road
Sheringham
NR26 8HH
Tel 01263 822895

Newsletter Editor
Robin Limmer
Highlands,
Trunch Hill, Denton,
Harleston,
Norfolk IP20 0AE.
Tel. 01986 788701

Committee
Colin Burleigh
7 William Cowper Close
Toftwood
Dereham NR19 1LT
Tel 01362 697654

Jean Eaglen
Two Hoots
Manson Green
Hingham
Norwich NR9 4PY
Tel 01953 850417

Vera Youngman
Forge House
Station Road
Yaxham
Dereham NR19 1RD
Tel 01362 692709

Ted Peachment
The Nest,
Woodgate,
Swanton Morley,
Dereham NR20 4NU
Tel. 01362 637539

John Austrin
Eunede House,
Yarmouth Road,
Stalham, NR12 9DF
Tel. 01692 580

Netti Rose
119 Broomhill,
Downham Market,
Pe38 9QU
Tel. 01366 383227

Technical adviser
Stewart Orr
Priors Croft Barn
Withersdale
Harleston IP20 0JG
Tel 01379 854458

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)*:

£6 (single member) **£20 (educational establishment)**
£10 (family membership) **£50 (commercial company)**

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms.*(Surname and initials)*.....

Address.....

.....

Postcode.....

Telephone.....

Please send to:
Brenda Bizzell,
Walnut Tree House,
Forncett St. Peter, Norwich NR16 1HR
Cheques made out to FOND, please.