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Winter
2006
No 24

A MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM



The Merry Mawkin

Newsletter of Friends of Norfolk Dialect www.norfolkdialect.com

The Boy Colin is elected FOND's new chairman

After its highest profile 12 months so far, FOND, founded in 1999, has launched into a new year full of optimism and new ideas designed to build on past success - and with a new man at the helm. Colin Burleigh (aka the Toff of



Colin Burleigh

Toftwood and the Boy Colin) took over from Tony Clarke (the Boy Jimma), FOND's secretary for six years and chairman for one, at the AGM at the Lincoln Hall, Hingham, on Sunday,

November 26.

Colin, a committee member since FOND's formation, said it was an honour to follow in the footsteps of Keith Skipper,

Peter Brooks and Tony Clarke "and it is my sincere hope that I can carry on with the good work that they have done."

Guest speaker was founder chairman Keith, who

listed some of his favourite authors and suggested that FOND might set up an anthology, or register, of Norfolk literature.

He described our schools project as "a good example of Norfolk doing something bold and

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The Dumpling, the Canary and the dropped aitches

Norfolk country people looked down on Norwich citizens because of their accent

In the old days of the Dumpling and the Canary, it was quite common for the country people of Norfolk to look down on the city people of Norwich because of their accent.

One feature that usually came up in

discussions of this topic was the fact that Norwich people “drop their aitches.” This was often said in a way that suggested that there was something wrong dropping your aitches, a point of view which some schoolteachers were happy to confirm “It must be wrong,” they used to claim, “to say *ammer* because hammer is spelt with an h.”

If you think about it, that doesn't make sense. Writing is a way of recording speech. Speech comes first, writing second, and so if speech and writing don't agree, it's because the writing system is inadequate, not the speech.

For those English speakers who normally say *ammer*, the English spelling system has an inadequate way of representing their pronunciation of this word.

There is nothing surprising about this. The English spelling system is notorious for the extent to which it diverges from modern pronunciation. But what is really going on

here is that arguments about “correct” pronunciations are simply rationalisations for prejudices against accents with low status. This is obvious from the fact that no one suggests that to drop the h in *hour* is wrong because not even posh speakers pronounce

the h in this word. Nor does anybody claim that the h in words like *night*, *light*, *thought* and *eight* should be pronounced, and that it's wrong not to do so.

In fact, some speakers do pronounce the h in these words. Many Lowland Scots use a pronunciation usually represented as *icht*, *thocht*. But their accents do not have high prestige, even though they do “pronounce the letter h.”

On the contrary, in Scotland this pronunciation is often looked down on, and has lower status than the more widespread pronunciation

without an h. (And Norfolk people who wanted to claim that BBC announcers are wrong because they pronounce *moan* and *mown* the same would most certainly not get listened to.) In any case, it's now much less common for the Dumpling to look down on the Canary in this way, because even some Dumplings have started to drop their aitches. And then there are those younger people who are still so worried that h-dropping might be “wrong” that they have started calling the letter h “haitch”.....



**By FOND president
PETER TRUDGILL**

Emeritus Professor of English Linguistics, Fribourg University, Switzerland; Hon Prof of Sociolinguistics, University of East Anglia; Adjunct Prof of Sociolinguistics, Agder Univ, Kristiansand, Norway; Adjunct Prof, RCLT, La Trobe Univ, Melbourne, Australia.,

When the mawkin met the upturned sheep



FOND forges those East Lincs links



Have you heard what happened when the Fondites went to see the Far-Welter'ds? No? Well, for a price, we'll give you the full unexpurgated version. For the moment, however, suffice it to say that two unsuspecting Fondites — who remain anonymous to protect the innocent — nearly got wrongly paired off when the overnight accommodation was being organised. Everything got sorted out after they diplomatically explained that being members of FOND didn't mean they were *that* fond of each other!

From that auspicious opening onwards, laughter remained the dialect dish of the day when eight "missionaries" from the Friends of Norfolk Dialect travelled to Louth in the beautiful Lincolnshire wolds, to meet members of the East Lincolnshire Dialect Society, otherwise known as "Far-Welter'd." It was probably to be expected that there would be a few comedians in any gathering of people from two organisations whose

unconventional logos are a merry mawkin and an upturned sheep.

Far-Welter'd, it seems, is a Lincolnshire term to describe a sheep which has been rolled on to its back and can't get up.

But there was a serious aspect to this exchange. Both FOND and Far-Welter'd are keen to make contact with other dialect societies to see how they all fit into the rich and colourful jigsaw of England's network of ancient regional languages.

By Tony Clarke

The Lincolnshire folk were also keen to "poach" information about FOND's successful education project among Norfolk schools in the hope that they can set up something similar. During a Monday night session attended by about 80 enthusiasts in a village social centre at Great Carlton, near Louth, the two societies swapped stories, readings, jokes and songs. They also indulged in "dialect tennis" in which they flung words and sayings at each other as a challenge to identify the meanings (pollywoggle -

tadpole - was one Norfolk word which had 'em guessing!)

The Norfolk visitors discovered they cannot claim exclusive ownership of the word "squit." The FOND delegation — chairman Tony Clarke (aka the Boy Jimma) and his wife Pat, vice-chairman and education officer Norman Hart, Colin Burleigh (the Boy Colin) and his wife June, Ted Peachment, and John Austrin with his wife Liz (the Gal Liza) - enjoyed warm hospitality in Louth before returning to Norfolk the next day.

Said Tony: "It was a good exercise, which proved we in FOND, though we are proud of our Norfolk tongue, are not so parochial that we can't broaden our horizons and reach out to our neighbours.

"Our friendly little group was given the warmest of welcomes and I know our Lincolnshire friends would like to return the compliment by visiting Norfolk.

"Could this be the forerunner of future exchanges?"

Chairman's role 'awaits Colin's towering talents'

**An appreciation of
FOND's new leader,
Colin Burleigh, by
founder chairman
KEITH SKIPPER**

The Toff of Toftwood is ready for high office. Colin Burleigh's sartorial elegance, comic élan and musical prowess make him a complete performer on the local entertainment circuit. Now the catwalk of culture beckons as he dons the robes of linguistic loquacity to become the fourth chairman of Friends of Norfolk Dialect – a role simply waiting for his towering talents. I dubbed him the Toff of Toftwood when he turred those quickfire quips of various vintages into a stage routine so reminiscent of the old vaudeville pedlars of mirth. His snazzy shirt and waistcoat set him apart from the rest. "I didn't understand a word – but what a fine figure of a man!" sighed one adoring female after a Press Gang extravaganza. He may have shown her the grey hairs on his chest. Colin has insisted many times that humour is the shock-absorber of life. It helps us take the blows. He is living proof of such a creed, returning to the entertainment fray with even more zest after taking his scripts to "Happy Pappy" and adding

memorable lines about having "four bypasses in 10 hours.....and that's more than the whole of Norfolk has had in 20 years."

I first met Colin in the early 1960s when I was a young newshound on the Dereham and Fakenham Times and he was a key figure both as performer and persuader on the booming trad jazz scene. The likes of Kenny Ball, Acker Bilk and Chris Barber were lured to Dereham Memorial Hall by Colin's charm and enthusiasm. His melodies linger on. We have crossed paths regularly since those heady days, not least at reunions of a flourishing Old Hamondians' Association. He went to grammar school in Swaffham slightly earlier than me – 8.45am to my 9.15 – but we've pooled our memories and mardles at annual dinners and other cheerful functions. Colin joined me on air at BBC Radio Norfolk with news and views from Dereham and the environs for Dinnertime Show listeners and, more recently, he's had 'em rolling in the aisles with his sparkling stand-up routine on Press Gang rounds. He "rehearses" all the time, most notably when he's got new lines to share, and his irrepressible manner is bound to keep FOND get-togethers moving with purpose and pace. He can light up the dullest committee meeting with a burst of repartee – usu-



**Father Christmas
Colin at Jarrolds.**

Colin was born at Dereham in 1931 and attended Hamonds Grammar School, Swaffham. He worked for Jentique Furniture before RAF National Service and when stationed in Germany would regale his colleagues with Harbert's News from Dumpton in the Dereham and Fakenham Times. On demob he joined the Collegians Jazz Band as singer. After redundancy at Jentique he sold menswear till redundancy struck again. He then joined Jarrolds as a furniture salesman. After the demise of the Collegians he joined the Vintage Hot Orchestra as drummer/vocalist and remains with them. He appeared regularly on BBC Radio Norfolk in Keith's Dinnertime Show and later with the Press Gang. "With a bit of jazz, a touch of comedy and a happy home life with June and being blessed with children and grandchildren, I think I can say I'm a contented man," reflects Colin.

ally nothing to do with the subject in hand – so he may have to interrupt or reprimand himself as the new regime takes shape. But will he listen? I hope not. It's a chairman's prerogative to keep it cheerful whatever the challenge. The Toff of Toftwood is cut out for high office.

Be wary of people who jump on bandwagons, warns Keith Skipper



Keith Skipper,
FOND founder.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

exceptional," but he warned FOND to be wary of "people who jump on bandwagons to further their own ends."

One way of developing the schools project was to encourage young people to play a greater part in FOND-dews, and to invite speakers such as a representative of the BBC drama department or a dialect coach.

Keith described Sunday, October 3, 1999, the day FOND was born, as a day of celebration which he hoped future generations would look back on with pride. "Our optimism of October, 1999, was well founded," he declared.

But all this came before the county's most high profile deputy lieutenant offered us a selection of his favourite anecdotes which underlined his better known role as author, columnist, raconteur, Press Gang organiser and general "good ow' Norfolk boy."

Membership secretary Brenda Bizzell spoke of an encouraging trend in the number of FONDites and treasurer Janet Woodhouse reported a healthy bank balance.

Vice-chairman and education officer Norman Hart spoke of the negotiations and hard work to which he and acting secretary Peter Brooks devoted so much time and hinted of new ideas being considered to develop the project.

In his chairman's report, Tony said much of the patient groundwork of FOND's first six years had borne fruit. FOND had become part of Norfolk life and had thrust itself on to the national stage in fine style.

"We have drawn people's attention to the place of dialect in our national heritage and generally persuaded them to take the subject seriously. Mostly this has been achieved through the outstanding success of our schools dialect project which, funded by the Lottery Heritage Initiative, got the subject into nine schools at all levels of education.

"It has exceeded not only expectations but also our wildest dreams," he said. This was mainly down to the vision of our vice-chairman and education officer, Norman Hart, also to the hard work of acting secretary and former chairman, Peter Brooks.

There was a lot of coverage both in the regional and national media, ranging from articles in such august publications as *The Economist* and *The Times* to the appearance of Colin and his wife June with Dick and Dom in *Da Bungalow* on BBC TV, and an unexpected interview for Tony on BBC Radio Wales! With the visit to Lincolnshire (see Page 3) a major step had been taken towards achieving FOND's ambition of establishing links with other dialect societies.

The Merry Mawkin had enjoyed a very successful year with Robin Limmer back in the editor's chair. He had edited the newsletter from 2001 to 2004 and again throughout 2006 but was standing down now due to pressure of other commitments. Tony said: "Under him, during both his spells as editor, the Mawkin has been a professionally-produced publication full of interest, humour, information and opinion, and it will not be easy to maintain that standard under new management.

"I probably understand Robin's decision to retire better than most, because for my own personal reasons I am obliged reluctantly to stand down from the committee. They say you should bow out on a high, but I take no credit for the successes of the past year. They were achieved by a remarkably hard working committee. I thank all the committee for their kindness, friendship and support."

John Austrin paid tribute to Tony's year as chairman and six years as secretary.

(Tony hopes to continue writing the annual FOND pantomime for the foreseeable future. Next production January 14. See Page 27).



Norfolk by Adoption: In which contributors, though not Norfolk born, have made their permanent home here. **PAUL BARNES**, former Anglia TV presenter and producer, has been host for some 12 years of the acclaimed swing and jazz music programme *Gold for Grownups* broadcast on five BBC local radio stations on Saturdays throughout the Eastern Counties. He also writes for various magazines, including *Saga*.

30 years: it looks as if I'm staying!

"Welcome to the graveyard of ambition." This was the late Paul Honeyman, head of features at Anglia TV greeting me on my second day there in 1977. We were in the green room, where it was the custom for senior types to gather ostensibly to watch *About Anglia*, the regional news magazine, but in reality to sluice down drinks on the company.

Paul enlarged on his welcome by telling me that many an import before me had been happy to let the eiderdown of contentment settle around his shoulders as Norfolk absorbed him.

I knew a bit about the county. Having presented *Today* alongside John Timpson, the ultimate professional Norfolk man, how could I fail to be aware of the charms of the place? But I'd been aware of them long before, at the age of nine or ten, thanks to Arthur Ransome's *Coot Club* with its vivid picture of the Broads and the sheer pleasure of sailing quiet rivers. And that's another thing that Paul Honeyman told me: that I was bound to get myself a boat sometime. Everybody else seemed to.

There was another prior connection: railways. I'd been involved with the Association of Railway Preservation Societies, and in the mid-sixties two rival factions were fighting each other for the stretch of line between Sheringham and Weybourne, a

sweet remnant of the Midland and Great Northern Joint Railway. The risk was that they would both fail and the line would be lost. The ARPS banged some heads together, and it worked. Now the North Norfolk Railway is a flourishing affair. I used to visit often, staying on Kelling Heath and revelling the combined scent of pines, sea and steam, and I've still got my silver pass. Later, in 1982, the scent of those pines formed part of a new experience, when I ran in the first Norfolk Marathon - 26 miles, 385 yards of seriously undulating road between Kelling and Norwich Cathedral - muttering Noel Coward's libellous line "very flat, Norfolk" through clenched teeth. I've been a runner ever since. Not the athletic type, I'm not built for it, but just to keep fit. And the bonus is that running is slow enough for you to get a sense of place, and a sense of the season. Try it at dawn. The other day I encountered a barn owl, silently seeking breakfast for its young, and successfully too. It passed me minutes later with a small rodent in its claws. It's nearly 30 years since I came here, so it looks as though I'm staying. In fact, I've become so jealously fond of the place, wary of interlopers, that it may be time to reinstate a modest proposition that Keith Skipper and I discussed some years ago: a campaign to single the A11.

Rare Norfolk words - by Sid Kippe

No 9: SHEEP

The reason we don't have many sheep in Norfolk now is we found out what caused them. You see, years ago we had loads of sheep, due to what they call the Lowland Clearances.

That was when the landlords got foreclosures, fenced off the land, and threw all the peasants off it. Because they found that sheep kept the grass down just as well as peasants, plus you got the wool, and the sheep didn't set fire to your haystacks, or get with child by you and insist on maintenance. Well, a lamb don't take a lot of maintaining, anyhow.

So the landlords got rich, and built great churches to solve their consciences, and wondered

why there was nobody left to go to them. And the proof is we've still



Sid: Sheep? 'The Norfolk breed was called Up Ewe.'

got the churches, even though the sheep have moved on.

Round our way there was another reason.

The sheep were all kept on the Ups — near Northrups and Southrups — which is the high ground.

So the breed was called

Up Ewe. They were marvellous sheep. They gave fine wool, lovely meat, and they were always healthy. The only trouble with them was they were very hard to sell. Well, you'd take an Up Ewe to market, and go up to the dealer and say, "Would you like to buy a sheep?" And he'd say, "What sort is it?" So you'd tell him. And very often the sheep would escape in the ensuing fracas!

Learn more about livestock in Sid's latest "Kipper Country Code," downloadable monthly from www.channel4radio.com - select 'comedy'.

He will be appearing in the flesh at Sheringham Little Theatre on March 3 - telephone 01263 82234 for details.

All of a flutter.....

Three country vicars were having trouble with bats in their churches. They met over coffee to discuss what progress was being made.

"I put all mine in a cardboard box and took them miles away," said the first. "Unfortunately, they beat me back to the church."

Said the second: "I rang the bells non-stop for five hours. But the only result

of that was to make me deaf."

"I've got rid of mine," said the third. His colleagues were bursting to know the secret.

"All I did was to baptise them and confirm them. I haven't seen them since!"

From Rustic Revels, by Keith Skipper, published by Nostalgia Publications, 1997.

How film extra The Boy Colin also became dialect

I reckon they're seen the

When we cast our minds back to 1999, the year FOND was formed at Yaxham Village Hall, it will be recalled that apart from the fervent wish to preserve our beloved dialect we were "up in arms" at the way our accent was never portrayed in the proper way by the TV and radio companies. The actors inevitably spoke with voices that sounded as though they came from the West Country — to use Keith Skipper's word, from "Mummerzet." It has always been one of the major aims to try to make inroads into TV and radio to put this matter right.

Series

Recently, I was called by my agent to take part as an "extra" in the forthcoming Stephen Fry series, *Kingdom*, due out on ITV sometime in December.

Nothing exciting there, you might say. However, my first two days on set involved watching a dyke-jumping competition as part of a crowd filmed at Barroway Drove, near Downham Market, and as a shopkeeper repairing a broken window.

What has this to do with FOND? You might ask. I received another call from the agent who, aware that I am a member, asked if I would advise some of the cast on how to portray their characters with a Norfolk accent. "They're sin the loight at larst!" I thought. I was informed that their

usual adviser, Neil Storey, FOND's life member, was unable to work on that day and I readily agreed to take his place.

After breakfast at base camp (June says I only go for the food!) I was introduced to actors Dan Ryan, Tony Slattery, Tom Fisher, Celia Imrie and Trevor Peacock and asked to go through the script with them to make suggestions as to how they should pronounce various words.

Homework

They were all keen to listen to what I had to tell them and, to be fair, some of them had done their homework and had obviously listened to what Neil had told them.

Tony Slattery, in particular, was keen to talk to me on the matter of the necessity to retain dialects and accents. Celia Imrie and her son Angus (also in the production) were a delight to work with and profuse in their thanks at the end of the shooting that day. I ate my lunch in the company of Trevor Peacock who was keen to discuss football (he supports Yeovil Town) and cricket.

Lines

At the end of the day's filming I was asked to return the following day to go through the same procedure with other actors arriving on set and I was keen to continue.

I successfully put the actors through

adviser to Stephen Fry actors

Norfolk loight at larst!

their lines on the second day. The one thing that I noticed was that while I was rehearsing with them they could produce a reasonable accent but when they got on the set in some cases their having to remember their lines tended to fog their memories for the accent.

Sandwiches

In many instances I had to step in and correct them. Still, I was enjoying the work and was pleased when I was asked to return for a third day. At the end of the day I said my farewells with the hope that our paths might cross again some day — and they did, for I was called back again to do another day as an “extra,” this time, handing a plate of sandwiches to Rory Bremner!

The experience was a lot of fun, but underlying it all was the knowledge that maybe at long last the Norfolk accent may one day be portrayed on screen or over the airwaves in the manner that FOND would like it to be.

Pleasure

At least we've got a foot in the door. I look forward to seeing Kingdom on screen and will be listening avidly to hear if the effort that Neil and I have put in has proved fruitful and trust that FOND can be proud of what has been done to try to knock “Mummerzet” off our TV screens.

NEIL STOREY adds: It was a great pleasure to be part of the Kingdom project. Stephen Fry and all the cast and crew made it one of the most pleasurable jobs I have ever done. The set had a real “family” atmosphere and I could tell everyone cared about the programme and showed a great respect for the cultural identity of our beloved county.

Blarst!

*'Twas on a bus in Peckham Rye,
Elephant and Castle bound was I.
The peeked-cap man came for the fares.
Said I to him, “A tuppna please.”
And then a startled look I saw.*

*“Blarst yew cum frum Norridge, bor.”
I admitted it was true.*

*“Well blarst I sear bor, that I dew,
Blarst what a coincerd'nce,” he said.
I'er got a brother there called Fred.
Blarst, that earnt nothun, I'er got three,
And a rum old lot they sometimes be.”*

Sam Button from Gooderstone writes:

“I wonder if any readers know of this piece of poetry I came across in an East Anglian magazine in the 1950s. I learned it by heart to recite at a concert in our village but was dissuaded because at that time ‘blast’ was a taboo word. The last lines went:

*And that is where I saw him last,
Muttering every epithet but blarst.*

If anyone has it in full, I'd be grateful if they could phone me on 01366 328457.”

Lost in Translation recordings take their place in our archives

Schools' sound quality

By STEWART ORR,
FOND technical
officer

A major part of the FOND *Lost in Translation* project was the collection of a large number of recordings to be made by schools and returned to us at FOND.

You may even have heard some of them, either at the Forum, in Norwich, or in the programme *Fondly Norfolk* on BBC Radio Norfolk on August Bank Holiday Monday.

Fondly Norfolk

Yes, they have started to come in, and superb many of them are, too. They range from the very brief, lasting a minute or two, to the unstoppable characters who "go on" (gloriously) for almost an hour.

Also the sound quality is generally very good, so these new recordings sit well alongside those recorded by the FOND stalwarts over the last few years and already in our archives.

Of the nine schools involved we asked for 20 recordings from each, totalling 180. As we have 84 recordings returned, we are a little under half way there.

It was a delight to produce *Fondly Norfolk*, a feature programme about the project, for Radio Norfolk.

In the past I have worked hard to make original recordings for similar August



Stewart Orr in his studio at Priors Croft Barn at Withersdale, near Harleston.

Bank Holiday features, but this time I would think a good 20 minutes' material came straight from the schools recordings themselves – a great testimony to the quality of their work.

Copies of their original recordings are being returned on CD to the schools concerned, and this is proving a much larger job than anticipated.

Copy

Eventually copies will be available to members and others from FOND's own archives, and there will also be listening copies lodged with Jonathan Draper at the Norfolk Record Office.

If you missed the programme on August Bank Holiday Monday, do get in touch with me (address on back of the *Mawkin*). I can send you a copy for £10, including postage.

Now, I must get back to copying all those recordings that have come in. ...

Mike Coley recalls days when milk churns were collected at the end of the loke, bottle-tops were made of cardboard and cold rabbit pie was washed down with cold black tea.



How a workforce was decimated

If you ever had the slightest doubt as to our rural credentials, this fact should give food for thought:

There were more than 20 farming families in the West Norfolk village of Northwold during the 1950s when I was a lad, and that didn't include the labourers they employed.

Most of them would have employed either full or part-time workers to bring their operation up to strength when seasonal crops needed harvesting. Now sadly, unbelievably, there are only two such families from the village still operating today. There was always a diversity in what our farmers chose to work with: either arable, live-stock, dairy or, in most cases, a combination of some or all of them.

Dairy farms were prolific among them and this was when milk churns were collected from wooden platforms daily by lorry. They were placed at the farm gate or at the end of the loke that led up to it.

I remember when the milk was brought to our door on a small yellow milk float. That pony-drawn float belonged to Arthur (Hoppy) Hopkins from Pooley Farm.

People provided their own receptacles into which the milk

was ladled from the churn. Although the milk was normally bottled, the bottle-tops were made of cardboard rather than from the foil with which we're more familiar today. I imagine that the metal to produce foil tops would have been in short supply, probably due to the requirements of the aircraft and other industries during and just after the war.

Later, when churns were obsolete (becoming objects for narrow-boat artists to decorate) the milk from the farm was kept in large stainless vats until it could be pumped directly into road tankers that would transfer it to the bottling plants in Peterborough or some other far-flung place of mystery.

Dockey bag

Workers carried the day's refreshments in the *dockey bag*, invariably bread and cheese, or a bit of cold rabbit pie, washed down with a bottle of cold black tea (no canned drinks then!)

I remember my own dear grandad getting stung on the tongue by a wasp that had crawled unseen into his tea. After taking a mighty swig from the bottle the old boy nearly choked to death as his tongue swelled to the point that he was almost unable to breathe.

After that he adopted the saying:

"Wasps are pretty little flies, bor, but blast hen't they got hot feet!"

People often fell foul of these little blighters, but none worse than when Doug Cracknel inadvertently ploughed up a whole nest of them

while working at Dilton. Sadly, with no protection - tractors had no cabs in those days - he simply didn't survive the swarm's fury in the frenzied attack that ensued. Mechanisation largely improved the output of the farm industry, but decimated the workforce in the process.

A man and a horse could plough an acre a day, but now a man and his tractor can turn over many times that area before dockey time. Some of the bigger machines can plough 40, 60 and up to 100 acres a day.

Combine harvesters that developed from the scythe and pitchfork now gobble up the corn at an alarming rate. It no longer allows for the catching of rabbits and hares that once hid in the middle of the unmown crop, to be flushed out and dispatched by nimble lads, armed with sticks. This ritual was a much-needed perk to help feed the family.

Associated trades like blacksmiths, wheelwrights and horse-breakers have gone by the wayside. If an implement breaks or wears out today, we simply get on the phone and order a new one. At one time we would have made another one ourselves or we knew a chap who could.

But that's just part of the throw-away world we live in today, just like you'll chuck out this bit'o squirt when you're done a read'n on it. Never mind, I shall still be looking forward to looking back next time, despite all that. Till then, dew yew keep a'trosh'n. bor

www.norfolkdialect.com

Over 40,000 FOND visitors from across the world *Norfolk exiles'* *nostalgic notes*

By early November our FOND website had received a total of 40,208 visits from across the world since its inception in January, 2002.

Many of the messages left in the guest book are from Norfolk exiles recalling happy days spent in the county many years ago. After living in New Zealand for 32 years, **Celia Crowl** says she still gets homesick. She writes: "Having a great time going over my childhood. I was born and went to school in Sheringham. "Have now lived in New Zealand for 32 years, but still call Sheringham 'Home.' If I get a bit homesick I head for the web cam of Sheringham, or just look at the photographs online. Great to hear the accent." **Linda Rudd** from Friendswood, Texas, had Norfolk ancestors back in 1728.



**By our website
co-ordinator
PAULINE DODD**

"Excellent website," she enthuses. I enjoyed it very much. My ancestor was from Norfolk and was sentenced to transportation to America in 1728. I've always wondered how his dialect would have sounded and how he would have pronounced his last name. I now have a very good idea, thanks to you. **THANKS!! THANKS!!**

Peter Reeve writes: "Having been exiled in West Yorkshire — God's own country, they reckon, but they hin't seen Norfolk. It was loike a homecoming to find your website. To cum back to Norridge, my hum citie, and list'n to them havin' ajawon the open-air market is totally

wonderful. As a new member of FOND and a member of the Sid Kipper Official Fan Club, who has toured in wildest Yorkshire and amazed folk with his Norfolk wit and humour, could you tell me if Sid is related to Keith (There wus always a lot of incense in Norfolk!!) Must go now, but keep on trosh'n."

Malcolm Hutton writes: "As a Londoner I first went to Norfolk as a lad in the fifties, staying at Annie Kerrison's pub, the Royal Oak in Hingham, now sadly gone. "But as a five-year-old I loved the accent and the charm of all things Norfolk and have returned for holidays whenever possible.

"Sadly, much has been destroyed. I was mortified to find Tesco on the site of Stalham market two years back. I have to say that much of the ruination has been caused by Londoners who do not appreciate the charm of the county and seek to turn it into an extension of the East End of London. More power to *(continued on next page)*

Memories of West Tofts, doomed

village in battle training area

(from previous page)
your elbow."

Barry Chiltern was researching his family on the internet when he stumbled across our website:

"Found the site purely by accident, simply looking for past relatives in the Thetford area.

"I was born at West Tofts in 1940, the village which was destroyed, other than the church. How sad, such a lovely place. *(The vil-*

lage was evacuated permanently to become a military training area).

"My great-grandmother was the local postmistress, my grandmother took over and continued as postmistress on the side of the Army camp after we were evacuated.

"I have never lost my Norfolk upbringing; it was then a wonderful place to live as a small boy. For me it was the tree of life. Despite leaving Norfolk in 1955 I still feel the same way about the county. Your site is great and I have bookmarked it for future reference."

Danielle is studying English language at A2 and is interested in the accent

and dialect of Norwich.

"I was wondering whether you could tell me if possible what these words and phrases mean: read and lot

(found at a butcher's stall at Yarmouth market), troshing, ranny, spluttergut, jiffling. Thank you so much as this is very important with my course work."

(With the help of my trusty Larn Yarsef Norfolk, compiled by Keith Skipper, a bit

Spluttergut — dew yew

know what that mean?

of local knowledge and a bit of research. I was able to help Danielle. I have to admit 'spluttergut' was a problem.

Even Jonathan Maridle couldn't help me there. When in doubt, ask the computer and, sure enough, it came up with this from Angus, from Hemel Hempstead, who wrote:

"I'm from Norfolk originally and was brought up there. My mother used to use the word 'spluttergut' This can be used either as a

noun ('Don't be such a spluttergut') or a verb

('You don't want to go spluttergutting into that'). The word is used to refer to one who rushes into something without first considering all the implications.

"I have only ever heard this word used in Norfolk, but outside the county it seems to carry no meaning whatever."

Peter Bird asks the question: "Could any member confirm that a 'retch' is a Norfolk term for a length of a row of potatoes that a

picker was expected to pick from — going up one side and down the other — and putting the potatoes into

baskets, once the crop had been lifted? Before the advent of a 'hover' that put them straight into the accompanying tractor and trailer? Please give my regards to Netti Rose.

(Netti, from Downham Market, is a former member of the FOND committee).

Heather Hawker is a family historian who would like to get in touch with any Norfolk Webbon folk. Her e-mail address is Heatherhawker@btconnect.com

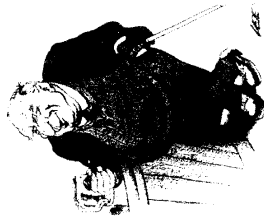
ing of dialect accelerates

well-packed tomes received from the county council today telling me how I can return them for conservation!) No, it is the environment of upbringing and work-place which affects one's writing. Indeed, Eric reminds us that, in general, accounts of East Anglian dialect were written by the squire, who liked to chuckle over it, the parson, who found it etymologically interesting, or the doctor, who found it quaint. He even tells a story against himself. When talking to another journalist he used the word "fulfer" and was immediately asked where he had learned the word. Eric replied that he had first heard it when he was about eight years old, from a boy who used to help in his father's garden. "Grrr!" his colleague remarked, "I can speak better Norfolk than you can. You see I was a gardener's boy." In other words, while he mixed with all sorts of people, he was bound by the restraints of standards of English.

One example of this occurs in his chapter *The Manner of Speaking*. Dealing with "what grammarians call the historic present," he relates the sort of comment which is often made to somebody who thinks he has made a bargain — "I reckon he see yew a-comin'." The "reckon" is too

Can *Broad Norfolk Survive?* In it he shares Dr Joseph Wright's views, written in 1904, in his *English Dialect Grammar and English Dialect Dictionary* (see the first article in the present series) "that pure dialect speech is rapidly disappearing even in country districts, owing to the spread of information and to modern facilities in intercommunication."

Like him, Eric Fowler knew that "the dialect that even old country-folk speak today (1973) is not quite the same language as their grandparents spoke." But he was not nostalgic for the sake of it and felt uncomfortable when people talked of "preserving Broad Norfolk." He sadly, and perhaps surprisingly, questioned whether "when a dialect becomes so self-conscious it can possibly remain a genuine dialect and not an affectation." He is probably right, for the lessening of dialect in Norfolk's tongue has quickened more in the 33 years since he wrote, than during the previous 70 years since Dr Wright wrote. This is bound to accelerate in an age when "texting" relies on abbreviation and silly slogans replace proper language. Despite what he says, the local speech is being de-based. This aspect is covered in Fowler's final chapter:



"Jonathan... mardling" is Joe Lee's caption for his cartoon of Eric Fowler.

good and does not fall well from a Norfolk working class tongue. "He must'a see yew a-comin'" would be more likely although, sad to say, 30 years after Eric wrote, "He must'a seen yew a-comin'" would be more likely.

It is probably unfair to make such selective criticism, but it does illustrate how quickly local speech is being de-based. This aspect is covered in Fowler's final chapter:

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Recording is vital as lessen in age of texting

**Norfolk antiquary
and book-collector
RON FISKE
continues his
series
The Norfolk
Dialect: Guides to
Reading and
Research.
No 14, Broad
Norfolk by
Jonathan Mardle,
Norwich, 1973**

In the last two articles in this series we have dealt with books entitled *Broad Norfolk*. Even so, a third book with the same title appeared in 1973. Written by Eric Fowler, under his well-known pseudonym Jonathan Mardle, it was published by Wensum Books under the guiding hands of George Nobbs and Alan Dean. It was further aided by the drawings of Joe Lee, a political cartoonist with the London Evening News and, in his retirement, with the Eastern Daily Press. His drawing of "Jonathan...



Illustrations by and personae of Mr. George Nobbs

mardling" is a treasured glimpse of Eric, forced to endure a substitute for his favourite sport of bowling. Eric's *Broad Norfolk* adopted a new format: a wide-ranging discourse split into seven chapters covering the language, sounds, words and manner of speaking before concluding with some well-known place-name renderings, a few of his stories and useful glossary. He carried well the double-edged sword of journalism. His natural gifts had been honed to make his writing readably attractive while

preserving the restraints of timetable and deadline. The best of these traits resulted in a very entertaining book. One that proved so popular that it called for three more printings. The weakest was that it was quickly written and, despite being over-read by the equally merited Merwyn Payne (Oh for a return of his literary reviews!), would have benefited from an editor's blue-tipped pencil. While in critical mood it is worth mentioning one other defect, which is quite common to all of us: the restraints of environment (not, I hasten to add, those two

A few words from the Walloons - Strangers from the Low Countries

When thousands of Strangers from the Low Countries settled in Norfolk during the 16th and 17th centuries, the largest influx was in Norwich, but there were also Stranger communities in Yarmouth, King's Lynn and Thetford.

Among the Dutch and Flemish Strangers in Norwich there was also a substantial community of French-speaking Netherlanders employed in the weaving trade. These were the Walloons.

Moreover, when the Dutch engineer Sir Cornelius Vermuyden drained the Fens he employed workers from the Low Countries to dig out rivers and drains and here too were a substantial number of Walloons. The area they came from was in the south of the Spanish Netherlands, mostly in what is now the region of Wallonia in Belgium. Compared with

the Dutch, their influence on Norfolk dialect has been very small, but there are two or three areas where the Walloons have left their mark.

Firstly in Norwich the Walloons competed with the Flemish weavers by producing high quality stuffs. Some of the

**By Dr William Woods
Director, Dutch and
Flemish Studies Centre,
St Mary the Less,
Norwich**

terms for specialist cloth made by the Strangers, known as the New Draperies, are of Walloon derivation — *canlet*, *domix*, *mockado*, *lammy*.

Secondly in the Fens there is a geographical word in use from Lincolnshire to West Norfolk: *éau* — a Fenland waterway. A form *ea*, of the same meaning, was in use long before the arrival of the Walloons, but possibly because of confusion with the similarly pronounced *ey* meaning island (eg Ely).

Ramsay, Whitlesey) the alternative form *éau* was adopted through Walloon influence.

There are two *caus* in West Norfolk: Eau Brink near King's Lynn and Popham's Eau near Downham Market.

Thirdly there are many people with Walloon surnames living in Norfolk and the Fens. The much more numerous Dutch and Flemish surnames quickly became anglicised (eg Van der Goes to Goose), but many of the Walloon names have been preserved in close to their original form. From Norwich come

Boys, Cockaday, Drummer, Feayter, Fovargue, Lefever, Marley, Mee, Neave, Perowne, Philippo, Roister, Savage, Taverner and Vorter. From the Fens come Amory, Bayley, Beharel, Culy, Eggar, Lethair, Lepia, Massingarbe, Prime and Tegedine. Finally, a common dialect word of Flemish origin widespread in East Anglia and beyond can be traced back to Walloon influence in Flanders: *pingle* — to pick at food, eat squeamishly, from the Flemish verb *pingelen*, from *epingle* = pin.

Abbot preached in Norfolk dialect circa 1180

The Norfolk dialect was alive and well in the 12th century. In the book *Jocelin of Brakeland: Chronicle of the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds*, is a reference to the newly-elected Abbot Samson, in 1182, stating: "He was a good speaker, in both French and Latin, concentrating more on plain speaking than

on flowery language. He could read books written in English more elegantly, and he used to preach to the people in English, but in the Norfolk dialect, for that was where he was born and brought up."

* *The World's Classics series, published by Oxford University Press, 1989.*

Have you got a nickname?

I was always wriggling, explains Polly Wiggle

Someone asked me the other day if Polly Wiggle was my real name! Not a Norfolk person, I might add – a local would know that a pollywiggle is a dialect word for tadpole – but she has only known me as Polly, which is my nickname, of course.

Have you got a nickname? They do seem surprisingly common in these parts. My mum is one of a family of six, and they all have nicknames, together with two proper names each.

Titch

My dad reckoned it was a real nightmare sorting them all out when he first met them. There is Bishy, Titch, Botty (but she doesn't like people to know; no one dare call her that to her face), Holler (who has the loudest voice I've ever heard, and his laugh nearly deafens you), Dodman (because he was always last getting ready) and Ranny. You often seem to be landed with a nickname as a result of some characteristic. It seems I couldn't keep still when I was little, I was always wriggling around and one of my great-aunts labelled me Polly Wiggle because she couldn't keep hold of me.

Bishy

I've calmed down a bit since then. My Uncle Bishy got his name because he always got red in the face when the others teased him, but I don't think he ever came out in black spots. Sometimes, of course, it is an opposite and ironic – Uncle Titch is huge!

My mum is Ranny to the family. She is the youngest, the little one. She's quiet and quite mouse-like, so her nickname probably suits her best of the lot.

You can get a nickname at any age. My grandma got her latest one when she was offered a dishwasher for a present, mainly because she refused point-blank to use it! She said after washing up for a family of six and lots of hangers-on all her life she wasn't about to change now, so, of course, she became Nanny Dishwasher! But I have to say that she isn't at all like a pied wagtail really.

Actually, I'm surprised that I've stayed as Polly Wiggle. My husband reckons I ought to be renamed Billywix because I'm more of an owl than a lark.

Spud

I do my best work late at night, and I used to be Tawny Owl with the local Brownies.

However, in his family my husband's nickname is Jacob because as a boy he came home with a jarful of frogspawn one year and put it in the pond in their back garden. He looked after it until all the frogs had developed, but the following year they were overrun with frogs and he ended up taking the spawn back to the stream where he had found it in the first place! So I guess if he's going to carry on looking after me I'd better stay as Polly Wiggle.

Oh, yes. My dad had a nickname too. He was called Spud. But no one ever could tell me why.



Reindeer Moon

*The moss is silvered in the glade
This gentle night
And ferns like phantom wreaths are laid
In secret light.
A reindeer moon rides in the sky
And crystal frost
Crisps leaves to tinsel as they lie
On paths embossed
With patterns of a travelled way.
Aside, I see
Pricked out with stars unknown to day,
A holly tree:
Its berries mutely flushed with peace.
An ivy cloak
Steals radiance of a golden fleece
From gilded oak
And from its folds a weird flute
Wavers away —
A brown owl's tremulous salute
And solemn say.
Great trees tonight a cloister make
And standing here
Beneath the reindeer moon, I take
Thought of the year.*

By TED ELLIS, 1953. From *Ted Ellis's Countryside Reflections*, first published in 1982. Drawing: David Poole.

A landgirl's memories

By DORIS YARHAM

In the forties and fifties I worked on a mixed farm. I looked forward to the different seasons and varied jobs through the year.

One job I liked was on the drag-rake at harvest time. The horse I had to use was a chestnut called Prince. No one told me he had never been in a pair of shafts or a drag-rake and he had only been brought to the farm the night before! You can imagine what happened when I tripped the rake when it was full — luckily it was a 60-acre field!

I looked after quite a few laying hens as well as a small flock of geese for Christmas. The farm grew a few acres of carrots and four women would spend the winter pulling them and bagging them. I also had to pull mangolds, top and tail them and grind them up — hard work turning the handle when the grinder was full. With the wartime two-hour time difference the working days were long and at harvest time we would come out of the fields in the moonlight.

To earn a little more, my husband and I, with two other men, would go muck-spreading in the moonlight! Threshing was hard work. I always got the job of bagging the chaff and the wind was always blowing the wrong way!

Sometimes I would like to turn back the clock, even though it was hard work. There was the friendship with the men and women who worked on the farm and the satisfaction of a job well done. As the seasons come round I still miss it, even though I am now well into my eighties.

Ghostly happening in a blizzard on Salthouse Heath 192 years ago

In the early 19th century Norfolk experienced a number of extremely severe winters. In 1814 the temperature fell to 20 degrees below freezing point and frost rendered the rivers and many roads impassable.

A sailor who had been paid off from his ship at Yarmouth was determined to return home to his family in North Norfolk at Cley. He hitched a ride on a couple of carriers' carts, then slept the night in a barn. Next day a kindly farm worker gave him a lift in his wagon but severe snowdrifts made the road to Cley impassable. The wagon had to turn back, but, undaunted, the sailor swung his kitbag over his shoulder, wound his scarf round his head, pulled his hat down firmly against the wind, drew his coat closer and set off with a firm resolve to walk home.

As he began to cross Salthouse Heath the gentle snowflakes turned into a blizzard so intense that he could no longer discern the landmarks he was using to find his way home.

Then, out of the swirling snow, an old man appeared. Surely he could not be far from his home in such foul weather? The sailor called to him, but it was only when he drew level that he received any reaction.

The old man stopped, regarded the sailor for a moment, his eyes twinkling and a smile turned up the corners of his big white beard. He raised a

gloved finger to his whiskered lips, pointed to the heavens and with a sweep of his arm bade the sailor follow.

As the light faded, the blizzard died, and the man walked up an old cart track and indicated his cottage. Lamps illuminated the windows and smoke was whirling from the chimney.

The sailor continued on his way and soon recognised the familiar landmarks of Cley and Wiveton churches. As darkness fell he reached his cottage door and the embrace of his family.

Next morning, he resolved to take a token of thanks to the old man. Slipping into his coat two fine flasks of rum he had hidden from the Excise, he set out across the white fields to find the old man's cottage.

There it was, smoke still billowing from the chimney....

The door was opened by a little old lady, even more wizened than the old man. He explained how he wished to thank her husband for his kindness.

Her eyes filled with tears. Her husband had been dead for more than 10 years.

Thinking there might have been a mistake, the sailor gave a full description, whereupon the poor lady was beside herself—it was just as her late husband had looked and how he was dressed when he was found during the last great snow storm, when he lost his way and perished on Salthouse Heath.

Taking his leave, the sailor rushed down the path and on to the heath.

Though more snow had fallen, he could still discern his tracks — but there was only one set of footprints!

**A spooky tale once
told to
Norfolk historian
NEIL STOREY
by 'a good ole North
Norfolk bor'**

NORFOLK QUIZ

Compiled by the Boy Colin

- 1 What is the name of the marshman's cottage at How Hill?
- 2 Which authoress wrote Revelations of Divine Love?
- 3 Who founded the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital in 1771?
- 4 What is 34 acres in area and lies beneath the heath of Breckland?
- 5 In the 1880s which Norwich pub was the home of a drinking club called the Everlasting Club?
- 6 For which football club did Peter Grant, Norwich City's new manager, play before joining the Canaries as a player?
- 7 In which Norfolk village was the church dismantled and reassembled under the supervision of Canon Walter Marcon, its rector for 63 years?
- 8 In which year was Taverham Mill demolished?
- 9 Where was the Royal Agricultural Show held when George V visited it six days after his coronation?
- 10 Who was manager of Norwich speedway team in 1946?

ANSWERS ON PAGE 27

Left, right - 'coop' or 'reesh'!

When I was about 15 my friend Neville ploughed for local farmers in the Gayton area, near King's Lynn. He used to let me have a go...or should I say "Hev a goo"? The signal for a *left* turn was a pull on the rein and repeating the word "cupp," or a prolonged "coop," depending on whether it was a sharp or gradual turn. The word *right* sounded like "reesh." This, too, would be given as either short or long, depending on the nature of the turn; simply, an instinctive adjustment of intonation to what was required of the horse. Another memory stirred when I read "half arter

tew..." in the extract from a novel by "James Blyth." My grandmother told me of an afternoon when she and her sister had taken a walk over fields.

Meeting a farmhand driving a horse and wagon, they asked the time. He

By RUPERT SEWELL

pulled out a large watch and chain: "Thas half arter— whoa old mare— thas half arter — whoa old mare— thas half arter foer by my marster's toime." When I was about 10 (1935) I would sometimes be taken to an aunt at Setchey (we called it

Setch), south of Lynn on the A10, the old London road. My aunt lived in a cottage situated a mile from the main road.

Further along the lane was a farm where I was given rides on a work horse. One day, I was taken into the stable to see how the harness was put on. "What's his name?" I asked. "Sooner," came the reply. "Why?" I innocently inquired. (All right, you're ahead of me!) "Because he'd sooner be in hare eat'n than out thare workin'."

Incidentally, the London road really was quiet and leafy-lined in those days. We could stroll along the middle of the road on summer evenings with no fear of being run over. Makes you think, doesn't it?

WORDSEARCH

Hidden below are the names of 20

Norfolk employers, past and present

Compiled by Brenda Bizzell

Solution on Page 27

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

ALDISS
BAYER
BESPAK
CALEY
COLMAN
CRANE FRUEHAUF
GARDLINE

HEATRAE
HOBBIES
JARROLD
KINNERTON
LOTUS
MACKINTOSH
MARSH

NESTLE
NORWICH UNION
RHONE POULENC
STARTRITE
STRUCTUREFLEX
THALES

At the mercy of the unforgiving North Sea

The Rescues of the Wells and Blakeney Lifeboats. By Mick Bensley. Bengunn Publishing 2006. 46 colour illustrations, 33 pencil sketches. £35.

This is the third of Bensley's books featuring rescues by North Norfolk lifeboats. Not only is it a pleasure to review this book because of the quality of the paintings but also for the meticulous research through RNLI records and interviews with fishermen and lifeboatmen. It covers 150 years of lifeboat service in the two communities and in these days of advanced technology one can only marvel at the bravery and stamina of the men who put to sea in all weathers with so little protection to save men they did not know.

They were at the mercy of the unpredictable and unforgiving North Sea. Reading of these rescues is a humbling experience. This is a book for everyone interested in the sea, be they simple watchers from a deckchair, amateur sailors, professional officers and crews or those with an interest in human behaviour and how we react to unexpected emergencies.



The Wells lifeboat Baltic taking the crew from the fishing smack FTB, of Boston, on March 23, 1898.

Norfolk in wartime

**Norfolk in the Second World War.
By Frank Meeres. Phillimore & Co. £17.99.**

Education and outreach officer at the Norfolk Record Office, the author takes a commanding overview of how the war affected all sections of Norfolk society, be they residents, evacuees, visitors or members of the armed forces.

Along the way are interesting facts — official approval for the sale of horsemeat, the use of nettles as a vegetable, anti-splinter paint for decorating schools, the fining of a Naval reserve officer in Yarmouth for striking a match to help a girl to read the dial in a phone box, American bases covering 100,000 acres of Norfolk countryside and the presence of 50,000 US personnel within a 30-mile radius of Norwich are just a few.

Diss town centre was closed at least once so that black US servicemen could enjoy an evening out free from harassment from their white colleagues; a rodeo was held at Carrow Road ground in 1943, police warned women in Diss that it was an offence to take an interest in Italian prisoners of war; and there was a clash of cultures among evacuees.

The experiences of Norfolk men serving throughout the world are recounted. All the horror and passion is there in this testament to man's inhumanity to man, the stoicism of civilians under pressure and the reaction of children to a frightening environment.

Inspired by wild Norfolk....

Words on Wildlife. By David North. Birdseye Books. £4.95.

This small book, written, designed and published in Norfolk, carries the byline "Words and images inspired by wild Norfolk." The author is currently education

manager for the Norfolk Wildlife Trust and course director for the UEA's Certificate in Ornithology course.

Each of the 21 evocative photographs is accompanied by a short poem, varying from three to over 20 lines. This reviewer's favourite is a

three-liner tied to a view of a puddly path at Holkham during a wet November:

*On reflection,
Even puddles have
Their hidden depths.*

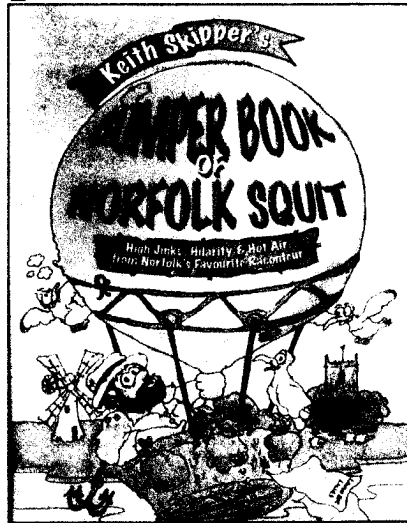
You'll enjoy finding your own favourite in this small gem of a book.

Providing hours of pleasure from a book to treasure

**Keith Skipper's
Bumper Book
of Norfolk Squit.**
Halsgrove Publishing 2006. £14.99.

If you are looking for something different as a Christmas present this is the book to choose.

Within its 15 chapters you will find prime examples of Norfolk humour, both true and imaginary. From the famous post-scripts of Aunt Agatha which accompanied every Boy John Letter to the Eastern Daily Press (as in "She's a very wise woman what say nothin' at the right time") to Norfolk Proverbs (as in "Too menny cooks — finish up on tellervishun") and the two-line conversations between Gert and Florrie. There are serious offerings with insights into the career of the Singing Postman (Allan Smethurst), Sidney Grapes and Dick Bagnall-Oakeley, plus contributions from Baroness Shephard of Northwold, Sid Kipper, Sir Nicholas Bacon of Raveningham Hall, Helen McDermott of Anglia TV, Lord (Robin) Walpole of Mannington Hall and Professor Peter Trudgill, president of FOND and internationally acclaimed lin-



guistics expert.

Add in local limericks, 10 pages of humorous stories sent to Keith during his 40 years as a broadcaster and writer, an almost believable chapter on Norfolk "firsts" and a distinctly unbelievable chapter on the origins of our town and village names and you have a book to treasure and one that will provide many hours of pleasure. Highly recommended.

The Peddars Way



Robinsons on the trail

Walking the Norfolk Long Distance Trail: The Peddars Way and The Coast Path. Both by Mike and Bruce Robinson. Poppyland Publishing. £8.95 each.

These two books complement each other, providing a guide to the two "paths," one ancient and one new, that make up the 95 miles of the Trail, opened by the Prince of Wales in 1986. The texts are by Bruce Robinson, former Eastern Daily Press journalist and one-time EDP diarist Clement Court. The superb colour photography is by son Mike. Both books follow the same pattern: a general text recording Bruce's experiences during his many walks along the Peddars Way and four walks on the coastal route. The other "half" is a series of "favourite bits," such as the ruins at Castle Acre, the

vast expanse of Holkham Bay, the beauty of Roman Camp and, most importantly, pubs to visit. Snatches of local history add interest to the changing scene.

As Bruce says, "The walks have everything — "...history and botany, bird watching and fresh air — a continually changing landscape, breck, chalk, forest, mid county, high county, agriculture, tourism, together with cliff and coast, shoreline, the latter offering gentleness, peace and openness." If these delightful books don't tempt you, at the very least, to try a short section of either path, then you will miss out on some of the most interesting and pleasurable aspects of our much-loved Norfolk countryside.

Poppyland Publishing website www.poppyland.co.uk contains extra support and resources material for use by schools, special interest groups and researchers, plus a linked mapping page and a classroom resource page. The site also features a video promotion where Mike and Bruce Robinson talk about the books.

Mary Mann: a nightmare

The Patten Experiment - A Novel by Mary Mann. Larks Press 2006. £7.50. First published 1899.

Mary Mann is renowned for her stories of Norfolk village life published in the 1880s and early 1900s. She captured the stark reality of the comfortable lifestyle of those "Up at the Hall" compared to farm labourers trying to provide for their families on 11 shillings a week.

This story follows six young idealists from a local hall as they, lightheartedly, decide to experience life at the labourer's level, living in a terraced tied cottage with none of the everyday facilities they had enjoyed. What starts as a simple experiment to satisfy their curiosity soon turns into a nightmare as they struggle to come to terms with a completely different way of life and the realisation that they are totally ill-equipped, both mentally and physically, to cope. Temptations to steal, strained relationships within the group and with neighbours, sickness and other dramas make this a compelling story, providing us with an insight into life at the labouring level.

A village full of memories

Thornham: A Photographic History of a Norfolk Village and its People. Edited and researched by Peter Oliver and John Warham. Published by Thornham Local History Society. £12.50, direct from John Warham, Red Brick House, Hall Lane, Thornham, PE36 6BN, p&p £2.50, or available from local shop In the Barn.

Drive through any village in Norfolk, especially along the North Norfolk coast, and you can appreciate the charm and apparent laid-back lifestyle. But look closely and realise how much our communities are changing. Every available piece of land is being developed, not always sympathetically, with more and more homes being used by incomers too many of whom do not contribute to village life.

This book is a timely reminder of days past when Thornham had a bustling port, was self-sufficient for most of its needs and its inhabitants were recognised for what they were — individuals who had a sense of community and were valued for what they contributed to it.

There are tales of smuggling, the Lady of the Manor who founded an ironworks which counted royalty among its customers; the local men who joined Captain Frank Beck from the Sandringham Estate in their futile and fatal expedition to Gallipoli, and why Sir Donald Bradman sent his best wishes to the village cricket team.

This book is a permanent record of the generosity of villagers who have scoured attics and cupboards to bring to light long-forgotten never-seen-before photographs and postcards which tell the story of how this coastal village has changed over the past 100 years. *All profits from sales of the book will go towards supporting village projects*

Norfolk murders

Norfolk Murders. By Neil Storey. Sutton Publishing 2006. £12.99.

Today, murders in our county are reported factually and with a certain amount of restraint — except in the case of a few sensationally orientated tabloids.

In Victorian and Edwardian days there was no restraint whatever, the more lurid the details the more sales rocketed.

FOND life member Neil Storey has produced a meticulously researched and eminently readable book detailing 11 murders within the county.

They range from the Burnham Poisoners of 1835 through to the crimes of Denis Moore of Old Catton and Alfred Reynold of Dereham in 1951, the last hangings in the county.

Neil outlines the atrocious behaviour of ordinary people who clamoured to find the best sighting of public hangings; includes facts, documents and illustrations never seen or heard of before, and a skim through the acknowledgments testifies to the diligence of the research carried out.

One man's search

Don't Hassle Me, I'm Local: The Travelogue of a Journey to Another Dimension. Self-published by Vaughn through Windyridge Publishing, Selside, Cumbria 2006. £8.99.

A book with a difference — part autobiographical, part observational and part recording one man's search for a scientific explanation for the theory of time and space and how all things in the universe are connected. Vaughn Balding was born on his grandmother's settie at Wiveton, North Norfolk. Now, 49 years later, he lives close to his birthplace with his wife, son and daughter. He records his opinions on the incomers who have changed, irreversibly, the nature and life of his birthplace; his work as a builder and his love of painting and boating; his relationships with his tenants who have become friends; the reaction to his paintings and how we have brought our planet "right to the edge of the abyss." It is clear Vaughn is still searching for the answer to his scientific quest.

Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse



A history of the buildings and the people who lived in them. By Stephen Pope. Poppyland Publishing. £10.95.

Today we regard the workhouse as something of an anachronism, but in the 18th and 19th centuries the threat of having to live in these institutions, with husbands, wives and children separated into different dormitories, was faced with dread and foreboding.

Rudimentary education was given to young children in the hope that they would find a job and not come back!

Punishment for apparently minor misdemeanours, such as playing cards, could result in a spell of solitary confinement on a diet of bread and water or even several days in the House of Correction at Little Walsingham.

Every encouragement was given to inmates to leave — girls going into service, boys into a trade, sometimes paid fares to Canada, or simply waiting for them to die. Burial was in a cheap coffin, often with a hinged

lid so it could be reused. Many graves held upwards of 20 bodies, and some dead inmates, up to the 1920s, were sent to the Cambridge College of Anatomy for research and training purposes.

The original building at Gressenhall was a House of Industry, a category of institution unique to Norfolk. It developed into a full-time Union Workhouse with tramps ("Gentlemen of the Road") frequent visitors in search of a bath, a meal and a straw bed under a welcoming roof.

Later it became a home for the elderly, a centre for housing homeless families, a German prisoner of war camp, a billet for the 3rd Regiment of the South Wales Borderers and a reception centre for evacuees in the second world war, and finally the Norfolk Rural Life Museum, which opened in 1977.

Workhouse Trail tours are available most days. Telephone 01362 860563 to check availability and times.

My Life with Horses: The Story of Jack Juby, MBE, Master of the Heavy Horse. Edited by Alison Downes and Alan Childs. Halsgrove Publishing 2006. £19.99

Horseman supreme

While Jack Juby fought a terminal illness, daughter Alison had the foresight to tape interviews with him recalling his life with horses—at the same time providing him with an interest which helped to counteract the pain.

This is the story of a journey through life, from poverty to national and international recognition as a master of his profession, culminating in the MBE for his service to heavy horses.

Along the way we are taken to cattle markets, shows and fairs at Norwich and Acle, reminded of grandfather's 3-seater bucket lavatory and visits to Sandringham to meet the Royal Family. This book is a testament to a Norfolk character and is for everyone interested in farming and how it has changed within a lifetime.



Jack Juby in 1993, at 72.

updated script and we'll be looking for the usual stars to take the roles of Cinders, the Ugly Twisters, the Handsome Prince and anybody else who stumbles into the story. Please come prepared either to offer us something for the first half or to take part in the panto — or both. You know it makes sense.

Back came the reply: "Why you're up in a balloon."

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This is the final Merry Mawkin to have been edited by Robin Limmer. A new editor has not been appointed yet. Anyone interested in filling the vacancy should contact the acting secretary, Peter Brooks, telephone 01263 822895.

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

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

Address.....

.....

Postcode.....

Telephone.....

PLEASE SEND TO: Brenda Bizzell
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Cheques made out to FOND, please.