

SYDERSTONIAN NEWSLETTER

April 2015

Village News

1 **St Mary's Church**

Friday 8th May 7pm – Bangers and Mash supper – Amy Robsart Hall

Sunday 7th June 4pm – Evensong, All Saints – Barmer

Sunday 21st June 1-6pm – Open Gardens

Saturday 1st-Wednesday 5th August 10am-5pm (except Sunday 2nd August 12.30-5pm) – Flower Festival

Sunday 2nd August 6pm – Evensong and Songs of 'Praise'

Sunday 13th September 10.30am – Patronal Festival service and lunch

Friday 9th October 6pm – Harvest Supper

Amy Robsart Hall

The defibrillator is now in situ and ready for use (if you are unlucky enough). About 16 people have been trained in its use. Let's hope the necessity for it will be minimal.

A village garden fete will take place on Saturday 23rd May and will be held at various venues in the village. Funds in aid of East Anglian Air Ambulance and community events.

'Lynn Arms' P.H. will host a Quiz Night on Sunday 3rd May at 7pm – proceeds to East Anglian Air Ambulance and community events.

Obituary

Betty Broughton died in March aged 85. For the past two years Betty has been living at Docking House Care Home. Betty was a regular attendee at the O.S. reunions and although slightly formidable on first appearance had a keen sense of humour and would willingly share her knowledge of bygone Syderstone. We extend our sympathy to her husband George.

Many thanks to present and past contributors to this newsletter (Cluck especially says thank you). Anybody may feel free to make a contribution. Correspondence (max 100 words) to Ken Edge 3 Haynes Road, Hornchurch, Essex, RM11 2HS. Or email kenneth636@hotmail.com. K.E.

2 **Carriages at Whitehall**

I have been posting these newsletters to Rita Chapman of West Runton for a few years now. Her interest in Syderstone derives from her maternal grandfather's position as head horseman at Whitehall Farm. Robert Springall (b Cromer) and Jane Elizabeth Neve (b Stoke Holy Cross), Rita's grandparents, occupied a cottage next to 'Shepherd' Mussett, his wife and son Fred.

The Springalls brought up a family of three girls, Violet, Olive and Lilian. Lilian became Rita's mother and in fact had a closer connection with Syderstone than Rita herself. Lilian sang in the church choir and played the organ occasionally. She was not the front rank organist and her playing was probably confined to the children's services. This was probably during the time of Rev. Basil Read or possibly earlier. Lilian and Fred Mussett became firm friends and

on one occasion he gave Lilian a lift on the crossbar of his bike. Some way along the road the bike wobbled, Fred lost control and the pair ended up in a patch of roadside stinging nettles. Not the best way to start the day but I expect they laughed it off as friends are wont to do. Sid Negus told me that 'Shepherd' Mussett was a fully-fledged football referee and would bike to local villages to officiate at various fixtures on a Saturday afternoon. For his dedication, and dedication it was most certainly was, he would have received half a crown a game. Fred will need no introduction to many of us. I always found him an approachable, genial man. He, along with another notable Fred, Fred Harper, provided me with references when I joined the Metropolitan Police. Some might say that they have a lot to answer for but I am grateful to both of them for this service. On leaving school Lilian went into service at Syderstone Rectory and in due course left there and, along with her two sisters, went to work at a boys school at Hunstanton. She loved her life and Norfolk. She was gathering some dog roses from the hedgerow when she met and fell into conversation with Charles Edward Walker from Stanhoe. Charles was born in Stanhoe and lived there with his father George and his brothers and sisters – six in all. Eventually Granddad Robert, Granny Jane, Violet, Olive and Lilian moved to Willesden Green, North London to work. Lilian and Charles married at Neasden and Rita was born two years later, Rita Fay Springall Walker. Whilst at Whitehall part of Robert's duties was to drive the ladies from the 'big house' shopping or visiting or wherever they wished to go and always to Syderstone Church on Sunday. Rita does not remember the name of the people who lived at the 'big house' at this time.

Rita spent holidays with George Walker and his family at Stanhoe. Rita says Granddad George was a lovely man and kept bees among the fruit trees at the end of his large garden. He would take Rita to see the bees and introduce her to them telling them who she was and what she was doing at Stanhoe. 'Bee lore', Rita says - well, I had heard of the old custom of telling the bees when their master had died and the name of the new master. This was done so that the bees would not swarm. Unfortunately this was forgotten when George died and his bees did swarm. Kipling saw bee lore this way in his poem 'Bee Boy's Song' – "Bees! Bees! Hark to your bees! Hide from your neighbours as much as you please, But all that has happened to us you must tell, Or else we will give you no honey to sell!" It strikes me that a beekeeper could get much off his chest in this way keeping his bees posted of family and local news supplemented by his own views be they moderate or extreme and all in the certain knowledge that his bees would fill his combs with honey.

When Rita and her husband Alan retired to West Runton they paid a visit to Syderstone and went to the church where providentially they met Fred Mussett. Fred showed them where Lilian would have sat in the choir stalls and they adjourned to Fred's cottage where Phyllis gave them tea and tales and reminiscences were exchanged. At this time Lilian was living in a care home and arrangements were discussed about arranging for her to meet Fred. Sadly before this could take place Lilian died but she did know that Rita and Fred had met.

A close neighbour of Rita's at West Runton was Rev. Albert Holland, a former rector of Syderstone from the late 60's to the early 80's. He and Rita had many talks about Syderstone and Albert remembered a photograph framed and hanging in the rectory depicting a carriage leaving the church with some elegantly dressed ladies and in all probability driven and under the care of Mr Robert Springall. At this time the rectory had become a care home. Would Rita like the photograph? If so, Albert felt sure they could get it for her. Well, yes she would like it but felt that its removal would be depriving the old place of part of its history and this she did not want to do. She says that she later regretted this decision upon hearing that the rectory had ceased to function as a care home and had returned to private ownership. What a coup if this photograph still exists but more probably it was discarded during the changeover.

I am grateful to Rita for recalling these events. In her own words, "So I travel on with my thoughts and a few precious memories that have been passed on to me by those I love so much!" – Rita Chapman nee Walker.

3 **Bees**

My knowledge of bees is not extensive. Barely more than that of my four year old grandson Olly. Olly emerged from the garden the other day looking a little panic stricken. "There are buzzies out there. Buzzies have sharp bottoms!" Indeed they do and a most important fact to learn and store away in life's armoury when you are four and there is lots to learn every day. I told him that provided he stayed quiet and calm in their presence and watched them from a distance he need not fear them. He seemed unconvinced but it is a sure fact. He reminded me of a story told me by May, my cousin, which took place several years ago. She and her brother Don were spending a holiday with aunts and uncles at Glandford and at various times he would load up the old green Ford model AA truck sign – written W.R. WEST. MILLER. GLANDFORD. PHONE CLEY 212. The lorry would carry sacks of weaners meal, layers mash, cubes of linseed cake, chicken corn and various foodstuffs for the local farmers and smallholders. If it suited him he would invite any holiday making children along for a ride. Back in the late 20's and early 30's to go for a ride, especially in a lorry where you sat up high, was a real treat. On this particular round, they made an early call at Colonel Crowdy's place at 'Long Furlong' down the Langham road. Uncle Billy got out to unload the various sacks and carry them to the store house. May and Don were told to stay in the lorry and not to go poking about in the farmyard and go prying into things that did not concern them. All this cautionary advice accompanied by a wag of the finger. They settled down to wait his return which seemed a longish time on occasion or so they thought. This day was different. In the distance somewhere at the back of the buildings they could hear a shrill screaming which soon became louder and more urgent. Uncle Billy reappeared in some agitation. "Do you crank those windows up and just stay in the lorry. A boy knocked over a bee hive and those bees are something savage". The windows were quickly cranked up and not a gap remained. This did but slightly muffle the poor boys screams and they caught a glimpse of him running full pelt to the shelter of the house with a cloud of bees around his head peppering him like Stuka dive bombers. May said that you could see his head and face coming up in red blotches and wheals. So the earlier one learns to treat bees with respect the better.

For those among you who like honey and are at Syderstone you could do worse than drive out towards Docking and turn right at the crossroads where Gigero Gray's scrapyard used to be in the direction of Stanhoe and on the left past Ayres' coal depot you come to an entrance where Mr and Mrs Russell keep their bees. They sell a good selection of honey. Tree Ivy honey, heather honey, Norfolk honey, borage honey and sea lavender honey at a fraction of the cost supermarkets charge and a most superior product. Don't take my word for it – try it yourselves – you are in for a treat! – Ken Edge 11/14

4 **Household Hint**

A few years back now we had a minor flood in the bathroom caused by a leaking pipe right underneath the bath. We called the plumber who needed the water shut off from the stopcock which was in the front garden enclosed inside a glazed drainage pipe. The stopcock tap was elbow deep down. In itself this was not a problem as we had inherited a tool to reach and turn off the stopcock. However lack of attention over many years had allowed the pipe to partially fill up with soil and garden debris and was also home to about forty snails. "I'll let you clear that out mate", said the plumber and I spent an uncomfortable half hour lying face down, elbow deep in the pipe extracting debris and snails. Eventually I cleared the pipe and the plumber turned off the water. "We don't want all this palaver every time we want access to the stopcock do we? Got any black bin sacks?" I provided the sacks requested and the plumber knotted about four together and fed and rammed them into the pipe. No more trouble. The snails? Oh yes. I have a neighbour who caused me some trouble a few years back and I thought the neighbour's lush garden might provide an agreeable home. Surely better than the inside of a glazed water pipe. Giving is surely good! K.E. 12/14

5 Eric Morecambe sets the pace

In conversation with Max Bygraves, Eric Morecambe was relating how he became fitted with a pacemaker. Max was fascinated and asked how it worked. Eric provided all the details. "How marvellous, but you have to hope that these things never go wrong". "Went wrong this morning" said Eric. "Good lord, what happened?" asked Max. "I farted and the garage door opened!" K.E. 2/15

6 Mike Shurety

Mike will need no introduction to most of us Old Syderstonians. He, his brothers Allan, Richard and Stephen lived in Syderstone in the 1950s at the police house at Creake Road where his mum and dad operated as the law keeping force in the village with additional responsibilities for good order at USAF, Sculthorpe, hence, Bert's nom de guerre 'The Syderstone Sheriff'. At 6ft 2 and a half inches Bert was a colossus but exercised his authority with a light touch. Mike made a visit to Syderstone last summer and no doubt found a number of changes and in order to get his bearings he visited the old rectory and was referred to Sheila Riches. Mike was given a copy of a photo of a 1950's Syderstone cricket team of which Bert was an opening batsman. In addition, he received a copy of the book I wrote in 2006/2007 recalling my memories of life in the village in the 1950's. Both were well received and the items were copied to share with his three brothers. In due course I received an email from Mike recalling my stepbrother Colin, Ida's shop and the lively activities that took place around Webster's yard in those days. He also mentioned his rivalry with Jack Daykin. Apparently he and Jack only had to see one another and a fight would ensue. This spilled over at school on one occasion and Mr Goult, who was probably fed up with the whole business, called the two lads together and told them that he would give them the opportunity to fight in front of the whole school with boxing gloves and with Mr Goult as referee. The big occasion took place with both lads predictably overawed. Expectations proved too great for both of them and after a few ineffectual punches and feeble scuffling, Mr Goult called a halt to the proceedings. As Mr Goult had intended both lads lost their appetite for fighting, at least for the time being. Mike was saddened to hear of Jack's death and also Colin's passing. In response to his email, I add a few observations of my own.

Dear Mike – glad to hear that you and Allan enjoyed the book. I enjoyed writing it and it gave me pleasure recalling people and events so long ago. Webster's yard was a lively place back in the 1950's with our noisy games of cops and robbers and cowboys and Indians accompanied by popping cap guns. These games were not without their dangers as John Greeves split my eyebrow with an arrow fired from his bow. At the last reunion in October 2014, Barry Thompson reminded me that Colin's nickname at school was 'Noisy'. One of those perverse nicknames, for he was a quiet chap who loved tinkering with his meccano set and anything mechanical. He was less comfortable in a social gathering.

The old derelict house you refer to may have been the old one up-one down which backed on to the 'Lynn Arms'. It was certainly dilapidated and was used by the Greeves family to store bikes and garden tools etc. It had been occupied within living memory by a Mr and Mrs Johnson. Harry Pells told me that the old girl looked like a witch and that all the kids gave her a wide berth. Colin said that their chickens lived en famille and shared the ground floor accommodation with them. All this was before my time. I remember hitting a cricket ball through one of its windows and had to pay sixpence to have the pane replaced. It was the first money to have been spent on its maintenance in many a year. I do not remember Jack Daykin as a boy but he did attend a number of reunions. A shame neither of you rose to the occasion at the school bout. As you say Jimmy Goult knew a thing or two and ran that school very well. I remember you and Colin organising our motley crew into something of a military structure with ranks ranging from the highest to the lowest. We were 'paid' in different coloured beer bottle tops scavenged from 'The Buck'. The ranks of Lt. Colonel and Major General confused me a bit. I don't know why I should have been bothered as I only

rose to corporal. I remember that we built huts in the wood which 'Wonky' Edge and 'Norkie' Edwards and their gang demolished after a few days and in due course we would return the compliment. No hut lasted more than a few days, You were highly honoured to have been invited in to play. Ida was usually set against us having friends in the house to play unless it was on a birthday. I don't remember this occasion although we did play 'Happy Families', 'Whot', 'Lexicon', whist, rummy, patience and also Newmarket if there were sufficient numbers available. One of the crumbling cottages in the yard known as 'Noah's Ark' was demolished in the 1950's by Dick Green and David Graveling. I mentioned this to ('Young Cosh') Wally Havers at a reunion recently and he told me that he had been born there in the mid 1920's. Greeves's old shed is now, I believe, a holiday cottage! At the last count something like 20 per cent of properties in Syderstone were holiday homes. In Burnham Overly the figure is about 80 per cent! – Very best wishes, Ken.

I can remember Bert Shurety opening the batting for Syderstone with Lionel Lack in the early 1950's. His pads barely reached his knees and the bat was like a toy in his hands. Running between the wickets could be a problem as Bert was down the far end of the pitch in about six long strides whereas Lionel, about one foot shorter than Bert and encumbered by his batting pads, had to be given due time to make his ground.

Mike attended Fakenham Grammar School and a group of us would wait for the 'Carley crate' at the Creake Road corner. Mike stayed on to 6th form and became a prefect – an honour not lightly bestowed. In my time I can only remember the twins from Tattersett, Wendy and Carol Hurn receiving that honour among us locals. None of these three were bossy or officious or trigger happy with their authority and 'ruled' with a light touch. Mike now lives in Canada, Allan in Brisbane, Australia, Stephen on London/Essex borders and Richard lives in Portsmouth.

After I had made an application for the position of police cadet at Fakenham in 1959, my dad suggested that I call on Bert Shurety to see if he could give me some tips to help me at the interview. I had barely spoken to Bert before and sought his help with some trepidation. The door was answered by the man himself in his shirtsleeves. "Good evening, Mr Shurety, may I see you in private please?!" Goodness knows what he thought was coming, after all, there was no great mystery wrapped up in the visit. He ushered me into the front room saying "Well, there's only two of us here. What's on your mind?" I explained about my forthcoming interview and entrance examination at Norfolk Constabulary H.Q. at Thorpe Toad, Norwich. Did he have any tips or advice that I might benefit from? "I don't think the English or maths papers will give you any trouble. There will be a medical which oughtn't to be a problem either. That just leaves the interview with the Chief Constable or the Deputy Chief Constable, just stand up straight and answer all his questions, frankly. You can't do more than that. Best of luck!"

I reported to Thorpe Road on the following Monday along with a fellow school friend, Dennis Flood and a lad called Leach from another local school. Bert was right about the English and maths papers which were not too difficult although Mr Leach failed the spelling test and was bidden "Good morning" by the invigilator. Dennis and I were left to our own devices during the dinner hour. "Come on" said Dennis, "let's go to Antonios down Prince of Wales Road". Antonio served up some good portions of fish and chips. Dennis knew Norwich much better than I did. His dad worked on the railway and he had travel privileges on the railway which brought him up to Norwich for many of City's home matches at Carrow Road. After dinner we were driven to the surgery of Dr Napier at Willow Lane where he certified us both fit for constabulary service. Back then to Thorpe Road for the final hurdle – the Chief Constable's interview. In our case it was with the Deputy Chief Constable, Mr King. I don't recall much about it other than I felt very nervous although it seemed to go well enough.

We were gathered together by the plain clothes man who had acted as our host for the day. "Well, Ken and Dennis, you have both done very well and both passed satisfactorily.

However, the vacancy at Fakenham is for just one cadet. After due consideration Mr King has chosen Dennis for the vacancy, sorry Ken". "But as we both passed everything are there no other vacancies?" I asked. "Yes there are but as we pay no lodging allowance for cadets we would need to place you in a vacancy where you could live at home or with a conveniently placed relative. I know it's disappointing but there are no other vacancies that we can offer you".

On the walk back to the station I muttered my congratulations to Dennis. Dennis was a likeable bloke and certainly not the sort to crow over his success. I wished him well.

On hearing the news my dad got me busy with pen and paper to enquire if police cadet vacancies were available in Lincolnshire, Suffolk or Essex. There were but the non-payment of a lodging allowance rendered my enquiries of no avail. In due course I submitted an application to the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis and was invited for an interview and accompanying examinations at the Recruiting Centre, Borough High Street, London SE1 in November 1959. The outcome and progress over the following months is a story for another time (a much shorter one). K.E. 1/15

7 'Who's a naught boy then?'

A lady was passing a pet shop when a caged parrot in the window caught her eye. The parrot was priced at £20. The lady entered the shop and asked the proprietor if the price was genuine. "Oh yes, I know it is cheap but I must warn you that his previous home was in a brothel and his language and the company he has been used to leaves something to be desired". "Never mind, I'll take him". She handed over the £20, the cage was covered and they travelled home. The cover was removed and the parrot eyes his new surroundings approvingly. "Nice new place, nice new place" he squawked. In due course the lady's two beautiful daughters came in. "Nice new girls, nice new girls" approved the parrot. After a while the lady's husband returned home. The parrot eyed him with recognition in his eyes. "Wotcher Keith", he croaked. K.E. 3/15 (Source Barry Cryer).

8 A Journey to the Last Great Wilderness

In August last year, my daughter Paula and I were lucky enough to go on a cruise from Vancouver to Alaska. I know some of you Syderstonians have been on this journey, so you will remember some of the places I mention.

After settling in to our cabin, we left Canada Place, Vancouver with loads of folk waving from the terminal. We were set to sail along the Inner Passage between the coast of British Columbia and Vancouver Island. That evening as we were having dinner with Paula's friends, Michele and Ritch, we spotted some killer whales a few yards away.

The next morning we woke to see that there was no sign of land around us, just sea, something don't think I have experienced before. There was quite a lot to occupy us on the ship though. I was amazed to see how hard the domestic staff worked, most of them from Bali, Indonesia. They were away from their families half the year and sending money home to them, but most of them were very friendly and always cheerful. Although, I don't think they were paid very much.

The next morning I awoke very early and looking out of the window realised that we were sailing off the Alaskan coast. There were snow-capped mountains, glittering in the sunshine. We were due to dock in the port of Juneau, capital of Alaska at lunchtime. We knew we were almost there when we spotted several little houses and the United States flag flying. There was a small beach there.

Juneau is built on the edge of a mountain, which makes it only accessible by sea or air, so I would imagine it is very quiet in the winter.

We went ashore. I was surprised how warm it was as I had packed my case with woolly jumpers and trousers which all deemed unnecessary.

Juneau was full of souvenir shops and much to Paula's delight, cafes where for a purchase, one was able to use Wi-Fi.

We left the town that evening and the next day was spent on the water. The next stop was in the town of Skagway, where we had booked a shore excursion into the Gold Rush country. This was one of the most fascinating parts of our cruise.

We went on a train journey into the Yukon, travelling over very steep mountains and bush country. On the way, we passed a Gold Rush cemetery which made one realise how many folk had perished while digging for gold. At the end of our journey we stopped off at a museum and tried our hand at gold panning, which we did not do very well!

The third town we visited was Ketchikan, the salmon capital of the world.

After that, we knew our weeks cruise was almost over. Our last stop was at a glacier called Tracey Arm where the ice was blue.

We were due back on the Friday morning. It had gone so quickly and to me it had seemed like another world. I would have liked it to go on longer but all of a sudden the Vancouver skyline appeared and we knew it was almost over. I will never forget our journey into 'the last great wilderness'.

Book Review

I read a book recently which I can recommend. It is called 'Scunthorpe – Stealth and Secrecy'.

It is the story of the U.S.A.F. occupation of the air base during and after World War II.

Carole Gilham nee Havers