

'The Syderstonian' - April 2019

The following dates are for events at St. Mary's church and Amy Robsart Hall.

Friday 17th of May - Bangers and Mash and Beetle Drive 7pm Amy Robsart Hall. Tickets £7. Apply by 8th of May.

Saturday 27th of July - Wednesday 31st of July. St. Mary's flower festival 10am - 5pm daily. Entrance free. Please contact Dizzy (01485 578527) if you would like to sponsor a flower arrangement.

Sunday 28th of July. 'Songs of Praise' and supper. St. Mary's 6pm for service. Supper (bring and share).

Friday 18th of October. Harvest service and supper. Service 6pm St. Mary's. Supper Amy Robsart Hall. Tickets £6.50p. Last reservations by 9th of October. Events requiring tickets apply to Dizzy Goff (01485 578527).

Pat Harrison Nee Hurn

Pat Harrison Nee Pat Hurn died of breast cancer on the 20th of February 2019. She attended Syderstone school and later Fakenham Grammar and then to Swansea University where she attained a first class honours degree in pure mathematics. Her first teaching post was at Arnold High School, Nottingham where she eventually became head of the department.

During this time she met her husband Andrew, to take account of his job with Shell they moved to Chester where they lived for most of their married lives with the exception of five years when they lived in Canada because of Andrew's work.

Pat's hobbies included ballroom dancing, golf, and they were members of a walking group. Bird watching was another interest and she loved to walk at Titchwell and Cley. She will be sadly missed and we send our sympathy and condolences to Andrew, her family and many friends.

From Small Pips

Sometime between 1809 and 1815 Mary Ann Braitsford of Southwell in Nottinghamshire planted an apple pip which germinated and gave rise to a tree which produced the Bramley Seedling cooking apple. Two hundred years on the original tree clings to life having been under attack by honey fungus. Expert opinion considers that it is doomed to die at anytime between one and at best, ten years.

The honey fungus can be conquered but only at the cost of the tree itself. What a productive lifespan though! The apple with its tangy tart taste duly became the popular in the Southwell locality and the enterprising teenage son of a local nurseryman, Henry Merryweather, recognised its

potential and grafted a stock of trees from the original. This was done with the proviso that should this venture prove commercially viable it should bear the name of the owner of the cottage, a local butcher, Matthew Bramley. That year, 1876, 'Bramley Seedling' became a new registered variety.

After a slow start, the tree bore no fruit at all until 1837, its popularity exceeded all expectations. By 1944 more than a quarter of a million Bramley trees were in commercial plantations in England and Wales. The original tree was struck by lightning in the early 1900s but although it keeled over it re-rooted itself and set up by a new trunk. Sometime in the 1990s Professor Ted Cocking of Nottingham University led a team who cloned the tree by biotechnological methods and did what they could to control the honey fungus blight.

At the time of writing the tree is a sorry sight and the garden at 75, Church St. Southwell is overgrown and neglected following the death at 94 of the last occupier, Miss Nancy Harrison. The cottage now belongs to Miss Harrison's nephew Coulson Howard. It would be nice if a caring owner can be found for this cottage along with this historic but declining tree which place in the annals of horticulture is assured. The Bramley is high in fibre, high in vitamin C has a goodly content of polyphenols (which nobody should go short of) which protect against Alzheimers', heart disease and high cholesterol. All that being said it is a damned good apple.

I don't suppose Matthew Bramley or young Merryweather gained much financially by nurturing and propagating this tree. Nobody becomes a gardener or a nurseryman to make a fortune but what huge satisfaction to have produced and nurtured the queen of cooking apples. I hope that they lived to enjoy their success.

Royal Air Force Bircham Newton Heritage Centre

OPEN DAYS 2019

Easter Sunday, 21st April and Monday, 22nd April.

Early May Bank Holiday Weekend Sunday, 5th and Monday, 6th May.

Spring Bank Holiday Weekend Sunday, 26th and Monday, 27th May.

Sunday, 16th June.

Last Sunday in June, 30th June.

Sunday, 14th July.

Last Sunday in July, 28th July.

Summer Bank Holiday Weekend Sunday, 25th and Monday, 26th August.

Last Sunday in September, 29th September.

Last Sunday in October: 27th October.

Remembrance Sunday, 10th November

Opening times are from 10am to 4pm

Entrance is FREE

Disabled access and toilet facilities are provided. More details can be obtained from the Heritage Centre website www.rafbnmp.org.uk

Venue:- The National Construction College

Bircham Newton NW Norfolk PE31 6RH

Contact David Jacklin Tel. 01379 741884 e-mail: david.jacklin@outlook.com

Avril MacArthur Tel. 01362 860139 e-mail: avril.macarthur1@btinternet.com

Tom's Trip

Tom was a middle aged bachelor who lived in a farm workers cottage in an isolated village. Tom had worked on this farm man and boy and knew the sparsely populated area intimately. He was a man of simple pleasures and through dint of hard saving had managed to buy a small, modest motor car. A keen reader Tom shunned the television and throughout his life refused to have one in the cottage. He enjoyed his garden and the occasional evening visit to his local.

Tom's village had no pub or shop and he had to travel to the next village three miles away to indulge this pleasure where he would catch up with the local news and play a game of darts or dominos. He had ventured there one evening which was passing in a pleasantly social way when one of the locals popped his head in the bar and called out, 'Here you blokes, have you seen what's outside? Do you come and look.' A curious group approached the door. A thick fog had silently enveloped the pub it was scarcely possible to see across to the other side of the road.

Most customers had only to get back to their homes in the village but the fog was thick enough to worry Tom a little. He had next days sandwiches to prepare and feed his cat before bedtime. He finished his pint and called 'goodnight' to his mates before setting off back home. If anything the fog was thicker than it had been when he had first had it drawn to his attention. He groped his way slowly back to his car, was it his car? He wasn't sure but his key obligingly turned the lock and the ignition light glowed brightly as the engine started.

Tom turned on the headlights which seemed to do no more than reflect towards him off the wall of fog. He cranked down the drivers window and could barely make out the grass verge on his right. Gingerly he moved off keeping the edge of the verge in sight as best he could. At the end of the village the grass verge grew longer and the edge more ragged. He calculated that the T junction where he had to turn right would come up in about half a mile. Progress was at no more than walking pace but eventually the long ragged grass gave way to a much shorter, level and cared for turf.

This must be the turn, Tom swung the wheel to the right and the car glided over the firm grass and straight on. It was a question of keeping sight of the edge of the road for the next two miles then

home. The car gave a couple of lurches which concerned Tom and he pulled up and got out to see if he had hit anything. 'Well bugger me, how did that happen?' Tom was standing in a stubble field and realised he had driven some distance into the field because there was no sight of the boundary hedge or gateway.

He decided to drive until he reached the gateway or hedgerow and follow it round until he reached the gateway he had inadvertently drove through. All this sounded simple and indeed would have been in normal circumstances but the thick unrelenting fog just served to confuse and disorientate. Tom's efforts to pick up the boundary were scuppered when the car suddenly lurched and bounced over a really rough patch causing it to veer sharply right and then left almost wrestling the steering wheel from Tom's grasp. It was at this point Tom decided to find the gateway on foot.

For a good half hour he followed the boundary hedge stumbling over and against various obstacles until, at last, he found the gateway. However, he had a marked lack of success reuniting himself with his car and although he had left his lights on the car remained elusive. Back then to the laborious trekking around the boundary here and at long last to the gateway. Nothing for it then but to foot it back home. A long, slow, lonely walk but at least the walking was along a made up road and ages later Tom arrived thoroughly cheesed off albeit relieved back home.

His cat looked up in an accusing manner at him and without more ado Tom opened up a tin of sardines to allay the moggy's discontent. Tom examined his watch 'Bugger me, ha' past two.' Tom hadn't kept hours this late since lordships eightieth birthday bash up at the hall. Hellfire that had been a good do with transport laid on there and back home. What about the car? The battery would be flat as his wallet before payday. Fred next door would help its recovery but he'd want to know all the ins and outs of the mishap and would not hesitate to spread and in all probability embellish the tale but what the hell the nettle must be grasped and the embarrassment taken on the chin. He would live it down eventually, wouldn't he?

Eric Todd (Update of an Old Norfolk Boy) by Carole Gilham Nee Havers

A while ago with the help of my cousin Vic Todd, I wrote a piece about Vic's brother Eric. I mentioned that Eric was born at Barn Cottages, Syderstone in the same house that I was born. His mum was a local girl, Bessie Havers. He went to Syderstone school where he was taught by Miss Lena Parrot this being in the 1930s. I told the story of his life and that he now lives in Australia. At the age of 95 he lives in a care home in the state of Victoria.

A few weeks ago I had a very interesting conversation with Eric. In spite of his age he remembers several things about Syderstone. About living at 'The Barn', and going to school with his cousins Wally and Babs Havers and also my brother Philip. I will be phoning Eric in a few weeks and will try to discover what else he remembers about his time at Syderstone. One thing is clear, he is an 'Old Norfolk Boy' at heart!!

Spring by Carole Gilham Nee Havers

The sunrise is higher in the sky,

The visiting birds fly swiftly by,

Nature spreads her hands over the quiet earth,

To tell us Spring has given birth.

All future contributions to Ken Edge. 3 Haynes Road, Hornchurch, RM11 2HS, Essex,

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