

# CARLTON & CHELLINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Volume 14, No 3

NEWSLETTER

September 2016

## Chairman's Letter

First, I have to apologize, on behalf of your Committee, for moving our annual Cheese and Wine Evening from its scheduled August date to 15th September. This was done because we were told the Village Hall would be closed during August for the renewal of its roof. Recently we have learned that this work was not done after all, because of a bureaucratic mix-up, but instead, the Hall has been redecorated. We decided not to move our event to some other venue outside the village, because most members live in Carlton and we know that many people like to arrive on foot so that they can indulge in a little gentle imbibing unworried by transport problems. The talk by Edward Bean, originally advertised for 15th September, has been rescheduled for early next year.

Many of our longer established members will remember Hazel Hobbs, who joined our Society in its early days and acted for quite a long period as our Hon. Secretary. Hazel resigned from the Society some years ago, and she spent the last few years of her life in a nursing home, where she died on 13th June. A memorial service was held for her on 15th July, in Turvey church, which was attended by several members of the Society. On behalf of you all, I would like to extend our sympathy to the surviving members of Hazel's family. Her husband Peter, who was also a member of the Society, died in 2012.

In August the local Churches Together Outreach organization ran a coach trip to Boughton House near Kettering, the remarkable Northamptonshire home of the Duke and Duchess of Buccleugh. About half a dozen members of the Society participated in this outing. Just before we reached our destination we passed by the Eleanor Cross in the village of Geddington, one of the few remaining monuments of this kind, which recalled a talk we were given a couple of years ago on the origin of these crosses. Most of Boughton House was built in the 18th century in the French style, extending a much earlier residence. The house was never spoiled by the Victorians because it was left largely unoccupied between 1770 and 1915. The collections it contains, of furniture, paintings, carpets, tapestries and porcelain, are amazing — they are the combined acquisitions of three ducal families. This was a splendid day out, in perfect weather, and the organizers are to be congratulated.

*Mike Pratt*

## EDITOR'S NOTES:

1. Distributed with this newsletter is the latest newsletter from Bedfordshire Archives, or details for accessing the Internet version.
2. Inside you will find the Society's remaining schedule of events for 2016, and for the first half of 2017.

*Mike Pratt*

**In this issue: Page 2, Committee News and 2016/17 Program; Pages 3 – 6, Henry John Ellman of Carlton**

## COMMITTEE NEWS

Your Committee has started early on settling our selection of talks and visits for next year, and below you will find details for the first half of 2017. There will be changes on the Committee after next year's AGM in May, when I will stand down as Chairman, as already announced. We would be delighted to hear from any other members willing to join the Committee to help in its future activities.

**Officers of the Society:** Chairman and newsletter editor, Mike Pratt, 21 High Street, Carlton, Bedford MK43 7LA, (01234) 721720; Vice-chair, Myriam Ritchie, (01234) 721119; Secretary, Mike Meade, 5 The Moor, Carlton, Bedford MK43 7JR, (01234) 720070; Treasurer, June Wood, 4 Pavenham Road, Carlton, Bedford MK43 7LS, (01234) 720689;

**Committee members:** David Chadwick, Louise Heathcote, Lloyd Lugsden, Judy Meade, Winifred Pratt.

## REMAINING PROGRAM FOR 2016

**Unless otherwise stated, talks are held on  
THURSDAY evenings in  
CARLTON VILLAGE HALL**

**Doors open at 7.30 pm for 8.00 pm start.**

**ADMISSION: Members £1.00, Visitors £3.00.**

**Tea or Coffee & Biscuits between 7.30 and 8.00 pm**

### Thursday September 15th

**Annual Cheese and Wine Evening** (postponed from August).

### Thursday October 20th

A talk by **Prof. Paul Davis** entitled 'Allergy: How its Mystery came to be Understood'.

### Thursday November 17th

A talk by **Ruth Thomas** on 'Mediaeval Northampton'.

## INITIAL PROGRAM FOR 2017

### Thursday February 16th

A talk by **Debby Horsman** on Antarctic exploration: 'Shackleton's Forgotten Men'.

### Thursday March 16th

A photo display by **Edward Bean**: 'North Bedfordshire Villages from Old Photographs' (rescheduled from September 2016).

### WEDNESDAY April 19th

**Outing** in own cars to **Drayton House** and **Lowick Church**.

### Thursday May 18th

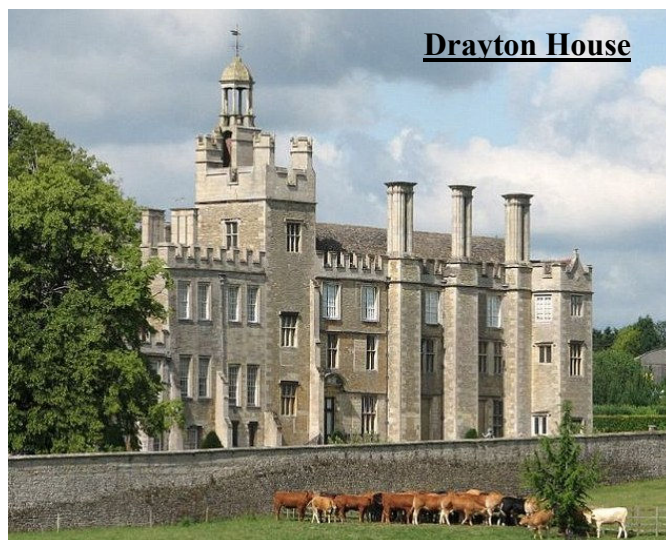
**AGM** at 7.15 p.m., and then at 8 p.m. **Nigel Lutt** will talk about 'Bedfordshire Railways'.

### Thursday June 15th

**Coach trip to Hemingford Grey Manor.**

## NOTES ON THE 2017 OUTINGS

The April outing, in our own cars, will be to the Northamptonshire village of Lowick, near Thrapston. In the morning we will visit Lowick church, a very impressive building which is given four stars in Simon Jenkins' "Thousand Best Churches". There is a good pub in the village where we can have lunch. Then, in the afternoon, we will go to nearby Drayton House. This has a local connection, because it was owned for more than 200 years by the Mordaunt family who became the Earls of Peterborough. They also owned the manor of Turvey, and for some reason they preferred to be buried at Turvey (where there are splendid Mordaunt tombs in the church) rather than Lowick, where they actually lived. In 1770 the house passed to the Sackville family, who still own it today and use it as a family home. The core of the Drayton House dates back to about 1300, but there have been major alterations and embellishments in every century since, notably around 1700.



**Drayton House**

The June outing, by coach, will be to the Manor House at Hemingford Grey on the river Great Ouse in Cambridgeshire. We are still working on the details of this trip, and will hope to include another attraction as well. As at Lowick, there is a good pub in the village of Hemingford Grey where we can have lunch. The manor house is said to be the oldest continually inhabited house in Britain. It was built in the 1130s, and much of the original structure remains intact despite changes over nine centuries. The house also has a beautiful garden, which should be at its best in June.

*Mike Pratt*

## **HENRY JOHN ELLMAN, RECTOR OF CARLTON & CHELLINGTON 1829 — 1862**

William Hooper, the subject of my last newsletter, was succeeded as Rector of Carlton and Chellington by **Henry John Ellman**. He was inducted in 1829, and held the living until his death in 1862. As far as I can discover, he was a less interesting character than some of his predecessors, but his father achieved fame in his day, as I will recount, and his wife also provides scope for some historical digression — I will return to her later. Henry himself was born in about 1800 in Glynde, near Lewes, Sussex, and was baptized there on 19th March of that year. His parents were John Ellman and his wife Constantia.

### **Henry Ellman's father John**

Although not of aristocratic birth, John Ellman of Glynde (1753—1832), was an eminent man in his day, at least in agricultural circles. He was a tenant farmer who specialized in improving the local Southdown breed of sheep, originally a tall lean animal, into a more compact beast yielding both good mutton and excellent wool. His success in this endeavour brought him to the attention of several members of the peerage, to whom he gave advice on farming. He was introduced to King George III, and he sold two of his rams to Emperor Paul I of Russia for 300 guineas (the Duke of Bedford, who arranged this last transaction, took two for himself at the same price). Despite having very little formal education, John Ellman made prominent contributions to several contemporary works on agricultural matters. He was a founder member of both the Sussex Agricultural Society and the Smithfield Society, and was a progressive employer who maintained a school for workers' children in Glynde.

John is said to have regretted not having more education. His father, also a farmer, permitted him to go to the village school for just two terms, in winter, when he was not needed to work on the farm.

He married twice, first in 1783 to Elizabeth Spencer, by whom he had a son John junior. After Elizabeth died in 1790 he married again, in 1794, to Constantia, daughter of the Rev. Thomas Davies, Vicar of Glynde, with whom he had a private arrangement to further his education during the winter evenings. Henry John Ellman, later to become Rector of Carlton and Chellington, was the third of six children of John and Constantia; he had two older brothers, and his younger siblings included another brother and two sisters.

Soon after John Ellman's death in 1832 a lengthy memoir of him was published in *Baxter's Library of Agricultural and Horticultural Knowledge*. Although

this contribution was anonymous, it seems to have been common knowledge that its author was Francis Pearson Walesby, who in 1836 married Catherine Mary Constantia Ellman, the elder of John's two daughters. He was also an interesting man in his own right; he edited a multi-volume edition of the works of Samuel Johnson, and was at one time Professor of Anglo-Saxon at Oxford University, a position later held by J.R.R. Tolkien of *Lord of the Rings* fame. Walesby eventually left academic life and became a barrister. He died in 1858. Unusually for the time, he and his wife chose to live apart. He resided in the Oxford area, but his wife lived for many years in Bedford, where she lodged with a widow by the name of Martha Naden, in Harpur Street and later Adelaide Square.



*John Ellman, Farmer, of Glynde, Sussex*

### **Henry John Ellman's life**

Initially Henry John was raised on his father's farm, but he certainly received a great deal more education than his father, some of it almost certainly at a public school, since his father was by now quite prosperous. Then, in January 1819, at the age of 18, he matriculated at Wadham College, Oxford. There is no record of his first degree, but he stayed on at Oxford to study for a further qualification, and was awarded a BCL (Bachelor of Civil Law) degree in 1828. The same year he was ordained as a priest in Chichester Cathedral, by the Bishop of Chichester. He was appointed Rector of Carlton and Chellington on 20th February 1829.

Possibly he found ministering to two churches within the same parish to be heavy work. For that or some other reason, in 1833 he suggested to the Bishop



of Ely (within whose diocese Carlton & Chellington belonged at that time) that the churches of St Mary, Carlton and St Nicholas, Chellington should be abandoned, and a new church should be constructed, more centrally situated within the united parishes. By 1836 a plan had been drawn up, but further contact with the Bishop revealed that an Act of Parliament would be required to authorize any such scheme, which would doubtless have entailed vast expense. Nevertheless, the idea did not finally expire until several years later.

In 1836 the Rev. Ellman was appointed a Land Tax Commissioner. This was an unpaid position, usually undertaken by members of the gentry, involving the assessment and administration of the land tax in a local area. The actual collection of the tax was usually done by people of more modest means, such as farmers or tradesmen.

By 1839 it appears that Carlton had abandoned the idea of a new church, because in this year St Mary's church was extensively repaired and renovated.

In February 1841, aged over 40, Henry John Ellman married Elizabeth Simmonds at St James, Paddington, London. Her age was about 20 at the time, and the marriage record gives her father as Benjamin Simmonds. However, Benjamin Simmonds died very shortly after his daughter's wedding, having in the meantime made Henry John sole executor of his will. He left his real estate to his sister Sarah and his residual personal estate to his daughter Elizabeth Ellman. Benjamin Simmonds himself had been the executor and sole beneficiary the previous year under the will of a Margaret Norton Purcell, who died on 10<sup>th</sup> January 1840. The precise relationship between Benjamin Simmonds and Margaret Norton Purcell remains to be established, but it is known that they were business partners and neighbours, living in Kensall Green, Middlesex. I will return to these people later.

The year 1841 brought the first detailed census of England, which was taken on 6th June. It found Henry and Elizabeth Ellman living in Carlton, with two domestic servants in their household.

In 1843 the Chellington Vestry (church committee) gave its final consideration to the matter of building a new church, agreed that it was not practicable, and decided to repair and refurbish St Nicholas instead. The following year, the neo-gothic architect Edward Buckton Lamb exhibited a design he had prepared for the proposed new Carlton/Chellington church at the Royal Academy, but nothing further was heard of the scheme. As far as I know, the drawings no longer exist.

On the night of the 1851 census Henry was staying in a house in Marylebone, London, accompanied by a married couple, the man being a 'Porter' and his wife a 'Servant'. His wife Elizabeth was meanwhile staying in a house in Harrold High Street, accompanied by three servants, one of them a nursemaid, though no

child is listed. Elizabeth seems to have been awaiting (after nearly ten years of marriage) the birth of her first-born child, Benjamin Simmonds Ellman, who was indeed born in Harrold shortly afterwards. Her second and only other child, Henry Ellman, was born in the Hastings area of Sussex, in 1853.

In 1859, plans were approved for building a new Carlton Rectory. It was adjacent to the old one, which was converted to accommodate servants. The new building seems not to have been completed until 1862.

The 1861 census finds Henry John Ellman and his wife Elizabeth living in Carlton Rectory (though we do not know whether it was the old one or the unfinished new one). Their two sons were living with them. Henry's age was given as 60, and Elizabeth's as 40. They had a visitor staying with them, Unity Smith, who gave her occupation as 'Lady', and three servants: a cook, a housemaid and a gardener. Both this census and the previous one give Elizabeth's birthplace as London.

Unfortunately, the Ellman family were not able to enjoy the accommodation provided by the new Rectory for any significant time, because Henry John died on 3rd February 1862, aged 62, and his widow and children had to move out to make way for his successor, William Sweet Escott. Henry left a will, the probate record for which states that his 'effects' were worth less than £3,000. Although his residence is given as Carlton Rectory, his actual place of death was 5 George-street, Hanover-square, Middlesex. His widow Elizabeth Ellman of Carlton was his sole executrix. Henry John was buried at St Mary, Carlton, and there is a memorial to him in the church.

From this account Henry John appears to have been a rather humdrum individual, who undertook civic duties on request and who travelled up and down to London (and probably Sussex) from time to time. His one big idea, the notion of a new church for our combined villages, did not come to fruition.

After Henry John's death, his widow Elizabeth lived a peripatetic life for a while, mainly in the London area at first, staying with various people, and living on her own means. During this period I can find no record of either of her two sons. By 1891, however, she had settled in Northfleet, Kent, where she remained for the rest of her life. Her son Benjamin lived with her from this time on. He was unmarried, and they employed a servant to look after them. Elizabeth died towards the end of 1909, aged 88. Benjamin then lived on in the same house (but now with *two* servants) until his own death in 1918. He never seems to have had any employment.

As for Elizabeth's second son, Henry, born in 1853, he disappears from the record entirely after the 1861 census. No death record exists for him; I think he must either have changed his name or gone abroad.

## Elizabeth Ellman's background

I noted earlier that Henry John Ellman's wife Elizabeth, née Simmonds, was born in London. She was almost certainly the Elizabeth Simmonds who was born on 28th December 1820 and baptized the following month at St Mary le Strand, Westminster. Her parents were Benjamin and Elizabeth Simmonds.

On the previous page I mentioned that Benjamin Simmonds was a neighbour and business partner of a certain Margaret Norton Purcell. When I investigated further, I found that the business they had in common was based on an estate in Tortola, the largest of the British Virgin Islands in the West Indies, which employed slave labour. Specifically, I found a document dating from 1834 which was headed "*Virgin Islands, Tortola. A List and Return of all the additions to the original Stock of Slaves in Tortola on Nortons Valley Estate and belonging to Thomas Bates as attorney of Benjamin Simmons [sic] and Margaret Norton Purcell or in the lawful possession of the said Thomas Bates as such attorney whether by birth, purchase, return of fugitive or absent slave, or otherwise since the last return*" (see below for the beginning of the list). In a note at the end of the list its compiler notes that 84 of the 86 slaves concerned were taken over in November 1832 from William Rogers Isaacs, and that two infants had been born into the slave community since that time.

At this point some facts about slavery should be explained. In 1807 the British Parliament passed an Act abolishing the slave trade, with special emphasis on the Atlantic trade. However, slavery itself was not abolished by this Act, and it continued in those British colonies where it was established. Trading in slaves did not stop instantaneously, because it was very lucrative, but high penalties were introduced, and the Royal Navy was used to check for transported slaves on British vessels at sea. This led to a gradual diminution in the trade, and had an influence on other countries to follow suit. Slavery itself was not abolished by Parliament until the passing of the 1833 Emancipation Act, which, in principle, freed all slaves in Britain and its colonies. Compensation was paid to slave owners. The "freed" slaves continued to work much as previously, however, because they had no other means of support, no education and no experience of doing anything else.

The document quoted above is dated 1834, *after* the Emancipation Act, but it still refers to "possession" of slaves — the reality of emancipation was slow to take effect. In 1837, a claim was settled by the Government for the value of the slaves on the Norton Valley Estate; now their number was 83, and the value of the settlement was £1,245 — £15 per freed slave.

Despite this payment of compensation, neither Benjamin Simmonds nor Margaret Norton Purcell, the former owners of the slaves, benefitted from it. There was a long-standing court case concerning a different but related matter which re-emerged from time to time over a period of many years in the High Court of Chancery. Eventually, as for the case of *Jarndyce v. Jarndyce* in Charles Dickens' novel *Bleak House*, the money was all consumed by legal fees and there was no gain to any of the parties contesting the case.

Benjamin Simmonds' died in 1841, as previously mentioned, and in his will he expressed his wish to be buried in "the Purcell family vault in Lewisham (Kent)". This seems to indicate that there was indeed a familial relationship between him and Margaret Norton Purcell. However, in the churchyard of St Mary, Lewisham, there is found the inscription "Family Vault of B. SIMMONDS, Esq.: herein are deposited the remains of Benjamin Simmons, Esq., died 27<sup>th</sup> February 1841, aged 62". His trustees therefore seem to have buried him in the right churchyard, but in a vault of his own. However, there is another memorial in the same churchyard, a chest tomb surmounted by an urn with a coat of arms ("a chevron ermine between three boars' heads coupé"), bearing the inscription "James PURCELL, Esq., Lieutenant Governor of the Virgin Islands. He died July 8, AD 1759, aged 43 years and 8 months". Here, then, is another Purcell connection to the Virgin Islands, where Benjamin Simmonds and Margaret Norton Purcell had their business interests.

The James Purcell buried in Lewisham was the first Lieutenant Governor of the British Virgin Islands — he only held the post for about one year (1750—1751), and seems then to have relinquished it because of ill health. He was succeeded by a John Purcell (possibly James' son or brother), who remained in office until his death in 1771. I suspect that both Benjamin Simmonds and Margaret Norton Purcell were descendants of one or other of these former Governors.

| No. | Name  | Sex  | Country or part of the World<br>from which they are Natives - | Colour | Reported<br>Age |
|-----|-------|------|---------------------------------------------------------------|--------|-----------------|
| 1.  | Adam  | Male | Tortola                                                       | Black  | 51 yrs.         |
| 2.  | Braut | do   | African                                                       | do     | 46. "           |
| 3.  | James | do   | Tortola                                                       | do     | 41. "           |

In summary, my impression is that, while Henry John Ellman, rector of Carlton 1729—1762, may not have been a particularly interesting individual himself, some of his family connections were much more colourful characters.

### Postscript on William Hooper

In my last newsletter I dealt with the life of William Hooper, Henry John Ellman's predecessor in office as Rector of Carlton and Chellington. I implied that the Rev. Hooper may have been a somewhat contentious character, but had forgotten about a certain record which confirms that impression. This is a letter from Richard Gee of Turvey, the surveyor employed in several of the local Parliamentary Inclosure negotiations. He writes to the commissioners who oversaw the process of re-allotting land, who were responsible for paying his fees, and who had apparently disallowed some of his charges in connection with the redistribution of land in Carlton, Chellington and Stevington. The following is a slightly edited version of his letter, dated 5th January 1805:

Gentlemen,

*I have been looking at the deductions you have been making in my bill, and I must say you bear too hard upon us. I have been a surveyor 30 years June next, but of all the Commissioners I have met upon business I never met with any yet that disallowed any part of my charges made for any survey I ever took before, and why the Commissioners for Carlton, Chellington and Steventon should be more severe upon me than any Gentlemen of that description I ever met before I cannot account for. I have charged 1s 9d per Acre because I had not charged mine and my assistants time adequate to the extra trouble we had. I perceive you have reduced my pay in many instances from £1 17s 0d to £1 10s 0d. I have Lavendon and Brayfield accounts now before me — Mr Davis was a Commissioner. I was there allowed every day of Self and assistants attendance £1 17s 0d, this was in the years 1801 and 1802. I am ready to produce the Bill at any time if necessary. 1804 February 9th and following days I was at Turvey on the Calculations. This business is generally done at a meeting in the presence of the Commissioners, but you were so engaged as not to be able to get through them at the meeting, and when that happens the Surveyor is allowed for that part of the business done at his own home. I remember the situation of the allotments were so incorrect for want of time that not one of them remained as intended. And I verily believe taking all the alterations into account the Fields were allotted three times, and it is on this account that my Bill is rather swollen, it is not the charges either by the Acre or [by] Time.*

*Gentlemen, don't think me illiberal, for I hope I am not possessed of a grain of illiberality. I know when we were last at Bedford the Finances were low. When I found how they stood I concluded I must bear a part, and the balance then due to me was very near £50. I did expect about £20 if everything had then been settled, but when I found the finishing of the business postponed goodbye says I to the £50, but to touch me further I cannot assent to. It puts me in mind [that] when I was a lad I was fond of shooting. And in company with Boys about my Age, if we found nothing else, he that happened to have the worst hat must hang it up to be shot at (for the weakest generally fares worst). The case with me is almost similar, only you are shooting at my Pocket, which is more susceptible of injury than the Hat unless the Head was in it. Gentlemen, when you have settled your accounts you are done with the business. That is not the case with me, for so long as I live here I must be troubled with the disagreements and quarrels of the owners of Lands in all these Parishes near me — I have been at home about 3 weeks, and have had People from almost every Parish around me. The last person was Johnson from Carlton who complains of not having his road widened up to Grimescroft. Mr Battams has allowed land, but it is not done. I mentioned this to Battams a few evenings since, and his answer was [that] the Parson and rest of the Carlton People were a pack of leering rascals for making the complaint. This for your consideration. The £35 you want of me is no ways adequate to the service I may be of to the Parishes, for they are not the most cordial set of People in the world, and they are sure to quarrel. Come as many and often as they will, I never charged a farthing [for talking to them] in my life. I am sorry I am so circumstanced as not to be able to attend you in order to explain the business more fully, but at some future time if required my self and my assistants will attend with particulars of the extra time these negotiations took us, or they shall be laid before a Gentleman whom we all have a respect for (Mr Fellows), and he shall determine the matter.*

*I am, Gentlemen, Your obedient servant,*

*Richard Gee*

The letter makes the point that much extra time had to be spent in allocating and reallocating the land because of the intransigence of the local landowners. It is very uncomplimentary about the Carlton people concerned, including their Rector, for although its writer attributes their description as “a pack of leering rascals” to a Mr Battams, he does not disagree with that assessment. This would have been Thomas Battams, Gentleman, of Turvey, who owned Stayesmore Manor in Carlton at the time, though it was actually occupied by his son Robert, who farmed the associated land.

*Mike Pratt*