



IN TIME

Ely U3A History Group Members' Newsletter



Edition 13

25 June 2020

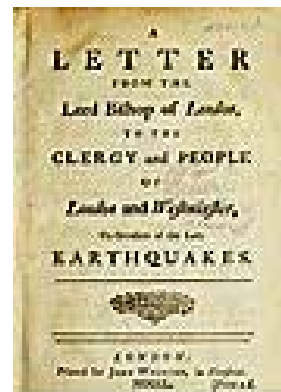
Welcome to Edition 13 of IN TIME our weekly U3A Newsletter. Last week we read about the life of Matthew Wren, Bishop of Ely, this week we are told of his elaborate funeral in Cambridge. We also have interesting articles on earthquakes in 18th century London, why there is an Italian chapel on Orkney and a dark episode in the history of the island of Tabarca as well as another item for the disrepair shop.

Please keep your articles coming they are fascinating and I know our members love reading them. Send your articles to Maggie Haverson (email address supplied in the covering email)

1750 The year of the Earthquakes – Wendy Rolph

“Houses collapsed, sheep ran wild, Westminster Abbey trembled and people shivered in fear of Armageddon.” On February 8th 1750 an earthquake shook London. A contemporary publication notes” a great noise was heard resembling the roaring of a great piece of ordinance”

On the 8th March exactly four weeks after the first shock came the second. This was more pronounced and covered five times the area. Two houses in Whitechapel collapsed and several chimneys fell. A slight tremor was felt on 9th March. Then a powerful rumour was started by Trooper Mitchell, a demented soldier who would eventually be despatched to Bedlam. He predicted that on the morning of the 8th April a massive shock would come and it would lay waste to the whole of the city.



His ravings were supported by the attitude of many of the more evangelical clergy who preached that these shocks were Divine warnings that Londoners should renounce their wicked ways. The Bishop of London, Thomas Sherlock delivered a powerful sermon urging repentance. This very plain-spoken address was then put into pamphlet form of which 40,000 copies were printed. It is hardly to be wondered that people worked themselves up into a terrible state of fear. The evening of April 7th saw much of London

deserted. Many had fled into the surrounding countryside and the roads were thronged with carriages in which sat trembling souls waiting for the final crack which would spell the doom of the city. The Thames was alive with boats as many citizens assumed the river would be immune from the shock.

Nothing whatever happened. The people crept back shamefacedly into the city and most simply blanked the episode from their mind. No doubt country innkeepers and Thames watermen remembered the huge profits they made that night as did some enterprising haberdashers who had rushed out special lines in “warm earthquake gowns, for sitting up all night in! “

The Italian Chapel, Orkney - Helen Moore

In October 1939, a German submarine under the command of Gunther Prien entered Scapa Flow and sank the British battleship 'Royal Oak' with the loss of 834 lives. Winston Churchill, at that time First Sea Lord, visited Orkney and the decision was taken to construct barriers to close off four of the entrances to Scapa Flow to make the base for the home fleet more secure.

Shortage of local manpower was causing delays so in January 1942 around 1200 Italian prisoners of war were brought to Orkney to help local contractors build barriers between several small islands. As these also formed a causeway enabling islanders to move more easily from South Ronaldsay to Mainland they were not deemed to contravene the rules of warfare that prisoners could do nothing to help the enemy's war effort.



The prisoners were accommodated in camps on two islands. From September 1943 when the Italians capitulated to the allies the prisoners were given more freedom and paid for their labour. They had improved the surroundings in the camp but lacked a place of worship. With the help of padre Father Giacobazzi and artist Domenico Chiochetti they persuaded the camp commandant, Major T P Buckland, to allow them to build a chapel on Lamb Holm.

They were given two Nissen huts placed end to end and set about decorating them appropriately outside working hours. Under the direction of Chiochetti a team of skilled craftsmen and willing workers from amongst the POWs turned the bare nissen huts into a beautiful chapel using largely found materials and concrete. Chiochetti adorned the sanctuary with frescos and based a painting of the Madonna and Child above the altar on an image by Nicolo Barabino on a prayer card given him by his mother before he left his home in Italy.



Just as the chapel was finished in 1945 the prisoners were released and returned to Italy. By 1958 it was the

only part of the camp remaining and was beginning to deteriorate. A committee was set up to ensure its preservation and in 1960 Domenico Chiochetti returned to Orkney and spent 3 weeks helping with the restoration. On 10th April 1960, the last day of his visit, a service of rededication was attended by 200 Orcadians and parts of the service were broadcast on Italian radio. In 1964 Chiochetti visited again, this time with his wife Maria bringing greetings and gifts from their home town of Moena to further beautify the chapel. Other former POWs have been welcomed back to Orkney including a party of eight and their families in 1992, fifty years after they first set foot on Lamb Holm.

Domenico Chiochetti died on 7th May 1999 in his 89th year and a memorial requiem mass was held in the chapel in thanksgiving for his life and work. During the mass a letter from his family was read out which concluded with the following: "We are deeply moved and extremely grateful for the affection you showed us in this painful moment as on many occasions in the past and on our part we will always love these places and your people as our father wished. We embrace you all."

Tabarca - Heather Carruth

Ever heard of TABARCA? Not many have; a tiny sun-drenched island off the Alicante coast, now a protected marine reserve, a popular tourist attraction, rich in history and to almost the end of the 18th century a refuge of the Barbary (from the word Berber) pirates. Today you can still see the footprint of cells where up to 300 hundred men and women at a time awaited their fate; destined for the slave markets of Africa and the Ottoman Empire. People snatched from villages as far apart as Iceland, Ireland, England and all along the Mediterranean coast. Fair hair and blue eyes were valued above all. Raid were so frequent on the Alicante coastal villages, that watch towers were built and manned 24 hours a day. At the first sign of unfamiliar boats, warning beacons would be lit all along the seashore, the villagers would flee terrified inland. Some deserted Towers still stand tall on the landscape, still watching.

The first permanent inhabitants of this small, flat island were Genoese sailors and merchants (at that time Genoa was a satellite state of the Spanish Empire), shipwrecked as they fled from their islet home of Tabarka off the Tunisian coastal town of the same name. In the 15th-16th century this islet had belonged to Spain, but in 1741 it was overrun by the forces of the king of Tunisia. Enraged, Carlos 111 of Spain rescued and eventually resettled the Genoese survivors, together with a Garrison provided for their protection on the island now known as Tabarca. This action effectively making Tabarca a no-go area for any future pirate activities. Ruins of the garrison and the new fortified town still stand.



In 1631, 107 Irish people were abducted from their village (known as the Sack of Baltimore, Cork) by the pirates and forced into a life of slavery.

The Disrepair Shop – cherished memories

My Dad's Clock – Maureen Lee

In the late 1950's my Dad worked as a Caretaker at the Burnley Mechanics Institute.

The Institute was built in 1855 by a local architect, a fine building next door to the equally impressive Town Hall. Pevsner described it as 'One of Burnley's best buildings' and John Champness called its façade 'among the very best of its date in the country' and it is now Grade II* listed. It aimed to provide education and skills for workers and locals flocked to classes in art, science and technology.





In the early 60's it became an entertainment venue run by the Council. A young Tom Jones appeared there as well as a host of rising stars. In 1986 after extensive refurbishment it was opened by HM The Queen and still thrives as a venue for musicals, plays, G&S and many other events.

One day Dad found this old clock down in the cellar and asked if he could have it. Dad was good at fixing things and liked to fiddle about with watches and clocks. He took it apart, cleaned it up and got it working, he even repaired the chime. Then it took pride of place on our sideboard.

The clock now lives in our cloakroom. Unfortunately, it does not work, but I'm not sure I miss the chiming. I know nothing about the clock, who made it or where it came from. I know it is not valuable but I would never part with it as it brings back such happy memories of my Dad Jim Coates.

[The Life, death and funeral of Matthew Wren \(1585-1867\) – Bishop of Ely - Clinton Tweed](#)

Part 11 - The funeral - As observed by Alderman Samuel Newton in May 1667



When the Bishop died Cambridge was a small town and so I imagine that the activities surrounding his funeral would have been some of the most remarkable days witnessed by the town up to that time. The arrival of the hearse, the lying in state at the University and the funeral was probably a once in a life time event for the ordinary citizens.

The elaborate funeral procession would have been a magnificent spectacle and Newton's Diary contains minute details of the grand manner in which the solemnities were carried out. The presence of the King at Arms (England's chief heraldic officer) at his funeral indicates the regard with which Wren was held by the time of his death.

24th April, 1667-Newton notes that "...dyed at Ely house in London, Matthew Wrenn Lord Bishopp of Ely".

9th May - "...in the afternoon....was brought to Cambr the body of Matthew Wrenn Lord Bishopp of Ely in a herse Coach hung round with his Escocheons, it being drawn with 6 horses, a postilion riding on one of the fore horses.." Church bells tolled at Trumpington, Little St Marys, St Bottolphs, St Benets and Great St Marys but "St Edwards Bell stirred not". The "herse coach" as Newton calls it was accompanied by four other coaches each pulled by six horses with "half a dozen horsemen in mourning" and inside the coaches were "a dozen other parsons and gentlemen".

"The corps being in lead and in a large Coffin" was taken to a small room in "the Schooles of this Vniversity". The room was darkened "hung in all parts with black cloath", including the floor. In contrast the coffin was covered with the crimson "coat of the King or Herald at Armes" on which was embroidered in gold "the Kings Armes". The Bishop's Mitre "wch was either beaten gold or silver guilt" was at the head and his silver Crosier was laid on one side of the coffin. Three candlestick were on either side of the coffin and two "poore schollers bare in mourning gowns" stood each side at the head with two more each side at the feet.

Here the Bishop lay in state "till his funeral solempnization" and Newton observed that "all persons that came in to see stood bare there, all that desired might see, none denied neither poor nor ritch, Towne nor Country." (*"Bare" in this context means bare headed*).

11th May- the funeral was preceded by the tolling of “the schools Bell in Great St Maryes”. The Bishop’s coffin was “borne by 6 ordinary persons in course gowns..from the schools to Pembroke Hall” First behind the coffin “went 2 old men in course mourning gowns by name Wilson the taylor.....and Billops the joyner with sticks in their hands”. They were followed by “28 pooreschollers in mourning gownes” Next in “mourning cloakes” were the Bishop’s Secretary and about 30 of his officers. Then came “the King at Armes and a Herald at Armes each of them clad in mourning and having on their coates of armes embroidered with gold the one of them bearing the Bishopp’s Miter and the other carryeing his Crosier”.

The hearse covered in black cloth hung with the Bishop’s escutcheons “borne by 6 poore men in gowns aforesaid” came next and on either side were “3 Doctors of Divinity who took hold of the herse cloth”. The Bishop’s family followed “covered all with mourning, noe hats or capps on, onely black cloath carelessly lyeing flatt on their heads and but little of their faces scene....” Finally came the members of the University in slightly more colourful attire. The Vice Chancellor with Doctors of Divinity, Law and “Physick” in their “scarlett robes and hoodes”. They were followed by the Bachelors of Divinity headed by Beadles and then “all the Masters of Arts in their habits and hoods” and they were led by the University Registrar “carryeing a Beadles staffe”.

Newton notes that “thus in their Orders they went to Pembroke Hall where the Bishopp was laid in a vault.....in the new Chappell which he caused to be built and which he himselfe consecrated on St Matthews day 1665.” He ends by noting that all the said Doctors etc “had each of them boxes of banquetts to the number of 500 and to the value of about 5 shillings a box.” He does not mention whether the “6 ordinary persons in course gowns”, the 2 old men” or the “28 poore schollers in mourning gownes” received “boxes of banquetts”. - I expect that they did not.

[Petty’s Pick of the Week](#)

Every day Mike Petty posts on his Facebook group “Fenland History on Facebook” a number of newspaper clips from his massive archive of local events reported “on this day”
<https://www.facebook.com/groups//102684982076955>

Spike’s engine deal – Waterbeach Past Snips June 2rd 1947

The temptation caused by a salvage dump containing equipment which was expected by two men to be “broken up and thrown away” led to their appearance at the Cambs Petty Sessions on Saturday. Defendants pleaded guilty to being concerned in stealing four petrol motors and generators to the value of £40 from the salvage dump at Waterbeach Aerodrome.

One said “About a fortnight ago I was working on the dump with a civilian driver called “Spike”. He asked me if I could get some engines. He said he could sell the engines and make some money and would stand me a drink sometime”.

Defendant said he understood from “Paddy” that the engines were to be broken up and he thought they would be thrown away

This story appeared in a Cambridge newspaper on this date.

