



IN TIME

Ely U3A History Group Members'
Newsletter



Edition 14

2 July 2020

Edition 14 of IN TIME and still going strong. In this week's edition we learn about an Indian prince living in Britain, the history of cataract surgery, the strike at Burston School in Norfolk and more about the Romans.

Please keep your articles coming – we still need more. If you haven't sent one yet think about 'having a go' and to our regular contributors thank you and please keep on writing. Send your articles to Maggie Haverson (email address supplied in the email containing this newsletter)

[Duleep Singh 1838-1893 The last Sovereign Ruler of the Punjab. – Heather Carruthers](#)



In 1839, aged five, Duleep Singh was proclaimed Maharaja of the Sikh Empire, with his mother as Regent. His vast inheritance included the fabulous Kohinoor diamond, which was seized by the British in 1846, as war compensation when the Sikh wars ended. After the wars the Maharaja was retained by the British as nominal ruler, whilst the Maharani was replaced by a Council of Regency; which eventually banished her. As a matter of British policy, Duleep was converted to Christianity.

In 1854, Duleep was exiled to Britain where Queen Victoria who became his godmother, showered affection on him, taking him into her family. When he eventually became bored and requested to return to India, a tour of Europe was arranged instead.

On his return in 1855, he was given an annual pension and Castle Menzies in Perthshire was leased for him. His love of highland life and habit of wearing the kilt earned him the nickname, the "Black Prince of Perthshire".

In 1863, the Indian Office purchased the estate of Elveden, near Thetford, for him and Duleep appeared happy, totally reforming the rundown estate and living an aristocratic lifestyle in a house remodelled as an oriental palace. However, his sense of regret for his forced departure from the Punjab and his involuntary conversion to Christianity continued to trouble him.

In 1886, wishing to re-embrace Sikhism, Duleep attempted to return "home", but only got to Aden, where he was repatriated to Britain; his plans for a lavish re-conversion ceremony in Bombay scaled down to a minimal affair in Aden.

Maharaja Duleep Singh died in Paris in 1893, at the age of 55. His wish for a Sikh funeral in India was not honoured for fear of unrest amid the growing resentment of British rule, instead his body was returned to Elveden for Christian burial.

Out of the deep respect the local Sikh community hold for their last Maharaja, the ladies of that community ensure fresh flowers are always to be found on his grave.



[What did the Romans do for us? - Kate Cann](#)

Roger Haverson's interesting article on the Roman finds at Upware reminded me of a film *The Life of Brian*, in which it was asked "What did the Romans do for us?" Well they were the first to form a settlement in Cambridge (Cantabria) as they called it.

In the first century AD the Romans arrived and it is said that they forded the river where Magdalene Bridge stands today. Roman remains, pottery and jewellery were all found along the banks of the Cam in the area known as the Backs. Many of these items grace the Fitzwilliam Museum and possibly the Folk Museum on Castle Hill.

They had already formed garrisons in England and now needed a direct route to Colchester, Leicester and Chester. A small settlement grew up on the slope of what we know today as Castle Hill, but a larger settlement was formed at Arbury, maybe this is where the Garrison had their headquarters. This area was excavated in the 1950s to provide much needed homes after the war. Many years ago a friend told me her two year old daughter talked about the soldiers who marched through the house and down the garden; the description the child gave was of Legionnaires.



The roads they built coming down from Huntingdon over the river and through the centre of the city of Cambridge still exist today and if you follow the pattern out toward Linton passing Wandelbury you can still see a Roman road in that area. Maybe they intended to have small settlements along the Cam to Kings Lynn but after four hundred years of occupation they were recalled to defend Rome.

They left behind an historical record of what Roman life was like, great roads, under floor heating, aqueducts and mosaics and wonderful pottery and jewellery made from gold. It was another four hundred years before Cambridge was finally founded again as a settlement by the Saxons and later the Normans when the town then began to grow and prosper. Just like the Romans they left us a great example of Norman life when they built The Round Church (a Templar church), but that's another story ..

[Intra ocular implants - Ian Forrest](#)

I started training in optics in September 1968. At that time, for many patients, cataract surgery was still major surgery, typically involving a ten day to two week stay in hospital, initially sleeping with the head supported by sandbags to prevent rolling causing a retinal detachment. Today the surgery usually takes less than ten minutes under local anaesthetic and you are home in time for tea. How was this change achieved?

A cataract is when the lens inside the eye becomes opacified, inducing visual changes and eventually blindness, usually caused by ageing.

Going back to the 5th century BC a needle or probe was inserted by the edge of the cornea and the lens dislodged. Unfortunately the traumatic nature of this procedure often lead to complications and not infrequently blindness.

In 1753 London surgeon Samuel Sharp performed the first recorded Intra Capsular Cataract Extraction. This involved making an incision, removing the supporting attachments and removing the whole opacified lens. A large incision was required meaning infection was prevalent and the removal of the support provided by the lens often resulted in complications – typically retinal detachment.

During WW2 Ophthalmologist Harold Ridley observed that aircrew suffered more damage from trying to remove splinters of plastic cockpit canopies from their eyes than by leaving them in place. Unlike glass, no inflammatory response was observed. In 1950 Ridley implanted a lens made from Polymethylmethacrylate (PMMA) made by Rayners Optical Company at St Thomas's Hospital London. While many of Ridley's fellow ophthalmologists disliked the idea of placing a foreign body inside the eye, Ridley continued to refine the technique.



Sir Harold Ridley

In 1967 Dr Charles Kelman used phacoemulsification (ultrasound) to break up the lens and then aspirated the remains. This allowed micro instruments to be used and the advent of the foldable implant (1978) meant that incision sizes were reduced to 1.00 – 3.00 mm. The posterior capsule of the lens is left in place to support the implant. The small incision size often avoided sutures which meant there was less chance of induced astigmatism.



Examples of modern implant

In 2010 Femtosecond Laser-Assisted Cataract Surgery (FLACS) was approved by the U.S. Federal Drug Administration. This procedure allows removal of the opaque tissue and creation of corneal incisions with a special laser, however many surgeons feel that it does not replace good manual technique.

Modern cataract surgery is safe (with one of the lowest complication factors of any surgery) and effective, with most patients achieving good vision. Besides spherical implants, there are toroidal implants to correct astigmatism, bifocal, trifocal and multifocal implants; also available is an accommodating implant which moves inside the eye to change power (the efficacy of these is debatable at present) and implants with UV Blocks to reduce the chance of age related macular degeneration.

In the 1990s Harold Ridley had a successful bilateral intraocular lens implantation at St Thomas's Hospital. So he benefited from his own invention and the operational procedure he had pioneered, but what was most pleasing to him was that he had it done in the hospital where he performed the first operation.

Harold Ridley died on 25th May 2001. In September 2010, the Royal Mail issued a series of commemorative postage stamps to mark "Medical Breakthroughs". Designed by Howard Brown, the 67p stamp depicted artificial lens implant surgery pioneered by Sir Harold Ridley.



Example of a preloaded injector, holding an implant

Here are the details of some video links on cataract surgery but **DO NOT WATCH THESE VIDEO CLIPS IF YOU ARE SQUEAMISH!!**

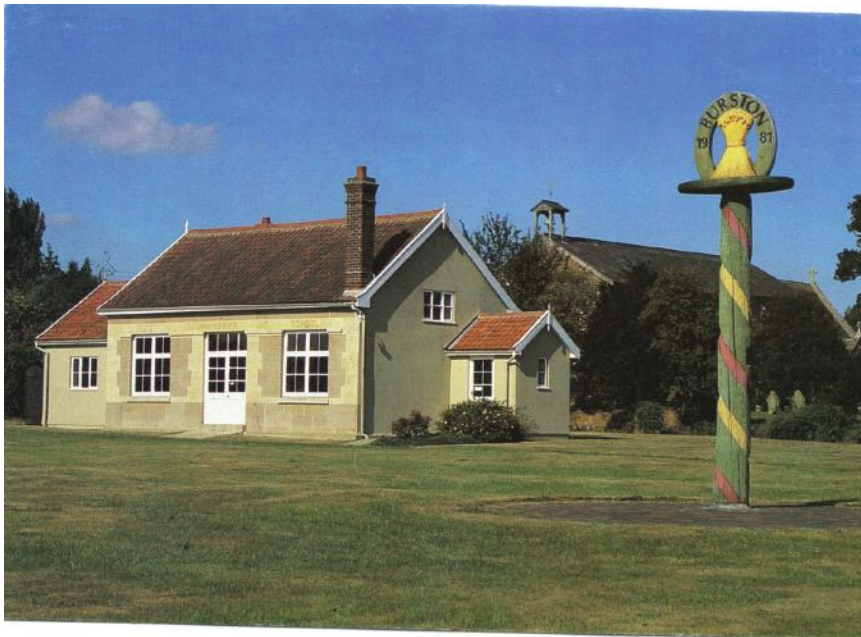
To see an early operation try

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pCCMsE5jV_8

and now the modern equivalent

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6aIOKqBA-64>

The Longest Strike in History -Minors not Miners! - Roger Haverson



In Edition 1 of IN TIME I wrote about some of the postcards I had acquired at auctions mentioning one showing Burston School, and I promised you more information about this school in a future newsletter. So 13 editions later here goes.

On 1st April 1914 the education authority for Norfolk was preparing to take over the administration of the small school in the tiny village of Burston following the sacking of the Headmistress and her assistant. The sound of children marching and singing was heard, and the sight of 66 of the schools children marching around the village and waving flags. The children had gone on strike in support of their teachers t To continue being taught by the Higdons hey set up a marquee on the village green, then moved to a carpenters workshop, and no one returned to the old school for 25 years, making the Burston school strike the longest in British history!

Kitty and Tom Higdon moved to be Headmistress and Assistant at Burston School in 1911. They came from Wood Dalling school, from which they were transferred following years of friction with the school managers, who were predominantly local farmers. The Higdons had objected to the cold, insanitary conditions in the school, and particularly the habit of farmers keeping the children off school when they wanted a bit of extra labour!

Arriving at Burston, they found things no different. In addition they were up against the Board Chairman, a newly appointed rector, Reverend Charles Tucker Eland. He was a man determined to re-establish the power of the church in the parish, particularly those powers recently usurped by the new Parish Council. With a free rectory and a salary of £581 per annum as against a farm labourer's wage of £35 he was in a good position to do so.

Tom and Kitty complained about the dampness, inadequate heating and lighting, lack of ventilation and general unhygienic conditions. Tom stood, and beat, the Rev Eland in the parish council election, and the managers set about a campaign to get rid of the pair. After a somewhat kangaroo court (at which one of the charges was lighting a fire without permission to dry the clothes of pupils who had walked three miles to school) the Higdons were given three months notice.

The strike started on 1st April 1914, with almost the full support of the local labourers. The level of intimidation, even by 1914 standards, was shocking. Farm workers were sacked, and thereby evicted for their tied cottages, land and pasture rented from the Rector was reclaimed, leaving villagers without winter food, and eighteen parents were summoned to court and fined for not sending their

children to school. The local Methodist minister was censured by his church for holding services for the children on the village green

Word of the strike quickly spread and was quickly grasped by the then burgeoning trade union movement. The lease of the carpenter's workshop was expiring, an appeal was set up for funds to build a new school, and by 1917 this had reached £1,250 with donations from miners' and railway workers' unions, Trades councils, Independent Labour Party branches and Co-operative Societies. The new school was officially declared open on 13 May 1917, with the leader of the 1914 demonstration, Violet Potter, declaring, "With joy and thankfulness I declare this school open to be forever a School of Freedom."

Tom Higdon died in August 1939, The Burston Strike School closed soon after with the 11 remaining pupils transferring to the council school. Kitty died in 1946, and they are buried together in Burston churchyard

An annual rally, supported by (many famous) trade unionists from all over the country is held the first Sunday in September to commemorate the longest strike in British history. The Strike School is now a museum, and almost on our doorstep, so worth a visit.



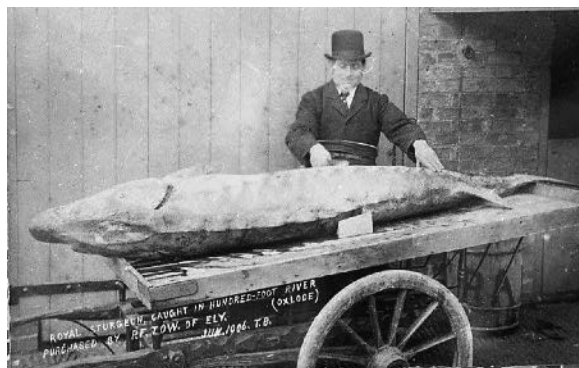
Jeremy Corbyn MP addresses the Burston Rally 2002

Photo By Sludge G - <https://www.flickr.com>

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>

Jaws' 1904 & 1906 – Over Past Snips June 29th



1904

For a week a sturgeon estimated from eight to 15 feet has disported itself at Over Stauch and successfully resisted all efforts at capture.

Vicious lunges with iron-headed quants or poles have failed to reach it, rifle shots have gone astray and a supply of harpoons have proved of no avail.

Meanwhile visitors to the staunch are increasing in number. A doctor was making his way when his boat behaved in a most unaccountable way. It tilted and rolled and when the startled occupant saw it was a huge fish which had caused the commotion there was no more pleasure in boating that day

Same day, but two years later, the Ely Standard reported:

1906

Can the King claim the eight-feet long, 200lb sturgeon, reported to have been caught in the river at Oxlode, last week – 1906 06 29 ES