



IN TIME

Ely U3A History Group Members'
Newsletter



Edition 16

16 July 2020

Welcome to this week's IN TIME. With the comet Neowise about to pass by the earth at a distance of 64 million miles it is fitting that one of our articles this week talks about a comet seen and recorded by Alderman Newton in his diary in 1665. We also have an unlikely silk connection between two articles, one about a well known High Street Optician and the other about a manor house in Kent. In addition to this we celebrate the bicentenary of Florence Nightingale and continuing the 'medical' theme look at some very strange remedies recommended in a book published in 1902.

What wonderful articles, please keep them coming. Send your articles to Maggie Haverson (email address supplied in the email containing this newsletter)

[Florence Nightingale's Bicentenary - Virginia Dival](#)



This year marks the 200th anniversary of Florence Nightingale's birth in a villa near Florence in Italy.

When she was a year old the family moved back to England, to a large Jacobean house, Lea Hurst surrounded by formal gardens in Derbyshire on the edge of the Peak District National Park, with views along the Derwent Valley. This was the family's summer home with their main residence an imposing Georgian mansion called Embley Park in Hampshire which is now a school. Their neighbour was the Prime Minister Lord Palmerston.

Florence was known as the 'Lady with the Lamp' for her nightly patrols around the wards of sick and wounded British soldiers during the Crimean War. She is considered to be the world's first nurse and revolutionised nursing saving thousands of lives. It was to her Derbyshire home she returned to as an A-list celebrity as the heroine of the Crimean War, so as to escape her fame which she hated. It was here that she wrote a detailed report for Queen Victoria full of statistics and information as to how through the evidence she had gathered on nursing, cleanliness and good management many lives could be saved.

Florence founded the world's first professional nursing school at St Thomas's Hospital in London, which now houses the Florence Nightingale Museum. Due to Covid-19 the museum is closed, however an exhibition of 200 objects to mark the 200th anniversary of her birth can be viewed online at florence-nightingale.co.uk This includes her gold watch given to her by her father, her own medicine chest and her famous lamp which is actually a Turkish lantern. Although she received several proposals of marriage she remained unmarried. Her voice can be heard in the only recording in 1890 made at her London home 10 South Street Mayfair where she lived for most of her adult life and died there aged 90 in 1910. She is buried in the family vault at St Margaret's Church, East Wellow, Hants

Later in the year to mark her bicentenary a stained glass window, which depicts the moment when a teenage Florence sitting in the grounds of Embley felt called to her vocation, will be installed in the 900 year old Romsey Abbey.

Some Snippets from 1660's Cambridge – Clinton Tweed

As recorded by Alderman Nerwton in his diary

17th December 1664 - Comets thought to portend an evil event

“.....from about 2 of the clock to 5 was seene in the ayre a commett which several days lately before had bin alsoe seene, the star it selfe was very little and not at all bigger than an ordinary starr, but it had a ray which came fromit that appeared to the judgement of some 20 yards in length, to thers the length of a pyke, to others the length of Kings Coll Chappell, it appeared southeastward.”

Note - This was Halley's Comet



3rd April, 1665

“This morning at three of the clock I arose and went to hogg hill where I plainly beheld the commett which appeared very low in the firmament full east with the streame or ray whichwas 2 or 3 yards long, and the starre and streame was much like the former that lately appeared, onely this was somewhat bigger.....”

Note - Another comet in the sky and later in 1665 the Great Plague arrived.....



Comet Neowise, Stonehenge, July 12th 2020

Lullistone Castle - Kate Cann

Lullingstone Castle is really a large manor house with a spectacular gate house . The remains of a roman villa were discovered in 1949 under the floor of the church. The estate is set in 120 acres of beautiful Kent countryside .

The late Zoe Hart Dyke (1896 – 1975) established a silk farm at Lullistone in the early 1930s - the country's first such farm - and her childhood passion became a flourishing business producing silk for the late Queen Mother's coronation robes in 1937. It also produced silk for the present queens wedding dress in 1947 and for her coronation robes in 1953 .



Thirty rooms of the house were used to breed the silk worms and more than twenty acres of the estate were populated with mulberry bushes to feed them . Each Silkworm produced a quarter of a mile of silk . During the Second World War much silk was used to manufacture parachutes. Fortunately Lady Zoe imported all her silkworms from China - it would have been considered unpatriotic at this time to obtain them from Italy where many silkworms were also bred.

Sir Oliver Hart Dyke, the grandfather of the present owner, Tom Hart Dyke designed, produced and installed machines to reel the cocoons .In 1947the farm was commissioned to produce silk for an altar front for St Botolph's Church which is on the estate. This now hangs in the Queen Anne bedroom for visitors to see. The farm also produced the silk for the late Princess Diana's Wedding Gown but by then the farm had been sold and moved from the estate to Dorset . .



[At the Sign of the Golden Spectacles and Sea Quadrant – Ian Forrest](#)



John Dollond was the son of a Huguenot silk weaver who fled to Spitalfields in London at the end of the 17th century. After working on his weaving, John frequented the London Mathematical Society meetings shortly after it was founded in 1717. Isaac Newton's Opticks had been published a few years before John's birth and the topics contained therein fascinated John. At this time Opticks was not just the science of vision but included the properties of light itself.

The telescope was invented in 1608 by a Dutch spectacle maker called Hans Lippershey, however, the quality of the image obtained was badly degraded by coloured fringes around the image, a phenomenon called chromatic aberration.

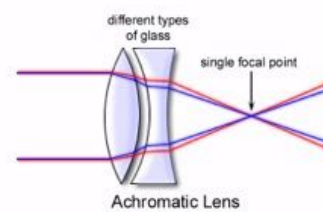
A barrister of the Inner Temple, Chester Moor Hall, made optics his hobby. By 1730, working at a laboratory in his home in Essex he made the world's first telescope lens without chromatic aberration. He had combined two lenses of opposite powers, one a flint lens, the other a crown glass lens to produce an achromatic doublet – (a – without, chromatic – colour, doublet – two lenses, usually cemented together). Then having achieved something which had defeated Newton, Moor Hall sat back and did nothing.



By 1729 John Dollond had served his apprenticeship and was a master silk weaver. He had married Elizabeth Sommier, their first child Peter was born in 1731, with a brother John born in 1733. While continuing his work as a silk weaver John made contact with many spectacle and optical instrument makers in and around Spitalfields. Peter Dollond started his apprenticeship as a silk weaver aged 13, but never completed it and in 1750 he opened a small optical business in Vine Street, Spitalfields. John Dollond continued his trade for another two years and then in 1752 joined his son in optical practice in a formal partnership. To move up market the pair moved their practice to the Sign of the Golden Spectacles and Sea Quadrant in Exeter Exchange off the Strand. John set about redesigning the micrometer, a navigational device for finding the distance from the sun. The Dollond Micrometer was a success; in 1769 James Cook took one on his voyage to Australia and to view the transit of Venus.

John Dollond continued experimenting with eyepieces to reduce chromatic aberration, then one day by chance had a conversation with George Bass who had worked the lenses for Chester Moor Hall. While Bass did not understand what he had done John Dollond was sharp enough to put two and two together.

By 1758 John Dollond had worked out what was necessary to make an achromatic doublet and wrote to Dr Birch of the Royal Society who printed a copy of the letter in the same year. John's commercial mind immediately went to a patent, which he was granted (as Moor Hall had made no attempt to publish his work).



The Royal Society's highest award, the Copley Medal, was presented to John Dollond, for his work, in 1758. He was made FRS in 1761. Early that year he was appointed optician to King George III. On 30th November 1761 John suffered a stroke and died.

The optical company that John and Peter Dollond formed thrived. While it made spectacles, its speciality was optical instruments, especially telescopes. These were much appreciated by the Royal Navy and in the same way that we refer to a 'hoover' meaning a vacuum cleaner, Naval Officers referred to telescopes as dollonds. It is thought that the telescope which Nelson held to his blind eye during the [Battle of Copenhagen](#) was a Dollond telescope.

However by 1927 it was obvious that Dollond & Co was about to go bust when Irvine Aitchison stepped in and brought the company calling it Dollond and Aitchison Opticians. After passing through many hands including TWW Television Company, Slater Walker, Gallaher Ltd and a management buyout, the company was bought by Boots and the Dollond name disappeared from the High Street in 2009.

[Consult me for all you want to know– Wendy Rolph](#)



Is the title of a delightful book published in 1902.

Some of the household ‘receipts’ are amusing and terrifying in equal measure.

‘Alteratives: medicines adapted to cure a disease without producing any very sensible effect on the human system’

Alterative pills: Lobelia seeds, Mandrake, Blue Flag, Blood Root, Cayenne Pepper, Gum Guaiacum, Extract of Dandelion, Oil of Peppermint and Simple Syrup to form into pills.

Take two pills twice or thrice a day. These pills are of great service in bilious and liver complaints, diseased joints, boils, carbuncles, cutaneous eruptions, scrofula, syphilis etc.

Please note I have omitted the quantity of each ingredient listed above but am happy to supply on request with suitable disclaimers.

Bleeding at the Nose: Use wheaten flour; it forms a good styptic; snuff it up the nose. Tighten the garters; apply ligatures to the arms and put the feet in warm water to bring the blood downwards.

Perhaps prevention is better than attempting a cure!

Cold to Avoid Catching: Accustom yourself to the use of sponging with cold water every morning immediately after getting out of bed. Follow this by a good deal of rubbing with a wet towel.

Practice temperance and early rising. This proves a safeguard to the injurious influence of cold and sudden change of temperature.

*Eye-sight to Preserve: Do not read in the dusk or by candle-light or gaslight if the eyes be at all disordered. Do not let the curtains, walls etc be white; green Is the better colour. Avoid exposure to cold easterly winds; **especially avoid intemperance and excessive venery which are awfully destructive to eye-sight.***

Just in case anyone keeps sheep you may also find this useful.

Sheep-Dipping Wash: take white arsenic, powdered, half a pound; soft soap four and a half pounds. Beat these for a quarter of an hour in five gallons of water. Add this mixture to the water sufficient to dip fifty sheep.

I hope you have found these extracts amusing but please, don’t try them at home!

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>

Horse rise – Ely Past Snip July 10th 1901



A rather peculiar accident occurred in Lynn Road, Ely.

A load of hay, weighing about a ton, was being carted to the Ely railway station by a young man, Sidney Jugg.

The girth band under the horse suddenly broke and the weight of the hay immediately tipped the cart up and lifted the horse bodily into the air. Jugg was thrown between the shafts but escaped with a bruised leg.

Meanwhile the horse was hanging in its perilous position, with its hind legs touching the ground but in its struggle managed to break loose and free itself. There was a terrific crash when the cart tipped up, large trusses of hay were strewn all over the road, and both shafts supports were badly cracked.

This story appeared in a Cambridge newspaper on this date.