



# IN TIME

Ely U3A History Group Members'  
Newsletter



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Welcome to this week's IN TIME. The newsletter always reaches you on time, but where did the phrase 'Do you have the correct time?' come from? We find out in this edition, as well as discovering the origins of Bury St Edmunds and learning about the world's first guided missile. We also have an interesting article by Pam Blakeman about a local photographer and artist as well as our usual Petty's Pick of the Week

Please keep your articles coming they are much enjoyed by our readers. Send your articles to Maggie Haverson (email address supplied in the email containing this newsletter)

## [Have you got the Correct Time? – Roger Orr](#)

Whilst growing up in Belfast in the 1950s and 1960s I would sometimes be stopped in the street with the question, 'Have you got the Correct Time?' My grandfather, being a watch-maker, meant I sported a wrist watch at an early age at a time when many adults still did not possess one. I found the question rather strange, suggesting that I might either have knowingly set my watch to show an incorrect time or might be choosing to provide an incorrect reply! It was many years later, whilst I was carrying out some family history research, that I discovered the likely original of this phrase.

Up to the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century time in any given location was set as local mean time i.e. noon was set when the sun was at its highest point. It was the rapid growth of the railways which forced the use of a common time standard across the country for time-tabling purposes. In 1847 Railway Time came into existence for this purpose, using Greenwich Mean Time, GMT, as the standard. However it wasn't until 1880 that the Definition of Time Act made GMT the legal time across Great Britain and Dublin Mean Time (about 25 minutes behind GMT) the standard for Ireland.



19<sup>th</sup> century clocks and watches, in the main, were not renowned for keeping accurate time and could not be relied on to get people to the train station or an important appointment on time. Consequently it was usually a local watch-maker who agreed to keep an accurate clock in their premises to be used as a reference. My great grandfather's brother, James, was a watch-maker operating in the provincial Ulster town of Ballymena. I came across a newspaper advertisement placed by him in the Ballymena Observer in April 1882 making readers aware that he was keeping Dublin Mean Time accurately in his premises. Doubtless he was hoping that visitors would show an interest in his goods as well as checking their pocket watch.

If a town possessed a clock tower this often became the reference point for time checking, assuming it was checked and maintained properly. After James emigrated to America in 1884 my great grandfather, Samuel, took over the family watch making business in Ballymena. In January 1890 he was appointed to maintain the large public clock on Ballymena Town Hall to keep Dublin Mean Time accurately. Wishing to take full advantage of the situation he had notices printed in the local newspaper to the effect, "All parties wishing to know the correct time can in future have same from the Town Clock. I have thoroughly cleaned and adjusted the Clock, and mean to make CORRECT TIME a speciality in connection with above Clock."

This almost certainly shows the origins of the phrase, Correct Time, still being used on the streets of Belfast mid- 20<sup>th</sup> century. Perhaps this is not so surprising when you consider that some of my enquirers were born at the turn of the century and probably heard their parents using the phrase as they were growing up.

Dublin Mean Time was phased out in 1916 in Ireland, being replaced by GMT.

### How Bury St. Edmunds got its Name – Heather Carruth



Bury St Edmunds has not only an interesting history, but to the modern generation a very misleading name. The town was originally a hamlet called Beodericsworth and it was here in the year 630, that Sigeberht, king of East Anglia founded a small monastery.

In 869, the ‘The Great Heathen Army’ advanced on East Anglia and the East Anglian King, Edmund, (until then a rather unremarkable character by all accounts), was slain by the Danes, possibly in battle, but by tradition after he had refused the Danes' demand that he renounce Christ. He died for his faith and became the Martyr-King Edmund. Hoxne in Suffolk claims to be the place originally known as Haegelisdun, where legend dictates this happened. King Edmund’s body remained in Hoxne until the early 10<sup>th</sup> century, when his relics were taken to Beodericsworth monastery for safe keeping. (Other villages in the area make similar claims).

By 925, the fame of St Edmund had spread far and wide, and the growing town became a great centre of pilgrimage. In the early 11<sup>th</sup> century, King Canute replaced the monastery of King Sigeberht with an abbey, the name of the town changed initially to St Edmund’s Bury then to Bury St Edmunds. In 1095, under Abbot Baldwin, the bones were reinterred in the rebuilt Abbey Church (later moved; the exact location cannot now be accurately stated). The Bury part of the town’s name probably has its roots in Germanic languages meaning fortress, castle or walls, not the fact that St Edmund lies buried there as my grandchildren, when tiny once thought.



*The searching Knights find St Edmund’s head being guarded by a wolf.*



*The Great Heathen Army overwintered at Thetford.*

As a point of interest St Edmund was for around three hundred years, the patron saint of England. Today his patronage cover; Kings, pandemics, the Roman Catholic diocese of East Anglia, Douai Abbey, wolves, torture victims and protection from the plague.

## The World's First Guided Missile —Roger Haverson

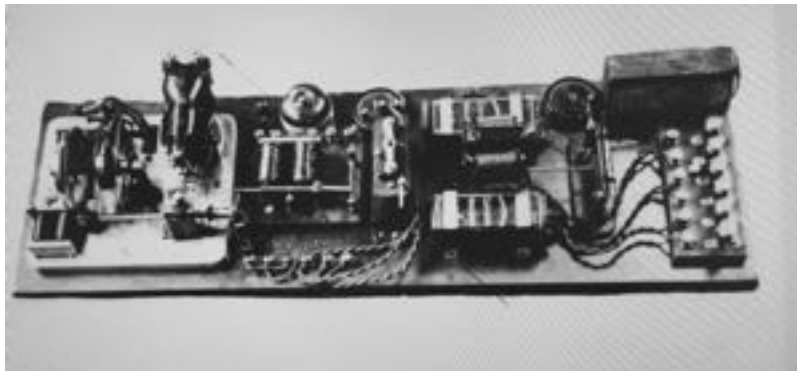
I'll have a fairly safe bet that if you asked 100 people who invented the guided missile and when, a top answer would be Von Braun and the V2 or maybe the V1, about 1943.

As ever the Imperial War Museum (IWM) is an amazing source of military knowledge, and while I was indexing stuff a few years ago I found that they have the remains of the very first ever guided missile, dated 1917. Here it is



Not quite your V2, but a pair of SE5 biplane wings attached to a circular fuselage and powered by a 60 HP RAF (Royal Aircraft Factory) engine. The aerial wires can be seen in the wings and fuselage.

The radio control gear was equally rudimentary. The apparatus was controlled by means of a large induction coil and was reported by Sir Henry Norman, of the Inventions Panel of the Ministry of Munitions to have "solved the problem of radio control within the limits of vision". Here's an image of the radio installed in this first prototype



Early trials must have been judged successful as later versions were produced, the final version in 1917 had an ABC engine of 10 hp designed to give up to 10 hours flight, and included an electrical gyroscope. Experiments were made with a view to finding a means by which messages could be transmitted from the missile back to the controller so that the missile could be controlled beyond the limit of vision.

The final apparatus of 1917 was launched by multiplying gear and compressed air. The apparatus, together with the self-contained compressor, the folding launching ramps and the generator for radio transmission could all be carried in a five ton lorry.

Later in 1917 an electrically steered rocket was designed with the designed purpose of pursuing a "hostile airman". To conceal its real purpose, which was bombing or anti aircraft defence, the project was called an Aerial Target! The final trial of the "Aerial Target" was on 21st March 1917 when it was demonstrated to an audience of generals and diplomats from all the allied countries. All went well initially, but then it crash-dived towards the VIPs who all ran for cover!

This all sounds rather far from our idea of guided missiles but please remember this was just 14 years from the Wright brothers first flight. The concept of flight was still amazing, much less control from the ground.

The man behind this project was another of our unsung heroes, a major in the RFC, Professor Archibald Montgomery Low. He was an avid inventor who eventually invented over 200 machines and gadgets, from new explosives, gas detectors for coal mines, cigarettes that did not drop ash, a glass cutter using old razor blades, and a stocking suspender that prevented laddering. He forecast, (in 1925) 700ph aircraft, and (in 1954) that travel to the moon would become a reality. In 1914, he had demonstrated a device which he called the "Televista", but did not pursue it as no-one would sponsor him.

The Aerial target was not pursued for many years, but during WWII a radio controlled Tiger Moth, the Queen Bee, was developed as a target drone. They flew throughout the war from what is now Northreps airfield near Cromer in Norfolk, so not such a bad idea after all!



### [John Allen Pershore Titterton 1830 - 1914 - Pam Blakeman](#)

The late Reg Holmes provided interesting information about John and his family; John. he said, 'was born in 1830 'of a well established Staffordshire family'.

His father. John Titterton senr. was in the Coldstream Guards during the Napoleonic wars and served at the battle of Waterloo ; his Waterloo medal probably remains with his family. After the war he joined the newly formed Metropolitan Police. He again came into contact with his former famous commander-in-chief, the Duke 'of Wellington. This was during the time of riotous disturbances in the City of London during which the Duke, no longer a popular hero, was hustled by the mob and was forced to dismount from his horse. He was only rescued from actual physical danger by a small body of the Metropolitan police led by Inspector Titterton who, according to The Times, quoted by the C.I.P., stated that 'having restored him to his horse, escorted him back to Apsley House'. Later he became Chief Constable in Cambridgeshire and then Governor of Peterborough Gaol.



*Padnal as it was before the construction of Sandy's Cut, the new river from Adelaide to Littleport, with the gibbet in the distance*

Reg Holmes also said that his wife, John's mother, came of a family who were 'the proud possessors of the magnificent Aston Hall, near Birmingham, from which the football team, Aston Villa, draws its name'. The hall was sold by a Mr. Holte in 1817, then leased by James Watt. The truth is that the link with the Tittertons is a 'long held family story: in fact the football team was named after Aston Villa Methodist Church.

It was in the Peterborough area that young John Titterton spent his boyhood & early youth and came to love the fen country. He came to Ely in his late 20s and lived there for nearly 60 years until his death in 1914. Arriving in Ely in by 1858 he said '... my ideal seemed to be realised . . . I found every one kind & courteous from his Lordship the Bishop to the humble fowler & fisherman whilst my sporting proclivities



*Wildfowling in the Fens*

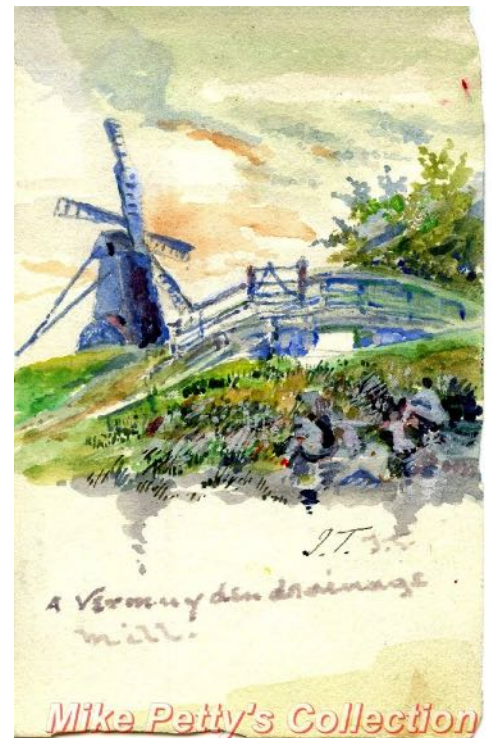
made me lifelong friends with some of the best men of the district'. He was a sportsman, photographer, antiquarian, naturalist and astronomer.

In Ely he met another keen astronomer. Professor William Selwyn - Canon Selwyn - and so 'John's skill as a photographer proved to be of particular use. With Canon Selwyn he made a complete record of the solar spots which were manifested in 1860. 'His photographic plates were deposited at Joddrell Bank' (Reg Holmes) where they

probably remain today. Some years ago I had a correspondence with a member of the Royal Astronomical Society and it was concluded that the two men probably made their observations from the top floor of the Black Hostelry. Recently the *Bacon Manuscript* has become more widely available so it is now clear that it was from the neighbouring Cellarer's house (now part of Kings Ely), perhaps from the garden rather than the top floor that the two men worked.

Henry Styleman Le Strange who, with Thomas Gambier Parry, was responsible for designing and painting the nave ceiling in Ely Cathedral refers to Titterton in his diary of 29 April 1861. Le Strange mentions that Titterton is 'making' photographs of his cartoons. On 20 September he writes 'service in cathedral at 10 - afterwards I settle with Titterton matter relating to the photographs of my cartoons'. The Cathedral still has some of the original photographs (on loan?) including those of the cartoons of prophets (the paintings can be seen on the ceiling) and also some of the main scenes depicted on the ceiling panels.

The great majority of Titterton's many oil and water colour paintings, drawings and very many sketch books remain the property of the Wills family (see below). Many are of fenland scenes and also his interpretation of past events. Two of his smallest water colours are at the Cambridgeshire Collection; one of Cuckoo Bridge (reproduced in colour in my *Ely Through Time* (published 2010) and one of Vermuyden's Drainage Mill. In *The Book of Ely* (published 1992). The photo taken from the Waterside Brewery chimney (perhaps taken from inside the chimney and made possible by the removal of a few bricks!) and his pencil sketch of skaters are also in the latter publication.. I have a sepia post card of his reconstruction of the building of Ely Cathedral and a small folding booklet 'Ely Cathedral Twelve Permanent Photographs one shilling'. His photographic work also included many portraits in the form of *Carte de Visité*. A number of his drawings and paintings can also be seen on Mike Petty's *Flickr*; these are from photos, that I now have, taken many years ago for Reg Holmes. Unfortunately most are in black and white.. There are also colour slides, taken for Reg Holmes, which I gave to the Cambridgeshire Collection and can also be seen on line in Mike Petty's extensive collection of local history information.



*The drainage mill at Cuckoo Bridge*

**John Allen Pershore Titterton** was born 23 May 1830 (baptised London St. Pancras 7 November 1834). He died 9 July.1914. John married Hannah King but by 1878, as a widower, he married Elizabeth Jane Titterton. His premises were on the corner opposite the Lamb Hotel. (Here later photographers, Starr and Rignall, John Slater and Jack Casselden also had their studios). For the last three or four years of John Titterton's life he and his wife lived at number one Lynfield Terrace on Lynn Road. John is buried at Ely Cemetery, Inscribed on the memorial stone the words 'The trumpet will sound'.

His son, John Frederick Titterton, was born 1880/81. The couple also had a daughter Elizabeth Clara. John Frederick Titterton had a tobacconist shop on Fore Hill, in the small premises on the east corner with Three Cups Walk; he lived with his family at 33a Downham Road in the 1930s. By the late 1950s *Ely Red Books* show a Mrs K. Titterton at number 33a and a Miss E.E. Titterton at number 43 Downham Road.

Mary, John Frederick's daughter, was born 1924. She married Arthur Wills composer and Director of Music Ely Cathedral. Mary died in November 2015; Arthur and their two children Collin and Rachel survive.

### [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>*



### **Recession bites – Ely Past Snip July 16th 1982**

Ely is wrestling with the problems of the recession which has seen 750 people lose their jobs.

The city's economy has been rocked by the shutdown of four of its biggest firms – Borden UK, Lytton Boat Building, Dorman Sprayer and the British Sugar Corporation.

It had been hoped that the new Club Mews shopping precinct would be a boon to small traders but they are finding the annual £400 rates too much.

However a new Tesco supermarket in Broad Street and a Boots store on the site of the Rex Cinema will bring 100 new jobs.

*This story appeared in a Cambridge newspaper on this date.*