



IN TIME

Ely U3A History Group Members'
Newsletter



Edition 24

10 September 2020

Welcome to edition 24 of IN TIME. We have a varied and fascinating collection of articles in this issue. We can read about Tudor wives and circus performers, find out more information about Bishop Osmund of Ely and the bouncing bomb and learn about a well known Ely photographer.

Please keep on sending in your articles to - Maggie Haverson (email address supplied in the email containing this newsletter).

[Complicated lives – three generations of Tudor women – Kate Cann](#)



Earlier this year I gave a history lecture to the history group on the family of Henry VIII and his six wives. Life in Tudor times was very complicated but here is an extension on my lecture.

Mary Boleyn was born about 1499 to Sir Thomas Boleyn and Lady Elizabeth Howard; she was the elder sister of Anne and George Boleyn. Mary was born at Blickling Hall in Norfolk before her parents moved to Hever Castle. All three Boleyn children had a happy childhood and schooling in the basic arts, the girls learning embroidery and dancing.

Mary and Anne went to France as ladies in waiting to the Queen. It is said Mary had an affair with the King, Francis I, and it is also where she met Henry VIII. Mary was sent home in disgrace and became the lover of Henry VIII. She was married to William Carey in 1520 and had two children Catherine and Henry Carey. When Henry courted her sister Anne, Mary was banished from court and when her husband died she married William Stratford, she had two children with her second husband but both died in infancy. Mary died in 1543

Catherine Carey, daughter of Mary Boleyn and William Carey was born in 1524. She married Sir Frances Knolly who was a puritan, he went into exile when Mary I was on the throne. Catherine's marriage was a happy one and they had 14 children together. She became maid of honour to Anne of Cleves and Catherine Howard and was acknowledged as Elizabeth I's cousin. When Elizabeth came to the throne, Catherine became chief lady to the bedchamber. She died at Hampton Court in 1569 her husband and children all outlived her. She is buried in Westminster Abbey.



Catherine's daughter, another beautiful woman was born in 1543 and named Lettice Knolly. At the age of seventeen Lettice married her first husband Walter Devereux Viscount Hereford who became Earl of Essex. Later she began an affair with Robert Dudley, Robert had plans to marry Elizabeth I and Lettice was a distraction, she was also the image of the Queen, and when Robert finally gave up his plans and married Lettice in 1578 Elizabeth's rage knew no bounds and she banished them both from court. Lettice gave Dudley an heir - Robert, Lord Denby in 1581. After Robert Dudley's death she married Sir Christopher Blount and from 1590 onwards lived mainly in Staffordshire in reasonable good health until her death on Christmas day in 1634 at the age of 91

Childhood memories

The Circus comes to Town - Bertram Mills circus 1947 - Roger Haverson



I grew up on the outskirts of King's Lynn, opposite "The Rec", now part of The Walks park. A major excitement every 3 years was the visit by a travelling circus, alternately Bertram Mills and then latterly Chipperfields. These started in 1949, a mere 4 years after the end of the war. The circuses had been in lockdown during the war, Bertram Mills at their winter quarters at Epsom, and Lynn became their first stop on their summer tour of the country, so a longer stop than normal, at least a week, for shakedown of tenting, site building etc.

The circus arrived at Lynn station overnight on 3 special trains. One of tents, tractors and stuff, one scenery and props and people, and one animals. Those that could walk (people and animals!) paraded through Lynn from the station to site, 6 elephants sauntering down London Road, trunk to tail, their only restraint a man with a walking stick!

Only the top performers had their own caravans, the rest had to find "digs" locally, and as we lived next to the site and my parents were up for it, we quickly became one of the "regulars", names passed from year to year in little black books. We regularly hosted a couple of "Elephant Girls" who rode the elephants and horses, and posed in various "Tableaux". Imagine the effect of all that glamour on a susceptible 7 year old!

Most importantly of all we had a BATH! Such luxuries did not exist on the site, so we saw a constant stream of trapeze artistes, jugglers, lion tamers etc passing through for one glorious exciting week every three years or so. Most were "foreign", spoke little English, and were completely wondrous. In a 1940's King's Lynn where you were considered alien if you came from Wisbech, I lapped it up. I had free rein to visit the menagerie (elephant girls doubled up in the pay box during the day!) and nobody took much notice of a spare child.

That's me in the picture on "Rufus" the pony, with the head of the menagerie, who had no hesitation in plonking me on any animal around. I almost seem to be enjoying it.

Of course its all awfully "non PC" now, and we all disapprove of performing animals, but my overriding childhood memory is of kindly and happy folk loving their jobs, and healthy and well cared for animals, albeit not kept in ideal conditions. We kept in touch with Irene (2nd



Elephant girl from the right!) for a number of years, she eventually left the circus as they all did, settled down and raised a family. Time moved on, the circus became more independent with living vans and no need for digs, and eventually stopped touring. Did it affect me? I don't know. I became a vet and practiced in Lynn for the next 50 years, so maybe it did. I never had to remove a tiger's tooth or trim an elephant's toenails, but there was always a frisson of thrill when the circus came to town.

Well that's my childhood memory. Everyone's got one of these, Maggie needs your contributions so get writing! From a Norfolk 'ol boy, in the words of the blessed St Deliah "Lets be 'aving yer!"

And that Reminds Me - Virginia Divall



Reading Kate Cann's piece about searching for the remains of Barnes Wallis bouncing bomb at Reculver beach in issue 21, reminded me of a family holiday on the Kent coast with a visit to Herne Bay and The Seaside Museum at 12 William Street, Herne Bay.

The museum displayed many varied and interesting objects including the Dambusters prototype bouncing bomb which were tested at sea off Reculver. The bombs were actually mines filled with a harmless substance many of these were retrieved from the mud to be analysed at nearby RAF Manston. This museum is well worth a visit if you are in the area.

It was also with great interest that I read John Carruth's article about the remains of six Anglo-Saxon Bishops that are interred in the outer wall of Bishops West's chapel. A book about one of these Bishops was published in 2014 by local Ely author Dr Janet Fairweather – 'Bishop Osmund: A Missionary to Sweden in the Late Viking Age'. Copies are available from the author.

Bishop Osmund had served as court-bishop to King Emund the Old of Sweden and was expelled from Sweden and travelled to England in about 1057 and died as a monk of Ely in the abbacy of Thurstan (1066 – c. 1072)

Janet is also the author of Liber Eliensis: A History of The Isle of Ely from the Seventh Century to the Twelfth, compiled by a Monk of Ely in the Twelfth Century. She spent 6 years translating the Latin manuscript into English.



Thomas Samuel Bolton 1878 – 1943 Pam Blakeman



The photographer, Thomas Bolton, provides an amazing record of Ely during the first thirty to forty years of the 20th century except for his time in the Royal flying Corps during World War One. He photographed almost every aspect of Ely life from celebrations, fishing parties, triumphant fishermen and floods to portraits of children and adults. The latter usually photographed in his studio and often printed as Carte de Visité.

As in so many cases the photo included Tom Bolton's hand written caption on the front as, for example, 'Royal sturgeon caught in hundred-foot river (or Lode)

purchased by R.F. Tow of Ely September 1906 T.B.’. Sometimes he would follow a procession along the street (Church procession of 1910) or stay on one spot recording the procession as it passed (Peace Day Celebrations). The frequency of these photos depended on the time it took to change the plate in his tripod mounted camera. Not only did he handwrite his name on the front but often the event and date, as with the example above, sometimes with a number to show the sequence. As Mike Rouse has pointed out Tom Bolton identified himself in a number of ways, on either the front or back of his cards – even by means of a circular rubber stamp. He published hundreds of photos as black and white post cards that are now very collectable.

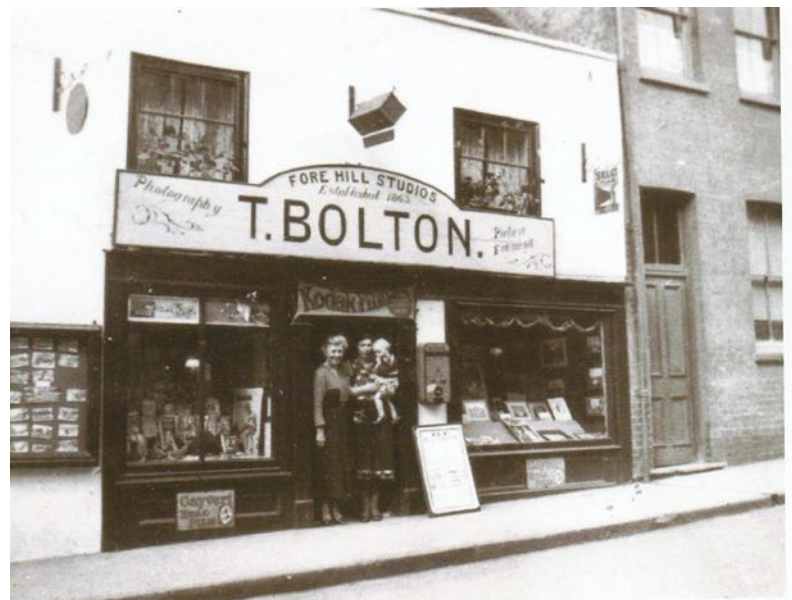


Tom was also an active member of Ely Amateur Dramatic Society and the Ely Trinity Amateur Operatic Society. To quote *Mike Rouse* again ‘The early bioscope pioneer in Ely was William Bryant in association with Thomas Bolton. The two men ‘gave magic lantern shows in Ely and Littleport’.

Tom’s father, Samuel, was recorded in the 1851 census as a ‘rural letter service’ in Prickwillow and in the census of 1871 as a postman. There may be doubt that he was a prolific photographer though he is credited with founding a business in 1863 in small premises at 40 Fore Hill, (more information about 40 Fore Hill is to be found at the end of this article) However in 1878 he married photographer Martha Heydon. Martha carried on the business on her own after Samuel’s death on 15 April 1888. Later Thomas joined her at the Fore Hill premises where outside there was often a framed ‘poster’ advertising the latest films shown at the cinema – probably at the Rex.

By 1903 Thomas had opened his own photographic business in premises on the Market Square next to the Club Inn, to the west was H.G. Churchyard, ironmonger, then the Temperance Hotel (*Ely Red Book*). In 1910 his sister, Rose, married George Eliott Churchyard. The business became Bolton and Churchyard in Market Street. Soon this developed into two separate businesses – Bolton’s at number 7 Market Street and Churchyard’s tobacconist next door at number 9. In 1920 *Ely Red Book* shows Market Street ‘H.E. Churchyard tobacconist, cigars, cigarettes smokers’ requisites etc. Bolton’s Music warehouse, pianos, Organs, Melodeons, violin strings, mouth organs, a speciality, “Tabard Inn Library”’. (The latter probably housed books that could be borrowed for a few pence per week).

In the 1930s it was Bolton’s Bazaar with on the east facing wall photos by Thomas Bolton were displayed in a glass fronted showcase. Inside the variety of goods sold included toys, souvenirs, china, wool and even a china baby doll’s head by *Armand Marseille*. The business continued under the name Bolton’s into the 1970s. Rose Churchyard (Bolton) who died in 1966 aged 85, almost certainly worked in the shop as did a Miss Cooper. It would seem very likely that Mrs Churchyard owned the business after her husband’s death. Meanwhile the photographic business continued to flourish until Tom’s death in 1943 after which number 40 Fore Hill became vacant.



Thomas's Family history

Thomas Bolton's grandfather, Henry, from Downham Market, was a butcher (as his father before him) in Prickwillow. He married Hannah (Collen) in August 1838 in Holy Trinity Church, Ely and their son Samuel was born two months later. He was baptised at Holy Trinity Church in Ely on 13 October 1838. Samuel married Martha (Heydon), a widow, in 1878 in London. (Martha's daughter Fannie then lived with them). After Samuel's death on 15 April 1888 Martha ran the business; she died in 1928. Thomas was born on 6 November 1878; he was baptised at the end of December in that year. He was married at All Souls Church, Hampstead on 7 October 1915 to Maria Elizabeth Horsler

40 Fore Hill

40 Fore Hill was next door to a house and corner shop that had for long been a grocer's and later Lemon's butchers. After 1867 a considerably larger house, built by the Blakemans overshadowed Gilbert. In the 1939 registration document the couple were living at 40 Fore Hill, Ely. Maria outlived Thomas. In 1928 Mr. T. Blakeman sold to Thomas Samuel Bolton 'a property on Fore Hill' for £90. (from a diary of Evans, solicitor. Where could it have been other than 40 Fore Hill. Number 40 was eventually demolished; sadly, it is believed that hundreds of Tom's photographic plates lie smashed under the car park of the subsequent office block.

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'

Car telephones - Cambridgeshire Daily News September 7th 1959

Motorists will soon have the opportunity of having their cars equipped with telephones.

"This is going to be a danger – using one hand driving and the other using a telephone", Coun. G.A. Holmes told Huntingdonshire Road Safety Committee. "And now they are trying to bring out t/v sets for cars", he went on. "We are not progressing. It is dangerous".

The Committee took no action on this matter. 59 09 07a

This story appeared in a Cambridge newspaper on this date.