



IN TIME

Ely U3A History Group Members'
Newsletter



Edition 26

24 September 2020

Welcome to edition 26 of IN TIME. This week we can read about a house that has stood the tests of time, a man who was close to three medieval kings, the early part of the reign of Henry VIII and a local inventor whose invention saved thousands of lives.

We have produced an amazing 26 issues of IN TIME and covered a vast variety of historical themes **BUT it will only continue if you send in the articles, so please have a go.**

Send your articles to Maggie Haverson (email address supplied in the email containing this newsletter).

[A House through Time..... with apologies to David Olusoga – Cassandra Rogers](#)



Chawton House is one of the finest Elizabethan houses surviving in Hampshire. It is said to be in the valley of the Thames as it is placed on rising ground near the sources of the Wey River. The form of the place name in the Domesday Book 'Celtone' makes it improbable that it has anything to do with the chalk, which, mixed with clay brick-earth and gravel, abounds in the parish. For timber the whole area is rich in beeches, oaks and elms. Behind the house on the hill, rise still further the gardens and shrubberies and a good long terrace which commands a fine view over the church of St. Nicholas to the high beech woods known as Chawton Park.

There is an interesting connection with The Vyne near Basingstoke, which runs through many generations, but in the 16th century the houses fell into different hands. Chawton to the Wests, who first leased it, then sold the property to the Knights. The one sale of the land since the conquest (1066).

The Knights had held land in the parish since the time of Edward II and were very ready to become squires. In 1524 William Knight leased the land which was renewed to John Knight the younger in 1551 – the land then sold to him. Finally, in 1578 the whole land and property sold to Nicholas Knight (son of John) thus sealing the Knight ownership.

John Knight seems to have been of some importance being High Sheriff of Hampshire in 1609.

Anyone looking at the house today might think it was intended to be in the shape of an E, but this was not the case, and would not have entered the heads of the pre-Elizabethan builders. It stands today in 2020 as it was built, and lovely it is, still the Freehold owned by my first cousin Richard Knight. He lives in Gloucestershire, and the house is now leased out as a centre for women writers from the 1700's. The library holds early editions of works by women, mostly in English, and mostly within the period 1600-1830. Many of these works are rare and in some cases unique.

From August 1st this year, the House and Gardens are once more open at certain times.

[William Marshall - Kate Cann](#)



Roger Haverson's article about King John in issue 21 has inspired me to write about one of my medieval heroes William Marshall. There have been a number of books written about the life of William Marshall and I have read most of them as this is my favourite period in history

William Marshall was born in 1147, his father gave him up to King Stephen at the tender age of five as a hostage for his father's good behaviour, this was a time when Kings felt threatened by the knights who were supposed to protect them. Nevertheless William was a happy child and finally became a squire in Stephen's household.

After Stephen's death in 1154, William joined the house of Henry 11, when he saved the life of Eleanor of Aquitaine, Henry's wife. From here on William never looked back. He married a wealthy heiress Isabella De Clare and became the Earl of Pembroke, He advised Henry on how to manage his wayward sons and was tutor to Henry's first born son also called Henry, he strove to advise and council through Henry

11's troubled life and although he was appalled by Thomas Becket's death he had given his oath to be the Kingsman and he kept his word until the day Henry 11 died in 1189.

When Richard 1 took the throne William passed his allegiance to his King, and so he began a new chapter in his history fighting alongside Richard Lionheart, or helping to restore order in England while Richard's brother John caused upheaval while his brother was in the Holy Land

Marshall helped to raise the ransom when Richard was captured and imprisoned in Germany, and when Richard was finally released he welcomed his king back to England. Once again Richard went into battle leaving William to watch Prince John, but this time Richard would not return and John was able to finally take the throne in 1199, William had to swear to be loyal to him or lose everything he had gained.

William's two eldest sons became hostage to John, for Williams good behaviour and so young William and Richard became squires in John's household,

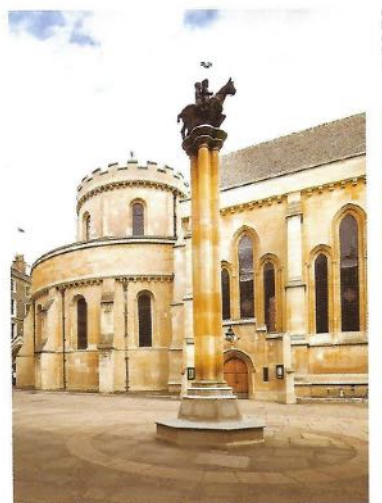
John quarrelled with the church and the whole of England was put in interdict for two years until William finally managed to get John to accept the pope's nominee as Archbishop of Canterbury, Stephen Langton.

William's wife Isabella had lands in Ireland and William asked John if he could take his family to Ireland, this he did and was able to keep his remaining children out of John's clutches. William was

asked by the Barons to talk John into signing a charter of freedom and rights and so the Magna Carta was written out and duly signed at Runnymede near Windsor on 15 July 1215

When King John lost his baggage train in The Wash and died in 1216 William was able to keep the French king from taking John's son Henry's throne, the boy was only nine years old and William had pledged to protect him. William was now eighty years old, his wife thirty six years his junior had given him ten children who had all survived. He died in 1219 and Isabelle his wife one year later .

William had taken the vows of a Knights Templar on his deathbed and he and his son are buried in the Temple Church in London . His son William died childless ten years after his father. William's daughter Malher married Roger Bigod whose family had built Framlingham Castle. When Roger died she married William de Warren, and three generations of his family built Castle Acre, the village and the Priory .



10 Temple Church London

The Accession of Henry VIII – Heather Carruth

When Henry VII died in April 1509, few mourned; for the old King had become a cruel and vengeful tyrant. Though they had no way of knowing it, the English people had endured a taste of what his son's reign would bring; but for now they rejoiced that their golden prince would be king, enjoying the undisputed progression with its absence of the bloodshed, terror and fighting. Life was good in England.

At seventeen, as he confidently took his place, Henry had two main aims in life ; one to ensure that he would have many sons, so that the next succession would be as painless for his people and the second to win back his birthright, France.



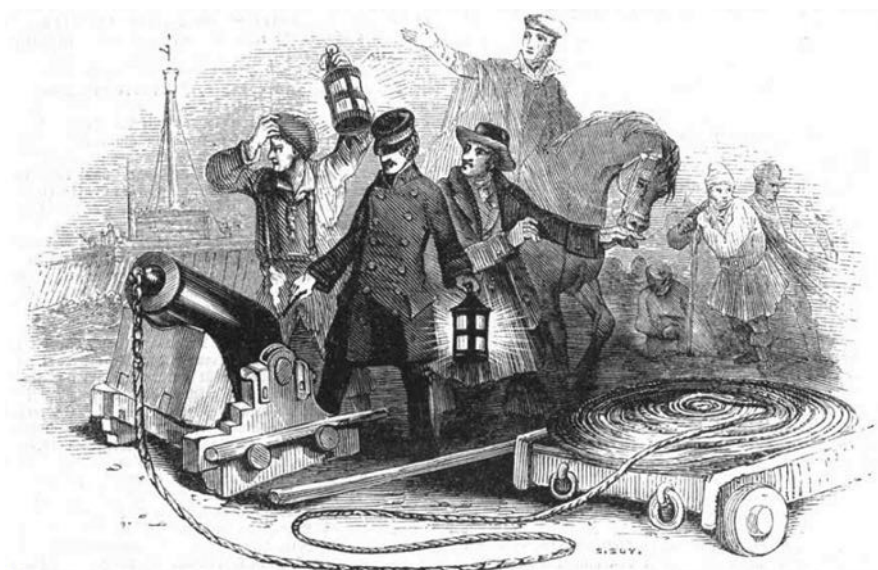
Thirteen days before his coronation he married Katherine of Aragon.

As they were wed no doubt he believed he had ticked the first box; he was a giant of a man, athletic, bursting with health, invincible, how could this union not result in many children? They were crowned together, declared King and Queen of England and France, but by the end of 1510, Katherine had born a stillborn daughter and Henry had begun to tire of her; he had already been unfaithful with several women.

Henry inherited £380 million (in today's money) from his father, which was good, because he was by nature a big spender. When he looked at France, he saw a prize waiting to be taken, but ticking that box would prove even more difficult and very expensive.

In 1511, Henry joined a union with Ferdinand, his father-in-law and the Pope to fight France, bankrolled mainly by Henry, it soon became apparent that he had been duped, Ferdinand merely wanting the English troops to guard his border whilst he waged a separate war with Navarre, he had no intention of fighting France. By October 1512, the dispirited English troops had returned home and Henry's fortune had been squandered.

Henry saw himself dishonoured and betrayed on all fronts with the finger of blame pointing squarely at Katherine.



Next time you are driving down the A10 towards Lynn look out for the village of Hilgay away to your right. If you have got an hour or so, stay awhile and explore. Take a walk through the village up to the church, for here is a memorial to a remarkable man, Captain **George William Manby** FRS (1765 – 1854).



Manby was born in Denver and attended school in Downham Market. After some military training he joined the Cambridgeshire Militia and reached the rank of Captain.

A formative event in young George's life was when as a helpless onlooker he witnessed a naval ship, HMS Snipe, run aground a mere 60 yards off Yarmouth in a storm. Despite being so close to the beach, rescue was impossible, and 214 people drowned, including woman, children and French prisoners of war. Following this tragedy he started experiments to find a way of throwing a light line to a stricken vessel to enable a thicker

rope to be drawn across. He even practiced by firing a cannon ball with rope attached over Downham church! He eventually came up with the Manby Mortar, essentially a cannon ball with a rope attached. Once the thicker rope was made fast a rather cumbersome wooden cradle was pulled out and casualties ferried across. This soon gave way to a simpler canvas seat, the Breeches Buoy. His invention was officially adopted in 1814, a chain of mortar station established around the coast, and by the time of his death almost 1000 people had been rescued using his apparatus.



Manby had quite a busy inventing life. In 1813 he patented the first portable fire extinguisher, the "Extincteur", a 3 gallon copper container filled with potassium carbonate solution under compressed air, so not so very different from present water type extinguishers. He also invented an unsinkable lifeboat, and a harpoon gun for whaling developed from his mortar. Both of these were sabotaged by seamen during the demonstrations, the first as wrecking was still a profitable occupation, and the second by harpooners who feared for their jobs. He campaigned for a national fire brigade, and was made a Member of the Royal Society in 1831 in recognition of his achievements.

Whilst you are in Hilgay pay a visit to the butchers. Almost always manned by Ali

Dent, a character in the village for many decades, you will be able to replenish your larder with everything from very fresh meat to newspapers and veg. Ali has become well know locally for organising incredible book sales in the village hall for over 35 years. Originally started because four people in the village were found to be suffering from Guillain-Barre Syndrome, an auto immune disease. Incredibly rare, the odds of more than one case in a tiny village were huge, and the disease was not well supported so Ali set out to raise money with a book sale. Raising an amazing £4,500 the event has now been held annually for 35 years and has raised £120,000 for good causes. Over 20,000 books have been donated. Well, at least go and buy some sausages!



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'

ROUND HOUSE - Cambridgeshire Daily News September 20th 1980



The Round House, Little Thetford is thought to be a lookout post built at the end of the 15th century. It was lived in, divided up into two three-storey cottages, up until 1959 and then stood empty for some years. The roof was in danger of collapsing and the 'stairs' were virtual ladders. Now it has been turned into one dwelling with a small extension at the rear. The thick walls are solid brick throughout; built before the village it could well outlast it. 80 09 20

This story appeared in a Cambridge newspaper on this date. Cambridgeshire Scrapbook 1897-1990 has thousands more with links to the actual articles
<https://archive.org/details/a-cambridgeshire-scrapbook-1897-1990-by-mike-petty.-july-2020>

(It's still there !! -Ed)