



# IN TIME

Ely U3A History Group Members'  
Newsletter



Edition 9

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It is difficult to believe that this is now the 9th issue of IN TIME. This week we take a look at the famous Mappa Mundi, a castle featured in a TV art program, a ferry accident on the Cam over 100 years ago and a cherished item for the disrepair shop, not forgetting of course, Petty's Pick of the Week. Our newsletter is a great way to keep in touch while we cannot meet, but we do need contributions to enable it to keep going, so please do think about writing something for the newsletter. Send your pieces to Maggie Haverson - contact details supplied in the email containing this newsletter.

## [The Hereford Mappa Mundi c. 1250-1300. – Heather Carruth](#)

Hereford Cathedral is home to Britain's most famous medieval treasure, the Mappa Mundi; it is not a map in the sense of the maps we use today; it records the world as 13<sup>th</sup> century man saw it, flat, like a disc and totally connected to God and religious beliefs.

Jerusalem is shown as the centre of the world with the rest of the known world, Europe, Asia and North Africa, roughly depicted surrounding it. Ireland is at the edge of the map as are China, Ur, Ceylon, Nubia and Gibraltar. Documented on each country are rivers, mountains and buildings predominantly of religious significance; Ely Cathedral being one of the thirteen locations, identified in England. The Clee Hills in Shropshire are the only English geographical feature recorded; significantly they form the highest land eastwards from Ireland, until the Ural Mountains.



The scholars who drew the map possessed a wealth of diverse knowledge; a Labyrinth covers Crete, a skier crosses Norway, Noah's Ark balances atop mountains near the Black Sea and the Pillars of Hercules stand firm. Whilst all types of curious peoples, bat eared, horse footed, flat headed, encircle the map, strange yet familiar animals are everywhere. The achievements of Julius Caesar, Theodotus, Nicodemus and Policlitus form its frame. In the East, where Christians must look for the second coming of Christ, the pious are led by angels to Paradise, whilst the devil drags sinners down to Hell.

Although unsigned, Richard of Halbingham (d. 1278), a Hereford cartographer probably caused the map to be made or made it; a footnote on the map asks that people pray for him and his family. Pilgrims to Hereford Cathedral would marvel at the map and it is thought that the excessive wear on it round Hereford was caused by thousands of searching fingers. Interested in knowing more? Visit Hereford Cathedral's interactive website.

## [Herstmonciux Castle - Kate Cann](#)

This castle was featured recently in a TV art program. The Herstmonciux Manor was around when the doomsday book was compiled way back by King William the Conqueror in 1086, when William granted tenancy to his friend Wilbert. In those days it was just a manor house and not the grand castle it became. Later accounts mention a lady called Idonea De Herst who married a Norman Nobleman known as Herst of Monciux, so the manor then became Herstmonciux.

In 1440 an English knight by the name of Roger De Fiennes owned the manor and petitioned Henry V1 that he might fortify the manor house. He fought alongside Henry V at Agincourt in 1415 and rose to prominence amassing a considerable fortune. It was now time to build a castle worthy of the family status. This castle was to become the largest in England following the French fashion of building in brick and was considered very bold by English standards at the time



The Fiennes family's fortune continued to rise until the reign of Henry V111. The golden rule of Tudor times was do not rise higher than the king and the Fiennes family did just that. Thomas Fiennes 9<sup>th</sup> Baron Dacra the owner at the time became implicated in the murder of a neighbour's game keeper, Henry V111 saw his chance to seize the castle and the poor unfortunate Baron was hung. Fortunately for the Fiennes family the estates were returned to them when Elizabeth 1 came to the throne in 1558.

By 1777 the reckless extravagance of the Fiennes family left the castle in a very sorry state, and eventually the furniture was sold, the interior stripped, and the walls fell down. In Victorian times the ruins became a popular attraction. It came back to life in Edwardian times when a politician had it rebuilt over a 20 year period and refurbished with objects of D'Art

The parks and gardens have been restored and for 30 years it was the home of the Royal Greenwich Observatory until it was moved to Cambridge in 1988. Today the castle is an international study centre, and the annual medieval festival is held here every year on August bank holiday. This is a riches to rags story as I am descended from the Fiennes family.

### [The Disrepair shop- cherished memories](#)

Last week we started a new series asking you to send in memories of cherished objects, here is mine

#### **My mother's tea set - Maggie Haverson**



As a little girl I loved this Royal Grafton tea set, I especially liked it because it was so delicate and the flowers painted on it were yellow which at the time was my favourite colour.

The Grafton China Company was founded in 1876 in Staffordshire, England by Alfred B Jones, and continued to produce fine bone china items up until 1972. Originally, A.B. Jones & Sons Ltd. used the trade name "Grafton" and "Royal Grafton" after producing a variety of fine china items, but started to use the company name "Royal Grafton Bone China" after Queen Mary awarded A.B. Jones & Sons with a royal warrant.

This particular tea set probably dates back to the 1920-30s. It was used when I was small whenever we had anyone 'come to tea' and on special occasions - it was the best china, so not in use on an everyday basis.

I inherited the tea set in my very early twenties and although would not at that time have considered using it (it being very 'old fashioned' in those days), I kept it for its association with my childhood and of course my mother's memory.

I have used the yellow tea set on occasions that I can count on one hand, but I would not part with it. It lives in an old china cabinet with glass doors so that each time I look I can see it through the glass. It brings back cherished memories of my childhood and times gone by.

## Step you Steady Gentlemen ! -Roger Haverson

In these days of lockdown with all boating activities suspended the River Cam flows gently and unhindered down to it's confluence with the Ely Ouse at Pope's corner. Not so in 1905 when the river through Cambridge was a mass of activity during the month of May for the annual "May Bumps" rowing events.

For those not Cantab qualified this curious event seems to consist of rowing eights racing one behind the other. If your boat manages to bump the boat in front you move up a place, with the ultimate being "Head of the river" at the end of the series. Nowadays the races still attract interest from the rowing fraternity, but in pre-telly days they were a huge event for both Town and Gown, with thousands packing the river banks, food, much drink, and enthusiastic support for one's chosen eight.

A favourite spot for viewing the latter stages of the races was the Plough Inn at Ditton, where a fine view and plentiful supplies of refreshment were available, Being on the east bank, and therefore the "wrong" side for the city this necessitated crossing the river by a simple chain ferry, little more than a large punt, called "The Red Grind" and operated on Saturday 10th June 1905 by Mr B Jolly, ( nicknamed Charon after the ferryman across the River Styx) ably assisted by Harry Clayton to take the fares.

It was a beautiful May afternoon, and all went well until after the last race at 6:30, when there was a stampede for the ferry to get across and start the walk back to Cambridge.

The ferry made two crossings, but still they came, and at least twenty had crowded on as the boat left, when two "gentlemen", perhaps little well lubricated, jumped on from the landing stage. The ferry gave a lurch, and capsized throwing all the passengers in to the water. Jolly desperately tried to wind the ferry back to the bank, but the chain snapped.

Rescues began at once, with boats launched, spectators entering the water and even those rescued going back in to help. Sadly, three young ladies were drowned, one newly married and one at a pre-wedding party.



At the subsequent inquest much attention was paid to the state of the ferry. Many complained that it was far from watertight, water built up during the afternoon until it was estimated that there was "almost a ton onboard" and the boat was very low in the water. The question of the competence and, of course, the sobriety of the crew was also questioned, but it only took the jury 25 minutes to bring in a verdict of accidental death, and although the ferrymen were censured they were simply told that in future they should take more care, and in the words Mr Jolly, frequently shouted when boarding "Step steady Gentlemen."

As was so often the case in those days the funerals of the three victims, Annie Thompson from Romsey, Violet Hanscombe from Bishops Stortford, and Minnie Murkin of Granchester, attracted great attention, with crowds lining the routes. Indeed that of Annie Thompson in Cambridge needed a police presence to control the crowds.

Altogether a sad end to a happy day out. The old Cam looks so innocent as it lazily flows through our village this lovely May morning. A salutary reminder, everything has its risks.

**Take Care - Stay Safe- Step you Steady Gentlemen.**

### 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>

***Kum-in fine – Ely Past Snips May 23rd 1947*** This story appeared in a Cambridge newspaper on this date.

The manageress of an Ely cafe who bought 360 eggs from the proprietor of a grocers' business for the benefit of flood-workers who frequented her cafe at that time was fined £5 by Ely magistrates for obtaining the eggs without the authority of the Ministry of Food.

On April 16th the Divisional Enforcement Officer of the Ministry of Food visited the Kum-In Cafe with another official and asked for hot lunch. They were served with eggs, chips and sausage and noticed that other customers were also being served with eggs. The manageress had purchased 360 eggs for the correct price of £3. The only authority she had for eggs was six - her allocation for the members of her family

