

Coddenham Village History Club

Newsletter ~ February 2020

We held our 33rd AGM in October which was well attended. We thank Sylvia Harris for being our cheerful and dedicated Chairman for 10 years and who retired in the latter part of last year due to a few health problems. Your elected committee for 2020 are:

Chairman:	Ray Collins
Vice Chairman:	Ian Jeffrey
Treasurer:	Susan Ashford
Programme Secretaries:	Brenda Hudson & Sue Allison
Committee:	Sylvia Bickers Sally Garrod Sylvia Harris Nigel Allison John Pelling

Annual subscriptions remain at £8 for adults and £3 for students. (The membership fee in 1986 was £2 and it's still good value for money!) Meetings are free to members unless otherwise stated and visitors £3. You can now pay by bank transfer as well as by cash or cheque. Details on the subscription form.

Last year saw two very exciting things happen in the village. The Community Centre, which was opened by Princess Anne in 2004, was transferred to a charity in November and renamed 'The Coddenham Centre'. Much work has been done by the Trustees to rejuvenate this important facility for the community. I suspect many of the same people were involved in the second exciting enterprise, The Community Shop. Congratulations to the management and amazing volunteers for making it such a success.

The 'Village Shop' has served Coddenham for several hundred years and thanks to those wonderful volunteers it is still doing so today. When you are there shopping or perhaps having a cup of coffee, take a few moments to reflect on its past. The following recollections are from Joan Gudgin, Roy's mother, who joined the 'family firm' as a

young bride.

A Gudgin & Son

Albert and Millie Gudgin came to Coddendam and purchased the Village Stores from Mr Lewis in 1922. Before then, Albert had been manager of the Co-op in Carr Street, Ipswich, and had therefore had ample experience in the retail trade. Millie's father ran Townsends Fish Merchants which was opposite Aldertons in the Buttermarket so it was likely she was no stranger to the trade either. Dudley would have been 12 years old then and Vera about 17. They said when they took over the shop the whole place was painted in green distemper.

My earliest recollections go back to when I first met Dud. I used to go over to the shop at the weekends and when Dud was in the greenhouse I used to talk to Millie and Albert. They worked very hard but lived well. We always had High Tea with salmon and salad, great tinned peaches and cream. Albert used to take a glass jug to Mr Wink who would fill it with thick cream for a couple of shillings. They liked their food, On winter nights Albert used to get all the odd bits of bacon, mushrooms, tomatoes and sausages and cook them up in a colossal frying pan. There was this marvellous smell of this massive 'fry-up' all over the house. They were wonderful ones for parties and were one of the first people to own a car in the village. One was called an 'Overland' and the second one was an Austin – this would have been about 1928.

After we were married we lived at the shop. Millie and Albert lived at one end and we lived at the other. Pigs were kept down the bottom of the garden and two were slaughtered each week for the meat. They used to make their own pork cheeses, lard and sausages. The counter near the cellar doow was like a big chopping block where the meat was cut up. It had to be scrubbed every night. There was no sanitation then, only a water pump in the garden and three pails in the kitchen. I used to have to get up early to get the drinking water for the old copper.

Everything came in bags or boxes which were nailed down and their contents had to be weighed and bagged – prunes, raisins, sultanas, apricots, salt, tea, etc. and sugar which was always in a blue moire bag. We had some lovely tasting cheeses which were left to mature.

It was hard work in those days, especially at Christmas time. Black celery, big bags of sprouts, etc. used to be out in the frost and snow and we'd be making up orders until 1 o'clock in the morning. Everything seemed so cold in those days – our hands were continually frozen. Sometimes the men would work all through the night and I used to get up at 3 o'clock in the morning to do the baking and then help them.

The shop was a drapers as well with a big counter on the left hand side by the window. I remember the big brass measure for measuring the material. Millie ran a Christmas Club which was funded by the Gardemau Trust. So much money was allotted to those people

in the village who were not so fortunate and when it got near to Christmas, Millie would order extra sheets, towels, tablecloths, etc. ready for people who would want them. I remember the old buttoned shoes, hobnail boots and galoshes which used to be hung up outside either side of the shop doorway. In the middle of the shop was a display – made up with orange boxes in tiers and always looked nice at Christmas. The left hand window was always decorated at Christmas too.

A horse and cart was used to deliver the groceries. They were kept in the stables at the bottom of the garden and looked after by Fred the horseman. We also had a gardener, and Billy Button used to work for us in the shop and deliver the groceries as well.

Millie was very house proud and her home was her castle and one day I was in the kitchen with her – it was about 11 o'clock in the morning when suddenly a lady appeared in the kitchen. She'd walked in through the front door, through the long arched hallway and along another passageway and stood in the kitchen doorway. She was a marvellous looking person, tall with blond hair and a picture hat and very superior. She said, "I have been knocking at the front door and couldn't make you hear. I've come to see you about having evacuees." It was the Lady de Saumarez from Shrubland Hall, but I don't think Dud's mother was very impressed! She was certainly not very pleased that she had walked into her house uninvited. Vera (Dud's sister) and Edward Semmence were living at "Hillside" at the time and they took in three land girls.

Joan Gudgin – April 1992

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PROGRAMME

Our first talk on **Tuesday 18th February**, "**The Rest of Your Natural Life**" by **Pip Wright**, is about the convicts transported from Suffolk during the period 1787-1867. Murderers usually received the death sentence so the convicts were mainly petty thieves and people driven to crime through poverty and hardship. Some were women who did nothing more than steal a silk handkerchief from a lady or food to feed their family. They were transported to an alien land, sometimes for life, for the crimes they committed.

Tuesday 17th March: "**To Relieve Need and Distress**" by **Sarah Doig**. This is the story of the history of Almshouses in East Anglia. The giving of alms started with the medieval monasteries where shelter and food were provided for the poor and sick. By the time of the Dissolution, religious orders had set up as many as 1,000 hospitals, almshouses, leper hospices and hostels for travellers across the country, many of which were in East Anglia. This is a fascinating talk not to be missed.

Tuesday 21st April: "**Bold in his Delivery but Decent**" by **John Pelling**, on the track of the elusive **Mr Candler of Coddendam!** We have never had a talk on Matthias

Candler and yet he is one of the most important historic figures of Coddendam. I believe John is the only person to have seriously embarked upon research into this man. Matthais Candler was Rector here from 1629 to 1663 when he died. He survived the turbulent Cromwellian years and was still here after Charles II was reinstated on the throne. He recorded the pedigrees of the Kings of England, the great Suffolk Families, his contemporaries and their descents, his own pedigree and those of his family and friends. The bulk of his manuscripts are in the Bodlian Library.

Tuesday 19th May: “The Real Robin Hood” by Graham Higgins. Robin Hood has fascinated people for centuries, being celebrated in literature, poems and films. But who was he? Did he really exist or is he a myth? Graham Higgins explores the complex origins of the man from historical records and comes up with some interesting facts and theories.

Tuesday 16th June: Visit to Sutton Hoo including guided tour of the Burial Mounds.

Cost: Non National Trust Members £14.25
National Trust Members £2.50
Without the guided tour of the mounds – subtract £2.50

Meet 12.30pm at Sutton Hoo for the guided tour to begin at 1pm. This is a car sharing event. If you would like to go, please fill in the form with this newsletter and return by 16th May.

The last time we visited Sutton Hoo was 30 years ago before the Visitor Centre was built. £4 million has recently been spent on its renovation to tell the story of the most significant archaeological finds in British history – the final resting place of the 7th Century King Raedwald. The Exhibition Hall and Tranmer House (the home of Edith Pretty) have been completely overhauled and a new walking route tracing the path the burial ship would have taken from the River Deben.

Thursday 16th July: Visit to the Mid Suffolk Light Railway at Wetheringsett

This is a 'behind the scenes' visit to include a talk on the history of 'The Middy', as it is affectionately called, with a guided a tour of the site including the Museum, Workshop and

Restoration Shed, followed by tea/coffee in the tea room. The shop will also be open should anyone wish to visit. Meet 2pm at Brockford Station, Wetheringsett. So we have an idea of numbers, please fill in the application form and return by 10th June to Ray Collins, Amberstone, High Street, Coddendam, Ipswich, IP6 9PN. This visit is funded by

the History Club for club members. Visitors £3.

WORKING MEETINGS

Working Meetings are held from at Ivy Farm House, High Street, Coddendam, where our records are kept. These evenings are for anyone wishing to research, work on a project, or just browse through the material we have collected over the years.

If you are unable to make any of the above evenings and are researching a particular subject or family, please contact Sylvia Bickers 01449 760382 when a mutually suitable date and time can be arranged.

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