

Coddenham Village History Club Newsletter ~ January 2021

First of all, we sincerely hope that you have all kept well during the past year and trust that 2021 will be a better one for us all. Little did we know this time last year what was ahead of us! We are very sad that we are unable to give you a programme for the foreseeable future. However, your committee has had several Zoom Meetings where the future of the history club has been well and truly chewed over. Firstly, we will not be asking you for an annual subscription this year and if you paid for visits planned and abandoned last year, please contact our Treasurer who will be happy to refund any monies due. Secondly, it has been suggested that maybe we could arrange meetings with speakers via the internet and zoom. There are speakers out there who are willing to do this. Perhaps we could have some feed back from you on this by either contacting one of our committee members or by commenting on our web site.

<https://www.coddenham-parish-uk/coddenham-village-history>

Our aim is to get on to our web site as much archive material as possible so that the records we hold will eventually be accessible to everyone. We have some wonderful recollections written by Coddenham people, most of whom are no longer with us. One such member is a very special lady, Mary Day. Mary was a prolific diarist and has left us with a wonderful window into her world and the people she shared it with in Coddenham. She was a school teacher at Stonham Aspal from 1928 to 1938 and then went on to become Headmistress at Creting St Mary until, with regret, she gave up her teaching life to be housekeeper for Jack and Rosabella (Bill) when they purchased Coddenham Hall Farm in 1940. The following accounts were when she was still at Creting St Mary School earlier in the year.

Friday January 26th 1940

A fortnight ago, during the dinner hour, I went with the children sliding on Brett's Pond. The ice was thick and clear, and we slid as we chose over its surface. Coming home that night I overtook Miss Jermy who had been looking for a pond on which to skate. So, in the starlit evening, I asked leave of Mrs Fox to skate on their pond. (*Ivy Farm*)

At 10am on Saturday, Jermy and I set off via Fox's Grove, at the end of which we crossed so much ice she called it Little Ontario, and finally, stiffly, performed on the ice. The air was cold but the sun so brilliant that we could well imagine what Switzerland was like. The ice was marred by frozen-in parsnips, stones, a moorhen and twigs, but for the most part we circumskated them. We sat down far too hardy once. The previous weekend had brought a slight thaw and thus allowed this ice to improve itself from when I saw it on January 3rd. In the afternoon, Bill accompanied us and the three of us went up and down together to my music.

On Sunday morning Jack made a quartette and skated off straight away while, in spite of Saturday's effort I hardly dared move at first. The sun so thawed the surface that falling forward I mopped up a good supply of water. In the afternoon, the five of us went for the loveliest of rides to Redisham. From Pettaugh home Jack drove through a dense white fog.

On Monday I sang the praises of a "weekend in seven years" and Mr Knight cycled home with me. Having fitted him up with Jack's boots and my skates, Bill and I and he with Jermy dashed up to Fox's. He fell in every way a beginner should fall, to the huge delight of some village on-lookers. After tea with Jack who, having seen us on Fox's Pond, had been to Needham and bought some skates, we five went up to Miles', where with Chris, Ken and Eric we had a most jolly time in the moonlight.

On Tuesday there were light falls of snow but, undeterred, Mr Knight bought boots and skates and drove in his car to examine Fox's pond. With Bill and Jermy and brooms we returned, swept the snow away and skated until 5.15. Due to this I was late at Stonham Aspal's C.D. Party. Riding home from there in Bickers Bus we rode through a white world and through a beautiful world. I walked to school next morning in 1 hr 10 mins.

Trying to cycle home in the afternoon I thought my nerve had gone. Never had the roads seemed so treacherous. Invariably I found myself having to jump off on the left hand roadside to avoid falling. In places the snow was shifting variously shaped cakes and these Canon Fleetwood took very steadily. A moonlight skate with music on Thursday. A fresh fall of snow made the roads terrible again on Friday morning and I was much cheered and assisted by Jack Stammers as far as Bosmere Bush. Both wheels slipped and turned irrespective of my presence or desire.

Saturday January 20th we all agreed was the coldest morning. Bill blew clouds of steam from the radiator when she drove the men to Ringshall and Hole's lorry was set fast at Gosbeck. I thought of approaching Jermy to try sweeping Fox's pond again, but finally rode to Ipswich with Jack through such a beautiful white world. In the afternoon J and I went to Grove Farm, Mendlesham where we saw the 6 month old twins. After that I walked up to High Elms (*Holly Farm*) and saw the snow laden pale powder-blue sky meet the snow of Spring Hill.

What a world! At White Arches the roadman had cleared a drift and from there I walked

with him sharing the beauty of the over-hanging mountaintop-like drifts on the left. Between Creting and Stonham I lost my watch. There were icicles from Mr Spall's thatch. Cycling home I have rarely felt colder. Three fingers on each hand seemed to die – at which Jack laughed. From the road spring downwards, Spring Hill was ice-covered. The spring was inky black and around its edge the dazzlingly white snow curved and drooped. A day from being full moon caught a thousand diamonds winking on their flawless cushions. The trees were hung with a hoar-like frost, an owl sailed noiselessly into the light lifting mist. By Wednesday afternoon the south wind blew softly and what a treat! Never had I seen the roads so white for so long. Thursday evening, cycling home from the Boot Club Whist Drive, whereby I lost third prize, the moon shone but it was not nearly so cold.

This afternoon hail dashed against the windows and stung my face as it fell amid snow and rain on my homeward way. Since turning, in time it has snowed to the depth of three or four inches and every twig and spray of the honeysuckle and rose bears its snow-white burden.

Saturday 28th January: Driving with Jack to Ipswich was like driving through a Canadian scene, so beautiful were the snow burdened trees of Sandy Hill. The silly townies having spoiled the snow were carrying it away in lorry loads. Sunday Bill, Jack and I to Redisham. En route we saw three grotesque and tremendous snowmen, the best in Walpole village. Nearly everywhere sand had been sprinkled from a lorry onto the roads. Monday a wicked north east wind made it nearly unbearable and caused 4 foot deep drifts sometimes a mile long along roads where the snow was blown from the fields. John Longe's was unreachable by lorry, also Farrow's on Winston Green. I was thoroughly fed up and cross. Upon later and closer view these drifts were wonderful.....

M a r y

Day

More on the web site.

The Plague in Coddendam (c.1350)

When looking to prepare the newsletters, we usually try to include something topical which relates to the present time. On this occasion we have thought about the Black Death and its relationship with the Corona Virus. How it affected Coddendam and the people who lived there.

From 2006 to 2011, the 'Higher Education Field Academy' (HEFA) of the University of Cambridge in conjunction with 'Access Cambridge Archaeology', held a series of two-day test pit excavations for pupils aged 14-17 years who were at schools in East Anglia. This included schools in the Ipswich area, which came to dig in Coddendam under the auspices of Carenza Lewis, of 'Time Team' fame, and her special team. The purpose was to investigate the archaeology and improve knowledge and understanding of the historical resources of the village.

The eventual results in their entirety were compiled into a book for Coddendam. The following is an extract which relates to the time of the Black Death (1347-53).

9.5 The Late Medieval pottery that was excavated from the Coddendam test pits was less than that recorded as High Medieval in date and suggests that the village was affected by the Black Death during the 14th Century, although perhaps not to an extent that it could have been. The settlement would have most likely contracted due to a decimation of the population, which is seen in the cluster of test pits yielding Late Medieval pottery that are focused from around St Mary's Church. There is still also evidence of Late Medieval activity to the north of this area along School Road and Blacksmith's Lane, although to a much lesser extent that had been seen previously in the High Medieval.

As part of the contraction of Coddendam, it seems some of the outlying farmsteads may have been abandoned altogether, whether they originated in the High Medieval or Late Saxon period. In the east of the village at Ivy Farm it seems to have been completely abandoned in the Late Medieval as no pottery of that date was found from any of the four pits excavated there. The same is true for Choppins Hall in the far north of the village, in that none of the six test pits that were excavated across the site yielded any Late Medieval pottery.

9.6 There was significant periods of growth of Coddendam into the post medieval period as the village expanded once again away from its core around the church and the population increased significantly.....

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The village survived unlike many others. Take care of yourselves and keep our village safe.

Newsletter Editors: Sally Garrod and Sylvia Bickers

