

Arcadian
Club
SCARNING



Newsletter October 2004 No.13

DR. JESSOPP'S SOCIAL LIFE

Dr. Jessopp was never more happy than when he was sitting by the embers of a fire in the hovel of one of his peasant parishioners, listening to them reminiscing about their childhood and talking of their hard lives.

Yet there was another side of Jessopp in that he associated frequently with many friends living in upper society.

Angela Margaret Mackail was born in 1890. Her father was a civil servant and her mother was the only daughter of Edward Burne-Jones, a celebrated painter and designer of stained glass.

He married Georgina MacDonald and lived in a large old house in Fulham. This became the venue for many distinguished visitors among whom were George Eliot, Beatrix Potter, Ellen Terry, James Barrie, Sarah Bernhardt, John Ruskin, Oscar Wilde, William Morris and the Prince and Princess of Wales.

Angela, his granddaughter, always sat at his right hand at the luncheon table.

Dr. Augustus Jessopp was also a friend and visitor to the household and references to him may be found in Margot Strickland's book on pages 19, 28 and 57 – 'Angela Thirkell – Portrait of a Lady'.

(Acknowledgements to Margot Strickland, the author)

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We also know that Rider Haggard and Rudyard Kipling were present at the opening of the Village Hall with many other notables.

Fred Hoskins



MEDITATIONS

Fred and I were sorry that because of Fred's pending knee operation (which was aborted at the last moment), we felt it wise to cancel our May meeting. As it happens, this is only the second occasion in seven years that our arranged meeting has been cancelled in this way.

The programme we planned for May will now take place on 16th October plus welcome and valuable contributions from our friends John Baxter and Ron Fiske that we will all look forward to with great interest. It is good that other members of our group input into our Jessopp deliberations; it also makes a pleasant change from members having to listen to Fred and I most of the time.

On a lovely Sunday afternoon, the 1st of August, Jean and I visited two glorious flower festivals, one at Old Hunstanton Church, an annual event – probably the best flower festival held in Norfolk and the other at the Church of St. Lawrence, Harpley.

This was the second occasion in ten years that we have paid a visit to St. Lawrence Church. The first time we visited the church it showed signs of neglect and disuse, but I was pleased to find that on this latest visit a vast improvement had taken place thanks to the Historic Churches Trust and other bodies. Work on the South aisle roof begins in September costing £82,000 with help from English

Heritage and other bodies to meet the cost. The flower arrangements we saw were beautifully and expertly done, enhancing this wonderful old church with its glorious East window and painted rood screen.

Another reason that I am interested in this lovely Harpley Church is because in "Random Roaming" Augustus Jessopp writes a chapter on 'A Fourteenth Century Parson' based on information he had gleaned from ancient documents going back to 1306 detailing the account books of the Revd. John de Gurnay who was responsible for building most of the Chancel of St. Lawrence before his death in December 1331.

John de Gurnay is buried beneath a marble slab in the centre of the Chancel floor which used to have a memorial brass. A chalice was found there in 1820

The records Jessopp examined shed light on the life of a 13th and 14th century parson and the status afforded him as a clergyman and landowner and the way he and his staff lived, the crops he grew, and the use to which they were put.

John de Gurnay also had another living at nearby South Wootton, close to Kings Lynn and he divided his time between both parishes.

MEDITATIONS

He was also responsible for starting the Harpley Kipton Ash Sheep Fair that became an annual event for over 500 years until the early part of the 19th century when a fatal disease wiped out the assembled stock one year.

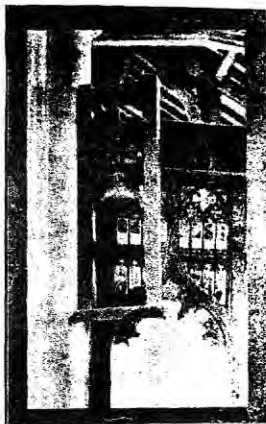
Thereafter the fair was transferred to Hempton Green outside Fakenham and I can remember in my early days this well known event taking place.

Another interesting fact – John de Gurnay's family were the ancestors of the great banking family – the Gurneys, who also produced Elizabeth Gurney or as she is better known, Elizabeth Fry who converted to the Quaker faith and was the great prison reformer.

The fascination of Jessopp's works lies in discovering these previously obscure facts that through his research, brought to our knowledge most interesting 'titbits' that otherwise we might never have known about and have enhanced our knowledge of medieval Norfolk

David Bunting





SCARNING CHURCH SANCTUS BELL

IN OUR MAY NEWSLETTER we wrote about the Sanctus Bell in Scarning Church. We continue with the history of the Bell and our information is obtained from an article written by Dr. Jessopp in his July 1904 Newsletter.

‘If we pass through the Nave of Scarning Church through the Screen into the Chancel we shall see on our right a small bell in a weather beaten frame fastened to the west side of the screen. The wooden frame in which it is fixed was formerly exposed to the weather and almost certainly was set up in a small bell turret above the roof of the Chancel and rung by a rope from below reaching to the Rood-loft which stretched across the Church in front of the Screen.

Before the great pillage of our English Churches which was so pitilessly carried out over all the land, when the sacred elements were consecrated and the bread and wine raised up in the sight of the congregation, a small bell was rung. This was the signal to kneel and continued until the year 1549 when the managers for the boy king, Edward VI issued a decree whereby all the contents of the churches in England were taken away from the parishioners to whom they belonged on the grounds that they were no good to anyone and that it was right for the king to

give them to the nobles and rich robbers. Our churches were stripped of their contents, which were infamously scrambled for. Amongst the most valuable objects were the Bells which were often of great weight and size, sometimes containing a large mixture of silver. These were hurled out of Belfry windows and flung into the churchyards where they were smashed to fragments. Scarning’s little *Sanctus Bell* was torn from its Bell-turret, broken into pieces and the materials sold.

The Church of Scarning was stripped bare to the very walls. The pillage was carried out under pretence of religion and it was justified on the pretence that bells and organs and sacred vessels and such things were mischievous and harmful, and that it was better that poor country folk – and poor town folk too – should be prevented from using such things, and that they should be taken from them.

Edward VI died in July 1553 and was succeeded by his sister, Queen Mary who immediately set to work to bring back the old state of religion. Dr. Jessopp believed that the present *Sanctus Bell* was cast then, being rung until 1815 when the Rev. St. John Priest who was a master of Scarning School and a Curate, stopped the ringing of the bell which was tossed into the Rood-Loft where it was found by Mr. Carson, the then Rector of the Parish. A.J.



The Future of the Arcadian Club



From time to time, the question of the future of the Arcadian Club arises. Should the archives be stored in the future Dereham Library where they could be well looked after? This was the suggestion of the Reverend Ames-Lewis.

Alternatively it would seem that as the Scarning Village Hall is to be refurbished, it would seem only right that provision should be made for the archives to be kept there. The balcony has been suggested as a suitable area but is not easily accessible.

Dr. Augustus Jessopp was responsible for the opening of Scarning Hall in 1904. A secure area could be established where a small library could be made of a collection of Dr. Jessopp's books etc. together with the newly framed pictures of himself and his wife. Ann Cordery suggests that Arcadian Club funds could be used to buy any of his books that might be found in antiquarian bookshops, but of course they are increasingly rare (and expensive).

Those that we have are mainly the personal property of members who might be persuaded to part up with them if they are kept safe and under lock and key. Apparently there was once a

considerable library in the Village Hall, Rudyard Kipling himself having donated forty volumes, but these have disappeared over the years.

For several years we have carried out considerable research which is now in written form and we should not wish this to be lost.

The original Parish magazines are too fragile to be loaned to members and are of course irreplaceable. There should also be provision for our Newsletters.

Lord and Lady Walpole have a considerable library with letters and documents referring to Dr. Jessopp who was a frequent visitor to Mannington Hall and although I have not suggested it to them, I am sure they would be prepared to house our collection. Mannington Hall is of course where Dr. Jessopp claimed to have seen the ghost of 'an ecclesiastical gentleman' and which became national news.

I hope you will give this matter some careful thought and express your ideas at our October meeting.

Fred Hoskins

I was in Leicester Prison

with Rector Dennis Rider when he asked me
“What did Augustus Jessopp write about?”

No, don't get alarmed. Some of you may remember a Scarning Curate was appointed as Chaplain to Leicester Prison and we were attending the special service. I remember we had a choir of 'inmates'.

So how would you answer that question? I think I said, “Just about everything!” for that was the case. Dr. Jessopp studied human nature – the strengths and weaknesses, to use a current educational term.

He was prepared to sit and listen and was never happier than when visiting old inhabitants who were willing to talk of their life experiences. This, he felt, was true history and he recounts many of the stories he was told of years gone by.

He also counted as a friend, Lord North who allowed him to browse through early Court Rolls and so we read of Jesuit priests such as Henry Walpole and their martyrdom, of the continued



struggle between Catholics and Protestants, of the dissolution of the monasteries and the ransacking of the churches including Scarning Church.

He paints word pictures of the Plague, of poverty and of High Society.

So what more could you possibly ask for? Track down his books and read them for yourself.

Generally it is better to dip into them rather than start reading from page one. Then come and tell us at our meetings of your impressions.

At this October meeting, John Baxter, a member, hopes to tell us of his reading of the book 'Arcady, For Better, For Worse' and the subject of his talk is 'A Churchman and Academic looks at Agriculture'.

Fred Hoskins



Late news

I have just learned that Ron Fiske will also make a ten minute comment on one of Jessopp's books. See programme for topic.

The annual subscription of £5 for members will be due at the October meeting. Why not bring a friend? There is no charge for them unless they decide to become a member.

Please see our Treasurer, Ann Cordery.



Wendling Abbey

The following is taken from the August 1904 Parish magazine and is written by Dr. Augustus Jessopp.

At the Annual Flower Show which was so largely attended on Wednesday 27th July at Mr. Wilson's house, The Dale, I undertook to give some account of the Abbey of Wendling, the traces of which may still be seen scarcely more than a hundred yards off from Mr. Wilson's house. It is always a difficult matter to discourse, in a few words, on a subject about which one has a great deal to say, and I am afraid my hearers did not carry away with them from my lecture as much as they would have liked to remember. Perhaps some will be glad if I give them here a few brief notes to assist their memories.

The Abbey of Wendling was a Religious House of *White Canons*, which was set down in the low ground by the side of the stream which runs from Wendling Hall in the direction of Dereham, and which serves as the boundary of Scarning on the North. They were so called because all the members of the order were dressed in a long white coarse garment - very like an old-fashioned smock frock - fastened round the waist with a cord, and a hood hanging down the back, which was drawn over the head when the wearer needed protection against sun or rain.

The Abbot was the head of the community, and he alone had any private house or separate room. He was like the captain of a ship; the Canons were like the crew of the ship - they all lived together, slept in the same dormitory, worked together in the tillage of the common garden, taught the boys of the parish or neighbourhood in the common Cloister, which was a large, square yard with a pent roof carried along all its inner sides; and here, too - I mean in the "alleys" of this Cloister - the Canons spent much time in reading and writing, and attending to such business management of their landed property, or the maintenance of their Church, necessitated.

The Canons were all required to take part in the Church services not less than six times in every twenty-four hours; so that if any wayfarer or inhabitant of Scarning or Wendling had a mind to say his prayers, he would be sure of finding the White Canons carrying on their acts of Divine Worship.

The Abbey of Wendling was never a large house. I do not think it could have been meant for more than twelve Canons and their Abbot, and it seems that they never numbered more than seven inmates, one of whom was the Abbot, who stood to the Canons as their Ruler, The Abbot was like a Rector of a large parish with half a dozen Curates under him. I am very strongly convinced

that at their first starting the first Abbot of Wendling and his first six Canons lived their daily lives in an earnest and consistent manner, so as to win the deep respect and confidence and affection of all the neighbourhood round them.

There is some doubt about the exact date when the Abbot and Canons settled down in the low ground where they began building. It was about 650 year ago. (*Now 750 years-Ed.*)

The Founder was one of the great lawyers of his time. He had been born in Wendling, and he had inherited considerable property, apparently from his father, and his name was William de Wendling, as his father's name had been before him. He must have got the notice of the King, Henry III, and preferment and wealth came to him and in his old age it seems he bethought him that it would be well if he founded such a Religious House as this Abbey in his own birthplace.

William de Wendling did not wait to dispose of his estates till he could have no further use for them. In those days it was a very difficult thing indeed for any man to leave landed estates to any one by will; but William de Wendling gave his lands during his lifetime to the foundation of this Abbey.¹ A.J.



¹ To be continued in our next Newsletter.

Scarning Village Hall

Did you know that Dr. Jessopp built at least **three** village halls – one at Wicklewood, one at Long Stratton and of course, the one at Scarning?

We hope to give you details of the one at Long Stratton in our next newsletter. Here are the rules he drew up for Scarning Village Hall.

***Statutes** for the government and administration of the Foundation of SCARNING VILLAGE Hall*

THE SCARNING VILLAGE HALL ESTATE, comprising an acre of land, on which have been erected the Scarning Village Hall and six labourers' dwellings, is vested in the Norwich Diocesan Trustees, who hold the Estate in Trust for such uses as are specified in the deed of conveyance dated the Second day of September, One thousand nine hundred and two.

The income derived from the rents of the houses and from such dividends as may accrue from monies invested in any regular Trustee investments, shall be received and dealt with by a body of Trustees called, in the deed of conveyance, **Administrative Trustees**, and shall be applied for the keeping up of the Village Hall and such other buildings as are or may be hereafter erected upon the Estate, in good repair, and with due regard not only to the convenience of the tenants, but with a view to adding to the attractiveness of the Village Hall inside and out. The Village Hall has been founded with the object of providing a place of Resort and recreation for the Inhabitants of Scarning, in which social gatherings may be

held, Lectures and cheerful amusement may be afforded, a Library of books for the use of the Inhabitants may be collected, and the moral and intellectual well-being of the people may be advanced by such methods as it shall appear to the Administrative Trustees desirable to encourage and support.

The first Administrative Trustees appointed under the Trust Deed are the Rector of the Parish of Scarning, the two Churchwardens, and two Communicant members of the congregation worshipping in Scarning Church. These Trustees will hold office for life. The Rector of Scarning shall always be *ex officio* Chairman or President of the Administrative Trustees.

On the occurrence of a vacancy among the Administrative Trustees, such vacancy shall be filled up by the surviving Trustees co-opting into their body such person as may succeed either as Churchwarden or Communicant member.

In all cases of a contested election the Rector, as President or Chairman, shall have a second or casting vote.

The Administrative Trustees shall hold no fewer than two meetings in every year, of which one shall be held in April and one in October.

The Trustees may, if they think fit, employ and pay some competent person to act as their Clerk. His business will be to take notes of the proceedings at all meetings, to report them formally, and to draw up a statement, when called upon to do so, of the financial condition of the Village Hall Estate in the form of a balance-sheet, which shall be audited in the usual way and duly presented to the Administrative Trustees at the meeting of the Trustees held in October.

(To be continued in our next Newsletter)