

Arcadian
Club
SCARNING



Newsletter October 2002 No.9

The Arcadian Club

You are invited to an
Augustus Jessopp Evening
at Scarning Village Hall

Dr. Jessopp was Scholar, Headmaster Edward VI School,
Norwich 1859-1880, Rector of Scarning 1880-1911 and Author
of many books covering life in those times and earlier.

Saturday 19th October 2002

At 2.30pm

Programme

Display of books, pictures, letters and documents

Welcome and update.....*David Bunting*

A Study of the Character of Dr. Augustus Jessopp

*Supported by extracts from A History of Norwich School
and Trials of a Country Parson..... Fred Haskins*

Proposals for the Future Study of Dr. Jessopp's

Past..... *The Very Reverend Henry Stapleton FSA*

Followed by general discussion, and a further opportunity
to examine the exhibits as light refreshments are served
The annual subscription of £5 will be collected from
members. New members are welcome.



Time goes quickly. It is almost six years since Fred and I first made contact over our mutual interest in the life and work of Augustus Jessopp which resulted in the first meeting in Scarning Village Hall in May 1996

Since the formation of our small group, we have learned far more regarding the career of Augustus Jessopp as a Headmaster, Parish Priest and Antiquarian writer of some repute, and over the past five years we have delved into his background, upbringing, family ties, and many other interesting features of his wide ranging intellectual character.

His knowledge of Norfolk's history has been a special feature of our discussions and I am sure all of us know far more about a man who spent over fifty years in Norfolk, twenty years as a Headmaster and thirty years at Scarning as a Rector, in the late nineteenth century.

One of Dr. Jessopp's finest moments at Scarning came in 1902 when the Village Hall was opened with much ceremony. Many of Norfolk's leading figures of the day, including Henry Rider Haggard, attended the Grand opening.

2002 marks the centenary of this event and a report of the special service and get together held to commemorate 100 years of Scarning Village Hall appears in this newsletter.

The building of the village hall was a feature of Victorian life and many sprang up all over England for the use of the parishioners to get together, and acted as a central point for village activity. Many were built during a long period of agricultural depression and acted as an uplift in spirits at a time when life was hard economically and financially for many, and many villagers were able to escape from the rigours of daily life.

Many were able to forget their difficulties and engage in dancing, Whist Drives and other social activities. Many village halls were described as reading rooms, where locals could read newspapers, books and periodicals provided by the Lord of the Manor or other leading local figures.

Many could read, following the compulsory Education Act of 1870 although few could afford to purchase newspapers or books of their own.

Throughout the twentieth century there has been a fall in the importance of village halls. Television and the car have allowed a wider range of interests which has drawn people away from village activity on the same scale that existed in Jessopp's time. A real community spirit existed then; villages were self-supporting; residents stayed in the same locality most of their lives, married locally, and worked for one employer until retirement.

Agustus Jessopp was at the heart of life as it existed then and saw the need to nurture local village activities which in Scarning's case, culminated in the raising of funds to build the village hall.



Today, there is however, a growing tendency for a fresh look at village life which has changed drastically in recent years, with computers, and second home buyers moving into the countryside, and it is felt that village halls should again be encouraged to offer a greater range of activities to meet modern needs such as Playgroups and Learning Centres.

Indeed, lottery grants are awarded for improvements to facilities and new halls have been erected at places such as Yaxham and more recently at Binham, to name but two.

Perhaps we are coming back to the idea that togetherness is more important than isolationism? Who knows? The stress of modern living has to be relieved and with the decline in the importance of rural life high on the agenda, efforts are stirring to rectify the imbalance that has occurred in the recent past.

David Bunting

*The next meeting of the Arcadian Club will be held on **Saturday 19th October 2002** in the Village Hall at 2.30pm. It is felt that this earlier time will be generally welcome as it will enable those who have a distance to come, to get home before dark.*



Scarning Village Hall 100 years on!

Choral Evensong was held by the Reverend Richard Ames-Lewis on the occasion of the centenary of the dedication on 18th June 1902 of the new Scarning Village Hall by the Reverend Canon Dr. Augustus Jessopp who was then Rector of Scarning.

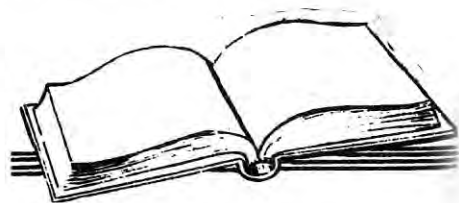
A large congregation listened intently to the Very Reverend Henry Stapleton who has been a member of the Arcadian Club since its inception six years ago and who gave the Address which we are now privileged to reproduce. He began by explaining that to Dr. Jessopp, Norfolk was Arcadia, the land of eternal sunshine and beauty.

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Wednesday, 18th June is the 100th anniversary of the opening of Scarning Village Hall.

A record of that event is to be found in both the Parish Magazine for July 1902 and in the following day's *Eastern Daily Press*. It is fascinating to compare the differences and similarities between what happened then and to-day.

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In 1902 the ceremony was attended by no less than three bishops, of Thetford, and Ipswich and of Norwich. The good and the Great were there. No less than six clergy, a Judge, General and the famous Norfolk writer Mr. Rider Haggard, the author of *King Solomon's Mines*. In those days the parish had not only a Rector but a Curate and a population of under 700. Somewhat unusually the weekly services then were Morning Prayer at 11 (no 8 o'clock), Evensong at 3; Holy Communion only on the third Sunday at 11. The timing of the morning services have perpetuated to this day.

Other similarities recur as we recall that 1902 was a Royal Year. Queen Victoria died in 1901; Edward VII was due to be crowned on June 26 but an attack of "appendissitis" what we know as appendicitis caused a postponement to August 9. 1902 and 2002 were years of departing Archbishops. The aged Frederick Temple died shortly after the coronation. Archbishop Carey retires in October.

But perhaps the most striking similarity is the crisis, the ferment in the countryside, In 1902 the young were leaving the countryside in droves to take up a more comfortable life in the towns. Today, many in the country feel disaffected by a government apparently unsympathetic towards country people and their traditions, threatened by

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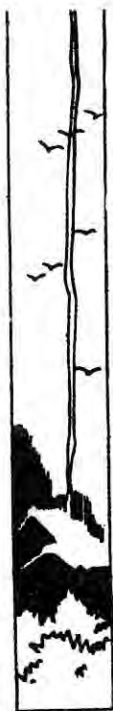


town people acquiring second homes and in some parts of the country devastated by Foot and Mouth.

The contrast between the amenities of the town in comparison to their absence in the village exercised the attention of Dr. Augustus Jessopp. He spoke boldly about how the townsfolk had all the benefits of the generosity of a Peabody or a Guinness while the countryman lived in what he claimed were no more ~~then~~ hovels. He wrote of visiting one building "*a wooden hut seventeen feet three inches long, fifteen feet nine inches wide and nine feet high in which a man and woman and three children were living.*" *Arcady xii*

He pleaded in his books and articles for money for a Village Hall and for Almshouses and he touched the heart of a lady, her name unknown at the time, our unnamed foundress. Her name revealed later in *Kellys Directory 1925* as Mrs. Caroline Evans of Wimbledon. Jessopp told the story of how the hall came to be built with zest, every word, laughter and applause recorded in the *EDP* and how this generosity was matched by the gift of the land by Mr. Evans Lombe. The cost was £2,000, no mean sum, perhaps £300,000 today.

So the Village Hall was to become the cultural centre of the village "open to any inhabitant over
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15 years of age but with the restriction that no religious service other than those connected with the Church of England to be held here and no political meetings of any kind. I am no expert in the dates of Village Halls but I reckon this must be one of the earliest.



Augustus Jessopp was a remarkable man. Born in 1823, he took his degree at St. John's College Cambridge; ordained Priest and then Deacon, he spent 7 years as Curate at Papworth St. Agnes near Cambridge. So the second part as a Schoolmaster. After a few years at Helston Grammar School in Cornwall he became Headmaster of Norwich School. He was one of the Great Victorian Headmasters, following in the footsteps of Thomas Arnold of Rugby. He transformed the school, increasing the numbers of boarding pupils and raising its standards. Success can be traced in the many assistant masters who became heads themselves.

His resignation after 20 years came as a surprise and many thought he would proceed to higher office and preferment in the church. Not so, he came here in 1880 and remained here till shortly before his death. He is one of that distinguished line of country incumbents who have often served thirty, forty or even fifty years in a parish.



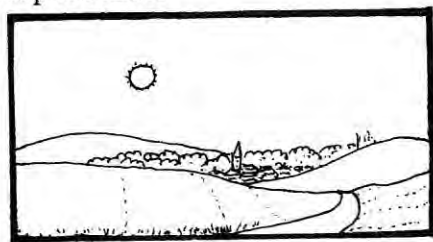
Far from being buried in the country they have provided inspiration to contemporaries and successors alike.

First he was an Arcadian. We have to unpack that word nowadays because it has literary connections lost on us. Arcadian was the idyllic country where people lived as shepherds and shepherdess in a land where the sun shone and all was ever beautiful. For him Norfolk was his Arcady, his ideal and beautiful county where he was for ever happy.

He was a historian of no small calibre. He wrote of Norfolk 'Before the Pillage' –that is before the English countryside lost so much of its valuable treasures and its accumulated wealth by the iniquitous rapacity of successive monarchs. He wrote of *The Coming of the Friars, One Generation of a Norfolk House*, telling of the Walpole Family and the brave adventures of the Roman Catholic priest who landed in north Norfolk and made his way south only to be captures, imprisoned, tortured but finally escaping martyrdom for his faith.

But he also wrote about significant figures in British history in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, about Queen Elizabeth I and John Donne, the poet Dean of St. Paul's. He ventured into Ghost Stories too. But perhaps his most

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widely read publication was his *Short History of the Church of England* serialised in a parish magazine and selling no less than 223,000 copies.

He was an antiquary, able to interpret artefacts, read inscriptions and translate mediaeval manuscripts. But I believe his greatest contribution may be first in his record of dialect perhaps not as evocative as the Bishy-Barney-bee, the ladybird or the Nanny-dishwasher, the pied wagtail as recorded by Keith Skipper; and secondly in the oral history he handed on by recording the memories of his parishioners.

Take this chancel for example. In *Random Roaming* he tells of John Beevor the Rector 1780-1799 who caused two stalls to be erected in the chancel, one for himself and one for his wife Elizabeth. But the lord of the manor Sir John Lombe thought different; and he appropriated one and Elizabeth and Jane had to share the other. He reports the stories about the Vicar's childless wife Elizabeth Beevor, a *wistful* lady.

'I've heard my mother say as she used to come and call in sometimes and talk won'ful quick-like and kindly, for five minutes at a time; and then she'd sit still and say nothing for ever so long, only look wistful-like at the children, and take and pat 'em, and say nothing, only pat 'em and pat 'em. Sometimes the little 'uns'd get scared

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Scarning Village Hall

One hundred years on!!

Choral Evensong was held by the Reverend Richard Ames-Lewis on the occasion of the centenary of the dedication on 9th June 1902 of Scarning Village Hall by the Reverend Canon Dr. Augustus Jessopp, Rector of Scarning. The Address was given by the Very Reverend Henry Stapleton, former Dean of Carlisle Cathedral. St. Nicholas' Church choir were also present and David Ovenden was the organist.

A large congregation listened intently to the Very Reverend Henry Stapleton who has been a member of the Arcadian Club since its inception six years ago. In his sermon, he explained that to Dr. Jessopp, Norfolk was Arcadia, the land of eternal sunshine and beauty. and that the Arcadian Club, which was formed six years ago, derived its name from this.

Mr. Henry Stapleton referred to Dr. Jessopp's successful years as Headmaster of Edward VI

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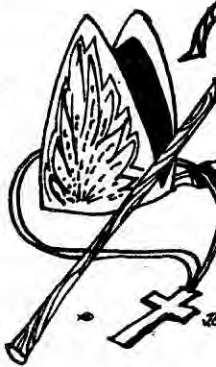
School, Norwich, (Norwich School 1859-1880) before becoming Rector of Scarning from 1880-1911.

As the latter, he wrote many books on a wide variety of subjects which were now the matter of research by members. He was in turn, Headmaster, Rector, Author, Chaplain to the King and an Arcadian!

Exactly one hundred years ago he built Scarning Village Hall, the money being donated by Mrs. Caroline Evans of Wimbledon, who preferred to remain anonymous at the time. Mr. Stapleton mentioned that three Bishops were present on that occasion, together with two Generals and many other notable personalities including Sir Rider Haggard! He also spoke of the many interesting references made by Dr. Jessopp in his books to the memorials in Scarning Church.

After the service and the blessing, the choir, churchwardens and clergy, followed by the people, moved in procession to the graves of Dr. Augustus Jessopp and his wife Mary Ann Margaret, where the Reverend Ames-Lewis gave thanks for the life of Dr. Jessopp and a posy of flowers was placed. At this point, the heavens opened and rained tears of joy for the life of this remarkable man!

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and she'd get up and go away, and say nothing, only look wistful like.' (page 185)

The wistful lady died on 28 April 1799 aged 43. That is the story behind that memorial tablet. Nearby is her grave in the chancel which disturbed the remains of a little girl nearby with its charming inscription:

*Ann Blackhall
Daughter of Edward Blackhall 30 July 1672
The Young and Innocent
In Death are blest
These with small labour
Gain eternal Rest
And have the privilege
To runne that race
That leads to heaven
In a little space*

Vicar John in such distress over the loss of his wife "Georged" himself as a local hostelry; but within months on 6 July, married a widow lady Bridget Lee who could not even sign her name. He went off with her to live in Norwich proudly boasting a heavy door plate inscribed:

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The Revd John Beevor, Rector of Scarning

Schoolmaster, historian, antiquary and yet above everything else, Augustus was a Parish priest. His '*Trials of a country Parson*' is compulsory reading for any country parish priest in Norfolk or any county. The parish recognised his value as the monarch *die* by creating him a Royal Chaplain. Indeed the generosity Augustus bestowed on this building which he restored with his own money, was mirrored in the gift of the lectern from his parishioners to commemorate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee.

We thank God for him, for the Village Hall and the almshouses and for all those many devoted parish priests of Norfolk. Among them I name and honour my own father in law, Canon Baldwin Sparrow Sapwell, Vicar of Rockland All Saints and St. Peter for 32 years who was ordained for over 60 years and rode his bike till he was 85. On his gravestone are the words of Micah fulfilled equally by Augustus Jessopp:

'What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, love mercy and walk humbly with thy God?'

-----*Henry Stapleton*

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Undeterred, everyone then moved to the Village Hall for refreshments kindly provided by the Trustees of Scarning Village Hall. The hall was tightly packed by so many people, most of whom edged their way to an exhibition of documents and books relating to the work of Dr. Augustus Jessopp. The display was set up for this occasion by members of the Arcadian Club, in particular by David Bunting and Fred Hoskins.

The Reverend Ames-Lewis then called upon Mr. Alan Glistler, Chairman of the Village Hall Trust, to outline the plans for the future development of the Village Hall and these were received with interest. A second application for a grant is being submitted to English Heritage Lottery and generally the hall would be enlarged in keeping with its traditional style.

The Arcadian Club meets twice annually, i.e. on the first Saturdays in May and October and information on membership may be obtained from Fred Hoskins (01362 692801). You are very welcome to have an evening with us and to have an opportunity to have a glimpse into the past, as seen through the eyes of Dr. Augustus Jessopp.

Fred Hoskins

