
Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society

(incorporating the Cambs and Hunts Archaeological Society)

Volume XCIII
for 2004



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THE CONDUIT: *local history and archaeology organisations and events*

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Cambridge Antiquarian Society**

(incorporating the Cambs and Hunts Archaeological Society)

**Volume XCIII
for 2004**

Editor Alison Taylor

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Editorial

The first thing you will notice about these Proceedings is our leap (as a belated welcome to the 21st century) into colour, for our cover and a number of plates. This is not really an innovation: CAS had beautiful colour plates in 1883 and a few other 19th century volumes. At last this is affordable again, and the water colour drawings and photographs we wanted to show seemed to fully merit some extra expense. In future, we will look carefully at illustrations that would benefit from such reproduction and would be particularly keen to include fine examples of artefacts.

This volume contains some very substantial reports on archaeological work, for we are one of the few outlets available for full publication of excavations. It is refreshing to see that these all relate to recent work, not the backlogs that once were a feature of British archaeology. A quick look at the 'Fieldwork in Cambridgeshire 2003' section however reminds us what a small proportion of current work can be made available in this way. Of course, reports on all sites are produced and can be purchased from the relevant units or consulted in the county archaeological office. In future, these will also be added to a national data base known as OASIS, run by the Archaeology Data Service, so accessing this huge amount of data will eventually be much simpler. We aim to keep you abreast with such advances through our own website, www.camantsoc.org.

It was a great pleasure to be asked by the Cambridgeshire Local History Society to publish a short note on their superb photographic project, a worthy successor to CAS' similar project in the early part of the 20th century, now a much valued part of the Cambridgeshire Collection. This voluntary effort will likewise be used by those involved with the historic environment in years to come. The same Society asked us to include the list of recent additions to the Cambridgeshire Collection, compiled by Chris Jakes. This list used to be included in *Conduit* and has been much missed. It reminds us that our local historians are not far behind local archaeologists in their labours, a tribute to the floods of new data from an ever-active antiquarian community.

'Fieldwork', 'Reviews', 'Spring Conference report' and 'Conduit' are regular items we have managed to maintain – and which add to another substantial volume. This year, 'Conduit' was compiled at short notice by our redoubtable President, Tony Kirby, to whom we owe many thanks. In the nature of things this has to be done at the last moment, and even so many societies do not have a complete programme for the following year at the time we need it. We would therefore like to have a Supplement later in the year, as with original *Conduit*, but currently this is beyond our means. Perhaps we will have better news next year.

It remains to offer further thanks to our retiring President. Tony has taken the Society safely through two quite difficult years, and this October hands over to Nicholas James. Our Secretaries carry an even larger burden of work for the Society, of which organising nine lectures, often by speakers of national repute, is only one part. We are therefore extremely grateful to our retiring Secretary, Liz Allan, and to Janet Morris, who has now taken on the challenge. We must say a sorry farewell too to Don Fage, who has had the tough job of Registrar. It may also be noticed that we still have vacancies for Excursions Officer and for Editor of *Conduit*, so do contact us if you are interested in volunteering.

Alison Taylor
Editor

Summaries of papers presented at the Spring Conference
13 March 2004, Law Faculty, Cambridge

Recovering Cambridgeshire's Past

Derek Booth

Cambridge Archaeologists and Antiquarians

Cambridge as a university has produced many of the country's (and the world's) leading archaeologists for more than fifty years, most of whom have gone on to make their name elsewhere, and it has also attracted famous names to work within it, a few of whom have been tempted to explore their own locality alongside more grandiose projects. And alongside the Dept of Archaeology there are other departments that have housed people I would like to claim as archaeologists even if that isn't strictly their profession (eg Clifford Darby) and even whole sections such as Quaternary Research and, above all, the Cambridge University Collection of Aerial Photographs, created and run for many years by Prof St Joseph and then by David Wilson, which is actually part of Geography. The Cambridge University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology is also world famous, and is responsible for both attracting fine archaeologists to work within it and training others to go and run the world.

Then we are fortunate in having a branch of RCHM and their expert fieldworkers here in Cambridge (still here as part of English Heritage) giving us for example Chris Taylor (below). Since 1974 (when I was appointed) local government has also become involved in local archaeology, leading to English Heritage funding work such as the Fenland Project (David Hall). With the growth of developer-funded archaeology in the 1990s we have attracted a large group of professional archaeologists who are now the principal force in local fieldwork. We are especially lucky that we have two highly respected units based in Cambridge, Cambridge Archaeological Unit (Chris Evans) linked to the University and the County's Archaeological Field Unit (set up by Tim Malim and now run by Paul Spoerry), so we get the best of those worlds.

Then, too, Cambridge has always been very lucky with what one has to call amateurs, though the quality of their work is anything but. In the past we have had the traditional clergy (eg John Layer, William Cole, Evelyn-White, Rev Webb), occasional aristocrats such as Richard Neville (Lord Braybrooke), at least one apothecary (Richard Relhan) and one family doctor

(William Palmer), not to mention Tom Lethbridge, who had enough private means to do as he wished, which happened to mean running some outstanding excavations. We have also had a 'housewife/superstar' in Joyce Pullinger. This tradition continues, and is fostered by CAS. The PCAS volume on Roman Cambridge for example was almost entirely the result of thirty years of voluntary work.

The selection of personalities for this talk was limited to those now dead. It included:

John Layer, the 17th century rector of Shepreth (where he also lived and held the manor), raided deed boxes of his County friends, visited every parish church and made notes (mostly on memorials). He is especially valuable for information on ruined churches which have since disappeared eg Malton, and records of villages, eg Childerley, which were transformed in his century.

William Cole, the 18th century curate of Waterbeach, lived at Milton, transcribed vast reams of historical documents and memorials, and sketched parish churches and other antiquities prolifically (see T Cocke, below).



William Cole

Richard Relhan was an early 19th century apothecary who made watercolour drawings of many Cambridgeshire churches and antiquities which are now owned by CAS (see illustrations to T Baggs article in this *Proceedings*).

Richard Neville, 3rd Lord Braybrooke of Audley End, excavated and recorded monuments in south Cambridgeshire during their destruction by ploughing, following enclosure of sheep walks on previous heathland. He is particularly known for work on Bronze Age burial mounds around Melbourn, excavation of Mutlow Hill, and work on Roman villas such as Ickleton, Bartlow and Linton (Hadstock), and Anglo-Saxon cemeteries, eg Little Wilbraham and Linton. Results were published as *Antiqua Explorata* 1847, and *Sepulchra Exposita* 1848.

Thomas McKenny Hughes was a professor of Geography. He had been Acting Consul in Rome when Garibaldi marched on the city, but returned to England to join the Geological Survey in 1861. His archaeological work included discoveries made during coprolite mining (eg the Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Hauxton), he was present when the railway first cut through Devil's Dyke in 1883, he cut sections through Arbury Camp, War Ditches and the villa at Landwade, and he observed aspects of the medieval town exposed during developments within central Cambridge.



Thomas McKenny Hughes

William Palmer was a country doctor who lived at Linton and worked extensively with Cyril Fox (whose work he also financed) and Tom Lethbridge. His primary interest was probably medieval and local history however, and he published a huge range of books and papers on historical, architectural and archaeological topics (a biography of William Cole for example, making his material accessible for the first time). In the 1920s he was a leading figure in the CAS photographic record project (see this volume).



William Palmer

Tom Lethbridge came up to Cambridge to study Natural Sciences but, deciding this was boring, enlivened field trips to study plants in the Brecklands in 1921 by discovering flint tools, starting a passionate fascination with archaeology that private means enabled him to enjoy. Drawing artefacts in the Cambridge University Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology (now Anthropology) (CUMAE), he got to know the curator Louis Clark, who invited him to dig as a volunteer. He also worked with Fox on Devil's Dyke, was CAS Director of Excavations 1925-57, and became Honorary Keeper of Anglo-Saxon Antiquities. He undertook (and promptly published) many excavations, in particular Anglo-Saxon cemeteries, for example Shudy Camps, Burwell, Holywell Row and Lackford, and developed particular insight into 7th century burials. In his garden at Waterbeach he excavated Anglo-Saxon huts. He hated the more professionalised post-War Cambridge, quarrelled violently with Graham Clark over the notorious chalk-cut Iron Age 'figures' he claimed to find on Wandlebury, and moved to Devon in 1957.



Tom Lethbridge at Burwell.

Cyril Fox was Assistant Curator at CUMAE, and the first CAS Director of Excavations. He undertook pioneering excavations, particularly on the Dykes, but is best known for his outstanding reference volume, the *Archaeology of the Cambridge Region* (1923). He went on to have a distinguished career as an excavator and as Director of the National Museum of Wales.

Gordon Fowler was a Gunner Major in the first world war, then ran a Brixton trawler until he came to Ely to organise water transport for beet factories. Tom Lethbridge described him as an 'enthusiastic collector of objects', and he was responsible for many artefacts in CUMAE thanks to all the times he called Lethbridge out to dig up or collect significant discoveries. Another of his important contributions was working out the system of old and extinct waterways (mainly Roman and prehistoric) from the Fenland roddons that he mapped and interpreted.

Grahame Clark was a professor of international fame, whose interests and contributions were in sorting out prehistory on a world scale. As a young man he excavated Car Dyke, worked in the field with Harry Godwin on the development of the Fens, and was a leading member of the Fenland Research Committee.

Harry Godwin was a professor of Botany whose study of vegetation at Wicken Fen and excavations with Clark were vital to Fenland studies. His work on peat in Scandinavia and Europe as well as in Cambridgeshire made him realise he needed to work with archaeologists. He set up the Sub-department of Quaternary Research, incorporating an early radiocarbon dating facility, and published *The History of the British Flora*.

Clifford Darby, like Clark and Godwin was an international figure, this time a professor of Geography, but is perhaps best known to historians for his work on Domesday Book and to us for his *Drainage of the Fens*.

Kenneth St Joseph took aerial photographs (often of archaeological sites) during the second world war, and just carried on doing it. He had a Department of Aerial photography specially set up for him in 1962 (with a personal Chair), which held 750,000 aerial photographs when he retired in 1980 and was a place of pilgrimage for archaeologists all over Britain. He was particularly expert on Roman military sites, on which he wrote extensively and sometimes excavated (eg at Longthorpe, near Peterborough). He also worked in Europe, and was starting new projects in Eastern Europe when he died at the age of 80.

Joan Liversidge was Honorary Keeper of the Roman collections in CUMAE for 33 years, and was well-known as an expert on Roman Britain, especially domestic aspects such as wall plaster and furniture. Her many publications, such as *Britain in the Roman Empire* and *Everyday life in the Roman Empire*, were an important antidote to militaristic Roman studies

that predominated at the time. From CAS she has immense gratitude for her role as our Secretary from 1955 to 1981.

Joyce Pullinger was another CAS Director of Excavations, working entirely on a voluntary basis. Her principal work was excavating Roman Cambridge in partnership with John Alexander in advance of rapid development of the area, but she also discovered and dug Roman pottery kilns at Harston (before destruction by the M11) and a villa at Teversham, and played a leading role in the Roman Pottery Research Group. She ran her own CAS Research Group, a valuable addition to our activities.

Tim Potter, one of our very few archaeologists to die sadly young, grew up in March and as a school boy excavated immensely important Roman sites in the Fens in the early 1960s, just before destruction by ploughing. He left Cambridgeshire for a distinguished academic career, then curatorship in the British Museum, but returned for regular summer seasons of excavation at Stonea Camp and the adjoining Roman town.

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William Cole in the context of English Antiquarianism

Thomas Cocke began with a reminder that the urge to record the past had ironically been prompted by the two great disasters to threaten the nation's heritage, the Dissolution and Reformation in the mid-16th century and the Civil War a century later. He suggested that the message of desolation and loss evoked by the ruin of the monasteries might have been especially strong in the flat East Anglian landscape which they had dominated, as Ely Cathedral does to this day. Though little afflicted by battle and siege in the 1640s and 1650s, the region did witness the diligent attempts of William Dowsing to purge churches and chapels from surviving 'idolatry' in their fittings and furnishings.

The losses resulting from iconoclasm or conflict prompted the preservation of great buildings and their monuments through recording on paper. Though the drawings made by Drydale and Sedgwick of monuments and glass at Ely immediately before the Civil War have not come down to us, King's illustration of the cathedral for the *Monasticon Anglicanum* is one of the earliest depictions of its architecture to survive. This process of collection and collation of the county's topographical evidence continued, to culminate in the great volumes of William Cole.

Cole dominates any discussion of Cambridge antiquaries, through the bulk of his manuscript collections, now in the British Library, which he could



St Peter's, Cambridge drawn by William Cole.

describe without irony as his wife and children. The material reflects the man. Cole was passionately interested in every detail of the places and people he knew and yet had wide horizons. His social position allowed him to be as intimate with Horace Walpole, youngest son of the Prime Minister, and Lord Mountford of Horseheath Hall as with his sister in Hackney and his churchwarden and labourer in Bletchley. He was sensitive to the subtle qualities of place, and recorded the plan of his Bletchley parsonage and its garden in almost Pooterish detail.

He can truly be said to have catholic sympathies, both in the denominational sense of allegiance to a Catholic view of the Church, verging on Popery, and in the general sense of being able to relate to a wide variety of situations and individuals. His French diary includes an unsentimental vignette of his generosity towards a beggar boy in a tavern who stuffed the chicken Cole gave him into his jacket to conceal it from the landlord and turned out the next morning to speed his benefactor on his way.

Through Cole, Cambridge antiquarianism was linked with the nationally-known names of Horace Walpole and Thomas Gray, whose years in Cambridge were spent as much on antiquarian studies as literary, and the local figure of James Essex, architect and antiquary of Cambridge. Coming from a non-university, artisan background, his perspective was different from that of gentleman scholars. His great contribution was that he wanted to understand how medieval buildings were constructed, indeed how they stood up, to analyse how mouldings or tracery was laid out, not simply to comment on the aesthetics of the design.

The great works at Ely Cathedral from the 1740s to the 1780s bring all these elements together. Major restorations of the structure by James Essex, especially of the lantern and the presbytery, and a major reordering of the choir, upon which Walpole was consulted,

were accompanied by a major book, the History of the Cathedral, eventually published by the minor canon, James Bentham in 1771. Bentham combined the traditional fasti, listing officeholders, with a continuous history of the institution and an exposition of its buildings in artful engravings as well as in the text. These works at Ely represent a first flowering of scholarly understanding of a great medieval building and of a sensitive stewardship and presentation of it. The young Turner's watercolour looking across the light-filled Octagon imbues both the recent contribution by Essex in the choir screen and lantern and the elaborate 14th-century architecture with a common sense of wonder.

Thomas Cocke
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Engravers and photographers

When Richard Lyne was commissioned to illustrate John Caius' history of Cambridge in 1574 he produced an elevated view, with details such as a fisherman and his catch. The following year his work was copied and redrawn; the same fisherman now seen from the rear – something the new artist could imagine – but he had no guide as to the western elevation of King's College chapel so he made it up. Any subsequent views must be treated with equal caution. David Logan has a reputation for accuracy in his *Cantabrigia Illustrata* of 1690. But of his view of St Catharine's he wrote 'the remains and ruins of the old college buildings were a sight too ugly to appear as a picture among the other colleges', so he drew only the most recent buildings as well as those actually planned but not then finished.

Amongst published books of views are Ackermann's *History of the University of Cambridge, its Colleges, Halls and Public Buildings* of 1815. It featured 64 topographical views in colour by Augustus Pugin, Frederick Mackenzie and William Westall, the finest exponents of their art. Cambridge artists such as the Harradens and Storers could not match them in their own volumes. But Richard Newby combined architectural draughtsmanship with the engraving skill of John Le Keux and had the backing of William Wilkins for his *Memorials of Cambridge* of 1841.

There were a number of individual prints produced, the principal in Cambridge University Almanac, issued annually from 1801 to 1855. Robert Willis and John Willis Clark included a list of these and other views in their *Architectural History of the University of Cambridge* vol 1, 1886 but there are many others. These include *The Cambridge Portfolio*, 1838, by JJ Smith and scores of engravings produced by Rock & Co from 1851 onwards. Two Cambridge artists, William Beales Redfarn and Robert Farren produced volumes depicting town buildings threatened with

demolition, while a number of national illustrated journals featured Cambridge.

Photography arrived in Cambridge in 1844 when the first studio opened at Great St Mary's Passage. Arthur Nicholls opened a new photographic studio in Post Office Terrace by 1865 and took views of Cambridge streets which have been reproduced ever since. Various photographers succeeded to the premises including Ramsey & Muspratt whose negatives, together with many thousand old glass plates taken by their predecessors, are deposited in the Cambridgeshire Collection. Amongst other prominent photographers were Thomas Stearn, Hills & Saunders and Scott & Wilkinson.

The advent of the picture postcard sees an explosion of images produced by national firms such as Valentine, Judge and Frith or locals such as Ted Mott. In 1904 CAS launched its Photographic Survey with members being encouraged to buy postcards and take their own photographs.

By the 1920s newspapers were increasingly featuring photographs. While they largely deal with the minutiae of change the overall picture is being captured by the photographer in the air – the University Collections of Aerial Photography, looking down on the scene as Lyne did in his imagination over 500 years ago.

The principal source for Cambridge illustrations is the Cambridgeshire Collection. Other depositories include the University Library map room, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge and County Folk Museum and Cambridgeshire County Record Office.

Mike Petty

The Pound, 1 Ely Road, Stretham CB6 3JH

The Victoria County History in Cambridgeshire: a hundred-year history finished at last

The VCH volumes which cover modern Cambridgeshire have been a massive undertaking, the work of 133 authors over a century of intermittent work, and running to perhaps three million words. Their value can best be appreciated if they are set in the changing times in which they were written and produced. Even while maintaining the appearance of stability in the format of the big red books, the VCH has undergone extraordinary changes in its ownership, in the arrangements for funding and staffing, and in the huge expansion of topics and sources covered in the parish histories. All the different phases of the VCH as a research project and intellectual undertaking are illuminated by its largely untapped archives in London: the foundation as a memorial to Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee of 1897; the financial crisis of 1908 which halted work on Huntingdonshire and Cambridgeshire; the General Editor William Page's removal of 14 tons of research materials to a garden hut in Bognor Regis in 1922 to carry on the work almost single-handed; his partnership with the boundlessly

enthusiastic Huntingdonshire landed gentleman Granville Proby from 1924; the revival of work on Cambridgeshire proper in 1935 after the University of London acquired ownership; and the long drawn-out work on Cambridgeshire at the VCH's central office which finally saw the last words published in 2002.

Chris Lewis

The value of the work of the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England to the history of Cambridgeshire

The value of the RCHME to Cambridgeshire history lies mainly in its five publications. But these are merely one of many sources for that history and like all such sources must not be taken at face value but examined, assessed and critically analysed before use. If this is done it becomes evident that these publications were produced at different times, to different standards, by different people, some competent, some not, under different pressures, in varying social and political climates and within a rapidly changing academic world. It is only by taking account of these factors that the value of the various RCHME publications can be assessed.

Amongst the problems that the Commission faced and that affect the value of its work was the changing definition of an historical monument. At first it was all sites before 1700, then 1714, later 1850. Thus the earliest volume, Huntingdonshire, contains no building later than 1714 and later books covered nothing after 1850. Likewise, Huntingdonshire has very few archaeological sites in it, but North-East Cambridgeshire lists all that were then known. Continuous advances in scholarship and the often extended publication process also meant that Commission volumes were always going to be out of date. On the other hand, one of the achievements of the later volumes was that they began to take on board the new ideas on landscape history, particularly in North-East Cambridgeshire, which included a landscape history of Swaffham Fen. The material in the Commission volumes can be used for many different kinds of history. At one level merely to know the date of a house or the various periods of the building of a church can be of use. At another level, the knowledge that there was a standard house type in the 17th century that is recognisable in Cambridgeshire and all over East Anglia and beyond can lead on to an understanding of social conditions hardly documented in any other way.

Commission volumes are therefore where anyone can find information. But the history that can be written using that information also needs considerable input from present-day historians.

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East Anglian Film Archive

Stewart Orr, of the East Anglian Film Archive, the East of England's public regional moving image archive, presented a selection of films including the earliest film made in the region, sailing trawlers leaving Yarmouth harbour in the summer of 1896 taken by pioneer film maker, Birt Acres. This was followed by a film by George Cunningham, the Cambridge dentist, made in 1912 about preventive dentistry, which he was advocating at the time. A film of pea picking at Sawston in the mid 1920s showed villagers picking their free peas, a local annual custom, and then skating on Lingay fen in 1927 from a cinema newsreel of the time. An early sound film of Cambridge, simply called *Cambridge* followed. This was made by Stuart Legg in 1931 and showed the life of students, Cambridge streets, and sports facilities. The 'synchronised' sound was of sound effects and music only. Stuart Legg was a student at the time, and went on to be a respected film maker.

Milton Road School showed a day in the life of the school in 1935, and this was followed by *Horse Sense*, a road safety film made in the streets of Cambridge by Mr H0 King, in 1950. Finally Sir Winston Churchill was seen planting a tree at Churchill College in 1958.

Stewart Orr and David Cleveland
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