



Cherry Hinton Local History Society



Cherry Hinton Local History Chatterings - Edition 2 April 2020 Welcome from our Chair Ken Hames

Welcome to our second newsletter. I hope you are all keeping safe and well during these exceptional times. Our newsletters will enable us to keep in contact until we can resume our normal meetings. I hope you enjoyed the first one. Thanks to Mo and Roy for putting it all together.

The Chimney at the Cambridge Museum of Technology

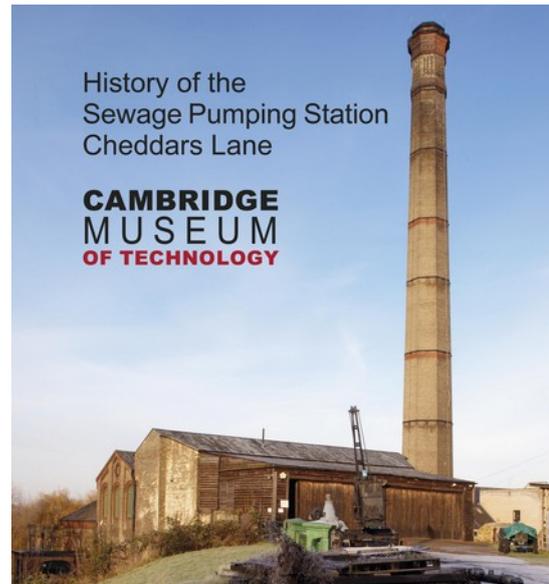


The Cambridge Museum of Technology – Past, Present and Future by Pam Halls (Curator)

*(Pam was due to talk to us at the April Meeting
we hope to arrange a new date and also a visit to the museum in the future)*

The chimney at Cambridge Museum of Technology is a local landmark in a flat landscape. However, many people do not realise that at the bottom of the chimney you will find a museum devoted to Cambridge's industrial history, based in the city's Victorian sewage pumping station.

My talk will chart the history of the pumping station, which was part of a brilliant 19th century engineering project, which cleaned up Cambridge's streets and waterways. It will also cover the creation of the museum by a group of local people, with collections ranging from 19th century steam engines built in Cambridge to ground-breaking technology produced by local companies including Pye and the Cambridge Scientific Instruments Company.



Volunteering at Cambridge Museum of Technology by Member David Stubbings

We all like having something to do and being useful. In volunteering one has the challenge to be useful to someone other than yourself. That means working with other people for the good of the organisation. I have been volunteering for about 15 years at the Cambridge Museum of Technology and I have learnt a lot and been able to give a lot.

The building of the Museum are the old sewage pumping station, the big tall chimney next to Tesco Newmarket Road. The equipment is still in working order having two big stationary steam engines with boilers driving pumps and two gas engines driving pumps. As part of my learning curve to understand what all the bits of machinery did, I went round and took photos of the items. There was a A4 sheet of text written by another volunteer that talked about the machinery but it was dry reading. I put the photos into the text and that went on to be the first guidebook about the place.

Later on, the museum was very fortunate to be sponsored by a top rate guidebook company (as in they produce the guidebook for Westminster Abbey and the like). It came to me to write text for the new guidebook and oversee the content as in which photos should be used. The guidebook explains the working of the pumping station in history and about the working conditions. I worked closely with other volunteers who had more knowledge so the text was correct. The big prize for the museum was that we were given free 1000 printed glossy guidebooks.

In volunteering you sometimes get to go places for free. The other year the museum had a stand at the Model Show in Alexandra Palace – somewhere I had heard about but not been to so I was pleased to go. The job was to hand out leaflet about the museum and chat with people. Not all day was on the stand, we took turns to look around the rest of the show – all very interesting.

Treasurer Roy Child is also a Very New Volunteer at the Museum

Roy says when I joined I met the team of volunteers renovating the boilers. I didn't fancy scraping the boilers myself but fortunately I found I could use my skills in another way! I had the chance to make a couple of interactive displays for children. One of them – the morse code key – was used before it was finished at an evening visit by a scout group, apparently it was a great success. I look forward to getting back.

Members' Memories of Work in the Pre Digital 20th Century

Thanks to the members who sent in their memories

Ken Hames started work at the St. Tibbs Press



My own experience of past technology started on 30th December 1957 when I entered the printing industry as an apprentice machine minder for 6 years. I left school at Christmas as I was not yet 15 in the summer term. I was employed at St.Tibbs Press which was also the Cambridge Chronicle and was owned by The Cambridge Daily News. In those days the general printing industry was nearly all letterpress, that is to say it was printing from lead type. Hand composing of type was being used in much the same way as in Caxton's time.

St. Tibbs Press was a fairly small firm housed under one roof. It was based at Willow Place in Fair Street next to the Hopbine Pub and was formally in St Tibbs Row. The Composing Room was on one side of the factory with the machines on the other side. There was a long driving shaft in the floor with belts driving some of the printing machines making the room quite noisy. One of my jobs would be to hand feed one of machines with paper ranging from small size fliers to 20 x 30 inches. Paper sizes were all imperial in those days. The machines could be very dangerous and I nearly lost a finger on a couple of occasions. At the end of the day I would have to remove and wash up all the inking rollers as the ink would dry on overnight. I used an old pair of leather gloves for this dirty job. I suppose in Caxton's time I would a Printer's Devil.

Printing type, being lead, is very heavy and had to be lifted on and off the machine, sometimes requiring two people. One man's job was to melt used type in an outhouse, then pour the molten metal into ingots to be used on the Linotype machines which produced lines of type. No health and safety here. The art of the letterpress printer was to obtain an even impression from the type, not over or under inked and in the correct position on the paper. However, at St. Tibbs Press some of the type was worn so requiring extra impression or ' bump' as we would say.

Much of the work comprised of items such as invitations, parish magazines, posters, annual reports such as the Folk Museum, Cambridge Daily News reprints, booklets etc. and the City Council Minutes which were made up of all the council committees and the full council meetings. Most of the small jobs would be composed by hand. Very often I had to do some hand folding and saddle stitching. One of my jobs as the youngest apprentice was to cycle to the 'News' to get our free copies of the paper. Another job was to go occasionally to Listers Engineering in Abbey Road to get a gallon of machine oil.

After 4 years the Cambridge Daily News moved from its site in St. Andrew's Street to Newmarket Road and St. Tibbs was closed down. I was transferred to Foister and Jagg in Abbey Walk to complete my apprenticeship. During my time as an apprentice I attended the Cambridgeshire College of Arts and Technology day release classes and obtained my City and Guilds Final Certificate and later went on to work there for 26 years.

Jean Seymour started work at Barclays Bank in Bene't Street



I started work in a bank in pre-computer days. I worked at Barclays Bank from 1965-1978. During this time, we went through decimalisation, computerisation, devaluation of the pound, cash machines and the introduction of credit cards (I remember an American coming into the bank in late 60's - we were amazed at the number of credit cards he had in his wallet). But the happiest days were pre-computer I think. We seemed to have more time for each other and our customers and banking was a service.

I started at the main branch in Bene't Street in August 1965 and I think it was early the next year that I moved to Sidney Street branch. At the time Bene't Street (formerly Mortlock's Bank - it had that on the cheque books) was one of the biggest branches in the country along with Gurney's branch Norwich (Gurney was related to Elizabeth Fry).

We posted ledgers on NCR32 accounting machines. The ledgers had to be agreed with the statement posting. Some were posted at night and finished in the morning. But on Friday nights everything had to be posted and agreed before we went home. The remittances (cheques to be cleared through other banks and branches) had to be agreed every night and sent by post. The local clearing cheques (for city centre banks and branches) also had to be agreed. Tills and the cash account had to be agreed before we left for home.

When I was a 'Junior' one of my duties (besides making tea and coffee) was to go to a designated branch or bank in the city and exchange the local clearing cheques. In the morning you came back with your own cheques, checked that your agreed with their total and in the afternoon went back again either with a draft of what you owed each bank or branch or what they owed you. Sounds very complicated now, but then it was just all in a days work.

Every week the ledgers had to be 'taken out' as we called it and each total agreed with a general ledger. Deposit's were posted by hand, the interest on a daily basis. Overdraft interest was also processed by hand. Every 6 months (30 June and 31 December) the branch had to 'balance' the ledgers and deposit interest and send the returns to Head Office. That meant working late on New Year's eve and January 1st was not a Bank Holiday then.

I started as a Junior/accounting machine operator (NCR 32's) then became a cashier and for the last 6 years I was supervisor in charge what then became the computer book-keeping room. I did go back for a time, when my son started school on an 'ad hoc' basic cashiering at various branches including the old and new Cherry Hinton Road branch and Addenbrooke's.

An Apprentice in the Mid 60's by Member Ken Phillips



What was it like to be an apprentice in the mid 60's? – Well I was one! After my last year at Senior School and obtaining the necessary qualification, which had to include a craft course. I applied for an apprenticeship with AEI (Associated Electrical Industries). The interview went well and I started my five year apprenticeship on 6th August 1963, two weeks before my sixteenth Birthday.

The first thing I had to do was to buy my own safety shoes and two boiler suits and be able to find my way to AEI. This worked out as leaving my house at 6.50am, running to Kentish Town West Station, catching the London overhead railway to Finchley Road and Frognal, running to West Hampstead Station to catch the Bakerloo line to Neasden then a half mile walk to arrive at my destination.

In that first year I spent three to four months on a department then moved on. All apprentices were under the main training officer Len Forder, but under the charge hand or foreman, whilst in the departments. The first year was learning about machines, drills, milling machines – working them and making parts to be used on heavy switchgear.

The first year of the course would only be recognised if in that year, City and Guilds Certificate part one was obtained. To do this I had a day release to College, which started at 9am and finished at 9pm. As I passed the first year I moved on, now day release become as before 9am -9pm with the added extra of another evening at College being added, 6pm -9pm

At the age of eighteen, you again went to different departments but now you started to learn to build the equipment. After five years and passing exams each year practical and written (if you failed an exam, you had to re –sit the whole year again), I qualified August 1968 as a fully qualified Mechanical Engineer. But like the driving test, it is after you pass that test, that the real learning begins.

Lasting memories of my apprenticeship

1. I did as much overtime as possible to supplement my wage.
2. My first week wage pay by piece work was £2.19.6d
3. I work hours on my back servicing other people's cars in my spare time
4. I also had a Sunday job, delivering milk for the small dairy opposite my home.
5. For the five years of my apprenticeship my Mother made me cheese and pickle sandwiches every single day for lunch.
6. The skills I learnt, I have used every day since, to mend, fix, repair as the plaque my Grandchildren gave me says "if Grandad can't fix it we are done for "

**Members Charles & Yvonne Wisbey write about running
Charles E. Wisbey, Greengrocer, 208a Cherry Hinton Road, Cambridge**



Charles Wisbey Senior moved to Cambridge from his shop in Sawston in 1946. He died suddenly in December 1965 and Charles Junior left his job at WG Pye to run the shop for his mother. Produce was delivered to the shop twice a week from local grocers and Charles travelled to Spitalfields Market in London once a week for further supplies. He also travelled to the auctions in Chatteris. Customers were served by staff but in 1990 self service was introduced.

The area was like a village and parents used to shop with their children on the way to school and we were able to watch the children grow over the years. We were involved with the local community and helped with the church, fetes etc.

Programme Officer Mo Child writes about working as an Invoice Typist

I worked as an invoice typist at Martindale Samoore (the wholesale arm of Savory & Moore) in Brighton in 1964/5. One whole floor was taken up with the departments needed to produce invoices. As you walked in there was a glass office in the corner in which sat the Floor Manager – Mr. Byass. The workforce was mainly female but Mr. Terry was the supervisor for the section that worked out the prices for the invoices and checked they were correct. There were very good facilities – a subsidised staff cafeteria, a medical room and good cloakrooms - much better than I've ever had in teaching!

At 9am Mr. Byass rang a bell and we all started work. Anyone who came in late had to work past his office! There were about 20 of us in the typing section and similar numbers in each of the other sections. Each typewriter had a framework over which the invoice was threaded up from a pile in a box on the floor. It was horrendous if you made a mistake, several copies to be corrected – no typex at that time! Each section went for coffee in the morning. In the build up to the coffee or tea break each couple of women in the typing pool would go and use the cloakroom – if you were too long then the head typist would send someone in to get you back! We did not pay for tea or coffee and lunch cost 2s 6d (12.5p!). The food was very good but the invoice typists were not well liked since our leader always got us to the cafeteria first so we had the best choice! At the end of the day we would all have our coats on ready to leave but we were not allowed to do so until Mr Byass rang the bell!

It was essential to watch the soaps on the television – Compact (about a magazine office) was the one we all liked best but Coronation Street came a close second – if you didn't watch them then you had nothing to talk about! We had to type 50 invoices a day – one day I did manage 100 but only did it once – I didn't think they paid me enough - take home pay in real money was £5 15s (£5.75) - to do more than 50! On days when there weren't many orders we had to pretend to work especially if management came round as we didn't want anyone to be laid off. Working in an office was very good for me, I learnt a lot about life and have always been grateful for the keyboard skills which I developed.

Work before the Digital Age by Member Jack King

I was born in Soham a few months before the ammunition train blew up and left a big hole where the station once stood. My home was about one and a half miles from the site and some of our windows were broken. My father at the time was in Home Guard and was called out to guard the site. Now for work, being in Soham, the main employment was land work.

At the age of fifteen years I left school and went out to work on a farm in Soham Fen. The owner of the farm was of the old school and did not like machinery very much. So the farm was worked mainly by horses. At about 6.30am I joined other workers and set off on bikes to be at work by 7am. Some of the horses had been prepared so could go out straight away, others had to be harnessed to carts and other implements. By 8am we would all be out in the fields.



I left school at the summer holidays (July – August) we were then preparing for harvest. Horses pulled a binder which cut the corn and tied it into sheaves. My job with others was to walk behind and stand up the sheaves in groups of six. A few days later a thrashing machine, powered by a tractor arrived in the farmyard. When this happened several horse and carts went out to the field to bring in the sheaves for thrashing. Being the youngest I was given the dirtiest job (Chaff Boy). In the process of thrashing, chaff, which is the waste product came out of a chute at the side of the thrasher and had to be collected in sacks. During the winter, potatoes and celery were harvested I was put in a cold dry shed where the celery was cleaned and packed. Much of the packing was done by several women. My job was to put wooden baskets together and make sure that the women always had them to hand ready to fill.

The following year the owner passed away and his sons took over. They did away with the horses and mechanised the farm. When this happened not so many workers were required, so being the youngest and last to join, I was made redundant with several others. I now made a change and went to work for a building firm. The owner lived and operated in Newmarket. Several of us lived in Soham, so were given transport (a lorry with a shed on the back) to take us to Newmarket and then on to our job site. Here the shed was taken off and used for our break times. I was employed as a labourer and plumber's mate. On leaving this company I then worked for a Soham builder doing much the same work in the Soham and Fordham area. My third building company was a well known Cambridge company which no longer exists. The final job that I worked on was the Ida Darwin Hospital in 1965. Another ten years or so towards my digital world.

On my 21st birthday I decided to leave Soham by joining the Royal Marines. Life in the Royal Marines began as a recruit in Deal, Kent apart from the odd trips to Cambridge and Ely this was the furthest I had been. Cleaning boots, shoes and webbing (belts) followed by marching, rifle and machine gun practice. During this time we also had school lessons in maths (no calculators!) and English to help us on the ladder of promotion. The training period included moving to other camps/ barracks at Portsmouth, Lympstone, Devon and also on board ship.

Work before the Digital Age by Member Jack King - 2



After several years I left the Royal Marines and moved back to Cambridge to work at the Wallis Garage, this was at the time that Mr. Wallis built his auto gyro that was used in the James Bond film. The nearest I got to digital was a car manual on slides with a projector!

On leaving Wallace Garage I became employed in a book shop which sold calculators to students this was approximately 1972. A few years after the company bought some computers. My start in the digital world. Younger members of the staff learned to use these much faster than I, so I had to get them to teach me.

'LOST' CAMBRIDGE COLLEGES Buckingham College by Committee Member John Gates



Buckingham College was founded by the Benedictine Order in 1428 after the Prior of the Students at Cambridge suggested there should be a College at the University where the Student Monks of the Order could live and study away from the temptations of normal student life! The College was supported by the Benedictine Abbeys around Cambridge - Ely, Ramsey, Croyland (Crowland), and Walden. The College was located on Monk's Way (Magdalene Street) next to the Great Bridge. Croyland Abbey owned the site.

Initially the Student Monks lived in houses on the site and the supporting Abbeys gradually built accommodation on the site for their own students. The 2nd and 3rd Dukes of Buckingham also provided help and finance.

At the dissolution of the Monasteries, Croyland Abbey surrendered to the King in 1539, and as the College had no endowment it also ceased at the same time. The buildings remained empty for about two and a half years, they were then taken over by Thomas, Lord Audley of Walden who obtained permission, in 1542, to refound the College dedicated to St Mary Magdalene. Lord Audley died in 1544 before he could give the College any endowment and it was in a poor state for many years. In 1564 the Duke of Norfolk, who had married Lord Audley's Daughter, contributed generously to the endowment of the College.

Magdalene College First Court is mainly the old Buckingham College buildings.

**Your Comments on the Article on Swimming in Cambridge in
the March Edition of the Newsletter**



**Swimming at
Sheep's Green**

Member David Burnet Commented Fascinating article on the river swimming. My home patch is Newnham, having been brought up in Selwyn Gardens just off Grange Rd. My first school/ kindergarten was Newnham Croft, and we all learned to swim in the tributary off the river just down the track from the Newnham corner. That bit of river was always known to us as The Snobs, for whatever reason we never did find out, and had a chain across it that separated the boys' section from the girls, and the swimming instruction was carried out by a local taxi driver, Mr Tarrant. He used a long pole, from which dangled a rope and sling, from which we were suspended in the water, as he marched up and down while we swam alongside.

We had to use the breast-stroke, because if we didn't, we knew we would be face down into the water, so we knew we had to stay face up by doing what he told us - literally keep your head up by swimming or go under! To be proficient enough to swim properly, we had to show that we could swim across the main river and back unaided, before we were considered safe enough to go in there at all. A great moment when we could - I remember it well!

The changing facilities were a bit primitive - an elongated open shed with one side open and only a fence and a patch of grass between ourselves and the tributary. We had many happy summer hours down there. The main patch of river had all the diving boards along it, adding to the privilege of being able to use it. Unfortunately, I don't have any photos of that era, much to my regret.

I would be interested to know of anyone else with their own memories of The Snobs!

Guess what David - Jean Semour emailed with her own memories of the Snobs!

I took my first unaided swimming strokes in the girls' section in the river at Newnham aged about 9. Part of it was called 'The Snobs' I believe. My older cousin had tried to teach me to swim in Jesus Green, but the days were getting cold for outdoor swimming. My mum took me to Newnham and we met up with a girl in my class and her Mum. We both went in with our rubber rings (mine was a yellow and white striped one) and decided to try without them. Low and behold we both swam unaided. But my cousin was disappointed he had achieved it the Autumn before. Our next door neighbour used to swim in the men's section and drive off the top of the bridge.

And then John Gates sent this about Swimming in Cambridge in the 1930's & 40's

The bathing places in the river at Sheep's Green were very popular. There were separate sections for men and women with the footbridge marking the division. I was at the Central School Parkside 1941-44 and we had swimming sessions here. Those not strong swimmers (me) used the 'snobs' swimming places, near the paddling pool, in the stream feeding Newnham Mill. Boys and girls sections were separated by the footbridge.

Jesus Green Pool was fed from the river, at this time, the difference in river levels helped flow through the pool, this must have been very sluggish because I remember the water always being rather murky. I don't think there was any filtration or chlorination. We had swimming sessions here when I was at Milton Road School. The Annual Swim Through Cambridge, from the mill pool to Jesus Green, was very popular. I think this stopped in the 1960s as the water was getting more polluted.

The only indoor heated pool was at the Leys School. The scout troop I belonged to had use of the pool one evening a week over one winter, quite a luxury!

The 12th Cambridge Sea Scouts had their converted landing craft river cruiser moored behind the old Tivoli Cinema (now the burnt-out shell of Wetherspoons pub) and we used to swim in the river from this most evenings during the summer.

Thanks to all of you who have written articles for this newsletter
N.B. Don't forget to put up your bunting for VE Day – Friday May 8th!

MAY NEWSLETTER

Can you make a contribution?

This will be focusing on commemorating 75 Years since VE Day

David Taylor, due to be our May speaker, is writing an article

There will also be WW2 Memories already collected from
Local History Society Members and Cherry Hinton Residents.

If you have memories of WW2 or know someone who has
If you know of anyone who has memories of what Cherry Hinton was like
or remember what your parents told you of their Cherry Hinton experiences
please let Mo know

Feedback on this month's newsletter will also be welcome

Can you make a contribution?

If you have a memory and/or a photograph please email to
mo@cherrydesigns.org.uk or phone 01223 210724 by May 15th
if you prefer to send hand-written copy ring Mo and send it to her

**The Society's Secretary Amanda Smith follows up on last month's article
and gives advice on
RESEARCHING FAMILY HISTORY ON-LINE**

I hope Pam's talk in February encouraged some of you to think about starting to research your family tree, if you haven't already. If so, here are a few tips to get started.

Always Work Backwards In Time

- Start with yourself and your siblings, write down dates of birth, marriage and death and then add your parents and grand-parents and as many other aunts, uncles, cousins as possible and so on. Try to include details such as place of birth, marriage, death and places where your family lived.

Ask The Family

- Other relatives may remember different things about the family. Ask them what they remember.

Now you have the beginnings of your family tree and is the time to look at some of the free websites – some of which were listed in the CHLHS March Newsletter. The top two family history sites www.ancestry.co.uk and www.findmypast.co.uk both offer new subscribers a free 14 day trial after which there is the option to pay for a subscription for a month or for longer.

Family trees on-line can be built on both sites. Birth, marriage and death records from the Government Records Office and Parish Records can be searched and once the correct record is found it can be added to your family member's details on your tree. Other records include censuses from 1841 to 1911 and certainly on Ancestry the 1939 Register can be viewed. For some areas, for example London, workhouse records are available. Also available are immigration/emigration records and some military records from WW1. Again, all records can be added to your tree.

If you have chosen to take advantage of a 14 day free trial to find out more about your family I would recommend signing up to the website and starting the trial when you can be sure you'll have time to spend researching, perhaps when the sunny weather we are currently experiencing is over and you are looking for something to keep yourself occupied during 'lockdown' when it's raining!

It has been some time since I had my free trial at Ancestry and I can't remember if I needed to provide debit/credit card details to start the free trial, if that is the case please make sure you cancel the subscription before the trial ends, although you may want to subscribe for more time to research! Paid subscriptions can be for a month, six months or a year and www.ancestry.co.uk is available free of charge at public libraries.

If you decide to go ahead and start your research please let me know how you're getting on, what you have discovered and if you need any help, I'm more than happy to help if I can.