

HOLT & DISTRICT FARMERS' CLUB

FOUNDED 1948

President: Bill Poortvliet

Chairman: Pat Cubitt

Vice Chairman: Andrew Ross

www.holtfarmers.club

CLUB MATTERS

Late March 2020

We are going through a baleful period when we might resort to *gallows* or other humour to keep us sane. By this I mean more than the horse being hanged along with its outlaw rider in Mel Brooks's classic spoof western *Blazing Saddles* or *The Life of Brian*'s "Always Look on the Bright Side of Life".



Gallow Hundred is the area around Fakenham, coincidentally bordered by the farms of the two members whose deaths I have reported recently. A hundred is an old county subdivision which used to have a court and this one extended southwards as far as Colkirk stopping just short of Oxwick and Godwick, the **Garner** farmstead. To the north-east it stopped at Little Snoring just short of the **Cushing** farmstead at Thursford. Not far from the latter is Pigg's Grave, the gallows (or gibbet ?) next to the crossroads between the Holt / Dereham B1110 and the Thursford / Aylsham B1354 - well known as Norfolk's second highest point. Further along the Cromer Ridge there was another gibbet between Holt - where George Cushing's funeral was held - and High Kelling where his wake was. Also Gallow Hill can be found on the east side of Salthouse Heath which might have been used for the Kelling Ranters who tried to destroy threshing machines in the Captain Swing riots almost two hundred years ago. Then there is Gibbet Plantation beyond the turning down to Sheringham off the A148 next to the Deterding/Batt East Beckham Quarry. Most of you will know of other such sites around the county that were normally next to crossroads or prominent places *pour encourager les autres*. Meanwhile I admit that my gallows humour prompts images of tumbleweed rather than titters:

India has imposed a coronavirus curfew on the whole population under which everyone has to be off the streets by 9 a.m. However one citizen was shot at 8.45.

"Why did you do that ?" the soldier who fired was asked by his superior officer.

"I know where he lives" the soldier replied "and he wouldn't have made it".

Did you hear about the agnostic coronavirus doctor who died and went straight to hell ?
It took him two weeks to realise he wasn't at work any more.

It has been a tough initiation for **Pat Cubitt**, our Chaiman. When he took over at last autumn's AGM no one could have predicted his first six months would have panned out so disastrously. At our first winter meeting we found ourselves double booked with the local W.I. Then, when the General Election was called for December, we brought forward the planned talk from Duncan Baker to which some members took exception because the other political candidates had not been invited. In January the Bitcoin lady who had been prepared to swap had to cry off. She was able to provide a late substitute but, again, several members were unhappy – this time with the ethics of Bitcoins likening them to those of snake oil salesmen. Prince Harry's mate got us back on track in February but even here Pat missed most of the meal beforehand tracking down a computer lead. This month the police failed to come up with any speaker at all which happened too late for him to find an alternative speaker so poor Pat stepped into the breach to introduce us to 3D printing, ably supported by his son. Maybe he will be able to replicate ventilators ?



On top of all this we have had this pernicious coronavirus ruining everything. Our long heralded trip to Austria had to be abandoned so Pat tried to expand **Richard Brooks's** visit to Shropshire's into a 2 day mini break around Cambridge. **Charlie Mack** was working hard on a Garden Party at his family's Hempstead Hall and fitting this in between the Cambridgeshire trip and the clay pigeon shooting match which he organises with **Tony Williams**. Sadly, for obvious reasons, these June events now look decidedly unlikely to happen. John Shropshire has told Richard that we are still welcome if we can 'squash the sombrero' representing the curve of the coronavirus cases but Charlie and the rest of us are not optimistic about any of the three events. One bright spot in our programme was another double victory in the bowls match although even this was somewhat hollow through Stalham being unable to get up a full team. We apologise for such a farrago. This has been the worst run in my time as secretary and I can't imagine there has been a worse one in our club's history. It is not for Pat's or the committee's want of trying but I guess that, other than the Second World War, the current situation means that our woes can be viewed in the perspective of the greatest national and international crisis since the Spanish Flu one hundred years ago. Cue Eric Idle and the Pythons "always look on the bright..."

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