

HOLT & DISTRICT FARMERS' CLUB

FOUNDED 1948

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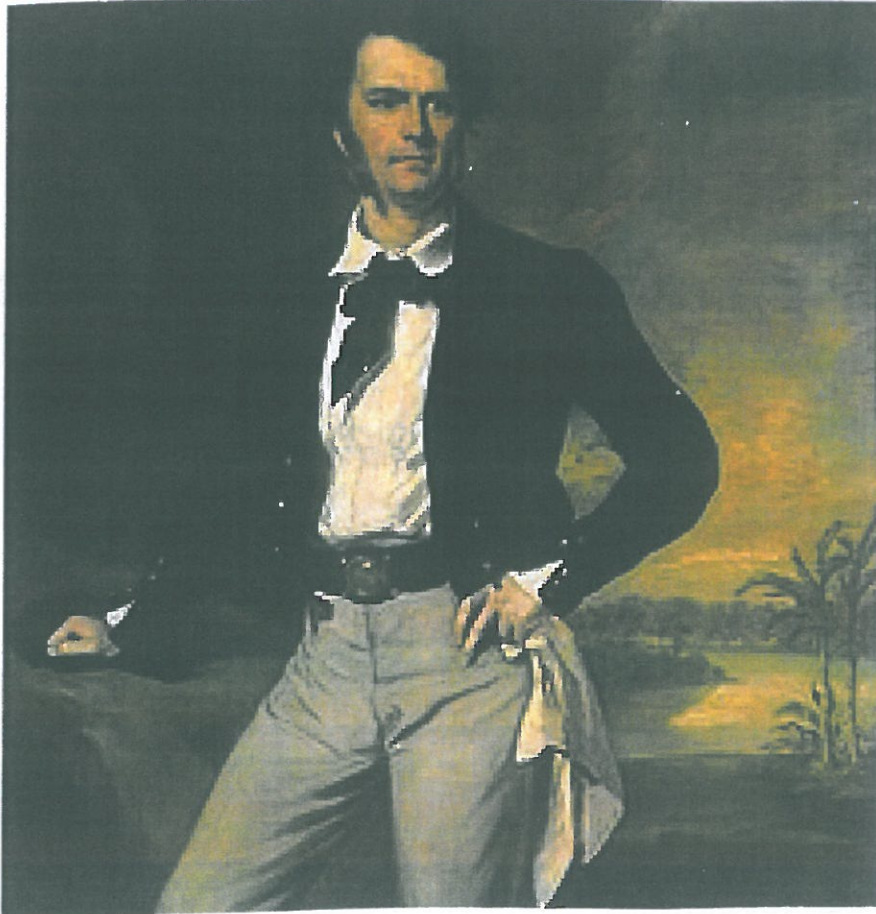
Vice Chairman: Andrew Ross

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CLUB MATTERS

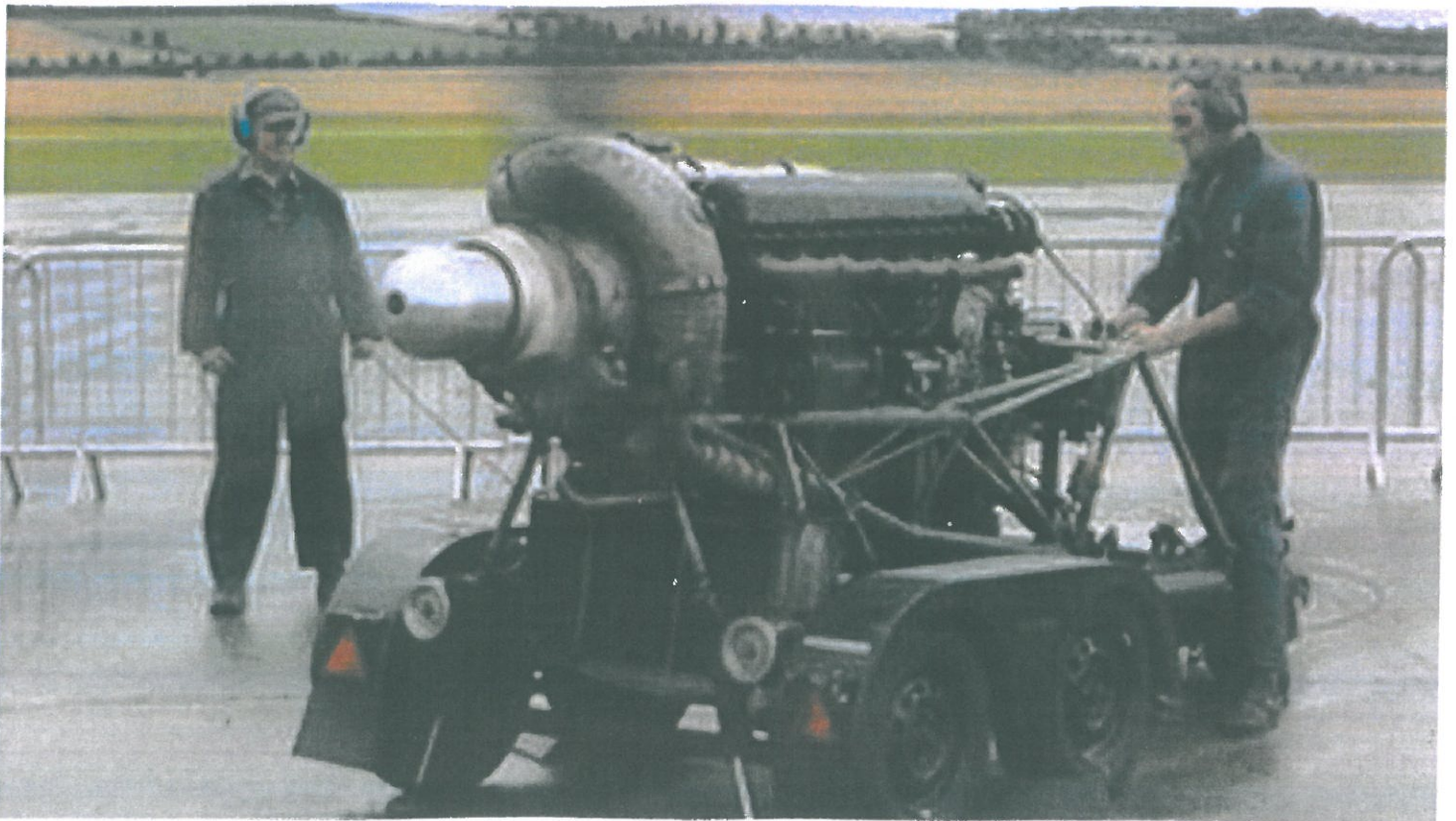
Midsummer 2021

In my last newsletter I brought you round to Melton Constable Park, Capability Brown's creation that is now owned by Roger Gawn or one of his offshore companies. To the south, just into Swanton Novers parish, lies Tipples Farm which is the home of the Plumb farming dynasty. I doubt that this, with its grand approach and Listed eighteenth century farmhouse, is named after anyone to do with our friend Long Tom Tipple. He was the peddler I told you about who was shot on a Briston roof in 1933. **Mike Plumb** had a long lost cousin who has also met an unfortunate demise – by bibliocide. Poor Paul Brooke lived next to The Feathers in Holt until, as an obsessive collector of books, he died last month under a collapsed pile of heavy tomes. Another sad passing is that of Jake Poortvliet who fought a long and brave battle against Motor Neurone Disease. He was a successful captain of Holt Rugby Club and joined us on one of our trips to the West Country.



Stephen Gregory, the previous Rector of Holt, claimed that Paul Brooke was a descendant of Sir James Brooke who was a Victorian adventurer in the Raffles style. Born in 1803 he was educated at Norwich School and raised under the Company Raj of the East India Company. Having resigned his commission in the Bengal Army he sailed out to the Malay Peninsula where – as you do – he put down a rebellion in Sarawak which is part of Borneo. For this he was rewarded by being made Governor and by suppressing piracy he became recognized as The White Rajah of Sarawak where he ruled until his death in 1868. Although many of his actions were questioned at the time, and even more so by modern woke standards, he struck a flamboyant pose to the extent that Errol Flynn wanted to portray him on screen.

Paul Brooke's near namesake **Richard Brooks**, as far as I am aware, has no such black sheep in his family ancestry. He has been keeping in touch with John Shropshire who is keeping his diary open for us to visit his horticultural empire in almost precisely a year's time. Let's hope that this proves third year lucky. Further to my piece about Foulsham Airfield **Peter Perry-Warnes** alerts me to a more recent archaeological find than his prehistoric one that was unearthed on his land at Tyby and relates that *"about 15 years ago a group of enthusiasts came to our farm to seek permission to look for the remains of a plane crash during the war. It was in a field at Themelthorpe so probably within a mile of the airfield. They came with all the paperwork from the MOD and, with our permission, marked a spot in a 85 acre field. A JCB arrived and, on the third bucket of digging, small fragments of alloy metal were apparent. By the fifth bucket, probably about 18/20 inches deep, they hit something very hard. They then very carefully dug around and lifted out of the ground a 12 cylinder Rolls Royce Merlin engine. It was from a Mustang plane. The pilot survived and the wreckage above ground had been cleared but the engine that had ploughed into the heavy clay soil was just covered up. It was in remarkably good condition due to the clay soil. We had ploughed and subsoiled that field dozens of times and it had been drained so we must have been within inches of hitting it over the years. I think it went to a museum at Seething Airfield"*. It has been claimed that the Merlin engine saved the free world. As well as powering the Mustang to escort bombers on raids over Germany the Merlin was also used for the bombers themselves including the Lancasters on the Dambusters Raid.



Finally, remaining in the same vicinity, I have told you the story of The Heydon Affray in 1826 when the poaching wars were being fought. Well next week you can compete with your bidding and witness some more local history. Paul, the youngest of the five Buxton brothers of Park Farm at Heydon, is retiring and there is an auction there at 10 on Wednesday which should prove interesting even if you don't take your cheque book.

Tim

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