

HOLT & DISTRICT FARMERS' CLUB

FOUNDED 1948

President: Richard Brooks

Chairman: Pat Cubitt

Vice-Chairman: Andrew Ross

www.holtfarmers.club

CLUB MATTERS March 2023

“Roll up, Roll up” for our last meeting of the season at 7.30 on Tuesday. Unfortunately the Director of the John Innes Institute Graham Moore has had to cry off but his colleague *Dr Simon Griffiths* will be addressing us as Project Leader on Crop Genetics. Wheat, providing 20% of our carbohydrates and protein, has a special role in global food security with 25% of global production being traded internationally. We had a good turnout at our last meeting and it would be good if we can finish the season in style... as Norwich City are bound to do ... I'm sure.

THE TIMES Weather

Weather Eye 28/2/23
Paul Simons



In 1682 a small fleet of warships and royal yachts gathered off Margate to celebrate the return of James, the Duke of York, from nearly three years of semi-exile, travelling on the warship Gloucester to fetch back his pregnant wife from Scotland, then join his ailing brother at Westminster, and eventually succeed to the throne as James II of England and James VII of Scotland.

As the fleet sailed northwards on the night of May 5, the sea was rough with a stiff, cold wind blowing from the east and the ships sailed at speed. Then early next morning, calamity struck — the Gloucester struck a solid sandbank about 28 miles off Great Yarmouth on the Norfolk coast. The ship bumped along a ridge at the top of the sandbank, lifting up on rising waves, then crashing down as they fell.



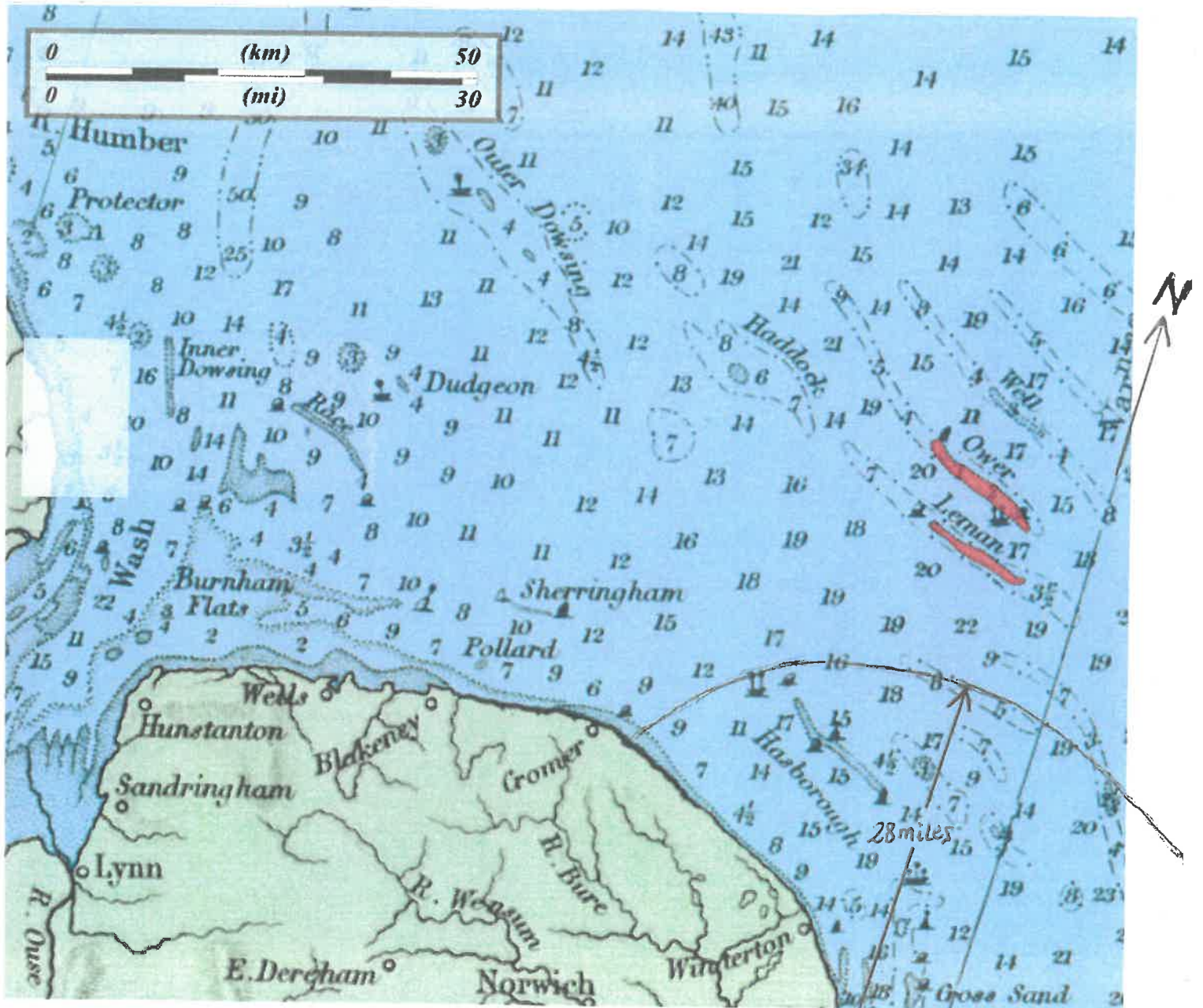
At this stage there was probably hope that the Gloucester might eventually come free on a high tide and sail away. But Sir John Berry, commander of the Gloucester, described the unfolding tragedy, “At last, a terrible blow struck off the rudder”, before a hole appeared in the keel, water rushed in and the ship rapidly sank.

The Duke of York had hesitated to abandon ship, probably hoping that the warship could be saved, until finally he escaped on a small boat shortly before the ship fully submerged less than an hour after hitting the sandbank. Most of the other passengers and crew were less fortunate and many drowned, with about 200 lives lost.

After a long search, the wreck was discovered in 2007 by a group of divers and a magnificent range of artefacts has since been recovered, including bottles of wine, a cannon and even footwear and clothing such as a petticoat in exceptionally good condition. It has been described as possibly the greatest shipwreck discovery since the Mary Rose, and many of the recovered items are now on display at an exhibition *The Last Voyage of the Gloucester: Norfolk's Royal Shipwreck, 1682* at the Castle Museum in Norwich. (Times News, February 24).

At that meeting **Martin Jensen** outlined where the £3000 that we pledged to his family's charity effort will be directed to the family of a Ukrainian soldier who was killed the day after Putin launched the Russian invasion. He left a widow who was pregnant and subsequently gave birth to a girl; they already had two teenage children. There are about a thousand refugees in the vicinity of Martin's farm and much of the £30,000 he raised last year is going towards a refugee centre. He has drilled every hectare, mainly with wheat, but remains worried about exports. He finds the populace still confident of ultimate victory fuelled by moral authority and the commitment of their soldiers. The Ukrainians are grateful for the West's supply of *materiel* although wanting more — especially tanks — and they acknowledge that the ravages of war will be long and *very* hard. Our **President** is arranging a raffle for a corn dolly on Tuesday in an effort to bolster what Martin and his family and helpers can do. In addition to this your committee agreed that we should donate £1000 to disaster relief following the earthquake around the border between Turkey and Syria. Fatalities now exceed 55,000 with something like 1,500,000 rendered homeless.

Michael Pollitt expects to be with us on Tuesday and has lined up a tour of the HMS Gloucester Exhibition at the Castle Museum at 2 o'clock on Sunday, 26th March. He has a fair number of Stalham members booked but there is still scope to add any Holt members who want to come. The fees are going up in April which has been enough to persuade me while **Ken Leggett** will be claiming his concession. Please let Michael know on the night or me remotely by that time. You will have been hard pushed to avoid publicity on local and even national media of what has been claimed as the single most significant historic maritime discovery since the Mary Rose was raised in 1982. The bronzed and beaming Barnwell brothers have been shown clasping the ship's bell which was cast in 1681 and proved their find. They have understandably been reticent about the precise siting of the wreck stating merely that it is 28 miles offshore from their base at Great Yarmouth. This Admiralty chart from 1867 suggests that it happened on the sandbanks highlighted in red which, by my reckoning are up to 40 miles from Great Yarmouth. I have plotted a radius of 28 miles which suggests to me that the precise location may be considerably closer than that to the infamous shallows around Happisburgh.



Part of an Admiralty chart of 1867 showing the coastal waters around GREAT YARMOUTH

Tim

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