

HOLT & DISTRICT FARMERS' CLUB

FOUNDED 1948

President: Richard Brooks

Chairman: Martin Jensen

Vice-Chairman: Andrew Ross

www.holtfarmers.club

CLUB MATTERS

Lent 2025

When the government has put a stop on applications for the Sustainable Farming Initiative to add to the Inheritance Tax imposition I apologise for returning to deaths, devilry and disaster. Firstly I confirm that **Bryan Plumbly's funeral is to be held at 2.30 next Friday, 28th March at Thursford Church, NR21 0BN.** Bryan, a friendly and mild mannered man, leaves his son Kevin to carry on at Meadow Farm and on the coastal marshes where he kept cattle. He married Heather (nee Todd) aged 20 and then bought Meadow Farm at auction in 1964 while having 4 children and enjoying 70 years of marriage. Our **Chairman Martin** has known the Plumblys for decades, principally through his amazing mother-in-law Joy Flint who turned 103 last month. She can recall the funeral of Bryan's grandfather at the little Methodist Chapel in Thursford where the turnout was such that the windows were removed so that those outside could hear. This would not have been long after the Chapel was built at the prompting of Bryan's mother in 1934 as the first since the various Methodist denominations united in 1932 although no new Methodist chapels have been built in this region since then. Bryan's near neighbour at Lime Kiln Farm is **Derek Lee** who, as another Methodist, has helped at the Chapel which closed a couple of years ago. Derek is no longer in the best of health though he did survive a horrible scare when he was only 30. This was in 1978 at the same time and manner that Colin Ross's poor 11 year old son Jamie died at Edgefield with Derek being trapped under 3 tons of grain before he was rescued. Meanwhile Joy still plays Scrabble with her daughter Rosemary and son-in-law Martin at Church Farm, Guestwick where she and her late husband Bernard farmed. He was described as *"a humble, gentle Norfolk farmer" who, with Joy, made a "wonderful Christian couple" and "around the table in the farm kitchen... made welcome...their extraordinary friends, missionaries in far-flung parts of the world who had also made their way to the farm deep in the Norfolk countryside"*.



Joy Flint



Sadly we have also lost two Holt farmers over recent weeks. Jake Brown was 95 and farmed at Heath Farm on the east of the town whose new care homes and housing estates have now extended up to the farmstead. Clive Cooper was 83 and farmed in a small way at Pereers Fam on the north Side of Holt as well as at Kelling. He had been a boy scout and postman as well as a member of Holt Farm Machinery Club along with his neighbour Edwin Jones. There is archive footage of Clive on an old combine harvester and he is seen here on a 1946 Field Marshall on a charity run that was supported by Edwin's son **Ben Jones** and family.

Clive Cooper

I'm sorry to harp on about Holt's harpie, "*the unscrupulous whore*" Alice Pereers who "*was a shameless, impudent harlot, and of low birth*". That was what contemporary fourteenth century chroniclers thought of her though David Mitchell, author of *Unruly* my Christmas book gift recom- mendation which has been in the bestseller lists for a year now, also has it in for her. In those medieval times there were three feudal Manors of Holt and it was thought that John Pereers was Alice's father and held the land to the north-west of Holt where Pereers Wood and Pereers Hills run out towards Cley Watering. Most of this area now forms part of Robert Carter's Letheringsett Estate but only a burnt out barn remains of Pereers Farm. To the north-west was the Manor of Sir John de Nerford (Narford near King's Lynn) where Holt Hall, built in the early 1840s within glorious grounds of 85 acres, is now rapidly being transformed with Sir James Dyson's £35 million into Gresham's Prep School. The third Manor was around the aforementioned Heath Farm where Sir John Hales was Lord. The questions remain as to whether Alice was truly of Norfolk stock as she may have been a thatcher's daughter from Essex and also whether she not only took the rings from the dying Edward III's fingers but had already per- suaded him to pay for his jewellery several times over in his demented state. I tend towards keeping her as one of history's '*baddies*' but our '*baddy*' for all that. There are historical novelists and Feminist historians who have attempted to portray Alice in a better light in the same way that others have sought to rehabilitate that smelly usurper King John when compared with his elder brother, that evil crusader, but the latter will always be Richard the Lionheart for me - even if he was gay.

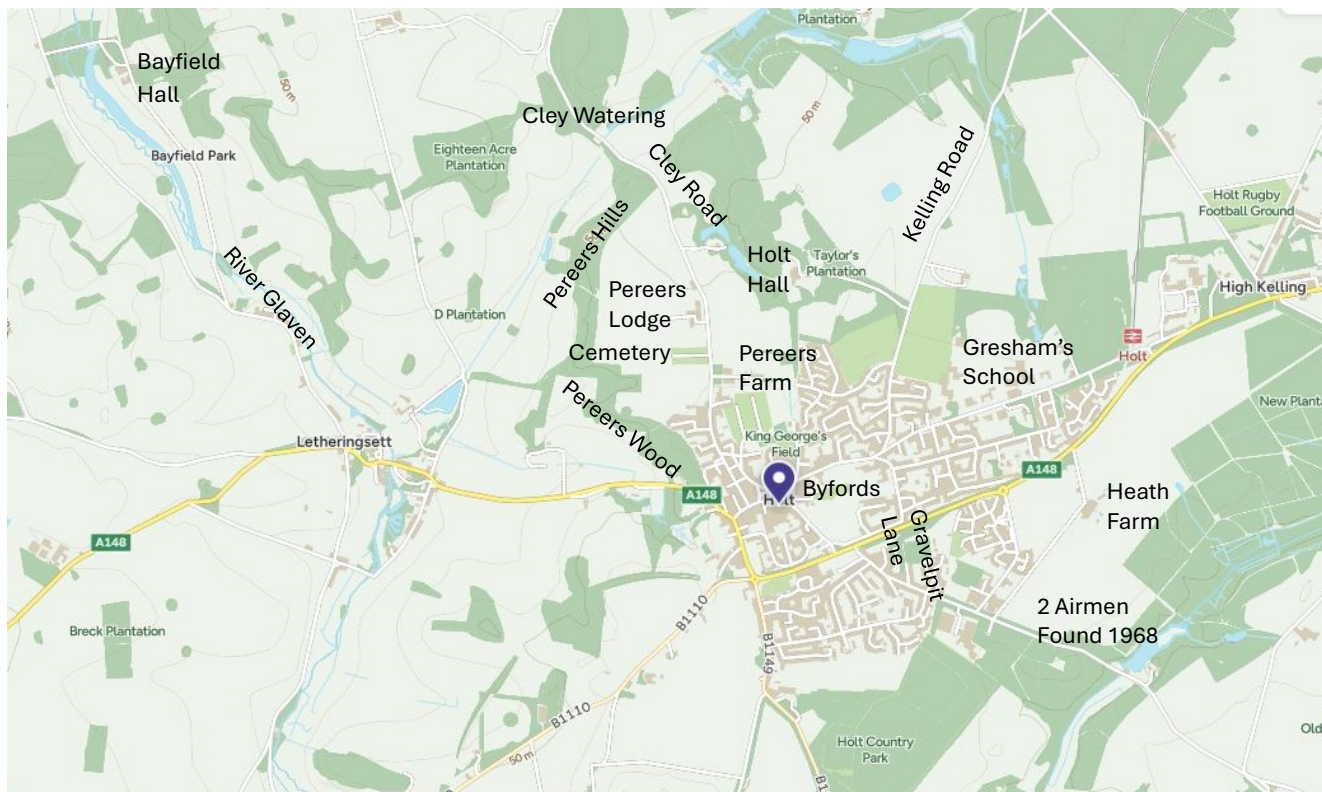


After these deaths and devilry the disaster I referred to is the awful air crash over Holt on 19th August, 1968. There was a thunderstorm when a Victor from RAF Marham was in collision at around 15,000 feet above Holt with a Canberra from Bruggen in Germany. Ted Buxton from Heydon captured the dramatic scene (pictured) but the loudness was equally

remarkable. One of the cockpits landed along the Kelling Road and other debris narrowly missed cottages in Gravelpit Lane so that there were no injuries on the ground although references in the press and in parliament to this being a miracle seem rather partial when 9 airmen died; the plaque with their names is in Holt Church. The aftermath was gruesome with a glove being found at Sheringham with the hand still inside and two bodies landed in what is now Holt Country Park just to the south of the town. One of these falls damaged a young pine tree which, rather poignantly, has continued to grow strongly for over 50 years while leaving the marked kink as shown.



Michael Pollitt has reported on our final meeting of the season and we are thinking of inviting **Peter Craven** back to address us on his role as national Head of Agriculture at Natural England. We already have **Tim Papworth** pencilled in to kick off next season's speakers on **Tuesday, 11th November** after our **AGM on Tuesday, 14th October**. **William Youngs** is pleased that numbers for the **Leics. Trip** have reached the low 30s and we now hope that Leicester Tigers can finish the season as well as England did. William is also working on our **visit to Combe country on Tuesday, 1st July** with the intention of providing food and drink as well as suitable transport for being driven round the Bayfield Estate. Apart from the Grade II Listed Hall above the lake there is the re-wiggled stretch of the river Glaven running through the magnificent parkland. Bayfield was another manor on the west side of Pereers Hills where the Jermy family built the current mansion on the site of the 16th century manor house and the ruined church is all that remains of the lost village of Bayfield. In the nineteenth century the Jodrell family acquired the estate and it was the beneficent Sir Alfred who, by the time he died in 1929, had achieved his ambition to leave the estate in better condition than when he inherited it in 1882. He replaced the cottages at Glandford and painstakingly restored the Church while the pheasant shooting was good enough for him to host that insatiable destroyer of gamebirds King George V. In the century since then standards may not have slipped as far as one might think with Holt being ranked in the top ten 'poshest' towns in the country by the Torygraph. Byfords has always promoted their 'Posh B & B's' which cost in excess of £200 per night and are so popular that they are closing their deli to cater for more 'poshos'. Incidentally King Charles took a keen interest in the fate of the ancient Byfords building when it closed as a hardware store in the 1980s. In the same vein the upmarket Holt Sunday Market starts again on 6th April. According to our M.P. a lot of these visitors are on '*a Jane Austen jaunt*'. I'm not sure our '*John of Gaunt jaunt*' to Leicester, and possibly to its reburied royal resident, will be quite as posh but I'm looking forward to it nonetheless.



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