

HOLT & DISTRICT FARMERS' CLUB

FOUNDED 1948

President: Richard Brooks

Chairman: Martin Jensen

Vice-Chairman: Andrew Ross

www.holtfarmers.club

CLUB MATTERS

Dog Days 2025

It was August 2015 when the Tory administration at Cromer, backed by their new Cameron government, first embarked on consultations on the new Local Plan for the North Norfolk District. We are now being asked for supposedly 'final' comments on www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/localplanconsultation by Wednesday, 17th September. The latest planning proposals should be adopted by the end of the year but it is possible that we will then discover that the District Council is going to be scrapped, amalgamated or whatever so who knows what the rules will be then? This tortuous and tectonic process has been reflected in the local applications that I have highlighted over these years. The latest is the Seaman family's one for what the EDP referred to as "*A Huge Chicken Farm*" between Edgefield and Saxthorpe by which they meant one capable of housing a third of a million chickens and producing 2.4 million a year rather than rearing pterodactyls. When this was first submitted three years ago there was only one private individual who objected but an outcry arose last month when planning consent was granted for six sheds, a biomass plant, feed silos and other associated infrastructure. It was claimed that there had been insufficient public consultation so the EDP conducted an online survey and the upshot has been public opposition and a legal challenge from the Coalition Against Factory Farming leading to a Judicial Review of the decision which the EDP expects will get it quashed.

Lime Kiln Poultry Farm Heydon

Courtesy of Simon Chilton



Further down the B1149 at Lime Kiln Farm alongside the Heydon Straight the contemporary application for a vast free range, egg laying facility with a shed measuring 121.7 by 23.5 metres along with an egg packing plant and manager's dwelling has been withdrawn. Instead the applicants have implemented their agent's threat to keep the poultry "*in smaller movable structures...without planning permission*" and these are pictured. The tide may be turning against megafarms judging by the recent refusal of Cranswick's application at Methwold in West Norfolk to house 714,000 chickens and 14,000 pigs. Meanwhile, after five and a half years and over one hundred objections, a decision is still awaited on the pig farm application at Aldborough. The applicants here are using the same approach as at Heydon by running an outdoor operation initially and claiming that it will be easier to meet Nutrient Neutrality Regulations when numbers are reduced and the pigs are managed inside. These EU derived rules together with the changes in national and local government are making the planning process ridiculously slow, expensive and unpredictable while the planning situation with renewable energy proposals is equally horrendous as I have chronicled.

On top of all this we have had the drought and the consequently poor harvest to contend with. **Stuart Ross** is still available to collect any late samples which are due to be judged again by Rebecca Gee of Crisp Malt for our **A.G.M. on Tuesday, 14th October at The Feathers**. Happier news is that Stuart and his wife Liz have been blessed with another grandchild in Aoife which is an Irish name pronounced in the way of the Cockney rhyming slang alphabet where the fifth letter is 'E for brick' as in 'leave a brick through a jeweller's window'. Also **William Youngs** and Jenny have welcomed Matilda as their first grandchild so congratulations to **George** and Victoria. The corn dolly made by **Richard Brooks** that George won in the raffle at our Anniversary Dinner last year clearly did its job as a fertility symbol. It is good to hear that **Jimmy Fowell** is continuing to make a gradual recovery but maybe not so great that he is driving again. There are several committee members up for re-election at the A.G.M. as well as one or two retirements so I shall send out my usual invitation for nominations of potential replacements next month with the agenda. Please put your name forward and/or propose others - presuming they agree.

George Youngs and Dolly

Courtesy of Michael Pollitt



Another update is due on the Norfolk connection with Leicester which, in rugby terms of Lions and Tigers, we followed early in the summer before it finished in a bit of an anti-climax with defeat at Twickenham. Long before **Youngs** and **Poortvliet** there was Rev. Richard Cattell who played for Leicester and won a blue at Oxford in 1893. He went on to captain England through to 1900 while completing his ordination during that period and later serving as an army chaplain at Gallipoli. He was then Rector at Watlington south of King's Lynn where he fathered seven daughters before moving to Warham with its two medieval churches one of which commemorates him with a plaque. However this does not record his most famous, or infamous, incident in 1932. Another Oxford man, although he had been rusticated from Exeter College, was Harold Davidson who was Rector of the neighbouring parishes of Stiffkey and Morston. As was widely reported he had been spending too much time 'ministering' to the 'fallen women' of the East End rather than his Norfolk flock. Rev. Cattell was standing in for him at an evensong service at Morston when Rev. Davidson, late as usual, stormed in and tried to seize the bible. The two wrestled briefly in front of the shocked congregation until Cattell withdrew which was fortunate for the 5 foot 3 Davidson who would likely have met his match in an ex-England rugby captain. Five years later he did so in Skegness after Freddie the lion took exception to Davidson standing on his mate Toto's tail.

Around this time another Leicester player called Bernard Gadney, a scrum half more in the **Poortvliet** than the **Youngs** mould, also captained England and then the British Lions. He started the move in which the Russian Prince Obolensky scored the 'greatest' try in defeating the All Blacks and went on to become headmaster of a Yorkshire prep school (mine). Another contemporary was Rev. Prof. Owen Chadwick, a world class hooker, who played for The British Lions in Argentina. He had a cottage next to Cley Church and wrote *Victorian Miniature* which is a minor classic about the struggles between Victorian Squire Boileau of Ketteringham west of Norwich and his good but troublesome priest Rev. Anderson. The Norfolk rugby story was continued by **Nick Youngs** in his twin victories, first for The Midlands and then for England, over the All Blacks in 1983 and culminating in Ben's 2019 World Cup semi-final victory over them which should have included a try after a "sumptuous" dummy.

Rev. Harold Davidson at
Vicarage Tea Party
Hempstead-by-Holt 1935

Courtesy of Jonathan Neville



Finally a little *addendum* to my recounting of The Peasants' Revolt and Battle of North Walsham in 1381. The local leader Geoff from Felmingham, while possibly a working class hero to modern eyes, was also a bit OTT. Having plundered John of Gaunt's place near Gimingham he sent Sir Roger Bacon of Baconsthorpe to do the same to Yarmouth. He also captured Sir Stephen Hales, Lord of one of the Holt Manors and a King's Man even though he had freed some of the villeins on his estate. Then he went on to Binham where the Manor Rolls were burnt as they had been at Gimingham. Geoff took the title of '*King of The Commons*' and effectively ruled Norfolk for a whole week. He tried to recruit the townsfolk of Holt with little success which can't have helped him at North Walsham. It was the Fighting Bishop Henry who despatched with Geoff by having him hanged in Norwich Castle 'almost to the point of death'. The poor dyer was then drawn (disembowelled) before being quartered (emasculated and beheaded) into four private and other parts which were displayed up the City, as well as in Bishop's (King's) Lynn, Yarmouth and Thetford. It is feared that **Cubitt**, Geoff's fellow leader of the rebels, met the same fate 'as a warning to others' or *ad terendos ceteros* as Bishop Henry might have put it.

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