

Bun, Cuppa and Chat

Veterans' Group

NEWSLETTER



December 2024

Unbelievably, Bun, Cuppa and Chat has been running for more than eight years, and the Newsletter for about the same time. The group started as part of the Dickleburgh branch of the RBL and when the branch closed a year ago, the baton was handed over to the Benefice of Dickleburgh and the Pulhams, headed up by our Rector, Revd Carl. Our first year under 'new management' has been very successful, thanks to the wonderful welcome and practical support from the lovely Glenn, Amy and Ryan at the Mariner's Galley, our brilliant volunteers who provide cakes and lifts, the pastoral support provided by Revs. Carl and Norman, and members of Bun, Cuppa and Chat whose donations each month mean that the group is not only self-funding but also allows us to subsidise the Christmas lunch and provide Christmas cakes!

We wish all our readers a joyful Christmas and happy New Year.

Our thoughts are with those who are recently bereaved, are unwell, or for whom life is particularly difficult. May you find peace and comfort this Christmastide.

Christmas Lunch 2024

Twenty-six of us sat down to a splendid Christmas lunch at the Mariner's Galley on 12 December with a choice of three different dishes for each course. Many went for the traditional festive fare of turkey and Christmas pud; others enjoyed sea bream, trifle or warm chocolate brownie. Clean plates were the order of the day. Thank you so much to Glenn, Ryan and all staff for cooking and serving the lunch; they barely had time for a cup of tea as they were doing it all over again at 6pm for a Bistro Night! Several folk were unwell so missed the lunch, with both Pearl and Martin spending time in hospital, though both are home now. Kathy was not well on the day and is continuing to recover. We wish them a speedy convalescence.



Bun, Cuppa and Chat 2025

Meetings will take place on the 4th Thursday of the month, 2.30-4pm at the Mariner's Galley, Rushall. Details of any special events, such as lunches, will follow nearer the time.

Thurs Jan 23

Thurs Feb 27

Thurs March 27

Thurs April 24

Thurs May 22

Thurs June 26

Thurs July 24

Thurs Aug 28

Thurs Sept 25

Thurs Oct 23

Thurs Nov 27

Members' News

Sadly, three of our longstanding RBL and Bun, Cuppa and Chat members, representing the three services, have died in the past few weeks, Mike Wilkinson (Royal Navy), David Shipp (Royal Artillery) and Jim Matsell (RAF). David and Jim were in their early 90s and Mike in his mid-eighties. Our thoughts and prayers are with Daphne, David's widow, and her family, and the families of Mike and Jim. Several other members of the group have passed away this year: Elaine Coupland, Veda Oakes, Jerry Eales, Bert Herrington and Geoffrey Bates. But we have also had new members joining our merry band, Anne P., Anne B., Herbert, Rick, Helen, Dorothy, Margaret, Mary, June, Bill and Tony. Welcome to them all.

George Golding – Workhouse Boy and Master Gunner, RN

George Golding was my great, great grandfather and was baptised with three of his siblings at the House of Industry (an early form of workhouse) in Newport, on the Isle of Wight in February 1833. The previous November, the children's parents, John and Fanny Golding, with four of their children (but not George) - Jemima aged 16, Eliza aged 10, Thomas aged 4 and Fanny aged 18 months - were admitted as paupers to the House of Industry; John was a tailor by trade. George was probably about thirteen and may have already been living away from home, working as a fisherman.



Many of the original House of Industry buildings survive today, forming a small part of St Mary's Hospital, which now occupies the site. A few hundred yards away from the main workhouse buildings was a 'pest-house' or isolation hospital for the treatment of infectious diseases such as smallpox or cholera, with a burial ground nearby, in which George's brother Thomas who died at home of scarlet fever, aged 12, and his father, John who died of dysentery at the workhouse, were laid to rest some years later. The site of the burial ground, which lies near the present helipad, is now marked by an excellent information board and a

rather curious art installation (above) described: 'The memorial is made of the 7 steel formers made by British Steel used to form the stainless-steel cladding of the new St Mary's Hospital built in the 1980s. The three steel uprights with three coloured press tools acknowledge the many children who are buried there.' I prefer the sculpture at Gressenhall Workhouse (right)! Well worth a visit if you've never been.

The Golding family remained in the House of Industry for about five months, so would have been there over Christmas. Much has been written about the harshness of the workhouse regime, and the shame attached to entering the 'House'. By the second half of the nineteenth century though, many charities, such as Barnardo's, the Children's Society, or the local charity set up in Dickleburgh by the Rector's wife Louisa Brandreth, were taking destitute children out of the workhouse to live in children's homes or boarded out (fostered) with 'respectable working-class families.' Mrs Brandreth



Rose Cottage children, Dickleburgh

ran two children's homes in the village, Rose and Lee Cottages, as well as a boarding out scheme. The annual 'Christmas Tree' at Rose Cottage aimed to give the children a feeling of family and home. A description of the 1888 event paints a happy picture: 'At twelve o'clock the doors of the playroom were thrown open, and the crowd of eager children admitted. The Christmas-tree - covered with flags, ornaments and crackers - was brilliantly lighted, and placed in the centre of a perfect wall of toys, dolls, work-boxes, and scrap-books. After the singing of some pretty carols, the distribution of presents began... Great was the excitement and pleasure depicted on all the faces as dolls and toys were distributed...each child received no less than four gifts,' and a story book.

It was not only the children in the Dickleburgh homes who benefited from the Christmas festivities, as a large party from the local union workhouse was also invited, consisting of: ...all the Union school-girls, with their teacher, and brothers of some of our little ones... It was very touching to turn from the merry children to a corner of the room where some poor little fellows from the Union might be seen in tears, at meeting their older sisters again. The Rector provided a dinner of roast beef and plum pudding and, after tea and buns, the union children returned to the workhouse, 'laden with oranges and bags of sweets'. The report, presumably written by Mrs Brandreth, ends with a neat summing up of the benefits the Dickleburgh children had over their peers who were still in the workhouse: 'It was surely well for our happy children, rescued from the monotony of Workhouse life, to share their pleasure with those less fortunate than themselves.'

Even though George seems to have avoided spending time in the workhouse himself, he must have had a tough life from his early teens given his parents' poverty and the brief period they spent in the House of Industry, but in 1842 his life changed when he joined the Royal Navy. From Royal Navy records, we learn that George was 5' 4" tall, had a sallow complexion, brown hair, grey eyes and carried the marks of smallpox though whether this was because of having had the disease or vaccination is not clear. His signature was firm suggesting a reasonable education, though where this was acquired, we do not know.



From June 1846 until December 1849, George served on HMS *Eurydice*, a fast 26-gun 5th rate frigate, commissioned in 1843. The ship sailed from Portsmouth in July 1846, was recorded as being at sea off Lisbon on 23 August and three weeks later called in at Cadiz. She was at sea from 26 October 1846 until 4 February 1847 (whether Christmas was celebrated on board, I do not know!) when she arrived at the Naval Base at Simons Bay in South Africa. From there she made several voyages calling at Mozambique, Mauritius and Johannesburg, setting sail on her return voyage from Simonstown on 21 October 1849 arriving in her home base of Portsmouth on 9 December after more than 3 years away.

Eurydice came to a sad end though long after George had left. Refitted as a seagoing training ship in 1877, she was returning to Portsmouth in March 1878 after a 3-month voyage, when the weather changed rapidly as she entered Sandown Bay off the Isle of Wight; she foundered in a sudden squall, with the loss of all but two of the 334 crew and trainees on board. There have been occasional sightings of a phantom ship in the area, believed to be HMS *Eurydice*, including one by a submarine commander in the 1930s who took evasive action and then found the ship had vanished, and by Prince Edward in 1998, there with a film crew who said that they had captured it on film!



George Golding trained as a naval gunner, being posted to HMS *Excellent*, the naval gunnery school, a hulk moored off Portsmouth Harbour, several times during his career. HMS *Excellent* is now a shore-based establishment ('stone frigate') on Whale Island, Portsmouth where it continues to serve as a training base for naval personnel in various aspects of modern warfare.

George retired in 1877 with a pension after nearly 35 years' service, 22 of them as a warrant officer gunner, a senior specialist non-commissioned officer. George would have seen significant developments during his service in ship design and weaponry and in

the careers and conditions of service of naval personnel. During this period, the Royal Navy moved from sail to steam, from wooden-hulled to iron-clad ships, and armament was moved from internal gun decks to the main external decks, with significant developments in weapon design. Uniforms were introduced for sailors, punishment became more humane and from 1853, 'continuous service engagement' was introduced for sailors allowing them security and proper career progression instead of being only hired for a single voyage.

George Golding died in 1906, aged about 85. He and his wife were buried in the Mile End Cemetery at Portsmouth, which sadly has now been built over and forms the hard-standing for vehicles at the Continental Ferry Port! In his will, George divided his four houses in the Portsmouth area and his shares and dividends between his four children.

From humble beginnings to a man of property.

The Poppy Appeal, 2024

We have had a very successful Poppy Appeal in the Long Stratton and Dickleburgh districts this year, with £5645.80 raised so far (£400 more than last year), covering 19 villages and 1 town, from church collections, the sale of wreaths, house-to-house collection, and poppy tins in schools (11 of them!), shops, supermarket, pubs, cafes, petrol station, businesses, community centre, and care homes. I am most grateful to all organisations who took a tin, and to everyone who contributed so generously. I wish particularly to thank everyone concerned with Bun, Cuppa and Chat - our volunteers at the Co-op, William, Mig, Olive, Michael, Jan, Pearl, Rose, Norman, Helen and Rick, who with the Long Stratton Cadets raised £1469.74 over four days; to the Mariner's Galley who raised £169.47, and to Rushall Church who raised £100 from their Remembrance Service.

And finally, a special mention for Stoke Holy Cross Primary School who took a tin for the first time and raised £300!

Norman's Chuckle Corner

- ✚ The new rector, armed with a sheaf of paper, started his first sermon by saying to the congregation: "My job is to preach to you, and your job is to listen. If you finish your job before I finish mine, please keep quiet."
- ✚ A police student was given a scenario to solve in his training exam: "You are on your beat, and you see two dogs fighting. One knocks a baby out of its pram causing a car to swerve off the road and smash into a grocer's shop. A pedestrian is seriously injured but a lady's bag is snatched and a crowd of onlookers chase after the thief causing a huge build-up of traffic, preventing the ambulance getting through to the injured person. State your course of action in order of priority." The student replied, "Take off my uniform and mingle with the crowd, Sir."
- ✚ A woman was driving in the rush hour and the car in front of her stopped suddenly. She did not have time to brake and smashed into the car's bumper. A dwarf got out and approached the woman's car. She wound down her window and the dwarf said, "I am not happy." "Oh, good", said the woman, "My neck hurts, I was hoping you were Doc."
- ✚ While watching a film at the cinema, a man cannot hear the dialogue over the chatter of two ladies in front of him. Unable to bear it any longer the man taps one lady on the shoulder, "Excuse me", he says "I can't hear". The lady says crossly, "I should hope not, this conversation is private."
- ✚ Ovaltine A chubby Adolescent?

And finally, for Christmas:

- ✚ Why did the turkeys join the band? Because they had the drumsticks.

Musings from the Mutts and the Moggie

Nacho here. I've been getting very anxious - about the car, eating, sleeping away from my hoomans, and being left when they go out. I am now sleeping in the hoomans' bedroom at night on a rug. So, Master and Missus asked this nice man called Sam to help. One suggestion he made was that I should have some 'crate training' so that I will be comfortable eating in my crate and staying there at night or when the hoomans go out. That is going really well - from my point of view anyway. I 'tollerate' eating in the crate, Sahara loves sleeping



in it at night, and last night after the Master had gone up to bed with me and was fast asleep, I jumped up on the bed and was asleep too when the Missus came in!

As you can see, I am still very comfortable on the sofa!



Sugie here. Here's me, toasting my bum on the heating pipes under the carpet. Done my hunting for the day and left Missus to clear up the mess!

**The Bun, Cuppa and Chat Group is part of the Benefice of Dickleburgh and the Pulhams,
Rector: The Revd Carl Melville, T. 01379 452029**

Organisers: The Revd Norman Steer and Rosemary Steer, T. 01379 854245

Newsletter Editor, Rosemary Steer, email: rosemarvasteer55@gmail.com (please note new email address)

Please contact Rosemary if you would like your name removed from the mailing list.