

THE HILDERSHAM EXPRESS

JULY 2005

EDITION No. VI



THREE GENERATIONS OF OUR CUTTER FAMILY LADIES

Welcome to the sixth edition of "**THE HILDERSHAM EXPRESS**," sadly you will see that this is a very small edition and no adverts. The edition that you were supposed to read along with many other important documents and photographs were wiped out by a very nasty computer virus, that attacked my main computer last Friday. This is a lesson to us all, I use a frontline Internet Security package – **Norton Professional 2005**, and on Thursday as part of my normal maintenance procedures I downloaded the latest set of virus definitions, so in reality I should have been completely protected. However, within seconds, at a time when I wasn't working and the computer was in 'Sleep' mode, my Windows XP system was completely wiped.

I should be able to eventually get a computer expert to recover the data on my main hard drive, but in the short term, this has resulted in the need to buy a new hard drive. When I contacted Norton to ask how was this possible, they told me that all Internet Security companies can only protect you 94% of the time and unfortunately this must have been the odd 6%, they do not tell you that in the advertising. However, it has taught me a harsh lesson, no matter how busy you are, you must take the time to regularly back up your important information and photographs. The way the experts have advised me to do this is to use a 300Gb External Hard Drive, which will automatically double save to both this new drive and the computer main hard drive, whenever I save to **“My Documents”**.

CUTTER FAMILY DAY:

On a much more cheerful note, June has been a wonderful month for village events. The cover photograph comes from the **“CUTTER FAMILY DAY”** at Abington on Sunday 26th June. Here I was privileged enough to spent a lovely afternoon with three delightful generations of our Hildersham Cutter family with Gwen, Angela and Samantha.

The reason this special day had been arranged was that in their research the Abington History group had found that in the 1891 census there were 39 Cutters living in the Abingtons, while today there is no one left with the Cutter family surname. This gives a very false picture as a packed Abington Institute showed that from across the country and in particular, Abington there are many descendants of the Cutters and ladies whose maiden name was Cutter, with two very special ladies in their late 80s. The earliest date we can trace the Abington Cutters' to is 1748 with Ishmael & Ann Cutter. The Hildersham Cutters' link to this family is with Gwen's husband Monty, from the family trees displayed at the institute, we were able to plot Monty's direct descent back to this first family, making Ishmael and Ann Samantha and the boys, Great, Great, Great, Great, Great, Great Grandparents.

Gwen's father was Frank Pegg, a fisherman from the east coast; Frank had married Ethel Tofts who was born in Hildersham. Gwen and her brother Billy were born in Sheringham, while their two sisters Celia and Poppy were born in Hildersham. Although due the computer problems I have not all the information available to me, but from my paper records of the census & parish registers I have been able to trace both sides of Ethel Tofts family tree and hence the Cutters' and Diggens' family, easily back to the 1750s in Hildersham, being related to many of the other family names we have read about in our history stories, such as the Haylock, Clark, Brown, White and Purkis families. Perhaps with the families permission we can have a similar day in Hildersham to show how special it is to be able to trace a living family so far back in a villages history.

HILDERSHAM VICTORY THANK YOU FUN DAY:

On Saturday 25th June, Hildersham did what it always does best, we had a wonderful day all gathered together to enjoy each others company and more importantly we were there to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the end of World War Two.

All year I have been working with the **BBC Peoples War team**, the **Big Lottery**, the **Royal British Legion**, **Age Concern** and the Cambridgeshire Archives and Local Studies services. It was back in February when following a conversation with Cheryl that the idea for a Hildersham Fun Day evolved and then it was Cheryl's unlimited

enthusiasm and powers of organising that drove the day forward into the end result and truly special Hildersham day we all had.

So a very big thank you to the '**HILDERSHAM IN BLOOM**' team, especially Cheryl, Brid and all their excellent helpers. In addition, a big thank you to Shaun Levitt, as his military uniforms and vehicles added a very special touch to the day. A big thank you is also due to the British Legion for all the balloons and bunting, as well as the Big Lottery with its '**Home Front Recall**' scheme that helped provide some of the funding for the equipment, etc that was used on the day and will be used at many other events across the rest of 2005 and beyond. The display of old photographs and memorabilia was very popular and to make sure as many people as possible get the opportunity to see these there will be another event or shared event organised.

While we all had a lovely day, a glance at Hildersham's War Memorial reveals a far more serious side of the day and the fact that three Hildersham men paid the ultimate sacrifice so that we today can live in freedom and peace:

KINGSLEY OSBERN GEORGE NUGENT Flight Sergeant – Navigator - 305 (Polish) Squadron, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve who died on Sunday, 26th November 1944. Aged 22 – Operation Market Garden and he is buried in Reichswald Forest War Cemetery. He was the Son of George Nugent and Gladys Julia Nugent, of Aldbourne, Wiltshire. His connection to Hildersham was that he married into the Foster family at Hildersham Watermill.

ERIC OWEN WILSON Captain - 2nd Battalion Cambridgeshire Regiment, who died on Thursday, 21st January 1943, aged 33. He died building the notorious Thailand – Burma Railway. He was the son of Edward Lewis Wilson and Dorothy Wilson; from Hildersham and was the husband of Helen Wilson, of Streatham, London. He is buried in the infamous Chungkia War Cemetery, Thailand.

SIDNEY WALTER PRENTICE Lance Corporal, 7th Battalion: Hampshire Regiment who died on Sunday, 1st October 1944 -Aged 28 during Operation Market Garden portrayed in the film 'A Bridge too Far'. He was the son of Charles William and Ellen Prentice and the twin brother of Victor Prentice of Hildersham. He is buried in Mook War Cemetery in the Netherlands. Vic Prentice is another war hero, fighting with the daring combined service group as they landed and fought their way through Italy.



Apart from these heroes, Hildersham has had many others who served in the Armed Forces in WW2 that have either passed away over the passing years or still live with us today. One such hero, who we would have loved to have been with us on Saturday was **JACK SMITH**, he bravely served with distinction with the Coldstream Guards in the battle for the bridges; Jack is just one of the many who sadly could not with us. I hope that during the rest of the year, Hildersham's War heroes and anyone who lived through the war years will record their stories on one of the BBC Story forms (available in the Pear Tree or Church or directly from me). Then later in the year we can record all these stories on the BBC Peoples War website so that they are never forgotten and will be available for many generations to come.

www.bbc.co.uk/ww2



Returning finally to our Family Fun Day, the sumptuous afternoon tea was rounded off with the Fancy Dress parade, the children as can be seen above looked great and all were given prizes, and even a few adults had joined in the spirit of the day and dressed up in uniforms and costumes of the day. Then we had a grand finale as we all had a great singsong with Brid playing all the great wartime favourite songs.

All in all a truly wonderful day.

FAMILY PICNIC & NATURE TRAIL AT FURZE HILLS:

On Sunday 13th June, a very blustery, cold and overcast day a group of intrepid Hildersham adventurers accepted Mrs Arabella Killander's very kind invitation to join her for a family picnic and nature trail at Furze Hills. Great fun was had by all as we battled the elements as we ate our sandwiches and had a welcome drink kindly provided by our host. For me it was a great opportunity to share with other people the

area I had loved to come as a young boy, whilst for most other people it was the first time they had ever been here and seen its wonders. After a brief description of how the Furze Hills had been created and a description of glacial gravels, sand and fossils, as well as a description of the areas history and what parts of Hildersham can be seen from this great vantage point. We were taken on a Nature Trail over all three and each very different hills, by two experts ladies from English Nature, they showed us



many of the beautiful and delicate and in many cases very small plants and flowers. These hills are a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and have been recorded as very special throughout history. They are recorded in **John Ray's Botany 'Catalogus' of Cambridgeshire's** in 1660, he interestingly calls one of the Hill's '**JUNIPER HILL**', while recently it was reported that only four wild Juniper trees sites were known in Cambridgeshire. Many other famous Botanists have visited Furze Hills over the years, including in the 1950s one of my headmasters from Abington Primary School **John Faulkner**. To find out more a great book to read is "**A Flora of Cambridgeshire**" by **Perring, Sell and Whitehouse**, published in 1964 by the Cambridge University Press in association with the Cambridge Natural History Society. Everyone agreed that despite the weather, it had been a real treat and an experience they are very glad they did not miss. Very kindly Mrs Killander has suggested that we should repeat this day again another year, perhaps at another time of the year. **HOPEFULLY EVERYTHING WILL BE BACK TO NORMAL NEXT MONTH**