



As I write this, we have just enjoyed our first meeting in the URC meeting room. Space is a bit more cramped, so it might take a few sessions to get used to the change, but we were in the village hall for nearly 15 years. Jerry will write a review of Gerry's talk about orchards in a future Telstar.

As you read this you probably have time to plan to join us for our **March 4th** meeting. If you didn't make it to our February talk, don't forget we are now in the URC Meeting Room – look out for our new banner (unless it is blowing a gale!) This will be another in our series of **Stowupland Stories** when we will be tackling the subject of **reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic** i.e., aspects of learning in Stowupland. Mainly Victorian times through to when Queen Elizabeth came to the throne, though no doubt some people will bring memories (hopefully happy ones) of their early days of the High School.

I have been writing my annual Local Recorders Report for Suffolk Local History Council, recording things that I have been aware of that happened in Stowupland in 2025. My thanks to many people who kindly helped by sharing what was important to them last year.

As part of my preparation, I always do a quick scan through of last year's Telstars. This year being sensible I checked out the online copies which meant I could *cut and paste* anything that triggered a memory of what I thought future generations should know about our time here. I don't use everything from Telstar but my thanks to the Telstar team and its contributors for producing this resource. It creates a valuable archive for future historians and each year when I review its content I am completely surprised as to how much information is included and how much I missed on first reading.

Now Jerry looks back to last year, with his review of our Christmas meeting's talk by Kathleen about Tudor Kitchens which was brought to life with her fantastic examples of Tudor cooking at its best, which went well with our tea and coffee provided at the end of the talk by Liz and Annie.

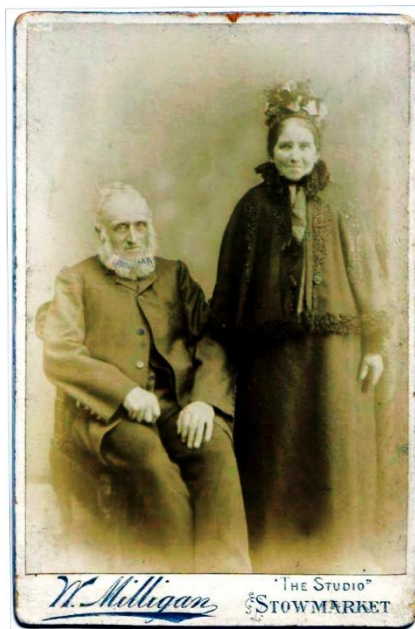
Starting the talk with slides of a typical Tudor Kitchen in most houses of the day. These photos were not a very joyful example, as it showed no kitchen should be subject to a modern-day hygiene inspection and expect to get a 5 for high standard of turn out. There were a number of dogs roaming around the floor eating various bits of leftover meat off the floor, and in one case a monkey sitting in the food preparation area - not a good advert for the kitchens overall. However, Kathleen assured us that the standard of food reaching the tables in those days was very high, with the insistence that hands were washed and cleaned to high standard. Some of the diners would help themselves using fingers to dig into the various courses of meat on offer, these often-included beef lamb and veal. And could also be started with a fish course which also included several varieties. Topped off with a sweet course such as tarts, a various selection of fritters, custard jelly, fruit plus a selection of wines and locally brewed ale.

The Tudor period is generally taken from 1485-1603 starting with Henry VII and finishing with Elizabeth 1. During this era trade was expanding and new worlds were being discovered, this had an effect on eating habits. Early on vegetables were usually onions and cabbages but as time went on, tomatoes and potatoes were introduced to the menu. This made selection available to cooks working to prepare the meals much more interesting. Kathleen had many

examples of various menus from the period. You really needed to see the full talk to understand fully the preparation that went into a finished meal set out on the table.

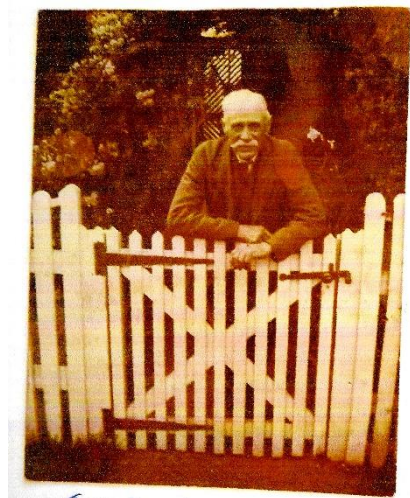
However, the Royal banquet was always a talking point. When Henry VII was on the throne at Christmas, he would declare a 12-day Christmas break for all his staff. They would eat, drink and be merry. Kathleen had examples of the menus of the day, and they looked fantastic, however the costs for these meals must have been huge as Kathleen had done some calculations, and the same costs for that 12-day period of eating and drinking would amount to around £400,000 not a bad thank you for the Kings staff over the Christmas holidays. Neil thanked Kathleen for coming and took questions from audience.

If they are still available Kathleen's Tudor Cookbook, Mistress Kathleen's Kitchen can be bought from M&Ms in the village. Even if you are not a cook and don't intend to try out the dishes they are a very interesting read and all the money from the sales goes towards Mendlesham's project to caretake their Armouries Collection. Kathleen will return to give us a talk on this later in the year.



Continuing from last month's Telstar. I am extremely grateful to a neighbour who shared some of her family's history research into the Robinson family, I especially like seeing old photos. This one of Amy and William Robinson must date to the late 1800s. William died in August 1887 aged 84. Amy died age 83. They lived in The Old Meeting House, today this is still a thatched house near to Stowupland Hall.

Another gentleman contacted us through the pages of our website to ask if we would be interested in some details and photos from his family history relating to the Dent family. Of course, I said, 'yes please!'



I will update our website page on the Dent family in due course. Our earliest record of Dent's living in Stowupland is of a John Dent who 'encroached onto Yhorney Green' in 1738 when he set up a blacksmith shop which subsequently became The Retreat. My contact was also a John Dent. He believes there are no more Dents in Stowupland. This is one of the photos he sent me of his Great Grandfather Mr James Dent leaning on the gate of his home Oak Cottage. He was grateful to the present owners of Oak Cottage who allowed him to look round his old house.

NEIL'S QUERY

On November 7th, 1847, the railway line from Ipswich to Norwich and Bury St. Edmunds was opened. However, the completion of Stowmarket station (the station was actually in Stowupland before the boundary changes of the 1930s) was delayed due to the death of the contracted builder Daniel Revett so a fresh contractor had to be appointed. Stowmarket

people were determined to have a station worthy of their town and the parish authorities contributed £1000 towards the cost of a new approach road from the town and advanced a loan of £3000 to the company towards the building itself. The station was finally completed in July 1849.

At one time the large letters of J.G.H and J.C.C. could be picked out in the brickwork of the station. These were visible until around 20 or 30 years ago but have succumbed to old age and are no longer visible. Do you recall these letters and do you know what they meant? Answers next month.



OUR PLANNED 2026 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March 4th– Stowupland Stories (5) – Schools and Education.

April 1st – ‘Onehouse Paupers Graveyard Project’, guest speaker Julie Johnson.

May 6th – ‘Medieval Pilgrimages to Woolpit’, guest speaker Dr Shalena Klazow

June 3rd– Stowupland Stories (6) – Thorney Green and Stowupland Parish Council.

July 1st – The Mendlesham Armoury Through Time

August 5th – Saxham Street Stories

More events will be added in due course. Please bear in mind it is occasionally necessary for a topic to be changed at the last minute.

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Do you have stories to share or prefer to listen?

**As a SLHG member you can enjoy our talks for just £2:00 on the door:
or we always welcome visitors to our meetings, just pay £5.00 on the door.**

If you have any queries about joining us or about Stowupland’s past:

**Please contact Jerry Voden on 01449 703717 or
secretary@stowuplandlocalhistorygroup.org**

Or visit our website: **www.stowuplandlocalhistorygroup.org**

Where you can listen to Jerry Jabbas.