

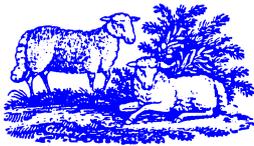


MOVING TIMES

The Annual Newsletter from Dakin Estates

*A Very Merry Christmas
and Happy New Year to all.*

DECEMBER 2011



DAKIN ESTATES NEWS

A difficult year in the property market but not quite as bad as we feared with low interest rates and a lack of supply of quality properties supporting the market.



Dakin Estates are finishing off two small barns and Garboldisham and are hoping to buy a larger barn in Barnham Broom which is near Wymondham. We know from our experience at Wrampingham that this is a very desirable area and Barnham Broom with school, shop, pub and country club and golf courses must be good news. There is, of course, the added bonus of the now visible evidence of the A11 duelling which is very good for South Norfolk and Norwich, as well as for anyone who has been stuck at the infamous Elveden crossroads!

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Check out past projects on our website!

www.dakinestates.co.uk

PICKING THE NIT 2

JD had an odd telephone message from a complete stranger with a note of slight desperation in his voice.

The stranger said he understood that JD had been a director of Prowting Homes in around 1960. If this was the case he, (the stranger), needed JD's help.

Now in 1960 JD, if not actually in nappies, would certainly have been sporting very short trousers. It was JD's father, Tony Dakin, who had been the Director of Prowting Homes.

Nevertheless, curious about this echo from the past JD rang the stranger who explained that he urgently needed to find the original plans of his home from when it was built around 1960 by Prowting Homes.

The penny dropped, "This is a bank surveyor doing a mortgage valuation who is asking for this isn't it?", asked JD.

The stranger confirmed that this was indeed the case. The surveyor had demanded the original plans due to a "query of boundaries".

In our last issue we drew attention to this growing phenomenon of nit picking queries by mortgage providers hoping perhaps, having approved a mortgage in principle, to avoid actually parting with the funds whilst being able to claim that mortgage "approvals" are up. Here apparently was a very extreme example - after half a century the stranger's boundaries would be firmly established de facto - even had they varied slightly from the original builder's plans.

Not that we will ever know. Prowting Homes has long disappeared. The Local Authority had merged and demerged and merged again and was unable to help. In addition, this was before the days of compulsory Land Registration.

The plans may exist gathering dust in a local archive somewhere but the stranger will never find them because nobody can tell him where to look.

So he may not get his mortgage.....



“...drivin’ across the airfield”

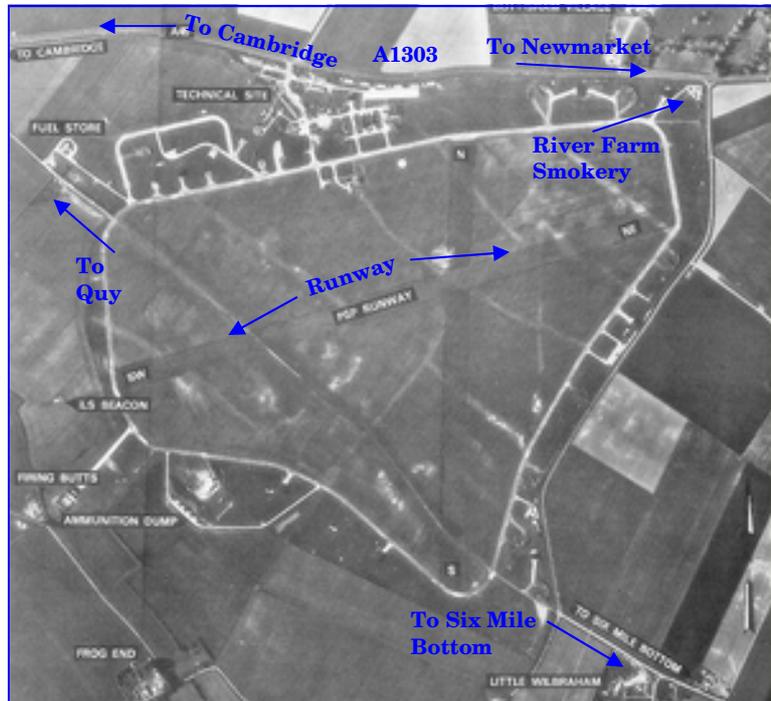
Cambridgeshire 1989

“I was drivin’ across the airfield at the time...”, said the old farmer recounting a tale of a recent collision he had had with a deer on the road between The Missing Sock at Stow Cum Quy, (formerly The Prince Albert), and The Green Man at Six Mile Bottom.

Surely there wasn’t an airfield in that area? ND inquired, puzzled.

The farmer agreed but added, “was once though, in wartime, when I were a little old boy” (“Little old boy” meaning young boy in traditional Cambridge dialect).

When ND investigated further he found that the wartime airbase along that road was part of Bottisham Airfield. Today, if you travel along the A1303, (the scenic route), between Cambridge and Newmarket you can still see some of its wartime buildings now housing the River Farm Smokery just outside Bottisham



Aerial view of Bottisham Airfield

The runway ran west from these buildings in the general direction of Cambridge bisecting the Quy – Six Mile Bottom road which, presumably was closed for the duration thus preventing local people “drivin’ across the airfield” for a few years.

But Bottisham Airfield has a secret. There are other airfield buildings, long forgotten, (until recently), which used to stand just outside the village but which have, over time, been subsumed into the village itself by the building of new houses and a surgery in Tunbridge Lane. The airfield buildings however survived this expansion and remain in situ, literally in somebody’s garden, and are accessed by a normal domestic driveway close to the surgery.



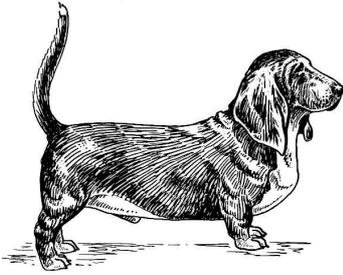
Thomas Christian

Bottisham’s wartime role was marked in the 1980s when a new housing development called Thomas Christian Way was built in Tunbridge Lane. Thomas Christian was the American wartime commander of the base and the housing estate was formally opened by his daughter with a memorial being unveiled.

More recently still, The Bottisham Airfield Museum Group has been founded and has gained access to the forgotten airbase buildings in the village and, after some restoration, has opened them to the public once a month in the summer months.



Funny what can be revealed from a chance remark overheard at a party about “...drivin’ across the airfield”.



BASSETING.....

At the Great Gransden Agricultural Show, near Cambridge, we tried, unsuccessfully, to suppress a smile.

“Yes”.... said The Master of Bassets noticing it, “That’s the reaction of most people when I tell them I hunt a pack of Basset Hounds”.

You can see why. The thought of those ungainly, lugubrious and lollypop dogs hunting in a pack did conjure up an amusing image.

However the dogs in that image, according to the Master, were the wrong sort of Basset. Basset Hounds started out as hunting dogs and have a lineage going back to sixteenth century France. Your true hunting Basset is a very different dog from his over bred, domestic cousin. He is smaller, leaner and more athletic and not lollypop or lugubrious at all. This differential resulted in a schism between The Basset Hound Association and the hunting Basset fraternity that ended a 50 year relationship.

The Hunting Basset is a very social dog and unlike foxhounds, can retire into a domestic household once his hunting days are over.

Basset hounds can produce an amazing turn of speed that would be the envy of their domestic cousins although they do share the same long floppy ears the purpose of which is to funnel scent from the ground to the nose.

There are seven packs of Bassets in the UK, (and many more in France), and both hounds and foot followers, (there are no horses involved), are a sociable lot. A typical meet of The Albany and West Lodge, (to whose Master we were speaking), starts in a pub at lunchtime followed by several hours hunting and a well earned tea at dusk.



During the course of an afternoon’s hunting a Basset can cover around 25 miles with huntsmen, on foot, covering around 15 miles and the sight of a pack of Bassets in full cry is apparently, a vision to stir the blood.

Not a sport for the unfit but foot followers get a lot closer to the action....and the Bassets.

www.Albanybassets.co.uk



Downton Dialogue

Downton Abbey has been a very pleasant change from the universal TV fare of reality shows, Strictly, X Factor, foodie programmes and, of course, far too many property programmes that now dominate the television schedules. Downton, however, has a series of ridiculous flaws and once you notice one it’s not possible to watch it in a relaxed fashion because you are always looking out for the next.

It’s in the dialogue – people in Edwardian England just didn’t use some of the Americanisms spoken by the characters. “Let’s take this upstairs” and “no way” being just a few that have been spotted. We have not yet seen anyone asking the butler for something using the awful but now universal “Can I get....?” but we live in hope. (The TV series “Friends” has a lot to answer for).

Now, if it’s period dialogue you want as well as a good film for Christmas look no further than the 1960s film The Charge of The Light Brigade which is actually more a film about class and society in Victorian England than the charge itself. The scriptwriters spent years pouring over old manuscripts, books, magazines and newspapers including Punch, Dickens, Thackeray and Surtees to work out exactly how different people would have spoken in the 1850s. If you have seen the film you may well not have noticed the dialogue with its rich array of words and expressions from the Victorian era, (“I am Lord Cardigan that is wot is wot”), but now it’s been drawn to your attention, like the flaws in Downton, you will notice it if you watch The Charge of The Light Brigade again.

The rich characterful dialogue in the hands of actors like Trevor Howard, Harry Andrews, Gielgud and even a young Peter Bowles is a treat.....and there is no danger whatsoever of anyone asking, “Can I get.....?”

THE BANKNOTE'S TALE

Although not unfond of the folding stuff TC seemed to be displaying an unusual interest in an auction of historic British banknotes in London by Messrs Spink & Co. TC had never heard of Spink & Co and was astonished at the variety and content of their website. Spinks, incredibly, have been auctioning coins, medals and banknotes since 1664 and their auctions include items from every period and every country in the world varying from the exotic to the downright eccentric ("...A COLLECTION OF HAMMERED GROATS..").



Bank of Hadleigh

Spink sell a lot of banknotes. The catalogue TC was looking at ran to over 300 pages and, to find that which he sought, TC was obliged to leaf through reams and reams of photographs of seemingly identical British green pound notes each, however, with a different guide price reflecting minute differences in design, serial number and collectability guaranteed to bring a gleam to the eye of the discerning enthusiast.

Finally TC found the section which he sought - "British Provincial Banknotes". Largely forgotten now, it was, for centuries, the practice of small market town banks in the country to issue their own banknotes due to the difficulty of transporting large amounts of treasury notes from London. Although accepted as currency in the bank's own locales, these notes were more of a local "scrip" than legal tender and worthless in the event of the bank going broke. This practice continued until surprisingly recently with one of the items in the auction being a £5 note issued by the Newmarket Bank dated 1903.

At last, TC came across his item of interest, a £5 banknote from the Bank of Hadleigh in Suffolk dated 1883 signed by a director of the bank, one L. Grimwade. The Grimwades were a very influential family in Hadleigh and indeed Suffolk – (until very recently there was a Grimwades department store in the centre of Ipswich).

The Hadleigh Bank was taken over by Barclays in 1904 and the Grimwades' influence in the area started to decline culminating in the compulsory purchase and demolition of their historic family mansion, Hadleigh Hall in order to make way for the new Hadleigh bypass in the 1960s.

Hadleigh Hall is pictured on the top left corner of the banknote.....and TC's interest in the banknote?

The signature, "L. Grimwade", on the banknote is that of TC's great great great grandfather!

The Bank of Hadleigh £5 note fetched £850 at Spinks auction
Not a bad return on a fiver thought TC.

CRYING WOLF

We were interested to see that two construction workers in Royston had been suspended following a complaint from a woman who they had wolf whistled as she walked past their building site.

Perhaps, this prompts the question as to how anyone mean minded enough to lodge a complaint about a wolf whistle could possibly be attractive enough to warrant getting one in the first place?



Or perhaps, to paraphrase Oscar Wilde, to a woman below a certain age, there is only one thing worse than passing a building site and getting a wolf whistle and that is"