

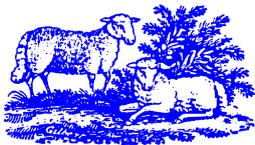


# MOVING TIMES

## The Occasional Newsletter from Dakin Estates

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

DECEMBER 2010



### DAKIN ESTATES NEWS

Interesting times in property. Prognosis? Decidedly difficult with the housing market having been artificially skewed in both directions before and after the repeal of HIPS since when properties at the middle and lower end have been flooding onto the market, although Agents report a lack of quality properties in this "flood". Interesting times indeed!

Dakin Estates are currently converting two barns in Garboldisham whilst pursuing long term planning campaigns on behalf of landowners.

The barns at Garboldisham will be going to market in March / April 2011 and Dakin Estates are currently very interested in acquiring a new project to start work on in the spring.



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Check out past projects on our website!

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### What's inn a name?

It was Richard II who, in 1393, decreed that all establishments brewing and selling ale must display a sign outside with a name and/or emblem.

His coat of arms was a White Hart whilst the Red Lion was that of the second most powerful man in England, John O'Gaunt. It was these two emblems, together with The Crown, that became popular inn names and remain so to this day.

In the later era, The Marquis of Granby also became a common pub name due to the Marquis's benevolent habit of setting his old soldiers up in business as innkeepers.

Some pubs, however, get their name in more unusual circumstances and fellow property professionals will be curious to know the origins of The Jackson Stops Inn at Stretton just off the A1 north of Stamford.

A handsome stone and thatch former farmhouse, the pub was for sale for so long, with a Jackson Stops agent's "FOR SALE" board outside, that the pub became known as "The Jackson Stops Inn"!

No reflection, however, on the selling ability of our friends at Jackson Stops today....

This was in 1955!



## Secrets of Shingle Street

In 1986 an Old Suffolk Boy in a pub told ND that he, The Old Boy, had been born and raised in the remote Suffolk fishing hamlet of Shingle Street which consisted of only about a dozen cottages and The Lifeboat Pub.

"In 1940 The Authorities made the whole village pack up and leave.." he said , adding, darkly "... something 'appened in Shingle Street during the war ....they never would tell us what".

In 1986 ND had never heard of Shingle Street and its wartime secret but type "Shingle Street" into a search engine today and you may find the results surprising.

Shingle Street lay between two top secret military installations Bawdsey Manor and Orford Ness both of which, even today, have an eerie and mysterious atmosphere. So what did happen at Shingle Street in 1940? The main story, (and there are several), is that the Germans launched an invasion against this remote part of East Anglia in 1940 but the invasion flotilla was defeated offshore by a new British secret weapon which covered the sea with burning oil inflicting terrible casualties. Hundreds of burnt bodies were washed ashore and buried in secret – some say on the beach at Shingle Street itself.

Is this true? Certainly it was reported in newspapers around the world, including The New York Times, with thousands of German casualties being mentioned. The incident is also mentioned in one of Evelyn Waugh's novels.

In 1940 bodies were regularly washed ashore along the east coast - German bodies washed ashore could have been from a German invasion exercise across the Channel which was caught in open water by RAF planes. Britain did, however, have a Petroleum Warfare Department experimenting with a "flame barrage" to repel invasion. East Anglian eyewitnesses seeing long columns of military ambulances, were told that they were full of "German casualties from a defeated invasion attempt" although this may have been a cover story to conceal casualties of a major British naval disaster at the time.

So "failed invasion in 1940" story probably not true then? – propaganda and invasion paranoia. Yet, the story won't die – rumours, stories and eyewitness accounts are still emerging. Books and articles are still being written even, occasionally, questions asked in The Commons about "the secret of Shingle Street". Former doctors and nurses in wartime Europe still attest that, around this period, hospitals were inundated by badly burnt German soldiers and the distinguished American correspondent William Shirer, a very creditable witness, reported seeing huge hospital trains full of burnt casualties in Germany at a time when there had been no fighting in Europe for months.

The secret of Shingle Street remains, to paraphrase Churchill, "a mystery wrapped in an enigma."

*Acknowledgements to and suggested further reading.*

The Bodies on the Beach – James Hayward, Where the Eagle Landed – Peter Haining, East Anglian Daily Times.



## PICKING THE NIT

"..had Dakin Estate's...." inquired the email from the estate agent..... "by any possible chance got a copy of the damp guarantees for a farmhouse they had sold nearly 20 years ago?"

"No – we hadn't – we handed them over at the time - was there a problem with damp then?"

"No, no, no – it's just that we are handling the sale of this house and the purchaser's solicitor is asking for it."

"Mmmm... surely, though, if there were any damp problems they would have manifested themselves by now and also been spotted by the purchaser's surveyor, besides, any guarantee certificate must be very close to expiring if not already expired."

"Yes, Yes, we agree but the purchaser's solicitors are being very pedantic...."

"Mmmmm...." We thought nothing more of this until a week later when another agent rang who was handling the sale of another property converted years ago asking if we had the copy of the cavity wall guarantee.

Naturally we did what we could to help but when a third agent rang a few weeks later with yet another query on yet another property converted years ago a pattern seemed to be forming. A ring around a couple of fellow developers confirmed this. Both were suddenly receiving large numbers of pettifogging queries on properties sold decades ago (and all, we hasten to add, still standing and in excellent order).

What's going on?

Could it be that THE BANKS (boo, hiss) under pressure to provide mortgages, but reluctant to do so, are giving mortgage approvals to show willing, then, having given a demonstrable boost to the number of mortgages approved, are then seeking to wriggle out of actually providing the funds on minor technicalities and quibbles?

Answers on a postcard, please!



## THE WILD MAN'S TALE

The first thing we saw was a Woodwose—one of those mysterious, shaggy, wild men depicted frequently in pictures and carvings from the dark ages - not just in England, but all over Europe.

It wasn't a real Woodwose of course, (now that would be something!), but a statue at Mendlesham, Suffolk pointed out by the Rector, known to all as Father Phillip, on a tour of his church. However, we were there not, particularly, for the church tour but because Mendlesham Church has an extraordinary secret.....

The tour continues – Father Phillip pointing out a Victorian grave with ornamental railings, “ornamental” by then but not too long before railings around graves were put there for a purpose – to keep out the Body Snatchers!

Father Phillip knows his stuff – an expert on ecclesiastical architecture, particularly that of his own church, and a collector of artefacts from churches being decommissioned. “...that font came from a church in Norfolk. They were going to put it in a skip – can you believe it?”

Father Phillip, a realistic man with a dry sense of humour, has been Rector in Mendlesham since the early 1970s and must be the last Rector in Suffolk still to live in a proper Georgian Rectory, (...”of course the Diocese have been trying to get me out for years but I tell them I'll move out of my rectory when the Bishop gives up his palace.”)

The level of warmth and activity inside the church is quite extraordinary for a weekday afternoon – some ladies are laying out tea and cakes in one corner and, throughout our visit, people are popping in and out on various errands all friendly, all cheerful. It's more like a thriving community centre. We remark that all that is missing is a bar.

Father Phillip chuckles, “Well, we did have a beer festival in the churchyard last week to celebrate our Patron Saint. Some people might think it inappropriate but you have to find ways to get people involved. We aren't one of those churches that only opens on Sundays. This is a working church. We are always open. There is always someone here and we have services every day. People come from miles around to worship here.”

The tour continues, ...“these pews date back to 1400 but these are far more modern ..mmm.. probably about 1650. Notice how the carved animals have had their faces hacked off – that was the Puritans – a bad business”, Father Phillip shakes his head, sadly, as if it was something that happened only last week.

He points out a small rusty spike set in the stonework of a porchway which we wouldn't have given a second glance to. “That is the church's first sundial, very old, at one time that would have regulated life for the whole village. There are two later ones as well.”



Finally, we get to the secret of Mendlesham church. At the time of the Spanish Armada, when invasion seemed imminent, Mendlesham like many settlements had a militia, a sort of Elizabethan Home Guard, which stored its armour and weapons in the only community building available, the village church.

Incredibly, the militia's armour and weapons are still stored there today exactly as they were last put away over four centuries ago in an armoury tower built, or adapted, especially for that purpose.

Behind a heavy locked oak door a mysterious stone flagged spiral staircase leads up the tower to a circular wood lined room full of weapons and armour. Father Phillip points out various artefacts “The Tower of London want to borrow this but I think it should stay in the village...” “This is one of only two longbows surviving from the period” ...”see this helmet here...”

Eventually we clatter down the stone steps and end the tour chatting over tea and cake provided by the nice ladies in the corner of the church. The tour had taken an hour and cost £4.00 per head, (including tea and cake).

Eventually we bid Father Phillip a fond farewell and take a last look around as we head to the door feeling oddly uplifted. We had come just to see The Armoury but left with a lot more.

We would highly recommend a visit to Mendlesham Church. It might be one of the best £4 you will ever spend...

...including tea and cake!



## STREETS AHEAD.....

A walk around central Cambridge streets with local building historian and adviser to Dakin Estates Jon Harris brings some surprising finds....



“That street sign is original - probably from around the 1830s”, Jon says, pointing to the “King’s Parade” sign on the side of Gentleman’s outfitters, Ryder & Ames, at the end of King’s Parade near Great St Mary’s church.

What is surprising, however, is not that Cambridge still has street signs that have been in service since the 1830s, but that before then, outside of London, there were no official street names or signs at all with streets just being named informally after people living in them or a particular shop, pub or characteristic of the street.. As a result many streets had more than one local name and names frequently changed over time. In the 1830s, however, Cambridge lead the way in being one the first towns to regularise and record the names of its streets and officially signpost them.

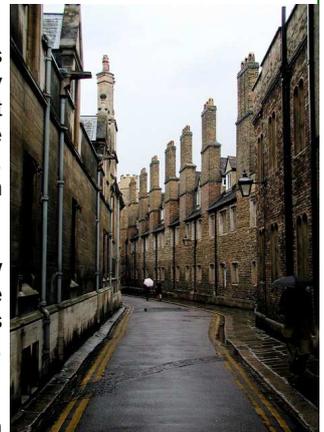
Walking down King’s Parade, with King’s College on our right, we turn left into Bene’t Street passing The Eagle Pub on our left. In the age of the stagecoach The Eagle was much larger - occupying considerably more of Bene’t Street than it does today, a seething warren of harness rooms, groom’s rooms, letting rooms, offices, stables, dining rooms and workshops all made redundant almost overnight by the coming of the railway in the early 1800s. The Eagle’s subsequent decline in fortunes was mirrored by the decline in the building’s footprint as it gradually relinquished or let off its peripheral buildings shrinking back to a two roomed inn off a yard and with no frontage to Bene’t Street other than an access gate.

In the early 1990s however this diminution was partially reversed when the offices of Messrs Hockey’s Estate Agents were taken over by The Eagle and converted to its present front bars with a handsome street frontage. To our right opposite The Eagle is Free School Lane once also known as Grammar School Lane but now with the “Free School” sobriquet officially endorsed by another 1830s street sign which, again, is still in situ.

Continuing on up Bene’t Street we pass Barclays Bank, shortly to close, on our right. At one time, in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, this building was a grand town house owned by the Mortlock Family the grounds of which contained the original Cambridge Botanic Garden which, around 1840, moved to its present location in what city centre wags called “New Zealand”, (because it was so far away!). Moving on we see Corn Exchange Street - prior to the construction of The Corn Exchange in 1874 it had been known, less salubriously, as “Slaughterhouse Row”.

Turning left alongside The Guildhall we enter The Market Square whose appearance was radically altered by “The Great Fire of Cambridge” in 1849. Prior to this the market occupied only the half of the present square on the Marks & Spencer side with the other half taken up by a great mass of buildings containing shops, offices, workshops and houses of various antiquity and state of repair. Jon Harris points out that Marks and Spencer occupies the former site, (up until 1846), of The Cambridge Foundry which would have cast the 1830 metal street signs we have been seeing.

Turning left then right down Rose Crescent, (named after a pub which stood above what is now La Raza for many years), we turn right into Trinity Street and straight away left into Trinity Lane once known irreverently by locals as “Pisspot Lane”. Trinity Lane then turns left and culminates in a dead end at King’s College Chapel. This street was part of what, in early mediaeval times, was the main thoroughfare through Cambridge known as “Milne Street”.



Trinity Lane



“Milne Street”

Milne Street ran from Silver Street up Queen’s Lane, (also now a dead end), across what is now King’s College and its chapel into Trinity Lane and through what is now Trinity College turning sharp right, (due to a large ditch). On reaching John’s College, it crossed what is now Trinity Street then ran down the approximate route of All Saint’s Passage, (past the cheese shop!), and culminated somewhere around the present ADC Theatre..

Nowadays, the two small dead end roads either side of King’s College are all that are left of Milne Street and, being on one of these dead ends, we are forced to turn left walking up Senate House Passage and arriving by Great St Mary’s on King’s Parade approximately where we started out. We are, Jon says, standing on another of Cambridge’s lost streets known as “University Street” which ran, until around 1800, from the Senate House to Great St Mary’s bisecting and delineating Trinity Street and King’s Parade..

Technically, John advises, we are now standing on “Senate House Hill”, (Hill?), but there is no street sign, ancient or otherwise, to mark it as such .....yet.

However, Jon Harris is currently in negotiation to have one made and erected to correctly identify the spot and regularise the situation - carrying on, you might say, the good work started by Cambridge’s city fathers back in the 1830s!