

P.O. Box A453,
Avondale,
Harare.
Zimbabwe.

3rd. Feb. 1986.

Dear Mr. Parker,

Thank you so much for your very prompt response to my letter. We all found it most interesting.

I have taken the liberty of sending you a booklet on the life of the old 'Major' as we know him by, William Hurrell, as I think you might be interested in reading it. Excuse me if I am being presumptuous and, unfortunately, I have to ask you to return it when you have finished with it. I have so few copies and no chance of having it reprinted.

I have written again to Maria Hurrell of Park House in Harston to ask whether they have a family tree at all that I could have sight of, but am not too optimistic as they were not very forthcoming when we visited in 1980. We stayed the weekend at Park House but did not meet any other Hurrells (brother to Geoffrey, I think,) because of harvesting. I just wish I could get my hands on that 1 ton which are probably just spoiling!

Mr. Parker, I have tried to sketch the family crest on the back of this letter, but my lion is rather a sorry sight. I am most intrigued as to the tie-up of name and crest as there are three crossbows...for sure. The same crest is on the wall of Park House in Harston...what, if any connection do you think there could be if Hurrell could not have been derived from Quarrel? Who could I contact to find out more?

Your suggestion of a family quarrel or scandal is probably correct as I seem to have heard that there was something about a horse stable court case or something of that kind. It seems strange also that the Major had very little connection with his family and from a letter he wrote during the Zulu War, his mother and a sister Mary were living in Wandsworth. It is suprising how little we know of them all. The William of whom you write is obviously an earlier William..... and so not really anything to go by as far as a quarrel etc. is concerned.

Could I ask you whether there are many Hurrells living in the Harston/Foxton and Arkesden areas? Do any of them have property like Geoffrey Hurrells and an old house like Park House? You must excuse my curiosity but we, being from a new country, simply do not have the old historical homes that are so common in England. I never had the nerve to ask the Geoffrey Hurrells whether they owned land also nor how much, apart from the land round the Park House. I gathered that they were considered "gentry" would you call them? At the same time they could have done with more help than we noticed....Maria herself got up to wash the kitchen floor during that weekend!

Well, I thank you very much for your help and interest. I shall be writing to Somerset House and the County Record Office so hopefully will be able to piece together the puzzling loose ends.

I met a lady, a Mrs. Peter Griffiths whose maiden name was Hurrell and who came from Essex. She lives here in Harare and is keen to read your book. I must find out more about her side of the family.

With very many thanks,

Angela Hurrell (has)

Angela Hurrell

AEROGRAMME

BY AIRMAIL
PAR AVION



MR. R. PARKER

COTTAGE ON THE GREEN

FOXTON

CAMBRIDGE

ENGLAND.



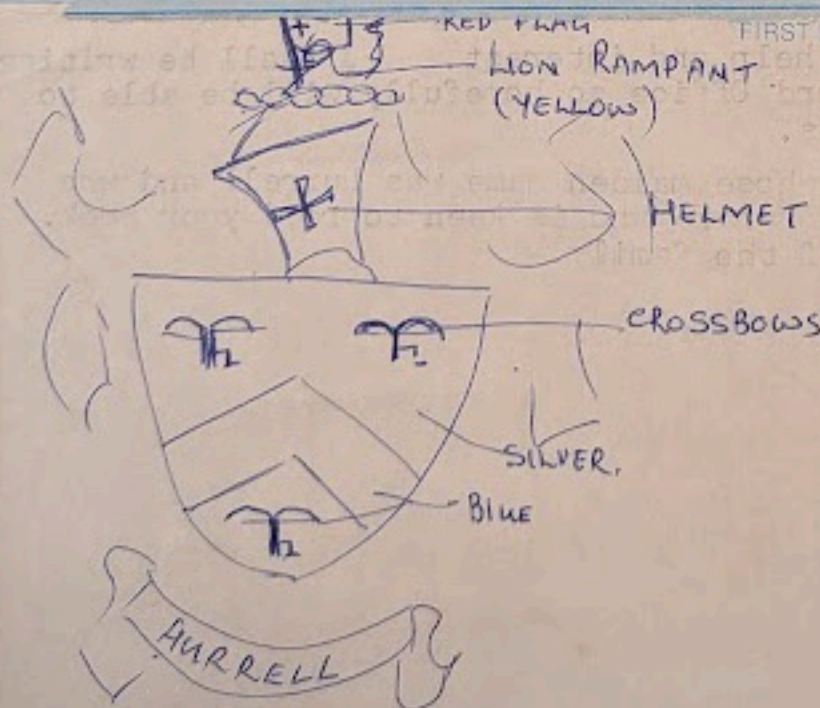
SECOND FOLD

Sender's name and address:

An aerogramme should not contain any enclosure.
If it does, it will be surcharged or sent by ordinary mail.

TO OPEN CUT ALONG THIS EDGE FIRST

FIRST FOLD



ps
signet ring has a
lion rampant on it!!

AH.

Flat 7 Lays House
Park Close
Banbury
Oxon

15-3-84

Dear Mr Parker

I do hope you will
not think I have a nerve writing to
you. But I have just re-read your
most interesting book ("The Common
Stream") for about the fourth time.
The reason being I used to live in
Foston and have some very ^{happy} memories
of it.

When we first came to Foston in 1923.
we stayed for a while with my grand-
parents at 4 Dryden Cottages ^{Station Rd} & my grand-
father was foreman at The Tutorial Press.
When we left there we went to live at
7 Barton Cottages, Park Lane, which is
not far from "The Green". I remember

(Boy)

the Black Buoy public house, which was kept by someone by the name of Bennet. Which I believe was demolished and is now a private residence,

The names of so many people in your book are familiar, ancestors of mine. Also the name Walter Stocks. even I remember him. (I am now 72) my sister used to play tennis with him round at the vicarage. The Kinders lived there.

I remember the garment - Liffords. Smith, near the Malt House. Also Stocks on the Green, where I used to go each morning to get my milk in a can. I was terrified of the cows I used to meet on my way. I do remember Jim Welch he has

a garage along the High Road near the station. I went to school for a while in Foxton, he was a pupil there I have a school photo of us. Lots of names you mention in your book are on it. There is Loker, Chapman, Shubbings, Bates, Luck, and Miss Funston school teacher also Head Master Mr Saunders. The photo is dated 1924.

I cannot add to the information you have collected - I often sit and think of dear old Foxton, I have been back a few times, the last time was about 15 years ago, when we visited some one called Meade a friend of my sister, they have both passed on now.

Well I do not think I had better go on, as I have no wish to

4

how you and I am a complete
stranger, after all.

Yours Truly

(Mrs) Mabel Robertson.

Feb 15th 1984.

Dear Mr. Parker,

Just recently I was in England visiting my family, summer of '83 and procured a copy of your book "The Common-Stream".

I found your book extremely interesting and a wealth of information, easy to read and understand.

My Father was Ernest John Rayner but so far I have not been able to determine whether he is descended from the Foxton Rayners.

I do have a family tree that goes back to 1743 on my Mother's side and she was a Barnard from Haglingfield.

Both my parents have passed on now at 87yrs old but I do wish my Mother could have read your book because she really would have loved it.

She was a great one for passing on the history of the family.

My Father, Ernest John had two sons, John and David. They are both very successful farmers and married with children, and one grandchild expected shortly.

John lives at Glebe Farm, Hingsterton and also owns Penn Farm at Haglingfield. He has one son, Phillip to carry on the family name, and David has 5 children.

Please return to address on back if not delivered.

BY AIR MAIL PAR AVION

AEROGRAMME



Frances Ward, aged 11, N.S.W.

BRISBANE
10-PM
16 FEB 1964
QLD 4000



AUSTRALIA

40c

TO MR Rowland Parker,
"The Cottage on the Green",
Foxton,
Cambridgeshire.

COUNTRY OF DESTINATION ENGLAND

Christmas Greetings from...

Mrs M. P. JORGENSEN,
93 Mavanagh Street,
Wickham,
Brisbane, Qld.
AUSTRALIA. Postcode 4122.

FOLD SIDE FLAPS FIRST

FOLD SIDE FLAPS FIRST

Two who are busy, Helen and Benjamin.
As I enjoyed your book so much I
thought I would just like to write
and say "Thank you very much indeed"
for it.
Yours sincerely,
M.P. Jorgensen. (Mrs).

Telephone Royston 60837

231
Topcliffe's Mill
Meldreth
Royston
Herts.

31 March 1981

Dear Mr. Parker,

Some years ago I read with great enjoyment your book The Common Stream. My admiration for the book and for its author leads me now to seek your advice about an archaeological puzzle in Meldreth.

I live at Topcliffe's Mill, situated at the end of a drive opposite the church. Next to the house there is a moated site, said to be the site of Topcliffe's manor, which was burnt down in the middle ages. The site consists of a flat-topped square mound, about 30 yards by 30 yards, surrounded by the remains of a moat, and raised some 6 feet above the neighbouring fields. On digging into the mound I have discovered, about 2 foot down into the earth, what appears to be an extensive cobbled floor. I have found this floor, at the same depth, at two opposite corners of the site, extending at least 10 feet in from the edge of the rampart; in the middle of the site, however, there is no sign of the cobbles, only what appears to be a hard floor of mud. So far I have come across no significant artefacts, though there are one or two bits of tile among the cobbles (also some oyster shells, a few nails and bits of broken pot in the overlying earth).

The cobbled floor is surprisingly deep under the earth, for a mediaeval structure. And I can't think what function it would have had in a mediaeval manor.

Before I dig further, I would greatly value your advice! If you have time to visit the site, I could come and fetch you in a car.

Yours sincerely

Nick Humphrey

Hilton Hall

Hilton, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, PE18 9NG

Telephone: Papworth St Agnes 417 (048 087 417)



19 May 1981

Rowland Parker Esq,
4 The Green
Foxton, Cambs

Dear Mr Parker,

I am writing in the hope that you may be able to help solve a small puzzle for me. I have been belatedly reading The Common Stream (and have been even more impressed by your remarkably imaginative common sense than by your industry). I suppose that if you do so much work and don't give detailed references you must expect to be pestered with enquiries like mine.

When my father bought Hilton Hall in 1924, he knew nothing of its history except what was given in the deeds (which only went back about a hundred years) and what he was told by Robert Little, the previous owner. Little said that the house "had been built on the site of ^{a twelfth-century} ~~an earlier~~ house and that a Sir John Delahaye died in it."

I have always been sceptical about this, not because it is ⁱⁿ any way unlikely, but I could not see where Little

could have got the information from.

The house looks as if it were mainly built around 1620. I have never found any trace of earlier building (though Little may have done so, since he rebuilt more of it than we did). More by good luck than anything else I have found who lived here from 1666 onwards. But I couldn't find a Sir John Delahaye in Huntingdonshire records, and I was puzzled to know how one could tell where he died, when houses (unlike fields) are so rarely mentioned by name. The wills of my first three occupants just say "the house wherein I dwell" ^{"my house", etc.}. Not till 1776 is the name "Hilton Hall" given.

Now I see that a Sir John de la Haye was a conspicuous figure in the history of Foxton, and that you seem to have found out a great deal about him. Do you know where he died? Were his forebears also knights? Any clues to this puzzle would be most welcome.

And once again, congratulations on The Common Stream.

Yours sincerely

Richard Garnett

D.G. & S.M.J. BAKER
061 - 980 6423

32 MELROSE CRESCENT,
HALE, ALTRINCHAM,
CHESHIRE, WA15 8NL.

6th. October 1986.

Mr Rowland Parker,
4, The Green,
Foxton,
Cambridgeshire.

Dear Mr Parker,

Having traced my family back over twelve generations from my grandfather Thomas Baker of Babraham to Thomas Baker of Balsham (d.1556), I felt I wanted to know what village life was like in those days. As my son is a student at Downing College, I often come down to visit him and on the last occasion went to have a look at Balsham. Mentioning my interest to a friend, they said 'Have you read Rowland Parker's book, The Common Stream'? I bought a copy and found it fascinating reading, giving me a real picture of what life was like in bygone days.

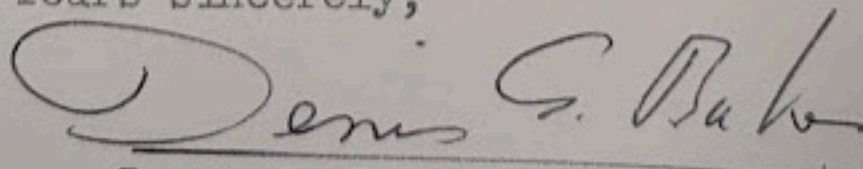
The name Baker appears in Cambridgeshire from about 1298 and I often wonder whether it was a surname taken by someone who happened to follow that occupation and therefor could crop up in various parts of the county without being any relationship between one and another. You mention baking taking place in individual homes, but perhaps at one time a single person would do the baking for the whole community.

I was also interested to note that surnames of Foxton people do not coincide with surnames at the villages that my family came from. i.e. Bales, Rookes, Chapman, Simpson, Wilson, Brand, Pearson & Dyson.

For your interest I enclose a copy of the will of Thomas Baker(1556) together with some of the comments of the researcher.

Thank you once again for a most interesting book.

Yours sincerely,



Denis G. Baker.

C12 f237 4 Sept 1556 Will of Thomas Baker of Balsham husbandman.
To wife Anne Baker and to Thomas Baker my son jointly my houses
and lands in town and fields of Balsham, of which I have already
made a surrender into the hands of John la Wrenn, the lord's tenant
there, to the use of my wife for life, then to my son Thomas Baker
and his heirs. To dau. Jane one rod of saffron ground of my own land
lying at Pearetre next to William Spycer. To son John Baker £5 at
18 years. To dau. Isabell one rod of saffron ground of Cranefeilds
land lying next to John Dys. To dau. Lettyce one rod of saffron
ground of Cranefeilds land lying next to John Wulwarde. In like
manner, to son Richard Baker £4 at 18 years. The payment of £13 to
said three brethren shall be discharged out of the lands and goods
of my said son Thomas Baker. Residuary legatee of household goods:
wife Anne. Joint executors: wife Anne and son Thomas.
Supervisors: John Lawrence and Roberte Dys.
Witnesses: " " " " John Yeoman

Probate: 28 Sept 1556

It is clear that a section was omitted from this will when it was
copied in the Bishop's office. £13 and 3 brothers are mentioned,
whereas we have 2 brothers receiving £9. The missing legacy was, I
would assume, before the legacy to Richard, which begins 'in like
manner.'

This will makes it clear that Thomas and John were brothers, which
makes it more difficult to the extent that the family names used by
both would be similar. I thought that the manorial court rolls could
be useful, as Thomas the husbandman held lands of the manor as well as
free land. However, a check revealed that the lords of the manor of
Balsham were the Governors of the Charterhouse, who presumably still
have the bulk of their muniments in London. There are a few admissions
to land in the manor at the County Record Office 1611-63. I have looked
at these, and there are no Bakers admitted,

The difficulty with the court rolls in any event is that one son-
youngest or eldest according to the custom of the manor would receive
the estate, so if for instance the Edmund of 1570 were not the eldest
son of Thomas the land would not pass to him. I thought that if one
could trace the family in the court rolls for a couple of generations,
it would make it clear to which branch your family belonged.

I am afraid that London is outside my province, but if you write to
the Charterhouse direct, they may be helpful. It really depends if
they have an archivist looking after their records. The only other
possibility that occurs to me is that the Balsham records begin in
1558 and the earliest Baker is 1567/8. It is possible that Thomas
married in another parish, and possibly had a child there. It would
probably be worth while checking the Boyd marriage index.

Also, do you wish to widen the search for the marriage of Thomas and
his other possible children? The Commonwealth period is poor for
parish registers, some of which are very badly kept for that period
although Balsham is quite good. There is a large number of indexed
transcripts of registers for the south of the county. It would be a
fairly rapid search to make a blanket search of the remainder of these.

P.O. Box 138.

LAGOS

NIGERIA

01 SEPTEMBER 77.

Dear Mr Parker,

May I say how much I enjoyed your programme this evening, centred about Foxton.

It brought back treasured memories for me. As an evacuee from the coast in 1940 I stayed at Barton, and whilst at school at the Cambridge Technical School worked the harvest of 1941 and 1942 with a farmer named Dobbin of Lords Bridge. He had a father, or father in law, who farmed at Foxton and we went over to assist. Hard work in those days before the 'combines' came on the scene, but lovely memories.

I look forward to purchasing one of the books on my return or leave at Christmas.

Again many thanks for the programme - reception was very good.

Benny Goodman.



*Thatch roofs lend character
and charm to English vil-
lage described in visit to
British author of "The
Common Stream".*

Invitation Received

I enjoyed the portrait of an English village so much I wrote to thank the author. I told him we were planning a visit to Great Britain in the fall and strongly hinted that we would like to meet him. Soon we received a gracious invitation to come to the Cottage on the Green. "You will find the setting here a marked contrast to that of London or, I dare say, with your home town." (I learned that Mr. Parker had never been in New England.)

We took the train to Cambridge, just over an hour from London. After a superb lunch at the Garden House in its lovely setting along the River Cam, we found a taxi driver happy to take us to Foxton, wait an hour or so, and return us to the inn for a reasonable charge.

Highway 10-A is like our Route 84, vibrating with an unending stream of cars, motorbikes and lorries. As we rushed along, almost hidden from sight by the huge vans roaring past us, we caught glimpses of the lovely English countryside now being eroded by the ugliness of industry on the rampage. To reap the produce of the land, man scours the source.

Our little taxi scooted off the highway at Foxton, a rabbit eluding the chase. Despite the proximity of 10-A, Foxton has an aura of timelessness and serenity. There'll always be an England never seemed more certain. We stopped in front of one of the few remaining thatch roof cottages while our driver made inquiries. "You are here," he said. "This is Mr. Parker's home. The thatchers are working on the roof today."

Later, Mr. Parker told us the thatchers were

members of one family, that they are among the few who know the work. The grandfather took his eyes from the roof long enough to greet us with a smile and dignified bow. The men on the roof worked methodically and silently. Almost all of the straw had been removed in preparation for the new roof, substantial enough for at least another twenty years.

Visiting The Author

Rowland Parker's writing style is readable, friendly and alive with humor. It was not surprising to be greeted in an informal, warm manner. Mr. Parker is lean and strong, like his prose. His Nordic eyes pierce time and space. He is, I am sure, a resilient man. Mrs. Parker rose from her chair by the fire to welcome us graciously. I thought of Catherine of Aragon, resolute, quiet, dignified.

Of course, we talked about "The Common Stream," Mr. Parker's first book. He told us he was naive about the publishing business, had not known what to expect. He was delighted that his book was also published by an American firm, Holt, Rinehart and Winston. He had not received a report from the States other than that "a fair number of readers seem to like it." (At the time, I did not know "The Common Stream" is in the Heritage Village Library.)

The book is doing extremely well in Great Britain, having sold more than 30,000 copies. The Sunday Magazine of *The London Times* ran a feature story about Foxton and the book. This gave sales a real boost.

At this point, Mrs. Parker said: "Although Rowland has never been interested in money, I have noticed a new interest in the arrival of the mail bringing royalty checks from his publisher." There was an affectionate twinkle in her eyes as she looked at her husband for confirmation, which was quickly forthcoming. The book is now in paperback as well as hardcover and Rowland Parker is working on what promises to be a fascinating combination of historical fact and fiction.

Present Day Problems

Although Mr. Parker lives in a house built in 1520, collects artifacts and makes history come alive for his readers, he is very much aware of the present. He said: "We Britishers think we know about money, but we don't. I think the monetary crisis is one of the greatest problems of the entire world."

Mr. Parker thinks the rigid English class system has handicapped his country in world trade competition because management has been the prerogative of birth rather than the reward for ability. He is disturbed about the apparent loss of what might be called community spirit, hopes "it will not take another war to bring us together again."

Above all, Rowland Parker has faith in the human spirit. His expectations are high. Read the final words of his book:

"Finally, and here I dare to speak of quality, if we have any doubts about the future or about the changes we have seen in our lives, we have only to look at the school playground any midmorning, or see the children as they walk homeward in little groups. These children are healthier, better fed, better clothed, better educated, prettier and, did they but know it, happier than any generation of children that ever before walked the village street. For us of the older generation, the past is past, and we do not regret it. For them - the future."

Ellis Gladwin [1031-B]

A Villager Meets A Village Biographer

Travel with me back through time to visit a man who wrote a love story about an English village. We will have tea with the author and his wife while thatchers work on the roof of their 16th Century cottage in Foxton, fourteen miles from Cambridge, England.

It began in August, 1976. Because of a family feeling for Great Britain, I bought a book, "The Common Stream...Portrait of an English Village Through 2000 Years." The author, Rowland Parker, is a retired teacher who lives with his wife and daughter in a thatch roof cottage in the tiny village he wrote about. The publisher's advance notice told that the author, through archaeological excavation, early histories, oral tradition, manor court rolls, wills and bishops' registers, had constructed "what may well be the most complete picture of any village and its inhabitants in the world."

Let Mr. Parker tell you:

"It tells firstly of a brook or stream, 'common' in the sense that it is but one of a thousand such streams which spring from the folds of the hills everywhere, but especially in the chalklands of Anglia...It became common in that it belongs to no one in particular, but to everyone in general, everyone, that is, in one particular community. It was, in fact, the only thing, other than the air, sunshine and rain, which was really and truly common."

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