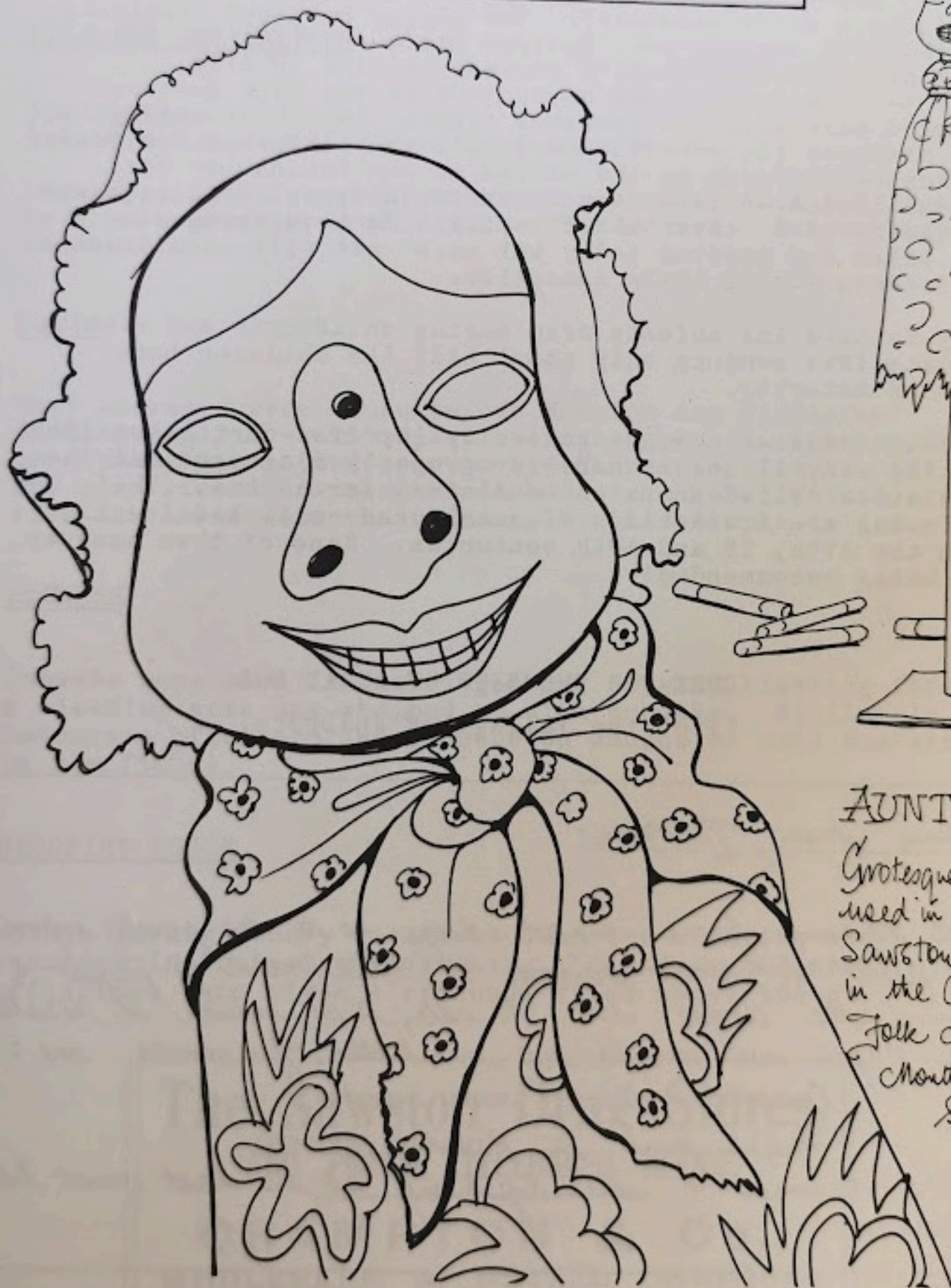


Curiosities



AUNT SALLY

Grotesque figure
used in fetes at
Sawston - now
in the Cambridge
Folk Museum,
Northampton
Street.

Compiled by O. C. Mayo

CURES AND REMEDIES

Life in 20th century Pampisford is free from many of the fateful illnesses, suffered by many of it's Parishioners in the past. Highly infectious diseases could easily decimate a small community. The plague occurred regularly in the 17th century and smallpox was a re-occurring threat even after Edward Jenner's cow-pox vaccine of 1796. Four pen-demic outbreaks of cholera in the 19th century coupled with numerous cases of typhoid (which according to one observer killed off more people annually than the number of losses suffered by the allies in the Peninsular War) gradually led to improvements in the disposal of sewage and provision of a clean water supply. Such improvements are taken for granted today but were met with considerable resistance during their inception.

Many Mothers and infants died during childbirth and even by late 18th century only about half the children born reached maturity.

Although medical science generally improved during the 19th century many illnesses were not properly diagnosed and the population relied on patent medicines for a cure. The following are a selection of such cures collected locally from the 17th, 18 and 19th centuries. None of them however, are being recommended!

CURE FOR THE BITE OF A MAD DOG (From the Village of Fulbourn)

Charme from Fulbourn.

The charme for a madd-dogg is to be wrote upon a piece of cheese pairing or little nowl of paper & given the dogg's bit to eat; that which is wrote on paper we made up in butter. ye words are:

Omnibus diabus, vivas nives,

Minas, mines a populus quarae,

The commas & the diphthong at the last must be observed.

CURE FOR A SORE THROAT

2oz Caraway seeds boiled in a quart of water down to a pint, half strain off, sweeten with sugar add a glass and a half of rum, take a wine glass every night on going to bed.

CURE FOR COSTIPATION

2oz Rhubarb	4oz Senna
½oz Cardamon seeds	½oz Saffron

Infuse all in a quart of brandy. Let them stand for 2 or 3 days in a warm place when it will be fit for use. One tablespoon for a dose.

WARTS

Wart Charmers were consulted in Sawston and Pampisford. Traditionally a small object such as a pencil, a handkerchief or a penny was handed over to the Charmer by the one afflicted who also stated how many warts he or she had. Within a short time the warts were charmed away by this simple action.

COBWEBS

Cobwebs were used in Cambridgeshire to stop bleeding for example a bleeding nose was stopped up with cobwebs. Similarly farm labourers often applied cobwebs to wounds or cuts sustained in the fields.

WHOOPIING COUGH

Within living memory a curious cure for whooping cough was recorded in South Cambridgeshire. Children suffering the affliction were given a skinned, fried mouse to eat!

The Sawston Drug Stores,

AND POSTAL TELEGRAPH OFFICE.

CRAMPTON & Co.,
WHOLESALE & RETAIL CHEMISTS,
AND PATENT MEDICINE VENDORS,

Be respectfully to inform their friends that they allow no other Chemist to undersell them either for Cash or otherwise.

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FAMILY RECIPES, AND
VETERINARY PREPARATIONS

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and Purest Drugs,
under old-experienced & qualified
management.

SOUND HEALTH AND LONG LIFE!



HOLLOWAY'S PILLS

Debilitated Constitutions.

In cases of debility, languor, and nervousness, generated by excess of any kind, whether mental or physical, the effects of these Pills is in the highest degree bracing, renovating, and restorative. They drive from the system the morbid cause of disease, re-establish the digestion, regulate all the secretions, brace the nervous system, raise the patient's spirits, and bring back the frame to its pristine health and vigour.

Complaints of Women and Children.

The very mild and painless action of these invaluable Pills recommends them to every household as a remedy for the early departures from health. Any mother, nurse, or young person guided by the directions which accompany each box of Holloway's Pills, has at once available means for checking disease, purifying the blood, and expelling from the system all gross humours. They are, indeed, at all ages, the female's tried friend.

Disorders of the Liver with Flatulency and Indigestion.

Loss of appetite and flatulency are usually the forerunners of stomaclic disease. These famous Pills exercise the most salutary power in all affections of the liver, and all irregularities of the stomach and bowels; they restore a healthy function to every internal organ, overcome all obstructions, and cast out all impurities.

The action of the Kidneys and other Internal Organs.

The immediate loss of muscular strength and nervous energy is more particularly remarkable in renal than in most other diseases. Their deficient action for one day suffices to produce fever, hence the necessity for prompt and efficient treatment. Holloway's Pills have the great merit of restoring any suspended or diminished secretions, and of relieving any inflammation or congestion in the spleen, kidneys, or other subsidiary organs.

Weakness, Languor, and Debility.

These famous Pills will immediately remove all symptoms of debility, languor, and weakness, as they act upon the main springs of life, and thus save thousands from a premature grave.

The Pills and Ointment are Manufactured only at THOMAS HOLLOWAY'S Establishment, 78, New Oxford Street (late 533, Oxford Street), London.

Full printed directions are affixed to each Box and Pot, and can be had in any language, even in Turkish, Arabic, Armenian, Persian, or Chinese.

Universal Cure from the Jews.

Make a black cat spit on mutton fat
Then rub it inside a horse's hat.
Scrape it off within a week,
Then go outside a toad to seek
And make it sweat into a pot.
With wooden spoon mix the lot
And you will have a healing balm
To keep the body free from harm.

An infallible cure for Cholera

1oz Venice Treacle dissolved into the yolk of an egg

1oz of Syrop of Cloves

4oz of Alexiterica Water

Mixed for a draught to be taken every morning
early 4 times.

*Archeap ded effeſſual medicine to cure the Co-
lers, or Colick. From the Edinburgh me-
dical Effays, Vol 5. p. 646. By Dr Charles
Ayton Douglas. 1745 A.D.*

- A } HE Cholera, which is a violent vomiting
and purging of bile, and other acrid hu-
mours, being a diſeaſe ſo acute and deadly, as
frequently to deſtroy a man in the ſpace of 24
hours, when a phyſician is not to be had (which
is frequently the caſe in the country) I hope it
will be acceptable to the publick to publiſh a
method of cure for it, by a medicine which is
always at hand, and which the doctor has often
try'd, and never found it fail, viz.
- B If the patients are not too much exhausted
before he is called, he makes them drink heartily
of warm water, three or four times, which
they always throw up; this dilutes, and by this
means blunts the acrimony of the humours, and
at the ſame time evacuates them. Immedie-
ly after, he adviſes them to drink plentifully
of a decoction of oat-bread, baked without any
leaven or yeſt, carefully-toaſted as brown as
coffee, but not burnt; which decoction ought
to be of the colour of coffee when it is weak.
C This preſcription he always found his patients
moſt willing to obey, their thirſt being gene-
rally very great; and they always ſay that it is
moſt grateful to their ſtomachs, inſomuch that
he does not remember that any of them ever
vomited it. He always uſed oat-bread, which is
common in Scotland; but when that cannot be
had, he makes no doubt but wheat-bread, with-
out yeſt, or meal, or wheat, or barley ſty'd or
toaſted brown, and ground to powder, will do
very well.

When the patient is much exhausted with vi-
olent evacuations upwards and downwards, the
E firſt thing that he gives him is a large doſe of
the above-mentioned decoction, and when the
nauſea is pretty well ſettled, he frequently or-
ders a pill of opium, to the quantity of two thirds
of a grain to a grown perſon, increaſing or di-
miniſhing the doſe according to the age or
ſtrength of the patient.

F But if the patient be convulſed, and the ex-
tream parts cold, then it is proper to give a
ſtrong doſe of liquid laudæum, becauſe it has its
effect ſooner than opium, viz. 29 drops to a
grown perſon, in an ounce of ſtrong cinnamon
water, and afterwards a draught of wine mix'd
with an equal quantity of the decoction; the
ſame decoction, being ſometimes mix'd with a
little wine, is to be uſed alſo to quench their
thirſt. G To prevent a relapſe, which the patient
is not able to bear, it will be proper to repeat
the opiate, in a moderate quantity, for ſome
days, morning and evening; and care muſt be
taken not to over-load the ſtomach, or to eat
any thing but what is of light nourishment, and
grateful to the appetite.

H It may be obſerved, that the above preſcrip-
tion is to be uſed when the patient is quite ex-
hausted, and in the very jaws of death; but in
ordinary caſes, when the patient is not much
spent, and opiates are not to be had, or if the
patient's conſtitution diſagrees with them, then
the decoction itſelf may be truſted to.

(See a cure for an ulcer in the lung, in Miſc.
Correſp. N^o III.)

A moſt Excellent Drink to prevent & likewise to
cure the Plague

Take 3 pintes malmeſey or good muscadine, boyle
therein one handfull of Sage, one handfull of rue untill
1 pint be waſted. Then ſtrain it & ſett it over the fire
againe, putting thereto One pennyworth of long pepper,
 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz of ginger, $\frac{1}{4}$ oz of nutmeggs all beaten together,
then let it boyle againe a little; this done diſſolve $\frac{1}{4}$
of a pint of angelicall water or good Aquavita, 4 penny-
worth of treacle & mingle together & keep it in a glaſſe cloſe
ſtopt & keep itt above a worldly meature. Take it always
warme both morning & evening if ye be already infected
if not once a day; it is alſo good for the ſmall-pox
measles ſinfiets & divers other diſeaſes.

LOCAL RECIPES

No particular bread or cakes are associated with Cambridgeshire.

BUTTER

Until World War I, butter was sold in rolls a yard long and an inch thick weighing about a pound. The butter made in the Cambridgeshire villages, was shaped by hand on long boards and placed inside wicker baskets ready for sale in Cambridge.

CHEESE

Cambridge cheese was a soft cheese, traditionally sold on straw mats. Made of milk it is brick shaped with it's sides standing higher than it's centre. Before World War II it was possible to buy a 'half and half', one half being made of milk and the other much yellower half made of cream. The cheese was often broken up with a fork and seasoned with salt, pepper and vinegar and served with a salad or as a sandwich filling, known as mock crab.

DOCKY

The traditional farmer's docky or beaver was a raw onion with a thick slice of bread and perhaps butter and cheese - all cut and conveyed to the mouth with a folding docky knife. Any time that a farm worker spent over his lunch was traditionally "docked" from his wages, hence the term "docky".

PIES

Pies and puddings often contained a variety of birds such as larks, blackbirds, or sparrows. It was a common practice in Cambridgeshire villages to snare birds for eating.

ONION CLANGERS

A suet crust rolled out and spread with onion and whatever meat was available. The whole rolled up and boiled in a cloth. Onion pudding was a variant where the suet crust was put in a basin filled with onions and meat or even sliced sausages.

MILK SOP

Made in poor households and often called Water mess or milk mess. It was generally served for breakfast or supper. A thick slice of bread was put in a basin and sprinkled with pepper or salt over which water or milk was poured.

To Brew Good Ale

To 10 bushells of good malt } for a Hogshead
5 lbs good Hoppes

NB If for beer 6 lbs of good Hoppes by adding one bushell of Malt to your brew you may have a second & third wout.

An Elizabethan trifle recipe found in among old documents discovered in a chest at Sawston.

"Cream boiled with sugar add Cinnamon, grapes & rosewater & serve in a silver bowl"

To make Gooseberry Wine

Take 36 lb of Gooseberrys pickt from the leaves you take 12 quants of Water boyle it & put it to your Berrys stir them well together & cover them close, next morning strain them thro a hair cloth, put to ye liquor 12 lb of sugar when it is dissolved put it up & lett it stand till Gooseberrys flower

NORELS

Morels, an edible fungus (*Morchella Esculenta*) which grows locally, have always been considered a great delicacy. In the late 17th century Lady Mary Fortesque of Sawston Manor expressed a fondness for Morels as did Mr. James Binney in more recent times. Many of the villagers in Pampisford recall collecting Morels which used to appear regularly among the green mosses and early violets, especially under ash trees, in the woods around Pampisford. Mrs. Hunt of Brewery Road enjoyed them as an addition to beef-steak pudding.

POOR BROTH

The following recipe was made to be served out to the public at large whenever food was scarce during the first and second world wars.

24lb of best split yellow peas.
14lb carrots
10lb onions
10lb celery
A quantity of turnips

Boiled in a steam copper. Later meat was added but removed before serving. Seasoning consisted of salt, pepper and dried meat.

EELS

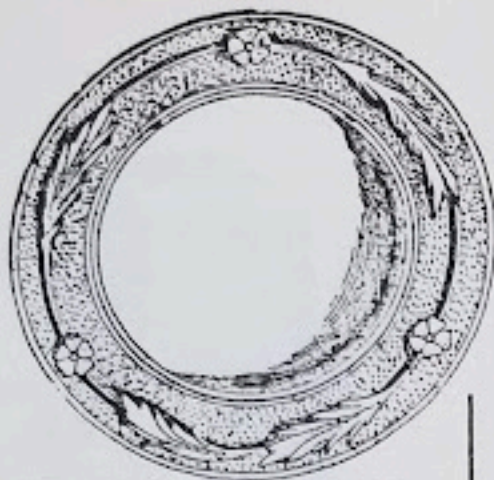
These were always plentiful in East Anglia. The monks at Ely exchanged 4,000 eels a year for stone quarried at Barnack to be used for building Ely Cathedral. Eels boiled or put into pies are a traditional local fare going back centuries as eels were always plentiful and cheap.

JACKS

A young pike, again, very cheap and very popular.

OYSTERS

Colchester oysters were eaten in large quantities between July 25th and late April each year and featured as part of local village fairs.



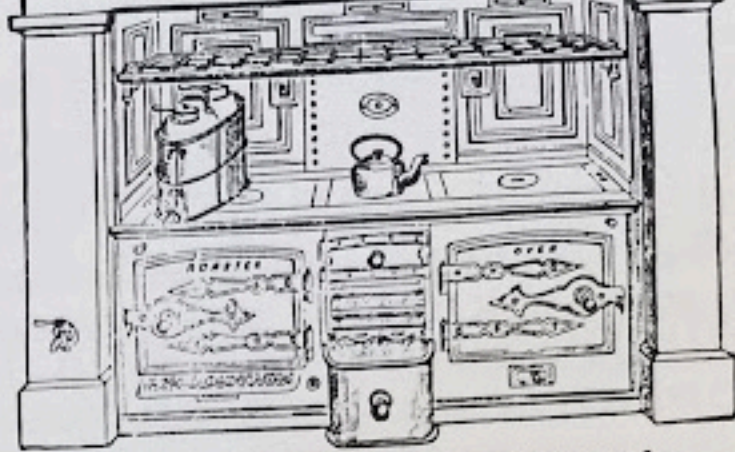
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Selected Wood, Superior Designs ..	2/6 to 4/-
Bread Knife, Special Value ..	1/-, 1/3, 1/6
Better Blade and Handle ..	2/-
Best Blade and Handle ..	2/6
Xylonite Handle ..	2/3, 3/6
The Kleancut, Cheap Line ..	6d.
Butter Platter, with Glass Dish ..	6d., 9d., 1/-
Butter Knife, E.P., with Wood Handle ..	10d.
Do, with Bone Handle ..	1/-, 2/-
Do, all E.P. ..	1/6
With Xylonite Handle, 2/6; with Ivory ..	2/10

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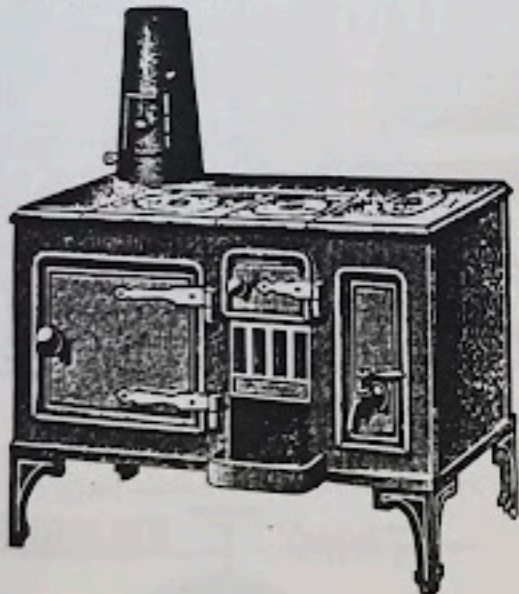
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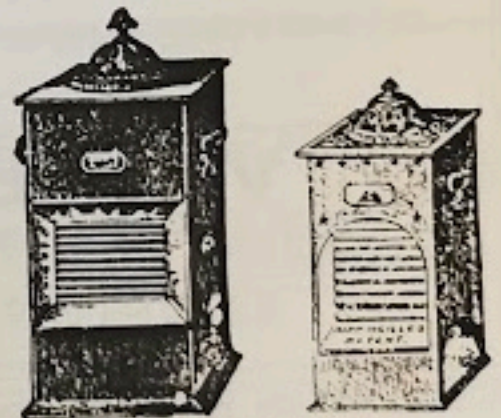
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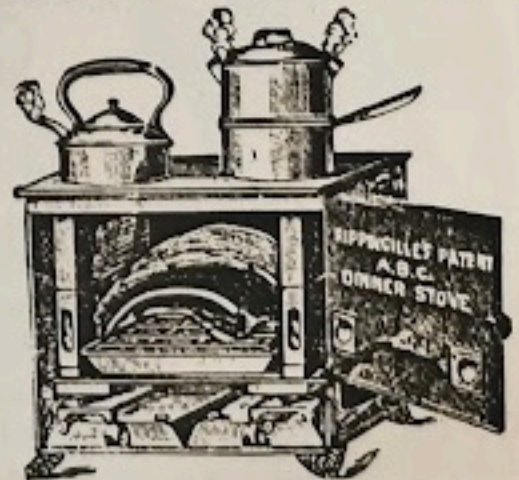
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FOOT BATHS.

	10	12	14
Plain Oak ..	3/9	4/6	
Best Quality ..	4/10	5/9	



HOT WATER CAN.

	8	4	5
	gal	gal	gal
Oak ..	2/4	2/10	
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TOILET PAIL.

Plain Oak, 3/9

The Set Complete. Bath, Can, and Pail. Decorated Design, 16/6



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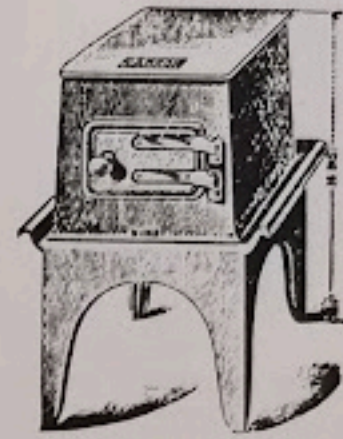
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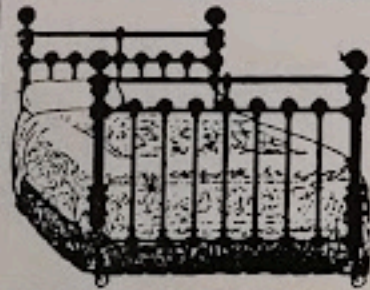
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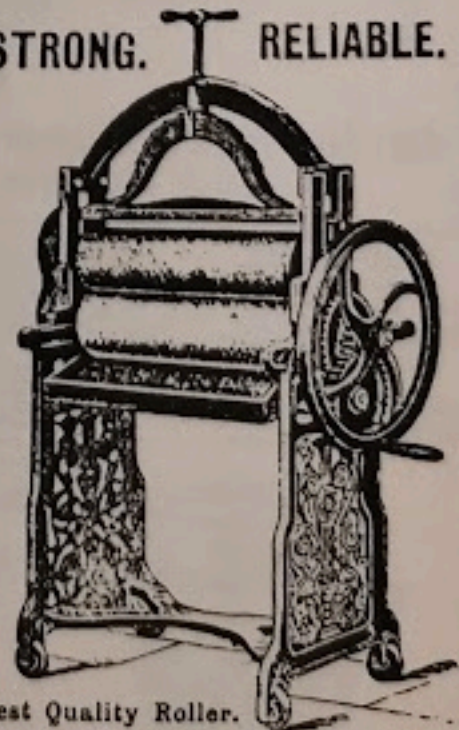
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Men's Boots Soled & Heeled	2/6	3/-	3/6	Men's Boots made to Measure	from 7/11
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AT EITHER ESTABLISHMENT,

Manufactory, SAWSTON, CAMBS.

STRONG. RELIABLE.



Best Quality Roller.

PEARL MANGLE & WRINGER.

18 in.	20 in.	22 in.
39/6	42/-	45/-

with brass caps and folding handle.
 24 in. 52/6 27 in. 63/6

India Rubber Clothes Wringer.

10 in.	9/11	12 in.	19/6
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WALTER DULLER,

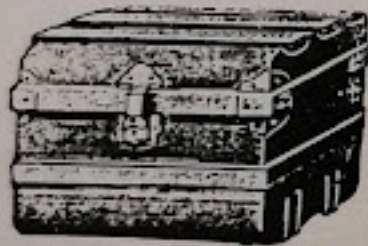
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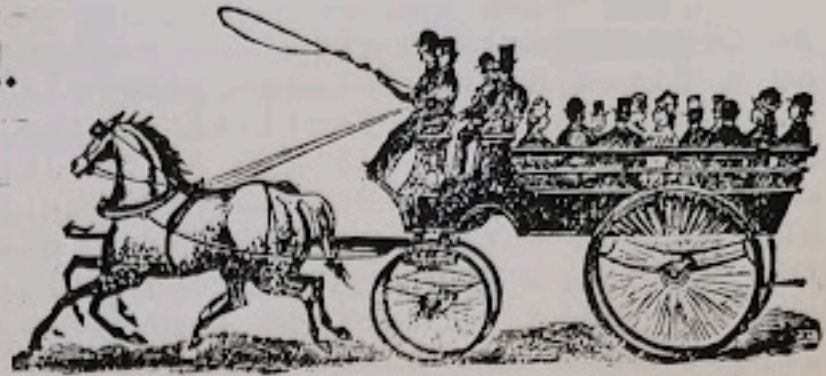


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Special Terms for Parties, Picnics, &c.

Passengers and Luggage to and from any Station.

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TRAVELLING TRUNKS.

G.S. & S. hold a Large Stock at prices that cannot be beaten.
because by purchasing in large quantities, they are able to
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Dark or Light Oak, Special Line.

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FEASTS AND FESTIVALS

In Cambridgeshire very few customs appear to have been on a fixed date although generally village feasts co-incided with the patronal festival of the local church. In Pampisford the feast day of St. John occurs during the first week of July. In Pampisford the feast day was regularly celebrated during the 1880's. Stalls were set up around the Chequers Pub and whole families gathered to savour the delights of various sweetmeats, pease pudding, gingerbread and shell fish and not forgetting oceans of ale! As the typical meal of a farm worker about this time would consist of boiled cabbage, home fatted bacon with potatoes from the cottage garden and staples of bread and cheese, the village feast offered exotic choices.

In Pampisford and Sawston it was also a great occasion for knocking down Aunt Sally's and engaging everyone in large skipping games. Often local musicians provided the music. In later years Pampisford's feast was celebrated when the fair-ground came and set up swing boats, coconut shies and roundabouts in a field off Brewery Road.

PLOUGH MONDAY

Mr. David Osbourne, a one time resident of Pampisford recalls being told, when he lived in the village as a boy, then meaning of Plough Monday and why it came to be a day of celebration in Pampisford.

Apparently years ago a particularly early and severe winter occurred. So extreme were the conditions that it was simply impossible to work the land and ploughing, which would normally have taken place in autumn, could not be undertaken. In an age when everything relied on the results of local harvests such a situation was viewed by the local people with extreme foreboding. It seemed that the Winter would never end and there could be nothing but hardship ahead.

Quite suddenly during the second week of January the weather changed, sufficiently so for the fields to be ploughed by January 12th. Such was the relief among the village population in the area, that it was decided that the fearful Winter should never be forgotten.

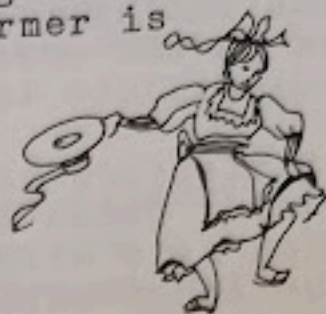
For that reason and for the sheer joy of being able to work the land again, Plough Monday became an important village festival held around January 12th.

In Pampisford the event was celebrated until the early years of this century. Boys and young men ran thru' the village with blackened faces ringing hurdy gurdy bells and drawing ploughs.

Traditionally, the drawing of the plough through the village took place with the threat of ploughing up the door stop of anyone refusing to give money to the ploughman and his boys. A further threat, this time to the farmer is embodied in the following rhyme.



"Up with your scrapers
And down with your door
If you don't give us money
We will plough no more!"



Mr. Brand of the Old Post Office related to his son how Plough Monday was celebrated in the village before the first world war. The farmhands went around cracking whips, shouting greetings and collecting money - the proceeds of which were later spent in the Chequers, the White Horse or the Railway Inn. Travis Teversham in the "History of Sawston" records the following recollection. A plough was pulled by local farmhands down the High Street to Manor Farm then on to Home Farm. Often a 'fool' would accompany the ploughman, an outrageous character dressed in flowered dress, the fool would hold out a wide brimmed hat to collect coppers.

MAY DAY

The traditional day for gathering peagles or cowslips.

ASCENSION DAY OR HOLY THURSDAY

Prior to inclosure perambulations known as "Beating the Bounds" took place on Ascension Day. Traditionally a church procession of clergy and choir boys, along with parishioners, walked around the Parish reading the epistle of the day at certain landmarks. The particular site of such landmarks (often a tree or stone) were impressed upon the children who were bumped against the mark or even given a beating near it. Sticks or wands held by others in the procession would be used to beat the landmark. Very few people therefore were unaware of the boundaries of their local parish!

EMPIRE DAY

Special services were held in schools and a half-day holiday was given.

"The twentyfourth of May
The Queen's birthday
If you don't give us a holiday
We'll all run away!".

Holidays were given on certain Feast days and at the annual flower show in Pampisford, but often unofficial holidays were taken by the school children whenever a fair visited the area.

WITCHCRAFT AND SUPERSTITIONS

Although no cases of witchcraft are recorded in Pampisford it is quite possible that some of the 16th and 17th century cottages contained charms to ward off witches. Various safeguards against witches, including boxes containing glass balls or pins, are quite common in the area, as are glass phials which contain salt - a renowned antidote to evil!

In Whittlesford and Sawston two cases of witchcraft were recorded. Susan Cooper of Whittlesford for example was regarded as a witch when she died in 1878. After her burial all the local children rushed to her grave and trampled it to make sure no nips (wicked imps), got out. Among the things she was accused of bewitching were pigs, which upon slaughter, would not take the salt needed for preserving.

A more celebrated case which scandalised the whole area took place in Sawston and is recorded in the "Cambridge Independent Press and Chronicle" of October 1804

My dear Richard

. . . I am going to tell you an odd history of Mr Adams the Tanner's house being bewitched, that I think it necessary to beg you not to imagine that I have lost my senses and am become quite foolish; but really the occurrence is so singular that the most incredulous after due examination won't allow it to be the best executed trick that ever was, nor could give a better reason for supposing it to be one than that it cannot be anything else.

Mrs Adams since last Sunday has had her gown torn everyday in a manner she could not account for, but on Thursday early in the day, she was obliged to change it; in a short time the one she put on was as much torn as that she had taken off. So it continued till she had put on five. She then went to Mrs Murphil's house. No one was there but Mrs M. and Sally Cooper.¹ She told her misfortune and shewed her gown which was quite whole when she sat down, upon rising to their astonishment it was slit in several directions. She put on six gowns on Thursday and they were all rent.

Since then almost everyone that has been in the house have had their cloaths torn, men and women, old Adams' coats, etc. As to a niece that lives with her and her maid servant, their cloaths have been shivered to rags, and what is extraordinary, James Cooper and Mrs Jones saw a piece drop off and not a person near or touching it.

I have made a visit and escaped, but it is impossible to describe how much some of the cloaths are torn, quite strong cotton gowns, so that no beggar would accept them. Ned² and Mrs Portchelor (?) have just been there and escaped, also Mrs Adams has put on a new gown this morning and it continues whole. It cannot be done by any liquid drops for the cloaths are evidently rent, tho' no one hears them rend. The poor maid servant's eyes were quite swelled from crying when I saw her two gowns, and it is quite impossible for her ever to wear them again.

Half Cambridge will be over today to see the house and cloaths. Two gentlemen who came from there yesterday had their coats slit. A young woman who went to the house with Mrs Jones and Joseph Cooper kept her gown close under her arms the whole time. Mrs J. sitting next her and Joseph opposite her both declare no person was near her, nor could possibly have touched her. When she got up she said, 'Well, I am sure I have escaped' and opened the part of her gown that had been under her arms the whole time, when to her astonishment she found it rent in four places. The poor woman was so frightened she ran out of the house and was very near fainting.

You will be tired of rending and tearing but I thought such an event in our own country village too important not to relate somewhat at length, especially as I understand it is likely to be inserted in the London papers. . . .

¹ The 13-year-old daughter of James Cooper of Sawston and sister of Joseph, both mentioned in the letter.

² Jane Hudleston's brother, Edward.

These events were reported in the *Cambridge Chronicle* of October 11th. 1804. The incidents were briefly described very much as in Jane Hudleston's letter, but with the additional information that Mrs Adams's 15-year-old niece 'had only the body part of her gown remaining, the skirts having dropped off as she moved about'.

The newspaper account concluded:

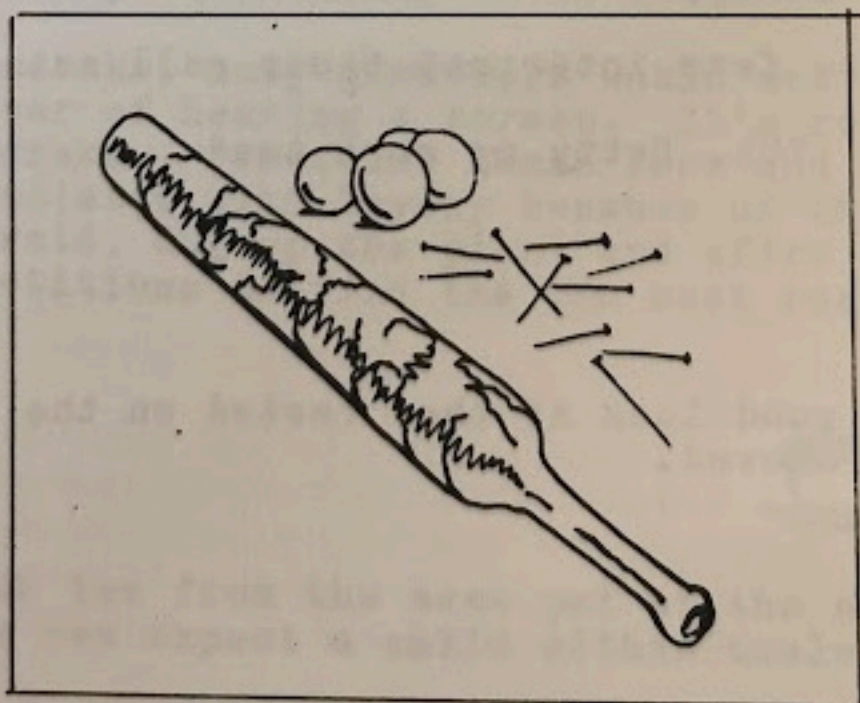
Such were the reports on Saturday when the torn garments were brought to Cambridge and exhibited to the public. On Sunday many persons from Cambridge, as well as from the neighbouring villages, visited the house and returned without injury to their cloaths, and we have not heard of any operation of this invisible agent since last Saturday. Our readers will form their own opinion of the above transactions, which certainly did not proceed from any supernatural agency.

Had the 15-year-old niece, one wonders, any hand in the affair?

In Sawston churchyard is the 100-year-old gravestone of one Sarah Fitch with its now almost-illegible epitaph:

All you have seen amiss in me
Take care to shun and look at home
Enough there is to be done

These lines suggest to Mr T. F. Teversham, the Sawston historian, that Sarah may have been accused during her life of witchcraft.



Pins, glass balls, bottles & phials full of salt were all seen as antidotes to evil. Often, like the ones above, they were incorporated into old buildings in the past. These were found in a cottage in Sawston.

SUPERSTITIONS

Many local superstitions and curiosities are recorded in Enid Porter's book "Cambridgeshire Customs and Folklore" the following are a selection from that source; in particular I have used those that have been confirmed by people in the parish. Acknowledgements are due to Routledge & Kegan Paul, publishers of Miss Porter's book.

TOADS

Lucky to have in the garden but also regarded as imps usually owned by witches.

SPIDERS



"If you wish to live and thrive
let the spider run alive!"
and on no account kill a money spider.



BEEES

Bee Keepers in Cambridgeshire regarded their bees as part of the family and "telling the bees" was an important practice. Any family matter had to be told to the bees otherwise the bees would fail to thrive or even leave their hives.

DOVES

People in the fens interpret their call as:

"Oh, Betty my sore toe"



MARTINS

Regarded as good luck if they rested on the house but nest mustn't be removed.

HARES

If a hare runs down the village street then an outbreak of fire can be expected.

Also known as Aunt Sally's, hares were regarded as witches in disguise and many stories are told of their mysterious powers.

PIGS

Never slaughtered when the moon was waning for fear the bacon would shrink.

HORSES

A village might boast several horsekeepers before the coming of mechanisation but those who had the power over a horse were called 'Toadmen'. A secret rite had to be carried out in order to gain such power over horses and many horsekeepers were feared by their neighbours.

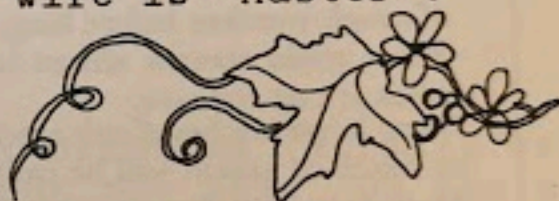


PERIWINKLES

Worn in the buttonhole they would wither quickly if worn by a flirtatious girl or an unchaste wife.

PARSLEY

Best planted at the time of the new moon to ensure germination. It flourishes in gardens where the wife is "Master".



WHITE BRYONY

Strictly speaking the following belief comes from the fens but was sufficiently interesting to be included here.

Often called Mandrake, many gardeners would not touch it or dig it up for fear of hearing a scream. It's root, like that of the true Mandrake, resembles human form and many mysterious stories are associated with bryony because of that. Fen people, perhaps less afraid, dug up the plant and after selecting roots held competitions to find the one most resembling human form.

TEA



If two women pour tea from the same pot at the same meal, then one of them can expect a child within twelve months.

MAY BLOSSOM

Never bring May blossom or lilac into the house for nothing but trouble will follow.

WEATHER LORE

"If there is enough ice in November to bear a duck then theres nothing to follow but slush and muck".

"However many fogs occur in March you can be sure that the same number of frosts will follow in May".

"If ever you should see a storm approaching Pampisford from the direction of Whittlesford Station, take care, it will be a bad one".

"If you are in the Bourne Bridge area and clouds are seen through Hayden's Gap (i.e. a space between two trees along Haydens Edge) then it will certainly rain".

I am very grateful to Pampisford Women's Institute for their help in compiling parts of this section.

Members of Chrishall Women's Institute collected in 1958 the following weather lore from residents in the village:

If the rooks fly off straight in the morning you won't need a raincoat that day.

If the rooks 'break-neck', that is twist and turn wildy, you can be sure of rough weather before long.

When rooks scream almost incessantly and keep close to their nests gales are on the way.

When large catches of eels are taken from the river thunder is due; but no roach or bream will be caught.

Mole holes showing no mound of earth above them tell us of a long spell of dry weather ahead.

If the flowers of the speedwell (*Veronica chamaedrys*) close in the morning it will rain before evening.

When rooks fly and wheel quickly high in the air there'll soon be a violent thunderstorm.

Rabbits sit, twitching their ears, facing the direction from which a thunderstorm is coming.

When sheep huddle together and all face one way snow is coming from the direction where their backs are pointing.

A horse in a field always stands with his back to the wind and rain.

Rooks huddling together in groups in the harvest fields show that wet weather is coming.

Many people believe that pigs, when they rush madly about a field, predict strong winds, and that horses and sheep huddle close together under a tree or hedge when wind, cold or rain is on the way.

The belief that the weather prevailing at the rising of a new moon will continue until full moon or, in some cases until it has waned, is still held. Some Cambridgeshire people believe that it is the weather prevailing when the moon is full which will last throughout its waning. A ring or 'halo' round the moon betokens wet weather.

STREET GAMES



Local village children loved street games, girls played hopscotch and skipping and boys marbles and "tut". All children played with hoops and enjoyed wiling away the hours playing "Jinks". In Pampisford and Sawston the Jinks were made from small nobbs of skin taken from the frames used in parchment making.

BLACKTANNY

Popular game until the beginning of the 20th century. A boy or girl would be chosen to stand in the middle of a street or field. The remaining children lined up at either side and raced to and fro until caught by the one in the middle.

A popular eliminating verse according to Travis Teversham was:

"Eena deena vinah mo
Catra veen vinah vo
O-U-T spells out goes she"

PIGGERTY GUTTER

Before Shrove Tuesday long trails of brambles (locally called Brimbles) were gathered and the thorns cut off. On the actual day arches were made from the brambles through which children danced and sang:

"Open your eye, open your eye,
Let the King come by"

It was a localised version of the better known game "Oranges and Lemons".

PITCH AND TOSS

Village lads would play pitch and toss with a half-penny under the trees along the footpath from Pampisfordwych to Sawston. Although one boy kept care the village bobbyknew how to catch them unawares from Hayfield Planten.

SKATING

Apart from cricket and football, which were taken with a degree of seriousness in the local villages, some Pampisfordians recall enjoying the ice skating that took place in Winter on the public drainage meadow opposite Eastern Counties Leather works.

Cambridgeshire Rhymes

Hungry Hardwick

Greedy Toft

Dirty Duxer (Duxford)

Silly Panser (Pampisford)

Proud Sawston

Long Whitser (Whittlesford)

Swaggering Bourn

Itchy lousy Cummerton (Comberton)

There was a little man where a little river ran,
And he had a little farm and a little dairy, ho.
He had a little plough and a little dappled cow
Which he often called his pretty little treasure, ho.
And his dog he called Fydell, for it loved its master well,
And he had a little pony for his pleasure, ho.
In a sty not very big he had a pretty little pig
Which he often called his little piggy treasure, ho.
Once a little maiden ran with a pretty little can,
Went a-milking when the morning sun was gleaming, ho.
She said, 'I don't know how' and stumbled o'er the plough,
And the cow was quite astonished at her screaming, ho.
The little maid cried out in pain
As the milk ran o'er the plain.
The little pig ran grunting after it so gaily, ho;
While the little dog behind for a game was much inclined,
So he pulled back little piggy by his taily, ho.
Such a clatter now began which alarmed the little man
Who came capering from out his little stable, ho.
Pony trod on doggie's toe, doggie snapped at piggy's nose
Which only made the matter worse than ever, ho.

.....

HOBSONS CHOICE

Hobsons choice the most famous of Cambridgeshire expressions. Thomas Hobson 1545 - 1630, a Cambridge canner and livery stable proprietor insisted that when he hired horses, they were taken out in strict rotation. It wasn't possible to choose a particular animal - it was Hobson's Choice or none.

Cambridgeshire Words.

collected by Erud Punter. by permission of R.K.P.

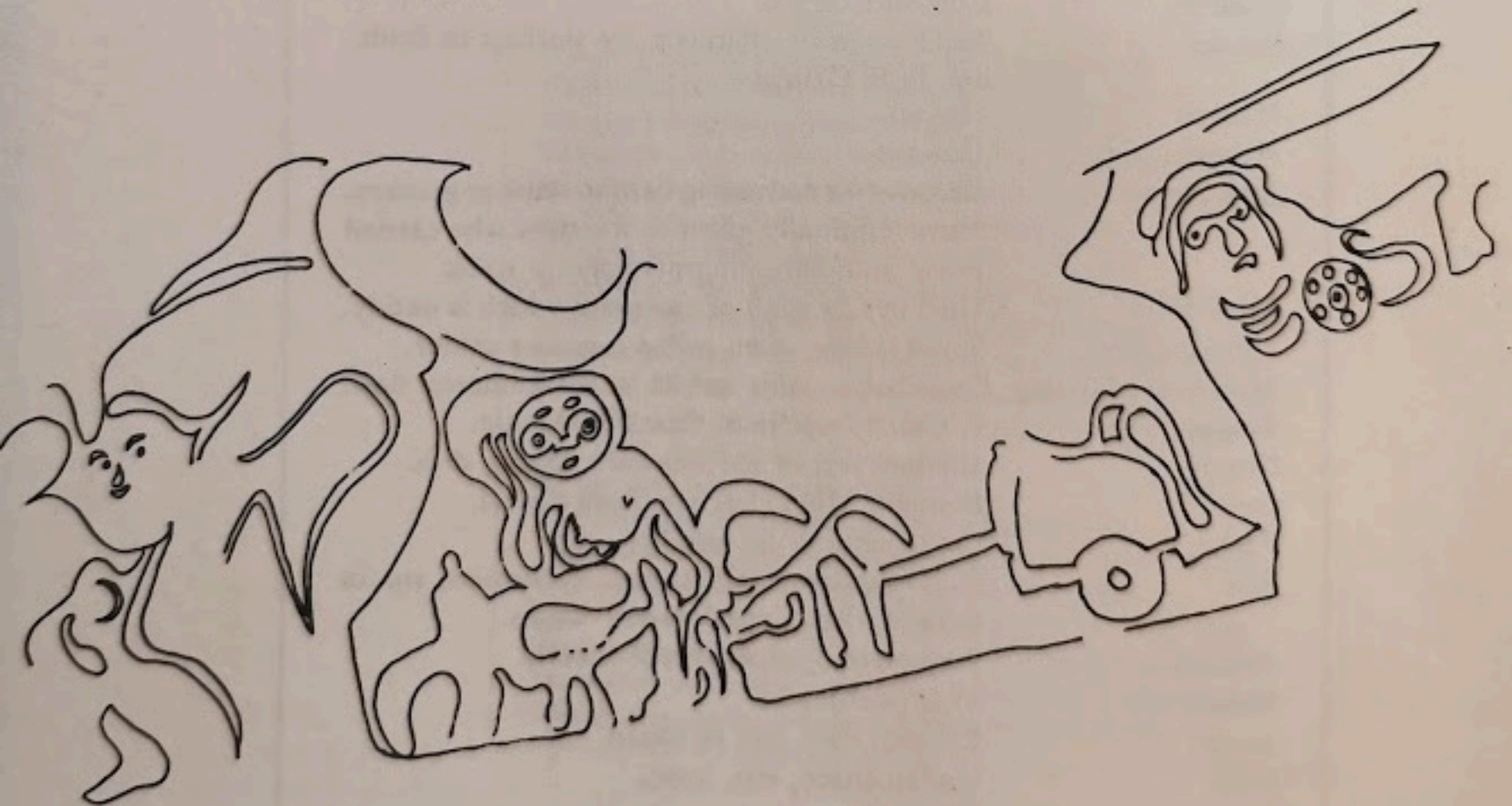
Bear's dung	Name given to the coprolites or phosphatic nodules dug up in S. Cambs. at end of the last century for fertilisers.
Beaver, bever	Mid-morning meal eaten by workers in fields, esp. in S. Cambs.
Blow	Blossom, esp. in Chrishall.
Brangle	Quarrel, dispute.
Buck-fisted	Clumsy.
Chimble	To crumble; used esp. of dry earth.
Chumble	To nibble; used esp. of rats and mice.
Chunter	To mutter, speak indistinctly.
Clung	Sticky; used esp. of wet clay.
Comical	Disagreeable, bad-tempered.
Dicky	Donkey.
Docky	Mid-morning meal (<i>v. beaver</i> above); or food eaten at midday by outdoor worker.
Doddy	Small.
Fen nightingales	Frogs.
Fleet	Shallow.
Fossils	Coprolites (<i>v. Bear's dung</i> above).
Fossiler	Coprolite digger.
Fourses	Meal eaten in afternoon by workers in fields, esp. in S. Cambs.
Housen	Houses.
Howsomever	However.
Jack Straw	Elevator for conveying corn to stack or granary. Name originally given to the man who carried straw from threshing-machine to stack.
Lob's Hole	Used in Chrishall of any place which is untidy.
Luck spinner	Small spider, often called a money spider.
May bee, May bug	Cockchafer. Also called a Midsummer daw.
Moggy	1. Cat. 2 (esp. in S. Cambs.). Mouse.
Nappy	Shallow brown earthenware baking dish.
Orts	Remains of food left over from a meal.
Parky	Cold; used of the weather.
Pod	Bag, usually of leather, used by farmers, esp. in Fens, for holding labourers' wages.
Prullick	Prepare to fight, esp. in S. Cambs.
Ranny	Vole or shrew.
Reasty	Rancid; used esp. of bacon.
Rere	Undercooked, esp. meat.
Roadster	A tramp.
Slop	A smock; also, in Fens, a sleeveless calico vest or the material used for making it.
Slud, slub	Wet mud.
Slummocky	Untidy in dress.
Tossled	Tangled.
Tract	Easy-going, good-natured.
Whaddon organs	Frogs.

LEGEND OF WANDLEBURY

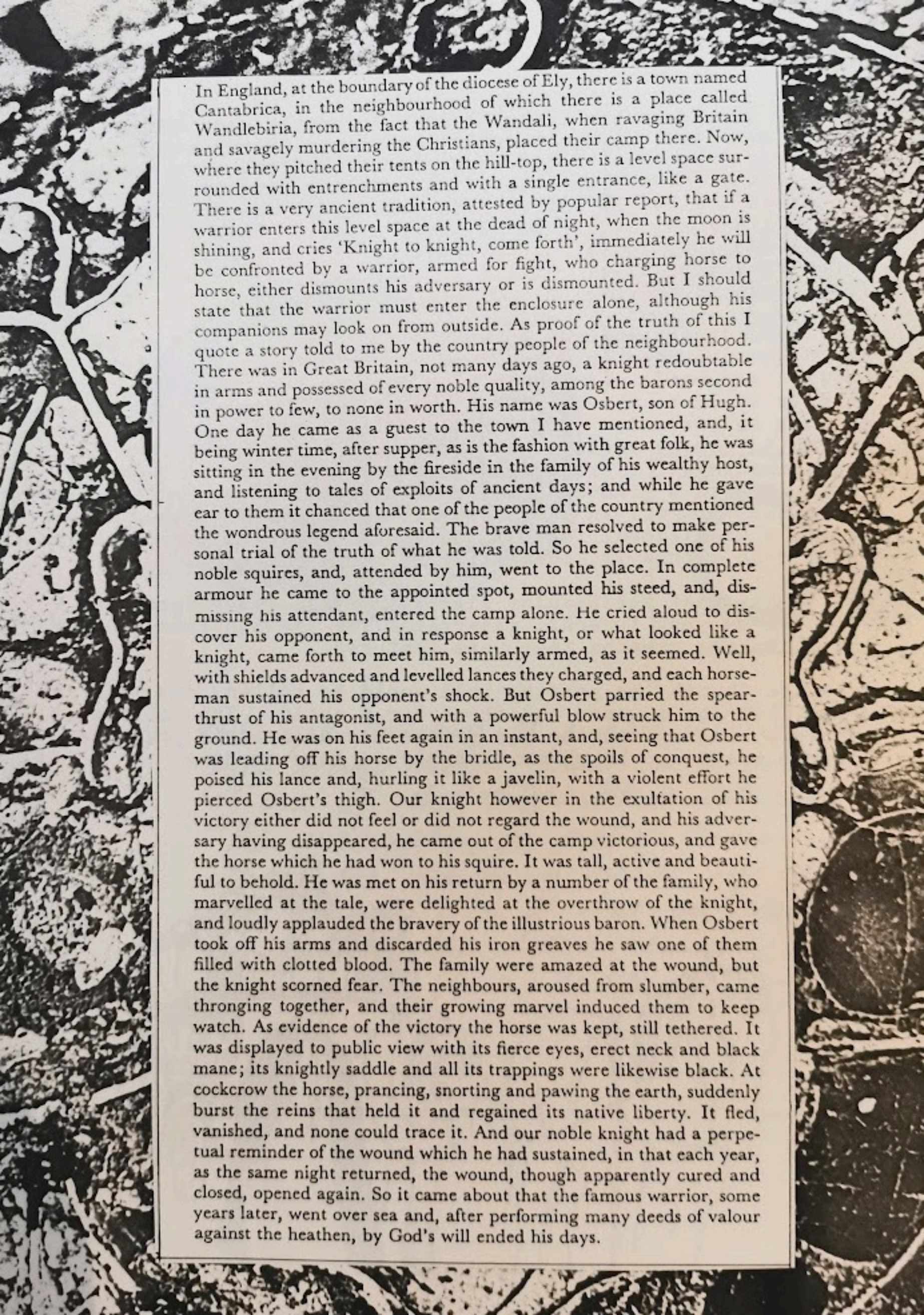
A few miles North West of Pampisford on the 240 foot summit of the Gog Magog hills lies the remains of a great Iron Age fort. Legend has it that ancient religious ceremonies are also associated with the area and in the early 18th century, William Cole remembered seeing the figure of a giant outlined in the turf. Cole left this valuable description, the last authentic mention of the Gog Magog giant.

When I was a boy, about 1742, I remember I went to Cambridge. The road from Baberham lay through the Camp, (now covered) was blocked up by the house & gardens of my Lord Godolphin. My father always used to show me the figure of the giant carved on the turf: concerning whom there were many traditions now well known.

All traces of the giant figure are gone today, although investigations by Mr. T.C. Lethbridge have revealed a picture of the Earth Goddess walking beside her chariot followed by Gog with the Spirit of Darkness poised, ready for flight, in front of them.



The oldest Wandlebury legend is that told by Gervase of Tilbury in his "Otia Imperialia" written about the year 1211. The following is a translation by Arthur Gray from the Gervase version.



In England, at the boundary of the diocese of Ely, there is a town named Cantabrica, in the neighbourhood of which there is a place called Wandlebiria, from the fact that the Wandali, when ravaging Britain and savagely murdering the Christians, placed their camp there. Now, where they pitched their tents on the hill-top, there is a level space surrounded with entrenchments and with a single entrance, like a gate. There is a very ancient tradition, attested by popular report, that if a warrior enters this level space at the dead of night, when the moon is shining, and cries 'Knight to knight, come forth', immediately he will be confronted by a warrior, armed for fight, who charging horse to horse, either dismounts his adversary or is dismounted. But I should state that the warrior must enter the enclosure alone, although his companions may look on from outside. As proof of the truth of this I quote a story told to me by the country people of the neighbourhood. There was in Great Britain, not many days ago, a knight redoubtable in arms and possessed of every noble quality, among the barons second in power to few, to none in worth. His name was Osbert, son of Hugh. One day he came as a guest to the town I have mentioned, and, it being winter time, after supper, as is the fashion with great folk, he was sitting in the evening by the fireside in the family of his wealthy host, and listening to tales of exploits of ancient days; and while he gave ear to them it chanced that one of the people of the country mentioned the wondrous legend aforesaid. The brave man resolved to make personal trial of the truth of what he was told. So he selected one of his noble squires, and, attended by him, went to the place. In complete armour he came to the appointed spot, mounted his steed, and, dismissing his attendant, entered the camp alone. He cried aloud to discover his opponent, and in response a knight, or what looked like a knight, came forth to meet him, similarly armed, as it seemed. Well, with shields advanced and levelled lances they charged, and each horseman sustained his opponent's shock. But Osbert parried the spear-thrust of his antagonist, and with a powerful blow struck him to the ground. He was on his feet again in an instant, and, seeing that Osbert was leading off his horse by the bridle, as the spoils of conquest, he poised his lance and, hurling it like a javelin, with a violent effort he pierced Osbert's thigh. Our knight however in the exultation of his victory either did not feel or did not regard the wound, and his adversary having disappeared, he came out of the camp victorious, and gave the horse which he had won to his squire. It was tall, active and beautiful to behold. He was met on his return by a number of the family, who marvelled at the tale, were delighted at the overthrow of the knight, and loudly applauded the bravery of the illustrious baron. When Osbert took off his arms and discarded his iron greaves he saw one of them filled with clotted blood. The family were amazed at the wound, but the knight scorned fear. The neighbours, aroused from slumber, came thronging together, and their growing marvel induced them to keep watch. As evidence of the victory the horse was kept, still tethered. It was displayed to public view with its fierce eyes, erect neck and black mane; its knightly saddle and all its trappings were likewise black. At cockcrow the horse, prancing, snorting and pawing the earth, suddenly burst the reins that held it and regained its native liberty. It fled, vanished, and none could trace it. And our noble knight had a perpetual reminder of the wound which he had sustained, in that each year, as the same night returned, the wound, though apparently cured and closed, opened again. So it came about that the famous warrior, some years later, went over sea and, after performing many deeds of valour against the heathen, by God's will ended his days.

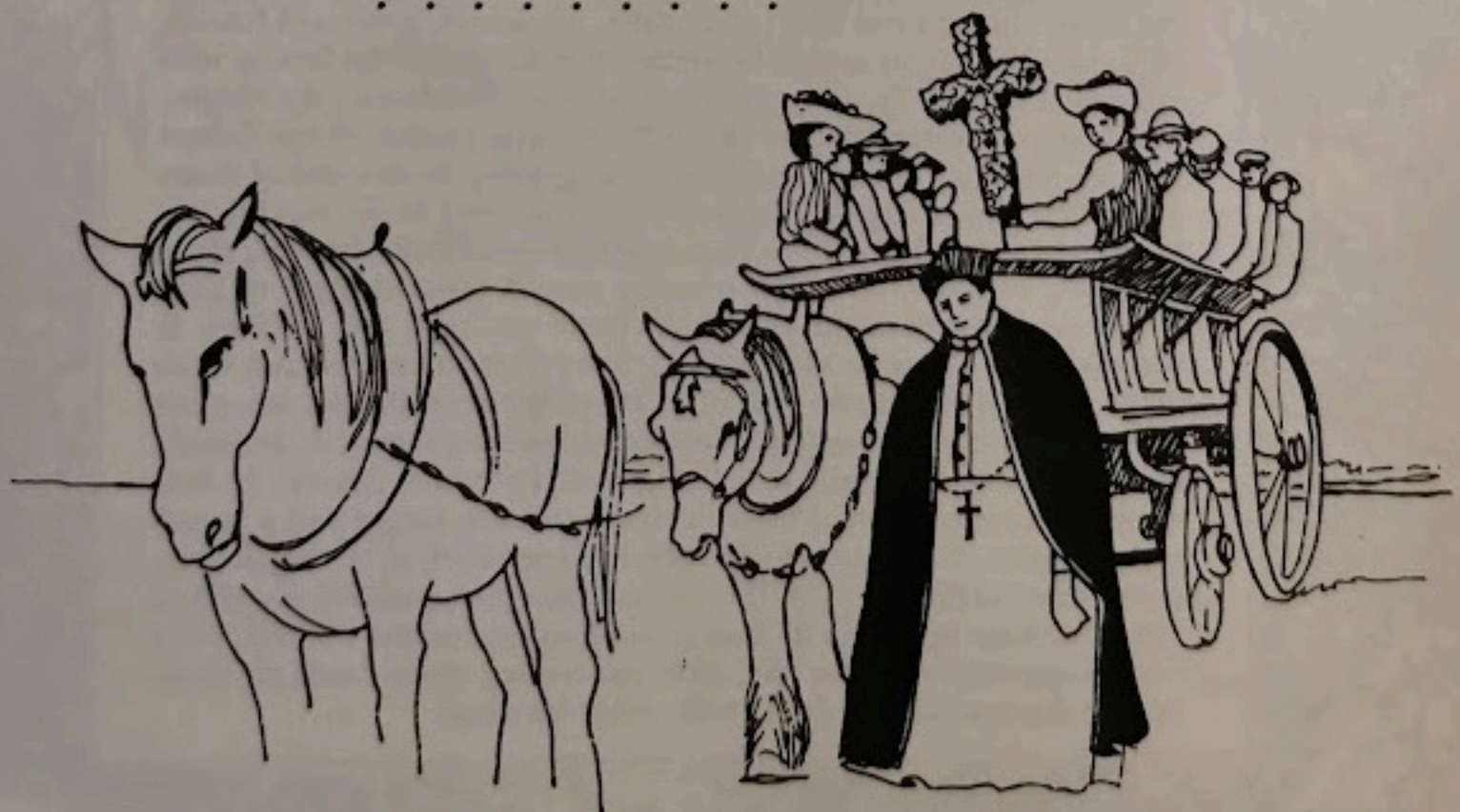
BURIALS

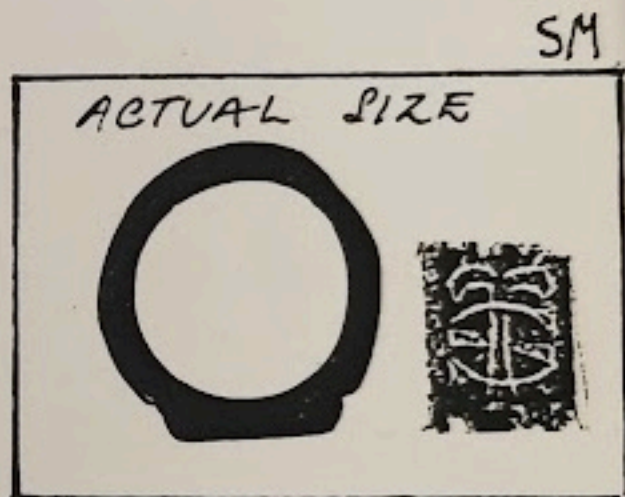
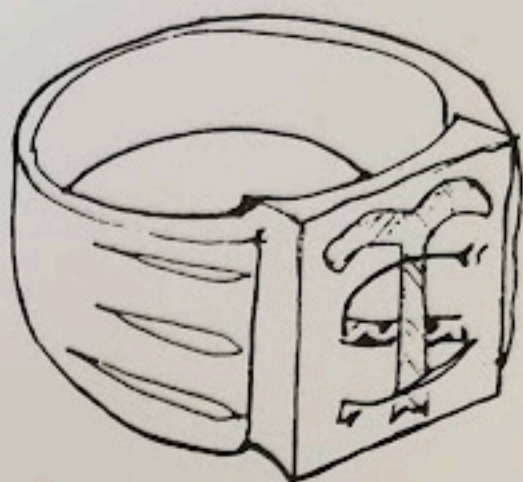
Wealthy people in the 17th and 18th centuries were often buried at night. Large torchlit and candlelit processions, which could be very costly took place. Coffins were not in general use but the shrouds of the wealthy were of wool and after the Burial Act of 17th century it was ordered that all shrouds should be of sheep's wool. This Act was not always complied with, however, as such a shroud could prove very expensive. Plague victims were buried well away from areas of occupation and exempted from the Burial Act.

For the ordinary village household the presence of a corpse would be a problem in a small over crowded cottage. When coffins came into use in the 17th century two chairs or a table would be the only resting place and burial took place as soon as possible. Sometimes a bier would be kept in the Church to convey coffins but often in rural areas a farm wagon was used. A framework of raves was added to the cart which allowed a greater load to be carried. Mourners and coffin would then set off in the horse-driven cart to Church. After burial a traditional funeral tea would be served in households that could afford it, consisting of ham and tongue.

One of the most spectacular sights in rural Cambridgeshire would be a gypsy funeral, remarkable for the numerous flowers and elaborate wreaths that were featured.

From the Church the passing bell would be tolled, one pull for a man, two for a woman and three for a child. The toll would continue ringing out the age of the deceased, this practice however ceased to be observed early in this century.





Enlarged drawing of a late 14th century
gilt-bronze ring found in a garden
of one of the High Street cottages.
The inscription is rather curious in
that the design is made up of
the letters T & S but on close
inspection the letters resemble a
palm tree & a snake.