



# FULBOURN VILLAGE HISTORY SOCIETY

*"To save Fulbourn's past for the future"*

**NEWSLETTER NO. 59 SPRING 2024**

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## FULBOURN VILLAGE HISTORY SOCIETY ENTERS ITS 25th ANNIVERSARY YEAR

This year we are celebrating the 25th anniversary of Fulbourn Village History Society. It will be commemorated by three events - a re-design of our website, the publication of 'Fulbourn Past' written by John Patten and a 'birthday cake' at the AGM in 2025.

The introduction on our website, which will be active from March 2024 gives a useful background to the Society, as follows:

**WELCOME TO OUR 'NEW LOOK' WEBSITE.** Re-designed by web-master (and F.V.H.S. member), John Timperio as part of our 25th anniversary celebration.

Fulbourn Village History Society was 'officially' formed twenty five years ago. On 28 January 1999 an open meeting was held with over 80 attendees and Officers were duly elected. At the Extraordinary General Meeting on 21 October 1999 the Society's Constitution was approved.

From October 1999 to March 2024, F.V.H.S. have had 138 speakers giving Talks on a wide range of subjects, mostly with a social and local history theme. We have had group visits to museums, held exhibitions celebrating the Millennium and several Royal Jubilee's. Displays of archeological finds in the area around Fulbourn, and maps plus documents showing the development of the parish over the past 500 hundred years, have also been organised and open to the general public.

A number of booklets related to the heritage of Fulbourn have been published by the Society. We actively continues to support research into the history of the village and in so doing carry out our objective 'to save Fulbourn's past for the future'.

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## FULBOURN VILLAGE HISTORY SOCIETY PROGRAMME OF TALKS 2024-2025

our venue for the Talks will be in the Meeting Room of the Fulbourn Centre, starting at 7.30 pm.

### 2024

**17 October** 'A History of Mills' by *Steve Temple*

**21 November** 'The History of Chivers' by *David Oates*

**12 December** 'The History of Christmas' by *Sean Lang*

### 2025

**16 January** 'How a Cambridge man made the Victorian Post Office so great - and what has gone wrong'.  
by *Prof. Martin Daunt*

**20 February** 'A community of negligent, thoughtless, dissolute and incontinent spiritual harlots? The nunnery of St Radegund, Cambridge, and other religious women in medieval Cambridgeshire'  
by *Craig Cessford*

**20 March** 'Seeing Science - Objects from the Whipple Museum' by *Alison Giles*

**17 April** 'Fulbourn Windmill' by *Ian Harrison*

## A Sad Tale of Betrayal from the Cambridge Daily News 23 November 1901 & Cambridge Independent Press 20 December 1901. Transcribed by John Beresford

### 'Cambridge Undergraduate's Love Affairs.

£3,000 for a FULBOURN LADY. Remarkable Evidence.

Before Under Sheriff Burchell and a special jury sitting in the London Sheriff's Court on Friday, a breach of promise action, in which exceptionally heavy damages were awarded, was tried. The parties were Miss Ethel Elizabeth Gardner and Mr. Walter James Chate (defendant).

Mr. Rawlinson, K.C., counsel for the plaintiff, said his client was the second daughter of Mr. John Gardner, now residing at Fulbourn [*the family home was identified in the 1911 census as being 'Barnsbury House. Now demolished, it was located in Cox's Grove. Ed.]*, near Cambridge.

Her father was of independent means, living on his income, after retiring from the management of the Wilberforce Estates in Sussex. The defendant was now a married man, resident at Llangollen, in Wales, and he, too, was a gentleman possessed of an income of about £1,500 a year. The parties first met at Cambridge in 1898. At that time the defendant was a Freshman in Caius College. Very soon Mr. Chate became exceedingly affectionate in his manner, and the friendship opened into an engagement. The plaintiff was then twenty and the defendant twenty-one years of age.

The engagement was ratified by Miss Gardner's parents, and Mr. Chate was received into the family as the prospective husband of the plaintiff. Speaking of his financial position, defendant said he had an income of £1,000 per year upon an invested capital of £25,000, and that under the will of an aunt that sum would subsequently be increased to £1,500 or £1,600 per year. In every respect, said counsel, there was the prospect of a happy and prosperous married life. Then the defendant began to make his fiancée valuable presents including the customary engagement ring, and then right away onwards until the autumn of last year there was nothing but a happy time of courtship between the couple.

The defendant's affection was shown in the numerous letters he wrote to Miss Gardner. In the whole of them he expressed himself in the most loving manner possible, as "Dear" and "Darling", "My darling sweet" and "My darling baby". Further, he went to the extent of making arrangements for a marriage settlement upon the plaintiff. He was frequently going about to places spending holidays, and from each of these wrote love letters. In one, dated from Llangollen, he said:

My Darling Baby,—My pen absolutely refuses to write another stroke. Consequently I must write to my wee darling in pencil. If there is no letter tomorrow, dear wee wretch, you will hear of it.

Things went on satisfactorily, counsel continued, until August of last year. At that time defendant was staying at Ramsay, Isle of Man. From there he wrote an exceedingly affectionate letter, and then one or two days later followed it up with another. This counsel read, as follows :

Dear Miss Gardner. —I have been fully considering the facts of our engagement, and I feel that owing to the unsatisfactory state of my affairs it would be better for you - for your happiness - if you were to release me from my promise to you. I can assure you I am sorry that fate should have brought me in your path, but our temperaments are so different that I feel it would be better if you released me. I am going to Glasgow to-morrow, and will let you know later [unclear].

On the 10th November the following telegram, addressed to [unclear] "Gardner, Fulbourne. Cambridge." was received by the plaintiff. "Many thanks for inquiries. Married to-day.—Chate.

Miss Gardner gave evidence in support of [unclear] statement, and said she could give no reason for the defendant acting in the manner

he did. Mr. Neillson, for the defence, in cross-examination, asked if there had not been some talk of the engagement being broken off, and if Mr. Chate had not asked to be released. Plaintiff said that was not so, but it was true that she put it to him whether preferred to give up drink or her, and he said he would give up the drink. That was not long before he went to Glasgow.

Mr. Chate gave you many valuable presents, I believe? - Yes.

They are worth £400 or more, are they not? - I couldn't say.

But you will have them? - Yes.

Mr. John Gardner, plaintiff's father, said defendant professed to him [unclear]. Witness regarded him as a gentleman.

Mr. Neillson : Didn't you write to him telling him he was a blackguard and a drunkard?—Yes.

Mr. Neillson : Then your daughter, if what you said was true, is better off by not having married him.

The jury, after consulting in private for half-an-hour, assessed the damages at £3,000. Judgment for that amount was entered with costs.'

**(Note from Editor:** This was not the end of the story as the case went to the Court of Appeal. The law has now changed. Until 1970 in England and Wales, a woman whose fiancé broke off their engagement could sue him for breach of promise. However, a woman was permitted to change her mind without penalty. Legal Reforms in 1970 undertaken by England and Wales generally made property disputes related to engagements to be handled like those between married couples.)

**'Fulbourn Breach of Promise Action.  
DAMAGES REDUCED TO £1,500.**

In the Court of Appeal yesterday the Master of the Rolls gave judgment upon the appeal made by Mr. Marshall Hall, K.G., for a new trial of the breach of promise action brought by Miss Gardner, of Fulbourn, against a Cambridge undergraduate, named Chate, in which a jury had awarded her £3,000 damages. The Master of the Rolls decided to grant a new trial unless the

parties would consent to a verdict for £1,500. Mr. Rawlinson appeared for Miss Gardner.'

**Note from Editor:** It is unclear whether Miss Gardner accepted damages of £1,500 which would be worth around £117,258.30 in 2017.)

There are several human interest and indeed, social history comments, which can be made regarding this event. The couple involved both would seem to come from wealthy families and certainly, Mr Chate had a significant income which would no doubt, have made him a financially acceptable suitor as being able to support a wife. There was no indication that he would need to have paid employment and the plaintiff's father at one point regarded him as 'a gentleman.'

The cross examination revealed Mr Chate had given presents to Miss Gardner, valued at £31,268.88 today! These do not seem to have been returned. He also wrote affectionate letters to her, had the approval of her father and had given her an engagement ring. Such evidence allowed the breach of promise suit to be brought against Mr Chate because the plaintiff only had to prove two things - that a promise had been made or implied by her suitor and that they would marry. Once this was established, she needed proof of abandonment ie if the suitor said so in writing, if he disappeared or became engaged to someone else.

So, what went wrong?

All appeared well until in August 1900 when Mr Chate, two days after writing an affectionate letter to Miss Gardiner, sent another one asking to be released from the engagement using the somewhat clichéd excuse of it being best for 'her happiness' and that 'our temperaments are so different' and apologising that 'fate should have brought me in your path'.

In the same letter, Mr Chate revealed that he was going to Glasgow the next day. On 10th November barely three months later, a telegram addressed to Gardner, Fulbourne was received by the family - it is unclear if Miss Gardner or her father was the intended recipient - but the

tone was odd. Presumably, some attempt at communication had been made in the interval since the ending of the engagement as it stated 'Many thanks for enquiries'. This was followed by the terse statement 'Married today'.

It suggests that Miss Gardner had in fact, been jilted and that another woman was involved. However, there is a hint that all had not been well with the relationship. Miss Gardner admitted that not long before Mr Chate went to Glasgow, she had given him an ultimatum - 'whether he preferred to give up drink or her'. Mr Chate agreed to give up the drink and this indicates that he had an alcohol problem. In fact, Mr Gardner, presumably after the rejection of his daughter, had written a letter calling Mr Chate 'a blackguard and a drunkard'.

The legal action taken by the Gardner family was, in one sense, quite brave. It exposed them to public scrutiny - and embarrassment - through the court system and subsequent reporting in



"The Trial," by Phiz.

Breach of Promise scandals were popular with the Press. Charles Dickens also immortalised the phenomenon in fiction within 'The Pickwick Papers', when Mrs Bardell is persuaded by unscrupulous lawyers to bring a breach of promise to marry suit against Pickwick, who ends up in a debtors prison for not paying the money awarded.

newspapers. During the 19C there were over 100 breach of promise cases annually in England (though very few with the lady as defendant), coinciding with a period when arranged marriages by parents declined in favour of those where romantic love rather than financial advantage, was - at least partly - the motivating factor.

Being accused of this 'crime' not only humiliated the gentleman involved, suggesting he lacked honour, it could also be a great loss to him in terms of money. How much was awarded to the plaintiff was based almost completely on the wealth of the defendant. Hence the considerable amount that Miss Gardner received - including costs. Perhaps this helped to assuage the injury to her feelings, reputation and matrimonial prospect at the time.

However, probate records for Miss Gardner, who died age 81 in 1959 at The Evelyn Nursing Home, Cambridge reveal that she was a spinster, leaving an estate of £177,33 7s 8d to her brother, Henry Lawrence Gardner a retired auctioneer. It may be that her personal history did in fact, affect her choice regarding the institute of marriage.

There is though, a further fascinating development to this story. Although described in the court proceedings as 'now a married man' there does not appear to be any documentation of this for a Mr Walter James Chate. He died in May 1914 leaving his estate of £333 12s 4d (where did the rest go?) to a Miss Dora Batley the niece of Mr Jonathan Batley who, according to the 1911 census, was the head of household for a property in Ulverston, Liverpool. Miss Batley also resided there, together with a border - Mr Walter Chase!

Does this suggest that Mr Chase lied when he admitted to being married, in order to extricate himself from the engagement? A perjurer, drunkard and possibly wastrel as husband - maybe Miss Gardner had a lucky escape.

Websites consulted (amongst others):

[gala.gre.ac.uk](http://gala.gre.ac.uk)

[quillsandquartos.com](http://quillsandquartos.com)

[nationalarchives.gov.uk](http://nationalarchives.gov.uk) (for currency calculator)



## THE HOME FRONT IN FULBOURN 1939 -1945 Part IX by Glynis Arber

Much of the information that Fulbourn Village History Society has about the village between 1939 -1945 comes from extracts in *The Fulbourn Chronicles Vol IV* whose earliest entry relating to the war years occurred on 22 September 1939. However, the leaflets in this article were donated by Richard Townley and provide an insight into how the Government prepared its citizens for potential war conditions.

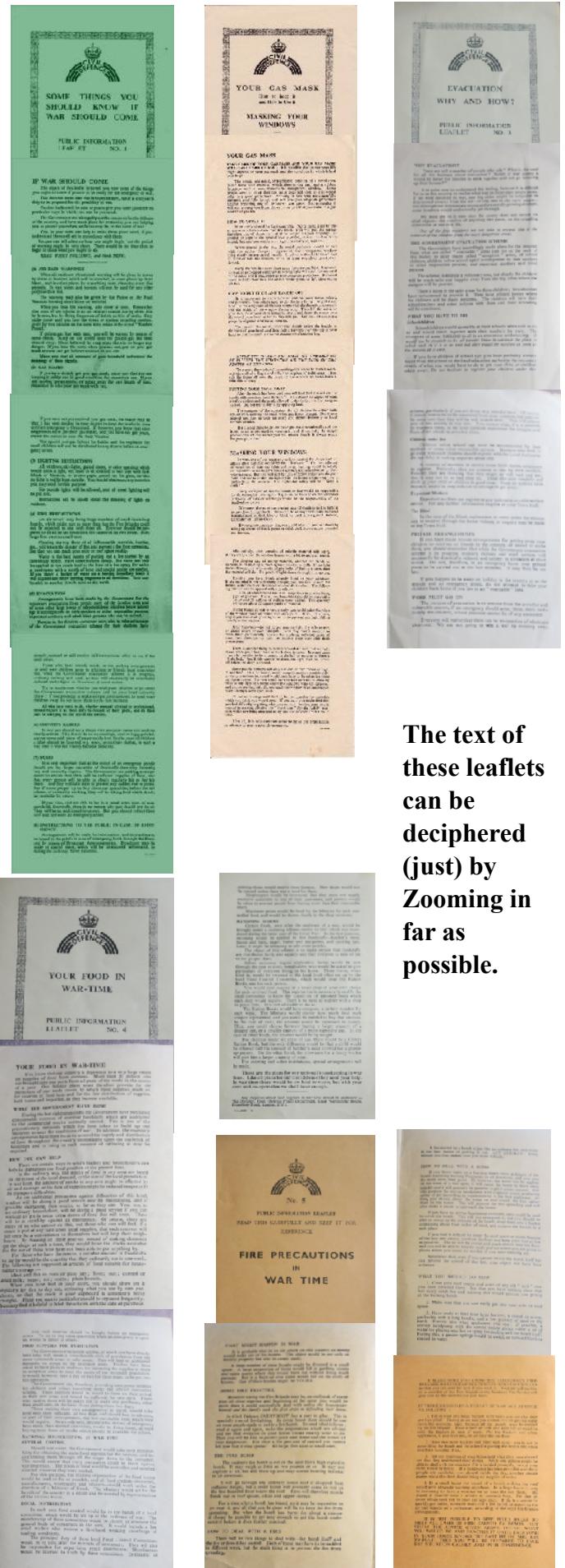
In the later years of the 1930's, the British Government was preparing for war with Germany which began in September 1939. Two months earlier, the Lord Privy Seal's Office issued the first of a series of leaflets with a Civil Defence heading.

No. 1 was entitled 'SOME THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW IF WAR SHOULD COME'. It highlighted several points: although stating 'This does not mean that war is expected now, but it is everyone's duty to be prepared for the possibility of war'. Thus for Air Raid Warnings it was essential to 'Make sure that all members of your household understand the meanings of these signals'.

The population as a whole were reminded that 'All who have work to do, whether manual, clerical or professional, should regard it as their duty to remain at their posts, and do their part in carrying on the life of the nation.'

Leaflet No.2 provided information on how to keep and use your Gas Mask as well as instructions for masking windows. Leaflet No.3 on Evacuation contained the stark warning that *'The transport of some 3,000,000 in all is an enormous undertaking. It would not be possible to let all parents know in advance the place to which each child is to be sent but they will be notified as soon as the movement is over.'* Leaflet No.4 on Your Food in Wartime, explains how distribution and rationing would be administered, while Leaflet No.5 on Fire Precautions in War time has headings such as 'Home Fire Fighters', 'The Fire Bomb', 'How to deal with Fire'.

The leaflets were an alarming read 85 years ago and are still so today.



The text of these leaflets can be deciphered (just) by Zooming in far as possible.

## A HISTORY OF SCHOOLS IN FULBOURN PART II: The early 19C

by Glynis Arber

This article, based on a Presentation given at our last A.G.M. is an amalgamation of all the research done on Schools in the parish of Fulbourn by members of The Fulbourn Village History Society over many years. Various sources eg Buildings, Maps, Documents, Newspaper reports and Photographs were consulted all of which are in our Archive Store. Hopefully, a story emerges that gives an insight into education within the village from the early 19C to the early 21C.

It was noted by 'Select Committee on Education of the Poor etc. (1818)' that in Fulbourn there was an evening school, with 27 boys and 4 girls attending and another with 10 girls. It may be that this was the only available time that children had to spend in education if they were working at jobs during the day. The Committee made a further comment concluding that 'The poor seem desirous to send their children to school, but the boys are obliged to labour very early'.

In Dr Hall's letter to the newspaper [16 December 1843], he states that 'In 1826 there was no Sunday School in connection with the church; but since that time, upon an average, one hundred and fifty children have belonged to the Sunday School, educated by me and twelve gratuitous teachers'.

He goes on to add that 'Moreover, there is a considerable Sunday school belonging to the Meeting'. By which he means the Chapel or United Reformed Church which was non-conformist and not Church of England like St Vigor's.

Sunday Schools were first set up in the late 18C to provide education for working children. These were the children of factory workers and farm labourers who typically worked alongside their parents six days a week, sometimes for more than 13 hours a day.

Sunday School teachers were not paid and were likely to be the daughters, wives and sisters of the more well to do who had received some education.



A 'Sunday School' with few pupils (who look well dressed).

Dr Hall further made the point in his letter that 'The Sunday School room, with its organ and stove, and tables, is provided by me, and the requisite Books have been always furnished by me, assisted of late years by the Vicar of Fulbourn All Saints; the annual treat to the children and the Teachers has, from the very first, been given by me'.



A 'Sunday School' with many (and poorer?) pupils.



## REVIEWS OF FULBOURN HISTORY SOCIETY TALKS

### October 2023. The David Parr House. Report by Tim Vaughan-Lane



This house in Gwydir Street has an unassuming exterior but houses an extraordinary time capsule of the Victorian and early twentieth century. David Parr bought the house in 1886 and lived in it until he died in 1936. The inside had scarcely changed since it was built in the mid nineteenth century. His granddaughter Elsie, moved into the house aged 12 years in 1927 and made few alterations, living in the house until 2009. Tamsin Wimshurst and her husband bought the house turning it into a Charity.

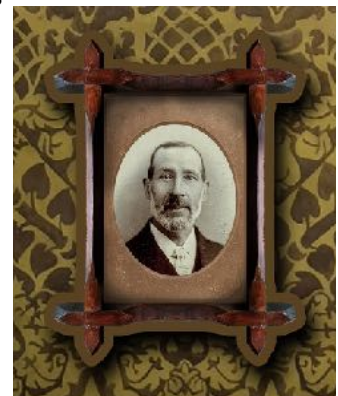
A little history of David Parr and the firm that he worked for. His father was an alcoholic who was prosecuted for neglect and cruelty to his 5 children. His mother had died from TB when he was just 6 years old. In the 1861 census it was recorded that David was living with his father and four siblings in Histon Road. Aged 16 he was apprenticed to the firm of F R Leech as a Joiner in 1871. The firm also made stained glass, had a painting and masonry studio. Fred Leech met George Bodley, a friend of William Morris, and so his association with the Arts and Crafts movement began. His renown spread and he was employed as far as Dundee.

The Presentation was given by Felicity McDonald-Smith from the Charity.  
Details of how to visit can be found at [davidparrhouse.org](http://davidparrhouse.org)

The firm did a lot of work on churches such as St Clements in Bridge street. It also painted the ceiling in Queens College. David Parr was recorded as having done some of this work. He was living in Islington in the 1881 census with his occupation listed as “Decorative Artist”.

He moved into Gwydir Street in 1887. He faithfully recorded the decoration that he carried out including some costings. He spent the first 6 years painting in Arts and Crafts styles, in some cases copied from William Morris. He started the ceilings projects in 1894. This was all painted by hand including the ceilings. No wall paper was used and the painting is remarkable. He then stopped decorating for 18 years before starting on the walls. The picture of David, below, is hung on one of his painted walls.

He would draw the pattern onto paper, then put a pin through the drawing in a lot of places, apply it to the wall and puff chalk onto the holes in the paper. He would then join up the chalk marks. He could then have the template for the other half of the design. Painting was all done with illumination by candles and oil lamps. Wood grains were painted on pine wooden doors to make them look like oak. He used salvaged items from his work, such as door finger plates. In an understairs cupboard his toolbox was found with all the contents faithfully labelled by David. Some five thousand items were archived during the initial restoration. There is further restoration work being done preserving as much as possible of the original but using specialist conservators to “fill in the gaps”



## **November 2023. The House of Spies.**

### **Report by Tim Vaughan-Lane**

The November meeting of the Fulbourn Village History Society was a fascinating tale of the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War by Roger Lievens, a Godmanchester resident and Author. His knowledge made this a wonderful talk full of “I never knew that”. The house in question, built in 1700, was requisitioned in World War 2 by the Government. It was an elegant home and was run by two RAF officers as a transit centre for SOE agents.

The first commander of Farm Hall arrived in 1942, straight from Bletchley Park. He was Squadron Leader Cautley Naysmith Shaw, whose nickname was Pink Gin Percy. He never missed the opportunity for liquid refreshment. Part of his job was to deliver Special Operations Executive operatives, from London to RAF Tempsford.

He also assisted in the retrieval and rehab of agents. Before they continued on their perilous journey, they were able to “relax” in the beautiful house and gardens. Parachuting into France could be extremely hazardous. Every item that they were taking with them had to be checked to exclude any UK identifiable item such as British cigarettes. His subsequent replacement was Wg Cdr Bruce Bonsey (Bonzo) whom Pink Gin Percy met over a drink at The Old Bridge Hotel in Huntingdon to entice him to work at Farm Hall.

Agents came back to the Hall when there were concerns that they were at risk of being discovered. One such was Peggy Van Lier who was involved with the Comet Line, a resistance organisation set up to smuggle downed airmen from Belgium and France to Spain. She met an Officer captured at Dunkirk who had escaped back to England. She married the aforesaid Jimmy Langley and after the war they retired from active service to run a bookshop.

Airey Neave was one of a few British officers to escape from Colditz. He worked from the Hall to supervise the drop of some Belgian agents. Members of the team involved in the Telemark operation also passed through.

A remarkable man Vadim Grineviches, was a white Russian forced to leave Ukraine as a child. He subsequently took up employment in the British passport Office in Sofia and became a naturalised British citizen in 1929. He then worked for British intelligence in Bulgaria. He was kidnapped on a train trying to get out of Sofia. Records show that he was interrogated in Berlin in 1942. He was then transferred to Dachau and from there to Flossenberg concentration camp. He was kept in solitary confinement for a lot of the time but managed to communicate by various means with a group of 13 British Officers. They were all shot by the Gestapo.

In an allied repatriation camp in Naples, he gave a formal statement to that effect. After the war ended, he returned to Farm Hall for six weeks recuperation. People were advised not to talk to him until he had started to recover from the atrocities he had witnessed. He then visited the next of kin of all of those murdered officers to give them their final words that he had recorded. The German scientists who were involved in the development of nuclear power spent some weeks at the Hall. All their rooms were bugged unbeknown to them. In one of the transcriptions of their conversations they didn't think that the British were clever enough to do this!

And finally hats off to Crommie (officially Cromwell), a golden cocker spaniel whose master was Pink Gin Percy. He was a constant presence supporting agents both before and after their missions. On one occasion he slept in the arms of a Czech agent who had had an abortive drop. By the morning he was much calmer. Crommie survived the war living out his final years with Pink Percy at his farm in Rhodesia. After some lobbying by Roger Lievens the PDSA recognised Crommie for his war work as one of the first PTSD dogs. To the right of the front door of Farm Hall mounted on a plinth is a statue of a cocker spaniel, paid for by the present owner Professor Marcial Echenique. It simply reads “CROMMIE, who comforted agents in WW2”.

**Reviews of the Talks from December 2023 to March 2024 will appear in Newsletter No. 60**