



Back in January 2014, Stewart Barber sent out a letter to everyone at The Grange saying “The Trustees of Eckling Grange are delighted to announce the appointment of Mr. Ian Masson as Pastor to Eckling Grange. This appointment will commence on 3rd February 2014 and Ian will take on the lead role heading the Pastoral Team and Spiritual work. Eckling Grange has been caring for the elderly, both physically and spiritually, for 50 years, but Ian’s appointment makes him the first ever employed Pastor to the Care Charity. Ian is currently the part-time Pastor to Saxlingham Nethergate Chapel and he will continue this work alongside his new responsibilities here at Eckling Grange.”

Almost 10 years have rolled by, and it has been, and continues to be, a great privilege to serve God in this unique place and to share the love of Jesus with residents and staff, week by week. Working as a Pastor is a very humbling experience, because the role is all about shepherding and you are under-shepherd to ‘the great shepherd of the sheep’, the Lord Jesus Christ. It’s a role in which I continue to be greatly blessed by those I care about and try to care for. And I’ve learned so much from you all along the way. What does the Pastor do? He leads, he visits, he teaches and he prays. He heals, though without using any pills or a knife. He is often a social worker, a bit of a philosopher, entertainer and salesman. He is supposed to be a scholar! He visits the sick, buries the dead, consoles those who sorrow, and tries to stay sweet when chided for not doing his duty. He plans programmes and spends time keeping people out of each other's hair. Between times, he prepares talks and sermons and preaches them on Sunday. Then on Monday he smiles when someone comments "what a job! one day a week!" Well, for me, it’s two and a half days a week of privileged ministry among those who have helped to bring me closer to God in ways I could not have expected. For that I say a big thank you to God. Now Pastor Nigel is with us; and I am delighted to be serving with him and we both look forward to what God will continue to do in the coming months and years at Eckling Grange. Ian Mason

ECKLING GRANGE



That Thine eyes may be open toward
this house night and day - hearken unto
the prayer - Hear thou in heaven - forgive -
I KINGS. 8. 29 - 30

LET POSTERITY NOTE AND HISTORY
RECORD THAT ON MAY 25th 1963
ECKLING GRANGE
WAS OFFICIALLY OPENED - BY THE
GOODNESS OF GOD - AS A CHRISTIAN
HOME FOR RETIRED AND DISABLED
PEOPLE - BY
JOHN WILLIAMSON Esq. C.B.E.
This stone was unveiled by
Major WILLIAM F. BATT M.B.E. D.L. J.P.
HIGH SHERIFF OF NORFOLK

1963-2023

Contact Magazine

Eric has asked me to write an introduction to his last Eckling Grange Contact Magazine, issue number 60. Firstly, we need to acknowledge and gratefully thank Eric for the many years of editing this magazine and pulling together so many ideas and stories which have made it an interesting read for so many people over the last ten years. He started in September 2013 and since then, he has produced a magazine every two months. Thank you Eric and enjoy your retirement.....

In 1963, Eckling Grange was officially opened as a Christian Care Home for retired Missionaries, and since then, the charity has continued to care for the elderly from all four corners of the globe. Thousands of Residents have lived at the complex and it is our joy to be able to celebrate God's continued faithfulness, and that in 2023 the original aims and aspirations of the charity are still going strong.

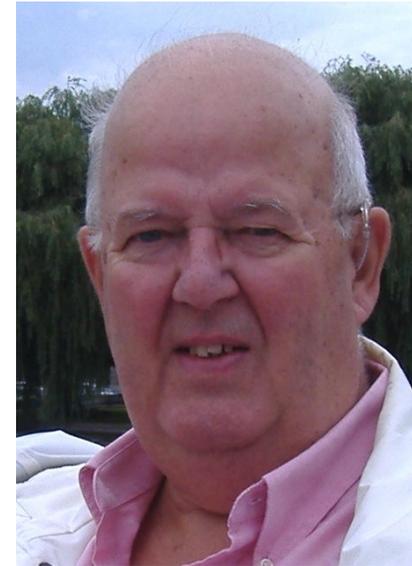
I started work here as General Manager in 2007, but my connections with Eckling Grange go back a lot further than that. Five of my relatives have lived on site at differing times, including my Grandfather, Bert Cason, who lived in bungalow 52 from 1987 to 1992 and a Great Aunt and Uncle who started in bungalow 6 and then spent their last days in the then Nursing Wing. As some of you know, my Dad, Bob Barber, was a Trustee as well for several years, although before I came, so my family connections cover at least 36 years of the Eckling Grange history.

So, like so many families, both local from the Dereham area or from our worldwide family, we should all want to give thanks to God for this amazing place. Everyone who has, and all those who live here now, should consider it a privilege to be able to enjoy this complex and its six acres of grounds, which has been provided through many years of service, dedication and giving.

Thank you to all who have served as trustees, worked as staff, volunteered or given financially over the last 60 years to make all this happen.

But lastly, and I am sure David Potter would agree, to God be the Glory.

Stewart Barber



FAREWELL

This will be the last issue of Contact from me after 59 editions. The first was in 2013, but now I am 93 and find it a little difficult seeing everything on the laptop. Margaret and I moved into The Grange in 2009 and I thank the Lord every day for bringing us here, just living with the Lord's people. I have missed the fellowship we used to have in the main lounge during Covid, but it is lovely to see things returning to normal.

Eric



ECKLING GRANGE 50th CELEBRATIONS



David's parents were Charles Robert Potter, born 1883, a Farm Labourer from Shelfanger, Diss and Florence Emma Welton. Florence,, David's mother, died in 1920, aged just 35. David Charles Potter was born in Norfolk in 1914. He had four bothers and four sisters. From an early age, David developed a love for the elderly people. After his mother died, when he was only six years old, David spent many hours with his Grandfather, sitting on his knee, listening to stories. On leaving school he was an apprentice with builders at Beetley. When David was 18, in 1932, he was baptised at the Dereham Baptist Church, under the ministry of Rev. Sidney A. Gray, but left the following year and joined the Christian Brethren meeting at Toftwood Gospel Hall, where he regularly worshiped until the time of his death. He was known for his love of the elderly, which continued throughout his life and was to be a major influence in founding three Eventide homes in Norfolk, South Green Eventide Home, Quebec Hall and Eckling Grange. David spent every other Sunday afternoon at the Workhouse at Gressenhall, now the museum, where he took a service for 20 or so elderly residents who loved the old hymns and the packet of Polos they were given at the end of each service!



David began his own business in 1938 in a small way - Potter Brothers Builders - as one of a family of nine. His workshop and offices were on the site of what is now the Latter Day Saints Church near Tesco. At one time, there were over 200 employees. He owned steam vehicles - and during petrol rationing at the time of the Suez crisis in 1957, he ran a fleet of them. There was a Sentinel steam lorry they used, which would get its water from the Rushmeadow brook. An old traction engine was behind the workshop, connected to the workshop central heating, fuelled by the waste from the shop. It was temperamental and the heating pipes around the workshop got very hot. In early January windows had to be opened wide to let the heat out. David liked his steam engines! He had a steam coach fitted out as a mobile workshop at one time. He also used a real steam roller. Most of the office staff were 15 year old girl school leavers and the young men in the workshop did a five year apprenticeship.



GARDEN CONSTRUCTION 2017



VISITING CAMEO SINGERS



THE LOUNGE 1960 AND TODAY



EASTER AROUND THE BANDSTAND



SOME OF OUR CARE STAFF



75TH JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS



David's first building, the Christian Brethren Gospel Hall, Shipdham Road, Toftwood.

He soon graduated to public work contacts, and supervised the building of secondary schools at Fakenham, Wells, Aylsham, Swaffham and Burnham Market. He also built police stations in Dereham, Dersingham, Hunstanton and Downham Market.

David built the large George Borrow housing estate on Yaxham Road, each road being named after an employee, Smithtyne Avenue, Burtontyne Avenue, etc. He also built the first houses on Moorgate Road, Dereham.

He also turned the windmills at Saham Toney and Hindolveston into homes.



In June 1939 David married Brenda Roma Saunders at Dereham, and they lived in Toftwood in a house built by David. He also lived in a house in Commercial Road called Whitehall. The recreation grounds were once a field connected to the big house, which was then owned by Mr. H. H. Aldiss, whose shop was in the High Street, Dereham. He left the field to the people of Dereham in his will, hence it should never be built on and events cannot charge an entrance fee (in 1948 horses still grazed there). The house became derelict and children would play around it until it was pulled down. David then moved to The Beeches, next to Yaxham railway station, where he had a number of steam engines and lorries in the grounds of his home. David and Brenda had three children, including Beryl, who was born in 1945. David's wife Brenda passed away, aged 49, on 24th December, 1960.



MORNING SERVICE IN THE ORCHARD



JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS



ALZHEIMER'S WALK



FASHION PARADE



CHRISTMAS DINNER



ECKLING GRANGE BY-THE-SEA

In 1963 David married Bertha Rosalind Horne, daughter of Arthur Horne, a builder and undertaker of Mattishall, at the Methodist Church in Mattishall. David and Bertha had two daughters, Leah and Rachel. David built a 'windmill' near Yaxham Station in 1974/5 on land leased from British Rail, with the intention of providing electricity to light his chicken houses and perhaps later, his own house nearby.

The mill, sometimes known as Potter's Folly, was featured in newspapers in April 1975, but early in May, in a strong wind,, the iron pipe windshaft sheared between the neck and the head wheel and the sails had to come down. Later that month, the teeth of the curb were stripped in another high wind and the mill was tail-winded. The shutters were subsequently removed and the mill has remained derelict. Although David Potter was able to build the mill using his own firm's materials, the never-used electrical equipment cost about £2,000.



David bought Eckling Grange from Capt. B. A. Smart in 1962. Eckling Grange is set in beautiful, well-maintained gardens on the outskirts of Dereham. David converted it into a house for 50 residents, the house being enlarged with many rooms, and a medical block was later added.

David's wife, Bertha, remembers him standing with her on the back lawn and he could see in his mind's eye the horseshoe of bungalows with the covered walkway. He knew exactly what he wanted to do. A lot of work had to be done, inside and out.

With the help of the previous owner, Mr. B. A. Smart, workmen were soon busy plumbing, rewiring, decorating and furnishing. Building the 58 bungalows began with a covered walkway all round, to protect residents from the elements of the weather, ideal for retired people who could be as independent as they wished, but in reach of care, if needed.

The bungalows were grouped in a horseshoe around a lawn with mature, shady trees, and an orchard with fruit of every kind.



ECKLING GRANGE

PICTURE PARADE





Graham Pickhaver, Chairman

Eckling Grange has a board of Trustees which comprises of local Christians from differing backgrounds. They all have a heart for the care of the elderly and regularly meet to consider the short and long term aims of the charity.

For many years Eckling Grange has been supported by those who give their time to assist with life around The Grange.

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| David Goddard, Trustee | Richard Pennington, Trustee |
| Liz Cross, Trustee | Philip Goddard, Trustee |
| Heather Havers, Trustee | Tim Johnson, Trustee |

There is also a team of over ten volunteers All give their time to see the residents' lives enriched.

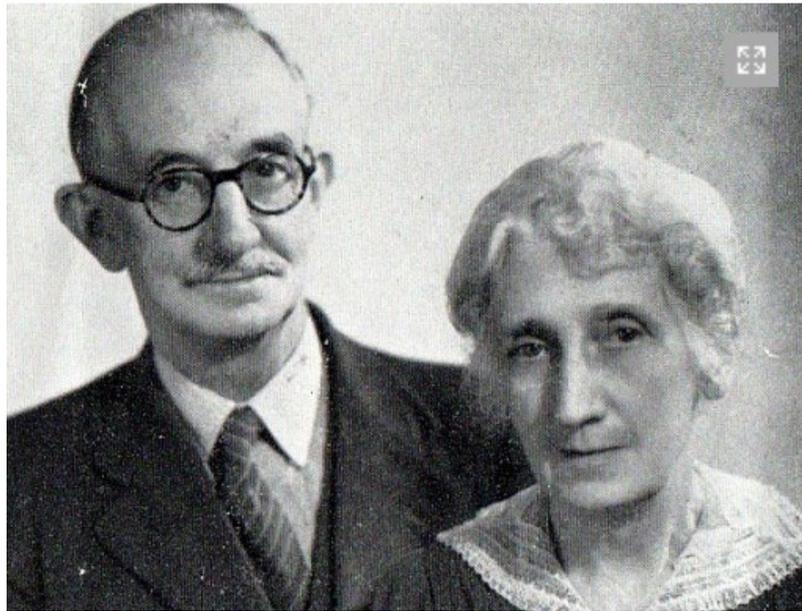
This team brings with them a positive influence to The Grange. Some help with one-to-one befriending, while others are involved with therapy groups, trips out or other activities.



Capt. Smart was Chairman and Managing Director of Jentique and Metamec in Dereham. He made a name for himself in the First World War when he was awarded the Great War D.S.O. and Bar for the destruction of a Zeppelin in 1917. Eckling Grange had been built by Charles Norton Elvin in 1877, who also bought Dereham Memorial Hall, where they repaired and made broughams, landaus, gigs and wagonettes.

1895: Nov 27 - Norwich Mercury - East Dereham, House TO LET - ECKLING GRANGE a good house, about a mile from East Dereham Railway Station, containing 3 reception rooms, 6 bedrooms, 2 dressing rooms and a servant bedroom, also conservatories; and if required about 6 acres of land and double cottage. Rent for whole £55, or without cottages, £45.

Eckling Grange was purchased by John Henry Skinner, the founder of Hobbies Ltd of East Dereham. Their name was known worldwide through their products, which they advertised in a magazine which they printed themselves, first simply "Hobbies", which later became "Hobbies Weekly", selling for a penny.



David was inspired to open Eckling Grange after he had witnessed the heart-breaking splitting of a couple, Mr. and Mrs. Griffiths, who were living at Quebec Hall. At that time, the hall did not provide nursing care and Mrs. Griffiths required a small amount of nursing care twice a day, so she was sent to a non-Christian home in Norwich. The Griffiths had faithfully served as Missionaries for 53 years and it was their parting which led to the establishing of Eckling Grange. Mr. and Mrs. Payne, together with a nurse, moved in to help receive the first residents. Mr. and Mrs. Griffiths had a room upstairs, overlooking the side lawn. Because Mrs. Griffiths was a frail little lady and as the lift had not yet been installed, David carried her in his arms up the stairs. There the couple spent one happy year together, having meals in their room and being looked after until the Lord called her home.



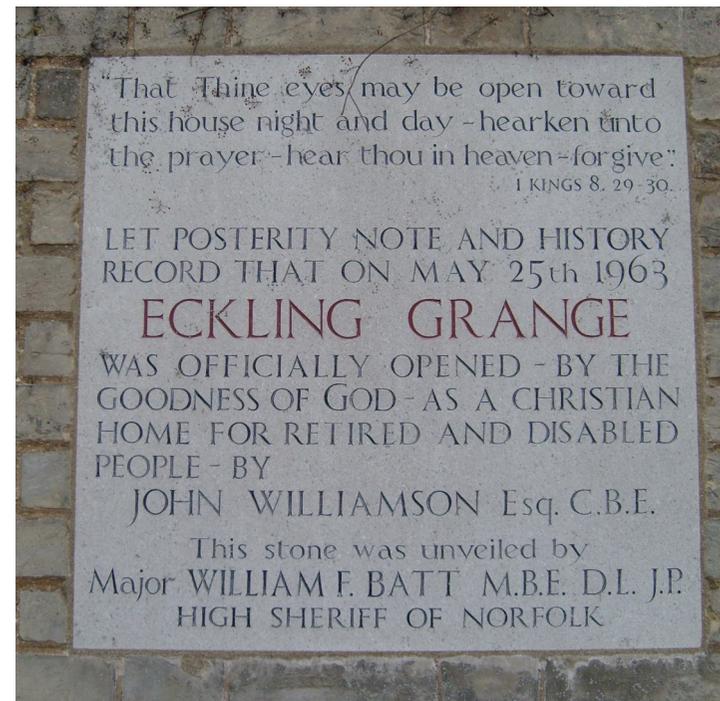
On 27th May, 2014 work started on the main lounge refurbishment. Over the next seven weeks the room was completely stripped back to bare walls and additional insulation and a new heating system were added. The whole room was then plastered and redecorated, before the final touches of carpeting and curtains were added.

The atmosphere in the Home is excellent. In the vast majority of conversations had with individual residents, it has been a matter of a few seconds before they talk about how thrilled they are with the care they receive. The care staff go about their work efficiently and unobtrusively. The care really does come across as genuine. In the Home itself there are 60 rooms, covering various levels of care, including a Dementia Care Unit. There is also a very good range of communal facilities, including dining rooms, large lounges, patio areas and extensive gardens.

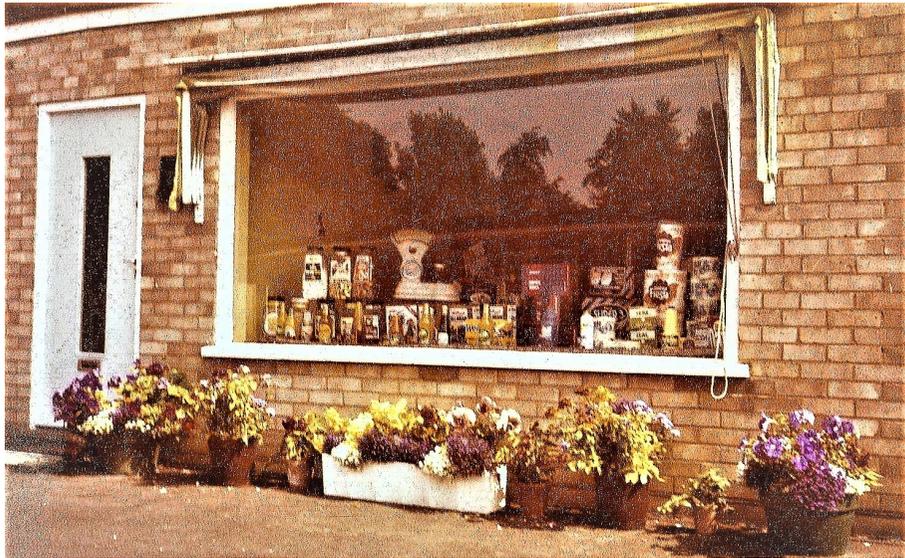


Ian Masson, who is also part-time Pastor at Saxlingham Nethergate Chapel, was appointed Pastor by the Trustees of Eckling Grange and started on 3rd February, 2014.

General manager, Stewart Barber, said “Eckling Grange had been caring for the elderly, both physically and spiritually, for 50 years, but Ian’s appointment makes him the first ever employed Pastor to the care charity. The role of Pastor to Eckling Grange will increase the Christian care and pastoral support they can offer to all the Residents, both in the Home and the Bungalows, their families and the staff. Ian had a strong background in pastoral care and was well known to Eckling Grange. He also brings his family along to sing.



The opening day took place on May 25th, 1963. A large marquee was erected on the back lawn for the meetings and another on the front lawn for the teas. Mr. and Mrs. Smart, the previous owners, A. V. Hilton Esq., MP, and members of the Dereham Council, attended. Messages were given during the afternoon by Mr. John Williamson C.B.E., and Major William Batt M.B.E. D.L.J.P. Mrs. Softley from the shop arranged two singing items by some of the Residents and the house and bungalows were open for visitors to see. At 6.00 p.m. there was the unveiling of the stone ceremony at the front of Eckling Grange by Major William Batt, then everyone returned to the main marquee for the evening service. The Norwich Christ for Victory sang three hymns - “How Great Thou Art”, “The Lord’s My Shepherd” and finished with The Hallelujah Chorus. The weather had been excellent, making it a wonderful day.



A shop was built in the grounds to help Residents who could not get into town. Mrs. Softley, a born shopkeeper, managed this, helped by her son, Mr. Edwin Softley, a trained nurse. They moved into a upstairs flat in the house. Mrs. Louisa Eaton took on the responsibility of the shop in 1973 with her husband, who was 22 years her senior. They lived behind the shop before moving into one of the three very old cottages with narrow steep stairs to the bedroom, along Mattishall Road. Mrs. Eaton lived there until moving into one of the bungalows when the shop closed. On 3rd November, 2016 a thanksgiving service was held for her life. She had lived at Eckling Grange 46 years.

David died on 31st October 1980 and 200 people attended his funeral at the Toftwood Gospel Hall, Dereham. Mourners had to be turned away and meet in a neighbouring schoolroom, where the service was relayed. Cars lined the main street of Toftwood.



On 5th June, 2013 the 50th anniversary was celebrated of the official opening of Eckling Grange, with the main point of the afternoon to give thanks to God for all that He had provided at Eckling Grange over the years. Pictures of the past and present were on display and 230 invited guests joined in the celebrations. Among the guests were several people who had also attended the opening in 1963. Mr. Russell Horne and Mr. David Jack spoke of their experiences and testified of God's faithfulness at Eckling Grange. During the afternoon the Bridgham and Harling Band entertained everyone, followed by buffet provided from The Grange kitchen, which was enjoyed by all.