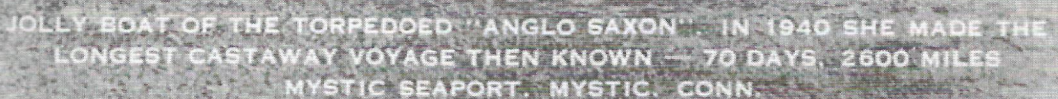




**👉 JOLLY
BOAT'S
TRAGIC
VOYAGE**

GOLF WIDOWS: A DUTCH INVENTION?

👉 SOCIETY MOURNS PASSING OF TWO GREATS



THE HISTORY MAGAZINE OF THE TOWN OF OYSTER BAY

Editorial

Oyster Bay is reeling from the shock of losing two fixtures in the local non-profit world: Angela Koenig and Dr. John A. Gable. Both had a wide-ranging impact on Oyster Bay, Angela in the sheer breadth of her activities and John for the length of his service as Executive Director of the Theodore Roosevelt Association.

Angela Koenig was someone I could always count on for advice on the proper manner in which to handle any sticky situation.

Given his encyclopedic knowledge of TR, John was my "go-to guy" on any question regarding Oyster Bay's most famous resident.

Both served as valued trustees of the Oyster Bay Historical Society and I will sorely miss both of them.

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THE FREEHOLDER

of the

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Purpose: The Oyster Bay Historical Society was founded in 1960 with the express purpose of preserving the history of the Town of Oyster Bay. The Society maintains a museum and research library in the Town-owned c. 1720 Earle-Wightman House, 20 Summit Street, Oyster Bay
Call (516) 922-5032 for more information.

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THE POST RIDER

To the Editor:

Thanks so much for the fascinating article by Claire Bellerjeau about the Townsend Jug. The reader can't help feeling how much the author must have enjoyed doing all that engrossing and rewarding research. Very interesting about Washington and Thomas Paine. Our first president certainly had difficult and painful choices to make.

Reading the *Freeholder* is always a

rewarding occupation!

Just as I was about to sign off I received the copy of *The Architecture of Oyster Bay*. What an incredible job! Just wonderful! You cannot be commended too highly! I only hope it shakes some people up! Good luck! And thanks to Senator Marcellino!

Arlene Goodenough

Thank you, Arlene. You are too kind! For any of our readers who did not receive a copy of our Fall "Architecture of Oyster Bay" special issue, copies may be acquired at the Historical Society, at Blocklyn's Books, or by ordering on our website, www.oysterbayhistory.org. Select back issues of *The Freeholder* and

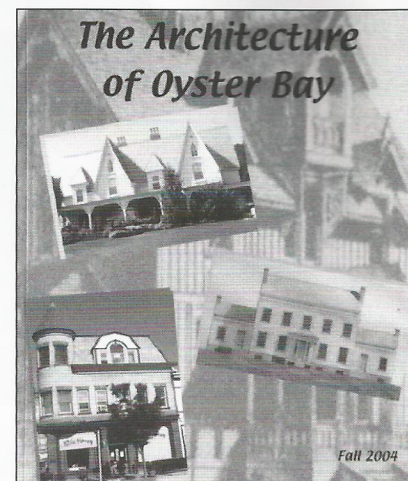
ABOUT OUR FRONT COVER

How did this jolly boat get from England to the Bahamas, thence to Connecticut, and finally back to England? And just what does it have to do with Oyster Bay?

See OBHS Trustee Steve Walker's fascinating story on page 3!

Photo courtesy of Stephen V. Walker.

our other special issues on the *Italian-American Experience in Oyster Bay*, *Recreation in Oyster Bay*, or *The Art of Oyster Bay* are also available.



THE JOLLY BOAT AND THE LETTER SAVED

by Stephen Vincent Walker

In everyone's life there is at least one family story so etched in distant memory that it cries out for investigation, yet invariably discovery is put off "for another day." In my fifty-two years the following story took fifty-one years to unfold...

Sixty-four years ago, on the night of August 21, 1940, calamity struck my grandfather's English family. Although he emigrated to America in the 1890s (settling in Oyster Bay about 1907), he kept in close touch by mail with his sister Amy Wilkins. On that awful night Amy's grandson, Roy Pilcher, an English merchant seaman, was 870 miles west of the Canary Islands on the *S.S. Anglo-Saxon*, a freighter taking coal to South America. A German surface raider, the *Widder* (disguised as a Spanish freighter, *El Neptuno*) opened fire on the *Anglo-Saxon*. Of a crew of forty-one, thirty-four perished immediately as the *Anglo-Saxon* sank beneath the waves.

However, seven of the crew managed to lower the ship's "jolly boat" and cast off into the

darkness. The regular lifeboats, strafed with bullet holes, were unusable but the jolly boat, a simple, functional 18-foot boat for ship to shore use, was unscathed. Roy Pilcher, the second radio officer ("Second Sparks"), and six others quietly made their escape. The valiant radio officer eagerly took his part rowing without complaint about his seriously mangled foot, which had been injured in the attack.

Roy Pilcher heroically lasted ten days into the castaway voyage, but on September 1st the gangrene which had set in took his twenty-one year old life. As his strength was ebbing he apologized for the stench his foot created, and bravely refused to partake of the small store of water they had so that the others would have a better chance of surviving. Besides his brave and gentlemanly spirit, Pilcher

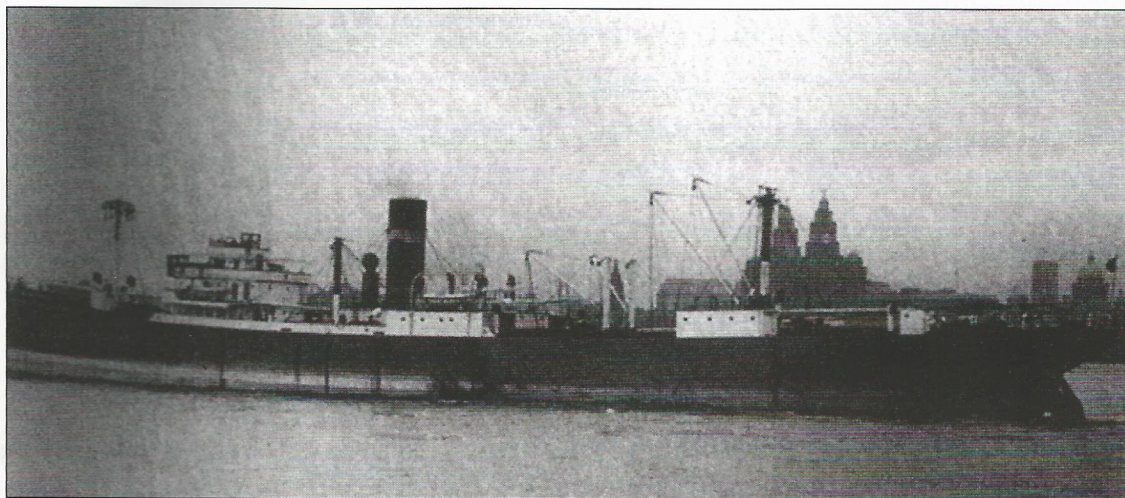


Roy Pilcher

also left his briefcase in the jolly boat after his passing. In the case was a pipe, a razor, a pound of pipe tobacco, his radio operator's log, time sheets as well as a letter

(to be described later).

In the weeks ahead four more of the sailors met their untimely demise as well. Miraculously though on



S.S. Anglo-Saxon

October 30th, after seventy days at sea in an open boat, two of the sailors, Roy Widdicombe and Robert Tapscott, achieved land-fall 2275 miles west across the Atlantic, on the island of Eleuthera in the Bahamas. A swoon of publicity greeted the two emaciated sailors when the enormity of their ordeal became apparent. The amazing tale of their survival was soon chronicled in a book, *Two Survived*, by Guy Pearce Jones, who interviewed both survivors. The jolly boat itself was purchased at auction by a Lady Oakes who in turn decided to have it displayed at the maritime museum at Mystic Seaport in Connecticut, where it told its amazing story for many years.

Roy Hamilton Pilcher, my second cousin, was one of two children of Bernard and Beatrice Pilcher. His sister, Beryl Joan Pilcher, was a stylish, friendly and well-spoken woman. Her outgoing nature suited her well for a career in the British foreign service, and she was eventually awarded the M.B.E. for her exemplary work. Postings around the entire globe afforded her the opportunity to experience life to the fullest, including getting to know her American cousins whenever her duties took her to New York City or Washington D.C. A visit from Cousin Beryl was one of the highlights of my childhood growing up in Oyster Bay. Though she had seen the seven wonders of the world twice over, she was always happy to visit our small town and get to know all of our family and friends. One summer she even tagged along on a trip to the Adirondacks and Montreal's



The author appears above with his mother and and his second cousin Beryl Joan Pilcher outside of the Walkers' Oyster Bay home.

Expo '67.

In 1953, when I was not yet one year old (I later found out), Beryl read in the July issue of *Coronet* magazine an account of her dear brother's fatal ordeal, and that the jolly boat was on display in Mystic Seaport. My father then drove her from Oyster Bay to Mystic so that she could make some peace with the awful tragedy thirteen years past.

Beryl Pilcher never dwelled on her personal horror, and I only remember her infectious good cheer each time she visited. It was left up to my Dad to fill me in on this great void in her life. At the end of every visit, Beryl always begged us to visit her in England. I had fervently hoped to take her up on this someday but alas a fatal illness took her from us in 1972 while I was still a college student. My mother howev-

er, did get "across the pond" to visit her in 1968 (even though my father, the actual blood relative, just wouldn't get into an airplane). At that time she was introduced to Beryl's parents, Bernard and Trix, as well as Beryl's first cousin, Joy Wykes and her family.

By 1981 both of my parents had passed away, and as I began to raise my own family it became apparent to me that unless I were to make some contact with my English cousins myself, our family would cease to know its English heritage. So in 1989 my wife Gail and I traveled to England with our two children to meet my cousin Joy and her family. In addition to the wonderful times we had with my vibrant and articulate cousin Joy, I saw first hand the pain in her matter-of-fact dispatch of the particulars of the

death of "Bun," (Roy's family nickname) whom she had last seen on her 21st birthday.

I also had the pleasure of meeting Joy's brother, Geoffrey, and his wife Kate. Geoff remembered spending most of his summer holidays with Roy, either at Royston, the Pilcher home in Godalming, Surrey, or at his own home in Nettlestone on the Isle of Wight. Both Roy and Geoffrey seemed drawn to the call of the sea like other Isle of Wight seafarers in their lineage. A cousin, Stanley Walker, sailed the globe as a ship's steward, and a great-grandfather, John Walker, was a sailor on the second place *Aurora* in the original America's Cup race of 1851.

By the time the growing evil of fascism had so senselessly taken his cousin's life in 1940, Geoffrey Wilkins was already steadfastly serving his country at sea. He joined the Royal Navy in 1938, serving on the *H. M. S. Warspite* which saw action in battles at Narvik, Calabria, Matapan and Crete. He also served on the destroyers *H. M. S. Blasdale*, *Tyrian* and *Opportunity*, in

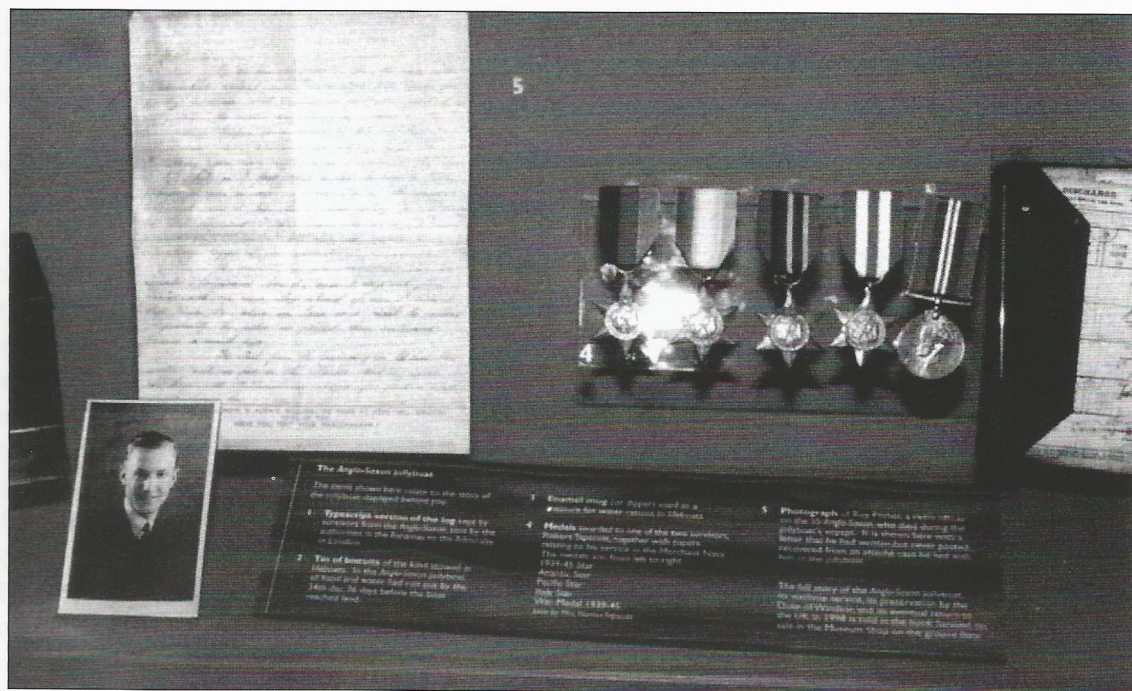
the battle of Dieppe, the invasion of Sicily and the landings at Salerno and Anzio. By the end of his naval career in 1961, he had risen from Able Seaman to Chief Petty Officer and also Gunnery Instructor.

After returning home, from time to time I got the feeling that I too had to make a pilgrimage to see Roy's boat in Mystic and lay his story to rest. Eventually I called the museum to inquire about seeing the jolly boat. They said it was no longer on display but that they would be glad to show it to me if given a few days notice. As life often gets in the way of such pursuits, I procrastinated in following through on my wish. However, my cousin Alfred eventually did go to see it when he accompanied his son's class outing to Mystic. When he returned and described its positioning in storage, I felt melancholy about the boat's inability to

tell its story trapped inside a shed. He also said it appeared to be being readied for travel somewhere. At the time I had little grasp of what was afoot.

Thus I was astounded when I next received a letter from Cousin Joy's daughter Madeleine, who had visited the Imperial War Museum in London with her husband Colin, an avid airplane enthusiast, and had inadvertently come upon a new display of the *S.S. Anglo-Saxon* jolly boat! A few years later my brother Daniel and his wife Tanya visited London and were the next family members to see the new jolly boat exhibit.

With a gleam in his eye upon his return, Dan relayed to me two important discoveries. The first was the display of an unposted letter written 64 years ago by Roy Pilcher to a good friend. The letter made the trip to the Bahamas in Roy's briefcase then came



The exhibit at the Imperial War Museum includes the letter written by Roy Pilcher to Cliff Walder.

back across the Atlantic when the case was returned to his parents. They in turn gave it to the friend who had kept it ever since. The second discovery was a new book written on the subject of the *Anglo-Saxon* jolly boat's ordeal entitled *Survived*, by Anthony Smith. I devoured the new book, which not only recounted the story itself but elaborated on how the jolly boat came to make its way from Connecticut back to England.

Mr. Smith, on whom *Two Survived* had made a lasting impression when he read it decades earlier as a school boy, decided to make a B.B.C. radio presentation about it in 1990. One listener was extremely interested in the broadcast, a Desmond Denny, whose brother, Barry Denny, was one of the five who made it into the jolly boat but perished, like Pilcher, on the voyage. Mr. Smith received a letter from Mr. Denny requesting a transcript of the broadcast.

The two made arrangements to

meet and Mr. Denny also contacted a Mr. Ted Milburn, son of Edward Milburn, Chief Engineer of the *Anglo-Saxon*, who perished in the initial attack. As they gathered at the Merchant Seamen's Monument at Tower Hill in London on Remembrance Day, they wondered what had become of the boat itself. When they subsequently discovered that the boat had been preserved at Mystic Seaport in America, a dream filled their thoughts....could the jolly boat finally come home to England?

Anthony Smith tirelessly pursued this dream with the aid and support of Ted Milburn and Desmond Denny (now deceased). After protracted negotiations, Mr. Smith fulfilled the four requirements necessary to bring the boat to England: permission from the Oakes family, permission from Mystic Seaport, an agreement with London's Imperial War Museum and the graciously donated services of a transport

company to do the job (P. & O. Steam Navigation).

Mr. Smith also pursued as many relatives of the *Anglo-Saxon* sailors as he could. For the family of Roy Pilcher though, he could not find any blood relations, though he was lucky to find Roy's best friend, Cliff Walder, who had saved Roy's last letter to him for all these years. Last January, when my brother Dan came back with a picture of Roy's letter and photo on display, I yearned to know more about this letter. I also felt the need to tell Mr. Smith that Roy's sister Beryl had at least been able to make some peace with her tragedy by making her pilgrimage to Mystic with my Dad in 1953.

So in early February I sent off a three page letter to Mr. Smith telling my story, along with family pictures we had of Beryl and Roy. Within the next two weeks I received an avalanche of replies and not from Mr. Smith! Mr. Smith himself didn't have time to reply immediately for he was just about to go on holiday. But he contacted his jolly boat acquaintances and they immediately contacted me. Therefore, having simply requested information as to how I could obtain a copy of Roy's letter, I was astounded to open a letter from the 84 year-old friend himself to whom the letter was addressed 64 years ago!

Cliff Walder was an intimate friend of the Pilcher family. He first met Roy in 1934 through Roy's cousin Roderick, who was a schoolmate of Cliff's. They enjoyed happy days of table tennis, the beach and the cinema together. They even shared a girlfriend, who started out with Cliff



The author's father by the jolly boat at Mystic Seaport Museum, 1953.

but transferred her affections to Roy when he came on the scene. After Roy joined the Marconi company, the two pals stayed in touch and when Cliff's next girlfriend, Daphne (his wife-to-be), was posted to work in Godalming, the Pilchers' hometown, the family helped her find a place to live, and Beryl became great friends with her.

Around August 1940, Cliff wanted to visit Daphne so the Pilchers invited him to spend a weekend. After the news of Roy's death, the Pilchers continued to open their home to Cliff throughout the war. After the war, Cliff and his wife continued to stay in touch with Uncle Bernard, Auntie Trix and "Gran" (Aunt Amy Wilkins). Roy's girlfriend, Marion Wastell, after coming to terms with her own grief, eventually married a Canadian and moved to Canada, where she still lives.

The next day's mail included a large envelope from Ted Milburn with a stack of photos and articles about the *Anglo-Saxon*, all meticulously noted, and a copy of Roy's letter to Cliff, now framed in the Imperial War Museum. In the letter, Roy describes various ports he has been to (St. Vincent, Montevideo, Buenos Aires, Santos and Rio Grande Do Sul), the conditions on the boat ("...the wireless room is like an oven ... but an icebox compared to the engine room which has had a temperature of 134."), politics ("Last year I was up in Norway going through the Fiords past



The extended family gathers for a photo around the jolly boat exhibit at the Imperial War Museum.

Trimso and Hammerfest ... not exactly where the fighting is taking place but similar country and I find it hard to realize that in place of small fishing boats there are large men-of-war ... such is life."), and his good wishes to the folks at home.

In my third day's mail yet another package arrived, another newly published book on the jolly boat story, *All Brave Sailors*, by J. Revel Carr, with an inscription "with utmost respect for your cousin Roy Pilcher, who is such a key figure in this book." I was astounded to know that Mr. Carr, the former curator of Mystic Seaport, knew of my cousin Beryl's pilgrimage to Mystic in 1953, and had unsuccessfully tried to find the Mr. Walker (my father) who had accompanied her on that day.

Deeply touched by this triple-barrel response as well as Mr. Smith's letter upon his return, I became determined to stop procrastinating and make plans to see the jolly boat once and for all. Though it would now cost me a 3000 mile plane fare, instead of the hour and a half ferry ride across Long Island Sound that it had been for my entire life, I was

happy to contemplate visiting the jolly boat "at home" in England. Thus on August 10th, 2004, our thirtieth wedding anniversary, we were welcomed to the home of my 85 year-old cousin, Joy Wykes, in Horsley, Surrey.

Four days later, on a Saturday jaunt through the countryside to see some historic sites, we decided to make a pilgrimage to Canterbury Cathedral. As we walked through the pilgrims' gate and into the cathedral grounds, I was not prepared for the tug at my heart some angel was about to cause. For just at the moment that I paused in front of the main altar a bell tolled and a voice over a loudspeaker intoned "At this time we pause for our weekly remembrance of those men and women who have given their lives in wartime," and I shed a tear for brave Bun, and for his dear sister Beryl.

Two days later my cousin Trevor drove us to visit my cousin Geoffrey and his wife on the Isle of Sheppey in Kent. Geoff took us to the waterfront and told us that he liked living in Sheerness because it afforded ample opportunity for watching

continued on p. 22

SUMNER WELLES: BRILLIANCE AND TRAGEDY

by Raymond E. Spinzia

Welles' rise within the State Department was meteoric, portending a brilliant government career. In 1915 he was assigned to his first post as the third secretary at the United States Embassy in Japan. By 1922 he was serving in the State Department as Chief of the Latin American division. In 1933 the forty-year-old Sumner Welles was appointed by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt to the position of Assistant Secretary of State and, then, just three weeks later United States Ambassador to Cuba. In 1937 Welles became Under Secretary of State, second in the department's chain of command to Secretary of State Cordell Hull.

During his tenure as Under Secretary, Welles was the driving force within the department; the person to whom FDR turned when he needed advice and/or action.¹ He is credited with conceiving and implementing the Good Neighbor Policy, which became the cornerstone of the Roosevelt administration's Latin American policy; drafting the original charter for the United Nations; playing a major support role within the Roosevelt administration for the establishment of the state of Israel; and authoring, with FDR, Churchill, and British Under Secretary of State Alexander Cadogan, the Atlantic Charter, a statement of broad aims to be accomplished once peace had been achieved. Why had FDR's most trusted member of the State Department, the man whom United States Supreme Court Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes had referred to as "presidential timber," inexplicably resigned in

1943 on the eve of the Tehran Conference when his leadership and advice were so sorely needed? Who was Sumner Welles?

Benjamin Sumner Welles III (1892-1961) [aka Sumner Welles] was the descendant of wealthy Boston merchants. His grandfather, Benjamin Sumner Welles, Sr., who was a member of the Patriarchs, an organization of twenty-five men which had been created in 1872 by Ward McAllister to "establish and lead" New York society, married Katherine Schermerhorn, the daughter of Abraham Schermerhorn of Manhattan. The Welleses summered at their estate on St. Mark's Lane in Islip. Katherine's sister Caroline Webster Schermerhorn, Sumner's great aunt, married William Backhouse Astor, Jr. and was the undisputed arbiter of society's elite Four Hundred. Katherine and Caroline's sister Ann married Charles Suydam and resided in Bayport. Sumner's mother Frances Wyeth Swan was the daughter of Frederick G. and Emily Wyeth Swan, who resided in the Oyster Bay area as did Sumner's great uncle Edward H. Swan, whose estate The Evergreens was in Cove Neck.²

As a youth of twelve, Sumner had been a page at Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt's wedding. He grew to adulthood at Welles House, the family's Islip estate on St. Mark's Lane; was schooled at Groton and Harvard; and was married three times to prominent socialites.³

Few knew of Welles' drinking problem and no one knew of his bisexuality until an unfortunate incident in 1940. While aboard

the presidential train carrying the President and cabinet members to the funeral of Speaker of the House William Bankhead, Welles became intoxicated and unsuccessfully attempted to solicit several of the black male porters. The incident was brought to the attention of the railroad officials, the Secret Service and, ultimately, to the President, who believed that Welles' political enemy Christian Bullitt, FDR's former United States Ambassador to France, had arranged to have the porters bribed to initiate the advances.⁴ The matter was shelved and kept secret until 1942 when Bullitt, his aide Carmel Offie, and President Theodore Roosevelt's daughter Alice Roosevelt Longworth began spreading rumors about the incident to Washington's inner circle.⁵

Republicans saw a golden opportunity to exploit a weakness in the administration in the upcoming 1944 presidential election campaign. The 1940 incident involving Welles was just the scandal which they craved. No longer able to protect Welles and sensing his vulnerability, FDR had no choice but to accept Welles' resignation.

The consummate workaholic, Welles had suffered several minor heart attacks while in government service. As a private citizen he continued the grueling work schedule, which was his habit, but this time as an author, syndicated columnist, radio broadcaster, and lecturer. In 1948, while taking an evening stroll, Welles experienced chest pains and decided to take a short



Sumner Welles

cut back to his house. Disoriented, he took a wrong turn and eventually collapsed onto the snow-covered ground one mile from his 250-acre Maryland estate at Oxon Hill. Discovered the next morning by a neighbor, returning from church, Welles was rushed to the hospital suffering from severe exposure and frostbite which necessitated the amputation of two toes and a finger. According to Sumner's son Benjamin, the incident also left Sumner with equilibrium and circulatory problems which plagued him for the remainder of his life.

Welles' health continued to decline, exacerbated by his work load, heavy drinking, indiffer-

ence and inattention to his health problems, and the household turmoil created by his bisexual valet Gustave Van Hamme.⁶ Unwilling to endure extensive medical treatments, the sixty-nine-year-old succumbed to pancreatic cancer.

The preceding was excerpted from Benjamin Sumner Welles IV's

sensitive, albeit biased, biography of his father, *Sumner Welles: FDR's Global Strategist* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997.)

ENDNOTES

1. The elderly and chronically ill Cordell Hull, whose ponderous personal decision-making process was reflected in the State Department he headed, was incapable of galvanizing the department's personnel into action. Welles' attempt to alleviate the situation by a massive reorganization of the department and its personnel would create politically dangerous enemies.
2. Correspondence between the

Swan and Welles families can be found in the Sumner Welles Papers at the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

3. Welles' first marriage (1915-1923) was to Esther Slater, the daughter of Horatio Nelson and Mabel Hunt Slater, Sr., of Boston. Mabel was the daughter of artist William Morris Hunt and niece of architect Richard Morris Hunt. Esther's paternal grandfather Samuel, who made his fortune during the War of 1812, is frequently referred to as "the father of the country's cotton industry." Her nephew Horatio Nelson Slater III married Martha Byers Lyon and resided at Ricochet on the corner of Duck Pond and Piping Rock Roads in Matinecock.

In 1925 Welles married his only true love, Mathilde Townsend, the daughter of Philadelphia stockbroker Richard Townsend and granddaughter of Erie, Pennsylvania, coal baron William L. Scott. Three years after Mathilde's death in 1949, Welles married Harriet Appleton Post, the granddaughter of architect George B. Post.

4. FDR, aware that Welles had been involved in a similar incident during the same month, believed that no one should be held accountable for what they did while they were drunk.

Bullitt's animosity towards Welles stems from Welles' involvement in Bullitt's dismissal from his ambassadorial post in France.

5. Cordell Hull, who came to feel that he was overshadowed by Welles and had grown to resent

continued on p. 22



ASK UNCLE PELEG

*In the summer issue of 2004 your old uncle took a look at the folklore of children's games. This was inspired by a letter about the singing game called "The Mulberry Bush." Sometime thereafter the editor received an E-mail from one of the members of the **Freeholder** staff, Arlene Goode-nough, about singing games. Somehow that letter fell between the chairs (meaning I probably lost it). This was not discovered until the production deadline for this issue was looming like a hungry tiger. Two things had to happen fast. One, an apology to Ms Goode-nough, hereby extended. The other was the ripping out of the intended Uncle Peleg offering for this issue and the substitution of the Goode-nough (actually better than that) letter and a further look at children's singing games.*

Dear Uncle Peleg,

How pleasant to read about the childhood verses we used to sing! I believe you have "London Bridge is Falling Down" mixed up

with "All Around the Mulberry Bush." Bear with me if my memory plays tricks. I remember:

London Bridge is Falling
Down,
Falling Down, Falling Down,
London Bridge is Falling
Down

My Fair Lady.

Take the key and lock her up,

Lock her up, lock her up

Take the key and lock her up,

My Fair Lady.

Iron bars will bend and break,
etc.

This would seem to refer to the days when London Bridge did indeed fall down and "My Fair Lady" could be any one of a number of high born ladies who found themselves in the Tower of London. I am a little fuzzy here, but I believe "Ashes, Ashes, all fall down," refers to the Great Fire of London. I personally played Musical Chairs, Simon Says, The Farmer in the Dell (Heigh, Ho the Cherry Oh, the

Farmer in the Dell), of course Tag and something called Ringalevvo. (Not the right spelling.)

Good luck with your research,
esteemed Uncle!

Arlene Goode-nough

Esteemed Arlene,

You point out an important element in the preservation of singing games, nursery rhymes and similar relics. That is, they tend to get "mixed up" with other memories of a similar nature. Another reason for change in the text of a singing game is that older children and adults almost unconsciously re-write the parts of a song or the protocol of a game that they have forgotten when they pass them on to younger children.

If one reads the London Bridge entry in various collections it appears that the only versions that match other versions word continued on p. 20



London Bridge appears above, c. 1615. The houses on the bridge were not removed until the mid eighteenth century.



CURRENTS OF THE BAY



*This section focuses on the doings of local historical societies, museums, and communities in the Town of Oyster Bay and its neighbors. Upcoming special events, exhibits, lectures and tours are featured, so send your submissions to the Editor if you would like to see your events covered in **The Freeholder**.*

SOCIETY PLANS EVENTS AND EXHIBITION ON GOLD COAST ESTATE LIFE

The Oyster Bay Historical Society invites you to share in a series of events that recapture a "Behind the Scenes" look at the fabled North Shore in true "Upstairs Downstairs" fashion.

Famous names. Famous houses. And the legions of family retainers - maids, butlers, cooks, chauffeurs and gardeners who made this world of privilege function with unobtrusive grace.

The series will begin at 4pm on June 12th at "Cherrywood" in Locust Valley, site of the fabulous tennis house once owned by Edmund C. Lynch of the venerable brokerage firm of Merrill-Lynch. Still in the family, this remarkable structure takes you back to an era of lavish tennis and pool parties attended by generations of North Shore Society.

Then, on September 17th at 5pm, one of the most historic and elegant estates on the North Shore will be the setting for an incomparable evening of superb food, wine, music and memories. "The Cliffs," the original Manor House of the Beekman Family, has been restored to perfection by its new owners, who have graciously consented to open the mansion and its glorious gardens for the first time.

The Society will be conducting interviews with descendants of the original estate owners and employees for their insights into what life on these estates was

like, from both the workers' and owners' points of view. The Society seeks photographs and artifacts related to life on the estates for inclusion in the exhibition which will open in November.

Please contact Director Tom Kuehhas at 922-5032.

SOCIETY MOURNS PASSING OF TRUSTEE ANGELA KOENIG

Ed. Note: We print here the eulogy delivered by Society Director Thomas Kuehhas on the occasion of the memorial service for long-time Trustee Angela Koenig, who passed away on March 3, 2005, at the age of 84.

When I first set pen to paper, I realized pretty quickly that it would be hopeless for me to attempt to sum up Angela Koenig's life in the space of a few minutes. Others who are speaking here today have had a much longer acquaintance with her than I. I consider it a great misfortune that I only knew her during the last dozen years or so. But even in that relatively short span of time she taught me much... and never ceased to amaze me!

As much as she loved the Oyster Bay Historical Society, and she served on our Board of Trustees for almost a quarter of a century, I knew that we were not her number one cause. Yet she always had time for me and was there when some sticky situation required her sage advice. She had a way of making you feel like you were the most important thing to her at that moment.

Given her often hectic schedule, which would have been considered rigorous for someone half her age, her serenity and patience were otherworldly.

Angela was my biggest supporter on the Historical Society's Board and sang my praises to all. She would give me wonderful pep talks which would revive my flagging spirits. With Angela in your corner, one felt invincible!

Somehow she found the time to write me periodic letters, which I cherish, brimming with what she termed "grandmotherly advice." I don't know how long it took her to craft those letters, but she got right to the heart of the matter, without being abrupt, stated her case beautifully and perfectly without a single extraneous word, and then moved on. Rather like her editorials in the *Guardian*.

She was also quite capable of taking a "tough love" approach when necessary. Once, when she perceived - correctly, I must add - that I had grown too big for my britches, she let me have it! My britches needed a belt after that dressing down!

Chastened as I was, I knew she was acting in my best interest. And she knew that it wouldn't do the Historical Society any good were I to fail.

On numerous occasions, Angela mentioned to me that she feared her friends were beginning to dread seeing her because she felt that she always had her hand out for one of her causes. I can't think of anyone who would ever dread seeing Angela Koenig... no mat-

ter what it cost them! Her friends knew that she would not have come to them if it hadn't been absolutely necessary

Angela was a unique individual in many ways, but especially so in that she was a person with vision, and yet she also possessed the common sense and perseverance it took to bring her vision to fruition.

I am thankful that Angela did receive some of the accolades that were her due while she was still with us. I felt privileged to be invited to attend an award ceremony for Angela in recognition of her work with the American Red Cross. Uncomfortable in the spotlight, she truly didn't understand what all the fuss was about.

To Angela, dedicating her life to helping others was simply a matter of course. I try to take her lessons in how to treat others to heart, not always successfully I'm afraid. But she did set a standard of behavior that we can all strive to emulate!

Which brings me to my last point. Angela meant so much to so many different non-profits in Oyster Bay, that her loss will leave an enormous void. Shall we ever see her like again?

I fear we shall not.

TRA'S JOHN A. GABLE, PH.D., DIES AT AGE 62

Dr. John A. Gable, Executive Director of the Theodore Roosevelt Association and former trustee of the Oyster Bay Historical Society, passed away on February 18, 2005, at the age of 62.

Dr. Gable had recently celebrated thirty years as the TRA's Executive Director and was active almost to the very end of his life. His list of accomplishments in that position is too lengthy to include here. Suffice to say that John Gable was the ambassador of the TRA to the world and his encyclopedic knowledge of Theodore Roosevelt made him indispensable to any author or film company contemplating a project on our 26th President.

In addition, Dr. Gable served as a trustee of the Oyster Bay Historical Society during the late 1980s and was instrumental in formulating the Society's collections policy.

A memorial service was held on February 25 at Christ Church, where Dr. Gable served on the vestry and whose history he had

been working on for the past several years.

SOCIETY PUSHES TO PRESERVE MILL POND

At a March 15 hearing on the Nassau County Environmental Bond Act Program, numerous local residents appealed to the County to preserve the area adjacent to the Mill Pond (threatened with inappropriate development) through acquisition of the property with Environmental Bond Act funds. Society Director Tom Kuehhas' comments appear below:

As the Director of the Oyster Bay Historical Society, I would like to focus on the historical aspects of the Mill Pond. The Mill Pond was formed in 1661 when Henry Townsend dammed up the Mill River in order to drive the wheel of his newly-built gristmill. All the townspeople of Oyster Bay were required to contribute their labor to complete this important project. Before the mill was built, Oyster Bay residents had to go all the way to Connecticut to grind their grain.

Over the centuries, the mill pond area was the scene of much of Oyster Bay's industry. In addition to the mill, there was a machine shop, and an electrical generating plant. In fact the original building of the Oyster Bay Electric Light and Power Company still stands to the north of the pond.

I urge the County to work with the Town of Oyster Bay to acquire the Mill Pond Overlook property and protect it from development.

If this land is not acquired, and the Mill Pond Overlook project

OYSTER BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY Categories of Membership

| | | | |
|--------------|--------|------------------|----------|
| Individual | \$ 25 | Business | \$ 50 |
| Family | \$ 35 | Business Sponsor | \$ 100 |
| Contributing | \$ 50 | Business Friend | \$ 300 |
| Sponsor | \$ 100 | Business Patron | \$ 500+ |
| Sustaining | \$ 250 | Benefactor | \$ 1000+ |
| Patron | \$ 500 | | |

Member Benefits: Quarterly Magazine, Members' Party, Invitations to Exhibition Previews and Special Events, 10% Discount on Publications and Workshops. Call (516)922-5032 for more information on joining the Society.

**Visit the Oyster Bay
Historical Society's
NEW website!**

www.oysterbayhistory.org

is allowed to proceed, it will irreparably alter the historic Mill Pond, which was created by the people of Oyster Bay almost 350 years ago.

We have an historic opportunity to preserve the Mill Pond and the surrounding area for future generations.

Let's take advantage of it!

**Farmingdale-Bethpage
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**

The 41st Annual Installation Dinner of the Society was held on Wednesday evening, October 27 at the Weeping Willow Restaurant in East Farmingdale. Frank Manhardt, a USMC Veteran, educator and community leader, conducted the induction ceremony. Incumbents Larry Jorgensen, President, and Frank Bondietti, Treasurer, were reinstalled, as were incumbent trustees Eric Goldschrafe, Ruth Mace, George Schriro, Maria Zito and new trustee Serena Carter.

Dr. Natalie A. Naylor presented "Walt Whitman at School," the first program of the Society's 2004-2005 Winter Lecture Series, on Sunday, November 21.

On Sunday, February 13, museum lecturer and history teacher Elizabeth Kahn Kaplan presented a slide show and talk about acclaimed Long Island artist William Sidney Mount. His portrayals of country life frequently contain subtle jokes which

today's audiences appreciate.

Harrison "Terry" Hunt presented "Long Island in the Civil War" on Sunday, March 13 at the Farmingdale Public Library. The Founders Day Dinner is planned for Tuesday evening, April 12, the 41st anniversary of the Society's founding.

**HUNTINGTON
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

The Society is presenting "Regional Treasures: Huntington's Earthenware" from January 30 through May 1, 2005 at the David Conklin Farmhouse Museum located at 2 High Street, Huntington. This exhibit features several rare examples of 19th Century earthenware from the Huntington area.

To celebrate Women's History Month, Dr. Natalie Naylor presented "Remembering the Ladies: Women in American History" on March 17. On April 14 Anthony Butera, Jr. will present "Huntington LI Red Earthenware Pottery."

**HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OF THE MASSAPEQUAS**

A tremendous showing by the community made this year's Apple Harvest Festival in October very successful. Thanks to our sponsors Roslyn Savings Bank and James Funeral Home. Thanks also to Jim Gilchrist, Manager of Home Depot, Copiague, for the woodworking kits he supplied for the children to enjoy. A special thank you to Massapequa Boy Scout Troop 660 and Girl Scout Troop 2047 and their leaders. The Scouts and their leaders were with us from early morning until clean-up in

the late afternoon. What an asset to the Society and the community!

Senator Chuck Fuschillo has forwarded grant papers to the Society and the grant funds should soon be here. They will be used for repairs to the structure supporting the altar. Future events are the Antique Fair at Massapequa High School on April 3, 2005, and the Strawberry Festival coming in June of this year.

**SEA CLIFF
VILLAGE MUSEUM**

On Saturday, February 19, 2005, the Spring Show "100 Years of Fashion - 1860 to 1960," opened and will run until the museum's closing in June. Sara Reres and Carol Ell, assisted by Diana Guardinos, mounted the exhibition. Both men's and women's attire are displayed along with shaving implements, hats of different periods and shoes. The museum is located at 95 Tenth Avenue (behind the Village Hall) and is open every Saturday and Sunday from 2 to 5 pm.

**CENTRAL PARK
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

In October Mrs. Ronnie Smutney shared her 35 years of experiences teaching in the Plainedge

Many thanks to Harry L. Dickran of Levon Graphics Corp., Route 109, East Farmingdale, for printing The Freeholder for the Society.

His generosity allows the magazine to reach a much wider audience than was heretofore possible. Please patronize our sponsors!

The Society now has available a "1900 View of Oyster Bay," which shows every building in existence at that time and includes a list of businesses and prominent residences. Eminently suitable for framing, this print is a great bargain at \$20 plus shipping. Also available are an 1833 map of Oyster Bay (\$5) and a map of Gold Coast estates c. 1920 (\$12.50). Shipping is additional. The recently-released OYSTER SONGSTER contains twenty-two songs, two poems, and two piano novelties about oysters and/or Oyster Bay. Contact the Society at (516) 922-5032 to order today!

School District beginning in a two room schoolhouse in 1953. Member Henry Suhr showed his 1926 class picture and told of farm life at that time before all of the development and changes. His daughter, Eileen Giannico attended the same school, as did the children of Mary Comerford and Mary Jane Pendl.

The membership will receive a March Newsletter informing them of the spring schedule. The existing incumbent board members and directors will continue in their present positions for 2005.

SAGAMORE HILL NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

Structural repairs and artifact restoration at Room One of the Theodore Roosevelt Museum at Old Orchard, made necessary by the August 26th flooding, are continuing. Prompt response by Park staffers Noreen Hancock, Bo Stein, Sue Sarna and Roy Putnam allowed the removal of all vulnerable items from their cases with minimal water damage.

The Volunteer Trip to Manhattan's Explorer Club on East 70th Street followed by lunch at Pete's Tavern on 18th Street was a success! In spite of rainy weather and horrid traffic a good time was had by all!

On November 6th nearly 500 Boy Scouts paid homage to TR by attending a ceremony at TR's gravesite. Afterwards they trooped to Sagamore Hill accompanied by a Scout band. They met TR (Jim Foote) and watched the Rough Riders in action.

HICKSVILLE GREGORY MUSEUM

The Museum's newest exhibit is "A Half Century of Dial Telephones" which displays telephones and related items from 1900 through 1950 and beyond. A big thank you to Tom Heckhaus and Rich Althaus for making this display possible.

The November 7 event, "From Grandma's Attic: Treasure or Trash?" was a success! A considerable number of people arrived with antiques, heirlooms, jewelry and memorabilia. Included were such items as 19th Century books, Victorian cameos and paintings, antique lamps and teapots, an old violin, several 1930s radios, an antique toy fire engine, a 19th Century Ottoman Turkish musket and two Civil War swords.

NEW YORK TRANSIT MUSEUM

The New York Transit Museum will be conducting an all-day tour of Teddy Roosevelt's hometown of Oyster Bay on Saturday, April 30, 2005. The tour will start at the station, currently undergoing ren-

ovation, soon to become a railroad museum under the auspices of the Oyster Bay Historical Society. Railroad historian David Morrison will conduct the group to the yard to view steam locomotive #35, the turntable and caboose #12. A slide show, "Teddy Roosevelt's Love of Trains" will precede a visit to his Sagamore Hill home and the Theodore Roosevelt Museum. Reservations and advance payment required. Transit Museum members \$20 and non-members \$25. For reservations and meeting time please call: 718-694-1867.

TOWN APPOINTS ELEVEN TO HISTORIC COMMISSION

The Oyster Bay Town Board recently approved the appointments of eleven individuals to its Historical Commission.

Appointed for three-year terms were Ruth Imhof of Oyster Bay, Phyllis Sczesnak of Sea Cliff, Jack Sumroy of Muttontown and Susan Troncone of Oyster Bay. Appointed for four-year terms were Richard Evers of Hicksville, John Hammond of Oyster Bay, William Johnston of Farmingdale, Thomas Kuehhas of Oyster Bay, Kenneth Robinson of Syosset, Albert Wahnnon of Plainview and Gerald Whitfield of Massapequa.

At its first meeting the Historical Commission elected Town Historian John Hammond as Chairperson, Thomas Kuehhas, Director of the Oyster Bay Historical Society as Vice-Chairperson, and Phyllis Sczesnak of the Sea Cliff Village Museum as Secretary.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE



There are undoubtedly many persons whom we have learned about but have never met. These include the famous and infamous of history and of our own time. Many of the names of these people we remember along with some of the details of their lives. Others have names that today sound familiar to us but the details escape us. Still others we have forgotten entirely.

We supply you with a list of such persons. Your task is to recall enough detail about each of them to identify them to your own satisfaction. When you have done so check our list of "Answers" to see if you have a broad memory of the folk you have heard and read about.

1. Lord Beaconsfield
2. Hermann Boerhaave
3. Martha Custis
4. Robert Gould Shaw
5. Richard Arkwright
6. Elizabeth Griscom Ross
7. Roger Ascham
8. Dwight L. Moody
9. Earl Sande
10. Ernestine Schumann-Heink
11. Lillian Russell
12. Wallis Warfield Simpson
13. Edward Teach
14. Roy Bean
15. Eldrick T. Woods

Answers will be found on p. 22.



THE GATHERING PLACE



"The Gathering Place" is the department of the magazine housing contributions of an historical slant but of short length that might otherwise be lost among the longer pieces. To our members who are not ready to attempt long or deeply researched articles, this is the place for your notions and comments, however brief.

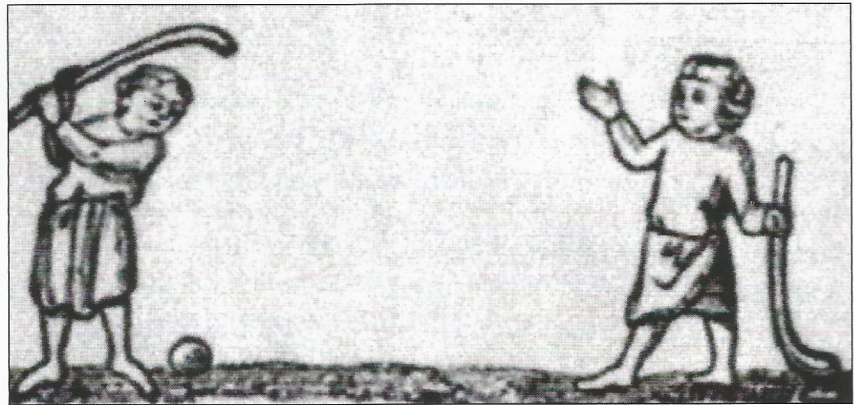
The Dutch Next Door

by Lee Myles

For many years there has been a bicker between the supporters of the belief that the Dutch invented the game of golf and those who believe that the Scots did. Let us be quick to state that neither of them was responsible. If creating a game that reduced the attendance at Sunday church services is reason for the bicker, neither nation bears the blame. However, we must assume that no small number of the citizens of both countries play the game on Sundays and may be subject to our disapproval for that reason. Be your own judge.

If it were not the Scots or the Dutch who first thought up the game, can the actual inventors ever be identified? Not unless some future genius builds a time machine and uses it to follow back into distant antiquity golf's evolution to its earliest beginnings. Well, were either the Dutch or the Scotch important to the development of the game? Of course! Both groups were. Call it a tie. Maybe the silly bicker will go away.

Keep in mind that this department of the *Freeholder* is dedicated to the contributions the Dutch and the Flemish made to the other nations of the world. For that reason we are going to give a little more attention to Dutch/ Flemish history both general and golf than that of the Scotch. Our emphasis is not a statement that the folk who live



An early stick and ball game.

across the North Sea from the country of kilts and bagpipes are more important than their haggis-consuming friends although we have heard whispers that the haggis may have been introduced to Scotland by the Dutch in their early days when they were not extra careful about what they ate. The Scots may even have made more important contributions to the development of golf as it drew nearer to our time than any other nation. But it's quite possible, even likely, that the Dutch introduced the Scots to the noble game. We'll be trying to find out.

So...It is necessary to explain that over the years from, say 1200 on, the Dutch/Flemish had much intercourse with the people of Scotland and this intercourse allowed plenty of opportunity for the Dutch/Flemish to influence those who dwelt in the far north of Britain in many ways. We must consider some of the circumstances that brought the two peoples together.

Before we do that, however, let's go back even further than the

Dutch relationship with the Scotch and take a quick look at the ancestry of the game we will be talking about. Fairly early in historical time and perhaps even earlier, peoples in many areas of the populated world began to play games in which the most important items of equipment were the stick and the ball. These games spread from the place of their earliest appearance to many other places. It is likely that occurrences of stick and ball games came about by diffusion rather than independent invention. We have no idea where this started but we do know the Romans played stick and ball games.

That is significant to note because the Romans spent some 400 years in Britain and conquered most of its area up to what would someday become Scotland. While they didn't exactly conquer Scotland they did spend many years within its borders and many years near but outside them preparing to invade. That's where they built Hadrian's Wall. But we

should emphasize the significance of their being there. It could be that the Romans introduced the Scots to stick and ball, to some ancestor of golf or even some primitive form of golf. One of the stick and ball games they played in Rome was called paganica. It had, in some of its forms, a feature that long after would be a feature of golf, that is, counting the number of strokes it took to drive a ball to a distant goal. We don't really know very much about paganica unhappily. But it is conceivable that when they pulled out of Britain in the middle of the fourth century they left paganica there. It may have still been there when Scotland and Britain as a whole began to feel the influence of early forms of golf from the continent.

OK. It's time to return to the general influence of the Dutch/Flemish on Scotland. Most of us have been strongly trained to recognize as a particular year the number 1066 and to remember that 1066 was the date of the invasion of England by William the Conqueror with his Normans. Forget the Normans. Some of us may remember that William married a Flemish lady, Matilda, daughter of Baldwin, Count of Flanders. Bill and Matty were quite incensed when Harold, the Earl of Wessex became the King of England on the death of Edward the Confessor, a plum that had been promised to William. He gathered an army, crossed the Channel and defeated King Harold's troops, killing Harold in the bargain. Beside his Normans, William's military establishment included a mass of nobles who were Flemish and

their soldiers and camp followers. Some of these nobles can actually be identified by their banners as shown in the Bayeux Tapestry. Linked to the Baldwins and to William through his marriage to Matilda these nobles were of great assistance to William in his battle with Harold's Saxons. Great were their rewards when William began to redistribute the real estate of England to those who had followed him. The Flemish received many manors in England and as many of them were near kin to Matilda decided to remain there and enjoy the benefits of William's court.

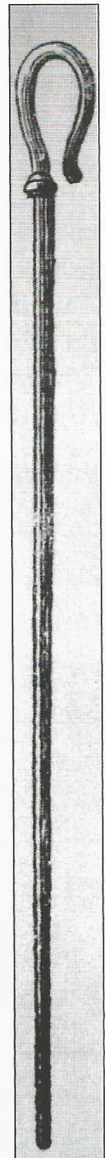
William arranged a marriage between Judith, his niece and a surviving English nobleman, Waltheof, heir of Siward the mighty earl of Northumbria. Their elder daughter Maud survived her father and became heiress of his enormous holdings in the midlands. She made two good marriages, first to Simon de Senlis a descendant of Charlemagne, and after his death to the Scot who was to ascend the Scottish throne in 1124, David I. Maud removed to Scotland as his Queen with a retinue of her Flemish relatives. These brought with them their retainers and companies of men at arms so the immigration introduced to Scotland many Flemings of every class. We know the names of some of the families the nobles founded: Baliol, Beaton, Brodie, Bruce, Cameron, Campbell, Comyn, Crawford, Douglas, Erskine, Fleming, Fraser, Graham, Hamilton, Hay, Innes, Leslie, Lindsay, Lyle, Murray, Oliphant, Seton and Stewart.

David I was greatly assisted in

consolidating his reign by the Flemish nobles and he gifted them with important grants of land. These adherents were very helpful in the new King's most important project, the establishment of "burghs", fortified towns around a royal castle, a Flemish practice and one that went back to Charlemagne.

More Flemish came in 1154 when Henry II expelled the aliens who were gradually taking over the English trades including the processing of wool. Upon arriving in Scotland the Flemings noted the poor condition of the woolen industry there and immediately began to improve it and to establish relationships with the wool makers of Flanders. They were eventually absorbed into the Scottish population but not without leaving signs of their influence in language, place names and doubtless other matters now untraceable. We cannot doubt that, although many of their gifts are now indistinguishable, it is likely that they brought and shared their games and sports. Nor is it unlikely that these included games with the stick and ball. Alas, no record remains to us.

Scottish relations with Flanders became strong and Flemings continued to be encouraged to



Is this the forerunner of the golf club?

come to Scotland. It is believed that they brought to the attention of the Scots much that their earlier, less prosperous lives had not allowed them to enjoy: children's toys, spinning wheels, tapestries, lace, looking glasses, curtains, certain pieces of furniture, glass window panes and various military arms. It is even said that they taught the Scots the making of oxtail soup. The list could go on and on.

By 1200 the number of burghs in Scotland had grown to at least 50. These money making institutions provided the financial ability to build abbeys, cathedrals and castles. A university was established at Saint Andrews in 1411. This is the town where golf is thought to have begun by one group of the bickerers. Not likely but there is much else to admire

there.

The industries of Scotland and her exports gradually became more and more important. Besides wool, fish became a large item of export. So much was exported from Aberdeen that in Scotland's biggest market, Flanders, cod was called *Aberdaan*. A variety of "modern" products flowed back. Among them the famous cannon, *Mons Meg* was brought over from Flanders in 1447. She fired a projectile bigger than a beach ball and got distance that made the driver in the golf pro's bag look silly. Flemish mechanics came over to help design and erect buildings. Founders in the Low Countries supplied the carillons and the great bells necessary for cathedrals. In later days the golden age of Dutch art produced the many

paintings bought to decorate the homes of the wealthy, in many cases still to be found in situ today.

Brugge, in our spelling Bruges, the greatest and busiest port of North Europe, early became the staple town for all Scottish wool, hides and sheepskin. It dominated trade in those products for more than a century and a half. Just across the North Sea, Scotland's east coast became its most important commercial area and Flemish shipping from Bruges visited there in large numbers. After many years, competition from other continental countries began to cut into Bruges' Scottish trade but she held her lead until disaster struck with the silting up of her port. Bruges ceased to be Scotland's chief avenue for the import-export trade



In this detail from Flemish artist Pieter Bruegel's painting "Winter Landscape with Bird Snare," the figure above the bird appears to be finishing a golf swing.

During the more than 150 years of her reign many Scotsmen came and went through Bruges and many lived there. Some were eventually absorbed into its population. The ones who merely came and went between Bruges and the Scottish east coast had plenty of opportunity to watch and even play the colf game which was recorded as widely played in Flanders. Sounds a bit like golf, doesn't it? It was but more about that farther along. Maybe one of the Scotsmen at the staple took the game home with him. Sadly there is no record of such a transfer.

A measure of the influence of the Flemings in St. Andrews where we are told golf started is the fact that the first Provost of the town was

Mainard Fleming. A recent survey of telephone directories in the general east coast area in the vicinity shows there are 262 people named Fleming listed.

It has been said that there is little enough evidence of the Scotch settlement of the Flemings in the language of the Scottish golfer. We will take this up later but it should also be noticed that an examination of the Scottish woolworkers' vocabulary reveals only about three items that are recognizably Flemish. They are "hesp," a tangle bundle of wound threads, "steek" which is stitch in both tongues and "kitlin," the Scots word for ticking from the Flemish "kittelen." Surely the wool trade must have been a vastly stronger influence than the game of golf yet the bickerers claim there is only one Dutch word that could be part of the golfer's vocabulary and many of them deny that. There are of course many more words that are common to the general vocabulary of the two peoples.

When Bruges silted up the Scotch trade largely went north to Middleburg and Veere, Dutch towns. The latter one became the staple for Scottish products, wool hides and so forth, in 1541.

Dutchmen who had attended Scotch fairs and other commercial activities on the east coast began to make their presence more strongly known there. As a result Dutch style building is frequently found, identifiable by its Dutch-style gables, Dutch-style red pantiled roofs and Dutch tiles. Indeed we can say that Dutch traces can be found over the length of Scotland from the English border to John o' Groats.

That gentleman was a Dutchman named Jan de Groet, who built a house at the northernmost tip of the country and ran a ferry to Orkney from 1473 to 1513.

Ask Uncle Peleg

continued from p. 10
for word are those where the second collector cribbed from the earlier one. Even the condition

of London Bridge, as stated in the first or first and second lines depending on the arrangement of the verses, is rendered differently in different publications as "is broken down," "is falling down" and "has fallen down."

Comparison of the first stanza, as you give it, with others I've consulted shows the "mix up" principle has been at work either before you heard the song or in your memory. For example, a line common to several versions, "Dance over my Lady Lee" does not appear in yours while "Take the key and lock her up" is not part of the versions I've exam-



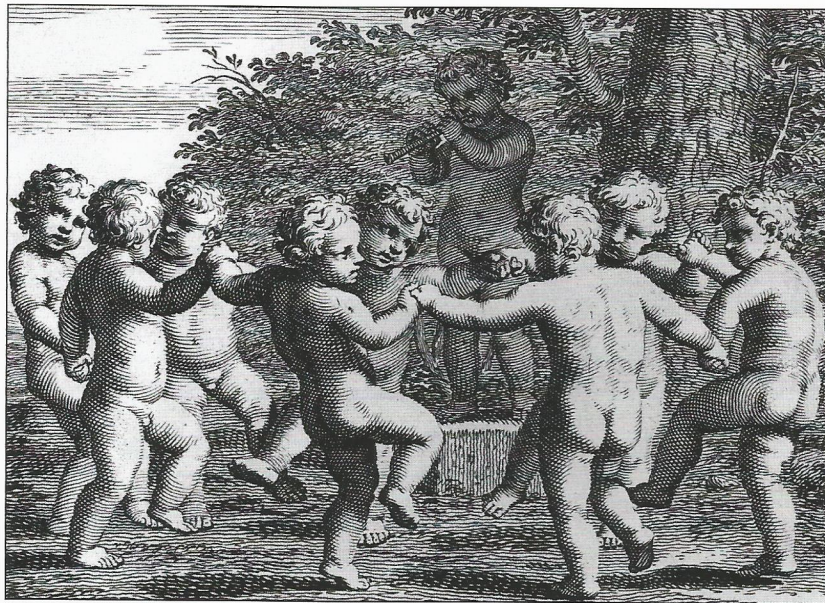
An eighteenth century English golfer is shown above (with his caddy?) in the requisite red uniform of a London course.

ined.

Not to pursue the point too far but to illustrate that even important lines can be dropped or substituted, My Fair Lady has been both left out and replaced by "With a gay Lady." That would not have provided much of a title for a Broadway show.

A rendition that seems to offer lines common to many of the versions may give us some idea of the original. On the other hand it may be a late edition. I give you only the opening line of all but the first stanza.

London Bridge is falling down,



A 17th c. French illustration of children dancing...The Mulberry Bush?

*Falling down, falling down,
London Bridge is falling down,
My Fair Lady!
Build it up with iron bars,
Iron bars will bend and break,
Build it up with gold and silver,
Gold and silver will be stolen
away,
Get a man to watch all night,
Suppose that man should fall
asleep,
Put a pipe into his mouth,
Suppose the pipe should fall and
break,
Here's a prisoner I have got,
What's the prisoner done to you,
Stole my hat and lost my keys,
Off to prison he must go,*

*I have left out several lines as
not adding to the developing
story or giving us anything to
compare to the Arlene version.
Lines that seem to echo your
"Take the key and lock her up"
are those about the prisoner who
"stole my hat and lost my keys"
and off to prison he must go." It
would seem that the mix up prin-
ciple had been long at work to*

produce such a change.

*A note from a reader who wishes
to be anonymous (perhaps he is
trying to avoid service for debt)
provides a note on The Mulberry
Bush that started our explo-
ration of songs for children's
games. It bears on the mix up
principle just expounded. He
writes," I recently dipped into an
annotated edition of the Mother
Goose Rhymes. I couldn't find
Here we go round the Mulberry
Bush in the first line index but
Here we go round the Bramble
bush was there and seems to be
the same song. The annotator
said the "bramble bush" came
first and he also mentions a sim-
ilar song that goes:*

*"Who will you have for your
nuts in May*

*On a cold and frosty morning."
An alternative to the the first
line is "Here we go gathering
nuts in May." You don't gather
nuts in May and May mornings
are seldom cold and frosty.*

Anon.

*The Nuts in May business
sounds like deliberate nonsense
to me. A manual of children's
games tells us that the Bramble
Bush song is sung to the same
tune as The Mulberry Bush but
the game is different. The simi-
larities suggest one was based
on the other probably long ago
in old England.*

General Washington's Letter: An Exhibit of a Previously Unknown Historic Document

by Sarah Abruzzi

Two hundred and twenty-
seven years ago, one young
nation was struggling for the
right to exist: British forces,
comprised of the greatest armed
forces in the world, occupied its
shores- including Manhattan,
Long Island, Oyster Bay...and
the Townsend family's home,
which is today Raynham Hall
Museum.

The War for American Inde-
pendence was in its infancy in
1777, and the year started out
well enough for the American
cause with a victory over the
British at Princeton, New Jersey
on January 3. General George
Washington established winter
quarters in Morristown and, due
to harsh conditions, watched his
troop numbers dwindle to a pal-
try 1,000 men. Spring brought
with it an influx of fresh recruits
which bolstered Washington's
numbers to 9,000, and by the
time March 12 rolled around,
the Second Continental Con-
gress felt confident enough to
return to Philadelphia from Bal-
timore where they had fled just
three months earlier.

The spring passed quickly-

and relatively quietly- until the Patriots were dealt a massive blow on June 17 when a British force of 7,700 men under General John Burgoyne invaded from Canada, sailing down Lake Champlain toward Albany. Burgoyne was planning to link up with General Sir William Howe who was to come north from New York City, and Colonel Barry St. Leger who was to bring his troops east from Fort Oswego, thus completely overwhelming American troops and effectively cutting off New England from the rest of the colonies. If this maneuver was successful, the British were all but assured victory.

Burgoyne confidently pushed his troops further south, and on July 6, they overwhelmed the stunned Americans with the capture of Fort Ticonderoga on Lake Champlain. When the fort fell to the British, vast quantities of military supplies that were desperately needed by Washington's forces were lost. American morale was crushed, and the troops were left woefully under stocked.

Just when it seemed that the British were lining up to crush the rebel army, poor communication- or perhaps hubris- intervened. On July 23, British General Howe, set sail from New York with 15,000 men. He headed not for Albany to meet Burgoyne and St. Leger, but for the Chesapeake Bay with the intention of capturing Philadelphia, where Congress and Washington uneasily waited. Why did Howe not sail north to Albany? Was it his stubbornness and desire to capture the capitol? Or

was it a case of too little information too late?

Whatever the reason, it was a most costly mistake and proved to be a fatal flaw in the British plan to split the colonies in two. Had Howe sailed north, he may have met Burgoyne by the time he and his troops reached the Hudson on August 1, after a grueling month spent crossing the wilderness that separated the southern tip of Lake Champlain from the northern tip of the Hudson River.

On August 2, General George Washington was uneasily situated in Philadelphia attending to his troops as well as the affairs of the Second Continental Congress, and wondering when the British would strike their next blow. Two days before, General Sir William Howe's mighty armada of 228 warships had been sighted off the Capes of the Delaware Bay--and then it disappeared into the mists of the Atlantic Ocean. Where was it going? Was Howe going to double back and attack Washington's army at Philadelphia? Or was he aiming for the Hudson River to join General John Burgoyne and Colonel Barry St. Leger's forces at Albany, effectively squelching any resistance and cutting New England off from the rest of the Colonies? Washington knew the outcome of the Revolutionary War might depend on the answer. Among the many urgent missives he wrote that day was one to Governor George Clinton, asking him to bring out the New York militia to defend the Highlands of the Hudson.

This is the very same letter, whose existence was never

before known, that is on display at Raynham Hall Museum.

Washington and his troops pushed south to meet Howe at Brandywine on September 11, and were ultimately forced back towards Philadelphia. Both sides suffered heavy losses while an ill at ease Congress was forced to flee to Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Philadelphia fell on September 26, and Howe and his troops occupied the city. The Americans finally won their first major victory of the war on October 7 at the battle of Saratoga- a battle that they would not have been able to win if Howe had sailed north on that July day. Saratoga was a tremendous boost to the rebel cause, one that they would need to carry them through the long winter ahead. Would it be enough? November 15 saw Congress adopt the Articles of Confederation as the government of the new United States of America, pending ratification by the individual states. Under the Articles, Congress would be the sole authority of the new national government. A new nation was starting to take shape. On December 17, the Continental Army led by General George Washington, set up winter quarters at Valley Forge in Pennsylvania. It would be a long and difficult winter, a fitting end to a long and difficult year.

This exhibit will remain on display through Summer 2005, Tuesday - Sunday, 1:00 - 5:00 PM. General admission is \$4 for adults; \$3 for senior citizens and students; children 6 and under are free. Audio tours of the museum are also offered for an additional dollar over the general admission

price. For further information, please call the museum at 516-922-6808.

The Jolly Boat

continued from p. 7

great ships pass in and out of the mouth of the Thames.

Subsequently, on August 21, 2004, the 64th anniversary of the sinking of the *S.S. Anglo-Saxon*, nine family members: Joy Wykes, her son, daughter and daughter-in-law, as well as my wife and I and our son, daughter and daughter-in-law, took the train to London to the Imperial War Museum to see the jolly boat, and to meet Mr. Smith, Mr. Milburn and Mr. Walder. Joy Wykes' son, Roy Trevor Wykes, was born four years after the passing of his gallant namesake. As Joy Wykes came up the stairs, Cliff Walder who had never met her, exclaimed, "It's Auntie Trix!" for her likeness to Roy's mother. Seeing those two meet after so many decades was a moment I shall never forget. And meeting Mr. Walder myself, who had jumped out of the salutation of a letter written by a cousin I never knew 64 years ago, was now a treasured reality. Meeting Mr. Smith, the architect of all this new found interest, and Mr. Milburn, the indefatigable collector of all the minutiae associated with the amazing story of the *S.S. Anglo-Saxon* was truly breathtaking.

The sails upon which this amazing story has caught wind are made of but paper, a disposable material, but a powerful one when it records people's thoughts. My father like his father before him saved and

treasured correspondence from his family "across the pond." In his working life he dedicated thirty-eight years to the business of written communication as carrier, clerk and eventually Postmaster of the Oyster Bay Post Office (coincidentally sharing that occupation with his English cousin Bernard Pilcher). I in turn now treasure missives from my cousins, as well as the envelopes from Mr. Smith, Mr. Milburn, Mr. Carr and especially the long-saved letter of a cousin I am only just beginning to know.

Sumner Welles

continued from p. 9

and hate him, issued an ultimatum to President Roosevelt that either Welles should go or he, Hull, would resign. Ironically, Hull did resign just one year after Welles.

Christian Bullitt never held another post in the Roosevelt administration.

Carmel Offie was arrested by Washington vice squad officers for soliciting.

6. Van Hamme, who looked upon Welles as a father figure, had previously been employed by New York's Governor Thomas E. Dewey and by Marjorie Merriweather Post, as a steward aboard her yacht *Sea Cloud*. He is described by Welles' son as a psychopathic alcoholic whose cleaver-wielding episodes terrorized the Welles household's staff.

Answers to Test Your Knowledge, from p.15

1. Benjamin Disraeli, First Earl of Beaconsfield, Prime Minister of England 1868 and 1874-1880.

He also wrote novels and much non-fiction.

2. A Dutch physician and chemist, born 1668 and died 1738. He taught at the University of Leiden and wrote important books on medicine and chemistry.

3. A widow, she became the wife of George Washington.

4. He became a hero of the Civil War when, as Colonel of the 54th Massachusetts Regiment, the first black troops from a free state, he was killed leading his regiment in the attack on Fort Wagner, Charleston, S.C. A statue of him by Saint-Gaudens stands on Boston Common.

5. Inventor in 1769 of the "water frame" spinning machine, he was important in the beginnings of the Industrial Revolution and the factory system. He was knighted in 1786.

6. She was Betsy Ross. If you don't know who that was, think of red, white and blue.

7. Born in 1515, Ascham was the tutor of Princess Elizabeth, daughter of Anne Boleyn. A writer, scholar, teacher, educational innovator, and diplomat, he is the subject of an autobiographical classic by Samuel Johnson.

8. American revivalist, he toured the United States and England. He was long associated with Ira L. Sankey.

9. One of the great jockeys of all time and the greatest of the 1920's plus, he rode *Man o' War* and *Gallant Fox* and other famous horses. He inspired Damon Runyon to write the line, "Gimme a handy guy like Sande, bootin' those winners home."

Blocklyn's Books



Book Reviews by Philip Blocklyn

1912: Wilson, Roosevelt, Taft & Debs- The Election That Changed The Country. By James Chace. Simon & Schuster, 2004. 323 pp. B&W illustration. Notes and index. \$25.95.

Ah, to be young and progressive in 1912! That was the time in America when four progressive politicians were running for president, espousing progressive themes, promising to do all sorts of progressive things, professing their faith that government, the right government, progressive government, could be a force for good in the lives of everyday folks.

That said, if you are trying to get Wilson, Roosevelt, Taft, and Debs into the same progressive bed, then you are going to need a big blanket. The author James Chace makes it clear how different these men were, personally as well as politically. Woodrow Wilson appears as the least sympathetic character. For a former president of Princeton University, he was a remarkably incurious man, a poor scholar and famously ill-read, who in 1916 admitted

that he had not read a serious book all the way through in fourteen years. Politically, he was "in essence a white supremacist," as Chace baldly puts it, an inclination to which he resorted for policy early and often in his administration. As a candidate and a president, he ably personified what Richard Hofstadter has called "the ruthlessness of the pure in heart." His tendency, Chace writes, was "to view opposition to his policies as personal antagonism."

Taft, on the other hand, you can feel for. A jurist trapped in an executive's office, he seemed to dislike the presidency as much as Roosevelt had loved it. He campaigned very little, delivering only two major addresses before Election Day. The Library of Congress photographs provided by Chace show Taft looking gamely presidential, but you know that he would much rather, on the whole, be playing golf.

Of the four candidates, Roosevelt is perhaps best known, and Chace presents very little new about him here. However, in describing the Milwaukee assassination attempt, Chace does provide one particularly emblematic TR moment. After aide Elbert Martin subdued the attacker, Roosevelt called out:

"Don't hurt him, bring him to me."

Martin pulled the man up, handed the revolver to Roosevelt, and then twisted the man's head so that TR could see him. "Here he is," said Martin, "look at him, Colonel."

"Why did you do it?" Roosevelt asked. "What was your reason?" And without waiting for an answer TR told Martin to hand

him over to the authorities.

Of all American Presidents, surely Roosevelt alone would directly ask his assailant why he did it and then rush off to deliver a speech before getting an answer.

That leaves Debs, a man of tremendous honesty and energy, whose political legacy was sadly limited by steel-headed stubbornness and an utter indifference to political theory. Still, he received 900,000 votes in this crowded progressive field, and his six percent share of the total ballots cast represents the largest electoral cut ever for a Socialist candidate. Unfortunately for Debs, a period of personal decline followed the gains of 1912. By 1919 he was beginning a ten year prison term for allegedly obstructing the US Conscription Act, a sentence that Wilson shamefully refused to commute. It took the genial and incompetent Warren Harding to release Debs from prison on Christmas Day, 1921. Apparently, when the two men finally met, they hit it off, Harding shaking Debs' hand and allowing how he'd "heard so damned much about you." Debs, for his part, called Harding "a kind gentleman, one who I believe possesses human impulses. We understand each other perfectly."

Further Reading: *The Bull Moose Years* by John Gable. *The Bending Cross* by Ray Ginger.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR THESE UPCOMING EVENTS!

APRIL

Thursday, April 14, 7:30 p.m.

20/20 Lecture

Christ Church Parish Hall

61 East Main St., Oyster Bay

David Byer-Tyre, recently-appointed Curator of the African-American Museum in Hempstead, will present "The Underground Railroad on Long Island."

Admission is free and refreshments will be served following the lecture.

MAY

Tuesday, May 15, 7:30 p.m.

20/20 Lecture

Christ Church Parish Hall

61 East Main St., Oyster Bay

Nancy Van Vranken, principal of West Van Restoration will speak on "Furniture: Restoration, Repair and Refinishing."

Admission is free and refreshments will be served following the lecture.

JUNE

Tuesday, June 14, 7:30 p.m.

[Re-scheduled from March 8]

20/20 Lecture

Christ Church Parish Hall

61 East Main St., Oyster Bay

Michelle Temares, author, lecturer, and educator, will present "The Peales: Diary of an American Family."

Admission is free and refreshments will be served following the lecture.

Answers to Test Your Knowledge,

from p.22

10. An Austrian-American who sang with the Metropolitan Opera Company and did much concert work. She died in 1936.

11. Born Helen Louise Leonard, she became a singer and actress and was known as "The American Beauty" She was four times married and, as well, was romantically associated with "Diamond Jim" Brady. Born in 1861, she died in 1922.

12. She became the Duchess of Windsor when she married the man who had been Edward VIII, King of England.

13. An English pirate, commonly called Blackbeard. During the

years 1716, 1717 and 1718 he was active off the West Indies and the American coast. He was famous for his cruelty to the passengers and crews of the ships he captured.

14. A picaresque figure of the western frontier, Bean left his home state, Kentucky, heading for California. He was variously the boss of a Mexican trading post, a cattle rustler, a Confederate guerrilla, a saloon keeper and a gambler. He settled in Vinegaroon, TX, a drovers' camp, set up a saloon called the Jersey Lily, renamed the place Langtry and appointed himself judge and the main man.

15. That's right. That's Tiger Woods.

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