

**DR. CAROLYN ANN COBBOLD** neé **ALDRED**  
(#644 on the family tree)

**May 2017**

Meeting Carolyn at home or with her family gives you absolutely no idea of the enormity of what she has achieved, all of it without any song and dance and all whilst bringing up three children, the youngest of whom is now over 21.

Following a degree in Mechanical Engineering at Imperial College, London, where she met her husband, and several moves dictated by his job, Carolyn found herself living just inland from the south coast at Birdham in Sussex. Since University she had been freelance writing for an American insurance journal with a particular interest in climate change and corporate liability and environmental risk.

Hence it is not surprising in the late 1990s to find her campaigning for more integrated spatial, water and coastal planning on the low-lying Manhood peninsula, south of Chichester. Carolyn and another local resident persuaded the Dutch Institute of Spatial Planning to hold their annual workshop – a five day conference – on the Manhood in March 2001. The workshop led to a range of new ideas about more sustainable coastal management and spatial planning for the area, described in *Going Dutch*, a publication Carolyn co-authored. As a result of the *Going Dutch* initiative, Carolyn founded the Manhood Peninsula Partnership, a multi-agency and community partnership. Since 2001, the MPP has been instrumental in raising substantial funds and encouraging more integrated working between local and government authorities and the public to improve the area's environment, habitat, drainage, flood issues and coastal defence.



Carolyn in front of the Gate of Honour at Caius, 29<sup>th</sup> April 2017



Take care when we leave the EU.

In 2011 the MPP published one of the first Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plans in the UK and in 2013 Medmerry, the largest coastal realignment project in Europe, was completed to protect the peninsula from rising sea levels. The site contains 300 hectares of important

biodiversity habitat including mudflats, reed beds, saline lagoons and grassland, creating new intertidal habitat important to wildlife on an international level. In 2014 the Medmerry scheme won many major national awards for engineering, ecology and public engagement, including the prestigious Prime Minister's Better Public Building Award.

But even before Medmerry was completed we find Carolyn developing her interest in the History of Science with the publication in September 2010 of her dissertation (for an MSc), *Yeast, A Problem – The rise of alternative bread leavening technologies in the 19<sup>th</sup> century*. The following year she is a post graduate speaker at Swansea University on Baking Soda in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and later at Imperial College, London on *The silent introduction of synthetic dyestuffs into 19<sup>th</sup> century food*, later published as a chapter in *The Silences of Science*.

Her pioneering involvement on the Manhood is not forgotten when she is invited to speak to the Climate Change Conference in London in December 2014 but her interest in foodstuffs persists with the publication in early 2017 by Cambridge University of an article warning of the dangers of abandoning EU regulations after Brexit. There is much that the Science Historian can contribute to today's food environment.

Finally, at a ceremony in the Senate House in Cambridge on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2017 Carolyn was awarded a PhD for her dissertation *An investigation into the introduction and use of coal-tar derived dyes to colour food, 1856-1914*.

Carolyn now has been awarded a Research Fellowship at Clare Hall, Cambridge to pursue her studies of food history. She is a Council Member of the Society of the History of Alchemy and Chemistry, and spoke at one of their conferences recently at the Royal Institution, London. She is also speaking at the British Society for the History of Science annual conference in York in July 2017.

Carolyn was appointed a Fellow of the Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA) in 2016 for her work on coastal management, integrated planning and community engagement. She is a Governor of the Matthew Arnold Secondary School in Staines and worked part-time as a volunteer for a homeless refuge 2015-2017.