
THE GLAVEN HISTORIAN

The Journal of the Blakeney Area Historical Society

No.7

2004

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Editorial

Welcome to the seventh issue of The Glaven Historian. There have been a few more tweaks of the design: running heads, wider columns and, I'm afraid to say, smaller type. The use of twelve point type in GH6 was welcomed by some readers but when it came to the point of having to choose between holding over material or reducing the type size slightly in order to keep within our absolute maximum of 80 pages, the choice was clear. This member of the Editorial Team (and I must emphasise once more that *The Glaven Historian* is a team effort) will be receiving his new pair of glasses shortly.

The print run of The Glaven Historian has increased with each issue – No.6 was 200, No.7 should be more – as we need extra copies for sale to new members and non-members. The cost of reprinting earlier editions is probably too high to be economically viable, but it is possible to reproduce them as CD-ROMs readable by anyone with a computer and a copy of Adobe Acrobat Reader. GH6 and GH7 are already available as it's a simple matter to convert Quark files to .pdf format – GH1-5 will take a bit longer as the pages will probably have to be re-scanned.

There is a strongly archaeological flavour to this edition for which we make no apology. Due to concerns about the effect of continuing beach-rollover on the viability of the present Glaven channel where it runs behind the beach (itself newly dug in 1924) proposals have been made to dig a new 'New' channel some 200 metres to the south which would leave Blakeney Eye and its Scheduled Ancient Monument on the seaward side. As part of the planning process for this project exploratory digs were carried out – as outlined in GH6 – and these in turn led to more detailed explorations of selected areas, with more to come. This work is the sort of opportunity that comes but rarely and must be grasped while it is there. It has led to some very interesting discoveries which are discussed in Chris Birks' article.

Also on an archaeological topic is David Gurney's brief account of the excavation of an Iceni grave in Letheringsett with Glandford.

This was found as a result of work by metal-detectorists from Leicester – working with the agreement of the landowner and in co-operation with Norfolk Archaeology – and is a tribute to the valuable contribution that responsible enthusiasts can make.

Also there is the maritime aspect – and its impact on the social fabric of the Glaven ports. Jonathan Hooton has studied how the decline in the ports through the 19th century can be seen from the shipping records; Pamela Peake has examined various aspects of the lives of families involved in the maritime trades; John Peake has studied migrations of people into and out of the Glaven villages, and in particular the connection with South Tyneside. It is worth mentioning that much of the material used for these researches is available at the History Centre in Blakeney.

There is much primary source material *out there* in people's attics which is potentially valuable to social historians. Such material as W B Monement's wildfowling journal part of which has been transcribed by Richard Jefferson and annotated by him, together with Frank Hawes and Brent Johnson.

Much more recent history is the story of the Blakeney Players as recalled by Janet Harcourt. It is important that village organisations – many of them necessarily ephemeral – be recorded if possible as they are very much a part of life in these communities. The Players, of course, are still with us...Oh yes they are!

The Back Pages are slowly evolving an identity as the repository for odd little snippets – more or less relevant to anything that has gone before – and the occasional sideways glance at received wisdom. Actually we could do with more of the latter as too often local tales gain a veneer of undeserved authenticity: it is necessary that these received explanations be tested from time to time in a properly dialectical fashion. Sometimes this will need diligent research, more often it will be sheer luck or coincidence. Then the revised version will need to be tested in its turn.

Richard Kelham

Five Thousand Years on Blakeney Eye

by Chris Birks

Synopsis: an excavation carried out on Blakeney Eye in 2003 produced evidence of human use of the site since prehistoric times and expanded knowledge of the 'chapel' structure. A gold bracteate from about the 6th century demonstrated wider cultural links during this period, as did pottery from the 15th and 16th centuries. Beneath the turf surface the 'chapel' consists of two separate cells, one with substantial walls having a cobbled area at the western end.

Introduction

Blakeney Eye is a raised sandy island situated within Blakeney Freshes on the North Norfolk coast (Figure 1). An archaeological evaluation of the Eye was commissioned by Halcrow Group Limited on behalf of the Environment Agency prior to the rerouting of the River Glaven through the Freshes.¹ This evaluation was therefore carried out in 2003 by the Norfolk Archaeological Unit.

The Eye is a designated Site of Special Scientific Importance and there are seven entries for this site and its immediate environs in the Norfolk Historic and Environmental Records held at Gressenhall. Interestingly these include a record of human burials being reported in 1924 during the cutting of the Glaven channel to the north of the site. There is a find spot for an eroded rim of a 2nd to 3rd century Romano-British jug. A possible Armada fort on the other side of the Glaven channel existing as earthworks in the marsh and the remains of a stone wall and brick floor have been reported; it was damaged by the floods of 1953. A number of pillboxes are also listed, as is a gun emplacement.

The most conspicuous feature of the site is the ruins of a flint and brick rectangular structure lying in the north-east corner known locally as Blakeney Chapel, but they have been variously interpreted as a chapel, fort or barn (Scheduled Ancient Monument no. 305). They are situated on a low natural rise in an area of undulating rough pasture and comprise an extant section of flint and mortar wall c 6m long and c0.3m high that forms part of a rectangular structure otherwise outlined as a turf mark over footings. The structure is east-to-west orientated and measures c18m by 7m, with no trace of sub-divisions in the pastured interior. Contiguous on the southern side is a

smaller rectangular structure, again outlined as a turf mark and measuring overall c13m by 5m. There is no remaining ground evidence that this was a chapel.

No tradition of dedication is known locally, and no information was obtained from the Norfolk Record Office other than the depiction of a complete roofed (but un-named) structure at this site on a map of 1586. This map names the area as Thornham Eye, and also shows evidence of rabbits along with a warrener or hunter.² A further possible chapel is shown on Palmer's map of 1835 to the east of the Glaven channel, though the Tithe Map of 1838 makes no reference to any buildings or ruins on either side of the channel.

A non-intrusive study of the structure or chapel was made by the Blakeney Area Historical Society during 1998-99 and the results were published in the *Glaven Historian*.^{3,4} It included height measurements, the results of a geophysical survey and an investigation of a collection of artefactual material from molehills. It concluded that the structures extended no further than the remnants of walls visible at the present ground surface. No firm evidence was found to confirm a wall running south from the chapel that had been reported by local residents during the 1970s, although there were indications of a World War II barbed wire fence. It was suggested that the two cells of the structure might not be contemporary because of differences in the quantities of stonework present and the robustness of the foundations. Little of the original building material was visible, as potentially such material could have been removed for re-use. No evidence for further structures was found from the survey area. There were no medieval finds, though it was suggested that this may be due to limited occupation of the structure, either temporally or in numbers of occupants.

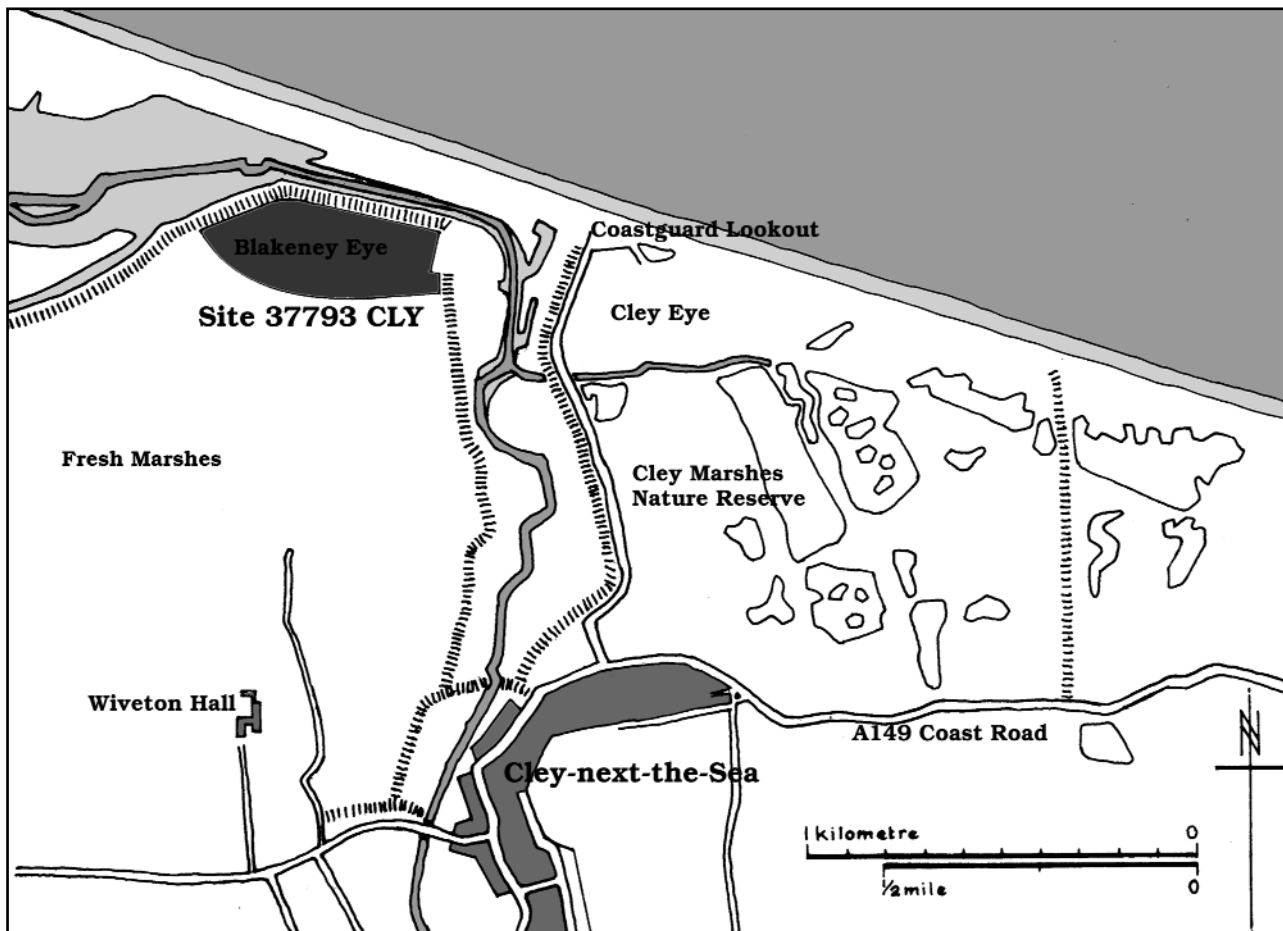


Figure 1. Location of Blakeney Eye (map by Frank Hawes).

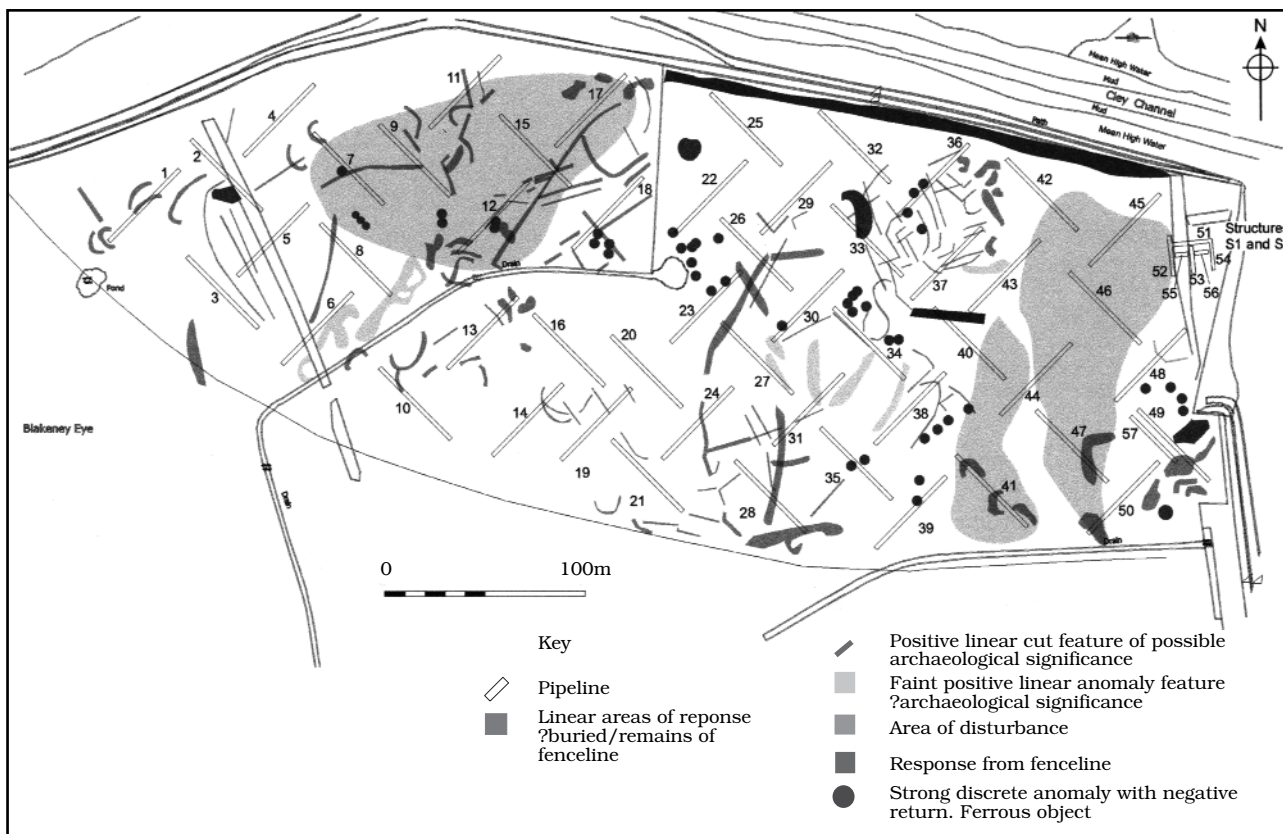


Figure 2. Results of Geophysical survey.

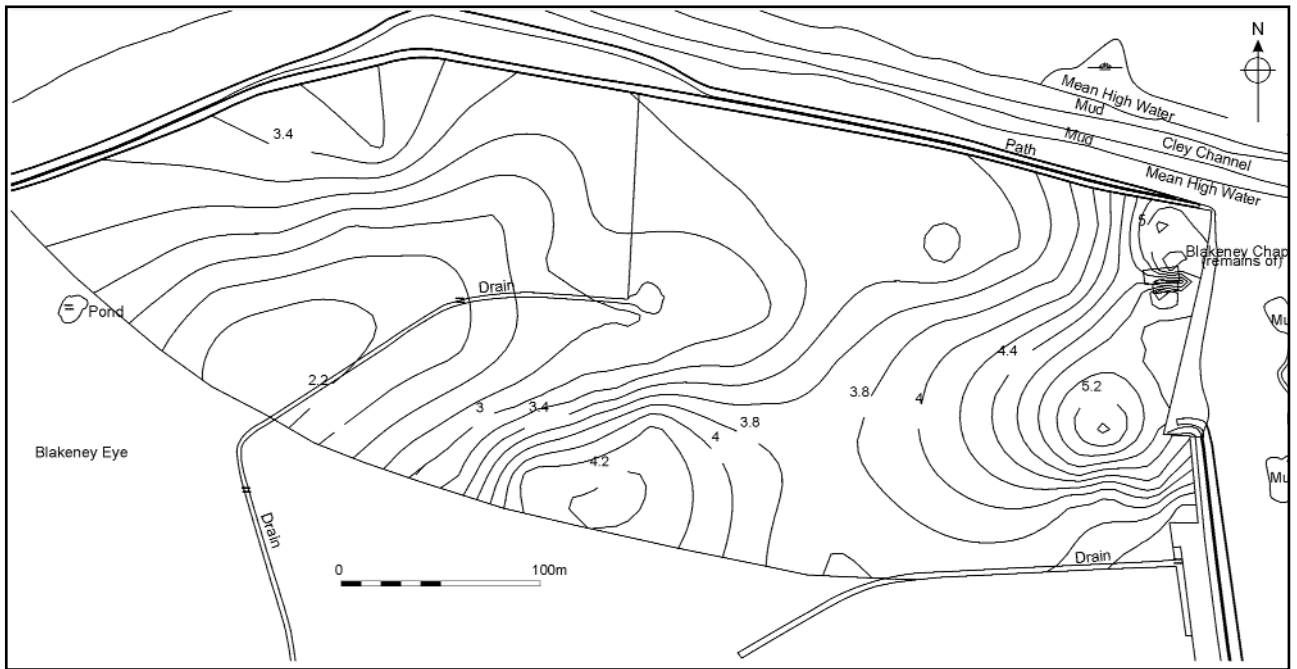


Figure 3. Site contours, with contour lines at 0.2m intervals.

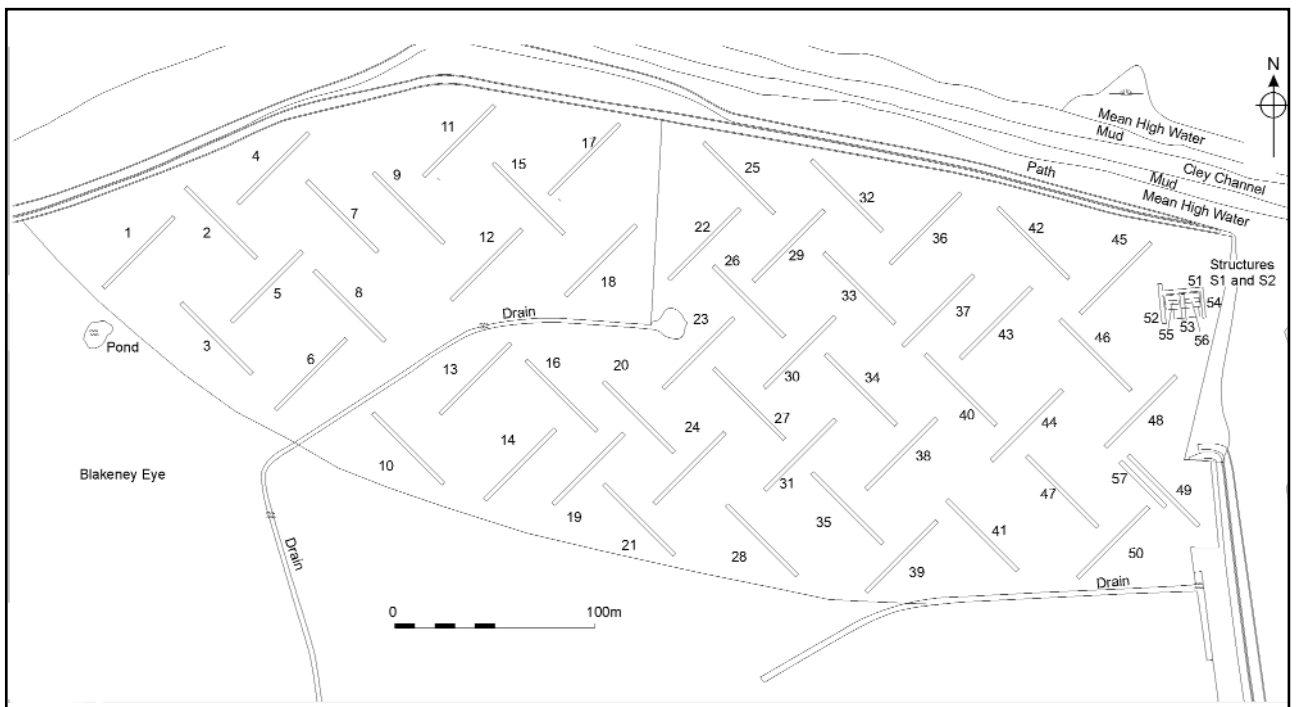


Figure 4. Location of Trenches 1 - 56.

Editors' notes: The plans and the section are taken from Norfolk Archaeology Unit, Report No. 808 (Revised): Report on an Archaeological Evaluation at Blakeney Freshes, Cley next the Sea 2003 (copy available in the History Centre Blakeney). Major features referred to in the text are shown on the individual plans for Phases II-V and in the section, but these figures also include additional information referred to in the original report.

The report concluded that some of the findings were compatible with the documentary evidence for the building having functioned as a medieval chapel in that the structure lies in an east-to-west orientation and that the roof was probably slate. The foundations of the larger cell were found to be relatively substantial. No evidence was recovered for habitation of the site and none was found to contradict the traditional interpretation that the structure functioned as a chapel.

Surveys

Geophysical Survey

A magnetometer survey was carried out of the site to locate flint foundations, salt-evaporating hearths or any other burnt deposits. An electromagnetic (conductivity) survey was also carried out to define sub-surface topography (e.g. palaeochannels, gravel surfaces). This work was undertaken by Stratascan Ltd.

Whilst the results showed some possible areas of archaeological activity, trenches (see below and Figure 2) placed over such anomalies showed them to be natural features, mostly fine sand-filled creeks in surrounding clay. Ferrous objects recovered were all modern, mainly associated with coastal defence during World War II, for example, lines of barbed wire to the east and west of the site and the large screws used to secure them from Trenches 7, 12, 18 and 35 (Photograph 1). Other finds included steel-sprung animal traps and modern iron objects from Trenches 9, 11, 12, 15, 17, 40-47, 50 and 52.

Borehole Survey

A series of 8 boreholes were drilled across the southern part of the site in-line with the proposed channel alignment. The work was undertaken by Allied Exploration & Geotechnics Ltd.

The boreholes extended to a depth of 12m to 16m below ground level and provided a record of deposits to this depth - full details are available in the site archive (Norfolk Museums, Gressenhall). The deposits generally comprised sands and gravels becoming more clayey until solid chalk geology was reached between 12.4m and 15.1m OD.

Hand coring for palaeoenvironmental remains was not possible due to the gravel substrate.

Contour Survey

During the surveying work a series of three-dimensional co-ordinates were taken across the surface of the site using the total station theodolite. From these points a contour map was created (Figure 3).

Trial Trenching

A pattern of trenches were dug across the site as shown in Figure 4. These displayed broadly two types of soil deposits depending on their location within the site; mid to dark brown windblown dune sands and white windblown dune sands, both lying over clays deposited through water action. Of the 57 trenches in total, 10 displayed archaeological evidence. Many of the geophysical anomalies were proved to be mainly creeks within the clay deposits filled by fine sands, or areas of gravel within the surrounding sands. None could be directly ascribed to the result of human activity.

Results (see Timeline opposite)

Finds

The earliest indication for human activity was a pit in Trench 20 that provides occupational evidence for the Neolithic period c4000-3100BC. Here a minimum of four utilitarian pottery vessels were represented within a pottery assemblage, together with a large quantity of worked flint. An environmental sample contained charred domestic refuse and the only seed of Black Bindweed recovered from the site. This pit was located on a higher level of free-draining gravels at c3m OD and there is a strong possibility that further remains will have survived and these could include evidence of structures that are very rare for this period.

The worked flint from the rest of the site is more mixed in nature with some probably being of Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age date and the remainder of an indeterminate prehistoric date. Some was clearly residual being recovered from deposits of a later date. However, it does indicate activity in the vicinity of the site during this period.

Further evidence for prehistoric activities in the area was provided by a sherd of Beaker pottery found unstratified close to Trench 49 that dates between 2600 and 1800BC (Photograph 2). Also found were some fragments of flint tempered pottery within a mole-hill to the north of Trench 48. The sherds were of prehistoric fabric but were not closely datable. These trenches were on higher ground at c4m OD at the eastern edge of the site and south of the structure.

Evidence of activities during the Roman period was restricted to a single residual sherd of Romano-British shell tempered ware, possibly an import from Bedfordshire or the Nene Valley brought into this region during the later part of the Roman period. It is part of a dish and most likely dates from the second half of the 4th century and probably into the 5th century AD. It adds to the evidence for a Roman settlement being in the Blakeney area.

PERIOD	FINDS	ARCHAEOLOGICAL FEATURES
Modern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * remains of WWII coastal defence works. 	<p>Phase V: Post-medieval activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Ditch cutting Phases III, II, and I deposits in S1; infill with material (much domestic waste) from 12th to 17th centuries. Possibly foundations for an east-west partition wall. * N & S foundation walls for S2 & N-S partition wall. * 3rd natural event – a silty gravel layer overlying earlier events. <p>Phase IV: Disuse & abandonment of Structures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * disrepair of walls and building material missing. * 2 natural events at this stage after abandonment – flood event, deposit of wind-blown sand and another flood event.
Post Medieval	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * sherds of Dutch-type wares (could have been made in this country) with a wide date range 15th-17th centuries. * sherds of imported pottery from Low Countries, Germany and France, 15th-17th C. * Local pottery. * majority of ceramic building material belongs here – brick, flat roof tile & pan tiles. 	
Medieval or Early Post-Medieval	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Copper alloy buckel pin. * fragments of brick. * sherds of local pottery dated to Late Medieval and transitional ware. * copper alloy needle. 	<p>Phase III: Structures - Construction & Use</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Post holes etc indicating a timber structure to east of main building (S1). * Evidence of burning above post-holes; finds dated to 12th-15th centuries. * Walls of S1 built with cobbles, predominately flint. Externally walls stepped out at base. * Internal flint and mortar wall to S1, with a cobbled area to west and a west doorway. <p>Phase II: Ditch</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * East-to-west orientated, the recovery of a piece of lime mortar from base raises doubts about age. <p>Phase I: Saxon Soil</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Very fine sand layer that covered the entire area and was probably wind blown dune sands on which a thin, poor soil developed.
Medieval	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Pottery both local or regional and imported e.g. Saintoge & Siegburg. * fragments of brick and roof tiles. * ear scoop / tooth pick. * Pottery ranging in date from Late Saxon/Early Medieval. 	
Saxon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Gold Bracteate: late 6th century. * Heavily burnt cereal grains, charcoal and black porous 'cokey' material. 	
Roman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Sherd of Romano-British shell tempered ware. 	
Prehistory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Worked flint probably Late Neolithic/Early Bronze. * sherd of Beaker pottery. * 4 Neolithic utilitarian pottery vessels & large quantity of worked flint. 	

Timeline for finds and archaeological features: only a selection of the finds are included and the archaeological features are divided into the five phases shown on the plans. Note: some of the finds and features are not attributable to a single historical period and are consequently placed in an intermediate position.

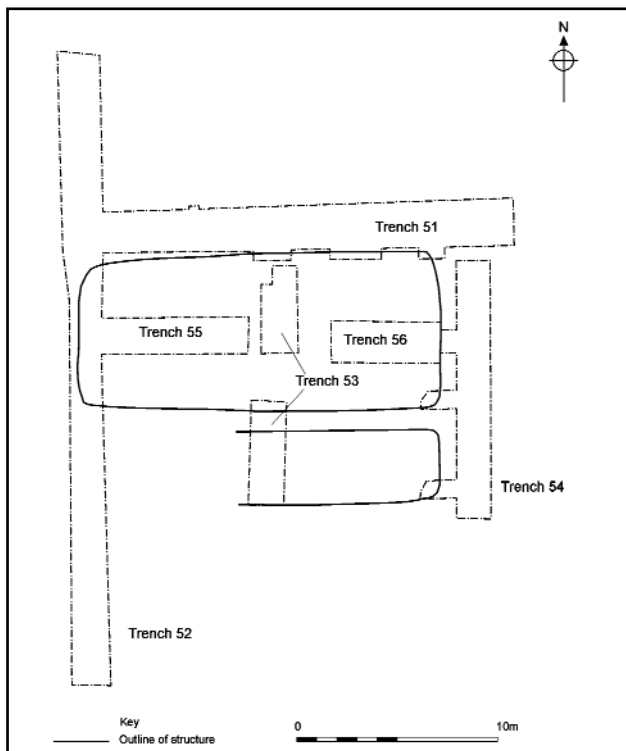


Figure 5. Trenches associated with structure – 2 cells, S1 and S2. Phase 1 was represented by a fine sand layer across the whole site and by the gold bracteate found in Trench 51.

Evidence for activities during the Saxon period was provided by the very rare find of a gold bracteate recovered from Trench 51 (Photograph 7 and Figure 5) immediately north of the structure in the north-east corner of the site. Bracteate finds are few especially outside Kent, but they help to define contacts in the first half of the 6th century between Scandinavia and regions to the south and also demonstrate continuing links between the two areas. It was recovered from a dune sand deposit similar to others identified across the site and is probably a stray loss in a coastal situation from a passing individual, rather than a burial find. Irrespective of whether the immediate source is Scandinavia or Kent, it does indicate continuing contacts between these regions and eastern England during the 'migration period'.

Also in Trench 51 was evidence of the Later Saxon period with a single fragment of Thetford-type ware recovered from the fill of a possible pit or gully and dated to the 10th-11th centuries. Caution must be exercised in dating any feature through a single sherd of pottery, and the fact that large pieces of post-medieval* (16th-century onwards) ceramic tile were recovered from the basal fill of this feature raises

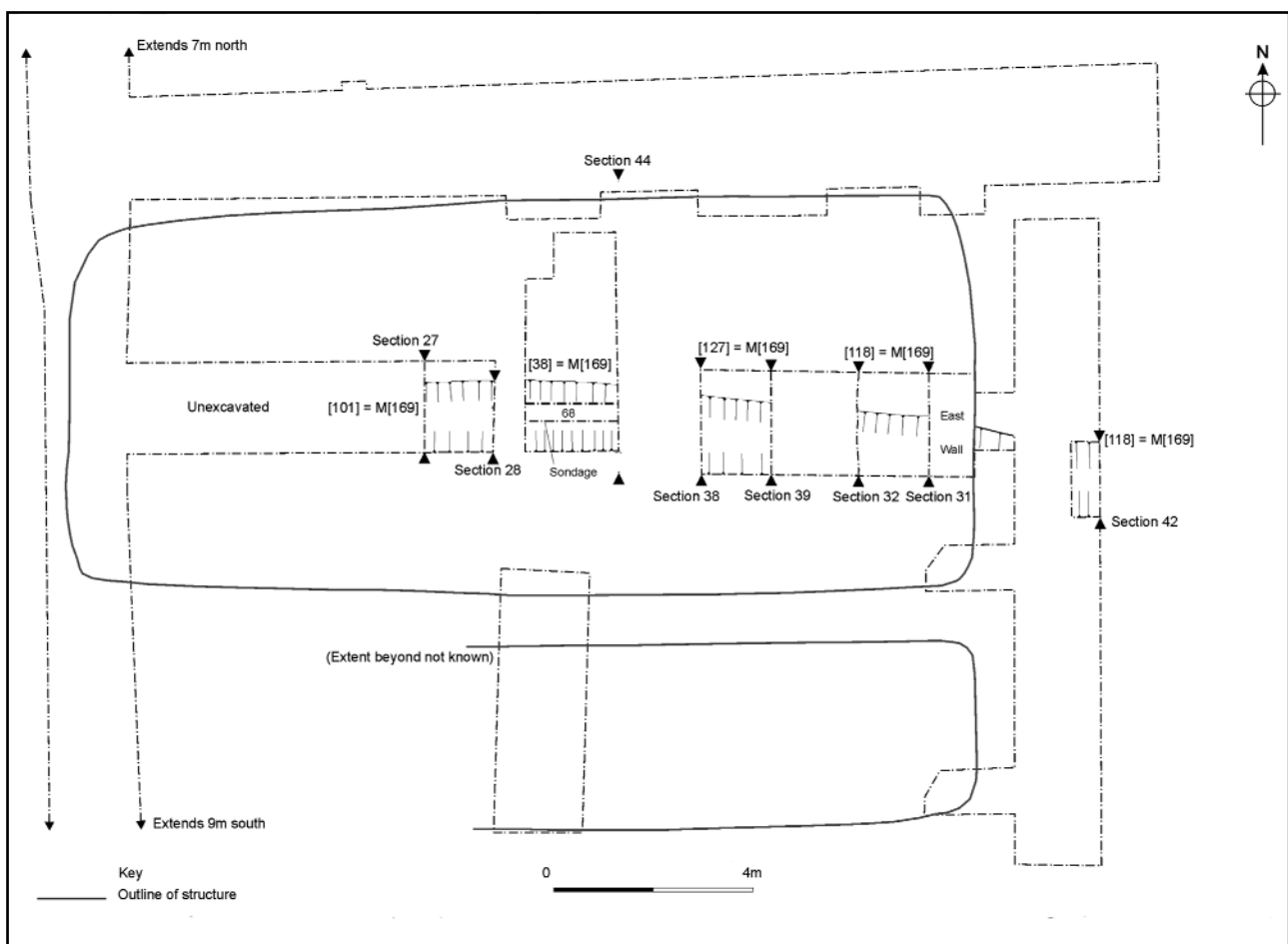


Figure 6. Phase II plan showing in Trench 53 the position of the sand layer (labelled 68) at base of ditch (see Figure 7 and Photograph 3).

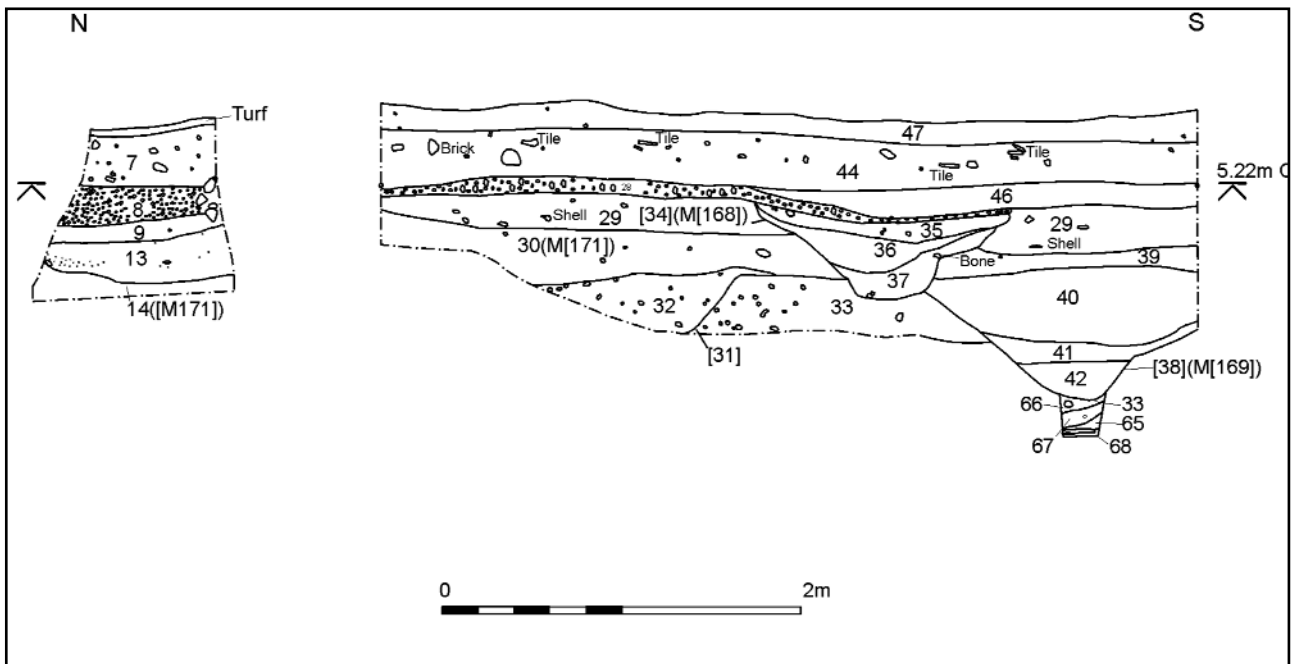


Figure 7. North to South Composite Section through Structure S1 following line of Trench 53 (Section 44 on Figures 6 & 10). The ditch is drawn at the south (right) end of the section (see Photograph 3).

questions. The sherd is most likely residual and whilst it demonstrates activities during the Late Saxon period, it remains unknown whether these occurred on-site.

A possible pit was identified within Trench 31. It contained a burnt, charcoal-rich primary fill that produced medieval pottery (late 12th-14th century), mortar, flint, stone, animal and fish bones, shell and a medieval/post-medieval copper alloy buckle pin. As this trench lies some distance from the structure with artefacts dating from the same period, and as the evidence from this trench is associated with settlement activities, there may be further structural remains hitherto undiscovered.

Two pits were identified c17m from the north-east end of Trench 19. Both produced worked flints and burnt flint fragments and one contained abundant cereal grains, chaff elements and segetal** weed seeds in addition to charcoal, coal and small quantities of animal macrofossils. The assemblage is most likely derived from a small deposit of charred cereal processing and/or storage waste, probably of a medieval or later date. The second pit contained very little in comparison: primarily charcoal, black porous 'cokey' material and burnt

stone in insufficient quantities to be accurately interpreted. It is possible that it may be of pre-historic date should the material recovered represent waste from pot-boiling.

Two possible pits were identified in Trench 47 though no finds were recovered.

There had been considerable coastal defence works on the site during World War II as evidenced by local knowledge and by the identification of sub-surface lines of barbed wire through excavation and geophysical survey. Iron screws for securing such fencing were also recovered. Exploitation of parts of the site for arable use during this period was evidenced physically by plough scars below the top soil and local knowledge.

Archaeological Features: the Structure

(Figures 5-10 & Photographs 3-6)

An east-to-west ditch was identified centrally beneath the structure and this extended beyond the east foundation wall (Figures 6 & 10, Photograph 3). A small quantity of flint and animal bone was recovered from the fine wind-blown fills. A single piece of mortar was recovered from a sondage* excavated at the base of the ditch. Plant macrofossils within the fill showed signs of burning, as did other samples from adjacent deposits and no doubt relate to some catastrophic burning event. The ditch

* Editors' Footnote: the terminology in this paper follows current archaeological standards and in a few instances this may differ from historical usage.

** segetal = weeds, often grasses, associated with cereal production.

*Editors' Footnote: sondage = a small hand dug trench or pit to explore a particular feature, in this case the underlying deposits at the base of the ditch.



Photograph 1. Sundry finds dating from the Neolithic to the 20th century, including sherds, animal bones, oyster shells, slates showing peg holes and parts of coastal defences from World War II.



Photograph 2. The single sherd of Beaker Pottery from Trench 49.



Photograph 3. Phase II, Trench 53, looking east in structure S1: showing ditch and soil layers drawn, see the south end of the composite section in Figure 7.



Photograph 4. Phase III, Trench 55 in structure S1, looking east, showing cross wall lying north south and cobble floor in foreground. The edges of Trenches 51 and 53 are visible.

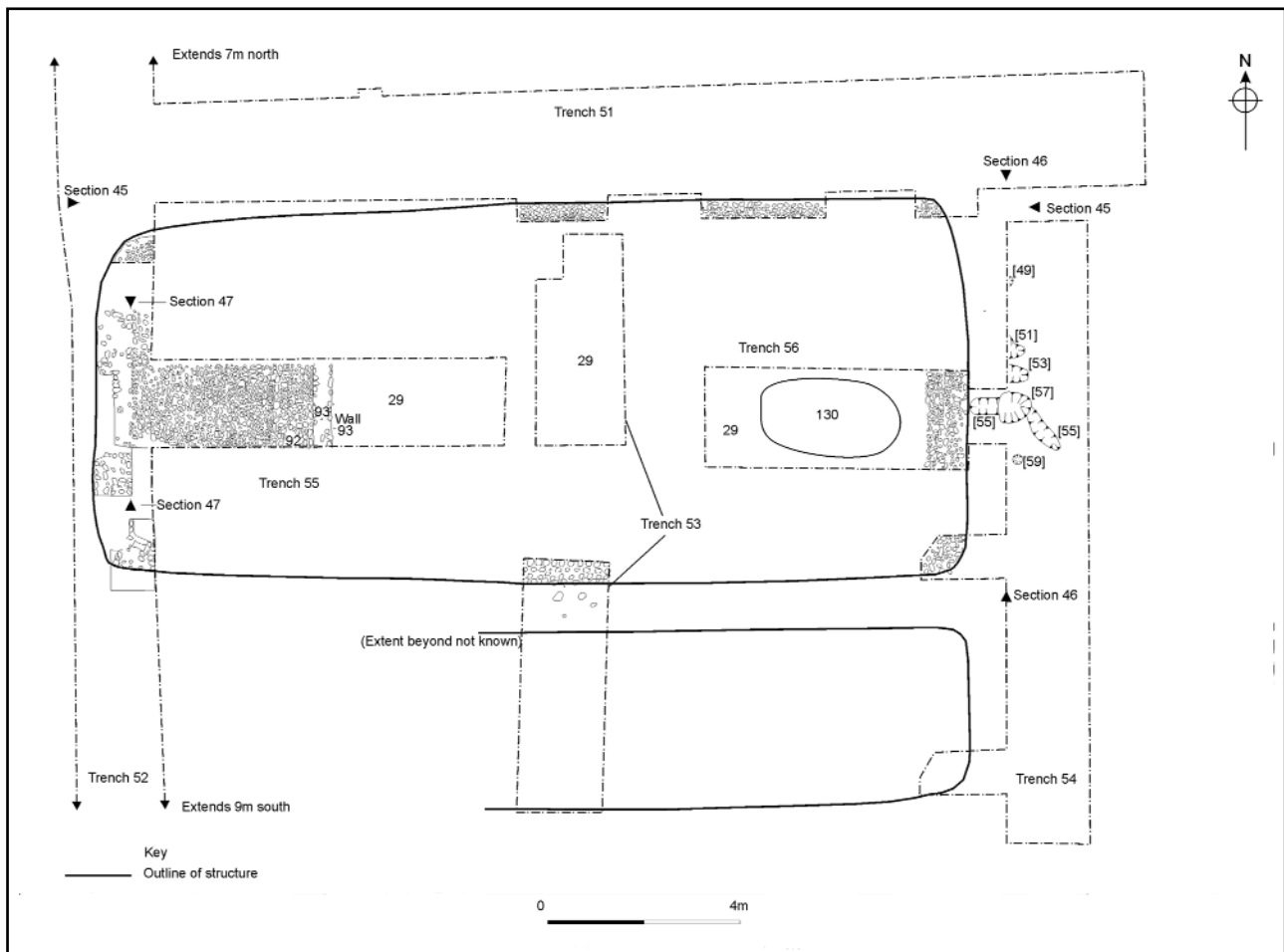


Figure 8. Phase III plan showing position of exposed walls and cobble floor in structure S1 (north cell), and in Trench 54 position of post holes (49, 51, 53, 57 and 59).

was initially interpreted as being of possible prehistoric date, or at least earlier than the structure as it extends beyond its eastern wall, though the presence of lime mortar raises questions about this interpretation. Nevertheless, it is earlier than another ditch that cuts it and, therefore, must be earlier than the 15th-16th century. This second ditch was identified within the main cell, that is the larger northern cell, and post-dates the occupation of this structure. The base appeared slightly squared and it is possible that it may have functioned as an internal east-to-west foundation trench that has subsequently been robbed.

Indications of a timber structure, mostly post holes, were identified within Trench 54, located to the east of S1* and these displayed signs of in-situ burning as did the lower cobbles of the foundation wall (Figure 8). The timber structure appears contemporary with the main flint structure S1 though its function and relationship remains unknown.

An exact date for the construction of the main cell of the structure, S1, was not attained. Although stratigraphical and finds analysis indicate the 15th-16th centuries were a time of considerable human activity and this is not inconsistent with the 1586 map.

An internal flint and mortar wall lay within the western part of structure S1 in a north-to-south orientation (Photograph 4). No internal walls were previously known. A well-made cobbled area lay to the west of this wall, using smaller cobbles without any apparent bonding materials that seemed to be set into the underlying sandy soil. Floors were not known within this structure prior to this evaluation and no floors were identified elsewhere within the structure. A doorway to the west of the cobbled area was identified as a plinth set into the wall and its interpretation is supported by 2 pieces of worked limestone recovered from the foundations of the later second cell S2 to the south of the main structure. They had been re-used as part of the primarily brick foundations and it seems probable that these would have been used in this doorway. However, it remains unclear whether this doorway is contemporary with the construction of the structure S1 or a

*Editors' Footnote: S1 = main structure or cell, visible on the surface as a surviving wall and an imprint in the turf. S2 = second cell to the south of S1.

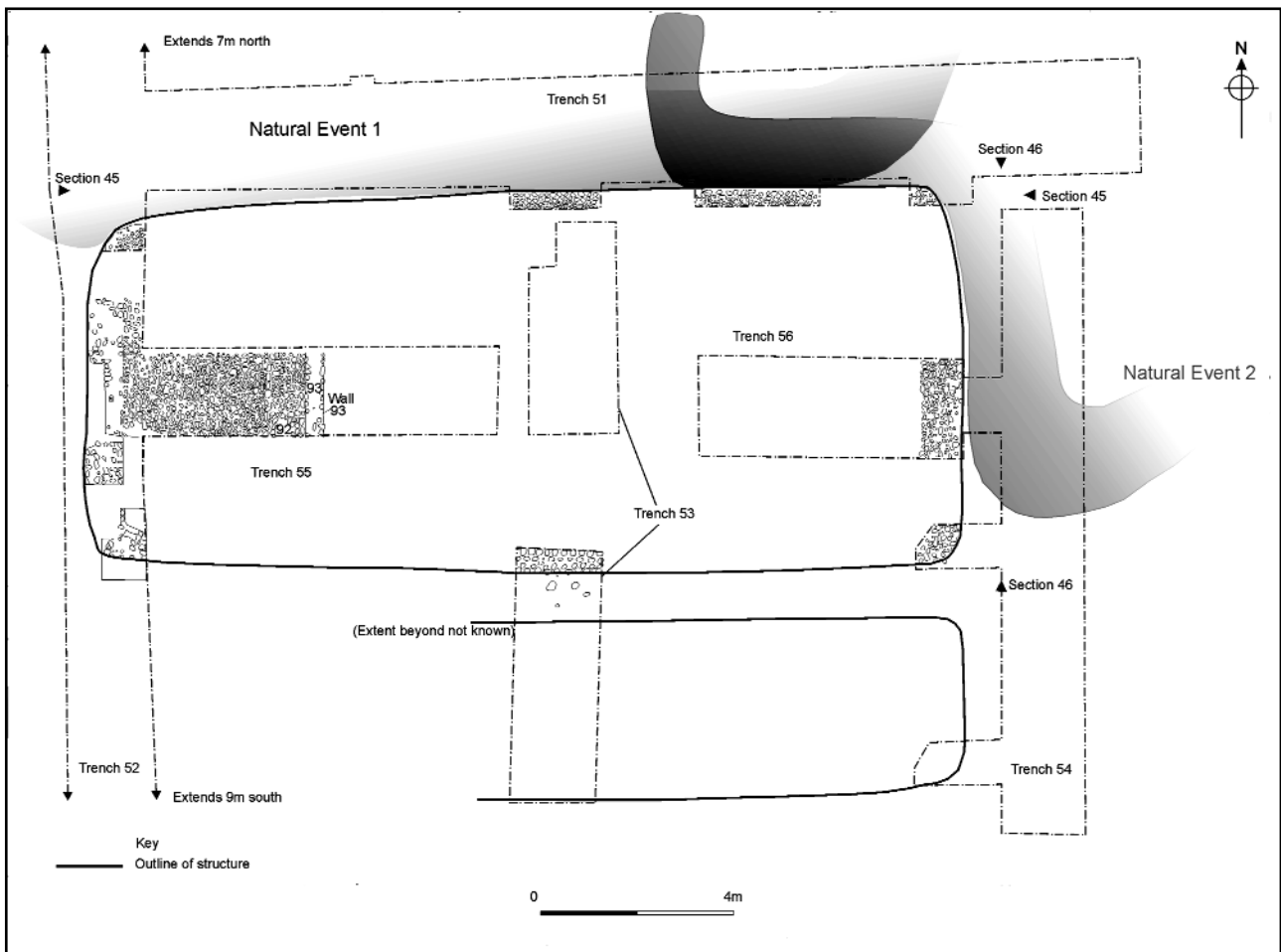


Figure 9. Phase IV plan showing extent of the first two natural events.



Photograph 5. Phase III, Trench 51, looking south at the external face of the north wall of S1, showing conspicuous layer of fine windblown sands towards the east (left). The stepped foundation rows of the wall are clearly visible.

later addition.

Nevertheless, there may have been an earlier occupation of this site given the number of artefacts dating to the pre-14th century period though no archaeological features or deposits could be assigned to this date. The larger and most northerly cell S1 forms the earliest part of the structure and appears to have been occupied, given the date and domestic nature of the finds recovered, primarily during the late Medieval/early Post-medieval period with the majority of the assemblage being of 15th-16th century. The pottery assemblage mostly consists of domestic kitchen and tablewares including a rare Siegburg (Rhineland) drinking bowl dated to the mid 15th-mid 16th century. This assemblage in particular has provided valuable information in contributing to an understanding of ceramic trends in this part of the North Norfolk coastal region. In particular, a high percentage of imported pottery confirms the extensive trading links between the medieval ports of Blakeney and Cley and parts of Europe as distant as south-west France.

The animal bone assemblage provided some useful information regarding diet. Much was derived from primary and secondary butchering and food waste of cattle and sheep or goat. Juvenile and neonatal bones of these species indicate on-site, or local breeding. Some rabbit bones also showed evidence of butchering. The presence of a variety of birds, including swan and curlew, and fishbones suggest this diet was supplemented with locally available species. Skinned canid and fox remains suggest the use of these animals, at least in part, for their fur.

The cause and reasons for the collapse or demolition of the main cell remains unknown though there has been at least one catastrophic burning event, evidenced by the burnt nature of occupational deposits and plant macrofossils found. There is clear evidence for collapse or destruction of the walls, particularly in the north-east corner of the north wall and in the east wall where they are in disrepair. Three natural events (Figures 9 & 10) following the collapse or demolition of structure S1 were identified; two flood events interspersed with an event depositing fine, wind-blown sands restricted externally to the central, north-east and east parts of S1 (Photograph 5), but they were not identified within the structure. Dates for these events are as yet unknown, though they are likely to have occurred sometime from the Post-medieval period onwards as finds of this date and later were recovered from the overlying soils.

Brick and two pieces of re-used worked limestone formed the foundation walls of the later, Post-medieval second cell S2 lying to the

south of S1 (Figure 10 and Photograph 6). It appears that both pieces of limestone would have formed a single doorway with the rebate for the door being clearly visible and are probably of 15th-16th century date and could have formed part of the west doorway of S1 leading to the cobbled area beyond. The foundation walls were in a poor condition, just two courses of brick and stonework remaining intact. A large quantity of brick, tile and flint cobble rubble lay between these foundations. The tile has been dated to the 16th-century onwards, and other finds, including clay pipe fragments are of the same and later date. Slate was recovered from the topsoil and rubble almost exclusively around S2, and some examples with punched securing hole at one end were retained. These also most likely date to the Post-medieval period.

Conclusions

Important and new information regarding the use of the site was uncovered during the evaluation, and it must be remembered that this was not a full-scale excavation. The results have established that occupation on the site occurred as early as the Neolithic period, c4000 to 3100 BC, through to the Early Post-medieval period, c.15th-16th century onwards. This occupation was restricted, as one might expect, to the higher, free-draining areas of the site, though whether episodic or continual occupation remains unanswered.

The topography of the site was shown to be considerably more undulating than previously known, generally between 2m and 5.5m OD, and reflects the dune-like nature of the deposits underlying the topsoil. Little truncation of these deposits was evident no doubt due to the history of land use as it was primarily rough grazing, at least, since the 15th-16th century and therefore would not have been intensively ploughed.

The rare find of a gold bracteate has helped define contacts between Scandinavia and Kent where the majority of such finds were found. Whilst this appears to be a stray find, rather than associated with a burial, it must indicate contact between these regions.

The structure within the north-east corner of the site commonly known as Blakeney Chapel has yielded considerable information. A firm date for its construction is still unknown, the main period of occupation being the Early Post-medieval period c.15th-16th century. Much of the finds assemblage consists of objects of a domestic, or personal nature, but compared with many sites where there has been human occupation remarkably little material was recovered. It has evidently seen a



Photograph 6. Phases III & V, Trench 53 in structure S2, looking north to excavations in S1. In S2 very little of the north wall is visible, except for the piece of worked limestone, a small section of the brick foundations of a possible dividing wall and the rubble infill. The flint wall lying immediately to the north of S2 is the external face of the south wall of S1 and beyond is the internal face of the substantial north wall of S1 with foundation rows showing.

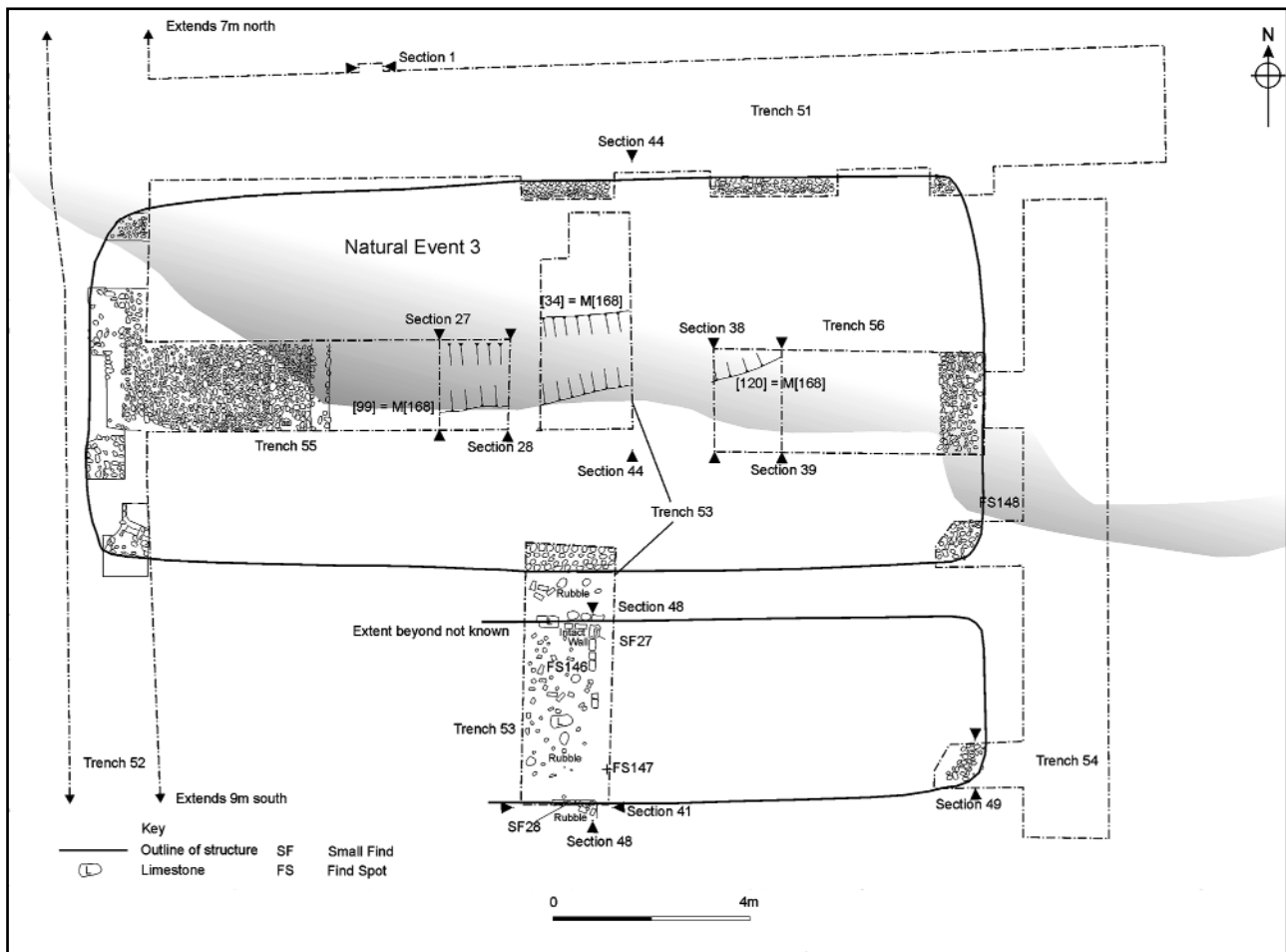


Figure 10. Phase V plan showing extent of third natural event; position of ditch in S1 running west-east in Trenches 55, 53 and 56, and remains of north and south foundation walls in S2.

number of changes to its construction and use, none can be ascribed to it having functioned as a chapel. There may yet be surviving evidence for earlier activities on the site given the presence of artefacts dating from the Late Saxon to the Medieval periods.

New information regarding the structure S1 includes the presence of substantial walls with a foundation step, an internal partition wall and a fine example of a cobbled floor. These may be contemporary with the initial building, or may be a later addition. It is possible this part of the building was used as an animal shelter. The later, second cell showed much reuse of building materials, in particular the worked limestone recovered from a foundation that most likely formed part of the west doorway of the larger building, S1. This part seemed to have been roofed using slate whereas the main structure may have been tiled. Exploitation of local resources, birds and fish, in addition to cattle and sheep/goat rearing was evident.

Appendix: Finds Reports

Finds of flint, pottery, coins, small finds and faunal remains were analysed and reported upon by appropriate specialists. Summaries of their findings are given below together with an environmental evaluation.

Prehistoric Pottery by Sarah Percival

The Early Neolithic:

Early Neolithic pottery represented the majority of the Blakeney prehistoric assemblage. Seventy-seven sherds weighing 1.153kg were recovered from the fill of the pit within Trench 20 together with a quantity of fresh long-bladed flints. A minimum of four vessels is represented and the assemblage is characterised by fine, undecorated bowls with simple rims and a marked carination low on the body of the vessel. It is known that early Neolithic plain carinated bowl styles had a long currency, beginning around 4000BC and continuing in use to c3100BC.⁵ The assemblage can be assumed to represent the remains of domestic occupation.

Later Neolithic Early Bronze Age:

A single sherd of Beaker pottery weighing

0.019kg was found in Trench 49. The sherd is made of a grog and sand tempered fabric with rare burnt flint inclusions and is decorated with incised lines forming a chevron motif. Parallels for the sherd have been found within the domestic assemblage from Riffley Wood near Kings Lynn Norfolk.⁶ The sherd dates between 2600 and 1800BC.⁷

Undatable:

Six fragments of flint tempered pottery were found within the upcast of a molehill to the north of Trench 48. The sherds were of prehistoric fabric but were not closely datable.

Roman Pottery *by Alice Lyons*

A single sherd of residual Romano-British shell tempered ware pottery, weighing 0.021kg, was retrieved from the fill of a post-hole in Trench 54. This deposit also contained fragments of a medieval glazed jug.

This sherd belongs to a plain, thick-walled dish with sides that gently curve inwards with an approximate rim diameter of 0.24m. The vessel looks to have been hand-made⁸ although the regular nature of the internal and external wipe marks suggest it was perhaps finished on a slow wheel. Of interest is an accidental nick made by a fingernail before the dish was fired that is still visible on the outside of the vessel wall. Also visible on the outside is a covering of soot, suggesting this was a utilitarian vessel used over an open fire, either as a container or a lid, probably during the process of domestic food preparation.

Romano-British shell tempered ware is known to have been produced both in the Harrold kilns in Bedfordshire⁹ and the Nene Valley.^{10, 11} and was imported into this region during the later part of the Roman period, although jar types are more frequently found than dishes.¹²

Vessels of both similar fabric and form and identical form but different fabric have been found in deposits at Harrold, Bedfordshire, that date to the second half of the 4th century and probably into the 5th century AD.⁹ Similar late Roman shell tempered vessels have also been found from the Nene Valley.¹¹

Late Roman shell tempered ware fabrics have previously been found on the North Norfolk coast at the Saxon shore fort of Brancaster¹³ and, as Roman settlement activity has been recorded in the Blakeney area¹⁴ (HER 17544), a residual sherd of this date may not be unexpected.

Post-Roman Pottery *by Richenda Goffin*

A range of pottery of late Saxon to Medieval date was found in features such as postholes, and pitfills recorded in several of the trenches.

However, the largest group of pottery is of post-medieval date, with the majority of it being of 15th-16th century and associated with Trench 56. In addition there are some interesting imports present.

Opportunities to examine such stratified deposits on sites on the North Norfolk coast are not common, and the analysis of the pottery has provided valuable information which contributes to a wider understanding of ceramic trends in this particular area of Norfolk.

The imported pottery overall makes up 32.5% by weight of the total assemblage, and 23.9% by sherd count. This very high percentage confirms again the extensive trading links between this medieval port and the continental mainland, not just on the other side of the North Sea, (the Low Countries and the Rhineland), but also the Bordeaux area of south-west France, where Saintonge whiteware jugs were made (fragment found in Trench 56). High levels of imported vessels are a feature of the assemblages recovered from excavations at the major ports of Kings Lynn¹⁵ and Great Yarmouth, where all these fabrics have been identified¹⁶. The Blakeney port books demonstrate an extensive list of foreign ports from which goods were imported, including ceramics.

This group of pottery appears to be a domestic assemblage of kitchen wares and tablewares, comprising cooking vessels, drinking jugs and jugs, with a rare Siegburg (Rhineland) drinking bowl dating to the mid 15th to mid 16th centuries.

Perhaps the most directly relevant comparison in terms of proximity can be found in the ceramic assemblage recovered from the excavation at Baconsthorpe Castle, three miles south-east of Holt.¹⁷ The nature of the pottery and other finds from this site is exceptional and reflects the status of the castle as an aristocratic household which is situated in a part of Norfolk where imports are particularly common. Analysis of the pottery from the site has shown that during the 16th and 17th centuries 46.4% of the pottery was imported, the breakdown being 7.2% from Northern France, 20.2% from the Low Countries and 71.3% from Germany.¹⁸ The assemblage includes most of the imported fabrics present at Blakeney Eye, but also additional ones and several exceptional vessels which may have been especially acquired by the owners, and were not likely to be part of the normal trading transactions between ordinary merchants.¹⁵

The ceramic assemblage recovered from the Eye provides evidence that the main period of settlement activity took place during the late Medieval and early Post-medieval period, in particular the 15th and 16th centuries. There is little pottery of a later date.

Ceramic Building Material *by Lucy Talbot*

98 pieces of Medieval and Post medieval brick and roof tile plus other finds were collected from the site.

Medieval:

The material from this period consists of eighteen fragments of brick and roof tile dating from the 13th to 15th centuries.

Late Medieval/Early Post-Medieval:

The site produced seventeen fragments of brick from this transitional period, ranging in date from the 15th to early 17th centuries.

Post Medieval:

This assemblage forms the greater part of the ceramic building material. The group consists of sixteen fragments of brick, a single piece of flat roof tile and forty-six fragments of pan tile. This material is dated from the 16th century onward.

Clay Pipe:

Three fragments of clay tobacco pipe stem were recovered.

Stone:

The site produced seventeen pieces of non-local stone. The assemblage consists of mostly unworked fragments of limestone and other unidentified pieces, however, eight fragments of roofing slate were identified.

Two large pieces of worked limestone were recovered approximately 3.5m apart from foundation walls of S2 within Trench 53. Both appeared to have been originally from the same doorway, with a rebate for a door clearly visible. The fairly wide chamfer is indicative of a 15th to 16th century date for these objects.

Shell

Oyster, cockle, winkle, whelk and mussel shells were recovered from many contexts.

Flint *by Sarah Baines*

A total of 149 pieces of struck flint were recovered from the site. One hundred and eleven fragments of burnt flint, weighing a total of 0.609kg, were also found.

Most of the flint is mid grey in colour with quite a number of pieces a paler grey, often due to patination. However some pieces appear to have been struck from a coarse-textured, slightly cherty flint and these are pale grey in colour. A quite thin orange-brown or greyish-coloured cortex is probably from gravel and other pieces have an abraded pebble-type cortex and may have been struck from beach pebbles.

The presence of soft-hammer struck flakes, the relatively large number of blades, the

nature of the retouched scraper and the presence of the polished flake all support an earlier Neolithic date for the material from the pit in Trench 20. It seems highly likely that it is contemporary with the pottery found in the pit.

The flint from the rest of the site is more mixed in nature with some of it probably being of later prehistoric date and some of it clearly being residual, found as it was in deposits which also contained pottery or other finds of medieval (and, possibly, Roman) date. However it indicates activity in the vicinity of the excavated trenches during the prehistoric period.

Small Finds *by Julia Huddle*

Of the 19 small finds considered eight are iron and include three clench bolts, a knife, a strip, a bar, an unidentified object and a piece of cast iron, probably piece of a drain pipe. Eight copper alloy objects were recovered and comprise an ear scoop/nail cleaner, buckles or buckle parts, a needle, a lace-tag and a sheet fragment. The remaining artefacts include a lead musket ball, a perforated oyster shell and many broken strands of twisted rope or cord.

The finds range in date from the Medieval through to the Post-medieval period, although some of the iron work including three clench bolts may be earlier in date.

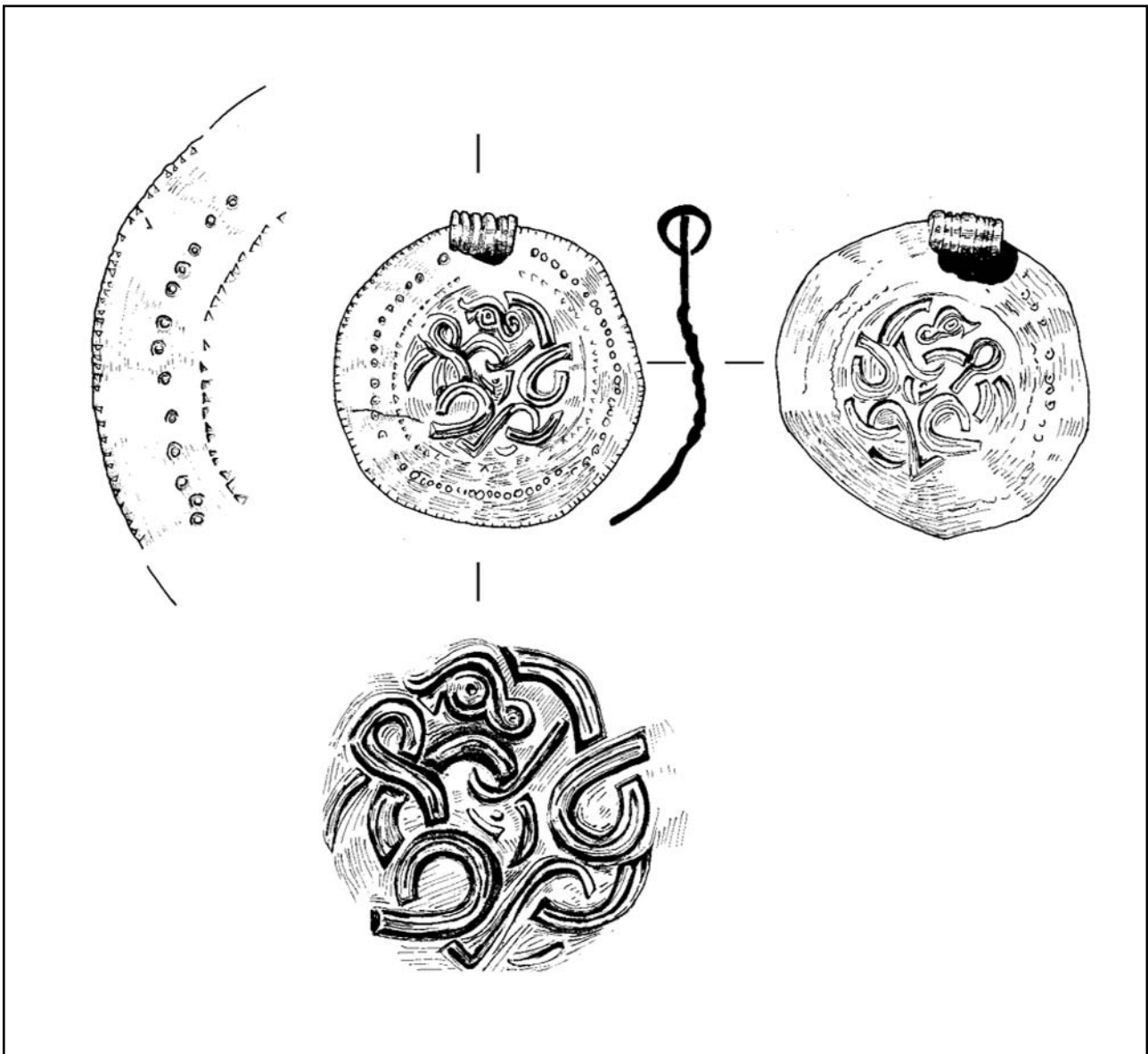
On the whole the material recovered falls into the category of personal and domestic items: such as a needle, dress fittings, a toilet implement and a knife. The clench bolts found (used to join timbers), may have been used on timbers of sea faring craft on the North Norfolk coast. A finely made ear scoop and a lace tag with punched decoration may perhaps be seen as high status finds, whilst a perforated oyster shell is perhaps of interest, although its possible function remains illusive.

Coins *by Adrian Popescu*

Five silver and one copper alloy coins were recovered. Two dated to the medieval period were recovered from the spoil of Trench 51 and one of 16th-century date from Trench 52. A coin was recovered from Trench 55 and dated to the 13th to 14th-century. The final coin was recovered from a probable occupational layer in Trench 53. It is in fairly poor condition and probably dates to the medieval period.

The Bracteate *by Ken Penn*

Bracteates are pendants, made in Scandinavia and possibly Kent in the late 5th and first half of the 6th century. Bracteates are made of gold sheet, with the main or central design stamped on a die (the pressblech technique) whilst the surrounding decoration is punched from the front of the object. The design usually incorporates Style 1 animals whose variety has allowed



Photograph 7. The gold bracteate from Trench 51 plus drawings showing front, reverse, pin and detail. The Bracteate is 41mm in diameter. The scale in the photograph represents 10mm per division.

a classification into classes A-D, with D being the latest with Style 1 ornament; the animals on D-bracteates have interlaced limbs and bodies.¹⁹

Bracteates derive from Roman gold coins and medallions imported into Scandinavia in the 4th century, and as such were intended as pendants with a large symbolic significance. Probably viewed in much the same way as the coins themselves, a token of Roman authority, they often have symbols rather than decorative motifs [such as the horse on the C-bracteate found at Morning Thorpe in Grave 80]. Gaimster suggests that they were 'special purpose' money, a deliberate imitation of Roman coins and their values.²⁰

Based on late Roman coins and the imperi-



al portrait, they were rendered in a different and evolving art style. Hines has made the point that as the only place that bracteate iconography is found is on the bracteates, then

the objects and their singular decoration are likely to have had a special significance.²¹

In Kent they occur with burials, but in Scandinavia they are not deposited commonly in graves, but as hoards in bogs, lakes and woods (and some in settlements), serving to emphasise their ritual character. In these deposits they were sometimes accompanied by a brooch with beads,¹⁹ and this may also point to their ritual character as some sort of surrogate burial, although minor bracteate finds are mostly found on dry land, as deposits of personal wealth.^{21, 23}

Imported Scandinavian gold D-bracteates are found mostly in rich Kentish graves of the first half of the 6th century, and as prestige objects may mark the burial places of the most important families.²⁴ Although in England, bracteates occur mostly in Kent, Hines²¹ listed sixteen from outside Kent, mostly D-bracteates. With one exception, bracteate graves are of females, with bracteates worn as pendants on necklaces. As to dating, whilst their manufacture may be early, their value and use as heirlooms may make their burial rather later.

The Blakeney bracteate is 41mm in diameter and is made of gold (Photograph 7). The central design is carried out in well-executed pressblech technique, and is of an animal in Style 1, a basic ribbon-shaped animal with the eye close to the loop, but with limbs nearly unidentifiable, around a central dimple (seen on some other bracteates).

The central design is enclosed within three concentric rings of punched decoration. The outer ring is on the edge of the disc and gives the impression of a bead rim. These impressions were made by the edge or point of a tool and vary in shape. The impressions in the intermediate ring are circles, rather unevenly arranged. The innermost ring is composed of closely-set impressions, each being made with a tool whose point is a double triangle.

The ribbed suspension loop is pinched over the edge of the disc (and over the decoration). The condition of the object is very good, with very little wear, and loss soon after manufacture is therefore likely, although the care likely to be afforded such an object may make this less certain.

D-bracteates outside Scandinavia may derive from three Scandinavian prototypes, although some may even have been made in Kent.²³ There are thus two possible sources for the Blakeney find. In Kent, Bifrons Grave 29 and Grave 63 contained bracteates with similar central designs (and also have a central 'dimple').²⁴

Hawkes also discussed finds from several Kentish cemeteries²⁴, including Sarre, and it is the bracteate from Sarre Grave 90 that pro-

vides a close parallel for the central design on the Blakeney find. Hawkes proposed a late 5th century date for the origins of the type in Sarre Grave 90, which is consistent with the date of c 530 given by Hawkes to the Bifrons Grave 64 burial, with a similar bracteate. A further parallel for the object comes from Nebenstedt, Lower Saxony²⁵, and further search may identify die-linked parallels.

On the subject of sources and links, one may note that Anglian C-bracteates, found outside Kent, are probably an insular variant of D-bracteates and evidence of links between South Scandinavia and East Anglia in the 6th century. C-bracteates have characteristically (often early) Style I ornament, and may date to the late 5th century. It is worth noting that a C-bracteate occurred in a burial in Norfolk.

The 'horse and rider' types include the Morning Thorpe Grave 80 example, buried with scutiform pendants and a pair of unusual bronze C-bracteates. The latter are both very battered, but clearly of a horsehead type, with broad plain border, no rim and an individual motif. These were probably of English manufacture and belonging to the 6th century, with parallels in Vendel-period Gotland, found with cruciform brooches of 6th century date.²¹ Hawkes and Pollard dated C-bracteates to the later 6th century,²⁴ but in her review of the type, Gaimster noted just one silver and two bronze issues among the East Anglian C-bracteates. She dated Morning Thorpe Grave 80 to the first half of the 6th century.²⁰

Faunal Remains by Julie Curl

Faunal remains were recovered from seven trenches. The largest quantity of bone was recovered from Trenches 55 and 56; there was little bone produced from Trench 31. The most common species overall was the sheep and/or goat, which was recovered from all trenches except Trench 31.

The majority of the bone in this assemblage was derived from primary and secondary butchering and food waste. The presence of a variety of birds and fish bones suggest a diet supplemented with locally available species. Fish would have been easily available as the site is coastal and birds such as swan and curlew are commonly found on wetter meadows and marshes in the area. The curlew is a sizeable bird (weighing around a kilogram) that would have provided almost as much meat as a pheasant or small chicken.

The recovery of probable skinned canid and fox suggest utilisation of these animals for their fur. At least some of the rabbit bones may have been intrusive as a result of burrowing rabbits, although this can be ruled out when butchering is present on the bones. Juvenile bones

and particularly neonatal bones of sheep and/or goat and cattle are indicative of on-site or local breeding.

Environmental Analysis by Val Fryer

Plant macrofossils:

Cereal grains/chaff and seeds of common weed species were noted in only five samples, generally at a very low density. The cereals were oats, barley and wheat plus a fragment of a large pulse (pea/bean). Preservation was poor to moderate; at least five samples contained material which had been subjected to extreme heat (either pre- or post-deposition), and as a result, the plant macrofossils, including the charcoal fragments, were distorted and fragmented. Frequent specimens had been burnt to the point of conversion into blackened tarry masses.

Animal Macrofossils:

Animal macrofossils, including fish bone, marine and land molluscs, charred arthropods and small mammal or amphibian bones, were extremely rare, only being recorded from three samples.

Discussion:

The assemblages from four samples are of note because of the high degree of burning evident in the form of melted charcoal fragments and puffed and distorted plant remains. The sample from the fill of the Neolithic pit in Trench 20

appears to contain charred domestic refuse. In this context, heavily burnt remains are not unusual. However, the remaining samples are from features in the immediate vicinity of the structure. Excavated evidence does suggest that the building may have been severely damaged by a catastrophic fire, and it appears most likely that some or all of the heavily burnt macrofossils may also be derived from this event.

A sample was taken from one of the pits in Trench 19. Although this feature is currently un-dated, it is in close proximity to a Neolithic pit in Trench 20. Cereal grains, chaff elements and segetal weed seeds are abundant, and it appears most likely that the assemblage is derived from a small deposit of charred cereal processing and/or storage waste. However, because of the density of material recovered and the composition of the assemblage, a Neolithic date is very unlikely, and it is tentatively suggested that a medieval or later date is more probable.

In summary, although a few plant remains were recovered from features associated with the structure, most appear to have been destroyed by at least one episode of catastrophic burning. The survival of plant material in features away from the structure is, in some cases, extremely good, and evidence survives for cereal processing and possibly storage. However, the dating of these contexts is often difficult.

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Punt-gunning on Blakeney Harbour

Extracts from the wild fowling journal of W Bolding Monement

Annotated by Richard Jefferson, Brent Johnson & Frank Hawes

Synopsis: W Bolding Monement (1846-1925) was one of the leading gentleman wildfowlers of his day. He lived at Weybourne in the house that is now the Maltings Hotel which he had inherited from his uncle W J J Bolding whose photography was the subject of an article in The Glaven Historian No.6¹. His wildfowling journal, kept in a hardback morocco-bordered exercise book, was started in 1880 and covered not only three trips to Scotland and the Hebrides and seven to the Netherlands but also these two accounts of punt-gunning locally. RJ.

Four and a half days at Blakeney 1891

Monday January 19th. Started from Weybourne after an early breakfast and walked round to the Villa² by Cley. The day was just breaking and a sharp frost. A small bunch of widgeon³ got up from not far from where our punts⁴ are kept and a good lot of duck came off the land. Got underway at high water, 9am (a moderate breeze East). I shoved off along north side⁵. Just before I got to the shingle point a small bunch of widgeon, followed by about 40, came from the Beachway⁶ and hit my side of the Hood – got well upwind to them, sitting all over the place – shot when they rose – downed 8. Loaded and went up Beachway, water falling fast. Several fowl afloat and on the wing – had a rare time getting up nearly dry creek, tipped and fired a very awkward shot – downed 2 duck⁷, 1 widgeon. Went over to the Freshes and shot 2 mergansers out of 3 with punt gun, also 4 knot, 1 godwit with handgun⁸. Returned to the Villa well satisfied.

Bag: 6 duck, 2 widgeon, 2 scaup.

Tuesday January 20th. Turned out at daylight, very strong wind East and sharp frost. Several bunches of widgeon on the wing. Started for Beachway. Just off the Hood 6 duck came straight at me and lit in the slog* not more than 150 yards off. Paddled to them and got 4 when they rose. Several fowl flying about Beachway. Made out 6 in the water. Shot when they rose bagging 2 duck and 2 widgeon. Too much sea to cross to the Freshes. On the way back shot at 2 scaup and got 1 and stopped the other with hand gun when he came past

me. Had a good dinner. The Villa beginning to look very nice – went out at night – very dark – shot close to the Villa by sound. Felt certain I had killed some but couldn't find any.

Bag: 6 duck, 2 widgeon, 2 scaup.

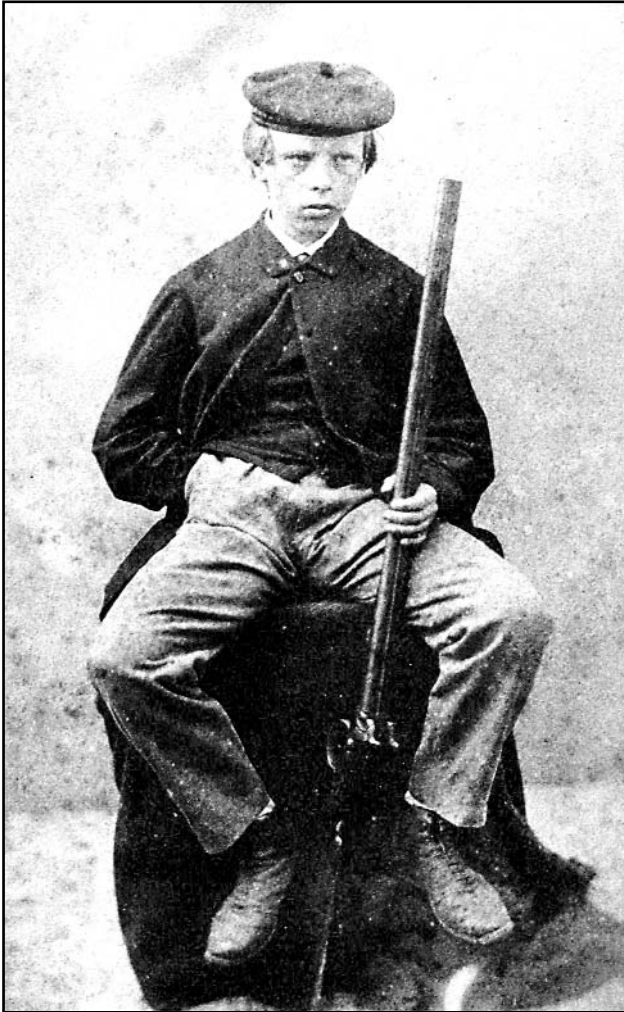
Wednesday January 21st. Same old wind. Marshall⁹ picked up 4 widgeon round the Hood that I had shot the night before. Ran down in a lot of slog* at a bunch of scaup on north side and got 7. Got back to Weybourne as I was shooting with Walpole¹⁰ the next day.

Bag: 7 scaup, 4 widgeon.

Friday January 23rd. Glass very low and snowing hard. Hammy Upcher¹¹ had asked me to his to dine and sleep. Didn't know what to do. At last Blakeney got the mastery but arrived there too late. There had been a swarm of fowl about. G Long¹² got 2 shots coming up from the lifeboat drill¹³ and old Arthur¹⁴ made a good day's work. Went out at 10pm. Tide just beginning to run the flats. Got 5 widgeon on "our manor" and again 3. Returned to the Villa.

Bag: 8 widgeon.

Saturday January 24th. Lovely morning slight frost light air of wind SW. Went down at low water. Tried to get a couple of scaup together but couldn't so didn't shoot. Shot at 1 with hand gun and stopped him, but he afterwards got up and flew away. Saw old Long¹⁵ at the Freshes and G Long coming up the Narrows. Went on board G Long's smack and smoked a pipe below. Long went on deck and saw 4 scaup swimming up the Narrows. I went at them and went all together but the gun missed¹⁶. Put on another cap and it missed



William Bolding Monement with his first gun in c1861. (Photograph by WJJ Bolding).

again. Tried to prime but up they got. I couldn't understand the gun missing. Primed again and went at a scaup in the sky. After a great deal of cracking and hissing off she went and so did the duck. When loading I found there was a big piece of oakum in the breech which had been left there when I wiped out the night before and sufficiently accounted for the misfire¹⁷. Lots of duck and brent flying west. Saw old Arthur further on trying to get to some brent and widgeon but no go. Went with him at a good lot of widgeon but they rose wild and I didn't get any. He was off them and I didn't shoot. Bishop went to the Freshes and I onto Blackrock – shot at 4 widgeon and got 3. Again at a scattered bunch of 6 – the old brent wouldn't [let] me look at them. Returned to the Villa having had a good day's work and then home.

Bag: 9 widgeon.

Four days and a piece: 32 widgeon
8 duck 9 scaup 2 mergansers 1 godwit
51 fowl average at 12 per diem. Best average in Holland had been 26 from 2 guns. Good on yer old Blakeney.

Next time down shot in the Narrows with George Long and Harry Long¹⁸ at about 2 dozen whoopers. Stopping 10 and getting 8 swans 1 cygnet.

Twenty-four hours spent at Blakeney 1898

February 11th Met Hammy Upcher at the White Horse, Blakeney at 10.30 and was sorry to find his rheumatic and strained arm that he had been suffering with for some time, although better, was still painful. Real winter weather. What little wind there was, SW. High water at about 2.30 and the flood was just beginning to come up the harbour. Got a man to carry our grub etc. a goodly load, across to the Villa. George Long shoved ashore as we were getting our punts down and gave a very poor account of the fowl. In fact he said there had been none at all in the day and very few at night.

Hammy set his sail and started for the west – and so I thought I'd take a look along the north side. Just before high water the coastguards King¹⁹, Hardy and Mr Coomber, station officer, came over from the main station. As I was returning to the Villa 6 widgeon flew up the harbour and after casting about for some time over the west muds went off to sea. Had a look round with the glasses when I got back and spotted the same birds no doubt on the west muds, which were just beginning to dry. Made a hasty departure being afraid there would not be water to them, but managed to get within 93 yards of them and stopped 4 – not so bad considering the distance. Ran back and as it was now getting dusk and the water falling away fast expected soon to see Hammy appear. Had a chat with Mr Coomber and smoked a pipe. It was now getting dark and there was very little water in the harbour, so I began to feel rather anxious about Hammy. Started to go down to my punt and met him en route which I was very glad of. He had seen several lots of fowl and had got 1 duck out of 1 and 5 widgeon out of a scattered company on the west sands. This we considered a rare good day for Blakeney and it undoubtedly was.

Had a first-rate dinner and a good spell at 4 handed lucre²⁰, after which Mr Coomber departed, and we, having set our alarm at 1am, turned in. Breakfast at 1 is rather early, but the early worm gets the bird and by 2 we were away again in our punts shoving over to the west muds. Sharp frost, a bright moon and a heavy swell coming up from the south-west. A good many widgeon here and there and we were a long time before we could decide which creek to go up. At last took the middle one but



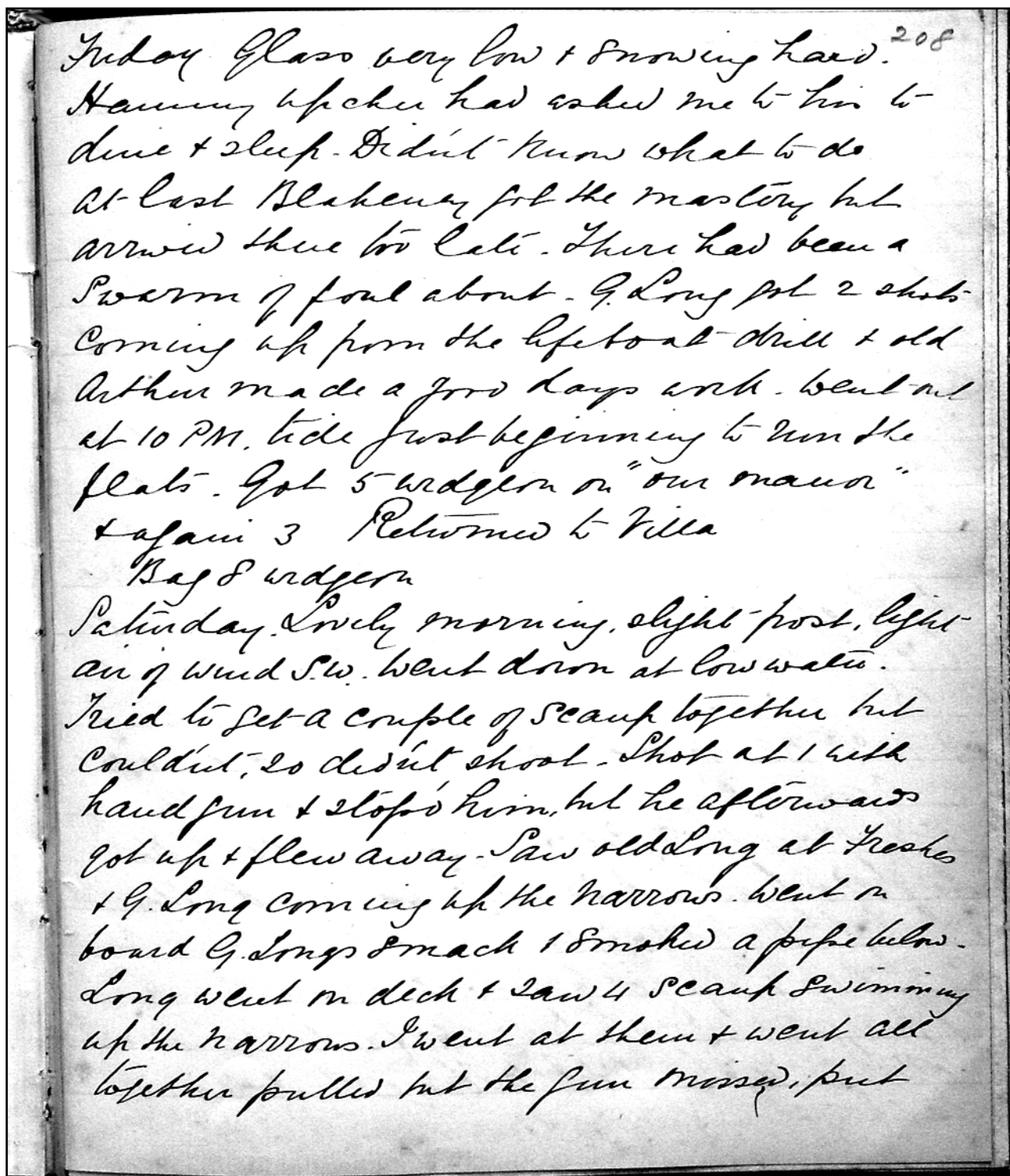
A 1938 photograph of Mr Edward Bird. This gun punt is typical of the type used on Blakeney harbour in the nineteenth century. (Photograph provided by Mary Ferrusset)

there was not enough water for our guns to shoot clear of the edge, and the tide owing to the frost was flowing very slowly – when about 100 yards up we saw 12 or 13 widgeon in the track of the moon, so squared our boats and waited for the tide to flow. Gradually inch by inch our guns rose higher up the edge of the creek, but the squall was not far distant and there was little time to lose. Presently all the fowl ran together having, as we afterwards saw, found out a little pool with cot* grass. Now if our guns are clear of the edge we have them, and giving a shout to make them put their heads up, we let drive. Haven't touched a feather, I said as Hammy clawed out of his punt and ran along the mud. Haven't we, by jingo, replied he, for there were 10 dead and 1 trying in vain to escape by a little creek. We have shot biggish shots in Holland times and often but never did I enjoy one more than this, small though it was. Paddled over to the Villa which began to look like business with 21 fowl in the cupboard. It was now 3am and we thought a turn in was advisable.

Up again at 7 for breakfast no.2. Glorious morning. Real gunning squalls of hail from the north-east. Bright sun at intervals and the wind going round the compass in a way that I never saw before. As we were starting to go down in our punts G Long shot at about 50 widgeon just our side of the Pit and afterwards said he got 2. Shoved down westerly on the latte* ebb. A nice lot of widgeon cast several times over the Freshes but wouldn't light. Went ashore on the west side of the narrows in a heavy hail squall. Could see old Arthur on the

lee side trying to keep himself warm. At last he came over to us looking very done and wet, having been out since 6 without anything to eat and wet through most of the time. Added to this he'd had, as he expressed it, a most noble chance of widgeon, packed I forget how many to the square foot, and his gun had missed. Hammy gave him a drink from his flask and he shoved up to Morston. Having seen a small bunch of fowl light by the bar sand, we shoved down and found there were 2 small lots, about 8 and 15, at the edge of the water. We had to go rather slowly on account of Hammy's arm. A swell caused by the flowing tide made aiming very difficult. Just before within range all the fowl waddled up what little sand there was left uncovered and huddled together for a short nap. We let them have it stopping nearly all. Several cripples ran over the fast covering sand and got into the rough water outside. Jumping out of our punts and wading as far into the surf as we could we killed with our hand guns all but about 2, bagging 19 altogether. Shoved up the low in west sands, shook hands and loaded our guns.

Whilst we were smoking our pipes and shooting the shot over again, about 150 widgeon came and lit at the entrance of the low and swam to the edge, on which we were standing, not more than 300 yards distant. As the bank was very steep and the tide running hard against us, we decided to go in Indian file and when within shot, or a little before, draw up abreast. All went well until Hammy came alongside and then the fowl on seeing one punt turn into two, rose at once, rather far off. If



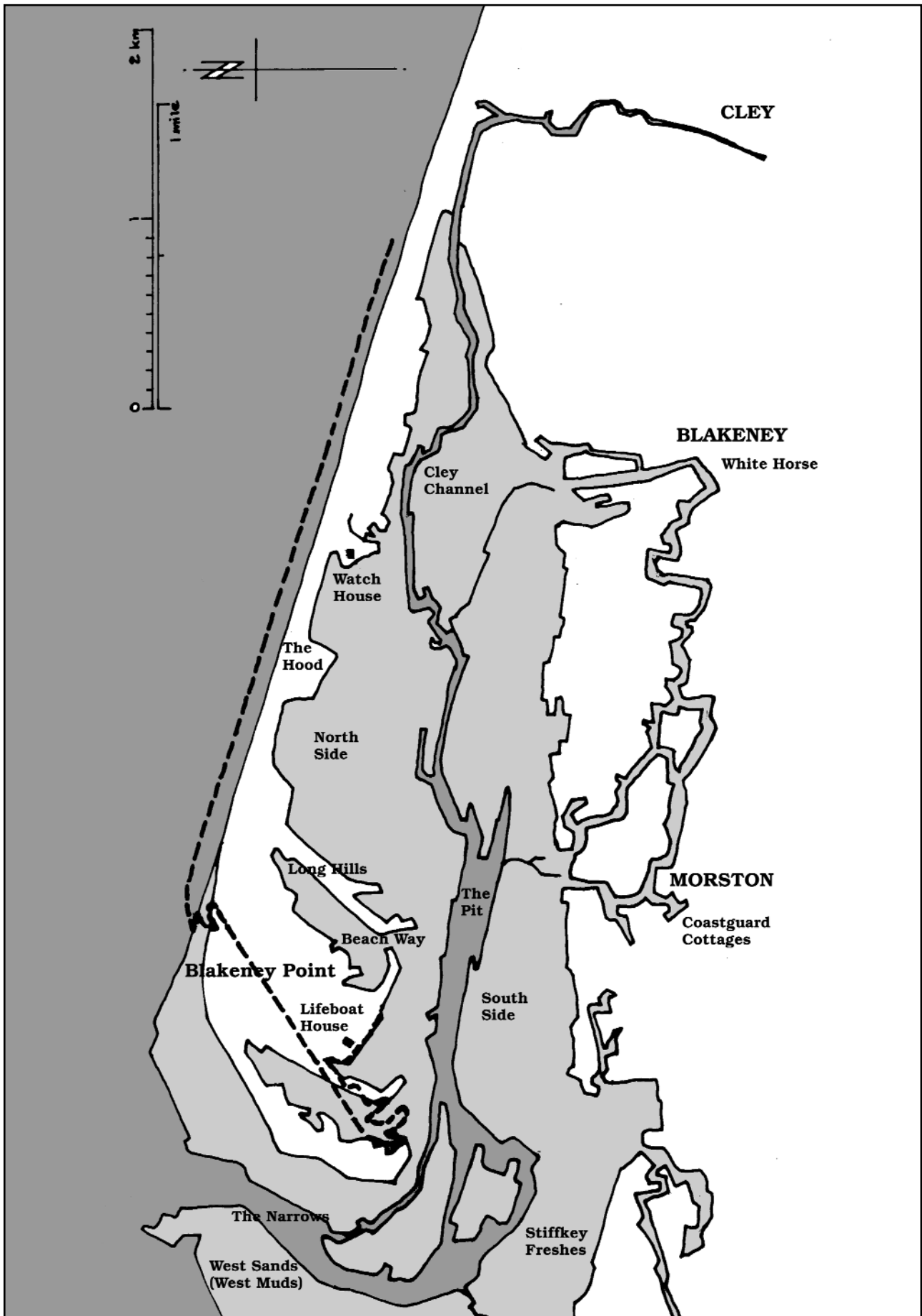
Sample page from the WBM Journal.

we'd known what was going to happen we could have kept one ahead of the other a bit further and most likely have had a good shot.

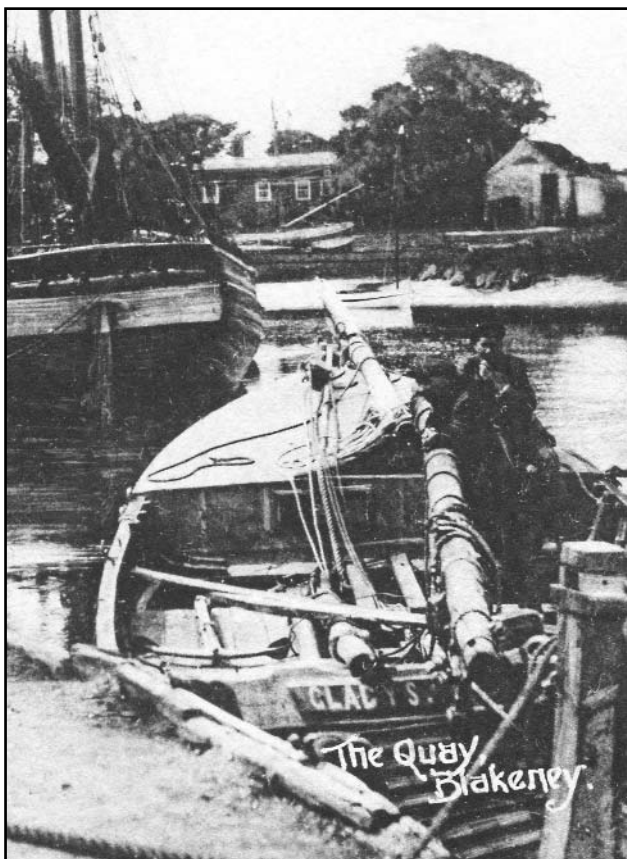
Shoved further up the low and over the high sand. Could see the brents and about 20 widgeon. Hammy was of the opinion that the former would take the latter with them when they rose, which would probably be about 200 yards off. But such was not the case, the widgeon taking no notice of their noisy companions departure. Going very nearly down wind

on them in stalking water with one hand on the trigger was very nice and we shot when they lifted, cutting down the greater part of them. It was a longish shot and when we had collected the cripples, the number of slain amounted to 15. This ended the best 24 hours we ever had, or are likely to have, at Blakeney and we returned to the Villa at peace with all the world.

Bag: 1 duck, 54 widgeon.



Map of Blakeney harbour in its present day form. In WBM's day the Far Point beyond the Lifeboat House would have been considerably shorter as indicated by the pecked line. NB: the map is orientated with North to the left and East to the top (map by Frank Hawes).



(top) George Long Junior with his gun-punt, handgun and “bag”, photographed some-time in the early 1900s (Photograph supplied by John Wright).

(above) George Bennington Long’s oyster smack at Blakeney Quay.

Notes

- * Words marked in the text with an asterisk are unclear in the journal. They have been jointly interpreted with the kind assistance of Richard Porter. [RJ]
- 1 Jefferson, R W J J Bolding (1825-1899), Pioneer North Norfolk Photographer; *The Glaven Historian* No.6, pp3-14 2003
- 2 The Villa, I am convinced, having read the text of the journal, was a house situated in the area of the Point or Hood or Watch House. Up on the Humber wooden sheds were erected by wildfowlers for shelter and they would spend nights or days in them between shootings. [BJ]
- 3 Wigeon (*Anas penelope*); WBM consistently uses the archaic spelling which according to the Oxford Book of British Bird Names (Lockwood; OUP 1984) had been spelt without the ‘d’ since Pennant chose wigeon in 1768. [FH]
- 4 Two sets of people from opposite ends of the social scale carried out punt gunning at the end of the nineteenth century: those that had to do it to help them make a living (market gunners) and those that had sufficient money that they did not have to work (gentleman gunners). The market gunners hated the gentleman gunners as they affected their living. The only exception to this would have been when they were asked to

- accompany the gentleman gunner to carry out all the hard work associated with punt gunning, the gentleman just taking the shot. [BJ]
- 5 Mr Monement (a gentleman gunner) seems to have punted on his own, that is he used a single handed punt, but was sometimes accompanied by another gentleman gunner using another punt outfit. This was not unheard of as even the market gunners sometimes combined two shots at fowl. [BJ]
 - 6 Beach Way (WBM makes it one word) appears on several maps including the current OS 1:25,000 Explorer 24 Norfolk Coast Central. It seems to have been a creek running into the west side of what is now called Pinchens Creek but at least one earlier OS map gives this name to Pinchens Creek itself. Robert Pinchen did not become warden of Blakeney Point until 1912 so, assuming the creek is named after him, the name would not have been in use in WBM's day. [FH]
 - 7 By this WBM seems to mean Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) but until the early twentieth century the name for this species was the Wild Duck, the term Mallard being reserved for the male of the species. [FH]
 - 8 The term hand gun in the text should read shoulder gun: a conventional gun carried to shoot wildfowl only injured by the punt shot and cleared up afterwards using a shoulder gun. These were normally of cheap quality, so that any salt water damage was not that important. [BJ]
 - 9 Mr Marshall has not yet been identified. [FH]
 - 10 Possibly Horatio Walpole 4th Earl of Orford who moved from Wolterton Hall to Mannington Hall in the 1860s and who died in 1894, or his nephew Robert, the 5th Earl, who moved from Mannington back to Wolterton in 1905. They were Lords of the Manor of Weybourne. [RJ]
 - 11 Mr Hamilton Upcher of Sheringham Hall. [RJ]
 - 12 George Bennington Long (1856-1938), at this time Second Cox of the lifeboat. For a newspaper report of George Long's punt gunning mishap in 1902 see *The Glaven Historian* No1 1998. [FH]
 - 13 This would have been a lifeboat drill with the *Zaccheus Burroughs* newly delivered a few months earlier. [FH]
 - 14 This was probably Hugh Arthur Bishop, a well known wildfowler who was known as "Gentleman Arthur". See Day, J Wentworth, *The Modern Fowler* (Batchworth 1934). [FH]
 - 15 James Long, the father of George B. and Harry. [FH]
 - 16 Misfired. WBM seems to have used a muzzle loading gun. In having to change the cap he is telling us he thinks the percussion cap has misfired. He takes it off the nipple and replaces it with another which also fails to fire the gun. He then suspects the priming charge. This is a charge of fine powder which is ignited by the percussion cap and fires the main charge. This is required as punt gun main powder consists of 2.25 ounces of very large powder grains and so requires a considerable flash to ignite it properly. [BJ]
 - 17 Black gun powder leaves a sticky wet residue after firing. It is essential to clean the barrel after each shot. If a wet powder charge is loaded without a thorough cleaning it will misfire or cause a hang fire (slow burning). [BJ]
 - 18 Harry Long, son of James and brother of George B. [FH]
 - 19 William Edward King was a Morston coast guard. Shortly after this he was posted to Wainfleet, Lincs, but returned in 1902 to become landlord of the King's Arms, Blakeney, until 1929. Hardy was presumably also a Morston coastguard and Mr Coomber their station officer. [FH]
 - 20 From the context it seems that "lucre" must be a card game but it does not appear in any of the lists consulted. Perhaps it was a local or even just WBM's name for Euchre. [FH]

'They seek them here, they seek them there'

OR

The Migration of people to and from three Glaven Villages in the second half of the 19th Century

by John Peake

Synopsis: Using the census records for 1851 and 1881 the movements of people to and from Blakeney, Wiveton and Cley are explored. Short distance migration was prevalent, with long distance being to London and more importantly north to Westoe and South Shields. The population in the villages fell by 20% and the importance of migrants in maintaining their vitality is discussed. The effect of this fall was not spread evenly across the community and its impact on the villages is discussed.

Introduction

Where people come from or where they move to are questions we all ask about relations and friends, even though the replies are often forgotten. Fortunately governments are also interested in such information and since early in the 19th century it has been recorded in censuses taken in nearly every decade down to the present day.

Searching for individuals in these census records is, however, both time consuming and tedious. Certainly they are not amenable to tracing the movements of large numbers of people dispersed across the country, but this situation is changing as transcripts of censuses are appearing on CDs in formats that can be read and searched on computers. Two are now available for Norfolk; the first for 1851¹ has a restricted coverage, while the second for 1881² covers the whole country. Both sets of CDs are available in the History Centre in Blakeney.

Once the novelty of searching these CDs for long lost relatives has worn off, other questions come to mind. Indeed the appearance of John Wright's paper³ in last year's *Glaven Historian* and a small article by another member John Rogers⁴ stimulated me to look again at some work done about five years ago when I moved back to Blakeney.

Generalisations are often made about the way people moved or didn't move from villages, with answers frequently being polarised at the

extremes. In this paper such presumptions are explored in the three Glaven villages of Blakeney, Cley and Wiveton using the CDs for 1851 and 1881. These enquiries are then extended to look at the occupations of migrants and the effects of their movements on the villages.

Of course these records contain no information on emigration overseas. So, it must always be born in mind that in the year 1835-6 more than 8,000 people left Norfolk and this 'export' continued throughout the century, even though the numbers were never so high again⁵. The full impact of this migration on the Glaven villages is largely unknown, but the occasional record suggests it cannot be ignored.⁶

Census

The censuses provide two essential pieces of information, firstly the 'birth parish' and secondly the place where the person was living at the time of the census. These were included together for the first time in the census for 1851. Unfortunately knowing these two points does not define the routes whereby people reached or left the villages.

There are limitations to the information on the CDs and mistakes can be found, but this is hardly surprising given both the enormity of the survey and the task of transcribing the results. Fortunately many of the limitations are not important in this study, which is con-

cerned with major variations where small errors are unlikely to be significant. Only in a few instances have analyses been abandoned.

There are also some amusing inclusions, such as the occupation of a seven month old baby recorded as a 'scholar' and that of a 64 year old seaman with a young wife described as 'a worn out sailor'. But such comments cannot be dismissed simply as errors, for example, the record of the baby suggests that some schools may have functioned as 'crèches' in the late 19th century, if so, which schools?

Maps are used to display the wealth of information, rather than long lists of parish names and numbers, and where the migration patterns for the villages are similar the data has been amalgamated. The information was extracted from the census CDs and manipulated in spreadsheets and in two computer programmes called LDS Companion⁷ and Genmap²⁸.

In-Migration

A distinction is frequently made between people coming from other countries and those moving within a country; the former is referred to as immigration and the rather ugly term used in the heading above is applied to the latter.⁹ This distinction reflects interest not only in sociological problems, such as the movement of people from rural to urban areas, but also in the considerable political implications associated with immigration. The latter was, however, low across the whole county of Norfolk during the 19th century and very few individuals were recorded from the three villages as being born overseas.

Birth parishes of people moving into the three villages in 1851 and 1881 are plotted on Maps 1 and 2 with the size of the circles reflecting the relative numbers of people moving. As might be anticipated the highest levels of movement were between the Glaven villages as shown in Table 1, with the numbers of in-migrants from selected villages and towns in Table 2.

Target Villages	Sources of Migrants		
	Blakeney	Cley	Wiveton
Blakeney	—	37	16
Cley	32	—	13
Wiveton	8	13	—

Table 1. Movement of people between the Glaven villages in 1851, showing the sources of the migrants and the target villages they moved to.

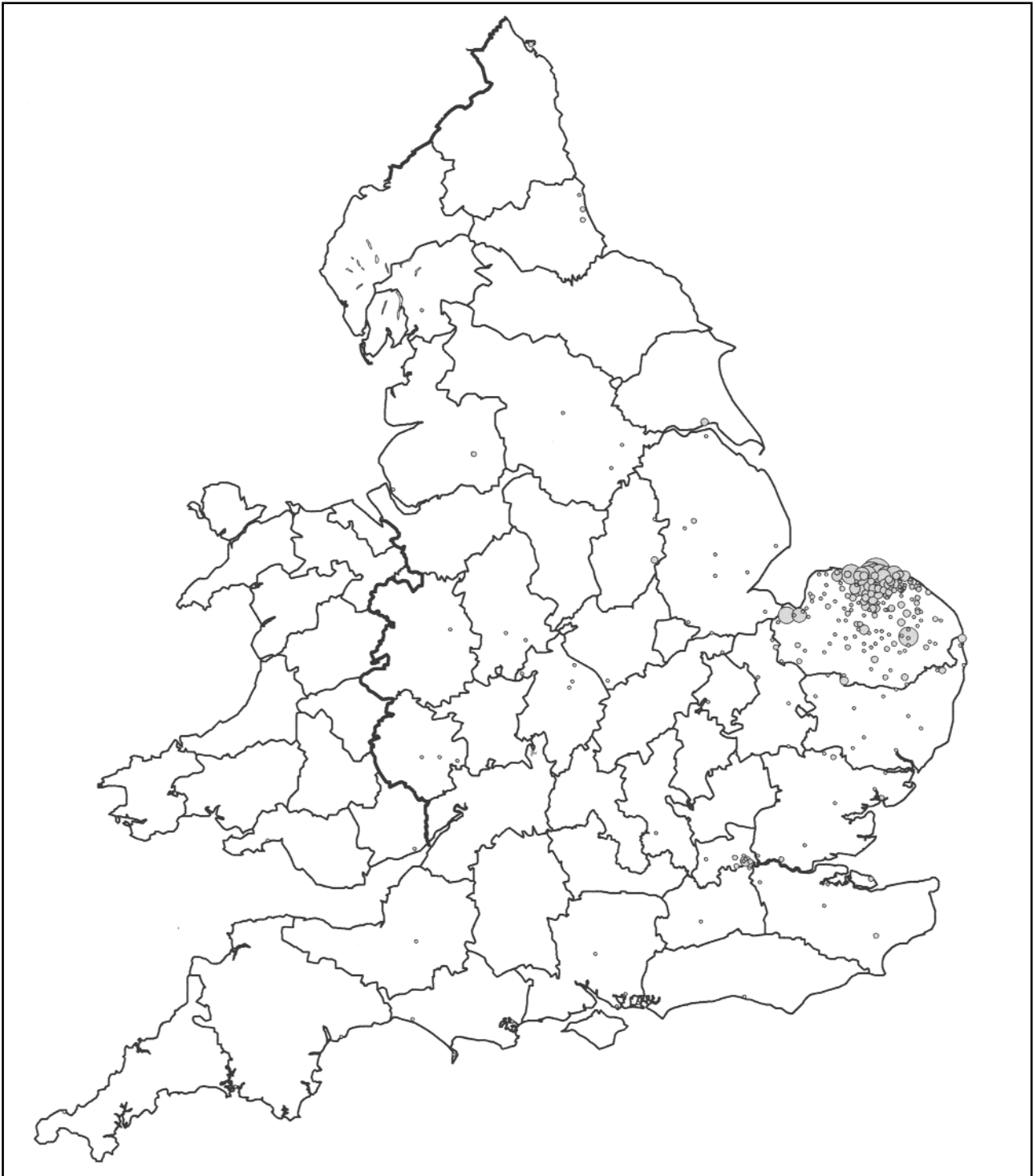
These maps and tables highlight the over-rid-

Short-distance migration: 1851

	In-migrant	Emigrant
2 miles		
Glandford	34	9
Salthouse	26	6
3 miles		
Langham	29	5
Morston	18	7
Saxlingham by Holt	3	4
4 miles		
Cockthorpe	5	1
Field Dalling	32	3
Holt	31	48
Kelling	12	3
Letheringset	12	10
5 miles		
Bale	4	1
Binham	10	3
Sharrington	9	1
Stiffkey	14	6
Stody	5	1
Thornage	5	1
Weybourne	24	5
6 miles		
Bodham	4	1
Brinningham	7	0
Brinton	5	7
Gunthorpe	8	1
Hempstead	10	1
Hindringham	18	0
Hunworth	4	3
7 miles		
Baconsthorpe	6	3
Edgefield	3	4
Sheringham	19	10
West Beckham	5	4
9 miles		
Wells	25	31

Table 2. Short distance migration in 1851: in-migrants to and emigrants from the Glaven villages, with distances measured from Wiveton.

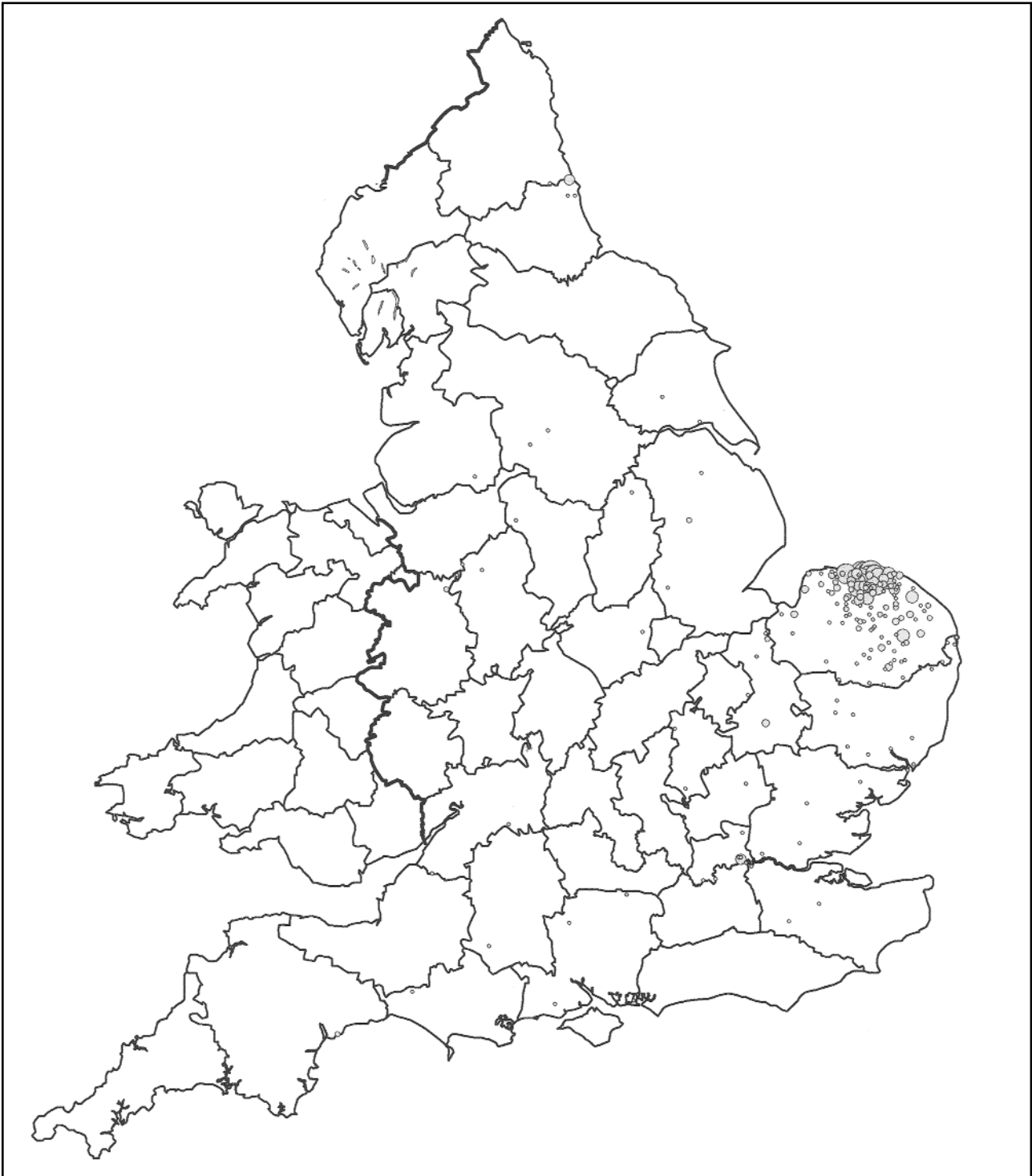
ing importance of short distance movements in both 1851 and 1881 with the majority of people coming from villages lying within a 9 mile radius (see also Wright¹). That was about a day's walking distance, there and back, and this defines a core area bounded by Wells in the west, Sheringham in the east and Brinningham to the south. Beyond this the numbers of migrants drop off rapidly and 1881 was just too early for the great explosion in the use of bicycles to have any effect. Given this pattern, the term 'local' takes on a new meaning, but in this paper it is restricted to people born in the village in which they were living. So a person from Blakeney living in Cley, or vice versa, is not a local!



Map 1. Sources of in-migrants to three Glaven village in 1851. The maps show historical boundaries and the divisions of Yorkshire. The relative sizes of the dots reflect the numbers of people moving from a parish: the smallest dot represents one individual, that for Norwich 24.

Although distance was an important factor in local migration it was not the only one, opportunities for work and population size in the donor and recipient villages would also have been significant. Bearing these additional factors in mind some of the figures in Table 2 are worthy of note – Glandford with 34 in-migrants to the three villages, together with Field Dalling 32, Salthouse 26, Langham 29 and Weybourne 24.

However, in-migrants from parishes outside this radius cannot be ignored: from the rest of Norfolk there were 277 in 1851 and 174 in 1881, compared to 579 and 277 respectively from within the 9 mile radius. In the majority of cases these records are for only one or two people from individual parishes, although in 1851 'Greater Norwich' contributed 26 and along the coast there was an extended catchment area with 14 from Kings Lynn and 18



Map 2. Similar to Map 1, but for the year 1881. The smallest dot represents one individual.

from Terrington St Clement and St John; the latter were labourers working in Salthouse. By 1881 this pattern had changed, no longer did Kings Lynn figure strongly and the Terringtons with one had all but disappeared, while inland the importance of Norwich had diminished.

Norfolk Migrants:

The number and percentage of in-migrants found in each of the three villages is shown in Table 3. In both years they formed a considerable proportion of the residents, indeed in both

Cley and Wiveton in 1851 they outnumbered the 'locals'. This situation had changed only slightly by 1881 when the population levels in the three villages had fallen and there was a reduction in the numbers of migrants. While this picture may run counter to the expected, it is not peculiar to these three villages. Table 4 shows comparative data for some other coastal and inland villages and towns in 1851 where the percentage of in-migrants varies between nearly 34% and over 64%, but with no obvious pattern.

Village	Census Total	In-Migrants	% In-Migrants	Born in Parish	% Born in Parish	Born in Norfolk	% Born in Norfolk
1851							
Blakeney	1107	401	36.2%	706	63.8%	1045	94.0%
Wiveton	254	135	53.1%	119	46.9%	235	92.5%
Cley	980	523	53.4%	457	46.6%	886	90.4%
1881							
Blakeney	804	326	40.5%	478	59.5%	755	93.9%
Wiveton	184	84	45.6%	100	54.4%	181	98.4%
Cley	720	359	49.9%	361	50.1%	671	93.2%

Table 3. Total numbers of people recorded in 1851 and 1881 in the Glaven villages, together with the numbers of in-migrants and residents born either in the parish or in Norfolk.

Village	Census Total	In-Migrants	% in-Migrants	Born in Parish	% Born in Parish	Born in Norfolk	%Born in Norfolk
Aylsham	3484	1866	53.6%	1618	46.4%	3278	94.1%
Bintree	413	157	38.0%	256	62.0%	407	98.6%
Cawston	1184	400	33.8%	784	66.2%	1145	96.7%
Foulsham	1078	528	49.0%	550	51.0%	1010	93.7%
Guestwick	315	179	56.8%	136	43.2%	312	99.1%
Holt	1726	890	51.6%	836	48.4%	1576	91.3%
Sheringham	1193	406	34.0%	787	66.0%	1138	95.4%
Wells	3650	1403	38.4%	2247	61.6%	3319	90.9%
Wood Norton	308	198	64.3%	110	35.7%	299	97.1%

Table 4. Similar to Table 3, but for a selection of coastal and inland villages and towns.

Broadening the horizons to cover people born anywhere in Norfolk, including those born in the three villages, changes this picture dramatically. This group dominates the three villages numerically in both years and also indeed in the villages and towns in Table 4.

The column headed 'census total' in Table 3 is only an approximation to the total population, albeit close. A few figures illustrate the problem: in 1851 the total for Cley was swelled by 90 'bankers' plus an engineer and timekeeper; these were not financial bankers, but labourers and supervisors working on the sea and marsh banks at Salthouse; for how long is not known? It would also seem extremely likely that other people were 'transient', staying in the villages for short periods while there was work, but they are impossible to identify in the census. Similarly the numbers of people at sea were not recorded consistently, but in 1881 59 people were listed as from Blakeney and 29 from Cley – of these 4 and 12 respectively were women – unfortunately no further information is available.

The large numbers of children in the three villages also make significant contributions to population size. For example, in 1881 the total

of children under the age of 11 was 290 and of these only 80 had been born outside the villages. Here the age of 11 is not arbitrary, it is the first recorded age for children having an occupation and entering the work force, by the age of 13 more were employed and by 16 years one or two individuals were apprenticed. Nevertheless, some jobs where children were involved are invisible as they are never recorded in the censuses, an obvious example is work in the fields at harvest time.

Out of County Migrants:

In both years only small numbers of migrants from outside the county are recorded. In 1851 there were 17 from Middlesex representing London, 4 from Hull, 5 from County Durham and 3 from Scotland. There was little change in this pattern by 1881, but interestingly South Shields, a town that had by then become an important target for emigrants, was represented. Albeit by only six people, including adults and children undertaking a reverse migration into the area and staying with relations, but for how long is not known. The children were recorded as scholars – so were they attending a local school?

However, a striking feature brought out clearly in both maps was the scarcity in both 1851 and 1881 of any representatives from long stretches of the North Sea coastline from Kent to Lincolnshire and Yorkshire. Was this simply a reflection of trading patterns?

Occupations

Across England and Wales the population rose steadily throughout the 19th century, trebling within the 100 years.¹⁰ In Norfolk the pattern was complex; the two urban areas of Norwich and Great Yarmouth, experienced continuous growth, in contrast to rural areas where it consistently fell between 1851 and 1881⁵. Yet in-migrants from both outside and inside the county were still present in significant numbers in the three villages in 1881. Some of these had undoubtedly been settled since the time of the 1851 census, but others were new migrants that had moved in during the intervening period.

What were these in-migrants doing? Were they competing for existing jobs with people already living in the villages? Were they filling gaps left by people who had emigrated? Or were they entrepreneurs creating new jobs? An insight can be gleaned from the replies to questions in the census regarding occupations.

In some occupations there were clear differences between the proportions of in-migrants and 'locals' employed, although rarely was an occupation the sole preserve of one group or the other. The data in Table 5 summarises the information for 1851 and 1881 in those occupations where in-migrants made significant contributions; the table covers only Blakeney and Cley as the population of Wiveton was too small to allow any meaningful analysis. The crude classification used emphasises skills, and ignores the many nuances that reflect differences in social status.

The table shows that migrants dominated the 'Sales and Service Trades' and professional groups. 'Sales and Service Trades' includes merchants and the suppliers of provisions of food and drink to residents or ships trading from the port. It also covers craftsmen working with metal, wood and stone whose skills would have been utilised in the building trade, agriculture and servicing ships. Indeed whether these people were transient migrants who only moved into the village for a short period or long-term residents is in some ways immaterial. The villages must have relied on these craftsmen being available.

It is not unexpected that migrants should dominate the professional group with teachers, doctors, chemists or druggists plus police, customs and coastguard officials. However, it is surprising to find farmers and bailiffs repre-

	1851		1881	
	R	IM	R	IM
Blakeney				
Professional	7	13	4	10
Sales & Service Trades				
Merchant	3	2	0	3
Food	6	18	7	10
Hard materials				
Blacksmith/Iron & Bar				
Moulder	0	3	1	7
Builder/Bricklayer/ Mason	0	2	1	6
Carpenter/Ship's Carpenter/Wheelwright	3	6	4	7
Primary Industry				
Farming				
Farmer/Baliff	3	1	0	3
Totals	22	45	17	46
Cley	R	IM	R	IM
Professional	6	13	5	15
Sales & Service Trades				
Merchant	1	2	0	1
Food	4	18	7	14
Hard materials				
Blacksmith/Iron & Bar				
Moulder/Brazier	0	6	0	3
Builder/Bricklayer	5	2	2	1
Carpenter/Ship's Carpenter/Wheelwright	10	5	2	4
Primary Industry				
Farming				
Farmer/Yeoman/Baliff	1	8	0	6
Totals	27	54	16	45

Table 5: occupations of residents born in the parish (R) and in-migrants (IM) in both 1851 and 1881: only those occupations where in-migrants make significant contributions are shown.

sented exclusively by in-migrants in 1881, as were many of the skilled trades associated with farming. Indeed given the importance of sheep in the previous century the fact that none of the small number of shepherds were 'local' is amazing. But this is not the whole story for 12 farmers born in the Glaven villages are recorded in the 1881 census: one is in Middlesex, the rest are in Norfolk with eight farming within a 9 mile radius.

In contrast, people born in the villages dominated occupations linked to the sea, these included mariners, fishermen and pilots. It

would appear the only occupation missing from this group is smuggling, yet mythology would suggest this played an important role in the local economy! Has anybody got a set of accounts?

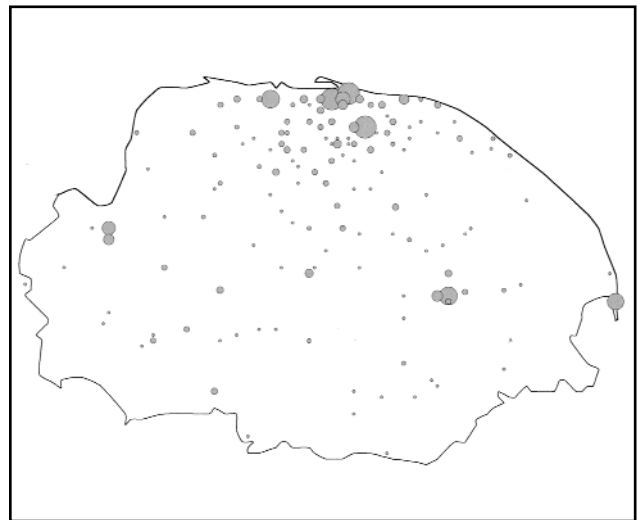
The inescapable conclusion is that in-migrants were crucial to the viability of the Glaven villages between 1851 and 1881 given the numbers of people and trades involved. They supplemented existing skills and services while broadening the range available.

Emigration

Emigration is the other side of the coin providing a counter balance to in-migration and immigration, but Table 3 shows that during the period between 1851 and 1881 the populations of the three Glaven villages were falling and variations in birth or death rates could not account for such large changes in population levels. Furthermore the data in Table 2 shows that there were not reciprocal movements between the surrounding villages and towns. Indeed, except for the larger towns of Holt and Wells, the balance was weighted universally in favour of the Glaven villages, obviously they were attractive 'honey-pots'.

Where did the people from the Glaven villages move to? The data for 1851 and 1881 are summarised in Maps 3 and 4; note that for 1851 the data is restricted to Norfolk as coverage for the whole of the British Isles is not available on CDs. These maps show only people born in the three villages; they do not include migrants who moved into the villages and worked there before moving on. Although these people left few traces in the official records one source is the birth parishes of children, like a married couple from Langham who had a child in Blakeney and then moved north to South Shields. Such records illustrate the frequent step-like nature of migration (see also Peake¹¹ p60 et seq), however, more complex patterns reveal that a few families were highly mobile. For example, the wife of one mariner was born in Blakeney then had six children born in South Shields (2), Newfoundland (Canada), Monkwearmouth (Co. Durham), Blakeney and South Shields in that order and in 1881 she was living in Westoe (Co. Durham).

As could be anticipated the greatest movement in 1851 was between the three Glaven villages with 114 people involved. Other major destinations for emigration were Holt with 48, Wells 31, Great Yarmouth 27 and Kings Lynn 17, but 'Greater Norwich' with 55 emigrants was more attractive. By 1881 this pattern had changed; within Norfolk movement between the three villages was still the most important with 99 people involved, with over half moving to



Map 3. Norfolk parishes to which people born in the Glaven villages emigrated in 1851. The smallest dot represents one individual, that for Norwich 32, and Heigham to the west 11.

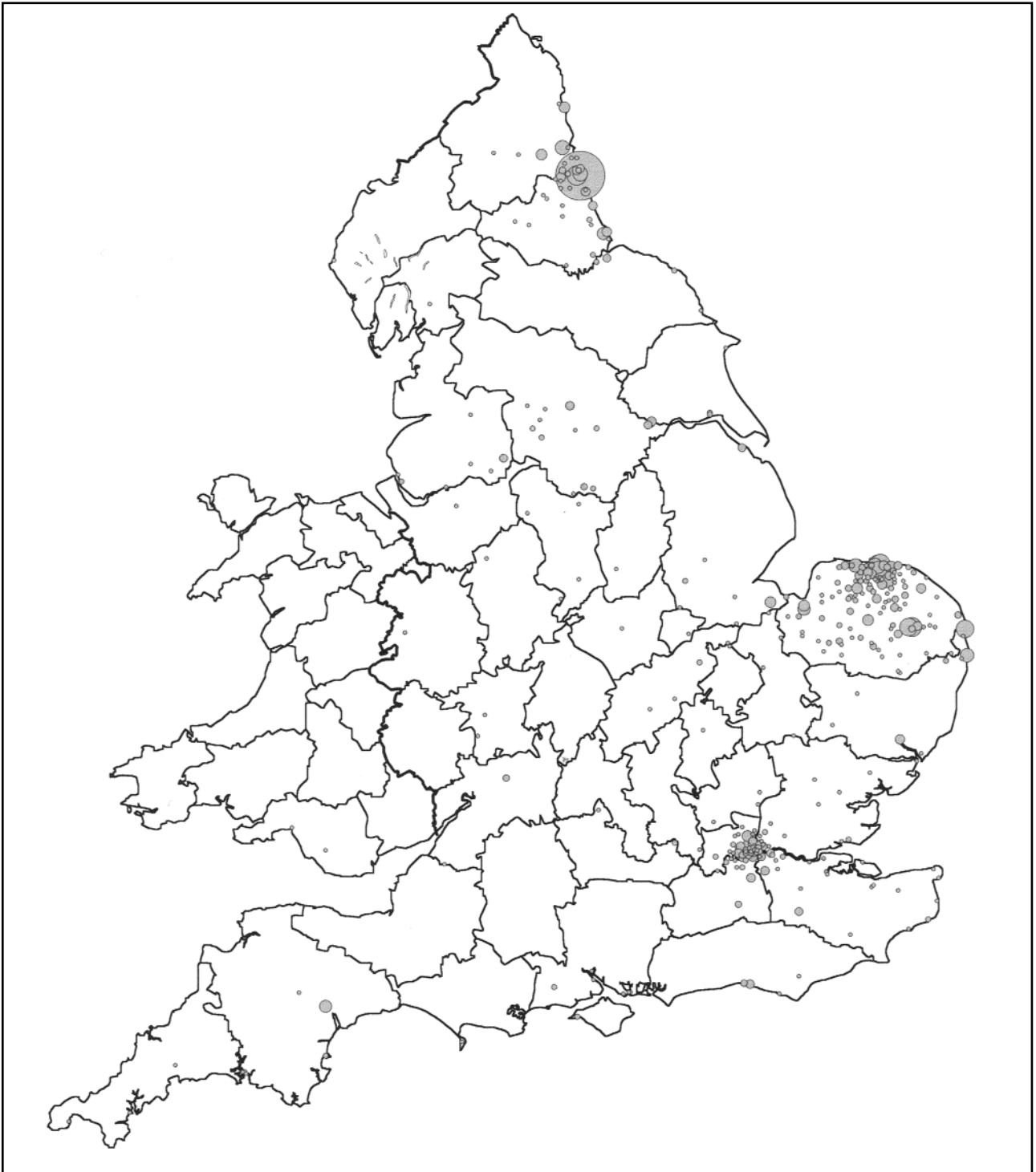
Cley. However, numbers to other destinations had dropped, some quite dramatically: Holt 19, Wells 16, Great Yarmouth 20 and Kings Lynn 9 plus Greater Norwich with 46. These two sets of figures suggest that although movement from rural to more urban environments was discernable within the county, by 1881 it was waning.

Map 4 for 1881 shows that outside the county there were two major foci for emigrants – one in the south associated with London and its environs, the other in the north lying on the south bank of the River Tyne. Migration to other counties was limited, even to those counties that were rapidly expanding through migration from other parts of the country.

Westoe and South Shields, County Durham

The northern location covered the areas known as Westoe and South Shields, both are now subsumed through boundary changes within the larger borough of South Shields. There were also small numbers of people in other parishes in Durham and north across the Tyne into Northumberland, but these were insignificant compared to those in Westoe and South Shields. In 1881 in the whole of County Durham there were 233 people from the three villages, of these 186 were in these two districts. Many were living in tenements or shared accommodation, only a few were visitors staying with relatives or mariners ashore in lodgings, presumably awaiting another ship. Importantly many were living close to relations or people from the same village often in the same street or adjacent streets and even within the same building.^{12, 13}

Although there is not a transcript for the 1851 census of Westoe and South Shields



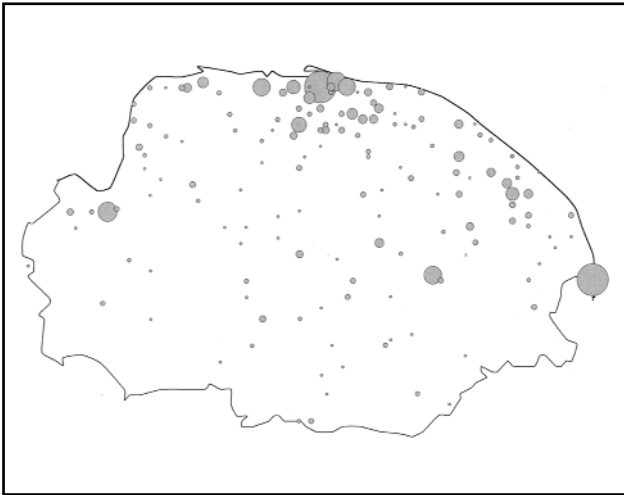
Map 4. Parishes to which people born in the Glaven Villages emigrated in 1881. The smallest dot represents one individual, that for Norwich 22 and Heigham to the west 21.

available on a CD curiosity was too much and the films of the original census documents were obtained and searched¹⁴. Surprisingly the grand total of people from the whole of Norfolk was 108 and of these 5 were from Blakeney and 5 from Cley and none from Wiveton. Many of these migrants were mariners or seamen living as lodgers.

Thirty years later, there were 1,196 migrants from Norfolk in Westoe and South Shields. Map 5 shows the majority of these

came from parishes near the coast, with Great Yarmouth (134) and Blakeney (135) being major contributors together with Kings Lynn (50), Wells (41) and inland Norwich (46). Surprisingly, what would now be considered small parishes like Salthouse (41), Hindringham (30) made significant contributions compared to Sheringham (7) and Cromer (6). While both Cley (49) and Wiveton (8) contributed considerably less than Blakeney.

The people who moved north to Westoe and



Map 5. Sources of emigrants from Norfolk to Westoe, County Durham, in 1881. See text for numbers of people involved.

South Shields came predominately from one sector of the community. Many of the men were either mariners themselves or came from families with mariners, so when they moved north they filled occupations largely associated with ships, from master mariners to plain seamen and even in charge of a ferry. Coal mining and factory jobs figured only to a small degree and comparatively few were in 'Sales and Service Trades'. Of the other occupations some women and men were employed in domestic service or in working with cloth and making boots and shoes.

By the second half of the 19th century the economic importance of this area of Durham lay in the juxtaposition of a thriving port with rich coal deposits, chemical and glass works and associated rail links. Population growth during this period was dramatic, indeed "the proportional increase in the 1880s being the highest in England".¹² At the same time the poor-quality riverside dwellings were being cleared and expansion was largely away from the river inland at Westoe. These changes were occurring at the same time as there was an increase in immigrants from the Glaven ports and the rest of Norfolk.

This area on the south bank of the Tyne was attracting people from nearly every English county, plus many from Scotland and Ireland together with a scattering of individuals from continental Europe. At the centre of this growth were the coal mines and the port, but there were also many opportunities for small businesses and employment in industry. Of course, this led to concomitant problems of overcrowding and disease with major epidemics of cholera and smallpox occurring during the 19th century.¹² It is difficult for us to conceive of the impression this place must have made on people moving from the Glaven villages, par-

ticularly the many women who would have never experienced anything like it before. But if they were homesick they could have even sat in the parks made from the hills of sand ballast brought from ports like Blakeney and seen the many small colliers and packets sailing south.

London

In the census for 1881 the emigrants that moved south to London and its environs present a less cohesive picture. In the first half of the century movement out of Norfolk had been predominantly south to Suffolk and Cambridgeshire, with the great metropolis being the major draw. 33,062 people from Norfolk were recorded in Middlesex – which in this context can be equated with London. Thirty years later the number was 54,469, but there had been a decline from 1871 when 88,809 had been recorded⁵.

In spite of the large numbers of Norfolk people recorded in London and Middlesex, in 1881 only 116 were from the Glaven villages, with a further 55 people in the outer rim that extended into the Home Counties. Nowhere was there a large concentration of these emigrants in the many administrative areas or parishes into which London was fragmented. In Hackney there were 9, Islington 12, Hanover Square 12 and St Pancras 10 with between 1 and 5 being recorded from other areas. These were the same areas that migrants from Norfolk had populated earlier in the century.

The addresses are indicative of the occupations in which many of these people were employed; they were in domestic service or support trades associated, for example, with clothes and building. However, a few occupations stand out, like a journalist, a reader for the press, a coffee house keeper, a single soldier, a naval officer and only one mariner.

Discussion

What were the factors that motivated people to move? Did local conditions force people to leave their homes or were the attractions of the north and elsewhere so great that they could not be resisted? So was it 'push or pull'?⁹

The population levels across the rural areas of Norfolk fell by about 8% in the period between 1851 and 1881⁵. In the Glaven villages the figure was closer to 20%, and this includes the in-migrants who were replacing emigrants. The villages were hit by a double 'whammy' from both the land and the sea. Firstly, a dying trade as fewer boats used the harbour, together with increasing competition from the railways.⁶ Secondly, was the relentless downturn in agriculture across the nation.

So that by 1881 1,226 people from the three villages were no longer living in the parishes in which they were born, of these 703 were living outside the county, and only 523 in Norfolk. A striking indicator is the comparison of these figures with the number of 'locals' remaining – only 939!

So the push was economic decline and the pull an expanding economy in the north⁴. The opportunity for money to come into the village economy from local mariners working out of other ports may have delayed the inevitable shift and opportunities to move to other occupations were limited. Even fishing was in decline as an occupation, falling from 68 fishermen listed in the 1851 census to 36 in 1881.

By 1881 the movement of people from Norfolk was predominately to the northern seaboard counties of Lincolnshire, Yorkshire, Durham and Northumberland, and then across to Cheshire and Lancashire. London and the south eastern counties were no longer so attractive and the Midlands had never become popular. At this time Yorkshire was by far the most important recipient, with over 20,000 people from Norfolk, twice the number found in the second county Durham⁵. In contrast, emigrants from the Glaven villages favoured Durham with 233 with the others trailing - Lincolnshire 17, Yorkshire 36, and Northumberland 57 plus Cheshire 1 and Lancashire 14.

It is interesting to speculate on whether there was selective emigration from the Glaven villages with different sectors or occupations moving to separate parts of England. People associated with the sea certainly favoured the north, London must have been attractive to those in domestic service or support services, but did the unskilled, for example, those labouring on the land move to other areas of Norfolk or to places represented by the many small dots scattered across England in Map 4? At present, there is no answer.

Nevertheless both censuses and trade directories show that in the 19th century the populations of the three Glaven villages were still diverse compared with many of the surrounding villages. This diversity included people employed in domestic service, manual work, as clerks and shop assistants, men making boots and shoes and with a significant group of women working as dressmakers, seamstresses, milliners, a tailoress and a straw-hat maker.

There was also a small number of people described as gentlemen, annuitants, pensioners and living on investments in land and property. For many of these the villages must have owed much of their attractiveness to their position and size close to the sea, but also within

easy access to the towns of Wells, Holt and Sheringham for shopping and entertainment. There were also diversions for the rich with the proximity of sporting estates and opportunities for gentlemen shooters to pursue wildfowl and rare migrants (birds!). Railways had increased the popularity of the seaside holiday, but by 1881 the full impact had not yet reached the Glaven villages.

Agricultural Workers

In agriculture the 19th century was a period of fluctuating fortunes. In the early part of the century the impact in Norfolk of lowered prices for agricultural products was devastating, there was some respite and by the mid-point the situation was improving. 1861 saw a peak in employment across the county, but this was followed by the 'agricultural depression' and a further shift away from the land. It was a picture of boom and bust⁵.

What happened in the Glaven villages? While the overall population fell, so did the numbers of people involved in farming, the initial impression that there was not a catastrophic drop in the latter has to be examined in greater detail. The total of agricultural labourers employed in the three parishes fell from 135 in 1851 to 120 in 1881, that is about 11% – 3% above the county average. There were changes, however, in the proportions of 'local' people and migrants employed: in 1851 the numbers were respectively 65 and 71, by 1881 it was 72 and 45. This gives an increase of about 10% in the 'local' people employed and a drop of nearly 37% in the number of migrants, with most of the decrease hitting Cley. These figures suggest that either the supply of migrants had dried up which seems unlikely, or as is highly probable, the farmers were protecting the local communities. It would be wrong, however, to presume this weakened the push for agricultural labourers to leave as incomes from farms across the county were falling and with them wages.

The conditions described earlier in the century by a worker on the land are starkly illuminating.¹⁵ An extract reads: "My family and myself never earned more than 10s, a week, except for about 5 weeks in harvest, then we might earn about £1 a week, and that to keep me and my wife and seven children.....the wages we receive in Leeds are, my wages are 18s, and sometimes a guinea, a week. My eldest daughter is in a situation, at £6 10s a year, and the rest of my family bring me in 15s a week..... people (i.e. in Norfolk) are so poor they are fit to eat one another up alive."

Could such a description be applied to the Glaven villages? It was referring to conditions in another area of Norfolk and there may have

been mitigating factors in the Glaven villages with the sea providing additional sources of food. Any answer must therefore be equivocal, but it would be wrong to treat the populations of these villages as homogenous and presume such conditions did not apply, at least, in some sectors. Certainly the villages had a mixed economy, both agricultural and maritime, and at least, one specialist crop was grown in the area, high quality malting barley for making beer, that was still exported, either as grain or malt, to London and the continent.

Maritime Influence

Since at least 1851 many opportunities must have existed for information to filter back from the north about job opportunities and friends or relations who could assist with a move. Boats were regularly plying along the North Sea coast and small packet boats were running weekly services between Newcastle, Hull and London, with Blakeney included in the network. Indeed, an appropriate ship could have been manned or even owned by a relation, so it is not surprising that in 1881 we find relatives visiting each other in both directions. Everything points to people moving by sea and not by the expanding railways and consequently distance would not have presented major problems. So, it is the role played by friends and family ties that may have been crucial in encouraging the move.

The age distributions of the parents and the children who moved to Westoe and South Shields tell us there was not a sudden surge of people, rather a steady trickle extending over, at least, two decades, and that many made the move when they were young. The common pattern was for all the children to be born in the north when at least one parent came from the Glaven villages and the other from somewhere in Norfolk. However, this was not universal and a few moved as families with young children and had more there. Where only one parent came from the Glaven villages or Norfolk and there were no children born in Norfolk it would be wrong to presume the partner always came from South Shields or Westoe. Many did, but others came from Lincolnshire, Northumberland, Essex, Manchester and York. What a melting pot the north must have been!

This raises an intriguing question, where did the partners meet? This problem has been studied in other communities by plotting the distance separating the residences of the spouses. Surprisingly this distance did not change over many years; in the majority of cases the maximum distance was about 9 miles – a day's walking distance! As one author commented in 1993 "people have become progressively more mobile in their daily

lives, but apparently it is still uneconomical in time, money and effort to maintain a courtship over a very great distance".¹⁶ Although this has implications for the short distance movements, it also suggests that many of the partners met in South Shields or Westoe when one had permanently moved north or was regularly visiting the port on a ship.

Summary

1. This paper set out to answer a series of questions using the data in the censuses for 1851 and 1881. The questions were simple, the answers have proved to be much more complex. Yet the censuses do give an abiding impression of the dynamic nature of these villages as they responded to declining populations.
2. At least, in the second half of the 19th century people were highly mobile over short distances. Consequently movement between villages within a radius of about 9 miles was high, but not reciprocal as the three villages acted as honey-pots.
3. Many of the in-migrants occupied crucial roles in professional occupations, in 'Sales and Service Trades' and agriculture. Contrasting with people born in the villages who dominated occupations where local knowledge was paramount.
4. Throughout the period between 1851 and 1881 the population numbers for the three villages fell by about 20%, a much higher rate than in most of rural Norfolk. Undoubtedly this was in response to a decline in maritime trade and to agricultural depression.
5. By 1881 migration to the south to London had past its zenith and the main focus had become the small area of Westoe and South Shields where often families or people from the same area lived close to one another. Here emigration was undoubtedly facilitated by family links and the availability of boats trading regularly between Blakeney Harbour and the Tyne ports.

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A very Brief History of The Blakeney Players

by Janet Harcourt

Synopsis: A very brief history of a group of amateur thespians and their place in the community. This is put into its historical context in the days before entertainment became largely passive.

The tradition of acting in Blakeney dates back to the Victorian era, when there were no bicycles, cars, or buses. The nearest railway station was at Holt and the only means of transport there was on horse-back or horse-drawn vehicle. Visits to the theatre or to concerts were very few and far between.

The merchant and farming families of Blakeney: the Pages, Turners, Hills (a family who lived in the Red House at the end of the Quay and died out), Temple-Lynes, Hudsons and the Woods of Morston met in one another's homes for musical evenings. Anyone who could play an instrument did so, others sang or recited, but the most popular activity was charades. A lot of the musical items came from a magazine of the time called the 'Musical Budget' and was largely based on the politics of the day - and means nothing to us today.

In the 1930s a dramatic society was formed in Blakeney, which met monthly for play readings, lectures, debates and mock trials. As now, the membership was drawn from all the villages around, two gentlemen coming from as far away as Sheringham. For a short time a group called 'The Gay Cabelleros' performed short plays and the like for the public mostly under the guidance of Eric Burrows - who at the same time performed as a professional. This group once had the honour of performing in London.

In the late 1920s, early 1930s Miss Irene Johnson or 'Johnnie' as she was generally known and Miss Velda Sprott moved into Blakeney and had a great influence on the drama scene - both being excellent actresses and splendid producers. Johnnie and Velda made the group unique in that there has never been a membership subscription or auditions so that they did not feel obliged to give every-

one equal parts and they could choose a cast according to talent and ability.

With the formation of the Women's Institute in Blakeney there were further opportunities for drama, both at the meetings and at the annual drama festival held in Norwich. Blakeney regularly entered the Mime and Shakespeare classes and frequently won cups. Margaret Loose won the medal for Best Actress of the Year for her portrayal of the dim maid in a play called 'Meet Mrs Beeton'.

The second World War put an end to these dramatic activities and it was not until 1954 that Velda Sprott started evening classes in drama in Blakeney School with performances in the British Legion Hall. In 1956 it was decided to name the group 'The Blakeney Players' and it has continued to this day.

In the early days the players would put on productions such as Musical Hall shows, sketches and so on when requested for dinners, parties, clubs functions and many charitable events while the regular shows toured other villages. Eventually lack of essentials such as a stage, curtains, adequate dressing rooms and out of tune pianos, ended this tradition.

Looking back, Eric Burrows, Irene Johnson and Velda Sprott were the main producers but John Ropes, William Blackwell, and for one show John Coleridge (and recently John Smart) also lent a hand.

In 1963 the Blakeney Players gave an entertainment for the Blakeney Twelve Christmas Dinner for the elderly of the parish, a custom which has continued every year since. At first this show was not performed for the general public, Players' productions being staged at Whitsun and the August Bank Holiday for three nights in succession. Often parts of the Blakeney Twelve supper show were incorporated into the later shows. For a time all, or part



Scene from 'A Quiet Weekend' 1976.

Back row: (left to right) Mike Curtis, Barbara Mayes, John Ratcliffe, Walter Bone, Edna Rudd, Richard Newton, Alan Gates and Barbara MacMillan

Front row: (left to right) Pooh Curtis, Sheila Breese, Josie Eaton, Margaret Loose and Kate Harcourt

of the Christmas production was taken to the Blakeney Hotel as part of the Hotel's Christmas festivities, the fee paid by the Hotel being donated to the Blakeney Twelve. More ambitious scenery for pantomimes which could not be taken to the Hotel ended this custom.

In 1968 another talented actress and producer moved to Blakeney, namely Josie Eaton. She and Margaret Loose wrote and produced a show called 'Out of the Red', which literally took the Player's finances into the black. This was the first of many successful collaborations over the years, often assisted by Mike Curtis. In the last few years, Mike Curtis, Peter Franklin, Sue and Mike Andrews have written and produced shows for the Players. John Ratcliffe has designed the sets and made scenery of an exceptionally high standard with assistance from many other folk, while costumes have been provided mainly by the Blakeney Wardrobe until its demise, but that is another story.

Periodically, larger productions were put on in the Church, the core of the performers being

Blakeney Players, under the name of St. Nicholas Players. These productions were Nativity and Passion Plays, Everyman, Pilgrim's Progress, John of Blakeney and most recently Blakeney Bulldogs, the latter written and produced by Jim Woodhouse under our own name.

The Whitsun performances were often under-rehearsed and it was eventually decided to put the show on later, starting in July, weekly, for six performances. This enabled more visitors to see the show. The effort required to put on the show was not so concentrated and taxing to the performers. Latterly, the Christmas show has spread into January for similar reasons.

Over the years the Blakeney Players have given a great many people pleasure and entertainment and they have also contributed to good causes and charities of many kinds. It is a fine tradition that looks set to continue.




The stage at the British Legion Hall: this was used for many early productions by the Blakeney Players. Here we have "Ali Baba and the 40 Thieves" a pantomime produced by Mrs Portal and the children of Blakeney and Cley for the local St John's Ambulance Brigade in the early 1950s (Photograph supplied by Ena Allen).

THE BLAKENEY PLAYERS
present
**PLAYERS
 PLEASE**
A Summer Revue
at the
 LEGION HALL
 BLAKENEY

Summer Season 1978


THE
 BLAKENEY PLAYERS
 PRESENT
**BLAKENEY
 DUNROMAN!**
 FROM COLOSSEUM TO CARNSER

 AT
 BLAKENEY
 VILLAGE HALL


 SUMMER SEASON
 1994


Blakeney Players' Productions

1954	Beauty Spot (Sketch)	1973	Double Bill (Variety)
1955	Christ Crucified (St. NP)	1974	Goodnight Mrs Puffin (Play)
1956	A Journey to London (Mime)	1975	Raulf of Wiveton (Musical)
	Alladin (Pantomime)	1976	Quiet Weekend (Play)
	Meet Mrs Beeton (Mime)	1977	WigWam (Musical)
	The Thistle in Donkeyfield (Mime)	1978,	Players Pleas (Musical)
	The Letter (Mime)	1979	Encore (Musical)
1957	Everyman (St. NP)	1980	Raulf of Wiveton (Musical)
1958	The Cradle Song (Play)	1981	See How They Run (Play)
	Anastasia (Play)		John of Blakeney (ChurchPl)
1959	Kick Off (Variety)	1982	Ace High (Variety)
	A Dolls House (Play)	1983,	The Bookshop (Sketch)
1960	The Birthday Party (Mime)	1983	Holiday Hotel (Musical)
	Cranford (Play)	1984	WigWam (Musical)
1961	Good Friday Play (St. NP)	1985	A La Carte (Variety)
	Wanderlust (Variety)	1986	Ten Times Table (Play)
	The Birthday Party (Mime)		Alladin (Pantomime)
1962	A Mixed Grill (3 Sh Plays)		Robinson Crusoe (Pantomime)
1963	Wishful Thinking (Variety)	1987	Best of Times (Variety)
1964	Robinson Crusoe (Pantomime)	1988	Cinderella (Pantomime)
1965	A Penny for a Song (Play)	1988	Take Five (Play)
1966		1989	Not now Darling (Play)
1967	The Pilgrims Progress (St. NP)		All Clear (Variety)
1968	The Shop at Sly Corner (Play)	1990	Hooray For Hollywood (Musical)
1969	Out of the Red (Musical)		Alladin (Pantomime)
1970	The Ghost Train (Play)	1991	Shock Tactics (Play)
1971	Holiday Hotel (Musical)		Big Top (Variety)
1972	Brush with a Body (Play)	1992	On the Box (Variety)
			Jack in the Beanstalk (Pantomime)
		1993	A Time and a Place (Musical)
			Blakeney Dun Roman (Musical)
		1994	Blakeney Dun Roman (Musical)
			Transylvanian Christmas (Musical)
		1995	Who Goes Bare (Play)
			A Christmas Cracker (Review)
		1996	Brooklyn Bonsoir (Musical)
			Cinderella (Pantomime)
		1997	We Love You Kevin Prentice (Musical)
			Blakeney Bulldogs (ChurchPl)
		1998	Take Five (Play)
			Robinson Crusoe (Pantomime)
		1999	WigWam (Musical)
		1999	That's Hats (Review)
		2000	Postcards (Review)
			Snow White (Pantomime)
		2001	Treasure Island (Musical)
			A Talent to Amuse (NCselection)
		2002	With love From Russia (Musical)
		2002/3	Twelve Knights (Review)
		2003	The White Van (Musical)
		2003/4	There was an Old Woman (Panto)



BROOKLYN- BONSOIR!

**A New Musical based on a story by
Damon Runyan**



BLAKENEY VILLAGE HALL

Summer Season 1996

Key

St. NP = St Nicholas Players
 NCselection = Noel Coward selection
 3 Sh Plays = 3 short Plays
 ChurchPl = Play in Church

A Port in Decline

Blakeney and Cley 1850-1914

by Jonathan Hooton

Synopsis: An analysis of the period from the mid-nineteenth century that marked the terminal decline and extinction of the Glaven ports drawing on Ships' Registers and the Harbour Company's records among other sources.

The period from 1850 to the commencement of the First World War marked the decline and cessation of Blakeney as a commercial port. The reasons for the decline are fairly obvious and have been well documented. What is perhaps more surprising is the fact that commercial activity held on so long. Why did vessels and masters carry on a trade that was much more suited to the railways? How profitable an enterprise was it? Were the mercantile activities subsidised by other aspects of trade? Was it wreck, old age or the lure of something more lucrative that led to the final collapse? Did those involved in the commercial shipping move to larger ports to carry on their trade or did they change trades? How did this affect the ports? This article proposes to look at some of these issues, although it will raise more questions that it has answered.

There is a wealth of documentary evidence available from this period to help answer these questions but there are also problems. For example, newspapers frequently record arrivals and departures but normally the reports are not regular enough to build up lengthy records of shipping movements. However, official records are not always consistent, aggregating different ports together or recording different types of information over a time period making comparisons difficult. The documents are usually scattered throughout a wide variety of museums, libraries and archive centres, spread throughout the country or world. A good place to start for an overview of the trade during the decline is the Shipping Registers, many of which are on microfilm at the Norfolk Record Office. As a result of the recent course 'Researching North Norfolk Shipping', the Society now has copies of Cley and Wells regis-

ters. However, analysing the amount of information held in the local registers is a time consuming and overwhelming task for one individual. Therefore the discovery of the Annual register of vessels registered at Cley Wells & Lynn 1867-1930, which was only deposited in the NRO in 2000 was a pleasant surprise¹. Here was a document that summarised some of the information for the period of the port's decline and the following article will be based largely around the information contained therein.

The Norfolk Record Office describes the Annual Register thus: *Records annually for each vessel at Cley 1867-1901, Wells 1867-1910, and Lynn 1881-1930 its year of Registry, official number & name, whether lost, broken up sold to foreigners or condemned, its tonnage, sail or steam and numbers of crew.* A list was compiled at the end of each year giving all those ships that were still on the register as well as giving an abstract for the year summarising the changes. The abstract for the first year (1867) is reproduced opposite.

The first page in the book gives a snapshot of the shipping at the port in 1867. By this time, Wells was the head port for the area. For most of its history, and certainly since the 16th century, Blakeney had been a creek of Yarmouth, whilst Wells had been a creek of Lynn. However the growth in coastal trade that resulted from the agricultural revolution eventually led to both ports becoming Head Ports in their own right. Wells was made a Head Port in 1676 and Blakeney just over a hundred years later in 1786. Until 1853 all new vessels were registered at the separate ports. In that year, Blakeney lost its status as Head Port and was combined with Wells. This remained the case until 1881, when the continuing decline in trade meant that both ports were now part of

Abstract for the Year 1867

			<i>Vessels</i>	<i>Tons</i>
Total Amount of Last Year's Account			138	10,813
Struck Off				
	<i>Vessels</i>	<i>Tons</i>		
Vessels lost & broken up	4	364		
Vessels transferred to other ports	3	260		
Vessels registered anew at this port	1	34		
	8	658		
			130	10,155
Add				
Vessels first registry	1	6		
Vessels transferred from other ports	3	208		
Vessels registered anew at this port	1	46		
	5	260		
Total on 31st December 1867			135	10,415

C E Bull Registrar 14th January 1868¹

the Head Port of Lynn. This is why, in the annual register up until 1854, the Blakeney & Cley vessels (which included those belonging to minor ports between Blakeney & Yarmouth, such as Sheringham & Cromer) are still recorded as "registered at the late port of Cley." After that date, all vessels along the north Norfolk Coast had Wells registrations. There is however, one major exception, for which there is no obvious explanation. From 1845-1853, Wells vessels were registered at Cley and found in the Cley registers, even though Wells was a Head Port and would, from the following year, be the place of registration for all the north Norfolk vessels. This often makes it difficult to identify which vessel belonged to which port, unless a study of the owners and masters is undertaken. The following table is intended to help clarify a confusing situation.

The rest of this article will concentrate largely on the summary data in the Annual Register¹ up until 1880, since after that date, the figures were combined with those of King's Lynn. Figure 1 shows that there was a steady decline in the number of ships on record, although Blakeney and Wells still possessed over 50 ships between them by 1880.

It appears that as ships were either lost or sold there was little replacement going on. In 1850 there were 17 vessels, either brand new, or transferred from another port, being registered at Cley. By the start of the annual register, in 1867, this had fallen to 4 vessels, by 1870 it was 1 and in 1880, no new vessels came on register.^{1, 2}

A similar tale is told by the tonnage on record, in Figure 2. After 1868, there is a steady decline, which poses the question, was

Status

Blakeney & Cley		Wells	
To 1786	Creek of Yarmouth	To 1676	Creek of Lynn
1786-1853	Head Port	1676-1881	Head Port
1854-1881	Creek of Wells	1882-	Creek of Lynn
1882-	Creek of Lynn		

Registration of Vessels

Blakeney & Cley	Up to 1854	In the Cley Registers	(NRO P/SH/L/10)
	From 1855	In the Wells Registers	(NRO P/SH/L/8)
	From 1881	In the Lynn Registers	(NRO P/SH/L/4)
Wells	Up to 1845	In the Wells Registers	(NRO P/SH/L/7)
	1845-1854	In the Cley Registers	(NRO P/SH/L/10)
	From 1855	In the Wells Registers	(NRO P/SH/L/8)
	From 1881	In the Lynn Registers	(NRO P/SH/L/4)

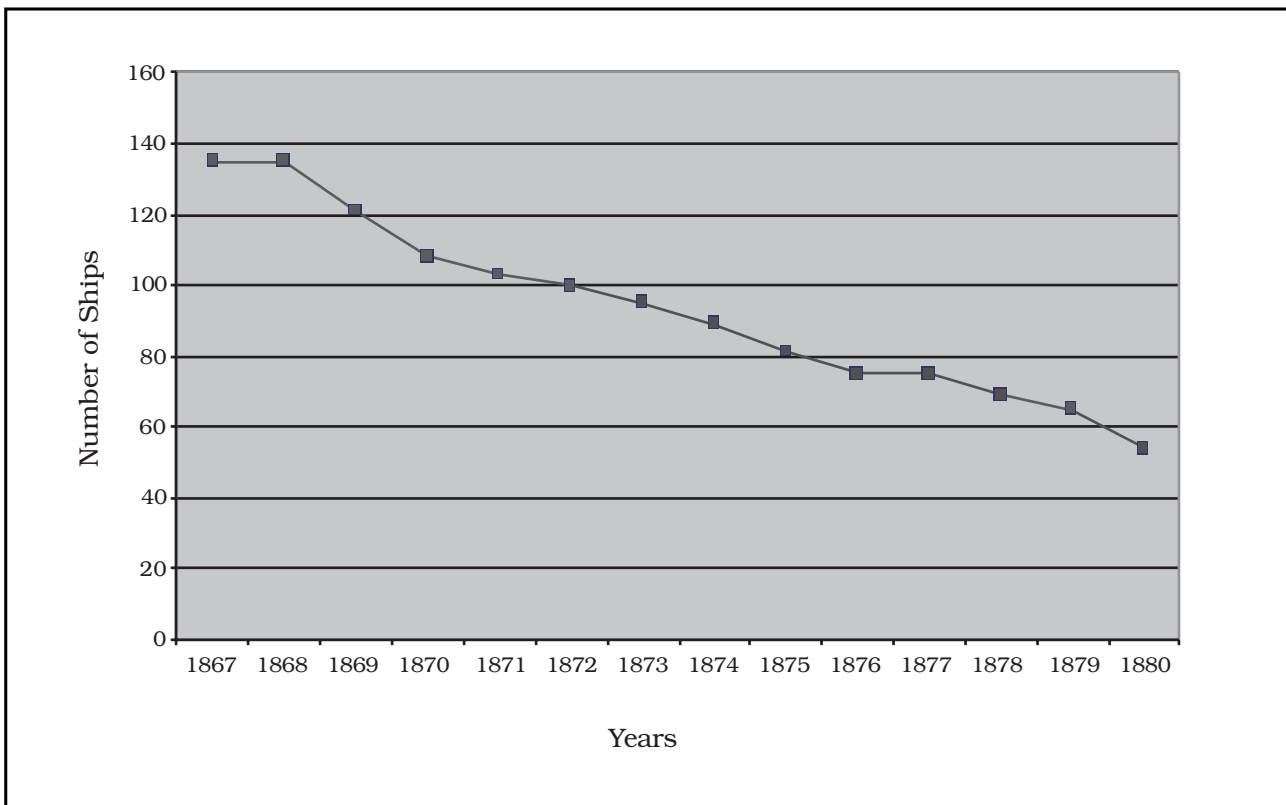


Figure 1. This shows the steady decline in ships on the Register.

the start of this period, 1867, the peak of ownership for Blakeney and Wells? Comparison with earlier figures from the House of Lords statistics for the 1840s and 50s would seem to indicate this, as shown in Figure 3.³ However, if the number of vessels is considered (Figure 4) the decline seems to already be underway by the 1860s, but the way the data was collected for the House of Lords may not be comparable with the annual register. Figure 5, shows the average tonnage, which is much lower for the earlier period and this would suggest that the House of Lords statistics includes many of the smaller fishing vessels of under 15 tons belonging to the associated creeks of Burnham, Brancaster, Sheringham etc. Therefore it is likely that the late 50s and early 60s did mark the peak of ownership as measured by the quantity of tonnage. Although there was an inexorable decline in the numbers of ships, this was not the case for average tonnage, which only dropped by about 10 tons, indicating that the type of ship remained the same. The one big drop from 1871 to 1872 can be accounted for by the loss of the *Agamemnon*, which was abandoned off Cape Town on 14th October 1872. At 850 tons, she was by far and away the largest vessel registered at Wells, the next largest being *Samuel Enderby* (404 tons) and *Orkney Lass* (319) tons whilst the majority were under 200 tons as Figure 6 shows.

The most common size category of vessel in

1867, as shown in Figure 6, was that of under 50 tons, although this was boosted by the inclusion of many smaller fishing vessels. The 50-99 ton category was much more typical of the trading vessels using Blakeney, Cley & Wells. With a crew of 4 or 5 they were economical and easy to manoeuvre in the small, shallow harbours of the East Coast. Although ships up to 150 tons could use both harbours, those over that figure rarely came and were usually engaged in trade from London, Great Yarmouth or the north-east ports. More will be said later about these vessels when dealing with their ownership.

The annual register also records the reason why vessels were struck off and this is shown in Figure 7 for vessels over 15 tons, which were on register in 1867. Forty-one percent, or about 2/5ths were lost, another fifth sold on to other ports and a further fifth broken up at the end of their commercial lives. If this is added to the vessels that became converted to lighters, houseboats, etc. then about a third of the vessels that remained at the port, survived. The figure of a loss of 42% of vessels compares favourably with figures produced by Mike Stammers for Wells, but not for Cley.⁴ He analysed a longer period recording the fate of 98 ships from Wells and 100 ships from Cley. Forty-one Wells ships were lost (41.8%) but only 15 from Cley (15%). The reasons for this

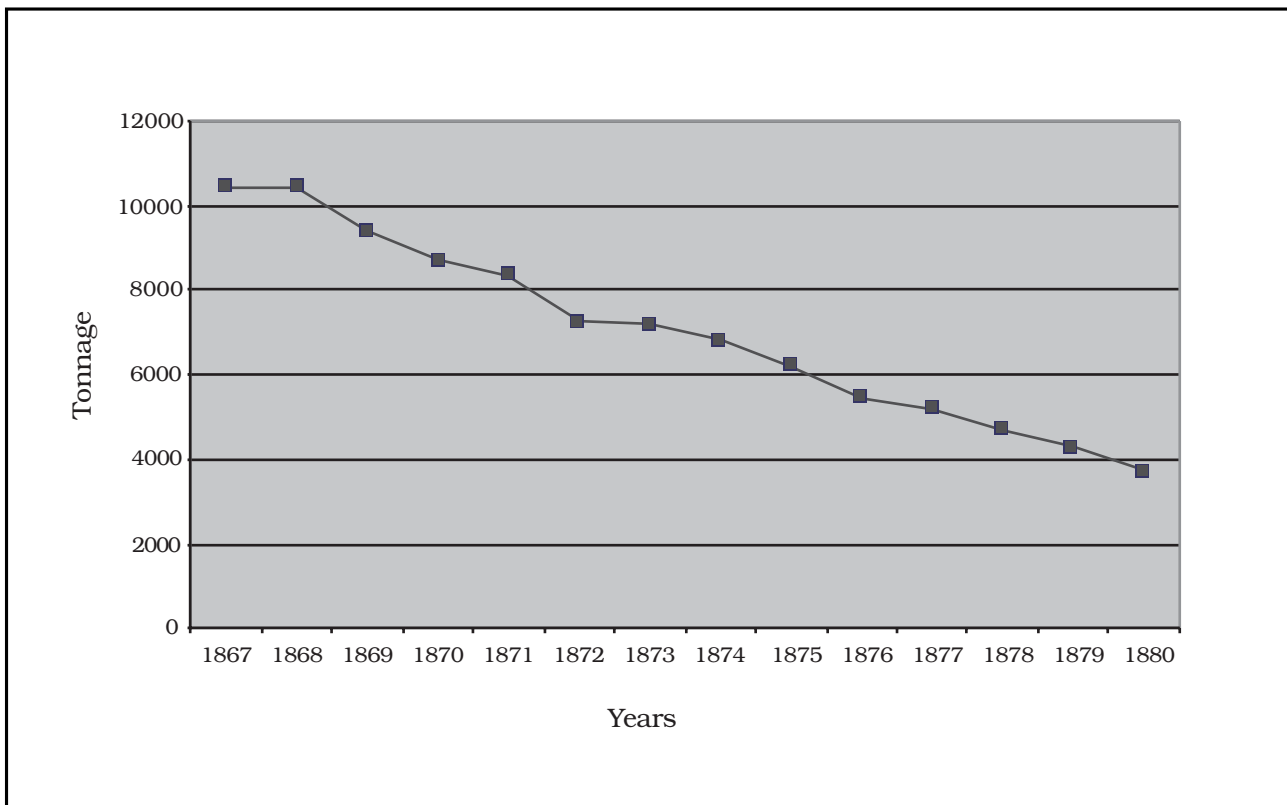


Figure 2. Tonnage on Register showing a similar decline.

imbalance were not clear and it is an area requiring future research.

Of course it is quite likely that many of the ships that were transferred to other ports were also lost. One of these was the brig *Alert*, whose loss was a most curious affair. She was a brig of 198 tons, built in France in 1843 but came to Blakeney in 1860 when R H Cooper owned her. He sold her to G H Collens & Co of Dartmouth in December 1880. One month later, probably on her maiden voyage for the new company from Sunderland to Dartmouth with coal, she was seen without her mainmast in distress off Cley. The Sheringham lifeboat was launched and reached her ten minutes before she became a total wreck. The crew were saved and landed at Wells.⁵⁻⁸

Figure 8 records the length of service of the vessels on register in 1867, whose fate is known, i.e. excluding the vessels that were sold on to other ports. Ten to twenty years was the most common length of service and this compares well with Mike Stammer's figures of an average duration of 14 years at Wells and 18 years at Cley.⁴ The most unlucky vessel was the *Amanarth* of Wells, registered in 1866 and lost less than a year later on 23rd March 1867. At the other end of the scale were vessels like the *New Walter and Ann* that lasted 63 years (1840-1903), *Minstrel* 57 years (1847-1904), *Hopewell* 54 years (1846-1900) and *John Lee* 45 years (1852-97). However, none of these

vessels can compare with the schooner *Squirrel*, which was built in North Shields in 1780, bought by the Temples and registered at Cley in 1839 and had accomplished 75 years of service, before being sold to Scarborough in 1855.

By 1881 the decline of the north Norfolk ports was such that even Wells could not maintain the status of a head port and the Customs House was transferred to Lynn. Trading did continue at Blakeney as well as Wells up to the First World War but largely with vessels already owned which were declining in number as they were wrecked or just became too old to repair.

Tracing the final years of decline from 1881 to the First World War becomes increasingly difficult as the records become amalgamated with Lynn and as the trade becomes less significant, many of the documents dry up. Certainly a few new vessels did arrive at the Glaven during this period. They were not brand new, but second hand, or, in the case of *Sir John Colomb*, salvaged vessels. She was originally a drifter from Yarmouth, YH 218, built by Beechings at Yarmouth in 1896 and she ran aground on Blakeney Point 17th August 1909.⁹ Cliff Turner bought the wreck and she was salvaged and rebuilt, before joining the Page and Turner fleet. Other vessels such as the steamer *Taffy*, and the tug *Comet*, arrived at Blakeney towards the end of the century, but remained

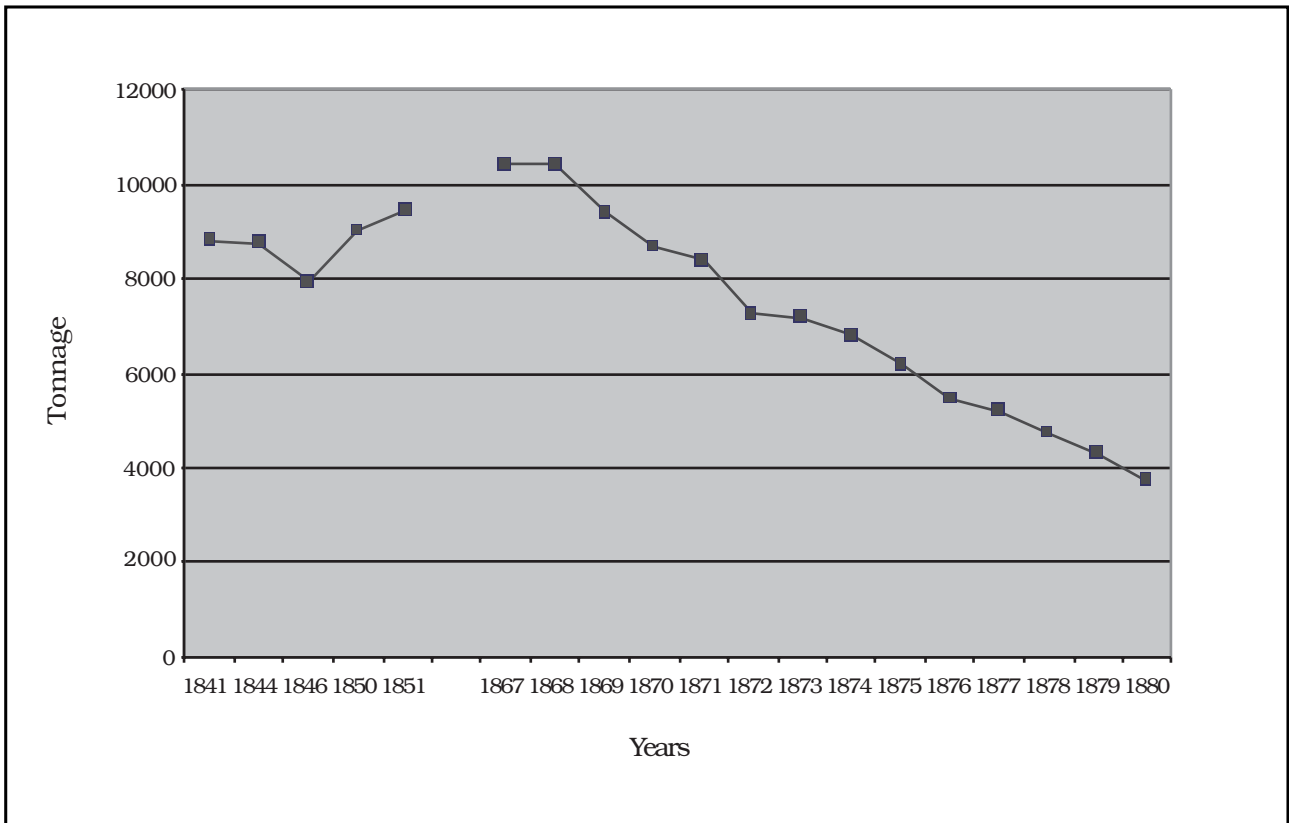


Figure 3. Total Tonnage on Register at Cley and Wells.

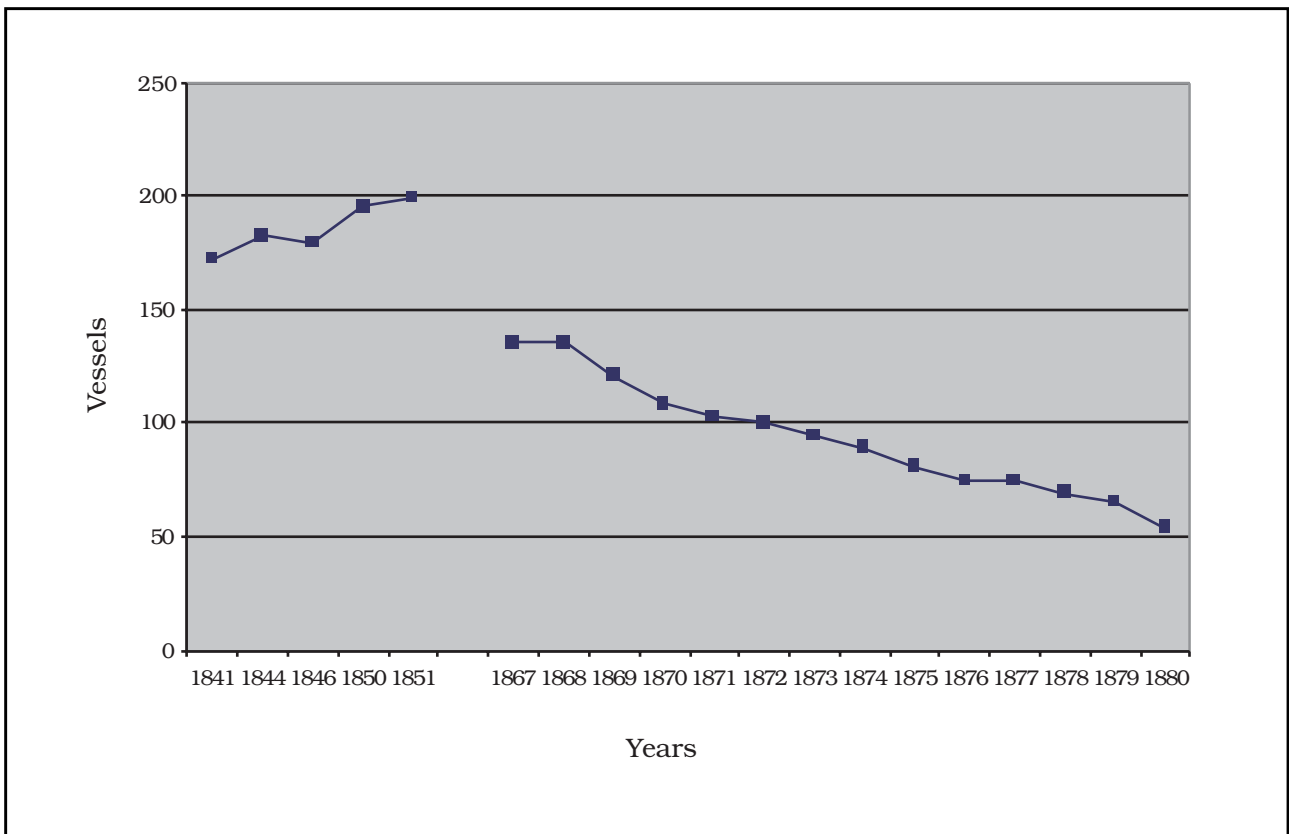


Figure 4. Number of Vessels on Register at Cley and Wells.

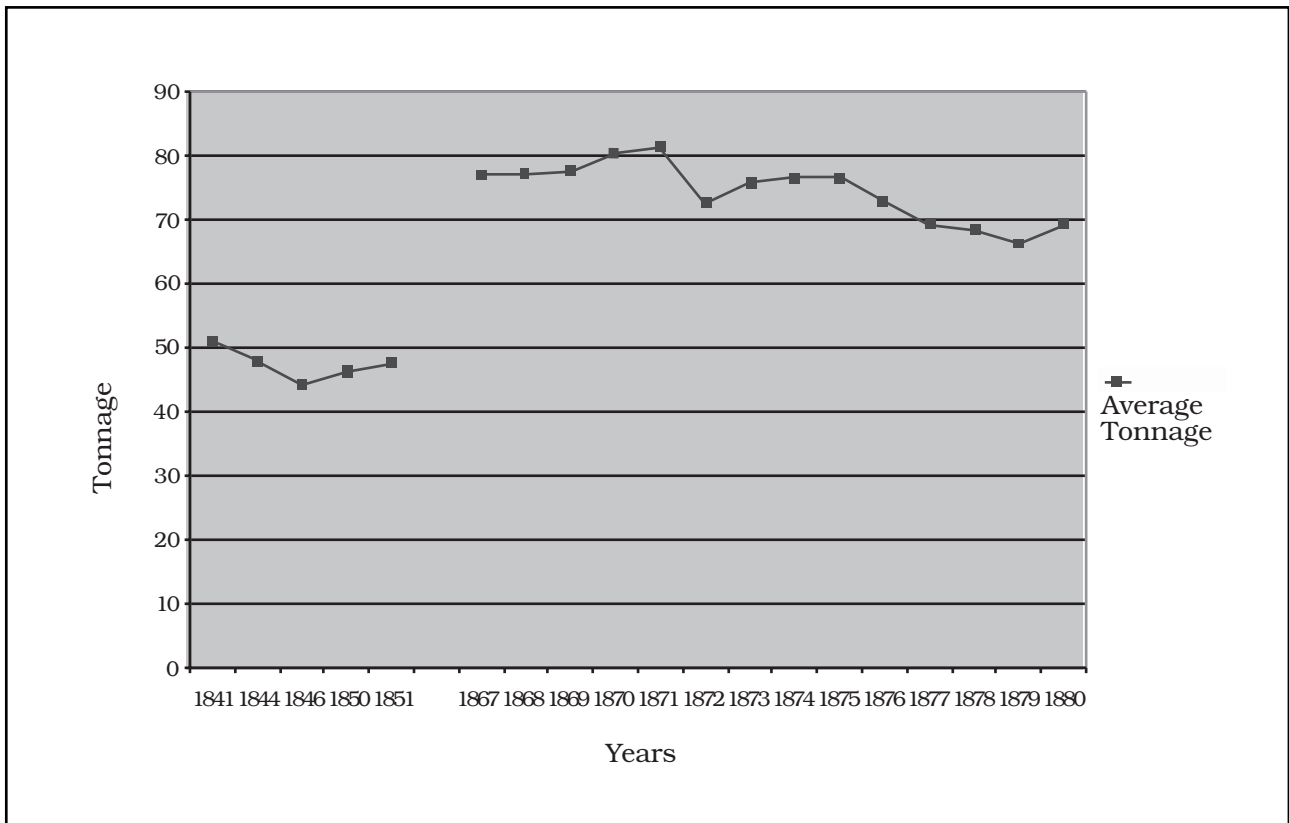


Figure 5. Average Tonnage of Registered Ships.

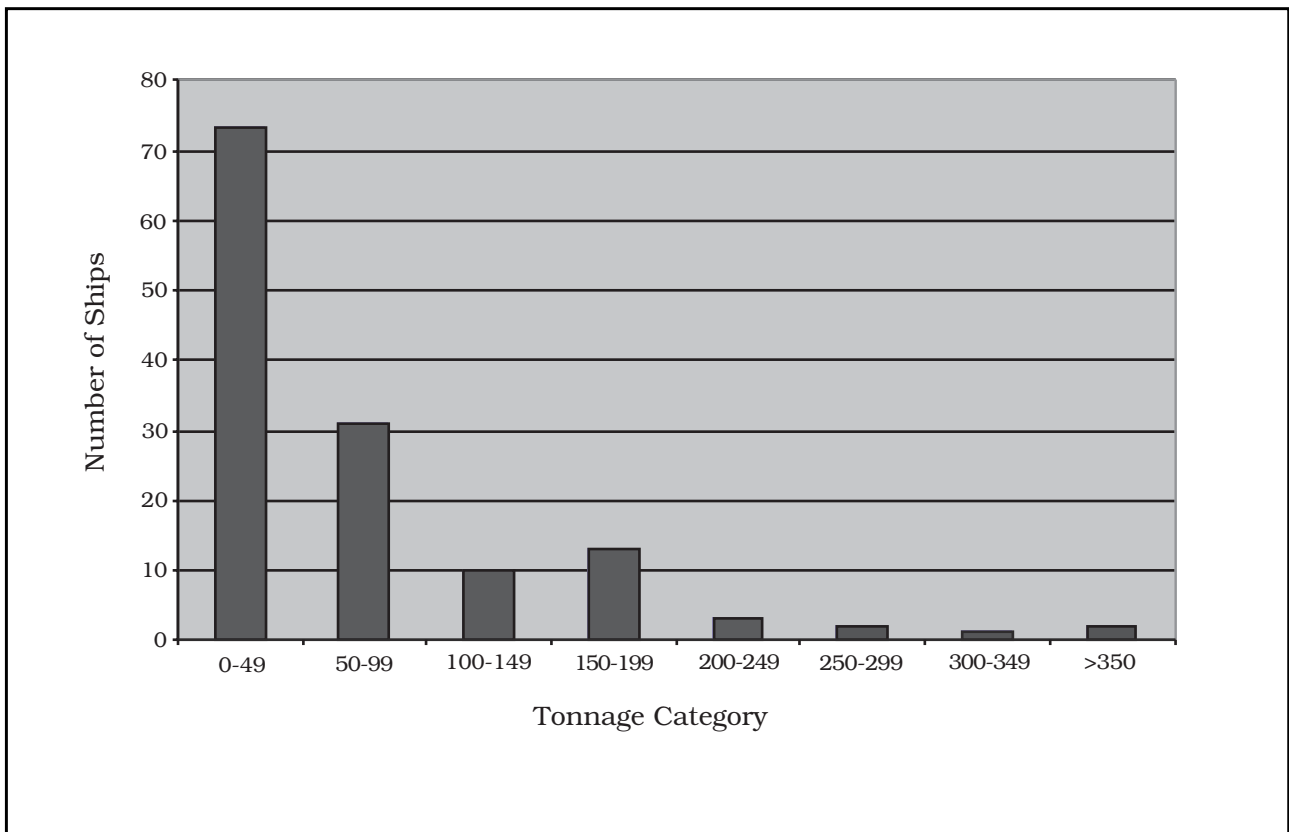


Figure 6. Sizes of Ships in 1867.

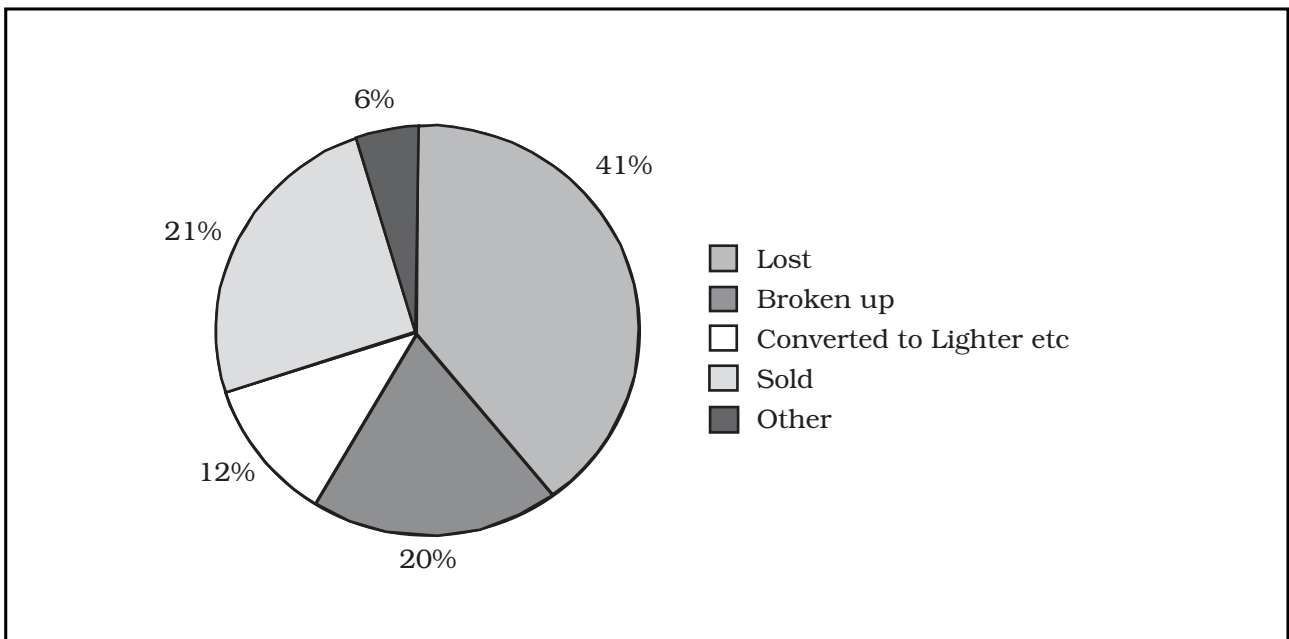


Figure 7. Fate of Vessels over 15 tons on Register 1867.

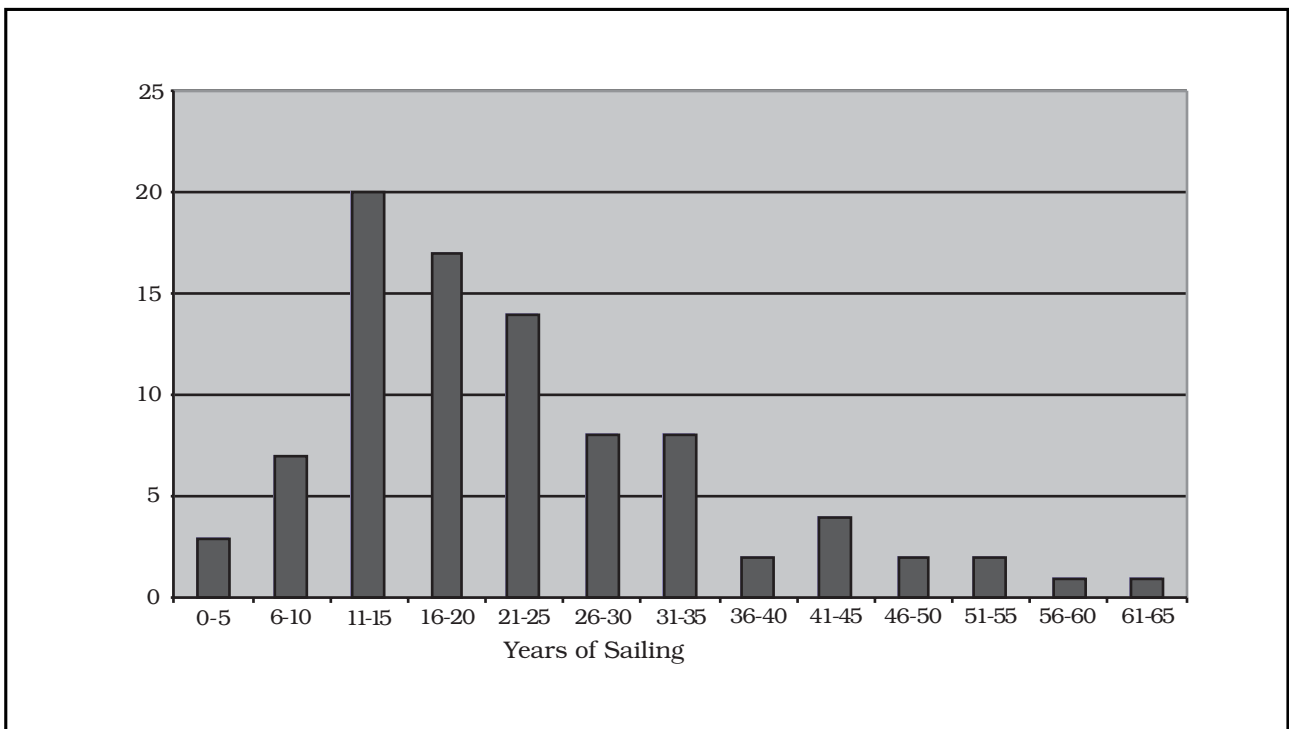


Figure 8. Length of Service.

registered at their original ports, Runcorn and Newcastle respectively. There seemed little point in re-registering them at King’s Lynn, which was also far away. As a result, the details are harder to trace.

Some local records still survive. The account book of the Blakeney Harbour Company records tonnage dues of vessels using the harbour up to 1882¹⁰ and the Wells

Harbour Record Book gives similar details of vessels using Wells from 1877 to the First World War. Details of the last vessels regularly using Blakeney for the last year of the account book (1882) and similar information for Wells two years later, along with the fate of the vessels, where known is shown opposite.

Ships regularly using Blakeney 1882¹⁰

Ship's Name	Tons	Fate
Newcastle Packet	49	Broken up 1889
Huntsman	22	Broken up 1890
London Packet	58	Wrecked 28 January 1895
TMP	45	Transferred to Barnstaple 1897
John Lee	66	Lost 29 November 1897
New Walter & Ann	29	Broken up 1903
Blue Jacket	56	Converted to a house boat 1911
Emma & Eliza	46	Possibly lost 21 November 1886
Aid	64	
Flora	31	
Palmers	73	Transferred to Sunderland
Jessie	97	
<i>Average Tonnage</i>	<i>48.8</i>	

Ships regularly using Wells 1884¹¹

Ship's Name	Tons	Fate
Mystery	98	Transferred to Goole 1884
Veracity	55	Lost 1886
Darley	67	Sold inland for navigation 1887
Gem	68	Lost 1889
Mayland	59	Lost 22 November 1897
Hopewell	51	Wrecked at Wells 4 August 1900
Herbert	55	Used inland only 9 August 1900
Sarah Lizzie	81	
Heroine	49	
Stanley	109	
<i>Average Tonnage</i>	<i>69.2</i>	

The number of vessels regularly using both ports in this period was similar (12 at Blakeney and 10 at Wells) as was the fate of the vessels. The number of cargoes dealt with was also remarkably similar, being slightly higher at Blakeney (Cargoes at Blakeney 1882: In – 85 Out – 55; Cargoes at Wells 1884: In – 75 Out – 67.) The differences were in the size of the ships, the average tonnage of Wells's vessels being bigger and in the use of the port by other vessels. At Blakeney there were only six other vessels that used the

port that year and they were all British. At Wells, twenty-nine other vessels traded from the port that year, from ports as far apart as Dublin, Cork, Riga and St. Petersburg, the largest being 139 tons.

The approach of the railways into north Norfolk certainly had a large effect on the trade of the ports. The bulk of the trade for both ports was the coastal movement of coal and agricultural produce, which could now be transported more quickly and reliably by rail. Although there is no indication of the cargoes

carried in the Blakeney Harbour Account books the Wells Harbour records show that despite competition from the railways, coal and cake accounted for 68 of the 75 imported cargoes that year.¹¹ It appears that it was still profitable to move goods by sea, although the profit margins must have been small leaving little room for any investment.

The railways also provided a profitable area for investment for local landowners, money that earlier in the century went into shipping. The owners of shipping fell into three broad categories. The small craft, solely or largely used for fishing were owned by one or two people, usually the master. The medium sized coastal vessels had several owners, usually linked by a common business interest, or with family connections. The larger vessels, often trading abroad and not using the local ports attracted the wealthier gentry who were looking for an investment opportunity. In the middle of the century there were several of these vessels owned in Blakeney, Cley and Wells, but this

following table lists such vessels as recorded in Clayton's Register of shipping for 1865, with their fate, where known.¹²

Although research needs to be undertaken to see if any of these owners or others purchased other larger ships at a later date, it is unlikely that there were many and if that is so then they were not registered at Wells or Lynn.

However, purely local trade, with small sized ships did struggle on at Blakeney into the 20th century. It would be interesting to know the profitability of such vessels and what other business interests their owners had and whether any shipping losses were subsidised from elsewhere. The trade was not very regular if the activities of *Minstrel* in 1901 were typical of other ships. She was a frequent visitor to Blakeney and other north Norfolk ports and by 1901 was owned jointly by John Savory of Burnham Overy (who had 48 shares) and William Temple, of Wells, the master, who

Owner	Ship's Name	Tons	Fate
Temple	Ann	291	Unknown
Temple	Wye	149	Lost 1869
Temple	Mignonette	182	Unknown
Nichols	Charlemagne	178	Broken up 1883
Nichols	Miranda	187	Lost 1869
Bensley	Thomas Chalmers	187	Lost 1872
Porritt	Tweedside	254	Run down and wrecked 1879
Porritt	Waterloo	147	Transferred to South Shields 1879
Porritt	Riga	177	Sold abroad 1874
Cooper	Alert	198	Transferred to Dartmouth 1880
Cooper	Electryon	190	Transferred to South Shields 1883
Painter	Countess of Zetland	184	Registration cancelled 1877
Randall	Samuel & Sarah	156	Wrecked 1871

had virtually ceased altogether by the end of the century. One of the reasons for this was that the railways were providing a profitable and less risky alternative to shipping for the investors. Michael Stammers has pointed out that when the railway reached Wells in 1857, £14,000 of the capital was raised in Wells, the equivalent of 8 new ships. Also that Joseph Southgate, the ship builder, was one of the major investors, and built his last ship only two years later.⁴

It is difficult to tell exactly when the local shipowners stopped owning ships that traded away from their homeports, and this is an area, which needs further research. However it was probably during the 1880s. This is borne out if the fate of vessels over 140 tons owned at Blakeney and Cley in 1865 is considered. The

owned the other 16 shares.¹³ In 1901, three years before she became stranded near Chapel St. Leonards in Lincolnshire and was subsequently broken up, she was visiting a variety of ports to get cargoes.¹³ She made two trips to Blakeney early in the year, but then visited several ports ranging from Hull to Southampton before finally ending at Wintringham, on the Humber for repairs.¹⁴ The majority of ships using Blakeney up to the First World War were owned by Gus Hill and Page & Turner. The Blakeney Harbour Company was wound up around 1914. If any point could mark the final end of trade it was probably in 1922 when Page & Turner finally closed their remaining granaries in Blakeney and transferred their business to Holt.

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Investigation of a Late Iron Age or early Roman Burial at Letheringsett with Glandford, Norfolk

A Report by David Gurney

Synopsis: Following the discovery of a patera, an investigation to establish its immediate context indicates that the vessel forms part of a richly-furnished Late Iron Age or early Roman burial.

Introduction

Early in 2003, metal-detecting of land at Letheringsett with Glandford located and recovered a copper alloy patera, and this was reported to and recorded by the Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service's Identification and Recording Service for Archaeological Finds for the Norfolk Historic Environment Record (NHER Record No. 39278). The patera has a rounded base and a handle with a rounded terminal (Photographs 1 and 2). An iron band reinforces the rim, and an iron bar supports the handle. The vessel has various riveted repairs in antiquity.

On 30th October 2003, a further investigation of the findspot was carried out with the principal aim of establishing the patera's context, with the fieldwork to be undertaken in one day and on the understanding that any complex deposits would be left undisturbed. The further work is recorded under NHER Record No. 39788.

The Investigation

The findspot of the patera was relocated, and an area approximately 5 metres by 5 metres was defined around it. The topsoil was excavated mechanically in three spits down to a dirty chalk surface at a depth of 0.35m, with the spoil and surfaces being regularly metal-detected. This surface was then hoed and cleaned, removing a further 0.05m, to expose a chalk surface with sandy patches and one large cut feature (Photograph 3), fortuitously located entirely within the excavation area.

The cut feature revealed is rectangular in shape, aligned north-east to south-west, 2.70m

long and 1.50m wide. Subsequent work suggests that the feature is fairly steep-sided, and probably of no great depth (at the east end only around 0.15m deep).

In the south-east corner, the backfilled hole from which the patera had been recovered was clearly discernable with its distinctive fill, and this was re-excavated (Photograph 3A). A few further fragments of iron and copper alloy were recovered, clearly part of the earlier find.

Partial excavation of the feature fill then followed, revealing the following items:

- At the west end of the feature, the top of a human skull, probably on its side facing north (Photograph 3B).
- In the north-west corner of the feature, an iron object – spearhead? (Photograph 3C).
- Along the south edge of the feature, many fragments of flint-gritted pottery.
- A semicircular iron handle, with a loop at each end, partially overlying a second circular iron object – rim, binding or base of a wooden bucket? (Photographs 3B and 6).
- Part of a second pottery vessel (Photograph 6).
- Most of a third pottery vessel, a carinated bowl in a fabric with a light grey core, red margins and grey surfaces.

Of these items, the second and the fifth were lifted, the rest remain in situ.

Discussion

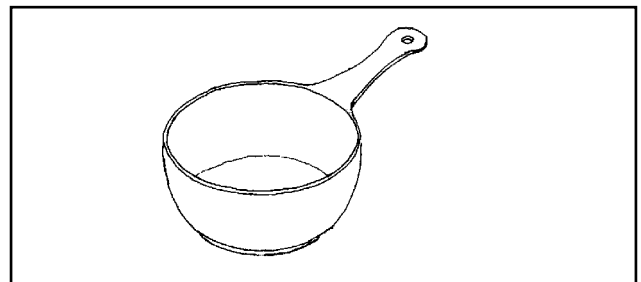
The context of the patera, although not fully explored, now seems clear. It was located at the foot of a large and richly-furnished inhumation burial, which includes (amongst other items yet to be located), an iron



Photograph 1 (top) The remains of the copper alloy patera. The patera had been repaired more than once by rivetting in new sections at some time in antiquity. The £2 coin in the centre gives an idea of the size of the piece.



Photograph 2. (left) The various fragments of the rim and handle.



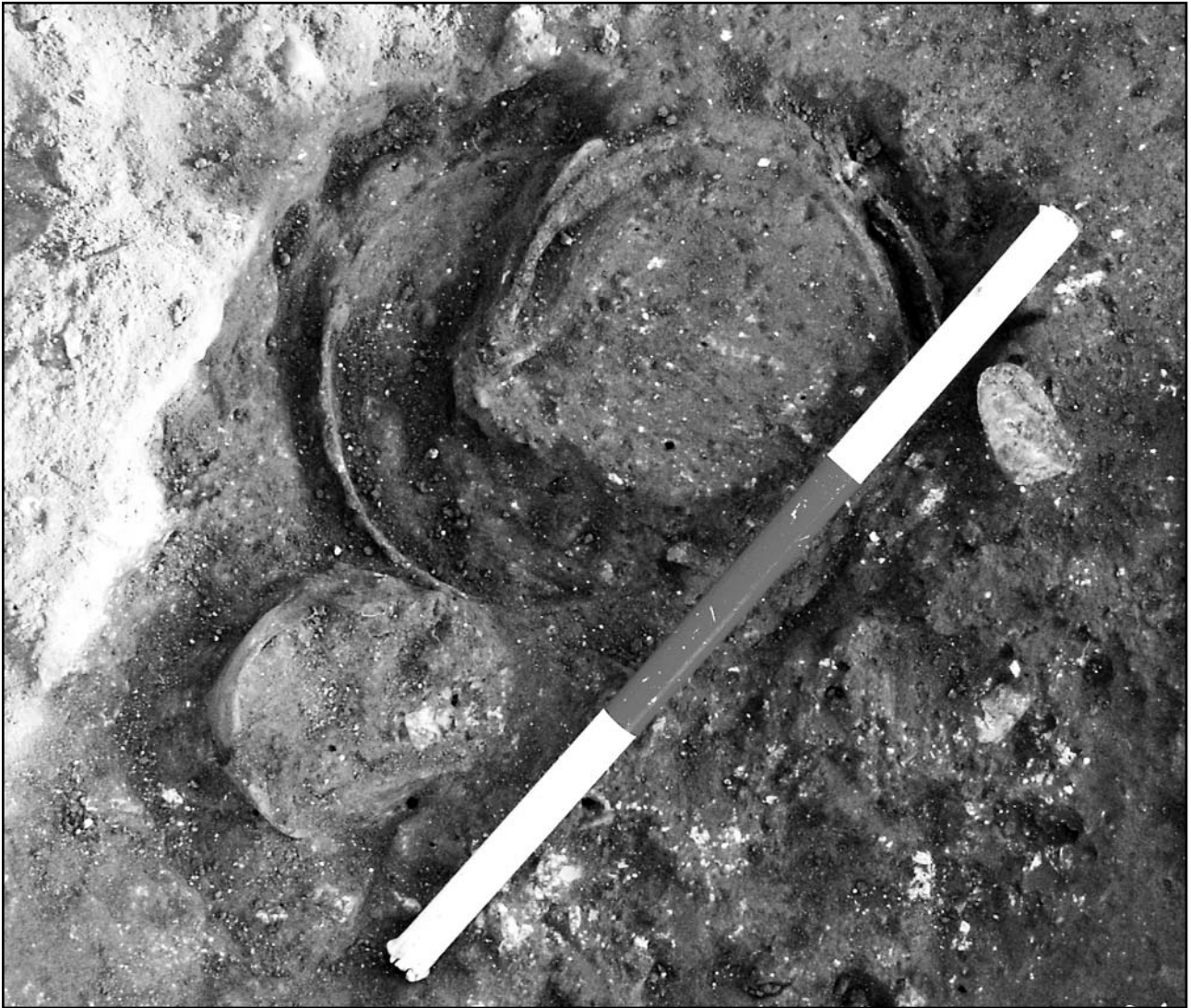
(Sketch of a patera by Frank Hawes)



Photograph 3 (top). The site exposed showing the rectangular cut feature and relative positions of the important finds A-D referred to in the text.

Photograph 4 (above left). David Gurney preparing a plan of the cut feature.

Photograph 5 (above right). Two sherds of the pottery vessel.



Photograph 6. *The iron bands of the pail as first exposed. The rim of the pottery vessel is also just visible bottom left. The measuring rod divisions are 20cms.*

spearhead, a wooden bucket with iron fittings and probably three pottery vessels.

We have been scouring the literature for parallels to the pottery vessel that we removed from the grave. There are no exact matches, but the general type is clearly 1st century AD, and probably the mid 1st century AD. So this is probably (as suspected) an Icenian burial of the period, between AD43 and 60/61.

It is anticipated that the patera and information about this find will be the subject of a small display in due course at the Shell Museum at Glandford.

Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to the finders of the patera (Ron Reid, Alan Daynes, David Maude and Jason Jackson), to the Bayfield Estate (Robin Combe and Roger Combe) for permission to investigate the find-spot and for provision of the mechanical exca-

vator and its operator (Peter Howard) and to John Peake and the members of the Blakeney Area Historical Society for their help in instigating the further investigation and for their participation in the fieldwork.

Editors' Footnote: All photographs in this article are by John Peake.

The Highs and Lows of living in Blakeney

Some thoughts on Mariners and their Memorials

by Pamela Peake

Synopsis: Some of the last vestiges of Blakeney's maritime heritage are to be found amongst the headstones in the churchyard of St. Nicholas. They are the monumental inscriptions that provide tantalising glimpses of sea-faring families, clues to lifeboats, tales of wrecks in far off places, named vessels and tragic misadventure. This article explores some of the stories behind these inscriptions.

A walk in the churchyards of Salthouse, Cley-next-the-Sea, Wiveton, Blakeney and Morston, is a journey into the past. The close juxtaposition of sea and land provides a back drop to a wealth of monumental inscriptions highlighting maritime achievements and associations: an admiral's daughter, customs and excise men, including comptrollers, tide waiters, surveyors and preventive officers, harbour masters, and extending to a captain who served under Sir Cloudesley Shovell, mariners of all levels, fishermen, pilots plus Greenwich Hospital pensioners. On the other hand, and more poignantly, there are the lows signified by inscriptions that alert us to tales of wrecks and frequent drownings or loss of life in far away places.

Monumental inscriptions are usually the prerogative of genealogists looking for elusive dates and names to add to a family tree, but there is also a wealth of other information that expands our picture of the harbour at work. Nevertheless, to look at inscriptions alone and ignore the abundance, variety and style of memorials, their decoration, symbolism and lettering is to miss an important part of the bigger picture. For the chronology of the memorials tells us much about the wealth and social structure of the community, attitudes to death, and changing socio-economic conditions.

An unusually large number of maritime monuments now sit together in the churchyard of St. Nicholas Blakeney, more by chance than design. This was the result of clearing an area to the south of the church during the early 1990s when the headstones were moved to the north side (Photograph 1, opposite), so that today there are mariners, captains, master mariners and their wives standing side by side with a tide surveyor, pilot, fisherman, mer-

chants and then ship owners.

It is fortuitous that a survey of all these memorials has been made since the millennium. Some inscriptions are now difficult to read whilst others have weathered rapidly and are no longer decipherable. It was this impending and inevitable loss that prompted an investigation into the stories behind some of the tantalising clues posed by the inscriptions, coupled with a natural curiosity about the family relationships of these men and what their lives entailed. The story is complicated, but worth pursuing!

Memorials and Maritime Occupations

The earliest headstone in the churchyard dates from 1719. This is followed shortly after by the headstone for John Matsell 1736, the earliest mariner with his occupation mentioned while Edward Murrell Baines holds the distinction of being the last Master Mariner, so described, when interred in 1923. This was a year after the merchants Page and Turner closed the granaries and moved their office from Blakeney to Holt, the fleet having earlier sailed away.¹ There are 38 references to maritime occupations with a spread of 6 in 1736-1799, 26 in 1800-1899 and 6 in 1900-1923 and 19 headstones erected between 1816 and 1879 referring to drowning.

The hundred years before the Burial Act of 1852 covers a period that provides us stylistically with a wonderful array of headstones and chest tombs. These memorials attest to increasing wealth in the parish and the persistence of a monied merchant class. However, a crisis was looming for the nouveau riche who fell between the 'old' gentry buried inside the



Photograph 1. Wilson Kitwood, Master. Died 1830, buried 1831.

church and the mass of village folk outside. A Government Statute of 1763 had introduced restrictions on grounds of public health for burials inside the church. So where could they be buried? They had no option, but outside in an already crowded churchyard!²

For the Temples, who already had a vault inside the church at the east end of the south aisle, this was not an immediate problem. The Breretons however, newly arrived in Blakeney, constructed a family vault in the churchyard alongside the chancel and the altar at the east end of the south aisle. The Temples were eventually forced to join them and constructed their new burial plot adjacent to the Breretons, erecting a tall monumental obelisk. These two sets of monuments together with those of earlier merchant families are still extant today in their original position on the south side of the church having escaped the clearance in the early 1990s.

In short, wealth from trade increased the demand for memorials during this period and ensured that monumental masons had greater opportunity to display their skills. Red sandstones were much favoured for headstones by the local masons and these were imported from York by ship. The same sandstone can also be found in adjacent coastal parishes, but not inland. Pattern books were available for the

masons and local styles began to emerge as knowledge and skills were passed from father to son.

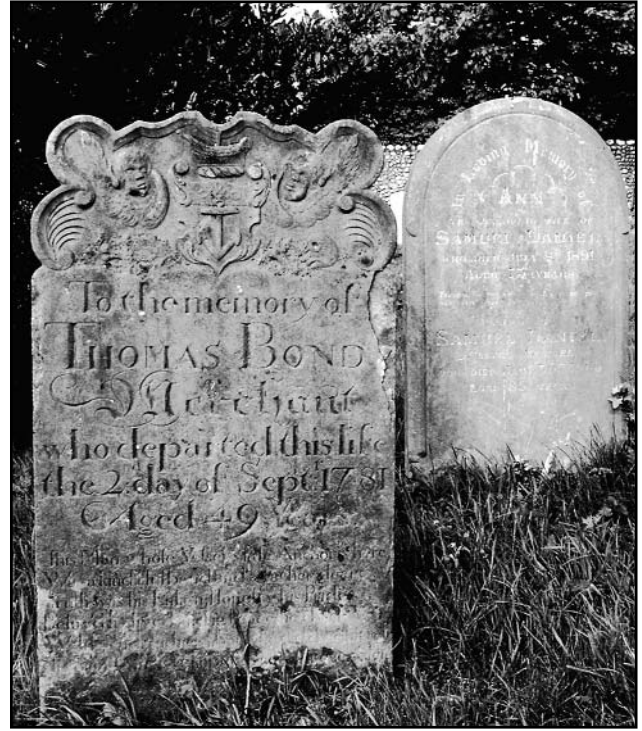
Headstones

The headstones of the early eighteenth century are generally short and thick with simple messages that are not always positioned centrally. Symbols of mortality abound with crudely carved skulls, crossed long bones, coffins, serpents and hour glasses, while cherubs caught the popular imagination and remained in vogue for a long time. The memorial to John Boyles, Tide Surveyor 1755 (Photograph 2, overleaf) bridges the two halves of the eighteenth century. The various styles of lettering and positioning on his memorial followed an earlier form, while the cherub and acanthus leaves with a three arched top heralded the new.

Significantly towards the latter half of the century, a new style of taller and broader headstones emerged with shoulders and sculpted arches on the top; this style was then carried over into the early nineteenth century. They were usually accompanied by small footstones to mark the end of the burial plot. This was the period of greatest individualism and variety, exhibiting the best carved decoration and lettering.³ Classical symbols of urns and drapes as well as cherubs and angels continued to be



Photograph 2 (above left). John Boyles, Tide Surveyor 1755.



Photograph 3 (above right). Thomas Bond, Merchant 1781 and Samuel Daniel, Master Mariner 1900 on the right.

Photograph 4 (right). Eliza Ann Dew 1864, wife of David Dew Master Mariner.

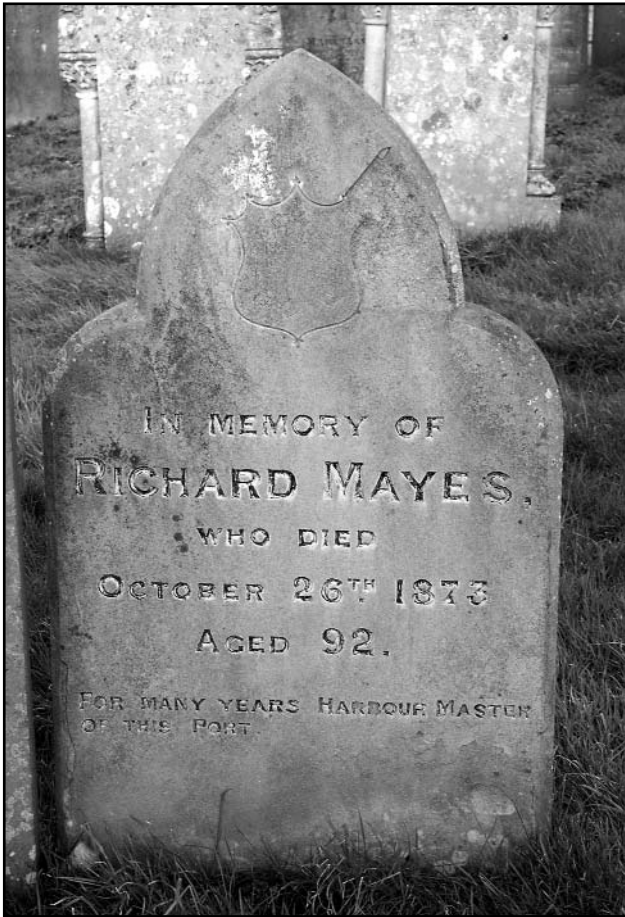
popular. But in addition a new form of symbolism was emerging that was to have a far reaching influence, this was promoted by the Oxford Movement after the ascension of Queen Victoria and involved the use of the cross as an emblem together with the Bible, torches and trumpets.

The style of lettering found in Blakeney at this time has been described as the finest English style to be found anywhere in the county, full of Georgian elegance and good taste and is attributed to the unidentified 'Blakeney sculptor'.^{4, 5} Photograph 3 shows the headstone for Thomas Bond, Merchant with an example of this lettering, accompanied by more cherubs, and in addition, his maritime activities symbolised by an anchor, ship and a line of verse that declares "whose vessel is safe anchor'd here".

The Burial Act of 1852 placed restrictions on the size and types of materials that could be used for headstones and even on the length of text. All this severely restricted the art of the mason and headstones after this time became plainer in outline, shallow pointed or rounded, and even thinner with decoration limited to the top. Photographs 4 and 5 illustrate these fea-



tures with the text on a raised panel and a rounded decorated top on a stone for Eliza Ann Dew 1864, plus an early lancet-style headstone for the harbour master, Richard Mayes 1873, that is virtually devoid of all decoration, while Photograph 3 shows a classically plain, round top monument for Samuel Daniel 1900 from



Photograph 5 (upper). Richard Mayes, Harbour Master 1873.

Photograph 6 (lower). William Newland, Master Mariner 1916.

Photographs 1-6 by John Peake (2004)

the very beginning of the twentieth century. Here the sides have only the slightest relief while the decoration is reduced to a minimalistic swirl.

Mass produced headstones, some with machine-made lettering and imported coloured marble slabs make an appearance as memorials in the late 19th century. Lancet shaped tops as well as crosses on plinths and kerbs witnessed a gothic revival that continued into the twentieth century. The headstone for William Newland 1916 (Photograph 6), sometime master of the *Mary Ann*, has flowers encircling an anchor and is similar in style to others made for the last master mariners sailing from the harbour. Their stones, that are nearby, have flowers surrounding clasped hands or the letters IHS, the first three letters of Jesus when written in Greek capitals, with a surround of ivy leaves rather than flowers.

These memorials show that many master mariners had enjoyed sufficient prosperity for families to mark an interment, or memory, with a permanent memorial that would attract attention. They were making public statements denoting status of the family within the community and these headstones are still effective today after more than 200 years.

Occupations

Every maritime occupation found in a monumental inscription is listed in Table 1 (p.64) together with the date of the memorial, the name of the mariner commemorated, his age at death and place of birth, when known. This makes a total of 38 entries on 37 headstones as the brothers Thomas and William Grix share a single memorial. However, there are only 36 mariners commemorated, as both William Penten junior and his father, another William Penten, appear twice on separate stones. Such discrepancies arise when headstones for female relatives, usually the wife, also commemorate the mariner and his occupation.

Unfortunately not every mariner is commemorated with a headstone and even when there is one, there may be no allusion to an occupation. Yet this restricted list shows that many mariners came from inland or neighbouring coastal villages and two from another county, thus introducing a new set of surnames into the parish registers. Furthermore, some of these new arrivals were not from traditional maritime families, but were the sons of agricultural workers, shoemakers, carpenters and inn keepers.

These master mariners, including the synonyms master and captain, were essentially nineteenth century sailors. Some achieved a grand old age in retirement, others did not get the chance. After 1817, Pilots and Harbour

Year	Name	Occupation	Age	Place of Birth
1736	Matsell, John	Mariner	60	
1743	Grix, Thomas	Mariner	20	Blakeney
1750	Grix, William	Mariner	36	Blakeney
1755	Boyles, John	Tide Surveyor of this Parish	55	
1786	Hipkins, John	Surveyor of this Port		
1797 *	Pentin, Wells	Mariner		Blakeney
1830	Kitwood, Wilson	Master	31	Blakeney
1833	Penten, William	Master Mariner	40	Blakeney
1837 *	Penten, William jnr. [bur. 1833]	Master Mariner		
1842 *	Penten, William [bur. 1857]	Captain		
1844	Baines, John	Master Mariner	76	Trusthorpe, Lincs
1845 *	Ellis, Henry [bur. 1875]	Master Mariner	75	Edgefield
1848	Baines, John	Master Mariner	54	Blakeney
1851 *	Dew, Edmund [bur. 1865]	Pilot	75	Langham
1854	May, James	Master Mariner	61	Brinton
1857	Penten, William	Master Mariner	93	North Walsham
1857	Porter, John	Master Mariner of this Port	63	Cley
1860	Jordan, Samuel	Master Mariner	72	Great Yarmouth
1861	Warnes, William Johnson	Mariner	44	Blakeney
1861	Johnson, John	Pilot	59	Blakeney
1864	Thomas, David	Master Mariner	42	Swansea, Glam
1864 *	Dew, David [died 1865]	Master Mariner	30	
1865 *	Mann, Wm	Master Mariner		Cley
1869	Baines, Edward B	Master Mariner	54	Blakeney
1873	Lane, Miles	Master Mariner of this Port	82	Blakeney
1873	Mayes, Richard	Harbour Master	92	Blakeney
1874	Nurse, William Ward	Master Mariner	74	Weybourne
1879	Loads, Michael	Fisherman,	78	Blakeney
1879	Parker, James	Master Mariner	61	Guist
1881	Dew, James	Master Mariner	52	Cockthorpe
1886	Nurse, William	Master Mariner	52	Blakeney
1897	Grout, Charles William	Master Mariner	59	Salthouse
1900	Daniel, Samuel	Master Mariner	85	Bircham
1909	Dew, Thomas	Harbour Master 40 years and Master Mariner	83	Binham
1910	Newland, William	Master Mariner	86	Blakeney
1912	Thompson, George Thomas	Master Mariner	92	Blakeney
1916	Waller, William	Master Mariner	66	
1923	Baines, Edward Murrell	Master Mariner	88	Blakeney

Table 1. Maritime Occupations: the seven memorials for female relatives are marked by an asterisk and the date of the mariner's death or burial, when known, is given in brackets after his name.

Masters were appointed by the shareholders of the Harbour Company from the pool of master mariners, as can be seen from Thomas Dew's epitaph. Undoubtedly the two harbour masters featured in this account found the land-based post conducive to longevity!

Despite there being a large number of fishermen listed in the censuses, and the church of St. Nicholas being dedicated to the patron saint of fishermen, only the stone for Michael Loads declares his occupation. Many of the fishermen had been mariners earlier in their career and it seems that this was the preferred epitaph as it undoubtedly reinforced their status within their community. Yet the dedication to St. Nicholas indicates the importance of fishermen in earlier centuries.

The Master Mariners

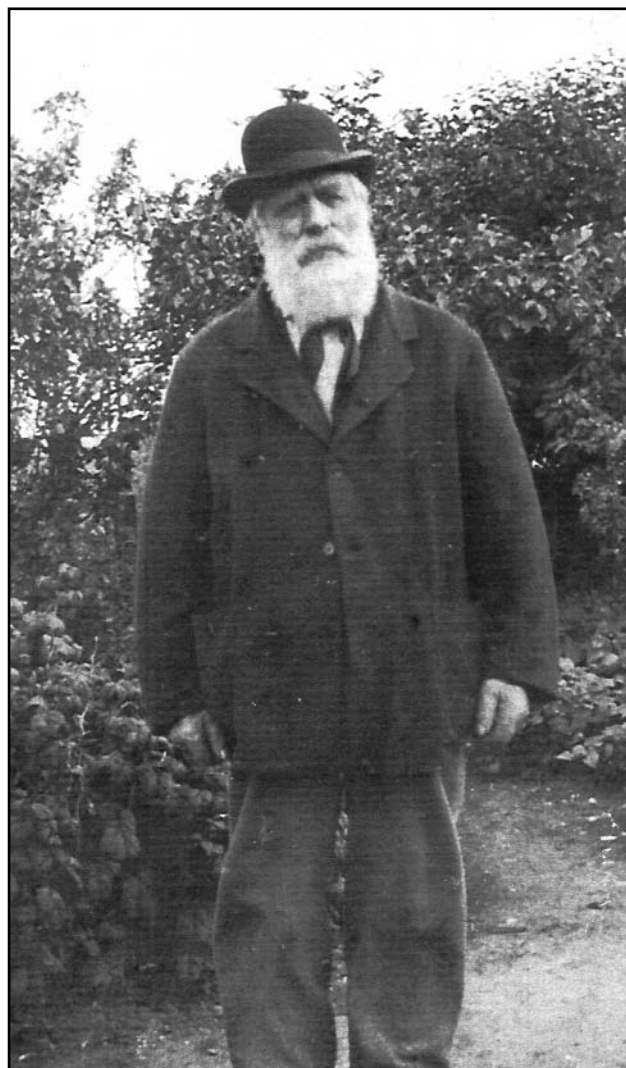
Who were these master mariners that occupied such a prominent position in the village psyche? Looking at Table 1 shows that surnames are repeated and this immediately suggests relationships and the elevated status of some families.

William Penten, father and son have already been mentioned, but Wells Pentin does not appear to be related. William Ward Nurse was the father of William Nurse, while less obvious is Samuel Daniel, father-in-law of Charles William Grout. Thomas and William Grix, who died so young are brothers, while William Johnson Warnes and John Johnson are distant cousins and William is the brother-in-law of William Newland. That leaves four Dews and four Baines with the remainder of the mariners not related in any obvious way, although a glance through the parish registers shows that marriages increased the number of connections.

The Dew Family

Thomas, James and David Dew were all brothers, just three of the many sons of John and Martha Dew who lie buried at Cockthorpe. David Dew, probably the youngest of the brothers, for his mother died 1835, was also the first buried as he was lost at sea off Blakeney bar in 1865 when only 30 years of age. He had married Eliza Ann Wisker (see Figure 4) in 1861, not many years before his untimely end.⁶ She was the daughter of Robert Wisker and Eliza Newton. David's father-in-law Robert, was a mariner and was the first master of the *Enterprise* when it was newly built in 1842.⁷

David and Eliza Ann Dew's only surviving child was Walton Newton Dew who, being orphaned, was brought up by his maternal grandparents. He was the author of the *Monumental Inscriptions in the hundred of Holt*,



Photograph 7. Thomas Dew, Harbour Master, early 1900s.¹⁰

essential reading when looking for ancestors in this part of Norfolk.⁸ Could it have been the loss of his parents, that he never knew, that prompted the young Walton to undertake the survey, looking for his Dew ancestors and thus fulfilling a sense of belonging?

Whatever the reason, these three Dew brothers, born and baptised between Binham and Cockthorpe, where their father was a labourer, came to live in Blakeney and all eventually became master mariners. By 1864, James was master of the *Ann*, a schooner of 84 tons which was owned by Robert Cubitt Wells of Blakeney.⁷ Robert was an up and coming merchant who lived at Marsh House on the quayside, better known today as the Red House and with him was his nephew, young Augustus Hill who would one day take over the business.

Meanwhile Thomas Dew had become master of the *Tweedside*, a brig of 254 tons that was far too big for Blakeney Harbour and usually sailed from Great Yarmouth, around the coast and back and forth to the continent.⁹ Thomas (Photograph 7) eventually retired from

the sea and became Harbour Master at Blakeney, a position he held until 1900 when he was 74 years old.

Edmund Dew, Pilot, commemorated by his wife, Jane Dew 1851, is the fourth Dew in Table 1 and appears to have been an uncle to the three brothers. He was born in Langham 1790, married Jane Cozens at Cromer in 1810 and then had eleven children baptised in Blakeney although only eight of these survived infancy.^{6, 10} It can be difficult tracing the career of seamen through the very early years of the 1800s before they were registered with seamen's tickets and before censuses are meaningful, but the entries for the baptisms of his children give Edmund as sailor, followed by seaman then pilot. By 1861 he had retired and his place was taken by his son, Henry.¹¹ Until quite recently, Henry's wife had a headstone with an inscription that gave Henry as a pilot.¹⁰ Sadly this monument has disappeared but it once marked the starting point of Walton Dew's survey.⁸

The Baines Family

The series of memorials for this family are the only ones in the churchyard that commemorate three generations of master mariners. They are for John Baines, 1844, his two sons John and Edward B, then his grandson Edward Murrell Baines. Their fortunes as a seafaring family were the subject of an earlier article that highlighted a division between those who stayed in the village and those who took to the sea and eventually moved. The latter moved first to Cley then north to Westoe (County Durham) via a short stay in Wells-next-the-Sea.¹²

John and Sarah Baines had six sons that survived infancy, namely William, John, Francis Murrell, Zaccheus, Murrell and Edward Bayley that have quite an illustrious record. In Lloyd's Captains' Registers¹³ Edward B(ayley) has a service record that cites him as a master qualified for foreign trade by virtue of experience rather than by examination. Also listed are his nephews, John Baines the son of his oldest brother William, and the half brothers Zaccheus Murrell and William Brown, sons of Zaccheus Baines. Both John and Zaccheus Murrell Baines had Certificates of Service similar to Edward, their uncle, while William Brown Baines, the youngest, gained his Certificate of Competency by examination at Newcastle, 1855. This qualified him as Master or Mate for foreign trade.

However, the two brothers Francis Murrell and Edward B were both to lose their lives by drowning under very different circumstances. Francis was only 19 years of age, a young sailor, when he lost his life late one Saturday night returning from a Methodist watchnight

service that had been held in Cley on 17th February 1816. He was with a group of companions on their way home to Blakeney initially on foot, but an exceptionally high tide made this route across the marshes and over the Glaven by Eason's bridge impassable. Arrangements were made for a ferry and with nine safely on board, the ferry moved off from the quay. Somehow she fouled the ropes of a lighter moored alongside, rapidly filled with water and sank. Francis was drowned as were four others, while the ferryman and Francis Newton were rescued, Thomas Loads made the Wiveton bank, Thomas Shawl the Cley side and Robert Payne was found at the jetty having no recollection of the event.¹⁴

Those who lost their lives that night were all buried the following Wednesday at Blakeney by Benjamin Pullan, Curate of Cley, where the Blakeney burial registers give them as:

Alfred Clarke Sisson aged 27

Sarah Murrell aged 24

Thomas Wisker aged 21

Francis Murrell Baines aged 19

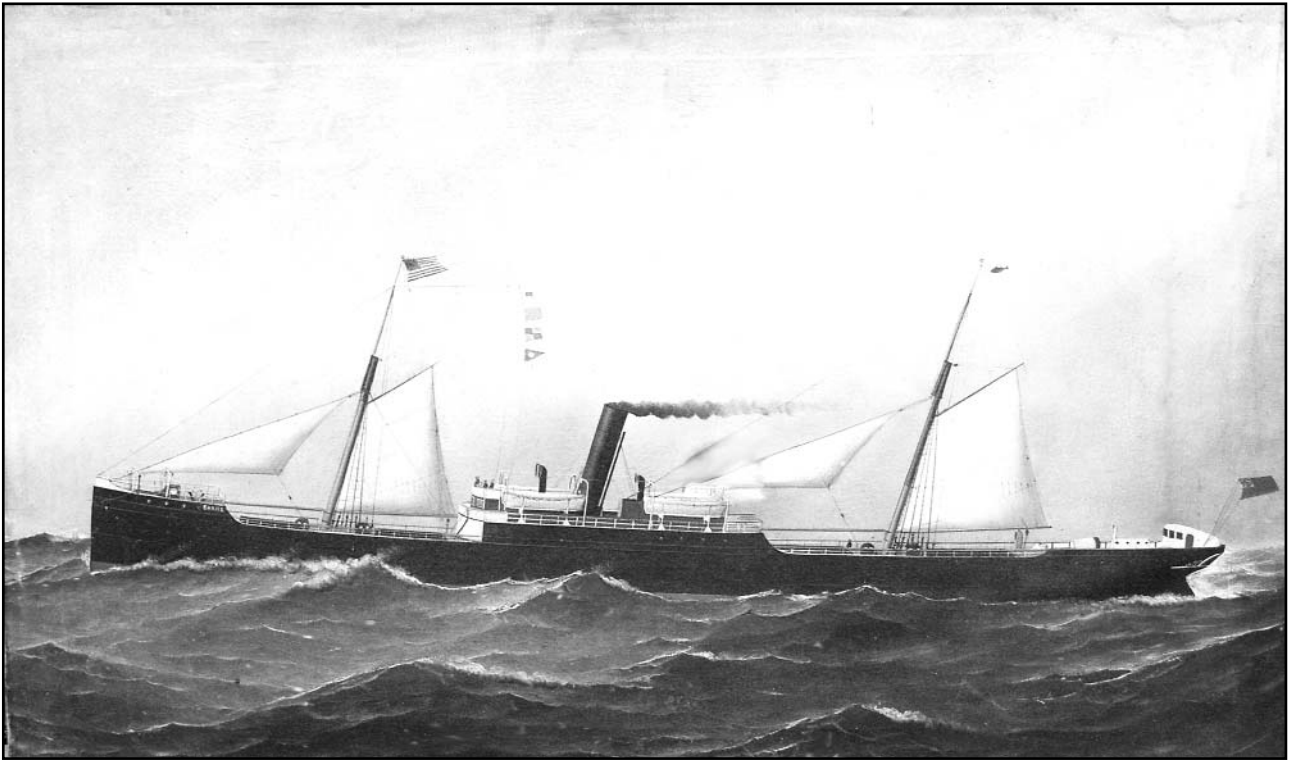
Hannah Smith Balcombe aged 19

Francis Baines and Sarah Murrell were cousins so that was a double tragedy for the family.⁶ Only Thomas Wisker has a memorial and the inscription is now severely weathered.

Edward B Baines, by contrast, was in the prime of his life at 54 when he drowned as his ship was almost safe in her home port of Wells. He was master of the *Enchantress*, a schooner of some 106 tons that was owned and managed by J B Southgate, postmaster of Wells.⁷

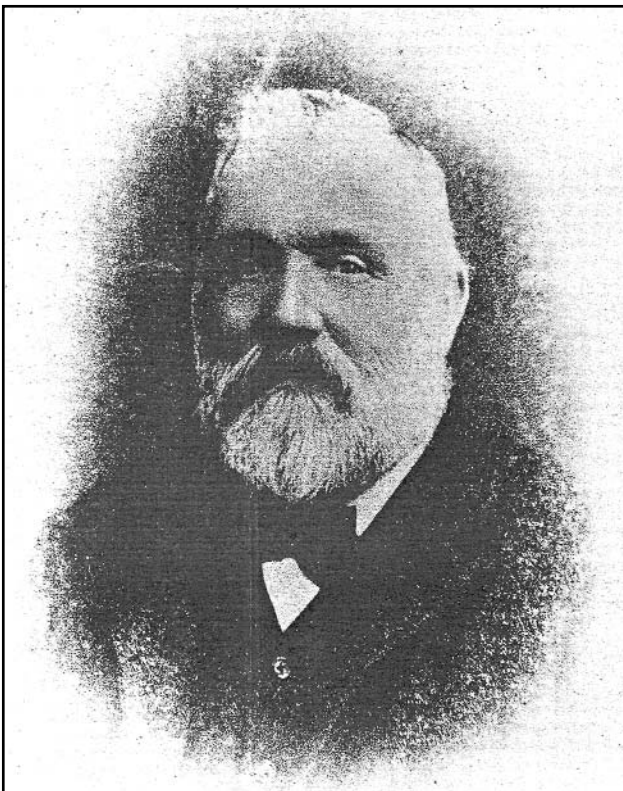
On the night of the 19th October 1869 the Norfolk coast was lashed by a storm, 'wild and tempestuous' according to the report in the Norfolk Chronicle, which continued thus "The *Enchantress* of Wells came on shore on the West Sands [i.e. at Wells] at 5 am with a crew of six men under Captain Baines of Blakeney (a well known Pilot of that port) master. The vessel went to pieces and every soul was lost. She was laden with coals from the north, bound for France. A more distressing sight can scarcely be conceived. The vessel with its rigging was one entangled mess, the masts broken into pieces, the stern washed away, the bow alone preserving the appearance of anything like a ship, the hull itself being rent and torn to fragments. Never seen so complete a wreck in so short a time ... it resembled no more than matchwood. The sands were searched at the falling tide for bodies but none were recovered".¹⁵ Edward's body was found and laid to rest in Blakeney on the following Monday, 25th October, but the inscription barely mentions the tragedy.

Further along the coast at Blakeney, on the same morning, the *Ravensworth*, bound for



Photograph 8 (left). Charles William Grout, Master Mariner.¹⁶

Photograph 9 (above). The Crane.¹⁶



Charles William Grout 1837-1897

Charles Grout (Photograph 8) was the final master mariner to be buried in the churchyard at the close of the nineteenth century. He was born in Salthouse, later moving to Blakeney for work. It is not surprising that he became a mariner for his older brother William was already established there as a mariner, while his aunt had married William Isaac Bensley of Blakeney, master mariner and ship owner.

In 1877 Charles had occasion to provide details of his previous service to the Board of Trade when applying to be examined for an Ordinary Master's Certificate of Competency (see Table 2). J W Watson, his last employer, adds a note to his recommendation "truly sorry when he left me for a larger ship". While accompanying the application was a testimonial from Samuel Daniel which stated "I have known Charles William Grout from being a boy and that he have up to present time always bin very steady Atentive to his Business always given us Satisfaction wile in ower Employ".¹⁶

Interestingly, just two months before Charles became master of the *Sea Flower*, he married Anne Elizabeth Daniel, eldest daughter of Samuel Daniel, and shortly after in 1865, his uncle William Bensley was listed as the managing owner of this vessel.⁷ By 1881 Charles and Anne Grout were living in Westoe,

Hartlepool from Riga (Latvia), was also wrecked but in this instance the crew managed to hang on until rescued by the Blakeney lifeboat and they were all ashore by breakfast time. Then at Cley beach, later on the same morning, the *Agatha*, on her way from Chatham to Hartlepool, was also blown ashore, and again the crew of 7 were saved. By noon the following day the storm finally abated having left utter devastation in its wake all along the north coast.

Date	Vessel	Rig	Capacity	Managing Owner
Nov 1861 - Mar 1862	Sea Flower	schooner	Master	Daniel, Mann & Co. of Blakeney
Nov 1862 - May 1865	Sea Flower	schooner	Master	Daniel, Mann & Co. of Blakeney
Nov 1865 - May 1866	Wave	schooner	Master	S Daniel and Co. of Blakeney,
1867 - 1876	various ships in the Baltic & coasting trade	various	Captain	Harriet Wells
Apr 1876 - Sep 1876	Queen	Three masted schooner	Master	J W Watson of Lynn

Table 2. Charles Grout: record of service 1861-1876.¹⁶

Durham with their children and at census time, Anne's youngest sister Lucy Daniel, was also there with her new husband William Starling and their first child.¹⁷ Other family tales recall Charles sailing along the Chinese coast with his daughter when running the blockade at Vladivostok.

Trade had been good for Charles and with his acquired wealth he planned to return to Blakeney and have a house built on the Morston Road by his brother-in-law, William Starling. William had already quit the sea by this time and was an established carpenter and boat builder. Charles duly applied to renew his Certificate of Competency as Master of a Foreign-going Ship and this was issued at South Shields 7th January 1896. It seems that one of his last commands was on the *Crane*, sailing to the eastern seaboard of the States (Photograph 9). Sadly it all came to a sudden end when he died in his new house the following summer.

His story illustrates how, despite the decline of trade towards the end of the nineteenth century in Blakeney, mariners who were prepared to move away and follow the ships could and did make good money. And unlike some of the Baines who had gone to Westoe and elected to stay, Charles wanted to return to north Norfolk.

Working for the Temples

Many of the mariners who lived in the village would have sailed on vessels owned or managed by the merchants, families like the Temples, Breretons, Starlings, Augustus Hill or latterly, Page and Turner. Apart from the Starlings, the Temples had lived in the village the longest having a presence for some 200 years until Charles Johnson Temple-Lynes, the last of the line as well as secretary

of the Harbour Company, died in 1926, just four years after Page and Turner moved their office away from Blakeney.

The Temples were successful merchants and farmers with a network of brothers and cousins across the north of the county. In the 18th and early 19th centuries they would have been one of the major employers in the village with agricultural labourers in the fields, servants in Quay House, clerks in the office, porters on the quay and in the warehouses as well as seamen of all grades on their ships, lighters and tugs.

Wilson Kitwood and George Thompson were two employees whose collective lives spanned the nineteenth century. Both were just lads when they began working for the Temple family, both eventually becoming captain of a Packet, one plying regularly to the north, the other south to London. There the route to progress and success ended for Wilson, who died under tragic circumstances. His widow noted on the headstone that he had worked for Mrs Temple for 17 years and this is the only instance of a merchant being named as an employer in the churchyard. George, by contrast, lived a full life surrounded by an ever increasing family circle and reached the grand old age of 92, the oldest inhabitant in the village, eventually dying of sudden heart failure in February 1912. His high regard for the Temple family is not found on a headstone, rather in an obituary where it is recorded with considerable pride that he had served the Temples for 70 years.¹⁸

Wilson Kitwood, 1799-1830

Born into an old Blakeney family in 1799, Wilson Kitwood was the son and grandson of two earlier 'Wilson Kitwoods'. He would have been 13 or 14 years old when he went to work for Thomas William Temple, husband of Mary



Photograph 10. The Blakeney Quay in the late 19th century with the London Packet berthed at the Low Quay on the far right.

Temple nee Lynes. Whether he was apprenticed is not known, but by 1830 he was married to Mary Cooper and had three young daughters. The story of his drowning has oft been repeated no doubt because of the harrowing elapse of time between death and recovery of the body and the fact that his widow was expecting another child when he died. The newspaper of the time reports “we are sorry to relate that during the gale on the night of the 19th inst. Capt W Kitwood of the *Hull Packet*, of this port, was lost by the main boom breaking, which knocked him overboard”.¹⁹

Just a few days after the tragedy, the Blakeney Burial Register records that two men were washed ashore, supposedly from Sunderland, one aged about 50, the other about 36 and they were buried in Blakeney. These unnamed seamen were casualties of the same gale. Alas for the widow, there was no sign of her husband and that might well have been the end of the story for all too often the sea claimed the body. In this instance his body was eventually recovered and the Curate of Cley, Benjamin Pullan added the following note in the margin of the Burial Register namely that “this man was drowned at sea about 15 miles from Blakeney on the 19th Dec 1830 and

was washed on shore in the parish of Morston 4th Sept 1831”.⁶ Wilson Kitwood was buried in Blakeney the following day (Photograph 1) and by this time his posthumous son had been born and christened Wilson Kitwood.

The Kitwood family were not new to the loss of life at sea for Wilson’s sister Ann, had lost her husband Thomas Starling from the smack *Lively* some eight years earlier. Then as if that were not enough, young Wilson followed in his father’s footsteps and at 16 years of age was drowned in the Thames in London from the brig *Equity*. The body being returned to Blakeney for burial, where his headstone records the event. Despite these setbacks, Ann remarried a sailor and her son Richard Starling became Harbour Master for a short time.

Coincidentally, the *Lively* and the *Equity* share the distinction of being the only two vessels named on Blakeney headstones, and now they lie virtually side by side on the north side of the church.

George Thompson, 1819-1912

George was born in Blakeney in 1819, the son of John Thompson and Sarah Ramm. While the Thompson surname has been in the coastal villages of north Norfolk for a very long time, the

obituary makes it quite clear that this John Thompson had been born in Aberdeen and subsequently pressed into service for King George in the Royal Navy.¹⁸ He even had the experience of sailing with Nelson and was in the North Sea after the Battle of Copenhagen when a terrific gale blew up. The Commander and his officers, while aware of safety in Blakeney Haven, were not entirely confident that they could bring the ship in.

However, John Thompson, who by now was a Petty Officer, appears to have studied navigation in his spare time, volunteered to bring the vessel into the harbour. His success was immediately rewarded with money and he received his discharge in the harbour. It was not too long before he met and married Sarah Ramm of Cley and eventually moved to Blakeney where the family prospered, there being over 300 descendants by the time his son, George Thompson died in 1912.

George left school and began work as a page boy for Mary Temple. He would follow her in livery on a pony as she visited her relations, the Lynes of Litcham. However after a few years he hankered after the sea and was apprenticed on 1st February, 1836 to Mr and Mrs Charles Temple, owners of the brig *Calthorpe*. Charles was the youngest of Mary Temple's surviving sons and with his older brother, Thomas, had taken over the business from their widowed mother.

His obituary gives a colourful account of what happened on his very first voyage to sea as a new apprentice. The *Calthorpe* was chartered by the Breretons, corn merchants, to convey a cargo of barley from Blakeney to Leith, Scotland. As happens all too frequently on the east coast, the ship sailed into a gale and met horrendous weather that pushed them south. The cold was intense and young George suffered severe frost bite to his feet necessitating urgent attention. The Captain obtained a tow into Shields where medical assistance was soon available. As the boots were cut from his feet and removed, the stockings pulled away the flesh. In such circumstances the proven method of saving the feet was to scatter them with dry mustard and then cover with mustard plasters. A drastic remedy indeed but it worked and despite the lasting memory of the pain, George undaunted, recovered and carried on. He passed all grades of service becoming master of the *London Packet* (Photograph 10, page 69), a position he was to hold until October 1862 when Captain Waller became the new master.²⁰

A census Index of seamen for 1861 allows a wider glimpse of the Thompson family at sea. On the night of 7th April George was on the *London Packet* berthed in London at St Katherine's Dock. On board, amongst others,

was Seaman Flood of Blakeney, a young apprentice, no doubt being put through his paces by George.²¹ Howard, his nephew, was an AB seaman on the *Charles*, while his oldest brother, William Thompson, was mate on the *Kate* docked at Newcastle. William's brother-in-law, Samuel Starling, was master of the *Kate*, the two men having married each other's sister. This close bond of marriage and work continued to the end with both couples buried side by side, just inside the west gate to St. Nicholas. Their epitaphs tell nothing of their maritime days.

When George retired from the *London Packet*, he exchanged the coastal run for the supposedly quieter life of a harbour tug master on the *Gem*. This post lasted for some time, but as his obituary recalls his adventures were not over as he was involved with the lifeboat (see page 72). He eventually hung up his sea boots and worked ashore for Charles Johnson Temple-Lynes. By 1902, when he finally retired, George had given 70 years of service to three generations of the Temple family.

The Early Life Boats

Tales abound of whole fleets of boats wrecked with horrendous loss of life and so it is not surprising to learn that Wells and Blakeney both had beach companies acting as rescue and salvage squads by the early 1800s.²² Look-outs were established for 24 hour watch at critical times and private boats that could be rowed or sailed were used as lifeboats. Fast boats and early warning were essential, as the first to arrive on the scene had salvage rights to unattended vessels or could negotiate terms to save a ship and take passengers and crew off to safety.

Surprisingly there are no headstones in the churchyard and no comments in the burial registers referring specifically to these early boats, this is in contrast to the memorials inside the church. Yet inscriptions on four headstones record the loss of life on 9th February 1861, two of these indicate that eight men (Table 3) were drowned attempting a rescue and that a Pilot was involved. All the evidence suggests a private lifeboat was used.

An early painting of the Point from about 1810 made by a coastguard from Morston, showed a Pilot's house, flagstaff and another building very close to the site of the present day two-storey Lifeboat House.²³ There is evidence that Pilots used their own boats for rescue whilst working from their House on the Point. This would make sense as they were strategically placed to keep watch both out to sea and in the harbour.

When the newly formed Norfolk Association

Name and place of birth	Date of Burial	Age	Headstone Information	1851 occupation	1861 Wife and children
John Johnson Blakeney	13th Feb	60	18 years Pilot drowned with seven others	Pilot	Margaret Pilot's widow dau. 32
Thomas Johnson Blakeney	13th Feb	52	No headstone	Fisherman	Belinda widow Pauper
William Johnson Warnes Blakeney	15th Feb	44	Mariner	Mariner	Jemima wid, Cottage owner
John Neale Thornage	25th Feb	49	No headstone	Fisherman	Jane Margaret Fisherman's wid. dau. 15
Jacob Graveling Thornage	30th April	27	No headstone	Ag. Lab	Mary Ann Sailor's widow dau. 8 mths
Michael Massingham Middlesex	14th May	57	Drowned	Fisherman	Mary Charwoman dau. 18; son 12
John Easter Cley	3rd Nov	39	Drowned with seven others washed on shore	Fisherman	Mary Ann Dressmaker dau. 11
Samuel Johnson Blakeney	Not found	49		Mariner	Pleasance Fisherman's wid. son 4

Table 3. The 1861 disaster: details of the eight crew members including their occupations in 1851 and the occupation and status of their respective wives at the time of the 1861 census on Sunday 7th April.

for saving the lives of Shipwrecked Mariners met in November 1823 in Norwich they voted to station lifeboats around the coast, including one at Blakeney and to provide a lifesaving mortar at the Hood.²⁴ Palmer's "Plan of Cley and Blakeney in Norfolk, 1835" clearly shows and labels a Lifeboat House next to the flagstaff and presumably this was the building erected by the Association in 1827.

However, despite this local presence, there is very little information on who manned this early lifeboat or indeed what rescues were made, we only know from oral tradition that she was named the *Lewes Heurtwuller*. There are a few brief mentions in the press by a Cley correspondent, which are sometimes quite controversial. Shortage of money meant the Association had to withdraw support from the station at Blakeney sometime before 1849 when Blakeney once again operated a private lifeboat.²⁴

The disaster of 1861

This event was the subject of an earlier article by John Wright in the *Glaven Historian* identi-

fying two of those who lost their lives on the morning of Saturday 9th February 1861, they were a pilot John Johnson, and John Easter.²⁵ Since then, it has been possible to unravel more of the details and identify all eight men.

In brief, Captain Summers, bound from Hartlepool to Torre del Mar, Spain, was caught in a gale and his barque the *Favourite* was driven onto the West Sands. Supposedly the moment his ship was seen, a boat ventured out to rescue the crew, but the sea was running very high and on nearing the bar at the entrance to the harbour, it capsized and all were lost. Three bodies were recovered within the hour, and it was presumed that the other five sank with the boat. A second boat put off from Blakeney and this was successful in rescuing the crew from the stranded barque.²⁶

Candidates for some of the men who drowned were found in the Burial Registers, but an article in the *Norwich Mercury*²⁶ gave the full list as: Michael Massingham, Jacob Graveleng, John Esther, John Neal, Samuel Johnston, William Warnes, John Johnson and Thomas Johnson. Here the spelling of the sur-



Photograph 11. The second RNLB Brightwell (1864-1873) with the coxwain William Hook(e) at the tiller.

names follows the newspaper.

This episode illustrates how tragedy was shared within close-knit families. Samuel Johnson, whose body was presumably never recovered, was the younger brother of John and Thomas Johnson, whilst William Johnson Warnes was a cousin. So all the Blakeney members of the crew were closely related and although the remaining four were not born in the village they were all married to local women.²⁷

Initially the newspapers claimed that the men on the first rescue boat were all fishermen, married and had left large families, a report subsequently modified by the Rector R. H. Tillard when he requested financial aid for the families. He said “..... that most had families – though not large”.²⁵ Indeed there were only 5 children aged 15 or under and even then Ann Neale, John’s daughter, kept an infant school, while the crippled daughter of John Johnson was aged 32 (see Table 3).

The Brightwells

The 1861 disaster resulted in the Royal National Lifeboat Institution reopening a station at Blakeney. This national organisation had been recently reformed and restyled in 1858 and made financially secure. The first *Brightwell*, the gift of Mrs C L Brightwell of Norwich^{24, 28}, was delivered 5th July, 1862 at a cost of £180. She was a Forrestt, self righting vessel, measuring 30ft x 7ft with 6 oars.

The lifeboat was launched on four occasions during 1863 with no lives being saved and a summary of the services is noted in Table 4. Indeed on the second launch there was almost a repeat of the 1861 disaster. The lifeboat went to the rescue of the brig *Faith* that had been driven on the West Sands. George Thompson had towed the lifeboat out with Temple’s tug, the *Gem* when, according to his amazingly detailed obituary, the lifeboat capsized, hurling all the crew into the water. Her coxswain William Hook(e) and one of the crew, John Bond, drifted from the boat to the side of the tug. They were in imminent peril and as they came nearer, George decided to make an effort to save them. Calling two of his crew, he ordered them to lower him over the side by his new guernsey frock, he succeeded in grasping Hook(e) who was hauled aboard the tug after much hard work and although nearly dead Hook(e) survived. Returning to his perilous position, George hauled Bond aboard in the same manner, Bond having managed to keep near the tug. For this, George received a testimonial on vellum from the RNLB. The remainder of the crew managed to make the shore at Stiffkey.¹⁸

The official comment on this disaster reads “Life Boat capsized. Not considered large enough for the locality new one ordered to be sent forthwith. June 1863”. And in due course the second *Brightwell*, also gifted by Mrs Brightwell arrived on station in 1864.²⁸

1863	Site of Wreck	Wind & Weather	Vessel & where from	Nature of service
January	West Sands	NW Strong	Sch <i>Pioneer</i> , London	services declined
May 19th	West Sands	NE by E wind	Brig <i>Faith</i> , Colchester	lifeboat capsized
Nov 9th	Burnham Flat	ENE Fresh	Sch <i>Ann Dering</i> , Ramsgate	“put off “
Dec 17th	Blakeney	NNW Heavy gale	Sch <i>Laurel</i> , Goole	“put off”

Table 4. Record of service for the first RNLB Brightwell.

This lifeboat (Photograph 11) a different Forrestt, self righting vessel was transferred to Blakeney from Fishguard. She was 36ft 4ins x 8ft 1in with 12 oars and cost a little more at £197. Her period of service was from 1864 till 1873 when she was replaced by the *Hettie*. On her very first launch, 4th November, 1864 she saved 6 lives from the French chasseur, *Eleanore* of Nantes.²⁸

Only two coxswains have a headstone in the churchyard, but neither mention this aspect of their lives. The first coxswain of the RNLI lifeboats was William Hook(e), grandson of John Baines and he was succeeded in 1896 by George Long, son-in-law of Samuel Daniel. Then George's son, Herbert Charles Long known to one and all as 'Charlie' succeeded his father in 1920; he was the third and last coxswain of this station but was not buried in Blakeney. The station closed in 1935 and records of rescues and service for RNLI events are commemorated on boards located inside the church.

Drowned off Mogador

Poignant reminders are the four monumental inscriptions marking the drowning of three Blakeney mariners off the coast of Morocco at Mogador, which is known today as Essaouira. This happened on the 13th December, 1864, within four years of the lifeboat disaster and is another reminder that many local mariners worked on larger vessels that sailed much further afield than the coastal waters of the UK or across the Channel to Europe and the Baltic.

The mariners from Blakeney who perished were David Thomas aged 42, Thomas Wisker Bowles aged 21 and Thomas Loads, an apprentice who was just 15 years of age. The vessel at the centre of this misfortune was the *Mignonette*, a brig of 182 tons built at Bristol, nine years earlier in 1855.⁷ On board was the Welsh born Master and part owner, David Thomas with his crew of 8 men. Only the year before, David Thomas had sold 46 shares to the Temples, amongst others, and registered her at Wells, then early in 1864 he sold another 8 shares to Thomas William Temple, leaving himself with just 10.²⁹

The *Mignonette* had been loading and was nearly ready for the return trip, when a hurricane swept up the coast of West Africa past Mogador, racing on further north damaging shipping and was so severe that it warranted a report in the Norwich Mercury on Xmas Eve, 1864. The news of the vessels lost at Mogador came via Lloyd's List, published in the first week of the new year, 7th January, 1865 which reported the following:

"The *Milagroso* a Spanish brig, stranded at noon with two men drowned.

A steamer or large vessel reported on shore. The *Advance* schooner, stranded on the beach much strained

The *Mignonette* brig of Blakeney, which was stranded during the same gale, broke up almost immediately she touched the ground. She had nearly all her return cargo on board; chief mate and one man saved; master and the rest of the crew drowned.

The *Maroc* of Bristaud, stranded close to shore much injured"

The *Mignonette* seems to have fared the worst, as it appears vessels were anchored off the beach and of course were vulnerable during severe gales.

A Board of Trade record provides the closing chapter to their working lives with the bald statement that they were drowned at Mogador on 13th December 1864 and that all effects, (personal belongings) were lost.³⁰ The dates that each man signed on are given and their wages were paid out to the next of kin at Wells on 21st March, 1865. They are listed as follows, with the Blakeney men marked with an asterisk:

Brown, Jno.	25. 9. 1864	£0. 00. 0
Chevley, Jno.	19. 10. 1864	£4. 00. 0
*Thomas, D.	18. 10. 1864	£18. 13. 4
*Load, T. W.	5. 10. 1864	£1. 2. 8
Brown, T. H.	23. 5. 1864	£4. 10. 0
*Bowles, Thos.	18. 10. 1864	£2. 12. 0
Home, R.	21. 10. 1864	£4. 17. 2

For the three families back in Blakeney, there were no bodies to bury, just memorials to erect, memorials which today provide the only tangible clue to this loss abroad. David Thomas had married Mary Ann Starling of Blakeney and had lived in the village for about fifteen years; there are no records of children.

The Bowles family had at least two other sons at sea, possibly three. There was William Bowles, who became Master of the *Palmers*, while his elder sister had married the owner of the ship, William Henry Markby Starling snr. William's son by a previous marriage, W. H. M. Starling jnr, was Mate on the *Palmers*.¹⁷ Then there was Bodham Bowles, who was serving as a boy on the *Phantom* in 1861.²¹

Thomas Loads is commemorated on two separate headstones in the churchyard. Firstly with his father Michael, (not the fisherman in Table 1) who had died earlier in 1861, just one month after the lifeboat disaster, and with his younger brother who died aged 2, in 1862. Then on the headstone of his two nieces, Mary and Rose Smith. For Ann Loads, this loss must have been another cruel blow for at the age of

36 she was left a widow with four young daughters to support having already lost her husband and youngest son. She must have hoped so much for Thomas's prospects as he went to sea, possibly with his uncle George Thompson's recommendation to the Temples.

What the Rector said

An insight into family life and the status of women was given with amazing clarity by R H Tillard, Rector of Blakeney (1858-1906), who obviously had a good working knowledge of his parish. He claimed in 1861 at the time of the lifeboat tragedy that "out of a population of about 1,100 there are between 40 and 50 widows, nearly half of whom owe their bereavement to some casualty connected with the sea".²⁵

On census night just a few weeks later it transpired there were 50 widows listed as head of a house, and one more widow was a companion. Their ages ranged from 25 to 93, with 1 in her 20s, 8 in their 30s, 11 in their 40s, 8 in their 50s, 7 in their 60s, 9 in their 70s, 5 in their 80s and one in her 90s.¹¹ There is no reason to doubt the rector's assertion that half the widows had lost their husbands at sea or because of the sea in some way.²¹

If you add to the widows the number of mariner's and fishermen's wives whose husbands were absent on census night then there were 35 more homes in Blakeney left in charge of women. This makes a total of 85 out of 257 houses in the village, in other words virtually a third of the houses were dependant on a woman being at the helm. Indeed the census for 1861 gives 45 mariners and fishermen at sea which accounts for the 35 husbands and leaves 10 more as sons or lodging mariners. The Rector had said that the population was 1,100 while the census total was 1,106. This total includes 6 men and women visiting but not the 16 absent on business or visits nor the 45 men and 7 women at sea. On this count the Rector was perceptive.

Discussion

Many Blakeney mariners sailing in the early nineteenth century were engaged on small coasting colliers, vessels notoriously undermanned, frequently sailing with worn canvas and pumps working round the clock to keep them buoyant.³¹ These colliers were mostly brigs, two-masted, square rigged sailing vessels that were the workhorse of the day. All the vessels were navigating a coast fraught with myriads of shifting sand banks, while they were at the mercy of North Sea tides and weather and being under sail,

often unable to keep out of one another's way.

The sheer volume of traffic sailing up and down the east coast was graphically illustrated by an event in mid October 1838 when some 2,000 plus vessels took shelter in Yarmouth and Lowestoft roads while gale force winds wreaked havoc with them, many of the vessels losing masts, bowsprits, anchors and cables. It was claimed that a veritable forest of masts stretched some 14 miles and when the seaworthy vessels were finally able to move off later in the week, it took five hours for the ships to clear.²⁴ No wonder a report of a House of Commons Committee on shipwrecks for the period 1812-1836 could claim that 600 British ships were wrecked yearly and most of those on the east coast.³²

In the second half of the 19th century 70% of all vessels involved in the coal trade were lost and one in five of the mariners who sailed in them was drowned at sea.²² Appalling statistics and a high price to pay, but one that cannot be doubted given the evidence in Blakeney churchyard. It could have well been even higher, but for the lifeboats and steam tugs ready to assist and save vessels and mariners in trouble.

In the 42 years between 1813 and 1855, which is covered by a single Burial Register, there are just 5 monumental inscriptions telling of loss at sea. However, excluding the four lost at Cley from the Methodist tragedy, the Burial Register gives details of a further 11 drownings not represented by stones: 2 men from Essex, 4 unnamed men, 3 unsexed corpses washed on shore, a woman from Newcastle and an infant from the *Johan Von Emdem* that was lost off Cley. How many Blakeney mariners suffered such an end far from home? Certainly the Mogador memorials remind us not to forget these mariners.

The headstones are a powerful reminder of the unpredictable nature of the sea along the east coast and they also emphasise the importance of family in a community that was constantly being tested by tragedy. Yet these stones are one of the few tangible pieces of evidence left in the parish that link us to this heritage – a maritime tradition on which Blakeney was built.

Acknowledgements

Recording all the monumental inscriptions in the churchyard of St Nicholas has been achieved with the help of many volunteers mostly engaged in work parties organised and supervised by Mary Ferroussat. Then J. Rogers was in the right place at the right time helping solve the puzzle of Mogadore. Many thanks to all of them.

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Back Pages

Snippets: Poetry Please

A recent History Centre Short Course, led by Peter Wordingham, on the history of parish councils threw up a number of little gems. One concerned a Clerk with a sense of humour who recorded in Volume 3, page 89, of Blakeney Parish Council Minutes a matter raised at the meeting held on 19 March 1956.

The Clerk producing an overdue Parish Council Income Tax demand explained that, being addressed to him personally, the demand for £2 2s 6d had become misplaced with his own Tax paperwork, the final notice had expired and legal action was about to take place.

The Clerk had explained the situation to the Tax Collector requesting he refrained from taking legal action, and added the following footnote:

Don't put the Council in the jug. Mr Tax
Collector
Don't put the Council in the jug,
They're poor but honest men, who'll never
stand again,
If through no fault of thei'r they find,
They're locked up in the pen,
Don't put the Council in the jug. Mr Tax
Collector,
Don't put the Council in the jug,
With tears of bitter shame, I'll shoulder the
blame,
But don't put the Council in the jug.

Swiftly came the reply of the very human Tax
Collector:

Thank you Mr Clerk for your rhyme,
Which incidentally just arrived in time,
The days of grace have passed and action
has begun,
It rather looks as if you and your Council
will be done.

However, as you say, your Council may
resign,
And Blakeney without them may gradually
decline,
And in order that your Hamlet may see me
once again,
I will withhold my action and clear you of
the blame.

Peter Wordingham

Snippets: Worth their Salt?

An anomaly has come to light. The Universal British Directory of 1791 has the following as part of its main entry for Cley: "*Cley-juxta-Mare....is a port, with large salt-works, from whence salt is sent all over the country, and sometimes to Holland and the Baltic...Here is a bath, which is much frequented...*"

Salt works? Bath? Where, pray, were these to be found? There is a roughly square, banked, depression opposite the Old Hall which has traditionally been referred to, even by the Ordnance Survey, as a salt pan though there is as yet no actual historical or archaeological evidence to prove this assertion (though it may well be correct) nor to show when it was last used. It is surely far too small to warrant the description given in the Universal British Directory.

The Customs Port Books that survive cover the whole of the 18th century up to c1780, yet all those that have been studied to date show only imports of salt and not a single export. As they would have been dutiable you can be sure that any exports that had occurred would have been recorded.

Cley gets another mention in the context of Great Yarmouth and its creeks: "*Cley and Blakeney are regarded jointly as part of Yarmouth: Cley is looked upon as the principal place, though Blakeney gives its name to that creek which supplies them both with an harbour... It is thought they export twenty thousand quarters of malt and hard corn and carry at least as much coastwise; they bring in about 6000 chaldron of coals, and the remainder of their trade consists in deals, barks, fir timber, pantiles and iron.*"

Not a word about salt! It has to be said that this second account is the one that bears the greatest similarity with the view from the Custom-House. How could such an important feature as a Bath, not to mention salt-works large enough to generate a significant surplus for export, escape the notice of historians? So where did the UBD get its information?

Earlier records show that salt was indeed exported from Cley – in the fourteenth century. By the sixteenth century, salt was one of the main imports, the situation that continued until the demise of the port.

Interestingly, Peter Brooks' pamphlet on Cley (Poppyland: 1998) states "in 1794 Defoe is recorded as describing 'large salt works in Cley which produces very good salt...which is sold all over the country and sometimes to Holland and the Baltick.'" Defoe died in 1731.

Richard Kelham

Feedback: The Origins of Taylor's Wood

This piece of woodland lying on the edge of Salthouse Heath, bounded by the roads from Swan Lodge to Salthouse and from Cley Hangs to Kelling (by way of Lowes Farm), backs onto the old farm buildings at Swan Lodge. Some of it is of considerable age, but how old is the name?

The commonly accepted origin of the name is that it is a corruption of the Norman-French word *taillez* (modern French *tailles*) meaning coppice. The wood was indeed regularly coppiced up until about World War 1, and again recently as part of the restoration by the current owners, though much of the wood had been felled in the 17th century and the land had reverted to the heathland it had surely been in early post-glacial times.

According to Monica White (*Glaven Historian* No 1, 1998) the Enclosure Award of 1824 allotted the common land on which the wood now stands to a local landowner who enclosed it and replanted chestnuts and oaks. The assumption is that the old name was revived, but did this sort of thing ever happen? Faden's map of 1797 not surprisingly shows this area as part of Cley Common, and no earlier usage of the name is yet known.

It is a truism to state that many place names derive from local landowners: Newgate Farm (and indeed the whole area around it) from Christopher Newgate, though the area was originally known as Suggate – South Street. Likewise Long Stone Lane was for many years colloquially known as Stangroom's Loke after the family who used to own the shop (latterly the 'Crabpot') on the corner, so could it be that Taylor's Wood was another instance?

Comments on the previous page about the Great Universal Directory of 1791 notwithstanding, by the late nineteenth century the commercial directories produced by Kelly and White were a reliable guide to who owned what in the country. Thus a quick glance at White's Directory of Norfolk for 1879 (a copy of which is in the History Centre, Blakeney) gives the names of all the tradesmen and farmers in Cley parish. Remember that the wood backs onto the farm buildings at Swan Lodge. And who is the farmer at Swan Lodge? Would Edward Taylor please stand up.

Unless, or until, someone comes up with a definitive reference to the use of the name Taylor's wood prior to enclosure – which in effect means prior to the felling in the 17th century – then I suggest that Edward Taylor be accepted as the eponymous creator.

Richard Kelham

And Finally... The measurement of Ships

The way that merchant ships have been measured in an attempt to estimate their "tunnage" or 'burthen' has varied over the years – from counting (or guessing) the number of barrels (tuns) that could be crammed under the deck to more scientific volumetric measurements.

The first such attempt was explained to the gentlemen of the Cley Custom House in an undated letter [PRO reference CUST96/152] of c 1720 from Head Office in the following terms:

'length from the....of the main post to the outer part of the stern, and the breadth from outside to outside then take of 3/5ths of the breadth from the length for the rake before and that giving the main length of the keel..., multiply the breadth by the length and the half breadth for the depth and the product of that divide by 94 to give tonnage.

eg 72' long, 20' wide. Take off 3/5th breadth gives length $\frac{60' \times 20' \times 10'}{94} = 127^{62}/_{94}$ tons

Is that clear now?

Richard Kelham

From the Norwich Chronicle

5 January 1770:

"The hull of a brig of about 140 tons burthen came ashore near Salthouse without a living creature on board, except a hog and that was drowned when the vessel went to pieces, which happened soon after she came on shore. She had been abroad two years, and appears to belong to Scotland, a pocket book being found, which gives an account that the master's name was Daes, and in this pocket book were three bills that amount to nearly £1000, one of which was drawn at Cadiz in Spain in July 1769, and another at Leghorn in July 1769 both payable six weeks after date. It is conjectured that the crew of this vessel quitted her at sea; that she had delivered her last lading in France, and that there were some passengers on board, as a great quantity of cloaths, both mens, womens and childrens, are found."

Also from the 5 Jan 1770 edition:

"Came on shore near Saltfleet in Lincolnshire the John & Sally of Cley, Thomas Taylor, master, from Sunderland to Lynn with coals. The master and crew were all lost, but 'twas thought the vessel would be got off again."



The archaeological investigation of Blakeney Eye continued in 2004 with a study of a large area, 40 metres square, at the west end of the site. There were a number of finds, but the most spectacular was the skeleton of a horse. The hind quarters were missing, but it was buried with the fore legs in a retracted position and it was thought there were signs of butchering. Unfortunately there was no obvious means of dating the find. (Photograph by John Peake)

Contributors

Chris Birks is a professional archaeologist with the Norfolk Archaeology Unit and also has experience in the Netherlands.

David Gurney is principal Landscape Archaeologist in Norfolk Landscape Archaeology, based at Gressenhall.

Janet Harcourt lives in Wiveton and is a very active member of the local community. Her family have a long association with amateur dramatics in the area.

Frank Hawes is a retired architect who has been in Cley for the last twenty years.

Jonathan Hooton teaches geography and environmental science at Notre Dame School, Norwich. He is probably better known here as the author of *The Glaven Ports*.

Richard Jefferson, former cricketer and teacher, is an avid collector of things historical, especially those relating to the Glaven Valley.

Brent Johnson lived in Blakeney for many years and has an abiding passion for the history of wildfowling and associated memorabilia.

John Peake, biologist, formerly worked in the Natural History Museum, London, and recently retired; has many early links with north Norfolk.

Pamela Peake, author, lecturer and recently retired adult education tutor; has a long-time fascination for social history.