



BAHS Newsletter

Number 11

August 2001

Our Local History Information Centre

Tremendous progress has been made on two quite different fronts since January, when you first heard about our quest for an Archive-cum-Reading Room. Firstly we have been seeking funding for a permanent, custom-built centre that will be part of the Blakeney Village Hall community complex, and news of our success in this venture is reported elsewhere in the Newsletter.

Meanwhile, a second venture has resulted in a temporary home for our collections that is now up and running in the Portakabin that was formerly the Parish Council office. Indeed, by the time you read this note, we will have been open to the public since early July. The various collections of documents, books, files and artefacts that have hitherto been held on several different sites, have at last come together. They continue to be sorted and catalogued, thus identifying gaps that need to be filled in order for the Society to have a really effective Local History Information Centre for the neighbouring community. Notice the new words that are creeping in to describe the Reading Room: they are the sort favoured by

grant awarding bodies!

Local History is a wide-ranging subject: nothing less than the story of the people and families who have lived and worked here and shaped our landscape. Almost everyone will know something of interest, or may have documents that throw some light on the past. But most of all, you may want answers to questions that interest you and this may decide the nature of research the Society carries out – and the the kind of local history that is written about our locality.

This is your opportunity to have a say. Visit your Reading Room and see how we can support each other. A warm welcome awaits you.

PP

**Reading Room, The Portakabin, Village Hall
Car Park, Langham Road, Blakeney.**

Opening Times:

First and last Tuesday in the month, 10am - 12noon

Other times by appointment (01263) 741063

**Weekend Workshop:
Reading and Understanding Old
Documents**
with Paul Rutledge

10th - 11th November 2001
Methodist Chapel, High Street, Blakeney
9.45am - 4.15pm
Cost about £23

**One-Day School:
A Palaeography Surgery**
with Elizabeth Rutledge

Sunday 11th November 2001
Methodist Chapel, High Street, Blakeney
9.45am - 4.15pm Cost £15

Limited space available on these courses – prior booking essential. To reserve a place send SAE to
BAHS, Crows Nest, Back Lane, Blakeney, NR25 7NP

Reports of Recent BAHS Meetings

Norfolk Wildlife Trust and BAHS

Tom Williamson

On June 23rd those of us who forsook the pleasures of a beautiful summer's evening for a lecture in Blakeney Village Hall were amply rewarded by a most stimulating and entertaining talk on "Changing Nature: Farming in Norfolk 1700-1900" by Tom Williamson from the Centre for East Anglian Studies.

The occasion was a new venture, a joint meeting of the North Norfolk branch of the Norfolk Wildlife Trust and the BAHS, and this blend of interests was reflected throughout the evening. Tom demonstrated the dynamic nature of our landscape and how changes in farming practices over centuries have influenced both people and wildlife. Linking, for example, the maintenance of nutrient poor heaths to the practice of moving grazing flocks of sheep every night away from the heaths to the surrounding fields so that their dung could fertilise the arable land.

Both societies will continue with these dual themes of change and landscape: the Trust with a celebratory lecture by Lord Buxton in Holt this Autumn, and the Historical Society with a UEA course on "Rural Buildings in the Landscape". Further details of this course are to be found opposite.

JP

Old Photographs of North Norfolk

Philip West

On the 27th February 36 members, and as many guests, squeezed into the Chapel to see slides which Philip West had produced from old photographs. His itinerary started at home in Hindringham and went via Thursford station and Barney brickworks to Fulmodeston, Stibbard and then into Fakenham. Here we saw how shops used to look and how much information can be obtained by zooming in to adverts, notices and other details. Market stalls, huge woolsacks, delivery vehicles, assorted carts and prams all made their appearance, as well as gypsy caravans at Hempton sheep fair.

Philip's commentary on each slide pointed

out not only those features no longer to be seen but also the names of many people captured on film. It has nearly always been difficult to identify the occasion and the individuals – do we still need reminding how important it is to annotate photos when they are taken?

The railways featured prominently in Philip's show, as they did in life. Long-gone stations reappeared, with some of the trains that used them.

And so to Wells, with Taffy the tug alongside the quay before the building of the big granary in c1905/6, and then the station, Venice-like in 1953. On to the Walsinghams, including Cornish's iron foundry (in operation from c1809 to 1995), past Binham green and Field Dalling post office to Saxlingham, where a cart disappearing down a hole was one of several slides showing damage caused by the extensive storm flooding of 1912.

After coffee we arrived in Blakeney with some of the regular ships at the dilapidated quayside: "Sir John Colomb" and "Bluejacket" were there, so too the "Yankee" whose remains still lie on Yankee ridge. More recent photographs showed the early years of the Blakeney Hotel, the fair, Hudson's aerial beach hut on the Cut, the 1953 floods, ice in the channel, and a sign to the golf links – where play had to stop when the course was mined early in the last war. The locals were represented: Jacob Holliday, shoemaker and stalwart Methodist, and Joshua Parker, who produced so many fine photographs, Kitty Palmer in scarecrow pose, mardlers on Quay Corner, and many others – including one or two in the audience.

Then to Cley with street scenes and the ubiquitous mill. Again there were photographs of people well known to at least one local resident. At Holt we saw the old water tower which stood on Shirehall Plain until the 1950s, and a ceremony at the war memorial, before moving back to 1880s Melton Constable when the station was being built. Philip concluded with a sunset, and a plea for old photographs that he could copy, and for more information about those he already had.

JW

Autumn/Winter Programme 2001-2

Membership numbers are up and our monthly meetings are now regularly attracting more and more visitors. With this 'feel good factor' in mind, the Committee has decided that the time is right to increase the number of meetings and extend our programme past March and into the summer.

The membership subscription remains unchanged, but from and including October, there will be a modest charge of £1 for members attending the meetings whilst all non-members, that is guests and visitors alike, will be charged £2. There will be no additional charge for Refreshments. In this way we will be able to finance speakers from further afield and meet their travel expenses.

Lectures

All meetings are held on Tuesdays in the Methodist Chapel, High Street, Blakeney, and start at 7.30pm.

Sept 18th AGM followed by
"The Shame and Degradation of
Local Victorian Poverty"
by Howard Fears

Oct 30th "Holt before the Fire"
by Michael Barrett

Nov 27th "Norfolk County Maps"
by Richard Jefferson

The chapel will open at 6.30pm so that Maps may be viewed before the meeting. Richard has also very generously offered to talk to members about their own County maps.

Jan 29th Recollections from around the Glaven, a series of short talks by local residents that range from wildfowling to ducks, Manor Farm to Hotel, a hundred years of butchers, and so on.

Feb 26th "History of the RNLI and tales of the North Norfolk lifeboats"
by Michael Softley

Details of the Spring/Summer Lectures will be announced in the next Newsletter. Advance warning of two other summer activities: there will be an outing in May to Baconsthorpe when there will be a guided tour of the Heydon homelands, and an Exhibition in June during the Queen's Golden Jubilee Weekend. Watch this space!

The UEA Course

This year's 10 week UEA accredited Extra-Mural course is moving from the usual autumn slot to become a winter/spring course. It continues the Rural Landscape theme that Tom Williamson started at our Summer Lecture, and will centre on Rural Buildings in the Landscape, with Dr Susanna Wade Martins as the tutor.

The start date: **Monday 14th January 2002** and the time 2pm in the Methodist Chapel. Make a note in your diary. Better still, book a place with the Secretary for the UEA course. Contact number 01263 741063.

Workshops

In addition to the above activities we are beginning a series of Workshops on different aspects of local history which will enable members to make full use of the material in the Reading Room for their research. The first of these Workshops is for beginners who wish to read and understand old documents, even if only their Parish Registers, and then transcribe the various styles of handwriting and shorthand that have been in use since the 16th century.

Running alongside this course is a surgery for students who already have a knowledge of Palaeography but would like help with specific problems of transcription. **See the item on page 1 for details of date, time, location, and expected cost.**

All in all a busy year ahead with plenty of variety for everyone. Looking forward to seeing you there.

PP

Web-site News

Well okay, so a dedicated BAHS web-site is some way off, but we do at least have a page on the Glaven Valley web-site run by Steve Wiles giving basic details of the Society. Point your browser at www.glavenvalley.co.uk and have a look. We will be posting all our lecture details on the Glaven Valley site's Notice Board in the hope of boosting still further the number of visitors and non-members.

Who knows, maybe one day the electronic version of the Newsletter will totally supersede the printed version. Think what that will do for the paper industry. Think what that will do for future generations of historians!

Proposed Changes to the Constitution

The Committee will be recommending to the AGM on 18th September that the Society alter the categories of membership to be offered. The proposal is to create a new category of "Family Membership" where two or more members of the same family wish to join the BAHS. Every designated family member would be entitled to the £1 rate for lectures, but the family would only get one copy of the Glaven Historian between them. It is hoped that, if accepted by the AGM, the new category can be back-dated to the beginning of the membership year.

The Subscription rates would then be: £12 Family; £8 Individual; £3 Junior. Full details in the AGM papers enclosed with this mailing. **Remember** – only fully paid up members can vote at the AGM.

Membership Renewal Slip

Name:

Address:

Please send with remittance to the Treasurer:
Anne Maw, 2 Wiveton Road, Blakeney.

Your Starter for Ten (thousand)

Thanks to much diligent work by Peter Wordingham, we have received a grant from the North Norfolk District Council for £10,000 towards the cost of providing a Reading Room for the Society and for the wider community. This has really put the project on "Go", though we still need to raise a lot more money to see it through to completion. The quotation for the building work is being re-evaluated to take account of a few changes to the specification, but, barring unforeseen problems, work should be able to start towards the end of the year, to be finished hopefully by Easter 2002.

Further grant applications are being prepared to help cover the cost of internal fittings and equipment. These application forms will be processed after the AGM.

We have to remember [Ed throws bucket of cold water over euphoric members] that we are junior partners in this Village Hall extension, and that much depends on the Players being able to complete their part of the programme on time.

Stop Press!

Just a reminder that the Norwich Castle and Gressenhall Museums are now once more open to the public after extensive refurbishment – well worth a fresh look.

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Membership category:

Individual	£8
Junior	£3

(delete as appropriate)

I would be interested in taking out Family membership (at £12) if approved by the AGM
Yes/No