



BAHS Newsletter

Number 13

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Glories of the Glaven

The Society celebrated the Queen's Golden Jubilee weekend in early June with a very successful exhibition that was attended by some 600 people. The theme for the Exhibition was centred on the villages of the Glaven River catchment area and display boards featuring a wide variety of topics were presented by fourteen members and two guest exhibitors.

Photographs from English Heritage's Images of England highlighted many architectural gems of the area from Hunworth to Blakeney and these contrasted well with a display of picture postcards of the lower Glaven villages from a century past together with photographs of the first aerial survey of Blakeney Point.

Further displays featured Baconsthorpe Castle and the Heydons, an analysis of handwriting styles with examples taken from documents relevant to our local history, family histories, Monumental Inscriptions, metal detecting in Wiveton, the development of property in Blakeney with special relevance to Greencroft, Morston Road and the High Street, and then Sea Charts used by Master Mariners to navigate these shores.

For Cley there was the church spire, the last four parsonages and the course of the Glaven. A display of costume by the Blakeney Wardrobe Society, census records for the surrounding villages, scrapbooks as well as a competition and highlights of various outdoor activities undertaken by the Society during the past year completed the exhibition, while for the more energetic, there were guided tours that took in aspects of an older Blakeney.

So there was something to interest and occupy everybody, from young to old, residents to visitors and if that was not sufficient or you needed sustenance then the Girl Guides and Chapel members were providing light refreshments. All proceeds from donations are going to help furnish the new History Centre.

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Glaven Valley Online

Don't forget that the BAHS has its very own page on the Glaven Valley website run by Steve Wiles as an extension of the Glaven Valley Newsletter. Point your browsers at: <http://www.glavenvalley.co.uk> and then navigate from there (if you can).



Basil Dickinson and Mick Adcock join our own Pam Peake at the "Glories of the Glaven" summer exhibition

History Centre Opening!

The structure is completed, decorated, carpetted, chaired, and very soon will be desked. There are a few details to be worked out – not least our exact relationship with the Village Hall and its Trustees – but we hope to have all the material transferred from the Portacabin by the time of the AGM. There will then be a Grand Opening.

When the Blakeney History Group started up twelve or so years ago we never dreamed that this would, could, ever happen; the income from sales of Jonathan Hooton's book, and the UEA courses, plus an awful lot of work, particularly by Peter Wordingham and John Peake in chasing grants, have made it a reality. Inevitably the responsibility of running the History Centre will have an impact on the Society, starting with a few necessary changes to the Constitution as laid out in the AGM Agenda and Management Committee Report included with this Newsletter.

We believe the History Centre will be an invaluable resource for the whole community as well as for the BAHS membership.

Reports of Recent BAHS Meetings

A History of the RNLI and tales of the north Norfolk Lifeboats

Michael Softley

In February Michael Softley talked to the Society about lifeboats. Early lifeboats were often launched with the help of horses hired from nearby farms. Hunstanton replaced horses with a tractor in 1921 and Brancaster followed in 1922. Tractors became essential when motor lifeboats arrived because of the extra weight, and the need for easy handling ashore limits lifeboats to 13 tons. Even so a boat can cost up to £1.8 million and about £1 million is needed each year (from voluntary sources) to run the present service.

The first lifeboat at Blakeney was provided by the Norfolk Association for Saving the Lives of Shipwrecked Mariners (formed in 1823). It was in service from c1825 to the 1840s, but little is known about it. In 1858 the Association transferred its assets to the RNLI whose first boat at Blakeney was the Brightwell (1862). This was launched four times but with only six oars was clearly too small; in 1863 it was replaced by a twelve-oared boat, also called the Brightwell, with a crew of 15 men: cox, 2nd cox, bowman and 12 rowers.

After the Hettie (1873-91) came the Zacchaeus Burroughes (1891-1908), unusual in that it was clinker-built. The last Blakeney boat was the Caroline (1908-35), notable for a service in 1918 when 30 people were saved by a crew with an average age of 55. The boat was first kept in the Lifeboat House at the end of Blakeney Point but because sand kept blocking the doors it was later moored in the Pit. The Blakeney and Brancaster stations were both closed in 1935 with the arrival (in 1936) of a motor lifeboat at Wells.

In thanking the speaker, John Peake emphasised the courage and strength of those who crewed the old lifeboats.

JW

Wigs & Waistcoats

Mary Alexander

In March, Mrs Alexander gave a small but select audience a detailed and fascinating introduction to the changes in male and female fashions through the 18th century. Using as her source various Tailors' Advertisements from the Norfolk Chronicle and the work of the painters of the period like Hogarth, Gainsborough and Reynolds, not to mention the diaries of Nancy Woodforde, she showed how as the century wore on clothes became more practical (if you ignore the fad for giant plumes), and more hygienic as powdered perukes gave way to real hair.

She also warned us of the pitfalls – such as the fondness of some gentry to be painted in historic garb.

Unfortunately space does not allow me to do full justice to her excellent talk (I have 5 pages of notes for anyone wanting more).

RK

Climate Change and Biodiversity

Prof Andrew Watkinson

On 20 April a joint meeting of the Society and the NWT in Blakeney Village Hall heard Professor Watkinson give an excellent account of current climatic trends and their impact on the natural world. His presentation included some clear graphs of long-term climatic changes from the ending of the last Ice Age through the warm medieval period to the 'little Ice Age' of the 1600s, since when warming has continued and accelerated. Winter cold spells are now relatively rare and summer hot spells more frequent... (oh yes they are!). Autumn temperatures have changed little but spring is becoming warmer. It now rains more in winter and slightly less in summer, although the annual average has not changed greatly. Changes in sea level are difficult to measure but there seems to have been a rise of c200mm in the last 150 years.

The scientific community mostly agrees that global warming is taking place, although the speaker did not attempt to explain the reasons why. His interest, as an ecologist, was looking at the effect that climatic change was having on plants and animals. He assured his audience that spring is starting earlier if measured in leafing dates and bird migration. Some bird species (Cetti's Warbler for one) seem to be moving north into East Anglia. However, much evidence is still tentative and not well understood, and he agreed that some changes appeared to be counter to climatic trends.

Climatologists had developed a model to aid predictions but some of the preliminary assumptions, such as the future production of 'greenhouse' gases, cannot yet be made with confidence. The result is that a wide range of possibilities still exists – temperatures might increase by anywhere between 2 and 5 degrees over the next century or so. Sea levels will continue to rise, perhaps by 600mm over the next hundred years. More storminess is likely. Climatic 'surprises', such as a change in the course of the Gulf Stream, are unlikely but cannot be ruled out.

He explained that while the Climatic Research Unit at UEA was studying climatic trends, the Tyndall Centre (also at the UEA) was looking at the wide range of actions which could be taken in response to current forecasts. Socio-economic decisions could have more impact than climatic trends themselves – on biodiversity as well as human ecology. 'Managed realignment' of the shore line in north Norfolk, for instance, might lead to more saltmarsh loss than would sea level rise alone. It was already clear that habitats and the mix of species within them will change – maintaining the status quo is not an option for nature reserve managers in southern England where perhaps one third of all plant species will decline.

After thanking the speaker, John Peake received an optimistic answer when he asked if long-term decisions really could be made by agencies with short-term horizons.

JW

Wanted: New Editor!

After five years the present Editor of the Glaven Historian would like a rest from his labours and so the Society is looking for a successor. If any Member has editorial experience and access to a computer perhaps they would like to offer their services. But just in case there really is a gap in the talents of the membership the following notes explain what the job involves.

Five headings are enough to outline what needs to be done. Firstly there needs to be a VISION of what the Journal should look like and what it should contain. The present Journal has a very conventional format which could no doubt be improved by anyone artistically inclined. For content, the main aim has been to present the results of members' activities by means of a clearly written text supported by references. Other items could be included – but folklore masquerading as history would not be popular with the Committee. Change is not obligatory!

Secondly, the Editor needs to have more specific ADVICE for those thinking of writing an article/about to have their arm twisted. The subject matter can be very wide in topic and date but it should have a clear relevance to the Glaven area or to the work of the Society. Length can (and should) vary, and photographs and other illustrations (neatly done) always make a text more interesting.

Next comes the first stage of EDITING. Deadlines are always a problem and the prudent Editor may wish to set different ones for different authors, depending on the amount of editing anticipated! A single deadline late in the annual cycle tends to result in a pile-up just as the Editor is going on holiday/moving house/about to be ill. Editing at this stage covers interaction with the author; sometimes just a few words might need changing, in other cases the Editor might wish to suggest amendments to the structure of the article or perhaps there are inconsistencies to resolve, or additional sources which might be used. The aim should be to help the author present the arguments and information as effectively as possible.

Then comes the PRODUCTION of the complete Journal – that part of the editing process done without the authors. If there is to be consistency in the Journal then a 'house style' is needed with rules for the use of typefaces, capitals, punctuation, format of references, paragraph style etc. Then the preliminary pages (cover, contents, editorial) need to be added after arranging the articles in the most appropriate order. The conclusion of this process is the proof reading, preferably by two people, and it does need time and concentration to eliminate all errors.

Finally liaison with the PRINTERS. So far we have used the same printer, but perhaps some competitive estimates are now needed. What the printer needs will determine the end product. Hitherto we have presented pasted up 'artwork' but a more computer literate Editor might not want to continue with this antiquated procedure. Does that help? If not, have a word with the present Editor.

JW

Stop Press

The Summer Lecture: Norfolk Villages

by Chris Barringer

On 20th July Blakeney Village Hall was full for the talk by Chris Barringer, former Director of Extra-Mural Studies at UEA and long-time student of Norfolk history. How to describe the villages of Norfolk and explain their development over the past thousand years in just one lecture? The speaker's solution, in essence, was to see their similarities and differences deriving from a series of 'interlocking themes'. First came a tour round the county, with slides of villages in their 'natural habitats', for each part of the county has its own characteristics, derived largely from its geology, which provide the stage for human activity. This can readily be seen in the 'choice' of building materials: though flint predominates in much of the county there is also carstone and chalk in the northwest, timber in the more wooded claylands of the south, brick in the fenlands. The natural landscape also helps to mould the local economy. Some soils are richer than others and could support a greater population.

Yet such factors do not determine the fate of villages for much also depends on innumerable influences from outside: the impact of new people, powerful landlords, inventions and new ideas all help to distinguish one village from another. Chris showed slides to represent some of these extraneous factors. After the Romans and their roads came the Anglo-Saxons who gave us the present distribution of settlements (and many of their names) and also the first churches. It is these buildings which tend to mirror local economic fortunes – many were rebuilt, some remain almost untouched, and others became the ruined churches so typical of parts of Norfolk. Villages did not exist in self-sufficient isolation; each contributed to various trading networks – agriculture, fishing, textiles – which had their own particular patterns of production and marketing, and such activities have left their mark on many villages. And on to modern times, with the railways bringing much change. Village development continues today, heavily influenced by location so that some commuter villages are bigger than the old market towns. 'Greenfield sites' notwithstanding, we continue to build on the past, hence turkey production 'determined' by the location of wartime airfields...

This brief summary cannot convey the wealth of detail and comment which enlivened the talk, nor of course the many illustrations. In thanking the speaker, Richard Kelham reminded the meeting that it was Chris Barringer's three courses at Blakeney which had been instrumental in setting up the original Blakeney History Group.

JW

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Autumn/Winter Programme 2002-3

The membership subscription remains unchanged, but 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 (unless otherwise stated) are held on Tuesdays in the Methodist Chapel, High Street, Blakeney, and start at 7.30pm.

- Sept 17th** AGM (see separate insert for details) followed by "A Race to the Coast – Local Railway History" by Adrian Vaughan
- Oct 29th** "The Wider Community of Stiffkey 1550 to 1650" by Professor Hassell Smith of UEA
- Nov 26th** "A Cley Miscellany" by Richard Kelham, John Wright, Richard Jefferson, and John Peake
- Jan 28th** "The Heydons of Baconsthorpe and Saxlingham" by David Yaxley
- Feb 25th** "Venerable Trees of North Norfolk" by John White
- Saturday Feb (date to be announced)**
Field Walking with Eric Hotblack
- Saturday March 15th**
Field Trip: Ringstead Farm Buildings with Susannah Wade Martins

Subscriptions

Have you renewed your subscription yet? The membership year begins on the 1st July and only fully paid-up members are eligible to vote at the Annual General Meeting. What's more, if you don't renew, this is the last Newsletter you will receive – now there's an incentive for you!

Subscription rates for this year year are unchanged:

Family	£12
Individual	£ 8

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

The UEA Course

The Norman Conquest – the Cultural Impact
by Margaret Forrester starting on Monday 23rd September, 2 - 4pm, in the Methodist Chapel. Cost £65 (10 weeks).

Was England in 1066 a cultural backwater or a treasure house about to be plundered? Did joining Europe encourage the arts to flourish? We look at the arguments and the evidence drawing examples from a broad spectrum of sources such as architecture (including archaeological remains), manuscripts, metal work, sculpture and the Bayeux Tapestry. There will be examples drawn from Norfolk and East Anglia and these will be set in a wider geographical arena.

For further details and enrolment, contact the Secretary on 01263 741063.

"Blakeney in the 18th Century"

Out of print since the early 1990s, a new edition of this very popular booklet was printed this year in time for our Summer Exhibition with the aid of a generous loan from the Parish Council. It contains a series of articles written by some of the first members of the Society when it was known as the Blakeney History Group.

These articles cover a range of topics from population to the Blakeney Manors with extracts from the Manor Court Book, a section of the Calthorpe family tree, the inventory of Arthur Browne, Gentleman, and the farming accounts of the Rector 1731-1746. Then there is a glimpse from the Port Books of the coal trade and how the measure of a chalders could be reckoned, followed by an account of roads both public and private that were described in the Inclosure Award of 1824. Illustrations include an extract of Faden's Map of 1797.

Blakeney in the 18th Century is available at £2 from the History Centre, at the monthly meetings, or from the Secretary.

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Blakeney Area Historical Society will be held on Tuesday 17th September 2002 at the Methodist Chapel, High Street, Blakeney, starting at 7.30pm. The formal business will be followed by a talk by Adrian Vaughan, well-known railway historian and author.

Following the precedent set at the last AGM there will be *no charge to members* for this evening, though visitors and guests will still have to pay the usual £2. Of course any donations will be gratefully received.

Agenda and Reports should be enclosed with this Newsletter, along with a Committee nomination form.