



BAHS Newsletter

Number 19

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The last sight of the “Blakeney Chapel” dig (the inverted commas are there because there is some doubt it ever was a chapel and anyway the site is in fact in Cley parish, not Blakeney, as any Cley resident will tell you, at great length) before it was all buried once more. What the photograph doesn't show is all the interesting stuff that was removed during the course of the excavation, so come to the 25th October lecture to hear all about it! (photograph by John Peake)

New UEA Course

The society has arranged the following course with the UEA for Autumn 2005 preliminary details are as follows:

Maps and Map Makers from Ptolemy to GPS.

Tutor: Matthew Champion

The aim of this course is not simply to study individual maps as items of material culture, pretty images of the past, but to look at some of the more fundamental questions associated with their production. Who created them? Why were they made? How were they constructed? Perhaps most importantly, what effect did their production have

upon the world which they sought to record – and what can we learn of this world from these surviving maps? Drawing upon a vast wealth of local material this course aims to bring to life the hidden history of English map making. This 10 week unit will contribute towards completion of a generic Certificate in Continuing Education.

The venue for the course will be: The Scout Hut, Blakeney Village Hall, Langham Road, Blakeney on Wednesday mornings 10-12 am, starting Wed 5th Oct 2005 for 10 weeks.

More information from:

Monica White (telephone 01263 740594)

Please indicate your interest directly to Monica, course fees will be in the region of £75

The Pastons -

A Great Norfolk Family

Report on a lecture by Peter Bradbury
(29 iii 05)

Instead of a chronological approach to a family's history Peter Bradbury took his audience on an illustrated tour of medieval churches with Paston connections – Paston itself, Mautby, Oxnead, North Walsham, Barningham, Tittleshall, Blofield and the ruined church at Appleton. There were also diversions to the (demolished) family seat, Oxnead Hall, and to Caister Castle.

Under the altar at Paston Church there is John Paston's tomb. He died in London in 1466 and was probably buried at Broomholm Priory, with his tomb being removed to Paston at the dissolution of the monasteries. His funeral was a notable one after being brought, on foot, from London to St Peter's in Norwich. This journey took six days and then there was the final lap to Broomholm, where the monks had been prepared by having special haircuts.

Apart from slides of the churches themselves Peter Bradbury showed many of the splendid monuments to members of the Paston family - some carried out by Nicholas Stone, Court sculptor to Charles II and James II. These can be seen at Oxnead and Paston. At North Walsham Church there is a monument which Sir William Paston (died 1610) designed and then had built for himself. He it was who founded Paston Grammar School (now a Sixth Form College) in North Walsham in 1606. We also viewed three Paston tombs at Blofield Church which had eluded Nikolaus Pevsner in his series on The Buildings of England, tombs which until relatively recently had been hidden under choir stalls.

Between the fascinating slides we learned of the disputed inheritance of Caister Castle and other properties from Sir John Fastolf in the fifteenth century, the bolstering of the family fortunes by Clement Paston, an admiral who served four monarchs commencing with Henry VIII, and successive prudent marriages. Sir Clement was responsible for the rebuilding of Oxnead Hall and he and his wife, Ann, have a tomb in Oxnead Church. The decline in fortune came with the Civil War. Sir William Paston was a staunch royalist and, following pressure to join the local militia, fled to Rotterdam. The Paston estates were sequestered but in due course he was allowed to return and buy back his former property. He turned away from politics and, despite straitened circumstances, built up a fine art collection. He borrowed money to do so and sold Caister Castle. At his death in 1662 his son, Robert, (who eventually became the first Earl of Yarmouth) continued living beyond the family's means. He was a close friend of Charles II and married one of Charles' natural daughters. He extended Oxnead Hall to accommodate the King's planned visit in 1671 and, on his death in 1693, left considerable debts to his son. The second Earl died in 1723 and the title died with him. He had outlived his sons and the male line in a junior branch of the family (descended from the six-

teenth century Sir Clement) had also died out. The end of a famous family - and of an informative and enjoyable evening.

Derek Schofield

BAHS Visit to Kelling Heath

On April 7th a party of 14, assailed by a cold south-westerly, strode up to Salthouse Heath to see some of the many barrows to be found there. Our leader was Trevor Ashwin, formerly a full-time archaeologist whose experience includes barrow excavation. Though many barrows from the Late Neolithic and the Bronze Age are known in Norfolk, most have been ploughed out in recent times – the best survive mostly on heathland. The largest ones on Salthouse Heath (delighting in the names of Gallow Hill, Three Ha'penny Hill and Three Farthing Hill) are well worth seeing, especially in winter before vegetation growth masks their outline. The mounds still stand some 6 feet high when seen from their surrounding shallow ditches, and are some 25 yards across. When first built, perhaps 4,000 years ago, these barrows would have been higher and steeper, standing well above ditches 5 or 6 feet deep. There would have been several phases of building before their final form, starting perhaps with a smaller mound over a single burial. Ultimately there may have been 20 or more burials under the mound or dug into its sides. Some barrows continued to have a community role into more recent times, as meeting places or for executions, and may still mark parish boundaries.

One bracken-covered barrow looks much like another, but Trevor kept us interested with what he did – and didn't – know about the prehistoric people who built them. Many uncertainties surround these monuments: none of the barrows in this part of Norfolk has been excavated by modern methods – though clearly people have dug into them to see what they could find. Excavations under 'research' conditions (rather than 'Time Team' rules) might provide some answers, or at least more evidence, but Trevor Ashwin's view is that this is unlikely to happen, if only through lack of funds.

In barrows elsewhere the soils beneath have sometimes provided evidence of the natural surroundings and agricultural practice at the time the barrows were built. Sometimes this shows that there has been deterioration in the soil quality round about, perhaps through over-grazing. Barrow builders seem not to have lived in permanent villages, so it is not clear whether these monuments were built on land already marginal, both territorially and agriculturally, or whether they had a central role in the life of the community. It does seem likely, though, that they commemorate important individuals – a different practice from the communal burials in the preceding 'long barrows' of the Early Neolithic period.



Gumboots much in evidence for Eric Hotblack's fieldwalking day at Field Dalling

Having braved the elements at the beginning, the party was soon rewarded with shelter among the trees, then sun and a following wind back to the cars at Kelling church, all of us, no doubt, with some thoughts about what we had seen and heard. Questions put to the Leader, for example, had included the origin of the word 'barrow' (replacing the 'tumulus' seen on OS maps); it seemed an innocuous question but Trevor had preferred not to speculate. Reference to books by Margaret Gelling, acknowledged place-name expert, shows her belief that a trio of pre-Norman words all meaning 'hill' have produced the modern 'barrow', 'lowe' and 'howe'. They are often, but not necessarily, associated with barrows, so that one should not be surprised to find barrows at Holt Lowes, or on Howe Hill, Blakeney.

John Wright

Moats & Earthworks Field Dalling

On a mercifully dry and not too chilly February Saturday morning about a dozen members assembled at Manor Farm, Field Dalling. Eric Hotblack gave us each a copy of an 1868 map of the farm and then led us up the Binham Road pointing out remnants of earlier village life such as the former shops of the carpenter/wheelwright and the blacksmith with their adjacent paddocks 'til we came to a track which gave access to an isolated field of about three or four acres inhabited by some pretty cows and a

large but, we were assured, very docile bull.

In the field was an area of higher ground with a ditch on its S & W sides and we were asked to consider whether we might be looking at the remains of a medieval moat. A group of us were even hoisted six or seven metres up on an agricultural implement to get a better view. We discussed the possible reasons for medieval moats, which Eric suggested were more of a statement than a useful defence, and the relationship of the mound to the stream that ran through the far side of the field and which we were told had run closer to the mound until the early C19. Eric then confessed that there was documentary evidence for this as the site of the Manor of Biggs, and gave us each a copy of the survey done by B W Dollin in 1985.

We were then taken in the company of Eric's father to look at some other intriguing earthworks in woodland closer to the farm which had also been surveyed (rather vaguely) by Dollin. These earthworks were much deeper than the others but much more difficult to interpret. We looked at the present course of the stream which has clearly been altered at least once. Eric pointed out the remains of the ram-chamber and pipe which took water from the stream to the Hall in the C19, which could explain its present unnatural course, but where it ran before that and whether any of the intersecting trenches at the woodland moat site were involved are as yet difficult to fathom.

However, we can be sure that Eric and his father will continue to ponder the history of the land they farm and keep the Society up to date on all new discoveries.

Frank Hawes

Summer/Autumn Programme 2005

Lectures

All meetings (unless otherwise stated) are held on the last **Tuesday** of the month in the Methodist Chapel, High Street, Blakeney, and start at **7.30pm**. There will be a modest charge of £1 for members (£2 for non-members) attending the talks – except as noted.

- Saturday
July 23 **Annual Summer Lecture:**
Nelson, Norfolk and the Navy
Charles Lewis
At Blakeney Village Hall,
doors open 7.30pm for 8pm start
(bar available)
£3 for everyone.
- Tuesday
September 27 **Two Centuries of Rages and Ravishes:** The North Norfolk Coast under attack during the 15th and 16th centuries: evidence from maps and documents
Matthew Champion
At the Blakeney Methodist Chapel
- Tuesday
October 25 **Blakeney Chapel – All is revealed:** Come and hear about the archaeological excavation on Blakeney Eye from the principal archaeologist
Richard Lee
At the new British Legion Hall, High Street, Blakeney. **£2 for all**
- Tuesday
November 29 **Archaeology of Churches:** Letting the buildings talk – a different view of churches
Rik Hoggett
At the Blakeney Methodist Chapel
- Tuesday
January 31
2006 **Members Evening**
Details to be announced in the next Newsletter
At the Blakeney Methodist Chapel

Membership Renewal Slip

Name:
Address:

£10 individual/£14 family/£ corporate on request
(delete as appropriate)

Remittances should be sent to the Mem Sec
Anne Maw, 2, Wiveton Road, Blakeney, NR25 7NJ

History Centre

Open Day: Thursday August 4th, 10am - 4pm
Your chance to view recent developments, see the new accessions and share ideas of what you would like the History Centre to do for you.

Members' Night

Open for research and library browsing on the first Monday of each month during the winter, starting October 3rd at 7pm. A modest surcharge of 50p per evening will help finance essential warmth.

Cockthorpe Project

Being a hamlet rather than a village 'Cockthorpe' means small is manageable. All the typical parish sources exist in manageable quantities allowing an easy insight into how a parish was arranged and evolved. Learn quickly from Cockthorpe then apply at leisure to your area of interest. Earlier in the year it was the church, which will continue after Xmas, while this autumn it is the turn of 'maps and plans'.

Monday, Oct 3rd, 1.30pm - 3.30pm. Meet at the church then walk the parish, armed with notebooks/cameras, etc., gathering information on the present day layout of farms, barns, land usage, houses, roads and paths.

Monday, Oct 24th, 1.30pm - 3.30pm. Meet at the History Centre and view the range of maps and estate plans that are available. See how your survey of Cockthorpe shows the evolution that has occurred over the past two hundred years with some rather surprising twists. Cost £5 for the two meetings or £3 for an afternoon.

If you need more information, wish to book your place or need a lift, please get in touch with Pam Peake at the History Centre or phone 01263 740388.

Wanted

Can anyone help? The following early issues of the BAHS Newsletter are needed to complete the History Centre collection: 1, 2, 3, 7, 8 and 10. Thanks for your help.

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