



# BAHS Newsletter

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## Admiral Sir Cloudesley Shovell

Talk by Simon Harris 30 x 07

Sir Cloudesley Shovell was baptised in 1650 in Cockthorpe church and drowned off the Isles of Scilly in 1707. That was pretty much all that stuck in my mind until Simon Harris' talk. He expanded on those two events and gave us so much fascinating information on the life in between that I couldn't keep up with notes for this account. Others who were there might remember different details but everyone must have come away like me with a head stuck full of striking memories and stunning images.

His father, John Shovell, was just a yeoman farmer but his mother, Anne Jenkinson of Cley, had money and also significantly a grandfather called Thomas Cloudesley. When he went to sea at the age of twelve young Cloudesley sailed under the command of Christopher Myngs from Salthouse in the *Centurian* on which John Narborough, also from Cockthorpe, was already a Lieutenant. Both these local men also became illustrious admirals and knights of the realm.

We learned that Sir Cloudesley was over six feet tall with an unusually large head, that he became fat and suffered from gout but was a devout protestant and a faithful husband to Elizabeth, widow of Sir John Narborough who had died in 1688. From the 1690s they had houses in Soho Square, London, and in Crayford in Kent. From 1698 till his death he was Whig member of Parliament for Rochester.

How much time he spent in the House is not clear as he was busy bombarding French coastal towns in the 1690s, involved in actions around Spain in 1702, 1704 and 1705 until in 1707 he was in command of the Mediterranean fleet attacking the French who were holed up in Toulon. The action had to be called off to get the larger British ships back to the Thames for the winter and this was their destination when the *Romney*, the *Eagle*, the *Firebrand* and Shovell's own ship, the *Association* were wrecked on the Isles of Scilly.

Simon Harris discussed the lurid tales that developed about this tragedy but pointed out that, as all aboard the *Association* were drowned, they can only be myths. Altogether, nearly 2,000 men perished including Sir John Narborough's two sons, Shovell's step-sons, who were with him on the *Association*. Whether, as the legend says, he was murdered after reaching the bay on the south side of the island of St Agnes which is where his body was temporarily buried is not known but the bay is a long way from the rocks where the ships went down so it seems possible that a boat was launched and may have nearly made it to safety. A few days later the body was recovered, embalmed and taken to Westminster Abbey for burial.

One phrase I noted down, though whether it came from an epitaph or from the letter of condolence written by the rector of Crayford to Lady Shovell I do not recall, described him as a "just, frank, generous, honest, good man". Not a bad epitaph.

Frank Hawes



## Margaret Bird

It is with great sadness that we report the recent death of Margaret Bird, one of the stalwarts from the very earliest days of the Blakeney History Group. A lovely lady, she will be much missed by all who knew her.

## Committee Stuff

Those who attended the AGM know that the Annual Accounts were qualified because we did not have an estimate from the printers for the Glaven Historian and the Newsletter. It was agreed at the AGM that when the invoice was received we should ask Tim Morgan, our Scrutineer, to approve and sign the amended Accounts. These were then presented at the monthly meeting on 30 October and approved. A copy of the amended accounts is included with this Newsletter.

Anne Maw

# News from the History Centre

Last year our Open Day expanded and was held on two sites, with an exhibition and refreshments served in the nearby Scout Hut. Yet again it demonstrated just how popular this event has become, so much so that plans are already underway for next August.

We are moving from Thursday to Saturday. Details will be announced nearer the time, meanwhile make a note of Saturday, August 23rd in your diaries.

The afternoon openings on a Monday in place of the evening openings, have also proved to be a popular change. Long distance members can now travel during the daylight hours and have taken the opportunity to come and continue their family history research during the winter months.

## Accessions

The number of documents received by the Centre during the past six months has been quite unprecedented. Some were an out right gift while others were loaned for copying and by an incredible coincidence that only happens once in a while, many contained information about mills and millers. The other significant feature of local importance was the sheer number and variety of documents relating to Cley. These cover all aspects of the parish during the past 200 years and provide a good starting point for anyone interested in Cley.

The deposits began with two volumes of notes and letters detailing the early history of Blakeney Hotel between the years 1920 to 1928. These volumes cover the purchase of the site and continue with the foreman's day-book, employment of staff and highlights of the day to day business affairs of the hotel as it became established.

This was followed by an opportunity to transcribe three eighteenth century indentures relating to the property of millers in Wiveton. The first named millers

were Thomas Macke, and his son of the same name who was a miller at Billockby, followed by Philip Smith the elder and his son, Philip the younger. The last deed relates to Philip Smith the younger's daughters, his three co-heiresses, Lydia Cocksedge, Hannah and Elizabeth Smith.

A Bean family photograph album has been loaned to the Centre for copying. This album has good photographs of William Bean, the last miller of Friary Mill, Blakeney, who worked for Bodham Starling from 1900 till 1912. He had previously been the miller at Glandford.

Then a bundle of 43 deeds and writings pertaining to property adjacent to Cley Mill, were gifted to the History Centre by the grandson of the last miller of Cley. They were accompanied by a further six documents that relate to the brick tower windmill on the road leading to Cley from Holt which the Burroughes family purchased about 1900. Amongst the latter papers was the will of John Balls appointing the millers Lawrence Randall of Cley and John Pegg of Hindolveston as his joint executors.

The bulk of these Burroughes papers include wonderful descriptions of dwelling houses, newly built cottages, window arguments, granaries, bake houses with details of ovens, The Loyal Alexander Lodge of the Oddfellows Friendly Society plus carpenter's workshops, cart sheds and a whole host of outbuildings in the proximity of Cley Quay. This deposit spans the years 1831 till 1923 at which time Messrs Burroughes Brothers sold most of these properties by auction at the George Hotel.

An opportunity to copy yet more Cley material has arisen with access being provided to some of the Bolding/Johnson/Monement manuscripts that are shortly to be deposited at Norfolk Record Office. The areas of interest selected cover allotments from both Cley Inclosure Acts, Lime Kiln Close, a small farm situated in Blakeney and Wiveton, another

farm in Cley, cottages to the west and north of the church and along High Street, sale particulars of auctions and so on.

Also included in this material is an Abstract of the Title of Thomas Armes to the watermill at Weybourne covering the period 1649 to the mid nineteenth century. It includes a note saying that Armes had erected his new post mill on the Beach Road about 1815.

A few books have been added to the library. Your Uncles by Roger and Anne Gresham Cooke and guides to searching WWI records for ancestors. Finally, a copy of the manuscript 'A History of the Thompson-Pyman family' by Charles Stuart Storrier.

## Roots and Branches

Three more Family History Folders have been donated to the Centre. They are for the Ramms and Bishops/Bretts of Cley then the Bakers of Wells and Blakeney. The Bakers had extensive links to the Kerrisons, Dews, Lincolns and Thompsons, details of which are noted.

Families recently making enquiries at the Centre include the following:

**Pinchens** – two separate sets of visitors seeking Parsons ancestors and living cousins

### Baldings

**Girdlestones** – looking for 17th century links in Blakeney

the grand daughters of Joseph Spooner **Cobon**

a descendant of the **Cletheroes** of Briston

a descendant of Thomas **Dew** and Jemima **Jary**

**Beans** of Blakeney

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## Field Dalling Walk

Mike Medlar returns to continue his walkabouts through the inland villages, this time introducing us to the church, manor houses and adjacent farms, vernacular houses and cottages of Field Dalling. If you have ever driven the road from Bale to Langham and noted the variety of buildings in passing, then this is the opportunity to pause and explore as all will be explained. See the diary dates for details and book your place early in the New Year.

*Pamela Peake*

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## The Glories of the Glaven

BAHS Autumn course 2007  
Tutor: Gerald Randall

The costs and administrative details of courses arranged in collaboration with the University of East Anglia both having risen it was decided that the Society would organise a course this year without UEA involvement. John Peake persuaded Gerald Randall to undertake a six week series looking in detail at three of our loveliest churches and sixteen of us signed up.

The plan was, taking each church in turn, to have an introductory talk in the Blakeney Scout Hut one week followed by a field meeting/guided visit to that church the following week. Sadly our first session was marred by problems with the electricity supply at the Scout Hut but the Rector came to our rescue by inviting us to decamp to St Nicholas Church where all subsequent introductory talks were held.

Gerald Randall started with St Margaret's, Cley, on which he is a notable expert as those of you who have purchased copies of his CD will know. In spite of that the group managed to come up with some new thoughts on the history of this magnificent church even the possibility that there might perhaps at one time have been two churches on the site.

At St Nicholas, Blakeney, we were allowed to climb the little stair tower to the chamber over the chancel vault. This was something I had long wished to do and I was amazed to find that what I had always assumed was a priest's lodging or perhaps a one-time schoolroom can have been neither as instead of a floor there is only the rough, mounded upper surface of the vault below. There is evidence of an earlier steeper roof and of the walls having been raised at least once. Was there a scheme to have an upper room which was never completed?

Sadly I had to miss the talk on St Mary's Wiveton but walking round the building inside and out with Gerald Randall and the rest of the group raised plenty of questions for investigation in future.

It was a very stimulating series including some surprises. Locating old footings or other features below the floor by the use of a pair of divining rods was a new technique to me but as demonstrated by the Rector and taken up by other members of the group was very convincing and left us with even more puzzles for future consideration.

*Frank Hawes*

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## Wrecks

The container ship beached on the South Coast in January 2007 excited many people's expectations, the same expectations recorded over past centuries. From hurricane or storm, errors of navigation, false lights or fraud, the resultant wreck or wreckage provides riches ripe for the picking by the community. The perceived notion that wreckage given up by the sea, the harvest of the sea, is the property of the finder is as old as history.

Compton Mackenzie's tale "Whiskey Galore", and later film of the same name, of the Hebridean Islanders during the Second World War showed a community presented with a harvest of the sea, a wreck of a cargo vessel carrying a significant cargo of whisky. The islanders worked

night and day to secrete away the cargo before officialdom in the form of the Receiver of Wrecks could organize the salvage.

Much the same action took place in Cley when in February 1837 the *Raby Castle* was wrecked on the beach. The crew and passengers were rescued, but from the *Raby Castle's* cargo valued at £5000 only £800 worth of goods were recovered

Norwich Mercury reported: *Immediately after she broke up, the beach was strewn with Spirits, Wine, oranges, nuts, toys, Hampers, boxes etc. The scene beggared description. The most outrageous and beastly conduct was exhibited. There, might be observed a group breaching a spirit cask and letting it run into their oilskins, hats, shoes etc. There another stood filling their pockets and handkerchiefs*

*Further on, another party secreting a cask etc, until a more favorable opportunity presented itself of disposing of it, and all this in the face of day and in civilized country. Plunder, wholesale plunder appeared to be the order of the day in spite of contingents of coastguard men. Many who were charged to watch the property became themselves intoxicated. Many were conveyed from the beach, literally dead drunk, and it is with disgust that we add that many women were in the same state.*

And more recently, in living memory, the timber cargo, another harvest of the sea, was washed into Blakeney Harbour by a northerly gale from the *Zor* of Istanbul which was in difficulties. On May 18th 1955 the *Zor*, with a list of 50 degrees, was taken in tow by the *Richmond Queen* which was in assistance and had taken onboard thirteen or fourteen survivors with the Wells lifeboat *Cecil Paine* taking another three. Sheringham lifeboat was also in attendance on standby.

*Peter Wordingham*

# Spring/Summer Programme 2008

## Events

All the following meetings are in the Harbour Room at the British Legion Hall in the High Street, Blakeney starting at 7.30 pm, except for the Annual Public Lecture which will be in Blakeney Village Hall at 8.00pm  
Entrance: £2 for members and £3 for visitors, including refreshments.

Tuesday **Members' Night: four short contributions by members.**

January 29                      *Janet Harcourt*                      *Local poetry*  
   *David Perryman*                      *Little Red Box*  
   *Brenda Worton*                      *Weybourne & Kelling - contrasting villages*  
   *Richard Jefferson*                      *Importance of Family Connections*

Tuesday **The Dutch Garden in Norfolk:** using wide ranging research to understand a continental  
February 26 style of gardens and ultimately reconstruct one.

*Charlotte Crawley*

Tuesday **Norfolk's Wealth: Wool and Weaving.** The history of weaving in  
March 25 Norfolk by the curator of the weaving museum on the outskirts of Worstead.

*Brian Morgan*

Tuesday **East Anglian Shipping:** placing the North Norfolk ports in a wider context.

April 29 *Mike Stammers*

Saturday **Annual Public Lecture:** in Village Hall at 8.00pm  
August 16 Details to be announced: look on the Society's website or watch for posters.

Tuesday **700 years of Psalter Illumination**

Sept 30 *Margaret Forester*

A short AGM will precede this meeting.

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## History Centre Diary

Reopening Tuesday, February 5th: 10am till noon, then the first and last Tuesday morning in every month.  
Other times by arrangement.

Members' Sessions on Monday afternoons, February 4th, March 3rd and April 1st: 2pm till 4pm. Remember there is a £1.00 entrance fee to cover essential heating.

**Field Dalling with Mike Medlar:** Explore the history of the village on foot, Saturday morning April 26th. The walk will start at 10am, last for two hours and cost £4.

Places must be booked at the History Centre or by phone on 01263 740388.

**Open Day:** this will be on Saturday, August 23rd - details will be announced later.

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## Autumn Course

Starting Wednesday morning, October 1st in Blakeney Church

**The Story of Illuminated Manuscripts**

*Tutor: Margaret Forester*

Enquiries to Frank Hawes: tel. 01263 740981

For more information: [www.history-blakeney-area.org.uk](http://www.history-blakeney-area.org.uk)