



BAHS Newsletter

Number 32

December 2011

Farewell Bert and Maude

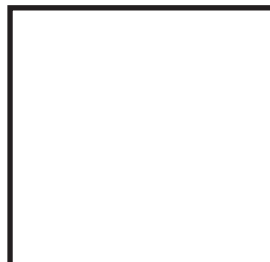


At the Society's Mardle Night in December we were treated to a farewell performance by Bert and Maude, alias Richard Newton and Janet Harcourt.

Their patter, delivered in broad Norfolk, has been a feature of performances by the Blakeney Players for many years – intended as an entr'acte while the stage crew shift the scenery behind the curtain – and well worth the price of admission on their own. Alas now they too are... history.

Subscriptions

If you're one of the handful of members who have not yet renewed their subscriptions, this is the last Newsletter you will receive and you will forfeit your chance to receive a copy of the next Glaven Historian, to be published this year. If there is a blob in this square,



reach for your chequebook now:

Subscriptions are still £10 for an individual and £14 for a couple at the same address, cheques to be sent to the Membership Secretary at Far House, Coronation Lane, Blakeney, Holt, NR25 7NS.

News from the History Centre

Where has the year gone? As the Centre shuts down for the midwinter deep clean and annual stock take, it is time to reflect on the number and variety of visitors we have welcomed throughout the year and the success of the House History courses. It is also timely to give thanks for all the support we have had from visitors and then closer to home, thanks to the volunteers who keep the Centre open and running, often travelling many miles to do so.

It is also time to welcome a new member to the team (Richard Dunn) and to take a deep breath as we prepare for the challenge ahead in mid August 2012, **Tidal Lands**. This is a four-day exhibition celebrating the history of Blakeney Point, a collaborative venture with the National Trust. There is still plenty of time for volunteers to sign up for stewarding, helping with refreshments, exhibition set up and dismantling and all the other behind the scene tasks that need to be done. Help spread the work-load and make it a resounding success for the society. If you have a day or two or even just an hour or two to spare, please step forward and commit by giving your name to Pam Peake, 01263 740388. Thank you.

Accessions

- 30 Years of Blakeney scribbled by Bill Hayward
- Shipbuilding at Wells in the 18th and 19th Centuries by M. Stammers
- Cooke Cameos 1911-2011 by D. Cooke
- London Gazette; another fascinating collection
- A selection of Board of Trade records for ship voyages together with crew lists and ship registrations, mostly 1820/30s
- Wildfowling at Wells by K. Thatcher *et al*
- The Book of the Burnhams by The Burnhams Society History Group
- The Trials of Wells Harbour by J. Barney

- The North Folk by R. Bond *et al*
- East Anglia by R. Rainbird Clarke
- 70th Anniversary of the Blakeney Sailing Club, script of talk by P Page
- 23 Rent books for R Gidney of Baconsthorpe
- The Howes Mortgage, 1894
- Displaced Persons Camp, Cley 1946 x 3 photographs by H H Tansley
- Blakeney Carpet Bowls Club, early records

A Deed Indeed

A document, loaned to the History Centre for copying, has proved unbelievably enlightening, outlining some 20 properties in Cley and naming 36 people in all.

The document relates to Robert William Howes of East Derham, photographer who was in need of money and raised £300 from the Vores family by mortgaging his real estate in Cley. This was in 1894 and the document highlights both freehold and copyhold property spread right across the parish, namely:

- 21 perches of freehold garden at Anderton Hill occupied by Mary Hurn
- 19 perches of freehold garden at Anderton Hill occupied by Herbert Holman
- freehold premises in Plattins Yard occupied by Howard Brett
- freehold house and shop next to former, occupied by Burgess Bix and William Hooke
- 3 more freehold cottages in Plattins Yard occupied by John Jary, James Grimes and John Jary
- 2 copyhold cottages at Newgate, both occupied by William Hill
- 2 copyhold cottages, now divided into 4, west of Kings Head Inn and occupied by Thomas Chapman, Howard Brett, xxx Holmes and one now empty
- 2 copyhold cottages on Road to Salthouse occupied by Brandon Holman
- 3 copyhold cottages, 1 a shop, on road to Salthouse occupied by Brandon Holmes (possibly meant to be Holman) and Herbert Holman

In many instances the names of former occupiers are given as well as names for owners of adjacent property, all in all a veritable 'Who's who' of Cley in 1894. This deed adds to our growing collection and like all of them will prove invaluable for house/family historians and understanding the development of our villages.

The black sheep!

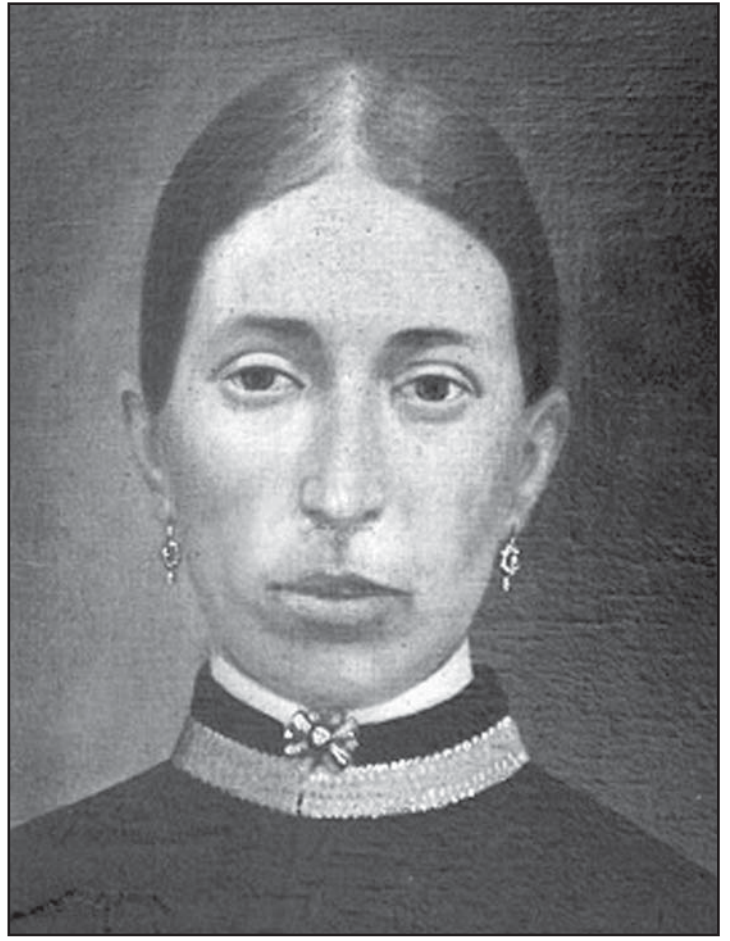
Robert Cademy (1759-1785) was the son of Henry Cademy, 'Shepherd of the Wiveton flock'. Unlike his father and many of his brothers, Robert was never a successful shepherd. In fact quite the opposite as the whole sorry saga of his life was revealed by his confession when executed for sheep stealing, 2nd April, on the Castle Hill at Norwich.

Essentially Robert started as an apprentice shoe-maker in Blakeney, then as a shepherd followed by a spell at sea before returning to help his father with the sheep followed by screening corn at Blakeney with Mr Farthing. After another spell back with his father in Wiveton he worked as a shepherd for several others before stealing sheep from Mr John Halls of Pinkney, near Great Yarmouth. This was his undoing and only came to light when a descendant recently obtained a printed broadsheet from Norwich Castle and donated a copy to the History Centre.

The Gant Archive

Family Portraits in the 2009 winter Newsletter, featured a 'family group on the beach' with the Gants of Wiveton and Longs of Cley. Margaret Charlotte Gant nee Long, the wife of Captain Robert James Gant of the Homer, was tentatively identified as the lady standing centre back.

This has now been confirmed by a descendant. Also positively identified are Capt Gant standing to the right of his wife and their young son George standing in front of his mother. Suggestions have been made for many



Top left: Captain Robert James Gant

Top right: Margaret Charlotte Gant née Long

Left: Gant family reunion at Wiveton; from left to right the family is George William Gant 1880-1959 (son of Capt and Mrs M Gant), May 1913-1996 (daughter of GW Gant), Margaret 'Madge' Hosking 1885-1964 (daughter of Capt and Mrs M Gant), Margaret Jenner 1911-1979 (daughter of GW Gant), Margaret Charlotte Gant, Hilda Hosking (daughter of Madge), unidentified lady in specs, Hilda's son and Ethel Coe (daughter of Capt and Mrs Gant).

others. Meanwhile here are three more photographs of the Gant family; firstly Captain Robert Gant, then his wife Margaret, both are portraits painted when they were abroad and then thirdly Margaret with her children and some of her grandchildren. Many more photographs have now been added to the Gant Archive and we have been able to put the donor in touch with a distant cousin who lives locally.

Roots and Branches

Recent enquiries or deposits of information regarding the following families have been lodged at the History Centre. If you want to investigate further, please call in February when we reopen after the New Year break.

Betts of Blakeney
Bishop of Blakeney
Russell of Blakeney

Starling of Blakeney and Glandford
Copeman of Glandford
Mann of Cley
Gant of Wiveton
Long of Cley
Digman of Blakeney
Smith of Stiffkey and Blakeney

Pam Peake

A Legacy for Blakeney



Just over 100 years ago in 1908 Professor Frank Oliver visited Blakeney while recuperating from a serious illness; thus began an association that had many far-reaching consequences for the area. It was his drive and enthusiasm, with the support of two other individuals, Sydney Long and Charles Rothschild, that resulted in Blakeney Point becoming a nature reserve. Long was a doctor practicing in Norwich, but was born along the coast in Wells, and Rothschild a member of the banking family who had a passionate interest in natural history and conservation. All shared a vision.

Oliver established the Point as a natural laboratory for the study of plants and animals with a permanent base in the Old Lifeboat House that he purchased for £50 from Lord Calthorpe. Research on the Point flourished with people from many disciplines coming to work there – not only botanists, but soil scientists, coastal engineers and zoologists working on the terns and other animals. He was also instrumental in hav-

ing an aerial photograph taken of the Headland to enable the study of vegetation patterns. One of his enormous strengths was his recognition of the interdependence of many different strands of research, in fact the basis of ecology. Oliver was Professor of Botany at University College London during this period and an account of the College's association with the Point written by Dr Donald White, himself a member of the College, was published in 2005 in *The Glaven Historian*.

After the Point was purchased it was presented to the National Trust who have been the custodians for the last 100 years. It was handed over 'on condition that the natural flora and fauna should be preserved'. There have been many changes during this period, students still come to the area to study, but they no longer camp on the Point (as I did over 50 years ago), rabbits have disappeared, Far Point has grown still further and now has a flourishing seal colony.

Oliver left another legacy to the area – a collection of photographs

Above: This is a later photograph taken in the 1920's after Blakeney Hotel was built. The occasion is the Lifeboat Service that is still held on the Quay, but here it is being conducted from a boat. Can you recognise anybody?

Top right: Oliver commented that one of the best views of the harbour and the Point was from the top of Blakeney Church tower. Here is his photograph taken on '23 September 1908'.

that started in 1908 and appears to have continued into the 1920's when he retired from University College. These photographs are now preserved in London and to give a flavour of their local interest four have been selected to illustrate this short note. However, these and many more will be shown in the exhibition **Tidal Lands** that will be held in Blakeney Village Hall in August, jointly organised by the Society and the National Trust. Come and see them.

John Peake



Middle: Photographs show that early visitors to the Point were often fashionably dressed. In this one Robert 'Bob' Pinchen is standing on the far left. He was the first Warden and prior to the National Trust's ownership he was the Watcher during the tern's breeding season. He was from a local Cley family and initially ran a butcher's shop when not employed on the Point. During the spring and summer months Bob lived with his wife and his two youngest children on a converted Lowestoft fishing lugger, the Britannia, which was moored not far from Pinchen's Creek and the Lifeboat Houses.

Bottom: Naturally Oliver took many photographs of the Point and the shingle spit showing the vegetation and topographic features, but here is one of general interest. It shows the two Lifeboat Houses and huts at a high tide. Some of posts that are visible carried the telephone wires along the shingle spit while others were used for signalling to ships, including the lifeboat. But could one be a radio mast?

Rescue Wooden Boats Restoring Dunkirk veteran local lifeboat *Lucy Lavers*

Rescue Wooden Boats is a new charity aiming to “acquire, restore, maintain and use heritage maritime wooden craft and in so doing, provide education into their history, construction, maintenance and use and into the crafts involved in all of these”. Our intention is that the restored working boats and lifeboats will be used actively on the water rather than become museum pieces. It has been started by local craftsmen boat builders David and George Hewitt at Stiffkey, together with wooden working boat enthusiasts Graeme Peart from Saxlingham and Wendy Pritchard from Burnham Norton.

So far we have been given two boats, our flagship project Dunkirk veteran *Lucy Lavers* lifeboat (donated by Dunkirk Little Ships Restoration Trust) and crab boat *Black Beauty* (donated by Andy Frary of Wells-next-the-Sea). We have identified further possible working boats to acquire and have started filming local fishermen, lifeboat men, and boat builders talking about their lives and crafts and about *Lucy Lavers*. These films and much more are on the website.

Once we have raised some funds we will start by restoring *Lucy Lavers* and returning her to Dunkirk. We estimate this project alone will cost at least £50,000 and take several years. We will film the restoration work to capture progress and the disappearing skills involved. At the same

time we hope to arrange for a few suitable wooden working boats to be available for lease to keen and experienced people to ensure their continued use on the water.

We hope there will be widespread interest in supporting us from people who love wooden boats, from people with connections with working boats or lifeboats and from people with an interest in maritime and naval history, particularly the Dunkirk evacuation. We invite people to join as a “Friend” of **Rescue Wooden Boats** and to support us by making donations.

Rescue Wooden Boats

14 Norton Street, Burnham Norton,
King's Lynn, Norfolk PE31 8DR
07920 760238
www.rescuewoodenboats.com

BAHS Spring Excursion Monday 30 April

You are invited to join us for an outing to KING'S LYNN on the above date. We will explore some historic buildings, in the medieval part of the town, with an expert guide and historian – Dr Paul Richards.

Details have still to be finalised. The cost will be £6 (plus £4 entrance fee to Clifton House). We will meet at approx 10.30 am, have lunch at a suitable pub and finish at 3.30 pm.

Names and money will be collected at the Spring Meetings. For further information please contact **Diana Cooke on 01263.740320.**

Feedback

I had a very nice call (and email) from Margaret Bird (the other one) who pointed out my self contradiction regarding which size chaldron measure was used in the Glaven ports.

Dear Richard,

I was so pleased to speak to you this afternoon and to thank you over the phone for the many articles you have written over the years on which I rely for some of my work on Mary Hardy. As we discussed, I am puzzled as to which coal measure was used in Norfolk ports: the Newcastle, the London, or the Great Yarmouth chaldron (53, 26½ and 24½ cwt respectively).

These are the references I mentioned:

R. Kelham, 'Taking the measure of the Blakeney coal trade in the 1780s', Blakeney in the Eighteenth Century (3rd edn Blakeney, 2010), pp. 21-2 (in which you conclude that Blakeney and Cley used the London measure);

R. Kelham, 'The Blakeney and Cley port books', The Glaven Historian, no. 1, 1998, pp. 22-5 (in which you indirectly conclude those ports used the Newcastle measure. You use the Sloop Active as one of your bases for calculation in both articles – but it not clear if the cargo of coal, 25 chaldrons, represented Active's total load);

However, the Great Yarmouth chaldron (used on the Broads) was different again:

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Glaven Historian Editorial Board: Tim Fawcett, Frank Hawes, Richard Kelham, John Peake

R. Clark, *Black-Sailed Traders* (Newton Abbot, 1961), p. 100 (in which Roy Clark says that in the mid-18th century the measure used was 20 sacks to the chaldron, each sack weighing 137 lb. I conclude a Broadland chaldron was thus 24½ cwt. However on that page Clark is not clear if he is referring to chaldrons of burnt lime only or to chaldrons in general).

I may have to skate over this one and say we just do not know, as Robert Malster did when I discussed the problem with him. He reckoned that a chaldron was roughly a little more than a ton, but I think that is a bit imprecise, especially as the Newcastle measure was far greater. I would very much appreciate your considered opinion.

I am working on the diary of Mary Hardy, written at Coltishall 1773-81 and at Letheringsett 1781-1809. She was the wife of a farmer, maltster and brewer with a large portfolio of tied houses. I am bringing out four volumes of annotated text, and four volumes of commentary and analysis. You and I met at 'Made in Cley' some years ago, when you kindly told me something of the history of the shop. I wonder if Robert Anthony was the grocer and draper to whom you referred? [presumably 'yes'] His wife Ann was, with Mary Hardy, a member of the Wesleyan Methodists at Cley in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

There is absolutely no hurry over this. My usual work of reference is the Cambridge Agrarian History, which has a superb appendix on weights and measures. But even they skirt around the chaldron problem, setting out the London and Newcastle measures without stating where they were used (vol. VI, p. 1128).

Margaret Bird,

Having re-read my arguments in both sources I can find no fault with the logic of either. Or, in other words, I'm as much in the dark as everyone else and cannot come to any definite conclusion as no further information has yet come to light. If anyone can provide the definitive answer to this, or wishes to get in touch with Margaret Bird, please contact me.

A short course: Norfolk's Industrial Past 1750-1940

"Did Norfolk have an industrial past?" – a comment on a par with the famous "Very flat, Norfolk." Its rural image can disguise the surprising variety and scale of its industries. This course covers the variety and scale of Norfolk's industry from 18th to 20th centuries, from textiles to heavy engineering and the generation of electricity. This course of five two-hour sessions and one outing, led by Msry Fewster, uses a mixture of visual and documentary evidence. Of necessity, some aspects are covered in overview, while there is an opportunity to examine certain industries or firms in more depth.

1. The Norfolk scene 1750-1940: an introduction to the landscape, economy and society of Norfolk, in relation to its industrial development, plus a focus on extractive industries.

2. Links with the land: a look at industries providing for, and dealing with the product of agriculture and fisheries.

3. "The grand source of its wealth": Norwich industries from the 18th to the 20th centuries.

4. "Making connections": the impact of the introduction of services, such as water and gas supplies, and of road, rail and water transport.

5. Entrepreneurs and diversity: the variety and scale of industrial development throughout the county.

Dates & time: Thursday mornings 10.30 – 12.30; March 22 and 29, miss a week, then April 12, 19 and 26. The date of the outing and the destination to be arranged during the course, but this may incur an additional cost of an entrance fee.

Location: Scout Hut, next to the Village Hall, Blakeney.

Cost: Members - £48,
Non-members - £55

Booking: to book your place either pay at a monthly meeting or send your cheque made payable to

the BAHS to John Peake, Crows Nest, Back Lane, Blakeney NR25 7NP. Note: early payment secures your place.

The Friary Centenary Weekend

In October 1911, following the sale of the Calthorpe Estate, Arthur Cooke (a surgeon in Cambridge), and his wife Viva, bought 'three cottages and some barns' behind Mariners' Hill in Blakeney. They restored the cottages back into one property and called it 'The Friary'. It is a listed C17th building with an C18th extension at the south end.

To celebrate the centenary of the Cooke's purchase, and four generations of the house being in their ownership, an Open House was held on the afternoons of 22nd & 23rd October 2011. Nearly 200 people came to the event and £480 was raised. This amount was divided between the Blakeney Area Historical Society and the Friends of St Nicholas' Church.

To mark the occasion a booklet was written, entitled *Cooke Cameos*. This draws together the story of the Cookes' Blakeney links and a history of the house, as well as census details in an appendix. Copies are still available at a cost of £3 (email: cookediana@paston.co.uk)

During the weekend, refreshments were served in the Dining Room. Books, puzzles & tools were on sale in other rooms and pictures of local interest were exhibited throughout the house. Some medieval artefacts (found on land that the Cooke family used to own) were also on display. There was a wonderful team of family, friends and BAHS members, without whom the event would not have been possible or such a success. Thank you, again, to all those involved.

Diana Cooke

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BAHS and Contributors

Spring/Summer Programme 2012

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 April meeting which will be held in Blakeney Village Hall starting at 8.00pm

Entrance: £2 for members and £3 for visitors, including refreshments.

This year the Society is participating in some of the celebrations of the National Trust's association with Blakeney Point. These events are marked with a 

Tuesday
January 31

Members Night: Three Short Lectures:

Richard Jefferson: James Olley lived in Blakeney

Pam Peake: Bags of Treasures

John Peake: Drawn in Stone

Tuesday
February 28

200 years of Farming: from John Stileman 1610 to

Henry Savory 1868 in Field Dalling

Michael Medlar

Tuesday
March 27



Blakeney Point in Trust: a review by two National Trust

Regional Advisors *Stuart Warrington* (*Regional Wildlife & Countryside*) & *Angus Wainwright* (*Regional Archaeological*)

Saturday
April 28



Our Changing Coast: Past, Present & Future:

Dr Kenneth Pye (*Kenneth Pye Associates*)

In Blakeney Village Hall at 8.00pm, doors open 7.30pm

Saturday to
Tuesday
August 17-21



Tidal Lands: an exhibition on the natural history and history of Blakeney Point, the harbour and villages.

In Blakeney Village Hall: every day 10.30am to 4.00pm.

Admission Free

Tuesday
September 25

Archaeology in Glaven Villages

Andrew Rogerson (*Norfolk Landscape Archaeology*)

Tuesday
October 30

Past-time with the goode compnaye – King Henry's Band

Robert Fitzgerald

Tuesday
November 27

City Clerks or Ploughboys: the role of education in Norfolk c1820-1940

Susanna Wade Martins (*Research Associate, UEA*)

BAHS Short Course: Norfolk's Industrial Past 1750-1940

Starting 22 March and led by Dr Mary Fewster, a course of five lectures and one visit. Details inside (p.7)

History Centre Diary

Reopening Tuesday, 7 February: 10am till noon, then the last and first Tuesday morning in every month. Other times by arrangement, phone 01263 740388.

Members' Sessions on Monday afternoons, 2pm till 4pm: 6 February, 5 March and 2 April. Remember your £1 entrance fee covers all expenses including free advice and help with your research topic.

Anyone wishing to use maps, film or fiche readers is advised to book in advance. Phone, as above, or send SAE to History Centre, Blakeney Village Hall, Langham Road, Blakeney, Norfolk NR 25 7PG.

More information available on: www.history-blakeney-area.org.uk