



BAHS Newsletter

Number 33

www.history-blakeney-area.org.uk

July 2012

A Day-Trip to Ryburgh



...actually a lot more fun than it sounds...

Our day out on the 17 May was the culmination of an excellent course on the industrial archaeology of Norfolk very ably led by Dr Mary Fewster.

The first port of call was Litcham where the small museum, crammed full of objects mostly donated by residents clearing out their attics, gives onto a garden wherein is hidden the remain of a lime kiln. And not just any old lime kiln but one of the peculiar Norfolk design where the base of the pot is accessible from all four sides by way of a tunnel into the hillside. The working conditions can be imagined, but preferably



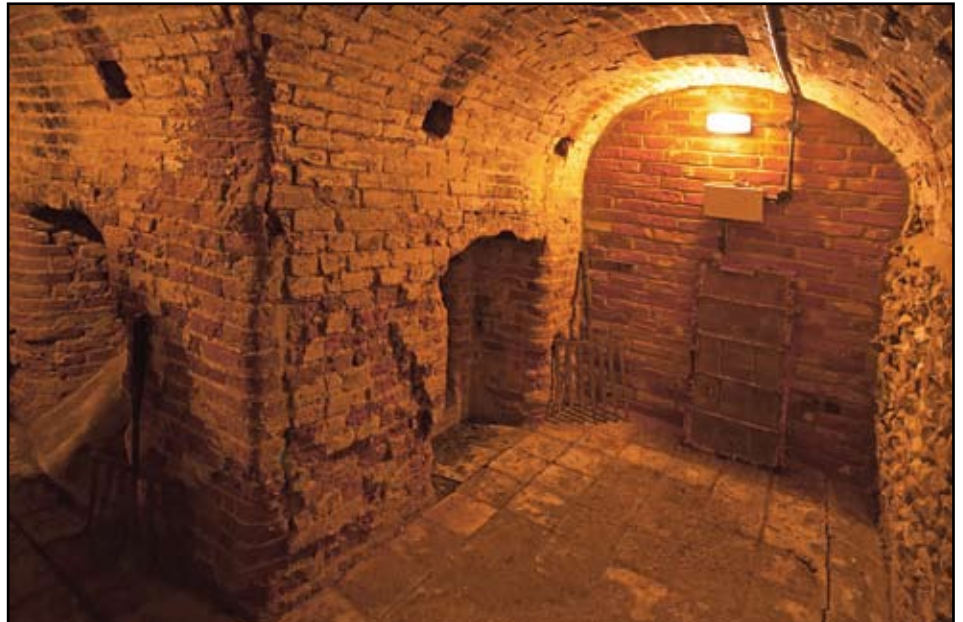
Top: malting the traditional way at Ryburgh

Bottom: modern silos for the storage of different grades of malt

never experienced first hand. The exterior was still much overgrown so it is easy to imagine how this ancient artefact could have been lost to view.

After lunch we moved on to the huge maltings complex at Great Ryburgh operated by Crisp Malting Ltd – to whom our thanks are due.

While most of the buildings are modern, state-of-the-malting-art, there is a core of older, C19, buildings dating back to the Smith family days which are still in use, producing malt the old-fashioned way. The process starts with drying the grains **(continued on p2)**



(above) the entrance and (right) an interior view of the Litcham Lime kiln showing two of the draw holes. The brick wall is a recent addition. (right below) two more views of the old maltings interior and their 'trophy cabinet'. To think they only offered us tea. Photos: J Cucksey

(continued from p1) to a moisture content below 14%, and then storing for around six weeks to overcome seed dormancy. When ready, the grain is immersed or "steeped" in water two or three times over two or three days to allow the grain to absorb moisture and to start to sprout. When the grain has a moisture content of around 46%, it is transferred to the malting or germination floor (as seen on p1) where it is constantly turned over for around five days while it is air-dried. The grain at this point is called "green malt". The green malt is then kiln-dried to the desired colour and specification. Malt produced the old way, from selected strains of barley such as Maris Otter, is a premium product often used by artisan brewers. So, if you want to support the continuation of this historic process the answer is simple, pop down to your local deli and buy some good local beer. You might even enjoy drinking it.

Of course the maltings also cater for the modern brewing trade, increasingly dominated by a handful of multinational brewing companies – the less said about their products, the better.

And finally a huge 'thank you' to Mary Fewster, our leader, for five fascinating lectures as well as a day out to remember.



BAHS Spring Outing 2012

Medieval Meander in King's Lynn



On 30th April, twenty-five members of the History Society travelled to King's Lynn to explore the plethora of medieval buildings that survive in the town centre. We met at the Green Quay café – a converted medieval warehouse – in time for coffee. Our expert guide, Dr Paul Richards – who knows everything there is to know about King's Lynn – gave a short introduction before we set off on our tour.

We walked past the Hanse and learnt about Lynn's Hanseatic connection; this was a league or trading alliance between several Northern European towns. We popped our heads into the delightful courtyard of a 14th century merchants' house called Hampton Court – at least 150 years older than its better known namesake!

From there, we walked a short distance to The Minster, formerly St Margaret's Parish Church. The church was founded by Her-

bert de Losinga – first Bishop of Norwich – and was originally built as part of a Benedictine Priory.

Our next stop was Clifton House, now owned by the Director of English Heritage (**pictured on the opposite page**). We were allowed to climb the impressive Elizabethan watch tower from where, thanks to a near-perfect sunny day, we had some wonderful views across the port and the 'lynn' – possibly derived from the Welsh *Lynn*, or a Saxon word *Len*.

This was followed by a break for lunch, back at Green Quay. We were all able to eat together in the 'upper room' where we enjoyed salads, cheesecake and much chatter. Our next port of call was the Customs House, via the millennium statue of George Vancouver, whose father was Deputy Collector of Customs & Town Dues.

We then walked along to the Centre for Arts which included a large 15th century Guildhall. This

latter has been variously used as a warehouse, court-house, armoury and theatre. After the war, it was in danger of being demolished to make way for a car showroom but, thankfully, this never came to fruition; instead, funds were raised and the building was restored to its former glory as a charming theatre.

Our final destination, via the Tuesday Market Place, was the Chapel of St Nicholas. It was founded in the 12th century as a Chapel-of-ease to St Margaret's Parish Church. The majority of the present building was completed by 1415. It is a magnificent space and is the largest Chapel-of-ease in England.

So ended a fascinating day; most of us realised how little we knew about King's Lynn but by the end we were all much better informed and keen to find out more.

Diana Cooke

Theyre Lee-Elliott (1903-1988): Artist



Theyre Lee-Elliott in a splendidly stylised portrait by Baron thought to have been taken in the mid 1930s.

Theyre was born in Lewes, the second of four children. His unusual name comes from his mother and also from his great-grandfather who was Vicar of Wymondham Abbey in the middle of the 19th century.

In 1905, aged about two, Theyre moved to Blakeney when his father was appointed as the new Rector. Theyre and his siblings grew up at the Rectory (now the Old Rectory) and would have been immersed in tales of the sea, marshes and surrounding wildlife. In 1916, mid-War, Theyre was sent to Winchester College; in the same year, his father moved to a living in Warwickshire. The Blakeney link, however, was not lost as Theyre's father returned to the village in 1923/4 to cover an interregnum for a year. At the same time he purchased the (Old) Rectory which became the family home for the next ten years.

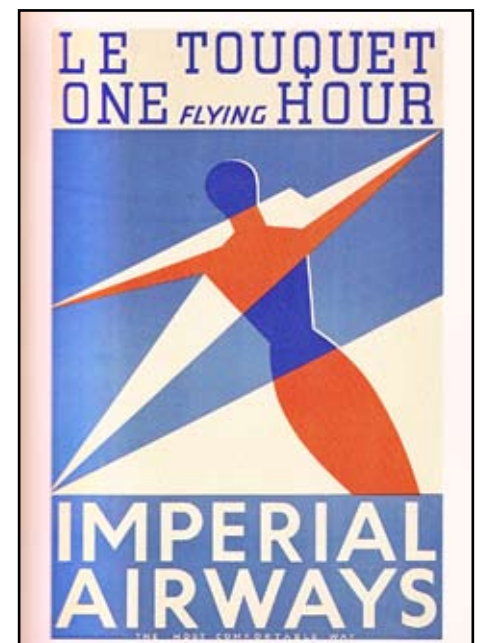
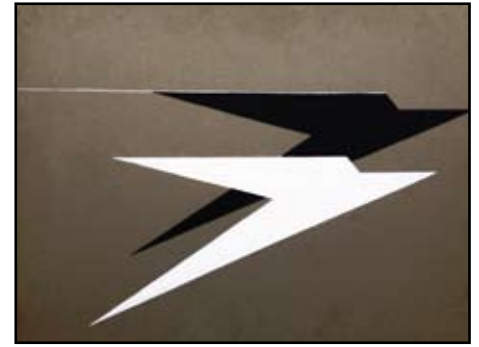
Theyre went to Magdalene College in Cambridge where he gained degrees in both Theology and English. He was a tall, athletic youngster who excelled in long jump and tennis; he also represented Great Britain at the Paris Olympics in 1924, playing

table-tennis. Anecdotes suggest he was full of fun with a keen sense of humour. He never married but had a raft of nieces and nephews, for whom he would paint any subject on demand, often with stories or poems attached. For most of his adult life he lived in Chelsea and had a studio-flat in Sloane Avenue.

In the mid-Twenties, Theyre went to Chelsea Art College and then studied commercial art at the Slade School. Subsequently, he found work as a scene painter at Sadler's Wells Theatre which had re-opened in 1931. At the same time, a new repertory ballet school – set up by Ninette de Valois – began to use its premises. In this way, Theyre was introduced to the world of dance and movement and, following in the footsteps of Degas, began to paint wonderful impressions of the dancers who were to become international celebrities – Margot Fonteyn, Frederick Ashton, Moira Shearer... to name but a few. Many of these works were published in *Paintings of the Ballet* (Collins, 1947). Theyre held the first 'Arabesque' exhibition in aid of the Ballet Benevolent Fund at Sadlers Wells. He later exhibited in New York, Paris and Tokyo, as well as back home in Chelsea.

During the 1930s he designed posters for London Transport and created the 'Speed-bird' logo for Imperial Airways (later BOAC); he was also responsible for one of the original airmail stickers. His talents were used to design propaganda posters in the War but his graphic art seems to have come to an end around sixty years ago. Significantly in this Jubilee year, Theyre's last known poster (for London Transport) was of the Queen's first Trooping of the Colour.

Although he was brought up in a Christian environment and steeped in theology, Theyre was not a practising Christian. In the Fifties and Sixties, he suffered



from a debilitating illness and nearly died. It was during this period that he expressed his pain in a series of 'crucified tree-forms'. In these pictures, he fused the image of Christ with that of a tree; his own struggle and doubt are reflected in them, alongside disturbing memories of the two world wars.



Opposite is his 'speedbird' logo and a couple of posters for Imperial Airways, later BOAC. On this page: contrasting styles with his sketch 'Margot' and a Harlequin, contrasting with his more graphic works. The watercolour of Salhouse is in a markedly different, far more pastoral, vein.

Theyre lived to the age of 85 and died, virtually a recluse; but his artwork survives. Many items were given to friends and members of his family, whilst many were sold around the world. The London Transport Museum and the Victoria & Albert Museum have a few and one is held by the Methodist Art Collection.

My introduction to Theyre was a poster which he designed for the 1931 Blakeney Pantomime performed at the (Old) Rectory. His use of bold colour with simple, elegant lines gives it a strong contemporary touch. For all his ability, it is surprising that he is not better known. However, a community of admirers is coming out of the (online) woodwork, wanting to learn more about him. Fortunately, one of his nephews has recently assembled (digitally) over 500 of his paintings; if anyone is aware of any more tucked away in an attic, do please let me know.

Diana Cooke

Images reproduced with the kind permission of Mr A Lee-Elliott

Subscriptions

Just a quick reminder that subscriptions are due from the 1 July and should be sent to:

The Membership Secretary
Barbara Ward-Jones
Far House
Coronation Lane
Blakeney
NR25 7NS.

The rates are unchanged at £10 for an individual, £14 for a couple at the same address and £25 for Corporate members.

Another Reminder

Tidal Lands, the joint exhibition to be put on by the BAHS and the National Trust, runs from Saturday 18 August through to Tuesday 21 August at the Blakeney Village Hall. The exhibition will be open from 10.30am to 4.00pm every day and admission is free. Can't say fairer than that!

We were hoping to have the new Glaven Historian available, but it will still be at the printers.

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BAHS and Contributors

News from the History Centre

History Centre celebrates 10 years

After a year spent camped in a Portakabin in the car park, courtesy of Blakeney Parish Council, the dream finally became reality with the opening in March, 2002 of our custom-designed History Centre at the rear of Blakeney Village Hall.

A Heritage Lottery Grant was awarded to purchase essential equipment, parish registers, censuses, land tax returns and maps, all adding to the local village archives that had been collected by members from earlier days. The Centre is for the benefit of members and public alike and over the years there have been numerous courses, day schools, workshops, guided tours, archaeological digs, open days, exhibitions and publications to complement the resources.

Countless visitors have arrived on the doorstep or contacted us in a variety of ways. Those from afar are usually descended from Glaven-based families that have since moved away. They generally want to find the houses that their ancestors lived in then visit the churchyard to see graves. Thank goodness the first part of a survey of Blakeney churchyard was recently published, as the new conservation areas will make it increasingly difficult to gain access to the graves. The History Centre has the information to point you in the right direction.

Information has been sought on all the usual topics relating to the area to the more unusual such as step dancing, beach furniture, local bus depots and timetables, ships that once sailed from the harbour, coastguards, location of former family homes, medieval net making, the Blakeney astro-labe to a poster made by Gerald Ackerman for the War effort, to name but a few.

The Centre has also assisted in two international reunions for the Powditch family, history weekends for Blakeney Hotel guests, tours for U3A, NNAS and the London



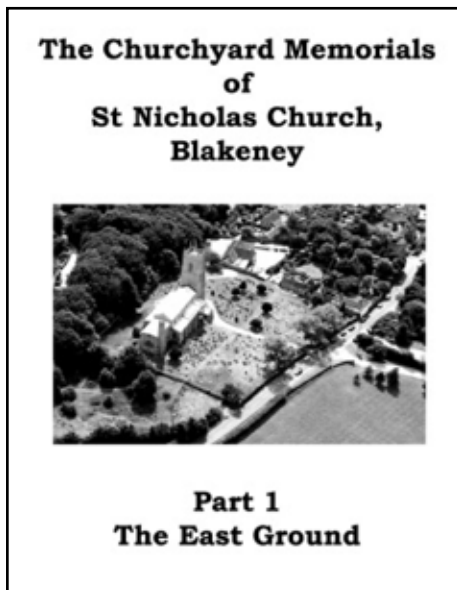
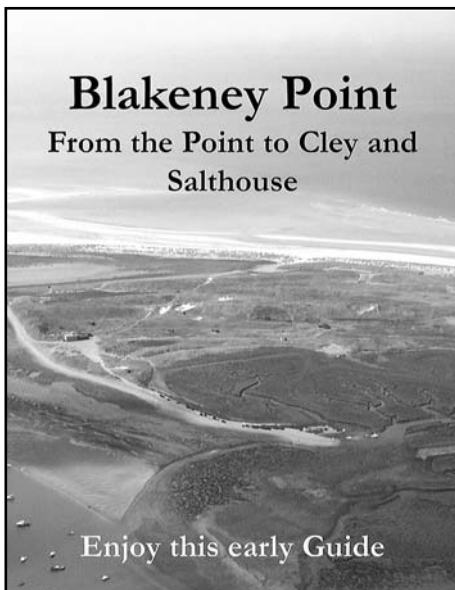
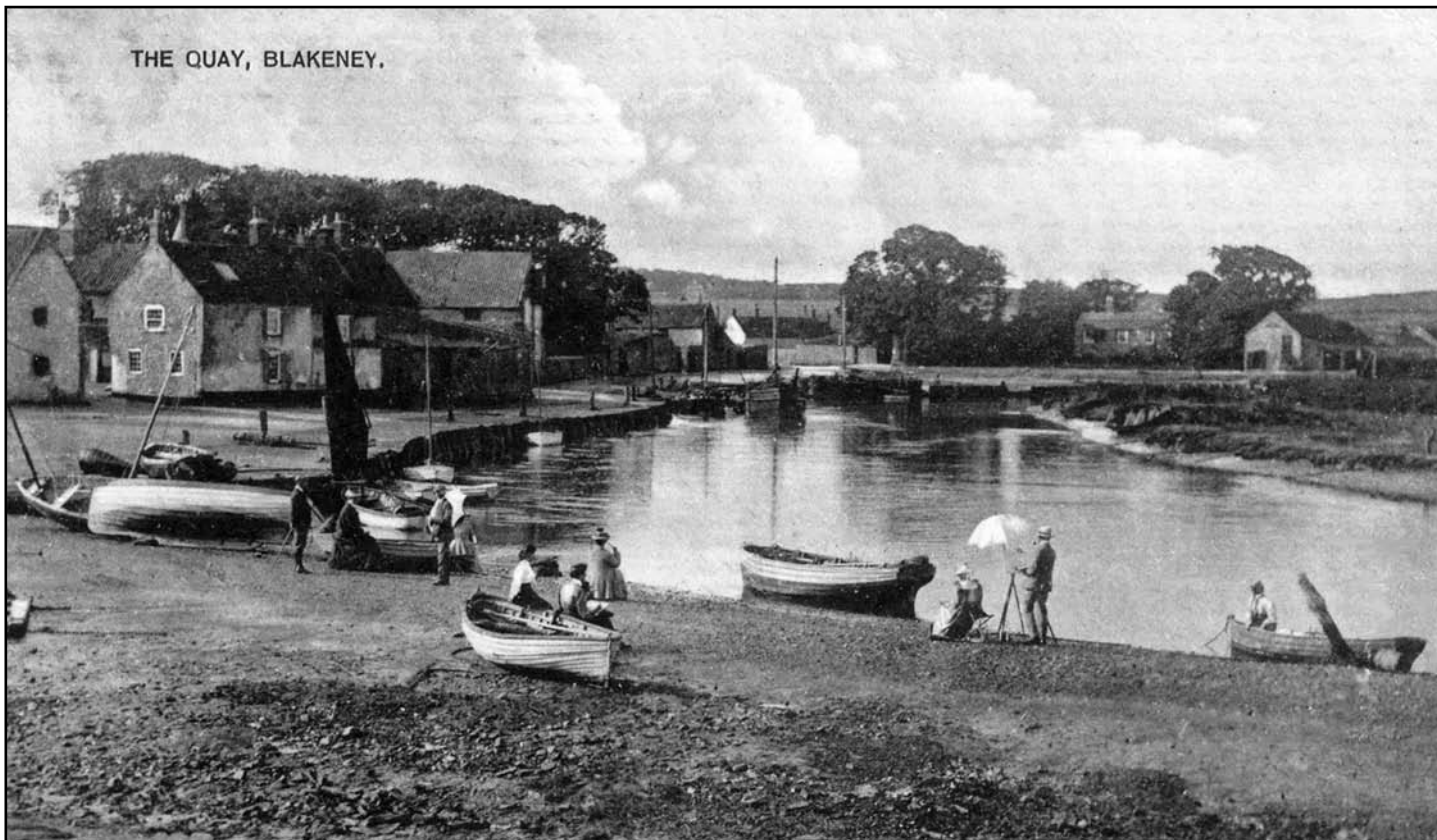
Upper: Chris Barringer and Cllr Bernard Crowe officially open the Centre under the eagle eye of a hungry Editor

Lower: Blakeney School children with Dr Carena Lewis of Cambridge University (we won't mention Channel 4 TV... ooops!)

Opposite page, top: Archival photograph used for Blakeney Caring Calendar – nothing new about tourists in Blakeney

Lower left: Blakeney Point, our latest publication

Lower right: Blakeney Burials Part 1, published 2008



livery of Glass Sellers amongst others, provided guidance to other villages on setting up their own Centres and support for several local Parish Councils and various societies. Introductory talks have been held for school children visiting from Cambridgeshire while closer to home we have assisted Blakeney Primary School's Hobbies Club and arranged for the children to be involved in the Wiveton Dig led by Carenza Lewis.

Open Days in the Centre used to be held in August but by 2005 had proved far too popular for such a small space and were

moved to the Scout Hut. Over the years the exhibitions have grown and this year sees our most ambitious yet as we co-host a 4 day *Tidal Lands* exhibition in Blakeney Village Hall together with the National Trust as they celebrate 100 years on Blakeney Point, see details on the Back Page. The History Centre contribution will feature the maritime history of the area and the community with supporting maps, photographs, family histories and documents.

Display stands have been purchased with the aid of a Blakeney Parish Council Community Grant

and a special publication, marking the event entitled **Blakeney Point: From the Point to Cley and Salthouse**, has been published by the History Centre in readiness. This is an early account of the area where Professor Oliver established his pioneering studies on the development of tidal lands. Although written nearly a century ago, the account written by Oliver and Carey still resonates today. The book is an essential guide to have as you experience the diversity of shingle, sand and mud, noting the changes that have occurred during the past century.

Looking forward to seeing you there.

Pam Peake

History Centre Dates for Diary on Back Page

Members' Opening Times for the autumn:

First Monday afternoon of each month from 2pm – 4pm
October 1st, November 5th and December 3rd


The History Centre shuts over Xmas and the New Year from December 8th 2012, reopening on Tuesday morning 10am till noon, February 5th 2013.


Autumn/Winter Programme 2012

Events

Unless stated all the meetings are in the Harbour Room at the British Legion Hall in the High Street, Blakeney starting at 7.30 pm.

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. The remaining event is marked with a 

Saturday to Tuesday
August 18-21  **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 withe 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)

Tuesday
December 11 **Cities, Cogs and Commerce:** the material culture of the North Sea World
Dr Brian Ayers (The Butrint Foundation)

Tuesday
January 29, 2013 **Members Night**
details to be announced

History Centre Diary

Opening times: first and last Tuesday morning in every month, 10am till noon, Other times by arrangement, phone 01263 740388. The History Centre is closed throughout January.

Members' Sessions on Monday afternoons, 2pm till 4pm: October 1st, November 5th and December 3rd
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

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