



# BAHS Newsletter

Number 35

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

July 2013

## More Roodery – Spring Outing to Barton Turf and Worstead



Our secretary organized another splendid outing for us on one of the beautiful days of a long awaited spring. We visited two Norfolk churches both renowned for their rood screens and especially for their beautiful painted panels.

We met up first at St Michael and All Angels at Barton Turf. The elegant tower surrounded by

large trees is impressive, as too is the vaulted north porch through which one enters but the best is yet to come; a splendid collection of hanging brass lamps and a lovely candelabra hang over the nave and beyond them is the graceful fifteenth century screen with beautifully painted and wonderfully preserved panels at its base. These show Saints Apollonia

and Sitha (or Zita) on the left and Saint Barbara on the right with nine figures between them representing the nine orders of angels of which some of us had never heard or had at least forgotten. Neil Batcock, still at that time our Rector, helped us to distinguish between Seraphim and Cherubim, Angels and Archangels etc. It was obvious that the quality of

the work had deterred sixteenth century iconoclasts from damaging the figures with the exception of one wearing a triple crown and one swinging a thurible; Papist symbols which they evidently could not accept. One couldn't help wondering why they had chosen to scratch out the faces of the offending figures rather than obliterating the crown and censer.

From St Michael's we went to the rather grander church of St Mary-the-Virgin at Worstead, entered this time not via a porch but through the priests' door in the SE corner. The interior is large and flooded with light from the large clerestory windows which were part of a late fifteenth century alteration when the fine hammer-beam roof was put on. Externally one can see the flying buttresses which had to be added to the N & S walls to take the weight and which add a touch of grandeur to this village church. The rood screen is tall and elegant but the painted panels were 'improved' in the nineteenth century and though they have since been 'unimproved' they are poor by comparison with Barton Turf. I was bewildered by the advent of a thirteenth apostle but now find that other references ascribe the figures to Christ as above, St Paul (these two panels being nineteenth century replacements) then eleven apostles plus St Jerome, St William and St Wilgefortis who I have subsequently found rejoices in more than twelve alternative names and was invoked by people particularly ladies seeking relief from tribulations such as abusive husbands.

It was altogether a well organized, enjoyable and informative day.

*Words by Frank Hawes  
Photos by Liz Kendall*

**Top: left hand panel at Barton Turf.**

**Middle: right hand panel at Barton Turf.**

**Bottom: detail of the left hand panel at Worstead.**

**Cover: the chancel at Barton Turf showing the full screen.**



# News from the History Centre

The last few months have seen the “new look” centre spring into action with approximately 42ft of additional shelving plus a custom-built unit for oversize folders and storage space for BAHS lecture equipment. Much of the funding for this project came from a BPC Community Grant, the remainder from small donations made by members and visitors. Thank you one and all.

Displayed in the Centre is the presentation model of the lifeboat ‘Hettie’ and the four volumes of Mary Hardy Diaries, all edited and annotated by Margaret Bird, together with a fifth book containing the remainder of the diaries that has not been annotated. All these items have been generously donated to the History Centre and each, in their own way, make an invaluable addition to our resources and understanding of the area.

Indeed it is the annotated notes in the diaries that have already produced significant nuggets of information for several members who are currently engaged in working their way through the text, a full half million words in all with countless photographs, maps and copies of relevant newspaper articles included. The diaries throw new light on 18th century life and in particular the villages and inhabitants of the Glaven valley. For more information visit [maryhardysdiary.co.uk](http://maryhardysdiary.co.uk) or visit the Centre.

## Summer Events

The History Centre has placed some of the boards from last year’s **Tidal Lands** exhibition in both the Methodist Chapel and the Church. These will change from time to time, so keep a look out for them. Then in August, we will be at Cley for an **Old Memorabilia Day**. See Back Page for more details.

September sees the History Centre supporting the Norwich Centre supporting the Norwich Heart, Heritage Open Days with **Ships Ahoy**. This event will use the church to showcase 500 years

of maritime history through tours and stories. The wealth of medieval graffiti will be revealed together with stories of adventure and misadventure highlighted from the churchyard plus an opportunity to see the presentation model of the lifeboat **Hettie**. For more details see our website nearer the time.

## Roots and Branches

Current Family History research and enquiries for individual people includes;

**Allen, Percy Henry** of Blakeney  
**Bilbys** of Holt, Cley, Wiveton and Blakeney

**Bishop, Hugh Arthur** father and son of India then Cley

**Craske, John** of Sheringham, Wiveton, Blakeney and Dereham  
**Durrants** of Holt, Blakeney and Cley

**Floods** of Blakeney

**Haddons** of Holt

**Kay, Dr R** of Cley and Blakeney  
**Mann, Jonathan George** of Blakeney then Australia

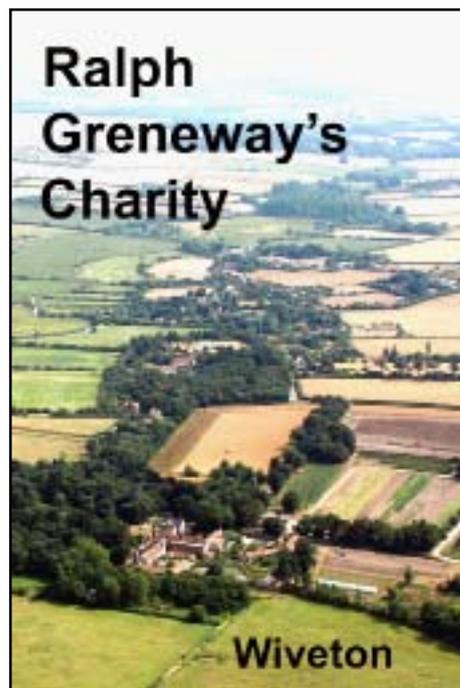
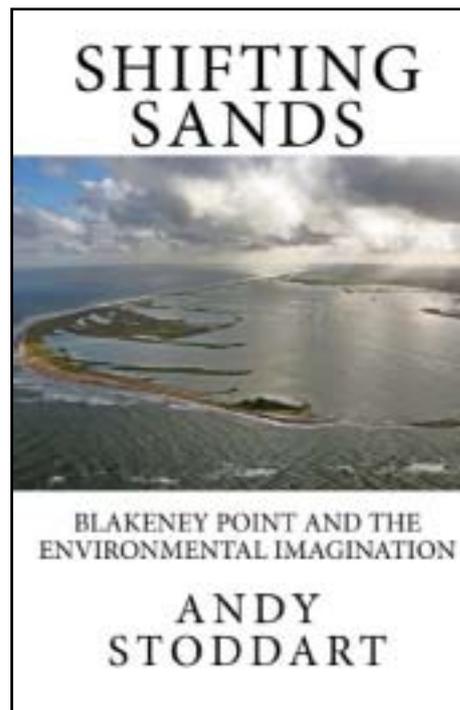
**Piercy, Jeremiah** of Blakeney, Gunthorpe and Morston.

## Just Released

The Centre has two new books for sale; **Shifting Sands: Blakeney Point and the Environmental Imagination** by Andy Stoddart at £9 and **Ralph Greneway’s Charity** by Pamela Peake at £2.50. The Point has attracted a plethora of publications over the last hundred years, but none quite like this. Here the philosophy of conservation is explored with some challenging ideas for you to ponder on. It is a softback book with 184 pages and 17 b&w plates.

Ralph Greneway was a Tudor merchant whose business as a grocer in London and family connections was outlined in Glaven Historian No.13. This new small booklet with 7 colour figures, features the history of his charity that he set up for Wiveton in 1558 as well as the family memorials that are still extant in Cley and Wiveton churches.

Pam Peake



## Mary Hardy's Diaries

This is just a reminder that a full set of Mary Hardy's Diaries, edited and annotated by Margaret Bird – a labour of love that took her twenty five years – have been given to the History Centre. These diaries represent a terrific resource, rivalling the Paston Letters and Parson Woodforde's Diaries, and are the generous gift of Margaret herself. Thank you.

# The Blakeney Lifeboat *Hettie*

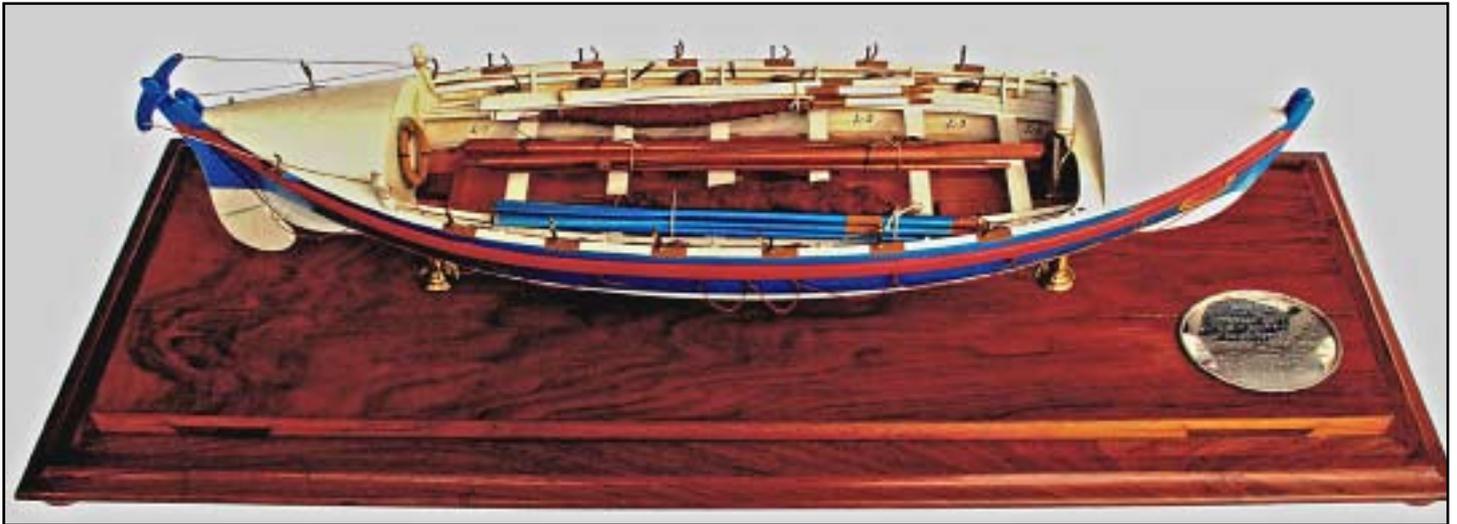


A part of Blakeney's nineteenth century maritime history has just come to light with the gift of a model of the lifeboat *Hettie* to the History Centre at Blakeney. It is a timely reminder that Blakeney had lifeboats stationed here, first under the auspices of the Norfolk Association for Saving the Lives of Shipwrecked Marines (1824-1843) followed by private boats until the tragedy of 1861 when all 8 crew lost their lives. It was at this time that the RNLI agreed to establish a station here. In all, there were five RNLI lifeboats working from the tidal harbour, covering the treacherous sands and coast beyond the bar, a station that was eventually closed in 1935 having saved 101 lives and 5 vessels.



**The lifeboat *Hettie* was the generous gift of George Firth Esq of Bradford seen here in a pastel portrait by an unknown (to us) artist. The model was kindly bequeathed to the BNHS by Firth's grand daughter Constance (left). The record of service board of the *Hettie* in Blakeney church (top left), and the contemporaneous model of the vessel herself (opposite page) which is now lodged in the History Centre.**

We are now urgently seeking upwards of £1000 funding to purchase a security case so that the *Hettie* can be displayed at various venues. Can anyone help us?



The *Hettie* was the third of five RNLI lifeboats, operating between 1873 and 1891. She was built by T Woolfe and Son at Shadwell on the Thames at a cost of £412 and arrived in Blakeney having been towed all the way by the steam boat *Black Diamond*. She was the gift of George Firth Esq, a wealthy Bradford Stuff Merchant and in return he received a wonderful scaled model of the *Hettie* from the Institution as a mark of their appreciation. Whilst the actual lifeboat has now almost vanished from memory, the model has survived, passing down through three generations of the Firth family over the intervening 140 years. It has now been gifted to the History Centre by the late Constance Firth, George's grand daughter whose dearest wish was that it should henceforth belong to Blakeney.

We know so little about the *Hettie* apart from essential details

of her construction; she was a self righting lifeboat measuring 37' x 9' 5" with 12 oars – a record of 4 launches with 12 lives saved – then the names of her first and second coxswains, William Hooke and George Long respectively. There are no known photographs of the *Hettie* and the names of her crew are a complete mystery so it is going to be quite a challenge working it all out, if indeed it is at all possible.

The model is a good starting point for the detail provided by the scale and original colouring is exciting with sets of different coloured oars, furled sails and masts at the ready as well as her early logo proclaiming that the *National Lifeboat Institution* is *Supported by Voluntary Contributions*. The model thus provides a visual clue to her appearance.

Today, the only tangible evidence to remind us of these lifeboats and their heroic deeds are

the two lifeboat houses on the Point with the older of the two (where the *Hettie* was housed) to the rear, the Fitzroy barometer at the bottom of the High Street, the records of service boards in the parish church and now the model in the History Centre at the rear of Blakeney Village Hall.

The *Hettie* may be viewed at the History Centre on the first and last Tuesday morning of each month between 10.30 am and 1 pm. If you have any information that you would like to share with us concerning the *Hettie*, or indeed any of the lifeboats, then please contact the Manager, Pam Peake

T: 01263 740388 or  
E: [historycentre@history-blakeney-area.org.uk](mailto:historycentre@history-blakeney-area.org.uk)

*Pam Peake*

## Officer and Committee Members' Contact Details (Officers \*)

Peter Wordingham, Chairman\* E: [peterword@btinternet.com](mailto:peterword@btinternet.com) T: 01263 570183  
 Diana Cooke, Secretary\* E: [secretary@history-blakeney-area.org.uk](mailto:secretary@history-blakeney-area.org.uk) T: 01263 740320  
 Richard Daley, Treasurer\* E: [treasurer@history-blakeney-area.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@history-blakeney-area.org.uk) T: 01263 740180  
 Jenn Savage, Membership Secretary E: [membership@history-blakeney-area.org.uk](mailto:membership@history-blakeney-area.org.uk) T: 01263 710288  
 Pamela Peake, History Centre Manager\* & Vice Chairman E: [peakeblk8@btinternet.com](mailto:peakeblk8@btinternet.com) T: 01263 740388  
 Ian Groves, Lecture Prog Organiser\* E: [lecture.programme@history-blakeney-area.org.uk](mailto:lecture.programme@history-blakeney-area.org.uk) T: 01263 713351  
 Richard Moore, Meetings Organiser E: [moores11@btinternet.com](mailto:moores11@btinternet.com) T: 01263 712748  
 John Peake E: [peakeblk8@btinternet.com](mailto:peakeblk8@btinternet.com) T: 01263 740388  
 Richard Kelham, Publications\* E: [richard\\_kelham@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:richard_kelham@yahoo.co.uk) Tel: 01263 740186  
 Frank Hawes E: [francishawes@btinternet.com](mailto:francishawes@btinternet.com) T: 01263 740691  
 Jan Semple E: [jansemple@hotmail.com](mailto:jansemple@hotmail.com) T: 01263 860741  
 Geoff and Brenda Worton, Minutes Secretaries E: [worton567@btinternet.com](mailto:worton567@btinternet.com) Tel: 01263 715503

History Centre Sub-Committee co-optees: Sara Dobson, Jean Thompson

*Glaven Historian* Editorial: Charles Bradshaw, Frank Hawes, Richard Kelham, Raymond Monbiot, Will Savage

# Serious Aircraft Accident at Morston, 1934



Following the piece about Hubert Blount's aeroplane in the last Newsletter, we received this letter and photo from Marcus Wainwright.

*In August 1934 my family had been lent a lovely old caravan by a farmer in Morston whose name, I think, was Mr Turner. Other members of the family were staying in Grandma's cottage at Greencroft, Blakeney. My brother and I were much more excited to be in a caravan which is perhaps why my memory is so clear about the events of that tragic day.*

*I was 4 and my brother 7. We were playing by the old sheep bridge that used to span the creek approximately opposite where the Blakeney-Morston bank ends some distance to the right of the present NT building. We saw a very bright blue plane fly across the marshes and land on the Point sands between the Pit and the Point.*

*Some time a little later it took off and flew towards us over the marshes, losing height and then crashing in the field about a hundred yards from our caravan. Both my parents were nearby and rushed over to help. My mother*

*who was a nurse, having been Theatre Sister at Charing Cross Hospital before she married, immediately went into professional mode and rendered first aid.*

*There were two occupants. Both were very seriously hurt. My father went to get further help while my mother did what she could for one of the injured and then attended the other who shortly after died in her arms. His name was Peter Symonds. His mother got in touch with my mother and they met and remained friends for many years. I never got to know the name of the other occupant but I understand he survived. Peter Symonds, we understood, was a friend of Peter Scott the famous naturalist who also came frequently to the Blakeney area.*

*The photo was taken, I think, by my father on an old Brownie camera and is from the family history recorded in the Log of the Good Ship Gipsy Lass.*

The story unfolds further with information from a variety of sources held at the History Centre. Firstly the newspapers report that the Inquest was held at the Anchor Inn, Morston, the

following Monday, 25 August 1934. The passenger, Mr Peter Hilary Pomeroy Simonds, an RAF officer stationed at Bircham Newton, was killed almost instantly. The pilot and owner of the Moth, Mr T J Armstrong Evans, suffered multiple injuries and was taken to Cromer Hospital. The plane was completely wrecked.

Seemingly the plane had landed on Blakeney golf links and with children playing everywhere, it was decided to park elsewhere. Permission was sought to use Ellis Turner's field in Morston and PO Simonds offered to direct the way. The newspapers go on to record that Dr Kay rendered first aid and that Acting Sergeant Risebrow of the local police guarded the machine as it was visited by hundreds of people.

Other sources reveal that Peter Simonds was in Blakeney for the 21st birthday celebrations of Nicholas Cooke, the tragedy causing the event to be cancelled, and that Peter was staying at the Anchor Inn. Ironically, six years later, Nicholas Cooke was himself killed while flying on patrol somewhere near Dunkirk.

*Pamela Peake*

# Mystery Photo



**Blakeney Musicians, can you help? The photograph is supposedly a Blakeney Band with Emerson Short(en)ing standing far right and sporting his customary straw boater. Sitting second from the right end is Herbert Smith, the renowned fiddler and blacksmith. Emerson was a Blakeney builder and Churchwarden. In the late 1890s he built Cley Town Hall and then the new look George on the corner. Can anyone confirm these two or indeed any of the other musicians? Answers to Pam Peake please, 01263 740388. Thank you.**

## Obituary: Mike Stammers

Following our slightly snuffy review of Mike Stammers' latest book, *Victorian North Norfolk Sailing Ships*, in NL34 – we came away with the distinct impression the book had been rushed into print – we have discovered that indeed the author was in a race, against the Grim Reaper, and that the GR won. Sadly, Mike passed away on the 30 January.

I would like to quote from the fullsome obituary published by the National Historic Ships website as this sums it up nicely: "in spite of a fiendishly busy professional life as a museum leader,

*[he] possessed a seemingly indefatigable ability to get the results of his scholarly research into print and out to his many readers. Mike wore his learning very lightly and with an endearing modesty, but his record of publications for someone in his position is simply awesome, and includes besides numerous short articles and essays on local craft, docks, harbours, dock-side buildings and other maritime structures and on local seafaring folklore, definitive works of international scholarship in maritime history and nautical archaeology which will unquestionably stand the test of time."*

He also had a major role to play in ship preservation in his role as Keeper, later Keeper Emeritus, of Merseyside Maritime Museum, setting the standard for the

care of vessels in the Museum's care. Alas such high standards are rarely to be found elsewhere.

He was also a friend to, and long standing member of, the Blakeney Area Historical Society so it is with particular regret that we record his passing.

A much more comprehensive appreciation will appear in the *Mariners' Mirror*, the Journal of the Society for Nautical Research.

*Richard Kelham*

Editor: Richard Kelham  
T: 01263 740186  
E: richard\_kelham@yahoo.co.uk

All text © 2013  
BAHS and Contributors

# Autumn/Winter Programme 2013

## Events

**All the following meetings are on Tuesdays 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.

- 24 September**            **Cities, Cogs and Commerce**  
*Dr Brian Ayers, UEA*
- 29 October**            **Recent coin finds from the Iron Age to Post Medieval period**  
*Dr Adrian Marsden, Shirehall Museum*
- 26 November**        **Pathways to History: researching public rights of way in Norfolk**  
*Dr Sarah Spooner and Dr Jon Gregory of the UEA*
- 17 December**        **The Yellow Caravan - a trip round Norfolk in 1912**  
*Juliet Webster*
- 28 January 2014**    **Members' Night**  
details to be announced
- 

## History Centre Diary: New opening hours

The History Centre is open on the first and last Tuesday mornings of the month from 10.30am to 1.00pm. Other times may be arranged for a small charge always providing that a volunteer is available. See contact details below.

The Centre will be closed during December and January.

Anyone wishing to use maps, film or fiche readers is advised to book in advance and reserve table space and or relevant reader. Telephone 01263 740388, email [historycentre@history-blakeney-area.org.uk](mailto:historycentre@history-blakeney-area.org.uk) or write to the History Centre, Blakeney Village Hall, Langham Road, Blakeney, Norfolk NR25 7NP. Remember when writing to enclose a SAE to receive confirmation of your booking.

---

## Summer Events

- Weekends beginning  
July 27th  
Aug 10th & 24th  
Sep 14th & 28th  
Oct 12th
- Tidal Lands** continued  
Café TMC, Blakeney Methodist Church  
High Street, Blakeney  
10.00am to 6ish
- Saturday  
August 17th
- Cley Old Memorabilia Day**  
Cley Village Hall, The Fairstead  
10.00am to 4.00pm
- September  
12th to 15th
- Ships Ahoy**  
Blakeney Church – Heritage Open Days  
Celebrating 500 years of maritime history with medieval church graffiti, stories from headstones and Blakeney Lifeboats. Tours and exhibits. 2.00 - 4.00pm

**More information available on: [www.history-blakeney-area.org.uk](http://www.history-blakeney-area.org.uk)**