



# BAHS Newsletter

Number 37

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

July 2014



# Spring Outing 2014: Gunton Sawmill...



*Top: the frame saw carriage with timber to be cut.  
Above left: the lake that feeds the mill. Gunton Hall is in the distance behind the trees.  
Above right: the mill header pond which is fed via a sluice gate prior to starting the wheel. Water here is about 3 feet deep.  
Front cover: more machinery.*

On Monday 12th May, sixteen members of the BAHS set off for the water-powered Sawmill in Gunton Park. The rain held off and we were welcomed by Barré Funnell and his enthusiastic band of volunteers. Our visit began with a short climb up to the Lake behind the Mill; from here we could see the dam which held back the water needed to power the wheel. Once back under cover, the water was released and we watched, in some amazement, as the Saw chugged its way along the length of a 12 foot lime log to create a long, even plank of wood. The whole process took about 40 minutes.

This historic Mill was built in the early days of the Industrial Revolution, between 1821 & 1824. It served the needs of the Estate for a hundred years until after the first world war, when it was replaced by a horse-drawn portable steam engine.

Subsequently, the Watermill fell into disrepair and the skilled craftsmen who had looked after it became redundant. A circular frame-saw, powered by steam, continued to be used until the mid-Thirties. During the second world war, when there was great demand for timber, a steam-powered sawmill was set up outside the building and operated with the help of a Scotch Derrick crane.

The mill is open to the public on the last Sunday afternoon of the month, April to September.

After such a fascinating display the Group needed some lunch, for which we went to the Erpingham Arms. Here we enjoyed a good meal in a relaxed setting, whilst it rained outside!

With our batteries re-charged, we drove to St Mary's Church where a churchwarden, Mrs Helen Burrell, kindly greeted us. She gave us an interesting talk about the history of the Church. This is bound up with the story of Sir Thomas Erpingham whose surname features around the top of the tower. He was in charge of the famous longbow archers at the Battle of Agincourt (600th Anniversary to be celebrated next year).

Our last stop was the Calthorpe Church of Our Lady & St Margaret

## ...and a Church or two



which, along with Erpingham Church, is in the Scarrowbeck Benefice. As at St Nicholas in Blakeney, the chancel dates back to the 13th century. There were some original Laudian communion rails and, at the west end, a fine looking 15th century font. It was interesting to make the connection between Calthorpe church and the early Calthorpe family who, several generations later, were to be so influential in the coastal villages of the Glaven Valley.

*Diana Cooke*

***View down the nave of St Mary's church, Erpingham showing the Victorian rood screen and cross. The church is unusual in that it has an aisle on the south side but nothing on the north. It also has a 15th century tower with set of working bells. As well as a fine 13th century parish chest, with its three locks, the church has acquired a number of interesting relics from other Norfolk churches including the font from St Benedict's in Norwich.***

# News from the History Centre

## Summer Openings

In a bold move this year, the History Centre will open every Tuesday morning during the months of July, August and September from 10.30am to 1.00pm. If these hours are not suitable then it may be possible to arrange an opening at an alternative time, for a small fee, and as always, subject to the availability of a volunteer. Simply phone 01263 740388 to make arrangements.

The Centre now holds thousands of records, books, family history folders, cuttings, maps, and photographs relevant to Salthouse, Cley, Blakeney, Wiveton, Morston and all neighbouring parishes inland to Letheringsett. People and places, from medieval to modern, are well represented and this is certainly the place to make enquiries and start your research.

## September Outing

Another activity later this summer will be an afternoon 'walk and talk' exploring the evolution of the Merchant House, once part of the Page and Turner estates, in the very heart of Blakeney High Street.

Page and Turner were business partners, the last of the Blakeney shipping magnates, following in the footsteps of the Temples, Breretons, Robert Wells and Augustus Hill. At their zenith, these properties extended from New Road in the west to Back Lane in the east. The walk will begin with the Merchant's House, the first Page home, exploring how the property grew in size from 1769 then contracted in the 20th century, as fortune waxed and waned.

Moving up the High Street, the 'walk and talk' will widen out to explore properties such as Ponds Court, the Methodist Chapel, Blakeney Neighbourhood cottages and the Nora Clogstoun/John Wallace connection before arriving at the last merchant house, the Turner home, for afternoon tea.



### **Follow the connection, all will be explained on the Summer**

**Outing:** *Thaxters of Holt (above left), end of the line for Page and Turner Seed Merchants where both their names and business can just be seen painted on the bricks. This was their last commercial office as they ceased trading in 1922. The Merchant's House (above right) in the heart of the High Street, Blakeney, home of Randle Brereton some 200 years ago when he added the fine Georgian front then, more latterly, the home of Martin Fountain Page.*

Date, time and cost are on the Back Page. Please note that you should secure your place early to avoid disappointment as numbers must be strictly limited and afternoon teas booked in advance.

## World War 1

In 1998, on the 80th anniversary of the end of the Great War, Mary Ferroussat began a series of articles that were published in the *Glaven Historian* nos 1, 2 and 3. All are currently available to read on our website [www.history-blakeney-area.org.uk](http://www.history-blakeney-area.org.uk).

- the first article listed Blakeney War Memorials and the names of servicemen commemorated thereon.
- the next, a list of War Memorials in Cley, Wiveton, Glandford and Letheringsett, together with a Summary Table listing all those who died in WWI with brief biographical details for each man.
- the final article was a summary of what was known about local men from Blakeney, Letheringsett and Wiveton – but not Cley – who served and died in WWII.

At the time Mary Ferroussat was careful to note that the information for WWI was neither necessarily complete nor correct con-

sequently there were uncertainties and gaps, furthermore, the true identity of a few servicemen has remained unresolved till this day, 100 years on. Nevertheless it was an excellent start at a time when the information was not so readily available.

Surely, with so much information now available on the web, there can be no better time than now to make a determined effort to identify everyone on the memorials and thus honour their contribution. The History Centre is also compiling a log of all those servicemen and women who survived. It is their legacy and our heritage that we are honouring.

So if you have a relative who was born, lived or had a family connection to any of our local parishes and served in WWI and would like their name to be placed on record, please contact Pam Peake on 01263 740388 or post/leave information at the History Centre together with your contact details. Thank you.

Later in the year, you will be able to follow our progress by visiting the BAHS display boards in the north aisle of Blakeney Church. These boards will form a small, ever changing exhibition that will run till 2018. They will highlight various aspects of the

**(continued on page 7)**

# Zeppelins over Bayfield

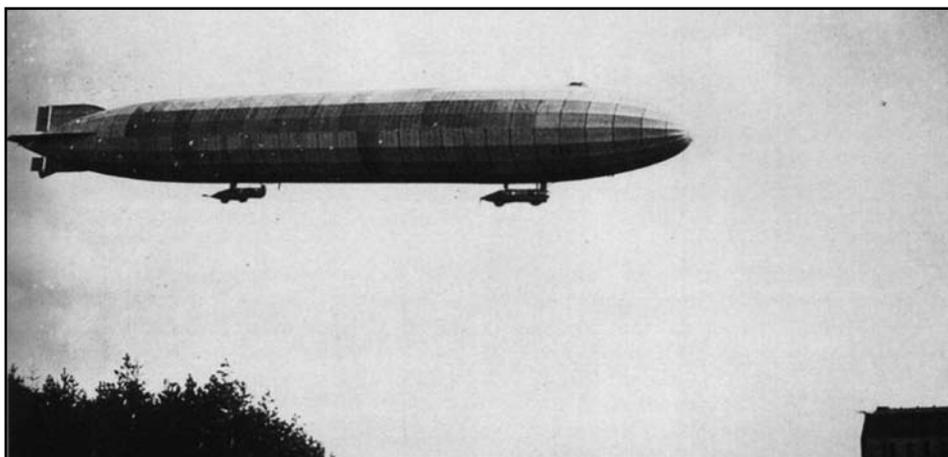
The recent screening of the television documentary covering the Zeppelin bombing of Great Britain during WW1 highlighted the East Coast as a part of the new 'civilian' front line. The first raid involved two Zeppelins, L3 and L4. L3 bombed Great Yarmouth during the night of 19th January 1915 and L4 Kings Lynn. The Zeppelin raid proved to be an unexpected and terrifying development of warfare against the British mainland that the navy was expected to defend. Initially there was no defence.

A war diary attributed to Edith Upcher of Sheringham Hall recorded a Zeppelin raid on the North Norfolk coast (NRO UPC 188, 642 x 2 25 Feb 1916-23 Mar 1916):

*"Perhaps the Zeppelin raid makes a good landmark — or war mark — at which to begin.*

*January 31 1916: Feeling weary, tumbled on to my bed after late lunch on return from Hospital, and slept like a log. Woke up, room rather unusually dark. Elizabeth came in. 'Is it time yet, time to get up?' Tea time and an hour after, and didn't you hear that horrid thing go over?' There being only one 'horrid thing that goes over' I got out of bed dressed and went to Drawing room for cold tea. Father, mother, Lily quite 'normal conditions' I could see having heard nothing. The servants had heard the Zeppelin and also seen it going quite low over the wood near the house.*

*I made no remark but in an hour's time heard a suspicious purring of engines, though not like the threshing machine noises of late 1915. Lil, father and I exchanged glances. The noise became more distant, seemed following the coast for a bit, then - crash, bang, shake, a loud explosion, every door and window in the house struggling to break free, another and another — then louder. Mother thought first of a Naval Engagement but we told her it was Zeppelins and at first thought of our guns firing at it. We knew that bombs were being hurled from the*



*sky somewhere in Holt direction. A lull in the banging then Harman's quiet voice at the door asking 'what about the jewelry'. Very thoughtful but what a comparative value jewelry seemed to have when one felt what are the bombs doing and whose turn next."*

The bombs dropped by this Zeppelin fell around Bayfield Lodge, most in the fields where they made 8 large holes in which 22 men could stand. Defence against this new threat appeared to have been distinctly amateurish. Edith was told that the guns on the cliff and at Bodham had failed to go off 'so they had to have a man from London who knew more about guns than what the soldiers do'. An anti-aircraft party was said to have panicked and fled to Holt, leaving their searchlight turned on at Holt Lodge! (NRO, UPC 188). A schoolboy writing home to his parents in Ipswich gave his account of the raid;

*"We were just going out of the last lesson at 6 o'clock and were going out to tea, when we heard a buzzing and ----- told us that a Zeppelin had been sighted at 4 pm in broad daylight, but they had done no damage. We came out of tea at 6.30 and we went out to see what was happening. We heard the Zeppelin plainly, and suddenly a bomb burst about 2 miles away; then eleven more all in succession, so quickly that it seemed one bright flash. Then we saw some more flashes, and we counted twenty-four. We went off to see the damage next day and lots of boys found pieces of bomb. One house had all the windows broken and half the slates off. The only casualties were three sheep, one heron, thirty sparrows and a pig'.*

The EDP of November 23rd 1963 published a letter in a series about the Zeppelin raids "Miss Appleton moved to Weybourne in 1916 and in May witnessed a Zeppelin brought down in flames in the sea, one airman was dragged ashore and was later buried at Weybourne."

In the days before Radar, the only way to have advanced warning of bombing raids, whether by enemy ships or from the air, was physically to keep watch. The church towers along the Norfolk coast were ideal for this, and the best watchers were boy scouts, their printed diaries included images of allied and enemy aircraft for identification purposes.

One of the boy scouts, William Glew kept a diary of his watching work at Morston and Blakeney in 1918. Typical entries read:

*14th March: 6-8 Watch - saw 3 Hospital Ships*

*3rd April: 6-8 Watch - Saw airship, Went for row. Saw monitor. Signaling with OP soldiers*

*17th May: Camp Orderly. Saw flying boat, 2 monitors & obs balloon. Cooked outside (NRO, MC 266/1)*

The last Zeppelin of the war to be brought down in August 1918 was L70, shot down over Wells by a DH4 flown by Major Cadbury. Peter Strasser, Chief of the Naval Airship Division and the driving force behind the German airship programme was on board L70 and perished with his crew.

Zeppelins made a total of twelve raids on London and forty more over the rest of the country, killing 500 people and injuring 1100.

*Peter Wordingham*

# Blakeney Bee Bole



There is an unusual recess in the orchard which my late husband's family purchased back in 1929. Until recently, it was hidden by a massive *escalonía* hedge. We tried, with others, to guess what it was – a bread oven, a privy, somewhere to sit – but none of the suggestions seemed quite right.

About three years ago, I was reading a newspaper article about an old property which had some bee-boles in the cellar. The description made me wonder whether they were similar to the one in my orchard. A while later, I searched 'bee-boles' on the internet and, to my surprise, up popped the International Bee Research Association. They had a Register of over 1500 bee-boles, with a dozen in Norfolk. The majority are in Kent (no doubt because of all their orchards) and

Cumbria (maybe for protection from the frequent rain). There was plenty of useful information and I learnt that Bole is a Gaelic word, meaning recess in a wall.

I was excited that my funny recess might be a bee-bole and this was confirmed by three common characteristics. Bee-boles usually face south-east to encourage the bees to fly out as early as possible in the morning to search for nectar. Secondly, there were smoke marks on the inside brickwork; this was most likely the result of smoke-guns being used to pacify the bees. Thirdly, the recess was the right size for a skep – an old fashioned bee-hive usually made of coiled straw.

The purpose of the bee-bole, it turned out, was to keep the skep dry and well-aired. For added protection in winter, a few boles had doors. Alternatively, skeps

would be stored in sheds or in cellar-boles, as described in the newspaper article. The shape of a bee-bole was, variously, a rectangle, square or dome like alcove.

There was, however, only one bole in my garden and this was queried by the IBBA. Their registered bee-boles are usually in rows of 3, 5, 7 or more. In the era of follies and monuments, some Estates even designed exotic houses for their bee-boles. Subsequently, I learnt that many smaller gardens had single examples but, like my family, people did not know why they were there and they were often left to fall into disrepair. Or they were destroyed because, by the late 19th century, the modern stacked bee-hive frame began to be adopted and bee-boles gradually became redundant.

So, during the summer months when you are looking round gardens, keep an eye open for 'an unusual recess'!

*Diana Cooke*

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## Birds, Beasts and Monsters

*by Margaret Forrester  
25 February 2014.*

Members and visitors at a well-attended lecture by Margaret Forrester were rewarded with a most informative and well-illustrated talk on Birds, Beasts and Monsters as portrayed in medieval art. A major part of the talk concerned the medieval bestiary, but time was given to explore the historical background of the bestiary and how the concept of monsters portrayed in art and literature continued after the close of the Middle Ages.

Margaret started with a slide showing very life-like birds, painted in the 5th century AD. She explained that Classical authorities were used to seeing wild animals and birds from all parts of the Roman Empire when they were brought to Rome and exhibited in contests at the amphitheatres. Following the fall of the empire, artists' portrayals of animals and birds was increasingly imaginative rather than realistic.

The Christian church adopted animals to represent saints, with 3 of the 4 gospel authors being thus identified: St. Mark by the lion (the king of beasts), St. John by the eagle (the king of birds) and St. Luke by the ox. The lion and the eagle became semi-religious symbols of imperial power, the eagle being adopted by the royal families of Germany, Austria and Russia. Margaret explained that mythical beasts were incorporated into this iconography as well because astrology was considered part of astronomy, and the use of animal symbols to recognise groups of stars and the signs of the zodiac dates back into antiquity.

From an English perspective, the Venerable Bede wrote about natural history as well as human history, and his works were copied throughout the medieval period. Many documents from the medieval period contain images of birds and beasts, both real and mythical, even when their main subject matter is not related to these creatures. A good example is the Bayeux Tapestry, where the borders contain images of many creatures from as far away as Persia.

The basis of the medieval bestiary appears to originate from Alexandria in North Africa, and many of the animals depicted were local to that area, as were the stories associated with them. In the 7th century AD, St. Isidore of Seville produced his monumental work "Etymologiae", an abridgement of much classical writing, in which man's dominion of God's creatures is classified with the animals placed into groups depending on their role in Christian creation. In 2002, St. Isidore was created patron saint of the internet by the Roman Catholic church.

By the 12th century, the bestiary had taken on the form it was to maintain throughout the medieval period. About 65 bestiaries survive, and 50 of these were made in England. One of the best of these is the Aberdeen bestiary, dating from about 1200, which can be easily accessed online at this address: <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/bestiary/bestiary.hti>.

Using illustrations from this bestiary and others, Margaret

showed how a number of animals were depicted and told the stories behind the pictures. Too many animals were shown for all to be described in this short piece. Many depictions of elephants were seen – the elephant presenting artists with difficulty because, after the elephant from Bagdad gifted to Charlemagne in the 9th century, none were seen in Europe until the 13th century. According to the bestiary, the elephant's only enemy was the dragon, which tried to defeat the elephant by entwining the elephant's hind legs with its tail, but when the elephant fell on top of the dragon, the dragon was killed. Elephants were thought to have no desire to copulate unless the female selected a special plant for her and a bull to eat; also, that she gave birth in water, for protection from dragons, with the bull standing guard over them. The Christian morals of these stories were the innocence of the elephants (similar to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden before they ate the apple), and the triumph of innocence over the evil dragon (representing the devil). The depiction of elephants with castles (howdahs) appears to be a memory of war elephants, handed down from Classical antiquity.

There is no good medieval depiction of the crocodile, and the story of the beaver being chased by hunting dogs very rarely has a good representation of the unfortunate beaver. Many hunting stories are illustrated in the bestiary, with the wily hunter being able to make his escape from a frustrated animal. From the 12th century on, there are a number of increasingly accurate drawings of animals and birds which show close observation in the field. Unfortunately, the stories attached to the drawings are not always as knowledgeable. Gerald of Wales' tour of Ireland produced the legend of the barnacle geese who, it was thought, grew on trees. This idea stemmed from seeing a type of mussel growing on driftwood, and which looked like a goose, and the fact that nobody in Ireland had seen a young barnacle goose because they are born in the Arctic.

Monsters – deformed humans with no heads, one leg or other deformities – were added at the end of bestiaries. The Roman author Pliny had stated that monsters inhabited remote parts of the world. St. Augustine had debated the authenticity of monsters and other strange animals; he accepted there were such beings, and determined that they were God's creatures and had souls and would eventually be converted to Christianity. A number of interesting slides of the Hereford Mappa Mundi showed monsters occupying the outer reaches of the world next to The Ocean.

Monsters feature in the late medieval period, being mentioned by Marco Polo, and also as one of the principal subjects of the book of the travels of Sir John Mandeville, which was a best-seller in the 14th and 15th centuries. A monster warrants a mention in Shakespeare's Othello, which was written in the 17th century.

As stated at the beginning of my review, this was a very absorbing lecture, with superb illustrations, and was enjoyed by an audience who warmly showed their thanks to Margaret for a most entertaining evening.

*M J Medlar*

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#### ***(continued from page 4)***

war as it impinged on both service men and women and the local villages, culminating with the epic lifeboat rescues of 1918. This was achieved by the *Caroline*, manned by a crew with an average age of 58 years, and is just one example of those who stayed behind and manned essential services.

For those unable to get to Blakeney then follow progress by visiting our website and following the links to WWI.

#### **Roots and Branches**

Current Family History research and enquiries for individual people includes:

**Piercy** of Blakeney and Cley  
**Baynes** of Cley and Thornage  
**Gidney** of Wiveton, Langham and Warham

**Ackerman** of Blakeney  
**Lynn** of Blakeney  
**Spooner** of Blakeney

# Autumn Programme 2014

## Lectures

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 fees for the coming year are under discussion as the cost of speakers and the hire of the Harbour Room have risen dramatically.

- 30 September**      **Brian Hedges: North Norfolk through Old Photographs**  
*Drawing on his extensive collection of photographs Brian will explore some features of local villages.*
- 28 October**        **Andrew England: World War One – a North Norfolk Miscellany**  
*Andrew will use examples from a variety of sources, including local war memorials, to illustrate stories behind the people who fought and died.*
- 25 November**     **Mike Bridges: Services, Printing and Chocolate Industry in a Norfolk Market Town: the story of Fakenham.**
- 16 December**     **Mardle Night: short lecture and exhibits.**  
*Rob Coleman: Stage Managing the Landscape Humphrey Repton's work in Sheringham Park and the NT's role in preserving it today.*
- 27 January 2015**   **Four Short Talks – Member's Night**  
*Richard Jefferson: Stanley Webster's War*  
*Will Savage: Shipwrecks and plunder*  
*John Peake: Serendipity – a Nelson Connection*  
*Pam Peake: 18th Century Cley*

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## History Centre Diary

**July, August, September:** every Tuesday morning 10.30am till 1.00pm

**October, November:** first and last Tuesdays only, times as above

**December, January:** closed

Researchers and visitors wishing to use maps, film or fiche readers are strongly advised to book in advance and reserve space as both equipment and table space are limited. Special openings at other times are strictly by prior arrangement. Arrangements can be made by phone 01263 740388, by writing to the History Centre, Blakeney Village Hall, Langham Road, Blakeney, Norfolk NR25 7PG (Remember to include a SAE for confirmation).

## Summer Outing

**The Merchant houses in the heart of Blakeney High Street.** A House History 'walk and talk' exploring the evolution of the Merchant House estate, and close neighbours, over the past 250 years. See **History Centre News** for more information.

**Saturday afternoon, 6 September; 2.00pm till approx 5.30pm**

**Cost £10.00** includes a pot tea/coffee (cake/scone is extra)

**Bookings:** please phone 01263 740388, thank you

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

Peter Wordingham, Chairman\* E: chairman@history-blakeney-area.org.uk T: 01263 570183

Diana Cooke, Secretary\* E: secretary@history-blakeney-area.org.uk T: 01263 740320

Richard Daley, Treasurer\* E: treasurer@history-blakeney-area.org.uk T: 01263 740180

Jenn Savage, Membership Secretary E: membership@history-blakeney-area.org.uk T: 01263 710288

Pamela Peake, History Centre Manager\* E: historycentre@history-blakeney-area.org.uk T: 01263 740388

vacant Lecture Prog Organiser\* E: lecture.programme@history-blakeney-area.org.uk

John Peake E: peakeblk8@btinternet.com T: 01263 740388

Richard Kelham, Publications\* E: publications@history-blakeney-area.org.uk Tel: 01263 740186

Jan Semple E: jansemple@hotmail.com T: 01263 860741

Geoff and Brenda Worton, Minutes Secretaries E: worton567@btinternet.com Tel: 01263 715503

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

Glaven Historian Editorial: Charles Bradshaw, Tim Fawcett, Frank Hawes, Raymond Monbiot, Will Savage