

# BLAKENEY AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Newsletter No. 5

June 1999

Dear Members,

This Newsletter has some notes about recent events, lists some diary dates for the next few months and also has some requests for information. Efforts are still being made to convert the proposed Archive and Reading Room from pipedream to reality and some help with possible funding sources would be appreciated. The second issue of *The Glaven Historian* is now ready and 67 pages of text and illustrations ought to persuade you to renew your subscriptions for 1999/2000: just £5 on 1<sup>st</sup> July to Eunice Wordingham, please.

## RECENT EVENTS

The last of the winter clubnights was in February when **Kate Sussams** of the Castle Museum gave a talk about metal detecting. There were trays of metal finds to see but the main emphasis of the talk was on the improving relationship between detectorists and archaeologists. Norfolk's Iron Age expert, the late Tony Gregory, had been a pioneer (and a much-abused one) in trying to overcome the suspicions of both parties, and the success of his policy is now seen in the County's extensive record of finds. Each year some 15,000 objects are brought into the Museum for identification and recording, 95% of them from metal detectorists. In recent decades deep ploughing has brought more metal objects to the surface where they corrode more rapidly as a result of greater contact with oxygen and chemicals. The quicker the metal is removed from the ploughsoil the better, though deeper material in situ is better protected. Whilst finds remain the property of the landowner, it is essential that they are reported to the archaeologists so that their precise location and description can be recorded in the Sites and Monuments Record. The co-operation between the Museum Service and Norfolk detectorists has provided a model for similar schemes in other counties, organised by Roger Bland of the British Museum. In Norfolk the need now is for better liaison with landowners.

In March, the miller at **Letheringsett Watermill**, Mike Thurlow, gave us an excellent tour and talk. Relatively little is known about the early history of the mill on this site – the first one built about 1799 was burnt down – and there seem to be no early photographs of the present building. Mike recounted in his inimitable style his experiences since 1987 when he took over the semi-derelict mill and began its renovation. His initial knowledge was nil so he had to learn very quickly from the few surviving watermills, from textbooks and from trial and error – though making errors could be very expensive. The mill makes flour from local wheat, including spelt, and blends varieties for better flavour. It was a pity that only ten members attended, but you will still have the opportunity to hear Mike again at the AGM in September.

## THE EYE PROJECT

The previous Newsletter described the project which Society members have been carrying out at Blakeney Eye where there are some earthworks believed to be the remains of a medieval chapel. The planned programme of fieldwork has now been completed and some very rapid analysis of the main surveys has enabled Peter Carnell to write up an article for *The Glaven Historian*. There is so much more that could be done at the site that Peter was reluctant to call a halt, but it is important now to consider the results and try to improve on the initial interpretation that it might well have been a medieval chapel of some kind. One intriguing find is the presence of slate adjacent to the building – did it once have a slate roof? If so, it was a rare example, for slate was an expensive way of roofing a building in medieval times and few private householders could afford it. We would like to know more about early slate roofs – are there any early local buildings which have, or had, slate roofs? Is there evidence that any of the Friary buildings had slate roofs? Documents show that there was also a building on Cley Eye – what is known about this? Some maps even call it a chapel. We should like to have more documentary references to both Blakeney (or Thornham's)

Eye and Cley Eye (both of which are in Cley parish). Does anyone know of any link between the chapel and the Friary?

The article in the Journal suggests that the chapel had a part to play in the wartime coastal defences. Does anyone recall the Eye during the last war, or know how the defences were constructed and later removed? Are there any photographs of the Eye at this time? Does anyone have photos of any buildings on Blakeney or Cley Eyes? What about the prisoner of war camp? Did the golf course reach onto the Eye? Are there records of it or any photos? There is much that can be recorded about the Eye and its 'chapel' but only if people are willing to make available the information they have.

## **MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE ACTION**

### **Reading and Archive Room**

You may remember that the Blakeney Village Hall Committee plans to build a small extension to the NE corner of the Hall order to make more storage and workshop space available to village organisations. The lack of sufficient funding, however, still prevents a start. Three applications have been made to various Lottery Grant Aid organisations and to the Rural Community Council but all have been unsuccessful. Since the last rejection the plans have been pared down further to reduce the costs. The simplified layout now gives the opportunity for individual users to approach specialist grant funders. The Society has accepted the offer of space for a Reading and Archive Room in which to provide a direct service to members and the general public. The Society is actively pursuing funds with one success to date: the Norfolk Coast Project can make up to £500 available towards set-up costs. An application to the Heritage Fund is in progress.

The Village Hall and other organisations (including this Society) have already pledged funds amounting to c.70% of the costs of the building project. At least £10,000 more is needed before it can go ahead, on the understanding that the smaller scheme anticipates much voluntary work in some of the labour-intensive areas (eg painting and decorating). Structural work must be undertaken by professional contractors.

In anticipation of a successful outcome the Society has taken advantage of equipment disposals following office closures and now has a number of plan-tables, filing cabinets and bookcases which the Archivist is using. If any members have knowledge of possible funders it would be appreciated if they would contact the Committee, or better still, offer to help with the fund-raising.

### **Next UEA Course**

The UEA has decided that it cannot provide the course originally suggested by the Society (Rural Norfolk 1600-1850) but has offered a course by Robin Lucas on the building materials used in the County before railways made bulk transport so much easier. No details about the course are available yet but it will take place in the Methodist Chapel this autumn, probably in the evenings and possibly on Mondays. Look out for further information in the Glaven Valley Newsletter.

### ***The Glaven Historian***

The second issue of the Society's annual Journal will be ready for distribution at the summer lecture. The articles are wide-ranging in subject matter and date so we hope that everyone will find something of interest. Copies will be available to non-members at £5 per copy. If anyone wants a copy of Issue No. 1 please let the Editor know – there are only one or two left at present but once the demand reaches 5 then more will be photocopied. The price will be £4 if collected, £4.50 if posted.

### **The AGM**

Please come to the AGM on 21<sup>st</sup> September. We need a quorum and you might like to hear Mike Thurlow talking about mills. We also need one or two new members on the Management Committee – the Society can only function if people are prepared to help. Do you know anyone who could be a Committee member?

## Exhibition in Blakeney

Your Committee has agreed in principle to stage an exhibition in the Methodist Chapel some time next summer to illustrate the history of Blakeney. Any suggestions or offers of exhibits to any member of the Committee, please. Limiting the contents of the exhibition to Blakeney will be a departure for the Society, whose remit covers all the Glaven villages, but the Committee feels that an exception can be made this time.

## Subscriptions for 1999/2000

The June lecture (Janet Smith on The Drovers) and the distribution of the *Glaven Historian* mark the end of the Society's subscription year and we hope that all present members will want to rejoin for the year beginning 1<sup>st</sup> July – and please bring some new members with you. Subscriptions (£5 adults, £3 under 18s) to Eunice Wordingham at Highfield House, Wiveton Road, Blakeney (01263 741015) or c/o the Editor (address at the end of the Newsletter).

## Opportunities for members

Many of you will know that the Glaven Valley Newsletter often carries articles written by Society members. To date, this has always meant Committee members, but there is no reason why others should not contribute. If you have an idea for a piece – and it doesn't have to be a long one – then do discuss it with any of the Society's officers. Yes, I know these words also appeared in the last Newsletter!

## FUTURE PROGRAMME

23 <sup>rd</sup> June 1999 Wednesday 7.30pm <b>Blakeney Village Hall</b>	<b>Summer lecture</b>	<b>Janet Smith</b> , well known as an excellent speaker, is giving a talk on <b>cattle droving</b> , the practice of moving animals on foot to fattening areas or to markets. Drove ways are marked on the 1769 map of Blakeney.
21 <sup>st</sup> September 1999 Tuesday 7.30 pm	<b>AGM</b>	In the Chapel. After the formal meeting there will be an illustrated talk on milling (in general) by <b>Mike Thurlow</b> who is the miller at Letheringsett Water Mill.
<b>Clubnights</b>		All clubnights have been well attended but there is always room in the Chapel for a few more. Do come along: meetings are free to members <b>and</b> their guests.
26 <sup>th</sup> October	<b>The Hoxne Treasure</b>	<b>Roger Bland</b> of the British Museum will give a talk on the treasure found at Hoxne (in Suffolk, but only just) and other coin hoards found in East Anglia.
30 <sup>th</sup> November	<b>The EYE Project</b>	<b>Peter Carnell</b> will describe the fieldwork carried out at the 'Chapel' on Blakeney Eye and the conclusions which have been drawn from it.
25 <sup>th</sup> January 2000	<b>Heraldry</b>	<b>Paul Banham</b> will give a talk on heraldry and explain how you can describe and decipher a coat of arms. Whose arms are on the 1586 map of Blakeney Haven?
29 <sup>th</sup> February 2000	(Undecided)	Still to be arranged.

## NOTES and QUERIES

Once again many thanks to all those who responded with information relating to the queries included in the last Newsletter. Those addressed to the Editor have been passed on to the questioners. Now we have some more questions to tease you.

*Edwin Rose* of Norfolk Landscape Archaeology (who commented on the wall paintings in Blakeney Guildhall) would like to know the origin of the name AGENORIA which has been given to ships, an early railway engine and to baby girls as well. Do you know the answer?

*Mr J. Kitching* would like to know more about the THURSTON family who lived in Cley during the 1700s and 1800s. Apart from a mention of Thirza in the 1851 census and a will dated 1827 little else is known. Can you help?

*Mary Ferroussat*, our Archivist, has supplied this mini-article about PIPE STEMS found in her own garden in Blakeney:

During a lifetime of gardening I have picked up, wondered at, and sometimes saved, many objects. When small I would collect all the coloured crockery fragments, wash and dry them and then stick them on to clay plant pots, varnish over them and give the finished article as a present. This year I have been surprised at the number of pieces of clay tobacco pipe stems I have spotted and washed. A few had on them a maker's name or town of manufacture, and on turning to Pigot's Directories for 1830 and 1840 I found embryonic material for a study. Within the towns of Norwich, Yarmouth, Lynn, Bury St Edmunds and Ipswich a total of 12 Tobacco Pipe makers were listed for each date, with 5 being recorded at the same address. I was able to trace a circle stamp of Brown to Wellington Street off St Stephen's St. in Norwich, made sometime between the late 17<sup>th</sup> century and c.1860 when circle stamps went out of fashion.

Another stem was stamped R.W.TAYLOR YARMOUTH and another with just TAYLOR YAR. A James Taylor resided at the Black Swan Row in 1830 and a John Taylor at 51 Row in 1840. A little stem intrigued me with TTY PIPE on one side and BURNS on the other, and by consulting the Shire Publication No 37 *Cley Tobacco Pipes* by Eric Ayto I discovered it was probably Scottish in origin – a short pipe or 'Cutty Pipe'. In the north of England they were known as 'nose warmers', and in all probability mine reached Blakeney via a deck hand from South Shields.

On a guided History tour of Wells last month (put on by the Wells Local History Group) I was amazed to see the piles of pipes in the Maritime Museum and to learn that they had been dredged from the harbour there during the 1980s. I wonder if there are any in the sand at Blakeney Quay, or if anyone else has found any pieces in their gardens? Even the unmarked pieces are interesting, as some have embossed patterns. The size of the bore decreased from about 3 mm in the 17<sup>th</sup> century to only 1.6 mm by the time the manufacture of clay pipes stopped in 1914, though children's bubble pipes were still made into the 1930s.

(Editor: Yes, some have been found in Blakeney channel ..... now where did I put them?)

### Answers

It would be interesting if those who receive useful answers to their questions could let the Editor know so that other readers can share them.

### AND FINALLY

Any comments, requests, suggestions, corrections etc should be made known to any member of the Management Committee or to the Secretary and Editor: John Wright (01263 740589).