

BLAKENEY AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER No. 6

SEPTEMBER 1999

Dear Members,

This week the Editor is learning how the other half lives - without a computer! Or rather with a computer that is very constipated - no matter what goes in, absolutely nothing will come out! So this Newsletter is being retyped on a typewriter

Otherwise, the content follows the usual pattern. Particular items to note are the AGM on 21st September, which includes a talk by Mike Thurlow on mills and milling, and a reminder that subs for this year (1999/00) were due on 1st July.

With this Newsletter you should also have the new Federation calendar, some or all of the AGM papers, and (for local residents) a leaflet giving more information about the course on building materials starting in Blakeney on 27th September. If you're not able to come to the course please don't bin the leaflet - pass it on to someone else.

STOP PRESS : Sorry, this course has been cancelled by UEA but a replacement course has been arranged : see last page.

RECENT EVENTS

If you were among the 60 people who came to the lecture on **droving by Janet Smith** last June you will know that it was a very good talk with much interesting information put over in a way which compelled attention - and not a visual aid in sight. For those who missed it here are a few of the main points.

The heyday of long-distance cattle droving was during the 1700s and the early 1800s when cattle were moved from the poor, hilly areas of Britain to fattening pastures in the English lowlands. Herds of up to 2000 were assembled and controlled by just a few drovers and their dogs. The cattle were shod with small 'cues' on the way and their noisy approach would warn local farmers to secure their own animals to prevent them being caught up in the herd. When the herds eventually reached London the drovers would often return by coach or ship, leaving the dogs to go back the way they had come, visiting the same inns to be fed.

The drovers were mostly from the highland areas. They had to be licensed annually, householders over the age of 30, and married, in order to avoid being classed as vagrants. They needed detailed knowledge of the cross-country routes, and had to be honest (to carry large amounts of money) and shrewd businessmen, often becoming important in their own community. They brought news to rural areas, knitted socks for sale at fairs, had special permission to be armed against raiders, slept in the open and carried their own food, mostly oatmeal, taking blood from the cattle to make a form of black pudding.

The herds which arrived in Norfolk came mostly from the Highlands and Islands via Carlisle, North Yorkshire and Wisbech. Many came to Horsham - some 50,000 in peak years - a journey which took about three weeks. The cattle were mostly small Galloway bullocks, 4-5 years old. Many came up Middleton's Lane to land kept unenclosed specifically for them - and on which Norwich Airport now stands. Horsham Fair each October was the Norfolk Show of its day, not finally ended until 1872. Cattle wintered on the broadland marshes and were gathered up at Horsham, at the Brick Kiln pub in Plumstead or the Bird in Hand in Tasburgh.

THE NEXT PROJECT : WIVETON

Last winter volunteers from the Society did survey work at the site of the medieval chapel on Blakeney Eye and the results are in the current Journal. Your Committee has proposed that the project for this winter should focus on Wiveton. In particular, geophysical and other surveys will be carried out on the site behind the church generally believed to have been the old quay. Members should note that this is private land and all work there will be under the direction of Peter Carnell.

It is also proposed that we should try to see the Eye, Wiveton quay and any other such sites as component parts of Blakeney Haven. Can we envisage the whole of the Haven in the medieval and Tudor periods? Where were the buildings then, what did they look like, and what did people do for a living? What sort of ships were in use? How did the Haven change after embankments were built? Such questions can stimulate all sorts of enquiries, including fieldwork as well as documentary research. The wide-ranging subject matter should give anyone with an interest in the earlier days of the Haven an opportunity to make a contribution, using perhaps some special knowledge they already have.

The outline of the 'umbrella' programme and the specific work envisaged on the old waterfront at Wiveton will be discussed at a special meeting in the Chapel on 5th October. If you have any interest in practical work or in reading about the results then please come. That should include most of you!

READING AND ARCHIVE ROOM

The previous Newsletter explained that full funding for the proposed extension to the Blakeney Village Hall had not yet been arranged and it has to be recorded that little progress has been made over the summer. The Society's application to the Norfolk Coast Project received a positive response but other sources have yet to be found. The problem has been relayed to the British Association for Local History (BALH) who have included it in their current issue of 'Local History News'. This goes out to local and family history societies all over the country. The note asks if any of them can suggest a grant-giving body to help with the costs of the project and adds that 'Perhaps there is a need for a list of such sources. Is there a web-site where such information can be found which could be published in a future LHN?' It is surprising that the Association has not pursued this issue before, but something may come of the interest they are now showing. Meanwhile, the Society remains committed to finding modest but secure premises in which to house records and equipment and develop a better service to the public.

NEXT UEA COURSE

Last year we studied buildings with Mike Brackenbury. This year we intend to learn more about building materials with Dr Robin Lucas. He will cover not just the materials (wood, timber, flint, brick, pantiles etc) but also construction techniques. The course will be held on **Monday afternoons 2.00 to 4.00pm** in the Schoolroom of the Blakeney Methodist Chapel. The cost will be £49 for 10 sessions (8 lectures, 2 visits) and further details can be obtained from the Editor. If he should be elusive, or you are unsure about the course, turn up anyway to the first lecture on **27th September**. As usual there must be a quorum or the course will not proceed.

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THE A.G.M.

Please come to the AGM in the Chapel on **Tuesday 21st September**. After the business meeting there will be a talk by Mike Thurlow on mills and milling. He's a good speaker - and he'll be speaking from practical knowledge, having brought Letheringsett Water Mill back into working order.

AGM papers are enclosed: the Agenda and Minutes of the last AGM, and the Report of the Management Committee for 1998/99. If the financial section of the report is not ready by the time the papers go out then it will be available at the AGM. It will contain a recommendation about subscriptions for 2000/01, ie those payable in July 2000. It is an unfortunate fact that the unavoidable costs of providing lectures, newsletters and a Journal are greater than the income provided by members. The Committee has considered this matter and concluded that we should try to maintain the current activities and publications rather than reduce them as a means of containing costs. The Committee is therefore proposing that next July the subscription should be raised to £8 - in the expectation that most current members will be able to part with the equivalent of 4 pints of beer for a year's membership.

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? If no one volunteers we shall be one short this year.

SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 1999/00

If you have not paid a subscription since July (the start of our new year) then you will need to do so now if you wish to receive all the goodies for the rest of the subscription year. It would have been useful to have had a tear-off strip at the bottom of the page to accompany your sub on its way to Eunice Wordingham at Highfield House, Wiveton Rd, Blakeney. Sorry, no room!

FUTURE PROGRAMME

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| 21st Sept
7.30pm | AGM | In the Chapel. After the meeting there will be an illustrated talk on mills and milling by Mike Thurlow who is the miller at Letheringsett Water Mill. |
| CLUBNIGHTS | All clubnights have been well attended but there is always room in the Chapel for more. Meetings are free to members and guests. | |
| 5th October
7.30 pm | The Wiveton Project | Peter Carnell will outline his vision of the 'Blakeney Haven' project and the survey work envisaged at Wiveton this winter. All are welcome, especially potential volunteers to help with geophysical and other surveys. |
| 26th October
7.30 pm | The Hoxne Treasure | Roger Bland of the British Museum will talk on the treasure found at Hoxne (in Suffolk, but only just) and other coin hoards that have been found in East Anglia. |
| 30th November
7.30 pm | The Eye Project | Peter Carnell will describe fieldwork at the Chapel on Blakeney Eye and the conclusions that have been drawn from it. |
| 25th January
7.30 pm | Heraldry | Paul Banham will explain how you can describe and decipher a coat of arms. |

29th February Wells (the place)
7.30 pm

Brian Scott of the Wells Local History Group will talk briefly about the Group's activities and will then give an illustrated talk on walks round the town.

NOTES AND QUERIES

Carrying on from the last item, the Editor has copies of a note about the activities of the Wells Group which includes an application form for anyone wishing to become a member. There are lectures, visits and newsletters, and also Special Interest Groups which members can join. The subscription is £5 (£8 for two people at the same address) with an extra £1 per lecture (and £2 for visitors). Copies of the application form will be brought to the AGM.

Mention has already been made of the BALH. The Society's membership brings four issues of 'The Local Historian' and four of 'Local History News' each year. In theory these are in the Society's library and can be seen by any member when the library is open. In the absence of any premises, however, these booklets, together with a number of other books, remain on the Editor's shelves where they can be seen by arrangement - but they are not available for loan.

So, to help you out, in this year's copies of 'The Local Historian' the articles are:

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| Feb 99 | Infant fashion in 18th century Berkshire
Parliamentary hedges: origin, function and legal status
An enclosure promotion in Buckinghamshire |
| May 99 | Local history and computing: the Bristol Databases Project
The Irish in Hammersmith and Fulham in 1851
A Worcestershire farm eviction in World War II
Friendly Societies and local history
Birmingham's open air schools in the early 1900s |
| Aug 99 | Local sources for early English beekeeping
Postal markings and their meanings from 18th century Berkshire
Sources for urban retailing: Wolverhampton 1800-1950 |

The articles in each issue total about 50 pages and are followed by reviews and recent publications. There is reference, for example, to 'The Norwich to Cromer Turnpike Road' by Valerie Belton (£3.50).

'Local History News' contains more ephemeral notices, mostly in the form of notes from local societies, libraries, museums and other organisations.

Don't forget that copies of 'The Glaven Historian' are still available at £4.50 for Issue No. 1 and £5 for No. 2.

There are no **Queries** this time but there is one **Correction**. In case you didn't notice, the 'Cley' pipes appearing in Mary Ferroussat's article should have been Clay pipes.

AND FINALLY

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

STOP PRESS

The first amendment to this Newsletter recorded the cancellation of the course by Robin Lucas, who is moving away from the area. The latest news is that the UEA has arranged for Mike Medlar to lecture on The Development of the East Anglian Landscape 1500-1900. Dates, times, place and cost remain unchanged.