

BAHS Digital Newsletter

Issue 6
25th July 2021
www.bahs.uk

Welcome

Welcome to the sixth digital newsletter of the Blakeney Area Historical Society. This newsletter is being sent to all current and past members plus individuals who have signed up to our information emails.

In this newsletter, along with much else, we have information on the upcoming lectures; Jonathan Hooton on his new book; the second part of the story of La Belle Ruby; Richard Jefferson providing a follow up on The Cley 1914-1918 War Project; Diana Cooke providing background on a book on wildfowling that has been donated to the History Centre and Serica East reminds us that it is summer with some photographs of being on the beach at Cley during a summer 100 years or so ago.

The editor would like to thank all those who have provided contributions to this and previous issues as they make it possible to publish the newsletter. Contributions are always welcome and may be sent to the editor at any time and we will endeavour to publish in one of the upcoming issues.

Finally, before you settle down to read the newsletter, please note that information contained in the newsletter is copyright of the author and is published as provided and with their permission. Despite best efforts the occasional mistake may slip through. If so, please blame the editor not the contributors.

2021 Lectures

Autumn Lectures

The autumn series of lectures will start after our summer break. Current details are:

- Tuesday 28th September 2021.
 Nelson, the Norfolk Hero by Charles Lewis.
 Only on Zoom
- Tuesday 26th October 2021.
 Blickling Belles The Georgian Daughters of Blickling Hall by Kate Barnes,
 National Trust
- Tuesday 30th November 2021.

 Privateers, the press gang and service in the Sea Fencibles: the pressures on Blakeney and Cley's seafarers c.1800 by Margaret Bird

The September lecture is only on Zoom. The October & November lectures will be held in the evening at 7:30pm at Cley Village Hall if allowed. It is also intended to simultaneously run a Zoom session so those who cannot attend in person may do so online.

Click here for further details and updates.

Recorded Lectures

The last lecture of the 2020/21 membership year by Ben Cartwright on *Travels in the footsteps of James Baillie Fraser* is now available for viewing.

Lectures that have been recorded may be viewed by visiting http://www.bahs.uk/activities/events/lecture-recordings.

New Defibrillator in Blakeney

There are two defibrillators in Blakeney with the new defibrillator fixed to the external wall of Blakeney Parish Council office which is at the entrance to the Village Hall car park. <u>Click here</u> for more information.

New Membership Year

The Society's new membership year begins on 1st September. If you pay by standing order then you have nothing to do. If you cannot remember how you pay your subscription you can check your past subscriptions by logging into the members' area at http://www.bahs.uk/membership/members-area/.

Information on paying subscriptions may be found at http://www.bahs.uk/membership/paying-subscriptions/.

2021 Annual General Meeting

The AGM will be held on the evening of the October or November lectures and will be communicated to members in due course.

Enjoying Summer on Cley Beach in the 1920s

Serica East has provided these photographs of her family from the mid1920s. This was the period after WW1 and also the Spanish Flu epidemic and is a nice reminder that all things do pass.



Paddling on Cley beach, c1925



Cley Beach c1925



Cley Beach c1927



Cley Beach late 1920s

Serica East

1953 Flood Letters

Wiveton

In the July issue of the <u>Glaven Valley Newsletter</u> there was a letter about the 1953 floods. The letter relates that "One man was marooned on the roof of his pig-sty for hours and eventually rescued, he spent most of the time beating off rats who tried to take refuge with him, and also tried to attack him.".

Having recently read *The 1953 and 1993 Floods* by Countryman Buttercup Joe the reference in the letter relates to the exploits of Buttercup Joe on that fateful night when he did end up on the roof of a pig sty. Buttercup Joe lived in Newgate Green, Cley, with his parents. In the March 1993 reprint he states his parent's house had no name in 1953 but was now known as Well Cottage. His grandparents also lived at Newgate Green in Fair View, now called Marsh Cottage.

I have given my copy of this booklet to the History Centre so that others may read it.

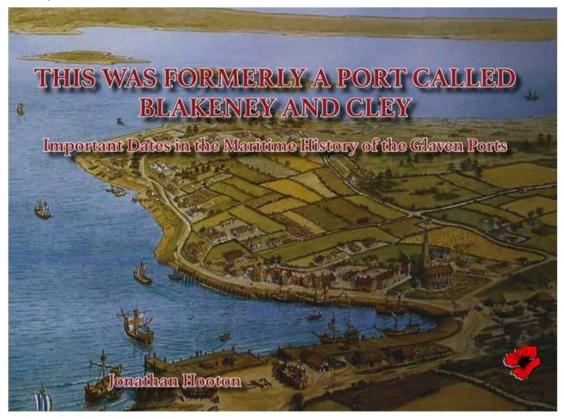
Cley

The BAHS has recently been given a copy of a letter written by Nancy Gull who ran the Corner Cafe in Cley about her experience of the 1953 flood. The letter was postmarked February 6th 1953.

The letter may be found on the BAHS at http://www.bahs.uk/history-centre/collection/local-areas-and-events/1953-flood-cley-letter/

Jonathan Hooton's new book

Published July 2021 by Poppyland Publishing it is a comprehensive guide to the maritime past of the Glaven.



Kelly's Directory for 1904. Hidden behind Kelly's bland statement is a fascinating history of Blakeney & Cley, from the development of a thriving medieval port, with its growth, its involvement in the major maritime events of this country and its eventual decline. The book, by looking at the key events that involved this port, fills in that history. Based around the framework of key dates it covers the maritime story of the Norfolk ports of the Glaven estuary from their medieval prominence to their gradual demise by the time of the First World War.

In addition, for those who wish to look for any physical remains of the maritime functions of the settlements, there is a series of Evidence Boxes which direct those who are interested to the physical remains that still exist adding more detail to the maritime history. Wars, piracy, wrecks, dramatic rescues and entrepreneurial skills are some of the topics touched upon in this history along with a picture of some of the characters who were involved. It is thoroughly illustrated and gives an easily accessible guide to some of the stories that lie behind these captivating tourist destinations.

Available to order from bookshops, Amazon and at poppyland.co.uk for £9.95 The Holt Bookshop expects to have the book in stock from end July. 01263 715858

Jonathan Hooton

The Cley 1914-1918 War Project - A follow up

In 2013 I started on the project of researching and writing up details of the twentynine names on the World War 1 memorial in the Lady Chapel in St Margaret's Church (plus the eight on Mary Ferroussat's list, and the two Royal Engineers buried in the churchyard).

From September 2014 to September 2018 my writings on the thirty-nine appeared in the GVN in the month a hundred years on from when they died. Then, in the Glaven Historian (No.17 2020), I brought together some of the stories of the men who died in an article with illustrations, excellently reproduced.

It is my intention to place a file in St Margaret's Church with all the printed articles, and multiple illustrations in support. I have been greatly helped by having access to medals and other items for Cley men who died. The owner has allowed me to take photographs and this is leading to follow up articles on the project in the BAHS Newsletter.

Private H. W. Williamson

The local medal collector purchased at auction a year or two ago Private Williamson's Princess Mary Christmas Fund Gift Box 1914 (figure 1), brass for other ranks and silver for officers.



Figure 1: Private Williamson's Princess Mary Christmas Fund Gift Box 1914.

Inside is a treasure trove of items: Williamson's three medals (figure 2), stamped with his name and service number (figure 3), and an assortment of paper items folded up very small.



Figure 2: Private Williamson's 1914-18 War medals. (1914-15 Star, War Medal and Victory Medal - 'Pip', 'Squeak' and 'Wilfred').



Figure 3: The rim of his Victory Medal.

A number of them have been photographed together (figure 4), including a letter from the chaplain of 9 Casualty Clearing Station to Williamson's mother dated 11th November 1915. It is of great significance in helping to discover the truth of Williamson's last days.

"Your brave lad has had a bullet wound in the head, but is at present doing nicely. He will get all the care it is possible to have, & the skill too. You had better not write to him here, as he will it is hoped be able to be removed to a base hospital".



Figure 4: A selection of the contents of Private Williamson's Princess Mary Gift Fund Christmas Box 1914, including the chaplain's letter (top right).

The 7th Battalion Norfolk Regiment Casualty Book (housed at the Royal Norfolk Regimental Museum in Norwich) recorded that Private Williamson was wounded on 31st October 1915. The letter from the chaplain was written on 11th November and he died on 20th November.

The Norwich Mercury for 4th December 1915 recorded the following:

'Private Herbert Williamson of the 7th Norfolks was shot in action in France on November 20th. He was badly hit in the neck and conveyed to a hospital tent, where death resulted a few hours later.'

The truth regarding Private Williamson's last days? It has yet to be discovered.

Richard Jefferson

La Belle Ruby - Part 2

The continuation of the story by Blakeney resident and BAHS member, Brenda Palmer about her mother Ruby Cross who appeared on stage under the name La Belle Ruby.

Marriage

Ruby married Norwich born engineer Stanley Abiathar Cross on 30th October 1929 and that would have heralded the end of her stage career with their first child born in 1930. Searching the <u>British Newspaper Archive</u> the last reference to La Belle Ruby Duo found is an entry in *The Stage* stating that they were rehearsing a new production.



Ocarina and one of the bells played by Ruby

Stanley's father Abiathar Cross had a motor engineer & haulage company, the Jenny Lind Garage on the Dereham Road in Norwich. Stanley became the joint proprietor with his father.

Post War

After WWII Ruby joined the Townswomen's Guild (TG) and was the first chairwoman of the Earlham branch. She ran a drama group for the TG, teaching many members how to perform. Shows were put on locally for, amongst others, the elderly throughout the area, including in Beccles.

Laurie Sydney Cholerton

Ruby's father was, as the newspaper article states, influential in developing Ruby's musical and stage skills. In the newspaper article he is incorrectly referred to as Laurie Stanley which was the name of one of Ruby's brothers.

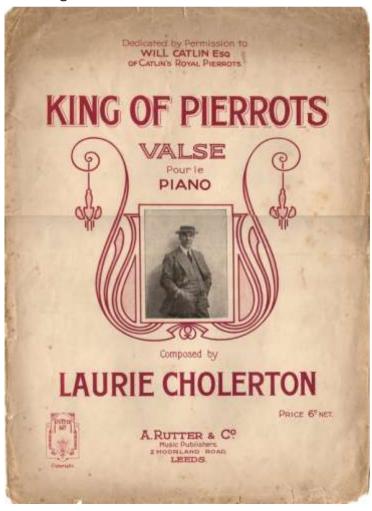
In 1911 he was Sub-Editor of the Scarborough Daily Post. Before coming to Norwich he was Managing Editor of the Hereford Journal and Hereford Mercury.

He came to Norwich in 1926 to be the Managing Editor of the *Norwich Mercury*. The General Strike was in May 1926 and he rolled his sleeves up to produce an edition but it is unknown whether he was still in Hereford or in Norwich.



Laurie Sydney Cholerton getting the paper published during the General Strike, May 1926 Douglas was one of Ruby's brothers

Laurie's career was in newspapers but one gets the sense that his heart was in music and entertainment. Apart from teaching Ruby many instruments, he performed on the stage, such as at the Victoria Hall, Tring, on 1 February 1899 where he is listed on the programme as a Musical Sketch Artiste. The document below shows that he composed the music 'King of Pierrots'.

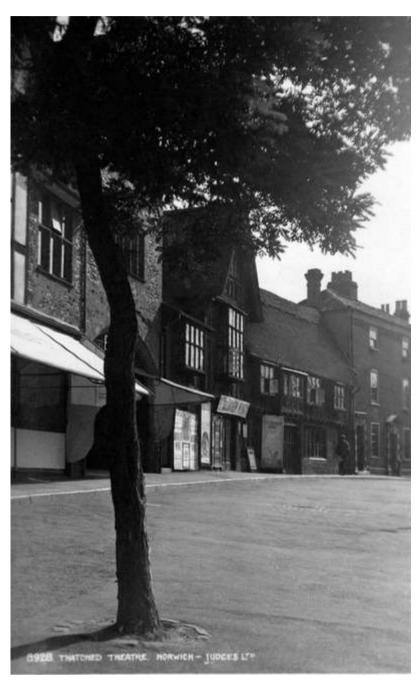


King of Pierrots by Laurie Cholerton 25^{th} July 2021

The Thatched House Theatre

Next to Bonds, on All Saints Green in Norwich, the theatre opened in 1915. It incorporated a ballroom and restaurant. A unique feature of the theatre was a sliding roof to let the outside in.

The Thatched Assembly Rooms Cinema was opened in the ballroom of the Tudor style building on 11th November 1915 with "The Old Curiosity Shop". Architect J. Owen Bond was the manager & licensee of the cinema.

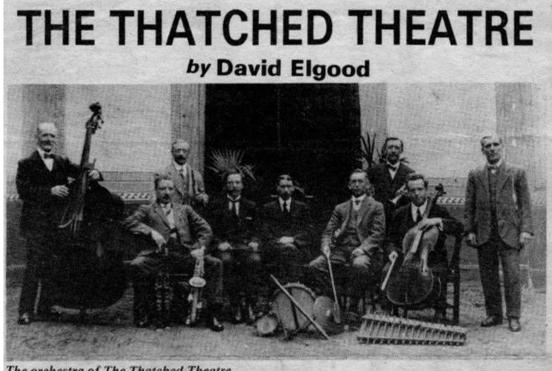


The Thatched House Theatre, All Saints Green, Norwich

Silent movies were shown but it never offered talking movies. Afternoon teas were available and an orchestra played to audiences. Variety shows were put on such as the Christmas show in 1927 when La Belle Ruby Duo performed.

The business closed in 1930 and was later incorporated into Bonds Department Store although it burnt down in WWII.

We cannot find a publication date or the name of the publication for the following newspaper article so we have taken the liberty of including it - rather than it being lost.



The orchestra of The Thatched Theatre.

to open in Norwich one had a unique feature that was completely different from all others.

On November 11th, 1915 The Thatched Cinema opened and within its thatched roof lay the main centre of an age long since past.

Certainly it attracted a different class of patron and a different class of film and its variety acts were some of the best ever seen in Norwich, before or since.

It also had the advantage of having a sliding roof so that patrons could enjoy the fresh air whilst watching the show.

The Thatched building had been used as an entertainment centre long before it became a cinema and stoodwhere the new Bonds Store now stands.

Amongst the variety acts entertainment.

Of all the cinemas that were that appeared there was one of particular interest to the people of Norwich and which featured the Carrie Copeland Trio but at the bottom of the advertising poster were the names of the Ruby Mona Sisters. Mrs Ruby Cross and her sister from Norwich, presented a 'Novel Comedy Connection', which proved very popular.

Together with its orchestra The Thatched presented many local artists.

But by 1929 the sound cinema was to bring a change in cinema going habits and whilst The Thatched was to remain open during the early days of sound it was never to take part in them.

Even so its programme presentation was to remain high and audiences continued to flock in and it continued as 'a something special' place of

When the lease on the building came to an end in 1930 the cinema closed and a little bit of entertainment magic left with it.

The Thatched Cinema closed its doors on 12th April with, 'A Society Scandal', starring Brigitte Helm, and the Variety programme in-cluded Cliff Barratt and partner in comedy episodes, supported by Key and Keyworth with piano and comedy episodes.

When the talkies first came to Norwich The Thatched advertised its programmes as 'SILENT BUT SOUND'.

The building was used for many purposes after its closure including a ballroom and then as a display window. Hitlers bombers took care of the rest and a dream factory has now been swallowed up.

The article implies La Belle Ruby Duo appeared more than once at the theatre. It refers to Ruby using her married name and as she got married in October 1929 it is possible the sisters performed there in its final months as a theatre as well as in 1927.

James Bond (1878-1948)

Not *the* James Bond but James Owen Bond a scion of the founder of Bonds Department Store. Wikipedia has his name as James Owen Bond but, rather disappointingly, the <u>John Lewis memory website</u> has his name as John Owen Bond. John is the name recorded in the Census record for 1881 but he may have been better known as James.

He was an apprentice and protégé of George Skipper and qualified as an architect. Bond worked for Skipper for six years. He was also the manager and licensee of the Thatched House cinema. Apart from the design of changes to Bonds, J. Owen Bond designed:

- The Burlington Buildings, Orford Place in 1904
- The Haymarket Picture House (latterly known as the Gaumont Cinema) opened in 1911 (closed and demolished in 1959)
- Possibly the Pottergate Tavern in the 1930s, now The Birdcage
- All Saints Green Carlton opened in 1932 and demolished in 2014. It took over the Gaumont name following the closure of the Haymarket
- Bonds department store extension in 1932

The Owen Bond Partnership, an architectural practice, was formed in 1930 and ran until 2000. Their records, including order books, plans and photographs, are held at Norfolk Record Office. However, it is possible that some limited partnership was formed out of the embers of the partnership before becoming Owen Bond Architects which was itself acquired by Brown & Co Architecture in 2013.

John Owen Bond, 26 Tombland, Architect, was also a subscriber to <u>The Strangers</u> <u>Club</u> according to its <u>incorporation document</u> dated 12th day of March 1927.

Bonds Department Store

Opened by Robert Herne Bond in 1879. Robert Bond advertised in the *Norwich Mercury* to get the business established. The *Norwich Mercury* was the business, of which Ruby's father would, many years later, become the Managing Editor.

Robert had three sons, two of whom joined the business with the third, John Owen Bond becoming an architect.

On the <u>John Lewis memory store website</u> there is a fascinating account that "just prior to World War Two, there were more than 30 assistants selling hats and over 20 milliners making them. Over a thousand hats would be sold on a single Saturday!". How times have changed.

The 'Baedeker Tourist Guide to Britain' was used by the Nazis to identify targets of a non-strategic nature that may affect the morale of the British people. The city of Norwich was subject to 44 recorded raids, with those on 27/28th and 29/30th April 1942 being the worst, and it was during these two raids that Bonds was badly damaged.

After the war a new store was built on the same site with the architect being Robert Owen Bond the son of John Owen Bond and was completed in 1951.

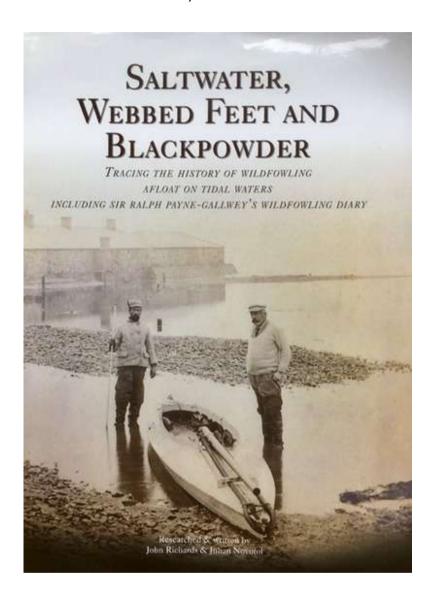
During the '70s the store struggled and eventually it was sold to the John Lewis Partnership in 1982. It continued to trade as Bonds until 2001 when it took on the John Lewis branding.

Brenda Palmer & Richard Daley

Wildfowling Book - Donation to History Centre

Saltwater, Webbed Feet and Blackpowder

Tracing the History of Wildfowling afloat on Tidal Waters Including Sir Ralph Payne-Gallwey's Wildfowling Diary Researched & written by John Richards & Julian Novorol



For some years, John Richards has been trying to find out who owned a Holland & Holland double punt gun which George Long used in Blakeney. Richards approached the History Centre for help but we could only offer limited information. Recently, he was in touch again and generously donated a copy of this book which was privately published in 2018.

The title sounded unusual to me but I soon learnt that it was the traditional wildfowler's toast! The book is nearly 300 pages long and includes a large number of photographs, as well as some attractive bird illustrations by Novorol, the co-author.

A detailed history of wildfowling is given and several adventures of the fowling community, including those of Peter Scott and James Robertson Justice, are described. The book covers changes that evolved in the design of punt guns for shooting wildfowl. On the other side of the coin, it discusses legislation and issues of

conservation, as well as the part which The Wildfowlers' Association of GB & Ireland played in their development.

It is not specifically a book about wildfowling in North Norfolk but it does provide an insight into this specialised sport which has been practised in these parts for several generations.

Diana Cooke

Interesting Websites

Through The Decades

Not really a website, other than you sign up for a fortnightly email via the EDP website.

To sign up, click on www.edp24.co.uk/newsletter and scroll down to the 'Through The Decades' option.

Old Maps

Old Maps claims to be Britain's most comprehensive historical map archive. It is possible to search by postcodes, town names and OS grid references. Visit www.old-maps.co.uk.

RootsChat & Ludham Archive

In researching the La Belle Ruby article and Bonds Department Store a link to a Bond family tree was found on rootschat.com which claims to be the country's largest free family history forum. This led to a Bond family tree on the Ludham Village archive www.ludhamarchive.org.uk. For a small village the website is a treasure trove of information on the village and the families that have lived there.

There Is No Such Thing As A Free Lunch

<u>www.tinstaafl.co.uk</u> is a somewhat unusual website. Tinstaafl stands for There Is No Such Thing As A Free Lunch. There is a brief (slightly out of date) 'About' page, <u>www.tinstaafl.co.uk/nbp/General/about.htm</u> which is rather hard to find and only describes one of the two projects on the website. These projects are:

Norfolk Baptism Project

The Norfolk Baptism project is recording Norfolk baptisms 1813 to 1880 and states it is updated regularly. Click on www.tinstaafl.co.uk/nbp/index.htm for records that have been transcribed.

England & Wales Hardwicke Marriage Index

The England & Wales Hardwicke Marriage Index 1754 - 1837 has recorded information on over 800,000 marriages. Click on www.tinstaafl.co.uk/eandwhmi for the transcripts.

Before Hardwicke's Marriage Act of 1753 came into force on 25th March 1754 early marriage records typically provided limited information.

Click on <u>www.familytreeresources.com/marriage-records.html</u> for a helpful 'Guide to Marriage Records in Parish Registers'.

On This Day: 25th July

1797

British naval commander Horatio Nelson's right arm was shattered by grapeshot during an assault on Tenerife in the battle of Santa Cruz. The injured arm was later amputated and followed the loss of the sight in his right eye some three years earlier. During the assault he lost over 300 men.

1865

The death of Dr. James (Jane) Barry, the first woman doctor - she had masqueraded as a man.

1907

Sir Robert Baden-Powell began setting up his experimental camp on Brownsea Island near Poole, Dorset to test the feasibility of Scouting.

1909

Louis Blériot of France made the first airplane flight across the English Channel.

1920

Rosalind Elsie Franklin was born. She provided important insights into the structure of DNA but received little credit for her contribution.

1959

The SR.N1 hovercraft, designed by Christopher Cockerell, made its first English Channel crossing from Dover to Calais. The acronym SR.N1 stood for Saunders-Roe Nautical 1.

[Cockerell was an old Greshamian]

2009

The last British survivor of the World War I trenches, Harry Patch, died, aged 111.

Computer Tips & Tricks

This column whilst not about historical matters provides tips and tricks that may help in improving your use of your computer and the Internet for historical research and in general.

In working with Brenda Palmer on the article La Belle Ruby I was looking into information on James Bond the architect son of the Bonds Department Store founder.

The starting point was entering the search term

James Bond

into a Google search which resulted in the region of 653 million results most of which are, I believe, about our famed secret agent, 007. Obviously this wasn't a good starting point. As mentioned in the article the name came up as James Owen Bond on Wikipedia and as John Owen Bond on the John Lewis Memory website.

This led to an approach I have often used which is to become more abstract in my search and also be more specific, both of which can lead to additional and different information.

Going more abstract meant initially a search for

J Owen Bond

This provided links to references to J. Owen Bond and son, Architects and Owen Bond Partnership Limited.

Gong more specific mean searches for

"John Owen Bond"

and

"James Owen Bond"

To make them more specific I tried both John and James and enclosed the full name in quotes to force Google to treat it as a single term.

The first of these searches found the Norfolk Record office catalogue entry and also the rootschat forum entry mentioned earlier.

The second of these searches found a Norfolk Chamber of Commerce entry and an EDP article on the Burlington buildings in Orford Place.

Overall, the three searches returned largely different results. With the search for J Owen Bond around 700 results were returned. It is very easy to focus on just the first page or two of results but looking further into the results may lead to some interesting discoveries. In this case it becomes clear that J. Owen Bond designed many other cinemas such as the Regal in North Walsham, the Odeon in Watford and the Regal Cinema in Chesterfield. It also appears that in 1908 he owned Sonia, a white boat or 'Yare & Bure One Design' which was designed for sailing on the Norfolk Broads.

Finally, in the 2013 newsletter of the Norfolk Historic Buildings Group it attributes some house designs in the Arts & Crafts Movement style to J Owen Bond' at Kingsley Road/St Stephens Road junction (1905).

Non-BAHS Activities

BALH Talks

The society is a member of the British Association for Local History. The BALH has published a collection of free ten-minute local history talks.

Read more...

Norfolk & Norwich Archaeological Society

The society is a member of the Norfolk & Norwich Archaeological Society. Their series of online lectures ended in March and will start again in October.

Visit NNAS Website

Norfolk Record Office

To view Norfolk Record office events please visit www.archives.norfolk.gov.uk and follow the Events link to Eventbrite (where you need to register for events). Eventbrite is used by many organisations to control access to online talks.

The NRO blog lists a number of Late Summer/Early Autumn events at norfolkrecordofficeblog.org/events-late-summer-autumn.

The BAHS

Joining BAHS

If you are not a member and wish to join you may join online or download our membership form from the BAHS website.

Click here to join.

Information Emails

If you receive this newsletter then you are receiving information emails.

Members automatically receive information emails. Non-members may receive information emails by signing-up.

Information Emails sign-up

Subscriptions

Subscriptions are due from 1st September for the year 2021/22. Membership rates are unchanged at:

- Individual £12
- Family £18
- Corporate £25

Renewals & Standing Orders

Many members have renewed their subscription using standing orders and others have paid online using faster payments.

If you can pay this way it helps as it creates less work for the membership secretary & treasurer. It also means less time standing in queues at the bank which, particularly in the current situation, is much appreciated by the treasurer.

If you are planning to renew, details may be found by clicking here.

Helping the BAHS

The BAHS Committee has many things that it would like help with and you don't have to serve on the committee to be involved!

If interested please get in contact by emailing info@bahs.uk.

History Centre

The History Centre is a small confined area and remains closed during the pandemic. This will be reviewed by the committee as and when Government guidelines change.

History Centre Collection

The History Centre is always interested in items of historical relevance to the Blakeney Area. These may be old wills, deeds, scrapbooks, postcards, Blakeney Regatta programmes, ... the list is endless.

Please don't bin it before checking if it is of interest to the History Centre.

BAHS Committee

Chairman: Richard Kelham [Temporary] chair@bahs.uk

Secretary: Diana Cooke secretary-bahs@bahs.uk

History Centre: historycentre@bahs.uk

History Centre Records: John Wright john.wright@bahs.uk
Membership Secretary: Bridget Candy membership@bahs.uk

Publications: Roger Bland <u>publications@bahs.uk</u>
Treasurer: Richard Daley <u>treasurer@bahs.uk</u>

Lecture Programme Manager: Roger Bland [Temporary] lecture.programme@bahs.uk

Sales Organiser: Jan Semple sales@bahs.uk

Website Organiser: Richard Daley webmaster@bahs.uk