

BLAKENEY AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Newsletter No. 4

February 1999

Dear Members,

At last, here is another Newsletter with some notes about recent events and some more dates for your diary through into next year. It also introduces some of the issues which your Management Committee have been discussing in recent months.

RECENT EVENTS

The **UEA Course** at Blakeney Chapel, tutored by Mike Brackenbury, was voted a success by those who took part in measuring and drawing a cottage in the High Street and trying to fathom its history. We didn't get quite as far as we had hoped, perhaps, but our eyes were opened to the wealth of clues which may exist. The **AGM** was well attended and the names of those elected to the Management Committee are listed below. The formal proceedings were followed by the main event: a talk by Dick Hamond on the marine life of the north Norfolk coast. His excellent slides were accompanied by comments exuding knowledge and enthusiasm.

To date, three of this winter's four **clubnights** have been held and the fourth is imminent. At the first one, in October, Peter Carnell set out some ideas for a detailed study of the Chapel on **Blakeney Eye** and recruited some willing helpers to carry out the work. A separate note on progress since then appears below. In November, Peter Robins gave a talk on early **flint tools**, explaining how they were made and how they can be distinguished from naturally broken flints - examples were passed round so we could see the difference. On display were flint axes and other tools, many of them brought in by Janet Harcourt. In January, Gerald Cubitt treated us to a sample of his large collection of **postcards** - in the form of 140 slides, all accompanied by comment on their content and probable date. Ships at the quay were of particular interest, while other views showed how much the streets of Morston, Blakeney and Cley have changed during the past hundred years. Joanna Dawson also brought in albums of postcards for us to examine after coffee. Our thanks go to all those who have given us such interesting talks in the last six months, to members who have arranged the evenings and, of course, to those of you who have attended.

The fourth clubnight, on 23rd February, is to be on the use of **metal detectors** when a talk will be given by Kate Sussams from the Castle Museum, Norwich, who has particular responsibility for liaison with metal detector users. Apologies if this Newsletter comes too late to serve as a reminder.

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE FOR 1998/9

At the last AGM, the following were elected:

Joint Chairmen	:	Michael Lee and Peter Wordingham
Secretary & Editor	:	John Wright
Treasurer & Membership Sec.	:	Eunice Wordingham
Archivist	:	Mary Ferroussat
Committee members	:	Peter Carnell Vic Daniels Monica White

Two places remain available for co-opted members.

THE EYE PROJECT

There has been much progress since the clubnight in October. A study of the maps and documents which mention the Eye has begun but to date this has concentrated on checking known sources. Finding new sources of information, in the Norfolk Record Office, for example, will be much more difficult. However, following receipt of the necessary licence from English Heritage, the fieldwork is well under way and a

group of hardy members has been visiting the Eye each Friday (yes, regardless of the windchill factor!) to carry out a contour survey (nearly finished) and a resistivity survey (newly started). If once there were other buildings near the Chapel, the resistivity survey should find traces of their foundations. But even if nothing new is found the Project will not have failed; its purpose is to record as much information as possible about this enigmatic site before the sea eventually destroys it. It is unlikely that the full results will be ready in time for this year's Journal, in which case an introductory article will appear instead.

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE DECISIONS

Your Committee is elected to take decisions on your behalf – and you have a right to know what they are. Most decisions can be described as 'administrative' but some can be extremely important. One such is the:

Reading and Archive Room

For some time the Blakeney Village Hall Management Committee has been trying to fund a modest extension to the Hall. It now looks as if sufficient grant money may be available, in which case the balance would need to be found locally, ie by the participating organisations. The Society has been offered a small room in the proposed extension for use as a 'Reading and Archive room'. At present, the Society's belongings (files and equipment) are boarded out with various members, but your Committee consider that a better arrangement would be to have a 'base' where these items could be stored, which could be used for private study, and to which the public could have controlled access. The Committee has therefore accepted the offer in principle. If the project comes to fruition it will have important implications for the Society. In the first place, there will be financial commitments: an initial payment of up to £1,500 might have to be made, with annual running costs thereafter, and with additional costs for furnishing and equipping the room. Already the Society has records which need to be computerised for convenient access and study. Secondly, strict management procedures will be needed: the room and its contents will have to be secure at all times and properly supervised when in use. Members may recall that the Society does have a healthy bank balance at present; on the other hand, annual 'profit' is now declining. Our income arises from three main sources: a proportion of the fees paid by those joining the UEA courses (but we now have courses of ten weeks rather than twenty, and the number of students has halved since the early 1990s); a fee for every *Glaven Ports* book sold (but stocks have almost gone); and members' subscriptions (but the cost of servicing members is greater than the amount paid in).

The Committee is agreed that obtaining secure, permanent accommodation and some more basic equipment is the right thing to do – but the corollary is that income must be increased. The Committee will address this in due course and, yes, one option will be to raise membership subscriptions. But if this project goes ahead, we will all support it, won't we?

Next UEA Course

The course run each winter by the UEA is jointly decided by the two bodies: the Society asks for a particular course and the UEA tells us what we can have! One has to have some sympathy with the UEA, though, as they have government guidelines to meet and, in the last resort, they can only provide courses that tutors are willing to teach. It is also unfortunate that Blakeney is some distance from the centre of academic gravity. For next winter we have asked for a ten-week course on Rural Norfolk 1600 – 1850. As yet no response has been received from UEA. Are there any other courses that members would like to see put on at Blakeney? Speak up now to any member of the Committee because if UEA cannot meet our suggestion we shall be looking for an alternative. Mike Brackenbury, for example, who lives locally, was so pleased with his students last term that he would consider doing a further course on the practical study of buildings. Any potential takers?

Other opportunities

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. The same goes for the Journal as well: there's bound to be something you know that will interest other members.

FUTURE PROGRAMME

Clubnights

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 and their guests.

23rd February 1999
Tuesday 7.30pm

Metal detecting

Kate Sussams will give a talk on her work at the Castle Museum, and will have some finds for us to look at.

26th October 1999
30th November 1999
25th January 2000
29th February 2000

These dates have been agreed by the Committee but subjects and speakers have yet to be confirmed.

27th March 1999
Saturday 2.30 pm

Spring visit

To **Letheringsett Watermill** for a specially conducted tour by Mike Thurlow, the miller. There will be a charge (max £2.50, depending on numbers – bring your friends!).

23rd June 1999
Wednesday 7.30pm
Blakeney Village Hall

Summer lecture

Janet Smith, well known as an excellent speaker, has agreed to give a talk on **droving**, the practice of moving animals on foot to fattening areas or to markets. Drove ways are marked on the 1769 map of Blakeney.

Journal No. 2

It is intended that the Journal for 1998/99 will be ready for distribution at this meeting (and by post afterwards).

21st September 1999
Tuesday 7.30 pm

AGM

In the Chapel. After the formal meeting there will be an illustrated talk on milling (in general) by Mike Thurlow.

NOTES and QUERIES

The previous Newsletter listed several subjects on which members were seeking information. Many thanks to those of you who responded. The name *Tryphena* seemed to be a very unusual one, but several boats of that name were turned up. Incidentally, 'Tryphena' is not particularly rare in the 1851 census: over 150 females bore that name in Devon, for example, though only 8 in Norfolk. In this issue there are two queries:

Godfrey Sayers would like some information and thoughts on the Watch House in Blakeney. In particular, when was it built? There seems to have been a building on the site since the early 1800s but the construction of the present building looks more like mid-Victorian. Was it re-built? Has its nineteenth-century history completely disappeared from folk memory?

Peter Wordingham would like to repeat his recent request in the Glaven Valley Newsletter for information about the Blakeney 'Guildhall'. Does anyone recall seeing or hearing about traces of wall paintings in there which might have been visible up to the last war?

CORRECTION

In Newsletter No. 2, a lane in Wiveton was referred to incorrectly: it should have been 'Granny Plumbe's Drift'.

AND FINALLY

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

