

Blakeney Area Historical Society



BAHS Digital Newsletter Issue 2 19 September 2020 www.bahs.uk

Welcome

Welcome to the second 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. If you would rather not receive the newsletter you may unsubscribe using the link at the end of the newsletter.

In this newsletter we have an update on the Jane Hannah by John Wright; an article by Pam Peake on the Veterans of World War One and Diana Cooke with an introduction to information published on the website about the 1586 Map of Blakeney & the Port of Cley. Richard Daley has started a column offering tips and tricks that may help in improving your use of your computer and the Internet.

Finally, before you settle down to read the newsletter, please note that any information contained in the newsletter is copyright the author and is published as provided and with their permission.

2020 Autumn Lectures

The option of holding a socially distanced meeting is not currently possible as meeting rooms and village halls remain closed. As a result the society decided to arrange digital Zoom meetings as the only viable alternative during the rest of 2020. Thanks go to the speakers who have agreed to provide their lectures over Zoom.

Tuesday 29 September, 7.30 pm on Zoom,

Jonathan Hooton, *Imagined Coasts – the Medieval Port of Burnham.*

Tuesday 27 October, 7.30 pm on Zoom

Roger Bland, *Roman coins from rivers and wells in Britain: hoards or gifts for the gods?*

A short AGM will precede this lecture.

Tuesday 24 November, 7.30 pm on Zoom

Susanna Wade-Martins, *Dereham and its vicar in Victorian Times.*

Arrangements

Information on using Zoom will be provided by email with general details on the BAHS website closer to the date of each talk.

It is hoped that some of our online lectures may be recorded and available to view on the BAHS website.

Further Details

Please visit www.bahs.uk/activities/events/planned-events for further information.

Jane Hannah



Jane Hannah with Billy Long at the helm and John Chase standing beside him.

On 16th June this year the Eastern Daily Press carried a picture of *Jane Hannah* being taken through Bideford on a trailer after being brought back to England for restoration. This boat came to Blakeney in 1939 and was one of two from this harbour that went down to Ramsgate to support Operation Dynamo in June 1940. In the event she did not go over to the beaches of Dunkirk but was taken on a special mission. Various stories have appeared about the nature of this mission but the truth is proving very elusive. What is certain is that she was later discovered in the Channel, damaged and awash. The Navy towed her into Newhaven where she was repaired and eventually returned to Blakeney.

Jane Hannah had already acquired an eventful history. She was built as a lifeboat for the RNLI at Blackwall, on the Thames, and sent to Appledore in Devon in 1910. There she took the name of her donor, *Jane Hannah MacDonald*, and was given the RNLI number 611. After saving 23 lives there she was briefly at Eastbourne before being sent to Flamborough in 1933 to serve as their No. 2 lifeboat.

The RNLI released her in 1938, at which time the surname was dropped because the name had to be changed, and a year later she was bought by Bernard Chase, who lived in Hertfordshire but had a second home in Blakeney. She was looked after by members of the Long family and it was Billy Long who bought her, around 1950, and adapted her for bringing seed mussels from the Wash into Blakeney harbour.

Misfortune struck in January 1953 with the great storm surge which caused so much damage on the east coast of England. *Jane Hannah* was lifted over the quay and battered against a garden wall, with serious damage to both. She was not repaired as a sea-going boat but was converted into a cabin cruiser for use on inland waters. After a few years she was moved away and passed out of Blakeney knowledge.

Eventually she appeared in a yard at Kidsgrove, near Stoke, where she was bought in 1992 by a British boatbuilder who took her to his boatyard at Migennes in the department of Yonne in France. Recently John Vistuer has led efforts to have *Jane Hannah* restored to her former state as a lifeboat. The first stage in that process has been achieved: she has been brought back from France and taken to Devon, where it is hoped that restoration will eventually be completed. The process, in the hands of the [Appledore Maritime](#)

[Heritage Trust](#), is bound to be long and expensive.

To help raise funds the organisers are preparing a book setting out the full history of the boat, which has entailed much research work as the written record is sparse and so little is now remembered about her time as a working boat. The time she spent in Blakeney is an important element in that story and John Vistuer has sought information about it from local sources. Some residents have responded online and the Society has made written contributions based on the memories of the very few who knew her from first-hand experience.

When the book appears a copy will be acquired for the History Centre and will be available for all to see.

John Wright

The Veterans of WWI

Two years ago, when centenary celebrations for the WWI Armistice were taking place, John and I presented an exhibition in Blakeney Church. The emphasis was on remembering the lives and service of the 39 Blakeney casualties besides visualising the village through a vast array of old documents, photographs and maps. Somewhat sidelined were the veterans who returned. So what do we know about these returning veterans? See: www.bahs.uk/history-centre/collection/ww1-blakeney-remembers.

Although a list of returning veterans was provided in the exhibition guide, this was only a starting point. More research was needed to check the veracity of the names and, if possible, find their service details. Fortunately a major break through came with the discovery of the 1918 Electoral Roll and, pertinently, the 1918 Absent Voters List (AVL); both these lists were prepared prior to the cessation of hostilities. A General Election was held in December 1918, the first since December 1910.

The Electoral Roll listed all men over the age of 21 and women over 30 who were qualified to vote. Men on active service were simply noted as Navy or Military and marked absent. However the 1918 AVL recognised the franchise had been extended by an Act of Parliament and included the names of men over the age of 19 if they had or were currently serving in the armed forces. Furthermore it included the all important rank, number and unit or regiment for those in the army, names of ships for those in both the Royal Navy and the Merchant Navy and similar details for those in the Royal Air Force.

PARISH OF BLAKENEY.					
682	Adcock, Albert Edward	Temple Place		Ldg. Seaman J/5121, R.N., H.M.S. "Idaho"	682
683	Adcock, Edward Able	Do.	do.	235978 Pte., 2/8th Lancs. Fus.	683
684	Adcock, Richard Donald	Do.	do.	Ldg. Seaman J/8411, R.N., H.M.S. "Marshal Soult"	684
685	Andrews, William James	Newland's Yard		Merchant Ser., H.M.S. "Mutlah"	685
686	Aston, John Bolton	School House		2nd Lieut., 41st Div. Train, A.S.C.	686

Figure 1: The opening entries of the 1918 Absent Voters List

While many Absent Voters Lists have not survived, those that are available are scattered throughout County Libraries, County Record Offices and The British Library while some are available digitally on FindmyPast and Ancestry. If you have missed details of your serving relative, no matter where they lived in England and providing they were still alive at this time, then these AVLs should be the place to continue your search.

The 1918 AVL for Blakeney named 65 men in the Army, 19 in the Royal Navy, 4 in the Air Force, 6 in the Merchant Navy and 5 with a home address indicating essential home service or a mariner on leave between engagements.

The names for inclusion on the AVL were collected in a rather hurried and haphazard manner. Firstly, names and known details were provided by the next of kin who passed the information to the local electoral officer. In turn these were sent to the War Office and subsequently checked by relevant regiments and so on before returning to the electoral officers. A logistical nightmare of paperwork without the aid of computers and emails!

Men could have been transferred, promoted, demoted or even died during the preparation of the List, so it is hardly surprising there were errors. Thus the AVL, published in October, included **Edward Adcock** who had died in March and less surprisingly **George Hudson** and **William Pyke** who had both died in September. The list naturally excluded earlier casualties, those demobilised and those who had been discharged because they proved unfit to serve despite passing their initial medical examination and finally, those

not submitted by their next of kin. The system relied on the name of a serving individual being submitted by his next of kin. There were some surprising omissions from the AVL like **William Bishop** and **Stanley Willis**. The latter was the first of many temporary Headmasters of Blakeney School who had stood in for **John Bolton Aston** whilst John was absent, serving in the Army Service Corps.

The 1918 AVL is thus a veritable goldmine of information. It has certainly confirmed some individuals for whom I could find no supporting evidence of their service in earlier searches, it also produced hitherto unknown men.

For all the veterans, many of whom were injured and suffering with unspeakable mental traumas, it must have been a challenging home coming. Manor Farm, part of the Calthorpe estate, had been the largest employer of agricultural workers plus craftsmen and traders in the village, but it was gone. The farm had been broken up into 22 Lots and auctioned off in 1911 with work ceasing the following year. Following this was the loss of the last maritime fleet when Page and Turner sold off their trading ships on the eve of the war, bar two that had been requisitioned by the Admiralty. This heralded further loss of employment opportunities both at sea and ashore together with ancillary businesses that supported the fleet and the harbour. Blakeney was about to begin a transformation and metamorphose into the village we know today. Somehow the veterans were to have a part to play in these changes.

The Royal Air Force

The experiences of the four Royal Air Force (RAF) personnel illustrate some of the issues outlined above. The RAF was the youngest of all the services. It was formed on April 1st 1918 from the amalgamation of the army Royal Flying Corps (RFC) and the naval Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS). It was the first air force in the world to become independent of either army or naval control as well as being the largest air force.

The RAF men named in the AVL were:-

- Corporal **Herbert John Pye** 212346, No. 4 Supply Depot, formerly RFC
- **Charles Barnabus Seales** 124496, 3rd Air Mechanic, formerly RFC
- 2nd Lieutenant **Herbert Samuel Starling** 23rd Balloon Section, formerly RFC
- 2nd Lieutenant **John Henry Woodgett**, formerly the RNAS

758	Seales, Charles Barnabas	Greencroft	124426 3rd A.M., R.A.F.	758
759	Seales, James Edward	Do.	S.S. "Magrix"	759
760	Shorting, George Frederick	Leatherdale Yard	45861 Pte., 4th Batt., Norfolks	760
761	Shorting, James Edward	High Street	30077 Pte., Royal Warwicks	761
762	Smith, Herbert Ernest	Nurse's Yard	015080 Pte., No. 1 Hvy. Mob., A.O.C.	762
763	Smith, James William	Do. do.	98451 A/Cpl., A.S.C.	763
764	Smith, Robert William	High Street	470308 Pte., 48th Labour Coy., Labour Corps	764
765	Starling, Herbert Samuel	Moys' Yard	2nd Lieut., 33rd Balloon Sect., R.A.F.	765
766	Starling, Leonard William	Priory Farm	13973 L/Cpl., 1st Norfolks	766

Figure 2: The AVL showing details for Charles Seales and Herbert Starling

John Woodgett was the eldest of these men. He was born in Thornage, lived in Yarmouth and Kings Lynn before settling in Blakeney and joining the navy at 14. After the war, he remained in service as a gunnery instructor and was later recalled at WWII, retiring aged 60 having reached the rank of Squadron Leader. John was a Founder Member of the Blakeney and Cley British Legion, a Freemason and at one time Grand Master of the Earl of Leicester's Lodge.

Herbert Pye junior was born in Blakeney, grandson of a former licensee of the White Horse. On his return to Blakeney he was fortunate to be given a piece of land along the

Morston Road by his father, where he erected his first garage, now known as the Blakeney Garage. This was a completely new venture for the village. Within a few years the garage was rebuilt, expanding to include a bus and lorry garage as well as facilities for a blacksmith to repair cars. Many years later, Herbert was the Commanding Officer of Blakeney Home Guard during WWII and his garage became headquarters for their operations.



Figure 3: Charles Barnabus Seales 1899-1922

Charles Seales and **Herbert Starling** were both born in Blakeney and were teenagers when they enlisted, Charles being an 18 year old blacksmith and Herbert a 19 year old dental assistant. Furthermore, both had already lost an older brother in the war, namely **William Seales** and **Ernest Starling**. According to his relatives, Charles, on returning home from war seemed to have been given no option but to sail out of Hull with his father. Within three years he died of tuberculosis and was buried in Blakeney Churchyard in 1922. His older brother William, who had died in the XII Scottish Hospital at Rouen from tetanus resulting from a bayonet scratch, is also commemorated on the headstone.

James Edward Seales, father of Charles, is also listed in the 1918 AVL as home was still Blakeney. He was in the Merchant Navy and had sailed away from Blakeney with SS *Taffy* when it was sold to Rix and Sons of Hull. SS *Taffy* was quickly sold on but James stayed with the firm, sailing on their newly built vessel SS *Magrix*. He was still on her in 1928 when listed again as an absent voter but not in 1932. Crewing with James throughout these years was **Robert Thompson** whose name also features on the 1918 AVL for Blakeney.



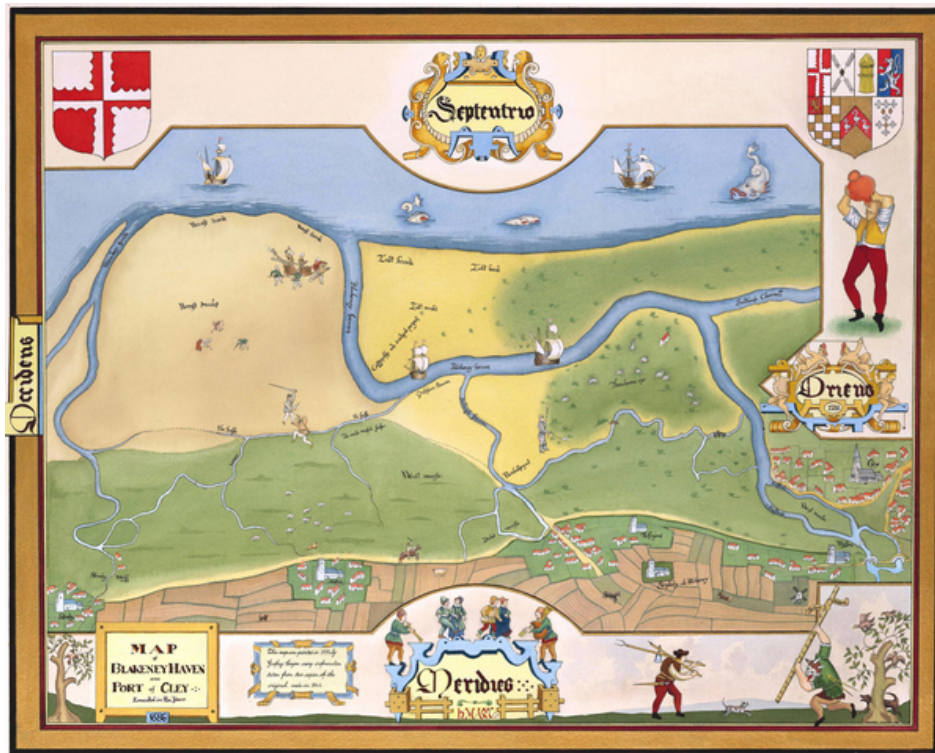
Figure 4: James Seales, far right, with crew on SS Magrix

Herbert Starling was the son of John Thomas Starling. They were members of a long established family that had lived in Blakeney continuously since the 1600s. John was 1st Mate on SS *Homer* and lost his life in 1901 when his vessel was struck by the Russian barque *Hoppet* and sunk, just off Spurn Head. Herbert left Blakeney School in 1911. It appears that he was then sent to the Royal Merchant Seaman's Orphanage, Hermon Hill, Wandsworth. He became a dental assistant, attesting at Farnborough 1915. Herbert quickly rose through the ranks and became a qualified Balloon Observer, serving with the BEF in France. From this elevated and vulnerable position, these Observers could see targets far beyond the visual range of ground-based observers and quickly pass strategic information back to ground artillery. Balloon Observers were the first to use parachutes long before they were adopted by fixed wing aircrews. He was demobilised in March 1919 and there I loose all track of him. He does not appear to have returned to Blakeney.

After some seven or eight years researching the Great War and its impact on Blakeney, I feel that the end may be in sight unless some significant new information is discovered. Does somebody have a diary, letters or new records from the war, or just after, that would throw further light on this episode in the history of the village.

Pamela Peake, BAHS Honorary Member

1586 Map of Blakeney & the Port of Cley



The *1586 Map of Blakeney & the Port of Cley* has been a source of much speculation over the past 30 years. You may even consider that it has had too much attention in print! However, as new aspects and queries continue to come to light, further investigation takes place. This means that, over time, a substantial ‘body of knowledge’ has been established. With this in mind, it seemed appropriate to set up a web page, on the BAHS website, to provide a summary of the links which are currently available. This will also be the first online publication for the Society and can be accessed through the Publication tab as follows: www.bahs.uk/publications/online-publications/1586-map-of-blakeney-haven

There are three sections -

1. A summary of the map’s history
2. A list of all the articles that have been published in the Glaven Historian Journal about the map
3. A revised list of known copies of the map.

Hopefully, more material will be forthcoming and written up in future Journals - a few ideas are already in the pipeline!

Diana Cooke

Tips & Tricks: Searching Websites

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

Who knows, but the few minutes spent reading this column may save you enough time in the future to read these newsletters or make your family history research less of a chore.

Many users of the web are familiar with using search engines (Google, Bing, Duck Duck Go, ...) but sometimes the number of results returned are overwhelming.

Queries are entered often without realising that there is more than one way to do this and that some ways are better than others!

Using google.co.uk, entering the search words *blakeney haven map* will return just over 1,000,000 results. It seems unlikely that all those results are relevant and who has the time let alone patience to go through that many.

Enclosing some of the words in speech marks will provide more specific results, as shown:

- Entering "*blakeney haven*" *map* returns nearly 900 results.
- Entering "*blakeney haven map*" returns just 3 results.
- Entering "*map of blakeney haven*" returns just over 400 results.
- Entering "*map blakeney haven*" returns 0 results.

If two or more words used in the search are enclosed in speech marks for example "*blakeney haven*" means that google (and search engines in general) treats the words within the speech marks as a single term not individual words.

Without speech marks google provides in its results a link to any web page that contained the words *blakeney*, *haven* and *map* regardless of their position or order within the web page. The word *blakeney* may appear in one paragraph, *haven* in another and *map* in a third paragraph - and not necessarily in that order.

When using speech marks as in "*blakeney haven*" google provides in its results a link to any web page that contained these words but the words *blakeney haven* must appear together in that order, although any words outside speech marks, such as *map* may appear anywhere on the web page.

When using speech marks as in "*blakeney haven map*" google provides in its results a link to any web page that contained these words but the words must appear together in that order.

So, thinking about which words to use in the search and whether any should be in speech marks may provide a reduced number of results and it is likely that these web pages will be more relevant to your search.

It is possible to have more than one set of words within speech marks, for example the search "*blakeney haven*" "*1586 map*" is a legitimate search that returns just over 200 results.

As with all things it takes time to become familiar with a new technique but doing so can be very beneficial. If you're not sure try the technique with a search where you know the likely result - although you may still be surprised.

Richard Daley

Norwich Castle's Keep

Construction on a major National Lottery Heritage Fund-supported project has started to reinstate the medieval floors and rooms in the Castle Keep.

[Read more...](#)

Non-BAHS Activities

BALH Talks

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

[Read more...](#)

Norfolk & Norwich Archaeological Society

The society is a member of the Norfolk & Norwich Archaeological Society. The NNAS has moved its lectures online.

[Read more...](#)

Norfolk Record Office

The Norfolk Record office has announced some online history talks.

[Read more...](#)

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.

Subscriptions

Subscriptions are due from 1st September for the year 2020/21.

Membership rates are unchanged at:

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

Renewals & Standing Orders

Over twenty 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](#).

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 publications@bahs.uk

Treasurer: Richard Daley treasurer@bahs.uk

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

Sales Organiser: Jan Semple sales@bahs.uk

Website Organiser: Richard Daley webmaster@bahs.uk

Information Emails

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

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

[Information Emails sign-up](#)

AGM

This year's Annual General Meeting will be held via Zoom on Tuesday 27th October, followed by the October lecture.

A link to all the required documents will be circulated in advance via email, plus printed copies for those not online.

The timetable and details on joining the AGM Zoom conference will be given prior to the AGM.

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.
