



# Blakeney Area Historical Society Electronic Newsletter

February 2025

“Studying the History of Blakeney Haven and its Hinterland”

Welcome to the fourth edition of the new style electronic Newsletter being published monthly.



*Cley Quay at low tide c1900. The maltings has not yet been converted/rebuilt as Beau Rivage, and the quay head is wooden, and distinctly dilapidated. Absent are the two lighters which allowed coal transferred from a collier ship lying in The Pit to be quanted up the Glaven on the rising tide. Instead there are several of the classic double ended crab boats.*

*The mill was in the occupation of Stephen Barnabas Burroughes, “baker, corn, flour, cake, pollard, coal and manure merchant, wind miller; & at Langham; & farmer at Wiveton Hall Farm” as Kelly’s Directory of 1896 recorded. He lived at The Gables, the listed seven bay house in Cley High Street, painted pink, and currently in the possession of the Cockcroft family.*

The BAHS are on Facebook [tiny.cc/yfo3001](https://tiny.cc/yfo3001)  
Follow the BAHS on X (Twitter) [@HistoryBAHS](https://twitter.com/HistoryBAHS)  
and Instagram [historybahs](https://www.instagram.com/historybahs) for all the news and  
to keep up to date.



# Blakeney Area Historical Society Meetings



This month's meeting will be on **Tuesday 25th February 2025** at 2:30pm at Cley Village Hall

## **Excavation of a new Anglo-Saxon site in Norfolk**

*Lilly Hodges*

Lilly Hodges, the researcher behind the project, will present her findings on Tuesday, 25 February. The talk is among the first she will deliver following the publication of her research at the end of 2024. [tiny.cc/4fo3001](https://tiny.cc/4fo3001)

Further details on the website [www.bahs.uk](http://www.bahs.uk)

The March meeting will be held on **Tuesday 25th March 2025** at 2:30pm at Cley Village Hall  
**Exploring Norfolk's Deep History Coast**

*Dr John Davies*

## **News from the Norfolk Archaeology and History Research Group NAHRG.**

### **It's All Too Beautiful : Mod Youth Culture in Norwich and Norfolk**

*Philip Woods (UEA Modern History PhD Mature Student)*

Saturday 22nd February at 2.30pm

### **Breckland's Earth Heritage**

*Tim Holt Wilson (Freelance Geologist)*

Saturday 15th March at 2.30pm

Lectures are held in the UEA Thomas Paine Centre which is on the right towards the end of Chancellor's Drive from the Security Lodge. It is signed as such over the side entrance but the main entrance is styled 'Norwich Business School'. There is a convenient bus stop very close to the Thomas Paine Centre/Norwich Business School block. <https://www.nahrg.org.uk>

## Pippa Sharp



We have a very welcome new addition to our Committee. Pippa Sharp has joined us and will initially take over the role of Secretary from Andrew Otterburn. She comes with a very impressive CV.

Pippa studied History and History of Art at Cambridge and, after training as a solicitor and having a large family, she took an MA in Naval History at Exeter University as a mature student. Most recently she studied for a PhD in London focussing on the work of war artists in Wandsworth and Chelsea during WW1. While doing this she prepared material for talks and exhibitions at the Chelsea Arts Club and for the Chelsea Society as part of their remembrance events in 2014. Most recently she spent eight years as a historian and guide at the Chelsea Physic Garden until 2024. Rather to her own surprise she developed a strong interest in the history of plants, plant hunting, medicine and science and some of the ethical questions which inevitably arise when discussing this topic. During this period she developed a passion for snowdrops and happily calls herself a committed galanthophile. She lived in Morston for 32 years before moving to Cley in 2022 – where her snowdrops are thriving.

We still urgently need a person to maintain the BAHS website, preferably someone living locally but it could be managed from a distance. Please get in touch with the Secretary for further information: [secretary@bahs.uk](mailto:secretary@bahs.uk)

## Norfolk Wildlife Trust

### **A port in decline**

*Jonathan Hooton*

**Thursday 13 March 2025**

1:00pm - 2:30pm

NWT Cley Marshes, Cley next the Sea, Norfolk

A talk given by Jonathan Hooton follows the fortunes of the Glaven ports from soon after being made a Head Port in 1786 through its decline and eventual demise at the time of the First World War.



# Claxton Scrapbooks - Houseboats

From 1932, the Claxton scrapbooks consist mainly of newspaper cuttings, rather than the handwritten entries that had been made up to that date. The earliest cutting, from the *Cromer and North Norfolk Post* of March 25th 1932, details yet another dispute with the National Trust below a succession of sensational headlines:

## **FISHERMEN V. NATIONAL TRUST INDIGNATION AT BLAKENEY, CLEY AND MORSTON FISHING RIGHTS ALARM PETITION TO BOARD OF TRADE**

Three Norfolk villages, Blakeney, Cley and Morston are seething with indignation. They fear that the National Trust, the owners of the Bird Sanctuary at Blakeney Point, intends to interfere with their means of livelihood.

For scores, perhaps hundreds, of years the fishermen of these villages have fished in Blakeney Harbour and lived by the results of their labours. Now it appears that an attempt is to be made to force them away. There has been no actual notice to that effect, but it is believed that there is visible "the thin end of the wedge."

Houseboat owners, four in number, were told that they must move their boats within a month and only a few days of that period remain. If they do not move them the National Trust will attempt to get an injunction. What action the owners will take is at present in doubt. If Blakeney, Cley and Morston are willing to support them they will defy the Trust. The fishermen are alarmed about their fishing rights. If the Trust force the houseboats to move will they then turn their attention to the fishermen? It is thought that will be the case.

The fishermen met at the White Horse Hotel and compiled a strongly worded resolution, which was sent to the Parish Council and to the Board of Trade. The parish council meeting at Blakeney, as reported in the E.D.P. of March 25th 1932, was well attended.

## **BLAKENEY PARISH MEETING. ANCIENT RIGHTS AND THE NATIONAL TRUST. PROTEST RESOLUTION.**

At the annual Parish Meeting last year there were not sufficient voters to form the Council of nine, but last Tuesday evening despite the heavy and welcome rain over 100 persons were present, including fishermen and boatmen from Morston and Cley interested in the present burning question of the alleged infringement by the National Trust of the ancient privileges and rights of the fishermen.

The Chairman of the Parish Council (Mr. James Lynn) presided, and submitted the following resolution:- "That the electors of Blakeney strongly protest against the threatened action of the National Trust in disturbing the ancient rights and privileges held from time immemorial in the free harbour of Blakeney". Mr. F. Westcott proposed, and Mr. W. E. Baines seconded.

In supporting the resolution, Mr. John Page said it was the duty of every man and woman in Blakeney to protest as strongly as possible against the encroachment of the National Trust on the ancient rights and privileges of this free harbour. He did not wish to speak against the work of the Trust as he felt it was of benefit to the nation, but when it usurped the rights of the parishioners he was dead against it. If the right to forbid the mooring of boats was gained, it seemed possible that they would soon want rent for the mussel and cockle lays, and make regulations for landing on the Point from pleasure boats. There are men on this coast descended from the Vikings, and East Anglians have always been foremost in maintaining their rights. This harbour is a free one, and must remain so, and it is necessary to pass this resolution in the most emphatic manner, showing that the

parishioners are determined to maintain their rights, not only for themselves but for their children. He had great pleasure in supporting the resolution. (Cheers.)

Mr. S. E. Baker said he was a member of the Point Committee of the National Trust, but was often in a decided minority. In his opinion, and he had made no secret of this to his fellow members, the posting of notices on the Point prohibiting the parishioners landing there was illegal. The notices should have been advisory and not imperative. People had free access to the Point, without let or hindrance, from generation to generation, and they must see to it that this liberty was not impaired. It was most essential that fishermen and boatmen should have no restrictions. This notice was put up, it was stated, for the protection of the birds. But what happened? Out of 2,000 birds hatched in 1931 hundreds died before they were a week old. The interference with nature always brought dire results. Last year these were tragic. The parent birds could get no food, and the youngsters were starved to death. He had reasons to look upon the Point as the best health resort in the Kingdom, and they must see to it that there was no curtailment of their rights on this precious heritage. (Cheers.)

There followed extensive correspondence in the pages of the E.D.P., including letters from Dr Sidney Long, Hon. Secretary of the Blakeney Point Committee of the National Trust, Professor F.W. Oliver (writing from Cairo) and even S. H. Hamer, Secretary of The National Trust, writing from Buckingham Palace Road in London. Their letters in support of the National Trust's actions were evenly matched by those from Sam Baker, Ernest Claxton and others. Eventually, the local M.P. convened a meeting, reported in the E.D.P. of May 7th 1932:

#### **BLAKENEY DISPUTE**

#### **PROMISE OF A HAPPY ENDING**

#### **NATIONAL TRUST SECRETARY'S OFFER**

There appears every prospect of a happy ending to the dispute that has arisen between the National Trust and the fishermen and boatmen using Blakeney Harbour, as a result of a friendly conference last night at the Blakeney Hotel between representatives of all parties concerned. This meeting was the result of the peace-making efforts of Mr. T. A. Cook, M.P., and he brought with him from London Mr. S. H. Hamer, the secretary of the National Trust...

#### **THE PARISH CLAIMS**

The representatives of the Parish Councils and the fishermen were first invited to express their views, and they outlined their standpoint as already published in the report of the public protest meeting at Blakeney in March and in the correspondence in the Press which followed. Among the matters they questioned was the right of the Board of Trade to convey the tidal waters of Blakeney Harbour to the Trust without local consent, whether the conveyance was by lease or absolute sale, and if so why the Board of Trade informed Mr. Stangroom in 1930 that Blakeney was a free harbour, the claim of the Trust to the purchase of the road-way on the Carnser (the east bank of Blakeney Cut), the statement by Professor Oliver that Far Point was at one time demolished by the sea, and the claim that no ancient rights exist; they objected to the posting of notices on the Point prohibiting people landing there, and particularly to the wording, claiming the right to land there at any time during day or night, criticised the action of the Trust in abolishing the right to erect huts and maintained the right to place bathing tents on the beach. They expressed regret at the alleged arbitrary action of the Trust with regard to the houseboats, contending these were not near the ternery and that the anchors were not dangerous to anyone. They emphasised the serious effect on the living of the inhabitants Blakeney and Morston the action of the Trust would tend to have, and asked whether action against the mussel and cockle gatherers was to follow...

## **NO INTERFERENCES WITH RIGHTS**

Dealing with some of the points raised, Mr. Hamer said the conveyance from the Board of Trade to the National Trust was dated March 28th, 1930, and showed that it was in consideration of the payment by the Trust of £25 to the Board of Trade. The action with regard to the houseboats was taken because the Trust felt it would be rather dangerous if not only the three boats in question but possibly others acquired through simply staying where they were an absolute right to be there always, as they could have done without any acknowledgment to the Trust. It was felt that having acquired the rights the Trust must assert them and therefore the letters were written which started this trouble. If any rights could be established no attempt would be made to interfere with them. He assured the meeting that he would report fully on what had transpired at that meeting, and personally he felt sure there was no reason why all that had been objected to should not be capable of adjustment to the satisfaction of all. He did not think there was any substantial difference between them, and felt sure that he would be able to get the London committee to instruct the local committee to negotiate with the representatives of the local interests. He would suggest, too, to the London committee that there should be further representatives on the local committee, and believed it would be a very useful thing if two of the representatives of the fishermen should be nominated as permanent delegates on it. They could then always present the fishermen's view. (Hear, hear.) The question of the Carnser was a matter that was too technical for him to go into at the moment.

Mr. Lynn—It is not too technical to us (Laughter.)

Mr. Hamer added that Professor Oliver would be at Blakeney next month and would be pleased to argue matters with Mr. Lynn, and anybody else, and if Professor Oliver found himself to be in the wrong he would be the first to admit it. The National Trust realised that really its interests and the interests of the fishermen were the same, and that it was to the interest of both to preserve the ternery, and that it should be an attraction to visitors. He could, too, give a solemn assurance that the rights of the fishermen to the mussel lays would never be interfered with, for one thing the Trust could not do it, and if it could it would never want to.

In reply to Mr. Lacy Mr. Hamer said he could give the same assurance regarding the rights of cockle and bait gatherers and the flat fish and sea trout fishermen. He also promised that the notices on the Point to which objection had been raised should be worded so that they no longer gave offence. (Hear, hear.) Mr. Lacy said that everything had been so satisfactorily explained that the fishery side did not come into the matter at all. Mr. Loynes, on behalf of the Fishermen's Association, thanked Mr. Hamer for having shown such a conciliatory spirit, and at the request of the meeting he agreed to act as local secretary in the subsequent negotiations with Mr. Hamer.

Cordial thanks were expressed to Mr. Cook for the part he had played.

The intervention of the M.P. for North Norfolk and of the national secretary of the National Trust appears to have poured oil on the troubled waters of Blakeney Harbour. No rights would be infringed (by either side) and the Trust would be more polite in its wording of future notices. Honour was satisfied on both sides.

# Norfolk Record Office

The winter events programme is available from [norfolkrecordofficeblog.org](https://norfolkrecordofficeblog.org)

## The Secret Lives of East Anglian Witches



*By Marion Gibson*

**Wednesday 26 February, 1pm**

In person and online

Free of charge

Marion will be talking about sixteenth and seventeenth-century witch trials across East Anglia – Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex. How can we find out more about the lives of suspects before they were labelled “witch” by their neighbours? Which types of historical document are useful and what are the surprising secrets they contain? Marion is the author of *Witchcraft: A History in 13 Trials* (2023) and *The Witches of St Osyth* (2022) as well as books about puritans, early modern women, and witchcraft in history and literature.

Refreshments will be available 10 minutes before the talk starts. Feel free to grab yourself a cuppa and settle down for an interesting 45 minutes.

Book in person place [tiny.cc/xup0001](https://tiny.cc/xup0001)

Book online place [tiny.cc/9vp0001](https://tiny.cc/9vp0001)

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