



Blakeney Area Historical Society Electronic Newsletter

September 2025

“Studying the History of Blakeney Haven and its Hinterland”



The ketch Admiral Mitford at Blakeney Quay in the 1900s. The 43-ton vessel, which was built in 1862 in Scarborough, was registered there, and owned by Matthew Jenkinson of Filey. Photo from a half-plate glass negative in the Hamond Family Archive.

The BAHS are on Facebook tiny.cc/yfo3001
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www.bahs.uk



BAHS Events:

BAHS lecture Programme

Lectures are held at Cley Village Hall (NR25 7RJ for those who rely on Satnavs) on the last Tuesday of the month. We have decided to revert to evening sessions for September, October, March and April, while retaining afternoon meetings for the darkest part of the year November, January and February. This is to make allowance for the fact that some of our members are still working and may not be able to make afternoon sessions.

Evening lectures start at 19:30, afternoons at 14:30 (that's 7.30pm and 2.30pm for us oldies).

The full programme will be published on the website www.bahs.uk with a monthly preview in this Newsletter.

September Lecture

Tuesday 30th September 2025

at 19:30 at Cley Village Hall

Pilgrim Hostels in Walsingham – the remaining evidence

Ian Hinton

Ian will talk about research by the Norfolk Historic Buildings Group, which conducted an in-depth study of the buildings of Walsingham. The research revealed evidence for several very large buildings which were used to house pilgrims in the 15th and 16th centuries.

The internationally important pilgrimage site of Walsingham attracted up to 100,000 people. When pilgrimages to Walsingham were at their peak, nearly every building in the town provided services to the influx of pilgrims.



Other Events

50 Years of Discovery

Norfolk Historic Environment are holding a weekend conference to Celebrate half a century of archaeology and heritage in the East of England

Saturday 1 November - Sunday 2 November (08:45-16:30 both days)

at The Enterprise Centre, University of East Anglia Research Park
University Drive Norwich NR4 7TJ

The principal speakers are all well known to BAHS members, being:



Professor Carenza Lewis. Well known for her time as a presenter on the hit Channel 4 series Time Team, Professor Carenza Lewis is a specialist in medieval archaeology with more than 30 years' experience under her belt across a range of subjects, disciplines, and methodologies. Her research into the historic development of rural settlements and landscapes has, over decades, involved thousands of members of the public in a series of excavations, which have thrown new light on the origins of today's villages and towns and the impact that events such as the Black Death plague had on local communities.



Will Bowden is Professor of Roman Archaeology at the University of Nottingham, with research spanning Roman and Late Antique Europe, particularly the transformation of towns, identities, and landscapes during and after the Roman Empire. the Caistor Roman Project, a thriving community archaeology initiative exploring the town founded after Boudica's revolt. His research combines traditional excavation with cutting-edge digital technologies for interpreting archaeological sites and enhancing public engagement. He has a deep interest in how archaeology shapes modern identities and works closely with communities and heritage organisations to bring the past to life in accessible and inclusive ways.



Dr Tim Pestell is Senior Curator of Archaeology at Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery, where he leads one of the country's most significant regional archaeology collections. He studied archaeology at the University of Cambridge and completed his PhD at the University of East Anglia on the foundation of medieval monasteries in East Anglia, before working in professional field archaeology across the UK. A Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, Dr Pestell has contributed widely to the heritage sector through roles on the Treasure Valuation Committee, Bury St Edmunds Cathedral's Diocesan Advisory Committee, and several national and local archaeological societies.

Full details of the programme, and of the reception at Norwich Castle, can be obtained from the Norfolk Historic Environment page at tiny.cc/ug6q001

Tickets (from £12 to £78) available from Eventbrite tiny.cc/pg6q001

Norfolk Records Office

The autumn events programme is available from https://come.ac/oiaz_

Reviewing Our Brewing Past

In person

Monday 13 October, 10:00-11.30

Free of charge

Refreshments included



At one point Norwich was said to have a pub for every day of the year, and many of Norfolk's villages had a least one, if not two or three pubs. Whether you want to reminisce about visiting your local pub, or worked in the successful brewing industry in one of the county's breweries, join us for our latest reminiscence session. The event will start with an introduction to the brewing industry in Norwich. There will be a chance to see some original documents and sound recordings

about people's memories of running or visiting local pubs. Join us at our café style setting to enable you to grab a drink and have a chat about your memories.

To book a place tiny.cc/sfaq001

Uncover the Past: Crime And Punishment

In person event

Thursdays 2 October, 9 October, 16 October, 10.30- 12:00

£25 per person*

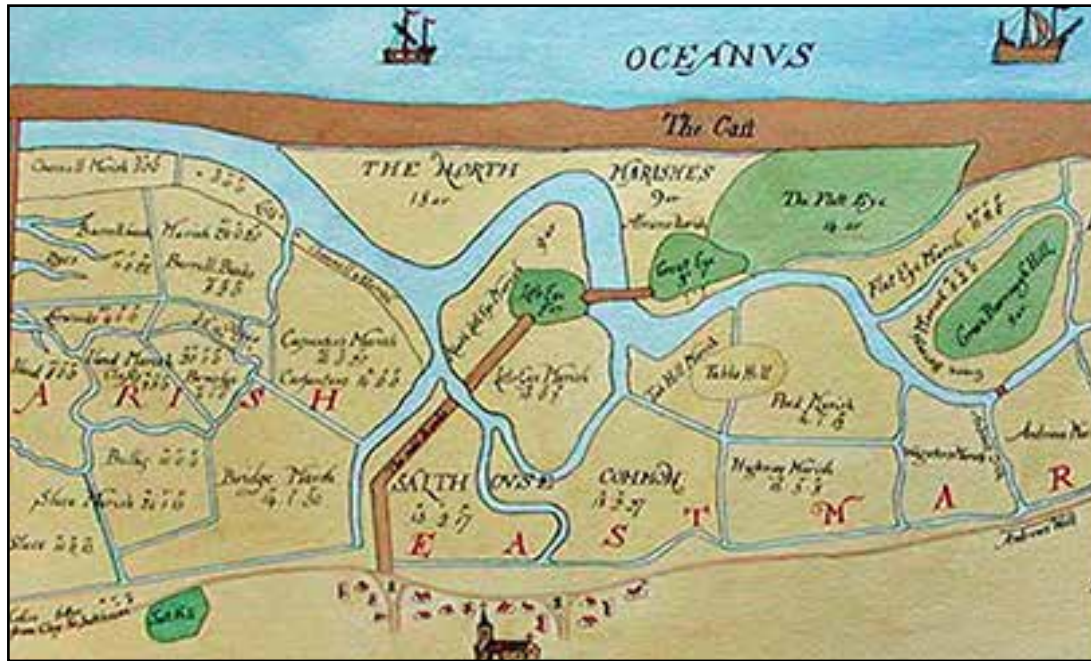
This course looks at the history of crime, looking at types of crime, which courts they would be tried in and punishments for those found guilty, from prison to hanging. Each session will include an introduction to the topic, a practical exercise and a chance to look at a range of related original documents. The sessions are:

- The court system
- Prisons, prisoners and police
- Punishment and life inside the prison

*Norfolk Archives and Heritage Development Foundation supporters can enjoy our research workshops for free. For more information and to join visit NorAH.

To book a place tiny.cc/egkq001

Life as a National Trust (NT) North Norfolk coastal archaeology volunteer



In 2023 after working full-time for many years, I found I had far more spare time than I had been accustomed to. I looked for some voluntary work. I knew I wanted something that contrasted with the boundaries of my past desk bound university career. Namely, to be outside, active, and coastal. Two years later I have no regrets in my role as a Norfolk Coastal NT Heritage Archaeology Ranger Team (HART) volunteer.

We survey over 30 sites. Apart from Branodunum, a 3rd Century Roman Fort in Brancaster, they are all located around Stiffkey, Morston, Blakeney, and Salhouse. The archaeological features of the sites are broad but most unsurprisingly relate to coastal defence. These include past sea defences, WW2 pill boxes, and a Cold War whirlogig. Some sites are very indistinct on the ground and can only be seen from LiDAR (a system that emits laser pulses and measures time it takes for reflected light to return and thereby reveal hidden archaeology features). Whilst others are visible, they are incomplete and clearly eroding (e.g. WW2 Pillboxes). Many sites have questions around their original purpose such as 'the Chapel' on Blakeney Eye (See *Glaven Historian* 9: 2006). Some of our site visits involve us going off the beaten track and are only visible at low tide (e.g. sea defences, Oyster beds, and Ridge and Furrow at Stiffkey).

Handling Old Photographic Plates

When Roberta Hamond handed me a box containing twenty three (more accurately 22½ as one was badly broken) old glass plate negatives that were part of her late husband's effects, I knew it would be an interesting journey.

The first step was to put them on a light-box to see what state they were in – mostly quite good it seemed – and then to put them into new glassine bags; a couple of the older, larger format plates were wrapped in newspaper of 1945 vintage – probably the last time they were looked at.

The majority of the plates were quarter plate size (3¼ x 4¼ inches or 83 x 108 mm), pan-chromatic, and were taken in the late 1930s, mostly in Blakeney. By that time most amateur photographers were switching to sheet or roll film as being both easier to handle, and a lot lighter to carry. Probably the most popular folding quarter-plate camera of that era was the Ensign Klito made by the Houghtons Ltd firm in Walthamstow. Numerous websites (eg https://camera-wiki.org/wiki/Houghton_and_Ensign) can give you more details of popular cameras of this vintage – but beware it is a very deep rabbit hole.

Scanning the plates was simply a matter of laying them on the bed of my scanner (Epson V750) with a black card mask to isolate the image. This works with plates as they are completely flat – if you try doing it with film (which is not flat) you will end up with random interference patterns known as Newton's Rings. Given the size, a resolution of 1200ppi is probably adequate; for smaller formats I would recommend higher resolution of course. The resultant file can then be opened in whatever image editing software you use, and can be cleaned up where there is physical damage to the emulsion. Some of the plates exhibited dichroic fogging of the edges, and others staining. I have not tried to tackle this for risk of damaging the plates. A few of the plates were broken; one had both bits so I did try to glue it back together, unsuccessfully. The problem was solved by the software.

Next came the job of identifying the location and possible date. This was mostly very easy as the images were taken around Blakeney Quay, but two of them (St Ives Bridge, and Wansford Bridge) were not, so resort was made to Google. Several of the quarter plates featured a car, a Riley 12/4 Kestrel, built from 1935, which combined with views of the Blakeney Hotel pointed to the late '30s date. Other plates, in larger formats (5 x 4 inch and half plate) were clearly older – including the image of the *Admiral Mitford* vessel at the Quay used on the front page. There is also an interior view of Blakeney church before the rood screen was installed in 1910.

There are three plates in 6 x 9 cm format, a size more normally associated with roll-film, which show Blakeney Quay after a blizzard. A trawl through the local press has not as yet thrown up any reports of exceptional weather on the north Norfolk coast; does anyone still alive have childhood memories of this event?

It is hoped that hard-copy prints can be made from these plates and that they can join the History Centre collection. Meanwhile here are a few tasters.



***Blakeney Quay after heavy snow.
Date unknown, though obviously
after the opening of the Blakeney
Hotel in 1924. 6x9cm glass plate***



*Interior of Blakeney Church taken before the rood screen was installed in 1910.
5x4in glass plate.*



Launching a sailing dinghy on the Carnser. The car parked nearby is a Riley 12/4 Kestrel introduced in 1935. Quarter plate glass plate.

July edition cover photo poser

In the caption for the July cover I asked if anyone could identify the single decker bus that was waiting to transport the ladies of the WI on their excursion. Michael Archer came up with a detailed account of the bus itself, a Crossley Eagle, and the other products of this company. This will be published in the *Glaven Historian* No.20 early next year, but in the meantime I can tell you that it was supplied to S C Waymann of March in April 1929 with bodywork by Dickson of Dundee – hence the Fife registration – and acquired from Eastern Counties, who had taken over Waymann in August 1933, by Herbert Pye, proprietor of the Blakeney garage, in 1935, this means the photo was taken some time between 1935 and 1939, when George Starr died.

Many thanks to Michael Archer for this.

Quiz Answers

The answers to the VJ Day quiz are as follows:

1) a 2) c 3) a 4) b 5) b 6) b 7) a 8) b 9) c 10) a 11) b 12) c

The winners will be notified directly.

VJ-80, Friday 15th August 2025



Our Chair Diana Cooke (centre) with Helen Gimson and Michelle Gibbs, co-organisers of the street party.



The best dressed guest at the party, Mary Richards, with her support dog.



Ex RAF pilot Paddy wearing his 1940s flight suit, accompanied by his wife.



The history boards created by BAHS committee members from artefacts at our history centre attracted a steady flow of people

A street party on August 15 at Blakeney Harbour Room to mark the 80th anniversary of VJ day attracted a good turn-out. Organised by the BAHS committee in collaboration with the Blakeney, Cley and District Royal British Legion, more than 100 people of all ages, some dressed in authentic wartime outfits, enjoyed food, drink, the atmosphere, a tombola and a Norfolk themed quiz.

The quiz is on the website (<https://www.bahs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/BAHS-Quiz-final.pdf>) for members who are keen quizzers – but note the deadline for entries is past. Nine people got all the answers right and their names went into a hat. BAHS Chair Diana Cooke pulled out the winning ticket belonging to Clare Smith of Holt, who has received a voucher for tea for two at the Blakeney Hotel. Hattie Vernum aged six won a set of three Herbert the Crab books written by our very own Andrew Otterburn (Treasurer and Secretary). We are still trying to trace the winners of the books donated by Holt Bookshop.