

Thoughts on the WWI Centenary

As we have all been made well aware by the media who love a centenary, the First World War began in 1914. I have never taken a great deal of interest in this major historical event probably because no close relation on either side of my family died during the conflict and I have often wondered whether this circumstance was at all unusual.

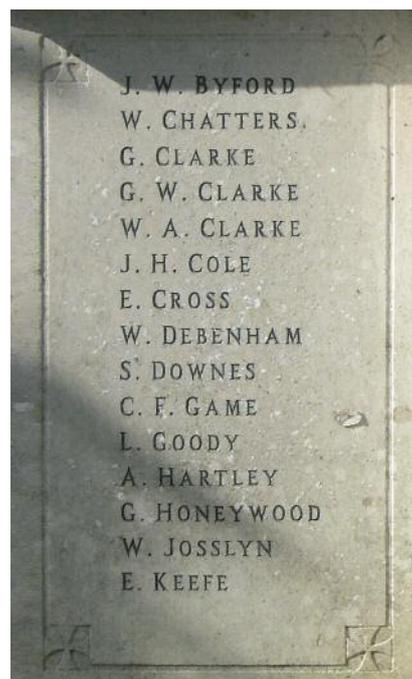
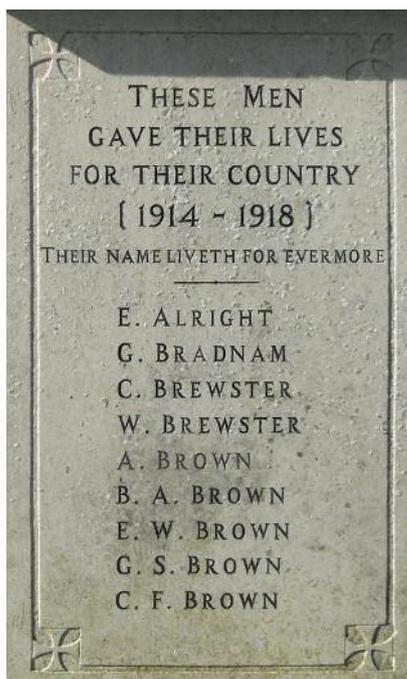
Evidently not. I have recently been reading *The Time Traveller's Guide To Medieval England* by Ian Mortimer*. He states that only six per cent of the adult male population of the United Kingdom perished during the four years of the First World War. He was of course comparing this figure with his estimate for the plague years of the fourteenth century. He claims that by 1400 "about half of all those born over the previous seventy years had died of plague".

I don't expect anyone from Glemsford to muster up a plague victim ancestor from 1349, but I am sure someone who reads this has an interesting story to tell of a brave relation who fought in France or elsewhere during the Great War. If so, why not share your research with fellow members in the next newsletter?

**The Time Traveller's Guide to Medieval England* by Ian Mortimer. The Bodley Head (2008).

In the meantime, this newsletter contains an article by Jenny Wears on the Sheep Stealers of Glemsford. One of those arrested went by the name of George Chatters and a W. CHATTERS also appears on the village's War Memorial. Is there a connection between these two people?

Robin Ford, Editor



The Sheep Stealers

At about 10pm on a dark November night, a sheep nearly missing! Not all is as it seems, however. A police constable Ward had been walking along Egremont Street and as he came to New Cut he saw two men walking down the lane towards him; one 'with a dead sheep on his back'.

According to newspaper reports at the time, George Chatters and William Wells, the said two men, 'were well-known characters'. When stopped by PC Ward they were carrying a blood-soaked cloth and knives, with the dead sheep on

George Chatter's back. One newspaper reported that they were taking it to Joseph Brown to have it dressed, while another that they were taking it to Mr Deaves, a farmer of Skates Hill who was the owner, because it was unwell!

The men were secured and removed to Melford police station, where they were held until the next Petty Sessions on Friday 15 November 1878. The session was chaired by the Rev. G Coldham and JGW Poley, Esq. The crime was serious, however, so they had to stand trial at Bury

St Edmunds Quarter Sessions. On 14 January, 1879 they stood before BB Hunter Rodwell, Esq the Chairman and other magistrates, to be charged with 'stealing sheep at Glemsford'.

Both men were sentenced to eighteen months hard labour. George Chatters had a previous conviction (not detailed) some nine years earlier, but both were warned that should they be reconvicted they would face penal servitude. Fortunately for them, the crime of sheep stealing no longer carried a death sentence.

They served their time in Bury Gaol and returned to Glemsford; William Wells as a labourer and George Chatters as a mat weaver.

If anyone happens to be researching William Wells, his parents were William and Elizabeth Argent. By 1866 Elizabeth was a widow with four children. She married Edward Wells in April of that year and William, now 14 years old, took the surname Wells.

Jenny Wears



Scene of the Crime

THE BUTTERWORT AND THE PAPER MILL



Hidden away in London's Natural History Museum is the herbarium of Joseph Andrews (1688-1764). He was a botanist/apothecary who lived and worked in Sudbury. The herbarium consists of 11 volumes of pressed plants mostly collected within a 10-mile radius of Sudbury. Andrews attached a label to each specimen giving details as to when and where he found it.

I have not had the opportunity of studying the herbarium at first hand but have relied upon an article which appeared in the *Journal of Botany* for 1918* which contains a list of these labels. Unfortunately, I can find no reference to Glemsford amongst the labels, but at least one plant was gathered close to our boundary with Long Melford. The label reads: PINGUICULA VULGARIS L. In a Boggy pasture & in Milford, as ride from the Paper Mills towards Hoop Lane. 12 May, 1746.

Common Butterwort *Pinguicula vulgaris* is an insectivorous plant of moors, bogs and fens. Much of this habitat has been lost in Suffolk and the plant is now restricted to a few sites in the Waveney valley. The accompanying photograph was taken last year on a rainy afternoon at Market Weston Fen, a Suffolk Wildlife Trust reserve.

The Paper Mills mentioned on the label became the site of the Bush Boake Allen factory, but I have yet to trace the whereabouts of Hoop Lane. Could Common

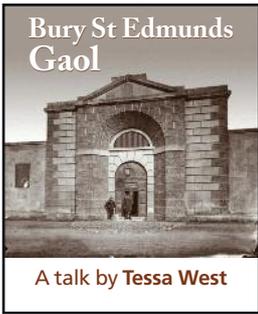
Butterwort still be lurking, unnoticed, somewhere along the Stour valley between Glemsford and Long Melford?

The following two paragraphs, that shed some light on the fortunes of the Paper Mills during the 19th century, come from the collection of newspaper cuttings belonging to Sid Watkinson.

June 24th 1829: An old established paper mill at long Melford to be sold with two engines, vats, presses, reservoir, drying, finishing and store rooms. This valuable mill is situated on a powerful stream with a genteel dwelling house, 6 acres of meadow. The flood gates have undergone expensive repairs and there is 7 ft of water.

April 22nd 1873: An application was made by the Patent Gunpowder Company for a licence to erect works at the old paper mill at Melford. Sir William Hyde Parker, Colonel Palmer of Lyston Hall and Stour Fishing Preservation opposed the application. The nearest to the proposed magazine is the Railway Cottage (362 yards), Cranfield Farm belonging to Sir William Hyde Parker (384 yards), the Windmill (1,430 yards), Lapwing Farm (2,200 yards), Mr Westrop, Lyston Hall (1/2 a mile), Col. Palmer, Lyston Church and Mill (3/4 of a mile). Sir William Hyde Parker said I own Cranfield Farm and Bullamy Moors and the proposed works would depreciate my property. The Bench refused a licence.

* I would like to thank Mary Briggs (Botanical Society of the British Isles), the Natural History Museum (London) and Eileen King (Little Cornard Conservation Society) for providing a copy of the *Journal of Botany* for 1918.



TESSA WEST, OUR January speaker, gave a lively and informative talk on Bury St. Edmunds Gaol. Drawing on previous experience and her research when writing a biography of prison reformer, John Howard, Tessa described the appalling conditions of prisons during the late 18th century.

The Bury St. Edmunds jail at that time housed a motley crew – prisoners awaiting trial, transportation or execution alongside felons, debtors and sad unfortunates suffering from mental illnesses. All were confined within one dismal space, lacking even the basics necessary for reasonable existence. Food had to be bought by prisoners' families and as jailors were unpaid they were obviously open to any underhand deals which promised financial gain.

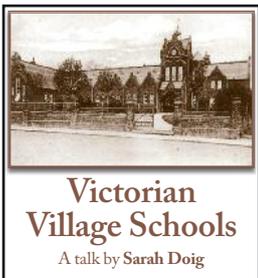
A total of 220 crimes were punishable by death, thus prison numbers were kept

down considerably. However all realised that something had to change. By 1800 the building of a new jail, adopting a similar layout as that pioneered by the Bentham brothers, had been proposed.

The design involved cells leading off a central 'hub', thus enabling separation of sexes and different categories; also improved cleanliness and hygiene. The new jail built by George Byfield and William Wilkins cost £30,000 and opened in 1804 housing 140 prisoners.

The first governor was John Orridge, a wise, considerate man, who served until 1844 during which time William Corder (of Red Barn notoriety) would have spent some time there.

The Bury jail finally closed in 1880 when inmates were moved to Ipswich.



OUR FEBRUARY SPEAKER, Sarah Doig lives in the converted Victorian school in Rickingham, thus her subject of Victorian Schools was not only appropriate but also very informative.

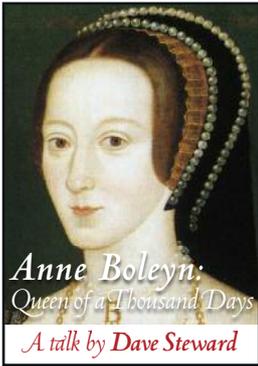
Before the 19th century, schooling for the masses of deserving poor was virtually non-existent and certainly non-compulsory. Robert Raikes was an early pioneer, introducing Sunday Schools which used the Bible as their only textbook.

Running parallel to these, charity, work-house and voluntary schools existed and gave to a few some form of rudimentary education but it was not until mid-1800s that architectural plans and buildings for national schools took place. There are many examples of such in Suffolk, some near churches, and each displaying a

similar layout of one large main room divided into three separate galleries or teaching blocks, a smaller room for the infants and two playgrounds for boys and girls.

Funding for an early Victorian school was mostly private, or from the church and other various fund-raising events. Good numbers for attendance were very important as were examination results because they increased the amount of funding.

As well as the three Rs, timetables also included drawing, needlework, music, nature and drill and many of the children would have been taught by pupil teachers, some as young as 13 because properly trained staff were few.



A VERY LARGE AUDIENCE in March were entertained by Dave Steward's whistle-stop tour of the life and times of Anne Boleyn. Himself a very distant relative of Anne, Dave based his talk on authentic key facts and not from the plethora of fictional works available.

He showed a large collection of charismatic portraits of Anne and other key figures in the drama. There were also pictures of a number of local places of residence or internment, including Hever Castle, Blickling Hall and Norwich Cathedral where the Boleyn coat of arms is very evident.

Anne, crowned Queen on 1st June 1533 reigned for only about 1000 days before meeting her untimely end on 19th May

1536. A victim of Henry VIII's frustration for failing to produce a male heir and of the political manipulations involving the acrimonious break from Rome, Anne appears to have been entirely innocent of the crimes with which she was accused.

Following hasty trials and the rapid execution of a number of supposed 'lovers', including her brother George, Anne continued to refute all claims in vain. Dressed in a silver grey dress, in the kneeling position Anne was beheaded by a French executioner wielding a sharp, double edged sword.

She is buried along with many other victims of the axe in the Tower of London's chapel.

PROGRAMME 2014

Thursday, **A Summer Outing** –

June 19th A conducted tour of Lavenham Little Hall, starting at 7.30pm. Meet there (near Market Place), or last car leaves from Black Lion Car park at 6.45pm prompt. There is a small charge for the tour.

Thursday, **A Summer Social Function** –

July 10th At Melton House, immediately following a conducted tour of upper Egremont Street, pointing out some of the old shops of Glemsford. Meet at end of Greyhound Road at 6.15pm. If some people wish to go direct to Melton House and miss the tour, please ensure that you do not arrive before the opening time of 7.45pm.

GLEMSFORD
LOCAL HISTORY
SOCIETY

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Annual Subscription: £10.00 **Visitors:** £2.00 per time

We meet on every 2nd Thursday of the month in Glemsford School at 7.30pm.

We welcome your continued support and that of others. Please encourage your friends and neighbours to join us.