

Glemsford Local History Society

President: George Grover Chairman: Patrick Currie Secretary: Margaret King

NEWSLETTER - Spring 2006

FREE TO MEMBERS (25p where sold)

Welcome to the third Glemsford Local History Society newsletter in this series. I am happy to say that response to my appeal for contributions has been so good that I have material in reserve; and that, with my improving technology and reducing technological idiocy, pictures should also make an appearance. I'm also happy that our past Chairman and Webmaster, Steve Clarke is enthusiastically posting past missives on our Local History website www.glemsford.org.uk. Do take a look at the site; even if you are computerially challenged it may be viewed from the terminals in our Library, or perhaps another member could show you – there are items on the Little Egypt Morris Men, family history links with the village, old pictures and ongoing correspondence from past residents or enquirers simply interested in our part of Suffolk. You never know, you may just have that much needed information, or likewise a contact may be able to provide just the answer you have been seeking for years...

Residential building continues apace in Glemsford. As I write the Flax Lane / Egremont St. development is nearing completion and work has started clearing land behind Whitlands, off Brook St. The row of houses on the site of the former Suffolk Studio Glass factory, "St Mary's" is now occupied. Although Argent's newsagents officially ceased trading some time ago it still remains open to sell off stock while papers may now be bought from Broadway Stores and from Mitchell's – is there nothing they don't sell?

The school now sports a security door at the main entrance where visitors must operate a call system similar to those on blocks of flats or nursing homes – not very welcoming but a sign of the times, I'm afraid.

Please keep the contributions flowing in if you would like to see further newsletters of the quality of this one. They can be handed to me or another committee member at a meeting, hand written, typed or on disc or you can send them to me via our new email address glhs@glemsford.org.uk. I can also arrange to copy and return loaned material although I prefer not to have the responsibility in case of any mishaps!

Happy reading!

Patrick Hemphill.

A Glemsford family in the 19th

In 1989 there was a family gathering in

Century

by Sheila Willmoth

We moved to Glemsford just over a year ago and are keen to discover more about the Hempsteads.

My mother's grandmother Emily Hempstead was born April 12th 1848 in Egremont Street, her father being William Hempstead, blacksmith. She was known to me as "Grandma Deaves" and died April 5th 1941 aged 92 after her daughter's house in Woodford, Essex, had been bombed. William's parents, William Hempstead and Susannah Playle lived in Glemsford and we have their marriage in Assington, November 21st 1793. Their children were:- William 1796?, Mary Ann 1802, George 1804, John 1806 and Hannah 1808.

William Hempstead, the younger, and Sarah Pearman produced a son (William, known as Hempstead Pearman) in 1817 when she was 17. On October 25th 1819 there was a marriage, after which were born Susan, Mary Ann, Edward, Isabella, Hannah, Elizabeth, Benjamin and Ebenezer. Sarah died in 1837 soon after Ebenezer was born.

On June 25th 1841 William Hempstead married Keziah Byford, daughter of Richard Byford and Alice Daniels. With her came Emma Byford, 1 year old, also Caroline born some years earlier. We believe Keziah came to look after the small children when Sarah was ill.

Glemsford. A lot of research was undertaken and it came to light that before this marriage Alfred Hempstead was born and sent to Maldon in Essex, to be brought up by his Byford grandparents. It seems that the rest of the family did not know of him. After him there were five more offspring:- Joshua, Ann, Emily (great grandmother), George William and Albert. Keziah died in 1867 aged 54 years.

William Hempstead senior and Susan lived in the pair of thatched cottages (Nos. 53 & 55) opposite the Greyhound Public House. In 1818 they bought one for £15 and in 1828 their son William purchased it from them for the same amount (£15) and in 1832 he paid 19 guineas for the second cottage. It appears that the blacksmiths shop could have been behind the cottages (from the 1840 Tithe Map). In 1863 it was bought by John Bigg of Glemsford and was sold by Eliza, his widow, in 1876 to William Byford, whose daughter Kate sold it to W. Walter Taylor in 1920.

William Hempstead, the elder, lived on until 1879 when he died, aged 83, in the Workhouse. By then all his children had dispersed.

The above facts have been obtained from Parish Registers and other documents in Suffolk Record Offices and other researchers in the family.

(to be continued)

Glemsford Childhood Memories

Great Aunt Emma must have been a remarkable lady. She outlived her three

by John Slater

My grandfather George was the youngest of his surviving eight siblings, being born in 1876. There was 27 years difference between the youngest and oldest. He was named after his eldest brother George who was killed by a collapse of overhang in Skates Hill Gravel Pit in 1874, aged 18. As my grandfather's family had lived in Glemsford since the 1690s they had married into most of the old village families, so everyone knew you and you had to be careful of what you said or who you criticised amongst your many "cousins".

One of my earliest memories was being taken by my grandfather to visit his eldest sister Emma, who lived at Five Gables Cottage, Plum Street, Glemsford. It would have been during the summer of 1932; I was then 3 years old, although I was born in Putney, London in 1928 as my father was working there in the twenties. As the first grandchild I was no doubt spoilt by my grandparents, and spent quite a lot of time during the summer months with them.

I recall being carried on my grandfather's shoulders for most of the way. It was quite a long walk from their house on Drapery Common, Hunts Hill to Five Gables, near New Street Farm. I remember this old lady (born in 1849) so she would have been in her eighties at the time, in her large kitchen, with a bread oven beside the open fire place (Five Gables must date from the 16th century). She gave me a sweet of some sort, and my grandfather a glass of home made wine.

husbands, Messrs. Maxim, Brinkley and Oakley. I recently spoke to her grandson Brian Oakley who lives in Sussex, who sent me the Oakley family tree. They have been in Glemsford since the early 1600s. He remembered visiting his grandmother in the 1930s and also his Aunt and Uncle Elmer Porter at the Croft.

Around this time in the early 'thirties I recall going with my grandfather to get milk from Spencer Biggs' farm, Place Farm, Church Hill, Glemsford. The milk was carried in a quart can; a journey from Drapery Common across the "Casey" (Causeway) usually was broken by a visit to Jim "Sooty" Brown's shop and bakehouse at Churchgate. He always baked his bread on Tuesday. The shop was on the end of a row of cottages, demolished in 1960 opposite the Prince of Wales public house, now closed. Grandfather would buy St. Julien tobacco, while I would have a toffee or two if I had been a good boy.

Tye Green in the 'thirties was the grazing pasture for Bill Martin's herd of five or six cows of all colours. They were kept from straying onto the highway by a collie dog who had one blue eye and one brown eye. Bill or his son Jack would drive the cows after milking from Bush Farm (constructed of faggots) in Shepherds Lane to Tye Green to feed. According to Collis Goodchild, magistrate and farmer of Clockhouse Farm, Bill Martin's cows were kept by the Parish. They certainly kept the Green well fertilised. Bill's son Jack delivered the milk around the village on foot, carrying the churn with pint and half-pint measures clipped to its side. They were both characters the like of which we shall not see again.

They bring back fond memories of times gone forever.



Bill Martin



Five Gables

Otters on the Glem?

by Robin Ford

Recent news headlines of otters being affected by building development close to the River Stour at Great Cornard reminded me of an article which appeared in the February 2003 edition of "British Wildlife" magazine. The article concentrates on the recent history of otters in Essex, but mentions the release of two pairs of otters onto the River Glem in 1995.

From the mid 1950s, a marked decline in otter numbers had been noticed in the Stour catchment area, and by 1980 there were few, if any signs of otters on the river or its tributaries. P.C.B.s (Polychlorinated Biphenyls) are thought to be a major factor in otter mortality, but other pollutants, traffic accidents and habitat loss have also

Results of surveys, carried out along the river and its tributaries between 1996 and 2002, have been published, and they show continued otter activity at the confluence of the Glem and the Stour. There is good bank-side vegetation along stretches of both rivers near Glemsford and this has undoubtedly helped otters to survive. Holts, which are man-made log piles, have also been constructed at regular intervals along the Stour by volunteers from the Dedham Vale and Stour Valley project.

For a few years there has been an "otter slide" visible close to the old railway bridge. This muddy slope running down a steep bank into the river, has now vegetated over.

Sightings of otters are few and far between, but a keen local naturalist, out bird watching in Glemsford one morning in late February 2006, had a surprisingly good view of one of our most secretive mammals, confirming their continued occupation of our stretch of

accounted for the population crash. However, by the late 1980s rumours started circulating of otter releases. At the time, all were denied by the relevant authorities. The situation was complicated by the release of captive bred animals onto the Black Bourne near Ixworth in 1983. Otters travel long distances and animals from this successful introduction by the Otter Trust could have eventually made their way to the headwaters of the Stour.

the river.

Snakeweed update to the Autumn 2005 Newsletter:

Robin Ford

Martin Sanford (botanical recorder for Suffolk), writing in the 2005 edition of Suffolk Natural History, has found just twenty four sites scattered across the county for *Persicaria Bistorta* (Common Bistort, or Snakeweed). The species has been included in the Suffolk Rare Plant Register as "locally scarce", declining, but widespread.

Review of recent meetings

Margaret King

Below is a summary of our meetings since the publication of the last Newsletter.

October 2005. A most interesting talk on 'Church Bells and their History' was given by Colin Cooke, a local bellringer, who told us about the makers of some of the church bells in our area. Bell construction dated back

January 2006. A record number of 46 members and friends attended the first meeting of the New Year when Rory Sumerling deputised for Ted Ingilby who was on holiday. Speaking upon the use of lime in the preservation of ancient buildings, Rory showed us samples of lime plaster, spoke of the 15 kilns which once existed in Sudbury and explained how plaster and lime wash was, and still is, used on the Suffolk timber-framed houses. This was an unusual topic which made for an interesting evening.

February. A really fascinating talk was provided by Anthony Wheeler when he

to the 15th. century when the gifted craftsmen had clearly been men of high standing in their communities. Whole families became famous for the quality and sound of their bells, a feature which we still enjoy today, associating their pealing with times of happiness, sadness and of foreboding.

November. The A.G.M. was attended by 38 members when, following the official business, which was aided and abetted by nibbles and complimentary glasses of wine, three members gave talks about times past. Eileen Lynch spoke about a 16th century Glemsford rector; John King reminisced on his childhood wartime memories; Ron Hartley told us of the archaeological 'dig' in Long Melford which unearthed a Roman burial ground. All agreed it was a most entertaining evening, many feeling that our own members have so much of interest to offer each November meeting. Long may it continue!

December. Our president once again opened up his home, 'Chequers', to members for a seasonal evening of food, drink and inter-active pursuits. These included a traditional Christmas quiz, followed by a photographic quiz based upon places and buildings in the village. The quiz winners were Carole Fletcher and Gill Leech respectively. Thanks go to George and Anne for their hospitality.

spoke on the 1916 Zeppelin raid on Sudbury. The whole subject was brought to life by Mr. Wheeler's anecdotes about the actual people involved, from the captain of the Zeppelin, to the characters in East Street, one of whom insisted upon finishing his pint in the 'Horse and Groom', subsequently paying the ultimate sacrifice when walking home! With his attention to detail, it was easy to travel back in time to Cuxhaven and join the pilot and crew in airship 14 on their journey to Sudbury following the railway lines across Suffolk.

March. There was a large attendance for Clive Paine who entertained us with a well-researched and humorous talk on the English Civil War (1642-48) in Suffolk. With King Charles 1 stubbornly adhering to his Catholic leanings and to the divine right of kings to govern without parliament, unrest between the church and the state quickly developed. This escalated into civil war when a Puritan-led parliament adopted dictatorial measures in the name of religion, banning all forms of jollity and seasonal festivals, desecrating churches and removing 'scandalous' priests from their livelihoods. Such was the chaos and confusion for the average Puritan-controlled Suffolk parishioner that, as a contemporary cartoon showed, he did not know whether he was on his head or his heels!

May 31st 1916. Walter Oakley aged 11 and Robert Bloomfield aged 10 of Glensford were charged with stealing two hen eggs valued at 2d from M Hill farm, Glensford. Mr Goodchild said he did not want the bench to deal harshly with the boys but he must make an example of them. The chairman said "you Oakley a son of a soldier, it is great indignity to your father and the King's uniform, the police are ordered to give them four strokes of the birch rod but if your parents like to undertake the duty in the presence of the police the bench will be satisfied", the punishment was duly carried out.

June 28th 1916. The run of bad luck which P.C. Gibbons of Glensford has had was told at Melford Petty Sessions when his landlord, Mr Pettit, applied for a distress warrant for rent owing which was 3s 6d a week. The constable said he had paid the rent since he had been back at work, his wife had been laid up for 13 weeks and on the day she went to be churched he got kicked while on duty at Melford Fair and was disabled for 7 months, it was true he got paid while off work but they had lost a child aged 11 months and while the child was ill his illness caused some expense. Order was made for payment of rent and 7s 6d a month off the arrears.

Forthcoming events

All the following meetings are held at 7.30pm in Glensford Village Hall except where stated

- **Thursday 13th April:** "Suffolk Pubs before 1900" Desmond Herring
- **Thursday 11th May:** "Heraldry" Dr. Geoffrey Heathcote
- **Thursday 8th June:** A summer's evening function – date and venue to be confirmed
- **Thursday 13th July:** A social evening – might involve searching for clues!