

## **GLEMSFORD LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

History Society member, Laurence Page, was our speaker at the May meeting when he took for his subject 'Palaeography' which is the reading of old handwriting. During Saxon times what little amount of recording took place was down to the monks, whilst following the Norman Conquest written accounts were basically in French or Latin, the latter being the official language for legal documents up until 1733. From c. 1520 an italic or secretary's hand of writing was used and we can find this principally in old wills, the hearth tax records and in parish and manorial records. When trying to read these, other factors come into being such as multi-spelling variations, use of abbreviations, and general standard of the handwriting, not to mention the condition of the texts. We then had a go at palaeography trying to decipher a number of samples of handwriting dating from 1732 back to 1577 each getting progressively more difficult, or so it seemed! However, we were assured by Laurence afterwards that we did very well for a first attempt.

**Margaret King (Secretary) Tel: 01787 280996**

[marjonking@gmail.com](mailto:marjonking@gmail.com)