

Glensford Local History Society

President: George Grover Chairman: Patrick Currie Secretary: Margaret King (Tel 01787-280996)

NEWSLETTER WINTER 2010

FREE TO MEMBERS (50p where sold)

I am writing this editorial having just attended the excellent GLHS Christmas Party at "Chequers". The members provided a choice variety of delicious food and our President, George Grover, was once again our most welcoming host, providing the wine and, of course, the venue.

Margaret King set, what to me, was a fiendishly difficult quiz, involving Christmas carols and popular songs; but one of our members managed an incredible score of 38 out of 40 correct answers!!! The Christmas Poetry readings were the highlight of the evening, and included verses penned by Kipling, Betjeman, Brendan Behan and John King!

To keep the Christmas poetry flavour flowing into the

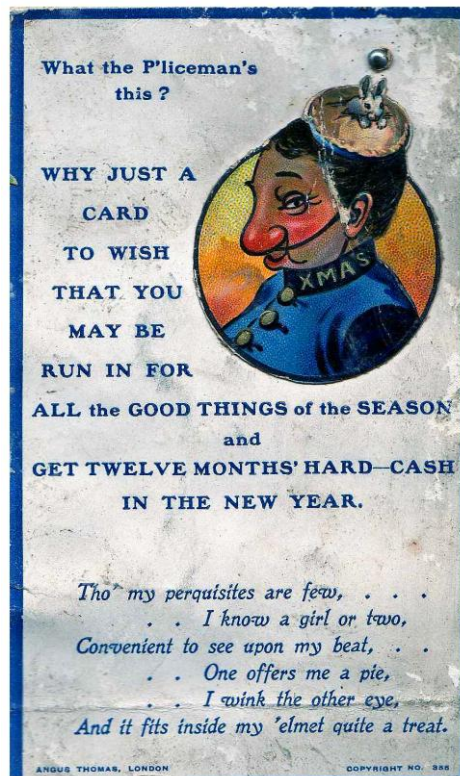
New Year, I have illustrated this article with a postcard lifted from an Edwardian scrap album of around 1903.

Information on the railway station is still arriving on my desk and I hope the next issue of the newsletter will be the long awaited "Railway Edition".

Val Huestis has since moved to

Braintree but has kindly agreed to jointly edit this issue, however she will be unable to carry on helping with the newsletter and has asked for someone to come forward who enjoys putting his/her creative juices to work on the newsletter layout for future issues. She will be happy to give that person the task of putting their talents to work.

I look forward to seeing you at the January meeting and wish you a very happy 2010.



By Robin Ford, Editor

A Glemsford Walking Tour

For the outing on July 9th 2009, the group traveled no further than a quarter of a mile from the village hail. Walking as far as Hunt's Hill, with many stops on the way, our congregation listened intently to Margaret King's recollections of growing up in Glemsford.

Patrick Curry took copious notes during the evening and has written them up for the newsletter. Thank you Patrick for your wonderfully concise notes and thank you Margaret for that wonderful walking tour that brought about these notes. It is surprising how much a village can change in such a short time.

1. Margaret King (nee Porter) was born in the southern end of what is now The White Studio, and lived there until she was about 9 years old. In those days the house was a simple brick faced cottage fronted by a small garden with a wooden paling fence. There was no mains plumbing at that time, and Margaret remembers the 'night soil' collectors.
2. Margaret's father used to cut hair in a small wooden shed at the back.
3. The Verger used to live at the school house until the Church sold the house to the open market in about the mid 1980's.
4. She remembers that the Church Hall (originally the school) was very gloomy and had a very dominant mural / picture of Jesus ascending at one end
5. A Victorian letter box was set in a wall to the south side of the entry to the Church Hall. When the wall was removed the post box was reset at the School gate.
6. The Box Iron row houses were very small and dilapidated and were situated along what is now the south side of Harpurs Road. There were about 8 houses in all, with quite long gardens, and outside W.C.'s (were they really W.C.'s I wonder?)
7. There was a pond at the end of the dead end track fronting Box Iron Row
8. Rev. Harpur lived in the first house north of the Methodist Church (where Ramon Farrance now lives), and was obviously the inspiration for Harpur's road.
9. The Primitive (?) Baptist chapel stood where Unity house now stands. It stood right up to the foot path and was built of red brick (unlike the similar chapel in Cavendish)
10. Mitchell's Store used to house a bus company (Longs). The bus livery was mainly blue with yellow additions. The garage burnt down in c 1986, almost certainly as a result of arson.
11. The area behind Mitchell's (and perhaps incorporating it after Longs) was occupied by Pearsons Haulage company, possibly as late as the 70's and 80's. They were very noisy with refrigeration units running all night, and multiple start ups and driving away of large diesel lorries in the early morning.

12. There is a old photograph of the shop opposite the Briars (now a hairdressers) as a Drapers and named 'Long'. Margaret remembers the shop as a small grocers under the name of 'Meads'. Others talk of it as an Estate Agent. There have obviously been many changes here.

13. At the northern end of The Briars was a lean-to weather boarded shop (since built over as an extension) which sold sweets. It was also where Margaret's mother first tasted ice-cream. There are several old photographs which show an elderly lady with the white apron in the doorway of this shop, who was Doris Bullingham's maternal grandmother. She was a Maxim, and the union is commemorated in the naming of Doris' house, ie 'Bulmac'.

14. At the south end of The Briars (i.e. where the social club now stands) there was a butcher's shop. This was a large detached wooden boarded building with a window facing the road, and with an entrance at the left side. So that's three butchers in Glemsford, at least! — one next to the Cock, one next to the Cherry Tree, and this one).

15. The frontage to Melton House was 'a nice hedge' and many functions used to be held in Richard Deek's very large garden where Melton House now stands.

16. Where the Village hall stands was simply a meadow where the grass was allowed to grow long. In the western corner stood the water tower which was painted with aluminum paint. Below the water tank was an office for the Borough Surveyor, and which sometimes was a venue for Parish Council meetings.

17. There was an annual fair in June on Tower Meadow with dodgems, and cakewalk etc.. The many penny arcade machines provided rich pickings for the village children in the grass afterwards.

18. The Plough pub stood behind the house to the north of Tye Green Paddock, and was occupied by Mr Seabrook, (whose daughter Ann later married Bernard Cutting). The Seabrooks owned a number of cowsheds where the bungalows of Tye Green Paddock now stand, and where cows used to roam freely in the field, even into the 1960's. (Possibly this field extended as far south as to the end of Harpurs Road) During the 50's and 60's a series of developments of the area resulted in the demolition of the old Plough house (and where the new one still houses Cutting descendents), the building of another house to the south (now Turners), the bungalow to the north of the new Plough House, and the Paddock itself.

19. The Turners store (now Rumbles) was, for many years a general store owned by Mr. and Mrs. Chatters. When they retired it became a clothing and haberdashery shop before reverting to groceries.

20. The blacksmiths occupied the corrugated iron sheds behind the green west of the Old Bank House. The space between the house and the road was occupied by an enclosed garage with imposing green gates.

19. The footpath through to the field (locally known as Shitpot Alley?) which passed just to the side of Rowland Hill's house was where the night soil was often deposited.

20. Coilis Goodchild lived at Clockhouse Farm. Margaret remembers as a child being chased off the field by him approaching on his horse dressed with buckled gaiters etc.

The Stars over Suffolk

While reading Christopher Winn's I Never Knew That About England, I came across a little titbit about Suffolk. The stars over Suffolk are famous and we don't even realise it. It was these very stars that inspired Jane Taylor to write a poem whilst star gazing from her home on Shilling Street in Lavenham, Suffolk at the young age of 23.

Jane Taylor, an English Poet and Novelist was born in London to a literary family. In 1806, after moving to Lavenham Suffolk, she wrote and published "The Star" in Rhymes for the Nursery, a collection of poems by Taylor and her older sister Ann. "The Star" actually has five stanzas but most people can only recite the first one.

It was put to music but no where have I been able to find out why that music was

chosen. It is sung with the French melody "*Ah! Vous Dirai Je Maman.*" The song appears to be adopted by Mozart who wrote 12 variations of the song. This rhyme also shares its melody with the "*Alphabet Song*" and "*Baa Baa Black Sheep.*" Surprisingly, many people have long forgotten that Jane Taylor wrote this very famous poem.

I'm sure many of you are smiling now as you've guessed the poem and you're humming the first stanza to the tune we all learnt as children. We now know this by another name - "*Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star.*" So when you look up to those famous and inspirational stars of Suffolk, remember Jane Taylor as the poet who immortalized them with her words "*Twinkle, twinkle, little star, how I wonder what you are!*"

By Val Huestis

The Crown Inn then...

February 21st 1844. To be sold at the Crown Inn ,Glemsford on the 22nd of February, on the premises, All the capital brewing plant for six coombs, two bushels, also well seasoned store casks from 10 hogsheads downwards, pipe hogshead and other casks. 800 gallons of beer, small quantities of wines and spirits and all the neat and tidy furniture of Messrs William Sparkes Golding of the Crown Inn, Glemsford. Under distress warrant and by virtue of sale.



And Now...

The Crown, Glemsford, Suffolk 26/12/2009
From the Archives of Newspaper Cuttings of Sid Watkinson

GLEMSFORD LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY NEWS

An excellent turn-out of nearly 50 members and visitors for the first meeting of the new 2009-10 season heard speaker Robert Halliday on 'Suffolk Graves and Graveyards' a subject, which as his many slides depicted, full of quite fascinating historical aspects involving as it does past lives, building trends and often some quirky graveyard positions.

Although the oldest Suffolk gravestone dating back to 1510 can be found within Lavenham church, the fashion for outside memorial stones did not generally start until the 17th century. Early gravestone art was either bizarre or, more often, macabre decorated with carvings of skeletons, shovels, coffins and hourglasses (a ever-present reminder of human mortality) and, as in one instance, much of the above set within a theatrical surround of draped curtains!

Gravestones of famous people also proved interesting. Gravestones in Suffolk included a maharajah, an assortment of military heroes and the man, now long forgotten, responsible for coining the word 'communist'. From more recent times we quickly recognised the names of author Hammond Innes (Kersey), bird impersonator Percy Edwards (Polstead), actor Simon Cadell (Honiton.)

Our October meeting was definitely a first for the Society. A long pub-crawl by a large number of members and visitors when we all completed the evening sober in the extreme! Our speaker, John Goodhand, took us on a multi-faceted journey of many British pub signs which collectively illustrated his chosen title of 'The Good, the Bad and the Ugly', these being only a small part of his slide library of 6,300 different signs!

The pub sign is now unfortunately becoming an endangered species owing not only to the fact that up to 50 public houses are closing per week, but also because many weathered pictured signs are now being replaced simply by named ones. We were given a potted history of each sign, with John telling us many stories of quirky behaviour, scandalous deeds and illicit liaisons of the gallery of characters shown. Thus we saw a large variety of Kings' and Queens' Heads (some of whom actually lost those heads!); saintly martyrs, manipulative politicians, pioneers, writers and artists, famous military commanders and sporting heroes.

Brewers such as Greene King, Tolly Cobbold, Adnams and Youngs all produced a variety of styles, whilst many of the signs featured personalities who had some connection with the area. Thus the Yorkist King Richard III can be found in Yorkshire; Nelson in Norfolk; Nell Gwynn and Lily Langtry in London; Margaret Catchpole in Ipswich and the notorious vicar of Stiffkey, whose extra marital affairs caused such a furor in the 30s, on a Red Lion sign in Stiffkey—a reference to his subsequent life in the circus where a supposedly tame lion mauled him to death! In all we enjoyed a most interesting and informative evening.

Our A.G.M. held on November 12th saw an excellent attendance of both old and new members of the Society. In his opening remarks the Chairman, Patrick Currie, spoke of the sad loss of one of our members, Maureen Sealey, wishing to convey our sympathies to her husband Terry and to her immediate family and friends. He said that our thoughts are with them, and likewise with two other former members, Esme Smith and Jack Alston, both very unwell at this time.

During his report the Chairman summarised the successes and achievements of the past year thanking the committee for their joint endeavours and the membership for its consistent support.

For special mention he commented on the varied talents of our hard-working treasurer, Rowland Hill, and also commended committee member Robin Ford for his 'behind the scenes' unsung participation in compiling the newsletter, making the tea, washing up, wet and windy car parking duties and for the supply of illustrated talks at short notice! Peter Coote, who has recently taken on the task of producing very professional posters, was also thanked.

Following the official business, the evening continued with cheese and wine. Our guest speakers this year were Bob Farmer who told us many interesting facts and stories of his home, Monks Hall, one of the oldest buildings in the village. Committee member, Jenny Wears, showed us the terriers which she has recently transcribed explaining

what these old documents really were. We listened to a 1968 recording from a recently purchased C.D. of Mrs. Ria Johnson, a former resident of Glemsford, speaking and singing some Suffolk folk songs. Ria, remembered by some, used much of the original Suffolk dialect in her speech a fact that reminds us how important it is to record the spoken word before it is lost for ever. The evening concluded with a short talk by the metal detectorist, Clive Coleman, who listed and showed photographs of some of the exciting finds from September's meeting including the rare 1st Century Roman lamp, identical to two from Pompeii in the British Museum, yet this is the only one ever to be unearthed in this country.

Margaret King (Secretary)

Forthcoming events

Thursday, January 14th: Tessa West: Researching and Writing a Novel set in the Fens of the late 17th century.

Thursday, February 11th: Patrick Hemphill: Motor Manufacture in East Anglia.

Thursday, March 11th: Ron Murrell: The Battle of Trafalgar.

Thursday, April 8th: Lisa Harris: Museum of East Anglian Life. (A talk and exhibition of artifacts)

Saturday, April 17th: COACH OUTING TO NORWICH!

(This event will go ahead providing enough seats on the coach are booked in advance).

Thursday, May 13th: Clive Paine: A Guided Tour of Boxted Church, the Weller Poley Monuments and memorials.

Thursday, June 10th : A summer outing to Hill Farm, Gestingthorpe, by kind invitation of Mr. Ashley Cooper.

Thursday, July 8th: A summer's evening function - to be arranged.

Annual Subscription - £8.00 - Visitors £2.00

We meet on every 2nd Thursday of the month at Glemsford Village Hall at 7:30pm

New members and visitors are very welcome so please come and join us.

Printed and published by Glemsford Local History Society. Senior Editor: Robin Ford. The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Society as a whole.

EXCITING UPDATE/REFURBISHMENT OF THE GLEMSFORD WEBSITE

Steve Clarke, now residing in the Isle of Skye, is still however very much in charge of the Glemsford website. He has recently given it a complete overhaul and it is well worth taking a look. To visit the website go to:

www.glemsford.org.uk