

**Margaret King's finding of a Thorn Apple *Datura stramonium* on the edge of an arable field just beyond her garden fence inspired me to give a short talk on the *Solonaceae* or Nightshade family of plants at our AGM in November**

With information supplied by former GLHS member, Ron Hartley, I discovered that Thorn Apple, Henbane *Hyoscyamus niger* and Deadly Nightshade *Atropa belladonna* had all been grown as crops on land belonging to Allen Farms during the first half of the last century.

Martin Sanford in his *Flora of Suffolk* describes Henbane as nationally in decline. However, there are a number of arable fields in the parish of Long Melford where the plant can still be found. A section of the boundary of Parsonage Farm, part of Allen Farms, lies along the river Glem. It is, therefore, possible that seeds of Henbane have crossed the river and that plants are awaiting to be discovered in some quiet corner of our parish.

From May onwards, when walking a field margin, look out for their distinctive bell-shaped flowers. To get your eye in, check out the field opposite Long Melford sewage works.

**Robin Ford**



# Life through rose-coloured spectacles!

I grew up in Felsted, a fairly large village in Essex, which is between Braintree, Chelmsford and Great Dunmow. As a child, I used to spend a large part of my time playing in the fields, going down to the River Chelmer to paddle in the millpond, swimming in the Stebbing Brook, cycling round the country lanes, and picking wild flowers across the fields. It sounds pretty idyllic, and I suppose it was. I used to help my father deliver his newspapers in and around our village in the school holidays and take our dog out for walks. I played up at the large farm, where my friend lived and we had a great deal of freedom then to wander and cycle where we liked. We used to build dens in the ditches across the fields and pick wild blackberries and mushrooms in the autumn.

Of course, then there wasn't a great deal of traffic around and everybody knew most of the village community, so I suppose we were relatively safe while out roaming. Felsted was a village of many very old houses and quite a few village greens with Felsted School at its centre. This is a well-known public school, dating back to the 1500s which was founded by Richard, Lord Riche. The original buildings are still there just by the Parish Church, although the present school is a few hundred yards

further up the road. Felsted sits partly on a hill, so there are many walks with scenic views.

Moving on into the 1980s, when we moved to Glemsford, I find that this village is rather similar in size to Felsted,

though perhaps not quite so spread out. It also has many interesting old houses and a few village greens. Of course, life is somewhat different now, with most families having at least one car, and leading very busy lives. Many children

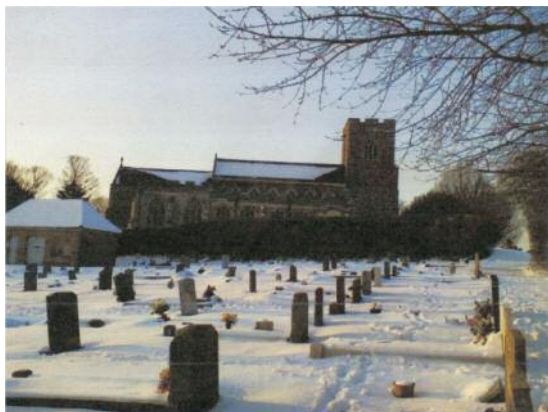
don't seem to play out in the same way, needing to be entertained, which is a great shame. I realise that with the increased traffic, many parents are reluctant to allow their children out to play, and to experience the pleasure of being in the countryside.

I feel that if they could be taken out regularly on walks and taught to enjoy their surroundings, and to learn about nature, as we did, maybe they would grow up to have more respect for the village and not drop litter and vandalise property. They would certainly be a lot healthier than sitting watching TV. Obviously I am talking about smaller children, but if you get them interested when they are young, perhaps they would retain that interest.

Because we have a dog, we purchased an Ordnance Survey map of Glemsford when we moved here, which shows the footpaths and bridlepaths for us to explore. And explore them we have! I think we must have walked all of the available paths many times over, and I am struck by the beautiful scenery on offer and the changing seasons. Glemsford being sat right on the top of a large hill, means whichever direction you choose to go, there are wonderful views looking towards Cavendish, Pentlow, Long Melford, Stanstead and Thurston End.

We have walked to all of them in the past, although not lately as the dog is getting old. We have seen many different wild flowers, many birds and animals, and butterflies. In the spring, everything is a fresh green and the catkins are out. In the summer, the fields are full of ripening corn and the vivid yellow of oilseed rape. In the autumn, the hedgerows are full of blackberries, and the leaves change colour. In the winter, if we get snow, the scenery takes on a completely different appearance.

I take many photographs when we are out walking, trying to capture the beauty of ►



*Glemsford Church,  
February 2011*

the scenery, and the changing of the seasons. I put them all onto my computer, as a sort of record, and regularly change the desktop screen photograph to match the season. Currently I have a picture of Glemsford School in the snow. This winter I have taken a number of snowy pictures taken early on Sunday, 5th February 2012, when all the snow fell, and I have included a few of them here.

The most enduring feature of living in the countryside is the constantly changing scenery and we are very glad to live in a beautiful part of the world. We have friends and neighbours who help each other, and look out for each other. Obviously life in the village is different from how it used to be, but if you consider how life would be in a large city, I know which I would prefer.

**Susan Smith**



*Towards Plum Street, February 2012*



*Shepherd's Lane, February 2012*



*Glemsford School, 2010*



# Abraham Slater – a Glemsford Baize Maker

In 1667 Parliament passed an Act declaring that all persons (except those dying of the plague), should be buried in wool. In 1668 a further Act was passed to enforce this, the legislation was to help the wool trade, which was in decline. The wool for burying however was not a woollen cloth as we might think of it, but a type of baize, known as burying baize, made from the late 1600s in response to the Acts. It was woven from the poorest trimmings of wool known as 'Nyloes/ Noiles' which were the combed out short ends and knots from longer wool and black wool.

In Glemsford, during the summer of 1707, a man by the name of Abraham Slater died. Unfortunately he left no will, perhaps dying unexpectedly, but following his death, an inventory was taken of all his possessions by James Holmes and Joseph Wood, on 26th September 1707. His occupation is not noted on the inventory, but judging by the tools and materials listed, I thought he was a weaver. He was in fact specialising in the making of burying baize, here in Glemsford in 1707\*.

Abraham's goods and chattels give a picture of a sizable property. There was a hall with tables, rush-seated chairs and a well equipped fireplace. A parlour

where beds, tables, and cupboards with two doz. trenchers were valued at £4.5s. The shop and woollen chamber detail the tools and materials of his trade. Looms, shave boards and warping bars; parcels (sic) of 'Midle Nyler', 16 grained topes and a little black wool.

There was a bake-house, buttery, stable and yard, and a buttery chamber, (possibly a bedchamber above the buttery). This contained a bed, bedstead and bolster, blankets, an old wicker chair and two hatches (cupboards). Included at the end were a Mare and parcel of oates – did the appraisers forget to list these when they looked in the stable? Rather poignantly is the 'wearing apparell' with money in the pocket, valued at £7.5s (was this the money or did it include the clothing?). The sum total of this inventory was £45.10s.9d.

I was unable to find his burial and do not know where in Glemsford he lived, but as the name of Slater can be found over many years in the village, he must have had a family and descendants. Perhaps he belongs to you?

\*From *Textile Manufacturers in Early Modern England*  
by Eric Kerridge.

## Jenny Wears



# Callis, Metholds and Wimbush

**They may sound like members of the 5th Form from “Jennings at School”, or even an old established firm of family Solicitors from Bury St Edmunds – but actually they form an integral part of Glemsford’s own history.**

In fact together they form the name of an ancient Manor within the purlieu of Glemsford, certainly existing in the 18th Century and most likely much earlier, and continuing perhaps so late as to be within living memory.

The reason for these apparent uncertainties is that we are only just beginning our own journey of discovery about this Manor (although no doubt there are many others who do already know, but for now, the fun for us is in the finding out).

It all started some time ago when our attention was drawn, via Steve Clarke’s website, to the new found existence of certain “Courts Baron” that seem to have been discovered, far away from Glemsford, perhaps during some house demolition and/or restoration.

For me as a Londoner, where Baron’s Court was just another station on the District Line, the connection with Glemsford was not immediately obvious, but it was explained to me that they were in fact, a sort of ancient rent book where, each year, an official Court hearing was held where ownership of land and property was confirmed, and where the terms of lease and rent for tenants was set.

As soon as their relevance to Glemsford was confirmed, we thought we should try to find out more about them. However, when they next appeared it was in the catalogue of the Fine Art Auctioneers, Bonhams of New Bond Street. By that time the Committee had considered whether we might try to purchase them for the village, but this did seem to put them a bit out of our league!

Nevertheless, we thought it was important that we should at least see them, and to be able to state with certainty what they were. Even more, we might perhaps be able to discover their purchaser and maybe even to gain some access to them for the future.

So on a lovely day last summer we set out to beard the fine art establishment in their den! We quickly located the appropriate Auction Room, amongst those displaying Russian artefacts and Fine Art, and others displaying impossibly glamorous and expensive Swiss watches. I was amazed that it was so quickly possible to gain access and to handle the Glemsford books themselves, albeit of course under close scrutiny.

The Lot turned out mainly to consist of three books, each fully and closely written in elaborate longhand. The first two, of which one was a close but not precise duplicate of the other, referred to transactions dated between 1725 and 1760. The other was more recent dating between 1847 and 1919. There were also a number of single sheets of the earlier period (one actually on vellum) which seemed to be simple lists of income per property, in fact rather resembling a modern P&L account.

They are all in remarkably good condition considering their age, and once your eye had “tuned in” to the script they are really quite legible given a little concentration.

Of course they were almost the last items on the list, and it took several hours of the sale of many hugely expensive manuscripts before our little item was reached. By then the room had largely emptied, and I even began to think that perhaps ►

a hundred pounds or so might just secure them, and even began to think of bidding myself. In the event, there was just one opening bid of £400 by an anonymous bidder which was successful, and which effectively shut us out because even that is equivalent to nearly £500 with commissions etc, and we would have had to top that!

Not to be outdone however, I made my way to the cashiers' desk, and nonchalantly enquired who the purchaser of that Lot may have been. Well, at least they didn't call the police, but I'm not sure that I will be welcome there again for a while after my glaring breach of etiquette.

So, it seemed a long journey home with little to show for the endeavour, but at least we had briefly been allowed to see what we had missed.

It was a month or two later that we received our usual Newsletter from the Suffolk Record Office (we are "Friends" thereof), and were surprised to see these items featured on the front

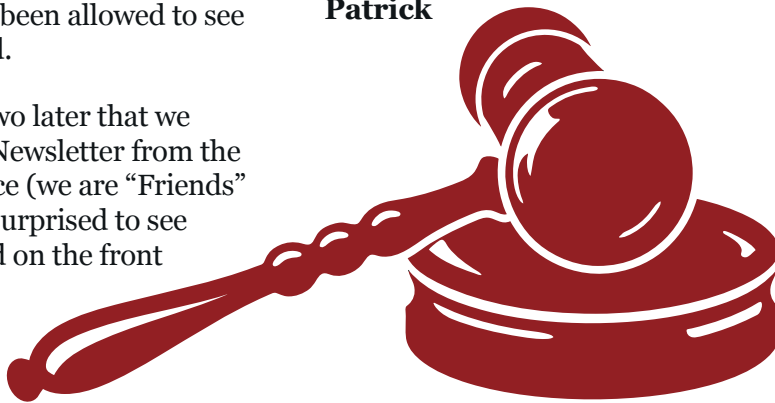
page – not only that, the SRO was even more proud to announce that they had actually purchased them themselves! (How glad I was then that I had not been tempted to enter the bidding against them.)

So, there they are, sitting in the Record Office at Bury, without any direct cost to us, just waiting for us to get into them and to pick out just how and where they fit into the history, places and families of Glemsford.

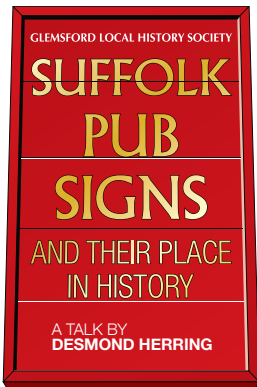
Which we will do just as soon as I've brushed up on my Latin (O-level 1959, Grade C), but at least that's only required for the period up to 1733.

More later...

**Patrick**



# GLEMSFORD LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY News

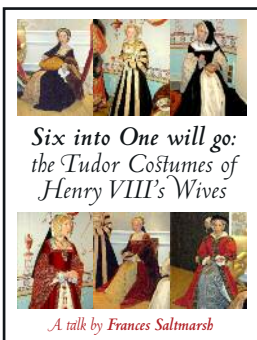


OUR NEW SEASON was opened by Desmond Herring speaking on the subject of 'Suffolk Pub Signs and their place in History.' Many new members joined a packed audience to hear how pub signs originated many centuries ago when travellers needed liquid refreshments and would stop in villages where certain houses began to offer it.

At first such establishments identified themselves by growing a bush outside, but owing to the ambiguity of such a method a law was passed around 1320 which said that a picture sign must be displayed. Early travellers were mostly pilgrims and such were the restrictions upon people leaving their villages and towns each pilgrim had to obtain a certificate and wear a badge to show permission had been granted.

The first pub signs had religious connotations eg. The Angel, The Bull (from Papal Bull), while the positioning of other early ones such as The Bell (from a ferry bell) and The Anchor show that Suffolk was an area criss-crossed by numerous rivers and streams with very few bridges. Other later signs have Royalist or political significance including King's Head, Royal Oak and White Lion.

Desmond continued his most interesting talk by further drawing upon his huge database and showing us many old pub games and activities concluding with an improvised account of the 16th century actor Will Kemp's journey from Norwich to London accompanied as it was by much drinking, eating and early Morris dancing!



OUR OCTOBER MEETING saw a large number of members and visitors enjoy Fran Saltmarsh's talk entitled 'Six into One will go' which told the story of the life and costumes of King Henry VIII's six queens. After the discovery a number of years ago of the letters sent from the queens to Henry and vice-versa, Fran and a friend devised a talk to include not just the content of these letters but also to focus upon the ladies' fashion of the time.

By the use of a tailor's dummy and an authentically made Tudor costume – flat chested, square necked – Fran took us through the lives of the queens adapting and changing the costume to suit each lady. Her designs were based upon original portraits and so we were shown a fascinating array of sleeves, jewellery, skirts, belts and beautiful varied headdresses.

Alongside these displays we heard most interesting accounts of the marriages; of Katharine of Aragon and Anne Booleyn's failures to provide Henry with his longed for male heir; of Jane's triumph in giving birth to a baby boy only to die shortly afterwards. And so to the Anne of Cleves episode – probably the queen who ultimately came off best-followed, sadly, by young Catherine Howard, a puppet in the hands of her pushy parents and destined to end up on the block. Only Katharine Parr, a more mature woman, knew how to treat the then ill and ageing king, managing to outlive him and to marry the man she really loved, Thomas Seymour.

Fran completed her talk by speculating that Henry has for too long been given a bad press, backing this up by reading excerpts from two most poignant and loving letters to him from his queens.





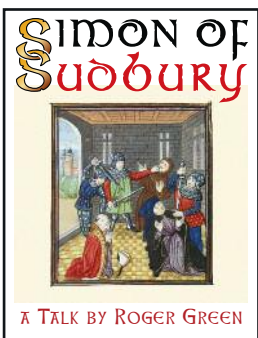
THE NOVEMBER AGM was a most successful evening attended by 42 members. The Chairman, Patrick Currie, welcomed all present before giving his yearly report in which he remarked upon the variety of activities undertaken by the Society.

These included presentations from a selection of interesting and lively speakers; summer outings and social functions in addition to a number of ongoing history-based projects. In thanking the committee in general for the imaginative and diverse approach they bring to the required teamwork, the Chairman further registered his thanks to our President, George Grover and his wife Ann, but above all to the

members for their loyal support emphasising that a healthy membership is essential if the Society is to continue to flourish.

The Treasurer's report and the election of officers and committee members concluded the official business after which members enjoyed cheese and wine followed by short talks, firstly from Robin Ford on 'The Nightshade Family of Plants' and secondly from Derek Cooper on his recently published book about his own Suffolk family in which reference is made to Glemsford inhabitants.

Our thanks go to them for contributing to what was a very interesting and enjoyable evening.



THERE WAS A record-breaking attendance for the first meeting of the New Year when the Glemsford Social Club provided a most convivial atmosphere for the 65 people who came to hear Roger Green talk about the life and times of one of our local historical characters, Simon (Theobald) of Sudbury. Yes, he is the one dating from the 14th century whose skull still resides in St. Gregory's Church and who is best known for becoming Bishop of London, Archbishop of Canterbury and finally, (and fatally), Chancellor of England – the appointment which led to his gruesome death at the hands of the peasants in 1381.

However there is much more to learn about Simon, and to this end Roger kept us thoroughly entertained telling us about the French connection. Having entered church service, an ecclesiastical mishap saw Simon under arrest and having to flee to France, not the safest place for an Englishman at the time seeing that we were in the middle of the Hundred Years War and had just slaughtered the French at the battle of Crecy! However, he spent many years in Avignon at the Popes' Palace serving

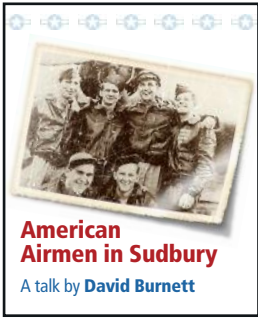
under a number of eclectic popes, most notably Clement VI whose sumptuous and luxurious lifestyle was basically profligate, self-indulgent and morally questionable!

The onset of the horror which was the Black Death saw Simon not only escape infection, but gain rapid promotion, owing to the fact that three-quarters of Avignon's population were dead. His name was cleared in 1356 when on returning to England he worked hard as a diplomat on peace talks and treaties bravely doing his best for the public good.

In 1375, on becoming Archbishop of Canterbury, he inspired and supervised the enlargement of the cathedral and to this day he has enjoyed an almost saint-like reputation in the city.

To complement his talk Roger displayed one of the three heads of Simon which last year were forensically reconstructed, adding that Sudbury intends to send one head to the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury Cathedral where his body still lies. Thanks to Roger for an absolutely brilliant talk enjoyed by all.





DESPITE THE VERY COLD evening, well over 50 people attended David Burnett's talk on 'American Airmen in Suffolk' when, using authentic photographs and accounts from those who lived through the early 1940s, he told us about the Sudbury Airfield-Station 174.

Built by local contractors, the workers' ranks being swelled by many Irish labourers, the station with its runways, control tower, bomb dump and Nissen huts covered a large area around Great Waldingfield and Acton and housed four squadrons of the USAAF 486th Bombardment Group.

At first these young Americans, many from the hot lands of Arizona, were shocked not just by the English winters but by the basic conditions. However as time passed improvements were made and the 3000 'Yanks' who had been pitchforked into the small community became a very significant part of local life.

The older people showed some resentment but young boys just loved fraternising with them and as for girls

of a certain age – say no more! Most of the local boys were away fighting leaving the stage set for the young, handsome and charismatic Americans (with money!) to take charge. Dances for the GIs and their girlfriends in the Aero Club were very popular, as were the Sudbury pubs, and inevitably many liaisons led to marriage, children and a large-scale exodus to the States after the war.

However nothing could disguise the stark reality of the war – the constant flying, fighting and the bombing, in fact the whole point of the Airmen's mission.

While acts of heroism and lucky escapes were reported, many men were killed or went missing their bodies never found. Two hundred members of the 486th BG suffered this fate. Of those who survived many have made return trips to Sudbury to recapture their youth and fond memories.

David ended his excellent talk by reading a most poignant tribute in the form of an address given a few years ago by one of them, Bob Harper.



MORE THAN 50 PEOPLE, including quite a few visitors, came to the eerily entitled talk 'Suffolk Ghosts and Hauntings' given by Robert Halliday. He divided his illustrated subjects into themes, from houses and sites to poltergeist and animals, giving more than one example in some cases.

Starting with haunted houses, he told us of the most famous, Borley Rectory, and its ghostly nun. To the east in Southwold, a buxom lass was seen to lean out of an upper floor window. Weirdly though, the owner of the premises told concerned passers-by that the room was unoccupied and kept locked!

Then came the tale of a ghostly site on a rural lane in deepest Suffolk. A visitor,

walking between hamlets saw an imposing house standing on its own. On reaching his destination, no one knew of the place and on his return there was no house to be seen, simply an empty field.

Poltergeist cause problems for a number of householders. In one case toiletries were taken from the shelf and laid in a careful line on the bathroom floor, while another spirit elsewhere walked about noisily and left a rumpled bed – in a secured bedroom!

Mummified animals have been discovered and ghostly images seen, the latter by Mr. Halliday himself near Blythburgh church ruins – in all a gripping but unexplainable subject.

**Jenny Wears/  
Margaret King**

## PROGRAMME 2012

Thursday, **Clive Paine:** Visit to Hawstead Church  
May 10th (contains historic memorials and monuments  
to the Cullum family). **NB** 7pm start

Thursday, **A walk around Sudbury** with Barry Wall  
June 14th Limited to 25 persons

Thursday, **A Summer Function –**  
July 12th to be arranged

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GLEMSFORD  
LOCAL HISTORY  
SOCIETY

### Newsletter | Spring 2012 edition

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

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

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