

History Harvest

Come September, the rural villages such as Glemsford see the harvesting of crops from the surrounding fields, barley, corn and wheat, while at a domestic level, the gardeners are reaping tomatoes, gourds and soft fruit. All the result of hard work and the 'right' weather. Harvest Festivals, still taken seriously in some places, used to feature prominently in the rural newspapers over the autumn. Michaelmas, 29th September, was the time for renewal of farm tenancies, as well as farm sales – property, equipment and livestock.

This edition of the newsletter is the result of a good harvest of articles from both members and non-members. Memories of a young farm worker in the 1950s, Little Egypt Morris Men, a Baptismal Font and a connection between medieval writing and nature, along with some newspaper reports for this season, in 1917. Good reading and thank you to those who have contributed.

Jenny Wears, Editor
e: glhsnews1@hotmail.com



President:
George Grover

Chairman:
Rowan Cain

Treasurer:
Patrick Currie

Secretary:
Margaret King
01787 280996



Remember the following five men, listed on our village War Memorials.

They died as far apart as Passchendaele and Iraq, between September and the end of October 1917.

2nd September: (Henry) Charles Brewster. He was a private with the 962nd Mechanical Transport Company, Royal Army Service Corp. Born in Glemsford, he died in the Persian Gulf aged 19, and is buried in Basra War Cemetery, Iraq. His parents were Henry and Kate Brewster of Egremont Street.

8th or 12th September: Samuel Smith. A private with 9th Battalion, Loyal North Lancashire Regiment. He was born and lived in Glemsford, the son of Abner Smith, he was 27 when he died, the exact date not known. He is commemorated on the Arras Memorial, Pas de Calais, France.

4th October: Cyril A Twinn. A private with the 17th Battalion, Manchester Regiment. He was 20 when he died of his wounds, in England. He was given a military style funeral and is buried here, in St Mary's. His parents were Alice and Wallace Twinn.

9th October: Edwin Piper. A private in the 1st/5th Battalion, Yorkshire & Lancashire Regiment. He was killed in action, aged 27, and has no known grave but is commemorated on the Tyne Cot Memorial, Zonnebeke, Belgium. He was not born in Glemsford but Sheffield. His parents were born in north Essex and had moved to Sheffield. Edwin's maternal grandparents lived here in Glemsford and he returned to the village as a young child following the death of his mother, but then returned to Sheffield by 1911 where he later married and enlisted. (Did his grandparents, William and Elizabeth Stammers ask that his name be added to the memorial here in Glemsford?)

22nd October: Edwin Alfred Keefe. Born and raised in Glemsford, he was a private with the 11th Battalion, Suffolk Regiment. The eldest son of James and Julia Keefe of 5 Skates Hill, he was killed in action in France, aged 18, and is commemorated on the Tyne Cot Memorial, Zonnebeke, Belgium.

A “history” of St Mary’s font

I have been involved with the conservation of St Mary’s Church Font for nearly three years now and by the time you read this I am hopeful that work will have started on the conservation project. (Phase 1 to start on August 23rd.) We believe that the font was installed in the church sometime between 1350 and 1450, so it is about 600 years old. We have baptism records going back a long way but not all the way back to when it was new although we know who the Rectors were during this period.

The list of Rectors is on the wall in the south aisle of the church.

Which of these Rectors was the first to use this brand new font? Was it John Rauf (1373-1381) or, later in our time slot, John Dalden (1443-1471), or one of the five Rectors in between, and who was the first child to be baptised in the font?

We can only speculate who the first child was – so I will! Was the baby boy or girl the child of one of the two landed families in the village – the Goldings or the Mondes – or the child of a local tradesman, the butcher, the baker or the candlestick maker? Maybe the child was the son or daughter of an agricultural labourer who grew up, married and died here in Glemsford and is buried in the churchyard, but this is not very exciting. What if...!!!

I am now letting my imagination run away with me.

If our child was a boy born at the end of the 1300s he could have found himself as one of the archers at the Battle of Agincourt in 1415. All communities were required to provide part-time soldiers in the event of war. “Indentured retinue” or “household retainers”. King Edward III declared in 1363: “if he be able bodied, shall, upon holidays make use, in his games, of bows and arrows... and so learn to practise archery.”

Our child, from an early age, would have been required to practise archery every Sunday.

At the Battle of Agincourt, Henry V’s army consisted of about 6,000 men, 5,000 of which were archers, against 30,000-40,000 French, mainly knights on horseback and men-at-arms (foot soldiers). Some 10,000 French died that day, with less than 400 English losses, so it is almost certain then that our child would have returned to Glemsford and lived out his life in peace; brought up a family who, in turn, would have been baptised in our font – and so on for many generations.

A fantasy maybe but there is an historic family saga here waiting to be written, not by me. Where is the novelist in the village?

David Newell



The Morris Men Of Little Egypt

A short history of the last 25 years!

The side (Morris teams are called sides) was first formed in June 1988. The then Rector at St Mary's Church – Adrian Mason – wanted some Morris dancers at the Church Fete, which was always held in the Rectory gardens back then. He couldn't locate a Morris side (at least not a side he could afford!) and so a request went out via members of the fete committee for volunteers to form a Glemsford Morris side as a one-off for the fete.

Frederick Sanders (who then lived at Five Gables Cottage on Plum St) heard the cry for help and was an ex-dancer and musician with Belchamp Morris Men. He enlisted the help of John Aldous, who also lived (and still

knew Frederick through work and I was also persuaded to join.

We practised for a few weeks in the Church Hall and managed, eventually, to learn four dances in time for the Church Fete. Our wives managed to produce some make-shift regalia, Bell Pads, Baldrics etc and we all purchased white decorators trousers and white shirts and we were ready for the big day. We danced our three dances (twice each I recall) and with accompaniment from Frederick on Melodeon received a tremendous reception from the gathered hordes at the fete – mostly partners and friends of the dancers who couldn't wait to heckle from the sidelines and watch us strut our stuff. And that was it; we disbanded after several well-earned pints at the Black Lion.

Then, early in 1992 we were approached again by the organising committee of the Church Fete and asked if we would like to do a repeat performance for that year's Fete. I recall we were enticed with the promise of free beer, and so it was that most of the men, together with some new 'volunteers' got back together for another one-off performance at the Church Fete on 11th July. We danced at both the Church and at the Black Lion. I can also recall that the Rector, Adrian, turned up dressed as a 'Hobby Horse' (although that may have been the next year! He was certainly a very good sport)

This time after the Fete was over, and we were reflecting upon our glorious performance over several more pints in the Black Lion, someone had the bright idea of keeping the side going and it just seemed like a good idea at the time!

So that was it. The side was named The Morris Men of Little Egypt*, new uniforms were created and I was elected Squire – a position that I have been privileged to hold for the past 25 years. Initially we had a rule that the side was to comprise only of men who lived within the Parish of Glemsford.



does) in the village and was also an ex-member of Belchamp Morris. News spread by word of mouth and the likes of Peter Ford, Paul Jaques, David Irvine, Steve Clarke, Derek Richards and Chris Britton were recruited from the village. I had just moved to Glemsford in January 1988 and

This was maintained until we started to struggle with getting musicians and dancers. The rule was then relaxed to allow musicians from outside the parish and then dancers. We still uphold the tradition of a 'Men Only' Morris side but we do have (and are very thankful for) lady musicians.

We now have members that regularly travel from all over Suffolk, Norfolk, Essex as well as France and Belgium to dance with us – such is the appeal of our side.

We have danced all over England and had numerous trips to Europe, notably Germany, France and Ireland where we have always been extremely well received by the unsuspecting locals.

In the summer months commencing at dawn on 1st May we wear our original 'Cotswold' kit – white trousers, shirts, rush hats and Baldrics. After October and through to 30th April we wear our 'Horkey' kit which comprises loosely of 19th century agricultural wear – collarless shirts, boots and heavy trousers. The styles of dances that we perform draw heavily from the Cotswold and Welsh Border traditions but over the years we have also developed our own unique style of Morris – with some dances that we have made ourselves from scratch – most celebrate the bucolic nature of our village heritage. The Morris sticks that we use in our dances, the longest of any Morris side, are winter-cut hazel which we take from a secret coppice within the Parish boundary. Our white handkerchiefs are woven from the finest Irish linen and are always perfumed with lavender and essential oils.

Our summer months are filled with dancing at pubs, fetes, festivals and events, but we also dance during the winter period at selected events, notably on Boxing Day at the Angel Inn which has now become a staple of Glemsford village life. This is also the occasion when we unleash our traditional Mummings Play on an unsuspecting



audience. Based around the age old struggle of good against evil, we now weave in appropriate tales and anecdotes from the year in our village.

If anyone is interested in joining us, you can contact us by email at:
littleegyptmorris@gmail.com

We practice most Tuesdays at the Methodist Church Hall, followed by a 'theory session' at the Angel Inn with refreshment after the rigorous practice session!

Neville Parry, Squire,
The Morris Men of Little Egypt

**I am sure that some of you will already know the origin of the colloquial name for Glemsford but if you have a spare hour, and for a couple of pints, any member of the side will tell you how the name 'Little Egypt' came about!*

Galls to manuscripts



Jenny Wears wrote a fascinating article on dying cloth that appeared in a recent issue of this newsletter. In describing the different dyes, she mentioned that black was the product of a plant gall. Many species of wasp (not the black and yellow variety but an insect closely resembling an ant with wings) induce galls on Oaks *Quercus robur* or *Quercus petraea* but only one wasp is responsible for the gall from which a black dye is obtained. This is the marble gall wasp *Andricus kollari*.

In spring, a chemically induced soft green growth, the size of a marble, is formed on a leaf bud of the tree. By the end of summer, this gall has hardened and turned brown. Also visible are exit holes from which adult insects have emerged. The galls are harvested, placed in a bucket of water and left for a few weeks. They are then dried and pulverized. Ferrous sulphate is added,

usually in the form of old nails doused in sulphuric acid, and the mixture is left in water for a further two weeks. Finally gum Arabic is added to stiffen the liquid.

The resulting dye or ink was used by scribes, in the later middle ages, for the production of documents and manuscripts. The ink would have had to be imported into this country as the insect needs the Turkey Oak *Quercus cerris* (not introduced until the 18th century) to complete its lifecycle.

Nowadays, marble galls can be found in reasonable numbers around Glemsford and elsewhere, usually on young oak trees. However, it may take some searching to acquire enough ink before being able to create a masterpiece of calligraphy.

Robin Ford

Matters Agricultural

“I worked at Skates Hill farm and if we were working in the top fields I would be sent off to the Weavers’ Arms, at the top of New Cut, to get the beer for our dinner break, if we were down nearer the Lower Road, I had to go to the Three Turns. At the end of the day the two horses were taken to drink from a pond at the farm. The pond is still there, behind the wall next to St Anthony’s Cottage, on the village side. The horses were Boxer, a Suffolk Shire and Gypsy. I was told not to take their harnesses off ‘til after they had drank, otherwise they would just go and roll around the meadow. There was a long meadow between the farmhouse and Potash Cottage, where the bungalows are now.

“Harry Richardson was the owner of the farm but he lived at Cavendish, Roslyn House. A Mr Baylem lived in the farmhouse. On the north side of the house was a large room, this was for the workers and where the milk was left to cool. The cows were kept on the long meadow. Skates Hill Farm was sold in 1957”. This is an extract from Lionel Clarke’s memories of Glemsford in the ’50s.

Mary Browne came to Glemsford in 1960, having lived on various farms until her husband became too ill for the work involved, whereupon they moved to a

council estate in Long Melford, then a house swap brought them to the village. She recalls the sheep grazing in local fields in the ’60s and there being less arable farming than seen now, around New St. Elsewhere in her ‘memories’ she says “There wasn’t much choice of food but you used to know that what you’d got was good stuff, either grown it yourself or you knew the farmer that killed the animals”.

.....

From Suffolk & Essex Free Press, 3rd October 1917:

At the Michaelmas Sale held at Pentlow on Friday, C. Goodchild (of Glemsford), was among those buying horses.

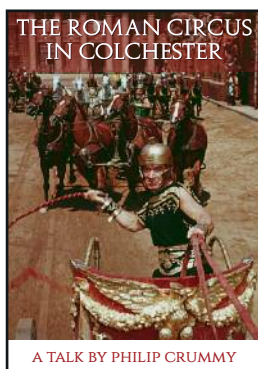
A report of the Harvest Festival held at St Mary’s on 3rd September: “The church was beautifully decorated as usual with an abundance of corn and flowers. Miss Game presided at the organ and well known harvest hymns sung with accustomed heartiness. Special psalms and lessons were read. The offering, to St Leonard’s Hospital, was £5.18s.” The Rector was Canon Hall.

JW



Skates Hill House

GLEMSFORD LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY News

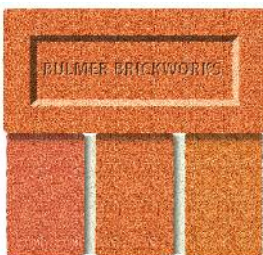


OUR MAY MEETING was on The Roman Circus in Colchester. We learnt from the speaker, Philip Crummy, principal archaeologist, how following much painstaking digging, a complete Roman Circus was discovered in Colchester; it is the only one known in Britain.

Land was being developed for new housing, and as the builders were aware that Roman remains are all too common in Colchester, a team of archaeologists were contacted for the start. It was 2004 and the remains of a wall, with buttresses, was found on land in the east of Colchester. It soon became clear that this was more than just a wall.

Dating from the 2nd century AD, this enormous structure had a large obelisk on an imposing central barrier, piped water and enough space for up to 8,000 spectators. They would have enjoyed the thrills and spills of exceedingly dangerous chariot racing, along with eating, drinking and betting. The charioteers often becoming rich celebrities – if they lived that long!

Today there is a visitors center and tearoom. For a small fee a tour can be had which explains what lies beneath the grassland, houses and roads.



THE JUNE MEETING, attended by a number of members and friends, was an evening visit to the Bulmer Brickworks.

Shown around by the owner, Peter Minter, everyone thoroughly enjoyed an extremely

interesting tour and talk about the process of specialised brick-making.

Over the years this well-known company have supplied bricks to many famous buildings nationwide.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, **Roy Tricker:** 103 not out! Deals, Wrangles
September 14th and Discussions in creating a Suffolk Diocese

Thursday, **Roger Kennells:** Pretty Corsets in Suffolk – The
October 12th story of William Pretty and Son, corset manufacturers

Thursday, **Annual General Meeting**
November 16th Guest speaker Archaeologist Martin Brookes
(NB the 3rd Thursday)

Thursday, **A Christmas Get Together**
December 7th at Glemsford Primary Academy
(NB the 1st (7pm start) Thursday)

Please note subscriptions increase: Membership **£12**, Visitors **£2.50** per visit

Earlier this year I received a phone call from the secretary of the GLHS, stating that a Canadian couple had contacted her with a view to doing some research into their family history while on a tour of the UK. Naturally I was intrigued especially when she mentioned that the lady's maiden name was Watkinson and that her ancestors came from Glemsford!

After an interesting exchange of emails, they paid me a visit after having done some research in the church yard of St Mary's. It transpired that we were indeed related as we shared a common ancestor, an Ambrose Watkinson, baptised in Glemsford, 1641.

The family line continues until 1736, when another Ambrose Watkinson married twice and the family line divided. A certain George Watkinson emigrated to Canada in the 19th century while my ancestors remained in Glemsford and the UK. Anyway the outcome was that we worked it out that we were fourth cousins, once removed!

One more interesting fact that came out was that the surname Watkinson, was the fourth most common name in Glemsford at one time in the middle ages and now approximately 500 years later, and as far as I know, I am the only one left!

Sid Watkinson

The Butcher Family

Having always believed that my family on both sides of my Tree came from London, when I finally took up the challenge of finding out about them, it came as a great surprise to find that my maternal grandfather's family (the Tindley family) originated from Sudbury, and my maternal grandmother's family (the Butcher family) from Glemsford! The common thread running through both families is the Weaving and Silk industries, with grandfather and grandmother meeting in Sudbury and then moving to London, where my mother was born.

Great great grandfather was Samuel, who ran a grocer's shop, the address shown as White Ash. There is also a Samuel Butcher who is shown as a pork butcher and grocer in Egremont Road, although I cannot prove it is the same Samuel however.

Alfred Butcher was my great grandfather: he was a silk weaver and he married a Rebecca Debenham. After his death in 1877, Rebecca married a Joseph Welham.

My grandmother, Annie Elizabeth Butcher, was born in 1873, on the 1881 census living at Woodfield Alley. Her siblings were Albert, Alice, Ellen and Alfred.

Are there any descendants of these Butchers still living in Glemsford who might remember the family? If so, I would love to hear from you.

Jean Curtis

You can contact me on:
jean.harwich@btinternet.com

***Editor's note:** I have started a little bit of research for this lady, but if any members feel they can shed some light please note her email address. Some of you may remember 'Woodfield Alley' from an earlier newsletter, it was a passageway that ran between 'Patches' and 'Ash House', Tye Green, and changed names three times over the 1871, 81 census returns and again in the 20th C! Egremont 'Road' I suspect should be 'Street' but what about 'White Ash'?*

JW



Elsewhere in Suffolk:

On the Bury Road in Lawshall, stands this large and unusual monument to a 2nd World War pilot, Johannes Jat Van Mestag. He was a 21-year-old Dutch Flight Sergeant with No. 64 Squadron. He was killed when his plane came down close to this spot, on 6th March 1945. Rather poignantly, his mother's birthday was 6th March.



Newsletter | Autumn 2017 edition

Annual Subscription: £12.00 **Visitors:** £2.50 per time

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

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