

GLEMSFORD LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Free to members,
50p where sold

WINTER 2017/8

Winter draws on

I started preparing this winter edition of the newsletter in late November and so the structure remains basically the same. The next edition will see a change in the back page and possibly the absence of meeting reports.

What do you, the members, think of the latter? Do you read them, whether you have attended the meetings or not? Let me know and I will continue to include them on a regular basis.

The remembrance of men listed on the two 1st WW memorials will of course remain. A 'follow up' piece from Robin Ford and a contribution from Gill Leech relating to the 'Riot Night' have been received with thanks. A report from the local press regarding a 'near murder and suicide' here in Glemsford, 1889, is the basis of an article starting in this edition. Relating to 'Elsewhere in Suffolk' is an article on the local supply of coal.

So, a Happy New Year to you all and don't forget to support your newsletter with your contributions. All the best for 2018, from your editor.



President:
Sid Watkinson

Chairman:
Rowan Cain

Treasurer:
Patrick Currie

Secretary:
Margaret King
01787 280996



World War 1 Remembrance

15th November 1917: William Debenham. A private in 1st Battalion, Cambridgeshire Regiment, was killed in action in France and Flanders, aged 35. Born in Glemsford, son of Alfred Debenham (deceased) and Julia. Husband of Mabel, they lived in Hartest. He is commemorated on the Tyne Cot Memorial, Zonnebeke, West Vlaanderen, Belgium. He is listed on the War Memorials in both Glemsford and Hartest.

1st December 1917: Charles F Brown, Lance Sergeant, 4th Battalion, Grenadier Guards, was killed in action, aged 36. Born in Glemsford, son of the late Joseph Brown and Amelia, Battersea, London. He is commemorated on the Cambrai Memorial, Louveral, Nord, France.

17th January 1918: William Slater, a corporal with the 3rd/4th Battalion Queens (Royal West Surrey Regiment) He died aged 26 in France and Flanders. He was born in Glemsford and left a widow, Elizabeth.

As all members are now aware, our long serving GLHS chairman, George Grover has stepped down after 26 years.

To thank him for his support, which included many years of hosting Christmas events at Chequers with help from his wife Ann, the committee members took them both to lunch at the George, Cavendish, at the end of October. At the AGM, the presentation of an engraved wine goblet, with flowers for Ann, was made, followed by a heartfelt round of applause for both of them.



Riot Night - 1st December 2017

A number of members attended this event, organised by the Friends of Glemsford library. It commemorated the riot that erupted in Long Melford on the 1st December 1885, on Polling Day between the men of Long Melford and Glemsford.

In 1972 Ernest Ambrose of Long Melford published his 'Melford Memories' and the following extract gives us plenty of detail of the events of that riotous day, albeit partly from a boy who was seven years old at the time. With thanks to one of our members, Gill Leech, for the piece.

When I was seven years old (in 1885) there was a great deal of unrest in the village. Groups of workmen would gather round the pubs, in angry mood, and fights became more than usually vicious. Though I didn't know very much about it, I heard talk about the mat makers in Melford, as well as those in Glemsford and Lavenham, being on strike for more wages. This was a desperate action to take in those days, as no money at all would be going into the homes, and this meant starvation. At the same time, a General Election was imminent and this made feelings run higher still.

Glemsford at that time was a stronghold of liberalism while Melford was very largely tory, and the antagonism between the villages was strong and often bitter. The men of Melford jeered at the Glemsford men, calling them Egyptians, and said they were outsiders. The words Egypt and Glemsford were so synonymous that the confusion spilled over into our geography lessons; and when a Sunday school teacher asked where the baby Jesus was taken when Herod threatened to kill all the babies, the answer came promptly: Glemsford!

Under a recent Parliamentary Reform Act the Glemsford men were demanding a polling station in their own village, instead of having to come to Melford to vote. When Polling Day (Tuesday 1st December) arrived and this was still refused, a body of mat makers from the Kollé Matting Factory, led by their foreman Henry Cook on horseback, came marching into Melford to demand their rights. They came along Westgate Street and broke some windows at the Scutchers' Arms, then marched on down the road past the conduit into the village. They were armed with sticks and staves, and were in a very militant mood. They recorded their votes, then threatened to break up the polling station which was at the Lecture Hall (now the Working Men's Club). Some of them swore they'd have my father's blood because they thought he was on the side of the owner of his factory. Father was foreman at the Melford Mat Factory and had tried to persuade the men there not to go on strike.

The Melford men were, of course, all out on the street and when they heard the Glemsford men were

marching into the village, they joined together in a body preparing to fight the opposition. The situation began to look very ugly with stones flying about and many windows broken. At this point Captain Bence of Kentwell Hall, a magistrate, read the Riot Act outside the Lecture Hall where the worst of the troublemakers had collected. But the situation still remained very tense and dangerous. The Melford police then appealed to the Sudbury police for help, but apparently they were unable to do so; probably they too had trouble on their hands with election activities! So they sent an urgent message to Bury, and the whisper went round the village "The redcoats are coming!" Before very long, a contingent of militia were sent by train. They were paraded on the station square, then ordered to fix bayonets. They marched up the long street, clearing out all the public houses on their way. At the sight of the militia in their red uniforms stolidly marching up the street, things quietened down very quickly.

When Pa came home later on, we heard that the Glemsford mob had tried to manhandle him and would have beaten him up, but he escaped by dashing into the Crown Inn and, with a group of others including the landlady, Mrs Clayden, scrambled out at the back and came home cautiously across the back fields. When he got to the Black Lion he recognised one of his most malicious attackers and was just going in after him when a policeman stopped him. "I just want to give that bugger a sole of the skull. You know me" says Pa, "I shan't make a fuss. Just want to get my own back". "Be quick about it then," says the policeman, "and give him one for me." And Pa did too. His fist could land a pretty heavy one when he liked to exert himself.

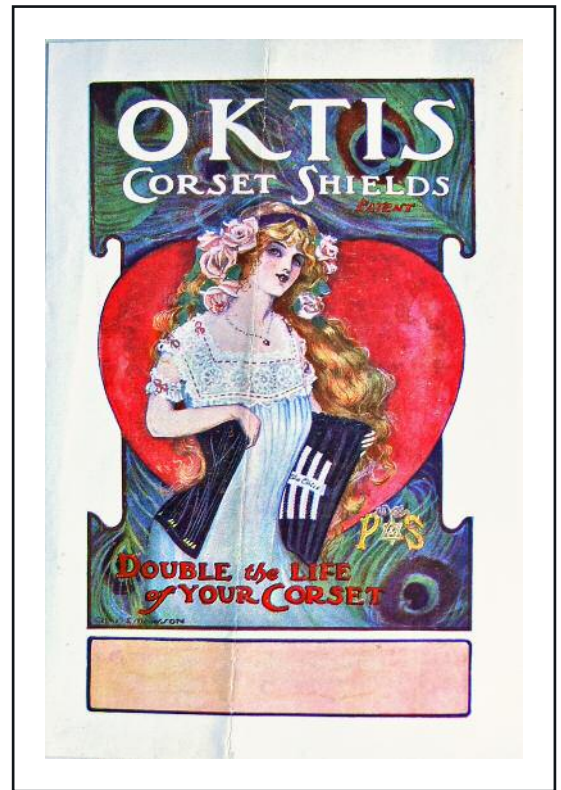
The village street was in a sorry state after it was all over, with broken glass everywhere. Shops and public houses down the whole length of the street from Whittle's Mat Factory right down to Branwhite's Brewery on Chapel Green had their windows smashed. The Crown Inn suffered most damage as the mob stormed inside and wrecked the premises. Compensation for this alone amounted to £137.15.6d, a considerable sum at that time.

Pretty Corsets revisited!

Mention of the "Oktis Corset Shield" and "Zairoid Rustless Supports", at the October meeting, had me scurrying home to look through some long forgotten storage boxes. My memory had not let me down. Within a few minutes I had found the small brown envelope containing the pair of items illustrated on the cover. The package had been found in a chest of drawers bought in the Sudbury Sale Room more than thirty-five years ago.

Manufactured by Pretty & Son of Ipswich, the "Oktis" stiffener, when sewn into the corset, achieved a graceful curve to the waist and, being made of "Zairoid" or stainless steel, doubled the life of the undergarment. Dating from the early years of the 20th century, this pair of once fashionable devices have, I hope, added further spice to a talk that was much enjoyed by members of the Society.

Robin Ford



1899 – Attempted Murder and Suicide in Glemsford



On a Monday, near the end of April 1889, a young widow, one Emily Heard, arrived in Glemsford. She didn't know or say, why and she had no apparent connection with the village, but this 21-year-old made her way here from Brentwood in Essex.

The following day she was in the Cock public house when a certain Edward Brett befriended her. He was a travelling barber from Diss in Norfolk, but had been in Glemsford for about nine months. He had lodgings in the village, where he shared a room with one Henry Bigg, a mat weaver. This set up did not deter Brett or Heard, when he invited her back for several nights. She shared his bed – both remaining fully dressed. Henry Bigg reportedly told Brett

that he should be ashamed of himself, bringing a woman to a room where another man was lodging, with Brett replying that she was a poor thing that had no where to go.

Very early the following Monday morning, Henry Bigg heard the woman, Emily Heard, call out "get a light, he's 'greening' me" before she rushed over his bed, fled into the street, with blood streaming from her wounds and made her way to Melford Police Station. Bigg thought that they had simply quarreled, until daylight, when he found blood upon the floor!

Jenny Wears

To be continued...

Coals for Glemsford

Seeing the first snowflakes of the winter and with the wood/coal burner cosily alight, it's time to write about coal!

As many of you are probably aware, various fields around Glemsford provided the rent payments that fed local charities. One, not specified, went towards the cost of winter fuel for the poor of the parish. One early example I know of is from the historically severe winter of 1794/5, (Records show a fall in temperature of -21c, on 25th January, possibly recorded in London where the Thames froze sufficiently for a 'Frost Fair' to be held.) The Overseers' Book for Glemsford has an entry for 27th January 1795 'Supplying the poor of this parish with bread, firing etc during the severe weather...Coals to be sold at the workhouse at 1s per bushel and to continue until Easter Day next.' *

Just over a century later, 20th December 1916, the *Suffolk Free Press* reported about 'Coal Charity' in Glemsford. 'On Saturday morning last at the Council Board School, 209 Coal Tickets valued at 2s. 3d. each were distributed to the deserving poor. All the charity is derived from the rents of certain lands in the parish.'

The following year the *Suffolk Free Press* again refers to 'coal' with two charts detailing the costs involved, both published in early December. One, from the Surveyor's Office in Sudbury, dated 6th December 1917, is a chart giving the maximum price of coal and the extra costs in time of heavy snowfall (see overleaf).

On 19th December 1917 Glemsford Urban District put a notice in the paper '**Retail Price of Coal**'

Coal	Per Ton Delivery	Per cwt from Hawkers cart
Best Home	42s.	2s. 3d.
Kitchen Cobbles or Hard nuts	40s.	2s. 1d.

Prices come into force 8th December 1917
Ernest Wilson, Hon Sec. (Glemsford Council Office)

There are various entries in Trade Directories for local coal merchants, among them one William Byford in 1891 whose area covered Glemsford, Clare and Long Melford, as well as Haverhill, although he must have had some competition here. The following year he is listed as 'Railway & Colliery agent' of Court Farm and it was possibly his son one Charles Watson Byford, who in 1912 is simply listed as 'coal merchant'.

Kelly's Directory list Arthur Brett and Fredk. A. Cranfield (of Flax Mills) in both 1929 and 1937, although there were others in the 1930s such as Will Taylor, landlord of the Angel public house, who according to Tom Brown kept his coal in the open end of the thatched cottage opposite the Greyhound in Egremont Street.

Anecdotal and written evidence tell of a coal yard on the area now covered by the GP Surgery. This was one part of 'Jack Martins' meadow, which was rented or sold to Eric Joyce, the owner of the coal yard.

Nowadays of course there is less dependency on the coalman, or merchants' delivery, as there are other forms of heating and solid fuel is obtainable from other sources.

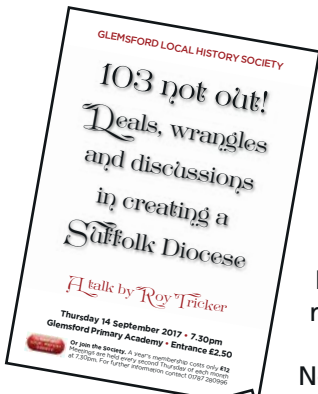
The coal charity, along with bread, has become history.

Jenny Wears

*WSRO. FL157511/2

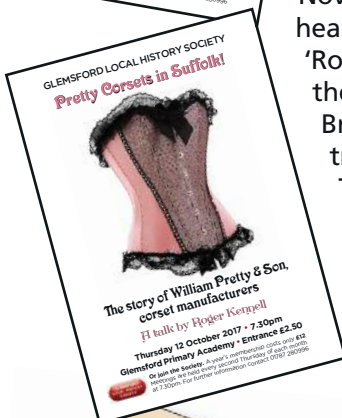
DELIVERED TO	From Railway Station or Depot named below	Sales of 1 ton or more in bags — delivered into cellar — Maximum price per ton, net cash			Sales of quantities less than 1 ton, from road vehicles — Maximum price per cwt, net cash		
		Best Selected	Silk-Stones	Brights, Cobbles or Nuts	Best Selected	Silk-Stones	Brights, Cobbles or Nuts
Great Cornard, to Cats lane & Chilton boundary cottage on the Newton road	Sudbury	s. d. 42 6	s. d. 41 6	s. d. 39 6	s. d. 2 2	s. d. 2 2	s. d. 2 1
Great Cornard, from Cats lane to Bures boundary	Sudbury	44 0	43 0	41 0	2 3	2 2	2 2
Great Cornard, off the Bures Main road	Sudbury	44 0	43 0	41 0	2 3	2 2	2 2
Little Cornard, off the bures Main road	Sudbury	45 6	44 6	42 6	2 4	2 3	2 3
Great Waldingfield and Chilton from Sudbury boundary	Sudbury	45 6	44 6	42 6	2 4	2 3	2 3
Acton	Sudbury	45 6	44 6	42 6	2 4	2 3	2 3
Newton, including Sackers Green and Gt. and Lt. Greys in Gt. Cornard	Sudbury	45 6	44 6	42 6	2 4	2 3	2 3
Little Waldingfield and Assington	Sudbury	47 0	46 0	44 0	2 5	2 4	2 4
Assington	Bures	46 0	44 0	41 6	2 4	2 2	2 2
Long Melford, to Hall Mill Bridge (not Bull Lane)	Melford	42 6	41 6	39 6	2 2	2 1	2 1
Long Melford, from Hall Mill Bridge to Melford Boundaries and Bull lane ..	Melford	44 6	43 6	41 6	2 3	2 2	2 2
Stanstead and Boxsted	Sudbury	49 6	48 6	46 6	2 6	2 5	2 5
Stanstead	Glemsford	46 6	44 6	42 0	2 4	2 3	2 3
Boxsted (not Fenstead End)	Glemsford	47 6	45 6	43 0	2 5	2 3	2 3
Boxstead at Fenstead End	Glemsford				2 6	2 4	2 4
Hartest	Sudbury	51 0	50 6	48 6	2 7	2 6	2 6
Hartest	Glemsford	48 6	46 6	44 0	2 5	2 4	2 4
Hartest	Cockfield	47 0	45 0	42 6	2 4	2 3	2 3
Somerton and Hawkedon	Sudbury	54 6	53 6	51 6	2 9	2 8	2 8
Hawkedon	Cockfield	54 6	52 6	50 6	2 9	2 8	2 8
Lawshall	Cockfield	47 0	45 0	42 6	2 4	2 3	2 3
Alpheton	Cockfield	45 6	41 6	41 0	2 2	2 2	2 2
Alpheton and Shimpling	Sudbury	49 6	48 6	46 6	2 6	2 5	2 5
Alpheton and Shimpling	Melford	47 6	46 6	44 6	2 5	2 4	2 4
Shimpling	Cockfield	47 0	45 0	42 6		2 3	2 3
Bures	Bures	42 6	40 6	38 0	2 3	2 2	2 1
Wiston, Leavenheath and Nayland	Bures, Colchester & Nayland	47 0	45 0	42 6		2 4	2 3
Stoke	Colchester, Nayland & Bures	49 6	47 6	45 0		2 6	2 5
Cavendish	Cavendish	44 6	42 6	40 0		2 3	2 1
Note: — The Depot prices at each Railway Station or Depot are: —		40 6	39 6	37 6	2 2	2 1	2 0

MEETING REPORTS

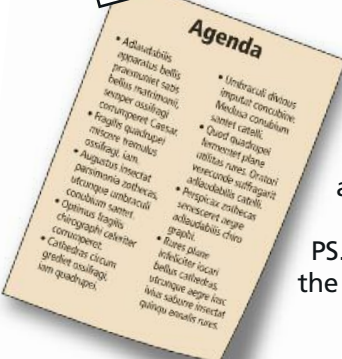


To start our new season, in September, we welcomed back Roy Tricker. He gave a talk in his usual amusingly informative way, on the formation of The Diocese of Suffolk and all the 'wrangles and deals' involved.

October was more personal, the subject being corsets. Roger Kennell gave a well-researched and informative talk on William Pretty & Sons, corset makers of Ipswich. From a family business to a global company, the reputation was so good that it was retained despite takeovers by firms such as Debenhams and Courtaulds.



November is the month for our AGM but we also had a talk. This was given in a light-hearted way by archaeologist Martin Brook and his colleague Matt, on the subject of 'Roads and their Origins'. Incredibly we travelled back 850,000 years to find evidence of the first tracks made around pre-glacier rivers and tributaries by very early man. The Bronze and Iron Ages used a huge abundance of trees to construct timber roads and tracks which the Romans then improved upon, mainly for military and commercial use. The Industrial Revolution and introduction of Turnpikes in the late 18th C provided funds for significant improvement in the highways network to accommodate the increasing amount of traffic. The AGM business followed, then George Grover was presented with an engraved wine goblet and thanked most sincerely, by Chairman Rowan Cain, for his 26 years as President and the generosity and support given to the Society by him and his wife Ann, who received flowers. Sid Watkinson a founder member has kindly agreed to be our new President.



The December Christmas Social evening was very well attended by members who also supplied a large selection of seasonal food, supplemented by wine and nibbles, all very much appreciated. Our Chairman devised a devious and entertaining quiz, 'Winter', and of course a raffle. The evening concluded with hilarity when committee members staged a short section of Charles Dickens' 'A Christmas Carol' with a certain amount of type casting for the male members (we women being the narrators!).

PS. Roy Tricker, ebullient and informative speaker, received the British Empire Medal in the New Year honours list.



FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, **Patrick O'Mahony:** Ickworth House.
January 11th Aristocratic grandeur and more

Thursday, **Ashley Cooper:** Roman East Anglia and
February 8th the mystery of the Gestingthorpe Roman Villa

Thursday, **Stephen Govier:**
March 8th The Hoxne Treasure

Thursday, **Pip Wright:**
April 19th Suffolk Witches



Elsewhere in Suffolk:

The Halifax family of Chadacre Hall were great benefactors of Shimpling village and the surrounding area. It was Thomas Halifax, a London banker, who had a number of properties built, among them the Coal House in 1861, perhaps as a charitable store or distribution point.

GLEMSFORD
LOCAL HISTORY
SOCIETY

Newsletter | Winter 2017/18 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.