

WALBERSWICK

LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

NEWSLETTER NO: 74

July 2024

Newsletter Editor's report

Forthcoming Talks/Speakers

Shorelines rescheduled!

- **Shorelines: voices of Southwold Fishermen:** Saturday 28th September 2024 at 7:00 pm in the Village Hall: You may have read Robert Jellicoe's book "Shorelines, Voices of Southwold Fishermen" about Southwold's longshore fishermen. Come and see the author and listen to him and the voices of a bygone age (including some from Walberswick which was always bound to Southwold).

Charlie back for Christmas

- **History of Surnames:** Saturday 14th December 2024 at 2:00 pm in the Village Hall. The ever-popular Charlie Haylock will talk about the Anglo-Saxon and Viking by-names and nicknames we had prior to the Norman Conquest. He will explain how and why surnames were introduced by the Normans . . . how they evolved after the Domesday Book in 1086AD . . . and the disruption it caused the English. Charlie will then enlighten us on the different types of various surnames, and give us their origins, their meanings and their derivation.

These talks are free to members and £5 for guests of members and can be booked through Edward Wright (see below).

If you know someone who would like to join WLHG or just attend a talk then please email us in good time before the talk at ewright123@btinternet.com. It's good value!

You may be surprised to get this newsletter as the next one is not due until September/October. However, I have been pleasantly surprised by being sent articles by a number of people. Rather than hold onto them I am slipping an extra one in now and may do so again later in the year. More value for your membership!

This edition contains only one article. It is a beautifully researched and written piece by Penny Fox. I am sure that you will enjoy it. It's slightly longer than usual but again "more bang for your buck".

John English – Newsletter Editor

A Warble for Walberswick - Penny Fox

In November 1881, an article with the headline *Autumn at Southwold* appeared in *The Standard*, then a daily morning broadsheet newspaper priced at One Penny. The (anonymous) author heaped much praise on Southwold (*'the abode of peace ... bracing air blowing from the North Sea ... a veritable Paradise for children'*) and suggested that a visit to Walberswick would also be worthwhile:

'Walberswick may be called the artistic suburb of Southwold, for it is dear to the heart of the painter and etcher, and certainly a very picturesque place for those who have eyes for quiet beauty. The village itself is nothing remarkable, though the church is a magnificent ruin, like so many of the churches in the neighbourhood; but the old harbour, where the river, broadening slightly, runs into the sea, has tempted more than one artist to immortalise it with the brush or the etching needle.'

Later that month, a poem entitled *A Warble for Walberswick* appeared in *Punch* magazine, quoting from the *Standard* article in its introduction. It continued (and this is best read in confident Gilbert & Sullivan style):

Oh, Walberswick's a village boasting very little tillage,
In the northern part of Suffolk, and it's very picturesque,
And you fly from all the gritty, dirty highways of the City,
To forget in pleasant rambles dreary duties of the desk.

There's a harbour old, and rotten planks and anchors left forgotten,
'Mid the tangle of the cordage, boats whose sea career is o'er,
There's a ferry with scant traffic, that MACALLUM in the *Graphic*
Drew long years ago, and sea-gulls sweep along the lonesome shore.

And there gathers many a sketcher, Doctor EVERSLED the etcher,
DELAMOTTE, and MARKS and HALSWELLE, LANGTON BARNARD, and
one KEENE
That *Punch* wots of, love the queer place, and declare it is a dear place,
While with skilful brush and pencil they've immortalised the scene.

There no horrible "cheap tripper" comes, a most persistent dipper
In the briny, and COOK'S tourist is unknown within those parts;
But the sunsets waxing fainter o'er the church delight the painter,
No wonder then that Walberswick is dear to artist hearts.

Some of the 'sketchers and etchers' named may not be familiar, so here are a few notes about them.

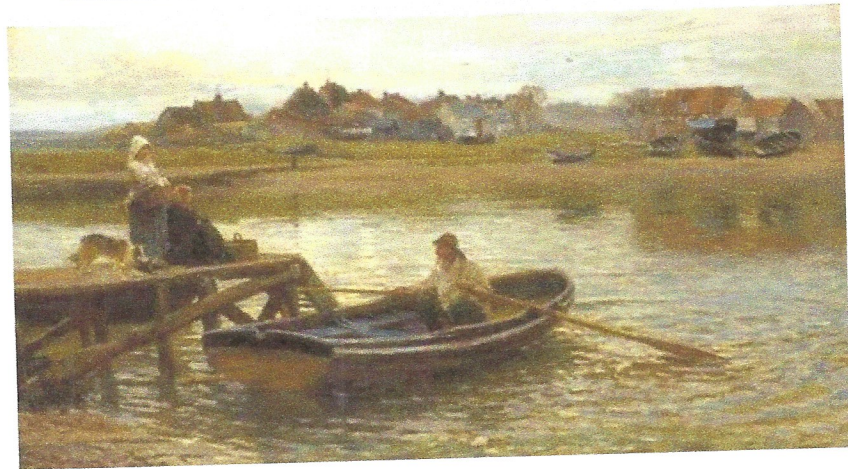
Macallum in the *Graphic*: (John Thomas) Hamilton Macallum, 1841-1896. A Scottish painter. Entered Royal Academy schools in 1864. Elected RA 1882. Had studios in London and at Beer, Devon.

The Graphic describes his drawing of a ferry boat, on show at the Black and White Exhibition in 1873 (below), as likely to be of a ferry in Scotland rather than Suffolk. However, his painting below, exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1875, is titled 'Walberswick Ferry' and much of the detail (the jetty and the boat itself) of his earlier black and white engraving is evident in the later oil painting.

The Ferry Boat drawn by Hamilton Macallum 1873. The Graphic.



Walberswick Ferry, Hamilton Macallum 1875, oil on canvas. Royal Academy



Doctor Evershed the etcher: Arthur Evershed, 1836-1919. Trained and practised as a medical doctor. Later in his life he was also a painter, etcher and illustrator and regularly exhibited at the Royal Academy. Southwold Museum has two of his etchings. The British Museum has 124 of his etchings and drypoints. His sketch (right) was exhibited at the RA in 1884.



Walberswick Ferry, print by Arthur Evershed. Royal Academy.

Delamotte: Philip Henry Delamotte, 1821-1889. Painter and illustrator. Exhibited widely including the RA. He illustrated the 1880 edition of Gilbert White's *Natural History and Antiquities of Selborne*. The sketches (right) are two of eight taken from the 1893 issue of *The English Illustrated Magazine* in which Delamotte illustrated an article by E. Boyer Brown, *Round About Walberswick and Southwold*.



NEAR THE WENT, WALBERSWICK.



PART OF THE OLD CHURCH, WALBERSWICK.

Marks: Henry Stacy Marks, 1829-1898. Painter and illustrator. A founding member of the St John's Wood Clique (motto: 'the better each man's picture, the better for all'). Elected RA 1878, Honorary RA 1881. It is known that he made visits to Walberswick and Dunwich with the etcher Edwin Edwards in the 1870s, meeting up with Charles Keene and Hamilton Macallum in Walberswick. (The LHG Newsletter No. 41, February 2012, refers to two prints of portraits of members of the Walberswick English family, purportedly by Marks). He was a caricaturist *par excellence*, showing great humour and skill. He was also an excellent painter of birds and he specialised in both oil and watercolour studies (some of which were also humorous) with significant popular success.

In volume 1 of his books *'Pen and Pencil Sketches'*, Marks describes one of his visits to Walberswick and a conversation with the ferryman:

Southwold and the adjoining picturesque village of Walberswick, on the opposite bank of the river Blythe, were then comparatively unknown to artists, and white umbrellas were few in the land. A picture by Hamilton Macallum, irreverently entitled 'Wobbleswick Ferry', appeared in the Academy in 1875, and this was, I think, the first, or all but the first, painted in the neighbourhood.

The old ferryman was a character. When he was asked, 'Well, Todd, what do you think of the weather?' he was careful not to commit himself by rash prophecies, and would answer, 'Well, I don't know, sir: it might be eggs, and it might be young 'uns.'

Though a drinker of beer, he did not believe in spirits, and likened a dram to 'a flash of lightning in a gooseberry bush.' 'There ain't no good in it; it's no sooner in yer than it's out of yer.'

In December 1877, the London *'Week's News'* report on the Winter Exhibition of the Society of Painters in Water Colours in Pall Mall, noted that:

H. Stacy Marks, A.R.A., who exhibits several small pieces, was perhaps never more happy than in the charming little view he has given of 'Walberswick, Suffolk' (94), a windmill on a river's bank at low tide.

However, no record has yet been found of what happened to either this painting or the many others he was reported to have produced. His entry in the 1901 supplement to the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* notes:

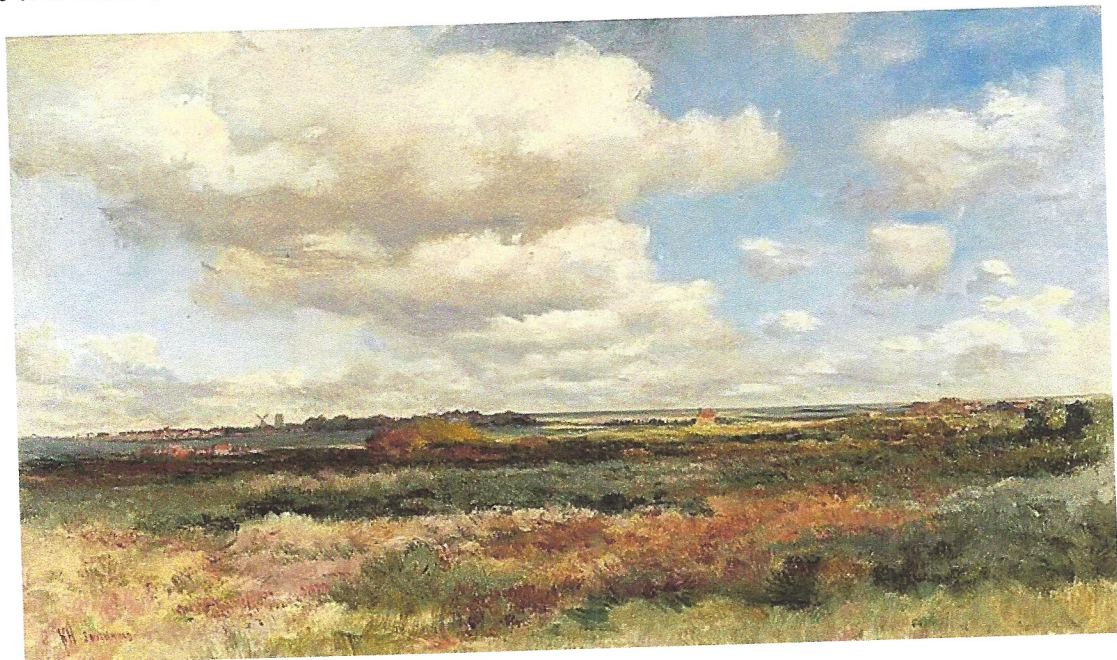
All his oil paintings are in pure colour, and their freshness of hue shows at present no diminution. His land and sea scapes in watercolours also have notable serenity and breadth. His favoured resort was the Suffolk coast, and he painted many scenes round Southwold and Walberswick.

An article in *The Biograph and Review*, November 1880, describes Stacy Marks as follows:

Mr Marks is well known for his indomitable energy and perseverance, and capacity for hard work; relieved by flashes of such boyish fun as prompt him occasionally to enliven his neighbours at a public dinner by drawing caricatures upon his thumb nail of deserving characters who provoke his notice. He is as versatile in his play time as in his working hours; full of fun and anecdote, and will sing a song or tell a story with any one.

Halswelle: Keeley Halswelle, born John Keeley Haswell, 1831-1891. Artist and illustrator, he worked on the *Illustrated London News*. He travelled widely, spending time in Italy and France, and is best-known for his landscapes, particularly of the Thames where he spent many years living on a houseboat. Elected as an Associate of the Royal Scottish Academy he was a successful and popular painter; his work was frequently to be seen in London galleries, often with paintings of East Anglian landscapes.

Below is Halswelle's *Landscape near Southwold*. The familiar profiles of the mill and church tower of Walberswick can be seen towards the left of the horizon. He was a friend of Stacy Marks and knew other members of the illustrator's circle.



Landscape near Southwold, Keeley Halswelle. National Gallery of Ireland

Langton Barnard: the rhyme's author may be referring to (John) Langton Barnard, 1849-1909. He has a painting in the National Library of Wales and exhibited at the New English Art Club. His work ranged from portraits to contemporary scenes, set in the UK and abroad. Almost all were oil on board. However, there's no evidence that he had any connection with

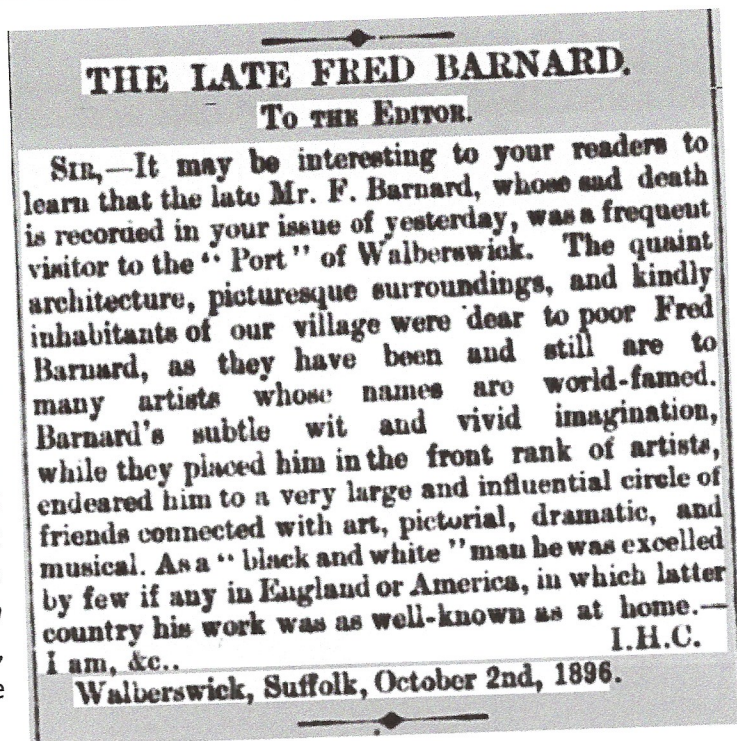
East Anglia or Walberswick, nor of any connection with *Punch* magazine or any other illustrated publications of the time.

A much more likely candidate would be:

Barnard: Fred Barnard, 1846-1896, who is a perfect fit in the context of the verses. Fred Barnard exhibited at the Royal Academy, but he was primarily a 'black and white artist', that is, an illustrator of magazines and books including *The Illustrated London News*, *Punch* and *Harper's Weekly*.

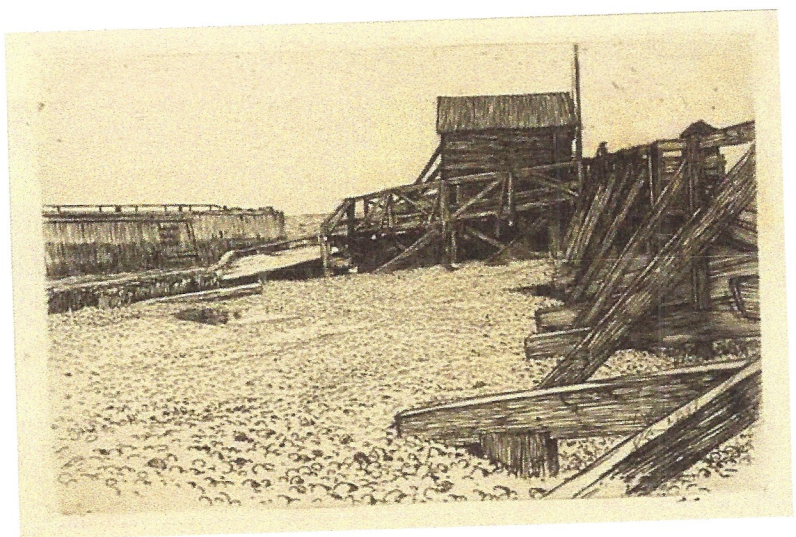
His work production was prolific, and he was commercially highly successful. Books ranged from *The Pilgrim's Progress* to numerous romantic novels and Christmas annuals. He was noted for his work on the novels of Charles Dickens, producing some 450 illustrations for a series of nine volumes.

John Singer Sargent, a close friend of Barnard and his family, painted several portraits of Barnard's wife Alice and their two daughters, Dorothy and Polly. However, finding any of Barnard's work that relates to Walberswick or East Anglia is proving elusive, although a letter, printed in the *East Anglian Daily Times* in October 1896, indicates that there may be some yet to be discovered.



East Anglian Daily Times

Keene: Charles Samuel Keene, 1823-1891. His illustrations first appeared in *Punch* in 1851 and he continued producing illustrations for them and other books and magazines for the rest of his life. Possibly the best-known name of all those appearing in the *Warble for Walberswick* verses, Keene visited Walberswick, Southwold and Dunwich in the 1860s and 70s often in the company of the etcher Edwin Edwards who had a home in Dunwich.



Old Walberswick Pier, Charles Samuel Keene, 1867. Tate Britain

In 1890, Keene was awarded a gold medal by the jury of the Paris Exhibition. Contemporaries such as Pissarro and Sickert regarded him as 'an artist's artist' and Richard Scott notes in *The Walberswick Enigma* that:

'Keene was regarded in his day as a major artist . . . "The greatest British artist since Hogarth" was Whistler's view.

'He was a man of quite eccentric habits, had a sharp sense of humour and gained a reputation for playing practical jokes. He also enjoyed playing the Northumbrian pipes, and while in Dunwich would normally do this on a deserted beach.'

Stacy Marks was a close friend and colleague of Keene and sketched his portrait when they were on board the *William and Mary* on a sea-going adventure in 1860. The sketch is reproduced in *The Life and Letters of Charles Samuel Keene* by George Somes Layard, (right).



Charles Keene.
Sketch by H.S. Marks



Charles S.
Keene, Untitled.
1866. National
Gallery of
Victoria,
Melbourne

**Artist sketching
watched by boys n/d.
Charles S. Keene.
National Gallery of
Victoria, Melbourne**



Postscript

Stacy Marks, in *Pen and Pencil Sketches*, described the St. John's Wood Clique formed in 1862, as:

'... a bond of brotherhood. "The Gridirons" was another name we gave ourselves, and this was the best, and most descriptive of our object in forming this band, which was, while continuing to be the best of friends, to criticise each other's works in the frankest and most unsparing manner. The better each man's picture, the better for all.'

Gladys Storey, the daughter of one of its members, thought of them as 'splendid, happy, unselfish and high-spirited'. Almost all were eventually elected members of the Royal Academy.

A photograph of the founders of the St John's Wood Clique taken by David Wilkie Wynfield in 1884/5.

From left to right: Philip Calderon, William F. Yeames, George D. Leslie, Henry S. Marks, John E. Hodgson, George A Storey (standing) and David W. Wynfield



**'A Vision of the Clique',
drawn by Frederick Walker**



And finally: Todd the Ferryman, and the 'ferry with scant traffic'

Ipswich Journal,
Saturday 20
September 1884

And the artists have long ago discovered Walberswick. Here Mr. Keene, of *Punch*, who is, I believe, an Ipswich man, sketched in old days; here Maccallum painted the river, and the venerable Todd, who is the ferryman of the place; here Dr. Evershed found inspiration for some of his most charming etchings; while Marks and Anmonier, Frank and Everard Cox, have all transferred bits of Walberswick to their canvases. The "Wick," as it is affectionately called, and adjacent Southwold have figured in many galleries. Mr. Keeley Halswelle had a picture of the Marshes in the Institute this year.

*George Todd on the left
with Robert English
Taken from Jessie
Browton's scrapbook,
Southwold Museum*



George Todd, aka 'The Ferryman', became iconic in the depictions of Walberswick and its 'quiet beauty'. Born in Walberswick in 1809 (though that date might be a little approximate), he married Elizabeth Wade, daughter of a Dunwich farmer; according to the censuses, they had 10 children.



Until 1861, George Todd described himself as a labourer or agricultural labourer in the census. His first self-description as a Ferryman was in 1861, and again in 1871. In 1881, he was calling himself a 'Fisherman'. At that point in his life, when he was about 72 years old, and for the first time in more than 40 years together, he and Elizabeth were living on their own.

The rowed ferry boat was replaced by a chain-cranked pontoon, and George's health was beginning to fail. From available records, it seems likely that Elizabeth died in the spring or early summer of 1884. Her death may have prompted the following actions and advertisement which appeared in the *Ipswich Journal* on 28th March 1885:

GEORGE TODD'S ANNUITY FUND: *George Todd, the Ferryman at Walberswick, Suffolk, has been superseded on account of age and infirmity, and owing to various adverse circumstances it is feared he will have no refuge but the Workhouse.*

With the hope of averting that fate, it has occurred to a few of his friends that many artists and others who knew the man and place, and retain pleasant recollections of both, would be willing to subscribe such a sum as would procure for Todd a small weekly allowance for the remainder of his life.

According to George Somes Layard, biographer of Charles Keene, the 'Todd Annuity Fund' was supported by Keene and other friends, enabling George Todd to 'retain his home and live in comfort for the remaining years of life'. The death of George Todd is recorded in December 1891.

One of the Hon. Secretaries for the Todd Annuity Fund, and the only one with a London address, is Henry Savile Clarke, a dramatist, journalist, librettist and critic. No doubt he chivvied the many 'artists and others' he would have known to subscribe to the fund. He wrote for, among many other publications, *Punch*, *The Illustrated London News*, *The Globe* and *The Graphic* and was the London drama critic for *The Scotsman*. He and his wife Helen were frequent visitors to Southwold and Walberswick; Helen produced a number of paintings and sketches of the area. His verses (right) were published in 1884.

ARTIST ON THE BRAIN.

(A Song from the Sea-side.)

I always did love Walberswick, and have in olden time
Immortalised its lonely shores in sentimental rhyme ;
But now the place is filled with crowds of men, and many a
lass, '
And white umbrellas spot the beach like mushrooms on the
grass ;
In ancient days the harbour was poetically drear,
But now it's crammed with Artist folk, those Painters on the
Pier.

They sketch the ferryman's old hut, the reeds that sway and
nod,
The early Christian countenance of Charon—Mister Todd ;
And Lady Amateurs are there, who morn and evening flop,
Round Artists of the other sex, and talk supremest "shop."
Oh, would that I might never see a canvas any more,
Away with all your "turps" and tubes, oh smudgers on the
shore.

I take a boat, and sail outside to where the breeze blows stiff,
And grisly bones diversify the face of Dunwich Cliff ;
When lo ! a sketcher on the sea uncomfortably floats,
And several canvasses are seen outspread in heaving boats.
They come to haunt my midnight dreams, I see them in my
sleep,

Those everlasting drawing boards of daubers on the deep !
I'll try a voyage in the air, I'll hire a big balloon,
And soar towards the midday sun, and interview the moon ;
And even then I'm sure to meet the Amateurs on high,
Still perpetrating libels on the unoffending sky ;
They're rampant upon sea and land, and yes, I do declare,
There comes another through the clouds, an Artist in the air.

I'll paint myself with Vandyke Brown, and eke with Naples
Red,
And Crimson Lake and Cadmium shall flame upon my head ;
A suit of Double Elephant shall be my daily wear,
And "Siccatif de Courtrai" shall anoint my flowing hair ;
So brim the cup with turpentine, nor deem that I'm insane,
For since I've been to Walberswick, I've Artist on the Brain !

H. SAVILE CLARKE.