



WALBERSWICK

LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

NEWSLETTER NO. 48
September 2015

ARCHIVIST'S/EDITOR'S REPORT

Scanning: With the passage of time, documents become aged and faded. In an attempt to protect and maintain the historical articles and data in the archives for future generations, we approached Viridor Credits for some funding to scan the archives on to a Hard Drive which we can then put on to the website for all to see. Initially we were very pleased that our application was successful but were then devastated to learn that Viridor Credits' regulator (ENTRUST) would not endorse the project as the archives were not kept in a "public amenity". Fortunately an anonymous benefactor has stepped forward and the project can go ahead. The archives will be collected on 3rd September and will take approximately 4-6 weeks to complete. Check the website around the end of October.....

Website: There are two very interesting additions to the Website: (i) War II – Walberswick School – This contains a fascinating transcription of the Walberswick School's Log book 1938-1941 together with Minutes and recollections, and (ii) 1956 Amateur film footage – this interesting amateur film (now conserved in the British Film Archives) includes a short sequence shot in Walberswick – it starts at about 12.20 minutes in to the film. Here is the link to the Website – <http://walberswick.onesuffolk.net/home/walberswick-local-history-group>.

Pat Lancaster (email: pat@globalchair.co.uk)

JUBILEE SEAT – 1935

The new Thatched Ridge to the Jubilee Seat looks very good but I wonder how many people have noticed a saw cut in the front left hand post?

This was put there by George Rogers who lived at Ferry Knoll and had what is now The Potters Wheel Tea Rooms and Restaurant as a lock-up garage and the Pump House as a Cycle Shop. He also had a Shell petrol pump from which he sold petrol.

It is said that just after the 1953 floods, George Rogers was talking with others and said that the height of the flood water should be recorded. He borrowed a saw from a passing local carpenter and put the saw cut where the flood water had left its mark. It is hard now to believe that the water was so high.

Richard (Dick) Leon

Saturday 10 October 2015	Dates for your Diary EDF Energy Talk on Nuclear Power Stations at Sizewell Christmas celebrations. Richard Steward will talk about "Climate change and the Blyth Estuary".
Saturday 28 November 2015	

WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

Although the Women's Institute movement in Britain started in 1915, Walberswick was the first village in East Suffolk to form a Women's Institute. To celebrate the Centenary Anniversary, a number of Walberswick members attended the Garden Party at Buckingham Palace this year.

At a meeting in September 1918 – in Mrs Owen's House, with Mrs Crafer in the Chair – a Committee was formed with Mrs Beebee as President, Miss Owen as Vice-President, Miss Powell as Treasurer and Secretary and Miss Pickhall, Mrs Robert English and Mrs Fisher.

Here is a list of Past Presidents of the Walberswick WI:

1918: Mrs H J Beebee	1963: Mrs M L Scott	1997: Mrs M Godbold
1919–23: Mrs J Payne-Williams	1964: Mrs O Rooke	1998: Mrs M Godbold
1924–29: Mrs A Benham	1965–66: Mrs H Bunch	1999: Mrs M Godbold
1930: Mrs M L Tomlinson	1967–68: Mrs D Turnbull	2000: Mrs M Godbold
1931: Mrs W A Van Oss	1969: Mrs D F Barrable	2001: Mrs M Godbold
1932–34: Mrs E Crichton	1970–73: Miss E K Bally	2002: Mrs B Taylor
1935–36: Mrs O Findlay	1974–76: Mrs M Purves	2003: Mrs B Taylor
1937–39: Mrs H M Buncombe	1977–78: Mrs E J Smith	2004: Mrs B Taylor
1940: Miss G M Dash	1979: Mrs G Smith	2005: Mrs J Cardwell
1941–44: Mrs M C Scott	1980–82: Mrs J Leaman	2006: Mrs J Cardwell
1945–46: Miss G Owen	1983–85: Mrs W Riddell	2007–09: Mrs J Cardwell
1947–48: Mrs G Mason	1986–88: Mrs P Rogers	2009–12: Mrs M Adkinson
1949–58: Mrs O Rooke	1989–91: Mrs M Adkinson	2013: Mrs S Pearson
1959–61: Mrs M Harwood (now Bell)	1992–95: Mrs J Stanyer	2013–14: Rolling Presidency – Mrs S Walpole, Mrs D Brynley-Jones, Mrs J Willison, Mrs M Beard
1962: Mrs M Cowcher	1996: Mrs B Taylor	2014–15: Rolling Presidency: Mrs I Prince, Mrs D Brynley-Jones, Mrs J Willison, Mrs M Beard

Pat Lancaster (with thanks to Erica Donnellan and Margot Godbold)

CONVERSATIONAL FRAGMENTS FROM EARLIER TIMES

During the final quarter of the last century I was fortunate on a number of occasions to talk to village elders of the time, acquiring nuggets of local knowledge not generally found in published material. Most of the Bertie Stannard conversations took place at his garden gate at Mafeking Cottage on The Green, while those with Blucher English and Leslie Goodwin generally took place in the lane outside Samphire Cottage. I made quite a lot of notes at the time, and have tried to arrange some of them in a readable form.

Bertie Stannard

Mr Stannard, who died in 2007 at the age of 104, was apt to be modest when sharing his memories of the village, and always thought that others would be able to give a clearer account of events than he could. "You must remember", he said to me once, "I've only been in Walberswick since 1919". (He had come all the way from Blythburgh). For many years he had worked for Blocks the builders, and over time he had either built, or worked on, a large number of local properties. His knowledge of the village was comprehensive. Nearly all his information relates to discoveries made in the course of his building work around the village.

An interesting revelation concerned **Oak Barn** – or **Elphinston Corner**, more recently – in Stocks Lane. The general understanding was that this house was built rather in the spirit of a barn conversion (perhaps that was why it was named as it was), using high quality parts and materials salvaged from old buildings in other places. It was designed by the architect Ernst Freud (son of Sigmund), who had arrived in England from north Germany in 1933. It certainly has the appearance, in silhouette, of many small dwellings to be found near Germany's Baltic coast. In, I think, the 1970s, a buzz went around the village suggesting that Oak Barn wasn't quite what we had understood it to be, and must have been an established dwelling for a long time pre-Freud. This arose because someone with knowledge of ancient brickwork had examined its chimney stack and recognised it as dating to the 17th century, or possibly earlier. I asked Mr Stannard whether he knew anything about this. It emerged that he had been very much involved with the actual building of the house, and as for the chimney stack, he had built that too, no doubt using the drawings produced by Ernst Freud. The main difficulty, he said, had been in locating enough old bricks of suitable age and size to complete the job (the reclamation business had yet to come properly into being at this time). Back to the original thinking, then.

Still in Stocks Lane, there was another mystery about which I sought Mr Stannard's advice. On the Lampland site there is a shed which is sufficiently overgrown with brambles and nettles to deter the average Nosy Parker who might be thinking of taking a peep inside. The determined NP, though, will find something truly remarkable within, a rich compensation for all the stings and scratches sustained on the way. The framing of three of the walls consists of wooden church or chapel window frames, laid on their sides, in place of the usual timber stud-work. The frames are of a simplified Gothic design, with Y-tracery, as seen in many small country churches built around 1300. These frames, though, are wooden, probably C1900 and still bear traces of their original finish – a textured paint intended to look like stone. They may have started life in a chapel – but if so, where? I could remember the frames lying in the undergrowth beside the lane for several years, and when they disappeared I assumed that they must have been 'borrowed'. Mr Stannard did not know anything about their history, except that at Mr Block's request he had collected them many years earlier from an address somewhere near Saxmundham, and delivered them to Lampland.

Other interesting finds were made on the south side of **The Street**, opposite the Freud stables. While digging footings for the properties along this stretch, and most particularly those for the house he was building for Mr Russell Collis, a local architect in the post-war years, he had come across the remains of ancient garden paths. This was a surprise, as an eighteenth century map showed no buildings on the south side of the street between Wayland Cottage and Stocks Lane, this stretch having been assumed to be virgin territory. Mr Stannard's discovery indicates that the 'old town', largely built on the field to the west of Stocks Lane, extended not only to the top of Stocks Lane but appears to have spread along the south side of the main street as well. It is probable that these properties perished in the great fires of 1633 or 1683, and as a result would not have appeared on the C1800 maps. The only house in this part of the village to survive the

fires was **Thorpe View**, now **Orchard House**, built c.1620, on the other side of the street and probably just sufficiently distant to escape serious fire damage.

Other interesting discoveries mentioned by Mr Stannard included evidence of an ancient working pottery (as distinct from a dump for broken crockery) in what is now the small car park behind the **Anchor Barn**, and the existence, buried in the steep roadside bank in front of **Mercers Hall**, of a flint wall, similar to the one opposite at Old Farm.

Blucher English

As most people will know, Blucher was the father of Jayne Tibbles, and was one of the prominent 'Eastenders' of the village in his day (my definition of an Eastender is anyone living to the east of The Green and Ferry Road). He much enjoyed reminiscing about the happenings during World War 1, when there were severe restrictions in place with regard to blackout, going out after dark, etc. To people like Blucher such things were, in the main, just challenges requiring circumnavigation!

Many of Blucher's tales were not of great historical note, but he always conveyed vividly the spirit of the times. He remembered without rancour various bits of corporal punishment doled out by, for example, the owners of two village orchards he favoured for scrumping expeditions.

Blucher remembered Charles Rennie Mackintosh, and one of his favourite stories concerned his habit of following CRM silently in the gathering dusk as he took his controversial evening walks. This was in part to see where he went, but more particularly to perfect his imitation of the famous Mackintosh limp. He would discreetly shadow the celebrated artist at what he thought was a safe distance, feeling certain that he had not been seen. He met CRM the morning after one of these excursions and was startled to be asked if he had enjoyed his walk the previous evening!

Leslie Goodwin

Leslie Goodwin took up residence at Harbour View soon after demob from the Royal Norfolk Regiment at the end of World War 2, but he was a 'local boy' with lifelong village links.

At the end of the war Leslie was involved with the post-hostilities clearing up around the village, which included the removal of large quantities of live ammunition from gun emplacements and other military installations now forgotten by all but a few. The live ammunition, which included numerous mortar bombs, was buried in a long trench which ran from the pillboxes behind **Far End (now Aldebaran)** in Millfield Road, to the single pillbox near the foot of the slope to the edge of the marsh. A line of raised ground in the now-dense vegetation marks the course of the trench. I like to do what I can to spread this knowledge, in case there is a fresh outbreak in the future of the wish to resume the bulldozing of hedgerows around the village.

Other 'village elder' fragments might follow, if a spark of interest has started to glow!

Richard Scott

VISIT TO THE SUFFOLK PUNCH TRUST

Wednesday June 21st 2015, dawned bright and sunny and the NE wind had dropped away.

18 members eagerly awaited their transport to The Suffolk Punch Trust which holds the oldest Stud Book on the breed of the Suffolk Horse. The Stud was established many years ago by Her Majesty's Prison Service based at the Hollesley Bay Colony, a Borstal for wayward boys. It became a farm growing produce which was used to feed various Prisons and give some meaning to these young men's lives. Horses needed attention 7 days a week and it was hoped that the training would give some purpose. With cutbacks around 10 years ago the Stud was going to be disbanded and the horses slaughtered if they could not be found other homes. At this time the Suffolk Punch Trust was founded.

Hollesley is a wide open area the way Walberswick looked 100 years ago, with light sandy soil which blows away in the wind and not much in the way of hedges and trees. The Trust have raised funds to build a visitor centre, with a café, museum and educational facilities. Our visit fell between the two agricultural shows and we were lucky to see two foals one of which was only a few days old. Unfortunately it had a problem with a leg and was receiving treatment; it should fully recover in time.

The Trust organised a wagon ride drawn by two Suffolks and a guide for the trip around the fields who explained everything as we progressed. On arriving back at the Barns there was time to make a fuss of the two horses, which were then taken back to the fields for some serious training at pulling a Plough.

Philip Kett (Tel No: 01502 723800 Answerphone)

WILLIAM BOWYER, RA (1926 – 2015)



WILLIAM BOWYER

With the death of William Bowyer on March 1st this year, Walberswick lost an old and loyal friend, known to all in the village as Bill, whose regular summer visits began in 1959 and were to span rather more than half a century. In 1960 he came with fellow painter Alfred Heyworth to pursue a shared enthusiasm – painting en plein air in front of their chosen subjects. At this time they “roughed it” with tiny bivouac tents in a field close to the sea, which quite soon became the established camp-site. In later years, Bill brought his young family to Walberswick for summer visits, still for some years under canvas but eventually graduating to the comforts of a caravan. In 1993 they acquired a more permanent Walberswick base – The Knapp in Lodge Road, to which a large garden studio was soon added.

Born in Leek, Staffordshire, Bill attended classes at Burslem School of Art, which like most art schools was managing to run a reduced war-time programme. In 1944 call-up papers for military service arrived, and Bill's preference was for the Royal Navy. This hope was soon to be dashed, as thanks to his enlistment number ending with a certain digit he became, without the option, a 'Bevin Boy'. By this time the manpower shortage in the mining industry had become acute and Ernest Bevin's scheme to recruit workers directly from the military intake had been adopted. Luckily Bill was placed at the nearby Sneyed colliery, accessible by bus from home, at the expense having to rise 4.30 am every day. The work was dirty and often dangerous, but somehow Bill found the energy to break many of his homeward journeys to continue attending evening classes at the School of Art. The Bevin Boys had to wait 70 years before they were at last included in the Armistice Day parade at the Cenotaph; by this time the youngest would have been 88.

The work produced at the exhausting after-shift evening classes helped with Bill's successful application for a place at the Royal College of Art after demob. Here he was to

meet people who would become close friends, such as Carel Weight and Ruskin Spear. Most importantly, he met Vera Small, a sculpture student who was soon to become his wife.

He also won a coveted award – a fourth year of study at the RCA. He found abundant material for painting at this time in the world around him, most particularly the street markets of west London and later at Bertram Mills' circus. By diligently 'cultivating' members of circus staff he was able to gain access to areas not used by the public.

After the RCA Bill trod a route common at the time among young artists, producing as much work as possible in the hope of exhibiting in London galleries, while earning a modest but reliable living with part-time teaching contracts around the art schools. With a young family to support, he became a full-time art school lecturer, and was eventually appointed Head of Fine Art at Maidstone College of Art. During these years he was able to develop his working practice as a painter, while seeking fresh inspiration with foreign travel whenever the opportunity arose. He became a regular exhibitor at the Royal Academy and was elected ARA in 1971. Additionally he was an elected member of several national art bodies, and was for twenty years Hon. Secretary of the New English Art Club. Full membership of the RA followed in 1981, resulting in a decision to leave teaching to become a full-time painter.

In ensuing years his output of paintings was remarkable. Every year he showed six large works, usually square format, at the RA Summer Exhibition. These were, typically, a mix of Thames-side works painted near his home in Chiswick, and some from Walberswick and The Blyth.

Bill is represented with work in several public collections including The Chantrey Bequest (Tate), the Arts Council, the RA Collection and also – with studies of Arthur Scargill and Viv Richards – at the National Portrait Gallery. Rather remarkably, his first solo exhibition in a London gallery did not happen until 2003, when he was given an exhibition at Messums in Cork Street, accompanied by a fine catalogue with text by Ian Collins.

As we all know, Bill also had a lifelong passion for cricket. In earlier life he played regularly in season and reached a very high level, while more recently he brought the game to Walberswick where an annual match was – and is – played between the Bowyer and Village teams. The games were always played very competitively, yet with much humour and lightness of spirit, and usually followed by memorable parties generously provided by Bill and his family.



Bill will be much missed. He is survived by Vera, daughter Emma and his painter sons Francis and Jason, who all share his enthusiasm for our wonderful village

Richard Scott

Walberswick Cricket Team 1962–63

Thanks to Dick Leon, the picture below shows the Walberswick Cricket Team 1962–63. There were many coincidences when investigating the names, including a past romantic interest. Also, as we didn't have the name of the chap beside Clement Freud, I asked Julia Reisz and he was her brother.....

Clement Freud	Kit Coppard	Dennis Fairs	Charlie Storey	Vic Fairs	Michael Buncombe
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Keith Oakes	Dick Cook	Harry Moreton	Frank Devaney	Frank Upcraft	
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Pat Lancaster with thanks to Dick Leon, Julia Reisz, Rita Woodcraft and Vivien Hunt