

Glensford Local History Society

President: George Grover Chairman: Patrick Currie Secretary: Margaret King

NEWSLETTER - AUTUMN 2005

FREE TO MEMBERS (25p where sold)

The reaction to the first of this series of newsletters, published in May was very encouraging. It seems that the revival of an old Glensford Local History Society tradition has been very worthwhile, particularly since our ex-chairman, Stephen Clarke published it on the [Society website](#). I am also grateful to various contributors who have kindly offered articles for future issues; I'm delighted to report there is enough material of a local content available to me for some magazines yet – but I'm always eager for more. Thank you all for continuing to make the newsletter so interesting. And to those of you who spotted my deliberate spelling mistakes – I just wanted to check you were reading it thoroughly...

Since the last issue our village has seen a few changes. The housing development at "St. Mary's" on the site of the old Suffolk Studio Glass factory is well under way, and appears to complement the converted flats in the former Horsehair Factory nearby. Also the new abodes on the southern corner of Flax Lane and Egremont Street are progressing. The latter site was a derelict eyesore for some years after the garage closed down; the two new bungalows at the rear are already for sale even before the terraced properties in front have been completed. Meanwhile builders have been busy renovating the porch at St. Mary's Church and carrying out other essential improvements. Finally I learned lately that Glensford is to be provided with speed cameras – a not uncontentious announcement! However all the above that is new today will pass into the annals of history, hopefully to be recorded by our Society just as events in times past have been captured photographically or in words for posterity. Will you help us?
Patrick Hemphill.

Chairman's Comments

Patrick Currie

Summer is already slipping away behind us as we look forward now into the long nights of winter. But that's not so bad,

Looking back, we seem to have pushed quite a lot into the last year. In addition to the extended programme of evening talks

because we've still got the AGM on Thursday 10th November and the President's Evening at "Chequers" on Saturday 10th December (not Thursday as printed in your programme) to look forward to! Actually, I think that the AGM evening is really one of the best of the whole year. That's when our own members are encouraged to share their memories of past times of life and work in the village and elsewhere. At times like this, history really seems to come to life! If anybody feels that they would like to share their experiences in this way, they will be made most welcome. Please let Margaret our Secretary, or any other committee member know as soon as possible, and also how we might be able to assist you (for instance, by scanning and enlarging any of your old photographs to illustrate what you are saying).

- 7 in the last season - we've made most interesting visits to the Silk Mill, Thurston End Hall, and Hawkedon Church; as well as the splendid "getting to know your village" scatter walk, followed by some excellent cheese and wine. Due also to your generosity, and the hard work of our fund-raising team, we've (you've) generated enough funds for us to ensure not only that the Society's books are balanced, but that we've also been able to fully fund all the new extensions to our activities, such as archiving, participation in village activities, and even this newsletter. This only leaves me to thank the hard working members of the Committee for their efforts and support throughout the past year, but most of all to thank you for your continuing interest and participation in your Society's activities.

An Oakley Connection

Thanks to the aforementioned reference to the fact that this newsletter now appears on the Glemsford Local History Society's website, a few weeks ago this new-fangled medium brought a response from a distant reader regarding Eileen Lynch's article on local 19th century apprentices. It seems the enquirer, Chris Goddard of Plymouth saw mention of John and Hezekiah Oakley who were apprentice oyster-dredgers and fishermen in East Donyland and realised that this tied up some loose ends in his family history! Through the article he was able to connect the Wivenhoe family of Oakleys with the Glemsford branch, to whom he is related. It's very satisfying to be able to be of service in this way, besides proving that the world is interested in Glemsford!

Gentry and Traders of Glemsford

Among the fascinating and multifarious documents member John Slater has lent me for our magazine, some of which will appear over the next few issues is a particularly poignant extract. It is believed to come from the 1900 edition of "White's Directory" and provides a revealing, yet concise insight into

Many family names will still be familiar to residents as will be those of most of the pubs, but the number of artisans practising now-forgotten trades (e.g. William Mann & Son, tallow chandlers & soap boilers) shows how industrious a village Glemsford once was. Several traders pursued more than one line of business, for example George Albon, who besides running the

Glensford life just over one century ago.

Black Lion was a farrier and there must have been enough trade for three individuals listed as “plumber, painter & glazier”. The Church had to wait several decades for tower repairs so that we could once again hear the bells – but look at the population of this thriving village – in the 1851 census just two-fifths that of today. The administrative body of Sudbury Union is also a relic of past districts which have changed identity a number of times in the intervening one hundred years.

Web master's note:

Unfortunately, for reasons both technical and human - like, I haven't got the means - it has proved impossible to reproduce the relevant image on this page, but it should be available (eventually, but not yet).

I would recommend interested parties approach the Society for a copy.

I would also recommend a study of the relevant Census material which gives an even deeper, but far less concise, view of village life!

At present I have a full transcript of the 1901 Census, and am working on the earlier ones.

Snakeweed Found in Glensford

Robin Ford

During the past fifteen years, I have been botanising around South Suffolk with the “Sudbury Flora Group”. Between April and September we indulge our passion for plants with botanical rambles on Monday and Wednesday evenings. Outings to Glensford have occurred regularly over the years, and it was on one such visit that we came across an uncommon species for Suffolk in the vicinity of the sewage works. The date was Wednesday 6th June 2001, and the plant was “Common Bistort” (*Persicaria bistorta*). Francis Simpson, in his “Flora of Suffolk” (1982), illustrates the well known colony to be found along Hadleigh’s riverside walk, and mentions a site (water meadows between Monksleigh and Chelsworth) where the plant

On 18th May 1747, Joseph Andrew, a Sudbury apothecary, became the first person to record “Common Bistort” in Suffolk. His specimen, now housed with the rest of his herbarium in the Natural History Museum, London, probably came from the Sudbury Common Lands. Adrian Walters, the present Ranger and Clerk to the Common Lands, has been searching through the archives of previous incumbents, and has come across a reference from the 1890s to a plant called “Snakeweed”. “Bistort” is derived from the Latin words “bis” and “tortus”, meaning “twice twisted”, an allusion to the form of the roots. This has given rise to many old names for the plant, including “Twice Writhen”, “Serpentary”, “Adderwort”, “Snakeroot” and “Snakeweed”, and

can still be found.

confirms the existence of the plant on the Common Lands up until the end of the 19th century. Unfortunately, there have been no recent records.

Our discovery of "Common Bistort", or "Snakeweed" near Glemsford sewage works will appear in a new "Flora of Suffolk" that the Suffolk Naturalist's Society hope to publish within the next two or three years, and records a new station for a plant that has a localized distribution in Suffolk.

Review of recent meetings

Margaret King

Below is a summary of our meetings since the publication of the last Newsletter.

May:

Dr. Philip Pantelis gave us a most interesting talk on the subject of 'Buried Treasure in East Anglia' describing in detail some of the many priceless items from antiquity which have been unearthed in burial mounds, farmers' fields and building sites around our region. Sutton Hoo, Hoxne and Mildenhall are just three of the places which bring to mind world-famous images of unique treasures some of which can be seen either locally, or on a visit to the British Museum. All agreed this was a fascinating subject.

June:

A new venture for a summer evening's function took the form of a Scatter Walk around the central part of the village. Unfortunately, a disappointingly small number of members attended which was a shame as they missed an evening which was both entertainingly different and very enjoyable. Patrick Hemphill worked very hard devising many intriguing and deviously cryptic clues which sent us off to stare at local landmarks somewhat differently in order to discover solutions. The participants with the most correct answers were Carole Fletcher and Margaret and John King. The social evening which followed was complemented by cheese and wine; many thanks go to the committee

July:

The annual outing. It was a dull and overcast evening when a large number of members and visitors journeyed to Thurston End Hall in Hawkedon to enjoy a tour of this Elizabethan mansion which dates back to 1560. A truly unique house and home, this proved a real experience as we explored a succession of heavily timbered rooms each with its own identity and varied outlook. The picturesque outside architecture of the house, together with the barns and outbuildings, interested many of our members, and it is certainly easy to see why T.V. and film directors have chosen its location on more than one occasion. Mr. and Mrs. Orbell open the house only for charity; our contributions went to the upkeep of Hawkedon Church. Our thanks go to our hosts for their hospitality.

September:

The first meeting of the new season saw a large number of old and new members, plus several visitors, attending the talk by Stuart Bowell on the intriguing subject of 'The Secret of the Seats' or the meanings of the carved wooden pew ends to be found in so many of our East Anglian churches. The saying that 'all human life is there' proved remarkably true when applied to the carvings, most of which date back to the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries. A superb collection of slides allowed us to

members who prepared it.

enjoy scenes from the past showing the ever-changing seasons, local occupations, families at love and war, rural and fantastical beasts, Biblical representations, as well as the always-present awareness of evil, so often depicted in the form of horrific creatures or the Devil. After this, we could well view church pew ends in a different light altogether!

Forthcoming events

All the following meetings are held at 7.30pm in Glemsford Village Hall except where stated

- **Thursday 13th October:** “Church Bells and their History” Colin Cooke
- **Thursday 10th November:** AGM, followed by members’ talks
- **Saturday 10th December:** President’s Evening, hosted by Mr. George Grover , 7.30pm (**members only**)
- **Thursday 12th January:** “South Suffolk Cottages & Houses (painting & limewashing)” Ted Ingleby
- **Thursday 9th February:** “The Zeppelin Raid on Sudbury (March 31st 1916)” Anthony Wheeler
- **Thursday 9th March:** “The English Civil War in Suffolk (1642 – 1648)” Clive Paine
- **Thursday 13th April:** “Suffolk Pubs before 1900” Desmond Herring
- **Thursday 11th May:** “Heraldry” Dr. Geoffrey Heathcote
- **Thursday 8th June:** A summer’s evening function

and Finally...

“What is the definition of ‘Local History’, and what is its purpose? To many, perhaps, it is just another academic exercise, and to others a mild interest in the past of the immediate area, or maybe an excuse to get away from the domestic scene. I believe the study of a parish or a district’s history, carefully researched, has a profound influence on how we arrive at decisions that affect the way we live now and in the future...” Such were the wise words of past Chairman Richard Deeks introducing the first ever issue of the Glemsford Local History Society newsletter.

Apparently speakers at meetings included Dr. Pat Murrells on “Crime in Suffolk in the 18th Century”; Elizabeth Wigmore on “Pubs in Long Melford” as well as current regulars such as Fred Pawsey and Roy Tricker. There were visits to the home of our President, George Grover, and to Monks Hall, then still under restoration. Further outings included trips to Long Melford Church and Bulmer Brick Works.

Note from the Webmaster: interested readers can find some of the earlier newsletter material [via this link](#).

Published in Spring 1993, edited by the

Then, as now there were plenty of Society activities to report; long may it

late Mary Chapple, Issue No. 1 consisted **continue!**
of a single A4 sized sheet also featuring
contributions from Eileen Lynch, who
wrote a piece connecting Glemsford with
Windsor Castle; an ode to the
countryside from Vice Chairman Chris
Britton, while the Secretary, later to
become our Chairman Steve Clarke was
advertising a forthcoming book now
familiar to most of us, "A Walk Through
Glemsford", produced in cooperation with
the Conservation Project. Would anyone
like to remind us newer members of the
Society of the background to this
scheme?

Published by Stephen Clarke (stephen.clarke@ukonline.co.uk) on behalf of Glemsford Local History Society.

Editor: Patrick Hemphill.

The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Society as a whole.

Copyright © GLHS October 2005