

Old Business

A Happy New Year to you all. Thinking of all the new members the History Society has gained over the past few years, I thought that some detail about the cloth/weaving history of Glemsford might be of interest.

I'm sure many of you are aware that the village once boasted a total of 14 public houses/off licences, of which only two remain. The Ship was in business in the mid 1700s but gone by 1800. Find out where it was on page 3.

The old local papers appeared to report quite regularly on accidental deaths, along with a lot of thievery and fighting in Glemsford, but there are pieces that fall outside these categories, one even a little amusing – in retrospect – although I'm sure the 'victim' didn't think so!

Thinking about 'Reports and Pieces', have any of you made a resolution to contribute something towards YOUR newsletter? Perhaps some family history, something about the history of your home or experience of work in a local factory or on the land – think GLEMSFORD and HISTORY. Good reading.

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*Wealthy clothier
John Golding's
(Trade) Guild mark.
This sign was erected
by a previous resident,
to acknowledge that
this was the clothier's
home in the 1400s*



Remember the men of Glemsford who did not die during the period December 1916 - April 1917

They may well, however, have suffered lifelong physical and mental injury as did many who died long after the end of the War, and so still gave their lives for their country.

Local News 1865-1891

Suffolk Free Press, 1865: Henry Brown, a rat catcher was charged with allowing his donkey to stray onto the highway at Glemsford. Fined 6d with 4s cost.

Bury Free Press, July 1875: To be sold at Glemsford, Crown Inn, Grocers shop on Fair Green in occupation of John Seeley draper and grocer, and building ground, dwelling in occupation of Mary King.

Suffolk Free Press, Dec 16th 1869: During the terrific gale of Thursday night the windmill at Fenstead End was blown down. It is said it will cost upwards of £100 to repair. (Another mill, at Belchamp Otten, lost two sails in the same gale.)

Bury and Norwich Post, Jan 27th 1891: Alfred Clarke a labourer of Glemsford was charged with pulling down the trousers of William Bridge at Glemsford, as he left the Chapel and throwing him down in the snow. Fined £2. 6s. with 5s cost.

The Ship

A long lost public house of Glemsford *The Ship* came to light when I read a sale indenture of 1807. The sale notice was for 'three tenements, previously a messuage or tenement called The Ship, situated on Egremont St' (part of the highway now called Hunts Hill). The sellers were 'Mr Josiah Stammers a Suffolk miller, late of Foxearth now Sudbury and John Firmin, Gentleman of Bulmer, Essex'. These tenements were next to Pannells Farm, owned by Mr Firmin. The relevant section of the indenture reads as follows:-

"...All that Messuage or Tenement formerly called the Ship and now used as three Tenements or Dwellings with the Yards Gardens and Appurteances to the same belonging and now used therewith situate lying and being near Egremont St in Glemsford in the said County of Suffolk and adjoining to a farm of the said John Firmin called Pannells towards the East, upon the Kings Highway towards the West upon premises Belonging to Mr John Webb towards the North and upon other Premises of the said John Firmin towards the South as the same premises were sometime in the

occupation of Samual Oste, Thomas Everett and William Wordley Their undertenants or Assigns and now of Samuel Copsey, Jarmin Gredly and John Jarmin Undertenants...."

As it happens, I had come across The Ship in some rental and Poor Rate papers a few years ago but had no idea where it was in Glemsford. It is listed for a few years only. Business owners had to subscribe towards the Parish Poor Rates.

July 1746-Oct 1746.....W. Wordley for the Ship.

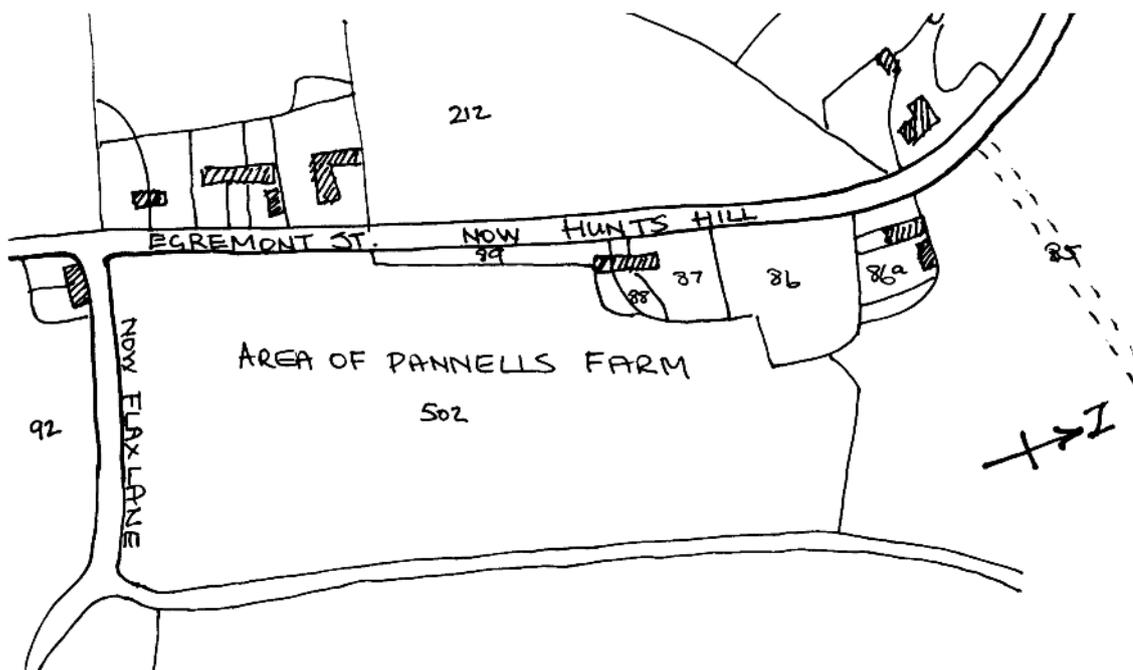
January 1747.....W. Wordley Pd but empty.

April 1747-July 1747.....Thos. Inbold for the Ship.

July 1747,not mentioned by name simply 'Inn' and then no entries.

A copy of the Indenture was kindly given to me by Sid Watkinson.

The map shown is the earliest available one for Glemsford, the 1839 Tithe Map, and the buildings are possibly not those mentioned in the text.



The Wool/Cloth Industry

The importance of the wool/cloth industry in Glensford during the 15th and 16th centuries is recognised by the buildings scattered throughout the village and the names of some of our roads, Golding Way and Drapery Common. Wills and Inventories from this period give clues about the tasks involved in the production of the woollen cloths by mentioning the equipment used.

Thomas Heggeman and John Petywate both mention tenters. Petywate had a wide tenter in Egremont St. for the hanging and working of cloth.¹ A tenterfield is marked on a field map, (in the area behind the weavers' houses, opposite Drapery Common).

John Brewster, a Glensford clothier, in his will of 1627, bequeathed to his son Ambrose "...one payre of my broad looms to be taken at his choyse. Two gange of shaftes, a payre of shuttles..."

Abraham Slater's Inventory after his death in 1707, details the following contents 'In

the Shop' (part of his house): Two looms, five pair of blades, three pair of sheirs a shave board and bench.

Si An Inventory of all and singular the goods, chattels, debts and personal Estate of Abraham Slater of Glensford in the County of Suffolk deceased at the time of his death taken and appraised this 26th day September Anno Domini 1707 by Joseph Wood & James Holmes' Gent: Appraisers

In the will of Ambrose Brewster, son of John, he is said to live in a property known as 'The Dyehouse'.

Here are some job descriptions of the trade, with a couple of Glensford names and Will dates.

CARDERS, using 'hand-bats' filled with teasels, dragged the fibre into parallel lengths which was then spun, often daughter carding and mother spinning.

SPINSTER, using a staff, about 3ft long with a cleft at one end, tucked under the arm, the wool fibre being given tension by small stone weights as it was spun down from the cleft. The yarns of varying lengths would be collected and returned to the clothier to be sorted and sent to the weaver.

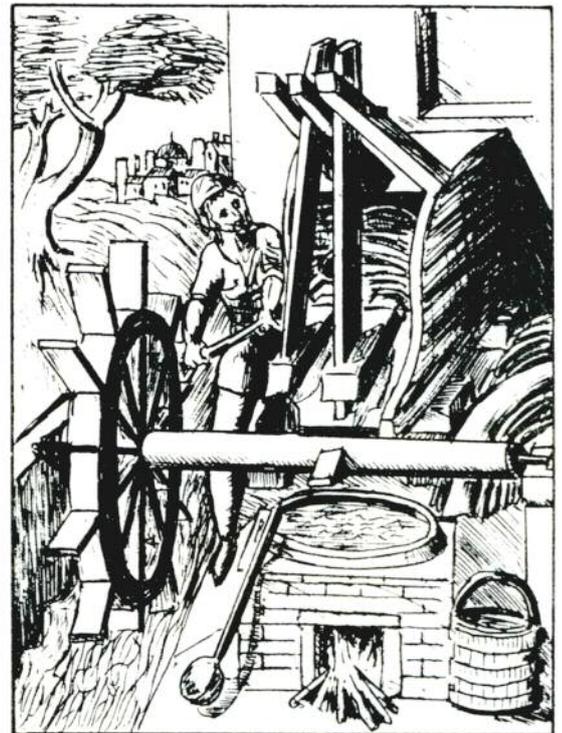
WEAVERS, (Robt. Everade 1527) usually men, worked at home on a loom that could be broad or narrow but of varying lengths. Not always wealthy men, the lucky ones would have had their equipment bequeathed to them and they served a long apprenticeship.

DYERS, this man would have had a skill known to few, and the detail of dyes was usually a closely guarded secret.

Lichens gave scarlet; woad, blue; birch bark, a yellowy brown; while weld gave a deep yellow and oak galls, black.²

Woad was very useful as it could be used as a base for many colours once mixed with madder, the latter used to produce a red colour. Dyeing could be done at various stages, and sometimes it would be done more than once.

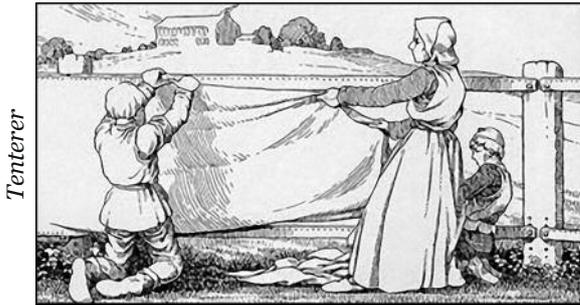
FULLER, (Robt. Heggeman 1494) after dying the cloth had to be 'fulled' to regain its woven strength. This process involved treading the cloth in a trough of soapy water with bare feet, but by the 1400s this would be done at a fulling mill. Hammers



Fuller

replaced feet in deep boxes. Wool would naturally be greasy and smelly and have just the natural colour of the fleece. Once the soap and dirt had been washed away the cloth would be given to the Tenterer.

The TENTERER would hook up and stretch the cloths outside – in a suitably windy field – to dry and slightly stretch.



Tenterer

Woe betide the thief who stole a piece of drying cloth, he would be severely punished as a piece could be the equivalent of a week's wages.

SHEARMAN, after tentering the cloth would be put on another frame and have the surface roughened by hand-bats, once



Shearman

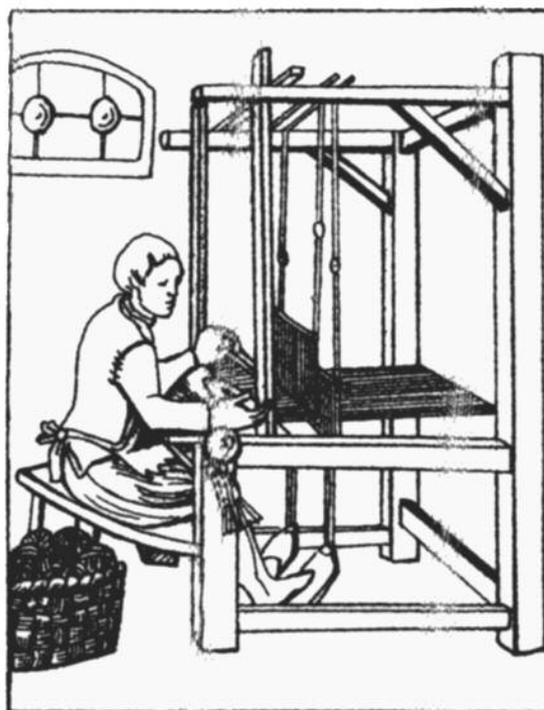
again, filled with teasels. If the buyer wanted a fluffy cloth, then it was ready for collection, but if the weaver wanted his patterns to show, the cloth would be laid over a long table or shave-board ready for the very skilled job of the shearing the nap down evenly. The shears often had 6ft blades and weighed almost 40lbs.

CHAPMAN. He would wrap the finished cloth and deliver it to market for the clothier. Could be quite wealthy as he acted as an agent by part-buying the product from the clothier prior to marketing.

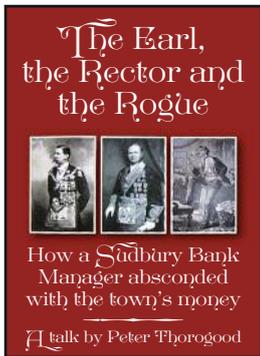
The spinners, fullers and weavers would often be 'outworkers' for the wealthier clothiers.

¹ *From Wool to Cloth. The Triumph of the Suffolk Clothier.* Nicholas R. Armor. 2016.

² *Wool is my Bread. Kendall's Woollen Trade.* M.Davies-Shiel. 1975.



Weaver



OUR OCTOBER SPEAKER, Peter Thorogood, had done a great deal of research in order to uncover the true story of a Victorian Sudbury bank crime in 'The Earl, the Rector and the Rogue'. Focusing mainly on the rogue of the title, one Henry Pratt, a Friars Street depository bank manager, Peter described his exemplary character, and how in seeking to emulate his father and the high esteem in which generations of his family had been held, he sought to further build upon an already worthy reputation.

Thus he mixed with the great and the good, entertained notable personalities (Charles Martyn, rector of Long Melford amongst them), was acquainted with the Earl of Euston, members of the aristocracy and even Edward, Prince of Wales, whom he met when attending society events in London!

However, all was not as it seemed. Indeed some may have wondered from whence came his bounty. Henry had in fact been falsifying the books by entering larger, incorrect deposits in the ledgers and

pocketing some hefty surpluses himself! Even though he may well have used some of his ill-gotten gains (£17,000 was unaccounted) for philanthropic means it was only in 1893, when the first ever audit by a bank inspector was imminent, that Henry realised that the game was up!

Leaving a poignantly sad letter for his wife and children which implied planned suicide by drowning, Henry sailed to Europe. His fate remains a mystery although positive sightings of him alive in Europe were recorded.

Fast forward to Brooklyn 1922 and the discovery of the body of a male lodger known simply as the 'recluse of New York'. Records show that this was almost certainly Henry, thus Peter has been led to the conclusion that Pratt did in fact work his passage to America a fair number of years before and had lived there ever since, just once, possibly, having been visited by his only surviving daughter.



THE AGM IN November was well-attended and began with a most informative talk by Martin Brook, one of the team of Britannia archaeologists who worked on Old Man's Field earlier in the year. For the layman he clearly and concisely outlined the nature of archaeological digs, pointing out that evidence of four periods of occupation had been found on the site, including those of the Iron Age and Roman times.

A drover's track, which would have had fields on each side, had been discovered and a number of pottery pieces unearthed. These were on display for members to examine and considerable interest was shown. Many thanks to Martin.

There was then a social cheese and wine interlude, much appreciated and enjoyed.

The official AGM business followed, and then the Chairman, Rowan Cain, assisted by former treasurer, Rowland Hill, spoke at some length about the very real need for the Glemsford Local History Society to acquire some location/establishment/building to store and display its increasingly growing collection of historical village artefacts. These include an eclectic mix not just of books, documents, maps, photographs but a large number of bulky items such as the old village sign and an original wheel from the Tye Green wheelwrights!

This is a problem for the whole village, not just the Society. If anyone reading this article has any suggestions or solutions, please contact me or any member of the committee.

THE ANNUAL President's Evening and Christmas party was once again held at Chequers, where candlelight and a roaring log fire complemented and enhanced the seasonal atmosphere.

A large crowd gathered to enjoy an evening of conviviality and good cheer. Hot mulled wine was followed by drinks, and a truly amazing selection of food donated by members.

The celebrations were interspersed with a quiz, some hearty carol singing and Patrick

Hemphill's spirited rendition of Clement Clarke Moore's 'The Night before Christmas'.

The evening concluded when we acknowledged our President's impending significant birthday, singing to wish him many happy returns. Again we must thank our hosts, George and Ann Grover, for their hospitality in opening up their lovely home to ensure such a successful evening.

Margaret King,
Secretary



FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, **Geoffrey Kay:** Death, Sex and Drugs – the story
January 12th of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood

Thursday, **Nick Sign:** John Winthrop of Groton and the 1630
February 9th Expedition to Boston, Massachusetts

Thursday, **Gerry Baxter:** Origins and Traditions of the
March 9th Pearly Kings and Queens of London

Thursday, **East Anglian Traditional Music Trust:**
April 20th (John and Katie Howson): Live and recorded
(NB. the 3rd folk songs collected from the Sudbury and
Thursday) Hadleigh area

Thursday, **Philip Crummy:**
May 11th The Roman Circus in Colchester



This Victorian pier at Shotley, dated 1894, is known as The Bristol pier, having been built by the Marquess of Bristol, of Ickworth House. He imposed a toll to use the ferry, which crossed the Stour from here to Harwich. The pier is 600ft long and was also used by HMS Ganges, a naval training base at Shotley Gate, for the transfer of mail, munitions and sailors until the 1970s.

It is now in a very poor state and up for sale by auction, with shares being sold to raise funds for restoration work. The pier is unusual for Suffolk, in being built as a working rather than a pleasure pier. Incidentally, this far eastern area of Suffolk is also classed as Babergh!



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Annual Subscription: £10.00 **Visitors:** £2.00 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.