

# Glensford Local History Society

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

## NEWSLETTER - SPRING 2005

FREE TO MEMBERS (25p where sold)

Welcome to the first issue of a new series of what I hope will become a regular newsletter again for members of the Glensford Local History Society. Within these pages you will find interesting articles about our village; reviews of past meetings and, of course news of up and coming events. This is your newsletter featuring your articles so naturally all suitable contributions are welcome for inclusion, including pictures; also I hope to post this on the Glensford History Society website as well as exchanging newsletters with neighbouring societies with similar interests to ours. This month's edition starts with a fascinating feature

researched by Eileen Lynch on apprentices domiciled in our village from 1802 – 1818 which reinforces the important role industry played in this area for hundreds of years which, as I write is under threat with the recent demolition of the Glass Factory and the future of Downs Engineering in the balance. Since the Society exists for the very reasons of preserving our village heritage, any comments you wish to make, artefacts you would like to see preserved or items you may have for publication will be gratefully received - please contact me or any committee member at a meeting or Margaret King by 'phone. I hope you enjoy it.

*Patrick Hemphill.*

## Early Nineteenth Century Apprentices in Glensford

*Eileen Lynch*

**Among our parish records, now in the Bury Record Office, is a very interesting Register of Apprentices 1802 – 1818 (ref: FL575 7/19). Under an Act of Parliament of 42 George III [1801 – 2], overseers of the poor were required to keep such a register under a penalty of £5 for not complying. In addition to keeping this record, the overseers advertised in the national press for someone to open a silk throwsting mill, as a result of which Alexander Duff came to Glensford and started the first silk mill. This volume is of particular interest in that of 44 children, 21 were bound to George Courtauld, silk throwster, of Pebmarsh,**

31 Jan. 1803: John Oakley, son of Robert & Hannah, apprenticed to Thomas Mason, oyster-dredger & fisherman, East Donyland, Essex, until of age.

28 Mar. '03: William Wordley, 13, son of Isaac & Sarah, to John Cranks, fisherman of ditto, until of age.

24 July '02: William Jarman, 12, son of Lydia Jarman, bound to John Raffell, pipemaker of Bury St. Edmunds, until of age.

25 June '03: George Merills, 14, son of James & Jane, to Simon Lawrence, of East Donyland, fisherman, until of age.

25 Nov. '03: Emily Brockwell, 15; Sarah Brewster, 14; Jane Clarke, 13; Sarah Ost, 12; Sarah Clarke, 12 (daughter of John & Sarah);

later Braintree.

**George Courtauld was born in 1761 and was apprenticed to the silk trade in 1775. After setting up a throwsting mill in Spitalfields, unsuccessfully, he went to America. He seems to have travelled back and forth several times until, in 1799, he was engaged by Witts & Co. of London, to convert a flour mill at Pebmarsh into a silk throwsting mill. As manager he was paid £350 a year, plus a house and 5 acres of land. In 1809 he went into partnership with Joseph Wilson and opened a silk mill in Braintree. He eventually returned alone to America where he died in 1823 leaving his wife, daughter and son, Samuel III, who by now had his own silk business. The list of apprentices was as follows:**

Mary Durrant, 12; Sarah Bane, 12; Charlotte Humm, 13; Sarah Wright, 10; Hannah Hills, 10, all to George Courtauld, silk throwster, Pebmarsh, for 5 years.

29 Nov. '03: James Hartley, 16, to Thomas Hayward, wheelwright, of Sudbury for 7 years.

31 Mar. '04: James Ives, 16, to Samuel Mills, fisherman, East Donyland until of age.

30 Oct. '04: John How, 14, to John Mansfield, blacksmith, Glemsford.

4 May '05: Maria Goody, 13; Mary Roberson, 9; Hannah Roberson, 11, and Susan Boreham, 13, to George Courtauld for 2 years.

22 July '05: Isaac How, 17, to Samuel Mills, fisherman, E. Donyland, until of age.

1 Nov. '05: Samuel How, 13, to Henry Brittain, shoemaker, Ixworth, until of age.

15 Apr. '06: James Creighton, 15, to William Lee, shoemaker, wheelwright and dishturner of Whepstead, until of age.

2 Aug. '06: Hezekiah Oakley, 13, to Sam. Cook, oyster-dredger, E. Donyland.

15 Aug. '06: Sam. Ford, 15, to Michael Everitt, fisherman, E. Donyland; James Oakley, 11, to Thomas Mason, fisherman, Wyvenhoe, and Edward Goody, 14, to John Smith, fisherman, E. Donyland.

16 Jan '07: Grimwood Gooday, 16, to Sam. Cook, fisherman, E. Donyland.

11 Mar. '07: James Watkinson, 14, to Thomas Cheek, fisherman, E. Donyland. fisherman, until of age.

17 Nov. '08: John How, 18, to Chris. Wilson, blacksmith, Bury St. Edmunds.

11 Jan. '10: William Humm, 14, to Thomas Cook, oyster-dredger, E. Donyland.

29 Sept. '10: William Bean, 14, to Isaac Harrold, bricklayer & plasterer, St. Martin in the Fields.

7 Nov. '10: Jonathan Ford, under 15, to John Everitt, fisherman, E. Donyland; Samuel Wordley, under 14, to Simon Lawrence, fisherman, E. Donyland.

17 Jan. '11: Joseph Brown, under 14, to Thomas Mason, fisherman, Wyvenhoe.

24 Feb. '14: James Bradman, 14, to Benjamin Bradman, tailor, Ridgewell.

14 Jan. '14: Elizabeth Jefferys, under 14;

Emily Wright, 14; and Sarah Jarman, 14, all to George Courtauld, Braintree, until of age. 22 Sept. '18: Sophia Game, 12; Jane Clark, 14; Ann Gridley, 11; and Susan Argent, 9, all to Joseph Wilson, silk throwster, Braintree until of age.

**I wonder how many of the children returned to work in our silk mill? A great deal of social and family history can be found in this list.**

**For anyone interested in the silk industry, I recommend “The Weaver and the Throwster” by David Possee, which covers Essex and Suffolk in great detail and from where I obtained the information on the Courtaulds who came to England with the Huguenots and settled first in Spitalfields, which became the important centre of the silk industry in this country.**

## **Review of the season’s meetings**

### **Margaret King**

The new season opened in September on a most successful note when members were shown around the Silk Factory by the manager, Iain MacKirdy, learning something of the long history associated with silk worldwide, as well as recognising how the local firms have been involved throughout the years. We saw examples of a variety of spun silks, whilst the modern methods of dying in a range of beautifully vibrant hues were explained to us. A barbecue at 'Chequers', the home of our president, George Grover, followed the tour of the factory. Superb food and wine, a large raffle and excellent autumn weather all combined to make this a really enjoyable evening.

**October:** Fred Pawsey from Cavendish gave us his entertaining and very humorous talk about the Suffolk Dialect. In amongst anecdotes rendered in the native dialect, he treated us to a surfeit of decidedly odd and antiquated words for everyday things that the Suffolk inhabitant of old would have used. Quite an eye-

**February:** Another very large turnout for David Lee from Kedington who shared with us his vast fund of knowledge about the facts and figures involved in the rapid growth of British Wartime Airfields after war was declared in 1939. His talk was illustrated with a large collection of slides of well-known local airfields, their layouts and buildings such as the hangars and control towers. Whilst many of these fell into disuse following the ending of hostilities, some have survived in the shape of museums, storage units and even private houses!

**March:** Peter Minter, the well-known owner of the Bulmer Brickworks, was a popular speaker when he told us about the history of the Bulmer site; how the clay is extracted to make the handmade, often very specialised bricks, which are then duly fired in a purpose-built kiln and how these bricks, often accompanied by decorative terracotta mouldings, are sent all over the country and worldwide. Bulmer bricks are to be found in local

opener for many of us!

**November:** Our A.G.M. was attended by a record number of 44 members. For the second year running, some complimentary wine was available to help the proceedings go with a swing! Four members gave poignant and humorous talks on the subject of their personal memories of World War II, recalling the fighting and their own childhood escapades which all made fascinating listening.

**December:** This was a meeting with the real Christmas spirit! Clive Paine transported us back in time to the Victorian era when Christmas was invariably white. It was also spent in the heart of large country houses with plentiful quantities of delectable, traditional Christmas fare eaten in halls festooned with bundles of holly, mistletoe and evergreens - or at least this is what we are led to believe. However, Clive showed us the other side of Victorian life where poverty was too often rampant and Christmases did not represent such a rosy picture. A raffle, followed by seasonal fare and mulled wine, concluded the evening.

**January:** Genealogy has apparently become a national obsession, aided and abetted by the ease of the online websites. This may explain the very large audience who turned out to hear Tom Shaw, from Clare, a local 'family detective', vividly describe the pleasures, excitements, discoveries and inevitable pitfalls to be encountered when the amateur sleuth starts to look into his/her past. In 'Researching Your Family Tree' Tom showed us an amazing collection of documents, maps and photographs which he had compiled from all over the country during his own researches. These have enabled him to really put 'flesh on the bones' to the extent that he could keep us well entertained with interesting stories about his ancestors and their social

churches, country mansions, ornate fountains and famous palaces such as Hampton Court.

**April:** Clive Paine, our speaker, kept everyone thoroughly absorbed with his account of the Peasants' Revolt in Suffolk.

In his own inimitable style he brought to life the troubled days of the 14th century – a time when an already poverty-stricken population found their numbers drastically reduced by the appalling horrors of the Black Death circa 1349.

Those who survived the plague however, were still expected to cover the same amount of work with half the remaining workforce and, by royal decree, no increase in wages. This, coupled with the iniquitous tax imposed upon them by the hated Lord Chancellor-cum-Archbishop of Canterbury, one Simon of Sudbury (a name familiar to most), fomented discontent and brought insurrection to a head in 1381. Whilst the Kentish mob led the revolt in London, it was clearly evident from the local chronicles of Cavendish, Liston and Long Melford that Suffolk men instigated and sustained a good deal of the action.

The fact that the great Abbey of St. Edmund was so near to them, in the midst of the Suffolk heartland, meant that they could converge upon it, venting their anger against the wealth and position of its inhabitants.

This certainly goes some way to explain why they deemed it necessary to take such an active part in proceedings. Rioting, fighting, looting and destruction followed, along with summary executions of those in power, in the peasants' efforts to improve their lot. Unfortunately for them, all to no avail, and retribution when it came was, as ever, swift and final, leaving the average peasant no better off than before.

standing in the community.

## **Forthcoming event**

**Thursday 9th June: “Glemsford Scatter Walk” at 7.30 p.m. from Tye Green  
followed by Cheese & Wine in the Village Hall**

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