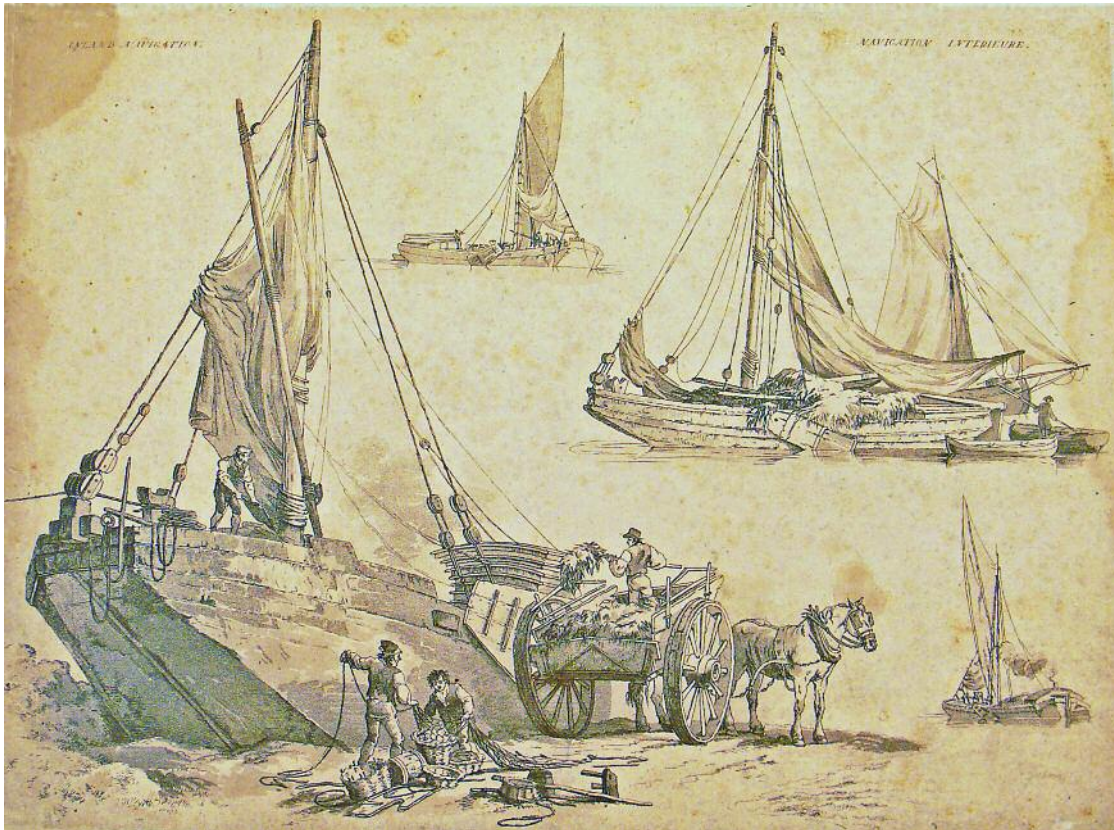


## History in Microcosm



Members whose memories stretch as far back as 2006 may recall that our January speaker for that year, Rory Summerling, lectured on the subject of "Lime Wash and Plastering". During the talk, he referred to an illustration of "Burning Lime" to be found in a book of aquatints by William Henry Pyne and entitled *Microcosm*.

Pyne was a founder member of the Old Water Colour Society and, between 1802 and 1807, in collaboration with the publisher, Rudolph Ackerman, he

produced more than one hundred and fifty aquatints depicting English rural life.

A couple of months ago, while rummaging through a box of miscellaneous prints, I came across two pages from the *Microcosm*, one of which is reproduced above. Although not the print that would have illuminated Rory Summerling's talk, it still depicts scenes that would have been commonplace along the Stour Estuary at the beginning of the 19th Century.

**Robin Ford**

# The Glemsford Workhouse?

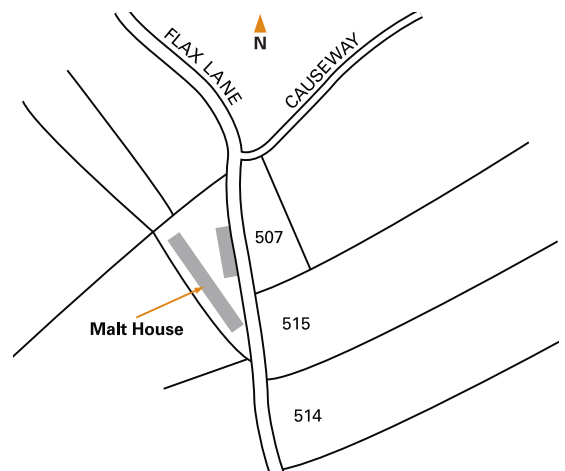
In the early 1700s many parishes were encouraged to build, or rent, a building to be used as a workhouse or House of Industry. The first mention of such a place in Glemsford that I have come across, is in the Ipswich Journal 1767. (Foxearth LHS) A sale notice states that “ ... a house lately used as the Parish Workhouse”. Two years later, August 1769, a detailed sale notice, possibly for the same premises, gives the description “good timbered building lately used as a workhouse, 3 stories high, 50ft long, 15ft wide, having been built some six years ago”.

According to a Survey of Suffolk Parish History (1990), 50 inmates were resident in the Glemsford workhouse in 1776, with an advertisement asking for a man and wife to be managers at the Workhouse. They had to “understand the woollen manufactory.” The post was re-advertised the following year. (Ipswich Journal Foxearth LHS). The Overseers Accounts, detailed matters relating to the poor and the parish, recorded vestry meetings, as well as accounting for parish monies. At a meeting in 1779 it was agreed “to allow one Thos. Belchamp, the Governor of the Workhouse in this parish eighteen pounds for this year’s salary”.

As the 1700s came to a close, life obviously became harder for those receiving parish help, the quarterly accounts repeating the comments, “Bad in Workhouse/Bad at Workhouse”. There was a particularly

severe winter 1794/5, leading the parish to distribute fuel and bread at a much reduced price to those not in the workhouse.

Wherever in the village the workhouse was, it was still in use during 1800, according to another entry in the Overseers Accounts dated June 18th. A lad, one Ezekiah (sic) Oakley lost his chance of being an apprentice cordwainer in Norwich through no fault of his own and had to “come home to the parish and was admitted to the workhouse”.



The earliest map of Glemsford in the West Suffolk record office, is the Tithe map of 1840/1. It is this map along with its Apportionment book that gives the only indication of a workhouse position, besides the name ‘Workhouse Lane’. (Now Flax Lane).

Tithe No.	Description	Owner	Occupier
507	Workhouse garden	John Diggin	Robert Grimwood
514	Workhouse field	Parish of Glemsford Churchwarden Overseers	Josiah Spark
515	Workhouse pasture	Robt. Holmes	Ambrose Shepherd



## The Glemsford Workhouse? Continued

However, the Tithe labelling could simply imply that the rent from these sites provided the 'Dole' to pay the poor of the parish.

The Overseer Accounts continued to show the comment "bad at the workhouse" at various times in the years 1802-1810, but workhouse or no workhouse, some of the poor of the parish were given shelter in the village as late as 1844.

The workhouse, could have been a parish 'House of Industry' where the inmates worked, perhaps weaving, to earn their

food, clothing and shelter. The Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 saw a complete change. 'Unions' were built to centralise all help given to the poor and needy: Sudbury was one of twenty built in Suffolk alone.

However, Whites Directory of Suffolk, 1844 states "the old 'School House' in Glemsford Churchyard is now partly occupied by paupers". The old school house had been part of the east end of St.Marys.

**Jenny Wears**

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# April visit by the Blackbourne U3A Social History Group

On Tuesday, April 12th, the Society played host to the Blackbourne U3A Social History Group who had contacted us some time ago regarding a possible visit to Glemsford in order to learn more about the considerable scale of its industrial past.

Using St. Mary's as a convening point where, following refreshments, displays were shown and short talks given, the group were accompanied by Society members alongside others with relevant, interesting knowledge on a tour of the main sites.

The former Horsehair Factory and the Silk Mills both provoked many questions and a great deal of interest although other old industries received the same

enthusiastic response from our visitors. Churchgate, Bells Lane, Brook Street, Chequers Lane, Fair Green were all covered, as was Tye Green where, as we admired and explained the new village sign, old memories from the 1920s of the wheelwrights were recalled. Unfortunately time ran out here and we had to return to the church.

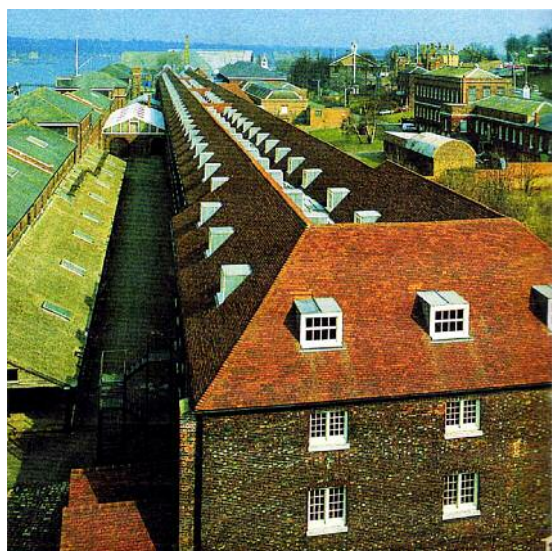
It was a very successful morning and really amazing to share in the accumulated knowledge of Glemsford's inhabitants. On behalf of the Society I would like to express our thanks to everyone who gave up their time to help in any way at all.

**Margaret King**



# A trip to the Historic Dockyards, Chatham

Following on with my quest to find out as much as possible of my family history, I recently had the opportunity to visit the Historic Dockyards in Chatham. I have wanted to visit for quite a long time, in order to see the Victorian Ropeworks since having watched some film about the Ropeworks on television recently, I was especially interested because when researching my family tree, I found out that my great grandmother's ancestors



*The Ropery*

were ropemakers and one of them had been in Chatham in the early 1800s and again in 1841 as shown on the 1841 census.

I was fortunate in that the name I was researching was a fairly uncommon one, which helped me to be sure that I had the right family. My great grandmother's

maiden name was Schrier, and I was able to trace back to her father's family and her grandfather's family. His name was John Schrier born c1781 in Shadwell, London who married a woman by the name of Grace Moore c1782. She was born in Chatham. They settled in Chatham and had several of their children there. Then they moved back to London and lived in Wade's Place, Mile End where the family carried on the trade of ropemaking. Later John, Grace and their two youngest children were found living in Old Road, Chatham where John was still working as a ropemaker.

Most of the family worked in the ropemaking business. I have discovered that probably all the Schriers descend from John and Grace. As yet I have been unable to find out who John's parents were, although I am still looking. My feeling is that at sometime in the 1700s

the family came to London from Europe, probably to escape persecution. The name Schrier is said to originate from possibly Holland or Poland or Ukraine, and may have a Jewish connection to it, but that's another story.

However, returning to the Historic Dockyards, the day was a particularly fine and sunny day in April and we arrived at the Dockyards around 10.30am. The Dockyard covers an 80-acre site, with historic buildings, museum galleries, historic warships and much more. We were booked to go on the Victorian Ropery Tour at 2pm, which gave us plenty of time to have a look around. We visited the Lifeboat Collection, the Royal Engineers Exhibition, two Historic Warships, but we didn't go into HMS Ocelot, which is a submarine, and has very confined spaces – rather claustrophobic. After a picnic lunch we went around the Royal Dockyard Museum before arriving at the Victorian Ropery.

Rope has been made on this site since 1618 when the first ropery buildings were erected. In the age of sail the Navy constantly needed great quantities of rope as each ship required around 20 miles of rope for its rigging alone. Over the decades the processes have remained much the same, using hemp for the making of rope. At the beginning of the 20th century new natural fibres were introduced and by 1918 manila had displaced hemp as the main raw material. However after the 2nd World War, following the fall of the Philippines, when manilla supplies had dried up, ropemakers turned to sisal for their fibre. Today the Ropery is still very busy making all types of rope. It is possibly the only ropemaking facility in the country. Much of the work is still performed in the same fashion as it had been for decades. The earliest mechanical ropemaking machine to survive in Britain is a forming machine which is still in use at Chatham which was made by Henry Maudsley in 1811. ▶

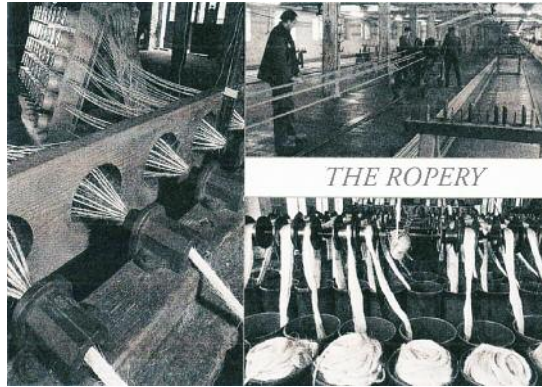
Bobbins of yarn are connected to the hooks of a forming machine which is pulled down the length of the ropewalk floor. As it moves, the yarns are drawn off the bobbins and twisted together to form strands. The strands are transferred to rail-mounted laying machines and again twisted together to make rope. Three strands make a hawser laid rope, four for a shroud laid rope and three hawser ropes twisted together make a cable. In 1836 these processes were assisted by the use of steam power, but by the early 20th century, steam was replaced by electric power.

The double ropewalk replaced earlier timber structures, combining spinning process on its upper floors and rope-making on the ground floor and has an internal length of some 1,135 feet.



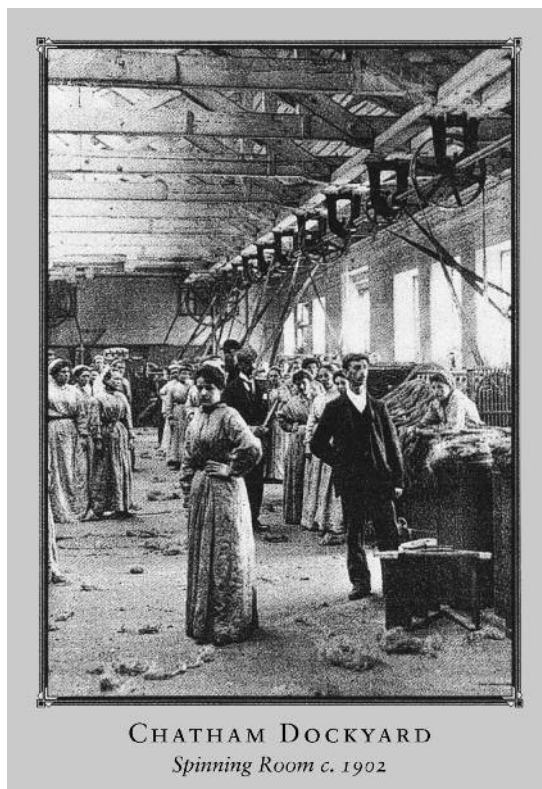
When constructed it was the longest brick building in Europe. Today, bicycles are used on the ropewalks by the workers to get to one end from the other as the forming machine is pulled along the length of the ropewalk floor.

The Ropery Tour is given by one of a member of staff suitably attired in Victorian dress to get a flavour of the place. We had a lady to show us around and demonstrate how rope was made (with the help of a few volunteers) and she was very informative and entertaining in her talk as she took us through the many processes. I asked her if there were other ropeworks in Chatham in 1800 and 1841, explaining



to her that my great, great grandfather had been a ropemaker and had lived in Chatham at those times. She said that he would have worked on the site, probably outside in 1800, but most likely he would have been inside the ropery by 1841 as the present buildings had been constructed around 1812. I was very pleased to see the type of work he would have done and in the very buildings he would have walked. It gave me a real insight into how his life would have been and how hard it was back then. I felt a real connection, especially after I purchased a small sample of rope as a memento of my visit. It was a very enjoyable visit, and one which I shall remember with great interest.

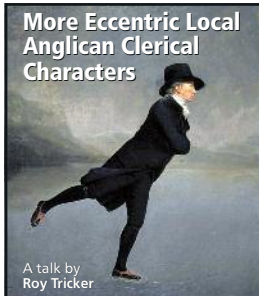
**Susan Smith**



CHATHAM DOCKYARD  
Spinning Room c. 1902



# GLEMSFORD LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY News



OUR MARCH speaker, Roy Tricker, a well-known church enthusiast from Ipswich, drew a very large audience to his talk on 'Eccentric Local Anglican Clerical Characters'. Roy prefaced his talk with a kindly eulogy to a personal friend of his, the Rev. Kenneth Glass, who died recently and was a rector of Glemsford in the early 60s. Many remember him or know of his book on the history of St. Mary's; his death is a great loss to the Diocese.

One soon realises that Roy is a born raconteur with theatrical flare and in very little time he was truly engaging his listeners with many humorous and outrageous stories from the lives of mainly local clergy from the past, the like of which are not bred any more!

These included Oxford-educated Rev. William Archibald Spooner who managed to so confuse his words that 'spoonerisms' is now a dictionary entry; the Rev. Algernon Ogle-Wintle from Lawshall who wrote books on street barrel organs and even played one each Saturday on Bury market accompanied by his pet monkey to help raise funds for

church restoration; the Rev. Wilfred Blunt – 'blunt by name and blunt by nature' – from Norfolk stood for no nonsense from anyone and when his farm's livestock and crops were ruined by floods promptly abolished Harvest Festival maintaining there was absolutely nothing to thank God for that year! The infamous Rev. Harold Davidson from Stiffkey in Norfolk needs no introduction being publicly defrocked in 1932 for gross immorality following scandalous tales of weeks spent in London's Soho rescuing the 'ladies of the night', a removal from a Cairo brothel, liaisons with theatrical personnel and finally death from a lion's mauling while in a travelling circus! Yes, he certainly did make the national papers!

Roy completed his talk with some outspoken quotes from Rev. Don Pateman from St. Martin's Dalston (1956-1998). Roy brought to life a man who raged against all things 'progressive' or patently stupid, who upset most hierarchies, who was probably the most politically incorrect churchman in the C of E and yet who still pulled in a congregation of 200 each Sunday!

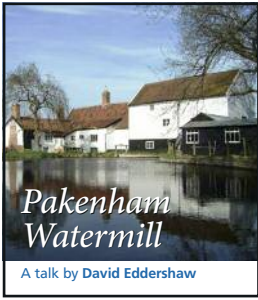


BARRIE STEVENSON paid us a most welcome return visit in April to conduct another Antique Roadshow. Barrie has recently celebrated his 500th show and his great interest and knowledge built up over many years is very evident.

Around 50 members delighted him by bringing in a truly eclectic collection of

antique artefacts. Barrie identified, dated and added an array of interesting facts on virtually all of the curios – ornaments, watches, plates, books and weapons to name but a few!

As before this proved to be a fascinating evening which kept everyone thoroughly enthralled.



DAVID EDDERSHAW gave us a wonderful talk about Pakenham Water Mill, a very special mill. It is the only water mill still working in Suffolk. There has been a water mill on this site for more than a thousand years (although the present one is not quite that old) and is mentioned in the Domesday Book.

Mr Charles Lowe started to rent the mill in 1813 for £130 per year on condition he spent £400 in the first year to improve and maintain the mill; and so in 1814 he put his name to the building.

The planning of the mill was very advanced for its day and extremely well thought out. It has four floors, the top floor being the floor to which the grain is delivered and stored. The third floor houses three stones where the grain, which mostly comes from local growers is ground into the flour. The flour then descends to the first floor and is packed ready for use and sale. The mill has two

hoists, one outside the building which was used to lift the sacks of grain from the farmers' carts up to the grain store. There is another hoist inside the mill and is the one used today in accordance with health and safety.

The water wheel was replaced in 1900 by Risbygate Foundry, Bury St Edmunds, and is inside the mill itself. It is fed by underground streams. The mill stones come from France and are made of Quartz and are so much harder wearing than our local stone.

Today the mill is owned by Suffolk Building Preservation Trust and St. Edmundsbury Council. It is run by a team of volunteers and produces 10 tons of flour a year. Running costs come from admission fees, the tea room and the sale of flour. Set in the beautiful Suffolk countryside in the middle of a nature reserve Pakenham Water Mill is one of Suffolk's treasures.



OUR SUMMER EVENING VISIT this year took the form of a trip to Pakenham Watermill – a follow-up to David Eddershaw's talk in May.

Members and visitors enjoyed a most interesting guided tour around this old mill still being run by volunteers. It is situated in a beautiful area, surrounded by a picturesque stream, mill pond and pleasant gardens. In addition, the mill itself boasts an adjoining miller's cottage dating back to the 16th century

which fairly recently has been most sympathetically restored.

Our two lively and knowledgeable guides explained in detail how they maintain the essential equipment and how they mill the flour using the very same methods as in days of yore. After refreshments, many of our party purchased bags of this finely ground flour anticipating some remarkably tasty loaves of their own!



A SUMMER LUNCHEON held at 'Chequers' by kind invitation of our president, George Grover, concluded a most successful season of the Society.

Members enjoyed convivial company and a delicious spread of meats, fish, quiche, salads, cheese and wine, followed by an array of desserts. Thanks must be given not just to our hosts but also to the team

responsible for gazebo erecting (essential items given the fickle nature of the English summer!) and to the group of ladies who did us so proud with their culinary skills.

The weather could certainly have been better but the intermittent showers were coupled by some very hot spells of July sunshine.

# PROGRAMME 2011 / 2012

## 2011

Thursday  
October 13th **Frances Saltmarsh:** Six into One will go:  
the Tudor Costumes of Henry VIII's Wives

Thursday  
November 10th **Annual General Meeting –**  
Members' Talks

Thursday  
December 15th **Christmas Social Evening** (in conjunction with  
the Gardening Club) Venue: Glemsford Social Club

## 2012

Thursday  
January 12th **Roger Green:**  
Simon of Sudbury

Thursday  
February 9th **David Burnett:**  
American Airmen in Sudbury

Thursday  
March 8th **Robert Halliday:**  
Suffolk Ghosts and Hauntings

Thursday  
April 12th **Ashley Cooper:**  
Local Literary Links

Thursday  
May 10th **Clive Paine:** Visit to Hawstead Church  
(contains historic memorials and monuments  
to the Cullum family). **NB.** 7pm start

Thursday  
June 14th **A Summer Outing** – to be arranged

July 2012 **A Summer Function** – to be arranged

GLEMSFORD  
LOCAL HISTORY  
SOCIETY

## Newsletter | Autumn 2011 edition

**Annual Subscription:** £10.00 **Visitors:** £2.00 per time

We meet on every 2nd Thursday of the month in Glemsford Village Hall at 7.30pm.

We welcome your continued support and that of others. Please encourage your friends and neighbours to join us.