

Glemsford Local History Society

President: George Grover Chairman: Patrick Currie Secretary: Margaret King (Tel 01787-280996)

NEWSLETTER SPRING 2008

FREE TO MEMBERS (50p where sold)

Welcome to the latest issue of the Glemsford Local Historical Society Newsletter. The Society exists to record the changes taking place in the village and the reminiscences of people who have lived and worked here, as well as to preserve documents and artefacts that have survived from previous centuries.

In the Spring of 2005, Patrick Hemphill launched the first issue of what was to become a regular newsletter under his editorship. After three years, he asked for a volunteer to step forward and take over the reigns. After three years of helping to serve refreshments at evening meetings, I tentatively put my name forward and was delighted and relieved to find a new member Val Huestis, had also volunteered. Together, we hope to continue the tradition of the Society Newsletter, and to maintain the standard achieved by Patrick.

As Patrick said in his first editorial, "This is your newsletter featuring your articles." We shall continue to look forward to all your contributions relating to the history of Glemsford for inclusion in future newsletters so if you have some knowledge on buildings, a story that was passed down through your family, remembering those good ole school days or whatever else, it is part of the history of Glemsford, and we look forward to receiving them. Oh, and I may continue to sneak in the odd article on Natural History!!!! In the meantime, we look forward to meeting you on summer outings, and on hearing any comments or ideas you may have for future issues.

And in conclusion, I want to take this opportunity to thank Patrick for all his hard work and commitment that it took to make the Glemsford Historical Society Newsletter what it has become today!

By Robin Ford

Glemsford Frog Count

This frog was photographed in Bell's Lane last year. Please let me know if you have Frogs and tadpoles in your garden or have seen frogs in other parts of Glemsford. This data can then be used to prepare a 'frog map' for Glemsford.





The Glemsford Waterworks

Many years ago Glemsford had a large water tower which occupied the north west corner of Tower Meadow, which was aptly named. Built in 1905, it was 60 feet high and the tank added another further 15 feet not including the flag mast on the top. In 1967, it was demolished removing what had become a Glemsford landmark.

At the time of construction, the Glemsford Urban District Council Surveyor and Sanitary Inspector was "Surveyor" Taylor. It had been said that the Glemsford Urban District Council was the smallest in the country until it was absorbed by the Long Melford District Council in the late 1930s.

Plainly visible from the road was a measure down the side of the tank, together with a pointer showing the number of gallons in the tank. The tank was a silvery colour but during the last war, it was painted in camouflage colours as it was thought it might be a navigational aid to enemy aircraft.

The bore, or well, together with the pump were at the foot of Skates Hill. To this day, the pump house remains. It is that isolated small building in the field on the left as you turn at the bottom of the hill to go to Long Melford. The bore hole is 500 feet deep. But then again, I have heard it is said that it is as deep as the days of the year, 365 feet!!! Up until a few years ago, it was quite easy to see where the town's name, "GLEMSFORD" over the doorway of the pumphouse had been chiselled out in 1940 as an anti-invasion measure.

As far back as I can remember, Mr Walter (Wally) Levett was in charge. Every morning he

pushed his bike up to Tower Meadow to check the water level and then went to the Pump House. He seldom rode the bike as it was usually festooned with bags of tools or spare parts. Each revolution of the pump pushed a gallon of water up to the tower. There was a rev counter on the pump so he knew exactly when the pump was full.

Mr. Levett had to carry out any repairs and if asked, replaced worn washers on taps. He had to frequently flush out the pipes. If the fire brigade were called to a fire in the village, it was a rule that he had to be informed so that he could start up the pump engine to ensure there was enough water. I did see the engine some time after the war and I believe it was diesel, but I cannot be sure. I had always wondered what kind of engine was used when it was first built in 1905. It would have had to have been very powerful because not only did it have to be pumped out of the ground, but the height difference between the pump house and the tower was about 130 feet plus the height of the tower.

I remember the Glemsford water had a very distinctive metallic taste which I think was probably from the iron pipes rather than from the tank and always thought better tasting water came from the brook on Chequers Lane.

The Glemsford Water Tower was quite an amazing feat for our village to build a water supply system and provide water to the village particularly since we were the smallest district in the country!!!

Many thanks to Mr. Gilman Game who provided us with this wonderful article.

HAVE YOU SEEN THESE???

The Mysterious Bottles of Glemsford



Since the last newsletter, the Society has acquired two interesting stoneware bottles. The first bottle bears the name of "CHARLES CRICK" Charles Crick was born in 1853 and in the 1881 Census, he is described as a "Beer and Coal Dealer, living in New Cut."



The second bottle bears the name "GAME, CROWN HOTEL." The Crown in Brook Street had rooms to let and substantial space for stabling horses. If anyone has further information regarding these two bottles, we shall be happy to print the details in the next newsletter.

Royalty, The Byfords and the Hartleys at Court Farm

My mother is an avid reader of Royal Biographies, Recently, she has been reading The Last Princess, the devoted life of Queen Victoria's youngest daughter - Princess Beatrice. On page 181, she came across a quote from the Bury and Norwich Post of November 18th, 1890.

"Prince Henry of Battenberg (husband of Princess Beatrice) accompanied by Colonel Clerk, Colonel Carrington, Colonel Vivian and Captain Prettyman arrived at Kentwall Hall, Melford. The party was met by Sir Henry Ewart, on Tuesday they shot through Court Wood and Scotch Yards Wood with lunch at Court Farm, afterwards Mr Byford showed them his stud of Suffolk agricultural horses."

After fellow GHS member Ron Hartley was shown the passage, he was able to supply me with the following information from the 1881 census:

William Byford is Head of the Household at Court Farm. He is described as "Farmer of 350 acres and Maltster and Merchant, 29 men and 3 boys."

Ron's grandfather, Joseph, had a younger brother called John who is described as "Groom (dom) (8)" in the 1881 census. He was seventeen years of age. Ron assumes that John, who lived at Court Farm, helped to look after the horses which were used for carriage, general transport and sport (hunting)

John Hartley was born in Glemsford and had previously lived in Stone Cottage on the Lower Road. In Glemsford churchyard, there is a headstone to Eleazar Hartley (died 1901) and his wife who were the parents of Joseph and John.

The Last Princess by Matthew Dennison, published by Weindfield & Nicholson, London 2007. By Robin Ford

As Our Neighbours Saw Us

The Glemsford Poachers

Philip 'Tulip' Rowe (1871-1955) of Upper Houses, Bulmer, wrote down his memories in exercise books between 1927-28 and 1936-38 whilst suffering from what today would be termed as a nervous breakdown. In 2004, The Bulmer Local History Society published In Tulip's Time, A Bulmer Craftsman's Memories. There are still a few copies left of Volume 1. These can be obtained from GLHS member, Peter Rowe, Cornfields, The Street, Bulmer, Essex. It is hoped that Volume 2 will be published shortly. The following extract is taken from Volume 1 with permission of Mr. Peter Rowe.

The Glemsford folk were a rough lot I can vouch for. The place was called Little Hell and they were Dears (sic) those I knew. I had little to do with them, but I have worked there and have had somewhat to do with Glemsford people nearly ever since I left school. These mat weavers had little recreation between them in the large village, although a man or two there had a fair with roundabouts, swingboats etc. These men worked early and late, earning good money according to [sic -as compared with] farm workers, for there were some very good land and farmers around Glemsford. Well, [as] the weavers did not work on Saturdays, they had to do something for recreation. They did, for they were poachers of the poachers. For they, in their numbers going out on Saturdays and Sundays with plenty of money in their pockets for beer, would take long walks around with a dog or two. If the dogs put up a rabbit that runned to ground one of them had a ferret in their pocket. This was put in the hole. If a small hole a line was put on the ferret. One or two of the party on scout to see if anyone was coming who knew them, to let those know who was after the rabbit. If [so]... they waited till the coast was clear, then they had the rabbit if possible.

It was said they had a club between them. So if they were caught and given a penalty or fine it was paid out of the funds. I am only writing of that I have been told by more than one, although I quite believe it was so. I know a gang came as far as Bulmer and walked over Smeetham Hall and Goldingham Hall, because I have seen them myself. Although I never had anything to do with the party myself or with those who I know did, I have had a drink with the Glemsford folk and those who belonged near to Bulmer or in it. I have seen them from a distance walking across a large field, just as sportsmen do for the beaters, to drive the birds over the hedge whilst the guns were at their stand, ready for the birds to come up for the guns. Also I have known the bailiff and his son who told them to clear off. The only notice they took was told both of them they would be better at their breakfast than "looking after us." The what [sic] surprised me the most was they did the same for several Sundays. There were two keepers on one farm belonging to the Auberies as well as a policeman in the parish. Yet these men did not get taken or it seemed as if it were not known. Anyways nothing I heard of was ever done to stop them.



Philip Tulip Rowe

Trivia Questions:

What rock band featured the Glemsford Station on their album cover?

When the Glemsford Station was dismantled, where was the canopy re-used?

The answer to these questions will be featured in our next edition along with more information on the Glemsford Station and Railway.

If you have any stories or photographs you'd like to share about the railway, the people who worked there and Glemsford Station let us know or alternatively you can email us at glemsfordhistory@gmail.com

GLEMSFORD LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY NEWS

Since the last newsletter, the Glemsford Local History Society has had some wonderful meetings with some learned presenters.

On a dark January evening, the local history society saw a record number of members and visitors turn out to hear Chris Trehwella's talk on "Bastardy and the Suffolk Village." Using research he had done into his own village of Stansfield in the late 18th century, Chris gave us a glimpse into the lives of a number of families by focussing upon authentic records from that period. He built a picture of how children born out of wedlock and their families were, and often continued to be a financial drain on village funds. Thus it was important to get the errant fathers to be to the altar even if it meant dragging them there by any available method! In his very concise and informative talk, Chris also contrasted the times with those of today pointing out that whilst much has changed for the better, in the 18th century village where everyone knew each other, there was often a far more caring attitude shown.

Our February meeting consisted of Leigh Alston's talk on Shops and Shopping in the Middle Ages. He offered not only a technical talk on how to spot a medieval shop in timber-framed buildings but also gave us some insight into what it was like to be at the market square, usually very busy with much buying and selling, all conducted in and around the fetid mires which were the Medieval streets, pathways and open sewers!

The March Meeting found an even larger attendance where members and visitors enjoyed John Walker's most informative talk on the subject of "Historic Timber-Framing: a Medieval Carpenter's Art." This age-old way of house building can be dated back to as early as the latter part of the 12th century, although most of Suffolk's surviving timber-framed halls, houses and cottages date from the 14th and 15th centuries.

All these houses would have been constructed from managed woodland trees, cut with an axe, assembled on the ground and erected by a skilled team using a sheer legs pulley. Gaps in the timber frames were filled with a mixture of twigs and wattle and daub, and then covered with a thin lime plaster. One estimate of a large house concluded that 332 trees were used in its construction. It was a very interesting evening, further enhanced by a professional slide show of many well-known and recognisable local buildings, all demonstrating the skill and craftsmanship of the Medieval carpenter.

The Antiques Roadshow in April was truly fantastic. The large audience was kept thoroughly absorbed while Barrie Stevenson passed judgment upon a truly eclectic collection of antiques and curios brought in by members. Barrie, a self-professed antiques fanatic, clearly loved all old artefacts however humble their origins, and many of the shows he has run, (This was his 419th!!!), have given him a great deal of experience when looking at treasured belongings.

Margaret King (Secretary)

Forthcoming events

Thursday 12th June - An Evening Summer Outing - a botanical and historical tour of the Bury St. Edmunds Abby Gardens. The tour will cost £3.00 per person and will last approximately 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ hours. Members and visitors are asked to make their own way to Bury St. Edmunds where we shall gather at the main Abbey Gate for a 7:30pm start. Depending on numbers, there will be up to two qualified guides to take us around this historical site. Anyone requiring transport from Glemsford, please contact Patrick Currie (01787-282289) or Margaret Kind (01787-280996)

Thursday 10th July - An Evening Social Event - Our last meeting of the season will take the form of an historical exploratory walk around the Egremont Street area of the village. This will be followed by a social gathering at Melton House, Hunts Hill for drinks/buffet plus a raffle. Cost for the evening will be \$3.00 per person.

Our new season begins in September....

Thursday, September 11 - Clive Paine: The Victorian Seaside in Suffolk.

Thursday, October 9 - William Tyler: Smugglers & Poachers in East Anglia

Thursday November 12 - A.G.M. - Members' Talks

Saturday, December 13 - President's Evening (members only)

2009

Thursday January 8 - Stuart Bowell: Suffolk Breweries - Past and Present

Thursday February 12 - Chris Miller: Suffolk Punch Horses

Thursday March 12 - Sarah Friswell: St Edmundsbury Cathedral - Past, Present and Future

Thursday April 9 - Pip Wright: Transportation of Suffolk Criminals

Thursday May 14 - David Possee: The 19th century Silk Industry in Essex and Suffolk

Thursday June 11 - A Summer Outing - to be arranged

Thursday - July 9 - A Summer's Evening Function - to be arranged.

Annual Subscription - £8.00 - Visitors £2.00

We meet on every 2nd Thursday of the month at Glemsford Village Hall at 7:30pm

New members and visitors are very welcome so please come and join us.

Printed and published by Glemsford Local History Society. Editor: Robin Ford. The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Society as a whole.