



WALBERSWICK

LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

**NEWSLETTER NO: 50
SEPTEMBER 2016**

25TH ANNIVERSARY EXHIBITION

A huge team effort saw the Village Hall and Annexe turned into an exhibition centre for three days at the end of May. In addition, the Heritage Hut opened its doors for several showings of the irreplaceable Scroll and the stage of the Village Hall was turned over to The Southwold Railway Trust who put on a very informative display. Pat and her helpers had some fun reassembling the filing cabinets but they managed it in the end! The exhibition was very well attended and many came on all 3 days. The enthusiasm and compliments from local residents and visitors alike (both personally and via the Visitors' Book) was extremely rewarding for the Committee.

We would all like to thank everyone who gave their own artefacts and paintings on loan to the exhibition which made it very personal. We believe that our purpose of making the Village aware of the extent of our archives was achieved. Hopefully we won't wait another 25 years before putting on another. Please look at the website for a more detailed report.

Chairman & Committee

Pat Kett – Treasurer

In 1991 when the History Group was formed, Pat and her husband Philip became members of the first Committee. Philip – Vice-Chairman to the Chairman – Don Thompson. Mary Clayton was our first Treasurer for a couple of years then Pat Wythe took the job until 1998 when Pat took over. Since then Pat has been an excellent and very efficient Treasurer and researcher. In addition, she is always ready to help whether putting out chairs and tables for meetings, organising the kitchen or making cakes, savouries etc. Pat now feels it is time to hand over to a new Treasurer so she can put her feet up. The Committee will miss her very much as she has always been so willing to help. Volunteers wanted please for the position of Treasurer – Contact Philip Kett – Tel 01502 723800.

Maureen Thompson

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Jenny Hand, Director – The Munnings Museum – Saturday
22nd October 2016

Libby Purvis: My childhood in Walberswick in 1950s – Saturday 3rd
December 2016

TEST PIT DIGGING

We would like to say thank you to all the people who offered their gardens to have a test pit dug and also to the extended group who offered. This was a series of four years which is now complete and the results and full report will be published in the New Year. The Scheme is run by Access Cambridge Archaeology which is part of Cambridge University using local school children of Years 9 and 10. Over the last four years, 152 students have taken part digging out our village history. From 39 pits, broken pottery from the 1stC (Roman) to 20thC (Lego) have been unearthed.

At the exhibition, I set out the finds and show them below. I appreciate that the picture is somewhat small but please ask Pat Lancaster and she can email this to you if you wish. It is also on the Website.

Philip Kett



ARCHIVIST'S REPORT

The Exhibition proved to be very worthwhile and many people – too many to name – offered items to add to the archives. This was very satisfying and everything has been added to the catalogue of archives and some (where regulations allow) new items are on the Website. I would love to have your comments – here is a link: <http://walberswick.onesuffolk.net/walberswick-local-history-group/>

Pat Lancaster

RONALD GRAHAME GODSMARK (GG) 7th April 1924 – 25th January 2016

Grahame was born in Temple Bruer, Lincolnshire on 7th April 1924. He read French at Manchester University in 1941 but after a year – at the age of eighteen – he volunteered to join the RAF training as a wireless operator. In 1943 he joined the S.O.E. and was posted to southern Italy where he spent 2 years communicating with Tito's resistance forces in Yugoslavia. Grahame returned to Manchester in the autumn of 1945 to complete his degree and there he met a fellow second year student, Mary Sykes. Mary & Grahame had three children Christopher, David and Katharine. In 1983 Grahame and Mary retired from Sherrardswood and moved to Walberswick, enjoying their newfound freedom from responsibility. Sadly Mary died of cancer in 1991.

In 1992, Grahame met Mary King, always known as Poppy as she was born on the eleventh of the eleventh. They were both in similar circumstances and had a lot in common with their love of books, dogs and wildlife, and Walberswick of course. Poppy's

companionship brought fun back into his life whether it was walking the dog, taking part in the Churches charity cycle ride or collecting hagstones on Walberswick beach. Grahame was a keen member of the History Group, organised the distribution of the Village News to the volunteer distributors around the village, actively participated in the Horticultural Show and wrote some excellent poems. The website has much more: <http://walberswick.onesuffolk.net/walberswick-news/news-2/walberswick-words/>

The following tribute was from neighbours and the perfectly encapsulating poem speaks for us all:

We have lost a familiar figure, a man of many parts: WW2 veteran, beach cleaner, British Legion member, writer of poems & ditties, cook and breadmaker extraordinaire. At any village event - you name it - he was there, giving a hand and more recently just being there.

IN MEMORIAM GG

A Walberswick poet of our times,
You sing to us melodious rhymes
Of ocean, beach, hagstones and more,
When walking on our shingly shore;

And inland too, you versify
With your keen poetic eye
Gorse and heather, fields and trees,
Nightingales and bumblebees.

The Panto, Fete, Bonfire Night:
You never hesitate to write
Of village doings, great and small;
That poet's eye recording all.

In a good cause you don't refuse
To put your poetry to use:
By mocking bureaucratic folly
You saved a bridge – which honours Wally.

With love we wish to celebrate
Our village Poet Laureate:
The story only you can tell
Has ended now – GG, farewell.

JR

Pat Lancaster – with thanks to David Godsmark, Mary King, Pat Atherton, Ruth Bassett and of course JR.

WALBERSWICK IN 1946

My family came to live in Walberswick in 1946, though we had visited just before the War, as they had lifelong friends who lived in Holton. We stayed at The Anchor, which was then more of a boarding house than a hotel. It was Easter, very cold and breezy, I remember.

In 1945, I had a bad go of hay fever and my mother, thinking that some sea breezes would do me good, came and stayed at The Swan and for something to do we walked via the Ferry to Walberswick and had a look around. The Army who had occupied a lot of the houses had left, so there were a lot of empty ones all with very neglected gardens – Dudley Cottage being one of them. Have you ever seen gardens that have been ignored for 7 years? The Army had taken over so many houses, but didn't touch the gardens,

except perhaps to dig a trench over the lawns. Hedges were growing over some gates and bushes grew everywhere. I remember it was a good summer for fruit that year, and we would gather plums, apples and much more from the unattended gardens. We liked Dudley Cottage and to cut a long story short, the Army put it back in to good repair and we moved in, in 1946.

What a different village from today! A quiet little backwater, rather than a popular holiday village as it is sometimes described as today, about half the size to start with. As you drove in, opposite Westons (today lived in by the Freuds) one had a fine, sometimes bleak view across fields to the sea. Manor Close wasn't built, neither were most of the houses up Stocks Lane and Church Field was a field.

It was very nearly self-sufficient. There were three shops on the east side of The Green. Mr Reynolds, the Grocer, Miss Reynolds, a Teashop – where we would often meet with friends for morning coffee and rather plain little buns, Rationing was still in force – and Mrs Reynolds with haberdashery, knitting wools, stockings etc. Opposite was Roger's Garage (this in addition to Fisher's Garage in The Street), The Pottery Shop (today The Parish Lantern), Block The Builder's office, and The Clubroom, now the Heritage Hut. The Post Office was in one of the cottages near The Bell. There was no butcher but meat was delivered once or twice a week. For vegetables, we had the Dickon Nurseries – which was where the new houses are at the top of the village on the right as you drive in – who used to come round for orders several times a week. My Mother used to say that Dicken tomatoes were the sweetest of any. Sonny Cross did a milk round. Bread was delivered three times a week by Benny and Winnie Newson. This was baked in their Father's Bakery in Southwold and brought in a covered handcart having been offloaded from a similar cart on the Southwold side and ferried across the river in willow baskets.

The Ferry was a rowing boat, as now but was used a lot. Not just tourists, but people going to work in Southwold and people going shopping. There were many fewer cars, unlike today, and those who had them used them much more sparingly.

The beach was being cleared of the defences that had been put in to deter enemy ships landing, known as "Dragon's teeth". Our end of the beach was clear but there were still some towards Dunwich. On one occasion, several large bales of cotton and bags of flour were found on the beach. These were presumably jettisoned from a ship. A crust had formed on the outside of the bags, but inside was lovely flour. During the war and after, flour was standard, neither white nor brown but khaki. This was lovely white flour and many housewives were down on the beach with containers to collect some.

Manor Farm was where the restaurant "Marys" latterly "De Creseys" was, surrounded by barns and tumbled down buildings where The Tuck Shop (now The Co-op) stands today, with fields at the back. A girl called Daphne Cross (Sonny Cross's daughter) kept horses there and she let them out for riding at, I'm told, 2/6d an hour. I can remember some very enjoyable rides, sometimes over to The White Hart at Blythburgh. One of us would go in and get the beer on one of those tin trays and it always got spilt, but one of the horses had a liking for beer which was lapped up with relish and we all went home with gusto along the old railway lines.

At harvest time anyone fit and able was roped in to help get the harvest in from the fields where the houses are now off Lodge Road.

A little time later, Jimmy Bugg, kept some horses at The Anchor, which he hired out, and many people have first learned to ride on one of his ponies.

The houses that the army had in the war were gradually coming back in to private ownership and people were moving in, several ex-colonials and others after their war

time jobs. I remember a Major who kept a Hawk, which he proudly brought with him when he came to drinks and he would sit it on a tree stump in the garden with its hood on, where it would stay until he took it home. He took it up to the common for it to catch rabbits for its food. Hawks like their meat fresh killed and still warm and his wife found this a bit of a problem when he had to go to London for a day or so. I think he left a few mice for him, but this wasn't really the wife's scene.

The Gannon Room was where the Village Hall now stands, it was a long wooden hut, not dissimilar to the Blythburgh Village Hall, and was well used for Badminton, the Youth Club, Old Time Dancing and various social events and I can remember several jolly dance evenings there.

The toilets were of the "bucket and chuck it" variety. Main drainage didn't come to the village till about 1965, and until then the houses with sufficient garden space had either a soakaway or cesspit type of drainage. The cottages without enough space for this relied on a privy in the garden of the earth closet type and I know that those cottagers living down near The Bell used to take their bucket down to the creek at night to empty it on an ebb tide.

We had a cinema - owned and run by the Jeans family - in a barn just down from The Bell in private hands. It wasn't quite up to the standard of the Electric Palace in Southwold as it was perhaps smaller but it was well got up with velvet seats and with curtains that pulled back at the start and films were shown there. I think one of the last ones to be seen was the wedding of Princess Elizabeth to Prince Philip.

The Bailey Bridge was put where the Railway Bridge had been in about 1948. The Railway Bridge had been put out of action by the Army in the war.

Swings and a seesaw were put on up on the Village Green. There was, of course, a thriving primary school.

Mary Nuttall

FREDDY & SHIRLEY EADE

Fishing had a long tradition in Walberswick, possibly extending in an unbroken line before the Domesday Book of 1086. Through the years fishing contributed substantially to the prosperity of the village and was a main support in helping it in the bad times. May 2005 was a significant event in the story of the village. For the first time in many, many years there was no longer a working resident professional fisherman among us as Freddy Eade retired. Now the village can no longer even claim that Freddy lives here as he and his wife Shirley moved to Reydon at the beginning of the year. We all wish them both every happiness in Reydon and they will be missed by a significant number of people in Walberswick. It is interesting to note that Freddie and Shirley were the last couple to be married in the Walberswick Chapel in 1961. It is a measure of the modesty of the man that Freddy never mentioned that In 1972, he was commended for his prompt action by the Royal National Lifeboat Institution for the part he played when 3 people were rescued from the sea following the capsizing of their dinghy. There is an extensive item in Newsletter No 29 dated February 2006 when Freddy very generously talked about his life to Julia Reisz and Maurice Godbold. If anyone would like a copy of the 2006 article, please contact me:

Pat Lancaster

PS: I much enjoyed working with Freddie on his life story. He soon came across as a real Suffolk character which reminded me of my early years in my own village of Wissett.

I discovered we had both been driving Fordson Major Tractors at possibly the same time, but never confessed. I heartily echo the good wishes to Freddie and Shirley.
Maurice Godbold

**EMBROIDERED KNEELERS -- WALBERSWICK PARISHIONERS IN
SEPTMEBER 1976**



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT

**PEGGIE PURVES, MARY MAYFIELD, AUDREY CHAMBERS, CONNIE HENDERSON,
REV. GEOFFREY SMITH, MOLLIE GREEN, PHYLISS WINYARD, KATHLEEN PATTERSON**

Pat Lancaster with many thanks to Margaret Adkinson