



WALBERSWICK

LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

NEWSLETTER NO: 71

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Newsletter Editor's report

TALKS/SPEAKERS

Saturday 6th May 2023 - Marlies Veldhuijzen van Zanten will talk on "White Barn and the Cleminsons".

Marlies writes - One of the handful of Walberswick houses by architect Frank Jennings was White Barn in Leveretts lane. From 1929 till 1969 it was the home of the Cleminsons. Henry, the sea loving solicitor and Canadian born Hester who was a gifted sculptor. Their home was open to masses of family, friends and people who sought inspiration or who just knocked on the door to borrow the canoe or play on the tennis court. They were cared for by generations of the Bloomfield family. Shortly after the war my family became interwoven with the Cleminsons and spent unforgettable times living and then staying in White Barn in this pretty village. The village still looks very much the same while at the same time being completely different. When the last of Hester and Henry's children and grandchildren passed away I inherited Hester's portrait. She looks at me every day in my home as she did from the mantelpiece at White Barn, the Cleminson home. I am touched that the historical society would like to hear their fascinating story.

FURTHER DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Exhibitions in the Heritage Hut: WLHG is one of the primary user groups for the Heritage Hut which means that we can use the HH free of charge for small meetings and exhibitions. You will have noticed that we have been planning the following for some time. The hold-up has been the continued uncertainty about hirer's liability insurance in the HH. We have now put dates to these exhibitions and taken out our own insurance while we wait for WCLC to work on the issue.

- **Sat/Sun 11-12th March 10.00-12.00 & 14.00-16.00: The George Charles Haite exhibition** of charcoal sketches of Walberswick dated 1895. WLHG is fortunate to own 13 beautiful sketches of late 19th century Walberswick and copies of two more. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Charles_Haite for general background.
- **Sat/Sun 25-26th March 10.00-12.00 & 14.00-16.00: Exhibition of Jessie Browton's paintings** of Walberswick from the 20th century. WLHG holds high-quality copies of the originals held by Southwold Museum.
- **Sunday 23rd April: Open Morning 10.00-12.00:** The WLHG archive now has a permanent home in the HH. The archivist and members of the committee would love to show you

the archives and try to answer any questions you may have. We may even inspire you to look out artefacts we can add to the archives.

WLHG AGM: Thursday 20th April in the Village Hall starting at 7:00 pm. Following the AGM there will be a glass of wine and Andrew Stannard will entertain us with songs by the legendary "Singing Postman". You might remember his famous and biggest hit "*Hev Yew Gotta Loight, Boy?*" The AGM is a members-only meeting but guests are welcome to join on the night (£10).

MEMBERSHIP

Membership fees were due at the beginning of January.

John English - Newsletter Editor – email johnrenglish@tiscali.co.uk

This newsletter continues the theme developed in the last newsletter of Walberswick women. The first of these we will all remember. The second was a relation of hers going back a good few years who took on the law and the law did NOT win. Finally we update you on two women who changed the lives of many young boys that society, in the early 20th century, depended on charity to look after.

Jayne Tibbles: 21st December 1946 – 31st October 2022

One of a number of sad losses in 2022 was not only a member of WLHG but also an active member of the committee before retiring due to illness. As a committee member she brought some much needed discipline to meetings as those who knew her can no doubt imagine. She also was one of a diminishing group of people who grew up in the village.

Again, for those who knew her it will be no surprise that Jayne planned for the time when she would no longer be with us. So, on Friday 18th November the village gathered at St. Andrews to celebrate Jayne's life. The following are some of her wishes and the eulogy she wrote.

- A celebration of my life at Walberswick Church, not too religious - Done
- Choir to help with singing - Done
- Would like Harry Edwards to officiate if possible - Done
- No funeral clothes, bright colours please – Done
- Eulogy to be read by family member or someone who knew me – Done.

By kind permission of Brian we are reproducing the eulogy exactly as written by Jayne (January 14th 2022).

I was born in 1946 to William (known as Blucher) and Edith English during one of the coldest winters on record. As one of the oldest families in Walberswick the English family can trace its roots back to Edmund English born in 1754. When I was two and a half we moved into Lima Cottage. I went to the village school in Leverett's Lane with Vivien, Janet, Wally and Ingrid to name but a few, then on to Reydon Secondary School. With a love of horses, I spent summer holidays helping out at the riding school that came to the village each year. At 16 I left home to train in the equestrian field, working at a stud farm near Norwich. A year later I went to Kent to work. I met Brian in Kent at the local youth club. We got engaged on my 18th birthday

and we were married in September 1966 here at St Andrews Church by Canon Thompson who had also baptised me.

Brian and I continued to live in Kent and had two sons, Peter and Andrew who produced our wonderful grandchildren – Jessica, George, Sophie and Eleanor. A fifth grandchild – Ollie – sadly died of a brain tumour aged seven. Many of you will have seen his memorial seat on the children’s play area on the Common.

When my father died in 1985, he left Lima Cottage to me and in 1990 Brian and I returned to live here (building a granny flat for my mother who had seven years in it before she died in 1997). We converted the flat into self-catering accommodation and we had many regular visitors who came back year on year. The additional space came into its own when the family visited. Brian and I liked to travel and visited South Africa, China and Thailand and of course America when Peter and his family moved there in 1991. Trips to Kent were frequent to visit Brian’s large family and to see Andrew and our Grandchildren.

We joined in the village activities, organising and helping as and when asked. I took on the role of Clerk to the Trustees of the Walberswick Common Lands Charity in 1996 – a role which I enjoyed for almost 20 years. I joined the WI and the Local History Group, took part in the pantomimes and will probably be most remembered for being the middle section of the crocodile in Peter Pan – the rear end of the horse in Wind in the Willows and Gertie the Goose in the Adventures of Mother Goose.

Having grown up with animals we always had dogs and cats and chickens in the garden and I enjoyed horse riding courtesy of a local horse owner. The large garden at the rear of Lima Cottage kept me busy and several prizes were won at the annual Horticultural Show with much rivalry between myself and David Webb for the first prize in the Dahlia and Jam making classes

My battle with cancer began in 2013. For the next nine years I had many operations and treatments. My down to earth attitude and determination along with the love and support of family and friends and the very special loving care of Nurse Brian kept me going.



Jayne's parents, Blucher and Edith, outside Lima Cottage where Jayne was brought up and again lived on her return to Walberswick



Jayne and Brian doing what they loved - walking the dogs and stopping for liquid refreshment

Goods Seized in Walberswick: a woman's fight for her rights – my great grandmother by John English

I was recently sent a cutting from the Eastern Daily Press, Thursday January 10th 1907, headed *Southwold Boatowner's Affairs – interpleader case at Lowestoft*. This was heard at Lowestoft County Court and concerned a case remitted from the High Court. Not being a lawyer I had to look up the meaning of "interpleader" but it does not really make any difference to the story. The interest to me was two-fold. Firstly it involved my great grandparents. Secondly it had something to say about the lives of women before WWI. I am not sure why the paper cited the boatowner as being from Southwold but that was the postal address many years ago.

In the previous December Messrs Sterry and Co, Coal Merchants, had obtained judgement for coal supplied to the steam drifter, *Wildflower*, owned by George English of Walberswick. This hearing concerned the ownership of certain property seized by the Sheriff under the judgement. This property was now claimed by George's father (Robert English) and his wife (Mary Ann English). Robert was claiming ownership of a small boat while Mary was claiming ownership of the seized furniture.

The debt had arisen when George got into financial difficulties after converting his boat into a steamer at a cost of £1,000 instead of the £300 he had anticipated. The pictures to the right could be of the steamship and it's crew but it is not possible to read the name on the boat and searching for LT257 does not help. Anyway this court case was not about George but about the ownership of the seized property.



The case concerning the small boat is of less interest than the case concerning the furniture. It hinged on the necessary paperwork required in transferring ownership. The boat was of little value and a transfer from son to father did not meet all the requirements. However, in summary, the court accepted that the small boat was the property of Robert and not his son, George.



The case concerning the furniture was, to me, far more interesting. Interested readers might acquaint themselves with The Married Women's Property Act 1882 which had come into law during the marriage of George and Mary. Ninety years after this a wife's income was still being taxed by adding it to the income of the husband. This case delved into the financial relationship between the husband and wife. It makes for some interesting reading in the context of women's lives and rights at the time. While George was clearly a fisherman his wife ran a lodging business from their home, Fern Cottage, Walberswick. Mary stated that the furniture was initially a present from her mother-in-law but that subsequently she had bought "it all" and managed the business by herself. She maintained that her husband had never contributed a penny to the lodging business. Mary then told the court that by hard work she had paid off the mortgage on Fern Cottage and now had the house "on her own name". She raised laughter in the court by saying "she worked hard from six in the morning till twelve at night in the visiting season, and employed her leisure in tailoring".

As part of a “searching cross examination” Mr Everitt for the execution creditors asked Mary if her husband gave her money from time to time. She replied that throughout their marriage he gave her £1 a week. Clearly there had been some snooping around Walberswick as Mr Everitt observed that three of her children rode bicycles. He then mentions the piano. Were these items purchased using the £1 a week? For the former Mary simply replies “no” and for the latter states that it was a present given to one of the girls by her mother-in-law. Mary points out that the £1 a week from her husband was hardly sufficient to keep nine people let alone buy bicycles and a piano. The passing reference to the children seems to ignore Mary’s other occupation. Between them the couple had seven children, the latest of which was born in 1901. Clearly she had her hands full and money was tight.

His Honour, Judge Eardley Wilmott, summing up found in favour of Mary (including costs) and made kind comments about her character and hard work. I found this quite reassuring in that both had been cleared of an accusation of fraud and that Mary had been treated by the court as a person in her own right. She clearly gave a good account of herself. It would, of course, be more than 20 years before all women were given the vote and somewhat more before women’s rights were taken seriously. The child born in 1901 turned out to be their last. A little over seven years later George, in his mid-fifties, would be asked to use his knowledge of the North Sea in the Great War of 1914-18. The picture is of George and Mary taken some time after that war with George proudly displaying his uniform and medals. Mary lived until 1939 and was spared seeing WWII. George died aged about 81 in 1945. Their property empire was shared between the four children who were still living in the UK (three had emigrated to North America).



Two women making a difference in early 20th century Walberswick – by Maggie Cochrane with additions from John English

In the previous newsletter we highlighted some remarkable women from the years either side of WWI. This article covers two more women from those times who made a big difference to the lives of young boys, who in the descriptive language of the time, were labelled cripples.

The Home for Crippled Boys or the Cottage Home as we should call it now has featured in two previous WLHG newsletter i.e. numbers 29 and 30, both from 2006. The home was certainly one for boys and as the pictures below, from around 1907, show - the “patients” were either on crutches or appear in bed (with one unusual exception).

Although the 2006 article was split over two issues it was still quite short. This update contains new and expanded information. Most of the information and all of the pictures were provided by Maggie Cochrane, granddaughter of Canon and Mrs C.T.G Powell and great niece of Miss E. H. Powell and Miss E.J Miller – names that will become more familiar as you read on.

The history of the home involves a number of properties down Palmers Lane, one on the left as you go to Southwold, now called Heath House, and a number on the right, principally

Bracken Cottage. Bracken Cottage is at the top of the row of houses and was built in the early 1900s, probably later than the other cottages in the row. The site was originally a gravel quarry, and there had previously been another building there. The first owners and residents were Miss E.H (Ella) Powell and Miss Elinor J Miller, who ran the 'Walberswick Home for Crippled Boys' in the house that is now Heath House. They had previously lived in Wayfaring and later some of the boys were also housed in Wayfaring, the house at the bottom of the row of red cottages.

The exact years that home operated is not clear. It must have opened in the early 1900's. There is no mention of it in the 1901 census. However, the pictures reproduced in this article are dated from 1907 and it looks well established.

The picture in newsletter 29 (see right) has a caption "The formidable lady in the wheelchair is Miss Powell". It would be interesting to know the details of her disability but this is another unknown. Could her disability and the nature of the home be linked? Miss Miller is also in the picture on the right and the one below it, looking suitably managerial.



How long did the home operate for? The home was certainly in operation in 1921, as witnessed by the recently-released 1921 census information. Indeed three of the buildings in the row were connected to the family – Wayfaring, Bracken Cottage and Windy Nook. Maggie's grandparents were in Windy Nook, and their eldest daughter Nancy, aged 17, with her aunts in Bracken. Gorse Cottage was occupied by an employee of the Mallets – see later.



While the two women "ran" the home they were not indispensable as shown by absences and death. In 1911 and 1921 the census recorded that the home had a "Head and House Mother" plus servants. Therefore it probably continued during the First World War when Miss Miller left to act as matron at a hospital for wounded soldiers in Hedenham Hall, Norfolk. By 1918 she was back in Walberswick and continued to live with Miss Powell, in Bracken Cottage. Elizabeth (Ella) Powell died the year after the 1921 census was taken, in 1922.

In the previous Newsletter, about the Mallett family of Tower House, it was stated that Mr Mallett had left money to the Children's Home in his will in 1924. This implies that the Home was still in existence in 1924, and therefore probably beyond.

Miss Miller died in 1930. Bracken Cottage then became the property of Miss Miller's sister, who was married to Miss Powell's brother, Canon C.T.G Powell. He was priest in charge at St Bartholomew's Church, Ipswich. However, the boys were not housed in Bracken Cottage but in the house that is now Heath House.



Maggie thinks that once her grandmother inherited the house in 1930 various relatives stayed for holidays. Her grandparents had planned to retire to Walberswick but as war broke in 1939, they remained in Ipswich and the house was used by troops.



It is likely as Miss Miller died in 1930, we can probably assume that the home closed around that time. Her obituary in the East Anglian Times of 27th October 1930 records that she spent 'all her time and energy for the good of the young people of the village'. She was a member of the Parochial Church Council and a founder member of the Women's Institute. Miss Miller's funeral and burial must have been quite an occasion with a requiem in St. Bartholomew's Church, Ipswich followed by burial in Walberswick. Both sides of the family officiated – the funeral was taken by the Vicar of Walberswick, the Rev A Thompson, assisted by the Rev C Miller and the Rev C Powell. In addition, the Rev J Robertson also officiated. Miss Miller was laid to rest next to her friend Miss Powell.

How the two women got together and why the home was started is another thing that is unknown. Did they know each other independently of family or did they meet through family? Miss Miller and Miss Powell became great aunts to Maggie Cochrane being sisters to her paternal grandmother and maternal grandfather. The Powell family lived in The Elms in Southwold (now May Place). Maggie believes that they 'retired' from London after some financial difficulties. One of the daughters of the family married a Blois around 1900 who is said to have died on his honeymoon. The Millers had been very well connected in High Church Anglican circles in the 1850s. Henry Walter Miller 1843-1926 was Vicar of St John the Divine in Richmond, Surrey from 1879-1885, another in the Anglo-Catholic tradition. He then 'disappeared' abroad leaving his wife and EIGHT children aged 3-16. Miss Miller of the Cottage Home and Maggie's grandmother were 2 of his daughters. The abandoned wife certainly lived in Bracken Cottage for some time in 1918. However, none of this explains how the two ladies met and set up the home. Miss Miller was a nurse, who had trained at King's College Hospital in London. So with Miss Powell herself being disabled perhaps this was a

driving force for setting up the home and also how the two women met? It certainly seems that the patients, as they are called in the census, may have been referred by a doctor in London. From the census data they were not orphans and possibly there was some payment involved to keep the home going. Miss Powell and Miss Miller are buried in the churchyard, as are two of the boys (no dates on their simple crosses). Miss Powell left money in her will for the boys' graves to be maintained. One of the boys, William Baker, aged 19 in 2021 is shown in the 1921 census as a boarder and past patient and invalid voluntarily working at basket work. He was born London. The other boy, Harry Follett, is listed in the 1911 census, aged 9. There is a young boy called Harry in pictures from 1907 who surely is this Harry Follett, though he looks older than six. This boy is not on crutches and is dressed very differently to the others. William Baker and Harry Follett would have been born roughly the same year. How they came to be favoured above the many others is not known. Maybe, as these were not orphans, the other children were returned to where they came from.

These two women would probably be forgotten now but for the home. It appears in the 1911 census and in the more recent 1921 census and almost demands attention. Also the continued family presence in Walberswick means that their actions cannot be forgotten. Miss Miller, the second to die, was evidently quite a force. Her friend, Miss Powell, despite being in a wheelchair, was also clearly quite active in village life as records of Walberswick Women's institute demonstrate. In 1924 a clock for the Women's Institute Hut was bought with a gift of £10 in memory of Miss Ella Powell, founder member and first Treasurer and Secretary. Walberswick WI was founded 9th September 1918 and has a fascinating history as one of the earliest WI in the country. At the inaugural meeting it was agreed to hold meetings on the first Thursday of each month at Longroof (Leveretts Lane), with a lecture, tea and music and on the third Thursday of each month a social meeting to be held at Millcroft (Millfield Road). Both women were active members and both left their mark on the WI and a home for young boys set up in Walberswick, a place often ahead of the times.