



# WALBERSWICK

## LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

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**NEWSLETTER NO: 60**

**July 2020 – Lockdown Edition**

### Newsletter Editor's report

#### DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Still no dates!

Serendipity! Back in 2016 (I think) the scroll was moved from the Village Hall (VH) stage to the Heritage Hut (HH) while the stage was being used. Due to an oversight it was not moved back. When the scroll historians were planning to show the scroll during the WLHG 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary they discovered this. It then dawned on them that the HH was the perfect place to show the scroll.

During the three-day exhibition it was shown several times each day. It never went back to the VH. There was a big problem though – the HH lay empty and without purpose. This meant that during the winter the precious scroll had to go on holiday to warmer premises. Discussions then ensued about how the HH could be made suitable to house and show the scroll. It soon became obvious that the HH was too good a building to be used solely for the scroll and briefly during the village fete. Roll forward 4 years and not



much appears to have happened from outside appearances. The above picture was taken during the exhibition and apart from some tree pruning it looks much the same. I will stop at this point as Bill Ungless has written a fascinating history of the HH which includes a peek into the future.

Before you get to Bill's article, his wife Kay has compiled a marvellous tour of some of the signs recorded on the scroll. What makes this so much more than a tour is that Kay has provided background historical detail. Since the scroll was scanned in high definition we have seen so much more. There are all the signs recorded in meticulous detail and then there are the notes made at the bottom including details of the weather in 1931. I'm sure there must be another article to be had.

You will notice that this is the July edition and you are getting it half way through June. This is testament to all the help I have received. The August edition is already being compiled. We may take a rest in August but, then again, if the articles keep coming in we may just keep going. Hopefully by September we will be back to paper copies for those who want them.

**John English** - Newsletter Editor – email [johnrenglish@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:johnrenglish@tiscali.co.uk)

## “THE WETTEST SUMMER FOR 100 YEARS!” (News Chronicle, Thursday, 1st Oct. 1931) – Kay Ungless

In his book “Art in my Time” published in 1933, Frank Rutter noted “John Doman Turner was an amateur with a remarkable gift for watercolour...” Turner was a member of the Camden Town Group. Spencer Gore, a fellow member, gave him instruction by correspondence, but because he was deaf, he would send his drawings to be criticised paying five shillings per lesson. Gore encouraged Turner to draw for a purpose and trust his eyes, emphasising that drawing is an explanation of an observation. “If you observe nothing special then your drawings will have nothing to them. Painting has to be learnt by observation.”

Starting at the westernmost edge of the village at the Game Keeper’s cottage, J. Doman Turner worked his way along the north side of The Street, round the Village Green, down to the ferry and back up the south side to Ryecroft. It is an incredible record of the Village as it was in the early ‘30s, and as the handle is turned and we listen to John’s delightful and informative commentary, we observe many recognisable buildings. Walberswick still looks much the same.

If the handle stops for a moment, start to look more carefully! You will see much more than the cottages, farm houses and shops. The artist has paid particular attention to the minutiae whenever something special has caught his eye. Bricks, iron railings, flints and chimneys are drawn with incredible detail whilst scale is used to emphasise or diminish rather than something an architect might understand. And, his attention to the notices and signs of the day give us an intriguing glimpse into the life of the Village at the time. There can be no doubt that Turner followed his tutor’s advice!



flyers and signs which have a familiar ring today, yet all of which are of interest to the social historian.

Little has changed where problem traffic is concerned, yet how much can there have been compared with today? In The Street near Leveretts Lane motorists are “requested” not to park in The Street, and further on by The Terrace a road sign warns of a dangerous bend, adding “safety first”.

Alexandra cottages are sketched large in comparison with their neighbour Manor Farm which is small and insignificant, but if we look more closely we can see what the artist *observed* to make it so special.

This was a pair of cottages, and a small notice in the window tells us the first is TO LET. Above the front door another tells us who lives there - F.W. WELLS. LATE W. WEST. BOOT & SHOE MAKER. REPAIRS NEATLY EXECUTED. ESTABLISHED 100 YEARS.

From the first warning “SHUT THIS GATE PENALTY FORTY SHILLINGS” [£136.00 in today’s money] on a ‘five barred’ gate between the Game Keeper’s cottage and the old Walberswick Station, to the last sign outside Ryecroft pointing “to Dickon’s Nurseries”, there are many posters,

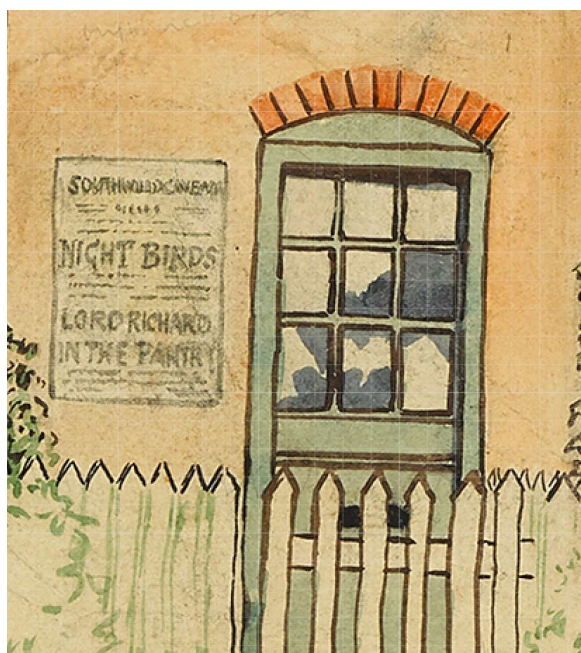


Stuck to the wall is a flyer telling us what the Southwold Cinema is showing this week. Unusually, Doman Turner has not bothered with the small print, but the two films are "NIGHT BIRDS" and "LORD RICHARD IN THE PANTRY". If you've never seen these films, or dare I suggest never heard of them, let me enlighten you:

**Night Birds** is a 1930 British-German thriller film directed by Richard Eichberg and starring Jack Raine, Muriel Angelus and Jameson Thomas. A separate German language version, *The Copper*, was made at the same time.

**Lord Richard in the Pantry** is a 1930 British comedy film directed by Walter Forde and starring Richard Cooper, Dorothy Seacombe and Marjorie Hume.

No print of the film is known to exist, and it is included on the British Film Institute's "75 Most Wanted" list of missing British feature films.



Did Southwold hold onto its copy?

Fixed to the garden gate of The Dutch House, is a poster informing us of an art show at the DUTCH HOUSE STUDIO, WALBERSWICK. ELEVENTH ANNUAL EXHIBITION OF WATER COLOURS FLORENCE COCKBURN. OPEN AUGUST & SEPTEMBER.

Florence Mary Bonneau (Florence M Cockburn 1851-1937) studied at Heatherlys School of Art and was a painter of flowers and literary subjects. She exhibited at

the Royal Society of British Artists, Walker Art Gallery and the Society of Women Artists. In 1896 she married Charles William Cockburn, an accountant. After the First World War they moved to The Dutch House, Walberswick, from where Florence taught in the local school. Florence died at Walberswick on 26 December 1937, aged 86. She painted under the names of both Bonneau and Cockburn.



There is going to be a Fête on August Bank Holiday (31st August 1931) in aid of the Church Restoration Fund and quite a few notices remind residents. It is remarkable that Walberswick is still keeping up this tradition, yet in 1931 it wasn't held on The Green as it is today. It was held in The Stackyard field.

It is the poster at the station, copied in meticulous detail by the artist, which gives us a clue “Westons adjoins the Fete Ground” and next to the Tower House we find “Entrance to Stackyard Field”. This gate was at the south-west corner of a large field bounded by The Street, Palmers Lane, Commonsides and Sandy Lane. Manor Close has been built within its eastern end. [many thanks to Julia Reisz]

We are told there will be numerous amusements, versions of which we would recognise, prizes, the Wrentham Town Band, children’s sports and a tennis tournament at Westons.

Westons will also give concerts with well-known London Artistes and the whole day will finish with a grand carnival dance in the Gannon Reading Room.



The station notice gives us another clue - the fête is being held in the Stackyard field by “kind permission of Mr. H.G. Fairs”.

Mr. Horace George Fairs farmed Manor Farm. He lived in the farmhouse with his wife Elizabeth, son Horace and future daughter-in-law, Iris Hovells. Their daughter, Violet, had married the dairyman, Harold Cross who was the son of the ferryman, Weston Cross. Horace had four brothers and the youngest, Sidney Fairs, farmed at Eastwood Lodge in 1925, but is registered in 1939 living at 1 Ivy Cottages “occupation - gardener (own account)”. Horace Fairs’ probate records that he died in 1957 at his brother’s one-time home, Eastwood Lodge Farm.



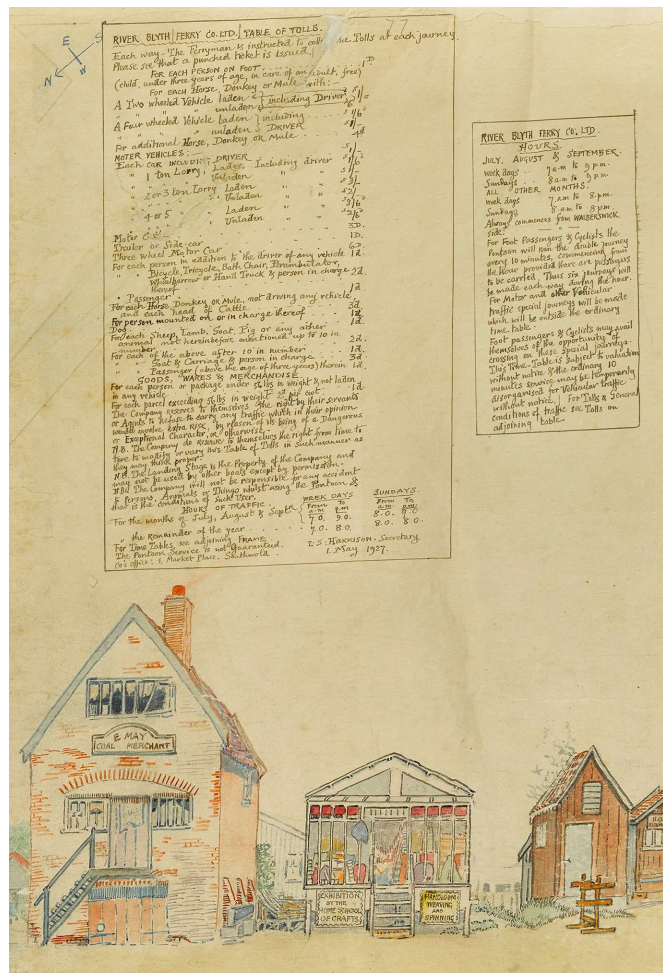
Captain Garforth RN, CBE and Mr. Upcher live at Westons. It is they who are organising tennis tournaments, and giving concerts in their music room.

Commander Francis Edmund Musgrave Garforth captained four of His Majesty’s ships, Vengeance, Amphitrite, Euryalus and Cicada, but at his own request was placed on the retired list in 1922. In 1943 the Admiralty expressed their displeasure with Garforth’s “irregular use of Government stationery.”

Peter Roland Upcher was a film actor. Born in 1892 in Halesworth, he starred in The Right to Live (1921), The Prodigal Son (1923) and Mr. Gilfil’s Love Story (1920) all of which appear to be romantic thrillers. A poster on the wall of Westons, names one of the Artistes as the contralto Miss D’Auvergne Upcher, his sister.

During the summer of 1886 a pontoon ferry had replaced the rowing boat connecting Walberswick to Southwold, and at the other end of the Village we are not only given a view of it still plying its trade almost fifty years on, but the list of prices and times of crossings are meticulously detailed - a very special observation. Compared with the cost of leaving a gate open, prices seem reasonable - one person on foot pays 1d. A bicycle with rider, 2d. Children under 3 are free. There are separate prices for sheep, mules, three-wheeled vehicles, parcels, etc. the most expensive crossing being for a 5ton lorry at 3/6d. The ferry operates all the year round from 8am to 9pm with an extra hour during the three summer months.

The Walberswick Scroll is a remarkable and truly unique work of art. It has been digitised and selections may be reproduced by kind permission of the WPC. Post cards are for sale, in stock or to order. Details can be found on the Walberswick website: <http://tiny.cc/Scroll>



John Doman Turner (1871-1938) painted four scrolls, each unique in its own way, the second of which was the "Walberswick Scroll, a 123-foot Diaramic Pictorial Record of a Suffolk Village". See: [www.johndomanturner.com](http://www.johndomanturner.com)

## The Heritage Hut, The Green, Walberswick – Bill Ungless

The Heritage Hut, as it is known today, was built on land originally owned by the Common Lands Charity. The first mention of it is in the Charity's minute book from 1884 which records the grant of a small piece land on the Green for the purpose of building a Mission Room. This grant was to a group of seven villagers (the name of one of whom is strangely left blank).

Later in 1884, a 'local' chapel was built on the site by the Southwold Congregational Church (SCC). The chapel was one of a pair built in the area by SCC, the other being at Mount Pleasant in Reydon. All the evidence, supported by the Norfolk Historic Buildings Group, is that both were assembled on site from pre-fabricated elements supplied by the Norwich firm of Barnard and Boulton, (see below an extract from their catalogue).

The company's origins date back to an ironmonger's shop founded in 1797 in Norwich by William Moore. William Staples Boulton joined the company in 1844 and subsequently it was called Boulton & Paul Ltd. This firm started an engineering division in 1905, and by 1915 began to construct aircraft under contract. During WW1 they built more Sopwith Camels biplane fighters than any other manufacturer. Later Boulton & Paul made their mark with the introduction of machine gun turrets for bombers. Their Overstrand bomber featured the world's first enclosed, power-operated turret, mounting a single Lewis Gun. So the supplier of Chapels morphed into an Arms Manufacturer.

*1884 January 11<sup>th</sup> v. Minutes of Parish Meeting*

*Resolved that a piece of land 41 feet long and 25 feet broad be granted to C. Bicker, R. English B. Cross, H C. Starley W. Cleveland and J. English to build a Mission Room at the bottom of the green at 5/- per annum Mr. W. Cleveland to pay the rent on the 13 day of May every year - Not to be turned into a house or sold to any one to receive any benefit from the said Parish in the event of any sale.*

ROSE LANE WORKS, NORWICH. 87



**No. 300. IRON CHURCH, CHAPEL-OF-EASE.**

**TESTIMONIALS.**

From Miss PALIN, Talwhyan.  
Miss Palin is much satisfied with the Iron Building. Should she ever require such a building again, will employ them instead of local carpenters.

From ANDREW LOW, Esq., Benfield.  
Mr. Low has to inform Messrs. Boulton and Paul that their workman has this morning finished the erection of the Iron Building; he wishes to express his satisfaction with the work and the workman, whom he has found most civil and obliging.

**No. 301. HOSPITAL, SCHOOL, OR MISSION ROOM, &c.**

PRICES for materials, framing morticed and tenoned, Carriage Paid to most Stations in England, ready for fitting and erection by purchaser, including galvanized corrugated iron sheets, flooring, matchboard, and felt lining; all necessary bolts and screws, gutters, and down-pipes; doors and windows packed complete; the latter glazed with 21-oz. sheet glass, and all supplied with requisite fittings:

Approximate Prices:	£	s.	d.
20 ft. by 12 ft., 11 ft. 0 in. high to ridge,	36	10	0
30 ft. „ 15 ft., 12 ft. 6 in. „	81	0	0
40 ft. „ 20 ft., 15 ft. 0 in. „	99	0	0



**No. 402. GALVANIZED IRON INFECTIOUS HOSPITAL.**



Size of main building 50 ft. by 17 ft.  
Three nurses' rooms 25 ft. by 10 ft.  
• Cash Price, £250.

Constructed according to the Specification on page 92, but with walls erected outside with iron instead of wood, thoroughly well ventilated.

REGISTERED DESIGN, No. 1754

The Charity's 'plan book' records that the Chapel used to pay ground rent to the WCLC, and has a wonderful depiction of the building, which shows a flue rising from the Chapel. The Heritage Hut land remained in the Charity's ownership until 1926 when it was transferred to the Parish Council. This appears to be a result of the 1925 Law & Property Act, when it was decided that the land was better combined with the Green, subsequently transferring to the Parish Council.

A recent report by a Building Surveyor on the structure of the Heritage Hut, found that,



notwithstanding its age of 135 years or so, it is basically sound. This is a credit to the design and to the quality of the timber used. Nevertheless the construction was low-cost, no doubt to suit the purse of the SCC. The pre-fabricated timber truss system is spare and elegant (see photograph below). Note the slender steel-rod 'close couples' which have hanging rods to prevent them sagging. These couples stop the weight of the roof causing the walls to spread. The minimal steel-rod



diagonal braces stabilise the building against the wind. This arrangement results in the room being light and airy and very much in character with its time. To make the building fit to be a chapel, money was spent by SCC on good local Suffolk clay pantiles, on richly ornamented timber barge boards and on ecclesiastically-designed windows

For three decades

the building was used, as intended, as a Congregational Chapel until 1918 when it became the Village School. When the school moved to Leverett's Lane, it changed use again to be a Working Man's Club from 1924 to 1931. Later the Hut was variously a shop, a store for George Summers' antique shop in Southwold (when it was known as Yew Tree Studio), an artist's studio, and a local headquarters for the St Johns Ambulance. From 1972, it became a Heritage Coast Information Centre initially run by the village but latterly taken over by Suffolk Coasts and Heaths. SC and H refurbished the building somewhat, and continued to use it as an Information Centre.

It is an intriguing coincidence that the display case of the Walberswick Scroll by John Doman Turner started life as Table Football game for the Working Man's Club, and was cleverly adapted by the late Tony Whittenbury into its present form. In the photograph can be seen the late Richard Scott and our tall Newsletter Editor showing the Scroll to a group of visitors.

In 2013, Suffolk District Council, the then owners, handed over the title of the Hut to the Walberswick Parish Council, who, in turn, leased the building to the Walberswick Common Lands Charity in April 2019.

The terms of this lease can be found in full on the Walberswick website but, to summarize this, the project is about creating a vibrant community hub which brings together the history of Walberswick and the day-to-day business of the Village in one place.

It is unusual for a History Newsletter to speak of the future but in this case the WLHG have an interest. The Trustees of the WCLC intend to renovate the Hut to make it fit for at least another half century or so. The building is changing to become an archive, a gallery and a communal meeting and a workspace. In order to do this, it must meet environmental standards suitable for archive storage, be comfortable for meetings and for people to work in. This means improving insulation, eliminating drafts and installing heat and humidity controls. In addition, it needs to be accessible for people with limited mobility.

They propose to make it more energy efficient, by removing the roof tiles, fitting insulation between the rafters, and then replacing the tiles. They also intend to rebuild the rear lean-to with new well-insulated walls and pitched roof. This latter room will house among other things the archives of the WLHG. The building will be generally upgraded to have proper heating and lighting suitable for its activities, to be fit for wheelchair users, and to have a disabled WC. Finally the addition of a porch will act as a wind-break to support the comfort and energy-saving of the building as well as facilitating easy access for wheelchairs.

All this is necessarily on hold at the moment, but with luck it will be ready for a celebratory opening which will also mark a new start to normal life.

*With thanks to James Darkins, Chair of the Trustees of WCLC for kindly supplying information about the early days of the hut, and for the 60's postcard below*

