

WELLS LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

MEMBERS' NEWSLETTER No. 14 - APRIL 2000

CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

We are at nearly the end of another winter programme. Thanks to John Christmas, we have had a very successful series of speaker meetings, mostly devoted to truly local topics. We plan to meet next season as now on the first Wednesday evening of each month from October to May. The Actual dates are set out on page 3; please make a note of them **now**, and in particular that the first meeting will be on 4 October, because it will not be until then that you receive your new combined membership and programme card - assuming you re-join! The total membership this year reached over 130.

The notice of and agenda for this year's A.G.M. (to be held on 10 May) are with this Newsletter. In the last (No. 13) suggested amendments to the Rules of the Group were set out and explained; no comments upon these have been received so far, and we hope they can be adopted at this year's A.G.M. without a great deal of discussion.

This has been an especially busy year for the Committee. Apart from the speaker meetings and outings, and the Special Interest Groups, an application has been successfully made for an "Awards for All" grant, and arrangements have been put in hand for the making and siting of explanatory plaques on local buildings (see page 4).

See you at the A.G.M.! We plan to have the bar open, and to have various exhibits for viewing before and after the official business.

Brian Scott

WALK ROUND GUIDES

The first of our planned guides is at last in print. Entitled **Town Walk One**, it is available for purchase at f 1 per copy from the Tourist Information Centre and from several shops. Failing those, it can be obtained direct from the Secretary (710136) or Chairman (710408).

Don't lend your copy to anyone, tell your friends to buy their own!

If it sells reasonably well we will proceed with illustrating and printing Walk Two and get on with preparing Walk Three.

Thank you to the many people who helped in the production of number one.

Brian Scott

A.G.M. Wednesday, 10th May 2000

It would be helpful if nominations for next year's Executive Committee were submitted in writing to the Secretary before the A.G.M.

If amendments to the Rules are adopted, in future this will have to be three weeks in advance of the meeting.

William Green ALLEN of Wells

William Green ALLEN lived in Wells during the second half of the 18th Century. He was the eldest son of a grocer in the town who came to Wells from Warham, where the ALLEN family had lived since the Civil War in 1643. Most of his family were either connected with the sea, or were small shop keepers. The grocer was Thomas ALLEN who married Katherine GREEN from West Raynham. Her family were shoemakers there and her father was a churchwarden.

At 21 William Green was writing the Log of a voyage on the 'William and Jane' trading between Madeira and England. The Log is still extant. The ship was probably named after William GOLDSMITH (1701-1768), a joiner and carpenter also of Wells, and his wife, Jane, and the former may even have built her. The family of William GOLDSMITH were shipbuilders and Master Manners of Wells, going back to the early 16 hundreds.

The year after writing this Log, William Green ALLEN married Jane, the daughter of a Wells taylor, Christopher AGGS. She was four years older than her husband. Her younger sister, Susanna, married William's younger brother, Thomas, a midshipman. Both couples settled in Wells and raised their families there. William's family consisted of two girls and two boys.

About 1785, when aged 34, William bought his first boat - the 'Amity of Wells'. This was a Brig which enabled him to carry a cargo of up to 70 chauldren of coals, which he was able to sell to a variety of people ranging from Mr. Hogg in King's Lynn, to widow DeMonte Schejdam of The Netherlands. His account books of these tradings show profits ranging from £78.14.1d down to one loss of £8.13.5d.

By 1789 the' cost of food was soaring and there were many local disturbances

around Wells. Times were hard for the shopkeepers of Wells, many of whom were elderly relations of W.G. ALLEN, like John ALLEN, the barber whom the Parish Register records died a pauper.

In 1793, despite France declaring war on Britain, Wm Green ALLEN set sail for Madeira with his 14 year old son, Thomas, in the brig, 'Amity'. During the voyage Thomas records in the ship's log, dated Wednesday 5th June 1793, "Mod. gales - fine weather. The sail came up with us very fast, down steering sails and cleared ship for fighting at 5 p.m. Hauled up our courses at 6. She came alongside of us and prov'd to be a French privateer of 22 guns. Made a running fight, exchanged several broadsides and shot away her fore jeers and main topmast. She sheared off having killed one man and wounded three and some small damage in the rigging. Gave her three cheers, down courses and repaired the rigging. Cloudy with rain". 13 days later they sailed up Madeira roads in 28 fathoms of water after coming through very hard gales which resulted in 4 feet of water in the hold - caused by a leak under the larboard main chains which they then attended to! In all this voyage took 22 days, 5 days longer than the same voyage in December 1772 on the "William and Jane".

Navigation in Wells harbour was proving extremely difficult for ships to enter safely and especially when there was a N. or N.E. wind. This often proved fatal for shipping. 6 coal ships being wrecked in one week of the same year (1 793).

W.G. ALLEN decided to leave Wells and move with his family to Lynn. He sold his 4 acres of land in Broomhill and the 2 acres in Stiffkey Breast to a Mrs. Dennis, and the family left Wells for good. For three further generations the ALLEN family remained mariners and ship owners of Lynn.

Helen Manton

Report on Awards for All Grant

In May of last year an invitation was received to attend a meeting at Wymondham to hear about Awards for All. Being a new secretary I could hardly refuse the request that I should attend and report back to the committee. I spent a confusing afternoon taking copious notes, but left with the sure knowledge that Awards for All would give Lottery grants to local groups who work on small incomes.

Application was easy, but the criteria for awards were very precise. John Checketts and I put together a request for a Microfiche/film reader and microfilm of the **1841-1881** census. Part of the form was worded thus:

...“We wish during the first year of the new millennium, to create a framework by which the community of Wells and beyond can begin to formulate an historical picture of their environment. Records held and available locally will allow a greater number of people to have access to them, particularly those who because of age, infirmity, lack of finance or time cannot view records held far away.”

In brief, we asked for money to buy equipment to view census and other data relating to Wells and the local area, which at present can only be seen at Norwich or King's Lynn. Long sentences using buzz words from the information sheets did the trick! The grant for £1,925.76 has been agreed and soon we will have the microfiche/film reader. It will be on view and available for use at the A.G.M.

Maureen Whiddett

4th October, 2000

1st November, 2000

6th December, 2000

3rd January, 2001

7th February, 2001

7th March, 2001

4th April, 2001

2nd May, 2001

NEW BOOK

A new book will be available shortly entitled ***“The Trials of Wells Harbour”*** by John Barney and published by Mintaka Books, 30 Friars Quay, Norwich, NR3 1 ES. Publication date is 4 May 2000 with a cover price of £6.50. It is suggested members contact the Publisher for further details.

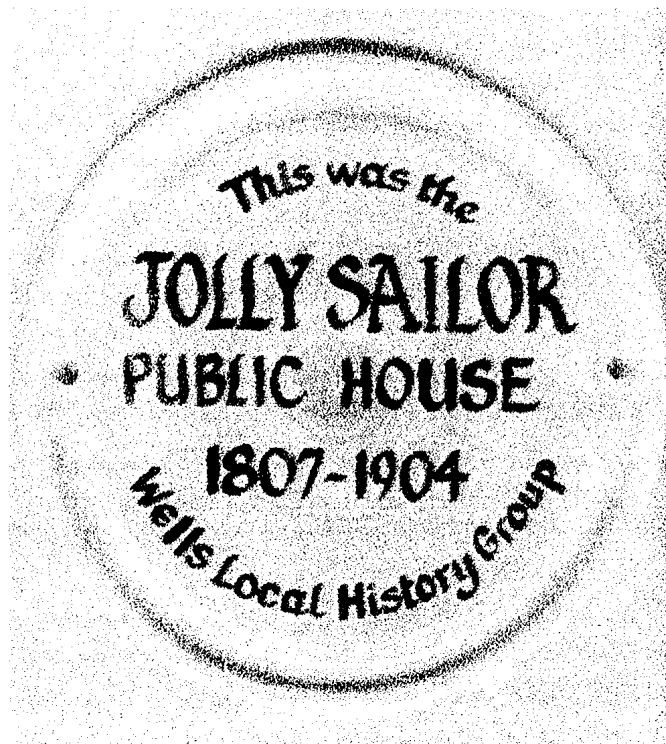
Copy for Newsletters

It would be very helpful if contributors submit their reports and articles as Word documents or as rich text files (.rtf) either on disk or by e-mail.

WELLS PLAQUES

Members Mike Welland and Tom Sands have been researching the public houses of Wells with some surprising finds. Later it is hoped other buildings that have been of importance can be identified.

The present project is to place plaques on the early public houses which may be as many as thirty or so.



EDITOR'S SOAP BOX

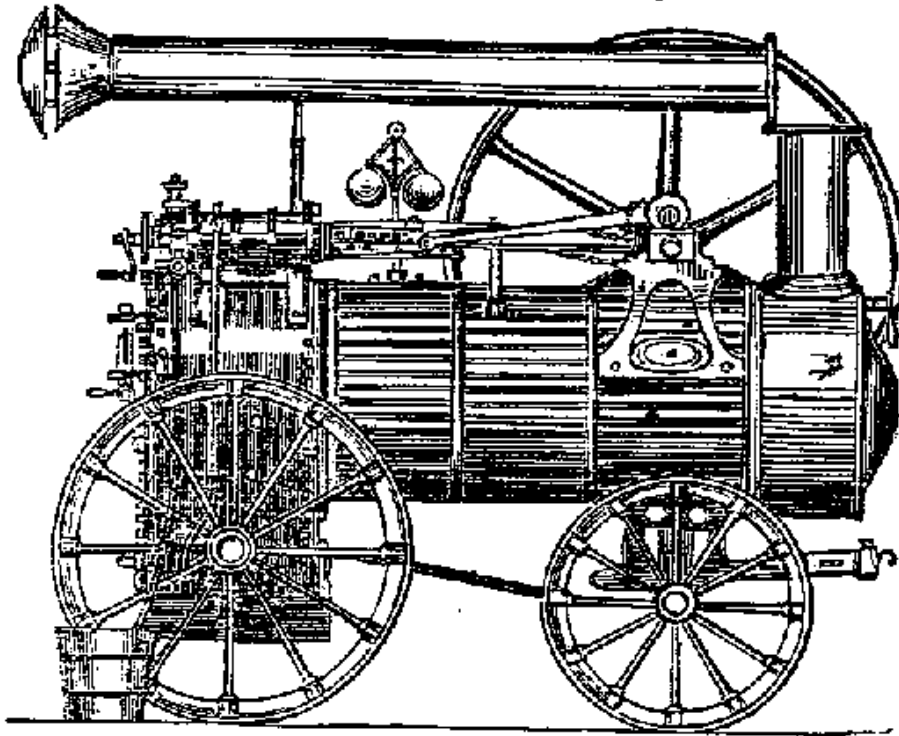
Another successful year is coming to a close and my comment can only be as that of last year (see Newsletter No. 11).

The Agenda for the A.G.M. will be distributed with this Newsletter and I look forward to a high turn out.

Lastly, I would like to thank Jean Terrington for producing the Newsletter on her computer on behalf of the Group. The Newsletter is a vital link between members and I believe it can be enhanced and extended but this will not be without difficulties.

D. A. Perryman

GLEBE FOUNDRY, WELLS.



ESTABLISHED NEARLY THIRTY YEARS.

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ENGINEERS, MILLWRIGHTS,

IRON & BRASS FOUNDERS

AND

AGRICULTURAL MACHINISTS.

MANUFACTURERS OF COMBINED PORTABLE

Steam Thrashing Machines,

Fixed Steam Engines, Drilling, Dressing, and Chaff Cutting
Machines, Ploughs, Horse-hoes, Iron Harrows, Bean Mills,
Oat and Linseed Crushers, Etc.

WROUGHT AND CAST IRON FENCING OF EVERY DESCRIPTION.

CASTINGS ON THE SHORTEST NOTICE.

AGENTS for the most eminent Manufacturers in the kingdom.

JOHN SMITH,
RAILWAY HOTEL AND COMMERCIAL INN,
WELLS,

This Hotel is the nearest to the Railway Station, and possesses every comfort and accommodation.

Wines and Spirits. Meux and Co.'s Superior London Stout. India Pale,
Burton, and Fine Country Ales.

GOOD BEDS. STABLING WITH LOOSE BOXES.

1856

R. R. RUMP,
CHEMIST AND DRUGGIST,
STAITH STREET, WELLS.

PRESCRIPTIONS AND FAMILY RECIPES CAREFULLY PREPARED.
Genuine Drugs and Chemicals. Patent Medicines and Perfumery. Horse and
Cattle Medicines.

DEALER IN BRITISH WINES, PICKLES, SAUCES, & VINEGAR.
CHOICE TOBACCOS, SNUFFS, AND CIGARS.

1856

H. M. LACK,
VICTORIA HOTEL,
HOLKHAM, NORFOLK.

WINES AND SPIRITS OF THE FINEST QUALITY.
GOOD STABLING. WELL AIRED BEDS.

Within One Mile of the Fine Sand Beach, by the German Ocean.

1856

Wells Local History Group

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**To be held on Wednesday 10th May 2000 at 7.30 p.m.
in the Hall, the Makings Community Centre, Staithe Street, Wells**

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 12th May 1999
3. Matters arising not otherwise on the agenda
4. Chairman's report
5. Treasurer's report
6. Appointment of Examiner
7. Appointment of Executive Committee
8. Amendment of the Rules
9. Any Other Business

After the A.G.M. the bar will be open and there will be

- **the newly purchased microfiche/microfilm reader to view and to use**
- **a "then and now" quiz.**