

WELLS LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

MEMBERS NEWSLETTER No. 10 - DECEMBER 1998



YOUR COMMITTEE WISH ALL READERS
A HAPPY CHRISTMAS
AND A PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR



CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

Already we are well into another season of successful monthly meetings. The programmed November speaker had to withdraw at the last minute but was more than adequately replaced by Martin Collier from Gressenhall, whose talk aroused much interest in a possible visit by members to that museum later in the year. Preliminary work is in hand and we hope to arrange such a visit.

By early November over 80 people had joined or re-joined as paid-up members of the Group, and no doubt there are more by this time. This gives us, the Committee, confidence to plan for next year's programme of talks and outings. Clearly, the Group is filling a need.

The Rules adopted at our last AGM say that "*membership will lapse if the subscription remains unpaid by 31 December*". Hence, people who paid in 1997/8 but have not yet re-joined during this season will receive this Newsletter but non hereafter.

The Special Interest Groups are continuing: Phil Champion has made great progress with his Millennium survey; the other Groups' achievements have been less impressive but nevertheless progress is evident.

ARCHIVE STORAGE AND ACCESS

Brief mention was made in our last Newsletter of the generous gift from Wells Carnival Committee towards the purchase of a large filing cabinet for the storage of archive material. David Bell of the County Library and Information Service has very readily agreed that our cabinet may be kept at the Wells Branch Library. It is now installed there, in a small room not normally accessible to the public and where bona fide study will be possible within library opening hours.

There is no point in accumulating records if they are not made accessible to all bona fide enquirers, and we hope to arrange for this. The Committee will be seeking professional advice as to how best to arrange what is hoped will be a growing collection, and endeavours will be made to make and update a catalogue which can be freely available to all.

In the meantime, we will welcome the gift or loan of anything regarding the Wells area and its inhabitants which anyone thinks may be of current or future interest. [The Group has sufficient funds to photocopy most things.] Even what is now commonplace - for instance Town Guides, Carnival programmes, Lifeboat Service sheets - may well be of interest to future historians. Please approach any member of the

Brian Scott

Committee if you have an enquiry, or contribution.

BMS

A MEMBER WRITES...

J. Bullen Standard mineral Water Works

My name is Alan Broadmeadow and I am interested in receiving information concerning the above company, which was established in Park Road (and which, I believe, is known locally as the Pop Factory) in 1900 by my great great grandfather, Joseph Bullen, and my great grandfather Benjamin Broadmeadow. The company ceased operating in 1951 when my grandfather, Alan Broadmeadow, passed away - the company was subsequently purchased by Robert Claxton and was in operation until about 1963. If you have any information I would be extremely grateful if you could contact me. I don't live locally, though I can be contacted on **01449 672245**, or by post to **20 Shelley Close, Stowmarket, Suffolk**. I am also interested in purchasing items produced by the works. In the fullness of time, I intend to present the results of my findings to the Wells Local History Group.

BEGINNINGS

"Great oaks from little acorns grow", they say, and this is certainly the way I see the History Group developing. We are, as yet a young seedling needing tender care and nourishment to urge on our development to greater things. As Secretary of the Group I see, first hand, the small items of interest that, hopefully, will one day turn into full archive files.

People contact me asking for information of a subject they are researching. For instance

someone from King's Lynn Library rang asking about a St.Monica's School 'in Wells' that a reader's grandfather had attended in 1901. I had not heard of it but I asked around. St.Monica's? No. But there had been a St.Michael's School, situated in Red Lion Yard and which is now a private house. Perhaps the reader had the name wrong...? Luckily, before giving up on the search, I thought of asking Margaret Scott [a WLHG member] who, as many of you will know, lived all her young life in Wells and returned here on retirement. Margaret, I discovered, had actually attended St.Monica's School as a little girl, but it had been in Burnham Overy Staithe not in Wells! She very kindly wrote a few notes about the school and gave me a copy of a photograph of her class standing in the grounds which I was glad to pass on to King's Lynn Library. [Naturally, I kept a copy of both documents for the Group's archives.]

Margaret also pointed me in the direction of her brother, Michael Rainsford [another WLHG member] who had attended St.Michael's School in Wells. She gave me a photograph of him with his classmates having lessons in the garden. And Michael, with the help of another past pupil, provided me with some written memories of his time there. These I am also keeping for our records.

Since then, we have received the following query from the 'Maritime Museum', who receive our Newsletter on a regular basis:

"The article 'Times Past' [in WLHG's last Newsletter] states that Wells had 3 schools, 2 supported by charity, one of them a farmhouse. Do you by any chance have any further information about these schools? We understand that Belmont House was once a school but have no details"

Thus, what has been started into tentative growth by these small items is obviously going to turn into a "Local Schools" file for the History Group's archives.

Next steps:

- How do we set about answering the query from The Maritime Museum? Does anyone know? Can anyone help by doing some research on this?

- If you attended a local school, would you be prepared to give us, say, copies of any photographs, school reports, exercise books, etc. and/or write [or put on to tape] some of your memories?

- We would love to hear from you with offers of help or information. **MS**

A WORTHWHILE JOB

The group regularly receives requests for help in tracing the members of families who once lived in Wells but then moved away. This is something we are happy to undertake on a voluntary basis. However, each time that we spend an hour searching through the Wells' returns for a particular name, we are very aware that we are repeating the same work time after time. The only difference is that we are looking for a different name. If only

If only the census was transcribed on to a computer. It would then be possible to sort the entries into family name sequences and print them out so that they could be easily read. This would be a joy for everyone who wants to use the census to trace a relative or former resident of the town. Searching for a name would be a five minute job in Wells Library rather than a one hour session, with eye strain, in Norwich.

Transcribing local history records in this way is very much the job of local history groups. It ensures that local history is easily available, in easy to read formats. The parish records were sent to the County Record Office a few years ago and have now been transcribed by the Norfolk Family History Society.

Transcribing the census returns would be a very worthwhile project for the Group. It would require a small group of people, or even an individual, with access to a computer and a little spare time. Volunteers would work on their own, so they would work at their own pace, as and when they had the time. Initially the 1891 census could be transcribed, and as expertise was gained, the earlier censuses could be tackled.

If we can summon-up one or more volunteers, the committee will be pleased to get the project organised. Is there any one who is prepared to help? If so please contact the Secretary on 710242. **J.C.**

THE MILLENNIUM BUG

Fifty years from now the millennium will be history. The fact that the millennium caused billions of pounds to be spent just on making the computers of the day able to accept the twenty first century will be forgotten. However, the expenditure of such vast sums and the concern of the public at large prior to the event should be recorded as part of the atmosphere that prevailed at the time of the millennium and part of our own records of what life was like in Wells at the end of the twentieth century.

The view commonly expressed is that the system designers of the late twentieth century were either stupid or incompetent.

"It must have been obvious that four digit would be needed to record the date in only a few years" is the view I often hear.

As a computer designer working through the 60s and early 70s I think it is only fair to give an explanation.

Personal computers didn't exist then and business computers needed a room as large as four or five average living rooms. These computer rooms had to be air-conditioned to remove the large amounts of heat that the equipment generated. A large commercial machine of that time worked at one thousandth of the speed of an average modem PC. The memory would have been one thousandth the size of the minimum memory needed to work Windows 95, and memory was one million times as expensive as it is today, without taking inflation into account!

In those days programmers were recruited from the best university grades of the year. They were very clever people, and they had to be, to make their machines work in what would now be regarded as a minute memory. They succeeded by packing data into as small a space as possible. And that meant no more than two digits for a date.

The problem was and will always be, that change happens slowly, and one rarely has the opportunity to start again when new technology arrives. The result is that the old proven systems are transferred to the new technology. Cars for example were made like carriages, with an engine in front where the horse used to stand. Computer applications followed the same pattern and the old systems were transferred to the new technology, lock, stock and two date bytes.

The new information technologist that took over from the old systems analysts were so busy keeping up with technological changes that they failed, until the last minute, to

catch up with the old system requirements. A secondary problem is that now many of the original system designers are retired or doing other jobs.

Personally, I do not believe that there will be any major problems, and after the great event it will be forgotten. However, I also believe that our problems should be recorded as a significant part of the millennium celebrations, to give future generations something to laugh about, although I doubt if they will learn from it; that would be going against human nature.

JC

THE MILLENNIUM PROJECT

Work continues to write the texts for the subjects photographed. In all over 100 photos have been taken to date. A further 36 will be taken when the weather is more conducive to good photography, in the Spring and Summer of 1999.

The response and goodwill toward our History Group from the people of Wells has made the task of research and photography much easier. Business and private people interviewed have all expressed their eagerness to help.

This all adds up to what should be a very interesting evening when the total package is ready to show, hopefully early in the first year of the new millennium.

Phil Champion, Project Leader

Particulars and Conditions of Sale

OF

SHARES

IN THE

NORWICH UNION FIRE INSURANCE SOCIETY,

The Norwich & London Accident Insurance Association,

THE GENERAL HAILSTORM INSURANCE SOCIETY,

THE NORWICH NEW CORN EXCHANGE COMPANY,

THE FAKENHAM CORN EXCHANGE COMPANY,

AND

WELLS HARBOUR £100 BONDS,

WHICH

Messrs. GAZE and SYMONDS

Have received instructions from the Executors of the late ROBERT LEAMON, Esq., to SELL BY AUCTION,

AT THE NORFOLK HOTEL, NORWICH,

On WEDNESDAY, 26th of MARCH, 1879,

AT TWO FOR THREE O'CLOCK IN THE AFTERNOON,

IN FORTY LOTS.

Particulars and Conditions of Sale may be obtained of Messrs. COPEMAN and LADELL, Solicitors, Norwich;
and of the AUCTIONEERS, Thornham Parva, near Eye, and Botesdale, Suffolk.

Lot 37.—FOUR BONDS for £100 each. Nos. 20, 22, 23, and 24, issued by THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE HARBOUR OF WELLS, under the authority of the Act 5th William IV. (1835), commonly known as Priority Bonds.

Lot 38.—TWELVE BONDS for £100 each issued by the THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE HARBOUR OF WELLS, under the authority of the Act 5th William IV. (1835), and of the Act 7 and 8 Victoria (1844), commonly known as Non-priority Bonds.

Lot 39.—Twelve similar Non-priority Bonds.

Lot 40.—Ten similar Non-priority Bonds.

The Interest due upon, these Bonds will be included in the Sale.

CONDITIONS OF SALE.

FIRST.

The highest bidder for each lot shall be the purchaser, and if any dispute shall arise between two or more bidders the lot in dispute shall be put up again at a former bidding, but no advance less than a sum to be named by the Auctioneer shall be deemed a bidding, and no bidding shall be retracted.

SECOND.

The purchaser of each lot shall pay a deposit of £20 per cent, in part of the purchase money, immediately after the sale, to Messrs. COPEMAN and LADELL, the vendors' solicitors, and sign an agreement for the payment of the remainder thereof on the 23rd day of April next, at their Offices, Little Oxford Street, Norwich, at which time and place the purchases are to be completed; and if from any cause whatever the remainder of the purchase money of any lot shall not be paid on the said 23rd day of April next, the purchaser shall pay interest for the same, after the rate of £5 per centum per annum, from that day to the day of payment, if the vendors shall elect to receive the same, and waive the right reserved by the fifth condition.

THIRD

The vendors, who are the Executors of the will of Robert Leamon, Esq., a deceased proprietor, stipulate that they shall not be required to furnish any evidence as to the capital affairs or circumstances of the Society, Association, or Company, in which the shares are respectively held, nor to furnish any evidence affecting in any way the nature or value of the security of the Wells Harbour Bonds other than that supplied by the Bonds themselves, and the transfers or assignments of such shares and bonds shall be in the form or mode usually adopted for the same respectively, and be prepared at the expense of the purchasers, in accordance with the customary practice of the said Society, Association, or Company, and Wells Harbour Commission, and shall be left for execution at the Office of Messrs. COPEMAN and LADELL, the vendors' solicitors, seven days at least prior to the time fixed for the settlement of the purchases; and the purchasers shall not be entitled to require any further or other title of or to any of the shares than the production of the customary certificates issued by the Society, Association, or Company, and an extract from the Will of the said Testator. And if the purchasers of any such lots should be objected to by the Board of Directors of the said Society, Association, or Company, as not fit persons to become the proprietors of the shares so purchased by them, such objection shall render the sales to such purchasers void, and the vendors shall in that case return the deposit or purchase money to them in full satisfaction of every claim they may have on the vendors in consequence of their purchase.

FOURTH.

If any error, mis-statement, or omission shall have been made in the particulars, such error, mis-statement, or omission shall not vitiate or annul the sale, but a compensation or equivalent, having reference to the amount of the purchase money, shall be given or taken as the case may require, such compensation or equivalent to be settled by the Auctioneer.

FIFTH.

If the purchaser or purchasers of any of the said lots shall fail, or neglect, or refuse to comply with the above conditions, or any of them, his, her, or their deposit money shall be absolutely forfeited to the vendors, who shall be at liberty at any time afterwards to resell the said lot or lots either by public auction or private contract; and in case there be any deficiency in such second sale, the same, and all expenses attending such second sale, shall be made good and paid by the purchasers so making default at the present sale, upon demand to the vendors, and in case of non-payment thereof the same to be recoverable as liquidated damages.

SIXTH.

The vendors reserve the right of bidding generally by themselves or their agent for each lot, of putting up two or more lots together, of making any alterations in or additions to the foregoing particulars and conditions, and of withdrawing any lot or lots either previously to or at the time of the sale.

EDITOR'S SOAPBOX

Newsletter No.9 was compiled and delivered in double quick time and I skipped checking a typed contribution to facilitate the speedy production. This is contrary to my professional training and, as a result, the item "Wells next the Sea 1854" contained an error. St.Peter's Church should, of course, be St. Nicholas' Church, and the credit should have been M.W. not D.P. Apologies to St. Nicholas' Church and Mike Welland.

However, this episode does concern me in that, as far as I know, no one pointed out the mistake regarding the church and consequently this implies that members do not read what is written - or they believe everything in the Newsletter is correct.

Does anyone still hold Bonds in Wells Harbour?

ARTICLES AND/OR COMMENTS WELCOMED.

Write to:

*The Editor:
David
Perryman
Ingleborough
Grove Road, Wells.*

Tel: 01328 711254

PROPOSED OUTINGS FOR 1999

The following outings and dates have been arranged for next year, but before making confirmations with venues, coach operators, etc. we would like to know the numbers of members that are interested and which trips they will support.

Thurs MAR 25 Royal Armouries Museum, Leeds

Sat MAY 29 Bletchley Park Museum [World War II Codebreaking, etc.]

TBA JULY Gressenhall Farming and Archaeology Museum

TBA SEPT True's Yard Fishing and Rural Museum, King's Lynn

Please return the tear-off slip below to a member of the committee as soon as possible. If any further details are required you can contact Mike Welland on 710080

I am /we are interested in the following visits. [Please tick those of interest]

Royal Armouries

Bletchley Park

Gressenhall

True's Yard

Name(s) Tel.No

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