

# WELLS LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

MEMBERS NEWSLETTER No. 12 - SEPTEMBER 1999

## CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

The Summer has passed all too quickly and we are again at the start of a new Winter season, The monthly meeting dates were given in our last Newsletter (no. 11); we can now list the actual speakers - see later.

Membership/programme cards will be available, we hope, at our first meeting on 6th October, to everyone wishing to join or re-join. We have decided to maintain the subscriptions at the same level as last year - £5 per person or £8 for two or more at the same address.

There has been some change in the composition of the Executive Committee. **Maureen Whiddett** is our new **Secretary** and John Checketts will assist generally. The remaining members will continue as last year:

**Chairman** ..... **Brian Scott**  
**Vice Chairman** ..... **Phil Champion**  
**Treasurer**.....**John Christmas**  
**Newsletter Editor** . . . **David Perryman**  
**Outings Organiser & Publicity Officer**  
..... **Mike Welland**

It should be added that we much appreciate the help of several non-Committee members who help with the Newsletter, other typing and at meetings and, in particular, the Rev. Hamel-Cooke and his son Chris who are leading the Genealogy Special Interest Group. When the Groups were set up we

planned to have one for Building recording, led by Keith Reay. In the event he moved away and this item has been in abeyance. However, we are very conscious that opportunities are being lost as buildings change hands or are altered, so Mike Welland or John Checketts will welcome being told of any opportunities there might be of measuring and recording buildings, preferably while they are empty due to change of ownership or other development.

The Council for British Archaeology, Eastern Region Group, asked if we would arrange for them to hold their AGM in Wells, on 22nd May, and we agreed to do so. They met in the W.I. Room, and afterwards three Committee members, together with the Rev. Hamel-Cooke and I, informed them about the activities of our Group, and some of the history of Wells. In the afternoon we walked them through the town and down to the Quay where most visited the Museum, We made some useful contacts - for instance, their chairman, Andrew Rogerson, is coming to talk at our February meeting about the archaeology of Wells,

Our first meeting of the season will be on 6th October; we are very fortunate in having as our speaker Jonathan Hooton, who is the author of the definitive work on the maritime history of the Glaven Ports - Blakeney, Cley and Wiveton. See you at the Maltings for 7.30 p.m.!

**Brian Scott**

## PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS 1999—2000

**Held in the Maltings Community Centre, Staithe Street at 7.30 p.m.**

6th October .....	Jonathan Hooton .....	The Glaven Ports
3rd November .....	John Dominy .....	The Norfolk Coast - History in the Making
1st December .....	Katrina Siliprandi .....	Christmas Past
5th January.....	Phil Champion .....	A Snapshot of Wells at the close of 2nd Millennium
2nd February .....	Andrew Rogerson.....	The Archaeology of Wells
1st March .....	Mike Brackenbury .....	The Architecture of Wells
5th April. . . . .	T.B.A.....	Seahenge - The Story so Far
3rd May .....	Lyn Gash .....	Victorian Cooking

## OUTINGS & VISITS

Although the Winter season finished with a speaker meeting and the A.G.M. in May, other activities have continued through the Summer. Mike Welland arranged a very successful visit to the Gressenhall Rural Life Museum on 26th May. The special evening put on for us by the Maritime Museum on 19th May was well worthwhile (there was no demand for a second date). Bob Smith explained the background of many of the exhibits from the truly local point of view, which added a great deal to the occasion. Some members confessed to never having visited before!

The afternoon and evening visits to

Holkham Fort in August were very popular, so much so that only paid-up members could be accommodated, and even then some were disappointed due to the restriction in the numbers permitted. We were very fortunate in having David Gurney, Head of the County Landscape Archaeology Department, to lead the visits which he made very enjoyable. Our thanks are due also to Ron Harrold, the Nature Reserve Warden, and David Ring, the Holkham Farms Manager, for allowing us access to what is very definitely not otherwise open to the public.

We invite suggestions from members as to where we might visit next Spring and Summer, or even during the coming Winter.

*B.M.S.*

## WHAT'S IN A NAME

I have been working on records of inns and public houses of Wells, and their landlords. Two of the names that occurred were Mathew Morters of the *Royal Standard*, and Robert Mortis of the *Bowling Green*. Although there was a similarity in the names there was nothing to link them.

Recently I was contacted by a man from Derbyshire who came along with some documents and asking for any information I could help him with on his ancestors. The man's name was Mr. Morter and he knew that these ancestors had links with Wells that he had already established.

On the 1841 census the family were listed with the surname Mortice, living on the Buttlands. The father Mathew 30, wife Jane 35, and children Mary 6, Thomas 4, and James 2. Mathew's profession was listed as shoemaker.

The 1851 census documents list the surname as Morters, father Mathew 40, but by this time he had remarried and his wife was listed as Comfort age 27, Only one of the original children was listed on this census James 12, but there were three additional children, Thomas 5, Jane 3 and Robert 1.

In 1861 the surname was now listed as Mortis, Mathew 50, Comfort his wife now 39 (a discrepancy of two years in the previous census), Thomas 15, Marion 13, Robert 11 and four additional children.

By 1871 there was another name change on the latest census, this time to Mortars, now living at the *Royal Standard*. Mathew was now 60, but his wife Comfort was now 46 instead of 49 if the last census was correct. Marion's name on the last

census, whose name was Jane on the one before, now changed to Maria. There were then six children listed on the census excluding Robert and Thomas who would by then have been in their twenties.

Mathew's death certificate dated 1886 gave his name as Mathew Morters aged 76 years. By this time his son Robert was landlord at the *Bowling Green* where he remained until his death in 1905. All entries in directories over this period listed his name as Robert Mortis, and this was the spelling on the death certificate. However, Robert signed his will with an X as he was unable to write.

Census records would in those days have been taken down by someone going door to door who would, no doubt, have written down the names as they sounded to them. The givers, not being able to read would not know whether what had been written down was correct. In the circumstances we must wonder what the correct name of the family was. The census records are all different, the death certificates for father and son are different. The ages of the children, not all itemized above, do not reconcile from one ten year census to the next.

Added to the above facts was that the man investigating his ancestors had a different name again. In all we have five different spellings for one family, and in view of the number of children involved it is possible that their offspring produced a further convolution of names.

When I receive a letter with my surname spelt incorrectly, I think I will look at it in a different way!

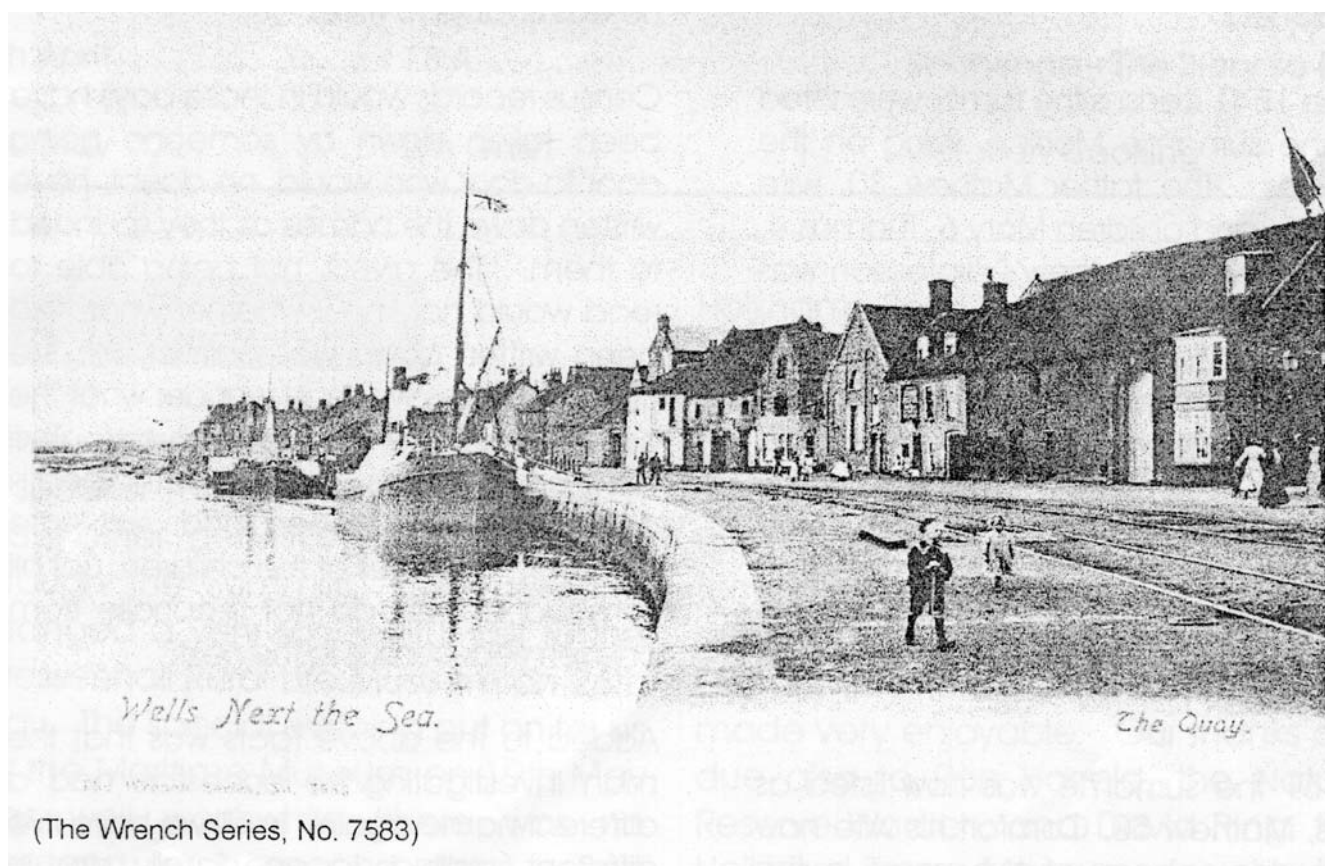
*Mike Welland*

## EDITOR'S SOAP BOX

The copy of this Newsletter is issued to all listed current members of the Group together with those that have lapsed membership, and details are still "on file". The next Newsletter will be absolutely for members only (and the agreed other bodies and groups) and will hopefully be the "bumper Christmas number". Articles and items please -A.S.A.P

Some years ago a series of articles in the Parish Magazine were devoted to some of the clubs and organisations in the town. There were not many in the series and I hoped it would continue, A similar series in these Newsletters would be welcome. It's all history!

Members will have noticed a change to the Newsletter - this is because Jean Terrington is now producing it ready for photocopying. Hopefully the Group's association with Jean will be long standing and will lead the way to more adventurous publications.



## WELL'S MARITIME MUSEUM OUTING

An outing by coach to the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich has been arranged for Saturday 16th October at a cost of only £16.00 for adults and half price (£8.00) for children. Some seats are still available and full details can be obtained from the Harbour Office on the Quay (tel. 01328 711646).

This must be of interest to members of the Wells Local History Group and their friends and neighbours.