

# WELLS LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

MEMBERS NEWSLETTER No. 18 - SEPTEMBER 2001

*This is the first Newsletter of the season, and, as has become the custom, will be sent to everyone who has been a past member and to those who have expressed an interest in joining the Group.*

*This can, of course, be possible only if correct addresses are known and on file.*

*Subsequent issues during the year will only be sent to paid-up members.*

## CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

The programme of talks for the next season has been finalised. Some members have, in the past, said that they would like to see more local content in the talks. I have attempted to achieve this with

our speakers for the next season, and with only a few exceptions the subjects will be Wells orientated. There is of course a limit to the number of speakers who are willing, or able, to talk on subjects relevant to the town or the local area. The danger is, therefore, that by using them all in one or two seasons the supply will be exhausted.

Members can help in several ways, firstly by coming forward to speak at a meeting on a subject that interests them. This need not be a talk lasting a full evening, but could include research into their house, family history etc. Secondly what would you as a member like to hear as a subject of a talk?

As with any group, our success depends on its membership, and your feedback is important to the committee in planning for the future

*Mike Welland.*

## Programme of Meetings 2001-2002

*Meeting dates and speakers for the winter season 2001-2002 to be held in the Malting Community Centre, Staithe Street at 7.30 p.m.*

3rd October.....	Railways of North Norfolk	A Vaughan
7th November . . . . .	Bygones & Social History	E Absolom
5th December . . . . .	History of Norwich Castle	J Davies
2nd January .....	Wells Murders .....	M. Welland
6th February .....	Development of Walsingham	J Christmas
6th March .....	History of the Granary .....	I. Scott
3rd April .....	Shipwrecks of Wells .....	G. Walker
1st May .....	The Wells Group of Churches .....	G. Robinson

## What You Need to Know

An Executive Committee Meeting was held on 9th May and the following officer posts were filled:-

**Chairman** -----Mike Welland  
**Vice Chairman** - - - - Terry Whiddett  
**Secretary**-----Maureen Whiddett  
**Treasurer** -----John Christmas  
**Speaker Finder** - - - Mike Welland  
**Newsletter Editor**- - David Perryman

Cynthia Jackson and Bobby Smith are the other members of the Committee. Bobby Smith is already well known for his work promoting the Maritime Museum so the two bodies will have a greater understanding of each others needs and functions.

Subscriptions are to be kept to existing levels for 2001/2, i.e. £5 single membership £8 for a couple at the same address. Meeting charges will still be £1 for members and £2 for others.

## Microfiche Reader

### Genealogy Research

The Microfiche Reader has been in great demand during the last year. Most of the enquiries received by Bob Brownjohn, Mike Welland and Maureen Whiddett have been from families from around the country and from abroad who had, or think they had ancestors who lived in Wells. Most contacts are made by e-mail, post or telephone but some come about by casual conversation on doorsteps. Some families have specific questions that are easily researched, but others have very few facts and are hungry for every scrap of information that we can glean and deduce from the parish and census records. The latter form of enquiry can take days or even weeks of work. The quickest answers are to those who think we are situated in Somerset!

The following list of family names is probably not complete, but gives an idea of the interest shown.

*Armes, Barnes, Bottomley, Castleton, Chapman, Cringle, Dickinson, Dodman,*

*Edwards, Frankling, Fryer, Gell, Hammond, Hamond, Hicks, Howard, Jickling, Land, Langley, Lubbock, Mann, Metcalf, Money, Mussett, Parker, Ransome, Ringer, Rix, Rust, Shaw, Shore, Smith, Snell, Storey, Walker, Wayte, Whisson, Wickham, Woods, Wordingham, Wright, Yarham, Youngman.*

Thanks to the kindness of the Maritime Museum Committee the Microfiche Reader is now housed in the Museum, together with fiches, films and a W.L.H.G. display. The Filing cabinet donated by Michael Rainsford forms the table for the Reader.

*Maureen Whiddett*

## Summer 2001

### W.L.H.G. did not hibernate this summer!

Following considerable interest from visitors to the town who expressed a wish for History Group events during their stay, it was decided to form a sub-committee to run a trial Summer Programme. The format would be to display the work of the Group in addition to short talks by residents about their recollections of life in Wells and a guided walk.

The evening devoted to displaying some of the photographs taken for the Millennium Collection was particularly interesting. It provided many names for faces and highlighted the gaps. The latter led to some detective work to track down those photographs which had been taken but were not to hand. As a result of the work a second photographic display was added to the final summer meeting.

Many thanks to all those who provided material, prepared it for display or assisted in staffing the individual meetings. The response was encouraging and a similar Summer Programme is likely. Details will be confirmed in a future newsletter.

*Terry Whiddett*

## First Summer Meeting

A Talk by Mrs. Freda Howell, Mr. David Cox and Mr. Derek Styman

'Ladies first' voted Freda to begin the proceedings and she regaled us with memories of her childhood and folks she'd known about town in the early part of the twentieth century. A born storyteller, Freda was able to draw in the audience with comments of 'You remember that, don't you Sylvia' and lots of other people.

David Cox followed next with stories of the East End, the fishing families and highjinks on the marshes and East Hills.

Derek, who was standing in at short notice for Mr. Geoff Perkins finished the evening talking about the shops and businesses on Freeman Street and the Quay and the people who ran them. He could remember who sold what and where all the sweet shops were!

David and Derek followed Freda's example and had lots of comments from the audience. It was great to see so many Wells locals there and enjoying sharing the talks and memories.

Mrs. Alison Christmas wielded the microphone quietly and unobtrusively and it's great to know that groups in the future will be able to listen to the goings on that evening and enjoy them again.

*Cynthia Jackson*

**1 August 2001**

### **Wells Local History Group Display in the Maltings followed by a Walk**

The display of photographs, Deeds, etc. of historical importance for Wells-next-the-Sea was of great interest and extremely well presented. It was obvious that many

hours, probably years, of research and work had been put into the presentation. One was able to walk around the Maltings hall, asking questions of and receiving answers from the many knowledgeable members of the History Group who were present to make the experience so enjoyable.

At approximately 7.30 p.m. around 30 holiday makers and residents were divided into two groups for a gentle amble starting from the Maltings Hall up Newgates Lane together before splitting up, the first group with Mike Welland and the other with Tom Sands. It was an enjoyable way to spend a balmy Wells evening, learning interesting snippets, both fact - and possibly a touch of fiction, melding together as in all good stories -about what once was a port of some note with no shortage of hostelryes of one sort or another. On our return there was another chance to view the display of material and ask any further questions before all was packed away for another day.

There is no doubt that this is an ongoing task with new information coming to light, which as it has in the past, changes the presentation. Anyone who has old Deeds, photographs and other relevant information should make this known to the History Group and so help to put together as accurate a picture as is possible after the event.

*Susan Wagstaff*

### **Brancaster Fort**

The visit to Brancaster Fort was, again, another successful summer outing. Under the guidance of David Gurney it was an expedition to see nothing but to feel the past. Having said that the tour commenced at the Church which apparently has stone from the fort incorporated in walls as building

materials, then a meander through little known pathways and onto the site of the fort. From the fort site a pleasant walk back along the Norfolk coast path and back to the Church.

I joined the 20 or so people who visited the site in the evening. The afternoon visit was similarly well attended and enjoyed.

**David Perryman**

## EDITOR'S SOAP BOX

Our *Speaker Finder* has put together what promises to be a very interesting "Local" programme. I hope the supply of local

talks is not exhausted to the detriment of future sessions!

If any member feels he or she can provide a suitable talk let the Committee know. It may be a friend or relative can offer a subject. Alternatively write an item for the Newsletter, but do please submit it as a Word document or rich text file (.rtf) either on a disc or as an e-mail attachment, as it is very time consuming having to re-type articles. A 'print out' should accompany your disc etc. for editorial use.

Copy for the December Newsletter must be in my hands by 31st October 2001.

**D. A. Perryman**

## THE CROWN HOTEL

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