

# Frinton & Walton Heritage Trust



## NEWSLETTER [2024:1 of 3]

Spring 2024



### New Book Published – Book Review and Launch

**Thomas Allen and War Time Boat Patrols  
in The Walton Backwaters**

**40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Events**

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## Report & Notes from the Chair

My report in this edition is full of good news stories. The National Lottery Heritage Fund have approved our grant application for the Archive Digitalisation Project, together with some monies to start the conversion of the new Frinton & Walton Heritage Centre into a small museum and community meeting room. The Rural England Prosperity Fund has also awarded us a grant to remove asbestos and similar components from the building in preparation for the main works. Volunteers have already stripped out the building and replaced the fence that had collapsed.

Meanwhile our volunteer Cottage Maintenance Team have been erecting a very smart new fence between the cottage garden and Caradoc Surgery's car park. This has been an arduous task as every post hole has been full of tree roots.

It is the Trust's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year (founded in 1984) and your committee has produced an exciting and varied programme of activities throughout the whole year to celebrate the occasion. Please take part in as many events as you can. Some are free to attend for members and their guests and others will necessarily have a charge to cover costs. There is something for everyone! See the announcements in this Newsletter.

Many of you will have supported the launch of our new history book, *Postcards from . . . Frinton's Sea Front*, on 24 February, 2024. Thanks must be given to Frinton Golf Club who hosted the launch and also to the rota of volunteers who took part in stewarding on the day. Thanks also to Liz Bruce for creating the exhibition on 40 years of The Trust

Other thanks are due: to the Frinton and District Rotary Club who lit up the cottage garden throughout the December Christmas Period; and the team who supported our stall at the Frinton Late Night Shopping Event.

This year, 2024, is full of anniversaries: 1884 saw the arrival of Walton's first RNLI lifeboat, the *Honorary Artillery Company*, on station at *The Lifeboat House*, East Terrace; Station Road was renamed Connaught Avenue in 1904 by the Duchess of Connaught on a visit to Frinton whilst her husband, the Duke of Connaught, oversaw the military manoeuvres in

the area; The National Britain in Bloom movement was founded in 1966, and so it is 60 this year; the founding of the RNLI was 200 hundred years ago in March 1824; and lastly, The Friends of Frinton Theatre are 50 years old this year.

Like any ‘toddler’ the Trust is still young at 40 years old and is crying out for more volunteers, in many areas of the Trust, and for more funds and grant monies to accomplish the urgent work we need to carry out at our headquarters, *Crossing Cottage*. The main path from the gate needs relaying and the boundary picket fence is rotting and needs replacement. There is also a lot of work needed to secure the external fabric of the cottage itself to ensure it survives into the future, which all costs money. We need a bigger team to manage grant applications and if you can help in any way please contact me.

We need to encourage more new members. Twenty-five years ago the Trust had over 500 members; by December 2023 the number was 340. Membership is not expensive for what members get in benefits so please encourage your neighbours, family and friends to join.

Thank you everyone for your continued support. Come into the Cottage and Trevor Bright Railway Museum to see the new season of exhibitions that have been created by our Archivists and Curators. These exhibitions change again later in the summer, so don’t think that you have seen it all in one visit. The Trust has also curated an exhibition in the waiting room at Frinton Railway Station, take time out to have a look next time you are travelling by train. And, have you experienced the discovery trail throughout the cottage garden of some of the Trust’s artefacts?

The competition for local Tuesday coffee mornings has increased recently but we have a lovely and unique garden for you to enjoy, so please come and support us. We are open weekly, 10:00 am to 12 noon, every Tuesday from Easter until October.

Finally I would like to record my profuse thanks to the whole committee and Trustee team who work so hard on our behalf.

**John Barter, March 2024**

## **Frinton & Walton Heritage Trust Secures Grant from The National Lottery Heritage Fund**



Frinton & Walton Heritage Trust is delighted to announce that The National Lottery Heritage Fund has awarded a significant grant of £235,976 to deliver our ambitious and creative project, '*Frinton & Walton Heritage Trust – Securing And Improving Our Offer*'. We are also pleased to announce the receipt of a further £19,119 towards our project from the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) Community Grant.

The project will allow vital works to our new premises at 120 Pole Barn Lane bringing it into use as well as helping shape our future exhibitions, outreach and activities. In particular we will digitise our archive and collections making access and extraction much easier. We will also undertake 'test and learn' exhibitions and activities which will help us better understand what our customers would like to see us provide in the future.

In order to achieve this, we will be looking to utilise our current and new volunteers providing specialist training in archiving, exhibition design/production and customer analysis. We will also be working with Heritage students from the University of Essex who whilst helping us deliver our project will gain practical experience of working in a museum environment.

John Barter, F&WHT Chair, says: 'We are delighted to receive this funding, made possible thanks to National Lottery players which will not only bring 120 Pole Barn Road into use but will drive new partnerships, better customer and volunteer experiences and help secure the Trust's future'.

### **About The National Lottery Heritage Fund**

As the largest dedicated funder of the UK's heritage, The National Lottery Heritage Fund's vision is for heritage to be valued, cared for and sustained for everyone, now and in the future as set out in the strategic plan, *Heritage 2033*.

Over the next ten years, the Heritage Fund aims to invest £3.6 billion raised for good causes by National Lottery players to bring about benefits for people, places and the natural environment.

The Heritage Fund helps protect, transform and share the things from the past that people care about, from popular museums and historic places, our natural environment and fragile species, to the languages and cultural traditions that celebrate who we are.

The Heritage Fund is passionate about heritage and committed to driving innovation and collaboration to make a positive difference to people's lives today, while leaving a lasting legacy for future generations to enjoy.

Follow @HeritageFundUK on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) and use #NationalLotteryHeritageFund [www.heritagefund.org.uk](http://www.heritagefund.org.uk)

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### **Volunteers Wanted**

We need volunteers to help with the painting and decorating at the new Heritage Centre. If you also have some carpentry skills this would be useful. Contact John Barter on 01255 852993 if you can help.

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### **Digitisation of Frinton & Walton Heritage Trust Archive**

This project of digitising our archive and collections will be undertaken in the main by volunteers, both current and new. We will also be working with Heritage students from the University of Essex who whilst helping us deliver our project will gain practical experience of working in a museum environment. If you would like to help please do get in touch. Don't worry if you haven't any previous experience as we will be providing specialist training. Maybe you have an interest in history or even just this local area, all will be welcome.

We will also be looking at venues for small 'pop-up' exhibitions, utilising the information we discover through the digitisation. This can be the local libraries, shops or if you know of any venue that would like a small display, please let us know.

Contact John Barter if you would like to participate in this project on 01255 852993 or Email [chairman@fwheritage.co.uk](mailto:chairman@fwheritage.co.uk).

## **James Stevens No.14 – An Update**

by Rachel Baldwin



When we went into the first Covid lockdown, nobody could have known what the consequences of those restrictions would be in the long term. For **James Stevens No.14**, the timing was about as bad as it could get as a wood fungus had just been found on the restored vessel. There was,

of course, no access during that crucial period and, by the time the vessel could be examined again, the concern had grown into a massive problem. What was the Trust to do? Who was to do it? How would the Trust pay for it? Did anybody care any more anyway?

It is now more than 25 years since the project started and the Trust continues to be extremely grateful to everybody who has supported the enterprise over that period. The original team members are now considerably older and some are sadly no longer with us.

So, besides lacking the essential expertise and enthusiasm to carry the boat into the future, the Trust Executive Committee also, now, have different priorities, the main one, principally being establishing the Heritage Centre in Pole Lane, Frinton. Consultations have ranged far and wide and when there appeared to be no apparent solution, either locally or further afield, I made an offer to the Trust: to take the vessel back into my ownership and 'go it alone'.

The Executive Committee agreed to that suggestion and I, together with new volunteers and support from Chris Titchmarsh at Titchmarsh Marina, will seek a solution based on my original desire: to keep the vessel locally as an artefact which is part of Walton's history.

**James Stevens No.14** has had a long and varied career, most of which we are familiar with. However, the main gap is the verification of her participation in the evacuation of Dunkirk. Unfortunately, at that time she would have been nameless so it is quite difficult to track down the necessary evidence we need, but one of her previous owners told us emphatically that a plaque commemorating her presence at the evacuation was removed from the boat when he bought it.

In my mind, it is inconceivable that our boat would not have been there unless she was in dock for repairs or annual service. She had (and still has) a very shallow draught and would have been able to ferry a 100 men at a time from the beaches to the larger ships at anchor off shore. She would have been a vital asset on that occasion, and thus, I repeat, it is unlikely that she would not have been there.

The phrase 'end use' is now regularly applied to restoration of heritage assets. If there is no obvious story to tell, then it is difficult to justify all the effort that would be needed for any project. To that end, I am looking for a forensic researcher to follow some leads about our vessel and Dunkirk. If you would like to get involved, please get in touch with the Trust through the usual channels.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone who has had an involvement with ***James Stevens No.14*** over the past 25 years. The Heritage Trust has expressed a desire to maintain an interest in her wellbeing and I will try to keep you all abreast of developments in the future through these newsletters.

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## **Around the Trust – Winter Lecture Series – 7 November 2023**

### ***The Naze – Past, Present and Future* by David Eagle**

Report by Tony Barrett

Forty-eight members and visitors came to hear David Eagle's most instructive talk about the Naze. David showed us, when reviewing the history of the area, the losses of land to the sea through the ages, illustrating his words with useful maps and diagrams. He explained the work involved in achieving the Crag Walk pointing out, however, that the sea in places was now coming behind the wall and that further remedial work was already necessary in that area.

At the moment his chief concern, however, is in the north east corner of the Naze where the sea is now threatening to push down Cormorant Creek, which could, if left completely unchecked, lead to water pouring into the Walton and Titchmarsh marinas. The option of doing nothing is not viable but David amply illustrated the difficulty of the Naze Protection Society in trying to pull together the numerous agencies involved; many of whom have their own agendas, which are not always in the interests of conserving and protecting what is there at the moment. He further explained that, whilst plans were in place to ease the current problem, the area where the work was needed was not

easily accessible and that in any event the society could only work when the area was not closed off for nesting and migratory birds.

Like so many other organizations, there is a lack of volunteers and, as it tries to build for the future, a lack of guaranteed funding. David made it clear that, whilst full of praise for the efforts of the local community, the money needed to save the Naze would have to be raised from various organizations already involved. The audience left a little chastened as we all began to appreciate the difficulties. Our thanks must go to David for illustrating those difficulties so ably and for giving us such an interesting evening.

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## **Around the Trust – New Years Day Walk 2024**

Report from Pat Fry



All the festivities are over and it is time for a New Year and what better way to get it going than to have a brisk or leisurely walk along the sea front to Walton.

We all gathered in the Cottage Garden and, ably led by Mike Talbot, made our way along The Crescent down to The Esplanade in Frinton. It was a lovely bright sunny winter's day and I think half

of Essex decided to join us. The pristine Frinton beach was busy with families, children, dogs and their owners enjoying Frinton at its best. What a happy start to everybody's New Year. Having reached Walton, we walked or sauntered back to the Crossing Cottage gardens where we were greeted with hot mulled wine, sausage rolls and mince pies prepared for us by Linda, John and Tim. After much drinking, eating and chatting, it was time to go home, and an afternoon nap for me. Thank you everyone for a lovely start to 2024.



## **Around the Trust – Winter Lecture Series – 6 February 2024**

### *The Day the War came to Clacton-on-Sea*

Report by Hilary Russell

A fascinating meeting was held at The McGrigor Hall with Roger Kennell, one of our local historians. About 50 people ventured out into the wet and miserable evening but were well rewarded by the interesting piece of local and national history. The reason being two Clacton residents, Mr and Mrs Gill, were the first civilians to lose their lives in World War II. On the night of 30 April, 1940, a German mine-lying plane was damaged and, while trying to fly home, lost control and crashed into Orchard House in Victoria Road, totally destroying it and causing much damage to surrounding houses. A mine exploded breaking many windows. Locals, unused to air raids, looking out of their windows to see what had happened, suffered facial injuries from the shattered glass.

The crash took many men and days to clear the debris, there being no mechanical vehicles to help in those days. The explosion was heard as far away as Ipswich, Colchester, Wivenhoe and Harwich. It made the national news and stopped the evacuation of London children to east coast towns as these towns became restricted areas. It also stopped tourism in Clacton for many years. One good lesson learnt was to encourage the taping up of windows in war years to prevent the glass being shattered in future attacks.

In 2017, a memorial was created to commemorate the Victoria Road crash. Thank you Roger for such an interesting talk.

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Roger has produced a small booklet on the above subject which can be purchased from The Trust on a Tuesday morning for £3.

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Clacton Victoria County History Group is launching its new publication on The Gunfleet Estuary in April 2024 at Tendring Village Hall. This should be an interesting day; The Trust has been invited to take a table and Liz will be providing an exhibition. Come along and support us. See Page 15.

## The Garden in Winter

by Marion Mear

If you, like me, are a keen reader of gardening magazines, then this is the time of year when they have photographs of grasses and seed heads covered with frost, glinting and sparkling in the sunlight. Quite beautiful. Unfortunately, the Cottage Garden does not look like these pictures at all! But that doesn't mean that nothing is happening and no progress is being made.

First of all, we have a new espaliered Apple Tree. Guided by Tim Scott-Saunders, who not only donated it, but chose and planted it. This replaces one that was exceedingly past its prime and, as we were able to clear the bed thoroughly, means that we can plant a herb garden around it. We are extremely grateful to Tim for this magnificent gesture and for his ongoing help and advice.

The wet weather has meant that clearing the beds is a bit behind schedule but three have been cleared and mulched already. What about the fourth though? Well that's the site of the ongoing battle with couch grass. We've opened an offensive and two sacks full of the wretched stuff have been extracted but there is still a great deal more to be dealt with. Really, we need to dig out the entire bed but that, unfortunately, is probably beyond our capacity.

The rotten weather means that work on the pond has only just started but there is still time so, by the time we reopen for regular coffee mornings, the pond may look rather different, and with no duckweed!

Winter is the season when most of the hard work of maintenance is done but also the season for planning ahead. Apart from setting up a herb garden, there are two new beds to be planted along the splendid fence the maintenance crew have put up, box to be replaced by Lonicera Nitida, and maybe a Lavender hedge will appear in a rather dull area near the Surgery.

So, by the time you visit the garden things may look a little different as no garden can ever be static, and that's one of the joys of gardening.



**Welcome to our New Exhibitions at Crossing Cottage**  
**Opening on Easter Weekend, Saturday to Monday:**  
**2:00 to 4:00 pm**

**In the Cottage Museum:**

***Who Do you Think They are?***

(Renowned historical people with connections in the local area)

You can see pictures of and read about some of the people from the past who lived and visited in our catchment area – Walton, Frinton, Kirby and Great Holland – and became well-known. Such people as Marconi, Christina Rossetti or the Landemere Giant are but a few of the renowned people that you can learn about. Did you know about the local suffragettes and the damage to Frinton Golf Course, or who painted the ‘Bean Field’, or the sculptor who got a CBE in 1968?

Liz Bruce

**In the Trevor Bright Railway Museum**

***The Closing of the Kirby Cross Goods Yard in 1964***

The exhibition will reflect on the goods moved by train: mail, coal, food etc., together with reference to the movement of goods before and during World War Two.

***Trams from Around the World***  
***Electrical Motor Units Used in Our Area***

**Don’t miss** - in the waiting room at Frinton Station, a new photograph of the last day of Class 321. These units had been the mainstay of our service to London and Colchester for the past 20 years plus.

Tony Barrett

**Tuesday Coffee Mornings in the Garden, 10 am to 12 noon:**

From Easter we start the new season of coffee mornings. We will be serving tea, coffee and biscuits and there will be the opportunity to purchase preserves, plants from the garden or any surplus home grown produce that is donated. Also local history books, posters and cards will be on sale. Come and enjoy the calm and tranquillity of the gardens.

The Cottage Museum and The Trevor Bright Railway Museum will also be open. Our newly refurbished Reading Room with 100 years of newspapers is now available. If you have a research project, book an appointment with Liz Bruce, our Archivist.

## **Social Evenings**

**McGrigor Hall, Fourth Avenue, Frinton-on-Sea**

**7:00 for 7:30 pm**

**Admission £3 members, £5 non-members**

**Tea and Coffee available from 7:00 pm**

**Tuesday, 5 March 2024**

***Harwich Train Ferries* by David Whittle**

2024 sees the centenary of the first train ferry to mainland Europe. David Whittle, curator of The Harwich Museum, will guide us through the years informing us of the ferry's growth, its impact on the lives of so many and its decline as air travel grew.

**Tuesday, 2 April 2024**

***Memories* by Ian Kirby**

Ian Kirby will be sharing with us his memories of growing up in Central London close to the Thames; he will also recall memories of his time as a City of London Guide since 2002, telling us about some of the people he met and the stories they told him.

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**Events In the Cottage Garden**

**Spring Fayre, Saturday 29 April, 2024**

**10:30 am to 1:00 pm Admission £1**

For sale: Plants, Homemade Cakes & Preserves, Jewellery and toiletries. Rachel is busy making her renowned marmalade and jam and there will also be a range of chutneys.

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**Request for Items for the Jewellery Stall**

**from Sue Cobbe**

The jewellery and toiletries stall always proves popular at the Trust's fund-raising sales. If you have any jewellery you no longer use or **new** toiletries that you would like to donate, they would be very much appreciated as current stocks are low. Small items like new tea towels, unused candles, gloves, scarves, note books, purses, cosmetic bags etc. would also be very welcome. Items can be delivered to the Crossing Cottage Garden on Tuesday mornings between 10:00 am and noon or, if collection is needed, please contact Sue on 01255 672150.

## **40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations**

**Frinton & Walton Heritage Trust is 40 this year and has arranged some special events to celebrate.**

The first of these is on  
Oak Apple Day, Wednesday, 29 May, 11:00 am to 1:00 pm  
**Coffee Morning in June and Tom Dormant's Wildflower Meadow**  
at Kirby-le-Soken

Come and see how many wildflowers you can identify.  
This is a ticket only event for Members and their guests.

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### **Mid Summer Barbecue**

Friday 21 June, 6:00 to 10:00 pm  
in Frinton's Crossing Cottage Garden  
Station Approach, Frinton-on-Sea:  
Ticket only Event

Ticket Price of £20 covers the cost of the Barbecue and dessert.

Adnams will provide a cashless Bar, purchase by card only.

Music provided by Ben and Jackie of Acoustic Avenue.

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### **Up, Up and Away - Kite Flying on the Naze**

Sunday 4 August, 11:30 am to 2:00 pm

Free Event Open to all - Bring your own kite, lunch and all your relatives!

Refreshments will be available from The Tower  
or Essex Wildlife Centre.

\*\*\*\*\*

Thursday, 22 August, from 1:30 pm

### **Annie Get Your Gun in the Big Top on The Greensward**

Come to a picnic (provided by The Trust) on The Greensward and  
then enjoy a Matinee Performance afterward.

Tickets - £55 per person to include theatre ticket and picnic.

\*\*\*\*\*

Date to be confirmed in September, from 6:00 pm

### **Supper at The Ship, Great Holland**

Thai food with homemade desserts.

Ticket Price £17, drinks extra.

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**Book with Linda Ellis: 01255 852993, Email: [secretary@fwheritage.co.uk](mailto:secretary@fwheritage.co.uk)**

**Fill in the booking form enclosed**

**or sign up at The Cottage on a Tuesday morning**

## **Other Events in the District Supported by The Trust**

### **The Holland Brook Story and The Tendring Hundred The Gunfleet Estuary, Storms and Wrecks, Ancient Boundaries, Defending the Coast and a Place for Leisure and Sport**

**Saturday, 20 April, 10:00 am to 4:00 pm**

The Holland Brook and Kirby Brook, which forms part of the boundary of Frinton and Great Holland, is one of the topics for an exhibition to be held on Saturday 20 April at Tendring Village Hall, which is located opposite the Parish Church of St. Edmund. At this free-to-enter exhibition there will also be a book launch telling for the first time the story of the Holland Brook, its tributaries, crossing places and its once great estuary named the Gunfleet. This former estuary, now the Frinton Golf Links and the Holland Haven Country Park, was once a place for trading and was busy with shipping until the 17<sup>th</sup> century when shifting shingle choked its entrance. The ancient Hundred Meeting place was alongside the river as it was previously recorded, at the village of Tendring.

At the exhibition there will be other local history groups, an illustrated presentation, the new book signing and light refreshments. Organised by the Clacton Victoria County History Group, who 'Investigate the Local History of the Tendring District.' We will be pleased to welcome you between 10:00 am and 4:00 pm.

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### **The Naze - What's it Worth, to Us, to Wildlife and the Planet Environmental Day, Saturday, 1 June, 10:00 am to 4:00 pm**

Aligned to World Environment Day, Naze Protection Society (NPS) is organising a day at the Columbine Centre that will bring together a number of organisations, including Essex University, Hutchinson Ports and East Anglia Wetlands Project. These organisations are committed to supporting NPS in managing erosion on the Naze and will be part of this community event. They will demonstrate how they hope to support the community in addressing some of these issues. Details of speakers and associated activities will be published in all the usual places. Please save the date and a keep a watch for more information about the speakers from stakeholder organisations and associated activities. We hope this can be an annual event for the community to have the opportunity to understand more about the status of our wild open space.

## Postcards From . . . Frinton's Sea Front

Book review by Tim Foster

After a number of unforeseen delays, the latest book from the Trust has finally been printed. This one, like the publication about Walton-on-the-Naze, is based in the main, on postcard images.

I consider it well worth the wait. It is full of information about the seafront in general, as well as a fairly concise record of the properties originally built along The Esplanade, starting with the Golf Club along to Cliff Way, including the beginnings of Frinton Park Estate and a fascinating description of the short lived Frinton Lido. If successful (and built on sound footings) it's interesting to wonder whether this Lido would have survived the 1950s or even wartime.

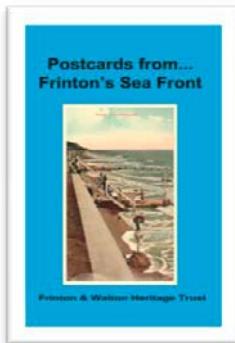
The information and pictures dealing with the construction of the promenade and sea defences make interesting reading, and one can only imagine how hard the work must have been in building all this, bearing in mind the lack of technology and large mechanical vehicles at the time.

Of all the roads in Frinton, The Esplanade must be the one that has seen the most changes. The demolition of a number of substantial hotels and the redevelopment of most of the houses with very large gardens postwar, has meant that lots of good, mostly Edwardian, property has been lost. Many still remain though, to give that timeless feel to the place, and this book gives a nice glimpse of what has been lost. Where possible, some details of who actually commissioned these houses has been given. I found this interesting because it presents a further window into the type of people who actually chose to own houses here at Frinton's inception; many of which survive to the present day.

We discover that some of the current property has been in the same hands for many decades and let us hope that in future, the existing houses seen in this book will be appreciated enough to warrant their preservation.

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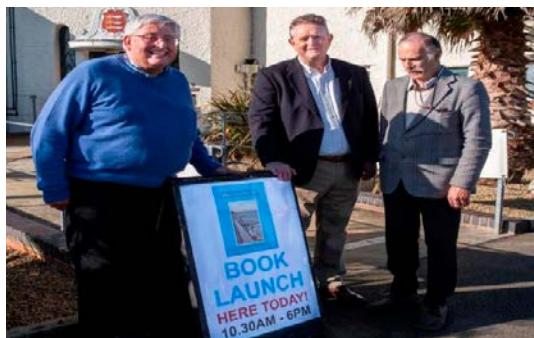
**If you haven't got your copy yet, there is an order form enclosed in this issue. As a member you get a £2 discount.**



## Book Launch, Saturday 24 February 2024

The Trust had a very successful day. Many people came to buy the book and stayed to look at Liz's exhibition on 40 years of The Trust and watch the pictures from the book on a loop on the TV screen. The Golf Club were generous in giving us a constant supply of tea and coffee all day.

Photos are courtesy of Martin Leech, CPAGB



## **Notes from The Potting Shed**

from Pat, Pauline and June

Well it is nearly that time of the year again and gardens need tending too. Looking to see what has survived the winter, what to change, perhaps pulling out plants or planting new ones.

Here in the Potting Corner, people donate cuttings of plants they have too much of and want to thin out and plants they no longer want; usually all to create space for newer plants in their garden. This is where our volunteers can help and make money for the Trust by potting up your donations of plants and cuttings. They then can be sold on at very affordable prices on the Tuesday coffee mornings and Cottage Garden Events throughout the year.

We are getting so well known for our variety of plants that people often pop in when volunteers are working in the garden to buy or ask advice. We are not experts, just love working in the garden with like-minded people.

Occasionally, we also have surplus produce on sale from members' allotments and vegetable patches. We will be pleased to see you on Tuesday Coffee Mornings and welcome any donations; the sales all help to boost the Trust's funds and volunteers are always welcome.

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### **Surplus Fruit**

Rachel is busy making her renowned marmalade ready for our Spring Fayre in April. Looking to the future and jam making, if you have surplus fruit please bear her in mind. In particular she will be short of blackcurrants as her previous supplier has given up his allotment. Donations can be dropped off to the Cottage on a Tuesday morning or collection can be arranged.

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**And, don't forget to get baking for the Spring Fayre on Saturday, 27 April! Please contact Ann on 01255 852914 regarding your contributions.**

## From the Archive

### Reminiscences of Gina Butler about her father, Thomas Allen, in the Second World War

When talking with Gina Butler about her memories of Frinton and Walton from the 1930s and her family experiences during the Second World War, she mentioned that she had lodged a memory story in the Trust's archives. Liz Bruce, the Trust's Archivist, located the piece and it is a wonderful 'picture' in words of a lesser known example of how our coast and the Backwaters were protected throughout the War. Gina's father was Thomas Allen who became one of the most famous stamp dealers in the World.

'Early in 1940, my father, Tom Allen, a well-known personality in the area, who had served in the Navy in World War I, was asked by the Admiralty to organise and run a small boat patrol off the Walton Backwaters to prevent the Germans from landing personnel from small craft in the many creeks and inlets. The patrol covered the area between Holland Gap and the Harwich Breakwater and had two moorings at Stone Point.

Tom started by requisitioning the Walton Yacht Club so that the crews should have somewhere suitable to live. He rented the building on a fully repairing lease. This was unacceptable to the Admiralty and when they received an account for the rent, they informed my father "they never rented, only purchased". My father told them in no way would he allow them to purchase – with tax payers' money – a building which was not worth anything and if they didn't like it, he would pay the rent! The Admiralty reluctantly paid up and at the end of the War handed back the building in excellent condition.

He requisitioned three local boats – *The Girl Pat*, *Latona* and a third whose name I cannot remember. Some of the crews were local men but others – seamen and petty officers – were posted to Walton. Although a civilian at that time, my father was known as Naval-Officer-in-Charge, Frinton. Later, for a short time, a Naval Captain, Captain Cavendish, was appointed Flag-Officer-in-Charge, Frinton. My father had devised a system of booms across the Backwaters' channels and inlets that consisted of floating timbers (taken from Walton Pier) joined by chains and staples, which were made by Mr Oxborrow (John's father) at the Forge in Kirby-le-Soken, who said he could make them in his sleep, he made so many. Claude Oxley helped to manhandle the booms into place. Only one boat went out at a time; it patrolled an eight-hour watchwith, I think, a crew of two or three. Crewmembers included Albert

Oxley, seaman mechanic; Eddie Oxley, petty officer; William (known as Wig) Oxley, petty officer; Bill Banham, Seaman and Fred Bedwell, petty officer. If a boat was short of a crewman, my father would go out with them, often at very short notice. At first they had no defence but later on had a Maxim gun which was transferred from boat to boat as required. There were also two Lee Enfield rifles and a box of Mills bombs. There was a depot ship, *Good Intent*, moored at Hedge End. She was a gaff-rigged cutter and was owned by John Hopkins of Kirby Quay. [Later on Pat Conley owned her]. She was used for keeping petrol and cooking occasional meals.

*Gunboat patrolling Walton Backwaters*

During the Battle of Britain, my father was out at dawn and saw a German plane shoot at an airman who had baled out. He immediately went to the scene and picked up the body. I can remember him saying, "he was about 19 and still in his pyjamas".



On a lighter note – the Resident Naval Officer received notification

of a summons from the Admiralty saying one of the patrol boats had been caught in a Harwich searchlight fishing. The owner of the boat, M. Darlinson of Walton, received a formal summons as his boat still carried its Harwich registration. He was furious. The RNO asked my father about this, who said "Yes, they were fishing – I encourage it because I know they are awake and not sitting up some small creek asleep". The Captain asked him "Do you catch anything?" "Oh yes", said my father (who was a very keen Walton sea fisher!). The Captain tore up the summons, nothing more was heard and we all enjoyed the fresh Dover soles and plaice! Wild fowling was also a popular way of supplementing the diet. One night Wig Oxley pointed out that there was "a lot of duck about", so he was put ashore on Skipper's Island and shot about 12 to 14 fowl.

My father subsequently served in the Royal Navy as Operations Officer on the staff of the Flag Officer Western Approaches at Liverpool for the duration of the War.'

Georgina Butler, 18 March 2009

## Needed

Gio Telot has unfortunately, due to pressure of work, had to give up managing the Trust's Website, so we are now looking for a volunteer to maintain it. To keep the website up to date with Trust events and news is a vital role as, in these modern times, this is a vital communication tool.

Gio has provided the following job description:

### Web Administrator

No formal experience or knowledge is required but a basic understanding of IT and the use of computers and a willingness to learn new skills is essential to update the Frinton & Walton Heritage Trust Website. The website uses a GUI (Graphic User Interface). This enables anyone with limited or no website administrative skills to update the website using a user-friendly 'front end'. No knowledge of HTML and CSS scripting is required. A brief introduction of how to use the Front End will be given. It's pretty much self-intuitive, but help is always on hand from the website provider help desk, either by phone or email.

If you feel you can help in any way please do get in touch. Pauline Jefferies has volunteered to look after our Facebook and Instagram pages, for which we are very grateful.

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### Obits Time by John Barter

It is with great sadness that we record the passing of several of our long-standing members who contributed to the work of the Trust over the years. The Trust offers condolences to their families and friends and was represented at the funerals and celebrations.

**Robert Bucke** was a local councillor and campaigner. His funeral, at St. Michael's Parish Church, Kirby-le-Soken on 3 November 2023, was exceptionally well attended which marks the love and respect in which he was held. He was buried in the churchyard at Kirby-le-Soken.

The life of **Valerie Bloom**, the widow of Frank Bloom, was celebrated on 1 February at a very full All Saint's Parish Church in Walton. She had campaigned and fund-raised for many organisations throughout her life,

including the Trust during its early days, the RNLI as well as the Parish Church. During her grandson's very full tribute I learned that she had from childhood an affinity with the sea and boating. As a member of the Oxley and Bloom families in Walton, she was involved with the Walton and Frinton Yacht Club and also trained for and became licenced to manage *The Lady Kent* tripper boat from the Albion Breakwater when her husband, Frank, was Coxswain on the Walton lifeboat during training and 'shouts'.

More recently, we acknowledge the passing of **David Ashton** who supported many organisations in the area, including the Trust. He was a local solicitor before retiring and would play the piano in local residential homes such as Read House, among his many other activities helping others. A real gentleman, a thanksgiving was held at St. Mary Magdalene Parish Church, Frinton, on 23 February 2024.

We have recently been notified by **Claire Ferreira**'s daughter, Ruth, that her mother passed away peacefully on 8 February 2024. Bill and Claire moved closer to their daughter in Wimbledon in December so they were able to be supported by the family. Her Email continued with:

"Bill would like you to mention Claire's death to those that knew her. They have such happy memories of their involvement with the society and good friends made there".

A memorial tea will be held at Frinton Golf Club on 27 March. The family would like anyone who knew Claire to please attend. Please RSVP to John Barter if you wish to attend so he can pass on likely numbers to the family. Telephone 01255 852993 or Email [chairman@fwheritage.co.uk](mailto:chairman@fwheritage.co.uk)

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**If you haven't renewed your membership you will find a renewal form enclosed with this newsletter.  
Subscriptions were due at 1 January 2024.**

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**Copy Deadline** for next Newsletter [2024 2 of 3]

**Contributions by:** 1 June 2024

**Publication Date:** 1 July 2024

## Diary of Trust Events

**Saturday to Monday, 30 March to 1 April 2024, 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm**  
Cottage Museum and Trevor Bright Railway Museum open. See page 12.

**Tuesday, 2 April, 2024, 7:00 pm for 7:30 p.m**

*Memories, London by the Thames, and later as a City of London Guide* by Ian Kirby. Social Evening, McGrigor Hall. See page 13.

**Saturday, 20 April, 2024, 10:00 am to 4:00 pm**

**Victoria County History at Tendring Village Hall** – Trust Stall and Exhibition. See page 15.

**Saturday, 27 April, 2024 10:30 am to 1:00 pm**

**Spring Fayre** in the Cottage Garden. Admission £1. See page 13.

**Tues 28 May, 2024, Annual General Meeting, 7:00 pm for 7:30 pm**

McGrigor Hall. See page 24.

**Wednesday, 29 May, 2024, 11:00 am to 1:00 pm**

**40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Event** – Oak Apple Day, Coffee Morning in June and Tom Dormant's Wildflower Meadow. See page 14.

**Saturday, 1 June, 2024, 10:00 am to 4:00 pm**

**The Naze - What's it Worth, to Us, to Wildlife and the Planet**

Environmental Day, Naze Protection Society at The Columbine Centre, Walton-on-the-Naze. See page 15.

**Friday, 21 June, 2024, 6:00 pm to 10:00 pm**

**40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Event** – Mid Summer Barbecue in Crossing Cottage Garden. See Page 14.

**Saturday, 27 July, 2024, 10:30 am to 1:00 pm**

**Bric-a-Brac Fair** - Admission £1.

**Saturdays 3, 10, 17, 27, 31 August, 2024, 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm**

Cottage/Railway Museums, special openings for the summer season.

**Thursday, 22 August, 2024, 1:30 pm**

**40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Event** – Picnic & *Annie Get Your Gun*. See page 14.

## Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of Frinton & Walton Heritage Trust will be held on Tuesday, 28 May, 2024 in the McGrigor Hall at 7:00 for 7:30 pm. The Agenda and relevant papers will be sent out nearer the time.

The AGM is your opportunity to air your views and to hear details of the Trust's exciting plans for the future. If you have questions about the Trust and its work please send your questions to the Secretary well in advance so that points can be researched and an appropriate response be made by your Committee. The Trust depends on the enthusiasm of all its volunteers and supporters. Just by being a member and advocating for the Trust to your friends, family and neighbours is such a tremendous help and is vital for it work in the future.

Any questions should be sent to the Honorary Secretary, Linda Ellis, at Crossing Cottage, Station Approach, Frinton-on-Sea, CO13 9JT., or Email: [secretary@fwheritage.co.uk](mailto:secretary@fwheritage.co.uk)



Ask your friends to join the Trust!

For further information about the Trust, contact the Honorary Secretary, Linda Ellis on 01255 852993 or email: [secretary@fwheritage.co.uk](mailto:secretary@fwheritage.co.uk)

Visit our website [fwheritage.co.uk](http://fwheritage.co.uk)

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