

Frinton & Walton Heritage Trust



NEWSLETTER [2021: 3 of 3]

Winter 2021 / 2022



“Oh, What a Lovely Day!”

See article on page 16.

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Report & Thoughts from the Chair

John Barter

Since the Annual General Meeting in June, the Trust has been very busy and so our own household has been filled with Trust activity too, including photography of artefacts for the digital database by Emma Filby's student, Georgie, under the guidance of our Archivist, Liz Bruce. In August, Linda and I hosted the first full Executive Committee Meeting since the COVID-19 lockdown under a gazebo in our back garden. As COVID-19 restrictions have lifted, we feel more able to do things whilst still being mindful of protecting those who are more vulnerable which is still so important. Our Sales Days are arranged with COVID-19 protection in mind.

Frinton Crossing Cottage

Work commenced on the refurbishment of the 1867 Crossing Cottage headquarters. Liz Bruce, Mo Collins and June Dormant first packed up the displays and artefacts on the ground floor and the smaller paper archives were moved to the upper floor. The plan chest containing all the maps and larger house plans were wrapped, drawer by drawer, and moved to our external storage. Finally, on 18 August, a team of volunteers cleared the larger artefacts and furniture into store leaving the ground floor empty and ready for the maintenance team under the direction of Alan Bowler.

We will be using some of the COVID-19 grant monies to improve the heating and make the rear room into a more useful facility where the public and members can meet with the Archival Team without having to climb the precipitous staircase to the Joan Barter Room (the Archivist's Office) and the David Rex Room (the Archival Research Room). The first room on the ground floor will be made into a sitting room with some display cabinets and boards so that we can accommodate our visitors and volunteers on wetter days through the winter.

Hopefully, this work will help the Cottage become 'drier'; there is a dehumidifier permanently working overtime, even during the summer, in an attempt to keep our paper archival material free from damp, mould and woodlice! The Cottage, originally the Gate Keeper and Signaller's living accommodation, also needs substantial repairs to the exterior. However, due to the proximity of the railway lines and the possibility of 'arcing' from the power lines, we are unable to do this work ourselves. We are trying to identify the officers within Abellio / Greater Anglia Railway who would have the responsibility to help us with this work.

Other major matters have continued to be worked upon by the officers and committee during the summer months.

Lifeboat *James Stevens No.14*

This Trust artefact has become a real concern as it has been a victim of the COVID-19 restrictions. Freshwater and the sun have caused huge problems for the wooden boat with an attack of the fungus inherent in larch. She is now out of the water, the fungus treated, dried out and a new larger cover fitted to keep her dry. The Committee and volunteers are reviewing how best to determine her long-term future within or without the Trust. Refurbishment costs will be huge and we unfortunately do not have a young enough volunteer team to take on the day-to-day management of the boat, let alone the repairs. As we are all aware, *James Stevens No.14* is special: on the National Historic Ships Register, one of the very few existing Norfolk & Suffolk class lifeboats, and one of the first lifeboats to have a petrol engine fitted, in 1905. She is one of the most important vessels in the country. However, her long-term care may now be well beyond the Trust's means and resources.

Other activities

As Chair, I have attended a number of Zoom meetings with the Community Voluntary Service, Tendring (CVST); represented the Trust together with Robin Cooper at the Hamford Water Management Committee Meeting in October; met with Councillor Graham Butland, Portfolio Holder for Arts & Culture, Essex County Council, in the Cottage garden; and was invited back to give a talk on the history of Frinton's beach to Myland (Mile End) WI at the Highwoods Community Centre, Colchester, one year on from giving a similar talk on *Postcards from ... Walton-on-the-Naze* to the same group.

The Imperial Hall

The latest news on our application to Tendring District Council (TDC) to designate The Imperial Hall in Pole Barn Lane, Frinton, an Asset of Community Value (ACV) is that it is still under review. The Imperial Hall, constructed in 1927/8 as a purpose-built theatre with a capacity of 400 seats, was also a meeting hall and social centre for Frinton and its environs. Frinton Summer Theatre used the hall from its founding in 1934 until the day of the outbreak of the Second World War in September 1939. Political meetings and cinema presentations also took place in the building. It is reported that it still has its proscenium arch, and sprung floor for dancing and much of its infrastructure.

Used as a furniture store since at least the 1960s by a series of companies, it is situated where Pyrkes Removals park their vans on its forecourt, with the building used for storage. It is the last public hall building in this area that could eventually be used by the Trust and others for exhibitions, artefact storage and small meetings. Our next step is to encourage and lobby TDC Portfolio Holders and

Councillors to visit the Trust so we can explain the benefits to the extended community of The Imperial Hall should it become available in future.

Hamford Water Management Committee

The Committee meets twice a year with representatives of the many organisations who use and influence the life of the Walton Backwaters and are able to talk with each other about both the water and the land around this Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). This was the first physical meeting since COVID-19 and most of the discussion revolved around the Harwich Haven Authority's dredging works in the main channel into Harwich and Felixstowe, with the discharge of sand and gravel onto the north-east corner of Horsey Island.

Essex County Council Cabinet

ECC held its private cabinet meeting recently at the Essex Wildlife Trust at the Naze. After lunch at Walton & Frinton Yacht Club, the various portfolio holders visited relevant areas of the district. Graham Butland, after seeing Michelle at The Naze Tower, came on to the Cottage garden to meet me, Tim Foster, Linda Ellis and Tony Barrett who showed him around the Trevor Bright Railway Museum. We explained the workings of the Trust, our plans for the future and the many projects we have underway at this time. He expressed a very positive attitude to the work we do. Thanks to Mark Platt, our Essex County Councillor, for arranging Graham's visit.

As the new Chair, I have been amazed at the dedication of our volunteers, visitors and supporters who have attended our Garden Sales, evening talks and continued to work on our various projects. Thank you to all.

The Trevor Bright Railway Museum (1)

Tony Barrett

As was feared, it was not possible to open the museum this year. COVID-19 continues to impinge upon the work of the Trust in general and the museum is no exception. Maintaining sufficient ventilation in the museum for visitors at the moment is not possible. Ways are being explored to solve this problem in time for Easter 2022 but no-one can be really certain that a solution will be found. The offer to members to arrange private visits did not receive much support although a number of non-members have visited.

Work on the refurbishment of the old railway gates, presently in the station yard, should begin soon and it is hoped that it will be completed by Easter next year, although that may be a little optimistic. The display boards in the booking hall at the station have now been completed and are available to be seen, normally in the mornings.

The Walton August Visitors' Association

Liz Bruce

The number of visitors returning year after year to Walton led to the formation in 1920 of the Walton August Visitors' Association. Its members, mainly from the East End of London, organised functions for the whole of the month of August. Concert Parties were organised; tennis tournaments were played, initially at Appleton's Courts on Woodberry Way and then at Harper's Courts on the Bathhouse Meadow by Hall Lane. Football matches with Walton Town Football Club were held at low tide on Pier Beach during the second or third week of August. Cricket matches were played on the beach by both boys and girls, and ladies and men. They played away at Kirby, Frinton and sometimes at Clacton against their club teams. Trevor Bailey CBE and Sir Cyril Hawker started their cricketing careers here.

The same families visited Walton through the generations renting the same rooms in the town and even the same beach huts. Most of the beach huts used by the visitors were on the Frinton side of the pier towards the Winchester Breakwater. Many of the huts on that slope were painted red and white. These belonged to the pier, as did all the land. The huts did not have bottled gas or any means of heating water. So there was one hut with a 'copper' which boiled water, and the maids, in their long black dresses and white aprons and hats, would go along with teapots in the afternoon to collect water for 'afternoon tea', which was often taken with a lace tablecloth and tiered cake racks.

An annual dinner in London in the winter was also held which brought in revenue, some of which was used to pay for diving boards and swimming rafts on the Winchester Beach.



This brochure, in our Trust Archives, shows the programme of one of the re-union dinners at the Great Eastern Hotel, London, in 1926. It is signed by some of the financial supporters attending the dinner. On the cover page (left) B Ingram Bryant is depicted in cartoon.

The double-page spread in the brochure sets out the programme for the event. The dinner menu makes good reading: various *hor d'oeuvres*; tomato soup; a choice of main course: either Scottish salmon with mussels, lamb with mint sauce, green beans and new potatoes or chicken; desserts such as meringue and peach melba; then coffee. All this was followed by light refreshments during the evening! Entertainment was with artistes singing, mirth, and music; also a host of ballroom dances with requests.

A prime mover in the Association was B Ingram Bryant, president from 1920 to 1931. He was affectionately known as “Grandpa Bryant”. The memorial to him in the form of a drinking fountain in front of the *Pier Hotel* is unfortunately no longer there as it was removed when the Second World War broke out and was never recovered. After he passed away, a new president was elected from the committee annually.

The Association gradually developed and each year they put on a concert on the pier. The existing production in the pier theatre gave way for one night for the concert, and in return all the ‘Visitors’ supported the season’s productions by going *en bloc*. The money raised went to charities. All the performers were amateurs and they practised most mornings in the ballroom of the Pier Hotel. The women improvised and made the costumes whilst sitting in their beach huts. Special songs were written featuring many of the ‘Visitors’. The first concert was held in 1923.

The annual sandcastle competitions were an early forerunner of those arranged by Frinton & Walton Heritage Trust from the mid 1980s and now carried on by the Walton Carnival Association. It is recorded that in 1937 Mrs H F Higgins presented prizes at Walton, with 12-year-old Stanley Rix of Frinton winning first prize with his leaf designs.

After the War, the next generation of visitors gradually came back to Walton and it was not long before a new committee was formed to organise the sports. The prize money was raised by holding two parties in the ballroom of the Pier Hotel. Sadly the committee realised that times were changing: more people were holidaying abroad, and they held their last function in 1966.

Disclaimer

The publication of material in this newsletter
does not imply that the views or opinions expressed
are shared by the editor,
Frinton & Walton Heritage Trust,
or any persons other than the named author.

Diary of Trust Events

Please note all events must be considered 'provisional' and are subject to any government restrictions.

Frinton's Crossing Cottage Garden, Station Approach, Frinton-on-Sea:

Tuesday Coffee Mornings in the Garden, 10am to noon: on 19 October we started the winter coffee mornings, as usual on the third Tuesday of the month. We serve tea, coffee and biscuits and there is an opportunity to purchase preserves, plants from the garden and any surplus home-grown produce that is donated. We will also have for sale local history books, posters and cards. Come and enjoy the calm and tranquillity of the gardens. Unfortunately due to COVID-19 restrictions, we will not be able to open the two museums.

Other Events

Christmas Lunch

Tuesday, 7 December at Frinton Golf Club: 12.15pm for 12.30pm. £35 per head for three courses with tea/coffee and mince pies. **It is essential to book by midnight on Monday, 29 November and give your menu choices.** Sign up at the coffee morning at the Cottage on 16 November, email: secretary@fwheritage.co.uk or phone Tony Barrett on (01255) 674678. The menu choices appear on the opposite page.

New Year's Day Walk

Saturday, 1 January 2022 led by Mike Talbot. Meet at the Crossing Cottage at 11am, followed by mulled wine, sausage rolls and mince pies provided by the Trust on return to the Cottage. Cost: £3 contribution towards the wine and food. Members and visitors welcome.

Social Evenings in the McGrigor Hall, Fourth Avenue, Frinton-on-Sea 7.15pm for 7.30pm; admission £2 members, £3 non-members

Tuesday, 1 February: *Frinton's Front* by John Barter An introduction and preview of our long-awaited book, *Postcards from . . . Frinton's Front*.

Tuesday, 1 March: *Coast to Coast* by David Bavister An illustrated talk about a walk undertaken in support of charities in Kenya.

Tuesday, 5 April: *Memories of Blowers and Cooper, 1903 to 1998* by Robin Cooper Robin, grandson of Blowers and Cooper founder George Cooper, will share his memories of Frinton's ironmongers and hardware store and its history in an illustrated talk.

Christmas Lunch Menu



Choose one of the following three starters:

Goats' Cheese, Pear & Walnut Tartine

goats' cheese, onion marmalade, roasted pears and walnuts
on a toasted fruit bread croute

Ham Hock Terrine with Pineapple & Ginger Relish

served with sourdough croutes

Poached Salmon & Prawn Marie-Rose Cocktail

with pickled salad & mini onion loaf

Choose one of the following four main courses:

(all to be served with braised red cabbage & green vegetable selection):

Traditional Roast Turkey Dinner

turkey breast with sage & onion stuffing, chunky pig-in-blanket,
roast potatoes, roast parsnip, bacon-buttered brussel sprouts & red wine gravy

Beef Bourguignon

rich beef bourguignon, braised carrots, horseradish mash & bacon crisps

Smoked Haddock Filo Parcel

smoked haddock, spring onion & cream cheese-filled
filo parcel on a giant couscous kedgeree with a coconut curried-fish sauce

Wild Mushroom, Roasted Squash & Chestnut Roast

with garlic roasted new potatoes & a vegan red-wine jus

Choose one of the following four desserts:

Sticky Toffee Pudding

with butterscotch sauce & clotted cream ice cream

Black Forest Bombe

ganache-covered chocolate mousse on a brownie base
& sour cherry compote

Caramelised Tarte au Citron

brûlée-topped lemon tart with raspberry coulis & sorbet

Cheese & Biscuits

a selection of European cheeses with fruit, crackers and chilli jam

*** **

Tea, Coffee & Mince Pie

See opposite for more details of date, venue, cost and booking arrangements.

Volunteers' Day

John Barter

On the afternoon of Saturday, 28 August, during the Bank Holiday Weekend, the Trust held a Volunteers' Day in the Cottage Garden. Refreshments of tea and cake were the enticement to attract our volunteers, old and new. We were saying "thank you" to all those who have helped with stewarding at the Walton Maritime Museum, worked on and crewed *James Stevens No.14* and also helped at the Crossing Cottage with maintenance, gardening, archival research and managing our coffee mornings and sale days.

The weather was drizzly but, undeterred, a number of people came. We hoped to attract some new volunteers and members too. Turnout was not high, but the various tables representing the different activities within the Trust had a lot of interest. Feedback from those that joined us indicates that we should run another day next summer, probably not on a Bank Holiday when the weather can be less clement!



(Above right) The Maintenance Team in the new arbour: (l-r) Alan Bowler, Tom Madden, Roger Lee, Martin Leech.



(Left) Newsletter: David Wicks & Rachel Baldwin with Gillian Knights. Beyond is Liz Bruce and Barbara Barrett at the archive display.



(Right) Trevor Bright Railway Museum: Tony Barrett with Martin Berns and his wife, Marianne.

From the Editor

Digital articles and / or images for inclusion in the first edition of this newsletter for 2022 should be sent to secretary@fwheritage.co.uk. Please ensure that material for inclusion is submitted no later than **Saturday, 12 February**. Material received after this deadline will not be included. Information to be incorporated into the 'Diary of Trust Events' section should be sent, preferably by email, to Linda Ellis (ellis.barter@gmail.com) by **Saturday, 5 February**.

Walton Town Show with The Naze Protection Society Fun Day John Barter

On August Bank Holiday Sunday, Linda and I, together with Liz Bruce and several other Trust members, supported the Walton Town Show & Fun Day with The Naze Protection Society on the Bath House Meadow. Liz had prepared display boards with a special exhibition on Walton and the Naze and information about the Trust. We also had our usual sales table of local history books, cards, prints and posters.



The primary object of the day, despite having fun, was to raise awareness of the state of the Naze and raise funds for The Naze Protection Society and their ongoing work to halt the erosion of our coastline. Each gabion, a stone-filled basket, costs just over £300. The first stage of the estimated £8 million needed to protect The Naze and the creeks through to the Backwaters is £20,000 and the event raised approximately £3,500 towards this target.

The Trust was joined in the gazebo on the Bath House Meadow by other local societies with displays on geology and fossils. The event was well attended and we were kept busy during the day talking to local visitors about the area and the Trust. Useful contacts were made which has resulted in subsequent additions to the Trust's archives as well as recruitment of new members. Some time ago the Trust had received a donation of a large box of brand-new postcards of Walton. The cards were passed on to The Naze Protection Society for their fundraising efforts.

Garden Delights

by Marion Meer

I'm sure that I'm not the only one who used to sing 'The Teddy Bears' Picnic' as a child: 'If you go down to the woods today, you're sure of a big surprise....'. Well, if you've popped into the Cottage Garden recently, you too will have had a big surprise at how much we've managed to achieve this summer.

First, led by Alan, the Maintenance Men, a group which grows all the time. Not only does the new arbour look great but it will soon be topped by a beautifully-restored weathervane. Then, the new compost bins are nearly ready as I write. These are being made so solidly that they will last, if not for 100 years, certainly for a lot longer than those we had before. The gardeners are very grateful and looking forward eagerly to using them. The ongoing problem of getting rid of the rubbish is also solved. One skip load has already gone and further skips will remove the rubbish regularly. And the next project? It could be that the plough is restored to its former glory – just watch this space!

Next the Gardeners. We are really pleased that Pat and Linda have joined us on Tuesday mornings and what a difference they have made. The four main beds look so much tidier and we can actually assess them and what needs doing to them. The long border next to the road is slowly being tackled too and some lovely small shrubs, which had been hidden by grass and weeds, can now be seen. There's still a lot to do here but an area which once reduced one to despair, no longer does so. What a relief!

The woodland has been tackled too. Again, grass has been cleared and ivy cut back, so that all can see the cyclamen and autumn crocus, which are so lovely and almost unexpected at this time of year. We are aware that several of the trees, both in the garden and at the Station, need work and that too will be carried out before spring arrives. It is true that the beds outside the cottage do not look at all attractive but we can only do so much each week and, once we have brought the garden back under control (and we're getting there), then we can look outside – and won't we and the rest of Frinton be pleased when we do.

Finally, if you've been to the Station recently, you'll have noticed that the beds are now edged with rustic logs, thus ending the problem of soil creep and making the Station Approach look so much tidier.



What's in a Name? The Name of the 'Road' Series John Barter

In my ignorance, I had always thought that Ashlyn's Road was named for Ashlyns School in Berkhamsted which I visited in the late 1980s to see a student production of *Joseph*. The obvious connection with Sir Richard Powell Cooper and the Cooper Estate, during the laying out and development of Frinton's Avenues after 1893, together with the names of Universities, colleges and schools to the east of Frinton, seemed to give me that impression. However, I now have a different and more likely theory. Ashlyns School was established in 1935 as the final location of the Thomas Coram Foundling Hospital, a children's charity which was established in London in 1739.

Ashlyn's Road begins at the junction of Fourth Avenue and Upper Fourth Avenue and ends at the entrance to the lane which leads to Frinton Cricket Club. A map of 1899, supplied with an auction catalogue of freehold plots for sale in Frinton, shows Upper Fourth, Upper Third, Fourth, Third and parts of Second Avenue. Ashlyn's Road is not named and is only made up as far as the top of Third Avenue. Beyond a cart track or lane heading for the fields and Witton Wood farm is barely indicated but was obviously planned to connect all the Avenues.



The first building to be constructed facing this new road was the Wesleyan Methodist Church in 1903, designed by the architect, William Hayne. The area of land, known locally as the Methodists' Green, was intended for a new triangular-shaped church to represent the Trinity such as was constructed in Clacton-on-Sea. The population of Wesleyan Methodists

in Frinton never outstripped the 112 seating capacity so the new church was not built but a new school room or church hall was constructed behind it in 1910, also designed by William Hayne.

The first houses built were the detached house, *Bramshill*, at the bottom of Upper Fourth Avenue but facing Ashlyn's Road, and the terrace of three houses, *Kingsleigh*, *Melmoth* (now *Sunnymead*) and *Ashlyn's*, all built in 1905/6. The architect was Edward Charles Homer who had worked at Frinton, first with Peter Schuyler Bruff on the original layout for Frinton at its inception as



a town and later designing a number of the early houses in the area. The Homer family, father, Edward, and his son, Ernest Charles, were involved in the Tomkins, Homer & Ley partnership of architects, surveyors, estate agents and developers that came to dominate much of the built landscape throughout the next 100 years. The builder of these four earliest houses in Ashlyn's Road was Alfred Hudson, but his life and building history in Frinton will make a separate article for this newsletter in the future!

My theory about the source of the Ashlyn's name is again based on Berkhamsted where the Cooper family made their money in a veterinary practice, William Cooper and Nephews, with the discovery and development of a sheep dip preparation called Cooper's Dip which took the world by storm. Jane Caddick, a local historian, wrote a marvellously-detailed biography of Sir Richard Powell Cooper and his family some years ago. A housing estate has recently been built on the site of the Cooper's sheep dip works in Berkhamsted where the arsenic- and sulphur-based product was made.

The earliest local records in Hertfordshire for the Ashlyn name is in a document dated 1314, naming a house owner, Reginal Asselyn. The house was sold in 1764 along with a garden, 200 acres of farmland, two orchards and additional forest land. Built on the site, *Ashlyn's Hall*, a Grade II* listed Regency-style villa, was completed in 1800 for James Smith, a member of the banking family which had founded Smith's Bank in Nottingham in 1699. The Hall went through a number of owners connected with the Smith and Dorrien banking families. The Estate was sold in 1859 to William Longman, son of the publisher Thomas Longman who founded the Longman Publishing Company. The Hall continued as a private house let to a succession of tenants. Between 1877 and 1911 the Hall was let to Richard Ashmole Cooper who inherited the the Cooper Baronetcy of Shenstone, Staffordshire from his father Richard Powell Cooper in 1913.

In Frinton, the Cooper Estate had a new Estate Office built in 1903: *Ashlyn's House*, designed by Homer & Son, facing on to Upper Fourth Avenue. It currently houses a small restaurant and a laundry. A flat was constructed as an upper floor at a later date.



Back in Ashlyn's Road, number 10, originally *Fairholme* but now called *Burcote*, was built by F H Durrant of Thomas & Co. in 1931. Next door to *Burcote* is *Willow Corner*, built before 1933 and originally named *Aston* but known by most Frintonians as *Thurso*. This is probably an R J Page design for Tomkins, Homer & Ley as it is similar to houses by him at the bottom of Upper Third Avenue.



The next houses built in Ashlyn's Road were also all designed by R J Page of Tomkins, Homer & Ley:

Peckwater, number 28, 1938, for Mrs Noel. In the 1960s it was renamed *Ardchoille* by the McGrigor family who moved from a house of the same name in First Avenue. The *McGrigor Hall* (originally the WI Hall) in Fourth Avenue is named for Mrs McGrigor. Her daughter, Heather, worked tirelessly for our Heritage Trust for many years;

Roseanne, now *Long Ridge*, number 30, 1937, for Mrs R Ottley (H J Ruscoe's mother-in-law);

Whiteladies, number 32, 1936, for H J Ruscoe.

Most of the other houses in Ashlyn's Road were built in the 1960s and 1970s. One notable resident was Jeanne Heal (1917-2010), a BBC presenter and producer during the Second World War and throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Also an author, her Frinton home was *Roundwood*, number 3 Ashlyn's Road. She is definitely a candidate for our Blue Plaque Project of prominent local women.

Finally, at the end of the road, Frinton Cricket Club (see below a postcard image dated 1929) moved from the Greensward to Witton Wood Farm in 1909, to land donated by Sir Richard Powell Cooper and remains a wonderful social and sporting centre in Frinton to this day.



“Oh, What a Lovely Day!”

Ann Gladwell

Saturday, 9 October proved to be a really lovely day in all ways.

As you are aware, we have not returned to the old format of a Spring Fayre in May and an Apple Day in October; rather we have concentrated on running several smaller Garden Days during the year. This was originally done in the light of COVID-19 restrictions and to avoid crowds building up in the garden area.

Having said that, this new way of organising our fundraising events in the Garden has proved to be successful on many fronts. With the old format, our popularity was in danger of putting us in a slightly unsafe place. With hundreds of



visitors often turning up, we were on course to exceed our capacity, which was quite worrying. Also, our wonderful, dedicated group of volunteers were often exhausted by the end of a long day ... especially if it was also wet and cold!

On 9 October, we saw our biggest event so far. As it was autumn, we were selling APPLES as usual, as well as jams, cakes, preserves, plants and jewellery, but there wasn't any bric-a-brac for sale, or a BBQ. This kept our visitors down to manageable numbers.

This was also the first time in many a long month that the refreshment stall was back in business. Hurrah! We've purposely stayed with the free-entry system, with visitors buying refreshments if they wanted to, rather than paying an entrance fee with the option of free tea, coffee and biscuits as part of the package. Again, this meant that the volunteers on the refreshment stall were not inundated with customers; there was no long crocodile of visitors winding down the pathway or clogging the walkways. It's true that less money is made with this system, but people gave generously on the day, and seemed more than happy to make use of John's donation box at the entrance gate, and it was undoubtedly much safer.



As I stated in my opening sentence, 9 October was a lovely day, with wonderful weather, good visitor numbers and a terrific atmosphere pervading the Garden. We continued the trend of providing free sandwiches to our volunteers if they



wanted them, as a small token of recognition for the time that they so generously give to the Trust's events.

And talking of generosity, many answered my plea for more cakes; as I've stated many times, we can only sell what we have. There were nearly thirty cake pledges, but we still sold out fairly rapidly. So, my plea has to

be repeated ... please, bake, bake, bake. The more we have, the more we sell!

And talking of generosity, and although I don't often highlight one individual's efforts, in this case, it cannot go unrecognised. As many of you know, just before COVID-19 entered our lives, Mary Dean passed away. She was a staunch supporter of the Trust in many and varied ways. Her good friends, Terence and Yvonne Towns, decided to mark her memory in a very practical way. Terence



made pots of preserves, baked several cakes and oodles of scones, and donated the lot to our Garden Sale in Mary's memory. I think this was such a lovely way to remember Mary and, obviously, it was also very lucrative for the Trust. So, thank you again, Terence and Yvonne.

And, I must mention the contribution that Rachel Baldwin continually makes to our garden sales. Just her donations of homemade jams, preserves and marmalade alone net between £300-£400.

I now need to broach the slightly contentious subject of entry times! Before that phrase COVID-19 entered our vocabulary, we kept strictly to time. If we said we'd open the Garden sale at 10.30am, then that's what we did. However, because we are still in a situation where larger numbers of people are not encouraged to congregate, we have tended to open approximately 15 minutes earlier than stated if a queue has started to form outside. This way of operating is not ideal, but we feel it is necessary to continue in this vein for the time being. Next year we may be able to revert to our old, and it has to be said, fairer way of admitting visitors.

Our latest Garden Sale raised over £1,200 in just over two hours! What an amazing result and all thanks to those ever present and willing volunteers. And moving forward to a, hopefully, brighter, more secure future, long may they continue to support the Trust's events. Thanks to one and all!



The images for this article, and the one below, were supplied by Carol Brewerton.

Cottage and 'Front of House'

Tim Foster

We were, at last, able to reopen the Crossing Cottage Garden on Tuesdays for the coffee mornings as the summer progressed. These mornings were not as busy as they were pre-pandemic, but I think this was to be expected. The main objective was to be seen to be open and therefore offering a return to normality.

There was some improvement in visitor numbers in the later weeks and it has to be borne in mind that both museums were closed. We have been aided by a number of extra volunteers which has been a boon, and I would like to thank them all for their input in the last weeks. Their presence on Tuesday mornings has helped the garden to improve a lot in the past month or so as well. The new loggia near the fence on the Connaught Avenue side is nearly completed, thanks to the efforts of Alan Bowler, Martin Leech, and Tom Madden. It just needs the weathervane to be finished and the loggia will provide a pleasant seating area for when we reopen next spring.



If any members would like to come along and lend a hand on Tuesday mornings, please feel free to visit us and, of course, have a coffee or tea. Please note that the winter coffee mornings are held on the third Tuesday of every month until March.

Members' Summer Outing Essex Collection of Art from Latin America (ESCALA) at the University of Essex Jacey Dias

The Trust was very privileged to have been offered a private viewing of Essex University's collection of Latin American Art. Along with six other members, Peter and I went to a fairly- deserted campus building next to Wivenhoe House Hotel on 9 September prior to the start of term. The art curator, Dr Sarah Demelo, was pleased to see us and confessed that, although a small group, we were giving her practice in showing the collection again to 'real people' post-lockdown!

I have always been fascinated by privately-held and stored art collections. Many of the big banks in the City have valuable art collections which they make available for viewings at various times and whilst working there, I was lucky enough to see a number of these. What intrigues me is how the art is acquired and how a collection is established. In our case ... how on earth does Essex University become the repository for the biggest South American art collection outside Latin America?

It transpired that a few initial bequests of Latin American art led to Essex acquiring a reputation in this specialised field and this attracted further donations, as well as purchases by the University. So one thing, quite randomly, led to another! In total they have over 750 pieces in their collection. The works are mostly stored in a secure room on large pull-out display boards and ranged from very colourful abstract works to some extremely moving politically-inspired pieces in more muted colours. One such group were the series of photographs of bicycles stencilled on the walls of houses in *Rosario*, the Argentinian home town of the artist, Fernando Traverso. Each bicycle represented one of his young student friends who had become part of the estimated 20,000 to 30,000 people known as *Los Desaparecidos* (The Disappeared). He had noticed that often a real bicycle left outside a home meant that the person owning it had been taken by the military junta and was likely to have been tortured and killed. The period of this military dictatorship was 1976 to 1983 and was commemorated in exhibitions 40 years on in 2016.



We were lucky to have seen this collection and, if the opportunity arises again, I would encourage other Trust members to visit.

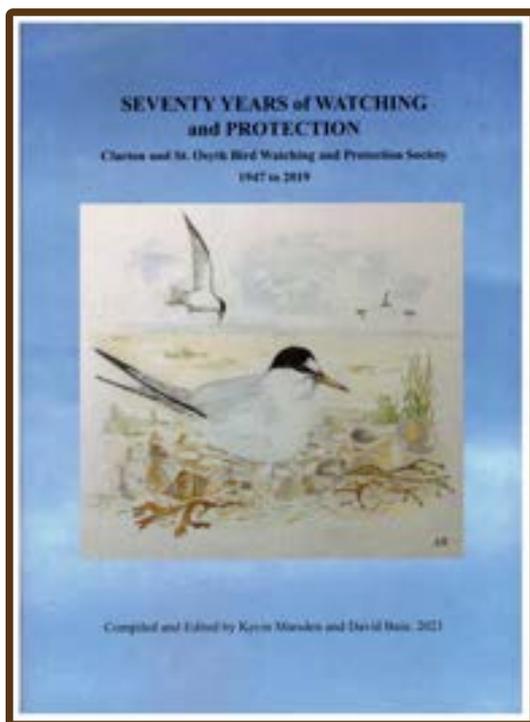
Counting Birds in the Walton Backwaters

Sue & Ted Maloney

Tuesday, 5 October saw the first of our social evenings at the McGrigor Hall. Perhaps due to caution, it was not as well attended as it deserved to be. Kevin Marsden gave the audience a wonderful illustrated talk and introduction to the joys and hazards of counting birds on predetermined dates, between November and March, over the last thirty years. The Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) is the principal scheme for monitoring the UK's wintering waterbird populations, providing an important indicator of their status and the health of wetlands.

Counts take place monthly across the country to build up a comprehensive picture of how many wintering waterbirds are present in the UK. Those of us who have been birdwatching on the Naze during the winter months can only imagine how much more daunting the conditions are when counting birds on the many areas accessible only by boat. On some occasions it is too rough to land.

Kevin began his talk with slides of flocks of birds on both the ground and in the sky and asked us to guess how many birds there were in view. A few brave souls



volunteered and in fact one answer was very close to the correct number. He explained that the technique is to count 10 birds of one species and then assess how many batches of 10 there are. We are talking huge numbers in some flocks. Obviously there are mixed flocks on the ground but to the practiced eye any variants stand out.

These counts are snapshots but, because they are undertaken by the same people on the same days throughout the season, any minor irregularities in the counts tend to be ironed out. A consistent picture emerges which, over time, enables trends in numbers and populations to build up with a high degree of accuracy.

It was amazing to discover the variety and diversity of birds we have on our doorstep. Some may be regular visitors but others may have gone off their usual migratory course, often due to bad weather and/or gales, and therefore constitute rarities. Even without these strays, though, the Backwaters are home to large flocks of wildfowl and waders, and the inlets and islands represent an important home for regulars like lapwing, redshank and avocet along with incoming migrants for whom they provide sheltered stopping off points on their journeys.

Kevin's talk was truly fascinating and underlined what a wealth of wildlife we have available to us here and his slides highlighted the beauty and unique appeal of the landscapes, islands and inlets of the Walton Backwaters.

The next social evening this season is on Tuesday, 2 November at 7.30pm when Jacey Dias will be speaking on *80 Years of Frinton Summer Theatre*. Please come along and join us.

The Trevor Bright Railway Museum (2)

Tony Barrett

In the spring of 2020 I was asked by the Essex and South Suffolk Community Rail Partnership (ESSCRP) to prepare information for a board to be erected on the platform at the station at Walton-on-the-Naze. This request was willingly accepted and the board was put up by the Partnership.

Many members will not have had an opportunity to view this board and it has been decided therefore that the elements regarding the railway should be published in this journal. The following is the first part of the text on the board together with some of the images shown there.

I have also been asked to provide similar information for the board on Frinton Station, which I hope to see completed by Easter 2022.

THE HISTORY OF WALTON-ON-THE-NAZE



In 1855 Peter Schuyler Bruff bought Burnt House Farm in Walton le Soken and began work on developing the town into a seaside resort. In 1862 Tendring Hundred Railway (T.H.R.) prepared plans to extend the Colchester line beyond Wivenhoe to Walton and to build a branch line to Walton from Mistley on the Harwich line of the Great Eastern Railway.

The extension of the line to Walton was to be in three phases:

Phase 1: Wivenhoe to Weeley

Phase 2: Weeley to Walton le Soken

Phase 3: Walton le Soken to Walton Channel where there would be a steamship landing place. This last section, of one mile, three furlongs and three-and-a-half chains, was never built but would have commenced at a junction one furlong before Walton station and run to Twyssel Creek (now known as the Twizzle).

Both the Walton extension and the Mistley branch line received the Royal Assent in July 1863, but a modification

was soon proposed. The Mistley to Walton branch line would pass through Bradfield and Tendring to join the Colchester line at Thorpe-le-Soken so avoiding duplication of coverage of the latter section to Walton. Although the change was ratified in 1864, within five years the plan for a branch line from Mistley had been abandoned altogether and the line was never built, but there is still one bridge standing over where this abandoned line was to have run.

On 17 May 1867 Walton Station was opened at the end of the new line built by T.H.R. from Wivenhoe to Walton; it was much needed. For ten months from July 1866 passengers had been conveyed from Kirby Cross to Walton by horse-drawn omnibus!

Walton was a prime example of the railway 'mania' of the mid-nineteenth century. Bruff fully understood the potential of Walton as a seaside resort and arranged for the pier to be extended so that paddle steamers could drop off visitors from London as well as from other east coast towns such as Yarmouth. A popular day trip was to embark at the Tower of London for Walton and then return home by train.

Walton railway station comprised two platform faces, an engine shed, turntable, freight siding and passenger carriage stabling sidings. These remained until electrification in 1962 which coincided with the demise of freight traffic and the closure of the goods yard in 1966.

In the early years, the railway service comprised three or four trains daily to Colchester, with Sunday services only running during the summer months. The new line soon became important for transporting freight, bringing coal to the area and allowing farmers to transport their cattle to market, rather than relying on the traditional barges.

L.N.E.R. & G.S.N. COMPANIES.
 4th June to Mid-September, 1938.
 CIRCULAR BOAT AND RAIL TRIPS
 DAILY (Fridays excepted)
 A Delightful Day's Outing to
CLACTON - on - SEA (Commencing 4th JUNE)
WALTON-on-the-NAZE (Commencing 9th JULY)
 or **FELIXSTOWE** (Commencing 9th JULY)
 (Weather and other circumstances permitting)
 BY THE
"CRESTED EAGLE"
"LAGUNA BELLE" or other Steamer
 (Felixstowe and Walton passengers change at Clacton)
RETURN FARE 12/- Third Class Rail, Saloon Boat.
 Outward by Boat and Return by Rail.
 "Laguna Belle" "Crested Eagle"
 Commencing 4th June 9th July
 Tower Pier dep. 8 15 9 30
 Greenwich " 8 45 9 50
 N. Woolwich " 9 15 10 15
 Clacton arr. 1 30 2 0
 Outward by Rail and Return by Boat.
 RAIL.
 Liverpool Street dep. Clacton, Walton or Felixstowe arr. By any train on day of issue.
 BOAT.
 "Laguna Belle" "Crested Eagle"
 Felixstowe dep. Walton " " Steamer as advertised (Change at Clacton)
 Clacton " 3 30 4 30
 N. Woolwich " 7 30 8 15
 Greenwich " 8 0 8 45
 Tower Pier arr. 8 30 9 15
 (Except June 20th & 27th and July 10th & 17th)
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Trains were suddenly a conduit for commerce, allowing people to travel to

work in Colchester and London. A good London connection was provided at Colchester and by the summer of 1870 a two-hour journey was possible and was a definite factor in encouraging commuter settlement in the area. The subsequent introduction of two daily through services in the 1890s was a direct recognition of this. Changing at Thorpe was still necessary for some passengers until a procedure was adopted for the Clacton and Walton portions to divide or be joined at Thorpe, a practice which continued into the 1980s.

New visitors now flocked to the town; indeed on summer days as many as 3,000 passengers might make the journey.

In 1882, when a line was built from Thorpe-le-Soken to Clacton-on-Sea, the line to Clacton from Thorpe was the branch and the direct trains from London ran through to Walton, but as Clacton grew in importance, the situation was reversed. A spur to connect Clacton directly with Walton was planned just east of Thorpe station but it was never built. Bradshaw's Guide of 1910, however, mentions through services between Clacton and Walton but only in the summer months.

These were discontinued after the summer of 1914 because of the First World War, only to be briefly reinstated in the summer of 1920. These trains would, of course, have had to be reversed at Thorpe!

In 1883, Tendring Hundred Railway

and the Clacton-on-Sea Railway Company were absorbed by the Great Eastern Railway Company (GER) which retained responsibility for the line until 'Grouping' in 1923 when the London & North Eastern Railway (LNER) was formed.

Under GER management, traffic rose steadily, although as late as 1892 basic local services, dividing and re-assembling at Thorpe, comprised only six journeys each way daily.

In the years leading up to the First World War, the main developments were in the improvement of the London services. The best down time fell to 102 minutes and subsequently to 95 minutes. Restaurant facilities had enhanced the Monday morning up service in 1898 to balance the down working of the famous Saturday midnight supper train.



1911 saw the construction of two new sidings to facilitate the heavy excursion traffic in the summer. The platforms were also lengthened and the turntable was enlarged to cater for the larger engines needed to pull the excursion trains. This turntable is now buried under the current car park.

The station continued to have a single island platform with two roads capable of accommodating nine coaches with a large engine plus a small engine shed. The sidings remained somewhat restrictive but there was a long single line running well back towards Frinton. Capacity was clearly limited: all shunting movements always blocked the main single line thus forcing approaching trains to be held at Frinton-on-Sea.

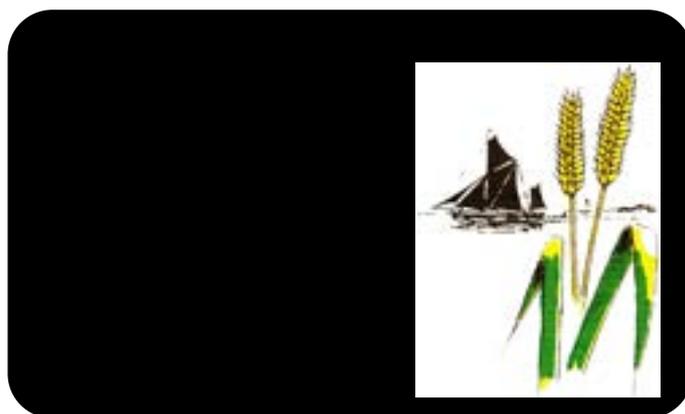
There has always been regular traffic of daily passengers travelling to work in London and the intermediate towns and in the days before the Second World War the service to Walton reflected the quality of customers using

the line. Walton also remained the starting place for the "POSH", a commuter train with full restaurant car service which did the run to Liverpool Street in less than 90 minutes for the complete journey, a time not repeated in post-war years until electrification speeded the service in 1962.

An odd mishap is inevitable at any station. In 1927, a staff employee, a Mr William Reynolds nipped between the side of an engine and a wall. He was carried some ten yards and crushed against the locomotive coal store. Surprisingly, he suffered nothing worse than bruising to his back and shoulders, but it is generally accepted that he was a very fortunate man!

To be continued.

Sources of information: Frinton & Walton Heritage Trust including Jerry Russell and Tony Barrett



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

Visit our website fwheritage.co.uk

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