

Another Newsletter!

As you can imagine, I have been delaying this latest missive to try to get some idea of what our future might be, both for us as an organisation and also for all of us as individuals and families. As far as WHC is concerned I should reassure you that, thanks to the large grant we were given in March, we are quite secure for the foreseeable future.

I am sure that we as individuals feel much less relaxed, especially in view of the continual updates, changes of policy and so-on from the powers that be, to say nothing of the hysteria being drummed up by the media!

However, despite all this we had our first talk for six months just a week ago, albeit with a much reduced audience because of the need for social distancing. Elaine Murphy treated us to a fascinating lecture on the involvement of East Anglia in general and this area in particular in the droving of cattle from the north of England and Scotland to the London markets. I had not registered the obvious point that this arose because of the very high quality of the grazing in this area, its relative proximity to London and the system of renting out the marshes for summer fattening. There were lots of interesting pictures to remind us of the changes in the shape, size and hardness of the cattle and, as an additional treat, we were entertained with the theme music from the TV series "Rawhide" of the 1960's (lots of Scottish drovers actually emigrated to America when the trade died out here with the introduction of the railways), some lovely folk music, and of course some great shots of a young Clint Eastwood!

After a drink and a wander outside to see the work taking place on the garden and building we then heard about the tanning industry in the area. This didn't involve ultra violet lamps but the messy business of converting animal skins to useable leather. This took place on a site adjacent to the river. Although the techniques employed originally were somewhat less polluting and dangerous than those used later, they were still pretty awful and certainly must have resulted in premature disease and death amongst those involved to say nothing of an even more heavily polluted river Waveney even than nowadays. Any of you who have been to Morocco may have seen very similar techniques still employed and wondered about the well-being of those involved.

We were hoping to get another event fitted in before Christmas at least but, in view of the latest virus figures, I suspect that won't happen. However, we continue to look for any opportunity to meet you all again.

To cheer us up we are about to start an on-line collaboration with representatives from the Archive Centre in Norwich to develop and enhance our own collection. We very much want to make it available to as wide a range of people as possible, both now and for the future. This will involve cataloguing and conserving, scanning documents, photos, newspaper cuttings and so-on. That should keep us busy!

If any of you would like to become involved in this, we would be delighted to welcome you. In addition, we would love to see any histories, mementos or photographs which you have yourselves. You may not wish to part with them, but we can scan and return them to you if you wish.

We look forward to meeting you again soon. In the meantime, keep well and we wish you the very best.

Mary Thompson and your fellow directors.