

Coddenham Village History Club Newsletter ~ February 2023

May we wish all our members a Happy and Healthy 2023

AGM

In November, we held our first AGM since the beginning of lock down in 2020. It was decided to keep subscriptions as they were pre-pandemic for this year - £8 per adult, £3 for students and £3 for visitors. A subscription form accompanies this newsletter.

Our web site has proved very successful over the last 3 years but does involve a lot of work. If there is anyone out there who is familiar with the relevant technology and willing to help us, we would be most grateful. We plan to purchase a cabinet for history club displays to be fitted in the foyer of the Community Centre. This would commemorate and be paid for by the Anne Stallibrass legacy. John Pelling, as History Recorder for Coddenham, is still collecting memories of the pandemic and how it affected Coddenham.

Your elected committee for 2023 are:

Chairman: Ray Collins
V-Chairman: Ian Jeffrey
Treasurer: Susan Ashford
Secretary: Sally Garrod
Programme: Sue Allison
Committee: Sylvia Bickers
Nigel Allison
John Pelling

We have vacancies on the committee and if you wish to join us you will be very welcome. Please let any of the above know.

The AGM was followed by a spellbinding talk by Tom Boles, “An Introduction to Astronomy: From Here to Infinity (and beyond!)”

FUTURE PROGRAMME

Our first speaker will be on Tuesday 21st February when Patricia Hodgkins presents “John Constable – The Man and His Landscape”. She covers his life and work with illustrations of his most celebrated paintings, plus photographs of the Stour Valley as it is today. Also, how the buildings are now being used at Flatford. 7.30pm Haysel House.

“The Real Robin Hood” by Graham Higgins is booked for Tuesday 21st March. Robin Hood has fascinated people for centuries, being celebrated in literature, poems and films. But who was he? Did he really exist or is he a myth? Graham Higgins explores the complex origins of the man from historical records and comes up with some interesting facts and theories. 7.30pm Haysel House.

On Tuesday 18th April we welcome the return of Kate Jewell. This time her talk is entitled “Bonfire & Bells”. It's about the rituals and festivals in medieval Suffolk, born from the many disasters of the day, for example drought, flood, fire and starvation. 7.30pm Haysel House.

Our talk for Tuesday 16th May is “Overpaid, Oversexed & Over Here - The Story of the Friendly Invasion of Suffolk by the USAAF in World War II”. 80 years ago, the first of about one and a half million American GIs landed on British soil to help in a desperate fight against Hitler. One of their bases was right on our doorstep which led to some of the airmen being regular visitors to the village. Mendlesham was home to the USAAF 34th Bomb Group which flew missions in B-24s and B-17 Flying Fortresses. My late brother in law, Jack, who lived close by in Mickfield, said he and his friends would bike up to the base where the airmen would give them chocolate and chewing gum, and if they were lucky, give them a ride in one of the aircraft they were testing - just around the runway of course – they didn't take off! *Ed.* 7.30pm Haysel House.

OUTINGS

The Granary Crafts Museum & Tea Room at Buxhall

A visit is planned for Tuesday 6th June to this fascinating museum of nostalgia. It houses a vast collection of well curated artefacts, many that must have made an appearance in all our lives at one time or another. This is a car sharing trip meeting 2pm at the museum. Cost: £3 donation to the museum, cash payable on the day. The Tea Shop will be open for buying your own refreshment. So we have an idea of numbers, please fill in the enclosed booking slip and return by 6th May.

The Replica Sutton Hoo Burial Ship Workshop

An 88ft reconstruction of the Sutton Hoo burial ship, excavated in 1939, is being built in a shed beside the River Deben in Woodbridge. The Sutton Hoo Ship's Company, the charity behind the reconstruction project, started the design phase in 2016 and volunteers have been using traditional methods to build the ship. To date, the backbone of the ship has been built, including the keel stem and stern post and now they have started attaching planks with rivets.

A visit to the Workshop and Gallery has been arranged for Wednesday 12th July. This is a coach trip with a pub lunch stop on the return journey. Cost for the coach and tour of the ship £12, lunch not included. Meet 9.30am Coddendam Community Centre Car Park for coach departure at 9.45am. The tour consists of groups of 6. Whilst one group of 6 are shown around the ship the other groups can visit the Gallery or the museum next door. We plan to leave at 12.30 for pub lunch at 1pm, arriving back at Coddendam approximately 3pm. There is a limit on numbers so please let us know if you are coming as soon as possible and return the enclosed booking slip. It will be on a 'first come first served' basis.

A GUDGIN & SON – A CENTENARY CELEBRATION!

One hundred years ago Albert & Millie Gudgin came to Coddendam and purchased the Village Store from Mr Lewis. Before then Albert had been the manager of the Co-op in Carr Street, Ipswich, and had ample experience in the retail trade. Millie's father ran Townsends Fish Merchants in the Buttermarket so it was likely she was no stranger to the trade either. Roy's father, Dudley, would have been about 12 years old at the time and his sister, Vera, 17. I wonder if they could ever have imagined that the name “A Gudgin & Son” would still be proudly displayed over the shop doorway today, 100 years later!

To commemorate the occasion, Ann and Roy Gudgin are holding a tea party in the Community Centre on the afternoon of Saturday 22nd July between 2 – 4.30pm. All are welcome. There will be a display on the history of the shop plus the many other shops that were operating in the village at the same time, together with various artefacts from the period. Coddendam was quite a self sufficient village in those days.

Only a few years later the Semmence Family arrived in the village, and the link here is that Vera Gudgin, Dudley's sister, married Edward Semmence. In 1992, Alan Semmence gave us his memories of those early days and it seems very appropriate to share them with you now.

“The Semmence Family came to Coddendam in December 1926 from Fore Street in Ipswich where they had a butcher's shop. They came to Coddendam to see about buying Leggett's in the High Street but instead bought Roslyn House and converted the barn, which had been a wheelwrights, to a butcher's shop. The abattoir or slaughter-house was behind the shop, and pens for the animals beyond that. There were three butchers in all and also pork was sold at Gudgin's. The Crown Inn had a paper shop in the yard behind

run by a Mr Prime whose son did paper rounds on a motor bike, and an ironmongers was run by a Mrs Smith, opposite the Village Hall. Her father used to mend shoes there too, I remember.

When we moved to Coddendam we also kept the rounds going that we had in Ipswich and on the outskirts. This meant getting up at about 6 o'clock as the van had to be loaded with meat. As this was prepared on the road we also had to load up scales, weights, knives, saw, chopper, etc. The rounds were as far afield as Nacton, Levington, Bucklesham, Brightwell, Foxhall, Westerfield, Winesham, Swilland, Ashbocking, Claydon, Blakenham, Somersham, Offton and Bricett. This meant having a good 10 hours on the road and for a time we also used a horse and cart. Later we had two vans.

On Monday mornings we used to wash the vans inside and out, take the wheels off and grease them. In the afternoon we used to do the killing. All the water had to be pumped by hand and carried across the yard from Roslyn House. When hot water was required during the pig killing it was heated in a copper and carried over the yard. In winter time we had to finish by the light of oil lamps. Sausages were all made by hand – no electricity! - and it was hard work turning the handle-wheel round to grind the meat up. The skins were not synthetic ones in those days, but made from the cleaned guts of the pigs.

I was 14 years of age when I started work with Edward and Pop in the shop. We started at 6 o'clock in the morning and were lucky if we finished by 6 o'clock at night. It was difficult keeping meat fresh in those days as fridges only worked on ice. Edward and I would collect a 2 cwt block of ice in the van and we had to break it up and then get to the top of the fridge and drop it in. We also put freezing salt with it and it was fairly cool. Cattle, pigs and sheep were brought from local farms and also from local people who would keep a couple of pigs, one for themselves and one which they would sell to us. Cattle also came from Ipswich, Wickham, Stowmarket and Diss markets.

There was no bathroom at Roslyn House when we came and all water was heated in a copper and put in a tin bath. The house was lit by oil lamps and all warmth came from coal fires which made it very chilly when you moved from room to room. In fact, the story goes that Pop Semmence found his dentures set in ice in the morning in his bedroom! We had a bathroom installed but all water then had to be pumped by hand from the well outside. You needed a bath by the time you had filled the tank! Sanitation was the usual little shed at the bottom of the garden with a pail which had to be emptied and contents buried. Later, of course, the 'Bumby Cart' came round once a week. We had a toilet and cesspit installed in 1953 but sewerage had still not reached Coddendam by then.”

Alan Semmence – March 1992

WORKING MEETINGS

These evenings are for anyone wishing to research, work on a project or just browse through the material we have collected over the years. 7.30pm Ivy Farm House, High

Street, Coddendam, where our records are kept.

Monday 20th February

Monday 20th March

Monday 15th May

Monday 5th June

Monday 3rd July

If you are unable to make any of these evenings and are researching a particular subject or family, please contact Sylvia Bickers 01449 760382 for a mutually suitable date and time.

DIARY DATES

Tuesday 21st February: “John Constable – The Man and His Landscape” by Patricia Hodgkins.

7.30pm Haysel House

Tuesday 21st March: “The Real Robin Hood” by Graham Higgins. 7.30pm Haysel House

Tuesday 18th April: “Bonfire & Bells!” by Kate Jewell. 7.30pm Haysel House

Tuesday 16th May: “Overpaid, Oversexed & Over Here – The Story of the Friendly

Invasion of Suffolk by the USAFF in World War II” by Dr Geoffrey Vine. 7.30pm Haysel House

Tuesday 6th June: Visit to The Granary Crafts Museum at Buxhall. Car share. Meet 2pm. Cost £3 cash donation to the museum, payable on the day.

Please fill in booking slip and return by 6th May

Wednesday 12th July: Visit to The Replica Sutton Hoo Burial Ship Workshop at Woodbridge.

coach trip

Meet 9.30am Coddendam Community Centre Car Park for with Pub lunch stop on the return journey. Cost £12 (lunch

not

included). Please fill in and return booking slip a.s.a.p. There

is a limit

on numbers

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