

HALBERTON HISTORY GROUP

BULLETINS 2018

HALBERTON HISTORY GROUP (Jan)

There was no meeting in December and in January we had a general meeting when we looked at some of the items brought to our History Day in November.

We learnt that Arthur Grabham, born Halberton in 1878, was responsible for introducing machines for washing and filling milk bottles which won many awards at dairy shows.

Now that the Halberton Branch of the British Legion has been disbanded, we have been given a large scrapbook of cuttings and photographs dating from the 1960s and 70s. This is now in the History Room and available for anyone who would like to look at it and perhaps put names to some of the people in the pictures.

We have also acquired two more photographs of Top & Tails cottages in the 1930s and aerial photographs showing the bungalow which later replaced them.



Did your father, uncle, grandfather or even you yourself work for Twosesin Halberton? Or perhaps your family were customers. A bit later in the year we are hoping to have an event to gather some memories of the works before they moved to Tiverton in 1963.

HALBERTON HISTORY GROUP (Mar)

In March a few members visited the Devon Heritage Centre at Exeter. One of the items we looked at was a register of Parish Apprentices 1815-40. It was sobering to see that the average age of these children, all apprenticed until they reached the age of 21, was 9 – 10 and a few were only 7 and 8. They were mostly assigned to farmers.

As November this year sees the centenary of the end of the First World War we are renewing our efforts to find out more about those who served and to understand more about the effect the war had on those left behind. We've all heard about rationing in WW2 but what is known about how those left at home were coping in WW1. If you have any stories handed down please let the Group know. And if the name of your Grandfather, Uncle or other family member is on the memorial board please get in touch and tell us a bit about them.

Our postponed AGM will now be held on Thursday 19th April. After a (hopefully brief) business session we shall have a talk by John Baker who came to Devon as an evacuee from London and never went back. He will be telling us about his life which included a time at the Twose Works in Halberton. A warm welcome is extended to everyone, member or not.

Our secretary of eight years is standing down at the AGM. We are going to divide up the various tasks and are urgently seeking two or three volunteers to take on a part such as arranging meetings or publicity. If you could help please contact Chairman Mike Britton – mike@halberton.org or tel. 07720 034667.

The History Room will be open on the Sunday of the Halberton May Festival from 1.00 to 3.00. Besides many photographs of local people and places, we have a very large scale plan of the High Street in about 1890, a complete run of Newsletters from 1995 and books on local history. We look forward to greeting visitors.

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HALBERTON HISTORY GROUP (May)

The History Group's Annual General Meeting was held on 19th April. Officers returned were Chairman Mike Britton, Vice Chairman Ron Venner & Treasurer Tim Hugill. Joy Wooding was elected as a committee member to look after the History Room's collection of pictures etc. There were no volunteers for the role of Secretary which had to be left unfilled.

Also in April the Group received a visit from nine members of the Twose family from Barcelona. They are fifth generation descendants of William Twose who set up the agricultural business in Halberton in 1830. His son and grandson went to Spain in 1877 to set up a paper making factory. The grandson married a Spanish lady and stayed. He is still remembered for the work he did providing employment, houses for the workers and a bank. The party included their 99 year old mother and all were most interested to see the place from which their ancestors came.



Members of the Twose Family from Spain with History Group member Lynda Bailey.

The History Room was open on the Sunday afternoon of the May Festival with only a couple of visitors to view the various displays.

Two of our members attended a talk at the Devon Heritage Centre. by a representative from the Parliamentary Archives on the Protestation Returns of 1642 when all adult men had to swear allegiance to the protestant religion. These have now been digitized and can be viewed on-line. Among the more than four hundred names for Halberton are some familiar ones such as Drew, Osmond, Manley, Maunder, Parr, etc.

For the Group's next meeting on 14th June we hope to be able to walk parts of the course of the ancient Moorstone Leat

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HALBERTON HISTORY GROUP (July)

In June we held a very successful walk and ride to explore the course of the Moorstone Leat. Members were joined by others who live near its former course. Bob Saunders, who lived at Moorstone as a boy, pointed out features along the way, adding stories of regularly clearing frogs from the taps in the house and swimming in the stream into which the leat ran. This stream, fed by a warm spring in Halberton Pond, served water wheels at Town Mill, Nether Mill and Five Bridges before joining the Splatford Brook near Five Bridges. In 1961 parts of the leat were filled in although in places there are still cuttings up to fifteen feet deep.

On a lovely evening in July we walked one of the most western parish footpaths from the top of Newtes Hill down to Seckerleigh. We passed the ruined remains of Salters Farmhouse which was abandoned in the last century and looked at the possible site of an ancient chapel. From the old records we learnt that once there was a little community of 6 or 7 families at Seckerleigh. Thanks to all who contributed to both walks including providing the very welcome refreshments.

We have appointed a new Secretary – Alison Thomas has stepped into the role. We have also welcomed David Charles to the Committee. He will take on publicizing our meetings and events and has also offered to update the Group's website.

We shall have two very interesting talks in our Autumn programme starting with a talk on 13th September about local water mills to which we welcome everyone, whether members or not.

As you will see on a previous page, there will be special events to mark the centenary of the end of the First World War on 11th November 1918. To help us tell the stories of some of the local people from that time – those at home as well as those who served in the forces - we would like to hear of anything handed down, whether tales or items kept in the family over the years.

HALBERTON HISTORY GROUP (Sept)

Our August meeting took the form of a members evening. Lynda Bailey and David Charles introduced us to the "Know Your Place" website which has now been expanded to include Devon & Somerset. This is an extremely powerful digital mapping project whereby maps of different dates between 1837 and 2017 can be viewed side by side making for some very interesting comparisons. There is also the choice of superimposing information from the Heritage Register including listed buildings, places where archaeological finds have been made or historical landscape features. Members spent time looking at various points in the local neighbourhood. In future we will be able to add pictures to complement the information.

Joy Wooding then showed members how to access the many pictures which are being digitized and put on line from the Beaford Archive. These photographs recording people and countryside were taken by James Ravilious between 1972 and 1989. Although the area covered is North Devon anyone who has an interest in any of the villages beyond Cridton or South Molton, or who likes black and white photography, will find they can spend a long time exploring the 1700 pictures made available.

We then had an update with more information about places recently visited including Five Bridges and the Seckerleigh area.

A recent visitor brought information about the Traction Engines and Steam Roller which were part of William Elworthy of Crosslands fleet early last century. Two of the machines took part in the 50th Great Dorset Steam Rally last month. The picture below is of the Queen Alexandra, which he bought in 1909, one of three similar engines used for heavy haulage. In 1915 two of them were stopped by the New Inn in the evening for not having lit their lamps. They were on their way back from Salisbury. This being nearly a hundred miles would have taken them a day each way and we wonder why they would have been making such a long journey. It appears that one of their jobs was hauling bricks from Cullompton brickworks so perhaps they were involved in taking material to Salisbury Plain for buildings for the troops. As the business was still going in 1939 we would be very interested to know if anyone had a relation who used to work with any of Mr. Elworthy's machines. Names include Bidgood, Coombes, Alford, Lee, Rowland, Bowerman and Whitton.



This machine worked here from 1909 to 1926. Then it was bought by Dingles for use as a fairground engine.

We also heard from a lady in the USA with more information about the Walters family of Tuckers Farm in the High Street. She sent us family photographs from 1892 and 1904, a few years before they emigrated. Another contact enquired about Townsend House when it was a boarding house in the late 1800s.

Everyone is very welcome to come to our talk on 11th October by Michael Gee entitled "Orchards, How Devon Turned to Cider". Mr. Gee is a founder of the charity "Orchards Live" set up to preserve some of the old apple varieties which are in danger of being lost.

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### **Halberton Remembers :**

**History Group Exhibition at Halberton Village Hall to commemorate the end of the First World War 100 years ago.**

**Open on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> November from 11 am to 4 pm  
& on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> November from 12 to 4 pm.**

**There will be a large display paying tribute to all those who served and information on how the people of Halberton coped during this traumatic period.**

**On show will be a hospital wheelchair from the period.**

**Please come and help us to mark this important centenary.**

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If you have any family stories of those times or any items tucked away in the back of your shed we would love to hear from you.

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HALBERTON HISTORY GROUP (Nov)

Our autumn programme included two excellent and informative talks to which we were pleased to welcome a good number of both members and visitors.

In September our speaker was Martin Watts with “Watermills in the Devon Landscape”. He looked at the development of mills and the uses to which they were put besides the grinding of flour, including in the woollen trade as well as driving various items of farm machinery. Mention was made of several local mills including Sutton, Oburnford, Way and Selgars.

In October the talk was “Orchards – How Devon turned to Cider”. Our speaker, Michael Gee, is a founder of the charity “Orchards Live” set up to preserve some of the old apple varieties which are in danger of being lost, and has just written a book about Devon orchards. He explained how cider became the most popular drink, playing a part in the Tudor voyages of exploration as, unlike ale, cider kept for long periods. Most farms would have had a cider press with farm workers receiving part of their pay in the form of cider. However, as other drinks became available apple orchards started to decline in the middle of the 19th century, continuing over the next hundred years until today very few remain.

Our exhibition “Halberton in the First World War”, one of the events held in the village to mark the centenary of the end of the First World War, will live forever in our memories and, we hope, in the memories of the one hundred and fifty or so people who visited it. The displays were the culmination of months of preparatory work by members of the group and would not have been possible without the support of the Parish Council, HCA and Village Hall. We also thank the many individuals who contributed ideas, artefacts and shared their family stories.

In doing the research we learnt so much about those that went to war, those who were left behind and how life carried on at home.

There is more work to be done to round off some of the stories we discovered and we will now be planning how to preserve these for the future.

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