

NAILSEA AND DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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WEB SITE

Thanks to the initiative of Committee Member Ann Cahill and her husband Steve, our Society will soon have its own Web Site. The pages will include a potted history of the Society, its Constitution, a Membership Application Form for downloading, the current years programme, latest issues of the Newsletter, and a list of publications, along with contact details and links to other Web Sites. Also envisaged are fact sheets for schools, a photo gallery, current projects update, town trails, etc.

We had hoped to have the site up and running by now, but it is taking longer than expected to assemble the text for Ann and Steve to scan or type in.

TYNTESFIELD

On 22nd March, Mike Phillis led a group of twenty on a most enjoyable visit, some members opting for a tour of the house, chapel and formal gardens; others for the grounds and outbuildings.

For me, after the excitement of touring the House on a previous visit, the garden tour exceeded expectations and can be thoroughly recommended. Our apologies to those members who had booked for

the visit but had to drop out when the National Trust changed the date. Following the visit we received a letter expressing delight at having "*the support of a group such as the Nailsea & District History Society*" and hoping that "*we will be able to continue to welcome your members to Tyntesfield and look forward to working with you in the future*".

GLASSWORKS

As many of you may know, much of the glassworks site has recently been scheduled by English Heritage - the area beneath TESCO, the excavated but as yet undeveloped site adjoining the Royal Oak Garage, the land beneath this building (which originally housed four gas fired furnaces), and both the winding house and horse whim on the Millennium Park.

A meeting between Nailsea Town Council, English Heritage, North Somerset Council, Mr. Jeremy Hobbs (who owns part of the site) and our Society (represented by myself), was convened to discuss the future of the undeveloped area. In the short term the undergrowth is to be cleared and areas of the site of danger to the public backfilled

with sand. It is likely that Consultants will be engaged by North Somerset to come up with various options and guide costings for the long term usage of this land. I am a member of a small working party to consider these and to progress the short term tidying up of the site.

Trevor Bowen

BETTY, PETER AND TREVOR AT CHARTERHOUSE STUDY CENTRE

On Saturday 27th March, Museum Manager Nick Goff welcomed representatives of North Somerset history groups to the latest meeting of the Local History Forum at Charterhouse on the Mendips. He introduced everyone to new Librarian Sarah Bowen, who has replaced Elaine Mellor, before handing the meeting over to archaeologist Vince Russet. Vince gave a splendid PowerPoint presentation of the work of CHERT (Charterhouse Environmental Research Team), which came into being as a result of the intense enthusiasm of Blagdon L.H.S (see Newsletter No. 13).

Local interest had been aroused by their project to research the history of every house in Blagdon and this led to a desire to learn more about the history of the surrounding Mendip area (from ice age to the cold war).

Charterhouse Study Centre, set in an area rich in archaeological remains, provided a base for the CHERT project, originally expected to take up to five years. It could take much longer than this, as new finds come to light, apparently on almost a daily basis. Vince told us that the general aim is to create a comprehensive historical and archaeological archive to be kept at Charterhouse. It would include documents, maps, photographs (aerial and ground level), records of discovered artefacts and results of various surveys such as boundaries (hedges and walls), wall furniture (stiles, steps and sheep creeps), and botanical studies. Geophysics plays an important role in ascertaining the location of ancient sites, for example, the Roman amphitheatre which was found to be at the Fort. The possible date for this is AD 50. From the window of the room in which we sat could be seen Town Field, under which was a Roman settlement.



I cannot hope to do justice in this brief account to the excellence of Vince's wide-ranging lecture. However, one item which rather turned our stomachs, was his story of the whale blubber which, many years ago, had been stacked locally in the open. Naturally this attracted rats and insects. The nearby road crawled with maggots. Eventually the disgusting material (including the rats and maggots) was sent to be rendered down, to be used in the manufacture of processed cheese!

At the end of Vince's talk we assembled outside to explore the landscape. We stood on the grass mound which had been the Roman Fort and gazed out at the marks and furrows of a previous civilisation. As we moved on, the dominating features were always the remains of the lead mining industry, and in light rain we walked over the humps and bumps left by those who had worked and re-worked the ground. Vince emphasised the need for conservation, throughout the area, of all archaeological remains, involving a great deal of manual labour in clearing scrub and removing trees which might be in danger of falling. Further on, deep hollows and channels showed where polluted water had once been led away from farmland, and we saw the well-preserved horizontal flues which had replaced the former chimneys.

Even though we walked over large quantities of slag from the lead works, jet black shiny pebbles, it was difficult to equate the present peace of the landscape with its busy and noisy industrial past. Under foot we trod on thick springy moss and did our best to avoid the thousands of rabbit holes.

Betty Brooks

NERT

Later, enjoying a pub lunch in the Queen Adelaide, Blagdon, Betty, Peter and myself had time to reflect on Vince Russet's comment at the conclusion of his talk. He had turned in our direction and said, "*NERT. What about it, Nailsea?*"

He was of course suggesting that we should form a Nailsea Environmental Research Team. As we mulled over the idea of Romans quarrying Pennant stone in Nailsea, the possibilities of Nailsea Wall being of Roman origin and investigating the flood water level of our "island", NERT sounded a distinct possibility.

If anyone is interested in being part of a small group this summer, please let me know. Nailsea as an island would be an interesting first project, the starting point being that the majority of the old farm houses are above the 50 ft contour level. A combination of field walking and consulting the farmers could well be a practical way forward.

Trevor Bowen

NAILSEA VIDEO

"BOTTLE GREEN & COAL BLACK"

This is now available in DVD format
price £16.95.

The price of the video version
remains at £12.95

CHANGE OF DATE

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SOCIAL EVENING

NOW

Monday 5th July 2004

at

“+REDACTED+”

*Please bring food to share,
and if possible, one or more folding chairs
in anticipation of another pleasant evening
in Judith's delightful garden.
Wine and soft drinks will be provided.
7.30 pm onwards.*

PLEASE NOTE THAT THERE WILL BE NO EVENING VISIT ON 14th JUNE AS ADVERTISED ON THE PROGRAMME CARD. INSTEAD YOU MAY BE INTERESTED IN THE AHLA WALK DESCRIBED BELOW.

ALHA Summer Walk - Monday 14th June 2004

Guided tour of East Bedminster, a once very densely populated industrial area. Led by Anton Bantock and Mike Hooper. Meet at 6.45 pm for 7.00 pm at Bedminster Library (parking in Asda car park). £1.50