

# Newsletter

## September 2021



### The Next Event

**THE HOLT SOCIETY  
LOOKING BACK and MOVING FORWARD:  
MARY ALEXANDER and STEVE BENSON  
in CONVERSATION.**

Now we are able to meet—the first **HOLT SOCIETY** event for this autumn is on **OCTOBER 29<sup>th</sup>** at **The VENUE, The Community Centre, Holt.**

This illustrated discussion will focus on events, people, ideas and provide reflection for Holt Society members while giving a flavour of the Society's background to our new ones, as well as an introduction for visitors.

**Doors open at 6pm - the talk starts at 7pm** . The bar will be open during that hour for refreshments.

We are adopting a table arrangement for seating. Any current Covid requirements will be in place. Those who attend are encouraged to wear masks until seated.

Tickets available on the door. Members £4. Visitors £6.

For details of membership visit: [www.theholsociety.org](http://www.theholsociety.org)

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The committee have not been idle during the pandemic, new projects and publications are in development which will form part of our programme for the membership over the next 12 months. After a long break in our activities the aim is to provide an event or visit each month. Plans are being finalised for visits to buildings both old and new while talks are being scheduled for mornings as well as evenings.

The next lectures open to visitors will be announced for February and March 2022.

**Members: Save the Date** the evening of November 18<sup>th</sup> for the launch of The Holt Society film **A STROLL THROUGH GEORGIAN HOLT.**

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### News from the Committee

At the last committee meeting, the members proposed and approved the setting up of a sub-committee. It will focus on Marketing and Events and look to move the Society forward. The new committee comprises Susan Williams, Polly Binns and Ken Jones.

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### Dates for your diary

#### Events 2022

We know it is a bit early but thought you would like to know that a few things are already on the books for next year.

Georgian Talk

Wednesday 16th March 2022

The Venue, Holt Community Centre

Speaker: Margaret Bird

Title: Mary Hardy's Georgian Holt: an indoor 'walking tour'

Bar open: 1800

Talk commences: 1830

What made Georgian Holt special? Twenty sites described by local diarist Mary Hardy give us some answers.

The town was one of only four outside Norwich to host the county quarter sessions and renowned for its sample market in corn - both drivers of the local economy. Its wealth of public houses, its playhouse hosting busy winter seasons, two notable headmasters at the grammar school and its service as an anti-invasion military hub combined to help give Holt its vitality. Twenty places to see associated with daily life and work in Holt in the late 18th century. A map will be available to follow the route.

Margaret Bird is a great supporter of The Holt Society, is a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society and has brought out nine volumes on Mary Hardy.

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The Holt Society AGM

Wednesday 6th April 2022

The Venue, Holt Community Centre

Bar open: 1800

Business commences: 1830

Speaker: Douglas Robb - Headmaster, Greshams School

Buffet

## Holt's Green Edges (in four parts)

With current interest in the exciting Greening Holt project it is good to reflect that the town is already at least green at its edges with a number of semi-natural, visually attractive and biodiverse places within walking distance of the centre.

### Part 4 - River Glaven

The River Glaven flows just 25km from its headwaters round Lower Bodham and Baconsthorpe to the sea behind Blakeney Point. Although the town is not on its banks, it is Holt's river; nearly two-thirds of its course is less than 4 km from the centre of the town.

Although arising in predominantly arable land, much of its middle and lower reaches are bordered by flood-plain meadows, some agriculturally 'improved', others not. It is a 'chalk stream' fed with water rising from chalk below the land surface, running clear and with a good all-year round flow. This is a recipe for rich wildlife. It is one of the very few lowland rivers in Britain that still has a healthy population of the native White-clawed Crayfish although in the lower reaches this is now threatened by the invasive Signal Crayfish. Otters have returned to the river and although, by their nature, rarely seen, their population may now be as great as the river can support.

In 1999, a group including landowners and conservationists came together to share their concern about what appeared to be a gradual deterioration in the quality of the river and its wildlife. In 2003 the group became constituted as the River Glaven Conservation Group (RGCG). Since then, with a steadily increasing membership it has initiated and carried out a number of major projects to restore the quality of the river and its catchment area.

Despite its charm, the River Glaven is not an easy river to explore as most of it flows through private land. The ford at Letheringsett is a good place to see the river – and perhaps paddle and have a picnic. At Natural Surroundings (Bayfield) you can also reach and enjoy the river.

*Tony Leech*

## THE HOLT SOCIETY TALK 7<sup>th</sup> August 2021 'OF PATIENT BEARING': A History of General Practice over Eight Generations by STEPHEN GILLAM

An audience of 60, including 18 non-members, gathered in the Holt Church Hall to hear a talk by Dr Stephen Gillam on the subject of his latest publication. What makes this fascinating book of particular local interest is the fact that from 1847 his medical forebears served the community from the very same attractive Georgian house in Holt where he lives today.

Dr Gillam tells the story of general practice over eight generations of his own family from 1770. Bringing to life the activities of his ancestors to humanise the evolution of medical practice over a period of 250 years is a remarkable achievement in less than 300 pages let alone a talk of under an hour. Yet with gentle authority, brilliant analysis along with well-timed flashes of humour, Dr Gillam held and educated his audience.

The number and range of questions at the end illustrated the great interest he evoked. So much has changed from the days of one-doctor 24/7 surgeries with no work-life balance to the larger practices of today, the digital revolution and the coming of the NHS. Yet Dr Gillam for all his experience in public health, policy research and medical education, appears still to be a GP at heart and pines (just a little) for the days when doctors really knew their patients and were able to exercise that holistic care that brought them into their profession and which current pressures make so hard for his excellent present-day colleagues to emulate.

Amongst the upper echelons of high Victorian society, we were told, there was some way to go for the general practitioner. A certain Lady Warwick asserted in her best Lady Bracknell tones, "One may invite a doctor to a garden party but never, of course, to luncheon or dinner." Stephen Gillam is welcome round at mine any time.

*Steve Benson*

*Dr Gillam's book is available through Amazon and The Holt Bookshop priced £12.99. Proceeds go to Amnesty International and WaterAid UK.*



Steve Benson and crew, meandering around Holt, whilst filming The new Holt Society film A STROLL THROUGH GEORGIAN HOLT. The plan is to launch the film to the membership on November 18th.