

Nayland with Wissington Conservation Society

Registered Charity no 268104

Chairman's Report for 2015

2015 was another busy year for us, the highlights being the geophysical survey of Court Knoll, a combined garden visit and May Bank Holiday walk, and a visit to the Munnings Museum in Dedham.

COMMITTEE: I am most grateful for the support and hard work of our committee. During the year Jill Slater and Jennie Jenkins retired from the committee and we are really grateful for their contributions. Jane Chauvet joined the committee as Membership Secretary but sadly is moving away from Nayland and has had to resign. We welcomed Tom Gardiner onto the Committee during the year and much value his contributions especially with regard to planning matters. Thanks also to Martin Wright, Andora Carver, Mike Hunter, John Partridge, Ed Fehler and David Heigham, our Hon. Treasurer, all of whom offer themselves for re-election in 2015-16.

The **Permissive Footpath to Stoke** is being well used and we are very grateful to the Stantons at Longwood House for arranging to regularly cut the Nayland end. Rix Farms kindly look after the sections towards Stoke.

Open Gardens on June 14th raised £2,080. 16 gardens were open and the event attracted over 300 visitors. The proceeds go towards the Society's funds for future conservation projects. Many thanks for all the gardeners who worked so hard and to the cake makers, tea and ice cream helpers.

Court Knoll Survey: Several geophysical surveys have been undertaken during the year under the leadership of Dr. Tim Dennis, assisted by volunteers from Nayland, the Colchester Archaeological Group and the Stour Valley Community Archaeology Volunteers. The results are most interesting and confirm the written documentation that there were a number of buildings on the site from about the 11th to the 14th centuries, the most significant of which could be a chapel. It is hoped that further investigations will take place in 2016. We are most grateful to Dr. Dennis and his helpers for all the many hours they have put in during the surveying work. Thanks are also due to the Trustees of the Tendring Estate and to Historic England.

Test Pits: 2 test pits were dug in Bell Meadow by volunteers and the findings bear out the fact that the land, being lower than the surrounding fields, floods frequently and a layer of clay 30cm beneath the surface results in the water being retained longer than would otherwise be the case. Whether this is a man made feature or natural, has not been established.

A further **test pit** was dug in the garden of Queen's Head House in the autumn, which unfortunately proved to be immediately above a large soakaway. After about 30 cms it had to be backfilled. Many thanks to the team of about 12 children and adults who helped out.

MEETINGS:

The Committee held 11 monthly meetings

There were, as usual, 3 Open Meetings with speakers on *Sir Alfred Munnings, The Edge of Extinction* by Prof. Jules Pretty, *Why Study Wiston* by Rosemary Knox and the *Role of a Police Wildlife Officer* by Barry Kaufman-Wright at our Joint meeting with Nayland Hortsoc. All were well attended and, in addition to being very entertaining, added greatly to our local knowledge.

VISITS: In addition to the Bevills garden visit, a guided tour of the Munnings House Museum at Dedham was arranged. Members enjoyed a private view of the Collection followed by tea in the cafe. We were particularly interested to see some works of local interest, namely "*Floods near Nayland*". We later arranged for copies of this work to be printed as greetings cards and sold in the village.

MEMBERSHIP: The Subscription remains £8 single and £12 double and the use of Standing Orders is encouraged to facilitate the collection of subscriptions. Life Membership remains £30 single and £45 double. Membership currently stands at about 260.

PLANNING: This has been relatively quiet this year. We continue to be vigilant and study all applications in Nayland and Wiston. Comments or objections are made where appropriate.

The Greenhouse site, Great Horkesley. Pigeon Investments purchased the Nursery site, the surrounding land, the Chantry and Westward Park and are in discussion with Colchester Borough Council regarding a development of 18 homes plus 4 affordable houses on the greenhouse site and near the church. Westward Park has been sold and the Chantry will be put on the market when plans for the Greenhouse site are approved. Pigeon Investments plan to sell the remaining land for agriculture.

THE MEADOW has continued to give pleasure to walkers and visitors to the village. The path is very well used. We are extremely grateful to Richard Wiles for continuing to look after "Richard's Wood" and the spinney close to Horkesley Lock.

THE ANCHOR/LOT 3 THRIFT FARM:

For the time being The Anchor is retaining one third of the land beside Horkesley Road as an occasional car park.

MAY FOOTPATH WALK: was a highlight of the year. The walk was from Arger Fen to St. Stephen's chapel, Bures. This was followed by a visit to the lovely garden at Bevills, which was open under the National Gardens Scheme, where about 30 members and friends also had tea and cakes. Thanks to Mike Hunter for planning the route and making the arrangements.

John Alexander
January 2016