



## NEWSLETTER

Winter 2024

Dear Friends,

This Newsletter comes to you with your copy of *The Orford Historian: Issue 3*.

Jack Cooke, the Editor, writes: 'the latest issue of *The Orford Historian* has an eclectic range of articles from whalebones and stuffed herons to Lancaster bombers. The publication has its first overseas contribution and regular features return, including a look at the rebuilding of the Orford church tower in the 1970s. To top all this, we have been given access to a rare album of wartime photographs never before published and full of local landmarks. We hope you enjoy reading it.'

Our events at Butley Priory this year have provided interest and entertainment for large numbers of Friends and guests. The Son et Lumière at Butley Priory on 22 August was a spectacular success enjoyed by an audience of 250 people. The weather was just kind enough for guests to be able to enjoy their picnics whilst listening to the story of the Priory voiced by actors David Schofield and Miranda Raison accompanied by music chosen by Graeme Kay and magical lighting effects. Orford Museum is, as ever, very grateful to Sir Edward and Lady Greenwell for allowing us to hold this and all our other events at Butley Priory. Clare Greenwell is tireless in her efforts to attract the most interesting speakers and we have a full programme of talks planned for this winter and next spring. We have already enjoyed a talk in September by Tobias Capwell on the discovery of the body of Richard III in a Leicester car park and another in October by local archaeologist Edward Martin on the Lost Gardens of Suffolk. In November, Peter Gutteridge told the story of Nelson's early life from his birth in 1758 in the small Norfolk village of Burnham Thorpe through to battle of Cape St. Vincent on 14 February 1797 which established him as one of the nation's great heroes. We very much

hope that Peter will return to Butley Priory to give us the remainder of Nelson's story.

On **Monday, 27 January 2025, Jamie Lowther Pinkerton**, Suffolk born and bred with a deep interest in its past, will come to Butley Priory to talk about

### **Agincourt: The Legend of England**

"Tarry, dear cousin Suffolk! My soul shall thine keep company to heaven: Tarry, sweet soul, for mine, then fly abreast; As, in this glorious and well-foughten field, we kept together in our chivalry!"

*Edward, Duke of York to the Earl of Suffolk, as they lay dying on the field of Agincourt. (The Life of King Henry V, Act IV, Scene VI.*

On the evening of 24<sup>th</sup> October 1415, a bedraggled, disease-ridden, exhausted little army huddled around its campfires for what many in its ranks feared would be their last night on earth. Their way to Calais and safety was blocked by a superbly equipped French army, fresh and vastly superior in numbers. The next afternoon, with improbable victory won, King Henry V of England enquired of the French herald, Montjoie, the name of the fortified manor house they could see on the edge of the battlefield: 'Azincourt,' came the reply. Agincourt.

Immortalised by Shakespeare – if it needed immortalising – the extraordinary victory at Agincourt, total and against all odds, marked the high point of English arms in The Hundred Years War. Its name rolls off the tongue alongside Crécy and Poitiers, the great triumphs of Edward III two generations earlier. But Agincourt is different. Agincourt forms part of the very fabric of how English people have viewed themselves and, for some, still do today. It sits alongside Trafalgar and

the Battle of Britain in defining us, both in our eyes and through the eyes of others. Jamie will describe the campaign and the battle and will attempt to view it from something of a soldier's perspective, however remote, and – thankfully! – different his military experience was from those who fought at Agincourt. Jamie Lowther-Pinkerton grew up at Alderton and now lives across the fields from Sutton Hoo. For twenty years he was an officer in the British Army and subsequently Principal Private Secretary to the then Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and Prince Harry. He is an ambassador for the HALO Trust, the world's largest humanitarian mine-clearance charity, and Waterloo Uncovered, a charity engaged in the excavation of the battlefield of Waterloo by world-class archeologists working alongside military veterans recovering from wounds and injuries.

On a date in March yet to be confirmed due to other commitments, **Sir Alex Younger KCMG** will give a talk entitled:

**Divergence, Hyper Connection and Chaos: a spy's view of the world.**

**Sir Alex Younger** was for 30 years a career intelligence officer in Britain's Secret Intelligence Service, MI6. He served in Europe, the Middle East and Afghanistan. He was appointed as Director of Counter Terrorism from 2009 to 2012, Head of Operations from 2012 to 2014 and then Chief of the Service from 2014 to 2020. Prior to SIS, Alex served in the British Army as an infantry officer. He attended St Andrews' University, where he read computer science, among other things. Alex led MI6 during a period of unprecedented technological change, when both digital threats and opportunities intensified.

**The Scapegoat: The Brilliant Brief Life of the Duke of Buckingham**

On **Wednesday, 2 April 2025**, Baillie Gifford prize winning author **Lucy Hughes Hallett** will talk about her biography of king James I's favourite, George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, the King's gatekeeper, right hand man and lover. When Charles I succeeded his father, he was similarly enthralled and made Buckingham his best

friend and first minister. Buckingham's story was part of a great political drama. After a spectacular fall from grace, he came to represent everything that was wrong with the country. *The Scapegoat* navigates love, war-fever and pacifism in a society on the brink of cataclysmic change and in this authoritative account of his life, Hughes Hallett summons an era that still resonates today.

All the above talks start at 6.00pm and last about an hour. Tickets cost £15.00 for Friends of Orford Museum, £20.00 for guests and include a complimentary glass of wine. Please book through our website at [www.orfordmuseum.org.uk](http://www.orfordmuseum.org.uk)

**ORFORD MUSEUM HISTORY FESTIVAL 2025**

From 27 February 2025 to 1 March 2025, we are repeating our very successful History Festival with talks throughout the three days.

On **Thursday, 27 February 2025 at 4.00pm**, **Ralph Houlbrooke** will speak on

**An Elizabethan Tragedy at Butley: The ill-fated marriage of Charles Forth and Elizabeth Jerningham.**

The story told in this talk involves two families: the long-established Jerninghams of Somerleyton, conservative in their religious allegiance, and the newly emergent Forths of Butley Priory, whose head, Robert, was strongly Protestant. When his eldest son Charles was allegedly allured into marrying Elizabeth Jerningham, Robert was scandalized. He reluctantly accepted the marriage, but it failed nonetheless. This talk will recount its sad ending and explore the interactions between social expectations and religious loyalties during the later years of Elizabeth I's reign. Ralph Houlbrooke is Emeritus Professor of Early Modern History at the University of Reading with a particular interest in social history and the Reformation. He has written several books, including *The Family in England, 1450-1700* (1984), *Death, Religion and the Family in England, 1480-1760* (1998), and *Love and Dishonour in Elizabethan England* (2018). He is also Chairman of the Berkshire Records Society.

Following this at **6.00pm, John Ogden** will give a talk entitled:

### **Orford's Atlantic Wall Breakers**

In 1942, over 400 inhabitants of the countryside between Orford, Snape and Slaughden were compulsorily evicted from their homes by the War Office and not allowed to return until 1947/8. In the interim, these 12 square miles of the Suffolk Sandlings were used as a testing ground for armoured equipment and assault techniques that would be used to great effect on D Day and beyond. John Ogden tells the story of this remarkable and little understood intervention in the recent history of the local area which had ramifications far beyond its more normally tranquil heaths, marshes, woods and shores. After reading history at Durham and a brief flirtation with the wine trade, John Ogden joined the Army on a short service commission and, unlike most of his contemporaries, he then forgot to leave for the subsequent 34 years. He now pursues a broad portfolio of roles and interests which include business consultancy, professional and recreational skippering, and military history. He lives in Waldringfield and is currently Rear Commodore of its sailing club, a member of the nascent Southwold Harbour Board, and a trustee of Landguard Fort. He was until recently the Armed Forces Commissioner for Suffolk.

On **Friday, 28<sup>th</sup> February** at **4pm, Alex Preston** will talk on

### **W G Sebald: East Anglian Wanderer**

Author and journalist Alex Preston took to writing and teaching after a career in the city. He wrote his PhD on the great W.G.Sebald, author of *Austerlitz* and *The Rings of Saturn* first published in Germany in 1955, about the author's solitary and melancholy walks around East Anglia and the Suffolk coast. Alex plays cricket for the Authors' Cricket Club founded in 1892. Authors who have played for the team included P.G. Wodehouse, A.A. Milne, J.M. Barrie and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

This will be followed at **6pm by Adam Rutherford** who will speak on

### **Who do you REALLY think you are?**

The tree of life is the most wondrous demonstration of evolution in all its

magnificent splendour. Except it's not a tree at all. Genealogy and family trees are the ties that bind us to our ancestors, descendants and local history. They're not trees either. And the story of human evolution is our species' family tree: guess what? Also not a tree. In this talk, Adam will take his genetics shears and history axe, and pollard, prune and chop down some of these trees, and plant much better ones. The whole of life on Earth is a tangled bank, and he guarantees that in this talk, you will discover your Royal heritage.

Warning: contains a small bit of maths. Adam is a scientist, writer, broadcaster and, most importantly, a Suffolk boy. He is the host of BBC Radio 4's flagship culture programme *Start the Week* as well as many other radio shows. He has written several books including the Sunday Times bestsellers *How to Argue With a Racist*, *A Brief History of Everyone Who Ever Lived* and, most recently, his first children's book *Where Are You Really From?* Adam is also a lecturer in Genetics and Society at UCL where he teaches about eugenics, race science, genetics and science communication. He won the Royal Society's David Attenborough award in 2022 and is a season ticket holder at Portman Road.

On **Saturday, 1 March at 4pm, Paul Lay** will give a talk entitled

### **What Revolution? What Republic.? Oliver Cromwell and his Times**

Paul Lay is the author of *Providence Lost: the Rise and Fall of the Cromwellian Protectorate*, which was shortlisted for the Cundill History Prize. He is Senior Editor of [www.engelsbergideas.com](http://www.engelsbergideas.com) and a former Editor of *History Today*. He is a Research Fellow in History at the University of St Andrews, Senior Research Fellow in Early Modern History at the University of Buckingham, and a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society.

Following this, at **6.00pm**, our final talk will be by **Henry Chancellor** who will speak about

### **Colditz: The Definitive History**

During the Second World War, this medieval fortress served as the only high security camp in Germany. Its massive walls contained every persistent escaper, troublemaker and valuable hostage captured by the Germans. There were

as many guards as there were prisoners. Colditz was considered escape proof; it proved to be the very opposite. The prisoners pooled their collected talents to create the greatest escape academy of the war. Over three hundred attempted to escape and thirty achieved a 'home run', returning to their mother country.

Henry Chancellor is an author, and film maker. His first book the best-selling *Colditz: The Definitive History* came out of his award-winning series for Channel Four. Described by Ben Macintyre as 'by far the best general account of the camp... a remarkable repository of human memory that I have used extensively...'. Colditz remains a peculiarly British fascination to this day. Henry will explore the facts and fiction as told to him by seventy-six inmates, all now dead. He has also written the official companion to Ian Fleming's 007 and several children's fiction series published in fifteen languages. He grew up in East Anglia and lives in Suffolk with his family.

Tickets for all these talks cost £15 for Friends of Orford Museum and £20 for non-Friends and include refreshments. Please go to our website at [www.orfordmuseum.org.uk](http://www.orfordmuseum.org.uk) to book.

Looking ahead to the summer, the travelling theatre group **Three Inch Fools** ([www.threeinchfools.com](http://www.threeinchfools.com)) will come to Butley Priory on Tuesday, 26 August 2025 to present a musical version of:

### **A Midsummer Night's Dream**

Watch our website for booking details.

### **Other Museum News**

We had our usual Orford Museum stall at the Orford and Gedgrave Flower Show on the Saturday of August Bank Holiday this year but, sadly, it was a complete wash-out as the rain poured down relentlessly all day and our tent proved to be totally porous. Our Curator, Stephen Mael, had prepared an impressive collection of photographs illustrating sporting activities in Orford in times past (a nod to the Olympics) but, of course, no-one saw them. We plan to display them again next year when we hope to have a rather more waterproof tent.

Our display cases in Orford Castle are now back to normal after the removal of the Celtic Exhibition and have been re-lined by Dickon Whitewood of English Heritage. However, we still need to re-print the labels to the items on display so that all fonts and their general appearance are uniform. Before this can be done, Edward and Joanna Martin plan to check them for content and accuracy. English Heritage have offered to do the actual re-printing for which we are again most grateful.

The wall boards in the Castle also require renewing as some of the information on them – notably the Lighthouse board – needs to be brought up to date. We hope to accomplish all these tasks before the Castle opens fully for the 2025 summer season next April. Finally, we are working on the re-wording and re-design of our two leaflets: *Orford Off the Beaten Track* and the Museum publicity leaflet. We hope to have these ready, possibly in a combined form, early next year.

Elizabeth Spinney  
Chairman  
Orford Museum

### **General Information**

To book tickets for the talks, please go to our website at [www.orfordmuseum.org.uk/events](http://www.orfordmuseum.org.uk/events)

Other useful email addresses:

[info@orfordmuseum.org.uk](mailto:info@orfordmuseum.org.uk)

(for membership information).

[curator@orfordmuseum.org.uk](mailto:curator@orfordmuseum.org.uk)

(for general information and enquiries about the Museum and its archive).

[editor@orfordmuseum.org.uk](mailto:editor@orfordmuseum.org.uk)

(for *The Orford Historian*)

[a.spinney43@btinternet.com](mailto:a.spinney43@btinternet.com)

to order any of our publications.

### **Orford Castle Opening Times and Prices:**

Orford Castle is now closed except at weekends. To check exact opening and closing times go to|:

[www.english-](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/orford-castle/prices-and-opening-times/)

[heritage.org.uk/visit/places/orford-castle/prices-and-opening-times/](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/orford-castle/prices-and-opening-times/)

Your Orford Museum Friends' membership card allows you free entry to the Castle and Museum accompanied by up to six children.