

The Aldringham Fens Heritage Project Appeal for information



Map extract showing several of the properties situated in the 'Aldringham Fens'

Charlotte NEWSON, a well-known local artist and member of Alde Valley Suffolk Family History Group (AVSFHG), has recently approached us for help with a Heritage Lottery funded project she is leading.

The primary objective of the project is to capture the history of the area known as 'The Fens', situated between Aldringham and Thorpeness, and to create a permanent digital archive celebrating an area officially designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

This beautiful area of Suffolk, with which many members of AVSFHG will be very familiar, covers an area of just a few square miles, on which stand eight houses, the Church of St. Andrew, Aldringham and the adjacent Ogilvie Almshouses.

Several of the eight houses were designed by local architect, Cecil Howard Lay, a regular patron of The Parrot and Punchbowl and also a gifted painter and poet. The names of these properties include The Pantiles and the now sadly derelict Colts Hill; other house names that will resonate with local ramblers and birdwatchers, are Pan Cottage, Fen Cottages, Chapel Cottage (once Willow Cottage) and Birds Farm House. The surnames of families either still living in the area or of past occupants include NEWSON, HART, EDWARDS, BIRD and SMITH.

Charlotte NEWSON is keen to gather as much information as possible about this small community, especially in relation to its social history and topography. In the latter respect, the significance of the River Hundred is of particular interest.

Members of the group's research panel have already uncovered some relevant material but we are now appealing to our members for any knowledge they may have of the 'Aldringham Fens', including stories of the families who lived there, photographs, old maps, newspaper articles and anything else felt to be of interest.

If you can help in any way with this most worthwhile initiative, please contact our research team by e-mail at research@avsfhg.org.uk . Alternatively, if you would prefer to speak to someone in person you can call our Chairman, Chris Broom on 07801-949045.

Thank you very much for any help you may be able to provide.

Chris Broom