

Autumn 2015

From the Chairman of the Friends

CHANGES AHEAD

For those of you not present at our AGM on July 31st (which was its usual enjoyable evening) I announced that I will not stand again for election in 2016 and will in effect retire from the committee. I have been serving for countless years, I don't know how long, but will have been in the chair for seven of them. I think by next summer it will be time for someone with more imagination to step into my shoes. Finding ideas for fundraising is no easy task and after the Charity Ride in September I feel I am fresh out of new ones!

I have enjoyed my time as your Chairman and I have made many friends and acquaintances. The Friends has flourished as an organization, going from strength to strength, and I thank you all for making it happen and for your loyal support. Whoever takes my place will appreciate your continued support and welcome any constructive ideas you might have for fundraising in the future.

I look forward to seeing some of you during the coming months but wanted to take this opportunity to thank you all very much indeed.

Elizabeth Ellis-Paul

Editorial

When you read this the spring and summer events will be but a memory. In May Rachel Duffield, as Marie Lloyd, again attracted a loyal audience to this now anticipated annual event and she has been booked again for next year. The weather on 14th June didn't favour the Garden Party for the opening of the new Garden Room and numbers were disappointingly low. Those who did come along enjoyed some delightful music and we thank Nick Price and the Strumpshaw Recorder Group and Steve on the keyboard for entertaining us and all who contributed towards the day. The Garden Room is now complete and available for hire. Please contact Sharon at How Hill on 01692 678555 if interested.

Bella writes about her last Ceilidh which was held in Bob's memory and raised £1,300 for How Hill, the Bridge Day was again well supported, and Simon reminds us how the money we raise has been spent. Lizzy, the 'new girl' at How Hill, who joined the staff a year ago, has written something about herself on page 4 and where you can see her photo.

If you did not manage to get to the AGM you missed a treat. Simon's talk with accompanying pictures after the very brief business meeting was very informative and entertaining. He updated us on the past year at How Hill. The food afterwards was of course excellent. Keep the date free next year!

Tracey Edward, a member of the Friends' committee, has been 'shadowing' me for this edition of the newsletter, with the view of possibly taking on the editorship at a future date. We have enjoyed reading Peter's and Elizabeth's memories of How Hill. Do you have any that you would like to share and could write about for the newsletter?

Fleur Bradnock

Boyhood memories of How Hill and World War II

My first memory of the war is the day after it was declared by the Prime Minister. At 7 o'clock in the morning the front doorbell went and the Ludham policeman was outside saying that my father was called up immediately and had to go somewhere. My father, Stuart Boardman, twin brother of Humphrey, was an officer in the Royal Norfolk Regiment Territorials so it was expected he would be called up. Where he went I do not know but later on I remember going with my mother and my sister, Cecilia, to see him in Hythe. Mother was running the farm. I cannot remember him ever coming back to How Hill.

I went to Town Close House School shortly before the war started and until most of the boys with some sisters were evacuated to Barbon Manor near Kirkby Lonsdale in Westmoreland. This was a most beautiful place and my time there was certainly the best and happiest of my schooling. There was a beck in the valley for swimming and for catching trout with one's hands. Some mothers came to help, including Mrs Colman who did the cooking and she very kindly cooked a trout for me when I caught one. Us boys also helped with various jobs we could do and be paid for. My job was collecting the pig swill for which I was paid seven shillings a week. This added up to a nice sum at the end of the term before we came back to Norfolk for our holidays.

The best part about Barbon was when we were not in classes. There were really no restrictions on what we did and where we went. I remember two of us going to the top of a fell that was 2000 feet high and some distance from the Manor. We just went without telling anybody where we were going.

My father spent some time in Castle Douglas in Scotland and mother and I went to see him there. Looking very smart in his uniform he once came to see me at Barbon Manor. This was the last time I saw him.

We came back to Norfolk for holidays and here at How Hill it was very different from Barbon. There I only remember seeing one plane, no soldiers. Ludham had an airfield and an army camp.

One day I was standing with my mother by the windmill at The Mill House when we saw a plane coming in our direction, flying very low from St Benet's Abbey towards How Hill House; then we heard gun fire. I remember saying to mother, 'We'd better go into the air raid shelter'. This was a Morrison shelter – otherwise a steel table with metal mesh sides – kept in the house. It is interesting that The Mill House and How Hill Farm were given one each as they were within a certain distance from Ludham airfield while How Hill House was too far away to get one. It was not long before we came out and looked to where the plane had come from. It had flown over the vegetable garden for How Hill House. In this garden was a reed fence, say 50 yards long, made for the protection of plants from north winds. Some of the frames of reeds had been knocked down by the bullets.

In the last newsletter my cousin Elizabeth wrote about the bomb dropped at the back of How Hill House. The plane that dropped it was being chased by a fighter and as usual had eight bombs to drop as quickly as possible. The last fell on the marsh at the bottom of the hill. The third from last fell on the fruit farm destroying several fruit trees for which the government paid compensation. Four others were found quickly and all had exploded but the last had to be located and after much looking was found in the middle of the large cornfield north of the village hall.

Another day an American parachutist landed on the Northfield. He first went to How Hill House and rang the door bell. Miss Cork (Corkie) opened the door to him, immediately slammed it with, 'You are a German'. He next went to The Mill House where mother was in and asked if she could take him somewhere suitable. She had no petrol so had to take him to Ludham airfield in her pony trap with my sister. My sister was very impressed with him because he put his hand in his pocket and got out some sweets and chewing gum. When his ride was nearly over he said, 'Today I have done two things

which I have never done before, jumping out of a plane and going in a pony and trap - the pony and trap was by far the most frightening'.

When I came back from Barbon somebody told me that if I heard a doodlebug engine stop I must go immediately to our shelter. I had never heard a doodlebug engine, or for that matter any plane for some time. I went to bed the first night home and on hearing something immediately thought, 'Is that an engine stopping?' I put my head under my pillow, nothing happened. At breakfast the next morning nothing was said about planes or doodlebugs - I was very relieved. Shortly after breakfast though mother came rushing in saying, 'Quick, a doodlebug has landed near Catfield station and not exploded. We must go and look'. The doodlebug landed in the field north of the station very close to the hedge on the north side of the field. There were soldiers around it so we did not try and get closer.

One night when Norwich was being bombed mother and I went to How Hill House to look over the wall to see how bad Norwich looked. Flames were lighting the whole sky. On millennium night Elizabeth Ellis-Paul and I went to the same place expecting to see it lit up for that special night in peace time. There were no celebrations visible at all.

Another connection between war time and now is the time my sister Cecilia, cousins James and Elizabeth and myself spent playing in the gardens of How Hill House. I am sure we did not make as much noise as some groups of children do now but it is very nice to know the gardens are still being used and enjoyed as we did.

Peter Boardman

How has the Friends' fundraising helped the Trust this year?

Like every year, the Friends of How Hill raise a tremendous amount of money which goes directly towards supporting the work of the Trust. This current year is no exception and members ought to be aware of where some of your hard-earned money goes! There have been three main projects this year.

In the winter, your chairman Elizabeth got together with Sharon, our House Manager, with an idea to renovate the summerhouse for people to hire, thus providing another income stream for the Trust. After much discussion, the summerhouse was cleaned out, painted and stocked with a table, chairs, picnic blankets, a kettle etc. The idea is that groups can hire the summerhouse, have full use of the gardens and, for evening functions, have the key to our new toilet block. Although only ready in June, we have had three customers so far who have been delighted with the new facility.

As part of the general refurbishment of the house (you may remember the Friends paid for new mattresses and some new beds last year), we are currently having all the curtains replaced. A deposit has been paid and the curtains are being professionally made and will have been fitted by the time you read this.

The last big expenditure by the Friends is an extension to the boardwalk in the secret garden. There is now a boardwalk from the new entrance and the boardwalk is now a circular loop which is far more sensible! A bridge was also renovated. The secret garden is now open all the time. Access is sign posted via How Hill wood at the rear of the house. There is a donation box at the entrance to the garden but, of course, Friends have free entry!!

The Friends contribute to many smaller projects throughout the year too, all of which make a great difference to the running of the Trust. On behalf of the Trustees, I thank you all for your continued support – it is so important to us.

Simon Partridge

Rachel Duffield as Marie Lloyd

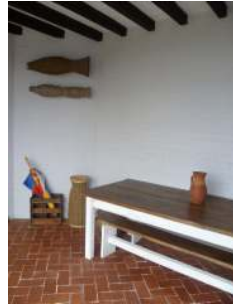
Rachel was once again very amusing and entertaining, singing and strutting to all the well known songs, (Oh! Mr Porter and A Little of what you fancy etc. all in a cockney accent). She also enlightened us as to Marie Lloyd's (Matilda Wood) unusual life. This photo with Rachel holding the bird cage is Marie Lloyd's last hit 'My old man said Follow the van'.



The Garden Party Sunday 14th June



The completed Garden Room



*The Strumpshaw Recorder Group
and Steve on the keyboard*



Bridge Day Friday 24th July

As it drizzled outside the atmosphere of joy and happiness inside the house was almost palpable as 80 people gathered for another day of great fun and excellent food. Our sincerest thanks go to Christine Buchanan and her wonderful husband Ian who swiftly had their card tables up and everyone soon made friends and sorted partners so that play could commence. The new style raffle seemed successful and players won only what they had bid for. Everyone had a wonderful day but only one pair could win and they were Hazel Carney and Jill Abbott (see photograph on page 8) with an amazing score of 4,110. Thank you Christine for all your effort and expertise.

Elizabeth Ellis-Paul

Lizzy



I'm Lizzy the new Education Manager. I started in this position in September 2014 but I have been here doing seasonal work and covering maternity leave for the last two years. I have an Ecology degree from the UEA and have done lots of weird and wonderful jobs but being here is by far my favourite. Before I was here I worked as an animal trainer at Pleasurewood Hills with sea lions and parrots which prepared me for working with lots of children and I'm still not sure which are easier to control! I love every aspect of How Hill and hope to be here for a very long time.

Bob's Last Ceilidh

Saturday 20th June dawned with only the slightest possibility of a shower and preparations were soon underway. The barn at How Hill Farm was swept and the tables and chairs set out. The two barrels of beer had been set up two days before and were settling nicely (we had to keep testing to check!). Sharp Street cider, wine and home made fruit cordials were added to the bar.



Guests started to arrive at 6.30 to wander round the gardens and choose a spot to have their picnics. We were glad yet again to welcome back Red Herrings to play for us and keep us busy on the dance floor from 8 to 11 with a short break for a rather long raffle fortified by several rounds of home made cakes.

Bob would have been delighted to see so many people of all generations and from as far away as Lowestoft and even Tooting, enjoying the evening (and some of them brave enough to drink his cider!) so a big thank you to all those who came to celebrate with us; to all those who baked the cakes, provided raffle prizes, sold the raffle tickets, got up early to help clear up (Nick, Brian, Greg, Cathy and Peter) to

Teresa who always hires and washes up the glasses, to Red Herrings for being there for every Ceilidh since we started over 12 years ago, to Geoffrey Wright of Grain Brewery for generously donating two barrels of his excellent beer, to the Irish Society and all the other people who have come and supported us over the years, and last but not least to Peter Boardman for generously allowing us to use his home for this annual event. We raised £1,300 for the Friends of How Hill this year which is the most ever.

Bella Rundle

A photo from 1963

'You may remember that when colour film first became available to the general public it was colour slides (and we all bored our friends and relatives with slide shows in a darkened room). These were taken with Kodacolor, a colour negative film that produced prints; and I was testing out its capabilities. Incidentally it was a jolly good film and many brands that followed were nowhere like the same quality.' Les Cockrill

This was taken at a How Hill open day. Some of you may be able to identify exactly which part of the garden this is - note the size of the azaleas and the trees in the background!



Raffle Prizes Wanted Please

Our store of raffle prizes all went at the Bridge Day and raised a staggering £260. So if you get perfume at Christmas that you don't wear or a bottle of wine you don't like, please consider bringing it for us to raffle. We put it to good use and it is surprising what money a good raffle can make.

Thank you to Peter Boardman, Les Cockrill, Elizabeth Ellis-Paul, Anna Meek and Katie Pyer for the photos in this newsletter.

More childhood memories of How Hill

Peter reminds me of the way we made use of the garden. We had our own sort of hide and seek with the rule that you must not be completely hidden (up a tree or in the middle of the bracken below the sun parlour). It was a wonderful way to spend the light summer evenings. Of course we only remember the fine weather. I do recall a close thunderstorm in which an oak tree just below the garden was struck by lightning.

In the winter we enjoyed the snow. During the war, when there was no traffic, we sledged down the road to the farm; the hill seemed very steep then.

As I am writing this in the summer, the harvest comes to mind. We helped to stack the sheaves of corn and went gleaning to supplement the chicken food. The steam engine and threshing machine came. We sat on the top of the stack behind the farm buildings. Cecilia caught a mouse from the stack - it escaped in The Mill House - not popular with her mother!) and was thence called 'Mind Your Own Business'). My pet mice 'Monty', after General Montgomery, and 'Snowball', bred frequently. The young were sold for three pence each to the pet shop near the old cattle market in Norwich. This brings me back to the rabbit story. When the escaped Dutch rabbit returned from her excursion into the wild, she produced brown and white babies instead of black and white like herself - quite exciting for a small child!

The fruit harvest was the best time: very busy for adults overseen by Mr Bloom, but Cecilia and I rode on Prince and Britain the Suffolk Punch cart horses who pulled the loads of apples. There was fruit in the kitchen garden too. This was a paradise for children. I don't know how lame Billy Slaughter maintained it so well. Grandpa was very interested in fruit so there was a good selection. Favourites were plums, Robin pears, Norfolk Royal apples and mulberries. I had my first little garden patch by the greenhouse where my nasturtiums became weeds; I've disliked them ever since.

The Toad Hole, now called the Marshman's Cottage, had been my mother's childhood play house. I think her brothers named it to tease big sister. There are photos of her doing housework, one including a brother, so they were not excluded. She always liked housework - maybe it brought back memories of her childhood. As a teenager she let it out to friends. She made enough money to buy a Harris Tweed coat which she still wore in the 1950s to feed the chickens. I remember sleeping there once. Later the staircase was declared unsafe. We found owl pellets on the window sill, so the bedroom was still used! There had been two tennis courts, one where the little garden is and the other south of the house, also a lovely white seat surrounding a small chestnut tree and a covered seat against the house - good for sheltering from a shower. A fine wooden building for tennis gear stood to the north of the court. Peter restored one court which we enjoyed playing on. It was the best grass court he knew. Now the cottage looks in good order except for the thatch and the little garden is thriving. That would please my mother as she became a keen gardener like most of the family. In my garden I have a white jasmine plant which came from the Toad Hole via my mother's gardens. Beside the gate to the cottage there is a small sand quarry, now overgrown with bushes and brambles. Years ago it was quite clear and a sheltered place for picnics. Sand martins nested there and a kingfisher. Another picnic spot was on the peninsula beside the boat house. It has now been washed away.

Blackberrying was a familiar pastime. The best ones were by the river accessible from the grey painted rowing boat moored at the staithe. Corkie was armed with a walking stick for reaching the high ones.

Another useful task for children was cleaning eggs for sale. The Egg Room was in the back yard. What was more exciting was dealing with rats in the big chicken house in the field beyond The Mill House. Armed with sticks and accompanied by the dog, we shut the chickens' little door at dusk and then went in with torches. I suspect the dog got most of the rats.

There were plenty of trees to climb. The best were the holm oaks which still stand below the Pound*. They don't look so big now but they are probably bigger. The other tree that brings back memories is the fig tree below the wall - I was so surprised to find the fruit blood red inside. Does anyone eat them

now? Shrubs by the boundary fence were in danger of being 'pruned' by Cecilia's horse, which Uncle Chris called a giraffe.

How Hill is built on sand; at least that is what Cecilia and I found when digging holes on the hill behind the kitchen. We were trying to catch toads, called the place toad trap land, but I don't remember any toads. We were more successful catching grasshoppers of which there were masses - big green ones and brown ones. A race track was made of thread and match sticks but inevitably they didn't keep to the track.

To the right of the path from the sun parlour there had been dug an air raid shelter of which there is now no trace. For which war? It was in good condition in the 1940s and we were not told to stay out in case it was unsafe! There were entries at either end of an underground corridor with rooms to one side. It was lined with corrugated iron supported by rustic poles. Nobody ever mentioned that it had been used.

In WW1 my mother remembered a night watchman from Norwich being employed. When he heard owls he was terrified and never came back.

We spent most of our time out of doors only coming in for meals when we heard the big bell on the back of the house. Indoors was good too. Auntie Monica made delicious fruit cake and Margaret Hubbard was the best cook I've ever come across - good old-fashioned English recipes with local ingredients. Tea time was particularly good for children with sandwiches and little sponge cakes. The kitchen was behind the dining room - they have been made into one room now. I spent many happy hours there with Margaret, 'helping' to make pastry, watching an eel being skinned and chicken plucked and gutted. Madeleine was another helper.

When we were small Grannie used to read to us by the window in her bedroom with that wonderful view. I recall Kipling's Jungle books from that time. Reading for myself included Arthur Ransome, very good stories about the outdoors, even including the Broads.

There was never any boredom, there was always something to do. Now I realise that How Hill was, and still is a special place. We have been so lucky to have known it all our lives and been part of such a caring family.

Elizabeth Crossley

*The Pound is the round garden in the house front garden surrounded by yew hedges which is now being replanted with roses.

EVENTS Volunteers are always needed for both Friends' and How Hill Trust events and raffle prizes are appreciated for Friends' events.

AUTUMN CRAFT FAIR Wednesday 28th October 2015 11 am to 4 pm

Many of the regular stall holders will be back this year including the return of the alpacas from Burnt Fen and the Norfolk Countryside Guild of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers demonstrating their skills. Come and shop early for Christmas presents or get some ideas and buy materials to make your own! Come along and bring your family and friends. Admission is free to Friends (please show your membership card) and to accompanied children, £3 to others. Refreshments (tea, coffee, soft drinks, cakes, filled rolls and soup) on sale all day.

**FRIENDS CHRISTMAS LUNCH Wednesday 9th December 2015
12.30 pm for 1 pm Cost £20**

The booking form for the Christmas lunch is on the next page. As you know the Friends' lunch gets booked up very quickly so don't delay in sending in the form.

Booking Form for Friends Christmas lunch Wednesday 9th December 2015

To: Jeanne Flett, Broadmead, Turf Fen Lane, Ludham, NR29 5PH

Please return form for this event by Saturday 21st November.

Please book _____ places for the **Christmas Lunch** on Wednesday 9th December 2015

I enclose a cheque payable to FRIENDS OF HOW HILL for £_____ (£20.00 each)

Please enclose s.a.e. if you would like your booking confirmed by post, or please enter your email address below if you would like your booking confirmed by email.

Name.....Address.....

Email address

Please indicate any dietary requirements

You may copy this form if you do not wish to cut up your newsletter.

Bridge Day prize winners Hazel Carney and Jill Abbott



This wonderful model of How Hill House was made from papier-mâché by 10 year old Olivia Sargeant of Blofield School after her visit last term. It took her three weeks to make.



Email contact for Friends is mikeandjeanne@btinternet.com

For How Hill Trust events (not organised by the Friends) please see the How Hill website or contact sharon@howhilltrust.org.uk requesting to be kept up to date with information by email.

www.howhilltrust.org.uk

You will find a link to the Friends on the How Hill website

If you would like to volunteer at events please contact:

Simon Partridge
if you can help in the tea room or at any Trust event
01692 678555
simon@howhilltrust.org.uk

or

Elizabeth Ellis-Paul
if you can help at any Friends' event
01692 678575
e.ellispaull@btinternet.com

Contributions to our newsletters from the Friends are always welcome.

Articles or photos for inclusion in the spring newsletter should reach the editor by 31st January 2016
Please note my new email address
fleur.bradnock@outlook.com