



THE AVELAND HISTORY GROUP

Annual Report 2024-25 by the Chair

The year started with an expanding team of volunteers engaging with both our ongoing major projects the Aveland Archive and our Aveland Odyssey living history events major, to mark the 80th anniversary of Operation Market Garden.

Having been trained through the winter of 2023-24, volunteers began undertaking sound recordings to capture stories and memories of WW2 from our older residents. The team also supported St James' Church Aslackby and Dementia Support South Lincolnshire (DSSL) as they captured readings of poetry by a former vicar from the Parish, which was linked to a project sponsored by NLHF, Bringing Architectural and Village History to Life. The Archive continues to grow and expand as more local information is uncovered and uploaded. We have been extremely fortunate to have two wonderful volunteers who spent 2 years transcribing a unique collection of Georgian land tax records into a searchable data base that were available online in 2024. Their in-depth research documents on the Aveland Wapentake during the civil war and a biography of every vicar in our parishes (a monumental task but very enlightening) are starting to appear on the site.

Following a very successful series of two Aveland Odyssey events in 2023, the Georgians in Folkingham and Vikings in Threekingham, work commenced in the autumn of 2023 to gather a team capable of hosting an even greater event in 2024. The theme for 2024 delivered itself, as the airfield USAAF Folkingham, Station 484 was occupied throughout 1944 by the 313th Troop Carrier Group of the US Army Air Force and it was from here that both Dakota and glider pilots flew men and supplies on both Operation Overlord (in June) and Operation Market Garden (in September).

We chose to honour the brave troops that left Folkingham in the latter operation, both because this coincided with Heritage Open Days, as well as marking the significant sacrifice in human terms that this operation resulted in, now most remembered as "A Bridge Too Far". 5 years into WW2, the men and women were unbowed, determined to prevail, even when an operation was not a resounding success.

To bring the action vividly to life, we were joined by two local artists who worked with us and with local schools, Cub Scouts, adult art groups including DSSL and Folkingham Art Group; their creativity saw us instal an art trail through the village, encouraging our visitors to see all the different locations where enactors, representing both US Army, Pathfinder, military vehicles from MVT and airborne troops, as well as the Home Front and Land Army were stationed across the village for the two day event.

AHG members spoke to a range of local groups to bring to their attention the significant role that this part of Lincolnshire played during WW2. Over the September weekend, we welcomed a daughter of a glider pilot over zoom, who delivered a lecture on the work of these brave men; a daughter of a paratrooper who had travelled from her home in the US

with her husband to talk movingly of the effects of PTSD as well as the resilience of the military wives of these men; a group of nine former Swedish parachute regiment men who acquired a decommissioned C-47 Dakota plane and found, in the logbook, that it flew from Folkingham - they are lovingly restoring it, in Southern Sweden! And finally, we were honoured to be visited by a local resident who landed on the beaches of Normandy in June 1944.

Throughout our planning, we built strong links with schools, local interest groups and local businesses, including the local campsite who offered us land for displays, entertainers and food concessions.

Following the event AHG were invited to support Billingborough Cubs with their local history badge and had a fun evening, with a light hearted team quiz involving stories and pictures of events through time across the Wapentake with a washing line to represent a timeline, the kids were encouraged to peg up when they thought these events took place. Interestingly they thought that the Knights Templar were charging around in Victorian times and Folkingham House of Correction was medieval!

We delivered more traditional talks to Bourne U3A and Grantham Civic Society, as well as Burghley House guides and North Luffenham Good Companions group. Our fees are fed back into the Group funds.

By kind permission of the owner a visit was arranged in Spring 2024 to the time capsule that is Dowsby Hall. We had two groups tour the property with a guide and the owner. The money raised went to Dowsby PCC.

For this coming year we have decided to postpone our planned Aveland Odyssey festival. And instead collaborate with other groups on the Worth200 celebrations taking place in Bourne in October 2025.

From late September onwards, AHG members have been working to identify ways to support the town of Bourne in marking the bicentenary of Charles Frederick Worth, acknowledged as the Father of Haute Couture. An ambitious programme of handicraft workshops has been created that started in February 2025, with an upcycling workshop under tutoring from a local fashion student alumnus to demonstrate the importance of sustainability in the current world of fashion. A sold-out workshop in March with local artist Eve Marshall taught a group of 20 people to create felted flowers for use as embellishments. The programme continues, with workshops in April, May, June, July and September. As well as adult workshops, which are ticketed at £20 per person, there are free childrens' art workshops happening in the Easter and Summer holidays. Through late 2024 and into 2025, our art leader Lucie Lawson has worked with primary schools in and around Bourne, to deliver both a logo for Worth 200 and they are now working on mood boards and artwork that can be displayed at the bicentenary event in October.

In January and February, the AHG sought funding for two of the three elements of the activities that we wish to deliver for Worth 200. Bourne Town Council graciously funded three legacy art projects: a series of silhouette shapes that will be erected in the summer

around Bourne, to build interest in CFW; a wicker figure with Worth's signature bustle, who will be positioned at the Red Hall for the celebration weekend and a community mosaic that is being created from March to May and will be placed on permanent display at Wake House, the birthplace of CFW. The Len Pick Trust was approached in February, to cover the costs of the educational lecture programme that AHG will deliver on two separate Saturdays in September and October 2025. The third element will be a truly fantastic Fashion Extravaganza held over the weekend at Bourne Red Hall. Bourne United Charities have kindly agreed to reduce their fees for the hire of the Red Hall for the celebration weekend in October, giving us the opportunity to work with students of all ages from the local area, who will curate and deliver a series of catwalk shows, displays and liaise with the U3A on a poetry programme. Stamford Shoestring Theatre will put on a performance there on both days, and we have gained input from Stamford College, Lincoln University, and the "Future of the Past" initiative to make the weekend appeal to as wide a range of interests as possible. To cover the costs, we will be applying for a SKDC Community Grant.

February also saw the final report issued to NLHF for the grant that was applied for by Aslackby St James PCC in conjunction with the AHG and DSSL. This project has now concluded and has delivered both the platform for Aveland Archive, built by Community Sites, as well as an updated and improved portal to this from a new The Aveland History Group website, built by Nettl.

Ali Ray - Chair

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5th April 2025

APPENDIX – DETAILS RELATING TO THE AVELAND HISTORY GROUP

Membership

Although there is no requirement for interested parties to pledge funds or subscriptions to the Aveland History Group, we maintain a list of individuals who have given their consent for us to send them emails regarding our events and news items, as these occur. We consider these people, as well as our followers on Facebook, to count as “members”.

Currently the number of individuals on our mailing list stands at: 140 (but needs updating) and our followers on Facebook at 560 members.

Finances

Whilst the Constitution expressly states that there will be no subscriptions for membership of the Aveland History Group, the Group will accept donations via our online presence as well as by donation at events.

Please refer to the Financial Statement to review the detailed finances of The Aveland History Group

Appointment of Account Examiner: Joanne Dolby examined the Group’s accounts for the year to December 18th 2024.

THE AVELAND HISTORY GROUP
AGENDA FOR 1ST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
SATURDAY 5TH APRIL 2025 12.30 pm – 1.30 pm.



VENUE: St James the Great Church, Aslackby

1. WELCOME
2. APOLOGIES
3. ANNUAL REPORT
4. FINANCIAL REPORT
5. APPOINTMENT OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE
6. APPOINTMENT OF ACCOUNTS EXAMINER
7. A.O.B.
8. DATE OF NEXT A.G.M.

REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED

THE MEETING WILL BE FOLLOWED BY AN OPEN AVELAND ARCHIVE SESSION FOR ALL IN THE CHURCH