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REPORTS OF MEETINGS FOR 2009 plus outings and other points of interest**9 January 2009****“John owes me sixpence”*****Terry Weatherley***

‘*John owes me sixpence*’ is the last entry in a diary that owes its existence to a bet between two brothers. John Burnaby bet his brother Geoffrey Burnaby that he could not keep a diary every day for the whole of 1912. The diary was kept in a Boots scribbling diary price 6d. It was profusely illustrated as the writer was a talented artist and at times preferred to draw his entries.

Terry Weatherley, in the first talk for 2009, related the story of Geoffrey Burnaby who had two younger brothers, Hugh and John. Their father was for many years the vicar of Ashfordby but after his untimely death in 1908 the family found themselves in reduced circumstances. The father’s sister, who had married a Captain Prickett and lived near Lowestoft, suggested they move to Ashby since she had found the Somerleyton Curate no longer used the Rectory there. The family soon relocated and Geoffrey divided his time between Ashby and Haileybury in Hertfordshire where he attended school.

In early January, the diary records them visiting their friends, the Combes family, where they enjoyed a horse-racing board game called Minoru (Minoru was the name of the King’s horse) and it seems a surprising game for a vicar’s family. Mrs Pankhurst spoke in Gt Yarmouth that month but the Burnaby boys didn’t go. Later, a series of visits were made to the Crossleys, at Somerleyton Hall, whose children enjoyed their company. ‘Let’s invite Geoffrey over’ they said, he always makes us laugh. The Sir Savile Crossley moved in exalted circles and frequently entertained society guests, including the Royal family. Another neighbour was Lieutenant Colonel Hill Mussenden Leathes, the eccentric author and Lay rector of Herringfleet church, who lived in Herringfleet Hall and who until 1908 had been in dispute with the Bishop of Norwich. Leathes argued that he was Prior of St Olaves and was therefore independent of the Bishop’s Diocese, and able to appoint his own ministers.

Then it was time for Geoffrey to pack and return to Haileybury, the public school in Hertfordshire where he was a boarder. He was allocated a poorly equipped room for study and slept in a dormitory. He records how he had to furnish the study, including the carpet; he also wrote that it smelt of mice, and of how he trapped several in the following period. Haileybury introduced its pupils to modern education with science lessons, and Geoffrey did not enjoy a lecture from Dr Stephen Paget (son of James Paget). The students ordered their schoolbooks from Mudie’s famous bookshop in New Oxford Street.

Easter 1912 was early, and after church preparations for the festival Geoffrey spent the holiday reading, writing, composing, and even listening (unsuccessfully) for the nightingale. He noted the boat race was a flop, with both Oxford and Cambridge capsizing, but never mentions the loss of the Titanic. In spring and summer the Burnabys kept active by walking and cycling, in the countryside, often visiting the coast and also, just occasionally, the Coronet cinema (now part of Chadds) at

Lowestoft.

The summer term brought the saga of his misdirected private box (eventually found at another school) and his School's Jubilee torchlight procession, which was a great success despite his nervousness. When he returned for his summer break he was able to see an early air race and, later, a fete in Lowestoft. Soon after came the great floods in East Anglia – Norwich being badly affected. The diarist illustrated this exciting event. He also went to Cambridge with his brother John, to see the King, and ascended Beccles church tower with Hugh.

His return to school in autumn 1912 brought glorious weather (he recorded sadly). Most of the term was taken up with sport and fieldwork. The diary had become a problem – both writing and keeping it safe from curious readers. He complained his study and seat had been taken over by a cat. At the end of term another trip to Cambridge occurred, to see his brothers in the play "Oedipus Rex" performed in the original Greek.

The diary bet, it is believed, was never paid off. The idea of publishing "Uncle Geoffrey's Diary" was proposed by G.V. Burnaby the son of the debtor as a tribute to his uncle on the centenary of Geoffrey's birth. G.V. also a Geoffrey recalls as a child that whenever his aunt Margaret (Mazzie in the Diary) visited she was always requested to bring the diary with her.

Young John Burnaby obtained a first class degree at Cambridge, went to the Dardanelles in 1914 and then the Somme, where he was wounded. He returned to Trinity to a succession of posts, ending as Regius Professor of Divinity in 1952, and retiring in 1958. Hugh became Fellow and Dean of Emmanuel College, Cambridge. As for Geoffrey, he also went to the Dardanelles, and survived, and then to the Somme. Like so many from Haileybury, his name appears on the Roll of Honour!

22 January 2009

Talk 1 "How did that get there?"

by Ron Ashman

'How did that get there', the first of two short talks by Ron Ashman, explained the appearance in 1919 of a World War I tank next to Lowestoft Lighthouse. The answer was that the government had encouraged the public to invest in War Bonds and War Savings Certificates and those places that raised the best totals were awarded a tank, supposedly brought back after active service in France and Flanders (although many were believed to have been training tanks that had never been abroad), as an acknowledgement of their efforts. Only 265 were awarded nationally, just three came to Suffolk at Lowestoft, Ipswich and Bury St Edmunds – Norwich and King's Lynn were the only examples in Norfolk. The female Mk IV tank, with four machine guns each side would have used a crew of eight – two drivers (one being the commander) two gearsmen and four gunners; the male Mk IV tank had two machine guns and one six-pounder gun each side. The Lowestoft tank travelled, with guns removed, by rail from Bovington camp to Lowestoft North Station from where a Tank Corps crew drove it to the Lighthouse. The *Lowestoft Journal* reported its progress ...The wind blew with hurricane-force winds and the rain pelted down in torrents. Notwithstanding there was a good gathering at the North Station siding, where the tank reposed in all its glory... It was swung round in its own length, slewed up to the roadway, got straight, and ambled forward at a dignified pace to the Yarmouth Road, into which it turned with the ease of a bicycle... The tank then proceeded to the appointed site, accompanied by the Mayor and other dignitaries and turned onto a prepared runway of planks. The report continues... In a moment the machine was straightened and in position. Not, however, before considerable damage had been done to the grass surrounding the base, which was literally piled in a heap by the huge machine. The crowd did not cheer... Only the Warren School pupils (from a planned large school group) joined the welcoming party braving the appalling weather. Soon after, the delivery crew removed the guns and drive chains to make sure its useful life was over, there being considerable unrest after the war both in military and civilian groups.

It is believed that most communities did not really welcome the tanks as they were not actual war trophies and were a visible reminder of bad times and things they would rather forget. The town was to remember its fallen in a better way, with a Hospital, a Social Club for discharged and demobilised soldiers, sailors and airmen and a Monument, with memorial tablet inscribed with their names, erected at the Royal Plain in August 1921.

The Lowestoft tank lasted until 1937 when it was considered a rusty eyesore and sold to local merchants Seago & Harrison for scrap. The sole surviving example of the 265 that were presented is

in Ashford, Kent. It was preserved by chance, having been used to house a transformer by a local electricity company. The tank, a male Mk IV, was restored and repainted in 1998 and is now protected by a weatherproof canopy.

22 January 2009

Talk 2 “Not many people know that!”

by Ron Ashman

‘Not many people know that!’ The second story featured Roy Edwards, who after joining the Navy at fifteen did service in the Great War and was finally invalided out in 1931, with the rank of Lieutenant, following two years in submarines. After this he worked as pool manager at the Sandford Park Lido, Cheltenham, then the outdoor pool in Maidenhead, and was finally appointed in 1937 as superintendent at a new swimming baths in Crewe. He remained there until 1939 when, recalled by the Admiralty, he was upgraded to Lt Commander and appointed to HMS Watchful, Gt Yarmouth as Rendering Mines Safety Officer NORE Command. He worked from Hastings but his main work area stretched from Clacton and Harwich to Scarborough and included much of the East Coast convoy route running between the Firth of Forth and the Thames. By June 1942 he had become a legend, roaming the east coast beaches to order, to defuse and deal with a variety of lethal mines. He also acted as instructor for NORE Command.

On 11 June 1942 Bill Ayers, an auxiliary coastguard, reported a mine in the breakers north of Tibbenham’s Score, at Corton, to Lt Com Edwards. It was identified as a submarine laid T-type magnetic mine, over seven feet long and containing a 507lb explosive charge. Two had already been defused elsewhere and Edwards asked permission to attempt to disarm the Corton one. Knowing that this type of mine was very dangerous, his superiors Cmdr Ashe and Captain Maitland-Dougall, Director of the Department of Torpedoes and Mine Investigation Section said they would arrange for a specialist from HMS Vernon to do the job. Later that day Edwards repeated his request and, because of local conditions, permission was reluctantly given – John Howard, an American Ensign who had transferred to Naval Ordnance in 1942, was to assist. In late afternoon they examined the mine but withdrew smartly when a strange noise came from it. After half an hour they returned, leaving Cmdr Theobald, a colleague from Gt Yarmouth, recording progress, on the cliff-top. Edwards removed the cover plate while the Ensign watched and then began work on the smaller plate beneath. After removing the securing nuts he was seen trying to force it free using a piece of driftwood. Soon after, a tremendous explosion signalled the virtual obliteration of two very brave men – the time was 6.02 pm. The Navy later discovered that the arming clock lay beneath this plate and had been booby-trapped. The force of the explosion was so great that sand was blown as far as the Corton Railway Station, some distance away.

Sailors billeted at the Civil Service Camp in Corton collected the fragmentary remains of the two brave officers, which were placed in a single coffin. After a service aboard, conducted in dock with a large guard of honour, the Royal Naval vessel went to sea for the burial five miles off Gt Yarmouth. Cmdr Edwards, who had successfully dealt with over 180 mines in two years, was awarded the DSO and, a Commendation for ‘coolness and devotion to duty’. Ensign Howard, the first American in the US Navy to lose his life in WWII, had a US Navy ship named after him.

A memorial plaque dating from 1946, from St James’s Church, Gt Yarmouth, was moved to St Nicholas Church and re-dedicated on 9 June, 2002, the same day that a new memorial was unveiled beside the Village Room in Corton Street. Members of Cmdr Edward’s family, plus representatives from the US and Royal Navies, the British Legion, the Wrens and the RNVR attended both ceremonies. (Cmdr Edward’s daughter unveiled a plaque in his memory at the swimming bath in Crewe in September 1944.)

12 February 2009

“Second World War Defences on the Suffolk Coast”

by David Sims

David Sims from the UEA spoke on 12 February about ‘Second World War Defences on the Suffolk Coast’. His talk covered the period 1940–1944 and gave details of the building and manning of coastline defences from Lowestoft, south to Aldeburgh. The declaration of war, in September 1939, had triggered defensive precautions in the UK, but when Germany attacked Norway in April 1940, the pace was stepped up. It was very obvious to the government and military powers that any invasion of Britain by sea would be concentrated first on the flatter stretches of the southern counties, they being

closest to France, followed by air, or combined sea and air, attack on vulnerable parts of the east coast. Lowestoft, Felixstowe and Harwich, being ports suitable for Naval use, were particular targets.

Parts of the Suffolk coastline have low to medium cliffs, but there are also many points where the narrow beaches and gently sloping dunes would have allowed invading troops and vehicles to arrive by landing craft. They could then drive directly ashore and quickly penetrate the first lines of defence, using a pincer movement to cut off key towns and open up access for following heavier units. To prevent, or at least delay this threat, a huge effort by the armed forces was needed to get defences in place and manned. David explained that within just a few months in 1940 the beaches were mined and protected by scaffolding and barbed wire, also at some points, pointed metal rails (known as 'dragon's teeth') were embedded vertically in the sand. Local builders were contracted to assist in constructing pillboxes and the thousands of concrete cubes required to prevent or hinder the access of invading tanks. When the defences were complete, members of the public were excluded from the beach and its surroundings.

A string of coastal batteries, mostly with 6in guns, ranged northward from Bawdsey to Hopton, covering spots where the cliffs were low or easily scalable. Home Guard Forces manned many of the batteries. Radar stations were positioned at Orford, Dunwich and Hopton, while anti-aircraft batteries were installed at numerous sites between Harwich and Lowestoft, including larger inland places such as Leiston, Saxmundham and Beccles. There was one at Lound to protect the amphibious-tank training centre at Fritton Lake. To help counter night raids most of the batteries were equipped with two searchlights. Different calibre, mainly ex-naval guns were commandeered to set up these defences, including 9.2in Howitzers and (to the west of Leiston) some 25 pdrs. After the war outdated guns were sent for scrapping. Halesworth, Blythburgh and Westleton each supported a garrison, but the manning of defences in between was largely covered by the Home Guard – by 1942 three companies of soldiers occupied the area south of the River Blyth. Like the Waveney, the Blyth formed a stop line and a pillbox covered every crossing. A mobile armoured train with two 3in guns and crew of twenty-six was stabled at Saxmundham.

Photographs, drawings, maps and diagrams showed many types of local defensive structure, and both British and Luftwaffe aerial photos of the coast around Southwold were compared. David Sims has done much fieldwork to reveal that a surprising amount of defences remain, although largely hidden by weathering and almost seventy years of vegetation. The most common relics are pillboxes (found covering key points and road junctions throughout east Suffolk) but there are also a few gun emplacements and underground shelters. The South Lowestoft battery observation post and nearby gun casemate are still on open view by the CEFAS building at Pakefield, but not recognised by today's generation – other gun batteries were positioned on the South Pier and at Gunton Cliff near to Heather Road. All the guns, mines, scaffolding and barbed wire were removed at the end of the war and the beach opened up once more. A few of the 3ft 6in square concrete cubes used as anti-tank obstructions survive from those that surrounded the Lowestoft area, but the extensive and deep anti-tank and anti-aircraft ditches dug along the coast and around most of the key towns and military sites were filled in after peace was declared and are difficult to find. Some smaller trenches, and the bases of a few gun sites remain, now mainly overgrown, but may be traced by the enthusiast. Runways from quite a few wartime aerodromes survive – some, like Ellough, Seething and Parham are still used for club flying and practise but most now serve as bases for farm activities and storage. Roads in north Lowestoft carry the names of Naval shore bases Europa, Mylodon and Minos and the Patrol Service Memorial Museum may be visited in the town's Sparrow's Nest Gardens.

26 February 2009 Talk 1 "The Funding and Building of Corton School 1895–96" by Don Friston

Corton Village in the mid 1800s was much smaller, and on the 1830s map continued north along the cliff, level with the church. There were two farms, the mill, a small school, and a few cottages by each farm. Life then was hard but conditions in the village were about to change. Jeremiah James Colman (youngest partner in the Norwich Mustard company) purchased a house on the cliff for his family summer residence in 1869 and brought a 'golden era' to Corton. A wealthy man, he extended the house (built near the old coastguard station site) naming it *The Clyffe* and also developed Corton Gardens, an estate surrounding his house that stretched south as far as Tramp's Alley. Each summer

the Colman family might spend up to 3 months there and entertained a stream of important visitors – these included the politician William Gladstone in the early 1890s. JJC also bought surrounding land and began to build homes (all of them marked with a ‘JJC’ plaque and date). Over two decades he was generous to and provided much work for locals, and also organised new facilities – a village room, with bowls green, upgrading the rocket life-saving equipment and encouraging a village choir. He also helped establish a Methodist Chapel in 1874, although he was a Baptist, and worshipped there during his visits to Corton until he died in 1898.

In 1895, JJC moved George Friston, his head gardener, and his family from Mill Loke into Hawthorn Lodge (the cottage in the village street, opposite the Estate) – the first rental agreement shows £1.5s.0d per quarter. The tenancy was settled on George and his wife Mary at a modest rent for the rest of their natural life – George died in 1940, but the tenancy remained intact until Mary’s death in 1951. (The cottage remains in fine condition today although its garden is much reduced.) After the deaths of Caroline and Jeremiah Colman, the family interest in the village seemed to disappear. *The Clyffe* was dismantled in 1917 and its fabric and contents were sold. Messrs Notleys of Lowestoft auctioned off the Estate and all its landownings in 1921.

Corton distributed a London-printed monthly parish magazine entitled ‘*The Dawn of Day*’ wrapped in a localising news-sheet that cost an extra penny – the following notes are mostly taken from the 1894 and 1895 issues. March 1894 states that the offices (toilets) at the existing school, almost opposite the Methodist Chapel, had been condemned at the last inspection. Although the schoolroom was not condemned it was over sixty years old and fell short of contemporary standards, the infant’s room in particular being too small. The feeling was that a new and larger school would be the best solution, so the matter was laid before village benefactor Mr Colman by vicar Walter E Smith. Jeremiah’s response appeared in the Parish Magazine for March as follows: [Mr Colman] ...*with great liberality agreed to buy the old school and site. Provided a new school is built and playgrounds laid out, amply meeting the wants of the place, he is willing to give a large and convenient piece of land, and £500 for the [old] building...* However, this generous proposition would need to be matched by at least another £500 from the village in order to build a good school. In the April issue the fired-up vicar heads the first list of contributors with (for those days) a massive donation of £50 (later increased to £60). In addition he planned church collections on 27 May, 15 July and 19 August, plus a sale of work in July. Such were his powers of persuasion that £154.18s.0d was raised in the first month. Records show this initial enthusiasm could not be maintained; later the contributions vary from 6d up to 5 guineas, plus a few large windfalls from the Fowler family and from other dignitaries (most of whom would probably be visitors to the Colman home).

Meanwhile village life continued, and in May parents were reminded that the Schools Inspector was due on 20 June. Attendance was vital, as on this was based the yearly Education Grant for the school. Summer 1894 wasn’t the best and on 12 July ...*the Sunday-school Treat was seriously marred by frequent heavy showers...* Rain also affected the sale of work, now rescheduled to 2 August, but despite the weather a net profit of £54 was added to the £25 (1st grant) from Lowestoft and Lotheringland Church Schools Aid Association making the total to date £333.12s.8d. Harvest holidays were from 10 August to 11 September (a period which might be approved by parents today). In that month the new Education Grant was confirmed at £80.19s.0d but raised to £83.5s.6d because of a ‘good’ result in the Boys Drawing Examinations (held earlier on 2 May). This was the largest grant that had been awarded to date. By October the fund had crept up to £356.4s.3d and the vicar now appealed vigorously for an additional £40 before applying to the Charity Commission for permission to do the land exchange. His prayers were answered, for in November Mrs Archibald Smith (was she related?) donated £50 and the Church Extension Association £20. Also in November a long-promised and eagerly awaited tea was given to the schoolchildren by the indefatigable vicar. This was due to the average school attendance for a week hitting 90% in June. Another tea was promised should 91% be reached. December collections were very low but January 1895 brought a bonanza, with a further £100 from JJ Colman MP, also a £20 grant from Suffolk Education Society and £10 (2nd grant) from L & L Church Schools Aid Assoc. Allowing for the £500 purchase of the old school, the plans could go ahead immediately!

In February 1895, Mr Colman confirmed the new school site would be the west part of the land formerly known as the Town[?] Pightle. This was preferable to the earlier proposed site south of the

mill. During March and April, plans were sent to the Education Department and approved – all tenders were to be in by 13 May, with mid-May forecast for the building work to begin. The contract stipulated completion in seven months. The building preparations went ahead from 30 May and on 12 June 1895, in a hurriedly arranged ceremony preceded by a few prayers from the vicar, and with only a few persons present, the first spadeful of concrete was thrown into the foundations by Margaret Lilian Smith (vicar's wife?). A few days later (this time in beautiful weather) the children enjoyed their 1895 Sunday-school Treat in the vicarage garden, near the church, but ...*were unable to play in the adjoining field as the hay was not yet carried...*

The village was now alarmed by the serious illness of Mrs Caroline Colman. Sadly, after a temporary recovery she relapsed and died aged 64 on 5 July. (JJC commissioned two windows for the Chapel in her memory.) Rather more cheerful news came when the Inspector's report showed a general improvement in pupils' schoolwork. The new grant per head was 17s.8d for older children and 15s for infants (previously 16s.1d and 11s) but was still below the national average of 18s.1½d per head. Because average school attendances had been up in 1894 the new annual grant totalled a record £100. At the end of July, the brickwork on the new school was almost complete and carpenters were ready to start on the roof. The vicar made another urgent appeal (this time aimed at visitors) to help find the £250 still required for outstanding expenses. In August the roof was nearing completion and a splendid picture of the workmen in front of the building was taken at this time. School summer holidays for 1895 were given as 9 August to 11 September.

The September donations list was the longest to date, though by no means the largest total, and included £1 from Mr GE Hawes of Norwich (who was building the school). Presumably he took on local contract labour, as daily travel from Norwich was hardly practicable in 1895. October saw the school roof complete and the internal structures nearly so. Surprisingly, at this time Miss Woods the schoolmistress gave notice that she had accepted another engagement at Bury St Edmunds and would leave at Christmas. In November, the ever-industrious vicar reported he hoped to engage a master to take her place (one of his appointed duties). Due to a violent outbreak of measles around 17 November, affecting almost every family in the village with children, the Sanitary Authority closed the school until at least 9 December. The month's donations were reported to be very small and the next list in the Parish Magazine would not be published until the New Year. The New School was due to be completed near the end of January, and finally opened on 3 February 1896.

THE ACCOMMODATION PLAN

The new school plan listed two rooms for older children, one 30ft x 21ft 6in (accommodating 64) and one 24ft 3in x 21ft 6in (accommodating 52) – these could be made into one by sliding doors. A separate room 24ft 3in x 20ft would hold 60 infants. Each room could be easily enlarged at a later date if needed. There were separate entrances, and cloakrooms for boys, girls and infants, a spacious playground for boys, and another shared by girls and infants.

TENDERS FOR BUILDING THE SCHOOL

Mr WE Sewell, Lowestoft £1471	Messrs Allerton & Earl, Lowestoft £1445
Mr George Beckett, Gt. Yarmouth £1365	Mr John Ward, Gt. Yarmouth £1355.10s
Mr JFW Bray, Gt. Yarmouth £1276	Mr F Grimble, Gt. Yarmouth £1244
Mr GE Hawes, Norwich £1240 (this, being the lowest tender, was accepted)	

26 February 2009 **Talk 2 “How nature shaped our coastline and human occupation from 700,000 BP to the present”** *by Keith Davies*

For most of the last million years, Britain was joined to Europe by a wide land bridge. During this period it was subject to violent swings in climate, ranging from ice ages to subtropical periods. Only recently, in 2003, has the earliest date for human habitation of the country been established as being 700,000 years ago, with the discovery of humanly worked flints, plant, animal, and insect remains at Pakefield, near Lowestoft. At that time it was part of the estuary of the largest river in the country, the Bytham, and enjoyed a Mediterranean climate, having a landscape of marshy ground with reeds and alder trees near the river, and oak woodland plus open grassland further away. The area supported hippo, rhino, mammoth, bison, tiger, lion, jackal, wolf and bear. The early nomads who had crossed

the land bridge from northern Europe, probably scavenged and hunted for meat, which was supplemented by plants and fish. The source of the Bytham was close to today's Stratford on Avon. The Thames flowed along a more north-easterly course than today, through the vale of St Albans towards Colchester before entering the North Sea near Ipswich. When in 450,000 the Anglian Glaciation advanced to its maximum extent it obliterated the Bytham and pushed the Thames southward to its present course through London.

As successive ages came and went, settlers returned during warmer periods except for a period of 100,000 years before 60,000 BP when there was no evidence of human occupation. There is a theory that the English Channel or at least a large river appeared during this period, and severed the chalk ridge joining the south coast to France. Modern surveys (2003) reveal that the huge underwater valley is more than 10 km wide and 50 m deep. The final cold cleansing of the population took place 13,000 years ago. Our ancestors lived here continuously from 11,500, and Britain became an island about 7,000 years ago. New migrations then had to come by sea and we trace their development through the Stone, Bronze, and Iron Ages.

Evidence of Neolithic settlement has been found at Corton, Pakefield, Carlton Colville, and Kessingland, although erosion by the sea has taken much of the evidence from Corton and Pakefield. Recent excavations to the east of Carlton Hall have revealed flintwork and pottery of late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age date – 5–4000 BC. A circular ditch with a spiral entrance containing burnt posts suggested a henge-type structure. An urned cremation and two burials were inside. At Kessingland, on the marshland by the River Hundred, evidence was found in 1996 of a flint industry left by hunter-gatherers pre 4,000 BC, and on high ground overlooking the river a large settlement dated about 2,500 BC has been discovered.

The first settlers in Suffolk who grew crops were Celts, and they arrived about 2,000 BC. By this time the rise in sea level, due to global warming, meant that many streams were open to shallow draught boats. It is likely that the Kirkley Stream would have been navigable to the end of the Street in Carlton Colville until the late Saxon Period. There are two place names in the local area of Celtic origin – the wis in Lothu-wis-toft, and Mortway in Carlton Colville. 'Wis' is slow moving water, and 'way' means road.

Romano-British, Iron-Age settlements were revealed in 1998 excavations on Bloodmoor Hill. The site was occupied in the 1st to 3rd centuries AD, and was a minor settlement. Later it was to become the most easterly Saxon settlement in the country and was occupied from the 5th to the 8th century with a maximum population at any one time of 25 to 30 (spanning 5 generations). Buildings of SFB and post-in-trench buildings housed metal workers, weavers, and farmers, who carried on a thriving trade, indicated by the remains of glass palm pots, claw beakers, and imported cult items in silver. A silverine figure 43 mm high was identified as a votive object of the 7th century. Digs in 2002/3 near Carlton Hall showed settlement periods similar to those at Bloodmoor Hill and sites on both sides of Castleton Way contain 4-post Iron-Age granaries, and field boundaries. The Carlton settlement had its first centre to the east of Castleton Way, with the indication of an Anglo-Saxon Hall post-hole structure of early to middle Saxon date, while a second Hall was built later to the west, close to where the Norman Hall had been situated.

Finally the Vikings, having established themselves in Lothingland, found a very desirable base in the Frostenden valley, remains of which can be seen today. Here was a landlocked harbour, protected from winds and invisible from the sea, with a fort for the harbour guard. The valley was part of a large estuary that included Easton and Covehithe Broads, open nearly to Wrentham, with sea levels at least 5 feet higher than today and a silt free river navigable by shallow draught boats.

The site was investigated in 1924, approaching the eastern bank of the stream by a footpath and an elevated terrace that was considered to be an ancient quay, 87 paces long, jutting into marshland. Just 28 paces to the north were unmistakable signs of an excavated dock. At the head of the dock was an oval mound, identified as a Danish earthwork, measuring 34 paces from east to west, and 23 paces from north to south, surrounded by a ditch 227 paces in circumference. The bottom of the ditch was 12 feet below the summit of the mound, which had been ploughed down by farming. The ditch/moat was fed by a spring and almost certainly connected to the dock. In the Danish era, Kirkley, Benacre and Easton probably all had harbours. Then as the river began to silt up and the sea level fell

Frostenden became inoperative, though surviving to be recorded in the Domesday Book as a seaport with salina (salt works), salt being used to preserve fish. In 1308 John de Cove built a quay on the part of the estuary that remains today at Covehithe.

12 March 2009

“The History of St Peter’s Church, Kirkley”

by Audrey Wormald

Historian Audrey Wormald stood in at short notice to speak about St Peters Church at Kirkley. As wife of the incumbent she was able to deliver an enjoyable talk with a frank and personal outlook. Kirkley and its church, being sandwiched between Lowestoft and Pakefield, and for many years sharing clergymen with the latter, was not well documented in its early period. Until about 1750 nothing was provable in local records but that is now about to change as the speaker plans to publish a collected history. The present church is probably the fifth on the site. The first may have been built around 950 AD, but that is not confirmed and there is no church listed in Domesday, where Kirkley is described as a small settlement. During the black death over 50% of the clergy died, and later rectors were so poor that they often took on the duties of schoolmaster to maintain their living. The Kirkley area had been Christian for many centuries but not being the richest part of the Suffolk coast the early churches were constructed of local materials such as wood and flint and to a budget. In general the nave was built first, then the north aisle (in order to avoid obstructing the daylight) and thirdly the tower. St Peter’s tower dates from the late 13th/early 14th century and was always fairly substantial, having three floors and a spiral staircase, but by the mid-1600s the nave and aisles had deteriorated to such a degree that the building was abandoned and worship transferred to Pakefield, St Margarets.

It was to be another hundred years before things altered, when the joint rector of Pakefield and Kirkley died and a new rector named Hall was appointed for Kirkley, although his church was derelict. The rector at Lowestoft, named Tanner, encouraged Mr Hall to restore St Peters and get it in use again. Hall sought sponsors and made a serious attempt to get the ruins built up – from then, written references remain and it is easier to follow developments. The existing open-top tower was connected to a new nave by a short, curved passage; there was to be no chancel, and the nave north wall was built of red brick – possibly due to lack of funds, as the local population then numbered only around 400. (Despite its shortcomings this fourth St Peters church lasted until 1858.) The income from the parish remained low, so the next rector (in 1828) got the living in Beccles and East Carleton for himself, putting in a curate to administer to Kirkley.

During the 1800s Morton Peto, who had purchased the open area known as the ‘Lamplands’ south of Lowestoft harbour for housing, contributed £200 and loans for the Lucas brothers to build St John’s Church for the use of the richer people from his new development. He did not support the existing parish of Kirkley in spite of the ever-increasing number of worshippers from the lower classes (servants etc.) who lived in the Mill Road area and were employed by the seafront ‘swells’. The next order of rectors in Kirkley was composed of Oxford graduates, who felt the church should be improved – they got a faculty and appealed for cash. None was offered so further development was done in small affordable stages, first a chancel, then an extension to the site boundary, then a south aisle. The next rector built a new nave outside and around the old, followed by a Gothic style north aisle by 1870. In 1886, benefactor Edward Kerrison Harvey aged 66 took on the cause, offering to fund a baptistry and south porch. Some years later, after marrying his second wife, he also gave an elaborate iron screen (still in use) a clock with matching case, a baptistry screen and a font cover. In 1906 he funded new gas lamps and a huge organ that was systematically extended. His generosity to the church was outstanding.

19 March 2009

“Exploring Lowestoft’s History in the Archives”

by Bill Wexler

Members of the Society made an evening visit to the Lowestoft Records Office where Mr William Wexler, Public Service Archivist, spoke about the role of the Office and how its contents are collected and used. As the third busiest in the country, Lowestoft receives regular consultations from overseas, national and local enquirers. Suffolk sent out many explorers and settlers over the last 300 years to both the New World and (through the fishing trade) to the Continent, so many contacts require information on family links. The deposited items range from photographs through to government and religious records, books, letters and printed ephemera. Major events are always well documented but

do not trace how life was lived by the general public and Mr Wexler was careful to point out that everyday bills of trade, business documents, letters and records of day-to-day happenings are very important too. These items require special care when stored as they often contain materials that can deteriorate unless kept in climate controlled or lightproof areas, and protected by acid-free wrappings or boxes. Strong rooms and storage conditions in all Record Offices have to be approved by the National Archive, and religious items from Suffolk by the Norwich Diocese. The Lowestoft protected archive is now getting full and staff are concerned that space may run out should any large deposits arrive from local societies or businesses.

Other record offices in Suffolk are at Bury St Edmunds and Ipswich, the latter having specialist staff who conserve and repair those donations that have become fragile due to ageing or wear and tear. Historians today have many advantages, due to the availability of computers and online research services, but often the most satisfying method of getting information is by accessing original documents. If needed, members with a reader's pass can be assisted in locating the right sources by the expert staff within the office. Deposited items at Lowestoft include deeds from the late 1100s, although the core collection comprises parish archives from the 1400s onwards. Local government records are stored covering the period 1853 to 1974, records after that time being the responsibility of Waveney District. An excellent register of shipping is held from 1852 to the present – this was returned to the Town, having been rescued when a collection was disbanded in the West Country. Poor Law records for Oulton from the 1760s, Coroner's records, also Magistrates, County Court, and Solicitors records are available to researchers. Farming records though are not well represented and the curators are always looking for more examples.

Bill Wexler and his staff displayed a good selection of local documents, maps and photographs for members to examine after his talk, and they were able to circulate and see the researcher's library and facilities, including the IT equipment within the office.

26 March 2009

“Koning Olie”

by Ray Collins

Ray spoke on ‘The Oil Industry before 1907’ and said that, amazingly, petroleum oil products date from prehistory. The Greeks used them for fire weapons and before this, in Iraq, bitumen was used to lay bricks, seal boats, to waterproof and/or decorate altars, and for lamp oil. The west however had to rely on oil from animals, vegetables and coal for their lamps until the mid 1800s. The industrial revolution in Britain and advances in chemistry made possible the production of paraffin from shales or coal, giving a much-improved oil for lamps, however it was expensive so the search began for a cheaper supply. A one-time American rail conductor named Edwin Drake was asked to look for oil at Titusville in Pennsylvania, where small quantities had been found floating on surface water and skimmed off by the local Indians. He started with no experience and spent almost two years without result, digging holes and trenches in what he believed were likely spots. By 1858 he decided to try drilling but still had no luck, and his sponsor wrote ordering a halt due to lack of funds. On 28 August 1859, just before the letter arrived, the bore hole filled with oil during the weekend break, so Drake ignored the instruction and began to collect the crude oil that flowed at an average 25 barrels per day. This output rapidly increased and was sent for refining into paraffin, which was the principal product. Within ten years the company was producing 7,000 barrels per day and a number of early investors made large fortunes – by 1908 world output had risen to 37.5 million tons per year. During the first years of production, output was mainly consumed in the USA although an American ship named the Elizabeth Watts brought barrels of paraffin to the UK in 1865.

In this country the Samuel family had set up business, M Marcus & Co – Established 1834, exporting goods to the Far East and importing exotic goods and food for Victorian consumers, including sea shells. When the father died he left a very healthy business with lots of overseas contacts. His sons Marcus and Sam took over and in 1866 began to export case oil (paraffin in 5-gallon cans). This developed into an idea to break into the oil business but the way ahead was tricky because John D Rockefeller, trading in the USA as Standard Oil (later to become Esso in Europe, elsewhere Exxon), was working to monopolize the market. Crude oil was being found in other countries and when the brothers saw a source from the Caspian Sea/Black Sea area they developed a plan. It was to buy paraffin from Rothschilds on the Black Sea, build a fleet of tankers suitable for the Suez Canal (this

had not been done before because of safety fears) and set up distribution depots all over the Far East. They had to keep their plan secret to prevent Rockefeller moving against them. Most of their business was done on a deferred payment basis and this soon made M Marcus & Co. very rich. Their first purpose-built tanker of 5,010 tons capacity, named SS *Murex*, was commissioned in 1892. It was built to a very high standard, given a Lloyds 100A1 safety certificate and sailed through the Suez Canal loaded with paraffin in August 1892. Marcus Samuel now met ups and downs in trading over several years and tried to strengthen his company by organising a syndicate that used his own fleet for transporting the oil – eventually this would turn into the Shell Oil Co. A lucky break came when the company were able to refloat the Naval ship HMS *Victorious* that had grounded in the Suez Canal and been considered a total loss – this success brought a knighthood for Marcus – in 1902 he achieved his ambition to become Mayor of London.

Marcus & Co. then tried to talk the Royal Navy into using heavy oil to fuel their boilers, but a trial proved unsuccessful as inferior burners had been fitted to the test ship. It would be a further 10 years before naval vessels used oil as fuel. Another mistake was to concentrate on paraffin, as alternative energy sources were coming into use, particularly petrol. In later years trading difficulties remained, but finally a new 40/60 deal with shared benefits was arranged between Shell and Royal Dutch. Henry Deterding from Royal Dutch played a major part in management with his British partner acting in more of a figurehead role. The mix was very successful and produced the company known today as Royal Dutch Shell plc. that uses the classic pecten (shell) trademark.

23 April 2009 “Problems from Owning a Roman Historical Site” by John Browning

Landowner John Browning spoke about the problems of owning land on the Norfolk-Suffolk border that contains a 50-acre Roman historical site, including remains of a town and villa. The land was first excavated in 1877, then again between 1974 and 1976 and is now a designated archaeological site. Over 50 burials were discovered, but being a Roman Christian cemetery there were no valuable grave goods. Today there are a large number of metal detectorists who are keen to investigate such sites, despite their protected status, and these people have a range of good and bad intentions. Those with a genuine historic interest may be given a cautious welcome, but sadly the majority are driven by greed and self-interest to search for buried artefacts. The mystery of what relics may be underground generates two kinds of reaction – either they wish to own them or they see the chance of selling them on at a profit. Ancient Monument Consent sets strict limits on what may be done at designated sites and there are heavy fines for breaking the rules. The UK law states that items discovered belong to the landowner, but over the years these laws have proved woefully inadequate and thousands of artefacts (and more importantly their history) have been lost to the treasure-seekers.

Mr Browning gave a fascinating account of his struggle to protect the integrity of the Roman settlement since he took it over in 1976. In the late 1970s metal detecting equipment came into the public domain and has since become ever more sophisticated. It soon became obvious from the footprints that his farm was being targeted after dark and some offenders were caught and challenged. However, unless the culprit had stolen items on their person it was not possible to take them to court, as metal detecting without consent was not a notifiable offence. This fact frustrated the landowner and offered little protection to the site. Also the night hawks could adopt a very threatening and violent attitude when challenged. In the 1980s Mr Browning received rumours that a major hoard had been removed secretly from his land, and was being quietly hawked around for sale to enthusiast collectors. By chance he obtained black and white photographs that showed numerous items of treasure (later described as a collection of 1st-century temple bronzes) believed to have been exported illegally. The story was even aired as part of a TV heritage programme.

Then in 1989, the British Museum wrote to Suffolk Police to say that the pieces were in the possession of, and to be put up for auction by, a Madison Avenue dealer. The Getty Museum was said to be keen to purchase them for its own collection of antiquities. Although the items, now known as the ‘Icklingham bronzes’ and believed to be worth a seven-figure sum were acknowledged to be those stolen from Mr Browning’s farm, the weak laws failed to secure the return of the treasure – this was because the UNESCO convention designed to stop illegal exports had been signed but not been officially ratified in the UK, and the CPS had failed to pursue and prosecute the thieves. By this time,

as they had been rejected by the Getty Museum as stolen goods, an American collector and his wife had purchased the bronzes for their already huge collection.

The aggrieved Mr Browning decided to take on the system that allowed such flagrant abuse, and over a number of years built up a case for the return of the hoard. With great determination he employed a specialist lawyer who had already succeeded in repatriating stolen artefacts and eventually an undisclosed settlement was reached in the USA courts. The Icklingham bronzes will be returned to the UK and bequeathed to the British Museum after the death of the American collectors. Meanwhile the UNESCO convention has been ratified and the Treasure Bill rewritten to stop crime of this type paying. A better system of rewarding legitimate discoveries and treasure trove is in place, and Mr Browning and like-minded friends continue to prompt major improvements in the control of archaeological sites. These include modern surveillance techniques and police assistance that helps ensure priceless items will remain in the National Archives for all to enjoy.

14 May 2009

“Kate Elizabeth – a journey through time”

by June Nice

Society member June Nice spoke about the hardships of Victorian life, when her grandmother Emma died young leaving 3 children. Having lost her first husband Harry Aris, a shoe-riveter, Emma had married a farm-worker named Damon Brion, but he struggled to find employment and the family were frequently on Parish support. After Emma's death in 1894 a Mr James Brown wrote to the George Muller Orphanage, then well known in Bristol, explaining their plight, and asking the owner to take in the children. Being twelve, son Thomas had to go out to work, but his sister Kate Elizabeth aged 10 and Alfie, being only 8, were found places after the application forms proved they were in good health, possessed a change of clothing, and had no other support.

George Muller, from a well-off Prussian family living in London, made an unpromising start. Growing up a thief, he then took on the unlikely career of divinity student. After some time at this, he was able to throw off his bad habits and became a successful Missionary for Jews in London. In 1834 he founded a Scripture Union and started to prosper, regretting his bad youth, which he blamed on over-indulgent parents. By 1836 he set up the original Orphanage that was to bear his name, starting with about 30 girls in the Ashley Downs area of Bristol. Successive buildings were much larger and eventually catered for over 2,000. Muller died in 1898 having shaped the lives of over 80,000 young people. During all this time it was said that he never asked for money. All needs of the Orphanage were met by donations and gifts in kind of food and supplies – at one Christmas 150 pheasants were received.

The children had a sound Christian education with strict discipline and were given practical tasks to fit them for life. Boys and girls were kept apart and, sadly, siblings were separated. Their day began with a bell rung at 6am and an early breakfast ensured they were in classes by 8.30. The evening meal was at 5.30 and they were in their dormitories (which held 30 beds on average) by 9pm. At one time Charles Dickens went to visit Ashley Downs as he was said to have heard the children were starving. The visit satisfied him that not only were they well fed and neatly dressed but they also enjoyed the benefits of plenty of exercise in and out of the Orphanage. They had to scrub floors, clean shoes and empty their chamber pots and all were taught a trade as part of their education. Girls learned sewing, laundry and domestic skills. Boys did saddlery, gardening and carpentry and both sexes, if thought suitable, might have teacher training. June showed an excellent selection of photos of the children in their classes. Boys could leave at age 14 and girls were sometimes kept on until they were 17. All were sent out in good clothes and with a Bible.

June's ancestor Kate was to become an assistant housekeeper at Harrow, and later to work for the Rothschild family. Alfie first went as apprentice to a saddler and progressed to the post of Stationmaster at Quainton, Bucks. The family held together, all being christened in Quainton, and June has a remarkable collection of documents and photographs to tell their story. The Orphanage closed in the 1950s, the buildings now forming part of Bristol College, but there is still a Foundation in Bristol providing small homes, and the Muller legacy lives on.

11 June 2009**“Visits to two local churches”****led by Terry Weatherley****St Mary’s Church, Henstead**

The group managed to find the car park, tucked behind the trees fringing the churchyard extension, and made their way across the road to the recently tidied graveyard surrounding the church. It stands on a slope with fine views across agricultural land. Like so many Suffolk churches, St Mary’s is rather remote from the scattered houses making up today’s village. This is due to much of the old village on the east side being destroyed by fire in 1641. The fire spread to the chancel and unfortunately the Parish Writings were destroyed.

The present chancel was rebuilt to a unified plan without chancel arch, step or screen. There is however, in the north wall, a door that shows the position of the original chancel arch. The stone surround to the south doorway is an example of splendid, highly decorated Norman work circa 12th-century, while the north door, of a similar date, is of plainer style. There is a stoup within the vaulted porch. A photograph within the church illustrates the interior prior to the latest rebuilding phase carried out in 1906. It shows the box-type pews and the earlier three-decker pulpit. The present interior is fairly plain, having exposed dark-stained beams and has a few interesting monuments – one refers to William Clark, a Naval Commander, slain in combat in the Indian Ocean when his ship was overcome by a Dutch vessel – others mark the Bence and Sparrow family links, including earlier incumbents of the 1640s. Two memorials on the north interior wall of the chancel are formed of Coade stone, an artificial marble invented by a Mrs Coade. A donor window commemorates Charles Sheriffe, a relative of Robert Sheriffe of Diss (who died in 1840) and of Thomas Bowen Sheriffe of Henstead Hall (Squire), died 1664. The font has a tapering decorative wooden cover of some height, surmounted by a dove with wings spread. The organ retains its hand-pumped bellows. There is one bell in the tall and well-proportioned tower.

St Edmund’s Church, Kessingland

The massive tower of St Edmunds Kessingland has perpendicular windows and fine flushwork. Richard Russell of Dunwich (who began it in 1437) died in 1440 and construction was then passed to another mason who took 12 years to complete the task – the change in windows and buttress pattern is clear to see. Like several others in East Anglia it forms an excellent reference point for passing ships. There is a fine hang of six bells, which were in use for practise when we toured. The west door in the tower has various designs that include a Tudor Rose, an anchor, a Bishop’s Mitre, also a dolphin and a heart pierced by three arrows. Two angels holding censers flank this door and above it is the seated figure of St Edmund, positioned centrally within an elaborate frieze containing shields. In 1598 John Bucknam left monies to repair the church, but by 1668 it was in such a poor condition that the nave collapsed. The present chancel and nave (built in 1908) are, like Henstead unbroken, giving a view of the 15th-century font, also by Russell, featuring saints in niches and considered one of the finest in Suffolk. Near the present south wall are ruins of an earlier south aisle. The south door is no longer in use. Two brass memorials inside commemorate the dead from both wars. Mr Jack Strowger of Kessingland commissioned a modern window in memory of his wife Katherine to honour the Driftermen of Kessingland. Nicola Kantorowicz AMGP designed the stylish glass dedicated by the Bishop of Thetford in 2007. A number of monuments in the chancel are dedicated to past incumbents and there is a five-light East Window with Tracery by Kempe of London that mirrors some figures from the font.

10 September 2009**“Memoirs of a Suffolk Gentleman”****by Guy de Moubray**

At the first autumn meeting members heard a numbers of interesting tales from Guy de Moubray, whose family dates from the 12th century. Later descendants, the Earls of Arundel, moved into Suffolk and had family links (through marriage) with Roger de Bigod of Bungay Castle. A later Roger de Moubray went to the Crusades – his family, the speaker’s distant cousins, once living in Framlingham and Orford Castles. Guy wrote his own history four years ago and has since published a couple of cookery guides with recipes. He was born in Kuala Lumpur where his parents worked in the civil service. His first memories were of being left in Belgium in 1930 with a married but childless aunt. Over fifteen years he saw his parents in brief meetings for just eight months. Fortunately the aunt proved a loving and caring substitute parent during his education at three different schools.

War came, and in 1942 his parents became POWs in Singapore. Guy (a teenager) applied for a government scholarship to learn Japanese and in 1944 joined the army and was posted to Burma, employed to listen for Japanese radio messages. In January 1945 he nursed an ailing army truck some 1000 miles from Arakan to Calcutta, where he found his rank of sergeant improved to Lieutenant. In Bombay when the A-bombs fell, he managed a transfer to Rangoon to join the 5th Infantry, for the relief of Singapore. On arrival, the relieving force approached the deserted quay with great caution. Being first ashore, Guy had just secured the boat when a gate opened and staff cars came out to offer lifts into the compound, but his cautious CO decided they should walk to meet the surrendering force and cheering prisoners. 20-year-old Lieutenant De Moubray was reunited in a short while with parents he had not seen for many years. In 1946, finding the army work abroad dull, Guy successfully applied for a place at Trinity College, Oxford to undertake studies in economics and finance. By lucky accident he missed his military flight to the UK and got a spare seat on a BOAC flying boat with a much higher level of comfort, a most memorable journey. His luck continued on leaving Oxford, when he joined the Treasury in London and on his first day met the attractive girl who was to be his wife for almost fifty years. Next he moved to the Bank of England and by 1956 worked in the Chief Cashier's Office. He then was recommended for the job in the IMF as PA to Per Jacobsen, from Basle, and in whirlwind style, within two weeks moved with his wife to the USA for a two-year spell with the Jacobsens.

Latterly, Mr de Moubray realised that Buxlow Manor, his attractive 17th-century home, had great potential for tourism and entered the "Open to View" scheme, and is still actively welcoming guests for short talks and guided tours. No stranger to technology at 84, he runs a comprehensive personal website: www.buxlow.com

24 September 2009

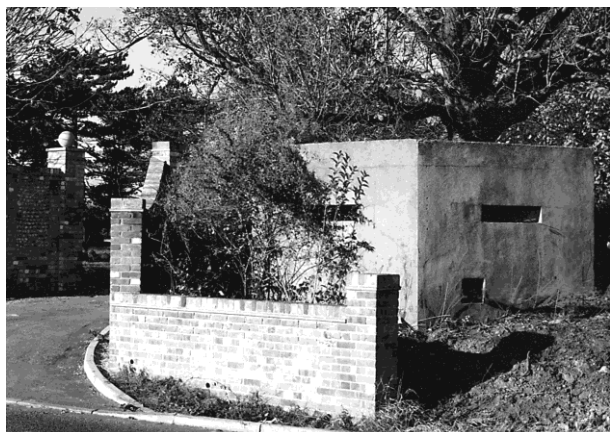
"Lowestoft's Defences 1939–45"

by Rob Jarvis

Rob is curator of the Lowestoft War Memorial Museum at Sparrow's Nest and gave details of the extent and manning of the town's wartime defences. At the outbreak of war, being a seaport with low shelving beaches and cliffs opposite occupied parts of the Continent, Lowestoft became a prime target for aerial and sea attack. The defended area stretched from Tramp's Alley at Corton to Crazy Mary's Hole, at the Pontins site, and inland as far as Carlton Colville, Oulton Broad and Oulton Village. Within this area were a number of ditches and lines of concrete blocks to trap and stop tanks and other military vehicles in the event of an invasion. The beaches had barbed wire and scaffolding barricades from 1941, punctuated at intervals by pill-boxes, a few of which remain in place. North Denes boxes were hexagonal with two gun embrasures on each face – two boxes on the south esplanade were disguised beneath sun shelters. Other pill-boxes survive in the area surrounding the town in 2009.

Seaward-facing batteries with battery observation posts were placed at Gunton Cliff (near Briar Clyffe school), the South Pier, Kensington Gardens and Pakefield (Pontins). Early ex-naval guns were used initially, and after the war these outdated items were sent for scrap. Anti-aircraft batteries were based at Pakefield, also near to St Margaret's Church, and to help counter night raids most batteries were equipped with two searchlights. In addition, the north beach was protected by underwater chains linking metal 'dragons teeth' and was mined to prevent access by seaborne military forces (the south beach was not mined). In 1938/9 the first evacuees were brought to Potter's Hopton Camp before being moved further inland. Following the fall of France in 1940, standing orders allocated three battalions for the defence of Lowestoft. The Home Guard was formed and Royal Navy Units, many of the latter based at Sparrow's Nest (which as the headquarters of the Central Patrol Service Depot for the duration was given the name *HMS Europa*). The sailors were brought there for training, being essential to assist with sea defences and manning the many naval boats then using the harbour. Residents had to get used to the blackout regulations and the Anderson or Morrison air-raid shelters. Some roads in town were prepared with underground explosive charges and removable barricades to disrupt traffic if needed (the Claremont Pier was cut away at the beach end and the Harbour Bridge was to be blown up if required). After 1943, barrage balloons were installed to put off low flying enemy aircraft. Local industries like the Coachworks were turned over to producing items needed for the war effort and boat-building yards constructed various sizes of craft from airborne lifeboats up to minesweepers. Many of these craft were built of wood so as to avoid setting off magnetic mines when

cruising out at sea. Suitable fishing vessels were commandeered for naval duties and fitted with guns to give them some protection against any enemy craft they might encounter.



After 1944 some regulations were relaxed, as the threat of invasion receded, and most of the defences were removed soon after 1945. Pill-boxes can still be found in several places but the south Lowestoft battery observation posts and gun casemate, by the CEFAS building at Pakefield, are not recognised by today's generation. A handful of concrete anti-tank cubes remain in the Lowestoft area, but most of the defence ditches dug along the coast and around town were filled in shortly after peace was declared. A few can be traced by the enthusiast but are mostly overgrown now. This

photo taken in 1999 of the pillbox overlooking the road junction at St Peter's Church, Carlton Colville, reveals it to be the small, hexagonal type with additional low embrasures for a Piat gun.

(More details about Suffolk coastal defences surrounding Lowestoft were in Newsletter Number 3, 2009, which may be found available for reference, with many other past issues, on our website: www.lowestoftlocalhistory.co.uk)

8 October 2009

“Mishap and Misdemeanour in Kirkley Roads”

by David Butcher

David described scenes that involved maritime trade and illegal activity in the Lowestoft, Pakefield and Kirkley areas. Kirkley Roads (havens) are sheltered waters off Lowestoft, inside a line of four sand banks that were probably deposited by a southward drift of material from further up the east coast of England. This ancient drift was also responsible for the build up of coastline upon which Great Yarmouth was built. The size of Lowestoft around Domesday has been estimated at 90–100 persons of mainly agricultural stock, with no established fishing, and the neighbouring village groups to north and south were substantially larger. David outlined the further development and migration of Lowestoft town from its original site, near Cemetery Corner, to the newly terraced cliff, the north end of which developed into the High Street, though the latter was still linked by Oulton Road to the main roads north and south. By 1350 the population had reached 3–400 and short streets of terraced houses appeared on the west side of the High Street. Early records show that local levels of taxation and growth of population were not always aligned (for example St Margaret's church remains the third longest in Suffolk (after St. James and St. Mary, Bury St. Edmunds) and, when built, it represented evidence of greater local wealth than is reflected in the published taxation lists. In the 14th century Lowestoft had no usable harbour, as a sand bar obstructed the mouth of the River Waveney, and all boats were landed on and operated from the beach. During times of bad weather, trading vessels sheltering in or passing through the Roads might be cast ashore, and then overpowered, or instead, captured at sea by local crews who helped themselves to any valuable cargo. The local population in those centuries was very violent and prepared to take strong measures in both attack and defence.

Substantial written evidence of misdemeanours is in the Patent Rolls, Close Rolls and Fine Rolls held at the Public Record Office at Kew. The published calendars (extracts) of these documents, written on vellum, are to be found at the Forum Library, Norwich, and also at the UEA. Amongst other items the Rolls record the granting of charters, privileges and Crown commissions, letters and patents (foreign and domestic), plus Royal Grants and Appointments of Royal Officers. When transcribed, this heavy-sounding list reveals a period of mystery and intrigue, with an east coast population controlled and governed by a set of local characters that might be loosely compared to the privateers of later generations. Several fascinating case histories uncovered during David's research into these misdemeanours were explained in the talk, and show that customs-fraud, piracy, and theft were quite common in the 14th century, involving exports of grain and malt, leather, fleeces and red herrings – imports included wine from Bordeaux, grain, flour, pig iron, bullion and coin, seditious literature and even illegal immigrants. Miscreants were listed by name in court proceedings and often ordered to pay compensation, or return certain stolen items. However, the penalties must frequently have been

evaded as the same names occur repeatedly. Government officials were given permission to search ships and seize quantities of herrings above the limit of licence for export, and other forbidden export and import items were also confiscated. The prime offenders were often those in charge, including the leading townspeople, Crown manorial lords and police constables. Later Customs Officers were appointed in the Lowestoft area and the offences became less frequent.

David's talk also covered local rivalry with Great Yarmouth. The grant of a market at Lowestoft had drawn in a great deal of business from the surrounding area, but even so town growth was quite slow and it took until the 1500s for the population to reach 1,500. Great Yarmouth, whose harbour mouth was awkwardly placed near Corton, was worried by this growing status of Lowestoft to the south, and also of Caister to the north. A great deal of irregular sea dealing was noticed, so Yarmouth negotiated a deal with the Crown whereby they were allowed to add the Royal seal to their crest and given control of shore landings within 7 leagues (leucas) of their port. This (at the time rather vague distance) nominally gave them power over all sea landings at Lowestoft, whose sailors were intensely irritated. Eventually, after prolonged dispute, often physical, a league was officially established as one mile, and the requisite distance marked by a large post at Tramps Alley, Corton. This left Lowestoft in control of its own sea approaches and brought an end to the long running 'herring wars'.

22 October 2009

"A Visit to the Cine and Camcorder Club"

introduced by Harold Whitewood

On this occasion members were guests of the Lowestoft Cine and Camcorder Club, who are to be congratulated on their superb conversion of the last remaining portion of Sparrow's Nest Theatre into a very well equipped and comfortable bijou cinema. The evening's programme was chosen by the hosts to provide a suitable mix of local topics ranging from history to humour, and was much appreciated by our members. First, came a sensitively shot film of the changing light and reflections on water at Oulton Broad. Then followed an acerbic commentary on first impressions of Lowestoft, as might have been gained by someone arriving by rail – this caused much amusement by showing the roofless station with boarded up windows facing the dilapidated frontage of shops on the "Tuttles" site. The next item, from the 1950s and typical of the period, was a promotional colour film of the town showing the beach, promenade and shopping centre, plus speedboat racing at Oulton Broad. Then came some 1960s film of Lowestoft tradespeople at work. Its images showed bread-making in Bushell's bakery, work in the cake-making and decorating department of Waller's, also manufacturing rock at the tiny Foreman's sweet factory in Pakefield and manning production lines in the CWS Canning Factory at Waveney Drive, and reminded viewers of the incredible changes in technology that have happened over the last forty years. The next item was a modern, hilarious, club-produced comedy short (shown as a complete contrast) before some rescued and restored pre-war black and white sequences of the herring fishing industry, the latter including sailing and steam drifters, the herring dock and fish market, and the associated railway sidings. Using modern techniques, club members then provided an excellent documentary (with a message) outlining the present status and possible developments for Ness Point – this was followed by a second, very witty, club comedy short. The first half ended with a history of some of the ships built at Richards Ironworks on the south quay and, after its closure, the building and opening of the ASDA superstore on the redeveloped Richards site.

After the interval came a humorous skit based on the radio broadcast style of the 'shipping forecast', the Lowestoft Players then featured in the club's workshop production 'Amorillo' (shot partly on location in Lowestoft Town and currently entered in an enthusiasts film competition). Next was a documentary on Lowestoft Porcelain 2000, then a cine-club member's colour film cleverly edited to match an appropriate song showcasing a steam rally. Several cine clips of Lowestoft circa 1970 followed, illustrating major updates like the bascule bridge, the construction of the one-way road system and the new police station. These period clips had the audience buzzing as they strived to recognize parts of the town before the demolition of older buildings and the construction of brick walls delineating the new routes. A third club comedy from the club produced gales of laughter, before a very well researched documentary showing features of the 'Lowestoft town scores' brought the extended evening to a close.

12 November 2009 “A History of the Sparrow’s Nest Theatre” by Brian Soloman

Retired Lowestoft amenities officer, Brian Soloman, gave members a history of Sparrow’s Nest Theatre, well illustrated with photographs and playbills. He recalled joining as assistant (in 1964) to Alf Beckett and working in an office at the Esplanade. The building at Sparrow’s Nest currently housing the War Memorial Museum and Café was originally Cliff Cottage, the summer residence of Robert Sparrow of Worlingham Hall (hence the name), and was purchased for a public park by Lowestoft Corporation in 1897 (the Jubilee bridge over the adjacent Ravine was built the same year). In the early days entertainment took place under a large tented awning on the lower garden level. This was destroyed in a gale in 1912 and a new Pavilion organised on the site in record time by Mr S W Mobbs, council engineer, opened in 1913. The surroundings were much more open in those days as the trees (along with those in the adjoining Bell Vue Park) had not matured, and the Nest became an attractive and popular venue for local and travelling events. Probably the greatest visiting artist was world famous negro singer Paul Robeson, in 1933, but a string of other stars from stage and wireless performed at various times. They included entertainers Elsie and Doris Waters (Gert & Daisy) who were unceremoniously thrown out when the Royal Navy commandeered the Nest for a training base at the start of World War II, renaming it *HMS Europa*. The Navy adopted and adapted the theatre, allowing suitable naval shows and concerts to take place from time to time, also building an office nearby (converted to a bar post war). The trainees boarded with local families, and on leaving many went to local ships as well as to the commissioned naval vessels using the port.

Lowestoft entertainments manager, Alf Beckett got the shows going again in 1946, including a summer season featuring stage and radio stars supported by a range of musical acts. Such names as Billy Dainty, Hedley Claxton and Dick Emery topped the bill. The booking fees at that time seemed remarkably low but television was in its infancy and its major stars had not appeared – the summer season lasted from 12 to 16 weeks on average. A series of ‘Dazzle’ shows came in the 1950s, then Ted Kent’s ‘Starlight Rendezvous’ in the 1960s. Charity Midnight matinees and local productions, including many successful appearances by the Lowestoft Players, filled out-of-season slots, and the perennial Robbie ‘at the Organ’ kept the daytime visitors entertained while they sat in the attractive gardens (inside if wet). Alf Beckett retired in 1971 and Brian took over as amenities officer, booking skiffle stars Chas McDevitt & Shirley Douglas among the acts for his first show. After this, Bunny Barron brought in artistes like sophisticated duo Bob and Alf Pearson who appeared in summer seasons that went on until 1978. However, the show that broke all records for revenue featured Bernie Clifton in 1977. Later on, audiences had fallen somewhat so alternative concerts were tried to boost business, including a split season, but ticket sales did not substantially improve. Despite increasing competition from TV and films, the theatre managed to continue until 1984 when the traditional style all-star ‘Summer Show’ returned bringing the likes of Danny la Rue, Val Doonican, The Nolans, Ken Dodd Frankie Vaughan and Alan Price. Sadly, the theatre building was literally crumbling and forced to close in September 1988 when the last live show was ‘Joe Brown and the Bruvvers’. After 73 years, the hastily erected theatre could not be resurrected so events were switched to the newly refurbished Marina in the town centre. Sparrow’s Nest theatre was demolished in 1993 but the public gardens remain and, fittingly, some entertainment lives on. A small annexe of the theatre has been turned into a mini-cinema that is home to the thriving Lowestoft Cine & Camcorder Club.

26 November 2009 “The Anglo-Saxon Burials at Lakenheath” by Joanna Caruth

Joanna Caruth, with the help of excellent slides, told members about finding an Anglo-Saxon man who had been buried with his horse. Joanna is Senior Project Manager with Bury St Edmunds Field Team of the Suffolk Archaeological Service and worked on this dig. In 2001 the team was given the chance to do further work within a known area of ancient occupation on the American airbase site at Lakenheath in Suffolk. Roman remains, both early and late, had confirmed their presence on this area up to approximately 400AD. Archaeologists worked there in 1987, returning between 1977 and 1999, and in addition to Roman burials the various digs had uncovered two Anglo-Saxon cemeteries holding a total of thirty-six graves. The pagan cemeteries were probably in use for about 30 years but most burials occurred between 470 and 480AD. Similar finds to these were anticipated in 2001, where

redevelopment of the base accommodation was again in progress, but what they actually discovered was truly amazing. The site was special for several reasons; first it was secure against night-hawks; second the hastily erected wartime buildings had shallow foundations, meaning there had been minimum disturbance of the ground archaeology; the cemetery area included large chalky deposits that, unlike sand, helped preserve bone; finally the team were given plenty of time to work. Excavation began, and the archaeologists discovered little in the first few days. However, 2m² trial holes by builders further across the site revealed clear signs of burials in the mixed sand and chalk. Machines removed the top surface and after hand stripping of subsoil an incredible number of graves appeared, eventually totalling 268, covering a large area. Graves were E–W aligned (with very few exceptions) with the head at the west end. Although they were not in rows there were only a few instances where graves overlapped.

Over several months the diggers patiently removed ten centimetre layers, recording and photographing finds (in the sandy parts just staining) as they progressed, eventually recording the whole cemetery except for a small area that runs under the road. There were sufficient bones to reveal the numbers of men, women and children and generally more grave goods were found with the females – these included brooches, wrist-clasps and thousands of decorative beads. Only two burials of individuals contained swords or spears, suggesting the local tribes were not of warlike disposition. Fifty burials were logged before the rare ‘man and horse’ grave, surrounded by a shallow ditch, was discovered towards the south end, centred in a clear area believed to have held a burial mound. It was well preserved and beside the skeletons held a large sword and two spears, plus numerous remains of harness fittings and a large bucket, probably to hold food for the horse in the afterlife. The male horse had been about 6 years old and the heavy pony type common to that period. Carbon dating fixed the burial as late 5th century. It was not a royal grave, but was of higher status than most others on site. By sheer luck a modern sewer pipe that divided the site missed this grave by inches. British Museum conservators were invited to carry out the recovery of the very fragile weapons and horse harness that were afterwards reconstructed in their laboratories. TV’s *Meet the Ancestors* team visited, Julian Richards *et al*, and working from the bones produced painted reconstructions of both man and horse. As well as inhumations the cemeteries contained numerous cremation urns, many of East Anglian origin. Four cremations contained horses. There will be several years of analysis and recording needed before a fuller picture of these early inhabitants and their life can be published. Hopefully the Society will get a follow-up report when the analysis is complete.

Full Accreditation Certificate Awarded to Lowestoft Museum

Reprint from the Journal articles and our Newsletter.

The Trustees of Lowestoft Museum celebrated this award in July when Waveney MP Bob Blizzard met them at the Museum in Broad House, Everitt's Park, and presented the certificate to Chairman Malcolm Berridge. The honour was granted by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council and means that our museum now meets nationally recognised standards and operates to the same set of rules as larger, professional museums. "The Museum team are all volunteers and those involved with the accreditation application have worked very hard to achieve this important status," said Ron Ashman, the trustee's secretary. Our members will know that much improvement work and rearrangement of the displays was done prior to the Museum opening this season. Visitor numbers have been surprisingly good to date and it seems that more families are staying in the UK due to the downturn in the economy. We are still looking for volunteer stewards to enable us to extend our opening hours.



Chairman Malcolm Berridge receives the Lowestoft Museum Accreditation Certificate from Waveney MP Bob Blizzard, flanked here by Museum Trustees past and present. *Picture copyright Mick Howes.*

Some Notes on an Underground Water Chamber

Paul Durbidge

In December of 2008 I was contacted by a Mrs R Woodcock from Walton Road who was at the time having her back garden landscaped. During the alterations some concrete slabs were lifted just outside the back door which in turn revealed a large brick built underground chamber some six feet deep. When I finally visited the address some two days after the phone call the builders had filled in part of the feature with rubble. In spite of this it was still possible to see the overall shape of the chamber which was constructed of 4½ inch brickwork and it had an overall size of six feet by eight feet. The builders said the chamber had a concrete floor and the walls had been rendered to their full height. Two very shallow brick supporting arches were visible at one end and it was told there were two central piers on opposite walls. While the bricks used in the arches were reds, the perimeter brickwork of the chamber was made up of creamy buff bricks measuring 4 x 9 x 2 inches. The builders also described the remains of a 3 inch cast iron vertical pipe fixed at one corner.

I later had a conversation with Ivan Bunn about the feature and from the description and measurements given he said he had seen an identical one which had later been filled in with rubble in the back yard of the house next door to his own property in Crown Street some years earlier.

Although there was much speculation as to what they were it would appear that these purpose built

chambers were constructed towards the end of the 1800s to retain water for additional domestic purposes. Water from the roof of the house would have been channelled via gutters and downpipes into the tanks and there would have been a cast iron pump on the surface to enable the contained water to be drawn up as required. The presence of the iron pipe in the Walton Road tank would add weight to this. At a time when there was a continual development of the town there was a comparatively poor water supply and these underground tanks were recognised structures and actually had a name which we are trying to find out. It is probable that some were communal with the retained water being shared by two or three families but it is unlikely the water was used for drinking. Walton Road and the adjacent area was originally fields and in parts there was no piped water supply, only that coming from well shafts. The first Anglian water company was in St. Margarets Road and as the demand grew this was followed by the water tower in Hollingsworth Road.

During my own childhood and while living at Haddiscoe we had a seven foot water tank sitting on brick piers just outside the back door. There was a keyed tap at the bottom and rainwater from the roof gutters discharged into the tank via an old stocking which caught all the various bits and pieces before they got in the tank.

We did have a freshwater tap over the shallow sink in the scullery but principally the tank water was used via pails to fill the copper either for washing or bathing. The water was very soft and often used for washing one's hair and other various domestic purposes. Just inside the back door was a small area between the living room and the scullery and on a wide ledge there would be two small galvanised buckets full of water which saved one going outside at night or in wet weather.

In conclusion I would like to take the opportunity of thanking Mrs Woodcock for allowing me to see the feature which has since been filled in and the garden reinstated. Also thanks are due to Ivan Bunn for his help and information on the subject of one of these early water containers which I had previously not seen before.

PD. September 2009

Dennis Collings – The Intrepid Collector

Paul Durbidge

As a direct result of a series of evening classes at the Denes High School taken by Bob Kedney in 1966, the Lowestoft Archaeological and Local History Society was formed later in the same year at a meeting in the old Lowestoft Library in Suffolk Road. Just before the meeting I was approached if I would become secretary and not being familiar with the post I enquired as to what it would involve. The late Peter Harris assured me there would not be much to do apart from a few letters so I agreed, however if my memory serves me right, the actual figure for the year was in the region of three hundred. Nevertheless it was a new venture and it was enjoyable, it also involved writing to possible presidents and vice presidents for the newly formed Society. A number of very interesting people were approached for the first year's lectures and if the speaker was an archaeologist the talk was often followed up with a site visit. One name given to me at that time was Dennis Collings who lived at Southwold and he agreed to talk to the Society on the subject 'The Divine King in England'. Some time before the proposed talk I called to see Dennis at his home and it was the beginning of a friendship that lasted over thirty years. He was born in Surry in 1905 and the family moved to Southwold four years later when his father Dudley bought a doctors practice in the town. At the age of 18 Dennis set off to survey tropical plants in Portuguese East Africa, staying on to help lay a telephone line to Portuguese Nyasaland and later compile the first map of the region. He later returned to England and studied under Graham Clark at Cambridge before moving to Singapore where he later became assistant curator of the Raffles Museum where he stayed until the outbreak of war. While his wife and children took refuge in Cape Town Dennis became an intelligence officer but was ordered to surrender to the Japanese in Java. After the war he helped set up the Malayan Welfare School and compile a dictionary of the Orang Asli the indigenous people of the Malay Peninsula.

He was a friend of George Orwell and was awarded an OBE for his work in Singapore and Ghana but turned it down in protest at British colonial policy and its consequences.

After an initial phone call I arrived at 23 Station Road one evening in heavy rain at about 8pm and after negotiating a large unruly bush in the porchway I knocked on the dusty red painted door. After a time a pale light appeared in the hallway followed by a silhouette and a man's voice telling me to go round the back. A covered passageway between the houses led to a back gate which opened as I approached and this was to be the first of many visits over the years to Station Road. On first impression Dennis appeared of medium height, he was fairly bald and looked a little unkempt, an old pipe clamped between his teeth and as we shook hands in the heavy rain I noticed he was standing barefoot.

We moved to an open back door which in turn led into a dimly lit kitchen which years ago had been painted cream but now after many years of neglect the paint was peeling on some scale. On the wall just inside the door was a large coloured map of the world and on the same nail hung a small wooden crossbow which had been made a few weeks earlier. A small whitewood table was positioned beneath the window and on it were various papers and cuttings and a small glass jar containing a black liquid and countless spent matches. An old table lamp was partially buried amongst more papers and reference books with various markers placed between the pages and a second jar containing various pens and pencils was in the middle of the table.

On the mantle shelf above the stove were over fifty empty boxes of Swan Vesta matches laid like bricks while above the door leading into the pantry was a striking black and white photograph of his late wife. In the corner was a shallow sink and overhanging tap, while the floor consisted of bare boards and these continued into the hallway which I saw on later visit. It was at this time I saw why he had not come to the front door, there was a mountain of mail up to the letter box and also laying on the hall floor was along wooden flag pole. This must have been in the region of ten feet long with the top end up against the bottom stair tread and the opposite end buried under the pile of unopened mail. Although eccentric, Dennis was an extremely well educated and travelled person and it was nearly one o'clock in the morning before I finally left the house on that first visit. The evening had been spent sitting in the kitchen initially discussing the proposed talk before listening about his work on the Easton Bavents and the various remains he had found there. Frequently to make a point he would refer to one of his books and struggle to put on his glasses that had one broken arm. I also learned how his pipe bowl has attained such a sharp angle to it when he started bashing it on the edge of the table to loosen the spent tobacco before finally cutting out the residue with a small knife. When refilled and lit and the air full of smoke the spent matches were deposited in the jar of black liquid along with all the others. Occasionally tea was offered and a couple of distressed cups were given a quick swill round by hand in the shallow sink and joined by a dark brown tea pot with wooly cover but no handle. Sugar was the brown variety along with resident spoon, it was possible to get bits of sugar if you worked at it but it became difficult when the contents got low.

While in conversation with Dennis I found myself looking out of a small window through the unruly clematis into the darkness of the night and it was just possible to make out the shape of a cat. Upon seeing this Dennis rose from his chair and slid the window sash upwards and a large grey cat stepped on to the table, its wet feet marking several papers and books. This was my first meeting with Trog, a beautiful grey cat with only one eye.

Sometime later he told me it had dragged home a dead pheasant and that they both had a meal from it. The cat seemed eerie but somehow it fitted into the scene of things.

Another facet of Dennis was his extensive knowledge of nature, in fact he seemed to know a great deal covering many subjects and he was also in regular contact with many professional people at Cambridge. Over a period of years he had planted several rare saplings and over the years we watched their progress. He also had an enviable coverage of many plants and small shrubs. On one occasion when I called he was busy filling some Kilner Jars with both earth and green foliage and when I enquired as to what he was doing he showed me some large hawk moth caterpillars. Apparently he has seen them on some bushes on the common and as he put it, he was saving them from being eaten by hungry Blackbirds and thus was giving them a chance to live.

His wide interest in Early Man was gained from his time abroad and at one stage both he and his late wife lived with primitive tribes in Borneo for a short time. He was best man to Dr. Louis Leakey's wedding and knew Professor Dart and his work on the limestone caves in Johannesburg, a subject he

often referred to during conversation.

Dennis Collings died in 2001 at the age of 96 but it was not until January 2009 the remains of his extensive private collection of objects were offered for sale in 37 lots in the Gentleman's Library sale at Bonhams London. The sheer range of objects was breathtaking covering such subjects as Archaeology Anthropology and Natural History and added to this was metalwork, boxes of pottery and flint book plates and mosaics depicting the grand tour. Some of the collection had reasonably low estimates and previously several pieces had been given to the Southwold Museum but listed below are some of the items that finally went to auction after being crammed in that modest terraced house in Station Road for all those years.

A glazed case containing 14 bird skeletons	£100-200
Two cabinets of exotic butterflies	£200-400
Group of Victorian portraits of Solomon Islanders	£400-600
Collection of antique blades and clubs	
Jananeae Tanto	
Malay Bade-Bade	
Medieval and Roman pottery	
Books – Book plates	
Micro mosaics depicting the grand tour scenes	
Seals	
Tusks, skulls and horns of walrus antelope and lion all shot by the late owner in the 1920s	
Large collection of animal bones from the Easton Bavents	£300-400
Part fossilised whale rib from Easton Bavents	

PD August 2009

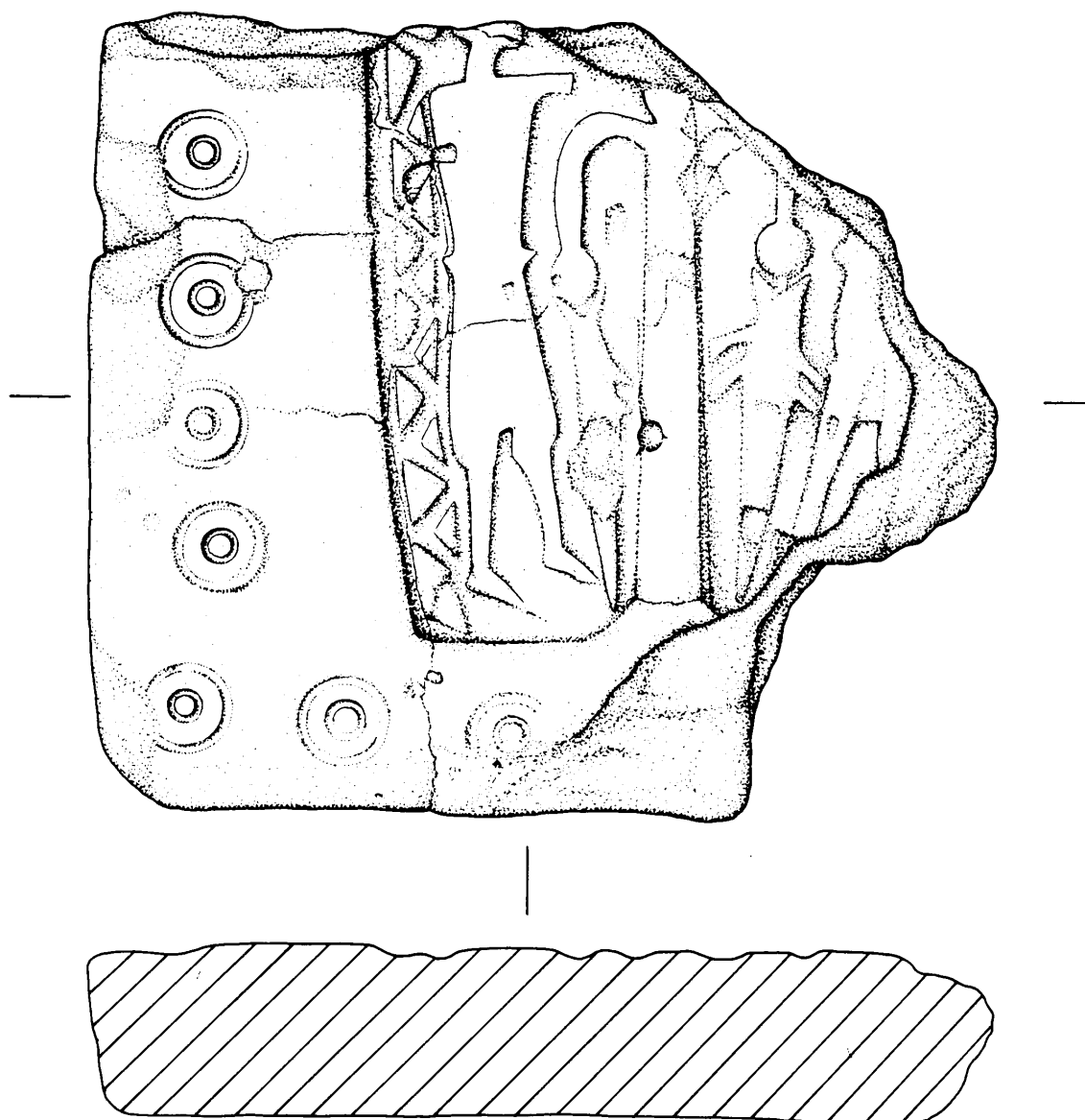
Much information on Dennis is to be found on the internet. The sale of his collection can be found on <http://rafflesmuseum.wordpress.com/2009/01/19/eccentric-southwold-collection-for-sale/>

An Unusual Medieval Tile from Oulton near Lowestoft Suffolk

Paul Durbidge

In the Society's Annual Report Vol. 37 2004/5 we looked at a group of medieval pottery recovered from a back garden in Oulton Village by Mr Alick Jarvis over a period of years. Briefly the remains consisted of some 48 broken handle from large jugs, jug rims and over 50 base forms. Added to this were a number of glazed and unglazed body sherds also from jugs. Last year Mr Jarvis contacted me again to say he had found what appeared to be part of a patterned tile while tidying up some flower beds adjacent to a perimeter hedge. Bearing in mind that glazed impressed tiles had previously been recovered while digging a grave at Oulton Church, Annual Report Vol. 38 2005/6 and also at the ruined church of St Andrew at Flixton many years earlier. I went to see Mr Jarvis. What he showed me was far more elaborate than I expected, it certainly was a tile and in spite of its worn condition it was most unusual and clearly of medieval date. It also required specialist identification and was taken to the Archaeological Unit at Bury St. Edmunds where after further research by Mrs Jane Carr a report was produced. Results of the research and a drawing of the tile are detailed below. Mr Jarvis has since very kindly donated the item to Lowestoft Museum in Nicholas Everitt Park, Oulton Broad where it will later join other examples of medieval tiles from Flixton.

PD June 2009



A Decorated Medieval Tile from Oulton near Lowestoft Suffolk

length 131.07 width 144.11 thickness 29 mm

Below is a reproduced of information from the Internet from the **British Museum Portable Antiquities Scheme Detailed report for find SF-963765**

Find Information

Object Type, Broad Period, Culture: tile, MEDIEVAL, not attributed

Description: Part of a medieval tile with stamped decoration. This may be part of a floor or wall-mounted tile, and consists of one right-angled corner with a border along both sides decorated with a row of ring and dot motifs made with a stamp 15.07mm in diameter. There are four such motifs in a row running up the tile, and three in a row along the base. The border measures 28.57mm in width along the base and c.49mm in width along the side of the tile. The border surrounds a central rectangular panel which is incomplete due to old breaks and is divided longitudinally by a narrow band 86.5mm long, 11mm in width at the base tapering to 8.5mm near the top broken edge. To the left there is relief decoration depicting a standing figure with an elongated, triangular-shaped upper body, a belt, and a knee-length tunic from which the legs and feet emerge, facing right. There is a neck at the top of the garment but the tile is broken off and the head is missing. Along the left side of the figure and within the panel is a zig-zag border of seven projecting triangles. To the right of the figure is an arm with a hand holding the pommel of a sword whose blade descends to a point. This arm appears

to be attached to the vertical band dividing the panel, and may have been mirrored to the right where a second sword can be seen, also having a round pommel, hilt and long blade. There is a rounded terminal at the top of the band. There are traces in the field of a yellow infill, presumably glaze or slip, and a darker slip or glaze is also suggested by a darker deposit on some parts of the surface of the tile. The width of the vertical border with ring and dot motifs suggests that the tile may originally have been quite wide and rectangular. Assuming a mirror-image from the vertical band, the complete tile would be 180mm wide. However, the figure that survives may have been flanking a larger composition, such as saint or biblical scene, assuming a church or monastic location, originally, for the tile. It could also be part of a larger scene composed of several separate tiles. The fragment measures 131.07mm in length, 144.11mm in width, 29mm in thickness, and weighs 700g. David Sherlock's work on Medieval Suffolk floor tiles catalogues a wide range of designs none of which is quite like this. However some with geometric designs include ring and dot or concentric circles for example no. 120 from Butley Priory and no. 135 from Sudbury, St Peter. Its discovery at Oulton, close to the coast could indicate a continental source for its origins.

Some Post Medieval Finds from Martins Score Lowestoft Suffolk

Paul Durbidge

Apart from the limited excavations carried out by the Lowestoft Archaeological and Local History Society, both in and outside the grounds of the Heritage Centre in North Lowestoft (ref. LA&LHS Annual Report Vol. 36 2003-04), there have been few opportunities to test any of the sloping ground to the seaward side of the properties between Rant Score and the Royal Falcon to the north.

Given the sloping nature of the ground and the relative age of many of the fine houses along this part of the old town it would be reasonable to expect that quite a range of datable material has over the years been discarded down these convenient slopes. While the majority of this would likely be of post medieval origin and later, evidence of medieval activity would also be expected beneath these layers although on what scale is as yet unclear.

Recently a relatively small parcel of undeveloped land situated halfway down and adjacent to Martins Score recently came up for the construction of four purpose built properties with the fronts directly abutting the Score. The area of land was small and sloped forwards to Whapload Road, the ground surface was partially covered in vegetation which in turn overlaid considerable amounts of building material including wood, glass, brick, concrete and steel. The timescale before the actual groundwork started was relatively short and after permission was given by the developer, it was decided that three test boxes would be dug and these would be sited where there was least problems with the infill.

Two were positioned high up on the site and four metres south of Martins Score and 50 centimetres apart. It was originally intended to position the third box directly at the foot of the site but digging into a concentration of rubble made this out of the question so it was positioned higher up. Trowelling began on the upper metre square boxes and the contents examined within them revealed very mixed soils including top soil, mixed loams and occasional ash. Amongst this mix pottery handles, bone and shell were along with fragments of thin window glass and pieces of red brick. At 44 cm. a very mixed top soil was showing in section and more pottery and animal bone were recovered along with fragments of coal. Top soil appeared reasonably clean at 60 cm. and at depth while the northern profiles showed the soil sloping away roughly following the profile of the Score. Inclusions in the upper part were few and those that were found consisted of thin fragments of animal bone and a couple of small vertebra probably from fish.

The soil making up of the third box some six metres east of the first two showed that the fill consisted mostly of mixed top soil which contained occasional fist sized cobbles and quite a number of small stones. Salt glazed sherds, probably from a Bellarmine and the greater part of a semi-glazed pipken were recovered in the fill with occasional sherds of courseware and oyster shell. Overall, the contents of this box showed the mixed top soil still continuing at one metre with more cobble sized flints and small bones and vertebra, again probably from fish. The presence of these large cobbles may well have connections with the brick and cobble walls that once ran parallel with the Score at this point and one of the pieces of brick recovered in the third box also compares with those in situ on the opposite side of the Score.

The extra depth of the mixed top soil encountered in the box and its location halfway down the site is probably by reason of the gradual wash of soil over a period of several hundred years. Ideally further testing of the ground at the foot of the site would have been constructive but unfortunately ground conditions would not allow this.

The Finds are as Follows, Broadly Classified.

Pottery

The broken remains of a small handled red glazed earthenware bowl was found in the centre of box 3. It was in orange fabric with patches of clear brown glaze externally, traces of soot were visible on parts of the external surfaces.
c 1700-1800



Small red glazed earthenware bowl
17 cm. wide 8.5 cm. high

Unglazed body sherd in light brownish fabric.

Two red glazed body sherds with splashes of copper green flecks on the external surfaces.

Unglazed body sherd in dark grey fabric, possibly medieval.

Plain dark grey gritty body sherd, possibly medieval in date.

Body sherd in orange fabric with green and reddish brown glaze externally.

Two narrow strap handles in hard whitish fabric. The handles from jugs are near identical, both decorated with shallow grooves and splashes of green glaze. c 1700-1800

Small section of unglazed base in hard grey fabric.

Body sherd from a globular vessel probably from a small Bellarmine with grey internal surfaces and a speckled brown external glaze. c. 1600-1700.

Brick Remains

The remains of three bricks were encountered, one compares in size and colour to those incorporated in the nearby wall of Martins Score, while the two other examples are much earlier. The remains of these have been cast in a probable wooden box and on the underside of the brick there are numerous impressions from grass or straw in the wet clay. The upper surfaces are slumped and drag marks are visible. Textures of the bricks show considerable distortion with the high firing resulting in much cracking and splitting of the surfaces. Colours are orangey brown and the remains measure approximately 4½ cm. thick by 10 cm. wide and compare in size and type to those used at the rear of 80 High Street, which is known as Flint House and dates from 1586.

Glass

Three very thin fragments of slightly oxidised glass compare with shards encountered at the nearby Heritage Centre and these are probably early window glass from leaded windows.

Two body shards from oxidised wine bottle.

Coal

A number of very small fragments were observed amongst mixed ash and clinker in the content of the two upper boxes.

Animal Bones

A total of 34 pieces of bone were found and remains were found in all three boxes with most in the upper two. The majority were broken and there were several pieces of split bone. Four broken leg bones were from sheep and a jawbone complete with both teeth and a tusk was from pig.

Three additional narrow bone remains just of 7 cm. long were part rib from domestic ox and these had been butchered in their length and came from box three.

Some much smaller bone including leg remains are probably from rabbit.

Vertebra

Some nine pale buff coloured vertebra were found in box 1, the largest being just over 1 cm. across, the smallest which was reduced in its length was just under 1 cm. It is probable these and some very thin fragmentary bones are from large fish.

Shell

Just over twenty small oyster shells were found in the first two squares along with fragments of mussel and winkle, the greater part of three whelk shells were also found.

Acknowledgement

Testing on the site was carried out under the writer's direction and I would like to take the opportunity to thank Mr John Head for allowing the work to be done before the development began.

Thanks are also due for support given by Rebecca Durbidge and Adrian Charlton and also 10 year old Christian Head. This was Christian's first involvement in Archaeology and he worked extremely well in the cramped conditions uncovering some nice material.

Since writing this report all the material recovered has been returned to Mr Head at Reydon, Suffolk.

Finally I would like to thank Ray Collins for transcribing all my contributions to this year's report for which I am most grateful.

PD Nov. 2009

Further Excavations in July 2009 at the Triple Post Alignment (Causeway) on Beccles Marshes

by Keith Davies

Further information on the ongoing work, previously reported in the 2008 Annual Report, 'Excavation of a Wooden Causeway on Beccles Marshes, dating from the Iron Age' by Keith Davies)

In July this year the public were invited to view the third (and probably final) stages of this work by a team of archaeologists from Birmingham University. This Project has been funded by English Heritage and supported locally, in particular by Beccles Town Council and the Beccles Amateur Sailing Club. It is hoped that eventually a permanent display may be arranged with a local museum. Several of our members visited the latest dig.

Well-preserved large posts were discovered below ground during bank realignment of the River Waveney in 2006. The three digs (2006, 2007 and 2009) have established these are part of a triple post causeway structure, of which 500 metres have now been traced, dating to 75BC, or near the very end of the Iron Age. In addition to the large upright oak posts a substantial quantity of worked wood and pottery fragments (Iron Age and Roman) has been found, also some adjoining trackways made from bundles of wooden rods. The causeway runs at an oblique angle to the river approximately north-west to south-east. Because only the lower ends of the posts are preserved below the peat (see both pictures) we don't know if they ever supported a superstructure such as a raised platform, but there is evidence of notches cut in the sides of some that might have located smaller diameter cross members.



Students at work on the dig near Beccles Yacht Club.



Keith Davies shows the scale of the principal oak posts.

The Lowestoft Scene 2009

Keith Davies

February

Sanyo Closure

Manufacturing of TVs in Lowestoft was started in 1951 by Pye of Cambridge, in the Silk Works Factory in School Road, which in 1959 employed 1500 workers. The Pye group of companies was bought by Phillips in 1976 and subsequently sold to Sanyo in 1982. At one stage 450 workers produced 500,000 sets a year. However scores of jobs were shed from 2006 onwards as the market was flooded with cheap televisions, and on Friday 27th of February the factory closed, and its 60 remaining staff had to look for new job.

March

Waveney Finances Muddle

20th The government has ordered Waveney District Council to pay back nearly £9million in benefit subsidy it paid between 2004-2007, for which it has been unable to supply records, at a time when they were transferred from paper to computer. In the meantime the chief finance officer has been legally enforced to freeze spending until the authorities budget is balanced. In addition urgent repairs at Southwold harbour could cost the council £3.4million.

Government plans to slash funding for further education schemes has put the brakes on plans to extend and redevelop Lowestoft Collage.

April

Train Service to London

1st Approval was given for an hourly train service between Lowestoft and London as part of a £1billion investment in the Anglia region. A passing loop will be built at Beccles possibly as early as 2010. Watch this space.

Wind Farm

15th Associated British Ports announced that Lowestoft had been chosen as the operations and maintenance base for the 140 wind turbine Greater Garbbard wind farm being built 15 miles off the Suffolk coast.

As well as building a new headquarters at the old dockyard fish market, the port will be the home of a fleet of helicopters and high speed offshore catamarans. The outer harbour and the surrounding area will be improved. The port development is expected to create up to 150 long term skilled jobs in the town.

September

The Royal Norfolk and Suffolk Yacht Club

On the 13th of September 60 sailing boats took part in a regatta on Lake Lothing, the first for more than 50 years, to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the club. Founded in 1859 at the Norwich Maids Hotel, it moved to its Lowestoft harbour location 27 years later, and its current premises in 1903. The regatta was followed by a sail past saluted by the club commodore Roger Knights, which returned to the clubhouse to continue the celebrations.

Lowestoft College Redevelopment and Sixth Form College

It was reported in the Journal on the 18th September that the hopes of receiving funds of £50m for redevelopment of the College were dashed by the news that the Learning and Skills Council, which had approved the scheme in December 2008, had run out of money. Also that £28m to build a new Sixth Form Centre would be scaled down so that it would not be completed before 2011.

South Lowestoft Fire Station

The Princess Royal visited Lowestoft on the 23rd of September to open the new five bay Lowestoft fire station. On display was new equipment, including a water rescue boat, off road vehicle, and fire engines.

To commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Royal Norfolk and Suffolk Yacht Club the Princess

unveiled two stained glass doors panels when she later visited the club. Finally she made a private visit to the SLP construction site at the Hamilton dock.

November

Waveney Campus

It was announced on November 6th that the plans for the flagship Waveney Campus, the multimillion pound council and science headquarters, have been set back by at least 8 months, and unlikely to be occupied until the end of May 2012. Delays have been caused by the uncertainty over the future of local government in the region, and the need to reduce a £9m bill from the Department of Work and Pensions for overpaid benefits. While a second round of bids from developers was needed after one of the original companies dropped out. Finally time has been added to allow WDC to resolve discussions with the WDP and for CEFAS and DEFRA to obtain final approval from HM Treasury.