

Society News

The Lowestoft Archaeological and Local History Society
Newsletter

September 2024

Editors:- Ron and Irene Ashman



Election of Society Committee

At the Annual General Meeting held on 23 May 2024 the following Society members were elected to the Committee:

Chairman:	Richard Mundy
Vice-chairman:	Jeremy Stone
Secretary:	Jenny Hatton
Treasurer:	Ray Collins
Programme secretary:	Marilyn Duerden
Committee:	David Hatton, Irene Ashman, Rodney Duerden, Sue Pyecroft, Richard Dearlove.

Further information

We have received an email from Mr Stanley Earl who after reading Richard Mundy's article in the April Newsletter, about a postcard Richard had in his collection, has sent some information about the Larter family mentioned in that article.

Daniel Larter only had one great grand daughter who is Mr Earl's step daughter, Sarah Clare (nee Larter)

Daniel and Eliza had 4 children who were

Rose Ellen who died as a child.

Mabel born 1892 (had one son and never married) Sarah's grandmother.

Amy born 1895 married and no children.

John born 1896 married and no children



Mr Earl also supplied a photo of Amy (left) Mabel (middle) and the lady on the right was a friend of Amy.

To quote Mr Earl, it is nice to put a face to a name.

Test Pit Dig.

Our Society Chairman thought it would be a good idea to involve members in the digging of a Test Pit. This is where a hole one metre square is dug and the soil is removed in layers, the soil being given to the sifting team to see if there is any object of archaeological interest. The Chairman asked if any Society members were prepared for this activity to take place in their garden over a weekend. We volunteered our garden so over the weekend of 15th & 16th June the first dig took place.

It was decided to keep the dig 'in house' so we did not have to worry too much about isolating the dig from other people, mainly keeping those involved safe, for which a Risk Assessment was produced and followed.

The dig was organised by the Chairman and led by Society member Kevin Jorgensen who had previous experience of this type of excavation and who supplied all of the tools and equipment needed.

After selecting the site, the area was marked out, then divided into nine sections and the turf removed in sequence. The soil in the hole was removed in measured layers which were kept separate and at the end of the session the soil was returned to the hole in the reverse manner to its removal, (last out first in), and the turfs replaced in the same position they originally were.

Unfortunately, not much of interest was found in this dig and the weather was mostly dry but was interrupted by a couple of rain showers, but those involved enjoyed the experience.

Photographs of the dig can be seen on the Society website.

A full report of the dig will be published in the Annual Report later this year.

If any members are interested in volunteering their garden to have hole dug in it, or would like to help with a dig then please see the Chairman at one of the talk evenings.



New Society Logo.

In the heading of this Newsletter is the new Society logo which will in future be used on all Society documents.



One of the lots submitted to TW Gaze's dedicated Clocks & Watches auction in May 2024 caused a ripple of interest amongst maritime historians. Consigned by a private vendor from an East Suffolk coastal port, the late 19th Century eight-day circular wall time piece in a plain mahogany case was very unassuming in appearance. However, the silvered face carried an unusual subsidiary dial, numbered 1 – 16 and was handsomely engraved "Anvil Point. One Revolution of Indicator Equals One Revolution of Apparatus". These words instantly provided the provenance and explained the purpose of this unique example of a rare type of clock. What's more, the makers were Brockbank & Atkins of London.

Anvil Point is a lighthouse in the grounds of Durlston Country Park on the southeast Dorsetshire coastline, approximately two miles from Swanage. It was built by Trinity House in 1881 using locally quarried stone and its purpose was to provide a waypoint for vessels on passage along the English Channel coast, giving a clear line to the west from Portland Bill and to the east guiding vessels away from the Christchurch Ledge and leading them into the Solent.

Anvil Point was opened by Neville Chamberlain's father, Joseph, who was Minister of Transport at the time. The light was originally illuminated by a paraffin vapour burner, and the fog signal was a small cannon giving a loud blast every five minutes.

Few examples of lighthouse clocks can be traced, but a similar clock, made specifically for the Belle Tout lighthouse, Beachy Head, Sussex, by the same specialist firm as the Anvil Point example, is in the collection of Royal Museums Greenwich. As the museum's notes explain, every lighthouse has its own signatory "character" (the sequence and frequency of flashes) so that mariners can identify a lighthouse from its signal. The clock has a subsidiary dial to help regulate the character."

The firm of Brockbank & Atkins was established when Cumbrian-born brothers John (1747 – 1806) and Miles (1754 – 1821) Brockbank, who trained as watchmakers in London and gained a reputation as preeminent manufacturers of marine chronometers, eventually went into partnership with clock and watchmaker, George Atkins (1767 – 1855). Subsequent generations of their families joined the business and together they were considered the most distinguished chronometer makers of late 18th and 19th Century London. The famous watchmaker George John Moore (1838 – 1916) joined the firm between 1885 and 1898 and during this time the firm's name was Brockbank, Atkins & Moore, and this was to be found on their clock and watch output of the period. These details help to date the clock for sale in Diss on 16 May. It is signed Brockbank & Atkins and therefore suggests it was made for installation directly into the newly built Anvil Point lighthouse in 1881, as by 1885 it would have been signed Brockbank, Atkins & Moore.

Anvil Point was modernised in 1960 and converted to run on mains electricity. It was then automated in the last decade of the 20th Century when the old fog signal was replaced. Sometime during these various stages of works, the wall clock was deemed redundant and removed. It was then loved and cherished in recent years within sight and sound of the North Sea but it became time for the owner to find a new berth for it.

It carried a pre-auction estimate of £800 – 1,200, but quickly rose through the bids and eventually sold for £8,500, selling to a horological and maritime historian from the south of England.

Meanwhile, Anvil Point lighthouse is now monitored and controlled from Trinity House's Planning Centre in Harwich, Essex.

D Day 80 – Sparrows Nest

by Richard Mundy



On 6th June 2024 I attended the event at Sparrows Nest to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of D Day. An event organised by Lowestoft Town Council with the Royal British Legion. The evening included live performances from groups such as the Super Swing Jazz Band, The Nightingales and The Lowestoft Signing Choir. There was also stalls representing groups linked to the armed forces. The museums in Sparrows Nest were also open late for the night. The commemorations were concluded with the Suffolk Glenmoriston Pipe Band and ended with the lighting of the beacon at 9:15pm.

It was a well-attended event, I bumped into many society members for chats and other members of Lowestoft's 'Heritage Community' I am very pleased indeed that our town takes part in national commemorations such as this and does so in a joyful yet respectful manner.

If you have any articles that you would like published in this Newsletter, please contact the editors at a meeting or send your piece to email address lahs@btinternet.com.

Items do not have to be typed, they can be hand written and do not have to be very long.

If you wish your name can be attributed to the article, or it can be left out.

Have you been to any interesting place or building in this country that might be of interest to other members that you could write about. Could you write a review of an historical book you have read. Or could you write about childhood memories. (e.g shops, wash days or school days).