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THE MUSEUM SERVICE IN LOWESTOFT

Second report prepared by the Committee of Lowestoft Archaeological and Local History Society, 1977.

Introduction

Last year this Society submitted a report outlining the objectives of a Museum in Lowestoft and the various methods of financing a Museum in the long term. It was also suggested that a working party be set up. Perhaps due to a misunderstanding this has not been acted upon. The Society would appreciate the Council's views on such a group consisting of :- Four councillors appointed by the Waveney District Council, four members of the Society, two members of the Field Club and one member of the Art Group.

Museum Progress

The second room at the Museum was opened at Easter 1976. This proved to be a considerable success. The new space was devoted mainly to Local History and also to Medieval finds made by Society members. For the first time also the Field Club were invited to take over two display cases for Natural History, which they did with enthusiasm.

It is felt that with the Museum now consolidated it is time to look at the long-term plans for the Museum, with this in view we have been very fortunate in having the help of an architect, Mr. R. Page, A.R.I.B.A., who has given his services in drawing up plans of the existing buildings and is prepared to continue to give his help in the preparation of Feasibility Plans, Final Plans, Sectional Drawings etc.

Security

Following this year's W.D.C. grant a basic security system will shortly be installed by Peck Securities. This will give peripheral security of the existing Museum together with alarm bells inside and outside the Museum. When funds permit it is planned to install a '999' automatic dialler. Due to inflation the system being installed is costing considerably more than was originally expected.

Display Area

Owing to the influx of exhibits our present display area has become insufficient and we shall need to extend this when funds permit.

The Society asks the Council for a grant of £450 towards improving and extending the display area and maintaining and improving the alarm system.

REVIEW OF FIELDWORK

by P.M. Durbidge

Over the last year a more varied selection of material has come to light within the region and it has also been possible to see some of the discoveries made by a local man at Walberswick over a number of years. Perhaps, however, the most exciting discovery made was the strange star shaped implement called a TRIBRACH found by Mr. A. Collins at Kessingland. Bearing in mind only three had been previously found in the country it caused considerable interest in our Museum and several people

brought in strange shaped pieces of flint in the hope they may also have been fortunate enough to find one. The intended purpose of the TRIBRACH is not positively known although some experts put forward the view that they may be connected with ceremonial purposes. Examination of the Kessingland example showed one point to be seemingly unfinished which would have facilitated hafting but one cannot be sure if this was intended or not. Following the discovery, several searches of the site were made and further numbers of implements were recovered, some with high degrees of flaking and included amongst these were examples of three arrowheads. Projectiles on the site are not uncommon but particularly fine flint working had been applied to a very small leaf arrowhead, a transverse type and also on a hollow-base specimen, the latter being the first of its type to be found on the site after ten years of searching. Another projectile, broken at the base, was possibly a lance head while a broad flaked implement again broken, strongly resembled a beaker dagger, similar to two previous types found close by during searches in 1976.

By now waste flakes found on the site must run to several thousand and equally a very large quantity of worked tools and weapons have been recovered and subsequently recorded over the years. As previously thought, the settlement was large, involving most of two adjacent fields with pockets of activity on several more. Mostly the industry is Neolithic but there are areas where Mesolithic material has been found in the shape of points, cores and various blades. The largest part of the prehistoric collection in our Museum is made up of material from this site and we are most grateful to Mr. Collins for allowing the TRIBACH to join the now very varied collection,

At Corton another scatter of flint industry has been found though nowhere near on such a scale as Kessingland; this time fieldwalking produced several trimmed flakes and several cores of varying types and later skin scrapers. Mr. D. Butcher who has been interested in the history of Corton for some time was fortunate enough to find an exceptionally fine specimen of a Barb and tang arrowhead in the same vicinity and from this find it seems that the flint industry may also be of Bronze Age date. A few odd potsherds were observed during searching but they were very small in size. Two, it is thought, may be possibly Roman, while the remainder appear to be both medieval and post-medieval in date. Like many other areas, Corton has never been systematically field searched, which is a pity as it may well yield some evidence of Roman material in some form, which would add weight to the Signal Station, which was thought to have been sited there.

Fieldwalking has resulted in the recovery of much material now in the Museum and often surprising results are obtained as a local man at North Cove can testify. After obtaining permission to search land near his home, he was very fortunate to find a late Achaulean hand axe lying on the surface of the field; discoveries of this period are unusual and are mostly recovered in gravel deposits unlike Neolithic implements which are invariably near the surface. Further searching yielded quantities of both Medieval and post-medieval pottery confined to one corner of the field. The pottery consisted of both glazed and coarseware types with many body sherds of cooking pots heavily soot stained, animal bones and teeth were also observed. Close to the side of the field on the edge of a ditch, part of a cooking pot in grey fabric was recovered and once again small body sherds and pieces of animal bones were again encountered. Homestead sites like this one often produce fresh material after recent ploughing and after a recent search the first piece of bronze has been found. This is in the form of a small dagger chape and although not decorated in any way it was in remarkable condition bearing in mind the thinness of the material.

Deposits of pottery on fields greatly vary in quantity from a few scattered body sherds which, without rims or glazed types, can be difficult to date, to more involved spreads containing many sherds including handles, bases etc., which enable approximate dating.

A comparison can be made between the few sherds found at Corton and the heavy scatter encountered at South Cove a short while ago. Again like North Cove the material was in one corner of a field revealing comparatively few glazed sherds but a large amount of grey body sherds, rims, corded bangles and heavy pouring spouts, suggesting a date of 14th - 15th century.

With a wide distribution of medieval pottery it is possible to compare types recovered in different locations such as a small frilly base which was encountered on three different fields outside Lowestoft. The first two of these frilly-base types were found with 15th Century pottery at Wrentham and later a complete goblet was recovered from a timber lined well at Covehithe. A few months later yet another one was found, this time at Kessingland, and again with more 15th Century pottery. It seems that this particular type was a local product and one would like to know where the kiln or kilns were which produced these and the other pottery found in the vicinity. We know that much of the Covehithe

pottery has come from a local source while other pots are attributed to the types found at Hollesley Bay. Examination of some of the latest pottery recovered from a well at Covehithe shows the vessels had not been allowed to dry before loading into the kiln as six vessels showed sunken bottoms where pots had been loaded on top in the kiln, causing the vessels to distort. These types do not show much usage and one wonders if the kiln was close at hand, certainly the distorted pots would not be particularly good for selling purposes. At Walberswick, however, the disastrous floods of 1953 did apparently reveal kilns close to the beach and after seeing some of the pottery, it appears that the date compares with finds made at Covehithe. On both sites stoneware from the Continent is well represented. Sooted cooking pot sherds, handles and glazed sherds are varied, two green glazed vessels with amusing pinched faces were found with simple drinking vessels, while other broken glazed sherds belong to a costrell, parts of glazed jugs and small bowls. At least we know that kilns did exist at Walberswick even if they were not examined with any degree of accuracy. The same thing may have happened at Covehithe in earlier times with an estimated erosion rate of 17 feet a year, since 1926, and some of them have already gone to the sea. On the other hand, the pottery could have been made further inland and the presence of brick and tile making at South Cove may have some connection with the medieval potters who were once producing local ware for distribution to the Neighbourhood.

DISCOVERIES OVER THE LAST YEAR

KESSINGLAND

Neolithic:	Leaf arrowhead	Several scrapers and cores
	Transverse arrowhead	Detached flakes from two polished axe heads
	Hollow base arrowhead	Hammerstone
	Broken chisel	
Bronze Age:	Tip at beaker dagger?	

Neolithic:	Polished axe head	Lowestoft
	Broken polished axe head	Oulton Broad
	Scrapers, flakes and cores	Corton
Bronze Age:	Barb and tang arrowhead	Corton
Roman:	Coin of Constantius II	Kessingland
	Concentration of broken roof tiles	
Medieval:	Post-medieval	
	Bronze dagger chape	North Cove
	Grouping of potsherds suggesting Homestead site	
Medieval:	Concentration of spouts, handles and body sherds	South Cove
Medieval:	Pottery recovered from a late medieval well	Covehithe
	Two French jettons	Covehithe
	Church token of German origin about 1750	Lowestoft
	Blything halfpenny 1794	Corton

P.M. Durbidge

A LATE MEDIEVAL WELL AT COVEHITHE

by P.M. Durbidge

Covehithe forms a picturesque part at our coastline and lies $4\frac{3}{4}$ miles north of Southwold. Little remains of the village now, except a farmhouse, a few cottages and the ruins of what was once a very imposing 15th Century Church. At the time of Domesday there was an extensive manor held by a freeman called EDRIC who also held sway at Wrentham. The population at this stage was about 160 and by 1600 this had increased to 270 but by 1672 it had fallen to 196 and it is doubtful that the population of the parish ever exceeded 300 people. Sea erosion has been a constant problem and over the period of years, a massive amount of land has gone, so, as far as excavators are concerned, we must accept that the early part of the village has gone and that the late medieval material we are recovering now marks the gradual decline of the settlement. In 1308 John de Cove had a hyth here for the purpose of loading and unloading vessels and he and his wife also had a charter of free warren here.

During 1328 a grant of a Fair was given and in 1616 the parochial register records that 'about 16 persons were drowned on July 26th coming from the fair by reason of a coble crossing the haven'. This haven suggests the Covehithe settlement was dependant on the sea and consequently sited close to it. Imported pottery recovered has not, as yet, been on a large scale which offers the theory of a declining settlement not being able to afford the finer foreign wares; trading appears to have been solely with the Low Countries, N.E. France and North Germany.

The first record we have of medieval remains being found at Covehithe was in 1888 when a Mr. J. Eustace Grubbe discovered a timber lined well in a cliff fall, the pottery was then thought to be Romano-British but in the light of finds since it was most likely a late medieval well shaft. William A. Dutt in his book on SUFFOLK published Jan. 1904 says 'Between this place (Covehithe) and Southwold several pits or wells believed to be vestiges of Roman colonisation have been uncovered by the sea from time to time in the crumbling cliffs'. He also refers to 'traces of wooden framework' which again does seem to indicate that these were the late medieval shafts lined with oak boards which we are now encountering.

The early part of January 1976 saw considerable damage to our coast line as a result of exceptionally high tides and gale force winds. Some parts of this coast suffered more than others but in walking along the beach at Covehithe one would see the vast amount of damage caused to this particular piece of coastline. It was erosion of this nature which uncovered a timber lined well of late medieval date sticking out of the sand like an upturned barrel some eight feet clear of the cliff face. The cliff had been brought down to some considerable extent and this destruction had subsequently destroyed the upper parts of the shaft, leaving the base embedded in the clay. It was lined with nineteen oak boards, each twenty eight inches long, having widths varying from three to seven inches, and $\frac{7}{8}$ " thick. Some of the boards had small $\frac{3}{4}$ " auger holes through them to lower the section down the shaft and auger marks to the tops of the boards were to enable them to lap onto the next layer.

In the black sticky sediment contained by the boards were small pieces of timber varying in section from $1\frac{1}{4} \times 2\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{3}{4} \times 1\frac{1}{4}$ and these turned out to be the remains of inner bands of hazel which had been pinned to the boards to retain them in position. From the iron stains resulting from the decayed nails it appears that two rings were used in this level to hold the last section of the well which measured approximately three feet in diameter. Contained in the black sediment were pieces of clay and when the former was disturbed it gave off a very strong smell as I was to find out later.

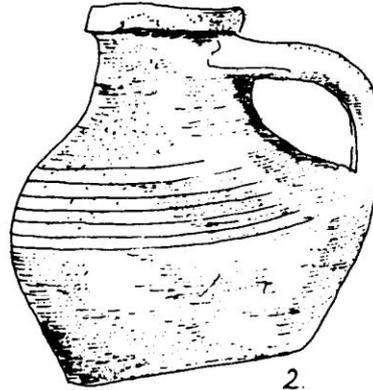
Although I was fortunate to find the well remains early in the morning it appeared someone else had also observed it as the contents of a shallow bowl or similar container lay close by. At this stage I assumed it might have been an iron cooking pot of some kind that had originally been discarded in the well. Shortly afterwards a colleague who had also been watching events at Covehithe produced the container which he had obtained from a local angler shortly before my visit. Apparently the angler thought the item to be of brass and was about to take it for its metal value, but fortunately for us the item has been given to the Lowestoft Museum.

After cleaning and restoration at Ipswich it appeared that we had a bronze cauldron beaten from a single sheet of bronze with an iron band running round the rim. There were two raised perforated lugs in the band for hanging or carrying purposes and the cauldron is thought to be of late medieval date. By mid-morning the weather had taken a turn for the worse, with strong winds coming off the sea combined with steady driving rain. It was under these conditions I began to sift through the well

contents which to say the least, proved difficult. Thirty five pieces of dark brown semi-glazed pot were recovered and when pieced together these formed the greater part of a vessel fourteen inches high. It was of 15th Century character and was discarded into the well minus the top, but the subsequent cliff fall which uncovered the well also smashed the pot into its present condition. The thick section base having also been smashed into four pieces. Odd flint stones were encountered in the silt beneath the pottery, the majority of which were fist size apart from one which was decidedly larger. Iron finds were present, the first being an iron disc slightly irregular in shape with a hole through the centre; iron nails with square shanks were surprisingly in good condition, and the same can be said of the double hasp and eleven inch iron pin. The pin had a large rounded head and at the opposite end it had been squared with a short cut through the shank bearing in mind the size of the object, it may have had some connection with agriculture.



1.



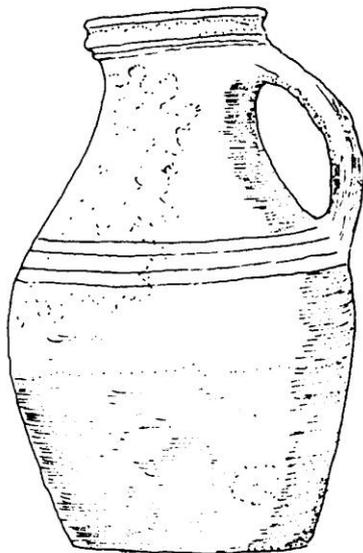
2.

COVEHITHE

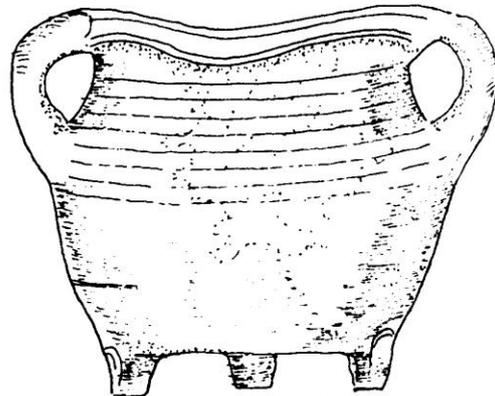
GLAZED

POTTERY FROM
WELL SHAFTS (¼)

1. Frilly based goblet in buff fabric, rich dark green glaze both internal and external. 002B
2. Jug of soft red fabric with sparse light green glaze to bib, decorative tilling on body. 002A
3. Jug of hard purpley fabric with bib of speckled dark green glaze, decorative tilling on body. 024
4. Double handled vessel of red fabric with part brown glaze applied to shoulder and internal base. 024



3.



4.

Remains of leather were recovered lying folded in the silt and this showed little signs of deterioration after the lapse of time; directly beneath this were the remains of a leather shoe. Apart from the wear of the shoe, the condition was fairly good with only the stitching suffering. The upper sole, heel and even the lace were quite recognizable. Beneath this, lying on its side were the remains of half another pot, this time of dark green glaze and partially covered in soot. From the profile of the neck it compared with further examples of jug types later to be encountered at Covehithe. By now the black infill was becoming more and more difficult to sift through and the smell was appalling. The high wind and rain turned the contents into black slush causing me to get rather despondent.

Nevertheless to leave the well and its contents for another week would have resulted in destruction by the sea and it was after all, the first chance to examine a medieval well in some detail.

The small pieces of hazel continually appeared in the infill often looking like bone in the black slush and at this point two other pieces of wood were found. One was of oak measuring 7½ inches long and shaped like the letter D, the other was of smaller section measuring roughly ¾ x ½". The purpose of the latter is debateable as several pieces of 'twig' were useable from parts of the infill, they were very small and several had decomposed to little more than dark stains. It is possible that this was the rotted remains of something but from this scanty evidence it would be extremely difficult to say what it was.

Towards the lower part of the well three small animal bones were found, one was of part of a rib with signs of abrasion at one end, while the second bone was brown on one side and honey coloured on the other. Traces of a blue pigment were present in the cell remains of all the bones and it was also present on the iron pin as well as the iron band belonging to the bronze cauldron.

Removal of the last of the infill produced very little apart from a piece of heavily corroded iron and part of a medieval brick. This was pale orange in colour and measured 1¾" in thickness, signs of both straw and soot were visible on the surfaces and it compared with two other bricks found close by a short time before.

Total clearance of the well revealed a slightly rounded base cut into the clay and embedded in this was a small gate pin with obvious signs of wear to the base of the object. After removal from the well the boards were examined and found to be in excellent condition, with no evidence of decay; this probably due to exclusion of air. Timber, especially hardwood, tends to resist decay if totally immersed in water, but if placed 'twixt wind and water' will decompose fairly quickly.

Since the discovery of this well, four others have been examined while in the cliff profile, and in each case additional datable material of both pottery and leather have been found. The depth of the shafts varies from 21 - 26 feet and in three of the wells, two layers of boards have been encountered, the second layer showing advanced stages of decay. The only exception was a very shallow well situated near the low cliff at Long Covert which was lined and contained a mixture of clay and topsoil. It appears that clay was used on the walls of the previous shafts as layers of sand and grey clay were noticed during excavation, prior to the commencement of the wooden boards. The collapse of boards as the shaft collapsed inwards was noticeable on well No. 002A and a great deal of pottery; animal bone etc., was thrown into the shaft shortly afterwards. After the removal of this material it was possible to see the fallen boards lying flat in the silt along with parts of the hazel bands.

In conclusion I would like to thank the people who have assisted in the investigation of those features, Mr. & Mrs. A.M. Turner and Mr. R. Smith for their help in recovery and restoration of material and to Mr. J. Bloxham and Mr. A. Pye who also worked with me, often under some-what hazardous conditions, to recover the material which is now on display in the Lowestoft Museum.

P.M. Durbidge

LOWESTOFT'S CHINA COLLECTION

by Charles Goodey

Thanks in no small measure to the enthusiasm of our District Librarian, Mr. Wilfred James, Lowestoft has at long, long last, in the new Central Library, a collection of its 18th century porcelain of which it can be proud.

Most of it has been acquired only in the past two decades at a time when prices have rocketed to unprecedented levels, long after our city fathers turned up their noses at a collection of 300 pieces which they might have had for nothing. This collection had originally been got together by the late

Mr. Thomas Henry Porter, who came to live in Lowestoft in 1921 after owning a brickworks in Norwich.

He bought 350 pieces altogether and in 1936 offered 300 of them for £300 to Mr. Howard Hollingsworth, Lowestoft's great benefactor, who lived at Briarcliffe on Gunton Cliff. He purchased the collection with the intention of presenting it to the borough as a nucleus of a display which he rightly thought the home of this famous porcelain should provide.

But the Town Councillors of those days lacked any appreciation of the ware and complained that it would cost £200 to provide the showcases to house the china. Mr. Hollingsworth promptly replied that he would pay for them but he made a stipulation that the collection should be displayed in Broad House in Nicholas Everitt park which he had earlier presented to the town.

The Town Council, however, would have none of this and, in disgust; Mr. Hollingsworth withdrew his offer and dumped the collection in his attic. There it remained until just before the outbreak of the 1939-45 War when it was bought by Mr. G.F. Browne, former manager at Smith's Furniture Store in the High Street. When hostilities broke out, he secretly buried the treasure somewhere in Oulton, only telling the then Superintendent of Lowestoft Police, Mr. William Clarke, where it was.

After the war, the porcelain was dug up, all safe and sound, and was sold off to dealers and private collectors, including Mr. Clarke. Meanwhile, the modest collection that Lowestoft had had in its old library at the corner of Gordon Road and Clapham Road had been bombed and thought to have been lost for ever.

Most of it had been loaned to the town in 1917 by Mr. W.S. de Winton, of London, who, in a letter to the Town Council in the previous November, had said that on a visit to the port he had regretted to find that the borough had no museum and no collection of the porcelain that had carried its name around the world.

He generously offered to loan the town several pieces 'as a nucleus of a public collection on the understanding that, if in five years' time, not sufficient effort is made in my judgement to add to this nucleus, my gifts are to revert to me'. He intended in that event, he added, to present the porcelain to the National Museum of Wales with which he was connected.

His final comment was; 'I went to see the old china factory and if you would secure it as a museum, Americans would come as pilgrims to visit it as they do at Stratford-on-Avon'.

Twenty-eight, pieces arrived in February, 1917, most of them bearing the label of the National Museum of Wales whose Director wrote to the Town Council in 1930 asking for them to be returned. But the Corporation either forgot to reply or declined to part with the china which remained tucked inconspicuously away in the library where, despite Mr. de Winton's warning no effort had been made to add to it.

According to some Lowestoft china 'authorities' who have since written about the ware, the collection was destroyed when the library (and one even said the Town Hall) was blitzed but I happened to be in my house in Gordon Road when that string of bombs descended upon us and was among the first to arrive on the scene of the demolished library.

I helped to bring out the survivors from the cellars beneath the building in which I later learned the collection had been placed for safety along with the town's share of the moulds that had been excavated from the old factory in 1902.

This piece of information came back to my mind after the war and I asked the then Town Clerk about the porcelain. He solemnly assured me that it had all been destroyed, but later on I mentioned the matter to Mr. Victor Steward, our then Borough Librarian, after he had returned from the war. He also thought that the china had been lost but when I pointed out to him that people had escaped unharmed in the cellars, we went to a small storeroom in the former Missions to Seaman hostel in Suffolk Road where the library was now housed and, lo and behold, we found beneath an old kitchen table, a tea chest stuffed with newspaper in which was wrapped the 'lost' collection.

We cleared out the chest and when we found one or two pieces which I thought were not Lowestoft at all, I called my old friend, Mr. George Levine of Brundall, an expert on Lowestoft, to confirm that these were, as I had suspected, Bow or Worcester.

I wrote an article about the find in the "East Anglian Daily Times" and, as a result, the Town Council, had the collection resurrected and placed in show cases which were placed on the landing of the temporary library and then, in January 1971, it vanished again. This time it was stolen by a cat-

burglar from Bungay who stole 104 pieces; overlooking other items locked in a cupboard beneath one of the cases.

Among the stolen pieces were the unique specimens – the Susan Redgrave birth tablet and the Beecroft jug – but because, I believe, we particularly mentioned these items in our newspaper reports of the robbery; the thief dumped them alongside a lay-by near Diss, to which he later directed the police.

Meanwhile, the burger and his accomplice had taken the rest of their haul to London and sold it for £350 to a dealer. He afterwards offered it to another member of the trade as a result of which yet another dealer, who had been informed of the theft by a Lowestoft friend, contacted the police who recovered all of the porcelain.

At the subsequent trial of the burglar, his counsel explained ‘It was only after publicity in the local newspapers that he realised he had bitten off more than he could chew.’ He had, apparently, estimated his haul as being worth between £300 and 350, whereas it was actually valued at the time at over £3,000.

If only that innocent burglar had buried it for some years, as Mr. Browne had done in 1939, he would have been a rich man today!

Footnote: In his article ‘Collecting Ceramics’ in the 1971-72 Annual Report; Mr. B.P. Girling wrote: . . . ‘a kiln in recent years was unearthed behind a house called “*Kingsmead*”, Yarmouth Road and by certain people was stated to be the kiln of Hewlin Luson.’ As I have seen from photographs and cuttings from the Lowestoft Borough Library this does not seem quite feasible as the kiln appears to have been too large for an experimental kiln.

Mr. Girling suggested that it was used for the manufacture of pantiles. (Presumably he was referring to an article I had written for the Annual Report for 1967-68 and, just to put the record right, I think I should point out that the kiln referred to was not behind but beside the house and that it was no bigger than my wife’s oven – and she certainly could not bake pantiles in that! Luckily I took photographs of the kiln for it has since been filled in and a house now stands on top of it.

Incidentally, will writers an Lowestoft china in the future note that Luson’s Christian name was Hewling and not Hewlin. That mistake was made by Gillingwater and has since been perpetuated by many others who have not taken the trouble to research further into the Luson family.

THE FRIARS OF GREAT YARMOUTH

by George Rye.

The three major orders of Friars, Greyfriars (Franciscans), Blackfriars (Dominicans) and Whitefriars (Carmelites) built establishments at Great Yarmouth. The Austin Friars had a main establishment at Southtown/Gorleston and a ‘cell’ in Great Yarmouth.

THE GREYFIARS was in the centre of the Town, the site of the church being where Queen Street now is. They were established c 1271 and dissolved 1539. Part of the cloisters still remained and was incorporated in medieval additions. This property was acquired by a local Trust in 1887. In 1906, a body of local gentlemen instituted a limited Company, non-profit making, for the purpose of buying and preserving old historical buildings. Their first venture being the purchase of part of the Greyfriars Cloisters. The buildings were utilised as a small museum and for public inspection. In 1947 they were passed into the Guardianship of the Ministry of Works. The Ministry eventually removed all the old medieval accretions leaving only the Friars structure. In the course of this work they discovered an interesting painted tomb. The remains are open to view by the public during the summer season and a guide book is available.

THE BLACKFRIARS Established in 1267. Fire 1520. Dissolved 1539. The site was known to be in the extreme south end of the Town, bounded by the Town Walls to the south and east. Local historian, C.J. Palmer, writes in 1852 ‘There are now no remains whatever to mark the site of the monastery and church’. The site which pre-war was covered with houses and fish-houses was in 1970 practically all cleared for re-development and a part at the area used by the Yarmouth Council to build a new Fire Station. I was permitted by the Council to be archaeological observer on the site (no excavation). Part of the site had been completely destroyed by the sinking and construction of herring steeping vats here. However, a few traces of buried flint foundation came to light and it was seen that a corner of

the adjoining public-house, 'The Clipper Schooner' was sitting on a buttress and north wall of the church. There was evidence of a groined undercroft, in the east end of the church. It continued under the boundary wall of the property of the public-house so it will be incumbent on the local Society to watch and wait for an opportunity to investigate in the back-yard and garden of this site. Further west, a mortared block of flints indicated a column base for a north aisle. Close to a fragment of the north wall of the church and on the outside, a stone coffin, minus lid, was found. It was, I feel, in situ, but on excavating the contents it was found that the skeleton had been disturbed by tomb-robbers who presumably had carried off the lid. Several skeletons were turned up by the mechanical excavator, which would have been burials under the Church floor. The excavated area deviated somewhat from the line of the church north wall and no further physical remains were seen out by great good fortune, the final cutting by the builders revealed part of the south wall, then a flint pillar base of the south aisle with a stone quatrefoil column base on top, and further along the flint base for the north aisle pillar. Close to the boundary of the Fire Station site (where a new wall was to be built) was evidence for the south wall continuing and a couple of skeletons were found here. From this evidence, I was able to sketch out a plan of the church which was published in 'Norfolk Archaeology'. The west end of the church was not of course located. However in 1977 this west end site was redeveloped. The old buildings were demolished and a new building erected. The street frontages (South Quay and Friars Lane) had been cellared and any early archaeological remains destroyed but in the centre of the site, the mechanical excavator unearthed some human burials. It was not possible to deal with these archaeologically but it was noticed from the section that the graves (about 6 or 8) were closely packed and in two rows. Human remains were also found in a test bore-hole on another part of the site. As some of these burials were outside the limits of the width of the church and as no evidence of any ecclesiastical foundations were discovered it is assumed that this area was a graveyard to the west of the church. The rear of the new building was about 30 feet from the Fire Station boundary wall (it was destined to become a car park). This was a key area from the archaeological point of view but unfortunately it was just here that the builders placed their huts and dumps of building materials. It was not until the new building was completed that we were given leave to open a trench here (one day only and it was to be back-filled). We plotted a trench which we hoped would pick up the corner of the south wall of the church where it should meet the missing west wall. In the event we did eventually find the south wall of the church with its floor level off-set but all traces of the floor had gone and it continued westward without any evidence of a crossing wall. Time did not allow for further digging. All that can be said is that the church extended a further bay westwards than is shown on my plan in N.A. but not more than half a bay beyond that. None of the building remains are now visible. The stone coffin, a gargoyle and the stone quatrefoil column base are in the Tollhouse Museum.

THE WHITEFRIARS established 1276. Fire 1509, dissolved 1539. C.J. Palmer writes 'Boundaries unknown and all traces of church and buildings have disappeared'. Paul Rutledge (Norfolk Record Office) recently gave some new historical background. I plotted out a section on the Town map approximately 500 x 400 feet as mentioned in the documents. The west boundary at the riverside was known as Whitefriars Quay. On the northern boundary, C.J. Palmer records a cellar beneath newly-built cottages, which contained bricked-up arches and a piscina in the wall. Query – is this the Anchorite's cell? On the east boundary (George Street) Palmer states that in a garden at the back of a house here, men digging a saw-pit came across an undisturbed skeleton about 5½ feet deep. He also says that many pieces of stone of an ecclesiastical nature have been found nearby. Query – is this a body buried beneath the church floor? On the south boundary a new road (St. Francis' Way) has been constructed incorporating the old Row which was formerly here. In the course of widening, mechanical excavators turned up several skeletons. The late C. Green reported 'Human skeletons from burial ground of Whitefriars Priory'. Query – a secondary graveyard? There has been post-war building of blocks of flats on a large part of the site and it seems unlikely we shall be able to get much evidence of the church, nevertheless there are other properties which sooner or later will be re-developed and which the local Society should keep a watchful eye on, in the hope that some more positive evidence may be revealed.

THE AUSTIN FRIARS Great Yarmouth. This is the 'cell'. It is situated in Howard Street North, the Row alongside being known as Austin Row (sometimes corrupted to Ostend Row). After the Dissolution it passed in 1694 into the hands of Quakers which converted the building into a chapel. It still stands (we resisted a town plan to demolish it for road-widening) and it is really a double monument – the Austin cell and an early Quaker Chapel, still in use. The Facia has been covered with

stucco but it is expected that a flint faced wall lies behind.

THE AUSTIN FRIARS Southtown. Established c 1290, dissolved 1539. The Field Group negotiated permission to dig prior to development, an open space on the Southtown/Gorleston boundary which historically is 'in the area' of the Friary. In 1975/6 the excavation revealed substantial flint wall foundations making three sides of a building. On the inside against the wall were the remains of a wall bench all round. On the outside of the north wall, they found a cess-pit and a garde-robe. The building was interpreted as the Chapter House. Further digging to the North produced no traces of other buildings. The southern boundary of the site had an ancient thick flint wall, with many brick patches, a blocked arched doorway and traces of a stone framed windows. It stood about 6 feet high and was east of the Chapter House. It was assumed to be the remains of the cloister wall but as we had not found the Church could it also have formed the North wall of the church? There was a small open space on the south side of the wall which had been cleared of old cottages. It was to be redeveloped by the building of a new Chapel for the Seventh Day Adventists. When the foundation trenches for this new building were dug, several skeletons were disturbed. Local residents reported that human bones had turned up here when the air-raid shelters were sunk during the last war. No old walls were observed in the trenches and the area is suggested as a graveyard of the Friars. Adjoining this plot and alongside the ancient standing wall, a small triangle of land was available for excavation. In the cuttings excavated some small patches of mortar floor were located and in the destruction rubble some broken pieces of green glazed floor tile may have formed this floor. 32 cm. below this was a secondary floor roughly laid with broken pieces of flat pin tiles. This tiled area was bounded by a dwarf wall 20 cm. thick composed of flint cobble and brick. The width was 86 cm. and the length exposed 9.1 metres when it disappeared into a section that could not be dug. Immediately on the surface of the tiled area was a layer of black earth 2 cm. thick. In this layer some half-dozen copper alloy pins were found; thought to be shroud pins. Many small iron nails which might be coffin nails were found in the main destruction layer above. No human bones were found. The structure is interpreted as a multiple tomb cut through the church floor. It would seem that at the Dissolution, the roof (probably lead) was removed and the tombs emptied.

The roof being off and the tombs being exposed to the elements would account for the black earth layer. At a later date the main demolition of the church took place and the plaster and rubble layer then formed. In one small area a concentration of painted glass fragments and lead indicated the position of a window. A test hole was dug at the southern limit of the ground available for excavation. It revealed, below modern rubble, a mortared conglomeration of flint nodules, but conditions prevented the excavators from defining the shape. If this could be part of the south wall, then the overall width between the standing north wall would approximate closely with the historical measurement given in William Worcester's Itinerary of the 15th century, for the width of the church. This is as far as we can go at present but there is a piece of the standing wall incorporated into buildings facing Beccles Road. It is old property and may be due for re-development in the near future. If it is possible to do any archaeological work here, we may recover further information. The standing wall is still visible and acts as a boundary wall between properties, otherwise the remains are not visible.

AUSTIN FRIARS, Gorleston. The Friars appear to have had administration of the church of St. Nicholas which stood where Priory Street is today. This was used as their conventional church. At the end of the last century several stone carved coffin lids were found in this area and are now preserved in the porch of the parish church of St. Andrew's. Part of the tower of the church survived and was used as a sea-mark until 1813 when it was blown down during gale. In 1975, the Field Club carried out a small excavation on the south side of Priory Street and found more human internments. Some graves contained three bodies in layers. A carved stone coffin lid was also found but this was not in situ, its function when found was as part of the covering of an old well. The stone has been erected and may be seen in the adjacent public park known as Priory Gardens.

George Rye.

References:

Norfolk Archaeology. Vol. XXXV Pt. IV pp 498-502

Great Yarmouth & Dist. Archaeology Soc. BULLETINS

No.25 The Blackfriars

G. Rye

1972

No.39 Priory St. Gorleston. Excavations

D. Bullock

1975

No.44	Excavations at Gorleston	D. Bullock	1976
No.49	Excavations at Gorleston	D. Bullock	1977
No.51	Where was the Whitefriars	P. Rutledge	1977
No.52	The Whitefriars, Archaeological aspect	G. Rye	1977
No.54	Excavation at Gorleston G3	A. McEwan	1978
No.55	Blackfriars, Yarmouth	G. Rye	1978

A LOWESTOFT WORTHY

by Hugh D.W. Lees

In St. Margaret's Churchyard, to the north of the Church on a plot of land divided from the 'Mill's Bequest' (the three-corner piece, close to the Water Tower) by a path can be seen a headstone to the memory of the Rev. George Steffe Crisp, 'Late Independent Minister of this Town'. It reads:

IN AFFECTIONATE
 REMEMBRANCE OF
 GEORGE STEFFE CRISP
 INDEPENDENT MINISTER OF
 THIS TOWN
 AT THE AGE OF 77 YEARS
 HE ENTERED INTO REST
 MAY 30th, 1863
 THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY
 OF THE DAY ON WHICH HE
 OPENED THE FIRST
 SABBATH SCHOOL
 IN LOWESTOFT
 FOR HIM TO DIE WAS GAIN.
 ALSO ANNE
 WIFE OF THE ABOVE
 WHO DIED SEPTEMBER 24th
 1886
 AGED 86 YEARS

The Rev. George Steffe Crisp was born at Wrentham, on March 8th, 1786, and was the second son of James Crisp and Sarah his wife, who was the daughter of Lyell of Cove, and great grandson of the Rev. Steffe, Rector of Wrentham.

The Crisps can show a descent from the time of Charles I. Their family tree commences with one William (d. February 13th, 1638) and Susan his wife (d. February 11th, 1639-40). 'With a view to the Ministry of the Lord' he entered Wymondley Academy on September 10th, 1803. He left College on May 30th, 1808, and settled in Lowestoft. Although a congregation of Independents had existed in Lowestoft for nearly 200 years, 'when Mr. Crisp settled in the town, the cause was exceeding, low, and no organised Church was in existence'.

White's Suffolk for 1844 records, 'The Independents had a large congregation here, as early as 1689 . . .' They worshipped in a barn in Blue Anchor Lane, (now Duke's Head Street) till 1695, when their present Chapel in High Street was erected', and adds, 'This building has a good organ and will hold 550 hearers'. This Chapel used to stand opposite Wilde's Score, near or on the site of John Devereux's premises. In 1852, the Independent Chapel, now known as the Congregational Church was erected in London Road North at the cost of £1,500 in place of the small chapel in High Street. It was galleried in 1861, at the expense of £700, and in 1863 a spacious Sunday Schoolroom was added at a cost of £500. In 1882 were opened new Sunday School classrooms. These suffered badly from blast when the Fox and Hounds Inn was damaged in April 1941.

As shown by the inscription on the headstone, the Rev. George Steffe Crisp founded the first Sabbath School in Lowestoft which met for the first time on May 30th, 1813. He soon afterwards we are told, reorganised the Church 'and four members including himself met together and gave to each other the right hand of fellowship in the presence of the Rev. Andrew Richie, of Wrentham'. Mr. Crisp was chosen pastor of this little flock and was accordingly ordained to the office of the Ministry on June 22nd, 1815. After five years he resigned the pastorate and left the town, but returned to Lowestoft in 1821, and resumed the pastorate in April of that year.

Two years later, we find a Public Bill was to be seen, posted up in the town announcing:

A SERMON
WILL BE PREACHED
ON LORD'S DAY AFTERNOON
2nd of FEBRUARY 1823
AT
The Independent Meeting-House
LOWESTOFT
BY THE
REV. G. S. CRISP
For the benefit of the 4 widows and
14 Children of the Seamen who were
drowned on Saturday the 11th instant
SERVICE TO BEGIN AT HALF-PAST
TWO O'CLOCK
AND
on the following Tuesday evening
AT SEVEN O'CLOCK
A MEETING
WILL BE HELD
AT THE SAME PLACE
TO FORM
A SOCIETY
FOR THE
Relief of Widows and Children of
subscribing seamen who may lose
Their Husbands and Fathers by like
Providence
27th January 1823 posted by SEARL
Printers, High Street, Lowestoft.

Having 'continued his zealous labours till December 21st, 1832, he terminated his official connection with the church', and soon afterwards he opened a Boarding and Day School at No. 22 High Street, Lowestoft.

The terms of this school make interesting reading, and are set out thus:

Board and Education for Young Gentlemen under 10 years of age including Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, English Grammar, Geography etc., 20 guineas per annum.

Ditto for Young gentlemen above 10 and under 13 years of age, 23 ditto.

Ditto for Young Gentlemen above 13 years of age, 25 ditto.

Day Boarders, 12 ditto.

Day Scholars, 4 ditto.

The Latin and Greek Languages, 4 ditto.

The notice adds; 'Each Boarder is expected to bring one pair of Sheets, Six Towels and a Silver spoon'.

No entrance charged – A Quarter's notice is required, previous to removal.

Lowestoft affords every advantage for Sea-Bathing.

SCARL. PRINTER LOWESTOFT.

In the year 1835 he established the business of Bookseller, and in 1842, he obtained a Licence to sell Tea. (Licence No. 4553 (No. 34) dated November 4th, 1842; issued by the Excise Authority at Beccles). Thus it came about that the Assam Tea Company, London was able to announce 'to the Public at Large they 'HAVE APPOINTED G.S. CRISP, Booksellers, High Street, SOLE AGENT FOR LOWESTOFT'. Tea was offered at 5/- per pound for the 'Black' and up to 7/- per pound for 'Green'.

The following year, we find him mentioned as being on the VISITING COMMITTEE of the newly formed BRITISH SCHOOL for Boys, which was opened on April 19th, 1843 for 'the reception of Children of all Religious Denominations', as the Public Notice put it at the time. These premises were pulled down in the early 1930's to make way for the building we now know as 'Electric House', in London Road North.

Upon the death of the Rev. Geo. S. Crisp, in 1863, the Bookseller's business was carried on by his widow, under the name of 'Ann Crisp and Son'.

In the year 1885, the LOWESTOFT JOURNAL announced, in its issue of April 18th, 'A REMARKABLE FIND' and goes on to recount; 'A few days ago, as some workmen were employed in the lower part of the ground connected with the premises of Mrs. A. Crisp and Son, they turned up some bones, which have since been ascertained by a competent authority to be those of a full grown stag'.

The bones were at least five feet below the surface and at the foot of the cliff on which the east side of High Street is situated.

Centuries ago the sea washed the base of this high land.

On September 24th the following year Ann Crisp died at the age of 84 and the business has been carried on since by her son, grandson and great grandson in turn.

On May 12th, 1943, at 9 o'clock in the evening, these premises were destroyed by enemy action. The following morning the newspapers were being sent out from temporary premises at No. 171 High Street, just opposite, acquired overnight, for in those days, it was a case of 'Business as usual' even if it was from a partly 'blasted' building nearby, for life in the town had to go on, despite the attention of Hitler's planes by night and day. No. 171 was only six doors away from the Jubilee Stores Inn which had received a 'direct hit' and where 33 persons lost their lives that night.

In 1945 Crisp's removed to the permanent premises at No. 68 High Street; on February 1st, 1964 the business was taken over by Mr. K. Nunn.

The writer is indebted to Mr. John Crisp and members at his family for many of the interesting details and for the extracts from the Congregational Year Book of 1864 on the life and times of the Rev. Geo. S. Crisp, and other papers.

NON CONFORMIST CHAPELS SURVEY

Compiled by Mrs. D. Julings

Section A. Existing Chapels:

Denomination	Address of Chapel	Name & Address of Minister and/or Secretary	Notes
Methodist	Carlton Road, Lowestoft	Rev. L. Richards, 27 Carlton Road, Lowestoft	foundation date, April 1962
Methodist	Yarmouth Road, Lowestoft	Rev. F. Morris Kedward, 8 Corton Road, Lowestoft	
Methodist	Commodore Road, Oulton Broad	Rev. L. Richards, 27 Carlton Road, Lowestoft	
Methodist	Shaw Road, Carlton Colville.	Rev. L. Richards, 27 Carlton Road, Lowestoft	
Salvation Army	Beach Road, Lowestoft	Officer-in-Charge, 50 Hervey Street, Lowestoft	foundation date, July 1898
Salvation Army	Carlton Road, Lowestoft	Officer-in-Charge, 4 Lovewell Road, Lowestoft	foundation date, 1906
Wesleyan Reform (Free Methodist)	Raglan Street, Lowestoft	Secretary, Mrs. S. Liffen, 39 Royal Avenue, Lowestoft	foundation date, June 1964
Elim Pentecostal	St. Peter's Street, Lowestoft	Rev. Harrison, 18 St. Aubyn's Road, Lowestoft	Formally Methodist Church (foundation date, 1876). Elim Pentecostal since 1961
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints	Yarmouth Road, Lowestoft	Rev. Lorenzo T. Barron, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Yarmouth Road, Lowestoft	foundation date, September 1967
Reformed (Free Grace) Baptist			A new Chapel formed in Sept. 1977. Meetings are held at present at the home of one of the members. Further information LOW 69641
Fishermens Bethel		Port Missionary, Mission House, Waveney Road, Lowestoft	foundation dates 1899
Brethren	Fairfield Road, Oulton Broad	Mr. Dodsworth, 161 Colville Road, Oulton Broad	
Brethren	Tonning Street, Lowestoft	Mr Taylor, 5 Mount Pleasant, Lowestoft	
Brethren	Colville Hall, Clifton Road, Lowestoft	Mr. Dye, 'Headingly'; Sussex Road, Lowestoft	This building was an annexe to Peter's Church, Kirkley until early 1930's when it became a Dance Hall. The Brethren have worshipped there since 1936
Brethren	Kirkley Run Mission, Birds Lane, Lowestoft	Mr. T. Cummings, 84 Waveney Crescent, Lowestoft	foundation date: 1907
Brethren	Bridge Road Hall, Oulton Broad	Mr. V. Dye, 87 The Street, Oulton	A Church School in the late 1800's. Used by the Local Education Authority for woodwork and art classes in the 1930's, Purchased by a member of the Brethren in 1960.
Independent Evangelical	Beresford Road, Lowestoft	Secretary, Mr. J. Sanham, 42 Grayson Avenue, Lowestoft	This building was formerly a net store and has been used by the Independent Evangelical Chapel since 1969.

Section A. Existing Chapels: continued

Seven Day Adventist	London Road, Pakefield	Pastor Trevena, 18 Mendip Road, Oulton Broad.	foundation dates June 1974
Mission	Commodore Mission, Hall Road, Oulton Broad	Mr F. Weaver, Hall Road, Oulton Broad	foundation date: 1937. Present building opened May 1950. From 1937-1950 services were held in a rented building (a disused malt house) in Commodore Road.
Baptist	corner: London Road South,/ Kirkley Park Road	Rev. T. Edworthy, 24 The Venlaw, Kirkley Park Road, Lowestoft	foundation date: October 1973
Baptist	Hollingsworth Road, Lowestoft	Secretary: Mrs. Watson, 22 Prospect Road, Oulton Broad	foundation date: 1951. Further building took place in 1962 and 1967
United Reform	South Cliff, Pakefield Road, Lowestoft	Rev. T. Shepherd, 68 Park Road, Lowestoft	foundation date; May 1903 Denominational change from Congregational to United Reformed October 1972
United Reform	London Road North, Lowestoft	Rev. T. Shepherd 68 Park Road, Lowestoft Secretary: Miss M Morling, 5 Corton Road, Lowestoft	foundation date: Church founded 1655 Present building opened September 1852
United Reform	Bridge Road, Oulton Broad	Rev. T. Shepherd, 68 Park Road, Lowestoft Secretary, Mr P.Morgan, 24 Lawson Road, Lowestoft	Denominational change from Congregation to United Reformed; October 1972 1. In 1837 a wooden shed was erected - now demolished 2. In 1859 a stone chapel was erected on the same site - now demolished 3. In 1897 a corrugated iron building was erected for use as a Sunday School and is still in use. 4. The present building was opened in August 1940. Denominational change from Congregational to United Reformed: October 1972

Section A. Existing Chapels:

Supplement 1978

Denomination	Address of Chapel	Name & Address of Minister and/or Secretary	Foundation	Date of any rebuilding Denomination changes Burial ground
Seventh Day Adventist	The Dell, Cotmer Road, Oulton Broad	Rev. Trevena, 18 Mendip Road, Oulton Broad		
Spiritualist National Church	Gordon Road, Lowestoft			
Mission Hall	St. George's Road, Lowestoft	Mr J. Coleby, Morton House, Morton Road, Lowestoft	1897	
Methodist	Corton } Blundeston }	Rev. F. Kedward, 8 Corton Road, Lowestoft		

Section A. Existing Chapels: Supplement 1978 continued

Methodist	Barnby } Hulver } Kessingland } Westhall }	Rev. L. Richards, 27 Carlton Road, Lowestoft		
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Non-Conformist Chapels Survey.

October 1977

Section B Closed chapels:

Methodist, Mutford, Nr Lowestoft foundation date 1827	Closed	
Society of Friends' (Quakers) Pakefield Street, Lowestoft <u>Chapel and Burial ground</u>	Closed	Information: Mr J. Coleby, Morton House, Morton Road, Lowestoft
Railway Mission, Denmark Road, Lowestoft, foundation date 1887	Demolished 1966	Information: Mr S. Green, 9 Borrow Road, Oulton Broad
Little Bethel, East Street (Beach Village), Lowestoft foundation date 1902	Demolished	
Gospel Hall, Victoria Road, Oulton Broad	Demolished	Surgery (doctors) now on site
Mission Hall, Crown Street, Lowestoft	Closed	
Fishermens Bethel, Commercial Road, Lowestoft foundation date 1864	Demolished	
Baptist, London Road North, Lowestoft foundation date: 1899	Demolished 1974	Boots (Chemists) store now on site
Salvation Army, Lorne Road, Lowestoft	Closed	
Seventh Day Adventist, Regent Road, Lowestoft foundation date; 1954	Demolished	
Seventh Day Adventist, St. John's Road, Lowestoft	Sold	Now Jeckell's Shop
Primitive Methodist, Chapel Road, Carlton Colville foundation date: 26th April 1886	Sold	Purchased by Mr, C. Leech, of Lowestoft. A sail-making business was carried on here in the 1960's. The pews have been removed and a new floor laid but the pulpit is still in the Chapel
Primitive Methodist, St. Peter's Street, Lowestoft foundation date 10th Feb. 1876	Sold	Elim Pentecostal Church since 1961
Primitive Methodist, Mill Road, Lowestoft	Sold	Used by local garage as a vehicle repair depot
Methodist, Lorne Park Road, Lowestoft foundation date. 1903	Demolished	
Methodist, Kendal Road, Lowestoft	Sold	Purchased in 1884 by Congregational Church, Pakefield Road and used by them as Sunday School until 1959. Now used by Scout Group. Purchase price in 1884 - £329
Methodist, High Street, Lowestoft	Closed	
Methodist, Hall Road, Oulton Broad	Demolished	2 houses erected on site

Section B Closed chapels: continued

Methodist, Tonning Street, Lowestoft	Sold	Used by local department store as storage depot
Methodist, corner London Road North/Marina, Lowestoft	Demolished	2 shops now on site
Methodist, The Street, Wrentham	to be demolished	Planning permission obtained for 1 house on site
Methodist, Sotterley, Near Lowestoft foundation date 1824	Sold	
Seventh Day Adventist, Shaw Avenue, Carlton Colville	Sold	Information Mrs. Baker, 313 Raglan Street, Lowestoft
Baptist, High Street, Lowestoft foundation date: June 1813	Demolished	Now Watson's Garage
Baptist, London Road North, Lowestoft foundation date; 1852	Demolished	Now Co-operative Society shops
Congregational	<p>Historical records are meagre but it seems that in about 1655 meetings were held in a barn in Blue Anchor Lane (now Duke's Head Street). In 1695, the Chapel, which stood in the High Street, on the south side of Messrs Devereux' Store, was built. In 1815, a strictly Independent Church was formed, and the minute books of the Church date from this time. Whites 'Suffolk Directory' of 1855 states: 'The new Congregation Church in London Road North was built in 1852 at a cost of £1,503 in Italian style, in lieu of the small chapel built in 1695 and now occupied by the Wesleyan Reformed'</p>	

Section B. Closed chapels

Supplement 1978

Baptist	Richmond Road, Lowestoft	Sold	foundation date, 1878 Building now used as a store room
Mission Hall	Salisbury Road, Lowestoft	Closed	
Methodist	Oulton, Lowestoft	Closed	
Union of Congregational Church/Baptist Church	The Street, Somerleyton, Lowestoft	Demolished	
	<p>From 'The Ter-Centenary Souvenir' London Road Congregational Church, (now United Reformed Church) 1965</p>		
<p>'The Somerleyton Church When Sir Morton Peto, Bart purchased the Somerleyton Estate in 1846, he found that a few Inhabitants of the village were worshipping in a small chapel at Hopton and on his own initiative arranged for services to to be held first in a cottage and later in the present chapel, which he built for the family at the hall and the inhabitants of the village. The chapel was first attached to the Hall and was later moved to its present position.'</p>			