

Volume Sixteen : 1983-84

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**THE WILL TESTAMENT AND INVENTORY OF MARGARET SYMONDS OF
LOWESTOFT MADE IN 1511**

by J. Reed

This Will, Testament and Inventory came from the Ipswich archives. Where there are words which can be read but no current meaning has been found, particularly in the Inventory, they have been put in without explanation. Definitions have been put in where they can be found. Some light can perhaps be thrown on the obscure words by others with local knowledge.

I acknowledge with thanks the assistance of Dr. O.G. Pickard, Mrs. J. Buck, Miss M. Smith in the transcription and definitions. *J. Reed*

WILL AND TESTAMENT

In dei no (mi)ne amen the 10th day January in the year of owre Lord God 1511. I Margaret Symonds of Lewstoffe in hole mynde and Good Remembraunce beyng making my testatement and last wyll in thys maner Forme Folowyng.

Fyrst I bequeth my sowie to God Almymhty our Lady Saynt Mary an(d) to all the Seyntts in hevyn my body to be buryd in the chyrchyard of Seynt Margaret of Lewstoffe aforseyd by myn husband.

Item I bequeth to the ley auter of the same Chyrch For my tythys forgotten and not payd 3s 4d.

Item I wyll that my howsse be solde acordyng to my husbonds wyll Thom(a)s Muton (1) and of the money theroff Cumyng to Fynde a prest to synge for my sowle my husbonds sowlye and my Friends sowlys by the snape of an hole yer in the forseyd Church of Lewstoffe.

Item I wyll that Olyffe my doughter shall have Fyve marks and all such Stuffe as I have delyverd on to hyre and Gyven beffore hande.

Item I wyll that ych of my Chylder be syde her have every on of them 4 marcys sterling a feder bed a blster a coverlygth and a payr of Sheets.

Item I wyll that every of my Sonnys shall have 2 pewter platers 2 pewter dyschys and 2 sawsers.

Item I wyll that every of my Childern shall have ych of then 2 sylver spon(es) and if it happynth any of the seyde Chylder to dye or that they cume to Full age or have delyveraunce of sayd money or Stuffe I wyll that the seyde money and stuffe be peyd to the resydne of my seyde Chyldern lvyng.

Also I wyll that my executors shall paye to the Reparacion of the Chauncell 3s 4d.

Item I bequeth a cloth of Red Sarsenet Garryshyd with sylke and (2) all Costes that longyth to the sayd Cloth for to hange upon the pyx (3) that the sacrament is in the ves(try) (2) Gooddes not bequethed I put them holy to the dysposiston of my executors (2) ordeyn Olyffe my doughter Robard Murdok and Martin Cornelys Esq. (2) every on of them for ther labours 13s 4d

Also I wyll that Syr John Brewer(?) (2) my supervisor of my Goodies to se the dissposiston

theroff for my sowle her (2) and that the seyd Syr John shall have 20s for his labours towards hys Vergare (?) (2):persons I have put to my seale.

PROBATE MADE AT CARLETON 4th March 1511

Notes on the Will

- (1) Margaret Symonds was married to Richard Symonds whose will indicates that she was his second wife. It was apparently her second marriage also. In that case it is likely that Olive, her daughter, was nee Muton.
- (2) The will is damaged and parts of the lines 14 to 20 are erased.
- (3) The word after pyx I cannot decipher.

INVENTORY

SHEET I

JHESUS

Thys is the trewe Inventory off Margaret Symonds off Leystoffte maid the 17 day off January the yer off our lord god 1512.

Item First and Formost In golde and sylver £3 16s 8d

In The Halle

Item in the halle a cownter off Inglysch makyng	5s
Item a cownter off sprewce making	5s 4d
Item 6 Cusschyngs	4s
Item a pleyn tabyll and the tresselles	22d
Item a brod seet graven	16d
Item a longe Forms 2 closse cheyrs and 2 opyn cheyrs	2s 10d
Item a pewter bassoon a latou (1) bason	20d
Item a coleyn (2) pott and 3 laton laudrs and 2 pewter potts and 4 candelstyks and an holy water stop (3) and 4 saltes and a chaffyng dysch off laton	9s 8d
Item 2 peyer haughynges in the chym(n)ey a peyer towngs	12d
Summa	£5 9s 4d

In The Kechyn

In primo a charger and 11 platters and 24 dysschys Plate and 8 Round dysschys and 4 sawncers and 3 pewter basons	18s
Item a lytyll candelstyke	2d
Item a mortar and a pesstyll off brasse	3s 4d
Item 2 brasse potts lytyll potts	3s 4d
Item 7 ketells	8s 4d
Item a lache (4) pan a gret pan and 3 smale pannys	3s 6d
Item a barburs bason	10d
Item a Sawceter a Skaner (5) 2 spyts 2 awndyrons	2s 6d
Item a Cobrou (6) with a hangyng 3 awndyrons an olde cobarde a hangyn to sett in a pott a trede a gredyrne	
2 peyers potte hokes	2s 9d
Item a peyer mostarde Qwerons	2s
Summa	44s 9d

SHEET 2

JHESUS

Item For olde shytes and olde tabyll clothys and olde towells and other olde lynnyn	9s 2½d
Item For other olde ghere the wiche is about in corners in the hows the wiche is valuyde	15s 11d½d
Item For sundry old Ryffe/raffa/ in the bakows and in	

the seller the wiche is valuyd	2s
Summa	27s 2d
M'd (sic) that thys bee the trew dettes the wiche bee comyng to the seyde Margaret Symonds.	
Item First and Formest Johnathan Sparrow off Leystoffte ocoith to the seyde Margarete Symonds	£3 6s 8d
Item Robard Mardot Howyth	37s 8d
Item the teniment that she dwellyth in is solde for	£10 10s
Summa	£15 14s 4d

In The Bakehows

Item a massche Patte (7) and a Oylying Patte	16d
Item a Kylar (8) and a fonnell (9)	6d
Item a Rommett and a knedyng tobbe	
Item a lytyll tobbe	6d
Item as many other tobbes as drawe with the tobby's before wryttyn	6s 9p
Item a trendylbedde (10) and a bourd	8d
Item a lowe boffet cheyr	1½d
Item 12 trenchurs and another lytyll cheyr	6d
Item 4 /olde/ coverlytts	2s 4d
Item a kaskett and 2 lytyll stolys	13d
Item 2 stolys	5d
Item a lytyll bourde	1½d
Item 2 olde leddyrs	6d
Item 13 Pyllows	4s 4d
Summa	18s 4d (actual total 19s 4d)

Sum Totalles £30 11s 8d

Item ther is /as/ mekyll (11) blake wolle as is valowde	2s 4d
Item Wylliam Stone howyth For a Comb (12) malt that he is smerte(?) for also he howyth in money	5s 8d
Item Rychard Younger howith	2s 8d
Item Robard Tomson howith	7d
Item Wylliam Boyght off Cley howyth for 1 yarde blanket	6d
Item Master Vycar howith for an hoxhede	8d
Summa	13s 7d
Item For an olde Cappe 2 pounds tallow and a kage	15d
Item For a styrke (13)	4s 4d
Item For pyllow byers	2s 8d

SHEET 3

JHESUS

In The Cham(b)er

Item In the north cham(ber) a presse	2s 8d
Item 2 poyn tyd clothys	12d
Item 2 olde chystes	16d
Item an olde tabyll and a peyer tressells an olde Forme	9d
Summa	5s 9d

In The South Cham(b)er

Item In the South cham(b)er a tabyll a peyer tressells	12d
Item a grete spruce chyste	3s 4d
Item an olde cheyher a lytyll coffyr	6d

Item 3 olde poyntyd clothys and a Forme		23d
	Summa	6s 9d
In The Grete Schop		
Item In the grate schoppe half a pound of saffron		5s
Item half a pound of pepyr and half a quarter		8½d
Item a quarter and half of Greynys		6d
Item 7 hespys (14) off yeolondes (15)		6d
Item 4 peyer off skdys (16) a peyer sherys a pressyng yryn and White thred		2s 10d
Item 7 yardys off bokram		2s 11d
Item 30 yardys off Canwas		7s 6d
Item 3 yardys and a half lynen cloth		20d
Item 9 yerdes off greycloth		4s
Item a remnant off hollande		8d
Item a yerde and 3 quarters canwas		6s
Item Grey thred		2½d
Item 7 shyrts		3s 6d
Item 3 cappys		18d
Item spyce bredes		1d
Item 2 bygons (sic) a chydys shyrte		6d
Item 2 chydys hapurnis		4d
Item 10 doseyn points		8d
Item 3 Grossys and a half off threden lasys		18d
Item 4 dosen threden points		4d
Item half a gross of recond threden points		3d
Item 2 boxys with covyrs and 3 with owte covyrs		12d
Item 2 hekylls (17)		2s
Item a lytyll tabyll		12d
Item 3 depyngs		4s
Item a pek and a half pek mesur		2d
Item 9 peyer trew bedys		4d
Item 3 qwayer off papyr		6d
Item in pynnys		6d
Item in nayles		20d
Item For tappys		3d
Item 2 Rownde tabylls		14d
Item a lyngffyssche		7d
	Summa	54s 4d
In The Lytyll Shop		
Item in the lytyll shop 6 balys and a half off flax		7s
Item in candyll half a hundredweight and 9 pounds		5s
Item For Maskys (18) For Cortshou and a stone hemp		12d
Item For threds and a bottell		7d
Item For Vynegyry		8d
Item 3 Skytte ffattes		6d
Item a lytyll tabyll and a peyer tressells		8d
Item 8 pounds and a half off passchylde hemp		10d
Item 2 pewter drynkyng potts		10d

- (1) latou or latten was in those days a type of brass. It now means steal plated with tin (tinplate).
- (2) coleyn = coaling. A coleyn pott is thus a coal scuttle.
- (3) presumably stoup or lade.
- (4) a lache (lech or lech) is a vessel for holding ashes to make lye for use as soap.
- (5) Written skaner. If skamer is intended, this is a skimmer.
- (6) Cobrou, presumably cauldron.
- (7) A mashfatte is a vat for boiling malt and water in the first stage of brewing.
- (8) Kylar is presumably keeler, which means a cooler used in brewing.
- (9) Tonnell = funnell.
- (10) a trendyl bedde may mean a trundle bed, that is, a low bed on wheels which we now call a truckle bed.
- (11) mekyll presumably means mickle or muckle i.e. much.
- (12) Comb or Coomb is a measure of 4 bushels.
- (13) Styrke. Bullock or heifer between 1 and 2 years old (stirk).
- (14) hespys, presumably moans hasps. A hasp was a definite measure of yarn, one quarter of a spindle.
- (15) the 'y' of yeolondes could be a 'yogh', in which case the word could be gerlands (garlands or galloons, meaning narrow braid).
- (16) skelys could be scales.
- (17) hokylls are presumably heckles which are flax combs.
- (18) Maskys and Cortshou could be curious spellings for kinds of cereal grain. For instance, maslin was a mixture of wheat and rye sown together.

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MR. A. WARD AND 6, NORWICH ROAD

by J. Huggett

One of the largest groups of objects presently exhibited in Lowestoft Museum is the shoemaker's display. The label accompanying it states that the former owner, a Mr. A. Ward, had a shop at 6, Norwich Road and on his retirement continued to repair shoes in a shed in his garden in Long Road until his death.

Doubt was cast upon this information during the last season by a visitor to the museum, Mr. Waller. He claim that Mr. A. Ward had not worked from 6, Norwich Road; instead the premises had been owned by a Mr. Clarke and later by a Mrs. Waller. This obviously required investigation and the Kelly's local directories were consulted, the results being given in Table 1.

TABLE 1 : Occupation of 6, Norwich Road

1900	Willie Pearson (Hairdresser and Fancy Repository)
1902	Willie Pearson (as above)
1908	----- (no entry)
1913	Thomas Guest (Bootmaker)
1914	Thomas Guest (Bootmaker)
1916	Daniel Clarke (Bootmaker)
1922	Daniel Clarke (Bootmaker)

1924	Daniel Clarke (Bootmaker)
1925	Daniel Clarke (Bootmaker)
1927	Daniel Clarke (Bootmaker)
1929	-----
1930	Elizabeth Camp (Private Resident)
1932	Edwin Eaton (Private Resident)
1933	-----
1934	Stanley Golder (Private Resident)
1936	Mrs. B.V. Waller (Draper)
1937	George V. Leech (Draper)
1938	George V. Leech (Draper)

1948 onward - property occupied by private residents.

Even allowing for the breaks in the record caused by the non-availability of some Kelly's directories, it would appear that on the face of it, Mr. Waller's claims are substantiated since Mr. A. Ward does not appear. Mr. Clarke and Mrs. Waller both had shops at 6, Norwich Road, but the only A. Ward recorded in Kelly's as a shoemaker is an Alexander Ward who had a shop at 81, Bevan Street, between c.1909 - 1921 at most and then disappeared from the record.

Apart from Alexander Ward, there are only three other 'A. Ward's': Mr. Alec Ward, Mr. Alonzo Ward and Mr. Alfred Ward, all of whom are recorded by Kelly's as being private residents. Mr. Alexander Ward is clearly not the A. Ward in question since the addresses do not match up and the presence of A. Ward, shoemaker, at 6, Norwich Road is confirmed by a number of bill-heads in the Museum display. The only additional piece of information about Mr. A Ward is that at some stage he lived in Long Road, since that is where the exhibits came from. This conveniently eliminates all of the remaining possible candidates except for Mr. Alec Ward – see Table 2.

TABLE 2 : Mr. Alec Ward in Lowestoft

1925	----- (no entry)
1927	2, St. Frances Terrace, Kirkley Run West
1936	2, St. Frances Terrace, Kirkley Run West
1938	53, Long Road
1948-9	45, Long Road
1970	45, Long Road

From Table 2, it appears that Alec Ward moved to Lowestoft in 1926-7 but if a link is to be suggested between Mr. A. Ward and Alec Ward a number of discrepancies have to be ironed out. There is no Mr. A. Ward recorded in Kelly's and yet there is clear evidence that at some time he did at least work from that address, even if he was not actually resident there. It is possible that he worked from a shed at the back of 6, Norwich Road, as was commonly done, and indeed, as he was later to do at Long Road. Alternatively, Mr. A. Ward may have leased the shop premises at 6, Norwich Road. From c.1928 to 1936 there was apparently no commercial activity at 6, Norwich Road (see Table 1) and it may be suggested that Mr. Ward may have leased the ground floor shop from the owner of the property who lived upstairs. In either case, since the owner of the premises was in occupancy, he or she appears in Kelly's directory and not Mr. A. Ward. The beginning of this period coincides with the time when Alec Ward arrives in Lowestoft (see Table 2).

On the available evidence therefore, it appears that Mr. A. Ward and Alec Ward are one and the same person. He came to Lowestoft around 1927, lived in St. Frances Terrace and worked from either the rear of 6 Norwich Road, or from the actual shop vacated by Daniel Clarke. It is not possible to say when he retired, but he later moved to Long Road where he continued to work from his shed until he died.

J. Huggett

THE DEFENCES OF LOWESTOFT

by Adrian G. Parker

For a County with a coast facing Europe, Suffolk has had few defences against invasion apart from its crumbling sandy cliffs or marshes. This paper aims to detail what is known of the defensive works at Lowestoft within the context of other Suffolk military coastal defences.

The Romans were a land power, who later needed forts to guard their harbours and to keep raiders off the 'Saxon Shore'. Their two fortified centres were Burgh Castle and Walton (Felixstowe). The only medieval castle on or near the coast is Orford, built in 1165 by the King to offset local baronial power. Dunwich and Ipswich were both port towns, with ditch and rampart surrounds in the early 13th century, but other medieval ports such as Southwold, Kessingland or Woodbridge seem to have had no defensive works at all. (1)

The regular use of gunnery demanded a quite different type of fort with low level batteries a new defensive strategies. Landguard Point at Felixstowe contains the only such fort in Suffolk, built as the mainspring of the defences of Harwich Haven. Landguard was first built in 1540-45, rebuilt in 1623, and again in 1717-20. By then it was a polygonal-fort with bastions, to which a central tower was added in 1875 and small concrete additions in 1940-41. Landguard was not disarmed finally until 1956 when the Coast Defence artillery stood down. (2)

During the Napoleonic War 103 Martello towers were built along the south eastern coasts of England. They were modelled on the Torre di Mortella in Corsica, and most of those in Suffolk date from 1810-12 (3) except apparently the Slaughden (Aldeburgh) tower of 1800-06. These towers were platforms for a single 24 Pounder gun and signals, but the larger Slaughden tower, at the end of the chain, had 4 guns on top and 5 in a battery in front. Although their use was short lived, some became coastguard stations, and were even garrisoned in 1914-18.

The greatest surge of concern about our coast defences was in the period 1856-1905, following the realisation of the technical advances of the French navy. Coast defence artillery was highly organised with regular, militia, and volunteer units but mainly concentrated around a few naval bases. The batteries around Harwich Haven were a very minor part of this strategy. (5)

The last series of defences were the hastily constructed emergency batteries in June - October 1940, often using guns scrapped by the Navy in the 1920s. Nine sites are listed in Suffolk by I.V. Hogg (1974), those in Waveney being at Lowestoft, Kessingland, Covehithe and Southwold. All were disarmed and mostly dismantled before 1945, but surely there must have been more than just four sites?

Lowestoft had defence works because Lothingland was an island between the coast and marshes and might be held as a bridgehead by an invader, in order to dominate Yarmouth and Norwich. The town itself had a wide shallow landing place in a broad anchorage between Ness Point and Pakefield. There was no harbour at all until 1831, and no town walls as in Yarmouth, or even ramparts.'

The first mention of a defensive structure is in Henry VIII's reign, and again in 1584 on a map drawn by the Committee for the defence of Lothingland against the Armada. A structure listed as 'The House' is shown on the Beach level, in line with Rant score, and was evidently a two storey blockhouse or gun platform. (6). Sixty years later, in 1643, a small number of Lowestoft citizens and nearby landowners skirmished briefly Oliver Cromwell; it was recorded that that they had cannon and chain, perhaps dragged Rant Score from the blockhouse?

During the 19th century a South Battery was built at Lowestoft, of Sodwork. I have not found when or why it was constructed, but in the 1770s assessment of the need for and state of existing defences began. In the case of Lowestoft, Col. Bramham reported on the East Coast in 1781. (7). The South Battery was in ruins, and had two 24 Pounders, six 18 Pounders and a dismounted 9 Pounder gun. At the north end of town were two 24 Pounders and three 12 Pounder guns, dismounted, and six gun carriages at St. Margaret's Church. 'These guns having laid upon the ground for many years and some of them buried; I conceive them not proper to be made use of without being proved again.' Col. Bramham concluded 'that Lothingland should be fortified for the defence of Norwich and the shipping lanes. At Pakefield he reported two 18 Pounder guns on standing carriages, but sunk about 2ft. into the ground without platforms. 'I imagine them to be serviceable as they have already been made use of against Privateers that have appeared in the offing.' This position - wherever it was before the extensive erosion at Pakefield in the 1840-1930 period - commanded the entrance to the Yarmouth Roads (sea-lanes) at the Stamford Buoy.

The report must have been acted on immediately, because a South Fort and East and North Batteries

were built in 1782. About 1790 Richard Powles, a painter at the Lowestoft china factory, drew beautiful scaled plans of these batteries for a book compiled by Isaac Gillingwater. (8). The South Fort was the Coastguard Cottages site at Battery Green roundabout in the town centre. This Fort, or 'Redout' (sic), was built by Col. Debbieg RE on land rented from Mr. Gooch's estate (The Grove); the land was called Maiden Acre or Gun Piece, and the loan is dated 3 April 1782. (9). The North Battery was clearly on the nose of Bellevue Park, the site of, the present Royal Naval Patrol Service Memorial. The East (or Beach) Battery was on the North Denes at the water edge, directly to the east of Ravine Score.

Further details emerge in 1803, when a Lieut. J.T. Jones RE reported on the condition of the Lowestoft batteries. (10). After 20 years the Beach Battery had been severely eroded and had collapsed about 1799; he found it dismantled and within 30 yards of the normal High Water Mark. He considered it a desirable position to maintain, if rebuilt farther back, since it commanded the Yarmouth Roads. Powles' plans show that it was a full-scale hexagonal earthwork, the guns paired in three positions to fire south, east south east, and north east, a small guardhouse and a magazine. After 17 years it was gone, and the last mention of this site exists in an 1830 Bill of Sale (11), where a 'North Battery' is marked on the Denes as a shallow crescent shape with a guardhouse – possibly Jones' emergency battery.

The North (or Cliff) Battery was very small, ½ mile from the sea, described as being 'en barbette' (i.e. a high, open level) with 4 guns. It covered an arc from north east round to due south, and had an earthwork front but an open back and a magazine house to the west.

This area was known as North End Common, but was laid out as Bellevue Park in 1874, planted as an arboretum, and a bandstand replaced the Battery, destroying any traces which were left. The cannon which are now there will be discussed below.

The South Fort in 1803 was being repaired in Lieut. Jones report, but was almost a square shape 200 x 220 ft., enclosed with a well palisaded ditch and glacis (open firing slope) to the east. There were four faces with 12 guns; in the 1782 plan there were 13 gun positions – 5 to the south/south by west, 5 firing south east, and 3 to the east north east, covering the Stamford Channel, the landing place, beach and channel. Lowestoft Bay, across to Pakefield, was said to be otherwise undefended.. Within the Fort was a guardhouse, magazine and furnaces (for red hot shot). This battery remained in evidence throughout the nineteenth century, in 1811 (9); 1830, when the fort was sketched only as the crescent-shaped ramparts of the eastern and southern faces (11); 1837 (12), shown as in 1811; and 1866, no gun positions were shown and development has crept up on the west side, with Marine Terrace and the British School marked. (13). An 1872 engraving by Rock and Co, still seems to show low ramparts and the glacis, although there is a footpath through the east side. (14)

By this time the fortification was of no use owing to the construction of the harbour works right across the southerly arc of fire, whilst the Waveney Dock, North Pier, and extensive scattered buildings in the Beach Village increasingly obstructed most of the easterly arcs (15). Once it dominated the anchorage and the landing place; now it was a relic in a public open space. On 16 March 1880 the Army transferred the property to the Admiralty (16), Lowestoft was a fishery Protection Naval-Station), who passed it internally to H.M. Coastguard, at that time a branch of the Navy. Probably very little work was needed to reduce the low earthworks gun positions, and in 1880 the present row of Coastguard Cottages was built with the west side of the fort. Since 1981 even the cottages have been sold and only rooms for the Royal Naval Auxiliary Service and the Auxiliary Coastguard remain. The perimeter of the compound is, however, very similar to that of the original fort, except that the 1890 Ordnance Survey Map (17) shows the northern boundary to have been alongside the footpath from Old Nelson Street to Marine Terrace and it thus included the Telephone Repeater site. The battery image of the Battery Green car park is only misplaced by the width of a road.

Nor have all traces of these defences disappeared in one respect. In Bellevue Park are three cannon and gun carriages, and at the Lowestoft Museum is a fourth. These were all found at the Council's Smith's Marsh (Rotterdam Road) depot in September 1970 and were later restored by local firms and mounted on authentic pattern of naval gun carriage copied from those at Southsea Castle, Portsmouth. (18) The details of the guns are as follows – all are muzzle loaded smooth bore.

No. 86190 – dated 1831; length 8ft; desined by Gen. Miller, Inspector of Artillery 1827-33; 48 cwt; 32 Pdr; cast by Carson Ironfounders.

No. 965 – dates from 1843; length 8ft: designed by Mr. Monk, Chief Clerk of the Gun Factories in 1838, and known as Monk 'C'; 42 cwt; 32 Pdr; gun; cast by Walker Company.

No. 2206 – date 1831; length 9ft 6ins; designed by Col Dundas in 1847; 58 cwt; 32 Pdr; Cast by Walker Co. C.J.N. Trollope says this must be one of the last smoothbore guns ever cast; the hole drilled in the right side is for an improved form of sighting. Used commonly on land service.

At the Museum, on present information, the cannon is a Minion largest of c.1685-1710, with a 3.25 bore, firing a ball of 3 inches diameter and 3lb.12oz. weight. (19)

At least one other gun in the town is a complete stray. At the Maritime Museum is a small gun which was in fact rescued from the top of a tomb in St. Margaret's Churchyard. It is a carronade and of Russian origin, a Crimean War Souvenir (1856); the tomb is recorded as being that of Sgt. John Hargreaves, a veteran who became the Artillery Volunteers instructor and died in 1867. (20)

I am particularly indebted to Mr. Chris Trollope of Fingringhoe, Essex, who rushed into the Museum late one Saturday in May 1983 and whose enthusiasm and knowledge swept me into helping him explore these local remains.

Adrian G. Parker Jan. 1984

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- (14) Rock and Co. 1872 : Marine Terrace, Battery Green and Bath House, Lowestoft. See *Lowestoft Then and Now: J. Rose and H. Lees.*
- (15) See W.F. Wren. *East Coast Ports.* (Terence Dalton, Lavenham 1978)
- (16) Source C.J.N. Trollope.
- (17) Ordnance Survey : First edition 25 ins:1 mile. (Lowestoft Central Library).
- (18) Information: Gerald Sykes, Principal Building Surveyor, Waveney District Council.
- (19) All technical information: C.J.N. Trollope, Fingringhoe, Colchester.
- (20) Lowestoft Archaeological and Local History Society: Monthly Newsletter May 1976.

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LOWESTOFT 'GRANDFATHER' CLOCKS

by Chas. G. Chambers

(Extract from the 1929/30 Annual Report of the Lowestoft Literary and Scientific Association, by permission of the Secretary).

Famous in song and story, the Grandfather Clock still holds our affections. The sight of its majestic form and the sound of its solemn 'tick tock' have power to awaken memories of days when, as children we watched rapturously a gently-rocking, full-rigged ship on its dial or a windmill slowly turning as the heavy pendulum swung to and fro, while the little hand marked jerkily each second of time. Then there were some on which Old Father Time himself swung his scythe, or the moon and the stars moved through some erratic orbit of their own.

These historic time-keepers are treasured, perhaps, even more now than ever. The power of the dollar has drawn many of the finest to America, and really good specimens which are still as originally constructed and have not been 're-assembled', fetch high prices.

Most clocks have a maker's name and the town of origin showing on the dial, and I have a list of nearly two hundred clockmakers of East Anglia whose names appear on Grandfather Clocks, including seventy Suffolk names, many specimens still in existence bear on their faces the names of villages which seem to us now to be too insignificant to contain a clockmaker. This suggests that the mechanical part was obtained from large makers in London and elsewhere, and that only the cases were made locally. The cases are generally of the best workmanship, and were probably made by the same village craftsmen who were responsible for the fine old chairs, tables etc., which can still be found, fortunately in many East Anglian homes. In a few instances the name of the case-maker has been found inside the body, and there is reason to believe that a case-maker sometime made the cases for several different clockmakers in his immediate locality.

Sometimes the cases were exported to the Far East, to China or Japan, in order to be lacquered and decorated. There is a magnificent specimen of this work in Kirkley which has been in the possession of one family for a very long time. The owner has told me of a tradition in the family that the clock case was away three years altogether. One year was occupied by the voyage out, of course in a sailing ship in those days; for one year it was in the hands of the eastern craftsmen, and one year was occupied by the voyage home. This particular clock bears on its dial the inscription: 'Thomas Clarkson, Hermitage', No other place of origin shows, but its family associations, and from the fact that The Hermitage was a Beccles place-name, it can possibly be allocated to that town. Another specimen in Kirkley, in professional hands, has a stained and faded record pasted inside the body giving dates and various interesting details of the two voyages.

I have met with specimens of Grandfather Clocks bearing the names of six Lowestoft clockmakers, viz:-

- | | |
|--------------|----------------------|
| (1) - Clarke | (4) Richard Furrance |
| (2) E. Crake | (5) Simon Norman |
| (3) E. Davey | (6) B. Watson |

Probably others exist but they have not come under notice.

The clock by Clarke is in the possession of Mr. H.J. Dack of Harrow, a native of Lowestoft. It was formerly the property of Mr. Timothy Sterry, one of the last of Lowestoft's twine-spinners. There were sixteen twine-spinning grounds in Lowestoft as late as 1840.

The specimen by E. Crake bears that name on the dial but has no town name. It can, however, be allocated to Lowestoft on knowledge of the clock's history. There was a Crake, watchmaker and jeweller, in Lowestoft for many years, and until recent times.

With regard to E Davey it may be pointed out that the name Davey or Davy appears several times in the list of East Anglian Clockmakers.. There was, for instance, a Samuel Davy at Norwich, a Robert at Aylsham, and an Elijah at Yarmouth. Specimens from each of these are in the locality. It is believed that the Yarmouth clockmaker, if not the others, was related to the Lowestoft Davey. Mr. W.A. Dutt at Carlton Colville has a clock bearing the name of Elijah Davy. A watchmaker and jeweller is still practising that trade at Yarmouth.

E. Davey is also said to have been employed at the Lowestoft China Factory. His name does not appear in the list of workmen set out in Spelman's 'Lowestoft China', but that list is known to be incomplete. A fine specimen bearing the name of E. Davey and the town name 'Lowestoft' was, until 1923, in the possession of Mr. William Brown, the well known 'Grandfather' expert at Oulton Broad.

The painted dial of this clock had the familiar roses and floral emblems in each of the spandrils, and also in the semi-circular space above the dial, and these were undoubtedly painted by someone familiar with the Lowestoft China designs. The painting of clock faces was carried on as a side line of business at the China Factory, and this particular dial was probably decorated there. This clock, instead of being in the Town Hall or the Public Library, as it should be, is now in Bermuda.

Furrance is an unusual name, but the spelling is quite clear on the specimen seen. The name occurs in other Lowestoft records, and will also be found in the 18th Century admission of Freeman at Great Yarmouth.

A Simon Norman, watchmaker, is mentioned in the oldest Lowestoft Directory I have seen, dated 1794. He is the only one of the trade referred to in that year. The only 'Grandfather' bearing the name of Simon Norman which I have examined had the town name spelled 'Lowestoffe'. The face was most delicately painted with flowers, and with strawberries in the spandrils.

I have no information with regard to B. Watson, but a clock bearing this name is at Oulton Broad.

Editor 2009 Note: A clock made by J. Clarke can be seen in the Lowestoft Museum.

LOWESTOFT TOWN HALL CLOCK

by Adrian Parker

Although the Lowestoft Town Hall dates from 1856 and 1900, the mechanism of the clock in its tower may well be the oldest machinery in the town.

Mrs. Hood has provided me with an extract from the Annual Report of the Lowestoft Literary and Scientific Association, 1929-30, – an article by C.G. Chambers on Lowestoft Grandfather Clocks, – which promoted me to enquire further at the Town Hall.

In 1678 the Town Chamber and Corn Cross was rebuilt at the Town Hall site, after falling into disrepair. On the first floor of the building was a chapel of ease to St. Margaret's Church, more conveniently situated for the town itself, and presumably the Manorial Trustees (1795-1810) and the Improvement Commissioners (1810-85) met there. Projecting from the first floor was a beam with an hour dial clock; this was made in 1698 by Isaac Blowers of Beccles and cost £20, plus £2-13s-6d for the frame and fixing.

In 1840 a minute hand and the necessary motion wheels were added. In 1850 Mr. Naylor, a Lowestoft watchmaker, repaired the clock and put in a new escapement and escapement and two brass train wheels in place of the iron ones. At the same time Childs of Southwold fitted an illuminated dial, a new frame or drum and a new beam. However, the Town Chamber was pulled down in 1854, and the clock without its beam was placed in a new turret in 1856.

In 1879 the clock was repaired and overhauled by John Bonsall of Pier Terrace, Lowestoft, and later placed in its present position in the Town Hall clock tower built in 1898-1900. Since then it has apparently been overhauled in 1924, and in 1982 by John Smith and Son, Derby. The clock is wound twice weekly, because the weights tend to stick on the pulley if it is fully wound weekly. The 1850 escapement gear actually seems to work in the reverse of the expected manner! The four faces of the clock show a time variation of four minutes owing to the slackness of the final gearing. Nevertheless for a clock with parts which are basically between 134 and 285 years old, not bad going.

FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE BONSALE FAMILY

by Barbara Turner

Mr. Peter Bonsall, now of Norwich, grandson of the John Bonsall referred to in Adrian Parker's history of the Town Hall clock, tells me that his grandfather maintained the clock of St. John's church until his death about 1920. After this, his father, also John, and his uncle, Ernest Bonsall, carried on the maintenance from their shop in Pier Terrace. His father set up a separate business as an optician in London Road North in the early 1930s, but Ernest Bonsall also moved to London Road North where Samuels now is. Mr. Bonsall thinks that his uncle continued with the clock until his death in the air-raid of January 1942 which demolished Boots, Waller's and Bonsall's jewellery business in London Road North among others.

The late Percy Loose and the late Albert Jarvis, employees of Ernest Bonsall, were involved in the clock maintenance.

Albert Jarvis took over Ernest Bonsall's business and, until his retirement, traded under the name of Bonsall's in Suffolk Road, a business which when Mr. Jarvis retired in 1972 was 97 years old.

MORE WINTER SEARCHING

by Paul Durbidge

During the hot summer months of 1983 the majority of weekends were spent digging on the Romano British settlement at Brampton, Norfolk, under the direction of Dr. K. Knowles. From this idyllic location a considerable amount of material was recovered in a comparatively short season. The sheer volume and types of pottery encountered will undoubtedly be of considerable help for identification purposes when material is discovered within our own vicinity, as the variation of types and fabric is a wide one.

With the beginning of the winter months thoughts turned from Brampton to the open ploughland of our own area, with the possibility of fieldwalking on both new and confirmed locations which over the early years produced much of the museum's collections.

One such venue is Covehithe, which is always worth a visit and an area I have a great affection for after spending much time slowly uncovering its early history.

On a frosty morning I arrived there just as dawn was breaking and after leaving the car near the church proceeded towards the southern end of the cliffs. Walking along the cliff top the air smelled crisp and fresh, there was considerable wildlife with two large formations of Canada Geese flying overhead, then turning and dropping to the fields beside Cove Broad. These sociable birds are an enjoyable sight at any time and can often be seen on Benacre Broad, where they frequently rest and preen after feeding on the salt marsh and estuaries. Leaving the cliff edge for the small frost covered trackway to Green Heath, the bracken and gorse still lay under a coating of frost which was slowly being highlighted by the weak rays of the early sun. On the heath several Chaffinches and Blackbirds were busy foraging for any food they could find amongst the bracken, while amongst the gorse bushes smaller insect eating birds were busy darting about after any insects or grubs they might be lucky enough to find. At the cliff edge the trackway suddenly terminated in a jagged tear, where the sea had brought down a sizable amount of cliff and heath including the path, which now lay in distorted heaps on the beach below. Large clumps of gorse, which make up part of the heath, lay scattered with heavy lumps of clay and other debris over a wide area of the beach, while great mats of vegetation hung like blankets over the cliff top, held together by entwined masses of bracken roots.

From the beach it was possible to see the exposed remains of war time trenches and pits showing clearly in the cliff face, some being quite large and containing barbed wire and other forms of war time hardware.

For many years now erosion at Covehithe has been a serious problem, reaching maximum destruction during 1979 when in excess of 70 feet was recorded from three separate locations in the space of one year. Continued yearly measurements have revealed a marked decline at the northern end of the cliff line, but a sharp increase towards Green Heath at the southern end. Already a noticeable bay has been cut in to the heath and when the yearly measurements are taken in March 1984, fresh fixed points will have to be set up in at least three locations and probably a fourth at Easton Wood, where again the change in erosion is now resulting in sizable falls after high tides.

This is also an area used extensively by the army during the war years, with the remains of two concrete pill boxes now lying angled on the beach, occasionally remains of drains and slit trenches appear at the top of the cliff, as well as scaffold poles and sheets of corrugated iron. A number of concrete tank blocks buried after the war years have now spilled down to the beach, with the remainder perched precariously at the top of the cliff and poised to fall, some with the date of their construction showing clearly where it had been scratched in the wet cement.

At the lower levels of this stretch of cliff there is a shelly crag deposit containing countless amounts of crumbly shells, these deposits have been uncovered to a depth of four feet or more before they gradually slope, then disappear below the present level of beach. Amongst the shells are fragments of

mineralised fish bone and vertebra, with occasional finds of circular teeth again from fish, some being rigid suggesting a shell fish diet. The age of these crag deposits are, as natural history goes, comparatively recent being in the region of a million and a half years old, but even so they are of considerable interest and at the time of writing fragments of shells from these deposits lay scattered along the entire stretch of beach after being washed out by sea action.

For several years this same sea action had uncovered the majority of the archaeological features at Covehithe, but now with the shift in erosion it is likely that any further falls in the cliff will be as a result of surface water draining over the edge, this will not be very frequent. Beach walking has on several occasions produced small finds of material from pottery, bead, bronze and several coins. I was fortunate this particular morning to pick up part of a bronze key. It was the greater part of a small hollow stemmed casket type, of medieval character, with a circular bow and although the ward was missing, it was a pleasant discovery. Four other keys have come from this location, including two other casket types and two badly corroded iron forms from a well shaft and a medieval pit during the early part of 1981.

During the winter months ploughland with its well weathered surfaces is always a challenge, providing permission has first been obtained from the land owner. Visual searching on ploughland can be and frequently is a cold and sometimes wet pastime when one is caught in a sudden wintry shower in the middle of a large field, it is a situation I have endured on several occasions for a pocket full of flints.

It was such a situation at Kessingland a short time ago when my daughter joined me searching one particular field, surface conditions were good with small worked flint blades being recovered, when as an addition to the biting wind, steady driving rain began to systematically soak the pair of us. Sometimes this sharpens the resolve to find partially hidden implements in the soil, frequently satisfaction is obtained when the earth is wiped off a trimmed tool or flake, while the discovery of a really finely worked object is an added bonus in the severe conditions.

As one would expect more material comes to light each year, like the lovely little flake axe from the Whitton estate and the remains of a much larger type found in the vicinity of Royal Avenue. This particular specimen had been made from a well figured piece of light brown flint and although broken, evidence of grinding and polishing was visible on its surfaces, suggesting its purpose was designed for forest clearance. Grinding and polishing on quartzite blocks was common during the Neolithic and Bronze Age periods, the process had also been applied to a small core axe recovered in clay from Corton Long Lane early last year. Lying undisturbed for a considerable period of period of time, the cutting edge of the implement was unblemished, showing the perfection of flint working during these periods. Even to the inexperienced eye implements of this form are reasonably obvious, but what of the remaining industry, countless amounts of small finds must still lie on the surface of many of our fields awaiting discovery. Continued fieldwork will in time reveal more temporary camps and possible other settlements, to compare with Manor Farm Kessingland, where over a period of a few years a mass of flint industry was encountered after continual searching.

Twisted metal of brass colour and in the shape of a bracelet is quite naturally of some interest when found on ploughland and thoughts do turn to the possibility of ancient origins. Such an object was shown to me after it had been found in the vicinity of Bloodmoor Hill and although it did appear old, the small turned ends of the bracelet did not appear quite right some how, it later transpired that it was of Indian or near eastern origin and nearer the 19th or 20th century in date, much to the disappointment of the finder. Nevertheless it is as well to keep an open mind on many of the metal objects recovered from ploughland, even if they are small and in many cases appear relatively modern, as appearances can be very misleading at times.

Over the years Romano British material has tended to be thin on the ground, but over the last couple of years or so more is beginning to emerge along with bronze finds including coinage. Of the pottery encountered near Wrentham, most can be attributed to the 2nd and 3rd centuries by reason of the varying types and also the undercut rim profiles, burnishing was visible on a number of sherds, the patterns copying the black burnished ware of Dorset during the 2nd and 3rd centuries. Later searching in the same location produced additional pottery, of brown coated beaker fragments, which may have originated from either North Suffolk or Colchester in the late 2nd or 3rd century A.D.

A number of plain fragments of the red gloss Samian ware were recovered along with rim and base forms, including part of a 2nd century bowl, probably form 18/31 and the base of a cup of form 33, the underside bearing a graphite, probably the owners name, while the upper side bears the stamp of the potter Macrini who worked in Lezoux between 120 and 180 A.D. Excursions into buff fabric were

limited to part of a base and neck of a late 2nd century round body flagon and a small piece of mortaria studded with iron stone grits. Another fragment of mortaria was a rim of orange fabric coated with a white slip, while a third fragment consisted of a comparatively soft reddish buff texture containing a hotch potch of mixed grits, suggesting a local manufacture by reason of its inferior quality. Remains of building debris were few and include small pieces of worn red brick and also remains of flue tiles in orange fabric, but whether these were found in their place of origin is open to opinion. The spot where all the pottery was found is a relatively small area, subsequent searches radiating outwards have only produced small sherds of medieval pottery, a scatter of Neolithic button scrapes and flakes, the latter being well represented in this particular location.

Just over a year ago more Romano British pottery was discovered at Gisleham during building work, when a number of grey rim and body sherds were picked up during initial ground work. The most impressive discovery was made when a service trench came on to the broken remains of a large grey coarseware vessel just a little way beneath the ground surface. After cleaning the broken sherds the vessel was pieced together, the small base and overall profile complete with simple decoration, suggested an early Roman form. The sharply sloping nature of this location has over the years resulted in a build up of top soil in the lower region of the plot, several of the later finds of pottery were encountered much deeper than the original discoveries.

Quite naturally, when the foundations were dug for the house it was hoped that more material would be discovered, but this was confined to a very small patch of burnt earth containing carbon fragments in which was found another 1st century grey rim form. Another profile was later found well down in the side of a second service trench a short distance away, although this and several other sherds retained sharp edges, the finds appeared well scattered. Visual searching at the top end of the plot revealed more pottery, this time of medieval date, but again a very thin scatter which also included post medieval sherds and fragments of salt glazed stoneware. A number of flakes were picked up halfway down the plot and although some appeared damaged, evidence of trimming was visible on at least three quarters of them, with one being flaked for use as a scraper. As a result of field searches carried out toward the latter part of 1976 we know from the amount of flint industry recovered during early field walking on land close to the marshland, that the early hunters of the Mesolithic and also some of the later Neolithic settlers, were probably living and hunting in the adjacent area.

It is quite likely that other settlers followed these early beginnings, remains of their occupation still await discovery, which makes the recent finds at Gisleham so interesting with their 1st century date and Iron Age influence shown in the style of the large pot. During the initial part of the Roman period small circular dwellings were much in evidence, often being sited where forest had been cleared, in some cases close to Iron Age farmsteads.

It is possible this may have been the situation at Gisleham, but it is unlikely we will learn much more from this particular location because of the depth of soil, but no doubt as time progresses additional material will be discovered which may have some connection, already at the time of writing two small coins thought to be Iceni have already been found on high ground a comparatively short distance away.

Paul Durbidge February 1984

'A GRAND OCCASION'

by J. Love

'Time marches on' as that raucous voiced commentator would conclude the American 'The March of Time' series on world affairs to cinemagoers from 1934 to the late forties. With today's diminishing cinema audience, together with man's inexhaustible quest for new forms of entertainment at home, let us take a trip backwards in time when the whole family would go out two or three, or even more times a week, for that grand occasion, a visit to the cinema.

Imagine walking round an average town, during those decades of the thirties, forties and fifties, stopping to view the still cases of between five and seven halls dedicated to the art of the cinema when it was the most popular form of family entertainment. In the mornings, fascinating aromas pervaded from the opened exit doors of the auditorium, the chars scrubbing away at the rubber tiles on the floors of the foyers, whilst, high up in the projection room, the last link in the chain to present the finished product from the studios, the projectionists, would be busy cleaning the big machines and checking

their equipment for that day's performance.

Many of those cinemas are today recognised as monuments of architectural triumph, but apart from the larger neon-lit super palaces, there were buildings that were not specifically designed for the purpose – not unlike the 'Bijou', from that excellent film, 'The Smallest Show on Earth'. This is the story of one of them, typical of the many that mushroomed in that era to provide entertainment for the ordinary person who was seeking perhaps to escape from everyday life for a while.

This particular hall started its life in 1897 as a roller skating rink and boxing arena, then later on it became an indoor swimming pool. For the new venture of cinematograph exhibition in 1920, the name 'Grand' was selected in a competition from these refinements then advertised for Lowestoft's newest cinema; 'Electric air cleaning', 'Greatest ease and comfort in viewing', 'Music pipe organ, and full orchestra under the leadership of Mr. Harry Cattermull', 'Most up to date films with no expense spared, also dancing in Cafe connected by covered way', Prices of admission, 3d., 6d. and one shilling.

The opening programme, as advertised in the local Journal for that 7th August 1920, was Mr. Patrick Campbell's greatest drama, 'The 13th Chair', also 'The Lone Defender'. Other attractions noted for that month were 'Stella Maris', with Mary Pickford and Conway Tearle, booked for the first three days of August 28th week, whilst on the Thursday, Friday and Saturday, 'Jane Eyre', a stupendous Italian drama would thrill its audiences. An ex patron recalling memories of that time remembers 'selling papers for the admission price to see Elmo Lincoln in 'The Masked Rider', that also on the screen would appear songs printed large to sing to, one in particular being 'I've never seen a straight banana'. However, that old demon time was still marching on, with the advent of sound just under a decade away to ring the death knell for the silent accompanist, but many more masterpieces of silent film art were still to be screened in cinemas up and down the country, including Chaplin's 'The Gold Rush', 1925, whilst the spectacular 'Ben Hur', 1926, with Ramon Novarro and Francis X Bushman was reissued in 1931 with sound effects, and that master of disguise, Lon Chaney, was to send a chill down the spine as the grotesque 'Phantom of the Opera' and 'Hunchback of Notre Dame', these and many others are considered classics today.

On October 29th 1929, the 'Grand' screened its first 'talkie', Al Jolson in 'Sonny Boy', and was now well established as a popular family place of entertainment. In 1930 prices of admission were 4d., 6d., and 9d.

Shortly after the turn of this decade I was to become introduced to this world of reality and imagination; regular weekly visits to the 'Grand' and other cinemas in the town, Saturday afternoon matinee's at the 'Hippodrome' I recall with particular relish, a noisy affair especially with Tom Mix or Flash Gordon providing the action.

At the age of fourteen, schooling duly completed, my footsteps led me to the 'Grand' hopefully asking for a position in the 'box', but with this fully staffed I accepted an offer as a page boy on condition that I could transfer when a vacancy occurred in the little room with the glass portholes that fascinated me so. Time progressed, I became a trainee projectionist, the year was 1941 and in common with other cinemas we carried on providing essential escapism from the stark realities of war time life, the air raids bringing some moments of fear with bombs dropping in the town, making the big black machines shudder momentarily, but luckily retaining that steady rhythm and clattering on.

Most programmes consisted of a feature film, a second feature, a comedy two reeler featuring Laurel and Hardy perhaps, cartoon, the Universal newsreel, and of course the trailers for the forthcoming attractions, and adverts, a show of three hours or more. Seats were 9d., one and sixpence, two shillings and threepence, and the top price three shillings per person for the big settee underneath the projection room at the back of the hall, these being very popular with courting couples. Notable films of that time shown at the 'Grand' were 'The Four Feathers'; 'Grapes of Wrath', and '49th Parallel'.

The owner manager would be in his office painting some posters for the many billboards that were dotted around the town and surrounding villages. He certainly was a jack of all trades in the business, and on cold winter nights in the foyer (which in its silent screen time had been the cafe and had echoed to the shuffling feet of dancing couples), an enormous coal fire would be burning in a large old-fashioned fireplace to welcome the patrons and to cheer them on their way home through darkened streets; no garish neon signs (that had to be kept off due to black out restrictions), for the 'Grand' simply did not possess any at that time to illuminate its glass canopied frontage. Christmas time was extra special, with programmes chosen to reflect the period and the wood panelled foyer decorated and including a large tree, giving a unique homely effect, the 'Guvnor' forsaking his usual plus fours to

don evening dress.

However, just off the foyer in an outhouse reigned 'Jenny', a large generator embedded in the concrete floor, thundering and whining away, together with a convertor and battery charger; the numerous old dials and switches made this place look something like Frankenstein's laboratory, but its purpose was to provide the 'Grand' with its lighting and arc lamps supply because the south end of town where the hall was situated had not yet been converted to alternating current.

Being an independent hall, in contrast to the chain circuit cinemas, the 'Grand' did not have the pick of the first releases, but the output of the studio then was such as to give us a winner or two and it would be wonderful after a few days screenings for the word of mouth to spread through the town: queues would start to form and by the end of the week we would pack them in for standing room only; the elation to a member of staff can only be described as being on parallel to applause for the entertainer. However, the image on the screen, the ability of the storyline to grip one's attention, that was the most important reason that the public had heard that a certain film was good or outstanding, and they wanted to come and see for themselves.

Of course, there were many poor offerings from all sources, but now even some of these have attained a cult status; a second feature, 'The Man with the Magnetic Eyes', a British Foundation production with Henry Norman and Jean Carter, was about a detective posing as a playboy to catch the head of a spy ring. It was considered by the staff and the 'Guvnor', who always watched the first run through on a Monday, to be so awful, that he withdrew it from further showing and substituted a standby film that was held in reserve in case of transport difficulties.

The two black projectors behind the glass portholes were a 'Kalee' 8, a British Machine, and a German 'Ernemann' 5, both giving years of faithful service, each holding a reel with capacity of two thousand feet of film, giving an approximate running time of twenty minutes before a change-over. The sound system was 'Western Electric' on universal base; hand fed arc lamps and an ancient slide lantern completed the equipment. There was no dimmer for the main house lights, just an on-off switch and when, for effect we wanted to colour the titles of a black and white film, a homemade wooden wheel containing coloured strips of gelatine would be held in front of the lens of the other projector running without film, as we did not have any footlights on the small stage.

Buckets of dry sand, and an asbestos fire blanket were also to hand in the 'box', for some nitrate stock was still with us (safety was just filtering in), and reactions had to be very swift indeed on the part of the projectionist in shutting off the arc lamp dowsers should a breakdown occur with the former, particularly if splices hadn't been properly checked whilst rewinding; however, we were to become very proficient remaking these by hand, using scissors and a safety razor blade to cut and scrape the film – it was a rare occasion to receive a 'green', or new print. So the 'Grand' carried on with all its very basic amenities, in common with all the many small independently owned cinema up and down the country, providing family entertainment, an opportunity for an outing, to sit in the warm darkness, to be taken out of one's self for a while, to relax and to enter another world.

We were to have a personal appearance to coincide with the screening of 'Dark Secret', a British film made in 1949 starring Dinah Sheridan, who was actually to be present on our small stage, what excitement! The 'Grand' had by then been taken over by a small group of cinemas based in London, and the manager, a young energetic Frenchman, had arranged it and inspired the whole staff with his boundless enthusiasm. Great improvisation was called for, the main problem; we possessed no spotlight, but this would be finally overcome by using the slide lantern, cutting a small hole in a piece of tin plate the size of the slide, then tilting the lantern to front centre stage; however, we were unable to move it in a horizontal position.

Came the great day, and everything passed off quite well with Dinah Sheridan talking about the film, the story of an ex-pilot's wife obsessed by the murder of their cottage's previous tenant; we were also told about her then young children, one of whom, Jenny, in later years would turn out to be an actress in her own right. That visit was certainly a highlight for the 'Grand', and although that film today may not be remembered as anything of significance, Dinah Sheridan would be going on to more noteworthy productions such as the memorable 'Genevieve'.

The 'Grand' was to carry on for a decade or so more with most of its loyal staff: 'Bunny', Mr. Bunn, the Head Doorman, an elderly retired sea dog – I always carry a mental picture of him marching around the hall during the evening's performance holding aloft a large brass syringe, spraying all and sundry with the essence of carnations; to them all I shall always be grateful for passing on to me their knowledge. The unique atmosphere of that era has now gone, the personalities of the silver screen,

stars and character players many of whom have aged and passed on, are, however, still with us in a state of celluloid immortality as we view the products from that time being shown on television; recalling those bygone days, perhaps of the gales of laughter coming up from a packed house below the flickering beams, or the emotion of rapt attention from an audience as a gripping drama unfolded on the far away screen.

Our interest in the world of cinematic art will never die for there is always some fresh facet to explore and excite the mind; the work of a certain director, the silent screen perhaps, a star, special effects, the musical score. Yet sadly due to the passage of time, unlike the films that have on the whole survived, many of the old buildings that gave stalwart duty as cinemas have gone; but some still remain to this day, including my 'Grand' which is being used as a local leisure centre. I must go back one day before it's too late, just to see the old place again and to relive my happy times in the shadows of yesterday's cinema.

Editors Footnote:

Mr. Love tells us that if his memory serves him correctly the 'Guvnor' referred to in this article was Mr. R.J. Atherton.

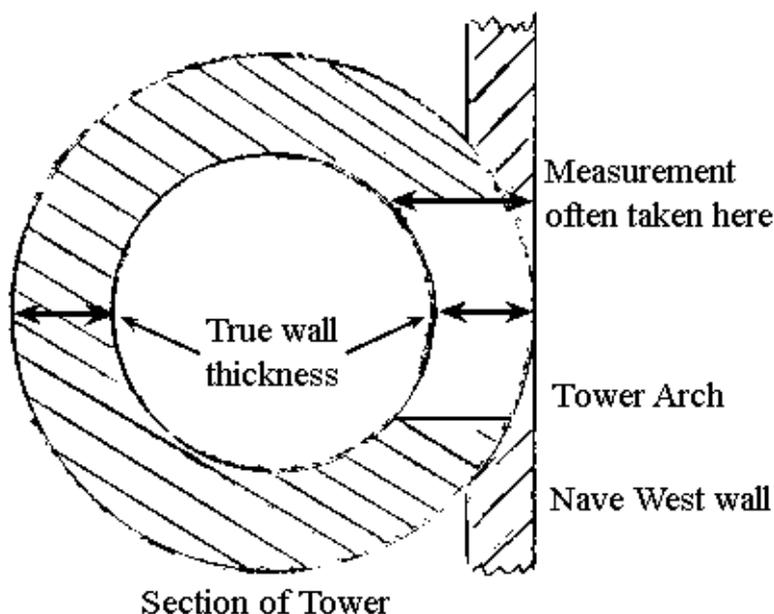
TOWERLESS CHURCHES

by W.J. Goode

We have all read about the East Anglian Defence or Watch Towers that were built of Flints and stood solitary along the waterways of Norfolk and Suffolk. The present article is aimed at discussing the whys and wherefores and the possibility of these stories being accurate or otherwise.

After all the magazine stories and Munro Cautley's assertions that East Anglia's Round Towers were not originally Church Towers, but built in isolation to serve as Defence or Watch Towers against the Viking raiders, it may come as a shock to learn otherwise. I soon became convince that these unique towers had been erroneously called Defence Towers for so long, because no one had been interested enough to study them fully. Everyone it seemed were only too ready to accept what had been said before without question.

Being convinced myself however, is far from proving my point. The accepted theory for over 150 years was that these Flint Towers were built for defensive purposes against the Viking raiders. The churches, we were told, were built later, and of wood until the 'Norman Conquest. The first challenge to this theory must surely be:- if the use of mortar was known in East Anglia in 350 A.D. the date of Burgh Castle, (and we know the strength of that mortar), was is this knowledge ever lost? Next, when these circular towers were built to a height of 35 ft, why were churches built of WOOD, when the knowledge was available to build on a permanent basis.



Reason says that our forbearers would not be likely to build a WOODEN CHURCH against a strong and sturdy of FLINTS, and we will soon find that REASON is correct.

Munro Cautley, the most widely read exponent of the Defence Theory, tells us how we can prove the towers were built first, but without naming a single tower. The nave west wall, he tells us was built 6" to the east of the tower to ensure it was perfectly flat; and this wall is therefore 6" thicker than the west window. Extensive measurements have shown

that although a few nave west walls are thicker, the majority are just the same, and a good number, (more than those thicker), are appreciably less, on the east wall, than the west.. Why Munro Cautley thought the east wall was thicker is not absolutely certain, but the same mistake has been made by other people who should know better. They appear to have measured the return wall of the tower arch and call this the thickness of the tower east wall. This is far from the truth, for the wider the tower arch, the thicker will be the return wall irrespective of the wall thickness.

Having noticed that many of these tower walls are thinner on the east, we must now add the fact that most of these towers also have a FLAT east wall (over the tower arch). In a number, we can see distinct gaps, where the tower is not in bond with the church wall. Repairs and re-plastering has covered most of these gaps; but they can still be seen in a number of towers on the first floor. The result of this information means, that these towers could NEVER have stood on their own, and therefore a stone church, even if we say this is not the original, stood here BEFORE the tower could be built.

The following list of Round Towers BUILT AGAINST existing towerless flint churches is as follows, 34 in number:-

NORFOLK: Bawburgh; Beechamwell; Brampton; Brandiston; Clippesby; West Dereham; Gayton Thorpe; Hales; Hassingham; Grt. Hautbois; Intwood; Letheringsett; Merton; Morton-on-the-Hill; St. Mary Coslany; Quidenham; Repps; Runhall; Rushall; Syderstone; Tasburgh; Thorpe-next-Haddiscoe; East Walton; Worthing.

SUFFOLK: Aldham; Beyton; Little Bradley; Bradwell; Herringfleet; Mettingham.

ESSEX: Great Leighs; South Ockendon; Pentlow.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE: Snailwell.

Four rebuilt towers have been omitted.

Even more proof can be seen in Merton-on-the-Hill and Thorpe-next-Haddiscoe, where Saxon windows can still be seen over the tower arch, opening into the tower. Here they would shed no light, if both were built together.

Even this number is not the end of the story of towerless churches, for a find in 1981 opened an entirely new field of study in this exciting quest. My earlier measurements of Taverham tower, (to the west of Norwich), showed that while the west wall was 3 ft. 10" thick (the average.), the wall over the tower arch was only 2 ft. 10". The interior plan however was circular, even on the east, and it was placed with those whose church and tower were built together. Saxon features were noted in both tower and church. It was in January 1981, when a doorway was being cut through the wall over the tower arch, for the new west gallery, that a single-splayed window was found with an opening only 10" wide inside the tower, proving conclusively that it belonged to the CHURCH WALL and not the tower. Close scrutiny showed that an extra layer of flints had been put on to the flat church wall to convert the D shaped interior of the tower to the accepted circular shape.

This, therefore, opens up another chapter of churches that were here before their towers. The number that we can prove, will not be added to our list quickly, for this proof will only come when work cutting into the wall reveals it. My list where the east wall is thinner than the west is as follows:-

NORFOLK: Aslacton 1 ft 9"; Bexwell 6"; Burnham Deepdale 8"; Old Catton 1 ft. 4"; Cockley Clay 10"; Colney 8"; Croxton 8"; Eccles 2"; Edingthorpe 1 ft. 5"; Fishley 3"; Fornsett 5"; Kilverstone 1 ft. 3"; Matlaske 1 ft. 2"; Stody 1 ft.; Surlingham 2"; Swainsthorpe 10"; Tuttington 4"; Taverham 1 ft. 2"; Thrextan 2"; Yaxham 4".

SUFFOLK: Brome 11" (tower re-cased); Bruisyard 11"; Bungay 3"; Fritton 4"; Gisleham 7"; Holton St. Peter 3"; Ramsholt 2"; Risby 1"; Rushmere 6"; Syleham 1 ft. 8"; Theberton 3"; Thorington 6".

ESSEX: Lamarsh 3".

Yet another church was built without its Round Tower, that does not fit neatly into any of the foregoing categories, for after the tower was added, its west and east sides were the same thickness. Barsham Church, Suffolk, lost its nave roof in a fire in September 1979, and the heat from the fire loosened the plaster and filling of a Saxon round-headed double-splayed window, high up over the tower arch. This added one more towerless church to our list. In this case the tower west and east walls are both 3 ft. 9'. Therefore, the wall thickness does not necessarily pin point ALL these towers that were ADDED to towerless churches, but it shows very clearly that many more are likely to be added to the number already known.

The only possible conclusion then for these unique FLINT circular Towers is that they were always

built as an adjunct to the church to hang a bell to call the faithful to worship. The crude workmanship of a few early towers seems to imply that they were among the earliest to be built. Church Towers we are told by ecclesiastical scholars did not appear until the 9th century, and we can assume that this is about the date of our early towers. If, therefore, many of our churches were built BEFORE these towers, what date are they likely to be? We must remember the knowledge was here, and that a 7th century stone church is still standing at Bradwell in Essex. With one stone church so close, who can say there were no more built and still standing in this area.

St. Felix and St. Fursey evangelised East Anglia in the 7th century, so there is a very good probability that the main walls of many of our Round Tower Churches date back to the 8th century. Does this treatise conflict with my book, 'East Anglian Round Towers and Their Churches'? On the face of it, I might be putting an even earlier date on these ancient Churches and Towers. However, the entirely new information I had discovered, had turned the accepted dates so much earlier, that my new datings had to be very conservative, and this was stated in the book. The approximate datings given above, have no available proof, only a very strong probability on the available evidence. With one stone church so close, who can say there were no more built and still standing in this area.

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