

Volume Twenty Three : 1990-91

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EASTERN COACH WORKS LTD - Oct. 1969*Authors unknown*

This history of Eastern Coach Works was handed into the Museum with other material during the autumn. A short history which was handed in at the same time was published in the Society's Monthly Newsletter in January 1991. The two histories, written at slightly different times, complement and support each other and are a valuable addition to the Society's, and indeed the town's records of the industrial history of Lowestoft. They were written by an unknown member of the Coach Works staff, but if anyone can throw any light on the author the Society would be pleased to hear.

A Brief History and Survey of the Company's Progress and Development Since the Year 1912

As far as records can be traced Eastern Coach Works Limited, as it is known today was founded as long ago as the year 1912, when the company, then known as United Automobile Services, was created by Mr. E.B. Hutchinson.

In those far off days the company was purely an operating concern and its "fleet" consisted of one secondhand "Halley" Charabanc which operated between the town of Lowestoft and the neighbouring village of Kessingland.

During the years 1913 and 1914 the "fleet" was increased by the acquisition of two further secondhand vehicles, formerly operated by the London General Omnibus Company, together with a few new "Commer" vehicles. These latter vehicles were commandeered by the War Department on the outbreak of the 1914-1918 war.

During 1914 also, the then Great Eastern Railway Company which operated two vehicles between Lowestoft and the village of Kessingland, discontinued the service and their garage was rented by the United Automobile Services Limited who moved their headquarters from Clapham Road, Lowestoft, to the railway site in Denmark Road, Lowestoft.

A few further secondhand vehicles were acquired during the 1914-1918 war years and restricted services were operated between Lowestoft and the surrounding districts.

During 1919 a number of employees were engaged for vehicle maintenance purposes and for the repair and conversion of vehicle bodies. From this small nucleus of workers the present establishment was founded.

Between the early part and the end of 1921 the company acquired premises in Laundry Lane (since renamed Eastern Way) and these were used initially as the garage and traffic department. Later a maintenance department was added for the purpose of upkeeping the Company's expanding fleet. This was followed by the addition of a small coach factory for the conversion of vehicles purchased from the War Department.

The construction of new single deck passenger bodies commenced about this time and by late 1922 the company was employing a staff of approximately 300. By this time, in addition to maintaining the existing fleet of vehicles, an output of not less than two single deck bodies per week was being obtained. Between the years 1922 and 1931 the premises were extended and the personnel built up to a total of 600. By this time passenger bodies were not only being produced for the Company's own

fleet but were also being sold to other operating Companies throughout the country.

Also in 1931 the company commenced the manufacture of double deck passenger bodies. In July 1931 the "Coach Factory" as it was then known, was acquired by the Eastern Counties Omnibus Company Limited, which was at this time operating most of the passenger services in this part of East Anglia.

During the following five years the company experienced periods both of full employment and acute shortage of work, but the lean years of the early 1930's were successfully weathered and by 1936 bodies were being produced not only for private companies but also for a number of municipal undertakings.

On the 1st July, 1936, the Coach Factory was segregated from the operating concern, formed into a limited company and registered under its present name of Eastern Coach Works Limited.

Between 1936 and 1939 the staff was increased to approximately 950. The Company was then producing about 700 public service bodies per annum, when in May 1940 the course of the war brought a tragic change in the firm's progress.

Following the evacuation of our forces from Dunkirk and the feared invasion of this country, the Company received instructions which emanated from the military authorities, to remove all wheeled vehicles as far from Lowestoft as possible in order to deny their use to the enemy in the event of invasion.

This removal, with the fullest possible co-operation of each and everyone of the company's employees was completed in under 24 hours. With no chassis, however, there was no work and on May 28th, 1940, all the Company's hourly paid employees together with many of its weekly paid staff were discharged.

The following month approximately 150 employees, including key men, supervisory and technical staff, were re-employed at smaller premises at Irthlingborough in Northamptonshire and here they were forced to remain until the early part of 1945.

It is true that when the invasion scare receded the Military Authorities permitted vehicle repair work to be carried out at Lowestoft on a very limited scale, but by March 1945 there were still less than 200 employees at the Lowestoft factory. It was at this stage that the Company made a determined effort to build up production again to something like the pre-war scale, and over the next three years the personnel was rapidly increased. In 1948 the company was acquired by the British Transport Commission as an integral part of the Tilling Group organisation.

Today, the firm employs approximately 1030 persons all of whom are housed in one group of buildings on the original site.

Output of new vehicle bodies is in the region of 700 per annum and since the war a gradual change over from timber framed to metal framed bodies has been made. Today, Aluminium Alloys are extensively used in body construction.

From the humble beginning of 1912 Eastern Coach Works can now be proud of one of the most up-to-date and best equipped coach factories in the country and the Company's products are renowned for their high standard of quality.

The change over from timber to metal construction has necessitated a certain amount of re-equipment and the installation of new machinery. However, men formerly employed in the machining and assembly of timber parts quickly adapted themselves to the handling of Aluminium Alloys and in many cases the machines which previously cut and shaped timber parts have been adapted to the forming and manipulation of metal parts.

No industrial concern can afford to lag behind in development and research today. New materials and methods of manufacture call for constant investigation into the possibility of their application to ones own business. Eastern Coach Works employ a full time staff engaged in research and development work, and these people occupy a large separate department for this purpose. A team of some 16 qualified Draughtsmen keep the production shops supplied with drawings, material schedules and general information relating to the work in hand and the team spirit pervading throughout the works is very largely responsible for the smooth flow of output.

As in all progressive industries, however, "snags" do occur and at such times a concerted effort is made to "iron them out" on the spot.

One may ask, "How is a factory occupying some 14 acres of ground space able to maintain an output of some 700 vehicle bodies of various types each year?" Let's start at the beginning and find out.

The keystone to the practical side of the business is the design department. This is where the ideas are born and developed and where the stresses and strains to be encountered are determined, the pleasing shapes and passenger comfort considered, the margins of material strength and public safety calculated. From the design department the determined data passes to the Drawing Office to be developed on paper to scale. The drawings then pass to the "Setting Out" department for full size development. This is carried out by a team of development draughtsmen (known as "Setters Out") on large plywood boards. From these full size boards, the various patterns are produced for the use of machine operators. This department also produces the jigs and formers required to obtain accuracy and uniformity in the various body shapes. Whilst this preliminary work is going on a department attached to the Drawing Office is compiling schedules detailing the materials required for the production of the actual bodies. These schedules pass to the Purchasing Department, where the raw materials and numerous items of equipment are placed on order for delivery in time to meet production requirements.

Machined and processed parts pass from the production shops to a "Finished Parts Stores", there to wait requisition by the sub-assembly departments.

Modern mass production demands specialisation and in the interests of economy and output the work of body erection is broken down into sub-assemblies. For this purpose the men work in "gangs", one gang building floors, another sides, another fronts, another roofs and so on, all of which are built on fixtures to ensure accuracy and to simplify the work of construction. The sub-assemblies then pass to the main assembly "gangs" for attachment to the chassis and the uniting of the sub-assemblies to form the completed body skeleton or framework.

As soon as the framework is completed the exterior panels of Aluminium Alloy are fitted before moving the vehicle. The body panelling is therefore carried out in the body assembly shop.

Much of the flat panelling is purchased to the exact sizes required, the only processing in this case being the punching of the fixing holes and the initial paint processing before fitting.

There is, of course, a large amount of shaped panel work to be made and this is prepared beforehand mainly from reinforced glass fibre hand layered in suitable moulds. Much hand craft work in the way of forming, welding, rivetting, etc., is also employed.

After panelling, the body mouldings are applied, these being fitted vertically and horizontally to seal the panel joints against the weather. The mouldings are screwed into position, the screw head recesses being pellet sealed to provide a flush finish and to seal the screw heads from the effects of moisture.

The body is now ready to move into the Paintshop to be "cleaned off" and to receive its initial priming coat of paint. At this stage also the work of "finishing" the interior of the body commences. Electric cables for lighting, signal bells and door operation, together with the numerous other items of electrical equipment are run through the body. Linoleum is applied to the floor. The casings or side panels are covered in fabric (usually leathercloth). Interior ceiling panels are fitted. Floor treads fixed where heavy wear takes place and the general interior furnishings applied.

The work proceeds in conjunction with the painting process, the vehicle daily moving up the shop as it receives its various coats of paint, towards the "Varnish Rooms".

Following the "priming coat", each body receives four coats of paint viz; a sealing coat, an undercoat of the final colour required, followed by two coats of enamel. The vehicle then moves into the Varnish Room, which is heated, to receive its final two coats of clear varnish. This gives the body its lustrous finish and forms a protective film to the undercoats of colour.

During the varnishing process the room is closed to all workers except those engaged in the varnishing process. This precaution is necessary in order to ensure as far as possible a dustless atmosphere within the Varnish Room.

Following the varnish coats the vehicle moves forward into the "Final Finishing Shop" where the remaining fittings are applied. These include the body windows, seats, handrails, interior lamps, destination indicator fittings, etc.

On completion, the vehicle is road tested and weighed, any faults discovered during the road test being rectified before submitting the vehicle to the Ministry of Transport for Certification of Fitness for Public Service operation.

A Team of Inspectors check all materials for accuracy and quality and a routine inspection system operates at every stage of machining, body construction and finishing.

With the exception of tubular seat frames, all seats are manufactured on the premises by our own staff

of skilled seat makers, Sewing Machinists and Coach Trimmers. A variety of materials are in current use for seat trimming, such as moquettes, hide and P.V.C. coated leathercloths. All seat cushions are of foam rubber, these being found most suitable both for passenger comfort and long service life. Handrails are of stainless steel, again formed to the required shape on the premises. Toughened safety glass bedded in rubber is employed throughout including the front windscreen glasses, the one in front of the driver being zone toughened.

As it would be totally uneconomical to manufacture all the numerous fittings and component parts required, many proprietary articles are purchased from firms specialising in such items as seat frames, already mentioned, electrical fittings and lamps, roof ventilators, heating equipment, destination indicator gear, etc. These are "bought out" and only require to be fitted into position on the body when received.

The comparatively new material known as Fibre Glass Laminate is coming more prominently into use in omnibus body construction. At the moment its use is limited to engine cowling, upper and lower deck frontal panels on double deck vehicles, interior parcel racks on certain models, front and rear corner panels on all models, side flaps, etc., and further applications of fibre glass will be made as and when it appears to offer definite advantages over alternative materials.

All public service vehicles must conform to specified standards of measurement, weight, stability, safety and comfort and final operation on each vehicle is certification by a Certifying Officer of the Ministry of Transport.

No vehicle can obtain a Road Licence without a Certificate of Fitness.

Body Types in Current Production

Road Passenger Transport is becoming an increasingly competitive business as more people provide their own means of transport and the railways compete with comfortable and swift diesel and electric train service. In many instances, particularly in rural districts, the omnibus services operate at a heavy loss. Nevertheless, operators are under an obligation to provide public transport and one way of economising is to operate vehicles designed for the particular service for which they are required. To meet these demands, Eastern Coach Works produce a wide range of bodies from 37 seater capacity to 75 seaters.

Provision is made for one-man operation, that is, operation without a conductor on all stage carriage models, the fares being collected by the driver as the passengers board the vehicle. This type of vehicle is in steady demand for both rural and town service operation.

In the range of Single Deck Stage Carriage Bodies the 46 seater 'RESL' and 53 seater 'RELL' types can be adapted to one-man operation if required. Fitted to underfloor engined chassis, these vehicles are in demand for normal service work. They can be powered by a 5 or 6 cylinder engine to suit the type of territory to be covered. Heaters, demisters and electrically operated doors are fitted as standard.

Side sliding or hopper type ventilating windows are also fitted as standard, and are again fitted with safety glass.

A further Single Deck vehicle is now being produced. This is a light-weight type known as the 'LH' and is available in three wheelbase lengths of 12' 6", 16' 2" and 18' 6". Fitted with an underfloor engine the vehicle is mainly designed for Stage Carriage service, the short versions being particularly suitable for rural area operation.

In the Double Deck range, production is mainly concentrated on the 'VR' Lodekka body. This vehicle possesses all the virtues of a Highbridge type body whilst maintaining a low overall height. The standard type is fitted with seats for 70 passengers, 31 in the lower saloon, 39 in the upper saloon. Dimensions 30' 3" long x 8' 2½" wide, laden height 13' 7½", unladen weight 8 tons 10½ cwt.

This vehicle supersedes both the Highbridge and Lowbridge models by combining all the desirable body features of both types, and is in popular demand.

The Lodekka vehicle is a joint product of Bristol Commercial Vehicles Limited and Eastern Coach Works Limited, the aluminium alloy body being built integrally with the chassis.

All 'VR' Lodekka models are fitted with rear engines, mainly 6 cylinder Gardner.

At the time of going to press, there are some 5,380 Lodekka vehicles in operation throughout Great Britain from the Highlands of Scotland to the Isle of Wight.

Limited Stop Services and Coach Vehicles

In the more luxurious class, two types of bodies are produced, the Express Carriage or limited stop service type and the Touring Coach type. The Express Carriage body is, in fact, a more luxurious version of the Stage Carriage body. Fitted with 47 coach type seats, this vehicle is designed for longer distance travel with limited stops, as distinct from stage to stage collection and discharge service. Certain refinements are added to enhance internal and external appearances and to provide additional passenger comfort.

Polished Alloy mouldings are fitted to the exterior sides, front and rear. Seats are of the reclining type. Additional interior lighting provides more comfortable night travel and heater units are fitted as standard. Other standard items of equipment include electrically operated entrance doors, windscreen demisters, luggage accommodation, sliding or hopper type ventilating windows, large roof ventilators, etc. This vehicle provides a medium between the more utility type of Stage Carriage body and the Touring Coach type, and is in popular demand.

Fitted to the Bristol 'RELH' type chassis with underfloor engine, this vehicle is in wide use on long distance service work and is adaptable to either summer or winter use.

The Touring Coach

The touring coach body is, of course, the last word in luxury travel and the early part of each year sees E.C.W. busily concentrating on this type of body in order to deliver in time for early summer use by operators.

In the annual Coach Rallies held at Clacton-on-sea, Brighton and London, Bristol/E.C.W. Coaches have been successful in winning the following awards :-

1955 at Clacton-on-Sea - winner of the "Lister Cup". Operator - Eastern Counties Omnibus Company Limited

1956 at Brighton - Winner of the Premier Award "The Brighton Trophy", and the "Lister Cup" for the second time, also the "Autobrite Cup". Operator - Eastern Counties Omnibus Company Limited

1957 at Battersea Park, London - Winner of the "Lister Cup" for the third time. Operator - Eastern National Omnibus Company Limited

1958 at Brighton - Winner of the Premier Award in the Concours d' Elegance, the "Clacton Trophy". Operator - Thames Valley Traction Company Limited

This outstanding record of success speaks well for the quality and design of the Bristol/E.C.W. Coach.

Whilst quietly pleasing in appearance, the emphasis has always been on maximum passenger comfort rather than on a lavishly garnished exterior and these desirable features undoubtedly appealed to the competition judges. The body dimensions are 36 ft. long x 8 ft. 2½ ins. wide.

A wide choice of equipment is available to suit the requirements of Coach Operators. This includes large Perspex glazed roof ventilators, hopper type ventilating windows, heaters, adjustable reclining seats, public address equipment, sun blinds, luggage accommodation and many other refinements. A toughened glass screen isolates the driver from the saloon without obscuring the passengers forward vision. Large front and side windows provide a panoramic view of every direction. A glazed front roof canopy is also available if required.

These coaches are designed for tourist travel and provide the highest possible degree of clear vision and luxury comfort under all conditions. Seating capacities up to 47.

Modern development, and the now almost continuous flow of new materials becoming available, calls for constant research and experiment into new fields of body design. Types in current production may now be quite obsolete in a short space of time. With the ever increasing competition from other forms of transport, Public Service Operators must be provided with vehicles incorporating the most up-to-date improvements in order to attract additional traffic. This is constantly borne in mind by the E.C.W. management and no effort is spared in aiming to keep to the forefront of development by constant liaison with operators and by experimental and trial application within our works.

Service Life of the Modern Vehicle

The age old craft of coach building has changed radically since the days of the Stage Coach and Hansom Cab. The handcraft has largely disappeared. Timber and iron in the framework have been superseded by light alloys. The polished wood formerly used for interior decoration has been replaced by polished aluminium and plastic materials. These new materials combined with improved roads and

improved chassis suspension systems have all contributed to provide a longer period of service life for the road vehicle.

Immediately before the 1939-1945 war, E.G.W. bodies were built mainly from teak, this being the best rot-resisting timber commercially available at that time. Bodies were then planned for a ten year life although this was seldom attained. The inevitable attack by moisture would invariably rot the more vulnerable parts of the framework well within this planned period. Not so with the modern alloy body. One can confidently expect a service life of 15 to 20 years with proper maintenance and attention. Even where timber is used in the framework the danger of rot from moisture has largely disappeared with the introduction of modern glazing methods and sealing materials.

Bodies now produced are accurately built to within fine limits thus enabling a parts replacement service to be maintained and a consequent speedy return to service of vehicles following overhaul or accident repair by operators.

Every component part of all models of E.C.W. bodies bears a part number and by quoting the part number or numbers required, the customer is assured of quick delivery of accurate replacements. This has been made possible only by the standardisation of the various body "shells" and the introduction of precision methods of manufacture.

Methods Employed in Manufacture

High grade materials play an all important part in the manufacture of E.G.W. bodies. Generally speaking, all raw materials and proprietary fittings used are the best of their respective kinds. The theory that the best is the cheapest in the long run is proved by the service life obtained from vehicles in operation, many of which serve industrial areas and are subjected to the most severe conditions of wear and tear. A few typical examples of materials in standard use are as follows :-

Body Structure - Aluminium, Manganese - Magnesium Alloy extrusions specially treated for strength and ductility.

Panelling - Aluminium Manganese - Magnesium Alloy sheet in various harnesses and gauges.

Handrail, Grab Rails, etc. - Stainless Steel

Glass - Toughened Safety Glass

Floorboards, (where in use) - First quality Douglas Fir or Resin Bonded Plywood

Structural Timber (where in use) - Siamese Yang, Mahogany

Floor Coverings - High quality non-slip materials

Glazing Medium - High quality patented section weatherproof rubber.

Seat Frames (Service Bodies) - Tubular steel with polished stainless steel top rails.

Seat Cushions (all models) - High quality foam rubber

Seat Upholstery - First quality moquettes, hide and P.V.C. material

Interior Body Trimming and Panelling - High quality Leather cloth and Plastic Laminates

Platform and Staircase Treads (Double Deck Bodies) - Non-slip wire woven fabric in Aluminium Alloy channel base

Exterior Paintwork - High quality undercoats, enamels and varnishes, brush applied

These represent but a few of the many items of raw materials employed, the same attention to high grade, however, applies throughout, even to the bolts, nuts, screws and rivets which to us are equally important where quality is concerned.

Miscellaneous Body Types Produced by E.C.W.

Whilst E.C.W. are mainly engaged in the production of Public Service Vehicle Bodies, facilities exist for the manufacture of bodies of other types to customers special requirements.

As long as the requirement is a vehicle body, E.C.W. possess the facilities and the "know how" to build it. This is only as it should be. After 56 years in the road vehicle business a tremendous amount of information, knowledge and experience is necessarily gained.

No precise information is available regarding the body output of the early days, but the total number placed on the roads from available records runs into many thousands of bodies of all types.

Labour Force

Of the total labour force of approximately 1,030, 744 are productive workers, the remainder comprising office and administrative staff, storekeepers, labourers, etc. The productive workers are

made up of craftsmen of various trades, roughly as follows :-

Woodcutting, Setters Out, Metal Cutting Machinists	- 47
Bodybuilders	- 190
Body Finishers	- 105
Coach Trimmer	- 62
Seatmakers	- 11
Painters	- 85
Panel Beaters and Sheet Metal Workers	- 110
Engineering Fitters	- 89
Electricians	- 29
Fibreglass	- 16

Many of these tradesmen are people with long terms of service with the Company.

Travelling about the country, particularly at holiday times, these men must experience a thrill of pride at seeing, and no doubt often using the vehicles they have helped to build, and which they have no difficulty in identifying.

Eastern Coach Works is now one of the manufacturing subsidiaries of the National Bus Company and manufacture omnibus bodies mainly for operating companies within the N.B.C. These are listed as follows :-

Aldershot & District Traction Co. Ltd.
 Birmingham & Midland Motor Omnibus Co. Ltd,
 Black & White Motorways Ltd,
 Brighton, Hove & District Omnibus Co. Ltd.
 Bristol Omnibus Co. Ltd.
 City of Oxford Motor Services Ltd.
 Crosville Motor Services Ltd.
 Cumberland Motor Services Ltd.
 Devon General Omnibus & Touring Co. Ltd.
 East Kent Road Car Co. Ltd.
 East Midland Motor Services Ltd.
 East Yorkshire Motor Services Ltd.
 Eastern Counties Omnibus Co. Ltd.
 Eastern National Omnibus Co. Ltd.
 Greenslades Tours Ltd.
 Hants & Dorset Motor Services Ltd.
 Hobble Motor Services Ltd.
 Lincolnshire Road Car Co. Ltd.
 London Country Bus Services Ltd.
 Maidstone & District Motor Services Ltd.
 Midland General Omnibus Co. Ltd.
 Neath & Cardiff Luxury Coaches Ltd.
 North Western Road Car Co. Ltd.
 Northern General Transport Co. Ltd.
 Potteries Motor Traction Co. Ltd.
 Rod & White Services Ltd.
 Rhondda Transport Co. Ltd.
 Ribble Motor Services Ltd.
 Samuelson New Transport Co. Ltd.
 Shamrock & Rambler Motor Coaches Ltd.

Sheffield United Tours Ltd.
 South Wales Transport Co. Ltd.
 Southdown Motor Services Ltd.
 Southern National Omnibus Co. Ltd.
 Southern Vectis Omnibus Co. Ltd.
 Stratford-upon-Avon Blue Motors Ltd.
 Thames Valley Traction Co. Ltd.
 Thomas Bros. (Port Talbot) Ltd.
 A. Timpson & Sons Ltd.
 Trent Motor Traction Co. Ltd.
 United Automobile Services Ltd.
 United Counties Omnibus Co. Ltd.
 United Welsh Services Ltd.
 West Riding Automobile Co. Ltd.
 West Yorkshire Road Car Co. Ltd.
 Western National Omnibus Co. Ltd.
 Western Welsh Omnibus Co. Ltd.
 Wilts & Dorset Motor Services Ltd.
 Yorkshire Traction Co. Ltd.
 Yorkshire Woollen District Transport Co. Ltd.

In addition to the above, E.C.W. Bodies are supplied to municipal undertakings and other Public Transport Authorities.

What of the Future

As we have already observed, the demand for Public Transport has tended to decline during recent years. It is, however, by no means certain that this trend will continue. There is an increasing tendency to build housing estates on the outskirts of towns for two reasons. Firstly, because town centres are already largely built-up, and secondly, because people prefer to live in these fringe areas rather than in the town centres. This must lead to increased application for Public Transport to be provided to such districts. Furthermore, the probable dispersal of industry in the future must also call for more public transport services.

Regarding coach travel, the tourist trade is undoubtedly on the increase. Each year sees more of our people taking continental holidays by coach, and more people from abroad are visiting and touring Britain. The outlook for the trade is, therefore, by no means gloomy.

The future outlook naturally concerns the vehicle builder just as much as the operator, inasmuch as the livelihood of both is dependent on the patronage of the travelling public.

Eastern Coach Works is kept constantly in touch with these future probabilities and advance plans are made accordingly.

New types placed in production today, were no doubt planned, prototype built and tested two years or more ago. Research and experimental work goes on continuously in order to keep to the forefront of development. In such a highly competitive industry no one can afford to lag behind in this respect.

1968 saw the completion of 56 years of steady progress of our Company, and we have every reason to look to the future with confidence.

PAKEFIELD WINDMILL*by Mary Goffin*

Last year I recorded the most interesting points from the deeds of the Windmill at Pakefield. After we transcribed the documents relating specifically to the Windmill, we were given access to documents to land in Pakefield, some of which became part of the estate of the Mill and was eventually developed into housing in Florence Road.

The first document outlines who owned land at Pakefield from 1712-1800 and to whom it was sold or mortgaged. There is a receipt of eight guineas paid by Jabez Aldred Snr. to John Curtis for an allotment of Dole Land at Pakefield. There are seven Extracts from the Gisleham and Pakefield Award giving details of numbered plots of various sizes allotted to seven Pakefield residents. They are Mrs. Ann Machin, John Newby, William Pack, James Brame, Joseph Harman, John Curtis and Benjamin Lane. Then we have documents showing how some of these sold their awarded lands.

10th Oct. 1799 - Elizabeth Harman, widow of Joseph, sells her Inclosure plot to Charles Woolby for £8 .8. 0. Details are given of the Willand Probate of Joseph Harman.

25th Dec. 1799 - John Newby sells his Inclosure plot to Charles Woolby for £1. 1. 0.

30th Jan. 1800 - Mary Ann Barber (Mrs.) and Ann Machin, spinster, sell to Charles Woolby for £10. 10. 0. Details are given how they inherited the plot awarded to Mrs. Ann Machin.

20th Feb. 1800 - James Cunningham sells his Inclosure plot to Charles Woolby for £20 and on the same date J. Cunningham signed a Bond of Indemnity of £40 to C. Woolby.

17th Mar. 1800 - William Pack sells his Inclosure plot to Charles Woolby for £12. 12. 0.

1st Aug. 1800 - James Brame also sells to Charles Woolby for £5. 5. 0. Details are also given of the families of four daughters of Richard Renwick of Pakefield, Gentleman.

In buying all these plots Charles Woolby is stated to be a Farmer of Kirtly.

1st. Apl. 1801 - John Curtis sells his Inclosure plot to Jabez Aldred for £8. 8. 0.

31st Mar. 1824 - is a Notice to quit possession of a cottage, barn, stable and hereditaments in Pakefield on Michaelmas Day to William Foreman from John Borrett.

31st Mar. 1824 - is a similar Notice to quit to James Peak of possession of a Cottage and Garden Ground and Hereditaments in Pakefield on Michaelmas Day from John Borrett.

1635-1836 Next we have another schedule of Deeds relating to three cottages at Pakefield inherited by Joseph William Gowing and late sold to James Mickleburgh - it outlines how Joseph William Gowing inherited.

The Attested Copy of the Will and Codicil of Stephen Gowing and with the transcription we have included details extracted in 1990 of people mentioned and also of bequests made. The details given in this Attested Copy enable Joseph William Gowing to sell the three cottages at Pakefield on 13th October, 1870 to James Mickleburgh for £115. On 31st October, 1876 a Substituted Deed of Covenant was accepted by James Mickleburgh from William Hubbard in lieu of the Covenant of George Nicholas Buller of 1869 to produce an indenture of 18th July, 1869.

The last document we saw related to the houses numbered 1 and 3 Florence Road in which a Statutory Declaration is made by Mrs. Ella Mary Colby, that in his Will, her grandfather, James Mickleburgh, made in January 1903, the property described as "my two modern houses in Mill Lane, Pakefield, occupied by Thompson and Thompson" refer to the two freehold cottages now known as 1 and 3 Florence Road.

COASTAL EROSION AT COVEHITHE*by Paul Durbidge*

For several years the coastline between Kessingland and Covehithe has constantly been under pressure from the sea, and during the early months of each year considerable erosion of the cliffs and beach occur, especially at Covehithe.

It was over thirty years ago when I first became interested in the area, principally because of its outstanding scenery and wild life, and later on that led to a study of the archaeological evidence which was uncovered as a result of the substantial erosion. During these early years, two of the three water filled gravel pits at Benacre were quite large and contained a considerable draught of water, and on

various weekends, like many families with children, we would spend a day there, sometimes with an inflatable dingy paddling across the lakes or just messing about near the sea.

On one occasion a television team had arrived during the week, and had constructed a large black upturned boat beside one lake complete with its own jetty, later that year we saw the reconstruction in the Television serial David Copperfield. The quietness of the location obviously appealed to the film makers for on another occasion when visiting Covehithe very early one morning I saw the figure of a man in a long red coat, black boots and a three cornered hat striding along the cliff top towards Green Heath. At first it did not seem real and the figure suddenly disappeared down a narrow gap in the cliff; at this stage I was really curious and upon reaching the point where he disappeared one could see more people in 18th century costume on the beach below. There were also several barrels and coils of rope lying around, and a camera team were sitting on a small trolley which was pushed along a small section of track when filming was being done. On returning from my walk some time later the man with the three cornered hat was sitting outside a Volkswagon Doormobile still in his regalia, drinking tea and enjoying a cigarette. Other films were shot at Covehithe - one particularly noticeable one was the advert for Townsend Torrenson which was staged between Easton Wood and the Broad, complete with longboat and hardboard shields. All set in very familiar surroundings which later came through very well on television.

Today there have been significant changes both at Covehithe and also at Benacre, where two of the three lakes are considerably smaller than they were. Continual sea action has resulted in vast amounts of sand and stone being gradually pushed into what were once large areas of water. Three years ago the second lake was breached by the sea and much material was washed into it before the shingle beach was consolidated by bulldozers, with several of the tank blocks that once stood on high ground between the two lakes being used to stabilise the ridge as well as tons of shingle and sand. The distribution of this beach material along this part of the coast is considerable, and the groynes at Kessingland have, over the years, proved very satisfactory and resulted in much consolidated ground, indicating a northward movement of material.

At Benacre Ness there has also been movement, with the Ness being almost due east of Beach Farm in 1925 but up to 1951 the most easterly point has shifted some 1900 feet or so, again to the north.

At Covehithe erosion has long been a problem and has averaged up to 17 feet a year since 1925 though measurements taken since then have shown an alarming increase.

Thirty years ago, where the roadway stops at the cliff, there was a large concrete observation post which people could walk through to the steps leading to the beach below. There was also a bungalow called 'Four Winds', with a large red brick wall, and on the northern side of the wall was a large army bunker built partially below ground; to the rear of the bungalow was a corrugated iron garage.

Further northwards at Long Covert was a reasonably high shingle bank with thick clumps of Marren Grass between the sea and the wood, along with a number of concrete tank blocks and a large concrete pill box.

All of these features have now gone to the sea and at the end of the road where 'Four Winds' once stood, 275 feet of cliff has gone over the edge since 1980. As a result of storms between 1977 and 1978 more cliff was brought down and more beach material was carried away exposing two medieval well shafts and four salt pans, the latter interlaced by army activity.

Unfortunately, as in many cases, the beach features were broken up by an oncoming tide and strong winds, and in addition a thick carpet of shingle was thrown up along a wide stretch of beach. It was while photographing the destruction that I first met J.A. Steers, Emeritus Professor of Geography at The University of Cambridge, and we discussed in some detail the amount of cliff loss at this location, and it was suggested that regular measurements should be taken each year to monitor the situation. Subsequently some ten fixed points were set up, from Long Covert in the north to Easton Wood in the south, and measurements from these points to the cliff edge commenced in 1977 and are still taken each year, the results now being sent to the University of East Anglia. During correspondence with Prof. Steers he enclosed a copy of his paper, The East Coast Floods, and in this a colleague, Mr. W.W. Williams, told of his visit to Covehithe on the Saturday afternoon of January 31st, where he surveyed a section of cliff at 4 o'clock. By 9 o'clock on the Sunday morning the thirty foot high cliff had been cut back 30 feet, while at the lower cliff the loss amounted to 86 feet, which as Mr. Williams stated was an extremely rapid rate of erosion. It was also calculated that the volume of material lost during that night amounted to somewhere in the region of 400,000 tonnes.

During the end of 1977 I was visiting the location four evenings a week, as well as weekends, in an

attempt to both recover and record material where possible. Although most of the damage was being caused by the sea, there was also the problem of surface water discharging over the cliff in two places, and examination of a well shaft at one of them proved difficult, to say the least. The shaft was observed with the familiar hour glass section in the ten foot cliff, and was threatened by a high oncoming sea, so it was decided to recover what we could before the inevitable happened. It rained heavily all day, and two of us tried to divert the flow of surface water that was coming down on us from above, before beginning the removal of some of the oak liner boards. The shaft infill varied from dark grey to near black, and contained the usual assortment of broken sticks, odd stones, parts of brick and pottery. It followed the pattern of the previous shafts with peat blocks lining the upper level, with the base levels consisting of two oak barrels telescoped into one another by approximately four inches, and held apart with hazel bands iron pinned from the inside. The sea was by now increasing in height, with the occasional surge swirling around our feet, and combined with the rain and high winds conditions were far from ideal. We were, in fact, very fortunate that the shaft was not in the high cliff as there would have been no chance to examine anywhere near the infill we finally removed, for obviously the safety element of working in the high cliff would have made it far too dangerous. Finally, when we had virtually decided to leave the shaft to the sea, we reached the lower silt in which lay the remains of two leather buckets. These were later conserved and are now in the Broad House Museum. The water from above was now cascading into the shaft, and the sea becoming ever more threatening, so we made good our retreat to higher ground with the rain and winds increasing. Next morning we returned to look at the feature again, but as expected it had gone, leaving yet another deep cut in the face of the cliff.

January saw more high seas and on January 31st there was another storm surge of high proportions, causing considerable damage on the coasts of the Wash, Lincolnshire, and East Anglia. Surge levels were between 4.6 and 5.9 metres; these were similar to those of the 1953 surge.

At Benacre and Covehithe the shingle banks were breached, while at Southwold the pier was damaged along with the pavilion and beach huts on the esplanade. The harbour was flooded and at Walberswick the outer beach was flattened, and a breach was made into the Corporation marshes. Damage at Covehithe was extensive with the garden wall of 'Four Winds' going over the cliff and with it the second of the fixed points. With the owners of the bungalow now gone, a decision was made to demolish the building to prevent vandalism.

Between March 1977 and March 1978 29 feet was lost at TM528.823 OS 1:50,000 sheet 196, and at the end of the road TM528.820 - 26 feet was lost, while on the southern side at TM527.816 - 46 feet was recorded for the year, with much of this loss due to the discharge of surface water spitting the cliff in three places. Cliff material was distributed over a wide area, and varied from great mats of vegetation, to large chunks of boulder clay and slabs of the brick wall from 'Four Winds'. A lot of the material had been moved several hundred yards, including heavy building material such as concrete underground service pipes and the remains of several large tree roots from Long Covert. Beach profiles changed frequently, an example being at Green Heath, TM525.812; in December the beach was scoured of material leaving a raised clay shelf above a gently sloping sandy beach. By January this had been covered by a shingle ridge covering the clay shelf and sloping down to low water level. February saw another profile with a sizable ridge of large stone and sand at low water mark and a gradual shingle spread up to the base of the cliff.

The situation had again changed in March with sand at the cliff base, and a heavy mantle of stone some five feet high six feet from the base of the cliff, and ridges of small shingle and sand up to low water mark.

In March 1990 measurements were again taken and showed an increase on six of last year's results, with 32 feet being lost at the roadway and 1989's fixed point now hanging over the edge. Surface water has, as expected, resulted in much of the damage, with the landowner now playing safe and leaving some 40 feet of land unploughed at the cliff edge on the southern side.

Long Covert has suffered severe damage, with three deep intrusions up to 28 feet cut into the low cliff while the trench containing the telegraph cable has also been subjected to much removal of loose infill, resulting in a cut back of nearly 30 feet.

The shingle beach defending Benacre Broad from the sea has been breached by a 35 foot gap with the rising sea pouring through into the Broad and then draining it as the tide lowers. Large amounts of sand and shingle have been swept into the Broad through the gap, and a large area of reed bed has been carpeted with stone and shingle, lessening the water depth considerably. No doubt as the threat

from high tides recedes the shingle beach will be reinstated which, in turn, will allow the broad and its extensive bird life to return to some degree of normality.

There does not appear to be much that will lessen the present rate of destruction at Covehithe, and given the predicted rise in sea levels over the next 20 years or so, there is a serious need for protection of the low lying areas, not only here, but all along our coastline. Ideas of sea defence have changed over recent years and many experts consider the repositioning of large amounts of stone and shingle is just as effective, and less costly, than concrete walls and timber defences. Sea defence is notoriously expensive with the £400,000 estimate at Southwold to protect 11 houses being an example, but failure to prepare for increase in sea levels will be even more costly, resulting in large tracts of valuable land and property being subjected to flooding on a scale comparable to the East Coast floods of 1953.

H.M.S. MANTIS Part 2

by Mr. A.M. Turner

In Part 1 of this article I mentioned in the introduction, that H.M.S. Minos had its H.Q. Building in the Marina. I have since been informed that the actual building that they occupied was the solicitors' office of Messrs. Johnson & Nicholson, who moved out for the duration to offices over the Linen Shop. These offices (now redeveloped), were on the north east side of the Marina between 'The Alders' and Lowestoft Friendly Societies' Medical Institute. It is worth recording that Messrs. Johnson & Nicholson were allowed to keep their strong-room in the Prairie building but had, of course, to have a Naval Pass to enter the building.

I regret that in Part 1 of this article I mis-spelt Mr. P. Dickens as Dickins. For the record he was the great-great-grandson of Charles Dickens. My apologies for this error. {corrected in re-issue. Editor}

In Part 1 of this article there was a short report of an action between an MTB and a mini-sub. I have now had a full report of this action from John Moore which gives more details and corrects some errors in last year's accounts :- 'This action took place in late winter 1944 early spring 1945. It was a night with much moon but not actually a full moon. The sea was calm, wind negligible, light cloud, visibility good.

MTBs 387 (Lieut. Wolfe RNVR) and 394 (Lieut. Moore RNVR) were on standard Z patrol out of Lowestoft. The patrol location was somewhere to the SE of Lowestoft and to the seaward of QZS.

On the night in question there had been much E Boat activity and we made at least two sightings, though without getting into an action. At one time during the night we got from C-in-C Nore the exhilarating signal to proceed with whatever dispatch it was which excused us from any consequences. On such a night and in such boats the thrill of a lifetime - but nothing came of a chase where we never saw the quarry, and we were soon brought back.

At about 04.00 hrs (zone 1) the E Boats seemed to follow their usual drill, heading for home. (Dawn about 06.00 hrs) MTBs 387 and 394 resumed normal Z patrol lying stopped and listening out on hydrophones. At about 04.50 hrs the watch on 394 heard (by ear, not by hydrophone) a low buzzing sound, entirely unfamiliar and outside previous experience. It could not be identified, but the direction was fairly clear and it sounded near at hand. Within less than half a minute the small conning tower of a midget submarine (type already notified in W.I.R. and looking like a tiny U-Boat) appeared on the lookout bearing of the noise. The submarine was heading slowly towards 394's port beam from a bearing of about Red 70 and was at a range of less than 50 yards.

Immediately 394 went to full action station's and crash-started. The only guns that would bear at such close quarters were the twin .303 Brownings on the after end of the port for'ard torpedo tube. Fire was opened at almost zero range. 394, gathering way from lying stopped, was getting across the sub's bow but failed to do so by two feet, the sub. hitting us in the tiller flat. In this last approach not even the Brownings would bear and fire was ceased.

394 circled tightly back to port to close the enemy again, but the submarine had sunk, leaving its two-man crew swimming. 394 closed with one and 387 with the other. Having got him half aboard, 394's First Lieutenant (Lieut. J.E.H. Davies RNVR) shone the Aldis lamp in his face, waved a .45 revolver under his nose and spoke firmly and frankly to him in German. The survivor was then hauled in and deposited in the forepeak, (where we reckoned that he could do no harm) with the hatch clamped down and an armed sentry by the hatch.

The collision damage to 394 was serious but not disastrous. There was a hole, three feet top to bottom

and over six inches wide, from the waterline downwards. The tiller flat was therefore flooded to sea level. The engine room bulkhead was holding and the steering gear was undamaged. As a precaution the standard bomber-dinghy was dropped into the tiller flat and inflated, but in the confined space it either burst or ripped so making a less than full contribution to our well-being. Nonetheless a careful return to Lowestoft seemed feasible and desirable and was initiated.

Before setting off, stock was taken of the entire situation. This revealed a steady knocking noise from the forepeak. It sounded as if the prisoner, game to the last, was trying to inflict what further damage he could to 394. An immediate, well lit and heavily armed inspection explained all - the prisoner's tooth were chattering!!

He was, in fact, the C.O. of the sub. They had been at sea for three days and were weary and confused to a high degree. They had not known where they were nor had they been bent on attacking us. Their survival of our contretemps, cold and wet but unscathed from the Browning assault, seemed a welcome release.

The return trip to Lowestoft, in a somewhat rising breeze, was slow but without incident. 394 entered harbour with the prisoner, duly blindfolded, fallen-in on the upper deck with the rest of the upper deck complement.

The following further entries from the 'War Diary' (incidentally this started as the War Diary of 7th MGB Flotilla 4th MTB flotilla, although there does seem to be some overlap at times with at least some of the other boats) give an idea of the settling down in a new port, the speed with which boats were ready to take up their sea duties and historical points regarding Lowestoft itself.

Tuesday, 19th August (1941) Ammunition removed from Walkers' Store (1)

Wednesday, 20th August Spare crew spent morning and afternoon at Walkers' Store straightening out Flotilla stores. 89 and 91 (MGBs) at sea at 19.45. Patrol duties north of South Leman buoy. Nothing to report.

Thursday, 21st August 89 and 91 returned from patrol at 07.00. Straight to Ice Jetty (2) for fuel. Make and mend clothes from 13.15. Leave till 21.00. Spare crew drafted to Hornet (Gosport)

Tuesday, 26th. August MTB 91 at immediate notice from 12.45, 16.00 revert to A notice. 89 settled on bollard at night when tide fell. Six feet of rubbing strake torn, and half a dozen planks lifted. To be repaired by Brookes. (3)

Wednesday, 27th August New engine arrived for 91. 89 repaired by 17.00 {Note the speed by which the repairs were carried out. Work started on changing the port engine of 91 on August 29th and was apparently completed by 1st September when she was moved to Hamilton Dock to have new type 0.5" guns fitted. A.M.T. }

Saturday, 11th October 10.45, 86 to Laundry Lane (4) for slipping. 11.00 S.O.'s rounds. 15.00 Laundry Lane slip not being ready, 86 to (Leo) Robinson's (Oulton Broad) but boat already on slip. 86 slipped at Laundry Lane at 16.15.

The following routine patrol is recorded for Wednesday, 5th November. I have picked this particular one out to include as it contains more details than many of the others, which, are simply recorded as 'routine patrol'.

OA's (ordnance artificers) on board - 89, 91's crew on leave.

02.00. 87 and 18 left harbour on E Boat patrol at Sheringham Buoy. Speed 30 Knots. 04.05 sighted two trawlers near 8c buoy; received no reply to challenge. 04.29 flares to E. & N.W. 04.50 sighted three trawlers. 87 went alongside Dhoon who reported Sheringham buoy missing. 05.05 returned via QZS 287 at 24 Knots. 05.25 replied to challenge by three trawlers near "8c". 06.05 red flares sighted. 07.15 Closed trawlers attempting to sink mines south of 'S' buoy 08.00. Entered harbour 10.00, Fuelled.

15.20 86 and 87 left for sea. 16.05 cleared guns. 16.07 mine sighted at 54F buoy. 86 fired at mine. 86 left for rendezvous leaving 87 to attempt to sink mine. 16.30 86 sighted second mine and reported to two M/Ls. 16.59 contacted (HMS) Campbell and carried out manoeuvres. 17.20 87 reported first mine to M/S 43 and 63. 17.27 87 left 54F buoy. 17.40 87 closed convoy and joined HMS Campbell and 86. 18.30 On patrol at 56 buoy, 60, Smith's Knoll, 60, Sheringham, 60, 56. 06.30 five buoy abeam. 08.00 entered harbour. 11.30 Fuelled.

The first mention of action with E Boats in the diary is on the 19th. November 19??

13.55 MGBs 87 and 89 left harbour. 14.35 5 buoy. 14.29 cut engines, oil pressure very low on 89. Returned to harbour, entered 15.29. 16.15 89 proceeded to N. Wall, centre engine unbuttoned 14.38. 87 proceeded. 14.50 54F buoy. 15.57 52 buoy cut engines, fired small arms. 16.02

sighted HMS Mallard. 16.10 52 buoy fired small arms. 16.39 contacted HMS Campbell. 16.50 carried out manoeuvres. 18.10 5 buoy. 21.35 vicinity of 60 buoy. Destroyers attacked vessel. Fired .5". Vessel fired two star cartridge, believed to be M.L. 22.20 55A buoy. 23.32 ship eight miles to N.W. torpedoed. Destroyer sighted E Boat to Port. Tracer observed coming from S. bound, convoy. Destroyer fired star shell; E Boat laid smoke-screen visible in star shell. 23.40 2 E Boats sighted on easterly course. Leading E Boat engaged on Port hand. Range 1,000 yards. Two E Boats sighted on Starboard beam and fired on. 23.45 left destroyer and proceeded to chase E Boat.

Thursday, 20th November. (MGB 87) 00.10 lost E Boat. Cut engines. 00.15 Proceeded to Brown Ridge. 01.16 Stopped at Brown Ridge. 02.24 Course S 10 E. 02.34 Cut engines. 06.05 left Brown Ridge. 07.45 Saw HMS Garth under tow. 08.05 5 buoy. 08.30 entered harbour.

(MGB 86) 13.30 Unslipped. Towed to Ice Quay for fuel and ammunition. 16.00 Towed to Hamilton Dock. 18.00 Immediate notice. Crew of MGB 91 standing by. 20.00 Starter on centre engine jammed, out of service.

(MGB 85) New engine moved. 10.25 Ship's company standing by 87.

I have had one letter from a Wren, who throws some light on life in Lowestoft during the War as well as some aspects of Mantis. I am afraid that I do not know her maiden name but she is now Mrs. Aspinall. She Writes :-

'I was a Wren billeted at the Kirkley Hotel, (5) for three years. I was fetching some pies from Pecks the pie shop and a plane came machine-gunning down the main street. I was really scared enclosed is the photograph of the captured E Boat what happened to it I don't know, I seem to remember some Germans coming off the docks with blindfolds on. When I was billeted at the Kirkley Hotel there was a nurse there, I think she was the daughter of the late (Lord) Somerleyton. I worked at Walkers' Stores. We kept parts for MTBs and MGB's. It was a kipper-curing factory so an old man told me who did spare time there There were 72 Wrens billeted in the Kirkley, of course they kept coming and going. The food was awful the only fish we got was some grade three salmon mixed up with all the bones, in with mashed potatoes; they called it fish pie. We got an egg once a month and they wasn't fresh. I guess it was better than being in Belsen.'

G.F. Lee (Ex-Radar) writes :-

'Our officers and ship's company assembled at Mantis in 1943 and travelled the short distance to Brooke Marine to collect MTB 681. We did the usual trials, then down to Weymouth to do our running-up training we joined up with our flotilla (58th MTB) at Lerwick under the command of Senior Officer Lt. Cmdr. Kenneth Gemmell In the spring of 1944 the flotilla moved down to HMS Mantis

Our first journey over to the Dutch Coast turned out to be a terrible night. Our MTB 681 was sunk by enemy ships and we lost two of our chaps We had seven days leave and then joined our second new boat from Brooke Marine, MTB 729, and rejoined the flotilla.' Mr. Lee enclosed a copy of the Naval Communiqués issued at the time :-

'June 9/10 1944. Boats; MTB 687, 666, 681, 684, 683, 723. Location: Off Egmond.. Nature of Action: Attack on patrol of four trawlers and one Gun Coaster. Result: In low visibility unit plotted and made torpedo attack firing eight torpedoes (CCR) and made hits on three trawlers. Unit re-forced and made second attack, firing two torpedoes and sinking the Gun Coaster. Claimed four ships sunk or severely damaged. German radio admitted three sunk. MTB 681 lost by fire and total casualties were two killed and seven wounded. Assessed as one Gun Coaster and two trawlers sunk and one trawler severely damaged - all by torpedoes.

Every picture tells a story. This certainly applies to a picture on one of the fly pages of Ford Jenkins 'Port War'. The picture shows a bonfire outside 'The Royal Hotel' fed mostly by black-out material from the hundred windows of the hotel this fire consumed a few tables and chairs (as well). The story of this bonfire was told to me by Douggie Sharp, the last C.O. of Mantis. (it was Douggie Sharp who paid off Mantis after V.E. Day). He writes:-

'That night the boys went crazy firing off two star cartridges and generally amusing themselves.

One gang of officers started lowering bunks and furniture out of the windows to make a great bonfire. The 1st Lieutenant suggested to them that the basement was half full of broken furniture etc. which would be easier to fetch and would burn beautifully. He told me what he had done to

save the mess furnishings and was amazed at my horrified reaction. I was the only person that knew that behind the stack of broken furniture and "general gubbins", which had been put there purposely, was the door to the rest of the cellar which was full of the Hotel's stock of wine and spirits which they hoped to sell when they took over the Hotel again. Hastily the 1st Lieutenant and one or two more senior officers, were able to attract the crowd away from the bonfire scheme before they discovered the doors or I feel certain there might have been a very unhappy ending?!

1. Walkers Store appears to have been Messrs. Walker & Son, net store, in Newcombe Road.
2. Ice Jetty. The old ice works on the South Quay, at the bottom of Riverside Road - formerly Ice Works Road.
5. Brookes. The Old Brookes Yard on the North shore of Lake Lothing.
4. Laundry Lane. This is now known as Eastern Way. It would appear that the Laundry Lane slip is now George Prior's slip.
5. Kirkley Hotel. This is not Kirkley House. This building was originally constructed in 1897 as two semi-detached houses, later converted into a hotel and then converted into an E.S.C.C. Old People's Home after the war. It has now been converted into flats.

THE LOWESTOFT SCENE 1990 TO 1991

by Jon Reed

The scene has been fairly static over the last twelve months, with the exception of two roadworks schemes, one completed and one just starting.

"Matters arising" from last year's report. The block of flats on the old Watson's Engineering site on St. Peter's Street is now complete and open. The Maltings at Oulton Broad are now complete, some flats being occupied and others being up for sale at above average prices. The expected upturn in house sales has not, in the event, been as high as anticipated. Although there is a steady movement, prices are still very depressed and the mortgage rates are still within a percent of 1990's high level. The fate of the Sparrow's Nest Theatre is settled, it is to be demolished as being too dangerous, according to a report in the E.D.P. Mortons now bears a notice that it has been sold. Rumour has it that it will become apartments and a leisure facility.

Not much more damage has been caused by gales. The trees that were in danger had already come down in 1987 and 1989. There are efforts being made to replant in various places, while fallen trunks still lie around in others. St. Marks Church bell tower, which was taken down after the gales last year, is still without its top. It will be repaired, hopefully, within the next year. Hamish Alger's builder's yard is somewhat cluttered with the remains that he rescued. Early in 1991 we had severe flooding. One of the casualties was the cellar of the Museum. This was full of water which actually covered the floor of the store and workshop by an inch or two. When it had been pumped out, the cellar floor was found to have been broken up by the force of the incoming water. Decisions on what to do about it are still awaited. The floods were not restricted to the immediate area. Blythburgh was flooded and the A12 was closed for some days. After that came the snow and ice. Railway services were disrupted and bus services cancelled, several of the main roads being impassable for a short while. In fact, Lowestoft was lucky compared to some places in East Anglia and Kent, which had at least half a metre of snow.

I reported last year on two accidents on the Lowestoft-Ipswich railway line. There have been two more in the last year, one at Victoria Road, Oulton Broad. In this case the man and woman survived, but British Rail are succumbing to pressure to put barriers back in. The second accident was a fatality near Halesworth. The signalling problems have kept on recurring but are claimed to have been cured. Time will tell.

A Tesco Superstore is being erected near Gunton Hall. As I write it is not yet open. An issue of "Post East" during the year reported on the number of trees being cut down on the site. Further up the road, the future of the American Theme Park at Corton appears to be in doubt. The company got into financial difficulties and a management buy-out seems to be in trouble. There have been a few changes of shops in the town, including the closure of Lilians on London Road South; but some new shops have been opened in a new complex on the old Eastern Coachworks site on Rotterdam Road.

Very little progress has been made on the famous Third Crossing. The line of the southern approach

has been altered to minimise the number of homes to be lost in the Durban Road area. Fen Park will still be cut in half, in fact it will virtually cease to exist. Proposals now include extending the dual carriageway south to join the Kessingland bypass. The rubbish tip opposite Pontins has now been sealed, by the way, leaving a sort of bare mountain. North of Lake Lothing the new road, opened in 1990, will have to be rebuilt to fit into the crossing scheme in the Normanston Park area. One is tempted to wonder whether road planners and architects ever talk to each other when it comes to forward planning.

The new road across Normanston Park to Oulton Road is, as I have said, open. There is a big roundabout at the Normanston Drive junction. At the moment the traffic is being turned off along the northern part of Oulton Road to come out at the north end of Oulton Village. This has caused storms of protest from the villagers. The new road will be continued on to meet the A12 somewhere beyond Foxburrow Hill - eventually.

This brings me to the disaster area in Oulton Broad. The new road is planned to go from a roundabout at the end of Victoria Road, to run east of Bridge Road, across a new bridge and to rejoin the existing road by the Wherry Hotel. As I write this in March, demolition has begun at the southern end. As I write this in March, demolition has begun at the southern end. Eastbike and Calor Gas have been flattened and the cottages on that side are having their roof tiles carefully removed, including Andrew Taylor's Newsagent and Tobacconist shop on the corner. No doubt by the time this is published, the destruction of trees and property will have progressed much further north. The road, which could be called a Planner's aberration, is due to open in 1992. I am making a photographic record of its progress and I have noticed several other people doing the same. Some of the affected businesses have already set up else where. For instance, the King Alfred pub on Burnt Hill Way, is now Pipers Club. It is a lot better patronised than the pub was. The club was sited in the buildings opposite the Wherry. When the chapel on the corner of Bridge Road and Victoria Road comes down, the foundation stone is reputed to cover a cache of relics of the time when it was laid, which should be interesting.

I have had reported to me that two old cottages which stood in Camden Street, between the High Street and Katwijk Way, have been demolished. Some small industrial units have been built at the bottom of Spurgeon Score and the offices of the Gallidoro Fishing Company in Lighthouse Score are being converted into flats. In south Oulton Broad the estate on the east side of Hollow Grove Way is rapidly taking shape. Not to be outdone, another developer is building at the top end of the big field bordered by Grove Road and Clarke's Lane. I have heard rumours that Clarke's Lane is to be closed in the middle. This would be a blessing since cars race up there and it is only about ten feet wide, with blind entrances to the roads on the Burnt Hill estate.

On the industrial scene, the Bally Shoe Factory has closed - put out of work by cheap foreign imports. This has taken away the jobs of over 100 people. There have been many small redundancies due to the recession. For example, about 20 went at Harrods Sports Equipment and 23 at Tasc Drives. On the other hand, Sanyo have announced that they hope to take on another 200.

For the future, those of you who might have travelled as far as Ipswich in March could have seen an exhibition of the plans of the Suffolk County Council and Waveney District for Lowestoft. You wouldn't have seen it in Lowestoft because it hasn't been here. The East Anglian Daily Times reported that its emphasis was on enhancing civic pride and conservation. There soon won't be a lot to conserve, but civic pride has received a boost from the recent expansion of the Lowestoft Society into the Lowestoft Civic Society. I hope they manage to have some restraining effect on the worst excesses of the authorities in the area. It is reported that Safeways are coming to the Gisleham estate, but this is so far unconfirmed. It also seems possible that Great Mills may be closing down their store on the same estate.

I finish with my usual apology for things I have missed, coupled with a renewed appeal to let me know of any change which is happening, or has been planned, in the Lowestoft area over the next twelve months.

**NON-CONFORMIST CHAPEL SURVEY UPDATE OF THE SURVEY COMPILED
IN OCTOBER 1977 - COMPLETED BY JEANNE JULINGS AND MARY GOFFIN IN
FEBRUARY 1991**

In 1977 Jeanne and Dennis Julings did a survey of Nonconformist Chapels in the Lowestoft area which was recorded in our Annual Report Vol. 10 1977/78. In 1990 the Suffolk Local History Council asked Local History Recorders in the County to do a survey of Non-conformist chapels, including Roman Catholic, in their areas. From this we found that the original 1977 Survey was no longer accurate and we have updated it. The Roman Catholic churches have been included in the Suffolk Local History Council survey, and sent to them. A detailed history of Roman Catholicism in Lowestoft can be found in a booklet by C.J. Brooks entitled "Stella Maris Souvenir Album" which is available for study in Lowestoft Reference Library and also in our own Museum Library. Do we now need to record the changes in the uses of Church of England churches in our area?

SECTION A. EXISTING CHAPELS

Denomination	Address of Chapel	History
Methodist	Carlton Road, Lowestoft	foundation date; April 1962
Methodist	Yarmouth Road, Lowestoft	opened Sept. 1970
Methodist	Shaw Avenue, Carlton Colville	opened May 1960. Building previously used by Seventh Day Adventists erected in 1930's.
Salvation Army	Beach Road, Lowestoft	foundation date; July 1898
Salvation Army	Carlton Road, Lowestoft	foundation date; 1906
Wesleyan Reform Union	Raglan Street, Lowestoft	foundation date; June 1964
Elim Pentecostal	St. Peter's St. Lowestoft	Formerly Methodist Church (foundation date 1876) Elim Pentecostal since 1961
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints	Yarmouth Road, Lowestoft	foundation date, Sept. 1967
Mission	Commodore Mission, Hall Road, Oulton Broad, Lowestoft.	foundation date; 1937. Present building opened May 1950. From 1937-1950 services were held in a rented building (a disused malthouse) in Commodore Road.
Baptist	Kirkley Park Road Corner; London Road South	foundation date; Oct. 1973
Baptist	Gunton - Hollingsworth Road Lowestoft	foundation date; 1951. Further building took place in 1962 and 1967
United Reform	London Road North, Lowestoft	foundation data; Church founded 1655. Present building opened Sept. 1852
United Reform	South Cliff, Pakefield Road, Lowestoft	foundation date; May 1903. Denominational change from Congregational to United Reform Oct. 1972
United Reform	Bridge Road, Oulton Broad, corner of Victoria Road.	In 1837 a wooden shed was erected - now demolished. In 1859 a stone chapel was erected on the same site. In 1897 a corrugated iron building was erected for use as a Sunday School and is still in use.

Denomination changed from Congregational to United Reform in October 1972.

Later became Free Presbyterian (Rev. Ian Paisley M.P.)

Buildings due for demolition to allow roadworks and new Mutford Bridge to be built 1991.

Fishermens Bethel Brethren	Battery Green Road, Lowestoft	Foundation date; 1899.
Fellowship of the Independent Evangelical Churches (F.I.E.C)	Fairfield Road, Oulton Broad	
F.I.E.C	Beresford Road, Lowestoft.	This building was formerly a net store and has been used by the Independent Chapel since 1969
Brethren	Kirkley Run Mission, Birds Lane, Lowestoft.	foundation date; 1907. (1977 survey shown as 'Brethren')
Brethren	Tonning Street, Lowestoft.	
Brethren	Colville Hall, Clifton Road, Lowestoft.	This building was an annexe for St. Peter's Church, Kirkley until the early 1930's when it became a dance hall. The Brethren have worshipped there since 1936.
F.I.B.C.	Mission Hall, Bridge Road, Oulton Broad.	This building was a Church School in the late 1800's. Used by the Local Education Authority for woodwork, art and cookery classes in the 1930's. Purchased by a member in 1960.
Seventh Day Adventist	London Road, Pakefield	foundation date; June 1974
Seventh Day Adventist	The Dell, Cotmer Road, Oulton Broad.	
Spiritualist National Church	Gordon Road, Lowestoft.	
Christian Spiritualist Church	Till Road, Lowestoft. Spastics Hall.	Meets on Sundays at this Hall which is used by many other organisations during the week.
Mission Hall	St. Georges Road.	foundation date; 1897. "Friends Mission Hall" named in brick above entrance.
Lighthouse Ministries. Name changing to Faith Christian Fellowship July 1990.	Crown Street Hall, Lowestoft.	Meets on Sundays at this Hall. Group founded in July 1989.
Lowestoft Covenant Church	Benjamin Britten High School	Meets on Sundays. Formed by group from Fishermans Bethel of Battery Green Road in May 1984.
New Age Spiritualist Church	Blundeston Village Hall	Service held at 6.30p.m. every Sunday. Started 11th Nov. 1990
Society of Friends (Quakers)	This building is now in use again	
Pakefield Street Chapel and Burial Ground		
Lowestoft Reformed Baptist	Richmond Road, Lowestoft	In 1977 survey a new Chapel called Reformed (Free Grace) Baptist was formed in Sept. 1977 and met in members' houses. Later they used the St. Johns Ambulance Hall in Oxford Road and in 1980 bought the Chapel in Richmond Road. Foundation date; 1878.

SECTION B. CLOSED CHAPLES

Methodist, Mutford, Nr. Lowestoft.	Demolished	Private residence now on site.
Foundation date; 1827.		
Society of Friends (Quakers)	Now in use again	
Pakefield Street.		

Railway Mission Denmark Road, Lowestoft. Foundation date; 1887	Demolished 1966	
Little Bethel, East Street, Beach Village Foundation date; 1902.	Demolished	
Gospel Hall Victoria Road, Oulton Broad.	Demolished	Surgery (Doctors) now on site.
Mission Hall, Crown Street, Lowestoft.	Re-opened as Crown Street Hall	Community Hall, also used on Sundays for Services by Faith Christian Fellowship
Fishermans Bethel, Commercial Road, Lowestoft. Foundation date; 1864	Demolished	
Baptist, London Road North, Lowestoft. Foundation date; 1899	Demolished 1974	Boots (Chemist) store now on site
Salvation Army Lorne Road, Lowestoft.	Closed	
Seventh Day Adventist, Regent Road, Lowestoft. Foundation date; 1954	Demolished	
Seventh Day Adventist St. Johns Road, Lowestoft.	Sold	Has been used as Jeckells shop, then as Auction Rooms now (1990) empty
Primitive Methodist Chapel Road, Carlton Colville, Lowestoft. Foundation date; 26th April, 1886	Sold – 1964	Purchased by Mr. C. Leech of Lowestoft used as sail-making business. The pews were removed and a new floor laid, but the pulpit still in the chapel.
Primitive Methodist St. Peters Street, Lowestoft. Foundation date; 10th Feb. 1876	Sold	Elim Pentecostal Church since 1961
Primitive Methodist Mill Road, Lowestoft.	Sold	Used by a local garage as a vehicle repair depot until demolished in 1986, site used as car showrooms.
Methodist, Lorne Park Road. Foundation date; 1903	Demolished	
Methodist, Kendal Road, Lowestoft.	Sold	Purchased in 1884 by Congregational Church, Pakefield Road and used by them as a Sunday School until 1959. Now used by Scout Group. Purchase price in 1884 - £329.
Methodist, Wesleyan High Street, Lowestoft.	Closed 1973	Built 1862, Sunday School added 1908 closed for worship 1973 and used as a store by Hughes Electrical. Demolished 1984. Opened as residential accommodation for the elderly as Wesley House in 1986. The crown badge on the east gable was salvaged from the Royal Hotel, built 1848 and demolished in 1974.
Methodist, Hall Road, Oulton Broad.	Demolished	Two houses erected on site - 140 Hall Road.
Methodist, Toning Street.	Sold 1968	Used by Chadds, local department store as storage depot.

Methodist, corner London Road North/Marina, Lowestoft.	Demolished	Two shops now on site. Proceeds from sale of site used to purchase ex-Seventh Day Adventist Church in Lowestoft Road, Carlton Colville (Shaw Ave.) for use by C/C Methodists.
Methodist, The Street, Wrentham		Planning permission was not granted to turn building into a house and the building is now used as a joinery.
Methodist, Sotterley	Sold	Foundation date 1824.
Seventh Day Adventist Shaw Ave, Carlton Colville	Sold	Sold to Methodists 1960 and now used as Methodist Church.
Baptist, High Street, Lowestoft.	Demolished	Foundation date June 1813 – now Watson's Garage.
Baptist, London Road North	Demolished	Now Westgate Store (Co-op. Soc. shops).
Congregational		Historical records are meagre but it seems that in about 1655 meetings were held in a barn in Blue Anchor Lane (now Dukes 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. White's "Suffolk Directory" of 1855 states: 'The new Congregational Church in London Road North was built in 1852 at a cost of £1,500 in Italian style, in lieu of the small chapel built in 1695 and now occupied by the Wesleyan Reformed.'
Baptist, Richmond Road, Lowestoft.		Foundation date 1878 now in use.
Mission Hall, Salisbury Road.	Closed	Now used as second hand furniture store.
Methodist, Oulton.	Closed	Amalgamated with the Church of the Good Shepherd
Union of Congregational Church/ Baptist Church, The Street, Somerleyton.	Demolished	Two bungalows now on site.
The Somerleyton Church.		<i>From 'The Ter-Centenary Souvenir', London Road Congregational Church (now United Reformed Church) 1965.</i> When Sir Morton Peto Partt 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 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 later moved to its present position.
Methodist, Commodore Road, Oulton Broad.	Sold	Land bought in April 1865 and building erected in Sept. 1865 with a mortgage of £100. Sold to Mrs. R. Jennings in 1983 now known as Rosina Jennings Hall. A Luncheon Club for the elderly held there until 1990. Services held at irregular times and building also used for Community meetings. The War Memorial, Roll of Honour W.W.1 from the now demolished St. John's Church (C. of E.) is now displayed and preserved in this building. Healing Services held occasionally.

NOTES ON THE HISTORY OF THE FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE, PAKEFIELD

by Mr R.J. Crozier

The present Friends Meeting House at Pakefield Street, Pakefield, probably date's from the mid 1840s. It is a single storey red brick building similar in style and size to the now demolished Meeting House at Hautbois in Norfolk. Friends, however, have worshipped and owned a Meeting House at

Pakefield since the earliest days of the Society. Records exist of the activities of these early Lowestoft Friends, even though the location of their Meeting House is not at present known.

Most early Friends were frequently at odds with the authorities over the matter of Tithes and the swearing of oaths of loyalty and or faithfulness. It was upon one of these matters that late 17th C Friends at Pakefield found themselves turned out of their place of worship onto the roadway. At this point they were arrested, put into a cart, and taken to the High Street to the local magistrate's house. At this place they refused to alight. The carter was instructed to let loose the belly band of the horse and so tip out the protesting Friends onto the High Street. It is likely that following this brush with the law some members would have served a short prison sentence or fine upon their property.

Most of the early records of Pakefield Meeting are missing. In fact it seems unlikely that any of the many usually meticulously kept minutes have survived. This misfortune is largely due to the way in which Pakefield has altered its Monthly Meeting status over the centuries. At different times it has been part of Norwich, Beccles, Ipswich and then Norwich and Lynn Monthly (business meetings). It is likely that the early records were lost at the time the small Monthly Meetings of Pakefield, Beccles and Yarmouth, meetings for worship, existed. The 100 year closure of Beccles meeting house and its dereliction could well be the root cause for this, as Beccles also seems to lack most of its early records.

In the second half of the 19th C alterations to the Meeting House seem to have been made. Evidence of this can be seen in the brickwork of the northern wall of the building. At the end of the century a further extension and porch was also constructed, presumably at the same time as the construction in St. Georges Road, Pakefield, of the Friends Mission Hall. In fact, the history of the last 100 years can hardly be separated from the growth, work and reinterpretation of the activities of the Friends Mission Halls in the town of Lowestoft.

Notable Friends attached to Pakefield in the closing years of the 19th C were Purseglove Leslie and his sister, both are buried in the Meeting House graveyard. They lived in the adjoining, and until recently, inter connected house to the south. Purseglove was a retired sea captain. The Le Gay Birleys of Oulton Hall were also members of the meeting for worship. They were of Belgian connection, though perhaps most notable as being one of the proprietors of the Eastern Daily Press. Several of the family are also buried in the graveyard.

The height of activity and work from the Meeting House was reached in the period up to the First War. In the 1890s a Sunday School for illiterates was started in the beating sheds of Colby Bros. opposite the Trowel and Hammer in Pakefield Street. This was the start locally of a large and continuing work.

At its height, just before the First War, there were Adult Schools at St. Georges Road, Salisbury Road and Victoria Road, Oulton Broad. Bible Classes for men, women and children, a brass band (the instruments of which formed the Lowestoft Town Band for many years) and a Bell Choir. The ideas and help of the Canadian Quaker Evangelist Alma Dale, who for a time lived at Walpole, were influential in this activity.

During the inter war years membership of the Meeting proper dwindled; however, Pakefield held its Preparative Meeting status until 1965. From then on, for the next 15 years, the building was closed. It was revived as part of a project for Rangers based at the Friends Mission Hall who were runners-up in a national adopt and cherish competition. Since this time activities have been renewed. Each Tuesday throughout the year a Coffee Morning is held to support the work of Friends overseas. Projects in Zimbabwe, Belfast, South Africa and Czechoslovakia have been, and continue to be, supported by the finances raised in this Meeting House.

A meeting for worship was restarted on the 3rd Sunday of each month five years ago. This is now a recognised Meeting for Worship, with a regular attendance of some 12/15 people. Three Pakefield friends are in membership of the Society of Friends at the moment. It may be of interest to note that the last Quaker Wedding to take place in Pakefield was some 30 years ago, between Judith Graham and Arthur Lee. Judith's father, and, in turn, her husband, were directors of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries Laboratories in the town.

THE TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS OF RESEARCH

by John Preston

When, in January 1990, the East Anglia Transport Museum Society - of which I am Secretary - took delivery of its most notable acquisition for some years, the body of a former Lowestoft tram, I thought I would try and put together some facts about it, for eventual display on the car itself.

This turned out to be a larger, and possibly more frustrating task than I had bargained for, but on the other hand it was to prove somewhat more interesting and enlightening to some extent.

My experience in the field of research was somewhat limited, to say the least, and in relative terms may still not be much greater now, but at least I think I do now have a greater appreciation of the problems researchers must face.

The car body itself was 'discovered' built-in to a bungalow in a suburb of Lowestoft, and details of its recovery have been highlighted elsewhere, but it is unique in so far as it is the only known example of 3' 6" gauge single-deck car with East Anglian origins. Thinking it was all going to be plain sailing, I made reference to a relatively recent publication, where I was hoping most of the work would have already been done for me. I could find plenty of detail but I became puzzled when the seating capacity of the car was quoted as being 50. I found this difficult to accept for a single-deck car of this gauge and style, especially as the double-deck version was shown as being only 48. Reference to a somewhat earlier publication still showed the seating as 50, and so if this was a mistake then it had been made much earlier.

The next step was to look up and search through whatever original documentation could be found in the archives of the local branch of the Suffolk Records Office, and this led me to a scrapbook of cuttings from newspapers and journals on Lowestoft's tramways, compiled by Mr. H Saunders, General Manager of the system from 1913 to the end of the Second World War. The inauguration of the town's tramways was on the 22nd July, 1903, and in all, there were cuttings from nine daily and six weekly newspapers, and a number of trade journals, all covering the event in some detail. With all this detail I did not think I could fail - but how misled I was.

After studying these reports, I was still not really helped as far as 'our' tram's seating capacity was concerned; figures varied from 38 to 48. However, while scanning through the cuttings it became apparent that there were other 'differences'. Even the present given to the mayor - who was also the Chairman of the Tramways Committee (Traction Committee in one version), was variously described as a punch bowl or a rose bowl. Most said the trams were painted in Munich Lake and Cream, but in a later publication this was given in Tuscan Red Primrose - maybe these are the same. Even the extent of the tramway varied, as reports varied between 4.08 and 8 miles; this could be possibly explained by the reporters being confused between the references to double and single-tracked sections.

Other differences noted were, the radius of the points - 100 ft. or 96 ft., the initial end to end fares - 1d. or 2d; number of cars in the first procession - 4 or 5; the southern terminus - Pakefield or Kirkley. Moving on a few years, there was even some argument as to who drove the last tram.

These variations haven't put me off though, in fact it looks like I am going to be 'hooked' on further research, if only to try and establish the true details, if this is possible at this late stage. As far as the seating capacity of our tram is concerned, and I now actually have a car to help me - I think it only could have had 38 seats in total; 26 in the main saloon, plus six in each end smoking compartment.

Any more qualified researchers care to make suggestion?