

Volume Twenty Six : 1993-94

Contents

“Mortons”	Jon Reed	1
HMS Mantis : Part 5	A M Turner	5
The Lowestoft Scene 1992-93	Jon Reed	8
Scole - An Archaeological Rescue	David Cuming	10
Pakefield Cliff Finds	Paul Durbidge	15
A Second Medieval Pit at Pakefield, Suffolk	Paul Durbidge	16
The Deeds of Laurel Farm, Oulton	Mary Goffin	21
Dowsing and Church Archaeology	Dr. N.B. Eastwood	22
A Most Conveniently Situated Small Farm – Part 2	Margaret Sanders	23

“Mortons”

by Jon Reed

This short history of Morton's Food factory is based on the talk given to the Society in April 1993 by Mr. Roy Charlesworth. I am indebted to Mr. Charlesworth for giving me a copy of his note and for vetting this article.

The Site

Until the late 19th century Lake Lothing extended south into Kirkley Ham. Between 1860 and 1890 the centre of the Ham was filled with the spoil from the excavation of Hamilton Dock. In 1894 a new road was built to connect South Lowestoft to Victoria Road. Before this the route to Oulton Broad was via Carlton Road and Kirkley Run. The remnant of Kirkley Ham can today be seen as the lake in Fan Park.

The road construction and the infill form the site occupied first by Lucas Bros. and then by Morton's, also the eastern and southern boundaries. To the north is a water frontage to Lake Lothing and to the west is Richards Shipyard. The factory site is one of the lowest points of the town, and has always been subject to flooding at high tides and in adverse weather conditions.

Lucas Bros.

The site was first occupied by Lucas Bros., a large firm of local builders making factory-produced timber work on contract, probably in the 1870's. Timber was brought in by sea and a railway existed on the site to move materials from the dockside to the storage areas. It seems likely that the trucks were horse-drawn, which is supported by evidence of a stable yard at the southern edge of the site. This was discovered when demolishing buildings to make a car park.

Lucas Bros. were heavily involved in the building of The Esplanade, Marine Parade, Kirkley Cliff, the Royal Hotel in 1848-9 (now demolished), St. John's Church in 1853 (demolished in 1970) and Lowestoft Central Station in 1853 (for which they supplied the Baltic timber of the roof that was taken down in 1993. There is some evidence that Lucas Bros. co-operated with Sir Morton Peto to a large extent in the development of the town. Lucas also supplied timberwork for Liverpool Street Station and the Albert Hall.

They had the contract for the supply and erection of huts and canteens for the Sudan Wars (1884-1899). The employees who volunteered to go out to carry out the erection were granted medals for their services.

In the 1866 Ordnance Survey, Kirkley Ham is there, but the Hamilton Dock isn't. In the 1890 O.S. map Morton's (or rather Lucas') site is shown with buildings on it. A contemporary painting shows a range of three-storey buildings, most of which survived until demolished in 1991 after Beecham Foods closed down the site. The picture also shows the Lucas wharf with a crane for loading and unloading timber and other material. Mr. Charlesworth says that an examination of the site shows that the painting was a more accurate representation of the position of the buildings than the O.S. map.

Lucas had a tiled sawing pit which was discovered during work some time ago, complete with a lining of sawdust in the bottom. An elderly bystander remembered spending eight or ten hours a day in the

pit at the bottom end of a large saw. The forges for making the various metal parts required were situated on the first floor of one of the buildings, as evidenced by flue openings and concrete bases found years later. Why they were above ground level is not known, but it is easy to speculate that the reason was to avoid flooding.

During the laying out of South Lowestoft, Lucas built a line of cottages in Clemence Street to house their workmen and families. {see *Lowestoft Through the Ages, Mr. M.L. Powell.*} In the 1970's excavations were carried out behind the river frontage on the main site and the remains of a red-brick structure were found. These included a tunnel heading south, large enough for a stooping man to walk through. Its purpose is not known, but it was heading towards the piece of land on the south side of Horn Hill known as Allertons Yard, which was later owned by Beecham Foods. The tunnel had collapsed after about 40 feet (12 metres) when found. Also found in the same area were four large timber piles which were probably there before the land fill.

In 1900 the site was acquired by C. & E. Morton for a fish processing plant.

Morton's

The company originated as J.T. Morton of Aberdeen. Two brothers, Charles and Edward Morton, set up C. & E. Morton. They developed factories in Lowestoft, Megavissey in Cornwall, Cubitt Town and Millwall. Their headquarters were at the Minories in the City. Their factories was said to have produced anything that could be bought in a grocer's shop – from cornflour to cigarettes, canned fish to meat paste. They built up a very good name and became suppliers to the British Army serving in India through the East India Company, and to many other parts of the world. It is said that most steam ships leaving British ports at that time carried Morton products. As late as 1985 samples of canned goods – peas, beans etc. were still being sent to the British Ambassador's Residence in New Delhi.

With this business there developed a very efficient export trade. They had the largest water frontage on the Thames in the Isle of Dogs area. The company's expertise in exporting, and its connections with the British Administration in India, made it possible to supply anything to anyone anywhere. They sent their products to all parts of the world including Iquitos, 2300 miles up the Amazon, Baghdad, Mecca and Iceland.

In 1902 the factory was the largest herring cannery in the British Isles. They canned around 20 million herrings in a season. Herring was landed directly on the quay heading; gutted, cleaned and packed into cans, either salted (roused) or smoked. The herring was a seasonal harvest and tended to create a glut. The site at Allertons Yard was a pickling plot, with girls, working in all weathers, gutting and packing the fish into barrels in the 1920-30's. These were shipped to many parts of the world. The range of buildings at the west side of the main site were originally smokehouses with floor fires, oak chips being stored in nearby buildings. The smokehouses were modernised in 1948 to more efficient kilns, but the equipment was soon after removed and the buildings used for other purposes.

Morton's supplied rations to the ill-fated Scott Antarctic Expedition and also to the expeditions of Sir Ernest Shackleton and Sir Douglas Manson. During the First World War the factory was working for the Ministry of Food, manufacturing Beef & Vegetables in cans for the troops in France. In the Second World War the factory was providing ration packs for the forces and packing Red Cross parcels for prisoners of war, also experimenting with dried vegetable preparation at the Cubitt Town factory. Arthur Wicks, later the Production Manager, was sent to Cubitt Town to work on this project. He travelled there and back at weekends on his bike.

Up to 1940 all the cans were made on site. A range of buildings on the east side of the site contained presses, formers, seamers and a lacquering shed making cans of various sizes. Between 1920 and 1930 there were over 200 tinsmiths working on piece work. In the 1940's Metal Box Ltd. negotiated the can-making contracts, bought up all the machinery and broke it up for scrap. In 1966 the last tinsmith, Mr. T. Bolton, was still working in the Maintenance Department.

After World War Two the company picked up where it left off. Fishing restarted and herrings were again packed. A wide range of other products was produced, such as Christmas Puddings, fish and meat pastes, soups etc. The herring industry began to decline and areas of the factory were changed for other processes. In the rush to change to wartime production in 1939 a concrete floor had been laid hurriedly over the salting vats. In 1946 the floor was broken up and it was discovered, that the vats were still full of herring in perfect condition. They were packed and made very good eating.

In the mid 1940's experiments were carried out to develop methods for canning vegetables. Although fruit and meat canning were well established at that time, canned vegetables required different

techniques. Canned processed peas, for instance, were almost unknown before 1945-50. The introduction of these products to replace the herring business meant radical alterations to the factory layout.

The herring processing machinery was stripped out and the cannery re-equipped with the most up-to-date machinery then available, much of it being tried and proved at the factory. In 1948-50 the Morton's factory was one of the most modern units in Europe with lines running at 80 to 250 cans per minute, depending on can size.

In 1945-6 the Morton's factory was bought out by Beecham's and later became part of Beecham Foods Ltd. Some changes were made to the use of the buildings, but many of the old names still clung on. The Soup Kitchen no longer made soup, the Knobbing Room where herrings used to be decapitated, the Kipper Kiln with not a kipper in sight, the Cereal Floor with no cereals and the Dairy, which had been used for the production of a milk chocolate drinking powder.

Beecham Foods

Changes were made when Beecham Foods took over. Mr. Charlesworth joined the firm in 1956, so has first-hand knowledge of the changes.

The most important was the development of the Garden Pea crop. This was seasonal, lasting only six weeks, when everything just had to run smoothly, since peas had to be in the can within two hours of being vined (threshed). Apart from the whole permanent staff of some 400, there were an additional 400-450 casual staff taken on for the campaign, during which 12 to 14 million cans of peas were processed. The Field Department controlled the growing and harvesting, contracting with farmers within a 50 mile radius. Until the 1960's the crop was cut, loaded onto any available transport (I can recall the old, slow tractors and their highly-loaded trailers trundling through the lanes into town), unloaded at Allertons Yard and fed into the 12 static viners. The peas were beaten out of the vines, winnowed, weighed, washed and convoyed into the factory, the waste being returned to the farms. The road congestion was bad at times with both Beecham's and the Co-op, within half a mile of each other, both struggling to get their peas through in the fastest possible time. The chaos on the road was mirrored in the factory at times with peas arriving from all directions, including seven other vining stations in the countryside which had very little contact with the factory. The viners at Allertons Yard started up at 5 a.m. and were often still hard at work at 9 p.m. The factory lines started up at 6 a.m. and it was not unusual for the Factory Manager to have the gates locked until all the peas had been canned, often well after midnight.

As the seasons passed, the static viners were replaced by mobile ones which did the beating and winnowing in the fields. They were controlled by radio communication from the factory and bulk containers were used to transport the peas to the factory. Handling at Allertons Yard improved and batch cooking at the factory was replaced by continuous cooking, due to the installation of a hydrostatic cooker and an additional chain cooker. After that the batch cookers (vertical retorts) were only used for pie fillings.

In about 1984 a major update introduced a fully automated line to replace three existing lines. This was capable of producing shrink-wrapped packs from bulk peas at the rate of 600 packs per minute, under computer control.

These lines continued to run until the factory was sold to Hillsdown in 1988. When the factory was stripped out later on, some of the machinery was reinstalled elsewhere.

Products

Apart from garden peas (already described), there were processed peas. The sorting and cleaning of these peas was quite complex. A mechanised plant removed all unwanted material, then winnowers removed light material and an air float bed removed stones and immature peas. Needle sorting drums then took out any peas with maggot holes, the peas with holes sticking on the needles. Any stained peas were removed in electronic sorters and the peas were then passed into large tanks to soak overnight. 15 to 20 tons were processed each day. Filling, processing and packing completed the cycle. In 1957 there were five canning lines in existence which produced four sizes of cans at rates from 80 to 250 cans per minute. Cans were cooked in baskets with three baskets in each retort or cooker. The baskets contained cans and were filled by hand. Packing lines were also manually fed after the cans were cooked and dried. That part of the process was much the same for all vegetables but the initial preparation was different.

Carrot topping was at first done mechanically, but this was found to be very wasteful and was dropped

in favour of hand topping. This was done at three or four topping stations within a 25 mile radius. Topped carrots were brought in, washed, steam peeled, graded, packed and processed.

Broad beans were processed after the pea season. At first they were podded by squeezing between rollers, but were later vined. They were a relatively small crop.

Beans in tomato were canned in quite large quantities before 1957 but, because bean supplies became difficult, production was stopped.

Runner beans followed broad beans. These were grown locally but were a major problem because of stringiness. Originally they were topped and tailed by hand and broken to check for stringiness before being sliced. After one very bad season the factory changed to a stringless variety, which eliminated the problem.

Potatoes, butter beans etc. were canned on trial runs but no serious production was undertaken.

Fruit Pie Fillings

The first of the fruit pie fillings was the blackcurrant. It was produced to use up a surplus of fruit held by the company from its fruit drink production. The product was hitherto unknown in the U.K. and was quite quickly expanded into other varieties. They were very successful and were widely sold. There still exists a film of the advertisements for pie fillings.

Confectionery

The most famous confectionery product of recent years is the Murraymint. However, confectionery production goes way back to the first half of the century. There are some very amusing tales of the early products. Peppermint tablets, which were large and very hot, were made and exported to the Middle East. When the tablet size and the strength were reduced, the sales slumped. Investigation showed that they were no longer acceptable to the camels that used to receive them as a reward. Another peppermint, rather smaller, was impressed with a head of Queen Victoria. When she died, Morton's updated the design to a head of Edward VII. The trade with India dropped alarmingly because the Indians didn't think they were as good without the head of the old queen. One product was packed in a sort of "Dorothy Bag" with drawstrings. This was sold in the Middle East. When the bags were removed to reduce costs, the sales dropped severely. The packaging was the valued item and was used by the women to hold salt, a very precious commodity, under their skirts by the drawstrings.

Morton's bought up a small sweet factory in London called Murrays. At first Murraymints were produced at the Millwall factory, but were transferred to Lowestoft when Millwall closed down. They were an extremely successful line. Beecham's also transferred Mac Throat Sweets to Lowestoft from the Macleans factory on the Great West Road in London, in about 1968.

The introduction of the Regent Chocolate Assortment to the Lowestoft factory necessitated major structural alterations, with air-conditioned packing areas and a starch drying plant. Other lines were Murray Fruit Pastilles, Ribona Pastilles, Murray Fruits and Murray Caremels. When Beecham's bought up the Pascal Confectionery Co. they dropped the Regent Chocolate Assortment in favour of the Pascal version, the machinery being taken out of the Lowestoft factory, eventually the Murray brand name was sold, Mr. Charlesworth believes, to Cadbury, leaving only the Mac Throat sweets at Lowestoft, and they continued until the factory was closed.

Other Products

Morton's produced several other lines, mainly to make effective use of labour at quiet times. Pickles packed in glass jars were introduced. Vegetables, onions, cauliflower, gherkins etc. were shipped in from Holland and stored at Allertons Yard. They were place-packed by hand very prettily, with layers of a piece of cauliflower in each corner, separated by a gherkin and an onion. Various cereal products were also packed, such as pearl barley, semolina, custard powder, sherbet and such remedies as Epson Salts and bicarbonate of soda. This is just a sample of the wide-ranging products of the company.

Some Staff Members

Many people, both men and women, made significant contributions to the success of the factory, people going back over the years whose names Mr. Charlesworth does not even know. However, there were a few who were known to most of the workforce and respected throughout the industry for their knowledge of the business and recognised contribution to its success.

For instance, Mr. Arthur Wicks, who started with the company when he was 17 and remained there until retirement. He had been the Production Manager for many years and knew the canning business.

He was very well known and respected. Mr. Bill Root, the Chief Chemist, had been with Crosse and Blackwell in England and Belgium, Mr. Ted Cox joined Morton's at their London office as a boy and completed 45 years with the company. Mr. F. Reeve was the Chief Engineer from about 1945 until he went to Headquarters. Mr. Bill Betney was the Factory Manager from about 1965 until just before it closed. Mr. Charlesworth himself joined Beecham Foods in 1956 after working at Brooke Marine. He started as Assistant, became Chief Engineer and went on to Assistant Factory Manager until he retired in 1985. He succeeded Mr. Peter Silverton in that post when Peter left to manage the Walls Pork Sausage Factory at Evesham.

Machonochies

There is some confusion about the relationship between Morton's and Machonochies. J. & A. Machonochies set up a factory in 1870 in Raglan Street for fish processing and the manufacturer of toiletries, similar in some way to the Morton's production. They moved to a site in Kirkley Ham in 1890, to the west of Richard's Shipyard. They were quite distinct from Morton's.

Mr. Charlesworth recalls seeing the name Machonochies on the wall of the C.W.S. factory.

A general acknowledgement to Mr. Roy Charlesworth, whose notes and assistance have enabled this article to be written.

H.M.S. Mantis – Part 5

by A.M. Turner

Last year's article starts with the first of a pair of anonymous poems. The second one is called " 'Z' Patrol".

A filthy night, black and wet;
We blame the ops' and curse the met.
Our boots are full, our oilskins leak,
Too rough for Kye, no time for sleep.

With eyes full of salt we strain to see
Whether that black shape's an 'R' or 'E',
Or maybe something that isn't there,
Radar confirms – his scan is bare

All night long we continue patrol,
A constant pitch, an occasional roll,
No enemy met – no battle tonight,
Maybe for him the weather's not right.

Dawn at last, a welcome sight,
Back to base, sleep, prepare for the night.

(Note : Kye – a hot drink, probably strong chocolate or cocoa.)

John Ramsden sent me the following :

'I served on M.T.B.'s at Lowestoft for three years, 1942-45, and I would like to pay tribute to one of the residents.

Well do I remember coming back off night operations in the middle of winter with 'icicles on our eyebrows' and handling lines with fingers that would not bend. Then around 4 a.m. or so with the boat secure, we would make our way through the dock gates. There, just outside, was a small wooden hut, manned by a lady called 'Ma Kitson', ready and waiting for us with steaming mugs of tea and

battered buns. If anyone deserved a medal this lady did for her devotion to duty. She never let us down. I'm sure I'm not the only one who was grateful to this wonderful woman.'

I am devoting the rest of this year's article to a general account by Roy Perrott. Parts of three short paragraphs of this account did appear in part one of this series to help to set the general scene, but, for the sake of continuity, I am repeating them here in full.

Along with coastal force flotillas based at Great Yarmouth (H.M.S Ridge) and Felixstowe (Beehive), the boats sailing from Lowestoft (Mantis) had the job of helping the protection of convoys making their stealthy, night-time passage up and down the coast of East Anglia. This stretch of the shipping lane was the celebrated 'E-boat alley' where the risk of attack was greatest, being in easy reach of those fast German torpedo-boats based in Dutch ports. At the same time the faster British boats (the M.G.B.'s and M.T.B.'s) made regular sorties across the North Sea to strike enemy shipping with gun and torpedo attacks and by laying mines, and thus they saw most of the action.

The M.L.'s were the all-rounders of coastal forces, used in a variety of roles in most theatres of war. Many of them were built in East Anglian boatyards by family firms whose shipwrights had constructed the drifters for the herring fishery and, going further back, the old red-sailed fishing smacks. So much traditional skill went into the building of coastal force craft and it is remarkable how rarely any basic flaws came up despite their years of sea-time.

In the North Sea the ML's were one of the mainstays of convoy protection and these brief notes deal with them mostly because, as 1st Lt. of one of them, M.L. 116, that is simply the area I know best. Every night when the sea was flat enough to allow the chance of a visit by E-boats up to a dozen M.L.'s drawn from the three ports mentioned, plus some M.G.B.'s, left harbour in pairs to station themselves out on the Z-line, as it was called, about 20 miles from the coast.

This was the first line of defence for the inshore convoy route and, as I remember it, it stretched from a position off Harwich up to the latitude of Cromer, about a hundred miles of seaway. So it was quite a thin line, despite some reinforcement by armed trawlers or a destroyer. Though it could not always deter E-boats from getting through the wide gaps between Z-line boats, it generally worked well as an early-warning-system of attack.

So there we are (let's say) leaving Waveney Dock, Lowestoft, at dusk on an averagely breezy evening. As one of the duty-boats, much of the day had been spent getting final defects from the last outing put right. Sometimes, we half-joke, we feel we're guinea-pigs for the post-war yacht industry, finding out the hard way what apparatus goes wrong at sea and what doesn't. As we are lucky with an energetic base staff we are fairly quickly in a shipshape state. Then fuel and ammo need to be topped up, guns checked, latest chart corrections done.

Finally the skippers go to a briefing at the Ops Room along the quay; and a very brief briefing it usually is. They will hear about the expected weather, details of the night's convoy and its escorts, who else is in the Z-line, and the secret recognition codes for the night. Apart from that it's the same old North Sea just like the last time we were out. As usual, the important piece missing is any idea of enemy intentions. If the sea is getting a bit rough, blowing force 5 or more, then there are slimmer chances of an attack when torpedoes can't be fired accurately; but you can't make a habit of counting on it. There is no clear pattern in the attacks. A long stretch of perfect nights can go by without a murmur. Then, just as the Z-line boats are going numb with monotony, there's an eruption of tracer along the coast and they're here again. It's, an unpredictable little war.

As we clear harbour there's increased activity at the HQ of C. In C., Nore, at Chatham which controls naval operations over the whole area we work in with Captain Coastal Forces especially in charge of the little ships. The big plot table there shows the up-to-date situation so that the Ops officers can see at a glance what forces to direct to trouble-spots. The Wren plotters are pushing counters with our numbers on out to sea, like Monte Carlo croupiers.

To supplement the warning system of the Z-line there are listening posts along the coast where other Wrens gamely spend their unromantic nights with headphones glued on. E-boat captains have a habit of chattering to each other by radio-telephone, and this traffic can give clues to the scale and direction of an enemy sortie; but any such chatter can mean the captains are already through the line and getting pepped up about sighting a target. So it needs speed from the Wrens and Ops Officers to get a warning to the convoy and its escorts.

Once on station the M.L.'s cut engines and prepare for the night's rock-and-roll. The hydrophone is lowered over the side. This is a simple listening device, able to pick up enemy propeller noises at a

distance – just a twelve-foot steel pole with a receiver down in the water and a pair of headphones at the inboard end. The deck watch takes turns to listen while look-outs scan the horizon.

Occasionally there's an incident that merits an extra-alert and doubling-up the watch. Sparks passes up a signal reporting action down Harwich way. Up here, somewhere off Norfolk, we stay put, but E-boats often operate in scattered groups so if one lot has been spotted we have to reckon there are more elsewhere.

Or we see a flare dropped miles out to sea and suppose it's a Coastal Command aircraft taking a look at something suspicious. Or – as happens once or twice in some months of patrol – we hear the whirring of high-speed props in the headphones distinct enough for the skipper to order 'action stations', anyway, it's good practice, he says. This time there's some suspense as the sound increases and a pair of black shapes with bow waves can be faintly picked up at 400 yards, seemingly coming right at us. Since the boats are coming from the shore direction the best guess is that they're a couple of our own fast craft, being scrambled out on a mission someone has forgotten to tell us about; but unwise to guarantee it. They could be E-boats going home undetected after a quiet minelaying job.

Seconds tick by and it's getting worrying, there's no signal from them and it is still not easy to identify the silhouette of friend or foe from this angle. If friendly, don't they know we've become part of the Z-line furniture out here, like Eddystone lighthouse? Fingers are on triggers (but safety catches on). The skipper has all of 15 seconds to decide what to do. Challenge them with a lamp? but if they are chums of ours they may have some good reason for wanting to keep total black-out. At the speed they're going they'll hardly have time to reply any way. On the other hand, if they are E-boats then flashing some feeble lights at them at this stage will just reveal our doubts and hesitations. They will make their first shots count.

The skipper shrewdly decides to wait and do nothing; but, as a last resort, in case our impetuous friends do start shooting us up, he picks up the signal pistol which will fire three small flares a few feet into the air, in the secret colour code for the night (the recognition signal) to show we are true-blue Brits. As even this could look aggressive to edgy gunners he holds his hand a few seconds more. Then, sure enough, a couple of white ensigns flash past our stern fifty yards away. We return to our cooling cocoa, half-cursing these intrepid M.T.B. types for being so nerveless.

Despite the spells of monotony there is enough activity to need alertness and two Lowestoft M.L.'s one night showed a brilliant speed of response. On the night of 24th September, 1943, a group of mine-laying E-boats was detected due east of the port. M.L. 150, commanded by Lt. J.O. Thomas, R.N.V.R. and M.L. 145 (Lt. R.F. Seddon, R.N.V.R.) were signalled to intercept. The enemy had sunk a trawler by torpedo and were hastening home. With barely half the speed of an E-boat, and sighting the enemy at 500 yards, Thomas decided he had one chance to go for it.

He went in to ram the second of three E-boats and hit it with a rending crunch, throwing his crew flat on the deck. M.L. 150 lost nearly all its bow in the impact. M.L. 145 joined in with all guns blazing and rammed the same E-boat head on while under fire. The other two E-boats mistakenly thought the British boats outnumbered them and scarpered, leaving their sister-boat on fire and about to be scuttled. M.L. 145 picked up thirteen prisoners, including two officers. Both M.L.'s were badly damaged but limped into Lowestoft next day to find the whole base had turned out to cheer them in.

Considering the technical superiority of the E-boat flotillas, with good armament and capable of 40 knots, one of the remaining mysteries is why they did not hit the coastal convoys harder and more often. The convoys included some valuable ships, such as big tankers and cargo ships. Had the E-boats been as hard-worked and tenacious as our M.G.B.'s and M.T.B.'s were on the enemy coastline (where good targets were scarce) they could have achieved damaging results. It is all the more strange when one sees what a force the Germans could assemble when they set their minds to it.

A month after the success of the M.L. action above, on 24th October, 1943, no fewer than thirty E-boats are estimated to have joined in attacking a north-bound convoy near Smith's Knoll, a sandbank off the Norfolk coast. The attackers were first driven off by the escorting destroyers, Worcester and Mackay. When further attacks developed and E-boats seemed to be everywhere, the Chatham operations room skilfully assembled counter-moves by directing boats from the Z-line to the trouble spots and by scrambling others from Lowestoft and neighbouring ports.

In his vivid account of that night, the late Lt. Cdr. Peter Scott estimates that sixteen different actions were joined. In one of the fiercest encounters, two large 'D' class M.G.B.'s took on a bigger force of E-boats. The senior officer, Lt. R.M. Marshall, R.N.V.R. sank one E-boat by ramming at almost full

speed, disabling his own boat in the process with five crewmen killed by gunfire. The outcome of this hectic night was that four E-boats were sunk for the loss of one British trawler while the convoy was amazingly left unscathed.

The Lowestoft Scene 1993 to 1994

by Jon Reed

Last year this piece started, with floods. This year floods and storms have again grabbed the headlines. The fate of Covehithe has been much in the local news. Last May there was an exhibition at the Central Library concerning erosion at Covehithe and Pakefield. Then there was the Suffolk History Fair at Stowmarket, for which the Museum and Society mounted an exhibit which included a feature on Covehithe. This was repeated at Wrentham in August, arousing a lot of interest at both venues. In January Paul Durbidge spoke to us on Covehithe, a talk which brought in nearly twice the average attendance, including several people from both Covehithe and Wrentham!

The winter storms have been particularly nasty this year. Not only have large stretches of cliff been eroded away, but there has been a great deal of flooding. In October Lowestoft had very nearly three inches of rain in one day resulting in flooding in the town centre, at Kessingland Dam, at Wrentham where the A12 was closed for some time, at Barnby, Mutford, Hulvergate and, inevitably, at Oulton Broad – the Museum and the Lady of the Lake were yet again flooded. In November the whole cycle was repeated twice. First we had severe rain and gales with winds up to 80 miles an hour. The usual flooding occurred and, hardly had it subsided when we had a quite severe snowstorm. The thaw three days later compounded the problems. Since then we have had a lot of rain and, as an instance, Carlton Marshes and the adjacent Golf Club are only just starting to dry out as I write this in March. The Water Authority says that supplies are still low because it takes a long time for water to seep down through the strata, but very many people find this hard to believe.

This has been a year of Plans. In March '93 the Coastal Plan was unveiled to a chorus of criticism, not least from Peter Boggis of Easton Bavants, who called it immoral. However, Professor Keith Clayton said that he agreed with the plan to let Nature take its course with all but coastal towns. Is Lowestoft about to become a peninsular again? Also in March '93 it was announced that some of Hamilton Dock would be filled in to make a new jetty in an expansion of the port. In September British Rail announced plans to curtail weekend services on the Ipswich-Lowestoft line. Fears were expressed that the line would be closed after privatisation. The reductions in service have taken effect.. In October the plans for Sizewell C were unveiled amidst protest. (During the previous months a transformer at Sizewell A exploded and some shortcomings were discovered in the safety systems of Sizewell B). Plans were announced to build a Wind Farm at Easton Bavants with five windmills some 130 feet high, each generating 500 Megawatts. {Editor – seems to be a too high figure, perhaps it should be 50 Mw} This has caused trouble on the grounds of noise and unsightliness. Nobody seems to have related the siting to the Coastal Plan, which proposes to lose Easton Bavants to the sea. Then there was the huge fuss over N.H.S. plans to merge Great Yarmouth and Norwich Health Authorities. There were real fears that James Paget Hospital would be closed to Lowestoft – or even closed altogether. The hospital Chief executive, Gary Muter, resigned in April '93 but, eventually, in spite of vehement and almost unanimous local protest, the merger was approved by the East Anglian Regional Board. For weeks the Lowestoft Journal carried a spate of letters condemning the decision. It is perhaps worthy of mention that a new Charity Shop has opened at James Paget in September and that the Chairman of the Board wrote a full-page letter to the Journal assuring everybody that there would be no change in the hospital or to the right of Lowestoft people to use it. Jack Rose has announced that he hopes the opening of yet another museum, this one on World War 2, would take place on the 50th anniversary of D-day.

On the industrial front, there have been some not unexpected events and some good and bad news. Tasc Drives duly moved to Norwich and the factory is now occupied by Sanyo. Two companies of ex-Tasc employees, Triac Services and Spectral Engineering, have received Waveney Bureau Awards along with five other Companies. Brooke Yachts was wound up in March last year, owing a German firm some £50,000. That was a bad week as Richards announced the next day 30 redundancies, on top of 35 earlier in the month, and 21 of their 54 apprenticeships were suspended. On a visit in May the Princess Royal launched the car ferry "Caledonian Isles", built by Richards for the Caledonian and

MacBrayne Line. This was their last order but they are trying for more ferry contracts. Also in May Sanyo announced that they were doubling output. They had taken on an extra 100 in February and were looking for 40 more people. The Morton's site is still a wasteland. In May '93 the Diss branch of Harvest Poultry was sold in a management buy-out worth £6M. The Lowestoft factory was on offer at the same time, but the offer was not accepted and it remained part of Hillsdown (who bought out Beecham's and closed it down). Then in August the announcement was made that Harvest Poultry in Lowestoft would close in November with the loss of over 300 jobs. It duly closed on November 26th, S.L.P. gave the news in April '93 that they had secured a contract worth £20M for Shell U.K.'s Brent Field, unfortunately the work went to their Teeside plant. About the same time K.Y.E. Ltd. announced they would take on 60 more staff. Their workforce was 20 at Christmas '92 and had gone up to 100 by April '93. Gallidoro Trawlers, who went into receivership in 1992, asked for an enquiry into the conduct of the receivers, but it was ruled out. In January Shell confirmed that they are to develop two gas fields off Norfolk and stated their long-term commitment to their headquarters in Lowestoft. Hoseasons completed their move into the old Bally Shoe factory and Lovewell Blake moved into the ex-Hoseasons office in Oulton Broad. In February Birds Eye Walls wanted 160 people for their extended plant, to work on chicken products.

Last year I reported that a new Free Presbyterian Church was taking shape in Victoria Road. It was duly opened on March 20th, 1993 by Ian Paisley and his son Kyle, who is the incumbent.

On the roads, the finalisation of the Oulton Broad scheme caused chaos in March '93 when the road was made up between the Wherry Hotel and Oulton Broad North Station. The new system has generally performed well over the last 12 months. It was announced in April '93 that the scheme won the Institution of Civil Engineers prize for East Anglia. In July the Eastern "Bypass" was started. By mid-January traffic was using the road but the pavements were still an awful mess. It was officially opened in February. In November there was a fuss over the lack of pedestrian crossings and the Journal of November 18th carried a most amusing cartoon on the subject. The upper part of Cotmer Road has had completely new drains laid. Part of it was closed in the spring of 1993 and the other part, just beyond the Cotmer Road/Colville Road roundabout, was closed later in the year for seven weeks, only re-opening in November. At the same time the Cotmer Road/Conrad Road junction was severely narrowed to "reduce accidents". About half a mile away, again at the same time, two lots of roadworks were badly affecting Elm Tree Road. The junction with Ashburnham Way was disrupted to put a right turn lane in and the Long Road roundabout was rebuilt because the road surface had collapsed. The Lowestoft Bridge stuck open a few times and in January and in February was closed all day Sundays for five weeks to affect maintenance.

In June Waveney District Council applied for "Assisted Area Status" because of the severe unemployment, well above the national average. In October it was announced that Lowestoft had not got "Assisted Area Status", although Great Yarmouth had. Nothing daunted, the Council applied for E.C. Grant Aid, backed by the government, and it was granted in January, for all areas in the town except Gunton and Oulton Broad. It could amount to £10M and will be spent on such things as tourism, training, business support and "infrastructure", whatever that might be.

Various new facilities have opened during the year. South Point Pavilion was opened on May 29th and has proved a good source of interest for visitors. On March 25th '94 the refurbished restaurant was opened and is hoping to serve traditional Suffolk dishes, in April '93 the Disabled Resource Centre for Independent Living was opened in Rotterdam Road (I reported last year on the destruction of a row of fishermen's cottages to make way for this). In October the new Grove Primary School was opened at Carlton Colville and the Warren School announced they had reached their £120,000 target for a new swimming pool – which will be a source of disappointment to footballers and dog walkers when they lose the field behind the school.

I have mentioned that the Princess Royal launched a ferry at Richards. Her main reason for coming was to open the Save The Children shop in Bevan Street, in her capacity as Chairman.

In September Eric Lawes' Hoxne find was ruled Treasure Trove at an inquest held in Lowestoft. An initial estimate of the share-out between him and the farmer on whose land it was found was £5M. The British Museum, who have had the finds on display, say that they are still negotiating the amount.

In October Shirley Webster-Jones of the Cheese Shop was made one of the Women of the Year and had the dubious privilege of being interviewed by Gloria Hunniford at a celebratory luncheon in London.

For the whole of August a broadcasting licence was granted to Lowestoft Town Radio (LTR-FM). It was a successful venture, presented by Keith Greentree from the Poplars Primary School. Proceeds went to Lowestoft Hospital and the licence is due for renewal in 1994.

There is a proposal to phase out County Councils and the various options for Suffolk have been discussed widely. Waveney District Council have opted for a "stand-alone" situation, albeit with slightly revised boundaries. There would be three other authorities in the county, one of these covering Ipswich. A decision is due in the next few months.

Finally two pieces of wet news, one good and one bad. In August Adnams Extra was voted Champion Beer by CAMRA (the Campaign for Real Ale). The bad news is that contractors on behalf of Suffolk Water will be lining the mains in the middle of the town. This, it appears, means digging holes all over the town, and we all know what that means !

Scole - An Archaeological Rescue

by David Cuming

The archaeological site was land originally owned by the Church, who sold it to the Ministry of Transport. The fields had been declared a Scheduled Monument Site about ten years ago, as a result of the excavations of G. Moss.

The advent of a by-pass at Scole made an archaeological survey at the ancient site south of the A143 to Diss a matter of urgency, and it had to be completed before the construction of the by-pass began in late November. The rescue was undertaken by the Norfolk and Suffolk Archaeological Unit. I visited the site in September, October, and with other members in November as the excavation was drawing to a close, and the following is a compilation of the information I gathered as the excavation advanced.

Roman Scole (Villa Faustini) was a town typical of the type built by Romans, close to river crossing and/or where there were tribal concentrations, as there would have been along the River Waveney. It was situated on the Roman road between Colchester (Camulodunum), and Caister St. Edmund (Venta Iconorum) roughly following the current A140. With earthworks at nearby Stuston, possibly an Auxiliary fort and a large villa, thought to be part of a large industrial estate, was either part of the town or in the vicinity.

The archaeological remains of the major part of the Roman town has long been lost under residential and other development of modern day Scole.

The Norfolk Unit's site was immediately off the road, whereas Suffolk's Unit was further off down by the Waveney.

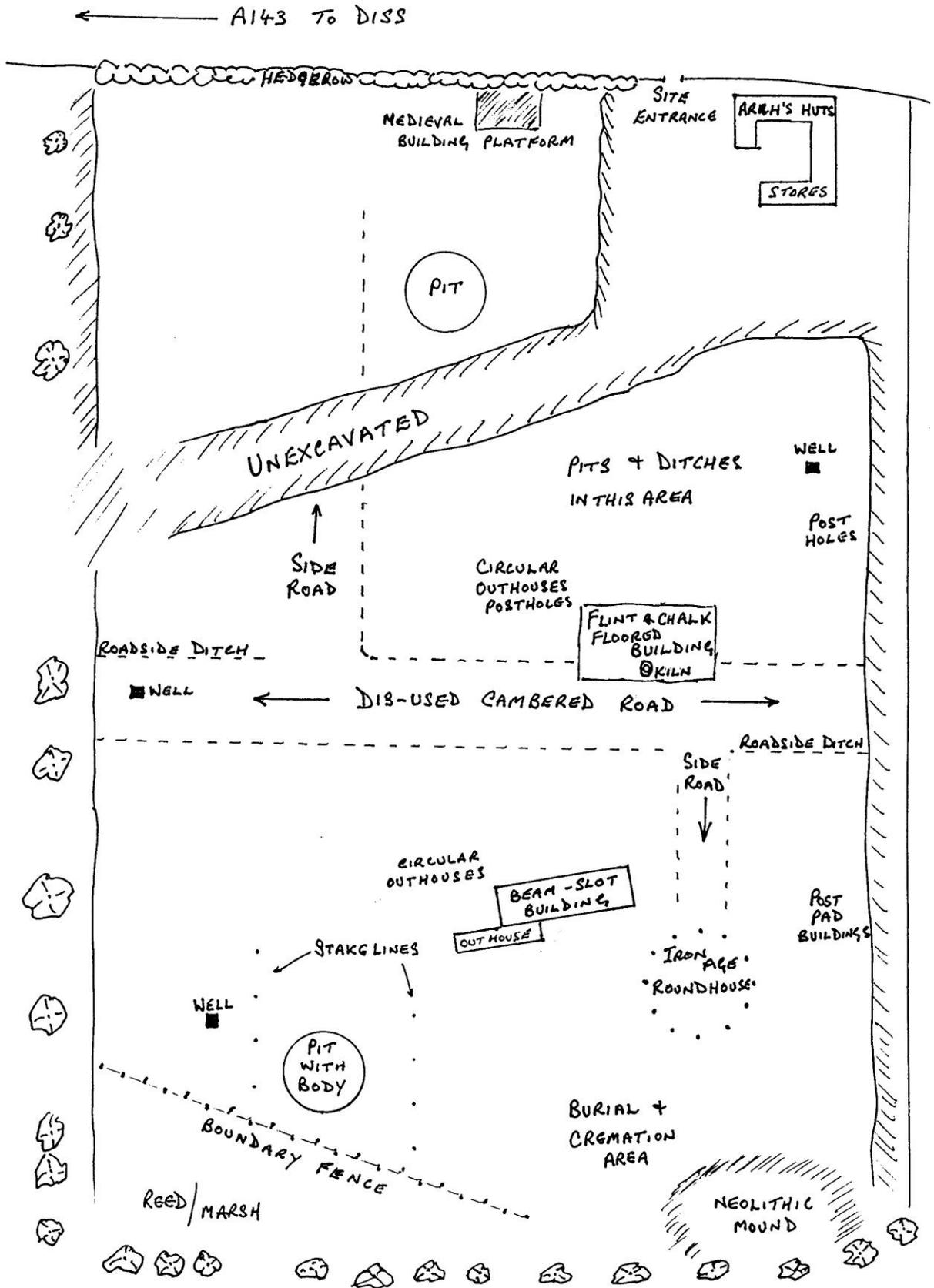
The Norfolk Unit's 40 acre initially had the topsoil removed by mechanical digger, and the site was divided up into ten metre square grid, then a three metre square test pit was dug in each square to see just what sort of archaeological remains the site would reveal !

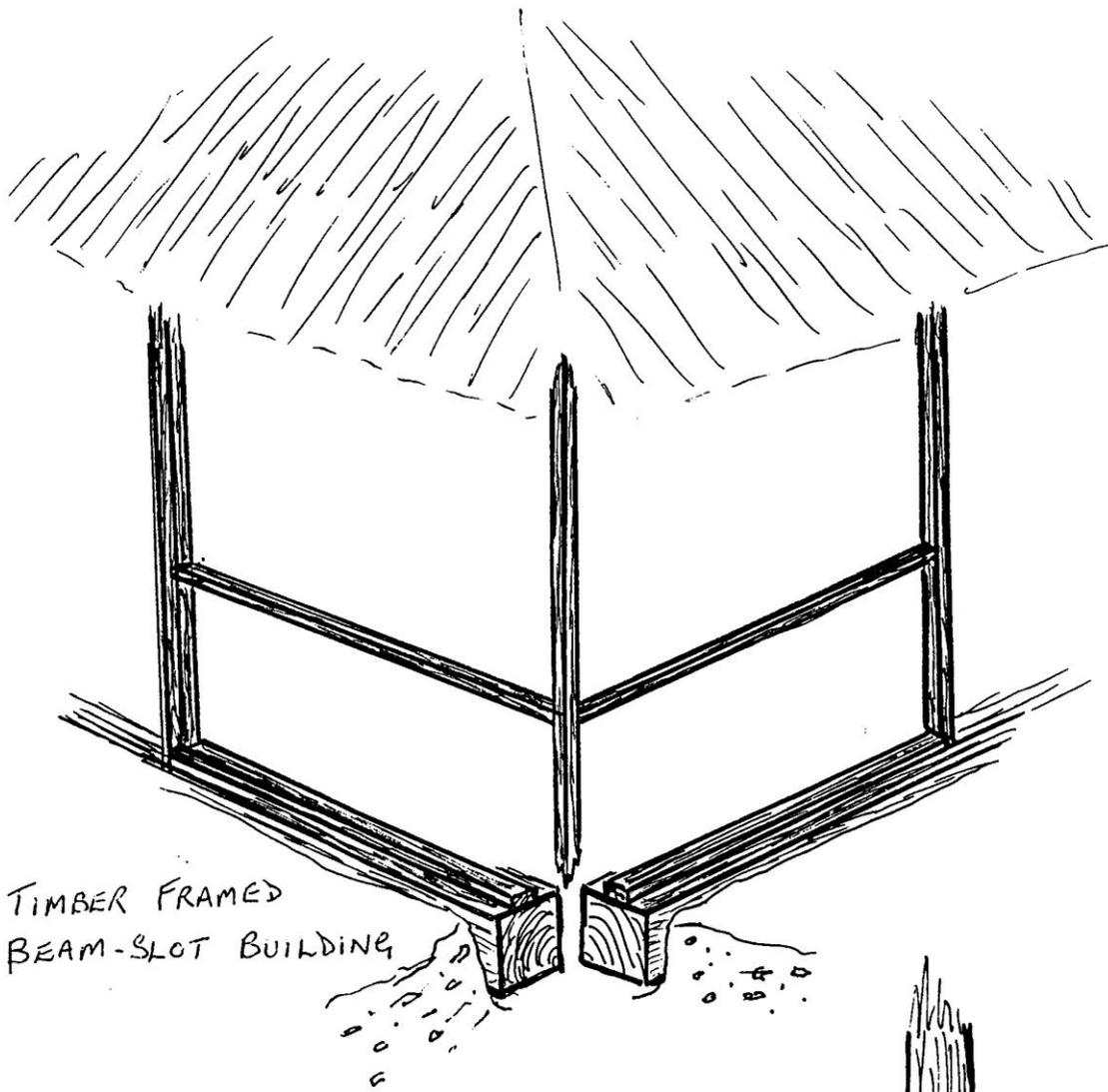
It is thought that this site was on the periphery of the Roman town, (wryly described by the archaeologist on site as rough suburb). It appears to have been more likely a working or industrial area, rather than an habitation, though the exact nature of what went on is still a matter of conjecture, and confirmation evidence is still being sought.

The site gently slopes to the south towards the River Waveney, and soil layers show water run off deposits and a dark staining layer. The dark stains confirm Roman activity during the third and fourth centuries.

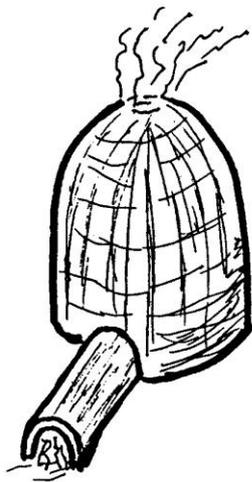
The first phase of the excavations uncovered a road, with two side roads, two buildings with outhouses, two wells, a burial area (Romans always buried out of town), fence and stakelines, and numerous artefacts. A Neolithic mound and an Iron-age round house were also revealed.

The peat deposits in the lower part of the site suggest that it has been constantly wet, even before Roman times, evidenced by the fauna and flora collected there, and the fact that the site is intersected by drainage ditches, running roughly east/west or north/south and at least one Medieval ditch on this part of the site.

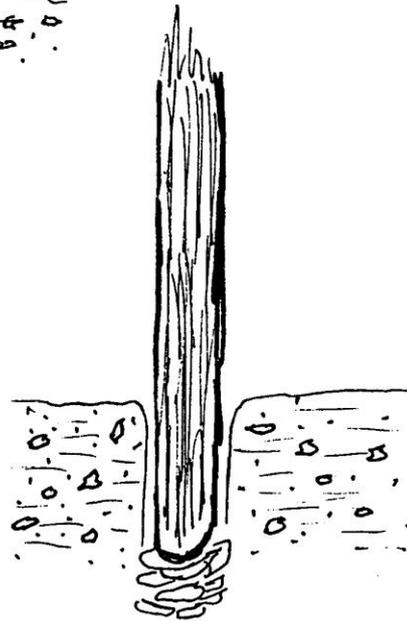




TIMBER FRAMED
BEAM-SLOT BUILDING



KILN



POST PAD

At some time a side road, cambered, approximately 10-15m wide, including the ditches on either side, (although it is thought that the ditches were not at the edge of the road), ran across the site from the main Roman road and continued west, (as earthworks in the next field confirms), and although the ditches continue, the road may have petered out into a dirt track. Aerial photography proves its continuation to Thetford. Evidence shows it fell into disuse early on, and the road material was later scattered across its sides filling the ditch and even later, buildings encroached upon it. Later investigations revealed a side road running north, with just one ditch on its eastern side. Also another, running south, which could have been just a path or alleyway.

The major building investigated in the north-east corner of the site had previously been excavated in the 1950's by Basil Brown, and again, in 1971/2 and in 1989, by Mr. Moss, who's only records are at present inaccessible.

The recent excavation revealed a building 15 x 7 metres of 2 or 3 compartments, one of which contained an oven lined with white clay, but turned red by furnace heat. The edge of this building was built over the disused road, evidenced by the ditch running under the house, causing slight subsidence to the compressed chalk and clay floor. Circular post holes in the west end of the remains indicated three outhouses, the uses of which were not evident, but soil samples had been taken as environmental evidence and sent to U.E.A. for analysis, and it is hoped that this will throw some light upon the activity that went on here. Fire-burned clay hearths were all that remained of three other outhouses a short distance away to the east, south-east and south of the building, and one of these was certainly a kiln of the period, with a draught flue.

There was evidence of another type of building which existed in the south-east area of the site, near to the centre, known as a beam slot building, a narrow timber framed structure measuring approximately ten by three metres. Post holes showed that this also had outhouses associated with it, and attached to its southern edge, and two, circular, to the west of it. Beam slot buildings were constructed of beams sunk into the ground with a timber frame built upon them. On the eastern edge of the site there were also other structures of a different type of building whose posts rested on 'pads' of broken tiles and flint.

On the west side of the site, on the line of the disused road, a well was sunk, about two metres deep, and measuring about two feet square. The sides were supported by horizontal timbers held in place by upright posts in each corner. At the bottom was pottery and the collapsed timbers from the top of the well, and at some time later it had been filled in.

A similar well had been sunk in the south-east corner of the site. The water is thought to have been fresh from the ambient water table, although this is dubious due to its proximity to the Waveney flood area and to the adjacent pits, whose uses are not yet clear.

On the southern side a fence (wicket type), and stakelines were uncovered in good state of preservation, due to the wet peat nature of the soil here. Timbers were of oak, birch, willow and other unspecified wood. The fence is thought to mark the boundary of Roman activity. The stakelines run north/south and compartmentalise the land, for uses mainly unknown; a tentative suggestion is that rubbish from whatever activity went on here was dumped in these bays.

Whilst investigating a pit in this area, the top of a skull was found. This proved to be part of an almost complete skeleton being discovered at the bottom of the pit, (arm and leg missing due to the intrusion of a later pit being dug). A shrunken, but intact brain was still inside the skull. The skeleton was face down with arms outstretched and thought to be female, because of the pelvic size and a yellow and green glass bead necklace (string intact), and bow brooch found with it. Foul play is almost certain, due to the body position and the manner in which the body had been covered up. A large piece of timber and sand had been placed on top, in a hasty attempt to conceal it.

On the south side, a series of ditches had been found, thought to have been used for controlling floods. Course particle deposits indicate that for some of the time at least, water was fast flowing.

In the south-east corner of the site was evidence of a cemetery and cremation area. There were several pits containing cremated bodies and in this area also, five/six cremation urns had been found, and a coffin, comprising a smaller timber box within a box thought to contain the remains of a young female. Both inhumation and cremation were carried out concurrently. Grouping of stake-holes suggest that cremations were carried out on a raised platform with a large volume of ash and material beneath.

In the very south-east corner, a 4,000 year old Neolithic mound 10-15 metres in diameter was found

(the earliest found was 15,000 years old). There was a lot of evidence of burned deposits, with much evidence of white and cracked flint particles, indicating that they had been used as pot boilers, though the need for hot water is a matter of conjecture, either for cooking, washing or in conjunction with whatever industrial activity was going on here.

In the centre of the south-easterly corner, a circular Iron-Age house had been found, established by post holes and Iron-Age tools discovered.

From the south of the site down to the banks of the River Waveney, further evidence of Roman activity had been uncovered by the Suffolk Archaeological Unit. Environmental evidence here was good. Investigations show that efforts were made at various times to alter the course of the Waveney, that cuttings were made, and that a mill was built astride a channel. Nearby, claylined pits or tanks are further evidence of some sort of industrial activity.

The second phase of the excavations, on the northern half of the site was not as productive as the first. The north-east corner was occupied by the archaeologists' mobile offices and equipment stores. This, and the adjacent area, from the entrance and car parks, along with a diagonal section to the south-west corner, above which, ran high voltage cables had to be left unexcavated. The north-west corner produced the ditch from the side-road previously exposed in the first phase, and which was shown to continue north. On the north side, next to the road hedgerow a Medieval building platform was uncovered. The remainder of the excavated northern half was covered in the remains of ditches, some Medieval (thought to be field boundary ditches), and further pits and wells, which the archaeologists did not have time to excavate.

CONCLUSION

In summary then, we have a 1st century Roman road running north-east/south-west, with a Roman settlement at Scole, 20 miles from Norwich, and 55 miles from Colchester. A minor road runs west to Thetford from the main road south of Scole. This later falls into disuse and becomes developed over by an out-of-town factory area, i.e. the site that was recently under archaeological survey.

The exact purpose of the area is yet to be established, though certainly part was the town crematorium and graveyard. Maybe part of the area was for the town waste disposal, (quantities of oyster shells show oysters consumed on site, or part of rubbish deposits). Metal slag around the site reflects metal-working, maybe associated with the many hearths, the raw material arriving on site by river, or by road from Colchester. The numerous pits scattered apparently randomly over the site may yet establish definite industrial activity, since some contained waste off-cut material of leather and wood. Some pits have been found to have been clay lined. One suggestion is that a pit on the north side of the site could have been used for storing urine, in connection with leather tanning. One pit contained remains of a revetment, made of odd pieces of timber and stone, and wood remains, indicating the remains of block and tackle. This may be associated with the river activity as a means of getting material onto the site.

Buildings and associated outhouse's have yet to yield their true purpose along with the fencing, stake-lines, and a number of wells over the site which were in a later period, capped with clay.

The investigation shows the lower end to have been constantly wet from ground water runoff and Waveney flooding, hence the number of ditches running across the site, (maybe only a drainage system) or possibly used in conjunction with other activities. Certainly the Waveney and its wetland area have been turned to some use. Peat down to Roman levels reflect some 400 years of Roman Scole activity.

Much use is made of environmental evidence in modern archaeology. Soil samples have been taken from all over the site for analysis at U.E.A., the results of which, it is hoped, will go some way to establishing the kind of activity taking place here – such as, was anything being done with cattle? There has been no physical evidence so far.

All the material from the cremation pits is to be washed, in order to try and estimate the number of bodies cremated.

Artefacts of much interest were found during this excavation – coins (over 1,000 found singularly, some with a metal detector), copper boxes, domestic utensils. Two unique items include part of a Roman sideboard, with some decoration to the front and with hole's for the handles. This was only the second piece of Roman furniture found in Norfolk. The pot 'blanks' were also found, made of wood, and rough hewn state, with some form of metallic supports on either side, possibly either for handles or support whilst hollowing out. These had probably been placed in the water to soften them up

before hollowing out. A unique find.

The site abounds with pottery shards from the second to fourth centuries, identified as coming from long-running potteries of the period, from Wattisfield (10 miles) and Pakenham (15 miles) to the west, and from Needham (6 miles) and Homersfield (10 miles) to the northeast.

It is hoped that one day the artefacts found here will be on display at Norwich Castle Museum.

Pakefield Cliff Finds

by Paul Durbidge

Pakefield Cliffs – The Problem of Erosion

After visiting the cliffs during high tides in 1989, I decided to monitor erosion along a stretch of cliff from the rifle range to a point 300 yards past the Pontins Gap, where water drains from the field surfaces down to the beach. Four fixed points have been set up and from measurements taken in January 1994, the loss of cliff from the four locations is 16 feet, 12 feet, 11 feet, 12 feet, the loss occurring over the last twelve months.

Although the excessive heavy rains have added to the problem, the very nature of the beach below, which is often comparatively flat, offers little resistance to high tides which in turn reach the base of the cliff. This leads to the removal of much previously fallen cliff, which in turn allows high tides to reach the base of the soft cliff bringing down tons of material on a wide front.

To the rear of Pontins, the cliffs to the north of the gully are mostly made up of some two or three feet of top soil and mixed brown boulder clay, overlying over thirty feet of soft sand. The composition changes just past the sentry tower, where, for over a hundred feet northwards, the grey chalky boulder clay form a mantle up to four feet thick over the soft sand. On the southern side of the Pontins Gap, the make up of the cliffs consist of both brown and grey chalky boulder clay, often to a depth of seven feet from the top of the cliff. Amongst the clay are sizable lumps of flint and slabs of sedimentary rock, which frequently tumble down to the beach below, along with considerable amounts of chalk and heavy blocks of clay. The presence of this type of clay has always attracted fossil hunters over the years, especially at the Gisleham brick pits and, of course, the cliffs at Corton, and it was this situation that led to Adrian Charlton discovering the exceptionally large Jurassic ammonite at beach level.

The ammonite, which measured nearly two feet across, was set in a large piece of sedimentary rock and by reason of its weight, there were obvious problems of getting it off the beach. Some weeks later, after beach levels had been subjected to another scour, the cast of another large ammonite was found by Charlton. This time it was set in a large slab of septaria and it is possible that these remains may be part of the earlier discovery, in fact, the cast of the former.

While the first discovery is still under tons of beach material the second find has been removed from the location and has been offered to Lowestoft Museum.

Flint Industry from Pakefield to Kessingland.

As a result of cliff falls directly behind Pontins Holiday Camp near Pakefield, the cutting end of a Neolithic ground and polished axe head was picked up at beach level during 1992. The axe, which appears wedge shaped, was made from dark crimson flint and the presence of traces of dark cortex on both faces suggest it may have been fashioned from tabular flint. Recent damage is visible on both spines and examination of the fractured end shows the implement has been subjected to intense heat, resulting in the breaking of the axe. The lack of patina on the broken section would suggest this happened in comparatively recent times.

Sizes : 2¾ inches wide by 3¼ inches in length. 1¼ inches thick.

From Top Soil in Pit No. 2 Pontins 1993

Secondary flake in grey flint, rectangular in shape, with attempts of additional flaking from one edge, resulting in much negative flaking. At the opposite end to the bulb of percussion the implement has been deliberately hollowed in profile with evidence of secondary working within the hollow. It is probable the flake has been re-cut from either a broken implement or an incomplete one.

Size : 1¾ inches wide by 2 1/8 inches in length. 3/8 thick.

During the early 1990's a small Mesolithic tranchet axe, made from a piece of dark yellow/brown flint, was recovered from the surface of a ploughed field close to Heathland Caravan Site, Kessingland,

Suffolk. At the same time, several small flakes were also observed lying scattered nearby, mostly in either grey or black flint, with some exceptions.

Since then, and close to the first find spot, the cutting end of a Neolithic axehead and a small adze of probable Mesolithic origin have been found. The adze was made from a small thick flake of brown/buff chert like flint, 2¾ inches long by 1¼ inches wide, the cutting end formed by a single detached flake. Several attempts have been made to remove the bulb from the side of the flake and have resulted in also straightening the edge of the tool, and similar flaking has been applied to the edges on the reverse of the implement.

The Neolithic axehead measures 3¼ inches long by 2¼ inches wide by 1⅛ inches thick and is parallel in its length, the flint being light grey in colour with some additions of black.

The cutting end still retains a good edge and while much of the surface of the axe has been ground and polished, including the spines, remains of flaking can still be seen on parts of the surface.

It is probable the axe has been broken just under half its original length, the fracture being square across and terminating in a hinge fracture.

With the exception of the tranchet axehead, which was kindly donated to the Lowestoft Museum, the remaining flint industry has been retained by Mr A. Charlton.

A Second Medieval Pit at Pakefield, Suffolk

by Paul Durbidge

During the early part of 1993, pottery was still in evidence close to the pit feature tested in late December, 1992 (Lowestoft Archaeological & Local History Society Annual Report Vol. 25) and on two occasions I visited the location with Mr. A. Charlton after he had shown me more sherds, including glazed forms. On the first visit there were no visual signs of any feature or intrusion through the top layers of the cliff, although it was possible to see odd pot sherds and occasional bone fragments in the mixed soils that make up the upper part of the cliff.

A second visit was after sizable cliff falls had occurred and as a result of this it was possible to see a probable pit cut through the upper layers of the cliff and just into the sand that forms the main part of the cliff. Some of the infill had fallen to the beach below and amongst the soil were several sherds of Medieval cooking pot and oyster shell. The pit showed as dark soil in the cliff and embedded in it were more shell, pottery bone as well as traces of carbon and bearing in mind the problem of erosion along this stretch it was decided to test the feature before more went over the edge.

A five foot square was marked out from above and some eleven inches of soil and grass removed. This revealed a mixture of top soil and brown boulder clay and a further two inches were subsequently removed across the square. At this depth it was possible to see the beginnings of an outline along with a scatter of flint cobbles amongst which were small splintered pieces of animal bone. Fragments of oyster shell were observed along with small, badly rolled sherds of pottery and occasional square shanked nails.

The outline of the pit showed clearer at 16 inches down from present ground level with the contained infill being mixed with boulder clay, but also it contained pottery, brick and tile. Two pin tiles were encountered in the upper fill mix as the removal of the content continued several sherds of pottery were encountered, mostly plain and heavily soot-stained, while others had been decorated with finger impressions. There was also a number of glazed sherds. Amongst the glazed sherds were four rims belonging to shallow fish or meat dishes and included amongst five handles was one thought to be Hedenham Ware. While a high percentage of the coarseware sherds were from cooking pots, a lesser amount belonged to shallow dish forms, base remains all showed sagging or slumped profiles with one showing pinching.

The pit terminated in an irregular bottom and just before reaching this point part of a small coarseware bowl was uncovered lying on its side and close to it was a near complete handled bowl. The latter had suffered damage opposite the pouring spout but apart from this it still retained a complete strap handle, and like many of the base sherds this too had a sagging soot covered base.

The removal of the infill revealed an irregular pit approximately 5' 9" by 3' 8" and the feature terminated at approximately 3' 8" down from the present ground surface, the contours of the feature being irregular to say the least.

Small Finds

Small finds recovered in the top soil up to the beginning of the pit include a secondary flint flake, four iron square shanked nails, three pieces of stoneware and a Post Medieval lace bobbin.

Tiles and Bricks

Remains of two pin tiles and broken bricks are described further on in this report.

Pottery

A total of 866 sherds were recovered and examined, the main bulk belonging to cooking pots, the remainder being shallow dishes and glazed forms.

Fabrics

Stonewares :

Stub of salt glazed handle (upper)

Sherd of dark brown saltglaze

Part neck of a mug? in saltglaze

Four sherds, of light grey stoneware, all the stoneware came from the upper fill

As in the previous pit there were clearly defined fabrics encountered and again the most prominent was :-

Fabric A. – which made up some 849 sherds.

This is a hard sandy material containing mica and small quartz grits with textures varying from sandy to relatively smooth fabrics. Colour variations from light to dark grey to orange browns.

Fabric B. – No sherds attributed to this group

Fabric C. – 3 Sherds

Very hard reddish brown material with partial grey core minute grits but no mica, splashes of green glaze.

Fabric D. – 14 Sherds

Soft orange fabric with grey centre containing minute grits and mica.

Fabric E. – 1 Sherd

Part of a base in soft whitish buff material with splash of rich green glaze externally.

In amongst the pottery examined from the pit was a single sherd of Romano British pottery; this was a sherd of softish light grey pottery decorated with a narrow combed wavy line.

Some 31 glazed sherds were encountered and broadly classified they are as follows :-

Handles

The remains of five earthenware handles were found, including part of a wide strap handle attachment to part of a jug neck, the material in a red/orange colour is probably Hedenham Ware.

Upper part of a 2" wide strap handle with the outer surface coated in a rich light green glaze, orange fabric underside enclosing a grey core.

Lower part of a 1¾" wide strap handle with pitted greenish glaze over pale orange fabric with grey core.

Upper part of 1⅛" diameter rod handle in hard grey fabric with single thumb impression, splattering of rich green glaze on grooved outer surface.

Body sherd in thin orange fabric with remains of base of a 3" handle showing strong thumb impressions where the handle had been attached to the pot. Green glaze covering handle base, some dull some remaining glossy.

Upper part of coarseware strap handle in light buff 1¾" wide, thumb marks on both sides, slashed decoration to centre of handle.

Glazed Remains

Shallow rim profiles of four fish or meat dishes, red/orange fabrics with grey cores. Coating of rich green glaze to inner surfaces, soot staining to outer profiles.

Part base of jug? in soft whitish buff material with a splash of green glaze externally.

Body sherd with rich light green glaze and splash of orange glaze reddish fabric with grey core.

Pitted cheesy green glaze on dark grey fabric.

Part base of vessel in red/orange fabric with grey core, finger pinching at 1½" centres, spots of rich orange/brown glaze on underside.

Part rim and shoulder of small mug or jug in brown buff with dribble of rich dark green glaze on external surfaces.

Coarseware Pottery

With three exceptions, the coarseware pottery from this pit compares with the earlier pit, both in fabric and also in form. Neck diameters of the cooking pots vary from 4¼" - 6½", 11½" and 12" respectively and again soot is present on many sherds, mostly on external surfaces. Thickness of pot sherds varies from $\frac{5}{16}$ " up to $\frac{3}{8}$ " and up to the time of writing only one sherd would appear to be a waster.

Finger or thumb decoration is present on ten sherds and it would seem three different vessels have been decorated in this manner. On two different rim forms thumb impressions have been made close under the rim of the vessels, while on another a number of imprints are visible on the high shoulder of the pot. On another sherd, diagonal lines have been marked into the walls of the pot, probably at a time when the vessel was leather hard.

A hard, gritty clay with occasional small flints up to ¼" in diameter was used to make a coarseware flagon, from which only part of the neck has been recovered. The diameter of the top of the neck measures nearly 5" and impressed in the collar of the vessel is where a 2½" strap handle was attached. The fabric is mostly light grey throughout with part orange showing through part of the outer face.

Bricks

The remains of six rough bricks were found in conjunction with the pit and are as follows :-

- (1) Yellow buff with impressed grass or straw marks on one side and face.
Size - 4½" wide, thickness varying from 2 $\frac{1}{8}$ " - 2 $\frac{3}{8}$ ". Length 7½ inches
- (2) Hard fired brick with many cracks in a slumped shape. Straw or grass imprinted in one face.
Yellow buff with areas of pale purple.
Size - 4½" wide with thickness averaging 2 $\frac{1}{8}$ ". Length 8 inches.
- (3) Red fabric with smoothed face and sides, underside rough cast containing impressed straw or grass marking.
Size - 4½" wide, thickness 1 $\frac{5}{8}$ ". Length 3¾ inches.
- (4) Crimson with shades of yellow buff. Top surface slumped, underside rough cast.
Size - 3 $\frac{7}{8}$ " wide, thickness varying from 1¾" - 2 $\frac{1}{8}$ ". Length 4½ inches.
- (5) Yellow brown buff with drag lines showing on top surface, rough cast underneath. Top surface slumped and showing profile of casting box.
Size - 4½" wide, thickness 1¾". Length 4¾ inches.
- (6) Yellow buff with areas of crimson, slumped upper surface, rough cast underside, grass or straw marks on underside and one side.
Size - 4 $\frac{1}{8}$ " wide, thickness 1¾". Length 5 inches.

Pin Tiles (Part Of)

Smoothed top surface with drag marks, underside rough cast. Hole for wooden peg positioned ¾" from end of tile, diameter of hole ½" and pushed through from smoothed face.

Pin tile with smoothed upper surface and rough cast underside. Hole for peg positioned 2¾" from edge of tile and 1" down from end of tile. From precise shape of hole it would seem a large square shanked iron nail, with a tapered head, was employed and pushed through the clay.

Animal Bones And Shells

The pit feature contained a number of oyster shells at the lower level, along with animal bones, including sheep, immature cattle and wild boar. Several of the bones had been fractured but there was no indication of butchery on any of the remains up to the time of writing, although signs of small teeth were noticeable on part of a shoulder bone. It would appear this occurred around the time the bone was discarded as the damage caused and colouration of the bone remain the same.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Mr. W. Miligan of the Castle Museum, Norwich, for his help with the pottery; also thanks are due to Mr. D.B. Owyn for allowing us to test the feature. Lastly, my thanks to Mr. A. Charlton for giving so much time at the location for without this a huge percentage of the pottery would probably have been lost.

Since drawing up this report another much deeper feature was exposed after considerable cliff falls early in January, 1994.

Romano British Pottery

The discovery of a sherd of Romano British pottery amongst the Medieval pottery is not too surprising as several more sherds, including base have been recovered some distance further north, yards from the Medieval area. Like the decorated sherd, with a few exceptions, all the pottery is light grey in colour, smooth and of good quality. Some appears to have been in contact with water, while other pieces remain crisp and retain sharp breaks.

Some eighteen body sherds so far have been found, with two probably from indented beakers. Of the six rim profiles, four belong to small jars, a fifth probably from a small bowl and a sandy buff rim belongs to a 2nd century wine vessel.

Base remains compare with the light grey fabric but it would appear that a complete base and greater part of another, are probably the product of a local potter. The fabrics are micaceous, containing mixed grits with one base virtually dark brown in colour. The second, again, is made from inferior clay containing many exposed quartz grits; the diameter of the base is nearly three inches and there are traces of limescale on the interior surfaces.

Mortaria

Remains of two mortaria have also been recovered. One is in light buff colour with a suggestion of mixed grits to the inner surface, while the other is made of orange buff material and studded with iron stone grits in the inner surfaces. The first mortaria which still retains its pouring spout has origins outside the area, while the second is of East Anglian stock.

Samian (Terra Sigillate).

Three fragments of Samian or red gloss ware have been found, two being plain wall sherds, the third being part of a rim from an East Goulish bowl with barbetine decoration.

Roofing Tile (Tegula)

Parts of five roofing tiles and four flat bricks have been recovered in conjunction with the pottery, but in each case the soft red material have been badly abraded and at some time has been in contact with much water.

Key to drawing

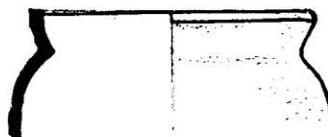
- (1) Neck of light grey coarseware flagon.
- (2) Small coarseware cooking pot with heavy soot staining to outer surfaces. Hard grey buff fabric with mica and small grits.
- (3) Small handled bowl with side pouring spout. Light brown, hard fabric containing small grits, soot stained.
- (4) Heavy section rim with hollowed top, possibly for a lid, finger or thumb decoration just under rim.
- (5) Square section rim in hard, gritty fabric. Strong, definite pattern to walls of vessel, dark buff outer face near black inner surfaces.
- (6) Rim of fish or meat dish in hard, orange/red fabric, soot stained external surfaces, coating of very rich green glaze applied to inner surface.
- (7) Part of a coarseware mortaria with pouring spout, sparse mixed grit to inner surface.
- (8) Part of mortaria with iron stone grits to inner surface, orange buff fabric and probably of East Anglian stock.

Numbers 1 - 6 are all of 13-14th century date and compare with material recovered, last year in an adjacent pit in the cliffs.

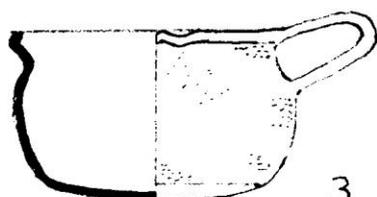
Numbers 7 and 8 are Romano British and belong to 2nd and 3rd centuries along with fragments of light grey coarseware.



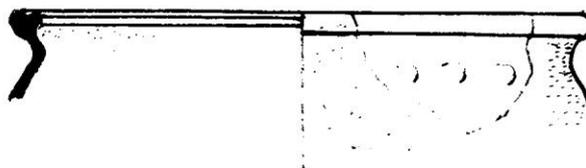
1



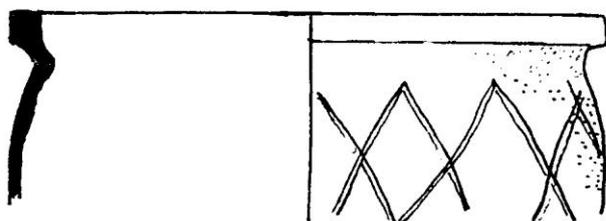
2



3



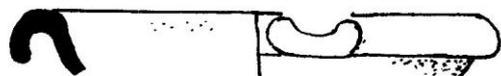
4



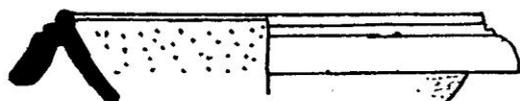
5



6



7



8

PAKEFIELD CLIFFS
MEDIEVAL AND
ROMANO BRITISH
POTTERY
SCALE 1:4

The Deeds of Laurel Farm, Oulton

by Mary Goffin

Since February, 1992 a group of members have been regularly meeting to transcribe the Deeds of Laurel Farm, Oulton, which have been kindly loaned to us by another member, Mrs, Thelma Mobbs. This has been quite a task as approximately 50 documents, dated from 1744-1851, need transcribing, typing and checking, but we are making progress and this is the first report of our findings.

Although these documents are held as the Deeds of Laurel Farm, most of the early ones refer to an Estate at Kessingland. We have transcribed up to 1797 and, so far, have not found the connection. There are no maps with these documents, so a visit to the Record Office was necessary to try and establish the whereabouts of the Estate in Kessingland. According to a document of 1749, this Estate consisted of "*3 messuages 3 cottages 4 gardens 4 orchards 4 acres of Land 5 acres of meadow 20 acres of pasture 20 acres of salt marsh and appurtenances in Kessingland and Gisleham.*" In 1772 the Estate was given as 3 Messuages 3 cottages 4 gardens 4 orchards 5 acres Land 5 acres of meadow 20 acres of pasture and 20 acres of salt marsh, almost the same as in 1749. A map of the Parish of Kessingland of 1787, in the Lowestoft Record Office, gives a rough idea of where it was but roads and footpaths, although marked, are not named. Tithe map of 1839 and a list of owners/occupiers shows people and places mentioned in later documents, not yet fully transcribed, so there will be more information to be unearthed and more work on the maps needed in the future.

Many documents start by giving the date followed by "*in the Year of our Lord and in the year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord. George the Second (or Third according to date) by the Grace of God of Great Britain France and Ireland King Defender of the faith*" and so forth. Note the inclusion of France, and that the phraseology ceased after 1800.

Our first document shows that in 1744, John Mayes the Younger of Reydon, Gentleman, owes William Lenney of Reydon, Merchant, £220. In subsequent documents John Mayes is often spelt Mays or May – similarly William Lenney is often spelt Lenny. We found many names throughout spelt variously but references to previous dated Indentures usually confirmed that they referred to the same person. In some cases where sons had been named after fathers we drew up family trees to make sure of their identity. In the following year John Mayes the Younger, Gentleman, had moved to Kessingland, not into premises himself as John Grice is given as the occupant and the premises are now held by William Boyce in Trust for William Lenney.

The next document is an Abstract of Title of Mr. John Davie's Estate in Kessingland which gives in brief the documents relating to the Title (i.e. ownership) of the property from 1746 until 1772, which was prepared by Messrs. Bohun and Rix, Solicitors Beccles. We have some of the original documents referred to in this Abstract but not all. By a Mortgage of the 7th June, 1746, William Lenney and Elizabeth, his wife, are now shown as owners of the property because they raise £400 on its security from Samuel Margerum of London, gentleman, £10 to be repaid by 7th December, 1746 and £410 on 7th June, 1747, but in March, 1747, William and Elizabeth Lenney then enter into a mortgage with John Elmy a surgeon of Beccles, for £440, so John Elmy pays off Samuel Margerum and W. & E. Lenney have to repay John Elmy £10. 10s. by September 1748 and the remainder, £430.10s. by March 1749. All the people mentioned signed this mortgage except Elizabeth, who made her mark. By May 1750 William Lenney had not repaid £420 owed to John Elmy but Elmy agrees to advance a further £200, a total of £62 plus interest, on the security of the premises. The next year John Elmy is owed £631. 12s. and Mary Bunco, spinster of Saxmundham, advances £600 to William Lenney to enable him to pay off John Elmy. (The additional £31. 12s. is paid by William Lenney direct to John Elmy) – £15 to be paid by October 1751 and £615 in April 1752.

By September 1754 William Lenney has died and in his Will dated 17th March, 1753, left the property charged to his Estate to his son, also William, who, with Christopher Spear, Clerk, were executors of the Will and sold much of his Estate, not just the premises in Kessingland, to pay legacies and cover the Mortgage of £600. William Lenney, the son, intends to marry Grace Roberts, one of the daughters of the Rev. John Roberts of Framsdon and as a marriage portion John Roberts paid William Lenney £300 as provision should she survive her husband and in lieu of a Dower and William Lenney granted and released the premises to John Roberts, subject to the Mortgage to Mary Bunco, with a Proviso that if William Lenney predecease his intended wife, Grace Roberts, then he must leave her sufficient

lands or goods to amount to £600 to be paid within three months of his death and the property to revert to Grace. William Lenney and Christopher Spear agreed to repay the mortgage of £600 and interest by November, 1754.

An Indenture of August, 1755 now states that William Lenney and Grace, his wife, had repaid Mary Bunco £692 of principal money and interest and in order to do this had borrowed £200 and interest from Charles Hay of Halesworth M.D. The fine for securing £600 to Grace Lenney if she survive her husband was still in place. The next year William and Grace Lenney borrow a further £50 from Charles Hay and in 1758 a further £150, a total now of £408, and in 1759, and again in 1760, borrowed £100, so that they were then in mortgage to Charles Hay for £600.

The Estate must have been substantial, as we now find William and Grace Lenney now borrow £250 from Richard Charley (sometimes Chorley, sometimes named Robert Cherley) of Framlingham, gentleman, on security of the premises, except for dower of Abigail May and the mortgage of £600 to Charles Hay. In 1761 R. Chorley pays off £610. 2s. 6d. to Charles Hay, so now William and Grace Lenney are in mortgage to him for £910. 2s. 6d. with interest. By 1763 R. Chorley is deceased, his executors being Philip Meadows of Diss, gentleman, and Robert Barker of Framlingham, Grocer. Before his death he lent a further £49. 17s. 6d. To William and Grace Lenney and after, his executors lent them a further £15, a total of £1,067. 15s. 10d.

In October, 1863 the executors agree to sell the premises to George Davie of Framsdon, Maltster, for £1,105, which is made up of £1,067. 15s. 10d., the mortgage money owed by William and Grace Lenney to the estate of R. Chorley deceased and £57. 4s. 2d. paid to William and Grace Lenney. There is also an agreement between the executors and George Davie that only £317. 15s. 10d. is actually paid and that the remainder, £750, remains a charge to the Estate. In 1771 John Oldham of Chesterfield in the County of Derbys, gentleman, and Elizabeth, his wife, only surviving daughter and Heiress at Law of R. Chorley are owed £800 by George Davie as he borrowed a further £50 from them in 1764. George Davie repaid this £800 plus £27. 12s. 0d. interest. He is able to do this because he has borrowed £800 from Elizabeth Clayton of Peasenhall, spinster, with interest of £36 to be paid at her new house in Peasenhall by October, 1772. At this date the mortgage is assigned to John Farr of North Cove, Esquire, who, at the request of George Davie repays Elizabeth Clayton. By 1776, although George Davie has mortgaged the premises to John Farr, he borrows a further £200, a total of £1,000 with interest at £43 p.a. George Davie pays the interest to John Farr and in 1778 enters into a mortgage with Samuel Barker of Lowestoft, merchant, who agrees to pay John Farr £1,000. Samuel Barker charges George Davie's 4% interest.

Basically, this is as far as we have been able to transcribe but I know we have an Extract from the Kessingland Inclosure Award of 1788 which gives details of numbered plots awarded to George Davie. The Awarded fields are numbered differently from the Tithe Map numbers and names but the plans for the Kessingland Award are in the Record Office at Ipswich so a trip to Ipswich R.O. is planned. We also know that George Davie died in 1809 and in his Will left his son, John, the Estate but legacies of £20 each are left to the five children of his son George, named John, George, Sarah, Henry and David. We then have the added complications of John the Son and John the Grandson and George the Son (why did his children get legacies? Was he alive when George the Father made his Will?) and George the Grandson. To be continued, and hopefully, by then, we will have discovered the answers to these queries.

Dowsing and Church Archaeology

by Dr. N.B. Eastwood

The most significant development in dowsing recently, has been the work of Prof. Betz ①, Professor of Physics in the University of Munich. He has conducted a series of very carefully controlled experiments, and showed that experienced dowsers were able to find underground water to a very high degree of statistical probability. These experiments put the fact of dowsing beyond reasonable doubt. Although his experiments are in respect of water only, they clearly enhance the credibility of other dowsing claims. Dowsing has been successfully applied in archaeology, as described by Scott Elliot ②, who used dowsing to find hidden archaeological features and then demonstrated them by excavation and by Bailey ③ et al who made comparisons between the findings of dowsing in churches and the results of excavation made when church floors were being repaired.

When dowsing in and around churches, my findings correspond with those of Mr. Denis Briggs and illustrated in the aforementioned book. The targets I look for are Iron Age hut circles, Roman roads, wooden Saxon churches, the water supply to the font and other wells, the bell-founder pit, the hidden foundations of early churches, especially apses and other concealed walls, apses beyond the east end of the church, altars and lost objects. I have encountered examples of all the foregoing. On dowsing evidence, Iron Age hut circles are common close to Medieval churches, suggesting that the history of villages goes back at least to the Iron Age. Roman roads occur and may have been used as secure foundations on which to build a church. Wooden thin-walled Saxon churches, are usually to be found adjacent to the Medieval church. Most old churches have a water-supply from an underground stream running close to the font, where an old well may be found. The bell-founder's pit may often be found at the foot of the tower, where church bells were often cast. Early churches appear to have had rounded apsidal east ends – as can be seen at Fritton church, and as a later development these were squared off. The footings of apses can be found under church floors and beyond the present squared off east ends. The site of previous altars has a characteristic dowsing pattern. In the earliest churches, the altars were not in the east, but from early Medieval times they usually were. My dowsing evidence must be regarded with caution as it has not been confirmed by digging. However, elsewhere I have been able to corroborate my dowsing findings in respect of Roman roads, Iron Age hut circles and underground water.

References :

- ① Betz H-D Unconventional water detection 1993. Obtainable from the British Society of Dowsers, Sycamore Cottage, Tamley Lane, Hastingleigh, Ashford, Kent, TN25 5HW.
- ② J. Scott Elliot. Dowsing One Man's Way 1990 Brit. Society of Dowsers.
- ③ Bailey RN, Cambridge E, and HD Briggs. Dowsing and Church Archaeology Intercept, Wimborne, Dorset.

A Most Conveniently Situated Small Farm – Part 2

by Margaret Sanders

Under this title in the 1992/93 Annual Report I began to describe researching the history of our house in Oulton Broad, a former farmhouse dating from the 17th century. In its advice leaflet for those seeking a house history, Suffolk Record Office suggests that this can only be traced through the affairs of the families who have owned or lived in it. How true this is proving to be.

A cache of documents deposited in the Suffolk Record Office show that members of a family called Guild owned the farm from 1740-1819. The Parish registers of St. Peter's, Carlton Colville record that there were numerous Guilds during this period and several tombstones are readily identifiable in the churchyard yet no one of this surname appears to live locally now.

Richard Guild, Yeoman, who purchased the farm in 1740, died in 1762 aged 79 years. His son Samuel Guild the Elder who inherited the farm died in 1811 at 83 having been predeceased by his wife Elizabeth who had died at 79 in 1803. They had had one child, Samuel Guild the Younger, born in 1765 and, although his parents died intestate, he, as only child and heir at law '*. . . . entered into possession of the same Messuages Lands and Hereditaments and became seized thereof for an estate in fee simple*'. Samuel Guild the Younger was 46 when he came into his inheritance. He had a wife called Mary but to date no children have been traced. He was the last Guild to own the farm and he had to sell out when mortgages were called in in 1819.

It seems quite possible that the Enclosure Act (1801) for Carlton Colville, Oulton and Kirtley enacted in 1803 may have been partially responsible for the downfall of this yeoman family. A tract of land, about thirty eight acres, '*lying upon East Heath in Carlton Colville between the water called Lowestoft Water and the Road leading from Mutford Bridge to Kirtley*' (i.e. all the land to the north of Victoria Road from Kirkley Run to Bridge Road) was awarded by the Commissioners to a member of the local gentry who sold this to Samuel Guild the Younger in 1804 for £1,050. The same gentleman subsequently sold Samuel the right to collect tithes on this same piece of land and for these he paid the rather high price of £950., since commonly lay impropiators at that time sold tithes for £10-15. per acre. Landowners did find it useful to buy the tithes on their own land when they could, as it meant they could let plots tithe free at a higher rental. The problem for Samuel Guild the Younger was that

he and his father seemed to have borrowed more and more money so that, finally, the 150 acre farm, including both freehold and copyhold land, was sold to John Farr Esquire of North Cove for £5,000. and when debts were settled Samuel was left with just over £1,000. Samuel and his wife seem to have disappeared without trace and by 1825 the farm was bought by the Johnson family who farmed it for the remainder of the century.

Of the field names, only 'Upper Cotmer' and 'Lower Cotmer' 'which lay to the east of Cotmer Road are preserved. Others, perhaps more charming, are lost. The 'New Delight' and 'Furthur New Delight' which ran from the northern end of Kirkley Run to Lake Lothing, 'Fidlers' and the East and West 'Bonny Pits' which were either side of Colville Road, these, amongst others, have all disappeared.

Having worked through all the deeds and associated documents, the next task is to follow up a possibly significant reference to '*the Messuage Tenement or Farmhouse which was formerly the Estate of Sir Richard Allin deceased*'. With any luck it may be the lead needed to take us back to the seventeenth century.