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NOTE: The date of issue for the report changed this year and therefore this report covers an extended period of 20 months.

REPORTS FROM MAY 2006 TO NOVEMBER 2007**11 May 2006****Pottery through the Ages****Alice Lyons**

Pottery is very important to archaeologists in their studies for dating purposes. It lasts for a long period of time and the composition of the clay determines the country and place of its origin. Its generic shape, and also particles found inside can give clues as to the use of the pot, for example storage or cooking, and sometimes for cosmetics or even funerary purposes.

About 6,500 years ago Neolithic man converted from a nomadic to a settled lifestyle. This was the period when they changed over from wooden and leather utensils to using pottery. They mixed their clay with grit in order to make the material stronger, shaped it by hand, and fired it by placing wood over and around the dried pottery in the manner of a bonfire.

At around 1000 BC, amphora (which means two handles) were used to transport quantities of olive oil, wine, exotic fruits and fish sauce to the British Isles from the Mediterranean states. The Greeks, Egyptians and Romans used amphorae in large quantities.

The Romans introduced the use of the potter's wheel. They fired their pottery in kilns in which the temperature could be controlled, which was a great improvement over the bonfire method. Within 50 years of the Romans leaving Britain, in the fifth century, the natives returned to the pre-Roman way of producing pottery and it was not until the Normans came, in 1066, that the use of the potter's wheel and kiln was reintroduced.

During the Medieval period the range of pottery increased. In the 13th to 15th centuries, pots were made watertight during the firing process by the use of glazes. These glazes could be coloured, usually with metal oxides. Green was popular and was produced by adding copper oxide. The amount of glaze used helps to determine a pot's age – earlier pots were glazed only at the bottom whereas later ones were glazed overall.

**7 September 2006 The Development of the Saxon State in East Anglia Andy Hutcheson
of the Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service**

This talk concentrated on Anglo-Saxon Norfolk, from AD 410 to AD 1066. Following the departure of the Romans, the government of the country collapsed and the country entered the period often described as the Dark Ages. The Saxons, Angles and Jutes invaded the country from the coast of Northumbria, also occupying East Anglia and round to the South Coast. There is evidence that Saxon invaders threatened East Anglia before the Romans left. This region, together with Kent and Sussex, was a large supplier of food to the Romans, and the Saxon shore forts could have been built to protect that food source.

Historical evidence comes from place names and archaeological finds as well as literary works. Although historical documents are rare in East Anglia sources include: Gildas (about 510) who writes about Saxon invaders; Bede (c673-735) ecclesiastical history; Felix, the life of St Guthlac; Various Monastic clerics in The Anglo Saxon Chronicles.

During this migration period goods occurring in Eastern Europe were similar to those in Britain. In Saxon times, women had a higher status than in Roman or the later medieval period. Finds include clothing adornments that were made of gold, silver and bronze.

During the late 7th century there was an increase in silver coinage, a concentration of which is sometimes found around place names ending in 'ham'. Christian burials appeared at this time and monastic sites were founded.

In the 8th and 9th centuries urban settlements were started. The earliest were at Ipswich, London, Southampton and York. Norwich and Thetford were created around AD 900. Trade at this time included pottery, with Ipswich Ware being used all over East Anglia.

The Vikings and Danes started invading in the late 8th century, with the main thrust in the 9th century. The Vikings were not Christian when they first arrived, so this disrupted Christianity. The country was governed by the Danelaw from about 870 to 910. The Fleggs in Norfolk have a significant number of Danish place names.

28 September 2006 Norfolk villages lost to the sea Chris Weston

Ten Norfolk villages that were recorded in the 1086 Domesday Book have either been totally destroyed or have little evidence remaining today. Locally the village of Newton Cross, which was located north of Hopton and about one and a quarter miles out to sea, was destroyed during a great storm in the 14th century.

Chris Weston spoke of the way these communities were destroyed. As well as the loss caused by flooding, such as Newton Cross, there is also loss due to cliff erosion and there is evidence of this all along the Norfolk and Suffolk coastline. There are two ways this occurs. The first is when waves wash away and undermine the base of the cliff, then the land above falls onto the beach. The second is where rainwater running off the land creates gullies, weakening the cliff, and the section between two gullies collapses onto the beach.

Some of the 'losses' occurred over a long period of time. For example, the village of Eccles was recorded in Domesday as having 2000 acres. During a great storm in January 1604 the sea reclaimed 1000 acres. The church tower fell onto the beach in 1895 and parts can still be seen today. At Keswick, a pub, hotel and a residential home are all that remain of the old village. The main street of Corton village once extended further north from Baker's Score to a point roughly in line with the existing St Bartholomew's church. However, cliff erosion saw much of it disappear in the 1800s, to be compensated for by additional building to the south. A constant battle continues today to preserve the cliff at the north end.

Of those no longer remaining, Foulness had a population of 100 in 1086, Shipden had two churches and a weekly market in 1285, but by 1370 was virtually non-existent. One and a half miles east of Winterton was Ness, which had a church.

On occasion, the sea will wash away the beach to reveal evidence of these lost communities for example at Waxham, where part of a cobbled road was revealed for a few hours, after which the sea covered it again. Little Waxham (Waxham Parva) was lost in the early 20th century. There were two

villages called Waxham – the one we know today is Great Waxham, where you will find the recently restored Waxham Great Barn.

At Hunstanton, in 1863, the sea went out further than usual at low tide and John Cobb found tree stumps, animal bones and a flint axe-head in a tree stump. Walcott had a sea wall up to 1953 and recently the sea removed 8 feet of sand from the beach in one night. Happisburgh is currently losing a lot of land to the sea, with the worst year being 1996. Today the local authorities are attempting to reduce erosion by the use of offshore reefs, groynes and sea walls.

12 October 2006

Suffolk's Ancient Woodland

Simon Leatherdale
from the Forestry Commission

Simon Leatherdale started his talk with the history of the Forestry Commission and how its role has changed from its creation, in 1919, up to the present day. The Commission had been set up as a direct result of the German submarine blockade during the First World War. The military had a requirement for quantities of timber, which could not be supplied from this country. Hence in 1919 the commission was set up to supply timber for military purposes and for pit props.

Ancient woodland is woodland that has existed continuously since 1600. This cut-off point was established, as woods were not mapped prior to this date. In our part of Suffolk there are only a few small woods that are ancient, such as one near Southwold. The current forest at Dunwich is not ancient, but there had been a Dunwich forest long ago. This was situated near the site occupied by the old coastguard cottages.

Boundaries to ancient woods are seldom straight and are usually surrounded by a ditch and bank. Parish boundaries often follow the woodland boundary. Other indicators are the presence of bluebells, small leaf limes (those not planted in straight lines), wild service (chequers) trees, and plants such as yellow archangel, oxlips and the early purple orchid. Broadleaf trees let spring light through, allowing bluebells and other woodland plants to flourish before the leaves grow on the trees. Conifers are evergreen and cut out the light to the ground throughout the year, therefore plants tend not to grow beneath them.

For centuries trees have been coppiced or pollarded. The coppiced tree is cut off low down, whereas the pollarded tree is cut off at head height, which prevents cattle stock eating the new shoots. In its natural state a tree can attain an age of 200 to 300 years, whereas a coppiced, or pollarded, tree may survive up to 1,000 years. These old woods contain many archaeological features – earthworks and track ways tend to survive, as the woodland is relatively undisturbed.

Forests suffer considerable damage from deer, numbers of which are higher now than at any time in the past. Deer can perform an important function but too many cause a problem, therefore, they and the woodland have to be carefully controlled. The situation is not helped by farmers planting large amounts of winter barley and wheat, as these offer the deer a good feed crop of nice green shoots after they germinate. Types of deer found nowadays include Fallow, Red, Roe, Muntjac and Chinese Water deer.

The plan is to change Dunwich forest over the coming years from fast growing pine trees to mixed varieties of native broadleaf species. Consultations led by Natural England are also in progress over the proposal to reintroduce a natural predator, the white-tailed (or sea eagle), in the Suffolk coastal region, possibly during the next five to six years. The wetlands and surrounding countryside up to north Norfolk are ideal for eagles as there are many rabbits to provide food. Sea eagles were here in Saxon times.

26 October 2006

The Optical Telegraph, London to Great Yarmouth

Bernard Ambrose

At the beginning of the 19th century, this country was involved in the Napoleonic Wars. The Admiralty had a need to convey messages around the country to the fleet commanders, but at that time the fastest method was by a rider on horseback. This could take a long time and the Admiralty looked at a way of speeding up the process.

A semaphore system had been designed by Claude Chappe, a Frenchman, and was already in use in that country. The Admiralty here decided to use a 'shutter' system. This consisted of a hut over

which stood a frame consisting of six 3 feet square panels (two panels wide by three panels high). Each panel contained shutters that could be opened or closed by the operating team in the hut. These huts were placed about 10 miles apart in a continuous line from the Admiralty building in London to Deal, Portsmouth and Great Yarmouth. The line to Portsmouth was later extended to Plymouth.

Mr Ambrose showed members a working model he had built of a shutter station, which helped to explain the way in which they operated. The system used the Murray Shutter Telegraph Code, which was based on a code (similar to Morse code) for each letter of the alphabet. The message was sent along the line from one station to the next. Each station was under the command of a disabled or retired Naval officer. When a message was being transmitted, the first station would open the appropriate shutter(s) corresponding to the code for that letter. At the second station an operator, using a telescope, would read this and put that letter code on his shutters. His companion would also use a telescope to check that the third station had received the code and had set their shutters accordingly. This was repeated progressively along the line.

The telegraph line to Great Yarmouth was completed in 1808, with the first message being sent on 24th August, stating, 'Calypso ready for sea'. This particular line did not follow the coast but was routed up through St Albans to Norwich, then to Great Yarmouth, where the station was situated on top of the Town Wall South Tower. The coastal route was not suitable as it was subject to frequent sea mists and fog, and this system required clear visibility between stations. At one location a wood stood between two stations and to overcome this a wide track, that remains today, was cut through the trees. The telegraph ceased to operate in 1814 following the end of the War with France.

Mr Ambrose explained that he has followed the route and has identified many of the station sites (nothing now remains of the buildings or shutters). Place names such as Telegraph Hill, Telegraph Plantation, Telegraph Lane and Telegraph Farm give valuable clues as to where these stations were located.

9 November 2006 Bombs, Beams and Boffins – the Secret Site at Orford Ness Paddy Heazell

Paddy Heazell works for the National Trust who currently own the spit of Suffolk coastland known as Orford Ness. Between 1914 and 1993 the Ministry of Defence used it, originally as an airfield, and later for aircraft testing and weapons research, including the development of nuclear systems.

In the Middle Ages the land at Orford was used for grazing – the MoD drained it in 1913, to make it suitable for their use. During World War I the Central Flying School station employed up to 600 personnel and operated two airfields. These did not have concrete runways as the aeroplanes of the time were able to land on the grass. Early research carried out there included work on investigating whether silencers could be fitted to fighter engines, so they would not be heard by the enemy as they approached. It was concluded that the power loss, with the silencer fitted, rendered the aircraft useless as fighters.

After World War I, Orford Ness was used to test parachutes, armaments, bomb designs and aircraft bombing formations. The parachutes were not intended for aircrew but for use in dropping flares. (Aircrew were not issued with parachutes until 1925.) Trials were also carried out on the most effective way to bomb railway lines. In 1935 work was started on radar design and development, although this was later moved to Bawdsey. Airborne radar was developed, which was very successful, and to hide this success from the Germans it was announced that the RAF pilots were eating carrots to improve their eyesight.

During World War II, captured enemy guns were fired at British aircraft. This was to find out how their protective structure could be improved to minimise damage and keep them flying. Also, captured aircraft were shot at to test the effectiveness of the home forces' guns and see if their performance could be uprated so as to inflict heavier damage. Armaments for the Hurricane and Spitfire were tested here.

In the mid-1950s a test range was constructed for the Bluestreak missile. The flight of the missile was monitored on cameras after it was fired down the range, the object being to develop and improve the flight trajectory.

Many of the buildings standing today were built for testing atomic bomb triggering mechanisms.

These tests were to perfect safety features and to guard against false detonation of the bombs. The environmental testing included heating; freezing; vibrating and also accelerating and decelerating to a high 'G' force to check that the firing mechanisms did not malfunction. This testing finished in 1967. Buildings of historical importance have been preserved, including the famous 'Pagodas' used for the A-bomb safety tests, whilst others have been demolished.

The National Trust has now returned some parts to grazing and flooded others to encourage wildlife. Today the site is open to visitors and birdwatchers under NT management and is accessed via ferry from Orford Quay.

23 November 2006 The History of the Lowestoft & East Suffolk Maritime Society

Peter Parker

Peter began his talk by explaining how the Society and Museum were started. The Society was formed in 1958, as the East Suffolk Marine Society. After reviewing and rejecting various buildings that were offered by the Borough Council, the Museum was started in 1967 in the brick and flint-faced cottage at its present location. Between these dates small exhibitions were displayed in a number of the town's shop windows. In 1968 the Museum was officially opened by the Duke of Edinburgh, 5,687 visitors paying their sixpence to view the exhibits in that inaugural year.

During 1974, discussions were held between the Marine Society and the Lowestoft Archaeological and Local History Society with a view to forming a joint Museum, but this did not happen and in 1975 the Marine Society changed its name to the Lowestoft and East Suffolk Maritime Society. At that time, in addition to trawl fishermen, there were a number of retired characters surviving from the herring industry, and a number of these acted as stewards to pass on their extensive knowledge to the visiting public.

In 1977 the Museum was extended with a new room named in recognition of Bill Soloman, an ex-trawler skipper, who had played a leading role in the founding of the Society. Bill was a first-rate raconteur and (pre-Jack Rose) gave hugely popular public slide and film-shows on Lowestoft, and particularly its fishing history. Unfortunately, Bill died three months before the memorial room opened. Three years later the Museum was extended again when the picture gallery was introduced. When, in 1988, it was decided to renew the Armada post that stands at the top of Martin's Score the Society took on the task, with help from some local companies, and publicity, plus a useful donation, from the Lowestoft Journal.

Peter displayed many slides, taken over the years, of the Museum and its team of helpers, showing how the building, its presentation and its artefacts had changed. He also told of some of the problems that had been encountered, such as the fire in the cabin in 1981, and how these had been dealt with. With a marvellous variety of donated and collected items it is one of the finest Museums in the area dealing with maritime history. A recent acquisition has been some models of boats, plus a box of photographs, that came from Richards Shipyard in Lowestoft. When Richards closed, the parent company moved these items to the Tate & Lyle Museum in London. They are, fittingly, now back in the town where they belong.

Less than two years away from its 50th Anniversary, the Museum is currently planning another extension.

11 January 2007 That's Odd! The story of Rushmere Church Terry Weatherley

Terry started his talk by looking at different buildings, the features that indicate their date of construction and signs of alterations. He then showed features in different churches that showed where changes had been made. These include marks left in walls where windows, doorways or archways had been filled in or where the roof level had been altered. Windows were often moved, enlarged or altered in shape. The Victorians were also very good at producing copies of earlier designs of windows.

The parish of Rushmere is small and in Domesday was valued at 5 shillings and 300 herring. The church tower was constructed in three phases. A drawing from 1829 shows six lancet windows below the existing windows. Around the post-Norman door archway in the north wall there are signs of an

earlier, larger door. At the east end of the building the steep slope of the roof indicate that it was originally thatched. Other signs in the wall suggest that the roof has subsequently been raised. This wall also has a scratch dial, (a form of sundial) which has possibly been moved from the south wall. The unusual thing is that it has been turned on its side.

There is a piece of graffiti on the porch door archway. The word Henry has been carved in the stonework, the date of this is possibly medieval. The porch is built of brick, which is supposed to be 17th century, although Terry thought the bricks looked more typical of the 18th century.

On the north wall there are signs of a relieving arch and in the south wall of two brick relieving arches. This poses the question of whether there had been an arcade on either side or could these be blind arcading used simply as decoration.

25 January 2007 Gorleston and the National Coastwatch Institution (NCI) Bill Richmond

National Coastwatch member, Bill Richmond, gave an enlightening talk to explain the formation of this voluntary group. In 1990, the government decided that technology had advanced to the point where the traditional visual watch kept by the coastguards for so many years was obsolete. The coastguard watch stations were closed and radar surveillance, backed by satellite weather reports, radio and global positioning technology, took over the task. No one in power was able to see that small boats suffering power loss or an engine failure would hardly show up on radar (especially if they were of the rib (inflatable) type and would be unable to call for help. (There's no use sending up a flare if there are no visual watchers!) The loss of the visual watch service caused many worries.

Eventually, it was loss of life on the Cornish coast, in just these circumstances, which prompted people there to start up and fund their own replacement service that was later to become Coastwatch. The system, matched in some places by the similar SSG (Sea Safety Group) has now spread from Cornwall along the south and up the east coast as far north as Hartlepool. All these small groups are voluntarily taking care of and funding (even down to their uniforms) what was previously government business. The duties at Gorleston are split into three, four-hour watches and cover from 8 am to 8 pm daily, involving a total team of around forty male and female volunteers.

The Gorleston group is housed in the original coastguard lookout at the end of Gorleston south pier head and is currently the only one based on a combined major river and port. The extended reach of river between Broads and sea means there are severe shear currents in the harbour mouth at certain tide times. Coastwatch and the port pilots advise shipping on these hazards. All types of visiting craft are observed and recorded, from container ships and oil/gas platform supply vessels down to one-man fishing boats. Surprisingly, in excess of 10,000 boat movements per annum are recorded here.

The NCI visual watch cooperates with a number of official bodies, including search and rescue and the coastguards. They monitor local inshore traffic, keep watch on VHF distress channels – especially to relay any weak signals – they also assist coastguards with updates on weather/sea conditions, maintain a local radar watch, monitor pollution at sea and, where appropriate, cover coastal path walks. Other contacts are kept open with the RSPB and Nature Conservation and, occasionally, with HM Customs regarding unusual movements of people and boats.

Bill's talk covered the various types of buoy positioned off Gorleston and was well illustrated, using slides to show the technical aspects of the coastline and harbour, including the depth of channels and details of Scroby Sands. Also, photographs of vessels, varying sea states, plus aerial views of the river from its mouth up to Breydon Water, three miles inland. The lookout contains a variety of equipment for measuring tidal effects but Coastwatch staff use the upper level, where the balcony offers a good view from Caister Point in the north (itself the site of a lookout in the mid-1800s) down towards Lowestoft Ness Point in the south. On top of the station are lights to control traffic entering or leaving the harbour.

The watchroom desk is well equipped with barometer and wind recorder, two VHF radios and powerful binoculars. Behind this there is a computerised chartroom. Staff are regularly tested and trained to Declared facility status (DFS). This ensures they provide a daily watch sheet and accurate written records, which may be referred to by coastguards. One vital skill is to assess the distance and direction of any vessel from the lookout station. This enables any search and rescue operation,

whether using lifeboat or helicopter, to get to the spot without delay – an essential element in their main aim of saving life at sea.

8 February 2007

Georgian Lowestoft – a pictorial tour

Chris Brooks

Chris Brooks, Chairman of the Jack Rose Old Lowestoft Society, treated the weather-depleted audience to a fascinating look at the town in its Georgian format. Lowestoft in the 1700s supported a population of approximately 2000 and covered only a fraction of the area so-named today. Using current landmarks, it stretched from Hamilton Road in the south up to Links Road in the north, and westward roughly to St Margaret's church. Since before the time of Nelson's visit there had been organised defences for the town. A fortified battery with thirteen cannon was positioned at the point called 'South End', later known as Battery Green. Other, smaller examples covered the north and east frontages.

At this time there was no harbour and no main route into town from the south, Pakefield being separated from Lowestoft by rough, undeveloped land and having its own church and identity – Lake Lothing was still a lake. The main access was from Oulton with visitors passing between spacious greens as they neared town, finally arriving in the High Street via Bell Lane. Occupations within town would have been varied, including tradespeople supplying the householders' needs; the brewing trade; farming; and transport, with its associated wheelwrights and blacksmiths, also millers would have been represented. For many years a windmill stood beside Oulton Road (now St Margaret's Road). It was finally demolished when the railway cutting for the line to Great Yarmouth was put in, but the mill cottages still survive in good order.

There would also have been carpenters and leather workers and, no doubt, shipbuilders serving the fishing industry and coastal-trading seamen. These marine trades worked direct off the beach, there being no docks or quay-headings available, only the guidance system of high and low lights for their safety. Moving goods by sea was probably better than trusting to the unmetalled roads and the horse-drawn or bullock carts of the 18th century, particularly during the winter period.

But in the mid-1750s a new trade emerged. To the north of town, at Gunton Cliff, a local businessman discovered clay that turned out to be suitable for making good quality porcelain. (The tea-drinking habit had developed in the late 1600s and porcelain was in demand.) Clay washing and settlement beds, using water from a natural spring (still-flowing), were established near the Warren Cottages on the north Denes. A kiln was set up in Factory Street and by 1760 Lowestoft porcelain was being sold and advertised through London agents. Skilled potters and decorators lived and worked in the adjoining area and the company produced a great variety of both blue and polychrome glazed pieces until about 1800, when the business closed. Today, the best examples command very high prices.

The Town's excellent Lowestoft porcelain collection was moved to Broad House Museum in Oulton Broad in 1985 and is open to the public during the summer season. The Porcelain Factory was converted to a brewery and used by E & G Morse for more than a century. In 1902/3 a local enthusiast excavated beneath the building and uncovered a large amount of pottery fragments, wasters and moulds. Some of these may be found in the Broad House display.

The Georgian period saw the old timber-framed buildings at the town's north end begin to be replaced by those of brick. A number of the wealthier merchants had new homes built on the east side of the High Street overlooking the sea, with 'hanging gardens' running down the slope to the beach level. The Georgian style is still visible in a number of houses in the Town Hall area and a few of those retain their vaulted storage cellars. Other buildings in the area of special note include the old tithe barn off Factory Street, both north and south Flint Houses, the ancient house north of Rant Score, with its traces of a jettied front, and Wilde's School, the remaining part of which now contains the Lowestoft Heritage Centre.

Chris Brooks had a first-class set of pictures supplemented with drawings by Ian Robb, who sat in on the talk.

22 February 2007

The Lost Houses of Suffolk

Alan Mackley

Alan Mackley gave an account of the reasons why a significant number of Suffolk Country Houses fell into decline and were eventually demolished. The talk, extensively illustrated by slides and drawings, explained that in the main this decline had taken place since the 19th century.

A general definition of the Country House is one large enough to have an estate, say 1,000 acres, and which can provide sufficient income to support the incumbents. An early survey of owners with 1 acre of land or more, revealed that there were only a few having estates over 20 acres; roughly 35% with 12–20 acres; another 35% having 5–12 acres and the balance made of relatively small lots. The owners derived several advantages, such as being able to display life-style and taste, hosting annual events and shoots, travelling abroad and entertaining their peers. Estate income from agriculture was supplemented by rents from their farms and other tenants.

For centuries the country estate owners had survived in a comfortable, feudal style, but they were to suffer a drop in income in the 1870s. Rents and wages collapsed due to the fall in value of English farm produce. This was caused by the large-scale import of cheap cereals and beef from the Americas. Tenant farmers could not find the rent and many families in smaller estates now also fell on hard times. The larger estates fared better and mostly had sufficient cash or holdings to keep going. Eleven estates of over 10–12,000 acres survived in Suffolk, but only six of these retained their houses. At this time, many land-workers in Suffolk moved to the booming herring fishing industry and some to other local trades.

Some Victorian industrialists had become rich but still found it difficult to buy an estate. This was because, to protect their property, many owners gave settlements of land or cash to members of their family, the split ownership making it almost impossible to sell off an estate. Because of this many houses were let rather than sold and it took an Act of Parliament at the start of the 20th century to break the settlement system.

The task of caring for houses of note (and managing their opening to the paying public) is undertaken today mainly by the National Trust, but this is a comparatively recent arrangement and the underlying strategies much different from those of their predecessors. In the 1930s, some groups stated ...‘It may not be that all old houses demolished were of sufficient worth to justify keeping them’....Also, at that time, there was concern for the continuance of long-established families, seen as being an indivisible part of the Country House, and about 230 houses were listed. In 2004, CPRE recorded that during 1940, with war damage threatening, artists were chosen to paint and record views of what they considered to be the essence of English Heritage. Very surprisingly, there were no country houses selected!

Things had changed with the War and some of the more forward-looking families made their houses into schools and public buildings, but a number of suitable ones were requisitioned by the government for military use. Due to lack of funding many old houses were run down or lacking facilities, not having modern plumbing, drains and heating, so escaped the government’s net. Locally, Earsham Hall was left due to its lack of services. At that time there was no obligation to notify a house was to be pulled down. Consequently, in the 1950s many country houses that had survived the blitz unscathed fell victim to demolition, then at its peak. In Suffolk alone 37 were destroyed.

Looking to the future of the remaining halls and houses in Suffolk; a good number have been well kept or restored but despite having their traditional shooting and fishing activities, find it difficult to maintain profitability. Some also have suffered through being hit by crippling death duties. Few if any of these can now be taken on by the National Trust so increasingly, owners are turning estates and houses over to commercial use such as tourism, wildlife parks, settings for weddings, conferences and music festivals, and occasionally as film-sets.

Henham Hall, south of Lowestoft, designed by James Wyatt (to replace an earlier one burnt down in the 1790s) was pulled down in the 1950s, rents in the 1940s having fallen to half the value of one hundred years before, leaving the estate in financial trouble and reduced to 4,000 acres. The current Earl of Stradbroke, with the help of his family, runs the estate from his home in Australia and has put forward plans to build a modern hall. This may perhaps incorporate a number of units suitable for temporary entertainment or holiday use.

8 March 2007**The History of Easter****Katrina Siliprandi**

Katrina, from the Education Department of Norwich Castle Museum, first gave a general explanation of this traditional ceremony, which appears in many countries across the world, and has existed for many centuries in various forms. She went on to reveal the mystery of the shifting dates allocated to Easter in the Western Church. This Moveable Feast always takes place on the Sunday following the first full moon to appear after the spring equinox. Immediately preceding Easter are the 40 weekdays of Lent starting with Ash Wednesday, a time which in the Christian Church is devoted to abstinence and fasting, in commemoration of Christ's fasting in the wilderness. In earlier centuries the four or five days before Ash Wednesday often took the form of a feast, which used up perishable foodstuffs, the Monday could feature eggs and collops (bacon), then came Shrove Tuesday with pancakes, the family possibly being called by the church bells to be shaven and absolved by the priest before they consumed the last of the pre-Lenten treats.

There were endless local customs to do with Easter. In Scotland, wheaten cakes (bannocks) replaced pancakes. The first public pancake race is said to have been run in Church Lane, Olney (Bucks). In some villages after a race the frying pans would be placed in a circle around the church font while the competitors went to worship. The first pancake could be saved and given back to the fowls or used in special ceremonies. Other entertainments on the day might include cockfighting and also cock threshing, where a local had a cockerel and bells tied to their back. Competitors paid a fee and were blindfolded before they tried to locate the mobile cockerel and strike it with a stick, the bird's carrier receiving the fees as a reward at the end of the game. On Ash Wednesday, children in Hants and Sussex picked ash twigs with black buds and played a toe-stamping game. On Mothering Sunday (the fourth Sunday of Lent) girl children who had left home often returned to visit their mothers bringing the gift of a simnel cake, which was both boiled and baked. Often, because it contained eggs and rich ingredients, it would be saved for consumption on Easter Sunday. Simnel cakes might have 11 marzipan decorations representing the true disciples. Liquorice or figs were commonly eaten on Palm Sunday (Fig Sunday) a week before Easter.

The Thursday of Easter Week (Maunday Thursday) saw the start of a custom where the ruling monarch originally washed the feet of chosen parishioners, who also received gifts. This became today's UK custom of chosen parishioners being presented with specially minted Maunday money. Good Friday customs varied across the country with water, fire, bread and, of course, hot cross buns all providing good luck if used in the right way. Marbles was played on Good Friday and 'long rope day' was celebrated by skipping on the beach at Brighton and elsewhere in Sussex. People were encouraged to wear 'something new' on Easter Sunday if they could.

The talk concluded with a description of the multitude of designs, customs and symbolism connected with Easter eggs, the egg being a symbol of resurrection and fertility from the ancient worlds of Egypt and China. Egg dances are known in many countries and egg hunts became very popular in the UK from the 17th century. Since the Middle Ages eggs have traditionally been finished in bright colours with fancy, often gilt, decoration. Sometimes hens eggs were painted or dyed by families whose members all took part in the experience. The Victorian gift eggs were usually of cardboard or tinplate, in two halves, with an elaborately colour-printed covering and were filled with chocolates or sweets. Commercial manufacturers produced the first chocolate eggs in the 1870s. In Germany is found the egg tree, where a small tree is decorated with eggs made from wood or blown glass. In the last 20 years egg trees are also appearing in the UK. And for those who have everything, there is always Fabergé.

22 March 2007**The Archaeological Excavations at Bloodmoor Hill****Alison Dickens**

This was the long awaited final report of the Cambridge Archaeological Unit. Alison deserves great credit for delivering a concise, well illustrated, easily flowing and extremely interesting précis of what has been a very large and important project. Fieldwork on the 3 hectare site (funded by the land developers) was carried out between 1996 and 2001, and post-fieldwork (funded by English Heritage) has occupied the last six years.

The 1996 excavation found the western part of a Saxon settlement was overlying a Roman site that had been occupied in the 2nd and 3rd century AD. It was a minor rural settlement served by a ditched

and banked trackway. A Saxon barrow was excavated nearby in 1758. Bloodmoor Hill, occupied from the 5th to the 8th century, is the most easterly Saxon site in the country and positioned where the parishes of Pakefield, Carlton Colville and Gisleham meet, on a slight rise on sandy soil a little east of the Kirkley stream. A mixture of techniques was employed after stripping the topsoil, including metal detecting, geophysics, trowelling and sieving, with cleaning of artefacts carried out on site; most important was the accurate recording of all stages.

It quickly became clear that this was a very important site, having 38 varied examples of Grubenhaus and more than 10 post-built structures; also 270 pits, many of which were overlapping, plus a very rare cemetery with east/west burials grouped into four clear stages of use. There were also many middens of large area that were sampled in metre squares to determine their contents. The pits and houses contained a wealth of small finds and the Cambridge investigators adopted the most recent methods of dating and testing these, including radio-carbon dating the residue preserved within cooking vessels. The population of Bloodmoor was probably not more than 25–30 people at any one time and spanned approximately five generations. Buildings from the second phase of occupation were more tightly grouped than from the first and the main cemetery was almost centrally positioned.

Finds included body ornaments, food utensils and both single- and double-sided bone combs of high quality. There were remains of Anglo-Saxon glass palm pots and claw beakers, plus imported cult items in silver, pointing to the existence of trade links. The site status is also important because traces of iron and copper-working were found, remains of 54 knives, a pot hook, a cleaver and other hooks, nails and wire being collected. Weaving must have been part of the daily round as loom weights and very rare evidence of textile fragments were recovered from graves. Traces of barley, rye, wheat, flax and beans were excavated, also crab apples, sloes and local reed. Strangely, for a site near the coast, fish did not feature in any quantity. Food may have been traded in – animal bones were mainly of pigs, some sheep, goats and horses (some butchered) and cattle. The last were mature, indicating their use for milk and leather, the younger meat was probably traded off-site.

The cemetery contained 28 graves (there were also two outliers 50 metres off, one a double burial) but soil conditions did not favour the preservation of bones, of which few remained. Grave goods included a silver necklace and cross (Christian period), remains of shears and hooks; also gold and glass decorative objects and an outstanding brooch of garnet and alloy, similar to one from Edix Hill, Cambridgeshire. The cemetery was in use for 20–50 years. The conclusion of the archaeologists was that the site was not just a village, but of high status with an organised layout and established social and trade links.

26 April 2007

The English Garden

Paul Scriven

Paul Scriven talked about some of the spectacular and historic gardens in this country. He explained that, despite the title, many ideas for stocking and designing gardens were imported from continental countries, including Holland, France and Italy, and even from as far away as China. By the time of Henry VIII it had become fashionable to adopt new and grand styles for the grounds of large estates. In the 1600s Andre Mollet brought French fashions to this country, particularly parterre gardens, but these were to suffer when Cromwell (who thought formal gardens trivial) caused many to be destroyed. Happily, the fashion was revived after Charles II was returned to the throne in 1660. Some estate owners took advantage of 16th-century exploration and voyaging to develop collections of rare and unusual plants and trees. In the 17th-century, espaliered fruit trees were introduced and topiary became fashionable (again through overseas influence). The Oxford Botanical Garden was set up in 1671. Weeping willows were introduced in 1730 and other species soon followed. A well-known voyager from the late 1700s was Captain Cook, who took botanist Sir Joseph Banks on his ship *Endeavour* when visiting Tahiti and the south seas. George III was advised by Sir Joseph Banks and expanded the collection at the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew by over 7,000 new species, mostly from overseas.

This was the time of the grand tour when the English gentry spent much time and money abroad, visiting the wonders of the world, as part of their education. They came back full of ideas and employed artists and designers to develop their country estates. Royal gardener William Kent, who had trained as an artist in Italy, worked with Charles Bridgman on modifications at Kew Gardens in

the 1700s, and also alongside Lancelot 'Capability' Brown on the development of the magnificent grounds at Stowe (now run by the National Trust). Capability Brown was to become a byword for many of the great garden designs including gems such as Blenheim Palace, Chatsworth and Audley End. Locally, he worked on Heveningham Hall, Suffolk. His work covered all aspects of garden design including the landscaping, water features and bridges, also buildings (often done in classical style) including rotundas and Corinthian arches. Humphrey Repton was another famed artist from this period, who first painted the existing landscape, then showed it to the owner with an overlay of the proposed modifications (artist's impression). He designed Henham Hall, Suffolk, but stated his own favourite work was done at Sheringham Park in Norfolk.

The National Trust, over many years, has acquired many famous country houses and gardens. Some are quite true to their original design but, on occasion, due to natural dying off of species, the plant list has changed. Modifications may also occur where gardens have become run-down due to neglect (e.g. Biddulph Grange) or if family lines have come to an end. The NT has then to carry out a rescue plan. The speaker paid tribute to the wonderful work done by the RHS at Wisley in developing new plant varieties and cultivation methods. He also described, and showed slides of, the Eden Project and the outstanding tropical Abbey Gardens at Tresco in the Scilly Isles.

10 May 2007

Norfolk & Norwich in the Great War Peter and Rosemary Salt

Peter and Rosemary presented a first-class slide show to members on 10 May. Rosemary's well-scripted and clear commentary traced the build-up in the early 20th century, leading to the declaration of war. These pre-war years had been full of new discoveries and excitement. Mechanisation of industry and farming life was taking place (Cantley sugar processing factory was constructed in 1912) and many inventions to improve home life had appeared. Flying experiments made news here and abroad. Hospitals were built including Kelling where new methods to combat the scourge of consumption were being developed. Motoring was the new craze for the well off and bicycling for the masses. There were disasters too – following torrential rain, the severe 1912 Norwich flooding made many people homeless, and the Sexton shoe factory fire of 1913 put 700 out of work. However, the pre-war years meant general prosperity for many people and frequent visits by the monarch, Edward VII, to his Sandringham estate and other social engagements in Norfolk produced a strong feeling of nationalism. Plans had been made for slum clearance in Norwich, but were delayed by the onset of hostilities. The four-year war (started 4 August 1914) was soon to change the outlook of the nation, with many servicemen losing their lives or returning injured, with some of the latter to be permanent cripples.

It had all started brightly enough with 100,000 recruits from Norfolk, encouraged by the local campaign meetings and posters, signing on for initial training and allocation to a variety of regiments, with all ages and classes required. Many of those too old for regular service joined the Norfolk Volunteer Force (roughly equivalent to the Home Guard of World War II). Evidently class played a big part when ranks were shared out to the regular servicemen. Special trains left Norwich, carrying the cheerful forces via the ports of embarkation to the front lines in France. Also required were substantial quantities of horses for cavalry mounts and for pulling the guns and army supply wagons. Forage teams collected baled straw and hay throughout the county to supply the horses. Meanwhile, the Royal Flying Corps, started in 1912, were practising in Thetford prior to sending flying crews overseas. In Norwich, both Boulton & Paul and Mann Egerton switched part of their wartime factory production to building military aircraft. Caley's factory produced 'Marching Chocolate' for the troops and also made gunpowder for munitions.

As more men went to the front, women were called on to take over their jobs in factories, the post office, railway and bus services, plus farming (a Land Army was formed). This was in addition to their more traditional nursing, catering and office roles. Salvationists collected food and gifts to be sent to the fighting forces. There was now a general fear of aliens in the area, not helped by the presence of German POWs brought in to provide local labour, mainly on farms and roads. War trophies such as captured guns were displayed to try and offset these effects. Many wounded troops were to be seen in the city at this time and great efforts were made to provide entertainment and comforts for them. War bonds were widely advertised and raised large sums of cash for the war

effort. Despite shortages, general life continued with weddings, funerals and fairs until the momentous announcement of the Armistice, signed on the 11 November 1918. This was the time for many thousands to take part in street parties, parades and local medal presentations. Harry Daniels VC (later also MC) was a well-known Norwich hero. Peace was not signed until 28 June 1919, after which a round of demob parties took place (not all well attended due to the post-war mood – Norwich had suffered the loss of 3,544 persons in the conflict). JJ Colman of Norwich had pledged to reserve the jobs of their employees who had served in the war.

In the early 1920s came agricultural strikes, unemployment and unrest. To combat this the government introduced new job schemes, building public parks, bridges, roads and sea defences. In Norwich, the Castle mound was cut back to allow wider roads and improve the tram and road layouts. The long-delayed housing improvements began and many areas of terraced estates sprang up surrounding and extending the city. A revived interest in motoring and air transport provided some extra jobs, as did the development of modern textiles and fashion, including the shoe trade, and other industries, but the overall recovery in the county was to be a very drawn-out affair.

LA&LHS – AGM: Thursday 24 May 2007 at South Lowestoft Methodist Church

21 members attended this year's AGM. Due to the unavoidable absence of our chairman, the chair was taken by Ron Ashman. The minutes for 2006 were agreed and the various Officers then tendered their reports for the current year. It was agreed not to raise the subscription for the new season and to change the publishing date for the Annual Report to January. The election of Officers proceeded, with all being returned to their posts, with the addition of Les Wilmot approved as Vice-Chairman. One vacancy remains on the committee and any willing member can still be co-opted for this season. Please contact Irene Ashman on 01502 586143 if you are able to fill this position.

At the AGM the following members were elected to the committee.

Chairman: Lilian Fisher

Vice/chairman: Les Wilmot

Secretary: Irene Ashman

Treasurer: Ray Collins

Programme Secretary: John Knowles

Committee Members: Ron Ashman, Keith Davies, Jenny Hatton, Don Friston (Newsletter Editor), leaving one vacancy.

Several displays in the Museum were reorganised and improved during last winter. New regulations force us to have two stewards on duty at all times there now. This has reduced the level of cover and means we can only open from 1.30pm to 4.30pm each day. Can you help us by sharing some of the duties? (please speak to Lilian)

14 June 2007 Members outing to visit the National Trust site at Orford Ness

guided by Paddy Heazell

Over 20 members met at Orford Quay to be greeted by our guide, Paddy Heazell, who works for the National Trust. The rain held off and the ferry soon took everyone across the river Alde to the spit of land known as Orford Ness. As the peninsula site is some 16km in length, the group was carried to a selection of the most important areas by custom-built trailer, with a running commentary given by Paddy.

Since the Middle-Ages the peninsula has been used for cattle grazing, with river walls being constructed at various times to gradually exclude the salt water. Because of its remote location, the Ministry of Defence acquired the site in 1913 and by 1915 had drained two areas for operation as grass airfields. From 1914 the Central Flying School began military test flights and by 1918 there were over 600 resident personnel involved. It is hard to imagine now how basic these early tests were. Flying was in its infancy and little was known of the effects of speed in the air, the low temperatures encountered, the lack of oxygen above a certain height and how pilot and machine would perform in these conditions. Early research tests included the vulnerability of aircraft fuel tanks and whether silencers could be fitted to fighter engines, so the enemy would not hear them approach. It was concluded that the power loss caused by the silencer rendered the aircraft useless as a fighter. By taking in a large area south of the original airfields to form a bombing range, Orford was also able to test a range of armaments, bomb design and air bombing techniques, including the most

effective way to attack railway lines. Photographs were taken as planes approached the range and released their bombs. From these pictures, specialists were able to plot the trajectory and learn how to improve the performance of airborne weapons. The airfield closed for 5 years at the end of WWI but the newly formed RAF worked on developments in flying from about 1924, often in secret (the Observer Corps began in 1925 on Orford Quay). Parachutes did not come into use until after WWI and it is estimated 1500–2000 pilots were lost as a result. When they were initially tested, the parachutes were not intended for aircrew but for use in dropping flares – aircrew were not issued with them until 1925.

By 1934, the British public was scared by the activities of German Zeppelins and Gotha bombers. Attempts to invent a defensive death ray came to nothing, but the following year, near Daventry, practical experiments were started by Robert Watson Watt to show wireless signals could be affected by passing aircraft. Watts' team was encouraged to start research on radio direction finding (radar) design and development at Orford (helped by a £10–12,000 government grant) then eventually moved south a few miles to Bawdsey Manor, where the 'Chain Home' radar system was perfected. Later, airborne radar was developed, which was very successful, and to hide this from the Germans it was announced that the RAF pilots were eating carrots to improve their eyesight. This type of radar allowed U-boats to be seen when surfacing – a vital factor in winning the Battle of the Atlantic. Great interest was shown in weapons and hardware used by enemy forces during WWII. If a weapon was captured, it was thoroughly tested to determine the damage it might inflict on the equipment of the home forces, and how to counter it – if an enemy aircraft could be obtained, it was first tested for performance, then subjected to attack (using the home ordnance) to find out any weakness in construction which might later be exploited in battle. Captured enemy armaments were fired at a wide range of redundant RAF aircraft, including the Hurricane and Spitfire.

In the mid 1950s a test range was constructed to test the Blue Streak missile and to perfect its trajectory, the flight of the missile being monitored on camera as it was fired down the range. From 1953–71 the Orford site was involved in various kinds of research carried out by the AWRE (Atomic Weapons Research Establishment). The remains of several laboratory buildings are standing today, including two 'Pagodas' built to test and perfect safety features which guarded against false detonation of atomic bombs. Environmental testing included heating, freezing, vibrating with sound; also accelerating, and decelerating the firing mechanism to a high 'G' force to check that it did not malfunction. This testing finished in 1967. A series of photographs, plus a complete WE177 (depth charge) atomic bomb casing, now form part of the visitor display. From the late 1960s, the powerful Anglo-American 'Cobra Mist' over-the-horizon radar system was developed and tested at the northern end of the site. It was never really successful and the scheme was dropped in 1973. The building is now partly occupied by the BBC World Service transmitters.

With the ending of the Cold War, the site became redundant and was decommissioned and swept in an attempt to remove 70 years accumulation of (possibly live) ordnance from the ground. Buildings of major historical importance are preserved, but most have been demolished or are being deliberately allowed to decay. The National Trust acquired the site in 1993 and returned some of the land to grazing, while other parts are allowed to flood to provide a haven for wildlife. The NT allows access to visitors and ornithologists within their management plan.

28 June 2007

An evening visit to two local churches led by Terry Weatherley

About 20 members collected on a fine evening at **Our Lady, Star of the Sea** (*Stella Maris*) Catholic Church in Gordon Road, Lowestoft. Building began in 1900, and a wonderful donation of £10,000 enabled the church to open for worship in 1902. Constructed by Baines and Richards in red brick and white stone, in late Gothic style, it is the only major church in the town centre. The west door, flanked by guardian angels, is to the right of the offset tower, and the first impression on entering the church is one of light and space. This is due to the high clerestory windows and the soaring arches of the nave set on eight red granite pillars, the eye being drawn to the Triple Crown and Keys of St Peter above the main arch fronting the sanctuary. The view toward the sanctuary reveals the central altar, beyond which is the high altar and the superbly sculpted, painted and gilded reredos. The apse at the east end rises above the reredos to show the finely painted sanctuary roof, depicting Christ in Majesty

surrounded by English Martyrs. This was first completed in the 1930s and renovated in the 1950s after wartime damage. The beautiful clerestory glass of the apse is by Kempe. This glass suffered blast damage in the war and was repositioned, renovated and rededicated in 1952.

The parishioners have contributed generously to the upkeep and decoration of the church during the 20th century. In 1927 they marked the silver jubilee of the church by donating fourteen Stations of the Cross, positioned in the north and south aisles and carved in Arts & Crafts fashion. Among the devotional objects is a *Pieta* (a replica of Michelangelo's work) donated by the Lawrence family who were well known in East Anglia as suppliers of soft drinks; also an icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour (donated in the 1920s by a local group – the Children of Mary). Positioned above the sacristy door are beautifully painted murals of Thomas More and John Fisher, prominent English Catholic Martyrs, canonised as saints of the church in 1935.

In the Lady Chapel, to the right of the Sanctuary, the altar bears a white marble statue of the Virgin Mary and Child Jesus, donated in 1902. The ceiling of this chapel is blue and depicts angels bearing shields. To the left of the Sanctuary is the Blessed Sacrament Altar, so-called because it acts as the altar of repose each Maundy Thursday evening. The ceiling is red with shields depicting wheat and grapes together with symbols of Christ's suffering. There is a high quality decorative screen between the chapels and sanctuary.

The tower has a room beneath and also contains the three-manual organ and the choir loft. A spiral stone staircase of about 150 steps leads to the top of the 100ft tower. An elegant Sanctus bell turret rises from the church roof. The statue of the Virgin and Child, situated outside the portico above the main door, was the gift of William Catchpole, a parishioner from a local fishing family.

Next, the group continued to **St Margaret's Church**, set in its huge graveyard on high ground to the north west of Lowestoft. Like most great Suffolk churches it contains elements from different centuries. The tower (of diminutive scale against the body of the church) dates to about 1340. It has been altered from time to time, as is shown by the blind arcading near the bell chamber, and the spire was re-clad in copper sheathing in the latter part of the 20th century. The crypt with its Gothic vaulting, which we were able to view, was constructed in the late 1300s. The large double-storey porch features superb flint flushwork and its upper storey is referred to as 'the Maid's Chamber'. The 15th-century nave with its widely spaced clerestory windows, generously proportioned aisles and numerous exterior buttresses is quite overwhelming in size. The south wall had to be rebuilt in the 19th century and is in superb condition with finely dressed flints. Before the churchyard trees were allowed to grow, visitors to the church had an unbroken view to the south, across the lower parts of the town and the inner harbour.

We entered by the Priest's door and were struck by the enormous interior space of the nave, stretching away from the chancel (there being no chancel arch), and the unbroken line of the painted and gilded roof is magnificent. To the west, the distant but superbly elegant font cover by Ninian Comper caught the eye, but the Rector admits to practical difficulties at christenings due to it being fixed in position. Close to the font, in a scale to match the church, is England's biggest stove locker. The nave floor once had many brasses but, sadly, few now remain. There are, however, a number of stone memorials in the centre aisle and on the interior walls. A partially built screen and loft features in the north aisle, above the War Memorial chapel, but for some reason has never been completed. Almost opposite is the exceptionally rare, medieval brass lectern.

At the west end, and also nearby in the north aisle, is some excellent stained glass by Christopher Whall. This was brought from the now-demolished St Peter's Church in Lowestoft. In 1819, the east window of St Margaret's was fitted with glass of a unique and unusual origin. It was painted, possibly in situ, by retired china painter Robert Allen who had been employed in the Lowestoft porcelain factory until its closure around 1800. This very rare window, painted in a curious, dated style is his only known glasswork. Fortunately, when the east window was re-glazed in the 1890s the Allen glass was reset. It remains in the south wall of the chancel. There are several memorials of interest – one is to the 17th-century puritan Samuel Pacey, responsible for the witch hunt hysteria in the 1660s, another reminds us of the Revd Bartholomew Ritson MA, who died while in the pulpit at Hopton. He left a large bequest for good works to be administered by St Margaret's, where he is buried. A brass plaque in the chancel is inscribed: *To the Glory of God and in Thanksgiving for the*

Safe keeping of the Church and Congregation in the Violent Thunderstorm of Sunday August 21st 1921.

This vast church has to be kept locked, because of the risk of vandalism, so is not much visited. However, the adjacent Parish office is staffed from 9am to midday, Monday to Wednesday and will help if possible.

13 September 2007 A North East Suffolk Historical Miscellany Dr J M Blatchly

The Society's new season started with a lively talk by Dr J M Blatchly, President of the Suffolk Record Society and one-time head of Ipswich School. He has a particular interest in the collection of early books within the Ipswich Library. A regular contributor of historical articles to the East Anglian Daily Times, Dr Blatchly drew on several of these to produce 'A North-East Suffolk Historical Miscellany'. This very interesting series of descriptions brought into sharp focus people ranging from antiquarians, artists and writers to the very eccentric.

Dr Blatchly's relaxed but authoritative delivery gave the attentive, and frequently amused, members a series of word pictures that brought these historic characters to life. A ghost story came first, followed by a wide selection of curious tales, some dealing with sea battles, searches for sea-shore treasure and the effects of shifting coastlines; others telling of personal achievements and travels from earlier centuries. Thomas Gardener was sent from his parents' far off and severely overcrowded household to be cared for by an uncle in Southwold. Thomas, who was a competent writer, ended up as the Southwold salt officer.

Members were shown a book by Isaac Johnson (1754–1835) who was a surveyor and artist of exceptional talent. He produced illustrated books, by hand, using a manuscript style of such perfection that readers believed they were printed. Thomas Fella (born at Bramfield near Halesworth) was a successful merchant who traded through the port of Dunwich in the late 16th and early 17th centuries. Fella was another enthusiastic writer and artist who has left two historically important manuscripts with unique and fascinating illustrations of long-gone local features. One manuscript is deposited in the Lowestoft Record Office and the other is in America.

Members were reminded that a new edition of the Oxford Dictionary of Biography is now available on line and covers local writers of note. The source material for this talk is given at the end of the report (page 47).

27 September 2007 A Hundred Taverns, Inns and Pubs of Beccles David Lindley

The Society welcomed David Lindley, who presented a slide show and talk on the history of Taverns, Inns and Pubs in Beccles from the 1450s until the present day. In those early days Beccles was in the top four important towns in Suffolk and larger than Lowestoft. Members were astonished to hear that over 100 drinking establishments of various types had been recorded. In the 15th and 16th centuries tea and coffee were extremely expensive, highly taxed luxuries. The average person drank beer, normally of home or local brew, of a low alcohol level (small beer) with their meals – even at breakfast. It was common for brewers and local shops (particularly bakers) to sell beer with other foodstuffs, some proprietors having a social room where the purchaser could enjoy a glass before leaving. Some of these shops developed into alehouses and also inns, the latter extending their hospitality to include meals and accommodation for travellers. Inns were essential in that most of the water sources up and down the country were polluted and undrinkable, even being risky for animals. As the main transport was horse drawn, coaching inns were obliged to offer stabling and overnight feed and care for horses and mules. In the 1630s, the well-documented White Lion, of Beccles new market flourished, this large building had one and a half acres of land adjoining for this purpose.

The White Lion, owned by the Rector of Gillingham, soon grew in importance and was upgraded in Georgian times to include a parlour, hall, kitchen and buttery. It was sold in 1720 and from then the manager allowed a number of functions, including legal business, retail of choice goods, auctions, masonic and other meetings in the assembly rooms, and a farrier service (run by a man from Shipmeadow). Also in the new market area was the popular King's Head, another large establishment. It was mentioned by Parson Woodforde as having the finest oysters he ever tasted – it

had 8 acres of ground for horse care out on the Ringsfield Road. The King's Head landlord was allowed to put up two adjoining extensions in the 19th century. These matched the style of the main inn and are still in use today. Other inns in Beccles catered for freemasonry, bowling and hunting, and the Falcon had a cockpit (this was later moved to the White Horse, an inn which was frequented by a number of local clubs). At various times many other pub games flourished including skittles, shove-ha'penny dice, cards, quoits and, of course, darts.

In the early 1700s, only Taverns were allowed to sell wine. Drinking wine (usually imported) had become very fashionable with upper class tradesmen who combined this with a business lunch. The fashion was not to last and by 1770 wine consumption fell by one third, the taverns being mainly replaced by alehouses which attracted a matching lower class of trading. Ten years later many pubs were being closed as they were considered to be dangerous meeting places for anti-establishment conspirators. Fortunately, common sense prevailed and before long the pub was restored to favour. Trading was not always good and one early landlord of The Fleece operated a coaching and carrier's business during the daytime, attending to his pub at night. Just as well 'breathalysers' were not in use!

Mr Lindley ended by showing numerous slides of lost examples, and the remaining Beccles pubs and inns as they are today, most, but not all, now put to a variety of business and private use.

11 October 2007 Far Pavilions part 1: Lowestoft Theatre and Music Halls Michael Mills

Michael Mills presented this outstanding 'Far Pavilions' slide show and talk, detailing how our forbears were entertained from 1790 to 1939 in the theatres and music halls of Lowestoft. Members heard that a variety of venues, some surprisingly large, were developed over this time. We are now accustomed to films and to mass broadcast entertainment from radio and television, seldom recalling the heyday of local stage performance. A theatre bill from 1790 advertised a visiting company starring in *School for Scandal*. Tickets were 3/- per box, 2/- for stalls and 1/- for the gallery and were probably sold in inns. Entrepreneurs were busy building or booking suitable theatres in main centres across East Anglia, including David Fisher, who was soon to develop the Fisher Company of Comedians (an early term for actors) after negotiating with the well-known Billy Scraggs. In 1794 they used the New Theatre in Dukes Head Street and a little later the nearby David Fisher Theatre, which he had built in Crown Street (this is still with us as the Crown Street Hall, where in late October 2007 local writers and actors performed 'Fisherton', a home-produced story of a fishing skipper's family). Early theatrical performances were also staged in the old High Street chapel of ease, which was let out for various events and later, after realignment of the High Street, was to house the Town Hall. The Fisher theatre dynasty ended in East Anglia in the 1850s but continued as a major influence elsewhere, including London.

A huge range of stars came to Lowestoft during this two-hundred-year period. In the 1870s, General Tom Thumb appeared with Barnum's troupe, also Harry Clifton – a music hall star famous for his song about *Pretty Polly Perkins of Paddington Green*, Maskelyne & Cooke, and Jolly John Nash. Organ concerts were all the rage and Nicolas Lemmens performed in 1870. Ten years later pantomimes were on the bill for the 3,000-seat Lowestoft Theatre Royal (proprietor H Holbrook) at the Alexandra Hall, Denmark Road. The Public Hall in Lowestoft, which seated 800, was built in 1873 (the building also housed the Journal Office). WS Gilbert's Savoy Operas came to town and tickets could be obtained at Crisp's Booksellers. A popular theatre opened in town at the Arcade, near Milton Road and was host to many top-line performers including singers and musicians of international status, like Philip Sousa. It once put on an unusual travelling exhibition of Japanese master craftsmen, and also featured 'Pepper's Ghost', an illusion play, where shadows of the actors were thrown onto a backlit screen as special effects. Another unusual performance was given using a cylinder gramophone playing Charles Dickens reading his own works. Revenue from the crowds attending these theatres must have been most welcome in those days when Lowestoft had begun to expand.

A great deal of development by Morton Peto, south of the bridge, meant this area could also support entertainment centres. One of the first was the Kirkley Hall, still standing (as a shop) almost opposite Waterloo Road. Nearer to what is now the Hatfield was the Olympian Gardens. At the turn of the

20th century, south Lowestoft residents could see up to three programmes per day if they could afford it. The South Lowestoft Concert Rooms may still be seen in the guise of the Bo Lee restaurant. Entertainers there included Gertie Miller in 'Our Miss Gibbs' and Philip Ritte, tenor, singing a song written in Lowestoft – *The Trumpeter*. The Leggett family opened swimming baths, which later were modified to become the Grand, and another theatre appeared on the Claremont Pier. In season, The South Beach Concert Pavilion was erected on the beach very near the Claremont. Lowestoft was greedy for shows and fun, so more development had taken place north of the bridge. Two skating rinks were built on land purchased in the Marina area and one of these became the first Marina Theatre around 1899 – the latter was to go through several rebuilds in later years. At almost the same time the Sparrow's Nest site was started and, to match a similar idea in Gt Yarmouth, the Hippodrome was put up with a seating capacity of 2,300. After the Great War, the South Pier got its own theatre and, in 1926, another (to be named the New Theatre) appeared in London Road South. This was destined to continue with repertory and musical shows for many years and remains in business today as the Hollywood Cinema. In the period following the First World War, radio had introduced many stars and they performed seasonally across the country. Many singers and comedians came to Lowestoft, including Florrie Forde, Ellen Terry, Paul Robeson, Arthur Askey, Charlie Chester and Gilly Potter, plus a number of popular London dance bands. At this time, moving pictures appeared and began to seriously affect the number of live public performances in the town.

25 October 2007

Winston Churchill's Secret Army

John and Ann Warwicker

Prior to the war, Military Intelligence Research (MIR) funded by MI6 was asked for ideas to combat a possible invasion and occupation of Britain. In 1940, as the threat of invasion grew, the British government became increasingly concerned. The armed forces were fully occupied on existing fronts and the Local Defence Volunteers (later to become the Home Guard) had been established but the latter could not be classed as a strong fighting unit. In 1940, Winston Churchill in his new post believed that a form of underground resistance, although strictly illegal under the terms of war, was essential and might operate in the style of the Special Operations Executive (SOE) in use overseas. By the end of that year a framework was in place to establish auxiliary units across those parts of the country most liable to invasion. Specially qualified men (usually two per county) were chosen from local regiments. These leaders assembled small, strictly covert units usually of six persons from patriotic civilians. They would be young and resourceful volunteers, specially chosen for their fitness, local knowledge and reliable character. Being based in rural areas meant that the majority would be from an agricultural background, an advantage when they had to be absent without warning or obvious reason from home or work during exercises. All members of auxiliary units would be highly trained in guerrilla-style fighting and use of arms, and prepared to die for the cause if the worst happened. Parallel groups of men and women were established to collect intelligence, which was then posted in dead-letter drops from where radio contacts could collect and relay it to controllers. The radio used was a top secret, voice-operated VHF system developed in the pre-war period. Operators were drawn from tried and trusted local radio hams. The lightweight sets were all collected and destroyed after the war. A non-working replica has been produced for the Parham museum.

The auxiliary units were divided into area groups, often by county, and the scheme had spread across the country by 1941. The first MIR area established was Kent and the second East Anglia, the latter combining Norfolk and north Suffolk, south to Aldeburgh. Both areas were seen as likely spots for landing enemy forces. Expectations of invasion were high after Dunkirk and the country's official defence forces mined beaches and installed tank barriers and traps, pill boxes and underground bunkers in many vulnerable locations around the coast. Tommy guns were obtained through undercover deals with USA suppliers and offered to each patrol. As part of their training, the secret army went into action by staging mock raids to test the performance of these official defences and their own developing skills. Each unit built their own underground bunker to a design by Anthony Quayle, circular in section, entered at one end via a concealed vertical shaft and having an emergency exit at the opposite end. Each was fitted with collapsible bunks and a table, and contained a radio, plus stores and ammunition sufficient to last for about a fortnight. The late Percy Kindred, a member of the local wartime team, pointed out the remains of a bunker at Parham airfield in Suffolk some years ago. The airfield currently houses a memorial museum in honour of the 390th Bombardment

Group of the United States 8th Army Air Force with a comprehensive collection of wartime memorabilia and recovered aircraft remains. The Secret Army (civilian) museum is adjacent, and a replica of the bunker was created there in 2004 for visitors to examine.

Due to its unofficial and illegal nature, nothing could be disclosed of the secret army until 1996 when the names of some personnel were released to apply for the Defence Medal. There are very few records of their movements and even fewer photographs. Most members never saw action and went to their graves content that they would receive no recognition – they were allowed no uniform until late in the war period when some adopted that of unrecorded units of the Home Guard. Some, but not all, higher levels of command are known, others including specialists from within the auxiliary units were seconded to the SOE and SAS during and after the war. The Secret Army was stood down on 30 November 1944 and was to remain virtually unknown for over half a century. John Warwicker and other researchers have interviewed a number of surviving members of auxiliary units over the last decade and have been successful in recording a fascinating part of history, which might otherwise have gone undetected.

8 November 2007

Lewis Price: A Pakefield Vicar

Trudie Jackson.

The Reverend Lewis Price was a fiery vicar who administered at Pakefield church for thirty years, retiring at the end of the 19th century. This extraordinary man, born in 1819 – the son of a Welsh farmer, decided early on to go into the church. At this time, Lampeter college, where he became a student, was promoting the Church of Wales in a bid to outdo the newly-popular nonconformists. Price and another fervid graduate named Henry James Prince (who had switched from a planned career as a doctor) were the keenest students on their course. They became close friends and decided to start the Lampeter brethren. Price stayed in Wales for a time after college but Prince took a post in Somerset where he soon made his mark as a forceful speaker, noted for his ability to attract numbers of women to his preaching, which did not endear him to the local males. He suffered a prolonged illness while still young and was nursed back to health by an elderly lady named Martha Freeman who, despite the large difference in their ages, married him (by now Prince had persuaded his flock that he had become the Holy Ghost). Martha then died and Prince married the sister of a Somerset colleague named Starkey. Due to Prince's odd reputation, the Bishop of Bath and Wells revoked his clerical licence and it was some time before he found a new position at Stoke-by-Clare in Suffolk. He was not taken seriously there and became short of funds but decided, with the help of his brother-in-law, to start his own sect. The plan was to found the church in the Brighton area but he had first to find a sponsor. The answer came from Somerset, where he had befriended five sisters from amongst his followers who each had a legacy of £6,000 from their wealthy father.

The founding members of Prince's sect were to include Messrs Thomas, Cobb, Starkey and, of course, Lewis Price. They decided that all five should be married, in a platonic arrangement – Agape is Greek for Christian love, and would form a commune. The marriages all took place in Swansea on the same day and the five couples then lived together in a large house at Spraxton. Three of the Somerset sisters were among the brides – Agnes married Thomas; Clara married Cobb and Harriet married Lewis Price. There was a barn with the house, which they converted for a place of worship. The group became known as the Agapemonites and they were firmly under the leadership of Henry Prince. It became obvious after a while that despite the outward claim of platonic marriage, Agnes was pregnant. She was sent away and replaced by her sister Louise. The questionable commune had by now developed a strong hold over its adherents. Prince persuaded the others that he should also have a 'platonic' wife selected on a weekly rota basis. He arranged a revolving stage on which was fixed a ring of chairs facing inwards – his own chair stayed still in the centre. A number of married women belonging to the sect took the seats and were pushed round by their husbands. When the stage had sufficient speed they stopped pushing and allowed it to slow to a stop. The woman who stopped in front of Prince became his 'bride' for the week and moved into the commune. In 1856, Prince told his flock that he had been told to choose a bride for himself from the unmarried followers of Agapemone. Astonishingly, a 16-year-old was picked and the so-called 'Holy' marriage consummated in church in front of the sect. Contrary to his declared intention the girl became pregnant, but he excused this by saying it was the work of the devil.

In 1860, Lewis Price left the Agapemonites but Harriet decided to stay, causing problems in their marriage. Price first tried to get her out by a court summons, then made two unsuccessful kidnap attempts. He captured her later and they moved to Bridgewater in Somerset (her county of birth) where he set about reinventing his career as an evangelical curate. At this time he was introduced to Edward Ball who was married to one of Harriet's sisters and lived at Borley Rectory, in Suffolk (of haunting fame). In 1871, aged 52, Price came to Pakefield as rector where he began berating parishioners for not observing the Sabbath, and for their so-called idolatries. During his stay, Price at times crossed swords with a range of locals. One occasion concerned improper land lease sales, when Price and his churchwardens were found to be at fault. He also caused a war between the crews of the Lowestoft and Pakefield lifeboats over rescue rights (as lifeboat organiser, he had formed illegal rules which benefited Pakefield). In 1886 he showed another side by setting up a soup kitchen to help those suffering at a downturn in the fishing industry. Two years later he was incensed by the Mayor of Lowestoft's plan to hold a ball near Christmas-time and in January 1888 sent a damning letter to the Press. The result was a public demonstration in support of the Mayor, when a torch-lit procession carried an effigy of Price from the town centre to Pakefield. Over 3,000 residents joined in and they cheered the Mayor before watching the effigy burn. Price had kept out of sight on that occasion and continued his stormy work undaunted. A window was dedicated to him in Pakefield church in 1896, and he retired in 1901. Stather Hunt, a later Rector, suggested Price had succeeded in emptying his church by his strong personality and rigid doctrines, and there was a noticeable increase in the congregation after his retirement. Price retired to Staple Fitzpaine, in Somerset – Harriet had already died – but he was brought back to Pakefield for his funeral in 1906.

22 November 2007

A Brief History of Witchcraft in East Anglia

Ivan Bunn

In East Anglia, as in the whole country, the widespread belief in spells, charms and the practice of witchcraft was held mostly between the 16th and 18th centuries. During this period prayers were offered to the Devil as well as to God and almost every town and village contained at least one person who dabbled in the occult. Even the Queen had an appointed wizard, named John Dee. After that time the scientific view dominated, also the introduction of lighting in houses and public places removed the fear bred of darkness. To strengthen the potency of their brews and spells, some witches would offer sacrifices. These were commonly of small animals or reptiles including cats and dogs, mice, frogs, lizards and toads. As an antidote, mummified cats have been found walled up in lofts or foundations of houses, in the belief they would protect the owners from evil witchcraft. Salt-glazed wine jars called Bellarmine containing personal items relating to the witch such as hair and nail clippings (plus urine if it could be obtained) were also used for this purpose. There were not many physicians at the time and home remedies and potions produced by witches and wizards were common, many containing ingredients guaranteed to turn the strongest stomach. A Norwich wizard named John Hall published a leaflet of charms and spells in the mid 1600s, which has never been completely deciphered.

In 1542 a Bill was introduced by Henry VIII to forbid "Practising Conjuration and Witchcraft" which allowed action to be taken against offenders, but this was repealed in January 1547 when the boy King Edward VI came to the throne. In this period of history the swing between Catholic and Protestant control of England caused many priests to flee to Europe and on their return they reported on the widespread witchcraft trials in Germany. Other Bills followed in later years, including one in 1563 introduced by John Jewel who a year or two earlier had preached on witchcraft to Elizabeth I. The 1563 Bill set out in some detail how to deal with witches. In 1603 Queen Elizabeth died and her successor, James I, did not like witches at all so a new Act to curb their influence was in place within a year – this was not to be repealed until 1736.

In the first quarter of the 17th century, John Stearne became an active prosecutor of witches. The first trials took place in Essex (when 121 persons gave evidence against 9 accused) and persecutions spread rapidly across England. East Anglia remained a hotbed of accusations and staunch Protestant Matthew Hopkins came to the fore, covering most of the area. He was soon termed Witchfinder General (although it seems he may have used the title 'Witchfinder in general') he followed a system of giving advice to locals as to how they might prosecute witches. He took a fee for this advice and it

seems was hardly ever held responsible for the outcome of the cases. Indirectly he sent many poor and ill-educated persons to an early death, as in the hangings at Chelmsford and Manningtree. Perhaps fate then played a hand as he was himself to die aged about 26. He justified his belief by quoting Exodus ...Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live. His advice to the public was to first search for black witches, then offer evidence to a magistrate, aiming to get a warrant raised. Once a warrant appeared a trial was mandatory, the idea being to get a confession. Torture was forbidden but was got round by 'swimming' the suspect in a river or deep pond (the moat of Framlingham Castle was used at times). If the victim sank all was well – apart from the danger of drowning – but if they floated the water had rejected them and they were guilty. It was an evil choice either way. Suffolk judges banned this cruel practice in 1645. Hopkins professed to charge £20 per town but recorded evidence reveals this was often greatly exceeded and all others involved, such as hangmen and bailiffs were paid for their services. The 1645/6 accounts for Aldeburgh reveal a string of fees paid to Hopkins and others. These charges were usually levied against the rates but were discontinued after 1720. Not many trials were recorded for Norwich, but in Great Yarmouth (who along with Aldeburgh and King's Lynn held a charter for the purpose) 15 were hanged after being tried in the Toll House. There were 14 indictments against witches in Lowestoft, and 19 hanged in one day at Bury St Edmunds. Witches were denied the last rites and buried in unconsecrated ground, sometimes pegged down in the grave with iron staples or stakes, some of which have been found by archaeologists. In later times, witchcraft was not illegal unless charged for, although it still continued at a lower level. In 1951, when the 'Fraudulent Mediums Act' replaced the 1736 Act, the scene finally changed and the term 'witchcraft' was dropped.

Fieldwalking at Church Farm Corton near Lowestoft*Paul Durbidge*

Some mid week fieldwalking on ploughland involved three conjoined fields at Corton near Lowestoft produced a wide distribution of struck flakes along with a number of small heavily abraded sherds of coarseware pottery and stoneware. The field has been ploughed for some time and the combined effect of both wind and rain had produced a surface with much exposed material. This drying effect also highlighted four areas which showed as quite wet suggesting the presence of either clay sub-soil retaining water or even infilled ponds. Overall the surface soils appeared medium to heavy with the latter mostly confined to one side of the field, this again retaining much wetness. With few exceptions fieldwalking has covered the majority of the land and flint flakes were encountered right across it, with a concentration roughly in the middle. It was also here that most of the abraded pottery was picked up with another thin scatter including stoneware being picked up adjacent to the bungalow on the southern side. Identifying flint industry as to a period is not always straight forward unless a particular type of implement or projectile is present as flint was extensively used right through to the Iron Age. The discoveries of the broken chipped axe head and later the bi-facially worked point suggest the period involved was the Neolithic and this was later confirmed by the discovery of an irregular thickened body sherd of hand made pottery. The sherd was brown buff in colour and was made up of flint temper and it was a lucky find as pottery of this age is extremely fragile and heavy rains or frost often leads to destruction once it appears on the surface. Further examination of the find spot showed a field surface with a good dressing of fragmentary grits and flints and it would be worth keeping watch after any fresh ploughing just in case more material turns up.

Pottery

Body sherd of hand made potter measuring 5.0 x 3.5 by 1.5 cm. thick, the irregular brown buff surface is made up of burnt flint temper with many small irregular shaped pieces showing in the surface. The field surface where the sherd was found has a considerable amount of tiny fractured flint and grits showing on the weathered surface. Neolithic

Part of abraded thickened base in brown buff with traces of water scale internally. Roman

Small section of abraded base in grey coarseware. Roman

Six abraded light grey body sherds. Roman

Small section of coarseware jug handle in orange fabric. Medieval

Small section of coarseware strap handle from a jug with splash of green glaze down the centre. Medieval

Curved rim with strip of applied clay beneath showing thumb imprints, gritty grey buff material. Medieval

Fragment of water worn base with buff internal surface. Medieval

Wide flattened rim from a dish in orange fabric. Medieval

Two abraded sections of thin base in dark grey fabric. Medieval

Stonewares

Part base from small blue and grey mug. WESTERWALD

Part section of grey handle from a mug. WESTERWALD

Upper part of grey handle from large mug. WESTERWALD

Two light brown saltglaze body sherds probably from stone bottles. c 1700-1800

Thin body sherd grey coloured stoneware. c 1700

Small section of peg tile showing half perforation.

Part neck of 18th century wine bottle.

Scrapers, Cores & a Point

Small end scraper on a blade in pale brown flint, some cortex.

Oval shaped scraper in dark red flint.

Near circular scraper on a primary flake.

Small button scraper on a primary flake.

Small well worked scraper on a pale brown secondary flake.

Well fashioned scraper on a black secondary flake that shows four previous removals.

Two thickened secondary flakes, both trimmed to form scrapers.

Probable slug knife made from a long narrow near black flake, the reverse shows plough damage while the face has been trimmed all the way round.

Secondary flake, 6.0 long by 2.5 cm. wide, the end opposite the bulb has been worked to form a hollow scraper.

Small core with some cortex, a number of narrow flakes have been removed from three surfaces with one suggesting it has been employed as a scraper.

Core in black flint, removals from four faces, remains of cortex present.

Damaged remains of multi platform core in black flint.

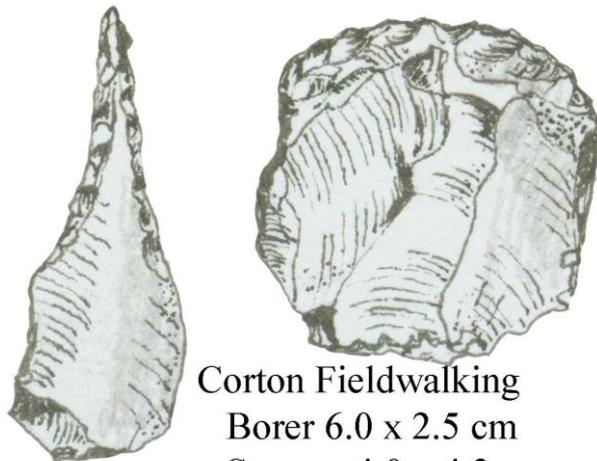
Core in black flint with cream cortex, there are seven parallel removals from the natural piece of flint.

Leaf point in reddish brown flint, both faces are bi-facially worked, broken in its length 3.0 long 3.0 wide 0.5 cm. thick.

Extremely fine borer in reddish brown flint, length 6.0 cm., the implement has been made from a tapered flake with a thickened base 2.5 cm. in width. The working point has been retouched along both edges of one face forming a narrow point to a depth of 3.3 cm., the reverse of the implement is unworked.

Thin flake in reddish brown flint measuring 6.0 cm. in length by 3.0 cm. wide, it would appear this was a borer with two angled sides retouched to form a gradual point which at some time has been broken, the reverse remains unworked.

Thin shallow flake with traces of small flaking and indications of polishing, probably from a polished axe head.



Butt from a chipped core axe in dark brown flint with traces of buff cortex on one face, the axe was probably broken in antiquity as there are three downward removals across the fracture with the patina being the same colour as the axe. Length 8.5 width 4.5 thickness 2.3 cm.

The fieldwalking survey of the field at Church Farm produced over a hundred flakes and implements over a search time of roughly 8 hours. Some of the flakes recovered were left totally unworked while others occasionally retouching had been applied for various purposes such as cutting, scraping etc.

A description of fourteen of the flakes is as follows:

Large secondary flake 7.5 x 5.0 cm. in dark brown to black flint, there have been two previous removals and there is retouching along an irregular right hand side.

Large secondary flake 5.5 x 6.4 cm. in dark brown flint, there have been five previous removals from one face.

Plunging flake in dark brown flint with creamy cortex.

Leaf shaped secondary flake with four removals and retouching along one side.

Large leaf shaped secondary flake in dark brown flint with a smear of yellow green on the underside, four blade like flakes have been removed.

Well struck secondary flake in black flint, no trimming.

Large dark brown secondary flake, the remains of the striking platform shows several attempts to remove flakes.

Primary flake in black flint, some flakes have been removed on one side resulting in a profile similar to a graver, the resulting point in this core is likely that of the fabricator.

Thin secondary flake with pronounced bulb but no platform.

Dark brown secondary flake terminating at a hinge fracture.

Small blade with three previous removals on one face.

Thin blade in light brown flint on a primary flake.

Irregular shaped secondary flake with three previous removals and retouching opposite the bulb.

Narrow blade like flake in dark red on a primary with brief retouching along one edge.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All the items recovered from Church Farm have now been returned to Mr M Edwards along with identifications and I would like to thank Mr Edwards for the opportunity to fieldwalk the land in question.

A Second Period of Fieldwalking at Church Farm Corton

Paul Durbidge

Since compiling the earlier report on Church Farm a further five searches have been carried out on the field resulting in more archaeological material being discovered. As a result of the latest searches the remains of four lava millstones have come to light along with more medieval pottery including handle remains and a thickened near black body sherd possibly of middle Saxon or Iron Age date. As encountered in the initial searches there has been further evidence of Neolithic activity in the form of cores, flakes and scrapers along with a mineral hammerstone.

The second set of fieldwalkings yielded some 108 flakes fashioned from either dark brown orange or near black flint and at least 67 of the flakes were plain, that is to say there was no trimming or working to any of the edges. However secondary flaking or retouching was present on 33 flakes along with other forms of working, the purpose of which is unclear. A further six scrapers were identified and these had clearly been fashioned for scraping with the edges flaked or trimmed either on the end or around the profile of the flake and although the degree of workmanship varied the purpose was the same. Although not of the quality of the early borers found during the first search, two more were identified during later fieldwalking, both had been made from narrow flakes and pressure flaked to form points. One made of black flint had been worked on one face from opposite sides, while a much larger example had been trimmed along one edge to form the point and then on the underside of the opposite side, resulting in a twisting point.

Below are listed the material recently found, all of which is broadly classified.

The Flint Industry

Mineral hammerstone, buff coloured and oval in shape and pitted at one end. Size approximately 5 x 5 x 4.5 cm.

Cores

Black core in dark grey flint showing where seven narrow blades had been removed from the side.

Blade core in dark grey flint with four narrow removals.

Pyramid core formed from a small pebble that had been struck in half, there are six removals from the flat platform.

Pyramid core, again from a small pebble, there have been four shallow removals and the core was utilised to form a crude scraper.

Pyramid core, here there have been five small removals while several attempts to remove flakes from the opposite side have not been successful.

Three small multi platformed cores showing blows to remove flakes from all directions. On one at least eight removals have been made leaving the remains of cortex on both top and bottom of the core.

One multi platformed core is unusually large and is light to dark brown in colour, it measures 6.5 x 5.0 cm. and a mass of irregular shaped flakes have been removed all over the surface apart from one area where successive flows have failed to dislodge flakes leaving a heavily stunted surface. On another part of the core the pitted surface indicates at some time the core was later utilised as a hammerstone.

Quite a number of the smaller pieces of struck flint found on the field are quite probably cores and it was noticeable that occasional flakes were frequently detached from naturally fractured material.

Lava Millstone

Four pieces of dark grey lava millstone have been picked up off the field and all were well spaced from each other. One fragment is quite small measuring 5.5 x 4.5 by 2.5 cm. thick and what little of the grinding surface remains shows it originally had a wide grooved surface to which soot is impregnated.

Remains of a second piece is wedge shaped, 10.5 cm. at the longest point and again 2.5 cm. thick by 7.5 cm. wide, the grinding surface is again grooved although this time the centres are closer.

A third example is much thicker at 4.5 cm. with a length of 14.5 x 7.5 cm. wide like the previous ones, this too has a rough cast underside and a slightly curved worn grinding surface. From the curve of the rounded external edge it would appear this stone would have been quite large and again there is much ingrained soot both on the surface as well as the broken sides.

The broken remains of the fourth millstone is almost triangular in shape measuring 22.5 cm. in length, 16 cm. at the widest point with a thickness of 6.5 cm. The remains are well rolled although the irregular underside is still quite noticeable although the grinding surface lacks the flatness and grooves of the previous ones. It may be that the stone had not been dressed or that the irregular surface may have simply been pecked making it difficult to identify in its present condition.

Two waste pieces of lava millstone.

Hone

The object is D shaped in section and formed from a hard dark coloured close grain mineral. By reason of its shape indications are that it was probably used as hone, it measures 4.0 x 3.5 cm. and it is broken in its length of 10.0 cm.. Period unknown.

Tessera

Small irregular shaped cube of sandstone, one face is flat while the remaining five appear to have been roughly shaped to form a cube 3.0 x 3.0 x 3.5 cm. It compares favourably with tessera recovered from a Roman site at Pakefield Suffolk some years ago where broken roofing tiles had been cut down to form irregular shaped cubes, these later to be used to provide hard standing floor surfaces.

Pottery – Roman

Two body sherds of greyware and a small greyware rim fragment possibly from a lid.

Flat creamy buff sherd with circular ring marks suggesting it came from the middle base of a vessel.

Thickened body sherd in gritty dark buff fabric.

Dark brown body sherd close to the base of a pot containing small grits, crude external texture. Saxon – Iron Age?

Pottery – Medieval

Upper part of a small strap handle from a jug in greyish brown.

Centre part of small strap handle from a small jug.

Middle section of green glazed strap handle from a jug.

Simple overhanging rim in dark brown gritty fabric probably from a cooking pot.

Abraded section of rod handle from a jug in brown buff fabric, the handle was possibly decorated with parallel grooves in which are traces of dark green glaze.

Upper part of strap handle in orange fabric with grey core, two thumb prints are present with splashes

of greenish brown glaze.

Abraded body sherd with remains of two thumb marks

from the lower part of the handle, traces of watery green glaze.

Fragment of base in orange fabric with remains of pie crust nipping.

Fragment of base in reddish brown with grey internal surfaces.

Small squared rim sherd in grey fabric with handle, scar traces of green glaze beneath rim, possibly from small jug.

Flattened overhanging rim in orange fabric with splash of watery green glaze internally, possibly from a milk dish.

Fragment of thin gritty base in reddish brown fabric.

Two thin greyware body sherds with light green external surfaces.

Part base in hard grey fabric with internal surface in pitted green glaze.

Fragment of gritty brown fabric, probably from a cooking pot, orange internal surface and soot stained externally.

Section of jug rim in orange fabric with splash of light green glaze beneath rim.

Body sherd in soft orange fabric with traces of water scale internally, soot present on external surfaces.

Small piece of probably pin tile in dark orange fabric with grey core, traces of cheesy green glaze on external surface.

Part section of unglazed floor tile(?), 9.5 x 5.5 x 2.0 cm. thick, the fabric contains very small grits as well as small flints, rough cast underside.

Upper part of large strap handle in red fabric from a jug.

Lower part of narrow strap handle in dark brown fabric from a jug.

Simple curved rim in grey brown fabric from a cooking pot.

Flattened rim in sandy buff from large dish.

Small thickened rim in grey black fabric from a cooking pot.

Late 17th Century WESTERWALD & German Stonewares

Two blue and grey decorated body sherds of WESTERWALD.

Part square rim from chamber pot WESTERWALD.

Fragment of base in buff coloured stoneware from a jug.

Stoneware body sherd in grey fabric.

Thick abraded body sherd in salt glaze, possibly from a jug.

Two thick body sherds in speckled brown salt glaze from a bellarmine.

Thin body sherd in light grey stoneware, probably from a jug.

Two thick body sherds in grey buff, probably from bellarmine.

Fragment of rim from a salt glazed bellarmine with speckled glaze.

Thick brown glazed body sherd from a salt glazed bellarmine.

Part base and wall sherd from a blue and grey WESTERWALD jug.

Other Pottery Finds

In addition to the pottery detailed here there are a number of small coarseware body sherds which could either be medieval or post medieval date.

Also a number of other sherds that have been collected can be attributed to the period around the 18th century and these include sherds of Staffordshire type slipware, black Wedgewood and remains of red glazed earthenwares. The latter include soot stained rim, sherds from pancheon bowls and a number of sherds glazed in a very light brown glaze, along with a pulled handle, probably from a skillet.

Clay Pipe Stems

Over forty of these stems were picked up with the greater part of two bowls. c1700-1800

Coins

Silver sixpence dated 1945.

Halfpenny dated 1946.

One pence piece.

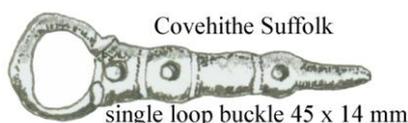
Acknowledgements

All the material recovered from the second session of fieldwalking has now been returned to Mr Edwards and I am most grateful for permission to continue the second part of the project. I would also like to thank Mr D Butcher for his contribution and also thanks are due to AC Charlton for his continued help on the fieldwork.
Paul Durbidge March 2007

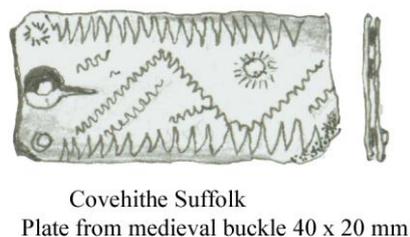
Medieval Finds from Covehithe Suffolk

Paul Durbidge

Metal Finds



Cast copper alloy single loop buckle with narrow tapering plate with four transverse ridges and three rivet holes, 45 x 14 mm. c 1250-1400. During the medieval period buckles such as this were used for many purposes but mostly for fastening varieties of dress and these and similar forms tend to be some of the most decorative, this example was originally gilded.



Remains of a copper alloy double sheet plate from a medieval buckle, the remains of three rivets are still in position and the squared end has a round aperture which is grooved on the front surface. The plate has an engraved border decorated with a zig zag pattern known as wrigglework and this in turn frames diagonal wrigglework, the reverse of the plate is plain, 40 x 20 mm. c 1350-1450.

Fire Stains in the Cliff

Over several years now very small patches of carbon have been observed high in the cliff face between Benacre and Covehithe. Usually these quite small features are sited between 45 and 60 cm. below present ground level and rarely have any content. Recently another of these small fire stains was seen in the cliff at Benacre but this time pottery was visible amongst fragments of charred wood and small burnt stones. Four sherds of pottery were retrieved from 16 features, one was a heavily soot encrusted sherd of base from a cooking pot and another part section of squared rim is probably from a dish. On a large grey buff body sherd there are signs of wiping on a somewhat irregular external surface and it is thought this is also from a cooking pot, although the internal surface shows few signs of use. The fourth item was part of a soot encrusted shallow bowl with a diameter of 19.0 cm. and a depth of 4.0 cm. Here the base had been decorated with a continuous pattern of small thumb marks and the underside of the bowl glazed in a reddish brown glaze containing iron oxides. The overall appearance of the material from the features along with the glaze would indicate a date around 1500 which compares with pottery recovered from a near by well shaft some years ago after high seas had brought down much of the cliff at that point.

Remains of Medieval Jug Handle

Lower part of plain strap handle from a large globular jug with strong thumb marks where it had been applied to the body of the vessel. The fabric is sandy buff in colour and contains small grits and the remains have been partially glazed in a rich light green lead glaze. While the glaze behind the handle remains smooth and clean the external glaze is covered in small dust like particles and whether this was intended or just wind blown on the glaze is unclear.

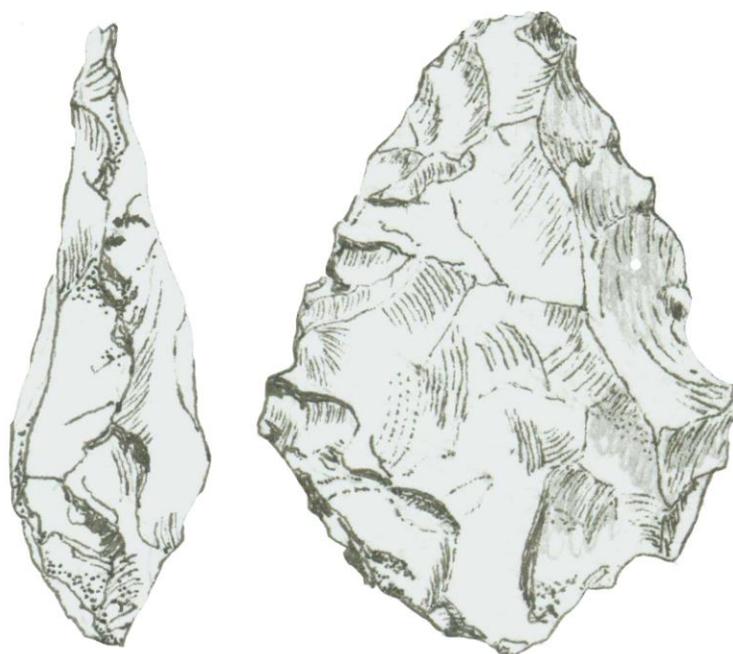
Some Recent Flint Industry Finds from Kessingland*Paul Durbidge*

In 1966 a large Neolithic settlement dating from about 2500 BC was discovered at Kessingland by a local woman. It was centred on high ground overlooking marshland and in addition there was evidence of flint industry left by hunter gathers of the Mesolithic period on a small piece of land virtually on the edge of the marsh itself.

As to be expected, there was a large range of implements and projectiles later to be recovered from the main site and in the majority of cases the quality of the workmanship was superb. In the early days a number of field searches were conducted by members of the Lowestoft Archaeological Society. The Lowestoft Museum in the Nicholas Everitt Park, Oulton Broad displays some of collection of the flint industry recovered during these Sunday morning visits.

Colours of the flint varied but was mostly a hard light to dark grey, black and variations of white and as to be expected there were also a number of exceptions.

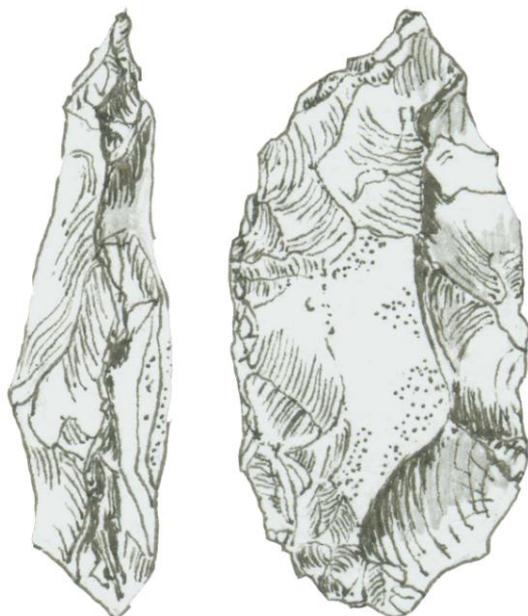
During 1968 a very unusual shaped flint object was picked up off the field by a Kessingland man. It was unusual by reason it had what appeared three distinctive points and the profile was not unlike a three pointed star. All the working was primarily from one face and by reason of its almost sandy brown colour the flint appeared to be gravel stained, it was tribrach. At the time I had never encountered one before and only learned what it was when it was shown to the late John Wymer, apparently they are known in parts of Russia and at the time of the discovery only three were known in Great Britain. It was roughly 7.0 by 6.0 cm. and although it has been suggested the three points may embrace the earth, sky and water, the same as the badges of the Mercedes company, its purpose is unclear. Recently I was shown another such tribrach again from Kessingland but this time much smaller but never the less the profile remains the same with only the colour of the flint being different.



Kessingland Flake axe 8.5 cm in length,
6.0 cm wide

Apart from continued finds of excellent scrapers being found on the site a small polished axe head and small flake axe head have recently been picked up, the latter measures 8.5 cm. in length by 6.0 cm. in width and the overall condition is good. While much larger and heavier core axe heads were being used in the slash and burn method to clear parts of the dense woodland, small flake forms such as this would have been mounted usually in antler sleeves and were used to clear the much lighter scrub and bushes. The cutting edge of this particular axe shows traces of the pitted face of the cobble from which the thick flake has been detached and only one spine has been flaked right up to the butt. A number of irregular shaped flakes have been removed where the bulb of percussion

would have been and the flint has obviously been difficult to flake resulting in only partial success in forming a workable cutting edge.



Kessingland Adze 8.0 cm in length, 4.0 cm wide

Another implement picked up recently from the same location is a small flint adze in dark grey flint, it measures 8.0 cm. long by 4.0 cm. wide and again the condition is good. These tools differ from small axe heads by reason the cutting end is usually curved enabling the hafted implement to be used to chop out timbers in the same way a dug out canoe is made. In the Kessingland example both face surfaces have been heavily flaked with alternative flaking forming two spines, not unlike an axe head. The tool has a pronounced camber at the cutting end when placed on a flat surface and while one end has been flaked to a near point the opposite working end has been chipped to provide a full width cutting edge.

Floor Tiles from the Church of All Saints and Saint Margaret, Pakefield, Suffolk

Paul Durbidge

For some time rainwater discharged from a flat roof adjacent to the church tower had resulted in water penetrating into the boiler room and across an area of the floor. The problem was the result of a build up of straw, pigeon droppings and feathers finding their way into the cast iron down pipe and slowly but surely blocking the water discharge into the nearby soak away. A narrow trench was dug revealing the blocked pipe up to where it discharged into a large hole filled with a quantity of bricks and broken concrete and the pipe was duly removed for unblocking.

In section the shallow trench showed very mixed soils including sand up to seven feet from the wall of the boiler house but this changed to a light acidic soil up to the soak away. The upcast from the trench contained a number of cobbles and pieces of broken brick along with odd fragments of heavily deteriorated bone. Most of the brick remains were of 18th-19th century date with one exception, this being part of a reddish brown straw marked brick complete with drag marks on one face and it compared with similar types dating from around 1500. Also amongst the upcast were several small pieces of floor tile with slight bevelled edges and evidence of glazing to the upper surface. Two colours were used, one a very dark green, the other a watery yellow and on some fragments splashes of glaze were also visible on the edges. The tile had been cast in a wooden frame placed on rough ground and the reddish brown fabric appears very hard with inclusions of small flint showing through some of the cracked surfaces, on average the thickness was roughly 2.5 cm. with the overall size of the tile being approximately 12.5 cm. square. From the pieces found there was no evidence of pattern or design and an incised line coming diagonally from corner to corner on one fragment was probably cut into the wet clay to assist breakage for halves and quarters.

By the middle of the 12th century the church of All Saints and St Margaret was in two medieties, that is two churches side by side being divided by a wall where there is now arcading. Also each church had its own Rector as well as its own Patron and the floors of the building would have been little more than beaten earth. While the present floor of the church consists of much later buff coloured brick, during the 15th century or thereabouts it would have been tiled with these small dark green and yellow tiles and probably strewn with rushes. The step down into the church and many like it was for a purpose, simply to prevent the rushes being kicked out by the feet of the worshipers.

Amongst the brick and tile remains from the trench were two struck flint flakes with shiny texture indicating that both were of ancient origin. Both were secondary forms and had clear bulbs of

percussion where they had been detached from a core and on one there were signs of polishing showing the flakes had come from a ground and polished implement some time during the Neolithic or Bronze Age. In earlier years while walking through the churchyard I have picked up other similar flakes which have been brought to the surface in mole upcasts and these were also near the church tower

Over recent weeks after heavy rains the broken remains of two more yellow glazed floor tiles have been exposed in the stony pathway near the north doorway of the church.

ADDENDUM – extra information from Pakefield the Church and Village 5th Edition 1938 price 6d.

Since writing this short account I have learnt that in 1936 the chancels of both churches were restored, new oak choir stalls were placed in All Saints and the ‘Singers Gallery’ which ran along the whole of the north wall of St. Margaret was taken down. Beneath this were discovered pieces of the old screen which had been used to block up the joists. They were almost entirely rotten but a portion of one of the uprights was sufficiently intact to show its original pattern from which the mutilation of the existing uprights could be seen. The original sill of the screen was uncovered by this restoration stretching the whole breadth of the two churches, although portions of this were completely rotted away. To the west of this the removal of pews brought to light the cross aisle which had evidently been paved with square tiles in black (dark green) and yellow. A few of these tiles still remain but almost all the glaze has been worn off them. One or two of the tiles were discovered underneath a part of the sill of the screen which had rotted away which would appear to suggest that they were earlier in date than the screen which would place them about the fourteenth or early fifteenth century. At the north end of the aisle the tiles had been removed, probably in 1864, but the profile could still be seen in the cement. They had been utilised to block up the joists of the seats along the north wall and many are still there but there is a patch still in situ under the seats on the north side of the chancel of St. Margaret.

The aisle was considerably broader than it is now and evidently there was at one time considerable traffic over it and as the tiles became broken they were replaced first by large paving stones and later by the present floor bricks.

The Crypt at All Saints and St. Margaret, Pakefield

In conversation with Jason Freeman regarding the tile fragments found in the trench I mentioned it could be worth while trying to obtain permission to visit the crypt as more information might be gained there. At the beginning of the 15th century the southern mediety of the church was lengthened and a crypt built underneath it and originally this was entered by a stone circular staircase on the north wall of the mediety. The Rector was subsequently approached and very kindly allowed us to visit the crypt. Armed with a measuring tape, camera and long lead light we descended down a short vertical steel ladder and two steps through a pointed archway and into a darkened damp building. The light revealed an area roughly 6 metres long by just over 2 metres wide divided into two chambers with an original brick undercroft supported by eight arched brick ribs with bevelled edges that joined at the top giving a ceiling height of approximately 2.5 metres. The floor area of the first chamber appeared untouched and was entirely covered with tiles, plain on both sides with a 90 cm. strip of yellow and dark green glazed forms down the centre. In gently brushing away the accumulation of dust and wiping over the surface prior to photography for the first time it was possible to get some idea what the main floor of the church would have looked like all those centuries ago. In the second chamber the floor appeared very irregular and for some reason all the tiles had been lifted and a number of them were roughly stacked along the west wall along with various cobbles and dressed sandstone. All the walls had been patched up and various materials had been used from broken bricks, cobble and even lumps of rough mortar and amongst these repairs were several of the floor tiles especially in the east wall.

In last year’s report we spoke of the remains of decorated medieval tiles recently found at St. Michael’s Church, Oulton and a subsequent walk around the church showed others built into the fabric of the building.

Here at Pakefield a single floor tile can be seen embedded above the stoop on the outside of the porch on the south side of the church and there are probably more, it’s just a case of looking for them

amongst all the other building material.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Finally I would like to thank Jason Freeman for his help and interest and also my thanks to the Revd. Bob Baker, Rector of All Saints and St. Margaret for allowing the investigation within the church for which I am most grateful.

I would also like to thank Mr R Collins for transcribing all my written submissions for this year's Annual Report, it involves much work and time and the end result is greatly appreciated.

Pakefield Scene

Paul Durbidge

Archaeological finds at Pakefield by Adrian Charlton continue to emerge with the discovery of two body sherds of handmade pottery and flint flakes. The pot sherds are of burnt flint temper and probably belong to the late Bronze Age – early Iron Age and were recovered in scree at the foot of the cliff and they compare with similar sherds found a couple of years ago.

A complete semi-glazed base from a jar was also picked up in similar circumstances a short distance from the village of Kessingland. The base measuring 9.0 cm. in diameter was made of very hard gritty clay and the underside is coated with a rich dark green glaze which is also present on part of the body where it had run down when stacked in the kiln. The underside of the slumped base shows abrasive wear and it is probable the remains date from some time in the 16th century.

During the latter part of January 2007 high seas removed much beach material at Pakefield forming a ledge of nearly a metre in some places. Removal of so much material in turn exposes not only concrete and wartime remains but also coinage and various other items of interest. It was in this situation that Charlton teased out a sizable chunk of Roman millstone which compared in type with a smaller piece some years ago, both being made from millstone grit.

The complete stone would have been in the region of 48.0 cm. across and 6.5 cm. thickness, the outer edge is rounded and there is a centre hole approximately 8.5 cm. in diameter. The grinding surface appears very rough and pitted while the underside has a reasonable flat surface.

During 1995 we were recovering Romano British pottery etc. a short distance from the present find spot and encountered a horizontal black layer just over 20 cm. thick containing fragments of pottery and dark grey clay loam material with pale greyish brown clay inclusions. The layer also contained hard red fired clay fragments up to 30 mm. A 200 gram sub sample was sent to Peter Murphey of Environmental Archaeology at the UEA where it was disaggregated in hot water. Charred cereal remains were abundant, particularly chaff (Glume Bases & Rachis Internodes) of spelt wheat (*Triticum Spelta*) with some wheat grains and the grass (*Bromus Mollis Secalinus*). The suggestion was that this black layer may well have been related to cereal crop processing or even that the crop processing waste was being used as a fuel possibly in some industrial process and it is likely that Charlton's section of large millstone had connections here.

Olive Jars

Over recent years thick sections of pottery from olive jars have been picked up from Pakefield beach, some are from Roman amphora but the most recent is Spanish in origin. It is from a globular or elongated olive jar and was made in Seville some time during the 17th century. While considerable amounts of this fabric are encountered in London I am told comparatively little is recovered from this area.

Allotments at Long Acre, Saxon Road, Pakefield

It is quite natural when digging to pick out anything that shows up under the spade and what appears to be part of a shaped white flint turned out to be the greater part of an 18th century wig curler made of pipe clay. A small fragment of a saucer 3.0 cm. long has been confirmed as Lowestoft porcelain, not surprising really bearing in mind it was produced for general use and it was only over the last hundred years or so it became collectable. The small sherd is soft paste, decorated with deep blue pigment

showing hatching and part of a flower pattern.

Grey stoneware body sherd with handle scar from a mug, probably Low Countries c 1700.

The Forest Bed Formation of Corton

Bob Mutch

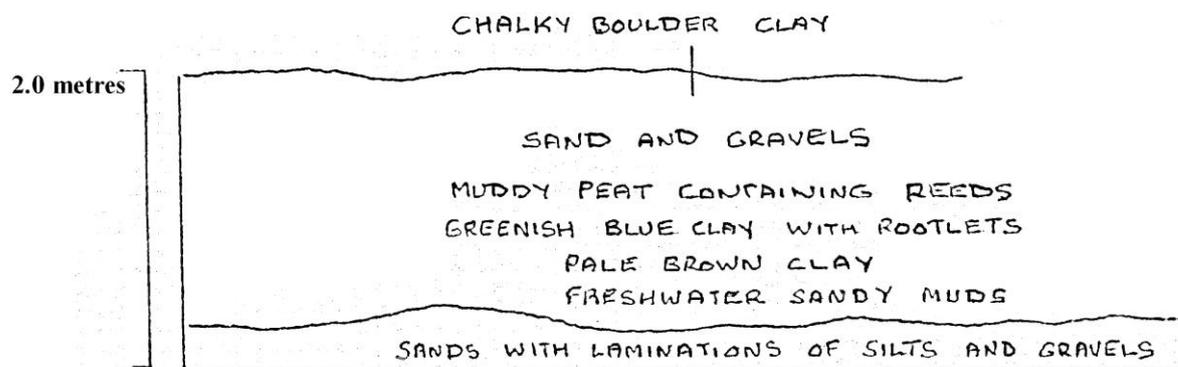
Whilst the recent discovery of human artefacts from the Cromer Forest Bed formation at Pakefield has brought it international attention, few people are aware that the similar formation lies beneath glacial deposits in the cliffs of Corton. Unfortunately however, the construction of recent concrete sea defences along the base of the cliffs have completely obscured this most interesting geological deposit.

In Victorian times however, it was a different story with the then unprotected beds subject to erosion by the sea leading to the discovery of many interesting fossil mammal bones and teeth. A table of these including a small sample of specimens in my collection and collected prior to the construction of the present sea defences is appended at the end of this paper.

In 1890 J H Blake of the British Geological Survey published a memoir of the geology of Yarmouth and Suffolk. He carried out much more extensive research at Pakefield probably due to the easier accessibility of the deposits at this site compared to those at Corton. The Victorians were also very much pre-occupied by the mammalian fossils these beds yielded and Pakefield was by a long way the more productive site of the two.

Blake gave very detailed descriptions of what he actually saw with regard to the deposits and it compares most favourably to the recent description of those self same deposits as seen in the 1970s by professor R G West. West gave both detailed descriptions of the physical nature of the deposits and both sedimentary and vegetation histories, the latter based upon common analysis.

Before discussing the deposits in any detail it would be as well to produce a diagrammatic representation based upon those of both Blake and West. This is shown below:



Boreholes were made prior the building of the current sea defences and analysed by West. He reported that the Rootlet Bed was laid down upon a series of marine deposits. These marine deposits consist of sands with thin laminations of silt, sand and gravels. On top of these are a bed of thin freshwater sandy muds.

It is upon this series of deposits that the fossiliferous Rootlet Bed lies. It is over 2 metres deep and in its upper part consists of greenish blue/grey clay and, in places, penetrated by hundreds of rootlets which give the bed its name. The middle section is pale brown clay containing calcareous concretions and the lower section is once again pale brown but with laminations. Resting upon the top of the Rootlet Bed is a much thinner bed of muddy peat containing numerous flattened reeds and pieces of wood. There is no record of any other fossiliferous material recovered from this bed other than the aforementioned plant material. The sands and gravels which overlie the Rootlet Bed are marine and glacial in nature and are capped by chalky boulder clay.

It will be readily seen from the Corton rootlet bed description that it resembles most closely the more well known and, now extremely well studied Rootlet Bed of Pakefield. Both are overbank deposits, sediments laid down on the flood plain of an ancient river system. Those at Pakefield are attributed to the lower reaches of the Bytham river system which flowed from the Midlands to the coast of north Suffolk, discharging into the North Sea. The site at Pakefield has been dated to 680,000 years before present. As will be seen from the table of fossil mammal specimens recovered from the rootlet bed at Corton all these species are also present at Pakefield and there are no species recovered from Corton which are not represented at Pakefield.

Pakefield Rootlet Beds	Corton Rootlet Beds
Spotted Hyana	✓
* Steppe Mammoth	✓
* Assinine Horse	✓
* Rhinoceros	✓
* Giant Deer Meg Aloceros Verticornis Meg Aloceros Savini	✓
* Wild Boar	✓
* Bison	✓
* Extinct Species	

The obvious conclusion is that both these Rootlet Beds are part of the same flood plain sequence and that any minor differences are merely local variations. However history has told us to be wary of such assumptions and this correlation could only be proved beyond doubt if the Corton Rootlet Bed was subject to the same extensive investigation that Pakefield has been. Regrettably, unless future sea defence works are undertaken at Corton which exposed the beds and allow scientific investigation, the question of direct correlation will never be fully answered.

R J Mutch 2007

Excavation of a Wooden Causeway on Beccles Marshes, dating from the Iron Age

Keith Davies

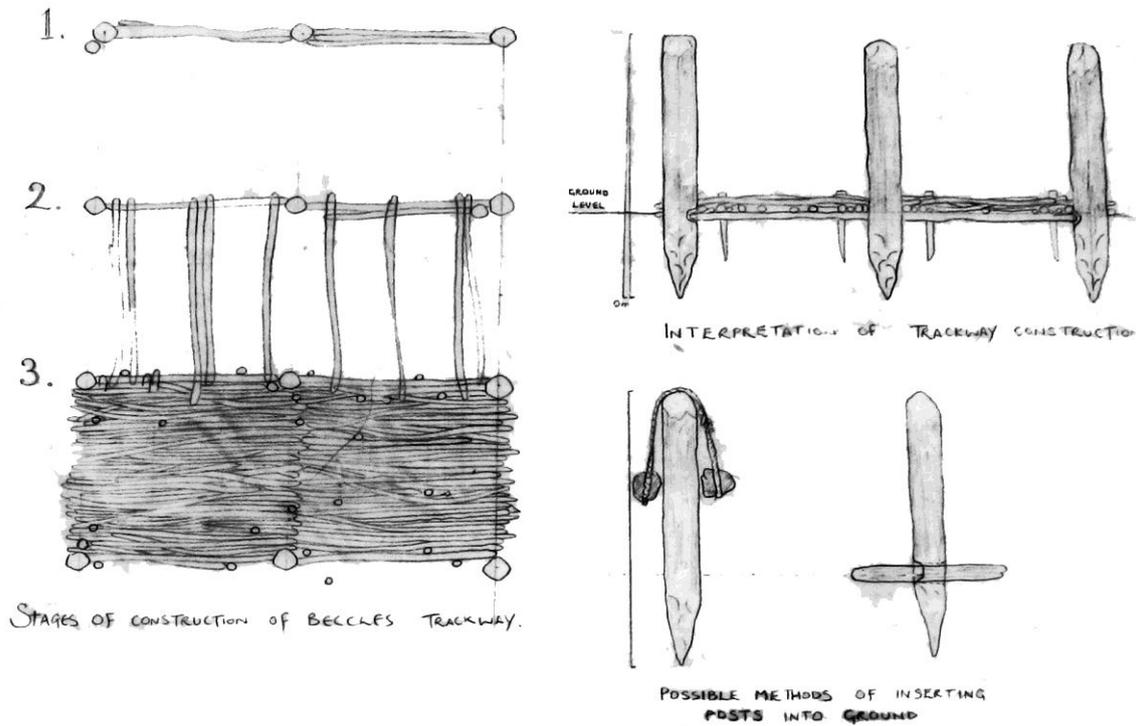
During the summer of 2007 work continued on the excavation of a wooden causeway on Beccles Marshes, dating from the Iron Age. Member Keith Davies visited the dig and collected the following information which was first published in our Newsletter.

In 2006, ancient wooden stakes were discovered on Beccles Marshes during flood alleviation works adjacent to the River Waveney. This discovery led to excavations funded by BESL and carried out by a collaborative team from the University of Birmingham and Suffolk County Council to obtain as much information as possible from the threatened archaeological remains.

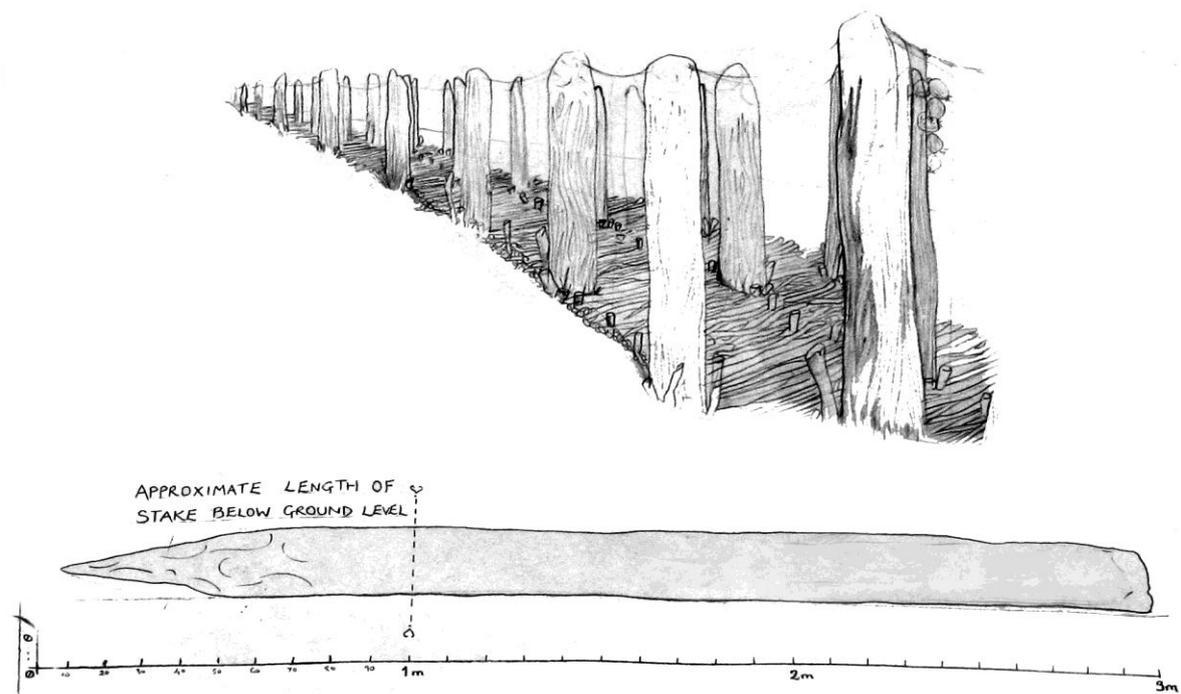
Work has continued in 2007 and the results have identified the site as a prehistoric stake causeway that has been preserved in the peat of Beccles Marshes for over 2000 years. This rare find may be of international importance and several archaeological questions remain. The public was invited to meet the team at the dig at the end of July.

The principal feature is a triple line of stakes that has been traced for 100 m. The projected alignment extends towards the Waveney to the north and the Morrisons Supermarket to the south – a distance of

over a kilometre. The large oak stakes were sharpened to “pencil” points using iron axes before being driven into the peat. Some are over 1.5 m long and 30 cm in diameter and their preservation is such that every axe mark and carpentry detail is visible.



It is likely that the site was built over many years and repaired/extended at times. Dendrochronology tells us part of the alignment was constructed in spring 75 BC – the late Iron Age – but the initial work may have started several centuries earlier. Pottery fragments show the site was used well into the Roman period before it was enveloped by the marsh. Several smaller trackways have also been found, constructed of brushwood and planking, perhaps related to continued use of the site over time and allowing access across particularly wet areas of the peat.



Stake alignments, although rare, are known from other Iron Age sites in Britain. They probably had multiple uses, including religious and monumental, besides the obvious routeway function of this example that linked the dryland of Beccles to the estuarine landscape of the northern River Waveney. Further information is being gathered on how long the site was used, its exact purpose, and on variations in its construction. *Details of the site will be posted on the website: www.ba-env.bham.ac.uk*

Unusual Discovery in a Load of Gravel

Paul Durbidge

During June of 2007 I was shown a small light grey coloured axehead that had been found amongst a load of gravel delivered to Mr John Stanley's property during the latter part of 2006.



Axe head found amongst delivered gravel from the pit at Oulton near Lowestoft 2006. length 8.5 cm

In raking out the pile of gravel Mr Stanley was able to recognise the implement and in conversation with him I learned the gravel had been delivered from workings near Camps Heath and it was probable that the axe was originally in the top soil before slipping down and ending up amongst the gravel workings. The axe is complete and measures 9.0 cm. in length with a cutting end of 4.0 cm., both sides are gently curved inwards to the butt which measures 2.5 cm., suggesting it was modelled on a metal form of Bronze Age date. Alternate flaking is present on all the edges with one spine showing evidence of multiple hard hammer blows where the grain of the flint has proved difficult to flake but there are no signs of grinding or polishing on any of the surfaces. While no controlled fieldwalking has been carried out in the vicinity the remains of two ploughed out Bronze Age ring ditches are known and these are approximately ½ mile from the gravel workings. Investigation of the surface of the nearby ploughland close to the present find would I'm sure provide more material and this would undoubtedly include evidence of additional archaeological periods associated.

Local Interesting Books

A new title in the Sutton Local History series – **FRONT-LINE SUFFOLK** by *Michael Foley*

This book came out in May 2007 and covers the military history of the county from Roman times to the present day. Available from all good bookshops, or direct by phone from 01963 442030 – it has 144 pages with around 150 illustrations – ISBN: 987-07509-000-0 – and it is published by suttonpublishing.co.uk One Line for History – price £12.99

To be published by Boydell & Brewer, summer 2008, **Lowestoft 1550-1750 - Development and Change in a Suffolk Coastal town** by *David Butcher*. David has contributed to past copies of this report and spoken many times at our meetings. The book review follows :-

This work is a reconstruction of Lowestoft and its inhabitants, during the early modern period, in topographical, demographic, social and economic terms. The work is based mainly on surviving documentation of the time, backed up by many years' field research, and uses a full family reconstitution of parish registers to underpin the whole study. This is the first time that FFR has been used in such a way, demonstrating its value in producing a detailed picture of an emerging, small, urban community, which eventually grew sufficiently to become Suffolk's second largest town. This book will complement some findings in the existing body of urban history writing, but take issue with others -especially those which use single-source evidence as the basis for analysis. Maritime settlements show interesting differences from land-based ones and work needs to be carried out on them in order to arrive at a more balanced view of pre-industrial societies. The book begins with an overview of Lowestoft's mediaeval history, then proceeds to investigate topographical development, demographic features, occupational structure, social geography, house-building and interior decor, wealth and inheritance, maritime pursuits, agriculture, local government, education and literacy, religious affiliation, and urban identity. Wherever possible, the town is not only described in a local context, but also placed in a national and European one.

The Lowestoft Scene May 2006 – November 2007

Keith Davies

The Relief Road

Officially opened in June. When will the relief begin? Frustration for local and through traffic has continued at a high level. For many, Lowestoft has become a no go area, with Beccles, Yarmouth, and Norwich reaping the benefits. Until the improvements(?) in South Lowestoft are completed, Kirkley remains a ghost area, while the Carlton Road diversion is grid locked during the rush hours.

July

Gulliver

Lowestoft's wind turbine and its tallest landmark stopped turning on June 30 and remained out of action for 5 weeks, due to ongoing electrical and computer faults. Built 2 years ago by SLP, at the time it was the largest turbine in the UK, capable of supplying 1600 homes with electricity.

The Seagull Theatre

The theatre was closed when the Suffolk County Council withdrew its £60,000 a year funding.

Archaeology from the sea

Roy Holmes for the past 40 years has been fishing the North Sea, and has found many ancient artefacts, including teeth and bones of woolly mammoths, which used to roam the marsh and heath lands between Norfolk and Holland. Roy has been a fisherman all his working life, but no longer works from Lowestoft, journeying to Holland where he fishes from the Dutch trawler Quo Vadis.

Today being able to use GPS allows precise positioning of the finds, which helps to build up a more detailed and accurate picture than has previously been possible. While developments in carbon dating have led to reassessment of previous findings. For example a sabre tooth tiger lower jaw recently found in the North Sea was discovered to be just 28,000 old when it was thought to have died out 300,000 years ago.

Air Show

The 10th anniversary of the Lowestoft Air Show was the biggest and best ever. A record 430,000 people attended, which contributed an estimated £11.2 million to the economy. It is the 4th biggest air show in Europe.

August

Bloodmoor Community Centre

Work began on the £300,000 centre on land off Darley Dale. It is to be a bungalow with 3 main rooms, and a veranda along the front, where mums can sit and watch their children in the play area. There will be an IT room, and outside there is already a football pitch and a wild flower area.

Birds Eye Factory

At the end of August staff at the factory were briefed on the £1.6 billion sale of Unilever's frozen food division to venture capitalist Permira. They remain in the dark about the company's plans for the future. The deal is expected to go through by the end of the year.

September

Flooding - Rain

At 3am Monday September 25 heavy rain began to fall, and by 8.30 the biggest floods for 4 years were affecting many parts of the town. Traffic was diverted from flood-affected roads.

Residents in Long Road, Blackheath Road, Carlton Road, Aldwych Way, and Velda Close, whose houses back on to the relief road, saw their lawns and sheds disappear under a foot of water, with consequent damage to gardens and equipment. This was due to the reservoir designed to take the run off from the road was connected to a dyke, which overflowed. Other roads affected were Rotterdam Road, Norwich Road, and London Road South. In Pakefield All Saints Road was inundated, and the Garage suffered about £20,000 damage.

Foxborough Middle School was closed for the following week after sewage filled up 2 classrooms, ruining carpets and floor coverings.

November

Flooding - Sea Surge

On Wednesday November 1, the worst flooding for 12 years brought traffic to a standstill in the area. A combination of gale force northerly winds and high tides caused a sea water surge of 5 feet with 15-20 feet waves, breaking into low lying areas. Caldecott Road was closed, and the Birds Eye factory, Nicholas Everitt Park, and the Carlton Marshes flooded.

Due to road closures in adjacent areas, it took 3 hours to reach Lowestoft from Ipswich, and 90 minutes from Norwich.

December

Media Centre

It was announced that the Kirkley Innovation and Technology Enterprise (KITE) media complex, was nearing completion and officially opened in the spring. It will have a dual purpose, functioning as both part of the school and independently. Providing a variety of services including private internet access, office and conference space, radio broadcasting facilities, and a sound recording studio. Operating for 24 hours a day, it can cater for upwards of 200 visitors a day.

January 2007

Kingswear Hotel

The hotel was built in the late 1800s, and was a prominent feature of the Victorian seafront. It later became the offices for the Lothingland Rural District Council and in 1974 the home of the planning department of the WDC. In 2005 the building was put up for sale. Badger Building applied for permission to demolish the building and replace it with a block of 22 flats early in 2006. In spite of objections from the Suffolk Preservation Society and local people, who accused the Waveney District Council of allowing the building to fall so badly into disrepair it was deemed uneconomic to restore, planning permission was granted.

Orbis

Work is expected to start in 3 months time on the Offshore Renewable Business Centre project in Lowestoft at Ness Point. It will house about 30 small – medium size companies involved in offshore energy. Due to open in 2008 the centre is expected to create 150 jobs, and encourage the development of the supply chain in the area.

March

Education

Suffolk County Council on 22 March voted to scrap the Middle Schools in the area set up in 1973 at great expense and disruption to pupils and teachers. In their place a two tier system will be installed at even greater expense, and causing even greater disruption to pupils and teachers during the

transition period.

April

Fish Merchants

After more than 20 years of friendly rivalry, JT Cole and Sam Cole are going to unite to create one of the biggest fish wholesalers in the country. JT Cole, now run by Donny and Michael Cole was established in 1935 by their grandfather. Donny's son Sam Cole set up his business in 1988.

The Sam Cole Food Group now employs over 100 people and includes Sam Cole Fish Merchants, Lowestoft Shellfish Company, Capps Food, A Kalkman, and the Black Olive Delicatessen in Southwold.

The merged fish merchant business will trade as Sam Cole Fish Merchants.

The Seagull Theatre

The future of the community theatre was revived when a £250,000 loan from an anonymous benefactor allowed a new organisation called the Seagull Lowestoft to buy the building from the W.D.C. It is planned to use the theatre as a mini cinema, for plays, and other live performances and workshops.

June

Lowestoft Relief

For more than 4 years the Lowestoft Sunrise Scheme and Relief Road led to road closures and works in the town centre, people were unable or unwilling to go there, and traders lost up to 80% of their trade.

Suffolk CC announced on June 22 that shopkeepers would not receive compensation, but £50,000 will be used to support traders in the town by providing free public transport on several days or weekends, to encourage visitors to the town.

The Maritime Museum

On June 28 it was announced that the Lowestoft and East Suffolk Maritime Museum had won a £34500 lottery grant to renovate the museum. It will be used to expand and modernise the displays, and provide a new education centre for schools and community groups.

Peter Parker the chairman of the museum society said: "We want to keep alive the history of the fishing industry on which the town was built.

Car Parking Charges

WDC has responded to public pressure to change the car parking charges implemented some weeks ago. Motorists were charged £4 or £5 to park in the car parks along the South Beach, frightening away short stay visitors. Changes announced in the Journal June 29 were: 6am to 6pm up to 1hr 50p; up to 2hrs £1.50; up to 3 hrs £4; over 3 hrs £5, 6pm to 11pm £1, 11pm to 6am free.

September

Free Transport

It was announced that free buses and trains would be laid on to lure shoppers back into Lowestoft, as part of a bid to revive the town's hard hit retail trade.

From Monday 7 September until the following Saturday, people would be able to travel for nothing after 9am on public transport from locations across the Lowestoft area, within a northern limit of Hopton, a southern limit of Wrentham, and an eastern limit of Beccles.

It was hoped that the free travel period would act as a public transport taster session in the run up to 5 separate 58 hour closures of Lowestoft's Bascule Bridge during October, November, and December.

November

Rubbish Recycling

It was announced that from November 5 that food waste could be sent for recycling in the green bins. Each household will receive a small kitchen caddy and a roll of 10 cornstarch liners to line it before putting them in the green bin when full. Until every household receives its allocation, householders can use their own containers and wrap food waste in newspaper before putting it in the green bin.

Flood Protection

Drainage work aimed at protecting properties from flooding in Aldwyck Way, Aspinall Close, and Velda Close, to the north of the Relief Road, started on November 6. The measures include underground storage tanks, at least 5 metres away from homes, and a 60 metre long sewer.

8 inches from disaster

On Friday Nov 9, the combination of the forecast of a tidal surge, gale force winds, and a high tide, led to the Environment Agency issuing a Flood Warning, the levels of which could reach those of 1953. In the event on Saturday they were 8 inches lower, and total disaster was averted. In Lowestoft the waters were 8 ft. 5 ins. above normal levels.

Oulton Broad appeared to be under the greater threat of being flooded, as the surge came up the Waveney from Yarmouth, 12 people were evacuated from the Broadside residential home in Commodore Road, as water flooded the road. The Lady of the Lake, had water coming in at the top end of the pub and into the toilets. Mutford Bridge was closed to traffic, as high tide threatened danger. Carlton Marshes were flooded between the River Waveney and Oulton Broad.

In Southwold, property at the harbour mouth was damaged, and boatsheds flooded. The Harbour Inn kitchens were flooded, and the lower bar had floodwaters waist high. The A12 at Blythburgh was closed to traffic for most of the day. It could have been a lot worse if the arrival of the surge had coincided with high tide.

Gulliver

On Nov 22, it was revealed that the turbine had been out of action for 4 weeks. It was switched off in October when a maintenance inspection revealed minor damage to one of the blade tips, caused by a lightning strike on June 8, and it was closed for safety reasons. Until a suitable crane can be found to remove the blade, it cannot be repaired and so will remain out of action.

A List of Famous Lowestoft People

On the 13 September 2007 Dr J M Blatchly gave us a talk. He used data from the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (available on the Internet) to tell stories of famous Lowestoft people listed there. The list is reproduced below as a useful source.

Scrope [Bradley], Thomas (d. 1492), Bishop of Dromore
Nashe [Nash], Thomas (bap. 1567, d. c.1601), writer
Ley, James, third earl of Marlborough (1618/19-1665), naval officer
Sansum, Robert (c. 1626-1665), naval officer
Berkeley, Charles, earl of Falmouth (bap. 1630, d. 1665), courtier
Allin, Sir Thomas, first baronet (bap. 1612, d. 1685), naval officer
Ashby, Sir John (bap. 1646, d. 1693), naval officer
Leake, Sir Andrew (d. 1704), naval officer
Arnold, Thomas (1679-1737), naval officer
Emlyn, Thomas (1663-1741), dissenting minister
Say, Samuel (1676-1743), dissenting minister
Scott, Thomas (1705-1775), poet and hymn writer
Potter, Robert (1721-1804), translator and Church of England clergyman
Gillingwater, Edmund (bap. 1736, d. 1813), topographer
Smith, Sir James Edward (1759-1828), botanist
Alderson, John (bap. 1757, d. 1829), physician

- Colman, James (1801-1854), found in Colman family (per. 1814-1898), mustard and starch manufacturers
- Alderson, Sir Edward Hall (bap. 1787, d. 1857), law reporter and judge
- Dance, Charles (1794-1863), playwright and civil servant
- Plumridge, Sir James Hanway (1787-1863), naval officer
- Southey, Henry Herbert (1784-1865), physician
- Hinderer [nee Martin], Anna (1827-1870), missionary
- Tymms, Samuel (1808-1871), antiquary
- Maurice, (John) Frederick Denison (1805-1872), Church of England clergyman and theologian
- Skey, Frederic Carpenter (1798-1872), surgeon
- Smith [nee Reeve], Pleasance, Lady Smith (1773-1877), letter writer and literary editor
- Fitzgerald [formerly Purcell], Edward (1809-1883), writer and translator
- Hibbs, Richard (18127-1886), writer on poverty
- Peto, Sir (Samuel) Morton, first baronet (1809-1889), contractor for railways and public works
- Owen, Sir Francis Philip Cunliffe - (1828-1894), museum director and exhibition organizer
- Ryle, John Charles (1816-1900), Bishop of Liverpool
- Simonds, James Beart (1810-1904), veterinary surgeon
- Child, Thomas (1839-1906), Swedenborgian minister
- Collins, John Churton (1848-1908), university extension teacher and advocate of the academic study of English literature
- Alderson, Sir Edwin Alfred Hervey (1859-1927), army officer
- Stock, Eugene (1836-1928), missionary society administrator and journal editor
- Davison, George (1855-1930), photographer, political activist, and patron of the arts
- Hay, William Thomson [Will] (1888-1949), comedian and actor
- Hill, Sir Leonard Erskine (1866-1952), physiologist
- Reiss [nee Lucas], Phyllis Emily (1886-1961), garden designer
- Robertson, Sir Dennis Holme (1890-1963), economist
- Daley, Harry (1901-1971), police officer and author
- Seago, Edward Brian [Ted] (1910-1974), landscape painter and writer
- Britten, (Edward) Benjamin, Baron Britten (1913-1976), composer
- Hamilton, Stanley Baines (1889-1977), civil engineer and historian
- Beverton, Raymond John Heaphy (1922-1995), biologist and scientific administrator
- Smith, Margaret Josephine Dean - [formerly Lilian Grade Copeman] (1899-1997), folklorist
- Cockerell, Sir Christopher Sydney (1910-1999), electronic and mechanical engineers