Presidents message

Dear all,

I recently came across an article which referenced the fact that in August 2022, at the Extraordinary General Assembly of the International Council of Museums, a new definition of "museum" was adopted. I have no knowledge of the previous wording, but this is what was adopted:

"A museum is a not-for-profit, permanent institution in the service of society that researches, collects, conserves, interprets and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage. Open to the public, accessible and inclusive, museums foster diversity and sustainability. They operate and communicate ethically, professionally and with the participation of communities, offering varied experiences for education, enjoyment, reflection and knowledge sharing."

This paragraph perfectly describes the Lowestoft Museum we all know and love. Meanwhile, a well-illustrated report published in November 2024, specifically dedicated to the mapping of museum closures in the UK, gave the stark statistic that 525 museums in the UK have closed since 2000. Again, this only highlights our justifiable pride in our museum. Not only has it survived (post-Covid and in modern times), but it has recently been awarded funding, which is accompanied by associated ongoing financial investment and planning. Broad House in Nicholas Everitt Park, the historic building which houses the collections and displays, and itself a little treasure, is being developed and improved, conserved and cherished. However, no less important is the investment made by people: the commitment, dedication and application of all the museum volunteers is priceless and without their freely giving of time and effort, the museum would have no life or soul. Likewise, the collaborative support of Oulton Broad Parish Council is critical to much of the progress being made. Full insight of the year's achievements can be read in the following pages.

Meanwhile, 2024 has seen the launch of a new logo for the Lowestoft Archaeological and Historical Society; a superb programme of talks with well-publicised, high quality speakers addressing enthusiastic audiences who attended in goodly numbers; a successful inaugural test pit dig which has set a precedent for similar events to be planned; and publication of the latest series of engaging and enlightening Society Newsletters – to name but a few highlights. Again, we are fortunate with the calibre of committee, members and supporters: their combined experience, knowledge, passion and dedication, together with their inclusiveness and infectious enthusiasm, creates a truly admirable fellowship. It may be a society themed on the past, but there is a vibrancy of ideas and aspiration which makes it a tangibly relevant society for the here and now. I know 2025 is to bring exciting evolutionary opportunities, but meanwhile, there is a great deal to review and celebrate in this year's Annual Report.

Read on… and enjoy! Elizabeth Talbot

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All line drawings in this report are by courtesy of Paul Durbridge

Chairman's Report

Another year another, Annual Report! Very special thanks must go to David and Jenny Hatton who have been putting this report together for the last 10 years. This year they stood down from this responsibility, we owe them both a huge thank you for putting together an interesting 'read' this last decade. However, they hand the reigns over to Richard Dearlove to carry on, who has done a great job editing and collating this year's report.

It's been a fabulous year for the society, with some of the largest talks we have ever had. We have also re-engaged with some live archaeology with our garden dig project. You can read all about the talks and digs within these pages.

Thanks to all the society members and others who have contributed reports and talk write ups to this publication.

We may have challenges ahead in 2025, but I look forward to working with committee and society members to continue our great work in making our society a diverse and engaging group. We very much look forward to making plans for our 60th anniversary in 2026.

Enjoy the read!

Kind regards

Richard Mundy

(Chair of LA&LHS)"

Membership List

Honorary Members

Mrs I Ashman Mr R Ashman Mr A Charlton Mr P Durbridge

Members

Jacquie Berrey
Tina Bell
Nick Bird
Terry Calver
Denis Chivers
Diana Coad
Ray Collins
Brian Cook
Richard Dearlove
Marilyn Duerden
Rodney Duerden
Pat Ewels
Rosalyn Fallon
Alan Fox
Daryl Fraser
Harry Grainger
David Hatton
Jenny Hatton
Jennifer Henwood
Deby Howlett
Kevin Jorgensen
Simon Kent
Janis Kirby
Trish Kirby
John Knowles
Muriel Knowles
Carole Lobel
Shannon Layzell
Helen Layzell
Philip Layzell
Janet Long
Steve Lovewell
Don Mathew
Richard Mundy
Mrs I O'Toole
Phillip Rasbery
Peter Rump
John Partridge
Trish Penman
Gavin A Plant
Sue Pyecroft
Dave Pyecroft
John Read
Katie Sharp
Mr M Sims
Mrs A Sims
Patricia Smith
Christopher Stone
Jeremy Stone
Susan Steward
Marian Symonds
Hazel Townsend
Ms Terry Unitt
Julia Waller
Sheila Webber
Geoff Webber

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2023 -2024

INCOME

2022/2023		2023/2024
735.00	Membership Fees	752.00
280.20	Visitors	318.00
102.00	Annual Reports	72.00
28.00	Sundry and Gifts	38.10
240.00	Spring Social – College Meal – March 2024	311.00
1385.20		1491.10
	Cash and Bank Balances at 1/4/23	
	Cash in hand 57.88	
	NatWest Account 4016.94	
	4074.82	5565.92

EXPENDITURE

2022/2023		2023/2024
466.00	Lecturers Fees	301.00
97.00	Charitable Donations	185.00
549.40	Room Hire	490.00
9.64	Postage, Printing and Stationery	13.98
36.23	Annual Report Costs	62.40
16.80	Web Site, IONOS Charges	81.00
25.00	Suffolk Local History Council	25.00
240.00	Spring Social – Collage Meal – March 2024	311.00
1440.07		1469.38
	Cash and Bank Balances at 31/3/24	
	Cash in hand 75.00	
	NatWest Account 4021.54	
	4096.54	5565.92

The assets of the Society, as written down for the current year, are as follows :

Laptop £120, Digital Projector £100.

The assets of the Society, as written down for the current year, are as follows :

Laptop £120, Digital Projector £100.

R A Collins, Hon. Treasurer.

AUDITOR'S REPORT

I have reviewed the financial statements of the Lowestoft Archaeological and Local History Society for the year ended 31 March 2024 and agreed the entries to the supporting documentation.

The financial statements have been reviewed solely for the confidential use of the Lowestoft Archaeological and Local History Society and may not be relied upon for any other purposes whatsoever. I neither owe nor accept any duty to any other party and shall not be liable for any loss, damage or expense of whatsoever nature which is caused by their reliance on these figures.

Signed by the Chairman at the Annual General Meeting, 23rd May 2024**.**

Museum Report

Lowestoft Museum opened on Saturday March 23rd 2024 and on the following day, Palm Sunday, many visitors came to sample the saffron 'dingers' provided by Bushells and curated by Sally Francis. During the Easter Holidays there were numerous visits, 1070 including 354 children. There are two new displays, one in the Everitt Room featuring WW II, 80 years on from D Day in June, and a case in the Turner Room with recent acquisitions not previously exhibited, including a TOC H lamp and information about that organisation. There is also an invitation to a dinner (and menu) at the Yacht Club from Howard Hollingsworth to commemorate the construction and launch of the luxury wherry Ardea, built by Robinsons at Oulton Broad in 1928. Nicholas Everitt was present at that dinner, only a couple of months before his death. Ardea visited Oulton Broad at the end of May.

Although the Museum opened early for Easter in March and had promising attendances during the school holidays, the overall visitor numbers were a little down on the previous two years, 6,300 compared to 6.800 and 6,600. Visiting Oulton Broad and Nicholas Everett Park is always influenced by the weather but this year, there were a series of building works and scaffold erection for the roofing. All these have affected the appearance and approach to Broad House, though volunteers have made considerable efforts to attract visitors with new and changing displays. Visitor comments are always complimentary.

Joanie Marion curated her Pebbles Workshop on two Wednesdays in August which were followed by a puppet making session a week later.

Heritage Open Days during September included displays of Bert Collier's Old Lowestoft pictures, and information about notable "Women of Lowestoft", including the Lowestoft Ladies football team.

Although Lowestoft Museum closed as usual at the end of the Autumn half term holiday, there were other open days between Christmas and New Year incorporating the third themed search 'Robins', mainly for children.

On February 12th, the MEND began with the sinking of three boreholes at strategic positions around Broad House, where the level of groundwater can be monitored regularly to inform the project. Sub-surface drainage work commenced, after which scaffolding was installed to carry out repairs to the roof and gutters. The plans included all necessary safety requirements so that Lowestoft Museum could remain open to visitors during the main summer season as well as to all other events planned for Nicholas Everitt Park.

The next phase of MEND began with the digging of trenches for a new drainage system. This was followed in September by work in the cellar which now has a 'tank' of special concrete which will exclude any water from gaining entrance. Scaffolding enabled access to the three areas of flat roof which have now been re-surfaced. New gutters and downpipes are in place and all damaged pointing revealed during this work has been repaired. 10 solar panels have been installed on the largest area of flat roof and paint and repairs needed to the windows have been effected. The MEND budget has been so well guided by our Relationship Manager that there are sufficient funds to install batteries and carry out this additional work. The fine Autumn weather enabled the project to proceed on schedule.

When Lowestoft Museum closed for the winter on Sunday November 3rd., there had been 8062 visitors, 1678 fewer than in 2023, however, the average donation per visitor remains very similar to previous years at 34.5p. After Carols on the Quay on December 15th,and then between Boxing Day and New Year, the totals went up to 8,318 including 1,869 children, which is 22.5%. Income for 2024 was £2,647 from shop sales, £2,876 from donations making the total banked £5,496.
We are looking forward to celebrating 40 years since Lowestoft Museum was opened at Broad House by Queen Elizabeth on August 1st 1985. The British Museum has agreed to extend the loan of the Somerleyton Bronzes for a further three years. There have been three new volunteers added to the steward rota.

Museum Accounts

Balance Sheet – Year Ending 31 March 2024

	2024 Unrestricted Funds	2024 Restricted Funds	2024 Total	2023
Current Assets				
Cash in Hand				
CAF Ordinary	£1083.27		£1083.27	£11304.17
CAF Gold	£17631.63	£3328.06	£20959.69	
National Savings Account				£10821.90
Total	£18714.90	£3328.06	£22042.96	£22126.07
Current Liabilities				
Net Current Liabilities	£18714.90	£3328.06	£22042.96	£22126.07
Balance as at 31 March				
Movement of Funds	£83.11		£83.11	
Total Income			£7965.00	
Total Expenditure			£7484.02	

The restricted fund represents £3328.06 for Turner Room

Meeting Reports

Tony Thurston **Commonwealth War Graves** **25 January 2024**

Tony gave a comprehensive account of the formation of the C W G Commission and the developments which have been made since its foundation in 1917 as the Imperial WGC, (updated to Commonwealth WGC in 1960). There could have been few of the large audience who did not have relatives or friends involved in conflicts across the world, some who survived but many who did not.

Before WW I, casualties in various colonial wars were buried where they were killed and very often without a monument to mark their graves. It was not the intention to repatriate bodies of the fallen and in the horrific conditions of battles such as the Somme or Passchendaele, many could not be recovered or even identified. Fabian Ware, a RTZ company director, was too old to enlist in 1914 but used his influence to become commander of a Red Cross unit and was surprised by the lack of any official recording of graves. As the War progressed and the numbers of the fallen and missing increased, his work was officially recognised and by October 1915 over 31,000 graves had been registered and 50,000 by May 1916. The next stage was to acquire land in Flanders so that graves could be kept together. Then questions of design arose, shape of tombstone and commemorative wording. At that time, Lutyens, a famous architect, was employed to produce suitable designs, Kipling provided memorable wording and Gertrude Jekyll helped with the gardens. Liaising with French authorities reached agreement on buying suitable land not too close to settlements but with British supervision and management.

The first experimental cemeteries were at Le Treport, Louvencourt and Forceville, of which the latter was considered to be most successful and used a template for other subsequent ones. At first, various cross shapes were used as grave markers until eventually a simple plain stone memorial became the norm and which can be seen today in Lowestoft and Pakefield, with a marker at the entrance to each cemetery even if only one grave is inside.

Pakefield Church entrance and the gravestone of Rating Adams. The anchor indicates a naval serviceman.









Where a large number of graves were collected in one area, a simple 'Cross of Sacrifice' or other memorial, recording the circumstances of that cemetery. In many cases bodies were not found or identified, as many as 315,000 in France and Belgium alone, so names of the missing began to be inscribed on special monuments of which the Menin Gate unveiled on 24 July 1927 is perhaps the most well-known. Visits to these cemeteries has become a regular feature of School war studies as well and many others interested in the whole subject.

R and M Mann **Captain William Bligh and the Munity on the Bounty** **8 February 2024**

The theme of this talk, as well as giving a full account of the Naval officer's career, was to show how the true history of his life can be altered to suit a more sensational public image. For the majority of people, it is the films 1935, 1962 and 1984 which have reinforced the reputation of Bligh as strict disciplinarian who alienated his crew to the point of mutiny. Richard's presentation revealed a very different picture but gradually showed the transition of this very able captain from "Hero to Villain". Bligh spent all his life in naval matters from the age of seven as a cabin boy until he reached the rank of Vice Admiral in 1814. Four of those years were spent in the merchant service and another year and a half 1806 -1808 as Governor of New South Wales.



In 1776 Bligh was chosen as sailing master on Cook's third voyage and after his death in Hawaii and the incapacity and later death of the new Captain Clerke, took over the navigation role to explore the Northwest Passage for the second time, and succeeded in bringing the expedition back to England in 1780.

All of which contradict the reputation for strict and violent discipline on his ships where he was known to have imposed lesser punishments for offenders. The Mutiny came about largely for two main reasons, space on board Bounty which would normally have housed marines to provide security, was kept free to store more of the bread fruit for which the voyage was planned. Secondly the intended route West via Cape Horn was prevented by contrary gales and the extra journey East meant that they arrived in





Tahiti at the wrong season and had four months to wait during which time the sailors formed friendships among the natives and were reluctant to return to the intended voyage home.

Captain Bligh should be remembered more for navigating 4,000 miles of tropical waters in a small cutter and bringing his loyal crewmen safely to Timor, whence they were able to obtain passages home, than for the Hollywood image of a surly disciplinarian.

David Wolwebber Unlocking the Mystery of Coins 22 February 2024

There can be few adults attending this presentation who have not had an interest in coins at some time, so it was even more rewarding to hear about finds in local hoards, discovered in the Blyth Valley, two near Cookley and others near Blythburgh, and now in Halesworth Museum. To appreciate the coins fully, a visit there is essential, or read David's "Buried Ancient Treasure of the Blyth Valley Suffolk.

This report will outline the main characteristics of the hoards and the features which make them special. In 2017 the Suffolk Archaeological Field Group, following up crop marks recorded in an arial survey, excavated in a field near Cookley, about 3 miles south west of Halesworth. Although after two seasons, the hoped for Roman settlement was not found, a scattering of 21 silver denarii ,dating to the late Republican era, were. 11 are now in Halesworth Museum and the other 10 still being examined in British Museum. The standard pay of a Roman legionaries was 225 denarii, auxiliaries 188 per annum. David's booklet contains a table of the items which could be bought with denarii during that period.

There are several unusual features to this collection (Cookley I) as well as the one found in a field not far away in August 2018 (Cookley II) in that they are all Roman but have origins dating from 155 BC to 60-61 AD, quite a long time to be in circulation and kept together in Britain. The usual feature which allows these silver coins to be dated, is the presence of the head and an inscription of known Roman ruler, including Julius Caesar Mark Anthony, Augustus and finally Nero. This bureaucratic process enables fairly accurate dating of Roman coins but still leaves the puzzle of how and why they ended up in fields near Halesworth. The Boudica revolution of 60/61 AD may be the best solution, loot from a retreating army after the sack of Colchester, London and At. Albans.





The 19 coins from near Blythburgh, discovered in 2018, are all gold staters (a term derived from Greek for weight) which date from 60 BC to c.25 AD. Although different in many ways from the Roman coins, there are clues as to their origins but also many puzzles which may keep numismatists busy for some time. The feature which David spent most time considering was the presence of semi-abstract representations of horses, several not unlike the Uffington White Horse in South Oxfordshire. Dating of this hoard has come from similarities to other Iron Age coins found in neighbouring tribal areas many of which depict similar features.



Uffingham White Horse



Blythburgh Gold Stater

Ivan Bunn & Peter Page **The Prunier Trophy** **14 March 2024**

This presentation was in front of a large audience, some of who had relatives in the competition to land the most herring in a single haul over a period of "2 full moons", most frequently in October and November when the shoals of "silver darlings" appeared off the East coast. Ivan recounted with many illustrations, the history of herring fishing and the decline in popularity of that fish which led to the establishment of a trophy by a French restauranteur Simone Prunier (1904 -1976).



Benefactress of fishermen

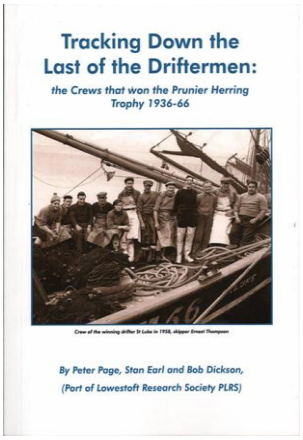
Operating from 'La Maison Prunier' in Paris, she had opened a similar restaurant, 'Prunier Maison' in St. James St. London and published a book with over 100 fish recipes. Learning of the continuing decline in popularity of herring, she devised a competition which would bear her family name and become a famous test of fishermen along the North Sea coast from 1936 to 1966 (excluding the war years).

A trophy was sculpted by Charles Robinson Sykes and is now in the care of Lowestoft Maritime Museum, though it has travelled to other victorious sea ports. In addition to the trophy, a pennant representing a herring was attached to the mizzen mast, as can be seen in the photograph below of a winning crew with Madame Prunier at the award ceremony. Early pre-war ones involved a trip to Prunier Maison and presentation by the sponsor herself. Later ones were less luxurious.



Reading of the winning drifters is very rewarding and the size of the catches which varied from 231 crans in 1936 by the Banff winner BF 592 'Boy Andrew' to LT 20 'Lord Hood' in 1952, 314 3/4 crans whose skipper Ernest Thompson, the only one to win twice, and 323 1/2 crans by PD 417 'Fruitful Bough'in 1953, down to only 128 2/3 crans in 1966, perhaps a sign of the diminishing stocks and a good reason to terminate the competition which had been likened to a fishing F.A. Cup.
In which case, it was a three way contest won by LT boats 14 times and second twice, Scottish ports (Banff, Buckie, Fraserburgh, Kirkaldy and Peterhead), 8 firsts and 10 seconds and YH 3 wins and 3 runners up.





For those who wish to learn more, there are several very informative books including "Tracking Down the Last of the Driftermen" by Peter Page, Stanley Earl and Bob Dickson, as well as online references to 'Prunier'.

Miriam Stead **Walpole Old Chapel and its Community** **11 April 2024**



As well as describing the Chapel itself and the building's history, Miriam was keen to set its foundation in the context of national events relating to the changing monarchy in 16th and 17th century England. Suffolk has been noted for its adherence to non-conformist beliefs and with the abolition of the Church of England under the Commonwealth, there were heated debates about what might replace it. Many Non-Conformist churches met in local dwellings. In Walpole the move from Cookley, 30 years after the execution of Charles I in 1649, was to a late 16th farmer's house, which the Suffolk puritans converted into the unique religious building seen today.

With the restoration of firstly Charles II in 1670 and after him the pro-Catholic James II, some of the dissenting leaders were forced to flee, especially to the Low Countries whence came William and Mary at the "glorious Revolution of 1688.

Several notable local leaders, William Bridge, an ordained minister who fled to the Netherlands to escape persecution, the Brewster family in Wrentham and Lady Brooke in Yoxford. The 1689 Act of Toleration allowed Non-Conformist gatherings to assemble in peace. In that same year, six trustees, all local men of substance received a lease on this building and and an acre of land from the Corporation of Southwold at an annual rent of 10 shillings.

In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, the growth of populations moving from farmland to towns led to a slow decline in congregation at Walpole. Eventually, in 1958, the number of worshippers became so small that the trusteeship passed to the Suffolk Congregational Union but closed as a chapel in 1970. For the 25 years which followed , there was doubt about its future but the newly formed Historic Chapels Trust took it into its care in 1994, only the second to be acquired. They are now custodians of a valuable collection of Grade I and Grade II* places of worship, including Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Quaker, Roman Catholic and Unitarian. These buildings, once repaired, are accessible to the public and they are available for occasional services such as weddings. For further information, please visit www.hct.org.uk.
We are indebted to the essay by David Holmes for the information reproduced here.

Bob Collis **Lowestoft 1944: The Year the Tide turned** **25 April 2024**

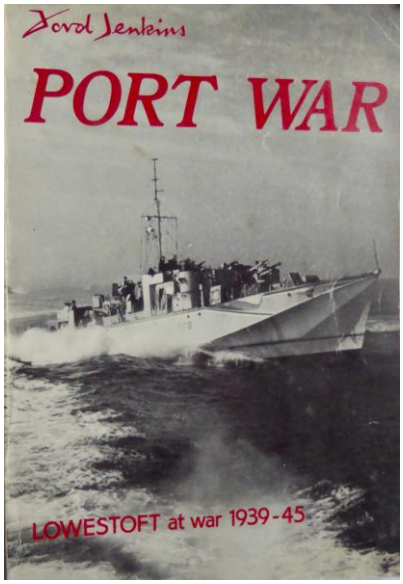
Bob gave another detailed and very well illustrated talk (95 slides) despite having arrived without his notes. Even without them his delivery and recall of detailed facts was perfect, a tribute to his care and concern for the history of the War in Lowestoft.

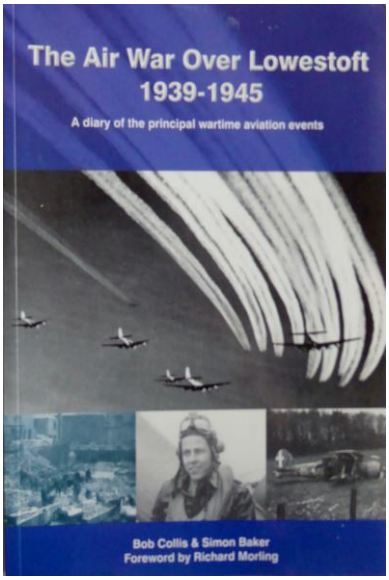
In setting the scene to the "Tide Turning", he referred to significant dates and events. The entry of US after Pearl Harbour in December 1941 leading to many USAF bases being built nearby in East Anglia, the victory over Rommel at El Alamein in October 1942 enabling invasion of Italy, and finally D day in June 1944 all helped but the overall picture was of Lowestoft being in the front line of attacks from the Continent well into 1945 from V1 and V2 weapons of destruction.

Bob's first slide depicted barbed wire defences along the promenade, put in place to deter invasion, very real in 1940, and still in place at the end of the War. The Children's Corner was visible in use beyond the fencing in September '44. As well as photographs relating to Lowestoft's place in the War, Bob was also able to use a meticulous diary of every air raid, kept by the Royal Observer Corp, from the first warnings in September 1939 right through to January 1945. There were 1891 alerts out of a total of 2064 days that the war lasted.

It was fascinating to see how the attacks on Lowestoft and the East Coast generally, developed and changed throughout the War, from a single seater Italian Fiat Falco bi-plane, forced by damage to its rudder to crash land near Corton railway station in November 1940, to the last of the V-1's in November '44.

This report does not include all the details and photographs which Bob presented. For those who wish to discover more, the two volumes shown below contain a wealth of information.





Janis Kirby **Town Hall Riot** **9 May 2024**



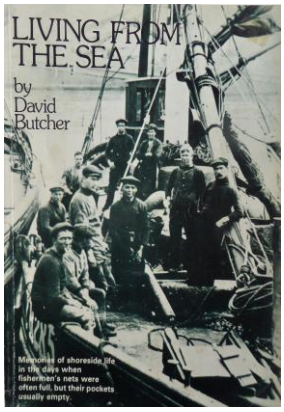
Riotous Behaviour and My Family's Part in the Town Hall Riot

Janis's talk resulted from research into this event as part of her role as Chair of the Suffolk Family History Society, where she learnt that her grandfather James Culham had been present at the Town Hall on Monday May 8th 1933. Following what was popularly known as a riot after about a hundred men assembled outside the Town to protest about the decision to cut the coal allowance, part of the benefit needed in the Depression of the '30's which followed the Wall Street crash of 1929. With unemployment at 20% in 1930 and 25% in 1933, many protest marches took place, the most well known being that from Jarrow in 1936.

At 2.30, a handful of men, including a delegation from the National Unemployed Workers Movement, chair Will Grimmer, wished to speak to the Guardians Committee who were meeting to set the benefit scales but it was refused entry to the Town Hall. Grimmer had represented the workers on several occasions to obtain better provision for unemployed families and may have been regarded, by this time, as a trouble maker. Gradually, as the crowd including James Culham increased in size and pressed against the main door, it was suddenly opened, the men nearest the door were pushed or fell inside and were immediately seized by police officers waiting there.
The doors were re-shut and barred. 24 men were arrested and taken to the Old Police Station charged with 'riotous behaviour' and remanded to Norwich Prison on Mousehold Heath, several with wounds from the rough handling and chains used by police. 3 further were added to the total and 2 women who had "assaulted" policemen on behalf of their arrested husbands.

Janis finished her talk by reading the account of Ted Quantrill, born in 1911, one of the men present and arrested on that day. It is quoted in David Butcher's book "Living from

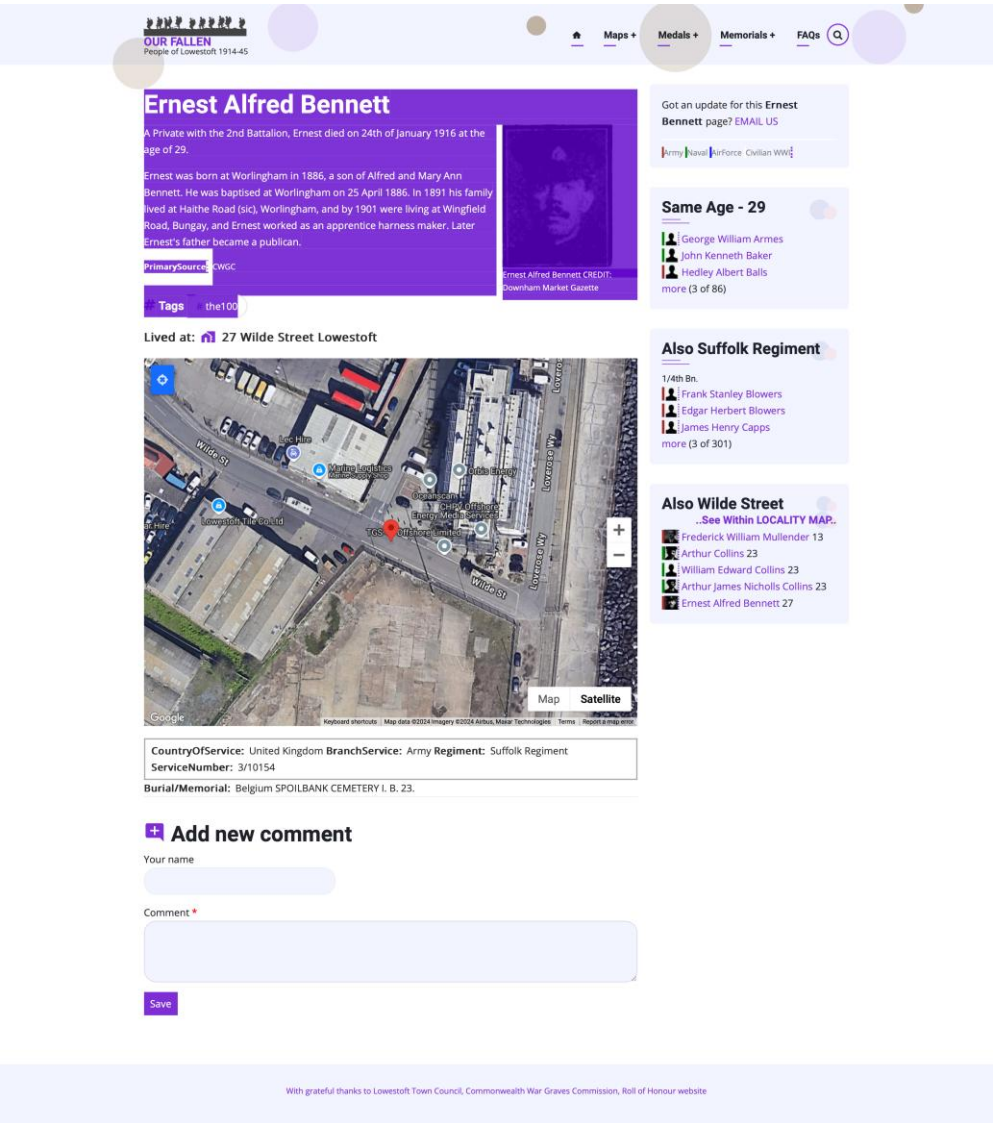
the Sea", page 62, which is a vivid account by one who was there and well worth reading by anyone interested in this whole period and subject.



Joe Thompson & Rev. Damon Rogers **Our Fallen** **12 September 2024**

The presentation led by Joe and assisted by Damon was very interesting and informative but will not be reported here in detail because many of those were of private individuals and include a large number of details about the persons who died between 1914 and 1945 as a result of the two wars. The object of the talk was to make residents in the Lowestoft area aware that the project, started by Joe and added to by Damon, could be accessed on-line to ascertain information about their relatives or neighbours. Most entries are of men, mostly young, in WW1 but there are also civilians and women who were killed by enemy action here.

This slide was for a man, born in 1886 at Worlingham, who was killed in action at Ypres in January 1915 aged 29. The illustration above gives an example of what can be found by going to https://lowestoftoldandnow.org and search on the alphabetical list. Sometimes the entries are by official birth names though the individual may have been known by another one.
Joe and Damon have been working hard to create this resource in a form which will last and be available well into the future.



Zoe Adlam **"Fool's Gold"** **26 September 2024**

Laws of Treasure in England and Wales

Two of the 5 objects which introduced the subject and the problem of defining "Treasure". The other images were of a figure and two animals carved from stone or cast bronze.

None was considered to be treasure at the time of discovery because only gold or silver were.

Sutton Hoo helmet, mainly of iron



Wooden tablet from Vindolanda.



Earliest known example of a woman's handwriting

Zoe began her presentation by showing the historical pattern of ownership relating to objects of value found in the ground. From the Norman period onwards, the feudal system meant that the king, at the top of the pyramid, owned the whole land and therefore anything of value in it. Gradually other landowners were able to enjoy some claim to objects on their fiefdom. The earliest museums were private collections often including artefacts from the Classical, Egyptian and Near East civilisations.

In 1937, the Institute of Archaeology, a department of the University of London, was founded by Mortimer Wheeler who was one of the first to become exposed to popular viewing on TV. More accurate and scientific methods of surveying potential sites and excavating brought to light many objects which were valuable culturally but did not count as "Treasure". The popularity of metal detecting after WWII and the availability of aerial photographs, led to a great deal of discussion about what should happen with significant finds, which led to The Treasure Act of 1996.

The Act is well worth reading by anyone interested in the details of the subject but the main development was that anything of value found in an archaeological context must be reported to a coroner within 14 days, who will decide if the objects should be offered to a museum at a value determined by the Treasure Valuation Committee or be returned to the finder.

The concept of 'Treasure Trove' had existed since 11th century for objects over 300 years, made of gold or silver and although the 1996 Act was seen to include several improvements, there were still academics and archaeologists who felt it did not go far enough. There was a campaign by the Archaeological Society to deal with anomalies and speed up the process which has led to a consultation involving interested parties, including museums and metal detectorists. This was publicised by the DCMS in 2021 and further refining led to promulgation in 2023.

Act of Parliament	
Parliament of the United Kingdom	
Long title	An Act to abolish treasure trove and to make fresh provision in relation to treasure.
Citation	1996 c. 24
Territorial extent	England and Wales Northern Ireland

Julian Barnwell **Royal Gloucester** **10 October 2024**

Our Journey to Find the Gloucester and Beyond



This presentation by Julian Barnwell not only brought to the attention of a large audience in SLMC the events of July 1682 when the Royal Gloucester carrying James Duke of York, John Churchill and in an accompanying yacht, Samuel Pepys, the famous diarist, was wrecked on the dangerous shoals off the Norfolk coast. All three survived, James became James II, John Churchill, the victor at Blenheim was ennobled for his success and Pepys's diary is a priceless record of significant years such as the Great Plague 1665 followed by the Great Fire of London in 1666. Over 200 aboard the royal flotilla did perish and if these three had too, Britain's history would have changed dramatically.

Julian then illustrated the story of how he and his brother Lincoln, based in Swaffham, Norfolk, became interested in scuba diving and their experiences in different parts of the world as well as in the North Sea, discovered in a register of wrecks, this one of the Gloucester, location until then unknown. During the five years of this operation, they discovered the remains, carefully excavated and filmed them and gradually retrieved some of the objects such as those on the photograph above. There is a lot more to do and The Gloucester 1682 Trust was set up to protect the wreck from unscrupulous divers who would be intent on looting any objects of value. In order to promote and support the Trust, Julian gives these talks and enabled the most informative exhibition at Castle Museum in Norwich to reach a wider audience.
This famous picture is not true to life as the sandbank on which the Gloucester sank is never seen on the surface. However it gives a fair impression of the peril which all aboard faced. For a much more detailed account, please read:-

The last Voyage of the GLOUCESTER: Norfolk's Royal Shipwreck, 1682



Sue Pearce **From Botany Bay to Kew Gardens** **24 October 2024**

Sue is notable among the speakers who address the Society for not employing a laptop or projector. Instead, she assembles a printed display of relevant material, such as maps and portraits and on this occasion, the prize exhibits were several botanical specimens closely related to the theme of her talk, namely the achievement of Joseph Banks's expeditions to overseas destinations in search of new plants and animals the former which would form the foundation of the great collection at Kew and also familiar items in British gardens today.

Sue held up an item which not many people would recognise or know, the male seed fruit of the Araucaria araucana, more familiarly know as the "monkey puzzle tree" examples of which are even to be found in Pakefield.



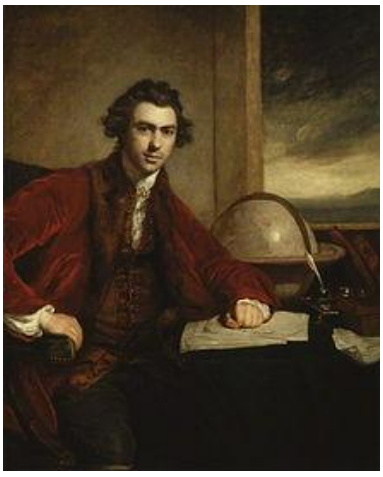
Much more familiar was the seed head of an Hydrangea, another plant brought back by Joseph Banks from a far away expedition, this time from China via Japan.



Another exhibit was a callistemon seed head, more commonly called a “bottle brush” plant also encountered at Botany Bay (earlier named ‘sting ray bay’) and native to Australia.

Joseph was born in London in 1743. His family owned property in Lincolnshire. He was educated at Harrow, Eton and Oxford but preferred the study of natural history to that of the Classics. When at home in Revesby Abbey, he would enjoy exploring the surrounding countryside, learning about plants and habitats which would serve him well on future trips. At the age of 21 after his father’s death in 1761, he inherited the estate and used his money to pursue the interest he had already developed.

His first venture to Newfoundland and Labrador on HMS Niger brought him fame, but it was on Cook’s first journey to the pacific via South America which made him known more widely and gave the name “Banksia” to some of of the thousands of specimens brought back in HMS Endeavour.



A portrait by Joshua Reynolds 1773 after Cook’s first successful voyage, landing in New Zealand and Australia as well as Polynesian islands. “30,000 miles and 30,000 specimens,” including fish, insects and birds as well as the now well-known plants, was reported to be the result of this amazing journey. When a second one on HMS Resolution was planned, Joseph applied to join it but was turned down by the Admiralty, so instead, he bought and fitted out another ship *Sir Lawrence* and sailed to Iceland where not only the flora and fauna were studied and collected, but also the volcano Heckla, and the great geyser Strokkur east of Reykjavik.

Joseph Banks was president of the Royal Society for 41 years and retained a lively interest in all of the natural world, helping to facilitate other voyages of exploration. Kew Gardens were part of the royal estate of Augusta, Dowager Princess of Wales on which George III (known as “Farmer George” for his interest in plants), consulted Joseph. Now named The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, the 330 acre estate is an UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Sarah Doig **The Real Basil Brown** **14 November 2024**
From Rickinghall to Sutton Hoo and Back



Basil Brown (22 January 1888 - 12 March 1977)

Sarah's talk was based on her book of the same title as above, from which the following opening paragraph is taken.

"*Today, although Basil Brown is not a household name, he is widely recognised and respected in archaeological circles for his discovery, on the eve of the Second World War, of the Anglo-Saxon Great Ship Burial at Sutton Hoo. More recently, the Netflix film 'The Dig', based on John Preston's novel of the same name, has served to introduce the wider public to Basil's key role in the successful excavation. Back in 1951, though, there was no mention of Basil at all in the large display about the Sutton Hoo treasure at the Festival of Britain. However, in recent years this injustice Basil felt in having been almost completely "airbrushed" out of the story has been rectified. He now, quite rightly, takes centre stage at the exhibition in Tranmer House at the National Trust's Sutton Hoo site. In Rickinghall, his home for practically all the eighty-nine years of his life, and in the neighbouring villages too, Basil has always been held in the highest regard, and is fondly and proudly remembered.*"

As well as Basil having been overlooked by the archaeological hierarchy at the time of the Great Ship discovery, in subsequent attempts to restore his work there, he is often considered to have been a 'one trick wonder' who chanced on the burials almost by accident. Sarah's approach was to emphasise how much Basil had achieved before the 1938/39 excavations and afterwards. She also showed in following his life story, how from an early age, even as the son of tenant farmer and wheelwright, George Brown, destined to leave school at 14 and work in agriculture, that he was already greatly interested in archaeology and astronomy. He kept an immaculate diary of activities and detailed colour drawings of all the work undertaken, now stored in an archive at the British Museum. The story of his early explorations in the countryside around Rickinghall, and the methodical approach which he learned to apply to his work, were vividly told by Sarah in this fascinating talk.

Basil continued to explore his local area and was involved in the discoveries of the Saxon Village at West Stow as well as several Roman pottery kilns nearby.

Basil examining a quern stone in a deep pit near his cottage Cambria in Rickinghall. Photograph 1968, taken by Paul Durbidge, who has become a noted local archaeologist.



The Real Basil Brown

From Rickinghall to Sutton Hoo and Back
by Sarah Doig
Recording Local History No. 16
Quatrefoil 2023

Ivan Bunn & David Butcher — **Lowestoft Relocated The Creation of a Late Medieval Planned Town** — **28 November 2024**

This presentation, by probably the most well-known and learned pair of local historians, was a fine culmination to the 2024 season. Ivan displayed and enhanced numerous maps and diagrams to illustrate the theme of their talk while David commented on what the audience could see on screen. Most if not all of the information can be gleaned from the volume cited at the end of this brief report.



When the Domesday Survey was compiled in1086, the town now known as Lowestoft (originally Viking Hlodver's toft) was a small settlement near a small bay on the north bank of what is now Lake Lothing but then called the Fresh Water, directly south of St. Margaret's church. That location furnished a valuable collection of tillable soils, grazing and woodland which supported the total number of about 90 people.



The premise of this talk was to show that the move eastwards to the present High Street was a carefully planned one which can be detected in the map of 1618 and in the names of the owners of the demesnes along this north south alignment. From careful examination of court rolls from the Medieval period, and other extant documents, David and Ivan were able to construct the maps, diagrams and descriptions presented to the audience in such a vivid and meaningful way that what could have been described as 'dusty old history' became a fascinating depiction of our familiar town in a totally new way.

For further information, please consult:-

LOWESTOFT 1550-175

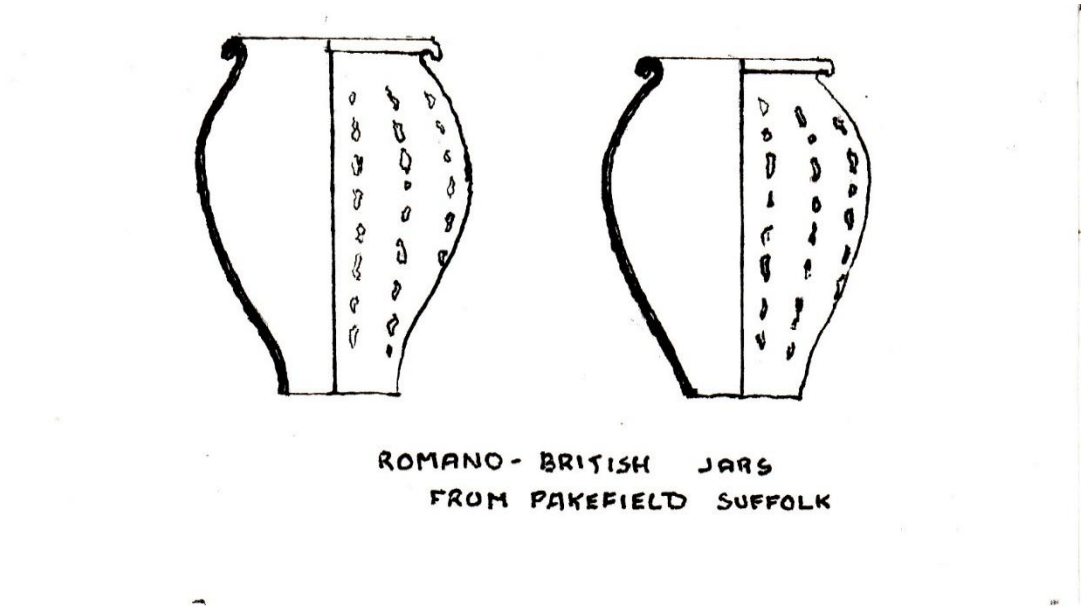
Development and Change in a Suffolk Coastal Town, by David Butcher

THE BOYDELL PRESS

Museum Donation — Paul Durbridge

During the summer of 2023 a Kessingland man donated two complete Romano-British decorated greyware jars, of third century date, to the Lowestoft Museum. From the raised applied vertical clay decoration it became clear that the two objects had previously been recovered from a small kiln site exposed in the cliff line at Pakefield after erosion had exposed the feature in 2021. An account of the small amount of pottery recovered was published in the Annual Report of the Lowestoft Archaeological and Local History Society, volume 54, January 2023. Both donated items were wasters, having distorted rims and cracking. They measured 17cm and 22cm respectively and the fabric is a fine greyware. Decoration consists of vertical applied strips of clay which are also present on several broken shards encountered at the kiln site. All the pottery recovered is stored in the Lowestoft Museum along with a section of the kiln lining with

inserted stick remains. The two recent additions are displayed with other Pakefield items of the same period.



Basil Brown

Paul Durbridge

During the summer of 1968 the late Peter Harris asked me if I would like to meet a relative of his, namely Basil Brown and while here in Lowestoft we were carrying out regular fieldwalking in the adjacent area and forming a museum I jumped ate the chance. I am not sure what I expected having previously read a number of accounts about his work at Sutton Hoo and his involvement in other projects including working as an archaeologist at Nacton near Ipswich and Kiln Farm at Wattisfield for Ipswich Museum. He also spoke four languages and studied Astronomy, later publishing Astronomical Atlases, Maps and Charts.

We arrived at his cottage, Cambria, in The Street, Rickinghall, and there finally met Basil and his wife, Dorothy May. The only photograph I had previously seen of Basil was published by the National Trust at Sutton Hoo in 1939 which showed a smiling man, wearing a well-worn coat and waistcoat along with a watch and chain, tie and a flat cap. While in his right hand he was holding his pipe. But on this visit he was totally different, dressed in a smart dark black suit and waistcoat along with the watch and chain and a pair of highly polished shoes and round glasses.

I found him remarkably easy to talk to and he came over very gentle. In the rooms of the cottage that I saw there were numerous cardboard containers of archaeological items which had been found over the years although we did not look at any of the contents. He asked if we would like to see where he was digging and he led us through the cottage out to rough trackway along the side of a long expanse of reed beds. We finally at the edge of a large field which sloped down to the reed beds and there, on the lower part of the

field he had dug out two large squares which must have been some 10 feet square and probably 8 feet deep. In the bottom of one was a light coloured Neolithic quern, which he asked me to photograph in situ before he lifted it. He then showed me a red exercise book in which he had recorded his work and he said he was unable to get anyone to help him with the excavation so we gathered he had done most of the work himself. He said that the two squares had yielded a lot of prehistoric material especially Mesolithic in date and the soil appeared to be very light in texture and probably very acidic. On the walk back to the cottage he spoke of his life farming the land and how he used to travel around on an old bicycle looking at the surface of previously ploughed fields for undulations and soil colours which some times lead to archaeological discoveries. He never spoke of Sutton Hoo but spent much time talking about features showing on the surface especially late in the day or when there was snow on the ground.

I learnt a great deal on my visit to see Basil and his wife and found it incredible how they could pack so much into their lives. Just before we left for home he disappeared into one of the rooms and reappeared with the greater part of a decorated Samian bowl he had recovered a short distance from his home.

I had intended to return to see Basil again but as things intensified here in Lowestoft with field walking, the museum and an excavation at Raveningham, it never happened. I later heard that he had sadly died of broncho-pneumonia at the age of 89.

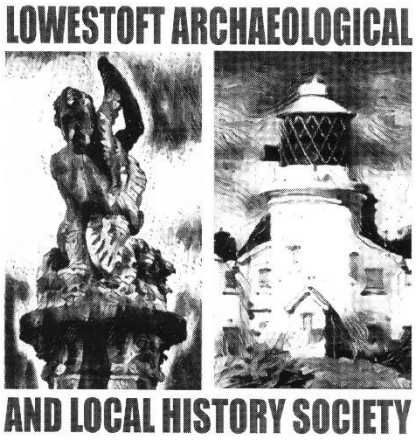
Over the years I have had the great fortune of meeting many professional people in the world of Archaeology but I don't think anyone made such an impression as Basil did on one sunny day in June in Rickinghall.

Society Logo

Early last year and perhaps prompted by the approaching 60th anniversary of the Society in April 2026, the Committee agreed to commission a new logo. Tracy Cone produced the following four designs.

All members were invited to vote on their favourite logo and the winner adorns the cover of this report.


L.A. & L.H.S.


LOWESTOFT ARCHAEOLOGICAL
AND LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY


LOWESTOFT ARCHAEOLOGICAL
AND LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY


Lowestoft
Archaeological
&
Local
History
Society

Lowestoft Scene
January

Chuffed to bits: rare piece of railway history returns
Decades after being removed, a rare piece of railway history has made a welcome return home. The double-sided enamel British Railways platform sign – that reads Lowestoft Central and dates back to the late 1940s or early 1950s – was one of a pair that greeted people to the town. After being removed as part of a modernisation scheme in the early 1990s, the giant original piece of railway heritage has returned to Lowestoft station – after being discovered at an auction. It is on display in the station's restored Parcels Office Exhibition Space.

Business park to expand
East Suffolk Council has approved a planning application for eight light industrial units on land West of Kirkley Business Park, off Horn Hill. The units will be "for small local business with an emphasis on assisting start-up type businesses." The site will be accessed from Maconochie Way. The plans also include boxes for swifts and bats, a suitable lighting scheme to protect the bats, as well as native tree and bush planting. *[Incidentally, LA&LHS were contacted by a family in Australia who, whilst digging up part of their new garden, discovered several old glass bottles that had contained products sold by the Maconochie family, who traded out of Lowestoft at the end of the 19th century.]*

Plans to turn three houses into children's care homes
Suffolk County Council has approved three planning applications for residential children's homes in the county, one of which is in Lowestoft. The homes will be run by charity and care provider Break, to support one young person at a time to build relationships and their lives following traumatic experiences.

Historic 83ft Dutch barge returns home
The wait proved worthwhile as the barge – Barge Number 9 – arrived back in Lowestoft. Dating back to 1928, and formerly part of the Lowestoft fishing fleet, the almost 100-year-old vessel arrived in Oulton Broad after being towed from Norfolk – where it had been a houseboat in Thorpe St Andrew for the past 30 years. Barge Number 9 had also been a refuelling tanker during WWII and had even spent six years underwater due to bad welding on panelling beneath the engine. The Dutch Barge Preservation and Community Project Group on Facebook is building in speed and more and more people are coming forward with offerings of help. Other members are sharing stories and pictures from when they or family members worked on the boat.

Campaigners 'surprised' by large turnout
Campaigners were 'surprised' by the amount of people who attended a meeting on coastal erosion in the Lowestoft area. The event was moved from Pakefield Church Hall. which has a capacity of 80, to the church itself after more than 200 people turned out. The meeting was organised by Pakefield Protection Group which is planning to become a Community Interest Company in order to raise funds for sea defences in the area. They are seeking to secure approximately £11M in funding (of which central government would provide £432,000) that

would be needed to extend the current rock revetment to the North and South of its current position by about 300 -400m.

Owl sanctuary looking to a 'bright future'
For 12 years, the hardworking volunteers at Fritton Owl Sanctury have been driven by a labour of love. In December, senior volunteer Chrissi Palmer took charge of the project to save the aviary by expanding the size of its enclosures after recent legislation changes deemed them too small. The goal was to raise an initial £10,000 to start upgrading the living spaces of the dozens of owls which call the sanctuary home. Three weeks later, anonymous donors have given thousands and the online fundraiser has amassed more than £13,000.

Shed loads of money!
Lowestoft Men's Shed has been providing a space for men to share conversation, hobbies and skills at its century-old home in Stradbroke Road, Pakefield for the last seven years. With members having refurbished the building – initially used for drying and mending fishing nets – they have received a welcome boost. The venue, called The Hut, has received a donation of £3,543 from six East Suffolk councillors to help with improvements, including window replacement and structural repairs.

Delays to delivery of final phase for Gull Wing bridge
Delivery of the final section of the new bridge has been delayed. As construction of the £145M Gull Wing bridge continues, the main bascule bridge span was due to arrive this month. However, whilst this has been delayed until the end of February or early March, Suffolk County Council say they were "still hoping that everything will be completed ready for the summer". A date for the official opening of the bridge is yet to be set.

£374,000 boost for town's tennis courts
Lowestoft Town Council and the Lawn Tennis Association have agreed a partnership that will "breathe new life into local park tennis courts". In Lowestoft, a total of 16 tennis courts and pickleball courts at Normanston Park, Kensington Gardens and Denes Oval will be upgraded, including resurfacing works, new access gates and an online booking system and floodlighting at Denes Oval.

Lloyd Webber brands cuts to arts funding 'short-sighted'
Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber said that the move to end arts funding would impact towns and cause problems for businesses. "What theatre brings to a town is extraordinary., so if you are cutting grants to the theatres, you are also cutting a load of potential business in the towns themselves". He is joined by other high profile figures including Dame Judi Dench, Laura Wright and Jan Etherington.

February

'Very disappointing': Reaction as flood barrier is halted due to £124M shortfall
East Suffolk Council has been forced to halt the final phase of the Lowestoft Flood Protection Scheme due to a huge funding shortfall. Phase 1 of the scheme - 1.5km of tidal flood walls was completed in October 2023. This, together with Phase 2, a 40m tidal barrier, would have protected more than 1,500 homes and 800 businesses from flooding. However, during

the design stage for the tidal barrier, and as a result of crippling cost increases relating to materials, labour, design changes and inflation, a £124M funding gap emerged the council said. With the council liaising with the government and Environment Agency to seek the necessary additional funding needed to complete the project, a council spokesman said; "£15M has already been spent on the project to date. However, the project is scheduled to spend an additional £20M between January and July 2024 and this amount cannot be covered by pledged funds, creating a £20M risk for the council". Waveney MP, Peter Aldous, said; "The scale and ambition of the project has increased over the past 10 years and likewise its anticipated cost has risen. In 2024 this was estimated at approximately £24M, in 2020 it had risen to £70M and today it is estimated at approximately £200M. As a result, there is now a funding gap of the order of £124M. In 2020 the government provided £170M to 22 flood defence projects across the country, of which the Lowestoft Flood Defence Scheme at £43M was the largest recipient. The government is currently considering representations from East Suffolk Council, the Environment Agency and myself to meet the current shortfall. They are doing so against a backdrop where it is clear that the current national flood defence budget is inadequate, even though at £5.2Bn it is double what it was previously."

Holocaust Memorial Day

Near to where hundreds of young Jewish refugees had arrived in 1938, the people of Lowestoft gathered during a special ceremony to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day. The event, organised by Lowestoft Town Council, reflected upon the town's role in the kindertransport program, whilst millions of people who died in subsequent genocides were also remembered. In a separate event, schoolchildren displayed artwork and delivered a series of poignant readings in Kensington Gardens.

Clowning around is order of the day

The prominent convention Clown Gathering UK returned to Lowestoft for its 10th anniversary and for the first time since 2020. A week of seminars, lectures, workshops, networking and performances allowed the professionals to pass on tips and experiences and brush up on their skills ahead of showtime at The Seagull Theatre in Pakefield.

Lowestoft Man honoured in 'Heroes of the Surf' awards

Nick Ayers, from Waveney Surf Life-Saving Club in Lowestoft, was among the volunteer members of the Surf Life-Saving Club of Great Britain (SLSGB) who were celebrated at the charity's Heroes of the Surf Awards. Mr Ayers won one of three Services to Lifesaving awards handed out. Established 70 years ago, SLSGB is a search and rescue charity with more than 90 clubs and 10,000 members across Britain.

Theatre completes major accessibility improvements

Staff, volunteers and patrons have been celebrating the successful transformation of the community-run Seagull Theatre, based in a Victorian-era school building. The overhaul focused on updating the facility including the creation of an accessible workshop space for more community activities, an entirely new toilet suite, the conversion of an underused area into a community access studio and total refurbishment of the main auditorium.

Lifeboat crew and operations manager honoured
Four Lowestoft Lifeboat crew members have been honoured for a combined total of more than 50 years voluntary service to the RNLI. They were awarded special certificates of service alongside the station's retiring lifeboat operations manager, Henry Carter, who was also recognised for his leadership, commitment and passion for the RNLI.

Primary school cultivates biodiversity with new orchard
Carlton Colville Primary School is enhancing biodiversity and supporting the growth of green spaces by establishing a small orchard and planting Silver Birch trees in a large meadow area on the school field. Mrs Gray, the teacher overseeing outdoor learning at the school, said; "These trees are a another great addition to our school grounds. Over the past few years, we have worked hard to develop our outdoor spaces. We have installed a large wildlife area with different habitats such as woodland, pond and wildflower areas. We are also developing two large meadow areas and have an established allotment area."

Fears over cuts
A letter signed by the leaders or acting leaders of Suffolk's district or borough councils has called on the county council not to cut vital support for residents at risk of homelessness. The representatives of five authorities – including East Suffolk Council – have warned of the catastrophic effect on hundreds of Suffolk's most vulnerable residents. The county council is proposing to remove £1M from the housing related support budget during the 2024/25 financial year followed by a further £2M in 2025/26. The reduction equates to the loss of 350 accommodation spaces by September, whilst all accommodation will be removed by the end of March 2025.

Fruitful day of planting
Pupils from the Limes Primary Academy in Oulton Broad joined Matt O'Connell, countryside ranger at East Suffolk Services Ltd, and a local volunteer group, to plant 20 fruit trees at Woods Meadow Country Park. The trees will form a community orchard within the park, containing local varieties of fruit trees and which will serve as a focal point for future community activities. On a separate occasion, 65 cubs and scouts, plus parents and scout leaders, planted 684 tree saplings at the park.

March

Refurbished toilets vandalised
There was delight as public toilets that had been closed for more than a decade in Fen Park, Kirkley, were reopened. But five days after a ceremonial cutting of toilet paper had marked the reopening of the toilet block, it has already had to be closed "due to vandalism". Police investigations are underway in connection with the criminal damage incident.

Victorian bridge reopens
Having been closed off for more than three years, the historic Jubilee Bridge in Lowestoft has reopened. The 19thC iron bridge, which links North Parade to Belle Vue Park as it runs over the Ravine, was unveiled following an official opening. With extensive works to repair and refurbish the historic footbridge having been carried out since September 2022, the Grade II

listed structure is once again open to pedestrians. The footbridge was built in 1887 to commemorate the Golden Jubilee of Queen Victoria.

Vandal-hit orchard plants new trees
Volunteers from the Carlton Colville Community Garden were left distraught after fruit trees were snapped and ripped out of the ground, with broken glass and rubbish scattered around the site after two incidents in October 2023. But now the community has rallied once more and united to plant additional fruit trees at the community orchard. They planted nine trees – including cherry, hazel, apple, plum and walnut – at the community garden at The Graylings, off Elmdale Drive, on land managed by Carlton Colville Town Council.

Banksy seagull mural could fetch millions in 'private sale'
What some onlookers have described as the world-famous graffiti artist's largest ever artwork has appeared for sale online. Almost 11 months after the top section of the seagull installation took flight from a wall on the side of a privately-owned block of flats in Lowestoft, people now have "an exclusive opportunity to acquire "The Seagull" mural by Banksy.

Lidl partners with academy to teach children culinary skills
Ormiston Denes Academy has teamed up with Lidl to deliver cooking lessons through their Ingredients into Schools project. These lessons are part of a pilot scheme supported by the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board and the British Nutrition Foundation.

East Suffolk Council agrees 2.98% council tax rise
East Suffolk Council has agreed a 2.98% council tax increase as it sought to plug a £5.4M funding shortfall next year. The increase, just shy of the maximum allowed, represents £5.40 extra for Band D residents.

Seal pup with sores and wounds found on beach
A grey seal pup covered in sores and puncture wounds has been discovered on Lowestoft's South Beach. Marine and Wildlife Rescue received a call from a concerned passer-by. They sent a team of volunteers to assess it and, after discovering its injuries, decided to stand guard over it. Dan Goldsmith, a spokesman for the charity said that they did not feel they needed to intervene further in its care at this time.

Final section of Gull Wing bridge arrives
The main and final bascule span of the town's long-awaited £145M third crossing arrived having crossed the North Sea from the Netherlands. Lake Lothing will now be closed to marine traffic for three weeks whilst the main bascule span is installed. It was installed the following week.

Lifeboat crew marks 200 years of saving lives at sea
As the RNLI turns 200, a special Service of Thanksgiving was held = with Lowestoft Lifeboat marked the organisation's anniversary with a sail-by. On 4 March, a Service of Thanksgiving was held at Westminster Abbey in London, at which Lowestoft was represented.

Primary school praised by Minister
Red Oak Primary School has received high praise from Damian Hinds, the minister for schools. In a letter congratulating the school's executive headteacher, Heather Madsen, the minister highlighted the "very high progress" the children had demonstrated and "the standard of achievement demonstrated in reading, writing and mathematics Key Stage 2 assessment last year."

Flood barrier call to Chancellor
Labour's Parliamentary Candidate for Lowestoft, Jess Asato, wrote to the Chancellor calling on him to "prioritise funding for Lowestoft's flood barrier and coastal defences for residents and businesses in Pakefield." It comes as East Suffolk Council was forced to halt the final phase of the scheme after costs soared and a £124M funding gap emerged in the construction of the tidal flood barrier.

Huge blaze at barn
Four fire crews, the police and the local authority attended a fire on a farm in Gisleham. An explosion was heard locally and a plume of black smoke was visible from the Carlton Colville and Kessingland areas of Lowestoft. No one was injured and the barn is reported to have housed tractors.

Promenade to be closed for three weeks
The North Denes promenade is closed for three weeks to enable essential maintenance work to be done. The repairs involve the removing and replacing damaged joint sealant and filling cracks in the existing concrete.

Lowestoft's historic dock buildings renovated
The Colne Shipping Company Limited and Waveney Chambers buildings in Lowestoft have undergone complete renovations. State-of-the-art business offices, conference rooms and 19 apartments now feature across the two sites on Waveney Road named Harbour Hub.

Work to repair flooding-prone A47
Three months of work to improve a flood-hit section of the A47 has begun. National Highways is installing new drains, kerbs and road surfaces on the almost-half mile stretch between Sussex Road and Lowestoft Lighthouse. The scheme will see a number of roads closed and temporary traffic lights put up in the area which is likely to cause delays the scheme.

Labour's new office
Labour's parliamentary candidate for Lowestoft, Jess Asato, welcomed the former home secretary and Norwich South MP, Charles Clarke, to Lowestoft to open the new Labour Party Office at 156 London Road North.

Lowestoft traders on how to solve "zombie" town challenges
After an East Suffolk Council report showed Lowestoft's retail unit vacancy rate is the highest in the district, businesses have called on people to "use it or lose it" – by "easing off" the online purchases to instead "start shopping in town." A recent report found that 26% of shops in Lowestoft were vacant. The figures are almost the double the national vacancy rate

of 13.9% and is equivalent to 96 empty shops out of 366 – its worst rate in the past five years.

'A massive transformation'
It is a resting place of natural beauty that was the first natural burial park to be opened in the area more than eight years ago. With the last of the 6,250 British native woodland trees for the second phase of development at Gunton Woodland Burial Park in Lowestoft planted, the Gunton Woodland Burial Trust is expanding six hectares of agricultural land into the existing woodland burial area.

Hospital has second longest waiting time for routine operations
For non-urgent conditions, people should be seen for treatment within 18 weeks of being referred. But figures from the NHS for the end of January show that 58.6% of patients at the James Paget Hospital were waiting longer. The national average was just over 40%.

Last female of UK's rarest deer breed moves to Suffolk
The UK's last remaining female of the one of the world's most endangered deer breeds has moved to Africa Alive. The Nile Lechwe are a type of antelope native to southern Sudan and southwestern Ethiopia and, according to the IUCN Red List, there are only about 32,000 left in the world. Africa Alive already has one of the rare deer – a male – and it is hoped that the two will kickstart a successful captive breeding program.

ASDA workers vote to strike
ASDA workers at Lowestoft have voted to strike over what a union official described as a "litany of issues" in the store. The GMB union warned that ASDA's owners are "not investing in stores and workers are paying the price," after 122 members of staff voted in favour of strike action. Keith Dixon, the GMB regional organiser, said staff were angry over alleged bullying, fire safety breaches, cuts in hours, poor quality training, health and safety issues not being addressed and equal pay not being resolved.

Seafront regeneration delayed until next year
A scheme of works to regenerate Lowestoft seafront has been delayed due to unexpected supply issues. A seafront vision that includes a series of works to improve the Royal Plain, Royal Green and the South Quay Wharf areas of the town was due to start last month. However, the seafront transformation will not now be completed until next year. The major seafront redevelopment includes outdoor gym stations, seating, a boulder climbing space, and a new Multi Use Games Area.

April

Historic church reopens
A special thanksgiving service was held on Easter Sunday as St Edmund's church, Kessingland reopened after being temporarily closed for 13 months. Having been the heart of one community for more than 500 years, Kessingland's parish church held a celebratory service following completion of repairs to its thatched roof. The 17th century thatched roof was in "a dilapidated state" with additional water damage to the buttresses, the church was officially declared 'at risk' and in danger of closing. In

November 2022, the church was added to Historic England's annual Heritage At Risk register.

Night club converted into crazy golf course
The former nightclub – situated upstairs at Claremont Pier – has been transformed into an 18-hole adventure golf course complete with a pirate ship, town square, fort, cave, desert island, dockyard and jail.

Work begins on new kiosks
Work has begun at the Triangle Market on the High Street in Lowestoft to bring four wooden market stalls/ kiosks with temporary fixings installed for traders. Lowestoft Town Council 'hoped to encourage more traders to the Triangle and increase footfall for the economy of the historic High Street.'

Easter event goes from strength to strength
Excited young children descended on Sparrows Nest Gardens on Easter Sunday in what has become a tradition. The Lowestoft Lions Easter Egg Trail 2024 was hailed as a success as hundreds of eager children searched for clues to earn a chocolate reward all under the eyes of the Easter Bunny. Despite cool weather conditions, Sparrows Nest Gardens soon filled up with excited youngsters, accompanied by their parents, keen to swap their vouchers for quiz sheets and get started on the trail around the park.

Suffolk charities to share £93K Co-op grant
23 Suffolk charities are to benefit from £93,000 grants awarded by East of England Co-op's Community Cares Fund. Altogether, the East of England Co-op will be donating £200,000 to good causes across East Anglia as part of its Community Cares Fund, which will directly benefit over 43,000 people. Suffolk Libraries, the charity that runs Suffolk Library Service, has already received £5,000 to extend and develop the work of all 45 libraries across Suffolk to offer warm hubs. These provide free hot drinks and donated clothing for those struggling to pay heating bills as well as access to year-round wellbeing activities to help tackle social isolation and computer skills support to reduce digital exclusion.

'New bigger shop' unveiled
Adie Fox is celebrating a top double – after his expanded Over The Hook shop moved to a new premises last month. After receiving the runner-up honour in the independent retailer of the year category for the whole of the South East of England at the Yarn Industry Awards 2023, it marks a past year for Mr Fox, as he only opened is new business in Kirkley in May 2023.

Team behind trawler recognised with top award
The Excelsior Trust has been honoured in the Suffolk Heritage Champion Awards for 2024. The trustees of the historic Lowestoft-based sailing smack Excelsior LT 472 were recognised for their dedication and commitment to preserving the 103-year-old maritime icon. Excelsior is the most authentically restored sailing smack in the UK and is included in the National Historic Ships Register as one of only 50 most important historic vessels in the country.

Opposition to HMO's for asylum seekers
Plans were submitted to East Suffolk Council in February and March for two separate schemes at properties on Milton Road East in Lowestoft and London Road South in Kirkley, to convert them into Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMO) for asylum seekers. Locals were "strongly opposed" to both schemes based upon "overdevelopment" and "potential disorder and harm" linked to the potentially vulnerable occupants. Lowestoft Town Council's Planning Committee has met to consider both applications and has agreed to refuse both applications.

Protest march against broken street lights
For two years, parts of the A47 in Lowestoft has been plunged into darkness. Broken street lights have not been fixed by National Highways despite numerous reports being raised by locals. A group of local people said that the ongoing situation had become so bad that it was now "an accident waiting to happen." National Highways have been contacted for comment.

Share your views on rescuing NHS dentistry
Amid fears nationally that many people are unable to get the dental appointments they need and one in 10 are even attempting their own DIY dentistry, views are being sought locally. Labour's Parliamentary candidate for Lowestoft, Jess Asato, has launched a survey, 'Rescue NHS Dentistry', to understand the issues people are facing in trying to access dentistry across the constituency.

Beach access work 'will help protect our important coastline'
Work was being carried out in Pakefield with surveys to "improve coastal assets." Coastal Partnership East has appointed RAB Consultants to carry out "a survey of the All Saints ramp." The work will include taking some core samples to understand the make up of the ground beneath the ramp and general surveyance. The survey of the ramp "will improve coastal assets" with the work described as "an important part of East Suffolk Council's commitments to ensure that the coastal assets they are responsible for are working effectively and are safe for the public."

May

Fishing smack set for globe-trotting adventure
Excelsior set off from Lowestoft on May 4 for the 2024 sailing season. The smack has a busy itinerary across Scotland, the Orkneys, Shetlands, Faroes, Lithuania, Finland, Scandinavia and Poland. An Excelsior Trust spokesperson said; "Excelsior will be a roving maritime ambassador for Lowestoft and we are proud to carry the flag of our home port."

More than 300 youngsters join St George's Day parade
More than 300 youngsters gathered for the annual Lowestoft District Scout Association's annual parade on St George's Day. Scouts, Cubs, Beavers, their leaders and team rector Helen Jary marched from St Mark's Church, Oulton Broad, through

Nicholas Everitt Park. Seven district groups participated including 21st Pakefield, 4th Lowestoft and 1st Carlton Colville among others.

Fishermen who lost their lives at sea remembered
The first National Fishing Remembrance Day was successfully held in Lowestoft, whilst 18thers were held elsewhere in the country. The service, organised by the Fishermen's Mission charity, Stella Maris and The Seafarer's Charity was supported by Lowestoft Town Council. People gathered on South Pier to join in as the service remembered all the fishermen who have lost their lives at sea as well as honouring their families.

People 'held in contempt' over flood defences
During a debate in the House of Commons on the environment, Peter Aldous MP prompted the government to address its decision to stop the construction of Lowestoft's tidal barrier. Mr Aldous said; "The East Anglian coast has taken a real battering in recent months, and projects have been delayed." He called for a climate change risk assessment to take place to give way for a regional coast defence strategy to be properly prepared. The shadow minister for coastal communities, Emma Hardy, said the government was holding residents in contempt by not telling them the fate of their local flood defences.

Woodworking project helps to transform lives
Pathways Care Farm recently received a hefty £9000 donation from the Enabling Communities Budgets of six local councillors. The generous sum allowed the completion of a wheelchair-accessible workshop at the charity site. Workshop supervisor, Colin Turk, said; "Suddenly the workshop is one of the busiest places on the farm."

Seagull Theatre celebrates landmark year
The Seagull Theatre in Pakefield has celebrated being a nationally recognised venue for the past year by the Arts Council. The Seagull's inclusion in the National Portfolio comes in light of its dedication to fostering local talent and community engagement.

Lifeboat crew awarded Freedom of the Town
The Freedom of the Town has been awarded to Lowestoft Lifeboat crew – past, present and future – for "outstanding service" and "show of courage" that has saved many lives. During a special ceremony at the Royal Norfolk and Suffolk Yacht Club, the Mayor of Lowestoft, Councillor Barker said;" Lowestoft has one of the oldest lifeboat stations, being founded in 1801, some 23 years before the RNLI was established."

Firm celebrates 70 years
Internationally recognised company Harrod UK ltd – the leading sports equipment manufacturer and provider of premium garden products celebrates 70 years in business. In 1954 Ron Harrod and his wife started Lowestoft-based Harrod UK Ltd with a £300 investment as old herring nets were converted into garden netting, using traditional skills associated with the town's fishing industry. Today, seven decades of innovation, quality and service later, the firm continues to shine on the world stage.

School earns high Ofsted praise
The "commitment, dedication and hard work" of staff and pupils has been hailed by the headteacher after Woods Loke Primary School was praised by Ofsted inspectors. Staff, pupils, parents and the governing body are celebrating following an 'Outstanding' Ofsted inspection. After the inspection, conducted in April, the school achieved top marks in all areas.

'The honour of my life'
At the annual meeting of Lowestoft Town Council, Councillor Nasima Begum was elected as the mayor of Lowestoft for the municipal year 2024/25. After being handed the Mayoral Chain by the outgoing mayor, Councillor Sonia Barker, Councillor Begum said; "It is the honour of my life to be elected mayor of Lowestoft. As a young councillor, a woman, a mum and someone from an ethnic and religious minority, I will try to use my time as mayor to support the Town Council in working on behalf of everyone in Lowestoft."

June

Wartime evacuees meet again
It is more than 80 years since over 3.000 schoolchildren and their teachers were evacuated from Lowestoft to Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire. A popular reunion has taken place again. Over 600 of those evacuated found safety in and around the high peak town of Glossop and the links formed between the two communities are still celebrated today.

Rare sea creature spotted
A sea mouse (Aphrodita Aculeata), which is a large marine worm that eats crabs, worms and dead flesh, was found by a walker on Kessingland beach. Sea Mice are carnivorous aquatic worms recognisable for their sharp black bristles, large oval shape and hairs that shimmer bright colours of blue, green and gold when underwater. They are normally found at depths of up to 3km underwater and live at the sea bed of the North Atlantic, the North Sea, the Baltic and the Mediterranean.

Parts of nature reserve closed after vandalism
Hides at Carlton Marshes are being locked in the evenings after anti-social behaviour plagued the park. The site, run by Suffolk Wildlife Trust, has had problems with groups gathering drinking, smoking, littering and playing loud music. Matt Gooch, Northeast Site Manager for the Trust, also said hides had been broken into after groups forced open windows.

Commemoration of D-Day landings
People across Lowestoft joined the nation in commemorating the 80th anniversary of the D-Day landings, with a free event in Sparrows Nest Gardens. Lowestoft Town Council thanked everyone "who came and supported our D-Day commemorations". The event was supported by the Royal British Legion and began at 8am as bagpipes were played at Ness Point before the Union Flag was raised at the Town Hall at 9am.

Residential care provider wins national award
Kingsley Healthcare Group, which has its headquarters in Lowestoft, has succeeded at a prestigious national awards event. The Group, amid its 25th anniversary celebrations, was named Residential Elderly Care Provider of the Year (Large Group) at the Health Investor Awards at London's Grosvenor House Hotel.

All aboard Harry's boat
A "lasting legacy" remembering Harry Elmy, who died suddenly two years ago, has been unveiled at his former primary school. Harry's parents had teamed up with Gunton Primary Academy to raise funds for the memorial boat-themed play area. The original target of £15,000 was soon smashed which led to a much larger piece of equipment being installed in the school grounds.

Coach company celebrates 100 years of service
Long-serving bus and coach company, Belle Coaches, is looking forward to the next century – after 100 years of operation was honoured. Based at Hadenham Road, South Lowestoft, Belle Coaches celebrated its century with a special gathering and open day. Its origins stem back to a partnership forged between Benjamin Shreeve and Charles Day – as a bus service between Lowestoft and Oulton Broad using 14-seater Ford Model T charabancs.

July

Disability advice group receives £300,000 grant
Disability Advice North East Suffolk (DANES), based on Rotterdam Road, Lowestoft has been granted £300,000 over five years to enhance its offerings for disabled persons in the region. DANES has been in operation since 1986 and has been a vital source of support and counsel for people with any form of physical disability or health condition that alters their daily life.

Labour triumphs in battle for Britain's most Easterly seat
The battle for Britain's most Easterly seat was closely contested as Jess Asato polled just over2,000 more votes than the Conservative candidate – Peter Aldous - and 4,000 more than Reform UK candidate, June Mummery. Having been a parliamentary constituency for almost a century, the seat of Lowestoft was abolished for the 1983 election and replaced by the Waveney seat. But following the 2023 periodic review of Westminster constituencies, the Lowestoft seat has been revived. The turnout was 56.4%

High School smashes charity fundraising target
Pakefield High School's fundraising week has exceeded its goals, raising £6369.53 for a children's cancer charity and an Alzheimer's charity. Throughout the week, pupils and staff participated in a variety of activities including a colour run, FIFA and Mario competitions, a sponsored cycle ride, sponsored silence, a bake sale and head shaving.

Flood defence repairs continuing

A series of "remedial works" have been taking place on the tidal flood walls on Hamilton Road after some defects were found during recent inspections. A Coastal Partnership East (CPE) spokesman said; "Following the completion of the flood walls in 2023, we have inspected the tidal flood walls and found some defects that require attention. The tidal flood walls on Hamilton Road form part o
F the Lowestoft Flood Protection scheme that began construction in May 2021. It seeks to reduce the risk of flooding to more than 1500 homes and 825 businesses in the town.

Tennis courts prove a smash hit
Lowestoft Town Council's tennis facilities at Normanston Park, Denes Oval and Kensington Gardens have undergone a programme of major renovations following funding from the Lawn Tennis Association and the council. It has seen a total of 16 courts in the three parks transformed – with the largest outdoor Pickleball complex in East Anglia now unveiled in Lowestoft.

First look at plans for 500-home site
New life could soon be breathed in to the former 14.2 hectare Jeld Wen site in Lowestoft that has been closed since 2010. An application for online planning permission was submitted to East Suffolk Council for the demolition of the existing buildings and construction of up to 500 residential dwellings and up to 3.2 hectares of employment land with associated access, infrastructure and landscaping.

Restauranteurs 'overwhelmed' by public support
Owners of JOJO's Kitchen and Bar in Lowestoft said they were 'overwhelmed' by the reaction to their reopening. The establishment, based on Lowestoft High Street, had been closed for two years, but since the reopening have declared a "full house!".

Wipeout comes to a halt
Wipeout at Pleasurewood Hills, which is described as the region's largest rollercoaster, came to a halt with schoolchildren on board. The maintenance crew worked hard to return the guests to the station so that they could disembark. It is the last remaining Vekuma Boomerang in the UK.

'Mini-emporium' opens in town
CoCo Pretty Things is a "mini-emporium" run by a mother and daughter duo who sell "one of a kind" items in London Road South. The business offers a whimsical range of items, from silver jewellery, gemstones and pendulums to wind chimes, tarot cards and crystal balls.

'A joyful celebration': nautical theme at flower festival
A popular parish church was transformed as a special event made a welcome return after a number of years. St Magaret's Church was abloom with colour as glorious music echoed out at the weekend. A nautical inspired flower festival was staged in the ancient parish church of Lowestoft. St Margaret's church in Hollingsworth Road is a Grade 1 listed medieval building and its fabric is in desperate need of renovation particularly repairs to the plasterwork.

August

Town landmark gets major overhaul
Gulliver wind turbine at Ness Point is set to undergo a series of refurbishment works to upgrade the landmark. Since it was installed in January 2005, Gulliver wind turbine has been situated on UK's most Easterly point and it looms large over the town. The works will see the nacelle – which houses the gearbox and control systems of Gulliver – and the blades at the top of the tower refurbished and upgraded.

Demolition of car park gets under way
Work to demolish the Battery Green multi-storey car park is under way as the council clears the path for a multi-million-pound redevelopment. The site is being cleared for the upcoming Cultural Quarter project.

Lifeguards save nine lives in one day
Lifeguards have reported saving nine lives in one day at Lowestoft beach at the start of the summer holidays. The first was a kayaker who paddled out to sea but struggled to fight against the current to return to shore. Six were people who paddled or bodyboarded to try and reach the off-shore sandbank but were defeated by the tide. Finally, two children swam out of their depth and were swept under the pier.

UK's 'most Easterly' Pride festival
Thousands of people gathered in Lowestoft to enjoy 'the most Esterly Pride in the UK'. The weather held for the town's second ever Pride as people enjoyed a fun-packed day at Sparrows Nest gardens. A spokesperson for Lowestoft Town Council, which organised the festival, said; "The response and feedback following the event has been fantastic".

Town's heritage campaigners look to the future
Heritage campaigners have called on people to "get behind" a community-led archives group. With the strapline of "Keeping local history local", the Lowestoft & District Independent Archive (LADIA), which incorporates the Save Our Record Office group, is continuing with its ambition of providing a records archive and local studies centre in the town. The chair of LADIA, Bob Collis, urged both the public and local councils to get behind LADIA as it represented the best chance of establishing a fully-functioning independent archives group "to keep our precious local archives where they belong." He added; "Practically none of the 1500 document collections previously transferred to The Hold
have been digitised meaning everyone will have to travel to Ipswich to see the original archives."

Business facing closure after firm goes into administration
A business in Lowestoft is facing closure because it is owed £250,000 by a Norfolk-based engineering firm which has gone into administration. Dave Hayes, a director at S&G Fabrications based on Horn Hill Lowestoft, said it was one of dozens of local companies to be owed thousands of pounds by Specialised Management Services –

Alderley in Gorleston. SMS-Alderley, a manufacturer for the oil and gas industries, went under last month leading to hundreds of job losses.

Vacant property near town centre to become new HMO
Change of use plans to turn a mid-terrace building near Lowestoft town centre into an HMO have been approved. A scheme centring around "Change of use to House in Multiple Occupancy with no physical changes to the building" at 7, Beach Road in Lowestoft has been given the green light. Approval for the "retrospective" application comes a couple of weeks after change of use plans were given the green light to turn the nearby mid-terrace former Samaritans building at 14, Beach Road into an eight-bedroomed HMO. With the town council recommending approval, three objections – citing "increased crowds and traffic" and "Over concentration of HMO's in the area" were among issues raised.

Samaritans signs stolen from bridge
Signs installed by the Samaritans at a bridge in Lowestoft have been stolen. The charity had installed replacement signage on the recently renovated Jubilee Bridge in Lowestoft. The 19th century iron bridge, which links North Parade to Belle Vue Park as it runs over The Ravine, was reopened in February after a restoration project. It had been closed since 2020 following safety concerns. East Suffolk Council said; "The Samaritans replaced the signs and they have now been stolen."

Vision to rebuild disused station building hits buffers
Two years after a new restaurant, café and workspace was earmarked as part of the proposed redevelopment of the Refreshments Building at the front of Lowestoft Station, the project "has been postponed". Around £2M was earmarked for the proposal to redevelop the disused part of Lowestoft station as part of the regeneration project. However, the vision to bring a building that "has been empty for 50 years" back into use has been shelved for the time being – casting doubt over its future. The council has instead decided to reallocate funding from the project after being unable to secure ownership of the building from Network Rail.

Giant fish-eating spiders thrive in region
The UK's largest spider that creates webs the size of a pizza is thriving at sites across the region. The fen raft spider was brough back from the brink of extinction thanks to a successful breeding programme and there are now thousands across the region. Before 2010, the spider was incredibly rare but is now thriving on sites including Carlton Marshes thanks to the progamme pioneered by Dr Helen Smith. *[Don't worry, they normally don't eat humans!]*

Sounds of the 50s, 60, and 70s get crowd rocking at park
Even though the weather may not have been the best, hardy Rock 'n Rollers still turned up to enjoy their favourite music of the 50s, 60s and 70s. With a mixture of six bands and solo performers entertaining them in Lowestoft, a steady stream of spectators braved the weather to enjoy the sounds of their favourite era. Those who turned out all had a great time dancing in the rain to the sounds of Rock 'n Roll.

First kittiwake chick hatches at offshore nesting site
A year after innovative purpose-built structures were unveiled as part of a "first of its kind" project in Lowestoft, the "first" hatchlings of the endangered seabird have emerged. Last year, two new kittiwake 'hotels' were completed offshore off South Beach in Lowestoft as the artificial nesting structures for "vulnerable seabirds" were developed by energy giant Orsted.

Roaring success for Lions charity fun day
Lowestoft Lions were delighted with the response after holding their charity fun day event in Nicholas Everitt Park. Lead organiser, Mark Lanham, said; "We are all really pleased by the success of the fun day. The weather was very kind and allowed the crowd to enjoy up to seven hours of entertainment in the sunshine."

School uniform bank helping families in need
The Bloodmoor Hill Community Centre in Carlton Colville has a school uniform bank for those in need. The programme is run by Russell Lord. Mr Lord said; "The project was set up originally by the council, but we now run it independently, with some additional support from them. According to the East Suffolk Council website, the average cost of a school uniform is £315 per year. People can't afford it. We have helped between 35 and 40 families since July."

MP urges greater backing for essential community hub
Lowestoft MP Jess Asato has written to veteran's organisations and government ministers after learning that one of the town's most historic hotels is facing a funding crisis. On August 7th 1919, the Lord Kitchener Memorial Holiday Centre was set up in memory of one of the nation's greatest was heroes. Founded by the former secretary of state for war, it provides seafront holiday accommodation to ex-members of the armed, merchant and emergency services and their families. Admitting that she was "deeply moved by the stories she heard," Ms Asato emphasised "the importance of sustaining and expanding support for such crucial community assets," amid growing mental health and loneliness issues in veterans. Centre manager Mr Ashworth said; "We continue to be a safe space for our Armed Forces and Blue Light community but, since COVID, we have lost a significant amount of funding. Yet we continue to provide discounts and free drop-in sessions. However, reserve funds are dwindling and we may not be able to continue without further support."

September

Unravel Lowestoft's history
Lowestoft's past is the backdrop of a new historical novel called Silver Harvest by author Daryl Fraser. The book covers the town's development from 1826 to 1956, using a fictional family to illustrate the community's changes. Readers will follow the Chapmans' trials and tribulations within the rise of the town. The book is available at Waterstones, Lowestoft.

Firms expand partnership as port becomes fully operational
Associated British Ports (ABP) and Clarksons Port Services (CPS) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to expand their partnership at Lowestoft's Eastern Energy Facility (LEEF). The £35M redevelopment project will support both operations and maintenance activities in the North Sea as well as construction of hundreds of new offshore wind turbines. Nine offshore wind farm contracts were awarded by the government at its recent auction, including Orsted's Hornsea 3 – the world's single largest wind farm – located 120km off the Norfolk coast and Scottish Power Renewables' East Anglia Two and East Anglia Three off the Suffolk coast.

Delight as new £145M bridge opens
Lowestoft's £145M Gull Wing bridge opened to people on foot and bicycles at 9am and to traffic at noon with vintage buses the first vehicles to cross. People formed queues to be among the first to walk over the 345m long bridge – the largest rolling bascule bridge in the world lifted using hydraulic cylinders. People snapped selfies and walked their dogs over the bridge which has become the third crossing over Lake Lothing.

New row of houses opens
The six two-bedroomed houses have been unveiled on Milton Road East on land once occupied by the Shaw Trust offices. Four of the first group of tenants have now moved in. They are among the first former residents of St Peter's Court, the nearby 1960's tower block to be moved to the new accommodation ahead of its planned demolition next year. The Shaw Trust block had been empty since 2019. East Suffolk Council acquired the site two years later so it could be developed into affordable homes.

Ports first vessel
Lowestoft has welcomed the first vessel to its new £35M port ahead of the facility being completed and fully operational. The milestone saw a Norside Support Walk to Work (W2W) arrive at the port for the very first time. The vessel was chartered by ODE Asset Management arriving from Aberdeen and berthing at the facility to embark 50 people for a two-week offshore campaign.

Customer services base to relocate
East Suffolk Council's face-to-face customer services facility at the Marina Centre in Lowestoft is to close. The council's customer services reception will be open five days a week at Riverside as it is based temporarily within the East Suffolk's offices on Canning Road. This temporary move comes ahead of the services moving to Lowestoft library in December.

HMO bid for empty town centre shop is refused
A bid to create a new seven-bedroomed house of multiple occupation (HMO) with retail use retained at a two-and-a-half storey corner building in Lowestoft was turned down. A scheme had been submitted to East Suffolk Council in July for the site on London Road North that includes the vacant former O2 shop.

MPs unite to demand action on region's rail bottlenecks
MPs have written to transport secretary Louise Haigh urging that she put revamps for Ely and Haughley junctions at the top of the government's to-do list. They want the government to release money now, to help plan for improvements. Members of the East of England All-Party Parliamentary Group (co-chaired by Lowestoft MP Jess Asato) said; "The upgrading of Ely and Haughley junctions will benefit people and businesses across East Anglia – including Lowestoft, the most Easterly town and base for our essential off-shore energy industry."

Offshore wind projects bring major boost to town
Green energy company ScottishPower Renewables is investing £8M to expand its presence in Lowestoft and kickstart the regeneration of the PowerPark hub around the port. The company said it has confirmed Lowestoft "as the long-term home and heart of its UK offshore wind operations" with the acquisition of a new site in the PowerPark, extending its existing footprint. It will create 100 new jobs at the site measuring just over 1.1acres on Trinity Road, which is currently occupied by RJ Pryce.

School celebrates being named as place of excellence
Red Oak Primary has been named as a Thrive School of Excellence for making a real difference in the lives of its young learners. The school, on Southwell Road, Kirkley, has embraced the Thrive Approach to help address the social and emotional needs of its community – as it supports more than 450 children aged three to 11.

Football stand unveiled in memory of a 'club legend'
Around 500 people turned out at the Lavish Life Competitions Stadium in Walmer Road, Lowestoft, as the stand was officially opened at Kirkley and Pakefield Football Club. Honouring James 'Huggy' Hutchinson, the stand was unveiled in his memory at Kirkley and Pakefield's home ground. Huggy not only played for Kirkley and Pakefield but also for Lowestoft Town. After his playing career ended, he became assistant manager at Kirkley and Pakefield.

Top rail service
Greater Anglia has been named Passenger Rail Operator of the Year in the National Rail Awards – the industry's top event – having also won the award in 2022. Greater Anglia has been the most punctual operator in the UK since April 2023 with annual performance at 94.3%. Its best performing routes are achieving between 96.0% and 98.1%. The company has transformed travel across its network, replacing its entire fleet, with brand new, state of the art, more comfortable trains with Wi-Fi, plug points, USB points, air conditioning and improved accessibility. *[Afternote. Despite this, Greater Anglia is to be one of the first to be renationalised.}*

October

Former Burton store given new lease of life
A charity that has given away more than a million free books across its bookshops nationally has opened its first 'books for free' unit in Lowestoft. The literary charity Global Educational Trust (GET) has officially opened its new shop in the town centre.

GET Free Books has transformed the retail shop which had been empty since 2020. Its books for free units are set up in collaboration with landlords who provide premises free of charge until a new tenant is found.

Sizewell C reaffirms commitment to support Lowestoft
People in the town are to benefit after Sizewell C signed a new agreement with regional charity Access Community Trust. It will see the recently opened SAMS Wellbeing Hub and Café in Lowestoft extend its provision for those in need in the town as it becomes an important base for raising awareness and access to jobs with Sizewell C.

New kiosks and upgraded toilets
New kiosks have been unveiled to boost footfall in Lowestoft's historic Triangle market area. An extensive refurbishment – as part of a three-stage improvement plan carried out by Lowestoft Town Council – has seen the public conveniences at the market reopened. Forming part of the project, it comes after the recent removal of the "damaged and aged" Sails. It has seen grassed areas added around the trees and the installation of four new wooden kiosks to complement the existing, refurbished kiosks.

Hundreds of voters without ID turned away
New data from the Electoral Commission shows that 616 people in Suffolk were denied ballot papers on the grounds of not having ID – and more than a third of these did not return later in the day to cast their vote. Lowestoft had the fewest refusals with 52 and only 12 people did not return later in the day.

Rail station's canopy given new lease of life
Works to repair and restore what has been described as a rotten and leaky front entrance canopy at Lowestoft railway station started earlier this year. And now passengers at the station will be greeted by a smart, rejuvenated canopy following a three-month refurbishment programme by Greater Anglia. The canopy was installed in 1903 when the booking hall was extended and it contained elements of the original 1855 entrance canopy. Passengers at Lowestoft station, the fourth busiest station in Suffolk, are now greeted by newly refurbished awnings following a project that has "enhanced both the structural integrity and aesthetic appeal of the front of the station."

Employability hub opened at college
Described as a "one stop shop", the new Nucleus Employability Hub opened for support following an official opening. East Coast College launched Nucleus in partnership with Sizewell C – as it aims to provide employment search assistance as well as application and interview support to those looking to secure employment in the region. The centre is bringing together services, training and employability expertise as part of efforts to reach an untapped local workforce.

Healthy hearts campaign 'could save your life'
A new machine that is offering quick, free, health checks has been installed in Lowestoft library. It comes as data has shown that Lowestoft has higher diagnosis rates of high blood pressure in comparison with neighbouring areas. It also has above average hospital admissions for cardiovascular disease. The Lowestoft Healthy Hearts

project is calling on people to know the risks associated with high blood pressure and how it's convenient and free to get it checked. In the first two weeks, 140 people have used the new blood pressure machine at the library and 11% of those were assessed as having high blood pressure and encouraged to take action.

New premises for social enterprise
Held on World Mental Health Day, the unveiling of the new centre for Catalyst Counselling marked a special anniversary. The unveiling of its new base at 11 Surrey St came as Catalyst Counselling celebrated its 10-year anniversary as a social enterprise. Two years ago, the organisation was named the best not-for-profit counselling service in the South East of the country. Catalyst was founded as a charity - then Waveney Counselling Service – in 1990 with the purpose of providing high-quality, low cost, longer-term mental health support in the local community. In addition, it now offers training for employers and a four-year counsellor training programme.

November

Praise for windfarm
The team behind ScottishPower Renewables' flagship offshore windfarm – East Anglia ONE – have been highly commended at a global industry awards ceremony. The commendation in the 'Offshore Wind Project of the Year' category at the Global Offshore Wind Awards reflects the team's dedication to operational excellence, health and safety, innovation and sustainability. Lead contracts manager Richard Watts said; "We're proud of what we do to keep the clean, green electricity from East Anglia ONE flowing from power to plug 365 days a year."

Trawlerboys beer tastes success
Earlier this year Green Jack Brewery in Lowestoft was crowned as one of the best in the country after the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) named it as the joint best in its category at the Great British Beer Festival Winter 2024. The awards back in February saw Green Jack Brewery's Baltic Trader jointly share the honour of winning CAMRA's champion winter beer of Britain with West Yorkshire-based Elland Brewery's 1872 Porter. And now the brewery, based at Argyle Place in Love Road, is tasting more national joy – as they proved to be just champion once more, this time at the Champion Beer of Britain Awards for 2024.

Self-taught artist reaches fundraising milestone
Ronald Hemp – who will be 98 next birthday – is a self-taught artist from Pakefield who has raised thousands of pounds for worthy causes over the years. Renowned for having an amazing attention to detail, Mr Hemp said that in order "to keep my batteries charged" he paints every day after converting the dining room in his home into a studio. Having created numerous large pieces of art, he has helped to raise funds for Help for Heroes, St Peter's Church in Carlton Colville and the James Paget Hospital over the years. In September, he achieved a special milestone – after raising more than £10,000 through his solo works.

Trust hails lasting legacy of departing 'wildlife legend'
Having made a real difference to the environment, and left a lasting legacy at Suffolk Wildlife Trust, North East Reserves Manager Matt Gooch is moving to the Water Management Alliance. A Suffolk Wildlife Trust spokesman said Mr Gooch, who joined the trust in 2005 as a temporary estate worker, had "made a lasting legacy on the trust and North Suffolk's wildlife. He spearheaded the development of Carlton Marshes nature reserve which has become one of the richest wildlife sites in the East of England – a feat made possible because of his deep knowledge of the landscape and unending passion for wildlife."

Plans approved for second huge new estate on edge of village
A phased hybrid development from WM Tubby for 185 houses in Oulton – 20% of which would be affordable – has been given the go-ahead. Plans to transform the 20.45 acre site – on land to the North of Hall Road and South of Union Road – have been given the green light. Approval comes after a separate phased hybrid development = from housing developer Oldman Homes to transform a 14 acre site on land to the North of Union Lane was approved by East Suffolk Council in June. Oulton Parish Council "strongly" opposed the development, with plans to use a paddock outside the residential allocation going against the Oulton Parish Neighbourhood Plan and the Local Plan as adopted by East Suffolk Council. Neighbouring Flixton Parish Council objected whilst Lowestoft Town Council also lodged a holding objection.

Historic church 'would have closed' without roof repairs.
The roof of the Church of St Edmund at Kessingland has been repaired and re-thatched thanks to a grant of nearly £200,000 from the National Heritage Lottery Fund, whilst the church itself raised nearly £100,000. Pat Briggs, the church's treasurer, said; "If the work had not been done, we would have been closed down within a year." The repairs have meant that the Grade I listed church, which is a landmark for seafarers, has been taken off the Government body Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register 2024.

Residential park
A former holiday site is being transformed into a residential park. The swich-up will see 56 new properties being built in a picturesque location beside the high-end Carlton Manor Hotel in Carlton Colville. Homes at the development will be exclusively available to people aged 45 or over and prices will start at £215,000.

Town falls silent as thousands turn out for 'poignant services'
The annual Remembrance Sunday parade and service took centre stage at Lowestoft war memorial on Royal Plain. Thousands fell silent as poignant tributes were paid. Lowestoft Town Council also organised two services to mark Armistice Day on November 11th, one at the War Memorial on Royal Plain and the other at Lowestoft Cemetery, both of which included short readings given by pupils from local schools.

Town's new community space opens its doors
It has helped thousands living with disabilities, providing vital support across Lowestoft and North East Suffolk over the past 38 years. Charitable organisation DANES (Disability Advice North East Suffolk) has marked a new chapter with a special

celebration. A new DANES community hub has opened its doors with expanded facilities at its Rotterdam Road base. DANES, or D.I.A.L as used to be known, has served as a lifeline for people since it was launched in 1986.

Princess Anne opens bridge

There were cheers and loud applause as Princess Anne officially opened Lowestoft's £145M Gull Wing Bridge. Describing it as "very aptly named" The Princess Royal unveiled the town's third crossing that has eased congestion and is delivering huge benefits to the town. Unveiling a plaque at the base of the control tower to formally open the bridge, the Princess Royal said; "The Gull Wing Bridge is unique in many respects and I am sure that the people of Lowestoft will not only make very good use of it, but also really appreciate it. Persistence and patience have really paid off." There were three cheers as the traditional Lowestoft fishing smack The Excelsior – of which the Princess Royal is Patron – sailed through together with Lowestoft RNLI relief lifeboat Eric's Legend and the Kingfisher pilot boat. The Princess Royal was introduced to the three youngsters who, in 2020 were Year 6 pupils at Somerleyton Primary School, named the bridge in a competition for local schools.

Former TESCO store transformed

A new cultural hub – called The Battery – has transformed the large former TESCO Metro store in Lowestoft town centre, which closed in 2019 after decades of serving the community. Since July, the London Road North building has been utilised as part of a two-year project – funded by an Arts Council England grant of £700,000 and East Suffolk Council grant of £300,000 – called The Battery of Ideas. Featuring numerous partners from across different sectors, the Battery of Ideas project is led by First Light Festival CIC and is building towards creativity in the new Battery Green cultural development in Lowestoft town centre.

Sail charity wins international award

In a first for any UK sail training charity, the Lowestoft-based Excelsior Trust has been awarded the Sultan Qaboos Trophy. The recognition, given for Outstanding Services to Sail training for Young People, was presented at the Sail Training International awards ceremony in Northern Spain. The Sultan Qaboos trophy, named after the late Sultan Qaboos bin Said of Oman, is the highest international recognition in sail training.

December

School's artwork is celebrated

Phoenix St Peter Academy in Lowestoft received the Visual Arts School Award at Lowestoft Town Council's Black History Month celebration. The school's artwork was inspired by Alma Thomas, an artist known for her "powerful form of brilliantly coloured and richly patterned abstract art." Amy Gloss, head of art at the school, said; "We chose Alma Thomas as our inspiration for our artwork this year and the children were incredibly enthusiastic about her style of art."

Spirit of Christmas comes to care home
Christmas is back on at a care home after its festive lights were cut down less than 24 hours after they were put up. Employees, residents and families of Blyford Residential home in Blyford Road, Lowestoft, decorated the outside and inside of the home ahead of the festive period on 25 November. But by the following morning, some of the outside lights on the hedges were found cut into "five or six pieces". Then two days later, its icicle lights had also been vandalised. But the festive spirit was restored after East Suffolk councillors George King and Graham Parker bought and installed a new set of Christmas lights for the home. Mr King said; "Graham and I were really disappointed to hear that the decorations were vandalised. The care home said that they could not afford to replace the decorations. We decided to take the initiative and buy them a new set of lights and set them up."

Christmas Lane lives up to its name
For the fifth year in a row, homes in Oulton Broad on Christmas Lane, Noel Road, St Michael's Close and surrounding roads, have been decorated with thousands of twinkling lights. For the past five years they have been raising money for charity. This year they have chosen the local charity Angels and Rainbows which is a pregnancy and baby loss support group based in Lowestoft, supporting families in Norfolk and Suffolk.

Lowestoft is lit up for Christmas
The town centre dazzled with festive spirit on Saturday as people gathered for the event. Families enjoyed an afternoon packed with entertainment, capped off by the arrival of Father Christmas and a stunning lights display at 5pm. The display includes a 'Merry Christmas Lowestoft' sign welcoming visitors to the town.

Campaigners slam plan to relocate Post Office
Campaigners have expressed anger over proposals to move a Post Office away from a historic High Street. A consultation is proposing that the North Lowestoft Post Office moves about 300m away to a new location. The plans could see the post office – which has served generations as it dates back about a century – move into Bushells Bakery on Tennyson Avenue. The new site will undergo a full refurbishment and will stay open longer. The Most Easterly Community Group said that the Post Office plan was "flawed and irresponsible".

Work begins to turn hotel into 27 apartments
A nationwide property developer has started work as a new lease of life is in store for Abigail, Court in Lowestoft. The building was used for service personnel during WWI. The building was shelled in April 1916 which destroyed the North East corner of the building. The historic site, consisting of three buildings on land covering 0.170 hectares, Abigail Court was previously a hotel but has since been used as independent flats for over 20 years.

Police launch advent calendar to catch shoplifters
Police chiefs investigating a spate of thefts from local shops have launched an online advent calendar appeal in the run-up to the festive season. A series of images have been featured in a 12-day advent-style calendar after thefts from shops in the town.

Featuring 12 people caught on camera, six have already been identified since the launch of the appeal.

Why you might not see a giant turbine turning above town
The Gulliver wind turbine at Ness Point has seen a major overhaul being carried out by renewable energy company Thrive Renewables. However, some people have noticed that the new blades are not turning, raising questions that the whole project is a white elephant. But Thrive say that whilst it is back on the grid, it is taken offline occasionally to make final improvements. It was due to be operating again by the end of October but it was delayed until November 14. It has generated over 88,800MWh of clean electricity for homes and businesses since 2005.

Greater Anglia to be nationalised next autumn
From next autumn Greater Anglia, which is currently operated by the Transport UK group, will return to public ownership. It will be one of the country's first train services to come under public control as part of a new law to improve the rail network. The Department for Transport said the move will mean railways are run in the interest of passengers and taxpayers after 30 years of privatisation. It said it will clamp down on delays and cancellations, and will save up to £150M a year in fees by ensuring that every penny is spent on services rather than private shareholders.

Charitable trust hands out £72,500 in grants
The Kirkley Poor's Land Estate, which has been around for nearly 200 years, handed out cheques to 17 groups and organisations at a gathering at the Hotel Victoria. The money will benefit hundreds of people in the Kirkley area. The trust only began awarding grants in 1967 when people were given the right to buy their houses.

Seafront restaurant offering discount for surrendered phones
Well Well Well: The Bath House in Lowestoft has introduced "phone jail" offering guests the chance to lock away their smartphones whilst they enjoy a meal. The light-hearted scheme was launched as a way to get customers to better connect with each other. The restaurant will knock 5% off the price of a meal for diners who take part in the initiative.

Boost for town's port
Around 15 acres of land at the Port of Lowestoft, the closest port to Sizewell C, is to be utilised for the materials that will then be moved to the construction site. With work on the Sizewell C project well under way, port owner and operator Associated British Ports has struck a deal with EDF Energy to support the extensive supply chain demands.

Damaged signs on beach to be replaced
Repairs and maintenance works are to be carried out along a stretch of the beach. It will see damaged signage replaced and hazards removed from the groynes at Pakefield beach. The repairs and maintenance works are being carried out by the Water Management Alliance (WMA) on behalf of Coastal Partnership East, which is made up of the region's coastal councils to share and manage resources. WMA will also be

replacing the access steps to the promenade at Wilde Street. These works will improve public safety.

Major NHS shake-up

Plans have been unveiled to establish a "group model" between the Norfolk and Norwich, James Paget and Queen Elizabeth (Kings Lynn) hospitals. The move will see the three hospital trusts continue to operate as individual entities, but they will be working under a single chief executive. In a joint statement, the chairmen of the three trusts said the move would "strengthen the power of collaboration between the three trusts" and "optimise efficiency" across the three hospitals. A significant factor in the decision-making is financial. Each Chief Executive role comes with a six-figure salary which, including pension contributions, cost the NHS around £1.26M last year. N&N has a £11M deficit and Queen Elizabeth has a deficit of £22M. Two sites, James Paget and Queen Elizabeth, are due rebuilds in the coming years.

'A devastating blow': Closure of boatbuilding college

IBTC Ltd - the company trading as International Boatbuilding Training College – closed with effect from 20 December. It will see 11 staff made redundant and its assets sold off in the new year. In a statement, the directors blamed the closure on negative economic events such as Brexit, COVID, the Ukraine war and also a shift in what constitutes "quality training" and falling student numbers.

Minister visits 'world-class' marine facilities

Global issues surrounding climate change, marine pollution and biodiversity loss were highlighted as CEFAS showcased its facilities to Fisheries Minister Daniel Zeichner. Mr Zeichner – the Minister for Food Security and Rural Affairs - and Lowestoft MP Jess Asato explored the cutting-edge marine research facilities at CEFAS. After touring the building, Mr Zeichner and Ms Asato then visited the RV CEFAS Endeavour, the organisation's flagship research vessel. With the visit giving the minister an opportunity to understand CEFAS' future infrastructure plans for marine research delivery, he said; "It was fascinating to get a deep dive into the work of CEFAS. Their efforts to understand and protect our marine environment are vital in supporting our coastal communities, food security, clean energy and nature recovery."

Fishing smack to host North Atlantic Islands Residency

The North Islands Residency, a collaborative initiative by Original Errant and The Excelsior Trust, will take place aboard the Lowestoft fishing smack, the Excelsior. The project invites established artists and young innovators to partake in a three-week sea voyage, exploring personal disciplines, fieldwork study and knowledge exchange. The voyage, which will commence from Esbjerg and culminate at Aalborg, will cover various locations including Northern Denmark, Southern Norway, the Skagerrak and Limfjord.

Most Easterly church given go-ahead for improvement plans

Steeped in history, the landmark Christ Church in Lowestoft is now looking forward to a new chapter. It opened in 1869 having been built to serve the Beach Village community

that was home to thousands of fishermen, net and sail makers. Christ Church survived the Zeppelin raids of WWI that devastated the fishing community homes, extensive bombing of the area in WWII and the 1953 East Coast floods that swamped the Beach Village and contributed to the demolition of the close-knit community in 1955 as part of a council slum clearance. And now, improvements are to be made to the church centring around replacing the existing West porch with a foyer that includes toilets and a "milling space", new steps suitable for the ambulatory disabled up into the parish office and four car parking spaces, two of which will be for inclusive access.

Cat fight over hospital's 'unwelcome' feline visitor

For the past two months, the whiskered wonder named Bobbie has been visiting the Kames Paget hospital and bringing comfort to patients and staff. The cat has become an unlikely star and even inspired its own social media following after employees set up a Facebook page called 'james paget hospital cat of love'. But hospital bosses are not 'feline fine' about the visitor. A spokesperson for the hospital said; "We are asking staff and patients not to encourage the cat. Whilst it is popular with some, there will be patients and visitors who may not want to have a cat in the waiting areas, for example if they have allergies."

Demolition completed

The partial demolition of a former multi-storey car park has been completed as the creation of a new cultural quarter in Lowestoft gathers pace. Regeneration of Lowestoft town centre with a huge new £24.3M development around the Battery Green car park and surrounding land on Marina Road, will see three landmark buildings created on a site that had been described as "unattractive and underutilised."

'Witches' remembered with town memorial

In scenes reminiscent of the infamous Salem Witch Trials, Amy Denny and Rose Cullender lost their lives in the gruesome form of hanging. A moving ceremony has highlighted how the two Lowestoft widows had been suspected of being 'witches' and bewitching their neighbours in the town in the 1660s. Honouring the lives of Amy and Rose, the new memorial stone has been installed in Belle Vue Park courtesy of Lowestoft Town Council. Facing 13 charges, their trial was presided over by Sir Matthew Hale, Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench. They were found guilty, after a one-day trial, of using malevolent witchcraft and sentenced to be hung despite a lot of the evidence being hearsay from young children. Much of the research into the story was conducted by Ivan Bunn. The new memorial was unveiled near the so-called Witches Stones in Belle Vue Park, culminating in a "very long journey" for Mr Bunn.