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Contents

Some Discoveries from Lothingland	P. Durbidge	1
East Anglia during the Ice Age	D I Losson	3
The Emergence of Man	D I Losson	5
Town Government in Lowestoft in the 19 th Century	K M Davies & L R Muddeman	6
The Raising of the Corton Pole	D R Butcher	8
The Maltings at Oulton Broad	<i>unknown</i>	10
Round Towers Research	W J Goode	11
Herringfleet : the Story of a Village	H Algar	14

SOME DISCOVERIES FROM LOTHINGLAND

by P. Durbidge

The continued success of field work is underlined by the series of discoveries made last season involving both prehistoric and medieval sites. Research of this type is highly constructive as comparatively little is known of either period within our own area and further afield. This continued interest by the searching groups has allowed fresh areas to be investigated and already more finds have been recovered, this time from Lound. It is possibly an advantage for groups to be small in number both from the farmer's point of view as well as that of the organiser, and invariably results often seem more productive. Objects of prehistoric date found over the last five years now run into several hundred individual objects excluding worked flakes and it is of no surprise to hear of single finds being found by local people. Nevertheless, the importance of fresh evidence cannot be over emphasised and this often leads to further discoveries.

The principal objective of fieldwork is to try to link up the field spots and if possible relate them to respective groups such as camps, settlements, homesteads, and so on. The major Neolithic settlement at Manor Farm, Kessingland, is the largest prehistoric settlement we know of, apart from the somewhat complex settlement at Lound.

Other areas at Hopton, Blundeston, Carlton Colville, Rushmere and Gisleham all make a contribution but nothing like the former site. As the fieldwork continues there is no doubt that a comparable site will be encountered, although it would be a fair assumption that it will be situated further afield, possibly in the area of Henstead. Fragments of pottery are often encountered on prehistoric areas, usually well scattered and mostly of medieval date. Occasionally we are able to investigate such areas in more detail as at Gunton, Kessingland and Wrentham. A field close to Gunton Church produced a sizeable spread of pot sherds including both glazed and cooking pot types. These are medieval in date and vary from the 13th century to the 17th, with indications of a large jug from broken remains of the handles received. These pottery finds were observed close to the corner of the field and a short distance away there is a dark stain extending outwards into the field. The adjacent field has also produced pot sherds of the same date and this too has visual features by way of a large depression reaching out from the perimeter hedge. Pin tile remains with a dark brown glaze suggests that there was a dwelling here at some time and the span of pottery also indicates it may have been here for some time.

Holly Grove, Wrentham, produced a similar picture although the only intrusion as far as dating is concerned was a small sherd of Samian received among sherds of 15th century pottery. Like Gunton it has visible ground colouring although on a much larger scale, running some 100 feet from a perimeter hedge. The medieval pottery as well as a short cross penny and a lead spindle whorle all came from the dark area or just outside, suggesting that this was once a 15th century moated homestead. The pot sherds include pinch base, as well as two well defined faceted bases and a wide range of cooking pot rims. Not far away several pieces of brick showing fire damage were lying in the field and amongst these was a small piece of lava millstone which was probably for grinding corn at

the homestead.

Further searches of this 15th century site will without doubt produce iron nails and other bric-a-brac with the possibility of more weights. It will also be interesting to see if any tile fragments turn up, although the building may have been thatched from a nearby local supply. Two other finds of pottery have been observed close by but the absence of glazed sherds and rim types makes dating somewhat difficult. These finds are interesting in as much as they consisted of two small groups about 50 yards apart, suggesting single vessels.



Fabricator of Mesolithic date from Kessingland



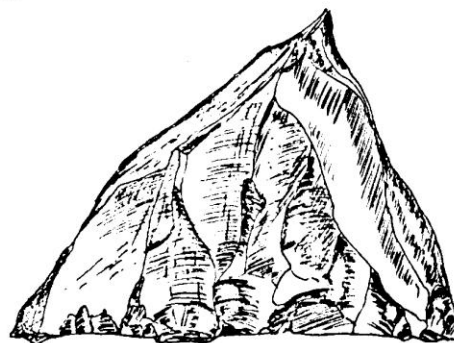
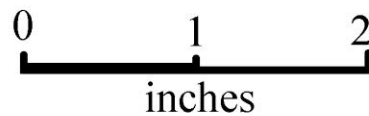
Neolithic leaf arrowhead from Hopton



Incomplete early bronze age arrowhead from Blundeston



6th century bone implement used for decorating pottery Kessingland



Double ended blade core belonging to the last phase of the Mesolithic Kessingland

With our aim research is to continuing. There have been two exceptional finds made by local people – both items being found in somewhat unexpected circumstances. The discoveries are important for two reasons; firstly they are both of bone, and secondly they are the only ones of their type found from our district. Upcast from a marsh ditch is hardly the place to retrieve antiquity but it was from this

environment that the first bone point was found by Mr. A Collings at Kessingland. It measures almost four inches in length and has signs of abrasion at the pointed end, while the other end tapers off to a gentle round. An analysis from Ipswich on the specimen suggests it might be a tool used for decorating pottery during the sixth and seventh centuries, thus relating another period of history to Kessingland. It also shows the importance of marchland in the preservation of bone material – an avenue of research worth examining in more detail.

For many years the Eastern Bevents have been a searching ground for animal remains which have been encountered after cliff falls, or after heavy tides. These include several species of deer, rhino, elephant and other bone remains of a very early period. It was from this location that the second bone tool was found by Mr. A. Gardener while searching the cliff for animal remains. The specimen was slightly over three and three quarter inches long and was clearly designed as a needle complete with its grooved out slot at one end while still retaining a very sharp point at the other. Unlike the animal bone remains it was far from a fossilised condition and is almost certainly of Maglemusian date. Its discovery is also perhaps the most important find of this industry within our area by way of its rarity and remarkable condition after such a long period of time. The finding of the implements has opened up more possibilities for the known Mesolithic sites along the Hundred River where these nomads searched and hunted for fish and game alike some 8,000 years ago. There have been no investigations of the of the marshland area adjacent to the river although odd flakes of flint have been observed in the river upcast in two places. The use of bone hooks and spears for fishing no doubt led to the loss of material at various times and somewhere there are almost certainly implements bedded in the composition that forms the present marsh surfaces. Our knowledge of these nomads is little apart from the small camps we have encountered, but from these small blades and bladecores we do know that their camps were very small in size and mostly situated close to river villages. Blunt blades, microliths, and many flakes left untrimmed along with burring have all been encountered, but the lack of axes from this period suggests that these people were not using the forest timber to construct their dwellings. The ready supply of saplings to form a frame work for animal skins would have had its advantages for a small group of people during the summer, though a more substantial structure must have been used during the intense cold of the winter.

I would like to conclude this short account of some of the discoveries made over the last season. I would like to thank in particular the people who have carried out the searches, and the determination with which they were carried out. Also, I would like to extend my thanks to the farmers and land owners for their co-operation in allowing the searches to be carried out on their land.

P.M.D. 1973

EAST ANGLIA DURING THE ICE AGE

D.I. Lossen

INTRODUCTION

The so called 'Ice Age' occurred during the Pleistocene Period, which began approximately 1.8 million years ago and ended about 10,000 years ago. There are two main reasons for the great interest shown in this period. Firstly it was during this period that man evolved in the Northern Hemisphere and secondly it was the last great glacial episode to occur on earth, however, several other glaciations have occurred in the Earth's remote past. Several glaciations are known to have occurred during the Precambrian Period, the oldest of which is probably the Timikamian Group in Michigan; U.S.A. This glaciation probably occurred some 2500 million years ago. Scotland; Scandinavia and Australia experienced periods of glaciation in late Precambrian times, around 600 million years ago. The next major glaciation occurred in late Carboniferous times (280 million years ago) in southern Africa.

Ice Ages therefore have been fairly common in the Earth's history, but only the Pleistocene glaciations are known in any great detail as the records preserved in the rocks of ancient glaciations are very scanty.

THE PLEISTOCENE ICE AGES

The evidence of fossil faunas and floras suggests a general decline in world temperatures towards the end of the Tertiary Era. The evidence suggests that the last 2 million years have been characterized by repeated cycles of alternately warmer and cooler climate. The amplitude of these climatic oscillations

being greatest in the last 500,000 years.

The major cold and warm episodes are known as glacial and interglacial periods. In Europe, four major and one minor glacial episodes are recognised. In Britain, however, only 3 glacial advances are recognised, but fossil evidence indicates that cold conditions prevailed over Britain during times of glaciation elsewhere. The glacial episodes are generally known by their Alpine names, although local names have been used in Britain. The Pleistocene succession is summarised as follows:-

Table No. 1

Alpine	British Isles	Climate
Post glacial or	Holocene period	warm
Warm Glaciation	Newlyne Drift	cold
Eemian Interglacial	Ipswichian Interglacial	warm
Riss Glaciation	Gipping Hill	cold
Great Interglacial	Hoxnian Interglacial	warm
Mindel Glaciation	Lowestoft Till North Sea Drift lower Chalky Boulder Clay	cold
G/M Interglacial	Cromerian Interglacial	warm
Gunz Glaciation	Weybourne Crag	cold
B/M Interglacial	Norwich Crag	warm
Donan Glaciation (Alpine borders only)	Red Crag	cold
Pre- glacial	Pre- glacial (Coralline Crag)	warm

Table No. 2 shows the time relationship of the various glacial episodes.

Episode	Period	Time scale Years BP
Wurm	Holocene	10,000
Ipswichian Interglacial	Middle Pleistocene	120,00
Riss		235,00
Hoxnian Interglacial		360,00
Mindel		670,00
Cromerian Interglacial		780,000
Gunz (Weybourne Crag *)		900,000
Norwich Crag	Early Pleistocene	1,150,000
Donan (Red Crag *)		1,370,000
Pre- glacial	Pliocene	1,800,000

N.B. * The Weybourne Crag and the Red Crag are marine deposits which contain fossils which indicate that cold conditions persisted whilst glaciations occurred in Europe.

It should be noted, however, that although the post glacial times are classed as a separate period (i.e. Holocene), there is considerable body of opinion favouring the possibility that we are at present in an interglacial period. This would mean that further glaciations are a distinct possibility sometime in the future – probably not for a few thousand years yet, however!

GLACIAL LANDFORMS

Present day land forms in the mountainous parts of Britain were moulded during the Ice Age. Valley glaciers gouged river valleys into a deep U-shape, in addition to straightening them. Particularly characteristic of such glaciated regions are deep rock basins called corries, narrow ridges called arêtes and glacial troughs.

Characteristic land forms were also formed in the lowland areas of Britain, as the result of the glacial

advances. East Anglia is one such region of lowland area which was affected by the Pleistocene glaciers. Vast sheets of ice, sometimes hundreds of feet thick moved over the area from a northerly direction. As they did so, they assimilated all sorts of different rock material, from the various formations the ice passed over. When the ice melted, this mixture of rock fragments and clay (boulder clay) was deposited as a thick blanket over wide areas. In many parts of East Anglia, the boulder clay is known as the chalky Jurassic Drift, due to the fact that it is composed essentially of Cretaceous chalk fragments and Jurassic mudstones and clays. The origin of these constituents is probably the Jurassic and Cretaceous outcrops of North Norfolk and Lincolnshire. An important deposit of this boulder clay can be found at Corton near Lowestoft. This deposit also contains numerous Jurassic and Cretaceous fossil fragments. In addition in East Anglia numerous rounded cobbles and pebbles of igneous and metamorphic rocks can be found. These are known as erratics and probably originated in Scandinavia and Scotland. They were brought by the ice. One other important result of glaciation was the diversion of many rivers and streams, resulting from the deposition of irregular spreads of boulder clay.

PLEISTOCENE BIOLOGICAL CHANGES

Rapid changes in climate and environment meant equally drastic changes in the fauna and flora. The vegetation belts of the northern hemisphere tended to migrate southward during glacial times and then return to their present latitudes during the interglacial periods.

Animal populations showed rapid evolutionary trends. The onset of the Pleistocene is characterized by the first appearance of the horses of the modern genus *Equus* and the first true elephants, from which the extinct cold climate mammoth evolved. Modern African and Indian elephants have evolved also from the early Pleistocene elephants. In East Anglia numerous remains (teeth and bones, etc.) have been found of the cold climate Mammoths.

During the Pleistocene, probably as a result of rapid climatic and environmental change, there were very important evolutionary advances of another creature – MAN.

THE EMERGENCE OF MAN

by D.I. Losson

The mammalian genus *Homo* and his ancestors form the rarest group of all fossils. Fossils of early man are extremely rare and evidence of him is most often found in the form of stone weapons and tools rather than by fossil skeletons. In Britain for instance, apart from one skull our record of the evolutionary pattern of early man is restricted to artefacts from river terrace gravel, such as those of the Thames. To obtain insight into man's genesis, we must look beyond Britain's shores.

Until the 1940s it was generally accepted that man's evolution began in Asia, because at that time Peking man and Java man were the oldest fossil humanoid remains to be found. They were in the order of 1 million years old. Together with the remains of Peking man, were found a number of crudely shaped implements and charred bones of deer, proving that he understood the use of fire. Scientists at the time believed the genus *Homo* to be only half a million years old, Java man and Peking man being classed as 'near-human'. Work on these two fossil remains showed that they belonged to the same genus – *Sinanthropus*, but to different species. However, thanks to the work of the Leakeys in Africa, the genus *Homo* is now reckoned to be about 2 million years old. Two million years ago puts us at the end of the Pliocene period, before the beginning of the Pleistocene.

In 1959 a skull and two teeth were found of fossil primate. Named *Zinjanthropus*, this 1,750,000 year old skull was of an australopithecine, a primate which showed a mixture of man and ape-like features. The Australopithecine were then believed to be the ancestors on the evolutionary tree to Man. Specimens of other Australopithecine had been found previous to *Zinjanthropus*, in 1956 for example, but this one found in 1959 was the oldest to date.

Then came the shattering discovery in 1960 of a 1,800,000 year old skull of a member of the genus *Homo* and he was named *Homo habilis*. Louis Leakey identifies the 'man with ability' as a tool maker. What does this mean then? It means that *Homo habilis* lived at the same time as *Zinjanthropus* and therefore the genus *Homo* could not have evolved from *Zinjanthropus*. Therefore *Zinjanthropus* and the other members of the Australopithecine were just on a short lived side branch of the evolutionary tree.

Perhaps the most exciting discovery came in 1972 by Richard Leakey, son of Louis Leakey. Near Kenya's Lake Rudolph a 2,600,000 year old skull was found and he believes it to be that of a member of the genus Homo.

In contrast to these very early beginnings, the earliest authenticated traces of man in Europe are some 500,000 to 300,000 years old, and are of the genus Homo. In Britain, the oldest remains of early man were found in the 100 foot terrace of the Thames near Swanscombe in Kent, along with their flint tools. The age of Swanscombe man is about 200,000 years old. The implements are of the Acheulian type which are found abundantly in the same seam of gravel. Surprisingly enough the fragments of this skull resemble closely that of a modern skull. Many experts group Swanscombe man with the same species as ourselves – Homo sapiens ('wise man'). If this is true the antiquity of the human species extends back to at least the Great Interglacial Period 2nd Interglacial nearly a quarter of a million years ago. Swanscombe man with his Acheulian tools is placed early in the Palaeolithic cultural stage.

The evidence is more complete in the case of Neanderthal Man (*Homo neanderthalis*), of whom several skeletons have been discovered in several localities, all outside Britain. The skeletons have been found associated with flint implements and the bones of various contemporary mammals on which he preyed. The implements are mainly of the Mousterian type and the mammalian bones are of mammoth, bison, reindeer and woolly rhinoceros of which are of cold climate species. Neanderthal Man lived later than Swanscombe man, during the Riss (3rd) Glacial period and the following 3rd interglacial.

Neanderthal man was undoubtedly of the genus homo but of a different species from ourselves. The head was very large – larger than any other known race of man, extinct or living. The face was probably somewhat ape-like with its prominent bony brow ridges. Neanderthal man appeared in the middle Palaeolithic cultural stage.

Later still in the upper Palaeolithic stage, at about the time of the last glacial period, a finely built race of men had evolved. He is known as Cro-Magnon Man and he had considerable cranial capacity. Skeletons and implements have been found at several localities in Europe. Cro-Magnon Man was of the same species as ourselves i.e. Homo Sapiens.

The existing types of Homo Sapiens are divided up into a number of races and Cro-Magnon man was a race of Homo Sapiens and not a sub-species as Neanderthal man was. The evidence suggests that this group of men were nomadic, following migrating herds of game.

All these Pleistocene men belong to the Palaeolithic or old Stone Age. The onset of the Holocene or post glacial period witnessed a return to temperate climatic conditions, and as a result the cold climate animals, on which early man had lived either became extinct or migrated to the Arctic regions. Thus man was forced to a more restricted and primarily coastal hunting and fishing economy, in the Mesolithic times. The Neolithic or New Stone Age began around 4000 B.C. and this marked the beginning of domestication of wild animals, and progress into historical times.

TOWN GOVERNMENT IN LOWESTOFT IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

K.M. Davies and T.H. Muddeman.

A winter course run by the Cambridge Board of Extra-Mural Studies, with help and materials supplied as requested from the Ipswich Record Office, has allowed us to carry out some research into the development of Lowestoft since 1800. One aspect of one town's growth at this time which has received little attention is the changing methods of local government. A summary of our findings so far follows.

In 1800 the parish of Lowestoft was part of the hundred of Mutford and Lothingland. The Manor court was held at Corton and the town had for many years been governed by this court when it met as a Court Leet. A Jury was empanelled at Lowestoft each year and met at Corton on the Thursday following Ash Wednesday to pay homage to the Lord and to be sworn in to office. On the next day this jury surveyed the town to record 'what nuisances there were; that required abatement' and on the Saturday met again at a local inn to appoint the town officials for the year e.g. farm reeves, constables, ale-tasters.

In 1698 the first civic meeting place was built, and served as a market-place, chapel, and parish room. By this time the parish vestry was taking a greater part in the government of the town with the Churchwardens as the chief officials. The Overseers of the Poor also had rights within the town, collecting rates for Mutford and Lothingland Union.

In 1770 the last Court Leet was held and the annual customs then ceased. The Court Baron, concerned with matters such as the transfer and title to land, continued until the twentieth century. The change in the control of the manor was precipitated by the incapacity of the Lord of the Manor, which allowed the tenants to take a greater part in matter of government. In June, 1772 the Manor court (a Court Baron) was presented with a 'Certain Instrument of writing under the hand of Thomas Anguish Esq. Committee appointed by the Court of Chancery to manage and Superintend the estates of Sir Thomas Allin Baronet a Lunatick the Lord of this Manor and so under the hands of Sundry persons appearing to be the Principal Copyholder Tenants and Owners of lands and Tenements of the said manor and also the Principal Inhabitants of the said Parish of Lowestoft which said writing bears date on or about the 12 day of November last past'. (1771)

This committee, with the Reeve as its chief official (as he would have been for the Lord, continued to administer the manor, authorised the transfer of land, and carried out the normal duties of the Court Baron.

In August, 1794, a new Lord of the Manor, Thomas Anguish, reaffirmed in his own name grants made by this committee, but in September he too was declared a lunatic and was replaced by a committee led by the reverend George Anguish. This committee made various grants for the enclosure of common land 'as far as they were able and their right extended'.

The succession of two lunatic Lords of the Manor established the Committee which gradually passed powers on to certain chief persons in the town in a different guise.

A grant of 15 acres of common land within the town was made to the Churchwardens on 5th April 1795. In return for a nominal annual rent to the manor, the income from these lands was to be used 'for purchasing oil for lighting the public lamps which are intended to be placed and fixed up in the streets of the said town of Lowestoft and for hiring a person to light the same and for amending and repairing such lamps'. Any excess money was to be used 'For such purposes, uses and intents as they the said Churchwardens for the time being and the majority of the inhabitants of the said town who shall be assembled at a town meeting' should decide. The Churchwardens shall 'convey and assure by Indenture of Feoffment to six persons' this lands. These six persons, nominated and appointed by the Churchwardens became known as the Trustees of the lamp – Lands.

Further grants in 1801 and 1805 increased the amount of land vested in the Trustees to 42 acres and extended their powers to the 'repairing, amending, renewing and making good' of the pavements and streets of the town.

In 1810 the Trustees of the lamp Lands obtained an Act of Parliament for the 'better paving, lighting, cleansing, watching, and otherwise improving the Town of Lowestoft'. This Act (George III cap.42) both confirmed and greatly extended their powers. Commissioners were appointed who administered the monies from the lamp Lands directly, replacing the Churchwardens. They could raise loans to the value of £4,000 and levy rates. These rates were assessed on the same valuation as the Poor Law rates. The Overseers of the Poor had to recognise the powers of the Commissioners and present their accounts to them.

Twenty four Commissioners now administered the town with power to replenish their own numbers as necessary. The control of the town now rested firmly and legally in the hands of a small group of leading citizens.

In 1854 the Lowestoft Improvement Act stated that the powers and provisions contained in the Act of 1810 were insufficient, and that 'further provision be made for the Election of Commissioners for the making of the new streets by this Act authorised, and for the sewerage, paving, cleansing and general improving of the respective parishes of Lowestoft and Kirkley and the regulating of the police therein'. The Act repealed the 1810 Act but allowed the Commissioners to remain in office until the election of new ones – 27 in all; 9 for each of the three wards set up by the Act. East ward, east of the High Street and London Road North as far as the bridge; West ward, west of the same line on the north side of Lake Lothing; South ward, all of the area to the south of the bridge (Kirkley). The Commissioners had to live in an area covered by the Act or within four miles of the area. Those who paid the Poor Rate were eligible to vote in the yearly elections.

A rate could be levied for the repair of the roads not exceeding 6d in the £ in any year. If they constructed the two new streets that had been authorised, they could levy a General Improvement Rate not exceeding 2/- in the £ per year. To increase the rate there had to be a public meeting of the ratepayers

One of the new authorised roads was to begin at the south west corner of 'The Grove' and from there extend along the beach and Battery Green, terminating near Marine Terrace. This was constructed in due course, beginning as Waveney Road and continuing as Battery Green Road. Also authorised was the building of a road from the south end of the Esplanade to the end of Pakefield Street.

The income from the lamp Lands was taken over by the new Commissioners. By 1854 much of the land had been sold either to the Railway or the Harbour company, and the money invested for the town. A growing awareness of the needs of Public health gave them powers to cleanse private drains and streets and to charge the owners for work carried out, to provide public W.C.s and force people to move private urinals. Knackers yards were to be inspected, and penalties were imposed for selling unsound meat. Burials had to be over 4 feet down and there was a penalty of £5 for disturbing corpses.

The Town Police Act of 1847 was incorporated into their duties which gave them the power to appoint constables, and officers, and to pay and discipline the same.

The Commissioner could raise additional monies by mortgaging the rates up to a figure not exceeding £6,000.

Other controls over public behaviour embodied in the bye laws of 1854 include the licensing of hackney carriages, regulating the fares to be charged, the number of people to be carried, and the baggage and loads to be transported. Bathing could only take place from a bathing machine, no boats were to come within 100 yards of the machines, and there was to be no unnecessary or indecent exposure. Penalties were imposed for obscene writing, pictures or figures, insulting language, soliciting, alms, prostitution, and keeping a disorderly house. Goods could not be exhibited for sale on tables or in the street except on fair days.

Improvement Commissions were not new but the fact that Lowestoft was at this time able and anxious to afford the considerable expense of an Act of Parliament to gain all possible powers is an indication of the rapid growth of the town since 1830 with the development of the harbour and the coming of the railway. The Municipal Corporations Act had already been passed in 1835 but Lowestoft was not yet prepared for this status.

In January, 1885, the Improvement Commissioners petitioned the Privy Council for the grant of a Charter of Incorporation. This charter was granted on August 29th, and the official reception to mark this was held on 22nd September. The Act redefined the area controlled by the Commissioners as the Borough of Lowestoft. This area was divided into four wards, each returning six councillors. Elections were held to elect a council, aldermen and mayor – the first Mayor being Mr. Youngman.

The area controlled by the Borough council has extended since 1885 but there has been no change in the management of the town to compare with the changes in 1770 and 1810 and 1854. Such a change is about to occur which perhaps makes this a fitting study for 1972-3.

THE RAISING OF THE CORTON POLE

by D.R. Butcher.

It is several years now since the North Sea 'ran' with herring, and the fleets of drifters that once plied from Lowestoft and Yarmouth are but a memory in people's minds. Catches today are reckoned merely by the boxful, where even 20 years ago individual craft were still landing up to 200 cran fairly regularly. What is more, it is only a few longshore boats that at present carry on the trade, which is itself almost incidental to the main catch of cod, plaice, and skate. Lowestoft is now a trawler base, while Yarmouth is no longer even a fishing port, having gone over to container traffic and the provisioning and maintenance of gas rigs. How sad that the livelihood and tradition of centuries should have finished so completely.

The matter I wish to write of here goes well back into the history of the two towns and concerns their long rivalry as fishing ports. It is a fascinating story, but one which is also extremely complex, such is

the frequency of petition and cross petition, of granting this privilege to one place and then modifying it to accommodate the other. Of a necessity, then, the account which follows is a drastic simplification of a conflict that lasted for 3 centuries or more, continued half-abated for another 3, and still isn't entirely dead. In order to get any sort of picture at all, much has to be left out. At the same time, the overall account is, I hope, generally accurate and gives one some idea of urban ambition and muscle flexing over a prolonged period.

Neither of the towns had a particularly auspicious start as far as actual position went. Yarmouth clung precariously to a sand bank at the mouth of the Yare, while Lowestoft stuck to its cliff, holding on in the teeth of the east wind. There was only one advantage in all of this, the huge shoals of herring that thronged the seas every autumn – and it was Yarmouth that first capitalised on their presence. From quite early on a flourishing trade developed, not only with the rest of the country (the south eastern parts especially), but with the continent as well, and it was from this that the famous Free Fair in herring grew, eventually becoming one of the greatest international trade gatherings in mediaeval Europe. It lasted from Michaelmas until St. Martin's Day and saw a great influx of nationalities, with catches being sent to all parts of Europe and the Middle East.

Naturally Lowestoft, very much the poor relation, looked on this enviously. There wasn't much she could do about it, though, because Yarmouth had got the head start and so it became a matter of learning to exist in the shadow of a more powerful neighbour, snatching a living from the seas as might best be done. It is, in fact, interesting to note that throughout the whole of the early Middle Ages Yarmouth never really considered Lowestoft as much of a rival at all. For one thing, the Suffolk settlement was little more than a village, for another, the Cinque Ports posed far more of a threat because of their traditional right to share in the administration of the Free Fair. During the 14th century the latter influence began to wane and this coincided with a rise in Lowestoft's prosperity. It was now that the trial of strength really began, though Yarmouth received a tremendous fillip in 1340 when, as a reward for her services at Sluys (she provided more ships than all the Cinque Ports put together; Lowestoft was too poor to send any), Edward III halved his Royal Arms with those of the town.

The first real hint that Yarmouth took the challenge from the south seriously came in 1357, when the Statue of Herrings (again a royal favour) fixed maximum prices for a 'last' of herring (10,000) and decreed that no fish was to be sold within 7 miles of the port except at the Free Fair. The effect of this latter was intended to be double-edged – (a) it prevented Lowestoft and other rival places encroaching on Yarmouth's trade; (b) it sought to regularise the conduct of the Fair and give everybody an equal chance in trading at the time of its being held. The only people able to break this ordinance were the London fish merchants, who were allowed to purchase herring from Yarmouth boats anywhere in Kirkley Roads.

Within 2 years of this statute being passed, the merchants of Winterton and Lowestoft were also able, by royal permission, to purchase fish beyond the period of Free Fair within the limits prescribed. This gave both places, but particularly the latter, a foothold in an industry that Yarmouth had always held to be its own prerogative. Not long after this, the First Haven began to fill with sand, and navigation became increasingly more difficult and dangerous. Yarmouth therefore petitioned Edward III to grant a charter protecting her trade against the competition of Lowestoft and alleviating the distress caused by the blocking of the mouth of her harbour.

Edward, as we have already seen, had good cause to listen to such requests and in 1371 he sent a Commission to look into the town's grievances. It reported favourably, and in 1373 the king granted a charter which was to result in 300 years of strife and wrangling between the citizens of both towns. What it did in effect was to give Yarmouth two clear advantages over Lowestoft; (a) it gave the former town complete control over the Kirkley Roads, with the right of taking tolls from any boats discharging cargoes anywhere in these waters; (b) it prohibited the buying and selling of herrings during the Free Fair at any place on land or sea within '7 leuca' of Great Yarmouth, except at the town itself. It is clear that a 'leuca' meant a distance of nearly 2 miles as the Commission which led to the Charter stated that Lowestoft was 5 leucæ from Yarmouth.

300 years of bickering are too long a length to recount here, though it is worth recording that between 1376 and 1386 the charter was revoked no less than 3 times and re-granted 4. We pick up the story again in 1660, when Charles II seemed to look favourably on Lowestoft's case (she had, untypically of the rest of East Anglia, declared for the King during the Civil War). After some months of debate, with the legal experts unable to agree, the matter was referred to the House of Lords, who simply

reiterated a judgement of Elizabeth I's reign (1595) which stated that the leuca or leuk was a mile, and no more. This was supplemented by an order to the Sheriffs of Suffolk and Norfolk to measure the distance of 7 miles from 'Crane Key', Yarmouth, along the shore towards Lowestoft, and to place there a new post – one had been set up in 1596, though without proper legal recognition, to mark the limit of Yarmouth's sphere of influence.

This was duly carried out in May, 1663 but Yarmouth refused to recognise its legality, which necessitated a further fixing in June. This still wasn't the end of the matter, however, and it wasn't until Charles gave Yarmouth a new charter in 1684 that it was finally stated for good and all 'that the word leuca mentioned in divers former charters signifies an English mile and no more, as declared by the House of Lords in the 15th year of our reign.' Lowestoft was at last free of its rival's claims upon it.

The spot where the 7 miles, measured from Crane Key at Yarmouth, was to end was on Gunton Denes, about 300 yards from the Corton parish boundary, near the Tramps Alley footpath. The post set up in 1663 was washed down within a few years (it had been placed too near the sea) and so in 1676 another one was erected a bit further inland. As the years passed, there was a need to replace the marker from time to time due to the sea's encroaching on the land, but the 7 miles was still clearly defined as late as the beginning of this century. When the post became known as 'Corton Pole' is not exactly known, but the local coastguard force was in the habit of using it to test life saving apparatus up till about 1905. Apparently it served to anchor the hawsers on their breeches buoy. At a later date, it was removed to the old Corton playing field (now a holiday camp) and from thence to the head of the loke not far from the railway bridge in Corton Long Lane. With the kind permission of Dr. R.D. Alexander, it came into my possession and then into the hands of the Lowestoft Museum.

Footnote: 'Fishing Beer'

As a result of the war against the Dutch in the reign of Charles II, the local herring industry was in a bad way. Lowestoft, however, had some favour with the crown because of her loyalty in Parliamentary times, and in 1670 Sir John Pettus (a well known Norfolk royalist, one of the men who had organised resistance to Cromwell at the top of Rant Score) presented petitions on her behalf. One of these was that 'fishing beer' should be exempted from excise duty. In connection with this proposal, a return was made of the number of fishing boats employed by Lowestoft and the neighbouring settlements. From this return it appears that at this time Lowestoft sent out 25 boats, Pakefield and Kirkley 14, Southwold 11, Aldeburgh 5, Corton 2 and Dunwich 1.

The annual consumption of beer by the crews of these 58 boats was estimated at 9 tuns per boat, amounting altogether to 522 tuns. With a tun reckoned at 252 gallons capacity, it can be seen that this was indeed a considerable quantity, and the likely explanation is that in those days a liberal supply of ale was meant to compensate for the deficiency in rations.

THE MALTINGS AT OULTON BROAD

The malting of grain to make beer was known to the Ancient Egyptians, and has been carried on ever since without much alteration to the basic processes until this century. So far as the broads area is concerned, commercial malting has been carried out for at least 150 years.

The traditional floor method of manufacturing malt is quite a lengthy process and each batch of barley has to be assessed individually. Basically the process consists of artificially ripening the grain, then soaking it to encourage germination, and finally, drying and curing it.

Malt production requires skilled labour; specially made strong buildings, plentiful supplies of drinking-quality water and cheap and easy transport, like waterways.

The history of malting in Oulton Broad is complex, and the records scattered and difficult to trace. However, we do know that in the 1833 Survey of Lowestoft, a Malthouse is mentioned as existing on the site now occupied by Truman's boatyard. Over the years this building has been altered beyond recognition.

A survey in 1882 (O.S. map published in 1885), showed a further malthouse at the edge of the Broad, near to the Commodore Road/Caldecott Road junction. This was demolished after World War II for the erection of boatyard buildings which have, in turn, given way to the whim of the 'progressive'

developers who propose to build high-rise flats on the site.

The surviving, traditional Maltings in Oulton Broad, built in 1900-1902, and known locally as Swonnell's Maltings, are in danger of suffering the same fate as the others, unless the outcome of the recent Public Inquiry confirm the existing Preservation Order.

The history of the Swonnell site is not completely known, but we do know that the land has passed through many hands. For instance, in 1846 it was sold by George and Mary Borrow to the Norfolk Railway Co. for £804. Transactions from that time until 1900 are not detailed, but by January 1901, the total plot had been conveyed (in two parcels) to Messrs. Swonnells as 'vacant land without buildings'. The land was purchased so that Swonnells could move their malting business to Oulton Broad from Nine Elms in London, to be in the centre of the rich barley-growing area.

An incomplete set of plans relating to the site and the buildings erected thereon have been studied. These show various stages in the development of the site and an interesting note on one plan refers to positions at which water was found by a water-diviner.

The original processes installed by Swonnells were modified after 1912 to take advantage of the improvements to burners and roasting apparatus suggested in patents taken out by an Oulton Broad engineer, Mr. Savory. At this time the business was flourishing, and in the 1920's two additional maltings were built, and later further ancillary buildings.

A unique feature of the Oulton Broad Maltings was their ability to produce both pale and coloured malts for different applications.

In 1965, the Maltings were taken over by Messrs. R.W. Paul (Maltsters) Ltd., and they carried out a considerable modernisation scheme and continued to produce malts until 1968, when they decided to close the Maltings and transfer the production to their Grantham site. Their reasons for this closure were given as high transport costs, raw materials costs and the 'penal taxation' on beer and whisky. The site was sold to a local consortium and parts of it have since been acquired by a Property Development Company.

It is sad to think that the thriving community of Lowestoft and Oulton Broad cannot be roused to preserve these monumental buildings, which have formed such an imposing feature of the Broods skyline for so many years.

Industrial Archaeology is a fairly new branch of the conservation scene, but technology moves so rapidly today that unless immediate action is taken when a site is threatened, we will lose all that is uniquely Oulton Broad and Lowestoft and nowhere else.

ROUND TOWER RESEARCH

by W.J. Goode

My constant aim is to publicise these churches in any way that I can. Firstly to help them to carry on as a living church, secondly to create an interest in their age and architectural beauty. Thirdly to work for raising funds to keep them in repair. These aims are incorporated in my desire to make a comprehensive study of these fine churches.

Creating an interest is done by writing to the papers and giving slide lectures. Four slide lectures were given this year. The South Lowestoft branch of the British Legion, an evening class at Gisleham, the parishioners of the Mutford group of parishes and finally a talk to the Feltwell Archaeology Society.

Carrying on my policy of a short visit to each church, taking a few photos and a short description, I visited 15 for the first time this year. During these visits I noticed that five of these churches had Ironstone quoins to the church; this is a fairly certain sign of 11th century work, and I feel that we may be able to add several of these to the Saxon list although not called Saxon at present. Most of the churches seen this year were fairly well cared for, but I would like to see far greater efforts made to keep the vegetation off the walls. This causes more damage than all the bad weather. An 18 inch garden all round the church would not take long to keep weeded and would do wonders in keeping the walls free of ivy. Many interesting features were noticed during my visits to the 15 churches mentioned above. The most striking of those was my visit to Pentlow in Essex. I have a vivid memory of my first sight of this church as I walked up the path. It reminded me strongly of Hales in Norfolk with its apse. It is certainly Saxon and the church quoins are of flat flints; pure Saxon work

this; the roof is of red-brown pantiles but it must have been beautiful when thatched. Inside, a lovely old square font is fixed against the North wall, it has interwoven foliage carved over its face, but I cannot determine its age.

Little Bradley, visited the same day, has quoins of Saxon long and short work and the tower is straight sided on the inner East side. This points to the tower being built at the same time as or little after the church, from which I deduce the tower is Saxon too.

Surlingham church, not far from the river Waveney, has Ironstone quoins; as this position would make the availability of dressed stone quite easy after the Conquest this seems to be another Saxon church and tower. Quite a lot of bricks have been used for repairs, and they rather spoil the character of this church, but there is still much to see of great interest and well worth a visit. Rickmere in Norfolk is a fine well kept church with ironstone quoins, the churchyard is well tended and there is much of interest here, fine stained glass, the rood screen still retaining some original paintings. A number of poppyheads survive on the bench ends, and these are carved with a variety of interesting and ingenious designs.

Sustead is another church with Ironstone quoins and is almost certainly Saxon although I know of no one who calls it so. The most noticeable feature of this tower is its resemblance to Aylemerton not very far away. I have often noticed that these churches and towers show local likeness as well as similarities covering the whole group. Both these towers have a South door to the tower, and neither has any opening from tower to nave on the ground floor. This arrangement is unique in Round Towers so one concludes that if one is Saxon then the other is too. I made a hurried visit to Thurgarton church and plainly where the Round Tower once stood, but alas this has now gone. Syderstone was extensively repaired about two years ago and looks well. The main entrance is by a West door in the Tower; but this has been moved from its original position in the South wall. Inside, the South wall of the nave still shows what the church looked like in earlier years. The differing style of capitals and Arcade arches still visible show that this church had a transept and south aisle in bygone days.

Hengrave is now used by a group of Roman Catholic Nuns, so this church has now returned to its original form of worship. I was told that they do not mind visitors provided that they do not speak while they are in prayer. Beyton, with its massive buttresses, looks rather ungainly, but it is one of only two with buttresses for its full height. This church, I am pleased to say, appears to be thriving, it is in the centre of the village and there is new building going on near the church.

Bartlow in Cambridgeshire is another interesting church with a Round Window low down in the South West face of the Tower, and the church contains three wall paintings. Of Brampton, with its famous 'brass', Threxton, Merton and Tuttington, I must pass over just pausing to say that they are all worthy of a visit, but space does not permit more in this report, and we pass on to three towers that were surveyed and measured during the year.

The first was Bungay Holy Trinity. During August I noticed that scaffolding was being erected on the tower, so I asked for permission to examine and measure the tower from the outside as well as on the inside. This was granted, and on the 26th August I measured and surveyed the tower from the outside and found it very rewarding, as I was able to confirm that this tower did have Saxon round windows, although they are now blocked up. More than this, I was able to count them and get their measurements from the ground and from each other. There are 12 circular windows in all, 8 in the belfry stage two between each belfry window, which would have been the original Saxon sound holes, and below this stage are 4 more Round Windows at north, south, east and west. These were for light to this stage of the tower, and the east one would have looked out over the ridge of the Nave. This tower is $55\frac{3}{4}$ feet high with the circular part $49\frac{1}{2}$ feet high. The internal diameter at ground is 12 feet with the walls $3\frac{3}{4}$ feet thick; this is thinner than usual, the average being around $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet thick.

The tower arch is $16\frac{1}{4}$ feet high and 8 feet wide. It has a pointed arch, but was originally a narrow Saxon arch. The upper doorway is behind the organ which is on a gallery built at the West end of the Nave for this purpose. Although the doorway is in the Tudor style it would seem that this is modern and that it used to be a Saxon pointed arch. The sandstone banding of this tower, in bands with flints is unique although the herringbone pattern may be seen in a number of others, usually with Ironstone as the basic material. Inside the tower the same stone facings were quite extensive, but only a small section of the herringbone survives. Another interesting feature of this tower is the conical top of red-brown pantiles inside the battlements. Few people would realise I imagine that this tower was once like those of Freethorpe and Moulton, before the battlements were added.

Next, on the 16th of September, I measured the tower of Mutford church. Again I had to obtain special permission due to the condition of the tower as certified by the architect.

I was assured, however that it was quite safe for me to ascend, measure and take my notes.

This tower is 67 ft. high, tall by Round Tower standards.

Ground level internal diameter is $10\frac{1}{3}$ ft with a wall thickness of 4' 5". The tower arch is 19 ft. tall, but it has been opened out to the whole width of the tower; almost certainly this was done when the Galilee porch was built. The tower arch looks like Saxon work, and the fact that the Upper Doorway is still to be seen above this arch proves that it was always this height or the door-way would have disappeared when the arch was altered. Inside the tower on the first floor we can see the Upper Doorway at close quarters and here we see a doorway almost identical to the one in Gisleham Tower not far away. The Upper Doorway in Hales, called by Prof. Taylor, Saxon, is similar except for the measurements. The jambs and head are constructed of selected flat flints, and the triangular head is set 2 inches back on the jambs. We have therefore two very strong Saxon features in this tower. The measurements of the Upper Doorway are:-

Height to springing	2' 9½"
Height to apex	4' 9"
Width	2' 3"
Height above the ground	25' 7"

The third tower that I surveyed was at Frostenden on the 23rd September. The first thing that strikes one about this tower is the irregular placing of the windows. Does this irregularity mean that it is Saxon? I for one would like to think so, but I can find no true Saxon features, and none of the irregular windows show any Saxon signs.

The tower is 57 feet high, with an internal width of 9 ft. and a first floor level at 18 feet up. The tower arch is 15 feet high and 4 ft 4 ins. wide. This is the nearest to a Saxon feature, but no upper doorway is present. Quite a lot of Tudor work is to be seen inside this tower, which indicates alterations at this period. The five small windows above the belfry have Tudor arches built with Tudor bricks. These arches and bricks are used on the blocked up windows on the first floor level.

The belfry windows are also of this period. The belfry is interesting, as carved into the main bell cage beam is 'KINDRED Ch WARDEN'. Also on a beam of the tower roof is written in black paint 'M PLANT 21 MARCH 1894'. This date is probably when the present bell cage was fitted. Here therefore we have what appears to be a Norman Church and Tower with major alterations to the Tower during the Tudor period.

I began complete surveys at Hales early this year, and I tried to complete Heckingham as well, but with so much to do this church is as yet not finished. Hales is, or was, pure Saxon, while Heckingham was not started until Norman times. These sister churches are very similar despite being built at different times. By the time this goes to press my book on Hales and Heckingham should also be published, I will therefore give here some of the differences and similarities of the two churches. Both are fully thatched and both have apses, but Heckingham's nave and chancel are low compared with the tall Saxon nave of Hales. Hales used to have a North Porch, but this was removed in the 19th century. Prof. Taylor says that the doorway of Hales appear to have been altered, as the inside jambs are taller than the outside. This seems to be quite likely as the outsides of these doors are the finest Norman work in Norfolk. The rich Norman carving on the doors of both churches points strongly to the work of the same mason. Why is it then that the inside door of Heckingham's doors correspond to those at Hales? The answer must lie in the fact that these doorways were copied from Hales. The doorway at Heckingham is a little more elaborate than Hales, but the church as a whole is nowhere as rich in the carved buttresses and three-quarter mouldings on buttresses and quoins as its sister church..

It is strange that with two pure Saxon windows and an Upper Doorway which may originally have been a window, that they were not recognised and recorded as such until 1927, and even today, most writers still copy the old text books and date this church in the 12th century.

Quite a number of Saxon Round Tower Churches are still waiting for recognition, and it is thought that there is always something new to discover that makes this hobby so interesting. Most of my library research has been done for me by my friend Brian Harmer. From an old book in his collection he found that Hales church had a porch which was removed sometime between 1800 and 1850, because vagrants used it for sleeping. The Round Tower of Briston fell in 1795 while at East

Beckham near Sheringham, so Bloomfield tells us, the Round Tower fell in 1783, and in 1890-91 a new church was built at East Beckham with the materials from the ruins of the two churches of East and West Beckham.

From other sources we learn of three other Round Tower churches that have completely disappeared, and only remain recorded in print, at Beccles, Ipswich and Tooting.

Now, as the nights draw in it is time to type up my notes, catalogue my slides, print my photographs and prepare for another season in 1973.

HERRINGFLEET - The story of a Village

by H. Alger

To begin, we must go back in time, further than the Normans, further back than the Vikings, further back than Saxons, further back even than the Roman invaders; who built the great camp at Burgh, no more than three miles from the confines of Herringfleet. Back in time to the Stone Ages, whose peoples lived and died upon the sandy cliffs of the then coast. These people were Nomads, staying in one place but a short time, hunting in the great forests which covered all of Lothingland and fishing in the wide estuaries, one of which reached practically to present day Norwich. These people left their traces when they continued on their way, and should you have the time (and the inclination!) a field search over the areas of one of the larger farms such as White House or Manor Farm will probably yield stone implements of either the Mesolithic or Neolithic periods.

From this early picture we pass now to the days of the great empire builders, the Romans, who must have exercised much influence in this area. Remains of this period are not plentiful in Herringfleet, but a very fine Patera was found in 1850. This is best described as looking like a large model of a Turkish coffee cup, and is in excellent condition with the maker's name Q. Attinus engraved upon the handle. It may be seen in the Norwich Castle museum. It is safe to assume that Herringfleet, and the other villages round about enjoyed the protection of Burgh and its garrison and life was probably quite good for the inhabitants of the area. The term village is misleading, a small collection of huts at the top of the southward facing sandy cliffs, probably in a clearing at the edge of the forest would be the most that Herringfleet could offer at this period. These people would be both farmer and fisherfolk for the land in the parish is good, well drained loam and fairly easily cleared of trees with the sandy sub-soil. We doubt these people were forced to provide food for the Roman garrison so close at hand, but the few inhabitants would be content to bask in the Roman sun, so close to military strength as to be almost free from raids and war. But, as everybody knows, the sun sets, and the Roman power began to wane. Firstly, all went well, then bands of fierce heathen, in small handy ships appeared in the estuary and made raids upon the countryside. But the Angles and the Saxons had not come merely to plunder, they had come to stay.

And it is at this point that the history of Herringfleet really begins, for up to now we have been unable to separate Herringfleet from its immediate neighbours, but now, with the help of more than a little imagination, and not very much proven fact, I will illustrate the birth of a village and the making of a name.

Cast your minds back to those far off days and imagine a small single sailed boat containing perhaps 20 men coming into the broad estuary of the Waveney from the North Sea, having been at sea for about 4 days. These men would of course be the North Folk or the South Folk probably coming from the land which is modern Denmark or Germany. They may have been true Saxons from Saxony, they may have been Angles or even Jutes, it matters little. Imagine then this ship, looking like an elongated rowing boat with the one square sail and the fair haired white skinned heathen with their leader standing up in the rear of the boat looking North towards those South facing sand cliffs.

Where a gully runs down to the present day marsh they might have landed, most likely with no opposition, as our Romano-British peasants were a cowardly lot with no Roman legionaries to back them up. On the top of the cliff the invaders would camp, bringing all their arms and stores from the boat which would either be burned where it lay or sailed back across the North Sea to bring more men. The leader of this band would be a warlike man, a petty leader with little money to tempt many followers and he would be anxious to secure as much land for himself as possible, either peacefully or by force if he thought that he could win – fighting either the Britons, or more likely his own kind.

This he would do to gain prestige and win money and valuables, thus gaining more followers until he had a considerable war-band. But of course this kind of local conquest was taking place all over East Anglia and other parts of England and a few Woden born Kings came over too, bringing large war-bands with perhaps 6 ships to bring them. Ella, landing in Sussex in AD 477 is reported as having as many as 9 large ships with him. Thus our Saxon landing on the site at Herringfleet would have great difficulty in enlarging his boundaries unless he was a great leader with much power and resource. We will assume that he had no such attributes and was compelled to remain more or less where he had landed because of near-neighbours who had war-bands at least as large as his own. After a time, such professional warriors as he had left him for richer rewards, and he was left with only a handful of men who were not fighters but who knew how to till the soil and raise crops. Our leader therefore would build a timber hall in the typical Saxon fashion for himself and his family and the other members of the community would build smaller structures grouped about.

The date of this petty invasion could be put at about the end of the 5th. century when we know for a fact that there was a general emigration from Anglen (in Holstein) of the North and the South Folk. Time now passes and the tiny village slowly grows; Christianity is introduced by St. Furse, who lived in nearby Burgh Castle. The village would be poor, scratching a living by farming and we can think of no more than 20 to 50 inhabitants at this time in a close-knit community. Time again passes, and the Viking invasion sweeps through East Anglia with tremendous force and into the Midlands. Not a bloodless conquest by any means, it is certain that the Saxons in East Anglia, with a few notable exceptions such as King Edmund, put up little fight. The point here is that such warring as there was soon over, and a peace restored. These people being similar in appearance to the Saxons it was not long before intermarriage took place, and generally speaking, life in the newly formed Danelaw went on after the Viking invasion much as it went on before.

It must have been about this time, the late 9th and early 10th century that one family in the village rose to greater heights than the others. Why, we do not know, but there have always been some who are idle, some merely content, and others with ideas and the boldness to carry them out. We can imagine just such a family in Herringfleet with a larger dwelling and more cultivated land than the now few others. As time passes, the shrewdness of the man who is head of the family ensures that the family enjoy more wealth until he becomes a sort of headman to the tiny community. The name of this able individual we will call Harl, or Herl, and the family name would thus be Harlinga, or Herlinga. Again time passes, and the fateful year 1066 with it. We come now to the Domesday Book of 1086. Herringfleet is to be seen there, written as both Harlingflet and Herlingflet. Flet being the Saxon term for the dwelling of a churl or husbandman, you will see that we have, in ordinary language, 'The Farmstead of Harl'.

I'm sorry to disappoint any of you who imagined that herrings were landed on the cliffs from a fleet of boats, and that the village derives its name from this. No doubt herrings were landed here in very early days, but there is no connection with the name. This then explains how Herringfleet came to be named, and also might serve to show what a small place it must have been in relation to its neighbours for while Domesday Book refers to what amounts to a single farmstead (Flet), the other villages round about have the normal Saxon or Danish suffixes implying collections, groups etc. Flixton, Fritton, Bradwell, Gisleham, to give a few examples.

According to the Domesday Book the Manor belonged to the King, presumably taken over at the Conquest; but shortly after it passed to Catherine FitzOsbert who was a member of a pious family who came over with William. Domesday Book states that the Manor was 'impoverished and bleak, containing wood sufficient for the maintenance of only 12 swine and was valued at 4 shillings'. A small village indeed with a population of no more than thirty; yet it must have been around this time, shortly after the Conquest, that the jewel of the village came into being. I refer, of course, to the Church. There is much speculation and argument about when Herringfleet Church was built and I must say, right away that I do not rank with the experts in this field of Saxon versus Norman. There is no evidence of a Saxon church in the village built before the present structure, either on the same site or elsewhere. Probably there was an earlier wooden church, but no written records remain, and from the evidence before our eyes, the present round tower is most likely early Norman, which would be about the time that Catherine FitzOsbert held the Manor.

In or about the year 1216, Roger FitzOsbert, a descendant of Catherine, founded a small Augustinian Priory on raised land near the place that the ancient ferry used to go across the Waveney. We do not know the actual date of the founding, but we do know that in 1225 the Prior asked for, and obtained,

permission to hold an annual fair in Herringfleet on St. Olave's day. It was always a small Priory, for we are told that in 1291 its income was only £26-17-4½d and again in 1535 the net income was returned at £49-11-7d. When an inventory was taken after the suppression, in 1537, the total value amounted only to £37-0-9d and we are told that the furniture was plain and mainly old, and the only silver articles listed were a pyx and two chalices in the church, and a pair of censers, a ship, a salt and a dish elsewhere. Apparently the Priory was not always run in an exemplary fashion, for one Prior appropriated one of the guest chambers for his own use, and in 1514 a report stated that the canons rose for matins at 5am instead of the proper time of midnight. One cannot help sympathising with the canons! Time does not permit me to dwell here on the Priory, for it is well worth an evening's visit by members of the Society; before we leave it, however, there are a few points to make. The Priory had an unusual plan in that the Church is South of the Cloister and the refectory, cooking and dormitory arrangements are to the North. Those of you who have seen Castle Acre will have seen the normal arrangement. I would emphasise the beautiful vaulted roof of the undercroft, built around 1312. This is almost as perfect as when it was constructed and is of brick, making it unusual, and interesting too, as it is amongst the earliest use of this material since the Romans.

I pass quickly now to St. Olaves bridge and its history. There had been a ferry here since soon after the conquest, and in Edward I's time it was kept by Sireck, a fisherman who, we are told, received for his trouble bread, herrings and suchlike things to the value of 20/- per year. His son William kept it after him but made it worth 50/- per year. His son Ralph kept it after him and had of his neighbours bread and corn, and of strangers, money. By the time that Ralph was an old man it was worth £10 per year and we are told that his brother John then kept it and it was valued at £12 a year.

John sold all his rights to it to Robert de Loudham who made it worth £15 per year. Presumably this high cost to local people was not to be borne and complaints were made, and in 1296 Edward I was asked by the Sheriff of Norfolk and Suffolk for permission to build a bridge. A jury was set up to discuss the matter and leave was finally given to build, although Roger de Loudham and the Prior (who doubtless had a cut of the profits) objected to the scheme. They need not have bothered, for although we find that Henry V issued patents for the work to begin, the first bridge was not built until the year 1512, just 216 years after permission was granted! This bridge lasted right up to the date of the present day structure, although Gillingwater reported, wrongly, that in 1770 the bridge was so much in decay that a new one was built. In fact, repairs of a fairly extensive kind were made which changed the look of the bridge, probably causing his error. This bridge and ferry marked one of the few places where the island of Lothingland could be entered or left, the fact that no provision has ever been made for defence must imply that for centuries past Lothingland has not been an island – at least in summer.

The history of Herringfleet is a peaceful story, we have followed it now to the Dissolution when the Priory was partly demolished by Sir Henry Jerningham who erected a three storey house to the north of the refectory. Sir Henry also held the manor of Herringfleet at this time, the other manor in the parish being held by the Loudham family. These manors changed hands many times, and one of them has been sold yet again fairly recently; the other manor; that of Herringfleet, is held by the President of the Society, Lord Somerleyton.

In 1655, Thomas Bedell, Lord of the Manor of Herringfleet built Old Herringfleet Hall, almost certainly on the site of a former dwelling as this is a moated site. The house stands today, much altered, but retains its interesting gables of Dutch design, which occur earlier than the time of Dutch influence in this area. Close by the Hall there is a large thatched barn; built, if a stone let into the side informs us correctly, in 1652. This is most striking, and has a very fair timber roof. In 1733 the then Lord of the Manor decided he could no longer live in the Old Hall but desired something better and the present day Herringfleet Hall was built by Norton Nicholls. Of no very great merit, the Hall stands well away from any roads and cannot easily be seen. Norman Scarfe reported in the Shell Guide to Suffolk that the small Orangery was attractive. The only other building of architectural merit in the village is the Herringfleet Smock Mill, which is the last remaining of a once large number of pump mills on the marshes built to pump water from the low marshes into the higher level of the river running between artificially high banks. It was constructed about 1820 and is of timber.

It is of interest to note that it is still in working order – by means of a diesel pump – and will definitely be preserved.

So there it is, the story of a village. A peaceful story, of man and the plough and the marshes where the cattle grazed and still do graze. A story of growing up – a small part of England's heritage. A

complete story, and yet obviously not complete, for history is still in the making, and this story is without an end. Several questions remain unanswered; why has the population remained so small? What are the mysterious chain of ponds near Old Herringfleet Hall? When was the church built? Where does Herringfleet go from here? Perhaps the Society can find out the answer to some of these questions, in any case, it would be interesting to try.
