

Presidents message

Dear all,

Upon receiving my prompt to write my introduction to the 2023 Annual Report, my immediate response was, "My Goodness, how the year flies!" My contribution to the cause is modest compared to the constant dedication and application of all members, supporters and followers throughout each 12-month span, and I continue to be amazed and exhilarated in equal measure by what is accomplished by the society in such fast-moving times. The contemplation of how much has been achieved since the end of 2022 makes me feel tired on behalf of others, but prompted by this, I believe part of my role as President is to act as a mirror and reflect back all that has been achieved, great and small, since the last report was compiled and ensure it is celebrated. My aim is to encourage everyone to take stock and appreciate the collective effort, an effort which is accounted for perfectly over the following pages.

The Society's Annual Report is always a well-compiled document and an informative read. A most engaging publication, it bears no resemblance to the stereotypical dry, dusty expectation usually conjured by the words "annual report". It is an achievement to be savoured, and I must acknowledge David Hatton for producing it so professionally each time. It contains colourful accounts, interesting facts and a helpful summary of insights about the year, presented month-by-month, which may otherwise have been over-looked in our busy lives, or else forgotten; plus articles and writings which add to the shared knowledge of our local history and heritage in an enjoyable way. Also, as I have referenced in previous introductions, each edition is a valuable addition to research records from which following generations will benefit.

Complementing the Annual Report perfectly, the LA&LHS also produces regular Society Newsletters, courtesy of the dedication of Ron & Irene Ashman, who edit and circulate each issue. It is another worthy read and an excellent medium for communicating current news and details of future events between members. Contributions of content are always welcome.

In turn, the Newsletter carries the timetable of forthcoming talks and presentations, which is always full and varied, showcasing opportunities to encompass just about any interest. We are truly fortunate to have access to the number of speakers we do, with so much depth and breadth of knowledge, most of them local and many of them LA&LHS members. The November issue carries the talk calendar for 2024, so start filling up your new diary!

Meanwhile, LA&LHS volunteer members contribute time, experience, knowledge and many a talent for d.i.y and craft, plus curatorship and people skills, offering a warm welcome to visitors throughout the open season. Some of this work is obvious and witnessed publicly, some is completed discreetly and is unseen. None of it can be underestimated or taken for granted, and the LA&LHS would certainly be the poorer without it.

Everyone is generous enough to acknowledge the hard work of all those around them, but perhaps not each individual is aware that they too are being thanked and applauded. So, to all LA&LHS volunteers, committee members, speakers, community representatives, charity and council partners, congratulations on achieving what you have in 2023 and thank you.

Elizabeth Talbot

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

Chairman's report

Welcome to the 2023 annual report. I hope you enjoy the read. Special thanks must go to committee members, Jenny and David Hatton who have been collating and putting these reports together for many years now and do a great job of it too.

We have had 13 entertaining evenings in the hall this year, thanks to a diverse range of talks and speakers. All have been very well attended with members and visitors too. A majority of these talks are captured in 'write ups' which are included within this report, thanks to Rodney Duerden for putting these together.

In the summer, the society participated in two outings: Norfolk & Suffolk Aviation Museum at Flixton and a guided walk around St Margarets Churchyard in Lowestoft. It was great to see members outside of our normal meetings in the hall, and I hope we can plan similar events in 2024.

In September, committee members, Rodney and Marilyn Duerden and I attended The Yarmouth History Fare, running a stall with displays from our Society and The Lowestoft Museum. This gave us an opportunity to promote what we do here in Lowestoft.

Our website and Facebook page have continued to be a success this year playing their part in promoting our society and engaging people in what we do. Thanks to society member Dave Pyecroft for taking the time to build and maintain our website. Our Facebook page had its 10th Anniversary in September this year – it's been a pleasure to run this page for the last 10 years, it's been a great vehicle to promote talks and Lowestoft's history.

Our newsletters, kindly produced by Ron and Irene Ashman, have continued to also be a good outlet for people to share history, pictures, and stories.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the committee members for the work they have put in making this year a success and to all members and visitors for coming out and showing their support. I am very proud to be the chair of this society and continue its great legacy.

Richard Mundy – Chair

Members

Honorary Members

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

Members

Ms J Berrey	Mr N Bird
Mr T Calver	Mr D Chivers
Ms D Coad	Mr R Collins
Mr B Cook	Mr R Dearlove
Mrs M Duerden	Mr R Duerden
Ms P Ewels	Ms R Fallon
Mr D Hatton	Mrs J Hatton
Ms J Henwood	Mr K Jorgensen
Mr S Kent	Mrs J Kirby
Ms P Kirby	Mr J Knowles
Mrs M Knowles	Ms H Layzell
Mr P Layzell	Ms S Layzell
Ms C Lobel	Ms J Long
Mr S Lovewell	Mr R Mundy
Mrs I O'Toole	Mr J Partridge
Ms T Penman	Mr G Plant
Mr D Pyecroft	Mrs S Pyecroft
Mr P Rasbery	Mr J Read
Mr P Rump	Ms K Sharp
Mrs S Steward	Mr J Stone
Ms M Symonds	Ms H Townsend
Ms T Unitt	Ms J Walker
Mr G Webber	Mrs S Webber



18th C cottage at top end of Pakefield Street on seaward side of the Jolly Sailors

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2022 -2023

INCOME		
<u>2021/2022</u>		<u>2022/2023</u>
135.00	Membership Fees	735.00
257.00	Visitors	280.20
106.00	Annual Reports	102.00
44.00	Sundry and Gifts	28.00
0.28	Deposit Account Interest	0.00
240.00	Xmas Social College Meal March 2023	240.00
<hr/> 782.28		<hr/> 1385.20
	Cash and Bank Balances at 1/4/22	
	Cash in hand 145.12	
	HSBC Current Account 0.00	
	HSBC Deposit Account 0.00	
	NatWest Account 3984.57	
	<hr/> 4129.69	<hr/> 5514.89
EXPENDITURE		
<u>2021/2022</u>		<u>2022/2023</u>
305.00	Lecturers Fees	466.00
133.00	Charitable Donations	97.00
336.00	Room Hire	549.40
23.76	Postage, Printing and Stationery	9.64
65.52	Annual Report costs	36.23
20.40	HSBC Bank charges	0.00
0.00	Web site, IONOS charges	16.80
25.00	Suffolk Local History Council	25.00
240.00	Xmas Social. . . . College Meal March 2023	240.00
<hr/> 1148.68		<hr/> 1440.07
	Cash and Bank Balances at 31/3/23	
	Cash in hand 57.88	
	NatWest Account 4016.94	
	<hr/> 4074.82	<hr/> 5514.89

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

Laptop £180, Digital Projector £150.

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 2023 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.

Auditor

Date

Museum report

The museum closed, as usual, on October 31st but for the first time recently, opened during the Christmas period to join in with festive events in Oulton Broad. The first occasion on Saturday and Sunday December 10th and 11th was a pre-Christmas 'Fayre', involving stalls and activities on the Boulevard. Lowestoft Museum was invited to take part and as well as displaying items under a pergola outside. Broad House was opened up with a 'Santa' hunt for children organised by volunteers. After Christmas and before New Year, the Museum opened again and refreshed seasonal displays. There were 311 visitors over this period, including 94 children, and generous donations were given by them. The museum will be joining in again on December 10th. 2023. As a result of this extra opening, the yearly total of visitors was increased to 10,203, and income by £329.13 to £7,170.93.

A draft lease was sent from Oulton Broad/NEPT in mid-December for the Trustees to approve. There were factual inaccuracies and items of concern which were referred to their solicitor and subsequently solved. The new 10 year lease was necessary before Arts Council England would release the MEND funds to start work on repairing Broad House.

Lowestoft Museum opened on Saturday April 1st and on Sunday 2nd there was a display of saffron and the "Lowestoft Dingers" by Sally Francis.

The equipping of the Turner Room was completed before re-opening. A new glass cabinet and display boards were purchased, helped by grants from the Geoffrey Watling Charity in Norwich and from Andrew Gee's (Oulton Councillor and Trustee) locality budget. The former is in use for a presentation of Bally shoes, and the latter has photographs and documents about the company.

A former cupboard has been converted into a wall case by Paul Durbidge and Ray Adams to display items including games, puppets and a ventriloquist's dummy, next to which is a dolls house that children can inspect.

Downstairs in the Oulton Broad area, is a small display relating to the **Ardea**, one of the extant wherries built on Oulton Broad for Howard Hollingsworth, friend of Nicholas Everitt, who bought and donated his estate to Lowestoft in 1929. This display is being transferred to the Turner Room as part of winter work.

The first weekend of opening was very busy and there were 956 visitors of whom 145 were children in the two weeks of the Easter holiday. One family, who visited after a disappointing one to Norwich Museum, said how delighted they were with the Lowestoft Museum and all the activities available for children as well as the established displays of local history.

The new 10 year lease documentation was completed in June and soon after the first allocation of MEND funding arrived the Museum's bank account.

In May Bob Tozer organised a motorbike rally in Nicholas Everitt Park which attracted about 100 machines, while the museum displayed items relating to former engineering works in Lowestoft.

In June, volunteers were shown round the Royal Naval Patrol Museum in Sparrows Nest Park (H.M.S. Europa), another valuable site preserving the heritage of a significant part of Lowestoft's history.

Lowestoft Museum took part in the Heritage Open Days from September 8th to 17th, opening from 11am each day with volunteers covering the extra hours. There was a display of Bert Collyer's photographs of Old Lowestoft, which were set up in the Turner Room and remained for the rest of this term. Another volunteer and trustee, Julie Walker, ran a hands-on workshop making Suffolk Puff items. Also in September, there was an evening visit by a Brownie group and a morning visit by a very knowledgeable party from the Parson Woodforde Society.

On September 21st, representatives of the MEND Steering Committee met to interview two candidates for the post of Relationship Manager. Both were highly qualified and suitable for the role but the one selected, Dale Copley, has more experience of working on ACE/MEND projects. She is now in post, has met Trustees and chaired a meeting with ACE representatives to press on with the next appointment of a Qualified Lead Advisor to supervise the contractors and the repair work.

Sales in the shop (not all profit) totalled £3,298.81, up on last year but donations were slightly down at £3,305.99. The museum has successfully opened a separate bank account with CAF (Charities Aid Foundation) into which all the Museum moneys have been transferred, leaving only the MEND fund in the Barclays account.

The unusually fine weather in early October saw an increased number of visitors compared to other years, and when the Museum closed on October 31st, there had been 9,730 visitors, 24.1% of whom were children. The final annual total is likely to increase when the museum opens during the Oulton Broad Christmas Fayre on Saturday December 10th as well as a stall on the Boulevard. Between Christmas and New Year, (December 27th - 31st), the Museum will be open from 12 am to 3 pm featuring a Christmas Tree hunt similar to last year's Santa hunt.

MUSEUM ACCOUNTS

Balance Sheet

	2023 UNRESTRICTED £	2023 RESTRICTED £	2023 TOTAL £	2022 £
Current Assets				
Cash in hand				
Bank current account	14920.75		14920.75	8344.52
Business Reserve account			0.00	
National Savings Account	1910.76	8911.14	10821.90	14811.65
Totals	16831.51	8911.14	25742.65	23156.17
Current Liabilities				-1239.00
Net Current Liabilities	<u>16831.51</u>	<u>8911.14</u>	<u>25742.65</u>	<u>21917.17</u>
Funded by				
Balance as at 31 March 2023	16831.51	8911.14	25742.65	
Movement of funds	2586.48		2586.48	
The restricted funds represent £3026 MEND Match funding and £5885.14 for Turner Room				

INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023	2023 UNRESTRICTED FUNDS	2023 RESTRICTED FUNDS	2023 TOTAL	2022
	£	£	£	£
INCOME				
Donations and fundraising	4,066.84		4,066.84	2,185.09
M Turner		3,328.06	3,328.06	2,000.00
Grant for Marley Boards	700.00		700.00	
MEND Match funding		3,026.00	3,026.00	4,000.00
Interest from National Savings	10.25		10.25	1.75
Shop and book sales	<u>3,235.02</u>	-	3,235.02	<u>2,452.77</u>
	<u>8,012.11</u>	-	<u>14,366.17</u>	<u>10,639.61</u>
EXPENSES				
OB - share of donations	£1,090.00			1,090.00
Display and maintenance	4,398.21			12,890.54
Subscriptions	200.00			82.00
Insurance	1,421.08			1,300.20
Website	311.00			149.00
Valuation	1,974.00			60.00
Modes Users Association	89.00			87.60
Printing	65.00			
Banners etc				
(New CCTV cameras, screen				598.99
Fire check & Pat testing	846.00			208.74
Shop purchases	1,385.40			569.28
	-	-	-	-
	<u>11,779.69</u>	-	<u>11,779.69</u>	<u>17,036.35</u>
TURNER ROOM				
	£			
RESTRICTED FUNDS B/F	2,000.00			
income		Expenses		
Geoffrey Watling	1,000.00	Moyles Carpets	1,000.00	
L Carter	1,500.00	Morplan New Case	1,270.80	
Ferini postcards	1,280.14	Marler Hayley	746.28	
Postcard auction	<u>£605.00</u>	Move case	<u>40.00</u>	
Restricted funds carried forward	£ 6,385.14			
	£			
MEND MATCHED FUNDS B F	4,000.00			
Income		Expenses		
Adnams	1,000.00	Design		
		Foresightful		
		Architecture	1,974.00	
Restricted funds carried forward	£3,026.00			

Report of meetings

The Lowestoft 1960's Music Scene Part 2 (1965 to 1969) 26 January 2023 Richard Mundy

Richard had previously presented 'Part One' of this talk in 2022 (Write up for this was included in the 2022 annual report). Richard continued where he left off, but first briefly explained again the background of the talk. How he had scanned through the entertainment pages of every Lowestoft Journal from the 1960's in chronological order, making notes on all the different well-known musical acts that had played in the town, creating a solid database. He had also interviewed and collected memories from people who were around at the time. The focus of the talk was the two venues, The Royal Hotel and The South Pier.

We ended 'Part One' in December 1964, so we now pick up from January 1965. On 16th January 1965 to be precise, when the Newcastle band 'The Animals' played The Royal Hotel (8/6 admission) with support from a Norwich based band called 'The Decans'. The gig was well covered by the Lowestoft Journal with an interview, including pictures of the band.



As The Animals had had an international No.1 hit with 'House of The Rising Sun' in 1964, Richard highlighted the fact that an origin to the tune links back to Lowestoft and the now long-gone Public House of the same name, which was once in the beach village. Investigated and researched by folk song collector Alan Lomax.

The next gig of interest came on 27th March 1965 when the London based band 'The Yardbirds' played The Royal Hotel with support from 'The Statesmen' who were from the Sprowston area of Norwich. This gig came at a pivotal time in the history of The Yardbirds as they had just released their biggest hit 'For Your Love' and had appeared on 'Top of the Pops' a couple of days before. Also, in March that year their lead guitarist Eric Clapton left the band, so this gig at The Royal Hotel Lowestoft was one of the first in the band's history to feature Jeff Beck on lead.

On 17th July 1965, iconic 1960's female singer Marianne Faithfull played at The Royal Hotel. However, it appeared there were some sound issues and the crowd appeared displeased leading the singer to say, "You can throw things if you want"!



On the subject of female artists, Richard highlighted the local band 'The Rocking Birds' from Wrentham, who played many gigs at The Royal Hotel around this time and later had a career in Europe. They were Beverley Fox (Rhythm Guitar/Singer) and sisters Maureen Chatfield (Lead Guitar/Singer) and Pam Chatfield (Drums) They were marketed as 'Suffolks First all Girl Group' so were worthy of featuring in the talk. Special thanks goes to Beverley Fox (Now Sampson) for supplying Richard with several

pictures and documents relating to the band.



Other gigs featured in the talk at The Royal Hotel in 1965 were 'The Steam Packet Show' on 18th September, which included Long John Baldry, Brian Auger, Julie Driscoll and a very young Rod Stewart. Irish band 'Them' on the 23rd October which featured a young Van Morrison – support on that gig came from 'Easi Beats' from Pakefield.



As we get into 1966, The South Pier becomes the main venue for the big musical acts. A new club opens up on the pier called 'The Nautilus Club' which features evenings with well-known London DJs and some famous Groups. There is also a 'Nautilus Boutique' which opens up in St Peters Street where you can buy Mary Quant boots - although they cost 49/11. Some of the acts that played the club were 'Geno Washington and The Ram Jam Band' (19th December 1966) 'Cat Stevens' (3rd March 1967) The Moody Blues (28th April 1967). But a big gig came on Saturday 10th June 1967 when the London-based band 'Pink Floyd' played at the club. Although this was during the early days of the band, they still had a big following and some chart success. After playing in Lowestoft, they headed back to London to play a gig, the same night, at the UFO club on Tottenham Court Road – going on stage at 2am.

Another big group to play the Nautilus was North London group 'The Kinks' on 5th August 1967. The band had played at The Royal Hotel in 1965, but very early in their career, by this stage the band had had a string of hits, including many No.1s and a couple of albums. So, the admission fee was 12/6. The band were in The Harbour Inn pub getting drunk before the gig, according to a fan that Richard spoke to, so it has been said that this was not their best gig.



As we got later into the decade, it appears that less big musical acts come to Lowestoft. The Royal Hotel is used for dancing or other entertainment (eventually being demolished in 1973) The South Pier is used for wrestling or comedy – although it would come into prominence as a place that big groups would come to the town in the 1970's – but Richard is yet to research that talk!

Richard finished his talk by posing the question 'Did David Bowie ever play in Lowestoft?' Richard concluded that he did, but it was tricky to nail down the details as Bowie played in many different groups during the 60's and as a solo artist went under different names and there was conflicting information out there. But Richard concluded that the best date he could nail down was 23rd June 1966 when he was performing as 'David Bowie and The Buzz' the venue is not known – possibly The Royal Hotel.

To complement his presentation, Richard interjected music from some of the artists showcased. Including playing a 7" Yardbirds Single on a record player!

The Roman town of Caistor St Edmund (Venta Icenorum) 9 February 2023 Michael Pinner

Most archaeology involves something of a mystery tour which starts from known visible remains and gradually builds up into as complete a picture as the new discoveries allow. The tale which Michael Pinner told of Caistor was one of slow, painstaking work to fill in the many missing details mainly by the efforts of the Caistor Roman Project (CRP) of which he is the research director and chair. Each phase which he described involved obtaining funds for specialists and equipment which were able to build up step by step to arrive at the present position.

Venta Icenorum (market town of the Icenii, Boudicca's tribe), is one of only three Roman forts or settlements, together with Silchester (Calleva Atrebatum) and Wroxeter (Viroconium) not to have been subsequently built on into modern towns. The almost square walls, though reduced, are still visible and the association with Boudicca made the site the subject of much interest and speculation over the years. Was there a British 'town' there before the Romans came? And what was it about the site which attracted them? The map of Roman East Anglia showed a great deal more water, and speculation that the nearby River Tas gave access to the North Sea has been proved wrong.

This first map (on the left) gives a good idea of the fort itself and the position near to the river. Higher ground lies to the East and the railway line runs in the North West corner from which a passenger may glimpse the site and the low walls if conditions are right.



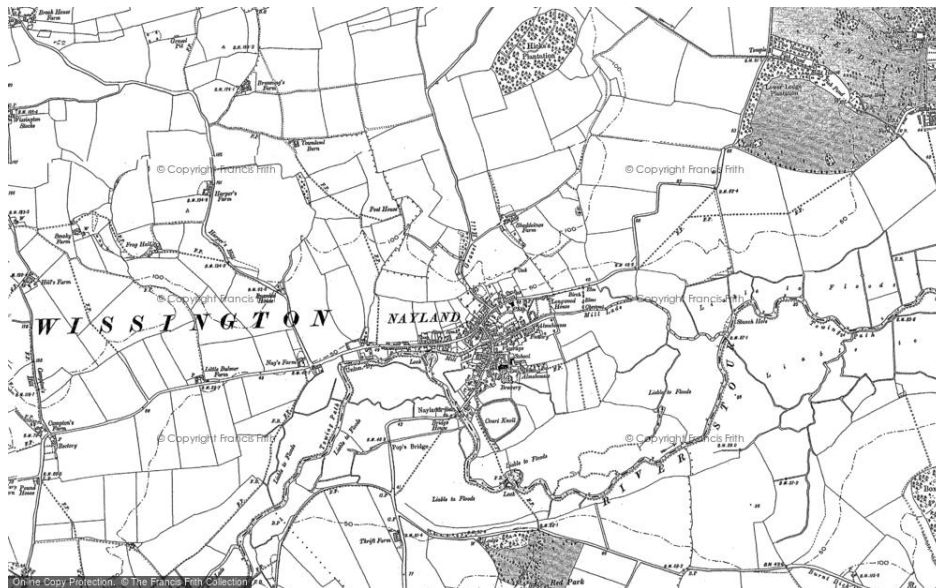
The second map (on the right) shows the marks of trenches and features discovered over the years, a complex picture which Michael unveiled stage by stage during his presentation.

Evidence presented showed that the gridded town was not laid out as a result of the Boudicca rebellion, as had been surmised in the past and the River Tas was not accessible to sea going vessels. Additional key findings showed that the early development was similar to other towns and also that an important person was resident. The forum fell into disuse early in the 3rd century but continued as a regional centre into the 9th century with middle Saxon presence. As Norwich developed having much more favourable geography, Caistor became less important.

There are still areas to explore and the CRP website (caistorromanproject.org) is a useful source of all excavation news and events.

Excavations at Court Knoll 23 February 2023 Jo Caruth

The presentation given by Jo Caruth was in several ways similar to the one about Caistor. Both involved teams of amateurs interested in their local history and wishing to find out more. Both needed to raise funding and employ archaeologists who could verify and advance their investigations. The two sites differ greatly from each other in that Caistor is a site of national importance, whereas Court Knoll is probably known to few outside that corner of South West Suffolk based on Nayland and Wissington. Judging by the subsequent evidence which successive 'digs' produced at Court Knoll, owing to the efforts of local residents, there may be a considerable number



of sites in East Anglia which might produce similar results if investigated.

Court Knoll is a rounded D shaped feature less than 100 metres from the River Stour which now forms the boundary between Suffolk and Essex. At the time of the Domesday Survey, which refers to who held the land before 1066 and the changes noted by 1086, Swein (or Suein) was lord of the manor or thegn, as had been his father Robert Fitz Wimarc before him. Robert had Norman connections, having served both Edward the Confessor and William as Sheriff of Essex and may be one of the figures on the Bayeux Tapestry next to the scene labelled:

'HIC EDWARDUS REX IN LECTO' The entry in the Domesday survey records :-
" Always 1 mill. Meadow, 10 acres. Now three horses at the hall;"

If Robert Fitz Wimarc laid the foundations for Court Knoll, it could be a rare example of a pre-Conquest ringwork. Much of the subsequent archaeological investigations were undertaken to establish the history of this feature and other remains associated with it. The local Nayland with Wissington Conservation Society set about liaising with the Dedham Vale and Stour Valley Countryside Project and Suffolk County Council to raise funds initially for a geophysical survey, which it was hoped would distinguish between historic buildings in situ and ground disturbance from trenches dug in 1924 by Major W.F.Dick. The latter had identified a large quantity of tile which subsequent studies have connected with Roman buildings in Colchester. In the 18th century, Philip Morant, an Essex historian, recorded a ruined chapel, and much of the recent archaeology presented by Jo Caruth was devoted to confirming this.

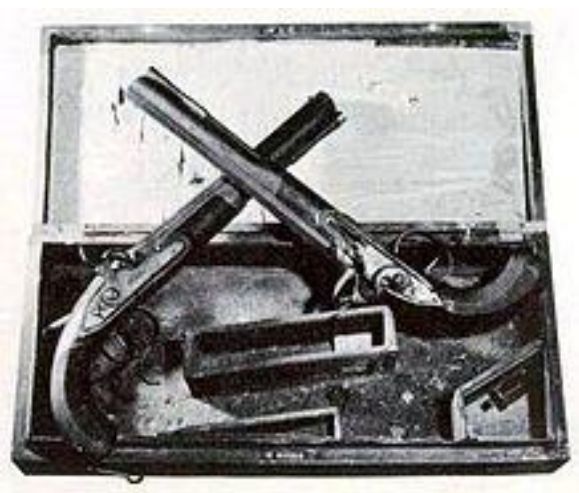
This is a short account of a fascinating talk, one which gives rise to the possibility of many such hidden gems in Suffolk. The full report is well worth reading as there are too many details from the talk to be accurately recorded here.

Archaeological & Documentary Report
Court Knoll, Nayland-with-Wissington, (SAM no.Suffolk 115) SMR no. NYW 006

Connections - The Man with the Pistols 10 March 2023 Ivan Bunn

This presentation began with 'the people behind the story' and when the story began, those people were in New York. Ivan was telling a tale which would weave and twist in different directions perhaps eventually with a Lowestoft connection?

The first image was of a map showing Manhattan Island c.1800 showing Weehawken, a small location on the New Jersey shore. There on July 11th 1804 a duel took place between Aaron Burr, Vice-President and Alexander Hamilton, former Secretary of the Treasury, over long standing political and personal differences. Hamilton fired into the trees above Burr but Burr's shot hit Hamilton in the stomach and he died the following day.



Wogdon and Barton duelling pistols



A later depiction of the scene

The pistols belonged to a certain John Barker Church (1748 - 1818), shown in the portrait below aged 26. Owing to his uncle John Barker, he had been set up in a profitable wholesale business in London but because of speculation on the stock markets and gambling, was declared bankrupt in August 1774. After fleeing to the United States, using the alias John Carter, he signed the Declaration of Independence under that name on July 4th 1776. In America he became wealthy again having been one of the three commissioners to audit provisions for the army of the North during the War of Independence. In September 1777 he resigned his commission and moved to Boston, where he not only added to his fortune, having secured a contract for provisioning the French forces, but met 21 year old Angelica Schuyler at the mansion of her father General Philip Schuyler and, failing to obtain his approval for marriage, eloped. They married, had eight children between 1778 and 1800 and resided at Belvidere in rural West New York, now listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Through connections with the well-known Schuyler family, (Elizabeth Schuyler married Alexander Hamilton in 1780) John Church became associated with Col. Jeremiah Wadsworth and formed a partnership to supply the French forces in America and two years later, increased their fortune by

supplying the Continental forces as well. He was employed in Paris during the negotiations which fixed boundaries in America and led to the Peace of Paris in 1783. As a result of his efforts, accounts to the value of £34,365 were settled, which enabled him to return to England where he settled in Down Place, Windsor, with his growing family.



In order to run for Parliament and contest the Wendover seat, he bought Claydon House, the former home of the Verney family. Between 1790 and 1796 Church used his business skills to advise the administration and make friends with people in high places, including the future George IV. He returned with his family to America in 1797, initially for a visit but turned it into a more permanent stay becoming a founder of the Manhattan Company and a director of the Bank of North America. A little earlier, he had accepted a mortgage on 100,000 acres of land in the Allegany area of Western New York state, against a debt owed him by his friend Robert Morris, and acquired the land when Morris failed to pay the mortgage. Church's eldest son, Philip travelled to the area and set about designing and constructing a planned village, based on Paris, which was named Angelica after his mother. In 1806 the

Churches began construction of the 30-room mansion Belvidere mentioned above, intended as a summer residence but became Philip and his family's home when it was partially completed in 1810. After the death of his wife in 1814, Church returned to England and died in London on April 27 1818, having made no will or letters of administration with an estate valued at only £1,500.

It was at this point that Ivan made the 'Connection' most relevant to the Society members present, which was that John Barker Church had been born in Lowestoft on October 30 1748 and baptised at St. Margarets Church. His father was Richard Church (1697 - 1774) and his mother Elizabeth Barker (1701 -1800) was the daughter of John Barker. Other connections followed, too numerous to report here, but which reveal the fascinating links which can be made when investigating family history, as members of the Society have also discovered.

In Search of Boudica 23 March 2023 Dr Natasha Harlow

Natasha's very detailed search for the identity of the famous Queen of the Iceni examined four main topics:-

- Queen Boudica and the British War of Independence,
- Classical History and Archaeology,
- Modern Myths,
- Feminism and Identity.

'Boadicea'
by John Opie
(1761-1807)



The earliest mention of Boudica can be found in the writings of Publius Cornelius Tacitus 56/7 - c. 117AD. In the memoir of his father in law - Gaius Julius Agricola who was a military tribune in AD 61, just after the Boudican revolt and governor in AD 78, and led a Roman army into Caledonia the furthest North so far - he mentions the destruction of Roman settlements and veterans but not Boudica herself. The longest description by someone with first-hand knowledge is to be found in Chapter 12 of his 'Annals of Imperial Rome' which records the events leading up to the Iceni revolting and attacking Colchester (Camulodunum), London (Londinium) and St Albans (Verulamium)



‘Auriga’ by Thomas Thornycroft (1815-1885)

Both these images reveal her status as an ikon reached by Boudica in the 18th and 19th centuries but images of the Queen of the Iceni are largely deduced from the description by Cassio Dio (c.155- c.235 AD) writing of her tall stature, flowing reddish hair and competence as a war leader. No archaeological traces of her are to be found. Natasha presented images of artefacts found at various sites in the Anglian region, including brooches, chariot

fittings and coins from the period of the ‘War’. The portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS), has a database of over 14,000 objects and a map of locations showed concentrations in the North Norfolk area as well as around Ipswich and other main centres .

Horses, often in abstract form, feature frequently on native coins of the Iron Age and other writers have described the tactics used by Britons when attempting to attack the massed infantry of a Roman legion in their chariots.

Although after Boudica’s death (Tacitus says by poison, Cassio from illness), it might be expected that the Iceni would have been exterminated, there are few gaps in the settlement pattern in the ensuing years. Though a lavish funeral and burial for Boudica was mentioned, no traces have so far been found.

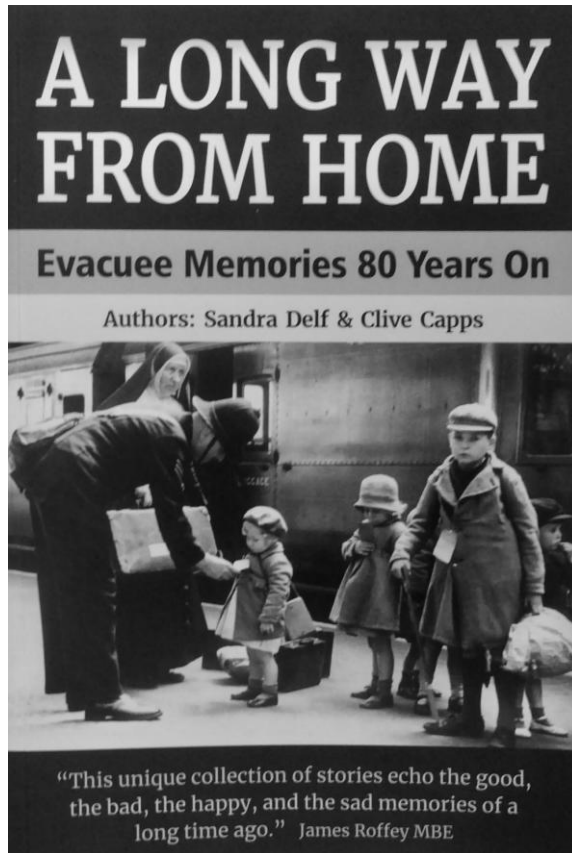


The dispute about the spelling of her name came about as the myths proliferated and tributes were paid in such as stained glass windows. Boadicea became normalised in popular accounts and it is only fairly recently that Boudica has been used in academic writing.

The final part of Natasha’s presentation featured female artefacts such as those representing Dea Nutrix (Mother or Nurse Goddess) which have been discovered in Norfolk. Modern identification with Boudica and her clan may be found in such products as ‘Iceni Water, Iceni Brewery, and ICENI pale ale’.

A very good account of Boudica (and Caistor St. Edmund) written by Jeremy Stone, can be found in the Annual Report for 2004 - 2005.

A Long Way from Home 11 May 2023 Sandra Delf



Sandra's presentation was about the evacuation of children from Lowestoft at the start of World War II using contemporary photographs of the evacuees and their own testimony.

This cover picture is from a collection of 34 stories of the Lowestoft children and their varying experiences in being evacuated to different towns mainly in Derbyshire.

There are also four stories of Dagenham children who sailed into Lowestoft, which was considered to be safe place at that time, over three days from September 1st 1939, as part of Operation Pied Piper. Even earlier, in May 1938, the Evacuation Committee was formed to prepare for a possible war, after the Anschluss (joining) of Germany and Austria in March of that year, and even after the 'Munich Agreement' later in the same year.

Once the war started, it was considered that Lowestoft - closer to parts of Belgium than London - was not a safe place. Children aged 5 to 15 went with their schools and teachers to various locations further North in Derbyshire and

Nottinghamshire, such as Glossop, Worksop and Clowne. Some siblings were separated, some were treated poorly, others so well that the foster family became lifelong friends often referred to as 'Auntie'. Each story, told by the evacuee, is a treasure of information which this short report could not convey adequately without copying in full from this valuable record.

Shackleton and the Antarctic 14 September 23 Jill and Richard Mann



Richard presented, with over 130 slides, a comprehensive picture of the three expeditions to Antarctica in which Ernest Henry Shackleton was involved between 1901 and 1916. Firstly, we were presented with facts about Antarctica, a very large continent, 5.4 million sq. miles, not only the coldest but driest, windiest and with the highest average elevation. Although achieving first at the South Pole was a goal for national pride, the British expeditions carried out an amazing amount of scientific work. * See references below, especially 'The Worst Journey in the World', not Scott's epic march but one to obtain an emperor penguin egg which are only laid during the dark polar winter). Shackleton achieved some success with two further

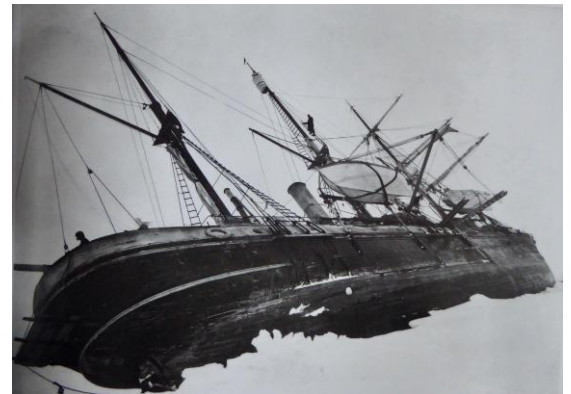
treks to 82° South with Scott and Wilson in 1902 and 88° South with Wild (Shackleton's 'right-hand man'), Marshall and Adams.

The story of Shackleton's life and polar journeys was vividly told with the images provided of which only a few iconic ones are attached here. His father was from Yorkshire but moved to Kilkea, County Kildare to be a farmer as his health did not allow him to be a soldier. Ernest was born there in February 1874 but when he was 8 years old the family moved to Dublin where Henry Shackleton trained to be a doctor. On qualifying, they moved back to England, Sydenham in SE London. Ernest always identified himself as being Irish even though his time there was limited.

By 1901 he was an experienced sailor and joined Scott's first Polar expedition aboard *Discovery*, as second in command. A select group set off for the Pole but after a very arduous trek of 960 miles, men hauling sledges, he had to be invalided back to New Zealand. His next journey, starting in 1907, was regarded as "un-sporting" by some for 'poaching' on Scott's territory before the latter's planned expedition of 1910. As well as another attempt to reach the Pole, two groups on the expedition located the South Magnetic Pole and surveyed a previously unexplored range of mountains.

The *Endurance* expedition of 1914 - 1917, the one for which Shackleton is mainly remembered as a 'Heroic Failure', set out just as war was declared. The offer to remain and help in the war effort was turned down and so *Endurance* proceeded to New Zealand and the harbour at Lyttelton before aiming for the Weddell Sea. The perceived failures of previous expeditions may have been due to using the wrong clothing, food or transport but this time luck was against *Endurance* which became trapped in exceptionally difficult pack ice and even after months of drifting roughly west and north, was finally crushed and sank. (The remains have recently been identified on the sea bed).

The rest of this expedition has become firmly fixed in the British consciousness thanks to the presence of Frank Hurley who photographed all of the expedition except the epic sea voyage in *James Caird* to South Georgia, waiting with the other 22 men on Elephant Island for rescue. The whole crew returned to Britain in 1917 and immediately joined naval forces in the Great War, three of whom died in action.



Endurance trapped and rolled by ice

After the war, Shackleton was determined to make another Arctic trip. One to Northern Russia where he had been involved during the War, was foiled by the Russian Revolution and alternative plans for Arctic Canada lost support there when a new government was formed. Rather than linger at home he set off in *Quest* (formerly *Goshawk*) to map the 1915

Antarctic coastline looking for suitable sites for bases, mineral deposits, even guano. The ship failed to deliver its promised speed and between Rio and South Georgia, Shackleton became more and more ill and died from heart failure on January 4th 1922. He was buried on South Georgia at his wife Emily's request.

Recommended reading:

South by Ernest Shackleton

Shackleton his Antarctic writings

South with Endurance The Photographs of Frank Worsley

These and other books about Antarctic exploration can be borrowed from Rodney Duerden

Daniel Malden – the exploits of a Suffolk criminal 28 September 2023 Pip Wright

Several speakers have used music to illustrate their talks but Pip Wright may be the first to open and finish with a song accompanying himself on guitar. This made the talk about Daniel Malden, a Suffolk boy born in 1712, based on Pip's book of the same name, all the more enjoyable. The book, which is out of print but can be obtained online, is a dramatised account of Daniel's life based on researched facts with aspects filled in from contemporary documents.



The cover picture shows a cart taking condemned prisoners from Newgate prison to Tyburn, the site of public hanging which was near to the modern Marble Arch. The two mile journey and execution was a spectacle much enjoyed by large crowds in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Daniel was born in Ipswich to a joiner and it was intended that he would follow his father's trade but he entered the merchant navy, after which he was apprenticed as a sail maker in Harwich. Apprenticeships were usually for seven years and at a distance from home to deter absconding. However, at the age of 12 he was caught stealing from shops (*Ipswich Borough Records*), and sentenced to a punishment of being whipped and serving three months hard labour.

At some point he learned to ride and was hired as a jockey, taking part in cross-country races for wealthy owners who bet on the outcome. One such race was from Bungay to Norwich, another from Newmarket to Six-Mile Bottom and back. He certainly got a taste and skill for riding horseback which led him to become as infamous as Dick Turpin for holding up travellers in similar locations between home and London, mostly in Essex and operating as a jockey at the same time. Perhaps this activity became too dangerous. Dick Turpin hid himself away in York and Daniel took to burglary mainly in the Whitechapel area of London.



Much of the subsequent information was gleaned by Pip Wright from County Records and one of the most useful of sources, but perhaps not the most reliable, were confessions of condemned prisoners to the 'Ordinary' (a prison chaplain). These were a source of income which was readily exploited and gave the person about to be executed or transported for life, an opportunity to gain some sympathy. In Daniel's 'confession' (in a document held in Cambridge University Library), we learn of two daring escapes from Newgate. Even though he was wearing heavy iron shackles, the first via the floor of his cell and then across roof tops and the second from an even stronger cell into the sewers beneath. In the course of this latter escape, Daniel came across the bodies of two out of four earlier escapees who didn't make it. In Pip's book, Daniel had help from 'Madge' (possibly a Mary mentioned in contemporary accounts) with tools to assist his escapes.

Daniel remained at large for a while but was arrested in Canterbury in September 1736. He was taken to London, tried and condemned to death. The concluding song, composed and played by Pip

Wright, contains the melancholy line about someone whose life ended “at twenty-three on Tyburn Tree”.

Old Lowestoft Slide Show 12 October 2023 Bert Collyer



Bert displayed 86 of the many images he has saved and processed over the years depicting the history and activities of Lowestoft from c. 1880 unto the 1960's. For those who are born and bred in the town, the photographs are a reminder of what has gone, what has changed and what still remains of a distinctive Suffolk port.

This report includes just a few of the 86 shown to the Society - selected to show some of the places and events which have been memorable in the history of the town.

The main promenade in c.1910, with Edwardian costume, the Triton statue and the sails of fishing boats in the background



The High Street looking South towards the Town Hall with tram lines (after 1903), horse-drawn carts and soldiers in uniform, probably Edwardian or just before WW1.

A view of the Steam Laundry on Whaplode Road on the morning after the great flood of January 31st 1953. The workers have been collecting the laundry boxes, dispersed by the flood which also led to the decision to demolish the Beach Village which lay behind them. Only a small section of the laundry wall remains and the site of the village is now dominated by the large Bird's Eye factory.





Another casualty of the same flood, in Bridge Road, Oulton Broad almost two miles from the sea but next to the Broad and Waveney flood plain.

On the 70th anniversary of the Great Flood, there was a display of photographs, documents and accounts in the Old Court buildings now known affectionately as “The Grit” in honour of the Beach Village which was not far away.



Not far from the Steam Laundry, with the gasworks (now demolished) in the background. This would have been a familiar sight – “Fisher Girls” packing herring into boxes which would then have travelled on the railway designed by Sir Morton Peto to connect Lowestoft to many more markets than was possible beforehand.

Pablo Fanque and the Victorian Circus

26 October 2023 Gareth Davies



The name of Pablo Fanque is known to a fair number of people in this country because of a sequence of events which started in an antique shop in Sevenoaks where, in January 1967, John Lennon noticed and bought a poster advertising a circus to be held in Rochdale. The poster shows the lyrics of the song on ‘Sergeant Pepper’ almost word for word, and including the name Pablo Fanque.

What Gareth meticulously brought to light in his presentation, was the life and history of a black man, born in Norwich in 1810 and named William Darby. How he became Pablo Fanque and ran a successful equestrian circus was the first part of this informative talk. In spite of his fame at the time, and the resurrection of his name in the Beatles’ “For the benefit of Mr. Kite” song, only a few passing references to his early life are available.

William's parents, John Darby and Mary Stamp were married in St. Stephen's Norwich on 29 March 1791. Although John Darby had been described at one point as a butler, living on Ber Street, by the date of William's birth, during national hardship partly caused by the Napoleonic Wars, and even after 1815, the family were dependent on St. Andrew's workhouse, now part of N.U.A. William must have shown some talent and aptitude for horses as he was apprenticed to William Batty the circus and equestrian proprietor, at an early age. Circus families were close knit ones and most children would be trained from an early age, as young as three, to perform the tumbling tricks which delighted the public. 'Hard Times' (1854) by Charles Dickens depicts the camaraderie of circus families in contrast to the wealthy citizens of Coketown.



Gareth proceeded to describe the sorts of entertainment then available and the employment of juveniles in the various activities to which the Victorian public became devoted. William would have been trained first as an acrobat before going on to the equestrian events which employed considerable agility. Many of these 'tumblers' originated as street performers before entering the areas with the main circus events. One of these was known as 'Risley style' or 'Street Risley' after Prof. Risley (Richard Riley Carlisle), an American, who would lie on his back and tumble his two daughters on his hands. Another attraction performed both out in the open and inside circuses was rope walking often by girls and young women. Gareth related occasions when the performer almost came to grief, saved only by strength of hand holds. Another specialist in horse riding skills was Philip Astley an ex-cavalry man whose methods were adopted by performers such as William.



As William grew in ability he took on the name 'Pablo Fanque' which distinguished him from other equestrian performers. By 1842, the date of the poster featuring "Mr. Kite" in Rochdale, he is running his own circus and travelling wherever a suitable building could be hired, the ideal diameter being 42 feet, a measurement still favoured today. In moving around the country, 'Pablo' would hire suitable buildings some constructed of timber and used for other purposes between circuses. In March 1848, the building in which he and his troupe were performing in Leeds, collapsed and the two ladies running the ticket desk were hit by falling beams. One survived, the other Susannah, Pablo's wife, was killed.

William did marry again and continued to innovate but he was much better at performing than managing the business and was often in financial difficulty. In addition, competition from larger American groups made earning a living more difficult and when he died in 1871 of bronchitis, he was in debt rather than able to leave a legacy to his second wife Elizabeth or surviving children.



For further information '*Pablo Fanque and the Victorian Circus, A Romance of Real Life*' by Gareth H.H. Davies, is highly recommended.

“Not a Small Thing”: the story of the Lowestoft Kindertransport 9 November 2023 Andy Pearce

Many inhabitants of Lowestoft are aware that in December 1938, a number of children fleeing persecution in Nazi occupied Vienna, arrived at the Central Station in a train from Harwich after a long and difficult journey. They were only in Lowestoft for about three weeks before moving on to more permanent homes but their story has resonated with people in this town and the display board at the station is a detailed reminder of the reasons behind their move to a new country.

Their story was told in great detail by Andy Pearce, giving his very first talk to the Society, starting in January 1938 before the *Anschluss* and the persecution of Jews in Vienna and Austria reached a climax which resulted in the Kindertransport remembered here. The full talk with illustrations is 53 pages, too large for this Annual Report, but possibly one which could be given pride of place in a future edition.

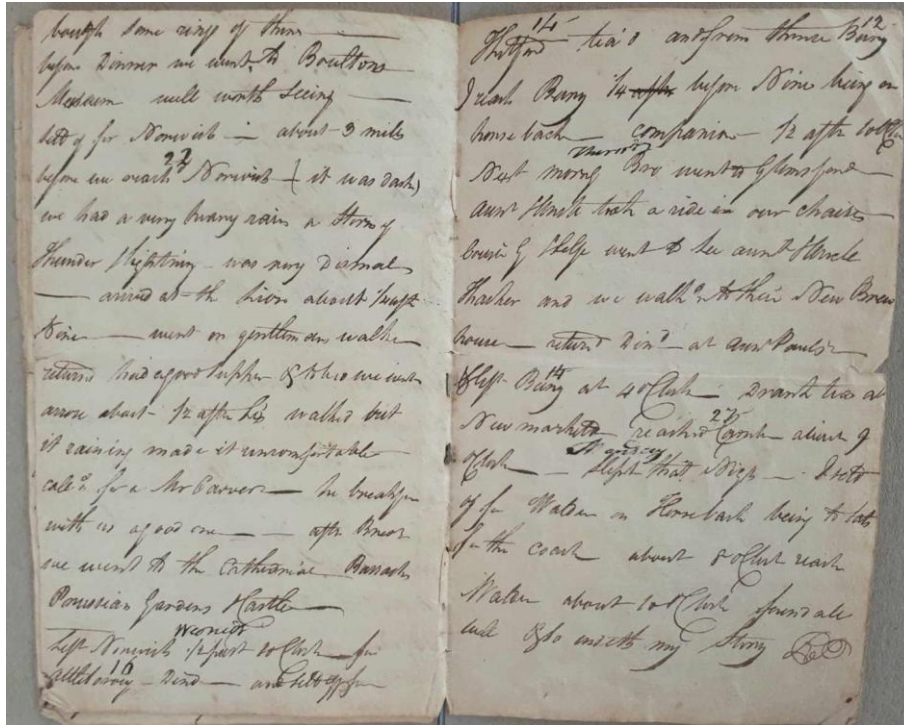
“ The good people of Lowestoft gave us kippers. We thought this was an attempt to poison us”.



A Seaside Excursion 1797 23rd November 2023 David Butcher

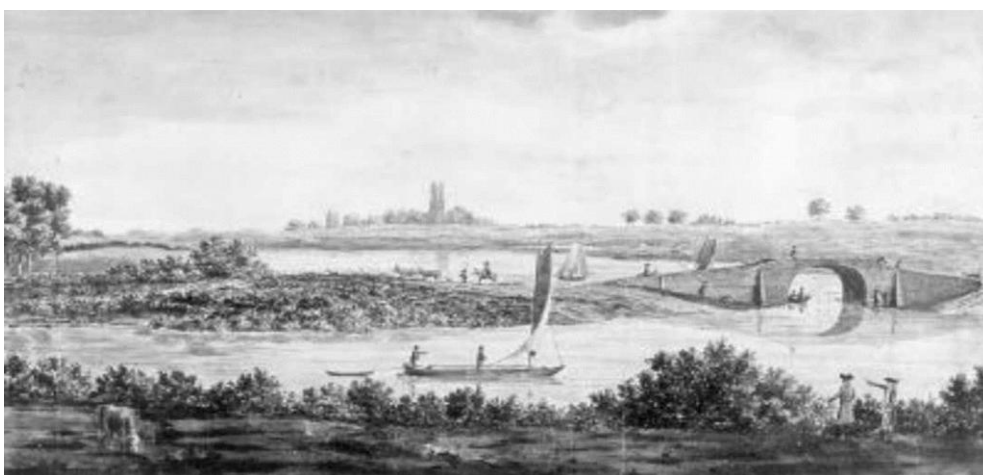
This illustrated talk was a live re-telling of the journey made by Robert Paul (aged 19) and his brother from Saffron Walden to Lowestoft and back in August 1797. The text of the small document, only

four pages and a commentary on it appears in the Annual Report, Vol. 54 published in January 2023.

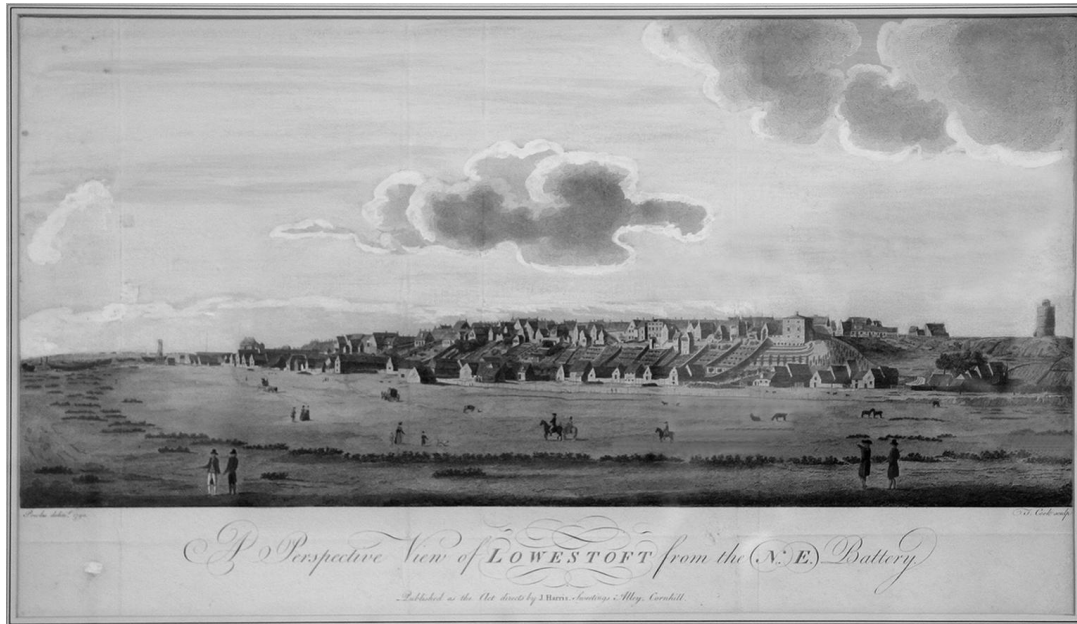


A section of the original document in the travellers own hand, with his idiosyncratic abbreviations and spelling, the task of deciphering which David Butcher achieved so well at the talk. This brief summary is intended to draw attention to

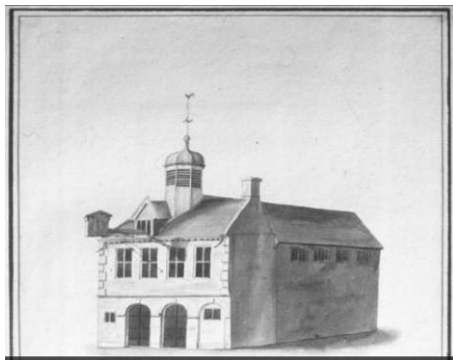
some of the places Robert Paul visited in the Lowestoft area and to direct the reader's attention to the full report in AR 54.



A view of a former Mutford Bridge, with Lake Lothing and St. Peter's Church in the background.



A contemporary view of Lowestoft towards S.W. from the N.E. Battery. Robert and his brother seemed particularly attracted to military and naval operations and would visit them wherever possible but the cost of boarding a frigate in Great Yarmouth was too great. They stayed at *The Crown* and could see the North Sea from a window., visited the pottery and bought "A Trifle from Lowestoft"



Lowestoft Council Chamber

They continued to Great Yarmouth then on to Norwich and returned home via Bury St. Edmunds. At each stage of the journey, they noticed and remarked on the notable buildings and churches, showing an interest which modern teenagers might not.

Silver and Bronze

The article that follows is a transcription of two talks given to the Society on 27 April 2023.

The Silver Cradle by Ron Ashman

In January 2020, the Lowestoft Museum received a letter from a solicitor in Surrey stating that Olive Fry had bequeathed to the museum in her will a silver cradle that had been presented to her grandfather, Charles Young Fry, in 1899 when he was Mayor of Lowestoft, to commemorate the birth of her father Donald.

Charles Young Fry was born in 1857 in Alresford, Essex and later had an Outfitters (tailors) shop in Swindon. He married Cordelia Laverick in 1882 and their son was born in 1887. Sadly, Cordelia died the day after the son was born. He named his son Charles Laverick Fry, Laverick being his mother's maiden name.

At some point between 1887 and 1890 Charles Young Fry moved to Lowestoft where in 1891 he was resident at 70 & 71 High Street, a shop that had previously been trading as T. Hodgson, tailor and hatter. Here he is recorded as an Outfitter. Also living at this address was his son Charles, his brother Walter Fry and Carrie Paul, the Housekeeper who came from Camborne, Cornwall. The premises were on the corner of Rant Score and the High Street, on the south side, opposite the Old Blue Anchor public house. This was a prime spot as the High Street was the main shopping area at the time in Lowestoft. Charles was also of the Wesleyan faith and a chapel was situated close to the shop. Wesley House, a retirement home, now occupies the chapel site.

In 1894 Charles married Caroline Mary Tyack in Camborne, Cornwall. It is a matter of conjecture whether the housekeeper played a part in their meeting! Charles became involved with community affairs and by 1896 he had been elected as a councillor for the North Ward on the Borough of Lowestoft Council, sitting as a Liberal. He also served as a Justice of the Peace and was appointed to the Lowestoft School Board.



In 1899 Charles Young Fry was appointed Mayor of Lowestoft, the year that son Donald Bernard was born. To commemorate the birth of his son the Council presented Charles and Caroline with the silver cradle.

The inscription on the Silver Cradle Plaque is:-

PRESENTED TO
Mr & Mrs Charles Young Fry
The Mayor and Mayoress of Lowestoft
BY MEMBERS OF THE TOWN COUNCIL
JUSTICES OF THE PEACE AND FRIENDS
In commemoration of the Birth of a Son
DONALD BERNARD FRY
DURING THEIR OFFICIAL YEAR
1898 – 1899



Charles Young Fry in his mayoral robes.

In 1911, the Fry family consisted of Charles and Caroline, together with five children, Charles Laverick, Eric Rosewarne, Dorothy Vivian, Donald Bernard and Edith Mildred. By 1913, the Fry family had moved to live at 1 Station Road, Lowestoft, and the shop at 70 & 71 High Street was now owned by Thomas Lake who advertised as selling Fashionable Men's Wear & Juvenile Attire.

Station Road links Yarmouth Road to Corton Road. Up until 1970, Lowestoft had a North Railway Station which was on the line from Lowestoft Central to Southtown Station in Great Yarmouth, passing through Corton, Hopton and Gorleston. The last train ran in May 1970 and within two years the station had been demolished. The only part of this line that remains in Lowestoft is the cutting going from Yarmouth Road to North Quay Retail Park and Normanston Park, which is now used as a footpath. The area where the North Station once stood is now residential and one road is named Beeching Drive. If this was intended as a 'dig' at Dr Beeching, it failed as this line was not closed in Dr Beeching's report. In Gorleston, the trackway that had been in the railway cutting is now used as the A47 - the Gorleston by pass.

In 1914 or 1915, the Fry's moved to Heathfield in Sussex then Mayfield in Sussex where he became involved in a gentleman's outfitting business. He also took a keen interest in parish matters and was officially associated with the Horticultural Society. Nominally a Wesleyan, he attended the Congregational Church but he was also an accredited lay preacher on the Tunbridge Wells Methodist Circuit. Caroline died in 1923 and Charles died in 1933, aged 77 years.

Donald Bernard Fry joined the army in 1915. On his attestation papers, dated 2 September 1915, his previous trade or calling was given as 'just left school', with his home address as 1 Station Road, Lowestoft. He enlisted into the Royal Engineers, as a wireless operator, with the regimental number 113983. Donald gave his age as 17 years, when in truth his age was 16 years and 5 months, (his birth date was 9 April 1899). His religion was given as Wesleyan. The service record of Donald shows that after finishing his training on 27 October 1916, he was posted to the British Expeditionary Force in France and Flanders. He returned home on 7 March 1919 and on 1 April 1919 was discharged on the grounds of being no longer physically fit for war service due to gun shot wounds to both hands

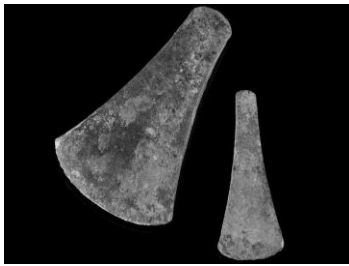
After leaving the Army Donald became involved with the new technology of radio. In 1922, it was reported in a local newspaper that he had managed to receive a radio signal from station WOR located in Newark, New Jersey, USA using a three-valve receiver. Donald's career continued in radio as in the 1939 Register he is recorded as a Radio Service Engineer. Donald had married Muriel Winchester in 1929. The Sussex Express printed a report of the wedding and included a list of presents, together with the names of who gave these. Donald and Muriel had two daughters, Audrey and Olive, and it was Olive who donated the Silver Cradle to the Lowestoft Museum.

Donald died in 1993.

BRONZE by Rodney Duerden

The majority of Society members would immediately think of the Bronze Age, which is usually divided into Early, Middle or Late according to various typological criteria based on axes and pottery.

Early Bronze Age axes



Middle Bronze Age palstave



Late Bronze Age socketed axe

The Somerleyton Bronze Hoard, discovered in August 1926 by a gardener working at the Rectory, comprises 32 items of mostly damaged weapons and tools, most likely intended for re-smelting into new ones. The gardener notified the Rector – Rev Gerald Halsey - about the finds and he considered that more expert advice was needed to establish their cultural value. Several letters passed between Somerleyton and London, handwritten ones from the Rector and typed ones from the British Museum.



Somerleyton Old Rectory – now a private house

A transcription of the initial letter

Oct 12th 1927

Dear Sir,

I am grateful to you for your letter of 10th Oct. re the Bronze weapons found at Somerton.

There is a photograph of the lot which was taken by a Lowestoft photographer of which I hope to be able to send you a copy, but am not quite certain whether the negative is still existent. It was reproduced in the East Anglia Daily Times of Nov. 2nd 1926 which I suppose you could easily have turned up for you at the Museum. This would show you fairly clearly what we have got.

The following is a catalogue of them, according to your request:—

Socketed Celts, with handle. 10(+ 1 which you have) Total 11.

Winged Celts 2

Fragments, larger or smaller, all I think, 1

of socketed Celts.) 8

Gouges. 2

Handle of sword 1

Flat bits of bronze(?) Blades?) 8

Total pieces 32

The pieces I have, in this box, weigh just 11 lbs. I think I shall have no difficulty in sending you the lot, which I think would be the more satisfactory plan. If necessary I will divide them into two packets for parcel post.

In this way you will be able to make what arrangements you like about photography, drawing, & publication, without prejudice to the ultimate disposal of them — & I personally do not feel competent to give you even a preliminary description

of them, but I may say that they were found in the garden of this house, about 5 feet below the surface, on or about August 24th 1926. They were all within a very small compass, but not actually discovered together; and I saw no trace of any urn or receptacle.

If it would be of any interest to you to come & investigate the spot, we should be delighted to accommodate you at any time which would be convenient to you, for as long as you like —

Believe me

Yours faithfully
Gerald Halsey

Reginald A Smith Esq.

P.S. My wife has satisfactorily packed the pieces & they are not overweight so I send them with this.

East Anglia Times November 6th 1926

INTERESTING FIND AT SOMERLEYTON. BRONZE AGE IMPLEMENTS.



(Spashett, Lowestoft.)
A photograph of the Somerleyton "find."

A find of first-rate archaeological interest has been made in the grounds of Somerleyton, no fewer than 27 bronze implements, some wonderfully preserved, having been found 5 feet below the surface of the Rectory garden.

The discovery was made by the Rector, the Rev. Gerald Halsey, whose residence is within the confines of Somerleyton Park, the home of Lord Somerleyton.

Digging operations which had to do with certain alterations Mr. Halsey wished carried out were in progress, and he was being assisted by two men. It was during the removal of a shrub that Mr. Halsey turned up what appeared to be a small piece of copper, the fashioning and shape of which at once excited his curiosity. He thereupon instructed the men to proceed very carefully, adding: "I think you will find some more like this." His surmise was correct, for, as the result of some excavating, he found 27 specimens of prehistoric bronze implements, some chisel-like in shape, and others parts of swords or spears. They were found at a depth of five feet, and within a radius of about a yard.

It is suggested that the good state of preservation of most of the specimens is due to the fact that for upwards of 3,000 years they have lain on a bed of sandy soil. A few of the specimens have been forwarded to the British Museum, and the reply received stated: "If found together, they are of the late bronze age; date about 1,000 B.C." The implements were described as: (1) socket celts, (2) part of winged celt, (3) handle of sword, and (4) socketed gouge. The socketed celts are in very good preservation. Asked if the find led to the location or identity of any race of people, Mr. Halsey said he did not know, but that may be ascertained. Meanwhile, he is retaining the collection, having as yet not finally decided as to their disposal. They will, in all probability, find their way into one of the county museums. It is believed that bronze weapons and utensils should be associated with a certain race rather than with an age, and the belief is expressed that bronze came into Europe with a race of Norsemen.

Mr. Guy Maynard, Curator of Ipswich Museum, having been shown the photograph here published, kindly made the following statement:

The discovery of a "hoard" of Bronze Age implements at Somerleyton is a welcome addition to the scanty list of such finds in East and Mid-Suffolk. The range of objects presented (socketed axes and fragments of winged axes, gouge, and parts of a sword) is closely similar to those in the hoard discovered at Felixstowe, where, however, the socketed bronze axes and gouge were also accompanied by a spear head, knives, a bronze saw, and

fragments of other implements, and rough metal from the casting process. At Thorndon the socketed axe and gouge were accompanied by a rare and remarkable socketed hammer, a socketed knife, and a spear head. At Butley fifteen bronze celts are said to have been found, but at Martlesham the socketed celt and gouge association occurred again, together with rough metal. The foregoing, together with a small hoard of broken socketed celts found on Bishop's Hill, Ipswich, appear to be all the hoards recorded for the East and centre of Suffolk, but an important find of earlier date was made at Poslingford Hall, near Clare, where nineteen bronze axes of the flanged type, which preceded the socketed form, were discovered about 1845.

Down the West side of the county the finds of both hoards and isolated weapons have been much more abundant—probably another indication of the "open" nature of the country as contrasted with the densely wooded central parts. This greater frequency of recorded finds continues to the South-West along the Icknield Way country and Dr. Cyril Fry maps 28 hoards in, or adjacent to, this chalk belt, while 7 others are marked in the fens near Ely and Wilburton.

The date of the Somerleyton finds may be placed near, but after 1000 B.C. in the later part of the Bronze Age of Britain. It is one of many finds characterised by the presence of the socketed celt or little axe and the leaf-shaped bronze sword, which is held to mark an invasion from the Rhine area about 1000 B.C.

The Bronze hoards have been of considerable assistance in establishing the sequence and appropriate dating of the various bronze weapons used in this country, as they usually include a number of different forms of older and newer types in association.

They have been divided into:—
(1) Personal hoards, where the equipment or belongings of some one individual appear to have been buried either for security or ritual purposes.
(2) Merchants' hoards, where numbers of new cast or unused implements are found, probably hidden by travelling vendors of bronze objects.
(3) Founders' hoards, consisting of bronze scrap and broken or worn-out implements, hidden, perhaps, by itinerant bronze smelters who did not wish to carry much metal from district to district, but intended to retrieve their property at a later date.

As the map recording and comparative study of such discoveries is the only way by which the reconstruction of the early chapters of the Suffolk story can be attained, I again urge all those who have knowledge of the finding of implements of stone and metal, pottery, burials, and ornaments which may be of ancient date, to communicate with the office of the Ipswich Museum, so that the record lists of the county finds may be kept as complete as possible.

by specialist from the British Museum



One item found in the hoard - visible at the lower right corner of the main picture - was not made of bronze. It is a scrap of textile, catalogued as linen, which was stuffed into the socket of one of the most complete axe heads. Wood and textile seldom survive from the prehistoric period, so these scraps were significant enough to be conserved and arranged between glass plates.

A more recent and much more interesting discovery was made at Must Farm near Peterborough – a site dubbed “the British Pompeii” – a complete settlement built over water in the Fens, was engulfed by fire and sank into the water, never to be visited or rebuilt. Remains of wooden buildings, metal working, textiles and food, as well as ceramic vessels, are being recovered and preserved for future study.

UNUSUAL STONE FROM PAKEFIELD – Paul Durbidge

Over recent years, Adrian Charlton has made a number of archaeological finds at Pakefield and was part of a small group that revealed evidence of the earliest humans in Northern Europe some 20 years ago.

Early last year, he showed me a heavy, oval-shaped mineral, measuring 23cm by 12cm and 6 cm thick. It appeared to be a type of gritty sandstone, light brown in colour, and was picked up from the base of the cliff line. At first, I thought it may have been used as a stone rubber, used to grind corn. But whilst this may be so, a low torch light shone on one surface showed several curved grooves scoured into the surface; narrow at one end and widening out towards the opposite end. It came from an area which has produced previous archaeological material and this may well have ancient origins, though to which period is, as yet, uncertain.



A silver penny of Athelred II Last small cross, issued about 1009 -1017CE, found at Bloodmoor Hill in 2002 has been given to Lowestoft Museum by Adrian Charlton and will be added to the Bloodmoor Hill display next season. The coin was identified by Dr Martin Allen and Mr Andrew Brown of the Portable Antiquities Scheme.

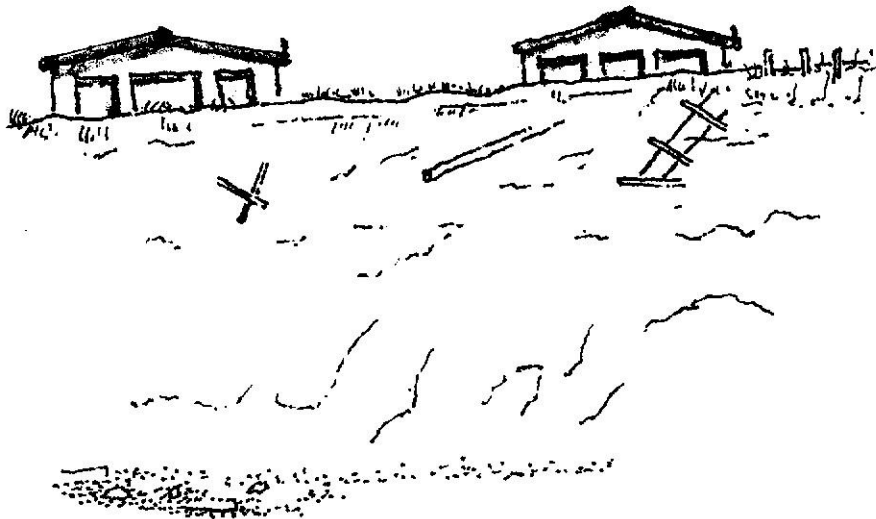
Coin – Specific Information:

Ruler:	Aethelred II (The Unready)
Mint:	Ipswich (Early Medieval)
Moneyer:	Leofsige
Obverse inscription:	+ Edelred Rex Ang
Reverse inscription:	+Leofsige Mon Gipe

Pakefield Beach – 7 March 2023 Paul Durbidge

The beach at Pakefield is mostly made up of sand and gravel, whilst the actual cliffs are made up of sand, much of which often leads to considerable loss during high water and heavy rain. This combination often results in the clay base of the cliffs being exposed.

Walking along the beach up to the recently-installed rock armour, it is clear to see where sea action has removed a vast amount of sand and shingle from the beach, leaving a shelf just over six feet above the present beach level. This gradually lessens further Northwards and reduces to less than three feet after some 200 feet or so. Where the rock armour has been positioned at the base of the cliff there have been more falls of the soft cliff Southwards, leaving a 60 foot slatted fence and posts right on the edge of the cliff line, with other posts hanging over the edge.



From the Southern edge of the armour at low water mark, two long sections of reinforced concrete (originally from the shooting butts) have been positioned at the end of the rocks running parallel to the cliff line. These now stand six feet out of the beach to add to the defensive line.

Regardless of this, the cliffs continue to fall, right up to the site of the shooting butts and beyond, where sizeable amounts of small shrubs and bushes lie tangled on the beach below after falling from higher ground. The top section of the cliff supporting the caravan site has various trenches exposed with areas of black polythene blowing in the wind, where it had been laid in various service trenches. Long sections of brown plastic sewer pipes jut out from the upper cliff with others lying on the slopes of the cliff and on the beach below.

The Ruined Church of Flixton St Andrew - by Paul Durbidge

Three miles North West of Lowestoft stands the ruins of Flixton Church; standing alone in a small field and connected only by a farm track to the Oulton to Blundeston road – and quite difficult to find!

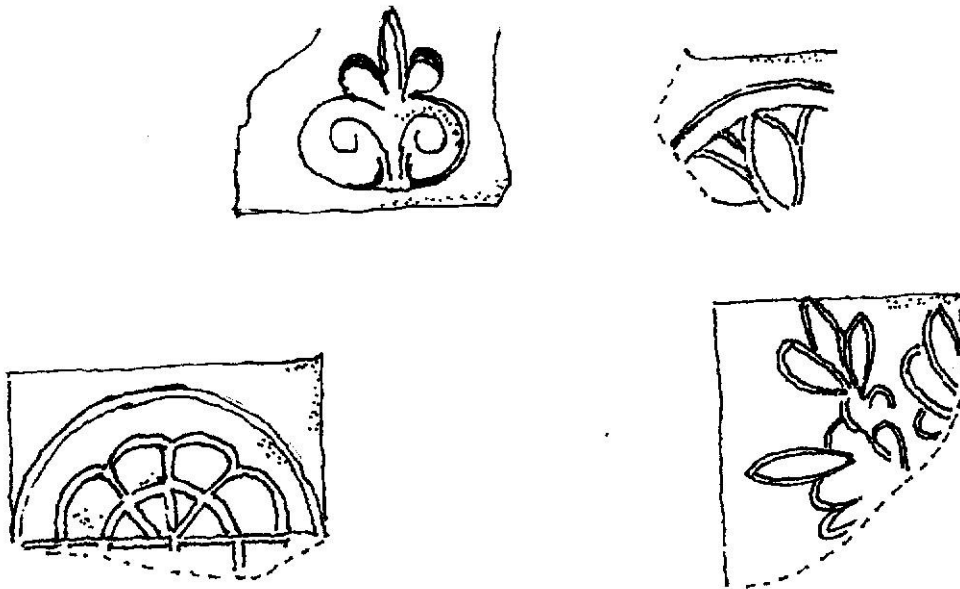


I first visited the location in 1968 to find remains of flint and mortar walls of varying height with angled herringbone tiling in both walls of the nave. A very large tree had grown, fallen, and lay, rotting, across the shallow wall of the East end. Perhaps the tallest of all the walls was the North wall which stood at around eight feet at one point near the East wall. Flint and mortar from the church walls lay scattered both inside and outside the ruins as a result of grazing cattle feeding on the grass with wind and rain causing additional damage over a long period of time. The church was a single celled structure, 50 feet long by 20 feet wide and although a bell is recorded, there is no tower so presumably there was a bell cote.

Gillingwater, the 19thC historian, tells us that the parish registers were burnt one cold winter morning, so our literary evidence of the past history of Flixton is very slight. The earliest date for records for this church is 1308 when the Rector was Roger Mann, but many of these first recorded figures of local parishes date from this decade; other examples being Oulton 1301, Gunton 1305 and Lound 1310. Little was known about the church locally until it was visited by a local man, the late Peter Harris, who decided to investigate the site in more detail. After being given permission, he formed a small group of young people and began to clear the soil and debris within the structure beginning at the Western end. In a later conversation with Pater he said as the infill containing flints and mortar was removed, a few very narrow pieces of lead tracery and shards of plain white glass were recovered – both from the nearby windows of the ruined church.

The removal of less than 12 inches of infill uncovered the remains of a red brick floor with bricks laid flat stretching from the South wall to the opposite side. An interesting feature was exposed in a line between the North and South doorways. The feature took the form of an octagonal base for a font, using seven broken sections of a late decorated Norman font for the corners, the middle being infilled with cobbles and mortar. From records, we learn that the roof of the church collapsed in 1600 and whilst the church was later restored by Sir John Wentworth and reconsecrated in 1631, the final restoration was not completed until five years later. It is likely that the replacement font was

added some time during this period. Examination of the earlier broken pieces showed it had been made from fossiliferous limestone and that it had already been repaired at some time. It was comparable to several Norfolk fonts having ivy leaf decoration incised at a later date. The original decoration, consisting of arcading, can also be seen on a section embedded in the North wall of Pakefield church, where it has been used as building material. The later replacement font used at Flixton now stands in Blundeston churchyard.



Noticeably in one corner of the brick floor at the Western end of the church are two clear 1½ inch cavities at the end of two full bricks, roughly three feet apart. Their purpose is unclear but they may have been used to position light, wooden, vertical posts for a screen or something similar. Remains of the late date red brick floor finished somewhat irregularly some 20 feet from the West wall and here a robbed-out situation was encountered up to the East wall, with large roots from the fallen tree contributing to the ground disturbance.

More sherds of white glass and thin tracery were found and a number of small unglazed sherds, including base from a medieval jug, were recovered in the South East corner. The broken remains of a number of peg tiles partially glazed in a gritty, light green and brown glaze were well scattered in the fill as well as the broken remains of 28 glazed floor tiles. Tile thickness varied from ¾ to 1½ inches and in each example the edges were undercut to achieve tighter joints when laid. Only one near-complete tile was found and here the overall size was 5¾ inches by 5¾ inches. Glazed remains consist of line-impressed designs such as a star pattern and fleur-de-lys, whilst some of the stamp-impressed patterns are more difficult to interpret. It is highly likely that the tile remains recovered at Flixton were made in a tile kiln in the vicinity of the nearby church of St Michael the Archangel at Oulton, where fragments of several glazed floor tiles have been found over the years during grave digging on the West side of the churchyard. On the South side of the graveyard during the digging of a storm drain, fused peg tiles were found with the remains of two grave covers.

Although no remains of stoneware for windows or doorways are in situ at Flixton or have been encountered elsewhere, the presence of the elaborate font would suggest that this may have been a building of the late Norman date, serving a small local community. However, with the coming of the Black Death this would have had a significant effect on the population, which probably led to people

moving away and finally to the village being abandoned like many others during this period of uncertainty throughout East Anglia.

The Norman font is displayed in Lowestoft Museum with some of the tile remains, white glass and lead tracery.

Flixton St Andrew – The Later Years

Extracts from the parish registers:

- | | |
|------|--|
| 1683 | Burial of Richard Newman and Elizabeth Bugg |
| 1695 | Marriage of Bill Dawson of Cromer and Ann Richardson |
| 1697 | Marriage of John Wallis of Great Yarmouth and Mary Hollis of Gorleston |
| 1699 | Marriage of John Davy of Reydon and Elizabeth Shingles |
| 1700 | Churchwardens disbursements: |
| | To ditching ye Chapel yard 3s-6d |
| | To glazing ye chapel 6d |
| 1703 | Rector – Thomas Skeet |
| | Rectors Warden Richard Allan Baronet |
| 1703 | November 25. The great storm which took off part of the roof of St Paul's in London also blew off the roof of the church, resulting in the church being abandoned. At that time the congregation consisted only of a shepherd and his boy. |
| 1721 | The church plate, a gift of Sir John Wentworth, was sold to the Rector and parishioners of Fritton St Edmund. |
| 1790 | The ruins were being used as farm outbuildings. But later, the churchyard was fenced off and protected from cattle. |

A man called Collings – by Paul Durbidge

When I look at the recent programme of speakers for the Society, I can appreciate just how much work goes into arranging for them to talk to us, fitting them into a programme. Will they turn up? What is their fee? When the Society was formed, I was asked if I would be Secretary and when I enquired what did it involve, the late RJ Kedney said; “Just writing a few letters.” At the end of that first year there were letters to find a President, two Vice Presidents, several letters to prospective speakers, arrangements for visits to places of interest, local landowners etc to name a few. I believe the actual number was over 200 and quite a lot of stamps!

One of the suggested speakers for that first year was Dennis Collings who was the son of a Southwold doctor and who read the Tripos at Cambridge. His suggested talk was “The Divine King in England”. Dennis was a close friend of the writer George Orwell and the two men fell for the same girl, Eleanor, but Dennis won and had a striking black-and-white photograph of her over the pantry door of his house. I made an appointment to visit Dennis at Southwold and one November evening after several phone calls, I arrived at Station Road in heavy rain. The front door was nearly hidden by a large shrub which I had to negotiate before knocking on the pale red door. After a while, a rather gruff voice said; “Go round the back.” To the left of the front door was a dark, brick passageway and as I felt my way along, I heard the sound of a back gate being opened and light from the kitchen framed a short, balding figure smoking a pipe, standing in the pouring rain with no shoes on. “Collings” he said, stretching out a hand. We proceeded into a brightly-lit kitchen and this was to be my first visit to an extremely interesting man over the ensuing years.

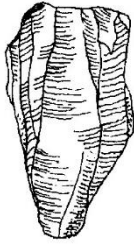
The kitchen was quite small with cream painted walls, badly flaking, an oilskin map of the world with a small replica cross-bow hung on a large iron nail on the wall to my right. In front was a high, wooden-framed fireplace with numbers of empty Swan Vestas match boxes stacked like bricks on the top. To my left was a small whitewood table under a window with many books with reference markers in them. There was also a squat glass jar containing spent matches in a dark liquid, which I think, was to do with his pipe. He asked if I would like a cup of tea and after the water had boiled, it was poured into a wool-covered tea pot with a broken handle, and sugar was provided in an old honey jar. It took some time to chip away pieces from the enclosed solid mass! When he got up to get an item from the living room, through the open hall door I could see why he had not answered the front door. Mail lay as it had fallen and was stacked from the floor to the letter box. Along the boarded hall floor lay a white linen pole with one end disappearing under the pile of mail.

Regardless of how things were now, Dennis had travelled far. After reading for the Tripos, he spent several years working with Professor Dart¹ on the limestone caves in Johannesburg and was Best Man at Louis Leaky’s² wedding. Dennis, together with his wife, Eleanor, had spent some time with primitive tribes in Borneo. (He showed me some darts tipped with poison used in blowpipes to hunt monkeys.) He also held a post in the Raffles Museum in Singapore but was later to spend time in a Japanese prisoner of war camp in Java.

My first visit was one of many over the years and I found he had a wide knowledge of both nature and prehistory and I learned a lot from my visits. On one occasion, he showed me some Hawk Moth caterpillars he had put in Kilner jars with vegetation “So they have at least a chance to survive before being eaten by the damned blackbirds” as he put it. He mentioned that he had cut through his telephone cable whilst hacking away at the overgrown clematis that had run riot over his back wall – but at least he knew why he was not getting any calls! On another evening visit, sitting round the whitewood table talking about the prehistory of the Eastern Baverns, he saw his large grey cat called Trog looking at us through the window. He slid the sash open and in walked one-eyed Trog.

Apparently, earlier that week it had dragged home a pheasant and as Dennis put it “It provided both meat and soup for several days”.

At the time, I had a run-down old Morris and if we were not planting various rare saplings in the local vicinity, much time was spent searching the coastline from Southwold to Dunwich and he always seemed to know somebody who had found something in earlier years. As time passed by, I was involved in fieldwalking and helping to produce the first Museum in the Prairie. I was approached by the headteacher of a local school as to if I could suggest anyone to take a series of evening classes on Archaeology and I immediately thought of Dennis. He agreed but there was a problem of getting from Southwold to the school, but we got round that. After his third class, I joined him when he was



about to explain the technique of blade cultures in the Mesolithic Age and halfway through the evening, he showed how a blade core would appear after being used for striking blades. From a small bag he produced a small rectangular shaped potato and from his pocket a small shut knife. He began by peeling the potato lengthways and when that was completed, he removed one end of the potato at right angles to the peeled cuts. He then explained that the flat top would have been the striking platform, whilst the peeled sides of the potato represented where flint blades had been detached. He then produced a real flint core that had been found in a field at Kessingland some years earlier, which went down extremely well with the middle-aged class. I believe that one of the group actually found a small black core, again

at Kessingland, at the top of a long back garden.

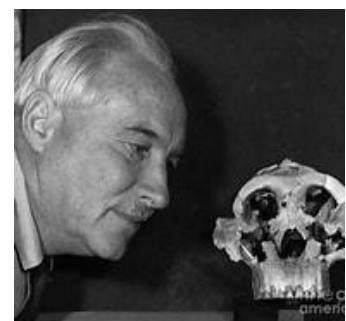
There are lots of memories of Dennis Collings, too many to write of here. During his latter years he served behind the bar at the Harbour Inn, but said he often felt uneasy about walking across the marsh road in the darkness. He was fiercely against joining the Common Market and he had a very large Union Jack in the front window of his home to say so. Needless to say, the flag stayed there for many years and literally fell to pieces before it was removed. It was a talking point for people walking past his house!

Notes:

1. Professor Raymond Arthur Dart (1893-1988). Australian palaeoanthropologist. Noted for the discovery in 1924 of the Australopithecus. He substantiated Darwin's view of Africa as the cradle for the human species.



2. Louis Leaky (1903-1972). Kenyan-born anthropologist. He and his wife Mary, made great discoveries in East Africa where, in 1959, they unearthed the skull of Zinjanthropus. In 1964, they found the remains of Homo Habilis and, in 1967, of Kenyapithecus.



Lowestoft Scene

January

A 'busy year' for Coastguard

The hard working, dedicated volunteer coastguard rescue officers – who respond to maritime emergencies and those on the Broads – are continuing to keep people safe. Claire Denby Hall, station officer at Lowestoft, said that the Lowestoft Coastguard team – which covers an area from Hopton to Southwold – responded to “around 220 incident taskings last year” – 40 more than last year.

Repairs taking place along North Lowestoft beach

Repair works are being carried out in North Lowestoft with repair and maintenance works to the “concrete seawall” under way. A spokesman for Coastal Partnership East said “The work is spread across the defences immediately north of Ness Point.

Skip is removed from Banksy mural

Having attracted countless visitors, a prominent component of the world-famous graffiti artist's seagull installation in Lowestoft has been removed – amid concerns it was being used for fly-tipping. The artwork showcased a seagull swooping down to steal some polystyrene chips that were placed in a skip below. The yellow skip has now been removed from the side of the building. Now all that remains is the seagull mural and protective screening surrounded by metal fencing. Its removal has sparked disappointment from locals who said “the installation has been robbed of its meaning and humour” by the removal of the skip.

Warm Wednesday sessions at station's exhibition space

The Parcels Office Exhibition Space at Lowestoft railway station is hosting winter warmer sessions with people invited to come along and chat over free coffee and tea and enjoy an afternoon talk on various topics from a line-up of guest speakers.

Volunteer crisis leaves community transport charity on the brink

BACT community transport ferries people in the Waveney and South Norfolk areas to important medical and hospital appointments as well as for social and shopping reasons. The number of volunteers in the charity has dropped from 85 in 2018 to 46 in 2022.

Majority of new beach huts 'empty in first summer'

The 72 Eastern Edge huts were hailed as “bold and truly unique” at their unveiling last year, although their design split opinion. During the busiest week last year, just 13 of the 36 huts available for hire were booked out for the week, while latest figures show just 10 of the remaining 36 new huts have been sold to date.

Community spirit shines through

The YMCA Trinity Group in Lowestoft have been so inundated with requests for support amid the cost of living crisis, they have started a new project to deliver free hot meals to support the community. Run by The Shine Project and thanks to funding provided by the 'Ease the Squeeze' Cost of Living Fund from East Suffolk Council, the two organisations have teamed up to launch this initiative and help tackle food poverty in their communities.

Ambitious seafront vision misses out on Levelling Up funding

Waveney MP Peter Aldous said it was “disappointing” that Lowestoft has been snubbed in the government’s latest Levelling Up funding round. East Suffolk Council had bid for funding for improvements along the seafront at Lowestoft’s Jubilee Parade.

‘Exciting’ new beginning

After 53 years at their previous base in Beach Road, Lowestoft, the Samaritans of Lowestoft and Waveney have relocated to new premises in the Riverside Business Centre. There were smiles aplenty as a ribbon was cut by the Mayor of Lowestoft Alan Green and Waveney MP Peter Aldous at the opening ceremony.

February

Revamped library unveiled

Staff and pupils at the Ashley School Academy Trust – a specialist SEN school in Lowestoft – welcomed Lowestoft-born Zeb Soames – the host of Smooth Classics at Seven on Classic FM – to reopen their library. After more than two years of behind-the-scenes work, the school marked a major revamp of its library with a grand reopening event.

New memorial honours Guava crew

The bravery and heroism of the 11 men who headed out to sea on the Lowestoft trawler Guava 70 years ago – but never returned – has been honoured. The wooden trawler left port with 11 men on board and headed for the Dogger Bank but the vessel was lost at sea in the great storm. A new memorial plaque, commissioned by Lowestoft Town Council, was unveiled at a special service and ceremony to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the North Sea floods.

New panel highlights arrival of 1938 Kindertransport

A giant interpretation panel was unveiled at Lowestoft Railway Station close to where hundreds of young Jewish refugees had arrived in December 1938. And as people from the community gathered to mark Holocaust Memorial Day at the station, a special ceremony was held to unveil the new panel – which recounts the events of 1938 Kindertransport arrival in Lowestoft.

Volunteers celebrate new EACH shop

The East Anglia Children’s Hospice (EACH) store on London Road South has a new look shop space and seen new flooring and energy-efficient lighting installed inside the premises. Manager Lee Carter said “The shop looks amazing – its night and day compared to how it was before. It’s given us all a boost. I couldn’t be happier with the way it looks and hopefully these changes will help us go from strength to strength.”

Westminster does not understand region

Peter Aldous, Waveney MP, called on the government to divert more money to Suffolk and Norfolk through its Levelling Up drive and expressed his fear that the counties miss out because the civil servants believe the region is “comfortably off”. He said the East of England has received the third lowest amount of levelling up money in the country – and that needs to change if the region is to achieve its potential.

Council tenants to share £8M after being overcharged

Social housing tenants in East Suffolk will gain refunds totalling £8M and have rents recalculated after historical overcharging. East Suffolk Council will provide full refunds to tenants and ex-tenants as it did not fully comply with rent-setting regulations between 2016 and 2022.

Offshore jobs boost for young engineers

A new pilot partnership between colleges in Lowestoft and Amsterdam is upskilling students for careers in the fast-growing offshore wind industry. East Coast College hosted 10 Dutch students as part of a skills exchange at its £11.7M Energy Skills Centre in Lowestoft.

‘Unsightly piece of land’ given new lease of life

A new lease of life has been given to an area of disused railway land after fly-tipped rubbish was cleared and trees planted. A team from Network Rail cleared the area of disused land and planted 30 young willow trees to help boost biodiversity. The land, which is between Denmark Road and the railway line, was once allotments but after becoming overgrown it has been a target for fly-tipping.

Sports partnership with Norwich City to open new doors for students

East Coast College has teamed up with Norwich City’s Community Sports Foundation to launch a long-term partnership. It aims to raise aspirations for students across all areas of the college, providing further sports and coaching opportunities through access to new qualifications, employment and work placements.

New lease of life for viewing platform

Officials at Suffolk’s major wildlife and nature charity have received a boost after a blaze destroyed a viewing platform at a popular nature reserve. A new lease of life has been provided – with a £5,000 donation from Persimmon Homes helping to restore the viewing platform.

A knotty problem

Is Japanese knotweed posing a threat to your home and garden? Latest data has revealed the places in Suffolk that are suffering the most from the invasive species. Although the plant is currently in winter hibernation, it can pose a risk to property owners by knocking as much as a tenth off the value of homes. Data compiled by company Environet UK on its Exposed tracker has found Ipswich topped the rankings for the most infestations in the county, with 49 recorded within a 4km radius of the north of the town. Lowestoft ranked third with 27 infestations.

Residents save trees

Six mature trees on the land on part of the former Blundeston prison were set to be felled by developers Badger Building. But neighbours wrote to the company urging them to leave the trees as they are. It has been reported that Badger has listened to the concerns and decided to leave the trees in place.

Pantry closes

The owner of a popular Lowestoft eatery has spoken about his difficult decision to close his business after 40 years. The eatery, formerly found in London Road North, was initially opened by Barbara and Joe Miller on 23 June 1983 and had served the community for 40 years.

Singalongs at seafront pavilion hailed a success

Hundreds of people have turned out to enjoy new singalong movie nights at Lowestoft seafront pavilion. Taking place in the transformed East Point Pavilion, the singalongs have brought in movie-goers of all ages to enjoy, watch and join in with much-loved musicals.

March

Special play area at last for truly special school

A dedicated group of parents and staff has been working on a project entitled 'A special playground for a special school' since 2019. Restarting after COVID in 2021, they have worked tirelessly to raise thousands of pounds towards improving the outdoor facilities at the Lowestoft area Warren School. With the school's previous play equipment not inclusive for all, they now have a range of equipment that can be used by all children.

Pupils protest on school toilets ban

Children at East Point Academy have used the video-sharing platform TikTok to organise and film demonstrations against the rules which they say prevent them from using toilets during lessons.

Town marks the first anniversary of the Ukraine invasion

A special ceremony in Lowestoft attracted a good turnout of people standing with Ukraine in a poignant show of solidarity. A minute's silence was observed at Compass Street Pocket Park as people remembered the lives disrupted and lost during the Russo-Ukraine war.

Author wins Ruth Rendell Award

A Lowestoft-based author and tutor has been honoured with a national award for services to literacy in the UK. Nigel Lungenmuss-Ward has been crowned as the joint winner of the 2022 Ruth Rendell Award at a prestigious ceremony in London. His work to promote literacy included working closely with the National Literacy Trust's 'Get Suffolk Reading' hub as champion, inspiring families and helping parents support their children's literacy skills.

Council tax to increase

East Suffolk Council's cabinet has agreed to an increase of 2.81% in its part of council tax bills meaning the rise would make the annual rate for band D properties £4.95 higher compared to the previous year.

Urgent repairs to roof of listed church

Urgent repairs are under way as part of a major scheme to restore and enhance a historic church that had been threatened with closure. Back in 2018, an appeal was launched to Raise The Roof at St Edmunds church in Kessingland. There was a major boost to the campaign in January last year, as a crucial £168,000 was awarded from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Having been at the heart of the community for more than 500 years, last November the church – a landmark for seafarers since the mid-15th century – was added to Historic England's annual Heritage at Risk register.

More moves for the Record Office

Western Way in Bury St Edmunds will house West Suffolk's archives, in a £4M development that has reignited anger among Lowestoft's historians as their records were moved more than 40 miles away. In April 2021, Suffolk County Council moved 1,539 collections of documents from Lowestoft Record Office to The Hold in Ipswich, due to the poor condition of the Lowestoft building. The chair of the Save Our Record Office campaign group said: "This decision has to be the final insult for Lowestoft and Waveney, now bereft of original archives and with little hope of anything being digitised", Suffolk County Council has no plans to revisit the decision or return the archives to Lowestoft.

New trash-eating 'Gannet' welcomed at port

A new trash-eating hybrid vessel has been welcomed at ABP's Port of Lowestoft. After being delivered to the port, the new workboat has been aptly named by a Lowestoft primary school pupil

following a competition. A Port of Lowestoft spokesman said; “The craft’s principal function is to support the efficient collection of litter, debris and aquatic vegetation from the water surface, and it will play a vital role in helping to keep Lowestoft Harbour and Lake Lothing clear of pollution.”

Cliff falls warning

East Suffolk Council and Coastal Partnership East have issued a warning following “recent erosion and cliff falls” in Corton. A spokesperson said; “Due to recent erosion and cliff falls in Corton, the coastal path from the area roughly near St Bartholomew’s Church to the rock defences in Baker’s Score is now extremely dangerous in places.”

New disabled access to popular prom

New access to a popular promenade has been unveiled as part of a major £4.7M scheme. It has seen new disabled access installed at the Links Road car park in North Lowestoft. Councillor Colin Butler said; “On behalf of Lowestoft Town Council, may grateful thanks be offered to Anglian Water for their generous provision of a disabled access from Links Road car park, through the inner parapet of the seawall, onto the promenade.” The issue arose from a simple comment from a member of the public that no direct access, disabled or indeed pedestrian, existed onto the popular promenade.

Hospice charities merger hailed

St Elizabeth Hospice and East Coast Hospice have announced that they will join together following consultation with partners, stakeholders and the local community. Activities in Great Yarmouth and Waveney will use the name ‘St Elizabeth East Coast Hospice’. The hospice will continue to work with East Coast Community Healthcare, which has supported more than 7,300 patients since launching their service in April 2019.

Distressed swan

A swan was left unable to eat after a plastic bottle cap was stuck around its lower beak. The distressed bird was found in Lowestoft and the RSPCA is now warning people of the effects littering can have on animals.

Unique new hotel really is for the birds

Renewable developers Vattenfall and ScottishPower Renewables have just completed construction of a kittiwake “hotel” with new nesting structures in the port of Lowestoft for black-legged kittiwakes. Soon the first “guests” will be flocking to the region’s newest “hotel” as part of the company’s environmental mitigation.

Teen campaigner tells politicians British Sign Language (BSL) GCSE is ‘vital’

The tireless campaigning of Daniel Jillings from Lowestoft has seen the UK Government begin work on developing a BSL GCSE. Having been born profoundly deaf without a cochlea, Daniel cannot use hearing aids or cochlear implants. As he does not use speech, BSL is his first language.

Campaign to help wildlife thrive returns

The ‘Pardon the Weeds We’re Feeding the Bees’ campaign was launched in 2020 to protect the environment by allowing green spaces to grow and thrive with wildlife. The reduced mowing programme aims to improve the habitat for a variety of flora and fauna, including the crucial bee population, by letting grass and flowers grow wild.

Arts venue facing ‘energy bill apocalypse’

Owners of The Grit in Lowestoft found out in February that their monthly energy bills would rise from £90 to £1200, sparking fears that the venue could struggle to carry on. But loyal supporters

have rallied behind the cause, raising more than £1,700 already since the GoFundMe campaign was launched. The Grit, located at the site of the former Old Court Building in Old Nelson Street, hosts regular live music nights, exhibitions, talks and also has a cinema on site.

New nature theme play area opened

Work started in January to transform an existing play area in Lowestoft with new equipment. The new bug-themed play area at Bentley Drive on the Parkhill estate in North Lowestoft has now opened.

Documentary about ‘thriving venue’ go-ahead

Approval has been given for a new documentary that will celebrate the Seagull Theatre in Pakefield. Lowestoft-born director John Hales’ idea to create an upbeat documentary about the community venue and its history has received a funding boost. The documentary will examine the history of the building from Morton Road school (1896 – 1940) to today – a community venue, centre for arts and changemaker in the town’s cultural life.

Almost £100K granted to help young people

Inspire charity has been appointed by East Suffolk Council to deliver the Personal Development Service, funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. With funding of £95,625, the Suffolk leading youth charity will be able to help young people who are facing complex challenges that are holding them back from entering the workforce. The new free service is specifically designed to support 16-25-year-olds who are furthest from work, including those who are facing multiple barriers to employment such as homelessness, special educational needs and disabilities, lack of educational attainment and mental health issues.

Did you know about the seven deserted villages in Suffolk?

Over the years, a number of settlements and villages have been lost or deserted. Dunwich and Eastern Bavents are well known, but Akethorpe? Akethorpe, sometimes spelt as Akethorp. Is believed to have been in what is now part of Lowestoft. The Domesday Book listed Akethorpe as home to four households in the Hundred of Lothingland.

Praise for ‘amazing’ new community film

The short film – entitled All in a Day’s Work – was launched to an outstandingly positive public reception at its premiere. Commissioned as part of the innovative Town Hall project, it captured memories from yesteryear with a scheme that has been inspired by working lives in Lowestoft. All in a Days Work can be viewed on Poetry People’s YouTube channel <https://bit.ly/daysworkvideopoem>.

Lowestoft seafront given £4.3M boost

Ambitious improvement plans for Lowestoft seafront have been given a £4.3M boost by the government. East Suffolk Council plans to use the money announced in the chancellor’s budget to help regenerate Jubilee Parade on the seafront, next to the Eastern Edge beach huts. The development will include a new two-storey building with a first-floor café along with improved showers, toilets and facilities.

Princess Anne visits CEFAS

The Princess Royal visited the newly developed and refurbished Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS) HQ building and laboratories on the second day of her two-day tour of the region. As well as commemorating CEFAS’s long-standing commitment to marine science in Lowestoft, the visit marked the formal opening of the new facilities. The official opening of the

new building follows a £16M investment programme with funding from DEFRA and the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership.

Mental health hub for young people unveiled

The Junction in Lowestoft has provided vital mental health and wellbeing support to dozens of local youngsters since opening. Based on Bevan Street East in Lowestoft, The Junction is staffed by a trained team of youth practitioners. The free-to-access service provides a range of holistic assistance, guidance and group workshops for 11 to 25-year-olds across the week. The Junction has transformed the former Clapham Arms pub and family retail store Coes of Lowestoft after receiving a grant from the Denbury Charitable Foundation. The interior of the building has been divided into a range of zones to accommodate differing young peoples' needs and features quiet safe spaces, a traditional and digital gaming area, sensory zone and arts/crafting corner.

Third crossing – huge parts barged in

Another significant milestone has been marked as the second and third major steel sections of the Gull Wing bridge arrived in Lowestoft. Weighing more than 400 tonnes combined, and measuring between 40m and 50m long, the next two steel sections of the bridge arrived via barge from the Netherlands. After some “very precise piloting”, the complex process of navigating the barge into the inner harbour – before transferring the steel structure from the barge on to the site – was overseen by a team of experienced civil engineers, port masters and marine experts. The North Approach Viaduct (NAV2 and NAV3) sections being used in the construction of the bridge have been carefully manoeuvred into place. The spans were lifted from the barge, positioned on the pier and joined together. A Gull Wing spokesman said “NAV3 is now in place, marking the first section of the bridge to go over water”.

April

Neighbours work together to create inspiring art

The artwork, painted on public buildings, has given people in Lowestoft a chance to have their say on the increasing risks of global warming. The two new murals have been created as part of the ‘We Are Here’ project, which is aimed at inspiring people to use their voices in the fight against climate change.

Banksy's seagull takes flight

Sadness and anger have been expressed after a prominent Banksy mural of a seagull started to take flight. Having attracted countless visitors to Lowestoft, part of the world-famous graffiti artist's seagull installation in the town, has been removed. The artwork, on the side of a privately-owned block of flats on Katwijk Way and created in August 2021, has delighted crowds as it showcased a seagull swooping down to steal some polystyrene chips that were placed in a skip below. The artwork was created as part of Banksy's Great British Spraycation. A world expert on Banksy artwork hit out at the loss of an “amazing gift” for the town.

Repairs to Victorian footbridge halted

Repairs and refurbishment to the historic Jubilee Bridge have been temporarily paused. Work had started in September 2022 with a road and footpath set to be closed for eight months. However, a £1M scheme of works to the 19th century bridge – a designated listed structure – has been put on hold. An East Suffolk Council spokesman said; “During the blast cleaning phase of the works, areas of the bridge were uncovered which showed greater corrosion than had been anticipated in key structural areas of the bridge. These levels of damage indicated that it was unsafe to continue work until additional structural support was provided for the bridge”

Disease outbreak forces riding school to close

A Riding school has been forced to close temporarily after an outbreak of herpes was confirmed among its horses. Three horses out of 30 at the Pakefield Riding School have been diagnosed with the disease— leading to the business owners and staff at the stables facing an uncertain future. However, the community has rallied to show its support with fundraisers planned and a GoFundMe page set up to raise monies for the expensive medical costs as well as hay and feed, bedding and day to day costs. Amazingly, within the space of three days, more than £6,250 of the £10,000 target had been raised.

Care home celebrates improved CQC rating

The Dell care home on Oulton Broad has been rated as ‘Good’ across the board by inspectors from the Care Quality Commission. Staff and residents are celebrating following an unannounced inspection in February. The rating shows the transformation at the Wellbeing Care group-run home following a ‘requires improvement’ rating in July 2021.

Hundreds enjoy Easter Egg trail

Enthusiastic young children searched Sparrow’s Nest Gardens in Lowestoft on Easter Sunday as they all set out on the hunt for a treat. The Lowestoft Lions Easter Egg Trail made a welcome return as hundreds of eager children searched for clues to earn a chocolate reward – all under the watchful eyes of the Easter Bunny. Despite a misty start to Easter Sunday, the popular park was soon filled with excited youngsters, accompanied by their families who swapped their vouchers for quiz sheets and took part in the trail around the park.

Popular care home named in top 20 in East of England

With more than 1500 care homes in the East of England, Harleston House – a residential and dementia care home in Lowestoft – has been awarded a top 20 spot by independent care platform Carehome.co.uk. Harleston House also holds an ‘Outstanding’ rating from the CQC.

Champion duo call it a day

Two fundraising champions, whose lives have been touched by cancer, have announced that they are finishing their charitable work together. Since Zoiyar Cole and Janet Ellis set up the Paul Cole Cancer Fund in 2000. Many groups, organisations and individuals across Waveney and Great Yarmouth have benefitted from their remarkable voluntary work. The friends established the Fund in 2000 in memory of Mrs Cole’s son Paul. Since then, they have raised almost £366,000.

Three weeks of repairs underway along beach

Work is being carried out at Corton and Gunton with repairs and maintenance “of coastal assets” under way. Coastal Partnership East, which brings together a number of coastal management resources, has appointed Water Management Alliance (WMA) to carry out the work. The work is spread between Bakers Score, Corton and Links Road, Lowestoft.

Campaigners raise Sizewell safety fears after ‘spy ship’ seen

The Admiral Vladimirsky ship is believed to have stopped at wind farms off the East Anglian coast to map undersea power cables as part of plans to sabotage the UK’s key energy infrastructure. A spokeswoman from Stop Sizewell C said: “The route chosen by the Russian spy ship, coming on top of Russia’s attempt to weaponise Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant in Ukraine, causes us grave concern.” Broadcasters from Denmark, Sweden, Finland and Norway tracked the vessel, which sailed around the Baltic Sea and the North Sea for a month, passing current and future wind farms off the coast of several Scandinavian countries as well as Britain. The broadcasters said the ship was part of a fleet of espionage boats, disguised as fishing trawlers and scientific research vessels, which were examining key energy sites for possible sabotage.

May

Parkinson's event

World Parkinson's Day was marked as a free support event - hosted by East Coast Community Healthcare (ECCH) in partnership with Parkinson's UK and Everyone Active – was held at the Waterlane Leisure Centre in Lowestoft. A spokeswoman said; "As Parkinson's is one of the most common neurological conditions in the UK, this was a great opportunity to raise awareness and connect with the local people living with the condition, and their carers, to show them the range of services that are available in the area to support them".

'Embracing Difference' event hailed as a success

Pathways Care Farm – a charity that utilises a 13 acre farm in North Lowestoft to provide therapeutic support and care for people living with mental ill-health, learning difficulties or dementia – has hosted its first 'Embracing Difference' event. The event brought together leaders from across the public, private and charity sectors to explore how they can help and assist people.

Farmland transformed into wildlife oasis now attracting 100,000 visitors

The Princess Royal opened a new visitor centre and nature reserve at Carlton Marshes in 2021. The Suffolk Wildlife Trust site – the size of 430 football pitches – is already attracting 100K visitors after its Southern gateway opened up the site and made it one of the most accessible reserves in the country. The restored space is now home to an astonishing 28 dragonfly species – the highest number found in a single site in Britain – as well as bird species, grazing cattle and ponies. The trust bought the lower Waveney Valley in 2015 for £3.15M in order to create a 1,000 acre wetland habitat.

Zookeepers 'thrilled' to announce new arrival

A new baby giraffe was born on 26 April to mum Kiara and dad Jengo. It is Kiara's third baby at Africa Alive since her arrival from Cologne Zoo in Germany. Keepers have named the calf Charlie, in tribute to the King's coronation.

Music project launched to support budding musicians

Strike a Chord is an exciting new opportunity for young people aged between 12 and 19 living in Waveney to create, produce and professionally record their own music. Strike a Chord is delivered by Sunrise Studios – part of regional charity Access Community Trust – the project sessions will be co-produced with young people alongside a music leader, youth workers and volunteers all within The Junction in Lowestoft.

'Vibrant and diverse' monthly market launches

Bringing a wide range of handmade crafts, handcrafted jewellery, local produce and much more to the Coastal Cuisine site in Lowestoft, the new East Point Market is taking place on the last Saturday of each month. Coastal Cuisine is located on Hadenham Road. Organisers said it is a "must-visit destination" for anyone interested in local and artisanal products.

Beaches named among the best in country

Three beaches in our region have been honoured after being ranked amongst the best in the country. The beach at Southwold has retained its Blue Flag status, whilst Lowestoft's South Beach and Kessingland Beach have both achieved Seaside Awards.

Investigation work

A week of ground investigation work as part of an ambitious project to transform part of Lowestoft seafront has begun. A drilling rig was prepared on the upper esplanade and some exploratory holes were made close to the balustrade wall. The ground investigation work is part of a £4.9M regeneration scheme along Jubilee Parade and involves some work on the upper esplanade and lower promenade. Once complete, the overall project will include a new two-storey building with a first-floor café, along with new showers, toilets and a Changing Places facility. The scheme has received £4.3M through the governments Levelling Up Fund and £600,000 from East Suffolk Council.

New mayor elected

At the annual meeting of Lowestoft Town Council held at Hamilton House, Councillor Sonia Barker was unanimously elected as the mayor of Lowestoft for the municipal year 2023/2024. Councillor Nasima Begum was then re-elected as deputy mayor for the forthcoming year

Funding for Suffolk's libraries secured for another year

Libraries in Suffolk have secured funding for at least another year after it was revealed the service was facing a shortfall. Suffolk Libraries had identified a potential deficit in its budget of £60,000 per month, with factors such as increase in service costs, rising inflation and the COVID pandemic to blame. But Suffolk County Council has confirmed it has approved plans to increase its funding to the service through to the end of its current contract in July 2024.

MP cuts cake at anniversary celebrations

Waveney Deaf Children's Society marked its 10th anniversary at Elm Tree Primary School in Lowestoft, where there is a base to provide support to deaf children in North Suffolk. More than 30 children could enjoy crafts, circus skills and visit the Bear's Hearing Aid clinic to get their toys fitted with specially made 3D printed hearing appliances, provided by Toy Like Me. Waveney MP Peter Aldous was invited in recognition of his support in highlighting issues affecting deaf children and for supporting the campaign for a British Sign Language GCSE.

Shops back community group's new scheme to improve accessibility

The new scheme called "Improving Accessibility By Raising Awareness" has seen improvements made at shops and businesses in Kirkley for people with disabilities. It has been launched by Enabling Kirkley – part of Kirkley People's Forum – which is supported by Community Action Suffolk, who have encouraged businesses to make improvements to the way people can use their services by breaking down the barriers people with disabilities may face.

Two stations in bid to be named UK's best-loved

Lowestoft and Beccles are among 48 stations nominated for the tournament, which is an annual competition showcasing the best of community rail and the benefits that railways bring to residents. Lowestoft was nominated thanks to the development of an "amazing community hub" in the original station buildings and the creating of a multi-purpose room which can be used for meetings or exhibitions.

After Note: Lowestoft was crowned region's Best Loved station.

'Once in a lifetime trip' aboard historic ship

High School pupils will be aboard Excelsior LT472 – a traditional Lowestoft fishing smack, built a century ago – as she takes part in the international Tall Ships Race this year. A spokesman for the Excelsior Trust, which operates the Excelsior said "The races are designed to encourage international friendship and training for young people in the art of sailing".

June

Project to restore town's post office wins major award

The London Road North conservation works to bring the building back to its former glory have been given a craftsmanship award by the Royal Institute of British Architects. Conservation repairs were completed through the Lowestoft Heritage Action Zone project, funded by Historic England and the Towns Fund.

Yacht rescued

A yacht and its crew had to be rescued after becoming stranded off the coast. The 12-metre Dutch yacht was part of a 34-strong flotilla that had sailed from Ijmuiden in the Netherlands bound for Lowestoft. The yacht's engine failed shortly after 1am off the Suffolk coast. The volunteer lifeboat crew was launched to bring them to shore at 1.45am and the yacht was brought safely into harbour at 2.45am.

RAF squadron surprises youngsters as Chinook lands on school field

The RAF surprised youngsters at Carlton Colville Primary School as a Chinook helicopter landed on its playing field to gasps aplenty. The Chinook had been used to transport the President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelensky, across London when he visited the UK. The children were then given exclusive access to the helicopter during the memorable visit.

People made homeless after devastating fire

A major fire ripped through seven flats in Lowestoft town centre – leading to three households needing to be placed into emergency accommodation. 13 fire appliances were called to the fire on High Street/Gun Lane to deal with the blaze above Vin-Tro and High Street Furnishing shops. Due to structural safety issues, fire investigators were not able to access the building until a survey had been carried out to see if the building was safe.

After Note: A Suffolk Fire spokesman said; "I can confirm that the joint investigation between police, fire and Prometheus Fire investigation has now been concluded. The cause has been recorded as undetermined at this time."

Pump Alley aggro – neighbours at war

For generations, locals in Pakefield have used Pump Alley as a shortcut to and from the nearby beach. But the 200m footpath is now at the centre of an extraordinary dispute between neighbours which has even seen police called in to investigate. Suffolk County Council are seeking advice on what can be done to resolve the issue.

[After note: The couple involved have now decided to gate off access to their property, leaving Pump Alley free for local people to enjoy as they previously did.]

New digital exhibition highlights town's connection to the sea

'A Study of Lowestoft and the Sea' has been inspired by the fishing heritage and the town's connection to the sea. It has seen three students from East Coast College co-curate a virtual exhibition for one of the rooms in the Virtual Town Hall – as part of the Lowestoft Town Hall project. As the Town Hall is closed for restoration, the Virtual Town Hall is a self-guided digital tour of the historic building created by Hugh Davies of the Town Hall project team and local historians David Butcher and Ivan Bunn.

New radio studio

East Suffolk One has opened its first radio studio on the historic High Street in Lowestoft. The volunteer team at East Suffolk One has thanked Lowestoft Town Council who provided them with

funding for the new hub. Recordings made in the hub can be heard on East Suffolk One – an online radio station that mixes music from the 80s to today, with local news, weather and community focused content.

Lowestoft named among the country's best coastal spots

Lowestoft has been named among the best seaside towns in the country. Millets included Lowestoft in its list of top coastal towns in the country. The clothing retailer looked at water quality, sea temperature, visitor reviews and parking costs to determine the best spots. They gave Lowestoft a rating of 6.96 out of 10.

Record numbers hit the beach for stunning return of First Light

Record numbers flocked to Lowestoft as the UK's only free beach festival made a stunning return. First Light Festival 2023 attracted the crowds celebrating the first midsummer sunrise in Britain's most Easterly town. Dozens of live music acts, performances, workshops, wellbeing zones, arts, unique sculptures and activities entertained the crowds. Transforming Lowestoft's South Beach, Kensington Gardens, the Upper Esplanade and Jubilee Parade, the festival started in style with a special walking parade celebrating Lowestoft's unique natural geography. The Cnothic Head by Lawrence Edwards which was installed on South Beach drew many comments – both like and dislike.

'Wheelchair Winnie' - the sheep to join flock

For a number of years, the Pakefield sheep have taken centre stage and captured the attention of crowds of onlookers as they walk past the churchyard at All Saints and Saint Margaret's church in Pakefield. As the Suffolk is a rare British breed of domestic sheep, the church has been looking for new lambs to join the flock. Two lambs were being trained to join the flock but sadly, one lost the use of her back legs. Calls, emails and messages later, Winnie was fitted with a wheelchair provided by Winston's Wheels – a charity for dogs that need help to stay mobile. She has taken to her wheelchair well and scoots around.

Afternote: Sadly, Winnie had to be euthanised a few weeks after the original report appeared in the Journal.

Thousands flock to East coast for Fizz and Forces Day celebration

With the strapline of "Honouring Britain's armed forces – past, present and future" the 17th annual Armed Forces Day was successfully held on Royal Green, Lowestoft. Fun for all the family took centre stage with plenty to entertain the crowds – as an estimated 4,500 turned out. With a traditional drumhead service, military heroes were saluted for serving their country as displays, exhibitions, stalls, marching bands, special attractions and live music all featured alongside poignant tributes to the fallen.

Special twinning project forged by CEFAS

CEFAS – the Lowestoft-based, world leading marine research organisation – has forged a special twinning project between the only school on Ascension Island in the South Atlantic Ocean and a Lowestoft primary school – some 7,000km away. Despite being located in opposite hemispheres, Two Boats School on Ascension Island and St Margaret's Primary Academy in Lowestoft have united as part of a groundbreaking scheme. The school twinning project has shown that a shared passion for nature is a powerful force in bringing together two different communities. The twinning partnership is connecting two diverse educational settings with the support of the UK Government's Blue Belt Programme and an ambition of working together to find out more about each other's marine environment. It has seen pupils from both schools sending and receiving their own video messages introducing themselves and describing their local marine environments. CEFAS and the Ascension government provided in-person teaching sessions at their respective schools with the children creating postcards depicting their local food chains.

£250,000 boost for volunteer schemes on coast

There was disappointment in Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft after the towns were snubbed in their joint efforts to become the 2025 City of Culture. However, a new £250,000 scheme to help promote the virtues of volunteering along the East coast has seen that cultural snub turned into a positive funding boost. Great Yarmouth Borough Council and East Suffolk Council have jointly launched a scheme called Cultural Connections Volunteering. Running until March 2025, Cultural Connections aims to utilise the momentum generated through the two council's joint City of Culture bid to build on the volunteer offer across Great Yarmouth and East Suffolk.

July

Parkrun marks 75 years of NHS

East Coast Community Healthcare (ECCH) teamed up with the popular Lowestoft Parkrun to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the NHS. Around 400 participants ran, jogged or walked the 5km course along the seafront – with many wearing blue to mark the special birthday event. It was the second time Parkrun UK and the NHS have worked together in this way.

College staffing crisis threatens future careers

Career opportunities for young people in East Anglia's burgeoning renewable energy industry are hampered because further education colleges are "operating with one arm behind their backs" an MP has warned. Waveney MP Peter Aldous warned colleges are facing their "worst staffing crisis in two decades" and called for the government to invest more money in further education. He said that would mean colleges such as East Coast College, which has campuses in Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft, can do even more to teach students skills which will be essential to Norfolk and Suffolk's economic future.

New cosmetics shop

The sight of empty shops in Lowestoft town centre has inspired a woman to run her own business. April May opened The Makeup Hut on Suffolk Road – to the delight of those who had mourned the closure of Claire's Accessories in 2019. The new store sells cosmetics, gifts and footwear mostly to young women.

Park awarded Green Flag status

Woods Meadow Country Park in Oulton Broad has been awarded an international quality mark for parks and green spaces. Woods Meadow, owned by East Suffolk Council, was created to provide a welcoming and informal green space for people to enjoy and benefit their wellbeing. The former arable land has been transformed for the benefit of wildlife and provide opportunities for learning, volunteering and a wider appreciation of nature.

Pre-school praised in OFSTED report

A Lowestoft pre-school that has the motto "Protect, play and grow" is "going from strength to strength." Committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of youngsters aged between two and five, staff, parents and youngsters at St Benedict's Pre-School expressed delight after they were praised by government education inspectors and rated 'Good' in all areas.

Giant 'kittiwake hotels' off South Beach

Giant new nesting structures have been unveiled as part of a "first of its kind" project in Lowestoft. Work has been completed off South Beach to construct two new artificial nesting structures for 'vulnerable seabirds' after energy giant Ørsted developed the first nearshore kittiwake 'hotels'. The works were carried out as part of a compensation scheme associated with the Hornsea Three wind

farm – which will comprise up to 231 offshore wind turbines about 120km off the Norfolk coast and is expected to be commissioned in 2027.

New campus opens

East Coast College has opened a new Civil Engineering and Construction Campus to fill the future skills gap in the sector and help the government achieve its 'net zero' target. The new campus based at Lound, near Lowestoft, opened its doors for the first time on July 5 as part of a Vision Launch, before opening its doors to students this September. It is based on a 17-acre site between Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft at the former Lothingland Middle School grounds.

Primary school praised by OFSTED

Staff, pupils and Trust leaders at a Lowestoft-area school are celebrating after receiving praise from a monitoring visit by OFSTED. Red Oak Primary School in Lowestoft – which is part of The Active Learning Trust – is currently rated by OFSTED as 'Good'. But after being visited for an ungraded monitoring inspection recently, inspectors found "enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged 'Outstanding' if we were to carry out a graded inspection."

Joy for Lowestoft firm

Harrod Sport, a long established, family-run firm in Lowestoft has scored as it won a contract to supply 20 sets of FIFA Quality goals that feature in the 2023 FIFS Women's World Cup, hosted by Australia and New Zealand.

Opposition grows to ticket office plans

Greater Anglia is currently consulting about proposed changes to the way tickets are sold and customer service is provided at stations. Waveney MP Peter Aldous slammed the proposals to close the ticket office at Lowestoft station as "a retrograde step." The proposals form part of a cull planned by Greater Anglia, which wants to close 47 of its 54 ticket offices across the region. The East Suffolk Travel Association said that they had "serious concerns" about the ticket office closures.

Dutch yacht crew rescued

The crew of a Dutch yacht had to be rescued off the coast of Lowestoft after suffering an engine failure. The Lowestoft lifeboat, Patsy Knight, was paged after the engine cut out and the crew feared they were drifting towards the shore – potentially causing huge damage to the boat and injuring those on board. With the weather conditions worsening and finding themselves in a position where it was too deep to anchor, they contacted the UK Coastguard. The boat was towed past Holm Sands and into the marina where emergency services attended to them.

In a separate incident a yacht with engine failure in a "very strong" tide sparked a lifeboat call. The 40ft yacht was on passage from Ipswich to Lowestoft when it had to call for assistance after suffering engine failure approaching their home port. The yacht, with two crew, a dog and a parrot, lost cooling water in their engine so had to shut it down before it overheated. The relief RNLI lifeboat "Storm Rider" found the yacht near the North Newcombe buoy, half a mile from the pier heads. The tide was very strong and there was a 28-knot wind blowing. A tow line was connected and the stranded vessel was brought into the marina, where it was met by the town's Coastguard Rescue Team.

Affordable housing coming to town

Prominent former offices close to the town centre have been demolished with work under way as part of the development of six two-bedroomed social rented homes. The construction is at the site of the former Shaw Trust offices in Milton Road East, which had been closed for more than three

years. Work has begun on the six social rented, local authority managed homes that will include private rear gardens, air source heat pumps, electric vehicle chargers and solar photovoltaic panels.

Schools gain industry awards

Staff and pupils at two Lowestoft primary schools are celebrating after gaining industry awards. Grove Primary and Westwood Primary schools in Lowestoft expressed pride after being awarded the 'Inclusion Quality Mark' and achieving 'Centre of Excellence' status. The Inclusion Quality Mark (IQM) award provides schools with a nationally recognised validation of their inclusive practice and ongoing commitment to developing educational inclusion.

MP blasts 'inadequate' support for energy projects

Peter Aldous, MP for Waveney, said in a speech to the House of Commons that the infrastructure needed to support the construction of projects like the East Anglia THREE windfarm and the Sizewell C nuclear power plant was "woefully inadequate" and called on the government to do more to support the region. Among his suggestions for getting the region ready for these large-scale developments was improving education to prepare people for jobs in the sector.

OFSTED praise for primary school

Staff, pupils, parents and the governing body at Somerleyton School are celebrating following a 'Good' OFSTED inspection which includes 'Outstanding' features. This was the first inspection since the school joined the Hartismere Family of Schools in 2019.

Anniversary auction features special artworks

Organisers of the Pakefield Postcard Auction will mark its 10th anniversary this year as they support an ongoing appeal by raising funds to install a statue of Benjamin Britten as a boy, looking out over the sea that inspired his music in his birth town of Lowestoft. In April last year, a community project was unveiled with the aim of raising funds to have the statue installed just yards away from where the world-famous composer, conductor and pianist was born.

Birds shot

Police investigations are continuing after a number of birds were killed following reported shootings. The Marine and Wildlife Rescue charity responded following reports that birds were being shot in The Parklands, off Ashburnham Way in Carlton Colville. The first bird discovered dead from bullet wounds was on the patio of a house and the homeowner contacted the charity to say that numerous other wild birds – including pigeons, doves and gulls – were being shot.

Warning issued over cat abuse

Cats Protection Anglia Coastal (CPAC) said it had been made aware of a "number of youths" who are reportedly catching and transporting cats from around the Beaconsfield Road area to the other side of the town – leaving them up to three miles away from their homes. CPAC provides care and welfare for animals in Great Yarmouth, Gorleston, Lowestoft, Beccles, Bungay and surrounding areas. New legislation introduced this year has made it mandatory for all cat owners to microchip their cats.

Community centre reopens

There was joy as the ribbon was cut to reopen Bloodmoor Hill Community Centre in Dale End, Carlton Colville following a successful bid by a new leaseholder. Councillor Chris Thomas, supported by Rev Sharon Lord and Rev Becki Bensusan, reopened the facility as an open afternoon and community funday was held to celebrate Pakefield Church as the new leaseholder.

August

New space-themed play area opens

Work was recently completed to develop a new play area in Lowestoft which cost just under £44,000. The new space-themed play area at Rosedale Park in Elmtree ward of Lowestoft has been officially opened. With Lowestoft Town Council overseeing the new play area development, councillors enjoyed visiting the new facilities that were officially opened during Love Parks Week – the national scheme backed by Keep Britain Tidy to celebrate Parks and Open Spaces.

‘A Major Asset’: New homes at vacant town centre site

New affordable homes – close to Lowestoft town centre – have been unveiled at a former brownfield site that had previously been used by a tool hire business. Prospect House is now set to provide 31 flats for much-needed social housing. The development was created with the goal of providing high-quality housing for individuals and families in the area who are not able to afford the high costs of a private rental property.

Flood works gathering pace

A project that will protect thousands of homes and businesses in Lowestoft from flooding now features words and artwork on the glass sections of the new flood walls. The words – including poetry and people’s reactions to the sea along with its history of flooding – and artwork have been permanently engraved onto the glass sections of the new sea walls on South Pier.



Traditional smokehouse reopens after major refurbishment

Smoking fish since 1987, Waveney Vally Smoked Products is open in Lowestoft once more. The site, on Newcombe Road, uses traditional techniques to cure and smoke herring. The shop was closed

for 13 weeks whilst extensive building work was done to bring the building up to the latest high standard and a more modern, fresher and up-to-date factory.

High Court injunction forces clearance of holiday park site

Work to clear an unauthorised extension at North Denes in Lowestoft has been completed after diggers had moved in over recent weeks. It comes after East Suffolk Council was granted a High Court injunction in May, which granted the removal of an unauthorised development. The council successfully applied to the High Court for an injunction ordering Tingdene (North Denes) Ltd to remove caravan bases, waste soil pipes, roadway and a pumping station and permanently restoring the site to its previous condition. The land was previously owned by Waveney District Council – now East Suffolk Council – before being transferred to Lowestoft Town Council.

New Alice in Wonderland play area

A new Alice in Wonderland-themed play area was given the seal of approval at the official opening. A revamp and expansion of the play area at Sparrows Nest started in October 2022. After Lowestoft Town Council teamed up with “experts in creative play spaces” Wicksteed Leisure, the new play area opened in May as part of the successful ‘Coronation Concert’ in Sparrows Nest Gardens in honour of the coronation of King Charles III.

A&E department rated the best in the country

According to a study conducted by the Care Quality Commission (CQC), patients in the A&E department of the James Paget Hospital have a better overall experience than anywhere else in the UK. The claim comes from a bi-annual survey into urgent and emergency care which saw patients share their experiences with the regulator in several aspects of emergency care. The CQC then collates responses to the questionnaire and scores hospital trusts out of 10 in different areas. The results revealed that the JPH had been given a score of 8.3/10 for overall patient experience – the highest rating in the country.

Pride event hailed a success

Lowestoft’s very first – and the UK’s most Easterly Pride event – took centre stage across two prominent parks. Although the rain hit the event, organisers said the weather “didn’t dampen the fun and energy” with great performances throughout the afternoon. Lowestoft Town Council organised the town’s first Pride event across Sparrow’s Nest Gardens and the Ness Park. Town mayor Sonia Barker officially opened the event and said it was important that everyone in the community was recognised, included and celebrated.

Classroom ‘transformed’

Greater Than – aka Justin Peach – is known for replacing the “Girl with a crowbar” Banksy piece that was removed from the former Lowestoft Electrical store and his Free Art Sundays, where he leaves paintings around the community for people to take home, as well as his live music and art exhibitions. But for nine days over the summer holidays he has been painting at Warren School – the special school on Clarke’s Lane, Oulton Broad. The talented artist has transformed one of the school’s sensory rooms in the PMLD classroom into an underwater wonderland. He painted turtles, jellyfish, dolphins as well as a host of other tropical fish surrounding a giant shipwreck.

High Street films shine a light on town’s history

High Street Histories – a ten-part series of films exploring Lowestoft’s historic High Street – has been launched. The short films – featuring conversations between Lowestoft historian Ivan Bunn and writer Dean Parkin – showcase buildings, past and present, on the town’s High Street. Allowing “all ages to find out more about the stories behind the historic high street” the series is a collaboration between Historic England’s Heritage Schools programme, the North Lowestoft Heritage Action Zone,

Poetry People and Mr Bunn. The episodes are posted online each Wednesday on Poetry People's Facebook and YouTube pages.

Virtual war memorial launched

The first ever complete war memorial for a Suffolk town, which covers both world wars, has been launched. A new virtual war memorial for the Lowestoft area has been unveiled. Rev Damon Rogers – the vicar at St Andrew's Church in Lowestoft – has worked with Joe Thompson, from community organisation Lowestoft Old and Now, and with support from Lowestoft Town Council to create a new memorial for the Lowestoft area. The new website 'Our Fallen' was launched at The Grit in Old Nelson Street. Visit ourfallen.lowestoftoldandnow.org.

Welcome Wimpy!

A branch of fast-food restaurant Wimpy has opened in Lowestoft, six years after it left the town's high street. Wimpy re-opened in Lowestoft after a major £300,000 revamp of its London Road North home

Top Bakery

A Lowestoft bakery has been named among the best in the UK by a national newspaper. The Times list of the top 49 bakeries to visit in the UK has been compiled by chefs and bakers local to a region. Joanna Brennan, co-founder of Pump Street Bakery, compiled the list for East Anglia. She recommends people visit The Penny Bun Bakehouse, Lowestoft. Run by chef and baker Johnny Spillings, The Penny Bakehouse often sells out quickly. Luckily, those looking for a baked fix can pre-order online, which is the recommended option to avoid being disappointed.

Work on new bridge delayed by two months

Work on the third crossing in Lowestoft has been set back by two months with highway construction taking longer than expected. The delay means that Farrans, the contractor for the £126.75M Gull Wing Bridge, has applied to extend the closure of Denmark Road until 31 October. This is to allow for the completion of the new northern roundabout and approach road to the bridge, as well as new drainage, attenuation ponds and utilities works on the Northern side of Lake Lothing.

New home for amphibians and reptiles in park

Ahead of Persimmon's housing development at Woods Meadow in Oulton Broad, East Suffolk Services Ltd has helped create new shelters at Woods Meadow Country Park for reptiles and amphibians. Working alongside Persimmon and ecologists, a team from East Suffolk Services Ltd constructed artificial habitats known as hibernacula. They will provide reptiles and amphibians with a safe place to overwinter, bask and feed and will increase the biodiversity of the park.

September

'It made our day'

Lowestoft Lions Club were delighted with the response after holding their fun day event at Nicholas Everitt Park in Oulton Broad. Lowestoft Lions Club has for over 60 years raised money to support those in need by organising fundraising events. The Lowestoft Lions recently donated 18 digital clocks to Ward 17 at the James Paget Hospital to support haematology patients receiving treatment there.

New festival in Lowestoft celebrates the power of kindness

The first ever Festival of Kindness, organised by Norfolk and Waveney Mind in collaboration with Lowestoft Town Council, took place on 26 August. The Sparrows Nest Park played host to the event, where people enjoyed a day of entertainment, live music, food and workshops.

Convoy of trucks cheered on by hundreds

The 30th annual East Coast Truckers Children's Convoy saw 98 truck drivers chauffeur disabled and disadvantaged children to a day out at Pleasurewood Hills in Lowestoft. The event saw people from Norwich, Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft applauding at the roadside to the symphony of truck horns.

Wilko store closes

The Wilko store on Gordon Road in Lowestoft was one of 24 shops across the UK that have closed. Having been based at the large former Fine Fare, Gateway and most recently, Somerfield superstore – that closed in 2008 – the Lowestoft branch of Wilko opened on Gordon Road in November 2009. With another vacant shop on the town's high street, retail leaders have expressed sadness at the latest body blow to beleaguered businesses in the town centre.

Mayor says she would like to see Banksy art return

Sonia Barker, the mayor of Lowestoft where Banksy painted a now-removed artwork during his 'Great British Spraycation' has said that she would like to see it return to its hometown in the future. The Sandcastle Girl was sprayed onto the side of the former Lowestoft Electrical shop by the world-renowned artist in 2021, and the building owners removed it from the wall in November and sold it to a private buyer. The art is currently on display in West Suffolk Council-owned Moyse's Hall, Bury St Edmunds.

Council approves bid to extend prominent holiday park

A bid to extend a holiday park near Lowestoft with 86 additional caravans has been approved by councillors. Park Holidays UK Ltd, which owns the business, will now build a new access and main site entrance off the A12, new entrance buildings and a clubhouse facility, as well as 86 additional static holiday caravans.

Town hosts Surf Life Saving championships

More than 150 athletes from across Waveney, North Norfolk and Brighton hit the beach at Lowestoft to battle it out for the title of top surf life savers. Waveney Surf Life Saving Club successfully hosted the Eastern Region's Surf Life Saving championships. There was joy for its junior squad as they retained their title of Eastern Region Surf Life Saving Nipper and Youth Champions.

Victorian bonanza

A Victorian-themed weekend of free entertainment has been hailed as a "great success". The historic High Street and Triangle Market area of Lowestoft was transformed as the town travelled back in time to the Victorian era for an 1880s themed bonanza. Victorian characters paraded the streets, with live music, an Amazing Flea Circus and a Victorian magician all entertaining. Organised by the Seagull Theatre, the event formed part of the Heritage Open Days festival running throughout the town. Working in conjunction with East Suffolk Council and Historic England, as part of the Heritage Action Zone initiative, the event was supported by Lowestoft Town Council.

'Pharmacy Wasteland' fears as branches close across Suffolk

Peter Aldous, MP for Waveney, raised the concern of community pharmacies closing down and leaving residents without vital help, in Parliament. According to the NHS, 222 pharmacies closed in England in the first six months of 2023, including six in Suffolk. Speaking in the House of Commons,

Mr Aldous said; “Community pharmacies are embedded in all our communities. They are the silent partners of the health and care system, and we’ve probably taken them for granted. We’ve had dentistry deserts, and we might be moving towards a situation of pharmacy wastelands.”

Primary schools proud to win science awards

Westwood Primary School and Grove Primary School have been awarded the Primary Science Quality Mark (PQSM) in recognition of their commitment to excellence in science teaching and learning. The schools, which are part of The Active Learning Trust – were both recognised for their high expectations of teachers and pupils.

Delight as new community archives facility is launched in town

With the strapline of “Keeping local history local”, the Lowestoft and District Independent Archive (LADIA) organisation has been unveiled at the Old Court Building in Old Nelson Street. As a new charitable trust, LADIA has been formed and governed by six local history enthusiasts to preserve the local history of North East Suffolk within the area.

Port’s rich history

Maritime history has been celebrated as hidden treasures in Lowestoft were showcased. With 10 days of free to enjoy activities celebrating Lowestoft’s rich history and culture, the town hosted the hugely popular Lowestoft Heritage Open Days Festival. As more events were held in Lowestoft than any other area in Suffolk, ABP’s (Associated British Ports) Port of Lowestoft was “thrilled” to host a special guided tour of the historic port. The tour concluded in the Port office, where documents were on display, which allowed visitors to trace the port’s journey from the construction of the original Inner Harbour in 1831, through to having built its reputation on fishing and the handling of agricultural produce, to its current role as a thriving centre for supporting the offshore energy industry.

£3.4M funding boost for town hall site

12 heritage buildings across the country have been awarded a share of £12.2M from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. The largest funding grant awarded will enable a scheme to bring Lowestoft Town Hall back into public use. With applications for listed building consent and full planning permission submitted to East Suffolk Council, they centre around “restoration and extension of the Grade II listed Lowestoft Town Hall, to form a heritage hub, café, gallery, community event space, town council office and registrar offices”, the funding boost has been hailed.

October

Tower block will be ripped down

Lowestoft’s only tower block is to be torn down and its residents rehomed, officials have confirmed. St Peters Court, which dates to the 1960s, is to be demolished following a costs review by East Suffolk Council. The authority says it has taken the decision to rip down the tower block and rehouse residents over the next 12 months as it will cost an estimated further £23M to maintain the building over the next 30 years. The block of 90 two-bedroomed flats – whose residents are mainly council tenants – has 16 storeys with six flats on each floor. Councillor Beavan, East Suffolk’s Cabinet Member for Housing said; “The court was once a great community, held in affection by local people, but tenants realise that its time has come. All tenants will be offered alternative appropriate social housing in Lowestoft.”

Heart of Darkness: Project to celebrate the town's links to Joseph Conrad

Polish author Joseph Conrad, famous for *Heart of Darkness*, arrived in Lowestoft in June 1878 not speaking a word of English. Now a new project is set to shine the focus on Conrad's uncelebrated links with Lowestoft. Assessing the impact of people in Lowestoft upon the Polish author, 'Joseph Conrad; the life of a Lowestoft immigrant' is a new arts and heritage development by Voice Cloud. As part of the project, creative arts workshops will run for local people and Polish/Eastern European communities between winter and April. Led by professional theatre makers, workshops will talk about Conrad's life and works, promote group discussion and encourage sharing of perspectives on immigration.

Costa's new look

A Costa Coffee branch has revealed its new look following a two-month-long overhaul. The Costa store in North Quay Retail Park in Lowestoft was closed in July for the building of a much "uplifted" interior and for the construction of a new drive-through lane.

Town to help build one of UK's biggest nuclear power stations

Lowestoft is set to play a crucial role in the construction of one of the UK's biggest nuclear power plants. The town will become one of two locations in the region to provide large-scale storage for building materials needed for the Sizewell C power station. Two sites in the Port of Lowestoft have been chosen, along with a third at the Port of Ipswich.

State of district blasted by Lowestoft councillor

A council has agreed to form a task force to tidy up East Suffolk after the state of parts of the district was called "unacceptable". A full meeting of East Suffolk Council has approved a motion by Peter Byatt, leader of the Labour group at the council and who represents Lowestoft's Kirkley and Pakefield wards. Mr Byatt said that residents, especially in Lowestoft, are fed up with the untidiness and shabby look of communities, from weeds to potholes and fly-tipping to dog-fouling. This is unacceptable as East Suffolk should be clean and inviting for all. The full council approved the motion and agreed to form a cross-party working group to take long-term decisions to help tackle the problem.

On your bike: Pupils pedal to promote active travel launch in town

A pilot scheme that is aimed at promoting active travel has been launched in Lowestoft to build on the legacy of the Tour of Britain. Children in Year 5 and Year 6 at Phoenix St Peter Academy in Lowestoft have saddled up to be part of the innovative new Bike Library scheme. The pupils have been given the opportunity to have free and safe access to a bike. The scheme was launched by Suffolk County Council after the free loan bikes were secured using funding from Active Travel, England's capability and ambition fund. With additional funding from Scottish Power Renewables – supporting partner of the Suffolk stage of the Tour of Britain – the pupils and their parents or carers will be offered a Bikeability training course to give them the skills, confidence and understanding they need to take their bike on the road.

Waterfront new homes receive funding boost

A bid to transform vacant brownfield land in a coastal town with 350 new homes has received a major funding boost. A Government grant worth more than £4.2M has been awarded to East Suffolk Council to help pave the way for a waterfront regeneration scheme in Lowestoft. The grant will help cover the cost of land remediation at the former Sanyo and Survitec manufacturing sites on School Road. It comes after the land, on the South side of Lake Lothing, was previously acquired by Waveney District Council – the predecessor to East Suffolk Council – in 2018, having stood vacant since 2009. The area, known as Kirkley Waterfront, forms part of the Sustainable Urban

Neighbourhood scheme that was adopted in 2013 and focuses on regenerating the area to provide housing and jobs for local people.

Brave sailors who gave their lives during WWII honoured

The Royal Naval Patrol Service's (RNPS) annual reunion and parade has been held at their wartime HQ in Lowestoft. Heroes who gave their lives during WWII were honoured at the 48th annual Service of Remembrance at Belle Vue Park, where a memorial to fallen service members is based. During the war, the town was the central depot of the RNPS, whose main role was minesweeping to keep vital supply lines open. After the service, the parade reformed in Sparrows Nest Gardens – the site of the WWII naval base HMS Europa – for the salute, address and the 'Sunset' ceremony.

Further funding boost to restore town hall

East Suffolk Council has pledged £900,000 investment as part of a project to revitalise Lowestoft's Town Hall. This further funding boost comes after the Lowestoft Town Hall Project received £3,257,512 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Cliff protection works under way

A scheme of maintenance work and repairs is being carried out on a stretch of beach in Corton. East Suffolk Water Management Board (ESWMB) will be placing concrete filled bags against the cliff below the lower part of Baker's Score access steps and to the North below the caravan park. The work is to address localised areas of cliff face loss and give better protection to the cliff in these areas.

McDonald's 24-hour licence bid for new restaurant gets go-ahead

As signs have been installed and work continues on a new McDonald's drive-through outlet, the fast food chain has successfully applied for a new premises licence. After plans to build the third McDonald's outlet in Lowestoft were approved by East Suffolk Council under delegated powers in 2022, last week's meeting was told that a hearing was required after 17 representations had been received against the application. A Suffolk Constabulary representative said that the police representation was about crime and disorder and the potential for anti-social behaviour in the area. Lowestoft Town Council objected on the grounds of crime and disorder amid fears that there would be additional gatherings in the car park causing an increase in anti-social behaviour. Whilst residents cited an increase in litter, noise and light pollution amongst their concerns. The licensing sub-committee decided to grant the licence.

Coastal parkrun named one of the best in the UK

The Lowestoft parkrun was featured in a recent BBC Countryfile feature of the 10 most beautiful countryside routes in the UK. Lowestoft's run was highlighted for its brilliant coastal vista which starts at East Point Pavilion and follows Lowestoft Promenade past Claremont Pier. This tarmac and gravel course offers vast views over the North Sea and finishes in the gardens of the Royal Wellington Esplanade. It is featured alongside other scenic beauty spots such as Snowdonia National Park, the Lake District and the Cairngorms.

Flood walls unveiled

A "vital" £ 97M scheme of works to protect Lowestoft from flooding has reached an "important landmark". A special event was held as the opening of Lowestoft's new tidal flood walls – the first phase of the town's tidal flood defence – was celebrated. It comes almost two-and-a half years after construction works started in Lowestoft to reduce the risk of flooding to more than 1,500 homes and 825 businesses in the town.

Ten streets most ticketed for illegal parking

A Freedom of Information request from the Lowestoft Journal showed that East Suffolk Council pocketed £194,049 from 7,442 penalty charge notices issued in Beccles, Bungay and Lowestoft. Lowestoft was the most ticketed with 5,016 penalty notices issued to illegally parked vehicles in 2022, leading to £134,742 in penalty charges. Among the top ten ticketed streets were:

Surrey Street (265)
Marina (215)
London Road South (206)
Grove Road (195)
High Street (187)
Beach Road (103)
Royal Terrace (91)

Firefighters and Storm Babet

Firefighters from Lowestoft dealt with multiple flood related incidents as Storm Babet hit the district. People were assisted from cars, businesses and homes by fire crews, whilst trees and vehicles were cleared from the roads during treacherous conditions. The specialist Swift Water Rescue Team from White Watch at Lowestoft South fire station were out dealing with flooding incidents across the county as torrential rain and strong winds lashed East Suffolk. The crew from Lowestoft North fire station first responded to an incident at 10.53am on Friday – and after responding to multiple flood related incidents across all of Suffolk thereafter, finally returned to the station at 12.45am on Saturday morning.

November

Blessing of the herring

A good gathering of people turned out on the green opposite The Oddfellows Arms public house for an open air service as herrings were blessed and prayers were said for those venturing out to sea. Despite the light rain there was a good attendance on the cliff top at Pakefield for the annual Blessing of the Herring ceremony, led by the Rector of Pakefield, Rev Sharon Lord. Cooked herrings were then offered for sale at The Oddfellows, to raise funds for the church, whilst the Lowestoft Longshoremens Shanty Singers entertained drinkers inside.

Shop forced to close by major blaze to reopen

A high street shop has reopened after a devastating blaze forced it to close for five months. The fire in June gutted seven flats above businesses along the High Street in Lowestoft leaving residents homeless and forcing traders beneath to close. One of the shops affected was High Street Furnishings which sat directly beneath the fire and suffered terribly from water damage. The owners of the shop lost everything in the shop, including all stock and personal items. After this big setback, they have announced that the shop has reopened.

Mindless vandalism: Fury as trees destroyed in community garden

Officials have condemned the “mindless” action of vandals after trees were destroyed in a community garden. For the past two years, a group of volunteers has worked tirelessly to transform a disused patch of land in Carlton Colville into a new Kitchen and Wildlife Garden. At a community tree planting day held on the land at The Graylings, off Elmdale Drive in January 2022, 16 heritage fruit trees were planted to create a Heritage Orchard. Last month, volunteers discovered broken glass and rubbish strewn around with one of the trees ripped out of the ground. Now, further damage has been found with most of the trees snapped and ripped out of the ground.

Delight over U-turn of planned closure of station ticket office

Plans to close the ticket office at Lowestoft rail station have been scrapped following a government U-turn. Proposed changes to services at Lowestoft train station had sparked fears that customers would be left without support. Greater Anglia launched a consultation earlier this year about proposed changes to the way tickets are sold and customer service is provided at stations, as part of a plan to close 47 of its 54 ticket offices across the region. Waveney MP Peter Aldous, in making a representation to Greater Anglia as part of the consultation, had slammed the proposals as a retrograde step.

'Fang-tastic!' Town centre transformed for Halloween

Hundreds of people turned out to enjoy some seasonal thrills and chills as the town centre was transformed for Halloween. Interactive street entertainment attracted the crowds as Spooky Saturday took centre stage in the town centre and on the historic High Street. A pumpkin trail, free activities for children and families and a circus theme saw a jam packed day of events held in the town centre, The Triangle Market and High Street areas. Organised by Lowestoft Vision, the turnout was boosted as Lowestoft Town Council held a Halloween Market in the historic Triangle Market.

Council now using B&Bs for temporary accommodation

East Suffolk Council has written to the Department for Work and Pensions calling for the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) to be increased to cope with soaring private rents as the local authority grappled with six times as many people living in temporary accommodation than three years ago. On current trends, the number of households in temporary accommodation in the district is set to rise by 48% by the end of the current financial year, due mainly to the cost of living crisis and private rents. The result has been that the council is having to use more 'nightly let' accommodation.

Appeal for baby clothes

Baby Basics Lowestoft has received a welcome financial boost – but still needs support with donations of baby clothing. Baby Basics, a Lowestoft volunteer-led project that was set up in the town in 2016 to support families with children aged from 0 to five with clothing, cots, prams and most things that babies and very young children need, including toys. They have received a cheque from the Rotary Club of Lowestoft South which will help them to meet some of their costs.

Joy as school is praised by OFSTED

Education watchdog OFSTED has visited Pakefield High in Lowestoft for the first inspection since the school converted to an academy in April 2019. After the inspection was carried out in September, the inspectors found the school to have a 'good quality of education', 'good leadership and management', 'good behaviour and attitudes' and 'good personal development' and its 'overall effectiveness' was rated as 'Good'.

New booklet helps children make healthier choices

New booklets have been created for primary school children in Lowestoft and the surrounding area. Entitled Lowestoft Healthy Habits, the booklets have been handed out as part of a new project through the Lowestoft and Northern Parishes Community Partnership and Lowestoft Rising. The Lowestoft Healthy Habits booklets have gone out to students in Years 5 and 6 in all primary schools in the Lowestoft area. They aim to help children make healthier choices leading to an overall improvement in their physical and mental health.

Suffolk remains a treasure hot spot

In 2022, people reported finding 1,378 treasures nationwide, marking the ninth consecutive year that the 1,000 mark has been exceeded. Suffolk has been placed on list of counties most fruitful in treasure, just after Norfolk, Hampshire and Kent. Suffolk County Council's archaeological team dealt

with 75 treasure cases last year. Most treasure finds are small items of gold or silver jewellery, such as finger rings or brooches that have been lost in antiquity and are often broken. They have also recorded coins of various periods and Bronze Age axe hoards.

New cheetah arrives at zoo

Africa Alive shared a post on social media welcoming Duma the cheetah to Kessingland. The two-year-old female big cat came from Zoo de Montpellier in the South of France.

Bomb squad brought in to deal with package

A Bomb Disposal Unit carried out a controlled explosion after a suspicious package was found near the Aldi store in Gateway Retail Park. Police put a 100-metre cordon in front of the Aldi shop and the Gym store. A huge emergency service presence was at the scene, including several ambulances. It is believed that the package was full of batteries.

Housing plans in doubt as major firm collapses

One of the region's major building companies has collapsed after more than 30 years in the business. Wellington Construction Ltd, based in Lowestoft, announced it was closing down and appointed liquidators. Over the years the company was involved in many large building projects in the region. The collapse now casts doubt over a bid, made by the developer in January this year, to build 104 houses in Bradwell.

'We will remember them'

Hundreds of people turned out as Lowestoft fell silent in paying tribute to honour the fallen. A poignant parade and service to mark Remembrance Sunday attracted large crowds who gathered to pay their respects to those who fought and died for our country.

Go ahead for £10M town hall transformation

A £10M transformation of the Lowestoft town hall site has moved closer to reality after revamp plans were given the green light. Plans centring around "restoration and extension" of the Grade II listed building "to form a heritage hub, café, gallery, community event space, Town Council office and registrar office" have been voted on and approved.

New McDonald's opens

A new McDonald's restaurant has been officially opened with a grand ribbon-cutting ceremony. The world-famous burger chain has flung open the doors at its newest eatery at Leisure Way retail park in Lowestoft. The 76-seater restaurant will create around 80 full and part-time jobs, and it will be open for dine-in service, takeaway, drive-thru and delivery.

Oil thrown on tennis courts

For more than 10 years tennis club members and volunteers have worked tirelessly on a project to transform facilities at the Denes Oval in Lowestoft. Late last year there was joy for Lowestoft Tennis and Pickleball Club as the newly renovated courts and floodlights were opened. However members discovered that some of the recently resurfaced courts were damaged when oil was thrown over the fenced facilities causing damage to the surface.

'Wonderful facilities' hailed at school opening

Horizon School unveiled its "wonderful facilities" during a special ceremony. The pupil referral unit, which teaches children who require alternative provision, is an amalgamation of four other units in North Suffolk and is now able to offer both primary and secondary provision on one site in

Lowestoft. Based at Saturn Close in Lowestoft, and with the strapline to 'Make each day a new Horizon', it can cater for 102 students.

December

Veteran receives nuclear test medal

Brian Hunter, an 86-year-old Lowestoft veteran, has been honoured with a medal for his involvement in nuclear weapons testing on Christmas Island. The Nuclear Test Medal was announced by the government in November 2022 after years of campaigning.

Coastal erosion

'Heartbreak' as diggers tear down chalet

On Saturday, diggers arrived and knocked down the three remaining cliff-top properties in Pakefield. One of the dwellings – which was deemed unsafe last year due to coastal erosion – was owned by sisters Jacky Tampling and Nicola Taggart. Ms Campling attended the demolition and watched as two diggers tore down her chalet. "It was heartbreaking" she said. "We've had it for more than 20 years. It was my parents place until they died".

Cliff-top properties left precariously perched

A dozen holiday homes left precariously perched on a cliff edge are set to be moved after a road partially collapsed during high tides and strong winds. After sections of the road in front of the cliff-top caravans near Pakefield Holiday Park collapsed and fell onto the beach below, several people were evacuated, a suspected unexploded bomb was found and a dangerous slope was fenced off. With an estimated 13ft of cliff having been lost in the recent bad weather, the steps down to the beach at Arbor Lane remain cordoned off. As the damage to Pakefield was assessed, the suspected unexploded bomb was found to be an object used in minesweeping, after a controlled explosion was carried out.

'Our coast is at greater risk than anyone could have predicted'

Peter Aldous said that it has been known for some time that Pakefield is at high risk from the threat of coastal erosion. The fact that this erosion has taken place so much quicker and more aggressively than predicted, highlights how our coast is more exposed and at a greater risk than anyone could have predicted. Mr Aldous raised the matter in the debate on the chancellor's Autumn Statement, urging the government to look very closely at increasing the coastal protection budget.

Cliff-top residents being 'ignored' over erosion fears

Desperate people facing 'impending disaster' from coastal erosion have said they will need to raise £10M to protect their community. The Pakefield Community Group (PCG) has announced that they are planning to become a Community Interest Group (CIG) to help them secure the money. The move comes after recent weeks saw the cliffs lose an estimated 13 feet. According to the chair of PCG, Pakefield is "not being listened to". He said the cliff-top "desperately" needs emergency intervention – such as the rocks placed on the beach in December 2022 – to slow the pace of erosion.

Seaside sauna launches to fabulous response

Embracing the Scandinavian sauna culture on the East Coast, one of the country's newest pop-up saunas has opened just yards from Pakefield beach. The new mobile Salty Sauna has been set up in a converted horse box. Perched on a cliff, Salty Sauna has become the most easterly positioned, wood-fired sauna in the country.

Organisations unite in supporting unpaid family carers

An event to mark Carers Rights Day was successfully held in Lowestoft as up to 30 organisations united to support unpaid family carers. Organised by Suffolk Family Carers, the event was held at East Point Pavilion. The drop-in and market place gave family carers in North Suffolk and South Norfolk the chance to find out more about the services and support available locally to them, to ensure they are aware of their rights and to raise awareness of the needs of family carers in the wider population.

Big crowd braves cold to enjoy Christmas lights switch-on

Freezing temperatures failed to prevent a big crowd enjoying the traditional Christmas lights switch-on in Lowestoft. Families who braved the cold were treated to an afternoon full of entertainment before admiring the new Christmas lights provided by Lowestoft Vision, the town's Business Improvement District organisation.

Man who rescued sailing smack receives national achievement award

John Wylson – who found the Lowestoft-based sailing smack Excelsior in Norway where she was working as a 'motor coaster' in 1972 and rescued her back to his hometown – has been honoured with a National Lifetime Achievement Award. Chartered architect and sailor, Mr Wylson set up the Excelsior Trust to restore her back to her original condition, securing funding and manpower for completing the restoration. In honour of his dedication and commitment to preserving Excelsior, vice president Mr Wylson has received his award from the Royal Yachting Association. He received his award from the Princess Royal – who is also a patron of the Excelsior Trust – at an event in London.

Charity van stolen

Brain Wave, a charity devoted to helping people with brain injuries, says having its van stolen has put daily operations on the brink of collapsing. The charity relies on the van for its daily operations and because of the theft it is experiencing difficulties in its day-to-day requirements.

Strike A Chord project launches Christmas single

Hoping to hit the top of the UK charts, 15 young people from the Strike A Chord project have composed "The Winters Night". Raising money for Christmas, the new single was composed by the group, which is a collective of young people aged between 12-19 in Lowestoft.

New town centre office hailed as 'important investment' in Lowestoft

Kingsley Home Care has launched its latest development on London Road North with the move hailed by the mayor, Sonia Barker, as "an important investment in our town." Kingsley Healthcare CEO said the opening of the town centre office marked a significant moment for the company as it entered its 25th anniversary year. The new office, in the former Barnardo's shop, has three floors which open up the possibility of running community programmes such as drop-in cafes for older people.

Get your skates on!

A temporary ice rink has proved a big hit with Lowestoft children and families. Adventure Island Play Park and Raw Soccer has turned one of its indoor football pitches into a winter wonderland. Believed to be the town's first indoor ice rink, it has seen families, local schools, businesses and clubs flock to the festive facility to use it.

Former post office building wins award for ‘positive impact’ on town centre

The former Post Office on London Road, which was restored last year, won first place in the conservation category at East Suffolk Council’s Quality of Place awards. The Grade II listed building has been closed and vacant since 2018 when it was bought by the council as part of plans to regenerate the town centre. A conversion phase will begin next year for the Post Office to become a new cultural arts space run by Messums, recognised for revitalising old buildings and embedding them within communities.

Wherry Christmas!

Lowestoft Railway Station presented its annual Wherry Lines Christmas Fayre on December 16. The event, presented by the Wherry Lines Community Partnership and the Lowestoft Central Project, showcased local crafters and makers.

Postcard competition celebrates creativity and love for town

Suffolk writer and poet Dean Parkin hosted an awards ceremony for the Greetings from Lowestoft postcard competition. More than 150 creative and colourful postcards of the town were submitted by people of all ages and abilities, showcasing the love and enjoyment they experienced whilst crafting their unique cards. The launch event is part of @firstlightlowestoft’s Christmas celebration, offering a festive atmosphere with choirs, performers, stalls and treats from the local traders at East Point Pavilion.

Christmas comes early!

At a gathering at the Hotel Victoria, cheques to the value of £61,000 were handed out to 16 groups and organisations which will go on to benefit hundreds of individuals within the district of Kirkley. They were handed out by the Kirkley Poor’s Land Estate. It is a charitable trust that has been in existence for almost 200 years, but it was not until 1967 when people were given the right to buy their houses that the trust began to have funds to award grants.

Local choir wants to bring Britten home

Pakefield Singers gave a concert in aid of the recently launched Britten as a Boy community project which aims to bring Britten home by honouring the town’s famous son with a statue of the young composer to be placed facing out to sea opposite his boyhood home in South Lowestoft. Britten was born in 1913, in Kirkley, on 22 November, a birthdate he shares with St Cecilia, the patron saint of music. Until he was 14, he went to school in Lowestoft – in sight and sound of the North Sea – and took piano and viola lessons from local teachers. Britten is more closely associated with Aldeburgh, Snape and Orford than Kirkley, but it was at St John’s Church (now demolished) by Lowestoft Harbour where his mother was the organist, and the neighbouring church of St Peter, that Britten first experienced the power of music. The young Britten was writing music from a very early age and went on to become a central figure of 20th century music.

Vandalism

Sonia Barker, the mayor of Lowestoft, has called for a stop to mindless criminal damage seen at Britain’s most Easterly landmark. Over several days, Lowestoft’s 12 metre Euroscope at Ness Point has been badly damaged, with many of the panels lifted and damaged and the central disc stolen. The landmark – which cost around £18,000 at the time it was installed in 1997 – is a popular site for visitors year round, especially during the longest and shortest days of the year. The price to replace the Euroscope will cost thousands of pounds of taxpayers money.

Mary Moppins cleans up with 200 toys donated

Mary Moppins Ltd, a family run, award winning cleaning business with its head office at the Quayside Business Park, has donated 200 toys for the Salvation Army's Be a Star appeal to help make a difference to less fortunate local children on Christmas Day.

New CCTV cameras to help boost fight against crime

The fight against crime in Lowestoft has been given a major funding boost to provide new CCTV cameras and help youngsters avoid getting into trouble. East Suffolk Council has been allocated £333,887 to fund higher quality CCTV cameras in Lowestoft and provide outreach activities for young people who have been excluded, or who are at risk of being excluded, and who are perpetrating or at risk of perpetrating crimes in their communities.

Nativity walk

Families united to "remember the true meaning of Christmas" as members of the Pakefield Church congregation joined friends and locals on a walk around the streets of Pakefield, where they encountered different parts of the nativity story along the way.

Christmas Day swim hailed a success

Organisers have hailed the success of a festive tradition as hundreds of people braved the conditions and took the plunge on Christmas day. Swimmers – many dressed up in festive costumes – jumped into the cold North Sea for the 44th festive plunge.

Ammonia leak

Eleven fire crews were called to a hazardous material leak at the Birds Eye factory in Lowestoft. Crews from Holbrook, Leiston, Wrentham, Beccles, North Lowestoft, Hadleigh, Haverhill and Lowestoft North were called. The incident was caused by an ammonia leak.



Pakefield showing
how badly cliff
erosion had
affected the area
c1925