

# Lowestoft Archaeological and Local History Society

## Newsletter

Volume 34 Number 4

**JANUARY 2006**

### What's On

**12 January 2006 "What William Butterfield did for us" by Terry Weatherley**

The story of William Butterfield, Ringsfield Church, and its restoration

**26 January 2006 "Howard Hollingsworth – Lowestoft's First Freeman" by Colin Dixon**

How a London businessman came to visit, and benefit, Lowestoft

**2 February 2006 Annual Dinner at *Le Plaisir Restaurant* at Lowestoft College (7.15 for 7.30pm)**

Cost £15 per head (inc. free glass of wine). Book Now via our chairman, Lilian Fisher

**9 February 2006 "The Landscape History of the Somerleyton Estate" by Tom Williamson**

A chance to learn more about our neighbouring stately home

**23 February 2006 "Tonning and Toning Street" by Hans Boje**

How the streets just north of the river in Lowestoft were given their names

**9 March 2006 "Roman Catholic and Classical Rome" by Arthur Middleton**

**All meetings are held in the SOUTH LOWESTOFT METHODIST CHURCH HALL, at the corner of LONDON ROAD SOUTH and CARLTON ROAD, at 7.30 pm (Entry via LONDON ROAD SOUTH)**

*Please ring bell if the door is locked*

### Chairman's Column

I wish you a very happy New Year and hope that you all had an enjoyable Christmas.

At our last meeting Mark Mitchels told us about the History of Movies and how they developed into the sophisticated film industry we know now. Tonight, Terry Weatherley gives the entertaining and informative story of William Butterfield and Ringsfield Church. I am looking forward to that.

Our Annual Dinner is booked at *Le Plaisir* restaurant at Lowestoft College for 7.30 on 2 February. This evening I have brought menus, and also forms on which to enter your choice. The College needs to know numbers attending, and your choice of meals, at least a week

beforehand so please let me have your completed forms as quickly as possible. The cost is £15 per head, payable on the night, and a free glass of wine with the meal is included as a concession. We are allowed to run a raffle during the evening and the contribution of a few prizes would be greatly appreciated.

The Museum at Broad House will reopen on Monday 27 March. Easter is a little late this year so it has been decided to open a few days before. As mentioned in our last newsletter, we do need more museum stewards and I shall be pleased (and grateful) to hear from any volunteers. Nancy has now left the flat above Broad House and there is a possibility (at present no more than that) that it will be handed over to enlarge our Museum. Waveney District Council will make a decision in approximately two weeks, so a bigger job may await us!

With good wishes for 2006 – **Lilian Fisher**

**Ray Collins, our Treasurer, is busy compiling the Annual Report, to be published at the AGM a little later this year. As this is the 40th year of the Society we want it to be as comprehensive as possible, and would welcome articles and any members' reminiscences, particularly of the earlier years. These may be submitted in any form and can be typed up for you if needed. Photographs or documents will be copied carefully and originals promptly returned. Please do your best to help make this a very special issue!**

**Please give any items you have for inclusion in the Newsletter to Don Friston, at Society meetings.**

*Don't worry if spelling is not your strong point, we can help out.*

**Details of recent talks appear overleaf**

**10 November 2005, "Aviation Archaeology – The Search for East Anglia's Missing Warplanes" –  
by Bob Collis (Lowestoft War Memorial Museum)**

Bob Collis (Lowestoft War Memorial Museum) took members back 60 years, with fascinating slides and stories of the continuing search for aircraft that crashed in East Anglia during the war. An incredible 72 American air bases existed in Norfolk and Suffolk in 1945, supporting thousands of planes with tens of thousands of crew and personnel. Piloting large bombers weighing 35 tons and carrying 2,500 gallons of aviation fuel, plus their armament, these visiting airmen flew alongside the RAF and many gave their lives in combat. Their quite basic radios offered little help in navigating in cloud or night skies, or reporting their presence to anti-aircraft crews on the ground so, unsurprisingly, significant numbers suffered mid-air collisions or were downed accidentally. When they still carried their fuel and bomb load the result may only be imagined. The amazing thing is that after sixty years in the ground, crash debris is still sometimes discovered in a remarkably good state of preservation, with markings on the airframe and instruments etc., which enable positive identification.

Frequently, aircraft crash sites help document local history which was, for national security, left out of the newspapers. When pieces are recovered, we see the equivalent of an

archaeological dig. Although produced in huge numbers, many types of warplane are not represented in museums today by a single preserved specimen, so it is important that even small fragments are conserved and exhibited to tell their story after sixty years in the ground. The enthusiasts' search is pursued with the aid of maps, aerial photos, metal detectors, official records and, of course personal reminiscences. Digging is an expensive business so is not undertaken without thorough research. Also, the people involved have to face the chance of discovering human remains, and the need to treat these and the site with due respect. When a possible location is found, they narrow down the search by keen observation of damage to treelines and landscape. Assuming funds and labour are available, negotiations with landowners must then occur before a dig begins.

There were many raids in the Lowestoft area and many crashes, but little evidence is now visible. This is because, for public safety, the crash sites were checked carefully to recover any live ordnance, also, to recycle useful components from the planes – then the sites were levelled. After an excavation, to ensure that crews who lost their lives are not forgotten, a memorial may be erected. In addition to the aircraft, associated buildings and period artwork are studied. Those interested in aviation history are well served in Suffolk and Norfolk with a variety of air museums, including Parham, Flixton and Norwich, and there are also airfield sites to visit.

#### **24 November 2005, "Landmarks in Movie History" – by Mark Mitchels**

Mark Mitchels used DVD technology to present a selection of rare and famous film clips. In France, the brothers Louis and Auguste Lumière, using their own camera/projector, showed the first true films in 1895. These family and comedy scenes were only of 1 min duration but enthralled viewers. By 1896 they were sufficiently skilled to shoot a train, which terrified the audience as it appeared to come into the theatre. Films became an instant success and the subject of many experiments, some being hand coloured to liven up the standard black and white. Another turn-of-the-century French film-maker, named Meliese, had his own studio and introduced early special effects in a 1904 film entitled *Rescue by Rover*, starring Cecil Hepworth and a dog. Films of this period were accompanied by a pianist/organist to heighten the atmosphere. Caption slides kept the audience in touch with the plot, the language being adjusted to match each country in which they were shown.

Although the British and French took the lead in developing movies, others soon pirated their ideas and techniques, including the USA. America made propaganda films for WWI and in looking for a site with the most annual sunlight (most shooting still being done outside) discovered Hollywood. D W Griffith, a brilliant technician, using travelling cameras, flashback and fade-outs made a number of great films including outdoor scenes, drama and war battles in what became a 20-year expansion in popularity. An Englishman, Charlie Chaplin, adapted stage routines to the screen around 1914 and was to become the first megastar – also the film-of-the-book appeared. One fine example was the *Hunchback of Notre-Dame*, starring Lon Chaney. Shot in a studio, it gave incredible realism by using close-ups and clever cutting. Many outstanding film actors were to become household names in this great film era.

Major comedy successes for Harold Loyd, Buster Keaton and Laurel and Hardy followed in the 1920s, while war films and drama, like Eisenstein's 1925 *Battleship Potemkin*, made an equal impact. Warner Bros, in financial trouble, took a chance on sound in 1927 with *The*

*Jazz Singer* featuring Al Jolson – it revolutionized Warners, and the world of film. The 1930s was kept cheerful by Busby Berkeley's wonderful dance routines in the *Gold Digger* series, and also the imported, 'swashbuckling' Errol Flynn, but the real sensation was in 1934 when *La Cucaracha* was released in colour. From that moment, many films (and cartoons – starting in 1937 with Walt Disney's *Snow White*) were developed in a variety of colour formats and went on to compete for huge audiences world-wide. However, some first-class black and white films were still produced pre-war and British makers were very much to the fore in this field, particularly with costume-drama. Mark Mitchels showed us how films had become ever more real, with a magical power to take their audience into another world while simply watching a flat screen.

**Society Web Site: [www.lowestoftlocalhistory.co.uk](http://www.lowestoftlocalhistory.co.uk)**