

# Lowestoft Archaeological and Local History Society

## NEWSLETTER

Society website: [www.lowestoftlocalhistory.co.uk](http://www.lowestoftlocalhistory.co.uk)

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### MAY 2007

#### What's On

**24 May 2007 "Lowestoft Archaeological and Local History Society – Annual General Meeting"**  
All Members of the Society are invited to attend

**14 June 2007 "A Members Outing to the National Trust Site at Orford Ness"**  
Check with Ray Collins (01502 574626) on vacancies for this popular excursion

**28 June 2007 "An evening visit to two local churches" led by Terry Weatherley (see details below)**  
Members who have pre-booked will attend a pub supper following the church visits.

**13 Sept 2007 "A North East Suffolk Historical Miscellany" by Dr J M Blatchly**

**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

On 19th April, Ron, Irene and I attended the S. Lowestoft Methodist Church AGM and, as requested, gave details of the Society's activities. At our last talk, on 10th May, Peter and Rosemary Salt told us all about *Norfolk & Norwich in the Great War*, illustrated by fascinating pictures taken during that period.

Our AGM is on 24th May and I hope we shall all be able to attend. Then, on 14th June, is our outing to the National Trust site at Orford Ness. Also to look forward to is the Church outing, led by Terry Weatherley, with supper to follow at the Norman Warrior for those who have booked. Can I remind everyone that our Broad House Museum revised opening hours, for this season, are from 1.30 pm to 4.30 pm each day.

The new autumn programme begins at the Church Hall on 13th September, when Dr J M Blatchly will tell us all about *A North East Suffolk Historical Miscellany* – I look forward to seeing you all there.

With best wishes, **Lilian Fisher**

**CHURCH OUTING: Led by Terry Weatherley – meeting 7 pm on Thursday 28 June,  
at Our Lady  
Star of the Sea, Gordon Road, Lowestoft, and continuing at St Margaret's Church,  
Lowestoft**

Supper reservations have been pre-booked by some members for 8.15 pm at The Norman Warrior (on corner of Oulton Road and Fir Lane). Bookings are now closed, but Myra **must** receive your menu choices at the AGM, **or** you may pass them to her at the outing to Orford on 14th June. There is no need to book for the church outing.

## **DETAILS OF RECENT TALKS – these continue overleaf:**

### **26 April 2007, "The English Garden" – by Paul Scriven**

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

This was the time of the grand tour when the English gentry spent much time and money abroad, visiting the wonders of the world, as part of their education. They came back full of ideas and employed artists and designers to develop their country estates. Royal gardener William Kent, who had trained as an artist in Italy, worked with Charles Bridgman on modifications at Kew Gardens in the 1700s, and also alongside Lancelot 'Capability' Brown on the development of the magnificent grounds at Stowe (now run by the National Trust). Capability Brown was to become a byword for many of the great garden designs including gems such as Blenheim Palace, Chatsworth and Audley End. Locally, he worked on Heveningham Hall, Suffolk. His work covered all aspects of garden design including the landscaping, water features and bridges, also buildings (often done in classical style) including rotundas and Corinthian arches. Humphrey Repton was another famed artist from this period, who first painted the existing landscape, then showed it to the owner with an overlay of the proposed modifications (artist's impression). He designed Henham Hall, Suffolk, but stated his own favourite work was done at Sheringham Park in Norfolk.

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

### **10 May 2007, "Norfolk & Norwich in the Great War" – by Peter and Rosemary Salt**

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

(started 4 August 1914) was soon to change the outlook of the nation, with many servicemen losing their lives or returning injured, with some of the latter to be permanent cripples.

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

As more men went to the front, women were called on to take over their jobs in factories, the post office, railway and bus services, plus farming (a Land Army was formed). This was in addition to their more traditional nursing, catering and office roles. Salvationists collected food and gifts to be sent to the fighting forces. There was now a general fear of aliens in the area, not helped by the presence of German POWs brought in to provide local labour, mainly on farms and roads. War trophies such as captured guns were displayed to try and offset these effects. Many wounded troops were to be seen in the city at this time and great efforts were made to provide entertainment and comforts for them. War bonds were widely advertised and raised large sums of cash for the war effort. Despite shortages, general life continued with weddings, funerals and fairs until the momentous announcement of the Armistice, signed on the 11 November 1918. This was the time for many thousands to take part in street parties, parades and local medal presentations. Harry Daniels VC (later also MC) was a well-known Norwich hero. Peace was not signed until 28 June 1919, after which a round of demob parties took place (not all well attended due to the post-war mood – Norwich had suffered the loss of 3,544 persons in the conflict). JJ Colman of Norwich had pledged to reserve the jobs of their employees who had served in the war.

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

**Would you like to join the Society's Committee?** We need one more member to bring us up to full strength. We meet four times a year to discuss and decide all issues relating to the Society – for details please ring the Secretary, Irene Ashman, on 01502 586143.