

Lowestoft Archaeological and Local History Society

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Society website: www.lowestoftlocalhistory.co.uk

What's On in 2010

27 May 2010 "The Archaeological Society's AGM" – Would all please contribute their ideas, as this is the meeting when we look at plans and proposals for the new season.

10 June 2010– Church Outing/Supper – Terry Weatherley will meet us at Benacre church at 7 pm and later we go on to South Cove church. There is no need to book for visiting the two churches, but if you would like to join us for a meal afterwards at Wrentham 5 Bells, please reserve your place(s) and select your meal using the form provided.

9 September 2010 "A review of the Archaeological Excavations at Flixton Park" by Stuart Boulter – Stuart, Senior Project Officer, first reported on this in 2003 and will bring us up to date.

Most 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

Tonight is our AGM and after business is concluded we will be providing free tea or coffee for all. I do hope you will be able to stay on for a while to enjoy a social chat.

On 10 June, Terry Weatherley will lead us for the visit to both Benacre and South Cove Churches. If you are joining us for the meal afterwards at the Five Bells, Wrentham, please look at the menu tonight and, if you have not already done so, you'll also need to add your name to the list.

Our next talk will be at the first Autumn Meeting on Thursday 9 September when Stuart Boulter will continue his report on the excavations at Flixton Park. We have had an excellent programme of talks arranged by John Knowles who, after five years, is standing down. We thank him for all his activities and the fine selections he made. We are all very grateful to him.

With good wishes, *Lillian Fisher*

We need your help NOW to replace our retiring Programme Arranger, John Knowles

As you know, John stands down tonight, after five years in the post, having already sorted the programme of talks for 2010/11. We would remind you that we **must have a volunteer** for this important position, ready to begin the planning of talks for 2011/12 during this autumn! **There will be help available for the person taking over.** We have a list of possible speakers on file, but we are always looking for new topics or outings. As in the past, talks from Society members' are very welcome and help us keep costs down.

Details of recent events:

22 April 2010 – "The Southwold Artist – Reginald Carter" – by Hilary Huckstep

Hilary Huckstep told members about Reg Carter's career, from his early childhood to him becoming a successful commercial illustrator. Reg was born on 6 December 1886 in Southwold. He lived with his parents and elder brother Wilby at Granville House, High Street and attended the Southwold National School where his talent for drawing was first observed. On leaving school his first job was as a solicitor's clerk, which he was not keen on, but he kept practising his drawing skills and by 1904, aged 17, was already producing postcard illustrations for two publishers. He worked from a small studio erected in the garden of Granville House. Some of these mainly black and white early drawings had a Chinese theme. This may have been due to his family's friendship with the locomotive foreman of the Southwold Light Railway (SLR) who had worked in China and who, with his wife, gave parties where they encouraged visitors to join them in wearing traditional Chinese costume. Although it is believed that Reg had no artistic agent, he was soon supplying artwork to a number of publishers. The range of subjects was extended throughout his life but, in a pre-TV world, naturally included many humorous and greetings cards reflecting the times (the perennial themes of marital and alcoholic scrapes being very popular).

In 1910 he produced the set of 6 humorous postcard artworks for which he is probably best known, featuring the Southwold Light Railway. Like many of his other illustrations, the cards included a self-portrait somewhere, dressed to suit the scene. This was fortunate as, up to the present, no contemporary photograph of the artist has been traced. World War I saw him in service with the Royal Field Artillery and a number of his views of camp life had a tinge of irony that did not amuse his superior officers. Some cards at this time featured John Bull, praising the troops and encouraging recruitment, while many others advertised both traditional seaside and place-named inland towns. At the end of the war Reg returned to Southwold to live with his mother.



He created his first character for children in 1920, using Oliver Hardy, in the *Film Fun* comic. In 1921 he drew a second set of SLR cards and these may be purchased again today, having been republished in the town by the Southwold Historical Society. Reg bought land in Haywards Heath in 1922, had a chalet bungalow erected there and, in 1923, married Doris Williams but they had no children. His work included many more fictional comic characters over the following years. By 1936 he worked for the new comic *Mickey Mouse*, but his best-known character (starting in 1938) was Big Eggo, the ostrich, with a record 10-year run on the full-colour front cover of the newly-issued *Beano*. He also provided artwork for several books, including some Ladybird titles, plus national magazines such as the *Tatler*, *Strand* and *Golf Monthly*. Towards the end of his career he illustrated four fund-raising books on football for A E Whitcher, his friend and neighbour in Haywards Heath (a director of Brighton & Hove Albion FC). This was his final major work and he died in a private nursing home in Cuckfield in spring, 1949.

13 May 2010 – "The Rest – Reydon" – by Cynthia Wade

Cynthia Wade, a member of Southwold Museum's recording team, told members of her intensive research on *The Rest*, a cluster of Alms-houses still in use off Covert Road, Reydon. The red brick houses are well set out and the gardens have gates with unusual conical turrets. The benefactor was Andrew Matthews (of Scottish origin) at the time a successful businessman with a main home in Willesden, who had made his money through the upholstery trade and the art world. He and his wife purchased *The Elms*, on the corner of Lorne Road and East Street, Southwold, in 1902. Cynthia was alerted to his role in the area when archiving a 1903 inventory of *The Elms*. This house, that has been home to several well-known persons over the years (including Margaret Gardiner, who started St Felix school, and artist Lawrence Grubbe) survives in the form of three flats with its large original garden having been absorbed into later building development.

The Matthews set up a Trust and in 1906 purchased the site of 6 old terraced cottages where, with the involvement of their son-in-law's family, the Jarvises, they had four 2-person charity homes built in 1907/8. Tragically, son-in-law Arthur Jarvis died of typhoid in 1909. *The Rest* was intended for aged local residents (65 and over), some were married, others were friends who had little or no income, and the houses were furnished and equipped to a high standard from the start. The first male resident was John Page, a marshman, who appeared in Emerson's historic book of Broadland photographs. Sensible operating rules were employed to protect both residents and their accommodation, which allowed use of the attractive gardens that feature terraces and decorative terracotta pelicans (a symbol of piety). One unusual rule was that any resident displaying a certain photograph of Ellen Matthews on the latter's birthday was given a 5/- award. A 'Good Thoughts' text panel is still displayed outside each home. With the assistance of family bequests and donations, the Trust took care that nursing and health care was provided for all residents. The efforts of Andrew Matthews were rewarded when he was made the first Freeman of Southwold.

Two grandsons of Andrew and Ellen Matthews had military careers starting at Sandhurst. Edward Andre Jarvis served in the South Wales Borderers, but had to resign his commission early after illness due to poor conditions experienced in World War 1. He moved to live in France, helping to rebuild the country after the devastation of war and married a local woman. They were forced to leave everything at the sudden onset of WW2 and returned destitute to Southwold. John Basil Jarvis enjoyed much longer, and successful service, first in Ireland and then India. After retirement he lived at *The Elms* and became Mayor of Southwold in 1963.

The Trust managed for many years to keep the services rent-free – only latterly being obliged to request a contribution from some residents. The maintenance of the Alms-houses and improvement of facilities is now beset with problems of having to apply strict health and safety rules. With its reputation and attractive setting it is not surprising there has always been a waiting list.

The Society's Annual Report detailing last year's activities is available from the Treasurer, price £2.00.