

# Lowestoft Archaeological and Local History Society

## Volume 38 Number 6 – **NEWSLETTER** – SEPT 2010

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

### What's On in 2010

**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.

**23 September 2010 "Dissolution of the Monasteries" by Pip Wright** – well-known speaker and author Pip Wright visits us again and introduces a fresh topic to many of our members.

**14 October 2010 "Beccles in the First World War" by David Lindley** – this expert Beccles historian returns to speak on how the town and its people were affected by the war period.

**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

On 27 May we had our AGM, when we welcomed two new committee members. Vice Chairman Les Wilmot stood down at the meeting and we thank him for past services. John Kowles continues as a member of the committee but, as explained in the last newsletter, has vacated the post of Programme Secretary. Volunteers or nominations are now required for both these positions. We will restart our 2010 meetings on 9 September, when Stuart Boulter follows on from his 2003 talk with the final report on the excavations at Flixton Quarry. Other interesting talks are to follow.

Our museum at Broad House, Everitt's Park, in Oulton Broad was given a face-lift this year and is open every day from 1pm to 4pm until the end of October. Look on our website for more news of Society events past and present.

With best wishes, *Lilian Fisher*

### **Details of recent events:**

#### **Brief Summary of the 2010 Annual Meeting held on 27 May 2010**

The Society's AGM was quite well attended and members were able to relax and chat with a drink and biscuit after the conclusion of business.

This year the membership stands at 50 members, 3 less than last year.

Membership fees are to remain the same as last year.

The Museum looks good, notices have been removed and walls have been painted downstairs, so it looks cleaner and smarter.

Les Wilmot resigned from the position of Vice-Chairman and left the committee.

John Knowles retired from the position of Programme Secretary. Both positions are vacant at this moment.

The following officers and committee members were elected.

Chairman: Lilian Fisher.

Vice Chairman: No-one came forward to fill this position.

Secretary: Irene Ashman.

Treasurer: Ray Collins.

Programme Secretary: No-one came forward to fill this position.

Committee Members: Ron Ashman, Don Friston, Keith Davies, John Knowles and Jenny Hatton were re-elected.

Janet Royce and Rodney Duerden were elected as new members to the committee.

## **10 June 2010 – "Terry Weatherley led us on an evening visit to two churches"**

### **Benacre, St Michael**

The Society was fortunate in gaining access to this now privately-owned church that is rarely open, does not appear on the Suffolk Churches website, and is not listed in Mortlock's Suffolk Churches. Of medieval origins, the building was severely damaged by fire in the 18th century. Local landowner at that time, Sir Thomas Gooch, made provision for extensive restoration and rebuilding in 1769; some additional restoration of interior and exterior was carried out in 1888-90. St Michaels has for most of its life been the parish church. More recently it became redundant but was acquired by Sir John Gooch, a descendant of Sir Thomas, and is now a listed building. We are grateful to Lady Gooch for making this visit possible.

In its current form the church is entered via a large red brick south porch giving access to the south aisle arcade and the choir area. The main building comprises nave and chancel (in one range, with its lower walls probably dating from the 13th century); there is a south aisle, porch, and west tower (of flint rubble); the upper part of the nave, chancel, and aisle walls were rebuilt, probably during the 1769 repairs, in red brick (to north) and pale yellow brick (to south). There are stone dressings. The pantiled roof has black-glazed tiles above the aisle. To the north the nave has four 2-light windows of 1769, in Perpendicular style, and a blocked 15th-century doorway with hoodmould and stone shields in the spandrels. The 2-bay chancel has Y-traceried wooden windows, from circa 1769, and a renewed 3-light east window, the opening shafted internally. The south chancel wall has remains of two original lancet window openings. The 3-bay aisle, dated to the 14th century, was substantially rebuilt in 1769 but retains its original moulded doorway – an original west window adjacent to the tower is now bricked-up.

The church contains a 13th-century octagonal font bowl of Purbeck marble, with two shallow recesses to each face, and the worshippers are all contained within a good set of 18th century box pews. 19th-century choir stalls and the organ are at west end of nave; also eight, good condition wall-mounted hatchments. The Squire's pew, 18th century, is at the east end of the nave. A traceried wooden chancel arch probably dates from 1769. There are many nave wall monuments and ledger slabs, mainly to the inter-related North and Gooch families. The north chancel monuments include: Francisca North (1663); Sir Edward North (1708): large, with standing and seated putti; Louisa Anna Maria Gooch (1838). South chancel monuments include: North Carthew (1716) and Sir Alfred Sherlock Gooch (1809): both cartouches; Sir Thomas Sherlock Gooch (1851): good condition, with three Grecian figures.

The square tower, possibly 14th century, is in two stages with the upper slightly inset; and believed reduced in height in the late 18th century. It has a later crenellated parapet with three flushwork panels to each face – to the west there are 5-stage diagonal buttresses and a restored 2-light window. The bell chamber has small single-light openings except to the south, where there are two lights with cusped Y-tracery.

## South Cove, St Lawrence

St Lawrence Church serves a very small parish of approximately 15 adults, a very limited base for a congregation. It normally has one service per month. Despite this small number of communicants the church is very well cared for and in the last six years has had areas of flooring renewed in church and tower and, after an expert survey, the Victorian 1840s exterior rendering totally removed and sympathetically restored. Historically, South Cove never had a manorial house, nor persons of any means until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the restoration over its early life supports this premise. The faithful farm labourers and fishermen of South Cove would make do and mend with whatever materials were to hand – note the crude rubble and plaster construction of the font pedestal. The colour of the mortar suggests the stone with scratched sundial, forming part of the south doorway arch, has been removed in the past and replaced upside down. It is believed the gravestone just inside the south door is a crusader grave.

The Saxon origins of this simple thatched church may be seen inside the nave, in the high arched north interior doorway and, to a lesser extent the south doorway, also high arched but within which are inserted lower, Norman doorways. When the exterior rendering was renewed in 1995, a vertical linear joint with large, irregular uncut quoins known as erratics (typical of the construction found in Saxon Buildings), was discovered at the north east corner of the nave wall, possible evidence of this being the site of the original east wall, or of a return wall to a narrower chancel, although the narrowness of the nave might make the latter unlikely. William Goode, author of *Round Towered Churches of Southern England* dated the chancel to 1240AD by its angle piscina and adjacent triple sedilia. The nave north doorway has a good C15 door with crocketed ogee arches to the panels and tracery above. The south doorway has a chevron-moulded arch and one order of colonettes to the jambs. There are 2-light C15 windows to the north and three 2-light to the south C14–C15. The chancel (probably C14) has Y-tracery 2-light windows, one north and two south; and a 3-light east window; there is a simple priest's doorway to south.

The 7-bay arched and braced oak roof timbers to the nave date to the 15th century and there is no chancel arch. In the north west corner of the nave is the tall niche of a stove locker. The two steps (ex grave tops) giving access from the south porch (rebuilt 1880) may have been 'rescued' from a derelict church at Dunwich along with the octagonal font bowl (C13 and now defaced). The nave contains a fine set of twenty-four C15 benches, the ends carved with tracery and poppy heads. Part of the rood screen dado remains (six cusped blank panels in two bays with traces of original gesso work and colouring), and the two planks forming the rood screen door carry a painting of the Archangel St Michael, dated to 1470AD by the Victoria & Albert Museum during its restoration in the 1930s. There is an original door to the C15 square tower. The latter has 3-stage diagonal buttresses to the west, and crenellated parapet both with flushwork decoration. There are 2-light bell-chamber openings; that to the west rebuilt in brick. The two silent chamber floors were replaced in 1996 with seasoned oak (set aside from two 400-year-old trees cut and planked in 1956), donated by church members Mr and Mrs Lodder, former owners of Reydon Wood.

A number of our Society members went on for an evening meal and social chat at the Wrentham Five Bells to round off the church visit.

### **We still need help to find a Programme Arranger for next season**

We would remind you that we **must have a volunteer very soon**, for this important position, to begin planning the talks for 2011/12! **There will be help available for the person taking over.** We already have a list of possible speakers on file, but we are always looking for new topics or outings.

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

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