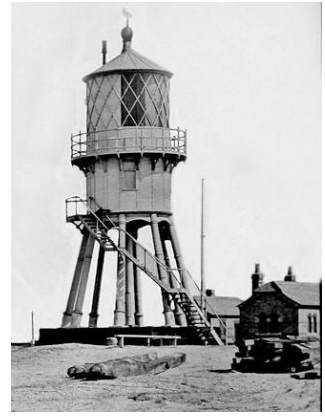


Society News

The Lowestoft Archaeological and Local History
Society Newsletter

September 2023

Editors:- Ron and Irene Ashman



Getting a good TV signal in Lowestoft

by Ron Ashman

Many people around the world would have watched the televised coronation of King Charles III. How different this was in 1953, for the coronation of the late Queen Elizabeth II. What is ironic is that all of the workers in 1953 who were making TV sets at T.V.Manufacturing (part of the Pye Group) were probably not able to see this event on TV themselves. For at that time the TV reception in this area was very variable, for although TV coverage had increased over the years, this area, like many other areas in this country, did not have a transmitter, therefore reception was down to the atmospheric conditions at the time.

In the 1 February 1953 edition of the News of the World it was reported that a lady from Lowestoft said that since November reception from the transmitter at Holm Moss, (high in the Pennines in West Yorkshire), had been reasonable on about three nights. Every other night it had been a waste of time to look in as all she saw on her set was a jumble of white blodges (newspaper description) and flashes with a faint mumbling voice in the background. She also said the French and Belgians were going to see the Coronation on TV so why couldn't she. This was the case over East Anglia for although there were other transmitters, the reception was similar. In Lowestoft it was reported that there were 79 TV licences holders.

In the 10 September 1953 edition of the Daily Sketch it printed a report that the Chairman of T.V. Manufacturing, Mr R.M.A Jones, had offered to build a repeater TV transmitter at the company's expense. It was to be low power that would cover the Norwich, Gt Yarmouth and Lowestoft areas which the BBC transmitters did not reach with any reliability, but the Government turned the offer down. The newspaper reported that Mr Jones was furious at the refusal. The Assistant Post Master-General had said the issue of a licence to anyone else to provide a service that was the direct responsibility of the B.B.C could not be considered, as the Corporation was anxious to develop this service as soon as it was given permission. After much campaigning by local authorities and M.P's this area finally got a reliable TV coverage on 30 April 1956 when the Tacolneston transmitter became fully operational. The only station broadcast was BBC. A second channel came on stream when Anglia TV, the ITV station, had its first broadcast in October 1959.

The transmissions were nothing like today, as there was 'Childrens Hour' after school, then a shut down until 7.00pm when the main programmes started and continued until 11.00pm.

Trixie Preston remembered.

by Ron Ashman

It with sadness to report that Beatrice "Trixie" Preston has died. Trixie joined the Lowestoft Archaeological and Local History Society in its early years and became Chairman of the Society in 1972, a role she held for 6 years. With other Society members she also played an important role in the organisation and setting up of the Lowestoft Museum in 1972.

Throughout her time she was very supportive of the Society and particularly the Lowestoft Museum, and gave her support to the formation, by the Trustees, to the sub-committee called the Museum Management Committee to manage the day to day affairs of the Museum. Trixie was an active member of the Trustees until her retirement in 2010.

Having moved to Lowestoft with her husband Alan in 1952, she lived for many years in Oulton Village, then some years after her husband died she moved to Southwold.

Trixie Preston died in Cambridge on 23 July 2023 aged 92.

The Three Churches of Gillingham.

As you drive along the A143 at the end of Beccles bypass and before you reach the McDonalds roundabout you will most probably not be aware that beyond the trees on the right hand side of the road are three churches. (Although a clue can be seen as the road leading off the A143 through the trees is named Church Road).

To be exact there are two churches and the remains of a third. These are All Saint's, St Mary's and the Catholic Church Our Lady of Perpetual Succour.

All that remains of the All Saint's church is the ruined tower. The church was built in the 14th/15th century and demolished in 1748, with the rubble being used to mend the roads. The church was thought to have been a large building. The font was said to have been sold to Kirkley Church for 1 guinea in 1746, with the base being found in a garden in Gillingham, having been used as a garden seat for many years.

All Saint's was united with St Mary's in 1629, although for some years before they had the same Rector.

The church may have gone but the graveyard is still in use.

If you decide to visit this ruined tower please be very careful as the ground is uneven and there are tripping hazards

The church of St. Mary's Church dates back to the times of the Normans, and some old records suggest that it was built on the site of an earlier Saxon church. The church was restored in 1860 which resulted in many alterations which included the addition of two aisles.

The church is an unusual shape as it has a tower to the western end of the nave, then an additional building has been added to the west of the tower. (this is believed to be called an narthex)

The third church, the Catholic Church Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, was built in 1898 and finished in 1903. The Kenyon family, who owned Gillingham Hall, were received into the Catholic Church in the 1890's and built this church for their own use. An unusual feature, to me, was the cast iron grave markers.

It was not possible to see the inside of either of these churches as the doors were locked.

Source of information:- Norfolk Churches and Gillingham Parish Council websites.

Guided Walk around St Margarets Churchyard

by Richard Mundy



On Tuesday 1st August at 7:00pm society members attended a guided walk around St Margarets Churchyard. The event was arranged by Janis Kirby, chair of the Lowestoft Branch of Suffolk Family History Society. Janis very kindly invited our society members along to join the family history group.

Our guide for the evening was Thelma, who has a keen interest in family history. She selected some gravestones and presented her research on the lives of the people and their families. This was followed by tea and biscuits in the church hall.



It was perfect weather for an event of this kind, all that attended appeared to have enjoyed themselves. Special thanks to Janis for opening the event up to our society and to Thelma for her research and enthusiastic delivery.

A collection gathered after the event was donated to St Margarets Church to help towards urgent repairs to the building.



An evening at: Norfolk & Suffolk Aviation Museum FLIXTON

by Richard Mundy



Thanks to local aviation expert Bob Collis and the volunteers at the museum at Flixton, I was able to arrange a special evening. On Thursday 13th July the Aviation Museum opened just for our society. For well over 2 hours, we were able to enjoy the 65 Historic Aircraft, 25,000 exhibits covering civil and military aviation in East Anglia.

Bob was on hand to share his knowledge with us and really bring the exhibits to life with his stories and background information. Around 28 visitors came to the event from the society or friends or family.

If you are interested in going yourself: The museum's opening times through the winter are Sundays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays 10am to 4pm. Although closed between 15th December and 5th January. Admission is free, but donations gratefully received. Address: Buckeroo Way, The Street, Flixton, NR35 1NZ.

If you have any articles that you would like published in this Newsletter, please contact the editors at a meeting or send your piece to email address lalhs@btinternet.com.

Items do not have to be typed, they can be hand written, do not have to be very long and do not have to include photographs.

If you wish your name can be attributed to the article, or it can be left out.

Have you been to any interesting place or building in this country that might be of interest to other members that you could write about. Could you write a review of an historical book you have read. Or could you write about childhood memories. (e.g shops, wash days or school days).