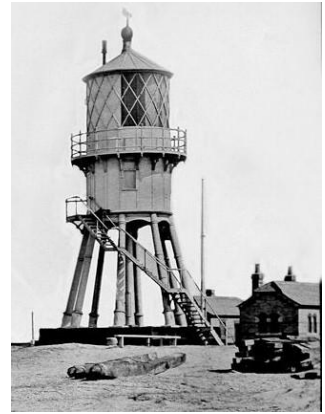


# Society News

The Lowestoft Archaeological and Local History  
Society Newsletter

January/ February 2024

Editors:- Ron and Irene Ashman



## The Pakefield Windmill

by Ron Ashman

In October last year our Society Secretary received a request for information from a member of the Suffolk Mills Group about the Pakefield windmill, as he was trying to write a history of this mill to appear in the Suffolk Mills Group newsletter, of which he was the editor.

In the late 1980's, the late Society member Mary Goffin organised a group of eleven Society members to transcribe 37 documents relating to the Pakefield Mill. This group met at Mary's home one evening a week to carry out this work.

Some documents were relatively easy to transcribe but on others they resulted in some head scratching and consulting with other group members. When all of the documents had been completed the transcriptions were typed by a team of six, of which only two were Society members. The completed typed transcriptions consisted of almost 200 A4 pages.

Mary wrote reports in the Annual Reports of 1989 & 1990 and 1990 & 1991. These can be viewed on the Society Website. [www.lowestofthistorical.org.uk](http://www.lowestofthistorical.org.uk)

A copy of the transcribed deeds was given to the owner of the deeds and additional copies were held in the Lowestoft branch of the Suffolk Record Office, which are now in Ipswich, but another copy should be in the Lowestoft Museum.

The Pakefield windmill stood behind a house appropriately named Mill House in London Road in Pakefield, next to the Seventh Day Adventist Church.

The following is an extract from the article in the 1989 & 1990 Annual Report.

*"Documents reveal the mill started as a trestle post mill, by 1822 a round house had been added. 1866 it is described as 'a working Post Mill with coupon sails; and sail cloths'. In 1879 it was a Smock Tower Mill with three floors of brick, three floors of wood, with Patent sails and it also had an auxiliary engine. It was blown down in 1881/2 and in 1888 the whole structure was pulled down".*

I don't think that many of the present Society members will have known Mary Goffin. She died in 2003 and up to that time she had been an active Society member, serving for many years on the Committee in different roles. Also, together with Mrs Jean Julings, they catalogued the artefacts in the Museum in the Prairie and in Broad House. Most of this was achieved before computers were available, so all of the facts were recorded onto Record Cards. She was also a steward in the Museum and supported the Society and Museum at outside events.

Mary will also be remembered by 'older members' for making jars of marmalade which she brought to meetings. (you had to arrive early to get one these as they went fast).

## **The Tale of a Tortoise**

by Ron Ashman

In The Times Newspaper on 11 November 2023 the 'Children's book of the week' was "The Amazing Tale of Ali Pasha".

This book was written by Michael Foreman, the author and illustrator who was born and lived in Pakefield. The book was first published in 2013 and was based on a true story and had been reissued in time for Armistice Day. It is well written and illustrated.

The story relates to the experiences of Henry Friston who as a 21 year old sailor met the tortoise when they were both thrown into a shell crater amid the carnage on X Beach, Gallipoli, in April 1915. Henry decided to rescue the tortoise and named him Ali Pasha then took him onboard the ship where he made a secret home for him. Had Ali Pasha been found by the Ship's Officers he would probably have been thrown overboard.

Henry died in 1977 and his son Don took on the role of looking after the tortoises, for by this time the tortoise family had grown. Henry and his family had lived at Rackhams Corner, where the road from Oulton Broad joins the A47 (was A12).

In 1986 Ali Pasha appeared on the Blue Peter television programme and was presented with a Blue Peter badge.

Many members may remember Henry's son, Don who was a Society member and Committee member for many years, who also was editor of the Newsletter. Like his father, Don also kept and bred tortoises.

## **The Old Tin Bath (Memories of the past)**

It was actually galvanised steel and it hung on the fence outside the kitchen. When anyone had a bath, the tin bath was brought into the kitchen, the gas copper was lit and when the water was hot the tap at the bottom of the boiler was turned on and the hot water run into the bath. Cold water from the kitchen sink tap, the only tap in the house, was added to the bath, and maybe some bath crystals as well. At Christmas you might receive a box of 6 bath cubes, yesterday's version of bath bombs. After your bath it would be emptied by pail, wiped out and hung back on the fence. When I was 21 in 1967 my mother asked the landlord to put in a bathroom, which he did. I bet mother was pleased that she did not have to empty the tin bath by hand anymore.

*Editors note:- has anyone got any similar memories they would like to share.*

## **Latest finds**

1 A 1,400 year old temple has been discovered near Sutton Hoo near Rendlesham, as part of an archaeology project. It is thought the temple could have been overseen by King Raedwald who died in 625 AD.

2 Latest research suggest that the Fens of Eastern England were once covered by forests, which were mostly Yew trees. Scientists have been studying Yew tree trunks ploughed up by farmers in the low lying areas of the Fens. These trees had been preserved in the peat and were there between 4,000 to 5,000 years ago. Tree ring analysis revealed that some of the trees were 400 years old when they died.

Could it be that a sudden rise in sea levels, which flooded the area with salt water, killed the woodlands in the Fens?.

## **Annual Report**

The Society Annual Report Volume 55 January 2024 is now available at Society meetings, priced £3.

There are reports on meetings, articles by Paul Durbidge plus the Lowestoft Scene charting the changes in the area over the past year.

## **Cycle Speedway (Memories of the past)**

by Ron Ashman

I lived in Blundeston from 1950 until 1968. When a school boy in the 1950's I remember watching cycle speedway on a track on a piece of land in The Street, on the opposite side of the road to what was, at the time, the General Store and Post Office.

In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century the site has been used for brickmaking and there were many discarded bricks around. The site owner and his son were keen followers of the Norwich Motorcycle Speedway Club and together with some teenage village lads, decided to form a cycle speedway track on the site.

It is thought that cycle speedway emerged before World War 2 but it off took after the end of that conflict. In towns and cities tracks were laid out on cleared bomb sites using the bricks and timber from the site to form the track and mark out the inner and outer perimeter of the track. In one source of information it was stated that the starting tapes were often made of mother's knicker elastic. The Blundeston team were nicer to their mothers as they used catapult elastic for their starting tapes.

A rider from a team in Walthamstow East London, explained that his bike had been made using an old bike frame his dad had bought for five shillings, to which some old wheels were added. There were no brakes, a single gear and the handlebars were bent upwards like bull horns. After the war it was a matter of make do and mend. I would suspect that the Blundeston team either made their own bikes or someone in the village made them.

At the Blundeston site materials found there were used to construct the dirt track, mark out the track limits, and erect a starting gate. The team were competitive and entered the Waveney Valley League, that was based in Beccles. They competed against teams from Worlingham, Oulton Broad, Corton, Brooke and Seething. The track was considered to be one of the best in the area.

The team only lasted a few years when many of the lads left for National Service duty.

I don't believe that Lowestoft had a cycle racing team, but you might know differently. Also, do you have any information as to where the Oulton Broad or Corton tracks were situated?. If you can help please contact me on the email address below or speak to me at a Society meeting.

## **Forthcoming Events**

Suffolk Local History Council's Societies Day.

All Lowestoft Archaeological and Local History Society members are invited to attend this year's Societies Day to be held on Saturday 2nd March at the Blackbourne Hall, Elmswell, from 9.55am until 4pm.

The event is free and there will be displays by societies from around Suffolk, plus a programme of short talks, of about 30 minutes each, has been arranged which can be downloaded from the link below, which includes directions to the venue. <https://bit.ly/SocDayProg2024>.

Tea/coffee and biscuits will be available, so it might be advisable to take a packed lunch if you are staying for the day. There is parking available at the Blackbourne Hall.



Imagine that you are intending to visit Lowestoft Museum, in Broad House, Nicholas Everitt Park, for the first time. What would you expect to see, a classical portico as at British Museum, the Ashmolean in Oxford, or Fitzwilliam in Cambridge? No, though the exterior of Broad House, once the home of William Everitt and his son Henry, (known as Nicholas), is quite impressive which reveals a variety of styles and periods of building,



Enter any day from Easter and Halloween between 1 and 4 pm each day and 11am until 4pm on Thursdays, (this year Saturday March 23rd to October 31st). There will be no charge for admission and families, especially with children, will be welcomed by friendly stewards who will be able to give information if requested about the various galleries and displays.

Exhibits range in age from flint fragments made by "Pakefield Man", 700.000 years ago to the first transistor radio made by PYE in Lowestoft. Equally famous are the two porcelain figurines, made in the Lowestoft factory c. 1775, reputedly the only known examples of a pair of standing pugs on display to the public. The guiding principle for inclusion in the Museum's collection is that the item relates to the people, places and activities in the Lowestoft area.



In addition to archaeology and industry, there is a fine collection of painting depicting fishing, sailing and other local activities, several by local artist George Vemply Burwood.



During the Christmas season, Lowestoft Museum was open on December 10th joining 'Seasonal Celebrations' on the Boulevard. There was a Christmas tree hunt in the Museum which attracted 252 visitors including 75 children. At the same time and between Christmas and New Year displays of toys from former times were on display in the new Turner Room. In the Hollingsworth Room there are a series of diorama the one below of Santa in his toy workshop.



On Sunday March 24th there will a return visit of Sally Francis with her Norfolk saffron, a special ingredient in the Lowestoft Dingers, baked specially by Bushells, which will be available to buy.

In the coming weeks there will be scaffolding appearing on Broad House to start the process of renovating the roof and the rainwater goods. This will be followed by improved drainage which will result in the rather dip cellar becoming watertight and available for use once again to store reserve collections of artefacts. If you are interested in finding out more or joining this team of stewards who are the public face of the Museum, which receives many complimentary comments in the Visitors Book, please visit our web site: [www.lowestoftmuseum.org](http://www.lowestoftmuseum.org) , or email [info@lowestoftmuseum.org](mailto:info@lowestoftmuseum.org)





H.M.S. Lowestoft features as one of the displays in the entrance hall.

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 [jalhs@btinternet.com](mailto:jalhs@btinternet.com). Items do not have to be typed, they can be hand written and do not have to be very long. 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).