

Society News

The Lowestoft Archaeological and Local History Society
Newsletter

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Editors:- Ron and Irene Ashman



The 1921 Census

by Ron Ashman

For anyone researching their family history the Census records are an invaluable source of information. For security reasons the Census Act of 1920 prohibits disclosure of the details for 100 years. In 1921 each household had been issued with a blank census form (or schedule) to be completed by a member of the household and included more detailed questions than any of the previous census, such as place of work and industry, but also the option for the first time to record the marital status of divorced.

On the document it stated that the form was to be completed of all people resident there at midnight on 24th April and was to be ready for collection on the 25th April, but due to industrial unrest the collection was postponed until 19th June 1921.

The 1921 Census is quite important as that taken in 1931 was destroyed by a fire in 1942 at the Office of Works in Hayes, Middlesex. The fire was not through enemy action, and I believe that the cause was never discovered, or at least not made public.

The 1941 Census was not taken due to the War. However, the Register that was completed in September 1939 of the population with a view to produce identity cards and ration books (which were issued in January 1940), is a valuable substitute for the genealogists and family historians.

Therefore the next Census to be released will be in 2051, of that taken in 1951.

It was a massive task to prepare the census ready for digitisation. The schedules were bound into hardback volumes that were transferred to a secure government location under the watchful eyes of the Office for National Statistics and the National Archives. It was here that a team of Findmypast qualified conservators and enthusiastic conservation technicians worked on the project from January 2019 until October 2021 and they had to contend with a number of issues. It must be remembered that these documents had been in storage for 100 years.

After removing the straps holding each bound volume, the schedules were carefully removed and individually inspected and assessed for damage before conservation tasks were undertaken.

Objects found between the pages, or pressed onto the pages were removed. These included squashed invertebrates from 1921. Surface dirt was carefully cleaned using a smoke sponge (these are vulcanised natural rubber sponges that can be used to clean dirt and smoke damage from materials where dry cleaning is essential, and can be used on paper, wood, metal and ceramics.)

Tears were repaired with fine Japanese tissue (tengulo), creases and folds on edges were flattened with a Teflon bone folder or a heated spatula. Pages that were stuck together by mould and damp were carefully separated and reconstructed as far as possible. Damaged or vulnerable schedules were inserted into 87,000 archival clear polyester sleeves made by a specialist conservation supplier. As well as the schedules the conservators also found items left by those who collated the census returns in 1921. Items found included

internal memo's, private notes passed between the staff, a tram ticket, pencil stubs, petrified rubber thimbles, spent matches and roast chestnut shells.

According to an article in the Times Newspaper in November 2024, notes were also written onto the forms, such as the lady who wrote "What a wicked waste of taxpayers money at this time of unemployment." A unemployed gentleman with 13 children added "Can you help us, times are hard." Other comments were aimed at the Government such as "Build houses" and "Out of work in the Land Fit For Heroes". One mother added humour by describing her children's occupations as "Getting into mischief".

Having completed the conservation each schedule was individually scanned, then passed to over 300 transcribers who typed the information to create an online database.

The original Census forms are now stored at the Office of National Statistics in Hampshire, collated into 28,000 volumes which occupy a mile of shelving.

The total UK population in 1921 was nearly 38 million, a 4.7% increase over 1911, and 1.7 million more women than men, with a particular imbalance among 20 to 45year olds. Of the children, over 730,000 children were described as lacking fathers and 261,000 without mothers.

The census revealed the first female policewomen, more female barristers, medical professionals and architects.

The results were available to view online in January 2022, but only subscribers of Findmypast could access this information on their website, for a fee. However, the information was also made available on other websites in November 2024.

Below are reproductions of the instructions given to the head of household who completed the Census document.

NAME and SURNAME:-

of every person who is alive at midnight on
the night of Sunday, 24th April, 1921, and
who whether as member of the family or
as visitor, boarders or servant in the
household or establishment:-

- (1) passes that night in the dwelling of the household or establishment or
- (2) arrive and is received into the household or establishment on the morning of Monday 25th April, **not having already been enumerated elsewhere.**

No one else must be included

MARRIAGE or ORPHANHOOD

For persons **aged 15 and over** write "**Single**", "**Married**", "**Widowed**", or if marriage dissolved by divorce write "**D**"

For children **under age 15** write "**Both Alive**" if both parents be alive
"**Father Dead**" if father be dead
"**Mother Dead**" if mother be dead or
"**Both Dead**" if both parents be dead.

RELATIONSHIP
to Head of Household

"**Head**", or
"**Wife**",
"**Mother**", "**Son**",
"**Daughter**",
"**Step-son**", or
other Relative,
"**Visitor**",
"**Boarder**" or
"**Servant**"

It is assumed that for a family with a step-daughter, they listed her as an 'other relative'.

Note: The UK population of nearly 38 million was that given on The National Archives website for England and Wales.

Cockney Rhyming Slang

by Richard Mundy

Listening to the recent excellent talk by Charlie Haylock on Suffolk dialect got me thinking about my own London East End roots and how we used Cockney Rhyming Slang. I was especially interested by how we fitted this into our everyday speech without even realising or thinking about it.

So, I reached out to some old friends and family from the East End and asked them if they could think of examples of Cockney Rhyming Slang that they still used in everyday conversation or newer ones that have developed. Although, will add, that I do appreciate that rhyming slang is not exclusive to the east end and was used all over the country.

It would be easy to just google a long list of 'Cockney Rhyming Slang' for you, but this list is special as it has come from a bit of research and words used in 2025. Here are some of the examples:

"You are avin a bubble mate" (Bubble Bath – Laugh)

"Nice Barnet" (Barnet Fair – Hair)

"Watch out, his on a Leo" (Leo Sayer – All dayer, all day drinking session)

"Ave a Butchers at this" (Butchers Hook – Look)

"Need to get somefing into me derby" (Derby Kelly – Belly)

"How long till dinner, I'm Hank Marvin" (Hank Marvin – Starving)

"Want a cup of Rosie" (Rosie Lee – Tea)

"His gone, His Brown Bread" (Brown Bread – Dead)

"His telling porkies again" (Pork Pie – Lie)

"Nice Whistle, cost ya much?" (Whistle and Flute – Suit)

"Do you trust this Fridge?" (Fridge Freezer – Geezer)

"Fancy a Ruby later?" (Ruby Murray – Curry)

"Me dog is doing an update" (Dog and Bone – Phone)

I have a funny story about the last one, a couple of years ago an old school friend and his family were visiting me in Lowestoft. He had his lovely little dog "Bella" with him and she was running about on the beach and my friend is trying to capture a picture with his phone of her and he was getting a tad disgruntled and said "Me dog is flippin playing up" and I said "Oh mate, she is just enjoying the seaside" He went "No me phone you idiot!"

Talks this season

The talks this season so far have all attracted good audiences. However, two stand out, these being The Discovery of the Royal Gloucester, by Julian Barnwell and the work of a dialect coach on the film The Dig by Charlie Haylock. Both of these talks were in the church.

For Julian Barnwell there were 36 members and 52 visitors giving a total of 88 persons.

For Charlie Haylock there were 44 members and 50 visitors giving a total of 94 persons.

The Committee took a chance in booking these high profile speakers, as they charged more, so it was good to see that it worked out well.

Finds on the shore

by Paul Durbidge

Over several years now the hard translucent fossilised resin called Amber has been picked up along the beach between Pakefield and Kessingland. Originally from extinct coniferous trees it can be typically honey yellow in colour or in variations of brown.

Also in recent years pieces of Jet, a variety of lignite, have begun to appear and recently I was shown a good example roughly the size of a man's fist. Jet is a hard black semi precious variety of lignite and is usually glossy black in colour and was formed originally from wood buried in the sea floor.

During the latter part of the 1900's a circular counter made of Jet and a smaller counter fashioned from shale were recovered amongst Romano British pottery after cliff falls at Pakefield. These two items are displayed in the Lowestoft Museum along with a small portable whetstone which has been grooved to provide a way of tying a thong around it to attach to a belt.

It compares with types found from Anglo Scandinavian York and was found on ploughland at Corton a few years ago.

Lowestoft North Cliff Community Garden (CIO) — A new charity garden set up by local residents for the benefit of the community.

by Harry Grainger

After several years of pursuing the idea of a communal garden a small group of us have formed a registered charity, the Lowestoft North Cliff Community Garden (CIO), and raised enough money through grants to purchase a large 500 year old, now derelict and overgrown, garden on the North side of Crown score below Crown House.

The aims of the Charity are summed up as

To support Restoring ecosystems and biodiversity To Encourage food self- sufficiency and to preserve and maintain the district's beauty and heritage through the creation of a community garden which reflects the Lowestoft heritage of its former Hanging (Kitchen) Gardens.

The project will create a new public open space where people can enjoy quiet recreation, gardening, food growing and contact with nature.

From design to planting and harvesting members of the local community will be involved in deciding what happens within the garden.

We are now looking for volunteers and members to join and help with this project. If you are keen to be involved then further information and contacts can be made Via the Mayfly cafe at 72 High street, or by contacting Harry Grainger at LNCCG24@gmail.com

Or come down to the Garden on Crown Score directly on the first Wednesday of the Month from 10.30 onwards.

Superstitions I still observe today.

- 1 Don't put your umbrella up indoors (Bad luck to do so)
- 2 Don't walk under a ladder (This will bring you bad luck)
- 3 Don't put new shoes on a table (Unlucky)
- 4 Don't do your washing on News Year Day (You will wash your luck away)

Are you superstitious and if you know of any more sayings would you like to send them to the Editors see the bottom of the last page.

Important announcements

- 1 Don't forget that the Annual General Meeting will be held on Thursday 22 May, we hope you will come along to hear the various reports, to have your say in the running of this Society, and to vote into office the Officers and the Committee members.
- 2 From **September** this year the Society talks evenings will be held in **St Marks Church Hall in Oulton Broad**.

LOWESTOFT MUSEUM and the MEND (Museum Estate and Development) Fund

by Rodney Duerden

The process of applying to Arts Council England for a grant to exclude water from Broad House in which Lowestoft Museum and its priceless collections are housed, began in 2021, and the last transfer of funds finished officially on March 31st 2025. To celebrate this major project as a thankyou to volunteers, supporters and donors, refreshments were provided in the Nicholas Everitt Park pavilion where a display of the building works and contributors was projected for all to see.



The very first activity relating to this work happened on February 12th 2024, when three boreholes were sunk at strategic positions around Broad House to monitor the ground water which has been seeping into the building for years and collecting in the cellar.



Typical state of cellar, January 25th 2024



The main building work started in March with the renewal of all the underground drainage pipes. This work was still in progress when the Museum re-opened to visitors but with the help of our Relationship Manager, Dale Copley, bright warnings communicated the situation to the public and safety measures were in place.



When scaffolding arrived to access the roof areas, replace the gutters and downpipes and repair three areas of flat roof, Broad House did not look as impressive and welcoming as beforehand.

While the scaffolding was in place, AJ Builders also used the opportunity to replace any poor woodwork, paint all the windows and renew necessary pointing.



One of the windows at the rear of Broad House



The old skylight which illuminates the interior and stairwell, was also replaced.

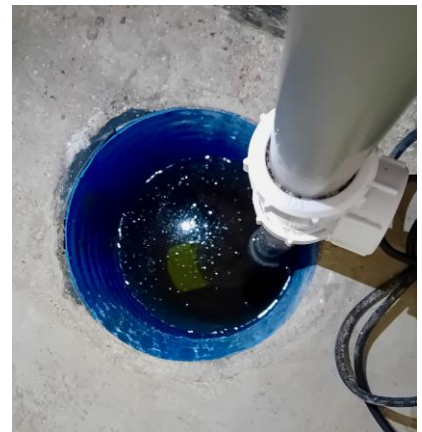
Drainage pipes August 30th 2024



Work on the cellar was quite complicated and involved firstly opening an old access arch and inserting a steel girder. A special type of waterproof concrete was then poured to form a new floor. Once set, shuttering was erected to construct the walls, with reinforced steel incorporated.



At the lowest end of the cellar, a self regulating pump (see photo on the right) was installed and after several refits, now removes any groundwater seeping under the new floor.



In November, 10 solar panels (invisible from the ground) were placed on the large area of flat roof above the porch. Once the wiring was completed batteries were installed in the workshop to store any excess power generated. At the time of installation, there was hardly any sun but in April, their value has been justified.



Lowestoft Museum re-opened on Saturday April 5th with several new displays which are well worth a visit, and will be open every day 1 - 4 pm with an extra 2 hours 11 - 1 on Thursdays.

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 lahs@btinternet.com