

Society News

The Lowestoft Archaeological and Local History Society
Newsletter

September 2025

Editors:- Ron and Irene Ashman



Election of Society Committee

At the Annual General Meeting held on 22 May 2025 the following Society members were elected to the Committee:

Chairman: Richard Mundy

Vice-chairman: Jeremy Stone

Secretary: Katie Sharp

Treasurer: Ray Collins

Programme secretary: Marilyn Duerden

Committee: Irene Ashman, Rodney Duerden, Sue Pyecroft, Richard Dearlove, Gavin Plant.

Jenny Hatton has retired as Society Secretary and David Hatton has also retired from the Committee.

We thank them for all that they did over the past years.

Our new Society Secretary is Katie Sharp and new Committee member is Gavin Plant.

The Committee had decided that the Society funds were such that the membership subscription should remain the same as last year.

Motorcycle Event in Nicolas Everitt Park.

by Ron Ashman

On Sunday 25th May the Lowestoft Invaders Motorcycle Club organised their 5th Annual Sunrise Motorcycle Rally. There was a bucket collection for the Lowestoft Museum.

The Invaders having been formed in 1955 celebrated their 70th anniversary this year. In 1957 they joined the Auto-Cycle Union (ACU) the national governing body for motorcycle sport in Great Britain.

The first scramble was organised in 1962, the event being held at Herringfleet Hills, with the layout of the course being decided with the help of Dave Bickers, one of the top motorcycle racers in the sport of scrambles at that time. Scrambles eventually became known by the European name of motocross.

Two of the scrambles held at Herringfleet Hills were televised on the BBC. Other events organised by the club included grass track, enduros and trials events, in which many of the members competed.

I was a member of this Motorcycle Club in the mid 1960's and remember being part of the team that spent their evenings in the week running up to the weekend scramble preparing the course, and taking it all apart on the following week. Many scrambles and motocross meetings were run until 1999 when permission was withdrawn.

The club also had a strong road riding section and supplied marshals for Snetterton Motorcycle race days.

From its founding the Lowestoft Invaders membership grew to a peak of 150 in the late 1970's early 1980's and currently stands at 127. This includes 36 Trial riders, 35 enduro riders, 3 road racers, 2 grass track racers 2 sprinters and a quad racer.

In the Park there was a good turnout with many different motorcycles on show, from the small BSA Bantam to a long three wheeler. Although I never owned one, the BSA Bantam was a popular small motorcycle in the 1960's and was produced from 1958 until 1971, when like most British motorcycle manufacturers at that time, BSA had failed to keep up with the changing times.

The first machine was powered by a 123cc two stroke engine. Over the years there were a number of changes with the final models being powered by a 175cc two stroke engine.

The original design was a pre-war German DKW motorcycle that came to this country as part of the German war reparations. However, BSA anglicised the design by changing the gearchange lever and kickstart to the right hand side (as was the British convention at the time) and converting all dimensions from metric to inches.

Society Harbour Tour with Jet Adventures

by Richard Mundy

On Sunday 8th June 2025 twelve society members and friends embarked on a Harbour Tour with the company 'Jet Adventures' owned and run by John and Fliss Kitching.

The tour disembarked from the Heritage Quay on the South Pier, traveling at a leisurely 4 knot speed, we went under the Bascule Bridge onto Lake Lothing, under the new Gull Wing Bridge, passing under the 100 year old Oulton Swing Railway Bridge, we then turned around at that spot for our return journey.

Along the way, we would pause, as many places of interest were pointed out by John or Society members and spoken about. Including the famous ship graveyards of Yellowtail, Platessa and MV Probe and the old ship building yards.



We had one moment of excitement when the offshore supply ship Grampian Talisker was coming through the Gull Wing Bridge and John, quite rightly so, was keen to get us out of the way, so manoeuvred our boat to the left (I believe boat people call that 'port side') which did the trick. But unfortunately, we were then stuck on a sandbank. So, all the society members and friends had to move to one end of the boat whilst John thrust the Jet engines into reverse to free us.

This did cause a lot of mud and sludge to get into the workings of the boat, so we had to then pull into a

small quay whilst John and his crew did some quick cleaning and checking of everything, then we were underway again. It was all very exciting and just added to the fun of the trip!

I would recommend the company 'Jet Adventures', they are a lovely family-run company. They do a few different trips, some out to sea. If interested their email is info@jetadventures.co.uk and number is 0800 1184126. The website with full details of all the trips is www.jetadventures.co.uk

The second Test Pit dig took place over the weekend of 30 May and 1 June.

The property at which the dig took place was built in 1904 in Kirkley and the dig was attended by several Society members and friends.

As in the dig last year the team were led by Kevin Jorgensen and the plan was to dig a one metre square test pit down to a maximum of one point two metres or until no further items of archaeological interest were found.



First the topsoil was removed and checked for finds, then spits of ten centimetres in depth were dug, the soil was sieved and any finds were cleaned, recorded and photographed. This continued until the end of the dig.



Among the finds, at various levels, was the almost complete skeleton of a cat, screws and nails, a horse shoe, clear and green glass, porcelain sherds, brown glaze pottery, blue and white and green glaze pottery possibly dating from the 18th to 20th centuries, medieval pottery, possibly Thetford Ware, from the 12th to 15th century, modern pottery and a clay ball which could have been a gaming piece, plus many other items.

Photographs by Dave Pyecroft.

The conclusion was that the ground was very disturbed as indicated by the fact that 19th century Porcelain was found below levels that gave Medieval pottery. Kevin wished to record his thanks to all the members and friends who worked on the dig.

Editors Note:- This article is based on a report produced by Kevin Jorgensen. The full report will be printed in the 2025 Annual Report.

Did you know?

by Irene Ashman

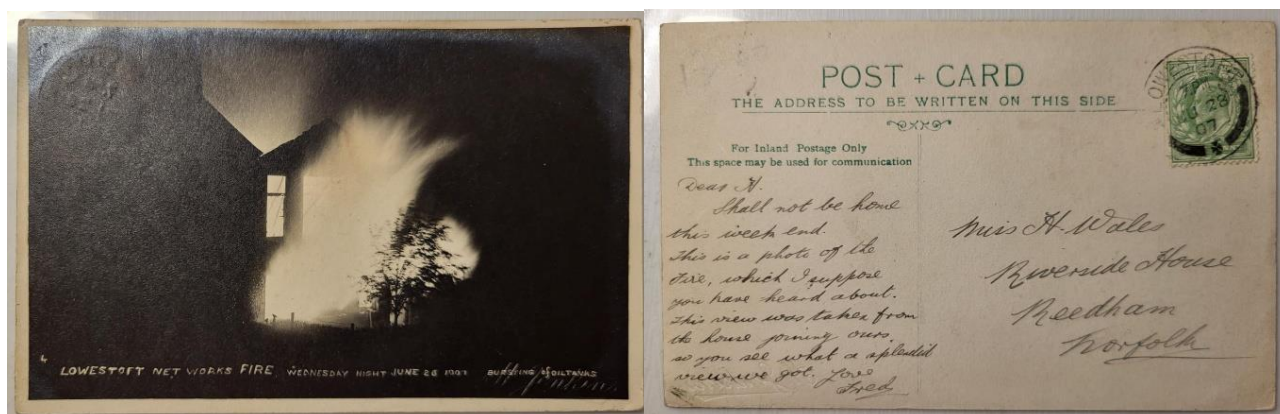


The plant called Madder has been used as a dye for over 3,000 years. It was found in Tutankhamun's tomb and was also used in Viking times. It is the roots that are used to make a red dye. This dye was used to colour the red coats for British soldiers from the mid 17th century to the 19th century, cochineal was used to dye the Officers coats.

Lowestoft Net Works Fire Postcard

by Richard Mundy

I recently purchased this postcard, its another example of how cards were produced and posted very quickly to spread news of an event. In this case it appears to be the bursting of oil tanks causing a fire in a net works in Lowestoft on Wednesday 26th June 1907.



The sender 'Fred' has sent this off to 'Miss H Wales' of Riverside House Reedham on 28th June 1907 (so just two days after the incident). Fred explains that he was in the house adjoining the house where the photo was taken so had a 'splendid view'

I have not had the time to do any research into the incident, to see if this was a small, isolated event or possibly part of a bigger well documented fire. So, if anyone does know more or wants to do any research regarding any aspect of the card, feel free to email Ron and Irene Ashman (the compilers of this newsletter) and we can then possibly include any information in the next newsletter.

'Michael Caine Lived in Lowestoft - Not a lot of people know that'.

The above was the title of two fund raising talks given on Saturday 30 August by Richard Mundy, (one in the afternoon and another in the evening) at **Desmonds** in Kirkley.

Richard thanked all who supported this event, which raised £242.76 for the Society which will help fund the 60th Anniversary celebration in 2026.

Thanks were extended to **Desmond Baldry** for letting us use his establishment to hold the event.

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