



# The Felixstowe Society Newsletter

**Issue Number 98**

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**1 September 2011**

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**Registered Charity No. 277442**  
**Founded 1978**





# The Felixstowe Society

The Felixstowe Society is established for the public benefit of people who either live or work in Felixstowe and Walton. Members are also very welcome from the Trimleys and the surrounding villages. The Society endeavours to:

**stimulate public interest in these areas,  
promote high standards of planning and architecture  
and secure the improvement, protection, development  
and preservation of the local environment.**

**Chairman:** Philip Johns, 1 High Row Field, Felixstowe, IP11 7AE, 672434

**Vice Chairman:** Philip Hadwen, 54 Fairfield Ave., Felixstowe, IP11 9JJ, 286008

**Secretary:** Laurence McDonald, 5 Looe Road, Felixstowe, IP11 9QB, 285651

**Treasurer:** Susanne Barsby, 1 Berners Road, Felixstowe, IP11 7LF, 276602

## Membership Subscriptions

Annual Membership - single	£5
Joint Membership - two people at same address	£7
Corporate Membership (for local organisations who wish to support the Society)	
Non - commercial	£12
Commercial	£15
Young people under the age of 18	Free

The subscription runs from the 1 January.

The **Membership Secretary** is Betty Woollan, The Pines, Manor Road, Trimley St Mary, Felixstowe, IP11 0TU.

Members are reminded that the Society's booklets **The Cotman Walk** and **Walking around Felixstowe** are available from the Magpie Book shop, the Tourist Information Office, and the Reunion Gallery.

The next **Newsletter** will be distributed by the delivery team at the beginning of January.

**Editor:** Tony Hughes

## **Notes from the Chairman**

Welcome to our September Newsletter and I hope you all feel refreshed after summer breaks and holidays. We are all so lucky to live in Felixstowe with seaside and countryside on our doorstep. For our own part it also ensures that we have lots of visitors which enables me to go to the cinema with grandchildren, see some really good films and eat lots of ice cream!

The 2011 Annual General Meeting was held on Tuesday 17 May and copies of the Agenda and the 2010 Annual Report were circulated with the previous Newsletter. Thank you to all members who attended that meeting.

I am pleased to report that Laurence McDonald has volunteered to take over the position of Secretary of the Society; Trish Hann remains on the Committee and is assisting Laurence to affect a smooth transfer.

A warm welcome to our new members: Paul Ainsworth, Ann Bradford, Mary Browne, Cyril and Norma Cayless, Jon and Jan Garfield, Diane Head, Richard and Lorraine Love, John and Frances McMillen, Beryl Perry and Maria Smither.

Sadly I have to report the deaths of Peggy Berryman, Colin Colgan and Sylvia McPherson.

Details of our remaining Summer/Autumn Programme for 2011 will be found at the back of this Newsletter.

At the time of writing this report I am still attending the final meetings of the Suffolk Coastal District Council meetings regarding the Local Development Framework Housing Settlement Policy. My final report on this matter will be in the next Newsletter.

**Philip Johns**

### **Beachwatch on Saturday, September 17 - Cancellation**

As you know, The Society usually takes part in the Beachwatch event which is organised by the Marine Conservation Society and locally by Suffolk Coast and Heaths. However, with sea defence works about to start in August in the area which we usually cover, it will not be possible to undertake a Beachwatch on 17 September. I understand there will be a lot of beach replenishment and other work going on in the area from Cobbolds Point to the Spa and that with the movement of heavy machinery and other work, the contractors will want the area clear. They hope to complete this work by November/ December this year.

However, we are pleased to report to you that we have agreed to join the Marine Conservation Society's Adopt a Beach Scheme whereby we will be cleaning the area from Seagull and Seashell cottages to the Spa four times a year instead of once a year. We will be doing the cleanup in March, June, September and December each year. This does mean that, on the timing mentioned above, there is some doubt as to whether we will be able to carry out our first Adopt a Beach Scheme beach clean in December, but I will keep you posted on this.

I am delighted to report that so far 23 members have recorded their interest in helping with this scheme. If you would like your names added to the list then please let me know. 01394 270845 or kjandehorn@btinternet.com

**Keith Horn**

## **Annual General Meeting 2011**

The following officers were elected:

Chairman -	Philip Johns
Vice Chairman -	Philip Hadwen
Secretary -	Vacant
Treasurer -	Susanne Barsby

The following Committee Members were elected:

Megan Baker, Alan Coombes, David Crawford, Trish Hann, Judith Hedges, Elizabeth Horn, Keith Horn and Gillian Hughes with Malcolm Stafford remaining as a co-opted member.

John Reynolds was elected as Independent Examiner. Trish Hann has indicated her intention to stand down as Secretary. When a replacement has been found she will continue as a member of the Committee.

### **Award for the Enhancement of the Environment**

Three Awards were made this year, two Main Awards and one Commendation Award. Facsimiles of the Awards and photographs are on the following pages.

#### **Main Award for Brierfield Residential Home, Trimley St Mary**

The Committee felt that this much needed extension had been created in a very tasteful manner. The timbering, curved shape of the rear, the windows and the correlation with the existing building make it a very attractive addition to the original building. A representative of Cura Construction attended to receive the Award.

#### **Main Award for 93 Cliff Road, Old Felixstowe**

The Committee felt that this new house was unusual and bold in design and very much a building of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Mr and Mrs Woodhouse attended to receive the Award.

#### **Commendation Award for 70 Cobbold Road, Felixstowe**

The Committee felt that the renovation work was carried out to a very high standard and in keeping with the age and style of the house. Mr Baker attended to receive the Award.

The formal business of the meeting closed at 20.00. There followed a talk by Phil Hadwen on "The Suffragettes and The Bath Hotel".

# The Felixstowe Society



## Award for the Enhancement of the Environment

presented to

*Brierfield Residential Home*

for the

*Extension to the original house*

Philip Johns Chairman 17 May 2011



# The Felixstowe Society



## Award for the Enhancement of the Environment

presented to

*Mr & Mrs J Woodhouse*

for the

*New House at 93 Cliff Road*

Philip Johns Chairman 17 May 2011



# The Felixstowe Society



## Commendation for the Enhancement of the Environment

presented to

*Mr & Mrs D Baker*

for the

*Renovation of 70 Cobbold Road*

Philip Johns Chairman 17 May 2011



# **'The Suffolk Gipsy'**

## **Talk by Pip Wright on Tuesday 22nd March 2011**

John Heigham Steggall, the Suffolk Gipsy, was a most remarkable man and using his autobiography, which was published in 1857, Pip Wright told us his fantastic story.

During his life Steggall claimed to be a gipsy, a surgeon, a soldier, a sailor and finally a parish priest. For most of his ninety years he lived in the villages of central Suffolk, but he also travelled to India and the South Seas, as well as spending time in Bury jail! There are elements of his story that don't seem true, but by and large Pip Wright, after exhaustive research, believes that the majority of his autobiography is true.

The book was originally published as "John H. Steggall, a real history of a Suffolk Man", but after a number of editions it took the title of our talk.

Steggall states that he was born of respectable parents in Needham Market in 1789, but records disprove this! The baptism register for Creeting St Mary record that a John Steggall was born on 8th May 1791 and privately baptised. He was sent to the school run by Mr Edmund Rogers in Walsham-le-Willows when he was seven. Unfortunately for John the regime was extremely harsh and the rod and the whip were liberally applied. He was so terrified of this treatment that he ran away, but knew he couldn't return home as his father would immediately take him back. Fortunately he met up with a family of gipsies who were very kind to him.

Jonas Gibson, the father of the gipsy family, was involved in a gun accident involving a nearby gamekeeper. This resulted in an appearance before the local magistrate at The Pickerel, Ixworth and young John was asked to give evidence, although he didn't see the accident! Unconvinced by John and Jonas as to the honesty of their evidence they were committed to Bury gaol. There is doubt about Steggall going to jail, but this just illustrates what an exciting tale this is. The gamekeeper, Sealey, recovers and exonerates Jonas Gibson, who is set free with the boy John, but it is too late for Gibson, who dies soon after.

John is reconciled to his family and found another school, much more to his liking. After completing his school studies he was articled to a surgeon practising in Bacton. John's uncle was very keen for him to go to sea, so he was persuaded to take a berth on one of his uncle's vessels bound for the South Pacific Ocean for the purpose of whale fishing. John, by now 18, thoroughly enjoyed his sea adventures and after completing his voyage he returned to Suffolk.

After having spent several months at home he was offered a cadetship with the East India Company. During the voyage to India, they were attacked by a French privateer, but managed to drive them off. Although he was ill on his way to India he soon recovered and received his commission as an ensign of the 15th Regiment of Native Infantry. Ill health afflicted him and he was invalided home. On the return journey the ship attacked and captured the island of Mauritius, but in the action Steggall took a large splinter in his thigh and because of this he was honourably received at home. He was now a wounded soldier, on full pay and with a leave of absence for three years. It was during these three years that his mind underwent a serious change and he resigned



from the army and started his studies at Corpus Christi, Cambridge. He was ordained as a deacon in June 1814 (Diocese of Norwich) and as a priest the following year.

John Steggall married Sarah Weeding at Great Glemham in October 1815. Unfortunately a short time after this his father had a stroke and he was forced to sell his living. This resulted in John becoming a curate at Wyverstone. His father's death left him with financial problems, so as well as his ministerial duties, which brought in some money, he set himself up as a surgeon in Rattlesden.

This did not prove a good idea, although he was popular with those he helped. His cut price fees upset other local surgeons and when a young girl had to have a leg amputated, he was blamed for providing the wrong diagnosis and was effectively struck off. All this after 15 years' service to the local community!

When Lord Thurlow proposed that Steggall and his wife should come and reside in the parish of Great Ashfield, where he would build them a house, it was an offer too good to decline and he remained a priest here for fifty years. John's wife died in 1876 and in 1879 he married Elizabeth Syer. John Steggall died in 1881 and was buried at Great Ashfield.

Throughout his life John Steggall always tried to show gipsies in a favourable light because of the kindness they had shown to him when young and in trouble. Once again Pip Wright had enthralled his audience and the members of The Society who were at this talk heard a fabulous tale.

## **Phil Hadwen**

# **The Suffragettes and The Bath Hotel on 28 April 1914**

## **Talk by Phil Hadwen on Tuesday 17 May 2011**

After the usual quick business part of the evening our Vice Chairman, Phil Hadwen announced that because of a clash of events our listed speaker was unable to attend and that he would step into the breach. His topic was the Suffragettes in Felixstowe. We first had a quick resume of the reasons for the development of Felixstowe which was sparked off by the craze for sea-bathing. In the mid 1800's Felixstowe was very popular with the great and good from London, particularly the golfing fraternity. From this interest several hotels were built such as the Felix Hotel (Harvest House) with the Bath Hotel being built in 1867.

Having set the local scene Phil then gave a short history of the development of the Suffragettes' movement, starting with the The National Union of Women's Suffrage founded by Millicent Fawcett in 1897. This organisation believed in peaceful protest but to others appeared to be ineffectual and so after founding the Women's Social and Political Union in 1903, Mrs Emmeline Pankhurst and her daughters decided in 1905 that a more active approach was required. As we now know this approach was enthusiastically followed by Mrs P and her acolytes, despite the barbaric treatment by the government of that time of those arrested. We now turned to the events leading up to the Bath Hotel fire in 1914. The two perpetrators, Evaline Hilda Burkett (alias Byron) and Florence Olivia

Tunks, arrived in Felixstowe on Saturday 25 April having had an 'away-day excursion' setting fire to Great Yarmouth Pier and sundry wheat stacks en route. They took lodgings at the home of Miss Daisy Meadows at Woodcroft, Cavendish Rd. It is suspected that they targeted Felixstowe because it was frequented by the rich and famous and they would therefore get better media coverage.

At 4.30 in the morning of 28 April, Coastguard Woodward called the fire brigade because he had seen smoke rising beyond the east cliffs. Despite their efforts by 7am the Bath Hotel was fully ablaze and by 9am was just about burnt out. The photograph Phil showed of the scene really brought home the devastation and also showed just how close spectators got to the blaze and the subsequent wreck. Their weak alibi of going to the theatre in Ipswich collapsed when a local boatman, William Wicks, saw them at 7.30 pm in a beach tent they had rented. They were also seen at 10 pm by Commander White and between 1 and 2 am the night watchman on the pier saw two women matching their description walking along the Prom. The two ladies were arrested and despite their loud attempts to repeat their slogans and show their disrespect of the courts (it was all men!) they duly finished up in Holloway Prison. It is possible that they intended to attack the Felix Hotel but this was still being used whereas the Bath Hotel was closed at 9 pm.

Soon after their imprisonment the war began and the Government was quick to seize the opportunity to release suffragette prisoners. The Bath Hotel fire proved to be one of the last important outrages of the suffragette campaign. It was interesting that in 1893 New Zealand was the first country to give votes to women. Britain followed in 1918 (the suffragette actions and the work of women in the war being the major influence) but it took until 1971 for the Swiss women to get the vote!

Phil had given us a very informative and interesting talk highlighting a significant moment on the history of the Town.

## **David Crawford**



## Essex Smugglers

If you wake at midnight, and hear a horse's feet,  
Don't go drawing back the blind, or looking in the street.  
Them that ask no questions, isn't told a lie.  
Watch the wall, my darling, while the gentlemen go by!  
Five and twenty ponies,  
Trotting through the dark –  
Brandy for the Parson,  
'Baccy for the Clerk,  
Laces for a lady, letters for a spy,  
And watch the wall my darling, while the Gentlemen go by!

It had all been arranged. We would meet Claire our Blue Badge Guide at 10 am on Wednesday 15 June at Tollgate but a 4 vehicle accident on the A12 soon changed these plans. As the minutes ticked by alternative plans were made. Our scheduled coffee stop at Wilkin and Sons, the jam making company at Tiptree, was cancelled and re-arranged as a lunch break thus giving us more time to visit the excellent free museum telling the history of the last 100 years of preserve making, having farmed this area since 1757. Along with viewing machinery used in those days, and browsing around the shop which stocked many varieties of jams, chutneys and jellies and unusual craft items, it's never too early to buy for Christmas. Our coach driver Clive's driving hours had to be taken into consideration but until we started moving 1.5 hours later nothing was definite. It was relief all round when we saw Claire patiently waiting our arrival. Throughout the day our guide made a number of references to Rudyard Kipling's 'A Smuggler's Song' as we travelled through the back roads of Essex where we were told some of the methods used to evade the Revenue Men and the rewards for keeping quiet. We also learned the advantages of Essex's 300 mile 'coastline' which included at least 50 well defined rivers, creeks and outfalls . Only the true locals knew the safest routes across the marshes, the tides and the best watercraft to reach well inland. Wool in particular was smuggled out of England in return for lace from Belgium, silk from France, gin tea and tobacco from the Netherlands and even soap under cover of darkness.

We passed through many pretty villages and heard how each played its part – a duck pond here where barrels of drink were stored until it was safe to move them to the copse of trees over there or the haystack just here. Horses hooves were covered as were the wheels of the carts to muffle the sound. Sightings of ghosts and false stories were circulated to cover up the mysterious night-time movements of the smugglers. The best known smuggling family who used the river Crouch were the Dowsetts. William and John had many a confrontation with the men in blue and red.

We called at the pretty town of Maldon on the river Blackwater where we could imagine the conditions smugglers had to take into consideration to make a successful landing. Low lying land gave good visibility over many miles and the use of lanterns signals for communications - a different code for each gang - warned of danger or gave the All Clear. Our day ended at the delightful town of Burnham-on-Crouch which being off the beaten track has a charm of its own. We could then reflect on our day's history lesson in smuggling and grateful that the outing was saved by the efforts put in by Claire, Clive and Keith who did a wonderful job keeping calm and hoping they were making the right decisions.

Running round the woodlump , if you chance to find  
Little barrels, roped and tarred, all full of brandy - wine  
Don't you shout to come and look, nor use 'em for your play  
Put the brushwood back again - and they'll be gone next day!  
If you see the stable-door setting open wide If you see a tired horse lying down inside  
If your mother mends a coat cut about and tore  
If the lining's wet and warm - don't you ask no more  
If you meet King George's men, dressed in blue and red,  
You be careful what you say, and mindful what is said,  
If they call you "pretty maid" and chuck you 'neath the chin,  
Don't you tell where no one is, nor yet where no one's been!  
Knocks and footsteps round the house- whistles after dark -  
You've no call for running out till the house-dogs bark.  
Trusty's here and Pincher's here, and see how dumb they lie -  
They don' fret to follow when the gentlemen go by!  
If you do as you've been told , 'likely there's a chance  
You'll be given a dainty doll, all the way from France,  
With a cap of Valenciennes, and a velvet hood -  
A present from the Gentleman, along o' being good.

**Elizabeth Horn**

## **The Cork Light Vessel**

For over a hundred years, an observer anywhere along the sea front where the town of Felixstowe now stands, would have been able to see, on a clear day, the red-painted Cork light vessel. The station was established in 1844, and was filled by a light vessel until the 1970s, although not by the same vessel throughout that time. It gets its name from that of a long sandbank nearby.



**The last vessel to occupy the Cork station**

Some town residents may remember seeing the occupant of this position, which was of a newer type, built in 1931 and working first off Edinburgh, and arrived here soon after the end of the second world war. Here she remained and was to be the last vessel on this station.

The Corporation of Trinity House, incorporated by Royal Charter in 1514, is responsible through its Elder Brethren, for all navigational aids and pilotage around our coasts. This involves the upkeep of lighthouses, light vessels and buoys, the removal of wrecks and the licensing of pilots. The Corporation also has a charitable function for distressed mariners and their families.

The number of crew on a light vessel changed over the years but became seven, including the master, with three men working ashore. After a month two men and the master would be relieved and the rest of the crew continuing for a two month period.

The very presence and positioning of the vessel was of use to shipping, and its light was of course, one of its two main attributes. The first vessels of this kind provided light by means of tallow candles only, but the invention of the Argand oil lamp around 1800 allowed a great improvement. This lamp consisted of two concentric tubes with the wick between them. Later multiple wicks were introduced, and this lamp became the standard light.

Firstly, sperm whale oil was used in the lamps, but due to its high cost was changed to rape seed oil and in the later 19th century that was gradually replaced by mineral oil. This improvement over candles was followed by the introduction of a parabolic reflector, firstly of 12 inches and later of 21 inches diameter, made from copper sheet thickly coated with silver.

The first electric vessel was introduced only in 1924, and the outbreak of war in 1939 still saw the great majority of light vessels using oil lamps. The one on the Cork station after the war was fitted with a 500 watt lamp operating at 100 volts. Later 1000 watt lamps were used.

Lenses, prisms and mirrors were also employed in different configurations to enhance and control the light beam on these vessels, and the lamp assemblies were made to rotate.

In recent years automatic light vessels have been introduced in some places, which are reliant on solar panels and are unmanned.

The other main attribute of these vessels was the sounding of an audible warning in case of thick mist or fog. In the early days experiments were carried out with bells and gongs. Gongs were preferred, and used throughout the 19th century, partly because their distinctive sound would lead to less confusion with bells ashore and elsewhere. These gongs were about two feet in diameter and of Chinese manufacture.

An air horn powered by a hot air engine was evaluated by Trinity House and approved, and this gradually replaced the gongs. In appearance this was like a huge gramophone horn seventeen feet long and the mouth three feet in diameter. Its sound could be heard for up to six miles.

The crew's pay was not generous, and in the 1930s was £6 to £10 a month. However, when the horn was in use in poor visibility the crew received what they called 'fog dust',

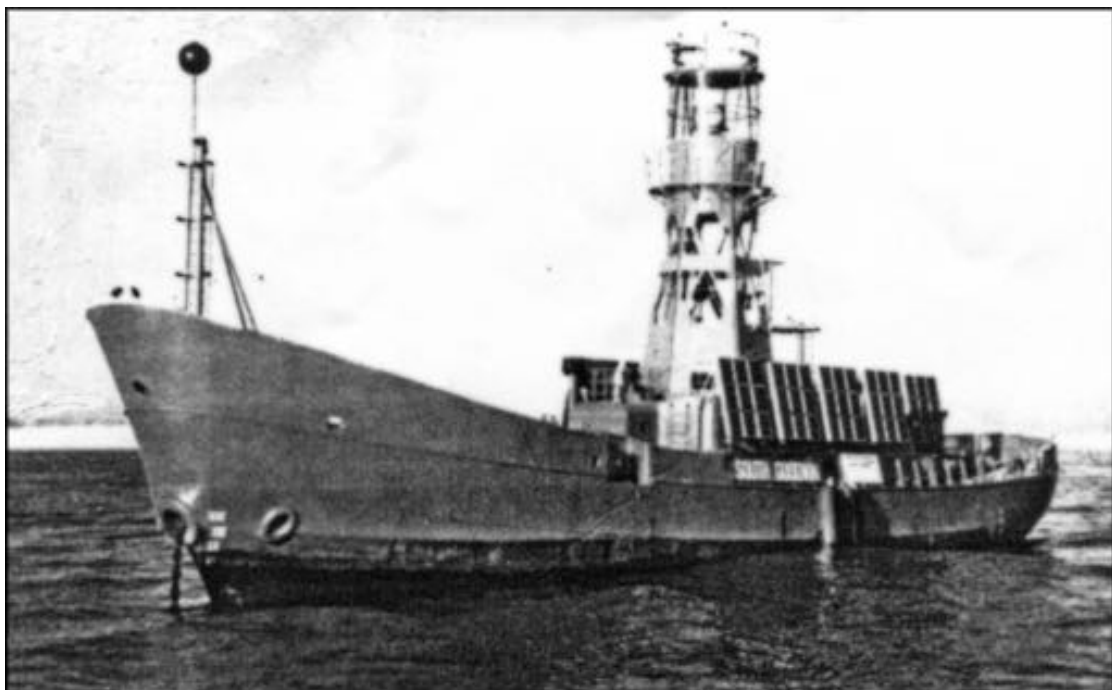
which was 2d an hour for the time the horn was working. This was compensation for their nearness to the unearthly regular roar of the horn. In the case of 24 hours of fog each man would receive an extra 4 shillings on his wages, which was sufficient for the men to welcome and endure it.

The head porter of the Felix hotel, one of whose jobs was to connect guests with their telephone calls, related an apparent eccentricity of Sir Joseph Broodbank of Trinity House. Sir Joseph rang London one morning and complained bitterly that the Cork foghorn-had kept him awake all night. Rather than eccentricity, it is almost certain that Sir Joseph could see very well, from his first floor suite and balcony, insufficient mist or fog to justify it!

Owing to changes in the size and position of sandbanks, over the years the vessel was moved locally, but at this time was only about 3.5 nautical miles from his viewpoint.

For the crewmen a posting to the Cork was a very popular one. This was because its station was in relatively sheltered waters, and quite close to land. This meant many more visitors. Visitors were welcome as they often brought gifts, even daily newspapers, and also might buy some of the goods the crew had made for sale. In their leisure hours most crew members made such things as mats, marquetry boxes, wooden ship models and ships in bottles, and these brought in some welcome additional income.

No alcohol was allowed on board, but a favourite ruse was to use a vinegar bottle for whisky, and this led to crewmen saying to visitors, 'next time you come don't forget the Sarsons' !



**A modern light vessel, unmanned and powered  
by two rows of solar panels**

At around Christmas time a civic dignitary might visit, accompanied sometimes by a vicar from a local church, when a service would be held on board. The Cork was fortunate in that it had regular Christmas visits from a group of the waiters and waitresses from the

Felix hotel. For their Christmas adventure they would hire a boat and, to the joy of the crew, arrive with newspapers, food and drinks, and have a Christmas party on board.

The Cork continued in service until 1975 when she was sold privately and towed to Saint Katherine's Dock in London, and renamed Nore. The replacement was a so-called lanby, which was a very large light buoy with a deck thirty feet in diameter, and the light forty feet above it.

**Acknowledgements.** Thanks are due to Mr Neil Jones of Trinity House for his kind assistance in the preparation of this article and also to Mr Anthony Lane for Guiding Lights.

**Leslie Ramsey**

## **Proposed Visit to the Olympic Sites**

A number of our members have asked if The Felixstowe Society is planning a visit to the London Olympic sites and we are pleased to say that if we get sufficient support we have made arrangements to go to London on Wednesday 12 October at a cost of £25 per person to include the coach journey, a Blue Badge Guide and a tip for our driver.

Claire Partner the Blue Badge Guide on our Essex Smugglers trip is also a London Guide and will be our guide for the day.

We will depart from Garrison Lane car park at 8.00 am and pick up en route at Great Eastern Square, Walton Half Moon and Station Road Trimley.

We will meet up with Claire at Tollgate Services and then continue onto Thames Barrier Park for a morning coffee and afterwards we will make our way to the various 2012 Olympic venue sites. At the moment our plan is to take lunch at Greenwich but please note that this is subject to change depending on traffic etc.

It is anticipated that we will be back in Felixstowe between 6.00 and 6.30 pm.

Please note that we require to know numbers attending by Monday 12 September and would ask you to complete and return the application form together with your payment of £25 as soon as possible.

**Keith Horn**

# Wyclif Hall

## Addendum to Research Corner 12 (May Newsletter)

These two photographs, from the publication ' Village life in and around Felixstowe', add more to the history of Wyclif Hall.

**133** Presbyterians, Methodists, Congregationalists and Baptists used Felixstowe Evangelical Free Church in 1871. In the background can be seen houses in Hamilton Place. This wooden building was eventually sold in the 1980s, demolished and a small block of flats built on the land.



**134** The Wycliffe Hall or Congregational Church in Cobbold Road, pictured shortly after its completion. The Church was enlarged in 1920 with the addition of a new nave. In 1972 the Presbyterian Church in England and Wales joined with the Congregational Church of England and Wales to form the United Reform Church. The Church and Halls in Cobbold Road became surplus and were sold to the Salvation Army. The Manse in Barton Road was also sold and the proceeds were kept in trust to provide an ongoing income.





## Research Corner 13 - James Douglas Davie

Research isn't always looking through past records in old books or files, it is sometimes close at hand if we can tap into it.

It is always very gratifying when writing anything that is published to have people respond. Many people have commented about the pleasure they obtain reading the historic articles I am writing about the history of St Peter and St Paul in their parish magazine "Step by Step", but I was absolutely delighted when I received a phone call from a lady called Peggy Howe telling me that one of her friends wanted to talk to me about her brother, who is commemorated on the Second World War memorial in the South Porch of the church. D Davie is just one of twenty eight names inscribed and I was able to write a few brief details thanks to a Roll of Honour website. Therefore it was a real pleasure for me to meet Wynn Lake and hear from her about her brother.

A photograph of Wynn is on page 22.

Those of you who have heard me talk about our war dead will know that I believe that we should try to keep their memory alive and any way that we can achieve this is important.

James Douglas Davie, "Dougie", was a very active young man, who always liked the outdoor life. He thought there was nothing better than to get on his bike and cycle away to distant parts of our area. Dougie was also a good table tennis player and he could often be found playing in the scout hut in Bath Road. When he left school he worked with his father transporting and selling coal blocks, which used to be delivered to Felixstowe railway station. His father was blind so there was a certain acceptance within the family that everyone would do as their father wanted, but Dougie certainly didn't want to do this - he hated it. At the outbreak of the war he had an excuse to leave home, he enlisted in the RAF. He wanted to fly and here was his opportunity. There was trouble about this at home, but Dougie stuck to his plans and trained as a rear air gunner. He was engaged to a girl from Ipswich, who wanted him to give up flying because she was fearful that he would be killed! He refused.

He was promoted to a sergeant in 106 Squadron Volunteer Reserves and during the Battle of Britain he was flying in an aircraft that was acting as a pathfinder, but was shot down and killed on 26th July 1942. Apparently he tried to bale out of his stricken aircraft, but hit his head while attempting this and consequently was never able to open his parachute.

His body was brought home to Felixstowe and his funeral was held at the Trinity Methodist Church. He is buried at the council cemetery - Felixstowe New Cemetery.

His father did not attend his son's funeral as he was an atheist!

Time moves on, but there must be more stories of our war dead that need recording before it is too late and all that remains is just a name on a memorial. For those reading this brief article if you know of anyone who can help keep alive the name of any of our war dead, from any of the memorials in Felixstowe, please contact me. We have an excellent Family History Society in our town and surely someone must have information that can help us!

**Phil Hadwen**

## The First Aeroplane in Felixstowe?

A recent article in the Ipswich Society magazine by John Barbrook asked the question as to whether the French aviator Henri Salmét, who landed his aeroplane in one of the meadows belonging to Gippeswyk Hall Farm, Ipswich on the evening of Saturday 10 August 1912, was landing the first aeroplane in Ipswich. It would appear to be the case, but this plane had arrived in Ipswich from Clacton via Felixstowe, so not only Ipswich, but

was this the first plane to land in Felixstowe?



The Royal Flying Corps was formed on 13 May 1912 as it was envisaged that air power would soon play an important part in military thinking. Various committees debated the role that land and sea planes would take, and it was

almost immediately decided that a site was needed for the development and experimentation of hydro-planes. The Harwich harbour area was considered a possibility and was visited on a number of occasions, during 1912, to assess its suitability. Lieutenant Colonel Charles Samson was in the area on 3 June, 14 July and 26 August. As Felixstowe was chosen as the site for this development and experimental station it stands to reason that Charles Samson actually landed at Felixstowe, but more than likely on the water off Felixstowe, quite probably in the Orwell estuary, as he was flying a hydroplane. So it was more than likely that Henri Salmét was our first aviation visitor!

Henri Salmét flew Bleriot aeroplanes, designed, if not built by Louis Bleriot, who was made famous by his crossing of the English Channel on 25 July 1909. Salmét, however, was the first to fly non-stop from Paris to London. He covered the 222 miles in a time of 2 hours 57 minutes. Working as a mechanic at the



newly established Bleriot Hendon School of Flying in 1911 he quickly gained his flying "ticket" having been recorded as flying a Bleriot 50hp aeroplane on a 50 mile trip. The Royal Aero Club started issuing aviator's certificates in 1910 and Henri Samet was the 99th to gain his on 27 June 1911. Within months he was chief flying instructor at the school. After reports of several first time flights and landings along the English Channel coast, he was sponsored in 1912 by the Daily Mail to undertake an aeroplane tour of the country. By the summer of that year he had worked his way up the east coast, certainly visiting Southend, Colchester, Frinton and Clacton.

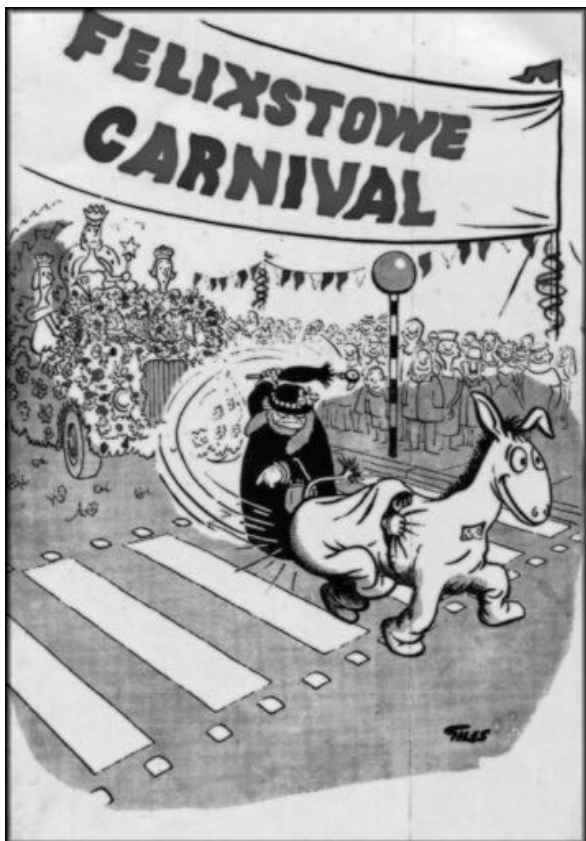
Samet's epic Daily Mail flights continued with tours to Wales, north west England and Ireland, as well as London to Manchester flights. There were numerous further "firsts" where his aircraft was adapted with floats to land on water. He went on working for the Daily Mail by delivering their Riviera Supplement to resorts in the Mediterranean, often dropping bundles by parachute. Throughout the First World War he flew for the French Army in early aerial combat, bombing and reconnaissance missions, earning himself the Military Medal.

## Phil Hadwen

## Giles

One of the characters that we associate with Felixstowe Ferry is Ronald "Carl" Giles. He was a great sailing fanatic and had been President of Felixstowe Ferry Sailing Club for a great many years. I was lucky to meet him while I worked at the Alexander Restaurant, where he often came on a Sunday evening for his dinner/supper. Memory plays tricks on us, but I'm pretty sure he always had an omelette, and this was usually made for him by

Mrs Baker, a wonderful women, who was almost like a mum to the youngsters who were working there. Anyway if he came in he always liked to sit by the window upstairs, in the far left hand corner, and if you were fortunate to have that station, then you usually got a five shilling tip (25p)! Very good for 1960, as we used to make about £1 a day in tips, so an extra 25% was always appreciated. We fought tooth and nail to serve him, if at all possible.



Why, you may ask, am I writing about Carl Giles, well I recently attended a wonderful concert at the Ferry Sailing Club, organised by Seafarers UK, and looking around the walls of the clubhouse I saw a large number of Giles' cartoons, which he had specially drawn for various functions run by the club. He always provided the cartoon on the menu for the annual Laying-Up Supper, as can be seen in the illustration, but I recently discovered that Giles had also supplied a number of cartoons for use on the Felixstowe

Carnival programme.

So having linked Giles to Felixstowe what do we actually know about him? Well certainly his cartoons featuring “his” family, with its matriarchic head-Grandma, but apart from her statue in Ipswich, I must say I know little about Giles’ life.

He was born in Islington, London on 29 September 1916 and was nicknamed by friends, Karlo, which later became Carl, because they decided that he looked like Boris Karloff, the famous film actor of that time who played Frankenstein’s monster. Giles left school at 14 and worked as an office boy for a film company in Wardour Street, before becoming an animator for cartoon films. He worked for the legendary film director, Alexander Korda, on the first full-length British colour cartoon with sound, ‘The Fox Hunt’. He then went to Ipswich and joined a studio that was going to produce a series of ten-minute animated newspaper cartoons. Although Giles was the head animator he received no credit on screen!

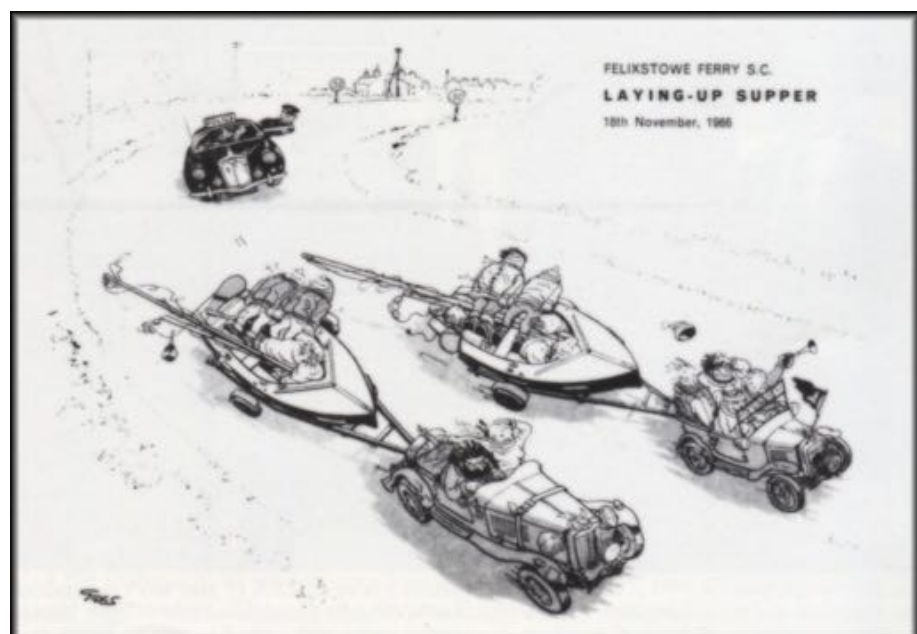
In 1937 he became a cartoonist for Reynolds News, a left wing Sunday newspaper, but his work came to the attention of the editor of the Sunday Express and he eventually joined the Express newspapers in 1943. His first cartoon for his new employer appeared on 3 October 1943. Giles never agreed with the Express group’s politics and secretly regretted leaving Reynolds News, but he was to become wealthy. By 1955 he only produced three cartoons a week, but he was paid £8,060 for doing this!

He was rejected for war service, following injuries after a motorcycle accident, but he became the Daily Express’s war correspondent cartoonist with the 2nd Army. At one stage during the war he was assigned to the Coldstream Guards and he was with them when they liberated the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp.

He was awarded the OBE in 1959. The Royal Family were fans of his and often requested originals of his work! He quit the Daily Express in 1989, because he noticed that his cartoons were being given less and less space, but he continued with the Sunday Express until 1991.

He never sold any of his cartoons, preferring to donate them to friends and to charitable organisations, like the RNLI. He contributed to several other publications and drew cartoons for Fisons, Guinness and other companies. He also designed Christmas cards for several charity organisations.

There must be at least one collection of his cartoons in the majority



of houses in our country and these collections have been appearing since 1946 and until his death in 1995 he selected which cartoons would be used.

In April 2000 Giles was voted "Britain`s Favourite Cartoonist of the 20th Century". He also supported Ipswich Town!

I am sure there must be more stories about him connected to this part of the world and it would be good to feature them in future Felixstowe Society Newsletters.

**Phil Hadwen.**

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**The thoughts below by Malcolm Stafford on the curious world we live in arrive by email. There will be more thoughts in later editions of the Newsletter.**

## **Fast Moving World**

I actually remember when the first Personal Computer was introduced by International Business Machines (IBM) in 1981. I was working in the Middle East and looked in awe as a Singaporean geek explained the capabilities of this small machine and even claimed it could pick up messages through the telephone line - which at this demonstration it didn't, which brought a wry smile from yours truly.

IBM were computer market leaders and when I was working in Ipswich in the early 70's my Company were guinea pigged by IBM to demonstrate to a disbelieving shipping industry that this was the future. I was part of our Company team tasked with telling the IBM executives what we wanted from their card reading System 3 machine, rather than accepting what these Mid Atlantic accented people wanted us to accept.

I have often wondered what happened to IBM and learnt recently that in 2005 a Chinese Company by the name of Lenovo acquired IBM and today is the third largest computer company on the planet. What is strange about Lenovo is that they claim not to have a corporate headquarters and their executives literally live out of suitcases and orbit the globe. Lenovo was incorporated in Hong Kong in 1988 as Legend, but became " more " Chinese in 2009 when a Beijing based private investment firm purchased 29% of Legend, but then this year Lenovo formed a joint venture with Japanese PC manufacturer NEC.

As executives and tourists travel the globe airports get bigger. The British designed Terminal 3 at Beijing International (PEK) is larger than all five terminals at Heathrow (LHR) but lost its crown as the largest airport terminal in the world to Terminal 3 at Dubai (DXB). Airports are no longer places outside of town they are places near where we build towns. I was reading recently about an executive who lived exclusively in hotels or on planes, sending his laundry to his office headquarters from where fresh clothes were sent to his future destination. He attended conferences and meetings within airports and rarely set foot outside the airport complex.

If this is the way it is going then I am glad my career is coming to an end !

## **Nuclear Down and Out ?**

After the devastating earthquake and tsunami in Japan and the nuclear accident that followed, it was not surprising that public confidence in nuclear power has been shaken and the nuclear renaissance has been stopped in its tracks.

Germany almost immediately suspended operations at seven of their 17 nuclear plants following the disaster in Japan and other European countries announced they would re-evaluate their nuclear plants. In the United States some politicians called for a halt to the plans for nuclear development after a nearly 30 year hiatus. But there are also the loud and growing calls to reduce carbon emissions whilst at the same time the global thirst for power continues to grow, some say by a staggering 36% over the next two decades. It is said that 200 million residents in China are still without electricity so the increase in energy demand is probably not wide of the mark.

The bottom line is therefore continued development of energy from wind, solar, gas and hydro sources as well as nuclear and fossil fuels. There is then the cost of course, and the blowout of BP's Macondo and the resulting slow down in deep water drilling as well as the political unrest in the Middle East has not helped. Natural Gas is the cheapest and all alternatives much more expensive.

What is important is for global governments to review safety requirements and reassure us all that existing nuclear plants are safe and the 65 reactors being built around the world (25 in China alone) have learnt the lessons of Fukushima.



**Wynn Lake at the side of her brother's war grave at Felixstowe Cemetery.**

**(see page 17)**

## Poem by Sir John Betjeman

### Felixstowe, Or The Last Of Her Order

With one consuming roar along the shingle  
The long wave claws and rakes the pebbles down  
To where its backwash and the next wave mingle,  
A mounting arch of water weedy-brown  
Against the tide the off-shore breezes blow.  
Oh wind and water, this is Felixstowe.

In winter when the sea winds chill and shriller  
Than those of summer, all their cold unload  
Full on the gimcrack attic of the villa  
Where I am lodging off the Orwell Road,  
I put my final shilling in the meter  
And only make my loneliness completer.

In eighteen ninety-four when we were founded,  
Counting our Reverend Mother we were six,  
How full of hope we were and prayer - surrounded  
'The Little Sisters of the Hanging Pyx'.  
We built our orphanage. We built our school.  
Now only I am left to keep the rule.

Here in the gardens of the Spa Pavilion  
Warm in the whisper of the summer sea,  
The cushioned scabious, a deep vermillion,  
With white pins stuck in it, looks up at me  
A sun-lit kingdom touched by butterflies  
And so my memory of the winter dies.

Across the grass the poplar shades grow longer  
And louder clang the waves along the coast.  
The band packs up. The evening breeze is stronger  
And all the world goes home to tea and toast.  
I hurry past a cakeshop's tempting scones  
Bound for the red brick twilight of St.John's.

'Thou knowest my down sitting and mine uprising'  
Here where the white light burns with steady glow  
Safe from the vain world's silly sympathising,  
Safe with the love I was born to know,  
Safe from the surging of the lonely sea  
My heart finds rest, my heart finds rest in Thee.



( from [www.poemhunter.com](http://www.poemhunter.com) - The World's Poetry Archive)

# Planning Applications

21 March to 14 July 2011

## SCDC has granted Permission for the following:

### *Previous Applications*

**4 Brook Lane.** Change of use from residential to Dental Surgery.

**21 & 21A Constable Road.** Replace windows with UPVC.

**16 Hamilton Rd.** Change of use from shop to Restaurant and Cafe.

**9 College Green.** Alteration to window aperture.

**Fronting 59 Hamilton Rd.** Use public highway for tables and chairs.

### *Recent Applications*

**Salvation Army, Cobbold Road: metal storage bin.** The Society believes that this proposal will have little effect on the Conservation Area.

**9 Quilter Rd: Rear Extension.** The Society believes that this extension will have little effect on the Conservation Area.

**3 Victoria Street: Change of use only.** Taking note of Gymphobics' amendment letter dated 26/02/2009(sic) received by SCDC 18 March 2011: Change of use only. The Society believes that this extension will have little effect on the Conservation Area.

**Part Side garden, 44 Glemsford Close: Erect One Dwelling and accesses.** This is a confusing application. The covering letter refers to only one dwelling but one of the plans clearly shows two semi-detached houses with separate new accesses. We would appreciate it if you would clarify these contrasting proposals.

**Fisherman's Hall, The Ferry, Felixstowe: Application for a Lawful Development's Certificate for a Proposed Use or Development.** The Society has no objection to the revised scheme. However, we find the elevations as designated i.e. North, South East & West confusing. They appear to be incorrectly orientated

## Applications awaiting a decision

**2 Berners Road – Single storey extension.** The redevelopment will have little effect on the Conservation Area.

**Plot adjacent to 9 Old Hall Close – Redevelopment of Redundant Cart Lodge as single residential unit.** We note that the plans for this redevelopment refer to 4 dwellings



and support the change to a single storey design. The redevelopment will have little effect on the listed building.

**The Ferry Boat Inn, Felixstowe Ferry – Extensions.** The alterations to this important building will enhance this part of the hamlet. However, the substantial increase in customer capacity will increase pressure on parking spaces and we feel that this aspect needs to be considered.

**Part of Public Highway fronting 74-76 Hamilton Rd – Change of use for the placing of tables and chairs.** The Society feels that this proposal would adversely affect the Conservation Area because there is insufficient space in this part of Hamilton Rd for this activity.

**23 Cobbold Rd – Single storey sear extension.** The Society believes that this proposal will have little effect on the Conservation Area.

**3 Quilter Road -- Extensions and alterations to roof.** The redevelopment will have little effect on the Conservation Area.

**Park House, 72 Constable Rd -- Widen vehicle access and demolish wall.** The Society objects to both of these proposals. We consider that they will have an adverse effect on the street scene. The removal of the small wall will detract from the separation of the house from the road as is typical of neighbouring properties.

**The Bartlett Hospital -- Change of use and Alterations to the former Convalescent Home and annex to form 28 residential units and build 3 dwellings.** The Society applauds this welcome plan to preserve this Listed Building. We think it should have a beneficial effect on this part of the Conservation Area, provided the external changes are made sympathetically to this prominent site. However, the future of these buildings and site will depend on the long term maintenance plan for the grounds and community areas being maintained to a high standard. We recommend that sufficient provision be made in any approval and conveyancing to ensure these standards are met.

## **Other Applications**

**72 Hamilton Road -- Rebrand ATM.** The Felixstowe Society Objects to this Proposal for the reasons given below.

The sign it is proposed to affix to the façade of this distinctive Conservation Area building is grossly oversized at 1.678 metres in height and completely out of keeping with the architecture of the building. Being bright blue in colour emphasises the unsympathetic nature of this proposal. REFUSED by SCDC.

**3 The Pines -- Erect rear extension with roof terrace and loft conversion.** Application withdrawn.

**David Crawford**

## Programme

Saturday 17 September	Beachwatch <b>cancelled</b> , see page 3 for details.
Thursday 22 September	Day visit to Long Melford with tour hosted by the Long Melford Society. Details were given in the May newsletter.
Tuesday 27 September	The Making of Cotman House. Colin Bentley and John Smith tell us all about this project.
Tuesday 25 October	Suffolk Punch Trust. Chris Harris will present an illustrated talk about the work of the Suffolk Punch Trust.
Tuesday 22 November	Felixstowe during World War II. A talk by David Tolliday, our foremost local historian.
Tuesday 24 January	Interesting characters from Felixstowe Ferry. A talk by John White, Harbourmaster at Felixstowe Ferry.

All speaker meetings are held in St Andrew's Church Hall at 7.30 pm  
Members £1, Visitors £2

## Free National Trust and English Heritage Day Passes

As the Felixstowe Society is affiliated to Civic Voice, its members are entitled to free day passes to National Trust and English Heritage properties. If you have access to the internet, go to:

[www.civic.voice.org.uk/nationaltrustcivicvoiceoffer](http://www.civic.voice.org.uk/nationaltrustcivicvoiceoffer) for details of the National Trust day pass, and to:

[www.civic.voice.org.uk/englishheritagepassoffer](http://www.civic.voice.org.uk/englishheritagepassoffer) for details of the English Heritage day pass.

The National Trust day pass is transferable, but the English Heritage pass is not.

If you do not have access to the internet, send a SAE to:

Ian Harvey, Civic Voice, Unit 101, 82 Wood Street, The Tea Factory, Liverpool L1 4DQ (mentioning your membership of the Felixstowe Society).

**If you wish to join The Society, cut these last two pages from the Newsletter.** Complete both columns on this page and send to Betty Woollan at the address given on the back page with a cheque payable to *The Felixstowe Society* for the correct subscription, and enclose a stamped addressed envelope.

Full names .....

.....

Address .....

.....

Post Code .....

Telephone .....

I/We could give occasional help with -- please tick

Artwork

Archives/Exhibitions

Litter clearance

Monitoring planning applications

Newsletter delivery

Organising activities

Survey work

Secretarial work

Maintenance work at Abbey Grove and Gulpher Pond

Have you any relevant technical/professional expertise or special interests, for example, computer skills?

.....

.....

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**For office use only** (please tick and date)

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On Newsletter delivery list .....

**Gift Aid Declaration** (for individuals).

Please ensure that the name on the cheque for the membership subscription (donation) is the same as the donor.

*Donor details*

Title .....

Forename(s) .....

Surname .....

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I would like The Felixstowe Society to treat all donations I make from the date of this declaration, until I notify you otherwise, as gift aid donations.

Donor to sign and date here

*sign* .....

*date* .....

*Notes*

1. You can cancel this declaration at any time by notifying the Treasurer.
2. You must pay an amount of income tax and/or capital gains tax at least equal to The Society's reclaims on your donation in the tax year.
3. If in the future your circumstances change and you no longer pay tax on your income or capital gains equal to the tax The Society reclaims, you should cancel your declaration. See note 1.
4. If you are unsure whether your donations qualify for Gift Aid tax relief, ask The Society, or ask your local tax office for leaflet IR65.
5. Please notify The Society if you change your name or address.

## If you wish to join The Society please read on

The Society has many different activities and almost everyone can give something to, and get something from, The Society.

### Meetings

The Society holds meetings which usually include a talk on some matter of interest; arranges outings to places of interest in East Anglia; holds exchange visits with other societies.

### Projects

The Society organises exhibitions; carries out surveys; works closely with schools on various projects; monitors planning applications; tackles specific issues as they arise; gives Awards for the Enhancement of the Environment; is actively involved with Abbey Grove and Gulpher Duck Pond.

### Publications

The Society issues a regular Newsletter and has published the 'The Cotman Walk' and 'Walking around Felixstowe' which are available from the places listed on page 2.

### Joining

To join The Society please complete the Form and the Gift Aid Declaration on the previous page, **cut these last two pages from the Newsletter** and send with your membership subscription plus a stamped addressed envelope for the return of the receipt to,

Betty Woollan  
Membership Secretary  
The Pines  
Manor Road  
Trimley St. Mary  
IP11 0TU

### Membership Subscriptions

Annual Membership - single	£5
Joint Membership - two people at same address	£7
Corporate Membership (for local organisations who wish to support the Society)	
Non - commercial	£12
Commercial	£15
Young people under the age of 18	Free

The annual subscription runs from the 1 January.

**Gift aid** is tax relief on money donated to UK charities. HM Revenue & Customs treats donations as if the donor had already deducted basic rate tax from them. The charity can then reclaim this tax to increase the value of a donation. The Society is a charity and the membership subscription is a donation.