



THE FELIXSTOWE SOCIETY Newsletter

Issue Number 114

January 2017

This issue includes:

Your chance to choose
next year's winner of the
Enhancement of the
Environment Awards



Registered Charity No. 27744

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP FOR
2017

THANK YOU

The Felixstowe Society is established for the public benefit of people who either live or work in Felixstowe and Walton. Members are also 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.

Cover photo; The old lift shaft machinery now incorporated into a new seating area at The Bartlet.

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Notes from the Chairman

I hope that you all had an enjoyable Christmas and, on behalf of The Felixstowe Society Committee, I would like to wish you a happy and prosperous New Year.

I am pleased to be able to tell you that we had a good response to my letter to all members in November asking for volunteers to join the Committee. The situation at the time of writing (mid-November) is that we have appointed Hilary Eaton as The Society's Treasurer and Membership Secretary to replace Tony Horrocks who will be retiring from the Committee at the end of 2016.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Tony for all his hard work during the time he has been with us. He has established robust systems for running both the membership and accounting databases and he has been a source of advice and good sense for the whole Committee.

We have also had volunteers to take on the other vacant Committee places (Secretary and Members' Communication) and a possible new Chairman and Vice-Chairman to replace me when I give up the role in the first half of 2017. Final decisions are yet to be taken on these positions but we will announce them as soon as possible.

Overall, therefore, The Society's future is a lot more secure than I dared hope just a month or so ago.

On another matter, please read my article, on pages 20-22, concerning the way in which the Bala Cottage development at Felixstowe Ferry has been handled by the Town and District Councils and the Planning Officers at Suffolk Coastal District Council (SCDC). Our Planning sub-committee do a wonderful job in examining planning applications and recommending approval or rejection. We obviously don't expect all, or even the majority, of our recommendations to be followed but occasionally decisions are made at SCDC which seem so bizarre and perverse that we feel obliged to take the matter further and seek some kind of explanation from those who made the decision (often just one individual, middle ranking, Planning Officer).

If, having read the article and seeing the accompanying photo, you agree with us that the approval of this development went against all planning guidelines and all aesthetic criteria, please contact your local councillors and ask them to explain why it went ahead.

Roger Baker

Calendar - January - December 2017

(All Speaker Evenings are at 7.30pm at The Salvation Army Church, Cobbold Road.)

January

Friday 6 Felixstowe Walkers - Landguard - meet at 10.30am at the Viewpoint car park - 2½ miles - Grade 3.

Thursday 19 Felixstowe Walkers - Trimley St Martin - meet at 10.30am outside Goslings' Garden Café - 2½ miles - Grade 3.

Tuesday 24 Speaker Evening - Military Bands - Richard Harvey - Director of Music at The Royal Hospital School

February

Wednesday 1 Felixstowe Walkers - Old Felixstowe - meet at 10.30am at Brackenbury Sports Centre - 2½ miles - Grade 2

Tuesday 14 Felixstowe Walkers - Daisy's Walk - meet at 11am at Butley Corner car park (off the B1084 Orford Road) - 2½ miles - Grade 3

Friday 24 - The Society's Quiz Night - see insert for further details

Monday 27 Felixstowe Walkers - Fairtrade Walk - meet at 10.30am at St Mary's Church, Walton - 2½ miles - Grade 2

Tuesday 28 Speaker Evening - Sister Marian - Port Chaplain at Felixstowe

March

Friday 10 Felixstowe Walkers - Suffolk Food Hall - meet at 10.30am at Suffolk Food Hall (off Wherstead Road) - 2½ miles - Grade 3

Thursday 16 - Visit to the Port - see insert for further details

Thursday 23 Felixstowe Walkers - The Grove - meet at 10.30am at The Grove car park - 2½ miles - Grade 3

Tuesday 28 Speaker Evening - Newspaper Life - Nigel Pickover, Editor of Eastern Daily Press

Thursday 30 Beach Clean - meet at 9.30am at the shelter nearest Seagull Cottage

April

Wednesday 5 Felixstowe Walkers - Pin Mill - meet at 11am at Pin Mill car park - 2¼ miles - Grade 3

Monday 10 - The Society's Annual Dinner at The Brook Hotel - see insert

Tuesday 18 Felixstowe Walkers - Bucklesham - meet at 11am at the Bucklesham Village Hall car park - 2½ miles - Grade 3

Sunday 30 Phil's Sunday Walks - The Tomline Walk - meet outside Martello P in Martello Park at 2.30pm

May

Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 17,18,19 - Three day trip to Norfolk- see insert

Sunday 21 Phil's Sunday Walks -The Seafront Gardens Perimeter Walk - meet outside the Town Hall at 2.30pm

Tuesday 23 AGM and Speaker Evening - Royal Yacht Britannia - Derek Peters

June

A Saturday Midsummer event at The Hut - date to be advised in May's newsletter

Wednesday 21 Beach Clean - meet at 9.30am at the shelter nearest Seagull Cottage

Sunday 25 Phil's Sunday Walks - The Cobbold Walk - meet in the car park of Brackenbury Sports Centre at 2.30pm

July

Sunday 30 Phil's Sunday Walks - Felixstowe in World War One - meet outside Harvest House at 2.30pm

Monday 31 World War 1 Commemorative Lecture - 'Passchendale and the Double VC - Noel Chavasse' at St Andrew's Church, 7pm

August

Sunday 6 Phil's Sunday Walks - Edwardian Felixstowe - meet outside the Town Station opposite The Orwell Hotel at 2.30pm

September

Saturday 16 Beach Clean - meet at 9.30am at the shelter nearest Seagull Cottage

Sunday 17 Phil's Sunday Walks - The Walton Walk - meet outside St Mary's Church, Walton at 2.30pm

Tuesday 26 Speaker Evening - Suffolk Workhouses - Richard Standing

October

Sunday 15 Phil's Sunday Walks - The new graveyard tour - meet at St Peter and St Paul's lych gate at 2.30pm

Tuesday 24 Speaker Evening - Radio Caroline - Brian Nicholls

November

Tuesday 28 Speaker Evening - Suffolk Sandlings - Richard Moore

December

Thursday 7 Beach Clean - meet at 9.30am at the shelter nearest Seagull Cottage

Gradings for walks: Grade 1 - easy, flat surfaces. **Grade 2** - mostly on the level, can be muddy in places. **Grade 3** - generally good surfaces, some moderate slopes, mud in wet weather. **Grade 4** - more challenging, may include steeper slopes, rough ground, mud in wet weather.

Society News

Donations

The Society is very grateful to Mrs Moore and Mrs Meredith for their very kind donations in recognition of the work of The Society.

Heritage Open Days 2016

Thank you to the small band of Society Members who volunteered as stewards at this event in September. The Society would also like to thank all those members who organised the openings of various properties and public buildings. It was heartening to receive offers of help, for the next event in 2018, from a number of members who attended this year's events for the first time.

The Bath Road Cobbles

In the May Newsletter, one of our members had spotted some poor repairs to the cobbles outside the Felixstowe Tennis Club on Bath Road. Our Chairman followed up this matter and some alterations have been made - for the better? You judge!



May 2016



November 2016

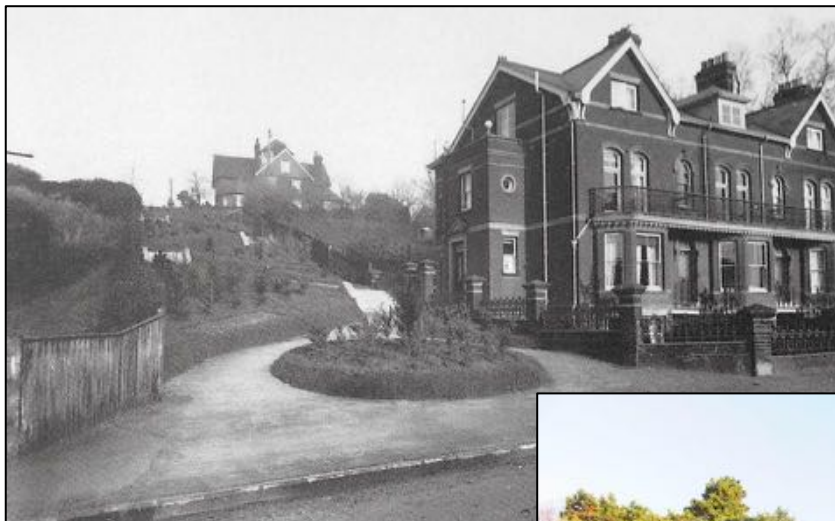
The Society's Archive

The Society would like to thank Roy Gray for his kind donation of a 1902 map of Felixstowe and a copy of the report of the official opening of The Bartlet Convalescent Home in May 1926.

A few members have volunteered to help with the archive but we need to find a permanent home for this very interesting collection of photos and documents. Ideally somewhere at a constant moderate temperature and a site not prone to damp. It also needs to be a location where all archive volunteers can have access. If anyone can offer this type of location, please contact the Editor.

Snow Hill

Our chairman was contacted about the steps which connect Lincoln Terrace with Undercliff Road West. Snow Hill, so local history books tell us, commemorates William Snow who came to a sad end in the Q Tower. These steps have been neglected in the past but a member of the Town Council has informed our Chairman that there are plans to renovate this area in the future.



Snow Hill Steps in 1904. The building, on the right of the picture, was demolished to be replaced by a modern block of flats.

A view in November 2016.

Has the architecture changed for the better?



The Big Beach Clean – September 17

Keith and Elizabeth Horn reported that 25 volunteers from The Felixstowe Society, The Beach Hut and Chalet Owners and members of the public collected 10 bags, of litter, weighing 40kgs, from between Cobbold's Point and The Spa. A large piece of builder's board, weighing 17kgs, was found. As usual, 100 metres of beach alongside The Spa was surveyed producing 1 kg of rubbish including a high percentage of plastic pieces. Again, this year, Adnams sponsored this event taking

place along the coastline in our area and all our collectors were given an Adnams voucher which was greatly appreciated.

Many thanks to Keith and Elizabeth Horn for their excellent organisation of the event.

The changes at W H Smith's

Another issue which has vexed a number of The Society's members is the re-location of the Post Office from its purpose built site, next door to Underwoods, to the



back of the W H Smith store in the Hamilton Road shared space area of the town. This beautiful shop was once owned by Ernest Burt, a well known local businessman, renowned for the variety and quality of

his merchandise. The old doors are to be replaced by sliding glass doors. Is there no end to the crazy decisions made in this town!



The Society's Newsletter

The Society is looking for a new Editor of the Newsletter. If you are interested, please phone Roger Baker on 01394 282526.

The Editor would like to thank the following for their advice and support with this issue: Consultant Editor - Tony Hughes, Proof Reader Susanne Barsby, Keith and Elizabeth Horn, Alan and Pam Cooper and Alan Muchal.

The deadline for the next issue is **MARCH 27, 2017**. Contributions and ideas are always welcome.

Contact the Editor on 01394 672184 or editor@felixstowesociety.org



Barbara Reid

One of our former Chairpersons, Barbara Reid, sadly died on September 19.

Barbara joined The Society in 1983 before moving permanently to Brook Lane, Felixstowe in 1986. She volunteered to take on the post of Secretary in

that same year and made an immediate impact. The Chairperson at the time, Cynthia Park, noted in the September 1986 Newsletter that 'judging from what Barbara has accomplished in the past month, she really knows how to get things done'. Barbara also took on the role of Treasurer until a willing volunteer could be found to take on this particular job.

Although Barbara had no interest in conservation and environmental issues before joining The Society, she soon made up for lost time and became a passionate advocate of planting more trees in the town. Barbara also highlighted, to members, the amount of dog mess and litter noted around the town. She attended meetings, wrote letters and liaised with local councillors regarding issues such as the noise pollution caused by jet skis along our beachfront. Barbara was an enthusiastic supporter of The Society's walking groups and of the two publications 'The Cotman Walk' and 'Walking Around Felixstowe'. She described the printing of the latter booklet as a 'runaway success, described by Magpie Books as the hottest property in Felixstowe and a reprint had to be done almost immediately'.

When Cynthia Park retired as Chairperson in 1989, Barbara embroidered a tapestry picture of Cynthia's house as a gift to mark the significant contribution Cynthia had made to The Society and the town. It was only a matter of time before Barbara became the new Chairperson in 1990 although she was still doing some secretarial work because of a lack of volunteers. One of Barbara's priorities, evident from the Newsletters, was to increase the membership to provide a more powerful voice for The Society.

In 1994 Barbara also took on the role of Newsletter Editor and continued writing a considerable number of articles for this publication. Her writing showed a breadth and depth of knowledge of the town's historical and architectural heritage. In May 1999 a new Editor was appointed. In 2002 Barbara was one of the first five residents of the town to be given the Mayor's Award for her significant contribution to Felixstowe.

Barbara decided, in 2004, to retire as Chairperson in order to move down to Hampshire to be near her relatives. She continued to contribute articles about significant buildings in the town, to the Newsletter, after she had moved down to Fordingbridge in Hampshire.

The last words must go to this indomitable lady who led The Society with such energy and passion. 'It seems important that we should have a positive attitude in whatever we do. There is no point in just complaining, we need to try and find a way round the problem. The main aim of The Society is to make people aware of issues and the history of our town and I think The Society can be proud of the impact it has had'.



A visit to Aldeburgh and Sizewell Power Station

Wednesday September 14

A lively group of The Society members travelled to Aldeburgh and Sizewell on one of the hottest days of the year, under the benevolent eye of the organiser, Keith Horn.

We arrived mid-morning at Aldeburgh, in time to make a leisurely visit to the Lifeboat Station, where we were shown round by Adrian, one of the lifeboatmen who, through his family, has been associated with the station, all his life.

He explained the launching procedures and the training and equipment needed for a modern lifeboat. We were given the chance to go up onto the raised platform so we could view the deck and the equipment. Many questions were put to Adrian, by the members. After we had seen the tractor unit which launches the lifeboat and the store where all the clothing and safety equipment is kept, we were ready for a light lunch and a coffee in Aldeburgh.

We left for Sizewell at midday and, on arrival, we were warmly welcomed by the staff who provided a welcome cup of tea. After our paperwork, including passports, had been examined, we were all provided with safety clothing (hard hats, goggles, high visibility jackets) and we were then divided into small groups of five to tour the site. Several members decided that it would be too hot to walk round so they were shown a video of the plant operation by a very knowledgeable member of staff who was able to answer all their questions.

The tour itself took about an hour. We were able to visit the vast turbine hall to see where 3% of the UK base load electricity is produced by EDF, the operators of the site. We were all very impressed by the safety standards and the multiple back-ups of their systems. It



was very interesting to understand the intake and the pumping of 3 million litres of seawater every minute for cooling the reactor. There was quite a lot of discussion about the impending construction of Hinkley Point C nuclear power station to a new design, by EDF, over the next few years.

Having bade farewell to our hosts, we then travelled to Friday Street Farm Café for a well earned cream tea which was much enjoyed. We were all most grateful to Keith and Elizabeth Horn for their organisation and planning which went like clockwork!

Thanks to Elizabeth Horn for the photos.



The Walton Board School - Mike Ninnmey

Tuesday September 27

In his fascinating talk, Mike Ninnmey attempted to unravel the strange story of The Walton Board School which opened in 1851 and closed in 1876.

The opening of the school had been due to the support, encouragement and financial assistance of the Duke of Hamilton who was a landowner and driving force of much that happened in the Felixstowe area at that time. In 1851, Walton was much larger than Felixstowe so the school was known as the Walton-cum-Felixstowe National School.

The school was well supported by the Vicar and Churchwardens of Walton Church in line with the desire for better education of the poor, spearheaded by Queen Victoria

A two-classroom school was first built, followed by a substantial Headmaster's house in 1864, with another classroom added.

Further funding was provided by the Privy Council which specified, in some detail, what would be required in terms of space per child, size of classroom etc. Their support was in line with the national requirement for a better educated nation, needed to support a growing Empire abroad. Mike Ninnmey was uncertain why the school closed but he suspects it was due to the extremely combative nature of Colonel Tomline who bought much local land around that time. Mike promises to give us an update when he has completed more research.



High Street Walton, taken before the parade of shops had been built on the left.

The large building on the left of the picture was the site of Walton Board School.



'That Woman - Wallis Simpson'

Bev Boyce - Tuesday October 25

A packed hall heard stories of Felixstowe's most notorious resident who arrived in the town, in early October 1936, to satisfy the legal requirement for residency within the jurisdiction of the Ipswich Assizes at which her divorce hearing would be held on October 27.

Christened Bessie Wallis Warfield, Wallis soon jettisoned 'Bessie' as she thought the name was only suitable for cows. An upbringing relying on the charity of relatives probably explains Wallis's later obsession with money and status. Her first marriage to Win Spencer whom she described as the 'most fascinating aviator' was a disaster mainly due to Win's reliance on alcohol and his wife's natural inclination to flirt. There were rumours of Win's abusive and cruel behaviour towards his wife but Wallis was the one to walk out and to remarry within a year of being granted her divorce from Win.

American-born Ernest Simpson, had taken English citizenship and was a settled husband and step-father. But an initial meeting at a friend's house, followed by numerous lunches and whatever else, led to divorce for Ernest and marriage to Wallis in 1927. Dinners and parties at their London flat enabled Wallis and Ernest to make useful contacts in the upper echelons of London society which led to the couple being presented to King George V and Queen Mary at Buckingham Palace. Their son David, the Prince of Wales, was also there.....and the rest is history!

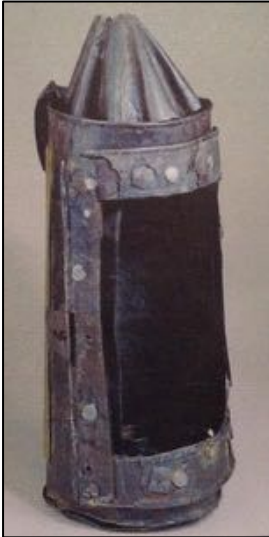
Bev Boyce focused on Wallis's stay in Felixstowe at Beach House and also, possibly at the Felix Hotel, which we now know as Harvest House. Wallis thought Felixstowe 'dreary' and 'dismal'. A particular complaint was the lack of attention she received from the residents of Felixstowe who completely ignored her when she walked on the beach or went to collect mail and newspapers in the town. Wallis also complained that the house was too small, only having six bedrooms and five reception rooms. Staying at Fort Belvedere, the country house of the Prince of Wales, who became Edward VIII in 1936, must have raised her expectations of any other house in which she had to reside.

Of course there are stories that the King flew down to Felixstowe, landed near Brackenbury Fort and drove to Beach House where he is alleged to have spent the night with Wallis even though contact between them was forbidden until after the court case. It is also alleged that the lovers had drinks at The Fludyers! As their later behaviour illustrates, since when did David and Wallis abide by rules and conventions?

Once the court case had been settled and she was granted the decree nisi, Wallis was driven straight from the court to London and a reunion with her lover, the King. As one American newspaper reported: 'King's Moll Reno'd in Wolsey's Home Town'.

The abdication of Edward VIII was a traumatic event for the 1930s and the revelation that he wanted to marry an American divorcee, previously hidden from the British public, was a world sensation. As one Society member commented, 'The only good thing about 'That Woman' is that without her, we wouldn't have our present Queen.'

A Visit to the Houses of Parliament - Friday November 4



Guy Fawkes' lantern (pictured left) was returned to Parliament on November 3.

Members of The Felixstowe Society visited Parliament on November 4.

Bonfire Night was celebrated on November 5.

Well timed, Keith and Elizabeth.

Society members were shown the death warrant for Charles I, signed by fifty politicians including Oliver Cromwell.

After the restoration of the monarchy, Charles II ordered the beheading of any survivors of the fifty.

Cromwell's body was exhumed and his head was suspended, for many years, from the ceiling of St Stephen's Hall.

Cromwell's statue pictured right.



Churchill stands defiantly by Churchill's arch at the entrance to the House of Commons.



Parts of the building were damaged by bombs in May 1941. Churchill asked that the arch be left in its dilapidated state as a memorial to all those in Britain and the Commonwealth who fought, suffered and died in World War 2.

The Throne in the House of Lords must be the most stunning aspect of the whole Houses of Parliament.



49 members are very grateful to Keith and Elizabeth Horn for arranging the day.

Thanks to Alan and Pam Cooper for this article.



The Restoration of the Seafront Gardens

The Breheny Team

Tuesday November 22

With a total budget of around 4 million provided by the Lottery Fund and Suffolk Coastal District Council, Breheny took over the contract to refurbish and reconstruct the Victorian Seafront Gardens after the previous contractors had pulled out at an early stage in the project. The full restoration, over about 15 months, has met with widespread praise; awards such as winning the regeneration category of The Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors Award for the East of England and The Royal Institute of British Architects Suffolk Craftsmanship Award for the Town Hall Shelter have resulted from Breheny's magnificent work.



With the aid of photos taken over the course of the project, Shaun Gardner and Steve Dyson illustrated the complicated civil engineering work needed to restore the cliff, stairways, paths and buildings into a safe and attractive condition. Many of the brick walls are just the facing for reinforced concrete structures behind the scenes.

Shaun described the sudden appearance of the 'sink hole' in the Town Hall Gardens caused by the subsidence of an underground attenuation tank used to collect water from the numerous springs in the cliff, many of which supply the ponds and the fountain.

Almost all the on-site work was completed by Breheny's Suffolk-based staff and Shaun drew attention to the detail of the wooden railings and the Shelter to illustrate their carpenters' skills. The gardens are now similar to their appearance in their Victorian heyday but the budget had not allowed for the water clock to be restored to its original location in the gardens.



Members were full of praise for Breheny's completion of this wonderful project.

THE FELIXSTOWE WALKERS

The Felixstowe Walkers enjoyed a further series of walks throughout the Autumn. We started off by supporting the Felixstowe Heritage Weekend in early September; a series of heritage walks around parts of Felixstowe and Trimley were organised by our walk leaders. These walks attracted a number of people whom we do not normally see on our walks so it was useful in building our profile and maybe attracting some new participants.



Our 'normal' programme started on 29 September with a walk from Stutton Church (pictured left) - a new walk for us. Unfortunately the weather was not good and we had a downpour just as we arrived, forcing us to take shelter in the church. This was a blessing in disguise as the church is delightful and well worth a visit. After that, the walk itself was superb and relatively dry. Our small band of intrepid walkers were really pleased that they made

the effort. Please note that we never cancel walks unless conditions are likely to prove dangerous. That has happened only once in our twelve year history.

A more prosaic walk was held on 12 October through Langer Park and along the Prom, finishing by walking across the newly grassed area which covers the old Yacht Pond. Our well-attended Trimley walk set off from The Mariners pub down towards the Orwell River. This is a really delightful walk close to Felixstowe with a variety of walking environments and lovely views down towards the river. It looks like the current proposals to close the footways across the rail lines will affect this route in future, but I am sure we will cope.

On 7 November we held a Fairtrade walk starting at Trinity Methodist Church. These are organised two or three times a year in conjunction with the Felixstowe Fairtrade Forum based on churches which actively support the movement. We are always made welcome at Trinity where they lay on a special long table for us and serve us Fairtrade tea, coffee and biscuits. The next Fairtrade walk will be on Monday 27 February starting at St Mary's Church, Walton. Town Mayor Jan Garfield will launch Fairtrade Fortnight prior to the walk around the Grove and Gulpher Road. Jan and her husband Jon were active walk leaders in the early days of the group and remain supporters of both Fairtrade and walking for health.

Walks continued throughout November and December with a careful eye on the weather and conditions underfoot. There were walks around Felixstowe Ferry, Woodbridge and a Christmas walk along the Prom with drinks at The Fludyers, following the walk.

We have another full programme of walks for the New Year which you can find on the calendar on pages 4 and 5. Do come and join us if you can - and if you think you might be able to help us as a walk leader, do speak to Laurence, me or one of the other walk leaders and we will explain what is involved.

Alan Muchal

The Society Members' Feature

Our Society Volunteers - Thank You



Jean Macpherson, Diane Elmes, Jean Young
Newsletter Distributors (ND)



(L) Mick Elmes - ND
Peter Bridge - Plans Committee



From left: **Bernie and Peggy Seeley - ND**

Laurence and Janet Gilbert - The Felixstowe Walkers

From left:
Elizabeth Corker
Donation of Emeny Photos
Michael and Penny Thomas





From left: **Keith Horn** - Committee, **Gill and Trevor Mason** - ND, **Elizabeth Horn** - Committee



Richard and Joy Moore - ND



From left: **Susanne Barsby**- Committee
Joan Reeve - Life Member

From left: **Monica Smith** - Plans
Committee
Meg Baker - Committee



The Society would like to thank Meg Baker for organising the event and Susanne Barsby and Diana Robinson for their help with refreshments

The Enhancement of the Environment Awards 2016

At the October Speaker Evening our Chairman Roger Baker presented two awards, on behalf of The Society, to recognise the quality of design and the enhancement of the surrounding area by the developments of The Feathers in Walton and the new build in Leopold Road.



Roger Baker with representatives of Roseberry Property Development Company Ltd and AMF Builders

A sympathetic conversion into two houses of the former Feathers public house.



Roger Baker with the team from James Francis Homes Ltd

The two new apartment complexes blend sympathetically with the other buildings in the area.



Award for the Enhancement of the Environment 2017

The Executive Committee of The Felixstowe Society will be considering suggestions for this Award during March 2017. **This should be for developments completed during 2016.** Please contact Roger Baker on 01394 282526 to nominate a development which meets the criteria.

To remind you, the aims of the scheme are as follows:

- ◆ To recognise developments which have made a positive and beneficial contribution to the town (particularly important).
- ◆ To stimulate local interest in the quality of development in the town.
- ◆ To encourage such developments in the future.

Both landscaping and architectural schemes can be nominated. The list below suggests some questions which it might be helpful to ask when considering nominations for the Award:

- *Is the scheme in character with the surroundings? This may depend upon the area having a distinct identity. It need not necessarily be in character if it is to serve as a focal point or terminates an important view.*
- *Is the scheme in scale? (Scale is not size. It is the relationship of one building to another. Contrast can be positive and interesting, or negative and detract from the area.)*
- *For restoration: Is the scheme an improvement on the original building or setting, or is it a restoration of the original? Does it add or detract from the designers' intentions?*
- *Is the scheme well detailed? Have sympathetic materials been used? Has colour been applied imaginatively? Have any aspects such as signs, down - pipes, paving, been considered only as an after - thought? Have too many, or too few, materials been used and are these pleasing to the eye in adding up to a unified whole?*
- *Is the quality of workmanship and the standard of finish of good quality? If it is an older scheme, has it stood the test of time? Is maintenance suffering?*
- *Does the scheme create an impact? Would it be good to have similar schemes elsewhere? Is it an example of good practice?*

Not all of these considerations will come into play in all circumstances, but the last two points will always be important.

Bala Cottage Development at Felixstowe Ferry

Although some of our members might possibly find the development of Bala Cottage, at Felixstowe Ferry, an enhancement of what is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), the reaction of the majority of Felixstowe residents when they see it is to say, 'How on earth was planning permission ever given for that huge eyesore?'

Even a local councillor has told us that, 'It is beyond me why those at the Planning meeting did not reject this application.'

I have to say that there is growing disquiet among Felixstowe residents, and in other towns, about the way Philip Ridley, Head of Planning Services at SCDC, and his team have apparently become a law unto themselves and use delegated authority to allow individual unelected staff to make personal decisions which can blight whole communities for generations. Not to put too fine a point on it, democratic control of the planning function at SCDC seems to have been abandoned.

In order to find answers to the questions that are being asked, I wrote the following letter to Philip Ridley, asking for a meeting to give his explanation to The Felixstowe Society. You will not be entirely surprised to learn that, at the time of writing, I have had no reply whatsoever, not even an acknowledgement of receipt. I do hope he doesn't complain of being misrepresented if he eventually sees this article.

If you agree with the points I raise in this letter, please contact your Town and District Councillors to ask them to explain how such decisions are allowed to circumvent the democratic process and are left to individual officers to decide, often by ignoring the guidelines which they should be obliged to follow.

Roger Baker

24 October 2016

Dear Mr Ridley,

Bala Cottage (The Lookout), Felixstowe Ferry, Suffolk

There have been widespread adverse comments by members of The Felixstowe Society, and by others who live in the town and beyond, about the final design of the alterations to Bala Cottage (Planning Application DC/14/0848).

The monolithic appearance of the building which presents a virtually blank façade as The Ferry is approached, is out of keeping with The Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. In case you haven't see the building yourself, here's a photo of it taken as you approach Felixstowe Ferry. In this letter I would like to make two observations - one is specific to Bala Cottage and the other is a wider issue of the message that approval of developments of this kind is sending to future owners, developers and builders.



1) Bala Cottage

Our main concern is that the building, as it finally materialised, seems to contravene the long-established criteria against which councils are required to judge the acceptability of new developments. From our research of the relevant regulations (DM21 and SPG16) it appears that

this development ignores criteria such as the following which planning authorities such as yours are obliged to take into account, regardless of whether you receive objections from the general public at the time of submission or not:

- **‘Proposals should relate well to the scale and character of their surroundings particularly in terms of their siting, height, massing and form’**
- **‘Alterations and extensions to existing buildings should normally respect the plan form, period, style, architectural characteristics and, where appropriate, the type and standard of detailing and finishes of the original building’**
- **In order for extensions to existing buildings to be acceptable, particularly...on those located in sensitive locations, the extension shall be visually ‘recessive’ and its size and design shall be such that the original building will remain the more dominant feature on the site’**
- **‘It should not overlook and impinge on the amenities of other buildings’.**

In our view, there is no doubt that this building contravenes all these important criteria and has a distinctly adverse impact on the view of the village particularly as it is approached from Felixstowe (see the photo). It gives the appearance of a factory or storage building. The final design has significant differences to the original drawings which showed a less blank appearance to the back of the building and less enclosure of the original front (sea) side but, even so, it was an overlarge expansion of a house that dwarfs the adjacent Golf View and Deben View bungalows which are visible in the photo.

The same comments can be made about the Harbourmaster’s Lookout at the Ferry but let’s leave that to one side for the moment.

We know that central government has eased planning regulations in order to place a higher priority on getting housing built to meet the national shortage but surely this does not mean that all planning criteria, such as those quoted above, can be completely set aside. After all, the modifications to Bala Cottage have not increased the housing stock at all – it accommodates the same number of people and it is simply a more luxurious place for them to live.

2) Wider Consequences

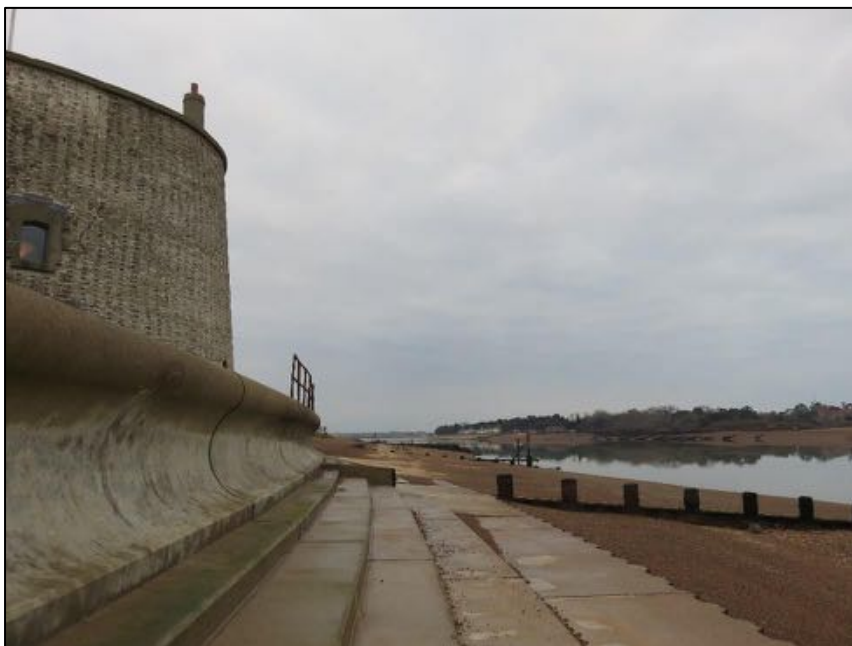
Your approval of the changes to Bala Cottage and similar approvals of unsuitable developments have the cumulative effect of sending a clear message to owners, developers and builders that, in future, they can rely on eventually getting approval for any kind of development they care to submit and resubmit since the chances of rejection have now become close to zero. It follows, inevitably, that the nature and character of the whole SCDC area will be eroded at an increasing rate. This will mean that, whilst the planning bureaucracy and procedures will remain in place, their safeguarding functions will have been abandoned in practice.

One further point - we shall be alerting our local Town and District Councillors to the fact that the increasing popular opposition to these unsuitable, and very visible, developments is being blamed on them. Rightly or wrongly, their standing in the community will decline when it is seen that their views and recommendations, and those of their constituents, are simply disregarded often by just one unelected individual working in your department.

In response to our members' feedback on this issue, we have decided to include an article about our concerns in our next Newsletter (circulation - over 600) which will be published in early January. My Committee has asked that David Crawford, Head of our Plans Review Group, and I should request a meeting with you to hear your side of the argument and thereby ensure that the article is accurate and unbiased. I would therefore be grateful if you would suggest a date and time for such a meeting.

Yours sincerely,

Roger Baker - Chairman



This photo was not part of Roger's letter. This was taken on an Autumn walk along the beach towards The Ferry - Ed.

The Pier



For many long-time residents of Felixstowe, the work to regenerate the Pier building hasn't come soon enough. At the time of writing, in late November, the building has been demolished quite rapidly and work has started on creating the approach to the new building which, the developers state, will be larger than the one they have just demolished.

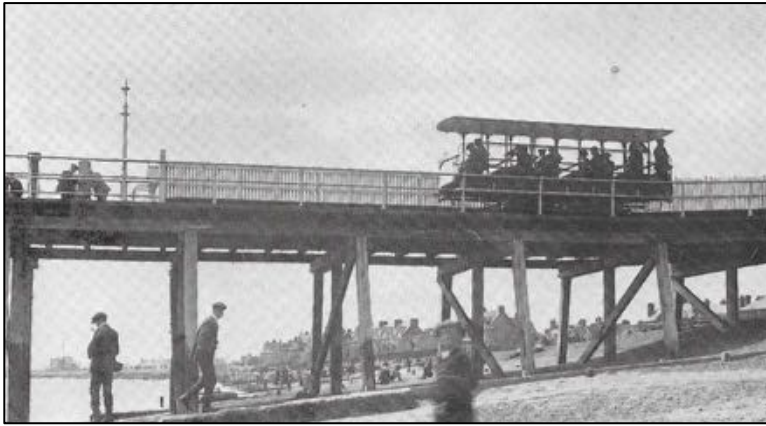
This building will contain 'a café/bar with alfresco dining, bowling, a vibrant family entertainment centre (does that mean slot machines??) and food kiosks'. There will be 'a boardwalk for promenading around the building, over the beach and sea'.



The debate about the attraction and viability of piers has been in the news in recent times and there is even a National Piers Society which features both international and national piers including 13 in East Anglia.



In 1905 the Coast Development Corporation opened Felixstowe's pier to enable a connection with its steamer services between London and resorts on the east coast. Various figures have been published concerning the length of our pier, possibly at least 903 yards long.



An electric tramway, only used in the summer months, was provided to carry passengers along the length of the pier as shown in the photo on the left. One of our local historians believes that, in the early 1900s, the tram fare was a penny each way and that a full year's travel cost would be 10s 6d.

The original trams were scrapped in the early 1930s. Fishing was also allowed on the pier for an annual sum of 10s 6d, 1s 6d a week or a daily ticket of 6d.

With the threat of invasion in the Second World War, the pier was partially blown up to prevent the Germans from landing! On the right, a picture from 1946 shows the damage.



One of our Plans Committee members, Peter Bridge, has written a thoughtful commentary on the state of our pier and he has given permission for extracts to be published here.

'I am well aware that piers were built to facilitate the loading and unloading of deep-water vessels where there was no convenient deep-water harbour; particularly the disembarkation and embarkation of passengers at places where seaside or lakeside holiday resorts become established. This passenger traffic has ceased at most seaside towns and resorts in the UK and abroad where the motor car now provides easy access and speedy local sightseeing. Thus it might appear that most piers at holiday resorts are redundant anachronisms.

I put it to you that this is definitely not the case!

I have been privileged to live in other countries. Like the UK, many waterside towns have waterfront piers – and there is one universal social custom. People like to walk on the pier, out over the water! People include such a walk during any free or holiday time they have. It seems to be basic human nature. The pier is a magnet. People will park, if needs be, at some distance and then walk along the streets or promenade to reach the pier.

Shrewd businesses set up on the pier. These days, access to a pier is usually free. A secondary attraction of piers is for fishing. Or at least young and old dangling lines over the end. Such recreation seems to be self-regulating but can be logically zoned or granted by permit.

The pier, out over the water, is the most significant attraction that Felixstowe has.

A published Southwold survey rates Southwold Pier as the number one attraction in that town. The estimated footfall is over 750,000 visitors per annum (Bury Free Press website 28 February 2013: re Gough Hotels).



The delineated Felixstowe Conservation Area includes all of the projecting sea pier. Felixstowe Pier is particularly well situated as an attraction for visitors and residents alike. It is located centrally along the active promenade and businesses in the apex of the bay, making it highly visible. The sea is quite shallow which eases maintenance and moderates wave forces. Yet the sea is present under the pier at all

states of the tide, unlike many west and northwest English piers. It is safely accessible in most weather conditions throughout the year. Major businesses and tourism hotels, such as The Brook and The Premier Inn are within a very short walk - ideal relief after a business day.

In the Ipswich Star website article by Richard Cornwell, dated 7 August 2015, Mr Stan Threadwell is quoted as saying there would still be a 250 yard jetty at the rear of the entertainment complex - no mention of the sea pier. I hope that Mr Threadwell's jetty is refurbished to become the number one attraction in Felixstowe.'

Below is the information board, setting out the vision of the developers.

The project has taken a huge amount of planning over the past few years and it will provide a new landmark and attraction for the resort.

Work has now started on the multi-million pound new pier. Demolition of the current building will be the first stage in the project.

The prom will be raised to link the pier bight area to the new pier entrance.

The new pier building will be larger than the current one and will include a boardwalk for promenading around the building over the beach and sea. There will be a cafe/bar with alfresco dining, bowling, a vibrant family entertainment centre and food kiosks to include the perennial seaside favourites of fish & chips and ice cream.

The existing part of the jetty that is closed to the public will remain so, other than the small section that can still be used for crabbing and refreshments from the Boardwalk Kiosk.

Something for everyone!

We look forward to giving you a warm welcome in early August 2017.



Peter's strong advocacy of a 'proper' pier must surely strike a chord with many readers.

This view, taken in late November, is a forlorn picture of a pier adrift from the rest of the town. We have to hope that the developers will provide a stunning attraction for Felixstowe but - there will be no chance of ever walking down that pier again.

The Yacht Pond

Another heritage landmark in the town has disappeared, to become a car park and a grassed events area. The Yacht Pond and the surrounding area had become derelict and unloved.



The Model Yacht Pond was opened in July 1910. It became a popular venue for formal race meetings of yachts sailed by serious enthusiasts and smaller scale 'fun' boats belonging to children.



In the 1950s, it is evident from the photo above, that concrete walkways have been provided around the pond and it appears to be a larger facility than earlier in the century. The results of the yacht races were published in the weekly Felixstowe Times. Water Sports, as part of the Carnival, were held at the pond and paddle boats were provided as entertainment for summer visitors.



This photo, taken in December 2013, shows the pond filled with water from the tidal surge which damaged parts of the Prom.

Only birds used this 'new' facility at that time. The decline of interest in model yacht racing and the attractions of modern seaside entertainments led to this area of the seafront being neglected and run down.



The new grassed area which can be used for events. The old go-karting area which had been created from part of the original boating lake, was also demolished.

An improvement on a forlorn area of the seafront.

Planning Application - July to October 2016

Applications recently approved by SCDC

The Penthouse, 6, Kiligarth Court, Wolsey Gardens: Replace double glazed inward opening patio doors with UPVC. These alterations will have little effect on the Conservation Area.

Maynell House and Foxgrove Residential Homes, High Road East: Two storey extension and single storey glazed extension (Renewal of C/13/0474). This proposal has little adverse effect on the Listed Building and makes a positive contribution to the link between the two properties.

Zeeweg, Martello Lane: Proposed dormer window with cladding. These alterations will have little effect on the Conservation Area.

21, Constable Road: Change of use to make a thirteenth bedsit and separate kitchen. These alterations will have little effect on the Conservation Area.

77, Undercliff Road West: Change of use and change of hours. These alterations will have little effect on the Conservation Area.

Part rear garden, 10, Crescent Road: Construct one two storey house with two off street parking spaces and walled front garden. Create one off street parking space for host dwelling. The Society has no objection to a house on this site. However, we consider the character and appearance of the proposed new house to be uninspiring. It will detract from the street scene and it is unsympathetic to the established character of this area.

135, Undercliff Road West: Two storey rear extension. These alterations will have little effect on the Conservation Area.

64, Hamilton Road: One non-illuminated sign and one non-illuminated double sided projecting sign. These alterations will have little effect on the Conservation Area.

27, Beach Station Road: Construct maisonette above single storey shop. This design is sympathetic to, and would improve, the street scene. The Society has no objection this proposal.

Friarscroft, Marcus Road: New dwelling. The Society objects to this proposal as it would lead to a cramped form of development out of character with the form of existing residential properties in the area.

Recent applications awaiting a decision

4, Northcliffe Court: Extensions and remodelling, including amended entrance etc. These alterations will have little effect on the Conservation Area.

Flat 1, 32, Leopold Road: Replace front elevation bay windows (ground floor) with UPVC165. These necessary alterations will have little effect on the Conservation Area.

9, Sea Road: Convert twenty bedroom nursing home to seven flats. We believe that this proposal will have little effect on the Conservation Area.

Applications previously reported - approved by SCDC

Meri Rauha, 1, High Beach: Alterations and extensions to provide five apartment flats.

105, Undercliff Road West: Erect oak and brick veranda with glazed roof to the rear elevation.

17A, Beatrice Avenue: New dwelling in garden. The proposed design of the house is sympathetic to the street scene. However, The Society objects to the siting of the dwelling.

37, Quilter Road: Proposed rear extension with single storey extension.

Applications refused by SCDC

3, Bristol House, Sea Road: Hand rail/Safety rail around existing flat roof. These alterations will have little effect on the Conservation Area.

89, Gosford Way: Change of use to commercial premises. The Society objects to this proposal for the reasons below:-

- The proposal would convert urgently needed affordable housing into commercial premises.
- The subject house sits within a terrace of affordable homes.
- The terrace of houses lies within a modern estate specifically comprising affordable dwellings for young families and the elderly. The estate includes a recreation ground and a vibrant community centre.
- The proposed business at the commercial premises produces no benefit to the needs of the estate community.
- The proposal anticipates up to five staff at the premises. This does not include business visitors who will also need parking space.
- The residential streets are narrow with limited space for parking. The street must be kept clear for the public bus service.

David Crawford

The Photo Quiz - Answers for May and September



On the wall of a block of flats in Walton.



On the Prom - part of a trail of charming scenes posted near heritage locations.



Adjacent to the Library



Beach Road East



Adastral Close



Above the 1930s entrance to the school on Garrison Lane

Outside Wainwright's Estate Agents



The brick maker's fingermarks on the Harvest House wall



The sun dial near the Pier

Outside a former antiques shop in Manning Road



The Society wishes to express its appreciation for the support of Ensors as one of our Corporate Sponsors.

Photo Quiz 3

After the Heritage Open Days, you should be able to spot the locations of the following:

