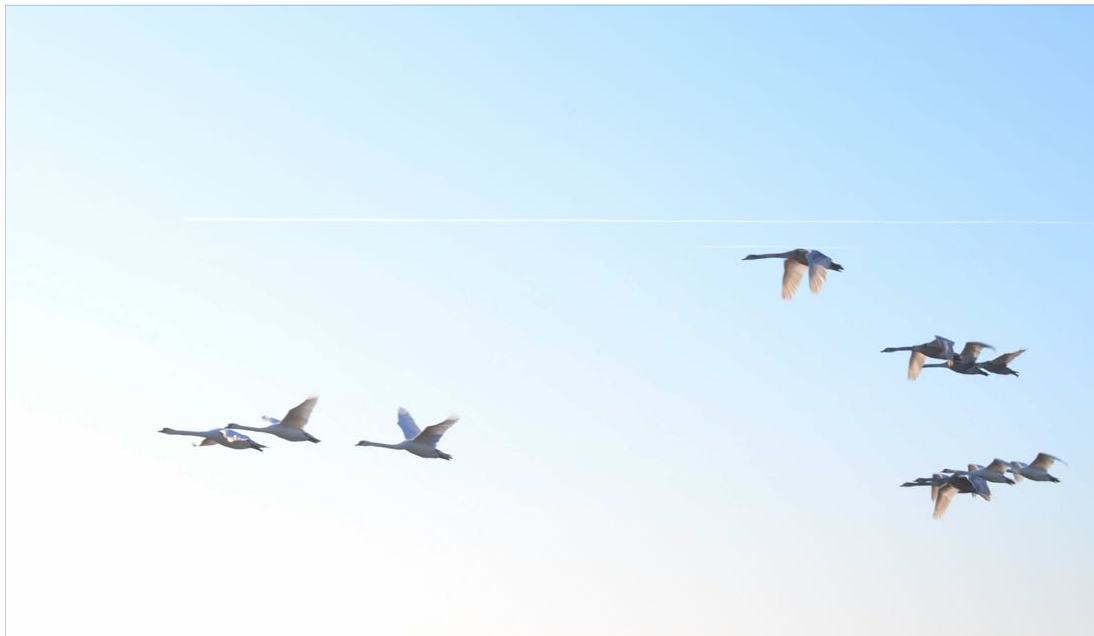


# The Felixstowe Society

# NEWSLETTER

Issue No. 117

January 2018



**HAPPY NEW YEAR**



Registered Charity No. 277442

**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 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 photograph taken by Glynne Blackall.  
Swans over Felixstowe Ferry. November 2017*

## **Contents**

<b>3</b>	<b>Notes from the Chairman</b>
<b>4-6</b>	<b>Calendar 2018</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Felixstowe Walkers</b>
<b>8-10</b>	<b>A Day Out in Harwich</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Felixstowe Conservative Club</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>Tour of Felixstowe Docks</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>Enhancement of the Environment</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>Roger and Meg Baker</b>
<b>15-18</b>	<b>Tribute to Phil Hadwen</b>
<b>19</b>	<b>Felixstowe Society Plaques</b>
<b>20-21</b>	<b>Speaker's Corner - Richard Holland</b>
<b>22-26</b>	<b>Planning Applications</b>
<b>26</b>	<b>Radio Caroline Plaque unveiled</b>
<b>27</b>	<b>Speaker's Corner - Memories of Radio Caroline</b>
<b>28-29</b>	<b>Pill Box, Ferry Road</b>
<b>30</b>	<b>Felixstowe Beach Hut and Chalet Association</b>
<b>31</b>	<b>Walton Roman Fort</b>

### **Contacts :**

**Jan Garfield – Chairman - 01394 210887**

**Hilary Eaton - Treasurer - 01394 549321**

## Notes from the Chairman

As I write this the evening is drawing in and the wind is howling, winter is here! It is Remembrance Day, and we spent the morning at St John's Church followed by the wreath laying and two minutes silence at the War Memorial. The Church was packed, as was the Sea Front and Town Hall Gardens, a wonderful sight to see, and really heart-warming. This afternoon, just as the rain started, another church full of people gathered, this time in SS Peter & Paul, We were all there to dedicate a beautiful bench to the memory of our beloved Phil Hadwen. This was a joint venture between the Church and The Felixstowe Society in Phil's memory. We were honoured by the presence of the Mayor and Mayoress. Most importantly Gill Hadwen, Phil's widow was there with most of the Hadwen clan. It is two years to the day that Phil died, so it was a fitting tribute.

Well I have now been Chairman for just under two months and have chaired two committee meetings. I believe that I am settling in OK and must thank my fellow committee members for their co-operation with the 'unknown quantity' that they had in their midst. I must single out my two Vice Chairmen, Keith Horn and Roy Gray for their invaluable support. We have an excellent committee BUT WE STILL NEED A SECRETARY. If anyone is interested please contact me.

Since the AGM we have had two excellent Speaker Evenings, so thanks to the speakers and to Roy Gray for arranging them. We also had a very good talk by Bev Boyce on the battle of Passchendaele and the double Victoria Cross winner, Noel Chevasse. Also two beach cleans, with another coming up in December.

Last month four members of the Committee met with ten members of the Harwich Society when we were all invited to look around Martello Tower U at the Ferry. How many times have I walked past there and wondered what it looked like inside!! Well, thanks to Elizabeth and Richard Setchin, I found out. No curved furniture!! A building that has been very sympathetically transformed into a wonderful home. Incredible what can be done within the constraints of a Grade 2 listed building/ancient monument status

The Felixstowe Walkers seem to go from strength to strength and I am pleased that gives another 'offer' from The Society. Also pleased that 'Phil's Walks' are still carrying on.

I am very anxious to maintain our ties with projects around Felixstowe and, to that end, am meeting with Bob Stoner and Alan Muchal at the beginning of December to see how we can help in any way with Gulpher Pond and The Grove. Both special places in Felixstowe and both maintained by a small group of volunteers. The FS has always been involved in the past, and I hope will be again. Watch this space. Talking about projects, you will all be pleased to hear that the 'Variation of Conditions' on Bala Cottage which was recommended for refusal by the Town Council is being referred to the Planning Committee at SCDC and will NOT be decided by the officers.

Closing thought – our 40th anniversary is next year, so we need a really big project. Any ideas?

Hope you enjoy this Newsletter, the first under the auspices of Honor Dines.

Have a wonderful Christmas

Regards

Jan Garfield

## Calendar January – May 2018

*All Speaker Evenings are at 7.30 pm at the Salvation Army Church, Cobbold Road*

### January

#### Wednesday 10

Felixstowe Walkers - Old Felixstowe

Meet at 10.30 am at Brackenbury Sports Centre. Distance 2 miles. **Grade 2**

#### Tuesday 23

Felixstowe Walkers - Felixstowe Ferry - A walk along the sea wall

Meet at 10.30 am outside St Nicholas Church. Distance 2½ miles. **Grade 2**

#### Tuesday 23

Speaker Evening - Further Stories of My Life in Athletics - Bill Tancred

\* \* \* \* \*

### February

#### Monday 5

Felixstowe Walkers - Langer Park - A walk through Langer Park, returning via the Prom.

Meet at 10.30 am outside The Leisure Centre. Distance 2½ miles. **Grade 1**

#### Friday 16

Felixstowe Walkers - Trimley St Mary - A walk towards the marshes.

Meet at 11.00 am outside The Three Mariners Public House. Distance 2½ miles. **Grade 3**

#### Friday 23 February

**Felixstowe Society Quiz - see blue insert for details.**

#### Monday 26

Felixstowe Walkers - Fairtrade Walk - A stroll through the seafront gardens finishing with a cup of Fairtrade coffee.

Meet at 10.30 am outside The Spa Pavillion. Distance 2½ miles. **Grade 2**

#### Tuesday 27

Speaker Evening - Bus Travel in Suffolk - Pip Wright

\* \* \* \* \*

### March

#### Wednesday 14

Felixstowe Walkers - Woodbridge Walk along the river Deben.

Meet at 10.30 am outside the Deben Pool. Distance 2½ miles. **Grade 2**

#### Wednesday 21

BEACH CLEAN

Tuesday 27

Felixstowe Walkers - The Grove - A spring walk through Felixstowe's only woodland.  
Meet at 10.30 am at The Grove car park. Distance 2½ miles. **Grade 3**

Tuesday 27

Speaker Evening - Coastwatch - Julian Milsom

\* \* \* \* \*

**April**

Monday 9

Felixstowe Walkers - The Promenade - A walk through the sea front gardens and along the promenade.  
Meet at 10.30 am opposite the Fludyers Hotel. Distance 2½ miles. **Grade 1**

Monday 16

**Felixstowe Society Annual Dinner - see pink insert for details**

Friday 20

Felixstowe Walkers - Newbourne Springs - A Walk through the nature reserve  
Meet at 11.00 am in the car park. Distance 2½ miles. **Grade 3**

\* \* \* \* \*

**May**

Thursday 3

Felixstowe Walkers - Trimley St Martin - A walk through the countryside.  
Park on the grass near the road at Goslings Farm Shop.  
Meet at 10.30 outside the Garden Café. Distance 2½ miles. **Grade 3**

Thursday 17 - Sunday 2018

**Three night stay in Derby and more**

Tuesday 22

**AGM and Speaker Evening -  
40 Years and Counting . . . The Society's Contribution to the Heritage and  
Development of Felixstowe - Bev Boyce**

\* \* \* \* \*

**June**

Thursday 14

BEACH CLEAN

Tuesday 19 June

**Day Visit to HMS Ganges, Shotley and Royal Hospital School, Holbrook  
See green insert for details.**

\* \* \* \* \*

## September

[Saturday 15](#)

BEACH CLEAN

[Tuesday 25](#)

Speaker Evening - [Angel Roofs in East Anglia](#) - Michael Rimmer

\* \* \* \* \*

## October

[Tuesday 23](#)

Speaker Evening - [A Local Author](#) - Ruth Dugdale

\* \* \* \* \*

## November

[Monday 12](#)

**The Felixstowe Society WW1 Commemorative Talks 2014-2018.  
The final talk in this series will take place at 7pm at St Andrew's Church.**

[Tuesday 27](#)

Speaker Evening - [Oceangoing Yachting](#) - Bridget Keevil

\* \* \* \* \*

## December

[Wednesday 12](#)

BEACH CLEAN

\* \* \* \* \*

\* **[BEACH CLEAN](#)**

**Meet at the shelter on the promenade near to The Bartlet. 9.30 am start.**

\* \* \* \* \*

\* **[FELIXSTOWE WALKERS](#) - please note that the distances quoted are the maximum and we can accommodate shorter walks where required.**

### **Walking Grading System :**

**Grade 1** - easy flat good surfaces

**Grade 2** - mostly on the level but can be muddy in places

**Grade 3** - generally good surfaces but some moderate slopes and mud in wet weather

**Grade 4** - more challenging - may include steeper slopes, rough ground and mud in wet weather.

The Felixstowe Walkers are part of The Felixstowe Society and regular walkers will be expected to become members of The Society. Annual membership is £7, or £10 for two adults at the same address. For further details of membership send a SAE to Hilary Eaton, Treasurer, 102C Queens Road, Felixstowe, IP11 7PG.

Copies of the programme can be obtained from the library or email [felixstowewalkers@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:felixstowewalkers@hotmail.co.uk).

## **Felixstowe Walkers**

Felixstowe Walkers enjoyed a further series of walks throughout the autumn. We started off on 4 September with a walk starting at M&S at Martlesham Heath. This is a lovely walk across to Martlesham Church, with a view over to Martlesham Creek, and returning across field and through deciduous woodland. M&S Café is then a comfortable place to enjoy a cup of their Fairtrade tea or coffee and have a chat. Our walks, whenever possible, start and end at a café or pub as we view the walks as a social occasion as well as exercise and it is nice to get to know fellow walkers a bit better. If you haven't done so already why not try us out? We grade our walks 1 – 4 with one being the most straightforward. They are usually about two miles long, or just over, and last no more than an hour.

Another popular walk from a local café, in mid September, was the Trimley St Martin walk beginning at Goslings Café, part of Goslings Farm Shop. The weather was perfect for walking and we enjoyed a bracing walk through the Trimley countryside which included a good view of Grimston Hall the home of Trimley's famous 16<sup>th</sup> Century pirate and explorer, Thomas Cavendish.

The Waldringfield walk, towards the end of September, was a stroll of delightful contrasts. Starting along the river near the Maybush Pub, the route meandered through woodland and open fields encompassing marvellous views of the countryside.

On 11 October we had a walk starting at the Suffolk Food Hall. This is a Grade 3 as there is some climbing involved but the views over the Orwell are worth it. The Food Hall is a good place to stock up on local provisions and the coffee and tea are excellent.

Closer to home Landguard Common is always a good spot for a bracing walk and we went there on 24 October. The popular Viewpoint Café is nearby. Remember many of our walks are accessible by public transport – including this one. The bus stop is only yards from where we start. Other walkers are often very happy to drop you off near your home afterwards.

On 6 November we had 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 and other institutions which actively support the movement. We are always made very welcome at Trinity where they lay on a special long table for us and serve us with Fairtrade tea, coffee and biscuits. The next Fairtrade walk will be on Monday 26 February when Fairtrade Fortnight 2018 will be launched.

Walks continued throughout November and December with a careful eye on the weather and conditions underfoot. There was a walk in Woodbridge on 17 November, one in The Grove on 30 November, a longer walk in Kesgrave on 13 December and a Christmastime walk along the prom on 28 December with drinks at the Fludyers Hotel following the walk.

We have another full programme of walks for the New Year which you can find on other pages of this Newsletter. Do come and join us if you can – and if you think you might be able to help 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*

# A DAY OUT IN HARWICH

## 20 July 2017

After an easy coach journey, 44 members arrived at the Halfpenny Pier in Harwich, named after the original entry charge, to be greeted by the Town Crier. He was magnificent in his red coat and breeches as he rang his bell, shouted 'Oyez Oyez' and formally welcomed us to Harwich before handing us over to Bernie Sadler, our 'chaperone' for the day.

Bernie told us something of the history of the town and The Harwich Society - they have 2,000 members from a population of 18,000 in Harwich and Dovercourt. And we thought we were doing well with 600 members from the 30,000 residents of Felixstowe and the Trimleys!

We were divided into three groups, each with an individual guide - all Harwich Society volunteers. We started at the Pier Hotel, built in conjunction with the arrival of the railway, subsequently the Town Hall, with splendid views over Harwich Harbour. Notable here were the sculpted busts of various monarchs included in the façade.

Our tour took us past the Mi Amigo, the former pirate radio ship in the old light vessel LV18. There was no time to visit it (that's for another day) but the next stop was the Navy Yard where 58 wooden men of war were built between 1660 and 1827.

One of only two twin Treadwheel Cranes in the world (the other is in Poland) was removed in one piece from the dockyard and relocated further east on the site of Queens Mount Battery in 1932. We were able to go inside it to see the two large (5.8m diameter) treadmill



Town Crier welcomes members to Harwich



Electric Palace Cinema



Entrance to the expensive seats!





Felixstowe cranes from the High Tower

wheels, and a rather primitive braking system, that were used to raise and lower cargo and timbers. The right weight of men had to be matched to the load to be lifted!

We were privileged to be able to go into the Electric Palace, one of Britain's oldest (1911) working cinemas complete with 'One Shilling' (5p) and 'Sixpence' (2½p) entrance doors. The cinema had not been in continuous use because of the 1953 Flood and the general decline in cinema attendance following the arrival of television into people's homes. Happily, this trend has been reversed and there is now an up-to-date programme of films and live screenings as well as films of yesteryear.



Members at Harwich Redoubt

Harwich was once walled on three sides and after visiting the site of the Old London Road gate, we were given the chance (not taken by all!) to climb the 100+ steps of the spiral staircase to the top of the High Tower. Before the days of electronic navigation, the Low and High Towers had to be lined up to find the channel into Harwich Harbour past Landguard Point. There were interesting displays in some of the rooms on the way up including one on the Kindertransport children who arrived in Harwich in 1938/9 and another on Christopher Newport, the captain of the Pilgrim Fathers' ship which sailed from Harwich to found Jamestown, Virginia in 1620. There was a magnificent panorama from the top of the tower stretching from Trimley to Walton on the Naze. We were told about a tall and portly lighthouse keeper who died in the High Tower and presented the undertakers with quite a problem on the narrow stairs as rigor mortis set in before they arrived, as well as Lighthouse Lil who used the defunct lighthouse for the oldest of professions!



The former Navy yard crane



Harwich Redoubt

Our return to the Halfpenny Pier took us past the 3 Cups Inn where Nelson and Lady Hamilton are reputed to have stayed as well as two traitors who hatched a plot there to assassinate Napoleon. Harwich once had 54 pubs/inns and is now down to 10: it had the reputation of being somewhere that you could not die of thirst! We also passed the Grade 1 Listed Guildhall where one of the groups was taken in to see the 'naïve vernacular' graffiti of sailing ships on the walls of what had once been cells. These were discovered when some panelling was removed during renovation works and are rare examples of the everyday art of their time as well as a record of how the ships were rigged etc.

As we finished our morning tour at the Pilgrim Fathers' exhibition on Halfpenny Pier, the heavens opened and we took cover wherever there was some food! Fortunately, the rain stopped just before the afternoon tour of the Harwich Redoubt. Here we had two groups led by Bernie and

John who gave us an excellent introduction to the strategic significance of the Redoubt (1808) as part of our defences against a Napoleonic invasion and how it was built. It had gun ports in 10 directions and was re-armed for WW1 and used as a searchlight tower in WW2 but had never fired a shot in anger. For the last 50 or so years, the Harwich Society has been renovating it and collecting memorabilia. Pictures showed the dereliction when they took it over. Excavating the debris from the moat (it had been used as a general dumping area) produced one of the heaviest and plumpest guns I have ever seen - very like the ones that are missing at Landguard Fort - that the Army helped to recover and put back in position. There remains much to do but the care and enthusiasm of The Harwich Society volunteers was plain to see.

Our tour concluded with the below ground rooms that were packed with memorabilia, and a very welcome cup of tea and piece of cake.

We all had a thoroughly enjoyable and informative day. Thanks are due to The Harwich Society for our guides as well as to Keith and Elizabeth Horn for their immaculate organisation. Well done to them!

*Guy Pearse*

## Felixstowe Conservative Club

The building in High Road West opposite the Fire and Police Station was built as a Conservative Club in 1913. There had been a Club for Conservative Gentlemen prior to that situated on the first floor of premises on Bank Corner opposite the Methodist Church in town.

The land in High Road West was given by the Pretyman family and when the building opened in 1913, it was open only to gentlemen and continued that way until 1964 when ladies were given 'Affiliated Membership'! Before that, ladies had only been allowed in on 'Special Occasions' eg Christmas parties, or occasional dances!!

In 1967 Ladies were granted full membership!

The leaflet illustrated was, we believe, issued prior to the 1939 /1945 war as railings shown around the building were taken down for the war effort. Note that tennis courts for hire are advertised. This is now the area of the car park and extended bowls green.

The club stayed open during the war years but beer and spirits were in short supply. The regular shortage of some of the brands of spirits caused concern and after investigation it was discovered that the steward had been selling the spirits to other pubs and clubs!!! He was immediately dismissed.

The building has not changed greatly in over 100 years except for an extension at the back of the building which houses the Bowls Club changing rooms and a Snooker/Billiards Room with three full size tables.

There is also a function room upstairs available for hire for weddings, parties, seminars etc.

Roy Gray



## **TOUR OF FELIXSTOWE DOCKS**

### **Thursday 21 September 2017**

Thanks to the good offices of Roy Gray, and his longstanding connections with the port, The Society was able to arrange two separate bus tours of the docks (with one more to follow) with Paul Davey, the Public Affairs Director, as our guide.

He explained that the land on which the docks are situated was once owned by the Pretymen family of Orwell Park who were forced to sell due to crippling death duties in the 1930s. There was a lot of dissent among the senior fellows of Trinity College Cambridge about whether the potential purchase was worth the sum of £1,200 for such poor quality land. They had to wait some time for a return, but it is now worth many millions each year in rent!

Paul went on to explain that the Port has grown considerably since the early days and is now the largest container port in the UK. It can now handle the largest EEE container ships which can hold some 10,000 large containers each (20,000 TEUs)

At any one time there are some 50,000 containers stacked on the dockside for an average of five days. The movement of containers and the planning of where they need to be is incredible, with tugs whizzing about, constantly moving them around the site.

There are now more than thirty of the huge cranes we can see from the town, each worth over £8 million. Some are now having their legs extended so that they can reach over the largest vessels being handled.

Around 30% of the containers now travel to and from the Port by rail, and an upgrade of the track is now well under way, with dual track due to be installed at Trimley shortly.

The main problem seems to be that the UK doesn't sell as many goods overseas as it imports, so the major export from Felixstowe is Suffolk Fresh Air in empty containers being returned!

If your contact details change in the course of the year,  
please inform the Membership Secretary :

[hilaryeaton53@icloud.com](mailto:hilaryeaton53@icloud.com)

01394 549321 / 07764 998213

Thank you



## **Award for the Enhancement of the Environment 2018**

The Executive Committee of The Felixstowe Society will be considering suggestions for this Award during March 2018.

**This should be for developments completed during 2017.**

**Please contact Jan Garfield on 01394 210887 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 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.



## Thank you!

On 24 October, prior to the speakers on the History of Radio Caroline, Jan Garfield, the Chair of Felixstowe Society, made a special presentation to Roger Baker the departing Chairman.

Roger served for four successful years, directing The Society in its aims and objectives and also being a stalwart in the distribution of the Newsletter.

His wife, Meg, has also served for the last four years as Minutes Secretary before stepping down. Meg was given a large bouquet for her services.

A voucher and a commemorative plaque were given to Roger, who expressed his surprise and thanks. He wished The Society all the best for the future, and reassured everyone that he was not disappearing from his role as Newsletter distributor.

Dear Jan & Committee Members

Meg and I would like to thank you and the Committee for the unexpected presentation at the last speaker's evening. We were delighted with the M&S voucher and the lovely flowers. The framed certificate is already installed on my office wall and is in front of me as I type.

As I said, there was absolutely no need for any acknowledgement of my time as Chairman: it was a pleasure to work with the Committee who are all dedicated and hard-working people and the four years in the post has enabled me to get to know many more members of the Society.

I guess that my only disappointment over the four years was the small number of our 600+ members who were willing to come forward to fill vacant Committee posts. However, I am told that all societies such as ours experience the same difficulty.

Thanks one again for the very kind words you spoke at the meeting and for the gifts.

With best wishes

Yours sincerely

Roger Baker

## DIARY DATES

### QUIZ

Friday 23  
February

Details on  
the Blue  
insert

### ANNUAL DINNER

Monday  
16 April

Details on  
the Pink  
insert

### DAY VISIT TO HMS GANGES

Tuesday  
19 June

Details on  
the Green  
insert

**PLEASE  
RENEW  
YOUR  
MEMBERSHIP  
FOR 2018**

**Thank you.**

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

*We are in desperate need of a Secretary.*

*Is this something you would consider?*

*Please contact the Chairman for details.*

## Phil's Bench

I first sat on Phil's bench in the crispness  
of Autumn,

A changing season of life where death is  
not far away,

Life was fading in the unexpected beauty  
around,

But the wind of change was gathering.

As winter heralded I sat on Phil's bench  
experiencing the cold, the frostiness and  
the winds of chill.

Snow threatened yet rarely materialised

As life experienced those bitter moments  
that death brings

With Sunshine brief and intermittent and  
lonely dark days all too numerous whilst  
missing Phil,

Spring arrived at Phil's bench,

And joy was found in the tender green  
shoots,

Promising much as life blossomed  
from learning and teaching the Phil way.

There was always hope, a God standing  
by, coming through the darkness.

So even the surrounding gravestones  
wanted discovery  
to reveal life's secrets.

In summer Phil's bench was a gathering  
point

Of yet another group of enthusiastic  
amateurs

On one of "Phil's walks"

Enchanted with the endless stories  
behind the names and inscriptions;

The nobodies becoming somebodies so  
life flourished.

Through the changing seasons clothing  
Phil's bench

You hear in the echo of the wind his  
catchphrase

"Look Up."

As the ripples spread out amongst the  
deadness,

His thread of love and future life

Was strengthened and united to bring  
to Felixstowe

A true heart for the community,

A spirit to learn from the past

And be the guardians of the heritage  
for the future.

So succeeding generations can know

That Love and to be proud of our town  
of Felixstowe.

I sat on Phil's bench dedicated to Mr  
Felixstowe himself

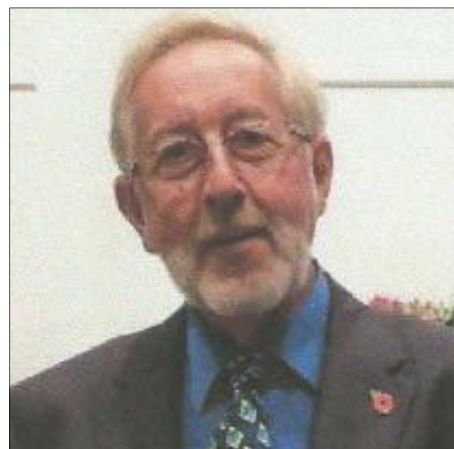
And I pondered those changing  
seasons, in our changing town

And I was inspired to pick up that  
thread of love,

That is the heart of Felixstowe and  
take it with me

to share with my community just as  
Phil had taught me.

*Jean Macpherson Oct 2017*



*Written in response to the wooden bench being donated by Felixstowe Society to  
St Peter and St Paul Old Felixstowe Parish in memory of Mr Felixstowe Phil Hadwen*

# Thank you . . .

On the afternoon of Remembrance Day, 12 November, as Felixstowe remembered those who have passed on, we also remembered one of our most valued citizens, Phil Hadwen, on the second anniversary of his death.

The occasion was to show Felixstowe's appreciation and love for Phil by dedicating a bench in the Churchyard at St Peter and Paul's church, Old Felixstowe, to his memory.

**"I miss Phil, My family miss Phil, Felixstowe misses Phil, with his fantastic knowledge of the town."**

*Nick Barber, Mayor*

Over 70 people gathered in the church, including Phil's family, to hear Mayor Nick Barber and Jan Garfield, Chair of Felixstowe Society, speak about their memories of Phil and of what he meant to the whole community of Felixstowe. Jean Macpherson, a churchwarden and friend of Phil's, read a poem dedicated to him.

Old Felixstowe Parish (St Peter and St Paul, St Andrew and St Nicholas' churches) are thrilled to have Phil remembered in this way and thank Felixstowe Society for their kind donation.

Following speeches in the church, the congregation moved outside where the rain had briefly stopped, and Rev Canon David Finch, retired clergy, blessed the bench. It is hoped that it will become a place where people can sit and think about what Phil did for Felixstowe. His brilliant mind and his enthusiasm for all things Felixstowe will be long remembered.

He was loved and respected by everyone.



PV - photo by Paul Voller

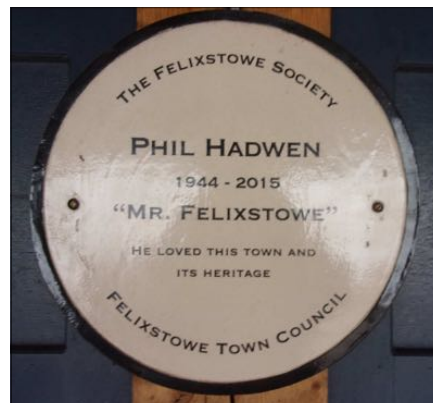
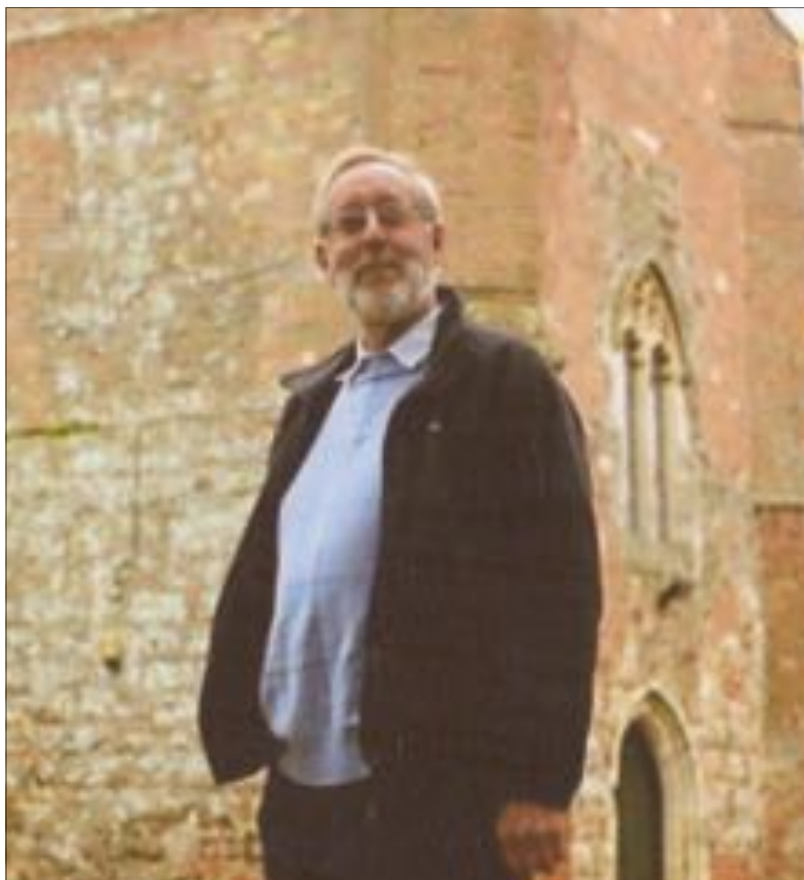


**"Phil was a man of integrity, devoted to his family and to Felixstowe."**

*Canon David*



# ... Mr Felixstowe



*Dear all,*

*A massive thank you for your presence and participation in getting Phil's Bench into the graveyard at St Peter and St Paul. Phil was a great member of the Parish family and brought many people into the graveyard and church with his history talks.*

*The presence of 70 people was proof of the love so many had for him. Old Felixstowe Parish is so thankful to Felixstowe Society for the bench as a lasting memorial to his role in the Parish. It will be a much loved place alongside Felixstowe's tribute to him at the Shelter in the Town Hall gardens.*

*Jean Macpherson,*



**"Thank you to the Felixstowe Society for making this possible. My grandfather would have loved the work he started in Felixstowe to continue. The community were lucky to have him, and so were we, his family."**

*Michael, Phil's grandson*

## **Phil's Sunday Walks**

### **Sunday 22 April**

Felixstowe's Trades and Businesses.  
Meet at 2.30 pm at the Top of Bent Hill. The walk finishes at The Triangle.



### **Sunday 20 May**

The Cobbold Walk.  
Meet at 2.30 pm outside Brackenbury Leisure Centre. The walk finishes at the same place.



### **Sunday 24 June**

The Walton Walk Part II.  
Meet outside the Half Moon Pub. The walk finishes outside 90 Grange Road.



### **Sunday 22 July**

The Tomline Walk.  
Met at 2.30 pm by Martello P in Martello Park.  
The walk finishes at the corner of Sea Road and Cavendish Road.

### **Sunday 26 August**

The Seafront Gardens Perimeter Walk.  
Meet at 2.30 pm outside the Town Hall.  
The walk finishes at the Town Hall Gardens Shelter.  
A gradual incline and steps are part of this walk.



### **Sunday 23 September**

Victorian and Edwardian Felixstowe  
Part II  
Meet at 2.30 pm outside Cliff House in Hamilton Gardens. The walk finishes in Ranelagh Car Park.



### **Sunday 18 November**

Felixstowe WW1.  
Meet at 2.30 pm at the Garrison Lane car park.  
The walk finishes at the Seafront War Memorial.



## FELIXSTOWE SOCIETY PLAQUES

The burning down of the **Bath Hotel** by two suffragettes  
*On the front wall of Cautley House*

**Thomas Cavendish**  
 Explorer  
*Trimley Memorial Hall*

**Captain Nathaniel Darrell**  
 Defender of L  
 Landguard Fort  
*Landguard Fort*

**Percy Edwards**  
 Entertainer  
*Spa Pavilion*

**Empress of Germany**  
*South Beach Mansion,  
 Pram Walk side*

**Empress of Germany's children**  
*South Cottage,  
 Hamilton Gardens*

(Broken—may have been sent to Pat Todd for repairs)

**European Gateway Disaster**  
*Wolsey Gardens Lookout*

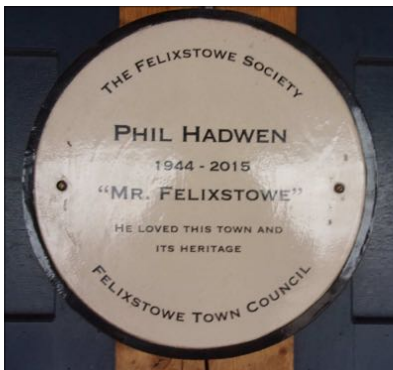
**Phil Hadwen**  
 'Mr Felixstowe'  
*Town Hall Gardens shelter*

**Harry Fensom**  
 Computers  
*Stillwater Bookshop  
 Hamilton Road*

**Wallis Simpson**  
 Duchess of Windsor  
*Entrance Gatepost,  
 Beach Place  
 Undercliff Road West*

**John Mills**  
 Actor and Film Star  
*Gainsborough Road*

**Sir Frank Whittle**  
 Inventor of the jet engine  
*Felixstowe Dock*



**T E Lawrence**  
 Lawrence of Arabia  
*Felixstowe Dock*



**Henry Williamson**  
 Author  
*Felixstowe Museum*



**Sammy Wall**  
 Local Historian  
*Walton High Street*

**Keith Wood**  
 Pioneer of Radar  
*Sailing Club Clubhouse*

## **SPEAKER'S CORNER**



## **Richard Holland Felixstowe Old People's Welfare Association**

**Tuesday 26 September 2017**

Richard Holland kindly stepped in at the last minute as speaker at Felixstowe Society's Speaker Evening held at the Salvation Army Church, Cobbold Road as the planned speaker was ill.

He gave us an intriguing oversight of the organisations in Felixstowe with which he is associated.

### **The Hut**

This seafront building, just in front of the Bartlet development, is a magnet for the elderly living within reach of Felixstowe; it is rented out for 200 days each year to Care Homes and Residential Homes who are successful in applying on the one booking day each year in January. By all accounts it is highly valued and much enjoyed by hundreds of people each year who love a day by the sea. It is fully equipped with a kitchen and everything necessary for a day out.

Originally funded by the Round Table, the building was opened in 1964 and run by the Red Cross for forty years, but when they ceased to operate, Felixstowe Old People's Welfare Association (FOPWA) was formed. The Association took over the lease and has run it with a team of volunteers ever since.

Because of its location, the building is in constant need of refurbishment but it is a facility of which the town can be really proud, as it benefits so many people each summer.

### **Felixstowe Travel Watch**

Perhaps the least well known of Richard's activities, this is a user group which was originally formed to oppose the Beeching cuts of the 1950s. It has since become very successful with over 400 members and, as a benefit to them, offers an extensive tour programme to local and national places of interest.

It has promoted Seaside Specials and worked hard to see Greater Anglia secure a longer franchise than in the past, so that new and longer trains will soon be available on all lines.

Felixstowe Travel Watch also promotes Station Adopters, whose task is to make stations more attractive, and report faults or damage. The star performer this year was Cromer, where the place apparently looks like Kew Gardens it has such a profusion of flowers!

Richard also mentioned their focus on local bus services and the changes which have taken place.



## **Felixstowe / Wesel Twinning Association**

Richard spoke about progress with the Twinning Association, which has agreed that Brexit would not be a hindrance to what they hoped to achieve. He mentioned the link between the schools and the Wesel Fire Cadets, and the exchange trips which have taken place, including a forthcoming plan for an English language group to come to Felixstowe.

A civic party from Wesel usually comes over each year for the Mayor's Ball, and this year paid a visit to the German war graves in the cemetery.

Richard explained that the Association was hoping to involve the local Chamber of Trade in discussions about possible links between interested businesses.

## **Senior Citizens' Centre**

Better known to the town as Broadway House, this is another highly valued asset which benefits the elderly of the town, particularly those who are lonely or on their own. The current building was erected in 2004 in Orwell Road. The Centre uses the ground floor; the upper floor is residential accommodation.

Open every Monday to Friday, Broadway House attracts many older people, and some even travel from Ipswich to enjoy the friendship and the facilities. Between forty and fifty volunteers help to man the Coffee Bar and to distribute the free food which is supplied weekly by local businesses. Regular tea parties are held to add to the enjoyment of many who would otherwise rarely get out.



We send Richard our grateful thanks for a very interesting and informative talk.

## **Planning Applications 21 June to 10 September 2017**

Applications recently approved by SCDC

### **Cliff House, Chevalier Road**

*Creation of new front and side balconies, alterations to fenestration, creation of roof-top terrace. Relocation of car-lift port and amendments to approved car park layout.*

The Felixstowe Society believes that the proposals will enhance the current appearance of this prominent Conservation Area building and closely restore the original architecture of the south elevation.

### **48 Princes Road**

*Erection of one and a half storey dwelling.*

The Society believes that this Proposal will have little effect on the Conservation Area.

### **Dorincourt Guesthouse, 41 Undercliff Road West**

*Conversion to 5 self-contained flats with a courtyard-style active and independent ground floor restaurant. Through conversion and extension/alteration of the rear 1980s addition.*

The Society objects to this application in its present form and finds it difficult to assess. There is no internal floor plan in the documents we reviewed and residents' parking seems to be in nearby paid parking areas. Similarly, the depictions of the proposed changes do not make it clear what impact these will have on nearby properties.

In our view, the finishes are not sympathetic to the existing building or the character of the Conservation Area.

### **Martello Place, Golf Road: Communal Garden Area**

*To fell one Beech, three Holm Oak, one Holly. To coppice five Holm Oak.  
Reason : For enhanced sea view and view of garden.*

Due to the lack of timely information from SCDC, the Chairman of the Martello Place Residents' Management Committee has, at short notice, kindly permitted a Felixstowe Society representative to visit the site. The Society is very concerned by, and regrets, the inclusion in the above proposal of the felling of three substantial Holm Oak trees situated within the Felixstowe Conservation Area. The residents' plans for ongoing arboricultural and horticultural improvement by competent persons of the extensive Martello Place gardens and associated cliff landscaping were discussed at the site. The Society is satisfied that, on balance, the felling of the designated trees can be accepted.

The Society would object to the felling of trees within the Conservation Area for the sole objective of 'enhancing somebody's view'.

### Applications Awaiting a Decision

The Society believes that the following proposals will have little effect on the Conservation Area :

#### **12 Holland Road**

*Rear and side single storey extensions.*

#### **Bath Road (Tennis Club)**

*Four houses in one block with associated landscaping, parking and amenity spaces.*

#### **25 Constable Road**

*Rear extension (revised scheme – amended materials).*

#### **Holm Oak, 4A Hamilton Gardens**

*Front extension to replace conservatory.*

#### **115 Hamilton Road**

*New fascia and projecting signs.*

#### **Ridley House, Maybush Lane**

*Replacement of existing slate roof covering with clay roman tiles – only applies to the main house. Amended scheme with reduced works.*

#### **Flat 3 Ranelagh Court, Ranelagh Road**

*Replacement windows and doors.*

### Applications Refused

#### **40 King Street**

*Erection of a one and a half storey dwelling.*

The Felixstowe Society objects to this proposal. In our view it is an overdevelopment of the site and an undesirable fragmentation of the rear garden.



### **Planning Applications 10 September to 5 November 2017**

SCDC has granted permission for the following:

Previous applications

#### **105 Undercliff Road**

*Erect an oak and brick veranda to rear elevation.*

### **159 High Street Walton**

*Erect single side extension following demolition of existing conservatory and outbuilding.*

These changes will have little adverse effect on the Listed Building.

### **12 Holland Road**

*Rear and side single storey extensions.*

The Society believes that these proposed extensions will have little effect on the Conservation Area.

### **Harvest House, Cobbold Road: Listed Building Consent**

*Fitting of replacement lightning conductor system.*

This fitting will have little adverse effect on the Listed Building and the Conservation Area.

### **Bath Road (Tennis Club)**

*Four houses in one block with associated landscaping, parking and amenity spaces.*

The Society believes that the proposed new buildings will have little effect on the Conservation Area.

### **Part side garden of 40 King Street**

*Variation of conditions 2 & 3 of DC/15/3519/FUL Erection of a two storey dwelling etc.*

The Felixstowe Society objects to this application because there is no block or site plan to enable us to establish how these changes relate to the surroundings. We request clarification of these matters.

### **115 Hamilton Road**

*New fascia and projecting signs.*

The Society believes that the proposed changes will have little effect on the Conservation Area.

### **Flat 3 Ranelagh Court, Ranelagh Road**

*Replacement windows and doors.*

These changes will have little effect on the Conservation Area.

### Recent Applications

#### **7 Cranmer Cliff Gardens**

*Replace wooden french windows and doors on first floor apartment with exact copies in white uPVC.*

These changes will have little effect on the Conservation Area.



Applications awaiting a decision

**Harvest House, Cobbold Road (CA)**

*Fell eucalyptus tree.*

**64 Hamilton Road (Smiths) (CA)**

*Installation of ATM in left-hand window.*

Objected.

**Wycliff House, High Road East**

*Fell a Holm oak.*

**Site of the former Cavendish Hotel, Sea Road**

*Erect 48 flats, ground floor commercial units and 11 houses.*

**8 Montague Road**

*Two storey rear extension.*

**30 Orwell Road (CA)**

*Change of use to bar/restaurant.*

**23 Orwell Road (CA)**

*Convert first and second floor to two flats.*

**25 Orwell Road (CA)**

*Convert first and second floor to two flats*

**29D Quilter Road (CA)**

*Replacement dwelling.*

**14 Manning Road (CA)**

*Change use of dwelling to HMO (Multi occupation)*

**86 Ranelagh Road (CA):**

*Rear extension.*

**Flat 2, Seagull House (CA)**

*Replace windows, screen and door with UPVc.*

Applications Refused

**Land to the rear of 114 High Road West**

*Outline application for one dwelling.*

The Society objects to this application. It is an undesirable form of piecemeal development with most inadequate means of vehicular access.

## Ridley House, Maybush Lane

Replacement of existing slate roof covering with clay Roman tiles – only applies to the main house. Amended scheme with reduced works.

These changes will have little effect on the Conservation Area



Saturday 9 September saw the unveiling of a plaque to commemorate 50 years since 'Radio Caroline' went on air from a vessel anchored off the coast of Felixstowe.

Society Chairman Jan Garfield did the unveiling in brilliant sunshine with help of many of the original disc jockeys including the famous 'Emperor Rosko' and there were many stories of their days working on the vessels.

The plaque is situated on Wolsey Gardens and was supplied by East of England Co-operative Society.

In the January 2016 issue of The Felixstowe Society Newsletter, written shortly before his death, Phil Hadwen wrote :

***"We feel that The Felixstowe Society Newsletter is a quality publication, but it is only as good as its contributors so in order to bring a more personal touch, we would love to have anything to do with Felixstowe that we could publish which reflects people's own reflections of our lovely town. It doesn't have to be long, but a few sentences with a photograph would be greatly appreciated and would give a 'different' feel to the Newsletter.***

***Do you have any information, memories and/or photographs of Manning's Amusements (formerly Butlins), seaside Felixstowe - beach huts, amusements, the yacht pond, the Pier and Spa Pavilion, the Spa Gardens?***

***Do feel free to comment on anything that The Society does - feedback is always welcome, even if it is not complimentary!"***

Today seems like the perfect opportunity to echo his words!

**Contributions for the May 2018 Newsletter  
should reach the Editor by Sunday 18 March 2018  
email : [fxsocnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:fxsocnewsletter@gmail.com).**

**Thank you.**

This was a real trip down Memory Lane as radio enthusiasts Brian and Charles outlined the history of offshore pirate radio and Felixstowe's part in the story.

Ronan O'Reilly, an Irish entrepreneur, founded Radio Caroline, which began transmission off Felixstowe at Easter 1964. By the end of the year it was estimated that she had more than 6,000,000 listeners, and many are the tales of the DJs such as Simon Dee, Tony Blackburn and Dave Lee Travis welcoming teenagers alongside the ship, or becoming involved in the local life of Felixstowe. Many people visited Felixstowe just to view the ship offshore - easily spotted due to its 200 ft tall aerial.

Charles, an early convert, says he wrote from Felixstowe High School where he was a student, asking Simon Dee to dedicate a record to the school prefects!

However, it was not long before Radio London, backed by Texan money and expertise, came on air in late 1964, broadcasting from offshore near Clacton. The listening figures for Radio Caroline were hit hard. When a law was passed in August 1967 banning offshore radio, all of them rapidly closed, although Radio Caroline defied the law for some time. Granada TV was about to do a programme on Ronan O'Reilly but the harbour master prevented their return to Felixstowe, and that really was the end.

Several other failed attempts at offshore radio were made (Britain Radio and Radio England off Felixstowe) including a plan for Tower TV and Radio on the Sunk Tower, but it never took off and the authorities blew it up rather spectacularly!

Since then, in September this year, DJ Emperor Rosko visited Felixstowe with a group of Mini Moke enthusiasts (yes, really!) and together with Felixstowe Society Chair Jan

## **SPEAKER'S CORNER**

### **Brian Nichols and Charles Wright reminisce about Radio Caroline**

Tuesday 24 October 2017



Garfield, unveiled a memorial plaque to Radio Caroline and her association with the town which can be seen in Wolsey Gardens near the Town Hall. (See photograph elsewhere in this newsletter).



## PILL BOX FERRY ROAD, FELIXSTOWE

Before the Second World War, there had been a concentration on a strong Royal Navy and a build-up of air defences but very little was done to improve coastal and inland fortifications. However, after the hasty evacuation of British troops from Dunkirk, France in May 1940, there was a sudden realisation that much needed to be done given the threat of the German army that was now just across the North Sea and the English Channel.

The threat of immediate invasion was suddenly to the forefront of everyone's mind. However, the considered opinion of the country's military leaders was that Adolf Hitler would not attempt to send in his army until his air force controlled the skies. They recommended that a start should straightaway be made to organise the country as a fortress. Prime Minister Churchill gave an appropriate stirring speech in June 1940 in which he promised:

*"We shall defend our island whatever the cost might be; we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets . . . we shall never surrender."*

The German army had already very ably demonstrated its Blitzkrieg tactic to storm its way through a country. It has subsequently been discovered that its military planners intended to land a first wave of 250,000 infantry to include parachute and glider troops, 650 tanks, 35,000 vehicles and over 500 field guns between Brighton and Folkestone on the South Coast.

The quick British solution to the threat was to establish 'fixed defences' consisting of a network of 'stop lines'. so constructed that the German mobile columns could not outflank them or penetrate them very easily. The lines, as far as possible, followed natural barriers such as rivers, which were consolidated by many thousands of miles of anti-tank ditches with supporting pill boxes and other obstacles such as concrete 'dragons teeth' or 'pimples' intended to slow down enemy tanks. The most important of these stop lines was the General Headquarters Anti-Tank Line built to protect, in particular, the capital city and factories with essential production lines in the Midlands and the North. This line ran down the East Coast from Edinburgh to The Wash and then across through Cambridge, skirted to the south of London and then went down to Bristol through Maidstone and Guildford. A network of secondary lines backed up this primary line. However, modern military historians have debated how successful such stop lines would have been, given that on the continent the German army had been able to overcome heavily armoured forts by ferocious attack.

As a first time measure of defence before any invader would reach the top lines, all possible landing beaches, including Felixstowe, were quickly provided with land and sea mines as well as large anti-tank concrete blocks backed by barbed wire and scaffolding. Such obstacles were intended to impede progress until reinforcements could arrive for the defenders in their pillboxes and other emplacements.

Other local work undertaken as part of what was called a defensive 'coastal crust' included the shortening of Felixstowe Pier to prevent it being used as a landing stage as it was one of the longest piers, complete with railway, in the country. Felixstowe Ferry Golf Course and some of the nearby marshes were mined in addition to the beaches. Anti-tank ditches were excavated in the fields and marshes from the Felixstowe Dock to Felixstowe Ferry. Heavy concrete blocks to resist tanks were placed along the sea front between the same locations.

A very important part of the defensive system was the pillbox – so called from the circular ones build with concrete blocks during the First World War. During mostly 1940 and 1941, some 18000 of these infantry strong points, manned by the Army or the Home Guard, were hastily built – although not always in the best strategic positions. Their intention was to delay or force back German attackers by inflicting maximum casualties in what would be a short, ferocious battle. Once the pillbox had revealed its

position, its defenders had to be prepared to face almost certain death unless they pulled back to the next defensive line. Although at first sight one pillbox looks very much the same as another, there were in fact some ten main types with the hexagonal shaped Type 22 the most common. In addition, there were more specialist ones such as retractable ones that sunk into the ground, used to protect airfields, and another well-concealed sunken type which had a turret with a 360 degree field of fire.

Each outward facing wall of almost all pillboxes had a rifle gun-loop which was kept to a minimal size so that enemy fire or a hand grenade would find it difficult to penetrate. Just in case this did happen, an internal wall was built to reduce the risk of ricochet or grenade explosion putting all the occupants out of action. Similarly, the entrance had a blast wall to protect it. The walls themselves were generally 18 inches thick with steel bar reinforcement and were intended to offer protection from small-arms fire and direct hits from weapons with a larger calibre. Indeed, such was the demand for concrete for the pillboxes that the thickness of floors and even walls had to be reduced to meet shortages.

Many pillboxes were most ingeniously camouflaged. One such pillbox, disguised as a motor vehicle, was erected within 10 days between 25 July and 3 August 1940 in the centre of Langer Road, Felixstowe, close to its junction with Cavendish Road. Some pill boxes were camouflaged as cafes and shops with one example on Felixstowe beach disguised as an ice cream sales outlet. Other Felixstowe pill box locations were at vital road junctions such as the Beach Station Road and Langer Road junction; Hamilton Road and Crescent Road junction and

Garrison Lane and High Road West junction. Elsewhere in the country, pill boxes were disguised as log piles, hay stacks, summer houses or earth mounds in fields. There were even readily-seen dummy pillboxes made of canvas and wood to fool and so deter the enemy.

It was during the summer of 1941, and at the time of the Battle of Britain between the British and German Air Forces that there was new military thinking as regards how best to deal with the threat of invasion. Work on building pill boxes and developing the stop lines was halted. The emphasis was now placed on mobile offence rather than static defence. The plan was to prevent German forces from gaining a good hold on British soil by hitting them hard with greater firepower, including the use of tanks and artillery.

Few pillboxes now remain and those that do are often in relatively poor condition due to vandalism and the weather. The pillbox in Ferry Road, Felixstowe is one of the better remaining examples.

*Michael Sharman*







## Felixstowe Beach Hut & Chalet Association

I am pleased to be able to give two very positive updates from subjects I reported on in my article in the last newsletter.

Thankfully Suffolk Coastal has listened to the protestations of beach hut owners, through our Association, in respect of its proposal to raise the cost of owning a hut to an astronomical level. Out has gone the recommended £7,000 for a 10 year 'lease premium' and the price bands have been greatly simplified - as we suggested to them. Instead of the present 14 different price bands, depending on where the huts are sited, as from April 2018 there will be just two bands: one for huts in the front row and another for huts that are not in a front row. Simple! The new prices will be £500 for the front row and £400 for other rows (including VAT) which will increase by 10% in April 2019 and a further 10% in April 2020. After then Suffolk Coastal will no longer exist as it will be merging with Waveney and it will be for the new combined Council to set the rates. Also, instead of charging three times the annual licence fee to issue a new licence when a hut changes hands, which would have been up to £1500, a new cost of £600 has been agreed. Much more than the current £36 but much less than the original proposal.

There will be winners and losers in the beach hut community, as some will pay a little more and some will pay a little less, but it is far better for all hut owners than the original proposals. In addition Suffolk Coastal will increase its revenue from beach huts, which was the whole purpose of carrying out the review.

The next piece of good news is that Joy Reeve's hut at Manor End - 'Grandma's Little House' - has been named as 'Beach Hut of the Year' in a national competition organised by Towergate Insurance.

After being shortlisted, Joy had to go to London for an interview, which culminated in her success. One of the judging panel was Phil Spencer of the Channel 4 programme 'Location, Location, Location', and it was Phil who came to Felixstowe to present Joy with a plaque for her hut, a cheque for £1,000 and a fantastic cake in the shape of her hut. The presentation attracted coverage by Anglia TV, local radio and the written media. Our Association was also awarded £500 which we will endeavour to spend on something that will benefit not only our members but also the community. Congratulations, Joy, a well deserved award. Her hut will again be open on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings throughout the winter for tea, coffee and homemade cakes for which donations to The Alzheimer's Society are invited. Why not visit and admire Joy's lovely hut?



## **WALTON ROMAN FORT**

During the late third century AD and towards the end of the Roman occupation of Britain, local security became a matter of increasing concern. The Angles, Saxons and Jutes and other Germanic seafaring tribes regularly attempted to carry out hit-and-run raids along the south east coast of Britain to attack coastal settlements and those up estuaries and rivers. They also made pirate attacks on Roman shipments taking cargo and precious metals to Rome from this country.

In order to counter these raids from across the North Sea, a set of military installations was built by the Romans between Portchester in Hampshire and Brancaster in North West Norfolk. However, there is still argument between historians about their exact purpose and even their name. Documentary sources list nine such garrisons – of which only four still survive – commanded by a so-called 'Count of the Saxon Shore'.

A typical Saxon Shore Fort was approximately rectangular in plan with stone walls some twenty feet high and perhaps twelve feet thick. It had round towers that projected at intervals along the sides and at the corners as well as strong fortified gates and a surrounding ditch.

It is likely that as a defensive stronghold, the fort may well have housed not only cavalry who could respond quickly to any local hostile landing, but also artillery units in case of an attempted attack by invaders. Certainly raiders would have been reluctant to steer close to it. There is also some evidence that Saxon Shore Forts also served as safe anchorages for a Roman fleet that patrolled the coastline to deter raiders. It is clear that the forts had some success until after the Roman army was withdrawn in AD 410 to return to defend Rome itself from barbarian attacks.

The site of the shore fort, locally called Walton Castle, and planned to watch over the river mouths of the Deben, Orwell and Stour, is opposite the Dip at Old Felixstowe and may be partly seen as seaweed covered rocks at very low tide. Almost the entire fort has disappeared over a very long period of time due to coastal erosion. Indeed, the destruction was so great that many local people really doubted whether the fort existed at all.

However, in the 1950s, a detailed survey of the seabed was undertaken by the Ipswich Sub-Aqua Club which found large lengths of partly intact wall about forty yards out to sea. This wall was constructed in characteristic Roman red brick and flint courses. These remains are now generally accepted to be those of the shore fort.

*Michael Sharman*



**My grateful thanks to Susanne Barsby for proof-reading this edition and checking for inaccuracies. - Ed**

Look out for the next issue of  
The Felixstowe Society Newsletter  
published on 1 May 2018



**40 YEARS ...  
AND  
COUNTING !**

*Celebrate with us as we review the achievements and successes of  
The Felixstowe Society over the last four decades!!!*