

The Felixstowe Society

NEWSLETTER

Issue No. 127

September 2021



Registered Charity No. 277442

The Felixstowe Society is established for the public benefit of people who 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
- Secure the improvement, protection, development and preservation of the local environment.

Cover photograph courtesy of Alan Boyle -  Everything Felixstowe & Beyond

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THE FELIXSTOWE SOCIETY CONTACTS

Jan Garfield	Chairman	01394 210887
Hilary Eaton	Treasurer	01394 286733
Roy Gray	Vice Chair	01394 285827
Keith Horn	Joint Vice Chair	01394 270845



CHAIRMAN'S NOTES



Hello Members

I do hope that you are all well and are managing to enjoy our new found "freedom". I know that there will be some of you who still feel a little dubious about the sudden lifting of all restrictions and feel a little worried about mixing too soon. This is quite understandable as we have been kept in our homes for so long that it has become to feel the 'norm'. However, let us hope that everybody will be careful as we emerge and that all will be well, especially with an obviously successful vaccination programme and the promise of boosters for some in September. Hard to realise after all the beautiful weather this week that this dreadful virus is still out there!

Talking about mixing, Keith Horn, Roy Gray and I met one of the new Majors at the Salvation Army Hall last month, to discuss restarting our Speakers' Evenings. Her name is Katarina Lennox and her husband is David. She is a lovely lady and we had a very fruitful discussion. She wanted to know all about The Society, our ethos, etc., and seemed very pleased with our replies. All being well, we shall be starting back on 28th September. Hope to see as many of you as possible there. Don't forget that there will be no meeting charges this session.

There is not much for me to report for obvious reasons. However, please don't forget the Archive Exhibition at Harvest House on 22nd August and the Social Get Together in the renovated Palm Court at Harvest House on 3rd September. Light refreshments at the first and a buffet and entertainment at the second. Please fill in the forms in the last Newsletter.

Speaking of Harvest House, I must report that our Archive was flooded during the floods in June. Thanks to the racking which lifted it all off the floor, nothing was damaged, but the carpet tiles on the floor were destroyed by the water. Our grateful thanks must once again go to Michael, the Manager of Harvest House, who not only took up the ruined tiles and cleaned the room but has given us some of the old carpet tiles which used to be in the Palm Court. Also, the Plaque dedicated to Thomas Cotman, will be erected on the outside wall of Harvest House and unveiled by the Mayor of Felixstowe, Mark Jepson on 4th August. Our thanks must also go to Pat Todd who, once again, has made her usual beautiful plaque.

I have received a sad email this week and this was the resignation of our Walks Coordinator, Alan Muchal, for personal reasons. Alan took over from Laurence in 2019 and we thank him for all he has done. At the moment we are not sure what will happen to the Walks until Alan has met with the Walk Leaders.

Last of all, members, this will be our last Newsletter online. From January we are reverting to our usual home delivery method thanks to Roger and his intrepid band of deliverers who have agreed to carry on.

Look after yourselves and please take care.
Kindest regards

Jan
Chairman

QUIZ NIGHT, QUIZ NIGHT, QUIZ NIGHT

Make a note in your diary, our Quiz Night has been booked for Friday 25th February 2022. Details will be in the January Newsletter.

Speakers For 2021

We are pleased to announce that the Speakers' Evenings will be held as from September. The evenings will start promptly at 7.30 p.m.
We would encourage masks to be worn at all times.

Please note the changed dates for September and October.

September 28th	B. Van Loon	Street Names
October 26th	Geoff Kay	The Great Exhibition
November 23rd	Robert Simper	The River Deben

The following dates have been booked for Speakers' Evenings for 2022:

25th January, 22nd February, 22nd March, 26th April,
24th May (AGM),
27th September, 25th October, 22nd November.

Details of the Speakers will be in the January issue.

Organiser Roy Gray

Holiday to Winchester 2022

Will it be 4th time lucky? I really hope so because plans are underway to arrange our long-awaited holiday to Winchester.

A note for your diaries; 3 Nights 4 days From Friday 27th May 2022 to Monday 30th May 2022. PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS IS NOT A BANK HOLIDAY WEEKEND.

We have retained deposits for 40 of our members from our previously cancelled holidays and I hope that they will be able to join us on the 27th May 2022.

I have already booked Klarners Coaches and we will be staying at the Norton Park Hotel on a dinner, bed and breakfast basis. Full details will be provided in due course. The itinerary will be basically the same and will include: -

A visit to Biggin Hill Memorial Museum with lunch included.

A day trip to Bournemouth including a visit to The Russell Cotes Gallery and Museum with afternoon tea/coffee and cake included.

A day in Winchester with a walking tour and visit to Winchester Cathedral included.

A visit to Whitchurch Silk Mill with guided Tour and lunch included.

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN THIS HOLIDAY AND WOULD LIKE TO BE PUT ON OUR WAITING LIST, PLEASE TELEPHONE ME ON 01394 270845 or email me on kjandehorn@btinternet.com

Final details including cost will follow.

Keith Horn

The Felixstowe Society Beach Clean

We will be holding our first beach clean-up since 2019, on Thursday 9th September 2021 and hope that you will be free to join us.

We will be meeting at our usual place at the shelter along from The Fludyers Hotel at 9.30am and pick for about an hour. We hope that you will be able to join us for coffee afterwards. Litter sticks will be provided but it will be helpful if you can bring your own gloves and bag to put the collected rubbish in.

If you have any queries, then please phone me on 01394 270845 or email me at kjandehorn@btinternet.com

Keith Horn



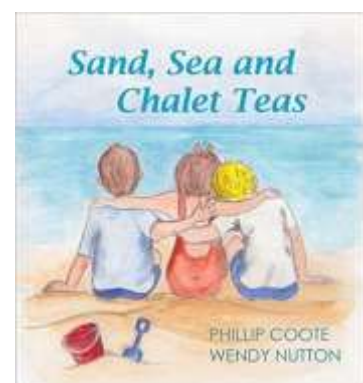
Felixstowe Beach Hut & Chalet Association

In our last article I made mention of the fact that a beach hut had sold for more than its asking price of £35,000. When I wrote the first draft of this article, I had just read that a hut in Undercliff Road sold for £65,000. If that wasn't staggering enough there is now a report in the national and local press that a hut near The Fludyers Hotel, which was advertised for £70,000, has been sold for £88,000. That is incredible. It is disappointing that owning a hut is getting beyond the reach of many people who would really love to have one. There appear to be more huts coming on the market, undoubtedly fuelled by the prices that are being paid, and owners are looking to cash in on their investment. Dedicated beach hut owners, such as me, have no desire to sell our huts as, for us, they are a priceless asset.

Like The Felixstowe Society, we have not been able to hold an AGM again this year. Nevertheless, all the current Committee members are happy to remain in post and none of our members objected to that.

There is still no solution to the problem of huts near the Spa Pavilion not being able to return to the beach due to erosion. East Suffolk Council have looked at wooden platforms and temporary shingle platforms held in place by concrete blocks, but none have come to fruition. Some owners have given up and have moved their huts to other sites, but the majority wish to remain in the vicinity of the Spa and eagerly await a decision. A meeting between affected hut owners and representatives of East Suffolk Council is being held soon. Sitting sideways on the promenade as they have done for the last three years is certainly not ideal.

We have learned of a recently published book called 'Sand, Sea and Chalet Teas' which tells of nostalgic beach hut holidays in the 1960s – although not at Felixstowe. It is essentially a children's book, but apparently it is also popular with adults. It sounds as though it will bring back memories of visiting the coast as children, when international holidays were almost unheard of.



It costs £6.99 and can be obtained from one of the co-authors, Wendy Nutton, on wendy.nutton@btinternet.com

Trevor Mason

APPLICATIONS LISTED IN PREVIOUS NEWSLETTER AS AWAITING DISTRICT COUNCIL DECISION

REF	ADDRESS	PROPOSAL	SOCIETY COMMENTS	ESC DECISION
DC/20/4724	27A Albert Walks	Conversion of disused shop to single apartment	The Society considers that the proposal will cause no harm to the significance of the conservation area	Permitted
DC/21/0731	19 Manning Road	Demolition of workshop and replacement with 1 detached dwelling, alterations and extension to existing building to retain shop/office and provide 2no one bedroom first floor flats and 1no two bedroom dwelling. Amended scheme to previously approved	The Felixstowe Society considers that the proposal is an improvement on the previous scheme both in its visual impact and parking. The proposal would conserve the character of the conservation area.	Refused
DC/21/0478	St Mary's Nursing Home, Undercliff Road East	Part demolition, alteration and change of use of nursing home to provide 6no. apartments, together with 4no. new build houses with new shared cartlodge.	The Felixstowe Society objects to this proposal. There is concern that the scheme would result in overlooking of properties in Brook Lane. There are also concerns about the use of cedar cladding which is out of character with the building and the locality. It is considered that the proposal represents overdevelopment and does not respect the characteristics which contribute to the significance of the conservation area.	Awaiting decision
DC/21/0541	Former Deben High School, Garrison Lane	Construction of 45 apartments and maisonettes and 16 houses in the buildings ranging	The Felixstowe Society objects to this proposal. Although not in the conservation area,	Permitted

		<p>in height from 2 to 3 storeys, conversion of retained assembly hall to provide 250m² community space, 16 residential car parking spaces, 1 car park space for community hall, 137 cycle parking spaces, highways and public realm works, hard and soft landscaping, access and associated works. Redevelopment and extension of retained sports hall to provide indoor bowls facility and cricket pitch with pavilion, 32 car parking spaces, 24 cycle spaces, landscaping and associated works.</p>	<p>this is an important site within the town. The stark housing blocks proposed would be wholly out of keeping with traditional form, scale and character of existing housing in the area. Furthermore, the proposal would result in an overdevelopment of the site leading to inadequate space about the buildings, inadequate private and public amenity space, inadequate parking provision and loss of privacy to existing residents whose properties adjoin the site. In summary, the scheme appears to have been designed in isolation with little regard for the local context or the amenity of neighbouring properties.</p>	
DC/21/1074	58 Maybush Lane	Works to trees	The Society considers that the works to the trees will cause no harm to the significance of the conservation area	Permitted
DC/21/1056	16 Beach Road East	Works to trees	The Society agrees that the trees are in need of pruning and lopping but considers that the proposed pollarding of lime would be severe. Trees will be unattractive for some time	Permitted
DC/21/1043	Saville Court, Victoria Road	Works to trees	The Society considers that the works to the trees will cause no harm to	Permitted

			the significance of the conservation area	
DC/21/0808	Land East of Bent Hill	Temporary change of use for one year to allow adjacent businesses use of public open space for tables and chairs for the consumption of food & drink outside.	The Society supports this application on the basis that it will help businesses that have been significantly affected by Covid. A temporary permission will enable the use to be monitored and its impacts assessed should a proposal for permanent use be submitted in the future.	Permitted

APPLICATIONS COMMENTED ON BY THE SOCIETY 27 MARCH to 26 JULY 2021

REF	ADDRESS	PROPOSAL	SOCIETY COMMENTS	ESC DECISION
DC/21/1663	14 Berners Road	Demolish out-building and workshop/shed. Erect single storey extension to rear of property	The Society considers that the proposal will cause no harm to the significance of the conservation area	Permitted
DC/21/1549	7 Sea Road	Conversion of ground floor commercial unit to provide new homes, including minor ground floor infill	Taking into account the overall design of the building, The Society considers the proposal to convert the ground floor to residential would have little impact on the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.	Awaiting decision
DC/21/1440	5/7 Crescent Road	Prior Notification - Change of Use to Residential	The plans are inadequate to determine how the building and site would be altered. However, subject to sympathetic conversion The Society considers	Permitted

			that the proposal would not have a material impact on the Conservation Area.	
DC/21/1383	15 Montague Road	New dormer windows, front balcony, tree removal and fabric alterations	The Felixstowe Society considers that the changes would result in a significant improvement reverting more to the character of the original house. This would enhance the appearance of the Conservation Area	Permitted
DC/21/1179	23 Quilter Road	Erection of a single storey side/rear extension and canopy (following demolition of conservatory)	The Felixstowe Society considers the proposal to be an improvement which because of its location would have little impact on the Conservation Area.	Permitted
DC/21/1146	Fish Dish 69/71 Undercliff Road	Installation of 10 Aluminium Anodised K-Fold windows	The fenestration is presently unattractive and needs attention. The anodised windows would be a substantial improvement on the UPVC windows. The Felixstowe Society considers that the proposal would comply with the need to conserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.	Permitted
DC/21/2210	77 Ranelagh Road	Rear and side extension	The Felixstowe Society has no objections in principle but considers that red brick would be a	Awaiting decision

			more appropriate material.	
DC/21/2111	47 Orwell Road	Change of use of salon and flat over to one dwelling with rear extension	The Felixstowe Society considers that the scheme will be an improvement visually on what is already there and so would enhance the appearance of the Conservation Area	Permitted
DC/21/1961	38-40 The Old Dairy, Victoria Street	Variation of Condition No. 2 of DC/15/0332/FUL - Conversion of redundant buildings to new dwellings, erection of new flat to site frontage and erection of car ports and associated car parking - Relocation of car port to plot one from plot two to provide covered parking to plot one and allow extra storage in car port roof space, required due to retention of vaulted ceilings in this plot giving limited storage.	The Felixstowe Society considers that the changes are well handled and would have a positive impact on the Conservation Area.	Withdrawn
DC/21/1903	69 Bath Road	Poplar tree to the far left of the rear garden to be re-pollarded the finished height of the pollard will be 10'-15'. 1 No. Sycamore tree to be re-pollarded. 1 No. Pear tree to be reduced by 30% and shaped. 1 No Elder shrub to be reduced by 30- 50%.	The Felixstowe Society considers that the works seem necessary and are unlikely to impact on the Conservation Area	Permitted
DC/21/2318	The White Horse, 33 Church Road	Demolition of the White Horse Public House (Use Sui Generis) and the erection of a convenience store	The Felixstowe Society objects to the planning application in the strongest possible terms.	Awaiting decision

		(Use E) on the ground floor and four apartments (Use C3) on the first floor, and the erection of two bungalows (Use C3) with associated parking and landscaping.	<i>Please see below**</i>	
DC/21/2481	50 Quilter Road	Single storey side extension to rear of property. New Dormer Window to roof of house fronting Quilter Road. New flat roof dormer to rear of house to form Ensuite Shower Room	The Felixstowe Society considers that the proposals are in keeping with the existing dwelling. However, the proposed dormer on the front elevation is set too high. The Council's SPG indicates that dormer windows should be set clearly below the ridge line.	Awaiting decision
DC/21/2444	Trim Train And Volley Ball Area Sea Road	Development of a 'beach village' area with 27 traditional wooden huts, accessible pods to hire and new public conveniences- plus movement of trim trail to new activity park area, comprising of three petanque rinks, table tennis tables and exercise space.	The Felixstowe Society considers that the proposal is an innovative scheme for two sites which are currently drab and uninteresting. However, the main concern is that there appears to be no clear explanation of the parking for residents and visitors. The Society considers that the scheme should not be approved until such time as a parking strategy has been devised and implemented.	Awaiting decision
DC/21/2381	30 Orwell Road	Change of use of ground floor to bar/restaurant including musical entertainment with three & four seat	The Felixstowe Society considers that the proposal is acceptable in principle. Restaurant use has	Permitted

		tables externally on wide pavement to Orwell Road	previously been agreed here and would be an appropriate use for this part of the Conservation Area. As this is a mixed commercial and residential area conditions should be imposed to control the extent and hours of outside seating	
DC/21/1384	7 Beach Road	Replacement windows and front door, with like for like double glazed timber windows	The Felixstowe Society considers that the proposal is acceptable and will cause no harm to the significance of the conservation area.	Awaiting decision
DC/21/2999	13 Quilter Road	Proposed change of use from financial services offices for use by the applicants only, to single dwelling house	The Felixstowe Society considers that the proposal will cause no harm to the significance of the conservation area	Awaiting decision
DC/21/2941	1 The Old Dairy Victoria Road	Erection of car port	The Felixstowe Society considers that the proposed car port is a well-designed building which will cause no harm to the significance of the conservation area.	Awaiting decision
DC/21/2844	67 Undercliff Road	Retrospective Application-Installation of extraction ventilation equipment at take-away premises	The Felixstowe Society considers that the proposal will have little impact on the streetscene and will cause no harm to the significance of the conservation area	Awaiting decision
DC/21/2808	79 Ranelagh Road	Works to trees	The Felixstowe Society considers that the proposal will cause no harm to the significance	Permitted

			of the conservation area	
DC/21/2608	64 Orwell Road	Erect front porch	The Felixstowe Society considers that a brick porch would provide a better solution than the render proposed	Awaiting decision

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Felixstowe Society Comments on The White Horse Planning Application:

The Felixstowe Society objects to this planning application in the strongest possible terms. The White Horse is a non-designated Heritage Asset. The building was designed in the 'Arts and Crafts' style by local architect Thomas W Cotman for Messrs Cobbold & Co and constructed in 1904. Cotman's original drawings for the building, signed and dated March 1903, are held by the Suffolk Records Office Ipswich (SROI) (reference SROI EF12/3/5/1681 and 1726).

Cotman's contribution to the townscape of Felixstowe is significant. He designed many of the town's important buildings, including Harvest House. The *Dictionary of Architects of Suffolk Buildings 1800 – 1914 (Brown, Haward & Kindred -1991)* attributes 20 buildings in the town to Cotman, plus a further 41 buildings in Ipswich, Walton, Woodbridge and Saxmundham. Cotman died in 1925 and is buried at Old Felixstowe Parish Church.

The planning application fails to describe the significance of the building and is therefore, contrary to paragraph 189 of the NPPF.

Paragraph 197 of the NPPF states that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application and that, in weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

The design, appearance and historic significance of The White Horse and its associated outbuildings make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area. The proposed development results in the total loss of the heritage asset, thereby causing significant harm. The proposal does not result in sufficient public benefits to outweigh that harm.

Furthermore, the design of the proposed retail store makes no attempt to reflect the architecture of the existing building. Its form and scale is out of keeping with its surroundings.

The applicant's claims over viability seem somewhat vague and misleading. The application describes the pub as "*wet led pub with a single bar pub operation, but with the ability to serve food.*" In fact, the majority of the ground floor of the pub is the 'restaurant' area. Furthermore, most of the trading figures are based on unsubstantiated "estimates". Audited accounts for the business have not been provided.

The level of proposed parking is woefully inadequate and does not accord with the Highway Authority's standards. A retail building with a floor area of 326m² requires 20 car spaces including 3 disabled. The application proposes just 12 spaces and 1 disabled space.

In summary, The Society considers that the loss of the non-designated heritage asset would result in significant harm and that the proposal is contrary to Local Plan policy SCLP8.1 and the objectives of the NPPF.

The White Horse Planning Application

by P Cobbold

As detailed above, a planning application has been submitted to demolish The White Horse public house and replace it with a shop, four flats and two bungalows on the car park.

The White Horse was designed in the 'Arts and Crafts style' by local architect Thomas W Cotman for Messrs Cobbold & Co and was constructed in 1904. Cotman's contribution to the townscape of Felixstowe is significant. He designed many of the town's important buildings, including Harvest House. At least 20 buildings in the town are attributed to him.

The original drawings for The White Horse are held by the Suffolk Records Office but are too fragile to copy. Despite its architectural interest and historic significance, The White Horse is not a listed building.

The Society has submitted a robust objection to the application. We have urged East Suffolk Council to consider the building as a 'non-designated heritage asset'. The Suffolk Preservation Society and Felixstowe Town Council have objected too.

To date, there have been more than 400 objections from the public. Any members who have not yet objected are urged to do so.

A group of Local residents have submitted an application to East Suffolk requesting that the building be listed as an Asset of Community Value. If this is accepted, the group would have the opportunity to purchase the building and run it as a community pub should the property be put up for sale.

Clean-Up at Gulpher Pond Saturday 10th July 2021

When Guy Pearse and I arranged a meeting at Gulpher Pond on Wednesday 7th July we couldn't believe what we saw and decided that a clean-up was required as soon as possible. Bearing in mind the fact that our last clean-up had taken place on 21st October 2019 our planned next clean-up in March/ April 2020 failed to take place because of Covid 19.

Saturday 10th July was the agreed date and I made contact by phone and email in order to get a work party organised and 7 of us agreed to meet up at 8am armed with appropriate tools etc.

The first photographs show the situation at 8 a.m.



and these 2 photographs show what was achieved.



Did you know this?



Here we have my 6 colleagues, namely Guy Pearse, Mick Elmes, John Newman, Bob Stoner, Alan Muchal and Mike Williams who made what we achieved happen. Many thanks for your help and I can assure you that you will not have to wait just under 2 years for the next clean up.



P.S. With the possibility of more of our precious farm land being converted into housing estates, I wonder what will happen to Gulpher Pond. I know this has been and is enjoyed by hundreds of people to watch the bird life on the pond, have picnics or spend quiet time around this lovely peaceful area. Wouldn't it be nice to have a seat on site?

Please let us have your thoughts.

Keith Horn

From RADAR to RESTORATION

It is said that '...necessity is the mother of invention'.

It was certainly true at Bawdsey Radar in the years before World War II and still is today.



During the 1930s the British government had become increasingly anxious about the prospect of aerial bombardment from an enemy that could potentially be only 20 minutes away. An air defence strategy was needed. In 1936 a top-secret scientific base was established firstly at Orfordness and then at the remote location of Bawdsey Manor.



The Switch Gear being carefully conserved

Robert Watson Watt headed up a team of scientists who worked at incredible speed to build the first air defence radar station in the world which subsequently helped to win the Battle of Britain.

RAF Bawdsey, inaugurated in 1937, had many links with Felixstowe, indeed, Miss "Ginger" Girdlestone, the till girl in the local butchers went on to become one of the first radar operators. There are numerous stories of the overcrowded bus on Saturday nights, when Albert Aldis would drive RAF folk back to Felixstowe Ferry after a great time out on the town. (Have a look back at The Society's article 'Issue 95 Research Corner 10 Albert Aldis').

Felixstowe provided many facilities for RAF Bawdsey: the ferry to link the two together, the train line to London, the cinemas, the Pier Pavilion for dancing, Cordys and Millars restaurants and the charming Bonnets tea room to mention just a few; and of course, Felixstowe had a Woolworths!



Felixstowe Ferry circa 1960

Following a public opening of the Transmitter Block by a small group of radar enthusiasts in 2003 an unexpected 900 visitors arrived, so it was decided "that something must be done".

The “something-must-be-done” response was that an enthusiastic group took on the challenge of restoring and opening the ‘T’ Block to the wider public. In 2004, the ‘T’ Block was included in the BBC2 “Restoration” programme featuring historic buildings. It came fourth in the final which raised its profile. The ‘enthusiasts’ became a Trust. Small grants enabled the provision of water and electricity and with plenty of ‘make do and mend’, the Block was able to be opened to visitors.

However, the 1937 concrete continued to crumble. By 2012 it was a now-or-never situation and applications for large grants were made to try to save the building and create a new exhibition to tell the site’s remarkable history. In 2015 a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant of £1.4m was awarded for the project, plus a £200K Historic England grant that was specifically for the repair of the concrete blast walls.

The concrete blast walls, like many things on the brink of war, were erected using materials that were easily available. It turns out that the sand and shingle aggregate in the concrete mix could have come from a beach...sea shells have been found in the walls! So, with



The Transmitter Block today

that and the salty sea air the metal reinforcements within were vulnerable to corrosion as steel rusts, expands and causes the concrete to fall apart.

A specialist East Anglian company ‘Concrete Renovations’ was given the contract for the restoration and they actually won an international award for the work. The flaking concrete was removed, exposed steel cleaned and treated with inhibitor and new concrete of matching colour with washed aggregate was put back on. Care was taken to incorporate shuttering board marks into the concrete to reproduce the original construction techniques.

The original bomb proof roof had been constructed as a sandwich consisting of layers of concrete, sand and shingle, which would absorb any force from a direct hit. The building fortunately never received a direct hit, but it was strafed on several occasions in World War II and you can see the marks in the brickwork.

Over the years water had penetrated the roof causing damage to the interior of the ‘T’ Block. Tons of sand and shingle had to be removed to allow new waterproofing and insulation, then shingle and finally concrete to be laid.

The Interior restoration was designed to retain the character of the building and to showcase a stunning new interactive exhibition.

Officially re-opened in July 2018 by HRH The Duke of Gloucester, the museum tells the story of the ground-breaking developments that went on at Bawdsey, the people who worked there and the long-lasting impact that radar has on our lives today.



Museum Interior

The successful restoration project is a testament to the local volunteers who were determined that something must be done to preserve the building for the nation.

Such an important story that happened just across the river Deben, having so many links to Felixstowe, is history on our doorstep.

For details of how to visit the Transmitter Block please see www.bawdseyradar.org.uk

Liz Brooking



JANUARY 2022 NEWSLETTER

Would you like to write an article for the next Newsletter?

We welcome new contributors. If so, could we please have your contribution by **25th November**, in Microsoft Word format if possible.

The email address is: felixsocnewsletter@outlook.com or, if sending by post the address is: 6 Harvest House, Cobbold Road, IP11 7SP Thank you.

Grateful thanks to all our contributors, to Susanne Barsby for proofreading and to Keith Horn for his help.

IMPORTANT NOTICE - SOCIAL EVENT AT HARVEST HOUSE

FRIDAY 3rd SEPTEMBER 2021

For members attending our Social Event, please remember to bring your face masks.

ALSO

Please don't forget that we are having a Raffle and will only be able to receive cash payments for the tickets you buy.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH

KEITH HORN.

The Felixstowe Society Archive

What is an archive?

It is a question we asked ourselves as we were preparing for the archive exhibition in August at Harvest House. We have all the usual items associated with archives such as photos, prints, documents, books and objects.

One of the many jobs of an archivist is to care for the 'health' of all these items, a large number of which are irreplaceable. In 2017 we attended a course at Suffolk Records Office at its 'old' home in Gateacre Road, Ipswich. One of the Conservation Officers took us through a rather forbidding list of the 10 agents of deterioration, ie:

- Handling
- Fire
- Pests- insects and rodents
- Light- ultraviolet and infrared
- Incorrect relative humidity
- Thieves and vandals
- Water
- Pollutants
- Incorrect temperature
- Disassociation – things being lost.

Since that course we have experienced a number of these, as our archives have been stored in various places around Felixstowe thanks to the kindness of individuals and organisations.

One example on which we will require professional help, is the wonderful collection donated by Peter and Heather Blemings, of original plans and drawings dated between 1922 and 1925, of The Bartlet.

This photo shows some of the drawing sheets on very fragile brown paper. Currently we are unable to display this work which shows so much detail of the construction and measurements of the building. When handled, the paper disintegrates.



H. MUNRO CAUTLEY, A.R.I.B.A.
DESIGNER OF THE TARTO'FARE
IPSWICH, DECEMBER 1922.

The new shelving, installed by Andy Walsh, has been invaluable and has enabled us to find documents, etc., far more quickly. Andy spent a number of hours putting the shelving together and The Society is very grateful for his time and expertise. The basement of Harvest House was recently flooded but because we had the archive on the shelving, we were able to rescue everything and place our precious artefacts in a dry space.



We have certainly tried to comply with the best advice regarding the storage of archive items. This photo shows one of the shelving units containing boxes of photos.

Cardboard is preferable to plastic although there are plastic holders for photos but the plastic must be 'pure' plastic, i.e. should not include additives, plasticisers or any surface treatments.

The boxes protect the photos from light and allow easy access. We have thousands of photos in the archive. Many have yet to be individually catalogued. They have been stored according to where they were taken and by subject. The archive is very grateful to Gill Hadwen, who has kindly donated so many of Phil's photos.

Some of the more elderly items in our archive, especially books, arrive with that particularly musty smell which characterises old paper that has not been aired. We have tables and school desks on which we can 'air' these items on a regular basis.

One book which has to be 'aired' on a fairly regular basis is a wonderful gem passed on to Phil Hadwen by relatives of Austen 'Clarence' Farrow who lived in Felixstowe up to WW2. It is a collection of newspaper extracts and photos cut from magazines which detail such topics as the amount of sunshine in Felixstowe, the rise of modern Felixstowe and so many photos of well-known buildings in the town and the surrounding areas.



Pages from the book



In 1920, the hours of sunshine in Felixstowe amounted to 1,840 compared with Brighton which received 1,564 and Blackpool with only 1,268. A search of recent records would provide useful data to add to the archive. The book contains 30 pages of carefully cut out text and photos which have been painstakingly glued onto each page - how many hours did Mr Farrow spend in compiling this fascinating record of days gone by in our town?

Although not appearing in the August exhibition, we have a number of photos and documents related to both wars and particularly RAF Felixstowe in its earlier days. The archive does not have many photos which reflect the connection between the town and the armed forces from the 1950s but some black and white photos given to Phil Hadwen and donated by Gill, show a Territorial Camp at Landguard. In the photo, here, the anti-tank defences can be seen.



We continue to use our detective skills to date some of the many undated and unannotated photos we have in our collection.



This photo, has left us stumped at the moment, but perhaps a Society member can help to identify its origin. It has been cared for by its previous owner as it is encased in a glass fronted solid wooden frame.

We hope that all those members, attending the exhibition, had an enjoyable afternoon and we will produce a full report in the January Newsletter.

Bev Boyce and Jean Macpherson – Archivists.

LOCAL ORGANISATIONS.....

Felixstowe Community Choir

In 2012, Felixstowe resident Rachel Sloane was keen to belong to a community choir, one that was informal and non-performing, for men and women who just enjoyed singing. Unable to find exactly what she was looking for, she decided to investigate starting a choir. With Emily Bennett, a local musician, actor and choir leader on board, the next thing was to find a venue.

"I really wanted a place to meet for a good night out." Rachel explained. "Even though it was only available for three months before the theatre closed, the bar at the Spa Pavilion seemed ideal. I was then committed to hiring a venue and paying a professional musician... what if no-one came?"

With £100 sponsorship from the Yeo Group, who were about to open the Fludyers Hotel, and with a raffle to offset costs, the choir moved a step closer. Using her contacts in the press and media, made through her work as a writer and broadcaster, the publicity for the choir began.

Emily agreed: "no backing tracks but live music, no auditions, and no sheet music. We'd provide the words to songs, and would learn harmonies by repetition. Choir members would pay a modest weekly fee, and there'd be no special clothes to buy," Rachel remembered. "On our first night we watched the car headlights approaching down the road to the Spa Pavilion... 26 men and women came. Half a dozen of those initial members are still singing with us."

Within a few weeks, numbers had grown, and by Christmas everyone wanted to show off their singing to an audience and so the bi-annual Family and Friends mini-



Felixstowe Community Choir September 2019

concert, nicknamed 'Parents Evening', was created. It was no longer a non-performing choir!

The choir moved to The Orwell Hotel in January 2013. 60-80 men and women were attending, singing a wide repertoire of songs from chart hits to show tunes, from The Muppets to Adele. Over the years several hundred local people have been choir members, with some getting the confidence to go and join more formal choirs. The choir is run on a not-for-profit basis and decisions are made by the members.

At our Family and Friends Concert on 17th February 2020 we presented cheques for £1,000 each to our chosen charities for the previous twelve months, St Elizabeth Hospice, Alzheimer's Research UK and Brain Tumour Research. This brought our direct donations to a variety of local and national charities, chosen by members, to £30,000. Past charities have included some very small local charities such as Walton Parish Nurses and the Ipswich Hospital Children's Ward school room. The choir has also sung at many charity concerts and with the Music in Felixstowe orchestra.

From March 2020 the choir, like all others, was unable to meet in person because of Covid, and Emily began a free-to-all Facebook Live singalong session, sponsored by choir funds, that attracted weekly over 100 people. The sessions only ended in June 2021, when up to thirty choir members started meeting to sing outside.



Covid rules allowing, Felixstowe Community Choir will restart on 19th July 2021, at a temporary home at St John's church 7.45 – 9.15 on Monday evenings, until the Orwell Hotel can have them back, probably in September. Any men and women aged over 18 are welcome and no experience is needed. Watch social media and the choir website for updates. Members are kept up to date via a weekly text, an occasional email newsletter, and social media and pay £5 a week.

"I always say that, apart from my family, Felixstowe Community Choir is the thing I am proudest of," smiled Rachel. "Emily gets everyone laughing and singing - including the majority of members who have never sung in a choir before."

www.felixstowecommunitychoir.co.uk

by Rachel Sloane

Felixstowe Allotment Association

As the Chair of the Felixstowe Allotment Association, I was asked if I could provide a short missive about the highs and lows of having an allotment in the town.

That said, in conversation with a fellow allotmenteer, I discovered the historic origins of the humble allotment. The term dates back to Anglo Saxon times when land was given to those who helped in the communal clearance of woodlands to which they had



certain rights of pannage. These labourers had the right to “pasturing of their pigs”. A right that (in a limited way) still exists today in the New Forest in Hampshire.

Many things then changed after 1066, and the re-distribution of land changed the “rights of the commoner”. Common land was being enclosed by new land owners and the common man was rapidly losing the right to use this land. In order to survive, representation was made to these landowners and some form of compensation was demanded. Those in tied cottages were given ‘allotted land’, in order that they could provide for the family. A pig was even allowed on this ‘allotted land’.

I find it interesting that the measurement for the allotment goes back to the rod, used to control a team of oxen who worked the land. The rod measured 5.5 yards, but we also now call the measurement a pole or a perch. The actual size was ten square rods and in today’s language is about 250 square metres, the size of a doubles tennis court and deemed to be sufficient to provide food for a family of six.

Moving forward in time and with the arrival of the Industrial Revolution and the building of back-to-back housing with no gardens, an allotment was seen as a vital asset in order to live. In 1908 we see the Small Holding & Allotment Act brought into law. The Act required local authorities to provide allotments with rental agreements that were fair.

Felixstowe Town Council plainly took notice of their statutory obligations and thus we have five allotment sites spread across the town. Cowpasture, taking its name from the nearby farm, remains by far the biggest even though it has been slightly moved over the years to make room for new roads and buildings.

As regards actual plots, Cowpasture has 312, Ferry Road 94, Coronation Drive 44, Taunton Road 17 and finally a small number remain at the main Cemetery, reducing over time to allow for the future growth in burial plots in Langley Avenue.



Most allotment holders look for a plot of about five or ten rods, some are lucky enough to have twenty or more rods, but as the demand increases, we are seeing five or ten as the norm and with a continued upturn in the desire to grow one's own there are a few smaller starter plots being let.

Coronation Drive and Ferry Road are both now totally surrounded by housing, with the Cowpasture site also now being touched by the latest

development under way in Candlet Road where over five hundred dwellings are to be erected by Persimmon homes.

With an evergrowing population, all our sites will be sought after by young and old, the experienced and the novice gardener. The modern terms of 'no dig' or the 'lasagne gardener' make me smile. 'No dig' does not mean 'no weeds'. It can be the opposite. The layering of cardboard, plastic or wood chips again does not mean 'no work'.

The preparation of the plot starts with careful thinking in August, followed by regular trips with a spade and fork in October. That's after I've placed my seed and potatoes order via our ever busy seed coordinator. Christmas Day sees the planting of the tomato seeds, quickly followed in my heated greenhouse with plenty of other seeds, all waiting for an early dry Spring so we can get planting. Although I'm very much a vegetable grower, the allotment produces amongst other things, red and white wine from the Cowpasture vineyard.



One member is an international rose grower who spends many hours tending a huge number of specimen roses. This year sees a marvellous display on his plot as you can see from the photograph.

All crops once sown, then need regular attention, just like my children did or my cat. They need to be seen regularly, watered and kept away from unwelcome visitors, that's weeds. I was told long ago, hoe every week before

you see a weed and that way you will never see one. Think about it.

We are an ever-growing allotment association, 260 and rising, we have a wealth of knowledge and experience and in my opinion, most are happy to chat on their hoe and discuss the finer points of allotmenting. We now have the facility to provide at reasonable cost, compost, fertilisers and much more to our members.

The committee work hard to ensure our relationship with the landlord! Felixstowe Town Council is positive and mutually productive to both sides. Having five sites does require maintenance and looking after, roadways and hedges need attention, plots come and go, always losing a few who become disheartened at the attention required or those tenants who move on to pastures new. Covid has seen a sharp rise in new tenants, and as I've alluded to, we may see smaller plots for those who do not need or wish to tackle a full plot.

The Association recognises we must involve our members, and we are currently seeking to replace our ageing and leaking communal hut at Cowpasture with a more friendly building that we can use Winter or Summer. Talking of Summer, this year with the assistance of our landlord, we have commenced a trial at the main site of a plastic portaloo, as used I'm told at the many "festivals" held across the Country. One day we hope to have our very own modern flushing toilet!

So, to close, if you are or were thinking of having an allotment plot in town, they do exist and the Town Council can advise you on the likelihood of having one this year or next. The Association is always pleased to welcome new plot holders and advice is never far away!

N J Farthing

The Thomas Cotman Plaque



On 4th August a ceremony took place to unveil a memorial plaque to the architect Thomas Cotman at Harvest House. The Mayor was in attendance. The plaque was made by Pat Todd and commemorated the fact that Cotman was an architect of Harvest House. The building with its shaped gables and clock tower, is just one of the iconic buildings in Felixstowe which he designed.

Present were the Mayor Mark Jepson, together with Jan Garfield, Chair of The Felixstowe Society, Vice Chairmen Roy Gray and Keith Horn, the Directors of Harvest House, Felixstowe Society Archivist Bev Boyce and Society committee members.



MEMBERS' CAR MEMORIES

A 'CHUMMY' LIVES ON

by M Thomas



In the January Newsletter, I described the building of a little sports car (The Special) from an Austin Chummy saloon (c 1929) bought from a Gloucester scrap yard for £10 in 1955.

I was amazed to find out from the DVLA that it was still taxed. However, they could not disclose information about the owners but I was able to track them down in Bath through the Austin 7 Owners' Club. A wonderful story emerged.

After its tour in Europe, the car was left untended but eventually "rescued" and bought by a young man who was yet to pass his driving test. His father helped to get it running again and it became his first car and a means of getting to work.

Unfortunately, it was then involved in an accident and written off with £30 compensation paid. It was retrieved from the local garage, but then stored for a while until a friend who needed a car, agreed to take a half share on the understanding he would restore it to working order. So, a new and improved example emerged with a proper windscreen – and a fine brass horn!



With competing interests (marriage, house buying, etc.) there ensued a period of some



As she was in 1965

30 years when the Special languished on blocks or under canvas in various driveways and garages. The half share was bought back around 2016, some work done and then the car given to the original owner's daughter as a Christmas present! "The car remains there and is still worked on, whilst the daughter has fun learning to double de-clutch".

The Special has survived so many ups and downs in its life and I hope it will continue in the ownership of the same family who have kept it alive for more than 60 years!

Let the editor know if you own - or have owned - an interesting classic vehicle which you would be willing to write about in the Newsletter.

Happy 65th Anniversary to the 'Box'

It was on 26 April 1956 that a converted petrol tanker, the 'SS Ideal X', laden with 58 containers, each 35 feet long, on her deck and with a liquid tank cargo in her hold, sailed from Newark, New Jersey to Houston, Texas.

This voyage began what was to become a revolution in world trade, with modern intermodal shipping an important sign of globalisation *and* which provides many of the items in use in daily life.



SS Ideal X

This concept of the container, or trailer van as it was first known, was the brainchild of an American businessman and transportation entrepreneur Malcolm McLean (1913 - 2001). He had been a former truck driver and knew all too well the inefficiency of the previous system, which involved repeated loading and unloading at ports at each end of the voyage. McLean shortened this process by designing a trailer chassis which allowed it, plus the container it carried, to be lifted and then stacked on or below deck. This operation not only reduced employment costs and improved reliability but also reduced pilferage and accidents. McLean had carefully worked out that by sending his containers by sea at a cost of \$0.16 per time, rather than overland, at a cost of just under \$6 a tonne, then the savings were in the order of 36 fold.

McLean had wanted to carry his company trucks on ships along the Atlantic coast of the United States from North Carolina to New York. However, the early 'trailer ships' were inefficient because they wasted potential cargo space on board. This resulted in McLean's modification of his original concept, so that just containers and not the truck chassis were loaded onto what were called container or box ships. Another problem for McLean was that a United States regulation did not then allow a trucking company to own a shipping line. He therefore started his own shipping line, which he later renamed sea-land service.

The world's 1st transatlantic shipment was realised in April 1966 between New York, Rotterdam in Holland, Bremen in Germany and Grangemouth in Scotland. The original container size of 35 feet long was by now standardised to 20 feet or 40 feet.

Michael Sharman

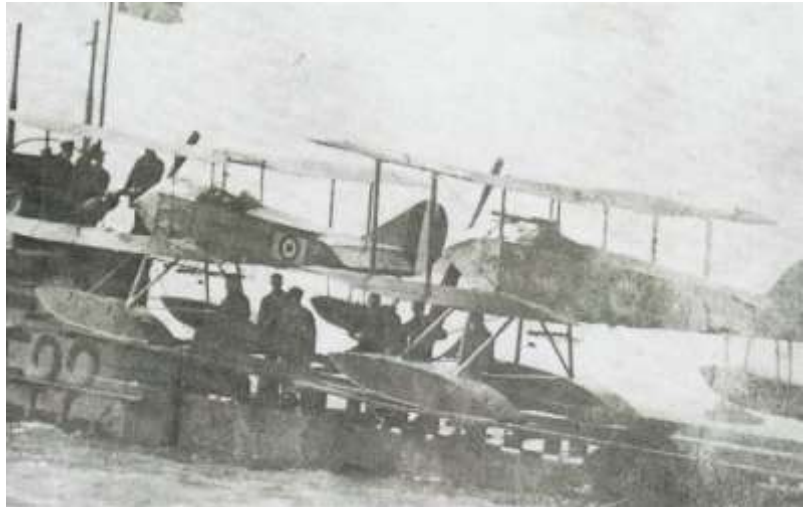
FELIXSTOWE SEAPLANE BASE 1913-1924

PART 2

4. Porte's Other Experiments

Porte carried out numerous experiments to increase aircraft range, with a view to tackling Zeppelins and high-flying aircraft.

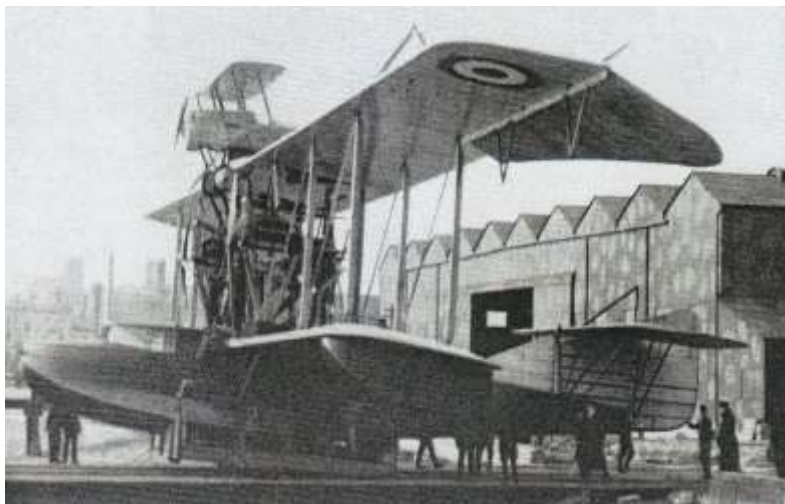
On 24th April 1916, two Sopwith Schneider floatplanes (3730 and 3743) were floated off a temporary wooden platform fitted behind the conning tower of submarine E22. This was done 3 times that day in the river between Harwich and Felixstowe.



24th April 1916, E22 and its Deckload

No effort was made to go to sea; the aircraft could only be launched in very calm water and the submarine could not dive without jettisoning them. The idea was never repeated and the aircraft were landed.

E22 was torpedoed by UB18 off Gt. Yarmouth the next day with the loss of 33 crew. The two survivors were rescued by UB18 after clinging to the remains of the wooden decking.



May 1916, Porte Baby and Bristol Scout

On 17th May 1916 Porte Baby Flying Boat 9800 took off from Felixstowe with a Bristol Scout C (3028) attached to its upper wing. The pair took off from Harwich Harbour and at 1000ft the Scout's pilot Flight Lt M.J. Day started his engine, released his aircraft and made the first ever landing at Martlesham which did not officially open until 16th January 1917.

Day was killed in France shortly after this flight. This experiment was, also, never repeated.

In 1917/18, Porte designed a semi-submersible pontoon, capable of being towed by a destroyer, for carrying flying boats across to Heligoland Bight for extended reconnaissance. On 11th August 1918, a Sopwith 2F.1 Ships Camel fighter (N6812), piloted by the Canadian Lieutenant Stuart Douglas Culley, taking off from a ramp equipped pontoon, shot down the Zeppelin L53. This aircraft hung inside the Spa Pavilion for a while. It can now be seen in the Imperial War Museum, London.

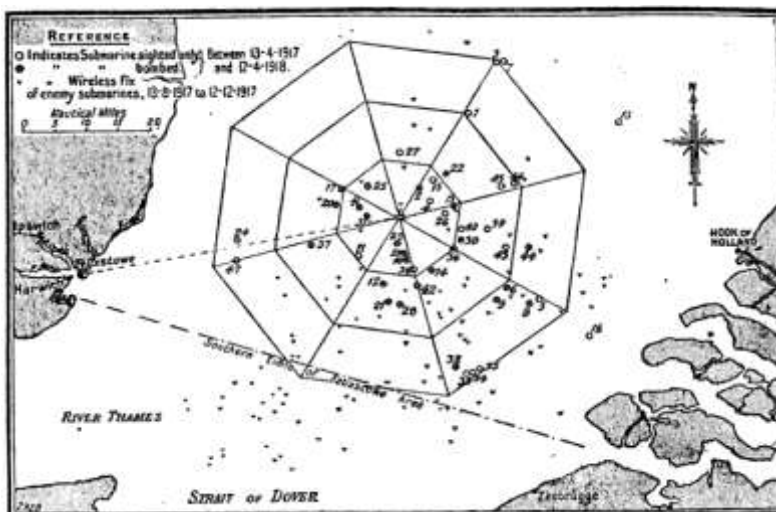


Late 1917, Felixstowe based Sopwith Baby, built by Blackburn Aircraft.

Throughout the war, despite the flying boats grabbing the headlines, inshore patrol

along the east coast was carried out by numerous floatplane types – Short 184 and 320, Sopwith, Blackburn and Fairey Hamble Babies, developed from the Sopwith Schneider. All helped to protect imports of meat and dairy products from the neutral Netherlands.

Two more of Porte's designs need to be mentioned. In 1916 the large, cumbersome, Felixstowe built, Porte Baby (9800) three engined (1 pusher, 2 tractors) biplane flying boat was tested and went into service. When retired in 1918 the hull of this boat remained at Felixstowe and had a door cut in its side and electric light laid on. Four WRNS drivers had sufficient room inside to sling their hammocks and stow their clothing. A production run of 10 (9801-9810) was built by May, Harden and May, at Hythe near Southampton.



'Spider's Web' as on a marine chart

Somewhat underpowered, these boats initially undertook spider web patrols from Felixstowe and Killingholme until 9810 was attacked on 1st October 1917 by 3 German aircraft which knocked out 2 of its engines forcing it to alight. After repairs and taxiing for nine hours to the Suffolk coast she was triumphantly towed into Felixstowe.

Babies were never again used

in areas where they ran the risk of meeting enemy aircraft. Two Babies were still on strength in Scotland at the armistice. The pilot of 9810 was Flt Commander William Sholto Douglas (1893-1969), subsequently a Marshal of the Royal Air Force (1946) and Chairman of BEA (1949-1964).

The last design was the Felixstowe F4 Fury (N123) (also known as the Porte Super Baby). A five engined triplane flying boat, developed from the sole four engined Curtiss Wanamaker Model T triplane (30z73), erected and unsuccessfully tested at Felixstowe in 1916. The Fury was built at Felixstowe and was first flown on Armistice Day 1918. It crashed and was damaged beyond repair on the 11th August 1919 at Felixstowe, whilst taking off for Plymouth, from where she would have flown an 8,000 mile record breaking flight to Durban, with numerous rest and recuperative stops along the route. One crew member was lost but six survived. A second Fury (N130) was probably not started.

5.The End of the War and its Aftermath

During his command at Felixstowe, Porte's rank, due to the reorganisation of the RFC and RNAS, into the nascent RAF on the 1st April 1918, when Felixstowe was renamed the Seaplane Experimental Station (SES), was variously described as Lieutenant Commander, Wing Commander and Lieutenant Colonel. He was pensioned with the rank of Colonel and joined the Gosport Aviation Company in August 1919 as chief designer, but died at Brighton on the 22nd of October 1919 of pulmonary tuberculosis. He was not quite 36 years old.

By June 1919, when SES was disbanded, Felixstowe had become the largest seaplane base in the world. Its three enormous hangars, erected by the Norwich firm of Boulton and Paul, were landmark features of Felixstowe Docks until they were demolished in the 1980s or 1990s. Each was served by its own slip and protective piers, whereby seaplanes on their wheeled beaching trolleys could be readily manoeuvred down into the water and retrieved from it.

Experimentation resumed when on the 17th March 1924 the Marine and Armament Experimental Establishment (MAEE) was established. On the 1st April 1924 armament trials together with landplane testing were transferred to Martlesham.

The base's sentry box, in the 1920s, was recorded as being fashioned from the front end



of a flying boat. The front section of what is almost certainly the same boat was found in the garden of 49 Seaton Road, Walton, which was being demolished to provide space for 2 new houses in 1989. It had been in use as a potting shed for many years and had stood nose up with the bow acting as a roof and a doorway where the nose gun position and cockpit would have been.

Lovingly restored, it can now be seen at the Norfolk and Suffolk Aviation Museum, at Flixton near Bungay. It is believed to be from a Felixstowe F5 and is the last link with the World War 1 seaplane base at Felixstowe.

Andrew Halliday

Orwell Park Observatory, Nacton

A rare and really fine example of a Victorian scientific establishment exists at Orwell Park Mansion in Nacton, which was the country home of Colonel George Tomline 1848 to 1889.

While not an astronomer himself, the Colonel believed that he had a public duty to use part of his large wealth for the advancement of science. Consequently, he asked John MacVicar Anderson, a very well-known architect, to build him an observatory and arranged for it to be equipped by Wilfrid Airy, who was the son of the Astronomer Royal.

A leading optics company, Troughton and Sims of London, made a powerful telescope which was 16 feet long and sat upon a cast iron mounting which was locally cast at Ransome's foundry in Ipswich.

The telescope now known as the Tomline Refractor, is housed in an 18 foot diameter dome reinforced with a cast-iron framework and lined with mahogany planking.



*Orwell Park Observatory
(James Appleton 2010)*



*The Tomline Refractor
(Ken Stacey 2010)*

The telescope sits at the top of the tower with a staircase of 111 treads. The dome is clad on the outside in copper sheet and is completely independent of the tower itself being able to rotate around 360° on a toothed track, which was also cast by Ransome's of Ipswich. Its aperture can be opened to see the night sky through the telescope.

Unusually, Colonel Tomline insisted that his observatory be situated within the framework of his mansion, rather than follow the normal practice for a private observatory of a wealthy landowner, to be built on high ground and isolated from the main house with all its disturbances.

The observatory became functional in mid-1874. However, surprisingly, there is no evidence that the Colonel actually made use of it himself. Instead, he appointed John Isaac Plummer as his professional astronomer to operate the observatory and to observe on his behalf. A house was built close to the Orwell Park Mansion for the astronomer and this house still survives today and is known as Orwell Dene.



Rear of Orwell Park Mansion with the observatory shutter open.

Following the death of Colonel Tomline, his observatory fell into disuse. In time the estate in which it stood was sold to the Orwell Park School Trust 1937 and the mansion became the residential school which is still there.

The aims of the Orwell Astronomical Society Ipswich (OASI), are to run the observatory and to bring the science of astronomy to the wider public. It undertook the extensive restoration of the observatory from 1967 and is now responsible for its operation and maintenance. The Society meets at the observatory and at Newbourne Village Hall.

For more information and membership details please email info@oasi.org.uk or see their website at www.oasi.org.uk.

Michael Sharman

From January 2022 we shall be returning to the printed version of this Newsletter. These will be delivered by Roger Baker and his team of volunteers. Our thanks go to Roger for organising the deliveries and of course to the volunteers.