

The Felixstowe Society

NEWSLETTER

Issue No. 128

January 2022



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

Contents

3	Chairman's Notes
5	Speakers
6	Holiday/Beach Clean
7	Beach Hut and Chalet Association
8-14	Planning Applications
15	Felixstowe Walkers
16	Social Event
17-19	The Felixstowe Society Archive
20	September Speaker's Evening
21-23	First RIBA Woman Architect
24	October Speaker's Evening
25	November Speaker's Evening
26-27	St Andrew's Church
28	Felixstowe Library
29	The Annual Dinner Booking Form
31	The Quiz Booking Form

THE FELIXSTOWE SOCIETY CONTACTS

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Keith Horn	Joint Vice Chair	01394 270845



CHAIRMAN'S NOTES



Hello Members

Hope that you are all well and enjoying this glorious weather that we are experiencing at the moment. Warm enough today for me to forget that I was wearing a coat when I went to the hairdresser's and arriving home without it, necessitating a swift return visit!

On reading my Notes from last time, there seems quite a bit of waffle as I hadn't a lot to impart. This time there will be more meat on the bones. Firstly, I want to thank the Harvest House Directors and their hard-working Manager for allowing us to use the Dining Room for Committee Meetings. So much more comfortable than our old venue and no stairs!

Talking about Harvest House, we held our first event since lockdown there in September which was a Buffet Supper and Entertainment. We went ahead with some trepidation as we didn't know how many people would want to come. However, we were amazed at the attendance numbers and it was wonderful to hear all the chatter and laughter echoing around that beautiful room. My grateful thanks must go to the catering team headed by Hilary Eaton who had to find alternative caterers at the last minute as our previous firm had just changed hands and the new owners do not do catering at the moment!

In October our Archivist, Bev Boyce, and her lovely assistant, Jean Macpherson, put on a fantastic Archive Exhibition in the newly refurbished Palm Court in Harvest House. It was a wonderful display and very well received by the members, who didn't stop coming all day. Bev received many donations as well for the Archive. We intend to have another Exhibition next year and Bev is already planning this. We also held a smaller Exhibition at the Hut which attracted some new members for us. We were also given the original architect's plans for Old Felixstowe, going back into the nineteenth century. These were donated by a wonderful gentleman who found them in his attic. They are in fabulous condition and Bev hopes that they will be on show next year.

Talking about the Archive, this has moved to a much lighter room which has dried out since the flood earlier this year. Fortunately, none of the Archive was damaged as it is all on racks, but it all had to be moved to another area to let the room dry and then moved back. Bev had a lot of help from dear Keith and Elizabeth Horn, Mick the Manager and a gentleman called Andy who has been incredible. So, thanks to anyone who helped.

We have so far held 3 Speakers' Evenings since September and have been very pleased with the attendances. They compare very well with those before the pandemic and we are very grateful for your support. We realise that there are still some folk who are wary of attending gatherings and even to come out, we do understand. Hopefully you will feel able to return when this dreadful virus wanes again. At the first of these evenings I

presented cheques to Harvest House (who let us use all the rooms free of charge) and to Felixstowe Coastwatch. This week I also presented one to The Men's Shed for the work they do for mental health.

I have to report a very sad event, that of the death of our former Newsletter Editor, Honor Dines. Honor died early in November but had not been well for a while. I and some other Committee Members will be attending her funeral next week and we have all been asked to wear a bit of red as it was Honor's favourite colour.

I also have to report that I have received a letter from both the Walk Leaders to say that they cannot carry on for family reasons. No one has come forward from the Group to take over, so our walking group will, sadly, cease. However, there are alternatives for our walkers as you will see further in the Newsletter.

Nearly finished! We need to future proof the Committee with younger people who can take over from us Oldies when we can no longer read, hear or stand! If you feel that you would like to join the Committee without a particular job to do, but just to see what we do, please contact myself or Keith or Roy. We only meet 4 times a year, usually, and are a very friendly bunch.

Anyway, enough from me.

I hope you had a Happy Christmas and wish you a Healthy and Prosperous New Year,

Jan

We are very sad to announce the death of our previous Newsletter Editor, Honor Dines. Honor died in hospital on 1st November and we send our condolences to her family, especially to her son Richard, who kindly helped with an edition of the Newsletter.

Honor was always so enthusiastic about her job and also about The Society, always ready at events with her trusty camera, despite her health problems towards the end of her tenure.

Speakers For 2022

The Speakers' Evenings are held in the Salvation Army Church Hall, Cobbold Road. Doors open at 7 p.m. and the evenings will start promptly at 7.30 p.m.

We would encourage masks to be worn at all times.

January 25th	G Page	<i>The Citizens Advice Bureau</i>
February 22nd	Lisa Wall	<i>Where Have all the Houses Gone?</i>
March 22nd	J Bradburn	<i>The Capture and Escape in WW2 of Men of the 67th Regiment</i>
April 26th	Julie Wheeler	<i>Sutton Hoo</i>
May 24 th A G M.	Bev Boyce	<i>1953 Floods</i>
Sept 27th	C. Hullcoop	<i>Windmills</i>
Oct 25th	Pip Wright	<i>'I read it in the local paper'</i>
Nov 22nd	Brian Ansell	<i>Architecture</i>

Organiser Roy Gray

QUIZ NIGHT, QUIZ NIGHT, QUIZ NIGHT

Make a note in your diary, our Quiz Night has been booked for Friday 25th February. Details on page 31.

FELIXSTOWE SOCIETY ANNUAL DINNER

Another date for your diary, Monday 11th April. Full details on page 29.

Holiday to Winchester, Friday 27th May to Monday 30th May 2022

I am pleased to report that we have almost filled our coach for this long-awaited holiday to the Winchester area.

If you are still thinking about applying, why not give me a ring and I will let you know if we have any seats available.

Keith Horn

Telephone: 01394 270845 or email kjandehorn@btinternet.com

NEWS FLASH

Please put a note in your diaries - Wednesday 6th JULY 2022 AFTERNOON TEA PARTY – FULL DETAILS WILL BE IN OUR MAY NEWSLETTER.

Felixstowe Society Beach Clean – 9th September 2021

On a lovely September morning 8 members and friends gathered together at 9.30am at the shelter on the prom along from the Fludyers Hotel, to carry out a beach clean from Cobbolds Point to the Spa Pavillion. The beach was in a very clean condition and when the rubbish was weighed at the end of our hour's work we had only managed to collect 2Kgs in total. Many thanks go to Mick Elmes, Mike Atkinson, Peter Bridges, David Markwell, Dan and Shirley and Elizabeth for helping me with this clean up.



Afterwards we enjoyed our coffee and time for catching up, at The Kiosk at the bottom of Bath Hill.

Keith Horn.



Felixstowe Beach Hut & Chalet Association

At the risk of being boringly repetitive, we are still hoping that a solution can be found for hut owners at the Spa Pavilion site. A group of owners, supported by the Association, are working very hard to try and convince East Suffolk Council that there could be a solution to allow the huts to remain in the vicinity of the Spa, even if it is not on the beach nor in their current position on the prom. However, their efforts are currently falling on deaf ears. Replenishment of the beach would be the ideal solution, not only for hut owners but also for beach users, but that is ruled out on the grounds of cost although we understand that there is due to be a replenishment in 2027/28.

East Suffolk Council's preferred option is to move the huts to existing sites in other parts of the seafront and have submitted a planning application to increase the number of huts at Manor End by sixteen. Other sites are at Clifflands and Pier South, which would also have to be the subject of planning applications. None of these options are what the owners want. They point out that huts have existed at the Spa for many years and are part of the heritage of the town. It is believed that beach huts at the Spa were some of the first in the country. There are many old photographs which show huts in this location. I'm sure this will be reported on further in future articles.

We are planning to hold our AGM in person next year, and our Chair, Jo Woodward, and Vice Chair, Roy Gray, have given advanced notice that they are intending to stand down then. They have been in post since the Association was formed in 2013 and have given great service to our members. We have appealed to our membership of 606 people for some of them to come forward to join the Committee. Whilst we will be sad to lose Jo and Roy it is not always a bad thing to get new people with new ideas and energy onto a Committee.

Trevor Mason

**APPLICATIONS LISTED IN PREVIOUS NEWSLETTER AS AWAITING
DISTRICT COUNCIL DECISION**

REF	ADDRESS	PROPOSAL	SOCIETY COMMENTS	ESC DECISION
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.	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 Felixstowe 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/21/2210	77 Ranelagh Road	Rear and side extension	The Felixstowe Society has no objections in principle but considers that red brick would be a more appropriate material.	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 (Use	The Felixstowe Society objects to the planning application in the strongest possible terms. (See ESC	Awaiting decision

		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.	Website for full letter of objection).	
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.	Permitted
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/21/1384	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.	Permitted
DC/21/2999	13 Quilter Road	Proposed change of use from financial services offices for use by the	The Felixstowe Society considers that the proposal will cause no harm	Permitted

		applicants only, to single dwellinghouse	to the significance of the conservation area	
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.	Permitted
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	Refused
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	Permitted

**APPLICATIONS COMMENTED ON BY THE SOCIETY
JULY 26th 2021 TO NOVEMBER 24th 2021**

DC/21/3433	4 Red Hall Court	Replacement of seven windows & two door sets	The Felixstowe Society considers that the new fenestration should match the existing and that traditional materials would be preferable. However, it is considered that the scheme is unlikely to harm the significance of the conservation area.	Permitted
DC/21/3438	Spa Pavilion Undercliff Road West	Alterations and extensions to the Spa Pavilion to form a ground floor extension with first floor balcony to the North Sea-facing elevation and entrance canopy to	The Felixstowe Society supports the scheme provided that the works retain sufficient space to enable HGV access to the rear of the theatre.	Permitted

		the primary Theatre entrance	The area under the restaurant projection has no real character and the proposal would add to the appearance and attraction of the building. It is considered that the extension will enhance and preserve the character of the Conservation Area	
DC/21/3368	3 Cranmer Cliff Gardens	Proposed installation at ground floor of 1no. pair of French doors (with fanlights over) and 14no. replacement windows into existing openings to front and rear of flat	The Felixstowe Society considers that the scheme would cause no harm to the significance of the conservation area	Awaiting decision
DC/21/3196	1 The Courts	To replace existing sash windows with upvc mock sash opening outwards windows to keep them in character and look of sash windows. Also, to remove a dead overgrown ivy bush and replace with a matching feather board fence, adding to the existing fence.	The Felixstowe Society regrets the creeping replacement of timber windows and doors by UPVC replicas, but providing visual appearance is almost identical to originals this should cause no harm to the significance of the conservation area.	Permitted
DC/21/3944	19 Manning Road	Discharge of Condition Nos 11 and 14 of DC/18/4989/FUL-Extensions and alterations to existing building to create a total of four residential units and four shop/office units (Existing workshop to be demolished). Re-submission of previously approved scheme C/10/2097 - Drawing indicating Aco drains and	The Felixstowe Society considers that the proposal will cause no harm to the significance of the conservation area.	Permitted

		Document with Flood Mitigation Measures		
DC/21/3878	Land To The Rear Of 9 To 15 York Road	Single storey detached dwelling and new driveway connection to un-adopted access road	Felixstowe Society objects to this proposal, considers that the land should be retained for residents' parking.	Refused
DC/21/3776	Harvest Court Cobbold Road Felixstowe	Holm Oak (T001) - fell and remove stump	The Felixstowe Society considers that the Holm Oak is a significant feature in the streetscene of the conservation area and should be replaced by a suitable species, to be advised by the Council's Arboriculturalist.	Permitted
DC/21/3785	85 Ranelagh Road	Bay tree to be felled - tree is causing blockage of drains. Rowan tree to be felled - tree is overhanging neighbour's garden and causing them problems with their garden.	The Felixstowe Society considers that there is insufficient information on the public file. The Rowan Tree should be reshaped or pollarded to reduce overhang of neighbour's garden	Permitted
DC/21/3386	2 Red Hall Court	To change current windows and doors to UPVC. Like for like in style	The Felixstowe Society considers that there is insufficient information on the public file. The applicant should confirm that the proposed replacements will match doors and windows of adjacent houses in the terrace.	Permitted
DC/21/3957	11 High Beach	Front garden, immediately to right of double garage 1 x Gleditsia triacanthos (Honey locust) - Fell to ground level Reason: The tree has substantial dieback and is located close to pavement and road	The Felixstowe Society considers that there is insufficient information on the public file. The Honey Locust is a significant tree in the conservation area street scene. Applicant should include a proposal for	Permitted

			a suitable replacement species, to be advised by the Council's Arboriculturalist.	
DC/21/3990	The Priory 2 Cliff Road	Listed Building Consent - two storey front/side extension (retention of works already undertaken).	Having regard to the many additions and alterations to this building over the years including the relatively recent approved developments, The Felixstowe Society does not consider that the proposal is out of keeping, even though it is slightly higher than the previously agreed scheme.	Permitted
DC/21/4630	Manor Court 9 The Courts	Rebuilt garden room, new walls and roof, plinth to remain	The Felixstowe Society considers that the proposal would cause no harm to the significance of the conservation area	Awaiting decision
DC/21/4404	27 Langer Road	Single storey rear and side extension with second storey infill between double gable roof	The Felixstowe Society considers that the proposal is an unsympathetic design in a prominent location and would be harmful to the setting of the conservation area.	Withdrawn
DC/21/4395	Ridley House Maybush Lane	Fell the dying Sycamore tree in the corner. Fell three Sycamore trees in the middle of the back woodland area. Fell one Holly tree. Remove one limb from a Sycamore tree overhanging the neighbour's garden. Remove the dead wood from one Holm Oak tree. Fell five Holm Oak trees in the front garden. Pollard Holm Oak trees near the trampoline. Pollard one Holm	The Felixstowe Society considers that there is insufficient information on the public file to justify the proposed works. There is no plan to re-locate the trees in question.	Permitted

		Oak tree by the boundary wall		
DC/21/4252	47 Orwell Road	Change of use of salon and flat to one dwelling with rear extension - design changed (reduced) to suit updated.	The Felixstowe Society considers that the proposal will cause no harm to the significance of the conservation area.	Permitted
DC/21/4202	Beech House 20 Buregate Road	1x Eucalyptus - To be felled; tree is touching electric wiring. I am advised by a tree surgeon that it is too near the house. 1x Cherry - Grown too high and now touching same electric wiring; to have crown reduced up to 30% to more manageable scale.	The Felixstowe Society considers that there is insufficient information on the public file to comment.	Permitted
DC/21/4203	Beech House 20 Buregate Road	Beech Tree in the rear garden of 20 Buregate Road Felixstowe; reduction overall 30%	The Felixstowe Society considers that the work is necessary and acceptable.	Permitted
DC/21/4867	45 Bath Road	Fell Monkey Puzzle tree	The Felixstowe Society considers that the work is unfortunate and would prefer to see surgery to lower branches	Awaiting decision
DC/21/4706	8 South Hill	Construction of new balconies to Nos 3 and 5	The Felixstowe Society considers that the proposal would cause no harm to the significance of the conservation area	Awaiting decision
DC/21/4629	81 Ranelagh Road	Single storey rear and side extension	The Felixstowe Society considers that the proposal is overdevelopment which would impact on the neighbour. The overhanging guttering is not shown on the drawing. It would result in a narrow dark alleyway.	Awaiting decision



MAY 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 **22nd March**, 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.

Felixstowe Walkers

As you know from the last issue of the magazine, I have, reluctantly, had to withdraw my offer of organising a limited programme of walks under the Felixstowe Walkers banner. I did approach the other walk leaders to see whether anyone else might be willing to take over but nobody felt able to do so. It, therefore, looks as though Felixstowe Walkers, at least in its current form, will cease to exist. Thank you, in particular, to Laurence Gilbert, who put together the programme of walks since its inception.

The good news is that several other groups in Felixstowe now organise walks similar to those we provided – in particular the ‘Stepping Out’ group with whom we organised a number of joint walks before the hiatus. The local coordinator is Nigel Meadows, who himself is a Felixstowe Society member, and he would be pleased to see any of you on the walks his group organises. During the winter months the group tries to organise weekly walks, alternating short walks along the prom with longer walks in and around Felixstowe. Full details can be found on the Stepping Out website at <https://onelifesuffolk.co.uk/services/health-walks/our-walks>

I hope some of you will join Nigel and his colleagues on their walks. I have, personally, gained a lot from walking with others and can thoroughly recommend it for your physical and mental wellbeing

Alan Muchal

The Newsletters are delivered by Roger Baker and his team of volunteers.
Our thanks go to Roger for organising the deliveries and of course
to the volunteers

Felixstowe Society Social Event at Harvest House

On 3rd September, more than 70 members gathered in the elegant dining room at Harvest House for the first main get-together since lock-down began. It was good to see so many old friends again after so long.



Everyone brought their own glasses and drinks, and the catering team did a great job in ordering and arranging a delicious selection of sandwiches and cake.

During the evening the 'In Tandem' trio, of David, Ann and Ian on violin, guitar and accordion played a selection of music and songs, mostly related to the sea and seafarers, including a song about the 'Button boy' on the HMS Ganges mast, and another about the 1953 floods. They were much enjoyed and appreciated.



The proceeds of the raffle were split between Harvest House and Coastwatch, both of whom The Society is keen to support. The evening was rated a great success, and a good start to a programme of talks to follow in the Autumn and Winter.

Haley Dosser

THE FELIXSTOWE SOCIETY ARCHIVE

We would like to thank all those members who attended the inaugural archive exhibition at Harvest House on August 22, 2021. The feedback was very positive and we received a number of donations during and after the event.

The Palm Court at Harvest House is an ideal venue for an exhibition, especially when space and ventilation are required to ensure a safe environment for all visitors. We were able to display many items from the archive including all our photo albums which proved to be very popular, particularly the Emeny photos of 19th and 20th century Felixstowe and Walton.

Some albums, which have not been on display before, contained photos showing the construction of sea defences from The Dip to Cobbold's Point in the years from 1989 to 2000.



The photo on the left shows Jean Macpherson and Elizabeth Horn checking the albums before the exhibition opens.

We hope to produce new albums of photos for next year's exhibition, which will also contain completely different displays from this year's event.

A photo display of all 31 of the plaques unveiled by The Society in Felixstowe, Walton and The Trimleys surprised a number of members who did not realise how fortunate

we are to have so many notable high achievers, such as Frank Whittle, Keith Wood and Harry Fensom. Ex-students of Felixstowe Grammar School were able to relive their time through a variety of memorabilia, including the famous whole school photos. Some more unusual items were displayed on tables and on the grand piano. Fragments of the original 1898 wallpaper from the Orwell Hotel and a copy of an original Jockey Scales



ticket were displayed for those who remember this iconic seaside attraction. Both items were collected by Phil Hadwen- who else!

The exhibition was opened by the Mayor of Felixstowe, Mark Jepson, accompanied by his wife and our Chairman welcomed all members to the event. Jan expressed The Society's appreciation to the Directors of Harvest House and the Manager, Mick Marlow, for their support in helping Keith and Roy to organise this event.



We are grateful to Peter Baggott, Sue Hazelwood and Ernie and Erica Entwistle for their donations and the lady who gave us a copy of the 1982 edition of the Cotman Walk .

The Entwistle family used to live in Gainsborough Road next door to the house lived in by John Mills whilst he was working in Ipswich in the late 1920s. In 2005 a very elderly John Mills paid a return visit to Felixstowe, a town of which he had happy memories. The photo below, by kind permission of the Entwistle family, shows Ernie and his son alongside John Mills and his carer.



On September 12, The Society Archive was again on display, albeit in a more limited form, at the OPWA day centre on the prom. This enabled members of the public to find out more information about The Society and become members which some did – on the spot! We received a donation of various

items from John Smith and the loan of some photos, which we can copy for the archive, from David Shaw. A highlight of the day was a donation by Andrew Shelton-Murray of Chattisham Hall near Ipswich. He explained that when he moved into the hall, he found a large folder of maps dated from 1882-1908, showing 'Building land and Seaside Residences' in what is now known as Old Felixstowe and the West End of town, to be sold at auction by Shuckford Downing & Co among other auctioneers.



The architects and surveyors were Eade and Johns, another famous name in Felixstowe architecture.

The folder is full of wonderful detail and we hope to find a way of displaying this at next year's exhibition, while preserving the delicate nature of the maps.

Finally, the new room has recovered from the flooding in the summer and we are moving everything back in, so from the New Year we shall be in operation.

We would like to thank Jean's husband, Andrew, for carrying so many heavy items from the now demolished Deben High School down to the basement.



We are also very grateful to Andy Walsh for providing the new work table as shown in the photo on the left. This will be invaluable for conservation work. Keith Horn's continued support is much appreciated.

*Bev Boyce and Jean Macpherson
The Felixstowe Society Archivists*

The September Speaker's Evening



Mick Maughan

The evening began with the presentation of cheques to Mick Maughan of Coastwatch and John Grumbridge of Harvest House, these being the proceeds of the raffle held at the recent Society social evening.



John Grumbridge



Borin van Loon

Following on from this was an interesting talk by Borin van Loon, entitled Ghost Signs; traces of lost Ipswich businesses.

Ghost signs are not something most of us are aware of, but Borin van Loon spoke about them in his talk and showed us a photo of the Edward Fison Ltd sign, on the side of a building near the wet dock in Ipswich. It has faded over the years, but is still plainly visible and a reminder of how important milling and malting were to Ipswich's economy during the 19th and early 20th centuries.

His range of photos of old signs, still visible, was quite amazing - Bakers Pastry shop on the corner of Fonnereau Road and the Edme Bakery in Dog's Head Street, tell of flour milling. Many others remind us of Breweries which in the early days were in pubs, forerunners of today's trends. The Old Bell Inn on Stoke Bridge is one of the oldest pubs in Ipswich, founded in 1639, which is now a Funeral director's premises, but whose signage is still very clear.



Egertons, one of the largest motor dealers, has a sign still prominent on Crown Street, though now long gone, as is the Bake Office in Felaw Street, once the place to take your meal to be cooked after the baking had finished, but whose sign is still very prominent.

A most interesting and well-illustrated talk, with more to come as Borin continues to explore his subject throughout Suffolk and Norfolk.

Haley Dossier

Hilda Frances Mason (1879 – 1955)

First Woman Architect of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA)

Sometimes life poses you a variety of questions which are answered through a series of circumstances. Each on their own is not of great worth but when joined, allows a coherent joining of the dots in the answers found. Such was my research journey on Hilda Mason, the original architect of St Andrew's Church, Felixstowe.

From 2018, the rewriting of the Old Felixstowe Parish history; the formation of the Old Felixstowe Parish Archive; meeting with Vicky Thornton (ARIBA) and lastly the preparation of a 90th Anniversary Exhibition for the current St Andrew's Church. It was soon apparent how little information there was about Hilda Mason. The most noticeable missing puzzle piece was a picture of Hilda as no public source appeared to have one! It was only one week before the 90th Celebrations in 2021 that I learnt of the existence of Hilda's great niece and suddenly a whole avenue of source material was opened up to me. So, from a few jottings by the late Phil Hadwen, to various sentences in Archive documents, to interviewing the great niece, this article is a summary of my findings.



A Young Hilda

Hilda Mason was born in Ipswich in 1879, daughter of Frank William Mason, a cement & timber merchant in Great Blakenham, Ipswich and his wife Bertha *née* Turner. Hilda was the eldest of 5 children – 3 girls and 2 boys. Her parents believed in the value of education for the girls so Hilda was taught by a governess whilst her younger sister, Elfreda, studied at a private school. All the girls were taught in a wider curriculum than was usual for girls at this time.

During the First World War Hilda agreed to remain at home and care for their ageing parents, whilst Elfreda went to drive an ambulance on the Western Front. Hilda realised the shortage of manpower so taught herself to type and gained employment in the offices of H Munro Cautley ARIBA, as a Secretary and Tracer. H Munro Cautley were the Diocesan Surveyors to the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich and also had connections with planning aspects of the Bartlet Hospital in Felixstowe.

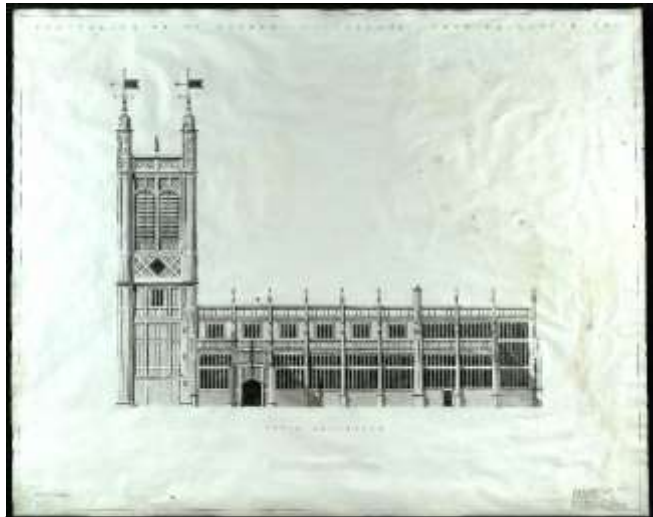
After the war Elfreda took over parental duties which enabled Hilda to pursue her desire for a career in architecture. She became one of the very few lady architects of the 1920's. Hilda was the *first* English woman to qualify as an Associate of the Royal Institute of British Architects (ARIBA) after 3 years of study, 1921-1924, having enrolled at the age of 39. The Architectural Association at this time was renowned for "a mixture of traditional architecture and modernism" so it is not surprising that Mason experiments with this material (concrete), that became a hallmark of modernism. She also had a family connection with the Concrete Works at Great Blakenham (later Blue Circle) near Ipswich, which her brother ran, so was not unfamiliar with the material.



Hilda in 1936

The first plans for the replacement of St Andrew's were drawn up by Mr H W Buxton, but the Rev Greene disliked them. Hilda was a neighbour of the Vicar, Rev Greene, in Maybush Lane, her parents owning Northcliffe House and she, living in Northcliffe Cottage. He appointed Mason as a replacement architect, she was working also as surveyor to the Diocese. In her short time since qualifying she had set up her own business and whilst dealing with as many as 70 rectory jobs in a year for the Diocese, also designed the Nurses Home in Felixstowe, additions to the Convalescent Home (at the bottom of Convalescent Hill) and a lot of domestic work for wealthy clients. St Andrew's Church in Felixstowe (1929-1931) was Hilda's first major design project.

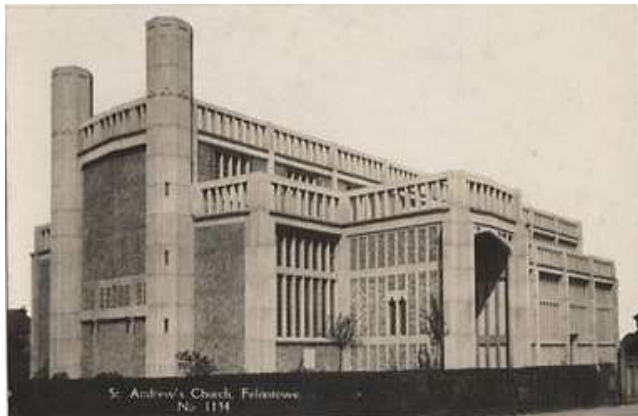
The unexpected building and design of St Andrew's got a rough ride from the Church Commissioners' architects, who vetoed her first solo design. It may have been questioned that a woman was not a suitable architect. Architectural Review supported St Andrew's (the Erith/Mason design) as a "brave experiment that has the merit of combining structural sincerity with a genuine English feeling". 'The last wool church' was one comment, as St Andrew's was based on the typical Suffolk Wool Church, like Lavenham or Blythburgh in the perpendicular (Gothic) style. However, it used a very modern material of concrete, rather than timber and brick, which had been dismissed as too expensive.



The original approved plan based on Hilda's

From the original plans on display in St Andrew's, it can be seen that Hilda's name was added afterwards to Erith's name, who was a respected London Architect at this time. Inspiration also came from Perrett's concrete Church of Notre Dame, Le Raincy (1922-5) which Hilda had visited. She feared that this would increase the unpopularity of her own church by association with architecture which was too innovative, foreign and Catholic. She had to fight for approval from the Church Commissioners and stated in a letter after the first refusal, "we wish to give the parishioners the very best building, anything unsatisfactory would grieve me far more than anyone else in Felixstowe." She went on to say, "A modern design would not be acceptable to the client's tastes – or my own as a member of the Church of England. We have thoroughly talked over the whole design and chose to use slightly Gothic treatment of detail."

During the building of St Andrew's Hilda showed her character by standing up for what she always believed in and her design integrity. The family recalled she was a woman of short stature but formidable character. However, an argument with the Rev Greene ensued during the building of St Andrew's and Hilda was replaced by Raymond Wrinch, an Ipswich architect. Hilda had arranged



The Completed St Andrews Church in 1931

the inclusion of multi coloured glass panels, in a red, yellow and blue design, but the Vicar was appalled and stated he would not have his church looking like "an Italian Ice Cream Parlour". Unwilling to compromise, Hilda resigned with Erith following suit. The family were not surprised, although to many, it is recorded, she was modest and had a charming personality.

Hilda Mason's other major work was completely modernist, Kings Knoll, Woodbridge, 1933, a house for herself in the International Style. Recently this building has been sold and is undergoing renovation to make it a modern family house, within the Grade II listing boundaries. Recently, I chatted with the builders who established that, features which had been removed, were being returned in the original style. We shall have to see if this is a sympathetic renovation when it is completed.



Kings Knoll

Hilda was a renowned supporter of anything to do with Suffolk, being a member of the Suffolk Preservation and Archaeological Society, the CPRE Countryside Charity, also serving on the Executives and Village Halls Committees of the Rural Community Council. From youth she was an artist often exhibiting work in Felixstowe and Ipswich. Her mother had probably encouraged this being a highly proficient artist herself, with many of her paintings remaining in the family. Hilda died in 1955, aged 74, in Ipswich, of pneumonia and had remained unmarried. Her obituary states, "Wherever good design and planning and a touch of beauty was required, either in building or landscape, Hilda Mason was enthusiastic in advice and cooperation." (East Anglian Daily Times May 1955)

Such was Hilda Mason. An "unsung great" of Felixstowe, probably because of her modesty, but someone whose passion in creativity and preservation has left us with the unique buildings of St Andrew's Church and King's Knoll, Woodbridge. A woman in a man's world unwilling to sacrifice her integrity yet being a pioneer for many today in the world of architecture.

Jean Macpherson, The Felixstowe Society Archivist

The October Speaker's Evening

The Great Exhibition 1851

Geoffrey Kay described for us, the conception and realisation of the Great Exhibition of 1851, in his fascinating and well-illustrated talk.

The Industrial Revolution had started in 1789 when the first iron bridge was built at Ironbridge - a revolution in the use of metal rather than wood. Henry Cole, a buccaneering civil servant, dreamt up the notion of a Great Exhibition to raise the standards of industrial design, and to showcase what was happening in the country. He had access to Prince Albert, who immediately warmed to the idea, but suggested that it was for all countries and not just for the UK.

There was no suitable building available, so Queen Victoria offered the temporary use of Hyde Park. By the Summer of 1850 a design had still not been chosen and the Exhibition was due to open in May 1851. A designer named Joseph Paxton then became interested. He had started his career as a gardener, firstly at Chiswick House, a London home of the Duke of Devonshire, and later at Chatsworth. He had designed large greenhouses for the Duke, big enough for visitors to drive their carriages through.

Doodling at a boring meeting one day, he sketched out a design for the competition for the building for the Great Exhibition. It was eagerly selected by the committee and backed by Henry Cole.

Time was of the essence with less than 9 months to complete the project, but with 2000 workmen on site, it was completed on time and opened in May 1851. The site itself became a tourist attraction and over 8 million visitors came during the 6 months the exhibition was open. Countries from all over the world exhibited, and the many volumes of the catalogue extended for over 5 feet in length on the shelf!



Queen Victoria opens the Exhibition

Charlotte Bronte thought the Exhibition was marvellous. William Morris was so horrified he refused to go in, and Thomas Cook started his travel business by running trains to London with the Exhibition as the main attraction.

Of course, it became known as the Crystal Palace, and after the exhibition closed, it was moved to Sydenham, but was eventually destroyed by fire in 1936.

Many of the exhibits formed the basis of the collection at the Victoria and Albert Museum, where Henry Cole became the first Director, and the proceeds funded the building of the Albert Hall.



Geoffrey Kay

The November Speaker's Evening

We had a very interesting talk by Robert Simper on the River Deben, at our November meeting.

Robert was born and lived most of his life, at Ramsholt, close to Woodbridge. He has a wonderful knowledge of the River Deben and the history of many places and buildings on the River.



Robert Simper

The talk was accompanied by slides, showing many of the places on the river. His talk started, as the Deben does, at a ditch in Debenham and finished at the mouth in Felixstowe.

Having spent most of his life on or around the Deben, he had some lovely stories about some of the old well-known characters, who lived and worked in the area. He also spoke about some of the craft which used the River for both business and pleasure.

Robert has written some 30 plus books about the Deben.

Roy Gray

Autumn Clean-up at Gulpher Pond



Before



After Clean-up



After Clean-up



The Three Musketeers are L to R: Mick Elmes, Bob Stoner, Guy Pearse with D'Artagnan behind the camera!

St Andrew's Church, Felixstowe

The weekend of the 7th/8th August 2021 saw an interesting exhibition held in St Andrew's Church celebrating the 90th Anniversary of its consecration.

This third church in the Parish of Old Felixstowe (St Peter and St Paul and the Ferry Church of St Nicholas are the others) is the successor to a temporary corrugated iron and wood church erected in 1907, on land donated by Captain Ernest George Pretyman (1859-1931), to cater for the growing residential area near the town railway station and



the Orwell Hotel, both of which had opened in 1898. This was a second-hand church from Shepherd's Hill, London N.6. and had already been dedicated to St Andrew. It was nicknamed the "Tin Tabernacle" and when the new church was built it was bought by the local building firm Rogers Bros and stood at their works opposite Beach Station for many years.

This building was regarded as a temporary solution and the Rev Walter Horne (Vicar 1911-25) raised £3,000 in a building fund for a permanent church, but the project was suspended during World War One. Plans were drawn up by Henry William Buxton who had designed the Cliff Hotel and the Cottage Hospital. From 1925 to 1946 Ulsterman Henry Barker Greene was Vicar and he was determined that St Andrew's should be an Evangelical counterpoint to the High Church Anglicanism of St John's.

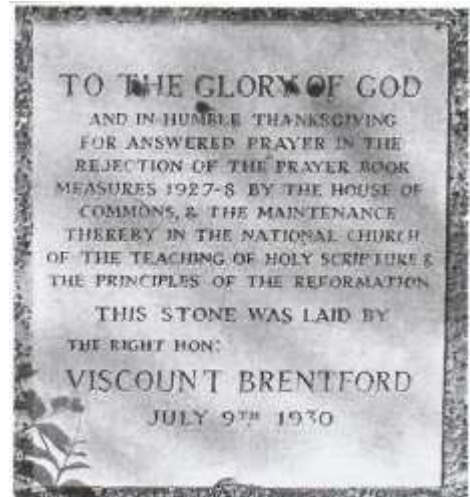
Miss Hilda Mason (1897-1955)** drew up new plans. In a bold move she proposed a design inspired by the medieval Suffolk churches like Lavenham but using concrete rather than brick and timber which was dismissed as too expensive. It was turned down by the Church Commissioner's Architects, so she turned for help to Raymond Erith (1904-1973) whom she had met as a fellow student and the plans were resubmitted and approved in December 1929, with Erith's name added.

Building started in Spring 1930. The framework of reinforced ferroconcrete was made on site, the liquid concrete being poured into a framework of wooden shuttering, the marks of which can still be seen on the pillars inside, using local sea sand and shingle. The intervening walls are of brick, covered with pebbledash. Hilda's father and brother owned the Claydon Cement Works that supplied the concrete and the timber was supplied by William Brown of Ipswich, who were the sole selling agents for Mason's Cement. The clerestory windows are lined with brick which add a subtle dash of colour to the exterior. The grid-like aisle windows are designed to add as much light as possible.

Originally the windows were of geometric pattern in bright colours, but the Vicar was appalled. Work was stopped for three weeks, each day of which St Andrew's was fined

£10 by the contractors Messrs Tileman & Co. The architects refused to back down and resigned. The Vicar appointed Raymond Wrinch (1878-1935) of Ipswich to continue the work. Ironically, he died on 11th October 1935 at Mansard Cottage, Golf Road, next door to the former home of Hilda Mason. The kaleidoscopic glass, which anticipated some of that installed in Coventry Cathedral by some thirty years, was removed and stored in Haste's Garage for many years and then vanished.

Much of the internal design was modified by Wrinch. The eastern Ascension Window was made taller and more imposing for greater impact. The remaining windows had clear glass fitted making the church light and airy, emphasising its height. Much of the oak sanctuary furniture was redesigned, although the pews and doors of Mason's original design remained, the oak furnishings were made by James Gosling of Walton and the Elizabethan style communion table by Whippell & Co. The wording of the foundation stone laid on the 9th July 1930 is noteworthy, it is on the wall to the west of the porch.



A plan inside shows the proposed tower about 25ft square, which was not built due to lack of funds. There were to have been pinnacles above the openwork parapets and turrets were to have been erected at the junction of the nave and chancel. The lower portions of the eastern turrets of the intended tower flank the west end of the nave.

There was a proposal in 1965 for a belfry for the two bells on the west end of the roof. Raymond Erith drew an ad hoc design on 24th October 1965 but dismissed the option and wrote, "I am finding the belfry a difficult problem because I have not been able to find drawings or calculation of the reinforcement and come to the conclusion that it would be unwise to build anything over the west end of the nave without being certain that the structure is strong enough to support it."

The final cost was £10,590 and it was consecrated by the Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich on the 8th August 1931. The outstanding debt was £3,000, which was finally cleared on St Andrew's day 1937. To put these costs into perspective in "new" money, the average detached house cost £475, petrol cost 1p a litre, a pint of milk 5p, a loaf of bread 1p. The average wage was approximately 5p an hour for which most would work 50 plus hours a week.

You can't keep me out of an old church, they are such repositories of local history. New churches can rarely compare. Over the years I have developed an affection for this often misunderstood church. It is still one of only two mainly concrete churches in Europe and, fittingly, was granted Grade 2 listed status in 1986.

***Please see Jean Macpherson's article on page 21*

Andrew Halliday

FELIXSTOWE LIBRARY – Why not pay a visit ?

After months of “Select and Collect” and very restricted access, we finally opened our doors fully on the 19th July 2021. It was a bit of a shock to the system but we soon got used to it. Apart from social distancing and mask wearing it began to feel like old times. It was great to be able to run the Summer Reading Challenge throughout the holidays. We had 280 children join up aided by 14 volunteers who spent time talking to the children. We had the added bonus of a fully refurbished children’s library. Made possible by the efforts of our Friends group and generous donations from The Town Council, Councillors and others.



Part of the Children's Library



Felixstowe Library

First to come back was Top Time. Our social group for over 55s. They meet once a week on a Tuesday and have a full programme of talks and activities. Open Space is another social group, this time with a focus on mental health and wellbeing. Colleagues from Suffolk Mind help us run this group. And finally, Wordplay, Baby Bounce and Tot Rock are back on a Friday morning and proving very popular.

We have introduced a new group called Me Myself and Baby. This time focussing on Perinatal mental health and wellbeing. Footfall may be down but what is proving popular are the social groups, confirming that this is what people missed most during the lockdowns. Libraries play such a key part in combatting social isolation. Lots of people turned to our e-Library services during Lockdowns and are probably still using this free service.

The Home Library Service is back up and running. This is where volunteers take books or audio sets to people in their homes. Providing that all important contact.



Steph Merrett - Librarian

Steph Merrett

FELIXSTOWE SOCIETY ANNUAL DINNER

Hopefully, The Felixstowe Society Dinner will be held once again at The Brook Hotel, Orwell Road on Monday 11th April, 2022 at 7.00pm for 7.30pm. The cost will be £20.00 per person for a carvery main course, sweet course and tea or coffee. A vegetarian dish will be available, if required. Please let me know if you have any dietary requirements.

We hope that you will be able to join us and would ask you to complete the booking form and return this to Mrs Susanne Barsby at the address shown below.

We will be holding a raffle and would welcome gifts of prizes if at all possible, please. I will be pleased to collect your raffle donation, in which case telephone me on 01394 270845 or email me at kjandehorn@btinternet.com. Alternatively, please deliver your prize to me at 75 Ferry Road, Felixstowe, IP11 9LU. Thank you.

Keith Horn

BOOKING FORM FOR THE FELIXSTOWE SOCIETY ANNUAL DINNER
Monday 11th April 2022, THE BROOK HOTEL, ORWELL ROAD, FELIXSTOWE, IP11 7PF

I would liketicket(s) for this event at £20.00 per ticket

Vegetarian Option - Yes or No Dietary requirements - Yes or No

Choice of Sweet Course – Please tick below

Fresh Fruit Salad ()

Ice Cream ()

Eton Mess ()

Please provide names of all persons attending who must be fully paid up members of The Felixstowe Society

I enclose £..... Cheque payable to The Felixstowe Society

Names.....

Address.....

Telephone No.....

Email Address.....

**PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM AND PAYMENT AND SAE TO: Mrs Susanne Barsby,
1 Berners Road, Felixstowe, IP11 7LF.**

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THE FELIXSTOWE SOCIETY QUIZ 2022

Roy Gray has kindly offered to organise a Quiz Night at the Trades and Labour Club, High Road, Walton on:

Friday, 25 February 2022, starting promptly at 7:30 pm

The cost is £10 per person which includes a cod and chips supper (sausage and chips as an alternative) or vegetarian.

All profits raised from the raffle will go to local charities.

Tables can consist of 4 – 6 players. Hot and cold drinks can be purchased at the bar.

Please phone Roy Gray on (01394) 285827 if you are able to donate a prize for the raffle.

This is always a popular and enjoyable event so you are advised to book early.

Cut.....

BOOKING FORM FOR THE SOCIETY QUIZ – Friday, 25 February 2022

I would like..... tickets for this event at £10 per ticket

I enclose a cheque for..... payable to The Felixstowe Society

Please indicate numbers for:

Cod and chips Sausage and chips Vegetarian.....

Name

Address

Telephone number

Email address.....

Please send this form together with your cheque to:

Roy Gray, 428 High Rd, Felixstowe IP11 9QP by 21 February 2022

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