



For our September meeting we shared with our members some Stowupland Stories from our Archives about our Poor and Sick. Have you never wondered what health care was like before the NHS, who cared for the poorer members of society? Some of our stories may make it to a later edition of Telstar.

Our next meeting will be on **Wednesday October 1st**, 7.30 in the Village Hall. We will be joined by Dr Michael Walker who has done extensive research into the **Medieval Siege of Haughley Castle and the subsequent Battle of Fornham**. Some of the committee did go to hear him give the talk at Elmswell, I thought it would be a boring talk of blood and gore, victories and defeats but he made it a really interesting journey round Suffolk.

If you can't make that meeting, make a note in your diary to join us for another chapter of our Stowupland Stories on Wednesday November 5th. This time we will be looking at Crime and Punishment, or **Law and Disorder in and around Stowupland**. ***NB all crimes mentioned took place over 50 years ago.*** As usual tea and coffee will be available.

Scary as it is, we only have a few meetings to go before it is time to renew your membership or take out a new annual membership to the group. If you are not currently a member, then do come a long as a guest (just £5.00) to find out how the past has shaped the place you call home.



Having just watched the cycling Tour of Britain come through Stowupland, reminded me about the Swifts Speedway Cycling track. Back in the 1950's I understand this was on a field behind today's Little China.

This was the decade after Leslie Brame lived in Stowupland but in the 1920s and 30s most villagers, young and old would have had bicycles. And although accidents still happened, I dare say the roads were safer places for cyclists than now.

In his memoirs, Leslie remembered that amongst the many bikes he had one was a Dayton Roadster racing bike. He described it as being light weight with butterfly handlebars. He added the downside was that 'it had no free wheel, which meant I could not stop peddling to coast downhill'. He added he often cycled 40 miles a day but the only way he could 'rest his legs and cruise downhill' was to take his 'feet off the pedals and park them on the handlebar, and that left me with minimal control'.

Leslie seems to have enjoyed tinkering with and repairing the family's bikes. He wrote that his sister Kittie once remarked that he 'seemed to be able to deal with anything that went wrong with a bike, and if nothing was wrong with a bike, I could still fix it.' I guess those were

the days when most things were repairable and spare parts could be bought from local shops.

If the bikes looked a bit shabby, he would brighten them up by painting with new fast drying enamels, made of the new colloidal type of solvent' which came from a 'development in chemical production from wood pulp in a munitions factory taken over by the firm of Courtaulds'. He summarised 'there it was, a little factory on the River Gipping, a little way out of the town of Stowmarket, making the most powerful explosive known at the time, TNT, and as sidelines artificial silk and Robbialac. The miracle enamel that would dry in 10 minutes at most.'

Going back a bit further in time, to the early years of The Stowupland Flower Show and Fete when it was held in the grounds of Stowupland Hall. A 1903 poster announcing the programme of Sports events tells us that amongst other races there was a One Mile Bicycle Race (for parishioners only) and an Open Two Mile Bicycle Race. The entrance fee for either race was 6d (i.e. 6 old pennies). First prize for the one-mile race was 7/6 (7 shillings and 6d, so about 37p), whilst the prize for the 2-mile race was 15 shillings (for those who don't know or have forgot, there were 20 shillings to the pound, and a pound note was a piece of paper not a coin).

More up to date, Neil takes us back to our meeting in August, when Geoff Kay shared his research into **The USAAF in East Anglia** (tune into Jerry Jabbas on our website to hear an audio version of Neil's report).

In August we welcomed Geoff Kay to talk about what is often called "The Friendly Invasion" when over a million American service men were stationed in this country a large part of that number being in the eastern counties. The USA entered the war after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour and shortly after Germany declared war on the USA.

Geoff told us that a chance conversation one evening with a local sparked his interest in this subject. Geoff lives in Haughley Green near what used to be The Fox pub. And he was told that US servicemen frequented the pub in WWII and there had been some trouble due to animosity between black servicemen from a nearby encampment at Haughley Park and their white colleagues. From then Geoff set about researching the subject.

There were quite a few USAAF bases locally including at Great Ashfield and Mendlesham and construction of these was largely undertaken by black servicemen. Black and white weren't integrated, each having their separate segregated regiments. This while the norm in the USA was out of step with British attitudes. The locals including Haughley's vicar Reverend Grainge White were generally supportive of the black servicemen.

To avoid further trouble the pubs used by USAAF servicemen were designated for use by either black or white servicemen.

Geoff also talked about some American celebrities who had enrolled and made morale boosting visits to many of the airfields, these included Joe Louis the boxer and actors James Stewart and Jimmy Cagney as well as band leader Glenn Miller.

It is well known that many women married American servicemen returning with them to the States after the war - the "GI Brides". Sometimes these marriages didn't always work out, the wives finding that life in the US wasn't always what they had been lead to

believe.

We were pleased that local ex USAAF serviceman Don Mobley could join us and add his considerable knowledge to Geoff's interesting talk.

It had been quite a time since we had Geoff come to talk to us last but we hope to invite him back before too long for another of his engaging talks.



Continuing the WW2 theme, some time ago at a group meeting a member showed me some photos. They dated from the 1940s and one showed George Stannard on duty guarding a radar relay station near Creeting Lane. I was instantly interested as I had never heard of this before. In the photos there are buildings in the background but not enough to judge their function.

The little information that came with the photos suggested that the station may have relayed information from the radar station at Bawdsey to Duxford air base, I asked Bawdsey radar museum if they had any information but they drew a blank however a clue came to light when I was looking through the 1939 register of inhabitants of Stowupland that was taken to provide information for identification cards at the start of the war. The register lists all inhabitants with addresses, ages and occupations.

Four people were listed as being telephonists at the "DFS". They were James Leeds, Leopold Denny, Percy Kerry and Walter Kerry. *

DFS I found was the abbreviation for "Direction Finding Station". I now had something to go on and an internet search brought up some information. Briefly direction finding made it possible to locate enemy transmitters by triangulation, whether on land, on ships at sea or aboard aircraft. This information helped to build up a picture of where enemy forces were and what they were doing.

DF stations comprised a small hut with space for little more than one or two operators. There was sometimes an accompanying hut with facilities for those on duty and storage. RDF Huts were usually located in the middle of fields, as nearby trees as buildings or metal fencing would cause interference. The RDF hut was surrounded by four masts connected to the hut. A bearing could be taken by turning a small internal antenna. To reduce interference a circular grid of earthing radials were laid out around the hut, the earth was salted to increase conductivity, and the whole structure was ringed by a fence or wall.

From what can be seen on the photos our RDF seems to have conformed to this description. A further internet search brought up a list of known RDF station locations including the one at Stowupland. This showed that it did indeed forward its information on to Duxford and having a OS map reference I was able to pinpoint the location. This was in a field between Creeting Lane and Bells Lane, the location no doubt selected as at 66 metres above sea level it is some of the highest ground in the area with an aspect towards the east.

The field belonged to Mr Carter who farmed the area and lived at Stowupland Hall. The RAF asked him for permission to use his field to which he agreed on one condition. Stowupland Hall had no electricity and Mr. Carter suggested that they should also connect the electricity

cables necessary to power the station to Stowupland Hall connecting it to the grid (or at last the local electricity supply).

*The 1939 survey only tells us who were living here in 1939, Margaret Rose (George's daughter who started this research off, told us that many other RAF personal were billeted in the village during the war. We knew local people had taken in children evacuees from East London in 1939, but we did not know that people were given the choice between taking in children or service personal.

If you have any queries about joining us or Stowupland's past:

Please contact Jerry Voden on 01449 703717 or

secretary@stowuplandlocalhistorygroup.org

Or visit our website: www.stowuplandlocalhistorygroup.org

These articles are written by members of SLHG committee but can only give a small glimpse of what is shared at our meetings. If you don't want to commit to an annual membership we welcome visitors to our sessions, just pay £5.00 on the door.

DOWN MEMORY LANE.

Telstar, back in October 1993, asked '**ARE YOU THE PARENT OF A BORED TEENAGER?**' Local people wanted to know if anyone wanted a youth club in the village, for teens between the ages of 12 and 16. It was hoped a group could be set up with a registered youth leader. Were you a bored teenager in the 1990s, with no 'screens' in those days do you remember what you did to amuse yourself in the dark winter evenings?



Stowupland Guides 1986

Were you a brownie or girl guide, do you have memories or photos of any Stowupland youth activities?

