

With the hot weather we had at the end of May I can't imagine what it would have been like for the men who wore these suits of armour. Which is a way of introducing our talk on **Wednesday July 1st** when

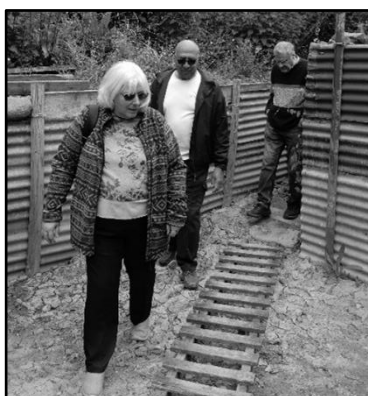
we will welcome back Katheen Hallaways for an update on the **Mendlesham Armoury Project**. if you want a taster or want to find out more have a look at their website:

www.stmarysmendlesham.org.uk/armoury-project.html.



Then on **Wednesday August 5th** we will share another chapter in Our Stowupland Stories. This episode will focus on **Some Saxham Street Stories**. We can't give a detailed history for all the houses and their occupiers but will try to cover a fair few, or at least what can be condensed into an evening's talk

Then on **September 2nd** we will welcome back Don Mobley who will be sharing his experiences from when he was based at Lakenheath with a talk entitled '**On the Nuclear Edge: The F-111F at RAF Lakenheath**'.



Looking back to mid-May some members of the group took ourselves off to the **War Huts** project at Brook Farm Camp near Bury St Edmunds. This is an amazing project and even though the organisers have a way to go to complete their vision, the narrative of their journey is as interesting as the story they hope to tell about the 11th Suffolk Battalion. Jerry will write a more detailed report for another edition of Telstar, but it is mentioned here as at the time of writing we were puzzled by a silver medallion that Neil had come across on an internet auction site. Unfortunately, the asking bid was way beyond our group's budget for purchasing memorabilia (it has a silver hallmark).

The insignia on the back of the medal was the motto for the Suffolk regiment but we were puzzled by the date. Further research by Neil has solved the puzzle, thanks to a newspaper article in the Suffolk Chronicle of 29th October 1920. Our war memorial in the cemetery was unveiled on a Sunday at the end of October 1920 in the presence of over a 1000 people, but



in November 1919 a 'welcome home dinner' had been held for some of the men who had returned home. 400 local men had answered the call to serve their country, 37 are named on our war memorial and plaque but not all the remainder were able to attend the dinner as according to the press report 'some were at the time undischarged, and others were distant. And it was to these that they were presenting the silver medallions, which bore the Suffolk arms.'

The dinner, medallions and a 'peace celebration' for the children had all been paid for by a 'general collection, substantially aided by subscriptions from the works in the parish' which had amounted to £350. Mr A.G. Bramhall, the school headmaster, had been chairman of the War memorial Committee.

And now Jerry takes us back to the beginning of May when **SLHG presented a talk for May 2026 , "On the Pilgrims Way to the Woolpit Shrine" by Dr. Shelona Klatzow.**

'Neil had this month got us a talk on the above subject which is something that had been touched on when the group visited Woolpit last year for a guided tour of Woolpit village and Church. 1211 is the first known documentation that Shelona had picked up on during her investigation work into the subject. This was a view of the "Woolpit Shrine" which in those days was situated adjacent to the current church building. The shrine no longer exists. The way to the shrine was via tracks around the County, that possibly linked together other Medieval shrines or Holy Places. Shelona had found records to show that most of the Pilgrims arrived by sea, disembarking at the Port of Ipswich. The Woolpit shrine was also near a water supply known as "The Ladies Well". The well or spring can still be visited today, located about 300 yards to the Northwest of the church.

Many Pilgrims visited the shrine for healing purposes, for the many ailments that were around in those days. Many Merchants and Knights rode the pilgrimage way on horseback but most walked the way which followed the route of the River Gipping. It was a surprise to our audience that criminals who had been convicted of various crimes were made to walk in front of the Pilgrims dressed in long white robes, so people along the way would take note of who they were. When the pilgrims neared the Shrine, they would start to sing, and this would alert the clergy at the site that they were on the way in. After their arrival and welcome there was a mass and a look round the site, with many able to partake in the healing process. In 1286 there was a major 'Horse Fair' held in Bury St Edmunds with many stalls. Historical records show that in that year many Pilgrims having visited the Shrine then progressed to the Fair. This included many Merchants/

Moving forward to the 15th/16th centuries, Woolpit was popular with Royalty, with visits from Henry VI in 1448 and again in 1449. later Queen Elizabeth of York made her own Pilgrimage in 1501. Not quite so welcome were Henry VIII's reformation changes in 1538, this was when his representatives arrived and mashed the statue "Of our Lady of Woolpit" at the "Woolpit Shrine". The chapel at the site was demolished in 1551, so a sad end to the site. As I said earlier the "Ladies Well" survives today to give evidence and a reminder of this well used historical site.

Shelona had also found evidence that Pilgrims Badges were available to mark the completion of the walk. It is known that many religious shrines issued their own tokens, though their purpose is debated. They might have been used for fund raising or considered to have healing properties, certainly today's tourists still like to collect various memorabilia to remind themselves of places they have visited.

She had several photos on the subject, and this bought her talk to life. She also showed maps of the way to the site, but I can't share them with you in this column (or in Jerry's Jabbas).

We were very pleased to welcome Shelona to our group meeting, and Neil thanked her for coming. We also welcomed our largest number of guests, the hall was filled, not quite standing room only! Shelona finished her talk by answering a variety of questions from the audience before we all had a chance for a very welcome cup of tea or coffee, our thanks to Annie and Liz, and a chance to stretch our legs and catch up on local gossip.



This embroidered collage is on display in the Woolpit Institute. It was designed and made a few years back by two local sisters, Claire McGrath and Frances Ridsdill to tell the story of the Woolpit's Lady Well. It is far more colourful than it appears here, the sleeping lady has blond hair, and the wave is a vivid blue. As Jerry said the well or spring can still be seen on the outskirts of Woolpit. It was reputed to have healing properties for disorders of the eye, but I doubt anyone would risk bathing their eyes with the water today. Shelona did tell us it had been tested and found to have a high sulphur content so might have had some beneficial effect on superficial eye infections.

DOWN MEMORY LANE – PLAY PARK ON THE GREEN

Do you remember the play equipment on The Green in front of The Retreat. It was set up in late 1979 by Stowmarket Round Table. Maybe you have a better-quality photo you could share for our archives?

The following report by Kay Roper, the Secretary of the playpark committee appeared in a 1992 edition of Telstar:

STOWUPLAND AUGUST 1992

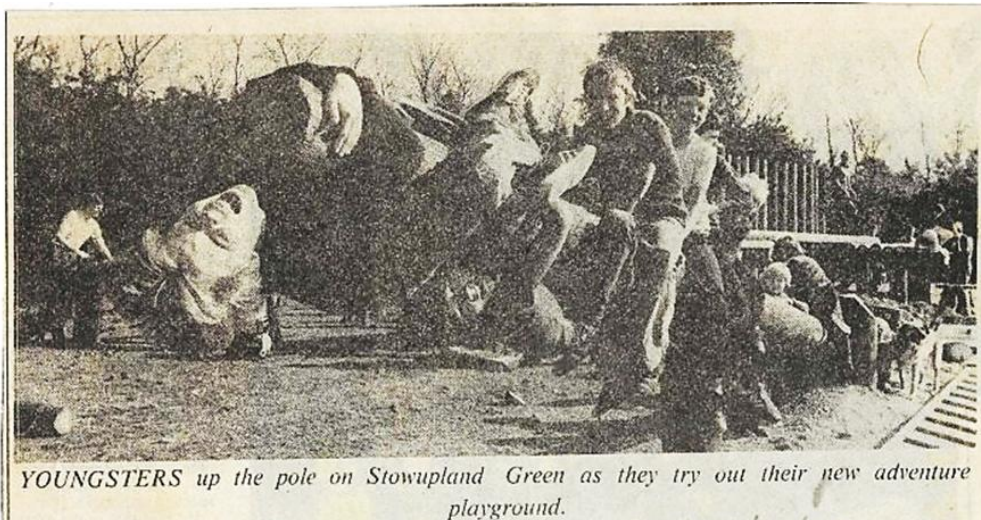
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'As you can see, we now have a third piece of equipment installed on the playpark. We would like to thank the Retreat Pub for donating us money from their Charity Fete, to help us install the adventure climbing frame. It's a great shame that a few older children have nothing better to do than vandalise the equipment and the gates. The committee have worked very hard trying to get a play area for the children.

Oct/Nov sees the Playpark A.G.M. and we are afraid that if we do not have any support the playpark committee will cease to run. If you have any young children who use the Playpark please think seriously about coming on to the committee to help make it a better play area for your children.'



YOUNGSTERS up the pole on Stowupland Green as they try out their new adventure playground.

Don't know what you don't know, come along to a meeting, and find out...

You can still become a full member but Visitors to our meetings are always welcome - just turn up and pay £5.00 at the door.

Any queries about joining us or hearing about Stowupland's past:

**Please contact Jerry Voden on 01449 703717 or
secretary@stowuplandlocalhistorygroup.org**