

LOCAL HISTORY RECORDER'S REPORT

EARL SOHAM - 1977
(Electoral Register - 315)
(plus 69 under 18)

The Church Bells were replaced in February after an absence of four years after being re-tuned and fitted with new mountings at Loughborough. A new iron bell frame was fitted in the tower in place of the former oak frame which was badly worm eaten. The bells were dedicated on 3rd March by Rev. Pizzey, Ringing Master, Suffolk Guild of Ringers.

Following upon the death of the Rector of Ashfield, that parish was joined with Earl Soham and Crettingham in the care of the Rectory of Earl Soham.

As a result of a concerted effort by the Parish councils of the villages through which the A.1120 road from Stowmarket to Yoxford passes, Suffolk County Council dropped their proposal to designate the road as a lorry route.

Mr. J. Ashwell of The Bakery found a Roman coin in his garden at Stanwell Cottage.

Mr. Frank Cook who collected, sorted and sold waste paper, has since 1968 been able to give nearly £1000 to local charities and organisations as a result of his efforts; when the demand temporarily ceased over a period of two years he stored 7 tons of paper in his garage. Initially the Royal British Legion benefitted but as the scale increased donations were made to other organisations.

The old brick bridge in Swan Land over the river was replaced in April by another structure more suited to the heavier vehicles using the Lane and the Channel widened at the same time.

The Choral Society's Concert in the Church in May was well attended (70) the main work being Vivaldi's Gloria. Visiting artist's contributed a programme which included items for Flute, Harpsichord, Clarinet and Bassoon.

The Earl Soham Women's Institute entered a map of the village for the County W.I. Jubilee Map Competition, attaining 14th place out of over 100 centres. It is hoped the map will eventually be on permanent display in the Village Hall.

The Spring Horse Trials at the Equestrian Centre sponsored by the Midland Bank attracted 120 entries from a wide area.

The celebrations of the Silver Jubilee of the Queen's accession to the Throne opened with a bonfire prepared by Mr. G. Clarke at Hill Farm, one of the highest points in the parish, and lit as were hundreds of others, official and unofficial, throughout the country on the eve of the National Holiday 7th. June. Although the weather on the day could have been better, the programme was carried through without a hitch in spite of some drizzle in the afternoon. The proceedings opened at 1.30pm, with a peal on the newly restored church bells followed by a short service on Mr. Neil Murrell's meadow opposite Street Farm. This was conducted by Rev. G. St. C. Tisdall, Rector, Rev. J. Holloway the former Baptist Minister, who was visiting his old parish, Mr. Raymond Glasson, Baptist Church, and Mr. N. Sheffield, Chairman of the Parish Council. Mr. Alec Pettit provided the accompaniment to hymns and national-anthem on an accordin.

A telegram of Congratulations and good wishes to the Queen from the Parish Council on behalf of the Parish was read out by Mr. Sheffield together with her Majesty's reply. The School children then gave a May-pole dancing display and this was followed by sports comprising some 30 events, serious and hilarious, for all comers from tots to grand parents, prizes being Jubilee crown pieces. The winners of the competitions for best decorated house or shop, a poem or verse (3 classes) and a flag or banner (2 classes) were announced.

Tea was then given to children, who received Jubilee mugs donated by the Parochial Church Council, and to Senior Citizens in the Village Hall which had been beautifully decorated with red white and blue streamers for the gay occasion. A framed portrait of the Queen presented by Major Sturgis was placed in position on the stage. The day concluded with a party in the evening open to all in the Village Hall, entertainment being provided by Alec and Clive.

Two trees commemorating the Jubilee were planted, one by the Women's Institute in Mr. N. Murrell's meadow to the right of the entrance gate, the other by the Parish Council on Fair Green.

Mr. R. Clark, chief planning officer, Suffolk Coastal D.C. came under fire from the 40 or so who attended the Annual Parish Meeting due to the failure of the Council to give planning permission for the projected single tennis court on Town Trust land adjacent to the Bowling Club. Permission had been refused due to lack of provision of a car park and pavillion, reasons greeted with some decision by those present. Parish Councillors maintained that every recent application approved by them had been refused whilst others not approved by them had been granted. After some discussion it was agreed that a small committee of parish councillors would meet the Planning officer with a view to establishing common ground particularly in connection with the tennis court. Agreement was subsequently obtained and The Court was seeded in the autumn.

Earl Soham Football Club was established due to the efforts of Mr. J. Sealy with local support; the club is playing in the 7th Division of the Ipswich and District League on a pitch behind the Village Hall.

The combined Fete and Horse Show (young riders) on 6th August suffered somewhat from poor weather and entries were below average. Mr. K. Cabban took over the organisation from Mr. N. Sheffield who had successfully undertaken this task for some years.

As the Suffolk C.C. Education Department had provided a kitchen housed in a 'Portacabin' for school meals on site, and no longer used the Kitchen of the Village Hall, this latter was converted to a committee room (without the lossof cooking facilities) and together with the rest of the Hall re-decorated largely by voluntary labour. The Hall remains a popular venue for large and small functions for both parish and local organisations.

The Harvest Supper in October continued to receive popular support.

The house Dorset Dene formerly occupied by Mr. L. Bilner, who moved to Bedford, was enlarged, by new building and the addition of the adjacent cottage, and re-named Dolphin Cottage by Cdr A. Daniell, his former residence Bridge House being re-named Merlin House by the new owner Major Sturgis. Other changes include Mr. A. Preston to Moat Farm (Lady Moorling), Mr. A. Patterson to Sunnyside (Mrs. Reeks), Mr. Headly to Willow Mead (Mrs. Duncan), Mr. V. Harding to Old Hall Farm (Mr. F. Knights), whilst The Elms, let for a number of years to U. S. Airforce Personnel was occupied by the owner Mr. Herron.

A colour television set was installed in the Primary School largely due to activities of the School Amenities Group.

A youth club under the control of PC. M. Carter fulfills a long felt need .

The oldest inhabitant Mr. Alfred Game 96, after a period of ill health removed to the Paddocks home at Eye, he was formerly employed on the L.N.E.R. in the goods yard at Shenfield, Essex. His son, also now retired, had been Traffic Superintendent at Southend Victoria.

O. E. Keall
Local History Recorder
Earl Soham.
March 1978.