

AYLSHAM LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

JOURNAL & NEWSLETTER



Volume 10

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Front cover: Aylsham Roman Project excavation at Woodgate August 2016.
Photo: Kevin Myhill.

Back cover:–

Plan of Kiln 1 showing the kiln (on left) and the associated rake pit (right).
Plan of Kiln 2 showing the perforated floor surface, material spread and
associated rake pit. Photos courtesy of Britannia Archaeology Ltd.

The **JOURNAL & NEWSLETTER** is the publication of the Aylsham Local History Society. It is published three times a year, in April, August and December, and is issued free to members. Contributions are welcomed from members and others. Please contact the editor:

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While I have been Chairman of the Society over the last seven years this page has usefully served as an editorial slot as well as a more general commentary on our activities and aspirations. Now that Geoff Sadler has kindly taken on the role of Chairman we shall no doubt arrange this page rather differently. At the AGM I was asked to continue as a member of the Committee and I have agreed to continue with the Journal in its present form at least until the end of Volume 10, with Part 10 next August. We can then discuss how the Society would like to proceed in a world that is increasingly digital but where many of our members still like their reading in print. Most of us now no doubt use our excellent website as the principal way to keep in touch.

This part goes to the printer before the guided tour on 3 November to the Fakenham Museum of Gas & Local History. This is the only remaining complete town gasworks that was in service for 120 years and has a great reputation as a visitor attraction. Many thanks to Caroline Driscoll and Sue Sharpe for arranging the visit.

We are already halfway through the winter programme of lectures, but have the following to come, all at 7.30 pm in the Friendship Hall, and all by popular speakers who have supported us so well over the years.

Thursday 26 January 2017. *Lost Country Houses of Norfolk* by Sarah Spooner.

Thursday, 23 February 2017. *The Guildhall and The Saint George's Guild* by Barbara Miller.

Thursday 23 March 2017. *The Oxnead Treasure* by Victor Morgan.

In case of adverse weather conditions, members are asked to telephone a committee member after 11 am on the day of a lecture to see whether the lecture will proceed. A notice will also be placed on the website: alhs.weebly.com

Please see notice on p. 243 for WEA Spring course.

Property, Death and Taxes: a New Look at Early Modern Sources for Aylsham

by Maggie and William Vaughan-Lewis

The third in the series

No 3 Taxes

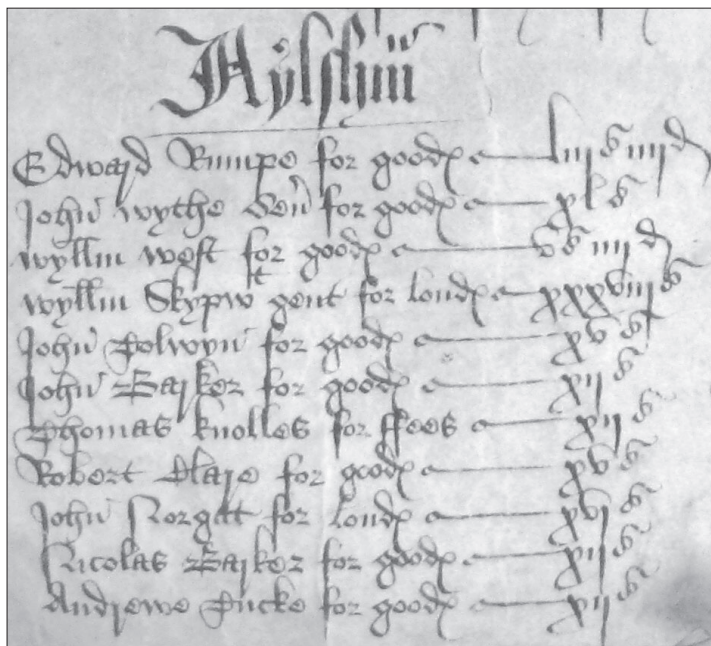
Perhaps the most unpopular interaction with the government, taxation has created an incredible paper trail, much of which survives. From the earliest feudal taxes, through tithes, poll taxes, hearth and land taxes to locally paid rates we have paid up and been recorded. Some lists only include totals collected but many have names and population studies have developed methods for comparing villages and towns from these. (Not an easy science, given the exemptions and evasions.) I am not attempting to explain all the various classes of taxes here – on the National Archives website there is an excellent research guide called ‘Taxation Before 1689’ describing all the central government national levies. In the absence of local parish register information before 1653, these lists can be useful for establishing names of inhabitants and, to some extent, for identifying the larger family groups.

Early taxes

The main series of subsidies are listed in TNA class E179; this includes taxes paid by both the clergy and the laity. The lay subsidies of 1290–1332 were followed by the ‘10th and 15th’ in 1334 and the first poll tax was raised in 1377. After a few attempts this unpopular tax was abandoned and after 1522 people were assessed on their wealth and income. These were regularly raised and augmented with occasional one-off taxes like the sheep tax in 1549. All the time the church was also claiming its share through the tithe system (a tenth of produce) and the manorial lord imposed fees for any transfer of copyhold land or local misdemeanours through his court.

A recently completed project at the National Archives has enabled access to the impenetrable mass of papers through its ‘E179 database’. The parishes are grouped by hundred but researchers have listed them by parish name – a massive task taking over 20 years. A search for Aylsham gives a list of all the years where the parish return has survived (116 results) but many in the 14th century of course have only totals raised. One for 1597, with names, has been transcribed by Geoff Lowe and is available on his Norfolk Transcriptions

website (www.doun.org). It is a fairly short list as it does not include the exempt poor; in others they make up the majority of the names. We have taken photos of E179/150/215 and 274 (1524 subsidy), E179/150/222 Part 1(1525 subsidy) E179/253/35A (1546 the 'Free and voluntary contribution' levy), E179/151/335 (1546), 345 (1547) and 369 (1549). If interested please ask. The extract shown here notes whether assessed on land, goods or, for professional men, fees.



1546 Thomas Knolles, an attorney, had his fees rated at 12s

Other taxes, not within the E179 project, include the hearth tax and muster lists. The hearth tax was introduced in 1662 to raise money for the King. Sadly many of the full hearth tax returns for Aylsham do not survive; the assessments for Norfolk 1664 and 1666 have been published in the Norfolk Genealogy series volumes 15 and 20 respectively but only the former includes Aylsham. This lists about 132 names and the number of hearths on which they were charged and represents the middling and wealthier residents. Twice a year those whose houses were worth more than 20s a year and who paid church and poor rates, were assessed at 1s per hearth, ie 2s a year. The vicar Nathaniel

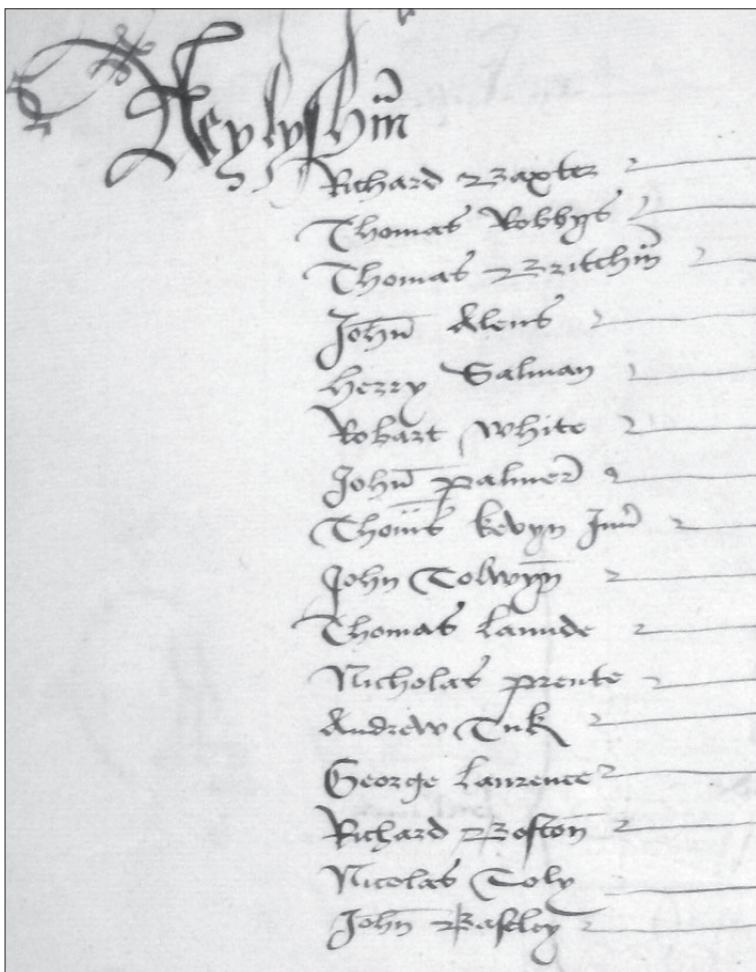
Gill had 5 hearths (the current vicarage was not built until 1701) and Major Robert Doughty had 9 fireplaces. Such a number seems very high; here caution in using the records at face value is vital. Doughty at this time owned two neighbouring houses, the old predecessors of both the Old Hall and West Lodge (see *Aylsham, A Nest of Norfolk Lawyers*). Two houses with 4 or 5 hearths each would be more likely than a first assumption of one huge mansion. For comparison, Mr Robert Burr of the 'Manor' (Great Edmonds) had 6 fires.

Fortunately some exemption lists, naming the poorer inhabitants, have survived in E 179/337–338 and we have photographed 1670, 1672 and 1674. The first has 259 names, the second 239 (with 309 hearths between them) and the third 202 names. The unpopular tax was abolished in 1689 by the incoming king William of Orange. For a national view of the hearth tax see <http://www.hearthtax.org.uk>; Norfolk is not yet included in their poverty mapping project but the Essex maps show what can be discovered. For a detailed discussion of Norfolk hearth tax and the problems of interpretation, see Seaman Pound and Smith, *Norfolk Hearth Tax*, Norfolk Record Society Vol LXV, 2001 (published by British Record Society).

Of the muster lists, which showed men, over 16, able to bear arms or contribute to the war effort, one showing a modest number of archers and a larger number of billmen in Aylsham (see over) is referenced E101/61/16. One wonders if all 16 archers practised at once on the Butts and if they were any good!

The list was drawn up in 1522 and then later used as a subsidy assessment in 1524 and 1525. Because the original purpose was the muster, it's thought that the information given may be closer to the truth than other levy assessments. The valuations show wealth in land, cattle and goods and also list those assessed at having 'nihil' nothing – the working or unemployed poor. (Both the muster and assessment are available on the Norfolk Transcription site and we have digital photographs.) For a discussion of these documents see Jane Whittle, *The Development of Agrarian Capitalism: Land and Labour in Norfolk 1440–1580*, 2000, pp 203–224. Jane analysed the relative wealth of the parishes and the population density. Aylsham and Burgh were urban in nature with the highest density (20.3 people per 100 acres) and, using the multiplier of 3.4, she estimated the population at the time as 865 (against Cawston as 356). Nine of the 28 wealthiest people in the hundred of South Erpingham were townsmen of Aylsham: however half the parish owned between nothing and £2 in wealth.

Of course there were other taxes raised at times of crisis; the Civil war forced 'loans' of plate and cash and alcoholic drinks and other goods were



The archers of Aylsham in 1522

taxed from 1643 with the creation of the Boards of Excise and of Customs. Window tax was introduced in 1696 and initially had a 10 window threshold below which a standard flat rate of 2s per house was payable. By 1766 this was reduced to 7 windows; many houses – such as Bure House in Millgate – still show old windows blocked up in an attempt to keep below the threshold. (The tax was not repealed until 1851.) The Town archive has an original return for Aylsham dated 1697 and a photocopy of one from 1739; both have been

transcribed and appear in the Journal Vol 3 No 2 June 1991. In 1697 a total of 118 houses are listed which increased to 137 by 1739. As before, those too poor to pay church or poor rates were exempt.

While on the subject of population, a useful ecclesiastical document of 1706 also appears in our Journal (Vol 2 No 11 Sept 1990). The Bishop of Norwich required parishes to categorise all parishioners over 16 into religious beliefs noting papists and Quakers in particular. So in theory the list gives all adults alive in 1706. The article suggests that the total of 570, allowing for the under 16s, would be about 60% of the population (so around 950). Population totals are infamously hard to create; variable multipliers from 3 to 5.5 are used and individual places may have a higher preponderance of single occupancy or households with apprentices and workers. So any claims should be treated as rough approximations. It is known that the general population grew rapidly in the 16th and early 17th centuries, had a period of stagnation before increasing sharply again in the later 18th century. As a benchmark, the first official census of Aylsham, in 1801, gave a total population of 1667.

The land tax, which replaced the hearth tax and preceded income tax as the most fruitful tax based on wealth, was introduced in 1692. Sadly the early records were not retained and later many paid off their future obligations by making one-off payments. However the period 1780–1832 is usually available for most places. For Aylsham we have a good run from 1799.

Local rates

The church had collected money from parishioners throughout the medieval period but surviving records are rare. Arguments over the clergy's rights to collect tithes gave rise to many court cases which can give an idea of the amounts of produce (and their value) that were demanded. Before the apportionment of tithe rent charge in 1839–40 we do not have many other records but an 1811 tithe list, held at the Dean and Canterbury Cathedral archives, is now available as a transcript in the Town archives. The churchwardens could raise rates for the maintenance of the church fabric (and for repair of local bridges and occasionally roads) but the earliest of their accounts for Aylsham dates from 1637. They clearly show the expenditure but do not have any lists of names or how the payers were assessed until the later 18th century. A new national project which is just starting on Norfolk's churchwardens accounts will give us a view of how much Aylsham was spending compared with other parishes.

More productive are the poor rates the levy of which was authorised under the 1601 Poor Relief Act. Aylsham's wonderful set of overseers' account books, starting in 1674, have now been digitally copied and are available as such in the

NRO and the Town Archive. Roger Polhill's excellent computerised transcript of the early volumes gives a quick way of searching for when individuals were in the parish. The rate was normally paid by those who were actually in occupation rather than the owner. Although identifying the premises is not straightforward, the books can be used in conjunction with the manorial court books we looked at in the first article. Quite often, using both the later land tax returns, paid for by the owner and naming the occupier, and the tithe map, individual properties are trackable.

All these payments were of course very unpopular and those who could afford it appealed against the amounts assessed. Those refusing to pay church rates – quite a number in Aylsham – were reported to the church courts. (In 1610 eleven tradesmen were named in the visitation.) Poor rate appeals could be made to justices in Quarter Sessions. The judicial records (both civil and criminal) of the county ought to be a splendid source for this period but Norfolk's survival is poor and patchy. For more about the difficulties in using the Norfolk Quarter Session papers in the 17th century, see Peter Smith, *Petitioning Quarter Sessions in The Annual*, No 24 2015, Norfolk Archaeological and Historical Research Group.

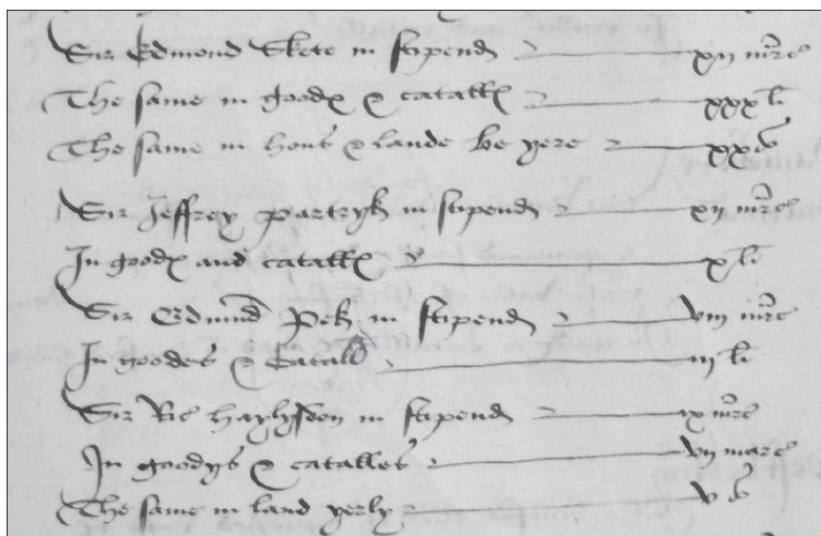
Other sources

This combination of sources to build the bigger picture of early modern Aylsham would not be complete without mentioning parish registers. Sadly Aylsham's earliest register was lost so our entries start only in 1653 – nearly 100 years later than luckier parishes! However the practice of making copies for the diocese means that a few names have been preserved as early as 1600. A group from the Society transcribed and indexed these documents - known as Archdeacons' Transcripts - and their work is in the Town archives. The dates covered are 1600–1603, 1623, 1628–30, 1633, 1665–66, 1668, 1670, 1677, 1693–95, 1698.

And what of printed sources to which we all turn first? Early printed works must be used with caution – even the great Francis Blomefield has many errors. The same goes for modern books which just repeat chunks of earlier works without question and give new life to old chestnuts. For Aylsham by far the best source is R H Mason's *History of Norfolk* Volume 2 (completed 1885). Mason's general volume 1 is well known but the second volume was to be the start of a parish by parish detailed history. This was never completed but luckily for us he arranged his work alphabetically! His Aylsham section is full of personally transcribed records from the then Public Record Office (TNA) and is very accurate. We have to forgive him for being the first to publish an image of the Manor with the paragraph on Bishop Jegon's house; Blomefield

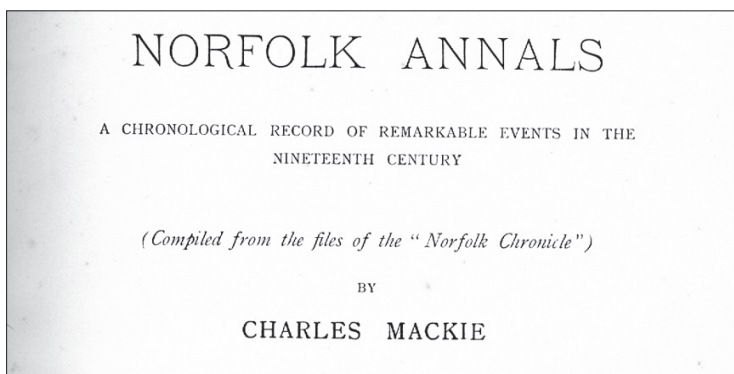
does not say which house it was and we believe Mason may have been misled by the Bulwer family who owned the manor in the late 19th century when he was writing. (As we now know Jegen's house was a fine building at Spa Farm.)

Luckily the Aylsham section was reprinted in the Journal in Vol 5 (nos 3,5,8) 1997-1998 with a splendid introduction by Tom Mollard in no 3. Mason includes full transcripts of several 16th century wills and church documents. It is worth comparing his versions with those of the good Dr Sapwell in 1960. The latter, very sensibly, drew heavily on Mason but in condensing the entries, made several errors of omission. As always, our mantra is the closer to the original source one can go the better. Happy researching!



1522 Aylsham's lower clergy were called 'Sir' (E 101/61/16).

Extracts from Norfolk Annals by Mackie vol. 1 1800–1850
by Lynda Wix



From the Preface to Norfolk Annals Vol 1 1800–1850 (1901)

With the lapse of time many things, too familiar and commonplace e.g. the coaching system, sports which are now obsolete, country celebrations and observances – have acquired an interest which they did not present to a compiler of eighty or a hundred years ago. Some of the facts recorded in these pages may not in themselves be considered remarkable but collectively they illustrate the manners and customs, the wisdom and follies, the labour and amusements, of Norfolk people in the century just closed and it is hoped show to what extent the county and city have progressed morally and socially during the last hundred years.

The writer is indebted to the Chairman and Directors of the NORFOLK CHRONICLE Co, Limited for permitting him to make use of the files of that newspaper, from which exclusively the following pages have been compiled .

October 14th 1802. Races were held at Blickling Park. Lady Caroline Harbord gave a ball and supper attended by upwards of 100 guests from Aylsham and the neighbourhood.

November 25th 1802

Me Welby of Blickling undertook for a bet of 50 guineas to ride his mare on the Aylsham road in ten hours, all paces. 'She performed the first 80 miles in 8 hours 25 minutes and had an hour and thirty five minutes to run the last ten miles but was unable to accomplish it to the great disappointment of those who bet three and four to one that the mare performed this journey'

November 9th 1803

The Fakenham Volunteers Capt. P.M. Case marched into Norwich from Aylsham. There were four officers, seven sergeants, four drummers and 80 privates. This was the first Volunteer corps in Norfolk to volunteer for garrison duty at Yarmouth.

October 26th 1804

Races were held at Blickling Park. Events: A subscription purse for horses bred in Norfolk, the best of three one mile heats; a subscription purse of £50 for the best of two mile heats. Silver Cup for the best of three two mile heats. A purse of five guineas for ponies for the best of two mile heats.

November 10th 1804

A one hundred yards race took place in Gunton Park between the Hon. Edward Harbord and a well known runner, named Wade, of Aylsham. Mr Harbord won by about four yards.

January 11th 1805

A murderous poaching affray occurred in Thorpe wood, near Aylsham, when several game watchers, in the service of Lord Suffield were severely wounded. At the Norfolk Assizes in Thetford, in March, six of the poachers, indicted under the Black Act were found guilty and sentenced to death. Lord Suffield and the Hon Edward Harbord pleaded that their lives might be spared and the sentence was ultimately commuted to transportation (details of attempted escape follow).

August 26th 1805

A cricket match was played in Blickling Park between elevens of the Blickling and Norwich clubs and was won by the former. It was followed by a single wicket match between the same teams, when Blickling again won with nine wickets to go down.

December 3rd 1805 (relating to Nelson's victory at Trafalgar)

Thanksgiving Day. Collections were made in the churches for the relief of the families of those who fell and for those who were wounded. At Aylsham there was a 'grand naval procession', barrels of beer were drunk in the Market Place and a display of fireworks took place at night.

November 23rd 1810

The Norwich, Aylsham and Cromer coach commenced running from 21

Lobster Lane to the Red Lion, Cromer. It left Norwich on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and returned on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. The proprietor was Mr W Spanton.

January 7th 1814

A curious incident occurred at the funeral of Benjamin Edwards, for 20 years coachman to Lord Suffield at Blickling. The corpse was conveyed from the house to the church for interment followed by 30 servants in their liveries. After the Rev Mr Churchill had retired from the grave an old acquaintance came forward and performed a promise which had been made by each party which was done as follows:— He enquired his age, and was informed it was 64, he then took a bottle of rum from his pocket and threw it upon the head of the coffin, from the fall the bottle was broke and the rum was distributed upon the lid of the coffin. He said ‘God bless him. I have performed my promise as I am sure he would have done had I gone first.’

March 1st 1815

A match was decided at Blickling Park between three horses belonging respectively to Mr Sheppard and Mr Roper of Coleby and Mr Wright of Aylsham. The best of three one mile heats was won by Mr Sheppard’s horse. A second race between two horses the property of Mr Gay of Oulton and Mr Smith of Aylsham was won by the former.

December 24th 1815

Lord and Lady Castlereagh arrived in Norwich and after dining at the Norfolk Hotel proceeded on a visit to Lord Suffield at Blickling Park.

October 25th 1819

The Duke of Wellington passed through Norwich on his way to Blickling Hall. On changing horses at the Angel Inn he was warmly cheered by the crowd.

August 1st 1821

Died at his house in Charles Street, Berkeley Square the Right Hon. Lord Suffield, His Majesty’s Lieutenant of Norfolk. His lordship, who was in his 54th year, dying without issue, was succeeded by the Hon Edward Harbord M.P. for Shaftesbury. The remains of his lordship arrived at Aylsham and lay in state at the Black Boys on August 12th, the funeral took place at Gunton on the 13th.

January 25th 1825

At the Norfolk quarter sessions the justices ordered that the houses of

correction at Aylsham and Wymondham be abolished on completion of the county gaol

December 30th 1828

A 'grand match of cocks' was fought at the New Inn Aylsham between a gentleman of that town and of North Walsham. The sport was continued on the 31st, North Walsham won 9 battles out of 12 The winning cocks were 'fed' by Stafford of Norwich.

January 28th 1832 (advert)

A great main of cocks will be fought at the Black Boys Inn, Aylsham on February 14th and 15th between the gentlemen of Norwich and Norfolk for £5 a battle and £100 the odd. On Tuesday evening a turn out for £10 and on Thursday a grand Welch main by 16 subscribers for a silver tankard. All to be fought in silver spurs. Feeders: Steward for Norwich, Overton for Norfolk

February 2nd 1833 (advert)

A grand main of cocks will be fought at the Black Boys Inn, Aylsham on February 12th and two following days between the gentlemen of Norwich and Aylsham for 5 sovereigns a battle and 50 sovereigns of the odd. Feeders: Stafford for Norwich, Overton for Aylsham

March 11th 1834

Resolutions in favour of the repeal of the Malt Tax were passed at a large meeting of the owners and occupiers of land in the Hundred of South Erpingham held at the Black Boys Inn, Aylsham under the presidency of Robert Marsham.

March 3rd 1837

A fine specimen of the sea eagle was shot at Blickling. It measured from tip to tip of extended wings 7ft 3 1/2 inches and from head to tail 3ft. Lady Suffield presented it to the Norfolk and Norwich Museum

January 16th 1850

Aylsham was for the first time lighted by gas, an event celebrated by the ringing of the church bells, by the distribution of beer, and by a dinner and ball at the Black Boys Hotel. A display of fireworks ended the festivities.



Heritage open day talk 10.9.2016 – write up of the actual talk by Daphne Davy



Lyons

Aylsham parish church is dedicated to St. Michael and All Angels, and has been at the centre of our community, both spiritually and physically, probably for more than a millennium.

If you look at the list of incumbents on the south wall of the chancel, the first rector mentioned is Brithric. This is an Anglo-Saxon name, which could imply that he was here before the Norman Conquest. It is unlikely that there was a priest without a church, so I believe that there was a church by 1086, the date of the Domesday Book. I mention this because the current guidebook, and a number of other books about the church, and about Aylsham, suggest that the church was erected by John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, son of Edward III, and at one time, the Lord of the Manor(s) of Aylsham (along with some other odd bits of England, you appreciate).

As the earliest dateable part of the church can be attributed to 100 years before John of Gaunt, I think that the books are wrong. It is possibly because John of Gaunt is virtually the only medieval person, connected to Aylsham, that anyone has ever heard of. Everyone loves a celebrity. There is no evidence that he ever visited Aylsham, and a steward administered his estates on his behalf.

The original plan was to walk round the outside of the church, then the inside. The weather took over, however, and we only managed to walk the southern footpath, before we were driven inside by the rain.

First, we looked at some graffiti on the west wall of Holman House. STAND BY THE KING was painted in 1936, at the time of the abdication crisis. The king in question was Edward VIII. Beneath the writing it is possible to make out the twin lightning forks that symbolise the Nazi SS.

Next, the church dimensions. The extreme length is 164ft 9in, of which the nave is 111ft 6in, the chancel 53ft 3in. The width across the transepts is 88ft 8in, across the nave about 50ft. The tower height is 90ft, plus the spire.

Our church is a cruciform structure. As you can see from the market gate, the church is basically cross shaped. The tower and its base, at the west end, the transepts, and the chancel are later than the original fabric, so at one time, the church might have been rectangular, or possibly rectangular with a semi-circular chancel at the east end. In fact the aisles of the nave are not original, so not just a rectangle, but a smaller rectangle.

If you look above the line of the nave roof, where it joins the tower, then look a little bit above, there is an upside down v at a steeper angle than that of the present nave roof. This is the line of the previous, thatched, roof. Thatch needs a steeper pitch than lead or tiled roofs, to stop rain driving into the hollow stems.

Within limits, window shapes, tracery, and lights can provide a date range for that window. These will always be subject to error – a mason, benefactor or priest may wish for something old fashioned, or for consistency, or even to make something look older than it is. This was not just the Victorians. A local pub, which is several hundred years old, was given a faux old look in the 1970s, covering up some very real antiquity. Mainly, our church windows are “decorated”, or “perpendicular”. Decorated means the tracery is roundish, foliate, busy. Perpendicular means that some of the tracery, between the lights, is a straight line from the base of the window to the top. As you can see, on the south nave aisle, there are two different window shapes.

Buttresses come in many shapes and sizes. Our buttresses are not the finest, but they illustrate some features. They are designed to support a wall, just like the piers in many garden walls. As our churches are built to the greater glory of God – *ad maiorem Dei gloria* – they are made ornate. Firstly, the number of “stages”. Ours, in general, have two, but in other places there may be one, three, sometimes more. This can help with dating. On our buttresses, the front of them has flintwork which is much better quality than most of the church. This is because the buttress fronts would have been left exposed, whereas most of the church would have been rendered. You can even see some of the remaining render in places. Most was enthusiastically removed by the Victorians, who thought it was an addition, and were anxious to return churches to what they believed were their original state.

Looking above the south transept roof, in the clerestory, there is a blanked off window. It is not visible from the inside. Presumably some new work on the church at some time necessitated this.

The porch was built in two stages, as you can see from the very different flintwork quality. The upper storey was built by Richard Howard, a resident of Aylsham who was a Sheriff of Norwich and whose brass, and that of his wife, can be seen in the church normally. The flint and freestone quartering at the front of the first floor is considered fine. It is no longer possible to access the upper storey of the porch, except with the use of ladders.

There are a number of gargoyles at the top of the tower, but the only one that you can see clearly is on the vestry wall, on the east side of the church.

There is a yew tree to the north of the churchyard, very near the north wall. Yew trees were (and are) common in churchyards. There have been many suggestions about why this is, including the idea that yew was required for longbows, and the churchyard was the only place where animals would not have access to it. But, yews in churchyards often predate the use of longbows. The most likely explanation, apparently, is that yews in religious yards predate Christianity, and represent immortality, since they are extremely long lived.

The Norfolk Federation of Women's Institutes did a survey, I think during the 1970s, of Norfolk churchyards (or possibly all graveyards). They recorded every gravestone which was standing at the time, some of which have now gone. This is an invaluable resource for any researcher, and is available from the Aylsham archives.

In 1824, the last man hanged for sheep stealing in Norfolk was buried in Aylsham churchyard. A local resident, Roger Crouch, has researched this. The gravestone no longer is in place, but I understand that it was to the north of the church.

At this point, the rain really set in, and we went inside the church.

The window above the chancel door is known as the serpent window. It terrified me when I was young. It is a representation of Moses and the Brazen Serpent, from Numbers, which figures in Christ's declaration, in John chapter 3, verse 14. The wording above the picture gives the reference. The window was supplied by a stained glass window maker, Charles Clutterbuck, in the 19th century. If you look carefully, you can see that the window has been darkened. Presumably the original was regarded as a bit too bright.

From the chancel south aisle you can see a hole in the wall between the aisle and the sanctuary, which is known as a squint. Often these are referred to as "lepers" squints. Whilst a few are to do with lepers, most are not. The function of this squint was to enable a priest, officiating at the altar on the east wall of the south chancel aisle, to see the high altar when elevating the host. This

chapel was dedicated to St. Thomas a Becket, and there was an Aylsham guild in his honour. There is another squint, also focussed on the high altar, from the north transept. This is currently hidden behind the arras.

The south transept is set up as our Lady Chapel. This is recorded as being a Lady Chapel before the Reformation. Thomas Alleyn paid for it to be fitted up new in the early 16th century, and also paid for a chantry priest to pray for the souls of him, his family, and the king, Henry VIII. For the next four centuries after the Reformation, in fact until 1971, it was simply a transept, but at that time, it was returned to its former function. If you look at the roof, you can see the remains of the pre-Reformation decoration. To help in seeing this, the hassocks are embroidered with the same monogram, which is a crowned MR for Maria Regina - Mary Queen (of Heaven).

You can see that the corbels, the stones sticking out to support the roof, have been carved. One is in the shape of a bishop's head.

The pillars of the south nave aisle are dateable to the late 13th century. This is from the pillar bases, which are known as water hollow mouldings. If, as I believe, the church started life as the width of the nave only, the pillars would have been installed during the addition of the aisles.

As I said before, windows are subject to fashion. Looking at all the windows in the church, you should remember that not every window is in its original place, some windows have been modified, sometimes more than once, and the materials and work is of very varying quality.

As you can see on the side of the south tower pillar, we have a small piece of exposed flintwork. It has been suggested that this could be the last visible piece of the original exterior wall. Why this should have been left exposed has not been explained. If, as I believe, the original building was made up of the nave and a (now covered by the current) chancel, this flintwork would be on the outside of the church.

The west end comfortable area is our generation's contribution to the church. We started the Monday sale in 2000, to raise money to install plumbing, initially. Before that if we had tea or coffee, the water had to come in big bags. The design for the West end was done by a local architect, Janet Jury, and although many people liked the design, there was enough antagonism for us to have to hold a consistory court. In the event, the only stipulation was that it should not be attached to the existing fabric, and you can see that everything is separated slightly.

In the middle of the 19th century, the then vicar (who had a bit of money) decided to refurbish the church, and bring it back to what it would have been when first erected. Sadly, his view on this was wrong. He thought that medieval churches would have been filled with pews. This is wrong, but he did it. Every

available space was filled with pews. Many have now been removed, but when I was young, there were pews in both aisles of the nave, the nave pews went back nearly to the font, and nearly to the chancel arch. There were pews in both transepts, and in the south chancel aisle. We have removed several, I mentioned the consistory court, but every time we tried to reduce the pews, someone complained.

In the north pillar of the chancel arch, about 10 feet up, there is a door. This is the door to the rood loft, accessed via a stair in the pillar, with an entrance door on the opposite side of the pillar at ground level (this is now locked). The rood loft, a walkway at the top of the rood screen, would have been decorated according to the Church calendar, as would have been the sanctuary. Services were more flamboyant – bells and smells.

The Chancel is 19th century. A visitor remarked how similar our chancel was to the chapel in Pentonville prison. As far as I know, most of the people in our church do not resemble the congregation of Pentonville.

In the sanctuary, there is a memorial to Bishop Jegon, who had a second home in Aylsham. There is a verse about him, which refers to the disastrous fire at his previous residence, which was in Ludham..

Our short, fat, Bishop of Norfolk, 'twas he
That caused the great fire in Ludham to be;
He could not abide the poor at his gate,
Nor yet for to see them early or late,
He made strip and waste, most plain we do see,
Both of wood and timber in every degree.

Contributions to the church development, during my lifetime, have included work on the organ (twice), fitting up the Lady Chapel, putting in the west end, and the community rooms in the north transept. I am proud of our work, but someone wrote in the Visitors book recently about the awfulness of the west end, and the community rooms. You can't win them all.

In summation, there has been quite a lot about architecture, and a bit about history. To turn to religion, for me, the Christian religion is summed up as "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first, and great, commandment. The second is like, namely this. Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." These commandments are from both Matthew's and Mark's Gospels, and we say them every Sunday as part of the service. Everything else is putting this into action. Many people's vision of this has caused the building of this church, its maintenance and modification over the years, and the reason why we are all here today.



AYLSHAM ROMAN PROJECT

“Over the last forty years, I have been picking up pieces of Roman pottery, coins and other artifacts from my garden and the surrounding fields – sometimes it seemed as though every molehill and rabbit burrow turned up another fragment of the past.

A couple of years ago my curiosity finally got the better of me and I invited Britannia Archaeology to undertake a geophysical survey of the area. Their results were every bit as exciting as I could’ve hoped...

...The question was what to do next.”

Peter Purdy

The Aylsham Roman Project is a community orientated organization. Our aim is to explore and preserve the history of the recently uncovered Roman settlement, involving the local community at every possible stage, whilst also maintaining a professional approach both to the excavation of the site and the publication of our findings. We also aim to make the entire process accessible to members of the public, who might not have had any previous experience in heritage or archaeology. To achieve this we hope to maintain a friendly and approachable association, and produce publications not only for the archaeology community, but for schools, our own volunteers and the general public.

Aylsham Roman Project Season 1 – Summer 2016

by Martin Brook and Dan McConnell

Overview

In August 2016, the first excavation season of The Aylsham Roman Project was undertaken. An earlier evaluation of the site had defined the location of a probable Roman kiln and a number of associated features. The excavation area encompassed the kiln, associated features and other anomalies that were shown in the preceding geophysical survey.

The excavation was successful in locating and excavating two Roman kilns, the associated rake pits, a waste pit (probably used by the potters working on the kilns) and a number of smaller features possibly dating to earlier than the kilns.



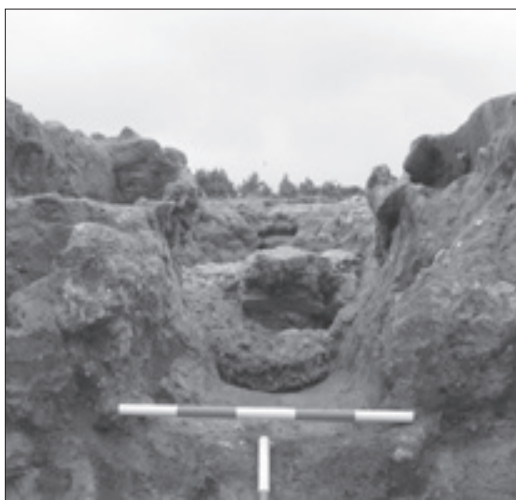
Photo: Kevin Myhill

Kiln 1

Kiln 1 was located in the north eastern end area of the excavation and was circular in plan (see back cover). The kiln was semi-sunken and had a single flue. The clay kiln chamber was a permanent clay lining. One of the most interesting aspects of Kiln 1 is that it showed evidence of reuse. Currently at least two separate phases of use have been identified. The flue was relined after the first firing. However the most interesting aspect of this kiln isn't wholly to do with the structure itself.

The associated rake pit adjacent to the kiln contained approximately 5000 sherds of pottery as well as numerous pieces of kiln lining, construction material and debris. It appears that something went wrong in the final firing of the kiln which had caused a high percentage of wasters within the kiln contents as well as possibly causing the kiln to collapse internally. Based on the evidence recovered during the excavation an explanation may be that the secondary floor surface of the kiln collapsed, causing the contents of the kiln to spill over and break. This floor surface was still present along with the pedestal (central structural) pillar once the kiln was excavated. The clay lining of Kiln 1 has been left intact to allow us to come back in a future season and

take samples for archeomagnetic dating. This will give us a working date range for the final firing of the kiln.



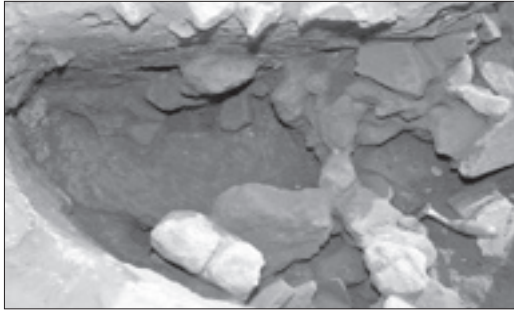
A view into Kiln 1 showing the flue in the foreground, the collapsed floor surface and central pillar in the background. Photo courtesy Britannia Archaeology Ltd.

Based on all the evidence from the kiln and specialist input, the current date range for the feature is mid-3rd to mid-4th century AD. Further analysis of the pottery will enable us to understand the methods the Romano-British were using in creating the pottery, as well as allowing us to create a type series for the site; this will be available for reference for all other sites in the area potentially allowing us to see the full limits of the dissemination of the pottery created at Aylsham.

Kiln 2

Kiln 2 (see plan on back cover) was located in the western portion of the site. The initial evidence for Kiln 2 was solely based on the results of the preceding geophysical survey which revealed a strong positive anomaly in this area of the site. After the initial site strip a small fragment of the outer structure was uncovered.

Similar to Kiln 1, Kiln 2 also had a substantial associated rake pit which contained a large amount of waster pottery. Originally it was believed that Kiln 2 was in a far more damaged condition than Kiln 1. However as excavation



A view into Kiln 2 showing the perforated floor surface. Photo: Kevin Myhill

of the feature continued and as more of the structure was uncovered it was found that this was no longer the case. This kiln not only showed evidence of relining (in the same way as Kiln 1) but as the firing chamber was excavated it became apparent that the kiln contained a raised perforated floor (which would effectively create a combustion chamber beneath the pottery being fired). While a perforated floor surface is not uncommon in Roman kilns finding one so well preserved is, and Kiln 2 (which has been left with the floor intact) will give us an opportunity to study their construction at a later date.

These types of kilns were simple in their design. They would be comprised of a stoke pit in which fuel would be fed into a flue (which we can see in Kiln 1) and the hot gases from the fuel would rise through the central chamber, where the pottery would be stacked, in order to fire the clay, eventually escaping through the top of the kiln.

Kiln 2 still needs to be fully excavated. 25% of the main chamber still needs to be removed as well as 50% of the associated rake pit. This will be undertaken in future seasons.

Conclusion

The first season at the Aylsham Roman project has produced some fantastic results. The excavation of the kilns has shown there to be a tangible Romano-British presence in the area towards the end of the Roman occupation of Britain. The finds that have been recovered are all undergoing specialist analysis and will help us determine firm dating evidence for this season's results as well as inform us going into the 2017 season.

Further Information: Aylsham Roman Project www.aylshamromanproject.com
Britannia Archaeology Ltd www.britannia-archaeology.com
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Annual General Meeting

Thursday October 6th 2016

Apologies: Sue McManus, Valerie Hills, Joan Rawlinson

Minutes of the AGM 2015 were signed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

Secretary's Report

Good evening. I hope you have collected your membership cards which, in addition to providing the list of lectures for this coming winter, also acts as receipt for payment of your Society subscription. Please note that the committee and officers on your card are those currently serving and not necessarily the ones you are about to elect.

The winter lectures were well attended with two lectures focused on the 600th anniversary of the Battle of Agincourt, and three on the 400th anniversary of the death of the poet and playwright William Shakespeare.

We have arranged an interesting series of speakers for this winter which is detailed on your membership cards, and includes some of our most popular speakers.

Members may recall that bell-ringers of the Guild of St Michaels are tolling a bell on the centenary day of the death of each young Aylsham man who died in world war one. This will continue through to 2018.

The Society's Autumn course was 'The Pastons and Their Norfolk' led by Elizabeth McDonald.

The annual dinner was held at The Buckinghamshire Arms, and was well attended, and enjoyed. The fact that we need to look for a larger venue is encouraging. The next dinner will be held on 30th March 2017 as in your membership card, and the venue will be confirmed later.

The Society has continued to enjoy good relations with the Heritage Centre and the Town Archives. The Heritage Centre has been working with Peter Purdy to dig part of the Woodgate Roman site. This has provided many people the opportunity to take part in a community dig; full of interest and good spirit. There is the probability that the dig will continue next August. The Heritage Centre also provided the opportunity for research in to the union workhouse, which is on-going.

Thanks to the Town Council and Honorary Archivist for enabling the continued research facility in the Town Hall.

If elected, I will stand down at the end of the next year as secretary, but I look forward to the year ahead.

Thank you.

Jim Pannell

Treasurers Report

I can report another satisfactory year for the Society's finances. Your subscriptions denote a buoyant membership and it is good to see that our Thursday lectures attracted a large number of visitors, some of whom might decide that membership of the Society would be to their advantage. Careful costing of visits and the social evening contributed to an end of year excess of income over expenditure of £602.66.

The accounts are currently with Graeme Johnston for checking and we expect to publish them in the December issue of the Journal.

Ian McManus

Report on Journal and Publications

We are now coming towards the completion of another volume of the Journal with Volume 10 parts 5–7 issued this year and part 8 nearly ready for printing. I am most grateful to our regular contributors who have given the Journal an excellent spectrum of topics and style. We are most fortunate to have the erudition and enthusiasm of William and Maggie Vaughan-Lewis as they extend their Aylsham research and also for a series of articles on resources now available for us to investigate property, death and taxes of the 15th to 18th centuries. To mark the 600th anniversary of Agincourt and the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death Jim Pannell organised the series of lectures that we have recorded, in part with kind contributions from the speakers themselves. Caroline Driscoll and Sue Sharpe have taken on the responsibility not only of organising several highly successful outings but also compiling much appreciated reports for the Journal. Projects led by the Aylsham Heritage Centre on the Aylsham Workhouse and the Roman dig at Woodgate also feature in current issues.

Caroline Driscoll has kindly taken on responsibility for stocking and selling the Society's publications. Many thanks to Diana Polhill for looking after the books for the last seven years. Sales brought in £760, mainly from Lynda Wix and Jim Pannell's *Aylsham Baptist Church*, well covering the costs of production and an excellent addition to our list. The Committee has been discussing several new research projects in which we hope members will like to participate in the New Year.

We are most grateful to Geoff Sadler for the continued enhancement of the

Society website and its links to other organisations.

We are sad to record the death of Geoffrey Nobbs, a member of the Society for over twenty years and an inveterate collector of much appreciated information for successive editors of the Journal – he will be greatly missed.

Roger Polhill

Report on Visits

There have been successful and well supported visits to Oxnead Hall, the Van Daal shoe factory in Norwich and Brinton Hall, reported in previous issues of the Journal.

The next visit, responding to the results of a members' questionnaire, is to Fakenham Gas Museum on November 3rd.

Caroline Driscoll

Report on Membership

The Society now has 124 members. It is good that there are enquiries from residents of the new estates in Aylsham.

Geoff Sadler

Election of Officers

In all instances members were asked if any wished to stand.

Roger Polhill announced he was standing down as Chairman of the Society after seven years. He thanked his wife Diana for all her support to him and the Society.

A new chairman had therefore to be elected.

Chair: Geoff Sadler, proposed by Roger Polhill, seconded by Sheila Merriman

As his first action as chairman Geoff thanked Roger and Diana for all they had done and suggested to the meeting they be given honorary Life Membership of the Society. This was overwhelmingly approved. A bouquet of flowers was presented to Diana and a bottle of wine to Roger. A former chairman Geoff Gale gave his thanks to Roger, particularly for the admirable way the Journal had been expanded.

Vice chairman: in the absence of any nominations from the floor this position will be appointed from the committee.

Secretary: Jim Pannell, proposed by Geoff Sadler, seconded by Vic Morgan

Treasurer: Ian McManus, proposed by Geoff Sadler, seconded by Ruth Harrison

The rest of the Committee, including Roger Polhill, was elected en bloc. Roger will continue to produce the Journal. Proposed by Geoff Sadler, seconded by Maggie Vaughan-Lewis.

Election of Judges for prize to Aylsham High School student

Vic Morgan explained to the Society that it had been agreed by the Committee a prize of £100 and 5 years free membership will be given to a student judged to have produced a worthy project on any historical subject. 3 staff members and 3 assessors from the history society would decide the prize winner.

Geoff Sadler proposed Vic Morgan, Ruth Harrison and Lynda Wix be appointed from the society. This was agreed unanimously.

Any other Business

Geoff reminded members of the Community Fair on October 10th in the Town Hall where we had some table space.

Roger Crouch asked if any member had a timber framed property they were willing to show to Norfolk Historical Building Group.

The AGM was declared closed

LIST OF MEMBERS – OCTOBER 2016

Below is the list of current paid-up members. After this issue of the Journal, the circulation of future issues will be based on this. IF YOUR NAME DOES NOT APPEAR ON THIS LIST YOU COULD MISS OUT ON FUTURE ISSUES OF THE JOURNAL. You will receive them by paying a subscription to the Treasurer, Mr Ian McManus, Little Nunthorpe, Aylsham NR11 6QT (individuals £9; couples £15). Apologies to any members who might have recently renewed their subscription and still missed inclusion on the list which was compiled at the end of October.

Baker, Mr D	Casimir, Mr & Mrs S
Baker, Mr & Mrs P	Cox, Mrs F
Barber, Mrs S	Cragg, Mr J
Barwick, Mrs G	Crouch, Mr R
Bayes, Mrs R	Davy, Mr & Mrs R
Bird, Mrs M	Douet, Dr A
Blake, Mrs J	Driscoll, Mrs C
Bowman, Miss H	Ducker, Mr G
Brady, Mr P	Duncan, Mrs B
Brown, Mr R	Dyball, Miss A J
Burton, Mr G	Dyer, Ms F
Calvert, Ms R	Edwards, Mr & Mrs J

Elphinstone, N.
Elsey, Mr & Mrs B
Fiske, Mr R
Fletcher, Mrs G
Gale, Mr G
Gee, Mrs B
Gordon, Mrs J
Goose, Ms J
Goose, Ms M
Grellier, Ms D
Hall, Mrs R
Harrison, Mrs R
Hill, Mrs M
Hills, Ms V
Holman, Mrs E
Home, Mr J
Humphreys, Mrs C
Janes, Ms L
Jay, Mrs S
Jeavons, Mr S
Johnston, Mr G
Jones, Mr & Mrs M
Laws, Ms E B
Layt, Ms A
Lock, Mrs A
Lyons, Mr D
Margaron, Mr & Mrs G

Mawbey, Mr & Mrs E
McChesney, Mrs J
McManus, Mr & Mrs I
Merriman, Mrs S
Mollard, Mrs T
Morgan, Dr V
Pannell, Mr & Mrs J
Parry, Ms E
Pim, Mr & Mrs M
Polhill, Dr & Mrs R
Powell, Mr & Mrs I
Roulstone, Mr & Mrs P
Rowe, Mrs M
Sadler, Mr & Mrs G
Sharpe, Mrs S
Sheringham, Mrs J
Smart, Mr & Mrs L
Steward, Mrs L
Thomas, Mrs C
Ulph, Mr C
Vaughan-Lewis, Mr & Mrs W
Warren, Mrs R
Wessely, Mrs J
Wintle, Mrs S
Wix, Mr & Mrs M
Worsencroft, Mr D
Worth, Mr & Mrs J

NOTICE

WEA Spring Course. *Gardens through History*. Tutor: Shelagh Ashe.
The course follows the history of gardens from the ancient civilisations until the present day, relating the development of the garden to history, philosophy, art and literature, including the creative explosion of the Italian Renaissance, the paintings of Claude and Salvator Roasa and the novels of Jane Austin.

Course fee: £47.25 for nine 1.5 hour sessions.
If you wish to book please contact Fiona Scott on 01603 279166
or weaylsham@gmail.com

**AYLSHAM LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY
RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS ACCOUNT – YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2016**

2014/2015	INCOME	2015/2016	2014/2015	EXPENDITURE	2015/2016
957.00	Members' subscriptions	969.00	440.00	Autumn Course	400.00
63.00	Visitors	144.00	1291.80	Publications & printing	683.40
805.00	Autumn Course	670.00	350.00	Hire of halls	390.00
604.00	Visits	705.00	568.00	Visits	765.60
532.50	Sales of publications	760.75	752.00	Social evening	945.00
752.00	Social evening	945.00	83.00	Professional subscriptions	83.00
68.00	Donations	13.00	235.00	Lecture fees	295.00
60.26	Refreshments	51.00	145.96	Stationery, posters, copying	58.69
560.00	Baptist Union	–	20.00	Gratuities	35.00
<u>£4401.76</u>		<u>£4257.75</u>	<u>£3905.76</u>		<u>£3655.69</u>

Reconciliation

Bank balance at 31/08/15	5626.57
Cash balance at 31/08/15	28.59
Add excess income over expenditure	£602.66
	Total: £ 6257.22

Represented by:– Bank balance carried forward	6188.80
Cash balance carried forward	<u>68.42</u>
	6257.22
	<u>1087.80</u>

Funds held on deposit at year end

Ian McManus (Treasurer)