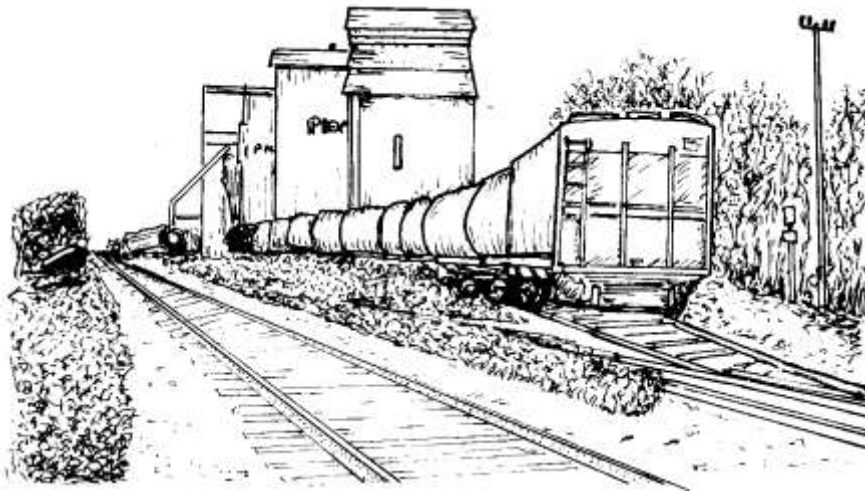


AYLSHAM LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY



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Cover illustration: Grain elevators, Aylsham, Canada.



AYLSHAM LOCAL HISTORY
SOCIETY

JOURNAL & NEWSLETTER

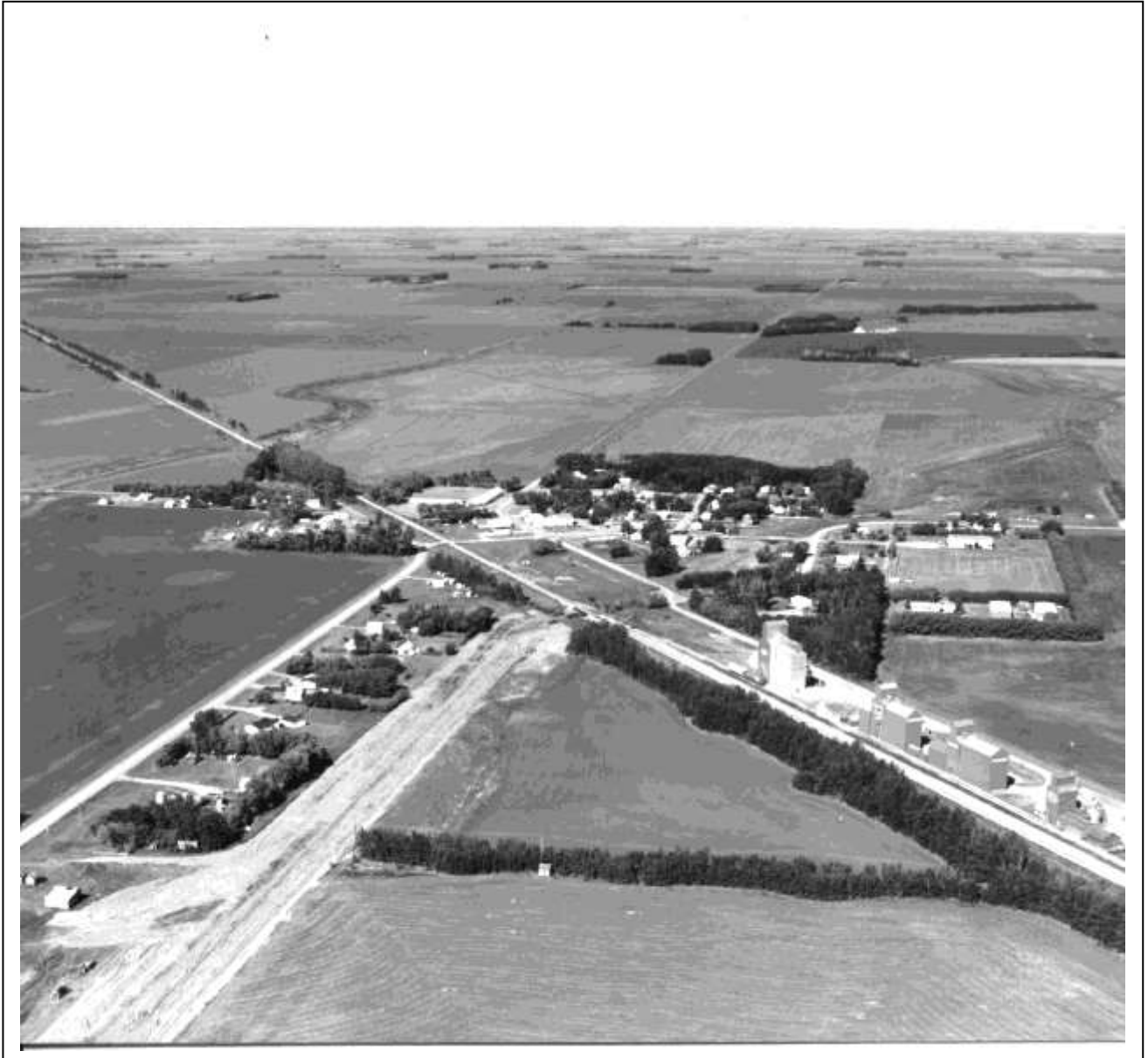
Volume 8

No. 5

Lloyd Mills kindly drew attention to an image of the grain elevators at Aylsham, Canada, on the *flickr* site of the internet in November 2008, put up by David Gane. This prompted a review of the papers in the Town Archives started by Ron Peabody in the 1970s. Dr David Case, Yvonne and Dave Bagshaw kindly helped with the article and helpful contact was made again with Mrs Dorothy Blue in the District Office in Aylsham, Canada. We shall miss Ron's cheerful presence in the town, but glad he was active until almost the end of his long life.

The series of winter evening lectures were all well attended with an exceptional turnout for the talk last month by Dr Victor Morgan. To complement the excellent Autumn Course on the history of Norwich, Charles Lewis has kindly agreed to lead two walks around Norwich in May. Chad Goodwin will follow up his similarly appreciated course on Thomas Paine with a course on *The Norfolk Landscape* in the Autumn, with a field day in the Breckland planned for October. The WEA is also offering a course on the *History of Science* by Glen Barrett, starting January 2009. Details are given on the back cover. Attention is also drawn to the launch of William and Maggie Vaughan-Lewis's new book on Mannington Hall. There is a fine display this season to celebrate the centenary of the *Masque of Anne Boleyn* at Blickling, initiated and written by Derek Lyons, including material from the Archives.

We look forward to the Spring Social Event on Thursday 23rd April arranged by Geoff Gale. Sadly he is stepping down as chairman in October. His assiduous and deft management will be much missed. The Society is very appreciative of Jim Pannell taking on the role of secretary.



Aerial view of Aylsham, Canada, from a photograph in the Town Archives.

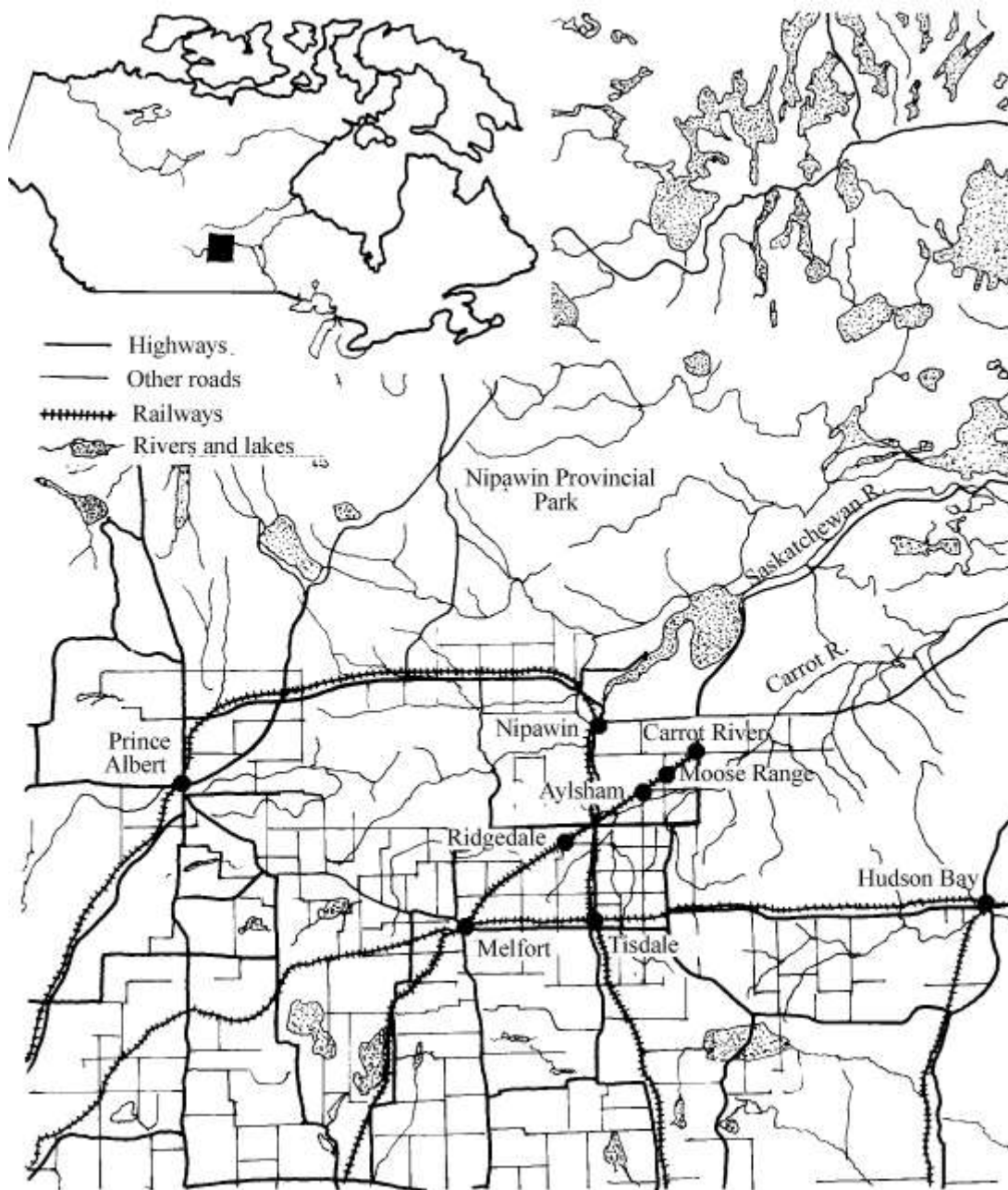
Aylsham, Canada

Roger Polhill

Ron Peabody, the Aylsham librarian, whose life we are celebrating in this issue, was renowned for his curiosity. He began a correspondence in the 1970s to explore the history of Aylsham, Canada². In 1979 he sent to the District Office there a series of tapes recording sounds and voices he had collected to give an idea of life here⁹. Over subsequent years the Town Archives has accumulated a good number of documents and records of visits in both directions^{2, 5, 10}.

The little town of Aylsham lies towards the northern limits of the Canadian prairies. The first settlers were attracted to the Moose Range District by the promise of a railroad connection on the Canadian Northern Railway. The Erickson brothers came in 1912 and were followed by immigrants from Norfolk soon after⁴. Sidney Thirkettle was born here in Aylsham, England, in 1881, the son of Joseph and Julia, who had a flour mill in Millgate^{1, 8, 12}. He was apprenticed as a carpenter and in 1908 emigrated to Canada. At Winnipeg he found work with construction companies, first building grain elevators and then joining the Canadian Pacific Railways, becoming a foreman for the Bridge and Building Section.

He came back to England in 1910, but soon pined for the freedom and opportunities of Canada. In the few months he was here he met Charlotte Emerson, the daughter of a miller in North Walsham and at that time working for the Colman family. She followed Sid out to Canada to marry him in November 1911 in Moose Jaw. They based themselves in Regina, where Lottie ran a boarding house for the next three years. They came back to Aylsham, England, for a three-month holiday in 1914 and on returning to Regina they both worked for the railway. When in Stroughton that year they met Joe Burrell, another friend from England, who had just filed for a homestead in the Moose Range District. Surveyors had demarcated the land into blocks, the homesteads found by following the cut lines and Indian pathways, each with a mound and a labelled metal pole at the NE corner¹. They rejected their first choice of land as too wet and refiled for better plots. Sid returned to work on the railways until early 1916. After losing the option on a new boarding house in Regina they decided to take up their homestead, bought a couple



of horses and a cow, packed their belongings and took the train to the railhead at Tisdale. There they acquired wagons and supplies, then began the forty mile journey over rough and muddy roads, four days of memorable adventures, to reach the Burrell's homestead.

From this base they developed their adjoining land, building a house and barn, and beginning to clear the land. At first only the ridges were dry enough to use, growing oats, building up a herd of 20 cattle by 1918 and erecting more farm buildings. In these pioneering years they had to depend considerably on the abundant wild fruits and berries gathered in

the summer and bottled or canned for the winter and on elk and moose for meat.

After the War ended there was an influx of newcomers, including Dick Laxen and his wife Helen. Richard Laxen was born here in Aylsham, England, in May 1887, the son of Horace Laxen, a baker and confectioner in Red Lion Street, and Sarah Anne (née Coldham)^{6, 7}. He assisted his parents and spent some time with the Norfolk Territorials before he emigrated to Canada in 1911⁷. He worked on the Canadian Pacific Railway until October 1914, when he joined the 28th Battalion of the Canadian Expeditionary Service. He sailed for England at the end of May 1915 and was stationed at Shornecliffe. Soon after, on 18 July 1915, he was married in St Michaels Church to Agnes Helen Lynes, 27, of 3 Sycamore Avenue, Aylsham⁷. Apart from spells of leave he served through the War in France. Almost immediately after his discharge he and Helen emigrated to Canada under the soldier-settler scheme to take up his homestead in Moose Range. They stayed with Sid and Lottie Thirkettle and with Sid's help built their house about a mile away on the adjoining homestead¹.

By 1921 the promised railway had advanced from Melfort as far as Ridgedale and the community had grown to the extent that James Clark, another farmer, was asked to set up a post office and Dick Laxen suggested the name of Aylsham^{1,4}. During the 1920s Sid was much in demand, helping newcomers build houses and barns, and working for companies engaged on drainage projects. Drainage from the mid-1920s brought much boggy land into cultivation, gradually transforming the district into grain production¹. The soil was good and Aylsham has been called the "Garden of Saskatchewan"⁴. Joe Thirkettle was born in 1923, Jack in 1925, Edna Laxen in 1921, Horace in 1922, Kenneth in 1923 and Donald in 1926, the two families growing up together¹. A school was started in Aylsham in 1927⁴, the first stores and a bakery were opened in 1929–1930, and in November 1930 the first train pulled into the new station. Grain elevators were soon erected, and despite the economic recession of the 1930s more people came, the school was extended and the Aylsham United Church opened in 1934.

The town prospered again with the demand for agricultural produce during the Second World War. By 1946 there were 125 students at school and 144 by 1954, justifying the building of a new school in 1955.



Grain elevators, Aylsham, Canada. Photo courtesy of Dave Bagshaw.

By 1976, however, the numbers had shrunk to 44 as access by bus to larger schools in Niapwin, 10 miles away, became easier and the school finally closed in 1988³. The little town had reached its zenith about 1955 when the centres of commerce and recreation began to dissipate until in 1976 the town had a population of 160⁴ and in 2006 just 92¹¹. It once had a team that took an active role in the Nipawin Curling Club and the Aylsham premises remain as a Heritage Centre.

Dick Laxen had to give up farming for health reasons and in 1937 the whole family moved back to Norfolk. Dick was the publican at the “Bull Inn”, Holt, for eighteen years until his death in 1954⁷. Helen died in Cromer in 1960 and the children continued their lives locally. Edna (Cobly), Horace and Don made one more visit to Aylsham, Canada, in June 1980 to celebrate “Aylsham’s Homecoming”¹.

Joe Thirkettle moved away, but Jack worked on his father's farm and after the Second World War began contract work on other farms and to take time away to do electrical jobs, leaving his wife Audrey (née Wallace) to run the farm¹. Sid died in 1963 and Lottie in 1966. Jack and Audrey's two children, Doug and Anita, moved away from the district, but Jack is still a resident in the family home— just over a century from when his father ventured forth from Aylsham, England.

Acknowledgements.

I am grateful to Dr David Case for much information on the Laxen family, to Mrs Dorothy Blue for information on Aylsham, Canada, and to Mr and Mrs Bagshaw for remarks and photos taken on their visit in 1995. I also appreciate the use of information and images from the Aylsham Town Archives.

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Portrait of John Jegon in the Deanery at Norwich,
courtesy of the Dean, the Very Reverend Graham Smith.

Ann Dyball was invited to an exhibition of paintings by Irene Ogden at the Deanery in Norwich on 13 May 2008. She was unable to go and kindly arranged for us to take her place. In the dining room I noticed a fine portrait of John Jegon (1550–1618), in a scarlet cape with ermine collar. The room was due for redecoration and while the painting was off the wall the Dean, the Very Reverend Graham Smith, kindly gave Derek Lyons permission to photograph it in September for the Town Archives.

The artist is said to be unknown in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (2004). It was painted in 1601 when Jegon was appointed Dean of Norwich. There is a copy at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, where Jegon had been Master since 1590, with the legend suitably emended. There is no information on the back of the portrait at the Deanery, other than restored by a Norwich firm in 1928.

Tom Mollard found a copy of an engraving published January 1st 1800 by William Richardson in London in an interleaved 2nd edition of Francis Blomefield's *History of Norfolk* 2: 400 (1805–1810) in the Cathedral Library. He used this for the cover of the *Aylsham Local History Society Journal* 2: 277 (1990), with a note about it and Bishop Jegon on p. 291. This picture has been reproduced most recently in John Pumphrey's book *About Aylsham* in 2008.



Jegon was appointed bishop in 1603. According to unflattering contemporary verses, collected by Harrison and later printed by Blomefield, he was said to be short, fat, dour and mean with money. It was alleged that when the Bishop's manor house at Ludham burnt down in 1611 he had been involved with the arson to save himself expense. Instead he enlarged the Manor House at Aylsham which he had bought earlier and lived there until he died a few years later in 1618, his fine monument in the chancel of St Michael's Church. Dr J.M. Blatchly, in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004), says that too much credence has been given to these doggerel caricatures. Jegon soon put in good order the chaotic records of the see, was quick to interrogate his officials from the chancellor down to the commissaries, suspending offenders summarily and only reinstated those prepared to forswear bribery and extortion. He supported the preaching ministry and helped to establish market-day lectures in places such as Swaffam. There seems some truth in the complaints of covetousness and parsimony. None of his numerous servants were remembered in his will and he charged high fees for ordinations and institutions to benefices. But Fuller, *Worthies* 1: 346 (1811) describes him as 'A most serious man and grave governour; yet withall of a most facetious disposition; so that it was hard to say whether his counsel was more grateful for the soundness, or his company more acceptable for the pleasantness thereof'.



Ron Peabody

Tom Mollard



On Wednesday, 17th. December, Ron Peabody died in St. Michael's hospital, Aylsham, at the age of 88. Ron had been the Librarian in Aylsham from 1966 until his retirement. He worked firstly in the temporary building hidden away in Dye's Loke which was later replaced by the newly-built library in Hungate Street.

In the early days of Ron's career in Aylsham, he also had the responsibility for the libraries in Reepham, Stalham and Mundesley. He was the ideal person to be the town librarian. He was highly knowledgeable, and a great bookman and knew his subject well and which books were important and should be present in every library.

He came to Aylsham from Hayes in Middlesex and very soon became involved in the town and its history. For a time he also served as a Town Councillor. Ron's interest in the history of Aylsham lead him into becoming a member of the Aylsham Local History Society when it was formed and he was its first Vice-Chairman in 1984, assisting Canon Jack

Vyse in the running of the society. Four years later, when Canon Vyse retired and moved away from Aylsham, Ron became Chairman of the society for the remainder of that year, until Jane Nolan took over as Chairman the following year.

Ron's other great interest was his involvement in the Town archives collection. He became deeply involved in its custody and care, and he became more and more an expert on the history of the Town. The collection had been cared for by various people over the years - by the Proudfoots, followed by Dr. Sapwell who wrote the history of Aylsham, published in 1961. Ron worked closely with Dr. Sapwell until the doctor's death, when Ron took over the collection which he administered until his own retirement. He was the ideal person to hold this post. He was meticulous in collecting material for the archives, and for recognising what material should be collected and preserved. He was also very expert at persuading people to part with such material which would enhance the collection, and he has left his mark permanently upon it.

Ron also made his own contribution to the Archives. I consider myself privileged to have worked with him until he retired, and to have worked with him in Ron's production of the book published in 1995 for the Town Council celebrating the centenary of the Town Council in the illustrated publication *Aylsham Remembered*. This was an excellent survey of the previous 100 years, entirely from material and photographs collected in the archives. This was funded by the council.

Ron's other contribution was in recognising the value and interest contained in an unpublished manuscript preserved in the archives and contained the memoirs of W.F. Starling covering the period 1852 until his death in 1937. Starling had been a local shopkeeper with a great knowledge of the town and its citizens. The memoirs were a valuable contribution to the history of life in Aylsham. These memoirs were eventually published with the aid of the Local History Society in 2000 and were a great success. Ron also kept up a correspondence with the granddaughter of W.F. Starling, who lives in Australia. This continued up to his death. The granddaughter is Margaret Keable, who was delighted to see the memoirs of her grandfather in print.

All this is just part of the memory of Ron Peabody, that will remain with all who knew him and recognised his great contribution to the town.

SOCIETY NEWS

Black Shuck – a talk by Peter Ransome



Ladies and Gentleman

On the 22nd of January Mr Peter Ransome tickled our tastebuds with an illustrated talk on “Black Shuck”, the phantom Hellhound of East Anglia.

Legends of Black Shuck, a calf-sized dog roaming the Anglian countryside, date back to the time of the Anglo-Saxons and Vikings. Seamus Heaney writes of him in his poem “Beowulf”:

*A dreadful thing from the cliff did spring,
And its wild bark thrilled around,
His eyes had the glow of the fires below,
T’was the form of a spectre hound.*

His name may derive from the Anglo-Saxon word ‘scucca’, meaning ‘demon’, or possibly from the local dialect word ‘shucky’, meaning ‘shaggy’ or ‘hairy’. He has appeared as a bloodhound, wolf, shaggy dog or labrador – sometimes headless, or often with eyes like burning coals, and accompanied by mist or fire and in howling winds and gales.

According to folklore the spectre often haunts graveyards, country lanes and dark forests.

His appearance usually bodes ill to the beholder. He terrifies his victims, but leaves them alone to continue their normal lives. In some cases his appearance occurs before close relatives of the observer die or become ill – sick people, it was said, “had the look of black dog”.

We were reminded that dogs have long been associated with Death in some cultures. For example, in Ancient Egyptian tombs the black dog guarded the jars containing the viscera of the deceased king, as in the tomb of Tutankhamun. ‘Man’s best friend’ has been heard to howl on the death of his Master – as in the case of the sudden death in 1923 of Lord Caernarvon, who funded the Tutankhamun excavation. So, our local legend fits well into the ancient depiction of the dog being associated with Evil.

There have been numerous ‘supposed’ sightings of Black Shuck in Norfolk and Suffolk over the centuries. One of the most notable reports is of his appearances on the same day of August 4th 1577 at Holy Trinity Church, Blyburgh, Suffolk, and at St Mary’s, Bungay. On this occasion during the service at Blyburgh, the Hellhound is said to have burst through the main doors with fire and a whirlwind, causing the church tower, spire and bells to collapse through the roof. In the terror and panic ensuing a man and boy were killed, whilst the Beast escaped through the North door and on to Bungay church. In 1933 this door was restored revealing scorch marks from the hound’s claws, and that can be seen to this day. The encounter on the same day at Bungay was described in “A Straunge and Terrible Wunder”, by the Rev. Abraham Fleming in 1577, the same year. Again panic followed but with no loss of life. The event is commemorated in the church weather vane.

Sightings continued in the 19th century – particularly near the coast and on the road between West Runton and Overstrand. Sheringham fishermen claimed they heard the howlings of Black Shuck during storms – or is this a crafty ruse to discourage interest in their nefarious activities of smuggling and pillaging from shipwrecks?

In the 1890s a Cromer teenager was rescued from the sea maintaining that the Black Dog had chased him into the foam – or was it the demon drink?

BIG CAT SEEN

By **MARY HAMILTON**
mary.hamilton@archant.co.uk

THE mystery big cat that has stalked Norfolk for years is on the prowl again, with two fresh sightings reported.

One of them is in the north Norfolk village that was named the county's big cat hotspot two years ago.

Louisa Allen, from Hevingham, said she was shocked to see the animal just 25ft from her house last Wednesday. "It was completely black with a very

long distinctive downward-curving tail. It was about the size of a Labrador but it was much longer in the body and walked like a cat," said the dressmaker, who was preparing for a fitting when it happened.

"I saw it so clearly. I've no doubt it was a panther."

Turn to Page 2



OUT THERE?
Was it a panther spotted in north Norfolk?

North Norfolk News Thursday February 26th 2009

In March 1901 Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Creator of Sherlock Holmes and a dabbler in the supernatural, stayed at the Royal Links Hotel, Cromer, on a golfing holiday. Here he heard of sightings of Black Shuck from his friend Bertram Fletcher Robinson. Did these tales inspire him to resurrect Sherlock Holmes, his famous detective, in the “Hound of the Baskervilles” a year later as was the case? Although the story takes place on Dartmoor where a similar legend exists, and where the author spent some weeks in the same year, it would be gratifying to think that our local legend had contributed to one of the finest Victorian crime novels in our language.

More recent sightings have continued to occur, particularly in south-east Norfolk near the coast. During the Second World War an A.R.P. messenger, cycling down Church Lane, Gorleston, at night suddenly saw a ‘huge black dog’ that ‘fixed his steely gaze on him’. A police dog-handler (surely a reliable witness?) spotted a large dog (the size of a calf) run across the A12 north of Blyburgh and disappear into the marshes. Later he had a second sighting in the churchyard and heard blood-curdling howls. Alice, aged 14, travelling with family and friends in Suffolk, saw a huge, black creature overtaking cars; and a birdwatcher, pursuing his solitary hobby, took a photo of a large shaggy dog in the distance – possibly a forlorn Irish wolfhound – hardly convincing!

“A load of old squat!” I hear you say, but such is the nature of myths, and whilst many can be explained away, our culture and imagination is all the richer for them. We thank Mr Ransome for bringing them to our attention, with the accompanying slides and recordings. No doubt further sightings will occur. It would be interesting to speculate how this “shaggy dog” story would develop.....Perhaps Black Shuck will meet up with the current phenomenon, the huge Black Cat*.....now that’s a confrontation worthy of the front page of the EDP – and even the A.L.H.S. Journal.

Jean McChesney

* Seen in the field of Brick Pit Farm to the north of the Weavers’ Way a little before the Blickling road, as I well remember on an evening walk some four years ago, and seen thereabouts independently by our neighbour Cheryl Parkes several times – Ed.

Servicemen in a Wartime Photograph, before, now and in-between – a talk by Andrew Tatham



Mr Tatham was a very engaging speaker with an easy and pleasing manner. His extensive researches into the background of a group of officers commanded by his grandfather in the Great War left his audience rather in awe of his dedication.

His presentation was split into three parts:

A ten minute introduction – this proved to be absolutely essential for any understanding of what followed.

A thirty minute video illustrating the lives and fates of his subjects.

And finally, a more detailed biography of two of the officers in the group.

The video was slick and smart but contained far too much information, too quickly delivered for my poor old eyes and addled old brain to take in

at one go. The fact that I was sat at an acute angle to the screen and that my view was interrupted by the heads of those in front did not help, but one can hardly hold that against the speaker. As far as I could make out it set out to project simultaneous time-lines for all the officers appearing in a group photograph taken during the First World War, just prior to their embarkation for the front. The sequence began well before the war when most of his subjects were first born. Throughout the video births were punctuated on the sound track by the sound of a baby crying. Similarly, each death was signalled by the tolling of a bell. The passage of time was indicated by historical clips and sound recordings, as well as by an advancing calendar at the bottom of the screen. I was quite fascinated by the presentation but I did find it hard to follow. Numerous pieces of information in the form of pictures or captions appeared suddenly at different places on the screen and then, by the time I had shifted my gaze, just as rapidly disappeared, so that I felt frustrated at having missed them. However, it was a most interesting and novel way of telling a story and Mr Tatham deserves considerable praise for his skill and imagination.

Part three of the presentation was far more conventional. It dealt in detail with the lives of just two of the officers – the shortest lived and the longest lived. It moved at a slow enough pace that even I managed to follow the plot. Both subjects were interesting in their own right without being too much out of the ordinary.

Whilst it was an interesting evening I did feel that in making the video the speaker was indulging himself rather than producing something that would appeal to an audience. The reaction of the History Society audience was, I think, slightly puzzled. It really was difficult to follow. The final part of the presentation, I suspect, came as something of a relief to many people – here was something that was easy to comprehend.

Derek Lyons



Did the Renaissance reach East Anglia? – a talk by Dr Victor Morgan



A north window in Melton Constable church has a panel of glass made locally in the 1520s with a candelabra motif characteristic of the Renaissance.

Well, yes – but you might not think so. The history of Norwich edited by Carole Rawcliffe and Richard Wilson in 2004 does not include the Renaissance in the index to either volume and the only reference seems to be in Christopher Barringer's chapter on surveying, where he remarks on the innovation of triangulation. Sixteenth-century history in England has been dominated by the Reformation, with its cultural transformation and the obliteration of many edifices and precedents. Dr Victor Morgan gave a brilliant illustrated lecture to an exceptional turnout of the Society on the evening of the 26th of March, seeming to cleverly condense a year of university lectures into an hour.

The Renaissance in England was relatively late and followed the Reformation rather than preceding the spread of protestant ideas as is in

other parts of Europe. It is only to be expected, however, that people with power and wealth would have an eye for fashion and the latest innovations, not least the Royal Court in London, very evidently so after the accession of Henry VIII in 1509. The court continued to be a central node from which the leaders of the catholic church, the cities, great houses and universities disseminated new ideas and expressions of learning, art and architecture.

Throughout the late medieval period prelates, gentry and city merchants in the provinces needed to keep a pulse on the royal court. There are numerous items of correspondence with agents or relatives in London to solicit favours, goods and connections, as well as curiosity about the latest fashions and technology.

There was a false dawn of Renaissance in East Anglia at the end of the fifteenth century when the catholic church was at its pre-eminence. Wealthy prelates were able to build palaces and introduce new levels of comfort and decoration, evident in the Priory at Carrow in the early sixteenth century. The lay piety was also able to indulge in new domestic comfort, design and ways of thinking as they gained influence through sororities of religious houses and through the guilds. The College of St Mary-in-the Fields, on the site of the present Assembly Rooms, seems to have been of considerable sophistication, as indeed was the Guildhall. Much was lost during the suppression of 1530–1540. Indeed between 1530 and 1670 hardly any new churches were built.

A further major factor around the turn of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was the proliferation of printing presses and the widespread availability of woodcuts. This led to a rapid spread of new designs and ways of thinking. Traces are evident, for example, in the candelabra design, much favoured in Renaissance Italy, beginning to appear in Norfolk, to decorate monuments, such as the 1554 Howard tomb at Framlingham. It is now beginning to be discovered earlier, such as locally made stained glass preserved in the church at Melton Constable, dated to the 1520s, and previously dismissed by Pevsner as “panels of foreign glass”. The manuscript books treasured by master craftsmen now began to be replaced by widely available printed pattern books.

The second major conduit that persisted up to the reign of Elizabeth I was through the local magnates that held great power in East Anglia, the Howards, Hobarts, de Veres and de Poles. Grand houses, such as that

built by Howard, Earl of Surrey, on Mousehold in the 1540s and demolished in 1551, the house in Surrey Street, of which only a few pieces of glass remain in the Board Room of the later building, the Duke Street Palace, all no doubt contained Renaissance influence though now mostly lost. There are, however, still traces of new influences, such as the widespread use of terra cotta decoration, apparently brought in by foreign workers in the 1520s, and well preserved at Oxburgh, also seen in Norwich and Wymondham. The old oligarchy was dismembered by Elizabeth I and the second false dawn was gone by the 1570s.

It was at this time that graduates from the great universities and immigrants from Flanders began to take up civic and commercial positions and vied to display their sophistication, comfort and learning. Certain colleges at Cambridge, notably Caius and Corpus Christi, took many East Anglian students who later came to occupy prominent places in the church, the Bench and country estates. By 1600 the 1,200 resident clergymen in the Norwich diocese mostly had degrees. The Bacons, Cokes, Pastons, Spellmans, Townshends and Gawdys were all families sending sons to Cambridge, as were aldermen, such as Aldrich, Stile and Quash. There were special schools founded with offers of scholarships for poorer students.

Thomas Blundeville, who died in 1605–1606, had his hall at Newton Flotman, and was proud of his study with its ceiling or “false roof”, his collection of books and instruments. His interests in the sciences and mathematics are displayed on the tomb he designed for himself. The Dunston Hall manuscripts of the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century reveal much of the intellectual interest in cosmology, mapping and astrology. Robert Race, who died in 1618, was much involved with the history of Suffolk and particularly with the intricacies of heraldry and genealogy. Sir Thomas Nesbett (d. 1578) was a bibliophile with a notable collection of coins, medals and cameos, which he catalogued and organised into emblem books embellished with pithy sayings, a passion he shared with Nicholas Bacon (d. 1579) at Stiffkey. Ornamentation also extended into typography. The great houses showed Italianate features, conspicuous in the 1620s at Blickling with its state rooms on the first floor, privy rooms behind, the use of brick, rather than stone, and the embellishment of the façade with classical figures.

The art of oratory was in fashion with the parochial clergy, evident in the books of sermons seen at the Blackfriars Library in 1608. Civic occasions were also marked by great festivals with processions and proclamations, notably the midsummer installation of the mayor at the Guildhall in Norwich. New Dutch influences became apparent in the desire for civic portraits, inspiration for great poems, such as the “Faerie Queene” by Edmund Spenser (d. 1599), new techniques of composition and performance of music. Norwich became a hub from which the influences for festivals and speeches were disseminated widely to the towns throughout the county.

Although much of the Renaissance influence in East Anglia has been lost or overlooked, research projects initiated at UEA over recent years have already brought much to light and promising leads keep turning up now the outline has been established.

Roger Polhill

See you in Court: The Potts Family of Mannington Norfolk 1584–1737 by William & Maggie Vaughan-Lewis.

The Potts family owned the beautiful 15th century moated hall at Mannington for 150 years but who were they? This detailed history traces their rise from yeoman stock to Baronets and covers much of southern and eastern England with a focus on North Norfolk. The intricate interweaving by marriage and trade links of gentry families across the country is perfectly demonstrated by this single family. Their success - peaking with Sir John Potts’s important role in the civil war - and later decline is described using many never-before published sources. With nearly 700 pages, fully referenced to fascinating Chancery court papers in the National Archives and local archives across the country, this is a major addition to studies of local communities in the early modern period.

William and Maggie Vaughan-Lewis will be signing their new book in St Jude’s Gallery at Itteringham shop 11–3 on 2nd May. £10 discount for purchases that day. There will also be a talk at Mannington Hall on 26 April at 3 pm – tickets (incl. tea and biscuits) are £5 from Wolterton estate office.

NOTICES

SPRING SOCIAL EVENING

Walnut Room, St Giles House, St Giles Street Norwich Thursday 23rd April for members who have signed up for the event with Geoff Gale. Coach leaves Aylsham market place at 6.30 pm.

WALK ROUND NORWICH LED BY CHARLES LEWIS

Charles Lewis has kindly agreed to lead a walk round Norwich on the afternoons of Wednesday 6th May and Sunday 10th May for 15 to 20 people, starting at 2 pm on each day. Those who attended the Society's Course on the history and development of the city will be given priority.

£5.00 for lecturer and coach. Coach leaves Aylsham 1.30 pm sharp. Booking slip enclosed with this issue.

MANNINGTON BEFORE 1737: New Discoveries

William and Maggie Vaughan-Lewis will be talking about their new book at Mannington Hall on Saturday 26th April at 3 pm and selling signed copies in St Jude's Gallery at Itteringham Shop 11.00–3.00 on Saturday 2nd May – see notice on page 135 of this issue.

COURSES IN AYLSHAM AUTUMN 2009 AND SPRING 2010

Aylsham Local History Society:– The Norfolk Landscape Wednesdays at 2.00 pm from 23rd September. Field day in the Brecklands planned for sometime in October.

WEA:– William Morris by Jill Arnold, Tuesdays at 2.30 pm from September, and

History of Science by Glen Barrett, Wednesdays at 2.00 pm from January 2010.