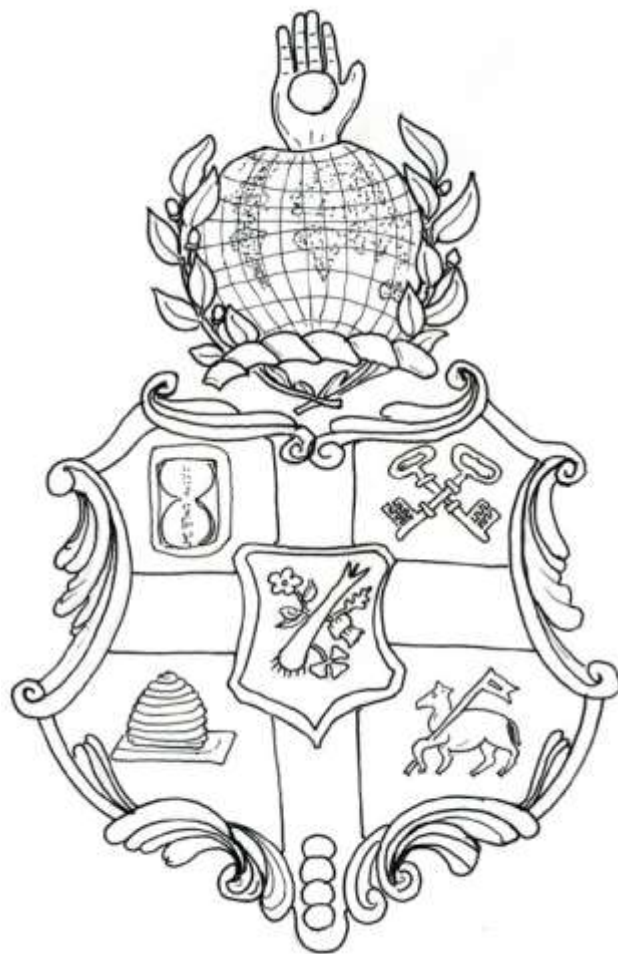


AYLSHAM LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY



Volume 8 No 7

December 2009

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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Cover illustration. Emblem of the Aylsham Oddfellows.



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SOCIETY

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This issue is larger than usual and I am grateful for a number of contributions on the business of the Society as well as for the original articles. Sheila Merriman took a lead in organising the very successful event for the Heritage Day and has kindly advised the Society on matters of Equal Opportunity Policy and Data Protection. There are still three lectures this season, weather permitting (see below):

Thursday 28th January. '*History of Cromer*', by Alistair Murphy

Thursday 25th February. '*Archaeological Prospecion in Urban Areas*',
by Ken Hamilton

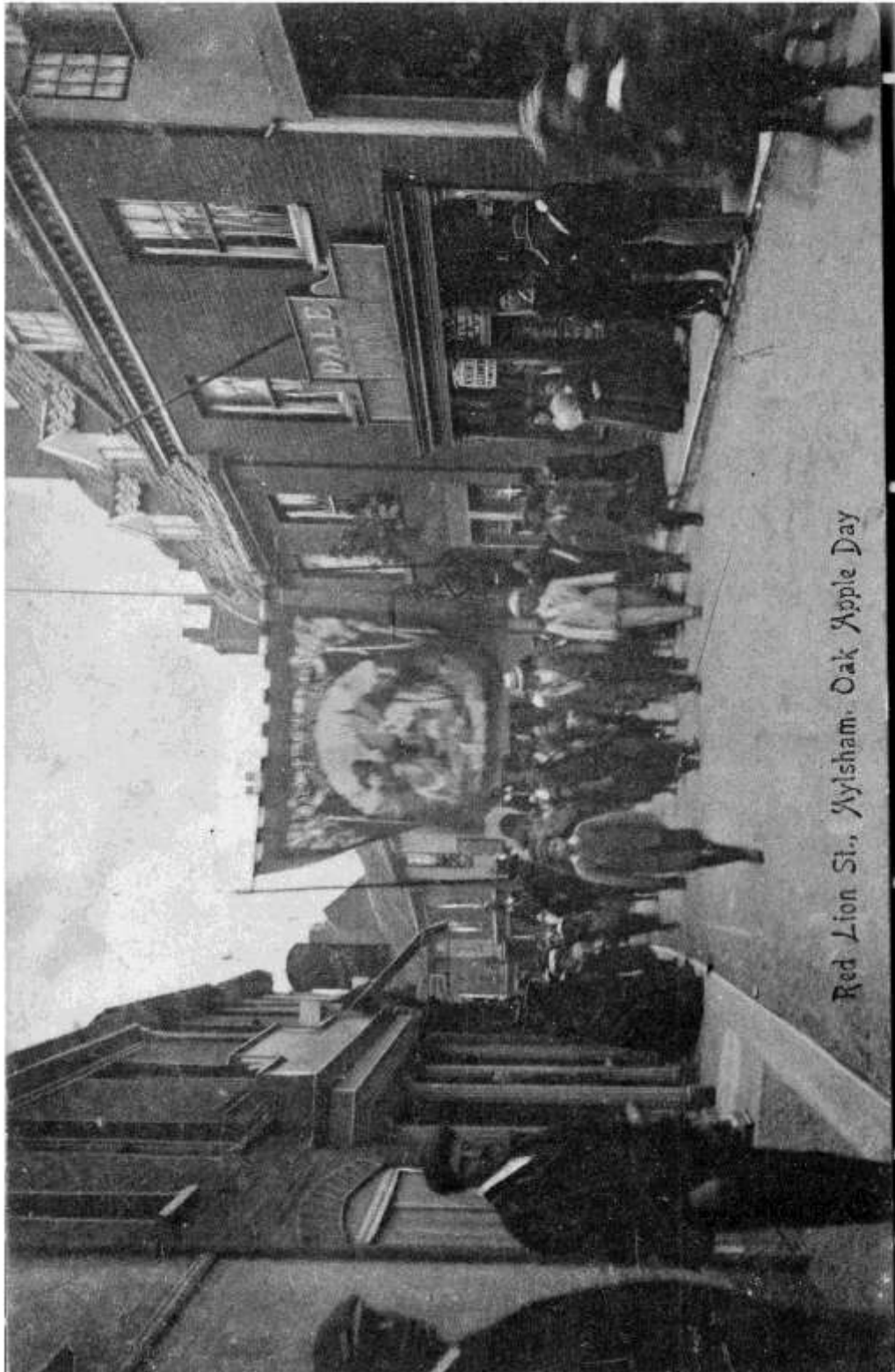
Thursday 25th March. '*Norwich Silver*', by Dr Francesca Vanke

Please see back cover and inserts for information on the excursion to Carrow House in March, the Spring Social in April and the WEA course on 'The History of Science' from January.

Severe Weather Procedure

All Committee Members will be contacted before 10.00 am

1. Members should ring a member of the Committee to determine if the meeting is/is not to go ahead as planned. Names and telephone numbers on the back of the membership card.
2. Radio Norfolk will be contacted with a request to broadcast a cancellation notice.
3. If any member wishes to be contacted by email please notify Roger Polhill at polhill@FreeNet.co.uk or Jim Pannell at j.pannell487@btinternet.com



Red Lion St., Aylsham. Oak Apple Day

Friendly Society parade down Red Lion Street on Oak Apple Day. Year not recorded, but some of these lads might well have been involved in the Great War. Photo courtesy Aylsham Town Archive.

AYLSHAM ODDFELLOWS' ROLL OF HONOUR

Lloyd Mills

Hanging on the wall of the stairwell leading to the Council Chamber in Aylsham Town Hall is a memorial board. It reads as follows:

ROLL OF HONOUR

Erected in Memory of the Brethren of the
LOYAL "MARQUIS of LOTHIAN" LODGE No. 4266
M.U.I.O.O.F. = NORWICH DISTRICT = AYLSHAM.
**Who made the supreme sacrifice during the
GREAT WAR 1914 – 1919**

ABBS W. M.		MELTON A.R.
BROOM C.C.	DUCKER E. J.	NORTON WILLIAM
BLYTH R.J.	DUCKER T. E.	PAYNE A.H.
BRAWN H. H.	FROSTICK F. H.	PERT C. F.
BOND F. T.	FISHER SIDNEY	SARSBY T. J.
BIRCHAM H. C.	FAIRCLOTH E. R.	SKIPPER BENJAMIN
BIRCHAM WILLIAM	FIELD W. G.	TURNER B. R.
CAMPBELL A. S.	HALL. A.R.	WATSON ABRAHAM
COOKE NOEL H.	JOHNSON ALFRED	WARNE F. C.
CUSHION BASIL	LUSHER A. J.	WADE R. J.
DIGBY A. W.	MARTINS FREDERICK	WINTERBORN A. C.
DOUGHTY C. W.	MOY FREDERICK	WILSON SIDNEY

"Greater Love Hath No Man Than This"

BROOM F.A.		JECKELLS H.
DUCKER D. S.	1939 – 1945	SKIPPER G. E.

The Oddfellows developed after the suppression of the trade guilds by Elizabeth I. The earliest surviving rules of an Oddfellows Lodge date from 1730. In 1789 the Grand United Order of Oddfellows Friendly Society was formed.

In 1810, members of the Oddfellows in the Manchester area became dissatisfied with the way the Grand United Order was being run and formed an independent Order with the title 'Manchester Unity'. This organisation is nowadays usually referred to as "The Manchester Unity Order of Odd Fellows" (MUOOF).

The earliest reference to an Oddfellows Society in Aylsham Town Archives is a copy of the Laws and Regulations of the 'Aylsham Independent and Benevolent Royal Clarence Lodge of United Friends, Odd Fellows'. This was published in 1829. They met at the Star Tavern in Red Lion Street, which was run by 'Brother P. P. Wilson'. The booklet was printed by 'Brother E. Silence' of Aylsham.

A copy of the drawing of the 8th Marquis of Lothian hangs in the Council Chamber at the Town Hall. Underneath is written 'The Most Noble, William, Schomberg, Robert, 8th Marquis of Lothian, after whom, Lodge No. 4266, M,U,I,O,O,F, was named on August 3rd 1847'. This was the accepted date of the establishment of the lodge.

The first minutes that we can find in the Town Archives are dated 25 January 1889, but these include a resolution that the minutes of the previous meeting be signed and confirmed. The minutes are a near continuous run to 27 November 1982 (signed on 18th December 1981). They also include the election of officers for 1982.

As may be guessed the major gap in our collection of the minutes covers the dates 1919 to 1925 – presumably the years during which the Roll of Honour Board was commissioned and put in place? The Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31st December 1949 include an expenditure of £3 for lettering on the roll of honour. This may have been to add the names of those that fell in the 1939 – 1945 war. We also have the minutes from the Marchioness of Lothian Lodge dating from 1912 to 1948 but these make no reference to the Roll of Honour Board. Perhaps we should assume the commissioning of the Honours Board was a male undertaking?

MY VISIT TO AYLSHAM – September 2009

Graham Laxen



I had heard about Aylsham since 1963 when my parents rediscovered it on a trip to England from our home in South Africa. My grandfather Frederick Laxen had spoken of his home town, but I am not sure that he ever returned after settling in Boksburg, Transvaal, in the 1920s. To record my parents' visit there was a photo taken on a rather inclement day of them standing in the Market Square. They found a plaque in memory of my grandfather's brother, Henry Fenn Laxen, on the wall of the town church. He had been killed in the Boer War and is buried in Heroes' Acre in Pretoria – where South African presidents and prime ministers are buried. Under British administration it was decided that British soldiers belonged there too. In 1999 my father Peter Laxen searched diligently for this grave and later had a fine headstone placed there.

Our surname, Laxen, is very unusual and in England it is unique to Norfolk and can be traced back to 1725. David Case, a Laxen relative and a member of the Society has taken an active interest in this name and

compiled the family tree. There are also Laxens in Scandinavia and others that originate in Germany. Although five letters long the name must always be spelt out to people and it also lends itself to unfortunate nicknames and social humour.

I emigrated to Australia in 1980 and since then have concentrated all overseas travel on return trips to South Africa to visit the family. As my parents recently passed on I decided it was time to visit England and a major priority was a visit to Aylsham. It was a far busier place than the 1963 photo had led me to expect, and more picturesque than I had given credit for over all those years. I was travelling with my eldest daughter Renee and we easily found the important family sites (armed with information from David Case). We found the Laxens' saddlers and harness makers shop in Market Square (now Break Charity) and the bakers' shop in Red Lion Street (now F.C. Gardiner). Down the road was the Old Stonemasons house where my grandfather lived in the early 1900s. I don't expect that my parents would have known of all these significant buildings when they visited. The church stood open for inspection and there on the wall was the plaque that I had heard about for so long from family visitors to Aylsham. It was the first one I saw as I entered the building.

Renee and I had lunch at The Black Boys Hotel before commencing our return journey. As you can imagine in 1960s South Africa the name of this establishment had fascinated us too. I have observed that food in England has an underlying flavourful quality and the Black Boys lunch was no exception.

It was one of the highlights of our tour of England to get to this town of such family significance and I have determined to visit again with my wife before too long. My grandmother always felt a huge nostalgia for England and an empty desolation at being relocated to Africa, and for the first time I had an insight into her viewpoint when I saw Aylsham, Haddenham in Buckinghamshire (where she was born) and other English towns. What a hard life story Henry Fenn Laxen and others like him had – to leave wonderful places and die young on some colonial battlefield.

Next time I want to stay longer and see the surrounds of Aylsham, the nearby coast, and the many attractions of this very special part of England.

THANKSGIVING DAY AT AYLSHAM Thursday 5th December 1805

Geoffrey Nobbs

At the local library computer recently I found details of an entry in the London Gazette stating that by Proclamation of November 20th 1805, the 5th of the following month was to be set aside as a 'Day of National Thanksgiving for the successes of His Majesty's Arms'. It was also the day upon which Nelson was to be entombed. I checked the internet to learn a bit more, and chanced on the following report on the celebrations which took place in Mansfield.

The day was celebrated in a truly exemplary manner. Every place of religious worship was open upon this affectingly glorious occasion & the recommendation of the Committee of the Patriotic Fund at Lloyd's duly attended to. In the parish church an appropriate discourse was delivered by Reverend Durham, and the sum of £40 collected; at the Unitarian Chapel after an excellent sermon in which a handsome tribute was paid to the memory of the late gallant Nelson, nine guineas, & at the Calvinistic & Methodist Meetings, upwards of £5, for the benefit of the widows and orphans of the killed and wounded in the late victories.

Naturally thinking of Norfolk in this context, I was then pleased to discover a report in the Naval Chronicle that prints some details of the procession in Aylsham, where unsurprisingly 'the immortal Nelson' & our naval successes were given pride of place. It would be fascinating to know whether similar sermons were given in various chapels in the town or whether unlike the far larger town of Mansfield, in Aylsham all religious communities joined forces in the parish church. Accounts may be carried in Norfolk and Norwich newspapers & will be investigated later on.

Meanwhile, report in the Naval Chronical report appears below.

NAVAL PROCESSION AT AYLSHAM, ON THE LATE THANKSGIVING DAY

AT Aylsham (under the patronage of the noblemen, ladies, and gentlemen of the town and its vicinity), the Thanksgiving Day was observed with peculiar demonstrations of joy, accompanied at the same time with proper marks of respect to the memory of the departed Hero, whose name will survive to the latest posterity.

A procession was made to church in the following order:—

Blue flag, carried by a British Soldier

Band of music

Red flag, carried on horseback by a British Sailor, with a drawn sword.
State horse, covered with black cloth, and led by two British Sailors, and mounted by a Captain in the Navy, wearing a black silk scarf, and carrying a sword reversed in the left arm, covered with black crape.

Flag of an Admiral of the White, borne by a British Sailor.

A ship, carried by four Sailors, bearing the flag of an Admiral of the
White

King's Arms, carried by a Volunteer in the South Erpingham Cavalry,
supported by two other Volunteers of the same troop.

A Banner, with the words, "The immortal Nelson", painted on an anchor,
surrounded with cannon balls, and a piece of cannon at each corner —
trimmed with black crape — borne by a Lieutenant of the Navy.

Banners with the following inscriptions, borne by British Sailors:—

"England expects every man to do his duty."

"Show me my Country's Foes the Hero cried —

"He saw, he fought, he conquer'd, and he died."

"The Combined Fleets of France and Spain, defeated at Cape Trafalgar."

"Rule Britannia."

.....

"We rejoice for our Country, but mourn for our Friend."

"The British Volunteers."

"May every Briton prove a Norfolk Hero."

"Prosperity to the town of Aylsham."

"In thee, O Lord ! we put our trust"

"Almighty God has blessed his Majesty's arms"

"God save the King!"

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Band of music.

Red flag, carried on horseback by a British Sailor, with a drawn sword. State horse; covered with black cloth, and led by two British Sailors, and mounted by a Captain in the Navy, wearing a black silk scarf, and carrying a sword reversed in the left arm, covered with black crape.

Flag of an Admiral of the White; borne by a British Sailor.

A ship, carried by four Sailors, bearing the flag of an Admiral of the White.

King's Arms, carried by a Volunteer in the South Erpingham Cavalry, supported by two other Volunteers of the same troop.

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"England expects every man will do his duty."

"Show me my Country's FOES the Hero cried—

"He saw, he fought, he conquer'd, and he died."

"The Combined Fleets of France and Spain, defeated off Cape Trafalgar."

"Rule Britannia."

"The Duke of YORK and the Army."

"Success to Lord COLLINGWOOD and his valiant Crew."

"Sir RICHARD STRACHAN and the British Navy."

"Earl St. VINCENT, Sir J. B. WARREN,

"Sir SIDNEY SMITH, Viscount DUNCAN,

"ABERCROMBIE, COOK,

"BURGESS, DUFF."

"We rejoice for our Country, but mourn for our Friend."

"The British Volunteers."

"May every Briton prove a Norfolk Hero."

"Prosperity to the town of Aylsham."

"In thee, O Lord! we put our trust."

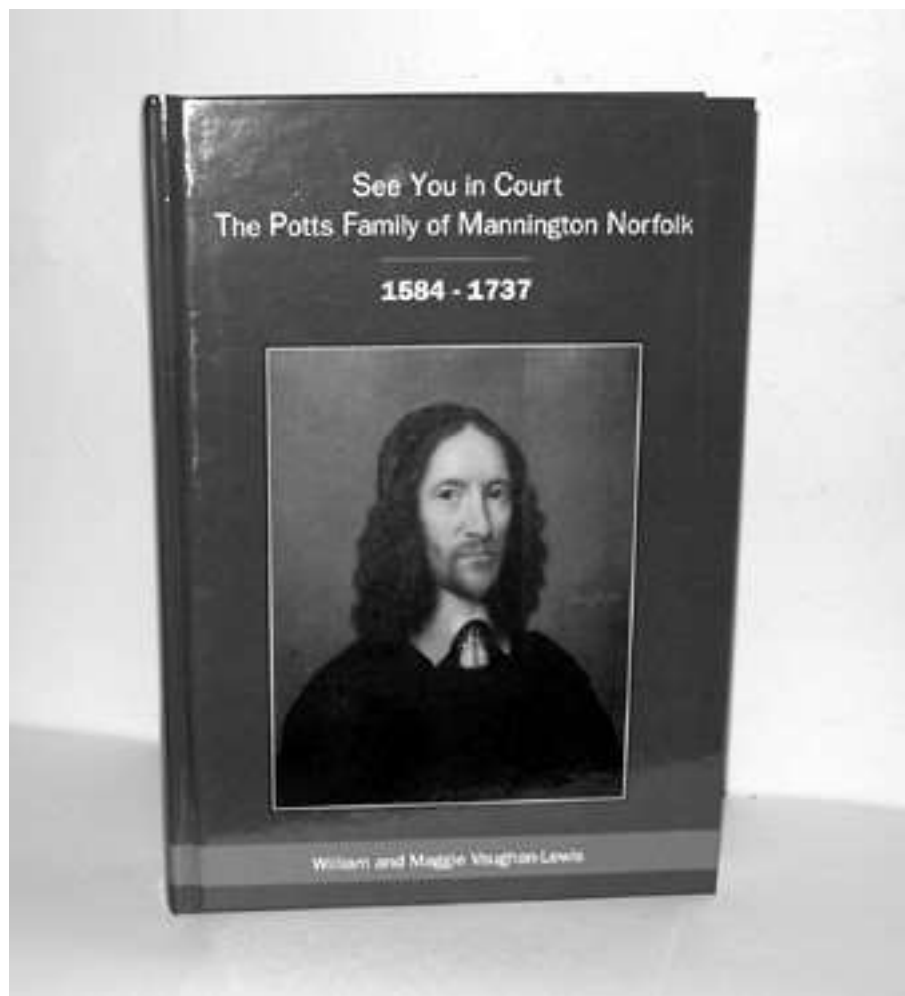
"Almighty God has blessed His Majesty's arms."

"God save the King!"

BOOK REVIEW

See You in Court. The Potts Family of Mannington Norfolk 1584-1737
by William and Maggie Vaughan-Lewis.

Published 2009 by Itteringham History. Hardback 700 pages.



A large and complex tome which overwhelms one with names, places and events – including 50 pages of Family Notes and 70 pages on sources used. Not for the faint-hearted reader but an eminently worthwhile case study about one extended family, packed with details which illuminate 16th–17th century England. It uses original documents (wills, deeds, court rolls, etc) many never before published and includes numerous family trees, to illustrate the fascinating and intricate personal

and social networks created over the generations – a complicated lineage which led to numerous Chancery court actions over disputed inheritance.

The Potts are typical of middle Norfolk gentry, rising from farming in Cheshire and Cambridgeshire, to the grocery trade, landlords and lawyers in London, and culminating in Sir John Potts (1592–1673), knight and baronet. They purchased Mannington Hall in north Norfolk in 1584 at the time of marrying a half-relation of the Lumners of Mannington. Their story is a social and economic history of the period; an insider view of landed estate development, of opportunistic purchases, mortgages and debts; and they provide a stunning example of litigious actions between family members which add spice and interest to events. The row between the children (Sir Roger and Elizabeth) of the second Sir John (1618-1678) – several years of squabbling over the will and codicil – provided a treasure trove of court papers to examine.

Unfortunately, legal costs, mortgages, debts, too many daughters and married sons put pressure on the family's wealth; most of the gains were lost, leaving only Mannington manor. However, "In the end the Potts family was not let down by reckless generations but by its genes". Algernon Potts (1673-1716) the 4th Baronet, and his wife Frances died childless within days of one another probably from smallpox. The title was inherited by his brother Charles who died 'very suddenly of an apoplectic fit' aged 56 in 1732. He also left no children but despite major losses in the South Sea Bubble, he was not bankrupt as has been previously suggested. The Baronetcy ceased and after his widow, Dame Mary, died in 1737, Mannington Hall was sold to Horatio Walpole of nearby Wolterton for £20,029 – a third of it used to settle debts and mortgages. All the heirlooms and 405 books listed in the library, were sold, leaving no collection of family papers although some family portraits have survived.

As the authors admit this work "has been a labour of love" . It has created a history of the Potts Family, a documentary record of family papers plus a critical examination of already published information. Two further books are in preparation one to cover local land-ownership in the medieval period and the early modern years, and another will describe life in eighteenth century Itteringham.

Edmund Perry

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SOCIETY NEWS

ELIZABETH GALE†

Tom Mollard & Roger Polhill



Elizabeth Gale, a member of our Society, died on October 27th and her funeral took place on 19th November 2009. She was born in Torquay in 1929 to a Scottish family. With characteristic determination she obtained a place in a course at the Kingston College of Art, where she trained as a textile designer. She later worked as a freelance designer for Edinburgh Weavers, Lister & Co., Harper Bates & Smith and others. She taught for some years at the Central School of Art and Crafts, Willesden School of Art, and lectured on printed and woven textiles at the London College of Furniture. She wrote a highly commended book entitled *From Fibres to Fabrics* in 1968, that dealt with natural and man-made fibres and the various techniques used to produce a fabric from this myriad of fibres.

The book was first published by Allman & Son and later by their associate company Mills & Boon. It went through four editions and is still considered a standard reference; she took great pains always to write clearly and elegantly. Elizabeth was always a practical designer and weaver and she was a member of the Society of Designer-Craftsmen. In the early 1980's she held an exhibition of woven tapestries and rugs at the Barbican Gallery in London.

She married Geoffrey Gale in 1954 and brought up their two children, Jane and Jon, in Greenwich and later at Crouch End, passing on to them her practical skills and rigorous research methods, not only in her professional talents, but also cooking, gardening and letter writing. Later they moved to Muswell Hill and got to know Norfolk from family holidays at their cottage in Booton. After Geoff's retirement from the University of Middlesex they moved to Aylsham in 1993, first at Mash's Row, and then in 1998 to Holman Close. She and Geoff both joined the Town Council and for a number of years Elizabeth acted as a scrutineer, poring through the accounts before they went to audit, saving much potential embarrassment for the council.

Elizabeth was a member of the Society even before they had actually moved to Aylsham and in a quiet sort of way she was involved in many of the Society's activities. In 1992 she helped in a visit to Aylsham by the Norfolk Archaeological and Historical Research Group. Lectures and displays were given and Elizabeth spoke on the history of William Mash and his family who had lived in Millgate.

In 1993 an Oral History Group with Jane Nolan and others was formed, starting an oral record of Aylsham history, as remembered by older citizens. This was very successful with many taped records created, largely by Elizabeth and Derek Lyons, who interviewed and recorded many people. This was quite a demanding task, visiting many people in their homes. These records were added to other earlier records that had been created by Ron Peabody, and these oral records are stored in the Town archives in the Town Hall. Copies were also supplied to the University of East Anglia. A full list of all these recordings appeared in the Journal, Volume 5 pp 218–20 (1998).

Elizabeth took part in the running of the society and was a member of the organising committee for some time. She contributed a number of well-researched articles to our Journal. These included a history of 27

Bure Way. She also acquired much material on Captain Beard, a well-known Aylsham character. This was largely material which had been published over many years by the Eastern Daily Press and is all preserved in the Town Archives. In 1999 Elizabeth also took part in welcoming the members of the Parson Woodforde Society who visited us and were shown round the town and joined us for lunch in The Black Boys hotel

Elizabeth also made several other contributions to the Journal about Aylsham properties, and in the process we acquired many papers and records which ended up in the Town Archives. – Dye's House in the Market Place a good example. She also wrote on changes to Aylsham in recent times. All of these were well-researched, useful articles included in our Journal.

Her final publication was *Aylsham Inns and Public Houses*, published in 2001. This is a most valuable contribution to Aylsham's history and will be sought after for years to come and will rightly be a permanent reminder of the author.

Books can make good memorials; Angela King, one of our members and former secretary, discovered at the funeral that Elizabeth was also the author of *From Fibres to Fabrics* that Angela had used in her teaching days – only at the funeral she discovered, too late, the connection.

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Gale, E. (2001). Aylsham Tribunal 1916. *Aylsham Local History Society J. 6*: 227–229.

Gale, E. (2002). Dye's House, 15 Market Place, Aylsham. *Aylsham Local History Society J. 6*: 359–361.

Gale, E. (2004). Recent changes in Aylsham. *Aylsham Local History Society J. 7*: 88–89.

Gale, E. (2007). Family books. *Aylsham Local History Society J. 7*: 360–362.

Gale, E. (2008). Postscript on visit to Braintree. Aylsham Local History Society J. 8: 83.

GRESSENHALL – The story of a paupers palace a talk by Stephen Pope



This is the story of the Union Workhouse at Gressenhall from its early days as a House of Industry housing the unfortunates of mid Norfolk, to a Union Workhouse, an Old People's home and today the county's Rural Life Museum.

The first reference to the site occurs around 1250 when William de Stutevill, Lord of the Manor of Gressenhall, founded the Chapel of St Nicolas at a place then called Rougham. The chapel housed a college of Priests whose duties consisted of offering prayers for the souls of the founder, his ancestors and his heirs. Little is known about the chapel and it is assumed that its foundations lie somewhere under the current farmhouse.

In medieval times the poor were mainly looked after by the monasteries and almshouses. The dissolution of the monasteries led to a new system of providing relief to the poor.

The reign of Elizabeth I saw the introduction of the Poor Laws in 1598 and 1601. These gave responsibility for providing relief to the poor to

individual parishes. A poor rate was levied, and expended on the relief of the sick, aged and unemployed. This relief was usually given to the poor in their own homes, but gradually some parishes provided 'Poor Houses' or 'Workhouses' which gave both accommodation and work to paupers. These parish workhouses were mainly buildings housing a few families of inmates. None of these seem to have been built in the Mitford and Launditch area apart from one in Dereham built in 1758.

By the middle of the 18th Century the increased enclosures, the rise in food prices during the French wars, and the rapidly rising numbers of poor, meant that the money raised from the poor rates had dramatically increased. Various methods were introduced to combat the growing numbers of poor. In East Anglia groups of parishes began to combine into Incorporations or Companies, to build large Houses of Industry to house their paupers.

Mid Norfolk consisted then, as it does today, of mainly agricultural land centred on the market town of East Dereham. The Hundred of Launditch lay to the east while the Hundred of Mitford was owned by the Diocese of Ely and included the town. Altogether an area encompassing some 50 parishes.

In late 1774 a series of meetings were held at the George Inn in Dereham with a view to apply for an act of parliament to set up a house of Industry in Mitford and Launditch. Despite considerable opposition the bill was granted by parliament in May 1775. Construction started in early summer 1776. The site chosen was Chapel farm in the parish of Gressenhall.

The building consisted of the main H block with an East Wing. There should have been a West wing but the Guardians or Directors ran out of money. Total cost was some £15,646. Unfortunately we have been unable to find out who the architect responsible was, but we do know he was paid 30 guineas. Situated on a hill, the workhouse would have been visible for miles around. It has the look of a country house, but was built to house poor people. The Guardians were of course trying to impress the Guardians at the other Houses of Industry by building a larger, more impressive building. The scale of these large buildings soon led to them gaining the nickname 'Paupers Palaces'.

Gressenhall opened in July 1777, the first Master and Matron being James W Moore and his wife Margaret. Between 1778 and 1794 the

average number of inmates was 447. The building had been designed to house 600 and the maximum number it housed at anytime was 670 in 1801. Along the side and east wing ran an open colonnade behind which were the rooms for the inmates. Some of the inmates lived as family units.

The men were employed in cultivating the farm, combing wool, dressing flax and hemp and weaving cloth mainly for use in the house. The women were employed in spinning worsted and hemp. Within the building was a factory making hemp sacks with machinery such as carding engines, looms for weaving and at least six spinning wheels one of which had a spinning wheel of six foot diameter.

The inmate's diet consisted of milk broth, gruel or bread and cheese for breakfast, boiled meat in broth, dumplings or suet pudding for dinner and bread and cheese for supper. Their main drink was beer brewed on site, no one drank the water.

The inmates worked from 6 to 6 in summer and 7 to 6 in winter with an hour for dinner. Children under five were given basic schooling in reading and church religion and after the age of five they were employed in the spinning of hemp. The men were allowed to keep 1d out of every shilling earned, while the young women could keep 2d and women over 60, 4d. The women over 60 were not obliged to work.

Punishment mainly consisted of a reduction in diet to bread and water although there was a set of stocks in the dining room for inmates over the age of 12. One interesting punishment for inmates convicted of lying was for them to sit on a stool in the dining room with a paper fixed to their breast on which were the words 'Infamous Liar'.

The building of the Houses of Industry in East Anglia did not, however, solve the problem of how to provide for the poor. In 1832 a Royal Commission was set up to investigate the Poor Law. This resulted in the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act. The Act introduced a centralised administration leading to the creation of Unions, and the election of Boards of Guardians. All the old parish workhouses were abolished and parishes grouped into these Unions. Outdoor relief was abolished. Relief could only be obtained by entering the Union workhouse. Conditions in these workhouses were worse than the conditions of the lowest paid worker outside. This was achieved by separating families

when they entered and providing them with monotonous work and monotonous food.

In East Anglia, many of the Houses of Industry, including Gressenhall, were converted to Union workhouses, with the original company directors now becoming the new Guardians of the Poor.

Work on converting Gressenhall from a House of Industry to a Union Workhouse started in May 1836. Carried out by Mr Fuller Coker Junior from Shipdham, the work consisted of bricking up the arches of the colonnade and converting the cottage rooms into dormitories. Also built at the same time was the 14ft wall around the site and a number of outbuildings. Cost of the conversion was £4358. The style of these new Union Workhouses was such that they soon gained the title of 'Bastilles' amongst the poor.

So what was it like to be in Gressenhall? Most families were only able to meet up for one hour on Sunday, during the Church service. Visitors were allowed, although infrequently and then only in the presence of the Master or Matron. Inmates were roused from their beds at a quarter to six, breakfast was taken at half past, and then they were led out to the workyards to work until 12.00. From 1.00 to 6.00pm they were again in the workyards until supper and then were put to bed at 8.00pm. The bell on the roof of the workhouse controlled their lives. It sounded to bring the inmates to meals, to go back to the workyards and to go to bed. This would have been very alien to the many agricultural labourers in this area where life revolved around the hours of light and dark; when it got light you went to work and when it got dark you went home.

Other buildings on the site accommodated other classes of inmates. Unmarried mothers were usually separated from other inmates and were considered by the Victorians to be of the lowest moral standards. Many of these women would have been placed in the workhouse by their families who had disowned them. These women were called 'Jacket Women' because of the distinctive jacket they were forced to wear. Also kept separate from the main building were the tramps or casuals.

How desperate many of these people must have been, to be forced to enter the Workhouse. Having gone to their local Relieving Officer they now found themselves presenting themselves at the gate clutching their admittance order. Entry to the workhouse was controlled by a porter who would have conducted them to the receiving or 'itch' ward. Here

their own clothes were removed; they were inspected by the Medical officer and they were given a bath. The bath sounds quite good. In 1866 James Greenwood working as journalist for the Pall Mall Gazette spent the night as a casual pauper in Lambeth Workhouse. He described the water in the baths as ‘a liquid so disgustingly like mutton broth.’ It had of course been used by many paupers, the Guardians were not about to allow clean water for each inmate. The inmates’ original clothing was cleaned and stored and would be returned to them when they left the workhouse. Although if they had entered as a child and left as an adult they might not have fitted, especially after being boil washed. Having received their workhouse clothes the new inmates were escorted to their dormitories. The dormitories were mainly on the first floor reached by stairs.

You may think of the workhouse as a squalid place, but in fact it was very clean with whitewashed walls. It was, however, very spartan with little creature comfort for the inmates. Men, women and children were accommodated in separate dormitories.

The bed is smaller at the foot. This allows more beds to be fitted into the room top to tail. In some situations two women or three children would sleep in one of these beds. In the early years inmates were not allowed to have personal possessions.

One of the main deterrents to force the poor not to enter the workhouse was the regime of monotonous work. Areas were walled in to provide separate workyards dividing the men from the women and the children.

In the men’s yard they worked for 5–6 hours at a time in all weathers, breaking stones and picking oakum. Oakum was old rope covered in tar, mainly from ships rigging. The men’s job was to unpick this material. In many Workhouses this was done with the aid of a tool called a spike. This may be where tramps got their name for the workhouse when they talked about ‘going on the Spike’. The oakum was sold to boatyards for use as corking where it was rammed into the space between planks on the hull to make the boat waterproof.

Another work activity carried out in the yards was the breaking of bones for fertilizer. However this practice was stopped as a result of the notorious scandal that occurred at Andover in Hampshire in 1845. Here the inmates of the workhouse were found fighting amongst themselves for bits of gristle and marrow amongst the old bones they were being

made to crush. The Master had reduced their rations below the legal minimum as a punishment.

In the women's yard the women were mainly employed in the laundry. Clothes were changed every 5 weeks and in the early years had to be washed by hand.

The intention of the Guardians was to feed the inmates with monotonous food, although the quantity was in many cases more than a pauper would have received outside. Before 1836 the diet of inmates in the Houses of Industry was comparatively generous – regular meat meals, abundant vegetables, bread and beer. After 1836 it became meagre and monotonous – bread, gruel, meat pudding on Sunday. Bread and cheese for supper.

In the dining room inmates were made to sit at rows of benches. Separate sittings were held for males, females and the children. The food was placed on the tables and then the inmates were let in. This practice of putting the food on the tables first did not cease until 1944. At the head of the room sat the Master and members of his staff. On the table was usually a pair of scales to weigh food should an inmate dare to question whether they were receiving their entitlement. All meals were eaten in silence. Christmas was the one day of year where the inmates received a substantial meal, although the tramps and jacket women were not allowed to partake of Christmas Dinner.

One area where inmates of the workhouse had a distinct advantage over those paupers outside, was in schooling. By law all boys and girls received schooling while in the workhouse. This was long before compulsory education became law. The schooling given was rudimentary and consisted mainly of the four R's, Reading, Writing, Arithmetic and Religion. The Guardians at Gressenhall seem to have been very keen for this to happen and the workhouse had a good reputation for the quality of schooling given to its workhouse children. The intention was that with an education these children would find work and would not return to the workhouse.

One of the claims to fame at Gressenhall is that it saw the first example of the pupil teacher system. In 1837 William Rush a boy of 13 took it upon himself in the absence of the Schoolmaster to teach the younger members of the school. This so impressed Dr. Kay-Shuttleworth, a leader in education at the time, that he came and observed William and

took the idea away. In 1884 the workhouse schools were shut down and the children sent to Gressenhall School. It was always said that you could tell the workhouse children at these schools – they were the ones with good boots. However by January 1887 they were transferred back to the workhouse schools as the local schools no longer wanted workhouse children causing disruption. The workhouse schools were finally closed down in 1898 and the children attended local schools at Beetley and Gressenhall, although even here the separation was maintained with the boys going to Gressenhall and the girls to Beetley.

The Poor Law rules meant that no corporal punishment was allowed under the terms of the act, although this did not include the cane. For relatively minor acts of what was called refractory conduct, transgressors were placed in solitary confinement in a separate room for up to 12 hours at a time on bread and water.

During the early years of the Workhouse Sunday services were conducted in the dining room. In 1868 a chapel was built paid for by public subscription and designed by R M Pinson. All workhouses had a chaplain appointed to look after the spiritual well being of the inmates. The Chaplain also determined what was taught in the schools. To many inmates he was the ‘Sunday Jailer’.

The workhouse however was not a prison; inmates could give notice to leave at any time. However if they left they could not leave their family behind. The orphan children of course became wards of the guardians and were not allowed to leave until they were older when they were usually found situations in service.

Death of course was the other way an inmate could leave the workhouse. In 1795 a burial ground had been built on ground to the west of the building. Here pauper inmates were buried with little or no ceremony in unmarked graves, sometimes 10 to 20 to a grave. Coffins when used were mainly of cheap material.

Gressenhall Workhouse was run by a surprisingly small number of staff. For up to 400 people only some 10 people would have been on duty. In charge were a Master and Matron.

A Way Ticket was a pass for a bed and food in exchange for work carried out on the following day. After being at a particular workhouse, they were unable to return there for 30 days and they spent much of their time walking from one workhouse to another. In the 1930s some 400 to

500 tramps a month were coming through Gressenhall. Many came from Norwich and travelled on to Walsingham, Aylsham or Docking. For some reason they avoided Swaffham. It was the tramps who were mainly employed in oakum picking up to 1925. After that they were employed on chopping wood and looking after 2 acres of potatoes.

Sanitary conditions before 1871 were not very good. At Gressenhall large numbers of inmates had died in an outbreak of cholera and scarlet fever in 1834. In 1871 along with the Infirmary a bungalow was built as the isolation ward for infectious diseases.

In 1930 workhouses were transferred to the control of the County Councils becoming Poor Assistance Institutions. There was little noticeable difference to the regime at Gressenhall although the inmates were now called patients.

During the Second World War Gressenhall housed a number of patients evacuated from other workhouses in Norwich and Essex. In January 1942 the east wing caught fire and the inmates had to be evacuated.

The introduction of the National Health Service in 1948 finally saw the Workhouse system abolished. Gressenhall became Beech House, a County home for the elderly, with many of the residents continuing to live there.

In 1975 the building was taken over by the County Museums Service to become the Norfolk Rural Life Museum. The North courtyard was enclosed and the buildings were refurbished and fitted out with displays and artefacts. In November 1979 Union farm was leased to the Museum Friends to be cultivated as a 19th century early 20th century farm worked by horses.

Today the Rural Life Museum is a major tourist attraction in Norfolk with over 40,000 visitors a year. Major displays show life in the workhouse, rural crafts and a full working farm. In 2000 a major upgrade was undertaken with more space being open to the public.

I have focused on the part of Stephen's talk script relating to the workhouse years at Gressenhall. There are many comparisons to be made with the history of the poor in Aylsham, and the Society publication 'The Poor in Aylsham 1700 to 1836' is available from Geoff Gale.

Jim Pannell

Further Reading

Pope, S. (2006). Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse. 108 pp. Poppyland Publishing, Cromer.

COSTUMES AND TEXTILES TOUR OF NORFOLK – a talk by Lynda Wix



The Cholmondley sisters, c. 1600. The bearing cloth in which the babies are wrapped is similar to the one held at Carrow House. Photo courtesy Museum Service.

This fascinating talk, presented in October 2009, was based on items held at the Costume and Textile Study Centre at Carrow House, Norwich, where Lynda Wix used to work. The first item she mentioned was an altar frontal. She recalled how, about twenty years ago, she received a phone call from a Kent man visiting Reepham. He wanted to see an item given by his family in 1520. Lynda discovered it had been given by John Westgate and eventually located the item in the roof at Strangers Hall. On first sight it appeared to be a piece of folded cloth but, on being sent for conservation, was unfolded from its frame and was found to be a rare complete altar frontal bearing the merchant's mark 'JW' in a roundel.

Another ancient item was a 1651 cushion bearing the Norwich coat of arms, part of a set most of which is kept in the cathedral. The knotted

technique used to make the cushions was probably acquired during the Crusades.

A slightly more modern item was a pattern book displayed in the Bridewell which contains designs used in Norwegian folk dress. In the eighteenth century Norwich exported fabrics to Scandinavia.

An entertaining tale of a thwarted bride told us how the father, a silk maker, insisted that his daughter wore a wedding dress of green Norwich silk rather than the white muslin that she craved. An extant reminder of the importance of Norwich silk is the mulberry tree behind the French church (St Mary the Less) in Queen Street.

Silk was also used in the weaving of Norwich shawls. The original concept was from India but the Norwich version is wider and the pattern, in the earliest shawls, embroidered by hand. The prototype of one designed for King George III and Queen Charlotte, was conserved at Blickling Hall. Another shawl belonged to the Hobart family but that was cut up and used as bed hangings that are on display in the Chinese bedroom at Blickling Hall. A prototype was made for Alexandra on her marriage in 1863 to the Prince of Wales later Edward VII. This was particularly large at 3.5 by 2.5 metres as it was designed to accommodate a crinoline. After the fashion changed in the 1870's such shawls were often used as tablecloths.

The blue uniform of the Thomas Anguish School in Fishergate earned the boys the name of 'Bluebottles'. A complete set, comprising tam o'shanter, waistcoat, jacket and trousers, from 1621 was resplendent with the Norwich coat of arms on the buttons. The trousers were known as 'inexpressibles'.

An intriguing sampler, 12 foot long and 9 inches wide, was made by Lorena Bulwer of Beccles while she was an inmate at Northgate in Great Yarmouth in the late nineteenth century. It is made of pieces of fabric stitched together and decorated with two figures and writing. The writing is all in upper case and is complete gibberish. It may possibly reflect Lorena's mental state.

Also from Yarmouth was crepe bandage from Grout's factory. The wide strip of material was marked ready for cutting into narrow bandages. It had been donated by a loom tackler who had moved to the Yarmouth factory. Parachutes were made in the Grout's factory during the war. Each parachute had a colour woven into its selvedge. The

colour was specific to the country using the parachute. This meant that a parachute could be used in identification of crew that had baled out. The Grout's factory was bombed in 1941, was rebuilt but ceased production in the 1970's

The next stop on the tour of Norfolk was Lopham. This village was famous for the weaving of linen damask, including the tablecloth for the Travellers Club in Pall Mall. A Royal Warrant was granted to Thomas Buckenham in the mid-nineteenth century so he incorporated the words 'Linen manufacturer to the Queen' into his designs. The cotton industry in Lancashire and mechanisation completely changed the demand for hand woven linen damask so Lopham's industry declined .

In 1931 George V set up a flax industry on the Sandringham Estate to provide employment. As a naval man he wanted a good supply of flax for ropes, fire hoses etc. Before 1931 flax had been imported from Germany and Russia. The flax was also woven in Ireland to produce Irish linen. The flax industry declined in the 1950's as synthetics became more popular than natural fabrics. However, there are still some uses for flax such as the insides of Mercedes car doors.

Moving to Brinton Hall we viewed an entire set of patchwork bed-hangings that had been displayed at a French château in 2003. The set is now boxed at Carrow house, Norwich. The bed-hangings were made over a four year period by Anne Brereton. She began the work in 1801 after her son died.

Susannah Barnes, of Holkham School, made a sampler incorporating the alphabet, numbers and a verse. It was decorated with coronets of different styles. Susannah would be likely to go into service so would be trained to embroider coronets to mark the linen. She would be conversant with the different types of coronets that denote a Marquis, Earl, etc.

A nineteenth century souvenir from Cromer had a practical purpose of containing wax to wax thread. It was possible, also, to purchase small spoons to scoop out the earwax that was used for thread.

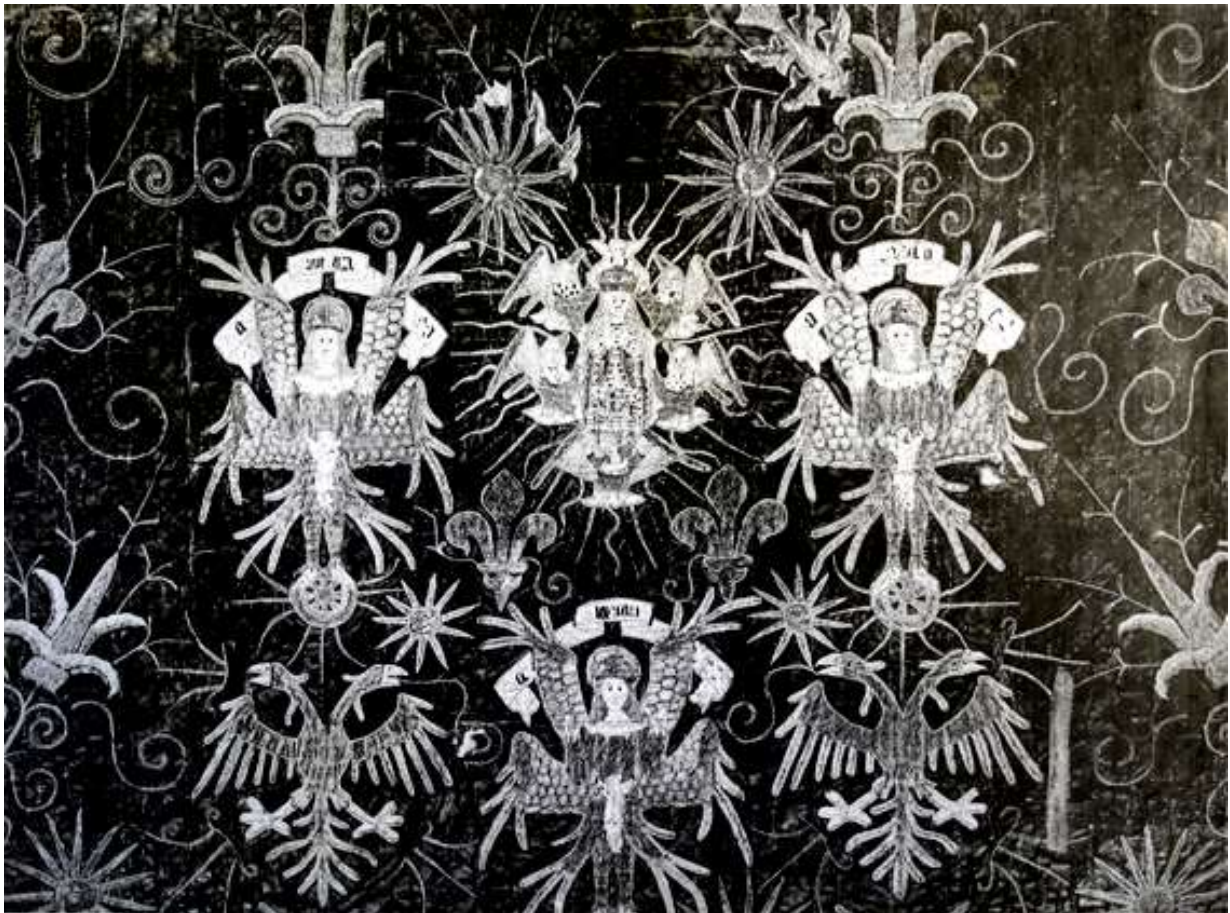
Elizabeth Fry's cloak was a connection with North Repps. It was silk, warmly lined with either ermine or rabbit, and was worn when she visited the infamous Newgate prison in London.

The final thread in the tour was a riding habit from Felbrigg Hall. It had belonged to Agnes, wife of William Frederick 'Mad' Windham. He was

a man of intense passions. For example he loved trains so much that he would persuade railway officials to let him drive the engine, collect tickets, and wear and use his guard's uniform. He met Agnes while riding in Rotten Row in London and, despite her reputation as an adventuress or 'grande horizontale', he determined to marry her. An action was brought to prove him mad and incapable but, despite damning evidence, he was found to be not mad. He soon went bankrupt and sold the estate in 1863 to John Ketton. The following year Agnes finally left him but, presumably, leaving her riding outfit behind. Mad Windham continued to degenerate until he was so broke that he took a job driving the Norwich to Cromer coach for a guinea a week.

We were treated to illustrations of all the items mentioned. It is hoped that we will be able to view some of them on Thursday 11th March 2010 as Anne Dyball has arranged a visit to Carrow House for Aylsham Local History Society members. Numbers will be limited, so make sure to book your place as soon as possible.

Sheila Merriman



The Bircham altar front: angels on wheels stored under the rector's bed. Photo courtesy Norfolk Museum Service.

WINDOW ON AYLSHAM, 13 September 2009

The Society would like to thank all those who contributed to a very enjoyable event, and in particular Sheila Merriman. The organisers thought it useful to make a record of the talks given at the Market Place and at Millgate. The contributions of Ann Dyball, Sheila Merriman, Jim Pannell, Peter Pink and Lynda Wix to the scripts is much appreciated.

The Market Place

Welcome to our first ever Heritage Day event.

Here, we're standing in the Market Place in Aylsham – as people have done for hundreds of years. If we can for a few moments block out the double yellow lines, the bus stops, the zebra crossing, the street lighting and the supermarket and peel back the layers, can we imagine the mail coach with the noise of the wheels and the horses, the jangling harness, the sound of the post horn coming up Hungate Street over there and through an archway now blocked up into the yard of the Black Boys inn? Can we imagine Admiral Lord Nelson dining in a room of the Black Boys? Can we imagine twelve hundred people sitting down to a meal to celebrate the Peace after the wars against Napoleon? Can we imagine that many Royal coronations and Jubilees were celebrated here with hundreds sitting down to a meal and the children being given a commemorative mug? That Edward, Prince of Wales, and Alexandra drove through here in a carriage in the 1870's on their way to stay at Gunton Hall (and Lily Langtry)? Can we imagine that men mustered here to go to war in 1914?

But lets go back a lot further.

I expect you all know how Aylsham got its name? It's from around 500AD when a Saxon by the name of Aegel settled here. 500AD. That's about one and a half thousand years ago. Anyway, in those days the word for a homestead was ham. So Aegel's Ham became known as Aylsham. We're not certain where Aegel's Ham was, but it must have been near the Market Place because it's where people would have come to trade.

There's information about Aylsham in the Domesday Book. That was 1086 for those of you keeping track of the dates. The King used the Domesday Book as a written record of all the places where he could gather tax. At that time there were, in Aylsham, about 150 people owning land and probably about 50 with trades such as miller, carpenter, blacksmith. Add that together, add in wives and children and the population of Aylsham may have been 1000 or more. That was a huge place for those days. So this market place would have been very important.

Let's just spend a few minutes getting the layout of the market place as it used to be.

The most important road would be Hungate Street. It was the main Norwich to Cromer Road. It would just have been known as Hungate because the word gate is from the Scandinavian word meaning street. If you look over there, between Lloyds the Chemist and the Post Office you'll see the Unicorn pub at the top of Hungate Street. That pub is a really old building. It's actually timber-framed – but plastered over so you can't see the timbers – and it used to be thatched. Take time later to walk down Hungate Street. Look up at the buildings. Some of the oldest ones in Aylsham are in that street. Imagine what it would have been like

in medieval times. That narrow road was the main street. Imagine all the hustle bustle with carts and horses and pedestrians.

So, having arrived in the Market Place – how would you get to Cromer? It's really quite simple. The road went straight through. Check the line from Hungate Street. Follow it along the side of the Market Place and you'll see that it goes between the Spice of India and Somerfields and alongside the church. Yes, that narrow footpath that goes through the churchyard, through the lych gate and down onto the Cromer Road is what remains of the old main road. Though I don't think Somerfields and the Spice of India were here at the time!

What was here? You might ask. Not just important people visiting or a place for special events. It was a place where ordinary people worked and bought goods. Certainly one of the things for sale was cloth. It's recorded that a question was asked about it in Parliament in 1315. There were complaints that the merchants of Aylsham and Worstead were cheating their customers. Giving short measure. Selling 20 measures as 24, 25 as 30 and so on.

Have you heard of the cloth woven in Aylsham? It was one of the best fabrics you could get. It was linen best known as Aylsham Web. It was such good stuff it was used in 1323 to make pillows for Edward II's bed. Then, when his successor Edward III was crowned in 1327, 3500 lengths were bought for lining armour, covering cushions and making pennons. He must have liked it because more was bought in 1334 for making hobby horses for games jousting. Later Aylsham was better known for corn and wool.

But to get back to the Market Place. We know there's been a market here since at least 1296. And we know that in 1519 Henry VIII granted a

licence for a weekly market on Saturdays. Market days started off as Saturdays, but then in 1705 Queen Anne gave a grant to Sir John Hobart that there could be a Tuesday market which was for the buying and selling of all manner of goods. Anyone committing petty crimes as they traded would have been punished here.

And what punishment might they have received? Well we know that in 1810 there were still stocks standing in front of what's now the main door to the Town Hall. Imagine what it would be like to be placed in the stocks. Absolutely helpless with your feet and hands held in place with wooden boards while any passer-by could hurl abuse – or rotten food – at you.

What was the ground like in the Market Place? Definitely not tarmac! It would have been earth. Imagine what that would mean. Think of the Market Place crammed full of stalls selling materials, meat, fish, live animals, vegetables, fruit – anything and everything. And what would it smell like? It would take a day for the fish to get here from Cromer so on a summer's day it would smell awful. (*sniff*) And the live animals (*sniff*) – add in their stink (*sniff*). And the hundreds of people with not a single toilet (*sniff, sniff*). No public loos. Blue or otherwise.

Every October there'd be a hiring fair. If you wanted a job as a servant or a labourer you'd come and stand here until someone decided to employ you. Just think how awful it would be if you were the last person left standing. That nobody wanted you.

By the eighteenth century Aylsham was very famous for its carthorse fair in March. That attracted people from all over East Anglia.

Gradually, there were more and more shops – not just in the Market Place but also in Red Lion Street. You could buy almost anything, and the shops had long opening hours – 7am to 7pm. The Post Office – which used to be where Somerfields is – was open from 8am to 8pm. And a couple of hours on Sunday. The idea of Wednesday early closing didn't come until 1898!

But it didn't stop the Market Place being used for celebrations, as I was mentioning earlier, as well as the market. Go and have a look at the slide show in the Town Hall today. See the old photographs of the Market Place and much more.

But before you go, let's have a look at some of the buildings around the Market Place. If you look over to Barnwells to Barclays bank over there and the side with the Black Boys and through towards the church, the skyline has hardly changed for about two hundred years. Have any of you heard of Humphrey Repton? He was a landscape architect and is buried in the churchyard surrounded by roses. He did drawings of this market place in the early nineteenth century so we know how it looked then.

Over there, on Barclays Bank, you'll find a plaque to Joseph Clover the famous anaesthetist. The photos of his equipment are in the slide show today.

On the next side, go to the Black Boys Inn. That used to be where the post horses were changed. The hub of the local transport system. The Assembly Rooms used to be on the first floor. Take a look at the wall outside, you'll find a plaque to Admiral Horatio Nelson who visited there.

And what about that little sculpture above the Spice of India? What is it? If I tell you it used to be a chemist's shop can you work it out? On the side of the building opposite leading to the church there is painted lettering which says 'Stand by the King'. This was done at the time of the abdication crisis in 1936.

On the opposite side of the Market Place, take a really good look at Clarke's the ironmongers. Look at the windows. They come from widely different ages. Then walk all round the shop, down the loke into Red Lion Street and up at the other side. Look at the roof line as you go round the building. Can you work out how that happened?

And as for the Town Hall. Well, in the context of the Market Place it's a relatively new building. The foundation stone on the left of the original doorway says 29 September 1856. Of course, it wasn't originally a Town Hall. It started as a Corn Exchange or Market Hall.

Talk given by Lynda Wix with script support from Sheila Merriman, Ann Dyball, and Peter Pink.

MILLGATE

Millgate. So here we are on Millgate. 'Gate' is an old word meaning 'street', so we can imagine this as the road from the town to the mill. It links the core of the old town clustered to the south of the church, with the watermill on the River Bure and then the fields and villages beyond. Millgate is an ancient way, gently winding and dropping down to the river.

Many of the buildings stand at the edge of the roadway, and the frontages are staggered. This brings a pleasant and informal character to the street. However, it is not easy for pedestrians, so please be very

careful, and please understand that we cannot always stand outside a building we would like to examine more closely.

River crossing. We are on the river crossing. This is the ‘great bridge over the king’s river’. Picture the droves of animals, workers, horses and carts passing over the wooden structure here. In 1759, the great bridge was replaced by the present brick structure, and it bears the date and the name of the builder – W. Berry. This single arch has withstood severe floods. The next, equally narrow, brick bridge was built in 1821. It crosses the feeder to the navigation, which also acts as a relief channel to the mill.

Aylsham Mill. There were at sometime two mills, but a mill has probably stood on this site since Saxon times, and it is mentioned in the Domesday book of 1086. It finally stopped working in 1967. Many mills have stood on this site, but most of this mill dates from the late 18th century, a time of great change here as we shall see. It is an imposing building and it is not difficult to imagine wherries drawn up alongside and grain being hoisted in, and flour and other mill products being loaded. A wherry is a boat able to carry around 25 tons of goods, with a single, large, high-peaked sail stepped well forward. When there was no wind, it had to be moved with a quant pole. The wherry on this navigation had to be a smaller version than most wherries, both in length and width. The mill is now partially converted into flats, which may preserve a building that has been very significant in the life of Aylsham. ‘England: An old house layered with memories’. This is a quote from Kevin Crossley-Holland, a distinguished author and historian. You will have the opportunity to hear Kevin speak in the Town Hall later this afternoon. This is a fine position to reflect on that quote. ‘England: an old house layered with memories’. I’d like you to consider four layers using the view from this bridge.

The first is 1700. The great wooden bridge spans the river, and just over the bridge the road divides in to three; to the right is the road to Tuttington, straight ahead is the road to Banningham and North Walsham, and left is the road to Ingworth and Erpingham. Over the bridge and into fields, probably worked by agricultural labourers who we

know lived in Millgate. This is a view that had probably changed little for hundreds of years.

Now let's move on 100 years to the second layer in 1800. We have a huge change. Across there is now the Staithe, which is a Norse word used in the northeast and east of England to mean a landing stage, such as Brancaster Staithe on the north Norfolk coast. Wherries were lined up in the basin, loading and unloading, wherries and barges being repaired and built, and carters delivering and collecting goods. The staithe has been built through Tuttington road, which has had to move further east to its present-day position.

Move on another 100 years to the third layer in 1900. Now Banningham road has disappeared, and in its place are the railway sidings of the Midland railway. The road follows the Erpingham road, over the new railway bridge and then bore right to join the old road.

Another 100 years brings us to the fourth layer in 2000. The canal basin was filled in, in 1974, though the granary can still be seen alongside. The railway line, station and sidings have all been cleared. We are in the age of road transport, and a new road has been constructed across the old sidings and out to the by-pass.

The Navigation and The Staithe. A navigation is a navigable waterway. Thus the name 'navvies' who constructed them. Local landowners grouped together, and an Act of Parliament was passed in 1773 to enable the construction of five locks and the digging of new channels to cut off bends, though plans had been mooted for many years previous. This was as big an engineering undertaking as this part of Norfolk had ever seen. The navigation was costed at £6000, but there were money issues which delayed construction. It was completed at the Staithe in Aylsham in late 1779 behind schedule and way over expected costs; shades of the Channel Tunnel, the Millenium Dome, the New Wembley Stadium, but hopefully not the 2012 Olympics!

It is difficult for us to imagine that such a slow method of transporting goods was a huge improvement on the roads at that time. It was quicker to travel by boat from Norwich to Amsterdam, than to travel by road from Norwich to London. The ability to transport heavy loads quickly and cheaply was a huge asset. On the Broads, every parish had its staithe. Loads were taken to and from Yarmouth where they were trans-

shipped for coastal trade. The Navigation linked Aylsham to The Broads, and was specifically designed to be used by wherries under sail. It took a week of fair winds to make the return journey to Great Yarmouth.

Aylsham Staithe became a busy place as new basins and warehouses were built. There were wherrymen, boat builders, carpenters, canal maintenance men, carters, cordwainers (leather workers), millers and maltsters. They flourished. Although the canal didn't make much profit, it certainly benefited the area through which it ran. The railways arrived in the 1880s, and the navigation declined. In 1912 an immense flood swept down the Bure, washing away weirs and locks, altering the channel of the river, and damaging the bridges. A chapter of Aylsham history came to an end. Here is a card, available through the history society, showing the scope of the waterfront at this time ... and yes, regattas were held here in Aylsham! Now, while we are here, please turn for a view of one of Millgate's most distinctive buildings:

Bridge House. Here is Bridge House, formerly the Anchor Inn. It is a large Georgian Inn of great character. Can you see the fine door case, the fanlight, good sashed windows, and three large dormer windows in the pantiled roof? This north gable end, overlooking the river, is a large shaped gable in the Flemish style, and we might wonder why there is no similar style gable on the southern end? The building at the south end of The Anchor Inn could once stable 12 horses. Behind the inn there was a beer store – no cellar as it would have flooded. There is also still a building where fish were cured – smoked.

On both sides of the road there were clusters of cottages crowding the roadside down to the bridge, of which one or two remain.

Occupations in 1881. And what about the people of Millgate? The history of England seems to be dominated by the wealthy and famous – the glitterati of previous centuries, so it is pleasing to be in an area which reflects the lives of working people who had to find work, or face the label of pauper, apply for parish relief, or endure the workhouse.

The mill was the commercial hub of the area. Along Millgate we find millers and granarymen. Farming continued to be important, with a large number of agricultural labourers continuing to live in Millgate throughout the 19th century. There was a maltster who prepared barley for brewing. There were carters who moved grain and coal. There were

wherrymen, watermen, carpenters and boat builders connected with the Navigation. There were people who served the needs of these workers, selling food, repairing boots, and making clothes. 164 workers lived in Millgate in 1881, and this number was consistent through the century. Similar occupations were undertaken by workers living at The Staithe, Dunkirk, and Drabblegate across the river.

Large numbers of these were journeymen – skilled workers practising a trade or craft. Whilst farming and milling remained prosperous occupations, Millgate showed a diversity of employment. This is reflected in the types of houses from the prosperous trader to the humbler cottages of the people they employed.

Millgate from the Maltings. This long building is The Maltings, dated by a stone in the high gable reading ‘Robert Parmeter 1771’.

Here grain, mainly barley, was steeped, allowed to sprout, and then roasted to produce malt for brewing beer. It’s not difficult to picture sacks of grain being hoisted from a cart through the opening that is now a large window.

Now look opposite. There is Bure House. This has a dated brick in the south wall ‘TR 1768’. It is three storeys, with large sash windows, a central doorway with a pedimented door case with Tuscan pilasters. Look up to see the brick string course (a line of bricks laid as decoration), and fine decoration of the eaves.

Note the uniform appearance of the brickwork in these buildings; all standard sized red bricks in Flemish bond alternating headers and stretchers as we would expect in the 18th century. Though, curiously, there is English bond brickwork on the back of the The Maltings, with headers along one row and stretchers along the next.

Now I’ll tell you a little about the buildings to the south of us, that are difficult for us to see as a group, but which you can look at on your way back.

Opposite is Mill Row with pleasant houses and of course The Mill.

Continue along the back of The Maltings here, and you will find a pretty cottage with knapped flint to the left and a large converted barn with a thatched roof. This little cluster of buildings, together with buildings at right angles to the road, suggests that there was a premium on land fronting the road which had become built up. The 1871 census lists a ‘Wickes Yard’, suggesting that building had to extend behind the

street front, as with the yards in Red Lion Street here in Aylsham, and several streets in Norwich, such as Elm Hill. William Wickes is listed as a landowner.

Further up on the right are numbers 15 and 17 forming an L-shaped block. Look back as you pass at number 15, gable end to the road showing 13 fine windows, and an off-centre door with a neat canopy. Number 17 faces on to the road, and has an upper storey of knapped flint – flint that has been shaped.

Further up on the left look for Victoria Place of 1851, and then the Stonemasons Arms – one of several inns that existed along Millgate. Its stone quoins (groups of bricks or stones at the corners of buildings used to strengthen those points), string course, and slate roof indicate a solid Victorian building. It also serves to remind us that stonemasons and stone sawyers worked in this area. Further still on the left, you may be able to identify what was the last shop on Millgate. And further still, some very attractive brick and flint Victorian cottages ending at the old red telephone box.

Local building materials are much in evidence; local clay for bricks and tiles, reed for thatch, and timber for the frames of some of the older houses. Look for iron – there is a very attractive iron ventilation cover just on the right here, and several houses have iron discs which mark the ends of ties, and prevented the external wall from bowing outwards. These are usually at first floor level, as they ‘tie’ in to the joists.

On both sides look for the use of flint. There is both proudwork where the flints stand out from the wall, and flushwork where the flints are knapped so that they are flush with the wall. Pebbles would have been brought from the beach when transport became easier in the early 19th century. Numbers 3 and 5 on this side have an unusual curving swastika design in flint, and no 11 is faced with small flint pebbles. The use of similarly sized flint pebbles and white brick quoins gives a very pleasing and unusual effect. There is also a garden wall made of deep brown carrstone from the west of the county.

Finally, two buildings that are gone. As the road divides at New Road, the left road beyond the red telephone box is Gas House Hill and the gas works stood on the right hand side. You may see a photo of the Aylsham Gasworks in the film presentation in the Town Hall. On the right at the divide and behind The Tabernacle, stood the Aylsham Parish Workhouse

which closed in 1839, to be replaced by the Union workhouse which is now St. Michael's Housing Development and the remains of our hospital on Cawston Road.

I have drawn heavily on 'Millgate' – a History Society publication written by society contributors, and still available through the Society.

Jim Pannell

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 1 OCTOBER 2009

SECRETARY'S REPORT. Jim Pannell thanked Geoff for all his help as he (Jim) settled in as Secretary. The Society had received a request from a television company regarding a programme they are making on Fatherhood. Anyone interested in participating should speak to Jim. Jim also asked that the Equal Opportunities policy be adopted. This was carried unanimously. Jim also has details of events being held to celebrate the bicentenary of the death of Tom Payne. A couple of corrections: subscription renewal notices contained the phrase "married couples" – this had been changed by the committee that this should refer to "couples". Also Sheila Merriman has reached the end of her three year term and not four years as stated on the agenda. Jim spoke of the success of the Window on Aylsham day, especially the work done by Sheila Merriman. He asked if anybody has any suggestions for next year. He also mentioned the generosity of Bidy Holman in donating (for sale by the Society) the remaining copies of the Map of Aylsham produced by her late husband Peter. A bouquet of flowers had been given to her to show our gratitude. He said how much he has enjoyed working with Lloyd Mills at the Archives, and with the committee of the Society. In particular he mentioned the work done by Roger Polhill in producing the Journal.

TREASURER'S REPORT. Peter Pink presented the annual accounts. These were still to be audited and when they had been they will be printed in the Journal. A busy year had been reflected in the accounts.

NEWSLETTER/JOURNAL. Roger Polhill reported there had been three issues of the Journal. The journal is still published in the same format as devised by Tom Mollard. Roger said he is very grateful for the

articles and reports donated by members and appealed for more next year.

PUBLICATIONS. Geoff Gale reported that the books had been selling steadily. About twelve copies of the Inns and pubs were left – this from an initial run of 600.

VISITS. Ann Dyball reported that there had been two trips in May, but, unfortunately, the proposed visit to the Marshland Churches had to be postponed. It is hoped to do it next summer. As part of the Autumn course there would be a Breckland Walk next August.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS & COMMITTEE. With Geoff Gale standing down as chairman and from the committee it was proposed by Ann Dyball, seconded by Geoff, that Roger Polhill be elected as Chairman. This was carried unanimously.

Sheila Merriman was re-elected and Dr Vic Morgan was elected to the committee.

CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS. Geoff started by remembering Ron Peabody who had died last December. Ron became the Aylsham librarian in 1966; he had been Vice Chairman of the Society; he was a Town Councillor as well as being the Town archivist, where amongst many other things, he oversaw the publication of the Starling memoirs. He praised the manner in which Jim Pannell had taken over as Secretary; and thanked Ann Dyball for organising the visits. Finally he thanked all the members of the committee he had worked with over the years – they were one of the strengths of the Society

AOB. Ann Dyball rose to say that she was sorry that Elizabeth Gale could not be with us tonight, as she was sure everybody would like to thank both Geoff and Liz for all their work over the years. Geoff has been a member for 18 years and on the committee for 17. He has brought his skills as a designer and photographer; he is a good communicator, kind and sharing which has made everybody's lives on the committee that much easier. He will still be around, helping with the publications. Tom Mollard then spoke of Geoff's contributions on the Publications Committee and his work as an editor. Out of all the publications Tom felt that the Aylsham Directories will be remembered as the most useful. Tom said it had been enjoyable to work with him and that we all owe him our thanks.

Both Geoff and Elizabeth were made life members of the Society. Geoff was presented with an engraved glass cube, whilst a bouquet of flowers was presented for Liz. Geoff was asked to pass on all our best wishes to her. In his usual manner, Geoff said thank you and how much it was all appreciated.

The AGM was closed at 8.45 and after a coffee break the evening concluded with a very entertaining account of *Gressenhall Workhouse* by Stephen Pope.

Aylsham Local History Society: Equal Opportunities Policy

Statement of policy

The aim of this policy is to communicate the commitment of the Committee to the promotion of equality of opportunity in the Aylsham Local History Society.

It is our policy to provide membership equality to all irrespective of:

- ❑ Gender, including gender reassignment
- ❑ Marital or civil partnership status
- ❑ Having or not having dependants
- ❑ Religious belief or political opinion
- ❑ Race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins)
- ❑ Disability
- ❑ Sexual orientation
- ❑ Age

We are opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination.

To whom does this policy apply?

All Members of the Aylsham Local History Society.

Equality commitments

We are committed to:

- ❑ Promoting equality of opportunity for all persons
- ❑ Promoting a good and harmonious environment in which all persons are treated with respect
- ❑ Preventing occurrences of unlawful direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation

- Taking lawful affirmative or positive action, where appropriate
- Regarding all breaches of equal opportunity policy as misconduct which could lead to disciplinary proceedings

Implementation

The Chairman has specific responsibility for the effective implementation of this policy. Each Committee Member also has responsibilities and we expect all Members to abide by the policy and help create an equality environment which is its objective.

In order to implement this policy we shall:

- Communicate the policy to members
- Ensure that adequate resources are made available to fulfil the objectives of the policy.

Monitoring and review

The effectiveness of our equal opportunities policy will be reviewed annually and action taken as necessary.

Complaints

Any Member who believes that they have suffered any form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation is entitled to raise the matter with any Committee Member.

Every effort will be made to ensure that Members who make complaints will not be victimised. Any complaint of victimisation will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially. Victimisation may result in withdrawal of Membership.

Aylsham Local History Society: Data Protection Policy

Introduction

The Aylsham Local History Society (ALHS) holds certain personal data about living individuals for the purpose of maintaining the administration of the Society. ALHS recognises the importance of correct and lawful treatment of personal data.

The type of personal data that ALHS may require includes name, address, telephone number, email address for its members and others with whom it communicates, e.g. lecturers. This personal data, whether it is held on paper, on computer or other media, will be subject to the appropriate legal safeguards as specified in the Data Protection Act 1998.

ALHS fully endorses and adheres to the eight principles of the Data Protection Act. These principles specify the legal conditions that must be satisfied in relation to obtaining, handling, processing, transportation, and storage of personal data.

Principles

The principles require that personal data shall:

1. Be processed fairly and lawfully and shall not be processed unless certain conditions are met;
2. Be obtained for a specific and lawful purpose and shall not be processed in any manner incompatible with that purpose;
3. Be adequate, relevant and not excessive for those purposes;
4. Be accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date;
5. Not be kept longer than is necessary for that purpose;
6. Be processed in accordance with the data subject's rights;
7. Be kept secure from unauthorised or unlawful processing and protected against accidental loss, destruction or damage by using the appropriate technical and organisational measures;
8. And not be transferred to a country or territory outside the European Economic Area, unless that country or territory ensures an adequate level of protection for the rights and freedoms of data subjects in relation to the processing of personal data.

Satisfaction of principles

In order to meet the requirements of the principles, ALHS will:

- Observe fully the conditions regarding the fair collection and use of personal data;
- Meet its obligations to specify the purposes for which personal data is used;
- Collect and process appropriate personal data only to the extent that it is needed to fulfil operational or any legal requirements;
- Ensure the quality of personal data used;

- Apply checks to determine the length of time personal data is held;
- Ensure that the rights of individuals about whom the personal data is held, can be fully exercised under the Act;
- Take the appropriate technical and organisational security measures to safeguard personal data;
- And ensure that personal data is not transferred abroad without suitable safeguards.

ALHS Designated Data Controller

The Chairman of ALHS is responsible for ensuring compliance with the Data Protection Act and implementation of this policy on behalf of the ALHS Committee. The contact details for the Chairman are printed on the current Membership Card.

Status of the policy

This policy has been approved by the ALHS Committee and any breach will be taken seriously.

Any Member who considers that the policy has not been followed in respect of personal data about themselves should raise the matter with the Chairman.

Subject access

All individuals who are the subject of personal data held by ALHS are entitled to:

- Ask what information ALHS holds about them and why.
- Ask how to gain access to it.
- Be informed how to keep it up to date.
- Be informed what ALHS is doing to comply with its obligations under the 1998 Data Protection Act.

Data security

ALHS will ensure that data is kept securely meaning that precautions will be taken against physical loss or damage, and that both access and disclosure are restricted.

Use of data

Data collected by ALHS may be used for a range of administrative purposes including:

- Enabling effective communication;
- Monitoring the number of members;
- Monitoring the demographic of the membership;
- Maintaining a resource list of lecturers.

AYLSHAM LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

ACCOUNT FOR YEAR ENDED 31st AUGUST 2009

2008	Income	2009	2008	Expenditure	2009
3343	Publications	1594	2,004	Publications	1583
712	Subscriptions	849	48	Subscriptions	93
653	Course fees	1341	660	Course	800
72	Visitors	48	28	Programme cards	28
31	Donations	5	50	Donations	30
33	Bank Interest	12	291	Journal	257
640	Social Event	676	732	Social Event	961
25	Refreshments	–	36	Rent (F’ship Club)	60
5	Officers’ Expen.	–	24	Rent (Friends)	36
–	Journals	3	261	Insurance	–
			85	Officers Expenses	183
			220	Lecturers’ Fees	215
			5	Stall at Carnival	–
				Hire F’ship Hall	250
Visits					
	Wingfield	414		Wingfield	445
468	Stamford	–	505		–
587	Kings Lynn		539	Kings Lynn	50
164	Barningham	97	–	Barningham	275
483	Sudbury	–	666	Sudbury	
483	Braintree	–	475	Braintree	–
<hr/>		<hr/>	<hr/>		<hr/>
£7225		£5253	£5939		£5230
	Balances			Balances	
	31/8/08			31/8/09	
1350	Comm A/C	3589	3589	Comm A/C	3600

1037	Business A/C	1070	1070	Business A/C	1082
986	Publications	—	—		
<hr/>		<hr/>		<hr/>	
£10598		£9912	£10598		£9912

LIST OF MEMBERS – NOVEMBER 2009

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 Peter Pink, 38 Lancaster Gardens, Aylsham NR11 6LD (individuals £9; couples £15). Apologies to any members who might have recently renewed their subscription and still missed inclusion on the list.

Baker, Mr D W	Gale, Mr G	McChesney, Mrs J
Barber, Mrs P	Garrett, Mr & Mrs A	McManus, Mr & Mrs S
Barwick, Mrs G	Gawith, Mr & Mrs C	Mawby, Mr & Mrs W
Bayes, Mrs R	Gee, Mrs P	Merriman, Mrs S
Bird, Mrs M	Green, Mr M	Mills, Mr L
Boekee, Mr & Mrs R	Grellier, Ms D	Mitchell, Mrs M
Brasnett, Mr & Mrs D	Haddow, Ms E	Mollard, Mr & Mrs T
Burton, Mr A	Hall, Mrs R	Morgan Dr V
Casimir, Mr & Mrs S	Hicks, Mr R	Newell, Mrs J
Collins, Mrs R	Harrison, Mrs R	Nobbs, Mr G
Corbin, Mrs H	Hawke, Mr & Mrs D	Norton, Mr P
Cox, Mrs F	Hill, Mrs J	Pannell, Mr J
Crouch, Mr R	Holman, Mrs P	Parkin, Mrs T
Davy, Mr & Mrs R	Humphreys, Mrs C	Peabody, Ms J
Douet, Dr A	Jackson, Ms S	Pim, Mr & Mrs M
Ducker, Mr G	Jay, Mrs S	Pink, Mr P
Duncan, Mrs B	Johnston, Mr G	Polhill, Dr & Mrs R
Dyball, Miss A J	Keable, Mrs M	Powell, Mr & Mrs I
Ellis, Ms J	Lloyd, Mrs T	Preis, Mrs W
Elsey, Mr & Mrs B	Lowe, Mr B	Pritchard, Mr & Mrs E
Fletcher, Mrs G	Lyons, Mr D	Riseborough, Mr &

Mrs R
Rowe, Mrs M
Rust, Mrs L
Shaw, Mr & Mrs A
Shepherd, Mrs A

Sheringham, Mrs J
Smith, Mr & Mrs R
Swann, Mr & Mrs J
Ulph, Mr C
Vaughan-Lewis, Mr

& Mrs M
Wintle, Mrs S
Wix, Mr & Mrs M

NOTICES

Visit to Carrow House

A tour of the Costume & Textile Study Centre at Carrow House, Norwich, is scheduled for Thursday 11 March 2010, to look at the resources area, library and view some of the items mentioned in the talk by Lynda Wix in October. A coach will leave Aylsham Market Place at 1.20 pm.

Please book a place with Ann Dyball 01263 732637 or ajdyball@tiscali.co.uk

WEA Aylsham Branch – Spring Term 2010

Glen Barrett on *The History of Science*

The course is for ten weeks from 13 January 2010 at Friends' Meeting House, Pegg's Yard, Aylsham, Wednesdays 2–3.30 pm. The course will look at the lives and contributions of many of the great scientists from earliest times to the modern era.

Fee for 10 week course: £43.50

Contact: Ms Ann Dyball 01263 732637 or ajdyball@tiscali.co.uk

Spring Social Event

The Spring Social Event is scheduled for Thursday 22 April at The Sea Marge Hotel, Overstrand.

Please see insert with this issue. Jim Pannell would appreciate an indication of numbers by 31 January 2010.