

AYLSHAM LOCAL HISTORY
SOCIETY



JOURNAL & NEWSLETTER

Volume 9

No. 6

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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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This issue leads with several articles arising out of the launch of the Society's new book, *Sail and Storm – The Aylsham Navigation*. The Bure Navigation Conservation Trust's event at Coltishall to mark the exact centenary of the Great Flood of 26 August 1912 and the book launch in Aylsham on 16 September were a great success (despite early rain on the 26th) – we much appreciate the review by Margaret Bird. The book is selling well at £15, discounted to £14 for members.

The summer excursion to Venta Icenorum was much appreciated by those who were able to go and there has been really good attendance for evening lectures – many thanks for the reports here. There was a sell-out for the most enjoyable and revealing Autumn course by Rebecca Pinner on 'Hidden Histories of Medieval and Tudor East Anglia'.

Lectures for the rest of the winter season at 7.30 pm in the Friendship Hall, Cawston Road.

Thursday 24 January. '*A Journey through Time*' by Dave King

Thursday 28 February. '*The Sedgeford Project*' by Gary Rossin

Thursday 28 March. '*The Howard Tombs*' by Phillip Lindley

Please see the last page, p. , for severe weather procedure and notices about the annual dinner, the WEA Spring course and our Autumn course

Front cover: design for the cover of *Sail and Storm* by Kerry Buck.

Back cover: 'Bunch of Pears' feature on a Millgate cottage, courtesy of Gloria Wilson-Law, and the wherry Albion, courtesy of Mike Sparkes and The Norfolk Wherry Trust.

GUIDED TOUR OF DUNKIRK

Provided by Brian Elsey and Jim Pannell 16.09.2012 as part of the launch event for 'Sail and Storm – The Aylsham Navigation'.

The Staithe. We are standing on the staithe. Staithe is a Norse word for a landing stage, and you may be familiar with, for example, Ranworth Staithe on the Broads and Brancaster Staithe on the coast. The Staithe was the area of warehouses and open storage used for goods arriving at and leaving from the Basin. The basin is now filled in, but it came up to this row of trees. These cottages (Mr Rowlands) you see were once a warehouse standing on the south side of the basin.

The River Bure was always navigable from its mouth at Great Yarmouth up to Coltishall. In the early 18th century it was proposed that the river from Coltishall to Ingworth should be made navigable by widening, deepening, and cutting where necessary, and installing five locks to maintain the water levels. The plan finally took shape and was drawn by Mr Biedermann in 1772, and a copy of that map can be seen in the Town Hall today. The necessary Act of Parliament was passed in 1773, money raised from local worthies such as Lord Walpole and Sir Robert Marsham, and Commissioners appointed to create and maintain the Navigation. The Commissioners included Humphry Repton's father, and they met at The Black Boys. It was constructed from the Coltishall end so that the Navigation could be used to bring in the necessary materials as it progressed. As far as we know, all the work was done by hand – digging and carting with wheelbarrows, and The Navigation opened in 1779.

It became clear that the section to Ingworth would be too costly, and that proposed section was never constructed. The head of the Navigation minus the basin can still be seen, and that is where we are now headed.

Wherry Cottage. The River Bure runs under the first bridge out of Aylsham, and the by-pass channel runs below the second bridge. That channel runs along the back of these cottages. The cut that runs across here joins the Navigation to the by-pass stream and to the river and the water mill.



Aerial view of the Navigation at Aylsham a few years ago.

Unfortunately, there is no public place in Aylsham or Dunkirk where the Navigation can be actually seen, so we are very fortunate to have permission from Mr Rowlands to be here today. The cottages here were once warehouses on the edge of the head of the navigation basin. They are the only part of the 18th century building that remains at the staithe. They were built by Robert Parmeter the younger in 1795. Robert Parmeter re-built the mill in its present form in 1798. He had the maltings built, and owned the Anchor Inn, now Bridge House. There is a

house on Old Cromer Road where Parmeters lived, and still named 'Parmeters'.

The Steam Mill. Since Domesday and perhaps before, the water mill was the centre of industry here. The industry was expanded greatly by the building of the Maltings on Millgate which converted local barley in to malt for brewing.

Dunkirk changed with the building of the navigation. In this area there was a kiln, and a tannery. The smithy occupied the double garage at Mash's Row. Warehouses were constructed, wherries were repaired and built here, mainly by the Wright family. Grain, timber and flour were taken by wherry downstream, and consumables were brought up.

In the middle of the 19th century there was a great change. Mr Frederick Copeman decided to build a new steam-powered mill here. There was a cut in to the yard from the Navigation for wherries to load and unload. The flour mill is now the base of the garage. The small brick building in the yard just nosing on to the street once housed the steam engine. The chimney and the engine have long since gone, but the bone mill is still here in front of us. Here Mr James Vince ran his business of milling and mixing unwanted fish remains with remnants from the neighbouring tannery and the bones of farm animals to create fertiliser. What a stink! Coal became a vital wherry cargo, brought in from the north-east coalfields. Later, the businesses of the water mill and the steam mill would be amalgamated, and milling flourished here. The sale and repair of agricultural equipment, and the silos for storing and processing grain are still very important trades of Dunkirk today.

In those times it was customary for the builder of the mill to erect his home proudly overlooking his business. Sure enough, here we have Frederick Copeman's house built in Victorian gothic style, with a slate roof; perhaps the slates brought up the Navigation. Copeman's initials can be seen on the drain. A similar piece of architecture can be seen by the Weavers' Way car park. That is the school-room and school-house built at about the same time, and now a listed building.

The Maiden's Bower – Royal Oak. This house is named 'The Maiden's Bower'. It has not always been so. The Maiden's Bower was the name of a piece of land adjoining the house. However, for many years this was 'The Royal Oak' public house. It would have been an ale house, at some

times also known as the Butcher's Arms and the Wherryman's Arms. This would have been the place for a clean drink for watermen, wherryman, and perhaps those working in the mills nearby. Perhaps also those men who dredged and cleared the waterway, known as 'dydlers' refreshed here, too. And maybe the Wright family who crafted wherries such as the beautiful 'Gypsy' that sailed the waters of Holland.

Back at the Staithe. Several people in the group have introduced themselves as relatives of people who lived here, and it is most interesting to hear their accounts. Prior to the Navigation, the Tuttington Road ran diagonally across this area. It was moved northwards to make way for the staithe. Trade on the Navigation, including grain, flour, feed, coal, and building materials grew, especially in response to the demand for coal in the mill, for domestic fires and at the new gas works up Gas House Hill. However, in 1880 the first railway station in Aylsham was opened at what is now the Bure Valley site. In 1883 the Midland Railway arrived here at Dunkirk. Immediately the Navigation trade dropped, and continued to drop until 1912. We know that coal and grain merchants moved their trade to the station yards.

The station and sidings occupied the area to the east. The North Walsham road had to be diverted over a new bridge by the station, to turn sharply right and then left. Years later the railway closed, and a new road could be built to cut the corners.

Just 100 years ago, on August 26th 1912, following a period of intense rainfall, The Great Flood occurred. You can see a wonderful short film about the flood, made by Derek Lyons. It will be showing in The Heritage Centre. The flood swept down the Bure damaging bridges and locks beyond repair. The Commissioners tried to raise money for repair, but were unable to do so and, like most Navigations in East Anglia at this time, The Aylsham Navigation never recovered and was finally and formally closed in September 1928.

If you wish to see more of the Navigation, there is a footpath all the way from Burgh cradle bridge to Coltishall lock; a beautiful path being protected and promoted by the newly formed Bure Navigation Conservation Trust.

Digging the Canals

by Lynda Wix



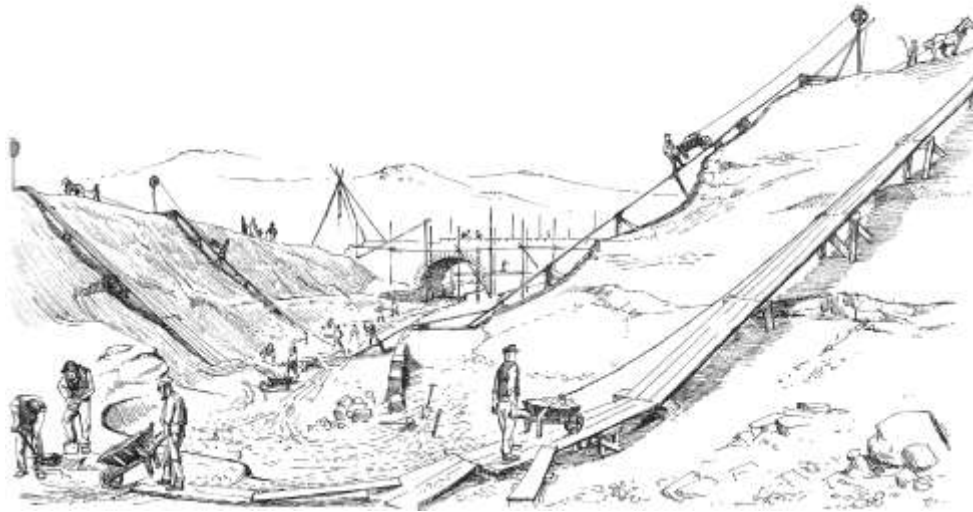
Canal surveying, using level and staff to establish height. The assistant has a perambulator and surveyor's chain to measure distance. Drawn by A.J. Lewery in *The Illustrated History of Canal & River Navigation*.

Henry Biedermann was contracted to be the surveyor for the Aylsham navigation. His task was to identify those areas of the River Bure, the loops and meanderings that could be straightened. Such improvements would ease the workings of the wherries and speed the journey time between Aylsham and Horstead. This was a scheme for River Navigation not the building of a completely new canal.

Detailed planning in 1772 included the sensibilities of the landowners and their needs as at Woolsey Bridge in Burgh Hall meadow. Detailed costings included the price of digging out spoil per cubic yard, the distance this would have to be moved, the provision of building materials and the wages of the labourers.

A surveyor needed to know the nature of the land which would be dug and the drop in levels between one place and another along the course of the navigation.

The canalized sections were chosen to improve the natural course of the river so the geology was a given. It was not possible to choose one subsoil over another. The positioning of locks and bridges was fitted alongside these canalized sections. Each feature was dictated by the needs of the millers for a depth of water and the management of water flows.



Deep cutting in the Midlands: removing spoil with barrow runs. Drawn by A.J. Lewery in *The Illustrated History of Canal & River Navigation*.

Could Henry model the effect on the river currents of the deepening of the river Bure and the building of new sections? Shoals in shallow areas afflicted by hoves and unforeseen scourings as the natural course of the river was deflected caused difficulties and expense during the life of the navigation.

Measuring the drop in land levels from Aylsham to Horstead was a more secure technology. The levels were plotted by triangulation measured by theodolite. A chain 22 yards long was fixed to the ground by metal arrows to measure distance. Levels were taken with a spirit level and telescope with crosswire sights. Heights were found by sighting adjustable markers on staffs.

Once surveyed and the course of the navigation agreed, the new cuts had to be excavated. Level pegs were arranged so their cross pieces could be lined up horizontally and so checked with a levelling instrument. The labourers used these pegs as a guide when digging to achieve a level cut. They worked away from the slope towards the centre of the canal. Digging produced spoil which had to be removed by wheelbarrows being wheeled up a plank on to the land or a boat. Some barrows had shallow sides and could hold 2 cwt. Some muscle needed to work with such a weight up hill! Digging to a depth could also produce water in the bottom of the trench particularly in a time of prolonged rain. The archived accounts mention an Archimedes Screw to pump out Horstead

Lock in 1779 so such devices were obviously known about and used where necessary.

Usually the equipment to make the navigation was everyday basic. Picks, spades, shovels, wheelbarrows, planks, horses and carts were supplied to the labourers by the local craftsmen such as William Gill, Thomas Harvey and James Frost who were contracted for various sections.

It is sensible to think that each section was dug and made water tight before each end was connected to the river. Tanners were used to lining their pits. The Dutch knew about lining drainage ditches in the Fens. Probably most new sections on the Navigation being dug out in natural clay had these foundations consolidated by a wooden rammer but some water proofing techniques were employed particularly at Horstead and Buxton locks.

The principle was to impregnate the earth with an impervious substance so that it will hold no more water and so resist water. The water did not leach into the subsoil but provided a depth that wherries could navigate. This process was called puddling. We do not know if any specialised puddling spades were used or scoops, a wooden box with a long handle, used to ladling water over the puddling as the layers were built up. We do not know if the labourers were provided with special strong water tight boots whose weight would help ram down the puddle, but we do have a record of marl from Little Switzerland near Bylaugh being brought down by boat to the locks to provide a secure foundation. Where marl was used the surveyor would have to adjust the depth and width of the canal to allow for the layers of gravel, coarse sand and marl to a thickness of 18". A lock chamber needed strength to resist water and earth pressure. A U-shape of brick set in a clay puddle gave this strength.

When we look at the remains of the Navigation how often do we think of the back breaking work of local men necessary to building it with no bull dozers, conveyor belts or efficient pumps.

Further reading:

Paget-Tomlinson, E. (2006). *The Illustrated History of Canal & River Navigation*. Ed. 3. 384 pp. Landmark Publishing, Ashbourne.

Unfortunately efforts to contact the publisher and artist failed - Ed.

Bunch of Pears

Roger Polhill



No. 3, Millgate,
showing the symbol
of a 'bunch of pears'

Mast head of the '*Albion*',
showing the same symbol

At the Society's book launch for *Sail and Storm – The Aylsham Navigation* on 16 September 2012 Ivor Stemp, from The Norfolk Wherry Trust, remarked that as he had gone down to look at the staithe he saw the decorative feature of a "bunch of pears", which is featured on the wherry *Albion*, depicted on a cottage in Millgate. He had a vague memory of someone telling him they had also seen it on a vessel in the Mediterranean, but otherwise he knew nothing about the origins of the symbol.

Mike Sparkes, a skipper and archivist for the Trust, kindly provided us with more background information. 'A bunch of pears', as wherrymen

call is drawn with a pair of compasses. It is mentioned in the glossary to Robert Malster's *Wherries and Waterways* (Terence Dalton Ltd, Lavenham, 1971). Unfortunately we do not know what it has to do with wherries apart from being decorative but Albion has the same pattern, which at one time was painted either side of the mast where the metal rod held the pulley which is set in the herring hole. The same symbol is now fitted to the front of our mast. There were other decorative symbols such as a round circle with small triangles painted around the small circle like petals. It is said that wherrymen borrowed paint from yachtsmen to brighten up their wherries. Mast head colours were important and companies usually had their own colour schemes. Walkers of Bungay had a green mast head with two gold bands. This is how the Albion mast head was painted when she was working for them. Because *Albion* is the old word for England 'The Norfolk Wherry Trust' uses the colours of Red, White and Blue for the mast head colours.

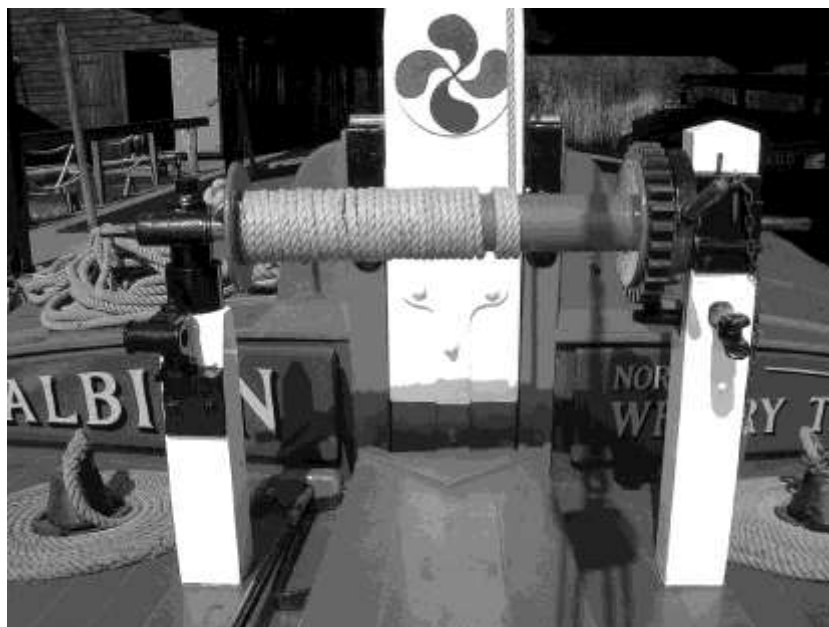
Matthew Champion, who gave the Society a memorable lecture on medieval wall paintings in October 2012, has added more background. The symbol is very similar to a number of compass drawn designs and motifs that he has come across on a regular basis as part of his graffiti research. The generally accepted theory is that all of these designs are types of apotropaic symbols. In effect, they are symbols of protection. Partly they are seen as 'good luck' or 'warding off the evil eye' – but the concept appears to go far deeper than that. In reality we have nothing completely comparable in the modern world – hence the development of the term 'apotropaic'. He supposes the easiest way of thinking of them is as a quasi-religious protective talisman.

The fact that this symbol appears to be particularly associated with wherries and river travel is also particularly of interest. Many of the apotropaic symbols he has come across in churches tend to be in groups or clusters, and they are often linked with items such as ship graffiti – particularly on the Norfolk coast. They are also found on a variety of media (stone, timber, etc) and in a variety of structures (churches, barns, vernacular housing stock) and are recorded as being used from at least as far back as the 14th century right the way through to the 18th century.

He suspects, but has no direct evidence, that what we have recorded is an individual apotropaic marking that, for reasons unknown, has historically become associated with wherries and wherrymen. Although

this may have started out as some form of ritual protection mark it is likely that it continued as some form of ‘traditional’ marking long after any real memory of its use and function were lost. It simply became a marking that ‘brought luck’. The closest analogy he can think of is throwing coins into a fountain or well. An archaeologist would argue that it is simply carrying on a many thousand year old tradition of ritual deposition in water. The bare evidence that this is the case is irrefutable. However, if you question someone who casts a coin into a fountain they are unlikely to say that they are ritually depositing offerings in water to appease the gods. They do it because it has always been done. If pushed they might claim they do it ‘for luck’.

No 3 & 5 Millgate was built by William Bartram in the 1840s, and his son Robert was a master builder after him. The ordnance survey map of 1886 shows their timber yard. At this time the Wright family were well established as wherry builders, Daniel, Robert and Thomas all living in Millgate and Dunkirk. It seems likely that the lucky symbol appealed to William Bartram at a time when the Navigation was bringing wealth to this part of the town – a considerable part of Millgate and Drabblegate was built or rebuilt around the middle of the century – to the benefit of his business.



Acknowledgements

My thanks to Matthew Champion, Michael Sparkes and Ivor Stemp for the information that makes up this short note.

Sail and Storm: The Aylsham Navigation

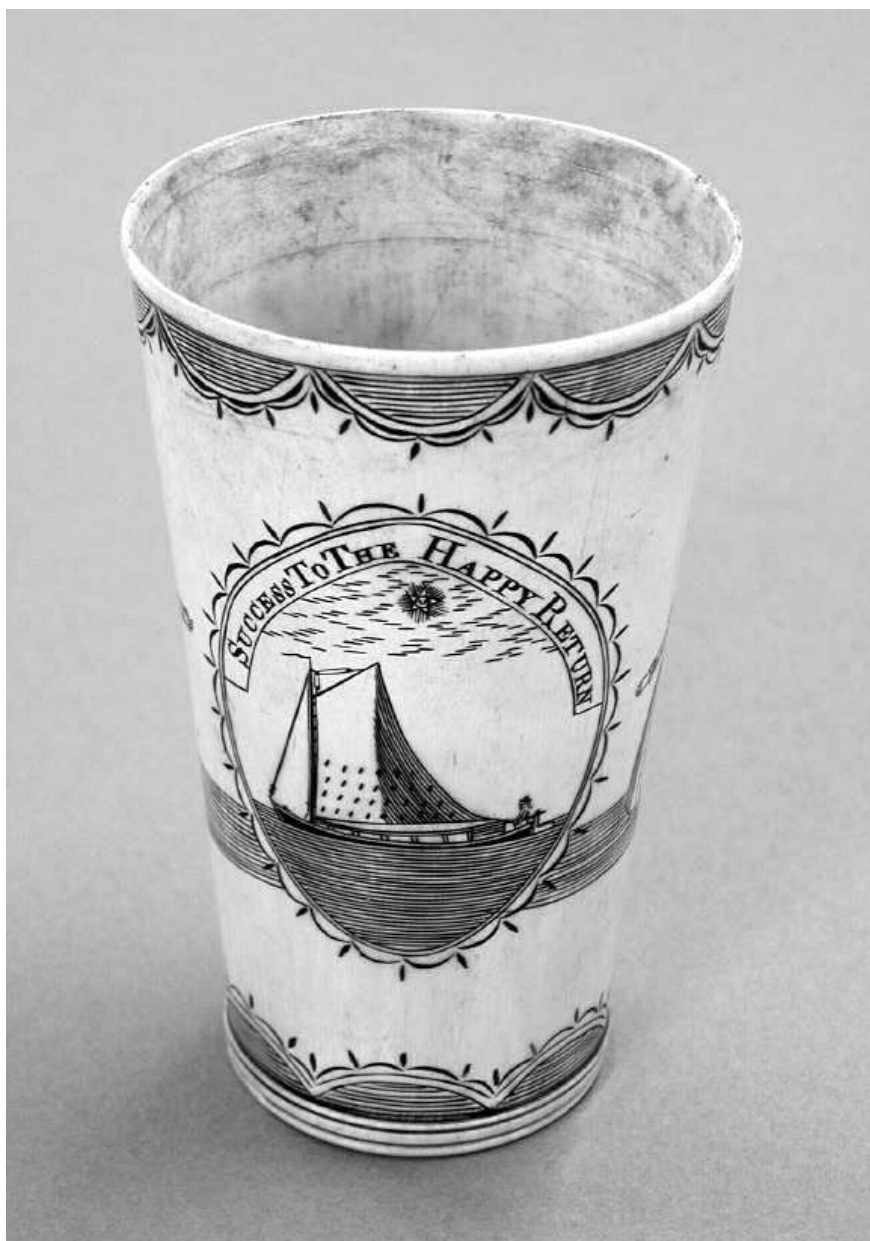
This well-illustrated study of Aylsham's waterway and its traffic was published on 26 August 2012, the exact centenary of the ending of navigation along this nine-mile stretch of the Bure. Margaret Bird reviews the latest in a distinguished line of Aylsham Local History Society publications.

This book is a triumph. It is the product, in an attractive and enduring form, of a collaborative effort to mark the flood of 26 August 1912. As members will know, this natural disaster precipitated the end of the navigation, or canalised river, which had seen Aylsham transformed into an inland port since 20 October 1779. The attendant economic benefits for the town and its hinterland had lasted 133 years.

Sail and Storm was a huge task for the Aylsham Local History Society Research Group. All within two years a special course of studies was designed and undertaken, under the supervision of the Centre of East Anglian Studies at the University of East Anglia (UEA). Topographical surveys were made along the waterway. The town archives – still in the care of the Town Council – were pored over, and long extracts transcribed.

Sixteen enthusiasts worked at the heart of the project, three of them from UEA. Leadership of the research group at the Aylsham end lay with the society's chairman Dr Roger Polhill; at UEA with the course tutor Dr Sarah Spooner, Lecturer in Landscape History and the book's editor. They, with Steve Smith and Jim Pannell, were also responsible for writing *Sail and Storm*, their styles happily being compatible. The result reads as a seamless whole.

The book was part of a wider project which has seen the formation of the Bure Navigation Conservation Trust, under the inspiration and drive of Stuart Wilson. Rarely can a scholarly historical work have been so densely woven into community collaboration. The launch of *Sail and Storm* to the long-set centenary deadline is testimony to the leadership, imagination and professionalism of those involved.



The earliest illustration of a clearly drawn wherry on a horn cup dated 1787.
Courtesy Norwich Castle Museum.

Others such as Robert Malster and Tom Williamson have touched on the subject as part of their wider studies of the Broads and industrial East Anglia. Now for the first time the Aylsham navigation takes centre stage in this carefully constructed and analytical work. It ranges widely, examining such topics as Biedermann's plan of 1772, the mills and locks, the vessels, cargoes and watermen. Studies of the various stretches of the navigation, with the associated village staithes and industries, culminate

in a chapter devoted to the canal basin area of Aylsham, known as Dunkirk, and the street running down to it, Millgate.

The book is not only a historical study. It also examines the demands of waterway maintenance; Steve Smith the 1912 rainfall and flood which brought about the demise of the navigation. Steve brings us to the present with a chapter entitled 'The Landscape Today'. Scholarly footnotes, not endnotes, aid the reader and identify the sources; well designed graphs and tables enhance the text.

This beautifully produced book delights the eye. The front and back covers feature a specially commissioned painting by Kerry Buck. Inside, many of the striking illustrations are in colour. Some, such as Bruce Rushin's, were specially drawn for the book. Many are archive photographs; others come from local and national collections including those of the Norfolk Museums Service and the Victoria and Albert Museum. One primary source is displayed to great effect on the endpapers. This is the original coloured plan, 1.5 metres long, by German-born Henry Augustus Biedermann.

The coated art paper used throughout shows off both text and illustrations to great effect. The Aylsham printers Barnwell Print, based at the former head of navigation at Dunkirk, have crafted a book that signals class and solidity. Useful appendices, a glossary, full bibliography and index complete the picture of *Sail and Storm* as having all the trimmings. Given the time pressures to meet the centenary deadline, Diana Polhill's detailed index is a real tribute to the professionalism of the production.

On the whole the book breaks new ground. It is careful not to overlap with existing published research on such topics as the natural history of the area, or the use of the Bure as a defensive stop line in the Second World War. As always, it is not the last word on the subject. There is more to be done on the effect of the opening of the navigation on the economy of the inland ports downstream; also limitations of space meant that the introduction could give only an overview of comparisons with other navigations. Aylsham happily avoided the spectacular financial losses suffered by the Norwich and Lowestoft scheme of 1827 to bypass Great Yarmouth through the creation of Mutford Lock and the New Cut. These considerations however lie outside the mission of the

collaborators, who have retained their original focus of charting the history and landscape of the Aylsham navigation.

Symbolising the co-operative effort which was one of the work's hallmarks, the pre-launch and launch events for *Sail and Storm* drew large numbers of participants. Under the leadership of Stuart Wilson of Brampton and Peter and Sue Baker of Coltishall the precise centenary was celebrated on Sunday 26 August by a riverside festival on Coltishall Lower Common. Many local societies and organisations had stands. The wherry *Albion*, decked overall, welcomed admiring troops of visitors on board. Commemorating the trade of the past, 36 canoeists from 1st Buxton Lamas Sea Scouts paddled down to Coltishall from Aylsham bearing local barley and potatoes. The book was unveiled, and sales were brisk.

On Sunday 16 September, the actual launch day, the society's honorary secretary Jim Pannell organised a tour of the Dunkirk area of Aylsham for about a hundred people, many being drawn from well beyond the local area. Also attending the launch was Lucy Best, widow of the Keswick Hall student Desmond Best (1924–91). His unpublished four-volume thesis of 1976 had guided the researchers to many of the sources and given the study its initial impetus. Professor Tom Williamson of UEA, patron of the Bure Navigation Conservation Trust, gave an illustrated talk. The sales desk manned by Diana Polhill and Geoffrey Sadler was kept busy all afternoon. This is a book which shows every sign of being a sales success, an outcome it richly deserves.

It is a work we shall want to return to, again and again. It repays re-reading, for while the research effort was huge the writing is spare. The points, made tellingly, open our eyes to what is around us as we explore the waterway. Through this study we come to understand the landscape of today and how it was shaped by the energy and imagination of those who undertook the great venture to link Aylsham to the sea.

Sail and Storm: The Aylsham Navigation, edited by Sarah Spooner (published by the Aylsham Local History Society, August 2012), 223 pp. ISBN 978-0-9521564-5-1 price £15 + £3.00 UK p&p

www.aylsham-history.co.uk/publications

Branch Lines around Wroxham

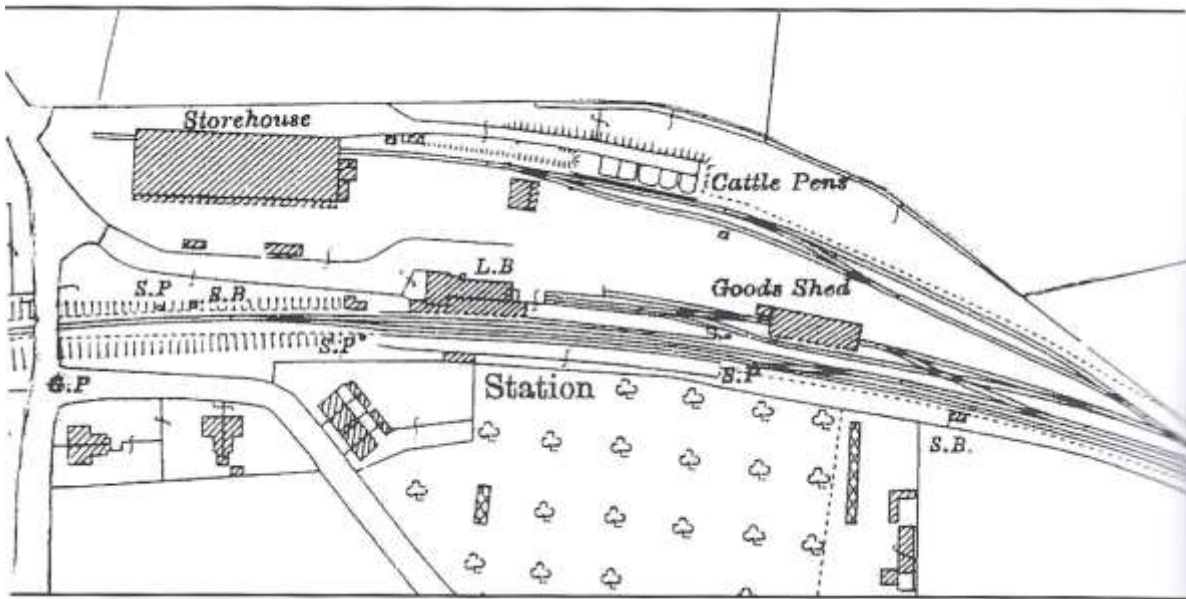
Book review by Derek Lyons of a notable new book about local railways including the line through Aylsham from Wroxham to County School.



Train in Aylsham South Station, June 1952. Courtesy Aylsham Town Council Archive

When I came to live in Aylsham and began to explore the surrounding area I came across a number of abandoned railway stations just outside the town. I didn't give them much thought. Had I spared them any consideration I would probably have imagined them as quiet country halts with an occasional leisurely train calling in, waiting at the platform while a couple of unhurried folk alighted or boarded, then puffed off down the line towards the next equally sleepy station. But, this would have been only half the story. These were the remnants of a once thriving network, with express trains travelling from one side of the county to the other, and beyond.

But there was still something of the idyllic picture in my mind when I opened a recently published book about the region's railways.



Map indicating facilities at Aylsham Station South in 1928.

Branch Lines around Wroxham is the work of Richard Adderson and Graham Kenworthy, two railway enthusiasts who have meticulously researched the material for their book. It charts in some detail the history of the local railways from the original construction in the eighteenth century, through the gradual amalgamation of the smaller companies, until, shortly after the war, they were all nationalised under the mantle of "British Rail". Eventually, the system was considered no longer viable and most of the network was decommissioned, leaving only the sad remnants of what had once been.

The authors have unearthed a wealth of interesting memorabilia. Vintage time tables and even some original passenger tickets (one of which shows the fare from Reepham to Aylsham at just five old pence) are reproduced. Photographs of stations and locomotives that once serviced the network are plentiful – there are even diagrams showing the layout of many stations. Aylsham, I knew, once had two railway stations, as did Cromer. But I didn't realise until I read this book that North Walsham likewise had two: one on the Norwich to Cromer line and the other on the Yarmouth to King's Lynn line. They were so near to each other that a lump of coal thrown from one might well have landed on the other.



Aylsham Station South, probably during the 1930s.

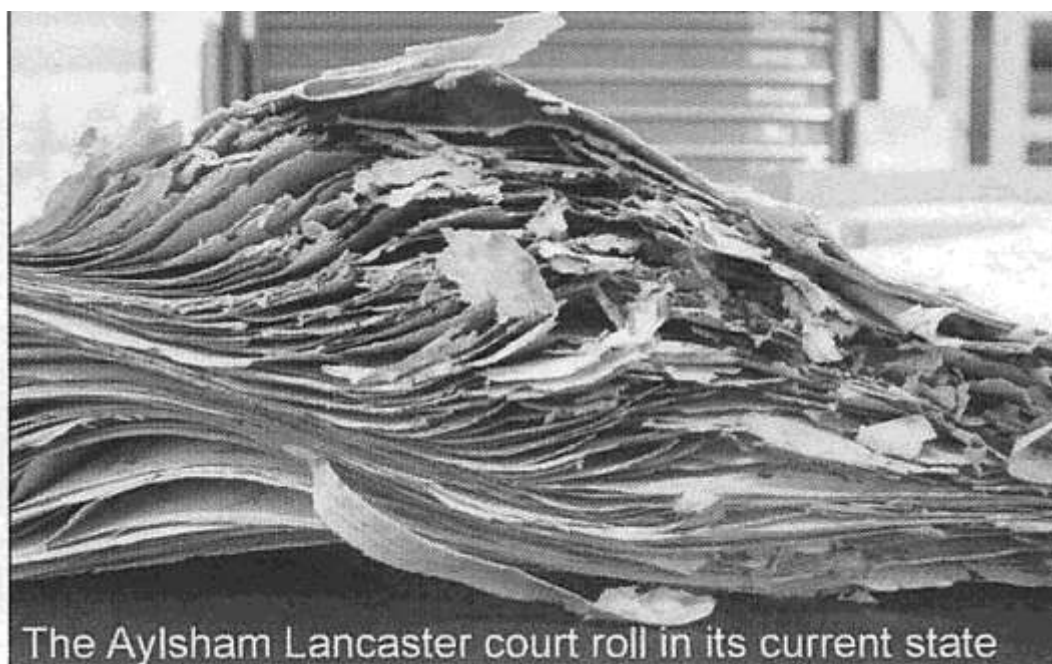
Up until the middle of the last century Norfolk enjoyed a very extensive network, with a whole spider's web of lines criss-crossing the countryside, connecting not only towns but also many villages to the outside world. There were few places one couldn't reach by train in those days. Norwich, I discovered, used to have three major railway stations. Thorpe station is still very much alive and well but Victoria station (near St Stephens roundabout) and City station (now the City trading estate) are long gone – victims of so much rationalisation.

There is (inevitably) a certain amount of technical data between the covers, but not so much as to spoil the book for a non-railway buff. Local historians are bound to find it interesting.

Adderson, R. & Kenworthy, G. (2012). *Branch Lines around Wroxham*. 96 pp. Middleton Press, Midhurst. ISBN 978 1 908174 31 4. www.middletonpress.co.uk

Price: £16.95. Available from Jarrold, Norwich, and Railway Station shop, Aylsham. Also post free from Middleton Press, Easebourne Lane, Midhurst, West Sussex GU29 9AZ.

Aylsham Lancaster Court Roll 1509–1546



The NRO Newsletter issue 54 for September–November 2012 notes that one of the Aylsham Lancaster manor court rolls is to be repaired, thanks to a large conservation grant. This has been made possible by generous support from the National Manuscripts Conservation Trust and from Aylsham local historians. The roll (NRS 13434) covers the period 1509 to 1546, almost the entire reign of Henry VIII. Anne Boleyn owned the manor during part of this period and her father, Sir Thomas Boleyn, was one of the manor's stewards.

The roll, which is in too poor a condition to be consulted, suffered badly from adverse storage before it came to the Norfolk Record Office. One side was damaged by damp and mould, while the other side had been gnawed by mice. An eighteen-month project starts this autumn to conserve the document. It will be digitised to allow everyone access to its content.

Manor rolls contain a wealth of information for local historians. The roll is expected to reveal details about the regulation of trade, markets and fairs in Aylsham, the administration of agricultural matters in the town, and the transfer of copyhold property from tenant to tenant.

SOCIETY NEWS

PETER PINK 1929–2012



We miss our gentle, meticulous treasurer, a notable contributor to the Society, much valued for his quiet humour and his thoughtful, kindly presence at so many meetings and outings. He had an intense love of history. Whenever his family saw him reading, and he was a prolific reader, it was almost always a history book. His attitude to historical events was to ask the question "WHY?". He analysed history like a scientist, getting to the real truth of why things happen. This approach fascinated him.

Peter was born on 26 March 1929 in Stockwell where his father was a detective in the London police force. His need to ask "WHY" started at grammar school when a history teacher accused him of being a Marxist. From then on he devoted himself to the works of Marx and Engels. Although he was influenced by Marxist literature he was ever ready to be critical if he found Marx to be wrong; like a scientist he would be ready to say so. The truth was the important thing. The three siblings, two boys and a girl, had widely divergent political loyalties and his socially aware parents fostered lively debate.

He did most of his national service in Egypt in the latter years of the 1940s, stationed at an ammunition depot in the canal zone. On his return

to the family home, now in Hayes, he had a short spell with Shell before joining Electric and Musical Industries (EMI). He worked in the export division and was involved with both the defence industry and popular music. He met Pam Littlewood at meetings of the Communist Party. She also had her home in Hayes, part of a teaching family, and had trained as a teacher at Keswick Hall in Norfolk. She then spent a couple of years in Iraq teaching at a school for foreign nationals. She was expelled during the 1963 revolution and the insights into poverty and social injustice strongly influenced her political sympathies.

After they were married Peter worked for the Morning Star as an advertisement manager and later as a fund raiser. They had one daughter and in time Pam was able to take an arts degree from the Open University. When Peter retired happy memories particularly of music and Keswick Hall drew them to Norfolk and a cottage in Mash's Row, After the flood of 1993 they moved to higher ground and settled happily in Lancaster Gardens.

Peter joined the Society in 1994 and was elected to the Committee in 1999, becoming Treasurer in 2000. He loved his work as Treasurer and took up a study of seventeenth century Aylsham. It became a special interest and the topic of his first talk to the Society on Members Night in April 1998. He enjoyed taking groups around Aylsham, the Parson Woodforde Society in May 1999, the Frary Family Association in September 1999 and the Cringleford Historical Society in July 2000. He gave a talk on the history of Aylsham at the request of St Michael's Church in November 1998, contributed to the 20th Anniversary Celebration of the Society in June 2004 and to the "Window on Aylsham" event in September 2009. He also made reports on several excursions. He died on 22 August 2012 and with his progressive decline he analysed his illness, calling it an "interesting experience".

Pink, P. (2000). Blickling. *Aylsham Local History Society J. 6*: 43–47.

Pink, P. (2002). "The Triangle". *Aylsham Local History Society J. 6*: 262–264.

Pink, P. (2004). The Roman Landscape of East Anglia. Report on course given by Mike Hardy in Autumn 2003. *Aylsham Local History Society J. 7*: 102–103.

Pink, P. (2005). Aylsham is a Market Town. *Aylsham Local History Society J. 7*: 180–182.

Pink, P. (2006). The Reverend Benjamin John Armstrong, Vicar of East Dereham 1850–1858). *Aylsham Local History Society J. 7*: 266–270.

Pam Pink and Roger Polhill

VISIT TO CAISTOR ST EDMUND ROMAN SITE

by **Carol Humphreys**



Those members of the Society who visited the Roman site of Venta Icenorum at Caistor St Edmund on 16th August 2012 were rewarded with a most interesting tour. Professor Will Bowden of the University of Nottingham and director of the present excavations kindly agreed to lead the group and gave a fascinating introduction to the history of the site, now in the care of the Norfolk Archaeological Trust.

Venta is mentioned in the writings of Ptolemy in the second century and then later in a third century document, known as the Antonine Itinerary as Venta Icenorum, “marketplace of the Iceni”. However, it isn’t until 1586, with the publication of “Britannia” by the Elizabethan antiquarian, William Campden, that Venta Icenorum is identified with the site of Caistor St Edmund, though this view was not accepted by all, some believing Norwich was the correct location.

There was further speculation and continuing interest in the site over the years, until, in the exceptionally dry summer of 1928, an aerial photograph of the area revealed quite clearly the street plan of a Roman town as the parched lines in a barley crop and confirmed that this was indeed Venta Icenorum.

Between 1929 and 1935 excavations were carried out of a number of buildings, including two temples, a forum and a bathhouse, under the leadership of Professor Donald Atkinson of the University of Manchester at the invitation of the Norfolk Archaeological Trust and the Caistor Excavation Committee. Unfortunately, he never completed a full report of this work.



Professor Bowden said that the present research project was begun in 2006. First, a geophysical survey was made of the whole site, which, as well as the streets and buildings of the town, revealed some large, circular features, initially thought to be buried ditches or gullies of pre-Roman origin. These have later been shown to be of Roman date. It may be that the town stands on the site of a prehistoric settlement, but so far no evidence of this has been found. The layout of the Roman town has been dated to around AD 70, a few years after the Boudican revolt. The Romans ruled the area then peacefully for two to three hundred years. The development of the town appears to have been gradual. It was at first protected by ditches and only later by walls, built inside the ditches.

As Professor Bowden was giving us this information, we followed him up an embankment and along a stretch of wall to where the South gate of the town would have been. We then walked down to the banks of the River Tas, a very important feature of the site. There was almost certainly a bridge or ford over the river to gain access to the West gate. The river has altered its course somewhat over the years, but flows into the Wensum and Yare, then finally out to sea at Yarmouth. In Roman times it would have been navigable by small boats, providing a link for trade and supplies.

The river was also the centre of much cult activity. A lead curse tablet, “defixio”, dedicated to the god Neptune, had been found, denouncing the thief of various objects, including a headdress, some pewter pots, and a pair of leggings and calling down Neptune’s wrath on him! On the far bank of the river there are Anglo-Saxon burial mounds and gold and silver coins have been found, melted down from Roman coins.

From the river we walked past another exposed stretch of wall and a bastion, once thought to have been a wall where ships moored, and then straight across a large field with grazing sheep. With a little imagination it was not difficult to see beneath our feet the narrow Roman streets, full of people going shopping, buying food, walking on the way to the forum, to the baths or to one of the temples. Professor Bowden said the population of the town was approximately 3,000. It had its own water supply from a nearby spring – the metal bolts which held together the lengths of wooden pipes have been found.

Our walk ended at the trench where the present excavations are taking place. A small section of road had been unearthed, probably part of a road leading out of the town towards the Roman town of Colchester. Pottery and coins, animal bones, seeds and pollen reveal how people lived in the town and how it changed over the years.

What is so special about this site is that no further development has taken place here since the time of the sudden decline of the town in the early fifth century, after years of being an important provincial Roman capital.

Ann Dyball thanked Professor Bowden for his illuminating and fascinating talk. She herself is to be thanked for arranging a very interesting afternoon.

Further information

There is public access to the site. Parking is at the site itself or in the adjacent church car park. There is a riverside walk and a walk following the line of the town walls. Although there is little to be seen above ground, this is a fascinating place, with more secrets waiting to be revealed.

Finds from the site are displayed in the Archaeology department of the Castle Museum in Norwich.

Seahenge – a talk by Dr Robin Hanley



Dr Robin Hanley, Western Area Manager with Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service, gave a brilliant lecture to a very well attended meeting after the AGM on 4 October 2012. The Bronze age timber circle at Holme-next-the-sea was a notably important discovery and, with journalistic enthusiasm, soon dubbed Seahenge, though technically a henge is more properly defined as large circular earth bank, ditched on the inner side, with the central area often left clear for ceremonial activities. The emerging timbers were first noticed by John Lorimer in the Spring of 1998. He found a Bronze age axe head at the site and intrigued by this he made repeated visits to the spot between the high and low tide mark in the Holme Dunes Nature Reserve. As the sea scoured away more of the peat that had preserved the timbers to a remarkable degree the complete circle – or rather an ellipse 18×15 feet – became evident during the summer and he alerted the archaeologists at the Landscape Archaeological Unit at the Gressenhall Rural Life Museum. By November English Heritage provided £9,000 for the initial research, dating and trial excavation.

As many will remember the publicity for the planned excavation in the Spring of 1999 aroused great controversy over whether the monument should be moved or allowed to disintegrate on site. The plans to move the timbers, championed by Dr Francis Pryor, who had much experience of preserving the timbers at the late Bronze age village at Fleg Fen near Peterborough, were vehemently opposed by some local residents, Druids

and spiritualists. English Heritage did, however, agree to fund the removal, undertaken with considerable interference, during the summer, the great stump in the middle removed in mid-July. Some expectation of finding a burial or grave goods beneath the inverted trunk was not to be, but the timbers were all transported to store at Flag Fen and an undertaking given to try and return the monument to a local museum after study and preservation. In the interim the 'Time Team' from Channel 4 did a Christmas special programme in December 1999 erecting a reconstruction of the timber circle in a roadside apple orchard at Thornham.

At Flag Fen the timbers were placed in freshwater tanks, the residual silts washed off, most of the damaging salts gradually flushed out and the damage from wood-boring molluscs and worms assessed. By comparing the pattern of growth rings, radiocarbon dating and some sophisticated statistics it was possible to pinpoint the time the trees were felled to the Spring of 2049 BC in the early Bronze Age. The timbers were laser scanned to record every surface detail. Surprisingly there were distinctive marks of 50 different bronze axe heads having been used to fell the timbers, indicating a significant communal endeavour – at a period when bronze tools had been introduced from the continent only a few generations previously. From pollen deposits, other natural remains and artefacts it has been possible to get a good impression of the original site, a salt marsh between the dunes and mixed oak woodland, these already stressed by inundation. The circle comprised 55 timbers cut from 15 to 20 oak trees, split lengthwise, with the bark left on the outer side. They were dragged to a trench marking the circle, and erected to give a height of about 10 ft, a number being placed upside down, perhaps to counter an incline of the palisade or perhaps to symbolise the states of life and death. The entranceway had a forked timber, another timber was used to bar access and there was evidence that the entrance had been closed soon after the monument was built. The overall effect was to give the appearance of a massive bark-covered oak tree, while the inside would have glowed brightly from the freshly cut wood. However the timber directly opposite the entrance was reversed, the dark bark forming the alignment for a simple astronomical calendar, marking the midwinter sunset in the SW and the midsummer sunrise in the NE.



Reconstruction of the timber circle at the Lynn Museum.

The central stump, upended with the honeysuckle rope used to move it left in place, weighed well over a ton and measured 8 feet in both length and breadth. It seems most likely that it was used for the funeral of an important person, placed on top for the bones to be cleaned by birds before burial elsewhere. No human remains were found on the site itself.

In 2003 the timbers were transferred to the Mary Rose Trust in Portsmouth. They were flushed with clean water to remove the remaining salts and then immersed in the special wax, polyethylene glycol (PEG), that gradually reinforced the cell structure of the wood. The timbers were then freeze-dried to remove any remaining water. The preservation was all funded by English Heritage. Then an appeal to the Heritage Lottery Fund, masterminded by Robin Hanley, raised over £1M to put up in 2005–2008 the most impressive and well designed permanent display in the Lynn Museum – during the winter months free of charge.

Roger Polhill

Further reading:–

Champion, M. (2000). *Seahenge – A Contemporary Chronicle*. 115pp. Barnwell Timescape, Aylsham.

Pryor, F. (2001). *Seahenge – a quest for the life and death in Bronze Age Britain*. 337 pp. Harper Collins, London.

Wilson, C. (2005). *Seahenge: An Archaeological Conundrum*. 92 pp. English Heritage, London.

Credit for photograph at beginning of article will be credited in the next issue.

Using local census material, a talk by Victoria Draper

On the 25th October Victoria Draper, the Education and Outreach Officer from the Norfolk Record Office, gave us a very enjoyable and comprehensive talk about the 10-yearly census. Begun in 1801 as a result of the government's need to know about the state of the population, the census has been taken every decade except for 1941. (The word comes from the Latin 'censere' to assess). Over time the questions asked grew and more detail was added.

Before 1841, only bare statistics were collected by each parish to send up to parliament. Sometimes the lists the clergy and parish officers compiled (from which the numbers were extracted) have survived and Victoria showed examples of 1821 lists of names and occupations from Bradfield and Winfarthing. The 1840 Census act set up Enumeration Districts, each having about 200 houses which the census-taker or enumerator had to visit.

The householder was supposed to fill in the form themselves but often the official had to help write the answers down – hence the interesting variations in spelling. Unfamiliar personal or place names said in say a Scottish or Yorkshire dialect might be a challenge to the Norfolk ear. The columns at this stage were still mostly about how many workers were in agriculture so the family relationships, marital status and exact birth place are not noted. A 'y' for yes and 'n' for no is all that's given for whether the person was born in the same county they were living in.

From 1851 the information settles down into a pattern giving more exact ages, how the individuals are related and the county and parish of birth. Also given are the numbers of houses and whether empty or lived in.

The official had to copy out all the forms into a fair copy book so what we see today is his handwriting. Some wrote neatly but others are terrible and with the use of ditto one might only get one bite at a surname! Victoria agreed earlier set hands are much easier to decipher. On top of that, the books were heavily annotated once they reached the government offices: the statisticians needed precise words to fit into their classification. Maid or lady's maid would become F. S. (female servant) and each entry was crossed through with a thick blue crayon line when counted, often obliterating the words! Sadly the original forms were destroyed so the books are all that survive. But 1911, the most recent

census to be released, does use the forms so we can see our ancestors' writing for the first time. However we have lost the easy way of seeing the route taken by the collector and the neighbouring houses.

Victoria then explained how we can use the census for family and local history and some of the pitfalls. The ages and birthplace can help in finding which parish register to look in for a baptism; in 1841 though, the ages of those over 15 were rounded down to the nearest 5 years (so if 28 it was shown as 25), so caution is needed. Even the later census might not be accurate, women's ages are notorious for being a little understated! Birthplaces too might be wrong – the informant might remember growing up say in Fakenham but forgetting (or not knowing) they were born and baptised in Sculthorpe. Sometimes the householder couldn't be bothered to ask the servants for their background and just put 'unknown' or a generic 'London'!

Social history can be gleaned from the occupations – in 1911 there were 1,106 women making straw hats in Hertfordshire (a major centre) but just 1 in Norfolk. Care must be taken over local terms – a 'drummer' might be a musician or a blacksmith's hammerman! The age children were at work by; the numbers of single daughters living at home; sons following their father's trade; the class of the family indicated by numbers of servants – all may be found. Households were clearly divided by a double backslash between entries and if there was more than one family in one house, this was shown by a single backslash. The status of whole neighbourhoods may be deduced by how many people are in each building. (Those running inns or lodging houses were responsible for collating all their customers' data on the night of the census – one poor man told the collector it was no use, his lodgers refused to tell him anything! No doubt there were some who didn't want to be found.)

Apart from difficult writing, incorrect or missing information there are other pitfalls. Illegitimate children were sometimes given as the children of their grandparents; parties may be give as married but in fact were just living together and some 'casuals' may be noted as 'unknown names' found sleeping in barns! Another tip was not to confuse the 'schedule' numbers written down the left-hand side with possible house numbers, which were quite rare in rural areas. (Some of us don't have them even now!)

Accessing the census is now very easy. Victoria reminded us that the county libraries have a subscription to Ancestry so you can go to your

local branch. Expert help is available in the Heritage Centre upstairs in the Forum and in the Record Office (at the Archives Centre next to County Hall). Both of these have the microfilms of the images as well as Ancestry online.

The benefit of microfilm is that you can easily see all the images, the neighbouring pages and original words whereas online you are reliant on the indexing. Human error has often crept in and means you cannot always find your ancestor under the correct name. If you know there is a mistake, Victoria encouraged us to use the button to let Ancestry know. However it is a wonderful tool and she went back 4 generations of one family just using four of the census years.

A useful extra was a list of abbreviations used: FS and MS for the servants, Cl for clerk, Ind for independent (someone living on their own means), J journeyman, M manufacturer, P pensioner in HM armed forces and Sh for shopman.

To finish off Victoria entertained us with some interesting tales: the children's ward of the Norwich hospital in 1861 included a shepherd boy and a matchmaker. In another entry instead of the Head of household being the man, Jane was the Head, occupation Mangle woman. The next entry was John her husband whose job was given as 'Turns my mangle'!

Women were also notable in 1911 as the suffragettes boycotted the census: some wrote on the forms 'No Votes for Women No information from Women'. Many tried to avoid it by being absent on the night of the census. Emily Davison failed rather dramatically – although not at home, her householder entered her anyway and to top that, a clerk at the House of Commons entered her on a form there. He noted her as 'Found hiding in the crypt of Westminster Hall'. Just to underline the problems with the census, Victoria pointed out that he spelt Davison as Davidson, gave the wrong age, said she was a teacher (she had stopped teaching by then) and was out in her birth place!

At the beginning of her talk Victoria spoke about the Record Office referring to the wonderful series of Aylsham court rolls that survive there which have enabled William and I to find out so much about the Old Hall and other houses. For more about the exciting new conservation project, see p. 220.

Maggie Vaughan-Lewis

The Romans in East Anglia – a talk by Ian Groves

In 55 BC Julius Caesar decided to conquer Britain. He had to avoid Rome where he faced prosecution for past misdeeds. He failed dismally and lost men and twelve ships. His second attempt the next year, with 600 transport ships with flat bottoms and also landing craft, in all 800 vessels and 22,800 men plus 200 cavalry, was more successful and he fought his way to Wheathampstead. Some tribes surrendered but he also demanded tribute and he took many hostages.

In 41 AD an unwilling Claudius became emperor. In 43 AD the Romans again invaded Britain with 40,000 troops. Claudius wished to expand his empire and unless he did something he would lose all trade with Britain and he wanted its corn, hides, metals and slaves. The Roman troops landed on the South coast and fought their way to the Thames where, to the surprise of the British, they swam across in armour. Claudius led the final push to Colchester and brought with him terrifying war elephants. Eleven British Kings surrendered.

By AD 47 the Romans had conquered Britain from the Trent to the Severn rivers and built a 190 mile road, the Fosse Way. The Iceni in Eastern Britain – there may have been three tribes – were a "client Kingdom" of Rome and would be left in peace without interference. Scapula ordered all weapons to be given up, but the Iceni refused and rebelled and in the battle of Stonea Camp, Cambridge, they were quashed and punished.

Colchester was made the Roman capital with a basilica, forum and bathhouse and a huge costly temple to Claudius. The Roman legionnaires with 25 years service were made Roman citizens with voting rights and were also given land around Colchester. Claudius was awarded the title "Britannicus". The British resentment must have been enormous.

The King of the Iceni, Prasutagus, died in 61 AD and left half his land to his wife Boudica and half to Nero. Nero demanded all of it. Also the naïve Iceni thought that the money-loans were a gift and were horrified when the moneylenders wanted interest. In punishment Queen Boudica was flogged and her two daughters raped, but she had no difficulty raising a huge rabble army of discontents. At this time 175 gold torcs were buried at Snettisham and in 75 AD a jewellery hoard of gold bars, rings and precious stones were also found there.

Boudica burnt unprotected Colchester and the hated temple, went on to London and then St Albans, burning, looting and killing. The Roman troops had been exterminating the Druids in Anglesey. They were marched quickly to stop her, which they did at, it is thought, Mancetter, Warwickshire, with huge loss of British life and ensuing retribution for the Iceni.

Drainage of the Fens had begun and a vast Imperial estate was set up with villas running North-South on the Fen edge. The foundations of a huge administrative building have been found at Stonea Camp. At Gayton Thorpe a large farmstead with a toilet set of ear cleaners and tweezers was found and at Feltwell a hypercaust and a bathhouse. There was a fort at Thornham in 61 AD and one at Saham Toney for 800 legionnaires. A fort at Cawston from crop marks was triple ditched. Caistor – Venta Icenorum – was started in 100–120 AD and produced pottery, wool, leather and glass. It was walled by 300 AD and by the end of the century had a population of about 3,000 people.

The third Century brought chaos to the Roman Empire with severe inflation and 48 emperors in one century. Long distance trade was affected and with no imports the local trade benefited and British towns and villas prospered. The defences were refurbished and the Saxon Shore forts were built around the coast at regular intervals, but if they were ever at Cromer and Mundesley they have gone into the sea.

Brancaster fort of 270 AD was built on a 9½ acre site, had a tower at each corner and a settlement outside the walls for troop entertainment to relieve them of their money. Caister-on-sea was an island port opposite Burgh Castle that had a harbour for the Navy and still has huge walls with, later, free standing solid towers. Britain was peaceful and prosperous which cannot be said of the distressed Roman Empire.

Christians were persecuted especially from 303 to 311 AD, but under Constantine, in 324 AD, it was eventually declared the State religion. A lead baptism font was found at Icklingham, Suffolk (Ick names belong to the Iceni district) and at Water Newton, Cambridge, church plate of 27 silver items. A hoard was discovered at Hoxne, Suffolk, of silver and gold coins and 200 items of tableware and also jewellery valued by the British Museum at £1.75 million. To date there have been 11,440 Roman remains found in Norfolk and there are many more yet to be discovered.

Jill Sheringham

Minutes Of Annual General Meeting held on October 4th 2012

Apologies Sheila Wintle, Susan McManus , Jane Benstead , Roger Crouch, Ruth hall, John Cragg

Minutes of last meeting on October 6th 2011 were accepted

Matters arising. The previous treasurer Peter Pink has recently died. During the year Ian McManus has been undertaking the duties of the Treasurer of the Society.

Amendment to the Constitution section 7 – proposed by Roger Polhill, seconded by Jim Pannell as follows

A committee of four officers (Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer) and six committee members shall be elected annually, by simple majority of members present at the AGM.

The committee may co-opt officers or committee members in the event of resignation/s during the year. The committee may also co-opt up to two additional members if there is need for special expertise, e.g. research, publication.

This amendment was explained to the members by the Chairman and accepted by a show of hands.

Secretary's report. Jim Pannell reported that we have tried to improve the arrangements for subs and membership cards so that members can have the card as early as possible. The committee on the new membership card is the current committee. The year 2011–2012 had again been a successful year for the society. The winter lectures were well attended. Barbara Miller spoke on 'James Edward Smith, Botanist Extraordinaire' and another popular talk was 'Round Tower Churches' by Dick Barham. There is an interesting series of speakers for this winter that is detailed on the membership cards. The society's Autumn course 'East Anglia in the Eighteenth century' was delivered by Sarah Spooner and Jon Gregory. This was a sell out and a course of outstanding quality. It was also part of the working relationship that the society is enjoying

with the U.E.A. department of Landscape archaeology. This autumn we have ‘Hidden Histories of Medieval and Tudor EastAnglia’ presented by Rebecca Pinner, also of the U.E.A.

The annual society Dinner was held at The Saracen’s head, Wolterton where we were treated to a pre dinner talk by Lord and Lady Walpole.

The committee is appreciative of the support of Geoff Gale, who has continued to promote Society Publications, Lloyd Mills the Town archivist, and Jayne Andrew, the Learning officer at the Heritage Centre.

Again through the year Ann Dyball has inspired visits, Ian McManus guided finances, Gill Fletcher overseen membership matters, Lynda Wix produced minutes, and Rosemarie Powell ensured that we have refreshments. This all happens under Roger Polhill’s enthusiastic leadership. In addition to chairing the Society, and editing, producing and circulating our excellent journal, he has been the central figure in every aspect of the Navigation research, the writing and the production of ‘Sail and Storm’, and behind every successful man there is a good woman and our sincere thanks go to Roger’s wife Diana for many hours of quiet and good humoured support. Jim concluded by saying he was now looking forward to the next year of society activities, which he hoped Members will support and enjoy.

Treasurers report. Ian McManus presented the annual accounts. He explained that because enough members did not choose to use the coach that was booked but preferred to use their own cars to go the annual dinner this accounted for the loss on that event.

The auditor Graeme Johnston wrote the following footnote to the accounts ‘I have carried out a check into the accounting records and supporting documents of Aylsham Local History Society for the year ended 31st August 2012 which I have found to be correct and in accordance with the attached statement. Accounts for the year ended 31st August 2011 supplied by the previous treasurer have not been similarly checked, however, I have no reason to believe that they do not constitute a correct record.’

Report on newsletter and journal. Roger Polhill reported that the society has issued three parts this year as usual. The December issue included the third part of the history of Aylsham Old Hall, the most significant historical research we have published in recent years. Our

thanks go to Maggie and William Vaughan-Lewis for their erudite research. We have also published a number of articles on the Aylsham Navigation to supplement the work on 'Sail and Storm' published in September. We have continued our series on notable Aylsham families with a tribute to Henry Laxen by Derrick Baker. We had a valediction for Valerie Belton, a commemoration of the Other Diamond Jubilee and a quiz on Aylsham landmarks. We had five reports on lectures and three on excursions. Roger said he was most grateful to all those who had written these up in such a nice way. He welcomed further contributions of all sorts.

Report on Publications. Geoff Gale reported that 'Sail and Storm' is selling well. There is a mini version for 50p. He has also brought out more copies of 'The Norwich to Cromer Turnpike' after the talk during last year.

Report on visits. Ann Dyball reported that a large group had a very enjoyable visit to Round Tower Churches in Suffolk in April in spite of the weather. Dick Barham was an enthusiastic and knowledgeable leader. In August a small group had an interesting tour of the Roman site at Caistor St Edmunds. Not many members attended perhaps because of holiday plans but this was the only slot which fitted in with the excavations and visit to these by Will Baden.

Report on Membership. Gillian Fletcher reported that our membership numbers usually settled around 100. To date there are 118 members.

Election of officers and committee members

Officers. Chairman: Roger Polhill; Vice Chairman: Ann Dyball; Secretary : Jim Pannell; Treasurer: Ian Mcmanus. Proposed by William Vaughan- Lewis, Seconded by Geoff Gale

Committee. Membership Secretary: Gillian Fletcher; Minuting Secretary: Lynda Wix. Geoff Sadler , Rosemary Powell , Sheila Merriman , Victor Morgan. Proposed by Maggie Vaughan- Lewis, Seconded by Jean Mc Chesney.

Roger emphasised that any member was eligible for co-option

There was no other business . The chairman therefore closed the meeting.

LIST OF MEMBERS – NOVEMBER 2012

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

Baker, Mr DW	Haddow, Ms E	Powell, Mr & Mrs I
Barber, Mrs P	Hall, Mrs R	Pritchard, Mr &
Barwick, Mrs G	Harrison, Mrs R	Mrs E
Bayes, Mrs R	Hawke, Mr & Mrs	Roulstone, Mr &
Bird, Mrs M	D A	Mrs P
Bliss, Dr V	Hill, Mr & Mrs M	Rowe, Mrs M
Bowman, Miss H	Holman, Mrs E	Sadler, Mr G
Calvert, Ms R	Humphreys, Mrs C	Shaw, Mr & Mrs A
Case, Dr D E	Johnstone, Mr G	Shepherd, Mrs A
Casimir, Mr & Mrs	Jones, Mr & Mrs M	Sheringham, Mrs J
S	Lowe, Mr B	Simpson, Mr & Mrs
Copeman, Mr J	Macartney, Ms J	A
Cox, Mrs F	Margarson, Mrs S	Stevens, Miss S
Crouch, Mr R	McChesney, Mrs J	Steward, Mrs L
Davy, Mr & Mrs R	McManus, Mr &	Thomas, Mrs C
Douët, Dr A	Mrs I	Ulph, Mr C
Driscoll, Mrs C	Menzies, Mr & Mrs	Vaughan-Lewis, Mr
Duncan, Mrs B	M	& Mrs W
Dyball, Miss A J	Merriman, Mrs S	Walpole, Lord &
Elsey, Mr & Mrs B	Mollard, Mr & Mrs	Lady
Fearn, Mrs P	T	Wintle, Mrs S
Fletcher, Mrs G	Morgan, Dr V	Wix, Mr & Mrs M
Gale, Mr G	Nobbs, Mr G	Worsencroft, Mr D
Gee, Mrs B	Pannell, Mr J	Worth, Mr & Mrs J
Greengrass, Mrs B	Peabody, Ms J	
Grellier, Ms D	Polhill, Dr & Mrs R	

