

AYLSHAM LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY



JOURNAL & NEWSLETTER

Volume 9

No. 8

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Front cover: The Grange, Cromer Road, 1973. Courtesy Aylsham Town Council Archives.

Back cover: Awards for *Sail and Storm*. Photos: Derek Lyons.

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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'The Lawns' provided an excellent dinner for the Social Event on Thursday 25 April and Jim Pannell would be pleased to have suggestions for next year. The summer excursion to Sedgeford was slightly marred by a hot afternoon with too much standing around, but, as Sheila Merrimen reports, it was otherwise a very successful day. Please see the notices on p. 300 for the Rig-a-Jig-Jig event on Saturday 5 October, for the planned outing to Saffron Walden on 26 September. It is hoped to visit the Norfolk Record Office later in the year to see the conservation of the Aylsham Court Roll (mentioned in the December issue). Please book too for the Autumn Course: 'A Brief History of Illuminated Manuscripts', tutored by Margaret Forrester, who is well known for her expertise and enthusiasm in this subject area. The WEA also has attractive courses for the Autumn and the New Year.

Lecture programme for the season has been arranged as follows.

Thursday 3 October. AGM followed by '*Multiple long-avenues in Blickling Park – fact or fiction?*' by William Vaughan-Lewis

Thursday 24 October. '*Rival Brewers in Northeast Norfolk in the Eighteenth Century*' by Margaret Bird

Thursday 28 November. '*The Boleyns of Blickling*' by Elizabeth Griffiths

Thursday 23 January 2014. '*The Real Edith Cavell*' by Barbara Miller

Thursday 27 February 2014. '*Textile Conservation and the National Trust*' by Ksynia Marko

Thursday 27 March 2014. Ancient Trees and the Norfolk Landscape by Tom Williamson

Ernuin or Unwin Family fleetingly of Aylsham

William Vaughan-Lewis*



The Grange, Cromer Road, Aylsham. Courtesy Aylsham Town Council Archives.

This piece was triggered by family members wrestling with the Ernuin family, for a short time in the 1850s and 1860s resident in Aylsham; an affluent family. Looking at the Aylsham census return for 1861 there is no doubt that Harold Augustus Ernuin and his family were living in the large house called The Grange in Cromer Road – the sequence of houses working down from the Vicarage is clear. He and his wife and children can be found readily in FreeBMD – the marriage, children’s births, their deaths are there – almost all as Ernuin (see below). Yet that surname seems recently to have evolved. So, first his family background and then that of his wife Julia Walkinshaw Wyatt.

Ernuin or Unwin

Harold is given in the 1861 census as aged 25 and born in Bexhill Sussex; so, about 1835–36. J Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses*, Part 2 Vol

* All this found via the internet and only referenced in brief.

2, CUP (1944) shows that Augustus Harold ERNWIN was admitted to Trinity College in December 1853 aged 20 [so perhaps his birth was a little earlier]. He had been to school at Eton College and Venn noted the school register said ‘afterwards in India’. This would account for a late admission to College (about 17 was typical). Perhaps he had a brief spell in the army or the East India Company or just travelled. Venn gives him as the son of Rowland of Bexhill Sussex.

This implies his father’s name was also Ernwin or Ernuin but this is not the case. Rowland was Rowland Unwin of Bexhill who died 9th April 1837 – *The Gentleman’s Magazine* that year p. 551: ‘At Worsham [in Bexhill] aged 37 Rowland Unwin esquire’. Rowland Unwin went to both Oxford and Cambridge (J Foster *Alumni Oxonienses* and Venn); initially Exeter where he was admitted aged 17 in May 1817 as son of Samuel Unwin of Sutton-in-Ashfield, Nottinghamshire and then Magdalene, Cambridge, where his entry shows him born about 1800 to Samuel Unwin and his wife Elizabeth Heathcote. Rowland had attended school in Macclesfield. Rowland left a PCC will, not proved until 23rd March 1840 (The National Archive ‘TNA’, at Kew, PROB11/1925/72 – can be bought online via their website or seen for free in Kew). This gap between death and proving the will suggests a problem identifying executors or heirs and online pages from the *London Gazette* can be found for about 1839–1844 which show requests for Rowland’s representatives to come forward. At this time our Harold was a small boy; where was he taken and by whom? His birth/baptism and his residence in 1841 have not been found. Was he abroad?

When Harold died leaving his two orphaned daughters the issue of the inheritance rumbled on. A chancery suit shows in TNA records in 1858 and 1867 (C 15/481/E35 and C 16/410/E93 – enter into TNA Discovery catalogue to see details ... these could be viewed at Kew but might need to be ordered in advance of a visit as later chancery records are held offsite) where the young girls are represented – e.g. by Charles Thomas

Beresford Hope for Constance in 1867 – who is he? This chancery suit is Ernuin versus Heygate – see the material from Sutton below and on Reverend Thomas Edmund Heygate for the connection. This is clearly families behaving badly over a will. ESSENTIAL to read Rowland's will to understand what all this was about. Of course the Heygate name is already known as the orphaned girls in 1871 were, as his nieces (directly his or was his wife the family link?), living with the vicar of Sheen in Staffordshire: Thomas Edmund Heygate (MA at Cambridge and so findable in Venn, aged 45, born Hampstead) and his wife Catherine (aged 42, born Brixton).

T.E. Heygate's Venn entry shows he was born in 1826, admitted to Queen's Cambridge in 1844, noted as the son of James Heygate gent. This James was the second son of a James Heygate, a banker. The banker was the younger brother of Sir William Heygate, the 1st Baronet. He, and thus their background, should feature in later Burke's Peerages and the Venn entry references a Times article covering the vicar's death in 1900. (We can access *The Times* online archive via library membership.) Understanding Reverend Thomas Heygate's role in the orphans' upbringing seems worth the effort.

The Unwins were a big fixture in Sutton as factory owners, large house occupants and benefactors; clearly very wealthy, there is masses to find about them on the internet. Here is a good overview which helps on the family, taken directly from www.nottshistory.org.uk on Sutton in Ashfield:

The Unwin Family.

The increase of population in Sutton at the close of the last and commencement of the present century was brought about in a great degree by the connection of the parish with the Unwin family, who still own much property here. Over a hundred and fifty years ago Samuel Unwin settled at Sutton, and had two

sons – Samuel and William – being previously connected with the place by family ties. It is said that he came from Hackney. Both were fortunate in marrying heiresses, the elder having secured the affections and wealth of Miss Heathcote, and the younger those of Miss Craddock, of Walsall, in 1767. Samuel, the elder, built Sutton Hall, and planted the grounds on "The Lawn;" whilst William, the younger, resided at Mansfield, in Stockwell Gate. His daughter married Mr. Francis Brodhurst, who built Gilcroft House. They built the factory at Eastfield Side, adjoining the Mill Dam, at a cost, it is said, of £6,000, for the manufacture of nankeens and ginghams, which were famous for the excellence of their quality all the country round. They also built large mills at Tansley, near Matlock. They procured from London and elsewhere a great number of young people as apprentices. William died young, and was the first to be buried in the large vault adjoining the Chancel, which was bricked up in 1869, in the presence of the Vicar (Rev. C. Bellairs), the Churchwardens (Mr. John Knowles Daubeny, Mr. George White, and Mr. Thos. Robinson, of Hucknall), and of Mr. W. Oates, who for many years had been the respected agent of the Unwin family, and who died September 9th, 1879, at the age of 76 years. The latter was succeeded by his son, Mr. W. M. Oates, who died September 30th, 1902, and the position is now held by Mr. F. P. Cook, surveyor, of Mansfield Woodhouse. The other bodies deposited in the vault are those of William Unwin's widow, who died in 1816 from the effects, it is said, of fear, produced by the earthquake which at that period visited the neighbourhood – of Samuel Unwin, who died at Sutton Hall, suddenly and intestate, in 1800 – of his widow, who afterwards married Dr. Hulme, of Ball Hayes, Staffordshire; three daughters and a grandson of William Unwin, and lastly, of Mr.

Edward Unwin, an active magistrate for the county, son of Samuel Unwin, who died at the Sutton Works, unmarried, A.D.1841. The grandson of Samuel Unwin assumed the name of his grandmother Heathcote. and built a handsome residence on his Hertfordshire estate, called Shephalbury. The Unwins are closely connected with the Wigrams and Heygates. They ceased to reside at Sutton in 1825, and the old Hall, which, for many years, was occupied by a Mr. and Mrs. Woolley, afterwards stood in ruins until at length not a remnant of the building remained. Old associations, however, were revived when, in 1884, the Unwins built the present residence for their then agent (Mr. W. M. Oates) on the site of the old Hall. It is now occupied by Mr. J. D. Fidler, Solicitor, and Clerk to the Sutton Urban District Council, who has been resident there since January 21st 1903, shortly after the death of Mr. Oates.

Samuel Unwin (Cambridge admission 1807 I think), the father of Rowland, was brother to William Unwin (1809 entry to Caius Cambridge). In Venn is a complicated entry that seems to show a Heathcote Unwin having a son who changed his surname to Heathcote. This would need further research to unpick. Since this name changer was a Lincoln's Inn lawyer it may well be relevant to the 1858–1867 chancery actions. So, no surprise that Harold Augustus had pots of money – from his father. (I have not been able to identify who Rowland married but ancestry does show a Rowland son of Rowland Unwin and Sarah in London in 1830 which may give a clue to her name.) I cannot find anything much on Rowland of Bexhill – he might have travelled, lived in India (military work or East India Company) or simply done nothing at all – more research required since he sounds interesting and may have taken his son to India after Eton.

Wyatt and Walkinshaw Families

Harold's wife was Julia Walkenshaw Wyatt (sometimes Walkinshaw) – their marriage in 1857 is on FreeBMD and *The Coventry Herald & Observer* (available online) for 17th July 1857 noted their marriage in Christ Church, St Pancras: he of Aylsham and she the daughter of Thomas Wyatt esquire of Ullenhall, Warwickshire. It seems likely that the 1828 PCC will in the TNA for Thomas Wyatt gent of Coventry is him (PROB 11/1749/363) and this again is essential reading for what it will tell of the family. Thomas Wyatt's wife not yet identified with absolute certainty but Julia can be found in the 1851 census aged 17 in her widowed mother's household in Chester Terrace, London. Elizabeth had two other daughters at home at the time and was herself an annuitant aged 58. She was born in St Andrew Holborn. She may have lied about her age (not at all unusual and nearly always one way!); the best bet for her is the baptism there 12th March 1785 to Andrew Walkinshaw and wife Catherine. Another baptism in 1808 in that parish to a James Walkinshaw and wife Maria shows that the name was established there. Further research into wills and more digging on the internet might confirm this (reasonable) assumption that Elizabeth was a Walkinshaw girl.

The Aylsham and Calthorpe Era

Why did Harold come to Aylsham? Why did his surname evolve? His father's will should address the possibility that he was an illegitimate son – if he was, this might explain the difficulty finding his birth, the change of name and the family-driven chancery suits. Perhaps a relation came to the Aylsham area. So far no obvious candidate appears and no linkages to either Harold or Julia's families have been spotted. Might there have been a link to the previous occupants/owners of The Grange? It would be worth getting the civil death certificates of Harold and Julia to see who notified/was present at their deaths as this might give a clue. It would

also show whether they had moved from Aylsham to Calthorpe. It is possible that a short lease (perhaps 7 or 10 years) on The Grange had run out and the next best house Harold could find was in Calthorpe; hard to know what that might have been though. Another possibility is that a relation was a cleric working locally. Calthorpe's living was held in this era by a long-living rector in Erpingham. He might well have put in a curate to help out. Unfortunately the directories only give the rector/vicar not any curate there. Getting from the Norfolk Record Office (NRO) photocopies of the church burial register entries for Harold and Julia should show who was the presiding cleric – perhaps a name will pop into view. (NRO will respond to email requests for small and specific look-ups.) There is a clerical candidate to research. CCED's website shows a 'Joseph Rolling Unwin' (I guess Rolling is somebody's transcription error for Rowland) as curate of Sutton in Ashfield in 1824; given the family influence there, surely a relation of Rowland Unwin etc? Can he be found in his later career in *Crockford*?

Next steps

Getting all the family civil registration certificates, from the General Register Office via their website, may well shed light on the family story. Here is a copy of the FreeBMD page for Ernuin showing the information needed to order certificates online via the GRO site:

Surname	First name(s)	Age	District	Vol	Page
	Births Jun 1859				
ERNUIN	Constance		Aylsham	4b	86
	Births Mar 1860				
ERNUIN Female			Marylebone	1a	421
	Deaths Mar 1860				
Ernuin Female			Marylebone	1a	332
	Deaths Sep 1865 (>99%)				
Ernuin	Julia Walkenshaw		Aylsham	4b	55
	Deaths Dec 1866 (>99%)				

Ernuin	Harold A	31	Aylsham	4b	60
	Marriages Jun 1879 (>99%)				
ERNUIN	Julia Margaret		Marylebone	1a	891
	Marriages Jun 1881 (>99%)				
Ernuin	Constance		Marylebone	1a	897

And here is their marriage, where his name is given as Ernwin, in the index at least:

	Marriages Sep 1857 (>99%)				
Wyatt	Julia Walkinshaw		Pancras	1b	196
	Marriages Sep 1857 (>99%)				
Ernwin	Harold Augustus		Pancras	1b	196

And here is Thomas Heygate's marriage to Catherine Lambert:

	Marriages Jun 1857 (>99%)				
Heygate	Thomas Edmund		Epsom	2a	3

It would be interesting to get Rowland's burial information from Bexhill registers – via the local record office since his death is before civil registration. Perhaps local research there might discover where he lived and how long he was there, who his wife/widow (?) was, etc. Presumably there was once a decent house in Worsham Lane, Bexhill. East Sussex Record Office has a map of Great Worsham Farm in 1791 and may be able to help with more information as it later was part of a big estate.

Why did the surname evolve? Was Harold definitely a legitimate son? Who was his mother? Was he trying to avoid social linkage to the Unwin family in Nottinghamshire, with their trade background? Was he trying to hide from those relations? Or is there a more mundane answer to be found?

Both sides of the family seem very interesting and well worth doing more research on to flesh out these basic facts.

MEMORIES OF WILLIAM ALFRED PASK ABOUT AYLSHAM OUTFITTERS

Lynda Wix



Pask & Sons, High Class Tailor, in Red Lion Street, shop next to archway beyond the Cross Keys. Courtesy Aylsham Local History Society.

Looking at the 1920's and 1930's, you could buy all the clothes you required in Aylsham.

Henry Page, in the market place on the site of the present bakery, card shop and pharmacy, had departments which included shoes and ladies' gentlemens' and childrens' outfitters. Mrs Stackwood and Miss Ewing, tailoresses, would make any alterations such as taking up a hem. These were off the peg clothes for everyday use for everyday people.

The length and scale of the Napoleonic wars which ended in 1815 had led to systems of mass cutting of cloth and making up of uniforms. During the nineteenth century and assisted by the invention of sewing machines in the 1840s, these systems filtered through to permit the mass production of off-the-peg clothes for retail.



Ladies'
Riding Habits
and Costumes.
Gents'
Clothes of every
Description.
Liveries,
Gamekeepers'
Suits, etc.

All made on
the Premises
by experienced
workmen : :
under personal
supervision.

PASK & SONS,
High-Class Tailors.

ESTABLISHED 1875.

PASK & SONS,
Aylsham, Reepham, and Foulsham,
LADIES' & GENTLEMEN'S
Tailors and Breeches Makers.

.....
*The following are a few copies of Testimonials
being constantly received.*

Melton Constable Hall,
November 27th, 1904.

The little Grey Coat fits beautifully, and is *very* well made. I must tell you I am very pleased with it. It hangs so nicely and looks so comfortable.

Yours faithfully,
ELIZABETH HASTINGS.

Plumbton House, Bury St. Edmund's,
July 4th, 1904.

Dress Coat and Vest to hand. Glad to tell you quite satisfactory. Very pleased with it. Have enclosed cash for same. Kindly return receipt.

Faithfully yours, W. BENSLEY.

From The Rt. Hon. LORD HASTINGS, Melton Constable Hall.
"The Hunt Uniforms have given complete satisfaction."

From The BARON DE CHESSERON, Reddisham Hall, Suffolk.
"The Box Cloth Coat is quite satisfactory."

From S. BIRCHAM, Esq., 46, Parliament St., Westminster.
"New Suit arrived safe, fit all right."

From The MASTER OF MELTON CONSTABLE HARRIERS.
"Breeches fit remarkably well."

From G. SHAND, Esq., Belgrave House, Clapham, S.W.
"I received the Norfolk Jacket; you will be glad to hear it is a good fit."

From Mr. G. REYNOLDS, Knockdow, Ireland.
"Clothes received this morning; fit well."

From The MASTER, BETHNAL GREEN WORKHOUSE, London.
"Norfolk Suit fits me well; send me patterns of Nansen Cheviots for another suit."

Ward and George was a ladies' outfitters where Keys estate agents is now. They also sold hats.

Mr Lark had a gentleman's outfitter shop in Red Lion Street, next to the former Red Lion Pub.

Jimmy Bond first had a clothing shop on the site now occupied by Santander. Later the business moved to Red Lion Street and was taken over by Eric Green in the 1940's after the war. Jimmy Bond had a system to move on small items such as gloves and socks that were not selling. On some Saturday nights he put wrapped parcels of these items in a box in the window and charged one shilling for each parcel. Customers did not know what was in the parcel before they bought it – or what size!

In contrast to these establishments was Mr Pask, the tailor in Red Lion Street. A glance at their catalogue shows how esteemed their services were by the local gentry. Bespoke clothes of good quality, locally made, were a feature of small market towns such as Aylsham and Reepham. Not being mass produced such clothes were only affordable by those with substantial incomes.

The business had been started by William Alfred Pask II in 1875 in Reepham. He was born in 1851. His son William Alfred III was born in 1872. It was he who opened a tailoring business in Red Lion Street in Aylsham on the site of the former "Star", which closed in 1900. As a young man he had worked in Lancashire as an agent for Singer Sewing machines.

William Alfred IV ran the village shop in Oulton Street. His son William Alfred V was born in 1923 over the tailor's shop in Red Lion Street near the archway down to the present Keeper's Den.

He remembers his grandfather chalking the pattern on the cloth and then cutting out with huge tailor's scissors. There was a stove to heat the irons and a steam press. His grandmother sat in a rocking chair making hand made tailor's buttonholes.

The business thrived until such time in the 1930's that the support of William Alfred Pask III for the Labour Party caused the withdrawal of custom from the gentry probably of differing political views. Mr Pask limped on as a tailor until the early 1940's with alterations and clothing for professional men and farmers.

So in Aylsham you could buy a hunting suit, an off-the-peg dress or a pair of gloves too small for you. What a wonderful choice.

Busy Bodies

Festival Week Heritage ‘Walk and Talk’ Monday 27 May 2013



Aylsham Market Place in 1814, depicted by Humphry and John Adey Repton. Courtesy of Aylsham Town Council Archives.

Good morning and welcome to the Heritage Centre. My name is Sheila Merriman and I'll be leading the 'Busy Bodies' walk this morning. It's called 'Busy Bodies' because I'll be talking mostly about the people of Aylsham. First, I'd like to acknowledge that all the research for today's walk has been done by Jim Pannell, Roger Polhill and William Vaughan-Lewis, not by me. The walk will start and finish in the churchyard and will take about an hour.

Now, I'm going to take us back in time. We're going to look at a fragment of Aylsham's long history. We will be looking mainly at the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Generally around the time of George III. That's the one that's sometimes described as 'mad King George'. Anyway, as to Aylsham – it was a prosperous town which built on its success. This is when the Navigation – a canal – was developed to give Aylsham good transport, by water, to Yarmouth. The other main type of transport was by coach and horse and Aylsham was an important link on the coaching route between Norwich and Cromer. As to the size

of the town – about 1600 people lived here – as compared to the 7000 we now have.

The people who lived in Aylsham would mostly be born, live and die in Aylsham. So the family names would continue for many generations. Unless you were very wealthy, of course. In which case it would be obligatory to be in London for the Season, not to mention doing the Grand Tour of Europe. All the necessary shops and trades would be local to Aylsham. The trades would often be passed from one generation to the next.

Let's go outside and see some reminders of the past. Our first stopping point is halfway up the path across the churchyard, heading towards the Market Place. If you're happy on the path, I'll move round on the grass to show you a couple of gravestones that may give you a flavour of Aylsham's history. This headstone marks the grave of William Gill. He was a carpenter and very active in the late 1700's. You remember I mentioned the Navigation that was built to link Aylsham to Yarmouth? Well, William was paid to erect and repair bridges and locks on the waterway. You'll see that when he died in 1818 he was 90 years old. Which goes to show what a good place Aylsham was to live in! They didn't all die young.

Here's a group of graves belonging to one family. The Parmeter family. This was a very influential family. These are the graves of Robert and Sarah's children. Robert Parmeter was the miller in the 1770's. He bought land around the Staithe. I'm sure you all know that a staithe is a mooring or landing point for boats. Maybe William Gill over there was responsible for building the staithe? Anyway, Robert Parmeter owned the mill and the Anchor Inn (which is now Bridge House) in Mill Lane. He built Bure House and the Maltings. He also owned the mills at Ingworth and Burgh. One of his grandsons, Robert William Parmeter, was a well-known lawyer who lived in the fine house 'Parmeters' just down Cromer Road. Parmeter Close in Aylsham is, of course, named after the family – it's not where they lived. If you go into the church – which I strongly recommend because not only is it a wonderful building, there's an intriguing Flower Festival on at the moment – you'll see a memorial tablet near the font to Thomas Spurrell who died in 1770. Thomas was the miller who ran the watermill for many years before the Parmeters.

Speaking of Parmeter being a miller, makes me think of another staple – beer. This grave belongs to the Ulphs who lived on Red Lion Street.

This family of publicans ran the Cross Keys on Red Lion Street for about 100 years. Not that it's a pub any more – it's now Granville Bonds. Just as an aside, in the Aylsham Local History Society Journal, it's recorded that an Ulph family get-together was planned for 1987 in Burnham Market. At that time there were only 335 known Ulphs around the world of whom 27 were listed in the current Norwich telephone directory.

Another family from Red Lion Street, the Laxens, lie nearby. Horace Laxen was a baker and confectioner. His son, Richard, emigrated to Canada and in 1921 suggested the name of 'Aylsham' for a settlement in Canada – sometimes known as 'the garden of Saskatchewan'.

Now, if we look into the corner, there's the memorial for Thomas Cook and John Bayfield Peterson. Thomas Cook lived at Bushey Place on the Cromer Road and John Peterson owned Abbots Hall. The families intermarried and belonged to the New Jerusalem Church. (That's the church that was taken to America by John Chapman, also known as Johnny Appleseed.) Anyway, to return to Thomas Cook – he may well have been related to Benjamin Cook who bought the steam mill on Dunkirk from Frederick Copeman. He installed milling machinery that was considered very progressive in its day.

And this grave is that of Jonathan Fountain Wrench. He was the doctor at the end of the eighteenth century who was responsible for the care of the poor. His father was a vicar who got into trouble with Colonel Harbord of Blickling Hall for shooting his partridges. And Jonathan's grandfather, also Jonathan, built the Vicarage just over the wall, there, in 1700.

Now, let's leave the graves for a little while and take a look at some of the buildings.

Holman House was the home of Thomas Cook (his was the memorial in the corner) before he moved to Bushey Place. It's a Regency house of two periods. As you know, the Regency period was when George III was considered too mad to rule so his son, who became George IV, was the Prince Regent. However, parts of the house are much older than the house you see today. Under the house there's a medieval undercroft, perhaps 14th century. It's a brick barrel vault of exceptional size and runs north-south, unlike the house. The north-south direction parallels the trackway that led from Hungate, through the Market Place, past the church and on to Cromer. It may have been a warehouse for textiles. There's a piece of modern history here, too. Perhaps you can see the

fading remains of graffiti from before World War II? It reads ‘Stand by the King’ and was written by the blackshirt fascist supporters of Mosley and was written in 1936.

Number 16, The Market Place Restaurant, is a 17th century house that has been remodelled, most recently in the 19th century. If you look at the bay window, it seems that it’s an addition or ‘conceit’ as it doesn’t fit the recess it stands in. It can be compared to adding a conservatory to a modern house – though we probably wouldn’t get permission to add one at the front of a house these days!

Look up at the roofs along this side of the Market Place. They’re all very steep which suggests they have previously been thatched. A steep pitch is needed to drain off the rainwater. Note the attic windows. These will probably have been added when the thatch was replaced with tiles. They are a feature that’s been copied in some of the more recent buildings on the Market Place.

Number 15 is Dye’s House. James Dye had a house here in the early 1800’s and the name has stuck. It was a private house until the 1860’s when it became a solicitor’s office, notably for the Commissioner of Income and Land Tax. Then from the beginning of the 1900’s it was the office of Purdy and Holley, two old Aylsham families, then shared as an office with Ewing Self Estate Agents for about 100 years, before it became a private house again. When the house was being restored in 1995 a cache of old flintlock pistol fittings was found under the floorboards in the attic. The era of the flintlock was a period of widespread smuggling and lawlessness when both Excise men and smugglers went armed. It’s not known to whom these pistols belonged! A flimsy metal buckle was also recovered – from the skip. It’s not known if other items had already been thrown away. As well as these artefacts a cellar, believed to be medieval, was uncovered and a mullioned window found when plasterboard was removed. Looking at the outside, the eaves are dentillated – that means they look like teeth. There are pilasters at the end and in the centre. If you look at the wall by the door, there’s a lintel with nothing below it. From old photos of the Market Place, I think there used to be a window. Personally, I think it looks better as it is, though it’s not symmetrical as the door isn’t dead centre to the building.

If you turn round, you can see the Co-op. This was built in the mid 18th century. It’s an interesting building. If you look carefully at the first floor windows you’ll see that they are not what you expect. They don’t open,

do they? And one is a complete fake. The building has been previously used as a Post Office. It's recorded that in 1900 the Post Office was open from 7am until 8pm and 8 – 10 on Sundays, with letters delivered 8 times a day. Is that an example of 'the good old days'? Having mentioned the postal service, you might be interested to know that from 1906 to 1922 Mr Arnold Tuddenham had a contract with the post office to deliver the mails to the post offices at Ingworth, Erpingham, Aldborough and Hanworth. He supplied his own cart and horse and collected the mail at 5am from the Black Boys, where it was delivered from Norwich. For security, he always carried a couple of bull mastiffs on the cart.

As I've mentioned the Black Boys, let's walk over there and take a look.



West side of Market Place, 1860. Courtesy Aylsham Town Council Archives.

The Black Boys has probably always been Aylsham's leading inn. It dates from the 17th century. Nobody knows the derivation of the name 'Black Boys' but it might have been an adaptation of King Charles II's nickname. Or it might be because the house on this site before the inn was built was called 'Boy'. Those of you who've known Aylsham for a while will remember that, until recently, the painted frieze contained a row of 'black boys' but, as you can see, these have now acquired a

politically correct neutral shade. It was a coaching inn with stabling for forty horses. There was a central passage beneath the balcony leading directly from the Market Place to the stables at the rear. There have been some famous visitors here. Parson Woodforde stayed after delivering a sermon in the church – but in his diary he commented unfavourably on the food. On the other hand Sir William and Lady Beauchamp Proctor stayed the night here in 1764 and considered the accommodation and charges very reasonable and took away a good impression of it and the town in general which they described as ‘neat and clean’. Perhaps most famously, Lord Nelson attended a dance here in 1792, presumably when visiting his brother in Aylsham. In the days when travel was limited, there needed to be a local venue where polite society could meet to enjoy music, literature and, of course, each others’ company. I’m sure you’ve all heard about Assemblies. They feature in Jane Austen’s novels. Do you remember Mr D’Arcy meeting Elizabeth Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice*? Aylsham had one of the oldest and longest running Assemblies in the country and it met in the Assembly Room here at the Black Boys. I say it was the ‘polite society’ that met here but they didn’t always stay ‘polite’. A local solicitor John Hogg, who’d moved here from Kings Lynn, refused to dance with a certain lady and made an impertinent remark that caused her partner to punch Hogg on the nose. To avoid further trouble, John Repton took Hogg by the collar and ejected him from the room. Hogg, feeling aggrieved, took the case to court where Repton was acquitted and Hogg was awarded damages of one farthing. In our modern currency you’d need about 10 farthings to make one penny. Even in those days a farthing wasn’t much! And as to Hogg, well, he never attended an Assembly in Aylsham again.

Having mentioned John Repton, let’s walk back to the churchyard and look at his elder brother’s memorial.

This is the memorial to Humphry Repton. He was a famous landscape gardener. However, he failed at quite a few other things before he found success as a gardener. Repton was born in Bury St Edmunds but as a teenager lived in Holland, training as a merchant. Returning to England, he married and set up as a textile merchant. He felt unsuited to the trade and moved to a small estate at Sustead and went on to be unsuccessful as a journalist, dramatist, artist, political agent and as a confidential secretary. He joined John Palmer in a venture to reform the mail-coach

system but, while the scheme ultimately made Palmer's fortune, Repton again lost money. In 1788, his capital dwindling, Repton – age 36 with a wife, 4 children, and no income – moved to a modest cottage in Romford in Essex. He hit on the idea of combining his sketching skills with his limited experience of laying out the grounds at Sustead to become a 'landscape gardener' – a term that he coined. Since the death of Capability Brown in 1783 there hadn't been a dominant figure in garden design. So Repton sent circulars to all his contacts in the upper classes, advertising his services. He was an overnight success. He had a unique way of presenting his plans to his clients. He produced 'Red Books' (so called because of their binding) with explanatory text and watercolours with a system of overlays to show 'before' and 'after' views. If you want to see some of his work locally, why not visit Sheringham Park? The rhododendrons are fantastic at this time of year.

But, back to his memorial. Repton left instructions for where and how he was to be buried. If you have never read the inscription, it's well worth taking a minute or two to do so.

And to take things full circle, one of Repton's sons, William, was a solicitor and was clerk to the Navigation which, of course, was where William Gill – the occupant of our first grave – was employed.

This is where today's walk ends. I encourage you to go into the church as, not only can you admire the building that dates from 1380 and see today's Flower Festival, you'll also see memorials that link to the 'Busy Bodies' mentioned today. Look for the Repton window, the floor slab that's a memorial to John Repton, Humphry's father – and so much more of interest.

Thank you for coming with us today. If you want to know more about local history, why not join the Aylsham Local History Society? Just Google Aylsham local history and follow the link to our website. If you'd like to take another history walk – why not collect a booklet from the Heritage Centre so you can take another walk whenever you want to? Meanwhile, please enjoy the Aylsham Festival – there are events available all day.

Thank you for listening. Enjoy your Bank Holiday and the rest of the Aylsham Festival.

Aylsham Rainfall 2008–2012

Ben Rust

During these 5 years, three years have above average rainfall and two years have below average rainfall. One of them, 2011 having only 19.81 inches of rain, being the lowest annual rainfall since 1972 – 18.52 inches and 1921 – 16.75 inches.

The general trend is above the 100 year average of 26 inches. This trend has continued since 1998. During these 15 years only 4 years have been below the average of 26 inches annual rainfall:

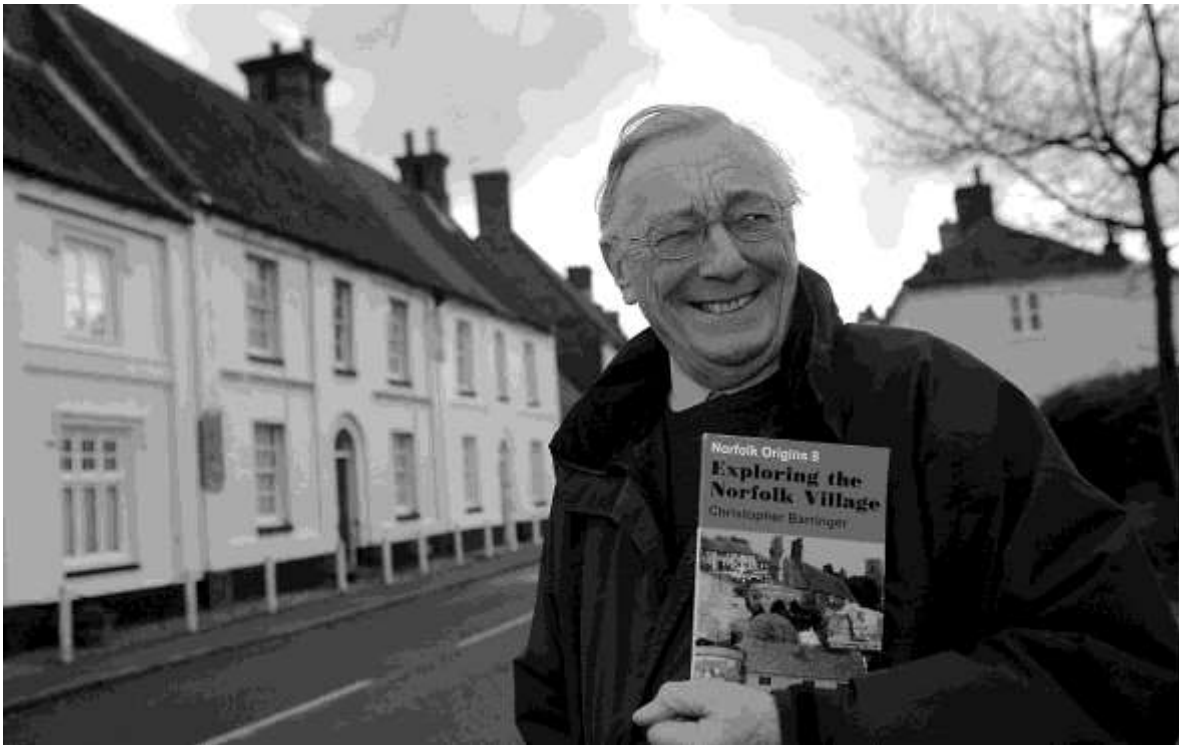
2003	23.15 inches
2006	24.70 inches
2009	24.61 inches
2011	19.81 inches

The one very dry year in 2011 caused water shortages and hose-pipe bans throughout most of the country and requests to save water; and yet this one dry year was within a period of over average annual rainfall.

2007 – 34.50 inches was the wettest year since 1912 – 36.38 inches, followed closely by 2001 – 34.20 inches and 2008 – 33.43 inches. During these years there was severe flooding in parts of the country, especially the West. However the Bure Valley escaped severe flooding.

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	100 yr Average
Jan.	3.18	1.59	2.62	2.08	1.44	2.34
Feb.	0.98	1.96	3.59	1.59	0.42	1.74
Mar.	3.93	1.47	1.38	0.97	2.09	1.86
Apr.	1.53	0.52	0.75	0.17	3.74	1.72
May	1.13	1.14	0.84	0.67	1.57	1.82
June	2.06	1.98	1.65	3.30	3.97	1.87
July	2.12	4.38	1.83	1.79	2.82	2.44
Aug.	5.74	0.64	4.48	3.73	3.07	2.34
Sept.	2.37	0.59	2.76	1.01	1.72	2.18
Oct.	3.42	1.87	3.20	1.35	2.80	2.68
Nov.	3.59	4.10	3.85	0.69	3.31	2.74
Dec.	1.78	4.37	1.20	2.66	3.29	2.47
Total	31.83	24.61	28.15	20.01	30.24	26.20
Wettest	Aug.	July	Aug.	Aug.	June	
Driest	Feb.	Apr.	Apr.	Apr.	Feb.	

CHRIS BARRINGER†



Chris Barringer in 2008, courtesy of Archant.

Chris Barringer, who had a seminal role in the formation of the Aylsham Local History Society, died peacefully on 23 June 2013, aged 82. John Christopher Barringer was born into a Quaker family in Croydon on 6 March 1931. His father was an advertising copywriter and on changing jobs the family moved back to Ilkley, where Chris attended Ilkley Grammar School and became head boy. He excelled at geography and was keenly involved with stage productions and sport.

Commissioned as a junior officer in the Royal Corps of Signals, he was later awarded a county scholarship to St John's College, Cambridge, where he read geography and participated in field trips to Iceland and Norway. He trained as a teacher, was appointed head of geography in his first position at Lancaster's Royal Grammar School and played for the Vale of Lune Rugby Club.

In late 1965 he was appointed Norfolk tutor for Cambridge University's board of extramural studies and moved to Hethersett with his young family. He started local history groups across the county and it was from

this period that older members of the Society encountered his enthusiasm and friendly encouragement to get involved with projects or to lecture at the classes he ran for many years from Wensum Lodge. He started writing books, beginning with volumes on the Yorkshire Dales and the Lake District, ran summer schools in the Lake District and at Cambridge, and became involved with his local community, playing cricket and starting the Hethersett Society.

The Aylsham branch of the Workers' Educational Association invited him to look at the 'History of Aylsham' with them in 1982. Ron Peabody, retired Librarian of the Aylsham Library and Treasurer of the Aylsham WEA, curated the collection of archives previously assembled by John Sapwell for his *History of Aylsham* (1960) and was a key figure in the preliminary research. Out of the second year of work by the class came *Aylsham: A Guided Walk* in which members of the WEA Branch researched the detail, and the Aylsham Association, the Parish Council and Broadland District Council all co-operated in the production of the booklet. As a direct result of these classes the Aylsham Local History Society was formed in June 1984.

Chris had found 'The Aylsham Rental', a manorial record of c.1624, in the Record Office in London, bound up with documents relating to Wymondham Abbey. By the Spring of 1985 his colleague Fiona Macdonald had translated it into modern English and members of the Aylsham Local History Society studied the document, initially in a Cambridge Extra-Mural Board class and subsequently with informal meetings over several years. By the time of the Annual General Meeting of the Society on 14 October the Research Group could announce that the work was nearly ready for publication. The suggestion that a "launching party" be held when it was published was an idea that found general favour. Chris advised on its production and wrote the foreword when it came out in 1988 with Poppyland Publishing as *Aylsham in the Seventeenth Century*, with a decorative cover.

The other projects stimulated by Chris on oral history, the Barnwell papers and Millgate were in abeyance at that point. But research in classes over the winter, guided by his colleague Elizabeth Rutledge, resulted in three talks at the 1989 AGM on Aylsham clockmakers, the Aylsham Navigation and the Norwich-Aylsham-Cromer turnpike. In 1990 the Millgate Group "was revived on a grand scale with the start of

the Tuesday morning classes held by Chris Barringer" – an inadvertent compliment to his charisma and the close association he had with Jane Nolan, our enthusiastic and talented chairman. A major incentive was the offer of a bundle of deeds collected by Tom Bishop, which came to be known as the "Bishop Bundles", that provided excellent material for the research group to acquire skills in reading and appraising the documents. The group comprised 18 members of the Society led by the indomitable Jane Nolan. The book, *Millgate, Aylsham*, was published by the Society in 1993, with an introduction by Chris.

By this time the provision of adult education had moved from Cambridge University to UEA in 1991. Chris was able to continue his career, lecturing, monitoring postgraduate students and writing books. In May 1992 the achievement of the Millgate research group was used by Chris for an exhibition in his new department of Continuing Education "to show how Local History groups could be set up and encouraged to investigate aspects of its own town or village history, and to record them in a meaningful way".

He retired in 1995 and his wife died the following year, but he happily remarried in 1999 and was able to give more time again to his many interests. In November 1996 he gave a lecture to the Society based around George Sawyer's mid-seventeenth century maps of Cawston and returned to this subject, with more detail, in a lecture in March 2003. In May 1997 he led a tour of selected houses in Aylsham, including the old hospital, Bank House and Candle House, to investigate more of the town's architectural history. And in July 2000 he took a group around Dragon's Hall and King Street in Norwich. He was helping to raise funds for preservation of the hall, later supported by a major heritage lottery grant, and became chairman of the Dragon Hall Trust.

His last book, with the provisional title *Norfolk – A History*, was finished, ready to be published posthumously, and within the last six months he was in contact with Geoff Gale, our former Chairman, about depositing materials in the Aylsham Town Council Archive.

Barringer, J.C. (1984). *Norwich in the Nineteenth Century*. Glidden Books, Norwich.

Barringer, J.C. (2005). *Exploring the Norfolk Village*. Poppyland, Cromer.
Obit. Eastern Daily Press 5 July 2013.

BOOK REVIEW

The Diary of Mary Hardy 1773–1809

edited by Margaret Bird, Burnham Press, April 2013



Diary 1 1773–1781 Public house and waterway 606 pp price £28.50

Diary 2 1781–1793 Beer supply, water power and a death 566 pp price £28.50

Diary 3 · 1793–1797 Farm, maltings and brewery (with the Diary of Henry Raven)

568 pp price £28.50

Diary 4 · 1797–1809 Shipwreck and meeting house 608 pp price £28.50

The Remaining Diary of Mary Hardy 1773–1809 paperback 168 pp price £18.00

Norfolk diarist Mary Hardy was the wife of a Norfolk farmer, maltster and brewer and lived all her life in Norfolk. She wrote her diary daily first at Coltishall, from 1773 to 1781, and then at Letheringsett, from 1781 until her death in 1809. Her diaries were first published in 1968 in a very abridged form by Basil Cozens-Hardy, Mary's descendant, as Norfolk Record Society volume 37. The work attracted the attention of historian Margaret Bird who 'wanted to know more' about this energetic, business-like, wife and mother who, like many in north Norfolk, gradually moved her allegiance from church to chapel.

If Margaret Bird had ‘just’ transcribed the whole of Mary Hardy’s output, half a million words covering nearly 36 years from 1773 to 1809, published together in five volumes, it would have been a work of an outstanding scale. However, over the last 25 years, she has undertaken in-depth research on every topic and person that the entries encompass, knowledge that has opened up two further areas to the work. Firstly the detailed footnotes, which are rather unusually but very conveniently placed down the side of the page, illuminate what could be otherwise fairly obscure entries. For example, Cozen-Hardy’s entry for 23 April 1776 gives ‘Miss Smith daughter of Henry Smith Lawyer of Hobis was married to Mr Parr clergyman of Aylsham.’ Margaret has three long side-notes detailing Parr’s life and wives. For 20 Oct 1779, Cozens-Hardy has ‘Mr Hardy went M10 to Aylsham with Mr Ansell in the Grampus with 4 other boates, one of them was oversett near Lamas, got to Aylsham even 5’ with no added comments. Margaret adds the rest of the day’s minor events and gives a long side-note about the opening of the navigation, Robert Ansell and his boat Grampus and a likely spot for the capsizing. The notes are very readable in their own right. Indeed at any opening one can be absorbed in the notes and the full captions to the 1,300 illustrations before even coming to Mary’s daily jottings.

Secondly her research, and her own training as an 18th century historian, has allowed Margaret to write an analysis of the diaries – yet to be published in another four volumes (*‘Mary Hardy and her World’*) to accompany the first five. I know of no other author who has single-handedly attempted, let alone achieved, such a task.

Everything about the presentation of this incredibly rich material has been considered with the reader in mind. Margaret, who did all the text preparation herself, wanted to capture the original impact of Mary’s writing. Not only has she kept the spelling and abbreviations – all editorial conventions are explained fully in each volume – but she was concerned that Mary’s emphatic use of capitals would not jar on the page. Typefaces were chosen, measured and discarded until a suitable one – with lower than usual heights of capitals – was found.

Not only is the reader provided with a very useful glossary, family trees and a map of the north Norfolk landscape that was Mary’s world, but the 460 page index is also especially user-friendly. Rather than indexed to a page number in the normal way, references are given to the date of the

relevant entry. That means the reader can eliminate or choose a reference without having to check every one. A novel idea which at first I found odd but on using the volumes now appreciate the more.

The format of the first four volumes is standard hardback book size complete with indexes. The fifth volume is an A4 paperback format and has no index or side-notes. It has been thought odd by some to have omitted entries of less interest from the first four volumes only to publish them in the fifth. Margaret's explanation is that she felt the duller, repetitive entries would have drowned out the liveliness of the rest; on seeing that these extra entries comprise 44% of the original section from 1781 to 1809, I suspect she was right. But I also agree that it would have been wrong to lose such a quantity of the text – one knows that life has its monotony and regular patterns. (My favourite was 'went to Mr Savory for tea, Mr Savory was not at home.')

These entries in this extra volume are also a boon to weather historians as Mary never fails to tell us what each day brings.

The commentary volumes (*'Mary Hardy and her World'*) yet to come will stand alone as studies, each in their own right and all separate from the transcripts. The 39 themes covered will be divided as follows: Volume 1 · A working family; Volume 2 · Barley, beer and the working year; Volume 3 · Spiritual and social forces; Volume 4 · Under sail and under arms.

If there is a downside (though it seems churlish to find one), it is that it would have been wonderful if the commentary volumes were available with the text. Of course this was not possible given the workload but it is difficult to see the overview of the themes in the diary when presented with the mass of detail. We await Margaret's expert analysis with great interest.

In the meantime, we have Mary's own words; never judgemental her style is brief and factual. (One wonders what the anodyne '1779 May 30 Mother in law went away had been here 51 weeks' may have concealed.) Anyone with an interest in the Holt and Coltishall areas, the workings of brewers and maltsters, the growth of non-conformity, crime and the lifestyle of women in the 18th century – on Tuesdays the maids hand-washed a month's linen at a time – will spend many happy hours engrossed in the five volumes we have at present.

Maggie Vaughan-Lewis

Visit to Syderstone and Sedgeford



On 25 July a group of members of the Society enjoyed an excellent excursion to St Mary's Church at Syderstone and to the archaeological dig at Sedgeford, all arranged by Ann Dyball.

On arrival at the round tower church of St Mary's we were greeted by Father Clive Wylie and the Churchwarden, Barrie Wells. Over coffee and cake Barrie and Dr Victor Morgan explained the history of the church. It dates from 1100 but has been subject to many alterations. For example, the south aisle was built in 1180 but taken down in 1785 when it was deemed to be unsafe. Similarly the north aisle was built in 1330 but removed in the eighteenth century. In 1200 the central tower fell down, smashing the wall of the nave, and the round tower was constructed in 1220 but subsequently has been extensively renovated. In 1370 the church was at its point of maximum development and it was then that the existing east window was built shortly after the Black Death. Interestingly, the stained glass in this window dates from 1948 as a thanksgiving for the return of peace after World War II. Another surprising feature is the lion in the niche over the west door where, conventionally, there would be a statue of the Virgin Mary. The crest is thought to be from the house of the wealthy Norfolk landowner, Sir John Robsart whose daughter, Amy, married Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester.

Leaving the church we went for lunch at the King William IV at Sedgeford, then to the Sedgeford Historical and Archaeological Research Project (SHARP).¹ We were greeted by Gary Rossin, who spoke at the ALHS meeting in February 2013,² then met Jon Cousins, the Excavation

Director. Jon explained that Sedgeford had an incredibly rich heritage spanning over four thousand years. He began his talk in the area known as ‘The Boneyard’. To date, about 300 burials have been discovered and it’s thought there may be as many as 1500 in total in ‘The Boneyard’. It’s a sloping site, leading down to the Heacham river. The soil at the top is shallow, but up to 6 feet deep at the bottom. In the deeper soil, bodies are buried on top of each other, the one below often displaced and the bones rearranged around the new one. Most of the bodies date from around 650AD to 850AD but a fully articulated horse, with one Iron Age sherd, was found below Saxon remains. The horse’s neck had been broken post-mortem, then placed on the shoulder. It hasn’t been possible to carbon-date the remains.³ Other Iron Age finds include a cow’s humerus that was found in 2003 with a metal detector because it was filled with Iron Age gold coins that had been minted on the Continent. Also from the Iron Age were two parts of a gold torc, buried about 75BC: one part was discovered in 1965, the other part in 2005, in two different areas of the site. The torc is now displayed in the British Museum.

Moving up the slope to the area of the dig known as ‘Chalkpit Field’ Jon described the landscape and some of the finds from this area. This part of the site is about 150m by 100m and has yielded thousands of finds, with the highest density at the top of the slope. These date from a Bronze Age crouched burial, through Roman pottery to Saxon post holes. There may have been seven buildings on this part of the site. We then had a brief opportunity to talk with the teams working in the trenches and hear how much they enjoy their painstaking work, tempered with the excitement of new finds. Most recently an industrial-scale oven has been uncovered. It may have been used for drying corn prior to export.

Sedgeford is a site that could be visited every year as there is so much of interest plus the lure of new features that might be uncovered each season.

Sheila Merriman

References

¹ Sedgeford Historical and Archaeological Research Project (SHARP). www.sharp.org.uk (accessed 29 July 2013).

² McManus, I (2013). A SHARP Story – archaeology in a Norfolk Village – a talk by Gary Rossin. *Aylsham Local History Society J.* 9: 263–264.

³ Cross, PJ (2012). The ritual of horse burial – Sutton Hoo and beyond. *Saxon* 55: 8–10. The Sutton Hoo Society.

Book Awards for *Sail and Storm – The Aylsham Navigation*



Garden party reunion at Parmeters, Aylsham, on 13 July 2013 for contributors to *Sail and Storm*. Photo.: Derek Lyons.

Sail and Storm won the 2013 Canal Book of the Year and was overall winner of the Transport History Book of the Year in the Railway & Canal Historical Society's annual book awards.

The judges described the book as “deserving recognition as a model of what can be achieved by collaborative research and well-edited writing”. On the evening of 3 May, at the AGM weekend of the Society at Preston, our editor, Sarah Spooner, was presented with a silver cup and a £300 cheque for the 2013 Transport History Book of the Year award. She also received a framed certificate as winner of the 2013 Canal Book of the year and a further cheque for £300. In her words of acceptance, Sarah paid tribute to the team she had worked with to produce what is more than an attractive local history. It is a welcome addition to canal histories nationally that will also boost tourist interest in the waterway history of that part of Norfolk.

The awards have been kindly publicised in the EDP and 'Just Aylsham', the book continues to sell well at £15 (+£2.50 post and package) from the Society (£14 for members' personal copy) and in local bookshops. A reunion party was held for contributors to the project at Parmeters in Aylsham on 13 July – a glorious day on which elderflower cordial took clear preference to anything stronger.

Rig-a-Jig-Jig is a Country Dance Band. The Society and the Aylsham Heritage Centre are combining to bring Rig-a-Jig-Jig to Aylsham Town Hall on Saturday 5 October. The group will play, talk a little about the instruments and the music traditions, and perhaps call a few dances. The group will play a rare instrument unique to Norfolk – the Norfolk dulcimer. To find out more about the band and the dulcimer project, go to the 'Rig-a-Jig-Jig' website. The event will be part of the Aylsham Slow Food Festival. Tickets available from Dennis, Salad Days, Market Place: £8 which includes some food.

Why not put the event, October 5th in your diary?

Autumn Excursion.

Thursday 26 September: Saffron Walden.

Please contact Ann Dyball on 01263 732637

Autumn Course. The topic for our Autumn Course is '*A Brief History of Illuminated Manuscripts*' and the tutor will be Margaret Forrester. The fully illustrated course will take us from the papyrus scroll to the invention of printing in ten sessions on Tuesdays 2.00–3.30 in the Friends' Meeting House, Pegg's Yard, Red Lion Street, beginning 17 September. Course fee £ 35. Maximum of 40 participants.

Further details and to book your place contact Jim Pannell on 01263 731087.

WEA Courses

Hyenas in Petticoats 'Remarkable women of the last 250 years'. Tutor: Valerie Morse. Course starts 2 pm Wednesday 18 September in Friends' Meeting House, Pegg's Yard, Red Lion Street.

'Subterranean Norwich.' Tutor: Matthew Williams. Course starts 2 pm Wednesday 15 January in the Friends' Meeting House.

Please book with Ann Dyball on 01263 732637.

Festival of Architecture in Norwich and Norfolk.

David Bussey on George Skipper. Wednesday 16 October, 6 pm, the Forum, with Norwich tour of Skipper buildings. Booking essential.

See FANN13 website & Sainsbury Centre (01603 593199; www.scva.ac.uk)