

AYLSHAM LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY



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Cover:

Duke of Edinburgh at the opening of the Aylsham and District Care Trust's new centre. Picture courtesy Just Aylsham

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JOURNAL AND NEWSLETTER



Volume 12

No. 2

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Editor: Jeremy Worth, 4 Woodgate Way, Aylsham NR11 6FJ

jeremy@worthfamily.co.uk 01263 733787

Chairman: Geoffrey Sadler geoffreysadler@gmail.com

Secretary: Sue Sharpe sjsharpe156@gmail.com 01263 733441

Website: aylshamhistory.org

In this issue we recall the occasions when the life of the Duke of Edinburgh crossed paths with the people of Aylsham. Pride of place goes to the young men and women, now early in their careers, explaining what the Duke of Edinburgh's award meant to them and the adventures it led them into (rain figured in a lot of them!)

We give thanks too for the life of Lord Walpole, who died in May. He and Lady Walpole were supporters of the Society from its formation under Jane Nolan in 1984. Older members will remember the visits the Society made to Mannington Hall in 1986 and Wolterton in 1987. Our thoughts are with Lady Walpole and the family.

Zoom meetings have continued successfully and at the time of writing we can finally look forward to meeting in person again. Don't forget the editor will soon be looking for recollections of life under lockdown for a future issue.

Looking ahead to coming events for the rest of the year, all at the Friendship Hall Cawston Road Aylsham, we have our AGM, starting at 7pm on Thursday October 7th, followed after a break by a talk on Nineteenth century industrial activity in Norfolk and its market towns by Adrian O'Dell. For subsequent talks refreshments will be available from 7pm subject to any restrictions in force at the time with the talk starting at 7:30pm. On Thursday 28th October Paul Dixon returns to give a talk on Norwich: A Black History. Then on Thursday 25th November Dr John Davies will talk on Iron Age Norfolk.

Remembering the Duke's Visit

Reprinted from Just Aylsham April 24th

As the nation continues to mourn the death of Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, special memories of the day he visited Aylsham have been recalled.

The duke, who died on April 9, arrived in the town by helicopter on October 8, 2013, to officially open the Aylsham and District Care Trust's new centre in St Michael's Avenue.



He was greeted by a large group of people waving Union Flags and cheering before he was met by the official welcoming party.

This included Rees Coghlan, who had launched ACT as a charity in 1985 to become the first integrated health and social care complex of its kind in the UK.

The prince then signed a photograph of himself, which is still proudly displayed in the centre, before spending time speaking with many of the people gathered there to welcome him.

John Hall, a volunteer with ACT, who set up a dementia and disability activities' group said: "Alan Holland, the then centre manager, took him

into the main hall to meet many of the users, staff, and volunteers of the centre.

"He walked around the hall, meeting the art and painting group, speaking to Mary Sherwood (volunteer kitchen assistant), and my group. He then spoke to an elderly lady in a wheelchair, who had worked at Bletchley Park during the war, and Edwin "Ted" Wallis, who had worked as a butcher for Lord and Lady Spencer.

"The duke then met Katy Carroll and members of Broadland School of Dance group, who impressed him with a splendid dance performance.

"He was with us for a good hour, talking to different people. After leaving the ACT Centre he went to meet the staff and residents at Green Lane View then on to St Michaels Court."

Tanya Wiseman from Aylsham High School asked Paris Chandler, one of the dancers, to recall the day.

We were lucky enough to 'dance for the Duke' when he visited the ACT centre in Aylsham. We were training with Broadland School of Dance and were told about the royal visit about three weeks earlier, which didn't leave us much time to prepare. Fortunately, we had recently taken part in a show at Norwich Theatre Royal so were able to use some of the routines we had prepared.

On the day, there was much excitement as myself, my sister Chloe and about 10 other dancers arrived at the Centre and got into our outfits. We had chosen to do a jazz number to 'Dancin Fool' from Copacabana so all wore bright pink outfits with headdresses which Prince Philip seemed to love! As he walked into the room with his entourage, mid-dance, his face broke out into a huge smile, and he pointed towards us all and clapped. After he'd chatted to a few of the centre users, he came and spoke to us all and asked us how long we'd been dancing and what we hoped to do when we left school. I'll always remember his kindness, his warmth and how genuinely interested he seemed in each and every one of us.

It was certainly a day I'll never forget.

Duke of Edinburgh – Patron of the Norfolk Wherry Trust by Jeremy Worth

Mike Sparkes, the Trust's Archivist recalls the Duke's involvement with the Trust over 72 years.

He was lucky enough to be in the crew on 13th October 1998 when the Duke, as Patron of the Trust, took a 20 minute sail on the wherry Albion on Wroxham Broad. It was one event in a typically packed day which saw him whisked away from Wroxham Broad by helicopter to open a natural gas terminal in North Norfolk.

The Duke's involvement began right at the beginning of the Trust in 1949 when the founder Roy Clark wrote to the Palace seeking support for saving a trading wherry. In 1966 and again in 1976 when major repairs were required the Duke supported the fund raising as Patron of the Trust. So it was logical that Prince Philip should be asked to take on the role of Patron once more, in 1998, at the time of her centenary.

Roger Watts, the Trust's Secretary remembers an immensely joyful time for all who attended that day. After the sail he came and spoke to everyone, in small groups. It showed the ease with which he would integrate with those who he had never previously met. It was a wonderful way to celebrate both the boat and her special guest.

The Trust is grateful for the Duke's support over so many years. Albion is a costly lady to keep but without her the broads vista would look quite different and thousands of people would miss her majestically making her way past.



Photo by the late Roy Elson

Duke of Edinburgh Award at Aylsham High School by Tanya Wiseman

I have been the award manager for the past fifteen years at Aylsham High School and seen 100s of young people achieve their bronze, silver and gold awards. I am very proud of them all; it can be a huge challenge for students. During the pandemic this past year most students have found it much more of challenge but have really stepped up and made it work for them personally.

It helps all young people to broaden their horizons, work with other young people outside of their friendship groups, and develop team work, leadership skills and confidence. Everyone and anyone can achieve the award, it's about giving new things a go! It looks amazing on your CV and tells your college and employers that you are a team player and extremely committed.

The Duke of Edinburgh first considered the idea of the award in the autumn of 1954 at the request of his inspiring headmaster Kurt Hahn. When the award first started it was just for boys. Within the first twelve months of the award starting there was seven thousand boys enrolled. It was so popular the award was then opened up to girls a year later with thousands of girls taking on the challenge as well. There are currently around 330,000 young people on the award.

With assistance from adult Leaders, participants select and set objectives in each of the following areas:

- **Volunteering:** undertaking service to individuals or the community.
- **Physical:** improving in an area of sport, dance or fitness activities.
- **Skills:** developing practical and social skills as well as personal interests.
- **Expedition:** planning, training for, and completion of an adventurous journey in the UK or abroad.
- At Gold level, participants must do an additional fifth **Residential** section, which involves staying and working away from home for five days, doing a shared activity.

The Duke of Edinburgh has left behind a huge legacy for all young people and will go from strength to strength for many years to come. It is an honour for the school to offer this award to the students and has benefited those taking part as they further their careers outside of the school.

Here are some of their stories (getting soaked through figures quite prominently)

Megan Blair

During my time at AHS, I had the opportunity to sing a song I wrote about my experiences in my Bronze Duke of Edinburgh for Prince Edward at a presentation event. He seemed so lovely



and it was such a great experience! Doing D of E taught me that hard work and resilience pay off... and that there is nowhere to plug in your straighteners when you go camping (sorry Olivia!).

I decided to take on my Bronze D of E as a challenge, I am very much not the outdoor camping type but I had such a fantastic time with a group who spurred each other on and kept morale high when blisters were forming! It was so sad to see the passing of the Duke recently but his legacy remains intact in this wonderful award. Thank you Aylsham High School for this wonderful opportunity.

Liam Upton *Hotel Manager The Mead Coltishall*

I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to take part in the Duke of Edinburgh award. It was always something that interested me so to have been in that select few who got the opportunity was really humbling. It taught me the value of hard graft and team work which I've taken with me throughout my work life which has enabled me to be very successful as a Hotel manager. The biggest lesson it taught me is the value of a good set of waterproof trousers!!



Jack Sadler



While in high school we were given the option to take part in the Duke of Edinburgh Award, at the time I was not sure on what this involved and what I would take from it. However, the award challenged me to volunteer within my local community improving my confidence, learn new skills and complete a weekend expedition.

The expedition was tough as we faced torrential down pours throughout and walking for 6-hours with a third of your body weight on your back is not easy, especially when soaked! However, the Duke of Edinburgh Award allowed our team of 6 to work together, support each other when times were tough, push through and succeed together.

The Duke of Edinburgh introduced the foundations of leadership, taught resilience and taught me to be a supportive team player.

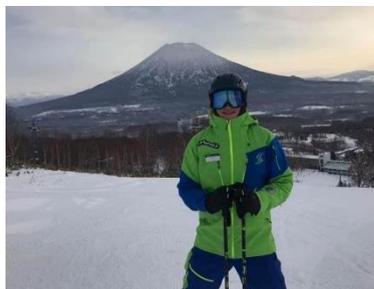
The award has helped to shape me into the man I am now, working for the National Health Service as a Physiotherapist on the frontline and I would like to thank Aylsham High School for the opportunity to take part.

Harry Keen

I attended Aylsham high school from 2012-2017 and I completed my bronze and silver awards with the school. The main thing that made me want to do them was the fact I love a challenge and I love to push myself to achieve something to be proud of! I went on to complete my gold award in college.



After completing my volunteering at a sailing club, I then went on to qualify and volunteer as a sailing instructor. Also, one of my skills for gold was skiing, this put me on the path to qualify as a ski instructor in 2019 where I then got a job working and living in the mountains of Japan for 6 months. After travel being affected by covid and being stuck in England for a while I am now about to start the training to work on Super-Yachts in the Mediterranean. The Duke of Edinburgh award has been a huge part of my life and not only has it taught me plenty of skills, but it has also taught me a lot about myself as well and I am not sure I'd be where I am today had I not completed it.



Mary Spalding

I completed the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award whilst at Aylsham High School as at the time I thought it would equip with me additional transferable



skills to support my academic and career aspirations at the time. Never did I realise, it would lead onto a 10 year football refereeing career that would allow me to represent my country at an international level. Although that chapter has ended, the skills I gained from the award, along with the fond memories of the

expedition, has given me the confidence in my role as a Police Officer at Suffolk Constabulary and for that I will always be grateful for the opportunity to participate in this programme. Duke of Edinburgh award has taught me how to communicate, work within a team and has allowed me to make a difference within my community.

Michael Sawyer-Stone

Having the Duke of Edinburgh's award accessible to me at Aylsham High made starting the process extremely simple. Growing up in Norfolk I was lucky enough to complete my expedition in beautiful (albeit flat) landscapes. Completing the bronze level at an age where non-academic achievements were few and far between was fantastic and gave me a great sense of achievement.

Following completing Bronze D of E I had an urge to follow this style of learning and was awarded a scholarship to Gordonstoun, where the curriculum mirrors that of the D of E award. Here I completed my Gold D of E, largely through activities that had become part of my day to day life. The most exciting of these was my service activity, training to be and operating as a Volunteer Firefighter for the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service. With Gordonstoun located in the Scottish highlands, I completed my expedition over miles of largely untouched and beautiful landscapes with a great team of close friends, an experience I will never forget.

Whilst at Gordonstoun, I was also lucky enough to meet HRH the Duke of Edinburgh, witnessing his famous sharpness and wit first hand.



Michael is second student from left

The D of E award gave me the confidence and foundation to follow my passion of the outdoors and enhance my education.

Shannon Wiseman



During my time at Aylsham High School I was able to join the Bronze Duke of Edinburgh award. This was a huge challenge for me as I was not the outdoor type and hated camping! (But when your Mum is the manager you have no choice!) However it actually turned out to be one of the best and most exciting things I have ever achieved. It taught me many skills of leadership, how to be resilient and most of all a team player. All of these

skills have really helped me through my job working in a special school and throughout my degree, which has certainly challenged me at times.

My expedition was one of the wettest weekends ever, we were soaked for the whole time! But together as a group we supported each other and had lots of laughs. We are all still good friends eight years later.

This award has really helped to make me whom I am today, I am just about to finish my teaching degree and start my teaching, a fantastic new chapter in my life. I would like to thank Aylsham High School for this opportunity.

Aylsham Egg Packing Station and the Taylor/Stackwood family **by Roger Polhill and Maggie Vaughan-Lewis**



Bert and Hilda Taylor on their wedding day 1932 and young Rod outside the Egg Packing Station early 1950s

Rod Taylor, born in Hungate Street in 1946, has kindly provided the Town Archive with some photos from the papers of his mother, born Hilda Stackwood. His parents worked at the Frank Sainsbury Egg Packing Station at the Maltings in its heyday when it collected and despatched eggs for the Sainsbury supermarket chain.

Hilda Stackwood married Bert Taylor at St Michael's on Christmas Eve 1932. Bert was probably the first manager of the Egg Packing Station from around 1930 to 1957. Although we have no memories of those, like Bert and

Hilda who worked at the Station in the 1950s, many still remember vehicles coming and going.

The Sainsbury Archive online gives us some insight into the family business. John James Sainsbury was born on 12 June 1844 in Lambeth and founded the firm with his wife Mary Ann Staples when they got married in 1869. Their first shop was in Drury Lane and they lived above the shop. They moved to live above their second shop at Queen's Crescent, Kentish Town when it opened in 1876.

The business was expanded by joining forces with Mary Ann's father, Benjamin Staples and several other grocers in London. They had a 'pact' whereby members undertook not to open shops in direct competition with each other and to help each other to gain new footholds in new areas by offering first refusal of premises to other members of the group. He developed a close relationship with his suppliers and developed a depot in Kentish Town with the facility for buying in bulk. In 1882 he bought his first shop outside London, at London Road, Croydon that he fitted out in a distinctive style, easy to keep clean and cool, with a broadened product base, particularly of cheese and poultry. In 1890 he leased premises in Stratford Street, Blackfriars that became the firm's centre of operation for the next century.

From the end of the century "country" branches were opened in provincial towns and the eldest son, John Benjamin was made a partner and took over the firm when his father died in 1927. Frank Sainsbury, the third son, born in 1877, followed his elder brother into the family business, but was never really content as a retailer. His stint as manager of the Holloway branch was abruptly terminated when his father caught him giving orders to the staff while riding his bicycle around the shop. Still in his early twenties he trained instead as a farmer with Mr Mitchell of Withersfield near Haverhill. He married in 1902 and was put in charge of the farm at Blunts Hall, Little Wratting, a few miles from Withersfield where he lived for the rest of his life. His father subsequently built a house within half a mile of Blunts Hall and spent much of his leisure time there.

Frank started collecting eggs from neighbouring farmers by pony and trap. The eggs were tested at Blunts Hall, packed and forwarded to Blackfriars for distribution. After the difficult times of the First World War egg packing stations were opened in Suffolk, Norfolk, Cambridgeshire and Lincolnshire, at one time more than 40 in number. At the same time Frank's farming extended steadily with the production and breeding of pigs, sheep and cattle.

In 1924 Bert Taylor, who was born seven miles away in Hundon, started his career at 14 working for Frank at Little Wrattling on egg collecting vans before coming to Aylsham around 1930. During the interwar years road transport was still rudimentary and Frank Sainsbury made full use of the Great Eastern Railway system.

The proximity of the Maltings to the Aylsham North Railway Station on the M. & G. N. Railway line from Yarmouth to the Midlands was no doubt a factor in the choice of a location for a packing station.



Egg Packing Station at the Maltings 1950s

By the 1950s with improved transport connections and changing methods, egg supplies became canalised through a packing station at East Harling, near Thetford. Egg packing at the Maltings plus similar operations, including Little Snoring, ceased around 1957 when Bert moved to open a new automated packing station at Kenninghall in southern Norfolk not far from Thetford. Egg collection continued in Aylsham for a few more years, but bulk eggs were shipped to Kenninghall from an Industrial Unit near the Marsham end of the bypass.

In 1962 Tom Bishop bought the Anchor Inn (now Bridge House) that had closed the year before and rented the Maltings from the millers to restore furniture and deal in antiques. He was able to buy the Maltings from BOCM Silcock in 1974 and converted them into a row of five terrace houses in the

1980s. He also added a terrace of five new houses at right angles in keeping with the old eighteenth century building.

The Stackwood family in Aylsham

Bert and Hilda Taylor lived at 61 Hungate Street with their two sons, Ivor born in 1935 and Rod in 1946. Rod attended primary school here with friends Roy Gosling and Bryan Bush. Hilda (Emma Hilda) was the daughter of David and Mabel Stackwood and had been born in Aylsham in 1910. Her mother Mabel Rounce came from Oulton and married David in 1905. Stackwood is a well-known name in the Aylsham area with the directories listing: Robert the bootmaker in Hungate (1890), William the water miller (1896), Mrs Louisa, shopkeeper Hungate (1904), Arthur George, carpenter of Hungate St (1912), also builder Buttsland, and Cawston Road (1937), Mrs Stackwood, motor cars Ship Inn yard, White Hart Street (1921 only).

The family came from Carbrooke where Robert Stackwood, the bootmaker, was born in 1848. With his first wife he had three sons in Kenninghall, Robert, John and David. After her death, Robert moved to Hungate Street in Aylsham and married Erpingham girl Louisa Harmer in 1884. They had another four children here, Ernest, Hannah, Walter and Arthur, born 1889. Robert led the handbells at the Christmas dinner in the Cross Keys in 1893 but died at only 46 the following year leaving Louise living with her two sons Ernest and Walter. She was probably the Hungate shop keeper listed in 1904 and had three boarders in 1911. At the time they were in the tiny cottages in front of the Unicorn pub which were shortly to be demolished.

David Stackwood, Hilda's father, who had been a bricklayer's labourer since he was 12, later worked for Arthur the builder, his step-brother. Arthur and his new wife Bessie Currie, from Rougham, were living in Hungate Street in 1911. Later Arthur built new houses in Norwich road in 1935 (possibly near Buxton Road) at which time he was using the workshop at the Tinsmiths house in Oakfield Road.

Hilda's brother William Robert (known as Billy) was a self-employed carpenter living at 8 Yaxleys Lane. His work can still be seen in the oak support for the Aylsham sign on the corner of Burgh Road. His wife Mrs Mildred Stackwood was the teacher at Itteringham parish school from the war time up to 1969 when she resigned aged 60. There were only 13 children

there aged 4-11. Her pupils - one of whom remembers her as being 'very prim and proper', having no children of her own - may be surprised to think of her as 'Auntie Millie' as she was known to young Rod. A colleague recalled her as 'easy to get on with' but able to make one cup of tea last for hours by topping up with hot water! Her husband was churchwarden at Itteringham until the mid-1950s.

Although the Taylor family moved away in 1957, Hilda returned to Aylsham in 1970 after Bert died and lived at first with Vina and Fred Neale at 6 Yaxleys Lane next door to her brother Billy. She was very friendly with Mrs Joyce Wells and they worked for a time in Pages haberdashery where Hilda had worked before she was married. Hilda later lived at 35 Soame Close and worked in Ivy Ward's Baby clothes and Wool shop in Red Lion Street ('a time warp' as Rod remembers). In the mid-1990s she left her bungalow and died in The Manor in 2003 aged 92. Joyce played the organ at Hilda's funeral.

We much appreciate the information from Rod Taylor and the Sainsbury Archive on which this article is based.

Humphry Repton and his family: Correspondence 1805-1816

ed Dr Heather Falvey, Norfolk Record Society, Vol 84, 2020, available from Norfolk Record Society via their website or c/o Dr G Alan Metters 29 Cintra Road Norwich NR1 4AE. Priced £25 plus £4 postage.

Review by Maggie Vaughan-Lewis

Humphry Repton (1752-1818), the landscape gardener, is a well-known figure in Norfolk and is buried in Aylsham graveyard despite the fact that he never lived or owned property here. His fourth son William Repton (1783-1858), the solicitor who lived and worked at 1 Market Place (now Barclays Bank), is not so widely-known outside the town although we gave him good coverage - as the town's senior lawyer at the time - in *Aylsham: A Nest of Norfolk Lawyers*. It was clear he was a trusted solicitor and sound business man, organised, thoughtful and, from the numbers of papers that survive locally, a good archivist. How much better we could have served him had we had this wonderful volume! Three fortuitous events led to its creation. Firstly William Repton stored all the letters his family sent him - as well as his draft replies- amounting to over 200 items. Secondly they were not lost after his death but were all sold in the 20th century to the Huntingdon Library in California so keeping the archive together. How easily could the 55 letters written by Humphry have been sold off separately. Thirdly, historian Dr Falvey decided in 2013 to commit herself to publishing the letters, supported by a scholarship from the Huntingdon, and publication by the Norfolk Record Society. Dr Falvey is a medieval and early modern lecturer in Continuing Education and her publications are designed to create access to sources, including medieval wills and 18th century recipes.

Now we have the flesh to add to the bones - William was the lynch-pin of the Repton family, especially for his aunt Dorothy. Humphry's sister had fallen in love with and married John Adey, an earlier Aylsham solicitor. Her father John Repton bought No 1 Market Place for them for their home and office. Her nephew William was articled to Adey and so lived and worked with them there from the 1790s onwards. As Dorothy lost both her sons as babies, the letters to her 'Dearest William' are frequent and very affectionate; he is the child she never had. In 1810 she writes: 'it is and ever will be my wish to have your approbation in all I say or do'. One letter ends 'you are all and everything to [me]'.

Oddly only two letters from William's mother Mary have survived. In 1816 he says 'he never sees her handwriting' but she replies that he 'must not suppose I love you less, for not writing'. His father, as she reminds him, is a better correspondent; 35 of the letters from Humphry are addressed to William. One is a rather vexed complaint that William's affairs and his father's will not allow them to meet in March 1808. It begins: 'Oh William, William you are a bad boy - here I put off and put off my journey in the hope of seeing you & now I find that you do not leave Aylsham til Thursday when I shall be on my road from Cambridge Northward'. Having detailed his route each day and suggested some quite unreasonable diversions William could make, he ends, 'Yours fondly' but adds, 'I wish you hangd for so badly contriving your Motions - but so it is-& so it is- & so it is very so.'. Humphry was obviously very fond of all his children; indeed the whole family were very loving towards each other.

After John Adey's long illness and painful death in May 1809, Dorothy stayed at Aylsham for a year and then began to visit friends and stayed for months at Hare Street near Romford, the home of Humphry and Mary. But she loved Aylsham and its 'simplicity, for as yet fuss, finery and fashion have not altogether invaded that little nook'. After Humphry's death in 1818, Dorothy spent much of her time with William, dying in Aylsham in 1822. As well as No 1 Market Place, she left him the brooch which held a lock of her late husband's hair.

Of course the volume is entitled 'Humphry Repton and his family' and scholars of his work will find a great deal of interest. However his words make up only a quarter of the text and far more is of interest for the family's social network in north Norfolk and William's business affairs. The letters of condolence received after John Adey's death show the respect and affection in which the older solicitor had been held. Lady Katherine Walpole of Wolterton (a daughter of Horatio Walpole 2nd Baron of Wolterton and newly, the 1st Earl of Orford of the second creation), writing from the family house in London, is very affectionate. She and Dorothy were already regular correspondents and William's draft reply shows the care he took over expressing the family's feelings in some detail. Lady Katherine may well have employed him when she invested in property in town in 1807 (The Retreat in Hungate and the Star Inn in Red Lion Street). Lady Mary Anson was a closer friend - her husband's family were of Shugborough Hall where Thomas Anson, MP for Lichfield, had been a great help to John Repton's family in

earlier days. He owned the former Earl of Yarmouth property at Oxnead just down the river from Aylsham and supported the Bure navigation construction. William was staying at Shugborough at the end of April 1809 when his aunt's letters caused him to cut short his visit.

However the sad occasion did not prevent Humphry writing letters two days later ensuring that Adey's former roles (as steward of local manors of Baron Wodehouse and William Windham) would be offered to William. (Wodehouse declined but in the most 'civil' of replies). Dorothy was often quite involved in the business, especially during William's frequent trips to London. They had clerks to do the routine work, George Ives, Francis Barnes and Harry Mileham - the 'Young Men' as Dorothy called them - but sometimes clients asked to see her. Barnes was only 18 and she sent him to William with letters when the latter was on extended business, even when as close to home as Holt. Mileham was briefly dismissed for dallying with the wife of a townsman; despite the town's reaction - 'utter detestation' - the family seemed to think he was not altogether to blame and he was later re-employed. William's brother George Repton commented that he did not know 'Aylsham had been so moral a place'. William always wrote the subject of a letter on the reverse; his words 'crim.con with Mrs Smith' made Mileham's conduct clear. (The term criminal conversation was the legal term for sex with another's spouse.) Some of the matters of business referred to in the letters may be cross-referenced with the AYL collection in the Norfolk Record Office which also contains William's diaries and client lists. Other records from the practice were given to the Aylsham Town archive.

Samuel Taylor the Aylsham surgeon who attended the family is highly praised. He lived next door to No 1 Market Place, the archway into which can clearly be seen in Repton's sketch which illustrates the front cover. The fine house had been bought by John Repton at the same time as the other properties in the block and it was used as home and surgery by surgeon apothecaries for about 100 years. Edward Piggon jnr (who succeeded his father) was joined by Samuel Taylor as a partner in 1771. Taylor was constantly in attendance during John Adey's illness in 1808 administering laxatives called Your Mothers Recipe 'which had a glorious effect' but one medicine containing a 'great deal of Nitre' was not considered helpful. He described Adey's complaints as 'feeble and nervous' but agreed if he fancied 'sauceage & Pottato' he should have it. By April 1809 he came in daily to dress a wound and at the end of the month he was preparing friends and

family for the coming death of Adey. His kindness to Dorothy is clear - she has hardly slept and is advised to sleep in another room to get some rest. She was back up at 5 'as was poor Taylor'. Her husband died a few hours later. Taylor was a respected doctor and consulted with the eminent Norwich surgeon Philip Martineau of Bracondale who attended John Repton, Humphry's brother, at Oxnead who died, a month after Adey, aged 56.

Towards the end of Humphry's life, William thought his father should come and live in Aylsham, suggesting he stayed in Taylor's house (which the family still owned) as being convenient. Humphry declined on the grounds it would be as much a burden as if he lived with William and Dorothy. We do not know what Dr Taylor thought! Dorothy considered him 'a good creature as ever lived' and although she rated 'his kindness and humanity' above his skills, she wanted his 'Emulsion' to be sent to Essex to help Humphry. This was not professional practice and not likely to have been accepted by Repton's own doctor and friend, James Andrews, who Humphry wrote 'keeps us all alive from year to year'.

It is a wonderful collection of letters, opening the door on the very private lives of the Reptons and one only wishes a longer time period was covered. Full of humour despite the illnesses and bereavements, the contents are lively and gossipy and the reader is left almost breathless from the rush of words on the page. John's marriage to Elizabeth Knight was bitterly opposed by the family and Humphry, who called her a 'low woman', was particularly sharp. Even Martineau, when discussing John's illness with Taylor, said 'that Wife of his must hurry and fatigue him, how incessantly she talks.'

An unexpected bonus is the inclusion in the introduction of a fascinating description of the postal system at the time. Prior to the use of envelopes, letters were still folded over and sealed with wax, with the address panel showing, allowing for precision in dating the letters and seeing the route taken. (The later habit of disposing of envelopes makes listing letters far more difficult.) One wonders how many letters popped into baskets of linen or other goods, to avoid postage, were lost in transit!

The excellent index and helpful footnotes aid navigation through the chronologically arranged letters and the whole volume is, as always with the Norfolk Record Society, beautifully produced. All those interested in

Aylsham's history will be grateful to Dr Falvey for her painstaking work in bringing our branch of the Repton family to life.



No 1 Market Place (Barclays) where William Repton lived and worked (and his aunt Dorothy), and the doctor's house next door. Taken from Humphry Repton's sketch used on the book's cover – by permission of Lord and Lady Walpole.

Roger Polhill's Personal Achievement Award

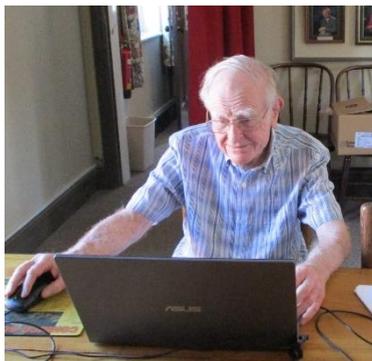
On June 12th, Local History Day, Roger was presented with his Award from the British Association for Local History (via Zoom inevitably). Roger is not one to blow his own trumpet so the Society will have to do it for him.

The Trustees limit the awards to six in any one year, to those 'who have gone beyond the everyday, reached further than their own immediate vicinity, continued for many years, encouraged others to become involved, and thus caused interest and enthusiasm to spread.'

The Award is richly deserved.

Roger has an inclusive infectious enthusiasm for local history while being a studious, accurate researcher.

His contribution to the Society has been immense, as Editor of the Journal for thirteen years, as Chairman for seven years and taking an active role in researching and seeing through to publication projects including co-authoring an important work on Aylsham's Navigation history - *Sail and Storm* and laying out the design for a major publication - *A New History of Aylsham's Public Houses*. His role was pivotal to bringing the book to completion.



***Roger Polhill at the Town
Archive***

When the Town Archive was left without an archivist, Roger, who had volunteered there for some years, stepped up and managed the archive between 2017 and 2019. He is still a regular, accessioning material and helping enquirers.

We are fortunate indeed to have Roger and his wife Diana in the Society.

Geoff Sadler

The Norwich Guild Feast, c.1560-1720: Of Marchpanes and the Very Best of Hams talk by Victor Morgan

I know that many of you enjoy the Society's lectures and the outings. But I also know that what you really look forward to is the annual dinner at a succession of well-chosen hostelryes. The committee has been able to bring you part of the annual offering by way of lectures—as now—on Zoom, but we are aware that what you have really been missing is the annual dinner. This evening's entertainment brings you some form of virtual gastronomic sustenance as I stand before you as a combination of chef, *maitre d'*, and humble waiter offering dishes from Norwich's distant past.

Guild Day in Norwich between around 1560 and 1720 was the high point of an entire week of festivities at midsummer to mark the transfer of power from one mayor to another. The Guild Feast was the culmination of a day of processions and was held in St. Andrews Hall. In a modified form these celebrations continued for another hundred years and were not finally ended until the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835. Nowadays the installation of the Mayor is but a pale shadow of past glories.

In interpreting the meanings of the *Guild Feast* what I have found most useful is to pursue what could be described as 'connected history'. This has required some historical detective work and involved a process of tracing back from the food on the table to the raw commodities that went into their making, the means by which they were made and the manner in which they were served. This should make it easier to see and to understand as contemporaries did the food set in front of them.

How we interpret the event is also shaped by an understanding of the wider context. Guild Day itself was a highly symbolic occasion. And that symbolism was itself embedded in a way of thinking that saw meanings in all sorts of events, especially events in the natural world such as thunderstorms: everyone lived in what has been called a 'magical universe'. Much of this bled over into an understanding of social relationships.

God was still believed to be 'immanent', that is, present and acting in the world: he might have sent the thunderstorm as a message. In imagery of the period frequently the intervening hand of God is represented as descending



1. Detail from the arms of the Norwich Bakers' Guild, c.1680, showing the hand of God imparting equity as between the bakers and their customers in the form of equally balanced scales. (Norfolk Museums Service)

from a cloud, often in order to impart justice amongst men. It is there in the arms of the Norwich Bakers' Guild, this particular version of which dates from the 1680s, and which once hung in St. Andrews Hall (illustration 1).

All this means that contemporaries were attuned to thinking symbolically to a degree that we are not. Furthermore, the food chain was much shorter than today and there was a more general understanding

of where food came from and how it had been prepared before it arrived on a plate. Therefore, when all these considerations are taken into account it is very likely that contemporaries would be inclined to 'read' all that was involved in the Guild Feast in a symbolic manner in a way that went beyond the overt symbolism that is obvious to us.

It might help if we start with the overt symbolism. This is most evident in the form of the symbolic marchpanes, the sugar sculptures and the moralistic trenchers on which the marchpanes were served at the end of the feast. The marchpanes and sugar sculptures were what the cook Robert May designated as "Triumphs and Trophies in Cookery, to be used at Festival Times". Sugar sculpture and sugar plate were used as table decorations. As such they would have augmented the decorative silverware such as the Reade salt that we know had been presented to the City by Peter Reade in the 1560s.

I assume that sugar sculpture arose naturally from the custom of scraping portions of sugar off the hard cones of the substance into which the newly imported cane sugar was refined (see illustration 2). Eventually it reached



2. A sugar mill, illustrating the production of sugar loaves or cones. Design by Jan van der Straet for a series of prints, “Nova reperta”, (Antwerp, c.1590) showing recent inventions.

artistic heights. The great Florentine artist, Giovanni da Bologna, was required to create sugar sculpture table decorations for the Medici weddings c.1600.

Sugar plate consisted of a mixture of powdered sugar, rosewater, and gum tragacanth. Its hardness made it suitable for larger-scale table decorations.

At its simplest marchpane or marzipan is made from crushed almonds and sugar. There were two main variants. One used boiled sugar in its making. This resulted in a more malleable paste that could be moulded into shapes. In his, *Delights for Ladies* of 1609, Sir Hugh Platt provided instructions for creating “prettie conceits, as birds & beastes beeing cast out of standing moulds”.

Today, the emasculated descendants of this once complex renaissance art form are the modest simulacra of fruits that sometimes make their way to the top of cakes. Others are the coloured sugar mice that used to be on sale in the

Arcade in Norwich. The grittier German type of marzipan is still going strong and is what I choose as my Christmas treat from Aylsham's classy chocolate shop.

The symbolic nature of the Guild feast becomes even more evident if we consider how the marchpanes were served. They were delivered to the ladies at the end of the feast on trenchers. Normal trenchers were crude wooden dishes used by the poorer sort. But as with much else at the feast these were refined trenchers. They were thin, flat, wafers of wood and on one side there was painted decoration. Here, I will look at only one such trencher that may have been used in the Norwich Guild feast (see illustration on back cover).

In the speeches and the sermon heard earlier in the day there was a dual emphasis on both the virtues and the responsibilities of the city's governors. This was a society that was deeply imbued by moralistic tales derived from the Bible. The moralistic and admonitory tropes evident elsewhere on Guild Day are also seen on this trencher. It depicts 'Dives' (meaning 'rich man') and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31). This is an especially pointed choice in that it shows a feast contrasted with the sufferings of the poor yet was presented *at* a feast. Perhaps the consciences of diners were salved by the fact that a few hundred yards away from where they dined was the municipal granary—now part of the University of the Arts. This had been created in the Elizabethan period as a welfare measure to help relieve the poor in the City. It was also customary on the morning following the feast for the poor to gather at the hall in order to receive the leftovers. Here was symbolism in both form and action.

If so much explicit symbolism is to be found in certain parts of the feast, could it be that it was also present but rather less evident in the food and drink that was consumed before the trenchers and their marchpanes arrived at the tables? Perhaps in order to 'read the feast' as historians we need to begin to reconstruct the meanings and associations that contemporaries would have seen in the food and drink consumed on Guild Day that were *not* overtly symbolic but which—I'm going to argue—are likely to have carried meanings that may not be immediately obvious to us today.

We are able to reconstitute the menu at the feast from a variety of sources, but mainly from a description provided by the City's Librarian, Benjamin Mackerell (1685, d.1738), as part of his unpublished history of Norwich of c.1737. There is much to be said of the very particular choice of foods for the feast but here I will only be able to sample the ham and its meanings.

We need to ask: from what sort of pig was the ham made? At first glance this product derived from the pig may seem to be a rather prosaic commodity amongst the self-evidently luxurious company that it kept on the table of the Guild feast. But commodities derived from the pig enjoyed a much higher status in the Tudor-Stuart period than they do today.

In part the enhancement of the status of the pig rode on the back of the revival of classical learning as part of the renaissance and the consequent widespread familiarity with classical texts. This was acquired in schools such as that housed in the Carnary building in the Cathedral Close in Norwich which was attended by the scions of both the urban elite and the county gentry.

The Romans held pig-meat in all its forms in high regard. That regard was transmitted to renaissance Norwich through familiarity with classical literature. Effectively, certain types of pigs were classicised. In the renaissance pigs became associated with festive occasions. All this would have been in keeping with the grafting on to Guild Day of other renaissance elements.

Surely, you are going to say, pigs were squalid creatures kept by the very poorest? To which the answer is 'often, but not always'. It was not until the eighteenth century that the systematic breeding of pigs resulted in differentiated types from which our modern breeds derive. But already in pre-modern England pigs lived in a two-class society. The fundamental distinction was based on how they were reared, and here, of course, was a direct parallel with the human society of that time.

One class of pig, was the sty pig, kept by the humblest as, often, their only source of meat and largely fed on domestic waste. They tended to be stockier, with shorter legs. The Mayor's Court Book in Norwich chronicles the efforts of the City's authorities to curb or ban the keeping of pigs secreted away in Norwich's numerous yards. It was one amongst a raft of measures designed to impose hygiene on the City's teeming population.

But the city's governors did not eat sty-bred pigs. There was a second class of pig, pannage fed. This produced the best, the leanest, ham. Pannage was a legal right to turn pigs out in the autumn to graze in woodland on the mast. Today, the only place where this practice continues is in the New Forest. 'Mast' consisted of the fall of various types of nuts, but especially acorns.

Pannage was part of a complex and now largely forgotten integrated system for the use of woodland (see illustration 3).



3. A old-breed blackspot pig rooting in pannage in the New Forest. (Picture courtesy of Marc Baldwin wildlifeonline.me.uk)

disputes amongst the gentry and between the landlord and his tenants. Therefore, to own or to have access to the products derived from free-range pigs was a sign of social superiority on the part of those wealthier tenants and rural dwellers who remained in the countryside compared with those who poverty had driven into towns.

After being fattened up on the autumn mast a proportion of the prestige mast-fed pigs would have been brought into Norwich for sale. Considerable skill was required to cure the ham. Different techniques were available. So, what occupied the table at the Guild feast was not just ham: to echo the phrase of the sultry lady who does the TV adverts for M&S, very likely this was mast-fed ham especially cured for occasions such as this.

Ham bears comparison with other types of food consumed on Guild Day. In particular it would have partaken of two of the characteristics of pickles. First, the word itself, 'pickle', was also used for the mixture of salt, saltpetre (potassium nitrate) and spices used to cure meats such as ham at this time. In itself this would have set off yet further the type of ham consumed at the feast from the type that resulted from simply hanging in a chimney a joint of meat to cure in the smoke from a fire. It would have imparted a completely different texture and flavour. In doing so it would also have reinforced a

difference in flavour that must have arisen from the tannins that were absorbed from the acorns consumed by mast-fed pigs.

Second, and more reconditely, cured ham and pickled foodstuffs were akin in that they manipulated time by the overriding of the seasons through preservation. Customarily, pigs were slaughtered in midwinter—witness the event as depicted in illustrations of the months where the slaughter is shown in November or December. But on Guild day, ham, the preserved form of pigmeat, is being served in midsummer. In this respect at least the urban elite could override time itself. Similarly, they played with time in the form of the ephemeral sugar sculptures.

Certainly, the majority of the City's population might not have grasped the more esoteric symbolism employed during the feast in the form of those marchpanes and sugar sculptures. But in the case of the superior hams on offer here there was a symbolic form of consumption that they would well have understood even if they were unlikely ever to enjoy it. Amongst pigs and the differing forms of pigmeat there was a yawning gulf just as there was in the human social organisation of the City.

But there were aspects of the pig that were rather more the possession of the populace at large. For in pre-modern European practice pigs were associated especially with pre-lenten carnival. By the late sixteenth century Guild Day had been moved to midsummer but one of its origins was indeed in pre-Reformation carnival. Also, in being held at midsummer it derived part of its energy from another popular festive period between haysell and harvest.

In the carnivalesque tradition the status of the pig was ambiguous. I would suggest that in part at least this ambiguity derived from a contemporary awareness of what was, effectively, the pig's two tribes. It was also manifest in the varied uses made of all the parts of the animal. The best joints of meat went to the tables of the City's aldermen and mayor, but other parts were the prerogative of the people. This included the pig's capacious bladder.

There is evidence of practical uses of bladders such as the floats used in net fishing. But they often ended up as toys for children. The bladder was also an essential attribute of the fool. Fools are usually depicted with a stave or staff. Sometimes an inflated bladder was attached to the end of it (see illustration

4). The so-called 'Dick-fools' of Norwich's Guild Day fell within the Fool tradition and are depicted wielding a stave.

Of course, as anyone knows who has had to deal with (or encourage?) children let loose with the latter-day successors to pig's bladders, that is, balloons, they can cause mayhem when filled with water and let to fly, or be made to emit obscene noises by controlling the emission of the air within them. We may surmise that all this was going on around the City and



4. Hans Holbein, A Fool Contesting with Death. The Fool wields a deflated bladder. The letter 'R' from a set of alphabetic woodcuts designed by Holbein c.1523-4 and depicting various social types identified and characterised in various ways in conflict with personified mortality. In this context it is significant that the bladder is assumed to be an essential attribute of the Fool

led by the Dick Fools as part of the popular celebrations on Guild Day while the elite enjoyed more civilised speeches and refined consumption of other parts of pigs in New Hall.

I regret that the constraints of time mean that I have not been able to serve up an interpretation of all the dishes consumed on Guild Day in Tudor and Stuart Norwich. But then I certainly don't want to give you virtual indigestion!

Norwich Castle - Gateway to Medieval England a talk by Andrew Ferrara

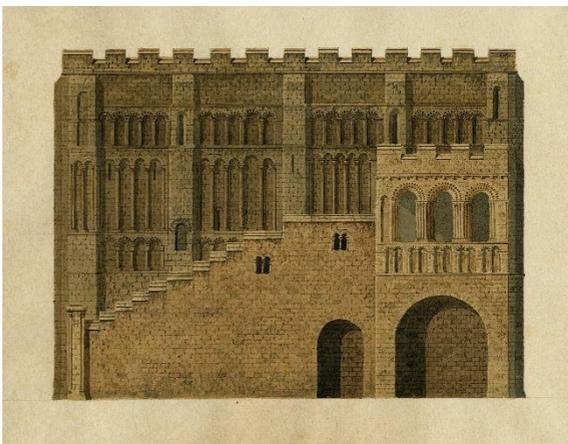
Norwich Castle is one of the most iconic 12th century secular structures in England. The site has been a dominating and central feature in the city since its first manifestation in the 11th century. Now a project is underway to refurbish the interiors of the Norman Keep, the most significant alterations to the castle for over 100 years.

The construction of Norwich Castle has its genesis in the aftermath of the Norman Conquest. At this period, Norwich was an established Anglo-Scandinavian site. The 'north wic' is first mentioned in numismatic evidence from the reign of Athelstan of England (924-39) though it must have begun as a settlement earlier. The bulk of the population lived on the south side of the river, with Tombland as a centre market space. As a means of controlling this emerging urban population and demonstrating the power of the new Norman monarchy a motte and bailey style wooden castle was constructed from around 1067. The scale of the undertaking was an equal statement of authority to the military vantage that the complex provided to the new regime. The Domesday Book notes that 98 Anglo-Saxon houses were demolished in order to make way for the mound and its bailey. The castle was one of the focal points during the Revolt of the Earls against William I in 1075. Subsequently besieged by Archbishop Lanfranc with 'every kind of engine of war', the fortress held out for three months under the leadership of Emma de Guader, Countess of Norfolk.

In the reign of William II (1087-1100), the castle complex was enhanced with the mound increased in size, the baileys expanded, and the construction of a stone Keep begun. At this period the only other two stone keeps being developed were the White Tower in London and Colchester castle. The stone for the upper portions of Keep was imported from Caen in Normandy underscoring the vast investment that the buildings works represented. It has been suggested that the design of the structure's exterior façade followed mathematic formulae for the locating of the moulding, string courses and blind arcading, with the complexity of the masonry reflecting the status of the interior levels. This created an imposing visual grandeur and acted as an expression royal authority beyond the utilitarian military standing. The approach of presenting royal power through architectural flourish and detail

was matched on the interiors through several features. These included the insertion of a kitchen in the principal floor, a well extending all the way up to the bedchamber on the same level, and the sumptuously carved Romanesque archway leading to the Great Hall, the final portal on the formal route into the heart of the castle complex. The works took around twenty-five years to complete and were finished by 1121 when Henry I held his Christmas court in the Keep.

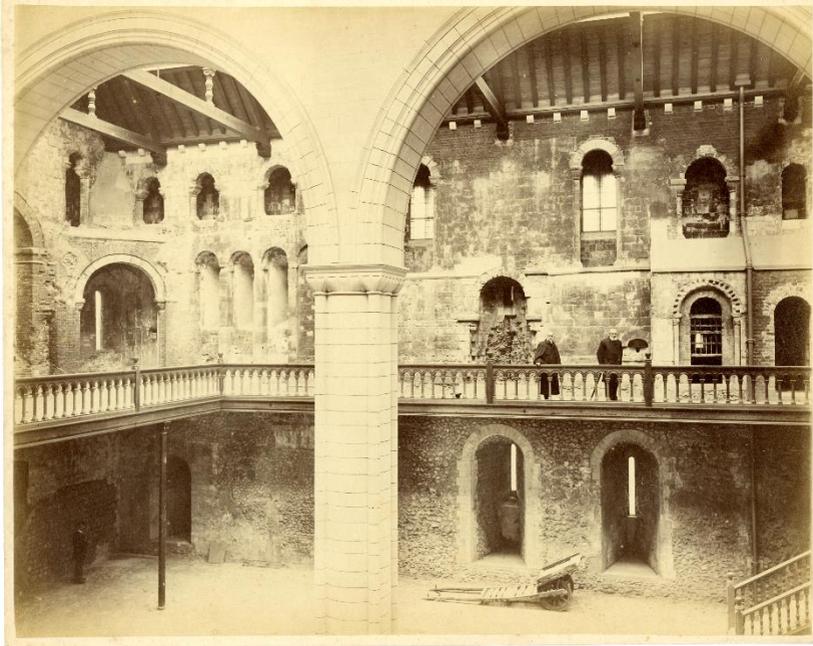
The wider castle complex continued to be updated in the subsequent decades though these enhancements did not stop the Keep being captured following sieges in 1174 and again in 1216. Though Edward I (1272-1307) built a new great hall against the north of the Keep, the 13th century saw the decline of the castle as a utilised



Watercolour of the east elevation of Norwich Castle Keep, William Wilkins, 1795 (Norfolk Museum Service)

royal residence and around 1300 it had principally become a gaol. In the subsequent centuries the castle appears to have fallen more and more into disrepair and was used as a source of building material for the city. The areas of the baileys were granted to the city in 1345 and through the centuries progressively dismantled while the ditches filled with rubbish as the city expanded. As the gaol maintained its role of dispensing royal justice, the shirehouse was rebuilt as required in 1579 and then in 1749. In 1780 the castle was purchased by the County from the Crown and three years later, as part of the prison reform movement, construction began of new cell blocks within the Keep and an adjacent entrance under the architect Sir John Soane. This work was later expanded between 1822 and 1827 with the addition of a radial plan designed by William Wilkins. In the years after, the façade of the Keep was repaired and refaced following the existing medieval patterns of

arcading, creating the exterior now seen. But even with the expansion and alterations to the structure, the castle was deemed an unsuitable site for incarceration and the prison was moved to Mousehold heath in Norwich in 1886. Proposals were then made to convert the castle into a museum and under the eye of architect Edward Boardman this work was completed in 1894. Boardman's designs were inspired by the revealed medieval remains, orienting the new interior on the footprint of the original with the new central



Photograph of South-east corner of the Keep during the conversion to a museum, 1890-2 (Norfolk Museum Service)

columns sitting on the Norman spine wall, though his proposal to reinsert the principal floor was rejected and a gallery inserted instead. The Keep has remained a museum ever since with collections and displays moving and changing over the past century.

Plans to refurbish the interiors of the Norman Keep have been in development for a number of years and construction began in 2020, generously supported by the National Heritage Lottery Fund. The project

aims to improve access across the Keep with new lifts and adjacent facilities and a complete refurbishment of the interiors. The original medieval principal floor level will be established and many of the former room divisions laid out. These spaces will be set to the 12th century, adorned with recreated furniture and textiles, based on medieval models, to help convey the colour and grandeur of the interiors in their heyday. Amongst these is a 19-metre-long embroidery, following the historical style and techniques of the Bayeux Tapestry, which will depict the two stories of the Revolt of the Earls and Hereward the Wake.

At the present lower level, a new gallery, delivered in partnership with the British Museum will explore the medieval world through the archaeological and historical collections of Norfolk Museum Service and other institutions. The gallery is organised thematically, inspired by the hierarchical social divisions through which the medieval world defined itself: Those who Work (farmers, craftspeople, merchants), Those who Pray (priests, monks, nuns) and Those who Fight (royalty, nobility, knights). These displays aim to explore many facets of medieval life and challenge some of the common misconceptions about the period.

The ground floor will present an opportunity for visitors to examine the existing archaeology of the castle through a variety of methods. The pier bases will be outlined with an artistic light sculpture to convey the shape and scale of the supports for the principal floor. A range of other media such as films and virtual reality technology will enable the contextualisation of the archaeology and architecture in a wider historical framework: how we know what we know about the development of Norwich Castle. The level will also contain an active space for teaching and an area dedicated to early years visitors where children from five and under can engage with interpretation designed specifically for them which links to the wider displays and spaces above.

These are just some of the many facets within the current project at Norwich Castle and the work which will transform the Keep overall, with the new interpretation and displays offering a glimpse of the complexity and splendour of the structure and the world in which it was first created as a royal palace in Norfolk. Norwich Castle is anticipating the completion of the works for the end of 2022.

Viking Age East Anglia

On Thursday 20 May, Dr Tim Pestell gave a fascinating online talk to some 50 members of the Society on a *Viking Age East Anglia*. Tim is the Senior Curator of Archaeology at Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery and gained his doctorate from the University of East Anglia on monasteries in the region. His current role includes looking after the post-Roman collections - so we could not have had a better qualified speaker.

Coming from Scandinavia, the Vikings was seaborne marauders, raiders and eventually settlers in the 9th to 11th Centuries, probably driven by a scarcity of good farming land as well as a desire for new sources of wealth! Initially the Viking activity focused on pirating and raiding so their impact was mainly on the coastal areas where a number of place names, such as Hemsby, have Viking origins and can be identified because they end with 'by'. In 850 they carried out a concerted series of raids with far more Vikings taking part and they were better organised. In 865, the raiders brought a large army and remained in winter quarters in East Anglia but they were bought off and left. However, they returned and in 869 defeated and killed King Edmund, who was later canonised as St Edmund. A major conquest took place at the beginning of the 11th Century and one of the Kings descended from the Vikings was Canute, who made the shrine to St Edmund - at Bury St Edmunds - into an Abbey. He was also responsible for the creation of the St Benet's Abbey.

A number of hoards of Viking valuables have been discovered in East Anglia providing good evidence of their presence and activities and giving an indication of the wealth of the region. Moreover the Vikings left their mark with place names (first evidence of which often comes from the Domesday Book of 1086) as well as absorption of some 200 words of their language, including 'sky' and 'egg' as well as all the days of the week except Saturday. Some of the artefacts discovered have included the seal of a Papal Bull from Pope John IX, gold and bronze objects, and occasional silver ingots. In addition, more practical objects include coins and weights. Although pagan, some of the decoration of items like brooches feature recognisable images of Christ but with a Scandinavian twist. Of particular interest is the Hingham Hoard, discovered by a metal detectorist in 2012 and

which included four silver brooches and 23 silver pennies from the time of King Edmund. One of Tim's jobs is sourcing funds to try to purchase these hoards if and when they come up for sale and his success has helped build an exemplary collection in the Castle Museum and Art Gallery.

After Tim finished his presentation, there were numerous questions from Society members, including the role played by detectorists. We hope he will be able to join us in person at some time in the future to update us on the continuing discoveries in the region.

Geoff Sadler



The Hingham Hoard
Picture courtesy Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery

Back Cover

3. Banqueting Trencher illustrating the Biblical parable of the rich man, Dives, and the poor man, Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31). Inscribed “This lazare pore on yearth had paine but after deathe hath Joy and reste / The glotton riche had pleasures vaine and after deathe had hell possessed”.

Painted on wood and probably copied from an engraving by the German printer Vergil Solis.

(Courtesy Norfolk Museums Service)

