

AYLSHAM LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY



JOURNAL & NEWSLETTER

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CONTENTS

Editorial.....	2
Aylsham Almanack: Chief Local Events during 1914.....	3
Aylsham in the First World War by Lynda Wix.....	5
Aylsham Contingent to the Norfolk Regiment 1914–1918.....	16
The Bowmans of Aylsham Manor – a brief coincidental history by William and Maggie Vaughan-Lewis.....	17
Society News.....	22
Molly Long† by Derek Lyons.....	22
Textile Conservation and the National Trust – a talk by Rachel Langley and an outing to Oulton – Lynda Wix.....	24
Ancient Trees in the Norfolk Landscape – a talk by Professor Tom Williamson – Roger Polhill.....	25
ALHS Dinner by Jim Pannell.....	31
ALHS 30 th Anniversary Celebration by Jim Pannell.....	31
Notices.....	32

Front cover: The Goulder Memorial Cross in the Norwich Road Cemetery, Aylsham.

Back cover: Cake for the ALHS 30th Anniversary Celebration. Photo: Geoff Sadler.

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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Lynda Wix has arranged an exhibition to mark the beginning of World War I for St Michael's Church from Monday 4th August to the end of the week and subsequently in the Heritage Centre. She has kindly provided a version for this issue of the Journal. The second main article by Maggie and William Vaughan-Lewis also touches on the WWI period and arises out of their new book *Aylsham, a Nest of Norfolk Lawyers*, which is now in press. The Society News includes a tribute to Molly Long and reports on some of the memorable lectures, excursions and social events of the year, including the 30th Anniversary Celebration.

Geoffrey Sadler has neatly redesigned the Society website, now www.alhs.weebly.com. The site is updated regularly and he urges members to use it so that it becomes more prominent on google webpages.

Please see also the other notices on the last page relating to the autumn lecture courses and heritage open days.

Lecture programme for the season has been arranged as follows.

Thursday 2 October. AGM at 7 pm followed by '*Norfolk's Deserted Settlements*' by Ian Groves. Subsequent lectures start at 7.30 pm.

Thursday 23 October. '*The Aylsham Navigation Context: Fuel, Farming and the Environment*' by Tom Williamson. Joint meeting with the Bure Navigation Conservation Trust at the Jubilee Family Centre, Norwich Road.

Thursday 27 November. To be announced (scheduled speaker has had to drop out).

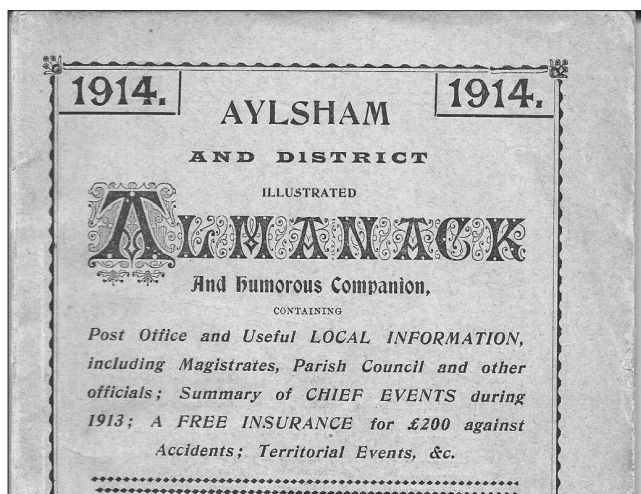
Thursday 22 January 2015. '*Tidal Lands in the Blakeney Area*' by John Peake.

26 February 2015. '*The Paston Family*' with speaker Rob Knee.

26 March 2015 '*Primitive Methodism in North Norfolk*' by David Yarham.

Aylsham Almanack: Chief Local Events during 1914

Chief Local Events during the Year 1914 by H.W. Marjoram



July

The annual Church Parade of the Territorials was held on the 5th. They were joined by the Boy Scouts, the members of the local branch of the British Red Cross Society and about 40 members of the National Reserve Force, who turned out for the first time since its formation. There were also a number of members of the Yeomanry, whose smart uniform added colour to the parade, which was headed by the band of the Territorial Detachment. The Vicar (Canon Hoare) discoursed, Captain Purdy read one of the lessons, and the Revd. C. Waters (Curate) took the prayers. The offertory was for the Parish Nurse Fund. In the afternoon, Captain and Mrs Purdy entertained the Territorials, to strawberry and cream tea.

The Revd. R. Buck, of Dunkirk, having accepted a living at East Molesey, left the parish this month, and the Revd. P. Brereton succeeded him at Aylsham.

Mr. R. Buck, of Dunkirk, had a hen sitting on 10 hen's eggs and 1 duck's egg, and when hatched, the duck was found to possess four feet.

At the Newmarket July bloodstock sale, the Aylsham Stud's Pawnce, a ten-year-old bay mare, by Avington-Pansy, with bay filly foal, by Neil Gow, made 340 guineas, the purchaser being Mr. F. Lynham.

In connection with the Misses Reynold's and Chamberlin's Beeches School, a sale of work realised about £5 for the Aylsham Coal Club.

Miss Mercy Goulder and her staff of helpers raised £12 15s 9d for Dr. Barnardo's Homes, by a street collection.

August to December

From the beginning of August, and onwards, the customary local events were almost at a standstill, owing to the outbreak of a great European War, and this terrible event filled the hearts and minds of everybody. The Committees of the Aylsham and North Walsham Agricultural Society and the Industrial Exhibition discontinued their energies in these directions, and other events were postponed sine die, and the inhabitants gave up their time to the more pressing needs of their King and Country.

On the 5th August, considerable excitement was caused in the town by the mobilization of the Aylsham Detachment, 5th B.N.R. The Territorials, at short notice, paraded in the Market Square, and afterwards adjourned to the Town Hall, where they were addressed by Captain Purdy who urged upon them the importance of making themselves fit in every way, and not to grumble if they should be called upon to endure hardships. He asked them to take as their motto, "For God and King". The Captain's remarks were received with cheers from the Territorials, and they formed up (about 60 strong), and after a prayer by the Vicar (Canon Hoare), they were marched to the G.E.R. station, headed by the band, where they were entrained for East Dereham for a few days, and from thence to Colchester. Other recruits joined Captain Purdy's men later, and about 60% of them volunteered for service abroad. Later on some of the Local Reservists responded to the call to serve their King, and defend their hearths and homes. Several gentlemen who could not leave their businesses, or were hindered by other causes, volunteered to serve as special Constables, and to undertake other home duties.

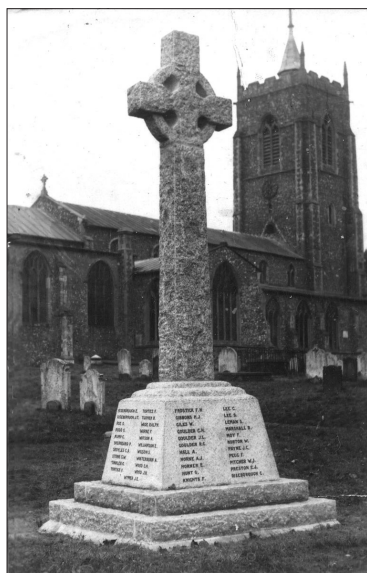
Meetings were held in the Town Hall, and various Committees were formed for various useful purposes in time of need, Mr. H.F. Proudfoot acting as Hon. Secretary.

Major Bowman, Major Gidney, and Ex-sergeant Tuddenham were busily engaged in drilling and making fit recruits, and Ex-sergeant H. Wade as Recruiting Officer, had the satisfaction of passing a number of local men into the army.

Mrs. Cheetham, Mrs. Bowman, Mrs. Larkworthy and others, had their residences ready to receive any wounded if need be (and the need arose later on). Dr. Sapwell was giving courses of first aid lessons, Miss Hoare had a staff of ladies working shirts, bed jackets, and other clothing requirements of a hospital. A local Defence Fund was formed for the relief of needy causes, and much good work was done all round.

Aylsham in the First World War

Lynda Wix



It is believed up to four hundred men left Aylsham to fight in the First World War. Only their families know who returned wounded in body and mind, who could never talk about what they had seen, who were unable to return to their former employment. Research could give a full list of those conscripted to serve but there are only records locally of those in the Territorials and in Kitchener's army before conscription was introduced in 1916. More is known of the sixty five who never returned and whose names are carved on the war memorial.

Recent access to the 1911 census can reveal what employment these men had before they left home and the shape of their families. What of the families whose sons, brothers, husbands left Aylsham to serve in the forces. We can trace some of them, in particular those who died in service. We can see the shape of their families – was the man the only son or one recently married or one of several brothers. We can find what employment they left – many farm labourers, some tradesmen, some craftsmen. Some left in August 1914, others volunteered and enlisted later and others joined when conscription was introduced in 1916.

Here are a few men and their family history.

Percy Willie Baker, born in Aylsham 1895, son of John, who was born in Ingworth and Matilda from Wood Dalling. In the 1911 census he was listed, age 16, as a general labourer. When he joined the army he was described as a farm labourer.

Frank Thomas Bond was born in Drabblegate in 1891. His father Dennis was born in Oxnead and his mother Sarah in Itteringham. In the 1911 census the family is listed in Hungate Street, Aylsham. Frank, by now 23 years old, was a carpenter. His brother Granville, age 18, was an assistant outfitter.

Walter Cecil Chamberlain was born in 1898. He was the son of Walter and Martha. In 1911 Walter's father was a milkman on a farm. The family lived in Fox's Loke Aylsham.

Thomas E. Ducker was born in Pound Road, Aylsham, in 1887. His father was James, his mother Letitia; there were at least seven children in the family. On Christmas Day 1908 Thomas married Ellen Kerrison at Tuttington church. In the 1911 census Thomas was listed as a farm labourer living in Fox's Loke with his wife and one year old son also named Thomas.

William George Field was born in 1884. In the 1901 census he is listed as living with his maternal grandparents and working as a teamster on a farm. He enlisted in Aylsham as a member of the Territorial Force 1/5th Norfolk regiment.

Arthur Robert Hall was born in 1886. His father, Charles, was a stonemason of Millgate Street, his mother was Susannah Postle. Arthur was listed in 1911 as a single man, age 24, living on New Road and working as a stonemason.

Eric Horner was born in 1892. His father was a blacksmith in Cawston Road on the corner of Fox's Loke. In the 1911 census Eric is listed as single, working as a coal miner and boarding in Shield Row, County Durham.

Sydney Samuel Lea/Lee was born in 1897, the son of Hubert William and Elizabeth of Beerhouse Farm, Cawston. In the 1911 census Samuel was listed as a farm labourer working at Sankence Farm and therefore known to Colonel Sapwell.

William Norton was born in Aylsham in 1876. His father John had been an innkeeper's ostler. In the 1911 census William is listed as married to Sarah with 4 sons and living in Pound Road. He worked as a garden labourer.

J.C. Payne was born in Aylsham in 1884. His father William was a bricklayer, his mother was called Anna Sophia. In the 1901 census he is found listed as a bricklayer's labourer with 2 brothers and 5 sisters. The family lived in Drabblegate.

Charles John Rump was born in Aylsham in 1882. He was the only son of Joseph, a gardener, and Harriet, a dressmaker. In the 1911 census Charles is listed as married with a carpenter's trade.

Fred Tortice was the son of Elizabeth of Town Lane. In the 1911 census he was listed as being single, a farm labourer and living in Dunkirk.

Benjamin Robert Turner was born in Aylsham in 1889. His parents were called

Benjamin and Mary. In the 1911 census he is listed as single, a plumber and house decorator and living with his widowed father in Hungate Street.

Ralph John Wade was born in Aylsham, son of Harry and Leah of Penfold Street. In the 1911 census he is listed as a whitesmith apprenticed to his father.

James Emmanuel Wymer was born in 1893 the son of John and Elizabeth. In the 1911 census he is listed as single, a cowman living in Drabblegate. His father was a traction engine driver.

Tension between nations had been rumbling for some years, but few of those who went to Holkham Park for the Territorials' summer camp in 1914 can have imagined they were on the brink of disaster. A church parade in Aylsham followed by a strawberry tea seemed like a very English peace-time affair.

But on August 5th Major Purdy left his home, Millgate House, to address the Territorials in the Market Place before they marched down to Aylsham South railway station and so off to Dereham and on to war. For some this was their last view of Aylsham. As a child this was a sight to stick in the memory.

The schools broke up for the Harvest Holidays in August 1914 with the cloud of war hovering over the country. On 4th August I remember coming from school and seeing people congregating in the Market Place outside the Post Office (now the International Stores) and the Black Boys, waiting for the latest news. The hushed silence was strangely ominous, for even we schoolchildren realised that fathers and brothers would be leaving to fight the enemy, and although you might be proud you had someone in the fighting forces, there was a tense tightening in the throat at the thought of what might happen.

During the war years I was travelling each school-day to East Dereham by train, 7.45 a.m. in the morning, returning at 6.00 p.m. in the evening.

Violet Spalding's memories included in W.I. book in the Aylsham Town Archive.

It was thought that if there was a war it would be over by Christmas. The fear was of a pre-emptive strike on British mainland by sea before the British navy could be in place. This strike would be repulsed by the superior strength of the British navy (in the meanwhile the army would send an expeditionary force to Belgium to honour obligations and alliances).

So once war was declared there were panics about German zeppelins that had bombed Sheringham and a possible coastal raid from the deep water close inshore at Weybourne. A series of trenches in radial arcs were dug from Weybourne; pillboxes in pairs built as a stop line and people riding bicycles or carts which showed lights were fined – they might have been wittingly or unwittingly guiding zeppelins to targets.

APRIL 26, 1917

BEFORE THE MAGISTRATES

AYLSHAM—Tuesday.

(Before Major H. S. Marsham (chairman), Mr. P. C. Shepheard, Mr. F. E. Patteson, Colonel B. B. Sapwell, and Mr. Wm. Casa.)

Mr. M. Falcon took his seat on the Bench for the first time.

Sergeant Sidney Willoway, charged with obstructing the free passage of the highway at Aylsham on March 25th, was fined 7s. 6d. and costs 2s. 6d.

George Dennis, an Erpingham farmer, charged with driving a horse and cart without a red rear light at Aylsham on April 7th, was fined 4s. Gwendoline Orford, school teacher, of Marsham, charged with riding a bicycle without a red rear light at Hevingham on April 7th, was fined 2s. 6d. Walter Medler, of Hevingham, labourer, for a like offence, was fined 2s. 6d. Thomas Matthewson, of Hevingham, dealer, charged with driving a horse and cart with an unshaded accetylene lamp at Hevingham on April 14th, was fined 2s. 6d. Alexander Gibson, of Hevingham, labourer, charged with driving a horse and cart without proper lights at Hevingham on April 7th, was fined 7s. 6d. John Ellis, of Hevingham, dealer, charged with driving a horse and cart without lights at Hevingham on April 7th, was fined 5s. Thomas Matthewson, of Hevingham, dealer, for a similar offence, was fined 5s., and William Matthewson, of Hevingham, dealer, 5s. William Fisher, of Coltishall, groom, charged with driving a horse and cart with one front light at Coltishall on April 14th, was fined 3s. 2d.

In Aylsham everyone wanted to prove their readiness to help the war effort. Some trained as special constables responsible for policing emergency instructions in case of invasion. A Black book for Hungate Street listed those who had a shovel to dig trenches ? or a cellar to shield the family or who wished to leave if necessary.

No	Occupiers name	Number of women and children	Number who want to be taken away	Occasion how many it will carry besides driver	Is any of any description in house	Is any cellar underground accommodation	
1	Robert ²⁰ Samuel ^{House} Last	5	nil	1	5	None	Not good
2	Francis Williamson	1	1	None	None	None	None
3	William Fox	None	None	None	None	None	None
4	William ^{House} Clarke	3	3	None	None	None	Not good
5	Edward ^{House} Dalls	4	5	3	9	None	Very good
6	Rose Durant	1	1	None	None	None	None
7	John Thaxter ^{Post Office}	None	None	None	None	None	None
8	J. Heldon	1	1	None	None	None	None
9	John Spilling	7	4	None	None	None	None
10	Jane Rivett	1	1	None	None	None	None
11	J. Barrett	3	3	None	None	None	None
12	Thomas Shaw	1	1	None	None	None	None
13	Herbert Doughty	1	1	None	None	None	None
14	Abraham Watson	1	1	None	None	None	None
15	Emma Brown	1	1	None	None	None	None

People soon found troops from Wales, Scotland and London in their midst, training before leaving for the front. These men were originally in tented camps but as the war was obviously not short and sharp, once the weather turned colder troops were billeted in private houses around the town, in the Maltings and on farms such as Blickling Lodge.

As conscription in 1916 meant more men were called up buildings which could hold larger numbers of men were required. Gradually Aylsham workhouse was completely requisitioned. The inmates were sent off to Smallburgh or West Beckham.

Aylsham workhouse minutes AC/GP1/34 AC/GP1/33 Norfolk Record Office

Aug. 22nd 1916. The clerk reported that application had been made to him by the Military Authorities for the use of the west wing of the House, part of the isolation Block and the Childrens Home by troops during the coming winter months. The application was acceded to.



Stonehouse, Millgate, with billeted troops. Aylsham Town Council Archive.

Those on the home front supported concerts given by and for the troops. They set up sewing parties. They bought war loans. War weariness must have set in as the casualties rose and the shortages grew, but Aylsham people continued their support. There had been trouble from troops being rowdy in the town after a night in the Black Boys. The local magistrates decreed troops had to leave by nine in the evening, the locals could continue drinking until ten. As part of the solution to this problem of young men needing a place for recreation a Y.M.C.A. hut was built off Commercial Road, now Bure Way

The church was exercised, almost in a moral panic, about the way young people were mixing during the war. The Bishop of Norwich sent this letter to be read out in churches.

I would be so grateful if you would personally do all you can by the grace of God in this way, and would also try to shield our soldiers and all our young people from temptation. Much harm can be done by good humoured but thoughtless treating, and by allowing the young men and girls to be exposed together.

Believe me to be,

Your Friend and Bishop

On a practical matter, the church realized the dangers from the air. Precautions against fire were made. Evening services were moved to the parish rooms as the cost of blacking out the huge church windows was too much. In the early days of the war fighting by air was a novel concept and the

range of aircraft was limited. Landing grounds for aeroplanes chasing zeppelins were created between aerodromes. One such was in a designated field behind Marsham church. At night the site was lit by flares – hopefully to show up the church tower as well as the field to incoming flights.

So Aylsham was defended by trenches, pillboxes, landing grounds, a military train trundling up and down the line between North Walsham and Mundesley all the war. Local men were trained to evacuate people away from danger and police the strict blackout.

For the women of Aylsham service was possible at the Red Cross Hospital at Cawston Manor, now a psychiatric unit. Local girls would be needed as nursing assistants, cooks and cleaners. Did they cycle to Cawston unchaperoned for a night shift? There is no evidence of particular Aylsham women working in hospitals or munitions factories, on transport, in offices, in the post office or on farms but there is evidence of this service being provided by women in Norfolk.

Farmers and agricultural labourers were opposed to German prisoners of war, boys or women working on farms. The labourers feared their wages would be undercut and their jobs permanently lost. The farmers feared women would not be able to do the heavy work. Hence Aylsham tribunals appealing against conscription to keep men on the farms, with members of the appeal committee instructed to reject as many appeals as possible.

NO WHEAT IN.

A farmer of 380 acres appealed for a general labourer, aged 27, married, and passed fit. He stated that he had only seven men, and had no wheat in, no bullocks in the yard, and no sheep on the turnip ground. He was also backward with his muck spreading. Applicant had tried to get women to pull the roots, but they would not do the work, and he had also advertised for labour in four papers, but without success.

Mr. Sapwell remarked that the applicant was stating just what was taking place all over the county.

The farmer stated that the man had been three times rejected for the Navy and once for the Army, and that was why he took him on. He had four brothers serving.

Mr. Sapwell—How are you going to get your wheat in?—I shall do my best. Last year I had over 100 acres of wheat, and this year 84 acres, but I don't know what I shall have next year.

Conditional exemption.

German prisoners of war were mainly put to clearing drains and rivers that remained damaged after the 1912 flood. Many women would have worked on the family farm as they always had done. A few joined the Womens Land Army in spite of concerns about women wearing trousers.

Mr Sapwell of Sankence Farm wrote 'Farmers Notes' for the E.D.P. but he was very wary of farmers being told by the government to put land to growing crops. He believed quantities of grass were needed to provide forage for horses. Did he realize the government's dilemma?

The land had not recovered from the agricultural depressions of the late nineteenth century when much arable land fell into disuse. Quantities of home grown food were low as imports from Canada and Argentina supplied the market, but this supply route of food was seriously affected by German U-boats. At one time there was only a few weeks' food supply remaining. A Corn Act was passed in 1917 to insist land was used for food production and rationing was introduced in 1918. The International Stores in Red Lion Street was one of the nominated shops where you could take your coupons.

So with growing privations life went on in Aylsham and the dreaded telegrams were delivered. The Ducker family, then of Fox's Loke, still have the last postcard sent from the front by Thomas to his wife and child. The post soon after brought news of his death.

The Goulder family lost three brothers. There is evidence in the Norwich Union archives of the life policy of £300 taken out on Robert Christopher's life and the pay-out when he died of wounds received in battle. This money was generously given towards the cost of a sports pavilion on the memorial Recreation Ground provided after the war on land also given by his parents.

A most moving funeral was held in Aylsham for his brother Clare Horseley, fatally wounded in the same campaign on the Somme.

The deceased was accorded full military honours, and every shop in the town was shaded whilst the Market Place and the route from the parish Church to the Cemetery was lined with large numbers of sympathetic spectators. The body which was enclosed in a coffin of polished oak with brass furniture arrived at Aylsham by train shortly before noon and was conveyed to the church where it rested on a bier just behind the font. The latter had been draped with the flags of the Allies and at the foot were arranged many choice floral tributes.

Whilst the congregation were assembling the organist Mr. Frank Hill F.R.C.O. played Chopin's Funeral March. The service was conducted by Canon Hoare, the rector, and the Rev. R.W. Longley, vicar of St Martin at Palace, Norwich.

The Mourners were Miss Sybil Goulder and Mrs J. Hammond (sisters), Mr H.W. Goulder (brother), Captain J. Hammond (brother in law), Mr W.E. Peacock (uncle), Mr

H.F. Proudfoot, Mr and Mrs B. Ling (Worstead), Mr and Mrs F Ling (Holt), Mrs P. Green, Mr and Mrs J.L. Jackson, Mr and Mrs F.E. Buck.

None of the young men mentioned at the beginning of this article returned home.

Percy Willie Baker was killed on 31.7.1917. He had been awarded the Military Medal. His brother James was taken as a prisoner of war after the Battle of Ypres. His son Charles lived in Aylsham until the 1980s.

Frank Thomas Bond died of wounds on 9.11.1915 and is buried in Bethune Town Cemetery, France.

Walter Cecil Chamberlain died at the Battle of Gallipoli 12.8.1915.

Thomas E. Ducker died on 18.10.1916, on the same day and in the same battle as his brother James. Both brothers are buried in Bamont cemetery, France.

William George Field died 22.10.1916 after working with Colonel Purdy.

Arthur Robert Hall died on 18.10 1918, just before the war ended. The Oddfellows in Aylsham sent a letter of condolence to his father.

Eric Horner died aged 23 on 21.8.1915 in the Dardanelles, during the Gallipoli campaign, as a member of the 6th Battalion Yorkshire Regiment.

Sydney Samuel Lea/Lee is mentioned in Colonel Purdy's diary 22.10.1916. He died on 7.1.1917.

William Norton died on 17.3.1917 and is buried in France.

J.C. Payne died in Dec. 1917 and is buried in Aylsham cemetery.

Charles John Rump died on 12.7.1917 and is buried in France.

Fred Tortice died on 18.11.1918 after the armistice and is buried in Aylsham cemetery.

Benjamin Robert Turner was a member of the Territorial Force 1/5th Norfolks who marched from the Market Place in August 1914. He died at the Battle of Gallipoli 1915.

Ralph John Wade died of enteric fever at Alexandria Hospital in Egypt and was buried in Alexandria on 13.10.1915. Colonel Purdy visited his grave on 28.4.1917.

James Emmanuel Wymer died of wounds 13.4.1918; buried in the Somme Cemetery.

Major Purdy, who set off for war with the 5th battalion of the Norfolk regiment, led them through Gallipoli and Gaza. His diaries record instances of meeting Aylsham men on service abroad.

At the E.F. Canteen was "Kitpole" erstwhile a Millgate wherryman son of old Allen who used to dydle the river for the Navigation Commrs. He had joined the 3rd Norfolk Regt. then been transferred to a Garrison Battalion and been taken on by the F.F. at Mudros and came on with them to Kantara where he had been 15 months. He was getting all he wanted in the way of food and drink and 17s. a week in addition to his pay – looked fat and well and said he had saved £50 since he had been in the army. I handed him a letter

to Dodo to post.

Extract from Captain Purdy's diary courtesy of Peter Purdy.

And his despair at the loss of so many of his men. His diary also records how quickly he received copies of local newspapers such as *The Cromer Post* at the front.

When Peace finally came, the church bells were rung, the flag was flown from the church tower and the vicar gave thanks that God had been on our side.

AYLSHAM

As soon as the good news was received the Union Jack was hoisted on the church tower and several houses displayed flags. The bells were pealed, and at three o'clock the Vicar (Canon Hoare) conducted a service of thanksgiving, which was well attended by civilians and soldiers. The National Anthem, "All people that on earth do dwell" and "Now thank we our God" were sung. The Vicar made a few feeling remarks. At the Cawston Manor Hospital (Commandant Mrs. J.C. Cheetham), where there are over 200 wounded boys, an entertainment and supper were specially arranged, and the festivities were kept up until the early hours of Tuesday morning.

The surviving men returned to Aylsham. The town had suffered no war damage but the lives of many had been changed for ever.

Meetings were held to decide how to remember those who had lost their lives. Only five servicemen were buried in Aylsham Town cemetery. For other families whose men had been killed and buried on the battle ground there was no body or funeral. A war memorial in the churchyard recording their names was the closest point for them. Others wanted a sports ground and pavilion. The needs of both parties were met and a peace began which lasted until 1939.

AYLSHAM WAR MEMORIAL

June 1919

At a Committee Meeting held on the 17th inst., it was decided to report the progress that had already been made, and to extend the time for further Donations until the 19th July, 1919.

The amounts subscribed to the Memorial, consisting of a Granite Cross in the Churchyard, with the names of the fallen inscribed on it, and a Tablet with the names on it outside the Town Hall, total £279. 5s. 6d., and the Committee decided to proceed at once with the erection of the Granite Cross....

The amounts subscribed to the Institute and the Recreation Ground are shown over-leaf, and the Committee hope that before the 19th of July these will be considerably increased.....

Whichever scheme, whether an Institute or a Recreation Ground, is decided upon, the chief object is to provide healthy means of amusement and recreation for those who have not the opportunity of providing those things for themselves.

LIST OF DONATIONS

There follows the list of the 113 subscribers to the Memorial Cross, of which the principal donors were Major & Mrs T.W. Purdy, £50, Col. Bowman, Major & Mrs Johnson, Canon & Mrs Hoare and Col. B.B. Sapwell, each of whom contributed £20. In all £279.5.6 had been raised by this date.

The Institute Fund had raised £193.19.6, for which the principal donors were Major & Mrs T.W. Purdy and Mr H. Page, £50 each, Mrs Boulderson, £40, and Canon and Mrs Hoare, £25.

The Recreation Ground raised £740.3.6, the principal donor being The Goulder Family £550 (and a Pavilion), Major H.J. Gidney and Mr H. Page, £50 each, and Colonel Bowman, £30.

DISCUSSION

Col. Goulder in favour of a Recreation Ground. He saw on the battle field of Flanders the kind of courage that had pulled us through....the men then did not consider the cost – they went over the top & we must not consider the cost.

Mr Hodds: young men wanted a place to play football and cricket in the summer...he did not believe in marble & stone memorials

Mrs Johnson re Institute [for which she no doubt spoke].....

Mr Sapwell: the men who played football and cricket won the war not the men who played draughts.



Aylsham Recreation Ground, 1927. Courtesy Aylsham Town Archive.

Aylsham Contingent to the Norfolk Regiment 1914–1918

Aylsham 1914–1918: Norfolk Regiment, 5th Battalion, from Sapwell, J. (1960), *A History of Aylsham*: 53–54.

On 5th August 1914, the day after the declaration of war on Germany, the 5th (Territorial) battalion of the Norfolk Regiment was mobilized for active service. The Aylsham detachment (forming part of C company) paraded in the market place, after being addressed by their Commanding Officer, Capt. T.W. Purdy, in the Town Hall. Prayers were offered by the vicar, Canon Hoare, who wished them God speed, and, headed by their band, they marched to the Great Eastern station where they entrained for their depot in Dereham.

After nearly a year's training in England, the 5th battalion, now forming part of 163rd Infantry brigade of 54 Division, embarked in H.M.T. "Aquitania" for the Dardanelles, and on the 10th August, 1915, landed at Suvla Bay. The action fought there on 12th August proved to be the first of two great disasters to the battalion, whose fate at the time appeared to be something of a mystery.

From conversation with survivors of the battle and the study of records, the truth appears to be somewhat as follows. The 163rd brigade was ordered to advance and clear the thickly enclosed country of enemy, preparatory to a larger attack on the Tekke Tepe ridge planned for the next day. Instead of advancing to a predetermined position and digging in there, Col. Sir Horace Beauchamp, O.C. of the 5th Norfolks, a brave but somewhat impetuous soldier, continued to advance indefinitely with his men until they were wiped out piecemeal. The bodies of some of them were found after the war half a mile behind the enemy front line. According to their war diary the casualties of the 5th battalion were 22 officers and 350 other ranks, many of whom came from Aylsham and district.

The rest of their stay on the peninsula was comparatively uneventful, and, on the night of 4th December, they were evacuated together with the rest of the allied forces and withdrawn to Alexandria. There followed a year of duty guarding the Suez Canal, and in February 1917 the battalion marched through the Sinai desert to take part in the campaign in Palestine.

In the second battle of Gaza on 19th April, the battalion again suffered terribly in a frontal attack, losing 19 officers and 643 men, leaving practically none of the original members.



The Bowmans of Aylsham Manor - a brief coincidental history

William & Maggie Vaughan-Lewis

As part of our research for our book on Aylsham lawyers and their houses, we talked to Maureen and Richard Burr about their time in the Manor on Norwich Road when Maureen opened and ran a bar and restaurant there in 1979–1980. As most readers will know, they subsequently built themselves a house and are creating a wonderful woodland garden in part of the Manor grounds. Maureen had bought the old house and grounds from the family of a ‘Major Bowman’ and we were curious to find out a little more about the two generations of this family that owned the Manor from 1908 to 1977. When Maureen, then Maureen Barnes, first arrived to collect the key to the house – at the Black Boys – the Manor name drew a blank. It turned out it was only known as ‘Major Bowman’s place’! Both the Bowman men had been in the army in the First World War, making it particularly appropriate to write about them in this centenary year.

In 1901 the Bulwer family, long-standing owners, had sold in 14 lots the whole Manor House estate of 230 acres, with all its farms and cottages. In 1908 the house and grounds were again sold by the executors of William Page. (Sales particulars in the Town Archive for 1901 and Norfolk Record Office, BR 184/387, for 1908.) *The Times* of 6th June 1908 described it as known as ‘The Manor House’, an Elizabethan red brick residence with its rooms described in outline and the well-timbered grounds of more than 9 acres were noted to contain a tennis court and croquet lawn. The house and grounds were bought by Major Henry James Bowman, who had retired in 1904 from his army career in the Derbyshire Regiment. Standard internet sources enabled the background of this man to be discovered with ease. (ancestry.co.uk; findmypast.co.uk; familysearch.org; FreeBMD.org.uk; *The Times* Digital Archive; *The London Gazette*; *The Law Journal*; *The Post Office Directory*; *Blackwood’s Magazine*; etc.)

Joseph Bowman was born in Cockermouth, Cumberland in 1779 and emerged as a successful and prosperous ‘China merchant’ working from premises in 3 Wood Street and 34 Milk Street in Cheapside in the City of London. Directories and bankruptcy notices on customers who did not pay their bills show that Bowman and his long-time partner John May dealt as wholesale merchants supplying primarily drapers around the country. *The Post Office London Directory* of 1843 described them as ‘Scotch and Manchester Warehousemen’. No doubt fine fabrics, tea, Chinese porcelain and other

objects were at the core of their trade.

Joseph and his first wife Elizabeth Robinson (married in Hackney in 1809 but probably from Cockermouth) had three sons, all of whom were involved in the business: William (baptised 1814 in St John, Hackney), Abraham (1816) and John (1822). Elizabeth died in the 1820s and Joseph had a daughter by his second wife Mary Younghusband of Glasgow. By 1851 Joseph, living at 18 Hackney Terrace, described himself as a retired China Merchant. He died in January 1861 and by the census of that year all three of his sons described themselves as retired merchants, having no doubt inherited enough money to buy country seats and live off invested funds and the profits from lands.

Eldest son William married relatively late in life in 1870 to Philippa Julgan, a daughter of a Crown Agent for the Colonies. Abraham married Maria Matilda Bingley in Cockermouth in 1854; the Cumberland roots of this family were strong. They had a number of children brought up at his seat at Stangrove in Edenbridge, Kent. John also went to Cockermouth two years later to marry Charlotte Emma, the daughter of John Robinson (and quite possibly his first cousin). In keeping with this much-travelled family, Charlotte had been born in Malta in about 1833. John and Charlotte settled in Rusthall Lodge in Speldhurst parish, part of Tunbridge Wells, Kent. Here they raised a family of four boys and a girl. Eldest son Alfred John became a Captain in the 4th Battalion Scottish Rifles and a successful Inner Temple barrister. Our interest is in the next eldest, Henry James born in August 1860.

Henry James Bowman became a career army officer; thanks to the sale of his medals in 2009, the essence of his career was found on the internet without having to work through the records at the National Archives (WO 76/110/11). At the 1881 census he was a Lieutenant in the Militia, still living at home. He seems to have joined the 95th Derbyshire Regiment at around the time of the 1881 amalgamation with the 45th Nottinghamshire Regiment to become The Sherwood Foresters (Derbyshire Regiment, later Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Regiment). Bowman was made Lieutenant in the 2nd battalion in January 1882 and active service followed in the Egypt Expedition, the Sudan, India, Sikkim, the Punjab and the Tirah campaign on the north-west frontier. His Egyptian campaign medal, the Khedive Star in 1882, probably explains a tale told by Richard Burr. In Richard's schooldays in Aylsham the rumour was that there were crocodiles in the large ponds in the grounds of the Manor. Much later he was to unearth the skull of a Nile crocodile which it seems, with other hunting trophies, had hung in the summer house still just standing in the Manor gardens. No doubt this was one of Henry James Bowman's, bagged in Egypt in the 1880s!

Henry's India General Service Medal for 1888 in Sikkim was not the only

reminder of his time there; that year his only child was born in Sikkim and christened Aubrey Cyril Sikkim Bowman. The previous year Henry had married Catherine Maud Mary Walker, daughter of Reverend Joseph Need Walker, Rector of Averham, Nottinghamshire and sister of Reverend Joseph Cyril Walker who succeeded his father as Rector there from 1907 to 1942. By chance, Henry Gidney, one of Aylsham's solicitors, was involved in family matters and a copy of the 1887 marriage settlement survives in his papers (NRO, AYL 1159). John Bowman settled £6,700 on his son and Catherine; they were to have the interest for life and then the principal would pass to their children. (This would be worth more than £400,000 in today's money - TNA currency converter.) In January 1890 Bowman was promoted to Captain and to Major in February 1901. In 1891 Henry, wife and young son, together with Henry's elder brother, can all be spotted in the Scottish census living in The Glebe, Bent Road, Hamilton, Lanarkshire; presumably they were there on a period of home leave. In 1901 Aubrey was lodging in East Bletchington in Sussex; probably at school while his father was perhaps abroad on active service – the regiment was engaged in the Boer War. In June 1902 Henry James Bowman was made Recruiting Staff Officer in Manchester for the regiment (*Hart's Annual Army List ...*, 1904, p. 305, includes his promotion dates).

Major Bowman retired in 1904 and moved to Aylsham in 1908 but with the outbreak of the First World War he went back into active service. In 1915 he was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel as Commandant of the large prisoner of war camp at Stobs Camp in the estate of Stobs Castle near Hawick in Lowland Scotland. The Norfolk Record Office has a letter addressed to him there (AYL 1159) and various websites cover the history of the camp, noting him as commandant. A large area of countryside there had been acquired by the War Office in 1903 to create a training base for the army. The camp came into its own from 1914 when capacity rose to accommodate thousands of trainees at any one time. In due course it was served by its own branch line railway and had a substantial hospital on site. From November 1914 German civilian internees and increasing numbers of German prisoners of war, both army and navy, were also housed at the camp. By the middle of 1915 the numbers grew rapidly and it seems that at least 3–4,000 prisoners were there at peak. In 1916 the civilian internees were packed off to the Isle of Man and the camp was solely a military prisoner camp until its final clearance at the end of 1919. Colonel Bowman was clearly good at his job; the camp has a reputation for few escapes and virtually no escapees not being recaptured. He did of course have thousands of eager soldiers, remoteness and rough terrain on his side.

Meanwhile, Aubrey Bowman had joined up promptly and by October 1914 was temporary 2nd Lieutenant in the Army Service Corps (*London Gazette*). At

the time of his engagement in January 1916 he was still a 2nd Lieutenant in the Army Service Corps, Military Train. This large corps of the army built railways and ran trains and other transport systems to keep the front line supplied, particularly with ammunition. What a nice coincidence that Richard Burr is firmly intent on building a narrow-gauge steam railway in their grounds! (And William Page had been a tramway engineer!) Aubrey's subsequent army service has not been researched but his record card is in The National Archives (WO 372/3/12719) and shows his service from 1914 to 1920 when he left still a Lieutenant in the, by then renamed, Royal Army Service Corps. Unless, unlikely for a man born in 1888, he served and was twice promoted in the Second World War, rank inflation took hold for 'Major Bowman' of Aylsham. The 1963 edition of *Burke's Peerage ...*, in a section on Sir Hastings Goldney, 4th Baronet, refers to his sister Lucy Hulbert Goldney being married to Aubrey CS Bowman, 'sometime Lieutenant in the Army Service Corps', and having children.

Aubrey married in 1916 to Lucy Hulbert Goldney, youngest daughter of Frederick Goldney (later 3rd Baronet) who was variously mayor of and MP for Chippenham in Wiltshire and a High Sheriff of the county. He was known as a senior freemason and wrote a book, *A History of Freemasonry in Wiltshire*; he had homes at Beechfield, Corsham and Prior Place, Camberley in Surrey. Aubrey's life outside the army has not been researched in any detail but a certain amount about him has been found. Aubrey and Lucy had two daughters: Veronica Lucy (b. 1920) and Gwendoline Maud Ethel (1923). Both births were registered in Uckfield, Sussex where Aubrey and the family lived in The Red House, Isfield (*Debrett's Baronetage ...*, 1931, p. 331, which also noted their other home being The Manor House, Aylsham). In Uckfield Aubrey Bowman, MSPBA, was running a commercial poultry breeding operation (*Modern Poultry Keeping*, Volume 5, 1922, p. 146).

Aubrey's father died in Aylsham in June 1925 aged 64, his ashes under the memorial in the Manor garden, and his mother in 1929, leaving estates, respectively, of £53,712 (more than £1.6 million in today's money) and £21,207; Aubrey of course was the main heir. A summary of Henry's will was published in *The Times* and small legacies were left to: the Aylsham Scouts towards providing a hut; a Fund for alterations to Aylsham's National School; the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (had he been involved with Aubrey's poultry business, or did he not approve?) and the Church of England Waifs and Strays. First and foremost of these legacies, however, was £150 left to his gardener William Wones. Wones may have been the son of a labourer living in Millgate Street, born just before the 1911 census, and he may well have continued to work for Aubrey for many years. Maureen Burr remembers the covenant included in the deeds of the Manor which required a gate into the

garden to be maintained opposite the bottom of Oakfield Road so that the gardener could come discreetly into the garden to tend the family memorial stones. Richard has unearthed, sometimes painfully, various rusted fencing legacies of the menagerie of animals that Aubrey Bowman seems to have kept in the grounds.

Although Aubrey inherited the Manor in 1929 he and Lucy can be found in the 1930 and 1931 Surrey Electoral Registers voting from their home in White Knobs, part of White Knobs Manor, Godstone Road, Caterham (ancestry.co.uk, presumably they had only recently moved there). Their 'abode' in Aylsham was also then noted but Aubrey does not actually appear in the Aylsham directories until 1937. His supply instincts were still at the heart of the business he ran until 1937 at 25 Oxendon Street, just around the corner from Leicester Square in London's West End. By yet another strange coincidence, William Vaughan-Lewis's forebears many years ago ran a large silk dyers' business almost next door at numbers 27–29 Oxendon Street. In 1937 Aubrey retired from the partnership he had with game farm proprietor Harry Walpole Palmer of Aspen Vale in Cawston. They had been running Sandy's Snack Bar in Oxendon Street and were described as sandwich and snack bar keepers and restaurateurs – very fresh egg sandwiches for breakfast no doubt. Sandy's is credited with being the first of its kind in London, opened in 1933 (or a little earlier) and selling 60 varieties of sandwich at 4d to 6d. (P Ackroyd, London: *The Concise Biography*, 2012, p. 279; A Clayton, *London's Coffee Houses ...*, 2003, p. 139). Perhaps Aubrey would have approved of the Manor later becoming a bar and restaurant and certainly he would have approved of Richard's rather fine hens in the garden.

Aubrey had some eccentric manners. He called himself major although he had never reached that rank. He was also an hypochondriac, constantly calling in the local doctors who never knew what they would find. On one occasion he was sitting on a windowsill, legs dangling, threatening to jump. His wife became keen on the tennis at Wimbledon but he refused to let her attend; surreptitious shopping trips to London were her only means of achieving her goal. When Gwendoline married Norman Hargreaves in Marylebone in 1950 he reacted furiously. Norman was not only a teacher but from Birmingham! Aubrey sent out black-edged cards to all the relatives saying he had disowned her; she never came into the house again. If Lucy wanted to see her grandchildren, she had to meet them at the gate.

Aubrey Bowman died in October 1972, his widow Lucy in May 1977 and their daughters put the property up for auction through Savills that year.

There is much more about the early origins, owners and occupiers of 'the Manor' in our book: *Aylsham, A Nest of Norfolk Lawyers*.

SOCIETY NEWS

Molly Long†

Derek Lyons



Molly Long, NCO in the Girls' Training Corps in the 1940s. Courtesy Aylsham Town Council Archive.

Molly was still a very young girl when her parents brought her to live in Aylsham. Her father, William West, worked for the London and North Eastern Railway and had just started a job based at Aylsham station. Initially the family rented a home in Hungate Street, but later moved into a company house nearer to the station. Molly was a bright girl who did well at school. When she left she had no difficulty securing a job at Smith's garage in Norwich Road. She married Derek Long and they had a daughter, Susan, who was tragically taken from them when in her late teens, in the most heartbreaking circumstances imaginable. This blighted the rest of Molly's life, but she was a woman of considerable moral strength, who didn't wear her heart on her

sleeve, so her pain was not obvious to others. She was an excellent cook and qualified to City and Guilds standard when she worked in the school kitchens.

She joined the History Society in 1986 and from the start was an active participant. She made several contributions to the Journal. Her submissions were always well informed and interesting.

1987	The Girls' Training Corps	(Journal vol. 1: 146–147)
1994	The Railway Children	(Journal vol. 4: 120–121)
1995	Some Norfolk Sayings	(Journal vol. 4: 121–122)
2001	Thomas Arthur West	(Journal vol. 6: 143)
2003	Re-print of “The Railway Children”	(Journal vol. 7: 33–35)
2004	Memories of Sunday School in Aylsham	(Journal vol. 7: 89–91)

With her brother, Tom West, she contributed Society exhibitions about railway memorabilia at the Norfolk History Fair in 1990 and at the Bure Valley Railway Gala in 1991. She was also active in many other ways, involving herself in research projects such as early work on Aylsham's Inns and Breweries. Members benefited from her culinary skills on more than one occasion when she organised meals and refreshments at Society functions. Her Bakewell Tart was a legend, so well regarded that the recipe was reproduced in the Society Journal.

Molly was a thoroughly nice lady, who had a whole fund of tales to tell and was a mine of information about Aylsham and its people. She was always happy to share her extensive knowledge with anyone who had time to listen. We shall sorely miss her company in the future.

Molly Long's recipe for a Bakewell Tart.

Line a 8 in. flan or sponge tin with shortcrust pastry.

Spread a thin layer of jam.

Cream 1/4 lb. margarine & 1/4 lb. caster sugar together until light and fluffy.

Beat in 1 egg.

Mix together 2 ozs of plain flour (sieved) with 2 ozs semolina and 1 level teaspoon of baking powder.

Add to sugar, margarine and egg mixture alternately with 1–2 tablespoons of milk to a spreadable consistency.

Add almond essence to taste (1/2 teaspoon).

Spread evenly over jam.

Bake for 10 mins at reg. 6 (400°F), reduce heat to reg. 4 (350°F) for a further 20–30 mins.

Sprinkle with flaked almonds before baking, if desired, alternatively dust with icing sugar before serving, or ice with glaze icing if served cold.

Any surplus can be frozen uncooked – and saved for next New Year's Party).

Textile Conservation and the National Trust



The National Trust is responsible for 650 tapestries, 20 state beds, 31,000 items of costume and thousands of pieces of household linen and furnishings. In the course of time some of these fabrics are conserved in the studio at Oulton.

Rachel Langley, Senior Conservation Officer at Oulton Conservation Studio, explained the range of problems at a well-attended talk on 27 February. Fabrics are vulnerable to light, humidity, insects, mould, abrasion, tears and splits. The aim is to keep the integrity of the fabric and slow down the inevitable decay. Conservation is not the same as restoring to a pristine condition. Sometimes soiling can be significant part of the history of the item.

In some instances repairs and cleaning are done on site and in view of the visiting public who can understand better what processes are involved and why. People can be a problem. Breath can increase humidity, movement creates dust. A balance has to be found between damage and income. The studio has a wet room to clean large objects. Where adhesives and solvents are used staff need to wear fume hoods. A dye lab produces threads to match the ground of the fabric requiring conservation. Great technical expertise is needed.

The studio is a self-funding enterprise, accepting as many private as National Trust projects. Costings are produced by working out the amount of work for a 20 cm square and then multiplying the number of squares .

Rachael gave us a fascinating insight into the work at the studio. The talk was followed by a visit to the studio on the 4th of March so that members could see projects currently being worked on in the building.

Lynda Wix

Ancient Trees in the Norfolk Landscape – a talk by Professor Tom Williamson



The old deer park at Kimberley Hall, near Wymondham, with veteran oaks, one allegedly dating back to 1343, the park redesigned by Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown in 1762. Photo.: Jon Gregory.

The evening lecture of 27 March 2014 was rather special. Professor Tom Williamson is known to be a good speaker, the subject was intriguing and of general interest. He is the patron of the Bure Navigation Conservation Trust, so we had the pleasure of welcoming members from villages along the middle reaches of the River Bure as well. The meeting was held in the Jubilee Family Centre in Norwich Road as the Friendship Hall was undergoing renovation and the extra space was welcome.

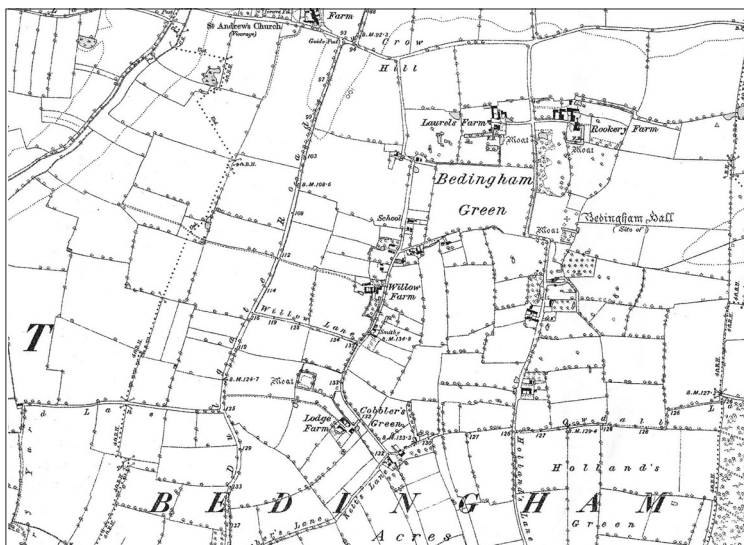
Although Tom Williamson has long been interested in the nature and distribution of trees the talk was focused on a survey he had made with his colleague Gerry Barnes on veteran trees, that is trees that are old for their species. With the aid of many students and volunteers an assessment was made of 5,500 trees out of an estimated 40,000 individuals in Norfolk. The criteria for veteran status were a circumference of 4.5 m at breast height or evidence of traditional management, notably pollarding, or appearing venerable even if of a smaller size. Survivors of this sort have very varied his-

tories, in part ecological, but largely a measure of economic and social factors over the last 300 years. Many facets of accepted wisdom had to be reconsidered. It was quite a complex matter to tease out the probable explanations.

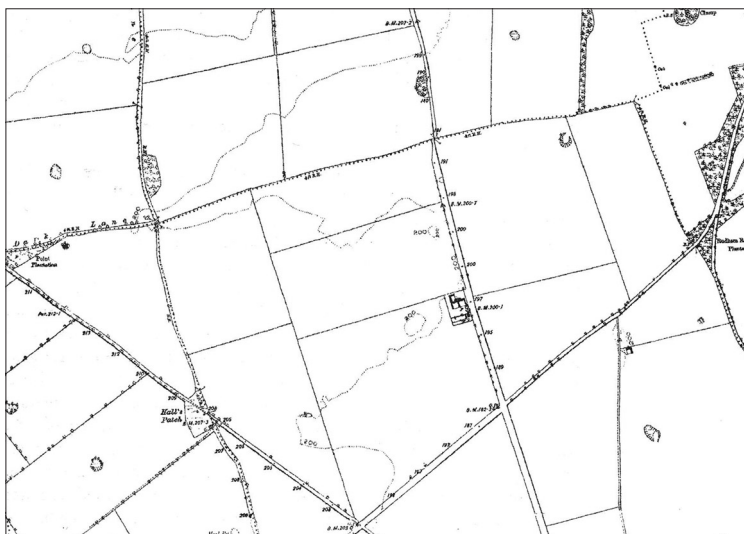
Over 80% of venerable trees are oaks and over 80% of these occur as hedgerow pollards. Oaks reach maturity at about 80 to 100 years. They grow fast when young, more slowly in middle age at about 80 years and much more slowly in senescence. The cores rot with age precluding a simple count of annual growth rings. As a rough guide it used to be considered that an inch of girth represented a year's growth for a tree standing in open conditions, two year's growth if shaded. On that count a tree with a girth of 1 m should be around 40 years old. Hedgerow oaks dated from documented planting in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries are mostly 2.5–3 m in girth. Rather few are 3–4 m, and a few 4–4.5 m. Trees in landscape parks up to 5.5 m, and the few 6–7 m or more in girth, were almost certainly planted before 1700.

Standard oaks grown for timber are traditionally harvested at 80–100 years. Timber was normally retained by the landowner and trees often felled during periods of recession, notably after the Napoleonic Wars, again with the imposition of death duties in the early twentieth century and during the depression before the Second World War. Thus three-quarters of the veteran oaks surveyed are hedgerow pollards. They are distributed unevenly, most numerous in the centre and south-east parts of the county, generally on the heavier soils that are favourable for good growth. A more important factor, however, was a difference in land tenure as farms became larger and more specialised after c.1400. On lighter soils 'sheep-corn' farming persisted, but on the heavier soils farms started to specialise in dairy and beef stock, much of the land laid to pasture. Piecemeal enclosure was largely by private agreement and the outlines of the open fields were maintained by the establishment of hedges, generally sinuous, reflecting the allowance for earlier plough turns. The pattern is still evident today, at least south of the 'prairies' around Long Stratton.

The situation was different on the lighter soils to the north and east. Some parishes were enclosed in the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but after 1700 open fields disappeared on a large scale, together with tracts of heath and sheepwalk. This was partly effected by new farming methods associated with the agricultural revolution and to a considerable extent by parliamentary acts in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. This resulted in large rectilinear fields with just a scatter of trees. On the light soils to the west of the county, including Breckland, open fields dominated the landscape. Old trees are comparatively rare. The Scots pines, familiar along the A11, probably grew out of old hedges.



Landscape of early enclosures in south Norfolk, with scattered settlement and small fields with sinuous boundaries. Late nineteenth century Ordnance Survey map, from Barnes & Williamson (2011)



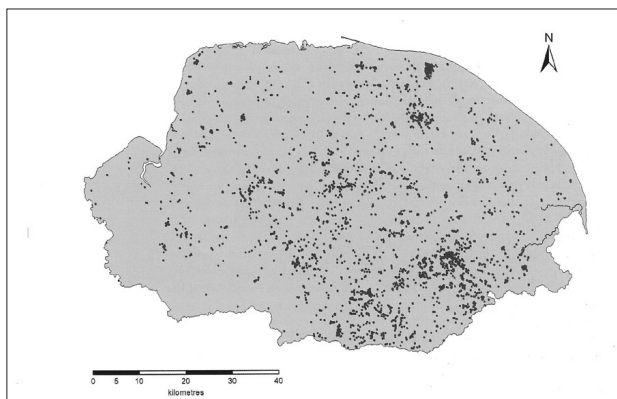
Landscape of eighteen and nineteenth century enclosures: rectilinear fields in north-west Norfolk. Late nineteenth century Ordnance Survey map, from Barnes & Williamson (2011).

Hedgerow oaks were generally pollarded at 10–15 year intervals, the actual height seemingly somewhat arbitrary, but above the browse-line for stock. The products were normally available to the tenants, the larger branches much valued as superior fuelwood, for fencing and for minor construction. Some trees were managed on a shorter rotation and cut for leafy hay, used as a winter fodder. Sometimes side branches were removed to produce shred, a fuzz-like cushion of leafy growth and such trees often planted several rows deep along edges of fields, a practice largely discontinued in the seventeenth century. Pollarding became unfashionable in the eighteenth century, but persisted in the south and east well into the twentieth century, notably on the southern clays.

In addition to the hedgerow component, oaks survive as remnants of woodland and wooded pasture. The detailed Domesday record of pigs indicates woodland mostly in an arc through the centre of the county from the north-east to south-east following the central watershed. The number of pigs suggests that even then wooded pasture was more common than coppiced woodland. The relatively small amount of coppiced woodland generally had relatively few standards so as not to suppress too much of the regrowth beneath. The coppicing rotation was increased from 6–7 years in the thirteenth century to 14 years in the nineteenth century, because hearths need larger logs and there was more demand for timber as poles. The coppice beneath the standards was generally of ash, hazel and maple, but in the south-east there was more hornbeam, and varying amounts of small-leaved lime and bird cherry.

Woodland largely disappeared with the expansion of arable farming, but some pieces were incorporated into the plantations established after enclosure in the eighteenth century, especially around mansions in the north and west of the county, both for timber and as ornamental features. Some 90 sites are remnants of old wood pasture enclosed originally as venison farms or hunting grounds. They were later used mainly for sheep and cattle and often no longer pollarded. Isolated specimens have also persisted along old roads, parish boundaries and around villages on old commons.

Loss of trees in the overall landscape has occurred on an increasing scale from the late eighteenth century as East Anglia became an intensively arable region, with cereal farming extending into both the fen lands and the clays of the south-east. Many hedgerow trees were taken out in the nineteenth century, but there were still many more than now. Comparison of individuals shown on Ordnance survey maps of the late 1800s compared to the aerial photos of 1946 show a loss of an average of more than 30% in the claylands and some 50% on the lighter soils of the north-east. There was further loss during the Second World War and in the period up to the 1970's when conservation



The distribution of ancient and traditionally managed trees in Norfolk, from Barnes & Williamson (2011).

measures began to be introduced. Nonetheless a considerable number of oaks have survived and give unexpected insights into earlier landscapes, such as the occurrence of pollarded oaks on the old heathlands of the Bayfield estate.

Ash is now the most common tree in Norfolk, but in the survey outnumbered by oak 20 to 1. Ash is fast growing and does not live long. The remaining pollards rarely exceeded 4 m in girth. Ash had a bad reputation for robbing crop-planted land of nutrients and water. The tough flexible wood was, however, much valued for fuelwood, poles, fencing, tool handles, cart wheels and the like. It was a major component of coppiced woodland. Hedgerow pollards also provided forage and leafy hay and were maintained by small independent farmers in the south-east of the county into the twentieth century. It was often the main component of hedges before mixed planting became fashionable in the mid-eighteenth century. It remained suitable for short rotation hedges and survivors tend to be trees that have grown out of unattended hedges.

This part of the county also has a preponderance of residual hornbeam and black poplar. Hornbeam was the third most common tree in the survey and survives largely as pollards growing out of hedges. It is restricted to heavier soils, principally of the south-east, but sporadically in the far west around the fens and along streams or on river plains. The wood is very hard and once valued as butchers' blocks, mallets, screws and as pulleys and cogs in mills. Black poplar is a rare native species with just over a hundred known examples in Norfolk, mostly in farmland meadows, pastures and hedges. About half are pollards, with a scattered distribution, but again mostly on damp clay soils and most numerous in the centre and south-east of the county. The wood was

fire-resistant and often associated with kilns, mills and malthouses, but also used for wood turning and making carts, the wood notably shock-absorbent. Old specimens are accordingly often found on commons and beside farmyards. Willow and alder from wet places rarely reach any significant age.

Parks proliferated around great mansions in the second half of the eighteenth century and included introduced species in a variety of settings from plantations and avenues to specimen trees in gardens, notably of beech, sweet chestnut, lime and yew. Of these beech is most common, nearly 100 found with a girth of 5 m or more and some up to 6.8 m in Bayfield Park. They put on growth quickly, but are shorter-lived than oak, rarely more than 300 years old and up to 7 m in girth. They were commonly used in avenues, as blocks in woodland and as specimen trees in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. The fine pollarded beeches in Felbrigg Great Wood, with girths up to 5 m on old heathland, have been considered as a northern extension of the native population, but were probably planted by the Windham family in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century.

Sweet chestnut, probably introduced by the Romans, was extensively planted in parks and gardens from the seventeenth century, often in avenues, but also in geometric groupings and other ornamental arrangements. It grows as fast as beech, made up 4% of the veterans and had 180 specimens with girths of more than 4 m, some up to 7 or 8 m. A notable example is in the churchyard at Hevingham planted in 1647 with a girth of 7.5 m. Lime was used in much the same way and very common as an avenue tree. The native yew is mostly associated with churchyards, but, like the other ornamentals, planting there was stimulated by Loudon's important book *On the Lay Out, Planning and Management of Churchyards* published in 1843. Few in Norfolk exceed 5 m in girth and none of special note. Norfolk does, however, have a small number of named commemorative trees. The 'Hethel Thorn', a large ancient hawthorn, was supposedly grown from the staff of Joseph of Arimathea. Some old oaks were named, the 'King of Thorpe', the 'Marsham Oak' and the like, duly documented, mapped and preserved into senility – and sometimes then replanted, like 'Kett's Oak' in Hethersett. Most of the named trees mentioned by nineteenth century writers have, however, disappeared as practical considerations took precedence over aesthetic and romantic ones. Many of the finest veterans now reside near large mansions, not only the exotics, as might be expected, but also no less than half the oaks of Norfolk with girths of 6 m or more occur in such situations.

Roger Polhill

Further reading: Barnes, G. & Williamson, T. (2011), *Ancient Trees in the Landscape: Norfolk's arboreal heritage*. 179 pp. Oxbow Books, Oxford. Above text largely summarised from this source.

ALHS Dinner

In recent years we have enjoyed memorable venues and food! These include Sea Marge at Overstrand with its Winston Churchill connections, Northrepps Cottage with Buxton associations, The Saracen's Head at Wolterton where Lady and Lord Walpole gave us a pre-dinner talk, The Lawns at Holt where we learned a little about The Holt Society, and earlier this year on home ground at The Black Boys in Aylsham where Geoff Gale updated us on the presentation of research on the inn. I would like to thank Matthew for the arrangements, and Lindsay and the kitchen and serving staff for such good food, and all with a smile!

Next spring we hope to meet at The Crown at Banningham, a very old inn with impressive recent improvements, where Jeannie is sorting the arrangements for us. Local venues mean that no coach is necessary, and the cost kept to a minimum. Look out later for date and further details.

Jim Pannell



ALHS 30th Anniversary Celebration.

On Sunday 8th June Diana and Roger Polhill kindly hosted a celebration to mark the 30th anniversary of The Society. The weather stayed clear and sunny throughout while over 60 members sipped summer punch and wine, and ate a wonderful variety of good foods, culminating in strawberries and cream.

Roger, as Chairman of the Society, welcomed everyone and introduced David Capp who spoke about the history of the lute before providing some background music for the party. William Vaughan-Lewis then gave a most interesting account of the houses, remarking on the long periods of ownership and, in particular, the association with the Parmeter family after whom the house is named.

A very colourful birthday cake was cut by Gillian Fletcher, a founder member, who has been a committee member since 1999.

Thanks to all who contributed towards a lovely occasion, and in particular to Diana and Roger for hosting and organising everything around their beautiful house and garden. A good time was had by all!

Jim Pannell



NOTICES

ALHS Website

Please note our new website address: www.alhs.weebly.com. Our old address is now obsolete, but still appears on google when you enter a generality such as Aylsham Local History Society. As the new address is used more it will move up the ranking on google and hopefully overtake the old one that we are trying to have taken down. The site is updated regularly with new information so please check it from time to time.

Autumn Course

Art and Archaeology of the Medieval Church, 1066–1559. Matthew Champion will give a course of 8 sessions, including one outing, starting Wednesday 17th September 2014 at 2 pm in the Friends' Meeting House, Pegg's Yard, Red Lion Street. The course fee is £35, payable at the second session. The course will focus on the medieval church as a building, a repository of the most exquisite of medieval art and as a centre of the medieval parish's religious and social life. Booking essential – phone Jim Pannell on 01263 731087

WEA Course

Art and Conflict. Judith Stewart will give a course of ten weekly sessions starting on Tuesday 23rd September at 2 pm in the Friends' Meeting House, Pegg's Yard, Red Lion Street. Booking essential – please phone Fiona Scott on 01603 279166 or email weaaylsham@gmail.com.

Aylsham Town Archives

Please note a change in the times for access to the Archives from Tuesday mornings to Wednesday afternoons, 12–2 pm. It would be helpful to contact Lloyd Mills, the Archivist, if you have a query with which you need help,

Heritage Open Days

Can you help for a morning or an afternoon on Friday 12th September or Saturday 13th September to open the undercroft at Holman House for visitors on either of these two Heritage Open Days? If you can help, above or below ground, please contact Sheila Merriman on 01263 734408 or sheilamerriman@hotmail.com by the end of August.

Heritage Open Days (HODs) provide an opportunity to experience local history, architecture and culture at free events throughout England. This year the dates are 11–14 September. Three properties will be open in Aylsham. The details of opening times and events will all be listed at www.heritageopendays.org.uk

