

AYLSHAM LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY



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Front cover: Holman House, 18 Market Place, Aylsham. Photo:
William Vaughan-Lewis.

Back cover: The Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Great Ryburgh, view
from drone and excavated graves. Photos courtesy of Museum of
London Archaeology.

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During the Annual General Meeting at the beginning of October, two stalwart Committee Members retired from the Society's Committee – though they remain members. Jim Pannell stood down as Secretary and was presented with a small token of our thanks. Sheila Merriman had organised our contribution to the Heritage Open Days in September and had helped with several history walks in the Town – but was unfortunately not available and her presentation has been done separately. We also welcomed a new member to the committee, Ros Calvert, who is taking over the membership role from Sue Sharpe, who was elected Secretary at the AGM.

William and Maggie Vaughan-Lewis's new book, *Hearths and Heaths: Dispersed Settlements in Aylsham's Early Modern Landscape*, is now on sale either from Woodgate Nursery or Itteringham Village Shop, for £10. Far wider-reaching than the title might suggest, the book visits the lesser known outer parts of the parish of Aylsham, including Woodgate, Stonegate and the Spa as well as adding new information on Millgate and the Mill.

We look forward to the remaining winter lectures, all at 7.30 pm in the Friendship Hall. We are trialling refreshments at 7 pm, see AGM, A.O.B. p. 34. Thursday 25 January 2018. *A Striking Village* by Anne May.

Thursday 22 February 2018. *Harriet Martineau* by Nigel Wimhurst.

Thursday 22 March 2018. *Beating the Bounds in Georgian Norwich* by David Berwick.

As Winter is approaching, a quick reminder that in the event of adverse weather conditions, members are asked to telephone a member of the Committee after 11 am on the day of a lecture to see whether the lecture will proceed. A notice will also be placed on the website: alhs.weebly.com

Finally, a request to keep Thursday, 29 March free as the provisional date for next year's annual dinner.

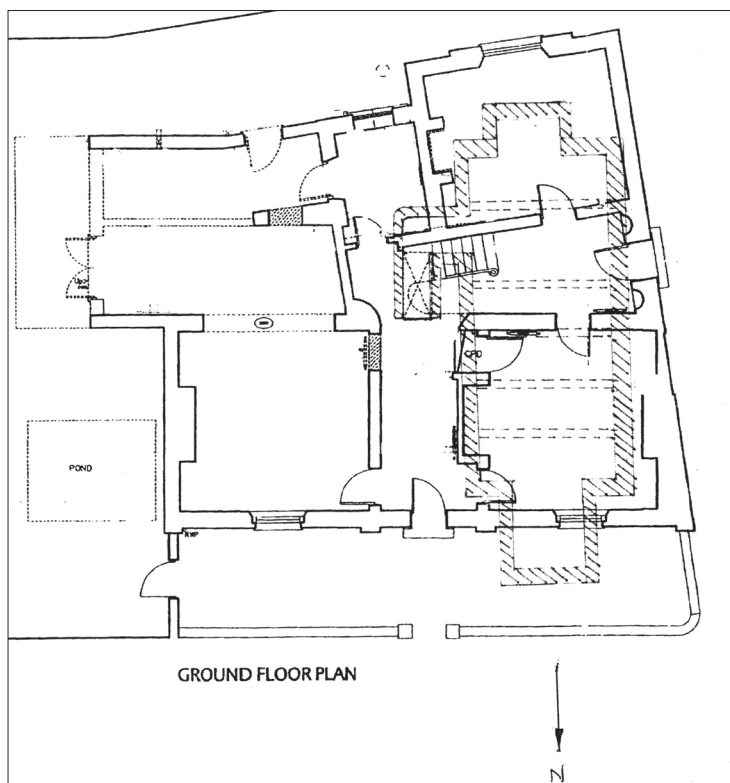
18 Market Place Aylsham: Holman House and the undercroft

William and Maggie Vaughan-Lewis

Some time ago the owners of Holman House kindly showed us their deeds which enabled us to piece together a first draft of the house's history. With recent recording carried out by Norfolk Historic Buildings Group (NHBG) who have generously allowed us to use their drawings, it seemed the right time to write the full site history. Thanks too to Roger Crouch for his family memories. There is more research to do on the north of the market place but we are reasonably happy with this site.

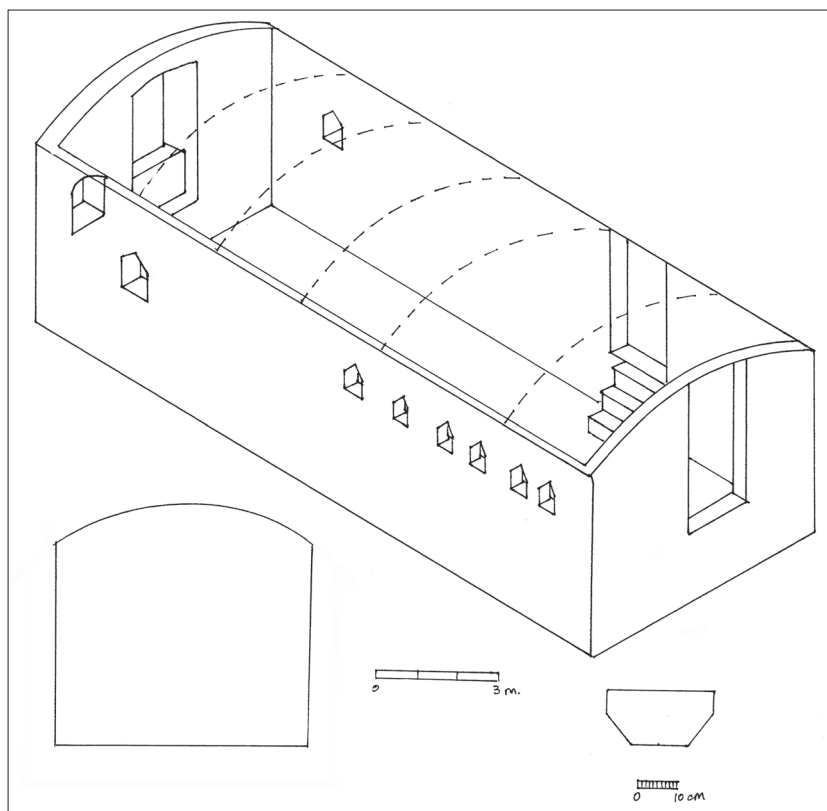


Holman House stands on the north of the market place, on the east of the narrow entrance to the churchyard of St Michael's. The northern front of the Georgian house, with a small garden, brick wall and gateway, faces directly into the churchyard. The angle of the western side of the current house seems



Plan of house and undercroft, courtesy NHBG and Roger Crouch.

to differ from the original building line which was probably parallel with the undercroft (see plan). The area of the site was always given as 8 perches from the earliest reference right up to the 1910 valuation records, making it easy to follow in the court rolls. Along this edge also ran an extra depth of land 5ft by 40ft, some of which may be suggested by the present cobbled area. Granted as a new rent of $\frac{1}{2}d$ in 1433, this was a piece of the 'waste' of the manor as the open market place was usually described.¹ In 1473 this piece was described as a 'cottage' on the west side of the house although from the shape it was more likely to have been a lean-to structure, perhaps for displaying goods. Given that the house opposite (the predecessor to Repton House) was much closer to the road than now, the way through to the church must have been very narrow indeed. This may be why it is always called 'the ecclesiastical way', never 'a common lane' or 'Kings highway' in the records.



Drawing of the undercroft, courtesy of NHBG.

The medieval undercroft

The location of the house site, by the churchyard and the Market Place, suggests in itself a high status site. The medieval undercroft reinforces that view. Although many undercrofts survive in Norwich, they are rare in smaller market towns. Our undercroft is large (over 25ft by 11ft) and seems to be an unique survival in Aylsham although many other central properties have cellars of various, mostly later, dates. Where ownership of undercrofts has been identified, they are usually associated with an affluent merchant; they would not have been cheap to build. Given Aylsham's linen-based wealth in the medieval period, it seems most likely that this had been a merchant's home with storage or display underneath.

The undercroft has very substantial flint and brick walls and a brick barrel-vaulted ceiling crossed with five chamfered brick ribs. Its western wall sits just

inside the floor plan of the present house above it. The walls contain a surprisingly large number of niches, presumably for candles or rushlights. This might suggest the Aylsham one was used to display wares. The current stairs down from the house were inserted later and original access would have been from one of the end walls, either in the churchyard or the market, but too much has been altered to be sure.

Precise dating is agreed to be difficult, given that there is clear evidence of early use of brick in Norfolk and there are few distinctive dateable features. Expert opinions on the Norwich ones vary. Amery says they are all 15th century yet the one at Dragon Hall is attributed to John Page around 1330. Unfortunately, here, 20th century paint covers much of the evidence. Edwin Rose's report on Aylsham notes the similarities to one at Wymondham dated to around 1300 but the 'slight point to the apex [of the vault], and the form of the bricks, suggest a slightly later date, perhaps in the 14th century'.² If so it would date from the era when Aylsham was at peak affluence from its linen trade between 1272 and 1377.³ A curious feature was noted in 1955 when water pipes to the surgery at the house were being laid. Dr Maingay's wife informed the Castle Museum that a 4ft wide wall had been uncovered by the church gate. Sadly no detail of the exact position or orientation of the wall was made but such a substantial wall may suggest the northern part of the west wall of the merchant's house might have abutted directly on to the churchyard. However without further excavation this is speculation only. It was used as a shelter during the 2nd WW by the resident Jacques family.

The Tollhouse

Unlike the fine 15th century undercroft at Blakeney, which belonged to a fish merchant and was later used as some form of guild hall for that trade, there is no reason to believe that Aylsham's was ever used as a civic building. We do know that just to the south of the Holman House site stood an early tollhouse where market tolls would have been collected. By the late 15th century this building, the *domus theolonei*, was already 'wasted' or ruined.⁴ The building was where the front of the Co-operative store now stands, 'three perches' long and '1 perch and four feet' wide (about 50' by 20'). It stood on the corner with the 'ecclesiastical way' along the west side which also ran along its southern front – the present lode that runs behind the Town Hall. Another house stood to the east. We know about its demise because in the late 15th century and for much of the 16th century, the land was in common ownership with the Holman House property. By 1577 a house was on the site which between 1580 and the late 1590s seems to have been an inn owned by Henry Emans called The Kings Head.⁵

Earliest known ownership and the adjoining site

Unfortunately we have no records as far back as the 1300s so we can never know the identity of the merchant who lived over the undercroft. But the manor court rolls start in 1461 and we have also looked at the few surviving early accounts for the Duchy manor held at Kew, so we can follow the history of the site.

The first entry in the manor court rolls for the site of Holman House comes in September 1473 when John Bettes and Thomas Boller surrendered a 'newly built' messuage (house) containing eight perches of land on the north side of the market and the 40' long by 5' wide piece on the west side. Both parts were described as previously of John Brooke. When the Duchy granted the extra piece in 1433, the house was described as being of John Brooke and his wife Margaret. This shows that the reference to a 'newly built' messuage already dated back to at least 1433; the words were still being used as the traditional descriptor of the property in the mid-16th century. This means the house could easily date back into the 14th century.

Who was John Brooke? The name Brooke or Broke is not that common locally at this time although a William Brooke was the vicar of Aylsham and rector of Marsham in the second half of the 15th century. John Bettes was a leading butcher of the Old Hall family and Thomas Boller was a frequent feoffee (trustee); it is possible that they were selling off the property in 1473 after John's death. The new purchaser was Thomas Chevereye of Erpingham with his daughter Elizabeth and John Feltwell. Perhaps Elizabeth was to marry John, whose family owned a large site on the west side of the Market Place. Another uncommon name, nothing more is known of the family.

In the latter years of the 15th century the house passed through the ownership of John Purry and his wife Cecily. Purry, probably a successful merchant, was owner of three large house sites in the centre of town and some other lands. (One, probably his home, was the site of Repton House across the road from Holman House also adjoining the churchyard.) He conveyed the property to Richard Champeneys and his wife Margery. Another unusual name, most of the family were Norfolk clerics in the 15th century. It was Richard who also acquired the nearby tollhouse site. He was definitely a trader as he was fined in 1498 for selling a consignment of rotten and stinking herrings in the market. In November 1500 Richard Champeneys, now a widower, conveyed both sites to Simon Edmonds.

We know a little more about the next owner; Edmund Skete was a cleric who seems to have been in charge of the parish while the vicar William Boleyn was at his London parish. He appears as witness to many wills between 1519 and 1536 and heads up the list of six clerics living in Aylsham in 1522. His

stipend was 12 marks and he was taxed on £30 of goods and 20s for house and land. He was given the honorific 'Sir' which suggests he had some higher education. Did he live here? Skete sold another property in the town in 1524 and in August 1530 sold the combined market place properties to Nicholas Prent, from a Buxton family, who sold it on in September 1534 to John Barker senior. At around this time John appeared in the beer sellers' lists in the manor court rolls; Barker was quite a big figure in the town, so whether his alehouse was on part of this site or elsewhere is not clear.

In August 1537 Barker sold the whole block to John Swann who had it for nearly 20 years. The Swann family may well have lived here as, in his will, John left his wife Alice a life interest in the property (which shows in the court roll for August 1553). Alice remarried to John Jagges and 17 years later, the couple and her three eldest Swann sons – John, Christopher and Robert – conveyed the whole block in November 1570 to John Owles and his wife Elizabeth. By 1577 John and Elizabeth Owles started a series of mortgages of the whole block to Thomas Browne, nephew and heir of her first husband Thomas Browne senior who had died in 1566.

It seems that Thomas Browne junior retained rights to the old Tollhouse part and in September 1577 he sold this, now with a house on it and some extra land/buildings on its north side, to William Harte. In June 1580 Harte sold this part to Henry Emans and the two properties then remained in separate ownership. The Holman House site came into the ownership of a minor line of the Knolles family, lawyers and owners of The Knoll.

Ownership of the Holman House site since the early 17th century

There is a gap in the records at this time but in March 1611 the court book notes that Christopher and Henry Knolles were both now dead and that the next generation, Margaret Knolles, John Knolles (and his wife Mary) and Alice Knolles, now the wife of Edward Corbett, sought admission so that they could convey the property immediately to Thomas Abbs. The Holman House property was now described as 'a built messuage on the south side of the cemetery of the church'. Quite what was going on in the family isn't clear but in August the same year Thomas Abbs and his wife Dorothy surrendered to Thomas Allen. Thomas Allen was to hold it for many years although he seems not to have any other Aylsham property. In the 1622 survey (along with his close in Marsham parish) it is described as a built messuage of three 'spaces' (bays) with a yard of eight perches next to the cemetery of Aylsham. As a result of his long tenure, by the late 17th century and permanently thereafter the messuage is described simply as formerly Allen's. This descriptor is used all the way through to the tithe apportionment of 1839–41 and appears on the

owner's title deeds, confirming we have the correct site.

Towards the end of his life, in October 1659, Thomas Allen mortgaged the premises for £22 to John Allen, a Norwich tailor. The mortgage was not redeemed; this was a regular mechanism whereby people with no dependants to inherit the property could secure a retirement income. The relationship of John to Thomas, if any, is not known but in April 1662 John Allen was admitted on the 'mortgage' default and almost certainly after the death of Thomas. In October 1663 John and his wife Anne conveyed the house to John Durrant gentleman.

Durrant held a number of Aylsham properties including agricultural land and other houses and was probably a senior tradesman. After his death his widow Susan came to court in October 1677 to claim her lifetime right to all his property under his will. Helpfully he had made explicit in the will that he lived in the house 'late Allen's'. Susan seems to have been Durrant's second wife, not the mother of his daughter Frances, the ultimate heir to the house as in her will Frances described Susan as her 'mother-in-law' (stepmother). Frances married the equally successful William Doughty and she left the Market Place house to her daughter Anne, albeit with a complicated condition attached. Susan Durrant had the right to live there for her life and then it should be occupied by those of Frances's daughters who remained unmarried. At marriage (or death) they would lose their rights in the house and it would pass back to Anne's heirs.⁶

From this period onwards, the Aylsham poor rate books can be used to show the sequence of occupiers: from 1677 'widow Durrant' paid 3d per month for the house and this continued until 1700 when Katherine Doughty took over the 3d rate 'for Mrs Durrant'. Anne's sister Katherine, a spinster, lived out her life in the house sharing the house and garden with a widow Elizabeth Russell.⁷ Anne married Thomas Curties, the rector of Brampton and Scottow and did not inherit the house herself. Katherine continued at that rate until her last payment in 1729 although she did not die until 1734. (Briefly, for 1730–32, John Bray paid the rate; he was later to own the house and perhaps Katherine Doughty spent her last years elsewhere.) Thomas and Anne Curties had daughters Jane and Frances and (presumably as sole survivor) Jane Curties alone came to seek admission in October 1734 after the deaths of both her mother and of Katherine Doughty her aunt. Jane Curties, spinster, started paying the 3d rate from 1733 and fully inherited in October 1734 after her aunt Katherine's death. She paid the 3d 'for Doughty' until 1738. In April 1738 she sold the house to Robert Brettingham, a Norwich bricklayer, on the condition that he paid her 4s per week for life – a more explicit version of an annuity. In October 1739 John and Barbara Bray bought the house from Brettingham

without the condition, so Jane must have died in 1738–9. Bray already had quite a portfolio in Aylsham holding properties of his own in Hungate and Red Lion Street. He ran the Black Boys pub and lived in Great Edmonds in Norwich Road (now known as the Manor) from 1741.

The poor rates for 1739 and 1739–40 show Edward Dey (Dye) for Curties 3d but in 1741 Bray himself paid the 3d 'late Dye'. It is not clear who was then actually resident since Bray and his son paid the rates for all the properties in their ownership through much of the 1740s and 1750s. The implication is that they had rather modest tenants in each place. It is possible that Edward Dey may have continued to live in the Market Place house.

From John Bray the ownership passed to his son James and wife Catherine in 1752. We know that James was usually of Norwich (where he ran the Maid's Head) and seems to have been uninterested in the minor Aylsham properties and by March 1753 Bray had mortgaged or sold them. By November 1758 he was dead and since nobody came to claim the Aylsham premises, the house was then granted to the mortgage holder Frances Bacon, of Norwich Cathedral precincts, in lieu of £365. In March 1767 Edward Bacon esquire of Earlham had it as son and heir of his widowed mother Frances. Throughout this period the property was simply described as the messuage in the Market Place late Allen's.

Who lived in the house during this era? From 1762 to early 1765 the pattern of poor rate payment by the owner continued as 'the representatives of James Bray'. Later in 1765 James Fish paid the new higher rate of £3 for 'late Bray's' which, following a new valuation assessment in the parish, permanently replaced the 3d rate. In the Easter 1766 rate Fish did not pay this rate and it seems almost certain that Ralph Spurrell's £3 'for Fish' was for the Market Place house. Assuming this identification is correct, Spurrell remained tenant here until and including the 1790 rate. In 1791 William Hagon paid £3 for the house late Spurrell's.

The ownership passed from Edward Bacon in 1786 (his PCC will 1786) to his nephews Richard Frank clerk of Alderton Suffolk and Bacon Frank esquire of Campsall in Yorkshire who were the sons of Elizabeth Frank widow, Edward's sister. In October 1786 the Frank brothers immediately sold to James Curties, a grandson of Thomas and Anne. Had the grocer who added this house to his large string of commercial and residential properties around the Market Place, known the family house as a boy?

It is not clear where Curties, who did not marry, actually lived. A wealthy man, he owned property in eight parishes. His main Aylsham trading premises were in the Market Place and seem to have been taken over by his ultimate heir Stephen Ashley who was married to Curties's niece Jane. James probably

lived in the house just across the road (later to be rebuilt as the Savings Bank, now Repton House); this is the only house of all his real estate said to have been in Curties's own use at his death in 1801.

We know that Ashley did not occupy Holman House. In 1802 the occupants were again an Edward Dey and probably his son Edward, both cordwainers. (It is not clear whether the earlier Edward Dey returned or if this was his son.) Dey had paid varying levels of poor rate in the 1790s, suggesting that he lived in different places before settling in this house. Indeed it is possible that the 1792 to 1801 hiatus in identifying the occupier from the poor rates may suggest the date of a major rebuild.

The new house

The main range of the present house, facing into the churchyard, is built from post-1770 brick and it could easily date from the 1790s.⁸ Edwin Rose in his report on the house states that both parts of the house have 'horizontal skintlings indicating a date after c 1770–80'. Although dating from skintlings is tricky, Rose's dating would fit in with the style of the building and the wealth of the later owners. Presumably the old house had had little investment for many years, making a complete rebuild worthwhile after the departure of Spurrell, the long-standing sitting tenant, in 1790. James Curties (or Stephen Ashley) seems to have designed the house as two dwellings, although from the churchyard the front is quite symmetrical, with three bays divided by pilasters with moulded caps, sash windows and a central doorway. The eastern part was the larger section; on the west, on the roadside leading into the churchyard, was a smaller unit with the remains of a narrow steep staircase in the south-east corner of the downstairs room. This room also must have featured a large window, long since blocked up, which would have been entirely consistent with the workroom and shop of a cordwainer.

The main, eastern, part of the property in 1802 was lived in by Dr Hugh Moises, the first doctor to be associated with Holman House. He and wife Anne Taylor baptised three daughters in Aylsham in 1802 (twins) and 1804 but he was gone by 1805. He was an interesting man: an army surgeon at a young age, he was made bankrupt in 1797 and practised as a surgeon and dentist in Pimlico in 1798. He sued a man for slanderously saying he was a quack but lost the case as he could not produce adequate documentation from Edinburgh to prove he had earned his degree from them. Why did he turn up in Aylsham after his disgrace in 1799? His father was rector of Kirkby Malzeard in Yorkshire where Tomyns Dickins (a barrister and bankruptcy specialist) had an estate through his first wife in 1802. Dickins owned what is now called Diggenses Farmhouse in the old Buxton Road in Aylsham (see *Nest of*

Lawyers). This may have been the connection that brought Moises to Aylsham. Perhaps Moises worked under the protection of sometime surgeon and apothecary Edward Piggon who was the long-standing tenant of the Dickens farm. Hugh returned to the army and died in 1819, only 46, after a long and painful illness.⁹

Thomas Morrill esquire took over the Moises part from December 1804 with Edward Dey still next door. Thomas, originally of Marsham Hall, and his wife Jane had previously been renting The Manor. Morrill was here until mid-1810 when widowed shopkeeper Elizabeth Nobbs moved in, initially continuing to pay the £8 rate. She can later be found running a tea/druggist shop and post office in Hungate, which subsequently moved into the old Tollhouse/Kings Head/Co-op site.

Gradually Ashley sold off his Curties inheritance and in May 1814, for £240, sold the complete Holman House site to Thomas Thompson whom we know as manservant to John Hogg of West Lodge. Thompson knew Hogg was leaving him £500 and an annuity of £100 a year as well as the cottage he was living in. Perhaps he bought Holman House on his expectations or his friend gave him the money. At this date Edward Dey was still living in the house, paying rates of £5 for the smaller roadside part and Elizabeth Nobbs (initially at £8 but later at £6) for the other part. Sadly Thomas died shortly before his friend in 1815. By June 1816 his widow Mary was living in the east part, replacing Elizabeth Nobbs, and at that date her daughters Anne and Elizabeth Thompson were admitted as owners of Holman House. In 1817 Mrs Thompson paid the £8 rate and there was a note of money uncollected from Edward Dey. All was to change between 1818 and 1820; by the end of 1821 Mary Thompson was paying a rate of £12 for the whole house.

Her daughter Elizabeth was by now Elizabeth Peterson, having married in 1800 John Bayfield Peterson, head of the family of what later became Abbot's Hall at Drabblegate and owners then of Sexton's or Wood manor. The Petersons also owned Bayfield House at this time, hence its present name.¹⁰ She and Peterson had no children and so her sister Anne became sole owner of Holman House at Elizabeth's death in 1827. Meanwhile in 1818, in her late 30s, Anne Thompson had married Thomas Cook a machine maker of Swanton Abbott. He was baptised in 1770 in Buxton to William and Anne (nee Deeker).

It was Cook's money that allowed for the next stage of the building. A date stone inside the house (above what was probably once a window facing out into the garden) shows 'C A T 1820' for Thomas and Anne Cook. It is clear that Cook helped his wife and sister-in-law to give the house a major make-over and convert it into a single dwelling. The southern extension at the west end has a door to the lobe and a fine, albeit slightly cramped, staircase serving



The 1820s staircase

the whole of the upper floor. The earlier large ground floor window onto the street was probably blocked up at this time and the old narrow staircase was removed, leaving just an outline inside a cupboard. This took time to achieve and in 1821 they lived separately with Mary in her part and Thomas and Anne in the rest. Thomas Cook took over paying the £12 rate for the Market Place house from 1824 and, since she did not die until 1835, Anne's mother probably remained living with them.

By that time they had baptised two daughters both named Eliza Mary Needham Cook, the second one of whom survived. At the 1822 baptism Thomas gave himself as engineer and later in the directories was always gent.

Thomas Cook was an interesting man; a younger son of a minor yeoman farmer and grandson of a worsted weaver (John Cook) and schoolmaster

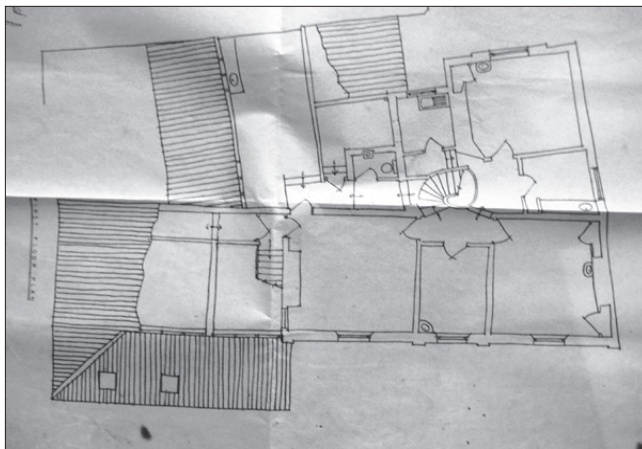
(Joseph Deeker) he had probably been apprenticed as a blacksmith but became the designer and builder of early agricultural machinery. Cook started a new venture with the purchase in October 1830 for £1,270 from Henry Pike of what was to become his new home, Bushey Place on the Ingworth/Cromer Road. Pike, a minor and unsuccessful Aylsham lawyer, had acquired the previously undeveloped agricultural land from Potter Dyball Batson, butcher of Red Lion Street, and started building. At the time of purchase the poor rates show that Cook's new house was empty and it remained so until mid-1833 when Thomas started to pay a new rate of just under £18 for Bushey Place and its three acres of land and stable.¹¹ Thomas and Anne moved up to Bushey Place but apparently without her mother. For the last few years of her life Mary Thompson paid a rate of £4 10s until she died in 1835. It is not clear whether this was for just part of the Market Place house or for somewhere entirely different. At the tithe apportionment of 1839 the Holman House site was empty and tenants after Thomas and Anne moved out have not been identified with any certainty for a considerable span of years.

The Cook and Morton connections

Eliza Cook, daughter of Thomas and Anne, married Dr Richard Kay Morton in 1842. Her father died in 1852 and her mother, who had briefly used the Market Place house in her later years, in 1864. In 1865 Eliza Morton was admitted to both Bushey Place and Holman House. In 1865 the court book shows that the Market Place house was now unoccupied but had been lived in by Miss Blanche Lee Gould (she was first noted in the directories there the previous year, so did not stay long). It seems that Dr Richard Morton senior used the Market Place premises for his practice from time to time although the directories usually show him as of Bushey Place where the Cooks and Mortons lived together for many years. It is certain, from the directories, that from the 1870s his doctor son Richard, 'Dr Dick', ran his practice from Holman House and probably lived there with his wife Marion.¹²

The 20th century

What of later owners and occupiers of 18 Market Place? Dr Richard Morton was followed in the practice by his brother Augustus ('Dr Gus') who had practised in North Walsham and London and was living in Westminster in 1901 with his Norfolk-born wife Elizabeth and their daughters Winifred and Violet. The year after the death of Augustus in 1925, Winifred leased the premises to Dr Alec George Holman who ran his practice here until the early 1950s (he died in 1956). The house remained in the Morton family's ownership until the sale in 1942 to Dr Holman, after whom the house was named.



First floor plan 1994

Holman lived in The Beeches in Pound Lane and from 1930 Holman House was leased to his pharmacist Ted Jaques as part of his employment package. The patients' waiting room was to the right of the west entrance and the consulting room was on the left. The pharmacy where Ted made up his own prescriptions was in an annexe at the eastern rear of the house. As the family's living room was behind the surgery area, patients had to walk outside and round into the churchyard, re-entering through the metal gate to access the timber building. Ted lived in the house with his wife Frances and daughters Angela, Mary and Elizabeth. The girls would earn 1d for washing out each medicine bottle for reuse. Ted remained there when Dr Maingay and later Dr Hackett took over the practice. Mary married Godfrey Burr and Elizabeth became Mrs Crouch. Her son Roger remembers his grandparent's house well; as a child he explored 'what seemed a labyrinth of rooms in a house with two staircases and a water closet – flush toilets still being a rarity for some.'

In the 1990s the surgery moved out and the house became home to architect and artist Anthony Butler and his wife Liz who moved their Red Lion Gallery here. The upper floor plan of the period shows the various oddly-aligned older additions on the southern side.

Subsequently Tim Ardern moved in and carried out extensive refurbishment, removing the last vestiges of the building's very long use as a surgery. The white paint or whitewash was removed to reveal the brickwork and he is said to have found three wells in the back garden. The house is now home to Tim Bliss and Isabel Vasseur who bought it from Mrs Elizabeth Hamilton after her husband Dr Hamilton had died.

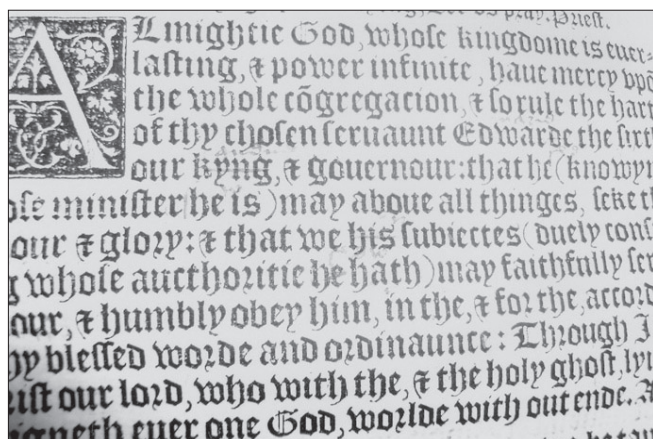
1. TNA, DL 29/295/4851 'as appears in court roll 11 Henry VI'. This rent and its description was repeated in the accounts into the mid-16th century.
2. Rose's report was published in full in ALHS Journal Jan 2000. It does not contain any reference to the idea that the old main road ran past Holman House through the churchyard as suggested in the recent NHBG Newsletter.
3. Anne Sutton *The Mercery of London 1130-1578*, 2005, pp. 5, 14, 49-50, 56-7 notes that Aylsham, already important in the 13th century, was one of the main linen centres by the 14th century. CH Hartshorne *Historical Memorial of Northampton ...*, 1848, p.155 notes tolls on linen webs including Aylsham webs 1299-1300. William Beaumont's article on *Annals of the Lords of Warrington ...*, Chetham Society, *Remains Historical and Literary Connected with the Palatine ...*, 1872, p.138 notes that Aylsham linen webs were charged at double the rate of local webs in Lancashire in 1310 and notes 100 ells of Aylsham linen worth 16s in 1290. He also notes that a *Tractatus de Ponderibus et Mensuris*, probably mid-14th century or earlier, said that the measure of linen cloth was to be that of Aylsham. Carole Rawcliffe and Richard Willson, *Medieval Norwich* notes an unlager appointed in the mid-1340s to control linen cloth production in Aylsham.
4. The Duchy accounts repeat the phrase 'the farm of the market with the farm of the tollhouse' from 1412 through to 1544 without reference to its condition. TNA, DL 29. Given that the building fell into disuse and was sold off, the accounts are really recording the right to collect tolls.
5. After its early 18th century closure as an inn, the site became a shop but the Kings Head name was briefly revived for the inn subsequently known as the New Inn in Red Lion Street.
6. In March 1687 Anne Doughty was admitted to the reversion of the property, under this condition; this ensured that her rights to inherit eventually would be on record.
7. Anne's will, made in 1713, names the occupiers as Katherine and the widow Elizabeth Russell.
8. There is no evidence at all to back up R Harbord's suggestion of 1760, for which he gives no reference; the house around this time was mortgaged, defaulted on and owned by a non-resident widow so a new build would be extremely unlikely.
9. *Gentlemen's Magazine* 1819, p.184
10. See authors' unpublished research done for the Druets and on a very early inn at this site.
11. The court book for December 1828 notes that at his purchase of the first acre of land for £130 Henry Pike had lately built the buildings on the site (in April 1830 he bought two more acres here from Batson for £200). Starling suggests that only the ground floor of the house was completed by the time Cook bought it. This may be true but the two-year period before the sale to Cook and the high price tag suggests a considerable amount of work had been done to the value of more than £1,000. The poor rates in 1831 describe it as an empty house technically valued at £13 10s which suggests it may have been rather more complete than Starling's suggestion. Pike was covered briefly in *Nest of Lawyers* where we noted that after an accusation of cheque-signing fraud he left Aylsham. Pike was in fact sentenced to 15 years' transportation, a very high sentence in an era when a major felony might see seven years.
12. They do not seem to have moved into Bushey Place. Dr Dick and his brother Dr Gus decided to sell Bushey Place after their father's death in 1890. After his death his widow remained there until her death in 1900.

Reformation in Aylsham

Lynda Wix

Five hundred years ago on October 31st 1517 Luther nailed his 95 theses to the door of Wittenberg Cathedral and the Reformation of the Church in the west officially began. How did this movement ripple out and affect Aylsham?

It is difficult to discover the beliefs of lowly vicars as the new forms of prayerbooks, the denial of the power of the Pope, the different ideas on vestments and the place of the communion table, the ceremonies for saints and images and so on were introduced. What every vicar had to take on board was that King Henry VIII, in his quest for a divorce, used the reforming ideas which had been simmering for a long time to make himself, not the Pope, head of the church in England.



1552 Prayerbook in Blickling Hall Library.

In Blickling Hall library there is a rare 1552 prayerbook. This was issued briefly at the end of the reign of Henry's son, the reforming Edward VI and just before the accession of Henry's daughter, the Catholic Mary. She swept this book away. There is a prayer in this 1552 prayerbook which says 'we humbly beseeche thee so as to dispose and governe the heart of Edwarde the sixth thy servaunt, our King and governour'. St Andrew's church in Norwich has a wall plaque similarly reinforcing the crown as head of the Church of England now. It refers to Elizabeth, Henry's daughter, who came to the throne after Mary in 1559 as 'our noble Queen who set up the gospel and banished Popery'.

Vicars in Aylsham had to keep on the right side of the crown or suffer. What did John Bury, who was vicar of Aylsham 1542–1547 and again from 1554 to 1558, make of these ideas? Note he was not vicar during the reign of Edward VI.

In his second incumbency during Mary's reign he was commissary to Bishop Hopton of Norwich. Hopton had been a chaplain to Mary. He is recorded as asking of those he interrogated 'do you not believe as your father did? Was he not an honest man?' Hopton, as a supporter of Mary, persecuted those who protested against Catholic systems. Thomas Hudson, a glover of Aylsham, was delivered by John Bury to the bishop on a charge of heresy and burnt at the stake at the Lollard's pit in Norwich on 19th May 1558.

Anyone in Aylsham who gave the least sign of unorthodoxy was persecuted. Two hundred of John Bury's parishioners had to creep on their knees to the cross in the church as penance. Vicar Bury was a man with a violent temper. Many rejoiced when he fell down dead in the churchyard in November 1558.

Elizabeth I had managed to keep in balance the catholic and protestant factions but when she was succeeded by the Stuarts parties coalesced around puritan ideas on the governance of the church and the powers of Parliament and the Crown's insistence on the need for bishops and the Divine Right of Kings.

East Anglia was largely a supporter of Parliament during the Civil war which ensued to fight out which of these ideas would prevail. John Hobart of Blickling Hall, whose second wife was a puritan, supported Parliament. John Philips was vicar of Aylsham 1633 to the 1650's. He signed the National Covenant in 1643 and by this act perhaps was allowed to stay in post during the Civil War and Commonwealth.

There were of course instances of men who held to traditional ideas and wanted to live with their conscience. So another survivor during the Civil War was Nathaniel Gill. He became Rector of Burgh next Aylsham in 1638 but as a supporter of the Crown in an area which largely supported Parliament he was supposedly ejected, sequestered, in 1643. Supported by friends and parishioners he stayed in the area until 1651 keeping the parish registers and continuing to baptize and marry parishioners under the now forbidden ceremonies of the church. He returned with the Restoration of Charles II. He paid for the paving, glazing and thatching of the chancel of Burgh church becoming rector of Aylsham also in 1663 until 1669.

There are several churches not too far from Aylsham where you can read epitaphs for individuals who had suffered for their religious beliefs and who wanted it known that they were always on the right side. So Robert Mihill in Potter Heigham church has the words 'clerke, vicar of ye towne who built ye

vicarage and suffered much in ye Oliverian times for his loyalty to his Prince who for his Great Piety, charity and sufferings was beloved in his country'. On a Burnham Overy Church tombstone we read of another who 'suffered much in his fortune and person from Cromwell, being sequestered and imprisoned and tho' he survived that usurpation, the common fate of those times, he enjoyed the restoration of his King only'. Does he mean he never was restored to his church living ?

Great Witchingham church records that Oliver le Neve was 'no friend to popery or Presbytery but a zealous assertor of the church of england'. Individual vicars had their particular beliefs, some of which we can glimpse, but most had to follow the demands of their diocesan Bishop. Bishop Nix was the last Roman Catholic Bishop of Norwich 1501–1535 when the new Reformation ideas were beginning. Much later John Jegon was the bishop 1603–1618 . Despite the long-held belief that he lived in the Manor House in Aylsham, now an old peoples home, it is now known that he lived his later years at Kettlebridge on Spa Farm, part of his considerable estate in the area. He had a reputation for enforcing conformity concurrently with a reputation for wealth and meanness. He is buried in the chancel of Aylsham church. In his favour he had found it politic to satisfy local puritans by the appointment of some preachers in his diocese. He was succeeded as bishop by John Overall 1618–1619. Later, feted by John Costin who raised a monument to him in Norwich Cathedral, Overall had come to a position between puritanism and catholicism. He was on the committee for the translation of the King James Bible in 1611.

Matthew Wren was bishop 1635–1638 at the time of Archbishop Laud. Forty ministers, the name given to puritan preachers, were disciplined by Wren with the help of visitations and a network of enforcing commissioners. Thomas Allen, rector of St Edmund's, Norwich, was deprived of his living in 1636, fled to the Netherlands and eventually to New England. He returned in 1651 during the Commonwealth. Robert Peck minister at Hingham left for New England in 1638 returning in 1641 during the Civil War.

Edward Reynolds Bishop of Norwich at the time of the Restoration of Charles II contributed to the 1662 Book of Common Prayer. This was a distillation of all the difficulties raised during the reformation. Reynold's Prayer of General Thanksgiving is rightly loved 'we bless thee for our creation, preservation and all the blessings of this life ... for the means of grace and for the hope of glory ...and we beseech thee that we may show forth thy praise not only with our lips, but in our lives'.

Slowly the Church of England came to an accommodation with the ideas of the Reformation and with the claims of Parliament and Crown. Elizabeth II is



Altar in St Nicholas church, North Walsham, with the wording altered to include "and blood".

head of the Established Church, bishops sit in parliament, those who do not conform to the Church of England, who have non-Christian faith or none have tolerance entrenched in law. Many churches in Norfolk have kept the whitewashing on the walls that overpainted colourful pre-reformation scenes. There are many wonderful Stuart communion tables, not altars. But there are still traces of the pre-reformation times. You can see the occasional wafer oven in which communion bread was baked. An altar in North Walsham church has had words inserted into the text carved along the top to include 'body and blood'. This records the dispute on this subject of communion during the Reformation. There are consecration crosses, fittings for the Lenten Veil, Easter sepulchres and niches for images.

Aylsham Church has the base of a painted rood screen still and a squint, so that the Elevation of the Host carried out in the chancel and hidden by the rood screen could be noted and communicated to those in the nave. A typically English mix of pre-reformation fittings in a Reformed church.

Sources

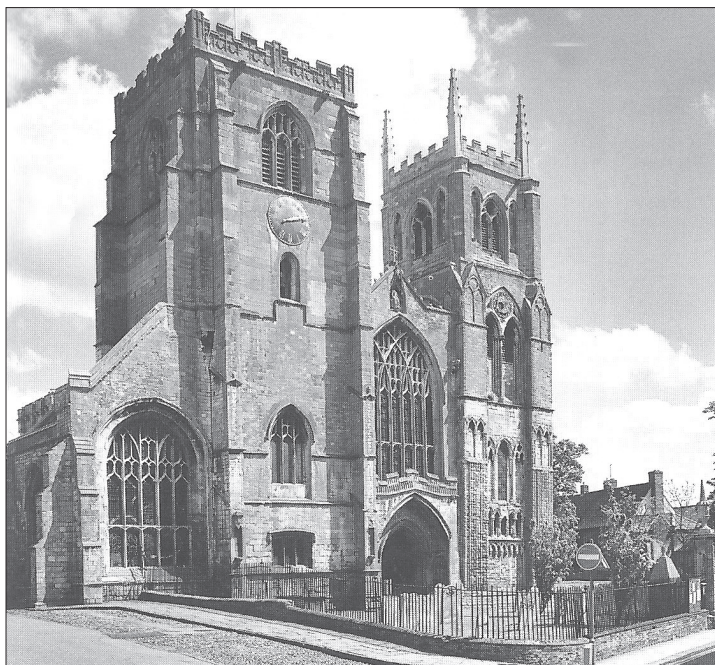
Robert W. Ketton-Cremer, *A Norfolk Gallery* (1948).

Eamon Duffy, *Fires of faith, Catholic England under Mary Tudor* (2009).

John Sapwell, *History of Aylsham* (1960).

Susana Hardman Moore, *Pilgrms, New World settlers and the call of home* (2007).

Visit to King's Lynn



West front of the Minster of St Margaret, King's Lynn

King's Lynn is an ancient seaport on the banks of the Great Ouse. It was originally called Lyn, Lenne or Leuna (names of Celtic origin, meaning the place by the pool or the place of spreading waters) then Bishop's Lynn before finally becoming known as King's Lynn in 1536. Between 1100 and 1400 Lynn developed to become one of the largest trading ports in the country. It is thought that salt was produced in the times before 1100, as a result of which, the land level rose leading to the development of the medieval town. Trade was both national and international and Lynn still carries on trade in timber from Scandinavia.

Our guide for our tour of Historic Lynn on 19th September was Vic Saunders, a King's Lynn guide for 40 years. We started in the Saturday Market Place and our first port of call was the Minster or the Parish Church of St Margaret of Antioch.

The Minster

The Minster started to be built in 1101 by Herbert de Losinga, then Bishop of Thetford, who was also the founder of Norwich Cathedral, and was dedicated to St Margaret of Antioch, St Mary Magdalene and all the Virgin Saints.

The two towers on the West front indicate a church serving both priory and parish. Apart from the towers the church was rebuilt in the 13th century. Vic drew our attention to various interesting areas. Being built on soil the pillars and 18th century nave have a noticeable slant. Two large monumental brasses are the only survivors of several in the church. One is known as the Peacock Brass because in a panel at its base a peacock feast is represented. Made in Flanders it was shipped over in pieces and we could see the divisions where the reassembly had been made.

We looked at the town's coat of arms which featured a pelican pecking its breast to feed its young (a myth) used as a symbol of Christ shedding His blood. Also three dragon heads each with a protruding cross. These are the emblem of St Margaret who was swallowed alive by a dragon, but she held on to her cross which so irritated the dragon that it either spewed her out of its mouth or its belly burst open thereby releasing the poor suffering woman.

Vic pointed out various misericords (which had fine carvings such as the Green Man), the Sword Rest where the sword of King John is held along with the four ceremonial maces, part of the Town Regalia. After a brief look at the West Window erected in 1927, Vic led us outside to look at the West facade and its two clocks. The clock on the right hand tower is a tide clock presented in 1683. It records the high tides and its single hand is St Margaret's emblem of a dragon failing to swallow the cross. At high tide the man in the moon appears on the clock face. Vic pointed out the various high water marks in the stones under the tide clock. We saw the tower of Greyfriar's Priory, the only part of four priories in the town and maybe left after the Reformation to act as a shipping mark.

Out in the streets again we were made aware of the continual battle with rising water in the raised entrance steps to the houses. Flood defences have now been installed. Vic explained how the many fine Merchant's houses were built to display the wealth of the owner, with the counting houses being less showy single storey buildings. Although Nelson had nothing to do with King's Lynn, Nelson Street is the main street of the town. One timber framed building was painted all over, including its timber, in terracotta, apparently picking out timbers in black and white was Victorian. We stood in Hampton Court (possibly named after a baker) and saw a cannon ball suspended over the entrance which was fired during a siege in the Civil War, the Town being for King Charles, whereas most of Norfolk was Parliamentary.

We paused to look at the only extant Hansa house in England and admired the granite setts laid by French prisoners during the Napoleonic Wars. Vic then asked us to look down at a manhole cover with the name Savages on it. Frederick Savage, engineer, moved to the town in 1851 to make agricultural machinery. He then became involved in making fairground roundabouts with galloping horses and other rides. He also invented the switchback. The fairground opens on February 14th each year with a procession and opening by the Mayor, and is an important event for the Showman's Guild.

On the Quay we looked in vain for a bridge. There is none, all crossings across the river are made by ferry. A very fine double ended cockle boat, The Baden-Powell lay resting on the river mud having been recently restored. We saw the docks in the distance and a marker showing the line of the 13th century quay way back from today's edge, an indication of the continual silting up.

We admired the chequerboard facade of the Town Hall, which also housed the old lockup, as indicated by the iron manacles mounted on the front of the building. With our tour nearly over, we were taken along a right of way through the 17th century warehouse building, Clifton House (actually two medieval merchants' houses made into one). A five storey look-out tower in the grounds was a status symbol used for entertaining, but doubled as a watch tower for returning ships and a ships' marker. Clifton House is now in private ownership but open on heritage days.

Our tour ended at the old Custom's House, now the Tourist Information Centre. We all thanked Vic and paid our donation confident that the money would be given to the King's Lynn Preservation Trust, the good work of which had been much in evidence on our tour.

We walked back to Marriott's Warehouse on the quay for a well-earned lunch having first admired a modern sculpture of a three fathom column on a stone base created by Andrew Schumann, which symbolises the rise and fall of the tide; each of its six sections are half a fathom high.

After lunch members were free to wander at will around the town. Several of us went to St Nicholas Chapel and True's Yard and Fisheries Museum.

St Nicholas Chapel

Built by William de Turbus Bishop of Norwich in 1145, St Nicholas is the largest chapel-of-ease in the country, a chapel dependent on St Margaret's and serving the parish for the 'ease' of the nearby parishioners. Being a chapel it was not allowed to celebrate baptism, marriages or the churching of women until 1627 when a font was installed and baptisms were allowed. Saint Nicholas is patron, among other things, for fishermen.

The enormous, light and airy interior seemed to us far from a chapel.

Looking up there is a magnificent hammer-beam roof with flying angels playing musical instruments.

Other note-worthy features include:

- The spire. The old one was blown down in a gale in 1741 and the present one was completed in 1869–1870, designed by Gilbert Scott, it is built of lead-covered timber.
- Several magnificent monuments are set in the walls, that of Thomas and Susanna Green on the West wall being particularly attractive, and
- The Consistory Court in the north-west corner, which sat twice a year to hear various alleged transgressions of ecclesiastical law.

Declared redundant in 1989, the Chapel is now in the care of The Churches Conservation Trust and used as a community hall.

True's Yard and Fisheries Museum

William True, a whitesmith by trade who used the smithy in the yard, rented out 6 cottages to local fishermen and their families. Only two remain. The old fishing community in the North End of King's Lynn was once a thriving community with its own boat builders, chandlers, sailmakers, pubs, bake-houses and school. The hard and dangerous life led to a close-knit community providing mutual care and understanding. However, the fishing industry started to decline in the late 19th century.

The cottages were very small: one room up and one down with very steep stairs, no toilet and limited cooking facilities (the fire only). What is now the museum gift shop was the North End bakery and anything that couldn't be fried or boiled could be taken to the baker who would, for a penny, cook it in his large oven. The last to move into cottage 5 was the Solly family in 1935. Son George was the last baby to be born in the yard and is now a trustee of the North End Trust.

Inside the museum we saw the smokehouse, the last of its kind in the North End. The smoke smell was much in evidence. The smoking of two types of fish was explained: bloaters and kippers, or red herrings. Although no reference was made to the familiar saying, subsequent research has indicated the red kipper fillets were used as a false trail in hunting. Also on display was a mannequin wearing a gansey, a traditional sweater worn by Lynn fishermen. Each family had a distinct pattern which could be used to identify a fisherman if he died at sea.

A few Lynn Characters

Margery Kempe the author of one of the earliest autobiographies and a mystic c1373–c1440.



Statue of George Vancouver in front of the Customs House. Photo: Sue Sharpe.

Fanny Burney 1752–1840 writer of diaries and a journal which have several references to King's Lynn. Fanny was the daughter of Charles Burney, organist at St Margaret's.

George Vancouver 1757–1798 sailed, aged 14, with Captain Cook in 1771 and on Cook's last voyage 1776–1779. A memorial statue was erected in 2000 which stands on a granite plinth from the West coast of Canada which he surveyed.

Ralph Vaughan-Williams stayed in the town in 1905 and subsequently composed around 70 folk songs inspired by meeting elderly fishermen and hearing their songs.

As members joined the minibus for the journey home, there was a general feeling that repeat visits were required to appreciate the rich history of King's Lynn.

Caroline Driscoll

Norwich market



Part of a painting of Norwich Market Place by Robert Deighton, 1799

Frances and Michael Holmes treated us again to their distinctive style of talk on October 5th. A double act featuring images, anecdotes, recorded and filmed contributions from local people and audience participation.

In Norman times the market needed to be in the protective shadow of the Castle. It thrived because Norwich was not only a centre for its hinterland but also because of foreign trade by river to the coast and onwards. Some of the present day street names reflect the varieties of markets there. Timber Hill for the wood market, Haymarket to serve the livestock market, the Maddermarket supplying dye to the textile trade and Rampant Horse Street remembering the name of the pub in the Horse market in St Stephens.

The market place we know today was divided into the Over rowe and Nether rowe, each specialising in leather goods or worsted and linens. Provisions were brought in from growers in baskets to be sold there. Fish had

a separate area. Until 1404 the administration of the market was conducted in a toll booth. As trade grew the Guildhall was built to serve the market and the administration of the whole city.

A picture from 1799 gave a picturesque view of the market but the smell of rotting vegetation, horse manure, flies and rats have to be factored in. A butcher's shop in time became The Baron of Beef tavern and in 1870 was renamed Sir Garnet Wolsey, which we can see today. Studlands china and glass Emporium was in the block of buildings between Sir Garnet Wolsey and the Guildhall. This range was demolished in 1938. Other buildings which can be identified from this picture include the coaching inn 'The Kings Head' later with an opening to create Davy Place. The shop P.J. Knights sold Norwich Shawls, Bignolds had a wine and brandy store which needed insurance to protect the valuable stock. This was the beginning of Norwich Union Insurance Company. In 1828 Exchange Street was made leading to the market place. Gas lighting had arrived in 1820. The Royal Hotel was another coaching inn whose time was limited by the advent of the railways.

Jarrolds, now a department store, was originally a store to sell its publications. An earlier version had been across the road from its present site. The exterior of this building was enhanced by a brick design by George Skipper. Skipper is renowned for the Royal Arcade built through the former Royal Hotel. In Arts and Crafts style with peacocks, apples and Italian tiles the arcade leads from the castle to the market.

In the coaching era many inns had thrived around the market place, serving the needs of those arriving or departing: a trade and transport hub. To attract custom from a rival many took to offering entertainment in the form of cock fighting or showing elephants or snakes. By the 1930's the city council had purchased leases of many businesses in the market place area. At this time the stalls were cleared away on Saturday evenings giving space to those wanting to persuade citizens to Temperance, Fascism, Trade Unionism or whatever. The cleared space would show the statues of Nelson and Wellington, since removed to Cathedral Close. Coaches had been superseded by taxis. The drivers had their own shelter for refreshment at the front of the market.

By 1932 it was recognized that the Guildhall and the muddle of buildings now owned by the council and used as offices did not meet the needs of the city. A new City hall was built and opened in 1938 when the old buildings could then be demolished. The removal of the Lutyens war memorial from Guildhall Hill to the top of the market completed the new look.

The fruit and vegetable stalls had thrived until the 1970's, but it gradually became evident that supermarkets were affecting this trade. The call was to Diversify or Die.



The Royal Hotel, front right, used by George Skipper to create the Royal Arcade that opened in 1899.

Other businesses were introduced as the provision trade altered. The wooden structures of the stalls with their faded awnings looked tired and harboured rats. Changes were made by the council in 1976 affording better security and shelter. Options were suggested in 2003 to update the look and accessibility of the market. A more acceptable solution was provided by Michael Innes. To give security and accommodate the varying slopes wood huts were built with added pitched striped tops. Each hut had adjustable legs and could only be stable in its particular area.

Now colour and a different character has overcome the sterile and returned the souk atmosphere. There are few stalls now selling fruit and vegetables but you can buy fabric, cheese, leather goods, cards and more and eat food from Italy, Chile, India or China. Norwich market is still a place to do business and knits together the heart of the City.

Lynda Wix

Meet our Ancestors: The Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Great Ryburgh – a talk by Matt Champion

It might be surprising to fill a hall for a talk about a cemetery, but our audience on 26 November was anticipating a treat from Matt Champion, who has entertained and informed us so well on a growing number of occasions. It is surprising too that Matt Champion found himself Consultant Archaeologist in his own village and, in a sea of mud, came across a highly significant and unexpected find.



The Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Great Ryburgh. Arrow indicates site of putative chapel. See also images on back cover. Photo courtesy of Museum of London Archaeology.

Great Ryburgh straddles the Wensum south-east of Fakenham, here a wide shallow valley that once may have been the head of the navigation. Gary Boyce had a plan to create a lake to breed crucian carp for fishing, with the concomitant benefits of flood defence, catching excess run off within its raised banks, and enhancing wildlife conservation. At first sight planning permission looked relatively easy as the grassy area had little sign of previous development. Aerial photographs from 1946 and particularly 1988 showed earthworks attributed to management features of a former nearby water mill. However in

the late 1980s an archaeological research group had found some evidence of early settlement, including a couple of pieces of Anglo-Saxon pottery. To compile the Heritage Statement a routine search was made of C18–C19 maps, including the 1808 Enclosure Map. The landowner of the time set himself to collect all the information he could resulting in what are now known as the Woodhouse documents found in the Hereford and Worcester Record Office, near where he had another estate. These records stretched right back to the C12 and reassuringly revealed a long history of no more than grassland prone to flooding.

Norfolk Historic Environment Service directed that trial trenches be cut. Six pieces of Anglo-Saxon pottery came to light, but more significantly, on further investigation, one of the spoil heaps had a great number of bones from butchered animals and quite an assortment of artefacts including 300 pieces of Anglo-Saxon and Roman pottery, a fine C9 metal strap and a boar's tooth. The Roman pottery included pieces of Samian ware, indicating the existence of a high status settlement in the vicinity. So in January 2016 in foul wet weather mechanical diggers were engaged to strip off the 50–60 cm of cluggy soil to reveal beneath a continuous bed of sand within which a wooden coffin was found in the first hour of excavation and it was soon evident that there was a significant number of graves. The wooden coffins and skeletal remains had been remarkably preserved due to a combination of factors. The sand was acidic but very finely grained and being persistently waterlogged remained deoxygenated and anaerobic for wood-rotting bacteria. Furthermore the Wensum here is fed by alkaline streams rendering the groundwater neutral, saving the bones from acidic decomposition.

To find these remarkable relics was one thing, but to raise the funds to fully explore the site at short notice was quite another. But after rebuttals from several hard-pressed organisations Historic England agreed to take on the responsibility as an exceptional request at a cost likely to come finally to £135–150 thousand. The team of archaeologists assembled by the Museum of London Archaeology was able to start work in June 2016. It was important to keep the site secure by a ruse of swearing all the villagers to secrecy through meetings and private chats. The ploy was helped by the work camp of Carillion burying a cross-country electricity cable the other side of the river. The press release was held back until 18 November 2016 by which time the finds had been removed for study and future reinterment. A number of the reports can still be followed on the internet and a remarkable number of images have been put online including the picture of the whole site taken from a drone and shown above and on the back cover.

In all 81 graves were unearthed, all orientated west to east, unaccompanied by grave goods, following Christian tradition. The coffins were of two sorts. The majority had been hewn from segments of oak trees 6–8 feet long, split longitudinally, each half hollowed out, one used for laying out the body, the other as a lid. Six were more sophisticated and probably of later date. They were made of planks that had been split and pegged to form a base, sides and top. From the best preserved of these it was possible to extract samples for dendrological dating, with a firm date of 750 AD. The decomposition of the skeletons varied, the through flow of water in some cases floating bones towards the feet. Enough remained to suggest a healthy population of adults, mostly of substantial stature comparable to the modern population. Some jewellery and coins were unearthed. The DNA of bone samples should give an indication of blood relationships and isotope analysis of tooth enamel an indication of life histories, whether individuals were resident or incomers, that can be pinpointed to the source of water they drank during their lives. Samples of pollen, seeds and associated finds should extend our understanding of their diet and life styles.

The outlines of two small buildings could be traced by the drip line of the thatch roofs. These can be seen on the colour image on the back cover of this issue by the blue coverings on the excavation. The small one near the centre of the site, facing west to east, looks likely to be a chapel. Credence is given to this by a single grave in the north-east corner. The Venerable Bede records a similar burial at an early Christian site in the north of England.

Only adults, men and women, were found, leading to a speculation that children may have been buried elsewhere. Whether this was a civil as well as a religious burial ground is not yet clear. Great Ryburgh is at the head of the navigable part of the Wensum, so a trading centre can be envisaged and it is certainly set close to a significant former Roman settlement. But the site on a slight rise in a substantial wetland in quite a large D-shaped expanse, with a river crossing and road bridge that are still extant, could signify a monasteria for a religious cult.

The site has now been covered over and the lake project fulfilled, already with very promising ecological benefits. There is a definite plan to return the human remains to the village after a couple of years and inter them near their original resting place.

Roger Polhill

Annual General Meeting

Thursday October 5th 2017

Apologies: Sue McManus, Jean and Margaret Goose, Jean Hawke, Joan Roulstone, Jeremy and Pamela Worth, Mary Elsey

Minutes of the AGM 2016 were signed as a true record. There were no matters arising

Secretary's report

Good evening. I hope you have collected your membership card which, in addition to providing the list of lectures for this coming winter, also acts as receipt for payment of your Society subscription. Please note that the committee and officers on your card are those currently serving and not necessarily the ones you are about to elect.

The winter lectures were well attended with, typically, 50 to 60 members and visitors. We have arranged an interesting series of speakers for this winter which is detailed on your membership cards, and includes some new speakers as well as one or two favourites.

The Society's Autumn course was 'A History of The World through 100 Paintings'. This did not prove as successful as most previous courses, and we arranged for a shortened 4-session course this Autumn that attempts to shine a light on the dark ages, and is led by the popular Matt Champion.

The annual dinner was held at The Kings Head at Letheringsett. Margaret Bird was our guest and she gave an interesting and amusing introduction to a very pleasant evening. The next social, provisionally, will be held on 29th March 2018 as in your membership card, and the date and venue will be confirmed later.

The Society has continued to enjoy good relations with the Heritage Centre and the Town Archives, and many members have enjoyed the continuation of the archaeological dig at Woodgate, thanks to Peter Purdy's indomitable enthusiasm.

Finally, as I am standing down as secretary, I would like to thank those who have served as fellow committee members. Leading a society involves a lot of work behind the scenes, much of it unseen. It is to their credit that the Society has continued success both in terms of our interest in history, and as a social group.

Thank you.

Jim Pannell

Treasurer's report

The accounts show activity in the several aspects of the Society. I have itemised the Autumn Course fees for lectures, sales of Publications and printing costs, the social evening and visits made during the year. Income is increased by subscriptions, visitor contributions and refreshments, while various expenses are incurred in running the society.

You will see that this year's expenditure exceeds income. This is due to a recent visit to King's Lynn, when I had to pay for the coach before receiving money from people going on the trip.

The statement before you was printed while the accounts were still with Graeme Johnston. Graeme has now returned them to me and has signed that he has checked them and finds them to be correct.

Ian McManus

Report on Journal and Publications

The three parts of the Journal and Newsletter published this year bring us to the end of Volume 10. There are copies of a list of contents and index available for anyone who would like them. As always I am most grateful to our regular contributors who have given us an excellent range of subjects and style, as well as valued reports on our lectures and visits. I had wondered whether printed versions of the Journal would by now seem outmoded in a digital age, but we plan to continue into Volume 11 in our usual way, collecting the material now for No. 1 in December. I look forward to your continued support and greatly welcome new contributors.

Book sales were boosted to £760 last year by publication of Lynda Wix and Jim Pannell's *Aylsham Baptist Church* and have come down to £480 this year. The tally includes 25 copies of *Sail and Storm*, 15 of *About Aylsham*, 10 of *Millgate* and 17 wall maps. We reprinted more copies of *The Poor in Aylsham*, which was out of print, and ten of these have been provided to our sales outlets with Barnwells and the Heritage Centre. Sue Sharpe has been working on a most informative leaflet, *People of Aylsham Through its Street Names*, and this will be going to the printers quite shortly. She has in mind the new housing estates where we feel newcomers will be interested to know a bit more about their neighbourhood. Lynda Wix has also produced a foldout card with a panorama of the Market Place in living memory that is now on sale at our meetings for £2. We also welcome guest publications by members of the Society. This evening we have two new books, *Hearths and Heaths: Dispersed Settlements in Aylsham's Early Modern Landscape* by William and Maggie Vaughan-Lewis and *Two Points East A View of Maritime Norfolk* by Judith Ellis.

Our Committee has reformed the Publications Subcommittee that was organised in a previous era by Tom Mollard and Geoff Gale. We are currently considering an updating of Elizabeth Gale's *Aylsham Inns and Public Houses a History* (2001) that has been out of print for some time. William and Maggie have much new information from their study of Court Rolls and now readily accessible digital versions of historic newspapers. It looks feasible to reshape the book to include some of this and then place the more detailed early history of the sites into a CD to be inserted in a pocket at the back of the book. It should also be possible to produce a fold-out leaflet along the lines of Sue Sharpe's road names of Aylsham. There is still some fairly straightforward research to do and we welcome two or three more members of the Society who would like to participate. We much appreciate Geoff Gale's support for the project.

Our website is the most accessible source for information on our programme and publications and we are most grateful to Geoff Sadler for maintaining it.

Report on visits

Caroline Driscoll reported that there had been 3 successful visits this year – to Fakenham Gas Museum, to the Great Hospital and Cathedral Library with lunch in the refectory and to King's Lynn. There is a proposed visit to Ely and a boatbuilder for the coming year.

Report on Membership

Sue Sharpe reported that 75 had paid membership fees before the AGM. There were 100 members last year. Three new members had signed up this evening.

A.O.B.

Geoff Sadler initiated a discussion as to whether members wished to continue with refreshments and if so at what part of the meeting would these be served – at 7p.m?, after the talk?, just at the AGM? There being a mix of responses the committee will address this issue again.

LIST OF MEMBERS

Alford, Mr P
Ashworth, Ms L
Baker, Mr D
Baker, Mr & Mrs P
Barber, Mrs S
Barwick, Mrs G

Bayes, Mrs R
Bell, Ms Sara
Bennett, Mr T
Bird, Mrs M
Blake, Mrs J
Bliss, Mr T

Bowman, Miss H
 Brady, Mr P
 Brown, Ms V
 Burton, Mr G
 Calvert, Ms R
 Cannon Ms L
 Carlyle, Mr D
 Case, Dr D E
 Casimir, Mr & Mrs S
 Cowan, Ms N
 Cox, Mrs F
 Cragg, Mr J
 Crouch, Mr R
 Davy, Mr & Mrs R
 Douet, Dr A
 Driscoll, Mrs C
 Ducker, Mr G
 Duncan, Mrs B
 Dyball, Miss A J
 Dyer, Ms F
 Edwards, Mr & Mrs J
 Ellis, Ms J
 Elphinstone, Mr N
 Elsey, Mr & Mrs B
 Fiske, Mr R
 Fletcher, Mrs G
 Fox, Mr & Mrs M
 Gale, Mr G
 Gee, Mrs B
 Goose, Ms J
 Goose, Ms M
 Gordon, Ms J
 Grellier, Ms D
 Gunne-Braden, Mr & Mrs J
 Hall, Mr & Mrs C
 Hall, Mrs R
 Harrison, Mrs R
 Hawke, Mrs J
 Hill, Mrs M
 Hills, Ms V
 Holman, Mrs E
 Home, Mr J
 Humphreys, Mrs C

Janes, Ms L
 Jay, Mrs S
 Jeavons, Mr S
 Johnston, Mr G
 Jones, Mr & Mrs M
 Layt, Ms A
 Lock, Mrs A
 Lyons, Mr D
 Margaron, Mr & Mrs G
 Mawbey, Mr & Mrs W E
 McChesney, Mrs J
 McManus, Mr & Mrs I
 Merriman, Mrs S
 Mollard, Mrs S
 Morgan, Dr V
 Nice, Mr & Mrs N
 Pannell, Mr & Mrs J
 Parry, Ms E
 Peabody, Ms J
 Pim, Mr & Mrs M
 Polhill, Dr & Mrs R
 Powell, Mr & Mrs I
 Roulstone, Mr & Mrs P
 Rowe, Mrs M
 Rust, Mr B
 Sadler, Mr & Mrs G
 Scott, Mr & Mrs A
 Sharpe, Mrs S
 Shaw, Mr & Mrs A
 Sheringham, Mrs J
 Shutes, Mr & Mrs J
 Smart, Mr & Mrs L
 Smith, Ms M
 Steward, Mrs L
 Thomas, Mrs C
 Vaughan-Lewis, Mr & Mrs W
 Walsh, Mr & Mrs P
 Warren, Mrs R
 Wessely, Mrs J
 Wintle, Mrs S
 Wix, Mr & Mrs M
 Worsencroft, Mr D
 Worth, Mr & Mrs J

If your name does not appear on this list, and you paid a subscription before the end of October or if you would like to join the Society, please contact the Membership Secretary, Ros Calvert, roscalvert@gmail.com

AYILSHAM LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY
RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS ACCOUNT – YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2017

2015/2016	INCOME	2016/2017	2015/2016	EXPENDITURE	2016/2017
969.00	Members' subscriptions	876.00	400.00	Autumn Course	400.00
144.00	Visitors	90.00	683.40	Publications & printing	1080.15
670.00	Autumn Course	810.00	390.00	Hire of halls	345.50
705.00	Visits	1025.00	765.60	Visits	1470.90
760.75	Sales of publications	483.62	945.00	Social evening	900.00
945.00	Social evening	875.00	83.00	Professional subscriptions	83.00
13.00	Donations	-	295.00	Lecture fees	180.00
51.00	Refreshments	50.00	58.69	Stationery, posters, copying	49.45
			35.00	Gratuities	30.00
				Donations	50.00
£4257.75		4209.62	£3655.69		4589.00

Reconciliation

Bank balance at 31/08/16	6188.80	Less excess of expenditure over income for the year
Cash balance at 31/08/16	68.42	379.38
Add excess income over expenditure	£ 6257.22	5877.84

Represented by:– Bank balance carried forward 6233.12 Less unpresented cheques (2) 388.50 = £5844.62

Cash balance carried forward 33.22

Funds held on deposit at year end 1088.34

£5877.84

The accounting records and supporting documents of the Aylsham Local History Society for the year ended 31st August 2017 are found to be correct and in accordance with the above statement **Ian McManus** (Treasurer); **Graeme Johnston** (Accountant)