

# AYLSHAM LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

## JOURNAL AND NEWSLETTER



Volume 11

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Front cover: The Reverend James Bulwer, oil painting by Frederick Sandys in 1858. Courtesy National Gallery of Canada NGC 9657.

Back cover: The Anchor Inn (now Bridge House) by Miles Edmund Cotman, watercolour painted in 1850, courtesy Aylsham Town Archive and the Mill about 1840, watercolour by James Bulwer, courtesy of the Norfolk Museums Service (Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery).

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In the August issue we said we were still hoping to hold the AGM in October and run the course of evening lectures over the winter. Sadly that has all been postponed as we enter the second lockdown and this issue goes to press at the beginning of November. The speakers listed in the August issue from the end of October have kindly agreed to come when possible. We greatly miss the social gatherings and do hope we get through the crisis before too long and in the interim we hope you keep well and safe.

Roger Polhill has been a distinguished editor of our Journal for the thirteen years since 2007, covering volumes 8-11. At the same time, Roger has filled many other Committee roles, including Chairman. As you may recall, Roger has been looking for someone to take on the responsibility of the Journal and now, having found someone to do so, is able to stand down from this role. However, he will be providing some informal mentoring for Jeremy Worth who will be taking on the role in the New Year. Jeremy will now be looking for contributions to the Journal and can be contacted at 4 Woodgate Way, Aylsham NR11 6FJ, and with the email address above.

Roger has continued in the footsteps of previous editors, improving the academic quality of the Journal while also including entertaining narrative. He and Diana have combined to pass eagle eyes over text to check its validity and clearness, especially where the society's books and pamphlets are concerned. He will be a very hard act to follow.

Roger has agreed to continue to support me as mentoring Vice Chair for the time being and so you will still be seeing plenty of him.

On your behalf I want to thank Roger for all his efforts (and Diana) in producing the journal over the years. When we are able to hold our AGM, we can all show him our considerable appreciation in the normal way.

## The Revd James Bulwer by Roger Polhill and Maggie Vaughan-Lewis



Revd James Bulwer. Coloured chalk on paper by Frederick Sandys early 1850s, courtesy National Gallery of Canada.

The Reverend James Bulwer (1794–1879) inherited The Manor in Aylsham in 1842 and is noted as an antiquarian, artist and naturalist. His proclivity to self-aggrandisement as he craved to be accepted among the landed gentry led to indiscretions unquestioned until the recent books on the history of Aylsham by William and Maggie Vaughan-Lewis', partly his fictional lineage to the aristocracy, but principally because of the myth he created about Bishop Jigon's residence at The Manor. James Stark (1794–1859), born the same year as Revd James Bulwer and one of the Norwich School of Painters, wrote the following in an article on the moral and political influence of the Fine Arts, published in the *Norwich Mercury* of 26 May 1827:– "the generation which

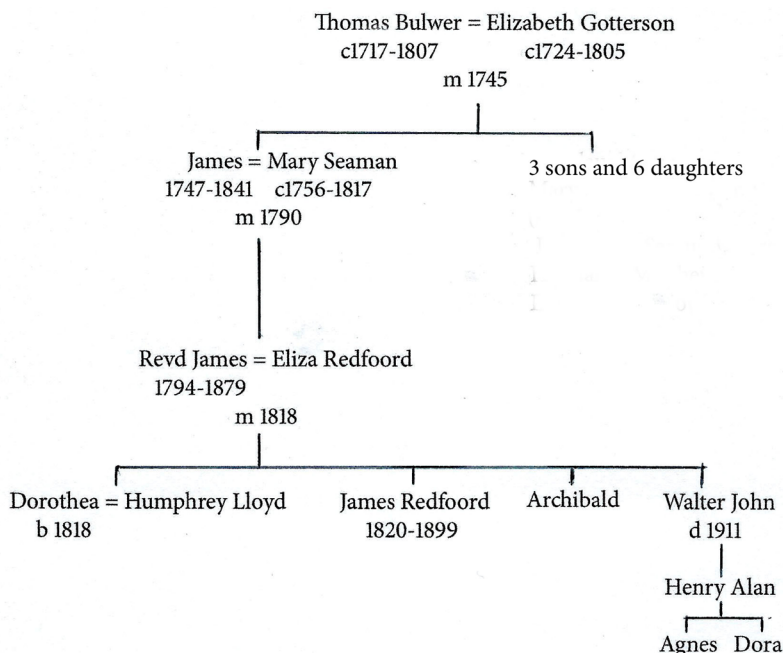
rears opulence is seldom the generation which uses it with liberal discretion... it is to the educated offspring of the first gainers of riches that we must look for the patronage of art, and this race is hardly arisen, though it is arising amongst us.”

James Bulwer belongs to a significant cohort of artists and scientists that have no exceptional talent or ambition in their own specialist field but greatly admire and like to befriend those that do. They often have a valued contribution in providing the administrative and fiscal support and quite often are assiduous collectors of books and objects. James Bulwer, who did not gain his own parish until he was in his fifties and then as a gift for his stewardship of the Blickling Hall library, is principally noted for his immense collection of watercolours, drawings, books and historical documents that were sold off by the family after his death. His competence as an artist, for which he wished to be remembered, has also been more appreciated in recent years, the previous attribution of numerous watercolours to the Norfolk School of Artists now recognised as his.

He was baptised in Aylsham on 23 March 1794. His father, James (1747–1841), a butcher in Aylsham, had married Mary Seaman from Frettenham in 1790. From 1791 the couple lived at 25 Red Lion Street (described in the next article). This was a good house off the main street that had just become available to rent.<sup>2</sup> James was already 43 before he got married and the family was prospering. Grandfather Thomas (c. 1717–1807) was also a butcher in the town. William Vaughan-Lewis has searched for progenitors without success. In 1927 two elderly ladies, Miss Agnes and Miss Dora, grand daughters of the Revd James Bulwer, arrived at Heydon Hall from Canada with the expectation of confirming the family story that they were descended from the notable family of Bulwers of Wood Dalling, their particular branch descended from Robert Bulwer of Sheringham.<sup>3</sup> Papers in the Norfolk Record Office include a letter from the Revd James Bulwer of Hunworth referring to this.<sup>4</sup> In reality the relevant Sheringham parish records were destroyed by fire and the family at Heydon Hall are descended from Wiggetts who adopted the name Bulwer from a marriage into that family. William concluded that the Aylsham Bulwers most likely came from a minor line at Buxton and Hainford, probably the latter as daughters of Thomas married into families from that direction.<sup>5</sup>

Anyway the Aylsham family continued to prosper. By 1770 Thomas had acquired lands and property in the parish valued at £120 and paying a rate of £17. In 1797 James senior makes the major acquisition of Great Edmonds, now The Manor, bought from the Dashwood family, distant cousins of the Wrench family, vicars of Aylsham at the time. The property had been leased to John Holley since 1792 and the Bulwers only moved into the house when the

tenancy became vacant in 1805, when young James was 11. Thomas died in 1807 at the great age of 90. By 1811 James senior was paying £164 in tithes to the Aylsham Rectory on 29 pieces of land across the parish (see tithe map on p. 299).<sup>6</sup> From around 1800 he invested considerably in modernising the house in Georgian style.<sup>1</sup> In 1816 he had a fine map prepared of the estate that shows he had 194 acres, exactly the same as shown on tithe map of 1840. By the latter part of his life he was regarded as a gentleman rather than a butcher.



Bulwer family tree adapted from William & Maggie Vaughan-Lewis (2014). Thomas and Elizabeth Bulwer (sometimes spelt Bullwer) had John (1768), Thomas (1774–1776); Mary marries George Barber with son John Barber; Deborah marries Samuel Cours (?); Hannah marries Matthew Reid; Elizabeth marries Peter Hovee in 1775; Anne (1757 and 1761).

Young James is recorded as at the Paston Grammar School in North Walsham in 1811<sup>7</sup> and he was at Jesus College, Cambridge, in 1814, graduating with a BA.<sup>8</sup> His mother died in 1817 and is buried in Aylsham. In November 1818 James was ordained as a Deacon by the Bishop of Norwich.

Kitson in his book on the life of John Sell Cotman (1782–1842) comments as follows. “During the period of waiting, after his university course was over

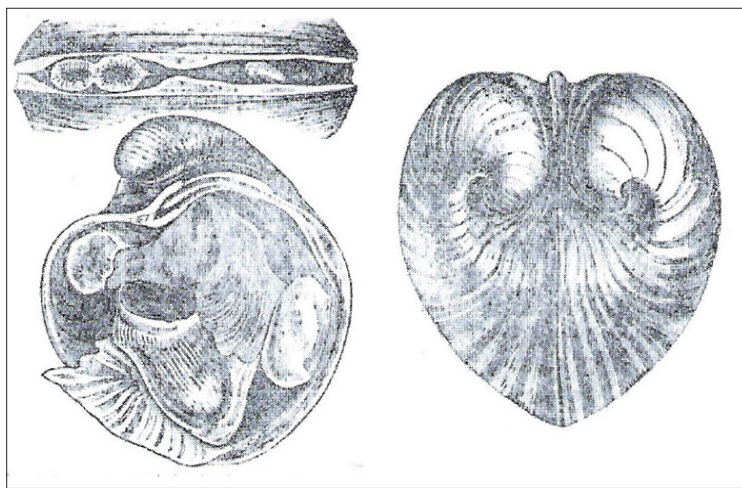
and before reaching the canonical age, he took lessons in drawing from Cotman".<sup>9</sup> They remained friends until the last year of Cotman's life. Cotman, with John Crome (1768–1821), was a leading proponent of the Norwich School of Artists. In 1812 he had moved to Yarmouth to help Dawson Turner (1775–1858) realise his enormous project to illustrate his copy of Francis Blomefield's *An Essay towards a topographical history of the county of Norfolk*. It took Turner over 40 years to assemble an extraordinary visual record of the antiquities of Norfolk, now preserved in 39 volumes in the British Library.<sup>10</sup> Dawson Turner ran the Turner Gurney Bank in partnership with Hudson Gurney (1775–1864), a lifelong friend with whom he shared many interests in art, literature and natural history.<sup>11</sup> The family lived in a beautiful house on the South Quay of Great Yarmouth overlooking the Yare, later Barclays Bank, with a large library above the bank salon. Here Mrs Turner (née Mary Palgrave, 1775–1850), an exceptionally talented artist and engraver, trained by John Crome and now under the tuition of Cotman, was passing on the craft of draughtsmanship to several of her six daughters diligently compiling illustrations for the antiquities of Norfolk. By 1818 they were busy using the lessons by Cotman to copy the numerous and diverse portraits, drawings of buildings, objects and maps, many by Cotman, into uniform small size to fit the projected rebinding. Three hundred of the original drawings and sketches were left on Cotman's hands and were put on sale for one hundred guineas. They were bought by James Bulwer. At an average price of less than seven shillings apiece they may have seemed a bargain.

Sarah Knights, in her excellent 1982 thesis on the Revd James Bulwer, doubts that Bulwer had proper drawing lessons from Cotman, but it does not now seem improbable given the note in Kitson's book published the same year as Sarah's thesis.<sup>12</sup> James was at a loose end from the summer of 1817. Cotman was on a tour in Normandy for Turner during seven weeks from June, but was back in Yarmouth by the autumn. He resided in a recently built house in Southtown, with a workshop in one of the three bedrooms that had a large attic overall.<sup>9</sup> Cotman, only twelve years older, taught in the large library at Bank House, not far away, an open house to numerous visitors, Dawson had been a pupil at Paston Grammar School, and James, at the beginning of his career, was to follow Turner's interests very closely in the following years.

Dawson Turner and James Bulwer also shared an interest in natural history. As an undergraduate Bulwer was elected a Fellow of the Linnean Society of London in 1817 as a "gentleman well versed in the knowledge of Testaceous Molluscs".<sup>13</sup> His friend Alfred Lyall described him as "a very quick observer and an ardent naturalist"<sup>14</sup> By the end of his life he had amassed a great series of British shells, most of which are now in the British Museum. In 1818 Dawson

Turner was still engaged on his *magnus opus Historia Fuscorum* or a *History of British Seaweeds*. William Jackson Hooker (1785–1865) was a welcome visitor at Bank House between 1806 and 1819 to make 234 of the 258 beautiful plates and was kept busy at his drawing board until ten o'clock: “at the first stroke everybody had fled thankfully to bed”. He married the eldest Turner daughter Maria in 1815, when she was only 16, and went on to be the Director of Kew Gardens.<sup>15</sup>

James was ordained as a deacon in November 1818. He had married Eliza Redfoord, in Bath on 23 March that year. Eliza was the only daughter and heiress of Archibald Redfoord of Shrowland, Kildare, west of Dublin. Their daughter Dorothea Maria Redfoord Bulwer was born at 7 Lambridge in the Walcot suburb of Bath on 24 December that year and their first son James Redfoord Bulwer was born in 1820. The family moved to Ireland where James was ordained as a Priest by the Bishop of Kildare in 1822. He received his MA from Cambridge and was appointed Perpetual Curate of Booterston, Dublin, in 1823, living in Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin, by 1826.

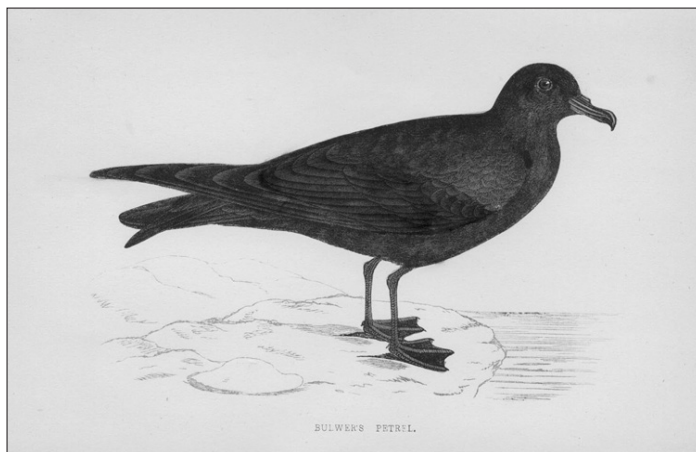


Oxheart clam, drawn by James Bulwer in 1824 from specimens trawled in the Irish Sea.<sup>17</sup>

James was able to continue with his natural history interests. In 1824 he made notes on the oxheart clam *Glossus humanus*, then called *Isocardia cor*, fished up from the floor of deep sea east of Ireland, his sketches published with his paper in *The Zoological Journal* in 1826.<sup>16-18</sup> The clam only protrudes the edge of its shell from the sand to collect plankton and other microscopic



material that filter down. From specimens in a tank he was able to record its feeding behaviour.



Bulwer's Petrel drawn by James Bulwer in 1825. Copy of coloured drawing bought by Roger Polhill and now in Aylsham Town Archive.

In the early part of 1826 he spent two or three months in Spain, Portugal and Madeira, with the traveller and philosopher Alfred Lyall (1796–1865). Lyall was about his age and published his *Rambles in Madeira* in 1827 with 26 lithographic views of notable features by Bulwer.<sup>19, 20</sup> Bulwer placed his sketch-book at the disposal of Cotman, who exhibited several at an exhibition of the Old Watercolour Society in 1828 with a view to selling reproductions to gentleman travellers.<sup>9</sup> He also sent several skins of birds to Sir William Jardine and Sir Hugh Gladstone had two sketches of birds by Bulwer. *Procellaria bulweri*, Bulwer's Petrel, was described by Jardine & Selby in their *Illustrations of Ornithology* in 1828, attributed to "Dr. Bulwer".<sup>13</sup> This monotypic species of tropical birds breeds on islands of the eastern North Atlantic, Indian and Pacific Oceans ranges between 10° S and 40° N. Those that breed in the Atlantic are believed to move into the tropics outside the breeding season and records from the UK have not been substantiated.<sup>21, 22</sup>

By 1830 the family was residing at Clifton, near Bristol, perhaps to be nearer Eliza's family now they had a growing family with two further sons, Archibald and Walter. While in Clifton he worked with William James Müller (1812–1845), the young landscape painter, whose style became an influence on Bulwer, and began a collection of illustrations on the antiquities of Somerset



for his project on the *Hundred of Carhampton* mentioned below. Cotman also visited him there, as evidenced by a fine painting of Leigh High Woods with Bulwer in the foreground.<sup>23</sup>

Bulwer was credited as “evidently a brave and strong minded man” for his stance at the Bishop’s Palace in Bristol during the riots of October 1831 during the trial of Charles Pinney in 1833.<sup>24</sup> He gave evidence of how he was at the gates on that Sunday and was stood down after the Mayor’s party arrived and the disturbance had died down in protest at the new Reform Bill.

On 24 May 1832 Bulwer was licensed to perform the office of Minister of St James’s Chapel, York Street, in the Parish of St James, Westminster and took a house in Old Burlington Street. Later that year he exhibited for the first and only time at the Norfolk and Suffolk Institution in 1832, the successor to the Norwich School of Artists, of which Cotman was vice-president. At this time King’s College was founded beside Somerset House, and John Sell Cotman was recommended to be the drawing master by Dawson Turner, his daughter, Lady Palgrave, being associated with the founders. Cotman came up to London in December 1833 and stayed with the Bulwers until his position was confirmed in February 1834.<sup>9</sup> On 8 January 1834 a letter from Cotman to Dawson Turner describes Bulwer as ‘quiet easy, dignified, simple, and more what I can fancy the apostles to have been than anything I have heard....he is a perfect kitten.’<sup>25</sup> Cotman sold his house in Norwich and with his family moved to 42 Hunter Street, near Brunswick Square, that remained his home for the rest of his life. His youngest son and the Bulwer boys all went to King’s College.<sup>9, 13</sup> Bulwer was impressed by the John Sell’s eldest son Miles Edmund, who now joined his father in London, and began to imitate his style and commission work from him.<sup>25</sup>

For his September holidays in 1834 and 1837 Bulwer made drawings of the antiquities of part of Somerset that he proposed to bind up in a tall-paper copy of James Savage’s *History of Carhampton* that had been published in Bristol in 1830. Some of these he finished himself but about twenty were handed to Cotman to redraw or complete, but the publication was never realised.<sup>13</sup> In the spring of 1836 Bulwer sent his collection of contemporary watercolours to be auctioned at Christie’s, for which he received a poor price. The supposition is that he was making room for his planned project to collect watercolours and drawings to illustrate his own history of Norfolk.<sup>12</sup>

By the spring of 1839 Bulwer was back in Norfolk at The Manor, as he was to come to call it. Cotman writes from London in May: “how you are to be envied in your occupation of planning and building, to say nothing of looking after your gardens, and watching the ripening of your first strawberries”.<sup>9</sup> His son, Miles Edmund Cotman, spent the whole of August in Norfolk and it is

probably due to him that we have the fine detailed watercolour of The Manor from the south-east, drawn then or less probably in 1850. It is not in the style of either Bulwer or John Sell Cotman, and Miles Edmund was known for his more punctilious technique. William and Maggie found the detail here sufficient to trace much of the history of the building.<sup>1</sup> His father died in 1841 at the great age of 94 and is buried in Aylsham. The 1841 census lists the Revd James Bulwer, now 45, as a widower with three female servants in Bank Street (now Norwich Road). When James Grigor visited that year he wrote that the seat “exhibited many marks of refined taste”. He noted fine specimens of elm, Spanish chestnut and Scots Pines planted up to 38 years before.



The Manor, right, from the south-east. Probably painted by Miles Edmund Cotman in 1839, see caption under his painting of the Anchor Inn on p. 302. Aylsham Town Archive, provenance of original unknown.

William and Maggie Vaughan-Lewis suspect that some features added to “the Barn”, which is at a lower level than the main house, may have been inserted by the Revd James Bulwer to give a sense of greater history to the building. A date stone ‘1600 IT’, with lettering difficult to read, once there and later embedded in a wall, seems to have been used to suggest that Bishop John Jegon had once lived here. The bishop did indeed live in Aylsham from 1611 to the end of his life in 1618, but his property was near Spa farm and Kettlebridge. Local reference to Manor House in Norwich Road first appears in the trade directories in 1879 and in 1885 RH Mason’s *History of Norfolk* adds an engraving of ‘The Manor’ to the story. The false attribution has stuck ever since.<sup>1</sup>



The core of Great Edmonds, soon to become The Manor, from the tithe map of 1840. The fields extended a lot further to the east and south as shown on the sale map of 1901, p.306. It comprised 194 acres exactly as recorded for his father on the map of 1816. In 1861 Revd James Bulwer bought 65 acres to the south-west towards Spa Farm.

On 14 August 1841 Bulwer was licensed to the curacy of Blickling with Erpingham in the gift of Lady Caroline Hobart, Lady Suffield (1767–1850). He also accepted responsibility for the large and valuable library at Blickling Hall. It is ironic that Aylsham had three vicars appointed between 1835 and 1839, the first two dying in office.<sup>26</sup> The history of the parish church might have been somewhat different if the romantic antiquarian Bulwer had been appointed rather than the energetic moderniser Edmund Telfer Yates. Correspondence shows that Yates and Bulwer did become friends. Bulwer made a report for the committee, chaired by Yates, for the Vestry meeting in June 1852 in which he stated ‘that the pews and fittings are in a very decayed state.’<sup>27</sup> In 1859 he seems to approve the removal of part of the old baptistry “in the barbarous style of Ann”, purchased from the Aylsham carpenter to be used in St Mary’s Itteringham for other purposes.<sup>28</sup> His diplomacy is evident in correspondence from Kent asking him about the suitability of Dr Ager’s St Michael Collegiate School. Bulwer refers to Yates’s doubts about Ager’s [Ager’s] doctorate and its success through “a system of puffing” on one hand and not wishing to do any injury to the school on the other. The correspondence also seems to indicate that Ager was hoping to rent The Manor to escape Yates’s supervision. The same year he had several letters from Yates asking him to join him for two weeks’ visit to the Rome Chapter – “it would be such fun!”<sup>29</sup>

Cotman, in the last year of his life, decided to spend his holiday in Norfolk, and at the end of September 1841 he wrote to Bulwer. “Get your sketching maps in good order, my dear Bulwer, for I meditate a descent on you; and ‘tis hard if, between us, we don’t demolish a church or two.” The fortnight’s holiday stretched into two months. In the summer Dawson Turner had distributed among his friends a catalogue of his collection of Norfolk drawings to illustrate Blomefield’s history of the county with due credit to Cotman and this was no doubt in the minds of the two old friends. Kitson<sup>9</sup> remarks that “during this time the elderly truant enjoyed himself with a boyish delight such as he had not experienced for many years.”

Cotman made a large number of dated drawings that trace his itinerary around north Norfolk, including Wickmere, Sheringham and Cromer, in the first three weeks of October before proceeding to the Turners in Yarmouth. He was back again in early November and made a sketch of the dining-room at The Manor House. He called it “Quite at Home. November 3, 1841.” The sketch passed down the family and gained the attribution that it was made at Heydon Hall, the imagined ancestral home of the family.<sup>13</sup> On his return to London in late November he began to work up some of the sketches into oil paintings, some of which were finished off by Miles Edmund after his father ceased working in January 1842 and died on 24 July. Miles Edmund issued a

portfolio of “*Twelve Lithographs of Norfolk Scenery*” in 1843 from his father’s 1841 sketches, hopefully to accompany a memoir of his father by Dawson Turner that never materialised.

In April 1842 the will of James’s father was proved and he took over the estate. The census of 1851 indicates he employed 12 men, 4 boys and three women, in addition to his three female servants. The estate shown on the 1840 tithe map coincides with 194 acres recorded in 1816. It extended to the east up to what is now the recreation ground and then north to the 28 acres bought by his father from the Edmund Jewell estate (later Belt Farm) north-east of Sir Williams Lane, now the greater part of Bure Meadows estate, as shown in the 1901 map for the sale catalogue below. He also had substantial holdings to the west of Norwich Road. Being near the centre of town much has been converted to commercial and residential use, but some peripheral fields still exist. He took part in some local affairs, including the Navigation, and joined the Norwich branch of the Royal Agricultural Society of England in 1849 and was on the committee raising funds to hold a meeting in the city that year.<sup>30</sup> In 1861 he bought four further fields south of Yaxley Lane towards Spa Farm, known as the Little Farm and later as Hungate Farm.<sup>2, 31</sup>

His principal passion over the next two decades, however, was to develop his “Norfolk Collection”, an encyclopaedic accumulation documenting the topography and antiquities of Norfolk that he had envisaged from his youth. He had already disposed of two earlier collections in preparation for the main project.<sup>32</sup> He now had 300 architectural drawings by John Sell Cotman, did a lot of work himself and enlisted 23 other artists to document the county. Of these by far the most important was Frederick Sandys, who made some 220 watercolour drawings of antiquarian objects and details of churches, including everything from Neolithic flints and Roman pottery to medieval seals, brasses and rood screens.

Frederick Sandys (1829–1904) learned his drawing skills at his father’s Norwich School of Design and was already exhibiting by the age of ten. He started work for John Henry Gurney (1819–1890), the young Yarmouth banker and keen ornithologist in 1842, when he was only thirteen years old. When that project came to an end around 1845 he eagerly accepted the opportunity to work for Bulwer. Apart from the fees it was the cultivated atmosphere of the clergyman’s household that had a major impact on his development and future London career. He became a lifelong friend of Bulwer’s eldest son James Redford, who had completed his degree at Cambridge and was now a lawyer in London. The Society values a number of Bulwer’s fine watercolour drawings from this decade, one of them displayed in colour on the back of the cover of this issue, that give such a good idea of the town before the industrial



development of the 1850s onwards, even if they may be a bit romanticised. Many of the drawings of landscapes and church interiors of this period were ascribed to Sandys, but now are recognised as the work of Bulwer himself.<sup>32</sup>



Two watercolours of the Anchor Inn (now Bridge House), the upper one by Bulwer the lower one by Miles Edmund Cotman in 1850. Compared with the one of The Manor above, this one is boldly captioned and signed seemingly now he has gained confidence out of the shadow of his father. The wonderful detail in the Cotman image is very evident. Courtesy of the Norwich Castle Museum.

On 27 September 1848 Bulwer was instituted to the benefice of Stody with Hunworth on the presentation of Lady Suffield.<sup>12</sup> The rectory was built for him by Lady Suffield and the cement facings of the porch have the inscribed initials “C[aroline]. S.” and “J.B.” in commemoration. He stayed at The Manor for a few more years while his new residence was being prepared and is recorded there in the 1851 census. Lady Suffield had died in 1850, but Bulwer continued to look after the library at Blickling. There are fragments of correspondence with William Schomberg Robert Kerr 8<sup>th</sup> Marquess of Lothian, the grandson who succeeded her, indicating they were on good terms and James dealt with local matters when he was in Scotland. In November 1856 Lord Lothian remarks that he hopes “Mr. Yates has not been getting into trouble again”. After he dies in 1870 Bulwer also enjoyed friendship with his widow, Lady Constance.<sup>13</sup>

Dates on drawings by Frederick Sandys record that he visited Bulwer in 1852, 1853, 1856, 1857, 1858 and as late as 1865, especially at times when James Redfoord Bulwer was at home. In 1852 he did the illustrations for James Redfoord’s alpine adventures, *Extracts from my Journal*, and about then he also did the ‘dashing chalk portrait’ of Bulwer above. In 1858 he spent several months at Hunworth making many studies of trees, individual plants, clouds, waves and cliffs, a stock of motifs he drew upon for the rest of his life. During this time he prepared with extreme care the oil portrait of Bulwer, shown on the front cover. His patron is depicted before a church door, not with a bible as might be expected, but a Whatman sketching block and a paint brush. He is portrayed not in front of the church at Hunworth, but “Prior’s Door” at Ely, while the ivy from his garden and gate-post symbolises his passion for nature and the countryside. Before actually starting work Sandys spent two days “copying small Holbein” portrait of Henry VIII at Blickling Hall.<sup>32</sup>

Between 1847 and 1879 Bulwer submitted eleven papers on antiquarian subjects to *Norfolk Archaeology*. The first of these is “Remarks on a Figure represented on the Rood-Loft Screens of Gateley and Cawston Churches” with a long footnote referring to a curious work by John Bulwer, doctor and philosopher, in 1644 about the traditional pointed forefinger. In 1857 he was elected a member of the British Archaeological Association. He continued to collect antiquities and in 1859 he purchased at auction “piscinas and An Ancient Carved Head” from Benjamin Pulleyne, the vicar of Sheringham.<sup>29</sup>

Bulwer no doubt inspired Henry Harrod (1817–1871), a solicitor in Norwich, the son of James Harrod, banker and former neighbour at Bank House in Aylsham, to become an antiquarian. Henry wrote to Bulwer in November 1858 asking him to promote a new plan for “the great question of a revival of Blomefield” to be discussed in Norwich. In response to Bulwer in January 1859



he says "I do not remember any Bulwers in either Wills or Inventories – my notes will be garnished with numerous extracts for Wills etc." In July Henry is hoping for a bit of support for "church hunting" and says he is buying documents in Great Yarmouth. Dawson Turner had died in 1858 and in the sale were "heaps of documents" and he is going for more.<sup>29</sup>

Bulwer had had a bad fall in Norwich in 1856, no doubt a preclusion to accepting Edmund Yates's offer to go with him to Rome in 1858.<sup>29</sup> Frederick Sandys made his last visit in 1865, but remained friends with his eldest son who was much preoccupied with becoming a member of parliament (1874). Bulwer spent his later years occupied in arranging and cataloguing his Norfolk collection. The many drawings and watercolours he had made himself and those of Sandys and others were arranged to conform to a uniform format; he mostly framed each drawing with a single line ruled in red ink and then laid out captions in pencil in gothic script between ruled lines removed after the captions had been inked in. The collection eventually reached colossal proportions and was contained in 42 numbered portfolios, supplemented by a further 19 portfolios, with parcels of unmounted material and masses of manuscripts.<sup>32</sup>

By 1871 he had to give up his clerical duties.<sup>33</sup> Gladstone includes the following recollection in the 1940s.<sup>13</sup> "There are still a few people in the district who can remember him, in his latter days, as an old man with a very long white beard who was taken about the village in a kind of push chair. He died – somewhat of a recluse – at Hunworth Rectory on 11<sup>th</sup> June, 1879, and it is curious that his death is not mentioned by a single learned or archaeological periodical, or even *The Times*, and dates of his birth and death are difficult to decipher on the cross which marks the place of his sepulchre in Hunworth graveyard on the north side of the church". Edmund Yates, in *Norfolk Archaeology* 9: 33 (1880), did note that the death prevented him giving a paper to the Society – on Burgh next Aylsham – that he apparently intended to give, indicating that he was active to the end of his life at the age of 85.

After his death the estate was inherited by James Redfoord Bulwer and leased until he died unmarried in London in 1899 aged 78. He left it to his brother Walter John Bulwer, then living in British Colombia, Canada. It was sold in August 1901 to William Page, a civil engineer in the London area, brother of Henry Page who developed the department store in Aylsham and whose parents had the grocer shop in Red Lion Street mentioned in the next article. When he died in 1907 it was sold again to Major Henry Bowman, whose family kept it until 1972.<sup>1</sup>

The 'Norfolk Collection' was also inherited by James Redfoord Bulwer and on his death divided between his two brothers, Archibald and Walter.

Archibald inherited the ‘Bristol and Somerset Collections’ now divided between the Bristol Art Gallery and the Yale Center for British Art. Walter inherited by far the greater part, passed on to his son, Henry Alan, then living in Vancouver in 1911. A catalogue of sorts was made before the greater part was sent to the Walker Gallery in London in 1921. Parts were sold off but the greater part was bought by Russell James Colman in 1936 and bequeathed to the Norwich Castle Museum in 1946, now known as the ‘Bulwer Collection’. A fair number of items have been scattered to private and public collections. Much of what was retained in Canada passed to the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa, including the portraits shown here. Betty Elzea and Douglas Schoenherr<sup>32</sup> concluded that the bulk of landscape watercolours painted after Cotman’s death in 1842, including most of those of interest to the Society, were painted by Bulwer himself, while Sandys concentrated on the detailed antiquarian subjects.

Aside from a tendency to ‘puffing’, to use his own words, we have a perspective of a kindly, conscientious Cleric who took advantage of his inherited prosperity to pursue his passion for antiquities, nature and art modelled on the example of the gentry among whom he was so keen to be associated. He passed on, after a long life, a well cared for estate and a remarkable collection of art work from artists he supported and did himself with techniques he learned from his protégés. We appreciate the researchers in recent years that have given him the credit he deserves as we walk past The Manor most days.

The late Geoffrey Nobbs, a stalwart member of the Society, lived successively in Aylsham, Yarmouth and Bristol. He developed an interest in the Reverend James Bulwer and collected a lot of information he passed on to the Society used with appreciation in this article.

<sup>1</sup> Vaughan-Lewis, W. & M. (2014). *Aylsham: A Nest of Norfolk Lawyers*. Chapter 15, The Manor: Bulwer and the Bishop: 207–224. Itteringham History.

<sup>2</sup> Court rolls at Norfolk Record Office (NRO), rates and property records in Aylsham Poor Books.

<sup>3</sup> Preston, J. (2003). *The Squires of Heydon Hall*, p. 235. Quiller Press.

<sup>4</sup> NRO cat. BUL 4/329, 614X6. Copies of C15–16<sup>th</sup> wills and letter from Revd James Bulwer of Hunworth re C17<sup>th</sup> Bulwers.

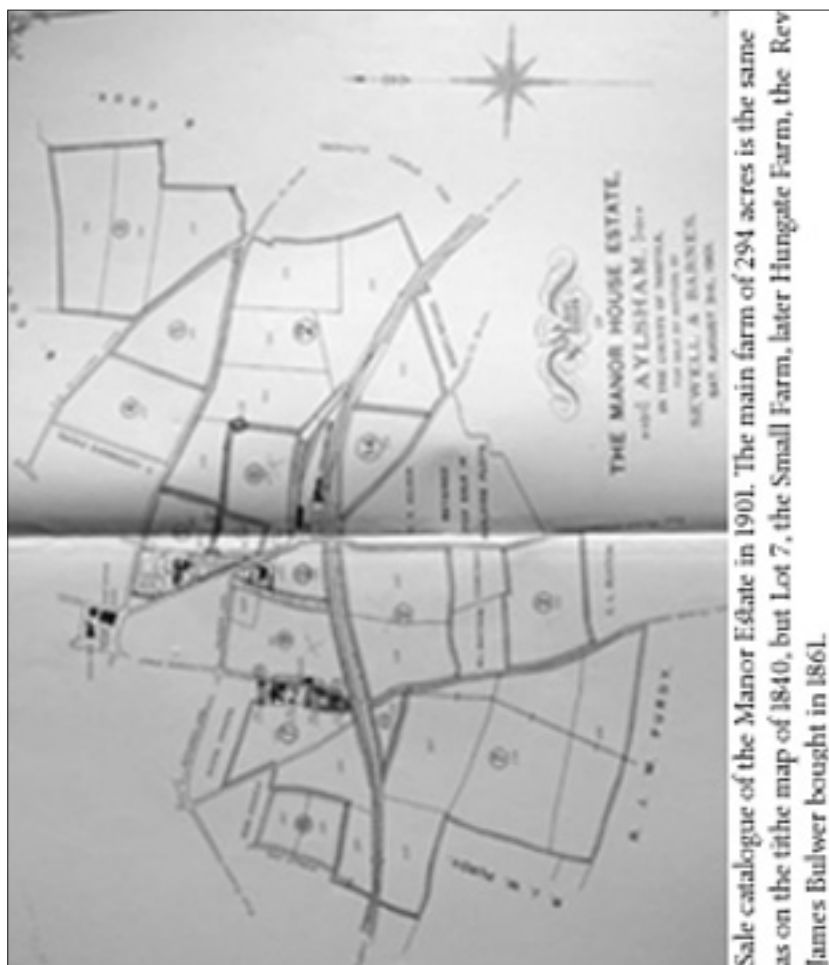
<sup>5</sup> William Vaughan-Lewis letter re progenitors, Aylsham Town Archive.

<sup>6</sup> CCA-U63/70 333 Aylsham Rectory 1811 Tithes. Copy in Aylsham Town Archive made by Maggie Vaughan-Lewis. Also NRO 1BR 276/1/94 James Bulwer’s map of 1816 for Great Edmonds, copy in Aylsham Town Archive.

<sup>7</sup> Forder, C. (1934, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1975). *A History of the Paston Grammar School*. Governors of the School.

<sup>8</sup> Ancestry.com. Cambridge University Alumni 1261–1900.

<sup>9</sup> Kitson, D. (1982). *The Life of John Sell Cotman*. Rodart Reproductions.



Sale catalogue of the Manor Estate in 1901. The main farm of 294 acres is the same as on the tithe map of 1840, but Lot 7, the Small Farm, later Hungate Farm, the Rev James Bulwer bought in 1861.

- <sup>10</sup> Hopkinson, H. *Dawson Turner's Index*. British Library online.
- <sup>11</sup> Goodman, N. (2007). *Dawson Turner. A Norfolk Antiquary and his Remarkable Family*. Phillimore, Sussex.
- <sup>12</sup> Knights, Sarah (1982). *Revd. James Bulwer (1794–1879). Patron, Artist and Antiquary*. 43 pp + 42 pl. Thesis. School of Fine Art and Music, University of East Anglia.
- <sup>13</sup> Gladstone, H. (1945). British Birds Named after Persons. *Transactions of the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History & Antiquarian Society* 23: 179–184.
- <sup>14</sup> Bell, C.F. (1926). John Sell Cotman (*The Bulwer Collection*). Walker's Quarterly Nos. 19–20.
- <sup>15</sup> Allan, M. (1967). *The Hookers of Kew*. Michael Joseph.
- <sup>16</sup> Bulwer, J. (1826). On the *Isocardia* of the Irish Seas. *Journal of Zoology* 2: 357–360.
- <sup>17</sup> *Penny Encyclopaedia of the Society for the Diffusion of Knowledge* (1839): 47, two figs.
- <sup>18</sup> *Isocardia* in *British Conchology* 2: Marine Shells: 298–303 (1863).
- <sup>19</sup> Bulwer, J. (1827). *Views in the Madeiras, executed on stone by Messrs. Westall, Nicholson, Harding, Nash, Villeneuve, Gauci, etc. after drawings made from nature*. C. & J. Rivington; Carpenter & Son; and Engelmann Co.
- <sup>20</sup> Monthly Review 1828. Art. VI. *Rambles in Madeira and Portugal in the early part of 1826*. C. & J. Rivington. 1827.
- <sup>21</sup> Jardine, W. & Selby, P.J. (1828). *Illustrations in Ornithology*.
- <sup>22</sup> Harrop, A.H.P. (2008). The rise and fall of Bulwer's Petrel. *British Birds* 101: 676–681. [The “fall” refers only to miss-sightings in the UK, not the validity of the species].
- <sup>23</sup> Coloured reproduction of a painting by John Sell Cotman labelled ‘Leigh High Woods with the Rev James Bulwer in the foreground’ sold by Chris Beetles, copy in Aylsham Town Archive.
- <sup>24</sup> Mayor of Bristol (1833). Trial of Charles Pinney Esq. Gutch & Martin, Small-Street, Bristol. On line.
- <sup>25</sup> Moore, A.W. (1985). *The Norwich School of Artists*.
- <sup>26</sup> Sapwell, J. (1960). *A History of Aylsham*. Rigby, Norwich.
- <sup>27</sup> Aylsham Town Council, item 238 from NRO PD 602/78.
- <sup>28</sup> Vaughan-Lewis, M. *Guide to Itteringham Church*.
- <sup>29</sup> NRO, Colman Collection COL 13/221/91 Ager correspondence; 13/221/93 proposed visit to Rome, purchase of piscinas and fall in Norwich; COL/13/220/1–5 Henry Harrod correspondence.
- <sup>30</sup> *The Farmer's Magazine* 1849.
- <sup>31</sup> Vaughan-Lewis, W. & M. (2014). *Aylsham: Hungate 1622–1840, A Norfolk Landscape*. Particularly Hungate Farm, pp 49–51.
- <sup>32</sup> Elzea, B. (2001). *Frederick Sandys 1829–1904. A Catalogue Raisonné*. Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service. [Particularly the introductory essay “The Spectacular Rise – and Sad Decline – of Frederick Sandys” by Douglas E Schoenherr].
- <sup>33</sup> NRO PD505/7. The vestry minute entries stop in April 1871 and restart in 1880.

## All in a name? 25-27 Red Lion Street by Maggie Vaughan-Lewis, Roger Polhill and Arthur Rope



Have you ever wondered why the shops on the west side of Red Lion Street jump from No 23 to No 27? Or why there is a well-trodden path from a gate in the wall of the churchyard as you come in from the market place? The answer lies in a half-hidden house, now called the Candle House, which lies at the back of the shops and behind the church wall. No 25 Red Lion Street is now a Grade II listed building, with two reception rooms on the ground floor, one beautifully proportioned Georgian, the other an improved 17<sup>th</sup> century room and two double bedrooms above. The official description of the house is:

Red brick, partly whitewashed. Steeply-pitched pantile roof (partly black glazed). Two storeys and attic. Five bay facade. Sashes with architraves and glazing bars. Central entrance with later gabled porch and modern door-case. Wood eaves cornice. Three gabled dormers on west side. Chimney stacks on north and south gables. Interior: contemporary staircase with two turned balusters per tread. Moulded plaster cornices in ground floor rooms.

Starting life as a much smaller timber-framed house of no great merit, No 25 has had a very varied history and is still posing some difficult questions.



1932 aerial photo showing the pathway, then gravelled.

### **No 25 and the name – Candle House**

As with most houses in Aylsham, the property was never named in the court rolls or other records. It is currently called The Candle House but this appears to be a relatively recent attribution. Lorene Rouse who lived there from 1962–72 has never heard of it being referred to by that name.<sup>1</sup> Geoff Harvey, who ran his much-loved bakery and delicatessen at No 23 from 1974 for many years, has also never heard of the name. Ronnie and Teresa Chapman moved into the house around 1982 and it was listed in 1984 just as No 25 Red Lion Street. By 1988, when it was visited by the Norfolk Historic Buildings Group, it was known as Candle House and it was labelled as such on drawings made at the time. Jane Nolan, a keen local historian, may have inadvertently given the idea wings. She linked the house to a 1649 will in which John Brady leaves his house – ‘commonly called the Candle House’ – to his wife. However it is now known that Brady’s house was the ‘Tiled House’ in the Market Place, now under the Town Hall.<sup>2</sup> The sequences in the court books for both Brady’s and No 25 RLS are quite clear and distinct but were not known at the time. Why did Jane think there was a link? One remote possibility is that prior to 1988 a comment was made about how the area near the old front door ‘always smelt of beeswax’ and this, plus the access to the churchyard, gave rise to idea of a connection to the church. Sadly this would be more plausible if the pathway led to the church but as the 1932 photo shows it leads directly towards the paths at the market place entrance.



There is nothing about the early owners or occupiers that suggests any direct church links. Ralph Spurrell was the sexton for decades and lived elsewhere. It isn't known when the brick wall to the churchyard was built. 'A passage to the churchyard' is noted in the court books in 1720 but the churchyard may have been hedged or fenced in earlier times (see below). It is most likely that the access way was more formally used after the 1764 rebuild by the Revd George and Elizabeth Ray raised the status of the house. The facade on the side facing the wall is better than might be expected for a 'back' suggesting that the Rays used this as the front approach. George Ray, as the schoolmaster, may have used the gateway in the brick wall for his main entrance and would have found it most convenient to join the existing path to School Lane.

The name Candle House should therefore be treated with great caution. It is interesting that there were at least two 'candle' names in the town at different periods, Brady's name for the Tiled House and later, a workshop in White Hart Street.

#### No 25 – 20<sup>th</sup> century



1910 Finance Act map. No 27 Red Lion St is 12, No 23 is 311 and No 25 is 548.

For most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the house was in a rather run-down state. Divided into two parts, the entry in the valuation book (known as Domesday books, following the 1910 Finance Act) shows the property had two tenants, Mrs Sutton and Mrs Bexfield.<sup>3</sup> From the 1911 census we can see that 'Mrs' Sutton is 65 year-old laundress Mary Sutton who was single and living alone



in 4 rooms. Born in Aylsham, her father James was a tailor and their family home had been in Hungate Street. Mary, her mother and sister all did laundry work. Jane Bexfield was the widow of Richard Bexfield who had been a grocer at No 27 from around 1880. Jane continued running the grocery business and she may just have used her half of No 25 as storage while living over the shop. In total she had 9 rooms.

The owner of the whole block (Nos 23,25,27) was then a Miss Lily Bishop of Potters Bar, Herts. In 1924 Lily paid £20 to have the tenure turned into freehold after which the manor court books have no further references. Lily's house at Potters Bar was called Kerdistone, revealing her family's Norfolk roots. (See below) In 1924 the shops were occupied by Henry Page, and James Roofe, grocer, who also had half of the house behind with Miss Sutton.

This shared arrangement seems to have continued for many years; in the 1960s the tenants of the house lived in half of No 25 'which was more or less like a cottage', having one room on each floor and a small kitchen. The other half was empty and 'full of shelves' having been used as a warehouse for the greengrocery for No 23. The whole block was owned by James and Gertrude Roofe who had previously lived there while running their business. Mrs Roofe lived at Little Bushey, Cromer Road and her weekly rents were collected for her by Miss Gorbould. In 1966 the Roofes died and No 27 became a newsagents (known as Winters) when Mr and Mrs Winter had to relocate when Dog Hill was redeveloped.<sup>4</sup> They purchased the freehold of the whole block, later held by Russell and Margaret Jarvis, their daughter.

It is not clear when the joint ownership of the house and shops ended; it may have been around 1974 or when Ronnie and Teresa Chapman bought the house in 1982. They refurbished the house and created a library from the old woodstore. Their estate sold No 25 in 2002.<sup>5</sup> Between then and 2014 the house was sold several times.

### **No 25 – 19<sup>th</sup> century**

If we work backwards in the manorial court books from 1911, we find that Miss Lily Bishop had the property from her brother Edgar Bishop in 1909. He too lived at Potters Bar but had been living in Norfolk at Frensham. In 1899 they had inherited at their grandfather's death while still children but of course the rents were looked after by their father Alfred. Interestingly Joseph James Bishop's will described the premises as 'my two shops and 2 private dwelling-house cottages in Aylsham'; the court books in the usual fashion of repeating age-old entries for continuity called them '3 messuages and shops, and a house in two tenements'. The house (No 25) was occupied as we know, by Jane Bexfield and Mrs Sutton.<sup>6</sup>

The reason for the ownership being held by ‘outsiders’ was because draper George Richard Fitt who had been a tenant in one of the Red Lion shops in the 1870s overreached himself. Described in 1877 as ‘linen draper, dress, shawl, mantle, and millinery establishment, hosier, glover, haberdasher etc’ George decided to buy the whole block. In May 1879 he paid a surprisingly large sum of £1000 and the ‘three’ shops became two. Of course at this price he had to raise a mortgage and he immediately borrowed £700 from John Shepherd, a surgeon of North Walsham. Somehow he managed to pay this back but in December 1886 he had another £700 from Samuel Browne jnr, a grocer and tea-dealer in Norwich. In 1889, despite Browne’s outstanding mortgage, he added another debt of £700 from Susannah Fitt of Heigham, presumably a relative. Why his affairs were so bad we do not know but sadly Fitt did not manage to pay off the debt before he died, aged 51, in 1893.<sup>7</sup> Browne promptly sold it all to Bishop, a contractor of 33 Bolingbroke Grove, Wandsworth Common for £310. (He may have owed Bishop money so offloaded the property as part of the deal.) ‘JJ’ Bishop was the founder of Bishops Move, the furniture removal firm still trading today. On their website it says he had started life as ‘a farm worker in Norfolk’ but in 1883 he owned a farm in Kerdistone near Reepham.<sup>8</sup>

Fortunately the court book description, which makes it clear that the divided house was at the rear of the ‘three’ shops and lying on the east side of the churchyard, had not been changed for decades, allowing for the history to be traced back to the time of the tithe map.



1840 Tithe map: plot 197 is No 25, 193 is No 23 & 27.

At this time the owner of the whole block is John Marsh Butler with the shops at the front occupied by Edward Suffolk Platten and William Pike. In

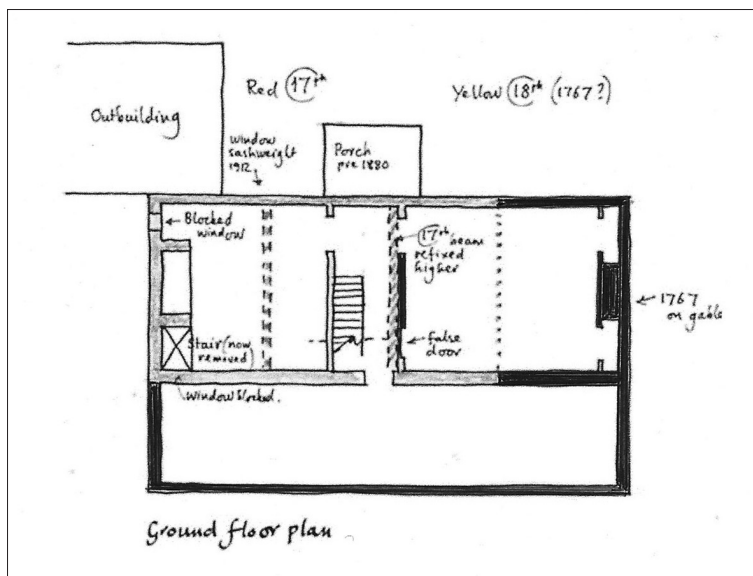
the tithe award, the house at the rear, No 25 with the garden, was noted as empty. Butler had bought a shop in the Market Place in 1832, probably his saddler's shop, but had been listed as a saddler in 'the churchyard' in 1830 so might have been renting No 25 or at least the yard and buildings.<sup>9</sup> John Marsh Butler later became a farmer and in 1859 sold the whole on for £160 to Robert Leamon of Whitwell, a large-scale tanner. The house (No 25) was used as an academy between 1845 and 1850 by the Misses Emily and Harriet Breese. They did not take boarders and probably just used the large downstairs rooms for teaching. It would have lost its older elegance by this stage. In 1879 the house was home to a journeyman coach builder, Benjamin Constable and a journeyman butcher, William Flint, their wives and six children.



### **No 25 – 18<sup>th</sup> century**

This is the century that saw the rise of No 25 into a good dwelling house which was lived in by its owners, rather than being rented out. William Keymer who inherited the house in 1712 was a publican, running first the Unicorn (1710–1711) then the White Hart (1722–1725). He seems to live at No 25 after this, paying a modest 2d in the poor rates. William now acquired the other parts of the property, the shops on Red Lion Street, which stay with No 25. He had two daughters, Mary who married a Mr Smith, and Elizabeth who married first Mr Hewes and then the Revd George Ray. According to Blomefield, Ray was

the Rector of Booton (1735), Oxnead (1740) and was 'the present schoolmaster of Aylsham' at the time of writing. His patron for the Oxnead living had been John Bennett, the lawyer living in Old Bank House, on behalf of the Earl of Yarmouth.



Sketch map showing ground floor extensions in 1764 (not 1767) marked in black (originally in yellow) to north and east. V Neirop-Reading 1993

When William Keymer died in 1743 he left both his daughters property. Mary had the cottages next to what is now Bridge House in Millgate but he left Elizabeth 'the house wherein I now dwell; the house in occupation of Clement Ives and the blacksmith's shop in occupation of Richard Dix, with all the yards and passages'. Widow Hewes, as Elizabeth was then, moved into her old family home and started paying poor rates of 2d based on the house valuation of 5s. (The two shops were also rated at 2d). She must have married George Ray around 1747 as he takes over the payment from then on. Around 1764 they enlarged and upgraded the house, placing a date-stone with their initials on the north chimney stack. The house was re-valued in 1765 to £4 and in 1766 to £7, raising their payment to 14s! <sup>10</sup>

George Ray died in 1774 but, as the owner, Elizabeth stayed on in her superior home for another sixteen years, dying in it at the age of 83 in 1790. At this time the house was still valued at £7 and is described as 'lately rebuilt'. Elizabeth and George Ray had no children and after her death the estate was

divided among the four children and various grandchildren of her sister Mary Smith. None of the family, most of whom were not local, lived in the house and the period of respectable renters began.

James Bulwer, a butcher, had married in 1790 and moved into No 25 ('late Ray's house') by 1791. He lived in the house, valued at £10, for some years and his son James jnr would have been born there in 1794. He soon afterwards bought the house now called The Manor in Norwich Road but he had to wait until the sitting tenant John Holley left in 1805 before he could move in. After Bulwer, No 25 was rented by Major Edward Fuller who paid the rates from 1807 to 1814. Fuller seems to have been connected to the other Bulwer family, at Heydon; when he left 'his situation', his goods were auctioned in March 1814. William Repton, the solicitor, bought a feather bed of 'old Fullers' for use at No 1 Market Place.<sup>11</sup>

By December 1814 Sarah Marie Addison was resident at No 25. Sarah was the widow of another clergyman – Leonard Addison who had been vicar of Saxthorpe until his death in 1796.<sup>12</sup> She had been living in a smaller house in the town for some years and would have been well known to James Bulwer. Sarah had three daughters Sarah, Frances and Harriet. Sarah jnr had married John Holley of the Manor as his third wife and so was Bulwer's tenant. John died in 1813 at Holme and his widow returned to Aylsham and lived in what is now Repton House on the corner of the Market Place and churchyard. Frances died in 1819. In the 1821 census, Mrs Addison is living in 'Red Lion Street' with three other females. Her youngest daughter Harriet was named in her will so Sarah probably lived at No 25 with her, a maid and a cook. No doubt Sarah regularly walked along the path from her house through the churchyard to see her elder daughter. In 1826, the year of her death, the house was still valued at £10.

After this the property was left empty for some years. The descendants of Elizabeth Ray's sister finally sold two of their ¼ shares to John Butler (in 1827 and 1841) but the other two were not surrendered until Robert Leamon bought the block in 1859.

### **No 23 & 27 – the shops**

The shops are either side of a passage way with a central door, which leads through to No 25. On the left, the larger 23, was probably originally in two. The 'three shops' as described in the court books, had been made into two around 1879. The central passage contains the entrances to the two cellars – Geoff Harvey remembers his being full of empty Guinness bottles when he arrived. The flying freeholds here are complex – No 23 owns the first floor over the passage while the second floor space and the passage itself are with No 27.



From 1856 to 1863 one of the shops was used by Zephaniah Smithson as a hairdressers. In 1840 the tenants of the shops were Edward Suffolk Platten, ironmonger and William Pike, the blacksmith. It is not clear which was the blacksmith's shop, probably 23, but there had been a blacksmith here for many years. Richard Dix who died in 1747 was followed by his brother Thomas until 1778. (Their smithy was at Millgate.) For the first part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Christopher Porrett was blacksmith and had the shop. In the 1821 census, William Pike was in Red Lion Street in a household of 6 males and 2 females. By 1877 the blacksmith was Robert Pike.

After George Fitt's purchase in 1879 the nature of shops changed although the practical nature of the property at the back is vividly shown by the memoirs of Harry Proudfoot.<sup>13</sup> He wrote that when he was about 16 (around 1817):

'went to Mr Bexfield's, he had a baking powder factory in some buildings situated in Red Lion St up a yard behind the present International Stores, he occupying the shop which is now owned and occupied by Mr James Roofe. We made baking powder and all sorts of bottled sauces. At this time the present International Stores was used as a coffee tavern.'

Later the shops on that side of Red Lion Street were almost all food outlets, with the International Stores, the greengrocers and grocery stores at 23 and 27 and George Pretty's grocers next to the Red Lion. Mabel Spinks recalled, in 1986, working for 'Jimmy' Roofe:

that was a grocer's shop ... and Mr Roofe had that for years, well I worked there for 20 years .... All the war years I was in there, when you had to weigh everything up – sacks of sugar, blocks of lard. I used to cut up this side of bacon. We used to go down the cellar, and another girl and I used to cut up this side of bacon, and the bacon side was bigger than me.<sup>14</sup>



In the 1960s No 23 was a greengrocery run by Maurice and Joyce Williamson; Fred and Barbara Barwick had the living accommodation above. When they left, Mrs Edith Carter, an elderly widow moved in upstairs. At that time No 27 was still a grocery shop, run by Mr and Mrs Fraser from about 1958.



The Red Lion site covered at least numbers 198, 195, 196, 194.

#### **No 25–No 27 –The early history of the whole site**

Vic Nierop-Reading, the retired Conservation Architect for Norwich City Council, surveyed No 25 in 1993 and dated the early core as 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>15</sup> A fireback in the house which is thought to be original bears the Royal Arms and CR. Whether this is Charles I or II it would tie in with the general dating.

Unfortunately the Aylsham Lancaster court books in the 1600s are badly written and have less detail about the properties making it harder to follow them back to their origins.<sup>16</sup> We have not found a magic entry saying, ‘a newly built house’ but it appears that the area was made up of several tenements and yards, divided repeatedly over time. This is very common in Aylsham, with most streets originally being made up of a few very large ‘messuage’ sites which were broken up over time into several tenements.<sup>17</sup> The need for sons to have a share of inheritance led to old manorial elements frequently being in four or five parts. Sometimes this was just a legal split but often parts of large units were physically divided. For Red Lion Street, the one clue we do have is the Keymer family as we know that John Keymer owned the house (No 25) when he died in 1700. The name is quite familiar in Aylsham but fortunately was rather rarer in the past.



### Keymer family

There were Keymers in the town in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and by the late-Elizabethan period Henry Keymer progressively bought up shares in the large site which later became first The Globe and then the Red Lion – a stone's throw from our property.<sup>18</sup>

At his death in 1605, his widow Elizabeth and five sons inherited what was obviously an alehouse. Elizabeth features in the beer sellers' lists in the court books from 1611–13 and in 1605 she and her son Thomas were fined for allowing 'the Chimney of his brewhouse to become ruinous to danger of the neighbours'. Widow Keymer was also fined by the church courts in 1611 for 'harbouring people in her house who eat and drink or otherwise distract themselves in her house on the Sabbath'. Her eldest son Thomas died in 1616 and William lived there with his mother. From early on he was frequently in trouble; in June 1612 he 'did quarrel fight and draw blood of one Smith of Skeyton a fidler in Aylsham churchyard'. William said he had seen that 'three young men being fidlers' were beating a young man and he 'by chance going through the churchyard, did rescue the youth out of their hands so they did abuse and strike him'. (Or had they been performing in the alehouse and all had too much to drink?). And in 1625 William Keymer was fined by the church authorities, 'he leaving a gate open into the church yard [and] doe many times have open the same whereby the churchyard and church is much annoyed'. Elizabeth Keymer widow was similarly accused. This was probably another gate in the fence or wall at the back of the inn but just might have been the same gate as today.

Elizabeth died in 1627 and her two surviving sons William and Richard Keymer came into the shares in the site.<sup>19</sup> William married Mary Norgate of the Norwich branch of that family and their son Henry became a Norfolk hosier. He owned some land in the Spratts Green area and a house called Sandlings; Richard, who his mother had feared would need 'help of the town', stayed in Aylsham with his wife and two sons, John and Henry. At some point the 'Red Lion' site had been reduced in size by parts to the north and south being divided off and Richard had kept his share, a small tenement called Gubbards or Gilberts.<sup>20</sup> Did the land extend as far as the rear of 23 and 27?

From an entry in 1639, where he and the new owners of the rest of the 'Red Lion' site are confirming the legal niceties of the split, we know that there was a new clay wall dividing the yard. It is agreed that Richard is to have access to the street with 'horses, carts and carriages' from his part of the yard across the other yard 'as much by a door in the wall as a great door next to the street'.

So are we looking at Richard owning No 25 and being allowed to pass into the 'Red Lion' yard to reach the street?

When Richard died in 1648, his sons Henry and John only inherited half the tenement and yard as their father had apparently sold the other half to Anne Pescod, widow, just before he died. (Anne was involved with the premises next door (192 on the tithe map) which was part of the other large messuage site on this side of the street (which originally ran up to and included 190, the computer shop).

It is possible that the 'tenement' may have included part of what later became No 23 and 27 Red Lion Street because in 1680 John and Henry legally partitioned into two properties their tenement and yard, in which John was living at the southern end. The yard was to be separated by dolestones and a fence. As there is no other entry for a John, his half has to be the property he leaves to son Robert in 1700 (No 25).<sup>21</sup> Henry however sells his half tenement and yard to Christopher Milborne in 1704 which has to be bought back into the family by William Keymer in 1722. William also buys the tenement and yard owned by Francis Clarke in 1720. This is described as one tenement occupied by Anne Bird widow but also has the very curious phrase 'except for the yard as is divided by a wall and the passage to the churchyard'. A later occupier was Christopher Porrett making the building the blacksmith's shop. Had there been an earlier shared use of the churchyard passage by other tenants on this large and complicated site?

Robert Keymer arranged with his son William to stay living in No 25 and when he died in 1712 the house passed to William. After having purchased the front shops (the Milborne and Clarke parts) he was able to leave his daughter Elizabeth the whole block. As we have seen a passage to the churchyard stayed with the house.

### **A new name for No 25?**

We came across 'Le Saffron Ground' several times in the court books but frustratingly the name died out before the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and it was difficult to be sure of the location. In William's notes there is a sketch of where he thought the ½ acre ground (as it was described in 1622) might fit.

Looking at the tithe map, there are 'gardens' (specifically not yards) listed for plot numbers 195, 196, 183 and we know the rear of 197 is still a garden today. All of these nestle up against the churchyard wall and are clearly defined with boundaries. This open area measures approximately the right acreage, measuring 25 yards in from the churchyard. Could this represent the last vestiges of the 16<sup>th</sup> century saffron ground where an incredibly expensive crop of saffron crocuses would have been nurtured and collected? Well-protected, not only from the weather but away from the street, this would seem to be a perfect spot. (Kett's list of anti-enclosure demands to the King in 1649 made

an exception for fencing saffron grounds!) Saffron was used for its colour and flavour, with saffron bread very common by 1600. Large quantities were exported from Kings Lynn and Blakeney as the dry region of north Norfolk was well suited to the crop. (The flowers do not close at night so rain is disastrous.)<sup>22</sup>

Maybe the revellers from the alehouse were too close or perhaps the crop was not economic but it is likely the Aylsham ground was not used in this way after about 1600, only the name lingering on the court books. So perhaps No 25 Red Lion Street should be known as Saffron House?

- <sup>1</sup>. Our thanks to Lorene for her memories of the property and people of the time.
- <sup>2</sup>. ALHS Journal Vol 11 No 8 Apr 2020 Beneath the Town Hall. Brady did not have any other copyhold property.
- <sup>3</sup>. The map and valuation books were created over about two years following the Act so may be dated as 1911–12. The house is shown with one number 548 but the book makes it clear that it was in two, with 549 not being written on the map. NRO, P/ DLV/1/80 and TNA, IR/1127/6.
- <sup>4</sup>. Dog Hill was the top of Norwich Road where The Dog PH used to be, now the parade of shops by Budgens.
- <sup>5</sup>. Teresa Chapman (née Watkin) was a granddaughter of Italian-born Maria Pasqua Abruzzesi who had married Dr Philip Shepherd the surgeon, 1881 in Eastbourne. The doctor and Maria lived in Abbot's Hall where they had built a catholic chapel in which occasional services were held.
- <sup>6</sup>. The court books used for this article are NRO, NRS 10225,16614–16625, Acc 2008/257, MS 2028–29.
- <sup>7</sup>. Starling mentions George Richard Fitt as his rowing partner in 1871 – ‘a very small man’ p42 *Memories of Aylsham*.
- <sup>8</sup>. Bishop also rented a farm in Aylsham belonging to Mrs E Morton between 1886–1893. NRO, Acc 2016.
- <sup>9</sup>. Butler sold his saddler's shop in the Market place to Henry Laxen, another saddler in 1852.
- <sup>10</sup>. The poor rates have been digitised and may be accessed at the Town Archive or the NRO.
- <sup>11</sup>. p303 *Humphry Repton and his family: correspondence, 1805–1816*, ed H Falvey NRS VOL LXXXIV 2020
- <sup>12</sup>. The sharp-eyed will spot that on a family tree on p 105 of *Aylsham: A Nest of Norfolk Lawyers*, 2014, we called Leonard's wife Deborah instead of Sarah. Apologies for the slip.
- <sup>13</sup>. ALHS Journal 2 No 10, 1990 p 283 The refreshment house was run by James Appleyard a brickmaker from Blickling, later a Norwich Alderman.
- <sup>14</sup>. ALHS Journal Vol 1 No 6, 1986 Mabel Spinks interview with Ron Peabody.
- <sup>15</sup>. Vic's drawings were reproduced in full in ALHS Journal Vol 3 No 10, 1993.
- <sup>16</sup>. This is my best guess based on William's notes and further research in the court books. He always said the west side of RLS would be very difficult to trace back!
- <sup>17</sup>. For manorial terms and background see *'Aylsham: A Nest'* pp x–xvii.
- <sup>18</sup>. *A New History of Aylsham Public Houses*, ALHS, 2019
- <sup>19</sup>. Unfortunately the premises are not described in detail in the 1622 survey when the Keymers were shown as owners.

- <sup>20</sup>. William Keymer sold the larger share to Thomas Leman and Henry Coates in the 1630s and by 1642 the site had been sold on to John Whitwell. For the rest of the Red Lion history see 'A New History'.
- <sup>21</sup>. Neither John nor Robert pay poor rates (there are no Keymers listed from 1694 to 1704) which is unusual. Normally the rate is paid by the resident (whether owner or tenant). It may be the property did not meet the value above which rate was assessed. William pays 1s for his pubs and then 2d for the house in 1720s.
- <sup>22</sup>. Information from Dr Sally Frances of Norfolk Saffron, talk at Wells Historical Society Dec 2014.

### Summary of Ownership and Occupancy

Year	Owner of No 25	Occupant(s) of No 25
d 1605, 1627	<i>Henry and Elizabeth Keymer owned all site of Red Lion</i>	
d 1648	Richard Keymer (son)	inherits a small share
1648–1700	John Keymer (son of Richard)	
1700	Robert Keymer (son of John)	
1712	William Keymer (son of Robert); also buys Nos 23 and 27	
1743	Elizabeth Hewes née Keymer (daughter of William) inherits whole block	
1747	Elizabeth Hewes marries Revd George Ray	
1764	House upgrade completed	
1774	Revd George Ray dies, widow Elizabeth remains in house	
1790	4-way split between Elizabeth's nieces, via sister Mary Smith	James Bulwer, butcher
1807–1814		Major Edward Fuller
1814–1826		Sarah Marie Addison
1827, 1841	John Butler buys 2 quarter shares	House empty, used 1845–50 as schoolroom
1859	Robert Leamon buys all	
1879	George Richard Fitt buys	Benjamin Constable /Wm Flint
1893	Samuel Browne of Norwich, then Joseph James Bishop	
1899	Edgar and Lily Bishop (minors) inherit from grandfather	
1911	Lily Bishop	Miss Mary Sutton, 65 Mrs Jane Bexfield as storage
1924	Lily Bishop creates freehold (d 1929 aged 38)	Miss Mary Sutton (d 1928 age 82) James Roofe, grocer as storage
1920s–1966	James and Gertrude Roofe (d 1966)	Joy & Lenny Flowerday; Peter & Lorene Rouse (1962–72) Storage for No 23: (greengrocers)
1966–1970s	Mr & Mrs Winter, Russell & Margaret Jarvis own whole site	
1982 approx	Ronnie & Teresa Chapman own No 25	

## A MYSTERY IS SOLVED!

In *A New History of Aylsham Public Houses*, we transcribed the 1666 inventory of innkeeper Richard Greenwood and wrote that it seemed likely that he was tenant at the Black Boys but 'could not be sure'. A chance re-reading of a volume of the Norfolk Record Society has revealed the answer. In the otherwise rather long-winded and general address given by Robert Doughty of Hanworth, JP to the commissioners who were to collect the tax of 1664 (among other duties) the extraordinary detail was given as follows: 'And that you truly and respectively present and certify in writing after the usual manner before the commissioners at the house of Richard Greenwood, being the sign of the Black Boy in Aylsham, on this day forward, by eight of the clock in the morning, the names and surnames of all and every person and persons having such substance in lands or goods.....' It could easily just have said 'the house of Richard Greenwood' or 'the Black Boy' or even just Aylsham! Although I have used the volume frequently, I had never bothered to read the 9 pages of this speech. These long exhortations were also delivered to the jurymen of each Quarter Sessions to impress on them their duties. Rarely do they ever contain personal names so this is one of those amazing moments that researchers dream of. If you have a copy of the pubs book you might like to add a pencil tick on p207!

1. NRO, DN/INV 52A/63

2. NRS, *The Notebook of Robert Doughty*, Vol LIV 1989

**Maggie Vaughan-Lewis**

## LIST OF MEMBERS

Alford, Paul and Andrea  
Ashworth, Lorna  
Baker, Derrick  
Baker, Peter and Susan  
Barfield, Pennie and Cliff  
Barwick, Gillian and Russell  
Baxter, Robert and Dehn, Jakki  
Bell, Chris and Marcis  
Bell, Sara\*  
Bennett, Trevor  
Bird, Margaret  
Blake, Jill

Brady, Patrick  
Brooker, Keith and Margaret\*  
Calvert, Ros  
Cannon, Lesley  
Carr, David and Julia\*  
Casimir, Stewart and Jenny  
Claridge, Hayden and Maggie  
Cowan, Nina  
Crouch, Roger  
Davy, Rex and Daphne  
Douet, Alec  
Driscoll, Caroline

Duncan, Beryl  
 Dyball, Ann  
 Dyer, Frances  
 Edwards, John and Veronica  
 Ellis, Judith  
 Elphinstone, Nicholas  
 Evans, Julie and Gordon  
 Faircloth, Sue  
 Fern, Elliott  
 Fletcher, Gillian  
 Fox, Martyn and Sue  
 Goose, Jean  
 Goose, Margaret  
 Gordon, Janice  
 Grellier, Diana  
 Grimble, Bob and Jackie  
 Gunne-Braden, Jim & Marguerita  
 Hall, Chris and Chris  
 Hall, Ruth  
 Harrison, Ruth  
 Hawke, Jean  
 Hill, Marilyn\*  
 Hills, Valerie  
 Hindley, Angela  
 Hollis, Margerette and Phillip\*  
 Horne, John  
 Jay, Sue  
 Jeavons, Stan  
 Johnston, Graeme  
 Jones, Hazel and Malcolm  
 Jury, Jane  
 Layt, Angela  
 Lee, Carole and Neville  
 Lloyd, Thelma  
 Ludden, Frances and Michael  
 Lyons, Derrick  
 Margaron, Giles and Sue  
 McManus, Ian and Susan  
 Mills, Lloyd\*  
 Merriman, Sheila

Minett, Ann and Paul  
 Mollard, Sheila  
 Morgan, Victor  
 Nice, Helen and Nigel\*  
 Palmer, Anne  
 Pannell, Jim  
 Parry, Enid  
 Peabody, Jane  
 Penkett, Stuart and Marigold\*  
 Pim, Malcolm and Claudia  
 Polhill, Roger and Diana  
 Powell, Rosie  
 Ramm, Susan\*  
 Rope, Arthur and Young, Jackie  
 Roulstone, Peter and Joan  
 Rowe, Margaret  
 Sadler, Geoff and Wendy  
 Saunders, Alfred\*  
 Scott, Tim and Fiona\*  
 Sharpe, Sue  
 Shaw, Tony and Diana  
 Sheringham, Jill  
 Shutes, Jonathan and Angela  
 Simpson, Daniel  
 Smart, Lez and Jenny  
 Smith, Marion  
 Spencer, Jennie and Neil  
 Spink, Joshua  
 Steward, Linda  
 Sullivan, Martin and Carol  
 Sutton, Anne\*  
 Thomas, Cath  
 Thompson, Maurice and Dinah\*  
 Toval, Jacob  
 Vaughan-Lewis, Maggie  
 Walsh, Peter and Jane  
 Warren, Rosemary  
 Wessely, Joanna  
 Wintle, Sheila  
 Wix, Mel and Lynda



Wood, Alexander and Rowena  
Worsencroft, David

Worth, Jeremy and Pamela  
Wright, Harry

An asterisk indicates members who have not yet paid a subscription for 2021. Please contact Ros Calvert, the Membership Secretary, if you wish to continue as a member.

Ros Calvert, 4 Banningham Road, Ingworth NR11 6PE  
rosalvert@gmail.com

Year to 31-08-2019	Receipts	Year to 31-08-2020	Year to 31-08-2019	Payments	Year to 31-08-2020
1,085	Members' Subscriptions	1,185	400	Course	-
42	Visitors	39	170	Programme - Lecture Fees	380
510	Summer Course	1,550	50	Travel costs & Expenses	-
				Summer Course - refunds	1,550
	<b>Visits &amp; Social</b>			<b>Visits &amp; Social</b>	
1,010	Chanters Jigge	240	1,147	Chanters Jigge	200
500	Cliftonville	667	500	Cliftonville	667
665	Elm Hill (Briton's Arms)		665	Elm Hill (Briton's Arms)	15
3,398	Sales of Publications	434	8,154	Publications (books & Journals)	569
2,605	Donations (for publications)	-		Membership Cards & Fliers	161
52	Admin & Postage	3	461	Stationery & Postage	161
86	Refreshments	60	177	Hire of Halls	235
	Misc		95	Professional Subscriptions	95
2	Bank Interest (Savings A/c)	2		<b>Donations Out</b>	
			150	AHS Prize and Trophy	100
<b>9,955</b>		<b>4,180</b>	<b>11,969</b>		<b>4,133</b>
2,014	Excess Payments over Receipts			Excess Receipts over Payments	47
<b>11,969</b>		<b>4,180</b>	<b>11,969</b>		<b>4,180</b>

#### Reconciliation

Bank Balances B/Fwd

Current A/c 4,601

Deposit A/c 1,091

Cash Balance B/Fwd 15

Excess Receipts over Payments 47

**5,754**

#### Represented by

Bank Balances C/Fwd

Current A/c 4,606

Deposit A/c 1,093

Cash Balance C/Fwd 55

**5,754**

The accounting records and supporting documents of the Aylsham Local History Society for the year ended 31 August 2020 are found to be correct and in accordance with the above statement.