

AYLSHAM LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY



JOURNAL & NEWSLETTER

Volume 11

No. 3

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Front cover: The Paston Treasure displayed at the Castle Museum.

Back cover: Beating the Bounds at St Clements, blowing the cow horn. Photo:
Lynda Wix.

The JOURNAL & NEWSLETTER is the publication of the Aylsham Local History Society. It is published three times a year, in April, August and December, and is issued free to members. Contributions are welcomed from members and others. Please contact the editor:

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I am sorry to have to mention the General Data Protection Regulations, but it is important we have your permission to continue using your contact details. We will not share your details with any other organisation. As a member, you have previously agreed that we can contact you as indicated but if you change your mind, let us know and we will take your details off the mailing list.

Over the past few months, we have had enjoyable and informative visits to The Dales, Earsham Hall and the Paston Treasure Exhibition. Many thanks to Caroline, Sue and their helpers for making all the arrangements. And there is more to come so keep a look out for our future programme on the website.

Talking of websites, I hope you are following the Aylsham Roman Project Dig in August (<https://aylshamromanproject.com/>). Even if you are not taking part, it is well worth following the news on their website. In addition, the Heritage Centre has a busy programme of activities over the Summer and into the Autumn (<https://www.aylshamheritage.com/>).

With this Journal you will receive the details of our AGM when we will be looking for two new members of the Committee. We are looking for someone to take over from Lynda as Minute Secretary and for one other person, preferably willing to look after our website. If you might be interested then please contact me or any Committee Member.

Lecture programme for 2018 has been arranged as follows.

Thursday 4 October 2018. AGM at Friendship Hall, followed by tea break and talk *Broadland Buildings at Risk* by Kate Knights & Barbara Hornbrook.

Thursday 25 October 2018, *The Cold War in East Anglia* by Jim Wilson.

Thursday 22 November 2018, 7.30 pm at Friendship Hall, *Angel Roofs* by Sarah Cassell

The Autumn Course will be on the theme *Cromer*, on Wednesdays, starting on 26 September 2018. See Notice Board on Town Hall and website for details.

30 Market Place, Aylsham

Roger Crouch

There has been much interest and speculation in the former Clarke's Iron-mongers since it closed and was later put up for auction in September 2017. At the time of writing, although sold, its future use has yet to be determined. As an iconic building in a prominent position in the Market Place, No. 30 will certainly have a commercial impact on the Town, as it has throughout its long history.

In an article, 'A Shop in Aylsham Market Place' written by Betty Gee and published in Vol. 4, No. 7 of the Journal in 1985, documents in the town archives were examined to investigate the building(s) and the people associated with them. In the last issue of the journal (April 2018) Roger Polhill revisited Betty's article, adding new information about the people associated and the business and occupations carried out there from the early 18th century.

Although all descriptions of the building state that it is 18th century an inspection of the interior tells a different story. I would therefore like to look at the physical evidence that remains especially any dating evidence. Unfortunately we have few images or early maps that give the layout of the buildings.

The problem with the manorial court records is that although ownership is usually well documented the details of the building and its occupants are scanty. As a member of the 'Norfolk Historic Building Group', whose remit is to record timber-framed buildings, I took the opportunity to look over the property during the viewing days prior to the auction. It will be no surprise to many that these buildings are older than the 18th century tag that gets put on most of the town centre buildings; the listings made in the 80s were 'walk by' listings, meaning that only the frontage was noted and described. So the remodelling of the town in the 18th century gives a slanted description and inaccurate appraisal of the building's age.

In medieval Aylsham, the Market Place was much larger and over the centuries a gradual infill has taken place. There are several examples of buildings surviving from the 16th and 17th centuries, Barnwells (33 Market Place) has a fine timber frame probably c1575 and Aylsham Computers (Red Lion Street) could be of similar age with its Dragon Beams and Jetties. There are plenty of examples of 17th century buildings: the Santander range of buildings date from c1650 and I believe two of the buildings encapsuled within No. 30 are of similar period with a later addition of c1700.



Photo 1. Market Place in 1856, courtesy Aylsham Town Archive

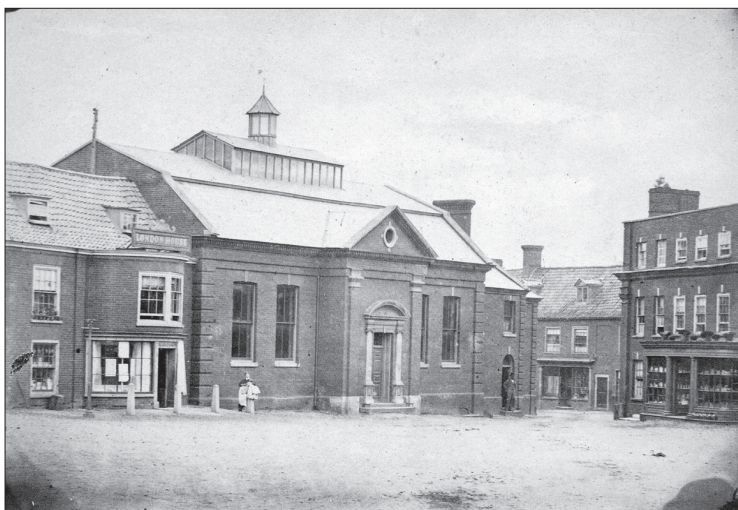


Photo 2. Same view by Juba 1875, showing new Corn Hall with part of London House, courtesy Aylsham Town Archive.

The earliest photographic image I have seen of the Market Place was taken in 1856 showing 'London House' the year before it was partly demolished to make way for the new 'Corn Hall' built in 1857. The same photograph (photo

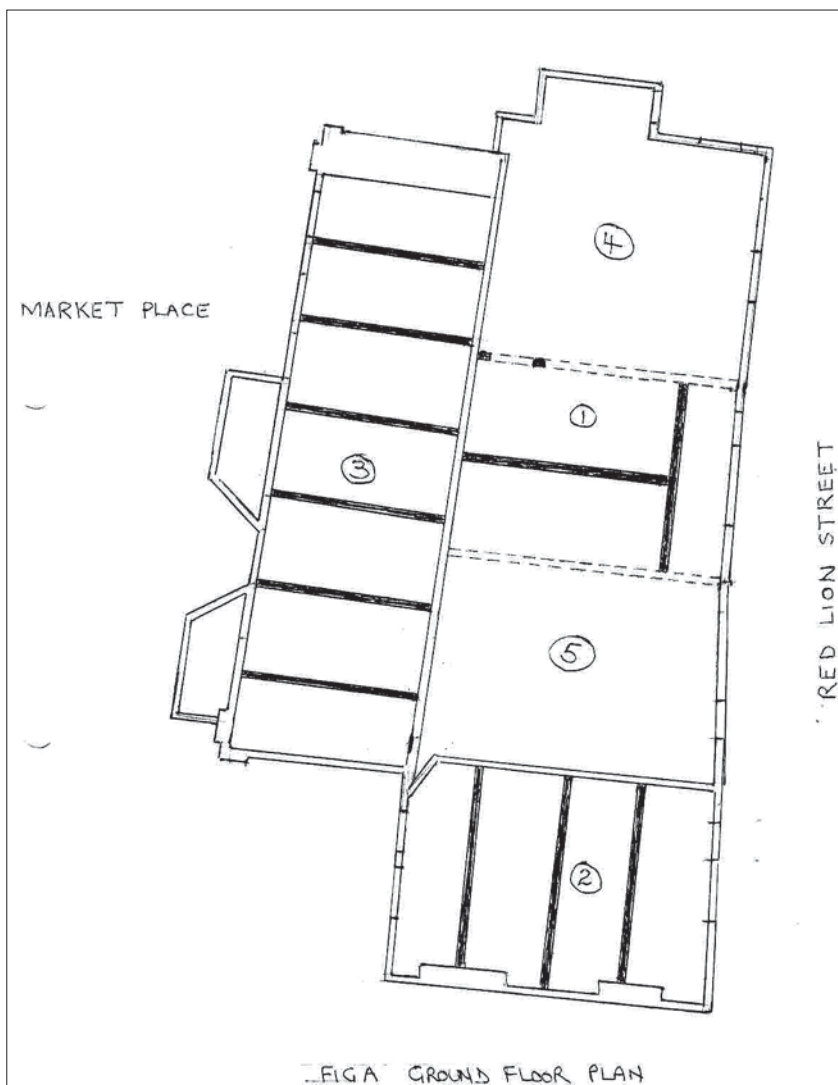
1) shows what looks like another 17th century building also demolished to make way for the 'Corn Hall' and it also shows the facade of No. 30 which displays a different glazed front window (with glazing bars) and with the entrance further to the north and heavier supporting columns. A photograph taken post 1857 (photo 2) showing the new 'Corn Hall' with part of 'London House' still attached also shows an unchanged facade to No. 30.



Wright's tithe map of 1839, with sites 176 and 177.

Further evidence of the buildings is given by Wrights tithe map of 1839. The key to the map tells us that site 177 is a house and shop owned and occupied by Stephen Breese (building 1 on my site plan), later to be extended to the north by Stephen Breese (photo 3) with the addition of building 4 on the site plan.

I believe that the western end of building 1 was truncated when building 3 was added c1700, and the eastern end extended towards Red Lion Street. While the ground floor of building 1 has been extensively altered and evidence destroyed the first floor and roof space could yield important information, the roof looks original but was not accessible at the time of viewing. Site 176, facing the market place, is described as a house (building 2 on my site plan) and yards (5 on site plan) was occupied by George Eldon Burrell. Building 2, like building 1, has possibly had both gable ends rebuilt as the remaining main beams have no tenon sockets for wall studs and are chamfered with lamb's tongue chamfer stops indicating that they are internal beams made to be seen and displaying the owner's status, the building most likely to be residential rather than outbuildings such as warehouse or stables.



Site plan

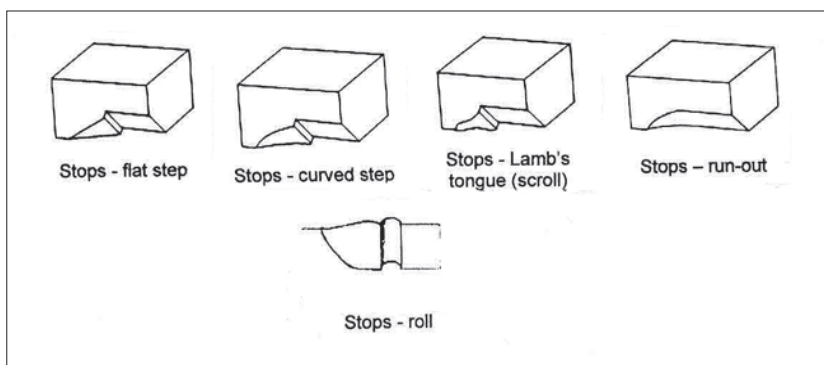
The first floor above seems to confirm this with signs of a fine timber frame. The area between these two buildings (5 on site plan) could possibly have been a yard with the gable end only being built relatively recently as the 'Breese' photograph (photo 3) clearly shows an open space with only a small lean-to attached to building 2.



Photo 3. Extension to the north by Stephen Breese, courtesy Aylsham Town Archive.

I have surmised that later in the 17th century a timber-framed shop with warehouse above (building 3 on site plan) has been added, and in the 18th century further alterations were made with a grand Georgian facade concealing the unfashionable timber-frame origins of the buildings but at the same time pragmatically utilising the existing structures. The 18th century facade appears to have three storeys with a parapet to the top storey; all the windows are sash with glazing bars to ground and first floors. There are rubbed brick arches with painted keystones over window openings and there are substantial corner pilasters with moulded brick capitals, and a moulded and dentilled brick string course at second floor level. All the brickwork, even later additions, are in Flemish Bond. The 18th century shop front with its offset doorway and columns has been replaced by a fine 19th century projecting shop front with central doorway and pilasters; to the north of this shop front is a doorway with pedimented doorcase. The north gable has a large chimney stack and the south gable has a further two stacks. The facade of building 2 is two storeys with a semi-circular headed window and two blocked openings with rubbed arches at first floor level.

There is a 19th century addition to the north of building 1 and the gables to Red Lion Street have been extensively rebuilt or refaced in the 20th century with the addition of modern windows and doorways.



Examples of chamfer stops covering the period c1400–c1700. See *Recording Key Building Features: An Illustrated Glossary* – buildingarcheology.co.uk

The dating evidence is provided by the surviving timber-framing, in particular the chamfer stops with roll or bar in building 1 (photo 4, bottom) and the lamb's tongue chamfer stops in building 2 (photo 4, top); all of these details would have petered out by the late 17th century.

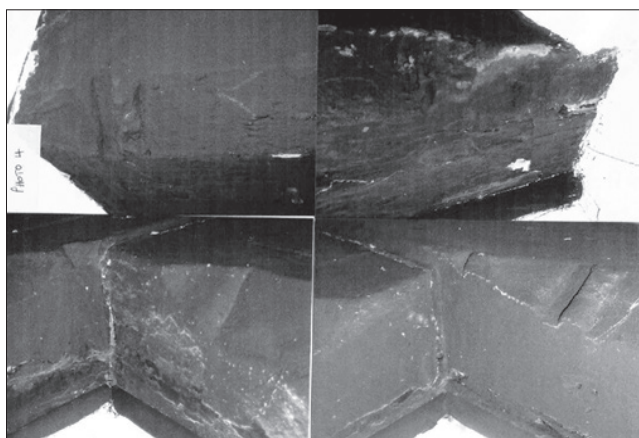


Photo 4, showing lamb's tongue (top) and roll stops (below).

More evidence such as carpenter's marks, scarf-joints, peg holes and wall studs may be concealed by modern alterations and hidden under cement plastering which hopefully will be removed in future to reveal more of the timber-frame if it has survived. There is part of the timber-frame showing in the east wall of building 3 (photo 5, left), which is a bit of an anomaly and could be a part of an earlier building.



Photo 5. Anomalous part of a timber-frame (left) and butt purlin (right).

It is difficult to understand the form of the 17th century buildings on such a brief survey but they were single pile structures a standard one rod (16½ ft) wide and approximately twice as long and possibly with a cross passage. These two buildings lie on an east/west axis and are tall with no evidence to support the suggestion that they have been increased in height. With possibly three floors plus cellars, the roof structures appear to be original with Butt purlins in-line (photo 5, right).

In conclusion, this brief attempt to discover the history of the site, like most retrospective analysis, raises more questions than answers but hopefully demonstrates that this building and possibly many others in Aylsham deserve further investigation. This description of no. 30 Market place is only based on my scant observations and limited knowledge of timber-frame buildings and was carried out on auction viewing days and in no way represents a measured or authoritative survey.

Footnote

Research by William Vaughan-Lewis on the whole infill block from Clarke's along to Barnwell and Santander is ongoing but already supports the idea of an early building at the end of the block (Roger's building 1). The southern end of the infill was a butchers' 'shambles' with at least two rows of stalls divided by a 'loke'. Over the late 15th and the 16th centuries, stalls became more permanent shops and more 'messuages' (houses which may have had shops below) evolved here. We may never be able to chart this shift precisely as the court book descriptions are often repeated unchanged over the years but it is clear that, as Roger explains, many buildings in Aylsham do indeed have much earlier beginnings.



Alice Woodfall was born in 1849 and married the Revd John Gurney Hoare in 1873. She is noted by Frank Meeres in his *Ordinary Women, Extraordinary Lives: Norfolk women in the first half of the twentieth century* (2017).

We are most grateful to her great grandson Peter Cartmell for the beautiful photograph of her as a young woman from the family album. He also provided salient notes from his father who knew Alice when she was young. He remembered her as every grandchild's favourite. Essentially she was a very active person, and thus a superb lady of the vicarage – a spirit instilled into

her two youngest daughters. She was a very keen gardener and also a good pianist.

Her father, John Ward Woodfall was born in Dean's Yard Westminster in 1810. He was a scholar at Westminster College and Trinity College, Cambridge. He went to Germany, studied medicine at Frankfurt and became a German scholar. While there he was prevailed upon to act as interpreter for Elizabeth Fry when she addressed prisoners (little knowing that his future daughter would marry into the Gurney family). He obtained a Certificate of University College, London, and became a physician (M.R.C.P. 1840). He was Assistant Physician to Middlesex Hospital when he married Jane Douglas from Shepperton in 1846. The family moved to Stone Street in the fashionable part of Maidstone in the mid-1850s, where John worked for the West Kent Infirmary and later as physician to the West Kent General Hospital. He died young from ossification of the heart in 1867, leaving the family in slightly straightened circumstances. His wife Jane died in 1871 and the two daughters (Jane four years older than Alice) moved to York Street in Tunbridge Wells, quite close to Holy Trinity Church, where Alice married John Gurney Hoare in 1873.

John Gurney Hoare, born in 1847, came from a privileged family living at Heath House in Hampstead, where his grandfather Sam Hoare had lived with Louisa, the daughter of Johnny Gurney of Earlham Hall and sister of Elizabeth Fry. The great Quaker families of Buxton, Gurney and Hoare, notable bankers, merchants and philanthropists, were closely intermarried and by the 1820s were beginning to take a greater part in the established church. John Gurney Hoare went to Cambridge and was an athletic blue in 1869–1870. He was a curate at Sculcoates, Hull, in 1873, ordained in York that year, and in Sunderland 1873–1875 and, after his marriage, at Holy Trinity Church, Tunbridge Wells, in 1875–1877. They moved to Canterbury in 1877–1888, where he was vicar of St Dunstons, coming to Aylsham in 1888. He was Rural Dean of Ingworth and the Diocese of Norwich in 1889 and made an Honorary Canon of Norwich in 1899.

They immediately made an outreach into the community. In the Parish Notes for February 1889 the Notices include the following.

“TO WOMEN AND YOUNG WOMEN

On Friday afternoons, once a fortnight, Mrs Hoare proposes to hold at the Bank Room, a Bible Class for Women and Young Women, whether living at home or in service. The class will commence at 3.30 and last an hour.....

All Women and Young Women will be most welcome.

Mrs Hoare will be much obliged if mistresses will kindly allow and encourage their servants to attend....”

In November the same year she remarks on the distribution of the Parish Notes "Please let them go out at once". In the same issue she has the following notice.

"Mrs Hoare knows of several girls wanting places and will be glad to hear of places for the girls. We are trying to find a Nurse for the Parish, but have not yet succeeded. One has been greatly wanted lately".

In December her established network is apparent in the following. "Mrs Hoare will be too much occupied at Christmas to superintend the church decorations. Will any kind friends who are willing to undertake any part and carry it out, let Mrs Hoare know by the 15th instant".

In 1894 there was an Act of Parliament to establish elected Parish Councils with a remit to create among other things allotments for the working classes and appoint trustees for Parish Charities. The Act also established the first Rural District Councils, to which women were eligible. Alice put out a leaflet.

TO THE PAROCHIAL ELECTORS OF AYLSHAM

My Dear Friends

I have been asked to become a Candidate for election to the Rural District Council, and as I have long felt that the post of Guardian of the Poor comes well within the province of Woman's Work, I have decided to comply with this request.

There are, in every Workhouse, certain departments which have always been considered as especially belonging to woman's work. A large proportion of those who receive shelter are women, many aged and bed-ridden, others young, and too often in circumstances needing a woman's aid. There are also young children, who are allowed to be peculiarly the subjects of woman's care, and sick of all ages and of both sexes, the nursing of whom is done by woman's hands.

It seems, therefore, desirable that at every Board there should be some women, who, being elected for the purpose, have a recognised position and voice in the management, and who may, therefore, visit the Workhouse not on sufferance but of right.

I trust I may, as a fellow woman, be thus able to serve the interests and promote the welfare of our poorer friends and neighbours.

It is with this object and this alone that I ask your sympathy and support.

I am

Yours faithfully

ALICE HOARE

Vicarage, Aylsham, Dec. 11th, 1894

She was duly elected Councillor to the Rural District of Aylsham on 19 December 1894, the other ladies among 41 men being Emma Sayers from Brampton Parish, Maria Buxton from Marsham Parish and Lady Alexandrina Charlotte Durrant from Scottow Parish. Her husband was appointed chairman of the new Aylsham Parish Council in the same month and remained chairman until he retired from the Council in 1919.

The Rural District Council, chaired by Benjamin Sapwell, met for the first time on 1 January 1895, in the board room at the workhouse, where subsequent meetings were held, usually immediately following the meetings of the Board of Guardians of the Aylsham Union, with which they had many members in common, including Alice. The only resolution was "Mr. Ireland gave notice he would move That the Board Room be warmed with iron pipes heated by steam". At the next meeting on 8 January 1895 Alice was appointed to the Sanitary Committee of 16 members. In April 1896 she was appointed to the School Attendance Committee and the House Committee, and was also on the rota of Visitors to the workhouse.

She attended meetings regularly. From the early 1890s there had been sporadic outbreaks of small pox, scarlet fever and diphtheria all over Aylsham and the surrounding villages. They were fortunate to have a good Medical Officer, Dr Frederick Bateman, who monitored the situation carefully, but it was a worrying time. In August 1895 Alice proposed "that Dr. Bateman be informed that it was resolved that it is impossible for the Master of the House to receive into the Union House Infirmary cases of Small Pox or other infectious diseases". In February 1897 there was an outbreak of scarlet fever in three cottages in Cawston. Alice was entrusted to oversee the compensation for the clothes that had to be destroyed. There was general concern for children boarded out from the workhouse and Alice was on the Committee in October 1897 to consider the powers of Guardians in dealing with children relating to a Bill introduced into the House of Commons in the last session. Maria Buxton was on that Committee and together in July 1898 they succeeded in obtaining additional relief for children boarded out.

A little earlier, in October 1896, the House Committee was permitted to advertise for a Nurse, and on 5 November Miss Fenn was appointed at £20 p.a., with board, lodging and washing at the workhouse and provided with a

uniform. In April 1897 an Industrial Trainer was appointed on similar terms. However on 11 September 1897 it was proposed that an Isolation Hospital be provided for the District, but was rejected by all but the proposer. The name of the proposer is not recorded.

There was growing pressure to take inmates from several London boroughs that had approached the Union for help. The Council would have none of that and on Alice's last attendance in November 1898 the Sanitary Committee decided not to adopt the Infectious Disease (Prevention) Act 1890. This was a bad time with Alice reporting several cases of diphtheria and scarlet fever in Aylsham in September 1897, 11 cases of scarlet fever in Aylsham in November, 22 in the town in December with 7 in the workhouse, more in Salle and Whitwell, 2 fresh cases in March 1898, 5 in Banningham in July and another in Foulsham in August.

Alice remained especially concerned for young women. We have proofs of an invitation card.

"Mrs Gurney Hoare requests the pleasure of the company of.....At a Meeting for Women in the Parish Room on Monday May 5th 1913, at 3.15 p.m., to hear Miss Katharine Browne of the National Vigilance Association for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic. Tea 4.30. RSVP The Vicarage, Aylsham. There will be a Meeting for Girls at 8 o'clock." She ordered 100 cards on 23 April and another 25 on the 24th.

All too soon Alice was much involved with War work and there is a letter she wrote from the Vicarage on 15 May 1918 to Major Tom Purdy in Alexandria expressing her appreciation of the work done by his wife, Nona, for the national network of local war savings associations.

"Dear Major Purdy

I know you will like to hear how much Nona's work during the 'War Loan Week' was appreciated. She covered herself with glory! & was the lady of the hour. It was a far bigger business than we any of us had any idea of, but Nona rose to the occasion & carried it through triumphantly. She stuck to her post through thick & thin, & looked wonderfully fresh at the end of the week – not nearly so fagged looking as the rest of us in spite of her longer hours & greater responsibility. She looked very nice on the Platform at the wind up when she was presented with a silver inkstand.....

I trust you are keeping well. We have all been rejoicing over the exploits of our navy - & only wish the German fleet would come out & get sent to the bottom. How is the war to end! the end seems to recede farther & farther into

the distance. But, please God, there are surprises in store for us – of an agreeable nature.

The Vicar joins me in kindest remembrances,

Ever yours very sincerely

Alice Hoare”

As elsewhere the women of Aylsham were much involved with making clothing, bandages and surgical dressings, boarding armed forces and taking on the jobs of men recruited into the services, particularly in the critical period from 1916. Help was needed for the Red Cross Hospital at Cawston Manor and the soldiers being cared for at Sankence House. In 1916 the west wing of the Workhouse, part of the Isolation Block and the Childrens Home were given over to the troops and the grounds used to stable horses. It was a challenge to prevent the Master and promising inmates being called up. By 1918 the whole workhouse had been requisitioned. In November the chairman opened the proceedings by expressing joy and gratitude at the signing of the armistice. The first verses of the doxology and national anthem were sung.

Canon Hoare died in 1923. Her grandson was always told that, when Alice had had enough of being the child-bearing drudge, she played the Victorian ‘delicate invalid’ very well for the remainder of her husband’s working days. After his death she went to live with her youngest unmarried daughter near Hoveton and became very active again – for her eightieth birthday she gave herself a wheelbarrow which she used daily, dressed as always, in black alpaca down to the ankles. It was a great pity that in her last five years she fell foul of the family blindness that occurred in the female line (but since defunct). She died in 1938 and is buried with her husband at St Peter’s, Belaugh, after indeed a long and notable life.

Sources. Family trees and notes deposited in Aylsham Town Archive, Aylsham Parish Notes, Aylsham Town Archive #171 and #1002; Norfolk Record Office Rural District Council Minutes 1893–1901.

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Hoare, Louise (c1960). *Six Generations*. 64 pp. Lancaster Press, Fakenham.

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Jenny May Jenner, District Nurse

Ursula Warren

[Reprinted from Aylsham Local History Society Journal 7: 6–10 (2003)]



Nurse Jenner on the left, with Miss Hilda Pegg on the right

After the recent Photographic Exhibition staged by the Women's Institute in Aylsham Town Hall many people have asked me about my memories of my mother who came to Aylsham in 1926 to be District Nurse. At that time I was six months old and travelled by train from Kelso in my mother's arms.

My father was with us, but had been told he had only six months to live. My mother, a volatile, resilient Welshwoman, realised she would have to be the breadwinner. Although always delicate, my father lived till he was sixty-three –so much for dire medical predictions. His was the minor role in our family, hard on a man who had been a pilot in the RFC and a racing driver, but he accepted his lot with dignity.

We were met at the Great Western station at Millgate ("the bottom station"

as it was locally known) by members of the Aylsham Nursing Association – including Rusts, Purdys and Sapwells. These are still well known names in the town.

It is strange to realise that the resourceful young woman they greeted should have become the almost legendary Nurse Jenner. Not only did she visit the sick in their homes, but she delivered their babies, immunised them and kept an eye on them till they went to school, as in those days there were no Health Visitors. She also saw that they were christened and the mothers churched, not part of her duties, but she was a staunch Christian.

Although sharp of tongue, she had a heart of gold and is still remembered with amusement and affection. Waiting for a birth or death, she always knitted and insisted on a regular supply of cups of tea. One old man told me that when his wife was in labour, my mother arrived on her bike and said sharply, “Put the kettle on, please”.

“How much will you need?”

“Just enough for a cup of tea” She’d replied.

“She came to my wife for all our kids and we thought the world of her. Nothing was too much trouble.”

We lived in Nurse’s Cottage in Palmers Lane, with a lamp at the bottom of the garden path. It had to be easily recognisable, as neither she nor her patients were on the phone. All messages were delivered to the house and taken by my bemused father or, when I was older, me. Ours was the only house in the Lane. Next door was Mr Burrell’s garden with no house. He lived elsewhere, but often worked in the garden and patiently retrieved my balls. Opposite was the wall of the Orchards garden. The Ian Sears Clinic at the bottom of the Lane was built by the owners of the Orchards, but much later.

My mother did her rounds on a bicycle. When I was old enough, I travelled behind, strapped in a carrier, with her black bag behind me. Once, the bag and I rolled off, going down a bumpy lane at Readypenny. When I returned to Aylsham twelve years ago, I used that bike and it was instantly recognised. It had changed less than I had. Sadly it was stolen from our garden some years ago. With it went many happy memories of my childhood.

As the population increased, my mother was given a car, which she drove badly but with great verve. This was garaged in a shed at the side of the Swan Inn, now pulled down and replaced by a car park. With the advent of the National Health Service, the Nursing Association ceased to exist, but one of the last, kind actions, was to sell the house, at a very low price, to my mother.

I went to school when I was four, at Miss Emily’s at The Beeches in Cawston Road. I walked there unescorted. In those days children had plenty of freedom. When I was seven, I went on the bus to Norwich to the Convent of Notre

Dame, kindly looked after by an older pupil, Sybil Keymer. I caught this bus from Watt's Garage on which Budgens now stands.

I left school when I was eighteen and my mother decided I would train as a nurse, so she duly took me to London Hospital, where I trained. She was a very formidable woman and her word was law. I'd been terrified she would expect me to replace her in Aylsham, but I knew I lacked her devotion to the sick and suffering. Her caring shoes certainly would not have fitted me.

Luckily, as soon as I had finished my training, I married a doctor and thankfully stopped being a nurse. Although we worked in Essex, we chose to come back to Aylsham to retire as we and our six sons had always spent the summer holidays in Aylsham.

Aylsham for me is full of memories of a very happy childhood spent in a friendly town. Of course much has changed. There are now no "top" and "bottom stations", and I walk my dog along the disused railway line – Marriotts Way. I found that there was now no proper stage in the Town Hall. On it, my friends used to give concerts to entertain the troops.

Most of us went to dancing lessons. First these were held in a room at the "Black Boys" situated well out of sight and sound at the back. Later, we used the Scouts Hut down Williamsons Lane. None of us had much talent, except Betty Skoyles, who had a wonderful voice.

Red Cross dances, held in the Town Hall, were much more fun. The band sat on the platform blaring out "In the Mood" and, more sentimentally, "We'll Meet Again". These dances were very popular as, during the War, Aylsham was full of airmen stationed at Oulton and soldiers from the Welsh Regiment from the Drill Hall; this was opposite the Cinema in Cawston Road. The height of teenage sophistication was to be escorted there by a pilot. My mother, of course, took me and brought me home from the Cinema and sat as a chaperone through all the dances. It never occurred to me to protest.

When the soldiers came to church, "Land of my Fathers" was always played. My mother caused me enormous embarrassment by singing the words in Welsh at the top of her voice. She was always unpredictable.

Once a young WAAF gave birth in a Nissen Hut in Blickling Park. My mother carried the baby into the Officers' Mess. When the startled, irate CO asked her what she was doing there with the child, "He's looking for his father", she answered in ringing tones before being hurriedly ushered out.

Although we were young, we soon realised that the young boys we danced with were in danger of sudden death. We worked hard to give them a pleasant time by working in the Salvation Army Canteen, which was in Red Lion Street opposite what is now the Dry Cleaners, and helping in the British Restaurant in the old Chapel at the top of Mill Road. In our small way we valiantly did our

bit for the war effort.

In the upper room of the Town Hall, we used to go to Red Cross lectures given by Dr Holman and Dr John Sapwell. The doctors did First Aid, my mother Home Nursing. On these occasions she always wore a huge, white, heavily starched cap. Actually she had no need of any uniform to give her authority. We all held her in awe – even the doctors. To give us “practical experience”, we junior VADs worked at Cawston Manor which was an orthopaedic convalescent home for children. This was hard, unglamorous work.

Aylsham is still permeated with memories of my mother. When I married, she was delighted that Dr and Mrs Sapwell asked us to have our reception at The Grange, and she was honoured that Annabelle Maingay and Suzanne Hackett, local doctors’ daughters were child bridesmaids. She’d always held the medical profession in high esteem. Bill, my husband’s brother, was his best man. He and the ushers stayed at the Dog Hotel in Norwich Road on the eve of our wedding and had a riotous night. This has, sadly, been pulled down. Bill liked Aylsham so much that, after he married, he bought a house in Burgh Road and practised as a Vet. My mother delivered both his children.

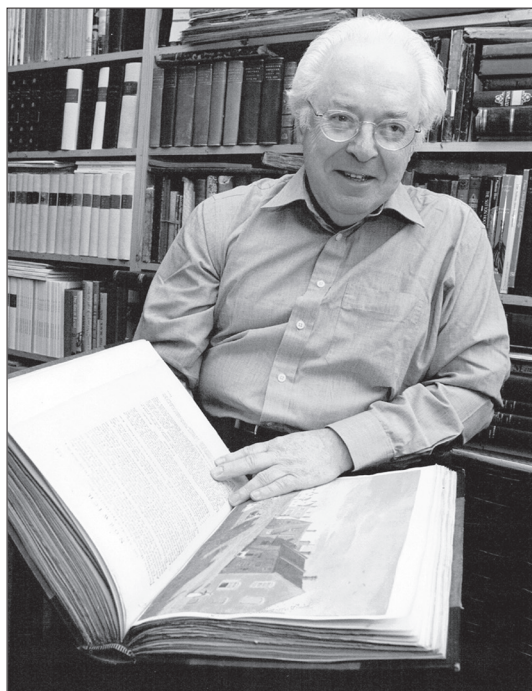
Over the last ten years, many, many older people have said to me, “Oh, Ursula, you are like your mother”. That is simply not true. Certainly, I am bossy, but I have not got her compassion, her caring nature. She comforted the dying, gave solace to the bereaved and cared for the afflicted in Aylsham for 42 years. That is why she is remembered by so many. Sadly, I am only half the woman she was.

Postscript from Mike Bush

One story I have of Nurse Jenner concerns my aunt, Mrs Molly Postle, who recently passed away, when she was born.

My grandmother Ginny Bond, wife of Granville Bond trader in the town, was being attended at the birth by Sister Lucas and Nurse Jenner, who was new to the area and “learning the trade” to take over from Sister Lucas, and after a particularly long and difficult birth it was decided that Molly was not meant for this world and was wrapped in newspaper and set to one side while Grandmother received the treatment she desperately needed. It was during this that the young Nurse Jenner noticed movement from the newspaper package and “rescued” the infant and brought her back to the world. Auntie Molly survived for 88 years, married and had two children herself, so it was a job well done for the young Nurse. My grandmother had to receive regular treatment from Nurse Jenner after that for a number of years and a great friendship with my family was established and I can just remember her visits.

Ron Fiske†



"I am myself a Norfolk man, and glory in being so"

No better words could be applied to Ron, except perhaps to restrict the area specifically to North Walsham. Ronald Clive Fiske was born on 17 January 1938 in a small semi-detached cottage at 47 New Road, North Walsham. Here he grew up with his three brothers, Anthony, Vernon and Gerald with whom he maintained a close bond throughout his life.

His Mother, Margery Ann King or "Annie", was the daughter of a Northrepps groom who survived the First World War, only to succumb at an early age to a horse which backed him into a sharp flint wall. His Father, was William or "Billy" Fiske, son of Horace Fiske, one of a very large family, in Ron's words, "one of the poorest in town".

When Ron was five, Annie spent six weeks in hospital with complications from pneumonia and Ron and his older brother, Anthony, were sent to live-

with Annie's Mother, Maud King in Northrepps. Despite a two-mile walk to school, Ron loved his time at Northrepps and developed a very great affection for his Grandmother. It was also during his time at Northrepps that he developed a keen interest in natural history.

At North Walsham Primary School, he was one of the last boys to wear hob nail boots, but he did well and shared the honour of coming first in class with another boy.

Ron joined the Cubs and, later, the Scouts, where he gained several badges and went on to become a patrol leader. He was also an enthusiastic member of The Church Choir. However, in 1951 Scout camp and the Easter services unfortunately coincided and eight boys, including Ron, were suspended from the choir after they went camping instead of going to Church. Allowed back, but initially only to sing with the congregation, the case made the press and Ron was quoted saying "We'll still go to church every Sunday".

Although he passed the eleven-plus examination for the Paston School twice, he was rejected on interview. Undaunted, he took the examination and interview for the Norwich Junior Technical School, which he passed with little trouble. Here Ron overcame his nervous nature, playing a good enough part in school activities to reach the highest position in the boys' hierarchy – "Dinner Monitor".

In 1954 Ron became an apprentice fitter in the Commutator Shop at Laurence Scott Electromotors where, amongst other things, he worked on Asdic equipment for submarines.

Ron loved and often talked about his time on a month's Outward Bound course on the shore of Lake Ullswater in 1957. The most enjoyable activity, Ron told us, entailed going off for 24 hours and surviving on minimum rations. On a three-day journey, they tackled the Helvellyn Range in visibility reduced to under 15 yards. On one night, Ron tells us that half the boys had got their sleeping bags wet and he refers to "someone" who spent the night sitting in his ruck-sac, with a towel round him to keep warm. We can only guess who that "someone" might have been.

It was while travelling to Laurence Scott by train that he met Marilyn Davies, who worked for the same company. They married on 11 July 1959, it was the beginning of their fifty-four years together. They worked hard and supplemented their income with a variety of side-lines. After living for a year with Marilyn's parents in Mundesley, they managed to save the £2700 needed to buy a bungalow at Marshgate, North Walsham, which they named "Kendalwood".

Ron and Marilyn bought a 225cc Ambassador motor bike which, despite its unreliability, they used to travel to work. Ron also used it to attend evening

classes three nights a week and to canvass for a place on the North Walsham Urban District Council, which he won in 1961. By 1967 and aged 29, he became, at the time, the youngest Chairman of the Council. He also became a Governor of both The Primary and the Millfield Schools and Vice-chairman of The Adult Committee of the North Walsham Youth Centre. He worked to obtain better facilities for the children and youth of the town and to ensure that Council Houses were let in order of most need. He served as a Councillor right up until the local government reorganisation around 1971.

Ron changed jobs in 1961, taking up the position of assistant to the Refrigeration Director at Ross Foods in Westwick, where he concentrated on surveys and drawings and dealing with the building work for new cold stores, although he later confessed that he never did learn much about refrigeration.

When the Ross Group decided to move its small technical department to Grimsby, not wishing to move away from Norfolk, Ron chose to go it alone as a self-employed "architectural surveyor". Through hard work and long hours, he became quite successful and took on a secretary and a young assistant called Stewart Smith.

Daughters Hazel and Brenda came along in April 1964 and July 1968 respectively.

Ron wanted to invest some of his money and saw that he could buy very old books at a fraction of the price of other items. Accordingly, he bought his first books – two volumes of Froissart's Chronicles. These contained a fascinating account of the Peasants' Revolt of 1381, the leading Norfolk events of which played out in his home town. Thus, by chance started an interest in local history books which developed, in Ron's own words, "until, I fear, I can be classed as a bibliomaniac".

At work, Ron's best client was William "Billy" Bird and in October 1970 Ron joined with him in a new limited company called William Bird and Son Contractors Limited, eventually becoming Chairman and leading shareholder when Billy retired. It was here, having "engaged some very good men who had much experience", that he was able to achieve his ambition of designing and building his own home. The family moved into 26 Yarmouth Road in 1973.

With his interest in local history growing, Ron helped form the North Walsham and District Historical Society, becoming in due course, its Chairman and President. He was also instrumental in helping to form the Cromer Museum.

An opportunity arose to buy some of the books from the library of Lamas Hall, including some on heraldry. Once he had become familiar with them, Ron developed a keen interest in Heraldry, to the extent that he later became Vice-President of the Norfolk Heraldry Society.

In February 1991 Ron underwent a triple heart by-pass, after which he decided to take things more slowly. Ron and Marilyn moved to Morningthorpe Manor in South Norfolk. It was a home which they both loved. The Grand-children have grown up with special memories there: Easter egg hunts and treasure trails, picking apples and pears, riding in the lawn-mower trailer, camping and birthday parties, barbecues and bonfire night and, of course, Christmas at Morningthorpe.

Ron loved Christmas. As children he would make us little parcels and hang them on the tree. In recent years he designed and made his own Christmas cards and painted menu cards and individual place-setting cards. Each year he opened his parcels carefully with a knife and kept his wrapping paper. When he moved he had envelopes in the attic with little keepsakes from each year's Christmas.

In 1989 Ron joined the Aylsham Local History Society and was soon contributing articles to the Journal, edited at that time by Tom Mollard. Ron was self-effacing and it was a little while, Sheila recalls, before Tom said to someone at a meeting of the Society that he would really like to meet Ron Fiske and the reply was well he is over there. At the beginning of Ron's 1991 article on The Norfolk and Norwich Archaeological Society's visit to Aylsham in August 1859 Tom remarks as follows. "The notes above and the newspaper report come from our own member, Ron Fiske, to whom I am continually grateful for interesting items for our Journal." Tom had in fact become Librarian for the Norfolk and Norwich Archaeological Society after he retired as a County Librarian in 1988 and had volunteered to reopen the Cathedral Library to the public.

Ron and Tom became friends with closely shared interests. Sheila well remembers the first time she and Tom visited Ron and Marilyn at Morningthorpe Manor – they were overawed by rooms over several floors just filled with books – one great library. One room was being repapered and, when asked why, Ron said he wanted it done in the style of the house.

In 1996 Ron supported efforts to establish a Norfolk Bibliographical Database as a Norfolk research resource.

Another of Ron's key interests came about when he was offered some books and pamphlets relating to Nelson. Ron added to the collection over the years, making it one of the best Nelson libraries in private ownership. It was through this that Ron came into contact with Ben Burgess, another Nelson collector and together they helped found the Nelson Society, with Ben Burgess as Treasurer and Ron its first Chairman.

Ben Burgess dreamed of creating a Norfolk Nelson Museum. Ron and Tom helped to bring this about and to fulfil a promise to see that Ben's collection

was not dispersed. The Nelson museum at South Quay in Great Yarmouth was opened by HRH The Duke of Edinburgh in July 2002. Tom added a footnote to Ron's report on the official opening in the Journal 6: 343–344 (2002). "As a final note – it was a memorable day for Mr and Mrs Editor, who not only had the pleasure and privilege of meeting and talking to the Duke of Edinburgh in the morning, but finished the day at the Sandringham Garden Party – slightly overwhelmed by the occasion and all the champagne." Tom was too modest to say that the invitation by the Queen to Sandringham was in recognition of his work in reopening the Cathedral Library, which they only realised after they had arrived at the party.

Ron also Supported Sir Bernard Matthews in his campaign to erect County road-signs proclaiming "Norfolk – Nelson's County".

In 2011 Ron's forty-year service to Heraldry was recognised when he was elected a Fellow of the National Heraldry Society, for his study of heraldic research in the County of Norfolk. He was proudly presented with the Fellowship Jewel and Certificate by Sir Henry Paston-Bedingfeld at Oxburgh Hall. Sheila recalls Tom being asked for information on Calthorpe arms, to which he replied I know just the person, and Ron sent the details next day.

Sadly Marilyn, to whom Ron was completely devoted, was diagnosed with a brain tumour in May 2013. During her illness Ron showed incredible strength and tenderness and was at her side every day until her death at the end of 2013. Although he never let it show, Ron was devastated to lose her. He decided that it was the time to downscale and move to pastures new.

Although he never complained, it was an exhausting and an emotional time for him packing up and leaving his beloved home at Morningthorpe and many of the collections it contained.

He moved to Salhouse in June 2016 and since then he has concentrated on heraldry and local history. At the time of his death on 2 March 2018, at the age of 80, he was still working on papers relating to his beloved hometown of North Walsham.

Ron always wanted to see a Museum of North Walsham's History and we are pleased that he lived long enough to see a building provided in North Walsham to display items from the town's heritage. Also, before his death, he initiated a gift of land to North Walsham Town Council for the benefit of the people of North Walsham.

At the time of his death Ron belonged to some 23 historical societies and organisations, mainly local. Earlier in life he had belonged to 40, some as an "armchair member", but in many he was very active. Not a confident person and often feeling awkward socialising he, nevertheless, often gave talks on a wide range of local subjects. He also produced a large number of short articles

and pamphlets, most for publication in a variety of journals. He said once “quite frankly, I do not write well, or easily, so have avoided larger workI rather think this is due to the manner of our Norfolk speech, which is guttural rather than lilt”.

At one time he served as Editor of *The Norfolk Ancestor*, the journal of the Norfolk and Norwich Genealogical Society (later the Norfolk Family History Society).

Ron was a true collector. During his lifetime he amassed a library of well over 30,000 books and pamphlets, as well as manuscripts and armorial rolls. With the aid of his handwritten indexes he could find a reference to an individual or an event in just a few seconds. He will be greatly missed, not only by his family who love him and are proud of him, but also for his wide knowledge of, and great contribution to, local history.

Ron was a quiet, modest man of simple tastes. He loved the socks and jumpers that his Mother knitted and complained that the shops had nothing like them. He loved eating fish, not surprising given that his Father was once a Fish Merchant, and he loved apples in all their forms, especially crumbles and pies. One of the first things he did at his new home in Salhouse was to plant apple trees. Perhaps as a reminder of the happy times and the apple trees in all his earlier gardens.

He has been called a “Norfolk National Treasure”. He will be remembered with love and we will miss hearing those words “I have a book on that...”

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Visit to Earsham Hall



An impressive drive, with a welcoming notice board inviting us to park in front of the house, immediately made us feel special on our visit to Earsham Hall on 18th April 2018.

Annabelle Stretton-Derham briefly introduced us first to the outside of the house with its original timber-framed Tudor house attached to the ‘new’ grander part built in 1707. We were then invited inside the house through the main front door where tea and cheese straws awaited us in the hall. As we looked around this impressive entrance, features were highlighted – including the original fireplace. Fireplaces throughout the building had survived the building’s time as a school, furniture had all had to be found and Annabelle’s father-in-law, who had bought the house in 1976, was an antiques collector and furnished the house with items in keeping with its grandeur. Two items that stood out for me were the braziers which had been placed on London Bridge for the wedding of Edward VII and Princess Alexandra as seen in the painting by Holman Hunt and the enormous station clock which could be lit from behind!

After refreshment, we began our tour in the Breakfast Room which, when being used as a staff room, between 1948 until 1973 when the Hall was let as a Boarding and Day School for boys from 11–18 years old, had been painted with a plum gloss. The Derhams stripped this off to reveal the original eighteenth century wooden panelling beneath. The sash windows were probably some of the first in the county and still had original glass in.



Our tour continued through faux-stone painted hallway, glimpses through the baize covered door to the servants quarters, bright sitting room with gothic furniture and a suitably book filled library with plenty of comfortable chairs. In the largest of rooms the table had been set out with a collection of the reminiscences and photographs of the people who had been at the hall, either as school children, servants, or visitors. We learned that some of the restoration work had been done by the Derham family themselves – painting the gold leaf on the ceiling design which must have been back breaking.

Earsham Hall was owned by William Windham (1706–1789), who became Controller of the Household of HRH The Duke of Cumberland, son of George II. William and his wife Mary, Countess of Deloraine, made many improvements to Earsham Hall and employed the young architect Sir John Soane (whose work includes the Bank of England and 11 Downing Street) to convert the Orangery into the “Music Room”, to design those fireplaces and to redesign the kitchens in the Hall, with the use of top-lighting for which he later became famous. The Orangery is no longer part of the estate, but the kitchen, now used by the family, was welcoming and light, with the restored lantern feature letting in light from above. On our way to the kitchen round the outside of the house we were able to see the greenhouses which have also been restored and now house plant sales.

Returning to the entrance hall we were invited to take part in a sumptuously delicious tea, a treat to finish an entertaining visit.

Sue Sharpe

Outing to the Paston Treasure Exhibition at Norwich Castle Museum



Caroline organised a wonderful outing to Norwich Castle. The exhibition – The Paston Treasure – is on until September, and I urge everyone to find the time to visit it.

We had a one and a half hour walk and talk tour around the exhibition. Our guide was Dr Francesca Vanke, co-curator of the exhibition, who has been involved in researching, sourcing and displaying objects connected with the Paston family; or where the originals were unavailable, finding objects to “stand in” for them.

The exhibition is multi-stranded. The first strand Francesca covered was the early record of the family. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries they were upwardly mobile (for which read jumped up). The first extant Paston family letter, from Margaret to her husband John in London, was written in 1418, making this the sexi-centennial year.

Over the next 300 years, until their bankruptcy in 1732, the family were minor movers and shakers in the land. In the main, they were landed gentry. There was one ennoblement, when a Paston heir married an illegitimate

daughter of Charles II, and was created Earl of Yarmouth. Garter regalia from this period is on display, as is a family tree, showing connexions with many Norfolk families – Gurney, Buxton, Knyvett. Another display is a map of Norfolk, showing the various land holdings of the family during their glory days.

The major strand of the exhibition is based around an enormous painting, about 2½ metres by 1½, in landscape format. It was donated in 1949 by the Buxton family. It is known as the Paston Treasure.

The painting cannot be dated exactly. It is mid-17th century from the style, by a Dutch/Flemish artist. The artist is also unknown, but was obviously competent in both life drawing and still life. The painting shows some of the major items owned by the family. They include a young Negro slave, a monkey, a parrot, a portrait of a young girl, and many items of precious materials.

For the past five years, Francesca and her team have worked with Yale University on the painting. It has been subjected to many (non-invasive) techniques, such as X-ray, Macro SRF, and Mass Spectrography. Details of over-paintings were discovered and investigated.

Surviving items from the painting have been tracked down as have other Paston belongings. Some are in the ownership of Norfolk Museums, some in both national and international museums, and some are with private collectors, both at home and abroad. Many of these have been loaned for the exhibition. Some have not (yet) been found. An enormous gold or silver gilt cup, perhaps 15 cm tall, is in the centre of the painting. Apparently, quite often when gold or silver items became unfashionable, they were melted down and recast in the latest style. A similar mug has been found, and is on display.

We were taken around and shown objects of vertu relevant to the Pastons; paintings, gold and silver, pietra dura, and stuffed animals and birds.

The final strand of the exhibition is the decline and fall of the Pastons. By the 17th century, expenditure had begun to exceed income, and fathers out-lived sons. In 1732 the family was made bankrupt. Oxnead was sold, partially demolished, and leased to farmers.

Inevitably, a Repton connexion was found. John Adey Repton, Humphry's son, painted Oxnead in 1809, and also lived there after the bankruptcy. He painted it, again, in 1844, showing a hypothetical development of the gardens (see Aylsham Local History Society Journal 10: 149 (2015)).

Great exhibition, great talk, great outing. Thank you, Caroline and Francesca.

Daphne Davy

Beating the Bounds in Georgian Norwich – a talk by David Berwick



For the last talk of the season on Thursday 22 March David Berwick gave the large audience a much commended account of the parish boundary markers in Norwich that most of us had not even noticed. This was his second visit this year as he had been the supporter for Anne May's talk on The Striking School in January, as she kindly was for him this time.

An annual ceremonial procession seems to date back to the Roman era and by Anglo-Saxon times it was used by clergy to deter any alterations to the fields on which their tithes depended. Rogation Days became a festival sometime around Ascension Day, forty days after Easter. Small boys with tasselled willow wands would 'beat the bounds' and made to remember the markers, sometimes emphasised by recitations, being bumped or told surprising tales, such as the pretext enacted by men that a certain rock was hot to touch, the alarmed boys being made to follow and find they had been duped. The clergy's blessing of germinating crops was accompanied by singing, drinking and feasting along the way, which for larger parishes might take several days.

Our speaker cited the example of a recorded perambulation of Mendlesham in 1898 with a ten mile route, the traverse including a pig-sty, entered easily by the front gate but squeezing through the small muck-hole at the back was more trying for the corpulent. Lynda Wix reports on the event at St Clements this year in the next article. Men of the Aylsham Parish Church also still walk to landmarks in continuation of the old tradition.

Gospel Oaks, Amen Corners and the like were inapplicable in the city of Norwich with its many small parishes, particularly along the river. In the 18th and 19th century lead marker plates were affixed to walls to supplement the relatively few stone markers of previous eras. The seminal article by Joseph Read in the EDP in 1934 listed 140 plates. Assiduous search has now raised this to 182, about 90 still visible on public buildings, some found quite recently.

The location and excellent photos of these up to 2007 are published in the speaker's *Beating the Bounds in Georgian Norwich*, on which this talk was based.

The plates date from 1710 to 1854, with initials for the parish, a date and generally an emblem, such as crossed keys for St Peter or a more general martyr's sign of a cross or anchor. They are mostly square to rectangular, often with a raised border, but sometimes as an oval, shield or more elaborate configuration. Lead was expensive and plates would be recycled, not however without some thought to compete in style and positioning with neighbours. The moulds would be kept and there are indications of successive generations of craftsmen keeping to the same style and lettering. After 1815 lead was generally replaced by cast iron.

Their administrative importance was nicely illustrated by the story of No 10 Pottergate where the lady died in a bedroom that projected into the building structure of the next parish. The body had to remain exactly where it was until it was resolved which parish the bedroom belonged to. The boundary marker for St John Maddermarket, dated 1829, can still be seen high up on the building above No 10 adjacent to Barney's Courtyard.

Beating the bounds cost a considerable sum that was duly recorded in parish records. Stops would be made at several hostelrys along the route with copious quantities of beer consumed, the boys not entirely excluded. At one event 18 dozen cakes (216) were eaten by the children – no doubt their only food for the day that womenfolk would have cooked and encouraged their children to participate. Otherwise there is no indication women took part. Gentlemen were generally expected to pay for dinner. In 1821 St Clement had a two-day event for which 775 pints of beer were paid for in ten public houses along the way. The fire appliance was brought out and the night crier was also paid to advertise the event. The dinner at The Bull cost each of the 30 diners 4 shs and a further 10 shs went to the servants. At St Peter Mancroft in 1827 dinner cost 7s 6d (about £35 in modern money), the Revd John Bowman was doused with a bucket of water from the pump on Hay Hill and “dried out” at the Angel Inn. Deluges from upstairs windows are recorded elsewhere. And last word from an 18th Century parishioner of St Peter Mancroft.

*Ye rascally ringers – inveterate foes,
Disturbers of those who are fond of repose,
I wish for the peace and quiet of these lands,
That ye had round your necks
What ye Pull with your hands!*

Roger Polhill

Beating the Bounds for St Clements

Lynda Wix



The ceremony of beating the bounds for St Clements parish Norwich took place on May 10th this year. The willow wands were distributed in the church and a tot of port taken by the church warden, the beagle and apprentice boys. To the accompaniment of a drum beaten by another parishioner and a cow horn blown by an apprentice boy the procession set out along Colegate tapping with the wands on the boundary marks high upon a house before taking a path to the riverside wharf.

At this point the boundary was through the middle of the river, so the churchwarden was rowed under Fye bridge to a jetty on Fishergate. Everyone else made their way to the jetty on dry land from the wharf to Fye bridge. In Fishergate the churchwarden was hauled out of the rowing boat. So long as one person marks the boundary that is deemed sufficient.

The boundary line then took everyone through a yard which emerged on to Magdalen street. The boundary marks were high up near Loose's shop so the apprentice boys had to lift one of their number up on to the shoulders of another.

Crossing the street down Boswell's Yard we were confronted with a brick wall which had been built since 1821. The apprentice boys were furnished with a ladder so they could climb over the wall to the car park next to the Old Congregation meeting church. The rest of the procession met them in the car park from Golden Dog Lane. There was permission to go through the garden at the back of the church and thence back to Colegate.

The apprentice boys were soaked by water squirted on their backs by the beadle as they went round. All part of the fun. The party continued to the 'Ribs of Beef' where all were sure the parish boundary marks on the route had been marked and that more sustenance was required.