AYLSHAM LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

JOURNAL AND NEWSLETTER

Volume 11 No. 5

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Front cover: Aylsham Computers, 15 Red Lion Street.
Back cover: Map of all known pub sites in Aysham, from *A New History of Aylsham Public Houses* reviewed in this issue.

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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In the event there was no need to prepare for adverse weather precautions, the February lecture in the unprecedented warm interlude. As usual there was an excellent turnout for Dr James Albone's novel take on the history of Roman roads. The last lecture of the season on 28 March will be by Mary Fewster, talking about *A Moving Story: Transport in East Anglia from the Middle Ages to 1900*.

The outing to Ely on 19 March will occur while this part is being printed and will be covered by a report in the August issue of the Journal. The next trip will be to Hindringham Hall, a fine Tudor moated house with beautiful gardens, on 16 July. Sarah Cassell has kindly agreed to lead us on a tour of churches with angel roofs later in the year.

Peter Jolly has very kindly taken on the upgrade and maintenance of the Society website. He is also planning to progressively make all eleven volumes of the Journal accessible on the internet, a great contribution to our outreach.

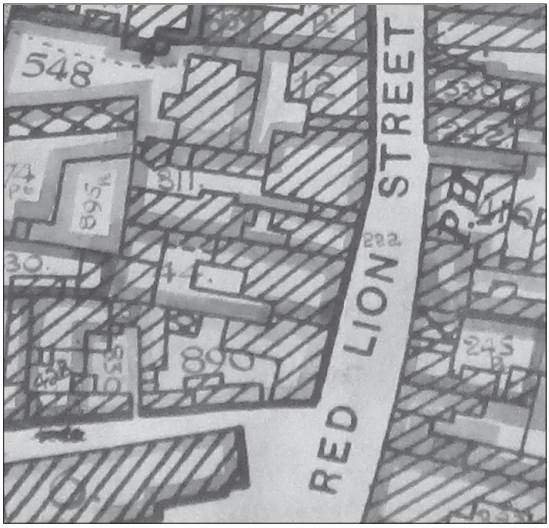
A New History of Aylsham Public Houses, kindly reviewed by Margaret Bird in this issue, has been a great success with over 200 copies now sold. The current exhibition in the Heritage Centre features *The history of Aylsham through its Pubs and Inns,* and there is an accompanying leaflet for a pub walk around the town.

15 Red Lion Street, Aylsham Maggie & William Vaughan-Lewis, Roger Polhill and Roger Crouch

Today 15 Red Lion Street is the address of Aylsham Computers, the shop on the corner of the Market Place and Red Lion Street. The site originally included the Bread Source bakery and Alleycuts hairdressers, now 13 and 13B Red Lion Street but lying in the loke behind the Town Hall.

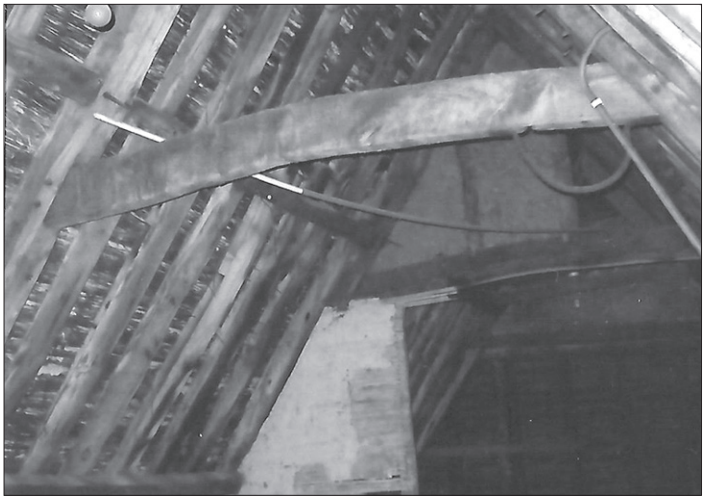
Early history

Before the infill buildings were added where the Town Hall now stands, this property would have been more significant. It is likely that there has been a building on this corner since the market began in the late medieval period but the increasing wealth of the merchants in the town in the 1500s led to finer shops and houses being built. The complexity of the site and internal features suggests there was a 16th century messuage here. A messuage was a house and yards usually with adjoining tenements and many of the town centre sites have been found to have originated as these large properties. It is suspected that the messuage may have run further north (44) and possibly westwards (830). The tenants had access through a yard to a well that was described for many years (even centuries) as 'at the house of Thomas Russell'. Shared wells often indicate ancient large plots.



Plot 890 in 1910.

Roger Crouch, with his knowledge of historic buildings, has kindly offered the following suggestions of what the jettied building may have looked like in the 16th century, with photos of salient features.



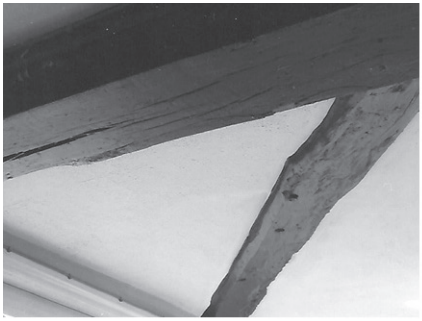
Original roof timber with two sets of butt purlins between main rafters, with also two arched collars between the main rafters.

South side and possible elevation.

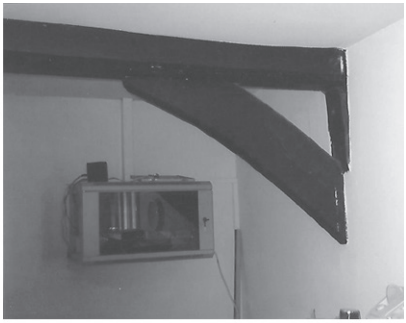
East side and possible elevation. The old door is still visible today.

There was probably a through passage east to west (or vice versa) depending on which side of the building we consider to be the front. It may have faced the original larger medieval Market Place on the west side, later using Red Lion Street as the main entrance and now fronting the south.

Despite the passage, this was not a hall house; the first floor and even the roof space are probably original and intended to be used.



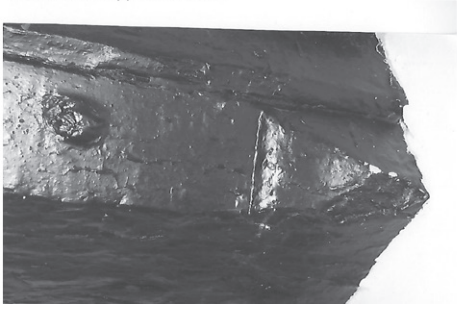
Dragon beam(s), these are horizontal, diagonal beams in a roof that run into the angle of the wall plate, and indicate a jettied building. This building had jetties on S, E and W elevations.



Arch braces between main posts and joists in first floor rooms.

Jetty on west elevation showing joists and end of dragon beam.

Jowled main posts supporting girts and joists.



Lamb's tongue stop champfers on beams.

It does not look like there were any service rooms and the northern end could possibly have been a parlour as there is a large fireplace with chimney stack and next to the chimney stack a staircase to the first floor and possible chamber rooms. In his drawings Roger has shown mullioned windows which probably would not have been glazed but may have had internal sliding shutters. If this is a 16th century building as indicated by construction evidence, the chimney stack could be a slightly later insertion. Roger adds a note of caution as a comprehensive recording has not been carried out and some features are not visible at present.

Who built the fine house and shop is still to be revealed – if possible – but the early court books are difficult and more work is needed.

17th century

We do know that the property was held by the Russell family by 1626. Thomas Russell appears to have owned two parts of a large messuage site with the corner site described as being 'part of a messuage with a small yard, enclosed by a wall, and a stable'. The Kings Highway was on the east and south sides. Thomas Hallifax was the neighbour on the west and the rest of Thomas Russell's house, called the Gatehouse, was to the north. Russell's well was to be shared by the new site with access through Russell's yard from 6am to 6pm to fetch water. Repairs to the well were to be divided equally.

Russell sold the corner property to Robert Voute for £60, payable at the south porch of the church. Robert's son, Robert Voute jnr, inherited the premises in 1643. He was the innkeeper who later ran The Bull, on the other side of Red Lion Street. In order to take possession of his legacy Robert was supposed to have paid his younger brother Nicholas £25 as his inheritance. Not only did he not pay up but he sold the place to Thomas Some in 1650. In 1653, for the manorial court, Nicholas technically became the owner when he was 21 so he could hand it on formally to Some. Thomas Some, a shoemaker of Marsham, and his wife Rose sold it to Edmund Baron in 1661 and in 1671 John Some of Aylsham became the new owner. John was a barber and ran The Dog Inn which he also owned. On his death in 1673 his widow Frances sold the corner site to a locksmith called John Reeve and his wife Abigail. They kept it for 30 years.

18th century

Stephen and Frances Ward were the next owners but they appear to have held it only for a year, 1705–1706, before selling on to William and Anne Hart. The Harts passed the property down from William senior to William junior and then to Michael Hart, a weaver. It was still described as having a yard and

stable and the Kings Highway to the east and south. The Gatehouse property 'of Thomas Russell' was still given as the abuttal to the north, despite the passing of nearly a century.

From now on the main shop would for many generations have had the distinctive smell of leather as gloves and leather goods were sold here in the 18th century and saddlery in the 19th. The next owner, James Fish, was a glover and fellmonger; he had land near the river for the noisome working with the skins and would have sold his products in 15 Red Lion Street. In the poor rates of 1741 his stock in trade was valued at £80. He died in 1762 and left the premises 'as were formerly Harts' to his widow Elizabeth. She lived on at the site until her death at 85 in 1789. Their son John Fish never used the shop himself and he was a shopkeeper in Itteringham (at the village grocer's shop, which started in 1637 and is still going). John had learnt his trade from James Drake, the major Aylsham grocer and draper and both Drake and Fish supplied Wolterton Hall. John remained in Itteringham until at least 1790. He died in Aylsham in 1808 but was buried in Itteringham in a fine chest tomb.

19th century

William and Elizabeth Dotheredge had jointly owned the site since May 1809 when Richard Fish and his wife Sarah had surrendered it at the manor court. Richard Fish was a gent of Blickling and only son of John Fish from whom he inherited the site in 1789.

Dotheredge was a collar maker and the site is described as two tenements (presumably the shop and cottage), stable, brewhouse and other outbuildings. The tenants then were Elizabeth Fish and James Durrant.

At the time of the tithe map, 1839, the site (190) comprised two main buildings, the larger shop on the corner and the building running along the loke behind the infill. These were then being used as two shops with houses, a cottage, yard, stables and other outbuildings. Over the years the number of tenants ranged from four to two reflecting the varied uses of this multiple site. In 1839 Elizabeth Dotheredge, then widowed, had been living in one of the smaller houses. Ann Rogers was in the cottage. Elizabeth also owned other properties to the north in Red Lion Street.

During Elizabeth's ownership the tenants had variously been William Dotheredge, Elizabeth Fish and William Culley. On her death in 1843, the property was sold to Benjamin Lemon, a master saddler originally from Cawston. He bought the site in April, for £295, at which time there were four tenants: Benjamin himself, John Davy, William Firmage and John Forster Smith. (For a few years Davy had run a beerhouse with lodgers in the little premises where the east end of the Town Hall now stands but by 1843 was a

carrier running his cart from the yard of 15 Red Lion Street.) The tithe map shows Smith occupying the other shop.

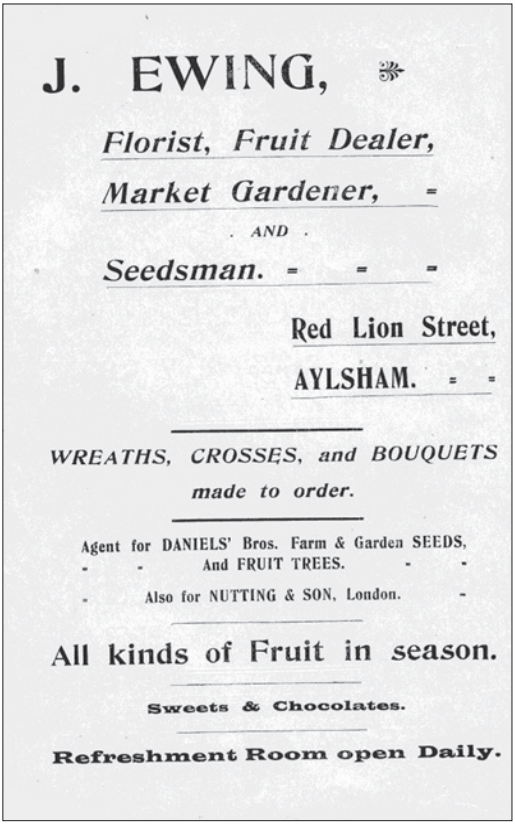
Plot 190 includes 15 and 13 Red Lion Street.

William Lemon, an Aylsham farmer, inherited the property from his father Benjamin in 1884 when he was already living there with another tenant called Manthorpe. At this time the outbuildings still were described as including a brewhouse. When William Lemon died in 1892 aged 59, his widow Maria Lemon, although now the owner, must have moved out as the next tenants were William Ducker and Samuel Maidstone. Maidstone was for decades the parish clerk, town hall keeper and town crier and his address was given as 'Back of Town Hall'. William Ducker was a saddler of 'Red Lion St' presumably using the shop.

Maria, who was William's second wife, had the property for life and she lived on until late 1908 aged 67. Their son William Plane Lemon inherited it but passed it to his sister Mary who had just married George Durrell. Mary died in 1916 but had left the property to her husband George Durrell for life only. The Durrells never lived there having usually two tenants at the site. John Ewing had occupied the shop while it seems Rachel Grapes had the cottage. Rachel was the widow of William Grapes with whom she had previously run a boarding house in White Hart Street. When George Durrell died in 1918 one of the tenants was able to purchase the shop and cottage from the trustees of Mary Charlotte Durrell in May 1919.

20th century: The Ewing Family in Aylsham

John Ewing was born in Blickling in 1865 to John and Amy, the seventh of thirteen children. His father, born in 1829, was a tenant on Hall Farm. Young John went to the school at Blickling, left at eleven and got a job in the kitchen garden of Blickling Hall when he was thirteen. He is listed in the Aylsham trade directories for 1900 as a fruiterer in the Red Lion Street shop.



Advertisement in Aylsham Almanack 1920.

John had married Blanche Amies from Cawston in 1898 and they may well have moved then. They had two children, Ellen Miriam, born in 1900 and later known as Ella, and Charles in 1906. The 1901 census indicates that May Amies, a sister-in-law, then 19, worked with them as an assistant in the shop and Jimmy Bond, a draper's assistant, was a lodger.

John obtained a market garden east of Oakfield Road from William Starling, running from Sir Williams Lane to Burgh Road behind Oakfield Road and west of what later became the Recreation Ground. William Frederick Starling, in his *Memories of Aylsham*, mentions in his account of the East Norfolk Railway that his father had "four fields, which Mr. John Ewing now has for his market garden". It is probable that John would have rented these until he had the capital to buy them.

Ewing shop 1920s with Ella and Blanche at the door.

The 1920 notice in the Aylsham Almanack has John listed as a florist, fruit dealer, market gardener and seedsman, with the shop advertising wreaths, crosses and bouquets made to order, an agent for seed dealers and all kinds of fruit in season, as well as sweets and chocolates. There was a Refreshment Room entered from a door facing Red Lion Street on the east side of the building (the passage of the early building) with a long table clients sat around for light refreshments during opening hours. The hall was behind, continuing into the kitchen, approached from a door that still exists near the back of the modern shop. A staircase ran up from the hall to the upper floor where the family had a living room and a couple of bedrooms. The hall also had an entrance to a large cellar well-suited to storing fresh fruit and vegetables. In Aylsham Computers now the hall staircase is visible in the corner, the doorway from the hall to the old kitchen is still used, but the doorway from the shop to the kitchen further forward is blocked up. In later times the cottage next door on the west side was just used for storage. There was a shed where people could leave their bicycles for a penny when they caught a bus into Norwich. There were other sheds for the pony and trap and a laundry room, as well as an outside toilet.

John continued his entry in the trade directories until 1937 and by 1936 was on the Aylsham Parish Council. He was a staunch supporter of the Wesleyan Reform Church and preached with verve at the Tabernacle and on the circuit around the nearby villages. Family life, continuing down into the next generation, was conducted with due strictures, particularly observance of

Sunday as a day of rest. Ella married John Blackstone, usually known as Jack, in 1926 and they took over running the shop. They employed Billy Rye to walk around town with a handcart selling fruit and vegetables, continuing in the Market Place until 9.00pm on Saturdays.

John, Ella and Blanche Ewing.

Charles went to Aylsham School and Burlingham Horticultural College before joining the family firm. He met Grace Winifred Payne, born in 1904, the youngest daughter of a Foulsham farmer. She was a secretary to the Market Place solicitors Purdy & Holley, staying the week with her Aunt May in Oakfield Road – with a tennis court – the rest as they say is history. They married in 1932 and built for John and the family a new house at No 1 Oakfield

Road that enjoyed the latest facilities of the time, Ella and family coming round for hot baths on Friday evenings. His mother Blanche died in 1933 at the age of 67 and was buried in the Norwich Road Cemetery, as was John who died in 1944. They share an ornate monument. Charles and Grace had two sons, Colin, born in 1936, and Martin, born in 1944, just three days before his grandfather died.

Aerial view of No 1, Oakfield Road, with the fields and greenhouses behind in the late 1960s, courtesy Colin Ewing.

Charles was soon elected to the Aylsham Parish Council in July 1944 in place of his father. He served for ten years, with responsibility mainly for allotments, public rights of way and planting in public places. His main attention was, however, to the Recreation Ground to the east of the market garden, on land donated in 1920 by the Goulder family in memory of their three sons killed in the First World War. It was run by 14 elected managers under the chairmanship of Ray Bond, the bank manager. Charles was the chosen link with the part-time groundsman. It became the home of the Town's football and cricket teams, but was quiescent during the Second World War. In 1946 the committee planned a gymkhana to raise money for the children's play area. Ray Bond, Wilfred Nobbs and Charles persuaded Rex Carter, a

well-known horseman at Mannington Hall, to be show director. It rained all day on the fateful Whit Monday, June 10th 1946, but it was a huge financial success. It became an annual event on the August Bank Holiday and attracted 4,000 people in 1949. In 1952 the Aylsham Agricultural Show Association was formed as a separate charity, with Rex Carter as President. In 1955 it moved to the Blickling Estate where it continues today. Charles continued his involvement with the Rec for most of his life and enjoyed playing bowls there.

Charles, Colin and John Ewing at Oakfield Road with greenhouse chimney in background.

The family built up a considerable estate of 72 acres, the principal part with extensive greenhouses, at one time employing 13 men and two women full time and benefitting from other members of their families at peak periods. In addition to the main Oakfield Road site John had rented 40 acres from Dr Shepheard at Abbot's Hall that Charles bought when Dr Shepheard died, 40 acres along the Banningham Road, either side of the bypass, the field at the beginning of Banningham Road now with modern cottages, four acres off the Cawston Road now commemorated as Charles Ewing Close, and a small plot in Hungate Street that John used for growing asparagus. Later Charles bought from Mr Bowman of Manor House the field between Aegel House and that used for car boot sales. In addition to the Red Lion Street shop Charles made deliveries three times a week to other greengrocers in the area. The mixed farming included a rotation of root crops and some livestock with the wide range of fruits and vegetables.

Ella died in 1968 after quite a long period of ill health and Charles took over the management of the shop, where Grace worked with Pearl Spink, who still lives in Aylsham. Grace closed the refreshment room and from 1979 Pearl ran the shop as a tenant until it was sold in 1986. She then opened a shop further south on Red Lion Street, now Lavenders Blue.

Martin helped on the farm and when he wanted to get married in 1968 Charles and Grace built a new house for themselves in Sir Williams Lane. By the 1970s North Sea gas was being piped into the country and coal was becoming prohibitively expensive to heat the greenhouses. European imports and Dutch subsidy of heating fuel for their horticultural industry were further factors to reassess the business. The field site was sold to Brian Springall, who built Sir Williams Close, and when Charles died in 1979 the estate was divided between the two sons. Martin had kept the house that was sold in 1975 when he moved to Ireland, but Colin still keeps the land he inherited. Grace was older than Charles, born in 1904, and lived on until she was 92 in 1996.

Colin had been educated at Norwich School and Wye College. After a short spell at home, when he modernised some practices on the farm, he got a footing in the production team of the fledgling Anglia Television in 1959. He was married to Polly in 1964 and they moved to the Old Rectory at Skeyton in 1965. He went on to become Director of Programmes in a flourishing business with a staff of 600. Soon after he retired in 1995 the company was progressively subsumed into larger media companies and now has just 30 people to do local news programmes.

The Red Lion Street property was bought by Pioneer Mutual Estates, formerly of 32 Red Lion Street, in 1986. 13 and 13B Red Lion Street, now Bread Source and Alleycuts, were sold off in 1987. Ortona Ltd bought No 15 and Galaxy Travel was in occcupation of the ground floor from at least 1992 to 2009. At some point towards the end of this period Galaxy Travel sublet to Harvey World Travel, which fell into administration in June 2009, the ground floor briefly vacant. Since February 2010 the space has been let to Aylsham Computers.

The first floor was let to insurance brokers in the early part of the century and then to Keys Estate Agents from March 2010 to March 2013. Thereafter Aylsham Computers took the lease of the whole property.

We are most grateful to Michael Crafer for giving Roger Crouch access to explore this wonderful old building and welcoming this article. We also greatly appreciate the contribution of Colin Ewing and his daughter Sarah Rye for their family story and to Darran Burch, a Director of Ortona Ltd, for the information on Galaxy Travel.

Geoff Gale†

Geoffrey Gale was born on the 18th November 1929 in Catford, south east London. He was the only child of Albert Edward and Nelly Gale. His father was a civil servant with the Inland Revenue and the family lived with Nelly's widowed mother Louisa Stacey.

During the 1939–45 war, Geoff was initially evacuated to just outside Plymouth. He remembered sitting on the hillside with other villagers watching Plymouth burn during the bombing raids. Luckily for Geoff, the London office of the Inland Revenue was transferred to Llandudno in Wales. Nellie and Albert moved there with her mother and Geoff joined them from Devon.

Geoff was educated at a local school in Catford until he moved to Wales, where he attended a school in Llandudno until the famly returned to Catford at the end of the war. In 1946 he was accepted as a student at Camberwell School of Art, and at the end of his course, he was called up for National Service and spent the next two years in the army. During his National Service he served in Malaya, where he developed a lifelong interest in Asian food. Geoff told his children that when on duty he drew maps for the troops, as well as designing lamps for his own interest.

After National Service he studied Industrial Design at the Central School of Art in Holborn, London. This was at odds with the lives and wishes of his parents, so he forged his own way even at an early age. He had little money, so taught himself to sew and made his own shirts. At 22, while still a student, he won a Royal Society of Arts bursary, using it to study in Denmark.

With the completion of his studies and after gaining the National Diploma in Design he was employed as a designer with Phillips. In this capacity, he designed radio and television for the company.

On the 27th November 1954, Geoff married Elizabeth (Liz) Hardie and moved into a flat in Blackheath, south London. Liz had trained as a textile designer at the Kingston School of Art, and after some years as a freelance designer, she also taught at the Central School of Art and Crafts, Willesden School of Art and the South East Essex Technical College & School of Art.

Geoff combined working for Phillips with lecturing at the Central School of Art & Design. He later resigned from Phillips, continuing as a part-time lecturer in Photography at the Central School of Art and Design. In addition to this employment Geoff worked as a freelance photographer taking photographs of the actors and actresses of the Royal Shakespeare Company. He also photographed the dancers of the Royal Ballet Company in the Covent Garden Theatre. This freelance work extended when he designed and produced the photographic titles for a number of BBC television programmes.

Geoff and Liz's daughter Jane was born in 1959, while the family lived in Blackheath. In 1962, they moved to Crouch End, where soon after their son Jon was born. During this time, Liz continued to teach at the London School of Furniture.

In 1964 Geoff was appointed a part-time lecturer of photography at Hornsey College of Art. This college eventually became part of Middlesex Polytechnic, later Middlesex University.

In 1968 Liz published her iconic book *From Fibres to Fabrics*. Geoff supported this project by taking the photographs and creating the line drawings and illustrations.

In 1971, the family moved 'up the hill' to Muswell Hill, by which time Geoff was a full time lecturer at Middlesex Polytechnic, in charge of the photographic section of the Graphic Design department, although he still carried out freelance photographic and design work, including the first box for the Kenwood Chef. Geoff was later appointed a Senior Lecturer and in 1989 he took early retirement.

Geoff had many interests, including books, theatre and films, which he continued to pursue until the end of his life. He had a great interest in cooking and in the late 70's attended Chinese Cooking classes for a number of years. He continued to cook and to experiment with new recipes until fairly recently, still teaching his children new ways to do things.

For a number of years Geoff had been interested in the graphics and seed packets produced by the Shakers, this interest spread into an interest in their buildings, furniture and other products. He carried out a great deal of research

in former years and with retirement was able to devote more time to this research. This work led to him being awarded a number of research fellowships, including from The Leverhulme Trust, as well as a number of grants, all of which enabled him to continue his research in America. He became the foremost authority in the UK on the Shakers and in 1997 was the consultant for the 'Shaker: the Art of Craftmanship' Exhibition at the Barbican Centre in London.

Adding to this, he gave lectures on Shaker design and products and wrote many articles, which were published in the UK and USA.

In 1977, following the death of his mother, Geoff bought a small cottage in Booton, Norfolk. For fifteen years, until it was sold, this cottage was the holiday home of the Gale family. By this time, their children had left home and they had become grandparents to Stuart. In 1989, Liz and Geoff sold their house in Muswell Hill, London and moved to Mash's Row in Aylsham.

They joined the Society in 1991 and by the next year Geoff was co-opted on to the Committee with the role of Publicity Officer. They were both happily involved with the Society until the end of their lives.

Geoff's last paper for the Aylsham Local History Society Journal in 2015 was an account of his happy collaboration with Tom Mollard in producing books for the Society. Geoff's design skills and interests in format and typography skilfully complimented Tom's expertise with editing. They worked happily together for some thirteen years.

The first major project Geoff describes was on *A Backwards Glance*, the book resulting from the exhibition in the Town Hall on the tenth Anniversary of the Society in July 1994. At a time before computer graphics, Geoff did an amazing job putting the exhibition together and designing a truly elegant book. Apart from the technical contribution, Geoff took on the management of book sales and established a new Publication Subcommittee that set aside profits for future projects.

We list below over twenty publications of the Society that Geoff wrote or edited and give some idea of the breadth of his interests. The tracings he did of James Wright's 1839 map of Aylsham, used for the national tithe assessment, printed in 1995, has been used for all our research work on properties, the starting point for ownership and occupation taken backwards in the manor court records and forward in the census returns.

Not surprisingly the first paper he contributed to the Journal in 1997 was on Norfolk England and Norfolk America. He must have had one of the best collections of books on the Shakers outside the Museum of Bath.

On Society outings his eye was often caught by some object or machine that was exceptional, mostly unnoticed by others, but warranted a fascinating little

lecture at a later meeting, such as the elegant new Ballington Bridge he wanted to see when we visited Sudbury in May 2007 or the Jacquard loom, of special interest to Liz, we saw in the Warner Textile Archive in Braintree in July 2008. When he was Chairman of the Society he organised series of short talks by members, his contribution in May 2005 being an exposition of a simple but ingenious Shaker press used to print labels of seed packets in the mid-19th century mentioned above. His own practical skills were amazing. He made the most exquisite tiny boxes, immaculate in their elegance, perfect in every detail. He liked to think how things could be made better – and had no uncertain views about NHS furniture in old age.

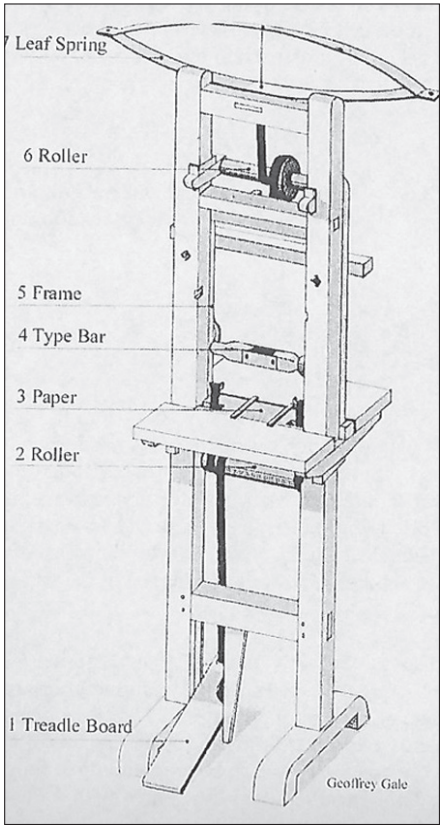
He had a deep interest in social movements and empathy for working classes, reflected in his articles on Mrs Girling, a C18 English Shaker, *Aylsham at Prayer*, and *Pest Houses, Isolation Hospitals and Smallpox*. He was still taking an interest in the first resident of the Aylsham isolation hospital in the last months of his life.

In 1993 their house in Mash's Row was flooded to a depth of twenty-eight inches when the River Bure burst its banks. The way this flood was handled by the various agencies and Town Council drove Liz and Geoff to stand for the Town Council in 1994. They both wanted to get something done. He became Vice Chairman in 2002, where he was a real supporter of the staff and very aware of all the work that went on in the office. He had the ability to calm things down at meetings. He retired from the Town Council in 2006.

As a friend of Tom Mollard he was wary of the Aylsham Community Partnership that established the Heritage Centre, but he did introduce Comma (Community Multi-Media Archive) program to the Aylsham Town Archive in the early 2000s.

Geoff was elected to the Broadland District Council in 1995 as a Labour representative for Aylsham, changed to Independent in 2003 near the end of his tenure. He served on a whole range of committees relating to planning, the Upper Bure Internal Drainage Board, Norfolk Arts Forum, Leisure and Amenities, Aylsham Swimming Pool and the Community Services Committee.

His papers on the Aylsham Market Town Initiative and the archaeological investigations in 2003 stem from his public service. He helped Liz publish her book on Aylsham inns and public houses in 2001, continued that work with research on the overlooked Fox Public House and was most generous and helpful to Maggie and William Vaughan-Lewis when they were preparing *A New History of Aylsham Public Houses* last year – and only missed the launch he was looking forward to by a few days. In gathering original materials for that project we realised his skill in choosing typefaces and devising print layout.



Shaker Herb Press drawn by Geoff Gale.

He was elected Vice Chairman of the Society in 1999 and Chairman from 2004 until 2009, the year Liz died aged 80. The photo above was taken when he was Vice Chairman in 2005 at the Society's annual social event in the Black Boys. He gave a great deal of support to the editor, Tom Mollard, as indicated above, and to his predecessor, Peter Holman, who relied on him a lot in his last years. He was always there to encourage research projects, take part in Society socials, visits and publicity events. He was chairman of the Aylsham branch of WEA for ten years from 2005 and was very supportive of the lecture series and common aims of the two organisations. He was especially proud of masterminding the production of two substantial books in this later period. The second edition of Millgate, greatly expanded from the first edition of 1993, came out in 2006. He was particularly pleased to have negotiated its publication through Poppyland. The profits helped to fund the next achievement, the

Aylsham Directories that needed his flair to organise the team that typed up the 370 pages of printed text, from which he designed a very attractive and much valued research aid.

After passing on the chairmanship he continued to take a keen interest in the Society, came to meetings regularly until the end of his life, contributed to the Journal and did a great deal of cataloguing in the Aylsham Town Archives until he could no longer manage the stairs. Geoff died on 4th November 2018 after a very short illness, two weeks before his 89th birthday. We are very grateful to Geoff for what he gave us. He was always companionable and supportive. We miss him greatly.

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BOOK REVIEW

William and Maggie Vaughan-Lewis's study of Aylsham's public houses, published November 2018, is reviewed by Margaret Bird:

A New History of Aylsham Public Houses (Aylsham Local History Society, 2018), price £15.00.
ISBN 978-0-9573488-0-6, A4 format paperback, printed by Barnwell Print, Aylsham, vi pages and 229 pages, colour and b/w illustrations, two appendices, glossary, bibliography and index

By the time members read this many of you will already have your own copy of the latest work by William and Maggie Vaughan-Lewis. You will not need me to recommend it: you will have pored over it, admired the well-chosen illustrations, and be in awe of what they have achieved. For those of you who have not yet bought the book let me give you a taste of the riches to come.

This study, with its wealth of detail, is rooted firmly in documentary research—archival and online. It offers fresh evidence not only in identifying the location of 33 public houses in the town, with brief biographies of the publicans and their families, but in pinning down the dates of crucial developments. These include marking the stages of increasing state control through regulation by statute, the swings between successive loosening and tightening of the JPs' grip through the mechanism of the licensing system, and the haemorrhaging of licensed outlets in modern times.

Aylsham now has only three public houses: the Black Boys and the Unicorn, close together in the town centre, and the Feathers on the southwestern outskirts. In earlier periods there were anything from ten to seventeen in operation at any one time. This book charts their ebb and flow with rarely matched precision. It is a boon to historians of brewing, breweries, the retail trade and working-class leisure pursuits. The Black Boys, with its assemblies and its key role in servicing turnpike traffic, stands as the supreme example of an inn attracting gentry customers and hosting much judicial and administrative business. It is granted 23 closely-written pages.

William as author and Maggie as editor will be the first to emphasise it was a team effort. Updating the 2001 study by Elizabeth Gale led to the formation of a working party under Maggie herself and Roger Polhill. Six others joined the team: Jim Pannell, Sue Sharpe, Caroline Driscoll, Geoff Sadler, Lynda Wix and Pamela Worth. Geoff helped William with photographing the sites as they look today; others carried out research and interviewed local residents, some

of whom had grown up in the pubs or had worked there.

It is evident that Elizabeth Gale's presence was felt as they worked. It had been her intention, before her untimely death, to keep revising and updating her original book, now long out of print; in this she was greatly aided by her husband Geoff. They contributed further articles on the subject in the society's Journal, in August 2003 and April 2004. Maggie Vaughan-Lewis kept in close contact with Geoff as the new work progressed, and his embracing of the revised study is enshrined in its Foreword:

'I am grateful to the Society for updating and revising Elizabeth's work and undertaking new research which has answered many of the questions she raised and which had puzzled her. I think she would have been very pleased to read the new findings and delighted that her book had spurred on others to increase our knowlege of Aylsham's historic past.'

Geoff Gale wrote those words in July 2018. He died at his home in Aylsham on 4 November, two weeks before the book launch which he had been looking forward to attending. He was 88.

Why should those who are already familiar with Elizabeth's study buy this reworking? Firstly, they will learn so much more. At a kilo the new book weighs three times as much as the earlier one: it is literally and figuratively a weighty tome. Secondly, as the structure remains largely the same (except that in the new work the general study of brewing history and local breweries goes at the start and not at the end) the reader can immediately appreciate what a greatly expanded publication it is. A glance at the contents pages shows 20 pubs listed by Elizabeth Gale in *Aylsham Inns and Public Houses: a history.* The Vaughan-Lewises have 33. They retain the helpful listing of publican and owner at the start of each entry, while amending and adding to the earlier lists. The illustrations were excellent in the 2001 work, but were used sparingly. Now, thanks to modern publishing and printing methods, we have a wealth of archive and modern photographs, many in colour, together with maps, sale notices and plans. The local printers, Barnwells, have done a superb job.

The greatest expansion has been in the range of sources consulted. William and Maggie have unrivalled command of the manor court books relating to Aylsham, held in the Norfolk Record Office. Maggie's role as former Surrey County Archivist means she can rise above poor legibility, Latin contractions and all the pitfalls facing the rest of us as we struggle with the crabbed hands, faded ink and yellowing parchment of the past. The parish poor-rate books, online British newspaper archive and family history websites have proved

fruitful resources too. I could have wished on many occasions that the authors would pinpoint their sources when some snippet is presented to the reader: I was left guessing as to where they had discovered some of their information. There are no footnotes or endnotes, which in an otherwise scholarly work such as this does throw the reader.

The authors are conscious that their terrier-like approach tends to produce dense prose that can present a bit of a challenge. As editor Maggie has hit on the elegant solution of lifting much of the more detailed histories of each change of publican and stages in conveyancing into what are termed Supplementary Notes. The determined reader, anxious to find out more about a certain property, can linger over this additional material at the end of each entry; others can move swiftly on. Side-headings in the longer entries help readers to cope, but across the whole work the narrative for each individual pub is given chronological treatment and is easy to follow.

In many ways this is not so much a history, or analysis, as a data-rich amassing of primary source material which others can draw on for their own projects. As always in my encounters with the authors' books this is the position in which I find myself. I was particularly interested in the Carpenters' Arms, which they have located far along the Cromer Road. Unbelievably there is only one source pointing to the existence of this pub: the will of the Coltishall brewer Clement Ives, who died in 1727. He had only recently added it to his portfolio of tied houses when making his will in 1726. Given the extreme paucity of the evidence most researchers would have had little to contribute on this elusive outlet. Not so our terriers. We are treated to two A4 pages, complete with photographs and maps. They give us owners and dates, and a summary of its conveyancing as minuted in the manor court book—where only once, when confirming the terms of Ives's will, is it named.

Another pub which has no mention in the earlier study is the George, once plying its trade where the very handsome property, Bayfield House, dominates the north end of Red Lion Street at the turning into White Hart Street. Its grand facade was built more than a century after the George had ceased trading in the mid-17th century; the impressive Georgian frontage hides much older licensed premises. By studying the book we gain an understanding of our past and an insight into the long-distant commercial life of the town. Until now the minutiae of its licensed trade had lain largely beyond our reach. William and Maggie Vaughan-Lewis unlock these doors for us in spectacular fashion.

The drinks trade helped shape the look of Aylsham. Almost in passing we read, in the entry on the Angel, the startling assertion that in the 1622 survey there were 'only five houses of 10 bays in the whole town, three of them being

inns'. One was the Angel itself, stretching along Red Lion Street; a second was the inn nearby which has borne five names: Howards, the Griffin, the Goat, the King's Head and lastly the New Inn. Red Lion Street, now a narrow thoroughfare, was once the eastern edge of a spacious market place. Aylsham, like other towns including Fakenham, Holt and North Walsham, has suffered over the centuries from encroachments on its town square by way of infill. This explains why a long line of pubs is ranged along one side only of the street: the western side was a very much later development. As is now a trademark of the Vaughan-Lewis partnership they clear up a good number of misconceptions, or what might be termed urban myths, which have been perpetuated in publications over the years. There never was a second Angel in the area of the junction of the Burgh and Norwich roads.

As well as histories of individual premises there are recurring themes. One is the sheer resilience of those trying to make a living from what was often an unprofitable trade. Premature death, bankruptcy, harsh times: these stalk the pages. Oral-history testimony gives immediacy and vitality to these accounts. Another theme is the contribution of working wives and daughters. They often ensured the public house stayed viable while the theoretical licensee (under statute law this was always the husband) toiled away at an unrelated trade such as that of butcher or baker. An outstanding example is Elizabeth, née Robinson, the twice-widowed innkeeper of the King's Head/New Inn, married to William Copeman and then to William Strain. On her first husband's death in 1787 she ran the large house alone for four years until remarrying. Following her second William's death in 1796 she continued in harness until 1820, serving an unbroken forty-year stint at the one house. The following year it became tied to a wholesaler for the first time: the Letheringsett brewer William Hardy junior, son of the diarist Mary Hardy.

This brings us to another theme: the grip of the common brewer, the wholesaler. Aylsham was not a brewing town, although the Vaughan-Lewises have charted the fortunes of one such family, the Rannells, in the first half of the eighteenth century. Increasingly predatory brewers hailed from elsewhere: Norwich, Coltishall, Reepham, Letheringsett, Trunch and Weybourne. We watch as houses which had for centuries brewed their own beer fall under the brewer's yoke. The Black Boys held out for a long time, as was often the case with a town's leading inn. It did not become a tied house until as late as 1874.

A fourth current is the effect of the loosening of magisterial control under the Beerhouse Act of 1830 (sometimes called the Beer Act). This produced a sudden influx of retailers of alcohol who on payment of a modest two-guinea annual fee to the Excise (not JPs) could set up in trade. In 1800 Aylsham had eleven active outlets. By the mid-1830s there were fifteen, rising to seventeen

a decade later. The magistrates and constabulary grew alarmed, resulting in reimposition of control. Even so, South Erpingham, in which Aylsham lay, had a wealth of licensed premises in the early twentieth century: a ratio, we are told, of one pub for every 186 persons in 1904 (children included), followed by a rise in pub numbers to one for every 155 persons just a year later.

Occasionally there is light relief: tales of drink-fuelled brawls, of miscreants hauled before the magistrates. My favourite anecdote concerns the Anchor Inn, by the bridge at the foot of Millgate. A tame jackdaw lived in the row of cottages opposite the pub in the 1920s. Accustomed to voices in the busy thoroughfare it became a good mimic. Waggoners driving to and from the watermill would pull into the cart shed beside the pub when stopping by for a drink. If short of time, the horse and cart would be left in front of the cottages: 'The story goes that one day the bird flew onto a waggon, screeched "Giddy up there" and drove off down the road!'

I was lucky enough to have been involved on the periphery when Elizabeth was preparing her book; we exchanged a few letters and had some phone conversations. I recall her clearly: her polite, graceful manner, her care over use of material and sources, her awareness that she did not yet have the full story behind them. And as they compiled this magnificent work I was lucky too to have been in touch with William and Maggie, again from a distance and in relation to a few limited areas—this time via e-mail. Once more I was conscious of their immense attention to detail, their determination to hunt down every unanswered question and where possible attempt to present a solution. Where answers cannot be certain they confine themselves to saying 'perhaps', or 'presumably', or use some other signal to alert the reader.

A work such as this requires a good index, and Diana Polhill has undertaken this vital task. In the few days I have devoted to reading the book I have frequently turned to the index to help me locate the specific reference I was seeking, and each time it has shown me the way. Thank you, Diana.

Friends of William and Maggie Vaughan-Lewis will have felt for them as they researched and prepared this great work while William endured long periods of ill-health. To bring a study of this magnitude and standard before the public when in the peak of condition would be a colossal achievement. To do so when beset by debilitating illness is dedication beyond the capacity of most mortals. As fellow members we salute you both. As readers we benefit from your expertise which has spared us much time-consuming delving in the archives. As friends we send you our fond good wishes.

Cold War in East Anglia — Jim Wilson

[This report, compiled by Sue Sharpe, relies heavily on quotes from Jim Wilson's book: *Cold War East Anglia* 2014.]

It is over a quarter of a century since the fall of the Berlin Wall, which led to the end of the Cold War. A whole generation has grown up without experiencing the dread and anxiety of Cold War. It is hard now to recapture the mood that prevailed during those nervous years. In East Anglia, the tensions were highest, under the threat of nuclear annihilation, mutually assured destruction, the iconic four-minute warning, and a reliance on the protective power of a credible 'deterrence'. The government worked hard to keep morale up by inferring that nuclear war could be survivable. But deep in Whitehall, civil servants of the JIGSAW group (Joint Inter-Services group for the Study of All-Out War) were discussing the point at which a nation state would pass beyond any hope of revival and reach the stage of total breakdown.

From January 1962, on operational V-bomber bases across the region, one aircraft per squadron was sitting on the runway around the clock, armed with a nuclear weapon, its crew ready to take off in fifteen minutes or less. The destructive power aboard each bomber was equal to all the bombs dropped on Nazi Germany in the whole of the Second World War. 'Hardly anyone died in the Cold War, but we lived on a daily basis with the risk that everyone might…' (Sir Kevin Tebbit, Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Defence).

East Anglia was home, during the Cold War years, to a massive British and American nuclear force. It hosted the launch pads for the first operational nuclear ballistic missiles deployed in the West; the UK's first generation of nuclear bombs were stored under armed guard and in considerable secrecy on the Norfolk/ Suffolk border. It made us the bullseye for any Russian attack.

What would have happened to the civilian population, and the contingency plans to determine how those who survived could have been governed, is an important part of the East Anglia story. The British Medical Council estimated that 33 million people would be killed in a Soviet nuclear attack.

One hundred and ten small subterranean bunkers, scattered across East Anglia and staffed by volunteers from the Royal Observer Corps, would be feeding data to the UK Monitoring and Warning Organisation and would have triggered public warnings of where the mushroom clouds erupted. Their job would have been to record the power of the explosions and track the path of radioactive fallout across East Anglia to prepare any who survived to face the horrors of the 'nuclear winter' that would follow. They are the unsung heroes of the time, prepared to do their duty however dire the situation.

The Royal Observer Corps post in Aylsham, between Stonegate Farm and Spa Farm north of Spa Lane, in use between March 1961 and September 1991. Photo: Evelyn Simak, 2014.

Throughout, UK governments agonised over the central question that had particular relevance in East Anglia – what measure of influence or control could the UK government exercise over an American president determined to use American military bases in the UK from which to launch a nuclear attack? Did The UK have a veto on American action launched from British territory? The agreements, such as they were, stem from December 1950, and talks between Clement Attlee and President Harry Truman. Three American B-29 bomber groups had moved to East Anglian bases at Marham, Lakenheath and Sculthorpe in June 1948. Truman said he would not launch a nuclear attack without consulting London, unless the US itself was under attack. But Truman refused to put this in writing declaring 'if a man's word wasn't any good, it wasn't made any better by writing it down'.

After Macmillan and President Eisenhower agreed to the deployment to the UK of American Thor IRBM nuclear tipped missiles in June 1957, East Anglia was the location of the first complex of launch bases. After Sputnik was launched on October 1957, the possibility of a 'bolt from the blue' pre-emptive missile strike became a greater threat. Macmillan pushed for clarity about the decision to launch. The agreement was set out in the Murphy-Dean Agreement of June 1958 which enshrined the understanding about 'circumstances of the time'.

One of the rooms in the derelict Royal Observer Corps post figured above. Photo: Mark Russell, 1998.

The lack of clarity within this document includes the process of 'joint decision' for firing the Thor rockets. Once unleashed they could not be brought back, and Thor was particularly vulnerable on its launch pad to a Soviet first strike.

How separate instructions from both the White House and Downing Street could have been flashed giving clear instructions to the US and UK personnel, on remote Thor launch pads in East Anglia in the inevitable chaos of an unexpected but dire threat, remained unclear and unspecified.

The Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962 put Thor missiles to their greatest test. The world was closer than it had ever been to nuclear war. RAF crews in East Anglia brought 59 of the 60 missiles to within fifteen minutes or less of the 'war/peace' keys being turned.

There is much more of relevance to us here in Jim's book *Cold War East Anglia.* He did manage to finish on a lighter note. Apparently there was thought given to how, in the event of a nuclear emergency, the Prime Minister could be contacted if he was on the road. Government cars were therefore to be fitted with AA radios so that the PM's could stop at the nearest telephone box. The driver should be equipped with four pennies. If for some reason they weren't available, permission was given to reverse the charges.

Angel Roofs – a talk by Sarah Cassell

St Agnes, Cawston, courtesy East Anglia churches.

Our November 2018 talk was given by Sarah Cassell, who is working toward a Ph.D. in the subject. She has researched Angel Roofs, particularly in East Anglia. Sarah told us about the first roof, in Westminster Hall. This was erected during the reign of Richard II, in the 1390s. She could not tell us whether Angel Roofs could be found elsewhere, perhaps in Europe, or whether they had sprung entirely from the imagination of the patron – the King, or the master craftsman who built it – Hugh Herland.

After this, angel roofs were built in several places in England, but by far the greatest density was in East Anglia. There are very few medieval ones in other parts of the country.

She showed us a dizzying array of roofs, to some of which she got up close and personal with, via scaffolding or ladders.

Near Aylsham angel roofs can be found in Banningham, Burgh, Cawston, Marsham, and Salle. A little further afield are Knapton and Trunch. Norwich has several, including Ss Peter Hungate and Mancroft.

Sarah concentrated on medieval roofs, from Westminster Hall in 1398 to the mid-16th century, and the Reformation. It is believed that some have been lost, and many have been restored/altered/added to over time.

The hammer roof of Westminster Hall. From *Intriguing History* online.

The range of roof types that support angel roofs are several. They include Hammer beam, double Hammer beam, false hammer beam, tie braced, arch braced, with and without king posts and queen posts. For the benefit of those, like me, whose reaction to this was "derr what?", I have included some definitions, and some diagrams, to help.

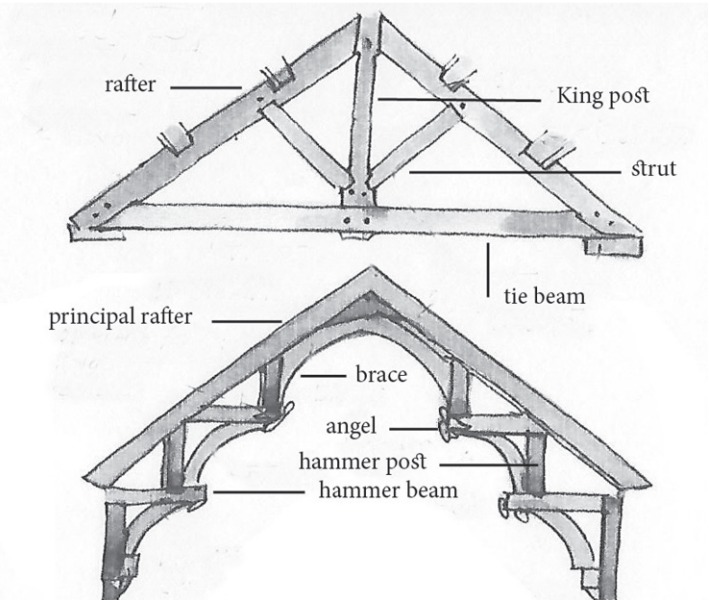
Not all angels are of the same scale and complexity. Some are in large, prestigious places, such as Cawston, where the de la Poles held sway whereas others are in small places like Banningham. In Cawston, the angels are six foot tall. Some photographs show the variations.

A book has been written about angel roofs by M. Rimmer. Mr. Rimmer suggests that the frequency in East Anglia may be as a result of the original master craftsman – Hugh Herland –moving to Great Yarmouth.

Sarah's view is that the initiative is more likely to be that the benefactors – de la Pole and others, who might have been trying to prove their religious orthodoxy to the Church, after the heretic trials in East Anglia.

One obvious question is – why do angel roofs remain in situ, and undamaged except by time, when other church "decorations" were removed, damaged, de-faced or painted over during the Reformation and the Puritan periods? Sarah's answer was obvious, too, once stated. Reaching the roof is not easy, and many people do not look up. In many ways, the Victorian's passion for restoration, as opposed to conservation, did more damage.

Sarah is obviously stuffed as full of knowledge as an egg is of meat, and managed to convey a little of her learning to the audience with verve and clarity.



Glossary

Hammer beam
A beam in Gothic architecture which projects from the wall, forming a support for the arches or tie beams of an ornamental roof.

King Post
A vertical post in the centre of a roof truss, extending from the tie beam to the apex of the roof truss.

Queen Post
Either of two upright timbers - normally symmetrically - between the tie beam and the principal timbers of the roof truss. Queen posts can span larger openings than a King post.

Ties and struts
A tie is a length of (mostly) wood, holding 2 other items (again, mostly wood) together. A strut is a length of wood holding 2 others apart.

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Daphne Davy