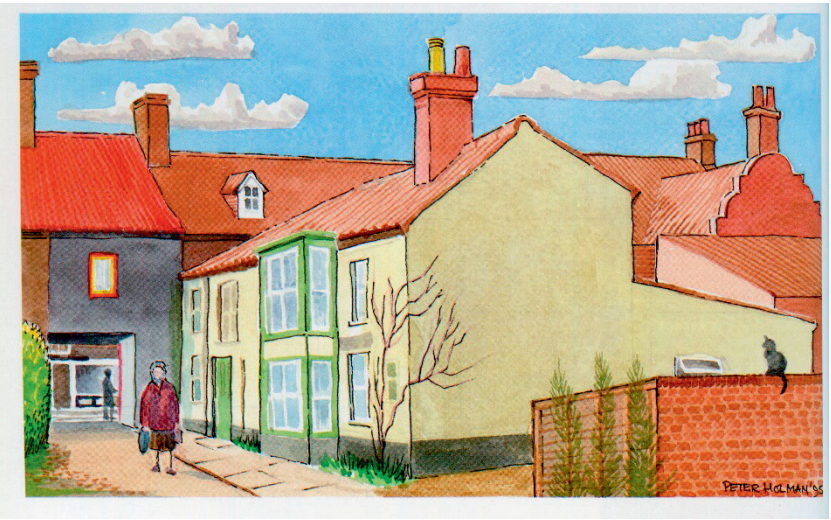
AYLSHAM LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY



Volume 12 No 10 **April 2024**

Cover:

Pegg's Yard from a painting in Aylsham Remembered by Peter Holman, Chairman or Vice Chairman of the Society for fourteen years and a key figure in setting up the Quaker Meeting House in the Yard.

AYLSHAM LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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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.

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Preamble

We are most grateful to Jeremy Worth for editing the first nine issues of this volume, taking over from me in 2020. We wish him and Pamela every happiness nearer their family in mid-Wales. We are delighted to welcome Gary Beahan as our new editor. He will of course very much welcome your contributions to future issues of the Journal.

After the AGM in October we were treated to an erudite and very informative talk by Vic Morgan, "Blickling Hall – How to 'read' a Great House". Phyllida Scrivens and Dr Richard Hoggett kindly provided notes for their talks reported by Hazel Jones in this issue. Our paid up membership has now reached 166 and we continue to have very good attendance in our new venue in the Town Hall. We appreciate the advantage of the large screen, better acoustics, bar space, and seating set up for us though some do miss the more intimate atmosphere and secluded parking of the Friendship Hall.

As we go to press the lecture series has Matt Champion with *Kett's Rebellion 1549: England's bloodiest year?* on 29 February and David Robertson from Archaeology East with *Seahenge and her sister* on 28 March. Plans for the summer include a trip to Peckover House on 20 May, a visit to Bury St Edmunds with a possible visit to the Grade 1 listed theatre in June, a Blue Plaque walk in Cromer in July and the Narborough pilgrimage in August.

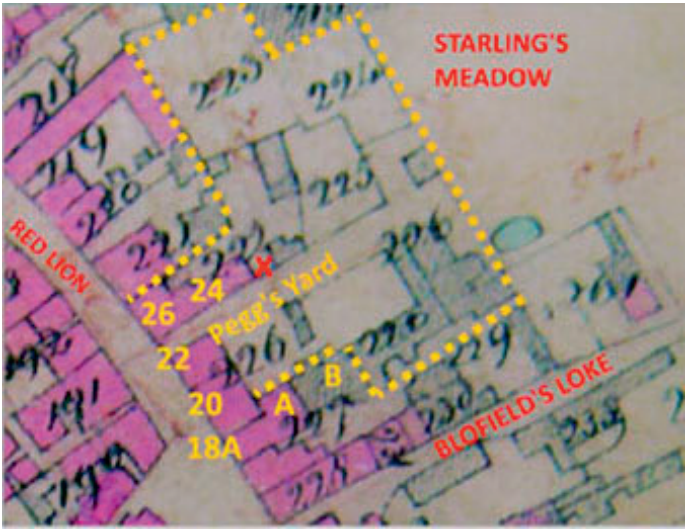
Pegg's Yard Red Lion Street: Part 2 James Wright walks around the Yard by Adi Raschkewitz

1- Passage to RLS, **2**- 26 RLS, **3**-24 RLS, **4**- Northern Cart House/"Bryan Bush's Barn", **5**- "The Threshing Barn", **6**- "The Warehouse"/Quakers, **7**- rear annexe 3 Pegg's Yard, **8**- 3 Pegg's Yard (ground floor front 20 RLS), **9**- "Larke's Wash House", **10**- 22 RLS. NB "The Bungalow" at 4 o'clock not shown.
Panoramic distorted view from east/rear end of yard today. Author photo.

In the last issue, my article 'An Introduction to Pegg's Yard', I attempted to provide an overview, inevitably with a high degree of uncertainty, of the history of Pegg's Yard before 1839 [1]. To recap, from at least the late 1400s until the middle of 1980s it was simply the yard space sandwiched behind the properties on RLS that were formerly the northern portion of Le Angell Inn (closed mid to late C18) and the 'Ollands' the ancient pasture land to the east (on either side of Oakfield Rd). [2, 3] I explained that it was always a yard where people worked, not resided (as far as I can tell) until the 1980s and that its history was therefore the history of the buildings, and their people, it sits behind. I say before 1839 because in that year James Wright surveyed and mapped the yard, listing who owned or rented which properties**,** giving us a snapshot of the time. In this article I will attempt to show some of what remains from what James Wright saw and recorded in 1839 and how it has changed.

Of course, all historical research of Aylsham starts with the detailed tithe map drawn by James Wright in 1839 and the very useful larger scale version he did for the town, known today as Wright's Survey. [4, 5]

The 1839 Tithe Map.



*Tithe map (photo Vaughan-Lewis with author's annotations). Passageway marked with red "*X*", see also blue arrow on next photo.*

Wright coloured residential buildings in pink, even if they also had, for example, shops downstairs. Outbuildings such as barns, stables and warehouses, he crossed-hatched in grey. My yellow additions are the relevant modern house numbers. Neither 'Starling's Meadow' nor 'Blofield's Loke' carried those names at the time the map was drawn. Blofield's Loke was probably known as 'Sands Loke' or 'Dirty Lane' (due to the open gulley down the middle that acted as a drain) and Starlings Meadow possibly as 'Clarke's', 'Diggens' or even perhaps still 'The Ollands'. Although I do not count The Old Tea Rooms (18A) as having been part of Pegg's Yard, they did abut the Yard until a later date and it seems logical, they, and their outbuilding, would have had access to the Yard and this I have signified with the yellow A & B. The yellow dotted lines demarcate what for the purposes of this article I am covering under the overall title Pegg's Yard or, to use the tithe map numbers, plots 222–226. The whole of plot 226 was at the time (1839) owned by non-resident James Diggens and sublet to two tenants.

The site from 1760

It would appear that after the Angel closed, the building was divided into at least two separate messuages, namely a southern one now comprising of The Old Tea Rooms and The Book Hive, and the more northerly one which now houses Maná Gallery and Bon Bon. It is this more northerly messuage that is of the most interest as from this period on we can discern the site that more than two centuries later would be christened "Pegg's Yard", bordered on the south by the yard of 18 RLS, to the north by the present day 26 and 24 RLS, to the east by the Ollands (now buried under the modern houses on the west side of Oakfield Rd) and to the west by Red Lion Street.

We do not know when that northern messuage was subdivided further into the current 20 and 22 RLS (Maná Gallery and Bon Bon) but certainly before the tithe map was drawn up and I think we can also infer from the trade directories that the division must have happened before 1820. When a shop was added to the front of 20 RLS is also unclear but again, we can be reasonably sure it was before 1820. However, the shop at 20 RLS had only half the frontage that it has now, but I'll come back to that when I explain why Maná Gallery is 20 RLS and its upstairs is 3 Pegg's Yard.

What would Wright have seen when in the Yard

When James Wright, a young and upcoming local surveyor, entered the yard he would have entered through the opening between the buildings on RLS, with Laxen's bakery (now 26, Dry Cleaners) on his left and the house of Mr Thomas Peachman, a coal merchant, (now Bon Bon) on his right. [6] When Wright surveyed the site, the downstairs of 22 RLS had not yet been converted into a shop – possibly occurring at the same time as the addition of the chamber over the passageway but more likely around 1880. As so often with RLS, and Pegg's Yard in particular, the sources can be simultaneously precise and infuriatingly vague. The chamber above the passageway, extending 22 RLS until it touches 26 RLS, first appears on a photo by Walter Juan Finch, which we can date with reasonable certainty to 1876.[7] Fortunately, on the other side of the opening, Laxen's bakery is much clearer with his shop, house and bakehouse running down behind the shop, forming the northern boundary of Pegg's Yard, the current south side of the Dry Cleaners and the present 24 RLS. Clearly visible on the tithe map is the space (blue arrow) between the building that today is 24 RLS and an outbuilding which seems to have been a stable with a hay loft above.

By the time of the 1886 OS map, which is the next map of the yard we have, this passageway between the house and the hay loft into 24 RLS yard had also been roofed over and acquired a chamber above. By the time of the 1906 OS map, the passageway had been 'filled in' creating a downstairs room(s) and giving 24 its present contiguous length. The chamber's support beam and changes in brickwork are still visible today.

24 Red Lion Street showing old filled-in passage. Author photo.

Northern carthouse or store

At the end of 24 RLS Wright noted a building used by Laxen – an over 9 metre tall, steep-roofed structure (late 18th century?) where, more recently, Bryan Bush, the late owner of 24, parked his car and hung his canoe from the beams – beams that have caused this researcher much head scratching. It has probably served at times as a vehicle store since before the tithe map and has also fulfilled various other purposes over the years. Harry Proudfoot recounted that first his father had his joinery workshop, and that after him the Plymouth Brethren their first Meeting Place *"behind Mr. Dale's shop"* and this building presents itself as the sole viable location. [8, 9] However, when it was built, for what purpose originally and by whom, are questions I wish to tackle in a later article about the Dales who owned the properties 24 and 26, for almost a century. There are reasons to suppose that the building may even be contemporary with the closure of The Angel.

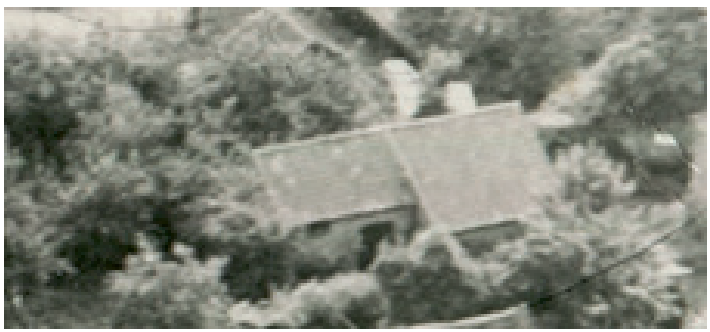
Showing Geoffrey Ducker between the Hayloft and Northern Carthouse circa 1980. Courtesy of M. Bush. Aylsham Town Archive.

On the eastern side of the boundary with the current 24 (where the red car is parked alongside the fence) Wright recorded plot 225, Clarke's Garden which butcher James Clarke, and subsequent residents of 20 RLS rented from the copy holder (in Clarke's case, James Diggens). It appears to have

remained a garden until after Pegg when the Estate Agents apparently started using it as a much needed parking space. It remains a parking space and garden today, however it is now no longer the property of 20 RLS.

Stable/garage (now bungalow)
Looking directly eastwards from Clarke's Garden, Wright would have drawn a square outbuilding at the eastern end of the yard bordering Clarke's Meadow (where now "The Bungalow" stands). By 1886 this had become a larger barn-like structure (shown in purple).

1886 OS. Aylsham Town Archive.


1950s Aerial showing Wright's Barn. Aylsham Town Archive.

The building and the garden behind it to the north seem thereafter to have been held by whoever owned Bon Bon, and apparently a Mr Wright, who was the shop owner in the 1960s, parked his car in it. This structure, or similar, seems to have remained until it was demolished in 1985 to make way for the

modern bungalow. Certainly, it appears, hidden almost entirely by trees, on an aerial photograph from 1979.

We surmise that James Wright entered the yard from RLS but it is also possible that he came in via the 1.5 acre "Clarke's Meadow", then perhaps colloquially still "Ollands" and noting the physical changes since the 1839 tithe map, we come to perhaps the greatest and most obvious change from what Wright would have seen. After 500 years of the Yard opening onto The Ollands/Clarke's or Hubbard's or Starling's Meadow/Oakfield Rd ("Back Lane" as it would have been called), there is now no rear or eastern exit from the yard. The link with the old open space, and the track across it, was lost with the building of the houses, c 1997, on the western side of Oakfield Road.

Threshing barn

After the former eastern exit, Wright would have come to The Threshing Barn now 1 Pegg's Yard. I refer to this as a "Threshing Barn" based on its layout but it may of course have been any kind of combination barn with threshing doors and built almost at any time since the Angel closed. It seems likely that by the time of the tithe map it had already ceased to fulfil its primary agricultural functions because Wright doesn't list it as a 'barn' which he does in other places but puts it under the rubric 'outbuildings'. Also, by the time of the tithe map a second structure (the remains of which still visible today as a white silhouette on the Quaker's wall) had been built along its western side meaning the vitally important western exit for the cross wind for winnowing was blocked off. So, we can safely assume it was no longer used, possibly because increasing mechanisation was reducing the need for threshing barns.

To my mind the most likely suspects for the barn's builders, if it dates from the 19th century, would be either James Diggens, the farmer and butcher from Kerdiston who owned the yard and Ollands close from 1809 or his later tenant, James Clarke, butcher, and gentleman farmer who had enough farm land (55 acres is recorded in the 1851 census) around Aylsham to perhaps warrant the building of such a barn. The Directories tell us he was in RLS by 1822 but he isn't listed on the 1821 'census'. [10]

A sales notice from 1871 lists the property in the Yard occupied by Stephan Hubbard, a plumber/painter/glazier/decorator as containing "Workshops" among other outbuildings and it seems likely that the Threshing Barn and the newer barn along its west side were those workshops. Apparently, Hubbard's

successor to the Yard, George Pegg (1929), for whom the yard is named, also used the barn as his carpentry workshop.[11] After Pegg left the yard in 1975 the barn fell into a state of disrepair and by the mid-80s was almost derelict.

The outline of the demolished addition can be seen on the far right-hand side Courtesy of EDP

It was bought, won an award and sympathetically renovated in the mid to late 80s by Mr and Mrs Bell, who ran their solicitor's office from there. It was also at their instigation that the yard was named "Pegg's Yard".

Warehouse

Adjoined at a right angle to the Threshing Barn is what I shall designate the "Warehouse" which is now the Friends Meeting House (Quakers) because I suspect, on admittedly limited evidence, that it was first built as a warehouse or store house and not as an agricultural barn. As always, we cannot even guesstimate as to when it was built or by whom but if one assumes after the Angel closed, it would be post-1760. Looking at the building, and the adjoining buildings even today it would appear to predate both the Threshing Barn and the other buildings next to it. The tithe map's survey book is very clear that Thomas Peachman, coal merchant, occupied a 'warehouse' in the yard. Wright used the term 'warehouse' extremely rarely in his survey. In his 1070 property listings he records six times that someone holds a warehouse (and three of those warehouses were connected to the Staithe, as one might expect). Wright had to be quite precise in his listings because this was a record for financial payments. If he had described someone's barn as a

warehouse, they might have found themselves paying more. We know there were appeals concerning property designations here.

After Peachman's coal business apparently collapsed in the early 1840s (Thomas died a 'pauper' in 1859) his business was taken over by another coal merchant and his father who were also 'carriers' running a thrice weekly cart to Norwich. The family Margetson seems to have settled on one forename for its menfolk and so in 1851 we have three Robert Margetsons living in 20 RLS. One assumes that the Margetsons continued to use the Warehouse for their coal and also parked their Carrier Cart under its arch(es). Another coal merchant, carrier-to-Norwich and owner of a prize-winning racing donkey named "Lightning", Mark Roper, took over from the Margetson around 1872 until 1878 and again one assumes he used the Warehouse's arch(es) as a convenient parking space.

At some point between 1878 and 1912 either Stephen Hubbard or his son Arthur John took over the Warehouse but when is unclear. Anecdotal evidence suggests it was AJ. Whether the Hubbards parked their conveyances under the Warehouse is also unknown, however George Pegg who followed them in 1929, according to eye-witnesses, does seem to have continued the tradition.

Courtesy of Aylsham Friends publication. Aylsham Town Archive.

As the above photograph shows, after Pegg, the Warehouse, like the adjoining Threshing Barn, fell into a bad state of repair. By the start of the

1980s it was almost derelict when James Bond's architects' partnership bought it and set about renovating it, converting it into their offices, creating most of its current appearance (including the atrium). The architects sold to the Quakers, completing in June 1994. The only major external change to the building since then is that the archway entrance (and parking space for over a century!) has been converted to a downstairs room. Back in 1839, Wright drew the Warehouse and the Threshing Barn as forming two sides of a walled yard in the middle of the yard.

Unfortunately, all the documentary sources list only occupiers and owners having access to 'yards' and a single 'walled yard' is never specifically mentioned. I assume when the Hubbards took over the entirety of the southern side of the site that they only then had the exclusive use of the walled yard which was later used by Pegg. The wall or at least 'a' wall seems to have remained until Pegg quit the yard. One eyewitness was able to tell me that the wall had been "old Norfolk red brick" so it might conceivably have been the same wall that is shown on the tithe map. Others also told me that, in later years, the walled yard became a repository for all Mr Pegg's unwanted items. (They didn't phrase it quite like that). Of course, it could be described as the 'Original' Pegg's yard. The yard is now the parking spaces in front of the entrance to 3 Pegg's Yard and the Quaker Meeting House.

Moving round from the now Quakers Meeting House, Wright drew an outbuilding attached to the rear extension of the now 18 RLS (or the northern half of the southern messuage) which at that time marked the border of Pegg's Yard. These appear in part to have later become part of 20 RLS and then later still part of 3 Pegg's Yard. I suspect we have our old friends Starling and Pegg to thank for that. But I shall deal with the vexed question of what changes were made to 20 RLS in its own article.

Larke's Wash House

Next Wright would have seen the unextended rear of 22 with, I suspect, its well or pump directly behind the building. Over the years, 22 was extended eastwards, culminating in "Larke's Wash House" which now forms the rear entrance to 22 RLS. I refer to it as "Larke's" chiefly because it seems to have been built whilst J P Larke was the Manager of Page's Tailors & Outfitters. (Yes, *that* Henry Page was here as well.) Larke lived above the shop at 22 RLS and in 1915 (although J P Larke was dead by then and his son had taken over the business from Page) his 11 year-old grandson, John William, carved his name, as Aylsham children did and still do, into the soft Norfolk Red brick of the building.

Author photo edited into 'relief' – a modern non-destructive 'rubbing' technique

Larke took over the shop from Page at the turn of the 20th century so it is possible he had the annexe built but it seems more likely that W.F. Starling (owner of 22RLS 1896–1919) added it perhaps at the instigation of Page.

Alongside the Wash House in an archway under the first floor of 22 RLS and, now hidden by the metal stairs leading to the flat above the Bon Bon, are the remains of the former well (its concrete cap hidden beneath wooden decking) and a pump. The Yard is fortunate to still have its cast iron pump as

far too many have disappeared. These water supplies were used well into the 20th century.

20 Red Lion St/3 Pegg's Yard.

So why is the Art Gallery, formerly various Estate Agents since 1975 when Irelands took it over after Pegg, numbered 20 RLS but the rest of the house above and behind it is 3 Pegg's? Unfortunately, this gets a little convoluted to explain and I have only been able to partially reconstruct the history**.**

To recap, we know from the tithe map that sometime after the northern messuage was separated from The Angel it was split into the two separate premises – namely 20 and 22 RLS (now Maná Gallery and Bon Bon respectively). In Wright's Day, 22 RLS was not a sweet shop but a private house lived in by Peachman, coal merchant, and there is much to suggest it was not converted into the current shop until after Mark Roper and his racing donkey had left. In the 1879 Kelly's Directory, the last year we have an entry for Roper on RLS, he advertises that his carrier's service departs from his "*house*" on RLS, 4 times weekly to Norwich, and not from "outside his shop".

The rest of the northern messuage, which today houses Maná Gallery below and 3 Pegg's Yard above, was at some point, before or around 1820, divided again into two separate buildings – the dividing line running through the middle of the current front doorway. Where today Maná Gallery's northern half is, a small shop was fitted (which Wright records as Clarke's butchers), the southern half remaining the front door to what was later considered 20 RLS.

In the crop of a postcard overleaf, dating from about 1913, the girl is standing in what is now the doorway to Maná Gallery. To her right we see the front door and downstairs window of what would have been 20 RLS if our Aylsham ancestors had used street numbers. However, they didn't and just identified locations by their occupiers. Starling refers to it nearly two decades later as "Pegg's house". [12]

We know from various contemporary postcards that the front remained the same (shop to left, door to house on the right) until the premises were taken over in 1929 by George Pegg. In the 1930s he removed the house door and converted the front to a double width shop that remains today. We assume access to the house was then via the shop and/or his back door in the Yard.

Girl standing in what is now the doorway to Maná Gallery, courtesy of the Aylsham Town Archive.

Later the owners of the building were renting out the shop by itself and residing in the rest of the house, using what had been the rear access in the yard as their main entrance to the house. When the Council approved the creation of Pegg's Yard the standard rules for the numbering of residences applied and so the residential part of 20 RLS (first floor and behind) became 3 Pegg's Yard.

To end this article on a personal note. Researching local history throws up surprises and, despite knowing my own documented local ancestry stretches back to the 16th century, I was surprised to discover I have an indirect familial connection to Pegg's Yard (via the Aylmerton Massinghams). But more on that perhaps in a future article, which I hope will begin to tackle the history of 26 and 24 RLS and their people.

My thanks to Maggie Vaughan-Lewis, without whom this article would not have been written. My thanks also to M. & B(†) Bush, A.Postle, R.Harrison, S.Bell, J.Gedge, C.Bunting, S.Chambers, D.Eddison, P.Rice, The Aylsham Society of Friends, V.Baker, S.Potter and Aylshamers past and present too

numerous to name for their patience answering my constant questions and granting access to properties.

Notes

1. Raschkewitz, A. (2023). *The History of Pegg's Yard Red Lion Street: a review.* ALHS Journal 12: 278–279.
2. Vaughan-Lewis, M, ed. (2018). *A New History of Aylsham Public Houses.* ALHS. The Angel Inn was situated on Red Lion St and not, as previously thought, on Burgh Rd.
3. Ollands refers to land once ploughed as arable but long since used for other purposes.
4. In the mid-1830s Parliament sought to reform the tithe (a tax paid to the church) and each Parish still paying the tithe had to appoint a surveyor to map the properties of the Parish and record in detail who owned them. In Aylsham the contract went to James Wright. M. Vaughan-Lewis (2015). *Mapping Aylsham: some clarification.* ALHS Journal 10: 75–85.
5. *A survey map of Aylsham; prepared by James Wright 1839.* ALHS 1995.
6. Baker Richard Laxen quit 24/26 RLS c.1852, moving northwards down RLS to No 38 and its yard, opposite the Red Lion Inn.
7. Polhill, R. (2022). *Walter Juan Finch – artist and photographer.* ALHS Journal 12: 147–156.
8. Polhill, R. (2022). *Harry Proudfoot* (1869–1961). ALHS Journal 12: 42–52.
9. Plymouth Brethren: a religious sect founded c. 1827, strongly Puritanical in outlook and prohibiting many secular occupations for its members. It combines elements of Calvinism, Pietism, and millenarianism, and has no organized ministry. Collins Dictionary.
10. Mollard, T. (1997). *Aylsham in 1821 The Population of the Parish of Aylsham Recorded by William Morris in May, 1821.* ALHS.
11. *Norfolk Chronicle* Saturday 15 July 1871 (British Newspaper Archive).
12. *Memories of Aylsham (2000). The Memoirs of William Frederick Starling 1851–1937.* ALHS.

Hubert de Burgh (c1175–1243): a forgotten Norfolk hero? by Peter Lavender

Arms of Hubert de Burgh courtesy of Heritage England Archive and Hubert in Sanctuary from Matthew Paris, Historia Anglorum.

Introduction

In 2001 an article appeared in the ALHS Newsletter and Journal about Hubert de Burgh (c1175–1243). There was a suggestion that Hubert might have come from the Aylsham area. Investigating this claim has thrown a little more light on Hubert and his life, which might be of interest.

In summary, Hubert de Burgh came from Norfolk, 'the son of an obscure Norfolk gentleman' and his family most probably originated from Burgh next to Aylsham [1]. From relatively humble beginnings he rose to become King John's right hand at the time of the Magna Carta (1215). Hubert was given gifts of land, manors and many honours. John ordered Hubert to take charge of Falaise castle and the imprisoned Arthur, Duke of Brittany, in 1202. Arthur had been named by King Richard I as his heir. Hubert was implicated in the disappearance of Arthur, though we know he may not have murdered him. As the second most powerful man in England he managed the King's government until the King's death in 1216. He then served King Henry III, as Chief Justiciar during the king's minority. He successfully defended Dover Castle against an invading French army (1216), defeated the French in a naval battle off Sandwich (1217), and married three times, the last to Margaret, daughter of the King of Scotland. During his lifetime he bought or received many castles, manors and much land from two kings – John and Henry III. In 1232

he entertained Henry III at his manor in Norfolk. Suddenly, in 1232 Hubert had all his lands and wealth seized by the King. He was accused of treason and reduced to being a hunted fugitive, seeking sanctuary, which was then broken. He was dragged out of a church, imprisoned and put on trial, but successfully defended himself and was acquitted in 1239. Hubert had been made Earl of Kent in 1227. His daughter Margaret (Meggotta) died at the age of 12 in 1237 and with it any hope of continuing the title. His son Sir John de Burgh by his first marriage, inherited some of Hubert's wealth but he and Hubert's grandson lost it all when John backed Simon de Montfort rather than the Crown in 1261. Hubert had been a powerful and wealthy man, through two reigns. He died peacefully in 1243. His wife Margaret outlived him, dying in 1259.

We know very little of Hubert de Burgh's family, which indicates that he may have come from minor landowning stock rather than anything grander. We have evidence of Hubert owning one of the Aylsham manors, and owning a hall close to Aylsham where he entertained King Henry III. We know he was a younger son and had three brothers. William, who had a career in Ireland [2] and may have helped Hubert into the court of King Richard I. Then Geoffrey, who became Bishop of Ely, and Thomas who stayed in Norfolk as a feudal lord of the manor. Hubert was competent in Latin and experienced in administration. He was pious and staunchly loyal, efficient as an administrator and effective as a fighter. He rose to become the principal courtier during the reign of two kings and was charged with governing the country during the height of the Magna Carta crisis. As Justiciar he was responsible for governance, while the king was away fighting to win back lands in France, once owned by his father, Henry II.

Hubert has been described as bringing strength to government and loyalty to the king [3]. Modern historians agree that Hubert came from Norfolk: his first wife was Beatrice de Warenne from Wormegay, related to the powerful Warennes (Earls of Surrey), who may also have helped Hubert into his first appointment in Whitehall. There is little space for a full biography of Hubert de Burgh, which has been done elsewhere [4] and so this short paper picks four

moments which might illustrate why Hubert could be described as 'a Norfolk Hero'.

The Aylsham Connection

It has been well argued that Hubert's family came from Burgh next Aylsham[5]. Evidence of a medieval fortified manor once owned by William the Conqueror has been found there. We know of a hall and a watermill near Round Top Hill with a moat surrounding them [6], and a number of medieval finds too, but most importantly, the large royal Manor of Aylsham was one of the early gifts given by King John to Hubert. A previous holder, Eustace de Neville, had sold away much of the available lands so when Hubert de Burgh took over the manor in 1226 he found that there was little demesne remaining and by that time Sexton's, Vicarage and Bolwick manors had all been granted away. The manor at Burgh was much later described as '*of his heredity'* when restored to him in 1232 [7]. Later, we know of a significant summer meeting at Hubert's home at Burgh when Henry III, after visiting Bromholm priory, swore personal oaths to observe the charters he had granted to his ministers [8]. One respected modern historian specifically identifies Burgh next Aylsham as Hubert's family home [9].

Shakespeare's character

Most people know about Hubert from Shakespeare's *King John*. Using Holinshed [10] as his source, Shakespeare places him centrally in the King's court. In the play, as in real life, Hubert is given the task of looking after Arthur, Duke of Brittany [11], the king's 15-year-old nephew and heir to the throne – he was Geoffrey's son, John's older brother, and had been named by Richard I as his successor. Later, the King asks Hubert to murder the boy [12], and Shakespeare captures a chilling scene in which the courtier, bound by loyalty and his oath to the king, is led into accepting the role. Hubert cannot do the deed, which involves blinding the boy as well as murder, and hides Arthur, in spite of the King's instruction. Arthur later dies, jumping from the castle walls. This version of the story may not be far from the truth.

King John

King John has been vilified but not forgotten. He is remembered for his calculating but incompetent strategies to gain land and money, his breaking of oaths and friendships, his temper and his cruelty. His reign has been described as a failure [13] and whether inherently evil or unlucky, is for others to decide. During it he lost almost all the land in France which he inherited as part of the Angevin dynasty. At his side through much of his reign was Hubert. How Hubert de Burgh got there is less well known. It is thought that he worked first in Richard I's treasury in Whitehall [14] before moving to Prince John's staff, while Richard was away fighting. He is noted as 'chamberlain to the Count of Mortain' [15] (ie John) on a document in 1198. When Richard died in 1199, John became king although Arthur Duke of Brittany (John's nephew) was also in line to the English throne and preferred by King Philip of France and some of John's barons.

During John's reign Hubert was appointed custodian of Dover and Windsor Castles (1200), sheriff of Dorset and Somerset, and warden of the borders of England and Wales (1201). While John was campaigning in France against King Philip, he gave the castles of Grosmount, Skenfrith and Llantillo to Hubert (all in Upper Gwent) and a few weeks later the manor of Cawston in Norfolk 'to sustain him in our service'. With properties and lands came money, and power. Numerous other gifts followed – Warden of the Cinque Ports; Sheriff of Cornwall; Launceston Castle; Wallingford Castle; Dunster Castle. The year 1202 saw John fighting two armies: Philip in the East of France and Arthur of Brittany in the West: both intent on taking Normandy which was John's dukedom. John moved south with his allies and mercenary army to stop Arthur from attacking his mother, Queen Eleanor's castle at Mirebeau. John's attack was well organized and swift [16], riding two hundred miles in less than three days [17]. He surprised Arthur, capturing the Duke of Brittany and all the rebel leaders, and imprisoned Arthur in his castle at Falaise in Normandy.

Prince Arthur, Duke of Brittany

It was at this point that Hubert faced his **first** test. He was summoned to France, arriving at Falaise in October 1202 to take charge of the castle.

Arthur was well guarded and strongly fettered. It appears from chronicle evidence [18] that King John, listening to advisers, knew that he could never be safe while Arthur was unharmed. The chronicler Ralph, Abbot of Coggeshall, writes that John ordered three of his retinue to Falaise to blind and emasculate the boy. Two of the men promptly took flight but the third passed the instructions to Hubert. The chronicle states that, *'When the order of the lord king was made known to Hubert, there arose a weeping and sounds of extreme lamentation among the guards, violently moved with compassion for the princely boy.'* Arthur himself when told of his fate is said to have replied, '*O my beloved lords, for the love of God give me just a little time to avenge myself upon this criminal before he tears out my eyes, for he is the last upon whom in this life they will gaze.'* The guards separated the pair and ordered the visitor out of the room. Hubert knew that if he disobeyed the king's orders it might mean the end of his career but to carry them out would be an act of savagery. The chronicler records that Hubert, to preserve the honour and reputation of the king, '*and anticipating the royal forgiveness'* moved the prince unharmed and caused a rumour to be spread around the castle and the province that the deed had been done and that Arthur had died of his injuries. Services were held, a burial took place, and his clothes were distributed to the leper hospital [19]. The immediate impact on the king was disastrous – the Breton people rose up in horror, vowing eternal revenge; John's enemies were united in horror, and the news in England turned more people against John. In haste, Hubert denied the rumour and said that Arthur was unharmed. At first the king was furious but he was mollified when his soldiers told him that if they were captured by the enemy they could expect the same merciless treatment, and as a result there would be no one to guard his castles. However, neither the king nor Hubert could produce Arthur because by then the Duke had been moved to Rouen and had disappeared. Hubert had also been moved, to take charge of Chinon castle in early 1203. No one ever saw Arthur again: the damage was done and historians suggest that John might have murdered Arthur himself with a rock, while drunk [20], and ordered the body to be thrown into the Seine.

It is true that every chronicler and most contemporary records indicate that John was cruel, lustful, irreligious, a liar, a murderer, and entirely self-

interested. He set people against one another and was full of spite, sneering at those he despised, trusting nobody. The Magna Carta crisis in 1215 has been described by Vincent (2020) as a significant victory for the barons but of little interest at the time [21]. Hubert de Burgh was one of the barons by John's side, advising John to sign, and Hubert's brother Geoffrey was a witness [22]. Soon after the issuing of *Magna Carta*, de Burgh was officially declared Chief Justiciar of England and Ireland [23].

The barons sought help from France and the French army invaded under Louis of France, King Philip's heir, denouncing John as a traitor, tyrant and murderer, and claiming the throne of England for Philip. When John died unexpectedly in 1216 it was widely believed he had been poisoned. William Marshall, first Earl of Pembroke, supervised the funeral arrangements and was entrusted with care for the young King Henry III, then only nine years old. At the time, Hubert de Burgh was Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, castellan of Dover Castle, High Sheriff of Kent and High Sheriff of Surrey. He had been involved in the siege of Rochester Castle and was busy defending Dover Castle against a French army.

Civil war was raging. The French army sent by Philip, had bypassed Dover Castle and took control of London, where the gates had been opened for them by the barons. They claimed the throne for Philip. Prince Louis, realizing how significant Dover was, then marched his army to Dover, putting the castle to siege, battering it with siege engines and calling on Hubert to surrender, saying that King John was dead and Philip would grant Hubert all honours if he served him. But Hubert and the garrison refused provocations, in spite of massive attacks by siege engines and Hubert's own brother being held by Louis as a hostage. Louis, still claiming the English throne, withdrew his troops back to London, leaving Dover Castle alone. Hubert immediately set about destroying the French siege engines and restoring as much of the castle defences as he could. Prince Louis' army then left London and went north to Lincoln which was a significant castle, defended by the impressive Nicola de la Haye who was loyal to the King. It was not the first time she had withstood a siege. In May 1217 William the Marshall, aided by Peter des Roches, Bishop of Winchester, marched on Louis and defeated his army at the battle of Lincoln in the name of Henry III, and also promised to uphold

Magna Carta. Many of the barons then rejoined the Marshall and the English army.

Meanwhile, King Philip, in response to Louis' repeated requests for help through his wife Blanche of Castile, gathered a fleet of ships at Calais to support Louis' efforts. This brings us to the **second** most significant moment for Hubert de Burgh. The French invasion fleet consisted of ten large ships and 70 supply vessels waiting at Calais for southerly winds to embark. Philip d'Aubigny was the French commander but he was supported by Robert de Courtenai and Eustace the Monk. Eustace had served King John for three years, basing himself in Winchelsea, and was a successful pirate working the channel shipping. He switched his allegiance to King Philip in 1215 and was forced to leave England. He had once been in holy orders and cultivated a terrifying reputation. It was he who had brought Prince Louis' army over to Dover and was now bringing more supplies, including siege weapons, together with heavily armed knights and a large number of horses and soldiers. Robert de Courtenai and Eustace waited during the summer at Calais. The situation in August 1217 was tense: the English were waiting for an invasion fleet to embark and London was in the hands of the French. Although Dover Castle and many other castles were still held in King Henry III's name, the barons in England were eagerly watching the power struggle between the barons and Henry III's army, led by William the Marshall, Hubert de Burgh and Peter des Roches Bishop of Winchester (Henry III's tutor).

King Henry III

On 24 August 1217 the French fleet set sail, the wind coming from the South. Hubert, together with Richard Fitzroy (King John's illegitimate son), immediately rallied the fishing fleets and a few large cargo vessels (cogs) off the south coast. He persuaded captains to join him in Rye Harbour to defeat the French fleet. Some 16–18 large vessels with crossbowmen and 20 smaller boats set sail, intending to come up behind the French fleet as they sailed north towards the Thames. At the last minute Hubert's force loaded barrels of powdered quicklime from the quay at Rye. Matthew Paris states that Hubert commanded most of the fleet, some sixteen ships with twenty small

vessels [24], but others have given slightly different figures. The largest English ship was a cog laden with bowmen and soldiers belonging to William the Marshall. As the French fleet passed Sandwich, Hubert's ship to stern made as if to attack and then veered off to the south-east. The French jeered loudly and their commander ordered Eustace the Monk to turn into the wind and to follow and attack Hubert's ship. This error allowed Richard fitz John's ship and the large cog to attack Eustace swiftly, the wind being in their favour. The rest of the French fleet were slow in turning about. The breeze then brought clouds of quicklime onto the French ship, followed closely by volleys of arrows. As the French sailors struggled to see, they were hacked down by fitz John's boarding party, who cut down rigging and masts, trapping the French sailors like fish in a net. Chroniclers comment that the French sailors were '*run through by bolts and arrows, pierced by spears, had their throats cut by knives and were cut to pieces by swords* [25]. As the English ships, with the force of the breeze behind them, engaged with the French they rammed the larger vessels, and boarded them. Ordinary sailors and fighting men were cut down; only nobles and knights were spared for ransom. The French fleet were scattered; some headed back to Calais, many were sunk, with their crews thrown overboard. Hubert towed two ships back to Sandwich, including Eustace's own ship, still loaded with a siege engine intended for Louis' army waiting in London. Eustace the Monk was found hiding in the bilges of his own ship. He pleaded for mercy, promising a ransom of 10,000 marks and loyalty to Henry III, but a Winchelsea sailor who knew him well, cut off his head on the deck and set it on the point of a spear. It was afterwards carried round the Cinque ports and Canterbury to show that Eustace was dead. William the Marshall divided up the bounty for everyone, endowing a new hospital for the poor at Sandwich. Hubert took charge of the prisoners for ransom and lodged them in Dover Castle.

The immediate impact of the sea battle was that Louis of France sued for peace and abandoned hopes of any further invasions. William the Marshall saw that the terms of the peace were generous to all. Prisoners were freed and France gave up its claims. The Channel Islands were given to Henry III. The barons of England had to swear never to enter into alliances with the French king. Louis sailed back to France in September and never returned.

The peace allowed Hubert to take up his role of Chief Justicier fully. Before William the Marshall died in May 1219 he put the care of young Henry III into the hands of the papal legate Gualo and insisted that the barons choose the king's political leader. Peter des Roches kept his role as tutor but Hubert was given the role of managing the King's political government, making him once again the most powerful man in the kingdom.

Hubert's rise

Hubert de Burgh had been appointed Chief Justiciar in 1215, succeeding Peter des Roches, Bishop of Winchester. Hubert was now Earl of Kent, in charge of many royal castles, and owner of many manors and much land [26]. In Norfolk Hubert had been granted the manor of Cawston by King John in 1201. He then bought land at Hindringham in 1208 and King John granted one of the Aylsham manors (confirmed in 1227 and 1228). Hubert was given Creak (1202) and Warham (1217). His first wife, Beatrice de Warenne, brought him the honour of Wormegay (1201) as guardian until his stepson came of age around 1243. She also brought the manors of Stowe and North Runcton. The manors of Burgh, Beeston, Newton, Rougham and Runton were described in a 'Letter Close' of 1232 as 'of his heredity' and a gift from the King; other sources state that Newton was the gift of King John. Oulton was acquired by Hubert by 1219 [27].

Hubert de Burgh was a calming influence on Henry, who did not take full power until he was 20, in 1227. Regarded as a wise and loyal courtier, Hubert's only difficulty was Bishop Peter des Roches. Hubert's close friendship with Stephen Langton Archbishop of Canterbury (the Pope's choice) meant that Peter des Roches could make little impact on Hubert's reputation. Nevertheless, because Hubert had successfully limited Peter's powers to influence Henry, the two men battled to influence the King. From 1219, after William the Marshall's death, Peter des Roches led the baronial opposition to Hubert de Burgh, largely aided by Hubert's evident growing wealth. At first the justiciar was successful but ultimately Peter's influence with Henry, prevailed. It was to be a long and painful feud between the two men and resulted in Hubert's ultimate decline. Peter des Roches himself fell from favour in 1134 [28]. Although Henry was crowned in 1220 (for the second

time) David Carpenter has argued that Henry's personal rule began only in 1234 [29].

The Norfolk Oaths

Hubert's **third** significant moment involves his rising wealth and status which resulted in increased enmity from jealous foes. The Justiciar had eight years of peace, interrupted only by rebuilding castles, reorganizing the treasury and reining in the King's enthusiasms. At this point in June 1221 there was a double wedding in York: Alexander II King of Scotland married Joan, King Henry III's eldest sister, and Hubert, Earl of Kent, married Margaret, Alexander's eldest sister. At a stroke, Hubert de Burgh had married a princess, was brother-in-law to the king of Scotland, and also held the most powerful role in the kingdom, after Henry III. Hubert continued to acquire castles, manors and wealth. He began building a palace for himself at Westminster, appointed stewards (often ecclesiastics) to his estates, and created a household which included chaplains, including Luke (later the archbishop of Dublin), a seneschal Lawrence of St Albans and several others. Hubert survived a number of crises – rebellion from barons having to return castles to the King [30]; a civil war against Llywelyn ap Iorwerth (1173–1240) also known as Llywelyn the Great, who had married Joan, a natural daughter of King John; and Henry's abortive march through France in 1228. Llywelyn was powerful, well connected, and a well-armed leader. Hubert led an English army against the Welsh in 1223, 1228 and 1231, with a view to protecting the castles he was responsible for. The latter two campaigns were dismal failures.

At the Christmas feast in 1228 Henry received strong requests to land in Normandy with an army and was promised local support. Hubert dissuaded Henry from immediate campaigning [31], probably remembering John's disastrous campaigns, his own injuries and imprisonment and the costly loss of life and money. More particularly, the campaigns in Wales had been shameful for him. Henry dreamed of a great return to France, recapturing the Angevin lands and ordered a summons to knights and men-at-arms in 1229, ready for an October invasion. Henry arrived at Portsmouth with a massive force of horses and men only to find a fleet ready but much too small. His

rage turned on Hubert whose life was only saved from the king's sword by earl Ranulph of Chester pushing him away. Hubert left until the king had regained control. The expedition aimed at restoring Normandy to English rule was postponed until April 1230. Henry landed at St Malo in May: the count of Brittany had already sworn allegiance. Henry was entreated to invade Normandy but Hubert guessed that the might of France would respond to such a mission and spoke against it. Henry took his advice and turned to Anjou and Poitou where barons swore allegiance and Henry paid them rewards. Crossing the Loire the army continued to Bordeaux without resistance. The castle of Mirambeau offered resistance but this was easily crushed. Henry returned to England at the end of October, his nobles demoralized and the expense enormous. Hubert lost his nephew Reymund de Burgh who was drowned in the Loire when his horse fell. Nothing was gained. Hubert continued to advise, each unpopular action and failed expedition (Wales and France) being laid at Hubert's door. Henry now had the power to grant lands and property as he wished, and he was tired of being held back by Hubert.

Little by little Hubert's luck changed. In 1232 Peter des Roches [32] returned from his pilgrimage to Jerusalem, on the way persuading the King of France to maintain the peace with Henry, founding religious houses and re-establishing his alliances. His triumphal return was a challenge to Hubert. Stephen Langton was no longer the Archbishop of Canterbury and in his place was Richard le Grant who did not like Hubert. Peter des Roches persuaded Henry to appoint himself and his nephew Peter de Rivallis to manage a large part of the exchequer, while at the same time letting Henry believe that he had been kept short of money through Hubert's influence. It was all convincing enough to be damaging but in addition Bishop Peter was able to arrange for the king to give sheriffdoms and lucrative roles to Bishop Peter's supporters. And then, in June 1232 Henry appointed Hubert Justiciar for life, giving him a sense of security. On the same day, Peter de Rivallis took custody of the king's seal for life, to add to being treasurer of the royal household and hence paramount minister in the royal household.

Bromholm Priory in Norfolk had fragments of what was said to be the true cross and Henry pilgrimaged there several times. It was only a morning's

ride from Hubert's manor at Burgh. In 1232, after prayers at Bromholm they rode to Burgh where, on 2nd July, Henry and Hubert swore oaths together. Present with Henry were Hubert de Burgh, Peter de Rivallis, Godfrey de Craucombe, Ralph fitz Nicholas, Countess Margaret, Ralph Neville Bishop of Chichester and Walter Mauclerc Bishop of Carlisle. The King and Hubert swore oaths on the gospels together. Henry promised, by the Rood at Bromholm, to maintain for life in all offices and possessions the Justiciar and his wife, the chancellor, treasurer, the two stewards of the household and the custodians of the wardrobe and bedchamber. Hubert swore to prevent the breach of that promise by the king. It must have been a powerful and solemn occasion and was recorded on Charter Rolls [33]. Within a month Hubert was dismissed from the justiciarship. Henry was to repeat this behaviour a few years later.

Hubert's fall

The **fourth** challenge for Hubert began on 8th August 1232 when Henry ordered Hubert (still Chief Justiciar) to surrender the royal castles in his custody [34]. Two weeks later (now only Earl of Kent) he was ordered to leave England, then Henry changed his mind and decided to put him on trial with many charges. His son, John de Burgh was instructed to surrender the castles of Hertford and Colchester. Hubert took refuge at Merton priory in Surrey and failed to appear for the trial in September. Henry ordered Londoners to fetch him alive or dead and the mob set off, only to be stopped on the king's orders. Henry had been persuaded by advisers that a mob cannot be controlled and the breaking of sanctuary would infuriate the bishops. Luke, Bishop of Dublin, urged the King to allow Hubert to prepare a defence and he was given until 13 January 1233 to do so. Hubert travelled to Bury St Edmunds where Countess Margaret was staying, and then to Brentwood to the manor of his nephew Thomas Blundville, Bishop of Norwich. Suddenly, Henry, fearing insurrection, sent Godfrey de Craucombe, steward of the household (and enemy of Hubert) with 300 men to take Hubert to imprison him in the Tower of London. Hubert was aroused in time to seek sanctuary at the altar, where they found him clutching the cross. Refusing to leave, Godfrey and his men dragged Hubert to a horse and took him to the Tower.

The following day the bishop of London threatened to excommunicate all involved for breaking a sanctuary and Hubert was taken back to Brentwood on 26 September. The order was to take Hubert back but to let no one visit him or feed him for the forty days. A series of other vicious orders was sent to the sheriff. At the end of forty days Hubert surrendered himself to the sheriff, preferring the king's mercy to starvation, and he was taken to the Tower. Peter de Rivallis persuaded Hubert to provide the king with the jewels he had entrusted to the Knights Templar, to appease the king, and this Hubert did. The detailed inventory is fascinating [35] and Henry confiscated it all. Henry softened, partly because of the popular mood – the barons had no more liking for the Poitevins, Peter des Roches, Peter de Rivallis, or Hubert's successor, and Hubert's suffering endeared him to many people. Hubert, throwing himself on the king's mercy, was entrusted to the guardianship of four earls. Henry then allowed Hubert to retain all the estates held by patrimony or purchase but the king retained all the estates held for the king. Anyone with a good reason for taking any of Hubert's estates was encouraged to make a claim (and many did). Hubert appointed Lawrence of St Albans as the administrator of his estates. This might have been the end of the story but persecution continued and Hubert had to seek sanctuary again. There was intervention from the Pope and the rescuing of Hubert by four heavily armed supporters. At the insistence of the archbishop of Canterbury, the bishops and the great council Henry was compelled to dismiss Bishop Peter and his satellites, Segrave, Peter des Rivallis and Passelwe. Safe conducts were issued to Hubert in May 1234 and he was pardoned. Hubert and the king were reconciled at Gloucester. Hubert lived peacefully until autumn, 1236, when Henry summoned him again. Hubert was now in his late sixties. A marriage had been planned between Hubert's ward, Richard de Clare, with Hubert's daughter Margaret (Meggotta), for when they reached 16. This was challenged by many, given it increased Hubert's wealth and lands in Wales. Hubert's defence was strong but Meggotta's death in 1237 sapped his spirit. Two years later in 1239 Henry threw back at Hubert all the accusations from 1232 and brought up all the charges that had festered since then. The list of charges ranged from the scarcely believable to outright lies. On 1st July 1239 Lawrence of St Albans stood up in the king's court as advocate for the Earl

of Kent, to deal with each accusation made. Each of the many charges Lawrence challenged. Hubert came up for judgement on 30 August 1239, where Henry's judgement was that Hubert must yield to the king his castles but retained his own possessions. It was a cynical trial arranged by Henry, in order to obtain some of Hubert's wealth and power.

Hubert retired to his manor at Banstead in Surrey, dying peacefully on 12 May 1243. He was buried at Blackfriars, alongside Meggotta, followed in 1259 by Countess Margaret. Looking back, historians have argued that Hubert managed Henry's volatile rages exceptionally well; he led the defence of Dover Castle with great success, and defeated the French invasion force at Sandwich. In later years he suffered a great deal, but was loyal to the king and principled. Hubert's greatest achievement may well be ensuring the Great Charter was agreed, which limited the power of a king to decide the law [36]. Hubert's style of government kept the peace in England for thirteen years. It is true that he was hungry for land, wealth and status and persuaded the king to support this. Others have argued that for a Norfolk gentleman born without title, wealth or privilege he had few other options at the time [37]. To my mind Hubert de Burgh has a reasonable claim to be regarded as a Norfolk hero, especially if we can find the evidence of his birth.

Notes

[1] Ellis, C (1952) *Hubert de Burgh: A Study in Constancy.* London, Phoenix House

[2] Conqueror of territories in Ireland 1185–1205 and Lord Connaught

[3] Ellis, C (1952) op cit.

[4] Ellis, op cit., and Harwood, B. (2016) *Fixer and Fighter: The Life of Hubert de Burgh, Earl of Kent, 1170–1243*. Barnsley: Pen and Sword Books Ltd

[5] See Ellis Ibid., pp183–202 and Harwood, B (2016), op cit. and Carpenter, D (2020) *Henry III The Rise to Power and Personal Rule 1207–1258* New Haven: Yale University Press p15

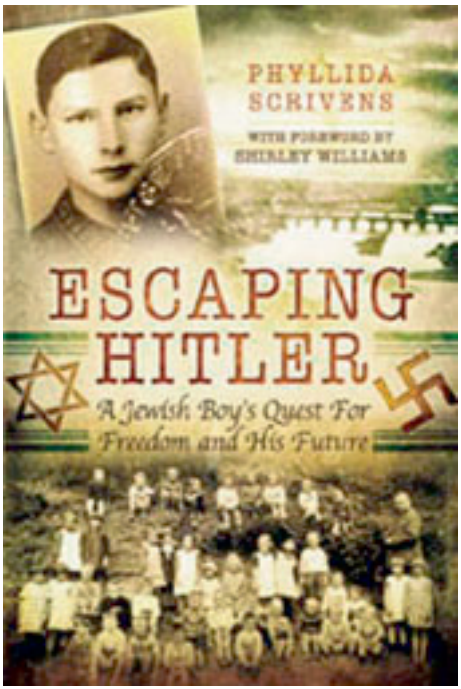
[6] Norfolk Heritage Explorer (2023) *Parish Summary: Burgh and Tuttington* NHER Number 7544 https://www.heritage.gov.uk/record-details?MNF7544-Site-of-medieval-Burgh-Hall-and-watermill-Round-Hill-&Index=11&RecordCount=363&SessionID=de475df-64ab-4eb9-bbe4-297af8b5def6 [Accessed 04 October 2023]

[7] Ellis op cit p 188
[8] Carpenter, D (2020) op cit. pp117–8
[9] Carpenter, D (2020) ibid.
[10] *Chronicles* (second edition, 1587). Shakespeare may also have used *The Troublesome Raigne of King John of England,* published anonymously in two parts in 1591, which may also have used Holinshed as a source. Holinshed Project, The http://english.nsms.ox.ac.uk/holimshed/Oxford University: 2008–2010. [Accessed October 2023].
[11] b1187, d1203? Falaise Castle
[12] *K. John: ...Yet I love thee well;*
And, by my troth, I think thou lov'st me well.
Hub.: So well that what you bid me undertake,
Though that my death were adjunct to my act,
By heaven I would do it
K.John: Do not I know thou wouldst?
Good Hubert, Hubert, Hubert, throw thine eye
On yon young boy. I'll tell thee what, my friend,
He is a very serpent in my way;
And thereso'er this foot of mine doth tread,
He lies before me. Dost thou understand me?
Thou art his keeper.
Hub.: And I'll keep him so
That he shall not offend your Majesty.
K.John: Death.
Hub.: My lord?
K.John: A grave.
Hub.: He shall not live.
K.John: Enough!
I could be merry. Hubert, I love thee.
Shakespeare, W (1971) *The Alexander Text of the Complete Works* London: Collins King John III, Sc3, 53–70
[13] Vincent, N (2020) *John an Evil King?* London: Penguin Random House. See pp101–2
[14] Harwood, B (2016), op cit.
[15] Prince John was made Count of Mortain in 1189 when he married Isabella of Gloucester shortly before his brother Richard went off to the Crusades. The title and territory belonged to the Dukedom of Normandy and seems to have been given to Angevin family members.
[16] Vincent, R (2020) *John an Evil King?* London: Penguin Random House

[17] Vincent Ibid p31
[18] Ralph, Abbot of Coggeshall *Chronicum Anglicanum. See https://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/doc/Coggeshall* John/?e=Jn [Accessed 04 October 2023]
[19] Ibid
[20] Ellis, op cit., p16 footnote 1; Vincent, op cit., p31
[21] Vincent (2020), op cit. Chapter5
[22] Powicke, F and Fryde, E (1961) *Handbook of British Chronology* London: Royal Historical Society.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Matthew Paris, *Chronica Majora III p27* [from Ellis op cit p42–3]
[25] Roger of Wendover *Chronica Majora* III p27 [from Ellis op cit p44]
[26] For an extraordinary map of England and Wales detailing Hubert's possessions during his lifetime see Ellis (1952) op cit. pp203–5; for a list of lands see pp208–228; for a list of portable wealth see pp 206–7
[27] All from Ellis (1952) Ibid. pp217–218
[28] In 1225 a plot to ship Eleanor of Brittany away to France, who as cousin to Henry III always posed a potential threat to the crown and was confined at Bristol Castle, was reported. The plot might have been false and only fabricated to discredit Peter, but he eventually fell out of royal favour in Spring 1234.
[29] Carpenter, D (1980) *The Fall of Hubert de Burgh,* Journal of British Studies Volume 19, Issue 2, Spring 1980, pp. 1–17. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1086/385752
[30] The 'royal castles crisis' (1223). See Ellis, op cit. Chapter IV
[31] *'…his one and only adviser'* (Roger of Wendover, *Chronica* Majora III p 165 [Ellis op cit p 100])
[32] The general view was that Henry was advised by Poitevins led by Peter des Roches.
[33] Ellis (1952) ibid pp121–122
[34] Dover, Canterbury, Rochester, Windsor, Odiham, Hertford, Colchester, and The Tower of London (Carpenter, 2020) op cit. p120
[35] Ellis, C (1952) op cit. pp 206–207
[36] Carpenter, D (2020) op cit.
[37] Ellis, C (1952) op cit

Escaping Hitler – A Jewish Boy's Quest for Freedom & his future – 23rd November 2023 by Phyllida Scrivens

Escaping Hitler is a true story, covering 90 years, of Norwich legend Joe Stirling, who in 1939 as a fourteen-year-old German Jewish boy, resolved to escape the tyranny of the Nazi regime. On a hot July day Gunter Stern left a note for his parents and set out to walk to the Hook of Holland, intent on boarding a ferry for Harwich and freedom. The outcome was not exactly as he planned.



Phyllida gave a very interesting talk about Gunter who was born in 1924 and the growing power of Hitler and Nazi Germany. Gunter had applied to the British to come to the UK and he was accepted but had to wait for them to find him a family who would look after him. After months of waiting and nothing happening, his father was taken prisoner so his mother packed a small

bag and they both fled to her parents in Koblenz. Gunter's father was released due to ill health to get better then they would take him prisoner again, so Gunter decided to pack a bag and set off, on foot to walk to the Hook of Holland. Phyllida described his various escapades and how a friendly Dutch policeman took him home, fed him and contacted the UK to get him on a boat only to find out that the agreement with the German authorities was that they could only take children from German Stations so Gunter went back to his family. After a while a letter and passport arrived for him to board a train from Cologne to the UK, that was the last to leave.

He was taken in by a family in Birmingham, who had a holiday home in North Wales where Gunter spent many hours walking with the father of the family.

His new life in the United Kingdom began with a much-coveted grammar school education, joining the British Army, joining the Labour Party and becoming politically active, marriage to a Norfolk girl resulting in four children and opening his own travel business in the city in 1958. Ten years later he was doing so well he could expand into Great Yarmouth, where Stirling Travel had a branch in King Street for over thirty years, benefitting from the offshore oil and gas boom during the 1970's.

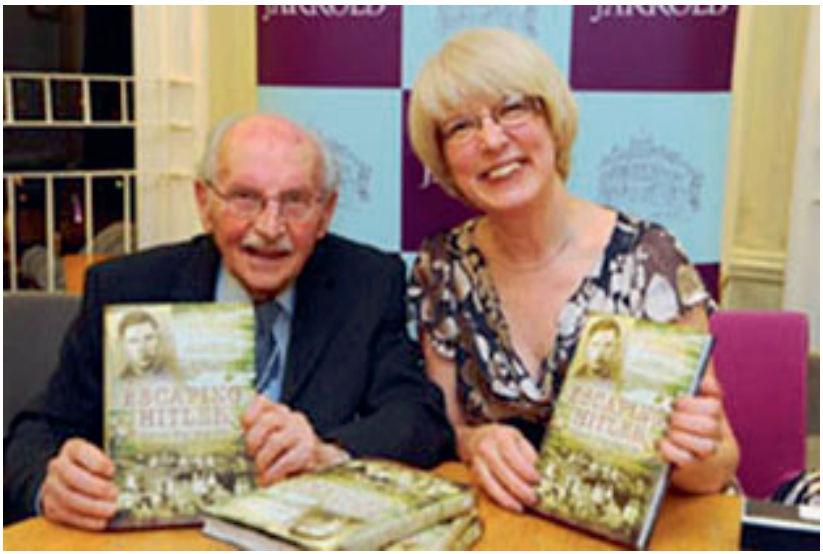
In 1975 Joe Stirling (his new name since 1944) fulfilled his destiny by becoming the Sheriff of Norwich, the first non-councillor to be honoured in this way.

Norwich biographer Phyllida Scrivens spent two years researching Joe's life alongside her MA studies in Biography at the UEA, graduating in 2014. At this point she achieved a lifetime ambition of being offered a publishing contract for her first book. She spent many months interviewing Joe in his own home as well as meeting with over 30 of his family, friends and colleagues, each with their own story to tell about this amazing gentleman.

During an emotional 'foot-stepping' journey in September 2013, Phyllida and her husband visited Gunter's birthplace in the Rhineland, discovered the apartment in Koblenz where he and his mother lived after fleeting Kristallnacht in 1938, drove the route of Gunter's walk through Europe and retraced the final steps of his parents, prior to their deportation to a Nazi death camp in Poland during 1942.

Further Information

Pen and Sword Books published this remarkable biography in 2016. The following year Skyhorse Publishing of New York bought the rights to publish and distribute through the US. Phyllida and Joe spent over two years sharing his uplifting stories with audiences all over Norfolk. Once Joe's health sadly failed, she continued the quest, and is still a regular speaker in the county and online, including appearances on Holocaust Memorial Day and at Heritage Open Days.



Phyllida's most recent titles from Pen and Sword re *The Lady Lord Mayors of Norwich 1923-2017* (winner of the Best Biography Award at the East Anglian Book Awards 2017) and *The Great Thorpe Railway Disaster 1874* (short-listed in the History and Tradition Category at the East Anglian Book Awards 2022).

For more information contact Phyllida by email – phyllida.scrivens@icloud.com

Hazel Jones

Changing Beliefs: The Archaeology of the East Anglian Conversion – 25th January 2024 by Dr Richard Hoggett

Richard started his talk with a brief outline of his work to date explaining that historical records of the East Anglian conversion is limited, it is complemented by a very rich archaeological record. His talk presented an overview of these two contrasting sources of evidence and demonstrated that a combination of historical, archaeological and landscape-based approaches of the study of the East Anglian conversion yields far more significant results than any individual approach taken in isolation. The case studies chosen illustrate that, far from being a rural backwater, Anglo-Saxon East Anglia was at the forefront of the development of the early Church in the region.

Bede – According to Bede, the first East Anglian king to come into contact with Christianity was Raedwald, who ruled the region in the first quarter of the seventh century and was reportedly baptised in Kent about AD 604. Although a king in his own right, Raedwald was subordinate to Ethelberht of Kent at the time of his baptism and his acceptance of the new faith should perhaps be seen in terms of a statement of political allegiance rather than genuine conversion. Certainly, his conversion did not last long, for upon returning to East Anglia he apparently lapsed back to his heathen ways, establishing a temple in which stood two altars, one dedicated to the Christian God and one dedicated to devils. If Raedwald was indeed the individual buried in the famous ship-burial at Sutton Hoo, then those who buried him clearly did not consider him a Christian.

Raedwald was succeeded by his son, Eorpwald in AD 627. He was persuaded by Edwin of Northumbria to abandon his idolatrous superstitions and, together with his kingdom accept the Christian faith and sacraments. By then Edwin had become the over-king of the southern kingdoms and Eorpwald's acceptance of Christianity should therefore be viewed in the same subservient context as Raedwald's baptism under Ethelberht. Again, Eorpwald's conversion was literally short-lived, as he was assassinated not long afterwards. For a short period, the kingship seems to have faltered, Eorpwald was succeeded by his brother Sigeberht around AD 630, described by Bede as "a good and religious man", very learned man in all respects. He had been exiled to Gaul during his brother's reign. Unlike his predecessors Sigeberht's reign saw the true beginning of the East Anglian conversion.

Dommoc – Sigeberht was aided by Felix, a Burgundian bishop who was appointed first Bishop of the East Angles and he was granted the site of Dommoc to establish his bishopric. The location of Dommoc is traditionally identified as being the east-coastal town of Dunwich, although this association is largely without foundation. Several strong arguments can be made in favour of Walton Castle being the site of Dommoc. Walton Castle's location also makes its identification as Dommoc more favourable.

Cnobheresburg – The establishment of Dommoc was not the only step towards Christianisation of the region that occurred during Sigeberht's reign. Bede reported how the Irish missionary Fursey was honourably received by Sigeberht who granted him the site of Cnobheresburg on which to build a monastery. Evidence that Cnobheresburg was located at Burgh Castle is not particularly strong and neither can historical or archaeological records provide a comprehensive conclusive answer. The late third-century fort at Burgh Castle is strategically situated on the river Waveney and in the Roman period it sat on southern side of the Great Estuary, an area of tidal water at the confluence of the rivers Bure, Yare and Waveney. The site was reoccupied during the Middle Saxon period and after the Norman Conquest a motte was constructed in the south-western corner of the fort. The motte was finally ploughed flat in 1837.

A number of small trenches were dug along the western perimeter in 1850 and 1855, a series of excavations was conducted by Charles Green between 1958 and 1961. In the south-western corner of the fort the remains of an extensive cemetery were discovered although several layers of the site have been destroyed by ploughing. The cemetery clearly predates the Roman occupation. Three radiocarbon dates suggested that the cemetery began in the early seventh century and continued to be used into Late Saxon period. On this basis the cemetery at Burgh Castle can be interpreted with certainty as being Christian.

We know Fursey's missionary activities were by no means unique for we hear of other missionaries at work in East Anglia, the most notable Botolph, who founded a monastery at Icanho that is recorded in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle for the year 653. Icanho has been firmly identified with Iken and the church is situated on a spur of land which projects into the river, as the ho place-name element suggests.

Two coins were made into crosses which have close stylistic affinities to several items of cloisonne jewellery recovered from the Sutton Hoo ship burial. All these objects were probably made in the same East Anglian workshop during the first half of the seventh century, demonstrating a remarkable degree of continuity in the manufacture of pagan and Christian items. That two such pieces should have come to light, despite the laws of diminishing returns that govern archaeological record, must surely be an indication that several crosses of the type must have been in circulation. Another example seemingly from the same workshop was discovered as far afield as Holderness (E. Yorkshire). There may be more to find!

That the two crosses can be linked to the workshop which produced the royal regalia of the pagan kings of East Anglia raises interesting questions about the status of the owners and the means by which they acquired the objects. The general consensus is that such pectoral crosses were worn by the women of upper-class families and were ultimately used to furnish their burials. The Wilton Cross is essentially without provenance and the circumstances and associations of the Ixworth Cross are by no means certain.

Conclusion – It is certain that the account of the East Anglian conversion derived from the documentary sources does not provide a comprehensive explanation of events, rather it provides a framework against which the contemporary archaeological evidence can be measured, compared and contrasted. Sometimes it is possible to reconcile the historical and archaeologic evidence – such as in the case of Iken – but in other cases the sources of evidence are more ambiguous such as Burgh Castle. Yet despite this, what we are able to say is that both the historical and archaeologic evidence point towards there having been a rich and varied ecclesiastical landscape in East Anglia during the seventh century.

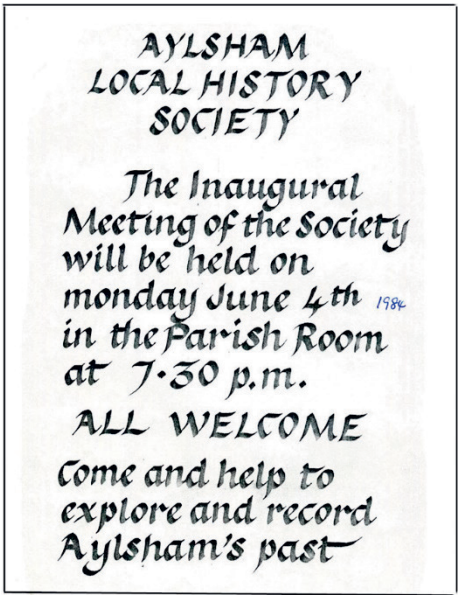
Hazel Jones

Find Out More

You can find out more about Richard and his work at his website: www.richard-hoggett.co.uk, http://www.richard-hoggett.co.uk/conversation/

He is always keen to hear from interested individuals and groups and can be contacted by email on – richard@richard-hoggett.co.uk

40th Anniversary of the Aylsham Local History Society by Roger Polhill



The inaugural meeting of the Aylsham Local History Society was held on 4 June 1984, so the Society will be celebrating its 40th Anniversary this year. The Workers Educational Association had invited Chris Barringer from the Wensum Lodge adult education centre to look at the "History of Aylsham" in 1982, as part of a county wide outreach to encourage more local history research. Ron Peabody, retired Librarian of the Aylsham Library and Treasurer of the Aylsham WEA, curated the collection of archives previously assembled by John Sapwell for his *History of Aylsham* (1960) and was a key figure in the preliminary research. Out of the second year of work by the class came *Aylsham: A Guided Walk* in which members of the WEA Branch researched the detail, and the Aylsham Association, the Parish Council and Broadland District Council all co-operated in the production of the booklet in 1983.

On 29 November 1983 20 people met at the Belt Lodge, the home of Jane Nolan (and where we now live) to consider the formation of a new Historical

Association. A steering group was set up to consider the form such a group should take and call another meeting when proposals and plans could be considered. The committee comprised Ron Peabody, Geoffrey Ducker, Mary Rust, David Walker, Canon Jack Vyse, Nick Crick, Nicolas Corbin and Jane Nolan.

The Inaugural meeting was held on 4 June 1984. Jane Nolan was elected as secretary and the objects of the Society set out, in essence to study the local history of Aylsham, encourage members to take an active interest, issue newsletters and other literature, i.e. research produced by members and others, to keep a permanent file of such publications, provide exhibitions, lectures and other means of promoting the objects of the Society and note historical records not already in the NRO, Parish archives and Parish church.

Jane Nolan, born and educated in Scotland, took up the post of Educational psychologist in Norfolk in 1950 when she was 25. After a period in Newcastle, where she was married, she returned to Norwich in 1980. She died in 1997 and Tom Mollard remarked in the Journal that she had guided the society's affairs, unerringly, over many years and she would be a difficult act to follow. Like Chris Barringer she was a Quaker and the Society has long enjoyed their meeting house for our activities.

The first AGM was held a year later on 4 June 1985 following a busy year with working groups, lectures, walks and excursions. Tom Mollard, a retired County Librarian and a volunteer at the Cathedral Library, helped Ron Peabody with the archive and edited the Journal and Newsletter for 21 years until the end of his working career in 2006.

The Society continues to flourish and now has 180 members, with 60 to 80 regularly attending talks, 115 in February. We had seven talks in 2023 and two rewarding outings, especially the one to the Sheringham Museum.

Gale, G. (2014). A Celebration in memory of Chris Barringer who died in June 2013. Aylsham Local History Society Journal 10: 49.

Gale, G. (2015). Editing Local History Society Publications with Tom Mollard. Aylsham Local History Society Journal 10: 127–129.

Lewis, A. (1997). Jane Nolan. Aylsham Local History Society Journal 5: 68.

Mollard, T. (1985). Introduction & objects of the Society. Aylsham Local History Society Journal 1: 1–7.

Mollard, T. (2013) Chris Barringer†. Aylsham Local History Society Journal 9: 291–293.

Also documents in the Aylsham Town Archive, including particularly the deposit by Jane Nolan.

Back Cover: *Hubert de Burgh at Sanctuary from Matthew Paris, Historia Anglorum.*