

# AYLSHAM LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY



**Volume 12 No 9**

**December 2023**

Cover:

*Aylsham Parish Church bells newly arrived for rehangings. Photo Rev  
Canon Julie Boyd*

AYLSHAM LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

JOURNAL AND NEWSLETTER



Volume 12 No. 9

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## Preamble

As announced at the AGM (see page 285), this is my last issue as Editor, as Pamela and I are hoping to move nearer our eldest son in mid Wales. It has been a fascinating two and a half years and I am profoundly grateful for all the help I have received from contributors over that time. Roger Polhill has kindly agreed to edit the next issue.

In this issue, Maggie Vaughan-Lewis takes us through the history of Aylsham school, its pupils, teachers and buildings, in the nineteenth century, as it moves slowly towards gaining public funding and then county council control following Balfour's 1902 Education Act.

The welcome return of the Parish Church bells after their repair is a chance to update the story of the bells and their ringers, last covered in the Journal Volume 4 No 1 in 1994. Those with good memories and an acute sense of pitch may have noticed they all sound a semitone higher!

Near the end, Adi Raschkewitz gives us a preview of the work he is doing on the history of Peggs Yard and its people. Look out for further instalments in coming issues.

Our first talk of the New Year will be on the 25<sup>th</sup> January in the Town Hall when Dr Richard Hoggett will be talking on *Changing Beliefs: The Archaeology of the East Anglian Conversion*. Then, on the 29<sup>th</sup> of February, Matt Champion will be talking on *Kett's Rebellion 1549: England's bloodiest year?*

## Aylsham School Part 2: National church school 1818 – 1902, by Maggie Vaughan-Lewis

*At the end of part one of the history of the old Free Grammar School, the small school was still situated on the old eastern site of the Blickling Road premises but was now a national school, thanks in large part to the efforts of Clement Overton.*

*National School, Aylsham June 27 1817*

Class	Teacher	Boys	Girls
1st	1st Teacher	18.1	6.8
2nd	2nd Teacher	2.0	1.0
3rd	3rd Teacher	9.4	4.4
1st	1st Teacher	1.0	0.9
2nd	2nd Teacher	13.2	
3rd	3rd Teacher	1.0	
1st	1st Teacher	21.3	
2nd	2nd Teacher	2.0	
3rd	3rd Teacher	1.0	
Total of Boys		68.10	
Total of Girls			11.1
Total		112.16	

*AB. L. D. Boys and Girls  
School since  
the last Exam.  
nation.*

*Clement Overton.*

***Pupil and teacher attendances 1817. NRO (NDS 27)***

### Jonas Warden

After Overton resigned in 1818, Jonas Warden was the next candidate recommended to the Bishop, who was still making the appointment of master<sup>1</sup>. The trustees and residents of Aylsham (including Joseph Hogg of The Old Pump house, son of John Hogg) described Jonas 'as a person of sober life and conversation and a member of the Church of England... sufficiently qualified for Master of the Free School of our parish'. Well-known in the town, Warden had been organist at the church since 1808, at first paid 4s a week but later given a salary of £12 for his playing. The son of a hot-presser in Norwich, he had married Mary Quantrell in 1804 in Norwich where they both then lived.

**J** WARDEN'S Preparatory School for YOUNG GENTLE  
 • MEN re-opens on Monday, the 21st inst.  
 TERMS.  
 Under 9 years - - - 14 Guineas.  
 Above ditto - - - 16 ditto.  
 A quarter's notice is expected previously to any pupil's  
 leaving the School.  
 Aylsham, January 9, 1811.

*Norfolk Chronicle Jan 1811. British Library*

On coming to Aylsham at first they rented 46-48 Hungate Street from Amos Walker. This had previously been lived in by another schoolmaster, James Wakefield (who died in 1793) and Warden may well have been offering private lessons here<sup>2</sup>.

In 1811 Jonas was able to buy his own house. Now known as the White House, on the corner of Petersons Lane and Cromer Road, the house was large enough for him to offer private schooling to boarders until he applied for the post of Master in 1818. (The teaching of grammar and Latin for the wealthier boys was continued by others, such as George Jarvis, a cleric living at Old Hall, Blickling Road, where in 1821 he had upwards of a dozen boys boarding<sup>3</sup>).

To the Churchwardens of Aylsham  
 Gent<sup>l</sup> I take the liberty of  
 offering myself as a Candidate, to fill the office  
 of Master, of the Free School, in this Parish.  
 Vacated by the resignation, of Clement Overton,  
 your patronage, will be esteemed, by  
 Gent<sup>l</sup> your Obed<sup>t</sup> & Aff<sup>l</sup> Serv<sup>t</sup>  
 Aylsham  
 Jan<sup>y</sup> 6<sup>th</sup> 1818  
 Warden

*Jonas Warden's application letter. NRO*

His supporters knew he had qualified in the Madras system of education which was the system required by the National Society to access grants. However, there appears to have been a rumour about Warden sent to the vicar implying he had been involved with a Yarmouth newspaper and displayed 'a bias to democratic principles'. Eager not to hire another James North, his backers assured the Revd Norris that Jonas was not 'a political rebel'. He must have had some savings from his private work as he purchased the schoolhouse from Clement Overton for £275 as part of the agreement to assist with the outstanding cost of the building. He and his wife were listed as living alone in School House Lane in the 1821 census, presumably in the old schoolhouse behind the school. A man of property Warden also owned a double cottage on Itteringham Common from 1815 to 1823 which was rented out<sup>4</sup>. In 1817 he had also bought a house from Thomas Rackham of Aylsham for £55 in Crown Court, St Peter Hungate in Norwich in 1817 which his sisters Hannah Thomas and Elizabeth Browne later inherited. His solicitor and trustee in this was William Repton<sup>5</sup>.

Sadly, only 5 years after becoming Master, he died at the age of 46 and was buried 6 May 1823 in the churchyard. His will, which he had made in 1819, left his 'beloved' wife all his books as well as his real estate in Itteringham, Aylsham and Norwich. This provision did not prevent Mary from petitioning the trustees for a pension if she was not allowed to continue working at the school<sup>6</sup>. She argues that his early death after expending 'large Amounts' on the school had left her with a great loss. She reminds the 'Gentlemen of Aylsham' that 'there were not originally any house only schoolroom' and that the 'present House and premises with other conveniences...was built and other alterations done by Chas Overton and the late Jonas Warden.' The trustees did, however, agree to her claim, although 'not supported in law', for £44 for fixtures and fittings. The incoming master could not be expected to pay more than £24 so they called on 'the commiseration & liberality of the Town' to raise the rest, with the trustees and senior residents paying 1 or 2 guineas each. Mary remained the Mistress looking after 45 girls in 1824 when John Balls arrived as master but she was gone the following year<sup>7</sup>. This may be related to the fact that the school was reported in 1824 as having been 'reduced to a very low ebb by the late Master'. Perhaps Jonas had been ill for some time or had given more attention to playing the organ than to the school.

The description of the fixtures in the schoolroom at the handover is fairly sparse: 9 stools and forms, 4 desks, 1 desk stool and 44 feet of seat tops. A stove and fender completed the list

*Aylsham June 30, 1823*

*A Valuation taken by James Roope and W. Warden of all the moveables & of Mrs Warden of Aylsham*

School	Five stools, four desks, one desk stool, 44 feet of deal for top of table, platform, fender and stove	£ 10 6 0
Parlour	Barth stone, stone slips, register stove, chimney, cap-stone of square mantelpiece, shutters for two windows painted each	10 16 8
Passage	Shutter to door and stone at the door, roof	1 12 6
Kitchen	Coal range, brick stove, iron gate and bench, two closets, shelves, mantle piece, shutters to window, W.C. door in wall, and a stone hearth	6 14 6
Backhouse	Coal grate, iron gate, shutter, copper for scalding, doors at the stairs, shelves and safe in pantry, a door to the back door, old rail to stairs, two locks on chamber doors & 3 locks	4 15 0
Dairy	Sundry shelves	1 15 0
Food	Water, troughs and pans for old stock, rack, mangers, and stalls in stable	1 12 0

### **Valuation of School room 1823. NRO**

On the death of Warden, his successor was suggested by the Revd Robert Walpole, a founder member of the Norwich branch of the National Society and a member of the Wolterton Hall family<sup>8</sup>. He wrote from his London address to William Repton 'as an influential person at the place' suggesting they ask the Norwich National Society Committee for a proper person to fill the vacancy. He knows they 'can recommend a very excellent master – John Balls – who 'has done himself great credit in conducting a school at Edgefield'. The parish and school trustees, who were considering two others candidates from Aylsham, would have found it hard to refuse such a recommendation.

John Balls and his wife Anne took over as Master and Mistress in late 1823 and he soon complained that some of the children were 'behaving ill at church'. But the National Society noted the school appeared now to be in a 'progressive state' and in 1826 there were 62 boys and 41 girls who were admitted from the age of 6. The top class ranged from 9 to 12 years and attendance was good except when farmers employed them. The girls also learnt sewing and knitting. Numbers remained high during the '20s with a peak of 74 boys and 48 girls in 1829 but in



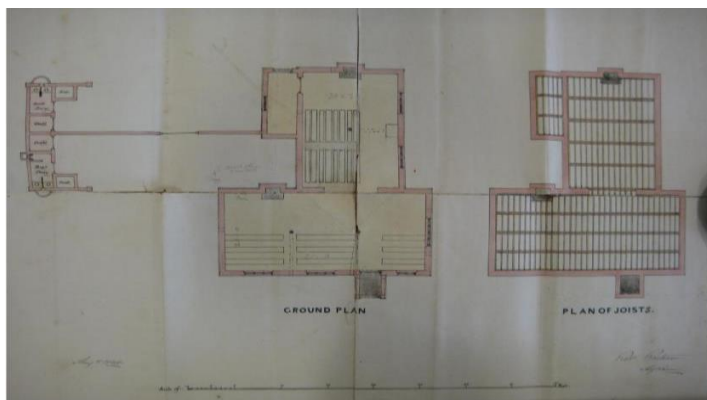
1830 the report showed a decrease of 24 children, ringworm present in the school, and attendance not so regular as usual. John Balls stayed at the school until around 1839.

### **Funding and rebuilding**

The old bequest of £10 was still paid by the City of Norwich with the £20 annual grant from the National Society but an equal amount was now being raised by voluntary subscription. Many gave fixed annual subscriptions; the Blickling estate accounts show 5 guineas being paid in 1822 (and the same amount in 1902!) The school room had always been used - presumably at a fee - for other events: in 1818 the Savings Bank opened at the schoolroom where every Monday lunchtime (12-2.00) savers could access their accounts<sup>9</sup>. William Repton regularly attended functions held at the school – ‘singing evenings’ in May 1844, and lectures were given there – the Revd T Wilson spoke on his travels in Egypt in January 1846. The 3rd October 1848 was a major day for the town as the school room was taken over for the prize giving by the South Erpingham Association<sup>10</sup>. Seventy-four industrious labourers were present in the room to receive their rewards and enjoy a beef and plum pudding dinner. The vicar cautioned them against ‘adjourning to public houses as had been done last year’.

In 1833 the Charity Commissioners report had stated ‘the school is chiefly supported by voluntary contributions and conducted on National system. Grammar has not been taught for many years; premises are a dwelling house and a schoolroom lately enlarged in national manner; and 1 1/4 acres of land called School Pightle (held of Lancaster manor).’ The 1839 Directory said the school was capable of containing 150 children and in 1840 an infants school was added, a loan being raised from the government Education Department which was conditional to the school being officially inspected. However the school was soon again in need of repair and enlargement but this time it was decided to start afresh and build on the other part of the property. Local builder Robert Bartram drew up the plans.

As always Aylsham’s predominant solicitor and churchwarden William Repton was a great supporter. By 1848 he writes that he is one five surviving of the nine trustees and sets out the proposals for the future. He notes in his diary on 21 Jan 1848 that the subscriptions were opened for building the extension to the school and he himself gave £15 in April 1849 for the building of the Aylsham National School. The extension had become a complete rebuild.



***Robert Bartram's plan 1848. NRO***

The whole was re-sited in 1848 at a cost of £700 on the acre of land to the west, the old schoolhouse pightle. A grant from the National Society of £40 was made May 1848 'towards the erection of new Buildings for the Schools of Aylsham' and another grant was made by the Privy Council<sup>11</sup>. At this point the land was made freehold from the Manor Aylsham Lancaster by Lady Lothian.

The property - the pightle and schoolhouse - was formally conveyed by the school trustees (James Gay of Thurning, William Repton, R W Parmeter, John Warnes and Edward Fennell) to the parish (Revd Edward Yates and churchwardens William Repton and John Warnes) on the 5 March 1849. Peterson's Lane was still described as the 'public highway from Abel Heath to Millgate'. The man who had been renting the pightle - George Edward Tattam - was presumably offered alternative land! Sadly there is no reference to what happened to the old school building to the east but it must have been completely removed.

It was specified that the new school was for the children of Aylsham, Blickling and Tuttington and be run on National Society principles by a committee of the vicar and 7 persons each subscribing £1. The National Society granted £10 a year annually and in Oct 1856 £10 was granted for books and apparatus 'in the new Infant School at Aylsham'. The families had to pay a couple of pence per child a week.

## Masters

While John Balls had been the master, his successor had been running a private school in White Hart Street. James Hindry and his wife Louisa appear first in 1836 although James may have been related to Benjamin and Elizabeth Hindry who had a school in the Market Place in 1830. James and Louisa take over the national school with Jane Horstead as the infant teacher from around 1840 until at least 1846. The couple, who were in their 30s, lived in the school house with their maid Hannah Williams. By January 1848 the Revd Yates was advertising in the *Norfolk Chronicle* for a master and mistress to apply by April. The 'highest testimonials' were required and as 'a liberal salary' was offered the master had to be qualified to instruct pupil teachers and stipendary monitors'.

Following the rebuilding of the schools there was a flurry of staff. In July 1848 the papers mention a Mr Bryant (sic) of Aylsham passing a schoolmasters' exam in London and by 1850 a James Bryan and his wife Charlotte are in post with Maria Dodman looking after the infants. However by the time of the census in 1851, the master and mistress are two singletons, James France, a 19 year old, from Leeds and Sarah Payne, 22, from Essex. Perhaps because of their status and age, they were lodging in School Lane with George Randell, agricultural labourer, and his wife. The schoolhouse had been rented out after the Hindrys left, it seems with agreement to take in the school staff.

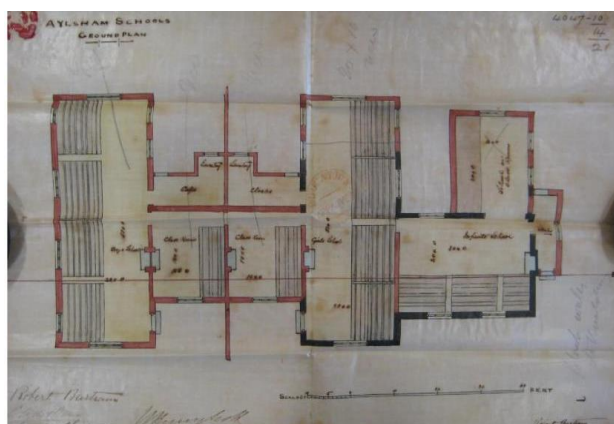
France remained, with Miss Sarah Dennington teaching the girls and infants in 1853 but they are quickly replaced with Thomas and Ann Peake in 1854. By 1856 some stability for the children is created by the appointment of a Norfolk couple, John and Mary Ann Rix who look after 65 boys and 48 girls. Over the next 15 or so years of their tenure, the couple are joined by infant teachers, Hannah Eldon (1856), Matilda Payne (1858), Virtue Staff (1865), and Alice Brown (1869). The turnover - and there were probably more - may have been because they had 54 infants to look after, the pay was not very high and they had to be unmarried. Their two daughters, Elizabeth and Mary Ann, were teaching at the school in 1871.

Mr Rix was a disciplinarian but not always effectively as a story by William Starling in his memories of Aylsham shows. Starling himself did not attend the parish school but went to Wright's school for sons of farmers and traders. The children of 'the agricultural and mechanic class' were catered for by Rix. One of the lads, Jack Laxen, a baker's son, often played truant and one day he went

to school only to be met by the master demanding to know where he had been. Starling goes on that Rix applied his normal method of punishment of placing the boy's head between his own legs and then using his leather strap on their behinds. But Jack turned his head and bit Rix's leg sending him flying backwards. Jack ran off and soon Rix was the 'laughing stock of the town'. Jack's father put him to work in the bakehouse but he died shortly afterwards. Interestingly Starling remembered it being called the Free school despite that era having long gone.

### **The 1870 and 1873 Education Acts: more change**

In 1870 schools could become a Public Elementary School under the new acts but the managers did not realise that being part of a school district would increase their costs. The districts were intended to ensure the whole county had coverage for all the villages and by 1873 the old expectation to provide for 250 children had increased to 380, including 20 from Ingworth. At the same time, there was a major push by non-conformist groups to release the grip of the 'churchmen' on primary education which came to a head at a meeting on the 10 July 1874. After heated debates, the parish decided not to change their status to become a Board school but to enlarge the present building (only designed for 180) at a cost of around £1035. The idea was to raise enough contributions to trigger the £264 grant from the government and £400 had already be given. Obviously the school had been confident of their option winning the day as plans for the additions had already been drawn up and sent for consideration!



***Robert Bartram's plan 1873. NRO***

After the 1874 enlargement, a grant of £25 towards ‘fittings for the National School Aylsham’ was made in October 1874. The school could now hold 200 more children.

### **Thomas Hill**

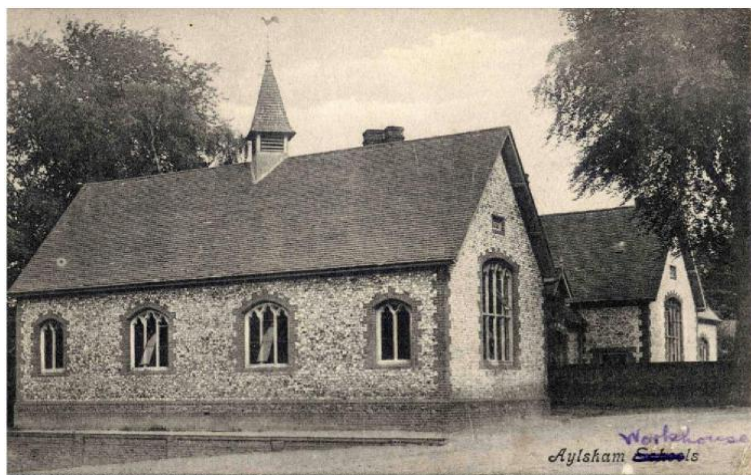
The master who was in post during this time of major change was Thomas Hill who was to stay for over 30 years. Arriving in Aylsham in his 30s with his wife and family, his career was fairly typical. Born in London, both he and Mary Ann were 'certificated' teachers and had worked at least three years in the small village of Shelley near Huddersfield where their first two sons, Henry and Frank were born. Perhaps attracted by the newly improved school buildings, they applied to Aylsham where they settled and had another four children. Thomas went on to be elected President of the Norfolk & Norwich Elementary Teachers in 1881. In his inaugural speech, he expressed the hope that one day teachers would receive a pension but his main concern was to highlight the loophole that allowed children to leave school at the age of 10. Although the Education Act had intended to create compulsory attendance from 5-13, section 74 allowed for local byelaws to except children who were sick, lived more than 3 miles from school or, more contentiously, who were considered ‘certificated’ in reaching a certain stage of education and were 10 or over. The standard for this measure varied from place



*The boys classes. c 1880. Mr Hill (?) back centre*

to place and Hill was concerned the government were not monitoring the number of 10 year-olds leaving school.





*Rowland Palmer's card 1906. Aylsham Town Archive*

window of his class as '2<sup>nd</sup> from left.' Aged about 29 at this time, he was lodging with Mr Grimson in Cawston Road, probably George a house painter.

### **All change**

By 1901 the elementary school educational system in England was about to undergo a major change. Under the 1902 Act ('the Balfour act') the old parish and national schools along with the non-conformist Board Schools were all taken over by the County Councils. The council immediately surveyed all its new responsibilities in 1903 and the details of the Aylsham School as it was then will be found in the report of Daryl Long's excellent talk, elsewhere in this issue<sup>14</sup>.

In 1926, the managers, who were still responsible for repairs, raised £2,000 for urgent work by donations and a Masque which was held at Blickling Hall.

The old and new buildings now contain St Michaels's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary and Nursery Schools. The new Kindergarten building is built on the rood of land where the original Free School once stood.

## Notes

1. NRO, PD602/114 Most of the information in this article comes from a file kept by Wm Repton and others.
2. *Aylsham: A Nest of Norfolk Lawyers*
3. 1821 census; Latin poem by Jarvis in the *Norfolk Chronicle* Dec 1819
4. Author's house deeds
5. NRO, N/TC/D1/524/16,33
6. NRO, MC 382/179
7. NRO, NDS 278/3
8. Author's booklet *Revd Robert Walpole: Cleric and Educationalist*, 2014. Walpole later paid for the erection of the school at Itteringham from his own purse.
9. This continued until a new building - now 17 Market Place - was built for the Savings Bank around 1850.
10. The association for rewarding good conduct & encouraging industrious habits amongst servants, cottagers and labourers.
11. DN/NDS 171
12. A copy of Thomas Hill's admission register of boys 1872-1911 is held in the Town Archives.
13. MC3/233,236
14. NRO, C/ED 183/1 The 1903 survey volume was used extensively for a joint project covering 480 schools completed in 2012. The full records (including photographs) are stored with the Norfolk Heritage Environment Record (HER), now housed at The Archive Centre at County Hall. (See *Building an Education: An Historical and Architectural Study of Rural Schools and Schooling in Norfolk c 1800-1944*, Longcroft and Wade-Martins, Journal of the Norfolk Historic Buildings Group Vol 5, 2013.)

*Correction to Part One: in the previous article (p220) the chapel Henry Aleyns left in 1554 was in the east end of the church, not in the east field.*



## **The Norfolk Survey of Schools 1903, a talk by Daryl Long**

There was a good turnout for a wintry evening on the 26<sup>th</sup> of January for the talk by Daryl Long, a research volunteer at the Norfolk Record Office, a good friend and former colleague of our Secretary, Sue Sharpe, on the 1903 Norfolk Survey of Schools. A show of hands revealed the remarkable proportion of our Society with roots in the teaching profession and the whole evening seemed notably relaxed and enjoyable. Daryl has very kindly given us a summary of the Aylsham component of the talk, with a couple of further photos from the Aylsham Town Archive taken by Joseph Dester, husband of the Headmistress.



*Aylsham Schools, early C20. Aylsham Town Archive*

The 1902 Education Act abolished the school board system and established Local Education Authorities (LEAs). Norfolk established LEAs for Norwich, Great Yarmouth, Kings Lynn and Norfolk County Council (NCC). NCC, to aid this transition; carried out a survey of its county schools in 1903. This survey is held at the NRO. 'Salary Returns Form 2' was completed earlier the same year and is useful for cross-referencing names as well as giving additional information.



***Emily Dester and Nellie Hill.***  
***Aylsham Town Archive***

The survey was completed on 30<sup>th</sup> September 1903. Schools were not always listed alphabetically but replicate the order they appeared in the salary returns book. Headteachers (HT) were asked to submit a survey for each department. Departments were defined as those recognized by the School Boards set up in the 1870s. Aylsham had three departments; boys, girls and infants. Its three Heads were Thomas Hill, Mary Hill and Emily Dester. Husband and wife Thomas and Mary lived in the schoolhouse with their many children, three teaching in the school, while Emily Dester lived with her pharmacist husband in the town.

details, of school, numbers and grant, staffing, organization of the curriculum, a plan of the school and school furniture. The first part named the school and the HT and recorded the number of pupils, attendance and the amount of grant paid over the last three years.

The survey had six different sections;

Grants were conditional upon the school being inspected and could be reduced or withheld altogether eg. if registers were not kept accurately. Pupil numbers also give an interesting picture of the demographics at the time. Here is the section for Aylsham Infants. While it had capacity for 65 children it was oversubscribed with 119 on roll in 1903. The

**Return of the School Staff Engaged on Sept. 30th, 1903.**

*X.R.—Every person in receipt of a Salary must be returned on this Form, e.g., unrecognised Monitors.*

SCHOOL *Aylsham* DEPARTMENT *Infants* HEAD TEACHER *Emily J. Dester*

*\*A separate sheet must be used for each Department recognised as such by the Board of Education. An Infants' Class need not have a separate sheet.*

STATISTICS FOR THE LAST 3 SCHOOL YEARS.	1901.	1902.	1903.
(a) Number on the Books at the end of the year -	122	121	119
(b) Average Attendance in the Standards -			
"    "    Infants' Class -	74.5	50.4	73.5
(c) Total Average Attendance -			
(d) Accommodation Provided (a) for Standards -			
"    "    (b) for Infants -	115	115	115
(e) What was the Principal Grant earned under Art. 101 -			
"    "    "    Art. 98 -	17/-	17/-	17/-
What was the Grant earned under Arts. 104 and 105 -			

infant department received 17 shillings a head if its average attendance was over 20.

The second part of the survey detailed staffing at the school. Here is the staffing for Aylsham boys. Two of Thomas Hill's sons are teaching at the school. Most of their family went into teaching and Thomas' son Geoffrey succeeded his father when he retired.

Staff Engaged on Sept. 30th, 1903, shown as placed for Teaching Purposes.

TEACHERS' CLASSES IN FULL		QUALIFICATIONS									
		Elementary	Advanced	Artistic	Artistic	Artistic	Artistic	Artistic	Artistic	Artistic	Artistic
		Elementary	Advanced	Artistic	Artistic	Artistic	Artistic	Artistic	Artistic	Artistic	Artistic
VI	6	Thomas Hill									
VI	15	George Hill									
V	24	Thomas Hill									
IV	21	Frank Hill									
III	23	Leonard Horner									
II	29	William Fairclough									
I	34	Arthur Duckett									

The third part of the form was about curriculum organization. Below is the section from Blickling where Sarah George was Headmistress. Occasional teachers were often employed to teach sewing to the girls or drill to the boys.

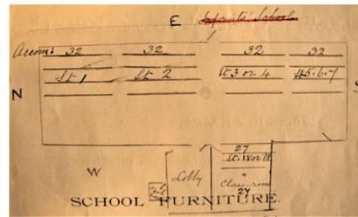
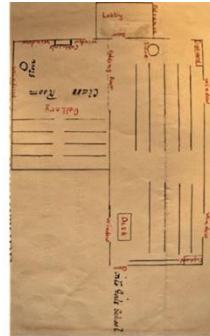
1. Is any Occasional Teacher employed? e.g., Sewing Mistress, Drill Instructor.....Yes

If so, give Name A. E. Ward.....Duties Sewing & Knitting Salary £9.10

2. Show the Grouping (if it differs from the Grouping for Classes) for the teaching of Drawing, Geography, History, Object Lessons on Common Things, and Singing.....

Standard I with Infants for Object Lessons and singing

The fourth part of the form asked for a plan of the school. At Aylsham three plans were submitted and, pieced together, form a (not-to-scale) plan of the whole school.



The final part of the form was 'Furniture'. This was an opportunity for schools to raise concerns as most had seen no investment since the 1870s. Comments about desks abound although Headteachers in the Aylsham area seemed fairly content with theirs.

Schools were asked about their 'museum' a rather grand title for what was usually a cupboard storing items for object lessons, a major part of the curriculum at the time. Aylsham boys had a cupboard but no items, Aylsham girls had neither cupboard nor items whereas Aylsham infants had no cupboard but six items. Perhaps some arrangement could have been made between the three schools?

493 pages of survey returns have the potential to reveal thousands of stories. Anyone researching education, family history or village life would find this document invaluable

Daryl Long – NRO Volunteer

## **Aylsham bells: part of the aural life of the town, by Jeremy Worth**

Aylsham Parish Church peal of 10 bells was rededicated on August the 14<sup>th</sup> after more than two years of silence. Cracks were discovered in 7 of the 10 bells in March 2021 and ringing had to stop. It took until early 2023 to decide how best to get bells ringing again in the church and to raise the necessary £45,000 for the work. On March 15<sup>th</sup> the bells were taken to Newmarket for the cracks to be repaired by welding, followed by a trip to Nicholson's in Bridport to be retuned and their headstocks refitted. (The sound bells make is complex and tuning a bell to the required pitch and tone involves shaving metal mostly off the inside of the bell. Bill Hibbert's <https://www.hibberts.co.uk/building-a-bell-sound/> explains just how much experience and skill it requires). In consequence, the bells are all one semitone higher in pitch, generally between one and two inches slimmer and overall 6 cwt lighter!

With its peal of 10 bells, Aylsham keeps company in Norfolk with Wymondham Abbey, Kings Lynn Minster and Gressenhall parish church. Only St Peter Mancroft and Great Yarmouth Minster, both with 12, have more. The Cathedral only has five. Aylsham's bells and their pitch, maker and date of last casting is in the Appendix.

The earliest reference to the bells at Aylsham is in a

codicil to the will of a shoemaker, John Bettes Snr, who, in 1529 left £10 to buy a 'trebill bell' to add to the five bells in the steeple<sup>1</sup>. In the near 500 years



***Aylsham bells after tuning at Nicholson's. Photo Mathew Martin***



since then more bells have been bought, and at least six of the ten bells have been subsequently recast, while two bells, the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> have been recast twice. It is possible that some of the bell metal has been in Aylsham since 1529.

To start with, bells were bought from Norwich based bell founders. There were 34 working over the period 1380, the earliest recorded, to 1745, the last, according to the online Dove's Guide for Church Bell Ringers<sup>2</sup>. In that time they cast or recast almost 600 bells. In 1648 two Norwich bell founders, John Brend and John Draper, came to Aylsham at the end of the Civil War and recast the then tenor bell (ie the lowest sounding bell of a peal) in a local barn, paying the owner £1 for the use of it.

In 1677 Samuel Gilpin and Edward Tooke from Norwich recast the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> bells, and in 1700 they cast two new bells, the present tenor, and the 5<sup>th</sup>, to make the peal up to eight bells. These two are now the oldest bells in the tower. The last bells cast locally in Norwich were the 8<sup>th</sup> by John Stephens in 1726 and the 9<sup>th</sup> by Thomas Newman in 1741, not long before bell casting finished in 1745. Two treble bells were bought in 1736 from a London foundry, but they were not deemed good enough. In 1775 the four highest sounding bells were recast in St Neots by Osborn and Arnold, a short lived firm recorded by Doves as only casting 19 bells.



***The tenor bell at the rededication service, suitably adorned, prior to rehangng. Photo Jeremy Worth***

In the mid nineteenth century Aylsham turned to the Whitechapel bell foundry whose owners, G Mears and Co, later Mears and Stainbank, had bought up a number of other bell foundries. They recast the 7<sup>th</sup> bell in 1860 and the 6<sup>th</sup> bell in 1879. Since then attention until now has largely been on the frame, replaced in 1890 and reinforced in 1960. At that time the whole peal was one quarter turned, meaning each bell was moved round by one quarter

of the circumference so the clapper hit a different part of the bell, to even up wear.

If there were bells in 1529, there must have been bell ringers, but how organised we do not know. In Norwich, ringers had been organised from 1602 and an expert band at St Peter Mancroft completed the first ever peal, rung on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1715. Every change possible on seven bells (1x2x3x4x5x6x7, 5040) was rung, with the tenor sounding at the end of each change. This set the norm, but for the next century peals were rare. The Norwich ringers came regularly to Aylsham and a keen rivalry developed. It was probably because of the interest of bell ringers that the peal was made up to eight in 1700. In November 1731 the Aylsham ringers claimed to have rung a peal which ‘they did not believe the Mancroft ringers had completed a recent peal in a more difficult method to compose’. This naturally led to an indignant and scornful retort from the leader of the Mancroft Company who maintained that the Aylsham ringers were incapable of ringing a peal!<sup>3</sup>

Then with the two new bells making the peal up to ten, the Aylsham ringers rang a peal of 6048 changes on 1<sup>st</sup> March 1736. It took them three hours and forty two minutes and was a record at a time when there were no more than a dozen peals of ten bells in the country. We know the ringers names: John Amyas, William Welly, William Molster, Robert Lubbock, Robert Scott, Robert Roofe, Edward Barnes, and John, Ralph and Thomas Spurrell.

Occasionally, the local band lost that perfect accord that should exist between the church authorities and the ringers. In 1850: “*. . . in consequence of a little altercation between the churchwardens of this town and the ringers, respecting a wedding, the ringers made what the Sailors term a ‘strike’*” wrote Charles Clements Junior to James Burman, Master of the Great Yarmouth Company. The bells remained silent until the following Easter Monday – “*..when, at the request of the Parishioners, they were again rung by our Company*”.

That perfect accord has long been restored and Aylsham boasts a long tradition of distinguished bell ringers. Indeed, Nolan Golden, born in North Repps, who moved to Aylsham in 1968 after a teaching career in Norwich, gained an international reputation as one of the world’s leading exponents



**F Nolan Golden MBE**  
**1908-1991**

of change ringing. He was awarded an MBE in 1989 for his services to bell ringing and rang more than 1280 peals in Norfolk alone.

Bell ringing is normally hidden from view in the tower. But, in 2012, students from UEA made a short documentary of the Tuesday ringing practice, which can still be found on YouTube under the title ‘The Way of the Bells UEA’.

1. Early modern wills: A codicil, by Maggie Vaughan Lewis Aylsham Local History Society Journal Vol 10 No 9.
2. Dove’s Guide for Church Bell Ringers <https://dove.cccb.org.uk/>
3. Things are better now. Indeed, it was comments after a visit from the Mancroft Company which led some months later to the cracks being discovered.

*I am grateful to Keith Shaw, former secretary to the St Michael’s Guild of Ringers for giving me a copy of his pamphlet ‘The Fine Bells of Aylsham’ which he put together eight years ago from the writings of Nolan Golden MBE, which I have used extensively in writing this article. My thanks also to the current Tower Captain Mike Cocker for his help. For those interested in learning more, or joining the ringers, he can be reached at [mac653uk@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:mac653uk@yahoo.co.uk)*

**Appendix:** pitch diameter and weight are after tuning by Nicholsons

Bell	Pitch	Diam ins	Weight cwt-qr-lb	Maker	Casting date
Treble	G #	27½	4-2-10	Osborn & Arnold	1775
2 <sup>nd</sup>	F #	28¾	5-2-2	Osborn & Arnold	1775
3 <sup>rd</sup>	E	29¼	5-0-27	Osborn & Arnold	1775
4 <sup>th</sup>	D #	30¼	5-2-2	Osborn & Arnold	1775
5 <sup>th</sup>	C #	32¼	6-0-5	Samuel Gilpin	1700
6 <sup>th</sup>	B	33¼	7-1-21	Mears & Stainbank	1879
7 <sup>th</sup>	A	36	8-1-27	G Mears & Co	1860
8 <sup>th</sup>	G #	38¼	11-0-26	John Stephens	1726
9 <sup>th</sup>	F #	42	13-3-15	Thomas Newman	1741
Tenor	E	46½	17-1-6	Samuel Gilpin	1700

*Dove’s Guide for Church Bell Ringers*



## Broadland Churches, a talk by Ian Hinton

A capacity audience on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> July at the Friendship Hall welcomed back Ian Hinton for a fascinating talk about Broadland Churches.

Norfolk has more medieval churches than any other county, while the density of medieval churches in Broadland is twice that of the rest of the county. Indeed, Broadland has the highest density of rural parish churches in the country. The Broads National Park and its adjacent parishes have an area of approximately 600 square kilometres and contains 136 known medieval churches - 1 church for every 4.5 square kilometres. One hundred of these churches are still in use.



*Barnby, Broadland's smallest church. Photo  
Ian Hinton*

Fifty-six churches in Broadland were listed in the Domesday survey of 1086. Eleven other churches that were not listed are known to have existed at this date because they are referred to in pre-Conquest wills or charters. Churches seem generally to mark the sites of Middle and Late Saxon settlements, perhaps implying the existence of a burial ground, if not of an actual church, from a

very early date. The overwhelming majority of them must, at the time of the Norman Conquest, have been timber structures.

Almost one-third of Broadland churches are now largely isolated, many with only the Big House or an individual farm for company. There is no evidence to support the common belief that isolated churches were the result of the Black Death destroying villages in the fourteenth century. Churches are isolated because settlement moved, or expanded elsewhere, in the course of the Middle Ages, often more than once, but the presence of a burial ground kept them fixed in position.

Parish churches were originally built by landowners. This process started at the top, with the Saxon kings, ealdormen and senior thegns building churches on their estates, and worked its way down the social scale. Broadland,



*South Walsham, two churches in one churchyard.*

*Photo Ian Hinton*

with its generally good soils, was able to support a multitude of small estates, and there are twelve cases where individual townships contained more than one parish church, in the cases of Gillingham and Ormesby as many as four. In four instances two churches stand in the same, or adjacent, churchyards - at South Walsham, Gillingham, Kirby Bedon and Rockland.

Church losses started soon after the Domesday Book was written and continued into the post-medieval period, especially where there were multiple churches in a village. Problems of maintenance often ensured that one was eventually abandoned and its fabric used to help repair the other. Reduced attendance, made worse by the Toleration Act of 1689 which removed the obligation to attend a Church of England service and allowed meetings to be held by most Non-Conformist groups, made expensive maintenance work difficult. In general terms, church redundancies in Broadland have been fairly evenly spread over the centuries, with sixteen in the four centuries up to 1600; another twelve in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and ten in the nineteenth and twentieth.

The small stone churches erected in the wake of the Norman Conquest were almost all subsequently extended and altered because of growing demands and changing liturgical requirements. Most churches initially had short chancels, often with apsidal ends, like that which still survives at Hales, but the majority were lengthened to cater for the requirements of new liturgy.

A growing population during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries necessitated an increase in the size of naves, to house the congregation and the increasing number of processions.



***Martham, Broadland's largest church. Photo Ian Hinton***

Naves were

extended eastwards, westwards and southwards, some more than once; others had aisles added.

The majority of churches originally had no bell tower, only acquiring one in the course of the twelfth, thirteenth or fourteenth centuries. Round-towered churches are particularly associated with Norfolk. Just over 70 per cent of the 186 examples in England are to be found in the county, with 32 standing examples in Broadland and a further five known amongst the lost churches. Few, if any, are Saxon and it has been shown that they were still being built as late as the fourteenth century. Over a period of 400 years, round towers cannot have been built for a single reason, such as cultural influences from the Continent or lack of stone for corners, as none of these reasons were valid for the whole time, so in many cases were probably the Patron's preference.

Around a quarter of the original churches are now either redundant, in ruins or have disappeared completely. Many of those that remain are remote from the communities they serve and face the dual threat of the rising maintenance costs associated with ageing buildings that require specialist repairs, and the declining income resulting from dwindling congregations. Are they facing a future reliant on charitable intervention?

*Our thanks to Ian for supplying this summary of his talk*

## **The history of Pegg's Yard Red Lion Street: a preview, by Adi Raschkewitz**

I have lived at the entrance to Pegg's Yard off Red Lion Street (RLS) since 2013. Towards the end of 2021 a neighbour suggested I might like to write a history of the yard and somewhat misguidedly I agreed. However, it quickly became clear that today's Pegg's Yard is a totally modern, and as is the way of such things, a rather artificial construct and what I was really researching was the history of the properties (and their people) *behind* which the yard sits and has sat since at least the late 15<sup>th</sup> century. After 18 months research, I have a mass of information which will form a series of articles telling the stories of those people and properties in more detail. This preview sets the scene by describing the earliest use of the site.



**Entrance to Pegg's Yard  
between 26 and 22 RLS.  
Author photo**

### **The Angel's Back Yard**

The early history of Pegg's Yard is all to do with the Angel Inn or "Le Angell" as it was originally known. The first record we have for the Angel Inn is from 1499. It encompassed all the buildings, and the yardage behind them, from White's Butchers (16 RLS) northwards to the Dry Cleaners (26) at the entrance of Pegg's Yard. The Angel's yards led eastwards on to a patch of ancient rough pasture land known as the "Ollands" ('Old Lands') which bordered on the current Oakfield Road, running parallel with Red Lion Street. The medieval Ollands (which were originally much larger) also belonged to the Angel. The close of land which survived was later known as Starling's Meadow and we know that it was still accessible through the yard as late as the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Starling's Meadow is still clearly visible on the aerial photo opposite from 1932. It is reasonable to assume that the Angel's Yards had various outbuildings -stables, store houses, a brew house, a wash house, a kitchen and privies etc but what was where no one knows.



**Aerial view 1932 Aylsham Town Archive**

How much of the original Angel is left behind the more modern, ‘Georgian’ brick facades is unknown but a survey in 1995 of 18 Red Lion Street by the Norfolk Historic Buildings Group found beams and other details which point to the 1500s.

The massive beam I am sitting directly beneath whilst typing this in our flat above the Dry Cleaners, with its Lamb’s Tongue chamfers, certainly appears to be of some antiquity, as do the beams in the upstairs of 22 RLS. So, we can say that from the end of the 1400s until the Angel closed c.1760 what we now call “Pegg’s Yard” was simply the north part of the Angel’s back yard(s). But first, a warning about street numbers.

Unfortunately, house numbers didn’t get used on Red Lion Street (or in Aylsham at all) until, just, within living memory which makes researching the properties very difficult and writing clearly for readers very convoluted. So it is almost impossible to say *where* on the street a trader was situated and to add to the complexity traders were not averse to moving their businesses up, down and across RLS to get a better deal on the rent or better suited premises.

The census records for RLS are also hard to interpret as the enumerator, certainly in 1851, seems to have mixed up all his papers, crossed the street in a zig-zag line or perhaps was drunk! Add to that the problem of dating the many photographs of the street and it becomes a question of using corroborative evidence such as the manorial court rolls to make the most likely solutions. So, apologies for the frequent but necessary use of ‘probably’ and ‘perhaps’ in the articles to come.

## **Finally**

### **Distressing scene in Red Lion Street**

In 2016 (Dec Vol 10, No 8) Lynda Wyx reminded us of the usefulness of newspapers for bringing Aylsham's past to life. Now that the 19<sup>th</sup> century newspapers are searchable online hours of fun may be had investigating the huge number of hits for Aylsham. Just as a taster here is an example from 1859.

*Norfolk Chronicle Nov 26 1859*

#### **Detention of a corpse**

On 18<sup>th</sup> inst between 9-11 o'clock am Red Lion Street was the scene of much excitement. Groups of respectable persons and others were assembled who were unanimously expressing their abhorrence of the distressing and heartless proceedings which had brought them together. A hearse and mourning coach had been standing with its attendants opposite a shop, from 9 o'clock. The deceased, a most respectable female, Mrs Ward, formerly many years housekeeper at Westwick Hall, died on the previous Monday from cancer. She had been a lodger for a few months, a sister had nursed her, any expense it is stated that had been incurred was liquidated.

On the evening previous to the proposed interment a bill of £8 for extras was presented, but it being considered an unfair demand, no attention was paid to it. On the hearse coming for the body the claimant declared he would not give it up till the money was paid. A gentleman and friends of the deceased offered to be answerable for any legitimate demand that might be made, urged that property that belonged to her was then in his possession, which he could detain but all was no avail.

A professional gentleman was consulted, until at 11 o'clock it was deemed advisable to despatch the son of the deceased to Witton near Norwich to stay the preparations for the funeral, and the hearse and mourning coach returned to the Black Boys Hotel. As a sequel to this very disagreeable affair, it suffice to say, the body remained here till 9 o'clock on the Monday morning when the hearse drew up and took it to the place of interment, the bereaved relatives having preceded it.

Maggie Vaughan Lewis

## List of Members

Alford, Paul & Andrea  
Ashworth, Lorna  
Askham, Marie  
Austen, Catherine  
Baker, Derrick W  
Baker, Eleanor & Paul  
Baker, Peter & Sue  
Barwick, Gillian\*  
Bell, Chris & Marcia  
Bell, Sarah  
Bird Margaret  
Blake, Jill  
Bliss, Tim  
Bostle, Clive & Clare  
Brady, Patrick  
Brooker, Keith & Margaret  
Bullock, Ian  
Bush, Michael  
Calvert, Ros  
Cannon, Lesley & Bennett,  
Trevor  
Carnelly, John  
Carr, David & Julia  
Casimir, Stewart  
Claridge, Haydn  
Cooke, Cherry  
Cox, Felicity  
Davies, Alan  
Davy, Rex & Daphne  
Dawson, John & Jan  
Dyer, Frances  
Earl, Stephen & Abigail  
Edmondson, Susan  
Edwards, John & Veronica  
Ellis, Judith  
Elphinstone, Nicholas

## October 2023

Evans, Gordon & Julie  
Fisher, Sue  
Floyd, Nicole  
Fox, Susan & Martyn  
Garamendi-Frederick,  
Christine  
Goodwin, Michael &  
Veronika  
Goose, Margaret  
Goose, Jean  
Gunn-Braden,  
Marguerita  
Hall, Chris & Chris  
Harrison, Ruth  
Harry, David  
Hawke, Jean  
Hill, Marilyn  
Hills, Valerie J E  
Hindley, Angela  
Hollis, Margarette & Philip  
Horne, John  
Jay, Susan E  
Jeavons, Stanley  
Johnston Graeme\*  
Jolly, Peter\*  
Jones, Hazel & Malcolm  
Kingsford, Philip &  
Sheila  
Kinsey, David & Julia  
Knee, Rob & Wendy  
Kuyper, Jeffrey & Linda  
Lamb, Jose D  
Law, Ellen Barbara &  
Carlyle, David  
Lavender, Peter &  
Nightingale, Christine  
Layt, Angela

Lee, Carole & Neville  
 Lloyd, Thelma  
 Lucier, Hilary  
 Ludden, Michael & Fran  
 Lyons Derek\*  
 Margaron, Susan & Giles  
 McKenzie, Trisha  
 McManus, Susan & Ian  
 Mills, Lloyd & Hunt,  
 Ros  
 Mollard, Sheila\*  
 Morgan, Victor  
 Osborne, Robert  
 Owen, Leonard  
 Palmer, Anne  
 Pannell Jim\*  
 Parker, David & Lesley  
 Parry, Enid  
 Paulding, Cindy  
 Peabody, Jane  
 Pim, Malcolm  
 Player, Derek  
 Polhill Roger & Diana\*  
 Powell, Rosie  
 Raschkewitz, Adrian (Adi)  
 Rodwell, Jean  
 Rope, Arthur & Young, Jackie  
 Roughan, George & Roz  
 Roulstone Peter & Joan  
 Rowe, Margaret A  
 Sadler, Geoffrey & Wendy

Saunders, Alfred  
 Schwick, Christine &  
 Christopher  
 Scott, Helen Fiona  
 Seal-Coon, Sue  
 Sharpe, Sue  
 Shaw, Diana & Tony  
 Shutes, Angela & Jonathan  
 Singfield, Susan  
 Smart, Jenny & Lez  
 Smith, Marion  
 Spencer, Jennie  
 Spink, Joshua  
 Steward, Linda  
 Stoney, Carmel  
 Sullivan, Carol & Martin  
 Thomas, Catherine  
 Thorneycroft, Glenys & David  
 Usher, Michael & Fiona  
 Vaughan-Lewis, Maggie  
 Lady Walpole\*  
 Watts, Jonathan  
 Wessely, Joanna  
 White, Carole  
 Williams, Marian & Richard  
 Wintle, Sheila\*  
 Wix, Mel & Lynda  
 Worsencroft, David  
 Worth, Pamela & Jeremy  
 Wright, Malcolm

\*Life member



# **Aylsham Local History Society ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Thursday 26th October 2023 at 7 pm

## **MINUTES**

**Apologies:** Graeme Johnstone, Stephen & Abigail Earl, Stan Jeavons, Sue Margerson, Barbara Laws, David Carlyle, Alan Davies, John Carnelly, Jonathan Watts, Frances Dyer, David & Lesley Parker, Pamela & Jeremy Worth

1. **Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting 6.10.2022** were signed as a true record.
2. Matters arising: None
3. **Secretary's Report: Sue Sharpe**

A highlight of the Autumn talks last year for me, was learning about how Lady Constance saved Blickling, a talk given by our own Tony Shaw! We were also joined in November by Megan Dennis - Property Curator at Blickling, learning more about how lucky we are to have that property just down the road. Other talks in Autumn included Norfolk's Lost Heritage by Stephen Poulter and the author Jeni Neill talking about her research for her book 'The Devil's Dye'

On a dark wintery night in January the Friendship Hall was packed for a talk about Norfolk county schools at the time of the 1902 Balfour Education Act, perhaps that wasn't quite so surprising when we learned that the audience seemed to comprise substantially of those with experience as teachers. Daryl Long a volunteer at the Norfolk Archives, gave us insight into the composition of our local schools and rather embarrassingly, highlighted some of the attitudes to teaching and attendance prevalent at the time.

Rob Knee returned, in full costume, to narrate the story of the life of Thomas Paine, described by Wikipedia as a political activist, philosopher, political theorist, and revolutionary, and also sometime resident of Thetford.

We followed that up with the first of two outings in the summer months, to Thetford, with its Ancient House Museum, which was so full of treasures, it requires return visits, as do other parts of Thetford we didn't have time for. The second was to Sheringham Mo Museum with its exhibition of mini

gansey jumpers and of the town's history right through from fishing and in particular, Shackleton's stay, to learn to row, to the offshore wind farm.

Our summer talks included Jack Powell from the Aylsham and Brompton Aerial Investigation and Mapping Project, who won the prize for being the most enthusiastic speaker and Ian Hinton who revealed the hidden clues in the church buildings of Broadland.

#### **4. Treasurer's Report: Gordon Evans**

For the 2022/2023 year the Society generated a deficit of almost £1,400. This was higher than the £830 deficit for the previous year, and the £500 from the year earlier, which was the year blighted by the lockdowns.

However, embedded in the £1,400 deficit this year were two large one-off expenses to benefit our Membership, and the Society as a whole. Firstly, we invested in the reprint of the wonderful book called About Aylsham; and secondly, a further sum was spent arranging for the Society's journals from 1985 to 2021 to be scanned. Now approximately 130 journals are available to read covering about 2,700 pages on the Society's website for anyone to access free of charge.

The annual income from Membership Subscriptions increased to the highest yet of over £1,450 against £1,370 in the previous year. For the current year, following the increase in the Membership Subscriptions, we have already accumulated over £2,000 in Membership Subscriptions.

In the past two years we obtained both a SumUp machine which we use mostly for the payments of our books and events; and we have introduced the Stripe payment system. The latter has proved to be successful and for the latest payments of Membership Subscriptions, 78 payments were made using the Stripe system whilst 33 other payments were by cheque, or direct into our bank account. One person paid in cash.

The cost of printing, binding, and distributing our journals increased with inflation not least in the price of postage stamps. But the distribution costs are still reasonable overall thanks to the volunteers who deliver a lot of the journals by hand.

There were fewer summer activities last year, but these activities broke even as far as the finances are concerned.

Our sales of publications during the year were encouraging despite a lack of new titles but, next year, with no new publications in the pipeline, the income from book sales is likely to be minimal.

The Society weathered the pandemic, survived the cost-of-living crisis, and we have enjoyed a second year when we slowly returned to normal.

But over the past three-year period, our cash reserves suffered, and if the budget for the current year is anything to go by, will suffer another deficit in the region of £500.

The level of deficit is something that your Honorary Treasurer, always has in mind. So, to be handed a cheque for value £100 from an anonymous donor last year was very pleasing indeed.

With the bank balances on 31st August, last, adding up to just over £3,000 together with the subsequent increase from the Membership Subscriptions, we presently have sufficient funds to continue the valuable work of the Society.

**5.** A vote of thanks was given to Graeme Johnson who audited the 2022/2023 accounts, and he has agreed to audit the 2023/2024 accounts as well.

*Proposed: Ruth Harrison Seconded: Roger Polhill*

## **6. Report on the Journal: Jeremy Worth**

At this AGM I am retiring as Editor of the Journal and Newsletter. Age is catching up with Pamela and myself and we hope to move before long to live near our eldest son in mid Wales. I am sure we will keep in touch electronically and will no doubt visit from time to time.

I haven't quite managed a complete volume of ten issues, my last will be number 9. However, I am delighted to say that Roger Polhill has agreed to edit the last issue of Volume 12 due out in the spring.

I would like to place on record my heartfelt thanks to the authors of the Journal articles, without whose painstaking work, sometimes in the archives, sometimes in conversations with Aylsham residents, we would simply have had a newsletter.

My very respectful thanks go also to Peter Jolly. He pointed me to getting a commercial firm to scan all our pre digital Journals and he has put them all on our website where they are readily accessible. Most impressively he has

also devised one index system for all the journals which allows the user to search them all in a common sense way without being swamped by references to common words such as Aylsham, or Repton or Blickling. As editor, I can vouch for its helpfulness.

Looking to the future, if the Journal and Newsletter is to continue it needs a new editor. The role has two main parts, which could be separated to make it a team effort. One is to encourage authors to research topics and write them up. Having a Town Archive so well organised and on our doorstep is a major bonus here. The other is the more straightforward task of assembling the material into, currently, 36 pages of A5 complete with illustrations and then getting it printed. Familiarity with Word is an essential skill here, but nothing more sophisticated is required.

It would of course be possible to abandon print and go straight to publishing on the web, although I might not be the only one to mourn the loss of something I can hold and read without a screen. On that note let me finish by thanking Barnwell Print who have produced all the issues of Volume 12 to such a high standard.

## **7. Report on Membership: Hazel Jones**

Firstly, I wish to thank you all for renewing your membership, especially those who used the new Stripe secure online system. This system really does help us all, me as it provides all the info I require, but not your Bank details and to enable our records for the coming year to be updated, AND it saves you having to fill in the renewal form and return it, so it's a win, win situation all round.

We currently have 155 members including 11 new ones and I welcome you all. Unfortunately, 6 members have passed away and 15 have not renewed for various reasons.

Finally, I have just one request to make which is:-

In order to receive the Journal or any other communication from us – please ensure you notify me of any changes, such as, postal address, phone numbers, email address etc., this is the only way our records can be kept up to date.

## **8. Report on Publications/Sales: Chris Frederick**

During our financial year of <sup>1st</sup> September, 2022 to 21st August, 2023, the total sales of publications amounted to £280.39.

It may be of interest that of that, £61.00 was taken at our monthly meetings, and £219.39 plus P&P of £13.14 accounted for online sales, mainly throughout the summer period. These online sales were mainly to those who either had ancestors who had lived in Aylsham or who had family who were moving here.

For information, and although I will include it in next year’s report, we sold publications amounting to £115.50 at our attendance at the History Day at the Town Hall on 16th September. This is certainly a good start for this year.

**9. Election of Life Members**

Sheila Wintle and Gillian Barwick have been staunch supporters and founders of the Society over previous years, and it was proposed, and accepted that both should be offered Life Memberships.

*Proposed: Roger Polhill Seconded: Ruth Harrison*

**10. Election of Officers and Committee members**

It was agreed that the present committee should continue for another year.

Those elected:

Officers:

<b>Chair:</b>	Geoff Sadler
<b>Vice Chair:</b>	Roger Polhill
<b>Secretary:</b>	Sue Sharpe
<b>Honorary Treasurer:</b>	Gordon Evans

Other committee members:

<b>Membership Secretary:</b>	Hazel Jones
<b>Publication sales:</b>	Christine Frederick

Rosemary Powell  
Dr. Victor Morgan  
*Vacancy*  
*Vacancy*

**11. Any other business: None**

# Aylsham Local History Society

## INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st August 2023

Year to 31/08/2022		Year to 31/08/2023	Year to 31/08/2022		Year to 31/08/2023
£	Income	£	£	Expenditure	£
	<u>Members &amp; Visitors</u>			<u>Members &amp; Visitors</u> - meeting costs	
1,370.00	Members' Subscriptions	1,455.00	360.00	Speakers - Lecture Fees	490.00
25.35	Visitors at Membership Meetings	40.00	35.50	Travel costs & expenses for speakers	75.70
			60.00	Hire of Halls for Membership Meetings	330.00
53.45	Refreshments at Membership Meetings	71.00	1.80	Refreshments at Membership Meetings	-
			865.00	Printing - Membership Cards & Journals	1,363.29
			230.50	Distribution - Membership Cards & Journals	191.39
	<u>Summer Talks, Visits &amp; Social Events</u>			<u>Summer Talks, Visits &amp; Social Events</u>	
2,061.70	Summer Talks, Visits & Social Events income	1,496.35	2,430.80	Summer Talks, Visits & Social Events expenses	1,483.05
	<u>Publications - Books owned by the Society</u>			<u>Publications - Books owned by the Society</u>	
345.95	Publication sales (Books & Archived Journals)	451.78	120.00	Publication re-printing Books	672.75
-	Publication sales Books etc. - P&P recovered	7.80	-	Sales Books & Archived Journals - P&P costs	-
	<u>Administration</u>			<u>Administration</u>	
-	Donations Received	152.00	-	Donations made - ALHS Prize & Trophy	-
-	Sundry Income	21.00	110.00	Publicity materials	-
0.47	Bank Interest (Savings A/c)	11.90	60.00	Committee Meetings inc. Hire of Peggs Yard	115.00
			-	Stationery & Postage	86.15
			110.00	Professional Subs/Insurance	110.00
			178.80	Equipment for card payments system	-
			59.94	Web Hosting	79.19
			66.35	Bank and Credit Card Charges	109.16
3,856.92	Sub totals	3,706.83	4,688.69		5,105.68
	Excess of expenses over income	1,398.85			
831.77					
4,688.69	TOTALS	£ 5,105.68	4,688.69		£ 5,105.68

### Details above and below up to statement balance dated

31 August 2023

### Reconciliation

Represented by

### Balances b/f at 1st September 2022

### Balances c/f at 31st August 2023

Bank - Current A/c	3,773.78
Bank - Deposit A/c	1,093.55
Membership fees in advance	(255.00)
Creditors at year end	(183.80)

Bank - Current A/c	2,397.03
Bank - Deposit A/c	1,105.45
Membership fees in advance	(129.00)
Creditors at year end	(343.80)

Movement in year - Deficit (1,398.85)

TOTAL FUNDS b/fwd £ 3,029.68

£ 3,029.68

As far as I can ascertain, having reviewed the financial records and supporting documents of the Society, the accounts have been kept correctly in accordance with relevant legislation, and the above financial statement provides a proper summary of the finances of the Aylsham Local History Society for the year ended 31st August 2023.

Graeme Johnston (Accountant)

9th October 2023

Back Cover: *Installing the bells in the Parish Church Belfry.*  
*Photo Peter Jolly*

