

Aylsham Local History Society



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AYLSHAM LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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COVER ILLUSTRATION

Clarke's shop on the Market Place; an attractive Edwardian shop frontage, behind which is an early eighteenth century house front. The illustration is from "Aylsham: a guided walk" produced by Aylsham Branch WEA, in 1983. Artist Brian Bowhill.



AYLSHAM LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

JOURNAL & NEWSLETTER

Volume 3

Number 1

MY CONNECTIONS WITH AYLSHAM: CASE AND LAXEN.

David Case

My great-grandfather, Robert Henry Case, was born in Acle in 1840, and later lived in Norwich where, at the age of 10, he was described as a "Cathedral Cloister Boy" in the 1851 census. His family were living at that time with a Rev. Robert Henry Cooper (formerly curate of Cantley), and this gentleman appears to have had a significant influence on the children in the family - two of whom were later apprenticed to Music Masters. Robert Henry Case later became a music teacher himself, and from 1862 to 1868 was organist at Aylsham.

Here, he met Anna Selina Laxen (daughter of Henry Laxen, saddler and harness maker of Market Place, Aylsham, and Ann Palmer, nee Foxhall) and the couple were married at Aylsham in 1863. In 1869, Robert was described as a Grocer and Draper Master of Hungate Street, and by this time, the couple had three young children. However, in 1870, Anna died of tuberculosis, and the widower moved to Thetford where his father was Inspector of Police at the gaol in Old Market Street. Robert Henry Case appears to have been so upset at the death of his young wife, that he later left his three young children in the care of his father, joined

the Royal Artillery, and was shipped out to India in 1874. There, he was caught up in the Second Afghan War (1878-1880), and as a gunner, he took part in the wars in Afghanistan, notably the Battle of Ahmed Khel in April 1880. He was shipped home to England in 1881, but sadly, died a few days after reaching Portsmouth.

The name Laxen is very rare, and every individual I have traced with this name is descended from the Aylsham family. They are descended from a Richard Laxen (who married Elizabeth Easto at Aylsham in 1804) and I suspect that the name may be a variant of Laxon. This Richard Laxen, married in 1804, appears to have been baptised Richard Laxon (Aylsham 1771, son of Richard and Martha Laxon). The names Laxen and Laxon would, of course, sound the same when a parson asked for the names of those he was about to marry, and this may be a good example where the variant 'Laxen' may have stuck after it was first written down. The other problem, of course, is that in a poorly written hand it is often very difficult to distinguish between an 'e' and an 'o'. I have been unable so far, to trace the origins of this family before they came to Aylsham.

About the Case family, I know much more. Earlier generations (from about 1600) lived in Swannington, and later, in nearby Weston. There, three generations came to be mentioned in James Woodforde's "Diary of a Country Parson". The grandfather of Robert Henry Case, mentioned above, worked for Woodforde as his yard boy.

I have visited Aylsham on a number of occasions, and have wished that I could learn more about my great-grandfather, whose life took such a dramatic turn after the early death of his wife. The experience of sailing out to India, and serving as a gunner in those fierce battles with the fanatical Afghans, must have contrasted vividly with his earlier life as a church organist in a quiet Norfolk market town. I have no photographs

of him, and still hope that one day (perhaps in a wedding group picture at Aylsham?) I may find one. I should be extremely interested to hear from anyone who can tell me more about the Cases who lived in Aylsham, or about the origins of the Laxen family.

[The author lives at: 7 Eden Close, Wilmslow, Cheshire. Ed.]

AS AYLSHAM WAS YEARS AGO. Arnold Tuddenham

In our last issue, we began the recollections of Arnold Tuddenham, edited by Ron Peabody, under the title "Tuddy Remembers"

Born in Aylsham, Tuddy died in 1975 in his 91st year. He wrote these memoirs shortly before his death, and we are fortunate to have them in the Parish Archives. - Now for the concluding part. We ended part 1 with Tuddy describing the fairs which visited Aylsham:-

Then Alfred Stock came with his smart galloping horses in the Market Fair, then, when nearing Easter, in rolled the Barker and Thurston's gondolas, and they spent a week on Starling's meadow [1]. Starling's meadow had three different entries - Dale's opening in Red Lion Street[2], Blofield's Loke, and Oakfield Road. September Fair was another horse fair, held at the end of September[3], and then we were settled down for the winter session.

In Dr. Sapwell's book of Mr. Starling's notes, it mentions a Mr. William Calver[4], and Mr. Starling says he does not suppose many people do remember him, but I remember him very well indeed, as I have cause to do so, when Mr. William Calver dropped dead in my arms when I was about 14 years of age.

He stood on a hassock in the little hall of the house on Cawston Road, where Mr. Bizley now lives[5] to wind up the grandfather clock. He would not trust me to do it. I could have done it as well as him, but that was his way, and I knew him. He taught me chess. He was a timber merchant, and had a sawpit in the yard opposite my place[6]. Yaxley's Lane divided his place from mine. He had the land up to the Great Eastern Railway - three or four fields to the bottom of Jewel's Loke. This loke afterwards got the name of Culley's Loke when Culley lived where D. Steven's is[7].

When I was a boy, Yaxley's Lane was always called Timber Lane, because the side was always crowded with timber trucks that had been brought home after he bought trees. He kept two men, regular saw men, at work in his sawpits - one in his yard, and one in Harry Keymer's yard, where his bus goes, along the wall that was Winterborn the millwright's yard[8].

The sawmen's names were - Yip Yap Davison, and Juby Smithson. Mr. Calver kept some fine horses for his jilling timber[9], and he drove a roan horse in his cart and in his sledge in the winter time. Weather never stopped him, if he could get around. I have been miles and miles a day. He had a cider press in his shed, and he made his own cider, and bought empty brandy casks to make it in, but he did not allow it to be touched for six months whilst he fed it. This he always did on his own, but I caught him one day, putting some raw beef in it, which he had just got off my mother (that's how he fed it!)

Now, as I have got older, I wonder why these old ways are forgotten. Of course, the younger generation all live in a different world to what we did. If they were any use, we should all have a good horse and cart, but they want cleaning and feeding. The average young man hasn't the time for that. He must have a car, and now that they are beginning to cost money, I wonder

what else will be their want. Certainly, in many cases they won't want money purses to keep it in, because there is too big a demand for money to keep one alive and doing, to give one a chance to save.

Of course, with a decent gang of very enterprising business people in the town we held an annual carnival, but what has it come to now?. It used to last three or four days, now, these past years it is down to less than a day. I know when I first "cried" the carnival as Town Crier, the town was full of people on the Wednesday, and there was something on each night until the Saturday night dance at the Town Hall. Where is it all today?. I think it is the wireless that has done away with the outdoor amusements locally, of today, because nearly everybody has one, either their own, or on the hire system.

The Town Hall, either in the Autumn or in the Spring, had a busy time with visiting troupes from the seaside when they had finished and before going to their summer places of entertainment, or as they came off them. The Becketts and Cyril Getliffe's National choir were two of the companies which always came. I remember them so well because we used to put up about eight of the parties.

The Volunteers of the old 'C' Company ran a minstrel troupe, and gave one or two performances in the winter, and the church choir always did have a couple of concerts a year in aid of their summer outing. What a day we had! - two three-horse wagonettes for the adults and one two-horse wagonette for the boys. We went by Plumstead "Cherry Tree" to Sheringham Park for a ramble through the park, and then drive on to the "Lobster" at Sheringham. After a half-hour rest for the horses, and a look at Sheringham, we then went on to Cromer "Lion" where we had our dinner - about sixty of us, sometimes more.

The Rev. J.G.Hoare[10] used to drive his pair of chestnuts into Cromer, and have an order for so many strawberries to be brought to our tea room at the "Red Lion". We left Cromer at 7pm. and were back home by about 8.30pm. Now, I don't think the Aylsham choir could entertain three blind mice. Why??

Speaking of the visiting companies that used to hire the Town Hall, Getliffe had some very good turns. He had one item called the 'Hyperdocksyncopodity' in his programme. I have never heard of it since, but it consists of several glasses of various sizes containing water, stood on a table, and a Miss Ina Gilbey played tunes on the top of the glasses with her hands and touching the water. His wife, Mrs Getliffe, was excellent on the cornet, and I especially noted how she played the 'Lost Chord' with the cornet. It's a good man's job, and I should know something, having been in a band myself since I was 13 years of age. I have played in different bands in concerts, including the old Crystal Palace, London, on several occasions.

I was also the Verger at Aylsham church. Having been at the choir since I was eight - I finished up through sickness on my 75th. Christmas anniversary choral service. I took over the verger's job after old George Neale, who had had the job as verger for 50 years.[11]. He taught me bell ringing and bell chiming; I already knew about organs from my childhood days, when I used to pump one [$\frac{3}{4}$ hour for 3d.]

I took the verger's job because Mr.Robert Rust asked me to, until they could get someone else to take it over. Well I carried on for six months for them, and charged nothing. I did all the coke-stoking that winter, and in the Spring I was appointed Clerk and Verger by Mr.Robert Rust and Major Johnson, and I held it for 29 $\frac{1}{2}$ years after, until I could not do it any longer. I hear that although they had people falling

over themselves for the job as verger, after I left, (that is over four years since I gave it up), they have still got a long way to fall, because there is not one got there yet!

I missed only one 8 o'clock Communion in those 30 years. That was when the clock was not altered. I was on my way to church, as usual, at 7.30 as I thought - when I heard it chime. When a friend put her head out of the window, and said, "where are you going, Arnold?". I said, "8 o'clock service, of course" She said, "Did you alter the clock last night? It is now 8.30 not 7.30 as you thought". I could not go to church late, so I went home again, but I got my bike out and got to the church, and put the clock on so that she struck 9am at the proper time.

On looking in my Daily Press, this week, I see the Bishop has again brought our Canon, Baldwin Sapwell, to the front, not forgetting his beloved bicycle. I have known him since he was a boy, and he never came to Aylsham, unless he looked me up. We called him 'Slasher' when he was a little boy, but he was one of the best you ever knew, and would not hurt a worm. I knew him, and his wife too, before they were ever married. I went into Haddiscoe post office for some stamps, when I was that way on business. I did not know he was the vicar there, or I should have called to see him. Anyhow, I said, "Good morning, Mrs.Sapwell" and the lady looked at me, surprised that I knew her, and then I told her how she should know me. Had she ever sat inside a roped-in round-clock machine, and had her weight tested by the butcher who killed the pig? Then she knew who I was - I was the man who weighed her, and I was the butcher for Mrs.Ives of Calthorpe's pig.

A.Arnold Tuddenham.

[Apart from a few more unrelated notes, the memoir ends there.]

REFERENCES

1. Starling's meadow extended from behind their shop in Red Lion Street (now Green's outfitters) to Oakfield Road.
2. Dale's shop, now the Bon Bon confectioners.
3. The last Tuesday in September, (Sapwell)
4. William Carver, timber merchant, Cawston Road, is listed in directories from 1864-1890, after which, he is entered as a private resident at Cawston Road from 1892-1904. In 1908 the entry changes to Mrs. Calver, so presumably William had died by then. The surname is variously spelt as Carver or Calver by Starling and in the directories. Starling says he was a violent man "given to picking fights".
5. No.66 Cawston Road.
6. The Ordnance Survey map (25" ed.1886) shows a large timber yard at the junction of Cawston Rd. and Yaxley's Lane; and a smaller yard in Jewel's Lane.
7. Dick (Richard) Stevens, agricultural contractor.
8. In Jewel's Lane
9. Mr. Mervyn Ellis, who owns the saw mill at Stratton Strawless tells me that "jilling timber" was the transporting of the felled trees from the woods to the saw mills on carriages called timber jills, or drags.
10. Vicar of Aylsham 1888-1921.
11. George Neale, Parish (Church) Clerk 1888-1937

The photograph (in part 1) is reproduced by courtesy of Aylsham Parish Church, and the references (in both parts) are researched by Ron Peabody.

AYLSHAM FRIENDLY SOCIETIES

During the nineteenth century, Aylsham had a considerable number of Friendly Societies formed to provide some benefits for its members in times of sickness and death. Dr.Sapwell in his 'History of Aylsham' devotes some space to them, and lists all the known societies.

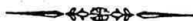
In return for a regular subscription, members, who were usually lower-paid working men and their families, would receive some sickness and funeral benefit in hard times. In the words of Dr.Sapwell:-

"They were in some ways, akin to the Medieval guilds which had been suppressed at the Reformation, and the ownership of a communal pall, which was lent for funerals of members, and the annual dinner preceded by a sermon in church, on 29th.May, can be regarded as the lineal descendants of guild activities."

They were not all identical; most were based on a particular hotel or public house where the members met. Those that did usually enjoyed a 'colourful social life', culminating in Oak Apple Day on 29th.May which was regarded as a public holiday.

Vivid accounts of the activities which were held on Oak Apple Day can be read in Sapwell's book, and in the memoirs of F.Starling (from which Sapwell's account is taken) and also in the reminiscences of 'Tuddy'. How large a part they were of Aylsham life can be seen in the list of societies which appeared in the Aylsham almanac for c1911 where it took two whole pages to list them. Not all of them enjoyed a vigorous social life. Some simply devoted themselves

AYLSHAM MEDICAL CLUB.



*At a Meeting, held at the National School Room, in Aylsham, on the Twenty-ninth
Day of October, 1833,*

ROBERT COPEMAN, ESQUIRE,

IN THE CHAIR.

IT WAS RESOLVED,

Firstly.—That a Medical Club be established for Aylsham and its Vicinity.

Secondly.—That the Clergy and principal Inhabitants of the parishes of Burgh, Banningham, Cawston, Tuttington, Colby, Erpingham, Calthorpe, Alby, Thwayte, Ingworth, Itteringham, Oulton, Blickling, Saxthorpe, Corpusty, Marsham, Heydon, Brampton, Oxnead, Skeyton, Hevingham, Felmingham, Buxton, and Lamas be requested to promote the Establishment and Maintenance of such a Club by Benefactions and Subscriptions, and to encourage the Labouring Classes in their parishes to become Members.

Thirdly.—That each Person subscribing annually Five Shillings or more, shall be an Honorary Member.

Fourthly.—That all Persons of the Labouring Class, of sober habits and good character, whether Male or Female, and whether Householders, Lodgers, or Servants, whose average earnings shall not exceed Twenty Shillings per week, or whose yearly wages shall not exceed Six Pounds, may, by becoming Members, be assured of Medical and Surgical Assistance, and Medicine (except in cases of Disease proceeding from Impudence) by Subscriptions at the following Rates :—

	s.	d.	
Each Person without a Child	1	0	} <i>Per Quarter of a Year.</i>
Each Widow or Widower with one Child under sixteen years of age ..	1	3	
Each Widow or Widower with two or three Children under that age ..	1	6	
Each Widow or Widower with more than three Children under that age ..	1	0	
Each Married Man for himself and his Wife	1	0	
Each Married Man for himself and his Wife and not more than three Children under sixteen years of age	1	0	
Each Married Man for himself and his Wife and all his Children under that age	2	3	

The Front Page of the Rules of the Aylsham Medical Club

to the medical and welfare benefits that could be provided for their members. One in particular was the Aylsham Medical Club, described in the following article by P.W.Monckton Copeman. This is one of the few societies whose rules and regulations have survived, and a copy of them is preserved in the Parish Archives.

Sapwell says that the earliest society in Aylsham was probably the Union Friendly Society, founded in 1820. The Aylsham Medical Club was founded not long afterwards in 1838.

The article by P.W.Monckton Copeman first appeared in 'Medical History' April 1958 2(2) 146-8. and is reprinted by kind permission of the editors of 'Medical History'.

A NORFOLK MEDICAL CLUB

CHRISTIAN solicitude for the well-being and comfort of less fortunate fellow creatures was a matter of individual philanthropy rather than public conscience in the early nineteenth century, when Robert Copeman was the squire of the market town of Aylsham in Norfolk. He became the first chairman of the Aylsham Medical Club. This was effectually a working man's small private National Health Service. There was nothing novel in the venture, for the system of Friendly Societies in Norfolk as elsewhere was well established by the end of the eighteenth century, and it gathered strength during the first part of the nineteenth century.

It appears that the constitutions of only a few of these clubs survive and that sets of rules are rare.¹ Thus it may be interesting to comment on the Rules of the Aylsham Medical Club, recently discovered among some family papers.

The chief purpose of Friendly Societies and Medical Clubs was to provide their members with money allowances during incapacity for work resulting from sickness or infirmity and to make provision for the immediate necessities arising on the death of a member or his wife.² The early ones were purely clubs, mutual associations, which arranged provision in time of illness and provided for good fellowship. Subsequently they included other purposes such as the encouragement of thrift and the furtherance of local business activities. Insurance against doctors' fees during illness was the purpose of the Aylsham Medical Club—conviviality played no part. It did not meet in the more usual public house but in a school. One does not find, therefore, such clauses in the Rules as those arranging for payment of the beer. (One club demanded a fee of fourpence for this refreshment from every member at each meeting, regardless of his attendance!)

The Aylsham Medical Club was founded in 1838. It was possibly a little more enlightened in its policy and scope than its predecessor which had failed after a short life of only eleven years. The benefits of Friendly Societies were usually open to men alone—their wives being excluded; the Aylsham Medical Club welcomed applicants 'whether Male or Female'. Entry was not restricted by age but by earning capacity and was open to 'Householders, Lodgers, or Servants whose average earnings shall not exceed twenty shillings per week or whose yearly wages shall not exceed twelve pounds'. Like most such societies, the Aylsham Medical Club provided for the labouring classes. They were eligible if they were 'of sober habits and good character'. Aylsham was noteworthy in that it had also an unrelated society whose membership consisted of 'tradesmen, mechanics and other persons above the degree of common labourers'.

Membership of the Medical Club entitled the subscriber to be 'assured of Medical and Surgical Assistance and Medicine'. He was disqualified only if his disease was deemed to have proceeded from 'Imprudence'. Some clubs had special clauses which rendered members ineligible for benefit if their disability was caused by drunkenness, brawling, wrestling, attempted suicide, venereal disease or grand pox. They might be excluded if convicted of 'felony, larceny, swearing, for the use of traitorous, disrespectful or seditious words against the Sovereign, and suchlike misdemeanours'.

Many societies paid death benefits to widows, funeral expenses, unemployment benefits and old-age pensions. A higher premium was necessary to maintain these commitments. The Aylsham Club was less ambitious in its coverage. Its concern was to bring to its members the benefits of a 'Medical Gentleman' (whom they were free to choose) 'who will visit them at their own houses when unable to go out'. He would be responsible for prescribing medicine. This duty was thoughtfully aided by a clause in the Rules 'that Sick Members shall provide Bottles for Medicine and when able shall go between the hours of nine and ten in the morning to the Residence of their Medical Attendant'. The next clause orders that the expense of 'such additional nourishment as the Medical Attendant thinks necessary for restoring the health of a member shall be defrayed out of the subscriptions of the Honorary Members'. The Honorary Members were those who had subscribed more than five shillings a year and 'are for the most part the Clergy and Principle Inhabitants' of the two dozen or so parishes concerned. They constituted the Committee.

A humane clause was the one which allowed any person to 'subscribe for his or her infirm Parent or Parents (if they were unable to work and were living with their family) on the same terms as children under the age of sixteen'.

Rules 'seventhly' and 'eighthly' deserve notice. 'That the wife of a member may be attended in her confinement by paying to the Medical Attendant, three weeks before she expects to be confined, the sum of seven shillings and sixpence (a further three shillings being paid out of the subscriptions of the Honorary Members).'

'That the members shall be entitled to have their children vaccinated'; (and the second half of this clause is significant) 'but, in case of their refusal to have them vaccinated they shall not be entitled to any attendance if attacked by the Smallpox.' One can understand the diffidence of a parent to have his child vaccinated in those days. Many dangers could attend the procedure, not least the transmission of disease and the infection of the site of inoculation. Fifty years were to pass until it fell to the great-grandson of the Chairman of the Aylsham Medical Club, Dr. S. Monckton Copeman, to invent glycerinated calf lymph for vaccination. This revolutionary discovery in 1891 abolished the hazardous 'arm to arm' method and transformed vaccination into a safe undertaking.

The failure of most of the earlier societies was due to difficulties in organization, inability to find security for their funds (embezzlement and theft was the end of more than one club) and their small membership. This last resulted in such societies being short-lived, which brought hardship to the elderly members; for either the members

were mostly young (with the prospect of sickness and old age remote) and they out-voted the older ones and decided to terminate the Society and divide the funds; or if there was an older membership the outpayments tended to exceed the income, a situation unlikely to attract the younger members.

The organization of the Aylsham Medical Club was not in the hands of the members themselves but in those of a responsible committee. This must have contributed to its stability. A large membership was ensured both by the number of villages from which members were drawn and by its powerful local patronage.

Friendly Societies survived until the present day through mergers of a great number of these small associations into the several larger ones. They were extremely successful and popular institutions, doing great service to the community. Their combined membership had grown to be over six million by 1948.³ But after that time, with the extension of public social and medical services, and the deprivation of their former function of handling the State's sickness funds along with their own, their numbers went into a steep decline, and with this much good fellowship disappeared.

My thanks are due to Dr. F. N. L. Poynter for his kind encouragement and to the President of the Osler Club for his careful criticism.

P. W. MONCKTON COPEMAN

SOCIETY NEWS

NEW YEAR'S PARTY - Despite the counter-attractions of Burns Night, our annual New Year's Party was again a highly enjoyable and successful night out. By now, much of the success of our annual party is due to the slick organisation of those willing lady members, under the leadership of Jill Fletcher and our Secretary, who can speedily convert the interior of the Friendship Club into a cosy and welcoming setting, with tables loaded with appetising food.

So good are they, that it all looks incredibly swift and easy. Part of Jill's technique is to keep an endless supply of tea-cloths to hand so we never needed to look far for a clean one. We few men who were able to help simply moved fast and did as we were told. No opportunity, or indeed need, for us to demonstrate flair or expertise. The only exceptions were Dr. Julian Eve who dispensed mulled wine with the flourish of a true professional, and also Peter

Holman who devised another of his competitions to test us. This time, it was to recognise the 20 or more viewpoints from which the parish church had been photographed, - not as easy as it might sound! but won, not surprisingly by Geoffrey Ducker.

After a first class buffet supper, we were entertained by a trio of local folk-singers, who added the finishing touch to an enjoyable evening.

"DANES & DEFENCES" During the atrocious weather of early February, it looked doubtful if the lecture, planned for February 14th. could ever take place. Fortunately, the snow and ice relented just in time, and about 40 persons turned out to hear Mr.K.Penn from the Norfolk Archaeological Unit, talk about king Alfred and the invasions of the Norsemen. It is a period so remote and obscure that it is hard to relate to. It is also complicated by the similarity of names, everyone seemed to be called Aethelbert or Aethelred, or something similar.

Mr.Penn certainly brought the subject to life. We saw brilliant pictures of English church treasures which had been looted by the Vikings, taken back to Scandinavia as booty, and later buried as grave goods. Hundreds of years later, they were unearthed by archaeologists and are now on display in all their original glory.

We were reminded of how Alfred stemmed the spread of the Vikings in England, eventually re-conquering the occupied areas, and re-establishing Christianity. He established physical defences in the form of fortified towns, and a permanent army, and spiritual defences in the renaissance of learning and education.

CONGRATULATIONS go to Ivan Morris who has taken over the editorship of the North Norfolk Naturalist's Magazine, in succession to the late Kay Mosse. This will appear twice-yearly, and I am looking forward to seeing the next issue. (T.W.M.)

DIARY DATES AND FUTURE PROGRAMME

Wednesday, 6th.March,

Dr.J.Maddison - "Master masons and medieval churches." Friendship Club. 7.30pm.

Thursday, 18th.April,

Dr.T.Williamson - "Norfolk Parks and gardens." Friendship Club. 7.30pm.

Tuesday, 4th.June - "Art in archaeology" - an illustrated lecture arranged jointly by the Aylsham Association and the Local History Society. 7 for 7.30, Friendship Club.

Several outings are being considered, and if all are successfully arranged, we can hope to have the following visits:-

1. Flag Fen, near Peterborough; linked with another place of interest, e.g. Elton Hall or Peterborough Cathedral. - picnic lunch - probably in April.
2. London, to the Queens gallery at Buckingham palace. Exhibition of George IV paintings etc. Possible date - May.
3. Horsham St.Faiths, a visit to the Priory. A second opportunity to see the Priory, for those who missed it last time. Possibly linked with a visit to the site of Horsford castle. Possibly July.
4. An expedition, fairly close to home, to several of the many sites of interest in Norfolk. This will be an interesting tour arranged by our Vice-chairman, Peter Holman.

Arrangements still have to be finalised for all of these, and not necessarily all of them will come about. Details will be circulated later when known.

QUERIES AND NOTES

AYLSHAM AND DISTRICT BOWMEN. This organisation is arranging a tournament on the Buttlands on 9th. June 1991, and would like to have with it a display of Archery, both as a modern sport and on the battlefield.

Unfortunately, there is no material in the Parish Archives which would help to illustrate such a display. If any of our members could help, please contact:-

Mrs. Annette Keeler, Church Farm Cottages, Banningham Road, Aylsham. Telephone: 732321

SANKENCE. The origins and derivation of the name 'Sankence' has been queried by one of our readers. Although Dr. Sapwell had close associations with Sankence, he gives no clue to the origin of the name in his 'History of Aylsham'. On the map, inside his book, the name appears four times:- Sankence House, Sankence Lodge, Sankence Barn and Sankence Grove. Can anyone add any more information to this?

The first edition of the 1" O.S. Map (post 1870 ed.) lists only two locations and the name is spelt slightly differently i.e. SANKINS Barn and SANKINS Grove.

Replies please to the editor.

---ooOoo---

AYLSHAM VESTRY MINUTES

Amongst the Aylsham Parish Archives there is preserved a soft-backed, foolscap notebook. In the catalogue of the Parish Archives, compiled by Dr.Sapwell, it is recorded as 'Workhouse Minute Book 1822-25'.

One can see why it is so described. The book is untitled, and most of its contents deal specifically with the day to day affairs of the workhouse. However, not all of the Minutes are concerned with the workhouse and it is more likely that the book contains the Minutes of the parish Vestry Meetings for that period.

Altogether it covers 81 meetings from the first one on 5th.Aug 1822 to the last one on 2nd.January 1826. The meetings were held fairly regularly every fortnight. The minutes for the periods before and after these dates are presumably in the Norfolk Record Office. The majority of the meetings took place in the workhouse, but five were actually held in the vestry. The names of all those attending are regularly minuted, but the pattern of attendance is quite varied. As will be seen, some were regular attenders, but others made only a single appearance over the 3½ years. A league table of attendance would show the following:-

J.Peterson 61	J.Warnes Jnr.25	Thos.Cook 5
W.Wickes 61	R.Woods 19	P.D.Batson 4
Henry Soame 46	J.Carr 9	M.Read 4.
R.Parmeter 33	W.Repton 9	R.Ringer 3
Thos.Rackham 32	R.Copeman 7	J.Frary 3
H.Woods 26	W.B.Cooke 6	J.Bulwer 2
		J.Lown 2

Charles Abbott, G.Body, C.Borrett, Robert Darby,

W.Elden, F.Fennell, James Gay, G.Jarvis, Charles Miller James Roofe and James Sly, all made but a single appearance.

It is interesting to note that James Gay, who only attended one meeting, was actually chairman for that one meeting, and over the period, there were six meetings where only one person turned up!

Most of the meetings were held in the workhouse, but towards the end of the period it was being referred to as the 'House of Industry'. As already stated, most of the business concerned the affairs of the workhouse - the workhouse in question being the original workhouse in Millgate, not the later Union workhouse which afterwards became St.Michael's Hospital.

The greatest concern was over the affairs of the workhouse - its day to day problems, and the necessary decisions to be made to ensure its smooth running. It was necessary to examine candidates for Poor Relief to determine their state of settlement, ie. their entitlement for relief from the parish of Aylsham. It was obviously a help to the rates if it could be established that wherever possible, the poor were the responsibility of some other parish and not a charge to the town. A lot of effort went into this, if there was any doubt as to where the responsibility lay. The second meeting records:-

26th.August 1822 The examination of Mary Dunhams [mother and daughter] to be taken before magistrates. (In the meantime they were granted an allowance of 2/- per week).

1st.March 1824 James Howell, late servant to Rev.B.Pering, to be examined as to his settlement.

Other parishes were equally keen to unload their responsibility if they could, and these attempts were

often resisted. We read, for example, that in June 1825 'It was resolved that an order for the removal of Richard Wiseman and his wife and daughter from Boston to Aylsham, be appealed against' and a long saga concerning Clement Smith ran from 1823-1825:-

21st July 1823 Clement Smith to come over to Aylsham to be examined touching his settlement. [but obviously nothing was resolved]

6th. December 1824: 'It was resolved that Clement Smith is wrote too, (sic) that the parish will take the case into consideration, and that no relief will be made until they are satisfied in respect of his belonging to Aylsham.'

17th. January 1825: 'Clement Smith to be allowed the sum of £1 and his settlement be further enquired into'

28th. March 1825: Resolved that Clement Smith's letter should be laid before the vestry on Monday 3rd. April, he having applied for further relief.

[After being allowed a further £1 on 18th April, the crunch came a month later]

16th. May 1825: 'no further allowance to be given to Clement. Smith at Gooderstone.'

After this, Clement Smith disappears from this minute book. Did he re-appear later in subsequent minute books? How did he cope with no-one accepting responsibility for him?

Having once accepted responsibility, the committee agreed on the type and extent of relief to be handed out. It came either as money, or as clothing, or even as a loan, for example:-

30th. December 1822: Thomas Wiley - the parish to lend him 15/- to be returned this day week.

6th. September 1824: Matthew Woodhouse to be supplied with the loan of a cart at the expense of the parish.

18th.October 1824: Resolved, the sum of 30/- be lent to Richard Jex, and he is to pay it back by instalments.

Christmas Neale received 5/- 'occasional relief' (5th.July 1824). Others received more regular payments - "Christian Allison to be allowed 1/6 per week for two weeks, and Jno.Ives 2/6 for two weeks.(4th.November 1822). This type of payment continued, usually for several weeks until, presumably, the need disappeared.

Widows were frequently listed as recipients - 'Widow Silence to be allowed 1/- per week, Widow Locket to be allowed 1/- in need' (7.2.1825)

A month later (7.3.1825) 'Widow Hicks at Norwich be allowed 5/- per week until a month after her confinement' and 'widow Payne be paid 13/6 per week in sickness' (18.7.1825) and sadly, on 7th.March 1825, 'Widow Floyd's furniture to be sold by auction on 15th.March'.

Widows were expected to carry out certain obligations in return for their relief:-

7th.March 1825: Resolved - "Any widow refusing to attend any poor person in sickness, at the request of the Assisting Overseer, shall be taken off their pay 6d per week during such refusal"

No great sums of money were paid out, but the committee did take its obligations seriously, and showed concern and a caring attitude when required, as these examples show:

3rd.January 1825: "Resolved, on reading a letter from Mr.Goose respecting the distressed condition of the widow Fox and family, belonging to this parish, and residing at Croydon, that the Assistant Overseer is to remit a £1 note as an additional relief to the said widow and family beyond the regular allowance, in consideration of the advanced price of all the necessaries of life."

5th. December 1825: ". . . Henry Payne to be allowed 2/6 for two weeks, and to be continued two weeks longer, if he cannot get any weaving. . "

4th. December 1824: "Resolved that the widow Thompson be allowed the sum of 30/- towards her journey into Derbyshire, she going to live with her daughter there. . "

There might possibly have been an additional motive in the last example; presumably widow Thompson would cease to be a burden on the Aylsham poor rate after she had gone!

Bastardy was also a problem. Payments were allowed to needy mothers of illegitimate children, but firm attempts were made to ensure that the father paid up wherever possible.

17th. March 1823: Sarah Bear to be allowed 9d. per week for her bastard child. Caroline Drake's pay for her bastard child to be reduced 6d. per week.

7th. June 1824:

The payment to Mary Nobbs for the maintenance of her child by Thomas Hawkins, to be suspended until the money is obtained from Hawkins.

17th. January 1825: It is ordered that Jno. Brown be apprehended for the non-payment of bastard money.

16th. May 1825: No more allowance to be given to the widow Stone until she swears her illegitimate child (ie. owns up who the father is)

Four months later, in September 1825, widow Stone and her two children were brought in to live in the workhouse. Deciding who should come into the workhouse was part of the committee's duties:-

20th. October 1823: Samuel Gibson and his wife and family to be taken into the poor house, if they cannot, in the course of the

week, find employment. William Seager to be taken in, if he requires relief.

3rd.March 1823: . . one child of Frances Rivetts to be taken into the house...

17th.March 1823: Elizabeth Gray's child to be taken into the house.

They were also responsible for the letting of the Town House or Poor House*

29th.August 1822: Resolved that at Michaelmas next, The Town House now occupied by William Skip(?) shall be let to Edmund Pull at the same rent of 20/-

6th.September 1824: Resolved that James Platten, son of Jane Platten who lives in the Town House, be taken into the workhouse if any relief be required for him, and the present weekly allowance to him shall be discontinued.

Relief could also be provided in the form of paid work in the gravel pit, and the minutes are full of instances. In January 1823 it was recorded that ...Thompson be allowed six days in the gravel pit 'the time the frost continues', but the next month (3.2.1823) we read 'W.Storey not to be allowed in the gravel pit. (No reasons stated).

The improvement of the workhouse property was also their concern:-

17th.May 1824: The present sick room, across the yard, the ground floor to be boarded, and a window in each room to be opened to the west. [what was it like before?]

* Sapwell (p.102) records that in 1776 a workhouse was built on part of the land (ie. Cressy's Charity land) and about 1803, two cottages which were let.

There was also the need to agree contracts for the following quarter.

15th.March 1824: agreed a meeting to be held on the 29th. for receiving contracts for next quarter, and one for the appointment of Overseers for the year ensuing.

The committee also received medical reports from the appointed doctor, and if necessary from others:-

17th.May 1824: Mr Coleman, surgeon at Norwich to report his opinion as to the health of William Ashe.

5th.April 1823: Resolved - Assistant Overseer consult Mrs Taylor as to the illness of Mary Culley, and give such relief as necessary.

Apprentices were a big responsibility for the committee members. The first meeting in the book was for the placing of parish apprentices. It was actually postponed for three weeks because insufficient members attended.

When the meeting did take place, eleven 14 year olds were ballotted for, and their names and the names of those who drew them in the ballot are recorded. The rules for conducting the ballot are also minuted, but that doesn't make them any easier to understand.

29th August 1822: agreed to ballot for parish apprentices, a List of persons liable to take parish apprentices being first arranged in shares of £50 each, with following regulations:

- 1) That no person shall have more than two apprentices at the same time, and the remaining numbers in the ballot of any persons having two apprentices to be taken out of the ballot until the term of one apprentice shall be expired.

2) Any person holding no more than three shares, according to the assessment, to have only one apprentice at the same time and his number in the ballot to be taken out until the term of such apprenticeship is expired.

3) The numbers drawn out at any time to be placed in a separate box, and not put again into the ballot until all the numbers have been drawn out.

Edward Wiley (?)	drawn to James Bulwer. No.37
Christmas Neale	" Richard Woods No.49
Robert Pull	" Robert Chapman No.18
Henry Barney	" John Warnes No.1
John Nichols	" Richard Clarke No.91
Eliza Murrell	" Thomas Mayes No.65
Susan Platten	" Richard Moore No.31
Mary Anne Platten	" William Wickes No.32
Lucy Platten	" Robert Abbs No.63
Curtis Parr	" James Gay No.88
Sarah Breese	" Robert Parmeter No.43

Previous to the ballot, the name of John Spink was withdrawn, he having at a former meeting, being ballotted to serve Mr. Samuel Taylor, and it is resolved at this meeting that steps shall be taken to enforce this apprenticeship.

The balloting was held annually in Aug/Sept. time, but between ballots the affairs and concerns of apprentices crop up and are dealt with:-

3rd. December 1822: Agreed - Henry Wells be bound apprentice to Charles Tuck, shipwright of Yarmouth for seven years with a premium of £7, and the mother of the boy to be allowed 1/- a week for the first year of the apprenticeship, and the apprentice to receive of his master 3/- a week for the first three years. 4/- for the fourth and fifth years, 5/- for the sixth and 14/- a week for the last.

John Spink to be bound apprentice to Mr Leggett Cobb, butcher, for the term of three years - to be paid £2-10-0 for cloathes (sic), and £5 at 1st.March next, premium, and £5 the Christmas following, and Mr.Cobb to provide the said apprentice with two suits of clothes at the expiration of the said term.

20th.October 1823: . . . Edmund Bunn to be bound apprentice to his brother, George Bunn of Felmingham, cordwainer, for five years. Premium £10, and the master to find cloathing.

It was part of the Overseer's job to make journeys to other parts of the country on occasion, sometimes a considerable distance was involved:-

1st.December 1823: Mr.Morris to go to Yarmouth to bind out the boy S.Wells, and to enquire as to the state of health of Thomas Wells.

21st.July 1823: Resolved - Mr.Morris to go to Ramsgate after James Spink who have (sic) left his wife and three children chargeable to the parish.

4th.August 1823: Resolved - Mr.Morris's bill of £4-12-6 be allowed for his trip to Ramsgate over Spink's family, also to Croydon to see the situation of the Fox family, and to London after Hawkins's arrears which he has received.

1823 was a busy year for Mr.Morris, as these minutes show. Most of these minutes are concerned with the affairs of the workhouse, but enough deal with other matters to suggest that the meetings were those of the Vestry and not solely the Guardians of the workhouse. We have, for instance, on 26th.August 1822, agreement 'that the Surveyors of the Highway should abate the nuisance committed by Francis Yaxley in the road at the back of Mr.Hogg's house and near the bowling green gates'. Later, on 18th.October 1824, we read ' . . . Francis Ward's estimate is approved by the committee for the

alteration of the pavement in the White Hart Street'

The committee also determined the amount of the Poor Rate in the town, and took proper steps to ensure that the money was collected:-

20th. December 1824: A rate made for the relief of the poor at 1/3d in the pound, and a county levy rate for building the new gaol at 1½d in the pound.

7th. February 1825: Resolved, Mr. Thomas Leath, now residing in Norwich, be summoned for the poor rate.

A whole range of other topics, unconnected with the workhouse, are dealt with, as this final selection of items from the minutes reveal.

6th. September 1824: . . . the meeting sent for constables, and being attended by Mr. White, represented to him that it was part of the constable's duty to preserve order in the approaches to the church and the churchyard on a Sunday, and to apprehend all vagrants, which may at any time be found within the parish.

an earlier and similar minute for January 1823 has already been quoted in "Aylsham in 1821":-

It is in the opinion of the undersigned that all vagrants, in future, are to be provided for by the House of Industry, and it is also ordered that a room proper for their accommodation be immediately prepared for lodging and food - and it is further considered that such persons are to be conducted out of this parish on the directions of Mr. Morris, the assistant overseer. . . "

Affairs affecting the parish church were also

part of the business considered:-

5th.May 1823: William Weaver to be appointed organist until Easter Sunday at a salary of £12, allowing Mrs.Warden, the widow of the late organist, a proportion of the salary from Easter to this time.

20th.September 1824: It is also resolved that the pews, agreed to be enlarged in the north isle(sic), be immediately completed by order of the churchwardens.

3rd.January 1825: It was further unanimously resolved that Mr.Morris wait on the churchwardens, and express the opinion of this meeting that it is not advisable to whitewash the church at the present season, and request that the same be deferred until the summer season.

2nd January 1826: The churchwardens be requested that C,Stearman the sexton, ring the 5 o'clock bell every morning.

One is reminded of this last item in the Starling memoirs, where he describes Mr.Charles Clements Senior:-

"This old gentleman was a noted bell-ringer, when he was a young man (I am speaking now of about 1857) and if you stood in the market place, just before 8 o'clock you would see this old gentleman go trotting across the market with a little lantern in his hand, up the church steeple, and as soon as the church clock struck eight, you would hear the curfew bell. We used to call it the 8 o'clock bell, but it was the curfew bell, but at the death of Mr.Clements it was given up."

and finally, other business included such matters:-

3rd.February 1823: Mr.Thomas Cook to make his report on the state of the engine [fire engine?], and the expenses of a new carriage for the new one.

6th.October 1823: Edward Carr, John Lowne and Wm.Morris recommended

as Surveyors of the Highway, at a salary of £16 per annum for the coming year.

So, enough variety of topics were being considered to show that the committee was not exclusively concerned with the affairs of the workhouse. It was involved also, in all the local government of the church and the town. Inevitably, a large part of its time was taken up by the workhouse and the provision of Poor Relief. Reading through these minutes, one can see that the members took their responsibilities seriously, both for the poor who needed relief, and the ratepayers who footed the bill. We read, in September 1822, that:-

notice be given to the Almshouse keeper that the Overseers and constables are instructed to make calls at their house, to see if any persons are there which are supported by the parish.

Times were harsher then, than they are today. It is not easy to determine how the provisions that were made then, were regarded by those people who applied them or received them. What might seem to us to be hard and heartless, could well have been regarded as liberal and kind to townsfolk of that day.

Reading through the documentary records does not always make it clear. In the Norfolk Record Office, there are the printed regulations [PD 232/26] for the management of the poor in Aylsham workhouse, approved on 10th. April 1788. Some of those rules seem harsh and discriminatory:-

Rule VI: All the poor who are able, shall rise at 8 o'clock in the winter and 6 o'clock in the summer; go to bed at 8 o'clock

in the winter, and 9 o'clock in the summer; comb their hairs regularly every morning as soon as they rise, wash their faces and hands before each meal.

Rule XIII: The old and infirm people, if they are able, are to go to church once every Sunday; all the others regularly, two by two, attended by the Master, twice every Sunday, and return home in the same regular order, and all sit in one place in the church appointed by the Churchwardens.

Rule XIV: As these regulations are formed with a view to mend their morals and behaviour, and to make them, in the end, more useful to Society, The non-observance of them will be attended with the forfeit of the sequent meal for the first offence, and a low diet, if found often to offend, for so many days as the committee think proper.

But against this, we read other rules:-

Rule III: All paupers, who by reason of their age or casualties are unable to work, are to amuse themselves, as they like, observing the regulation of their meals etc., and they are to have what they can earn for their own use.

Rule IV: Those who are able to work, if they earn more than their proper stints, either by the quality or quantity of work, shall have the excess for their own use.

The diet table which is printed along with the regulations show that meals were unexciting, but not inadequate. Each man was entitled daily to:-

Bread	11lb. 9 ozs.	Meat	9 ozs.
Beer	2 pints	Milk	$\frac{1}{2}$ pint
Butter	1 oz.	Dough	6 ozs.
Cheese	$1\frac{1}{2}$ ozs.		

Women and children received rations proportionately.

William Morris, referred to variously as the Overseer, Assistant Overseer or Governor, features frequently in these records. We know that he travelled widely, and practised concern over certain cases. It is easy to gain the impression of Mr. Morris as a wise old man, with years of experience, carrying out all the duties of Governor of the House in a paternalistic way. It comes as a surprise to learn that at his death, he was only 38, and only 19 when he first took up his post.

What the recipients of Mr. Morris's services felt about him, we simply do not know, but what the townsfolk felt about him is recorded on his tombstone in Aylsham churchyard, and probably gives a fair impression of the man:-

*This tombstone was erected
by the parishioners of Aylsham, in Vestry
Assembled, to commemorate the
Integrity, Ability and Zeal of
WILLIAM MORRIS
late Governor of their House of Industry
who, in the discharge of the
Difficult duties of that Office
during 19 years
gained the entire consideration
of his employers,
and who died on the
[?] day of March, 1833
in the 39th year
of his age.*

---ooOoo---