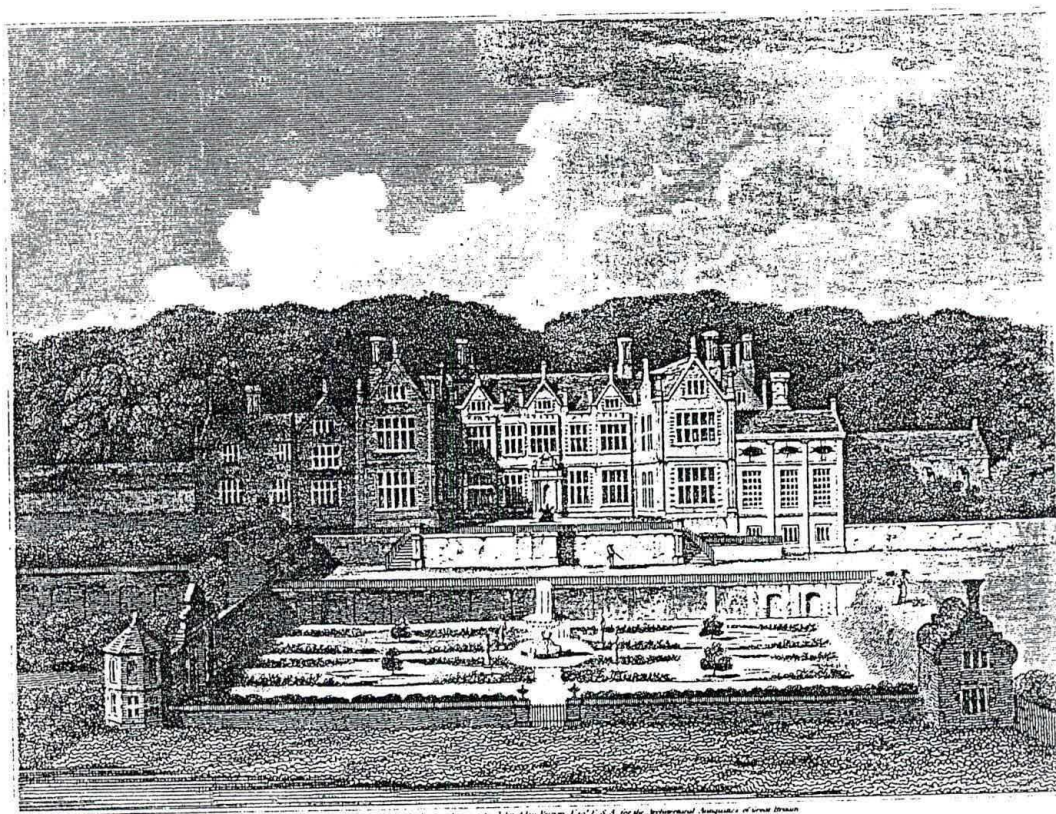


Aylsham Local History Society



Engraved by John Smith from a drawing by John Aylmer Esq. Eng. F. & A. for the Architectural Antiquities of Great Britain

OXNEAD HALL

AYLSHAM LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

CHAIRMAN

Mrs J.Nolan

SECRETARY

Miss V.Belton

EDITOR

Tom Mollard, Flint Cottage, Calthorpe Rd. Erpingham [Cromer 761638]

DIARY DATES

- 15th.June Visit of South Creak Local History
 Society to Aylsham.
- 3rd.September Visit to John Innes Library (see notice
 on page 190.)
- 24th.September Peter Holman's Mystery History Tour.
 Details later.
- 29th.September Archives Group commences. A course
 on the Poor Law in Aylsham, studied
 from the town archives and other
 sources. Tutor: John Pound.
- October Annual General Meeting. [date to be
 arranged]

COVER PICTURE

OXNEAD HALL. Engraved by John Smith from a drawing by John Adey Repton Esq. FSA for the "Architectural Antiquities of Great Britain". Published, January 1st. 1809, by Longman & Co. Paternoster Row, and J.Taylor, High Holborn.



AYLSHAM LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

JOURNAL & NEWSLETTER

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AYLSHAM MILLS

Ben Rust

Mr.W.W.Pallett was born at Lodge Farm, Stevenage on August 28th. 1855. He came to Norfolk when apprenticed to Press Brothers, Corn & Seed Merchants, of Spa Common, North Walsham. He eventually became a partner, and the name of the firm was changed to Press & Pallett.

On the death of Mr.Edward Press in 1906, Mr.Pallett became the sole proprietor. Re-organisation of the firm took place, and the Barclay family entered the business; the name being changed to Pallett Barclay & Co. At this time the company had its head office at North Walsham with trading premises at North Walsham, Bacton Wood, Felmingham, Wayford Bridge, Cromer, Gunton and Cawston.

In 1907, when the Dunkirk Roller Mills at Aylsham came on the market, on the retirement of Mr.Ben Cook, the company purchased them and formed a second company called Barclay Pallett & Company Ltd. Mr.R.L.Rust, who had worked for Mr.Pallett since 1900, was sent to Aylsham as manager. Following the death of Mr. W.W.Pallett in 1913, the two companies were merged, and at the same time Wroxham Mills were purchased; the whole company being known as Barclay Pallett & Co. Ltd.

DUNKIRK ROLLER MILL

The Mill is situated between the Tuttington Road and the canal at Aylsham. The Mill dates back to 1856 when Frederick Copeman

was the owner. Purchased by Benjamin Cook in 1878, who already owned mills at Itteringham and Blickling, he improved them considerably. At the time of purchase, the mill contained four pairs of millstones. In 1886, Mr Cook installed a four sack/hour roller mill plant - the first in the district. Three years later, he built offices, seed granary and stabling alongside the road and enclosing the yard. Alongside the canal and forming the fourth side of the yard is the building known as the Bone Mill. This is still in situ and still known by this name.

In 1878, a Mr.Vince carried on trade in bone meal, meat meal and other associated products. Mr.Cook acquired the land and buildings before building the new offices. In 1894 Mr.Cook added wheat washing and drying machinery, and carried out other changes. The first exhibition of roller milling machinery (as opposed to the long established millstone) took place in the Royal Agricultural Hall in London in 1879. It was then that English millers started to convert to the new system of milling; so Mr.Cook was in the forefront of modern milling techniques.

For nearly thirty years there was a good flour trade. In 1907 Mr.Cook retired, and Barclay Pallett purchased the mills at auction. The auction took place on Saturday July 6th. 1907 in Norwich by Messrs.Irelands. Three lots were offered:-

Lot 1. The steam Roller flour mills, together with wheat cleaning plant, offices, granary and stabling.

Lot 2. Double dwelling House (opposite)

Lot 3. Double dwelling House (opposite)

The company purchased Lot 1. Trading carried on without a break. Plans were made to improve the milling plant, but these were not carried out. An agreement was made with the Post Office to instal a telephone at an annual rent of £7-10-0 to cover 480 calls. In 1910, Henry Simon Milling Engineers improved the flour milling plant. There is a group photograph of mill employees and engineers taken at this time.

An agreement was made in 1909 with the Aylsham Canal Company to pay an annual fee of £50 in lieu of all tolls on the canal. The company owned and used a number of wherries. In 1910, the 28th. Annual Milling Convention was held at Cromer, the only time that this convention has ever been held in Norfolk, so this was therefore, an important occasion. The souvenir issue of "Milling" magazine contained write-ups of many mills in East Anglia, including Aylsham.

In 1912, catastrophe overtook the canal, river and mill. On 27th. August six inches of rain fell in 24 hours causing serious flooding of the Bure valley. My father told me that he went home at 6 o'clock in the evening, and he was called back at 6.30pm. The water level had risen two feet in a half-hour, due to the M & GN railway embankment collapsing and allowing a surge of water to flow downstream. Locks and brick-arched bridges were swept away, and mills and houses flooded. No damage was caused to the machinery, but many sacks of grain and flour were damaged.

The canal was not repaired. Some wherries were trapped at Aylsham, and were taken down the canal and river when water levels were high enough. At Buxton, they were taken out of the river, and manhandled across the road to reach safe water below the mill. With the coming of the railways to Aylsham in the middle of the 1880s, use of the canal had declined. The flood damage was not repaired, and navigation ceased on the upper reaches of the river Bure above Horstead mill after August 1912.

In June 1914, Aylsham Water Mill came on the market, and Barclay Pallett & Co. purchased the mill at auction, so they now owned both Aylsham mills, using one for flour manufacture and the other for animal food manufacture. In August 1914, the Great War started, and the Ministry of Food took over responsibility of flour manufacture with the mill being run by the company for the Ministry. At the end of the war, the control of the flour mill was handed back to the company, with suitable compensation being given. With this money, the company re-modelled the wheat cleaning and drying plant, and also up-dated some of the roller mill plant. The work was carried out by E.R. & F. Turner, Milling Engineers of Ipswich.

When re-modelling the wheat-cleaning plant, the roof of the building was raised, the locum removed and the smaller of the two tall chimneys was demolished. All this took place in 1920, and a photograph shows the mill as it was before these alterations took place.

AYLSHAM WATER MILL

Reputedly, there has been a mill here since the time of Domesday. During the 17th. century, the mill seems to have been the subject of a number of law-suits, and as a consequence fell in to a poor state of repair. It was purchased by the Parmeters, and re-built in its present form in 1798. The Parmeters built the malt house also, in 1777. During the latter part of the 19th. century, the water mill belonged to the Bullock brothers - John and Stanley. On the death of Stanley in 1914, it came on the market and was sold by auction together with land, houses and cottages in Millgate. A copy of the sale catalogue gives the date of sale as June 16th. 1914. The mill was bought by Barclay Pallett, and the two mills were managed by Mr.R.L.Rust for the next 50 years.

From the plan of the lots for sale, it is interesting to note how well the purchase of this property complemented the Dunkirk Roller Mills. The Company bought everything except:-

- Lot 2. Millgate House
- Lot 3. Bure House
- Lot 4. Millgate Cottages
- Lot 7. The Malthouse
- Lot 8. Meadow
- Lot 10. Shop, bakehouse, windmill and dwelling house.

Mr.R.L.Rust subsequently purchased the Malthouse, for there is an agreement to let land adjacent to the Malthouse, to the War Office for the purpose of erecting a bath-house for troops. The agreement was dated May 19th. 1916. Mr.Rust also purchased Millgate House at a later date. In 1918 he moved there, following Colonel T.W.Purdy who moved to Woodgate House.

During the Great War, the two mills and Wroxham mills, together with other trading sites were managed by the company and were profitable. These sites were:-

Bacton Wood Mill and granary
North Walsham station granary
Cromer Station granary
Felmingham Mill
Wroxham staithe granary
Cawston coal yard
Wayford Bridge granary

Employees serving in the forces were paid a part of their salary/wages. Employees working at the mills were paid a bonus. By 1922 there was a general down-turn in the economy, and employees were asked to accept a reduction in wages. Flour milling at Wroxham ceased, and Aylsham took over flour production and supplied Wroxham customers. Animal food production, and general trade continued to be profitable, and wherries continued to ply from Bacton Wood, Wroxham and Wayford Bridge.

The first steam lorry was purchased just prior to the Great War, and continued in use for many years. A second lorry was purchased after the war. Then petrol-driven lorries began to replace the horse and wagon, but horse-drawn coal carts continued in use until the end of the Second World War. Some names of drivers are Walter Johnson, Jack Wright, Tom Wright, Fred Grix, Reggie Gladman, G.Suffling and G.Eastoe.

The flour mill was powered by a large twin cylinder steam engine. This was used to drive the whole plant through a system of line shafts and flat leather belts. The engine was a 75HP twin cylinder Richard & Watts with a Galloway boiler.

Jack Matthews and George Eastoe were the engine minders, and a Mr.Smith ruled the workforce of a dozen men. The office was worked by an elderly gentleman by the name of White. He lived in one of the mill houses across the road, and turned up early each morning in cloth cap and slippers.

Before the Great War flour was packed in 20 stone [280lb.] sacks. These were delivered by horse and cart to local bakeries, and usually carried on a man's back up outside steps to the bakery loft. My father told me the story that when legislation was introduced to limit the weight of flour in a bag to 10 stone, the carters were very angry because it meant climbing the bakery steps twice as many times! Flour milling was never very flourishing, but trade continued with local bakeries and grocers' shops throughout the area, and to London. Flour to London went by rail, and subsequently by lorry. In the early 1930s, a small self-raising flour plant was introduced, and flour was packed in branded $3\frac{1}{2}$ lb. [$\frac{1}{4}$ stone] bags, and sent out in packs of a dozen.

In 1920, the wheat cleaning and drying plant was re-modelled by E.R. & F. Turner Ltd. of Ipswich, who also re-modelled the flour-milling plant, and there is mention of the plant standing idle for six months when under Flour Milling Control, just after the Great War.

The introduction of motor transport came slowly during the 1920s. Up to the introduction of mechanical transport, all cereals came to the mill from the farm by horse and wagon. At harvest time there could be up to 30 wagons waiting to be unloaded. Corn was put into corn sacks and manhandled. At the mill they would either be unloaded and carried on a man's back, or wheeled by sack trolley, and stacked. Corn was either threshed in the field at harvest time, or stacked and threshed from the stack at a later date. Corn sacks would be provided by the miller - each sack holding a volume of grain which was weighed on the farm:-

Wheat	1 sack = 1 coomb = 252lbs.
Barley	1 sack = 1 coomb = 224lbs.
Oats	1 sack = 1 coomb = 168lbs.

(Coomb is a Norfolk/East Anglian word)

English wheat, providing it was dry enough, was stored in sacks until required, then mixed with Canadian/American wheats for making bread flour, or milled on its own for soft flour.

In 1929, the steam engine was replaced by a Ruston Hornsby (of Lincoln) twin cylinder diesel engine of 120 HP, with a rope drive. A new engine house was built. The steam engine was sold, but the boiler remained until it was removed to make way for a night-watchman's room during the Second World War. The tall chimney was removed in 1937. The period between the Wars was a difficult time, with little change, and the fortunes of the company fluctuated, but the company was always profitable.

There was no mains electricity in Aylsham until 1931, so both mills generated their own. At the flour mill there was no electricity until the engine started each morning, so candles were used. This was a dangerous practice in an old wooden building, and even more dangerous in a flour-mill. The water-mill used a system of accumulators which were recharged each day by a dynamo driven from the water-wheel. In 1931, when mains electricity came, power was available for electric motors. It was not long before a small electrically powered hammer mill was installed in the water-mill. Ground cereals became available for the manufacture of balanced rations for livestock. Throughout the 1930s, this trade steadily increased, and two vertical mixers were installed in the water-mill.

Mill stones driven by water power continued in use for grinding farmers' corn. Some malting barley was stored in corn sacks on the granary floor. An average of five men were employed. One of these men, Mr. Harper, was skilled in dressing mill stones. A tap, tap all day long meant that he was using a mill bill, and chipping grooves into the surface of the millstone. The backs of his hands were black, caused by small specks of stone embedding themselves in the skin of his hands. Naturally, it was always necessary to wear goggles to protect his eyes.

The flour mill continued production, although the flour trade was never good. The mill was in production for either 8 or 12 hours each day, and sometimes 16 hours. The sale of balanced rations increased. As these increased, the sale of slab-cake decreased and eventually ceased altogether. Slab-cake was the residue from the extraction of oil, by pressure squeezing, from cotton seed,

palm seed and linseed. The residues became a thick slab of about 1½ inches, 3'6" long and 15" wide. These were manhandled, stacked in tiers, and fed to cattle. Any farmer who used this feed needed a cake-breaker. Modern methods, including the use of a solvent for oil extraction, terminated the production of slab-cake. A trade developed in seed corn. Artificial fertilizer sales increased, and small seeds (clover and grass) sales continued. General business conditions were improving, as the fortunes of agriculture became more prosperous.

SECOND WORLD WAR

The start of the 1939-45 war brought in rationing of feeding stuffs, a limited supply of fertilizer, and control of flour milling by the Ministry of Food. Many employees were retained in reserved occupations or were too old to be called-up. Women were employed in the office. Many of the older employees served in volunteer services such as,

The Observer Corps
The Fire Service
The Home Guard
St. John's Ambulance
The Red Cross

The army built strong-points at strategic places!! A concrete bag pill-box was built against the north end of the water-mill, adjacent to the sluice-gate. This commanded views of the road bridge, and the shallow water at the bottom of the mill pool. At this time, there was a small, single-plank footbridge across the river at the bottom of the mill pool, where there was a hard gravel bottom, and the water was shallow. The army decided, in the interests of security, that the footbridge should be destroyed. The County Council owned buildings adjacent to the staithe, which were hired by the company. At the start of the war, the County Council terminated the lease, and converted the buildings to decontamination sheds, for use in case of chemical warfare. At

the flour mill, the old boiler house was converted to a night-watchman's room, and throughout the war a man was always on duty.

POST WAR

For the first 2-3 years after the war, little change took place. Then, with steadily increasing labour costs, changes were necessary. A second and larger grinder was installed in the water-mill. Farm chemicals began to appear, and the sale of fertilizers increased rapidly. Transport requirements increased, new lorries replaced old ones and the horse and cart disappeared.

Bulk handling of corn became essential to reduce labour requirements. Four 50 ton bins were installed at Aylsham flour mill, and a facility for tipping sacks from the lorry into a small intake conveyor. This necessitated filling in the cutting from the canal to inside the mill building - a facility which had not been used since 1912. A warehouse and boiler house were also demolished.

In 1953, a complete re-modelling of the water-mill took place. The installation of a pelleting press and meal plant involved bringing into use the disused bottom floor beneath the granary floor, known as the Wood Shed. A small boiler house was erected at the east end with a bulk molasses tank below floor level. New style paper bags were used, and a big advertising campaign steadily increased sales of feeding stuffs.

In 1959, a grain silo and dryer was built at Dunkirk on land adjacent to the flour mill. This necessitated demolishing a pair of cottages. A weighbridge was installed; the turnover to bulk-handling of grain was rapid, and the use of corn sacks speedily decreased. For the first few years, use of the dryer was heavy. With the introduction of the combine harvester it became more economic for the farmers to have their own drying facilities, and after a few years, most grain was dried on the farm.

In 1966, the company decided to build a new provender mill alongside the silo, on land which belonged to the company and which was used as allotments. The grain silo could therefore supply both the flour mill and the new provender mill with all their grain requirements in bulk. Building commenced early in 1966, and production commenced in 1967. Animal feed production ceased at the water-mill, Wroxham and North Walsham. In 1967 the company was sold to British Oil and Cake Mills; a subsidiary of Unilever. The new owners enlarged the plant and added bulk handling facilities. Production of BOCM foods commenced in 1969.

The flour mill ceased production and was closed. For a long time it was used by the local Fire Service for training. In 1975 the building was demolished to make way for the present building; which is used for the manufacture of premixes.

The water-mill was sold in 1969 to Mr.J.Crampton, who converted part of it into holiday flats. The front section over the river houses a theatre organ. The water wheel and machinery has been renovated and is in working order.

British Oil and Cake Mills and Silcock Feeds, both national manufacturers of animal feeds, were both subsidiaries of Unilever. They were merged into one company known as BOCM Silcock. The new company had a policy of closing the very large port mills, and building smaller, computerised mills throughout the country. Strategically placed, the aim was to be within 60 miles of any farm. One of these new mills was built at Bury St.Edmunds, and it was not long before the company realised that Bury mill could supply Aylsham's customers. With the introduction of milk quotas, and the downturn in animal food requirements, the closure of Aylsham was inevitable.

Redundancy notices were issued to all employees in October 1984. Production of animal feeds ceased on January 1st 1985, but notices of redundancy were withdrawn. The plant was converted to the manufacture of fish food. Thus started a programme of specialisation at Aylsham mill. Premix manufacture continued, and when fish food manufacture was transferred to a new mill in

Scotland, other specialised foods were introduced at Aylsham.

Aylsham has become the special foods plant for BOCM Silcock. Much money has been spent on plant at Aylsham, and its future is assured. However, currently, Unilever are looking for a buyer for all their feed mills and agricultural business.

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AYLSHAM RIVER IN THE LAST CENTURY

Geoffrey Nobbs

William Arnold Smith Wynne was born at Aylsham in 1835, and mentions in his diary* that, like his father before him, he had a keen interest in the Broads. He noted, when 85, that he was still as keen on boats as he had been at the age of 12, on board his father's first boat, the 'Louisa', then the 'Caledonia'(lateener) then the 'Stormy Petrel', and lastly, the well-known 8 ton racing sloop 'Daphne'. Apart from the 'Stormy Petrel' all these were built by Bob Wright of Aylsham who, it seems, also built the 'Clara', a small racing sloop, after Wynne left for India as a surgeon in the Honourable East India Company (subsequently transferring to the Indian Army and retiring with rank of Deputy Surgeon General)

Dr.Wynne's father, Dr.Frederick Parsons Smith, was born at Cromer and lived at Aylsham from 1824 until his death in 1868. He practised, it seems, from Church Hill and then at the Market Place. In 1836, he applied for the post of Surgeon to the Aylsham Union, when his sponsors spoke confidently of his attention, care and kindness to the poor. Dr.Fred Smith was Commodore of the Aylsham Aquatic Club in 1851, as mentioned in John Sapwell's History of Aylsham. It is noteworthy that the early Aylsham Regattas were held on the Bure above the Anchor bridge, the boats having been hauled out from the Basin downstream, ready for the occasion. At this time, the Anchor Inn appears to have been the focal point of the Club, which may explain the existence of vestiges of a boat dyke next to the inn.

*[NRO MS 21477 T 134E]

Fred Smith's 'Louisa' came third in the 1850 Regatta, and the following year he won with his 'Caledonia'.

His son adopted the surname of Smith Wynne, although he was usually known as Wynne, and the diary shows that Dr.Wynne retained an affection for his native town of Aylsham. On several occasions he records items of news from the town, received via the "North River" [River Bure] wherryman. For instance in 1901, Wynne mentions that the wherryman,

'Old Collins, told me his wife was dead, and old Bob Dent childish, and had to be fed. This was Aylsham news by river. . . It was a St.Luke's Summer day'

When Dent, who lived at Sankence Lodge with his sister, died in 1903 aged 90, Wynne attended the funeral of his old friend, late of the Bombay Medical Service, whom he had known from a boy.

Dr.Wynne records his return to the town in 1877, after a long absence. He arrived by water, and mentions the fine distant prospect as

'Aylsham church came into view after passing the bridge, and looked well in the distance. . .we reached Aylsham about 4pm and went straight into the Mill pool. . .very few people about, and we saw only Forster amongst the wherryman class. Called on Stanley Bullock who asked me to make use of his house etc. . . Purchased meat at Nichols, and called at the Market Place and Shaws. . .I went into Stanley Bullock's and had supper tea. . .meat purchased at Aylsham a little fly-blown.'

The next day was fine, and Thornton Bullock came aboard. Presumably, the doughty sailors had eaten some of the offending meat, whilst moored in the Mill pool, for following Thornton's visit, they set off downstream and later,

'We cut up the rest of the mutton into the stewpot, which we set over the slow lamp whilst we rowed the

craft round to Allen's yard [at Coltishall] and rigged up our awning for the night, and dined off the stew which was very good, notwithstanding we had to throw some of the meat away for being too high. . . Bob very dainty and hesitated to partake. . .'

The Bullocks were millers and wherry owners etc. at Aylsham, and they lived nearby in Millgate. Wynne was probably supplied with his meat (good in parts and bad in parts like the curate's egg) by John Nichols, butcher and farmer of the "White Horse", also in Millgate. It may well have been entirely satisfactory on purchase, but suffered from non-existent storage facilities once on board. The identity of the 'Shaws' is not quite clear, but this may have been a reference to the Misses Shaw, perhaps old friends who lived in the Terrace.

Dr. Wynne evidently had not expected to find any changes in the town or its inhabitants, despite an absence of some years, and he sums up rather sadly,

'Here ended our cruize to Aylsham, which was not altogether quite a pleasure trip. . . again, on arrival at Aylsham, I saw no old friends, and the place looked dull and strange, and I felt a stranger in the old place, and was glad to get away from it as quickly as I could. I had determined to fly my flag in Aylsham Mill pool, and having done so and accomplished my purpose, I felt glad to get back to broad waters where I could again hoist sail'.

Arthur Patterson reckoned that in 1871 there were 112 wherries based on the River Bure. Of these, probably over 20 would, in the heyday of the Navigation, have been regular visitors to Aylsham. These were used for a great variety of cargoes, but in addition, as the Broads became popular with holidaymakers, the vessels were often converted, during the summer, to pleasure wherries for holiday parties, crewed by an expert skipper and mate. In 1891, Thomas Shreeve of Aylsham, offered for hire

"two wherry yachts [The Volunteer & the Enterprise] fitted with every convenience for the enjoyment of parties wishing to visit the Broads and rivers of Norfolk. Two men are provided by the owners to look after and sail the yachts, and are under the direction of the party hiring the boat. . . a jolly boat is with each yacht."

Come the winter, the cabins etc. would often be removed, and the craft returned to more mundane commercial duties.

On at least one occasion, however, some of the Aylsham wherries were used for yet another purpose - in providing a memorable school treat. The Parish Magazine describes one such event which took place in 1856:-

The Annual Treat was held on Thursday afternoon, August 6th. There had been a little rain in the morning, and fears about the weather were in the minds of most. The children, however, had no doubt, for they mustered in good force - 155 boys and 151 girls and 70 infants. A start was made from the Schools at 1.45. On reaching the Market Place the Procession was headed by the band, and marched through Red Lion and White Hart Streets, Gas House Hill and Millgate, to the Staithe, where three wherries, kindly lent by Messrs Bullock Brothers and Mr. Shreeve, took the children, their teachers and a few helpers, down the river and through the lock to a meadow, the use of which, Mr. W. Case had given with his usual liberality, and where Mrs. Case and some more helpers had already begun to prepare a good store of tea and eatables. Mr. Stanley Bullock had set up a number of swings, roundabouts, see-saws etc. on which the children disported themselves. These amusements, with races, throwing for sweets, scrambling etc. filled up the time till tea was ready, when the children sat down, mostly on some sail cloths spread on the grass and did ample justice to the fare provided.

After tea, the games were resumed, some joined in a dance, and others watched the sending off of balloons till the bugle sounded for the return at 7.30. The wherries were soon filled and moved amidst hearty cheers for Mr. & Mrs. Case. Coloured fires were burnt, and Roman Candles let off on each wherry. The staithe was safely reached by 8.30, and a crowd of parents and friends were ready to receive the returning children'.

The mind boggles at the well intentioned scheme of burning coloured fires and letting off Roman Candles on the wherries, bearing in mind that each craft contained, on average, 125 children, and in addition, the crew, teachers and helpers. Modern safety standards would have been in jeopardy, and it is with relief that we learn that all returned safely.

These wherries may have been built by the Bob Wright who had constructed Dr. Smith's racing vessels, or other members of the Wright family. The 'Caledonia' built by Bob Wright was, as mentioned by Dr. Wynne, a lateener, and the rig was once a common sight on Norfolk waters. With an enormous foresail, over twice the length of the vessel, as well as the mainsail, these shallow draught boats, which could sail very close to the wind, had round bluff bows to support the heavy mast raking forward over them. This raised such a big bow wave that fast sailing was impossible. The other fault with lateeners was that they had a nasty tendency to run completely under in a stiff following breeze, and no doubt for these reasons, the rig went out of favour.

The 1879 directory refers to Elijah Wright of Millgate, boatbuilder, whilst earlier on, in 1851, the census records Thomas Wright, master boatbuilder, aged 62 born at Horning, and Robert Wright, boatwright, aged 47, a native of Aylsham. Mr. William Case, who provided the meadow, (probably Case's Ham) for the School Treat, lived at Tuttington Hall, and farmed there as well as at Burgh. He subsequently became a JP and no doubt supported Aylsham activities whenever he could. In addition to owning trading vessels, one member at least of this family must have been handy with the oars, for

Dr.Sapwell records that in 1852, Mr.Bullock took part in a rowing match from Aylsham basin to the Lock and back.

The destruction of the locks in the Great Flood of 1912 put paid to Aylsham's waterborne trade. At least one wherry, the Zulu, was trapped in the stretch of water between Aylsham and Buxton and had to be hauled out over dry land, and then re-launched below Buxton Mill. Maybe, floods or not, the railways were already sounding the death knell of these fine old vessels which had been trading up to Aylsham ever since 1779.

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ETHEL MAY BUCK.

Frank Vincent

My mother is convinced that raw Norfolk swedes have life preserving qualities. She should know, because on May 12th. 1992 she is 100 years relatively old.

Ethel May Buck was born at Malt House farm, (the old farmhouse) in Oulton Street, near Aylsham, on May 12th. 1892. Her father, George Buck, was born at Itteringham in 1849, and her mother, Maria Buck (nee Maria Long) was born at Ingham in 1857. Ethel May Buck had two brothers and five sisters, and she is now the only surviving member of that family. She was married and widowed twice, and has lived at Bexleyheath in Kent with her daughter, May, and her son-in-law, Jim Wilson, for 30 years. Her first husband was George Vincent, and her second was James Smith, hence her name is currently Ethel May Smith.

As a girl in Oulton Street she enjoyed accompanying her father, who was a Wesleyan Reform lay preacher, to all the local villages in the circuit, and she would sing solo hymns after her father had preached the sermon. Sunday School at Oulton Street was at 9am, then a service at 10.30am, then home for dinner followed by a service at 2.30pm, then home for tea with a final service at 6pm. Church anniversary days are a great memory. She would be asked to sing on a wagon adjacent to the old farmhouse at Oulton Street,

and her father accompanied her on the violin. Her mother always made her a new frock for the anniversary day.

Ethel went to Oulton Street school from 5-13 years where Mr. and Mrs. English taught history, English, arithmetic and geography. She still remembers the names of her school chums of 95 years ago - Matilda Rackham, Margaret Ayton, Bessie Ayton, Annie, Fanny and George Sparrow, and Violet Lakey. She also remembers the Clements who lived in a cottage near the 'Bird in Hand', and Daisy and Sidney Fields, who lived in Aylsham Lane. She used to love to watch Mr. Kiddel, the blacksmith, in his forge, shoeing the horses, and would play with his children; Annie, George and Nellie. Ethel used to visit Mr and Mrs Powell in the village, to read the bible, pray and sing hymns.

She also enjoyed visiting her Aunt Sally (whose real name was Sarah) in Aylsham. Sarah Buck was married to Dennis Bond, and Ethel also visited them when they had a sweet shop in Aldborough. Violet Overton, who was Ethel's friend, got her father, the local coal seller, to take Ethel on his cart, to visit her aunt and uncle in Aldborough. Many years later, Violet was to marry George Sparrow, whose family lived in the other half of the Malt House farm at the same time as the Bucks. James, Granville, Frank and Mabel Bond were the children of Dennis Bond, and Granville Bond's daughter, Joy [Joy Ducker] is well known in Aylsham, where she lives with her husband, Geoffrey. The writer was named after Frank Bond, who my mother admired.

Occasional visits to Great Yarmouth with her mother, via Bluestone station in Oulton Street, and then Aylsham, were a great treat. Ethel would save a penny for the funfair but tragedy struck on one occasion when she lost it in the grass. Christmas was a wonderful time in the old farm house. The Buck's children would hang up their stockings, which were filled by morning with an orange, an apple and some sweets. There was no money for toys in those days, but the games and joy were in abundance. Venison meat was sent from Blickling Park to the occupants of the tied cottages, and Ethel's mother managed to produce a Christmas plum pudding for the family.

Another time of joy was the school-treat, in the summer time at Blickling Park, when a wagon would take the school children to the park where they were each presented with a bag of sweets by Lady Lothian. Life was hard, but vegetables were plentiful, and Ethel loved to eat slices of raw swede that was being cut up on a machine for the bullocks. She didn't know what baker's bread was like, because her mother regularly baked it for the family. Meat was eaten once per week, and for the remainder of the week, stews, sausages, and herrings from a visiting fish man formed the basis of the family diet. When the wheat had been harvested in the fields, the tenants were allowed to pick up the gleanings. Then Ethel would go with her mother, and take the gleanings to Mr.Harrison at the old mill at Aylsham (some three miles walk), where he would grind them into flour. The flour was later collected, and baked by Ethel's mother into some 10 loaves of bread.

Ethel, like so many young girls early in this century, left school at 13, and went into service in Norwich. She was up at 6am, and as a general domestic, worked throughout the day on everything from blacking the grate and pumicing the doorstep, to taking the children to school. After washing up the dinner things at 7pm, the rest of the evening was her own, which she spent in her room at the top of the house. She received, for her services, bed and room and 1/6d per week, but she had to provide her own collars and cuffs. After several general domestic posts in the London area, she tried her hand at a variety of jobs including barmaid, milkrounds-woman, (churns and measures in those days, and a heavy wagon to push by hand), and manageress of a sweet shop.

She met her first husband, George Vincent, in about 1910, and after the 1914-18 war, they were married, and started their married life in a sub-ground flat in South London, from whence they moved first to Bellingham, and then to Welling in Kent. Ethel has always loved singing, and it is a mere handful of years ago that she decided to give up singing to the 'old-folks' in local concert parties. She still retains strong traces of her Norfolk accent to this day, and always refers to Oulton Street as "back home".

---ooOoo---

DOCTORS' PRESCRIPTIONS OF THE 1830s.

Dr. Julian Eve

Among the Aylsham archives in the Town Hall is a leather-bound book labelled "Physicians' Prescription Book". It covers the period 1832 to 1839, and comes from a former Aylsham chemist at 14 Market Place.

I have been itching to look at the contents for some time, and last month I was able to spend a morning going through the items. All the local doctors dispensed medicine from their own surgeries, and I wondered why the local pharmacist had been called in. A clue to the answer may lie in the wealthy aristocratic list of customers recorded with the prescriptions. They include the Earl of Orford, the Marquess of Lothian, Lord Walpole, Lady Suffield Lady Sophia Windham, Sir Thomas Beevor, Sir Edric Kerrison, and many more important lords, knights and reverend personages. All the items are "repeat prescriptions" which I assume were supplied on demand as their regular medicant. Very few have any doctor's name attached to them, and they may not have even originated from a doctor.

I had hoped to be able to see if there had been any particular epidemic in Aylsham by the nature of the prescriptions in any one year, but they are obviously not suitable for this. However, they are not without interest. They consist mostly of fairly elegant mixtures used as 'tonics', carminatives, laxatives and lotions. Some medicines for biliousness and gout are also included, as well as some gargles. I was taken aback to find that preparations in use 150 years ago were nearly all known to me. Many of them were still in use in Norfolk country practices in 1950.

The prescriptions are written in medical abbreviated latin, and quantities given in the old apothecary's system using grains, scruples, drachms and ounces. [Twenty grains to a scruple; three scruples to a drachm and eight drachms to an ounce] They present no problem to doctors (mostly retired) of my generation. Only one prescription in the book contained any morphine, and that was a small quantity of laudanum.

The 'tonic' mixtures, or 'pick-me-ups' contained mostly iron, quinine, rhubarb and gentian - bitters were supposed to improve the appetite. None contained strychnine which was a favourite ingredient at this time, probably because it was a restricted drug. Strychnine - in small doses - was supposed to increase muscle tone, and create a feeling of well-being.

Carminatives mixtures (that relieve wind) contained peppermint, ginger, oil of cardamon, magnesium carbonate or even weak sulphuric acid for "sluggish digestion". The County gentlemen, who were always concerned about their bowels, were given very superior laxative pills. A preparation of aloes was incorporated with syrup of wormwood to make a paste, which was then divided into pills, so that each contained three grains of aloes. It was a very tedious prescription to dispense, but not quite as bad as powders, where each individual powder, wrapped in folded paper, had to be weighed. Another popular laxative was Syrup of Buckthorne. This came from the bark of the shrub whose popular name was Purging Buckthorne. It had the same action as Cascara.

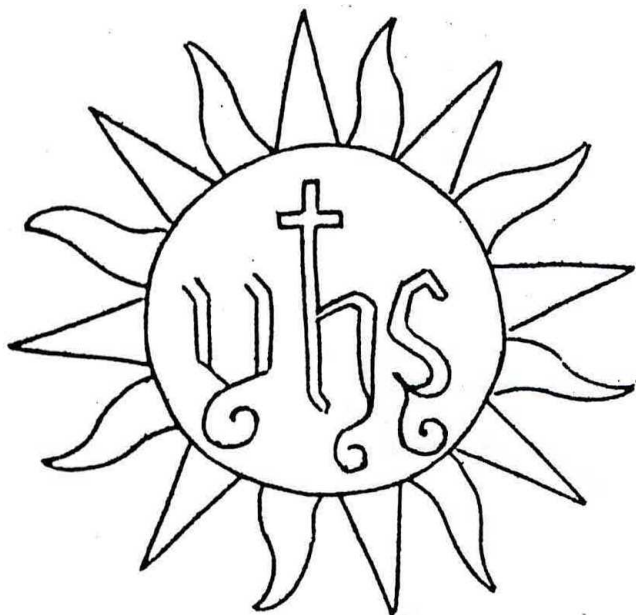
Mixtures containing alarming amounts of Mercury (Hydrarg. Subchloridi) are recorded. They were given to "cleanse the stomach and bowels". Older members may remember Calomel pills, which were in use 30 years ago, and even given to children. Patent teething powders for children commonly contained Mercury, and caused severe reactions for many years before they were made illegal.

One mixture for gout contained Colchicine, which certainly worked even if the therapeutic dose was near the toxic dose, but incorporated in the mixture was tincture of Ginger (Zingiber), tincture of Capsicum (cayenne pepper), weak ammonia and an infusion of Gentian. The patient would certainly have "felt it doing him good". An unusual gargle contained syrup of Kino. This was unknown to me, and I had to look it up in an old Extra Pharmacopoeia. It contained tannic acid which has astringent properties and would have eased a sore throat.

An ointment for chilblains bears an uncanny resemblance to the popular Iodex which some of you may remember. The chemist

obviously obliged his customers whenever he could. For one lady he regularly made up a "scented hair lotion" of fresh rose water and syrup of Myrrh. Two prescriptions recorded are not for medicinal purposes at all. One was a recipe for furniture polish. It contained beeswax and linseed oil mixed with brandy! What a waste - methylated spirits would have been just as good. The other was called Boot Top Liquid and contained Oxalic acid ("Laundry blue"), Sal Acetosella (salts of lemon, used mostly for removing ink stains), Saccharum Saturni (Lead Acetate) and ground pumice stone powder. Obviously it was used on my lord's hunting boots!

---ooOoo---



On the two wooden gates at the entrance to the present house at Oxnead, there is the design of the sun, very similar to the design in this picture.

Our illustration is actually a reproduction of one of the watermarks in the paper used in the writing of the "Paston Letters"

Any connection?

SOCIETY NEWS

'ON BEING A LABOURER IN THE 16th.CENTURY - On Thursday, 29th.February, a very large audience, including guests from the Blakeney Local History Society, gathered at the Friendship Club to hear Professor A Hassall Smith talk on "Being a labourer in the 16th.Century". The size of the audience was a tribute to Professor Hassall Smith's reputation as a former professor at the UEA, and his outstanding work on the village of Stiffkey.

By the end of the 16th.Century the population of England was only about two and a half million, of whom half were either seamen, labourers or soldiers. Little is known of the remaining 50% of the population. In the 16th.Century the country consisted largely of three types of farming - corn and sheep, pasture and woodland, and hill farming. These activities were not confined to geographical areas of the country, but rather spread throughout the country, although clearly in Norfolk there was no hill farming.

In the Stiffkey area, corn and sheep-farming was predominant. By the 16th.Century there had been a shift from part-time to full-time work, mostly in the arable areas of East Anglia . Much of Professor Hassall Smith's talk concentrated on Stiffkey, and according to the account books and other papers of the Lord of the Manor, Nicholas Bacon, estate workers were confined to people living in the parish, and it appears that workers there were working on a half-time basis, and included 30 families from outside Stiffkey, as well as 30 from the manor itself. Those from outside tended to be specialists, and included a molecatcher from Walsingham, building workers, thatchers, ditchers and shepherds. Wages were generally very low, and in Stiffkey the men were paid 8d per day and the women only 4d.

Professor Hassall Smith gave some information about Nicholas Bacon himself, a national figure who built Stiffkey Hall which was completed in 1592. At the end of his talk, Professor Hassall Smith faced a barrage of questions from the audience, and only time prevented him from answering all of the questions which the audience would have liked answered - indeed, even after the formal part of the evening, he was still being questioned over coffee.

ALAN VINCENT

VISIT TO THE CATHEDRAL LIBRARY - 18th March '92. The Society's first outing of the year was to Norwich Cathedral library. Here we were fortunate in that Tom Mollard, editor of our Journal & Newsletter is sub-librarian to the Dean & Chapter, and his exceptional knowledge was at our disposal. The present library room dates from 1913, but has the delightful appearance of a medieval monastic library - except that there are no chains attached to the books, only Tom's sharp eye.

The early medieval library was destroyed by fire in 1272, but was revived by many gifts from the monks. At the Dissolution, however, all the books were dispersed, many lost, and little action taken until the arrival of Dean Prideaux in 1681. He set up a new library in the Audit Room and this attracted many bequests. The move to the present room over the South walk of the cloisters occurred during Dean Beeching's time, and the library has grown so that it now holds almost 8,000 volumes. They cover a wide choice of subject and are by no means all religious works. Manuscripts have been placed in the Norfolk Record Office.

Tom had put out a wonderful display of unique books for us. One table contained a selection of magnificently bound Bibles. Amongst them was the Bishop's Bible of 1550, and a Bible signed by Queen Victoria at her coronation. We were also shown the 'Norwich Domesday', an early 15th. century MS which records details of all the parishes in the Norwich diocese. We saw many other ancient and finely bound books - too many to list them all here, but I particularly liked Blomefield's own interleaved copy of his History of Norwich, dated 1741, an illustrated book of human anatomy, and Henry VIII's book "Assertia Septem Sacramentorum" which earned him the title of Defender of the Faith.

Tom had gone to a lot of trouble to arrange for us to see and handle these interesting and rare books and deserves our thanks. The Cathedral library is open to visitors every Wednesday from 10am to 1pm.

JULIAN EVE

PLACE NAMES AND THE LOCAL HISTORIAN. The importance of place names in the study of local history was brought home, by Dr. Margaret Gelling, to an attentive audience of about 60 people in the Friendship Club, on the evening of March 26th.

Almost everyone will be familiar with the terms TUN (toon) and

HAM (haam) but few, I suspect, will have realised before Dr. Gellings talk, just how broad and diverse is the study of English place names. The subject is obscured by many centuries and by several languages, and encompasses British (Welsh), Old English and Norse cultures. It is not an easy subject for the beginner, since much of the available literature assumes a good basic knowledge on the part of the student. However, Dr. Gellings discourse was not only easily understood, but was also very interesting. Surely the mark of a true expert. She was at pains to point out that there were probably as many theories as there were researchers in the field, so there were those who would dispute her interpretation of the facts. However, none of the audience fell into this category.

During the evening we learned that there are few 'British' place names in Norfolk, most of the local names coming from Old English or Old Norse, which gives some indication as to the original nationality of the early settlers. The researcher is able to assess the distribution of the various nationalities throughout any given region from the place names. This is demonstrated by names ending in BY, THORPE and THWAIT, all of which indicate a Danish origin.

Geography and topography frequently figured in the naming of places. Stratton Strawless was quoted as an example. Stratton or Straet tun, indicates a settlement (tun) on a Roman road (straet). Those who accompanied Peter Holman on his mystery tour last year had first hand evidence of this when Peter pointed out the line of the Roman road running between Marsham and Cawston in the direction of Stratton Strawless. Other examples were quoted. Many of us, now, look out for the DUN (hill) when we pass by Hellesdon, and I for one, can't help wondering what could have happened to the waterway that once must have run close to Rackheath, to have given it a name indicating a landingplace.

DEREK LYONS

THE PASTONS AT OXNEAD - We know now that the General Election on April 9th. prompted a massive turn-out of voters. There was an equally splendid turn-out of members and friends, 45 in all, who came out in the evening to hear David Yaxley talk on the Paston family and its Oxnead connections. The choice of speaker was most apt; David Yaxley is a Norfolk man, steeped in the history of his county and born at Oxnead.

The Pastons were a dominant Norfolk family with houses spread

over much of Norfolk - Caister, Gresham, Hellesdon and other places in addition to Oxnead which became the family's principal home. Generations of the family were deeply involved in local and national politics and political disputes. David Yaxley took us through the complex genealogy of the family. Like so many Norfolk families, the constant re-use of the same Christian names makes it difficult to sort out the different generations. The fortunes of the family fluctuated greatly. One could claim that they reached their peak with Sir Robert Paston, who was created Viscount the Earl of Yarmouth. Financially, however, by the time of his son's succession (William, the second Earl) the family's fortunes declined, and both the estate and the title died out with the death of William. Of particular interest was their home at Oxnead, built before 1575 by Sir Clement. The house declined along with the family, and was sold in the 1730s to pay off Sir William's debts. Little of the house remains, only the drawings by John Adey Repton show how splendid it probably looked.

Through some excellent slides which were shown after the talk, we could see what exists today, and also how the gardens are being restored by the present owner. It was a most stimulating talk. Whether people were pleased or upset at the outcome of the election, they must have been 100% delighted at the outcome of this talk.

TOM MOLLARD

VISIT OF N.A.H.R.G. TO AYLSHAM - "A very well-organised day, thoroughly enjoyed", so George Fenner thanked the Society for entertaining over 20 members of the Norfolk Archaeological & Historical Research Group, on Saturday, May 2nd. Jane Nolan had made all the arrangements, Jill Fletcher masterminded the catering arrangements with the help of Eileen Daines, Maureen Strong and Betty Gee. Tom Mollard put on an exhibition of Aylsham archives.

The morning was devoted to a number of talks. After Jane had welcomed the visitors, Peter Holman spoke about the topography of Aylsham, and Jane about the seventeenth century Rental, which had been transcribed from a document in the Public Record Office, by members of the Society, and published by the Society in 1988. This was the first major achievement of the Archives Group. Subsequent speakers, Jill Fletcher on the Millgate documents. Liz Gale on William Mash and his family who lived in Millgate in the early 19th. century, and Valerie Belton on Aylsham and the Norwich to Cromer Turnpike

Trust, drew the attention of the visitors to the continuing work of the group. An appreciative audience joined in discussion, and added points of interest from their own researches. A visit to the parish church followed. John Maddison outlined its architectural development, and pointed out particular items of interest including the remains of misericords incorporated in the reredos, memorial brasses, stained glass and remains of the rood screen.

After lunch, Ron Peabody showed slides of Aylsham, some from early photographs of the town, and all instructive for those who went on the guided tours which followed. Jane made sure that the two groups led by Geoffrey Ducker and Ron Peabody, whilst covering the same ground, did not collide, and the day's activities ended with tea and cakes. As Jane said, "We enjoyed it too".

VALERIE BELTON

OPEN DAY AT UEA. The University of East Anglia held an open day on May 2nd. Did anyone from Aylsham go to it, I wonder?. If they did, they may have been somewhat surprised to find themselves looking at a large and colourful wall panel depicting Millgate and its history. How was it that Aylsham came to be included in such an occasion?

Let me explain: The Director of the new department of Continuing Education at UEA. (Extra Mural Studies) is Christopher Barringer, formerly Senior Tutor in Norfolk for the Cambridge Extra Mural Board, and presently tutor to the Aylsham group which has been meeting fortnightly during the winter, and largely busying itself with the history of Millgate. To illustrate the work of the UEA Department, the group was invited to contribute a panel showing how a Local History group could be set up and encouraged to investigate aspects of its own town or village history, and record these in a meaningful way. The date was unfortunate, in that many of the group were already committed to the visit to Aylsham of members of NAHRG [see report on page 187] but Peter Holman rose to the occasion, and with the help of some photographs supplied by Geoff Gale and Julian Eve produced this very eye-catching record.

The panel was also shown at the formal opening of the King Chemist building, on May 6th, and is expected to be on display in the new library.

JANE NOLAN

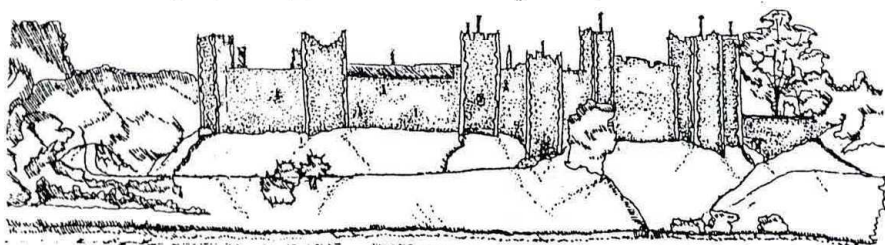
OUTING TO SUFFOLK - On 16th. May, a fine sunny day, 25 members of the Society set off on a trip to Suffolk. Our first stop was at Framlingham to explore the castle and town, and have lunch. The stone built castle dates from Norman times. The outer walls are still standing and include thirteen fighting towers to form a complete circle. The Wall Walk along the top is an exciting feature of Framlingham castle. The history is very romantic and stormy, and involves the Mowbrays and Howards as Dukes of Norfolk. Edward VI gave it to his sister Mary, and it was here that she learned that she was to be queen. Appropriately, it was later used as a prison for recusant priests, during Queen Elizabeth's time.

Exploring Framlingham town was made more interesting by using an excellent illustrated town guide, which would serve as a model if ever the Society decided to make one for Aylsham. The church, with its magnificent Renaissance tombs of the Dukes of Norfolk was worth a visit on its own.

Having had lunch, we set off towards the coast, stopping on the way to visit Leiston Abbey. This Premonstratensian abbey, founded in 1183, was re-built after a fire in 1380. Virtually all the walls are standing.

From here we soon reached Dunwich museum. The acting curator stepped in to explain the history of the village, now under the sea, using a scale model. The local finds of coins and pottery were well displayed, and the social history displays were of very high standard. The museum is only a few yards from the sea front and a beach cafe provided tea.

Our last call was at Holy Trinity church, Blythburgh. Here we saw 15th. Century carved bench-end figures, representing the seven deadly



Castle from the Mere

Framlingham

sins, and large painted angels in the roof. In 1577, the church was struck by lightning, killing two of the congregation "stark dead". The scorch marks of the devils hands, as he left by the north door are still to be seen today. The broken tiles in the nave are said to have been caused by Cromwell's men, when they tied their horses to the nave pillars, and shot at the angels in the roof.

We had a most enjoyable day, and would like to thank Jill Fletcher and Valerie Belton, who planned it.

JULIAN EVE

VISIT TO THE LIBRARY AT THE JOHN INNES INSTITUTE.

A visit has been arranged to see the Special Collection of Books in the John Innes Library. These books are mainly botanical in content, and are interesting because they show a range of botanical illustrations from the 16th. century onwards.

The visit has been arranged for Thursday, 3rd. September at 2pm. The party will have to be limited in number, because of the facilities at the library. Members who are interested should inform Mrs. Elizabeth Gale [Aylsham 734252] as soon as possible. Meet in Aylsham Market Place at 1pm, and although there is car parking space at the Institute, it would be helpful if members can car-pool to reduce the number of vehicles.

#####		#####
\$		\$
\$	W A N T E D	\$
\$		\$
\$	ONE TREASURER	\$
\$		\$
\$	After the AGM in October, there will be a vacancy	\$
\$	for the post of Hon. Treasurer. After two years of sterling	\$
\$	work, Wendy MacGregor will be resigning from the post.	\$
\$	Can you take over the job?	\$
\$	Offers, please to Jane Nolan or Valerie Belton	\$
\$		\$
#####		#####

CENTRE OF EAST ANGLIAN STUDIES - Associate Members Day. February 29th
"THE COUNTRY HOUSE: History, Architecture, Archaeology" was the title of the programme. Something for everyone, one might think, which probably explained the large attendance.

We heard four papers in all. The first was, for me, the most thought-provoking. It was by Dr. Charles Saumarez Smith of the staff of the Victoria & Albert Museum, and was entitled, 'New views on the Architecture of the Country House'. His main theme was as follows: He had trained as an Architectural Historian, and learnt that in studying a country house, the recognised procedure was to look first for the architect's plans, and then for the builder's records, bills, accounts etc. From these one could proceed to study, and hence understand how the house came to be as it was. He gradually came to question this approach when he came to write "The Building of Castle Howard". He discovered from the archivist there, that there existed a great range of documentation which was not architectural, and which had not previously been examined. These were the papers of the third Earl of Carlisle (c.1715) who built the house. Altogether there were the Castle Howard archives, estate papers in Durham University, and correspondence belonging to the Lowther family, who were much involved in Cumberland politics. He was also intrigued by the fact that the Earl built a mausoleum, not a chapel (the chapel came later). As he read the papers, he came more and more to the conclusion that the Earl was a most unusual man, and that this knowledge of his character and experience was crucial to the understanding of the house. The prime example of this was his discovery of a 'sermon' or essay on Deism by the Earl, indicating that his religious thinking was 'independent of ecclesiastical practice', hence the mausoleum and no chapel! In other words, it was necessary to know the person or persons behind the building of the house, or for whom it was being built, to understand the house itself.

The other three papers were:- 'Illustrated sources for the study of country houses' this had particular reference to the 15th. & 16th. centuries. - 'The building of Wolterton Hall' by Beverly Peters, and 'Building a country house in the 18th. & 19th. centuries', by Alan Mackley. The day was completed with extracts from the East Anglian Film Archive illustrating 'the country house on film'. In all, a good day.

JANE NOLAN

BOOK REVIEW

"The notebook of Robert Doughty 1662-1665" edited by James M. Rosenheim. Norfolk Record Society: Volume 54.

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The Norfolk Record Society has been publishing annual volumes containing the source material of Norfolk history ever since 1930, and this is the volume for 1989, which is gradually bringing the publishing programme of the society more up to date. Although all the volumes make a valuable contribution to Norfolk history, some are by their nature more readable than others. Volume 37 - "Mary Hardy's diary" is a good example of an enjoyable read, whereas Volume 52 - "An index to Norwich City officers 1453-1835" is a volume that one just consults.

This latest volume falls somewhere between the two types, but it has a particular interest to those interested in the history of Aylsham and its district. Robert Doughty (1616-1670) of Hanworth, was a Justice of the Peace under Charles II for just under five years. His notebook is a record of a diligent and conscientious magistrate, who devoted almost excessive energy to his responsibilities. His record is of the lower end of social life in the area of Norfolk roughly between Aylsham/Cromer/North Walsham. He is concerned with endless disputes between masters and servants, and also the problems of Settlement under the Poor Law, but the ordinary misdemeanours that we are familiar with today, also claimed his attention, such as drunkenness, running illegal drinking dens, bastardy, and common assault. We can see that human nature has not altered one jot since his times, and we are probably neither better nor worse today. The accounts are brief and unembroidered, but occasional glimpses of the people behind the cases emerge - like Robert Branding, worsted weaver of Swanton Abbot, who, when served with a warrant, said it would be useful to light his pipe with, and Henry Soame, fishmonger of Aylsham, who was charged with keeping back his servants wages, and for heaving a brick into the servant's house, because he wouldn't work without wages. Nothing changes!

T.W.M.