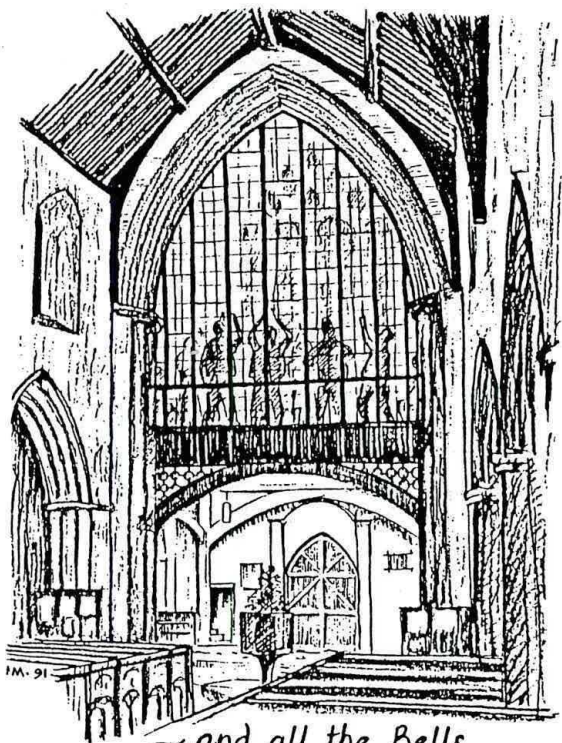


Aylsham Local History Society



*~ and all the Bells
on Earth did Ring ~*

AYLSHAM LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

CHAIRMAN

Mrs.J.Nolan
Aylsham 732226

SECRETARY

Miss V.Belton
Aylsham 734121

EDITOR

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

+++++

LATE ITEMS

NEW YEAR PARTY - This will take place on Friday, 29th. January at the Friendship Club, and follow fairly closely the pattern of previous parties. Details will be circulated to members before then, but this is advance notice. Please note also that the charge will probably need to be raised slightly this year - probably £5.

MEMBERSHIP FEES - These are now due, following the AGM, and it would be helpful to the Treasurer and the distributor of the Newsletter if members could renew their subscriptions as soon as possible. If you pay by Standing Order, it will also be necessary to let your bank know of the increased rate of subscription.

PUBLICITY OFFICER - Wendy MacGregor has relinquished the posts of Treasurer and Publicity Officer. Geoffrey Gale has kindly agreed to be our new Publicity Officer. [The Treasurer's post has been taken by Mrs. Betty Gee; see report inside on the AGM]

ORAL HISTORY - [see AGM report] Mrs.E.Gale has agreed to represent the Society in this project. Other helpers are still more than welcome.

COVER PICTURE

The Ringing Chamber of St.Michael's Church, Aylsham. Drawn by Ivan Morris. [see p.255]



AYLSHAM LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

JOURNAL & NEWSLETTER

Vol.13

No.8

THE BELLMAN

Ron Peabody

The first record I can find of Aylsham's Bellman, or Town Crier, is in Kelly's Directory for 1875 - "Samuel Maidstone, bill poster, town crier, superintendent of cemetery, parish [church] clerk - churchyard gate". William Flint took over as bellman in 1896, and was followed by Harry Proudfoot, who carried out this duty from 1899 until about 1929. Harry was the parish council clerk from 1897 until 1937, and it is typical of him that he should have recorded his "cries". There they are in the parish council archives, two stiff covered exercise books, 7" x 9", listing 223 cries from January 1899 until October 1923.

About a quarter of the cries are for lost property - jewellery, money, keys and clothing, some of which was found. William Monument, who was the Sergeant Instructor for the 3rd. Volunteer Battalion, C Company, Norfolk Regiment, paid 1/6d in January 1906 for a cry for his gold watch. However, he wrote later to Harry from the Armoury, Aylsham [now 9 Holman Road] "I have found the watch; our girl when dusting this morning, placed it under the edge of the map lamp, and forgot about it." But some were not so lucky - the first cry, January 3rd. 1899, is for Mrs. Harry Clarke of Oulton, who paid 1/- for:-

"Lost within the Market Place or Hungate Street, a silver watch and chain (ladies)"

In red ink Harry has written - "not found"

Three cries relate to the Boer War. The Relief of Mafeking was celebrated by a "grand display of fireworks" in the Market; a lecture, illustrated with "beautiful lantern views" on the war was given by the Rev. Mercer in the Town Hall, and Harry cried 'free' for the Rev. Hoare, the vicar, a "Thanksgiving Service for Peace, in church" on Monday, June 2nd. 1902. The First World War is, however, mentioned only once -

"Zeppelin Raid scare", January 1916, "The military authorities request that all windows in the parish may be screened from 4.30 until daylight, so that no light of any kind is visible outside".

Before radio and TV, entertainments of various kinds were popular, - Minstrels, choral works, lectures, ("The life history of a sponge" with 50 lantern views), Penny Readings, (including recitations, songs and instrumental solos,) and Mr. Reg. Wishart offered:-

"£10 reward to any gentleman who will bring a padlock which will prevent him from escaping from the 'Iron Bottle', tonight in the Town Hall, at 8 o'clock. If you want a good laugh, see him in his clown conjuring; hear him in his banjo songs."

The early cinema is recorded in the cries. In the Town Hall, on May 2nd. 1900 -

"a series of cinematograph pictures will be shown by the Royal American Bioscope, as used at the largest London Halls, including war pictures from South Africa"

The Unicorn bowling green was used for a 'Cinematograph Palace' in 1914 and 1915, and by 1921, the West End Cinema [now Barnwell's Printing Works, Penfold St.] was in operation, where Charlie Chaplin films, 'The Kid' and 'Shoulder Arms' could be seen.

The Bellman was also in demand to cry commercial sales, but he usually cried charitable sales free, such as for the Clothing

Club, or the Parish Nurse. We are greatly indebted to Harry Proudfoot for keeping this unique record of life in our town over a period of 24 years.

Baptist Chapel, Aylsham,

THURSDAY-EVENING, Dec. 6th,

At 8 o'clock,

Mr. EDWARD CONNOLD

(Hon. Sec. of Hastings Natural History Society.)

WILL DELIVER HIS

POPULAR LECTURE,

"The Life History of a Sponge."

SYLLABUS—

A SPONGE is an ANIMAL—The SKELETON—The SKIN HARD and SOFT—Threads of HORN—Needles of FLINT—The FLESH of a Sponge—Immovable and Unirritable—POROSITY—Resiliousness—Water, its ONLY food—Where it ENTERS—Where it goes out—How the WATER is SENT THROUGH—WHIPS to drive it—A Baby Sponge—Sponges are all AQUATIC—How they grow—How they are COLLECTED—How they BORE HOLES in Shells—VARIOUS COLOURS of Sponges—The USES of Sponges—PECULIAR NAMES of Sponges—Living and Fossil Sponges from Hastings Beach and Eastbourne Beach.

Illustrated with 50 Lantern Views specially photographed and prepared by the Lecturer.

Admission Free. A Collection in aid of the Chapel Funds.

C. H. BARNWELL, Printer, Aylsham.

Was it a packed house?

AYLSHAM AND THE NORWICH TO CROMER TURNPIKE ROAD.

Valerie Belton

"The best of all the sea-bathing places. A fine open sea. . . and very pure air".

So one of the characters in Jane Austen's 'Emma' describes Cromer, and it is tempting to attribute the making of the turnpike road from Norwich to Cromer to its attractions. In fact, the Act of 1794 provided for the Norwich to Aylsham section only, and it was not until a further act had been passed in 1811 that the Aylsham to Cromer extension was sanctioned. The Trustees' minute book simply records that the roads,

"are greatly out of repair, and in some parts narrow and incommodious for travellers, and cannot be effectually amended, widened and kept in good repair by the ordinary course of the law".

As far as I know, the Aylsham Highways Surveyors' books start in the 1820s, but the accounts of a neighbouring parish, Ingworth, show increased work on the road leading north from Aylsham to Cromer in the 1760s. This may, of course, merely mean neglect on the part of the previous surveyors, but it could be an indication of a greater volume of traffic. Certainly by 1794 an attractive opportunity for seemingly lucrative investment in a turnpike trust, presented itself.

The lists of subscribers show an interesting social mixture. The Hon. William Asheton Harbord, (later Lord Suffield); Lord Orford; Sir George Chad of Thursford and William Earle Bulwer of Heydon, were among them. So also were the Norwich banking families of Kerrison and Gurney; the incumbents of Horsford, Lammas, and Gunton; the Robert Marshams, senior and junior, of Stratton Strawless and Saxthorpe; a number of Norwich city gentlemen including Elisha De Hague and Mr. William Saunders of Aylsham, surgeon and apothecary. Many of these were also Trustees, as were

representatives of other well-known local families, including Hunt Holley, Parmeter, Curties and Repton.

The Trustees set to work immediately, meeting alternately at the Guildhall in Norwich and the Dog Inn (later at the Black Boys) in Aylsham. In general, the attendance rate at Aylsham seems to have been slightly higher than in Norwich - an indication of interest, or merely a comment upon the hospitality offered?

Their first task was to set up two gates and houses, one at, or near the Two Mile Stone from Norwich, and the other at, or near the brook or rivulet upon Marsham Common, where a new bridge was needed. Work on the existing road, to widen and repair it, was to start simultaneously at each end; in Norwich, at St. Augustine's Gates, and at Aylsham from the Dog Inn for "the extent of one mile towards Norwich". The parishioners of St. Faiths, Hevingham and Marsham were to,

"take down and remove the several gates now erected on the said road. . . together with all other nuisances".

Bricklayers were commissioned to build the two houses, which were completed by August 1795. Three others were built in 1811, at Ingworth bridge, Hanworth and Northrepps.

As far as I know, no major re-alignments of the existing road were involved. Travellers left Norwich by St. Augustine's Gate, and came to the first gate at the Two Mile stone, later the Hellesdon Gate. The road continued through Horsham St. Faiths and Marsham, the gate there being later moved and rebuilt within the boundary of the parish of Aylsham in the 1850s at the request of John Warnes of Bolwick Hall, when the road was moved westward for 729 yards. Aylsham was entered, then as now, by the Norwich Road which leads into the Market Place. After 1811, travellers wishing to continue on the turnpike road to Cromer, left Aylsham by Red Lion Street, and turned down the hill, by Widow's Row to Ingworth, Hanworth and Northrepps.

The duty of each parish through which the road passed, to

provide labourers to repair it, remained, although some preferred to pay a lump sum instead. So we find the Surveyors of the Highways in Aylsham undertaking to pay an annual sum of £6-5-9½ to the Turnpike Surveyor in 1795. This arrangement seems to have lapsed by 1811, as Aylsham does not appear on the treasurer's list of places which compounded labour for money in that year. In 1827, parish and Turnpike Trust co-operated in a scheme to improve the road on the north side of the town, near Widow's Row, by raising the level of the road and building a wall to support it, at an estimated cost of £21-5-0. The Surveyor of Aylsham found labourers who were paid by the parish, and worked under the direction of the Turnpike Surveyor. At the same time, an arch was to be constructed to convey water from the churchyard.

In 1831, the Trustees decided that something should be done about the section of the turnpike road which ran through Aylsham from the Dog Inn on the Norwich Road, via Red Lion Street to Widow's Row. They undertook to build pavements, put a barrel drain beneath the road, and macadamise the surface. Foot passengers using the path and steps at Widow's Row were to be protected by iron bars placed between stone posts. In 1833, they paved the walks between the houses and the curb stones in Red Lion Street with pebbles.

In spite of the care which the Trust had taken to improve drainage, there was recurrent trouble at Widow's Row, where there is a steep slope. In 1837 the sewer near the vicarage gate at the top of the hill was connected with a drain near Mr. Parmeter's garden on the Cromer Road, but in 1844, Mr. Clover was complaining that water from his wheelwright and blacksmith's yards was unable to pass away, and flowed back into the shops because of the raising of the level of the road.

That year provided a foretaste of things to come. Not only was the first Norfolk railway opened (Norwich to Yarmouth), but the Turnpike Trustees successfully prosecuted John Fish of Norwich for non-payment of tolls. Mr. Fish had claimed exemption on the ground that he drove a horseless carriage - presumably one propelled by steam. Yet the Trust survived another thirty three years; long enough for "Mad" (William Frederick) Windham to drive his "Express"

coach daily from Cromer to Norwich and back, calling at the Black Boys in Aylsham. Seeing him negotiate Red Lion Street must have been quite a sight! As far as I know he never had an accident. There is, however, in the Aylsham archives an account of an accident which took place on the turnpike road in Aylsham, one dark night in February 1852. What happened will be revealed in our next issue!

---oo0oo---

JOHN HORACE CHENERY

Tom West

John Horace Chenery was born at Garboldisham, in July 1860; he was the son of Solomon and Rhoda Chenery (formerly Shearing); he was also my grandfather.

John was a member of a large family, and his mother died when he was quite young. His father, Solomon, then married a widow who already had a family of her own, and they then produced a third family between them, and young John Horace had to leave school at the age of seven to help with the family finances. His first job was crow scaring, and for this he was equipped with clappers (a type of wooden rattle). He had to wave these about, and shout, "here come the clappers to knock you down 'backards'." The farmer would give him a look from time to time, and shoot some of the crows. When he did this, he would load and fire his gun so rapidly that on one occasion he forgot to withdraw the ramrod from his gun before firing - (a fact I have always borne in mind!)

In the late 19th. century, some farm workers were sent from Norfolk to Yorkshire, for economic reasons. Grandfather was one of those sent, but this did not work out very well, and one of the problems was the difference in dialect. The first thing the farmer asked him was, "can ye saw?". Grandfather, thinking he meant cut wood, said, "yes", but he was really asking, "can you sow" meaning seeds.

Things went from bad to worse, and grandfather decided to run away and return home to Norfolk, although they apparently were bonded to the farmer for a fixed period. When it was time to get up, in the bothy where they lived, he hung back, saying that he couldn't find his sock, and when the others had gone, he crept out and ran down to the railway station. As he did not have enough money to take him all the way home, he booked a ticket to take him as far as his money would allow. Before the train left, he heard the farmer's horse and trap arrive, and the farmer searching for him, so he hid under the seat until the train had left the station. He hid again for part of the way, when his ticket ran out, and ended up walking the final part of the journey. He never left Norfolk to work again.

On his return from Yorkshire he joined the Great Eastern Railway at Thetford, rising to the position of ganger on the section between Thetford and Brandon. By this time he had also taught himself to read and write. This was in the days when they used to change rails between the passage of trains, all on the responsibility of the ganger. This practice was alright providing you worked fast and had correctly read your timetable and had been informed of any Specials. Charles Dickens discovered the dangers of this practice at Staplehurst on June 9th. 1865.

The Chenerys moved to a gatehouse at Two Mile Bottom; grandmother was the gatekeeper at 2/6d per week - a position she was to hold for the next 26 years. It was a 24 hours a day shift, which often entailed getting up during the night to let people over the crossing. In all this time, no relief was ever supplied for her to have a day off - one continual shift 26 years long! This seems to be rather like the practice of the toll gate keepers on the Turnpikes. After the Thorpe collision in 1874, the Great Eastern Railway was in financial difficulties, and had to pawn some of its engines to an insurance company. Grandfather said he could remember engines running about bearing a notice stating this fact.

When he retired, the old couple had to leave their home as it was a tied house. They came to Aylsham in 1924, grandfather

dying in 1932 and grandmother in 1938 in the house now occupied by me.

John Chenery was a friend of the showman "Rhubub" Underwood, who regularly visited Aylsham bringing the annual fair, which in those days stood on Aylsham Market Place, and was eagerly looked forward to by most of the community. In later days the fair was moved to the Buttlands. "Rhubub" himself ran the coconut shy, and one year, when the fair was at Buxton, where we lived for a while, he came to our house, removed his hat and said, "look what somebody done". He had a dent in his skull; apparently, he was bending down to pick up a fallen coconut when someone let fly with a ball striking the showman instead. Older people will remember the fairs coming to Aylsham, and perhaps will remember the Underwood brothers, and know what became of the family. There were two sons - one was called Walter, the other may have been called Jack.*

---ooOoo---

* for earlier references to 'Rhubub' Underwood, see Arnold Tuddenham's memoirs in the Journal & Newsletter. Vol.2 pp346, 348. December 1990.

SOCIETY NEWS

Visit to the JOHN INNES Special Collection - On the third of September, a small group of members had the privilege of visiting the Special Collection of Botanical Books at the John Innes Institute in Colney Lane, Norwich. This unique collection of books was begun by William Bateson, the first Director of the Institute and a pioneer geneticist. It was during this early period when the Institute was at Merton Park, Surrey, that Bateson purchased most of the books and kept the bulk of them in his office. After his death in February 1926 the collection was incorporated into the Institute's library.

In 1946 the John Innes Institute moved, first to Bayfordbury in Hertfordshire, and then eventually to its present site in Colney Lane. During each of these moves the library facilities were improved, and when they were finally established in their present building, the collection was housed in a separate area. Bateson purchased the books with considerable care and discrimination, and the Institute now has some of the finest examples of botanical illustrations extant. It includes books on herbs from the early 1500s, a Gerard's herbal printed in 1597, many books on plants and flowers, and a copy of Redoute's *Les Liliacees* commissioned by the Empress Josephine Bonaparte.

The history of the library and the collection was explained to the group by Elizabeth Aitchison, the librarian of the Special Collection, and we were able to look at many of the books and illustrations. I have been aware of this priceless library since the early 1970s, when some of the books were first displayed at the Sainsbury Centre. The afternoon's visit was enjoyed by the whole group, and it was a great pleasure to see these exquisite prints and books once again.

G.G.

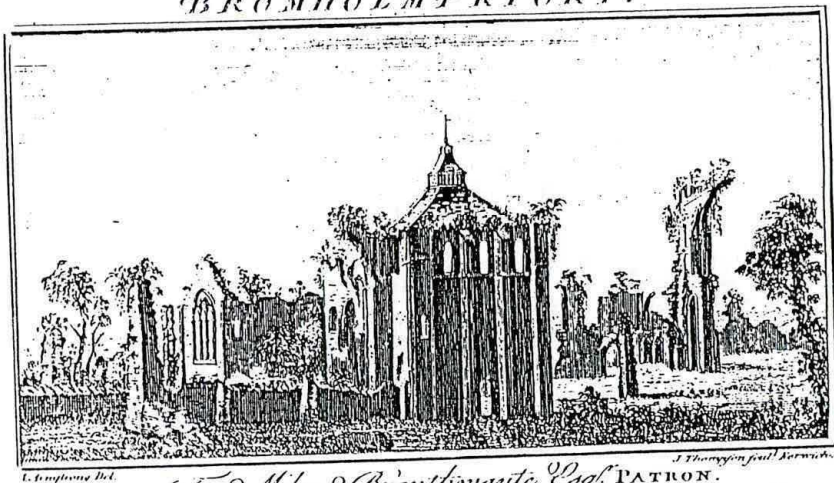
NORFOLK HISTORY FAIR - The third Norfolk History Fair took place this time at Blickling Park, following the two previous fairs at Gressenhall. Being so close to home, the society could do no other than participate, and Peter Holman undertook the arrangements and devised the exhibition. As this year was the 80th. anniversary of the 1912 floods, Peter chose that as his subject, and created a display of the effects of those floods on Aylsham and the Bure Valley. He also illustrated the current work of the society by a display of the society's study of the Millgate area, which is still in progress. Many helpers manned the stand over the two days of the Fair, and a greater awareness of the Aylsham Local History Society and its affairs was made available to a wider audience. Our stand was well patronised, and we welcome anyone who has since joined our ranks as a result of the Fair.

TWM

MYSTERY HISTORY TOUR - On September 24th. Peter Holman's second Mystery History Tour got off to a wet start, but fortunately the day improved as the tour progressed. These tours are always full of surprises, and the first stop was a complete surprise to me;

it was the Quaker Meeting House at Swafield, just outside North Walsham. Despite the numerous times I had driven along that road, I had never previously noticed the Meeting House, an 18th. century building tucked away behind the trees. En route to the next stop, we paused long enough outside Knapton church to hear about the magnificent 'angel' roof, and to see the church weathervane made from a design by J. S. Cotman. At Paston we were able to explore the church at some length, seeing the Paston tombs and the medieval wall painting of St. Christopher.

BROMHOLM PRIORY.



To Miles & Branthwaite Esq. PATRON.

The prize item in our tour was our next stop at Bromholm Priory to see the remains of what was once one of the most famous priories in England. These remains are now in private hands and are not normally open to the public, and only through previous arrangement by Peter, were we able to drive in and examine the ruins which surround the present farm buildings. In medieval times the fame of the priory rested on its possession of a relic of the true cross - The Holy Rood of Bromholm. The legend is that the relic was brought to England by a certain chaplain who had served with the Emperor in the Crusades in the Holy Land. On his return:-

He offered the Cross to several monasteries. Having endured repulse from the rich in many places, he at length came to a chapel called Bromholm, very poor at that

time and destitute of proper buildings. There he sent for the Prior and some of the brethren, and showed them the cross, which was constructed of two pieces of wood placed across one another, and almost as wide as a man's hand. The chaplain implored the brethren to receive him into the monastery and their order with this cross and other relics which he had with him, as well as his two young children.

The prior and brethren were delighted to possess such a treasure, and by the intervention of the Lord, who always protects honourable poverty, put faith in the words of the monk, and with due reverence received the Cross of our Lord, and carried it into the oratory, and with all devotion preserved it in the most honourable place there ; and immediately Divine miracles began to be wrought in that monastery to the praise and glory of the life-giving Cross ; for the dead were restored to life, the blind recovered sight, and the lame walked, the skin of lepers was cleansed, and those possessed of devils were released from them, and any sick who approached the Cross were made whole.

A great concourse of persons came from distant countries to reverence it, and the monastery became abundantly rich by reason of the gifts and offerings made to it by these pilgrims. Piers Ploughman alludes to the pilgrimages made to it in his vision :

“ But wender to Walsingham, and my wif Alis
And byd the Roode of Bromholm bring me out of dette.”

Capgrave says “ that no fewer than thirty-nine persons were raised from the dead and nineteen blind were restored to sight by the virtues of the Cross of Bromholm.”

Moving on, we paused to see the manor house and the Great Barn (now being restored) at Waxham. Had time allowed, we might have stayed long enough to listen to a lecture giving alternative views on history, which the lady from the manor house was only too willing to deliver. Luckily, we escaped intact and unreformed to Horsey Mill where we stopped for refreshments in sight of the restored windmill.

Refreshed, we travelled to the ruins of the lonely church at Billockby. Set amongst the fields of sugar beet, with not a house in sight, only the chancel remains in use still as the local church, but the remains of the much grander nave and tower were most impressive. The body of the church was ruined in 1762 when, during a great storm, the tower was struck by lightning and the

top fell into the nave of the church. The lightning split the tower from top to bottom and this split is there to be seen to this day.

Our final stop was a totally different church - the beautifully restored and maintained church at Ranworth. There, amongst other things, we could see the beautiful antiphoner, and the finest example of a rood screen anywhere to be seen in Britain. A lot of preparation had clearly gone into the arrangements for this outing, making it a great success, and considering that he had spent the previous weekend masterminding our society's exhibit at the Norfolk History Fair, Peter deserves a great 'thank you' for all the hours of hard work he had put in. TWM

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - This took place at the Friendship Club on October 7th. before a satisfyingly large audience of members and friends. The business of the meeting was disposed of with the usual alacrity, but with sufficient time for the reports of the different officers to be considered carefully. Our secretary reported on the year's activities, and as usual, when these activities are all listed we see what a rewarding and busy year we have had. Our activities are settling into a definite pattern with a main research day course being held each year, supplemented by evening lectures which are held, on average, monthly through the year. To this can be added one or two visits from other groups or organisations to us, and a couple of major outings of our own each year. These major outings are supplemented by other, shorter and more local visits arranged by members of the society, and the whole topped up with an annual party each New Year. This year, the society had also been involved with the Norfolk History fair. [See separate report above]. The display material used at the History Fair was also on show at the AGM.

Our Chairman also reviewed our activities and thanked all those people who in their various ways make the society tick along smoothly. Our current membership is 97, which is healthy, but we must never be complacent. Jane looked ahead and raised important ideas for our consideration. In particular we should consider the balance of our meetings and also the possibility of establishing arrangements for Oral History. [See separate reports on both of

these topics.] The editor reported on the Newsletter and thanked all those who kindly provided material for publication, and bleated on at some length with his annual request for others to contribute so that all our individual work can be recorded and all members be aware of what the society as a whole is doing. He also stressed how much of our annual subscription goes into producing the quarterly issues of the Newsletter (currently about £2.25 per head). The impact of this was apparent when the Treasurer's report was considered, and the members readily approved an increase in the annual subscription to £5.50 per head. Other increases include a charge to non-members attending lectures, of £1, and the charge for copies of the Newsletter sold to the public to be £1. Members are also asked to produce their membership card at lecture meetings as evidence of membership.

Elections of officers and committee resulted in the following:-

Chairman:	Jane Nolan
Vice Chairman:	Peter Holman
Secretary:	Valerie Belton
Treasurer:	Betty Gee

Committee members:- Julian Eve, Jill Fletcher, Tom Mollard, Frank Stageman, Maureen Strong and Tom West. Maureen Strong continues as membership secretary, and Geoffrey Gale is co-opted to the committee as an additional member. Betty Gee was welcomed as our new treasurer, replacing Wendy MacGregor.

Our Chairman read out greetings and good wishes from Canon Jack Vyse, our founder chairman, now retired and living in Lincolnshire, but still interested in the activities of the society of which he is a life member. We also heard from Ron Peabody that the granddaughter of Joseph Clover had visited Aylsham and wasa pleased to see the recently erected memorial plaque to which the society had contributed.

After refreshments, the rest of the evening was in the hands of Ron Peabody who produced a masterly collection of slides on old Aylsham. Although the slides dealt with old Aylsham, they were

new to most of the audience, and Ron again demonstrated his flair for producing just the right mixture of illustrations to capture our fancy and to whet our appetite for more. TWM

ORAL HISTORY - The need to record the recollections of older inhabitants of Aylsham has been recognised at many meetings and on various occasions, and in our Newsletter, from time to time. We all know what a wealth of detailed recollections is stored away in the memories of our older citizens. We can all deplore the lost opportunities to record some of these memories, as we see yet another older resident pass on to greater things.

How much memory is stored away and how valuable these recollections are can be seen at once when we listen to the few recordings that have been made, or when we read the recollections of those very few who have been persuaded to "get it written down". The memoirs of F. Starling in our parish archives being an excellent example of the latter. So we don't need convincing, but we still seem to experience great difficulty getting something organised.

Now it appears that there is an excellent opportunity to make a start. At the AGM our chairman reported the meeting between Mr. Hodson and our committee, at which Mr. Hodson suggested that the expertise of the producers of the Mardler (Talking Newspaper for the Blind) could be used to make such recordings. These would build up into a valuable archive, at the same time producing possible material for inclusion in the Mardler magazine. For this to succeed, we need a member of our society to liaise with the Mardler and to be our representative in such a joint venture. If you feel that this is something you can help with, or it is a subject that interests you, do contact either the Chairman or Secretary and offer your services. TWM

WHAT SORT OF MEETINGS? - Jane Nolan raised the question at the AGM. The pattern of our meetings has settled into a form which could be said to favour the older members of the society. Our membership is composed of all age groups, from the long retired to those young people still earning their daily bread and tied to the constraints of full-time employment. Inevitably, younger members at work cannot attend our morning study sessions, nor join

in the outings which are arranged during the week. Do younger members feel that they are being marginalised, or left out in the cold?. Our present research is probably only possible to be held during the day when access to the archives is available. But could we arrange something similar at the weekend? Would members want such a course? - perhaps a Day school, or a weekend course?

Such courses would not exclude older members from joining in! It is vital that no part of our membership should feel excluded from what makes the society tick. If you feel that the present pattern of our meetings debars you from participating as fully as you would wish, and if you have views and ideas of what could be done to improve that state of affairs - let your views be known.

AGRICULTURAL REVOLUTION IN NORTH EAST NORFOLK in the 18th. & 19th. Centuries - On 29th. October, a meeting held at the Friendship Club was attended by some 30 members. The Society was given an enlightening talk by Dr. Susanne Wade-Martins, various maps and slides being used to illustrate this. Information had been gathered by looking at documents referring to buildings, field-maps, landscapes and crop rotation records spanning 1650-1870. Unfortunately, as few farmers were able to write during this period, the bulk of the information came from the Heydon and Wolferton estates.

It was interesting to note that during the Napoleonic Wars farmers were encouraged to "Dig for Victory", and rents rose sharply, only to fall again at the end of the wars, in some cases by as much as 25%, rising again in 1840. Thirty years later saw the first import of Canadian wheat into this country.

One mystery as yet remains unsolved - there are still a good number of small manor houses, usually very well maintained, but barns and farm buildings are no longer in evidence. If these buildings did in fact ever exist, were they left to decay, or deliberately pulled down, and all traces removed?

At the conclusion of her talk, Dr.Wade-Martins invited members to ask questions, and to give any information which might be of help to her studies of this on-going and interesting subject. K.P.

COMPETITION TIME

On this occasion it comes from the parish archives:-

We are quite familiar with Peter Holman's puzzles and competitions, and I am quite sure most readers have enjoyed trying to solve his problems.

Peter had suggested a competition for the last issue of the Newsletter, and the results and winners of that are given at the end. By happy coincidence, a copy of a similar type of competition has turned up in the archives, and this is also reproduced below. As usual, there is no date given with this particular competition, but we know that the Rev. McNeile was vicar of Aylsham from 1930 to 1936, so we have a rough idea of when it was compiled.

It would have been an interesting competition when it first appeared. Today, after nearly 60 years, it is even more interesting - and harder, to identify what would have been well known local Aylsham names. Some are obvious, but others not so obvious. Try your luck, but don't send your answer to the editor, because he won't know, and don't send them, either, to Mr. Knock!

The competition in the last issue was to devise an alphabet for Aylsham. There were two winning entries; one from Molly Cook and the other from Molly Long and Tom West, jointly. There were some very skilled entries. There is not space to print them all, but how many would have thought of:-

E for Elswick House

F for Frogs Hall

Q for Quantrill's Alley

I thought Z would create problems, but when I read - Z for Zanussi Centre, Red Lion Street, I knew I was dealing with experts. Congratulations to the winners. A reward is on its way.

Puzzle Competition

ON

Aylsham Surnames

in connection with the

Hospital Carnival

THREEPENCE

Write opposite each clue the surname (of some Aylsham person) which fits it.

Examples

Name of famous Lock BOULTER
To mend, a measure SEWELL

Scaled solutions are in charge of the Rev. A. P. McNeile, who has kindly consented to help to examine the entries.

Three prizes will be awarded to the three persons who send in the greatest number of correct solutions.

Write name and address here

To be sent, not later than May 26, to

Mr F. Knock
Oakfield Rd
Aylsham

The result of the Competition will be announced at the Dance to be held in the Town Hall on May 30.

Wrote a famous law book	.....	The boys' cream of locomotives
The policeman's friend	.....	In danger in September
A Lincolnshire Town	.....	One who conveys
Accumulates through neglect	...	St Peter beheaded
A gay member of the crow family	.....	A short jacket
Proverbially bitter	.....	A young pupil (broad Norfolk)
Precedes an entry	.....	Writer of fairy tales
A London Jewish quarter	.....	One who gave the scold her due
Set not your heart on them	.....	Broken at the fountain
One more river	.....	Part of a key
A sign with the finger	... ..	Lord Swan (anagram)
Starting with F is better known	...	Uncle's sign
A pilgrim	... ..	A "spink" is one
A famous painter's Christian name	...	Not far from Dereham
The said painter's surname	...	Stop, conveyance
Dashing fellows	.....	Up to date abode
Emblem of peace	.....	Goes one better
His statue is in Norwich	.....	Farm building and how to fill it
An Irish County	.....	Did valiantly at Agincourt
Part of the billiard table	.....	An American General
A Norfolk Admiral	.....	An authority on martyrs
Once called a surgeon	... ..	Red hasp eh? (anagram)

THE WILL OF JOHN DOUGHTY

[A transcript, kindly supplied by Charles Farrow, from the original will in the Norfolk Record Office. NCC Wills 1663 OW 6 (MF 418)]

In the name of God, Amen. The fourteenth day of August in the year of our Lord God one thousand, six hundred, sixty and two. I John Doughty of Wood Norton in the county of Norfolk, Clerk, being now of a good and sound memory (God be thanked) revoking all former wills by me made in word or writing, do make and ordain this my last will and testament in writing, in manner and form following.

Imprimis, I commend my soul into the hands of Christ Jesus my Saviour, believing that at my death, by and through his death and merit, it shall enter into present and eternal happiness.

Item. I commend my body to the earth to be decently interred by my Executors, believing that it shall be raised up again at the last day of judgement, and shall be reunited to my soul again in eternal glory and blessedness, by, with and through Our Lord Jesus Christ, and for my worldly goods, of that little I have, I thus dispose of it.

First, I give and bequeath towards the new building of the Free school house in Aylsham (so ruined as it cannot be repaired) if it be new built and finished within two years after my decease, five pounds, then to be paid by my executors, and else not to be paid.

Item. I do give and bequeath to the poor of the town of Aylsham, three pounds to be paid by my executors soon after my decease or within one year after at the furthest.

Item. I do give and bequeath ten pounds and more if my executors think it fitting and needful and find wherewith to do it, to be disposed and laid out at my burial, in alms to the poor, and other funeral expenses at the discretion of my executors.

Item. I do give and bequeath to my cousin Margaret Holby, the daughter of my sister Empson, deceased, five pounds to be paid unto her by my executors within one year next after my decease, or sooner if it may well be.

Item. I do give and bequeath unto Sarah Holby, daughter of the said Margaret, two pounds to be paid her by my executors within one year after my decease, or sooner, and my mind and will is that all my debts (if there be any) be truly paid by my executors.

Item. I do give and bequeath unto Sarah Berry of Aylsham, the daughter of my cousin, Peter Empson, deceased, two pounds to be paid her within one year next after the day of my death.

Item. I do give and bequeath unto Marie Fiddy, the daughter of my cousin Elizabeth Appleton, twenty shillings to be paid her within a year next after the day of my death. And for the more full and effectual performance of this, my last will and testament in paying all and every the above given legacies, funeral charges and my debts, I having neither house, land nor living to tie and bind for the doing and performing thereof, therefore, I do will, give, and bequeath unto my executors all my goods, plate, money, chattels debts, corn, hay, grass and all my moveables, household stuff, and personal estate whatsoever, in consideration, trust and upon condition that they my executors shall truly and faithfully pay all and every the aforesaid legacies, funeral expenses and debts, with the money raised out of my said personal estate or in lieu of it, straightly charging them to discharge their duty and trust therein, and this truly and faithfully done and performed by my executors, I do freely will and give unto them, the overplus and remainder of all my personal estate to be equally divided betwixt them, and to enjoy it to themselves severally or jointly to dipose of it at their pleasure, and no man to call them to account for the same.

And I do make and ordain Henry Holby of Norwich, cutler, and Thomas Empson of Aylsham, Grocer, both my kinsmen, the executors of this my last will and testament, every word therein being written with mine own hand and according to mine own mind and will. In

witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal, the day and year first above written. And so I do declare and publish this to be my last will and testament. In the presence and witness of us

Edward Rollandson
Richard Skyton [his mark]

JOHN DOUGHTY

FAREWELL TO DYE'S LOKE.

Ron Peabody

Following the closure of the old library building, and the move of the County Branch Library to its new home in the Market Place, Ron Peabody who had been branch librarian at Aylsham for many years wrote the following article for the County Library Staff Association Magazine "Broadsheet". I am sure it will interest a wider audience. Ed.

"Where is the library?", I was asked, which seemed an unnecessary question considering it was sited right in the middle of the town, just off the Market Place. Of course, you did have to find Dye's Loke.

Between a solicitor's office and the Top Spot restaurant, signs proclaimed that cycling was prohibited (largely ignored), and that the library was here, but first you had to negotiate the narrow tunnel through the buildings, and out into the Loke - a good East Anglian word that I believe means an "enclosed lane", which our Loke certainly was, with high walls surrounding you as you looked for the library. Set in a nine foot high wall was an arched gateway beside which was the library notice board, giving the times of opening. You had found the library!

That gateway became famous when it was used by Anglia Television in one of the "Tales of the Unexpected" plays. The library board was covered by another indicating that this was a doctor's surgery. For allowing Anglia Television to film an actor opening and closing our library gate, I believe we received £25 from them.

The library was a wooden building erected in 1950, and made to fit inside the high walls of the garden of the Trustee Savings Bank, whose frontage was on the Market Place. Beside the entrance gate grew a fig tree, close to the entrance lobby, and when one of the larger branches threatened to pierce the side wall of the lobby, staff from Burlingham Horticultural Station were asked to prune it. They took away a section of the branch, and reported later that they had counted 80 rings which gave the tree's age at about 100 years. I was told that the library staff had been asked to collect the crop of figs when they first moved in, and send them to Library HQ, as the terms of the lease of the garden from the TSB said that the TSB should have them, but when this was done the TSB decided it was not necessary! We allowed any readers who liked figs to help themselves, but most of the best ones seemed to be well out of reach, and were left to the wasps.

The floor of the library was originally concrete which had been covered with lino laid by a local shop. Unfortunately, they used a kind of fish glue to stick it down, and with the summer's heat the smell was not very pleasant, so it had to be removed. Thereafter, we had heavy hessian mats with strips of lead at the ends to stop them curling. An American lady, who lived in a Queen Anne house just round the corner in the summer (her winter house was in Florida or Bermuda) used to visit us and enjoyed sitting on the mats whilst looking for a book. When I offered her a cushion she declined and replied that as she had just been gardening in the sun it was pleasantly cool on the floor!

Our revolving issue trays desk was a joy. Having spent many hours standing at the counters of other libraries, it was a relief to sit down to work it, and you could get up quite a speed. We also had a library cat, Wilhelmina, who adopted us and stayed for

many years. It was a sight to see her threading her way along a low case, on which books were displayed, without knocking any over. She was a great favourite, and received a mention in Aylsham Evening WI Village Diary entry, in the Norfolk WI competition in 1978, which was highly commended:-

'The library announced this month, that the year had seen a record number of books issued. . . Unfortunately, however, Wilhelmina, the library cat who adopted the staff about ten years ago, died this week.'

The drawing showing the Church terrace end of Dye's Loke, reproduced in the Norwich area telephone directory, also shows how near the parish church bell tower was to us. The ten bells sound sweetly from where I live, half a mile away, but I am glad the library wasn't open on Tuesday evenings when the ringers practised! I have been reminded of the occasion when one of our tall readers presented himself at the desk - not with a book, but with the lampshade from our low-ceilinged lobby which he had struck with his head. . . Little incidents like this keep surfacing in one's memory, but we must move on to Hungate Street.

Strategically placed near two of Aylsham's pubs - The Unicorn opposite, and the Black Boys nearby, where Parson Woodforde dined and did not think much of the food, [much improved now], the new library enjoys a prominent position in Hungate street. This was Aylsham's original main road to Norwich; the street "where the hounds run". Fiona French, the Kate Greenaway medal winner, lived here until recently; whilst Annigoni, the artist famous for his portraits of the Queen, used to visit his friend in Norfolk House nearby.

Opposite the library is the Post Office, opened in 1935, the first office having been at No.12 (now a vet's surgery) a hundred years earlier. Above the library and the adjoining chemist's shop, is Joseph Clover Court, 21 one-bedroomed flats provided by the

Broadland Housing Association, and named after Joseph Thomas Clover, 1825-1882, a pioneer in the field of anaesthetics who was born over a shop formerly on the site.

No reason now to ask - "Where is the library?"

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AYLSHAM - "THE GARDEN OF NORFOLK"

By Robert Whitmore. M.A.

[Amongst the many miscellaneous items in the Parish Archives is the following article. It is a newspaper cutting from a local paper, but sadly bears no date, nor any note of its source. Who was Robert Whitmore MA? He lived in Aylsham for a mere five years, but it obviously left a deep impression on him. He is writing many years after 1881, but probably still before 1912. As far as I can trace, he never wrote anything else, at least there are no works recorded in the British Library. Ed.]

This picturesque little town has been called "the garden of Norfolk" because of its abundant woodlands and the number and perfection of its cultivated grounds. Few towns of the size possess a market square more imposing than that of Aylsham. Its fine Town Hall, Reading Room, Bank, Post Office, attractive shops, Black Boys Hotel, and grand old church in the background, present a very striking spectacle.

One is not surprised to learn that in historic days Aylsham was the principal town in this part of Norfolk. John of Gaunt, the famous son of Edward III, once held his duchy court here, and 'Aylsham Webs' and 'cloth of Aylsham', as its linen was called, were known far and wide. At the Norman conquest, the town was well-known, and

the Manor extended as far as Tuttington, two miles distant. It had - "18 carucates, 20 villeins, 28 bordars and woods sufficient to feed 400 swine" Its very name denotes its Anglo-Saxon origin, for the usual derivation of Aylsham, or Aegelsham, as it was formerly called, is from Aegel or Eigil, brother of Weland, a Saxon god, equivalent to the classical Vulcan.

Later on in history, the manufacture of cloth was succeeded by that of woollen fabrics, and in the reign of James I, the chief products of the town were worstead stockings, breeches and waistcoat pieces. The ultimate introduction of frame work knitting spoiled this industry, just as the timber and coal trade in certain cases was almost ruined in later times when the railway replaced the old river transport of goods.

Aylsham consists of four manors, each with its own Lord - Aylsham Wood or Sexton's Manor, Aylsham Lancaster, Aylsham Vicarage and Bolwick Hall. The town includes the hamlets of Dunkirk and Drabblegate, which stand on the North side of the River Bure, while the town proper is situated on the south. For many years the river was only navigable as far as Coltishall, eleven miles off, but in 1779, at the cost of £6,000, the river was cleared to Aylsham bridge, so that boats of 14 tons, drawing 5½ feet of water, could sail to the town. The present borough consists of 4308 acres, of which 100 are woods and plantations.

The church stands on a hill, and is a most imposing structure. It was founded by John of Gaunt, and the font bears his arms, together with the symbols of the four Evangelists and the instruments of the Passion. The church is naturally built in the Decorated style, characteristic of the 14th. century, but there are Perpendicular insertions. The North Transept was called St. Peter's Chapel, and the South Transept, St. Mary's Chapel. Richard Howard built the porch in 1480, and he has a memorial in the church, and there is another to Thomas Wymer, who in 1507, had the roof beautifully painted with the figures of saints and martyrs. There is also a monument to Bishop Jeggon, who died in 1617.

There is a short cut to the Market Place from the Cromer Road part of the town through the churchyard, and in the latter is a grave surrounded with iron railings, and kept decorated with heartsease and other flowers to the memory of the famous landscape gardener, Humphry Repton, who died in 1818.

Aylsham has a Spa - a spring whose water is impregnated with iron, which used to be greatly frequented by persons suffering from asthma and other chronic disorders. It is not much used now. The spring rises about half a mile south of the town. On Stow Heath, two miles east of Aylsham, are several tumuli or barrows. In 1808, two urns were found in them containing ashes and human bones. In 1805 an earthen pot was ploughed up in a field near the town, in which were 500 ancient silver coins - chiefly groats of Henry VII. I possess a beautiful bronze kelt, found in making the railway line between Banningham and Aylsham Town station.

As I lived in Aylsham from 1877 until 1881, I have naturally many reminiscences of the life of the place at a date which now seems rather remote. Tennis parties were then the vogue. We received invitations to 70 in one year. One of my earliest memories is of the old vicar - a pleasant and cultivated gentleman, who suffered from indifferent health, and had the misfortune to lose one of his eyes. The missing orb was replaced by a glass one, of very natural design, but uncertain stability. He used to relate with great gusto, how, when he was taking tea with one of his parishioners, he found a very hard lump of sugar in his cup which refused to be broken by the spoon. Finally, he discovered that the supposed sugar was his glass eye!

In those days, before the railway was opened, people journeyed to Norwich by a coach driven by the well-known John Overton from the Black Boys Hotel. The periodical visits to Norwich became quite a local event. My mother who was extremely nervous, used to travel by this 'bus, and when she discovered that the famous "whip", Captain Springfield, was on the box, and guessed by the unusual pace that he was holding the reins, her fears became so uncontrollable that she openly protested. Such, however is the inconsistency of feminine

human nature, that when the gallant captain afterwards ran a 'bus of his own, she often travelled with him from choice.

There was some local excitement when the universally-loved Constance, Marchioness of Lothian, erected a beautiful alabaster monument in Blickling church to the late Marquis - and some consternation when it was seen that there was a peculiar mark on the alabaster face of one of the angels, which suggested that skin diseases were not unknown in the next world!

One last memory, as a boy, I was naturally disturbed - in March 1881 - by the news of the assassination of Czar Alexander II by a nitro-glycerine bomb. What was this terrible new explosive? A local doctor, fond of practical joking, said he would show me. He took me into his surgery and put a glass in my hand. Then he mixed some ingredients which bubbled and made the vessel turn very hot. I didn't know what to do, but he told me if I shook it, or dropped it, the whole town of Aylsham would be blown to smithereens. When he had tortured me long enough, he 'neutralised' the explosive.!

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o **MILLGATE** o

o o

o The Archives course on the Millgate documents has been slowly o
o bearing fruit. Although it all seems to have gone quiet, and an o
o Archives course on the Poor Law in Aylsham is already under way o
o the work done on the Millgate study has now been put together, o
o and there is reasonable hope that it may soon appear in book o
o form. o

o By the time of our next issue there should be positive o
o news - who knows! - we may even be taking orders for the latest o
o publication of the Aylsham Local History Society. o
o

oo

IVAN MORRIS

Ivan Morris died on 9th. November 1992. Amongst the many people who will mourn him are all our members who came into contact with him and valued his friendship; so also will the Society as a whole, to which he was indeed a friend and a valuable contributor. Ivan had only been in Aylsham for six years, but such was the character and nature of the man that one felt that one had known him for a lifetime.

Ivan was an architect with a solidly established reputation. When he came to us he brought all his skills with him, and his artistic abilities were greatly valued and generously offered. In 1990, he organised entirely the display which the Society exhibited at the Norfolk History Fair. Although fully involved in so many activities in the town, he readily found time to produce a drawing on request for our Newsletter, and I knew that I could always turn to him for help when necessary. The bound copy of the Aylsham Churchyard Survey which we placed in the Parish Archives now has a plan of the churchyard and its tombstones which Ivan prepared with as much care and accuracy as he would have given to any project that he might have tackled during his professional working life. Perhaps this was partly because of his great regard for St. Michael's Church. Last year, Ivan produced a drawing of the ringing chamber in the church, and copies of this have circulated over much of the world in the form of a Christmas card, and these raised considerable funds for the church. Long before Ivan became ill, he agreed that we should use this same illustration as the cover of this December issue of the Newsletter. I am pleased that it is there - a timely memorial to someone that I shall miss.

It will be one of many permanent memorials that Ivan will leave behind him, but to members of our Society the most permanent reminder will continue to appear in every issue of the Newsletter & Journal where the logo, which Ivan devised, features prominently.

Ivan has been accurately described as a 'truly Christian gentleman', and I could not better that description.

TOM MOLLARD

AYLSHAM LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY
ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st.AUGUST 1992

Income

	£
Sale of Newsletter & Publications	54.50
Subscriptions	405.00
London visit receipts	241.50
Suffolk visit receipts	191.00
Party income	220.00
Millgate Course fees	375.70
Mystery Trip (previous year)	7.07
Visitors' fees	36.22
Coffee profit	10.00
Miscellaneous donations	7.50
Bank Deposit acc. interest	4.49
<u>Total Income</u>	<u>1552.98</u>

Total Income

Balances 1st.September 1991

Bank Current account	33.10
Bank Deposit account	245.57
Petty cash	<u>7</u>

278.74
£1831.72
=====

Treasurer: Mrs Wendy MacGregor

Expenditure

	£
Officers' expenses reimbursed	83.72
Printing & Photocopying	273.16
London visit payments	235.00
Suffolk visit payments	160.00
Party costs	192.70
CUEMB Millgate	172.20
Town Hall rent	189.00
Friendship club rent	90.00
Aylsham Map & History Fair	45.00
Lecture fees	90.00
Friendship Club donation	10.00
Research Committee Subscription	8.00
Donation - Memorial stone	20.00
<u>Total Expenditure</u>	<u>1568.78</u>

Total Expenditure

Balances 31st.August 1992

Bank Current account	(7.39)
Bank Deposit account	270.00
Petty Cash	<u>33</u>

262.94
£1831.72
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Audited 2nd October 1992
Graeme Johnston.