

AYLSHAM LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

ESTABLISHED 1810.

JAMES BREESE,
Tailor and Woollen Draper,



RED LION STREET,
AYLSHAM.

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Cover illustration: An advert for Breese, tailor, Red Lion St. from a contemporary copy of the "Aylsham Almanac". See feature by Betty Gee on page 206.



AYLSHAM LOCAL HISTORY  
SOCIETY

## JOURNAL & NEWSLETTER

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### STAINED GLASS AT BLICKLING HALL.

Nicolas Corbin

*In an earlier issue of the Journal & Newsletter (vol.2 No.7. September 1989. pp.200-202) we published an article on the 15th. to 17th. century stained glass in the east window of Erpingham church. The story behind that article recorded the travels of the stained glass. The glass had originally been made for Steinfeld Monastery, in Germany; from there it had been sold to various persons, including Lord Lothian, and this particular section of glass had been installed in the staircase window at Blickling Hall. The article went on to describe the 'final' move of this glass from Blickling to Erpingham.*

*At the time it looked as if that would really be its final move, but events overtake us, and a noticeable deterioration in the state of the glass led to its removal from the church, by the National Trust, followed by extensive and expensive conservation work on the glass, and its return to its original position in the staircase window at Blickling Hall. As Area Agent for the National Trust, Nicolas Corbin was very much involved in this activity, and on 3rd. April 1995 he gave an address before a small invited audience at Blickling Hall celebrating the return of the glass to Blickling. This address, reprinted overleaf, adds the latest chapter to the history of the stained glass, and tells us of the various people involved, particularly the Rev. P. S. Raby.*

**[Editor]**

The principal credit for saving the glass must lie with the Reverend Percival Sidney Raby, who was born on 23rd. June 1901. He was trained at Lichfield Theological College and was made a deacon in 1924, ordained priest in 1925, became Rector of Ingworth in 1930, Vicar of Calthorpe in 1931, rector of Erpingham and Calthorpe in 1944, and retired in 1962. He died on 7th. December 1982. His ashes and those of his parents, to whose memory the glass was put into the chancel east window at Erpingham church in 1955 at his expense and that of his brother Edward, are buried on the north side of the Erpingham High Altar, and below a memorial tablet bearing his family Arms. A solemn Requiem Mass was celebrated at Erpingham church on Wednesday 27th. January 1983, by the Rev. David Pope, rector. The Rev. Aubrey Aitken - Bishop of Lynn, took part in the service. Percival Raby's ashes were interred at that service, and David Davison, a churchwarden, lowered the casket containing the ashes into the grave.

Virtually all the fine contents at both Erpingham and Calthorpe churches are due to Percival Raby's initiative. The arrangements of furnishings in the churches were also the result of his knowledge and energy. His hand can still be seen in Ingworth church, though slightly diluted. For a while during the last war, he was in charge of Alby and Thwaite parishes and for a short while lived in Alby rectory while waiting for tenants to move out of Erpingham rectory. His hand can just be detected at Thwaite church. Sadly, all his work at Alby church has been destroyed.

Percival Raby was a great admirer of the work of the architect, Sir Ninian Comper. The nearest best example of his work is in the parish church at Lound. On Passion Sunday, I attended High Mass at Little St. Mary's, Cambridge, and of course gazed at the splendid High Altar created by Sir Ninian Comper in 1913. The painting of the riddle posts reminded me of the riddle posts at Erpingham, which were supplied together with the present High Altar by the Wareham Guild in 1930 to the designs of Captain John Burton FRIBA, the church architect whose ideas were in tune with those of Percival Raby.

The recommendations and instructions set out in that splendid book by Percy Dearmer, *"The Parson's Handbook"* which was first published in 1899 and went into a number of printings and editions, were invariably taken note of by Percival Raby. Sadly, that book is now largely unknown to clergy and architects in these days. A modern edition was produced in the



1960s, but the text compares badly with the original.

As a young incumbent of parishes owned considerably by Lord Lothian, Percival Raby was invited to Blickling Hall by Lord Lothian after he moved to Blickling in 1932. He was shown over the principal rooms, and saw the glass in the staircase window before it was removed in about 1935, in order to shed more daylight on to the dark staircase, and after Lord Lothian's sister, Lady Gertrude Minna Thwing, had fallen on the stairs and broken a leg.

After I became the National Trust's first Area Agent for East Anglia in 1948, I naturally did a great deal of exploring in my early years and came across some wooden crates in a building behind what has recently been known as the Lothian Barn. I asked the Estate Yard foreman, Dick Salmon, what they contained, having noticed splinters of glass trickling out of one of them. His reply was *"that old coloured glass from the Hall staircase window"*. Percival Raby had already asked me what had become of the glass, and from then on the plan of putting the unwanted glass into Erpingham church developed.

The law has been strictly observed. A Faculty to put the glass into Erpingham church was granted by Chancellor Willink on 2nd. June 1954, and Chancellor Ellison granted a Faculty on 28th. July 1992 to send the glass back to Blickling Hall and replace it with a replica in Erpingham church.

—ooOoo—

## THE LOYAL AYLSHAM LIGHT INFANTRY VOLUNTEERS

Julian Eve

When England's war with Revolutionary France started in 1793 the British Army was only about 40,000 strong. Great Britain had mostly relied on large numbers of foreign mercenaries in her conflicts overseas. The only force available for civil defence was the Militia, which consisted of part-time soldiers, who in peace time spent only one month at an annual camp doing military training. They were only called upon if hostilities broke out and did not serve abroad. This limited Militia force was insufficient for the

defence of the Country and a Supplementary Militia Act was passed in 1796 calling for a further 60,000 Militiamen. Lists of men liable to serve between the ages of 18 and 45 were made for each county and local ballots were held to select the names of men required to serve. A quota was set for each parish and 'principals' (those who had drawn a lot) could provide a 'substitute' if they could afford to pay for one. The poor had no choice but to serve and their families were supported from the parish poor rate. At Aylsham, during the Napoleonic wars, several families whose men were serving in the Militia received poor relief.

The Government also called for men to join a local part-time Volunteer Force to defend its own area should the enemy invade. These volunteers were organised by the local gentry and the best known example was the Norfolk Yeomanry. This was a cavalry unit lead by the Marquess of Townshend where all the mounted men provided their own horses and uniforms and it consisted almost entirely of gentlemen and yeoman farmers. Infantry units were also needed and these resembled the Home Guard of the last war.

In 1803 there was a serious invasion scare as the huge French army was poised ready to cross the channel, it being held in check only by the British Navy. Each part of the country responded differently to the threat of invasion, depending on the keenness of the local gentry who were expected to raise and command such local defence units. Aylsham responded enthusiastically and on 14 July 1803 a public meeting was held to set up a Volunteer Corps. Sixty-one inhabitants volunteered to be enrolled and many more from surrounding villages. The unit was christened the Loyal Aylsham Light Infantry Volunteers. Men who enrolled were to be excused the Militia ballot and it is possible that some may have joined because of this but there does seem to have been a local patriotic response.

Quite a lot is known about various mounted units (Yeomanry) but there are few records concerning the volunteer infantry units. We can learn something about the Aylsham Light Infantry Corps, however, from the records kept by Captain William Repton who was a company commander.

Stored in Aylsham's Town Hall, amongst the archives, is a small tin cash box labelled 'Aylsham Volunteers 1803'. It contains dozens of receipts and hand-written notes, all neatly folded and preserved by Captain William Repton. He was a son of Humphrey Repton (1752-1818),

Aylsham's nationally renowned and successful landscape gardener.

William was to join his uncle, John Adey as an attorney in Aylsham, but in 1803 he was aged only 20 and was probably still articled. Later he took over his uncle's practice. William Repton died in 1858 and it is remarkable that his cash box with its 63 folded pieces of paper has survived.

From these fragments it is possible to discover the names of the officers in the Aylsham Corps. The commanding officer was Major John B Collyer, Clerk in Holy Orders. He is listed amongst the rate payers in 1802, paying rates on church glebe land and other property, advising the parish overseer and acting as Visitor to the workhouse. He may have acted as parish priest as Charles Norris, who is recorded by Sapwell as being vicar at this time, did not actually arrive until November 1803.

The two captains in the Aylsham Volunteers were William Repton and Robert Parmeter who owned the mills in Ingworth and Millgate. Parmeter was a very active and capable man of affairs. He was aged 39 in 1803. The Lieutenants were John Engall who had a house in Aylsham, Thomas Ashley, who I think was the son of the Aylsham wine merchant, Stephen Ashley, and a Mr Dent. He lived near the mill in Millgate and for a while was a partner of Robert Parmeter. John Partridge was an ensign and two more officers are mentioned, Mr Clover and Mr Soames, both from well known prosperous Aylsham families. By the end of the year the establishment for the six 'troops' consisted of one major, three captains, three lieutenants and three ensigns. Most of Captain Parmeter's troop came from Calthorpe although he himself lived in Burgh. The NCOs consisted of one sergeant major, ten sergeants, ten corporals and one bugler. There were 200 private soldiers.

All the men had to attend regular drills or exercise days in order to be exempted from the Militia ballot. Twenty-four attendances were required by the end of the year for full exemption but the unit *en masse* was eventually made exempt. Drill days were held on Sundays and on some weekdays and started in 1803 as soon as the harvest had been gathered. Most of the drills were carried out in small units under their own officers but when the whole Corps was on parade some of the drills were complicated and a Regular Army drill-sergeant was employed to teach the men. Captain Repton's accounts record on June 17 1804, "Paid my share of the expenses of drill sergeant from the 24th. Foot- 13/9d". Prior to this



they seem to have been paid by the overseer from the poor rate.

At times William Repton had to take the parade on his own. The following note was delivered to him by hand:

Dear Sir

I am informed this evening that Mr Collyer will not be at home tomorrow - and having by this day's post received this imminent intelligence I have to request you will take the command of the Corps in the afternoon. I am with esteem yours truly

R Parmeter, Burgh, Saturday 5 May [1804].

So that William Repton could remember the necessary commands for the parade drills he carried the card shown on the following two pages.

*(Echelon was an arrangement of troops in divisions placed parallel to one another but no two were on the same alignment, each had its front clear of that in advance of it)*

Records of the mens' attendance were kept and from the lists that have survived it is possible to name many of them. Their names are recorded at the end of this article for the benefit of any genealogists.

William Repton's accounts, which run from July 1803, when the unit was formed, to June 1804, tell us about his own company. He ordered jackets for his men and black sabre belts (at 8/6 each). He supplied them with "stocks" which I presume were neck-ties, like hunting stocks. He also paid for five pairs of gaiters. The captain lists the few men who had not yet got "cockades" but we can not really obtain a clear idea of what the uniform looked like. One man had his own uniform. Compared with the Yeomanry an infantryman's uniform was comparatively dull.

The captain also spent money on his own uniform, "paid Mr Francis for fustian jacket - 5yds at 5/- = £1.5s, also for velveteen breeches - 2½ yds at 6/- = 15s". He had Mr Gilman of Norwich "alter an old bearskin hat and cockade", he purchased "a green feather from Lt Ashley for my cockade" and paid Major Collyer for a sword-knot (a ribbon that is attached to the sword hilt). He purchased for himself a sword from Matthew Read for £3 and "paid for a new pair of pistols at Wright's gun smith in Norwich £4.14.6".



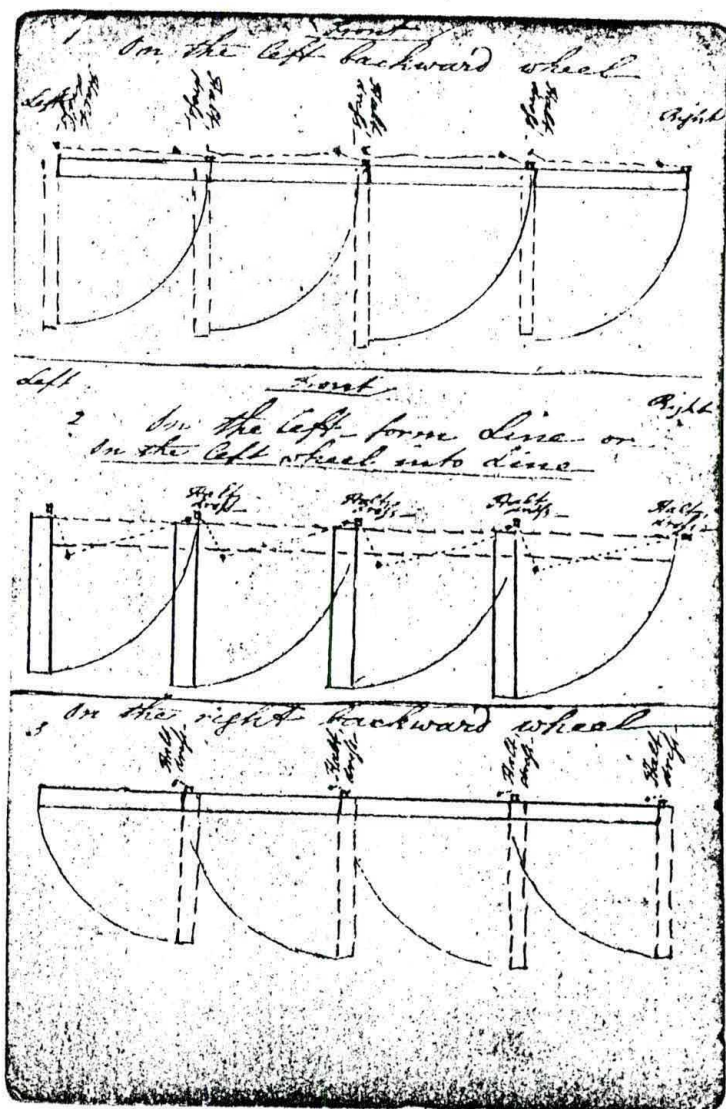


Illustration (1) The front side of William Repton's "crib card" detailing the required movements for the three drills:

"On the left, backward wheel"

"On the left, form line"

"On the right, backward wheel"

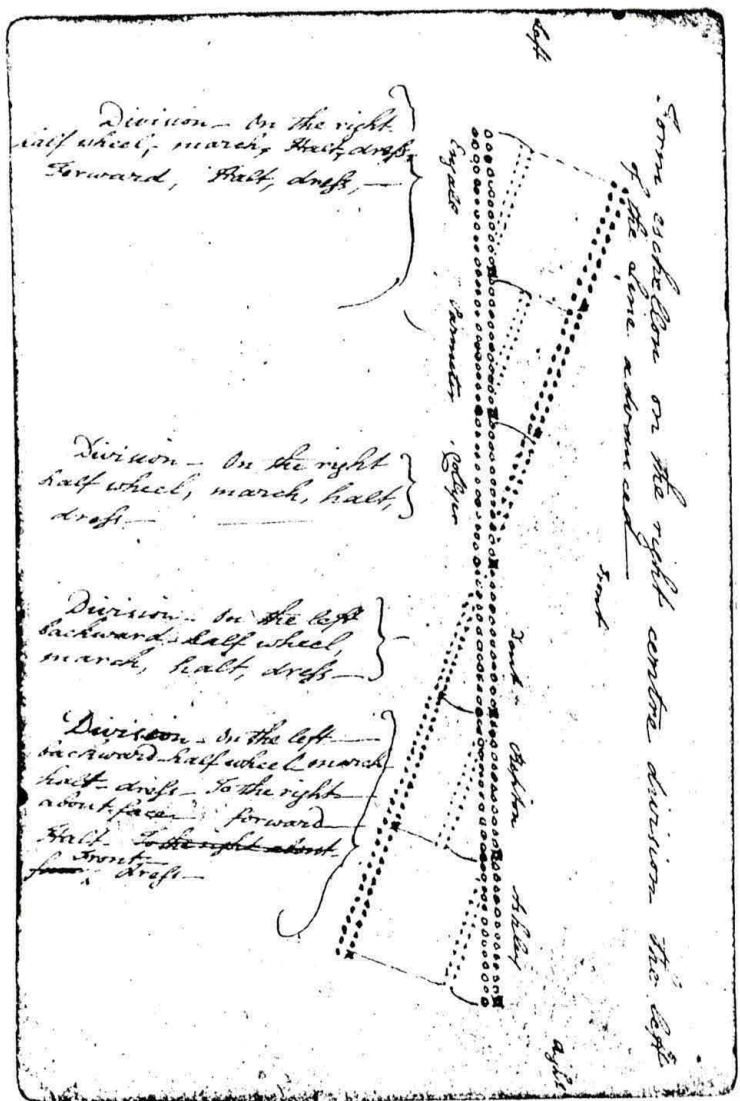


Illustration (2) The reverse of William Repton's "crib card" with guide lines for the much more complex drill movement.

"Form echelon on the right centre division, the left of the line advanced...."

As part time soldiers, they would have needed some *aide memoire* to remember drill movements of such complexity!

By August 21 his men must have been equipped with muskets for he had some blank cartridges made. A week later he purchased a pound of gunpowder for 2s and then paid "Locket for making 42 ball cartridges 2s". These were probably for his own use as 42 rounds was the required number to be fired to obtain a musketry efficiency certificate.

The social side was not forgotten and there are several entries in his expense book, "beer for the men 5s".

On 8 November 1803 he writes "paid my share of the dinner at the Black Boys when the Fakenham Volunteers dined with us - 15s". On the King's birthday, June 4th 1804, he paid twelve shillings as his share of expenses at the officers' dinner at the Black Boys. The same day he joined Lieutenant Ashley in paying six shillings for his share of the beer for the men. The men celebrated at the Dog Inn, no doubt more suitable for the rank and file.

Aylsham ladies formed a subscription committee to supply the Volunteers with "articles of comfort". They aimed to provide flannel worsted great-coats for the men. Military equipment was of course excluded from their provisions.

The attendance records show that the men were reliable attenders both for Captain Repton's and Captain Parmeter's units. A shilling was paid for each two hour "drill". Some attended 27 times between August and the end of December 1803. All had to "take the oath" and a record was kept of this. William Ash was discharged for attending only 17 times, Joseph Howes complained he was too infirm and that standing for two hours brought on pain in his legs and William Ulph missed four Sunday parades. He still achieved 26 attendances and Captain Repton has written a note, "this man being a hairdresser must have been at a considerable loss at his trade, had he attended on these four days which were Sundays". Repton was obviously keen to keep him in the Corps.

On November 11th 1803 the Loyal Aylsham Light Infantry was reviewed and according to Dr Sapwell there is a report of it preserved in the Local Studies Library. I hope yet to find an account of this. Soon after their formation similar Corps centred at Heydon and Catton joined with the Aylsham Corps to form the 5th battalion of the Norfolk Volunteer Infantry, 520 men strong.

I look forward to discovering more about the Volunteers and would be grateful for any known sources of information.



## MEN SERVING IN THE AYLSHAM VOLUNTEERS

### **Captain William Repton's Unit: (Nov 1803)**

|                  |                   |                 |
|------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| William Ash      | Ben Austin        | Francis Barber  |
| Fred Barnard     | Francis Barnes    | Robert Beasy    |
| John Bell        | James Cook        | Charles Fullard |
| William Gale     | Charles Horstead  | James Horstead  |
| Joseph Howes     | Shadrick Ives     | Thomas Lane     |
| William Pitchers | Thomas Paul       | Henry Rounce    |
| Robert Tice      | Charles Tuffield* | William Ulph    |
| John Ulph        | Francis Ward      | Robert Webster  |
| James Wiley**    | William Wilson    | Francis Yaxley  |
| Isaac Yaxley     |                   |                 |

\* promoted to Sgt 1803

\*\* Sgt. Reduced to the ranks for second offence

**Captain Robert Parmeter's Unit:** His list of men having attended five days drill, dated 2 Sept 1803. (Probably two troops)

|                           |                           |                               |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Charles Abbott            | Stephen Alexander         | John Batchelor                |
| Ben Buckham               | Richard Bunn - Calthorpe  | Jas Burrell-Ingworth          |
| Thomas Clover- Calthorpe  | Thomas Cook - Thwaite     | WilliamCook-<br>Calthorpe     |
| James Cory                | William Craspe - Aldby    | John Dade                     |
| John Dawson - Burgh       | William Dawson            | ThomasDix<br>Calthorpe        |
| James Durken,-Ingworth    | John Durken               | Edward Dye                    |
| James Earle-Calthorpe     | Stephen Earle - Calthorpe | John Field                    |
| Mark Fisher               | Thomas Frost              | John Frostick -<br>Banningham |
| John Glyster-Calthorpe    | James Hall - Calthorpe    | Thomas Haze                   |
| William Huggins           | Robert Ives               | Ben Johnson                   |
| Thomas Long               | Charles Miller            | James Moon                    |
| James Moy                 | Fisher Negus              | Ben Newstead -<br>Calthorpe   |
| James Newstead- Calthorpe | James Niarman?            | William Oaks                  |
| William Palmer            | Edward Platten            | Thomas Platten                |
| Robert Pull               | Thomas Ransome            | Sam Roofes                    |
| Richard Roper, Aldby      | George Sandus             | James Scarles                 |

John Scarles  
John Spanton  
Thomas Storey  
James White

John Scott  
Thomas Stonham  
William Sylvester  
Thomas Wright

Ben Spalding  
Stephen Storey  
Charles Wade

### List of Volunteers from parishes near Aylsham:-

|                   |                |                               |
|-------------------|----------------|-------------------------------|
| From Itteringham: | Spooner Ellis  | Robert Naylor                 |
| From Thwaite:     | Robert Bumfrey | Thomas Cork                   |
|                   | Samual Crasp   | Thomas Tudman.                |
| From Woolterton   | Robert Crisp   | William Leeds John Pearson    |
|                   | John Peg       | Stephen Reeve William Sparrow |
|                   | James Waters   |                               |
| From Wickmeer:    | John Bird      | Henry Carr Barn's Davidson    |
|                   | William Kyburn | James Lee Joseph Naylor       |
|                   | Joseph Neal    | Abra'm Newstead               |
|                   | Sam Rushbrooke | Thomas Rouse John Scottow     |
|                   | Henry Waite    | Thomas Waite.                 |

—ooOoo—

**P.S.** Since writing this article I have heard from Kate Thaxton, who is the Assistant Keeper of the Royal Norfolk Regimental Museum at the Shirehall, that the uniform worn by the Aylsham Volunteers in 1803 was a red coat, with black facings, gold lace and white breeches.

*[It is a great pity that we were not able to find an illustration of an 1803 Aylsham militiaman to go with Julian's article. Perhaps someone amongst our readers knows of the whereabouts of one?]*

*The threat of a Napoleonic invasion led to stirring times in Aylsham and Julian Eve will be dealing later with some of the aspects, including the instruction to the civilian population "Instructions in Case of Invasion" dated 1801, and also the complex signalling device designed to fit on top of the church spire, as the 'Aylsham Alarm system'*

*When "Dad's Army" was formed in 1940, I always assumed this was a brand new concept in British military defence. I now see that it had a much longer pedigree than that.....Ed.]*

## A SHOP IN AYLSHAM MARKET PLACE

Betty Gee

There is a file in the Aylsham Archives marked "29/30 Market Place, and 9/11 Red Lion Street" - the shop owned by Clarke's of Aylsham. This is a very interesting building which occupies a prominent position in the Market Place, so I have used the time available in the recent Archives Course, which met fortnightly, to study the documents in the file. The main aim was to find out more about the people who owned or occupied the house and shop during the last three centuries. A secondary aim was to follow up any clues relating to the structural changes in the building. Clarke's ironmongers shop is described in *'Aylsham - A guided walk'* as having an "unusually attractive Edwardian shop frontage, behind which is an early eighteenth century house front, and which in turn replaced the original timber-framed building."

The principal document in the file is an Abstract of Title which runs to eight handwritten pages from the year 1715 to 1826. An Abstract of Title details all relevant deeds to ensure that the seller of a property is legally the owner. This building was copyhold in the Manor of Aylsham Lancaster and any purchase, mortgage or surrender was recorded on the Court Roll. Also in the file are two Sale Notices of the 19th century. This information was supplemented by facts acquired from church baptismal rolls and memorial tablets, lists of window tax payers and rating lists, as well as from Aylsham directories.

With this quantity of names and dates, it seemed clearer to divide the material into three periods:

- a) the 18th. Century - the Curties Period.
- b) the Napoleonic War Period and aftermath (1802 - 1830) and
- c) the later 19th. Century and 20th. Century Period - the Breese and Clarke Period.

### THE 18th CENTURY - THE CURTIES PERIOD

The Abstract is entitled "Abstract of title of Thomas Curties to an estate copyhold of said Manor", so it was a pleasant surprise to find that





Clarke's shop in Aylsham Market Place - "*an unusually attractive Edwardian shop frontage...*" (illustration taken from "Aylsham - a Guided Walk, by Aylsham Branch WEA. Published in 1983. Illustration is by Brian Bowhill)

the well-known Curties family of Aylsham had owned the property as far back as 1715. There have been at least three reports in the Journal (by Ivan Morris, Tom Mollard and Valerie Belton) about them and, in addition, a detailed study was produced in the *Norfolk Ancestor*, Vol 2 No 2 dated September 1980, by E A Curties entitled "The Curties family of Norfolk".

The Abstract starts with John Curties, son of Anne Curties, widow, being admitted to a shop or tenement in the Market of Aylsham in 1715, by her will. She was the widow of Thomas Curties, Rector of Scottow and Brampton who had died in 1698. It is reported that, following his death, Anne had been assisted in bringing up her three children by her sister, Kathleen Doughty of Aylsham, and Anne left Kathleen, in her will, part of the Mileham meadow at Ingworth. Anne's two other children were Frances, who died young, and Jane who died unmarried. Possibly Anne Curties lived in the house as a widow. Since the Window Tax List of 1739 details a John Curties, with 19 windows in his house, and the building situated in the Market Place has 6 windows on 3 floors and another blocked up window on the side, it is possible that John, and Mary his wife, lived there. John was originally a weaver and later a tanner in Aylsham and Hanworth, and was described in a memorial tablet as *shopkeeper in Aylsham*. In 1741 John Curties became Church Warden of St Michael's Church, Aylsham. Late in life, he moved to Hevingham. Mary's memorial tablet in 1750 states she was the wife of John Curties, grocer. John died, aged 69 years, in 1760, and left his children well provided for. It is stated that he left a well in Aylsham with provision for all his family and friends to have access. (John and Mary's eldest son John also became a tanner; he married twice - firstly to Everett Parker and secondly to Mary Paul - but does not appear in this Abstract.)

John and Mary Curties surrendered this property in 1748 to their second son Thomas, who was also a grocer. Unfortunately, he died only a few months after his father, and his wall plaque states that he was aged 46 years, left a widow and eight children and further states that "*his assiduity in Business, affectionate regard to his parents, family and friends, and Truly Religious Life made his death the concern of all that knew him*". Thomas's son, Thomas, was admitted to the premises in 1761 (by the will of his father dated April 1760 which referred to messuages, lands and tenements lying in Aylsham in use of Thomas Curties and of Thomas Smyth and his under-tenants )

Thomas, the son, took out two mortgages, the first from James Curties, his uncle in 1776 and the second from Samuel Taylor in 1791. Thomas the son died in 1798 and his only child Ann, then a spinster, had to surrender the premises to James Curties her great uncle, at court in March 1800. This is the same James Curties referred to on pages 36 and 37 of *"Millgate"* the ALHS publication. James Curties died unmarried in 1801 and his will dated January 1798 bequeathed to Stephen Ashley, shopkeeper, any real estate lying in Aylsham, Erpingham, Banningham, Colby, Felmingham, Skeyton, Marsham and Matlaske. Stephen Ashley had married a niece of James (and was presumably a son-in-law of Thomas Curties) and was later referred to as a liquor merchant.

It would seem that during the Curties period (the greater part of the 18th. century) the shop in the Market Place traded as a grocer's shop. Stephen Ashley was admitted to the premises in March 1802 and possibly changed the type of goods sold.

## **THE NAPOLEONIC WAR PERIOD AND AFTERMATH**

**1802 - 1830**

During this period the premises changed hands several times. Stephen Ashley took out two mortgages, one in 1803 and one in 1814 from a London wine merchant.

There is a very interesting entry for 19 June 1816. Stephen Ashley, in consideration of £400, paid by William Simpson, gentleman Treasurer for the County Stock of the County of Norfolk, surrendered all that messuage or dwellinghouse situated in the Market Place.....with the shop warehouse cellars and appurtenances thereto belonging, part whereof was then lately in the occupancy of John Steward and the residue was then or was then lately used as a depot for arms, accoutrements and clothing of the 1st. Eastern Regiment of Norfolk Local Militia. Which said surrendered Messuage and premises were bounded by the Market Place of Aylsham towards the West, by a road or open space leading from the said Market Place to a street called Red Lion street towards the North, by the said street called Red Lion Street towards the East, by a footway or a passage leading from the said Market Place to said street towards the South....to the absolute use of Thomas Cubitt of Horning, Robert Marsham of Stratton



Strawless and John Preston Mott of Barningham. (Trustees)

There appears to have been a requisition of the premises until the "restoration of peace between Great Britain and other nations". The Justices had then to order, direct and appoint the price for the sale of the messuage buildings and premises. In June 1818 the premises were formally purchased from Stephen Ashley by the Treasurer, Wm Simpson and then sold to William Weaver of Aylsham, yeoman. He is referred to in another document as the quartermaster occupying the premises.

The premises were then sold by William Weaver to William Wilson and wife Sarah. On 11th March 1819 William Wilson and his wife Sarah sold the premises to William Lowe of Aylsham, carpenter. Wilson surrendered "all that messuage wherein William Lowe did live with the small yard adjoining, as the same were then occupied by William Lowe, and also the moiety of the wall then lately built for dividing the said yard from the yard then late of the said William Wilson and then of Stephen Breese which was to be kept in repair by, and at the equal expense of the said William Lowe and Stephen Breese.. .. which said premises are situated .... in Aylsham between the messuage and yard then late of William Wilson and then of Stephen Breese on the north past the Street called Red Lion St on the east .. "

This is the first mention of a messuage to the north of the shop and of a yard divided by a wall and could indicate that a separate messuage and shop owned by Stephen Breese had been built in the last three years, possibly the part of Clarke's shop in light coloured brick facing down Red Lion Street. On 15th July 1821 William and Newell Lowe sold the premises (which were described in a similar way as the last entry) to Thoms Cullam of Carleton, farmer. Finally the Abstract details the sale by Thomas Cullam to James Sly of Aylsham, baker and confectioner, in March 1826.

The Rating book for March 1821 lists Stephen Breese with a house rated at £8 and a barn and yard rated at £1. In 1823 rating books, the barn was referred to as a stable. The "*Aylsham in 1821*" publication by ALHS lists H Breese as living '*In Markett*. 'being in trade and having 6 in family';

William Lowe is "*against Mr Rackham's*", *in trade* and has *11 in family*. James Sly is in Red Lion Street, *in trade*. Thomas Cullam is not listed as an Aylsham resident.

One may speculate as to the reasons for the several changes in ownership taking place in five or six years. There was a very bad harvest in 1818, the booming wartime economy had collapsed and returning soldiers from the War would have aggravated the difficulties facing families who might have been employed as agricultural labourers or weavers. Messrs. Weaver, Wilson and Lowe appear in the Rating Books of 1821 and 1822 as owning houses, so perhaps their purchase of the messuage and shop was an indication of their enterprise. It is likely that there were sub-tenants of the premises.

There is no positive information available regarding the ownership after Mr Sly the baker, who purchased the house and shop in 1826, but early Directories give some clues.

## **THE LATER 19TH AND 20TH CENTURIES - THE BREESE AND CLARKE PERIOD**

The two Sale Notices in the Archive File both mention the name Breese and thus connect to the reference in the Abstract of the house abutting on the premises of Stephen Breese. The name of Breese occurs in a number of the Aylsham Directories of the mid-19th century. The references now follow in chronological order.

|                         |                                                                                                               |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1846 Kelly's Directory  | James Breese tailor and woollen draper                                                                        |
| 1853 Kelly's Directory  | James Breese tailor and draper                                                                                |
| 1858 Directory          | Stephen Breese tailor, Red Lion Street.                                                                       |
| 1863 Harrod's Directory | James Breese Black Boys Commercial Hotel<br>Market Place. Stephen Breese tailor and<br>draper Red Lion Street |
| 1864 Directory;         | Farmer: James Breese Market Place tailor:<br>Stephen Breese Red Lion Street.                                  |
| 1877 Directory          | farmer: James Breeze, Red Lion Street - no<br>mention of a tailor.                                            |
| 1883 Kelly's Directory  | James Breese, tailor, draper & farmer, Market<br>Place                                                        |

|                        |                                   |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1888 Kelly's Directory | James Breese tailor, Market Place |
| 1892 " "               | as above                          |

The Aylsham Almanack of 1900 does not list residents or commercial establishments but has an advertisement for J. T. BREESE, established 1810, tailor & woollen draper, Red Lion Street.

The Arnold Tuddenham memoirs have an interesting reference to Breese's tailor shop up two flights of stairs in the oblong windows over Edwards' china shop, and he goes on to say, "My grandfather taught the late James Breese the trade." This could be about the period 1870-80, as Stephen Breese died in 1864. The early references of the tailoring business are to Red Lion Street which fit in with the Abstract reference in 1821 of Stephen Breese having the messuage to the north of William Lowe.

The two Sale Notices in the File give further information about the building. The first dated 2nd August 1864, by Messrs. Burrell & Sons, states as part of its details:

"All that eligibly situated, commodious and substantially built dwelling house and shop situate in the Market Place, Aylsham, with a detached stable, gighouse, walled in yard and garden in which a good business of a tailor and draper has been carried on for many years by the late Mr Stephen Breese and is now in full operation. Also a good brick and tile built cottage adjoining the stable in the occupation of Mr. Robt. White".

This clearly states that the house is situated in the Market Place whereas several of the Directory references state that the business was in Red Lion Street. Presumably the stable, gighouse, yard and garden were on the Red Lion Street side. The purchaser's name is not attached.

The second Sale Notice is dated October 31st 1893 and, issued by Messrs Barcham & Son, has different Sale Particulars but has the Purchase Agreement attached. The question arises as to whether the Sale Notices are for the same part of the Clarke premises

Here follows a summary of the Particulars:-

"All that well built brick and tiled dwelling house and shop . . . Occupying a commanding position in the Market Place of Aylsham and in which a lucrative business is carried on. As the same comprises:- On the ground floor double fronted shop, entrance hall, dining room, kitchen, scullery and cellar;

On the 1st floor, drawing room and 3 bedrooms, and on the 2nd floor 2 bedrooms together with necessary offices thereto.

The same is now in the occupation of Mrs Edwards at an annual rent of £15.10.0. and abuts on the Market Place, Red Lion St, a passage leading from the Market Place to Red Lion St known as the Loke and property of Mr James C Breese."

This Sale clearly refers to the main part of the Clarke premises. Mrs Edwards, widow, of Mr John Edwards, china and glass dealer, is listed in directories as being in the Market Place, although in 1858 and 1863 John Edwards was shown as being in Red Lion Street. In 1877 the reference changed to the Market Place. In 1897 Mrs Edwards supplied glass dishes for the Jubilee Dinner given by the Jubilee Committee.

The "abutting" clause ending, "property of Mr James C Breese" suggests that the house and shop formerly owned by Mr Stephen Breese and detailed in the Notice of 1864 had been bought by Mr James Breese. The premises detailed in 1893 have an Agreement to Purchase signed by Mr James Thomas Breese - the Vendor's solicitor was Messrs. Tarry & Sherlock. It thus appears that Mr James Breese then owned the whole of the present Clarke building.

Mrs Edwards continued to occupy the main shop, with the Breese tailoring business in the part facing down Red Lion Street. There is a photo in the Town Hall showing the oblong windows surmounted by large letters B R E E S E. Mr George Probert Clarke had an ironmonger's shop in the Market Place from about 1883 until 1925, possibly part of the premises under discussion.

In the 20th century the china department of Henry Page occupied



the main part of the premises. The staircase was then in the centre not at the side of the shop. Page's shop was situated on the other side of the Market Place on the site now occupied by the chemist, and although primarily a grocer and linen draper it had a number of other departments until the 1940s. It was listed as the North Norfolk Supply Stores from 1937. In the 1950s Clarke's had an ironmongery shop on the corner site now occupied by the Alliance and Leicester Building Society and later moved to their present large shop.

Mention has been made of the "Edwardian " shop frontage of the Clarke shop, but the word "Victorian" would be more accurate as a photo of the Market Place in 1897 clearly shows these same double-fronted windows. It has also been suggested that the top floor of the building was added on at a more recent date; the other buildings on that side of the Market Place have a different height line. Could it be possible that the elegant windows and the top floor were incorporated at the same time? The Town Hall was started in 1856 and opened in 1857, This must have changed that side of the Market Place very much.

In conclusion, one may say that the primary aim of finding out about the owners and occupants of Clarke's shop during the last three centuries has been satisfied to some degree but that the secondary aim regarding the structural changes has merely produced some enlightened guessing.

## SOCIETY NEWS

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** - There are no visits or other society activities to report on in this issue, but details of the forthcoming Annual General Meeting warrant some publicity, so **most important - PLEASE NOTE** The date of the AGM this year will be **FRIDAY 6TH. October** at 7pm. This is a different day of the week from all previous AGMs. The venue is also different; it will be **The Methodist Church Hall**, White Hart St. Some parking is possible opposite where the road widens, and one may park in the car park of the Catholic church further down White Hart St. Following the business meeting, there will be a talk by Mrs Nesta Evans, who has been running the recent archives courses, and her subject will be:-

*"Local History is fascinating and Fun"* Not to be missed!. Some things never change, and it will be no surprise to be reminded that Annual subscriptions will also be due from the date of the AGM. Subscriptions are expected to be at the same level as last year [**£5.50**] and should be paid to Mr. A. Shaw, 25 Sears Close, Aylsham NR11 6JB (Tele: 734923) who will be replacing Maureen Strong as Membership Secretary.

## NOTES & QUERIES

We get many enquiries, by post, from people wanting to trace their long lost ancestors in Aylsham. I am never very keen to get too involved in family history tracing. It takes a lot of time, and is only really of interest to the family concerned. However, I am happy to pass on family history queries to our readers in general through the *Journal*, as our readers are so knowledgeable they often can come up with the right answers, so here is the latest enquiry from a Mrs. C.R. Todd, Greenacre, Welborne Rd. Welborne, Dereham, NR20 3LH. Her great-great-great grandparents were Thomas & Mary Cory, who had a son, Joseph Burrell Cory in 1818 (baptised 25.10.1818). Mrs Todd has traced all she needs to know about Joseph Burrell Cory, but she can trace nothing more about Thomas and Mary after that date. Can anyone help? (Telephone: 01362 - 850464)

—ooOoo—

## SAILING THROUGH YARMOUTH WITH "FLEA" BARBER, AN AYLSHAM CELEBRITY

Extracts from Dr. Wynne's log on July 3rd 1884.

*Dr. Wynne had spent the night at Potter Heigham, his wife and Graham [his son] had to return home by the 11am train, so:-*

"I had to get away before, in order to secure a passage home, if possible, but in all probability not further than Stokesby. . . but kept going . . . till 2½ miles below Stokesby Ferry, and came to Herringby....I felt I should liked to have got home [at St. Olaves] that night.. .. Just as I settled myself

down, I heard a voice from a boat, from a man with a boy.....the man, I must say, had rather an ill-favoured look, wearing a straw hat which half concealed a face not by any means handsome, with a discontented expression.

"Well, my man, what is it?"

"Please, sir, it is a very hot day....could you give us a drop of anything to drink. The river is brackish, and we are very thirsty."

It was a hot day and no mistake. I sympathised with the poor devils.

".....but, if you will accept some cold pump water out of my cask, you are welcome....". Then comes the query,

"Were you thinking, sir, of going to Yarmouth, when you pulled up, or did you pull up because you thought you were unable to get down?"

"Well", I reply, "I did want to get through Yarmouth, and get to St. Olave's Priory tonight, but....."

"Well," says my friend, "I know you can get down and if you wish I will help you".

Says I, "Can it be done now? are you sure.....?"

I jumped to the man's proposal, and said, "Well, if you get me through the North End, I will give you 2/6d."

I began to think I was a fool for having moved from my snug berth at this man's instigation.....says I, "This is getting slow work; it is no use my getting into Yarmouth unless I can save some of the flood across Breydon..... 'Oh yes' he was sure about it and as he had promised to do the job, he would stick by it. ....We began to meet yachts and barges sailing before the S.E. evening breeze out of Yarmouth, and I thought each crew looked wonderingly at my friend. There was no hearty exchange of salutations.....however, I began to have a better opinion of my friend when he talked of a tow line, and I said, "I was born up this North River, and had done a lot of towing as a boy....." "Well," says he, "I was born up the North River, my name is Barber".

'Good God' I thought, 'have I got that poaching rascal on board, who is always being sent to prison for breaking the law?' Well, it's too late to get rid of him now, I must take my chance. I told him I was born at Aylsham. "Well really" said he after a pause, "why, so was I. God bless my heart, you don't say that, why how old are you?"

I found he was a year or two my junior, so I say, "I can't remember

your name", but I soon found it by his description of the cottage in which he lived, his relatives and stranger than all that, when he heard my father's name he exclaimed,

"Why, my mother was for some years servant in your father's house. She was cook. Her name was Slaughter, and your father gave my parents their first wedding dinner. She is now a fine old woman of 83 and lives at Hockling [Hickling?]"

"How marvellous" thought I, then came—,

"Did you know so-and-so....?" going through all the old remembered watermen I used to know as a boy, and whose wherries were often our play houses.

"Did you know Captn. Grey, as we called him, of the wherry 'Bure' "

"Law, yes, he was my uncle "

"Why, I used to go to his cottage every week to look at a model wherry he had."

"Why", says the man, "I have got that same model at my house, *The Lord Collingwood Inn* at Yarmouth."

We were now great friends! and I only hoped he would not turn out to be the man I thought. Being born in the same town seemed to be a bond.

.....We sailed right into the North End, up to the suspension bridge....There were the usual number of disappointed loafers on the banks looking out for a job, all their hopes being blighted at the sight of Barber....."Take the helm for a minute whilst I hoist the jib, and we will tow your boat whilst I hoist the mainsail. You can then jump into your own craft and I will be off."

The *Arab* began to fly up the North Channel. Four shillings parted with, being as I said, because we were fellow townsmen. He was satisfied, and I was glad to settle down to the helm of my own little craft, alone. and under my own command, with the certainty of reaching my port, and in this humour sailed to Breydon.....

Subsequent enquiries have informed me that the man I had on board was a brother of the notorious fish poacher, but I am not sure, as some say one thing and some another. I visited the *Lord Collingwood* the following day and saw my friend sitting talking to another well known waterman of a



very shady reputation, and I was shown the wherry model owned by Capt. Grey, by a brother Barber. Which is the poacher and which the boatbuilder is at present a puzzle.

July 12th. 1884 - I have now discovered that the man was the well known "Flea" Barber, a notorious fish poacher who is always before the magistrates for something or other.

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May 1st. 1909 - I met Dick England in Yarmouth today. He gave me details of "Flea" Barber's death on March 29th. aged 69. The following extract from the Daily Press was written by Arthur Patterson (John Knowlton), the great local naturalist and Breydon fowler and fisherman.....Barber, whose first acquaintance I made up the North River when alone in my No.1 *Arab* ... and who came under suspicion of having relieved Col. Leathes and myself of our lead ballast, Christmas 1898. I must confess that I have since thought that the man was made a scapegoat for some other thief.

Mr.Patterson's appreciation of "Flea" Barber was headed "*Another Yarmouth celebrity gone*" so I am not the only one to call him a celebrity! Patterson wrote ".....A night or two ago, 'Flea Barber', erstwhile wherryman by profession, and river poacher by preference, after a long illness, engendered undoubtedly by river mists and night fogs, died at Runham Vauxhall, by no means an old man, but prematurely worn out by a hard and strenuous life, and asthma.....Barber was a naturalist to the core however much his instincts, from a conservator's point of view, may have been perverted. He was one of the most weatherwise man I ever knew. The habits of bird and fish, and marshland hare and rabbit were an open book to him.His knowledge of men was cute and penetrating, the average bailiff was hopelessly inferior to him.....I frankly confess that I really liked the man, who had a marvellous knack of getting out of scrapes as well as getting into them. He covered his tracks at times like a Red Indian.....Barber had some clever escapes and had a very curious knack of making out an alibi. He was not so plucky as some who love the Bohemian life, and very wisely, much preferred to run than fight. He was silent as a fox, when he liked....When he did open out a bit, his conversation was always most interesting. As a maker of nets to suit all purposes of sport, legitimate and otherwise, and as an accomplished netter of fish, which he always declared

were as much a poor man's right as an angler's plaything, we shall never see his equal again.

He was the last of the river poachers to do credit to the profession, not that it is difficult to get rid of poached fishes to this day, when you can get enough of them, and taking him for all in all, we shall—, well, the rest of the old saying need not be repeated.”

Incidentally, his real Christian name was William.

In 1877 when the Norfolk & Suffolk Fisheries Act was passed, there were one or two mistakes in the byelaws. One was that netting was not entirely prohibited. It was then urged that when fish attained the size of a pound and a half, they should be taken for food, and nets of three inches, from knot to knot, when wet, were made legal. In January 1882, a net 50 yards long, 12 feet deep and with a mesh a shade under three inches when wet, was seized out of the wherry of a notorious poacher. In the wherry were two tons of large fish - bream and roach. A conviction was obtained, but if the man had been a little more careful in his measurement, he would have escaped conviction.

*Extracts from Norfolk Broads and Rivers by G.C.Davies. 1884*

I looked up the EDP for January 21st 1882 when Barber was summoned, and the Chairman said they had decided to fine William Barber £10 and £2-9-0 costs, and the net would be forfeited. His son would be fined £3.....this conviction was for using the small net.

When asked whether anything was known against the man, the Bench was told of a former similar conviction in March 1881, when he was fined £6 and costs, and also that he had been convicted of similar offences at Blofield.

—ooOoo—

## ROBERT JOHN WOODS PURDY

### An appreciation

*One of the most useful sources of information lies in the files of old newspapers or press cuttings books collected by people many years ago, and since forgotten. Many of the citizens of Aylsham, well known in their day, are very often no more than names to the citizens of today, and it is useful to be able to look back and read what it was that made them well known in their own day. Obituary notices can be very informative, and it is a regret that today's press gives so little space to this. In the local paper for July 1st. 1916 appeared the following:-*

Practically the last of the generation of old-style Norfolk sportsmen ended with the death of this gentleman, last Tuesday, in his 77th. year. He was one of those who had seen game shooting, and especially wild shooting, in the good old sporting days before our preserves began, and till his death (though ever a crack and much sought after shot at battues<sup>++</sup>) he, in his heart, preferred a quiet walk with a friend along the hedgerows where he got a mixed bag, to the hottest corner of a much preserved wood.

Deeply versed in practical agriculture - in all woodcraft and in the manners and habits of all birds, beasts and fishes, he was a most entertaining companion. Until his death, he could hold his own with younger men, and was never without shooting, for not only he had his own acres, but his numerous friends were only too anxious to secure the aid of his unerring gun, and he might have shot every day of the season had he cared to do so. He was always most modest as to his own capabilities, and eloquent only in the prowess of others.

He was perhaps at his best on the subject of aboriculture, of which he had made a profound study, and few people have planted more, or with better results, than he did on his beautiful estate at Woodgate, Aylsham. Here again, his help and advice were always at the service of all friends, and even of strangers.

He came from an old yeoman family of Kelling, where they had been settled between two and three centuries. In all matters relating to local genealogy he was deeply versed, and his knowledge as to all the great local families was as deep as his anecdotes of them were amusing. It is a thousand



pities he did not carry out his intention to publish some of his reminiscences, for had he done so, it would have formed one of the most racy and interesting local books possible.

A very patriotic man, the present war and its losses affected him greatly, and may have shortened his life. His only son, Col. T.W.Purdy, of the Norfolk Regiment was one of the first severely wounded, but is now recovered, and will keep the name green in the county, for he has a sturdy son, who was the solace of his grandfather's last days.

In public he did quite his fair share of duty as a member of the Aylsham Board, a Commissioner for Income Tax, and Chairman of the Foulsham Parish Council where he was one of the most regular attendants, and where his efforts to promote and instruct a club, for younger men, for whist, of which he was an expert, were greatly appreciated.

His close observation of natural history was well known, and though on one occasion he was subjected to undeserved ridicule (by those who only believe what they see with their own eyes) when he detected, and observed a pair of luminous owls, his correctness was never doubted by those who knew his extreme accuracy, and the matter was set at rest when it was endorsed by no less a scientist than Mr. J.H.Gurney, F.Z.S. of Keswick.

Holding strong views on many subjects, it cannot be said that he made no enemies among those who disliked his robust common sense, but very few will be more regretted by their friends than he. As an archæologist (he was the most active member of the committee of the Norfolk & Norwich Archæological Society) he was most accurate and careful, and knew the history of every house for miles around. In short, he was a many-sided and most hearty man and will be missed by very many and by no one more than

W.R.\*\*

\*\*Probably Walter Rye, former Mayor of Norwich, and a fellow antiquarian and member of the Norfolk & Norwich Archæological Society. He lived at Lamas, and was listed amongst the principal mourners at Purdy's funeral.

++ An unusual word which would fox many readers [particularly this editor] is "battues" (p.220). It shows how the English language is constantly changing. Not listed in some modern dictionaries, the Concise Oxford defines it as - "*driving of game by beaters towards sportsmen*" another meaning is "*wholesale slaughter*"



## MATTHEW PARKER AND AYLSHAM

Canon Jack Vyse

Matthew Parker, the first Elizabethan Archbishop of Canterbury, was born in Norwich - in 'Norwich over the water'. He was born, by his own account, in the parish of St.Saviour's, brought up in the parish of All Saints near Fye bridge Gates, and educated in the parish of St. Clement's near Fyebridge (where it is said that the rector taught him to read). His father was "an honest and free citizen of Norwich, by trade a calendar of stuffs" - though he described himself in his will as a worsted weaver. The family was one "of ancient standing in the city....and allied to other creditable citizens there". From his will, again, we may gather that the elder Parker had a house in the parish of St.George, Colegate, which he left to his widow. Parker's brother became Sheriff of Norwich in 1558, and Mayor ten years later, and among their family friends they must have numbered the other merchant families of the time who served their city in the same sort of way.

I do not think there can be very much doubt that among those friends we may count the Jannys family. Robert Jannys had been born at Aylsham, where his parents were buried and where they - or I think more likely some other member of the family, perhaps Robert's brother John - gave part of the rood screen. Robert himself became Sheriff of Norwich in 1509, when Parker was five years old, and mayor on two occasions, 1517 and 1524, by which time Parker had left Norwich for Cambridge.

By his will of 1530, Robert Jannys instructed his executors to "*purchase 300 markes worth of land or as much as is worth ten pounds by yeare for a priest's service to sing for me and my friends in the church of Aylsham where I was born*". When his executors administered his considerable estate four years later, under the terms of his will...the Aylsham clauses became operative. The Lady Chapel was endowed as his chantry chapel..., the Grammar School at Aylsham came into being, with the chantry priest as its master....and our First School, in its 19th.century National School building, still stands on the "School House Pightle" attached to the site of the original school of Jannys's foundation.

Matthew Parker, meanwhile, was at Cambridge. Ten years before Jannys died he was ordained with his title as sub-deacon to Barnwell, near Cambridge, and the Chapel-in-the-Fields at Norwich. A few years after

Jannys died, he was made chaplain to Anne Boleyn, and Dean of the small college at Stoke-by-Clare in Suffolk. Ten years later, in 1544, he became Master of Corpus until he was deprived of that office under Queen Mary, because he had married Margaret Harleston from Mattishall, and refused to give her up. So there followed the blank years from 1553 to 1559 when we know nothing for certain of Parker's movements, until he was called by Queen Elizabeth, - Anne Boleyn's daughter - to be her Archbishop of Canterbury.

There has naturally been much conjecture as to what Parker did in those years between Corpus and Lambeth. He was already a married man with a family of two boys, the elder, John, being only 5 or 6. The evidence seems to be that whilst he was by no means poverty stricken, he was nevertheless not particularly well-off, and he was presumably, at any rate to begin with, without a home. Would it have been very surprising if he had found shelter with, and even support from, his family and friends in Norwich, at Mattishall, his wife's home, or even at Aylsham?

That his link with the City of Norwich remained strong is certain, and for some reason, there is this link with Aylsham also. What was it that caused Parker, in 1567 when he endowed the Grammar Scholars, to say that they should come from Norwich - or Aylsham? without mention of any other place. Why was it that only two years before his death, he could still be concerned, as he was, about the appointment of the rather doubtful Mr. Harrison as Master of the Aylsham school? again in a way that he was not concerned elsewhere. Does the explanation lie somewhere in a connection between the Parkers and the Jannyses? or perhaps some other similar family, the Norgates, for example, who similarly had their connections both with Norwich as merchants as also with Aylsham - and in this case also, as Norwich Scholars, with Corpus also.....?

*(The above is an extract from a sermon by Canon Jack Vyse. As most members know, Jack was Rector of Aylsham and first Chairman of our Society until his retirement. The sermon was one of the 'Parker Sermons' of which four are preached annually - one at Thetford, one at Norwich Cathedral, a third in memory of Parker's wife, at the parish church in Mattishall and the fourth at St. Clement's Church in Norwich.*

*This particular sermon was preached on Sunday, 15th. May 1977, at the Church of St. George, Colegate (in lieu of St. Clement). Due acknowledgement is hereby made to Canon Vyse for the use of his sermon.*

## BOOKBINDING

Turn your "*Journal & Newsletters*" into books

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The Society has already produced three volumes of the "*Journal & Newsletter*" and is currently on volume 4.

Roger Crouch, of "Red Lion Books", Aylsham, has made arrangements for volumes to be bound up into book form, in a dark blue cloth, with gold blocking, similar to existing bound volumes.

Price per volume would be  
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In addition to binding up members' own copies, **Red Lion Books** hopes to produce sets of bound volumes for general sale in the shop, and back numbers of the "*Journal*" are required for this.

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