AYLSHAM LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY



David Fisher 1760 -1832

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EDITOR: Tom Mollard, Flint Cottage, Calthorpe Rd, Erpingham. Norwich NR11 7QL. Phone Cromer 761638

CHAIRMAN: Jane Nolan Aylsham 732226 SECRETARY Valerie Belton Aylsham 734121

CONTENTS

A Terrible business, by R.C.Fiske	227
My memories, by Mrs. Ivy Edwards	230
Society News	238
Notes & Queries.	243
VJ Day in Aylsham, by Molly Long	243
No.1 Market Place, by Jane Nolan	244
Robert Doughty of Aylsham, by Joan Turville-Petre	246
An 1857 Stock valuation, by Roger Crouch	249
Dr. Wynne's reminiscences.	252
List of members - December 1995	255
Society's Balance sheet for year ending October 1995	256

Cover Illustration: David Fisher, (1760-1832), founder of one of the earliest theatrical circuits in the country. His travelling players visited Aylsham and performed here.



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JOURNAL & NEWSLETTER

Vol 4

No.8

A TERRIBLE BUSINESS, recounted by R. C. Fiske

Local History is not always pleasant. Sometimes it is necessary to record its worst aspects in order to gauge the evidence of the past.

What follows is an account of a brutal, sexual and possibly murderous attack on an Aylsham girl in the middle of the eighteenth century. Those who do not wish to read of such matters need go no further than this paragraph. For them it is suffice to know that the girl was Anne Bell, that she fell out with her parents, fled to London to take up prostitution, and there died after a terrible encounter with two wealthy rakes. The law decided that the men were innocent, the public were not convinced.

The evidence that is readily available, is scant: a cutting of a book title from a bookseller's catalogue, a review of that book, and brief reports in the *Annual Register*.

The book in question, or more likely a pamphlet, is called, "A Circumstantial Account relating to that Unfortunate Woman, Miss Anne Bell, alias Sharpe, who died at St. Marylebone". 8vo. London. (circa 1761). It is written by T. Holland, who, the catalogue entry states, was 'Adjutant of the Norfolk Militia'. Whether he was the same soldier with whom the story begins is open to question. If he is the author, he is remarkably honest, for the review of the book tells us it was "a gentleman"

of the army, quartered at Aylsham, who insinuated himself into her affections, deceived, ruined and debauched her."

This, without doubt, opened a rift with her parents, as the girl eloped with the soldiers, who concealed her in Norwich. Here she was discovered and forced to return to Aylsham. But, at home, she was 'despised and avoided by her own sex, until deeply afflicted with the contempt shown her, she was removed to London, from a scene where her reputation was irretrievable'.

At London she was placed with a reputable chamber-milliner, but 'having acquired a taste and passion for intriguing', once again eloped. She was then discovered to have married a tradesman near Whitechapel, but lived with him only one night, before fleeing again under an assumed name. Then, after taking up with an actor who, the author says, was unjustly accused of being the first man to decoy her from her parents, she took to a life of prostitution.

It was in this 'profession' that she met up with the two men she later described as 'young rakes of fortune' - Mr. Willy Sutton, who was later charged with her murder, and Sir W. F., who escaped accusation, even by Holland, who described him as "more unfortunate than culpable." Even so, it was with him and Willy Sutton that Anne Bell spent three days at a brothel - "immersed in the most execrable debauchery and brutality". It was Sutton who was accused of having beaten, kicked and abused her, before he, 'at last barbarously stabbed her with a penknife in parts which decency oblige us to conceal. . . . and for reasons that are not specified." A few days later, she died.

Holland states there was undeniable evidence that the girl received such usage and wounds, and a Miss Young attested that Sutton was the perpetrator. He further states that he got his information during frequent visits to Miss Bell and her maid. He put the evidence before Justice Fielding who gave orders for the body to be exhumed. Holland was annoyed when he was prevented from attending the exhumation, or giving evidence to the jury, who declared themselves "satisfied". He then wrote direct to Sutton himself, but the reply he received from Devizes, dated

16th. October 1760, declared its writer completely innocent.

About the same time, Capt. Holland wrote to the girl's father at Aylsham, from whom he received the following letter:-

AYLSHAM, October 16, 1760

Sir,

Yours came to hand this day, and I am obliged to you for the care towards my poor unfortunate daughter. As to Sutton, I am determined to bring him to the bar for his barbarity and cruelty, if it cost me five thousand pounds. I have enclosed a letter for Sutton, not knowing how to direct to him, and shall take it as a great favour would you seal it up, and deliver it to him yourself.... Your answer what Sutton says by next post, will oblige Sir, your most obedient humble servant,

William Bell.

N.B. I shall be obliged to you to let me know whether or no, you be the same Captain Holland that used to come to our house. The surgeons that examined the body, I will take care they shall be made easy, and every person that assisted her during her illness... excuse errors.

The letter intended for Sutton was a direct accusation of his daughter's murder, and a demand for him to make immediate 'attonement or retaliation' for his cruelty, saving which, Bell would make him appear at the bar.

Holland saw the folly in transmitting such a letter, and wrote back to Bell pointing out that only a public trial could bring atonement. He then sent a further letter to Sutton seemingly threatening such a trial, but, once again, only received a reply pleading innocence and a claim to be undeterred at the risk of such proceedings.

Holland was not alone in pressing for a trial. The Annual Register stated that the public were not at all satisfied with the Coroner's jury verdict, which was that Anne Bell died of a putrid fever. In the end the trial did take place, and, in the same Annual Register for 27th. February 1761, we learn that - "Mr. Willy Sutton, after a trial of nine hours, for the murder

of Miss Bell, was acquitted at the Old Bailey".

To get to the truth of the matter on such scant evidence is not easy. With Holland's account we have the "case for the prosecution" only. We have little of Sutton's defence. It appears the salient question was whether the knife wound caused the girl's death, or whether she died of venereal disease and/or inflammatory putrid fever.

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MY MEMORIES

Mrs. Ivy Edwards

In this issue of the Journal we introduce the first part of the memoirs of Ivy Edwards, who now lives in Norwich, but who spent the earliest years of her life in Aylsham. It will probably take about seven instalments to complete the whole of her memoir, and I am pleased to have the opportunity to put it into print in the Society's 'Journal' Ed.

Chapter 1

At almost midnight on Sunday 27th. of September 1914, I was born to my mother Christiana, so named as her birthday was on Christmas Day, and my father Charles, in Norwich. It was just a few weeks after that dreadful 'war to end all wars' was declared. My parents were married at the Methodist Chapel in Aylsham, about 12 miles from Norwich.

My father was a chauffeur in Norwich in the days when cars were very few and far between, and only those in high office could afford such a luxury, and then the owners were driven to their destinations. I have enlightened the reader on my arrival into the world, and now will try to put pen to paper and recall my earliest memories as far as I can remember, starting from about the age of three. When my father was called to serve in France in the Great War, my mother took me as a baby of only a few months old to my maternal grandparents at Aylsham.

My grandfather, Daniel Richardson, worked on the Great Eastern Railway, as it was then called, and lived in the Bure Valley gate-house, now almost hidden by the new Aylsham by-pass. Three of my uncles were away at the war, so that left at home my two grandparents, my mother, plus two aunts and myself, so I was surrounded by grown-ups and mostly female. In the summer those lovely sunny days never seemed to end. There was quite a long lane on either side of the house, and I gathered, quite by myself, bunches and bunches of wild flowers - in the Spring primroses and violets, then came buttercups, daisies, honeysuckle in the hedgerows and all the other wild flowers of Summer. It would not do in these modern times for a little girl of three or four to wander the lanes as I did.

I suppose I can recall such a lot about Saturdays and Sundays. The weekend started quite early on Saturday morning when a good fire had to be lit under the oven in the wall; just the right heat had to be reached before the weekend baking could begin. I well remember when the oven was particularly stubborn in reaching the correct heat, I have known my grandmother wrap a very small amount of gunpowder in a piece of paper and place it in with the coal, then hold the oven door tightly shut with the broom handle. The flames would then leap up. This was quite a common practice for housewives in those days. This achieved, the temperature of the oven would be tested by placing the palm of the hand on the brass knob on the oven door. When everything was satisfactory, baking could begin in earnest.

First there would be Saturday dinner, which could consist of pig's fry and Norfolk dumplings, or perhaps a rabbit caught in the harvest field. A joint of beef or pork would be roasted to be eaten cold on Sunday. Everything for Sunday was prepared on Saturday, as my family were all staunch Methodists, and Sunday was taken up by attending the local chapel. Once we had partaken of our mid-day meal on Saturday, the baking for the weekend began. A fruit pie would be made from any fruits that were in season, depending on the time of the year. Norfolk short-cakes, which were made with currants and sugar rolled in pastry, then cut into squares and baked on a flat tin. There would be a fruit cake with very little fruit, as we must remember that this was war time and all food was rationed. There was usually an apple tart, as apples could be stored for most of the year. Lastly, there was the baking of the bread, which had been put to rise in a warm place. These loaves, duly baked, my grandmother



Mrs. Ivy Edwards, (Ivy Lovick) aged about 4

would knock the bottoms to see if they were well done.

That was the work of my mother and grandmother, and although my grandfather had to work on Saturday morning, in the afternoon he would get vegetables from the garden ready to be prepared for Sunday dinner. In the summer I would love to sit in the outside shed and help him to shell peas. He would then clean the knives, forks and spoons on an emery board and some kind of polish. I cannot remember what that was called. There was, of course, no stainless steel in those days.

On Saturday afternoon, when we had partaken of a tea of freshly baked bread and cakes and perhaps apples baked in the oven in a large

stone jar, the aunts would be home from their work in the town. Dorothy worked in a china shop and Margery was a dressmaker. They worked long hours, so were not home very early. When tea was over the tin bath would be brought down and filled with water heated on the open fire, which on a Saturday had to be kept alight summer and winter. I would then be soaped and hair washed. Then would come the part which I most dreaded; my hair was put in curling rags by aunt Dorothy. Many a time I was promised a "boxing of my ears" if I did not keep still. I know this was not meant, as she loved to do it.

After breakfast was over on Sunday, all the family dressed in their Sunday best for morning service, and in those days we really did have 'best' clothes which we only wore on Sunday or very special occasions. People only had two sets of clothes, one set for work and the other for

'best'. Grandfather Daniel would always be first to set off; he sat in the chapel in his usual seat near the tortoise stove which was the main source of heating. The rest of the family followed, and the only means of going to the chapel, which was quite a distance from the house, was on foot with me being taken in my perambulator or push chair. The service started at eleven o'clock and finished when the preacher felt he had given of his best. Sometimes the sermon would go on for half an hour and sometimes longer. When the minister of the chapel did not conduct the service, 'local preachers' were appointed, and very often these men walked miles from surrounding villages to Aylsham. Young as I was, I remember these dedicated men, some educated, and some with very little learning, preaching until tears came to their eyes. They were such devout men. (There were no female preachers in those days.)

When a visiting preacher came, it often befell my grandparents to offer them hospitality for the day. In the summer it was usual for grandfather Daniel to take them "round the garden" while dinner was being prepared by the womenfolk. I would always accompany him, holding on to his coat tail as we walked. I must add at this point, a humorous episode you see all the rest of the family called my grandfather Daniel "father", and being brought up with them from such a young age, I called him the same, so with utter abandon I would gaily talk to him saying, "look at this, father" or "look at that, father". However, no doubt they all understood the situation, and I don't think it ever caused any embarrassment. I did not know, or care, as it all came so natural to me.

After mid-day dinner I was again wheeled in my rather antique push-chair, back to the chapel for Sunday School, as aunt Margery was at that time a Sunday School teacher. I well remember on one occasion, being put in my chair to go home, and some of the mischievous boys had put a lump of hot coal under the seat. No wonder I could not keep still, and no-one could think of the reason. Boys would be boys in those days. If, during a long service, I became restless, I was told not to 'fidget' a Norfolk word for not keeping still. We often went for a walk in the summer after Sunday School, and then back home for tea. There was always fruit from the garden in summer, and celery in winter. It was always said celery was better when it had 'got the frost'.

Grandmother Ellen never knew how many visitors she might have for Sunday tea. As this was war time, quite a number of soldiers were stationed in and around the town, so when grandfather took his afternoon walk he would invite one, and sometimes more, home to tea. They were very varied in their ways of speech and manner, but as grandfather said, they could have been his own sons who were away fighting in France, and he knew how home-sick they could feel. Therefore, the reader can see, our Sundays were never dull. After tea was over, the aunts and grandfather would set off again for evening worship. I would usually stay at home with my mother who would read to me, or we would bring out the old photo albums which I loved to browse through. When the rest of the family returned home, often bringing friends with them, aunt Dorothy would play the little organ in the front parlour, and there would be singing of hymns and well known sacred songs of the day, many from Sankey & Moody's Hymn Book. One particularly well known song of the time was called When you come to the end of a perfect day, and I think I can remember some of the words, which are as follows:

When you come to the end of a perfect day And you sit alone with your thoughts The chimes ring out with a carol gay With the joy that the day has brought. Do think what the end of a perfect day Can bring to a tired heart When the sun goes down with a flaming ray And dear friends have to part.

Sentiment in those days was very strong. I think in these modern times, people in general would feel embarrassed at showing their true feelings to their friends.

Monday morning would begin very early and full of activity. Grandfather would get the brick copper fire going, which was built in the corner of the kitchen, ready for the weekly wash. After breakfast he would start his long day's work. He did not often come home to mid day dinner, as he was responsible for the stretch of railway line reaching from Aylsham to Buxton Lamas, and on to Coltishall. He often walked the full length of that stretch of line, so he took his dinner, wrapped in a large red handkerchief, which was usually bread and cheese, or a piece of cold pie; - no doubt if he had a drink, it was bottle of cold tea.

The aunts having had their breakfast, set off to the town and to their separate jobs. Grandmother Ellen and my mother would then tackle the rigours of wash day. The 'coloureds' and the 'whites' were separated into piles. All articles which would boil were scrubbed on a board with soap. then put in the copper to boil. There were, of course, no modern washing powders or detergents, they used soda which was very hard on the hands, and I think they would add a small packet of powder called "Hudson's soap" to the boiling washing. When the linen had been well boiled, a wooden copper stick was used to transfer the sheets, etc. to a tin bath filled with cold water, to be rinsed, then put into another 'blue rinse' to bring out the whiteness. Sometimes, if one put too much of this blue into the water, the garments would look a very pale blue. The old-fashioned wooden mangle was kept in the outside shed, and the washing was folded and put through the wooden rollers to get as much wet out as possible. Linen lines reached the full length of the garden, where the washing was hung out to dry. When the sun was hot in the summer time, some of the thinner garments would be thrown over bushes - layender, for example, and when they were dry, they would be very sweetly scented. In winter, as far as I remember, a fire was left in the kitchen all night, and the linen left to dry on an old-fashioned wooden clothes-horse.

One thing was certain, people did not change their clothes so often as today. There were no synthetic materials and the old type of garments would easily shrink. However, everyone was clean, although it was a weekly bath in front of the fire. Monday dinner was finishing the cold meat with pickles, and perhaps a rice pudding cooked on Saturday. When I see my daughter's washing machine in use every day with a tumble-dryer to dry the linen if the weather is bad, and I tell her about the olden times, I think she and my grand children can scarcely believe me.

On Tuesday the workers departed to their usual day's routine, and the morning in the house meant ironing, and what a task that was. I don't think there were ironing boards in those days, if so, we did not possess one. So it had to be done on the kitchen table. Again, both summer and winter, a good fire had to be kept going in the kitchen grate. The irons were very heavy and triangular in shape. At one end there was a slot into which was inserted a red hot kind of brick which had been heated in the fire amongst the coals. Lots of the linen had to be starched, table-cloths, aprons, and my white embroidered pinafore, which I wore every day over my dress.

Everything had to be ironed, there was no drip-dry easy care materials. My mother, Chrissie, did most of this while grandmother, Ellen, prepared midday dinner. Mid-week dinners were often stews with plenty of vegetables from the garden, or a meat dumpling boiled in a cloth with little meat and a good thick crust, again supplemented with lots of vegetables. I think in those war time days of food rationing country people lived better than city folk because most of them kept chickens, so there were always eggs, and they also grew lots of fruit and vegetables. Sometimes, living near the railway line, a pheasant or partridge would be knocked down by a train, and 'father' would bring one home. That made another meal. Although I am recalling all these facts, I don't ever remember eating these creatures. I saw so many live animals and birds in my childhood, I have been practically a vegetarian most of my life. When the ironing was finished, and all neatly folded and put away, and our dinner over, the afternoon would be taken up with a walk to the town or to visit our friends.

Each day of the week had a different task. Wednesday would be 'bed-room day', when beds were re-made, floors swept and rugs brought downstairs and taken outside to be shaken. There was no wall-to-wall carpeting as today, and I think the rooms were much healthier. One could get the impression that I was a lonely little girl amidst all the grown-ups, but this was not the case. I had my friend, Sylvia, who lived at the farm house at the end of one of the lanes, and Mabel who lived quite close to the house. When I was alone I would, in the summer time, often amuse myself by making "scent". I would soak sweet scented flowers from the garden, roses, wallflowers and lavender etc. The only thing about this was that the aunts were made to put it on their handkerchiefs regardless of how it smelt.

Thursday was often taken up by having relations to call, or we would go visiting. I had an aunt and cousin living in a little cottage at Brampton, a small village between Aylsham and Buxton, and of course the only way to travel was on foot, picking wild flowers and wild strawberries from the hedgerow. How sweet those strawberries tasted.

Friday would mean various odd jobs and a walk in the afternoon to the town. Often to cut the journey shorter we would walk along the railway line, as the grown-ups knew exactly the times of the trains.

I can recall several of the shops in the town and in the Market Place. There was Henry Page's shop which took up all the corner opposite the *Black Boys* Hotel. This hotel is there at the present day. In Hungate Street

also lived the Frankland family. Mr. Sam Frankland was a tinsmith who worked at home and owned a small shop where he would sell kettles and saucepans and other household items. The Franklands were also friends of our family. Sam played the violin at various events which were held at the Methodist chapel. I feel sure the fishmonger's name was Balls. Also in the Market Place, next to Ward & George, was Claude Daniels, harness maker. The doctors at the time were Dr. Morton and Dr. Sapwell. I mention all these names as I am sure there could be a number of people still living in Aylsham, who would remember them. The farmers at either end of the lanes leading from the Gate house was Sutton at the Burgh Rd end, and Gostling at the Buxton Road end. I think Mr. Harry Gostling now lives in a bungalow on the Buxton Rd leading to the town. I remember when I was quite young, he laughed at me as I was always afraid of the "tarkeys", as he called them; all part of our Norfolk dialect.

Barnwell's, a stationery shop and printers, formed another corner, then there was "Ward & George" where aunty Margery worked as a dressmaker. The Town Hall is exactly the same today as it was in 1914. Opposite the Town Hall, forming another corner, was the china shop where aunt Dorothy worked. This shop also belonged to Henry Page. I must add at this point, that Dorothy was truly a bull in a china shop as she charged round in her hurry, breaking quite a lot on her way. As far as I know, this was all taken in good humour, she was such a character. Next, there was Miss Gott's sweet shop. She was a little Victorian lady, always dressed in black and her windows were full of bottles of all the old-fashioned sweets brightly coloured pear drops, aniseed balls, bulls eyes which were black and white striped mints. We would go in for a chat even if we did not always make a purchase. Chocolate and sweets were a weekend treat in war time.

Red Lion Street which was then, and is to this day, the main street, consisted of Mr. White the butcher, the Misses Ewing, greengrocers and florists, Mr.Buckingham, the chemist and the local dentist. Then there was Mr. Pask, the Ladies and Gents. tailor, where aunt Margery was later to work. All these people were our friends, so one can imagine our trip to the town was quite an outing, exchanging news and family welfare, and so home to tea which would often be bloaters purchased at the fishmongers in Hungate St. Then, Saturday was round again.

(To be continued)

SOCIETY NEWS

The Annual Mystery Tour - On 14th. September 30 members of the Society set out on Peter Holman's annual mystery tour. We were given no clues as to our destination as our coach set off along the Cromer road. We did not have to wait long as our first port of call was to Gunton Saw Mill. Here Derek Lyons, who has been involved in the recent restoration of the mill, told us its history and how it worked. The timber framed, thatched building was built in about 1820, and the mill uses the water from the lake as a source of power. Two separate sluices, in which the flow of water can be controlled, drive two large water wheels. One drove a reciprocating saw which sliced whole tree-trunks lengthwise while the other supplied power for a grist mill and a large circular saw. The reciprocating saw has been fully restored and can be seen in working order on display days. We were also told some interesting anecdotes about the Harbord family and their Gunton estate.

From Gunton we travelled due west for a few miles to arrive at Barningham Hall - a really delightful surprise. A most romantic building - it is the only one of the many country houses associated with the Pastons

CHRISTMAS PRESENTS

are you still searching??

How about a copy of "Backward Glance" as the ideal choice? Just one dozen copies remain, and when they are gone, the book will be permanently out of print and increasingly sought after.

Now is your last chance, for a mere £5 contact Geoff Gale, 2 Mash's Row, Millgate, Aylsham. NR11 6ST

that has survived in anything like its original form. Sir Edward Paston built it in 1612 soon after he had acquired the manor of Barningham Winter. The date of completion appears on the porch with the arms of Paston impaling Berney. (Margaret Berney was the second wife of Sir Edward.)

Our party was met at the entrance by Lady Mott-Radclyffe who then conducted us round the house. Not only did we see the principal rooms where the history of the china

and pictures was explained to us, but we were shown the rooms in the two upper storeys. From the fine oak staircase to the Victorian wooden toys in the nursery, all was fascinating, and the house is truly lived in. The Mott family have occupied the house for over 200 years and it was John Mott who commissioned Humphry Repton to enlarge the house in 1807. He enlarged the rooms and inserted bay windows on the south side which enhanced the appearance of the Hall. He also landscaped the grounds. Before we left we examined the fine series of cellars under the house. Our thanks to Lady Mott-Radclyffe for letting us see so much of her home.

From the Hall we moved on to North Barningham (formerly Barningham Norwood) to visit St Peter's, one of the redundant churches in Norfolk maintained by The Norfolk Churches Trust. Within this church are three fine stone monuments and a brass to the Palgrave family. The brass, dated 1516, shows Henry Palgrave and his wife; "he robust and swagger, she thin", according to Pevsner. Their children are shown at the foot of the tablet. The three stone monuments, in fine condition, are dated 1611,1621 and 1639, and are typical of their time. The most impressive one is to Mrs Pope. An upright superstructure curves outward from the wall and two angels hold back curtains either side of her while she kneels in prayer.

From Barningham we moved on to Kelling to visit St Mary's church. Here we counted the birds portrayed in the beautiful modern (1938) St Francis stained glass window and found more birds in the churchyard on a sculptured memorial. Kelling church also has a fine 15th.Century Easter Sepulchre on the north wall of the chancel. We then moved on to Blakeney Quay where we paused for refreshment.

On our way out of Blakeney we made a brief stop at Wiveton church to examine some unusual gravestone inscriptions. Several stones recorded deaths at sea and one lad had lost his life at the Battle of Waterloo. Peter had provided us with a questionnaire to keep us on our toes. On our way home we stopped at a small wood, known to Peter and owned by the National Trust, called Bullfer Grove. Here the energetic members went for a brisk walk on this fine summer evening - a perfect end to a most enjoyable, varied and interesting day.

Julian Eve

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: The Chairman, Jane Nolan, welcomed 40 members to the meeting at the Methodist Hall, on 6th. October. Canon Jack Vyse had written expressing his best wishes for the future of the Society and donated £10 to the funds. Jane paid tribute to our late

member and former committee member, Wenda Wiles, who died in January.

Valerie Belton, the secretary, reported that 1994 had been a year of celebration and 1995 a year of publication. She referred to the Wright's Map, 'The Poor law' compiled by Julian Eve, and 'A Backward's Glance', all of which had been published during the year. Also in the last year there had been a number of excellent lectures and visits to places of historical interest. Tribute was paid to Tom Mollard for the high quality of the Journal & Newsletter, and to Maureen Strong as the retiring Membership Secretary, for her work over the years. Alan Shaw was welcomed as the new Membership Secretary. Valerie ended her report by thanking the Chairman for all that she does on behalf of the society.

As Tom Mollard was unable to attend the meeting, his report was read by Peter Holman. All the contributors to the *Journal* were thanked by Tom, and he reminded members to continue to send him articles for publication.

The Treasurer, Betty Gee, gave her report on the society's finances, (see page 256). Members were, however, warned that with the rising costs of *Journal* publications, lecture fees, rent and officers' expenses, the annual subscription may have to be slightly increased next year.

Geoff Gale gave the report on behalf of the Publications Sub-Committee and stated that the sales of society publications had been very satisfactory. These had been sold either directly to members, or to the general public from bookshop outlets.

The election of officers and committee members resulted as follows:-

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

Committee members elected are:-

Julian Eve Elizabeth Gale Geoff Gale
Derek Lyons Ursula Warren Tom West

Co-opted: Alan Shaw (Membership Secretary)

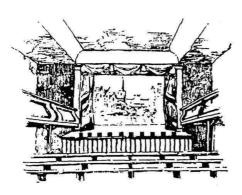
In the Chairman's remarks that followed, the members were informed that the Norfolk Record Office will be re-opening on the 23rd. October at Gildengate House in Anglia Square. In ending her remarks, Jane asked the members to encourage others to join the society, and in particular those of a younger generation.

A discussion followed, and members expressed their satisfaction with the manner in which the society is organised. Several suggestions were made regarding future visits, and these have been noted. All those present were in favour of the next New Year Party being held at the Friendship Club, with the catering as for last year. It was also agreed not to have any entertainment, but to retain Peter Holman's brain-teasing competition.

The speaker for the evening was Nesta Evans, lecturer in history at UEA. The Open University and tutor to the students of "Living and working in Aylsham in the past", an Extra-Mural Studies class held on every second Tuesday at the Aylsham Town Archives. The title for her talk was Local History is fascinating and Fun. Nesta began her talk by stating that all research was a matter of combining well-documented facts with clues, individual hunches and tenuous leads to be followed. She thought the history researcher could become addicted. To illustrate her point that history is not only fascinating but fun, Nesta quoted from various documents which gave not only interesting, but also amusing details of the lives of some very ordinary people of the past. In her closing remarks, Nesta pointed out that Aylsham was particularly fortunate to have a unique collection of historical material in the Aylsham Archives. This collection is a great research source for all those who attend the Extra-Mural Studies class. All the members enjoyed our speaker's talk, and Peter Holman, on behalf of the society, gave the vote of thanks.

Elizabeth Gale.

Subscriptions: remain unchanged for this year at £5.50. Members are reminded that subscriptions become due following the AGM and it would be helpful if they could be paid as soon as possible to our new Membership Secretary, - Alan Shaw, 25 Sears Close, Aylsham (734923)



The interior of Fisher's Sudbury theatre

THE FISHER FAMILY -

Mrs. Moira Field, the acknowledged expert on the Fisher family, entertained over 40 members and friends at the Friendship Club to an account of the lives and activities of that well-known East Anglian theatrical family.

Together with William Scraggs and his family, the Fishers developed a circuit of theatres over a large part of

East Anglia, which they regularly performed in. There were eventually 11, 12, or 13 theatres [depending on which account you read]. The travelling players spent up to a maximum of 60 nights at each venue, during which time they would put on 30-40 different plays out of their astonishingly large repertoire. The company enjoyed an excellent reputation and attracted audiences from all levels of society. The local gentry patronised the performances and would sponsor individual plays. The Nelson family was one that enjoyed the visits of the travelling players. Part of the success in attracting the patronage of all levels of society was due to the Fisher menfolk who were excellent mixers, talented performers and good musicians.

It was mostly about the individual members of the Fisher family that Mrs. Field talked about, rather than the activities of the company. We learned that the first Daniel Fisher came from farming ancestors at Hethersett. This first Daniel joined the Norwich Theatre Royal Company in the middle of the eighteenth century, before joining up with William Scraggs to found the theatrical circuit.

A good account of this famous family can be read in "Playhouses and Players of East Anglia" by T.Burley (1928). Aylsham was one of the places that the Players regularly visited, and is mentioned in Burley's book. Additional accounts of the theatre in Aylsham have appeared in our own Journal, - see the article in Vol.1 No.3 March 1986 pp56-58, for Ron Peabody's account of the early theatre in Aylsham as described in the

Starling *Memoirs*, and see also Vol.1 No.4. June 1986 pp75-82 for an account of some of the performances enjoyed in Aylsham.

Mrs Field gave us good value and entertained us for well over an hour and could have gone on for as long again, had time allowed. She was handsomely thanked by Julian Eve on behalf of us all.

ANTIQUES EVENING - A date has been arranged for this forthcoming meeting — MARCH 26th. 1996 —. This will be a meeting arranged jointly with the Aylsham Association. Time and venue details are still to be arranged, and more details will be circulated in due course

---ooOoo---

NOTES & QUERIES

Mrs. Sandra Weldon, whose grandfather, Charles Pratt, is recorded on our town's War Memorial, is seeking information about her family's history. Charles Pratt was killed on HMS Hood in 1941.

She thinks her family used to live in Mash's Row, and another branch of the family still lives there, but unfortunately family photographs and papers were lost when Mash's Row was flooded.

If any members can help Mrs. Weldon, please contact her directly:-

MRS SANDRA WELDON, 37 YEW TREE DRIVE, KINGSWOOD, BRISTOL. BS15 4UB

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VJ DAY IN AYLSHAM

In the previous issue we recorded the VE Day celebrations in Aylsham marking the 50th. Anniversary of the end of the war in Europe. Since then, we have marked the anniversary of the end of the war itself, and Molly Long writes:-

"VJ Day in Aylsham was more of a remembrance than a celebration. The two minutes silence was held in the Ex-Service Club, and

a Service was held on August 13th. at Alby church, the standards of the Royal British Legion and the Women's Section being carried. On the day itself, 15th. August, a seat donated by the Ex-Service Club in memory of all prisoners of war and all who served in the Far East, was unveiled in Hungate St. and dedicated at a short service by the Rev. John Pumphrey, assistant priest of Aylsham and Padre to the local branch of the Royal British Legion. The Standards were carried by David Smith and Janice Tortice. The exaltation was spoken by Chairman George Chamberlain. On Sunday the 20th. August, a service was held in Aylsham Parish church led by John Pumphrey and attended by a large congregation. The reading was by ex-POW Major Fred Bradshaw, and Standards were once again carried. Perhaps not so colourful as VE Day, but far more moving.



No. 1, MARKET PLACE

Jane Nolan

In 1615, a property called 'Portland and Woodwards', on this site, was left by Firmin Lawes to his son Thomas Lawes, along with sundry other properties including 'Palmersdale', a barn in Hungate Street, some market stalls, and Tudmore Close.

Sometime in the late 17th./early 18th. century, Henry Rippingall, attorney, inherited the property through his wife, Hannah Lawes. He was churchwarden in 1692, 1696 and 1710. On his death, his son (or grandson?) John, aged 10, was admitted to this property and the other properties as listed above. Henry Rippingall built himself a Mansion House on the site with a garden and a garden house behind.

In 1764 John Repton of Norwich, gentleman [and father of Humphry Repton, the landscape artist] bought the property, including a house in the Market Place, market stalls and other earlier "Lawes" property. There is a reference here, and in the earlier Rippingall acquisition, to "a piece of land, 21 feet by 5 feet, next to the garden of Henry Rippingall's Mansion, on the east, and Thomas Green on the west," which seems to be an entry, off the Market Place, to a lane or driftway

running behind the house in Hungate Street and roughly parallel to it*. This later became built up with a carriage entry and a room above as shown in Humphry's painting of 1807.

In 1775, John Repton died and bequeathed his property to his three children - Dorothy (who had by this time married John Adey, a solicitor from Lichfield who had joined the Rippingall law firm), Humphry and John. John Adey lived in No.1, Humphry lived in Sustead, and John leased Oxnead Hall.

In 1803 William Repton, son of Humphry, joined his uncle as a solicitor and in due course acquired the property, where he lived until his death in 1858.

In 1859, the Bank which had been established in 1815 by Robert Copeman and his sons George (of West Lodge) and Thomas (of Old Bank House), moved from the Old Bank House to No.1 in the Market Place. By this time it had become a branch of Gurney & Co. It joined in 1896 with 19 other private banks to become the present Barclays Bank.

In 1840 William Repton took as partner William Henry Scott, who practised from Red Lion St. and then from the Old Bank House, where he probably built the offices, and certainly built the "Orchards". The story goes that in hard times, he cooked large quantities of nourishing soups for the poor. He is buried in the Repton enclosure in the churchyard.

The practice was carried on by Mr. Gidney who was succeeded in 1930 by Mr. D. L. Walker.

[I am indebted to Joan Turville-Petre and David Walker for reading the MS and for their comments.

J.N. 1

SOURCES: Manor Court Books of Aylsham Lancaster "Aylsham in the 17th.century" - Aylsham Rental of c.1624

This article was originally intended for the "Backwards Glance", but is more at home in the Journal! [ed.]



^{*}See article on Hungate by Joan Turville Petre and reference to Chapman's Lane, in A Backwards Glance published by A.L.H.S. 1995

ROBERT DOUGHTY OF AYLSHAM

Joan Turville-Petre

The Doughtys of Hanworth Hall were an old-established family by the sixteenth century. Robert (d.1562), had three sons. The second, Thomas, moved to Aylsham. He and his elder brother, William, were jointly buying property there, as recorded in a Court Roll of 1565. Thomas was still in Aylsham in 1570 for he appears as a juror there in the Court Roll, but he eventually moved to St. Martins, London, where he became citizen and mercer. Probably he died there in 1627.

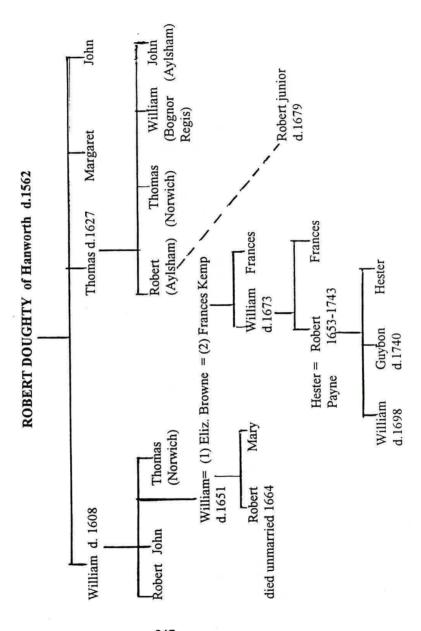
Thomas had four sons; two left Aylsham and two stayed. A few years earlier, his brother William at Hanworth had four sons (all bearing the same names as their cousins, but in a different order). This was the high tide of male heirs in this family, thenceforth to dwindle disastrously.

A Thomas Doughty was elected bailiff of Aylsham Lancaster in 1607. This is likely to be Thomas's second son. The eldest son, Robert, was elected to the same office in 1616. Robert Doughty of Aylsham owned two large houses in the Old Market, and a great deal of pasture. [Rental, c.1624]

A Robert Doughty Junior, of Aylsham, was called on to assist in various property dealings in Sustead and Hanworth. This was during the winter of 1671. He would seem to be the Robert Doughty whose will was proved in 1679. He was probably the son of the prosperous tenant in the Old Market.

The first to call upon Thomas Doughty of Aylsham were the Blofields of Sustead. Thomas Blofield (d.1637) of Sustead Hall drew up an elaborate will disposing of an estate of some 50 acres, providing in detail for five sons and six daughters. The main properties (in Sustead, Aylmerton and Bessingham) were entailed upon Leonard, the eldest son, and his heirs male.

In October 1661 Leonard leased the house and estate to his brother Thomas of Felbrigg, for a term of 17 years at a price of £300. In a document of 1671, the house is described as "the capital messuage where L.B. did then dwell", and stipulations are made as to "free liberty for L.B. to build and repair houses. . . to bring in carts, carriages, workmen.....". In this document, Thomas Blofield assigns the remainder of the lease to



Robert Doughty Junior of Aylsham, and Thomas Cooke of Sustead.

In the course of these ten years the capital messuage had been transformed. The present Sustead Hall bears the date 1663. It is a pleasant, unpretentious building (occupied for a while by Humphry Repton,) incorporating part of an earlier, lower house. It stands by the road and there is no park. In documents from 1671 onwards it is described as having a dovecote, gardens and orchards.

The Blofields (Leonard, Judith and Leonard Junior) had already taken measures to break the entail. In a document of October 1671, they enlisted the help of Robert Doughty Junior in a contract with Edward Townshend of the City of London. Townshend was to become tenant of the freehold. This arrangement led to endless wrangles, summarised and resolved at Westminster in 1684.

Meanwhile the Blofields were in deep financial trouble. Just after Christmas 1671, they borrowed £1000 from William Doughty of Hanworth Hall and Margaret Linge, 'singlewoman' of Hanworth. A near-contemporary note on the back of the document indicates that the terms were hard. An indenture of the same date sets out the conditions for the first payment of £500.

These last two documents, as also the transfer of Thomas Blofield's lease mentioned above, bear the signatures <u>Rbt.Doughty</u> and <u>Ro: Doughty</u>. The first is that of Robert Doughty Junior of Aylsham. The other is that of Robert Doughty of Hanworth, some fifteen years old at this time. His father, William, died prematurely in 1673. Robert obtained Sustead Hall from the Blofields, and re-built his own mansion (a splendid house seen from the church) after a fire.

Margaret Linge was pressing her claim in 1674. A document sets out that all property in Sustead, Aylmerton, Felbrigg, Metton and Bessingham [50 acres] will be forfeit if payment is not made.

It appears that Robert Doughty had got possession of Sustead Hall before 1677. A document of 22 May of that year proposes to lease back the property to Leonard Blofield and his mother. Leonard the elder had died in 1676. An elaborate schedule of moveables is inserted, including such things as shutters and shelves. However, Articles of Agreement drawn up shortly before Robert's marriage, show that he intended to settle the Sustead property on his bride, Hester Payne, daughter of a Norwich alderman. The document surrendering Sustead Hall followed in July 1677.

The Blofields received £1900.

In 1680, the proceedings of the Manor Court of Bessingham recapitulate the terms of Thomas Blofield's will, and record that Robert Doughty claimed a last acre of pasture from Leonard Blofield Junior.

Robert Doughty of Hanworth lived on until 1743. His eldest son died aged 21, and his second son also pre-deceased him. A ledger stone in the church records the loss of three male infants and one female. A grand-daughter inherited the estate. The progeny of Robert of Aylsham are unknown.

[Most of the material for this article was supplied by the kindness of Mr.David Walker, owner of most of the documents used. J. T-P.]

--00O00--

AN 1857 STOCK VALUATION Roger Crouch

The author of this valuation was William Postle of Chapel Field, Norwich, and it was addressed to Mr. John Shepheard, a land owner at Erpingham and father of Philip Candler Shepheard of Abbott's Hall, Aylsham, who was the husband of Maria Pasqua. The Robert Shepheard mentioned in the valuation farmed the land at Erpingham and was the brother to Philip Candler Shepheard. There were four other brothers, plus five sisters, including Charlotte Candler Shepheard and Elizabeth Anna, both spinsters who lived together at Abbott's House in White Hart St. Aylsham. These two sisters were responsible for building the small Catholic church on land adjacent to Abbott's House.

To Mr. Shepheard

Chapel Field 21st. October 1857

My Dear Sir,

I enclose my valuation, and have, tho' unusual enumerated the particulars of prices on the most important items.

This plan is adopted by me; the more effectual to detect any miscalculation in figures, or want of judgement in the various prices, being equally anxious with yourself, to make it just and equitable to all persons interested, and of granting you a more favourable opportunity of giving any relief, where you conceive to be needed. It will be extremely gratifying to me if it meets with general approval, having an ardent and increasing desire that your family arrangements may be attended with prosperous success, and to promote if possible additional comforts to your happy family circle &.

I remain

my dear Sir yours faithfully

WILLIAM POSTLE

VALUE OF HORSES -			
NAMES	AGE	£sD	
2 700 7000	20		COLTS
Grey Horse - Wilson	9	20 0 0	
Black Horse - Smith	6	35 0 0	Two year old 30 0 0
Jemmy Brown	19	12 0 0	Two, 2 year old $35 0 0$
Black Horse - Tinker	5	38 0 0	65 0 0
Grey Horse - Billy	9	30 0 0	
Grey Pony - old	20	600	
Bay Pony - old	18	700	MR R. SHEPHEARD
Brown Colt - Jacob	3	30 0 0	
Brown Colt - Joe	3	22 0 0	One 2 year old 20 0 0
		£200 0 0	
MR. ROBERT SHEPHEARD			
Grey Mare	15	16 0 0	
Sorrell Horse	20	13 0 0	
		£ 29 0 0	
VALUE OF CATTLE VIZ:			
Three bullocks and a cov	v	47 0 0	
a heifer and a young cov	,	18 0 0	
CHARLES LESS AND		65 0 0	
		N8081 20 12	
Two pigs		600	
An Anadoren & Table 414			

Value of turnips:-

CALLED	ACRE		PRICE/ACRE	£ s D
Six acre Carr	1.0.0.	white swedes		1 10 0
	5.0.0.	"	4-5-0	21 5 0
Twelve acres	12.0.0.	mangolds	5-10-0	66 0 0
Eleven acres	11.0.0	white	3-10-0	38 10 0
Thirteen acres - viz;	8.0.0.	swedes	5-0-0	40 0 0
	4.0.0.	Pudding	3-0-0	12 0 0
Long Furlong	7.0.0.	swedes	5-0-0	35 0 0
Glebe	2.1.0.	white	4-0-0	9 0 0
Crost	4.0.0.	swedes	5-10 -0	22 0 0
				£245 5 0

HAY

No.1 Large stack of excellent quality - forty pounds	
at four pounds per ton	160 0 0
No.2 of good quality - thirty tons at three pounds 15s	
per ton	112-10-0
A round stack 4 tons at 3 15 0 per ton	15 0 0
Fodder stack, very excellent, 16 tons 9cwt.	
at 3 5 0 per ton	53 9 0
	£340 19 0

Implements of husbandry, viz: waggons carts, ploughs Harrows, Bullock Bins, Rolls Water tub, Sheep bins, barn utensil and harness and sundries.

	1 otal	£Sd
		94 0 0
	Horses	200 0 0
	Colts	65 0 0
	Cattle	65 0 0
	Pigs	600
	Turnips	245 0 0
	Hay	340 0 0
		£1,015 15 0
Horses for Mr. R.S.		29 0 0
Colt		20 0 0
		49 0 0

----000O000----

Dr. WYNNE'S REMINISCENCES written by him after his return from India.

My father's first boat was a 14ft. open boat called the "Louisa", sloop rigged. In this we (myself and two brothers) acquired our first knowledge of boat sailing. Our ages were 12, 10 and 8 respectively, and I was the eldest. Our next boat was the "Caledonia" a lateener, 18ft, overall. She was a very handy little craft, and the best rig for narrow waters. After I left for India, she was converted into a cutter which became the fashionable rig when cutters with their long bowsprits licked all North river lateeners on Wroxham Broad. The first regatta on Wroxham Broad I ever saw was composed of Widgeon, Maria, Kathleen, Elizabeth, all lateeners and Kestrel, a cutter. I have forgotten the Oberon of Aylsham; a 16 footer belonging to Mr. Morton. She had an 8ft. beam and we boys slept in her little cabin at Coltishall on the night of the above regatta. We had come from Aylsham in the Louisa, and were joined by my father at Coltishall in the morning. We had to tack the Louisa to Wroxham, and did not reach the bridge until noon. She was not very smart in stays, and our father nearly lost his temper every time she came about. We saw Wroxham regatta from the upper entrance of the broad. It was pouring with rain and blowing hard. Our dinner in an open boat was attended with great difficulties. We had a veal and ham pie, and our plates filled with rain water as we were helped. My youngest brother, Augustus. (afterwards a midshipman on the Blenheim, of the East India Company) was much upset with the discomfort of that meal. How we got home, I have forgotten, but we were wet through!

The Caledonia, a lateener, was built by Bob Wright of Aylsham, and she became a winner of many cups at Aylsham, Lammas and other regattas. The last I heard of her when I came home on leave from India in 1867, was that she was owned by Mr. Astley, then living at Lammas. I should also mention that my father was led on by Aylsham watermen to buy a cabin boat of about 6 tons, the Stormy Petrel'. She belonged to Freeman, the picture dealer in London St., Norwich. She used to lay in the angle of the river Yare, just below Foundry Bridge. (Actually that part of the river is the river

Wensum). We boys used to admire her, and I am not sure that this did not tempt my father to purchase her. Her masts, spars and cabin fittings were very good, but as for her hull, well....this has to be described.

She was brought home by Tom and Bob Wright and some other Aylsham wherrymen. The crossing of Breydon happened to be a rough one, and old Bob Wright, the shipwright, was so frightened and said prayers for their safe arrival in Yarmouth. Bob had been a noted pugilist when young, but later on he turned Methodist.

I remember her arrival at Aylsham, she had a good suit of sails and looked very smart. She was anchored in Aylsham Mill pool, and there she sank! It was discovered that her planking was rotten, and that the strong current had washed the mud out of her seams, and this was the cause of the disaster. My father then decided to build another craft using all that was worth having out of the *Stormy Petrel*, and this was the *Daphne*, a 7 or 9 ton cutter, 27 feet overall, a 9 foot beam . . with a counter stern 8 feet long. Her sternpost raked inwards so as to enable her to sail in the 19ft. class. This was an illustration of tonnage cheating which led to half the counter being included in the length for rating.

In the *Daphne* we boys used to cruise in the North River, and out of Yarmouth and spend our holidays on the river at our moorings on Wroxham Broad, on Blake Humphrey's side, by his express permission. What happy days, often fishing and shooting for our dinner, jumping overboard every morning and swimming like frogs.

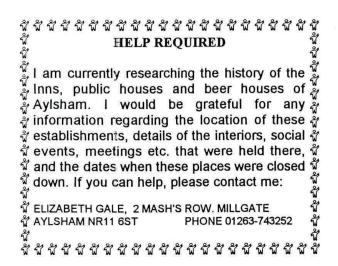
My brother Charles, who was in the British Army Medical Service, was stationed in Yarmouth, and had her fitted with a topmast, and cruised in the roads with old 'Captain' Grey of the wherry Bure as his man. I had, in 1857, entered the then Hon. East India Company Service, [afterwards H.M. Indian Army]. I came home on leave in 1867, after ten years service and found the Daphne at Aylsham, out of commission. I had her rigged and sailed for a [while?] in her with Foster, an Aylsham wherryman, for my man. I remember when we got as far as Coltishall, I found the water over her floorboards and half way up the sides of the berths. However she had a good pump (out of Stormy Petrel) and we soon pumped her dry, and her

seams soon "took up". I forget how long I used her, but I never saw her again until I came home a second time, and then she had been sold after my father's death, and was laying like a derelict on Cobholm Island, Great Yarmouth.

While in India, my father had another racing boat built, the *Clara* a 16 footer with a fantastic long counter. She was reputed to be able to turn in her own length. I saw her at Aylsham alongside the *Daphne*, but preferred the former

From these notes it is easy to form an opinion as to where I contracted the "boating disease".





AYLSHAM LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

LIST OF MEMBERS - DECEMBER 1995

Below is the list of paid up members of the society, correct at the time of issue of this number of the *Journal*. This list appears in each December number of the *Journal*, along with the notice that it will form the distribution list for future issues. So - if your name does not appear on the list, then this will be the last issue of the *Journal* to be delivered to you!

If your name is not on the list, how do you get it on?? - Easy - just send your annual subscription (£5.50, unchanged from last year) to our new Membership Secretary [see details on p.241] and he will be delighted to inscribe your name in letters of gold, amongst the elect.

With apologies to any members who might have renewed their subscription within the last few days and missed inclusion on the list.

ALSTON, Mrs. A. BARWICK, Mrs. G. BAYES, Mrs. R. BELTON Miss V. BIRD, Mrs M. BISHOP, Mr. T. BRATT, Miss R. CLARKE, Mrs. B COOK, Mrs M. COOTE, Mr. A. CORBIN, Mrs. H.L. CORBIN, Mr. N. CROUCH, Mr. R. DAGG, Mrs. I. DAINES, Mrs. E. DAINES, Mr. J. DENNIS, Mr. R.B. DYER, Miss F. EVE, Dr. J. FLETCHER, Mrs. J. FOX, Mrs. A. GALE, Mrs. E.

GALE, Mr. G GEE, Mrs. B. HARRISON, Mrs. C. HOLMAN, Mrs. B. HOLMAN, Mr. P. HUSAIN, Mrs. B. LAMB, Mrs. J. LONG, Mrs. M LOWE, Mr. B LYONS, Mr. D LYONS, Mrs. M. McMANUS, Mrs. S.M. MOLLARD, Mrs. S MOLLARD, Mr. T. MORRIS, Mrs. E. MORRIS, Mr. L. NOBBS, Mr. G NOLAN, Mr. F NOLAN, Mrs. J. PEABODY, Mrs. M PEABODY, Mr. R. PIKE, Mr. K.

PINK, Mr. P. RADFORD, Miss N. SEWELL. Mr. M. SHAW, Mr. A SHAW, Mrs. M. SHERINGHAM, Mrs. J STAGEMAN, Mr. F. STEWARD, Mrs. L. STRONG, Miss M. TURVILLE-PETRE, Mrs.J ULPH, Mr. C. VYSE, Rev. Canon J. WARREN, Mrs. U. WEST, Mr. T. WILSON, Miss C. WINTLE, Mrs. S. WORSENCROFT, Mrs. K. WRIGHT, Mr. J.

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AYLSHAM LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY Account for the year ended 31st. August, 1995

3271	41 226 20 250	2734	38 545 480 335 536 447 - - 36 30 - 275	1994
	Balances. 1st. September 1994:- Bank Treasurer Account 30 Bank Moneymaster Account 638 Petty cash 9 Girobank Publications account 275	TOTAL INCOME	Sale of Newsletters & Postcards Subscriptions Receipts from Visits Party Income UEA Course Fees Celebration Weekend Income Backward Glance Receipts Visitors' Fees Miscellaneous Donations Wright's Map Receipts Profit on sales of Millgate publication Bank Interest	Income
3388	952	2436	36 517 405 371 411 - 480 111 4 150 32	1995
3271	30 638 9 275	2319	155 273 475 264 478 458 458 	1994
	Balances. 31st. August 1995:- Bank Treasurer Account Bank Moneymaster Account Petty Cash Girobank Publications account 10 184	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	Officers' expenses reimbursed Newsletter Printing & Photocopying Payments for Visits Party Costs UEA Course Costs Celebration Weekend Costs Backward Glance Costs Friendship Club Rent Postcard Publication Costs Friendship Club Rent Postcard Publication Costs Wright's Map Old Peoples Welfare Assoc. Donations Lecture Fees Research Organisations Subscriptions	Expenditure
3388	606	2782	1117 308 392 403 397 703 397 - 200 30 1122 20	1995

Checked with records and found to be correct. 5th.October 1995. Graeme Johnston, Accountant; Treasurer, Mrs. B.M.A. Gee.