

# AYLSHAM LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY



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The **JOURNAL & NEWSLETTER** is the Quarterly publication of the Aylsham Local History Society. It is published each March, June, September and December, and is issued free to members. Contributions are welcomed from members and others. Contact:-

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COVER PICTURE One of the eight panels from the base of St. Michael's church font





AYLSHAM LOCAL HISTORY  
SOCIETY

## JOURNAL & NEWSLETTER

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Vol. 5

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### EDITORIAL

For me, this is a particularly sad issue of the *Journal*, and one that I would have dearly wished not to have to produce. All of the society's affairs are overshadowed by the death of our Chairman, Jane Nolan, who died on Tuesday, 8th. July after a long illness.

The extent to which the society will miss Jane has probably not yet been realised. She guided the society's affairs, unerringly, over many years, and for her successor she will be a difficult act to follow.

Our society is not alone in its loss. The wide range of other interests that Jane shared was evident in the large group of relations, friends and colleagues who attended her funeral at St. Faiths on 16th. July.

I would want to pay a tribute to Jane in this issue of the *Journal*, and I can think of no better way than to repeat the tribute that was paid to her at St. Faiths by Anne Lewis. It says what I would want to say, but says it so much better. I am grateful to Anne Lewis for permission to reproduce it here.

*Tom Mollard*



## JANE NOLAN

Jane was born in 1925 in Broughty Ferry near Dundee. She and her younger brother, Neil, had a steady and secure family life with their parents, attending the Presbyterian kirk across the road from their house, where Moffatt, who translated the Bible, had been minister. Neil and Bill (as Jane was always known) spent happy summers in Glen Shee, fishing with their father, finding wild flowers, gathering sticks to make fires, having picnics, and absorbing the magic of a beautiful wild place.

Jane was a successful pupil at Dundee High School, and was *Dux* in her year - that is - the academic leader of the school. She was already a conscientious, deeply thinking girl, interested in religious matters and an avid reader. From school, Jane went on to gain her Honours degree in English and History at St. Andrew's university at Dundee, where she encountered psychology which was eventually to become her profession.

After teaching in Perth for one year, Jane took up the post of Educational psychologist in Norwich in 1950. Christian Barclay was in that office when Jane walked into it, and Christian remembers immediately recognising her as a kindred spirit. And so it was to be - not only for Christian, but for many people with whom Jane came into contact. She was kind, she was thoughtful for others, she could not bear to see anyone unhappy, she was imaginative in her thoughtfulness, clear-sighted and good at dealing with people of all kinds, good at chairing meetings and good at handling her staff. She was never criticised.

At this time, Jane became an active member of Princes St Congregational church, now the United Reformed Church, part of a lively group of young people, keen on working with children, and living a full life. . . . to the extent that Jane's mother used to say that she did too much. Here was Jane's high sense of service to others continuing to develop.

The next part of Jane's life was to be in Newcastle, where she met and married Frank, and it was here that they both joined Friends. It is a tribute to them both that they were quickly recognised as having a great deal to offer, and were absorbed into the Meeting within six to nine months. Any Meeting would have been foolish not to have welcomed



them both with open arms. And so it was in Norwich when they arrived in 1980. Although Jane moved several times in her life, it is quite clear that she retained and sustained deep friendships. This gift was her own, but must be partly attributed to her early family. Her delight in, and affection for her brother and his wife, May, and their twin boys, John and Arthur, and all their achievements was evident even to those of us who knew Jane more recently.

The Quaker meetings in Norwich and Aylsham, The Aylsham Local History Society which Jane founded, the local UEA literature class have benefited richly from Jane's quiet presence, her delicious sense of humour, her competence, her unassuming ways and her willingness to put her head above the parapet (to use a non-Quakerly simile) when necessary. Frank says that he often used to say to Jane, "Oh, don't make an issue of this," but then they would have a joke about the Tuke's motto from the Quaker Retreat Hospital in York - *"What is right must be done"* - and she would do it!

We thank God for this lovely woman.

*Ann Lewis*

## VICTORIANS ON THE BROADS

**Jonathan Mardle**

In our previous issue (Vol.5 No.2) we printed the article by Jonathan Mardle on Dr. Wynne, and referred to a second article on the same subject which Jonathan Mardle wrote two weeks later. Again, by kind permission of the editor of the EDP we are able to publish the follow-up article. This appeared in the EDP for 14th. April 1965.

"It never rains but it pours. A fortnight ago I wrote about the 24 volumes of the yachting journals of a doctor named William Arnold Smith Wynne, who lived at St. Olaves Priory, beside the Waveney, and kept a log of every cruise he made on the Broads, from 1876 until 1920,



when he died at the ripe old age of 86. It was a chronicle of a Golden Age on the Broads, when the hiring trade (and motor cruisers) were in their infancy, and private yachtsmen and trading wherries had these waters almost to themselves.

As soon as the article appeared, I had a call from a Mr. A.M.Blake of Bramerton Hall, who said,

"I knew old Dr. Wynne. What a character! My father was one of his St. Olave's squadron, that used to sail in company, and had their own cruising flag. Another of them was Colonel Leathes who had a dread of lightning, so that he had a lightning conductor on the mast, connected to a chain that was dropped overboard in thundery weather. My father was woken up one sultry night by a noise on Colonel Leathe's boat which was moored next to him. Then he heard the colonel shouting to his man, 'John, John' It's thundering. Get out and drop the chain overboard. You've left it coiled up on the deck, right over my head!"

With that Mr. Blake lent me another yachting journal - his father's - in a great, fat, leather covered volume with 464 pages covered with notes, in a beautiful hand, of Broadland voyages from 1894 to 1920. I begin to suspect that all Victorian yachtsmen must have kept journals as a necessary accompaniment to the sailing. The mind of a modern man, in what is quaintly supposed to be the age of leisure, boggles at their industry.

The late Mr. Aubrey Blake seems from his journal to have been less of an eccentric than Dr. Wynne, and yet more of a poet. He would often excuse a wet day on the Broads for the sake of the grandeur of a stormy sunset, which he would describe in terms worthy of his friend, Sir Arnesby Brown, the painter who was famous for his skies. However, Aubrey Blake was also a thoroughly practical yachtsman, having been brought up at Bramerton, on the Yare. The strong winds and swift tides of the wide open reaches below Cantley were familiar to him, so were the channels through the mudflats of Breydon, and the awkward passage through Yarmouth to the North River - the Bure.



The thing that most impresses me about his journal is the delightful simplicity of his holidays on the Broads. The Journal begins with a cruise he undertook to Horsey in August 1894 with his young wife, Alice - camping out under a canvas cover in a half-decker, the *Spray*.

He was a solicitor, practising in Norwich, and living in a pleasant old house in the Chantry - which has lately been demolished to make a new car park for the staff of the City Hall, but his yacht moorings were still at the old family home at Bramerton. He kept a dinghy at Pull's Ferry and rowed down to Bramerton with his wife and the provisions for the voyage.

They sailed leisurely down the Yare on a fine Saturday in August, seeing nothing on the way but haymakers. They spent two days on the trip across Breydon, and up the Bure and Thurne, to Horsey, where they camped in their half-decker for a week, reading, sketching, talking to gamekeepers and marshmen and walking over the marshes to the empty beach where they bathed and picnicked among the sand dunes. They enjoyed the food of the country. They would buy a fry of herrings from a 'longshoreman', or a stew of eels from an eel-catcher in his old tarred houseboat in Heigham Sounds.

Nothing, except one wherry on its way up to the mill staithe disturbed them at their moorings in Horsey Dyke. Then they sailed back - through squalls and rain, which they seem to have taken as a pleasurable adventure - to Bramerton. From Bramerton they rowed in the dinghy to Pull's Ferry, where Aubrey unloaded their kit on to the riverside, while Alice fetched a cab from Thorpe station - and so home to the Chantry.

In 1896 they progressed to a small cabin cruiser called *Spartan*, - one of the old kind with a rakish bowsprit and a long counter stern. Since she was only 23½ feet long, yet carried 600 square feet of sail, she must have been a sporting craft to handle. Later on, when there were a nurse and a baby to accommodate, Aubrey Blake bought for £23 the Caister lifeboat, which had capsized in the disaster of November 1901, when nine of her brave crew were drowned. He re-named her the *Triton*, and had her converted at Brundall into a roomy Broads cruiser, rigged with a wherry's sail.



Mr. A.M. Blake has shown me pictures in old albums of his mother and Dr. Wynne's daughters, with straw hats, leg-of-mutton sleeves, tight waists, and long skirts. They look pretty but unpractical, the very picture of "the ladies", who are mentioned in most of these Victorian and Edwardian journals as reclining gracefully in the stern-sheets, while the seamen-like gentlemen do the work of navigation. But, either the journals are deceptive, or Alice Blake was an exception. Not only did she camp out with her young husband in the half-decked *Spray*, and crewed the heavily canvassed *Spartan*, but it was she who kept her head at the helm of the *Triton* one day when, with a fickle wind and a dangerous tide, the old lifeboat was in danger of a second wreck on the piles of Breydon Bridge.

*Triton* was still sailing, but *Spray* had been converted into a motor boat, when the journal ended, rather sadly, in May 1920.

*"Rather tired and out of conceit with boats and boating. However this may pass."*

Maybe Aubrey Blake and his friend, Dr. Wynne, in the previous forty years, had had the best of it.

—oOoo—

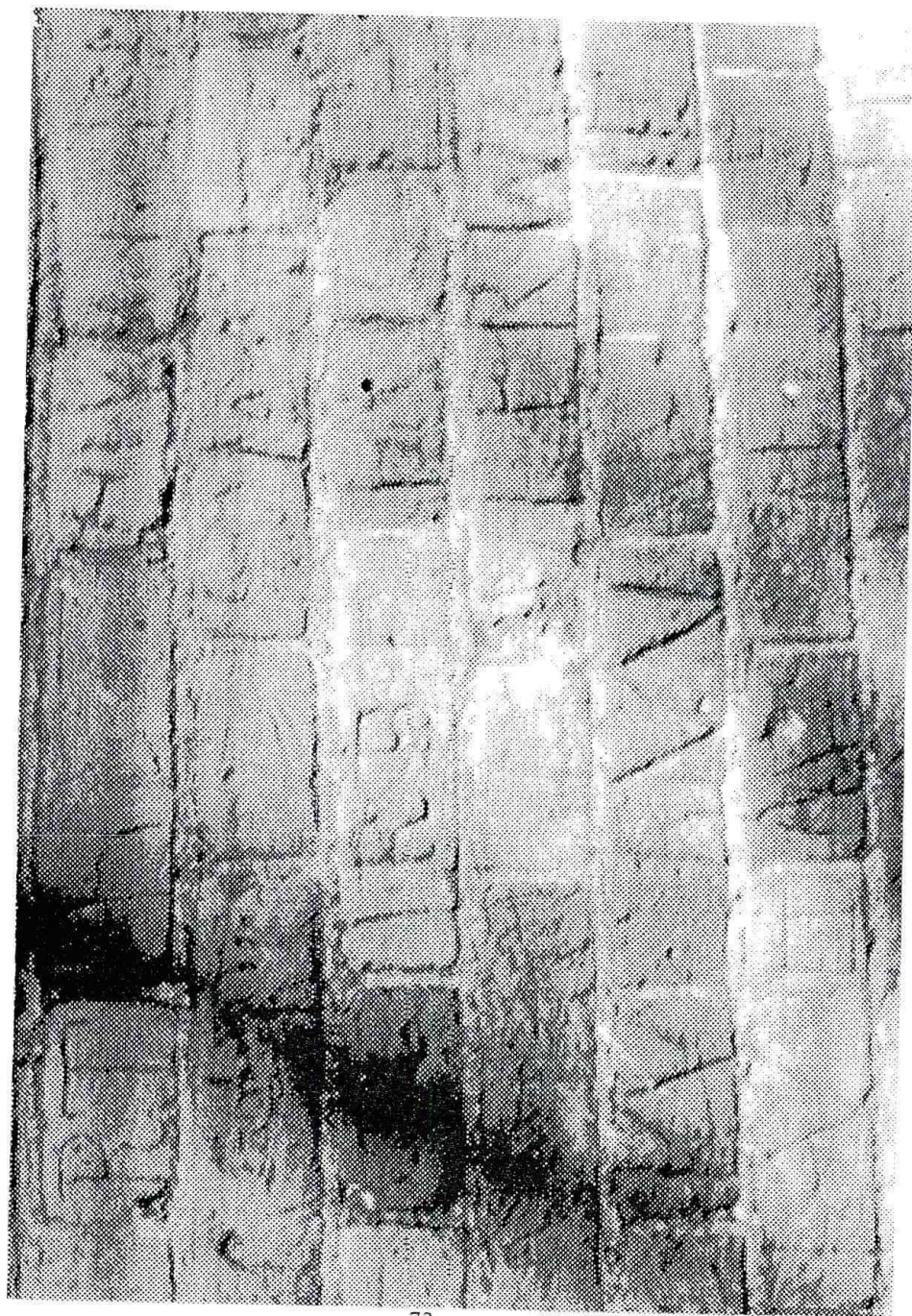
## YESTERDAY'S GRAFFITI

Alan Quinn

I have walked up and down Burgh Road literally thousands of times, but it was not until a few years ago that I noticed that the wall on the Burgh Road side of *'Pryde House'* that forms the corner with Oakfield Road, is covered in carved initials and names between about 18" from pavement level to a height of six feet.

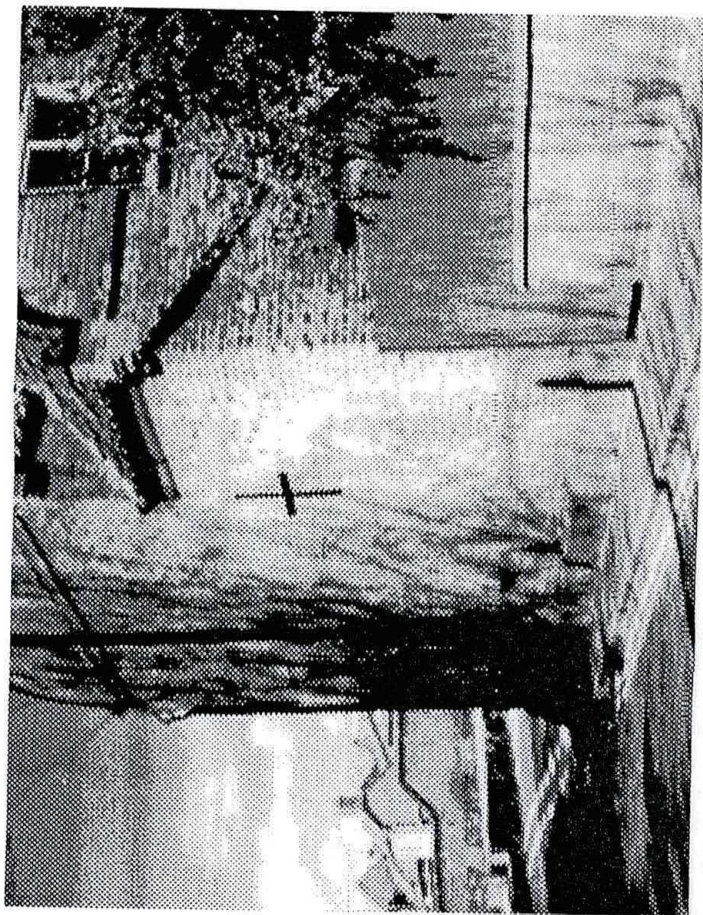
I have puzzled over why this particular wall should have attracted so much attention. No doubt someone will say it is obvious, and fancy not thinking of it, but nobody I have spoken to has come up with anything more likely than my original thought that it was a spot where a group of people must have collected regularly to wait for something. Was it a point from where some local transport took people to Burgh and beyond? Was it where a group of farm or other labourers collected before being taken off





*Part of the graffiti-covered wall of Pryde House*





*The gable end of  
Pryde House on the  
Burgh Road/Oakfield Road  
corner*



to their work? It seems to me to be an area ripe for research!

The most prominent name is that of J. Sands 1860. The editor tells me that a Sands family had a butcher's shop where White's now stands.

He also drew my attention to another wall in the town that is covered in carved names and initials. This is on the north side of Collegiate House (the Ex-service Men and Women's Social Club) on Hungate Street. This has more full names on it, e.g. *R.L. Tooley, J. Thrift 1856*, and *Brookes* with what looks like an intriguing date - 9/24/59 (?). There is one number, 174, that could be an incomplete date from the eighteenth century. Is this the oldest graffiti in town? This wall would be an even richer field for research.

The building was once a school, and it may well be that this was a gathering point for schoolboys before school started. One can imagine them huddled together on cold mornings, but perhaps being more mischievous at warmer times!

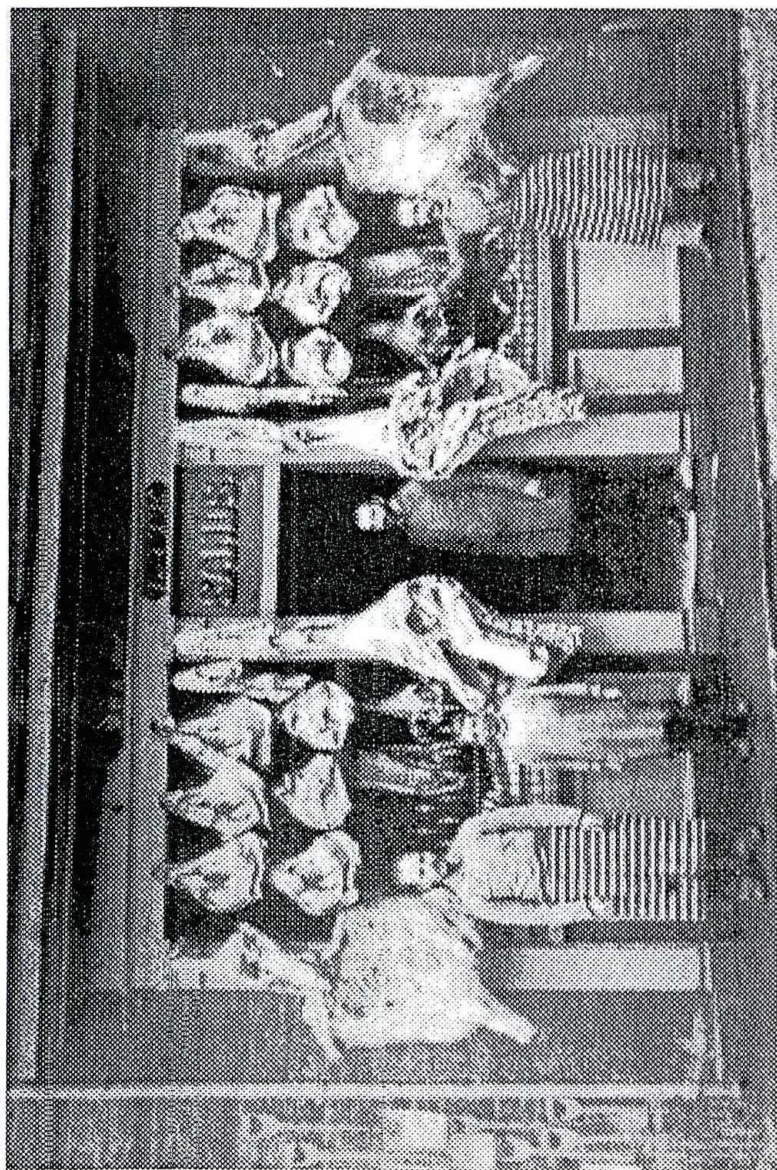
If anyone has any further ideas, or some useful information on these sites I would be pleased to hear from them.

One day's graffiti is another day's historical research!!.



"J. Sands 1860" - Sands, the butchers,  
had their shop close by





Sands butcher's shop - now Whites, in Red Lion Street. The sign over the shop reads "Blotfields, late Sands". The photograph is from the town archives, and was taken by W. Bond, photographer of Norwich and Aylsham. c. 1885



## SOCIETY NEWS

Ever since we started life as a Society, back in 1985, our status has been that of a small local, enthusiastic, historical society, catering for the needs and interests of the immediate locality. Our membership has rarely extended far beyond the area of the town and the nearer surrounding villages. The few members we have had who came from further afield were usually former sons and daughters of Aylsham, who had moved away but still wished to retain a link with the old home.

Others, who were complete strangers to Aylsham, were members usually researching their family history and had discovered that their forebears had previously lived in Aylsham, so joining the local historical society was a natural step to take. Whatever the reasons for joining, all members are valuable to the Society. So what's new?

Well now, everything has changed. We have suddenly moved into the big time. We now have an international status! We have recently accepted our first member from across the Atlantic - Mrs. Carol Sybrowsky, from California, has just joined us and we welcome her as our first American member.

Mrs Sybrowsky has connections with Aylsham. Her ancestors were Lovicks (or Livocks) from this area. She would obviously be grateful if any of our members could add to her knowledge of her family. Our reputation is travelling further afield than we realised. I hope you will enjoy your membership, Mrs Sybrowsky. I just hope no one proposes you as a committee member or officer of the society. You would have a hard job getting down to Pegg's Yard for the committee meetings.

**Aylsham Carnival Weekend** - The society took a stall on Aylsham Market Place on Saturday 28th June, and our Vice-Chairman, Peter Holman, volunteered to set up the stall to advertise the society, largely with a quiz involving the public. Throughout the day it looked as if the rain would wash out the whole event, but at the critical time, the sun appeared, and Peter with the help of Geoff Gale had a successful evening.



**Aylsham in 1821** - Back in 1989, following a Study Course on Aylsham's Archives led by Mrs Elizabeth Rutledge, a small booklet was published which was a transcript of the notebook used by Mr. William Morris, Assistant Overseer of the Workhouse, who was also the enumerator for the 1821 census in Aylsham. This 1989 publication was not very elegant. It was produced as a typewriter script, was never publicised properly, and I am always surprised that the few copies produced have actually all been sold.

For those who missed the opportunity to obtain a copy then, there is now a new edition available from the editor at £3 per copy. This is much more elegantly produced than the original, although in fairness, the text is largely the same as in the 1989 edition.

**Aylsham Buildings Visit** - I had hoped to include an account of the society's recent visit to certain Aylsham buildings of note. I am afraid there will not be a report in this issue, but I am still confident that we can include a good report in the December issue.

**Annual General Meeting** - takes place on October 9th. starting at 7pm in the Friendship Club. The business part of the meeting will be followed by a talk by Joan Turville-Petre on the history of Norfolk surnames. Can I remind members that subscriptions for 1998 will become due following that meeting. Subscriptions will probably be the same as the current year, and Sheila Mollard and Betty Gee will be delighted to receive renewals at the AGM and Programme Cards for next year can be distributed soon after. If you are unable to attend the AGM, subscriptions can be sent to Sheila Mollard at Flint Cottage, Calthorpe Road, Erpingham. NR11 7QL. All the meetings arranged for next year will be in the programme card, but here is advance notice of them:-

## DIARY DATES

1997

### Tuesday 23rd. September

Extra Mural Studies Course. Starts at the Meeting House, Pegg's Yard, Aylsham. The subject is *East Anglian Countryside since 1700*.



Tutor. Dr. Richard Joby. Commencing at 2pm. alternate Tuesdays.  
Further details, if needed, from Peter Holman.

**Thursday, October 9th.** at 7pm. Annual general meeting, followed  
by a talk on the history of Norfolk surnames, by Mrs Joan  
Turville-Petre. Friendship Club

**Thursday, October 30th.** at 7.30pm at the Friendship Club. "*Norfolk  
in the Age of Stonehenge*" by Mr. T. Ashwin

**Thursday, November 27th.** 7.30 pm at the Friendship Club. "*The  
Glaven Ports*" by Mr. J.J.Hooton.

1998

**Friday, January 30th.** WINTER PARTY. 7 for 7.30pm

**Thursday, February 19th.** at 7.30pm at the Friendship Club. "*The  
Drovers*" by Miss Janet Smith.

**Thursday, March 26th.** at 7.30pm at the Friendship Club. "*Banville's  
Norfolk*" by Mrs Susan Yaxley.

**Thursday, April 23rd.** at 7.30pm at the Friendship Club.  
MEMBERS' EVENING

## NOTES & QUERIES

The feature in our last issue, on the 'Cellar Book' left us with  
a query as to what was "*Sweetmountain*" wine. It was the only one listed  
in the cellar book which I hadn't identified

Peter Pink has written with a highly likely explanation.  
According to the *Shorter Oxford Dictionary*, [3rd. ed 1964]

"Sweet" can mean a "syrup added to wine or other liquor to sweeten the  
taste; applied spec. to British wines and cordials" (1679)



Mountain (or more correctly 'mountain wine') is, or was, "a variety of Malaga wine, made from grapes grown on the mountains" (1710)

Putting both these definitions together gives us a ready definition of 'Sweetmountain' wine. Thank you, Peter.

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In this issue we have a bumper crop of enquiries into family history. There are three in total, and as usual anyone who can answer the inquirer, or add to their knowledge, is invited to contact the inquirer direct:-

1. Mrs Christine Todd, Greenacre, Welborne Road, Dereham, NR20 3LH is seeking information about the Burrell and Cory families in Aylsham during the 18th. and 19th. centuries
2. Mrs Carole Peck, 65 Buckwell Drive, Hassall Grove, New South Wales 2761, Australia seeks information about the Chamberlain family who lived in Aylsham in the 19th. Century
3. Mrs Lynne Clark, 29 Glebe Road, Forest Hill, Newcastle upon Tyne. NE12 0NA is interested in the Platten family, said to have lived in Hungate Street in the 19th. Century

---ooOoo---

## AN ORDINANCE OF 1643

Tom Mollard

During the progress of the English Civil War, various levies were imposed on the civil population to raise money to finance the Parliamentary cause. In some cases payments were willingly made to support what many citizens regarded as a just cause. In other cases payments were not so willingly made. Even in East Anglia which gave massive support to Cromwell, there was still a significant body of



AN  
ORDINANCE

OF

The LORDS and COMMONS

ASSEMBLED IN

PARLIAMENT,

For the speedy raising and leavying  
of Money thorowout the whole Kingdom  
of *England* and Dominion of *Wales*, for the  
relief of the COMMON-WEALTH,

By taxing such as have not at all Contributed or  
Lent, or not according to their ESTATES  
and ABILITIES.

Ordered by the Lords and Commons, That this Ordinance  
be forthwith Printed and Published.

*John Brown. Cleric. Parl.*  
*His Elſynge Cler. Parl. D. Com.*

LONDON,

Printed for *Edward Husband*, and are to be sold at  
his Shop in the Middle Temple. *May II.*

MDCXLIIL.



support for the King and a reluctance to finance those who could be regarded as his enemies. It was sometimes necessary to lean a little heavily on the reluctant payers.

In May 1643 the following appeared *"An Ordinance of the Lords and Commons. . . for the speedy raising and levying of money. . . for the relief of the Commonwealth. . ."* There was no disguising who was being targeted. It was specifically directed against - *"such as have not at all contributed, or lent, or not according to their estates or abilities."*

Committees were set up in every county to oversee the collection of the levy. The Norfolk overseers were:- Sir Thomas Woodhouse, Sir John Holland, Sir John Potts, Sir Miles and Sir John Hubert, Sir Thomas Huggen, John Cook, John Spelman, Philip Bedingfeld and Samuel Smith. A separate committee was set up for the City of Norwich.

The preamble to the ordinance makes its intentions quite clear, *"[those] within the kingdom. . . that have not contributed, or lent at all, towards the maintenance of the Army. . . who notwithstanding, do receive benefit and protection by the said Army raised by Parliament . . . should be charged to contribute or lend to the maintenance thereof"*. A surprisingly short time was allowed for the carrying out of the order. It was published on 11th. May and the proceeds were expected to be paid in by the Collectors at the Guildhall in London by 24th. June.

A copy of the Ordinance has been lent to me by David Walker and with it a receipt for the payment made by one of the citizens obliged to pay. It is a receipt given to Mrs. Mary Doughty of Hanworth, Widow, for  $\frac{3}{4}$  ounces of silver plate, Troy weight. . . @ 5s 4d per ounce, to the sum of Five pounds, five shillings and four pence. [£5-5-4]. The receipt is signed by Timothy Skottowe, who was, according to Ketton-Cremer, a leading goldsmith of the City of Norwich who was appointed to try and weigh and value all plate collected. It is of interest to note that the receipt is dated 24th. June 1643 which was the last date for the proceeds to be paid in at the London Guildhall. Did she hang on until the last minute before she parted reluctantly with her contribution? I am unsure which Mary Doughty this was. Could it have been Mary, the daughter of Robert Doughty? If it was, one would have expected the contribution



Norfolk the 24<sup>th</sup> of June 1643

Received the day and yeare above written, by me whose name is subscribed (being Treasurer ordained by an Ordinance of both Houses of this present Parliament, to receive all such Monies and Plate as shall be brought in, according to certaine Propositions printed and published together with the said Ordinance) of M<sup>rs</sup> Mary Doughty 20s

£ 0 5 0

05-03-04

— Ounces  $\frac{3}{4}$  of Silver Plate Troy-weight, amounting in value with the Fashion, at 5<sup>s</sup> 4<sup>d</sup> per Ounce, to the Summe of five pounds five shillings, four pence — which is to be employed according to the said Propositions, I say received

for me Timothy Cotton

Receipt given to Mary Doughty of Hanworth



to have been made willingly, as Robert was himself involved officially in the collection of subsidies to parliament.

In those confused times it is difficult for us to know what the individual reactions of people were to officialdom. At the same period that this Ordinance was being enforced there was trouble in Aylsham. In Ketton-Cremer's *"Norfolk in the Civil War"* we read:-

Another disturbance during this Spring [i.e. 1643] took place in Aylsham and the neighbouring villages. We have no contemporary account of what happened, but there seems to have been a demonstration in April against the payments levied by the County Committee for the prosecution of the war. A detachment of trained bands was sent, presumably from Norwich, and some sort of opposition was attempted, although there is no evidence of any bloodshed or serious fighting. We only know of the affair because the estates of several local people, minor gentry and prosperous yeomen were sequestered. . .

Thomas Leman, an Aylsham attorney, was regarded as the ringleader and spent some time in prison. . . Richard Curtis of Aylsham and Richard Allin of Tuttington admitted their delinquency *"in opposing the trained band sent to Aylsham to appease a tumult about rates."* At least one clergyman, Richard Plummer of Alby and Sustead, also took a hand in the affair. In the following year, among many other misdemeanours he was accused of *"assisting by word or act the rising at Aylsham."*

Nothing much changes in this life. Those who, like me, thought that 'protection money' was a racket dreamt up by Al Capone and his Chicago gangsters now know that it has a much longer history. What's more - I am now off to pay the next instalment of my Council tax before the trained bands get here.

---ooOoo---



## MASON'S HISTORY OF NORFOLK

Tom Mollard

Anyone interested in the history of Aylsham has some excellent printed sources to turn to for basic information. Pride of place would go to Dr. Sapwell's book which is specifically on Aylsham and was published in 1960, but a wealth of information about the town exists in general histories of the county. Blomefield's *Essay towards a topographical history of the County of Norfolk* (2nd. ed. 11 vols. 1805/10) is the best example. The whole section of Blomefield dealing with Aylsham was reproduced in the first volume of our *Journal*. [Vol. 1 Part 8, August 1987. pp179-199]

Also of importance is the 19 volume set of *Norfolk Churches*, by T.H. Bryant, published between 1890-1906. This is largely based on Blomefield but is brought slightly more up to date.

Many other county guides have a decent section on Aylsham and we must not forget our own society's contributions to Aylsham's history in the volumes of our *Journal*, and in the few monographs we have produced since the society was founded.

One other history of the county is the *History of Norfolk*, by Robert Hindry Mason which appeared between 1882-84 in four parts. This is a monumental work, in size as well as in content. It contains 658 pages of history and 78 pages of appendices. The first part was issued in 1882 by the London publishers, Wertheimer, Lea and Co. at 1½ guineas. The second and third parts appeared, at the same price, in 1883, and the fourth part, with an appendix, appeared in 1884 at £2-7-0.

Fourteen years later, the *Norfolk Chronicle* announced that Messrs Jarrold and Sons of Norwich, had discovered a small number of copies of the original edition "*in an unsuspected quarter*" and were offering them for sale at the absurd price of 16s. The volumes had long been considered to be out of print. The 1898 notice is accompanied by an excellent review of the work. The review stresses that the volumes are largely under-appreciated, and not many people are aware of the wealth of information contained therein. The review continues:-



"Norfolk ought to receive this history with gratitude, and it will be a disgrace if the enterprise of the publishers is not duly recompensed, but we feel that this issue would have an enhanced value if a page were given to some biographical particulars of the author, who worked so hard, and whose careful and laborious researches are just mentioned in the current advertisements announcing the book. Mr Mason lived some time in Norwich, and it would at least have been generous, while lauding his work so highly, to introduce readers to the historian who died at his post." "... Norfolk & Norwich, while knowing little of Mr. Mason's valuable history, know next to nothing of Mr. Mason himself."

What do we know of him now? Still very little. McKies *Norfolk Annals* tell us:-

**7th. October 1885**      *Died at his chambers, Great Ormond Street, London, Mr. Robert Hindry Mason, aged 61 years. Mr. Mason had led a busy life as a journalist. He established, edited and conducted, from 1852-54, the "Greenwich & West Kent Observer". He owned the "Sunderland Times" and "Sheffield Advertiser" and subsequently became the proprietor of the "London and Eton Gazette". Some years previously, when a resident in Norwich, he published a work entitled, "Norfolk Photographically illustrated" and at the time of his death was engaged upon his best known work - the "History of Norfolk"*

By now you may be wondering whether or not I am straying from the point. I did start off writing about the sources of Aylsham's history, and here I am extolling the virtues of a volume devoted to the history of the county as a whole. But, there is a point to all this.

Having completed his four-part history of the whole county, Mason then moved on to Part V which was to be the start of the next part of the work, which would have been another seven parts devoted to the history of the towns and parishes, in alphabetical order, until he had covered the whole county. Fortunately for us, living in Aylsham, he had just completed the first section [**Acle to Barford**] in September 1885. By the 7th. October he was dead.

The remaining parts never appeared. This first part naturally



covers Aylsham, and I propose to reproduce the whole of the Aylsham section, in instalments, in the *Journal*, starting with this issue.

So now we can count our blessings. Aren't you glad that we live in Aylsham and not in some alphabetically-deprived town like Watton or Wymondham, whose history was never covered by Mr. Mason? What a tragedy that he never lived long enough to complete the whole design.

It still raises, and leaves unanswered, one important question. If Robert Mason had completed and already published [**Acle to Barford**] then it is highly likely that he was well on his way with further parts of his history. He must have had at least the next part ready for the press, and must surely have completed his supplement of biographies of Norfolk notables that he refers to. If so, what happened to all his notes and manuscripts and where are they now?

*I am greatly indebted to Clive Wilkins-Jones, Local Studies Librarian of Norfolk County Library, for the information about Robert Hindry Mason*

## AYLSHAM

This town is pleasantly situated on the southern acclivity of the Bure Valley. The Great Eastern Railway Company, on New Years Day 1880, extended its line of communication to the town, and onwards to North Elmham, where it joins the Norwich, Wells and Fakenham line. By the Eastern & Midland line, whose station is at Millgate, there is direct communication with Yarmouth, Lynn and Holt. On the Cromer road it is distant about eleven miles north-by-west of Norwich, whilst the town of North Walsham is seven

**The History of Norfolk,**  
from original records and  
other authorities preserved in Public  
and private  
collections,  
by

R. H. MASON. F.R.Hist.S

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Part V - **ACLE to BARFORD**

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Notabilities



miles east-north-east. In 1881 it had 572 inhabited houses, with 581 families. Early in the eighteenth century there were but 100 families in the town.

Ralph, Earl of Norfolk, held here at the time of the Survey, when the town was called Elesham and he had a goodly heritage, if, as seems probable, he succeeded to all that Guert, a Dane, had in the days of Edward the Confessor, when the manor reached into the village of Tuttington. Its domain extended to 18 carucates, and the woods were found to contain 400 swine. There were 20 villeins and 88 bordarii that paid provision for the Lord; with 60 socmen that ploughed his lands. With its berewicks the manor was then valued at £12 a year, and was 2 miles in length and breadth, and paid 20d. geld. When Ralph was deprived for his disloyal rebellion, the Conqueror added it to his own possessions, and Godric, his Steward, had the management. The Survey found its value increased to £29 a year, besides an annual fine of 20s. The portion of the manor that extended into Tuttington was disconnected, and William, Earl Warren, had that portion. For more than a hundred years the Crown was Lord, but Richard I divided it, and made grants of portions, which became separate manors. When Henry II became king, he assigned the profits to his brother William. King John leased it during all his reign to Eustace de Nevile, and Henry III in 1266, gave it to Hubert de Burgh, Earl of Kent, probably for life, for in the time of Edward I it was again in the king's hands, and Richard Cailly was his bailiff - one of the tenants being John Holmgey, who, for his occupation of Holme-croft, paid a rent of 4s.11d. and served the office of reeve of the King's mill and market.

In 1274, Edward settled Aylsham with other manors and the Hundreds of North and South Erpingham on his wife, Queen Isabella, with whom they remained during her life, returning afterwards to the Crown. On the 25th. June 1372, Edward III executed a deed of exchange of the manors of Aylsham, Wighton, Fakenham and Snettisham, and the Hundreds of North Greenhoe, North and South Erpingham, and Smithdon, to his fourth son, John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, who gave to his father in exchange, the revenues of the Earldom of Richmond.<sup>1</sup> John of Gaunt, by charter, granted to the



inhabitants of Aylsham, exemption from many burthens, the only one of which continued to recent times was that of serving on juries. When the king died in 1399 it passed to Henry Plantagenet, who, as King Henry IV, united the Duchy of Lancaster with the Crown, as it continues to this day, but maintained as a separate estate from the possessions of the Crown.<sup>2</sup>

The manor, however, was granted from time to time, to different persons for considerations duly stated, amongst others to Sir Thomas Erpingham in 1414. In 1460 it was put in trust to fulfil the will of Henry VI; in 1474, Edward IV settled it on Queen Elizabeth Woodville.

At an inquisition held at North Walsham on 11th. May 1609, specially to inquire into the possessions of the Duchy of Lancaster, before Sir Anthony Browne, John Kempe, John Trench and a Jury of the Hundred of South Erpingham, it was found that the King (James I) in right of his Duchy of Lancaster, was seised of the Hundred of South Erpingham and of the manor of Aylsham. In 1619, James I granted Aylsham manor to Charles Prince of Wales, and on Charles becoming king he granted, in consideration of a sum of £120,000 to one Ditchfield and others, representatives of the Corporation of London, a great many manors in various counties, by way of mortgage, and among others was this of Aylsham.

From this grant the mill was specially exempted. There is a letter of the king, dated 29th. December 1632, in which His majesty represents to Nicholas Rainton, Lord Mayor, and the Commonality and Citizens, that they must not make "an assurance" of the manor of Aylsham to Thomas Leman, John Sane, and Robert Pratt, or any other, for the use of the copyholders thereof, but to Sir John Hobart, the then tenant, as he was willing to give a better price than any other offer. His Majesty explained that he *"disliked the dismemberment of copyhold manors as of ill-consequence to government"*.<sup>3</sup> In the 15th. Charles II, the manor and mill<sup>4</sup> was granted to Edward, Earl of Sandwich, who, as Edward Montague, had brought Charles to England at the Restoration, for which service he was created an Earl. The terms of the grant were as follows:-



"In consideration of the good, true and acceptable services rendered to us by our beloved and faithful kinsman and counsellor, Edward, Earl of Sandwich, and for the better support of his family and dignity and also for divers other good causes and considerations moving us at the present time, of our special grace and certain knowledge and mere motion, we have given and granted, for us and our heirs and successors, to the said Earl and his heirs male, to their sole and proper use forever"<sup>5</sup>

The manor was held in recent times by Caroline, Lady Suffield who was second daughter of the Earl of Bucks. and next by the late Marquis of Lothian, whose widow, Constance, Dowager Marchioness, is at present lady of the manor.

Formerly, a Duchy Court was held at Aylsham, and in illustration of its records I may quote a few entries from the Court Rolls [Bundle 102 No. 1391 and Bundle 103 No. 1424]. In the time of Charles I (1633) it was proved that successive Stewards had kept the Court Rolls in an iron chest in the vestry of the church.

At the Court held before Lord Bardolf, steward, on 10th. March 1440, John Pratte of Blickling was found to have unjustly bound his cows on the common of Aylsham at Sharpes Green and Brabanys Lane, where he ought not. Put himself at the mercy of the court. Fined 2s.

Thomas Smyth of Blickling, John Glynne and John Letyse of same place, unjustly communicated and dug wells at Apytheythe [Abel Heath] in Aylsham. Fined 3s.

The chief or capital pledges of Marsham unjustly made "Porralin" (?) in the liberty and lordship of Aylsham, to wit, to the stonbrygge of Marsham, to wit, on the north part of the same to the sheep-cote called Bolwyk shepcote, where he ought not. Writ of prosecution.

Nicholas Burgeys, of Aylsham, was rebellious against the constables of the town while they were doing their office there, and said that if they arrested him he would hit them on the head with the cudgel that he had in his hand. Fined 2s. The same Nicholas has often come into the field of Aylsham, and shot many hares in the liberty where he ought not. Fined 20d.



Nicholas Manne of Saxtead, Clerk, keeps the Grammar school there, within four leagues, and they say that no other person ought to keep another such school there around the township of Aylsham within seven leagues of the Grammar school made there, and say that the Grammar school in Aylsham now exists to the prejudice of the King. That Thomas Alyard of Swafield made a similar one at Swafield. To be considered.

Nicholas Dorman, 'corrector of the Bishop of Norwich' <sup>6</sup> about the feast of All Saints made unjust scandal by unjust bill on Juliana, wife of Nicholas Colet, Ralph Herman, Nicholas Burgeys, Agnet Kernyle and many others of the town of Aylsham, in Court Christian, without any verdict of the jury of the town, or of any other there, against custom and to the great disturbance of the tenants. To be considered.

John Gerard, Under-Sheriff of Norfolk and Edward Bonet, his servant, unjustly usurped upon the liberty of the Duchy, to wit, impanelled divers tenants and residents in the liberty on juries of assize, novel disseisin, and other inquisitions in the grand jury between Chylde and Henry Wale, and in many other juries where he ought not, in manifest prejudice. By writ.

John Elmham, of Scottow, unjustly made Thomas Shadwell, bailiff of Milo Stapyllton, Sheriff of Norfolk, enter the liberty of the king at Scottow and liberate the cattle of Thomas Lincolne unjustly, and afterwards put himself at the mercy of the court. Fined 40d.

At our Court of Leet, held on Friday, St. Michael the Archangel in the 36th. year of Henry VI [1457], Robert Andrews, William Andrews, and John Andrews, present in court, surrendered into the hands of the Lords aforesaid a shop containing 16 feet in length and 8 feet in breadth in Aylsham Market, to the use of John Skipping, Nicholas Collet and Johanna Burges and their heirs. Then comes Beatrice, late wife of Sir Christopher (?) Andrews and remises, releases and surrenders into the hands of the Lord all her rights and claims, which were as of dower, in the shop, to the use of John Skipping, Nicholas Collet, Johanna Burges and their heirs etc.

At our court held there on Monday, the day next after the feast of the Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, 8th. year. Henry VII (1493) it was ordered to the bailiff to seize into the hands of the king, 2 acres and a ½ of land lately belonging to Thomas Skypin. Robert Watts was summoned to answer to Agnes, late wife of Sir Tho. Skypin upon the plea to render to



her her reasonable dower, as is specified in this court. Agnes was summoned and appeared in *propria personâ*, and Robert was summoned and did not appear, but made default. Therefore it is considered by this court that Agnes should recover of Robert her reasonable dower, that is, the mediety of the 2 acres and a ½ of land by his default. Therefore it is ordered to Thomas Tower, bailiff of the manor, that the dower be given to Agnes in the land aforesaid, etc.

At our court of Leet of the Queen, held there on Monday, on the morrow of St. Michael the Archangel, in the 19th. year of Elizabeth (1577) Robert Mark and Amy his wife, who was formerly wife of Richard Baxter, complains against Tho. Okes on the plea of customary land, namely, of the mediety of one acre of land with appurtenances, in Aysham in the jurisdiction of this court, and claim the reasonable dower of this Amy, which comes to her in customary lands from Richard Baxter, formerly her husband, in Aylsham, of which she has nothing. And therefore they complain that Tho. Okes has deforced them, and they make protestations in the nature of a writ of dower of the Queen, as they can get nothing by common law. Thomas Mark and Amy his wife by Tho. Green, their attorney, petition Tho. Okes for the moiety of the one acre of land, with appurtenances, in Aylsham, for the dower of the said Amy, made over to her by her late husband, because the 1 acre of land was parcel of the tenements of customary manors, and forasmuch as women after the deaths of their husbands, ought to be paid half of the tenements, which come from the manors, as has been the case from time immemorial etc. Therefore Tho. Okes was summoned to our court and appeared in *propria personâ*, and prays for a license to impale in a higher court and has a day fixed for him. And a day is given to Robert and Amy his wife.

It was an ordinance of this Manor Court, with the assent of all the tenants, that each tenant should have only one essoin in all plaints at all courts held there, except in plea of land, where every tenant had three essoins. Some of the minor entries are very curious. William Asshewell, a tenant of the manor, was fined 20s for unjustly harassing and imprisoning one William Hobbs, also a tenant, being at Norwich. He was at the same court fined 20s for having unjustly prosecuted John Draper, a tenant of the manor, by writ of *manutenentia*. The William Hobbs, just mentioned was at the same court fined 12s. for unjustly harassing Simon Gyne by writ of the king for terminating things in the



court of the manor, and one of the same name, described as a labourer, was next fined 12d. for that he refused to labour in the township of Aylsham.

The Court was held before the Chief Steward, the Duchy having here no regular manorial officers. William, Lord Bardolf was Chief Steward in the time of Henry VI and John Payne was Under Steward. What the value of the manor was, when Charles I came into possession, we learn from the Ministers' accounts of the 2nd. year of the King, No.48

A SHORT DECLARATION OF THE ACCOUNTS OF JOHN MILLINGTON, ar. Particular Receiver of our Lord Charles, now King, of the revenues of the manor following, viz. for one entire year ending at the feast of St. Michael the Archangel, in the 2nd. year of the King.

Charge:-----	£	s	d
Arrears for that year-----			None
Rents and farm manor for that year-----	43	15	8¼
Allowances and payments:-			
In money by the receipt of Adam Newton, Knt and Bart. Receiver General and Treasurer of the King, of the revenues of the manor aforesaid, delivered 17 Feby. of that year -----	42	19	8¼
Portage, or carrying forward the sum of £42-19-8¼, paid to Adam Newton at the rate of 40s. for every hundred pounds, for the allowance of the Commissioner of the King -----	0	16	0
	43	15	8¼

And there remains nothing because they are equal.

Declared 10th. June 1627

Savage  
Ja. Fullerton

SEXTON MANOR was formed out of the original, which included all Aylsham until the time of Richard I, when we find that King, being at Bury St. Edmunds on the 18th. November in the first year of his reign, executed the following charter:-

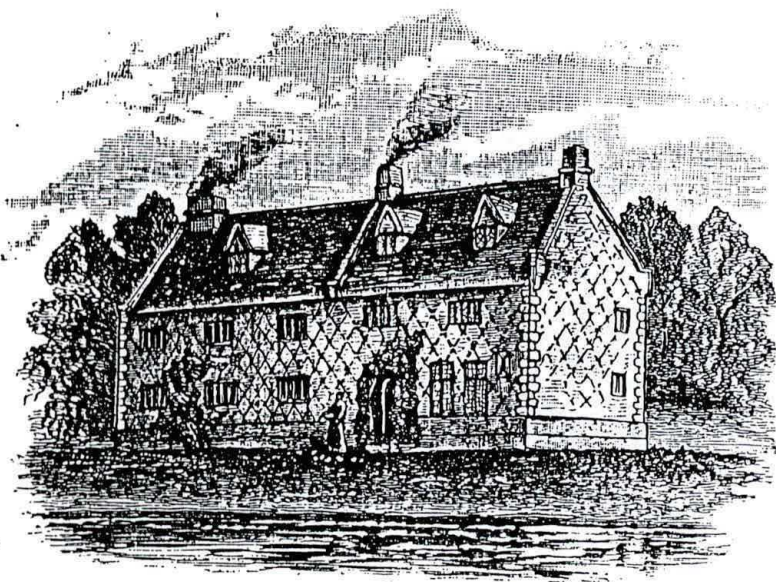


We have granted to the Martyr S. Edmund and the Abbot Sampson and his successors and the monks at S. Edmund, of service, in free, pure and perpetual alms for our health, 10 librates of land in our soka of Aylsham, to wit, land that Wm. Bardulf held there, with all its appurtenances for a 100 solidata of land, and another for a 100 solidata of land in the same soka, these men and these lands, namely John de Hasting with the lands which he held of us in the same soka, and Alexander, and Radû, and Robert, etc. etc. These 10 librates of land we give to the maintenance of good and competent lights before the body of the aforesaid martyr, so that the 10 librates which we take of the aforesaid men and lands shall not be put to any other use than that of the lights. Therefore, we will and firmly ordain that the Abbot and monks shall have and hold the lands with all the appurtenances, peacefully, freely, and quietly, in woods and plains, etc. etc. Witnesses. Roger le Bigot, Wm. de Warren, etc. etc.

This charter was confirmed by King John on March 15th. in the first year of his reign. It appears that a claim of 30s. 3d. was made in the reign of Richard I subsequently, against the Abbot of St. Edmunds for tallage for the above lands. He, on his part, petitioned to be exonerated from this payment, and the exoneration was allowed by grant from Edward III in the 7th. year of his reign. It also appears by a certain inquisition, that after the making of the charter, the Abbot acquired of a certain Agnes Smith, by the "*throwing down of the rod in the Court of the Abbot*" of Aylsham, 14 acres of land, every acre of the yearly value of 4d., 1 acre and 1 rod of meadow, per annum, 3¾d., and 1 acre of foldcourse, which was of no value per annum, in Aylsham, and of Henry of Ingworth, 15 acres of land there, every acre of the value of 4d. per annum, and of Beatrice of Therloe, 2 acres of meadow, of the yearly value of 6d.

The endowment was afterwards appropriated to the Sacristan, and so the estate came to be called, Sexton's Manor. The moated manor house, it seems, was for a time called Abbot's Hall. That ancient fabric disappeared at a date not now ascertainable, and the illustration here given represents Abbot's Hall, built upon its site about the year 1610, and as it still stands. It is the property of Philip Candler Shepherd Esq.





THE ABBOT'S HALL.

#### NOTES

1. The deed recites that *"King Edward, having created his said son Earl of Richmond, and thereupon granted him the honors, castles, manors, lands and tenements belonging to that Earldom, formerly held by John, Duke of Brittany and Earl of Richmond, and it appearing to the Council to be desirable for the Crown to repossess the same, the said Duke of Lancaster, like a grateful son, preferring his father's pleasure and the convenience of the kingdom to his own private advantage, resigns the said earldom back to the king, and accepts in lieu and exchange for the same, etc."*

2. The Duchy of Lancaster holds no manors in Norfolk now, nor derives any revenues from the county, except some agricultural rents for farms in Methwold, and some small rents in Thetford.

3. State Papers Dom. : Chas.I ccxxvi, 73

4. Except as to the tenants of the manor, I have not been able to ascertain that the mill exercised the privilege of soc, or soke, included in the grant, but it is probable that it did. It is only in very recent times that many large towns have been freed from such a monopoly. Manchester and Bradford had to buy off the privileged occupiers of mills. Wakefield, about the year 1850, paid for exemption nearly £20,000 and from Wardell's *Municipal history of Leeds* we find that "the inhabitants of the manor of Leeds were discharged by an Act of Parliament passed in 1839 from the custom of grinding corn, grain and malt at the [manorial]



mills, and a compensation of £13,000 was paid"

5. This giving away to Royal favourites of the property of the Crown and Duchy, the receipts of which went to the land Revenue Account, attained such an importance that it was declared by Parliament in 1702 to have been so *"impaired and diminished by the grants of former kings and queens of this realm, that Her Majesty's land revenues at present can afford very little towards the support of the government"* and thereupon an Act [1st. Queen Anne] was passed restraining such gifts, and imposing restrictions on grants by the Crown.

6. The Ecclesiastical, or Courts Christian, had disciplinarian officials in those days which happily have been unknown for generations. Nicholas Dorman filled such an office, not to 'correct' the Bishop, but to look after people who were supposed to be fit subjects for the court, and to execute its decrees. In the patents the officer is described as the Bishop's Corrector or Commissary. Dorman was also presented for other infringements of the rights of the manor, in connection with Thomas Fryngg, who appears to have been Official to the Archdeacon of Norwich.

*To be continued in future issues of the "Journal & Newsletter"*

---ooOoo---

~~~~~  
*And finally*

The rector opened his church one day to find an old man in a long flowing beard sitting by the altar.

"Who are you?" he asked.

"I", said the stranger, "am God."

A little shaken by this reply, and uncertain what to do next, the rector retired to the vestry, and telephoned the Bishop. He explained what had happened and asked for guidance. The Bishop thought for a moment, then said, *"Better play it safe. Get back in there and look busy"*.