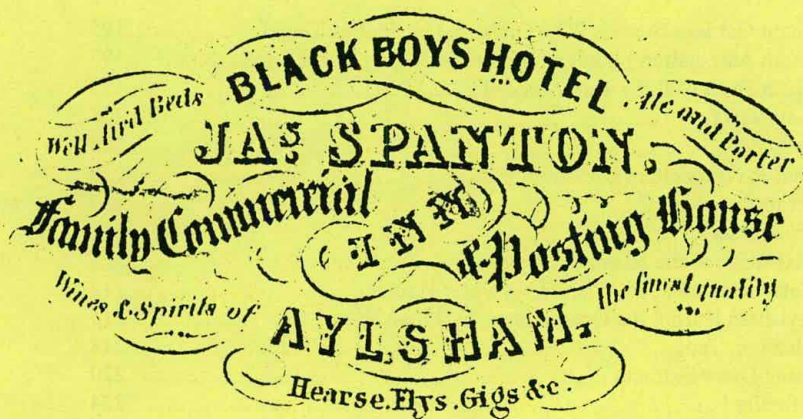


AYLSHAM LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY



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Cover Illustration: A bill heading from the **Black Boys**, Aylsham, dated August 13th. 1849, and signed by S. Spanton. The bill reads:

Bread and cheese.....	1 - 0
Bitter ale.....	6
2 Dinners.....	4 - 0
ale.....	6
wine.....	2 - 6
horse	1 - 6

.....£0 - 10 - 0

Happy days!



AYLSHAM LOCAL HISTORY
SOCIETY

JOURNAL & NEWSLETTER

Vol. 5

No. 7

AYLSHAM GARDENS SURVEY

Anthea Taigel
(THE ORCHARDS)

We conclude these extracts from the Town Gardens Survey compiled by Anthea Taigel for the Norfolk Gardens Trust, with the feature on the "Orchards" in Norwich Road. Once again our thanks to Anthea Taigel and the Trust for permission to reproduce these extracts.

The land on which the Orchards was later built was noted on a map of 1830 as "garden" and owned as part of the estate of William Repton, son of the landscape gardener Humphry Repton. At that date the main building of the estate was some way to the north, fronting Aylsham Market Place. The garden, which lay behind this building, was of interesting form, with serpentine paths etc. It seems to have survived, at least partially, until 1887. At the date of the Tithe Award Map [1840], both this house and garden were still in the ownership and occupancy of William Repton, together with just over two acres further south, recorded as 'Orchard'; hence the name of the later building. North of the orchard at this date lay the *Dog Inn* and bowling green.

The "Orchards" was built for William Repton by William Bartram, builder and carpenter of Millgate, to designs by Repton's brother, John Adey. William Repton's accounts note payments of just over £450 to

Bartram. The first payment was made in January 1848 and the final payment in the second half of 1849. The historic buildings listing department notes the new house as an important early example of developed Tudor Revival style.

William Repton's accounts for 1847 to 1857 have survived but detail only small amounts spent upon the garden. Ewings (later Ewings & Mackie) supplied seeds annually; there was at least one glass house, and fruit trees and gooseberries were grown. One gardener (who was also groom) and one boy were employed to maintain the grounds, but their work is unfortunately not well detailed. Bees were kept, and one unusual item referred to '*gravelling the orchard*' although later in the accounts there was grass seed purchased specifically for this area. It is presumed that '*gravelling*' was to paths. A new pump was put in the orchard in 1852.

One item of note in the accounts was the purchase of "a garden" in 1849 for £240. This is a large sum and may relate to the land to the west of the Orchards site, which was not owned by Repton in 1840, but which appears to have been part of the site by 1887 (see below). If this purchase was not to extend the existing holding, it is difficult to see why Repton would have undertaken it - he was already landlord of a reasonable amount of garden ground elsewhere in the parish, from which he received rents. The suggestion that the new garden was intended for his own use is supported by the consistency of garden rentals in his accounts before and after the purchase. It is possible that the items in the accounts which refer to new work on the orchard, relate to this section of the grounds.

Extensive search has failed to uncover further details of the layout of the grounds in this period. Was this the "*Picturesque Residence on the Norwich Turnpike*" put up for sale in 1868, together with "*extensive and charming Pleasure Grounds, tastefully disposed gardens, Glass, orchard, hothouses, fountain, lawns, parterres etc.*" the description certainly fits what is known of the grounds in later periods, but it could apply equally well to the Manor House on the opposite side of the road.

The amended Tithe Apportionment of 1876, which noted the property as owned and occupied by one Charles Morse, recorded the holdings as of the same acreage as in 1840 (i.e. without the additional land to the west). It is possible that the amended Tithe only recorded major changes and this addition was small (around one and a half acres) but without further information this must remain conjecture. Certainly by 1887, the grounds included the additional area to the west (paths were continuous between the two.) What is particularly noteworthy about this site of about four acres, is the very small percentage which was apportioned to informal lawn or pleasure ground. The majority of the grounds, and all of those directly around the house, was sectioned by straight paths and dotted with small features and glasshouses. It should be recorded that John Adey Repton was noted for garden design that was *'increasingly formal, historicist and small scale.'*



THE AYLSHAM ASSOCIATION PHOTO- GRAPHIC COLLECTION Derek Lyons

During the 1960s and 70s Aylsham lost a number of its historic buildings to the developers, and acquired in their place some buildings of rather questionable integrity. Nobody would argue for the retention of dilapidated buildings which are a danger to health and safety, but to raze them without any attempt to keep some sort of record for posterity seems, by today's lights, to be totally irresponsible. Few of us can now remember what the old Dog Inn or the Red Lion, that gave its name to the town's principal street, were like; likewise with Henry Page's "North Norfolk Supply Stores" or the old forge in Burgh Road. Fortunately, a few (a very few) old photographs do remain to remind the old hands, or to inform youngsters and newcomers.

In 1975 the Aylsham Association, aware of the changes that were going on around them, commissioned a photographic survey of the town and surrounding area. The photographer concentrated most of

his efforts on the town itself, but did venture as far afield as Coldham Hall and Spa Farm. Leafing through those pictures today one is made aware of just how many changes have taken place in the relatively short period since they were taken, and therefore how important they are as a record of the town. We should be grateful to the foresight of the Aylsham Association.

Soon after the survey was completed the pictures, together with some old sepia prints of the town, taken between 1900 and 1920, were put on display in St. Michael's church. This proved to be an expensive mistake, because at some time between being displayed and later being lodged in the archives, many of them suffered extensive damage, quite possibly while they were being removed from the display boards. In recent months the Aylsham Association's executive committee has been concerned to try to restore this important record before the photographs deteriorate any more. The original negatives have been lost, and the cost of having the prints themselves professionally restored is prohibitive, so it was decided that the only viable course was to re-photograph, on to 35mm film, the whole collection. It took several weeks to complete and was quite an expensive operation, but now, thanks once again to the foresight of the Aylsham Association, the town has copies of all 189 original pictures, this time backed up by a set of negatives.

(Derek Lyons, modestly, does not record that he was the member of the Aylsham Association who did the painstaking and time consuming work of re-photographing all the 189 originals.) **Ed**

—ooOoo—

AYLSHAM BRIDEWELL

Tom Mollard

Since we first started producing the *Journal & Newsletter*, items on the Bridewell have appeared from time to time (see the note at the end for references)¹. I cannot claim that this piece will be the last word

Particulars
and
Conditions of sale
of
**WYMONDHAM and AYLSHAM
Bridewells**

To be sold by auction
(Pursuant to resolutions of the Court of
Quarter Session for the County of Norfolk)

by

J. Sendall

on

Saturday, the second day of July 1825

at the

MAID'S HEAD INN, NORWICH

at four o'clock in the afternoon

to appear on the Bridewell, but it does at least deal with the last chapter in its existence.

Erected in 1543 by Robert Marsham, the Bridewell served the town of Aylsham for 282 years until it was eventually closed down when the County gaol was opened in Norwich. The original building served through to 1787, when it was rebuilt, and even after the Bridewell closed the building survived the closure and was sold off and converted into shops and dwellings, according to Dr. Sapwell.

In the town archives we have the original notice advertising the forthcoming sale together with the sale of Wymondham Bridewell. Along with the notice is a brief description of each of the two lots. -

Lot 2 - Aylsham Bridewell reads:-

All those buildings situate in Aylsham in the said county, also called the Bridewell with the yards, garden, land and appurtenances thereto containing two roods and ten perches or thereabouts, except the land whereon stands so much of the last mentioned Bridewell, distant 20 feet and six inches from the south end of that front to a spot in the south front thereof, distant 20 feet and five inches from the end of that front.

This lot is either Freehold or Copyhold, Fine Certain and is subject to no outgoing except a quit-rent of 1s 10d.

Eight conditions are attached to the sale; one referring particularly to the sale of Aylsham Bridewell:-

"The purchaser of Lot 2 to take down at his own expense, before the first day of May next, such part of the Bridewell at Aylsham as stands on the land excepted in the foregoing particulars and for his so doing shall execute a bond to the Clerk of the Peace in the Penal sum of £500.

On the reverse of the document are two handwritten notes of interest:-

Note. The South West corner of the Bridewell marked 'B' is to be taken down and the ground to be laid into the road for the use of the public. The whole contains about 90 rods.

Bull Public House

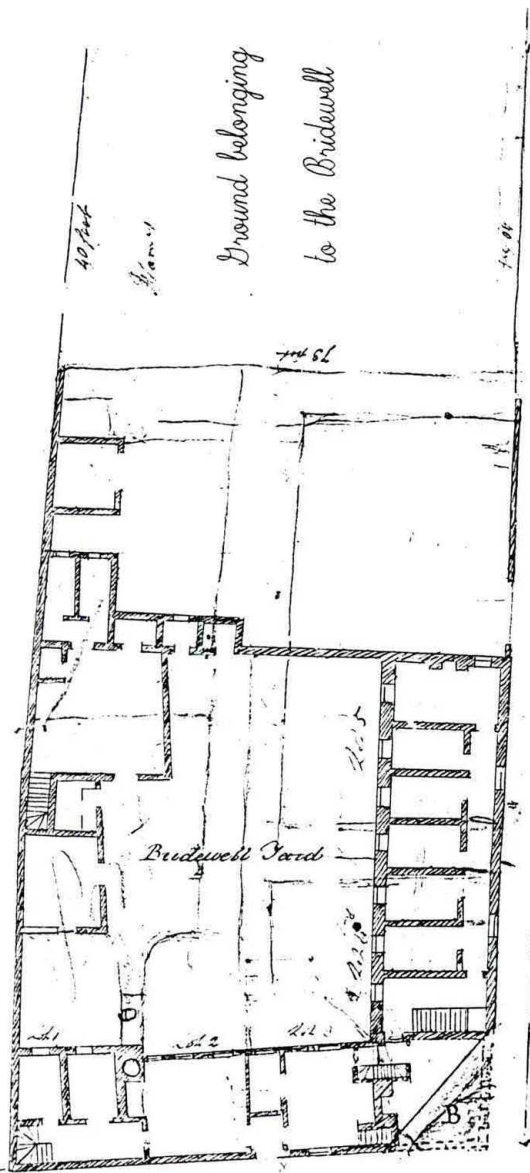
Red Lion Street

Francis Stone

April 23rd. 1825

to the Market Place

201



Public Road to Westward

To Norwich

width of street to be 24 feet.

Memorandum that on 2nd. July 1825, John Warnes of Aylsham became the purchaser. . . . for 805 pounds, and paid to William Simpson [County Treasurer] £161 in part of the said purchase.

Signed: Robert Copeman
W. Simpson

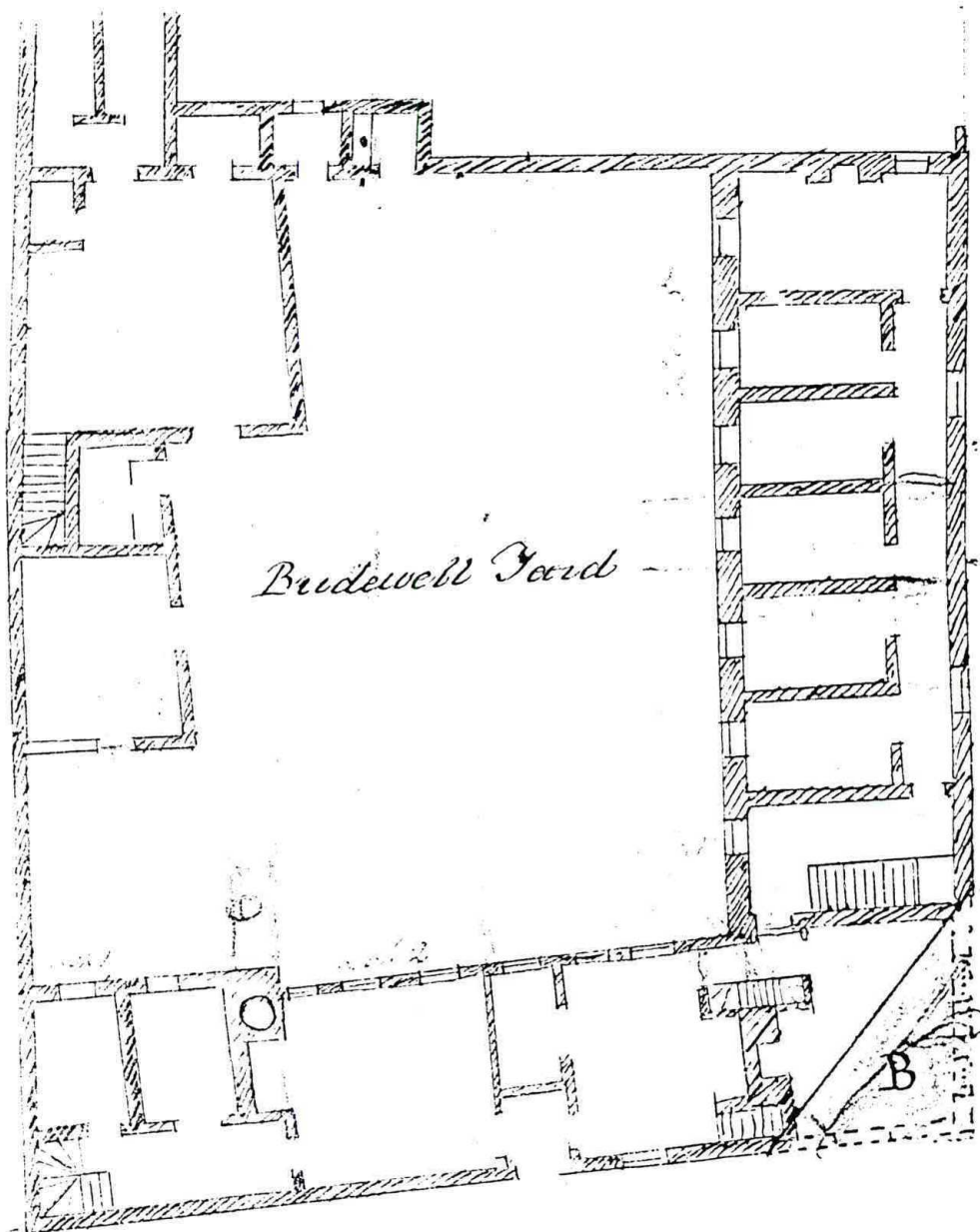
Lot.2 Schedule referred to, by the within conditions, contains a cornmill, flour dresser and shops, Pulpit, font and steps in the chapel and also 2 temporary sheds next the stable belonging to Mr. Tatham.

Something I have never previously seen is the plan drawn up specifically for this sale. This was prepared and signed by Francis Stone, the County Surveyor on April 23rd. 1825. The copy of the plan I have seen shows the internal arrangement of the Bridewell. As usual it is very difficult to produce a photocopy which shows all the details of the original, especially when the image has to be reduced.

The Bridewell occupied the corner of Red Lion Street and Burgh Road, and the cells lay behind the Burgh Road frontage. There were at least three internal staircases leading to upper or lower floors. The grounds belonging to the Bridewell stretched for about 113 yards down the Burgh Road, almost as far as Oakfield Road. The *Bull Public House* was immediately next to the Bridewell on Red Lion Street. The note on the plan refers to the Red Lion St/Burgh Road corner of the building (marked B) where the purchaser was obliged to take down the corner of the building so that the road could be widened.

Today we can see that this condition was complied with from the shape of this corner which has clearly been cut off. This corner is still difficult to negotiate. If the building had not been altered it would have been impossible with today's traffic.

Francis Stone (1775-1835)² who has signed the plan was the County Surveyor of Norfolk for almost 30 years, and I understand that a monument to him exists in St. George's Church, Tombland. He was



Enlarged plan of the Bridewell building

also a founder member of the 'Norwich Society of Artists'. He exhibited from 1805 to 1816 and was president in 1822. He is particularly well-known for his published work "*Picturesque views of all the bridges belonging to the County of Norfolk*". This includes a view of the Aylsham bridges, which members will recall provided the frontispiece to the Society's publication "Millgate, Aylsham" (1993).

Copies of Stone's book are hard to come by nowadays as they tend to become stolen so that the individual prints can be removed and sold separately as framed prints.

REFERENCES

- 1 *Earlier articles on the Bridewell in the Journal:-*
Vol 1. pp.98-102 and 166-167
Vol 2. pp.236-237 and 357-359
- 2 *Norfolk Architects 1660-1840 by A Paget Baggs, in Norfolk Archaeology. Vol 32 pp.236-246*

SOCIETY NEWS

Aylsham Carnival - Following a request from the organisers of the successful Aylsham carnival, the secretary has supplied information about medieval Aylsham. This excellent summary was included in the carnival programme, and later appeared again in the *Aylsham & Wroxham and District Community Magazine*. - all good publicity!

Outing to the Norfolk Broads - This trip was led by Dr. Martin George OBE. Before we set off from Wroxham we were able to view the rather sorry state of the wherry *Solace*, which had just been raised, after sinking, and was in the boat-house of Broadland Passenger Craft who provided our boat and skipper, and supplied us with pleasant light refreshments. The coach arrived with the Norfolk & Norwich historians who joined us on the expedition, and we set off for Wroxham Broad. Dr. George talked of the history of the Broads and the fairly recent

demonstration by Dr. J.M. Lambert, using stratigraphy, that they were formed by peat digging. He outlined the changes which have occurred since the last Ice Age, and spoke of drainage, windmills, powered mills and the last peat digger who was still working in the Hickling area until the early 1920s, and lived on until about 1928.

Dr. George told us of the start of hiring out boats for holidays in the inter-war period, and we saw for ourselves how the uninformed can rev up engines and create a damaging wash. He explained the difficulties the Broads have experienced since the war, because the area was not made a National Park when other National Parks were created. This led to conflicting priorities between Nature Conservancy, R.S.P.B., the various Local, District and County Councils, and the Water, River and Drainage Authorities. He described problems due to the destabilisation of the river banks; reeds at their edges have failed to thrive because of shade from trees that have been allowed to grow up in the last 40 years. Reeds and sedges are no longer needed for thatching so the beds are not managed as they formerly were. The increase in nitrates has encouraged algae, and the water quality has declined with the disappearance of helpful water creatures.

Mooring at the dyke leading to Cockshoot Broad, we learned of Dr. George's successful treatment by closing off this small Broad and managing it to obtain a balance in the water creature food chain. We went on foot to see the clear water and waterlilies. The party then divided into walkers and those who remained on the boat. We walked along pathways cut in the reeds and were fortunate enough to hear a reed warbler and see swallowtail butterflies. We looked across a fen meadow at the coarse marsh hay of the type which had formerly been harvested for London's cab horses, but which few animals will eat nowadays. We rejoined the boat and returned to Wroxham, lucky not to have been rained on. This was a most successful trip made extremely interesting by Dr. George's wide knowledge and indefatigable enthusiasm.

Tricia Hawkins

Bury St. Edmunds and Ickworth Visit - Members of the society enjoyed a very pleasant day in Suffolk on 10th. June. Although it rained

on the coach journey to Bury, we arrived in Angel Hill, the historic market place in gentle sunshine. We then dispersed to pursue our different interests - the lively market, the churches, the two museums and of course the Abbey gardens and ruins. Several members had booked a Blue Badge Tour guide starting from the Tourist Office and, after a look in the 18th century Athenæum with its magnificent ballroom, he took us round the by-ways of Bury, seeing a variety of domestic buildings, regaling us with a wealth of information en route. After we had lunch, we gathered together under the Abbey Gate sheltering from a fierce downpour, but all arrived safely on the coach to make the short journey to Ickworth.

The outline of Ickworth House has become so well known in recent years that arriving at this unique house with its oval rotunda was almost a disappointment. The stucco covering which the Earl Bishop of Bristol was determined to have on his vast house, seems to give it a bleakness which the gardens and woods on the north side do not soften. However, any reservations about the building vanished once inside. The state rooms are wonderfully preserved and the collections of furniture and paintings a tribute to the generations of the Bristol family who had acquired them. The Earl Bishop, who first had the vision of the house, and who feverishly collected works of art for it, was imprisoned in Milan in 1798 for 9 months (when the French invaded Italy) and his collections were confiscated. It is thought Capability Brown laid out some of the gardens. Since we only had an afternoon visit, only the briefest visit to the gardens was possible.

The Ickworth estate has been owned by the Hervey family since the middle of the fifteenth century. John Hervey was created Earl of Bristol in 1714. The National Trust Guidebook "Ickworth" gives a fascinating account of the careers of the various descendants. It is also interesting to read that local Bury craftsmen were involved in the completion of the house. We were fortunate in visiting Ickworth in reasonable weather, and in travelling home in late afternoon sunshine. **Betty Gee**

The Norfolk History Fair organised by the Federation of Norfolk Historical and Archaeological Organisations will be held at the

Assembly House, Norwich on 26th. & 27th. September. We have decided to take part in this event, having not participated for some years. The theme of this year's fair is the 'Eighteenth century', and we intend to put on a display which will highlight some events which took place in Aylsham during that period. We shall also put out our publications for sale, and we hope to include amongst these publications a revised reprint of "*A Backwards Glance*", for which there is clearly still a demand.

We do not know where we shall be located in the Assembly House, but the building should be an attractive setting for the many stalls and displays provided by a wide range of organisations similar to our own. Our secretary, Betty Gee, is arranging a rota to man the stall from 11 - 5pm. on Saturday, and 12 noon to 5pm on Sunday. If you would like to help, please let her know - in any case, do come to the fair to support us, and all the others taking part. See you there!

Peter Holman

Annual General Meeting - will be held on October 8th. Details and agenda are circulated with this issue of the *Journal*. Please note that our Treasurer, Mrs. Gillian Barwick, is unable to continue in the post due to other commitments. We thank her very much for her work. As from October 8th 1998, therefore, the society will need a new Treasurer. It is hoped that one of our members will be able to help the society, and take on this position. The Treasurer works closely with the Membership Secretary, Mrs Sheila Mollard. The Membership Secretary receives subscriptions and sends out membership cards. The Treasurer is in charge of the bank accounts, pays in cheques and money and pays the society's bills. He or she prepares the account at the end of the financial year. The Treasurer is a member of the committee, and reports to committee meetings, which are held 5 or 6 times a year, usually on a Thursday afternoon. The Chairman, Peter Holman, [01263-733434] or the Secretary, Betty Gee [01263-734834] would be pleased to give any other information required. - A reminder, too, that from the date of the AGM subscriptions become due for the following year

DIARY DATES

It is unlikely that Programme cards for the coming year will be ready for distribution at the Annual General Meeting, as it is possible that there may be changes amongst the listed Officers etc. which will not be determined until the actual meeting. However, we can record the dates of next year's meetings and lectures in this issue of the *Journal* so that members will know in advance what the coming year's programme holds:-

29th. September 1998 - Start of the the UEA Lecture course to be held fortnightly on Tuesday afternoons - *Local Architecture in East Anglia*. Cost £45 for series of ten lectures. Venue; Friends Meeting House, Peggs Yard.

Thursday, 8th. October at 7pm* - Annual General Meeting, followed by *Aylsham Inns and Public Houses* by Liz Gale.* **NB 7 not 7.30pm**

Thursday, 29th. October at 730pm. - *Humphry Repton - Landscape gardener*, by Anthea Taigel.

Thursday, 26th. November at 7.30 pm. - *Parson Woodforde and his Norfolk neighbours.* by Richard Wood.

1999

Thursday, 29th. January - The society's WINTER PARTY. - 7 for 7.30pm

Thursday, 25th. February at 7.30pm - *Roman Norfolk*, by David Gurney.

Thursday, 25th. March at 7.30 pm. - *Changes on the Norfolk Coast*, by Chad Goodwin.

Thursday, 22nd. April. at 7.30pm - *The River Bure from Aylsham to Horning*, by Eric Reading.

All meetings take place at the Friendship Club, Cawston Road.

—ooOoo—

JOURNAL & NEWSLETTER (Back numbers)

We are now in the middle of Volume 5 of the *Journal & Newsletter*. Checking through the back numbers of the *Journal* which the editor still possesses, I felt it might be useful to let members know what parts are still available for anyone who wishes to backtrack and make up sets. Members who have joined the society more recently may be interested.

Unfortunately, there are gaps in each volume which make it impossible to make complete sets of back numbers. There is just one complete set of all the parts of Volume 4 together with a title page and index, apart from that we only have what is listed below:-

<u>Volume One</u>	<u>Volume Two</u>	<u>Volume Three</u>	<u>Volume Four</u>
No. 1 - Nil	No. 1 - 16	No. 1 - 50	No. 1 - 19
No. 2 - Nil	No. 2 - Nil	No. 2 - 60	No. 2 - 9
No. 3 - 2	No. 3 - 2	No. 3 - 18	No. 3 - 2
No. 4 - 14	No. 4 - Nil	No. 4 - 10	No. 4 - Nil
No. 5 - 3	No. 5 - 6	No. 5 - 11	No. 5 - 14
No. 6 - 2	No. 6 - 25	No. 6 - 2	No. 6 - Nil
No. 7 - 9	No. 7 - 25	No. 7 - 1	No. 7 - 5
No. 8 - Nil	No. 8 - 18	No. 8 - 1	No. 8 - 7
No. 9 - 11	No. 9 - 16	No. 9 - 1	No. 9 - 15
No. 10 - 20	No. 10 - 12	No. 10 - 3	No. 10 - 19
	No. 11 - 12	No. 11 - 16	No. 11 - 15
	No. 12 - 9	No. 12 - Nil	No. 12 - 4

For anyone who is interested, any of the above can be supplied at the prices listed, plus p.& p. The early parts are offered at the cheapest rate, as these were quite amateurishly produced compared to present issues, and after the passage of ten years they are beginning to show signs of age.

I have not included any parts of the current volume [Vol.5] as I prefer to try to make up as many complete sets from these as I can when we reach the end of the volume.

Volumes 1 and 2	25p per part
Volume 3	50p per part
Volume 4	£1 per part.

The one complete set of volume 4 [12 parts plus title-page and index] is available for £10.

Any takers?

Ed.

LETTER to the EDITOR

Worstead
25th. June '98

Dear Tom,

I write concerning the last issue of the *Journal & Newsletter* in which appears an article on 'John Taylor, Glover' by Annie Alston. I feel I must point out that the piece is, in fact, my own composition both in concept and style.

However, I have discussed this with Annie, and since she and I worked closely together on the Will and Inventory of John Taylor, we have agreed that joint attribution would be fair and appropriate, and ask you to be good enough to make a suitable emendation in the next issue.

If you intend to publish more of such pieces in Jane's file (and we hope you do!) I suggest, with Annie, that they would be best attributed to the *Archives Group* generally or some such, rather than to individuals.

Sincerely
Frank Stageman.

(Now, at last we all know who wrote what !. Ed)

NOTES AND QUERIES

"The Paper" - most queries that find their way into the *Journal* are related to research into family history, and this one is no exception. However, in this case there is a slightly intriguing twist to the tale which makes it of interest generally, and it is possible that one of our members might be able to help. The enquiry concerns JOHN RAVEN of Burnham Market, who died in 1786. Much of what is known about John Raven is written up in "The Paper" which was a very local monthly paper which circulated in the Fakenham/Wells area.

Our enquirer would dearly love to read all the issues of "The Paper", but the problem is, where does one see copies. "The Paper", [*that really was its title*] appeared between 1982-86. It was printed by Barnwells of Aylsham, although I have not yet met anyone in Aylsham, (including Barnwells) who has copies of it. It was certainly kept at Fakenham Library, but sadly the file was transferred to the Local Studies Library in Norwich prior to 1994, and the inevitable happened - the disastrous fire of 1994 consumed the lot. If anyone can help, the enquirer is :-

Victor Manton, Chartley House, Swannell's Wood, Studham, DUNSTABLE.
Beds. LU6 2QB. Phone 01582-872487

Harry Proudfoot - An American enquirer is interested in the Proudfoot family, and thinks that he might well be descended from John Proudfoot, born in Aylsham in 1833. I have already sent him a copy of the Proudfoot memoir published in the *Journal* in 1990. Again, if anyone can help, or wants to help, contact:-

Frank Covey, 210 Polaris Circle, Merlin. Oregon 97532. U.S.A.

—ooOoo—

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY OF AYLSHAM

As reported in the June 1998 issue of the *Journal* this one-day seminar took place on the 9th May and was acclaimed by all who took part as a great success. There were two papers read during the day's proceedings, and I promised that in the next issue I would reproduce the substance of both papers for the benefit of those members who were unable to attend the seminar. Those who were not there will appreciate the chance to read Peter Holman's and Julian Eve's contributions, and I hope those who were there will not mind the repetition. In the case of Julian's paper, it will add supporting detail to the display he is arranging for the Norfolk History Fair on behalf of the society.

The early Settlement of Aylsham - Peter Holman

The glacial periods produced the surface geology of N.E. Norfolk; a rounded landscape crossed by one or two rivers and consisting of a mix of soils which can change suddenly from rich loam to heavy clay or infertile sand and gravel. In Aylsham itself adjoining gardens can have totally different soils. As the ice retreated and plants became established, for many thousands of years small family groups moved round, probably seasonally, hunting animals and gathering food in plant form. Nothing has been found of their habitations, and we only know of them by their flint tools and arrows.

Later, the first farming began and tribes became more settled as Neolithic man began to form settlements. As implements improved, so clearance of forests took place. Metals began to replace flint. The tribal system meant that important people could have large burial mounds or barrows. These exist in the Aylsham area; a good one stands on the parish boundary near Tuttington, there are others on the Blickling estate, and even more can be detected from the air. (There is an interesting account of 'barrow digging' at Stow Heath - 2 miles east of Aylsham - in July 1808, in our society's *Journal & Newsletter*. Vol.2 No.12. p.362, with drawings and description.) So, in prehistoric times people might have been quite thick on the ground hereabouts, but

agriculture, particularly in recent years, has destroyed most of the signs of them. There has been little careful excavation, though a small late iron age settlement [c.300BC-43AD] was found near Bolwick Hall farm and the Buxton Road. This settlement was superseded by a Romano-British farmstead - these are rare in Norfolk - until with the departure of the Roman army, the invading Saxons found it. Aylsham has produced no "Roman Remains" mainly because Brampton was an important industrial town, producing large quantities of pottery which were carried on the River Bure down to the sea and then up the coast as far as Hadrian's wall and beyond.

There are at least two Roman marching camps in this area, one at Cawston [TG 145248] and the other at Horstead [TG 258193] but nothing can be seen on the ground. So, the Romans were about, both in a military manner and an industrious one. They may have hunted wild boar in the Aylsham landscape.

Now we come to the so-called Dark Ages, and the arrival of Aegel in about 500AD. Why did he settle here? The centre of Aylsham is on high ground with a good outlook towards the north and the east; defensive, though no signs of defence works have ever been seen. The North/South road (now Norwich to Cromer) ran on a ridge of high ground coming into the town from the *Greens* (which were goose greens), down Hungate, through the churchyard by the east end of the church and along the now Cromer road, or perhaps down Millgate to use the 'great Brygge over y^e King's river. . . which brygge is a common passage for horse and carte both to the market at Aylsham and to y^e coast for the countrie'. In 1547 church plate was sold to repair what was then a wooden bridge, and in 1759 a brick bridge built by W. Berry replaced the wooden one. The second brick bridge over the mill stream is dated 1821. These bridges have survived serious floods [1912] by the flood water crossing the road at Mash's Row.

As well as the north/south track, there was an east/west track from say Worsted, through Burgh and on to Blickling and Saxthorpe. These are very old simple trackways. There are signs of another east/west route that passes to the south of Aylsham, crossing at the

roundabout (the Greens again). This survives to the east in Brindy Lane, a fine hollow way, now overgrown, and to the west down to Spa farm and another ancient bridge. Another factor is the site of the church. The present building dates from 1380 and John of Gaunt, but there was probably an earlier church, perhaps on a high pagan site. Many hill-top churches are dedicated to St. Michael. With the church goes the parish. These were established about the 10th. century, and were a mix of church and civil demands. The civil parish had to have enough varied land in it in order to support its population. Aylsham parish at 4,000 acres is large - as is Cawston - because of poor, sandy soil and heathland. The boundaries are fixed on distinctive features - for instance, the stream (The Mermaid, which used to be called Hendbeck) just before Marsham [the Flags] and the tumulus at Tuttington*

Parishes contained manors; often only one, but in the case of Aylsham, four:-

Aylsham Lancaster	Vicarage Manor
Sextons (or Aylsham Wood)	Bolwick

Sextons (the sexton of St. Edmunds Abbey) lies to the north of the River Bure towards Banningham- the name Wood is a later surname. Bolwick lies to the south - next to Marsham. The other two were in Aylsham itself. All at one time would have had large fields, worked on a strip system in rotation.

In 1086 the Domesday Survey (a rating assessment therefore lacking certain detail) shows Aylsham to have:-

about	2370 acres under cultivation
	25 acres of meadow
	640 acres woodland (Woodgate)
	1000 acres wild.

with 30 ploughs with 8 oxen each; 2 water mills; men holding land - 150. Total population 1000 or more. Aylsham was a very considerable place - larger than anywhere for miles around.

* See A.L.H.S. *Journal & Newsletter*. Vol 2 No.6 p.170
 "Boundaries of the parish of Aylsham in 1444"

Aylsham during the Great Alarm Julian Eve

From 1796 to 1805 England was under continual threat of invasion by the armies of Napoleon Bonaparte. An examination of the Aylsham records reveals how the inhabitants responded to this threat.

The French Revolutionary and Napoleonic War - The French were at war with Britain from 1793 to 1815 with only a short break during the Treaty of Amiens (March 1802 - May 1803). The first threat was in 1796 when Napoleon was made head of the "Army for England". Troops of the *Grand Armée* were encamped along the channel coast, and French ships collected in channel, ports. Realising it would be impossible to convey his troops over the channel without command of the sea, Napoleon temporarily gave up the idea and decided, much to the relief and surprise of the English, to take his army to Egypt. In spite of winning many battles, his expedition was a total failure. He lost all his ships at the Battle of the Nile, and returned to France in 1799 leaving the remains of his army stranded in Egypt. With other conspirators he soon brought about a *coup d'état* and made himself First Consul of France (emperor in 1802). He was now determined to conquer Britain. He raised 167,000 men and 15,000 horses, built a port at Boulogne and had 2,000 flat-bottomed boats made. The main force was to be conveyed to England on one tide. The fleets of Spain and France were to unite to control the channel. (France was now supported by Spain and Holland). The combined fleets were, however, destroyed by Nelson off Cape Trafalgar on 21st. October 1805. Napoleon abandoned all plans of invading England and the 29 month crisis for Britain was over.

Britain's response - Martello towers to house cannons were built round the coast, with signalling systems and beacons. Seamen fencibles were created in every small harbour.

Fresh volunteers were found for the regular army. They could be paid to join.



*The government had difficulty overcoming
the country's indifference to the threat of invasion.
New recruits to the army were initially treated
with derision and mirth.*

The size of the navy was increased and new ships built.

In 1796 the Supplementary Militia Act was passed to raise 60,000 extra militiamen to defend Britain. Local quotas were set for each county, and where this was not met a compulsory ballot was held in each parish or town. Men balloted could provide substitutes at a price, but the poor had to serve. Local Volunteer cavalry (yeomanry) were raised under the County Lords Lieutenant. Volunteer infantry (a "Home Guard") were raised for local defence.

Aylsham Records - Overseers' records show payment for three men for the navy (£60), payments to poor families serving in the militia, and payments to substitutes. The severe poverty due to the price of corn is also recorded. The workhouse was "modernised" in 1803 and became the best in the area.

Vestry minutes record the ringing of the church bells in 1798 to celebrate the Battle of the Nile; in 1805 for the Battle of Trafalgar, and on 22nd July 1815 for the final surrender of Napoleon following the Battle of Waterloo.

In 1801, two men were employed to make a record of all the horses, carts, waggon, stock and crop in the parish in case of invasion.

Finally we have the details of the parade in Aylsham held on Nelson Day, 3rd December 1805, to celebrate the victory of Trafalgar. It ended with a church service and sermon by the Reverend Major John Collyer, commanding officer of the Loyal Aylsham Light Infantry Volunteers. Afterwards, his soldiers under Captain Parmeter paraded in the Market Place and fired three volleys.

—ooOoo—

AYLSHAM ON TAPE

Several issues back, [Dec 1997] I reported in the *Journal* that I had received the complete set of audio tapes that Liz Gale and Derek Lyons had, between them, created during their joint work on the Oral History of Aylsham.

These tapes, together with transcripts of the recordings were passed to us to be preserved in the Town Archives for the benefit of future generations. I mentioned also that an earlier collection of recordings already exists. This collection was made and preserved by Ron Peabody, and were reported on in the *Journal* back in December 1986, where Ron gave a complete list of all his recordings. This original list is now updated by Ron with the addition of six more tapes made since the December '86 article. [Nos. 21-26 below]

Below is a complete list of all the tapes collected by Ron Peabody, Liz Gale and Derek Lyons:-

1. Aylsham Parish Council Annual Meeting - 16 March 1978
2. Aylsham Stock Market - 20 March 1978
3. Aylsham Association, Annual General Meeting - 26 April 1978
4. Herbert Jones - basket maker. 20 February 1979
5. Aylsham Canada - Copy of recording made of the voices and sounds of Aylsham, Norfolk, for the people of Aylsham, Canada. March 1979
[Contains: Parish church bells; Nolan Golden; Ron Peabody; John of Gaunt First School; St. Michael's Hospital (Sister Groves); Salvation Army Band; Jason Partner; Rev. Canon Jack Vyse; Aegel House (Mr. Cowling; and Miss Emmerson - Thirkettle family); Aylsham First School (St. Michael's); Aylsham Nursery School; Silver band; Ben Rust; Friendship Club; Aylsham Middle School; Bertie Jex; Stock Market; Mrs. E. Seeley (Brownies and Guides)]
6. Parish Council; Annual Meeting - 15 March 1979
7. & 8. Parish Council Meeting - 31 May 1979
9. Mrs. Crame. Oakfield Road - [Recreation Ground] 31 January 1980
10. Aylsham Bypass -
Ian Taylor, Resident Engineer, Norfolk County Council for the bypass.
26 February 1980; Opening ceremony on 2 May 1980

11. Cyril "Sam" Spinks & Archie Gould - 17 April 1980
[Aylsham Steam Mill workers, wherries, etc.]
12. Radio Norfolk - Village Voice programme on Aylsham 2 Aug 1981
[contains: Ron Peabody (parish Archives); Rev. Canon J. Vyse (Parish Church); Ben Rust (Mills); Yvonne Knott (Aylsham WI and Town Sign); John Horner & Son (Smithy, Cawston Road); Geoffrey Key (Stock Market); John Lines (Auction Rooms); Mr. B. Kerbotson (Administrator St. Michael's Hospital) and various townsfolk in the Market Place.]
13. Sidney Dack & Bertie Keeler - Aylsham Railways; 28 Nov. 1981
14. Parish Council Annual Meeting - 11 March 1982
15. Aylsham Town Sign Dedication -
Ceremony of dedication - 21 April 1982, Aylsham Evening WI, Mrs. Yvonne Knott, President and Mrs Barnard, Past President.
16. Parish Council Annual Meeting - 10 March 1983
17. Mabel Spinks - Aylsham shops. - 27 April 1983
18. Derek Norton - Aylsham Silver Band - 27 June 1983
19. Aegel House, Burgh Road; Home for the Elderly
[Mrs Laxen and other residents interviewed on 2 May and 12 June 1985]
20. Bure Valley Singers, recorded in Aylsham Church, February 1982
21. William Charles Nobbs
Recalling the first Aylsham Gymkhana (later the Aylsham Show) held on the Recreation Ground in 1946. Also Mrs Nobbs talking about her working life at the Aylsham Post Office in the 1920s. Recorded 1976 and May 1984.
22. Mrs Olive Skoyles.
Formerly an Aylsham (St. Michael's) schoolteacher. 21 March 1988
23. David Walker
Solicitor and former Aylsham Parish Council Clerk. 23 March 1992
24. Ernest Farrow
Recalling his wartime experiences and the massacre at le Paradis, N.E. France in May 1940. 2 March 1993
25. Ernest Farrow
Continuing his wartime reminiscences. 3 Aug 1993
26. John Cooper and Geoffrey Ducker
talking about the Dutch children who came to Aylsham 1945/46. 27 April 1996
27. *Recorded memoirs of* - 1/1 Alfred Matthews
- 2/2 Elizabeth Crouch [2 tapes]
- 3/1 Edith Bilham
- 4/1 Albert Frank Pull
- 5/1 G.H.Baker
- 6/1 A.Matthews & F. Pull

- 7/1 Molly Long & Tom West
- 8/1 Margaret Beard
- 9/1 Norah Lee
- 10/1 Winifred Jordan
- 11/1 Ursula Warren
- 12/1 Anne Marsden
- 13/1 Olive Hunt
- + 2 cassettes on David Walker, by Jane Nolan

1 box containing 13 folders of interview summaries for No. 21 [1-13] listed above, with copyright statements.

—ooOoo—

FARMING DIARY EXTRACTS 1828-38

John Shephard of Erpingham House, born 1791 and who died in November 1860 kept a farming diary covering the period 6 June 1819 to October 1860. I would love to have been able to read all the diary, but I have at least had chance to read several photocopied excerpts from it, which I reproduce below. These pages accompanied a letter to the late Judge Ives who lived at Erpingham House, and have been kindly loaned to me by Mary Willcox, his daughter and a member of our society.

1828 Nov. 12 Pulled white leaf turnip 23lbs, girth 42", scooped out and sent to Mr. Coleby in London. Inside it - Pike 5 lbs. do. 3 lbs. tench 2 lbs. do 1lb. eel 2½ lbs. In all 17 lbs.
Planted trees in meadow at back of the house in 1829. The common was enclosed 1818-19. Lawn at front of house made in 1818. Trees there planted following year.

1832 Jan 25. Caught a trout at Calthorpe, 19 inches long but out of condition, weighing only 2½ lbs.
Jan. 27 Planted two oak trees on the lawn, one 48 paces south from the front door and the other 78 paces SE. The acorns from which

the above trees were raised were set on the morning of Nov. 7 1820 by Charlotte Marsh of Erpingham, on the same morning she was married to John Shephard. Planted by Samuel Marsh Shephard, son to the above parties, assisted by his father.

March 16 Began to sow oats
April 2 Began to sow barley
April 26 Finished sowing barley.

1833 Aug. 25th. First rain since April 25th.

Aug. 31st Tremendous gale with rain from NNW, the like never witnessed before. Lasted 36 hours. 73 ships blown ashore on Norfolk coast. Crops blown out and injured, apples down; trees, leaves appear as if scorched by fire. Gales extended over greater part of Europe.

1834 Jan. 1st The most extraordinary season ever known. The wind SW ever since gale on 31st. Aug. Neither frost nor snow, but a great deal of wind. Thermometer not lower than 50° all the month of January. Cut a fine broccoli on the first of January. At the same time the hedges are covered with primroses, broad beans in full blossom, young rooks and young thrushes in their nests; some strawberries (the common wood strawberries) gathered on a south bank at Aylsham and sent to London. They were to full size and turned red. Gathered in my own garden a nosegay of hollyhocks, crocus, snowdrop, anemone, aconite, roses, polyanthus, stocks, wall flowers, heartsease, marigold, mignonette, hypanthia and many others that I know not the names.

Feb. 8th. Apricot trees in blossom, turnips in blossom. Wind SW.

Feb. 22nd. Blackthorn, May and bullace trees in full blossom. Wind SW. This after all was the backwardest spring we have had for several years. Wind NE all the month of April and often frost and snow.

1834 June 26 Finished haysel and began to hoe swedes.

July 12 Cut peas

Girth of the four oak trees:-

1st.	44 inches	1 inch increase
2nd.	56½ inches	1½ inch increase
3rd.	45 inches	1 inch increase
4th.	53 inches	0 increase

July 1st.

1834 July 19 Carried peas
 July 21 Cut oats
 July 23 Cut wheat
 July 25 Carried oats
 July 28 Cut barley
 July 31 Carried wheat
 Aug. 4 Carried barley
 Aug. 9 Finished wheat harvest
 Aug. 9 Finished cutting corn
 Aug. 13 Finished harvest

Aug. 23. Emptied the pond on the lawn, took out 1145 tench from 6 to 9 inches long; an eel of 4lb weight; three brace of carp and a 6lb pike.

Aug. 30 Put the bullocks to turnips

Oct. 17 Began wheatsel and finished Nov. 1

1835 Feb. 9 Dibbled peas
 March 26 Sowed oats
 March 28 Sowed barley
 April 2 Turnips in blossom.

1838 Jan. 20th. This was the sharpest frost, perhaps, that ever was known in England. The thermometer at 11 o'clock at night was 6° below zero. It was a rime frost. On the 31st. Dec 1799 the thermometer was 3° below zero, since till this year (?)

Feb. 22nd. The frost broke up this day having begun on 4 January, leaving 49 days mostly very severe with a deal of snow. Most of the evergreens died and the turnips chiefly rotten excepting those that were ploughed in.

What gives an added interest to the diary excerpts are notes added a century later (in 1937) by John R. Shephard commenting on the earlier entries. Referring to the 1145 tench cleared from the pond [23 Aug 1834] he writes:-

"These tench were sent to London to stock the Serpentine.

They, of course, had to go by coach and only six died on the journey. The three brace of carp were turned into the pond on July 22 1833”

It is difficult to imagine all these fish being transported by coach to London. Are the descendants of these Erpingham fish still swimming around in the Serpentine?

Another note refers to the acorns and the oak trees:-

“The acorns referred to on this page had been in the hand of the Duke of Wellington (The Iron Duke).

In November 1820 the Duke was shooting at Gunton. In the wood which was being shot there stands to this day a very fine oak tree. The Duke noticed this tree, he picked up a few of the acorns which had fallen from the tree. The Duke remarked what very small acorns for so fine a tree. He dropped them on the ground. John Shephard, my grandfather, picked them up and planted them when he got home to Erpingham. The trees are still standing on the lawn at the house. My father sold the house and farm to Robert Ives in 1903. My grandfather had eleven children. My father, Robert Shephard, was the seventh child.

1937

John R. Shephard.

In the book *Maria Pasqua*, by Magdalen Goffin (1979) this same story re-appears, but with significant differences in its details. In her version it is Philip Candler Shephard, John Shephard's son, who, at the age of 10 met the Iron Duke at Gunton. This would be about 1848 (the Duke died in 1852) According to Magdalen Goffin the Duke picked up an unusually large acorn!

“.....he stood looking at it as it lay in the palm of his hand then beckoned to Philip. “My boy”, he said. “Plant this when you get home.

Give it plenty of room. You may depend upon it, it will please your posterity."

—ooOoo—

FRIENDSHIP CLUB

The activities of our society are closely bound up with the future of the Friendship Club. All our Aylsham meetings are held there, and the society would have problems if the Club did not exist. It seems entirely appropriate, therefore, that we should include an advert for the organisers of the Friendship Club:-

AYLSHAM OLD PEOPLES WELFARE ASSOCIATION

Annual Bazaar - Saturday morning, 19th. September in the Town Hall. Produce of all kinds wanted before bazaar starts at 9am, or on Friday afternoon, 18th. September, at the Friendship Club.

And finally

He criticised her puddings, he didn't like her cake.
He wished she'd make the biscuits that his mother used to bake.
She didn't wash the dishes, and she didn't make the stew,
She didn't mend his stockings like his mother used to do.
Oh well, she wasn't perfect, though she tried to do her best,
Until at last she thought that it was time she had a rest.
So one day, when he started the same old rigmarole all through,
She turned and boxed his ears - *Like his mother used to do!*