

# 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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## CONTENTS

Volunteer Prize Distribution and Dinner .....	163
Aylsham Parish Workhouse 1775-1836, by Julian Eve .....	168
Society News.....	175
Diary Dates .....	180
Baconsthorpe School, by Carrie Miller .....	182
Humphry Repton .....	185
Aylsham Old Hall .....	186
<i>"Aylsham Inns and Public Houses"</i> .....	190
Help! .....	192

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### COVER ILLUSTRATION

*Black Boys Hotel* - Aylsham's principal hotel, featured in Elizabeth Gales's new book, *"Aylsham Inns and Public Houses"*. Reproduced from a drawing by the late Anthony Butler



AYLSHAM LOCAL HISTORY  
SOCIETY

## JOURNAL & NEWSLETTER

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### VOLUNTEER PRIZE DISTRIBUTION AND DINNER 1897

Once again, I am very grateful to our member Geoffrey Nobbs, who although no longer living in Aylsham still thinks of us, and kindly sends me interesting items he has discovered from Aylsham's past. Without members like Geoffrey I would be hard pressed to find enough material to keep the *Journal* going. The item is from **Norfolk Chronicle, 4th. December 1897** and records the annual jollifications of the local Volunteers. What I find just as interesting as the actual report are the comments in Geoffrey's letter which accompanied it. I have taken the liberty of including them as they add much to the newspaper item.

"Meanwhile herewith a little piece from the Norfolk Chronicle about Company C of the 3rd Volunteer Battalion, the Norfolk Regiment. It seems the numbers shown record the number of drills attended by each doughty volunteer. I find several of the prizes quite interesting, although due to the inevitable newspaper glitch, it's not clear what the overall winner, Cpl. G Moy, received. A Volunteer with 50 drills won a goose, whilst 48 produced for Pte. Broom two bottles of whisky and two of gin! I notice that lower down the list, Steward & Patteson's cask of ale takes precedence over a cask of Morgan's stout. I'm not sure what this tells us as to the respective qualities of the breweries - or maybe ale was preferable to stout.

I arrived on the Aylsham scene some 45 years after all this was happening, but Margaret who is a native of the town, and I, both find a great number of familiar names in the report. For example, in the forties Arnold Tuddenham (Cpl. A Tuddenham, I presume) was a great character in the town. He ran a butcher's shop at the Mill Road junction with Cawston Road, he also acted as a very male usherette at the cinema, giving short shrift to any unruly youthful cinema-goers. I seem to remember he also played a huge euphonium in the Town Band. Wearing yet another hat, he was the Church Verger and led the congregation with the thunderous and fearsome cry of 'Oarrrrr Men!' whenever an 'amen' was called for during the Reverend Martyn's prayers. He had a very small, well behaved, and friendly little dog which used to be seated quietly next to him in the pew during the service; sadly it ended its days when mistaken for a rabbit by one of the greyhounds which used to be exercised through the town. 'Tuddy' was understandably most cut up over that.

You'll notice that the Town Hall was decorated for the Regimental awards by H. F. Proudfoot, whilst Wm. Forster had dubbed up £5 to ensure the company could 'meet all claims and demands'. Miss Gilbert often opened her large garden on Cromer Road for Church fetes, etc. in my time. Mr H. Page was no longer around, but the fine store he founded was very much in evidence in the Market Place. The B. Cook who contributed a prize was, I take it, Ben Cook, the wherry owner, and maybe Mr Wright who remembered the Volunteers first field-day in 1859 and the first time 'they smelt powder' would be one of the Wrights who built the wherries."

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#### **NORFOLK CHRONICLE 4.12.1897**

The annual distribution of prizes to the members of 'C' Company, 3rd. V.B. Norfolk Regiment took place on Tuesday evening in the Town Hall in the presence of a large gathering of the principal residents of the town and neighbourhood, among whom were Mr. and Mrs. Purdy, Mrs. Gidney, Mrs. and Miss Morton, Mrs. Springfield, Mrs. Bansall, Mr. and Mrs. John Soame, Miss Cook, Mrs. Rising, Miss Gilbert and others.

The hall was appropriately decorated for the occasion by Mr. H. F. Proudfoot, and on the platform was a nice assortment of chrysanthemums, lent and prettily arranged by Dr. Turner. Mrs Purdy very gracefully presented the prizes, and at the close of the ceremony, Major Gidney, amid much cheering, moved a vote of thanks to her, and, alluding to the success of the company during the past year, stated that it had again won the battalion cup, thus proving it to be the best shooting company in the battalion.

During the year there had been 89 drills, and eight men had attended every drill, and six men only missed two. The efforts of the "local amateurs" at the recent tableaux entertainment, together with a donation of £5 from Mr. William Forster, had enabled the company to meet all claims and demands and there was now a credit balance of about £4. (Cheers)

The company were afterwards inspected by Col. Hyde, and dismissed. During the proceedings the band of the company discoursed music at intervals. Appended is the prize list:-

Corp. G. Moy	87	(?)	Prize given by Mrs. Cawston
Pte. J. Moy	81	£1/1/-	Mr. J.T. Spurrell
L/Cpl. Jacob Moy	81	£1	Col. Sapwell
Sgt. Tuddenham	78	afternoon tea service	(The ladies)
Sgt. Major Brawn	77	an epergne	Major Gidney
Corp. H.E. Spink	75	£1	Lt. Purdy
Pte. J.D. Partridge	75	£1	Major Archdale
Pte. G. Hill	74	£1	Mr. E. Hudson
Cpl. A.S. White	73	teapot	Mr. C.L. Buxton
L/Cpl. Rought	72	15/-	10/- Rev. J. Hoare 5/- Mr. Shephard
Pte. R. Grix	71	15/-	10/- Mr. B. Cook 5/- Mr. T. Hill
Pte. Yaxley	69	15/-	10/- Mr. C. Stapleton 5/-
			Mr. G. Durrell
Sgt. Wade	68	afternoon tea tray	Lady Orford
Lt. Purdy	68	butter cooler	Mr & Mrs R. Morton
Pte. E. Ingate	68	12/6	10/- Mr. H. Page 2/6 Rev. J. Cole
Pte. E.J. Grix	66	12/6	10/- Mr. Boyd 2/6 Mr. Ray
Pte. E.W. Pegg	65	12/6	10/- Mr. J. Soame & 2/6 a friend
Pte. D. Stackwood	65	10/-	Mr. H.G. Wright
Pte. J.R. Pilch	63	rug	The ladies
Pte. P. Green	63	10/-	Mr. W.H. Hackblock
Pte. J.D. Claxton	62	davenport	The ladies



Pte. E.D. Browne	62	plated egg stand	Mr. O. Carter
Pte. C. Williamson	61	10/-	Mr. C. Springfield
Pte. A Hornor	61	case of spoons	The ladies
Bugler Laxen	59	set of cruets	Mr. C. Gilbert
Pte. Larke	59	10/-	Mr. O. Corder
Pte. F. Browne	59	fruit dish	Mr. S.D. Bone
Pte. Rump	59	10/-	Mr. D.G. Nicholson
Pte. Tuttle	56	pair of salts	Mr. & Mrs. Woodhouse
Major Gidney	55	table cover	Mr. C.H. Ward
Pte. C. Pegg	53	10/-	5/- Mr. H.E. Cross 5/- Mr. C. Cross
Pte. R.T. Lane	53	10/-	5/- Mr. J. Breese 5/- Mr. J. Bourne
Pte. F. Poll	52	10/-	5/- Rev. E. Mack 5/- Dr. Dent
Pte. J. Barber Jnr.	51	7/6	5/- Mr. Carter 2/6 Mr. Brady
Pte. J.F. Bellward	50	goose	Mr. J. Goulder
Pte W.G. Broom	48	2 bottles of whisky and 2 bottles of gin	Messrs W. Pashley & H. Vince
Pte. H.W. Marjoram	48	umbrella	The ladies
Pte. Tortice	46	lamp	Mr. W. Bond
Pte. A. Williamson	44	1lb tobacco	Colour Sgt. Ward
Pte. Roe	41	bag	The ladies
Pte. R. Grimson	41	cask of ale	Messrs. Steward & Patteson
Pte. G. Burrell	38	cask of stout	Morgans Brewery
Pte. Pert	38	turkey	Mr. W. Case
Sgt. Shreeve	34	set of brushes	The ladies
Pte. J. Barber Snr.	33	cardigan jacket	Mr. J.P. Larke
Pte. F. Grix	32	lamp	Mr. F.W. Starling
Pte. Woods	32	goose	Mr. E.J. Bird
Pte. Gooderham	31	pair of trousers and hat.	Mr. G.W. Clarke & Mr. H.T. Wightman
Pte. Cornish	30	dressing case	Mr. and Miss Dale
Pte. W. Barber	30	½ doz tea spoons	Mr. M. Beck
Pte. Hunt	24	5/-	a friend
Col. Sgt. Ward	19	brace of pheasants	Mr. R.J.W. Purdy
L/Cpl. Miller	18	5 stone flour	Mr. T. Shreeve
Pte. C. Spink	16	pair of ducks	Mrs. J.H. Stedman
Pte. E. Mack	15	shoulder of mutton	Mr. W. Blofield
Cpl. A.R. Tuddenham	13	shoulder of mutton	Mr. D. Partridge
Bandmaster Bullock		pair of Japanese vases.	Mr. R. Bexfield
Pte. J. Suffling		½ doz. bottles of ale & stout and lunch cake	Mr. J.T. Sexton & Mr. H. Laxen
Pte. H. Miller		load of firewood	Mr. F. Culley
Pte. W. Blackstone		desk calendar	Mr. C. Clements

Later on there was a large muster of Volunteers and civilians (among whom were ex-sergeants Soame and Wright, service medals). At dinner, which was admirably served in the Assembly Room of the Black Boys Hotel by host. C. Stapleton, Major Gidney presided and was

supported by Col. Hyde; Lt.Col. Sapwell; Lt. Purdy; the Rev. H. Hildyard; Mr. G. Cawston; Mr. R.J.Martin; Mr. H.G. Wright; Mr. B. Cook; Mr. John Goulder; Mr. C.R. Dewhirst; Mr. R.J.W. Purdy; Trooper Cross (Royal Suffolk Hussars); Messrs. Robins, E.J. Bird; L. Ingate; M. Beck; W. Wade; H.F. Proudfoot; S.D. Bone and others. The loyal toasts were drunk with enthusiasm, and the national anthem was sung.

Mr. R.J. Purdy proposed - "*the Bishops, Clergy and ministers of all denominations*" remarking that he considered it incumbent upon those gentlemen to be generous in their line of thought and action and not to take extremes in anything. The Rev. W. Hildyard, rector of Wickmere, in reply, said he had formerly been a Volunteer and he was pleased to meet this company. He was glad they recognised a connecting link between the profession he represented and themselves, and indeed it was certainly a fact that there was something in common between them.

Mr. George Cawston submitted the toast - "*The Army, Navy and Reserve Forces*" and said that as an old member of the 1st. Middlesex A.V. he was strongly anxious to support the Volunteer movement. Col. Hyde responded, and after alluding to his 30 years service in the Norfolk Regiment, said he liked to come and look at 'C' Company as the men always turned out clean, and hung together so well and knew how to use their rifles (applause). He recommended them to go in for volley firing.

Mr. C.R. Dewhirst gave "*The Colonel and staff of the regiment*", and Col. Hyde replying said the battalion had had its time taken up with the new rifle, and the ranges were not all completed yet. Lt. Col. Sapwell, whose name was also connected with the toast, said he thought he had never seen 'C' Company better in numbers and appearance than at the present time. Mr. Wright, in proposing, "*Prosperity to 'C' Company*" took his hearers back 38 years when the company had its first field day, or as he put it, the first time they smelt powder. He told some interesting anecdotes in connection with the company at that period, and Major Gidney in reply stated that during that 38 years the company had only had four commanders and four

sergeant-instructors. Major Gidney then gave a resumé of what had been done during the past year

The company last year was 53 strong, and now it was 72 strong. Other toasts were - 'The Donors of prizes', Lt. Purdy, 'the non-commissioned officers', 'the Host', and 'the Ladies'. Songs were sung by Privates Suffling, Hill, Partridge, Woods, Peart, Larke, Proudfoot, and others; Private Marjoram accompanying.

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## **AYLSHAM PARISH WORKHOUSE**

**1775 - 1836**

**Julian Eve**

Aylsham had mostly solved the problem of housing the elderly, infirm and poor widows and children in the parish by using some tenements bequeathed by Thomas Cressy in 1616 for the use of the poor<sup>1</sup>. Four more tenements to house the poor were purchased in 1721-2 near the church. The parish, however, lacked a place to put the able-bodied paupers who were able to work if only work could be found for them. At Aylsham the increase in expenditure on the poor between 1770 and 1775, the amount doubling in these few years, probably triggered off the decision to build a workhouse and use it as a house of industry.

Knatchbull's General Workhouse Act of 1723 empowered single parishes to build workhouses and encouraged them to contract out the running of them. In Norfolk, however, little use was made of this act until the last quarter of the eighteenth century when the cost of poor relief rose alarmingly. It was hoped that the inmates of a house of industry would earn enough money to pay for most of the cost of their keep. It was intended that some houses might even become manufactories where the inmates worked looms or a hand mill or other machinery.



Aylsham erected its parish workhouse in 1775 at the top of Millgate on the two acre site where Thomas Cressy's charity poor houses were situated. The records of workhouse expenses first appear towards the end of that year<sup>2</sup>. There are payments for kindling, wood faggots (one and a half hundred at 16s 6d) and coal. There are other entries such as one on the 6th December 1775, "Brandy for the sick people at the workhouse 1s 2d", or on 31st December "for child-bed linen for three women at ye workhouse 4s 6d", which indicate that the workhouse must have been in use. In the spring of 1776 the chimneys were swept (cost 3s) and £2 14s 3d paid for installing a coal range at the workhouse. "Emptying the necessaries" cost 2s.

Mr George Hunt Holley, solicitor, churchwarden and the highest rated man in the parish (at £205) arranged for the building loan. The Overseers repaid him £100 in 1775 and the same sum in 1776 "towards the reduction of the mortgage on the workhouse, leaving £250 as the principal money still due". Although there were additional payments "to Edward Brooks for work at the workhouse and for stopping the gap in the workhouse pightle" the building seems to have cost under £500.

The rules and details of the diet, drawn up in 1788, have survived<sup>3</sup> and were quite liberal for the times. Unfortunately there are no other records covering this early period of the workhouse except for a few entries in the parish overseer's accounts. There is an entry, however, for 1793 in the Aylsham Vestry minutes that reads: "Agreed Robert Clabburn, that he and his wife shall continue as master and mistress in the workhouse at a salary of £10 instead of taking the earnings of the poor". Prior to this, then, the paupers must have been farmed out.

Many other parishes built workhouses at this time. Watton built theirs in 1774 and farmed out the paupers to a contractor. The master of the house was to provide meat, drink and firing for nine shillings a month per head. In return he was allowed to keep whatever the inmates could earn.<sup>4</sup>

At about this time the parish officers at Aylsham decided to appoint a Committee of Assistance (a form of select vestry) which later was

often referred to as the Workhouse Committee. Two new posts were created for the men who headed this committee. They were "Clerk Visitor" and "Guardian of the Poor". The Visitor called at the workhouse every week and dealt with the day to day problems. The committee met once a month, and the Guardian of the Poor was paid a salary (£30 in 1815).

The Easter Vestry meeting of 1791 decided that only the Committee of Assistance or the Overseer could decide on payments to the poor. Nevertheless parish vestry meetings should be held when necessary and furthermore that as well as notice being given in church the Sunday before the parish meeting, the principal inhabitants of the town should be informed personally by the clerk who was to receive half a crown for his trouble. They held five parish meetings in 1791.

In 1803 the workhouse was improved. Money was raised from five men of the parish who each lent £50 at 5%. The five men were Robert Lloyd, tailor; William Roofe, baker and John Cook, Francis Bulwer and John Warnes described as gentlemen. The interest and the principal sum lent were to be repaid as a charge on the Poor Rate. The actual loan agreements,<sup>5</sup> signed on behalf of the parish by John B Collier, visitor and John Holley, guardian of the poor, state that the loan is for "rebuilding, repairing, fitting up and furnishing a convenient house, building and office for the reception, accommodation and employment of the poor of the said parish". When completed the house could sleep 100 inmates.

From this date onwards an occupancy record was kept and has survived. It records the number of paupers in the house each week, under various headings, until its closure in 1836. The columns are headed Adult Male, Adult Female, Aged between 12 and 20, Under 12, and Diseased (infirm, lame and blind). Compare this with the inmates of the Poor Law Union workhouses after 1834 where they were classified under very different headings.

From these weekly totals the yearly averages can be calculated. Initially the House was used as a house of industry and only able-bodied

paupers admitted (with their families) as they were expected to work and help pay towards their keep. The Workhouse Committee minutes contain entries such as "Mr Morris [the paid overseer] to obtain material for making mats and also a loom" and "Sam West to earn by making beehives at the workhouse at 3s a week ... the parish to find the straw". The committee decided to sell the hives at 9d each.

Gradually the idea of maintaining a house of industry was abandoned and it was mainly used to house the long term homeless and impotent poor. This can be seen from a graph where the number of infirm inmates steadily rises. This is shown in a simpler form below:

### PERCENTAGE OF INFIRM INMATES IN AYLSHAM PARISH WORKHOUSE

The percentage of infirm inmates depended on the number of able-bodied in the house, but their numbers rose steadily.

In winter when work was scarce or the weather was severe the numbers in all categories shot up but even in the busiest times only one or two families were admitted in any one week.

YEAR	1804	1809	1814	1819	1824	1829	1835
% INFIRM	8	25	32	56	62	35	42%

In 1805 soon after its refurbishment the workhouse was visited by James Neild who had inspected many Norfolk houses and exposed the awful conditions in Norwich. He wrote <sup>6</sup> "... at Aylsham is one of the best I have seen ... the buildings well constructed, the rooms spacious and lofty and well ventilated and remarkably clean; the diet very good and the poor well attended to, in every respect". It seems then that Aylsham had a house to be proud of even if it was expensive.

Another book relating to the workhouse has survived - the Workhouse Clothing Book. It is headed "Apparel given to the Paupers in the House" and runs from 1803 to 1804 then starts again in 1817 and continues until 1826. In 1803 inmates are kitted out over a period of weeks but by 1817 whole sets of clothing are supplied on admission. A typical entry is on October 11th 1817 when James Spinks is given 2 pairs of shoes, 2 pairs of stockings, 2 shirts, two pairs of breeches, 2 jackets, 1 waistcoat, 2 handkerchiefs and 2 hats.

A set of clothes for a woman was as follows: (for Mary Watling) - -

*2 petticoats, 2 shifts, 2 pair of stockings, 1 gown, 2 aprons, 2 handkerchiefs, 1 pair of pattens and a pair of shoes.*

The prices are recorded. It cost £2 2s 8d to clothe a man and £1 16s 11d for a woman. The difference being the cost of men's breeches, jacket and shoes. A workhouse Admission Book <sup>7</sup> also survives and covers the year 1803 to 1804 and 1823 to 1835. 1,285 admissions are recorded over these 13 years for 450 persons. Clearly the same families passed in and out as demand for their labour fluctuated but some do appear to have been admitted on only one occasion. Husband and wives were admitted together with any family they had. Some families spent more time in the house than outside and a few became permanent residents. Some children were admitted without their parents.

There were births (eleven) and deaths (forty-nine) in the house and one woman died in "childbed". She was a member of the Watling family, a large family of about fifteen members, some of whom lived for more than ten years in the house. Frances Watling died at the age of nineteen, six days after the birth of her son Robert. She probably died of puerperal fever. She had been in the workhouse since the age of nine and been sent out to service when she reached the age of thirteen to Mr Cory of Aylsham. She returned to the house in 1833 for a few months but left in April only to return pregnant but unmarried in October. Her baby son, Robert, survived the birth only to die sixteen weeks later.

Another unruly member of the Watling family was Sarah, probably



Frances's elder sister. She entered the house at the age of fifteen and soon after was hired to Mr Lemon of Swafeld "for a year at £1 wages". She returned to the house at the age of nineteen and was put out to service at Mr Pratt's. The next note records her being sent to Walsingham goal for 21 days. she was put to service the following year to the New Inn at Wolterton but she ran away and was sent to spend another spell in Walsingham goal. She drifted in and out of the house over the next few years and gave birth, in the house, to a boy (William) in 1833. She left the house when the baby was three weeks old and we hear no more of her.

The House always held quite a few children (under 12) - usually they comprised 20 to 25% but at times of severe unemployment whole families were admitted and their numbers went up.

Inmates who broke the rules once too often were liable to be sent to the goal at Walsingham, but one poor child, Henry Spink aged seven, was sent to Norwich Castle for "cutting his shoes".

A typical story of a poor boy might be that of Robert Scott who was born in the house on 27 July 1823. He left with his mother at four weeks when she found employment and did not return until he was eight. From then on he and his mother were admitted on and off until he reached the age of eleven when he was bound out as an apprentice to a chimney sweeper. Not a happy ending. In 1824 one child, John Carter, aged 13 was sent to sea.

Between 1826 and 1830 Frederick Bloss of Newmarket took five children aged between 10 and 12 as three year apprentices (presumably as stable boys). He was to provide clothes, spending money and food. A Mr Bryce of Newmarket also took a child, Matthew Whitham aged 12, as an apprentice but a few years later he is back at the workhouse and being sent to Walsingham goal for 21 days hard labour. His future perhaps was not so bleak, as we might think, for he set sail for America on 20th April 1834 with several other people from Aylsham.

We should take note that the number of paupers receiving outdoor relief always exceeded the number receiving indoor relief, and even when

Poor Law Unions were formed with large central workhouses, the ratio remained something like 4:1.<sup>8</sup>

The Gilbert Act was passed in 1782 and enabled parishes to incorporate without resorting to an expensive act of parliament but unlike other parishes Aylsham continued with its own parish workhouse. It did not join the six adjacent parishes to the north, when in 1792 under the Gilbert Act, they formed a Union centred on Oulton; nor did Aylsham join with Buxton to the south when nine adjacent parishes became incorporated in 1806 under a private Act to share Buxton workhouse. It was not until two years after the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act was passed that Aylsham was finally obliged to join the vast new Aylsham Poor Law Union of 46 parishes.

When in 1836 Dr Kay, the Assistant Commissioner for Norfolk, came to set up the Aylsham Union he inspected the parish workhouse and he considered it to be very extravagant. He claimed the inmates were better fed than the Army and that the diet was "monstrous".

When the new Aylsham Poor Law Union was finally set up the parish lost its independence, because the newly formed Unions were managed by new large Boards of Guardians under the direct control of the Poor Law Commissioners in London. The last of the Aylsham workhouse inmates left on 26th September 1836 and the twelve men, eight women, two teenagers and four children for whom no homes could be found were transferred to either Oulton or Buxton workhouses which now served the whole Union. The Aylsham parish workhouse was then used by the Union to house "aged men, aged women and idiots"<sup>9</sup>. It was closed in March 1837 as being "surplus to requirements".

### **Postscript**

The 46 parishes that formed Aylsham Union were served by the workhouses at Buxton and Oulton until 1849 when a new workhouse with an infirmary was built on a twelve acre site at Cawston Road in Aylsham. The design was based on Blickling Hall. It could hold 600

inmates and cost £12,000. Management of the House was taken over by the County Council in 1929.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES:

1. John Sapwell, "History of Aylsham" p 102.
2. Aylsham Overseers Accounts 1721 - 1750. Town Hall Archives.
3. NRO PD 232/26
4. Minutes Watton Vestry Meeting 4th October 1776. NRO Watton parish deposits.
5. NRO MC 382/168, 733x6. Two of the five sponsors who put up £50 each made over the capital sum with the yearly interest to the trustees of the "Friendly Society holden at the Anchor" .
6. "Gentlemen's Magazine" October 1805.
7. Tom Mollard has indexed and analysed the records of the Aylsham Workhouse Admissions Book and I have made use of the printed and bound volume he has presented to the Aylsham Archives.
8. Ann Digby, "Pauper Palaces" table 4a & p 108, also the "Abstract of Returns Relative to the Expense and Maintenance of the Poor" for 1803.
9. Dr James Kay's letter to the Poor Law Commissioners of 17 May 1836. Crowley and Reid "The Poor Law in Norfolk 1700-1850".

## SOCIETY NEWS

**History of the North Walsham & Dilham Canal** - On February 22nd. we were entertained by Eric Reading to a slide show illustrating the history of the North Walsham & Dilham Canal. Of all the county's waterways this is probably the least known, even to some Norfolk people. We followed its history from the very beginnings to the final days. Unlike the Aylsham navigation, this canal did survive the 1912 floods, and lingered on for many years before the effects of rail and road transport brought about its end. During all its lifetime, it was never a very good financial proposition, and the limited flow of water meant that there could never be a heavy wherry traffic to justify its existence.

It did flow through some very scenic parts of Norfolk, and although much of it has disappeared, its route can still be traced and some parts



are still navigable to very small craft. After watching some very good slides, we can now count ourselves amongst the few people who do now know where the North Walsham & Dilham Canal was. **TWM**

**The Tudors at home** - Katrina Siliprandi addressed a well-attended meeting at the Friendship Club on how our Tudor forebears lived. Ms. Siliprandi who is the Education Development Officer for the Norfolk Museums Service began with some well selected slides showing types of Tudor houses and the way they developed. The Tudor period marked the beginnings of a slow rise in living standards generally, although if you had been one of the unfortunate peasant class you would have hardly noticed the difference. It was interesting to see that as buildings improved people were quick to use them to show off their increasing wealth and status by the quality of the building styles. It impressed the neighbours and shows that nothing changes!

From the buildings, Ms Siliprandi moved on to a description of typical household goods, based on a household inventory of Alderman Suckling of Norwich. These she illustrated with original artefacts brought from the museum, and for her finale, we were actually allowed to handle the pieces for ourselves - a rare opportunity. Ms Siliprandi had gone to great trouble to bring so much material with her for us to examine, and it was much appreciated.

It is easy to feel, sometimes, that we are already pretty well informed about the subject of most talks, but there is always something to learn. I never knew how people made mathematical calculations in the days of Roman numerals. Now I do, after seeing a replica of the counting board and the "jetons" used. Now I can understand how they did it, but I am still glad that we have moved on to Arabic numerals. **TWM**

**History of Taverham** - On Thursday, 26th. April, our scheduled lecture should have been *Norfolk Rural life - a pictorial past*, by Martin Collier. For reasons not entirely clear, the lecturer was unavailable at the last minute, and was replaced in our programme by Mrs. Judy Sims. Judy Sims is the editor of the Norfolk Federation diary of meetings, editor of the NAHRG Quarterly and organiser of the Young Archaeologists Club. We are extremely grateful to Mrs. Sims for standing in at such short notice, and giving an excellent lecture on the



history of Taverham, as Diana Polhill records:-

**Recent research on Taverham by Judy Sims** – The Friendship Hall was full for the last talk of the season on the 26th of April. Mrs Judy Sims kindly took the place of the planned speaker at short notice to speak about her recent researches on Taverham. This was based on some thirty years of passionate study, delving into archives, field walking with scarcely a stone unturned and enthusiastic consultation with specialists in many aspects of history and archaeology.

Taverham slopes up from a great S-bend in the River Wensum to the sandy ridge bearing the ancient Walsingham Way, now the road to Fakenham, and beyond towards Thorpe Marriot. Evidence of successive settlements go back to the stone age, with Saxon and Viking pottery in the area around the church. Mediæval maps indicate the long persistence of field names from Viking days, apparently rendered in a Danish vocabulary. The wealth of the area is indicated by the mention of 350 sheep in the Domesday book, many more than in neighbouring settlements. There were two mills in Saxon times. Taverham became a manor of the cathedral priory and terriers preserved in the library provide a rich source of information on the tenancy and gradual consolidation of holdings. It has been possible to map out the furlongs of open fields and plot individual holdings and subleases over the expanse of the Taverham slope, the upper ridge used for grazing and woods. In 1560 there were 14 different tenants working strips on 48 precincts on the furlongs. One of the most exciting discoveries has been the location of the lost village of Keswick. Literally Cheese Farm, Keswick was thought to be the place of that name in Cringleford, but in the 1460s a letter from Paston's chaplain clearly indicates a hamlet between Taverham and Thorpe Marriot. Recent field walks on the relevant farms have yielded abundant pottery, going back to Roman times. Unfortunately aerial surveys are precluded by the proximity to Norwich Airport.

In later times the tenants were powerful enough to consolidate holdings and harass assessors from the priory, which still had a claim on timber, and even changed routes of access around the woods to confuse them. At the end of the eighteenth century the Branthwaite family acquired the lease by a strange arrangement with the Government paying £3,299 16s 7d towards a reduction of the National

Debt in a scheme devised by the Pitt administration faced with the overwhelming costs of the Napoleonic wars. Maps dated 1802 depict the individual farms in great detail, even showing individual trees. Wealth was increased with the development of the paper mill and by 1815 the Micklethwait family owned parts of Attlebridge as well as Taverham. By 1850 John Micklethwait found the old hall incommodious and, despite legal protests from his brother Frederick, commissioned the new hall, designed by Brandon, a London architect. As a rector-gentleman, spending the season in London and much taken up with hunting and shooting, he took fairly short shrift of local affairs. When in 1860 the vicar reported the church to be in a parlous state, with the walls about to collapse, John agreed to pay £288 to rebuild the south aisle, with the proviso that any residual stone should be delivered to his garden. The church was already much modified after being struck by lightning in 1459. The floor and doors were replaced and signs of the fire were recently found beneath the flagstones. Judy continues to seek links between the many facets of Taverham in its landscape, deposits, buildings and records, and we look forward to being able to read the story she is writing and hopes to publish before too long.

**Diana Polhill**

**Aylsham Inns and Public Houses** - Members will recall the excellent talk given by Elizabeth Gale following the AGM in 1998, on Aylsham Inns. Elizabeth said that the talk was a prelude to a book which she intended to produce on the subject. We can now record that the book has now appeared (see pp.190/91 for full details) Judging by the large attendance at that meeting, there is clearly a great interest in the subject, and the book should find a ready sale.

**Outing to Wisbech** - By the time this issue of the *Journal* reaches you, the outing to Wisbech will already have taken place. I hope to publish a "write-up" on that visit in the next issue. On the subject of "write-ups" of meetings and visits, it was proposed at the last committee meeting that copies of the "write-up" in this *Journal* should also be sent to the *Aylsham Post* and the Parish Magazine. This should give wider publicity to the society's programme, and would be even more useful if the *North Norfolk News* was also supplied with a copy. There are many

interested people in the neighbouring villages who do not receive the *Aylsham Post*, or the Parish Magazine who would be interested in the society's activities.

**Congratulations - To Mrs Molly Cook**, one of our members recently honoured for her work as a member for many years, of the British Red Cross. According to a recent report in the North Norfolk News, Molly was awarded the society's Badge of Honour in recognition of a lifetime's 'devoted service' to the organisation. Molly joined the Red Cross in 1962. She served as Detachment Commandant between 1965 and 1974 during which time membership grew from 8 to 22, and she organised training in topics including home nursing, first aid, infant welfare and atomic bomb procedures. She also helped with the house-to-house collection, and with first aid duties at the Aylsham and Norfolk Shows, horse events, Cromer beach hut, major services at Norwich Cathedral and other events.

In 1970 she represented the detachment at a Buckingham Palace garden party marking the centenary of the British Red Cross. She was a regular helper at St. Michael's Hospital in the occupational therapy and hydrotherapy departments. This is by no means a complete list of all the activities in which she is involved. I for one only see our members only in terms of their membership of the local history society, and this is a useful reminder to me that our members often wear many hats, and have busy and active involvement in many other areas.

**TWM**

**Future Programme** - Our committee, as usual, is busy during the Spring and Summer months planning a winter programme for our members. Most of the arrangements for the series of public lectures held at the Friendship Club are already completed, but a few still remain to be finalised. Details of the full programme will be published in the September issue.

Arrangements for the **Day Classes** seem to be finalised, and unless some natural disaster occurs in the meantime, Charles Lewis will give a series of lectures on *Norfolk Ships and Seafarers*. There will be ten lectures before Christmas with the option of a further five after Christmas. It should be a good series of lectures. Charles Lewis is the former curator of the Maritime Museum at Yarmouth, and is very



involved in the 'Lydia Eva' Trust which is striving to preserve the last surviving drifter trawler currently moored at Lowestoft. Charles is also very involved, along with your editor, in the plans for the new 'Norfolk Nelson Museum' containing the Ben Burgess Nelson Memorabilia Collection, which will be opening early next year on the South Quay at Great Yarmouth, so his credentials are of the highest.

Other useful dates for your diary of events taking place during the summer, are listed below:-

## DIARY DATES

Below is a selection of diary dates listed in the March-September Diary published by the Federation of Norfolk Historical and Archæological Organisations. It is only a selection and includes those which might appeal to our members and which are close enough to Aylsham to be easy to get to.

### June 2001

- |                 |   |           |
|-----------------|---|-----------|
| Saturday 9th.   | <i>Putting the Roman army into fiction</i> , by Simon Scarrow.  | [TBT]     |
| Tuesday, 12th   | <i>Parish apprentices</i> , by Lilian Gibbens   | [FHS/S]   |
| Saturday, 16th. | <i>Fotheringay</i> , by Phil Stone  | [RIIS]    |
| Saturday 16th.  | <i>Maps as a source for local historians and archaeologists</i> , by Chris Barringer..                      | [UEA D/S] |
| Tuesday, ??.    | <i>Changing nature; farming in Norfolk 1700 - 1900</i> by Tom Williamson. Blakeney Village Hall             | [BAHS]    |
| Saturday 23rd.  | <i>Introduction to Geophysical surveying</i> , by Peter Carnell.  | [UEA D/S] |
| Sunday 24th.    | <i>Plantation Garden: Special opening 2pm; music and events.</i>  | [PGPT]    |
| Saturday, 30th. | <i>Recording and interpreting Medieval churches</i> , by Ian Hinton (with practical work in Waveney valley) | [UEA D/S] |



## July 2001

- Wednesday, 4th. *The Lordship of Striguil*, by John Dent [NHS]  
Thursday, 5th. *New Caley chocolate*, by Terry Long [NIAS]  
Tuesday, 10th. *Angels in hell*, by Brian Oldham [FHS/S]  
Saturday 14th. *Early aviation and the Pioneer Aerial  
photographers*, by Derek Edwards. [UEA D/S]  
Saturday 21st. *Landscape Archaeology, Past, Present and Future*, by  
Christopher Taylor. [UEA D/S]  
Saturday, 28th. *150 years of archaeology in East Anglia*, by John  
Davies and Kate Sussams. Shire Hall, Norwich  
UEA D/S]

## August 2001

- Tuesday, 14th. *The I.G.I.* by Simon Pawley [FHS/S]

## September 2001

- Thursday, 6th. *Old Drovers*, by Janet Smith [NIAS]  
Friday, 14th. *Royal Gardens*, by Roger Last [RS]  
Tuesday, 18th. A. G. M. followed by, *The shame and degradation of  
local Victorian poverty*, by Howard Fears, Blakeney  
Methodist Chapel. [BAHS]  
Wednesday, 19th *Sir John Soane in Norfolk*, by Tony Egglestone  
[CHS]

## KEY

- [BAHS] **Blakeney Area Historical Society.** Meetings held in the  
Methodist Chapel at 7.30pm. Details from: P.Peake, Crows  
Nest, Back Lane, Blakeney NR25 7NP.  
[CHS] **Cringleford Historical Society.** Playing Field Pavilion,  
Oakfields Rd. Cringleford at 7.30pm. Sec. J. Bellinger,  
30 Brettingham Ave. Cringleford, NR4 6XG.

- [FHS/S] **Family History Society (South).** Meet at Barclay Room, Roydon Village Hall, Roydon
- [NHS] **Norfolk Heraldry Society.** Meet at United Reform Church, Princes St. Norwich at 7.45, unless otherwise stated. Sec. A Marriage, 22 Cintra Rd. Norwich. NR1 4AE.
- [NIAS] **Norfolk Industrial Archaeological Society.** Meet at Charing Cross Centre, 17-19 St. John Maddermarket, Norwich, at 7.30 pm. Sec. c/o The Bridewell Museum, Norwich
- [PGPT] **Plantation Garden Preservation Trust.** Details from G. Mason. 58 College Road, Norwich.
- [RS] **Reepham Society.** Meet at the Bircham Centre, Market Place, Reepham 8pm. Sec: R. Cox, 49-51 Station Rd, Reepham. NR10 4LJ
- [RIIS] **Richard III Society.** Meetings held at the Assembly House. 2.30pm. £2 Sec: A. Hayek, 20 Rowington Rd. Norwich.
- [TBT] **The Battlefield Trust.** Meetings held in the Assembly House, Norwich. 2.30pm. Contact. M.Rayner, Meadow Cottage, 33 High Green, Brooke, Norwich NR15 1HR.
- [UEA D/S] **University of East Anglia - Day Schools.** held on Saturday at Wensum Lodge, unless otherwise stated. Fees for all, unless stated otherwise.

—ooOoo—

## **BACONSTHORPE SCHOOL      Carrie Miller**

Baconsthorpe School is one of the earliest village schools in Norfolk, founded in 1816 on charitable trust, and fifty years before the "*every child was entitled to an elementary education*" Act was passed. A plot of land was donated by James Holley Esq. of Blickling, for the building of a school to educate the children of Baconsthorpe and neighbouring parishes.

It is one of the first National Schools in the county. The Church of England National Society for the education of the Poor in Principles of

the Established Church had only been founded in 1811 and the Society contributed to the cost of building the school, most of the money was raised by donations, subscriptions and those that could not afford to give money gave their time in labouring, clearing the site, digging the foundations and just generally helping. The Reverend Theophilus Girdlestone (Rector of Baconsthorpe) was overseer for the construction and setting up of the school.

During the building of the school, there arose a dispute with the builder over the building cost. The estimate cost given to the Rev. Girdlestone by Mr Blythe of Cromer (the builder) was £366.4s.8d, the final cost had risen to £414.18s.4d. There were several letters written by Mr Blythe to the Rev. Girdlestone giving reasons for the additional costs. The roof should have cost £21, but an additional £3.11s.4¾d. was charged. Mr Blythe had made the cupola over the bell different to the instructions received from the architect, the bell split and the cupola had to be altered at a cost of 10 shillings. Additional charges were also incurred because the window frames had to be changed along with the seats and posts in the school room being repositioned. Mr Blythe had to arrange for two journeys by horse and wagon to the port of Cley to collect timber. The Rev. Girdlestone considered only one journey to be necessary, he therefore decided the final bill should be reduced by £6.6s. Mr Blythe was greatly distressed by this, as he was now in Norwich Castle Jail, where he had been imprisoned for debt. He wrote on the 1st. June explaining the reasons for the additional costs. In July he must have been released from prison, as he wrote from Cromer in his last letter still wishing to be paid in full, but there appears to be no evidence that he was paid any further money.

The school room was built to accommodate 120 children and measured 45ft x 20ft. In 1865 further money was raised by donations and subscriptions to improve and repair the school. The floor was boarded, heating installed and cloakrooms built. All children at that time were expected to contribute towards the cost of the school; a levy of 1/- a year per child, no more than 2/- per family, was charged, if they had more than two children attending the school. By 1870 the Education For All Act up to the age of thirteen was finally passed.

In 1875 a new house for the headmaster was built. He had previously lived in the small room at the East End (14ft x 17ft), this was then used as the infants class room. To raise money for the house a rate was levied on the parishes of Baconsthorpe and Hempstead, with government grants, the balance of the cost of the building was made up from donations in the local area. Matlaske, Plumstead, Barningham and Bodham sent their children to Matlaske and Bodham who by now had their own Board School. In 1880 attendance at school was made compulsory. The Education Act of 1944 transferred responsibility for maintenance of the school to the Local Education Authority, and additional land was purchased in 1945 to build a canteen on the western end of the school.

In 1956, Sheringham had opened a secondary school for 11-15 year olds and so the older children of Baconsthorpe were transferred to this new school. Baconsthorpe school at this time had further improvements by the addition of new wash-basins and sanitation, electric lighting having been put in earlier (plans drawn up in 1951 for lighting and new drainage etc). In 1961 by Order in Council (equivalent to an Act of Parliament) ownership of the school was transferred to the Diocesan Board of Finance Ltd on the school becoming surplus to requirements of the Norfolk Education Committee (at this time a possible closure within five years). From 1816 to 1961 the Rector and Churchwardens were trustees of the Charitable Trust.

In 1983, after 167 years of educating children of the area, the school closed due to a fall in numbers attending, although Baconsthorpe had taken some of the children from Matlaske School which closed in the early 1960's. Since the closure, primary school children now go to Holt Primary School. Also in 1983 the building was scheduled as grade I listed, as it seems to be the earliest purpose built school in the District and except for the modern extension to the west, is unaltered in any detail.

The parish leased the school as a village hall from the Diocesan Board of Finance Ltd. in June 1985, and on the 31st October 1986, Sir Charles Mott-Radclyffe officially opened the building as a village hall.



In January 1992 the Diocesan Board agreed that the village could purchase the building for £10,000, so grants were obtained from the District Council, Rural Development Council and money raised by various events by the village hall committee. A new kitchen block and washroom facilities have been built at the rear side of the premises, this again involved more fundraising, plus grants from the Millennium Commission.

Not far from the village hall is the 13/14th century parish church of St Mary's which is worth a visit and holds monuments/tombs to the Hayden family who lived at nearby Baconsthorpe Hall (now known as Baconsthorpe Castle). The roof timbers are carved with angels but also carved amongst the angels are two monkeys - can you find them?

—ooOoo—

## HUMPHRY REPTON

In the March issue of the *Journal*, (Vol.6 No.5) we featured a list of drawings by Humphry Repton. This list had first appeared in *Collectanea Topographica et Genealogica*, in 1843, and a copy of that list had been kindly supplied by Ron Fiske. The list records 28 drawings of buildings and scenes in our part of the county, all dated 1779/80. The list was described as the '*contents of an oblong volume of drawings in India ink, made by Humphry Repton. . . This book remains in the possession of his son, John Adey Repton*'

I queried whether the book still existed, and if it did, where was it to be found now? This query was picked up by Martin Stiles, writing from Wolterton Hall, who confirmed that the volume of drawings does still exist. Martin writes:-

The book of ink/pencil/wash sketches is now in the Castle Museum Collection. I consulted it a couple of years ago for the drawing of Sall church. Interestingly, there is a pencil note added above the drawing (by Repton?) - '*a ladylike drawing, i.e. incorrect*', which I am sure will not go down well with your lady members!

Three Repton sketches/drawings were engraved by W. Watts, and

published by Watts in 1779 et seq. in his *The seats of the Nobility and Gentry in a collection of the most interesting and picturesque views, engraved by W. Watts*. Those used are, Wolterton and Westwick, 'drawn by T. Hearne from a sketch by H. Repton' according to the inscription as depicted in the book, and one of Beeston Hall, seat of Jacob Preston, Esq.

Unfortunately, the Castle Museum is currently closed for major refurbishment, and its contents are inaccessible. However, it should shortly be re-opening and the list in the *Journal* should then prove useful for anyone wishing to consult the Repton drawings. I am grateful to Martin for this additional information which will make the original article much more useful. I am also grateful in that Martin's letter dispels the notion that I have long held, that no one else, except the editor, ever reads the *Journal*. Thank you, Martin. **Ed.**

-oooOooo

## AYLSHAM OLD HALL

A few weeks ago Aylsham Old Hall, one of the National Trust properties, although not usually open to the public, was advertised in the local press for sale on a 99 year lease. The usual glossy brochure prepared by the estate agent gives a very attractive picture of the Hall as it is now. I felt that members might be interested in the earlier history of the building, and below I have reproduced an account of the Hall from a typescript in the Town Archives. Unfortunately, there is nothing to indicate who wrote the account or who placed it in the archives, so it is not possible to make proper acknowledgement to the author. It merits reproduction and this seems a very appropriate time to do it.

Aylsham Old Hall is one of the most satisfactory of Norfolk's late seventeenth century brick houses. It was almost certainly completed in 1686, the date picked out in wrought iron letters on the east side of the central chimney stack, and considerable alterations in the early nineteenth century changed, but did not spoil the original design. The house came to the National Trust in 1940 when Blickling Hall and its estate were bequeathed by the 11th Marquis of Lothian. It seems that the

Old Hall did not become part of the Blickling Estate before the middle of the eighteenth century for although it is never referred to by name in the few relevant documents of that period, there is good reason to believe that it formed part of an estate in Erpingham and Aylsham purchased for £6,500 by John Hobart, 1st Earl of Buckinghamshire, from Thomas Wyndham of Cromer in 1751. Although the Hobarts had been Lords of the Manor of Aylsham since it was granted to Sir Henry in 1622 it was not until this significant purchase that they acquired any important land holding in the parish.

The Cromer Wyndhams were not the only family to build in the Bure valley in the late seventeenth century, the area is notable for its generous scatter of handsome classical red brick houses. The navigability of the Bure was a critical factor in the development of the region and the richness of its domestic architecture is a measure of the vigorous local economy around 1700. Coal from the North East came through Yarmouth as far as Coltishall while grain was exported by the same route and small craft laden with pottery and other domestic goods made their way to Aylsham itself.

#### DESCRIPTION - Exterior

Though small in scale the Old Hall has many of the architectural pretensions of a much grander house, and a charming birdseye view painted in the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century as the overmantle of the Saloon on the first floor shows the hall and its setting as they appeared or were conceived at that time. The house occupies the centre of the picture, to the right is a plantation of small trees, to the left the ornate range of contemporary farm buildings which we see today, and in the foreground the avenue with its paling fence dividing it from the Blickling road. The outline of the garden shown in the painting is still clear today. The formal canal on the the south side survives, but there was a handsome brick belvedere to the east of it and on the north side lay a formal garden with four lawns divided by axial paths converging on a statue. The principal facade is of seven bays with recessed central section. The angles are enriched by rusticated quoins of moulded brick. Strong horizontals are provided by the heavy brick stringcourse and the white painted timber modillion cornice beneath the



eaves. The door with its handsome segmental pediment and ionic pilasters makes a dignified centrepiece. Its arched head is a product of the early nineteenth century alterations which lowered the pitch of the roof and substituted almost square sash windows for the tall and narrow mullioned and transomed casements shown in the birdseye view. Two surviving windows of this late seventeenth century type can be seen on the North and East elevations. Originally lead downpipes with large rectangular hoppers placed between the windows of the projecting bays added to the verticality of the design, as did a steeply pitched roof with whitened finials and a miscellany of large and small dormers.

The details of the facade, especially the quoins, stringcourse and the pediment of the central door with its pulvinated frieze are a close match for those of the West Wing at Felbrigg, built to designs proposed by the gentleman architect William Samwell in 1675 for William Wyndham 1. Samwell, who is an important figure in the development of the English late seventeenth century classical house, died in 1676 and is unlikely to have played any part in the supervision of the Felbrigg work. When it was carried forward to completion in 1687 another builder must have taken over the plans and it is probable that this man, probably a local master bricklayer, was responsible also for the design of the Old Hall. There are several other buildings in the Bure Valley which show a similar dependence on the design of the late seventeenth century work at Felbrigg (notably the Limes at Coltishall and, in its unrestored state, the former Vicarage at Aylsham) but the implications of the documents that the Old Hall was built by the Cromer branch of the family that built Samwell's wing at Felbrigg makes it the most significant member of this architectural group.

## Interior

The generously planned entrance hall has handsome doorcases with curved pediments that lead into the principal rooms and its focus is the large contemporary fireplace surrounded like so many in the house by the thick bolection moulding of the period. Much of the door furniture is contemporary and repays close inspection. Several of the rooms are panelled. The Dining room to the left is one of the best examples, but the richest is the little room at the foot of the stairs which has an ornate



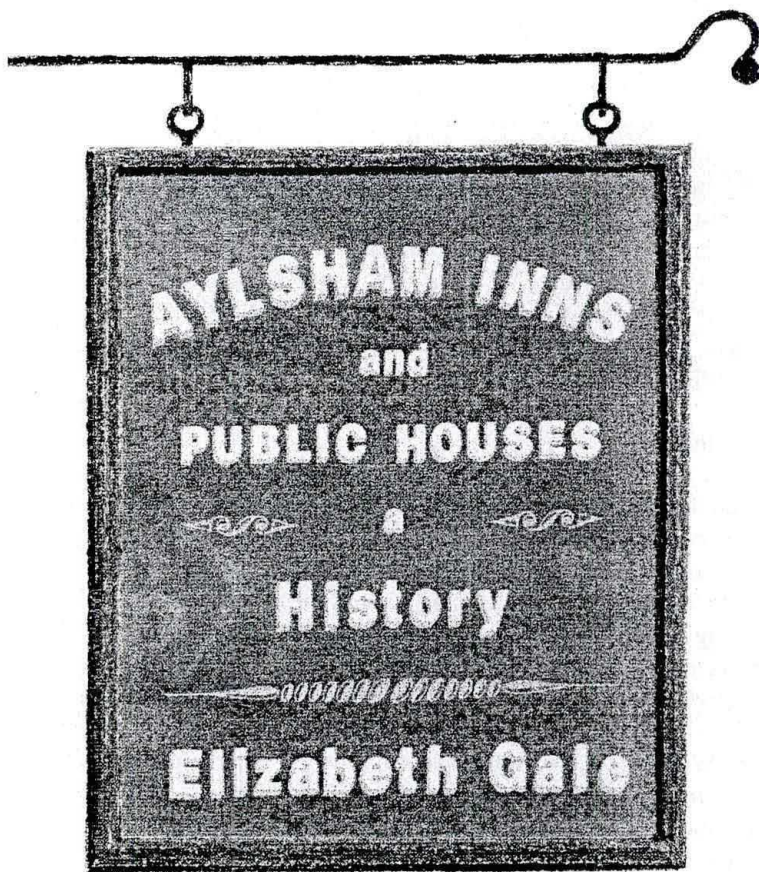
carved cornice and overmantle and may have been used as a study. At this period it was common to cover panelling with simulated marbling, an example of this treatment, more decorative than illusionistic, survives in a part of the saloon that was partitioned off at an early date. The Saloon, (now a bedroom), was the main reception room of the seventeenth century house and the staircase that leads to it is therefore an imposing one. Lit by one of the few surviving late seventeenth century mullioned and transomed windows, it rises in two flights with a heavy moulded rail supported on turned and twisted balusters. The full length portraits here are part of a set commissioned for Blickling by the 1st Earl of Buckinghamshire in the mid eighteenth century. Painted in about 1730 by William Aikman, they represent in descending order on the stairs, Henry Kelsall, Sir Robert Rich and the Hon. William Lemman. The remainder of the set in matching Kent frames can be seen at Blickling.

### Recent History

The Old Hall has not since the eighteenth century or even earlier been the permanent residence of a family, but was let to a variety of tenants including clergymen, retired army officers and the younger sons of county families, a fact which may account for the survival of so much of the original architectural features which a long term owner occupier might have been tempted to alter or remove.

A good deal of repair work has been undertaken since the building came into the ownership of the Trust. In 1950 and 1951 the nineteenth century Welsh slate roof was replaced with the present pantiles. The walls on either side of the front door were partially rebuilt in 1963 and, in the same year, the south wall of the building was extensively rebuilt to protect the house from further damage being caused by differential settlement. The Edwardian timber summerhouse at the head of the canal was rethatched with Norfolk reed in 1972. The gate and paling fence at the foot of the avenue is a reconstruction of the arrangement shown in the painting and was undertaken in 1973.

—ooOoo—



The attractive cover of Elizabeth Gale's new book on the Inns  
and Pubs of Aylsham.

Published jointly by the author and the Local History Society,  
and launched at the lecture meeting held at the Friendship Club  
on April 26th. 2001

*Recently Published,*

## **AYLSHAM INNS AND PUBLIC HOUSES, A HISTORY**

by  
Elizabeth Gale.

Aylsham is a small Norfolk market town twelve miles north of Norwich, and at one time it had twenty six inns or public houses; now there are only four.

Most of these were in the centre of the town and served the local residents, farmers and agricultural workers, and the coach and carriage passengers. Four other public houses in the Millgate area served the wherrymen and mill workers in the industrial part of the town. Wherries traded on the River Bure and the Aylsham canal, transporting goods daily between Aylsham, Norwich and the coast, but after the disastrous flood of 1912 the wherries disappeared. Those public house customers were then replaced by soldiers in the First World War, who were billeted nearby, and also by the passengers from the North Aylsham railway station.

The author, Elizabeth Gale, has written the first history of Aylsham's inns and public houses from the 1600s until the present day. Her book is a fascinating record of the buildings, publicans and owners who have been an important part of the town's fabric. This comprehensive history has been published jointly by the author and the Aylsham Local History Society.

**Price £8 pbk**

**ISBN 0-9521564-8-2**

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Available from local booksellers, or directly from the Society, at  
38 Holman Close, Aylsham, Norwich NR11 6DD  
Telephone 01263 734252



# HELP!

## A Plea from the Editor

Although I try to keep a small reserve of material in hand ready for the next issue of the *Journal*, I do not always succeed, and sometimes it is touch and go whether I have enough material to fill our 32 pages. I am getting dangerously close to that state now - my little well is drying up!!

If you have anything that you consider suitable for the *Journal*, I would be delighted to have the chance to include it. Any work you have done, or are involved in, or propose to do, would be most welcome. I would welcome ideas for what you think should be included as a feature in the *Journal*.

This plea also extends to suitable illustrations for the cover.

*And Finally. . .*

### Professor Who Wore Dunce's cap

*From our own Correspondent*

CHESTER, Sunday

Chester is to confer the freedom of the city on Tuesday on a man who at the age of 10 left an Aylsham, Norfolk school which had condemned him as a "dunce"

Young Bob Newstead was the despair of his teachers, but a boy with a great ambition - he wanted to become the curator of a museum. Today, at the age of 77, as Professor Robert Newstead, he is Emeritus Professor of Entomology at Liverpool University, spending his retirement searching for Roman remains.

One of his many associations with Chester is as Hon. Curator of the Chester and North Wales Archæological Society.

"My chief memory of school-days is wearing the dunce's cap - and at the age of 77 I believe it would still fit", he told me yesterday.

.....  
From the DAILY MAIL

September 1936  
.....