

# AYLSHAM LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY



*Aylsham Pump*

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The **JOURNAL & NEWSLETTER** is the publication of the Aylsham Local History Society. It is published three times a year, in April, August and December, and is issued free to members. Contributions are welcomed from members and others. Contact:-

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COVER ILLUSTRATION - the John Soame Memorial Pump by permission of M F Barnwell, Printers, taken from their series of notelets



AYLSHAM LOCAL HISTORY  
SOCIETY

**JOURNAL &  
NEWSLETTER**

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**EDITORIAL**

**Betty Gee**

As you will have noted, the December 2002 Journal was the last one edited by Tom Mollard. The Committee, despite its best efforts, could find no one to fill the vacancy. It is a tribute to his work over the last 18 years that members were chary of following on in his place. Nevertheless, the Journal has been an integral part of the Society, particularly for those members not able to attend meetings.

I therefore offered to become editor if the issues were reduced to three a year, April, August and December, and the Committee accepted my offer. I was a member of the Archives Group for five years and have produced articles from time to time; I have also been an officer of the Society for eleven years and have access to the volumes of journals produced over the years, which will give me ideas - I hope - in editing future ones.

I do hope that YOU, THE MEMBERS, will send in contributions about Aylsham's past and present. For example, Derek Lyons, the assistant archivist, is seeking information about life in Aylsham during the Great Wars. There were evacuees from London in Aylsham during the last War. Did they attend Aylsham schools or village schools? Were there many air raid warnings due to the nearness of airfields? I think older people have been pleased to put memories of the War well behind them, but perhaps we should record some of them while it is still possible.

## BRITAIN'S SECRET ARMY

Derek Lyons

In 1940, a German invasion of Britain seemed a near certainty. At the Prime Minister's instigation an underground guerrilla force composed of carefully selected civilians was set up to resist the invading forces. They were nominally members of the Home Guard and were issued with Home Guard uniforms but were assigned to one of three special Battalions, Nos 201, 202 or 203, depending upon their location. They were usually referred to as the "Auxiliary Units". The force operated in a thirty-mile-deep strip along the South and East coast, and its very existence was one of the most closely guarded secrets of the War. This "Maquis" force was made up of people from every grade of society; landowners, gamekeepers, poachers, doctors, business men and farm workers. It was divided into two branches, each having separate duties.

One branch, equipped with secret wireless sets, formed an intelligence network for spying behind enemy lines. The other branch consisted of highly trained guerrillas armed with automatic weapons, explosives and knives who would emerge at night from specially constructed "Operational Bases" (OBs) to harass the invading forces from the rear. Their training was very intensive and was received from elite instructors of the regular army and specialists in guerrilla warfare. Part of the training was to test the ground defences (unknown to the defenders) of military installations and airfields.

Operational Bases These were usually built underground at remote sites, often in the middle of a wood where the entrances could be easily concealed in the undergrowth. The locations were a closely guarded secret known only to members of each particular group. A story quoted in Christopher Bird's book "Silent Sentinels" tells of a member of the "ordinary" Home Guard who accidentally stumbled across an OB at South Walsham while it was under construction. He was forced to swear an oath of secrecy and was instructed to report to the OB in the event of an



invasion. If he failed to do so, he was warned, he would be sought out and shot. Channel 5 television viewers had the opportunity a while ago to watch a programme called "Hitler's Britain" which featured this secret army. It was partly filmed in the village of Heydon and included a contribution from a well-known Aylsham lady.

Local Organisation A number of Auxiliary Units were set up in this area. They were commanded by a Regular Army Officer based at Beeston Hall, near Neatishead. Under him were several "Group Commanders" holding the rank of Lieutenant or Captain in the Home Guard. Each was responsible for a number of OBs (usually three) and their contingent (patrol) of men. An NCO was in charge of each patrol and its OB. Secret wartime documents, now lodged in the town archives, name several local people who were members of this Secret Army. An Aylsham doctor operated one of the covert wireless sets. A businessman living in Blickling Road was the Group Commander responsible for OBs located at Oulton, Stody and Hempstead. Other OBs were situated at Alby, Matlaske and North Walsham, under the command of a Lieutenant living in North Walsham but working in Aylsham. Two local farmers, one from Erpingham and another from Wolterton, holding the rank of Sergeant and Corporal respectively, are also listed.

Stand Down of the Auxiliary Units In 1944, when the threat of invasion receded, the Auxiliary Units were stood down. Some men were transferred to the South Coast to guard installations important to our own invasion of Europe. Others were called up into the regular forces where, still bound by the Official Secrets Act, they were forbidden to talk of their earlier training and experiences, even to their superior officers.

References:

"Standing Up to Hitler" by Adrian Hoare Publisher: Countryside Books  
"Silent Sentinels" by Christopher Bird Publisher: Larks Press  
Aylsham Town Archives

## **JENNY MAY JENNER, DISTRICT NURSE**

**by Ursula Warren**

After the recent Photographic Exhibition staged by the Women's Institute in Aylsham Town Hall, many people have asked me about my memories of my mother who came to Aylsham in 1926 to be the District Nurse. At that time I was six months old and travelled by train from Kelso in my mother's arms.

My father was with us, but had been told he had only six months to live. My mother, a volatile, resilient Welshwoman, realised she would have to be the breadwinner. Although always delicate, my father lived till he was sixty-three - so much for dire medical predictions. His was the minor role in our family, hard on a man who had been a pilot in the RFC and a racing driver, but he had accepted his lot with dignity.

We were met at the Great Western station in Millgate ("the bottom station" as it was known locally) by members of the Aylsham Nursing Association - including Rusts, Purdys and Sapwells. These are still well known names in the town.

It is strange to realise that the resourceful young woman they greeted should have become the almost legendary Nurse Jenner. Not only did she visit the sick in their homes, but she delivered their babies, immunised them and kept an eye on them till they went to school, as in those days there were no Health Visitors. She also saw that they were christened and the mothers churched, not part of her duties, but she was a staunch Christian.

Although sharp of tongue, she had a heart of gold and is still remembered with amusement and affection. Waiting for a birth or death, she always knitted and insisted on a regular supply of cups of tea. One old man told me that when his wife was in labour, my mother arrived on her bike and said sharply, "Put the kettle on, please."

"How much will you need?"

"Just enough for a cup of tea." She'd replied.

“She came to my wife for all our kids and we thought the world of her. Nothing was too much trouble.”

We lived in the Nurse’s Cottage in Palmers Lane, with a lamp at the bottom of the garden path. It had to be easily recognisable, as neither she nor her patients were on the phone. All messages were delivered to the house and taken by my bemused father or, when I was older, me. Ours was the only house in the Lane. Next door was Mr Burrell’s garden with no house. He lived else-where, but often worked in the garden and patiently retrieved my balls. Opposite was the wall of the Orchards garden. The Ian Sears Clinic at the bottom of the Lane was built by the owners of the Orchards, but much later.

My mother did her rounds on a bicycle. When I was old enough, I travelled behind, strapped in a carrier, with her black bag behind me. Once, the bag and I rolled off, going down a bumpy lane at Readypenny. When I returned to Aylsham twelve years ago, I used that bike and it was instantly recognised. It had changed less than I had. Sadly it was stolen from our garden some years ago. With it went many happy memories of my childhood.

As the population increased, my mother was given a car, which she drove badly but with great verve. This was garaged in a shed at the side of the Swan Inn, now pulled down and replaced by a car park. With the advent of the National Health Service, the Nursing Association ceased to exist, but one of their last, kind actions, was to sell the house, at a very low price, to my mother.

I went to school when I was four, at Miss Emily’s at The Beeches in Cawston Road. I walked there unescorted. In those days children had plenty of freedom. When I was seven, I went on the bus to Norwich to the Convent of Notre Dame, kindly looked after by an older pupil, Sybil Keymer. I caught this bus from Watts’ Garage on which Budgens now stands.

I left school when I was eighteen and my mother decided I would train as a



nurse, so she duly took me to the London Hospital, where I trained. She was a very formidable woman and her word was law. I'd been terrified she would expect me to replace her in Aylsham, but I knew I lacked her devotion to the sick and suffering. Her caring shoes certainly would not have fitted me.

Luckily, as soon as I had finished my training, I married a doctor and thankfully stopped being a nurse. Although we worked in Essex, we chose to come back to Aylsham to retire as we and our six sons had always spent the summer holidays in Aylsham.

Aylsham for me is full of memories of a very happy childhood spent in a friendly town. Of course, much has changed. There are now no "top" and "bottom stations", and I walk my dog along the disused railway line - Marriotts Way. I found that there was now no proper stage in the Town Hall. On it, my friends and I used to give concerts to entertain the troops.

Most of us went to dancing lessons. First, these were held in a room at the "Black Boys" situated well out of sight and sound at the back. Later, we used the Scouts Hut down Williamsons Lane. None of us had much talent, except Betty Skoyles, who had a wonderful voice.

Red Cross dances, held in the Town Hall, were much more fun. The band sat on the platform blaring out "In the Mood" and, more sentimentally, "We'll Meet Again". These dances were very popular as, during the War, Aylsham was full of airmen stationed at Oulton and soldiers from the Welch Regiment from the Drill Hall; this was opposite the Cinema in Cawston Road. The height of teenage sophistication was to be escorted there by a pilot. My mother, of course, took me and brought me home from the Cinema and sat as chaperone through all the dances. It never occurred to me to protest.

When the soldiers came to church, "Land of my Fathers" was always played. My mother caused me enormous embarrassment by singing the words in Welsh at the top of her voice. She was always unpredictable.



Once a young WAAF gave birth in a Nissen Hut in Blickling Park. My mother carried the baby into the Officers' Mess. When the startled, irate CO asked her what she was doing there with the child, "He's looking for his father," she answered in ringing tones before being hurriedly ushered out.

Although we were young, we soon realised that the young boys we danced with were in danger of sudden death. We worked hard to give them a pleasant time by working at the weekends in the Salvation Army Canteen, which was in Red Lion Street opposite what is now the Dry Cleaners, and helping at the British Restaurant in the old Chapel at the top of Mill Road. In our small way we valiantly did our bit for the war effort.

In the upper room of the town Hall, we used to go to Red Cross lectures given by Dr Holman and Dr John Sapwell. The doctors did First Aid, my mother Home Nursing. On these occasions she always wore a huge, white, heavily starched cap. Actually, she had no need of any uniform to give her authority. We all held her in awe - even the doctors. To give us "practical experience", we junior VADs worked at Cawston Manor which was an orthopaedic convalescent home for children. This was hard, unglamorous work.

Aylsham is still permeated with memories of my mother. When I married, she was delighted that Dr and Mrs Sapwell asked us to have our reception at The Grange, and she was honoured that Annabelle Maingay and Suzanne Hackett, local doctors' daughters were child bridesmaids. She'd always held the medical profession in high esteem. Bill, my husband's brother, was his best man. He and the ushers stayed at the Dog Hotel on the Norwich Road on the eve of our wedding and had a riotous night. This has, sadly, been pulled down. Bill liked Aylsham so much that, after he married, he bought a house in Burgh Road and practised as a Vet. My mother delivered both his children.

Over the last ten years, many, many older people have said to me, "Oh, Ursula, you are like your mother." That is simply not true. Certainly, I am bossy, but I have not got her compassion, her caring nature. She comforted the dying, gave solace to the bereaved and cared for the afflicted in

Aylsham for 42 years. That is why she is remembered with gratitude and love by so many. Sadly, I am only half the woman she was.

After the above article was written, Ursula's husband Dr John Warren died on 9<sup>th</sup> February, after a long illness. We wish to offer Ursula our sincere condolences for her loss.

## NOTES & QUERIES

**The Norfolk Record Office** will be closed for its move to the new building beside County Hall from the beginning of March for several months. Some parish documents are available in the Millennium Library.

**Dr Alistair Lawrence** asked us whether the Archives had any records of Henry and Elizabeth Lawrence in 1790. Their son William died in 1839 and their antecedents were Frances Clark and in 1738 Mary Spurrell. The name Lawrence could be spelt Laurence. The Lawrences lived in "The Fairstead", Bridewell Lane, and the document stated the house "abutted the Bull" and had a barn. This inn had a frontage on Red Lion Street between the New Inn and the Bridewell, and it had several rooms extending behind. Tom Mollard could find nothing relevant and nor could I. "The Fairstead" is unfamiliar, and Bridewell Lane is not mentioned on Wrights Map of 1839 or in "Aylsham in 1821". It is possible that the beginning of Burgh Road was known as Bridewell Lane. The Bridewell was closed as a prison in 1824 and sold to John Warnes of Aylsham, who created new tenements. The corner was then removed so the road could be widened. As Dr Lawrence lives in Norway, please inform Tom Mollard at the Archives or myself, if you have information. Ed.

### **Transactions of the Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists Society, Vol VIII page 212:**

AYLSHAM - a jaw bone (of a whale) forms an arch at the foot of a bridge over the back-water at Messrs Bullock's watermill; it has been there for many years, and nothing is known as to its history. Ron Fiske

## SOCIETY NEWS

**Railways in a Norfolk Landscape - course conducted by Adrian Vaughan in Autumn 2002.** This ten-week course was much enjoyed by twenty people. At the first meeting, a map of railways north of Thetford in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was supplied. It was then obvious that the development of railways in North Norfolk had been much more complex and chaotic than at first thought, and owed much to strong individuals promoting their own companies. From an Aylsham viewpoint, one wondered how two railways companies both proceeding in the general east and west direction could have been approved while no railway was built taking the shorter route to Norwich. This inevitably contributed to the lack of profitability of the Aylsham GER railway.

Despite the fact that Bills for railways in North-east Norfolk had been proposed in 1845 and 1846, it was only in 1864 that an Act of Parliament was passed with a proposal to build a railway from the Great Eastern Railway at Whittingham Junction, a mile out of Norwich, to Wroxham, North Walsham and Cromer. The promoters were the main landowners of the district. The new East Norfolk Railway Company would have powers of compulsory purchase for 5 years to build the line. GER money went into ENR shares. A Contractor, Mr Simpson, was appointed and work started. He received £6,170 worth of shares in the ENR instead of cash. A few lengths of land were purchased and work began on these. In 1866 there was another national financial crisis and the Contractor went bankrupt and was ruined. The ENR sued him for non-completion, although the ENR had not been able to buy the necessary land. In 1868 he died and the shares were returned to the Company by his estate. The time limit laid down by the Act had now expired, but to wind up the company would cost the shareholders £20,000. It was decided to restart the project with a new Act.

The new Act for the ENR was passed in 1872. The line to North Walsham was opened in October 1874, a year late. A new Act was then needed in order that the ENR could borrow more money for the extension from North Walsham to Cromer (1). In 1875 work started on this route, and, after delays, the railway opened to Cromer Station in March 1877. In



1876, the Act for the Eastern Extension from Wroxham to Aylsham was obtained. The line opened through Coltishall to Buxton in July 1879 and reached Aylsham 1st January 1880 (Aylsham South station) (2). While labourers were working on this line, another railway to the north of the town was being constructed by the Eastern & Midland Railway (later known as the M&GN) linking Melton Constable to Corpusty and Aylsham and thence to Felmingham and North Walsham to Yarmouth. In July 1882 Aylsham North station was opened and thus the town was linked to Peterborough and the Midlands.

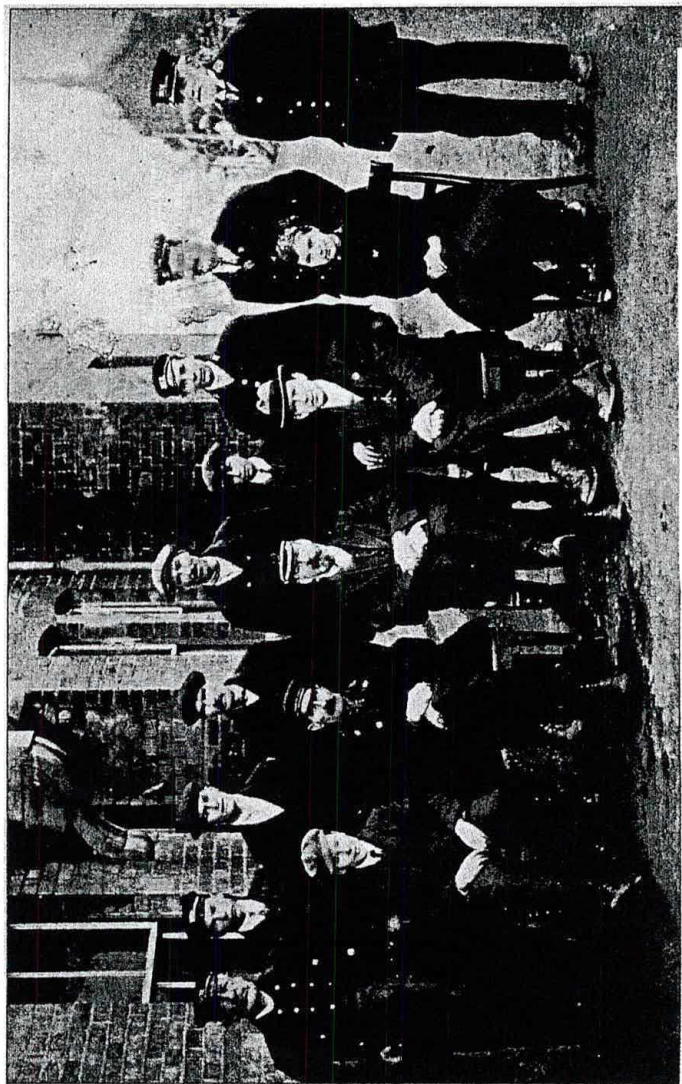
The Aylsham Western Extension from Aylsham was opened to Cawston in September 1880, to Reepham in May 1881 and to Foulsham and Broom Green Junction on the GER in May 1882. The GER opened County School station in May 1884.

These railways operated for about eighty years. As in other parts of England, their coming meant an improvement in working opportunities for farm workers and small business men alike. Railway companies gave working men a structure for improving themselves; they could also travel farther to get work. The Royal Mail used the railway; coal, cattle foods, timber and animals were sent by rail. These particular lines were used to transport materials for the building of air bases and then to transport fuel and personnel.

The population of Aylsham steadily declined from: in 1861 (2740 people); in 1901 (2471); to in 1911 (2627 people). The coming of commercial travellers and easier transport of all types of goods by rail to small market towns meant that individual crafts declined and towns became less self-sufficient.

Among other topics discussed in this course were the railways of the North East coast, working practices, the M&GN and the growth of Melton Constable, personalities involved and the end of the railways in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.





The old photograph reproduced above is of the staff at Aylsham South Railway station (GER) outside the station in 1919.

## References

1. "A History of the Bure Valley Railway" by Adrian Vaughan published by the Bure Valley Railway Co Aylsham.  
See Chapters 2 and 3.
2. This station closed for passengers in 1952 but a goods service continued until 1974. British Rail sold the former Aylsham South station to the Bure Valley Railway Co in 1990. It was demolished and a new terminal station and shed yard constructed.

"Branch Lines Around Cromer" by Richard Adderson and Graham Kenworthy, published by Middleton Press, Easebourne Lane MIDHURST Sussex GU29 9AZ

Betty Gee

A SECOND COURSE OF LECTURES by **ADRIAN VAUGHAN** started in January for ten weeks at the Friends' Meeting House, Red Lion Street, with the title "Early Engineers and Others".

**Octavia Hill, housing reformer and a founder member of the National Trust** - In 2001, members enjoyed an outing to Wisbech. Amongst the places of interest they could have seen was the Octavia Hill Birthplace museum on the South Brink. The house where she was born in 1838 is now a museum to the memory and work of this great social reformer.

On November 28<sup>th</sup> all members were able to enjoy a most entertaining talk by Monica Place, in the Friendship Club, on the life and work of Octavia Hill. It was in London where her greatest work was carried out. Seeing, for the first time, the squalor in which the poor were obliged to live, she dedicated her life to improving their conditions. She was influenced and assisted by John Ruskin and introduced Ragged Schools for the poorest children. She slowly bought up properties which she was able to improve and convert into suitable housing to rent to the poor. She was joined by other similar strong-minded women whom she trained to be 'housing managers' to help her extend her work.

It was the period of Christian Socialism, and the growing social conscience of the time led to other cities copying and introducing her practices. Although initially interested in improving housing conditions for the poor, she also became interested in improving their environment by creating or preserving open spaces, and also with smoke abatement. These interests led her naturally to becoming a founder member of the National Trust with Canon Rawnsley and Sir Robert Hunter. The rest, as they say is history, which today we take for granted.

It was a most entertaining lecture, and Monica Place held our attention right to the end. As a matter of interest; in trying to make sure I had remembered my facts correctly, I checked various sources and discovered that although the brochure on Octavia Hill states quite clearly that she was born in Wisbech, I found that both "Chamber's Biographical Dictionary" and the "Cambridge Biographical Encyclopaedia" claim that she was born in London! However, "Encyclopaedia Britannica" clearly says Wisbech, so I'll go along with that.

**Tom Mollard**

## **Our Winter Party**

On the cold evening of Thursday, 23<sup>rd</sup> January, 2003, over fifty members and friends of our Society assembled at the Aylsham Lodge Hotel for our Winter Party. After half an hour of greeting friends, finding table seats and attempting photographic puzzles (yes, you have to earn your supper at our party), we sat down for a delicious meal with excellent service by the staff of the Hotel. Between courses and conversation, we attempted a quiz on our local area and had time to socialize and meet new members.

During coffee our Chairman, Peter Holman, presented Life Membership to our honoured guests, Tom and Sheila Mollard, who have now relinquished their posts - Tom as Editor for eighteen years of our Quarterly Journal and Sheila as Membership Secretary for many years. The whole assembly heartily backed Peter in his vote of thanks and good wishes to Tom and Sheila.



The evening concluded with a further half-hour of chat, attempts at the puzzles and discussion of objects on the Curios Table. The results of the competitions were announced, prizes given and contributors to the Curios Table each told us a little about their object, thus rounding off an interesting and enjoyable event

We are obliged to our Committee members for the competitions, to our members for their eager participation, and to our Secretary Betty Gee for the excellent organisation, which all contributed to the success of this annual event.

**Jean McChesney**



Mr Peter Holman, Mrs Sheila Mollard and Mr Tom Mollard  
at the Party.



## DERIVATIONS OF AYLSHAM ROAD NAMES

Betty Gee

In 1993 a list of some Aylsham road names with their derivations appeared in the Journal; it had been found in the archives in Dr Sapwell's handwriting. This aroused much interest, and several members wrote in offering derivations of other road names. I have studied the volumes of our Journals and other publications and have collated the derivations made for many roads. I am indebted to Molly Long, Ron Peabody and others for their work on these names. Any errors are mine.

Here follows a list of Aylsham road names which includes recent roads.

**ABBOT'S CLOSE:** situated off Town Lane behind Abbot's House, White Hart Street, and Maingay House.

**BLOFIELD'S LOKE:** named after the butcher, William Blofield, on the corner of Red Lion Street (listed in Kelly's Directory 1988) now White's. Previously called New Inn Loke after the Inn.

**BURE VALLEY LANE:** a cul-de-sac off Buxton Road, presumably named after the nearby Bure Valley Railway.

**BURE WAY:** previously known as Commercial Road from about 1830 after the Commercial School at No 27. Before that time it was known as Workhouse Road or Street after the 1776 parish workhouse built on Cressey's land on the angle of this road and New Road.

**BUTTLANDS, THE:** parish archery ground dating possibly from 1363. Its present length is about 170 yards, but it is thought originally to have been the statutory minimum of 220 yards. Now a car-park.

**BUXTON ROAD:** Since the opening of the Aylsham Bypass in 1980, this road is a dead-end.

CANON HOARE CLOSE: named after John Gurney Hoare, Canon of Norwich Cathedral, and Vicar of Aylsham 1888-1922; first Chairman of Aylsham Parish Council.

CHARLES EWING CLOSE: Charles Ewing had a greengrocer shop in Red Lion Street and also a market garden next to his house at No 1 Oakfield Road in the latter part of the 20th century. He was a member of the Recreation Ground Committee, which in 1946 put on a gymkana, the forerunner of the Aylsham Show.

CHURCH TERRACE: leads to St Michael's Church.

CLOVER ROAD: Joseph Clover (1779 - 1853) was born in Aylsham and became a well-known portrait painter in London and Norwich. Joseph Thomas Clover (1825 - 1882) his nephew, also born in Aylsham, established himself in London as England's first full-time consultant anaesthetist.

CODLINGS LANE: a continuation of Holman Road. One definition of "codling" is "a cooking apple of long, tapering shape". The name goes back to 1839 so possibly there was an orchard there.

COPEMAN ROAD: Robert Copeman and his sons George and Thomas were members of a firm of solicitors and bankers and leading members of society in Aylsham in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

CRESSEY WALK: Thomas Cressey, churchwarden in 1638, left money, the surplus of rents, to be given to the poor (Cressey's Charity).

CROMPTON ROAD: is said to have been named after a former landowner in that part of the town.

DRABBLEGATE: the Danish suffix "gate" means road. Drabblegate is mentioned in old directories as being a hamlet. A dictionary definition of "drabble" is: to become or make dirty and wet

with water or mud. As Drabblegate is near the river, it could well have often been a wet and muddy road.

**DUNKIRK:** was known as a hamlet on the lane to Tuttington. It became important from 1779, when the Navigation was completed and the lane used by corn merchants, coal merchants and shipwrights.

**DYE'S LOKE:** In "Aylsham in 1821" which gives the population in families according to the street, one finds Dye's Yard with 8 houses. James Dye lived in the Market west side and Edward Dye in Red Lion St, both being in trade. There were Dyes in the 18<sup>th</sup> century who were licensees of public houses. Dye's Yard appeared to be in a similar position as Dye's Loke.

**ETHEL TIPPLE DRIVE:** Mrs Tipple was a well-known Norfolk County Councillor and Alderman in Aylsham in the mid-20th century.

**FORSTER WAY:** named after William Forster, 1827 - 1906, solicitor and clerk to Aylsham bench of magistrates. He bought the Corn Hall in 1892, and enlarged it. After his death, the hall became the Town Hall in 1908, the Parish Council taking out a loan to pay for it.

**FOXES LOKE:** between Cawston Road and Pound Lane - said to have been named after a public house "The Fox".

**GAS HOUSE HILL:** formerly known as Gay's Lane. The Gas House was erected in 1849 at the lower end of the hill. A Mr Gay was said to own a large house and fields where Abbot's House is now. This could be the derivation of the name Gay's Lane which, in James Wright's map of 1839, was given to the Lane commencing at Burgh Road, incorporating Oakfield Road and Gas House Hill.

**HENRY PAGE ROAD:** in the 1880s Henry Page founded a large shop in the Market Place; it was a tea dealer, grocer, wine merchant, general draper, outfitter and china supplier. Later it was known as the North Norfolk Supply Stores. Its main site was on the corner of Hungate Street at present occupied by the chemist. In 1940 Mr Henry Page bequeathed £3000 to the Trustees of Charitable Funds . . . for annual distribution to needy residents in the form of vouchers for food, clothing or fuel.

**HOLLEY WALK:** George Hunt Holley was a solicitor in the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century in Edmund Jewell's partnership, having married his daughter. In 1787 he built Blickling Lodge. Was a churchwarden, died in 1798.

**HOLMAN ROAD:** until 1953 it was called Pound Road after the dog pound at the corner of Sandy Lane and Pound Road. Dr Alec George Holman was a doctor who was a magistrate and Chairman of the Parish Council. He retired in 1952 to Devon.

**HOWARD WAY:** Richard Howard was a citizen and sheriff of Norwich, who, in 1488, was responsible for the building of the church porch. He died in 1499 and there is a monument to his memory.

**HUNGATE STREET:** said to have been the route to Norwich in earlier times. Blomefield stated the name meant Dogs Street and that the Bishop's hounds could have been kept there.

**JANNY'S CLOSE:** Robert Jannys, son of John and Agnes Jannys of Aylsham, was sheriff of the City of Norwich and mayor of the City. He founded the Free School, in School House Lane, in 1517.

**JEGON CLOSE:** The Rev John Jegon DD became Bishop in 1603. Said to have rebuilt the Manor House where he lived.

**JEWELL'S LANE:** named after Edmund Jewell, a lawyer in the early 18<sup>th</sup>



century; also a churchwarden in 1727, 1735, 1741 and 1751.

JOHN O' GAUNT CLOSE: Edward III granted the Manor of Aylsham, Lancaster, to his second son John of Gaunt. The north transept of St Michael and All Angels Church was built under the patronage of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, about 1380.

LANCASTER GARDENS: see previous entry.

LAYER CLOSE: Christopher Layer was an Aylsham lawyer who lived at no 1 Market Place. A supporter of the Jacobites, he was tried for high treason and hung in 1723.

MALTINGS, THE: off Millgate Street. Malthouses, viz houses for preparing and storing malt.

MANOR CLOSE: situated near to the 17<sup>th</sup> century Manor House.

MEADOWS, THE: the fields on either side and at the end of the lane are referred to as meadows in old maps. "Meadow" is defined as "low, well watered ground, especially near river" as well as "piece of grassland, especially one used for hay".

MILL PIGHTLE: A windmill was built in 1826 off the Cawston Road in what is now known as Mill Pightle. The sails were damaged by lightning about 1900 and the mill put out of use. It is now a private residence. "Pightle" means a small field or enclosure round a house or barn.

MILL ROAD: formerly called Mill Lane. Another windmill was sometimes known as the Buttlands mill; it was situated behind No 5 Mill Road, damaged in 1895 and the tower demolished in 1941.

MILL ROW: Mill Row leads to the water mill, which was probably rebuilt by the Parmeter family in 1798. The mill stopped

working in 1967. In the 1839 map it was known as Mill Lane (ref 1125).

**MILLGATE STREET:** In the 1821 census it was called Millgate, which means the road to the mill. However, there was also Millgate upon the hill and Millgate towards the mill. Possibly this was known as Mill Lane by 1839.

**MORTON ROAD:** named after a family of doctors who served Aylsham between 1838 and 1925. Dr Richard Kay Morton practised 1838-1890; he moved to Bushey House, Cromer Rd about 1855.

**NEALE CLOSE:** George Neale was Parish clerk and sexton 1888 - 1897.

**NEW ROAD:** This road is a continuation of Town Lane. Some cottages date from 1869 and one house has a datestone of 1815.

**OAKFIELD ROAD:** Known as Back Lane in the early nineteenth century. The name Oakfield Road is not mentioned in the census of 1821. In Wright's map 1839 it was called Gay's Lane. There were oak trees at the Burgh Road end and also in Blofield's Loke.(1)

**PALMER'S LANE:** at one time Buttlands Lane. Also called Swan Lane, from the Inn which stood on the site of the British Legion car park. In Wright's Map 1839 the name Palmer's Lane was listed. In the 1821 census, there are two Palmers but no Palmers Lane.

**PARMETER CLOSE:** Robert William Parmeter practised law in Cromer Road; was Churchwarden. The Parmeter family owned the watermill in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.

**PARTRIDGE ROAD:** named after Daniel Partridge, a well-known butcher in Norwich Road, listed in Kelly's Directory of 1875. He took an active part in public life.

**PENFOLD STREET:** previously called Pinfold Street. In 1821 it was known as Pin Fowell Street. Penfold means pound.

**PETERSON'S LANE:** was called Benjamin Peterson's Lane. Benjamin Peterson was listed in White's Directory of 1836 as a gentleman and it may be assumed that he or his family gave his name to the Lane where he lived.

**POUND LANE:** named after the dog pound at the corner.

**PURDY WAY:** Colonel Thomas Woods Purdy was Chairman of the Parish Council from 1919 to 1933: he was also a churchwarden. Was a solicitor in the Market Place next to Dye's Loke.

**RAWLINSON'S LANE:** This lane is a turning off Blickling Road. In 19<sup>th</sup> century directories a resident Mrs Anna Rawlinson is listed as living in Blickling Road. Possibly the name of the lane is derived from her family name.

**RAY BOND WAY:** Ray Bond, together with Charles Ewing and William Nobbs members of the Recreation Ground Committee, was responsible for arranging a gymkana on the Recreation Ground on Whit Monday 1946 to raise funds for a children's play area. Subsequently, the "Aylsham Show" was held on August Bank Holiday Monday.

**RED LION STREET:** This name comes from the Red Lion Inn, half-way down the Street, which is probably the oldest inn in Aylsham, dating from about 1700. It was a meeting-place for clubs and societies. It has a large yard which was used for coach and horses and by farmers leaving their dogcarts.

**REPTON CLOSE:** Humphrey Repton (1752 - 1818) a famous landscape gardener, architect and painter, is buried in Aylsham

churchyard; his son William Repton (1783 - 1858) was an Aylsham solicitor and churchwarden.

RIPPINGALL CLOSE: named after Henry Rippingall, attorney, who lived at the Bank House, no 1 Market Place. He died in 1714.

SANDY LANE: This lane slopes down from Holman Road to Blickling Rd. On Wright's map of 1839 the name seems to be given to the Lane now called Pound Lane.

SAPWELL CLOSE: Dr Benjamin Sapwell practised from 1902 at The Grange, Cromer Road, until 1937. His son, Dr John Ireland Sapwell, joined him and practised there. He died in 1977. Dr John wrote "A History of Aylsham", published 1960, which is the definitive authority on Aylsham's history.

SCHOOL HOUSE LANE: leads to St Michael's School. A Free School was built upon land known as the Schoolhouse Pightle in 1567 following the will of Robert Jannis.

SCOTT WALK: William Henry Scott, solicitor, joined William Repton as a partner in 1840. He was captain of the original company of Volunteers. Died 1882.

SEARS CLOSE: named after Captain Sears, who gave the Ian Sears Clinic, Norwich Road, in memory of his young son.

SIR WILLIAM'S LANE: this lane is not listed in the census of 1821 but is in Wright's 1839 map as Williams Lane. Dr Sapwell suggested the lane was named after Sir William Paston, who lived at Oxnead; he thus had a short cut to Blickling Hall (2).

SOAME CLOSE: Mr John Soame Austen provided a public well and pump for the town in memory of his uncle Mr John Soame (1834-1910) who had served on the Parish Council. It was opened in 1913 and is situated at Carr's Corner at the junction of Penfold Street with Blickling Road.



SPA LANE: Aylsham was once noted for its spa, a chalybeate spring, which was resorted to by invalids. A spring is said to issue from the north bank of the Lane beyond Henry Page Road.

STARLING CLOSE: named after William Frederick Starling (1851 - 1937), ironmonger in Red Lion Street and builder. Wrote his memoirs (3).

ST MICHAEL'S CLOSE: a turning off Rawlinson's Lane built in the 1960s very close to St Michael's Church.

STUART ROAD: Charles Bizley was the developer of this road and, it is said, named the road after his grandson.

SWAN CLOSE: named after the Swan Inn which, from 1694, was situated in Mill Road on the site now used by the British Legion car park. It was much used by railwaymen in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

TOWN LANE: although a narrow street, this lane was the main thoroughfare linking the core of Aylsham around the Market Place with the water mill on the Bure.

TUDDENHAM ROAD: named after Albert Arnold Tuddenham, known as "Tuddy" 1885 - 1975, parish clerk from 1938 to 1968. (4)

WADE CLOSE: named after a family of watchmakers, Charles Rice Wade in an 1836 directory and Charles Frederick Wade in 1863, who was also named as gunsmith.

WHITE HART STREET: mentioned in 1821 census. Named after the inn on the corner of Town Lane which dated from 1693. The street was at one time known as Chapel Street.

WRENCH CLOSE: Jonathan Wrench became Vicar of Aylsham in 1700. He died in 1741. His son Jonathan Fountain Wrench became Vicar in 1731; died 1765.

**WRIGHT CLOSE:** Mr William Wright started a school known as the Commercial School at 27 Commercial Road (now known as Bure Way), assisted by his son Henry who subsequently became a farmer and agent for the Blickling estate. The latter took a prominent part in local affairs. He died in 1904.

**YAXLEYS LANE:** This lane was called Back Lane in the 1839 map. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century it was called Timber Lane from the timber merchants using the Lane. Also in Wright's map of 1839 under the list of occupiers ref no 84 is Francis Yaxley, the owner of the cottage and garden on the corner of Cawston Road and the afore-mentioned Back Lane ref 1093. He also owned a garden on the opposite corner of Cawston Road ref no 73. Francis Yaxley would appear to have given his name to this Lane.

#### References

1. Mr Gilbert White, born 1913, gave his memories of Aylsham in Journal volume 5; pages 259 and 268 refer to Oakfield Road.
2. Jane Nolan researched Sir William's Lane. In volume 2 no 9, p 268 she wrote finding in "Seventeenth Aylsham" one Richard Wilson holding in 1619 "a parcel of land lying next to the heath called Sir William's land". She also found reference, in the Court Rolls of Aylsham Lancaster in 1740, to a piece of land of 5 acres part of the estate of Aylsham Manor, and "bounded by Sir William's Lane to the North and Burgh Road to the South". However, older residents refer to Sir William's Lane as Williamsons Lane.
3. See "Memories of Aylsham - The memoirs of William Frederick Starling 1851 - 1937" edited by Ron Peabody published by ALHS in 2000.
4. Albert Arnold Tuddenham, known as "Tuddy" wrote his recollections of Aylsham in his 91<sup>st</sup> year in May 1975. They are printed in Volume 2, no 12 and in Volume 3, no 1.

#### **TITLES IN THE LOCAL HISTORY SECTION OF AYLSHAM LIBRARY**

**RAF & RAJ - An Aircraftsman's Life 1944-47** by Jack Loveday,  
published by Barnwells Printing Ltd.

**EAST ANGLIA AT WAR 1939-45** by Derek E Johnson published  
by Jarrold Colour Publications, Norwich.

**PLOUGHBOY'S PROGRESS - the Life of Sir George Edwards** by  
Noel Edwards published by the Centre of East Anglian Studies

**THE NORTH FOLK; ANGLES, SAXONS & DANES - Norfolk Origins**  
by Bond, Penn & Rogerson published by Poppyland Publishing

## **SOCIETY VISITS THIS SUMMER**

A full-day outing is planned for May and a circular giving details is enclosed with this Journal. Please return the slip to Jean McChesney in good time. It is hoped a half-day visit can be arranged for June or July, and details of a second full-day visit will be sent out with the August Journal.

## **CHANGES IN RED LION STREET**

In the last Journal there was an interesting photograph of Red Lion Street in the first War. It is hard to identify individual shops, although reference to a Directory may perhaps identify several. There are inevitably changes of ownership over a period of time, but Red Lion Street over the last four or five years has had a number of changes. They are recorded below.

Recently the large site occupied since 1955 by Cooper Motors was cleared, awaiting the building of shops and houses. There has been a second archaeological "dig" at the site. This had been the site of the New Inn and the Bull Inn (closed in 1953). The Bridewell corner has been renovated and no 1 Burgh Road will be the office of Susan Flack, Project Officer of the Aylsham Partnership, which guides the Market Town Initiative.

During the last year, approaching Red Lion Street from White Hart Street, there have been changes in four shops. Stoners, an old-established cycle and electrical shop, closed. In its place a pine furniture shop has opened and there is a cycle and nursery equipment shop next door. There is a new parking place for the furniture shop giving a good view of the parish room. A butcher's shop closed, to be replaced by a sandwich shop. The large art and craft shop closed after Christmas; this was previously a draper and linen shop for a number of years. A popular bakery closed about three years ago, and this shop is again vacant. An old-established family shoe shop closed recently. About a year ago an antique shop closed and about three years ago a shop supplying baby and children's clothes closed. A large gallery displaying pictures of local artists has recently opened.

Red Lion Street has traditionally been the main shopping street of Aylsham. White Hart Street no longer has shops or public houses. It is to be hoped that Red Lion Street, and its interesting lokes and yards, remains attractive to new businesses.

**BG**



## **Food through the Ages - with Objects, by Faye Kalloniatis**

On 27<sup>th</sup> February a fascinating lecture with this title was held at the Friendship Club. Faye showed us in turn a number of objects spread out on tables in front of her. She first of all showed implements used in cooking with the open hearth for several centuries: a potholder from which a cauldron or skillet would hang. Potage (a food for poor people sometimes containing pieces of rabbit or pork) would be left cooking in a cauldron for hours. Wealthier houses would have meat on a spit with, in Tudor times, a spitboy turning the spit. In earlier times the kitchen would be in an outhouse because of the danger of fire.

Trenchers (plates) could be of wood or pewter and pitchers of horn or pewter for ale or beer. Pewter carried the risk of lead poisoning. White bread and cheese was a staple diet. Faye showed us a sugar loaf – refined sugar moulded into a solid cone. This was very expensive and would have had to be chipped off and then crushed in a pestle and mortar, as would spices and herbs. These gave variety to dull food. Syllabub vessels were made from clay and had two spouts. Syllabub was made from wine and cream. Water was boiled to get salt. The introduction of new foods, such as potatoes, was strongly resisted. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century canning was developed. The Victorian range for cooking and warmth made a great change and its popularity lasted until electricity was introduced. Faye concluded a most interesting talk with an outline of the many problems caused by the adulteration of food. In this respect, the “good old days” were only so for the wealthy.

**Betty Gee**

**JOURNAL VOLUME 6:** Tom Mollard advises us that the Index for the last Volume has now been printed and is available from him (telephone 01263 761638).

Editor's Note: My thanks go to contributors, to Tom Mollard for his good advice and to Peter, my husband, for his invaluable technical assistance.

**CONTRIBUTIONS WELCOMED FOR THE NEXT ISSUE.**