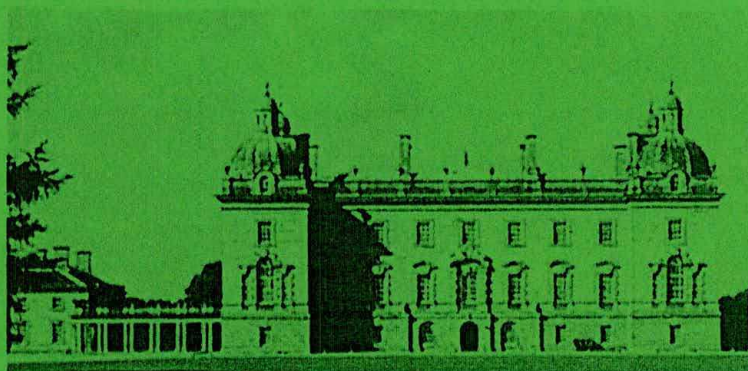


# AYLSHAM LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY



Volume 7 No. 12

December 2006

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: EDITOR: Mrs Betty Gee, Oakfield End, Oakfield Rd, AYLSHAM NR11 6AL Phone 01263 734834 E-mail [bettygee@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:bettygee@tiscali.co.uk)

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The cover illustration is of the east side of Houghton Hall.



AYLSHAM LOCAL HISTORY  
SOCIETY

**JOURNAL &  
NEWSLETTER**

Volume 7

No 12

The winter season of 2006/7 got off to a good start, with a well-attended AGM and talk about Oulton. We had two good visits this summer, which are reported on in this edition, and members have had the opportunity in November of making a joint visit to London with the WEA to the Victoria and Albert Museum for two or three particular exhibitions. There was also a visit to the John Innes Library in November. Members are reminded that the first meeting in 2007 will be on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> January at the Friendship Hall at 7.30 pm to hear a talk by David King on *Mediaeval Stained Glass at Salle Church*. A social function will be held next APRIL. This edition contains an interesting account of David Scotter's research into his ancestry. We are indebted to Geoffrey Nobbs for putting David in touch with us.

**Betty Gee**

ooOoo

**WHERE ARE POND HILLS?**

**Peter Holman**

An enquiry was made at the library, by some visitors in the town, about an address where some of the family had lived in the past (thought to be in the Aylsham area). The name given was Pond Hills. The library could not help, but after looking up various reference books and maps passed on the query to several people who had a wide knowledge of the area. Blickling was thought to be a possibility and those with Blickling connections were consulted – but with no success.



When asked about it I was at a loss at first, but over the days I felt that somewhere at the back of my mind I had an answer. Thinking about the address of the name I finally recalled a strangely hilly area with lakes and streams and mill-ponds. This is the headwaters of the little river Glaven, which, in its short journey to the sea, did, at one time, turn the wheels of over a dozen water mills.

So, to the OS map and there, written at an odd angle – Pond Hills, on the edge of woodland, North East of Edgefield! (GR 105355).

The enquirer's telephone number had been kept, and they were delighted to be told where Pond Hills was. They went there, and found the remains of a cottage, and met an elderly man who lived nearby, and remembered the family.

This is an example of how those with an interest in local history can provide this sort of knowledge, and who know who to approach about the names of people and where they lived – a vast amount of such knowledge is held in people's memories. Local history should be concerned with the details of the area in which we live – even stretching as far as Pond Hills near Edgefield!

November 1<sup>st</sup> 2006

ooOoo

## **THE SCOTTERS OF AYLSHAM**

**David Scotter**

Many family surnames are based on the towns and villages from which they originated. One such name you have probably never heard of is Skottowe. In 870 A.D. a Nobleman by the name of Skottowe gave a Manor, which was located in the Hundred of South Erpingham to some Benedictine Monks. The Scottow Manor was held during the time of Edward the Confessor in the name of the Abbot by Jeffery de Skottowe as well as his brother Richard and Richard's first and second sons Peter and John. After that period the Skottowes then drifted towards Norwich. There were of course some who remained in the county. Aylsham has been home to many Skottowes for five hundred years. They have played a prominent part in town life and even today there is somebody who lives there who is the grandson of a Scotter. The surname Skottowe as with many other

surnames changed with the passage of time, Skottowe, Scottow, Scotto and Scotter are but a few of the corruptions and there are several more. When I began researching my ancestry, I had no idea of the strong links with Aylsham.

One of my direct ancestors was Samuel Scotter, well documented in James Wright's 1839 Aylsham Survey. This shows Samuel as a farmer as well as keeping the New Inn in Red Lion Street. The Bure Valley Farmhouse in which he was living in 1841 still stands today on the Burgh Road and is being restored. It can be seen from the by-pass just to the east. There was also a Scotter Lane in the survey named, I feel sure, after Samuel. Old Aylsham directories and birth certificates tell us that Samuel was also a butcher. He was a man of many parts because at the same time as being landlord of the New Inn in Aylsham he also kept the Richmond Hill Tavern in Norwich which stood near Ber Street Gates and was described as a Pleasure Garden. It is recorded that hot air balloons took off from the Pleasure Garden, which I believe to have been an up market public house where families were entertained in the gardens. Samuel and his family left Aylsham in 1845 and moved to Norwich where he died of a fever in 1847, aged 56. He is buried in St Augustine's Church Yard at Norwich. His wife Hannah lived on for many years, dying in the City in 1889.

Several other branches of the family also lived in Aylsham at that time, including James Scotto a Chimney Sweep and his brother Edmund who was shown on the 1841 census as a pensioner; further investigation established that Edmund was a Chelsea Pensioner who had lost a leg at the Battle of Waterloo. The 1841 census records an Elizabeth Scotter living at Aylsham, then aged 75. Ann Scotto was also there in 1841 and she was listed in the Pigot & Co Directory of Aylsham for 1830 under 'Nobility, Gentry' etc; her husband Edmund was in fact a farmer. He was shown as a trader in the 1793 Universal Directory & also mentioned in the Poor Rate book where his dues were recorded. The two Edmunds mentioned whilst being on the same family tree were not too closely related. During their time in Aylsham their surnames were given in many forms.

Whilst it is not known whether all these people knew of their relationships, there are several buried next to each other in the corner of Aylsham

Churchyard. Their headstones can be seen after turning right as you enter the Church Yard from the Market Place.

In the early 1800s there was a real fear that the French would invade England. Posters were printed in Aylsham to tell the townsfolk what to do in the event of an invasion. Edmund Scotto was mentioned on one poster which stated that he had a wagon and three horses for his own use plus one cart and two horses for the service of the Parish. This cart was for the removal of infirm persons, women and children as were unable to remove themselves. They were to assemble in Millgate.

Edmund's father was William Scotto who moved to Aylsham from Blickling around 1792. There were many parish register entries in the 1700s for the Scottows, including Jonathan who in 1727 was landlord of the Griffin public house in Aylsham. The Scottows were also recorded in the 1600s. A marriage and deaths have been traced but these entries are unclear and are awaiting further research.

Whilst working on my family tree I found much of relevance to the Skottowe family held by the Norwich Family History Society. They had a family tree, compiled many years ago showing all the old Skottowe families of Norfolk. Many of these old Skottowes were the next best thing to royalty. As previously mentioned they had moved into Norwich from places like Swanton Abbott, Wood Dalling, Skeyton and several other villages in that area around 1400. Once in Norwich they really prospered, Aldermen, Sheriff, goldsmiths, merchants and one was a draper. As I was aware of my own family's connection with Wood Dalling in 1580, and had now found that the Skottowe tree also had Skottowes from Wood Dalling on it, I was anxious to trace the link between us. I was however unable to read the mediaeval Latin in which many documents of the day were written. As the parish records did not start till around 1560 I hoped that the answer might lay in the many Wills the Skottowes left behind them.

I contacted Geoffrey and Margaret Nobbs who had been Aylsham residents in the past - Margaret was born there. I explained my problem and they being interested in the history of Aylsham set about the task of translating the wills I sent them. After their efforts I am pleased to say that the link has now been found. They then suggested that some account of my



work on these Aylsham families might be of interest to your Society. In addition I hope that this will encourage others to research their own ancestry and past connections with the fine town of Aylsham.

A transcription of the 1535 Will of Simon Skottowe of Aylsham follows:

**WILL of SIMON SKOTTOWE of AYLSHAM 10 June 1530 -  
probate 1/10/1535** Transcribed by Geoffrey & Margaret Nobbs

In Dei nomine Amen I Simonde Skottowe of Aylesham being in good memorie and mynde at Alisham aforesaid the x daie of June in the yere of our Lorde god m cccc xxx make my testament & last will in maner & forme folowing

First I bequethe my Sowle to allmichte god my body to be buried in Alesham Churche yarde by the children of Margaret my wif *[then follow various gifts summarised by the transcribers as follows - for the repair of churches at: Swanton £10, Skeyton 4 marks and 10/-, Mother church in Norwich 6/8d, Lammas 3/4d, Burgh 3/4d, Tuttington 3/4d, Felmingham 15/-, Gyvingham 6/8d, Sco Ruston 15/- and to the poor folks at - Swanton 6/8d, Skeyton 3/4d, Lammas 3/4d, Tuttington 20d, Burgh 3/4d, to the poor generally [or perhaps Aylsham] 20/- per year for 20 years. Gifts to each of the 4 Orders of Friars in Norwich 6/8d, also 10/- they to have a 'trentall' [30 Requiem Masses] for Mssoul as soon as may be after his death, the prisoners in the Castle 3/4d, the House of Lazars [lepers] in Norwich 12d, the Nuns of Carrow 20d, the Norman Sisters in Norwich 12d, Adam Wilkenson once priest of Skeyton 3/4d. The Will then continues ] -*

To the high Altar of Alisham vs. I bequeth to the gilde of Saynt Michaelle in Alisham vis viiid. To our lady gilde the trinfie gilde saynt John gilde saynt Peter gilde Saynt Margaret gilde and to the gilde of all Saynts to iche of them iiis iiiid. I bequeth to my sonys children and to my daughters children to iche of them iiis iiiid. To Margery Nokkolde my daughter tenne poundes Also William Skottowe my sone shall have my tenement that he do dwell in & all the landes that longith thereto to hym & his heires conditionallie that he shall sell no parcel of land Without he Sellith all. I bequethe to John Scottowe my eldest sone the tenement that I do Dwell in in Swanton with all the landes that longith thereto to hym & his heires With condition that the saide John shall paye to my executores xl<sup>s</sup> [*£40*] that is to seye x<sup>u</sup> yerelie till the said sone be content & paied Which x<sup>u</sup> I wille it be to the performance of this my last Will. I Wolle that the said John Scottowe shall have my les [*lease*] of the maner of Skeyton during my terme & to have Withall ii hundrethe ewes \* of myn to paie for them xiiii<sup>11</sup> that is to

seye xiiiid a pese in forme folowing that is to seye Ixs by yere to the performacion of this my Will. I wolle that the said John shall have xx<sup>li</sup> neate of myne payeing therfor iche of them /as I did paye whan thei ware boughtey to my executores I Wolle & gif to Margaret my wif the place called Oodgate [*Woodgate*] & the landes thereto belonging to her & her heires to that intent that she will have an obite with Dirige and masse and to dispose to poor folkys xv<sup>s</sup> by yere to the space of xx<sup>li</sup> yere. I gif to Margaret my wif.... [*parts of the will damaged*] money she to be paied Within ii yeress.... I gif to Margaret .... Aprentys & all Maner and usse that.... ii neate all my hors [*horses*] And all the stuff howssolde. I bequeth to Agnes deye xx<sup>s</sup>. to Joan/John Camon xv<sup>s</sup> to Simond Nicold xvs to John Bloofeld tenne shillings I wolle and requere all my feoffees that ben infeoffed in all my hous & Landes aswell in Swantonne Skeytonne and Alisham that they shall make Surrender & deliver estate whan thei be requered be my executors to the performacion of this my last Will

And I wolle that if any of my children make any interest title or clayme in any prcell of tents [*tenements*] landys before bequethed whiche is free or copie holde that he or thei shall make release of the same tenements and landys whan thei be required by my executors to the performance of this my last will And if thei refuse to make release to those before rehersed [*recited*] then I wolle myn executors shall kepe from them the legace that I have bequest to them before in my testament The Residewe of all my goodes & cattails [*chattels*] not bequethed I gif and bequethe to my executores Whom I make & orden [*ordain*] John Skottowe my sone of Swanton John Skottowe of Buxton Thomas Orwell and bequeth them for ther labors to iche of them xl<sup>s</sup> to do trewlie for my Sowle as I Wold do for them. [*Document held by Norfolk Record Office*]

**Note from Geoffrey Nobbs** Clearly Simon was a man of some means, including two tenements, a substantial flock of ewes\* (the price for the entire flock seems at variance with the figure mentioned for each sheep), and land in Swanton Abbot, Skeyton, and also Aylsham where he owned 'the place called Oodgate' [*probably Woodgate*], which the will gives to his wife. It is possible that Woodgate, then as now, comprised a substantial house with grounds, lake, etc.

It is not clear whether the gift to the poor of 207- per annum for twenty *years* related solely to the poor of Aylsham or generally. The family was firmly established at



Swanton Abbot and indeed Margaret his wife is buried there, as recorded in Swanton church. Stated to be 'of Aylsham', Simon nonetheless dwelt in his tenement at Swanton; but wished to be buried in Aylsham churchyard by his wife's children - this could mean next to the children, or alternatively they to arrange the burial. Perhaps St Michael's was then in good condition, for it receives nothing for repair although he left £10 for repairs at Swanton Church.

One of the Aylsham guilds receiving legacies was that dedicated to the Trinity, not it seems previously recorded.

A small brass in the floor at Swanton Abbot church, depicted below, is placed on one side of a double slab. Separated merely by a shallow groove, the other bears a clear impression of exactly the same shape. The brass this must have held has long since gone but it seems likely that it also requested all who passed by to pray for Simon's soul.

*'orate p aia /pro anima/ margarete nup /nuper/ uris /uxoris/ simonis skottowe'* *Pray for the soul of Margaret the late wife of Simon Skottowe*

ooOoo

### Severe Weather Procedure

1. All Committee Members will be contacted before 10.0 am.
2. Members should ring a member of the Committee to determine if the meeting is/is not to go ahead as planned. Names and telephone numbers are on the back of the membership card.
3. Radio Norfolk will be contacted with a request to broadcast a cancellation notice.
4. If any member wishes to be contacted by e-mail we will attempt to do this. Please ensure that the Membership Secretary has your correct details.

## SOCIETY NEWS

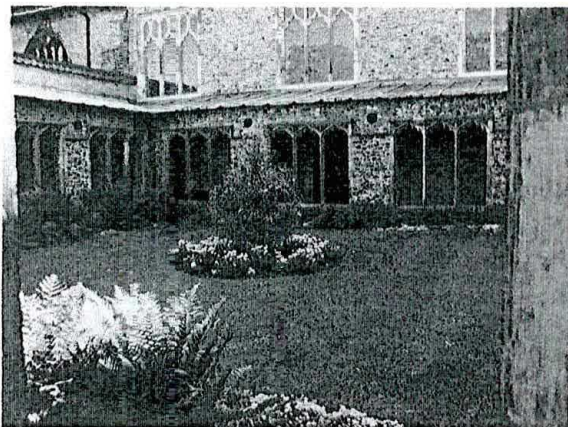
### VISIT TO THE GREAT HOSPITAL

Tom Mollard

In March 2005 we heard an excellent talk by Keith Leesmith on the Great Hospital in Norwich. A very good account of that talk was later given by Diana Polhill in the August 2005 issue of the *Journal*, which makes it unnecessary for me to dwell on the history again in this report.

On September 21<sup>st</sup> this year, we enjoyed what was the natural follow-up to that talk by Keith Leesmith, when members of the Society visited the Great Hospital for ourselves. We were doubly lucky to have as our guide Barbara Miller, who is an expert guide on the city of Norwich, and equally expert on the history of the Great Hospital. She was able to bring the Great Hospital to life, and explain its history alongside the history of the city.

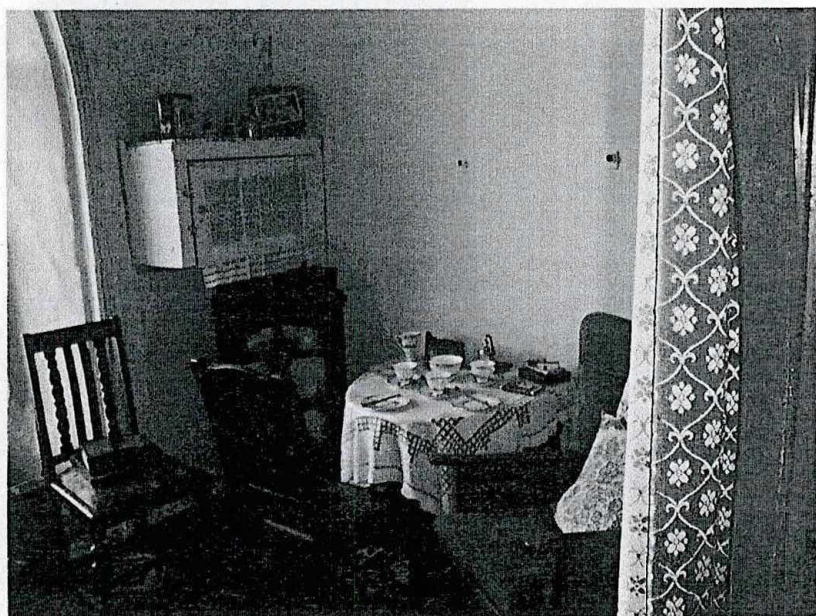
The Great Hospital is a unique building with its long history and the many uses to which the building has been put have left their mark on the buildings.



Much of the medieval foundation remains, particularly the cloister and the church founded by bishop Walter de Suffield.

Everything bears the marks of later events in its history. The outside of the church still bears traces of fire and damage incurred during Kett's

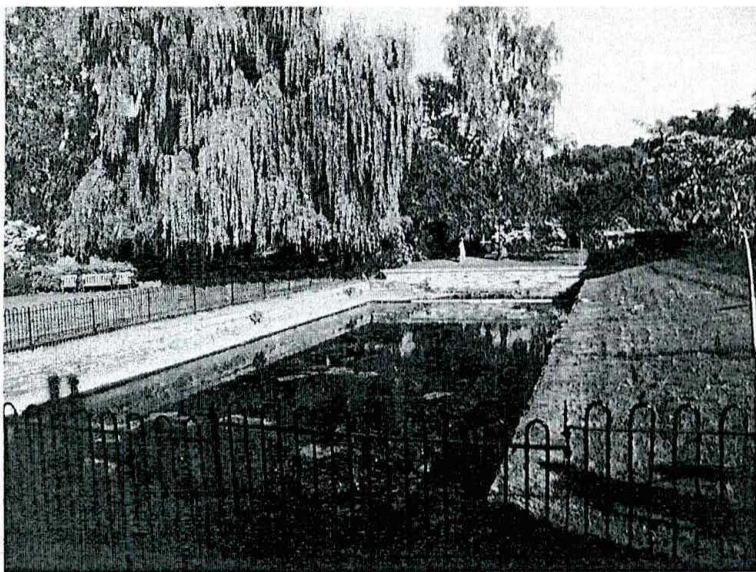
rebellion. The chancel of the church still shows how the interior was divided into two floors, providing accommodation for the men and women residents on two separate floors. This arrangement lasted until very recent times until the hospital was able to house its residents in modern, individual housing which now surrounds the old buildings.



It was fascinating to see the old cubicle accommodation used in the women's section of the chancel, all of which has been preserved and set out as it was, up to the 1970s and 1980s. See photo above.

Similar cubicle accommodation in the former infirmary hall has been removed, but the frontages of the cubicles have been retained, but set back again close to the walls. The original impression of how this room must have looked has been preserved. Much more self-contained accommodation has been built for the residents in later years. All of these reflect the periods in which they were built. These are all delightfully set out in the grounds, which are more extensive than one would imagine,





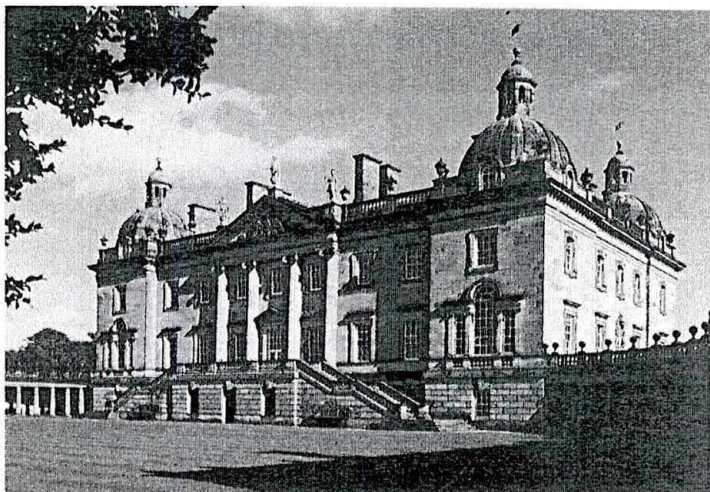
together with many facilities such as a bowling green, making it all an enviable place in which to live right in the heart of the ancient city.

There was so much to see it was difficult to take it all in. We saw briefly Thomas Ivory's house and other buildings of different periods which served communal purposes within the Hospital. All in all, our visit was very enjoyable and a good finale to the lecture we had heard back in Aylsham last year.



We finished our visit with a stroll across the road into the Cathedral close, to visit the new refectory recently built and winner of many awards for architecture - and it serves a nice welcome cup of tea which we all enjoyed.

## VISIT TO HOUGHTON HALL, THURSDAY 7<sup>th</sup> September 2006



The West Front

Ann Dyball had arranged for us to have a guided tour of the Hall in the morning, so after an early start from Aylsham we arrived at the impressive gates about 10.30. The drive through the extensive parkland on a lovely autumn morning was most impressive – no other cars – just glimpses of the white deer. The house stands dramatically at the junction of four broad avenues. Several of us had visited Houghton before but the special treatment we received made the whole day quite unique. We were met by two guides who would escort us on the tour. We were taken first into the Stables Court and into the west range for coffee. The great size of the stables block indicated the importance of hunting to the great statesman and politician Sir Robert Walpole.

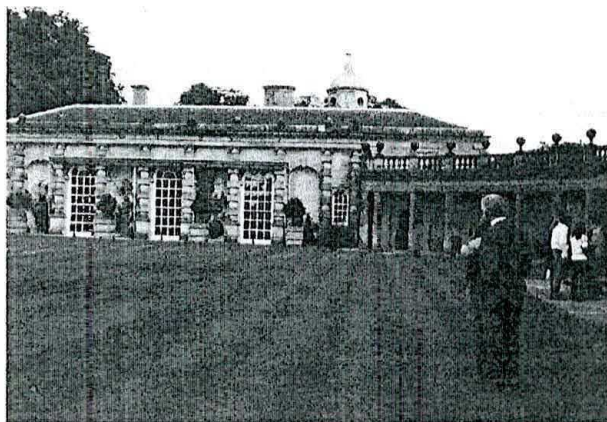
The guide explained the background to the building of this great House. Sir Robert had inherited a house and estate in 1700 and by 1720 had extended it to 9,400 acres. He had also started to collect fine pictures and carried out alterations to the old house and garden. Having spent nine years as a Whig minister of the Crown in important posts he gave up office in 1717 and became Leader of the Opposition and devoted himself to his estate in Norfolk. He returned three years later to become, following



the South Sea Bubble crisis, Paymaster General and then First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer. It would appear that the improvement in his political career and fortune - he sold his stock at 1000% profit after having argued against the Bubble Scheme - made him conceive of rebuilding Houghton on a much grander scale. No records had been found to indicate costs. He remained in the above two posts until 1742, being a mainstay of the Hanoverian dynasty which had started in 1714 following the death of Queen Anne. He died in 1745.

The first designer of Houghton was James Gibbs, who set the form and scale of the main block with its castle-like corner towers. In 1722 the foundation stone was laid. Construction was in the hands of Thomas Ripley, who also built Wolterton for Sir Robert's brother Horatio. In 1723 Colen Campbell, a leading exponent of the Neo-Palladian style, was brought in and made proposals to revise the design of the exterior.

William Kent, a decorative painter and architectural decorator, was responsible for the magnificent interiors of the main floor from 1723, and by 1731 most of the main rooms were complete. The Marble Parlour was finished in 1733. The old village, too close to the mansion, was demolished and a new one built outside the park; a magnificent stable block was also built.





We walked round to the west front with our guides and admired the long view to the distant park. Then we went into the house through the door under the west steps and came into the Lower Hall or Arcade, which was used originally for estate celebrations and hunting gatherings. From this simple room a door opened on to the foot of the Great Staircase, and as we climbed the stairs with its mahogany balustrade we saw the impressive bronze copy of the Borghese *Gladiator* pointing to the Stone Staircase. However, we first went into the Common Parlour, which was one of the original family rooms and had no decorative painting on the ceiling. Family portraits of Sir Robert and of his wives and descendants were on display.

The Stone Hall, a double-height hall, which is a perfect cube, 40' x 40' x 40' was the next hall for us to see. The plasterwork on the ceiling and in the coves was by Guiseppi Artari but the bust of Sir Robert was the work of Rysbrack, the leading sculptor of the day. We then saw The Marble Parlour, a richly gilded and colourful dining room for a state occasion, with special access for servants from behind the chimney-breast. This idea was by Gibbs but Kent was responsible for the decoration. He dedicated the room to Bacchus, god of wine. The dining table was the original one and could expand to 16 feet. The 16<sup>th</sup> century Turkish carpet was thought to have survived from Sir Robert's time. There were large pictures of Sir Robert and portraits of George I and II and of Queen Caroline. We then proceeded to the Cabinet, originally planned as a bedroom, but used by him to display 51 of the smaller pictures of Sir Robert's collection. His grandson the 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Orford sold the pictures in 1779 to Catherine the Great of Russia to pay debts and replaced the green velvet hangings with blue-ground Chinese paper. The next state room was the embroidered Bedchamber and contains a state bed hung with oriental needlework. The ceiling was richly ornamented, as was that of the next room, the Tapestry Dressing-room. This has two thrones granted to the 5<sup>th</sup> Marquess Cholmondeley when he was Lord Great Chamberlain to Edward VIII.

We were then shown the Green Velvet Bedchamber where the green velvet bed was said to be the most spectacular piece of furniture designed by William Kent; its trimmings cost more than £1,219 in 1732. As we

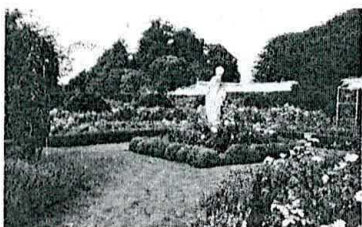
advanced along this middle corridor of the house, we admired the colours of the wall hangings in the rooms. The White Drawing Room which we saw next seemed misnamed. The furniture and walls were patterned and the ceiling (by Kent) had allegorical subjects. There was a portrait of the 1st Marchioness of Cholmondeley in a white dress. Sir Robert had originally hung here a series of pictures by Carlo Maratta.

We then reached the Saloon, the largest of the state rooms. It was the first to be elaborately gilded and to have its walls hung with material. It should be the first to be seen after the Stone Hall, being conceived as a room of reception for formal occasions. The decoration was all designed by William Kent and the ceiling contains many allegorical allusions and contrasts with the crimson walls. The ceiling gained dramatically when lit by electricity. It is thought the chairs and settees were made at Houghton in the 1730s. Gilded mahogany on the doorcases was also pointed out. There are now large family portraits in this room, notably of Sir Robert's 2<sup>nd</sup> wife Maria, of his youngest daughter Mary and of Horatio Walpole, Sir Robert's brother. A portrait of Catherine the Great of Russia was given to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl by her when she bought Sir Robert's pictures.

The bright colours of walls and furnishings in these state rooms was explained to us as a consequence of the floor being closed and cocooned for a century and a half. Houghton was inherited by Sir Robert's son Robert who died in 1751 and later his grandson George the 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl who died in 1791, both accumulating debts. Through Sir Robert's youngest daughter Mary (who died in 1731) the estate passed to the Cholmondeley family. She married Viscount Malpas, later the 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Cholmondeley. Her grandson George who became 4<sup>th</sup> Earl and 1st Marquess of Cholmondeley inherited Houghton after Horace Walpole died in 1797. He concentrated on his Cheshire estate. It was not until 1919 that the future 5<sup>th</sup> Marquess Cholmondeley and his wife Sybil Sassoon came to live at Houghton; they did not move to Cholmondeley when his father died in 1923. Lady Sybil lived at Houghton for seventy years, dying in 1989. The present Marquess, the 7<sup>th</sup>, divides his time mainly between Cheshire and Norfolk.

We were fortunate in visiting Houghton as a group in the morning before the public were admitted. We were able to see all the state rooms; they

gave a great impression of wealth and political power suitable for the dominant Sir Robert, friend to Royalty and skilful manager of Parliament.



After a pleasant lunch in the stable courtyard restaurant, we then had time to visit the former kitchen garden which has been laid out as a series of gardens by Lord Cholmondeley as a memorial to his grandmother.

Members also visited the large Soldier Collection with its reconstructions of battles and the large set of stables built from 1733-35. The external walls are of the local yellow Snettisham stone.

The stables can accommodate eighty horses. Several 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century vehicles are also stored here.



Our thanks go to Ann Dyball for arranging an excellent visit. **Betty Gee**

**References:** see **Robert Walpole First Prime Minister** by David Yaxley in the Larks Pocket Biographies series and

**Sir Robert Walpole: the King's Minister** by J H Plumb  
Houghton Hall Guidebook published by Jarrolds Publishing

Sir Robert's career had a fortuitous start, owing to two elder brothers dying at a young age; he therefore inherited the estate from his father in 1700, and also to Queen Ann's failure to produce an heir leading to the accession of King George I who knew little English. He soon left the management of ministers to Sir Robert. Sir Robert's first marriage to Catherine Shorter produced five children. She died in 1737, their



daughters Catherine and Mary having previously died. Sir Robert then married Maria Skerrett who had been his mistress for twenty years but she died within the year during child-birth. She had had a daughter Maria in 1725 but little is known of this daughter's life. In 1742 he retired from public office and spent much time at Houghton. He became closer to his remaining son Horace. Also in 1742 Walpole became 1st Earl of Orford and was presented with 10 Downing Street. He suffered greatly from gout having become very stout and died in London in 1745 from a violent remedy. At his death he had debts of £50,000. His son Horace assisted Robert's son the 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl and later the 4<sup>th</sup> Earl/1st Marquess of Cholmondeley (grandson of Mary Walpole) who inherited the estate in 1797 to pay off most of the mortgages. BG

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## **REPORT OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**      5<sup>th</sup> October 2006

The Chairman welcomed members to the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual General Meeting held in the Friendship Hall. After the last Minutes had been approved the Secretary gave her report.

Membership had remained at 102 and evening lectures had been well attended. She reminded members of the subjects and speakers, all of which have been reported in this Journal. The autumn afternoon course of ten lectures on *Historic Gardens and Parks of Norfolk* arranged by Peter Holman had been enjoyed by twenty members. The Winter Party held at the Aylsham Lodge Hotel had been attended by fewer members than in previous years; a pleasant meal had been followed by a musical interlude provided by Clive Ashwin and Gill Smith on clarinet and keyboard. At the Dinner Betty Gee had been presented with Life Membership of the Society in recognition of her years of Committee service and as Editor.

The Committee was considering changes in the timing and organization of the Party to encourage more members to participate.

The Holt Society had visited Aylsham in September, with Geoff Gale showing them the Market Place and Daphne Davy the Parish church. Lloyd Mills had also shown a selection of items from the Archives.

Angela thanked the Old People's Welfare Association for the improvement in the facilities of the Friendship Hall. New heaters had been installed this year. She then thanked all members of the Committee for their support and hard work and Geoff Gale for his guidance and work throughout the year. Betty Gee was thanked for her work as Editor of the Journal. Tom Mollard had once again kept the list of members on computer and organized the printing of the Membership Card. Finally the Secretary thanked members for their help with refreshments and distributing the Journal.

The Treasurer, Mr Peter Pink, explained that the Accounts had not yet been audited. An audited account would appear in the December Journal. Overall income had been above expenditure, although the Winter Party had had to be subsidised. He was thanked for his work.

**VISITS** Ann Dyball felt discouraged that fewer members had taken part in the visits during the last two years. She had therefore prepared a questionnaire, preferably to be completed that evening, which would give her a clearer idea of the kind of visits members preferred. Members should note that it was important to reply by the time specified for her to book the coach.

**REPORT ON JOURNAL** Betty Gee said that three editions had been produced in the last year. She hoped to complete Volume 7 in the next year. If any new members required copies of older editions they were available at £1 per copy. Her sincere thanks went to contributors, Gillian and Rosemarie for their distribution work and to Peter for his technical assistance.

**REPORT ON PUBLICATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE** The new edition of *Millgate* was being published by Poppyland, with the help of a grant for typesetting and artwork received from the Federation of Norfolk Historical and Archaeological Organisations.

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS & COMMITTEE** The Officers were re-elected en bloc. Ann Dyball and Rosemarie Powell, retiring members, were re-elected. Lloyd Mills was appointed to the vacancy created by the

resignation of John Harris. Betty Gee was co-opted on to Committee and Sheila Merriman was provisionally elected to the Committee, following due proposals and seconding.

**CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS** Geoff Gale reminded members that help was needed to set out chairs in the Hall for lectures. Several members had offered to assist but could not do every month. He congratulated Ann Dyball on the excellent visits she had organised. The Holt Society and Old Catton Society had offered to host visits. It was still hoped to arrange a visit to the John Innes Centre library in either October or December. Dr Charles Bristow had donated to the Aylsham Archives material on Joseph Clover the anaesthetist. *Researching House History* was being considered as a topic for a Spring course of lectures.

Daphne Davy proposed a vote of thanks to the Committee, seconded by Roger Polhill. Refreshments then followed. BG

### **OULTON AT WAR Talk given by Beryl Griffiths after the AGM**

Beryl Griffiths gave a talk on the RAF base at Oulton near Aylsham. She was drawn into this subject as a National Trust volunteer, and soon became fascinated with the subject, finding people with memories of the air base for the duration of the War.

There were three phases to the use of the Oulton airfield during the second World War. The earliest was as a grass airbase, run by what is now the RAF Regiment. This was followed by a longer period as a light bomber base, and the final phase was as a more specialist, technical base.

At first there were grass runways, few people and small planes. The base was made up of land taken from three farms, and was known as the Bluestone aerodrome, after a local railway station. As a light bomber base, planes were sent out to take part in raids, such as bombing the Philips factory in Eindhoven and a huge raid to Hugendorf.

Finally, it was a base for radar jamming technology, such as "window", where quantities of radar opaque foil strips were dispatched from aircraft



bomb bays to overload radar stations, and therefore render them useless for directing flak.

She spoke of the facilities provided at the base for the personnel. A stage erected in the Lothian Barn for shows is still there, still in use. Blickling Hall was used as barracks, at first for all ranks, then officers for the use of. Other ranks were housed in Nissen huts in the park, which were used after the War for civilian housing; (Mrs Hudson's essay about this was in the last Journal no 11). Some of Blickling Hall was sealed off, at the request of Lord Lothian, when it was requisitioned by the War Office.

Another theme running through the talk was humanity. Lord Lothian, the owner of Blickling Hall at the start of the conflict, visited it several times. Another personality was Miss O'Sullivan, the housekeeper who oversaw the use of the Hall, and was often in conflict with the RAF over misuse of its treasures. Squadron Leader Robinson, at one time Officer Commanding RAF Oulton, was on at least one occasion the one who misused the treasures. He was *guilty* of entering the sealed off areas. Another visitor, Mr Round, now 93, still comes to the Hall every year.

RAF Oulton, according to those who were stationed there, was a happy posting. There was space to walk, to relax, to get away. Beryl Griffiths allowed those of us listening to enjoy a brief view of that time.

**Daphne Davy**

### **LOOKING FOR THE PASTONS** Talk given by **Peter Bradbury**

On 26<sup>th</sup> October, Peter Bradbury presented an excellent series of slides illustrating his search for traces of the Paston family in Norfolk. This talk attracted a large audience, who found much to interest them.

On an OS map of North Norfolk in Gresham village, a castle surrounded by a moat is marked. Visit it one day and walk across the ploughed field. You will find very little, apart from flint rubble, to show that once upon a time this fortified manor house was a main residence of the famous Paston family. The family dynasty started with Clement of Paston who had some arable land and managed a water mill as tenant. He and his wife Beatrice had one son called William who was born in 1378.

The Black Death had killed nearly half the country's population in 1348 so there was a shortage of young people. Clement sent young William to Bromholm Priory at great personal cost and he then went on to study law and lived in one of the Inns of Court in London. He had a meteoric career becoming a Justice in The Court of Common Pleas in 1429. William took great care to cover up his yokel roots while he began to buy property in North Norfolk and establish the family line.

Our speaker, Peter Bradbury, darted around the local churches and houses associated with the Paston family, finishing up with the astonishing revelation that Sir William Paston who died in 1732 and was the ruination of the family, had married Charlotte, illegitimate daughter of King Charles II, no less. What a socially upward move from his ancestor in the late 14th century! So what happened in between these dates?

Our speaker took us to Paston church where a pew end displays the Paston coat of arms "six fleur de lys" and some tombs which he would tell us more of later. The brasses had been stolen long ago. Sir John Paston, son of the first William Paston, died of the plague and was buried at Bromholm Priory. He was married to Margaret Mautby the writer of the famous Paston letters. He inherited Caister Castle near Yarmouth from John Fastolph, made famous by William Shakespeare's Falstaff, causing a legal wrangle. During the dissolution of the monasteries the tomb was moved to Paston church in 1535. Erasmus Paston married Mary Wyndham of Felbrigg Hall. He died in 1538 and his tomb has the only brass inscription. His son William founded Paston Grammar school, where years later Nelson was a pupil. He was yet another lawyer. The tombs of Sir Edmund and Lady Katherine Paston are on display. They were sculptured by Nicholas Stone who was sculptor to James I and Charles I. Katherine's sculpture is a full size effigy of different coloured marbles. She was a very able lady managing her husband's affairs when he was ill. The monument paid for by her son cost £340. She too wrote letters to her family.

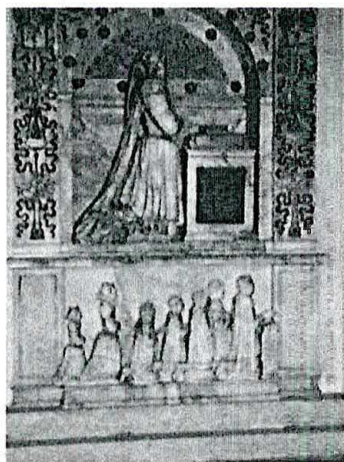
Mautby church is where Margaret Paston is buried. She died in 1488 having designed her own tomb. The tomb was buried under rubble when the south side of the church fell down.

Oxnead Church houses a bust on a pedestal of Lady Katherine Paston who died in 1636. Again the sculpture was by Nicholas Stone who also

designed the fountain which is now in Blickling Hall parterre. Katherine was the first wife of Sir William [see Paston church]. His estates were sequestered which was the start of the decline of the family. In 1659 he sold Caister Castle to pay off a debt. He died in 1663 and is buried in Oxnead church. His son became Earl of Yarmouth. Another tomb is of Admiral Sir Clement Paston who died in 1597. He was known by four monarchs as "Henry VIII's champion, Edward VI's soldier, Mary I's gallant seaman and Elizabeth I's Father." He captured the Admiral of the French fleet and was paid 7,000 crowns with which he built Oxnead Hall. His wife, Alice, is on the side of the tomb. She was a widow when Clement married her. She had a son from a previous marriage loved by Clement. [see floor tiles - Edmund Lambert and Alice Paston]. There is a small brass of Anne Paston daughter of John Paston.

Clement was succeeded by William Paston (his nephew), who was knighted in 1578. He founded Paston School in 1606. He lived at Paston Hall and he built Paston Great Barn. The arms of the Paston family are over the door. Sir William was buried in North Walsham church in 1610. He designed his own tomb and had it installed two years before he died. Bizarre!! Several paintings in the school are connected with the family.

Tittleshall Church is well known for the Coke family from Holkham Hall who are buried there. Lord Chief Justice Coke married Bridget Paston in 1610, his first wife. She was "his best wife." They were married in 1583 and lived at Godwick.



The monument shows Bridget Paston and their seven children.

She was born in Huntingfield in Suffolk where her father John Paston's tomb is situated.



Appleton church situated on the Sandringham Estate is a ruin. Admiral Sir Clement Paston bequeathed the manor of Appleton and Binham to a nephew. He tried to build a mansion at Binham but a workman was killed so he built one at Appleton instead. In 1707 fire destroyed the building. Three graves are in the derelict chancel, one may be of Agnes Paston married to Edward Paston; another the grave of a West Acre Priory monk.

Barningham church has a hatchment to Mary Clark, wife of Sir Edmund Paston who died in 1734. There is a tomb to John Paston aged 11 months old. Sir Edmund's Barningham Hall is the only residence of the Paston family left standing. The Paston coat of arms is still above the door. Built in 1612, it was altered by Sir Humphrey Repton no less. It was sold in 1736 to pay off the debts.

Sir Robert Paston joined Charles II in exile. On his return as MP for Castle Rising he raised £2.5 million for the King's war and was made Earl of Yarmouth in 1679; he died in 1683. He lived at Oxnead Hall and when the King was to visit Oxnead he added a banqueting hall in the King's honour. A statue from Oxnead of Goliath is in the Blickling Hall Orangery.

Blofield church had six black marble tombs rather than brass. A wall monument for Sir Edward Paston and his wife shows that they had nine children and that he was eighty when he died.

Sir William Paston, as stated, was the ruination of the Paston family. He lived at Oxnead, a widower with his children. Within 3 months of his first wife's death, he had remarried an Elizabeth North, a lady who had £20,000 and connections at court. He died on Christmas day 1732 in Epsom Parish in Surrey. He had outlived all his children and so was the last of the great Paston family.

**Martyn and Sue Fox**

**Note:** *THE PASTONS A Family in the Wars of the Roses* edited by Richard Barber and published by The Folio Society contains the Paston Letters in a historical commentary. It has a genealogical tree from 1378 to 1554 and an Epilogue giving an account of descendants. It was not possible, however, to establish the relationship between all the Pastons found by Mr Bradbury in his interesting talk.

## LIST OF MEMBERS – NOVEMBER 2006

Below is the list of current paid-up members. After this issue of the *Journal*, the circulation list for future issues will be based on this. IF YOUR NAME DOES NOT APPEAR THERE, YOU COULD MISS OUT ON FUTURE ISSUES OF *THE JOURNAL*! You can still receive them by paying a subscription to the Treasurer, Mr Peter Pink, 38 Lancaster Gardens, Aylsham NR11 6 LD (Individuals £8; Married Couples £13).

**With apologies to any members who might have renewed their subscriptions within the last few days and still missed inclusion in the list.**

Baker, Mr DW	Douet, Dr A	King, Mr & Mrs D
Barber, Mrs P	Ducker, Mr G	King, Mr & Mrs M
Barwick, Mrs G	Duncan, Mrs B	Kirk, Mrs T
	Dyball, Miss A J	Laxen, Mr R R
Bayes, Mrs R	Elsey, Mr & Mrs	Lloyd, Mrs T
Belton, Miss V	Fox, Mr & Mrs M	Lowe, Mr B
Bird, Mrs M	Fry, Mr R	Lyons, Mr D
Boekee, Mr & Mrs R	Gale, Mr & Mrs G	McChesney, Mrs J
Brasnett, Mr & Mrs D	Garratt, Mr & Mrs A	McManus, Mr/Mrs
Bratt, Miss R	Gawith, Mr & Mrs C	Merriman, Ms S
Bull Mr & Mrs P	Gee, Mr & Mrs P	Miller, Miss C
Burton, Mr A	Haddow, Ms E	Mills, Mr L
Cain, Mrs D	Hall, Mrs R	Minns, Mrs E
Clarke, Mrs P	Hawkins, Mr & Mrs A	Mitchell, Mrs J
Collins, Mrs R	Hicks Mr R	Mollard, Mr/Mrs
Cook, Mrs M	Hill, Mrs J	Newell, Mrs J
Cort, Ms J	Holman, Mr Mrs P	Nicholls, Mrs D
Cox, Mrs F	Johnston, Mr G	Peabody, Mr R
Crouch, Mr R	Keable, Mrs M	Pink, Mr & Mrs P
Davy, Mr & Mrs R		Polhill, Dr & Mrs R

List, continued

Powell, Mr & Mrs I	Shepherd, Mrs A	Swann, Mr & Mrs
Pritchard, Mr & Mrs E	Sheringham, Mrs J	Ulph, Mr C
Radford, Miss N	Smith, Mrs E	Vaughan-Lewis, Mr/Mrs
Rowe, Mrs M	Smith, Mr & Mrs R	Wadley, Mr D A
Rust, Mr & Mrs B	Steward, Mrs L	Wintle, Mrs S
Shaw, Mr & Mrs	Stickells, Mr & Mrs D	Wright, Mr J

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**BEESTON HALL GARDENERS' ACCOUNTS** The Norfolk Record Office has recently catalogued gardeners' accounts for BEESTON HALL, Beeston St Lawrence, 1844. Beeston Hall was built for Jacob Preston (1740-87) whose ancestors bought the estate from the Hobart family of Blickling Hall in 1640. The present Beeston Hall, built in 1786, replaced an earlier house on another site. Beeston, with its Gothick style architecture and castle-like facade, is unusual for a Norfolk country house.

The building is credited to William Wilkins senior, a Norwich architect, (1761-1815), who is famous for the Restoration of Norwich Castle. His son, the architect Sir William Wilkins, is renowned for designing the National Gallery, London.

The gardeners' accounts relate to the period when Beeston Hall was in the ownership of Sir Jacob Preston (1812-91) 2<sup>nd</sup> Baronet, who was eminent in Norfolk county affairs. He held all three offices of JP, Deputy Lord-Lieutenant and High Sheriff of Norfolk. By 1861, Sir Jacob was farming about 1,000 acres on the Beeston estate and his household staff totalled thirteen members. The gardeners' accounts for the year 1844 give a more intimate picture of Sir Jacob's household garden and complement records concerning management of his large Beeston estate. For example the 2s spent on ammunition and gunpowder in July was presumably used to destroy some of the 640 birds, birds' nests and rats shot on the estate and reorded in the accounts for the beginning of August.

The reference for the garden accounts is MC 2414/1, 965X9. For estate and family records of the Preston family at Beeston Hall, refer to MC 36 MC 105, MC 121, MC 337 and MC 502.

**BG**



# AYLSHAM LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

## PUBLICATIONS ACCOUNT

INCOME & EXPENDITURE ON PUBLICATIONS from AGM in October 2005 to AGM 2006

Income		Expenditure	
Balance - B/F	1753 - 22	Repayment of loan to E. Gale	+++ 229 - 50
Sales		Photocopies	7 - 40
<i>Inns &amp; Pubs of Aylsham</i>	156 - 32	Payment to Poppyland Publishing	400 - 00
<i>Starling</i>	26 - 10	Postages	15 - 66
<i>Wright's map</i>	17 - 00		
<i>Aylsham in 1821</i>	6 - 00		
<i>Poor in Aylsham</i>	9 - 00		
<i>Postcards</i>	12 - 00		
<i>Aylsham Directories 1793-1937</i>	103 - 41		
<i>Misc. sales</i>	8 - 00		
Loan from Federation**	400 - 00		
<b>Total</b>	<u>2491 - 05</u>	<b>Total</b>	<u>652 - 56</u>
		Balances in hand - Giro s/c	1804 - 47
		- cash	34 - 02
		<b>Grand Total</b>	<u>2491 - 05</u>

### NOTES:

\*\* Loan from Federation of Norfolk Historical Societies towards cost of publishing 2<sup>nd</sup> ed "Millgate". It will be repaid in two instalments over next two years.

+++ Final payment to Mrs E. Gale of shared cost of publishing "Aylsham Inns & Pubs"

Tom Mollard 27.9.06

# AYLSHAM LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

## ACCOUNT FOR YEAR ENDED 31st AUGUST 2006

2005 £	INCOME	2006 £	2005 £	EXPENDITURE	2006 £
1205	Publications	738	229	Publications	653
676	Subscriptions	715	30	Subscriptions	10
765	Course Fees	820	759	Course	387
51	Visitors	36	32	Programme Cards	25
11	Donations	-	25	Donations	25
			221	Journals	224
24	Bank Interest	23	138	Rent (F'ship Club)	138
644	Social Event	702	648	Social Event	727
			8	Rent (Quakers)	32
Visits					
204	Oxburgh		203	Oxburgh	-
358	Nelson		347	Nelson	-
44	Skipper		25	Skipper	-
336	Angels		370	Angels	-
-	Plantation	21	-	Plantation	18
-	Hickling Visitors	30	-	Hickling Visitors	47
			22	20th Anniv Events	-
			66	Officers' Expenses	81
			87	Lecturers' Fees	110
4318		3085	3210		2477
BALANCES 31/8/05			BALANCES 31/8/06		
922	Treasurer's A/c	1032	1032	Treasurer's A/c	1534
969	Business A/c	991	991	Business A/C	1012
777	Publications	1753	1753	Publications	1838
<u>£6986</u>		<u>£6861</u>	<u>£6986</u>		<u>£6861</u>

Excess of Income over Expenditure for the year £608

PETER PINK, Treasurer

GRAEME JOHNSTON, Accountant