

AYLSHAM LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY



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CONTENTS

Editorial	367
The Broads Society; Aylsham Hospital	368
Society News: Miss Ruth Bratt. Miss Eileen Nolan	370
Speakers for the 2007/8 session; news from the Archive Centre	371
<i>East Anglian Painters</i> - A Talk by Peter Baldwin Ann Dyball ...	372
Spring Social - A Report by Angela King	375
Visit to Sudbury and Cogglesall report by Betty Gee	376
Ballington Bridge, Sudbury by Geoff Gale	380
Voewood House, Kelling	384
Aylsham Boys' School Register 1872-1911 by Peter Bull	385
Roll of Honour Great War 1939-1945	388
<i>Village at War</i> - Gressenhall Farm & Workhouse 26 & 27 th August	392

Cover illustration: Photograph taken in July 2007 of Aylsham Hospital, the former Union Workhouse built in 1849. The entrance to the 2-ward hospital unit at present in service can be seen on the right of the picture.



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SOCIETY

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NEWSLETTER**

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Since the last edition in April we have had a most enjoyable Spring Social on 26th April organized by our Secretary, Angela King. As this incorporated a museum visit as well as a new venue for the meal, members wished their thanks to Angela to be recorded. The society has also had two excellent visits – the first to Sudbury and Coggleshall on May 3rd and the second an afternoon visit to Voewood House, Kelling. The latter was so popular that Ann Dyball arranged two dates, the 27th and 28th June. Ann's work on our behalf is very much appreciated. There is a review of the first day's visit on page 376 but a report of the second will appear in the next edition. A visit to Burghley House and Stamford is planned for Wednesday, the 12th September.

This will be my last edition as Editor; arrangements will be made for the 14 editions of Volume 7 to be bound once an alphabetical index has been made by Diana and Roger Polhill. My grateful thanks go to them for this most useful task. Then a complete bound edition of Volume 7 will be kept in the Archives, where it may be consulted on Mondays from 10 to 12 noon. I have enjoyed my time as editor and am glad that the Journal will continue.

The annual General Meeting of the Society will take place as usual on the first Thursday in October, the 4th October, at 7 pm followed by a talk on *Great Yarmouth, History, Herrings, Holidays* by Peter Stibbons; a notice is enclosed with this edition. There will also be an afternoon course by Wanda Standley on *East Anglian Artists* starting on Tuesday, 25th September at 2 pm at the Friends Meeting House.

THE BROADS SOCIETY

I have recently had a chance to read two editions of *Harnser* the magazine of the Broads Society, which is now more than fifty years old. It occurs to me that members of ALHS may well be interested in the activities of the Broads Society. Broad Society members “share a common purpose to help secure a sustainable future for the Broads as a unique and protected landscape in which leisure, tourism and the local economy can thrive in harmony with the natural environment.”

The editor of *Harnser* is Jill Wickens (Tel:01692 584179 e-mail: harmser2006@yahoo.co.uk) and the Administrator of The Broads Society is Carol Palfrey (Tel:01692 651321) . The website is www.broads-society.org.uk. The two editions I have read (for Spring and Summer 2007) contain interesting articles about changes in the Broads, as well as fascinating memories and photos from the past. There is information for members on the progress through Parliament of the Private Bill for the Broads, a report on news and views of the Broad Authority and a Progress Report on the Broads Flood Alleviation Project by Martin George. The latter gives a photo showing how the east side of Fleet Dyke has been “rolled back”.

Social events take place during the year, including river trips, and the AGM takes place in the autumn at How Hill. If you are interested in the future of the Broads, you may like to consider becoming a member of the Broads Society. The annual subscription for individuals is £13.00 or if paying by direct debit £10.00. New members can join at any time in the year. You should contact the Administrator for further information.

Betty Gee

AYLSHAM HOSPITAL Cawston Road This was formerly the Union Workhouse built in 1849 and designed to hold 600 inmates. It was taken over in 1948 under the National Health Service Act. In 1956, after a local campaign led by Dr Alec Holman to raise money for a Cottage Hospital, the east wing of the building was adapted and opened. Surpluses were also taken from the winding up of the Aylsham Nursing Association and Ambulance Funds. In 1959 a rheumatology unit under

Dr Cardoe was set up in the building, treating patients with arthritic diseases both medically and surgically and in 1982 an operating theatre was opened after a huge local campaign. In 1996 the NHS took these services away from Aylsham claiming that there was no "emergency provision at St Michael's should anything go wrong". The health authority then decided to close geriatric services and switch them to Cromer.

In 2002 the Cottage Hospital and its services moved to a two-ward community unit with 24-26 beds in the hospital grounds. In October 2006 a new vision for healthcare in Norfolk was projected by the newly-formed Primary Care Trust, with the aim of having a team of community based nurses and health professionals treating patients in their own homes, or closer to them. Many objections were made to this change from all over North Norfolk. Under this scheme the total number of beds in North Norfolk would be cut from 201 to 158, but under the scheme announced on 24th July 2007 at the PCT Board Meeting the number of beds has been pegged at 178. Five other sites have retained beds, but St Michael's Cottage Hospital is the only unit to be closed, probably by 2009. This was after three very well attended meetings in Aylsham and meetings in North Walsham, Kelling and Cromer.

Aylsham is to be offered five supported beds as a replacement, which the town Council chairman, Miss Liz Jones, described as a sop. She said "Despite GPs saying we need the beds and clinics, we are being ignored". Miss Jones led the hour-long question time at the PCT Meeting and was supported by a number of Aylsham people. The Director of Provider Services Mark Taylor said there had been a careful study of sites and their scope to expand by 30pc in the future... Only 6 of "Aylsham's beds were used by locals, with the others coming from the northern Norwich suburbs and Broadland." PCT Chairman Sheila Childerhouse stressed that the St Michael's closure was not because of any "done deal" with developers of neighbouring hospital land.

NOTE: The information about the PCT Meeting and consultations is abbreviated from the North Norfolk News of 26th July and 19th July. The immediate future of the original Workhouse building was not mentioned although local people think that the façade will be kept and the inside of the building probably used for apartments.

There have been various articles about life in the Aylsham Workhouse in our Journal. We had a guided visit to Aylsham Historic Houses in May 1997 with Chris Barringer and Vic Nierop-Reading and went to the Hospital as one of the places to visit. I was amazed by the size of it. It was even suggested that the Society hold a social function in the Board Room. Sadly it appears the future of the original building is outside the control of Aylsham residents. **BG**

SOCIETY NEWS

We very much regret to inform members of the deaths of two members.

Miss Ruth Esther Bratt born 6 November 1914 died 21 April 2007

One of the oldest members of our Society – Ruth Bratt - died in April 2007 at the age of ninety-two years at the Norwich and Norfolk University Hospital. Ruth served in the WRNS during the War. After working at the BBC in London with her good friend Miss Gwen Gaymer, she first came for holidays to a house in Soame Close, Aylsham. On retirement in the seventies she came to live in a period cottage in Hungate Street. She enjoyed playing golf at Royal Cromer Golf Course, and continued to lunch with friends there regularly after she ceased playing golf.

Ruth had been a keen member of our Society since 1986 and attended several talks during the last season; she enjoyed our summer visits to historic places. She took a lively interest in Aylsham affairs, politics and in the National Trust. Ruth attended Banningham WI meetings with friends. When she was over eighty years old, Ruth decided to move to Stuart Road and settled happily there, sometimes using a “buggy” to get around. She played bridge and, despite some health problems, maintained a keen interest in her friends. Her funeral took place at St Michael’s Church on 4th May last.

Betty Gee

Miss Eileen Nolan died on 28th May 2007 after a short illness. Her funeral took place on 11th June 2007. She and her friend Miss Olive Gardner were members of our Society for about eight years. Betty Gee

LIST OF SPEAKERS FOR 2007/8 EVENING SEASON

Thursday 4 th October	at 7 pm	AGM followed by <i>Great Yarmouth History, Herrings, Holiday</i>	Peter Stibbons
Thursday 25 th October	at 7.30 pm	<i>Nelson in Norfolk</i>	Charles Lewis
Thursday 22 nd November	“ “	<i>Sir Charles Potts of Mannington Hall</i> Mr Wilkin-Jones	
2008			
Thursday 24 th January	“ “	<i>The Broadlands Photographers</i> Peter & Rosemary Salt	
Thursday 28 th February	“ “	<i>The Norfolk Home Front in the Second World War</i>	Neil Storey
Thursday 27 th March	“	<i>The Jews of Norwich</i>	Barbara Miller
April		Social function	

ooOoo

News from The Archive Centre

Few visitors to County Hall and the Archive Centre will fail to notice the arrival of the memorial Jaguar jet. It boasts a wingspan of 28 ft, and, at a length of 55 ft, weighs, with the mounting pylon, about six tons! It was moved from outside the former RAF Coltishall to the grounds of County Hall following the closure of the air base. It will be a permanent public reminder of the historic links between Norfolk and the Royal Air Force and will be a tribute to those RAF personnel based in Norfolk who died in war and peace.

Here was an artist talking on other artists, so we too in the end were enabled to see with new eyes. We looked at philosophical ideas, and mathematical ones when we touched on spirals and the golden section (where the ratio of the smaller to the larger is that of the larger to the whole); at the creation of momentum and energy and change, both growth and decay, so that we were really looking at man himself. We thought about the artist's concerns with tones and the counterpoint of dark on light and light on dark. And running all through was the influence of one artistic movement on another and the learning from each artist that goes on within a movement and the reactions of artists to the changes in society. Many, perhaps most, of the pictures were familiar to us. What a relief to be spared the biographical detail except where it really illuminated the point which was being made and to be invited to see instead!

Peter Baldwin began by talking about Giambattista Vico and the importance of his ideas for the eighteenth century, particularly on how the artist needs to submit himself to nature. From this submission comes "form" and a picture is the interrelationship of "form" with "narrative" or "context". Mr Baldwin used the Norwich School of 1803 - 1833 (how short a period) to talk about times when artists were in a sense autodidacts, although in fact their learning was derived from each other. John Crome wrote to James Starkie on the necessity of "breadth" in raising feelings, rather than a concentration on details that have no inherent connection and the importance of "not knowing how we are so charmed" when we look at a painting.

The detailed view of the pictures themselves began with some thoughts on the influence of Frances Hayman on Gainsborough and the relationship of East Anglian art to that of northern Europe rather than south, with this being brought out by the clash between Gainsborough and Reynolds. Gainsborough's Mr and Mrs Andrews under their tree was used as the focus here to talk about asymmetry, the golden section, drapery and the impossibility (in artistic terms) of the shot pheasant being on her lap! We learnt how Gainsborough started with mid tones (put on using a broom handle so that he could stand back!) and moved on to dark and finally to light, and looked at the influence of Van Dyck (Charles I and Henrietta Maria

- brilliant stiff yellow silk and a plush red velvet tablecloth which you could really feel) on drapery where you have to "invent and improvise", since drapery is an artefact rather than something found in nature. This was followed by the delightful study of Gainsborough's two children eager to catch a butterfly, where the subject matter was edging on the romantic view to which he increasingly lent but was here married with the invention in the tonality. We learnt that the phrase "pot boiler" was coined at this time.

For the transition to Constable we looked at two of Gainsborough's landscapes and thought about Rubens and his use of open space in such views, as well as the small incidents he introduced into his pictures. A cart at a stream by Gainsborough was followed by a Rubens which led to Constable's "Haywain". Constable, said Peter Baldwin, picked up on the formal language of the late Rubens with stability on the left ("Willy Lott's Cottage"). We looked at how the wheels of the cart held the space and how he removed the "real" trees on the right and added sheep and a dog. Then the focus shifted to the influence of continental painters like the French Delacroix with his "look after the tones and the lines will look after themselves". We noticed the simple centre or sky in the middle of several paintings and looked at Delacroix's "Massacre at Chios" from the Greek war, where the artist's focus is on the edge of the battle scene and the victims and he uses remarkable contrasts of light and dark with one figure and an object almost in silhouette. Constable's "Salisbury Cathedral" with its arching rainbow influenced by Rubens was followed by one of his sketches of Weymouth Bay of about 1835 with its sand and cloud and sky showing his breathtaking grasp of natural phenomena. We saw how Constable had influenced Pissarro and Monet when they came to London to escape the French Revolution. The last Constable that was examined was his dark stormy impressionistic view of Hadleigh Castle, really a kind of internal landscape, painted after the death of his wife.

Some paintings by the Dutch Ruisdael, including his well-known Mill, followed. Here, it was suggested, the mill reflected the stability of the new Dutch society and the group of women looking out at the boat, presumably with their men on board, was an example of his constant reference to private life. Then there was a Hobbema, again with little figures and light over trees and dramatic counterpoint, and a somewhat Italianate Cuyp with a golden glow, where the eye was led from the gesturing large figure on the right across other figures to a boat, so that we read the painting clearly from

the outside to the inside, rather than vice versa as in the Renaissance, and we reached the Norwich School.

We started with Crome and saw how he had looked at change in the decaying buildings of man and trees in nature and how William van de Velde's pared down images "less is more" had influenced Joseph Stannard. Cotman followed and the influence on him of Thomas Girtin "If Girtin had lived, I would have starved". We looked particularly at the two "Greta Bridge" works and considered how, just as Girtin used his sketchbook to add other elements to a painting, the rocks at the bridge came from two miles away and in the second example the mountain came from North Wales! We thought about his interest in negative shapes and the spaces between, his use of thin water colour and the play of light and dark in both oils and water-colour. With Middleton, we thought how he "walked about till he felt in accord with what he was looking at", focusing on the technical brilliance of his "Trees and a Broken Gate", where the reflection of the gate was so important and we noticed how much he left out round the edges. Henry Bright's use of strong contrast of light in his view towards Upper Sheringham from Cromer and its dramatic impact in "St Benet's Abbey" brought this group of artists to a conclusion.

Then it was Wilson Steer's sketches and his almost pointillist "Girls running" where the technique made us think of Seurat. We were helped to see the implied narrations behind some of these scenes. George Clausen from Essex followed, who like Jean-Francois Millet, elevated labourers and their work and then Munnings who was a very different artist before the First World War from the Munnings of the Horse Fair which almost bordered on "illustration". The breadth of handling of Arnesby Brown from Nottingham and his influence on Seago, comparisons with Sickert, the influence of Paul Nash on his brother John, Cedric Morris and his irises and finally several works of Michael Andrews brought a rich and deeply thoughtful lecture to an end.

The range of ideas, the length of period covered and the discussion of such an immense amount of detail in an always enlightening way in one evening was a remarkable achievement.

Ann Dyball

In a new departure from the social events of recent years, the Committee decided to try a new date and venue for the 2007 Society Dinner, and booked a visit and restaurant in Cromer. Although it was hoped that this change would attract more members to this event, numbers remained roughly the same as the previous year with 35 people attending.

A coach from Aylsham took members to the venue at The Henry Blogg Museum and the Rocket House Café in Cromer. The two are situated in the same modern building, with full disabled access, at the end of the promenade.

The event started on the ground floor with a visit to the Museum which is dedicated to the work of the Lifeboat Service in Cromer. Before looking round the museum, members were treated to an introductory talk in which we were told that the lifeboat, which forms the centrepiece of the ground floor, was the restored H F Bailey which served Cromer between 1935 – 45. She was launched 120 times and saved 520 lives. Her Coxswain was Henry Blogg who served as a lifeboat man between 1894, when he joined the service at the age of 18, up until his retirement in 1947 at the age of 72. During his lifetime he went out on service 387 times and saved 873 lives. He won the RNLI's Gold Medal for gallantry three times and the Silver Medal four times.

Cromer is one of the the busiest stations in the UK. In the past, the lifeboat was manned almost exclusively by fishermen, but now with the decline of the fishing industry its members largely come from the shops and banks in the town.

We then had a chance to look round the ground and mezzanine floors of the museum and try some of its interactive displays. A donation to the RNLI was made on behalf of the Society. The party then made their way to the second floor of the building which houses the Rocket House Café. The café enjoys panoramic views along the seafront from the picture windows which run along the front and end of the building.

We enjoyed a pleasant and relaxed meal with good service and very

enjoyable food as we watched the light fade and the lights switch on along the seafront and pier.

At the end of the meal Geoff Gale thanked the staff of the restaurant for their efforts. Members then returned to the coach for the return journey, praising the coach driver who had again braved the steep slope of 'The Gangway' to collect the party from the main entrance.

A decision will now need to be made at the AGM as to the timing and venue for the social event for 2008. Members' input will be most welcome.

VISIT TO SUDBURY and GAINSBOROUGH'S HOUSE and PAYCOCK'S HOUSE and THE GRANGE BARN, COGGESALL

About thirty Society members and friends set out early on a cool cloudy morning on 3rd May. The journey to Sudbury, Suffolk, took about two hours and we arrived at Gainsborough's House and entered from a side street, Weaver Street. The House recently completed a major refurbishment programme, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund; it included the installation of a lift, the fitting out of the Study Gallery and redecoration and repair of the entire House. We were warmly greeted and conducted to the Study Gallery for coffee and a talk from the Education Officer about the history of the House and of Thomas Gainsborough, the famous painter. We were pleased that John Harris and his wife Daphne, who moved to Sudbury from Aylsham eleven months previously, were able to join us at the talk.

The Education Officer explained that the House was the birthplace museum of Thomas Gainsborough (1727-1788), one of the greatest painters in the history of British art. John Gainsborough, the artists' father had bought two neighbouring properties in 1722 and had linked them behind a red brick classical façade, the first time such a thing was done in Sudbury. Before then every house in Sudbury was timber-framed. It is thought he had employed an architect as there were two-toned bricks and sash windows with decorative brick aprons. These, and other touches, all added up to a building of distinction. John Gainsborough has been described as a milliner, a clothier and a crepe-maker, but after he went bankrupt in 1733, he became the town's postmaster. (It was his father,

Robert Gainsborough, a manufacturer and merchant in fine worsteds and creps and bays, who had founded the family fortune. He became a burgess on the town council and was made chief constable of Sudbury.)

There had been remodelling of the House in the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century and a restoration of the building in 1959. The parlour on the ground floor has elaborate timbering and the painter's early works were displayed here. Two rooms on the first floor showed paintings from Gainsborough's time in Bath and London. It was explained that we could see also a special exhibition of paintings, drawings and photographs of Sudbury, many of which had been loaned from private collections.

The life of the artist Thomas was one of nine children. He showed an early aptitude for drawing and went to Sudbury Grammar School, where his maternal uncle was schoolmaster. At the age of thirteen, with the help of another uncle, he was sent to London to study as a pupil of Hubert Gravelot and Francis Hayman. At the age of eighteen he opened his own studio in Hatton Garden. In 1746 (aged nineteen years old) he married Margaret Burr (a child died in infancy) and lived in Hatton Garden. In 1749 they returned to Sudbury and lodged in Friar Street, where he and his wife raised two daughters, Mary and Margaret. These two girls would become world famous through the portraits their father painted of them throughout their lives. Although one daughter was married for about a year, they lived with their parents until they died. While living here he was commissioned to paint the double portrait of Robert Andrews and his wife Frances Carter. They are shown in their park at Auberies on the edge of Sudbury with the sweeping landscape of the Stour valley behind them and the tower of All Saints church. This painting hangs in the National Gallery in London. Some of his pictures from the Sudbury period are in the collection at Gainsborough House.

In 1752 Gainsborough moved with his family to Ipswich where he continued to paint both portraits and landscapes. In 1759 they moved to Bath where his reputation was quickly established. . Through family connections he obtained contacts with West Country clothiers and the country houses in the area which gave him opportunities to study the work of the Old Masters. This period appears to have been the most important in his life.



A self-portrait of the artist, his wife and daughter

1768 he became a founder member of the Royal Academy, but quarrelled with it in 1773 over the hanging of his pictures.

In 1774 Gainsborough moved to London and rented the western part of Schomberg House in Pall Mall. Although he had no official position at Court he frequently painted portraits of the Royal Family with whom he was very popular. He was bitterly disappointed not to be appointed Court painter in 1784. Unlike other painters, Gainsborough did not have studio apprentices to help him with finishing works. His nephew, Gainsborough Dupont, came to live with his uncle in Bath and was officially apprenticed to him in 1771.

In 1784 he quarrelled again with the Academy about the hanging of his pictures and withdrew his exhibits. He then held exhibitions of his work at Schomberg House. He died in August 1788 at the height of his career and is buried at Kew. His wife, Margaret Burr, was of Scottish descent and had hinted that she was of royal blood. It is known that she received an annuity of £200 pa from Henry, Duke of Beaufort, and it was assumed that he was her natural father. Margaret Burr was an attractive woman and there is a wonderful portrait of her in middle age painted by him in the

1780s. Gainsborough was generous to relations and friends, but Margaret kept a sharp eye on extravagances even at the height of their prosperity.

Thomas Gainsborough's first love was landscape painting, but few people wanted to buy landscapes. He had an expensive lifestyle to maintain so his success in portrait painting made him spend more time on portraits. He took great trouble with the light, often painting by candlelight. It was said he sometimes used pencils on sticks which were 6 ft in length and placed himself at right angles to the sitter.

There is a standing collection of drawings housed in the new Study Gallery, alongside prints, rare books and Gainsborough ephemera. It was explained that the House is owned by a private charitable trust, Gainsborough's House Society, as a memorial to the artist. There is a charge for admission of £4 for adults and concessions £3.20 and children and students £1.50, but the House is open free every Tuesday afternoon. In the pleasant Garden there is a black mulberry tree which was planted about 1610.

After the talk we were free to look round the various rooms and garden. Then the coach took us the short journey to the Mill Hotel, where many of us had lunch and were also able to visit certain older rooms. There were lovely views of the River Stour from the Hotel and of the Common Lands near it, enhanced by sunshine.

The town of Sudbury Members could then walk round Sudbury to see the variety of architectural styles on their own or be led by a guide. It was unfortunate that the main roads were very busy and noisy, possibly due to it being an election day. There are three mediaeval churches: St Peter's dominates Market Hill and is used for events and concerts; St Gregory's Church dates from Saxon times and stands at the northern corner of Iron Age defences above the banks of the diverted river. It was rebuilt in the fourteenth century. All Saints Church was built on the site of a Norman Church and built to serve the new parish created when the bridge was built. It is considered to have the finest tower in Sudbury. It was evident from our short walk that there were many interesting buildings in this market town.

Sudbury gained much from the improvement to the Navigation of the River Stour in the eighteenth century; Sudbury became an inland river port and many wharves were also built along the nearby villages. Many heavy goods were transported until the advent of the railway in the nineteenth century (in 1849) took away much freight. Sudbury's first industrial estate was established with tramway access from warehouses to the goods yard. The railway to Cambridge closed during the 1960s.

Betty Gee

Further Reading: *SUDBURY History and Guide* by Barry Wall
Thomas Gainsborough; A biography 1727-1788 by Isabelle Worman

BALLINGTON BRIDGE

Geoff Gale

One of the interesting asides to our visit to Sudbury was a walk into older parts of the town and while some of the group took a wider guided walk through the "old town" I wanted to see the new Ballington Bridge which crosses the River on the eastern side of Sudbury.

A short walk along the busy Cross Street brought me to the river and to the new elegant bridge. A bridge has been on this site since 1200 AD and I would suspect it has been a river crossing point long before the first recorded bridge was built. There is now archaeological evidence to suggest that a number were swept away when the river flooded in the past. This 1200 AD stone bridge was apparently associated with a hospital built on one of the banks. The hospital had been founded by Amicia, the Countess of Clare and its role was to look after weary travellers and attend to the local poor. A later wooden bridge over the river in the 1800's was supported by at least thirty wooden piles driven into the river bed. This mass of closely positioned timber unfortunately impeded the flow of the water through the bridge with the consequences of the river freezing during the winter and causing nearby Church Street and Cross Street to suffer regular flooding at other times. Eventually the wooden bridge was replaced in 1910 with another, thus alleviating much of the flooding problem, but of course it was subjected in due course to the new modern problem of increased lorry weight. The need to strengthen the bridge led to it being replaced in the Spring of 2003 by this new precast concrete bridge. It spans the river in one long slim arched continuous line, supported at either end by four curved piers which come almost to a point as they

disappear below the surface of the water close to the river banks. The road deck is wide so the piers on the far side are always in the shadow of their twin and the overhanging road also helps to obscure these other piers which increases the apparent slimness of the span.

The architects of this beautiful bridge, Brookes Stacey Randall and Ove Arup with their partners Suffolk Highway Engineering, had taken considerable care over the design of the bridge structure and the traffic management around the town, a necessary part of the construction process.

The bridge's main structure is composed of two parallel, precast, arched concrete sections which included the road deck and because of this complex form the designers wanted to have an accurate model to check the final design. To do this they had a 40 inch long model built by a relatively new computer milling process and could then use it to check dimensions and literally hold the bridge in their hands. The great care taken over this design resulted in them being given the Sudbury Society's Alan Phillips Design Award 2006.



COGGESALL We then continued to Essex and the small town of Coggesall, full of interesting buildings, first being dropped off in West Street at Paycock's, a fine half-timbered wool merchant's house dating from c 1500; here the National Trust resident gave us a short account of the house's history in the last four hundred years. It was built by John Paycocke for his son Thomas on his marriage to Margaret Horrold and bequeathed to them on his death. When the male line died out in 1584 the house passed into the ownership of the Buxton family, who were related by marriage to the Paycockes and also involved in the wool trade. A descendant of this family, Lord Noel Buxton, gave the house to the National Trust in 1925.



16th-century
Paycocke House

The richly decorated character of Paycocke's façade is typical of late medieval merchants' architecture. The principal house block is the latest of a series of buildings. The close studding is a deliberate display of the wealth of the Paycocke dynasty. All of the windows, smaller doors and doorheads, roof rafters, tie-beam ends and carved pilasters date from Lord Noel Buxton's extensive restoration in 1905. The unusual exterior was a foretaste of the superbly carved ceiling inside the hall, where the initials T P and M P for Thomas Paycocke and Margaret Paycocke were inscribed. An ermine tail, the merchant mark of the Paycockes, was also pointed out. The Dining Room was enlarged within a decade of its completion. The original partition and probable end wall of the house is marked by a line of mortise holes in a ceiling joist. All the area to the east of partition was part of the carriageway and could be entered by the big doors to the street or by a smaller pedestrian door, now blocked.

The small Sitting Room has a decorated ceiling but plain walls. A permanent display of Coggeshall lace is kept in this room. Visitors could see the main bedroom at the head of the stairs and the small bedroom sited over the Dining Room. Two wings at the back of the house have low ceilings and plain timbers – the eastern wing having a third storey.

The house was very much a place of business as well as a dwelling. The roof space and parts of the wings would have been used to store wool

before it was distributed to the cloth-makers in Coggesall. Part of the unusually long back garden was probably used as a tentering yard in which lengths of cloth were stretched out to dry after fulling. There was originally a dove house in the garden and probably stabling. It is now an attractive cottage garden.



Some of us had time for a short visit to the Grange Barn, a half mile away, where we were amazed at the great size of the timber-framed barn, used by the monks of the Cistercian Abbey in the 12th century (and previously the Savignac monastery). It was explained that Cistercian monasteries were divided into two segregated communities – choir monks with a spiritual and contemplative life, and lay brothers having many skills devoted to arable cultivation. The coarse white habits of the monks were woven from the fleeces of their immense flocks of sheep.

The abbey itself was mostly pulled down in the mid-sixteenth century in King Henry VIII's time. It is thought the Barn was rebuilt by the monks in the late fourteenth century and continued in agricultural use. The skill of the carpenters and the apparent continued need for this great storehouse is noteworthy.

In 1960 the building was taken out of agricultural use and later became derelict – two west bays collapsing. Local and national preservation societies had a lengthy struggle to save this historic structure. Temporary repairs were undertaken in 1982 and in 1983 the remains of the Barn

were carefully identified and reassembled by workers according to traditional methods. As many of the original timbers as possible were retained and new timbers were used of English oak, held in place by oak pegs specially made on site. "The 80,000 peg tiles needed for the reroofing came from a housing estate built by the old London County Council. Within two years two surviving bays and an untidy heap of timber had once again become one of England's most important and impressive historic barns. . . . In 1989 the building passed into the ownership of the National Trust."

Finally we had tea in the White Hart Hotel. In our journey back to Aylsham in the sunshine we all agreed we had had an excellent day, seen beautiful buildings and been stimulated by the work of our past ancestors. We are very grateful to Ann Dyball and others who went to a lot of trouble to organize the whole day. **BG**

See the National Trust leaflets on Paycocke's and the Grange Barn and another leaflet from the Town of Coggeshall for more detailed information.



Voewood House, Kelling - a report will appear in the next edition

AYLSHAM BOYS' SCHOOL REGISTER 1872-1911 Peter Bull

A register covering boys entering the school (properly called the Boys' National School, Aylsham) between August 1872 and May 1911 is now available in a database held at the Archive. The original register is a worn and fragile document, not suitable for public use and difficult to consult.

Almost all the information in the register has been entered in the database. The register gives each boy a number (1 to 1452). The register then records his full date of entry, full name, date of birth, name and address of his parent or guardian, occupation (see further below), previous school if any, and leaving date. The database contains all this information. For some boys there is supplementary factual information (eg 'left the area', 'ill', 'to Paston GS'), which is also in the database. The only information omitted concerns the boys' progress through the school (eg Grade I 1882, Grade II 1883, and so on), which is repetitive and seems to be of little interest now. The register does not comment on the boys' performance or behaviour in the school.

Apart from the ease with which it can be consulted without risk of damage to the register, the advantage of the database is that the boys can be arranged in alphabetical order of surname. Thus people wanting to trace their family history will find it easy to use. The information about the boys is rather uneven. A few birthdays are imprecise ('?June 1882', 'age about 10 {on entry}'). In a few cases the register notes 'information withheld'. The name of the parent/guardian is occasionally missing. Most addresses give at most the street name (Hungate St, Millgate and Cawston Rd occurring most frequently); the address is often no more precise than 'Aylsham' or 'Ingworth'. (Some boys had no parent/guardian and their address is given as 'workhouse' or 'the Union'.) Early on for some boys the previous school column records 'none'; these boys however usually entered the school under the age of seven. Sometimes there is no entry in this column. 'Infants Aylsham' was most commonly noted as the previous school, though especially early on many boys attended what was presumably a dame school (eg Mrs Richardson's). In most cases the register records when the boy left the school, though sometimes the entry is 'left' with no date.

Information on occupation is seriously incomplete. Moreover, recording practice seems to have changed. The practice up to about 1887 seems to have been to record the occupation of the parent or guardian. Thus schoolmaster, innkeeper, works foreman, organist, or missionary can hardly have referred to the boy's occupation on leaving school. Thereafter the practice seems to have been to record the occupation which the boy took up, and entries like errand boy, pupil teacher, and telegraph boy start to appear. It is not clear that either practice was followed consistently, and in any case many entries could have applied to either or both. In the majority of entries throughout the period, however, no occupation was recorded, whether because the keeper of the register did not know, or did not think the information was worth recording; this may be why entries for farm work or domestic service are fewer than one might expect.

Quite often a boy's education was interrupted; he would leave school and return after an interval to resume his education. A few boys did this two, three or even more times, retaining their initial register number. There is no obvious pattern to these intermittent absences, suggesting that the cause was illness or family emergency rather than seasonal pressures on the farm.

Only eight of the 1452 boys are recorded as leaving to enter higher education - four to Paston GS, and one each to 'higher grade in Norwich', Holt GS, Gresham GS (the same?), and N Walsham GS (the same as Paston GS?). Since this was presumably a source of pride to the school, and so likely to be recorded, there may have been no other cases. A few boys in the latter part of the period are recorded as having left with a 'labour certificate (LC)'.

For long periods the entries seem to have been made in the same hand, though the greater uniformity of Victorian/Edwardian copperplate than of modern handwriting may have misled me. Presumably the register was kept by the head schoolmaster or a colleague.

The data cannot be manipulated automatically for numerical analysis. Since 1452 is a large number of records to process manually, I took every tenth boy in the list and divided the sample of 145 records into three periods of ten years and one of just over nine. I omitted from the calculation a few cases in which the boy had evidently moved into or out of the area, since they would distort the average starting and leaving ages;

and omitted any remaining cases where the boy was recorded as having left at a younger age than 10y 1m. As noted earlier, there is sometimes no leaving date, so the boy's age on leaving is unknown. For these reasons the leaving ages are based on fewer cases than the entry ages. The leaving ages for boys entering the school in the last period are of limited use, since large numbers regardless of age are recorded as leaving in 1910 or 1911.

The results are as follows: (the 'mean' is the simple average; the 'median' is the middle point of the distribution, with 50% of the observations higher and 50% lower).

Boys entering the school May 1872 - April 1882

Mean age on entry 7y 8m (range 5y 7m - 13y 2m*)

Median age on entry 6y 8m

Mean age on leaving 12y8m (range 10y 1m - 16y 6m* {the next oldest was 14y3m})

Median age on leaving 12y 5m

Boys entering the school May 1882 - April 1892

Mean age on entry 7y 8m (range 5y 5m - 12y 8m)

Median age on entry 6y 10m

Mean age on leaving 12y 3m (range 10y 5m - 14y 3m)

Median age on leaving 12y 4m

Boys on entering the school May 1892 - April 1902

Mean age on entry 6y 11m (range 5y 6m - 10y 0m)

Median age on entry 6y 9m

Boys entering the school May 1902 - May 1911

Mean age on entry 7y 1m (range 6y 1m - 10y 8m)

Median age on entry 6y 10m

In the early part of the period, the 1870 Education Act, which required children, with some exceptions, to attend school between the ages of five and thirteen, was recent. From this evidence, some children had received no schooling before they joined this school at an older age than five. Moreover, more than half the boys (even after excluding so far as possible those leaving because they moved away) left school some months before their thirteenth birthday; and this continued to be the case until the 1890s. No doubt enforcement of the Act was uneven and some boys may anyway have been subject to waiver.

Almost all boys still in the school left at some undisclosed date in 1910 or 1911, even if they were only seven or eight. I have not been able to confirm the most plausible explanation, that education in the town was being reorganised about that time. Anyway, the register ceased to be maintained in May 1911. The last entry (8 May) relates to an eight year old from the workhouse who arrived that day; the last date recorded relates to the departure of a 12 ½ year old on 31 May 1911.

1 'National' because the school was run according to the principles of the 'Incorporate National Society for promoting the education of the poor in the principles of the established church'.

* the same boy: presumably there were exceptional circumstances, not recorded.

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ROLL OF HONOUR

Betty Gee

Geoffrey Nobbs, a member of our Society for many years and contributor to this Journal, informed me recently that there was an entry on the Internet regarding the Aylsham War Memorial for both the Great Wars entitled *Roll of Honour Lest We Forget*. It was <http://www.roll-of-honour.com/Norfolk/Aylsham.html>. The words *Ministry of Defence* and *The Royal British Legion* are printed on the first page. I assume therefore that these two authorities were consulted by the Researcher Lynda Smith. It runs to thirteen pages and we have downloaded it. Since there are often family history enquiries about members of previous generations of Aylsham residents, I give below the principal details of those men commemorated on the Aylsham War Memorial in the Churchyard of St Michael and All Angels Church, but have space in this edition to print only the Roll of Honour for the Second World War 1939–1945. The whole Roll of Honour is in the Aylsham Archives, which is to be found at the back of the Town Hall and is open to visitors on Monday mornings from 10 am until 12 noon.

ROLL OF HONOUR - NORFOLK - AYLSHAM IN GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE OF THOSE WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-1945

Sidney George **AMIES** *Probably* Lance Bombadier 1063331. 3 Bty., 6 HAA Regt, Royal Artillery. Died 21 December 1943. Age 36. Buried: KANCHANABURI WAR CEMETERY, Thailand. Ref. 4. D. 16.

Richard Beart **BALL** Flight Sergeant 1320457, 117 Squadron, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. Went missing 27th June 1945. Age 32. Husband of Marjorie Betty Ball of Thorpe-le-Soken, whom he had married on 31st January 1942, just days before joining the R.A.F. Born 29th May 1913 in Aylsham. He joined Essex County Constabulary on 1st May 1935, having previously served in the Army from 30th January 1928 to 15th April 1935. After Headquarters training he was posted to Chelmsford on 22nd June 1935 (Police Constable 206 Serial Number 3424). Subsequently Richard saw service in Halstead from 5th September 1936, transferring to Foxearth on 15th November 1937, and finally Dunmow on 22nd March 1939. On 9th February 1942, he joined the R.A.F. Commemorated on SINGAPORE WAR MEMORIAL, Kranji War Cemetery, Singapore. Column 449. See also Essex Police Roll of Honour.

William Arthur **BARKER** *Probably* Sergeant 1377348. W.Op./Air Gnr. 9 Sqdn., Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. Died 10 April 1943. Age 32. Son of Thomas Edmund and Jessie Elizabeth Emma Barker, of Cromer, Norfolk. Buried: OUDEWATER PROTESTANT CEMETERY, Zuid-Holland, Netherlands. Ref. Plot 6. Grave 69.

Alan Denis **BOND** Sergeant 1198862. 420 (RCAF) Sqdn, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. Died 3 July 1942. Age 30. Son of James Flaxman Bond and Kate Bond, of Aylsham, Norfolk; husband of Joyce Ethel Bond, of Aylsham. Buried: VOLLENHOVE (STAD-VOLLENHOVE) GENERAL CEMETERY, Overijssel, Netherlands. Ref. Plot 3. Row 4. Grave 630.

Frank Adrian **BROOM** Sergeant 1467383. 10 Sqdn., Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. Died 8 November 1942. Age 20. Son of John Harold Ward Broom and Frances Susanna Broom, of Aylsham, Norfolk. Commemorated: RUNNYMEDE MEMORIAL, Surrey, United Kingdom. Panel 79.

Bernard Gibbons **CLARKE** First Radio Officer. SS Fort Missanabie (London), Merchant Navy. Died 19 May 1944. Age 28. Son of Charles and Emily May Clarke, of Aylsham, Norfolk. Commemorated: TOWER HILL MEMORIAL, London, United Kingdom. Panel 50. Special note: SS Fort Missanabie was sunk shortly after leaving Taranto, Italy, by a German submarine.

Ivan **CHAMBERLAIN** The Christian name has been taken from the Roll of Honour printed in *A History of Aylsham Appendix VI* by John Sapwell. No further information available at present on the Internet.

Douglas Stanley **DUCKER** Sapper 2090489. 251 Field Park Coy., Royal Engineers. Died 7 July 1943. Age 23. Son of Stanley Samuel and Kathleen Margaret Ducker, of Aylsham Norfolk Buried KANCHANABURI WAR CEMETERY, Thailand. Ref 2. H 12.

Possibly: Colin Davy **DYE** Lance Sergeant 5770891. 5th Bn., Royal Norfolk Regiment. Died 16 June 1943. Age 29. Buried: KANCHANABURI WAR CEMETERY, Thailand. Ref. 2. M 46.

Charles Patrick **HOLMAN** DFC Flight Lieutenant 115604. 272 Sqdn., Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. Died 25 October 1944. Age 25. Son of Dr. Alec George Holman and Grace Kathleen Holman, of Aylsham, Norfolk. Awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC.) Commemorated: MALTA MEMORIAL, Malta. Panel 13, Column 1.

Albert John **MURTON** Leading Aircraftman 1165687. Pilot U/T Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. Died 21 August 1941. Age 21. Son of Albert and Beatrice May Murton, of Aylsham. Buried: AYLSHAM CEMETERY, Norfolk, United Kingdom. Plot E. Row. E. Grave 82.

Reginald Claude **OWEN** Private 5954039. 5th Bn., Wiltshire Regiment. Died 26 July 1944. Age 24. Son of Henry George and Mary Elizabeth Owen, of Aylsham, Norfolk. Buried: RYES WAR CEMETERY, BAZENVILLE, Calvados, France. IV. C 3.

Douglas George **PICKETT** Telegraphist C/WRX 661. V.(Wireless)R. SS. Clan MacKinlay, Royal Navy. Died 6 November 1940. Age 37. Son of Cedric and Rosa Pickett; husband of Dorothy Ellen Elizabeth Pickett, of Aylsham, Norfolk. Commemorated: CHATHAM NAVAL MEMORIAL, Kent, United Kingdom. Panel 40, 3.

Clifford Harry **POOLEY** Sergeant 934691. Air Gnr. 104 Sqdn., Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. Died 17 December 1942. Age 20. Son of Clifford Arthur and Lulu Mary Pooley, of Aylsham, Norfolk. Buried: ENFIDAVILLE WAR CEMETERY, Tunisia. IV. E 28.

Charles **PRATT** As no further information was found by the researcher, the Christian name is taken from the Roll of Honour listed in *A History of Aylsham Appendix VI* by John Sapwell.

Henry Robert **RISEBROW** Private 5774648. 6th Bn., Royal Norfolk Regiment. Died 16 February 1942. Age 21. Son of Charles and Ethel Risebrow, of Aylsham, Norfolk. Buried: KRANJI WAR CEMETERY, Singapore. Ref. 29. A 20.

Walter **WARD** As no further information was found by the researcher, the Christian name is taken from the Roll of Honour listed in *A History of Aylsham Appendix VI* by John Sapwell.

Arthur William **WILLIAMSON** Corporal 1109931. Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. Died 18 September 1942. Age 30. Son of Mr. and Mrs. A A Williamson, of Aylsham, Norfolk. Buried: EL ALAMEIN WAR CEMETERY, Egypt. Ref. XII. E 16.

A F **WILLIAMSON** This name was given as Alfred Williamson in the Roll of Honour listed in *A History of Aylsham Appendix VI* by John Sapwell.

George **WILLIAMSON** This name was given as George Williamson in the Roll of Honour listed in *A History of Aylsham Appendix VI* by John Sapwell and only the initials GH on the Internet Roll of Honour.

It is hoped that more information will emerge about the names and service of those men who died in the 2nd Great War.

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