

AYLSHAM LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY



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The cover illustration is a photograph of the Black
Boys Inn, Aylsham, taken in January 2004



The Chairman writes –

This year is a year of celebration for the Aylsham Local History Society for we shall have been going for twenty years. It was in 1984 that Canon Vyse, Jane Nolan, Ron Peabody and others held the first inaugural meetings from which the Society emerged. Since then we have done many things, from talks and lectures, outings and historical visits to a string of publications.

The Committee have been looking at ways in which we might mark the events of these years and have decided on the following:

Firstly, a party on Saturday 26th June in the lovely garden of Roger and Diana Polhill at 12 Cromer Road for members and guests. In the afternoon there will be a display of dancing and other delights, along with strawberries and cream for tea.

Secondly, on Saturday 3rd July we move to the Town Hall where Derek Lyons will show slides of “Changes in Aylsham” for this day of celebration. There will also be displays of “archives” and book stalls.

We are also creating a mobile display of boards which will show events for each year or so of the Society’s history. This we hope to display in some public place so that the people of Aylsham can see what we have done.

There are many details yet to be arranged but we feel you should be alerted to these events which may now seem some time ahead – but book the dates.

Full details will be sent out later, along with cries for help for stewarding, serving refreshments, etc. These celebrations are for the benefit of all members of the Society and we look forward to enjoying them with you in the summer.

Peter Holman, Chairman

RECENT CHANGES IN AYLSHAM

Elizabeth Gale

Many historians who have written books based on their research have found that after publication the information is not always up to date. My book "Aylsham Inns and Public Houses" is a case in point. Following this publication in 2001, other events which later occurred could not unfortunately be included in the book and this article brings that information up to date.

In March 2001, the *Stonemasons* public house in Millgate closed and was sold in auction by the owners, Pubmaster. The buyer has converted the building into a private residence and turned the forecourt and car parking area into gardens. A free-standing pole with the sign of the *Stonemasons* which stood on the forecourt has been removed. The former public house was built in 1846 by John Freeman, a stonemason, on a pigstie of land which he purchased from the artist Joseph Clover, and John Freeman named his public house the *Stonemason's Arms*. After his death, it passed into the ownership of his family and from 1958 until the closure it was owned by various brewery companies. The closing of the *Stonemasons* meant that Aylsham lost one of the four remaining public houses in the town.

During the summer months of 2003, the buildings of Coopers car showrooms and garage at 8-10 Red Lion Street were demolished. This area was originally the site of the *New Inn* and the *Bull* public houses dating from the 1600s, which were demolished in 1955. After the removal of the Cooper buildings, the Norfolk Archaeological Unit carried out excavations on the site. A great deal of historical information was obtained and the details, written by Geoffrey Gale, were published in the ALHS Journal Vol 7 No 2 of August 2003.

Changes have also occurred at the *Black Boys Inn* which was established in 1656 in Aylsham Market Place and since that time has had a chequered history with a succession of owners and publicans. It is said that Richard Andrews, the first owner, was fatally wounded by one of Oliver Cromwell's men and he was buried in the grounds of the Inn. Rumour has it that his ghost has been seen within the building. In its time the *Black Boys* had many illustrious visitors; Daniel Defoe was one in 1732 and wrote that Aylsham was a lively town and he had enjoyed his meal at the Inn. Parson

Woodforde was another who dined there in 1781, but, according to the entry in his diary, he found the dinner shabby and overdone and the plates, knives and forks very shabby indeed. Another visitor was Horatio Nelson, who is thought to have attended balls in the Assembly Room of the *Black Boys* during 1791. In 1948, this Assembly Room was acquired by G A Key and converted into office accommodation for their business.

The late 1950s brought about interior changes when the owners of the *Black Boys* carried out a policy of modernisation. This resulted in the installation of American-style dining booths, snooker tables and play machines, but luckily the Jacobean staircase was left intact. On the 23rd July 2003, the *Black Boys* closed when the joint publicans, Paula and Graham Whitehouse left and moved to the Midlands. The Inn was taken over by the Colchester family, Nicola and Matthew Colchester and Matthew's parents and they have reorganised the interior of the building. The ground floor has been redesigned and a programme of refitting and redecorating has taken place. A new bar has been installed, the dining booths have been removed, along with the snooker tables and the play machines.

The Colchesters have developed the Inn, principally as a restaurant, where diners can sit at individual tables in pleasant surroundings and enjoy good food, but they also offer hospitality to those who wish to call in for a lunch time or evening drink. Further plans to continue the refurbishment of the building have been carried out and nine bedrooms have been refurbished and redecorated as accommodation for those who wish to spend some time staying in Aylsham. This Grade II listed building in a conservation area has taken on a new lease of life and it is pleasing to know that this old historic Inn will continue into the future, not only for Aylsham residents, but for those who visit this area of Norfolk.

MEMORIES OF SUNDAY SCHOOL IN AYLSHAM Molly Long

When I was a child Sunday School played a large part in most children's lives. My first encounter was in 1930 when my family moved back to Aylsham from Buxton Lammas. It was the Parish Church Sunday school but was held for some reason in St Michael's School. I was taken by an older girl.

Some time after this, I attended regularly in the Sunday afternoons in the Parish Church. Boys were segregated from the girls and small classes could be seen dotted all over the Parish Church. Sunday School was also held on Sunday mornings, which I never attended, but during the morning service which followed some children remained in the care of one of the teachers. You were given a stamp album and had a stamp with a Bible picture on it every time you attended.

Little girls always wore hats of the beret variety in the winter. In summer a straw, plain panama, for older girls was worn; smaller girls wore a close fitting straw with a garland of artificial flowers round the base of the crown. They were very pretty and were carefully put away from year to year.

In the summer was the Sunday School treat, always to Cromer which some of us visited many times during the year; but there was always something very special about going altogether. All the Sunday Schools from the chapels eventually joined with us, except the Salvation Army which held theirs on a different day. This put a stop to the few families who moved from one to another Sunday School in order to go to more than one treat.

It was always held on a Wednesday during term time, so we were given a day off school for this special occasion. We were packed into charabancs and shouted and waved to everyone we passed on the road. The last one I went to we went by train from Millgate station, changing at Melton Constable. Somehow sitting in individual carriages did not seem the same.

Lunch and tea were served in Cromer Parish Hall, probably sandwiches and cakes both times. I can remember singing Grace and large enamel jugs of lemonade for mid-day and tea for the later meal. Our mothers who came as well made their own arrangements for meals. We were allowed to walk up to the Parish Hall barefooted - something I wouldn't fancy doing nowadays.

We of the Parish church were always glad we didn't have to earn our treat by having an anniversary service consisting mainly of recitations and some songs, the collection going towards the treat. We always went to these, if only to sit in the front row and try to make the unfortunate performers laugh.

Some time just before Christmas was the winter party, held in the Town Hall. It was a tea followed by party games. The second part was the prize-giving; the prizes were always books. I never did receive one as you had to

attend both morning and afternoon classes to be eligible. Those that had one hundred per cent attendance also received a Christmas pudding made, I imagine, by members of Mothers' Union or perhaps the choir. They would not be so highly thought of nowadays.

After class was ended, we were always met by our parents and taken for a Sunday afternoon walk. All this came to an end when World War 2 began, my father having to work on Sundays relaying the railway track. By the age of fourteen I had left both day and Sunday School, being out to work and attending confirmation classes prior to being confirmed.

My own daughter became a member of the Sunday School in 1955 at four years of age. It was still held in the Church on Sunday afternoons only. I usually sat outside on a seat near the chancel door, to get her used to being in Church without me. Things were beginning to change from my own Sunday School days. Mr Leonard Stevens (Jack's father) was the superintendent; prizes were still given at the Christmas party for good attendance. They were always books as in previous years.

The summer outing to the seaside changed also. It was often to Sheringham, with afternoon tea at a seafront café. Gone were the sandwiches, cakes and enamel jugs of other years. Eventually it was changed to Gorleston, where it was possible to take the ferry to Great Yarmouth and more sophisticated entertainment. The tea was dropped in favour of giving the children a small amount of cash each to spend as they wished. I am sure this was much appreciated by the older children, but the old bonding together was gone, not meeting up again until the coach journey home. My daughter became a Sunday School teacher for a few years, leaving when she started work.

Sunday School today has had a name change to Sunday Club, and is still alive due to the dedication of a few Church members. It is held in the Parish Room in the mornings, with children going into Church for a blessing during suitable services, but it is very much in decline at the Parish Church, which is a great pity. Children do get to do more interesting things these days than when I was a child. Really delightful examples of their handiwork are often on show in the church and scripture lessons are made much more absorbing these days.

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF AYLSHAM! SOME QUESTIONS ARE VERY EASY BUT THERE ARE TWO OR THREE WHICH WILL MAKE YOU PAUSE. The solutions are given on page 111.
Betty Gee

1. Aylsham had two stations in the 1st half of the 20th century.
 Name them
2. Where did Aylsham men practise archery?
3. There were two pubs in Millgate in the 20th century.
 Name them
4. Where was Aylsham's theatre said to have been?
5. What was the name of the family which gave the Blickling estate to the National Trust?
6. A famous anaesthetist was born in Aylsham.
 Give his full name.
7. The junction at Norwich Rd, Burgh Rd & Red Lion Street was dangerous. How was it improved?

8. In 19th cent there was an Aylsham Regatta & Rowing Club.
 A well-known doctor and shopkeeper were on the Committee.
 Can you name them?.....
9. The following dates are of important events in the development of Aylsham; can you identify them?
 a) c1380 e) 1894
 b) 1779 f) 1912
 c) 1849 g) 1980
 d) 1857

(18 MARKS)

Old Documents, etc at the old Bridewell Room

Recently found amongst a bundle of documents sent to me from Cheshire was the following from H. Proudfoot to Col. Purdy which I thought might be of interest.

Roger Crouch

June 23rd 1954 Wednesday

c/o Ms. J. Cope

4 Trafalgar Road

Gt Yarmouth

Dear Col Purdy

Re Old Documents etc

At the Old Bridewell Room

I have your letter of yesterdays date with the list of the old Documents etc that you are handing over to Dr Sapwell, the Chairman of the Aylsham Parish Council. I am perfectly satisfied with what you have done and are doing to preserve them for future generations.

In corner on the left of the old Bookcase there was the old Gun which formerly belonged to the old vicar of Aylsham (Rev. E. T. Yates) - I would like you to take this & keep it - also on the walls was hung an old Baxter Print of "Reading Castle". I had been told on many occasions that it was (perhaps) valuable. Do what you like with it.

What's up with the Traders of Aylsham? The report in to-day's E D Press is not good reading.

Yesterday I received the Agricultural Show for the annual? show on August Bank Holiday - only one Trade advertisement in it, (Barclay Pallett & Co.) The 2 inside covers totally blank. What a nice sum could have been made from these if the Norwich Union Ins. Co. or the Brewers of Norfolk had been approached they could easily have brought in up to £20.

Very Kind regards & thanks

Yours sincerely

H. Proudfoot

I have gone stone deaf, perhaps it is a good thing!!



Mr. H.F. Proudfoot 1897-1937

Note: Mr Harry Proudfoot was born in 1869 at the old Corner House, Bank Plain, Aylsham, and died in 1961. In 1894 he assisted his father, the late Mr Robert Proudfoot, in the work of rate collection, and became Clerk to the Councils for the parishes of Aylsham and Blickling from 1897 until 1937. He was on the Norfolk County Council, serving on 25 Committees for over ten years. He was also chairman of Aylsham Rural District Council until 1935. Mr Proudfoot was Hon Secretary for the local celebrations in connection with Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee and also for King Edward VII's Coronation celebration.

He was active in many other Aylsham activities, including three Friendly Societies, and was also for twenty-four years secretary of the North Walsham Agricultural Association. He was the originator of the collection of photographs contained in the town Archives. A photograph of Mr Proudfoot is shown above. He was first employed in shops in the town, but in 1887, aged eighteen years old he became a bricklayer. The above letter was written when he was eighty-five years old; he still had a keen interest in Aylsham life.

Reference For further details of Mr Proudfoot's life, see Vol 6, edition no 4 page 121

QUERIES

Mr Ian Roofe of 2, Grafton Close, ST IVES Cambs PE27 3DL (tel 01480-467063) wishes to find out more about his ancestor Robert Roofe, Publican of the *Cross Keys* 1767-1778, who it appears was also Church Sexton 1804. During the 20th century Jimmy (James) Roofe, a relation, had a grocer's shop in Red Lion Street. George Neale, Parish Clerk and Sexton 1888-1937, was Ian Roofe's great-grandfather. No 10 Cawston Road was his Builder's yard. The sheds there were used in the 1950s and 60s for the storage of cycles (at 2d each) for the cinema patrons and also for those cycling into town to catch buses to Norwich to go to work. Arthur Neale, bricklayer, was George Neale's brother and may have lived at No 8 Cawston Road. He's probably the same Arthur Neale who presided over a Fireman's Dinner at the *Red Lion* in 1893. Mrs Dora Roofe is listed in Kelly's Directory 1912 with a tobacconist shop in White Hart Street.

Mr Roofe has much information about sport in Aylsham, as he played in football and cricket teams and served on the Recreation Ground Committee in the late 1950s and early 60s. He would be pleased to hear from members.

BG

DR FREDERICK LITTLE

I have received an e-mail (via Aylsham library) from Blaine Little in Manitoba Canada asking for information about the above doctor. The correspondent states that the 1901 census shows Frederick and Mary Little living with about 10 children in Aylsham. Sapwell's "History of Aylsham" lists him under Professional Men, arriving in Aylsham about 1862 as assistant to Dr Smith (parish doctor). By 1872 he was established on his own at the Manor House. This is the largest house in Aylsham, dating from 1550; said to have been purchased and added to about 1611 by Bishop Jegon, who resided there after his palace had been burnt down at Ludham. Dr Little later moved across the road to "The Orchards" (associated with the Repton family) another very large house. He continued to practise medicine there until his death in 1927 at the age of 86. "The Orchards" has this year had a major rebuilding into apartments. If you have further information about the Little family, the e-mail address is Blaine Little littleb@brandonsd.mb.ca Alternatively, you may let me know at my address/telephone no at the beginning of the Journal.

B Gee

BOOKS THAT MAY BE BORROWED

1. *Oxford Companion to Local and Family History* David Hey 1996
2. *Stories in Stone Roof Carvings of Norwich Cathedral*
Martial Rose & Julia Hedgecoe Thames & Hudson 1997
3. *Oxford Companion to British History* Ed by John Cannon 1997
4. *Norfolk in the Civil War* R W Ketton Cremer
Giddon Books, Norwich 1985
5. *English Field Names - a Dictionary* John Field
Alan Sutton (pub) 1989
6. *Local History in England* W G Hoskins Longman 1984
7. *Domesday Book, Norfolk, 2 vols* Phillimore, Chichester 1984
8. *English Parish Churches as Works of Art* Alec Clifton Taylor
Batsford 1986
9. *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Norfolk*
Arthur Young First published 1804
Reprinted by Augustus Kelley New York 1989
10. *Domesday - a Search for the Roots of England* Michael Wood
BBC Publications 1986
11. *Maps for Local History* Brian Paul Hindle Batsford 1988
12. *The History of the Countryside* Oliver Rackham Dent & Sons
1986

These books may be borrowed for research and/or pleasure for a reasonable time. Please ask Peter Holman (tel 01263 733 434) for more details about the books listed here or others that may be available.

THE CROMER ROAD

Tom Mollard

Almost 100 years ago a book was published entitled *The Newmarket, Bury, Thetford and Cromer road; Sport and history on an East Anglian Turnpike*". It was published by Chapman & Hall in 1904, and the author was C. G. Harper, who had written other similar works on East Anglian roads such as, *The Norwich Road* and *Cambridge, Ely and Kings Lynn Road*. He must have strayed down to the south coast at some time, as he also wrote the *Brighton Road* and also the *Dover, Portsmouth, Bath etc. road*. However, as we are not interested in the south coast routes, I thought it would be interesting to see what he wrote about our own local turnpike.

The style is quite chatty and still makes interesting reading. After describing the Suffolk section, he eventually reached Norwich, and understandably he writes at some length about the city of Norwich, but eventually continued on his way along the Aylsham road, seeing nothing of any interest until he reached Horsham St. Faith which he describes thus :-

Historically, St. Faith's is interesting, for it is bound up with the story of Katharine Howard, who was the daughter of Lord Edmund Howard, niece of the Duke of Norfolk, and fifth wife of that professional widower, Henry VIII, who wrought so greatly in all manner of affairs of Church and State during his thirty-eight years reign that we meet him at almost every turn.

It seems that while still a child, not yet thirteen years of age, in the house of her father's step-mother, the Duchess of Norfolk, at St. Faith's, she was debauched by one Henry Manox, perhaps a music-master, described as "a scoundrelly player on the virginals," and that she had relations of a more than questionable nature with one Francis Derham. Loud as are the moralists in denouncing the levity of our own times, we have but to read the intimate accounts of the household in whose vile society this forward girl was brought up, to be convinced that we have

advanced since then. The fury of Henry knew no bounds when these disclosures were made, eighteen months after his wedding with her, and she paid the penalty with her life, in the Tower, in the twentieth year of her age.



"ST. FAYS"

Of Newton St. Faith, scarce more than a mile down the road, there is little to be said, but its few houses are succeeded by the loveliest two miles of highway in Norfolk. Enclosed fields, trim with their neat hedges and long lines of wheat and barley, or well-ordered in their infinite perspectives of winter furrows, give place suddenly to a land rich in the varied tints of bracken and heather. . . these are fairy-like woods of Stratton Strawless. This is common land, and before Robert Marsham planted it in 1797, was a stretch of heath barren of aught save heather and bracken.

We need not hasten to acclaim the Marsham who created these woods as a public benefactor, because he did not aim at anything of the kind, and merely wished to improve the outlook from his hideous house, now confronted with these glades instead of by a monotonous flat. There is no denying the ugliness of that square



STRATTON STRAWLESS LODGES.

brick mansion. A benefactor would have hidden it from the public gaze. . .

Harper appears to have been quite unimpressed with Hevingham, his next stop along the road. -

"Hevingham, with the three succeeding places, is celebrated (or rather, made notorious) by a rhyme whose inner meaning no local antiquary has yet followed. Thus it runs:-

*Blickling flats, Aylsham fliers
Marsham peewits, and Hevingham liars."*

After a few words about the village of Marsham, Harper headed towards Aylsham.

From Marsham an avenue of young oaks, young as oaks go, for they are only some sixty years old, and mere infants, leads on

to Aylsham, passing on the right hand, an old toll-house, and crossing the railway on the level at Aylsham station.

Aylsham once manufactured linen and worsted and the "lineners" and worsted-weavers contributed greatly to the building of its fine church, a church packed away inconspicuously in a corner off the Market Square; but those old trades are dead now, and only the weekly market keeps the little town alive. You enter the place along a street once called "the straits," and still remarkably narrow, past the old coaching inn, the *Dog*, but the little town does not fully disclose itself along this narrow way, for its central point and focus is the Market Square, reached on the left by a short and narrow street. Here stands that curious old early seventeenth-century brick inn, the "Black Boys", remarkable for its coved eaves, still bearing the old decorative design that gave the house its name. This is a device of foliage and fruit, painted and gilt, running the two sides of the house, with three little black impish-looking figures in the centre of the side facing the square and one at each corner, all blowing gilded horns. They look like the "little demons" of Ingoldsby's "Truants," who had "broken loose from the National School below," but they are really only intended for representations of Bacchus, and thus by a side-wind, as it were, to hint to travellers of old of the good cheer of the house.

The "Black Boys" owes its existence on this scale to the near neighbourhood of Blickling Hall, perhaps the most famous mansion in Norfolk, and certainly the most beautiful and stately. Blickling is scarce a mile distant, and is so small a village that it must have been to Aylsham in general, and to the "Black Boys" in particular, that the custom fell in those old days when the Hobarts of Blickling Hall entertained so royally.

We cannot forbear visiting Blickling, for not merely Hobarts, but Anne Boleyn herself, most unhappy of queens, is associated with that noble pile and has made it historic.

Harper is much more interested in Blickling, than in Aylsham and goes on at some length about it. Tearing himself away at last he continues his journey towards Ingworth -

"From Aylsham to Cromer is little more than ten miles: downhill from Aylsham town to the levels at Ingworth, whose name, meaning the 'meadow village' illustrates that it is in fact set down beside the water-meads bordering the river Bure. Ingworth has a dilapidated church picturesquely overlooking the road from a little hillock, with only the lower part of its round tower left."



INGWORTH.

Having dismissed Ingworth in just a few words, he does at least give a most charming engraving of the village church and the watermill.

It is interesting to read Harper's opinions and impressions of places close to our home, and how they appeared to him almost 100 years ago. Equally, it is frustrating when you look up a place to see what he said about it, to discover that he had nothing at all to say! However, the few line drawings included in the book have a charm of their own, and convey a delightful image of what a peaceful, tranquil area it was a century ago. The drawings of the lodges at Stratton Strawless Hall look just as they do today. He was careful not to include a drawing of the hall itself!

SOCIETY NEWS

THE ROMAN LANDSCAPE OF EAST ANGLIA

Peter Pink

Course given by Mike Hardy in 2003

Our Society's 10 session course of classes on the Roman Landscape of East Anglia which started on 23rd September 2003 proved to be one of the best supported we've arranged.

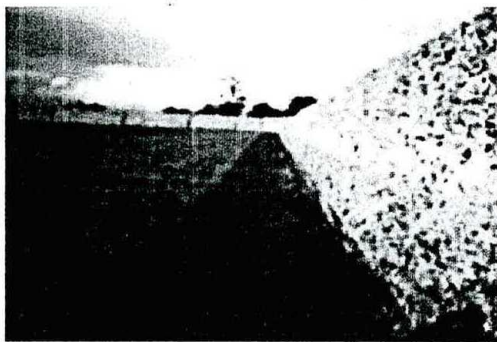
It included a field study visit to two Forts of the Saxon Shore, and it provided the large number who took part with the opportunity to appreciate the situation which had faced the Roman invasion of Britain under Claudius.

In East Anglia the invaders came upon a settled area mainly occupied by two dominant peoples, in Norfolk the Iceni and in Suffolk and Essex the Trimovantes. One of the reasons for Rome deciding to take Britain into their empire, rather than just develop trade links and influence it hugely, was the reports of Julius Caesar who had crossed the Channel but not established direct control. He thought Britain was rich. He was correct inasmuch as he saw Gold Torques and there were gold and silver coins which had been made from about 100 BC.

It is always as well to remember that the Romans liked to have friends in their conquered lands - Roman Legions were stationed in Britain, but having local leaders to assist in the maintenance of law and order and a settled life for the inhabitants was considered essential and was the practice in East Anglia. Generally speaking, the Iceni were at peace with the Roman authorities, any differences being settled peacefully.

However, situations change and the whole of the Roman Empire found itself under attack. During the period 360 - 410, the Legions were being withdrawn cohort by cohort. Though there may have been some forces of mercenaries left and utilised by communities who could afford to pay them (it must be remembered that the Roman Legions included mercenary units), people in Britain, some Romans, some Romanised Britons, and others had to look to their own defence.

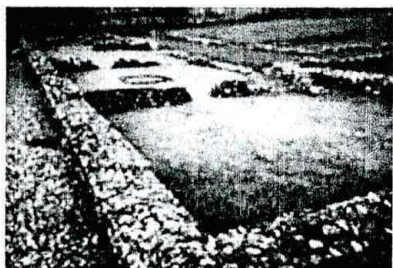
Before then, however, the Romans and their British allies had built up a series of Forts of the Saxon Shore. From late in the third century AD, a serious menace appeared on the Eastern coast of Britain, Germanic sea raiders landing on the unprotected shore and looting nearby settlements. The class visited two of these Forts, Caister by Yarmouth and Burgh Castle. It was obvious that these two Forts were quite different to one another. Caister by Yarmouth was an already existing Fort and it may be that the other, Burgh, was intended to replace it as a defence against the new attack by raiders.



Burgh
Castle

I found Burgh (Gariannonum to the Romans) a fascinating site. The remains are just the surrounding walls, with breaches in them where they had been modified in later centuries. Was this Roman construction really a fortified space, one in which horses and men could be housed until needed to confront any raiders?

These few notes refer to some of the many and varied questions which were raised and discussed in ten weeks. We were much assisted by Mike Hardy who stood in front of us for 9 weeks and walked around the two Roman sites having much to say and answering the seemingly never-ending questions.



Caister
by
Yarmouth

“Norwich Industries” by Peter and Rosemary Salt

The lecture on 30th October 2003 was a history of the development in the City of most of the major industries from the beginning of the nineteenth century up to the present day.

The husband and wife team of Peter and Rosemary Salt had assembled an amazing number of slides to illustrate the rise and fall of well known and world wide names familiar to us all.

To name a few - Boulton and Paul, starting off with agricultural implements but including airplanes, night soil carts and Scott's sledges for the Antarctic; all the many shoe factories, Bally, Holmes and Startrite; breweries and, most popular of all, the chocolates of Mackintosh and Caley's. In the food line, Colmans and Read's Flour Mill.

Alas today, most have now gone and we are left with the service industries of Norwich Union and Gurneys/Barclays Bank.

Rosemary Salt gave an interesting commentary to the slides. Geoffrey Gale, in moving the vote of thanks, expressed the appreciation of members for the variety of industries shown; he was able to link the topic with the last lecture by Gilbert Burton on the impact of the 20th century on Norwich.

Gillian Fletcher

Lecture on 26th February 2004 - The Great Hospital of Norwich

This date is unique in our programme of lectures. It is the first one that I can remember in twelve years that had to be cancelled. We have several times had to change the lecturer through illness or other reason but never had to tell everyone not to come. And the reason? The snow! The lecturer lives at Wells and he told us at 4.30 that it was snowing heavily. It started snowing at Aylsham soon after and continued all the evening. We informed a lot of members and put a notice of cancellation on the door of the Club. We hope Mr Leesmith will visit us at a later date to give his talk.

Betty Gee

Kett's Rebellion - A talk given by Barbara Miller on 27th November 2003
Betty Gee

This was a most stimulating and fascinating lecture. Barbara first sketched out the political situation in 1549. After sixty years of the absolute monarchy of the Tudor Henry VII and Henry VIII, the latter's son Edward VI, aged eleven, was now on the throne and England was governed by the Lord Protector, Edward Seymour. King Edward VI had been brought up a Protestant, but there were still powerful Catholic nobles looking forward to the next heir, the Catholic Princess Mary. Henry VIII's reign had been a most extravagant one, money being spent on new wives, great celebrations, pleasures and wars. The money gained from the dissolution of the monasteries had been dissipated, so Henry had had to debase the coinage. The poor were no longer looked after by religious houses.

Enclosure had been taking place for decades in various forms, but enclosure of commons for pasture at the expense of arable land was denounced by many preachers. "No lord of manor shall common upon the commons." Landlords could take advantage of the demand for wool, employ far fewer men by putting up fences on common land and grazing sheep with a shepherd. The enclosure of forest and of individual field strips increased the wealth of large landowners and of some yeomen. There had been acts to limit enclosure in early Tudor years, but they were often ignored.

In July 1549 there had been three bad harvests in successive years. Fences were being put up on common land. Less food was produced and cost more. Robert Kett was one of five brothers owning land in Wymondham. He was not a young hothead but a man of fifty-seven years. When his fences were broken, he listened to the grievances of the protesters and decided to lead them to Norwich to voice their complaints. His brother William joined him. On July 8th protesters gathered under an oak tree and started walking to Norwich. Thousands of men from all parts of the County joined Kett and walked via Cringleford and Bowthorpe to Drayton Wood, arriving July 11th. They continued and set up camp on the edge of Mousehold Heath in the ruins of St Leonard's Priory, at Mount Surrey. There were few trees on the Heath then so they were in a commanding position. They had appealed to the Bishop and to the City dignitaries, but were ignored.

From the 13th July the rebels tried to organise themselves. Kett sent 29 requests to the King for aid, but was ignored. Emissaries were sent to Kett appealing to him to spare the City, which was mainly built of wood. They were taken prisoner, but treated well. Kett's guns could not reach the City, so on August 1st he decided to go through an eastern gate of the City to the Marketplace where fighting began. It was reported he had 15,000 men, who brought their own arms. Certainly many sheep were killed. However, men started to go back to their villages to work on the harvest. The Lord Protector had no army so he had to send for German and Swiss mercenaries. The rebels were encamped for almost a month but finally the Earl of Warwick with 1300 mercenaries and supporters breached the western walls and came in St Stephen's Gate. Houses were damaged and burnt.



The Cow Tower was hit by cannon fire. There was fierce street fighting. William Kett offered terms for a ceasefire which were not accepted. Thousands of rebels were killed. The battle over, the rebels were treated brutally; three hundred were hung and thirty-nine of the leaders hung, drawn and quartered. In December 1549, Robert Kett was hung from the Tower of Norwich Castle and left to starve. William Kett had a similar fate. Thus ended the last English Rebellion.

Barbara told us that the Rebellion cost the Government, and Norwich dear. The mercenaries and dependants stayed for eighteen months. The office of Lord Lieutenant of the County was created to take control of country areas. Surprisingly the Kett family later got their land back. Barbara finished by suggesting that the manorial system was changing in the sixteenth century; agricultural practices were also changing. The clock could not be held back. Cobbett commented, "When farmers became gentlemen, their labourers became slaves."

Members were able to put questions to the speaker, notably one on the number of Kett's Oaks in the County. Thelma Lloyd expressed the thanks of the meeting to Barbara Miller for having brought the famous story of Kett's Rebellion to life for them.

WINTER PARTY

This was the first event of our Twentieth Anniversary Year. Forty eight members and guests enjoyed a memorable Winter Party held at the Aylsham Lodge Hotel on January 22nd 2004. From 7 o'clock the buzz of conversation grew in volume as people arrived. Huddles were observed around the excellent photographic quizzes devised by Peter Holman to test our knowledge of Aylsham. At 7.30 we sat down to enjoy the dinner. The hotel staff was very efficient and attentive. Between courses we endeavoured to work out the significance of certain dates in a competition prepared by Betty Gee.

At 9 o'clock the doors opened and Clive Ashwin and The Musical Friends arrived to give us an enthralling History of Music in Sound with delightful renditions by the choir of music of different eras. Between the items Clive put the music into the context of its period which was fascinating. They began with an example of monophonic ecclesiastic music from the early Mediaeval period, as would have been sung by monks at that time. Next came a piece from the 13th century, familiar to us all, 'Summer is a'cumin in' by John de Forncett, perhaps a Norfolk man, of Reading Abbey. In the 14th century the invention of printing brought great changes and it became possible to publish music. The next item was 'Non nobis domine' by William Byrd. At that time music was being adapted to the meaning of the text. The next development was the appearance of musical amateurs among the educated classes. Thomas Campion, a lawyer and doctor in Cambridge, wrote and published part-songs including 'Never weather beaten sail,' which the choir then sang. Alongside this kind of music was that of the folk songs which abounded but were not recorded until the 19th and 20th centuries. There followed 'Waly Waly'. Aristocrats and royalty began to play instruments. Henry VIII even wrote some music. By the end of the 16th century popular songs were being sold at fairs. In the 1580's 'Greensleeves', which the choir then sang, was popular. In 1588, the year of the Armada, a most

important book was published, 'Orchesography' by Arbaud. It recorded all the court dances popular at that time and listed ballet movements with names familiar to this day. The choir sang 'Pavanne', a stately dance from that time. The late 18th century was a period with a high standard of printing and high literacy, when many people played the piano and sang. There were lots of part-songs or 'glees'. 'Melting Airs' was an example of this period and it won a prize in 1763. There were no organs in churches until the mid 19th century, although after the Commonwealth it was a tradition to have a band in the west end, the West Gallery, of the church. Thomas Hardy's father ran one and there is a description in 'Under the Greenwood Tree'. Francis Rose wrote an anthem for West Gallery music 'My voice shalt thou hear in the morning', the next item from the choir. There was often bitter resentment to the advent of the organ and the demise of the traditional West Gallery music. It even led to some organs being destroyed. Clive said that history was ongoing and we should think how things might have been during the construction of the hotel in which we sat. The transistor radios would have been playing and one might have heard the last piece the choir sang, 'Blue, Blue is my world'!

Peter Holman gave a vote of thanks to Clive Ashwin and the Musical Friends to which there was loud applause. Everyone felt that it had been a very special entertainment.

Peter then drew attention to the competitions. The members had spent so much time chatting that results were not of the highest standard for the pre-dinner quizzes, but much more success resulted from the table quizzes, notably won by the table with the former editor of the Journal!

After a vote of thanks had been given to Betty Gee and her helpers for organising such an outstanding party, people then began to go home saying it had been the best ever.

Diana Polhill



Clive Ashwin and the Musical Friends

VISITS

It is hoped to have a Society visit to the new Archive Centre at the Norfolk Record Office on County Hall site, Martineau Lane. Norwich one afternoon in May. It would include a guided tour.

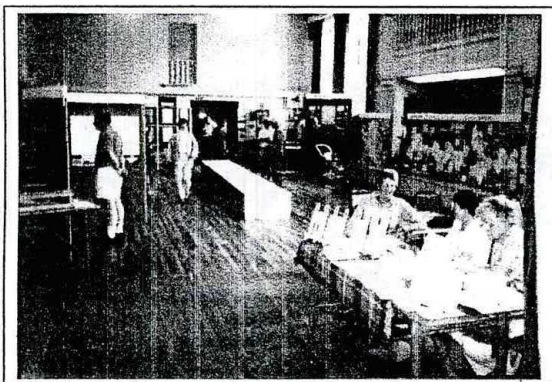
Please note that the telephone number of the new Record Office given in the last Edition was incorrect. It should have been 01603 222599, not 01263 222599. My apologies for that error.

A circular about this visit should be included with this edition of the Journal.

HONORARY SECRETARY REQUIRED

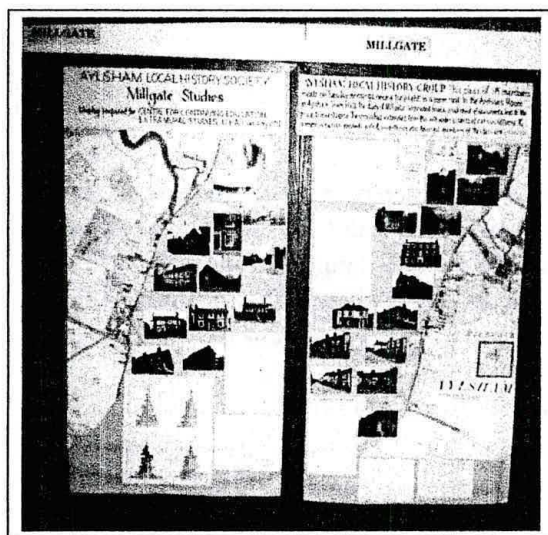
I have given notice to the Chairman and Committee that I shall not stand for re-election as Secretary at the next Annual General Meeting. I shall continue as Editor of the Journal.

Betty Gee



The Society's 10th Anniversary Exhibition in the Town Hall.

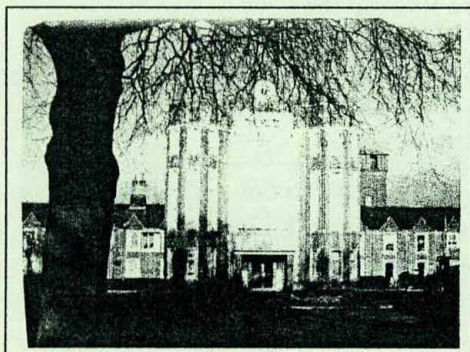
In the foreground are Gillian Fletcher, Jane Nolan the last Chairman and Betty Gee



One of the displays

SOLUTIONS to the Aylsham quiz on page 92

1. The 2 stations were Aylsham South (Great Eastern Co) and Aylsham North (M&GN). The latter one was also called Town Station.
2. The Buttlands.
3. The Anchor now Bridge House and Stonemason's Arms.
4. Oakfield Road.
5. Lothian.
6. Joseph Thomas Clover (1825-82).
7. The Bridewell was rebuilt with the corner removed.
8. Dr Morton and William Starling.
9.
 - a) Rebuilding of the Parish Church.
 - b) Completion of the Navigation.
 - c) Aylsham Union Workhouse built – now St Michael's Hospital.
 - d) Building of Corn Exchange – later the Town Hall.
 - e) First meeting of Aylsham Parish Council.
 - f) The Great Flood.
 - g) Building of Aylsham Bypass (4 miles long)



9c



9d

What's your name ?

by Anon

I remember Mario Lanza,
and even Vera Lynn,
but I can't remember which drawer
I put the scissors in.

I remember infant playtime,
and my childhood dog named Fred,
But did I switch the cooker off
Before I came to bed?

I recollect the space race,
and the landing on the moon,
But where is the jar of coffee
that I bought this afternoon?

I remember clothing coupons,
and the rationing of food,
But what I did two hours ago,
I haven't got a clue.

I remember Aldermaston
where I marched for CND,
But I wonder where I parked the car,
And where I've put the key?

With acknowledgements to 'Post-Lib' the magazine of the retired librarians guild TM

And finally - Thanks to the contributors to this edition and to my husband for his help. The next edition will, I hope, have reviews of lectures and of our summer activities

BUT I shall urgently need more contributions from members to keep the Journal going.

Betty Gee Editor