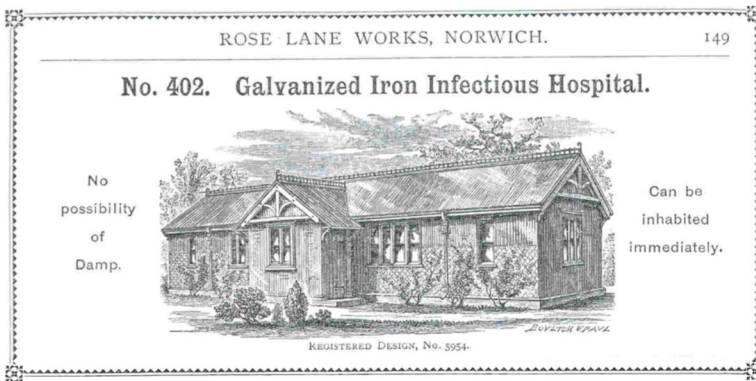


AYLSHAM LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY



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Cover Illustration: Advertisement for a Bolton and Paul Galvanised Iron Infectious Hospital – a rather more elaborate structure than the Aylsham Cottage Hospital.



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You were forewarned in the last issue that Betty Gee was passing on the editorship. It is a hard act to follow Tom Mollard and Betty & Peter Gee, but we plan to keep to basically the same schedules and layout so long as we have your support in providing us with articles and news to include. We start by thanking, on your behalf, Betty and Peter for all the hard work they have put into the Journal over the last fourteen issues since April 2003.

An index and a list of contents has been prepared for Volume 7 and is available from us for anyone who likes to keep a bound set of the Journal. A small number of back issues are available on request at the price of £1.

The remaining talks of the season have been planned as follows:

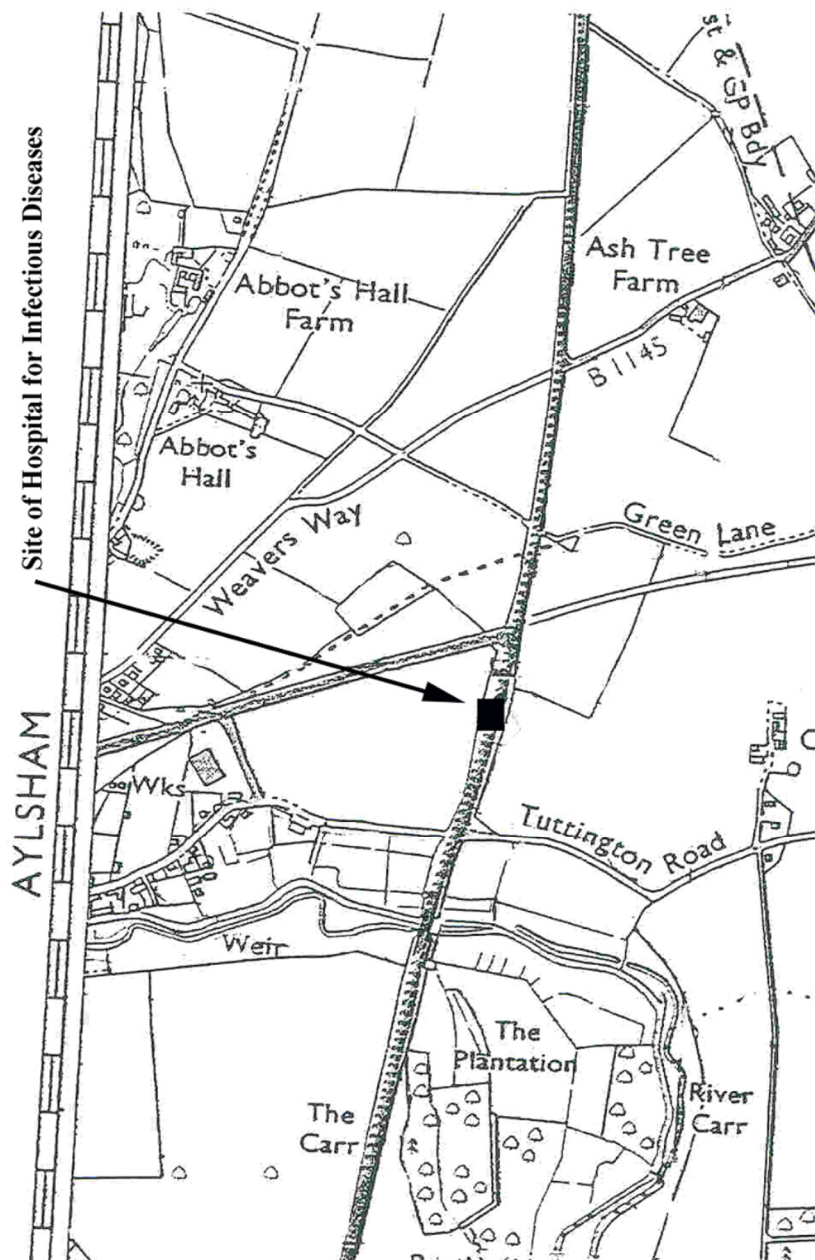
Thursday 24th January *'The Broadland Photographers'* by Peter and Rosemary Salt

Thursday 28th February *'The Norfolk Home Front in the Second World War'* by Neil Storey

Thursday 27th March *'The Jews of Medieval Norwich'* by Barbara Miller
All at the Friendship Hall at 7.30 pm. Details of the Spring Social are still to be arranged for Thursday 24th April.

Severe Weather Procedure

Please see note on p. 22.



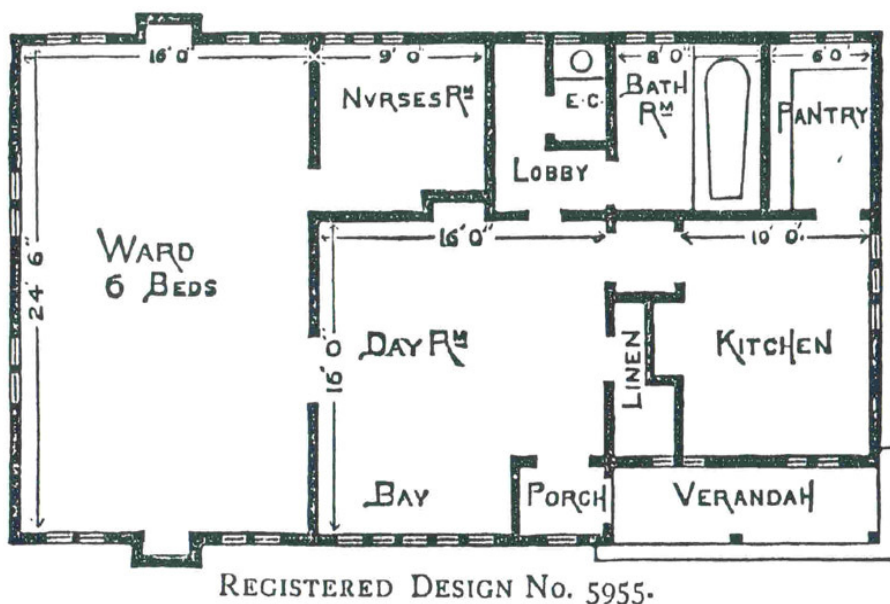
Map showing site of Aylsham Infectious Diseases Hospital

PEST HOUSES, ISOLATION HOSPITALS AND SMALLPOX

Geoff Gale

Smallpox is seldom heard about these days in Europe; occasionally there is a reference to a case in some distant part of the world and in television adaptations of books from the 19th century, but in that century and earlier it was understandably feared. The disease was, and still is very contagious and often fatal; sometimes if the patient is lucky and recovers they may have a lasting memory of their recent brush with death by being marked with the deep scars of the pox. Unfortunately they were usually visible and disfigured the patient for the rest of their life, with the result that women in the past were known to mask their face with a veil or use some other device to shield themselves from the gaze of strangers. Curiously smallpox only affects humans and is not known to be transmitted by them to other animals. To further single it out there are two variants of the disease, *Variola major* the more deadly of the two with a mortality rate of around 35% and *Variola minor* a milder form which leaves skin scars, blindness and can cause infertility. Nor is there a specific treatment for smallpox; even now the only successful prevention is by vaccination, and as a result the vaccination of children was introduced into England in 1853 and for the rest of that century there were very few new cases of smallpox reported. This period of calm lasted until the middle of March 1902 when a sudden epidemic of smallpox began in London and quickly reached sixty cases in the Tottenham area. A few days later this had grown to more than one hundred. The disease then spread quickly into the adjacent counties and one of the counties affected was Essex which by the end of the epidemic had recorded one thousand and sixty-one cases; two hundred and four proved to be fatal.

The fear that an epidemic of smallpox engendered caused district and parish councils to become very active in isolating any cases which occurred within their jurisdiction. One of the consequences of this fear and the secrecy to hide any case in the locality meant that on occasions the undertakers' men refused to remove bodies or burials took place at night, and those engaged were frequently drunk. The Henley-on-Thames Rural District Council and some of their neighbouring rural authorities collaborated in sharing the cost of building a small isolation hospital to serve them all. It was carried out in great secrecy at Pishill, a small isolated village seven miles north of Henley. This hospital, also known as a pest house, was a small converted cottage with a barn and was only opened as an isolation hospital at Pishill because a tramp in a lodging house in Henley



Plan of a Bolton and Paul Galvanised Iron Cottage Hospital

had unfortunately contracted the pox there. The local authorities were alarmed at the public cost of nursing this single case and were also concerned by the possibility of the much greater cost if he had infected others in the town. If that happened and it developed into a local epidemic there would be even more expenditure with contagion and nursing, so this small hidden hospital was seen as the cheaper alternative. Although the hospital had some intermittent use during the 1920's it remained empty from 1928 until 1948 when it became part of the Ministry of Health and was finally auctioned as a charming freehold property 'formerly an isolation hospital' but with not a hint of smallpox. The cottage was eventually reconverted into a desirable country residence in the Chiltern Foothills.

In that same year, 1902, a similar situation occurred in Aylsham when a Mr R T Payne, who lived in Red Lion Street, was also diagnosed as having smallpox. Payne had been a prisoner in the Gaol in Cambridge where there had already been a few cases of smallpox. As a precaution some of the

prisoners were vaccinated and Payne was one of the prisoners selected to be vaccinated, but in Payne's case this was slightly complicated because he was due to be discharged two days after the vaccination had been carried out. The next day Payne complained of feeling ill and was then examined by the prison doctor, who pronounced him fit and ready for discharge. On the Thursday morning, the day of his discharge, Payne left the gaol and went home to Aylsham by train, but he was still feeling unwell when he arrived and soon after he "took to his bed". On Sunday, still feeling ill, he was examined by a local doctor who diagnosed smallpox which was later confirmed by Doctor Back, the Medical Officer of the Aylsham Union.

On the following Monday evening a special meeting of the Parish Council was held in the Stage Room of the Town Hall (now known as the Green Room) under the chairmanship of Canon Hoare and recorded in the minutes "as specially summoned to consider the case of R. T. Payne lying ill with the smallpox". The details of the affair were repeated as were the views of the council on the behaviour and "apparent culpable negligence of the Authorities of the Cambridge Gaol". During the meeting, the council passed a resolution which was to be forwarded to the Home Secretary and to the MP for North Norfolk, Sir William B Gurdon, who was also requested to ask a question in the House of the Secretary of State relating to the negligence of the Cambridge Authorities. The MP duly asked the question of Mr Ritchie, the Secretary of State for the Home Department, who had also made enquiries and been told that the prison Doctor examined the man the day before and saw no sign of smallpox or reason for him not to be discharged on the following day. Sir William also spoke to Sir Kenelm Digby at the Home Office but with much the same result, except it was admitted that the "doctor had examined the man to the best of his ability"; both of these unsatisfactory replies were then communicated back to Canon Hoare. The MP also suggested to Mr Ritchie, the Secretary of State for the Home Department, prompted by the Town Council, that since there was smallpox in the gaol, absolute precautions should have been taken especially when the man complained of not feeling well although no symptoms were visible at the time. Once Payne had been diagnosed with smallpox the Sanitary Authorities became very active and Bolton and Paul, the Norwich company were commissioned to very hurriedly erect a building called by the press "an iron building" and to be used as a temporary isolation hospital. It was to be built in a field on the Tuttington Road owned by Mr William Case. Dr Back who was also the medical officer of Health for the Sanitary Authority urged for the quick completion of this small hospital which when completed was large enough to

accommodate three patients and a nurse. While the building was still being erected the patient remained in his home in Red Lion Street and it is assumed he was moved into the new hospital once it had been completed, although there is no record of this taking place. Payne must have been half way through the course of the disease by this time, but he would still be contagious so to move him would have been a wise precaution.

The Hospital was one of those many iron or wooden framed buildings that Bolton and Paul had developed and consisted of a metal or wooden structure sitting on either a brick base “supplied by the purchaser” or an Iron Pile Foundation manufactured by Bolton and Paul. No drawing or photograph of the Aylsham Hospital has survived but from the 1888 and the 1902 Bolton and Paul catalogues the most likely building to have been used was the “No. 403. Galvanized Iron Cottage Hospital”, 48ft. by 25ft, delivered and erected for £240.* The building had a ward for up to 6 patients, a bathroom and provision for a nurse to live in the building. It was too large for just one patient and difficult to predict how many of the population would be affected if this single case developed into a minor epidemic. The building was wooden framed, covered with galvanized corrugated iron and lined with varnished matchboarding. Between the wood and iron there was a layer of sheet felt to act as insulation; the building had a strong wooden floor and included a small veranda for the use of either the patient or the resident nurse. Although there is no indication on the plan of a stove or fireplace the kitchen must have been equipped with some form of stove for preparing food, which may also have provided heat for the rest of the building. Some of these prefabricated Bolton and Paul Galvanized Iron buildings were used as “Tin Tabernacles” Mission Rooms, Village Halls, Schools, Coverings for Medicinal Wells, portable bungalows and farm buildings. They either had an iron or a wooden frame which was covered with metal or timber boarding and all of them were designed to be both easily transported and quickly erected on a simple foundation usually by Bolton and Paul’s men, possibly the same men who had made them. The buildings were also designed so that extra features could easily be added to the basic structure from the catalogues, such as porches, roof fittings and seating.

The Aylsham isolation hospital was erected hurriedly for this one smallpox patient and each year the Medical Officer of Health reported on the condition of the hospital and wrote it had been kept in a good state of repair

* A less elaborate structure than the Infectious Hospital depicted on the cover.

with the building and stores properly aired. In his 1908 report he admitted that before a patient could be accommodated in it “stores would have to be replenished, a nurse secured, and a tent or some other accommodation provided for a man to act as a carrier of water, fuel and from time to time act as a messenger”. Financial arrangements would have to be put in place before this happened because of the considerable expense which would occur if it became inadvisable to remove the patient from the hospital or, if an outbreak occurred, making it beyond the resources of the hospital’s finances. These comments by the Medical Officer arose because there was a possibility of the isolation hospital being used to isolate patients during outbreaks of Scarlet Fever and Diphtheria and it was realised that the hospital may not be provisioned in time before the outbreak had disappeared. As a consequence the hospital, built initially for one patient was never used again.

It leaves two unresolved puzzles, where was it and what has happened to it ?

The Bolton and Paul Galvanized Iron Cottage Hospital was built in a field just off the Tuttington Road owned by a Mr William Case who generously gave the field for this use. William Case had been the Chairman of the Aylsham Rural District Council and was also the Chairman of the Aylsham Union from 1900 to 1926 when he retired from both councils at the age of 86. He had also been the vice chairman of the Union for seventeen years prior to him being elected as chairman of the Aylsham Union. In addition to his long interest in the administrative life of Aylsham he had been a prominent farmer and an experienced breeder of Shire horses. His reputation with horses was well known in the county and he was also widely known in the country because he often acted as a judge of horses and cattle at farm shows in other parts of England. He died after a short illness on the 3rd of February 1929 at Tuttington Hall aged 89. His funeral took place a few days later at Tuttington church and was attended by at least four hundred and eighty people.

Although the Hospital for Infectious Diseases is clearly marked on the Ordinance Survey of 1929 and some later maps of the area it has now completely disappeared. I remember having a conversation with the late Dr Julian Eve, who had talked to a road builder while he was researching “Epidemic Illness in Aylsham” and the builder claimed they had found the rusty remains of the hospital when the A140 bypass was

being built. The 1929 O S map clearly shows where the Aylsham Isolation Hospital used to be; superimposing the route of the bypass over it then reveals the hospital to be under the bypass just before the turning to the Aylsham industrial estate.

Sources:

Aylsham Parish Council Meetings, Minutes for April 4th 1902

Medical Officer's Annual Reports for 1906, 1908, 1912, 1920

Aylsham Almanacs 1900 to 1936

All the above are in the Aylsham Archives.

Annual "Ordinary" Report, City of Norwich 1921 by The Medical Officer of Health

Eastern Daily Press for,

Wednesday April 2nd, Thursday April 3rd and Friday April 4th 1902

Wednesday February 3rd and Monday 4th 1929

Local History Magazine May 2004

Bolton and Paul catalogues for April 1888, May 1902, May 1908. Norfolk Record Office, Archive Centre

"Epidemic Illness in Aylsham" by Julian Eve in Aylsham Local History Society Journal Vol. 4 No 10, June 1996.

SOCIETY NEWS

VISIT TO VOEWOOD HOUSE, KELLING on 27th and 28th June 2007



Such was the interest in visiting Voewood House, not normally open to the public, that Ann Dyball arranged two visits on successive afternoons. The house was bought ten years ago by Simon Finch, an antiquarian bookdealer, who has spent seven years restoring it. Voewood was built between 1903 and 1905 for the Rev Percy R Lloyd who never lived in it. Over the years the name of the house has been changed to Kelling Place, Home Place and Thornfield Residential Home and at times has been a Boys' School and an Old People's Home. It has now reverted to its original name of Voewood House and for the first time it is the home of its owner.

The Rev Percy Robert Lloyd (1868-1937) was the tenth son of the famous publisher and paper manufacturer Edward Lloyd (1815-1890). He was born in Water House, Walthamstow, coincidentally the childhood home of William Morris. He was educated at Eastbourne College, Pembroke College Oxford and Ely Theological College. He was ordained three years

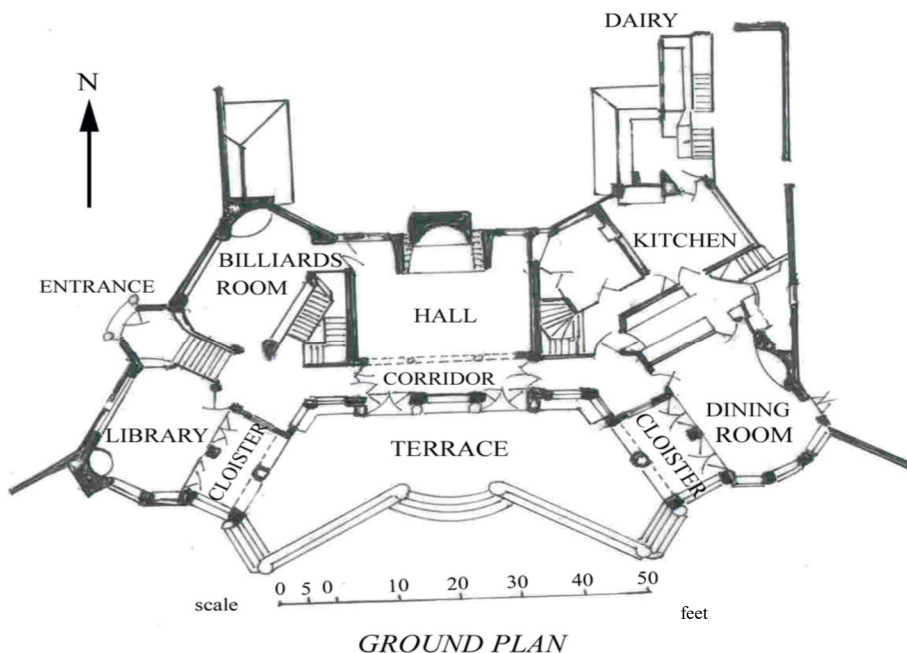
later and spent the next six years as curate of St Andrews, Lincoln. During this period he married Dorothea Mallam (1874-1907). She was the eldest child of James Thomas Mallam (1850-1915) of Oxford, a family which had connections with the Pre-Raphaelites. She wrote scholarly books with her husband. He left Lincoln to undertake work with the Norwich diocese in around 1900. It would have been at this time that the plans for Voewood were laid. It is said that the reason the Lloyds never lived in the house was the construction of a new isolation hospital next door, shortly after the completion of Voewood. Mrs Lloyd was fearful of contracting TB from the neighbours. Ironically and sadly, she was to die only four years later at the early age of thirty-three.

By the 1890's new country houses were being built for a different breed of client and in a different idiom. The clients were men who had made fortunes out of industry and commerce and the style was the 'Arts and Crafts'. The architects who believed in the Arts and Crafts principles left some of their most significant work in Norfolk – 1897-9, the Pleasaunce in Overstrand (Lutyens); 1899-01, Overstrand Hall (Lutyens); 1900, St Mary's, Happisburgh or Happisburgh Manor (Detmar Blow); 1903-5, Voewood House (E S Prior); 1912-13, Kelling Hall (Edward Maufe). The



architect chosen by the Rev Percy Lloyd was Edward Schroder Prior, already renowned for his butterfly plan house at the Barn in Exmouth and his passion for creating houses made from local materials and craftsmanship and related to the vernacular architecture. The site was difficult – treeless, a turnip field in a very exposed situation. The soil was chiefly flints and gravel with an upper layer of loam. An acre of ground was excavated to a depth of six feet in order to create a sunken garden and the excavated materials were carefully graded to provide the building materials. This was to be the first house to be built of concrete and the concrete was made from the excavated small flints and gravel and locally sourced lime. Clay was made into bricks and tiles; pebbles and flints were used to face the external walls. The flint facing was tied to the external walls with carstone and fixed to the core with bricks. Carstone is a golden brown stone quarried at Snettisham, some 30 miles away at a cost then of £980 a ton. Although its introduction to the building went against Prior's aims to source materials locally there really was no alternative. Later in the construction he had to use tiles and bricks from Cambridgeshire when local supplies ran out or were unsuitable. The exterior surfaces were highly decorated. The patterning made reference to the local tradition of diaper and zigzag patterns in the brickwork of cottages and farm buildings. Tiles were extensively employed, forming the surrounds of the first floor windows, as lintels in herringbone pattern and as decorative bands and patterns. The chimneys were truly remarkable neo-tudor. Tile-bricks were laid in lime mortar in twisted patterns around a fireclay flue-pipe.

Work began in 1903 with the construction of various outbuildings including gardeners' cottages and garden walls to try out building techniques using the excavated materials before beginning on the house. In 1904 the construction of the house began and the cost was a staggering £60,000, a fortune in those times. Prior did not employ a contractor except for the electrical work, believing that contract systems would result in 'only the most mechanical expressions of design'. Instead, the work was supervised and materials purchased by Prior's site clerk, A Randall Wells (1877-1942), an architect in his own right, and Mr Blower a local bricklayer. The house is based on a butterfly plan. The three-storey central portion is flanked by splayed two storey wings. The plan maximises views out and gives the best orientation to a range of rooms. The area contained within the splay faces the gardens, with the northern of the wings acting as the entrance, with a two storey porch and daylight basement. This wing also contains the library and billiard room at ground floor level. The wing opposite contains



Original ground plan for Voewood House from Country Life November 1909.

splayed two-storey wings. The plan maximises views out and gives the best orientation to a range of rooms. The area contained within the splay faces the gardens, with the northern of the wings acting as the entrance, with a two-storey porch and daylight basement. This wing also contains the library and billiard room at ground level. The wing opposite contains the kitchen and service accommodation together with the dining room. The entrance, through oak doors, leads into a six sided hall up a straight flight of Hoptonwood stone stairs into an octagonal lobby. The main staircase fills the triangular space generated by the butterfly pattern. It has a massive oak frame and twisted oak balusters. The library has a magnificent heavily ribbed ceiling of polished concrete. Originally it led out through glazed doors into a cloister, but the cloisters have themselves been closed in with glazed doors and the inner doors removed. The Great Hall has the character of a late medieval timber framed building with its heavily beamed roof and inglenook fireplace of polished concrete and tiling. A minstrels gallery across the south side of the hall links the two wings, originally open

to the Hall but now glazed in. The dining room is noted for its reinforced concrete beams and for the beautiful curtains a-flutter with appliquéd butterflies, created by Mr Finch and his friends and a glorious nude painting over the fireplace. After the grandeur of the ground floor the two upper floors are charming and more intimate with many twists and turns and steps and staircases. They bear the mark of the present owner and his talent for finding fascinating objects and unusual ways with decorations.

The gardens are Grade 1 listed and thought to be Prior's greatest garden design. They were created from the area excavated to provide the building materials. Those materials were used very attractively in the garden construction. Terraces extend from the wings of the house and end in steps leading down to the garden level. The garden is also reached from the terrace by a double flight of steps which used to lead to two stone paths, separated by a water feature in the form of a stepped stone tank containing water-lilies, iris and forget-me-not. Gertrude Jekyll and Lawrence Weaver in their book 'Gardens for Small Country Houses'. write 'the stepped scheme at Home Place, Holt, designed by Professor E.S. Prior, will be a counsel of perfection to most people...A curved flight of steps leads down from the main terrace to a long stairway of gentle descent with wide, shallow treads. This is divided down the middle by a long stepped pool, which is richly hospitable to free-growing plants.' Originally a double row of almond trees led to the central feature of the garden, a large basin with a parapet. The almond trees and the stepped stone tank are no more and standard roses now take their place. Mr Finch and his staff are working hard to return the gardens to their former glory.

We enjoyed tea and coffee and continued to feast our eyes as we wandered freely at the end of our tour. It was very hard to tear oneself away as always something new caught one's attention.

Diana Polhill

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Country Life, 9 November 1909

Jekyll, G & Weaver, L (1983). Gardens for Small Country Houses. xvi + 260 pp. Macmillan, London.

Pevsner, N & Wilson, B (1962). Norfolk 1: Norwich and North-East. 798 pp. Penguin Books.

VISIT TO BURGHLEY HOUSE, STAMFORD on 12th September 2007



We approached Burghley by driving alongside the wall of the estate on the road from Stamford and then entering quite a narrow access road leading to small gates. There were a few small deer in the spacious park. The coach was then allowed to drop our party quite near the very large and beautiful house. Cars were kept well away from the house and parked in the shelter of a small wood. It was a sunny afternoon which made Burghley House shine, being made from a local Northamptonshire oolitic limestone stone. The first impression of the House was of its great size. Some of us went to have a light lunch in the Orangery and others sat in the park.

Some members started by going to the Brewhouse, where there was an audio-visual introduction to the House and the family called *Ancestors in the Attic*. Afterwards we met our Tour Guides at the ticket office to be divided into two groups and went up a staircase to begin the tour in the Old Kitchen, which is in the oldest part of the House. It was explained that the tour passed through the ground and first floors. It showed eighteen rooms, on the walls of which were nearly 400 paintings.

The builder of this great House was Sir William Cecil (1520 – 1598) who was ennobled in 1571 by Queen Elizabeth I and became Lord Burghley. Sir William had inherited estates in Burghley and Wothorpe from his father Richard Cecil. The building of the House extended over 32 years and there

seems little doubt that Sir William was his own architect, assisted by an Antwerp mason named Henryk. The West front with its great gatehouse was finished in 1577 and the North front was completed in 1587. Although Queen Elizabeth visited Burghley, the House of her loyal Secretary of State Lord Burghley, she did not stay in the House as there was an outbreak of smallpox there. One wonders what she thought of the magnificent House, although many of the beautiful interiors and pictures now to be seen are to the credit of Lord Burghley's descendants.

The Guide explained that John the 5th Earl and his heiress wife Anne Cavendish shared a passion for beautiful things and, in the late 17th century, went on four Grand Tours in Europe, collecting many pictures, tapestries and sculptures. He employed Antonio Verrio, among others, to paint a number of rooms at Burghley and left heavy debts to his son the 6th Earl. Brownlow, the 9th Earl employed "Capability" Brown to complete the renovation and furnishings of the 1st floor State Rooms. They had remained in an unfinished state for over 50 years. Brown also made considerable architectural alterations to the roof line of the South front, to give an even skyline. He built the Orangery and courtyard in the 1760s and landscaped the gardens and enlarged park. Henry the 10th Earl was elevated to the rank of Marquess in 1801.

The 6th Marquess achieved an international reputation as a hurdler winning a gold medal in the Olympics 400 metres hurdles in 1928. He became a member of the International Olympic Committee and staged the 1948 Olympic Games in London in 1948. He later was Governor of Bermuda and established the Burghley Horse Trials in 1961. The present Marquess, Michael 8th Marquess of Exeter lives in the United States, but members of his family live at Burghley. On the death of the 6th Marquess of Exeter in 1981 direct ownership of the House and its contents passed to the Burghley House Preservation Trust, a private charitable trust.

The Old Kitchen on the ground floor, with its fan-vaulted roof, reminded one that the house was built in the Tudor period. There is an amazing collection of copper utensils from the late Georgian and Victorian periods. We then moved via the barrel vaulted Roman Stairs to the 1st Floor and into the Ante-Chapel which would have been used by the staff, while the family and guests attended chapel in the Chapel adjoining. The window on the west side of the room gives the only view from the State Rooms of the Inner Court below. We then entered the North Wing and the Billiard Room which contains many family portraits and a portrait of the artist Antonio Verrio (by Kneller); the House contains many of Verrio's

masterpieces including the Heaven Room and the ceilings of the four George Rooms.

The next room, the Bow Room, is immediately above the main entrance to the House and is a most imposing and lofty room, planned originally as the State Dining Room by the 5th Earl. It was decorated for the 5th Earl by Louis Laguerre in 1697. The ceiling depicted mythological gods and goddesses. It is however on the north side of the house and far from the kitchen. It was used as a music room by the 9th Earl. The dining table is laid as it might have been for a Victorian dinner party. During 1990 the entire painted decoration was cleaned and restored to great effect.

The next room, the Brown Drawing Room, has a wonderful late 17th century plaster ceiling, one of over twenty executed for the 5th Earl by Edward Martens. Our guide suggested that the slang term “plastered” came from the ceiling plasterers who had to mix plaster with wine instead of with water because using water would make the plaster set too quickly. The wine was obviously drunk as well as being mixed with plaster! Many important paintings are hung here – notably portraits by Thomas Gainsborough of Sir Christopher and Lady Whichcote, ancestors of the 4th Marchioness. The next room, the Black and Yellow Bedroom also contains many numbered portraits – visitors are supplied with a Guide to the Picture Collection (over 700 paintings).

Three steps then led to the Marquetry Room and the West Wing. All five rooms on this wing were created from the 16th Century Long Gallery, which greatly increased wall space on which to hang the 5th Earl’s newly acquired Italian paintings. There are fine examples of Dutch walnut marquetry here. Next there are two lavishly decorated bedrooms, with the Pagoda Room containing two small mother of pearl closets and various portraits. The Blue Silk Bedroom has a splendid state bed purchased by the 5th Earl and the Blue Silk Dressing Room has an 18th Century Chinese export lacquer table with fold-over flaps for card games and use as a tea table.

We then came to the George Rooms on the South Wing, State Rooms intended for royalty and other important guests. Each has a handsome 18th century fireplace with silver hearth decoration. The Second George Room has a very fine state bed and red curtain hangings purchased in 1795; the room was used as a bedroom by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. The Third George Room has fine pieces of furniture, particularly marquetry commodes and corner cupboards. The Fourth George room was used by Queen Victoria as a withdrawing room and has dark coloured wood. The

Heaven room, regarded as Antonio Verrio's greatest masterpiece, was decorated with scenes of ancient mythology. After that came the Hell Staircase designed by Verrio to contrast with the previous room. He worked mainly alone and it took 11 months to complete as his assistants had drifted away. The whole impression is one of darkness and despair. Years of lighting the staircase, firstly by oil and subsequently gas, had left the walls and ceiling with a heavy coat of soot and dirt. In 1993 a successful cleaning project restored this immense area to its original condition.

Lastly we arrived at the Great Hall, which is over 60 ft in height with a double hammer-beam roof, and measures 68 feet long by 30 feet wide. Originally used as a banqueting hall in Elizabeth times, it now provides a dignified and historic setting for concerts and other events. The large wine cistern, made by Philip Rollos in 1710, was reputedly the largest silver wine cistern in existence. The walls are hung with large portraits of the family and of notable persons.

The Tour Guide had pointed out particular features of the handsome rooms and been happy to answer our questions. The Tour had taken one hour and a quarter. He had given us much information and interesting anecdotes. Some of us then went to find the Sculpture Garden, where 12 acres have been transformed into a beautiful area with mown paths and a Lakeside walk. We saw a core collection of contemporary sculptures and then moved on to the Garden of Surprises. It had been a very full day, which will remain in our memory for a long time. It had been in pleasant weather and good company.

We thanked Ann Dyball very much for her hard work in organising the day.

Betty Gee

Reference: Burghley House Guide Book

GREAT YARMOUTH, HISTORY, HERRINGS & HOLIDAYS

A video introduced by Peter Stibbons on 4th October 2007

The 2007 season began with an interesting and informative ‘virtual visit’ to Great Yarmouth. An excellent video, introduced by the scriptwriter, director, producer, Peter Stibbons, took us through a range of aspects of Yarmouth.

The sixteenth century Hutch map by Thomas Damet was used to show how, in Roman times, a sandbank screened the mouth of the River Yare, Caister Castle defended the north and Burgh Castle the south. By 1086 the town had gained such importance that it was mentioned in the Domesday Book. However, by the thirteenth century the north entrance to the river had silted up and the south entrance had to be cut to keep the port open. Notably, a charter was granted in 1262 by Henry III and the construction of the town wall began with King Henry’s Tower. It took 111 years to complete the wall to enclose the town on three sides. The fourth side was, of course, the river. The wall was built by the townspeople. Everyone had a duty to work on it for a set number of days each year. However, if you were rich enough you could pay someone else to do the work for you. As there were no natural building materials on site it was constructed from ballast from ships, flint from the beach and fields and any brick that was available. The original design had arrow slits but, because it took so long to complete, and weapons changed, the design altered to build up the inside of the wall so that it could resist cannon fire. It was so well built that the entire population lived within the town walls until the eighteen hundreds. Some parts are still standing in the twenty-first century.

During the medieval period Yarmouth was a major port, bustling with activity. During the fourteenth century it exported herrings, wool and worsted. This industry helped provide battleships, notable to the siege of Calais in 1347. This successful venture received the reward of the town coat of arms, three crowns and three herrings. During the seventeenth century Yarmouth was considered to be the most important herring port in the world. The timber wharves built with Dutch skill in 1614 are still in evidence today. Yarmouth continued to provide warships, this time for Cromwell, enhancing the reputation of the English navy.

Initially, Yarmouth was famous for its cured red herrings. Then the international trade in bloaters and kippers generated massive wealth. At the time, fish was always eaten on Fridays, also no meat was consumed in

Lent. The addition of Tuesday as a 'fish' day guaranteed even greater sales abroad. But, when Elizabeth I came to the throne, a decline in fish consumption matched the decline in religious observances. This meant there were fewer boats sailing from Yarmouth, and fewer available for the English navy.

In the mid-eighteenth and early nineteenth century a new trend began. Initially the fashion was to visit the sea and drink the water, latterly to bathe in it. A Bath House was built in 1759, then bathing machines were introduced to allow the delights of sea water bathing. The popularity of Yarmouth increased steadily, enhanced by the opening of the Acle New Road in 1832, followed by the railway from Norwich in 1844, the railway from London in 1859 and the railway from Norwich to the beach in 1877.

Thus the tourist trade arrived in Yarmouth. William Absolon pottery provided souvenirs for the visitors and the Royal Hotel a beachside hotel, Charles Dickens being a visitor to the latter. The seventh pier in the country, the Wellington Pier, was built. The Winter Gardens, originally built for Torquay, were purchased and erected on the promenade. The Britannia pier had a perilous life, being cut in half, twice, by ships, also experiencing two fires. However, from the 1950's it starred popular household names such as Frankie Howerd, Tommy Cooper, Morecambe and Wise. With the addition of the Pleasure Beach, between World Wars One and Two, the resort had everything a holiday-maker could want.

Arguably Norfolk's most famous sailor, Horatio Nelson, visited Yarmouth twice. The Nelson tower, a Norfolk monument, was opened in 1819. A slightly less famous Nelson, Nelson the Clown, came to Yarmouth in 1845. He chose to ride up the Bure in a boat towed by geese. Hundreds of people turned out to watch, many of them standing on the suspension bridge. As the boat went underneath, the audience rushed from one side of the bridge to the other, tilting the bridge, snapping the cable and tipping the spectators into the river. Hundreds drowned.

A unique feature of the town is the Yarmouth Rows. There were 145 of these lanes, so narrow that people could reach out from their windows to shake hands with neighbour, opposite. For example, Kittywitches Row was only 27 inches wide at its narrowest point. However, as an open sewer ran down the middle of each lane, it's probable that most windows were kept shut. Charles Dickens is thought to have used the Rows as inspiration for 'David Copperfield'. The access to the market place was through the Rows

and, as a standard cart was too wide to get through, a special, narrow, troll cart was developed. Each of the Rows had a name, usually the name of a shop or notable resident. But if another shop opened, or another family moved in, the Row would acquire additional names. Very confusing! Eventually, the Rows were numbered, rather than named. The Rows were badly damaged by bombing in World War Two and only a few have been preserved.

The life of Yarmouth has always focussed on the sea. For example, in 1850 there were seven groups of Beachmen who not only salvaged ships that foundered, but also offered assistance. These groups of men were the beginnings of the lifeboat crews. Between 1860 and 1960 dozens of fishing boats would work from Yarmouth in the autumn. Over 700 million herring per season would be landed. The peak year was 1913 when there were over 1000 fishing boats. But, by the 1960's overfishing had led to a decline in catches and the fortunes of the townspeople. The economic status of Yarmouth was boosted in 1964 with drilling rigs looking for oil and gas. It is hoped that the construction of the outer harbour will help restore Yarmouth to its former glories.

Sheila Merriman

Severe Weather Procedure

1. All Committee Members will be contacted before 10.00 am.
2. Members should ring a member of the Committee to determine if the meeting is/is not to go ahead as planned. Names and telephone numbers are on the back of the membership card.
3. Radio Norfolk will be contacted with a request to broadcast a cancellation notice.
4. If any member wishes to be contacted by e-mail we will attempt to do this. Please ensure the Membership Secretary has your correct details.

**AYLSHAM LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD
ON 4TH OCTOBER 2007**

PRESENT: Geoff Gale, (Chairman), Angela King (Secretary), Peter Pink (Treasurer), Ann Dyball, Gillian Fletcher, Jean McChesney, Rosemarie Powell, Sheila Merriman, Lloyd Mills, Betty Gee and 47 members.

APOLOGIES for absence were noted from Diana and Roger Polhill, Peter Holman, Joy Newell, Sue Fox, Dr Douet, Mrs Hall, Elsie Smith, Mr and Mrs Elsey and Mrs Wintle.

The Chairman welcomed members on this the 23rd AGM of the Society. Before the start of the meeting he wished to announce the resignation of the Vice Chairman, Peter Holman. He thanked Peter for his seventeen years of service on the committee in which he had held the position of both Vice Chairman and Chairman. He reminded members of Peter's famous 'mystery tours'. He also paid tribute to another long standing member, Betty Gee, who had also decided to step down from the committee, having served twelve years as Treasurer and Secretary before taking over as Journal Editor. Lastly, he thanked Angela King who was resigning as Secretary.

MINUTES of the AGM held on the 5th October 2006 were approved and signed.

SECRETARY'S REPORT. Angela King reported another successful year for the Society. The membership numbered 115. Evening lectures were well attended. Subjects included in the programme were: 'Oulton at War' by Beryl Griffiths; 'Looking for the Pastons' by Peter Bradbury; 'Norfolk in the First World War' by Neil Storey; 'Medieval stained glass at Salle Church' by David King; 'East Anglian Painters' by Peter Baldwin, and 'Finding Norfolk's First Farmers' by Trevor Ashwin. There was no Autumn Lecture Course this year.

Geoff Gale was thanked for organising the visit to the Library at the John Innes Centre to see the Herbals. Ann Dyball was congratulated for her hard work in organising trips to Gainsborough's House in Sudbury in May, Voewood House at Kelling in June and Stamford and Burghley House in

September.

The Social Event was moved from January to April with a visit to the Henry Blogg Museum in Cromer followed by dinner at the Rocket House Café in the same building.

Angela thanked the OPWA, from whom we hire the hall, for ordering an additional 25 padded chairs.

Angela paid tribute to Peter Holman and Betty Gee for their long service to the Society.

Angela thanked all committee members not already mentioned for their support and hard work to ensure the smooth running of the Society. Peter Pink for keeping control of the finances and this year organising Public Liability Insurance for the members, Gillian Fletcher, assisted by Rosemarie Powell, for collecting the subscriptions and organising the delivery of members' journals and correspondence, Jean McChesney for organising the publicity, Lloyd Mills who has dealt with queries from family historians and others and Sheila Merriman for her common sense support. Angela could not have managed without Diana Polhill taking the excellent minutes at committee meetings. Lastly Angela thanked Geoffrey Gale for his guidance throughout her term in office.

TREASURER'S REPORT. Peter Pink apologised for the brief version of the report he was presenting to members but he had been unable to prepare the full balance sheet due to a recent health scare. A full copy of the audited accounts will be published in the Journal. He explained that there was a credit balance in all three accounts held by the Society although the impression given by the yearly balance was that there was a £1000 deficit. The £1190 expenditure on Publications was for a reprint of 'Inns and Pubs' and 'Memories' and would eventually be recovered by sales. The purchase of Public Liability Insurance had been deemed necessary to protect Committee members from any hostile claims in the present litigious society in which we live. The sums at present in the Society's accounts were: Community Account (day to day) £1500, Savings Account £1000, Publications Account £1000.

REPORT ON NEWSLETTER AND JOURNAL. Betty Gee reported that there had been three editions of the Journal since the last AGM which had brought the number of pages in Volume 7 to 392 without the alphabetical index. She had continued to include reports on lectures, visits

and courses, information about members and the accounts of the Society. She was pleased to have included Hunts directory of 1850. She thanked members for producing items of research, David Scotter about his family, Alec Douet on a farm workers' strike, Peter Bull on the Aylsham Boys' School and Daphne Davy on life expectancy in Aylsham in the 20th century. She thanked Gillian Fletcher and Rosemarie Powell for organising the distribution of the Journal and also her husband, Peter, who had helped with the production. She had enjoyed the challenge of being Editor but was looking forward to having more time for other things.

REPORT ON PUBLICATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE. Geoff Gale said that the Publications Sub-Committee had not met for some time but in any case had been reduced to two members, himself and Tom Mollard, who had organised the publication of 'Millgate' in conjunction with Poppyland Press. Tom had now resigned from the committee. There were no new books in the pipeline. Geoff hoped that a new Sub-Committee could be formed in the near future and that he would be able to pass on the chairmanship to someone else.

REPORT ON VISITS. Ann reported a successful year. Twenty-nine members and friends went to Gainsborough's House in Sudbury as an introduction to this seasons Autumn Course. The party then continued on to Coggeshall to visit 'Paycocks'. Fifty-five members visited Voewood House at Kelling over two days in June with the owner, Simon Finch, conducting the party around the house. Seventeen members visited Stamford in September. Most went on a guided walk of the town with Jill Collinge, a Blue Badge Guide. This was followed in the afternoon by a visit to Burghley House. Ann announced a provisional booking for a visit to Kings Lynn on the 19th June 2008. Dr Paul Richards would be giving a lecture followed by a guided tour. There was also a possibility of a visit to one or two private houses in North Norfolk and a trip to Braintree to look at the Silk Works.

The Autumn Lecture Course on East Anglian Artists by Wanda Stanley had started and had attracted twenty one members.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE. Geoff Gale explained that the committee had been a little overenthusiastic the previous year and had appointed one more committee member than it should have done. However, the resignation of Peter Holman had corrected this. The new Vice Chairman would be filled by an existing committee member.

Two members were prepared to stand. The committee would discuss this matter at its next meeting. Secretary: Felicity Cox had volunteered. She was proposed by Geoff Gale and seconded by Angela King. Jean McChesney was standing for re-election, proposed by Betty Gee, seconded by Gillian Fletcher.

CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS. Geoff Gale was sad to announce the death of long serving member Dr Julian Eve at the age of 82 years. He had been a member since 1989 and served as Vice Chairman in 1997–8. He also remembered two other members, Ruth Bratt, who died in April aged 93, had been a member since 1990, and Eileen Nolan, who died in May, had been a member for eight years.

In addition to the Autumn Lecture Course there was a possibility of a new class in the spring which would be held on a Saturday. The topic would be built around Sherlock Holmes and the social conditions of his time.

An evening for members to present their research has been earmarked for the AGM of 2008. Geoff suggested that if any member had a subject in which they were interested, he, Peter Pink or Lloyd Mills would help them to get started.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS. Angela asked members who were willing to volunteer to help with arranging the hall or refreshments to sign the rota sheet. Angela was willing to continue to organise the refreshments until the November meeting. She warned members that there would be no refreshments in the New Year unless someone was prepared to take over the organisation.

The evening concluded with a film by Peter Stibbons on 'Great Yarmouth, History, Herrings, Holidays'

Angela King

LIST OF MEMBERS – NOVEMBER 2007

Below is the list of current paid-up members. After this issue of the Journal, the circulation list for future issues will be based on this. IF YOUR NAME DOES NOT APPEAR ON THIS LIST YOU COULD MISS OUT ON FUTURE ISSUES OF THE JOURNAL. You will receive them by paying a subscription to the Treasurer, Mr Peter Pink, 38 Lancaster Gardens, Aylsham NR11 6LD (Individuals £9; Married Couples £15). Apologies to any members who might have recently renewed their subscription and still missed inclusion on the list.

Barber, Mrs P	Haddow, Mrs E	Pritchard, Mr & Mrs E
Barwick, Mrs G	Hall, Mrs R	Radford, Miss N
Bayes, Mrs R	Hicks, Mr R	Riseborough, Mr & Mrs
Bird, Mrs M	Hill, Mrs J	R
Boekee, Mr & Mrs R	Holman, Mr & Mrs P	Rowe, Mrs M
Brasnett, Mr & Mrs D	Humphreys, Mrs C	Rust, Mr & Mrs B
Burton, Mr A	Johnston, Mr G	Shaw, Mr & Mrs A
Cain, Mrs D	King, Mr & Mrs D	Shepherd, Mrs A
Collins, Mrs R	King, Mr & Mrs M	Sheringham, Mrs J
Casimir, Mr & Mrs S	Lloyd, Mrs T	Smith, Mrs E
Corbin, Mr & Mrs N	Lowe, Mr B	Smith, Mr & Mrs R
Cort, Ms J	Lyons, Mr D	Stevens, Miss S
Cox, Mrs F	McChesney, Mrs J	Steward, Mrs L
Crouch, Mr R	McManus, Mr & Mrs S	Swann, Mr & Mrs J
Davy, Mr & Mrs R	Merriman, Ms S	Vaughan-Lewis, Mr &
Douet, Dr A	Mills, Mr L	Mrs M
Ducker, Mr G	Mollard, Mr & Mrs T	Wadley, Mr D A
Duncan, Mrs B	Newell, Mrs J	Walpole, Lord & Lady
Dyball, Miss A J	Nicholls, Mrs D	Wintle, Mrs S
Elsey, Mr & Mrs B	Nobbs, Mr G	Wix, Mr & Mrs M
Fletcher, Mrs G	O'Toole, Rev & Mrs R	Wright, Mr J
Fox, Mr & Mrs M	Parkin, Mrs T	
Fry, Mr R	Parnell, Mr J	
Gale, Mr & Mrs G	Peabody, Mr R	
Garratt, Mr & Mrs A	Pim, Mr & Mrs M	
Gawith, Mr & Mrs C	Pink, Mr & Mrs P	
Gee, Mr & Mrs P	Polhill, Dr & Mrs R	
Green, Mrs Margo	Powell, Mr & Mrs I	
Green, Mr Michael	Preis, Mrs W	

AYLSHAM LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

ACCOUNT FOR YEAR ENDED 31ST AUGUST 2007

2006 £	INCOME	2007 £	2006	EXPENDITURE	2007 £
738	Publications	486	653	Publications	1338
715	Subscriptions	828	10	Subscriptions	30
820	Course Fees	—	387	Course	—
36	Visitors	80	25	Programme cards	25
—	Donations	1	25	Donations	70
			224	Journals	231
23	Bank Interest	25	138	Rent (F'ship Club)	150
702	Social Event	640	727	Social Event	698
			32	Rent (Quakers)	24
—	Refreshments	25	—	Insurance	261
—	Officers Expenses	5	81	Officers Expenses	134
			110	Lecturers Fees	150
Visits					
—	Houghton	272	—	Houghton	360
—	Great Hospital	192	—	Great Hospital	189
—	V & A	546	—	V & A	482
—	Voewood	637	—	Voewood	690
—	Sudbury	750	—	Sudbury	666
21	Plantation	—	18	Plantation	—
30	Hickling Visitors	—	47	Hickling Visitors	—
<u>3085</u>		<u>4487</u>	<u>2477</u>		<u>5498</u>
	Balances 31/8/06			Balances 31/8/07	
1032	Community A/C	1534	1534	Community A/C	1350
991	Business A/C	1012	1012	Business A/C	1037
1753	Publications	1838	1838	Publications	986
<u>6861</u>		<u>8871</u>	<u>6861</u>		<u>8871</u>

PETER PINK, Treasurer

GRAEME JOHNSTON, Accountant