



AYLSHAM LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

JOURNAL & NEWSLETTER

Volume 9

No. 9

CONTENTS

Editorial	302
A walk around Aylsham churchyard, by Daphne Davy	303
Geoffrey Ducker's memories of church repairs, by Lynda Wix	307
Aylsham in 'Old England' remembered by George Silence, by Lloyd Mills	310
Society News	313
Visit to Saffron Walden, by Fiona & Tim Scott	313
Long Avenues in Blickling Park, a talk by William Vaughan-Lewis – Maggie Vaughan-Lewis	318
Rival brewers in north-east Norfolk in the late 18 th century, a talk by Margaret Bird	320
Annual General Meeting	325
List of Members	329
Accounts for Year ending 31 st August 2013	330
Notices	332

Front cover: Corbridge plan of Blickling Park, 1729, showing the four long avenues.

Back cover: Saffron crocus depicted in the medieval stained glass window of the church of St. Mary the Virgin, Saffron Walden.

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

Dr Roger Polhill, Parmeters, 12 Cromer Road, Aylsham NR11 6HE
roger@polhills.co.uk 01263 733424

Chairman: Dr Roger Polhill

Secretary: Mr Jim Pannell 01263 731087 jpannell487@btinternet.com

Aylsham Town Archivist: Mr Lloyd Mills archive@aylsham-tc.gov.uk

Website: aylsham-history.co.uk

Tryco, the small firm in Norwich that has photocopied the Journal for many years has ceased trading. Catton Print has very kindly contracted to print the journal for us. For the last two issues of this volume we have decided to reproduce it in a format comparable to the preceding parts, but we have the opportunity of enhancing the appearance with the new volume in August 2014.

This issue contains the report on the highly successful visit to Saffron Walden in September and the two outstanding lectures of the new season by scholarly members of our Society. It was very satisfying to have so many members and visitors on both occasions. Thanks also to Daphne Davy and Lynda Wix for pieces on St Michael's church and Lloyd Mills for the transcript of a letter that turned up in the Aylsham Town Archives from a nineteenth century emigrant to the USA.

Ann Dyball kindly arranged a visit to the Norfolk Record Office on 24 October to include a much-appreciated chance to see the conservation work on the Aylsham Court Roll, 1509–1546. She has also arranged a visit to the National Trust Textile Conservation centre at Oulton on 4 February 2014, advertised on the back page. This visit nicely supplements the talk by Ksynia Marko on 27 February.

The lectures for the New Year are also listed on the back cover, together with a notice in case of inclement weather.

The Autumn course on illuminated manuscripts, given by Margaret Forrester, has been fascinating even if not quite as well attended as the courses in the last two years, which was a pity.

A walk around Aylsham churchyard

Daphne Davy



Photo. Derek Lyons

I took a group of friends around the churchyard of St. Michael and All Angels, pointing out some interesting features of the church. I have been asked to provide a report on this, and am happy to do so. I would also be happy to do another talk, if anyone is interested.

This building is a focus for Christian worship in Aylsham.

It is likely that there has been a religious building here for at least 1000 years. It is the oldest building in Aylsham, and the only Grade 1 listed structure.

The visible walls include work from the 13th to the 19th centuries. The nave aisles, chancel and sanctuary are 13th century; the south transept, tower, west end, and the ground floor of the porch are 14th. The first floor of the porch, north transept and chancel aisles are 16th century, the spire is 17th century, and the roof is 19th century.

You can see that the flint work is of differing quality. This is partly because it was put up at different times, but also because some of it was intended to be covered with lime render. The plan of the church shows that the outline is, basically, cruciform. The dimensions of the church are 50 metres at its longest, 34 metres at its widest, and the tower is just under 30 metres to the battlements.

Most churches are built east/west. Our east end is on your right, and the south side faces the market place.

Buttresses

A buttress is a projecting support built against a wall (OED). On our church, they are designed to provide support because the roof is very heavy.

Although a plain buttress would do the work, over time buttresses became ornamented, being built with two, three, and sometimes even four stages. The fronts of ours have been decorated with flint which has been split and shaped to make a fine, even, surface. The fronts of some buttresses have niches, which would have contained statues.

Buttresses are also necessary on corners, to support the load, and on the older corners you can see that there are two separate buttresses at right angles to each other. These are 13th century. Later, in the 14th century, people realised that one buttress, coming out diagonally, would do the same job with fewer materials.

Graves (including Repton & mortsafe)

Our churchyard has not been used for burials since 1852. The only additions now are interment of cremation ashes, to the right of the path from the market gate to the chancel door, and to the north of the church, near the lych gate. The churchyard is now in the care of the town council.

The gravestones, which are spread around the churchyard, represent only a portion of the many burials that have taken place here. Details of the people buried here are held at the Norfolk Records Office, and a copy of the 1980–1981 survey by the WI is kept in the church. As well as the regular gravestones there are several table tombs, indicating a higher status, and several enclosures, which would, in general, have been for local families. To the left of the chancel door is the enclosure of the Repton family, designed by Humphry Repton. He was a landscape gardener of national importance, responsible for gardens such as Sheringham Park, Catton Park, and West Wycombe Park in Buckinghamshire. Humphry's parents had premises in Aylsham, at a time when Humphry himself was apprenticed in Norwich.

Another feature to the north of the church is a 'mortsafe'. This is a metal grille put over a grave to protect the body from grave robbers. Grave robbing was a lucrative industry in the early 19th century, where the need for cadavers for medical students far exceeded supply.

Flint & Freestone

The outer walls are constructed of flint and freestone. There is lots of flint in Norfolk, but stone to make corners has to come from further away – probably Northamptonshire.

If you look around Aylsham there are lots of houses that include flint in their walls. Flint is found everywhere in Aylsham, and removing it from the ground makes for easier ploughing. Flint can be used in whole stones, or it can be split, making a flat surface. You can see in our walls that some have been left whole, some have simply been split, and some have been split and shaped to make rectangles, to give a very impressive appearance. Several of the buttresses have small areas of high quality flint work.

Tower & Roof

The tower is 14th century. It is believed that towers were originally built to house the bells, which were very important in the middle ages to call people to prayer. Our tower still houses the bells. There are 10 of them, and the ringers still call the people to prayer on Sundays. The ringers practice on Tuesday evenings, and there are often special peals to celebrate occasions such as weddings.

The clock is Victorian, and was installed in 1880. It has a quarter hour chime, and numbers the hours. There is mention of a ‘clockbell’ in the 16th century, but no further details are known.

If you look at where the nave roof joins the tower, then move your eyes above the apex, you can see a steep upside down ‘V’. This is where the original roof joined the tower, when the roof would have been thatch. We have a parishioner who was involved in the last re-leading of the roof, during the 1930s and 40s – see next article.

Porch

As you can see, the porch has been built in two separate phases. The flint work on the east side is completely different on the ground floor and the first floor. The ground floor was built in the 14th century, the first floor the 15th. If you look inside the ground floor, you can see to your right a large shallow bowl which in Pre-reformation times would have contained holy water – water that had been blessed by the priest – so that people coming in would be able to cross themselves before entering the church.

Inside the porch is stone seating. In the middle ages the church porch would have functioned as a Town Hall, and parish business would have been conducted there. The upper floor contains a room known as a parvis. This is no longer accessible, but would have functioned as the priests' room, an office with any papers and ledgers; a vestry with valuables such as the church silver; and possibly a robing room with priests' vestments.

The front of the Porch has some fancy chequerboard flint work above the door. In the centre is a niche that would have held a small statue, possibly of our patron saint – St. Michael. Saint Michael is the chief angel in heaven, and fought the devil in the form of a dragon. We celebrate his feast day on September 29th.

Lych gate & steps

Lych is an old word for corpse. The lych gate is where a funeral would have approached the church. The steps leading up to the gate, from the Cromer Road, are known as the coffin steps. They are very shallow, to make pushing the bier less onerous.

If you look from the lych gate back towards the Market Place, you can see that there is a relatively straight line from the west side of the Market to the Cromer Road. Going further, Hungate Street is also in a similar line. At one time Hungate street was the major road into the town, and it is possible that the footpath you are on was, at one time, the main road. This would mean that the church was actually right on the main road.

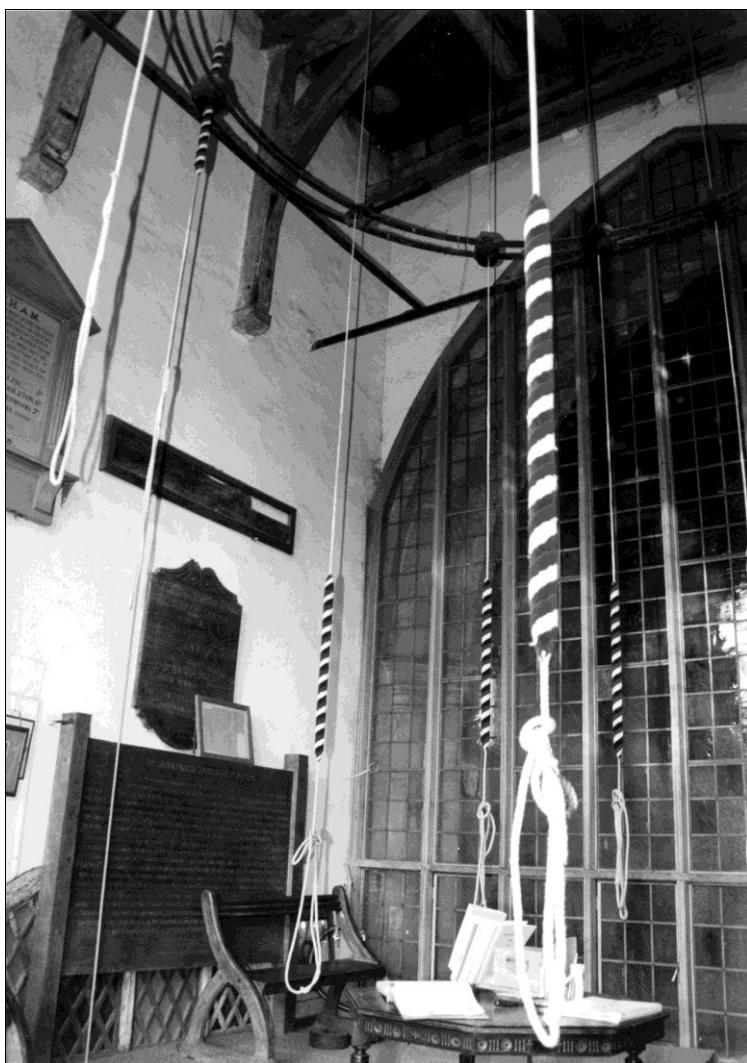
Vestry

The vestry is the priest's room. It contains the safe, the ledgers, the linen and vestments. In the vestry window is the date 1848 (backwards). This is when the vestry was extensively remodelled, not when it was built. Some years ago the floor of the vestry caught fire and a much older floor was found, about one metre below the present level. This implies that there was a room (either one or two storeys) there in the 16th century.

You can see a chimney coming out of the vestry roof. There isn't a fireplace in the vestry now, but at one time this would have been the only place with heating in the whole church. Nowadays we have gas radiators, but the height of the church means that heating the church is a very expensive operation.

Geoffrey Ducker's memories of church repairs

Lynda Wix



The Board in the Ringing Chamber of the tower of St Michael's, 1992. Photo: Derek Lyons, courtesy Aylsham Town Council Archives.

Aylsham church roof

In August 1939, Geoffrey's grandfather's firm, S.S. Ducker & Sons, were subcontractors to Gibson of Norwich (who later became Anglia Sheet Lead). Gibson's had the contract to re-lead the roof of Aylsham church. Duckers had built the furnace and had erected the first section of the timber scaffold, when war was declared. The leader of the group was in the Territorial Army, and was called up straight away – leaving Geoffrey, a 16 year old boy, and a 65 year old man, to finish the erection of the scaffolding.

The new lead was in ingots of one hundredweight, costing £19 per ton (by the end of the war it had reached £400). This new lead was added to the old lead removed from the roof, melted in the furnace, and new sheets were cast. When a section of roof had been laid, the scaffold was taken down and re-erected. The south side (except for the porch) was done, and the upper roof on the north side was also done. The porch and the lower roof on the north side were done during the 1950s.

When the ceiling of the south transept was being prepared for this work, the workmen removed the ceiling wood and threw it out. The wood was from the 15th / 16th century, and was decorated with crowned MRs (for Maria Regina) and ornate foliage. It dated from the Pre-Reformation period, when the south transept was designated as a Lady Chapel; and had been saved when the church was worked on in the 19th century. When the church architect heard that the wood had been jettisoned, the workmen were required to go and retrieve it, and restore it to the ceiling.

The work was started in July or August 1939, and completed about the end of 1940.

Other work on the church

Geoffrey was responsible for the wooden board in the chancel, with the list of incumbents. When he did the first ones, it took him about one hour to complete one line. The latest line, for Andrew Beane, took him one hour per letter.

Another of Geoffrey's contributions to the church is the tripartite board in the ringing chamber. (The text of this board is on the last page.) It contains details about the Masque of Anne Boleyn, held at Blickling Hall. The Masque was a professional production, but many Aylsham people took minor parts. Some of the money raised was donated towards the restoration of the church tower. The board had to be taken to the ringing chamber in three bits, on Geoffrey's back, up the spiral staircase, then assembled in situ. Billy Curtis carved the board.

When Jack Vyse left the parish John Pumphrey asked Geoffrey to take over the management of the pigeon problem in the tower. Pigeons nest on the tower and on the roof, so there are nests, pigeon droppings, and dead pigeons, all of which have to be removed. The problem is not made any easier because the lady who lives in 12 Church Terrace, one of the

closest residences to the church, is a keen fan and protector of pigeons. On the east side of the tower, just above the apex of the nave roof, is an unglazed window. When the nave roof was thatched, this would have been inside, possibly as ventilation. The pigeons were using this as their main nesting and breeding place. Geoffrey, with James McCosh and John Deacon, blocked this up with mesh, thus reducing the pigeon infestation.

The Board in the ringing chamber

In the years 1937–1940 Charles William Martyn, being vicar, and Arthur Jordan Gay and Robert Leicester Rust, Churchwardens, the outside of the fabric of this church was to a very large extent put into thorough repair by M. McDonald Co. of Nottingham. The stonework of the south porch and of the east, south and west faces of the tower, being reset and pointed, and the coigns (corners of the building) all made good and replaced where necessary by new stone. The roofs of the nave, south aisle, and south transept, and of the chancel and the south chancel aisle were completely renovated. The leads being stripped, recast with the addition of 5 tons of new lead and laid on new deal board by J. Gibson of Norwich.

The total cost of all this work was £2,180. Two thirds of the cost of the chancel roof was paid by the ecclesiastical commissioner. Of the rest of the cost part was raised by public subscription, part by an old English fair, and £1390 by the performance at Blickling Hall on the 8th, 9th and 10th of August 1938 of the Masque of Anne Boleyn, written and produced by Nugent Monk of the Maddermarket Theatre at Norwich, and carried through by a committee of ladies and gentlemen of the neighbourhood under the very able direction of their Hon Secretary Alec George Holman and their chairman Thomas Woods Purdy.

Blickling Hall with its grounds and buildings was very generously placed at the disposal of the committee by the most Honourable Philip Henry Marquis of Lothian and her Majesty Queen Mary generously gave her patronage to the Masque and was present at the afternoon performance on the last day.

The faith of the churchfolk of Aylsham in promoting and carrying through so ambitious and so costly a venture was rewarded by the most perfect weather throughout the performances.

Aylsham in 'Old England' remembered by George Silence

Lloyd Mills

According to the directories George Silence lived as a watchmaker in White Hart Street from at least 1836 until 1856.

One hundred years later a descendant of George Silence contacted Ron Peabody, then Town Librarian and custodian of the Archives. The short correspondence between these two revealed that James Silence (tailor and widower) married Mary Johnson at Marsham in 1779. George Silence is presumed to be their son.

George Silence had six children. The eldest two, George William and Thomas both emigrated (separately) to America in the early 1840s. At the time of his leaving the country George William was already married to Mary and they had two children, Tom and Mary with them.

In 1848 the younger George wrote to his mother and father from St. Louis, Illinois, with news of his life and family. His handwriting is well formed and standard for the time. Unfortunately the photocopy held in the Archives is very difficult to read. However, Mr. Peabody's correspondent provided his own transcript which he had made from the original. This is reprinted below.

Originally four pages long, the letter does not really shed any light on life in Aylsham but is interesting for the views it offers on 'Old England', the royal family, and what recent emigrants from England had to cope with when they made their way to America in the middle of the nineteenth century. Towards the end of the letter we can picture some of the emotional ties which bound families as well as the way they were prepared to move away from each other in order to provide for themselves.

Envelope is addressed to Mr George Silence, AYLSHAM, Old England
It was sent by G. W. Silence, 316 Morgan Street, St. Louis, U. S. A.
It was posted on 7th April 1848

Dear Father and Mother,

I take this opportunity of writing to you hoping this will meet you all in good health as it leaves us all at present, we have all enjoyed good health in America with the exception of myself from the first three months,

changing climate is very tiring to the constitution, for the sun in this part of America is very hot, such as you've never felt in England, and the cold in Winter is as great an extreme, and changes from cold to heat in a few hours. We think it is not so healthy as Old England, but a great deal different in the way the people live, we have all had to eat a great deal of meat, such living as the working people of England are not used to. Provisions are much cheaper, and wages more, so it is a better place for a poor working man such as me that was never contented with the good Queen and all the Royal Family, but if ever I thanked god heartily for anything it is to think that I have got my family out of slave Queendom, but everyone is not like me, nor can a man get a living without working hard in this country if he have a family and wish to bring them up as if he lives in a civilised country. But no one can think of the troubles that a family have to put up with in America, first the coming over the sea, and then when you get over in America all amongst strangers, and in a foreign land, but though it was foreign to me I have made it my home for my life, if nothing happens more than I know of at present, though I like it pretty well many English say they would rather be in England with all its faults, but that's the difference of opinion. I would not advise any one to come for they would be sure not to like it at first, for everything being strange to them, and employment is not always to be found for everyone that wants it without trouble.

Dear Father and Mother, a little about my Brother Thomas, I had a letter from him about three weeks since, he was quite well then, he lives about 300 miles from here, he removed from St. Louis last August to a place by the name of Lyndon, he is coming in trade (____) in partnership with Mr. James, they are doing well, they have bought a house etc. Dear father I found my brother at St. Louis when I came, in good health and he liked America very well, I was surprised to have that news of him, which I am glad to say he is alive and well and I hope heartily that he continues the same. I hope I shall see him before long in St. Louis. I am in partnership with a Mr. Davies, I commence 1st July, we have plenty of work and hope we shall do well as my partner is a very handy man and all live together, he is a single man. Dear father I have a pretty home such as furniture and all the necessities of life once more and I hope I shall do well, and I hope that I should like to enjoy the company of my relations and friends. I have got another child to add to the number of the family,

which was born on the 12th of January, its a girl, I have named her after my Mother and my wife's mother. Mary grows a big girl, she is eight years old on the 28th May. Tom is a sharp(?) boy (_____) is 6th November, they both go to school Mary is learning the German language and English, they send their love to all their English relations.

St. Louis population is from forty to fifty thousands, comprising of some of all nations and colours and religions. St. Louis is lighted up with gases and have many fine churches and public buildings, all the trade on the rivers is carried on by steamers of the first class convoys from three to fourteen tons (_____) times we can see from fifty to seventy of their steamers laying in (_____) so this will give you some idea of the trade done here, America is quite a different place from what many of us think before we got here, the difference in customs through so many different country people which make it, strange Germans are about one quarter of the population of St. Louis.

Give my love to brother James and his wife and family. I wish he would write to me for I and my wife would be glad to hear from them or any of the family, give our love to Edward and wife, let me know how they are getting on, if you have heard of anything of my brother William give my love to him. I should like to hear from him. Our love to sister Mary Ann. I should like to see you all once more, if I do not I hope I shall hear from you very often for the future.

Give our love to our Grandmother and all our relations and friends when you write and all the news you can about all (_____) I long to hear from you all.

I shall write to London in a short time the same way, you can let all my friends know all about the letter, and give my wife's and my love to them and Father, Mother and Brother and not forget our old friend Mr. E. (_____) from my wife and family. Let them know that I received a letter in February but will write to him next week if I am still alive.

So I will conclude

With love to all friends and remain your

Affectionate Son and Daughter

George and Mary Silence

References

ALHS J. Aug. 2005, Vol. 7(8): 219–221: Clock & Watchmakers of Aylsham.
Gale, G. & Mollard, T., eds (2004). Aylsham Directories 1793–1937.

Society News

Visit to Saffron Walden

The 26th September was a marvellous day. We arrived at Saffron Walden at 10.45am in beautiful sunshine after an easy coach ride, and disgorged into the Saffron Hotel for coffee – first things first!

We then divided into two groups for our excellent tour around the town led by Blue Badge Guides Sarah Kirkpatrick and her mother. Sarah gave us a wonderfully informed account of the history of the town, full of fascinating details of the architecture, famous inhabitants and events.

History of town:

Developed from a Roman ‘port’, it became a flourishing Saxon settlement by the time of the Norman invasion in 1066. The manor of Walden was given to Geoffrey de Mandeville, whose grandson, also Geoffrey, became the 1st Earl of Essex. He gained many favours from the King, which led to the building of the castle, the establishment of a Royal Market, and the building of a Priory (which later became Audley End). In 1140 Geoffrey de Mandeville diverted the High Street, thereby ensuring that everyone had to go through the market. The town was known as Chipping Walden (chipping meaning ‘market’).

In the medieval period the primary trade in Saffron Walden was in wool. However, between 1400 and 1550 it became the centre of saffron production in England when the autumn-flowering saffron crocus (*Crocus sativus*) became widely grown in the area. Extract from the stigmas, the saffron, was used in medicines, in cooking and as an expensive yellow dye. This industry gave its name to the town and Chipping Walden became Saffron Walden. The saffron crocus bears up to 4 flowers, each with 3 vivid red stigmas. Cultivation and harvesting are extremely labour-intensive and it takes roughly 150 blooms to produce 1gm of dried saffron. This makes saffron the most expensive natural commodity in the world, with prices rising to as much as £450 per oz.

By the end of the 18th century the saffron industry had declined to such an extent that, when George I visited the town in 1717, saffron had to be

obtained from nearby Bishop's Stortford! It was replaced by malt and barley, and by the 1830s there were more than 30 maltings and breweries operating. The town continued to grow throughout the 19th century, with the establishment of a cattle market and the building of a corn exchange and other civic buildings.



Hall houses on Castle Street and the Old Sun Inn, dating from the fourteenth century, with pargetting possibly dating to 1676.

Buildings: There are 324 listed buildings in Saffron Walden, five of which are Grade 1 listed. The town has a wealth of late medieval and Tudor buildings, although very few from the 16th and 17th century. With the new prosperity of the town the Victorian era (based on the brewing and malting industry), many new buildings were erected during that era too.

We spent some time looking at the Wealdon-style Hall Houses on Castle Street. These houses were 4 bay cruck-framed structures, with the open hall, taking up the two bays in the middle of the building. The hearth would have been in the middle of the hall, its smoke rising through an opening in the roof. One end bay of the hall would have contained two rooms, used for storing food and drink (the pantry and buttery). The bay at the other end formed the private space – the parlours on the ground floors and solars on the upper. The solars often stretched beyond the outer wall of the ground floor rooms, jettying out at one end

or else at both ends of the building. As the hall itself had no upper floor within it, its outer walls always stood straight, without jettying. Later, when chimneys were built and the roofs filled in, landing rooms were created. Some houses were then extended outwards along the whole length in line with the existing jettying, while others kept the original outer wall of the hall. Most of the houses were plastered, some with decorative moulding or pargetting. Many of the houses on this street had sliding sash windows.

The Castle was built in 12th century, but now only the ruins of the keep remain. The top of the keep was added in the late 17th century. The inner bailey is clearly visible around the ruins, with the outer bailey cutting across the present common. The common contains the celebrated turf maze – the largest in England. Records of its existence go back to 1699.

Next to the castle is the museum, one of the oldest purpose-built museums in the country.

The church of St. Mary the Virgin, is the largest parish church in Essex. It was built between 1450 and 1525, with money from the saffron trade and townspeople in general (many of whom are commemorated in the bosses), by the famous master mason, John Westell (who had just completed King's College, Cambridge). It contains very little medieval glass now, though possibly a fragment showing the head of Margaret of Anjou who visited the town in 1452, and reputedly fined the bell-ringers for not ringing 'joyfully' enough.

The church was damaged by lightning in the 17th century, and repairs carried out in 1790 removed many of the medieval features. Some of the woodwork removed during these renovations ended up in other churches, some was simply thrown away, and some small statues were even used as dolls! Hidden away in the vestry is the tomb of Thomas Audley, Lord Chancellor of England 1534–1544, who, despite living through a time of turmoil and serving Henry VIII, died in his bed, the 3rd richest man in the country. It was said his heart was as black as the marble of his tomb! The church also contains some fine brasses.

The Old Sun Inn – one of the Grade 1 listed buildings – is figured opposite. Originally two hall houses dating from 1340, it was decorated with pargetting probably in 1676. It was under threat of demolition in the 1960s, but is now Grade 1 listed and owned by the National Trust,

who let it on a 400-year lease. Recently repairs costing £30,000 have been carried out.

The Victorian part of the town is based around the market place. Since 1230 this has been the retail area of the town, and street names date from that time: Mercers' Row, Butchers' Row etc. During the 19th century the Quakers were very active. The most influential family were the Gibsons who helped build several buildings that remain today, such as the museum and Town Hall. Other notable buildings in this part of town include the Corn Exchange and Gibson & Tewkes Bank. The Corn Exchange was built in the 1840s and described by Pevsner as being in a 'jolly Italianate style'. In the 1970s it became the Library. Gibson & Tewkes Bank, was built in 1874 in neo-Tudor style with an ironwork frieze of Japanese Chrysanthemums.

After lunch, we had a chance to pay a quick visit to places not included on the 'official' tour, such as the Fry Art Gallery (containing a wonderful collection of work by 20th century artists who have lived in and around Great Bardfield & Saffron Walden, such as Edward Bawden), the Museum and the Bridge End Gardens.

1, Myddylton Place:

The afternoon was spent visiting this remarkable Grade 1 listed medieval building, which is the oldest continuously inhabited house in Saffron Walden. The building comprises several different buildings that have played very different roles. It is made up of three distinct parts: a merchant's house, a long store that became a maltings in the 18th century, and, separated from the rest of the building by a wagon way, a weather boarded loft.

On the corner of Myddylton place and Bridge Street is the oldest section of the house: a cellar dating to c. 1300. Above this, the Hall house contained the shop on the main London and Cambridge road, built in the late 1400s and the two medieval shop window openings that front Bridge Street are still present, as is the impressive Dragon Post carving on the corner beam. Inside parts of the original hall still exist with a carved partition – the fireplace was a later 17th century addition containing blue and white Dutch tiles.



Myddylton Place, showing the Hall house with its Dragon Post and two medieval shop window openings fronting Bridge Street; also the timbers of the Store House or Maltings that date from c.1500.

The Store House or Maltings is the part of the building along Myddylton Place. The frame has 8 bays with timbers dating from c. 1500 and was used as a warehouse, although the top floor may have been a guildhall. This part of the building is closely studded with diagonal tension braces in much of the upper floor.

The building also has a barley shaft from the 18th century when this part of the building was converted to a maltings.

The wagon way would have been part of the original barn and is open to the eaves. Alongside it is the third bay of the barn, which is weather-boarded in typical Essex fashion.

Until two years ago the house was run as a Youth Hostel. It is now owned by Julia and Tony Chapman, who have painstakingly restored it. They gave us a fascinating tour of the house during the afternoon, for which we thank them very much, and a simply fabulous tea in the quadrangle garden to end off a wonderful day.

Many thanks to Sarah Kirkpatrick and her mother, Julia and Tony Chapman, our coach driver, but most of all to Ann Dyball who organised the splendid trip.

Fiona and Tim Scott

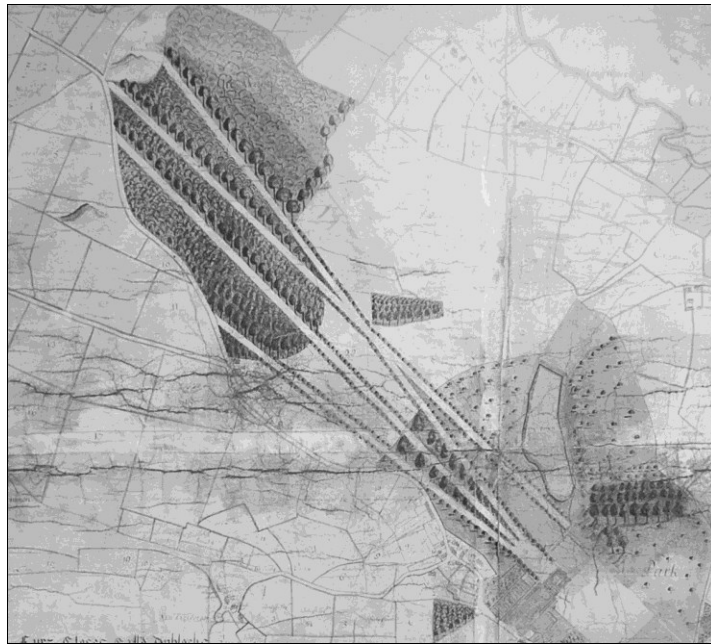
References

Saffron Walden Town Trail from Saffron Walden Tourist Information centre.

On line: www.onemyddyltonplce.co.uk/index.html;

www.uttlesford.gov.uk/museum/default.htm; en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saffron

Long Avenues in Blickling Park, a talk by William Vaughan-Lewis



For the first of the winter lectures, following the AGM, William gave fellow members an interesting new take on a section of Blickling's history. His work has been published in full in *Garden History*, the journal of the national Garden History Society, Winter 2012. He urged the audience to take advantage of the lovely autumn weather to walk in the Park and see for themselves the landscape and context of his talk. He then proceeded to show by some excellent images, how easily surviving documentation, in this case maps and plans, can lead to misinterpretation of what actually happened on the ground.

For years historians and guides have accepted that the 1729 Corbridge plan of the Park – that still hangs in the Hall – was a realistic depiction of the 18th century park. Most of the detail seems quite accurate but Corbridge also drew four long avenues of trees, three running in a fan shape from the west of the Hall towards the woods. William explained that these ideas were very popular from the late 17th century onwards and showed examples from Mannington and Wolterton, Old Hall Aylsham and elsewhere. As no such avenues are there now, people had always assumed they had been planted and later removed.

But William, taking a landscape historian's view, felt something was wrong. He showed us photos that show the land from the Hall falls away

quite sharply and it was clear that there would be no ‘vista’ as the latter part of the avenues could not be seen. He also noted that the back of the Hall did not have any state rooms (with viewing windows) facing the projected avenues – so even the fan effect of the closest parts would not have been appreciated.

The plan also had the left-hand avenues cutting across named tenanted arable fields and going through a farmyard – hardly a fit walk for the gentle folk.

To back up his feeling that the long fan of trees was never undertaken, William scoured the archives and found that all the references to avenues at Blickling were to one long avenue only – one that ran from the Wilderness, at one side of the Hall, towards the Great Wood. A drawing by Edmund Prideaux about 1725 does hint at a newly-planted avenue on the west side of the hall (and possibly another) but these were short runs which stopped at the paling fence dividing the garden from the rest of the park. Diaries of visitors are rather dismissive of Blickling’s landscape and even its loyal fans have to admit the Hall does not have the setting of sweeps of open land more usually found around such fine houses. It seems likely that the idea of extending one avenue into three or four great ones – such as Charles Bridgeman was able to create in other parks – was proposed at Blickling and drawn by Corbridge over his plan. Perhaps when someone realised the ground was not suitable the additional avenues were quietly dropped.

To show that caution should always be used when looking at maps, William reminded us of the Wolterton Hall map of 1732. A very convincing wing was drawn as if built but it never materialised. Even the first Ordnance Survey map, of 1816, which shows the one long avenue, is misleading. It points directly to the Hall rather than to the edge of garden on the north. William demonstrated how the modern local historian uses Google Earth (with a range of dated images from 1999), tithe maps and 1946 RAF photography on the internet to build up an understanding of what we see on the ground.

In discussion afterwards, members felt that the case was strong and congratulated William on his extensive search for evidence especially, as Geoff Sadler noted in his vote of thanks, it is harder to prove a negative than a reality.

Maggie Vaughan-Lewis

Rival brewers in north-east Norfolk in the late 18th century

Margaret Bird

This synopsis of the talk given by member Margaret Bird in the Friendship Hall at Aylsham on 24 October 2013 is published in two parts.

This exploration covers related themes: the importance of malting and brewing to the British economy in this period; the vertical integration of certain manufacturing businesses in much of Norfolk whereby almost all the commercial brewers were also farmers, maltsters and owners of tied houses; (in Part 2) the often neglected topic of distribution; and the brewers' relentless scramble to secure more retail outlets.

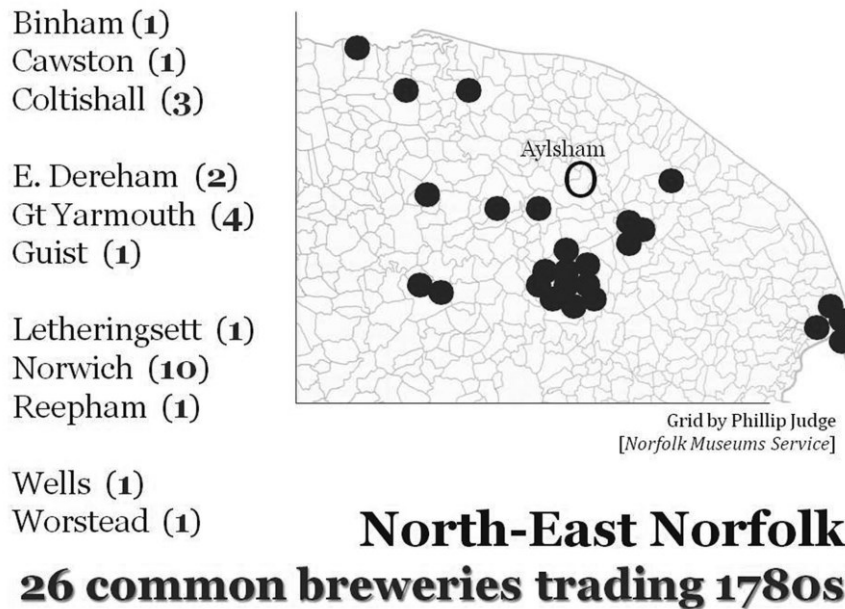
Part 1: Changing times and changing language

It is a 'Snakes in Ireland' subject for, as far as we know, there were no commercial brewers in Aylsham in the second half of the 18th century and in the very early 19th. Other market towns in the area were in the same position: North Walsham, Holt and Fakenham, for instance, had no wholesale brewers.

This was a period of transition as breweries got larger, more capital-intensive and more mechanised. The smaller producers fell by the wayside. The changes were reflected in the language, which is our starting point. In the 18th century a wholesale brewer was known as a 'common brewer' – a term carrying no adverse connotations – or as a 'brewer for sale'. This study is not concerned with private brewers such as Parson Woodforde in his rectory at Weston, free from regulation by the Excise; nor with publican brewers (innkeepers who brewed for their customers), a dying breed in East Anglia where the wholesalers had early established a grip on the retail trade.

A public house supplied by a brewer was a drawing house, the innkeeper being his drawer. The brewery was known as a brewing office, just as a maltings was known as a malting office; the buildings where the work was carried on were called brewhouses and malthouses. A 'brewery' in this period was the body of practitioners: newspaper advertisements promoting new products might have the headline, 'Advice to the Brewery'. Mary Hardy (1733–1809), the wife of a

manager of a Coltishall brewery, enables us to track the changing language in her 500,000-word diary. She consistently uses the term ‘brewing office’ when narrating her husband’s prolonged search for a concern of their own. It was not until May 1803, on a visit to Hull, that she adopted the unfamiliar word ‘brewery’.



One of the slides from the talk. Aylsham is shown surrounded on three sides by brewers, many of whom supplied the town’s public houses with beer. The list is probably not exhaustive.
[© Margaret Bird, 2013]

A great deal of brewing was carried on in villages such as Coltishall, Guist and Letheringsett. Aylsham was nearly encircled by village enterprises, as charted on the slide (illustrated). The reasons were twofold. A successful brew requires excellent water, known in the trade as liquor, and manufacturers set up only where they could be sure of a secure supply of good brewing liquor. (The founder of Woodforde’s Norfolk Ales, Ray Ashworth, recounted in 1990 that in his years as a home brewer the top awards would go year after year to a Coltishall home brewer who relied on her well in a part of the village where a brewery had flourished in the 18th century.)

Secondly a brewer found it increasingly hard to survive if he or she did not have the capital to expand by increasing production and offering popular but slow-maturing brews such as nog and porter. These required large costly vats. There were economies of scale in brewing, though

rather fewer in malting. Also geographical position was crucial. Ease of acquisition of raw materials meant that costs could be contained; in this the waterways played a major part. Although keels and wherries were generally not used for transporting beer they were invaluable in bringing up hops, coal and any cinders not made on site in coking ovens; they carried down malt, flour and other goods for onwards transshipment.



The farmer, maltster and brewer William Hardy with his diarist wife Mary. They lived at Coltishall 1772–82, Mary Hardy logging work in the fields and in the maltings and brewery; she worked in the Recruiting Sergeant at Horstead when there was no innkeeper in 1776.

[Portraits by Huguier, 1785; Cozens-Hardy Collection]

Norfolk is often dismissed as a non-industrial county and portrayed as sidelined during the industrial revolution; yet its manufacturing role was central to the British economy when this country had to support extremely heavy government expenditure: Britain was at war for much of the 18th century. The duties on malt and beer, amounting to roughly one quarter of the public revenue in the mid-century, helped keep the Army in the field and the Royal Navy at sea.

As a protection against risk, and in order to secure good quality malting barley and reliable retail outlets, brewers established themselves as vertically integrated enterprises. Farming, malting, brewing and ownership of tied houses became the norm in the eastern half of Norfolk: of the 26 breweries charted on the slide only two (Booty's of Binham and Ashmull's of Worstead) seem not to have had integrated maltings.



Letheringsett 1952: the two early-19th-century malt-kilns built by the diarist Mary Hardy's son William junior; the Hardys' 18th-century malthouse can be glimpsed beyond them.

Her husband William mechanised his maltings and brewery as early as 1784, converting them to water power. He built a tunnel under the present A148 to carry the waterwheel channel which here re-enters the River Glaven in the foreground; the cascade reflects the drop for the wheel.

Even more ambitiously, Chapman Ives of Coltishall had converted his brewery to steam power by 1796.

[Cozens-Hardy Collection]

Their committed, hardworking men nurtured the seed they sowed all the way through to the frothing pewter tankard. They ploughed the soil, harvested and malted the barley, brewed it, and drayed the barrels of beer

to outlets which in the flatlands of East Anglia could lie as much as 25 miles from the brewery. In hilly, less densely populated areas such as Yorkshire, the North-West and Wales, where delivering beer over long distances was not an appealing prospect, the publican brewer lasted much longer and there was less pressure to develop vertical integration.

There was a very wide range when it came to production levels, and on the whole it was the larger brewers who survived as long as they did not over-extend themselves at a time of poor harvests, illiquidity and high taxation. In London Whitbread was the first brewer, in 1797, to break through the 200,000-barrel barrier for annual production (a barrel being 36 gallons of beer). Such producers were soon to regard themselves as the ‘powerloom brewers’, in contrast with the ‘handicraft producers’ of rural areas. Two of the largest Norfolk brewers in our period were Chapman Ives of Coltishall, who at the turn of the century had the capacity to produce 20,000 barrels of strong beer (as announced in the *Norwich Mercury*, 9 October 1802), and John Patteson of Norwich, who actually achieved that figure in 1800 (*Norwich Mercury*, 19 July 1800). Most of the others were in the range 600–15,000 barrels. At Letheringsett in 1797 William Hardy produced 2000 barrels; at Coltishall in the 1770s he may have brewed only 1200 barrels p.a. at most.

Malting tended to be performed on the spot, where the barley was harvested. Malt is, by volume, three quarters of the weight of untreated moisture-rich grain, and it made little sense to cart barley by road. It was thus common for one brewery to be served by more than one maltings, which could be in different villages; to stave off the constant threat of bankruptcy brewers would shed an outlet rather than sell one of their maltings.

Drinkers in the public houses of Aylsham and the surrounding area would have had a bewildering time of it, for the local hostelrys were traded rapidly between brewers as fortunes rose and fell. In the second part, to be published in the next edition of the journal, we shall see how the brewers vied with one another over securing their vital retail outlets.

Note: One of the principal sources for the talk was the 36-year diary of Mary Hardy, published in full in five volumes in April 2013. Maggie Vaughan-Lewis’s review of Margaret Bird’s edition appeared in the journal in August 2013 (vol. 9, no. 8, pp. 294–6).

For more details see the website maryhardysdiary.co.uk

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Thursday 3rd October 2013

Apologies: Ros Calvert; Ruth Harrison; Mr and Mrs Hawke; Sue Jay; Sue McManus; Robert Prior; Mr and Mrs Ralstone; Lord and Lady Walpole

Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting 4 October 2012 were agreed.

Matters arising: none

Secretary's report

The Secretary welcomed the Members and reminded them to collect their membership cards which, in addition to providing the list of lectures for the coming winter, would also act as receipt for payment of the Society subscription. He noted that the committee and officers on the card were those currently serving and not necessarily the ones to be elected

The year 2012–2013 had again been a successful year for the Society. The number of members had been consistently in the 100 to 120 range. New members would be welcomed while valuing existing loyal members.

The winter lectures had been well-attended. A talk on the Sedgeford Project had been followed up by a recent visit to Sedgeford. Other titles had included the Romans in East Anglia and The Howard Tombs. An interesting series of speakers has been arranged for this winter: these are detailed on the membership cards. The Secretary reported that the Federation Diary entries for Aylsham Local History Society are incorrect or missing. The Society's Autumn course had been 'Hidden Histories of Medieval and Tudor East Anglia' presented by Dr. Rebecca Pinner. This continued the outstanding quality of the previous year, and extended our connection with UEA.

The annual dinner was held at The Lawns in Holt where an enjoyable talk was given by a member of the Holt Society who described their efforts to conserve the character and history of Holt.

On behalf of the Committee, the Secretary expressed appreciation for the support of Geoff Gale, who has continued to promote Society publications. The good relations between the Archivist Lloyd Mills, The Learning Officer Jayne Andrew and volunteers at The Heritage Centre, and this Society, continue to help provide interest for members, other people in the locality, and to visitors.

Income from *Sail and Storm* sales this year has meant that the Society is just into profit; a fine achievement. ALHS has a strong involvement with the archives and there is support for members to come in to the archive on a Tuesday morning to do some original research.

Through the year, Ann Dyball has inspired visits, Ian McManus has very efficiently guided finances, Gill Fletcher and Geoff Sadler have overseen membership matters, Lynda Wix has produced committee minutes, and Rosemarie Powell has ensured that we have refreshments. Sheila Merriman and Vic Morgan each support the Society with fresh ideas and their knowledge of, and connections with, other organisations.

Again, Roger Polhill has been our enthusiastic Chairman. The Society Journal seems to get ever more interesting, attractive and varied, and Roger's wife Diana is always supportive.

Gill Fletcher has resigned from her position as Membership Secretary. She has managed membership forms and subscriptions for some years, and her service to the Society in this capacity is very much appreciated.

The Secretary concluded by looking forward to the next year of activities, which he hoped Members would support and enjoy.

Treasurer's report

The accounts were circulated. They will be published in an edition of the Journal. The figure for subscriptions appears to be low: this is because some of the subscriptions were banked before the start of this financial year. The insurance premium payment is not shown because insurance is provided with the Society's subscription to the British Association of Local History. This is less than the previous premium.

Report on Newsletter and Publications

The Chairman reported that the Society had issued three editions of the Journal this year as usual. Articles relating to the publication of *Sail and Storm* last August featured in the December issue, together with a note

on the conservation of the Aylsham Lancaster Court Roll for 1509–1546, which we have an opportunity to see at the Norfolk Record Office on the 24th of this month. April and August had leading articles on notables who came to live briefly in grand houses and made a mark sufficient to arouse the curiosity of Maggie and William Vaughan-Lewis. The Chairman thanked them for an article on the local use of sygate for a ditched way. Lynda Wix kindly provide two articles, one on digging canals and the other on the Pask family of Aylsham outfitters. Ben Rust provided his third instalment on Aylsham rainfall. The Chairman expressed appreciation for reports on five lectures and two outings, reports on the guided tour of Dunkirk in September by Brian Elsey and Jim Pannell and the Festival Week Heritage 'Walk and Talk' in May by Sheila Merriman. The Chairman commented on three book reviews and the obituaries of Peter Pink and Tom Bishop, both of whom are sadly missed. He thanked all contributors and looked forward to more as the end of Volume 9 is near.

The website www.aylsham-history.co.uk has been improved by Geoff Sadler.

The Chairman concluded with a reminder that the Society celebrates 30 years in 2014.

Report on Visits

Ann Dyball thanked the membership for their support. Small groups had visited Syderstone Church and the archaeological dig at Sedgeford in July and Saffron Walden in September. Reports on all the visits are published in the Journal.

A visit to the Norfolk Record Office is planned for October 2013 also one to the Textile Conservation Studio in March 2014. A visit to Columbine Hall in Suffolk is on the agenda for 2014.

Ann thanked Gill Fletcher and Jill Sheringham for their help in researching and organising the visits. Ann asked for help from Members to assist with future visits.

Report on Membership

Gillian Fletcher was thanked for her years as Membership Secretary. Geoff Sadler has now taken up the post and has transferred all membership details to a spread sheet which makes it easier to generate

labels for mailings and the membership card. If your details are incorrect, please contact Geoff.

The website is being reviewed and will be made more interactive e.g. for ordering publications. It will be similar to that of the Heritage Centre.

Election of Officers and Committee Members

The Chairman reminded the Members that the Constitution had been amended so that all Officers and Committee members were elected for one year therefore all posts were open to nominations. No nominations had been received this year. All the Officers and Committee were willing to stand for re-election except that Ann Dyball wanted to pass on her role of Vice-chairman, but was willing to stand for election as a Committee Member and continue to organise visits. The Chairman thanked her for her support and encouragement as Vice-chairman for the last five years. He asked the Members to agree that the Committee could co-opt one of its members to the post. This action was proposed by William Vaughan-Lewis, seconded by Jill Sheringham and agreed by the Membership.

The Officers were elected as follows:

Chairman: Roger Polhill, proposed by Jim Pannell, seconded by Geoff Gale

Secretary: Jim Pannell, proposed by Diana Polhill, seconded by Daphne Davy

Treasurer: Ian McManus, proposed by Vic Morgan, seconded by Margaret Rowe

The Committee Members (Ann Dyball, Gill Fletcher, Sheila Merriman, Vic Morgan, Rosemary Powell, Geoff Sadler, Lynda Wix) were proposed by Daphne Davy, seconded by Gillian Barwick and agreed by the Members.

Any Other Business

Daphne Davy asked if honorary membership could be considered for founding members of the Society. The Chairman said that the criteria for honorary membership would be discussed at the next committee meeting.

Sheila Merriman

LIST OF MEMBERS – NOVEMBER 2013

Below is the list of current paid-up members. After this issue of the Journal, the circulation of 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 Ian McManus, Little Nunthorpe, Aylsham NR11 6QT (individuals £9; couples £15). Apologies to any members who might have recently renewed their subscription and still missed inclusion on the list.

Ashall, Mr & Mrs G	Humphreys, Mrs C	Rowe, Mrs M
Baker, Mr DW	Jay, Ms S	Runham, Mr G
Barber, Mrs S	Johnston, Mr G	Rust, Mr & Mrs B
Barwick, Mrs G	Jones, Mr & Mrs M	Sadler, Mr & Mrs
Bayes, Mrs R	King, Mr G	G
Bird, Mrs M	Lyons, Mr D	Scott, Mr T
Bowman, Miss H	Margarson, Mrs S	Sharpe, Ms S
Burton, Mr G	Mawbey, Mr & Mrs	Shaw, Mr & Mrs
Calvert, Ms R	W E	A
Case, Dr D E	McChesney, Mrs J	Sheringham, Mrs J
Cox, Mrs F	McManus, Mr & Mrs	Simpson. Mr &
Cragg, Mr J A	I	Mrs A
Crouch, Mr R	Menzies, Mrs M	Spencer, Mr &
Davy, Mr & Mrs R	Merriman, Mrs S	Mrs N
Douët, Dr A	Mills, Mr L	Steward, Mrs L
Driscoll, Mrs C	Mollard, Mr & Mrs	Thomas, Mrs C
Duncan, Mrs B	T	Tofts, Mr & Mrs P
Dyball, Miss A J	Moore, Mr P	Ulph, Mr C
Ellis, Ms J	Morgan, Dr V	Vaughan-Lewis,
Elsey, Mr & Mrs B	Nobbs, Mr G	Mr & Mrs W
Fletcher, Mrs G	Pannell, Mr J	Walpole, Lord &
Gale, Mr G	Parkin, Ms T	Lady
Gee, Mrs B	Peabody, Ms J	Wessely, Mrs J
Grellier, Ms D	Polhill, Dr & Mrs R	Wintle, Mrs S
Hall, Mrs R	Powell, Mr & Mrs I	Wix, Mr & Mrs M
Harrison, Mrs R	Preis, Mrs W	Worsencroft, Mr
Hawke, Mr & Mrs D	Pritchard, Mr &	D
A	Mrs E	Worth, Mr & Mrs
Hill, Mrs M	Roulstone, Mr &	J
Holman, Mrs E	Mrs P	

RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS ACCOUNT – YEAR ENDED 31ST AUGUST, 2013

INCOME		EXPENDITURE	
2011/2012	2012/2013	2011/2012	2012/2013
1186 Members' subscriptions	579.00	540 Autumn course	540.00
117 Visitors	72.00	1164 Publications & printing	4928.60
1330 Autumn course	1323.00	602 Hiring of halls	380.50
947 Visits	368.00	958 Visits	400.00
1559 Sales publications	5147.05	955 Social evening	928.00
845 Social evening	862.50	108 Membership subscriptions	107.00
10 Donations	12.00	175 Lecture fees	290.00
100 Refreshments	83.35	36 Film hiring	33.20
		60 Gratuities	92.50
		58 Insurance premium	—
		65 Website/Domain name	57.41
		287 Stationery, postage, photocopying	400.69
		327 Bure Navigation Trust (commission on sales)	—
<u>6094</u> <u>Total income</u>	<u>8446.90</u>	<u>5335</u> <u>Total expenditure</u>	<u>8157.90</u>
		<u>759</u> <u>Surplus for the Year</u>	<u>289.00</u>
<u>6094</u>	<u>8446.90</u>	<u>6094</u>	<u>8446.90</u>

NB Member's subscription for 2012–2013 includes £291 relevant to 2012–2013.

Reconciliation

3949	Bank Balance Brought Forward	4565.56
—	Cash Balance Brought Forward	142.22
759	<u>Add</u> Excess Income Over Expenditure	289.00
<u>4708</u>		<u>4996.78</u>

Represented by:—

4566	Bank Balance Carried Forward	4978.08
142	Cash Balance Carried Forward	18.70
<u>4708</u>		<u>4996.78</u>

Funds held on deposit at 31st August 2013 1085.71

I have carried out a check into the accounting records and supporting documents of Aylsham Local History Society for the year ended 31st August, 2013, which I have found to be correct and in accordance with the above Statement.

Ian McManus (Treasurer)
Graeme Johnston (Accountant)

24th October, 2013

NOTICES

These are the lectures for the new Year.

Thursday 23 January 2014. '*The Real Edith Cavell*' by Barbara Miller

Thursday 27 February 2014. '*Textile Conservation and the National Trust*' by Ksynia Marko

Thursday 27 March 2014. '*Ancient Trees and the Norfolk Landscape*' by Tom Williamson

Severe Weather Procedure

In case of adverse weather, members are asked to telephone a committee member after 11 am on the day of the lecture to see whether the lecture will proceed.

WEA Course

'*Subterranean Norwich*'. Tutor: Matthew Williams. Course starts 2 pm Wednesday 15th January in the Friends' Meeting House.

Please book with Ann Dyball on 01263 732637

Visit to National Trust Textile Conservation Studio, Malthouse Barn, Oulton Street, 2 pm Tuesday 4th February 2014.

Please book with Ann Dyball on 01263 732637